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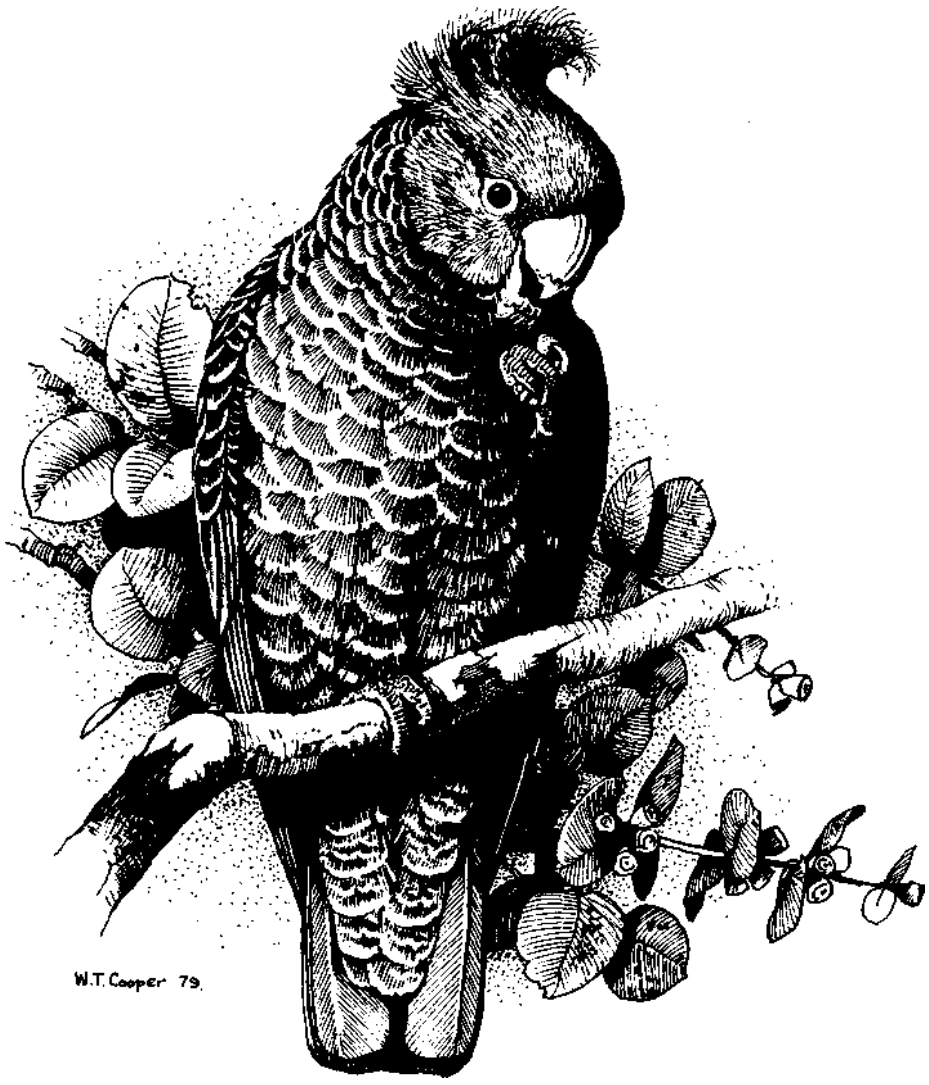

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(Continued inside back cover)

A RECORD OF A WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL LANDING IN A TREE

Mark Clayton

There has been much conjecture and folklore as to whether the two species of swifts that commonly visit Australia actually spend all their time "on the wing" whilst they are here or whether they roost at night in trees, caves or ledges. When discussing White-throated Needletails, ***Hirundapus caudacutus,*** which are common in the Canberra region during the summer, Pizzey (1980) reports they have been seen to "settle briefly on trunks of dead trees or in foliage but roosting habits are not known". and Schodde and Tidemann (1986) say "they roost in trees in forested country" and "it is also possible they sleep on the wing in communal rafts". There are some descriptions of White-throated Needletails actually landing, and possibly roosting, in the crowns of trees: Corben et al. (1982) at Mt. Cootha, Qld; Quested (1982) at Munghorn Gap, NSW; and Day (1993) at Wilsons Promontory, Vic.

On 22 January 1993 I was fortunate enough to see a White-throated Needletail land amongst the outer foliage of a tree at The Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve, approximately 8.5 km SW of West Wyalong, NSW.

