



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

To encourage the observation and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area.

No. 419
September –
November 2012

Editorial

Paul Laurie

Hi to everyone. As a fairly new member, I was thrilled to be elected to the position of Co-editor of the TBO Newsletter. I hope Kylie and I can do the position justice and produce an informative and interesting publication. We look forward to including all your reports, articles, pictures etc.

The Cambooya Landcare Group has invited club members to conduct bird surveys on rural properties in the Cambooya area. We already have three landholders who are keen to have us visit and I am in the process of getting teams together to conduct the surveys. See the Coming Events column for dates and please contact me if you wish to participate. We may be able to add to TBOs Annual Bird Count which has already exceeded the 2011 tally with some excellent sightings.

Those Interested in BirdLife Australia's Challenge Bird Count 2012 may be able to combine the two activities as they are to be held at around the same dates. For more info on the BirdLife Australia event please contact Graeme Hosken on 03 9802 5250 or David Ap Thomas on 03 9787 6691.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mick Atzeni and Kylie Grose for the work they had done on the newsletter while we have been without an editor and for preparing most of the content of the current issue.

Embarrassment of Riches

Due to not having a newsletter over the last couple of months we have an overabundance of material backed up. Therefore we plan to produce a December Issue. Those whose articles etc don't appear in this issue will find it in the next one which it's hoped will be appearing in your e-mail or letterbox at about the middle of the month.

2012 Challenge

Tally: 238 spp as of 20/11



**TOOWOOMBA
BIRD OBSERVERS**

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350
www.toowoombabirdobservers.org
MEMBERSHIP: Adult/family \$ 45
Pensioner/student \$ 40

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Just a reminder: Subs are due

Adults: \$45.00

Families: \$45.00

Students: \$40.00

Concessions: \$40.00

Send payment to:

The Treasurer
Toowoomba Bird Observers
PO Box 4730
Toowoomba East 4350

Help Save the Places you Love
Graeme Hamilton – (Former) CEO Birdlife Australia

BirdLife Australia and an alliance of environmental organisations from across the country launched a national public campaign on the 14th August to protect our nation's environmental laws.

These laws protect the things we love: the places we love, the wildlife we love.

However, under pressure from big business and the mining industry, governments have announced an aggressive plan to wind back our environmental laws. In the guise of cutting 'green tape', government and industry propose to hand over to the states important federal approval powers and to fast track approvals for large developments. This will remove federal protection for our most special places and wildlife, and accelerate mining and other destructive development.

This is a critical moment in time. It is essential that the Prime Minister hears community support for the laws that protect the places we love.

We are asking supporters of environmental groups, and members of the public, all over Australia, to write to the PM and their Federal member of parliament.

This issue is so important that I'm taking the unprecedented step of encouraging you all to get involved. You may want to write a letter yourself. Feel free to include a picture of wildlife you love, and while you are at it post the photo at www.PlacesYouLove.org. If you use social media you can 'like' the campaign page on facebook, or tweet about it. If you have the energy, write a letter to the editor of a newspaper - national or local. We are asking people to make as much noise as possible. Samantha Vine, our Head of Conservation, has samples of letters and templates that may assist you to write to your local member, the PM and editors and can be reached on samantha.vine@birdlife.org.au

We are asking people to make as much noise as possible. The media thinks that everyday Australians don't care about environmental legislation, so let's demonstrate that lots of people actually do.

Please join us in taking action to protect the places we all love.

[You can obtain supplied postcards for this purpose from the TBO Secretary. Ed.]

Some species I'd hate to lose – Kylie Grose



Pacific Baza
Photo: Charles Dove



Scarlet Honey-eater
Photo: Kylie Grose



White-bellied Sea Eagle
Photo: Kylie Grose

President's Report

Good evening members and guests. Thanks for your attendance and it's my privilege to report on the events of the past year.

Committee matters

The year proved a very challenging one for running club affairs. We didn't have a president, some of the committee members ended up having far more important matters to attend to, and the loss of key members during the course of the year made it difficult to conduct business efficiently. The good news is we have weathered the storm - and still know how to smile.

So firstly, sincere thanks to Mike McGoldrick as our chairperson in the absence of a president - and vice-president following Sandra Wilson's health problems - and to the remaining executive for the calm considerate way they conducted duties under what proved difficult circumstances. Three much-loved committee members bowed out during the course of the year - Vice-President Sandra Wilson, Treasurer Jenny Matheson and Editor Steve Burke. We completely understand their respective decisions to do so and I wish to acknowledge their services to the club formally.

Sandra has been involved with the executive on and off over several years, both as Secretary and Vice-president. Living in Warwick, it was hard for her to attend mid-week meetings but she did so regularly and without complaint. Likewise for Jenny who has since moved to Launceston. Jenny did a tremendous job pulling the financial records into Excel Spreadsheet format. Steve has done the club proud as both President and Editor. How refreshing it was to have a relatively new member so willing to take on the roles everyone else shuns. And he performed both duties admirably. Thanks Sandra, Jenny and Steve. We wish you all the best and hope you continue to support the club. You're welcome back on the committee any time!

