

LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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FEEDING HONEYEATERS

About three years ago we began trying to attract some of the small native birds to our garden.

The idea came from a small book "Australian Native Gardens and Birds" by Barbara Salter, a very useful and comprehensive publication. As we already had an odd honeyeater in the garden they seemed the logical ones to start with.

The first feeder was an open dish (the bottom of a plastic yoghurt container) in a wooden frame firmly wedged in a branch about 6ft. from the ground. This was discovered very quickly by white-eared honeyeaters, who have been regular visitors ever since.

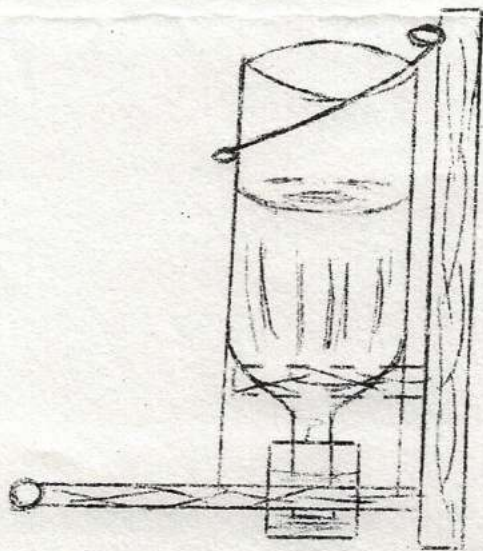
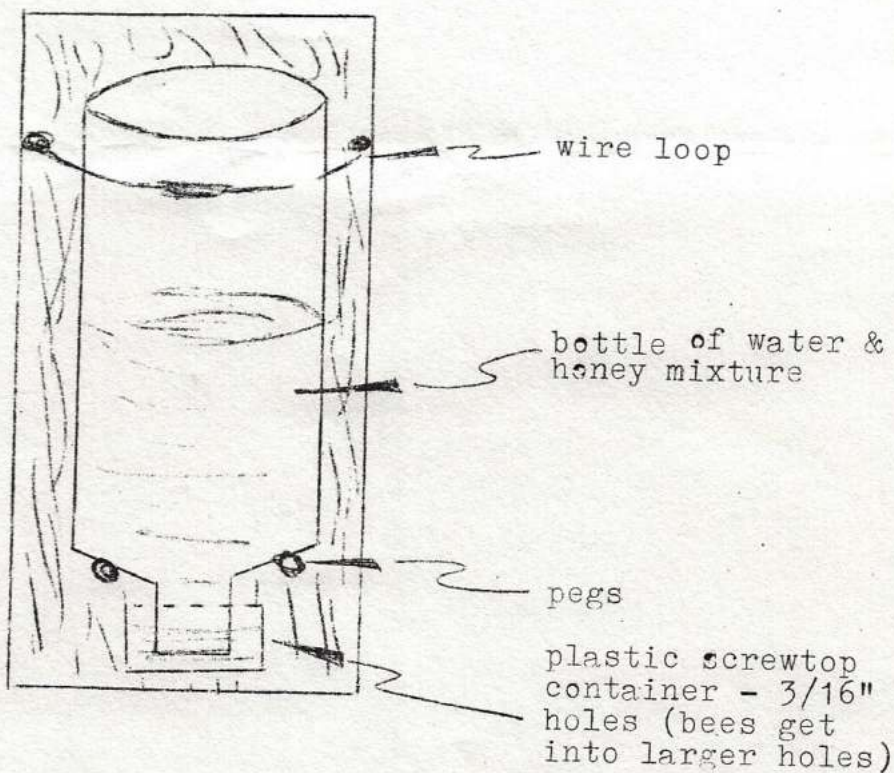
After a few weeks the ants and bees also found the dishes and became quite a problem, so it seemed time to change to the permanent bottle-type feeder. This consists of a bottle (straight-necked wine bottle is best) with a small plastic container fitted to the neck of the bottle. A hole is cut in the centre of the lid of the container so that it tightly fits on to the neck of the bottle. Some insulation tape wound round the neck just below it will stop it sliding down when the bottle is inverted. The bottle is then filled with water, the container screwed on and the bottle inverted. The water level in the container is marked and some 3/16" holes drilled about 1/4" above the water level. The next requirement is a method of suspending the feeder. We used a board about 4" wide and slightly larger than the bottle, with two pieces of dowel set in holes in the board about 1/3 way along from one end of the board. These are so placed that the neck of the bottle fits between them and the shoulders rest on them. A loop of wire attached to the other end of the board drops over the bottom of the bottle to hold it in place. More dowels fastened to the other end of the board make a perch for the birds. The whole thing can then be suspended (reasonably vertical or it may leak) in a convenient tree. There should be good cover close to the feeder and it should be fairly high off the ground, say 6-8'. Ants may be troublesome but can be prevented from getting at the honey mixture by smearing a ring of vaseline round the neck of the bottle.