At approximately 2020 hrs I was about 2 km from West Wyalong on the Newell Highway travelling towards the reserve when I noticed small groups, each of about six needletails, flying very low above the eucalypts lining the highway. My assumption at the time was that the birds were feeding on low flying insects as the weather was warm and humid. with an overcast sky and a thunderstorm imminent. I arrived at the nature reserve about 10 minutes later. At 2040 hrs, as I was preparing to set up camp, four needletails flew slowly through the site, just below the canopy (about 12 m). Three of the birds were lost to sight but the fourth was seen to "crash-land" into the leaves of a Red Ironbark, ***Eucalyptus sideroxylon.*** To achieve this the bird did a "barrel roll" and crashed belly first amongst the leaves. In the observations which they made, Corben et al. (1982), Quested (1982). and Day (1993) all mention swifts making similar forceful landings. The branches the bird chose were at the very top of the tree and set slightly apart from other more lower branches. I asked Mrs Katy Mallett, who was setting up her camp nearby, to keep an eye of the bird while I got my binoculars. By this time it was almost dark and anyone not knowing where the bird was would have had great difficulty in finding it. It was just discernible with the binoculars. The bird was not there at 0630 hrs the next morning but several needletails were noted flying slowly above the canopy about two hours later.

One of the many fallacies that concern White-throated Needletails is that they have weak feet and therefore are unable to perch. I have found this to be false. Ms Stephanie Martin was entrusted with the care and rehabilitation of an injured White-throated Needletail found on Mount Stromlo in December 1991. Upon the birds recovery Ms Martin asked if I could band it prior to its release. During the banding I became aware just how strong the feet of this species are as they grasped my fingers

extremely tightly. The claws are also very strong. This sort of grip would be needed to hang onto branches of a tree. The strength of the grip of their feet is also commented on by Schodde and Tidemann (1986).

Most photographs of White-throated Needletails I have seen have invariably been taken in captivity. probably of injured birds, and show the bird clinging to upright trunks or branches using the spins of the tail as a prop. My observation, together with those of Corben et al. (1982). Quested (1982). and Day (1993) shows this form of roosting is not necessarily the norm.

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FURTHER NOTES ON HOODED ROBINS NEAR CANBERRA

Bill Graham

This paper concludes a study of Hooded Robins *Melanodryas cucullata* at Enchanted Hill in the Tuggeranong Valley. ACT. It covers the nine month period from April 1990 through to January 1991 and follows an earlier paper which covered the eight month period from August 1989 through to March 1990 (Graham 1990). The topics discussed include site fidelity, breeding success. cooperative breeding. foraging behaviour and moult.

Study Area

Two adjoining Hooded Robin territories (identified as Site A and Site B) were studied in an area on the ACT/NSW border, 1 km east of Theodore, in the Tuggeranong Valley on the north-west slopes of Enchanted Hill (35 28'S, 149 8'E) (Figure 1). A more complete description of the area is contained in the earlier paper (Graham 1990).

Methods

During the nine months covered by this paper, Site A was visited 17 times and Site B 22 times (see Appendix). The total time spent at both sites was 32.5 hrs and the length of individual visits varied between .5 and 2.0 hrs. During these visits. which were in the early morning. field notes were taken of various aspects of the natural history of the robins. Both sites were mapped and divided into 1 ha grids. The locations and movements of the birds in relation to these grids were also recorded on most visits.

Territory Size

For each site the defended territory was about 5 ha during the breeding season and 50 ha during the remainder of the year. This was larger than recorded in 1989 (Graham 1990) and may have been because I had become more familiar with the area and kept more detailed records.

Site Fidelity

Site A - A pair of breeding adults was present from August 1989 through to January 1991 when observations ceased. I believe they were the same pair all the time and I never saw them leave the site.

Site B - A pair of breeding adults was present from August 1989 until January 1991. From November 1989 until November 1990 a male and female offspring remained with them. These immature birds were not seen after 11 November 1990.

The boundaries of the territories seemed to be respected by both pairs as I never observed any contact or territorial conflict between them. On only one occasion did I see a pair cross from one territory into the other (Site B to Site A) and that was only 30 m into the other territory. Whenever I walked between the two sites I would leave one group behind and then find the other in a different location in the adjoining site.

