



# *Wildlife Preservation Society of Caboolture Shire Inc*

NEWSLETTER NO. 203 – JULY 2007

**JULY**



Leadbeater Possum

## ALONG THE TRACK.....

As I pen this at our outside table I'm looking at a most unusual spider. Although it builds a web it does not use it to catch its prey, just for hanging around in. I expect at night this arachnid makes a sticky net which it holds between its two front legs and 'casts' it over its prey. You will not be surprised to hear that it is called the 'Net-casting' Spider.

We have been having some little visitors of late and when I say 'little' I mean little! They trundle into the house, probably at night, and perish. We just vacuum or sweep them up the next morning. Our suicidal intruders, only 7mm in length, are land hoppers. Often mistaken for insects the amphipods are abundant in damp areas of your garden, breaking down compost. If you have ever turned over a clump of damp seaweed on the beach you have probably met the sand hopper – a sandpiper's (especially Turnstones) delight. Food on the hop as our land hoppers are to sundry terrestrial species from Lyrebirds and Brush Turkeys downwards. Supposedly the dry conditions in the garden have activated these little land hoppers to seek damper areas. The ones that wander into houses are soon desiccated and those that fall into water, for example swimming pools, are over hydrated.

Australia has a number of native bees and most are stingless. One that we have noted around our unit is the Blue-banded Bee. These are usually solitary animals but will nest in groups but not extensive colonies as does the introduced European Honey Bee. A burrow is excavated in sheltered situations such as creek banks and planter boxes.

What piqued our interest in this species is that the males have a most unusual roosting habit. Using their mouth parts, groups of males clamp onto twigs and grass stems overnight. In our case, up to a dozen have clumped together on a stem of one of our pot plants. So while the girls are safe and warm in the burrow, the boys just hang out.

One of our residents has a small earthenware bell hanging from her back verandah, a memento from one of her Central Australian trips. Small insectivorous bats are using it as a roost during the day. It is usually very difficult to identify the species of these microbats but someone has informed Jan that they may be the Common Bentwing Bat which can pack tightly – up to 1500 per square metre – on ceilings of caves. At least three cram themselves into this mini-cave.

Thank goodness these little gluttons can eat their own body weight in mosquitos in a night, otherwise we just think of it.

More details of all the above animals may be gleaned from the latest edition of the Queensland Museum's publication "Wildlife of Greater Brisbane" – a vast improvement on its earlier edition. Our branch has them for sale. Indispensable.

*"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot".*

.... Aldo Leopold. US Conservationist 1887-1948.

Till next time..... John E Noyce



TRY SURFING THESE RAPTOR WEBSITES!

[www.qm.qld.gov.au/inquiry/2006/qm\\_wildlife\\_workshops\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/inquiry/2006/qm_wildlife_workshops_brochure.pdf)

[www.australiazoo.com.au/our-animals/amazing-animals/birds/?bird=raptors](http://www.australiazoo.com.au/our-animals/amazing-animals/birds/?bird=raptors)

[www.ausraptor.org.au/](http://www.ausraptor.org.au/)

[www.birdsaustralia.com.au/infosheets/info2.html](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/infosheets/info2.html)

[www.raptor.org.au/species.html](http://www.raptor.org.au/species.html)

and don't forget Frodocam

[www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/frodocam/default.htm](http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/frodocam/default.htm)

*Have fun! ...K Brooks*

# CABBOS CORNER



I just have to share this little epistle with you. It is by Virginia Jealous and it was found in "The Australian".

"Imagine a quest. There's a goal, of course, and set in unknown country there will be a lake or a forest with unfamiliar pathways, strangers who may or may not be friendly, suspicious locals, surprising encounters and the possibility of love. Sometimes you find what you're looking for; sometimes the pursuit itself is enough. It's a notion of travel that birdwatchers know well.

Welcome solitude and occasional loneliness accompany solo travel. Binoculars and a bird book are the perfect travel companions, and birding a perfect travel activity, completely portable as birds will (almost always) be where you are if you look

for them. So you can be alone but not alone and be purposeful in places where it's regarded as unusual to be alone.