The mixture we use is made up of 1 part honey with 3 parts water, but can be varied by using brown sugar in place of some of the honey. White sugar should never be given to birds as it lacks vitamin B₁ and may kill them.

Two of the new bottle feeders were installed near the house and were an instant success with the white-ears. Yellow-tufted honeyeaters were next to appear and they have remained almost as constant visitors. Yellow-faced honeyeaters are also constant, although less obvious, visitors, while in the summer months noisy friar birds make their presence obvious by attacking everything in

sight. However, they disappear in the winter, to be replaced by red wattle birds, which although larger are far less aggressive. Other visitors to the feeder have been Lewin honeyeaters (once or twice) and an occasional satin bower bird.

-Michael Dark



side view showing perch.

The Society was recently asked by the Senate Select Committee on Human Relationships if we would prepare a submission on the Woodchip industry. The summary of our submission was:

1. Forests are a scarce resource in N.S.W. and should be managed on a multiple use basis, that is, for:

- a) Production of timber and other wood materials
- b) Preservation of native flora & fauna and their habitats
- c) Public recreation
- d) Protection of water catchments and streams

Clear felling of large areas of forest is incompatible with the above.

2. Intensive forestry practices should not be carried out in areas desirable for the preservation of flora, fauna or other special features, whether such areas are currently preserved or not. Environmental impact statements should delineate all such areas.

3. Extensive clear felling of forests should not be carried out in areas of scenic, recreational or other tourist value. Adequate buffer and screening zones should be left.

4. Clear felling of large areas of forest and its transformation into monoculture plantations should not be carried out until the longer-term effects are known. This is particularly important in any area to be used for "perpetual" woodchip production. We suggest that any clear felling be limited to less than 1% of any designated area in one year.

5. Production of all materials from forests should be on a long-term sustained-yield basis, at a price which will enable this yield to be maintained, and any damage to the forest rectified, without Government subsidy.

Forests comprise about 6.8% of N.S.W. and should be treated as a scarce resource. They should be used for multiple purposes and not destroyed for one. Where clear felling is done overseas on a managed basis, a rotation cycle of 70 to 80 years is used. Since our forests take upwards of 100 years to mature, we recommend that less than 1% of any area be cleared in any one year. Much greater clearing rates are currently being used.

Among the features we noted as particularly requiring protection from intensive forestry practices were:

- a) Rainforest, which does not regenerate when cleared, and can even be destroyed by intensive logging.
- b) Rare forest species, or species not well represented in National parks
- c) Areas with particular features, of scenic value, and creeks & swamps

To reduce the risk of future problems such as pest or disease plagues we recommended that a variety of tree species be retained, rather than have vast plantations of the one tree type.

Forests have a major value for recreation. Surveys have shown that Australians use their forests for camping and hiking to a much smaller degree than do Americans. However, such usage is increasing here at about 10% a year, and it is highly likely that we will eventually approach the American figures for usage of forest lands. Cleared areas, forests of saplings or plantations of the one tree type are not of much recreational value.

A major problem is that intensive forestry such as for woodchipping could eventually deplete the soils of nutrients. Income received from the sale of chips or from royalties should pay for such long-term cost. There is some doubt that the royalties even pay the immediate costs. We could end up with most of our forests being cleared or irreversibly damaged at our expense. It is most important to discover any harmful effects before we lose what we have.