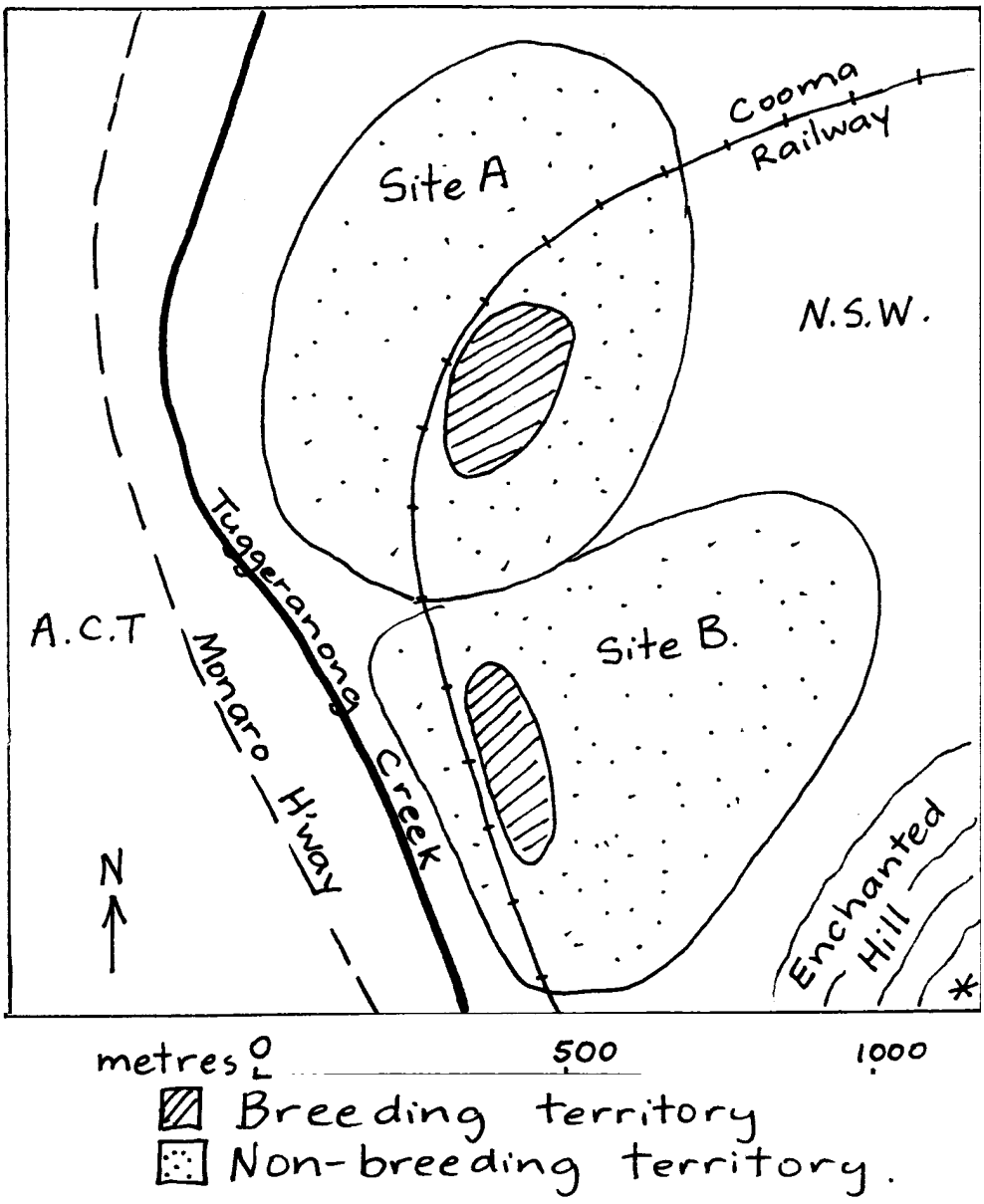

Figure 1. Sketch map of the study area showing the two territories.

Breeding

Site A - Both breeding attempts were unsuccessful. On 27 October 1990 a juvenile was seen flying. It was still dependent on its parents when it was last seen on 4 November. On the same day, the female had half-completed a new nest. It was 2.14 m above the ground in the fork of a horizontal branch of a small eucalypt. Two eggs were seen in this nest on 11 November. On 25 November the nest was empty.

Site B - The first attempt failed during brooding in early October 1990. The second attempt in early December produced one juvenile which was observed flying on 1 January 1991. The fate of this juvenile was unknown as I made no further visits to the site.

A breeding frequency of twice a year has been previously documented (e.g. North 1901-04, Beruldsen 1980). The period between laying and hatching at each of my sites is shown in Figure 2.