But it's not just the birds; what happens also is the great generosity and absolute selfishness that this most trivial-seeming activity can bring out in people. In Costa Rica (goal: Resplendent Quetzal), a man describes a Hummingbird in exquisite detail to his blind companion while drawing with his fingers its size and shape on the back of her hand.

Alternatively, birders at an observatory can hog a telescope and, with it, probably the only chance to see a wind-blown visiting migrant, while others peer hopefully through scratched and mildewed binoculars (yes, there is a hint of bitterness here, birding grudges persist).



Birding separates from routine and connects to the here and now in a way that is absolute. A community of birders transcends conventional social groupings to become something unique.

Disparate birding acquaintances at Broome (goal: Spotted Redshank and/or the recognition of almost any wader out of breeding plumage) include doctors, bikers, graffiti artists, scientists, nerdy and not-so-nerdy teenagers and more. But birders rarely talk about what they do outside the binocular-framed moment; it's an opportunity to be entirely in the present and to have a completely common purpose with the people around you.

A specifically focussed zone opens up, a space where it's permissible to sit for hours watching, say, almost identical little brown birds until subtle differences in detail reveal themselves.

After sitting for a while, small picture gives way to big picture.



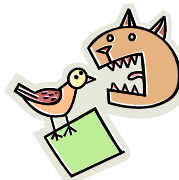
## RAPTOR I.D.

Along with waders and little brown bush birds, diurnal birds of prey can be very hard to identify. One reason for this is that as well as the immature birds moulting through a number of plumage phases before acquiring adulthood, some species also have dark and light morphs. To help you with this problem I would recommend you sign up for the coming Raptor Identification Workshop. We are fortunate to have been able to acquire the services of one of the most experienced researchers in this field, Greg Czechura. Go for it! ..... John E Noyce

Bird melds into flower or tree or fence post in the landscape and sweat runs down the neck under a humid sky or there's a stiffness of frost-cold fingers on binoculars; the view opens wider and higher in the open air with its smells and noises of other creatures moving in the bush. That's all there is and it's everything.

It's difficult to hold on to that feeling as it fades around the peopled world. For now the domestic pleasures of backyard birding (goal: protect nesting Willie Wagtails from neighbour's cat) will have to do".

Good (reminiscence) birding....  
.... John E Noyce



# REPORT

## CABBOS EXTENDED OUTING

Monday 28 May to Friday 1 June 2007

### TENTERFIELD



To say that Peter Sommerlad showed us a few birds in Tenterfield would be a gross understatement. This gentle man did us proud. As well as giving us his precious time for the whole three days he went out of his way to ensure we visited as many different environments as possible.

We stayed in the Tenterfield Lodge Caravan Park, seven in cabins, four in caravans and one in the lodge itself. Most had arrived by five when we had our first (and only) happy hour. Peter arrived and gave us a sketch of what he had planned for us. This meant an early get-up the next morning so it was back to our domiciles for a pre-cooked meal and an early shut-eye. New member, David, arrived during tea and was duly welcomed and accommodated in that order.

Tuesday 29 May dawned dull, overcast with the threat of showers. On the way to Bald Rock NP we stopped at the Old Boono Boono (pronounced 'Bunna Bunnoo' – an Aboriginal term for 'big rocks') Post Office, now a private residence, to pick up Peter's friend Geoff Robertson. It was very showery at Bald Rock and birds were scarce. Some saw the Red-browed Treecreeper but all had good, nay, excellent views of a male and female/immature male Scarlet Robin. Just as I remember them from my first sighting at Katoomba in April 1972. Cool, damp and dull conditions enlivened by this indescribable scarlet entity. It was then on to Geoff's property 'Currawong'. While he was boiling the billy for us we spied a few species but they were hard work. We then visited a neighbour's property with more grassland. Picked up a New-holland Honeyeater there. We finished the day back at the Old Boono Boono Post Office. Had another two Scarlet Robins (same two?) and not much else. Our guides were extremely disappointed about the lack of birds but Peter, "The bird-God giveth and the bird-God taketh away". There's always Manana. That night we dined at the Golf Club. Bonza grub. Total of species for the day was 56.