"The first rule of intelligent tampering is to save all the pieces"

-attributed to Aldo Leopold

Postage costs are taking a major part of our limited budget. To limit these costs we will in future be producing this newsletter bi-monthly but we will put more information in each issue.

AUSTRALIAN BIRDS- Migrants or Nomads? Text books often say that few Australian birds regularly migrate from one place to another - they are merely nomads, finding food where they can.

Mr. Henry Nix of CSIRO is not so sure. Using a computer model developed to predict the timing of plant growth over Australia, Mr. Nix simulated where a bird would go to obtain enough food to survive. He also checked the breeding times & seasonal movements of birds at 6 representative locations in Australia and 2 in New Guinea.

The results showed that at each location most species breed in the quarter of the year where plant growth is at a maximum. Analyses of plant growth timings at 500 locations suggest that bird movements would be confined within 4 distinct regions: (1) Eastern Australia, Tasmania & New Guinea, (2) NW Aust., West Irian, Timor, etc (3) SW Aust. (4) Central Aust.

Evidence is as yet sketchy for the whole of Australia, but his ideas do create a pattern in what was previously chaos.

COMING PROGRAMME

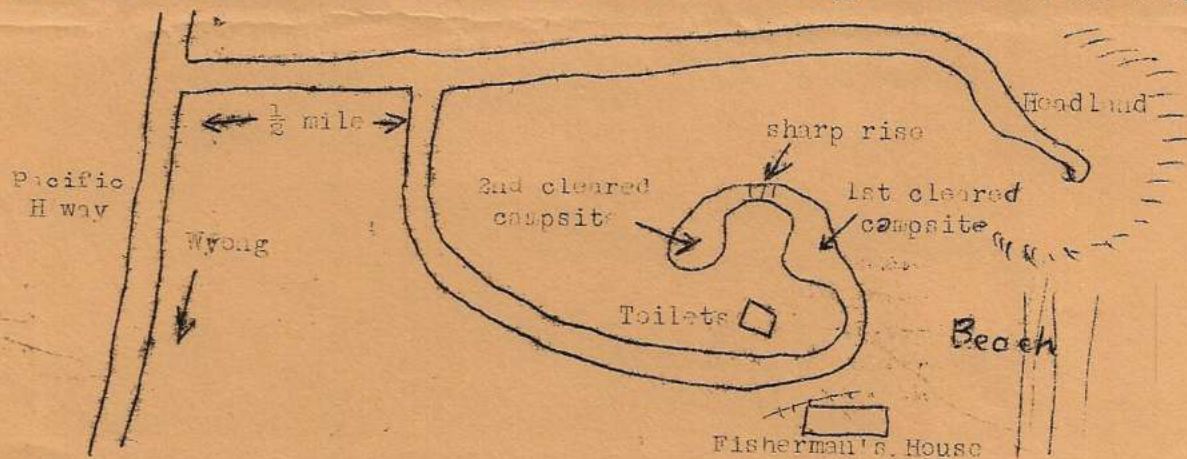
Fri. 11th July - Meeting, 8 p.m. Springwood Red Cross Hall. Showing slides from a recent trip by several members to Kangaroo Island in South Australia.

Sat. 2nd Aug) Weekend trip to Frazer Park, on the coast south of
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Sun 10th Aug.) Newcastle. The August meeting will be held at Frazer Park.

Sat. 6th Sept. - Field trip by car to study birdlife along the Hawkesbury Rd. from Whitecross Rd. to Yarramundi.

Fri. 12th Sept. - Meeting 8p.m. Springwood Red Cross Hall. A talk by Rev. Dr. Stockton on the Aboriginal history of N.S.W. and the Blue Mountains. This should be a most interesting and informative talk. Artefacts will be displayed.

Frazer Park excursion. This trip is to examine coastal sea caves and shoreline marine life, as well as heath wildflowers. Frazer Park is a Council-controlled reserve, the sign-posted turn off being about 16 miles north of Wyong. If possible we will camp at the second clearing, as shown on the map.



If the weather is doubtful, ring Bob Chapman (536107) or Dick Dark (391764) to confirm the trip.