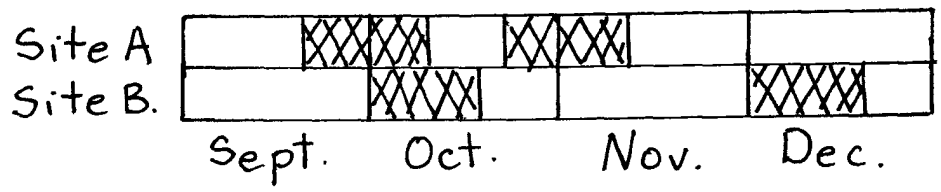

Figure 2. Periods between laying and hatching at each site.

Cooperative Behaviour.

Hooded Robins, along with some other robin species, engage in communal breeding in which two females, or birds in female-type plumage, may incubate and brood the young (Boles 1988). No cooperative incubation or brooding were observed in this study, but other cooperative behaviour, as detailed below, was observed.

Two juveniles from Site B which were hatched about 21 October 1989, stayed with the adults for twelve months. In that time they foraged. fed, and perched with the adults. On 7 August 1990, the adult male and his 10 month old male offspring were in thick cover near the railway line. In a rapid movement. they drove an Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis* out of their territory. This was the only occasion I had observed this species at Enchanted Hill. Marchant (1985) states that the Hooded Robin is the direct ecological counterpart of the Eastern Yellow Robin - this interpretation is consistent with the above observation which may have been an example of competitive exclusion.

On 28 October 1990, I took six COG members to the 1989 nest site in Site B where I expected a new nest to be located. In the 30 minutes we were at the site, the two adults and their 12 month old male and female offspring were in a state of constant agitation. Based on previous observations at both sites, I believe this behaviour was consistent with that adopted by parent robins when their juveniles had just left the nest.

In pairs or as a group. they circled above and wheeled in the air followed by a rest on the fence or in trees. One male swooped to within 50 cm of the head of one of the people who were with me. They repeated these manoeuvres until we left the site. Loud chattering and other alarm calls accompanied this display.

During the following five visits in November no nest or juveniles were found, although one of the 12 month old offspring was seen with the adults. As a consequence of this experience, I decided not to take groups to breeding sites again.

Foraging Behaviour

Brooker et al. (1990) identify seven types of foraging behaviour that insectivorous birds can use. These are: flitting, gleaning. hovering, sallying, hawking, probing, and scratching. As the Hooded Robin is a ground feeder it uses only two of these strategies. sallying (defined as a direct flight towards prey sighted in a section of the substrate, other than air, that is remote from the bird) is used most often, and hovering (fluttering in the air in one place then dropping to prey) is used rarely.

On 5 September 1990, a female sallied from the top of a fence post to the ground and moved along the fence, feeding five times in five minutes. The prey was too small to be seen and was eaten straight away. This method of feeding is described more fully in Graham (1990).

During windy weather, the birds forage in protected sites using perches close to the ground. On 17 June 1990 at 0940 hrs, a strong cold wind was blowing from the south and a trio were feeding in a protected gully in Site B under a mature Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora.* Lots of fallen branches and twigs were being used as perches to sally from. On 26 June it was cold and windy and in Site B the adult pair and their two offspring were feeding at the foot of Enchanted Hill. A fallen log 30 cm thick was used as a perch by one bird which moved along its length.

On 3 June 1990 at 0820 hrs, a male perched on the top of a 1 m high thistle. It hovered and fluttered with butterfly-like movements then dropped onto its prey. On the same day at 0840 hrs, a female perched on the stalk of a Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus,* hovered, returned to its perch, hovered again, then dropped. About 15 seconds later it beat a 4 cm long caterpillar on a log nearby before eating it.

On 27 October at 0940 hrs, a male 3 m above the ground in a tree flew out 1 m and caught a small moth resembling a Bogong Moth *Agrots infusa.* It returned to the trunk and beat the moth before consuming it. On another occasion, a robin in a similar position picked up and ate a caterpillar which was on the branch near its feet.

Small invertebrates were eaten directly and could not be observed, while larger prey were taken up from the ground to a perch and beaten. Unlike other ground feeders which hop or walk along the ground, the Hooded Robin tends to sally, land, eat or collect prey, then leave the ground quickly (see also Rowe 1991). The two instances of obtaining prey in the air and on the branch of a tree appeared to be opportunistic
and exceptions to the normal pattern.

Moulting

The most common pattern of moulting for any bird species is once a year for the large flight feathers of the wing and tail, and twice in each year for the body feathers.