Tuesday was another “full on” birding day but seeing as Peter was taking us to areas close to town we were able to kip for another half-hour. We started at a private property off Derby Street (opposite “Tenterfield Park”). The weather had improved and so did the birding. Little birds everywhere most notable being a pair of Mistletoebirds, Weebill and Yellow, Striated and Brown Thornbill. We arrived at the town water supply under showery conditions and availed ourselves of the shelter where we birded in reasonable comfort. Along with a veritable raft (make that “ocean liner”) of Eurasian Coot we had Great, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Pacific Black Duck and Hardheads. A couple of Darters looked huge against the Australasian Grebe. Oh, and there were Black Swans. During the whole trip we did not record one Egret species. On the way up to Mt McKenzie Lookout the cloud enveloped us but still the people in the lead car had a Superb Lyrebird (striking male) beside the road. By the time the rest of us arrived he had melted into the environment. The view was non-existent at the lookout with very few birds. Don had a fleeting view of “something” before the cloud obscured it again. Just like “Brigadoon”. After the lookout we wended our way back to town via Kildare and Sunnyside Loop Roads, passing notable features like Draining Rock, Small Bald Rock and The Doctor’s Nose. Had great views of Wedge-tailed Eagles (2) in a tree prior to them taking wing. Brown Falcon turned up. After lunch we travelled to a travelling stock route area off the New England Highway. Most obvious species here was the White-eared Honeyeater. It was then back to town to “Tenterfield Park”.

Peter and his brother John have spent many hours in helping to revegetate this reserve and it’s paying off with the number of species coming back. We had our only Rufous Whistler here along with others. We were introduced to John and the duo showed us around. Most of us had meagre fare this night as we had had a chicken lunch in town. Total of 65 for the day.

The next morning it was another early start with John joining us for the day. The sun came out and our spirits were up. We drove to Tenterfield Creek and at a causeway we had the best birding for the trip. White-plumed Honeyeaters were all along the creek with Spiny-cheeked and Striped Honeyeaters popping up now and then. Speckled Warblers were in the shrubbery with Red-browed Finches and White-browed Scrubwrens. Near a grid into a property we watched in awe as

a lone male Diamond Firetail hopped from the ground to the lower rung of the fence feeding on grass seed. We were extremely fortunate with this species as this was the only bird we saw. What a little gem. Australian Ravens were heard and eagle-eyed Don and Peter spied a pair of Turquoise Parrots feeding on the ground in paddock. They took off but soon returned, the feed must be very good there, to sit in a tree in the creek before returning to the ground. The yellow belly of the male really stood out when perched. Above the bank was a large gum with dead branches and bark laying under it. Two Brown Treecreepers never left this area under the tree during our sojourn there. During morning tea John, who has worked for the NSW National Parks, regaled us with tales of the indigenous people who lived in the area. John had undertaken a lot of work in his early years recording the stories and songs of these people.

Our last area for the trip was an idyllic spot on the Mole River with a resident Azure Kingfisher streaking up and down. This was the property of Lyn Lacey and Beatrix Lindlar. These ladies welcomed us onto their property and presented a copy of their brand new publication "Native Plants of the North West Slopes of NSW (Tap Rock Country)" to Peter. A most informative book, illustrated profusely. It may be obtained from Lyn and Beatrix for \$36 plus postage (67375477). 20% of all sales will go to Landcare. White-backed Swallows flew around for a while before disappearing. They have nested in the river bank. While looking at the Jacky Winters, Red-browed and Double-barred Finches we were drawn to a large flock of drab-looking birds feeding amid the grasses. They turned out to be Plum-headed Finches and with a number of coloured males in the flock we were able, as the light hit their crowns, to note the very subtle colouring.

The Hooded Robin, which seems to be disappearing over much of its range, was not seen. Back at camp we dined at the Bowls Club. Very exceptional grub. Total for the day – 66.

Peter was unable to dine with us so we did our thank you at the end of the day. He exceeded all our expectations. Thanks Peter and John.

During our stay in the caravan park we had King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas and that most iconic of Australian parrots, the Eastern Rosella, at all times. We were shown two Tawny Frogmouths roosting in a tree when we arrived and they were still there on the morning we

left. But these wise birds had moved, on that last morning, to a deciduous poplar so as to receive the full amount of heat from the sun. For you see, it was minus 3 degrees on Friday morning.