Rogers et al. (1986 p. 53) record primary moult in adult Hooded Robins from December through to March . Adult Red-capped Robins *Petroica phoenicea* moulted at Cooma North, NSW, following the breeding season (Coventry 1988). This was also the case at Enchanted Hill for Hooded Robins. In November 1989, late in the breeding season. body moult was taking place in a male. The white parts on the front looked frayed and dirty. On 14 January 1990, a male's lower chest was fluffy and ash-grey. The prominent white side panels on the tail and wings were gone. Viewing the male from the rear. the distinctive white hour-glass pattern (Pizzey 1988) was not visible. There were some small white feathers emerging on the sides of the wings.

On 27 March a male had new plumage which was clear white and soot black. On 20 May the head was black and velvety. Differences between the mature and immature (10 months) males were evident on 7 August. The immature male did not have as much white on the secondary coverts and its wings were dark brown, not black.

On 20 January 1989. at Castle Hill. north of Tharwa, a female had no white on its wing panel and I initially thought it was a Jacky Winter *Microeca leucophaea as* it had a similar grey-brown back and whitish underparts. However, there was no whitish eyebrow or black line through the eye which eliminated it from being that species. On 16 April 1990, at Enchanted Hill a female had fresh, new plumage but no white panel on the tail. The white feathers on the side of the wing had not completely regrown.

On 28 October 1990, in Site A, a new juvenile was seen for the second time. It was out of the nest and flying confidently. It had dark grey speckling and was about three weeks old. On 4 November it had grown larger and its front had become a pale grey. The remaining areas were changing to a blurred, brownish colour.

These observations on moult were not the main focus of the study and much more work needs to be done on the subject of moult in the Hooded Robin.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to the Canberra Ornithologists Group for the provision of a COG Research Grant to buy some equipment used in this study.

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Appendix. Dates of visits and number of Hooded Robins seen at each site.

Date	Site A	Site B	Comments
27. 3.90	2	nv*	Site A: male and female
8. 4 90	0	0	
16. 4.90	nv	2	
13. 5.90	nv	1	
20. 5.90	nv	3	
3. 6.90	nv	3	
17. 6.90	nv	4	Site B: adult male and female, and 8 month immature male and female
26. 6.90	nv	3	
30. 6.90	1	0	
3. 7.90	2	3	
14. 7.90	2	3	
29. 7.90	2	3	
7. 8.90	2	4	Site B: adult male and immature male defend site against Eastern Yellow Robin
12. 8.90	1	2	
16. 9.90	nv	1	
22. 9.90	nv	4	
25. 9.90	2	nv	
27.10.90	3	nv	Site A: adults and *c.* 3 week juvenile
28.10.90	3	4	Site B: adults and 12 month immatures defend nest
3.11.90	nv	1	
4.11.90	2	2	Site A: female nest building
7.11.90	2	3	Site A: juvenile not seen again
8.11.90	nv	3	
11.11.90	2	3	
14.11.90	1	nv	Site A: female incubating
22.11.90	1	nv	Site A: female incubating
5.12.90	0	nv	Site A: eggs gone from nest
1. 1.91	nv	3	Site B: adults with one 3 week juvenile

* = not visited

OUT AND ABOUT

G. Tibicen

The views expressed in "Out and About" do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

This month I am going to do something different by giving my column over entirely to an article which was first produced in *British Birds* in 1975 and reprinted in *Canberra Bird Notes* in April 1976. Although the article was written nearly 20 years ago, I feel the sentiments expressed by Colin Bibby still hold equally true today in Australia. It is a subject we should all spare a few minutes to think about.

At the time he wrote the article, Colin Bibby was studying the Dartford Warbler for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and described himself as an amateur birdwatcher by inclination and an ornithologist by profession. The article was re-printed with the permission of Macmillan Journals Ltd., the publishers of *British Birds*.

WHO TOOK THE BIRDS OUT OF BRITISH ORNITHOLOGY?

CJ. Bibby

Where has the love of birds among ornithologists gone? The huge and admirable growth of serious ornithology in Britain in recent years seems to have reduced the true amateur to near extinction. Does the corps of amateur and professional ornithologists enjoy birds and take simple delight in being in their presence and in the wild places they inhabit? Often I doubt it. With so much time spent counting, identifying, or investigating the moult of the greater coverts, how indeed does time remain for pleasure; but can study continue to be fruitful in the absence of pure delight in birds and the way they live? Undoubtedly there is now more ornithological talent in Britain than ever before, but much of it seems to be diverted to mindless pursuits or frustrated by professionalism in its worst sense.

How sad that the tick-hunting craze leaves no time to look at the birds, common and rare. because there is another to be collected on the other side of the country before the end of the weekend. How. I wonder, are such people not interested in the lives of common birds? Often. of course, the greatest enjoyment is personal. because it is a matter of skill and luck that brings one to see something fascinating in the intimate life of a bird and the view is a short-lived event never to be seen again. I recall watching a Woodchat Shrike dismembering a locust, taking each limb at a time and cleaning the muscle from the indigestible parts, cunningly using a thorn to help it. Nothing unusual

to a Woodchat, I'm sure, but what a privilege for a birdwatcher to see in detail. I was thrilled recently to watch a Willow Warbler catch a caterpillar before my eyes, because I saw the luckless insect before the bird did. Why, I wonder, do some of the most skilled identifiers of birds in the country prefer to flock like sheep to well-known areas. taking directions to the very bush to see other people's finds?

At least. with comparatively few exceptions. tick hunting is harmless. More worrying is the degree to which scientific claims are used to disguise confusion and as a result bring discredit to some areas of ornithology. For instance, how many ringers (maybe the most hard-bitten of all ornithologists) have time to think about the birds they are privileged to handle? Time to contemplate that the timid, slightly bedraggled Willow Warbler they ring will shortly flicker thousands of miles unaided to Africa. Time to pause and ask just what they are learning about the birds whose lives they disrupt. Happily, the technology of ringing is now so sophisticated and well controlled that ringers can be nothing but dedicated and skilled practitioners, but this does lead to the means becoming so engrossing as to obscure the end. In days past. the aims were simpler and research was directed by the observatories. Now, some ringing groups are able to harness and direct inquiring enthusiasm, but many individuals are left bewildered by a mixture of genuine complexity caused by increased knowledge and unnecessary obscurity in the name of science. Rare is the simple curiosity of Gilbert White tying a thread to a Swallow's leg to answer a specific question. Perhaps nowadays the simpler questions are answered, and more thought and cooperation are needed to make new discoveries.

I regret the passing of the days when most birdwatchers started their interest with a love of the countryside and nature's ways. Many probably started through egg collecting: what a pity that we are now so censorious of this pursuit among children. I remember sitting for hours with a field guide (a double-edged weapon indeed), peering at little brown birds and trying to identify them. What a lot is to be learnt about the birds themselves by this approach. Now, from the outset the eager birdwatcher has so many guides that they are an embarrassment, and increasingly they encourage a view that a bird can be summed up in a few lines of identification text - there is no time for the rest of its life, because there are so many species to be got through and so many field marks to be learnt. Surely it is possible to watch and enjoy the birds and incidentally, at the same time, to learn the finer points of identification, many of which are connected more with their character than with their plumage and coloration. Why, indeed. are we so anxious to encourage beginners in a belief that identification is a prime aim? Most people can appreciate a beautiful tree without asking what species it is. or see a finely sculptured landscape without knowing that it is a cretaceous chalk stratum capped with an angular flint gravel deposit. Why should not people enjoy the sight and sound of birds, pure and simple? An awareness of differences and thus of identification will develop at its own pace.

I am sure that I have been describing a recent phenomenon. Why, for instance is it now so difficult for an amateur to write a monograph on his bird? Why does so much currently published work on birds conform to a scientific mould which cramps divergence of thought or style? Will we again see men who can combine scholarship in

ornithology with an ability to communicate their enthusiasm? I suspect that present attitudes probably dictate the least healthy answers to such questions. I am sure, for instance. that the old-time collectors now described in derogatory terms knew far more of the lives and habits of their quarry than do their modem counterparts. I know countrymen and farmers who have probably never seen a Peterson field guide, nor read *British Birds,* but who have a deep feeling and understanding of the ways of birds. Sometimes their ideas deviate from accepted scientific wisdom: and here is the centre of the matter, because it is the interested scientific and professional nature of ornithology that has forced a rift between the birds and their admirers. While there are notable exceptions, such as the BTO-IWC Atlas project, it seems as if professional ornithology is increasingly antagonistic to the amateur, which in turn has altered the outlook of many amateurs led to believe that a scientific approach is essential. Surely there is no reason to scorn birdwatchers who delight simply in seeing birds with no other pretensions.