Of the mammals, we recorded four species of macropod, Red-necked and Black-tailed Wallabies, Eastern Grey Kangaroo and Wallaroos. Lucky Don and Del had a Spotted-tailed Quoll sauntering down the road towards them during a trip to Mt McKenzie prior to our arrival. Our total bird count for the trip was 100.

And just in closing. Here on the coast we only see immature and non-breeding Straw-necked Ibis. On the Mole River I saw one in breeding plumage. The iridescence on its mantle shone like bronze, its “straw” was bright yellow and prolific and its legs a most striking shade of pink. Just one of my memories of this trip.

My thanks to all participants, especially the ones who drove their 4WD during Tuesday and Thursday. A trip to savour.

..... John E Noyce

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## **CABBOS OUTING**

**Wed 18 July 2007**  
**Sheepstation Creek**  
**and Rocksberg**



Sheepstation  
Creek  
Conservation  
Park (Area R in  
our book) is 231  
hectares of open  
eucalypt forest  
to the south-

west of Caboolture township. This is the largest conservation park in Caboolture Shire, on the mainland. I started surveying this park in 1983 when it was buffered from suburbia by pine forests. It is now a most

important “island” of natural habitat in a sea of subdivision. 125 species recorded.

Afterwards we will move onto Rocksberg, at the end of Caboolture River Road and have our morning tea on the banks of the Caboolture River (North Branch).

Meet at the end of Phelps Road (UBD 46 N20) at 8am.

Bring morning tea, table and/or chairs, slip, slop, slap and insect repellent.

Directions: Take Caboolture River Road from Morayfield (UBD 57 Q10). Travel 8km and turn left into Phelps Road. 0.5km brings you to the entrance.

..... John E Noyce

# SNAILS: WHERE BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

(Part 2) By Steve Van Dyck (*Reprinted from "Nature Australia"*).

*We thank Steve for his permission to reprint these articles.*

The sensory information exchanged between the wonder-wart and the titillating tentacles quickly separates the men from the boys and the right species from the wrong; and if that information isn't entirely up to scratch, each snail does an abrupt about-face, puts its trail between its leg and goes on its phlegmatic way. However, if the data from both headwatts jell, and if the sluggish pace hasn't sent them both into a coma, then the two rise up in a slimy double slap-and-tickle that, for snails, is poetry in slow motion.

Sadly, it has been about eight years since we last had regular visits from Fraser's Land Snails, and coincidentally their disappearance marked the time when we hung up our gumboots because summer wet seasons in south-eastern Queensland began to consistently fail. The connection appeared less coincidental when it was pointed out that, on a much broader scale, the presence and absence of certain snails (including fossils) in particular habitats has long been used as a biological indicator of a wide range of local environmental conditions from moisture and pollution to changes of calcium carbonate in the soil. From analyses of the assemblages of snail species in excavations, archaeologists have good indications that farming in the British Isles began about 4,000 BC.

To many though, the attraction of gastropods is purely gastronomic. The Romans used to cultivate snails (being high in protein and containing mineral salts and vitamin C) as a nourishing food for the poor. Today, snail-raising is a multi-million-dollar industry in Europe. If we Aussies would only gobble as many introduced Brown Garden Snails as we annually try to poison....the trouble is they do have an image problem. Those long eye-stalks are a bit of a worry, not to mention all that foaming and hissing they do when you are trying to kill them. And there are those long strings of something that float in the saucepan too, and often something gritty in the chewing. But there is a hidden agenda that keeps me eating one escargot meal after the other...the titillating prospect of getting a flight of those love-darts stuck somewhere in my internal anatomy during the digestive process. Perhaps that is why the French are renown for being more than just great snail lovers.

## Brown Garden Snail

*Helix aspersa*



**CLASSIFICATION:** Class Gastropoda (snails, whelks), subclass Pulmonata (lung-bearers), family Helicidae.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Grey body, brown to yellowish shell with dark brown spiral banding and rough growth ridges. Shell up to 40mm across.

**DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT:** Introduced to Australia in the early 1800s from western Europe. Now Australia-wide and worldwide in warm temperate zones.

**FOOD:** Lettuce leaves, cabbage, porridge, milky bread, carrots, marigolds etc.

**LIFE CYCLE:** Hermaphroditic (both male and female reproductive organs in each animal). Mate for 2-3 hours, 40-100 eggs laid 1.5-2 weeks after mating. Eggs hatch 17-25 days later. Three to 10 batches laid per year. Live for approximately 4 years.

**GOOD POINTS:** Food for wide variety of mammals, birds and reptiles. Although an ointment of crushed snails was once used to treat human eczema, warts, corns, boils and tumours, today they are more usually just eaten (make sure you 'purge' them by feeding only corn meal and water for a week before cooking; that gets out the grit and strongly flavoured food in their guts).

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## TENTERFIELD JOEY'S TALE

A wallaby, frightened by bird-  
watchers  
jumped through a barbed-wire  
fence,  
but poor little Joey got caught by  
his tail  
and out of the pouch was  
wrenched.

His feeble cries were heard by the  
birdos,  
who found him hanging there  
upside down and trembling with  
fright,  
big eyes filled with despair.

Comforted in Helen's arms,  
he waited patiently  
while Heather removed those  
piercing spikes  
and so set him free.

They gently left him on the  
ground,  
but later, quietly came back,  
as 'Mother' was hopping away  
with Joey  
safe, we hope,  
in her sack..



....by Barbara Bailey, May 2007.

## MEMBERSHIP

Subscription rates, which are GST inclusive, are as follows:

Single	\$30
Family	\$45
Concession	\$20
Magazine Subscription within Australia	\$37
Magazine Subscription outside Australia (airmail) (no GST applies)	\$55

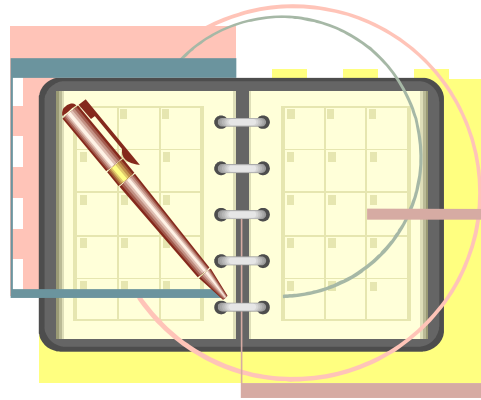
Membership renewal for members joining prior to 1999 is due on 1 January each year. Members joining later than January 1999, membership renewal is on the anniversary date of joining.

PLEASE NOTE:

Your subscription is due on  
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## DISCLAIMER....

The views expressed  
by contributors are  
not necessarily  
those of the society.



## COMING EVENTS.

**Saturday 14 July**

9.30am-12pm  
at CREEC



**RAPTOR ID**

*With Greg Czechura*

Phone CREEC 38888751 to book

**Saturday 1 September**

10am at CREEC

**ANNUAL**

**GENERAL MEETING**

*Helen Thomas will tell us about  
her travels to "the Kimberleys"*

**October (to be finalised)**

*Possible Frog Workshop*



**Saturday 3 November**

**Dragonfly I.D. Workshop**

*With Ric Natrass*



**Tues 4 December**

**End of Year Social**



## CONTACT DETAILS

President: Brian Rigden 38867400  
Vice President: Helen Thomas 38866132  
Secretary: Dianne Hytten 54985102  
Treasurer: Don Haupt 54968680

### MAIL ADDRESS:

Wildlife Preservation Society  
of Caboolture Shire Inc,  
PO Box 1415, CABOOLTURE Q 4510

## Wildlife Preservation

### Society of Caboolture Shire Inc

- Evening Meetings/Workshops held at CREEC (Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre), 150 Rowley Road, Burpengary,
- Daytime workshops/outings
- – various themes & venues
- Subgroup “Caboolture Bird Observers” CABBOS
- Tree plantings, day workshops, displays, guest speakers....

## COMING EVENT.....

### RAPTOR I.D.

**Saturday 14 July 2007 9.30am-12noon**  
**With Greg Czechura**



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