I am sure that a generation a birdwatchers endowed with a simple interest in birds and a delight in their place in nature would produce a healthier ornithological movement in Britain. To many ornithologists today, I can only say keep your eyes and ears open because real appreciation of wildlife cannot be switched on and off: it is an attitude of mind, an awareness .of the natural scene around you. Next time you leave a theatre (or pub) at night, lend your ear a minute to listen for any migrants passing overhead. Next time a flock of Lapwings flies past, ignore their state of moult, the adult/juvenile ratio and the direction of flight, don't count them, just watch and listen to one of our most beautiful birds. By such an approach, the natural ornithologist will find himself asking and then devising ways to answer his own questions, and all will realise that birds are wonderful creatures.

Finally, if you find the periodical literature designed for amateurs unreadable, don't despair and certainly don't be ashamed. Why not write to the editors to ask who took the birds out of British ornithology?

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HELP WANTED

From time to time we need people to assist with the entering of records from our various projects into the COG Database. If you have a personal computer that nuts on a DOS operating system and would like to assist please contact Malcolm Fyfe
Ph. 254 3310. We will provide the necessary input program and data sheets.

Many thanks,
Projects Subcommittee

REVIEW

Addicted To Birds by Annie Rogers. (1992). Published by Annie Rogers. 340 Ninks Road, St Andrews, Vic 3761. $25 (plus $3 for packing and postage). Available from the publisher.

The addict has a double compulsion, that of the area of interest, and that of the compelling need to convert others to their addiction. *Addicted to Birds* shares both of these compulsions.

Annie Rogers relates how she became a bird watcher and subsequently a bird bander. She tells how she, her husband Ken and son Danny have converted others, whilst they produced and published, *Bander' s Aid: a Guide to Ageing and Sexing Bush Birds,* a guide for bird banders in Australia.

The Rogers family had the opportunity to bird watch and to band birds for several years in three disparate areas; Iran, Korea and Australia. Rogers takes us along bumpy roads, through mud and into cold waters in all three countries. We get a rare glimpse into Iran, and the collection of Iranian bird migration records. We empathize with their attempts to watch birds in Korea under restrictions on travel and communications.

The majority of the book deals with their Australian experience. In 1982 they joined the Australasian Wader Studies Group expedition to north west Australia to band waders at Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach. Their travelogue from coast to coast via the red heart is vivid. The excitement and huge physical effort of the wader project was clearly rewarding.

From the Melbourne area during the 1980s the Rogers set forth to learn about Australian birds and to help band them. They helped with banding in a variety of projects and habitats before her husband Ken became an "A" class bander, and began to collect information about bush birds.

While packed with information, this book is hard for a general audience because of its difficult writing style.

There are almost as many people as birds banded in this work. I wish there were an index in the front to the many characters so that the reader could try to keep them clearly distinguished. The more one learns about one's environment, the more one wishes to conserve and preserve that environment. *Addicted to Birds* is testament to the contribution bird banders make to preservation and protection of avian habitats.

Carolina H. Lane

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

SOME COMMENTS ON THE ATLAS BY AN EARLY CANBERRA BIRD-WATCHER

23 May 1993

My first impression of the Atlas is its most attractive appearance and format. It would be very expensive to produce such a volume here in the USA. After reading too many "scientific papers" it was delightful not to have to face a lot of mathematical formulas which I do not understand. The charts and maps at the sides provide an immediate picture of the bird's position in the ACT. Also the indication of where and when to look for it (the "hotspot") is an excellent feature as are the suggested locations in the introduction. A newcomer to the ACT will find it easy to discover where to go and what to see. In my day we had to discover all this by ourselves. The maps show the entire ACT is covered, a far cry from the few randomly chosen localities we used. Some of the latter, of course, are now swallowed up by urban development. One huge change since my early days in Canberra, before Lake Burley Griffin existed, is the number of species of waterbirds. I was pleased to find that New Chums Road, which John Calaby and I "discovered" many years ago, still rates the occasional reference. The Wilson family and I added many species to the ACT list at that locale.

I have only one minor criticism. As I read through, I was surprised to find no page on the Pink Robin. Only later did I discover it at the end under "minor species". Perhaps a lack of information prevented these species from being listed with the others. On the whole, a brilliant piece of work.

Don Lamm

(Don Lamm lived in Canberra for two periods, each of four years, while attached to the American Embassy, first in the late 1940s and again in the early 1960s. He was a foundation member of the ACT Branch of the RAOU (the forerunner of COG). Don retired from the diplomatic service in 1964 and since then has lived in southern Arizona. He has written four papers about the birds of Canberra and district: Lamm, D.W., and Calaby. J.H. (1950) "Seasonal variation of bird populations along the Murrumbidgee in the Australian Capital Territory" *Emu* 50: 114-122; Lamm, D.W., and White, D. (1950) "The changing status of avifauna in the Australian Capital Territory" *Emu* 50: 199-204; Lamm, D.W., Wilson, S.J., and Belton, W. (1963) "New information on birds of the Australian Capital Territory" *Emu* 63: 57-65; Lamm, D.W., and Wilson, S.J. (1966) "Seasonal fluctuations of birds in the Brindibella Range, Australian Capital Territory" *Emu* 65: 183-207. eds.)

RARITIES PANEL NEWS

A short list this time. The most interesting reports are of the Chestnut-rumped Hylacolas *Sericornis pyrrhopygius* from Mt Rob Roy and Mt Majura. This species is rarely reported from our area, particularly so close to Canberra. Also of interest is the Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis* in Curtin, and the report of a Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* at Acacia Inlet in December 1990 - the last report of this species, also from Acacia Inlet, was in December 1988.

Again there is a dearth of records of Little Corellas *Cacatua sanguinea*. The only sighting is of one at Fisher. The numbers of these birds being reported from Canberra have declined sharply. Is this a reflection of their present status in Canberra or are they not being reported? Please report all sightings of this bird.

It is worth noting the continued presence of Red-capped Robins *Petroica goodenovii* near Macgregor (see also Endorsed List No. 35).

RARITIES PANEL ENDORSED LIST NO 36

Category 3

Intermediate Egret
1; 4 Apr 93; J. Bissett; NW corner Jerrabomberra Wetlands

Little Bittern
1; 14 & 15 Dec 90; G. Duggan; Acacia Inlet

Blue-billed Duck
1; 8 Feb 93; G. Hunter; Rose Lagoon

Whistling Kite
1; 1 Apr 93; J. Bissett; SW corner Lake George
1; 9 Apr 93; M. Fyfe; Grid J6, 4 km E Murrumbateman

White-bellied Sea-Eagle
1; 26 Apr 93; near "Douglas", Lake Road, Lake George

Glossy Black-Cockatoo
6; 18 Jun 92; Grid M13, NE slopes, Mt. Ainslie

Little Corella
1; 13 Apr 93; J. Bissett; Hamersley Place, Fisher

Superb Parrot
1; 9 & 13 Apr 93; J. Bissett; S slopes, Mt Arawang, Kambah

Red-capped Robin
4; 20 Feb 93 onwards; J. Price; near old Charnwood Road.
W of Macgregor

Black-faced Monarch
1; 22 Mar 93; J. Avery; James Street, Curtin

Chestnut-rumped Hylacola
1; 19 Jan 93; R. Rehwinkel; NE slopes, Mt Rob Roy
2; 19 Feb 93; P. Whittington; Casuarina Trail. Mt. Majura

Escapees

Port Lincoln Ringneck
2; 28 Feb 93; M. Fyfe; Kirby Place, Oxley

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ODD OB

EASTERN YELLOW ROBINS AND OTHER BIRDS HARASS SOUTHERN BOOBOOK

On 15 April 1993 I was returning from a walk along the Murrumbidgee River near the Tuggeranong Town Centre, when I was drawn to a commotion at the edge of the Pine Island reserve. At 1203 hrs I observed three Eastern Yellow Robins *Eopsaltria australis* calling. At 1205 hrs I discovered the source of their attention was a Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae* perched motionless in a thick clump of pine needles on a branch of a Monterey Pine *Pinus radiata* about 1 m above the ground.

The robins maintained a constant chatter while moving within 5 m of the owl. At times one of the robins would land in the clump near the owl. At 1210 hrs the owl flew 15 m south and perched 10 m up in another Monterey Pine. The vocal barrage continued and the three robins were joined by six Grey Fantails *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. They moved about but were much less vocal. At 1217 hrs a White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis* investigated the owl. It moved close to it calling, and then flew off. By 1220 hrs all of the harassers had moved away, leaving the owl in peace.

William S. Graham, 63 May Maxwell Crescent, GILMORE ACT 2905

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(Continued from inside front cover)

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Canberra Bird Notes is published quarterly by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. Contributions are welcome. These should fit into one of the following categories: major articles (up to about 3000 words); short notes and "Odd Obs" (up to about 300 words); reviews of books and articles (up to about 500 words); and where to watch birds (up to about 800 words). The articles and notes should cover matters of the distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds occurring in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding area (i.e. New South Wales coast north to Jervis Bay, and west to the Riverina). Contributions can be sent to the editors c/o David Purchase. 5 Orchard Place, Melba, ACT 2615 (Tel 258 2252).

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