Mike McGoldrick presided over important committee discussions in the wake of the merger of Birds Australia and BOCA into BirdLife Australia. The merger necessitated TBO obtaining its own public liability insurance to cover club outings while we considered the pros and cons of becoming a branch of BirdLife Australia. (We were previously covered by BOCA's insurance as an affiliated club.). A general meeting was held for all members interested in finding out more about the options and implications of becoming Birdlife Toowoomba. Opinion remains divided as to what is best for our members. The decision is open for review but for now we will operate independently.

Thanks to Olive for her secretarial duties and to Kay and Olive for their stand-in treasurer duties. Thanks to Pat for attending to the records and to Ross, the voice of reason in all things. Ross is not standing for re-election this year so I take this opportunity to thank him too for all his efforts and we hope to see him back on board in future. Thanks to Steve for all the newsletters he did and to Kylie who has helped me produce the last two.

Outings & Events

We had outings to Prince Henry Heights, Coolmunda/Durikai, Lockyer wetlands, Highfields Falls, Toorbul & Mt Glorious. Most were well-attended. Three others were cancelled due to

wet weather. Thanks to Kay Williams our Outings Coordinator, our various leaders and all attendees.

The June raptor census was well-supported again and the walkie-talkies proved very handy for the Lockyer Valley team who saw a record 13 species during their survey including Osprey, Square-tailed Kite, Little Eagle and Black Falcon.

Thanks to those Club members who assisted with the bird walks and displays done in conjunction with Friends of Escarpment Parks (FEP), at Redwood Park (Kylie Grose, Olive Booth, Pat McConnell, Mike McGoldrick and myself) and Nielsen Park (Al Young, Olive Booth, Joe Allan and Paul Laurie), and at GardenFest (Kay and Kev Williams). Thanks to Hugh Krenske (Chair, FEP) for inviting us. My apologies to anyone I have forgotten.

Advertising

Thanks to Gayle Lee who has regularly provided copy to the local papers in the hope they may publish an article now and then. Unfortunately, it hasn't proved fruitful so Gayle has started working on a new strategy - advertising at local stores, etc, using laminated A4 brochures. The results remain to be seen. You can all help Gayle by distributing them.

Thanks to Judi Gray for setting up the TBO Facebook page and to Kylie Grose for updating it in our efforts to target a younger audience through social media.

Website

The website forum is our best resource for timely sharing of sightings and bird news with other members. We would love to see more participation; after all that's what TBO is all about. To that end, we have looked into upgrading the forum so that images and documents can also be posted. We have been given an evaluation copy which I will assess. I have also had discussions with Bill Jolly about setting up an online monthly checklist recording system.

New birds

It's extremely unusual to add a new bird to the official local list nowadays but it happened – a Striated Heron of all things was seen and photographed at “Abberton”, Helidon, by Bill Jolly. We have also had an unofficial report of a Brown Treecreeper at Rockmount, which we hope can be confirmed.

Records

Most of our historical records are still in hard-copy format (i.e. monthly checklists), so are not readily accessible. The committee has discussed extracting the records of the more relevant species from the historical data as a sensible starting point. In the next year we will be looking for volunteers to help get this data into a database for future reference.

October Species Census, Seasonal Species Surveys and the Annual Challenge

Thanks to all who contributed to these activities. For the Annual Challenge we have already exceeded the previous record of 228 species. The current tally is 231 and we hope to better this in the coming weeks, particularly with some water birds.

Finally, thanks to you, our loyal members for your newsletter contributions, support and patience during an exceptionally difficult year; to those non-members who regularly contribute to our forum; and to those who share and allow us to freely use their bird images and quote their sightings. We look forward to your ongoing involvement.

Michael Atzeni (Acting President)

Treasurer's Report

Toowoomba Bird Observers Incorporated Statement of Accounts At 31st August 2012

	Cheque Account	Online Saver Account	Total
Opening Balance	\$1,269.74	\$2,103.62	\$3,373.36
Receipts			
Subscriptions	\$1,018.00		\$1,018.00
Interest Rec'd	\$0.64	\$86.45	\$87.09
Total Receipts	\$1,018.64	\$86.45	\$1,105.09
Payments			
Printing Costs	\$387.25		\$387.25
Petty Cash	\$85.80		\$85.80
Web Costs	\$180.00		\$180.00
Hall Hire	\$70.00		\$70.00
Insurance	\$756.25		\$756.25
Miscellaneous	\$278.45		\$278.45
Total Payments	\$1,757.75		\$1,757.75
Closing Balance	\$530.63	\$2,190.07	\$2,720.70

Bank Reconciliation Statement

	Cheque Account	Online Saver Account
Balance as per Bank Statements	\$530.63	\$2,190.07
Plus Unrecorded Deposits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Less Unpresented Cheques	\$0.00	\$0.00
Balance as per Cashbooks	\$530.63	\$2,190.07

Olive Booth (Acting Treasurer)

Members' Bird Notes
By Pat McConnell

All sightings seen by, or reported to, members of the Toowoomba Bird Observers. Accuracy not vouched for by the TBO. Please check with observer before citing.

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Australasian Shoveler	1/10/2012	Hood's Dam, Helidon	MA
Striated Heron	1/10/2012	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ, MW
Nankeen Night Heron (7)	1/08/2012	Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat	NM
Eastern Osprey	5/09/2012	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ
Red-chested Button-Quail	7/10/2012	Penderests Rd, Murphy's Creek	MA, BH, PB
Painted Button-Quail	25/09/2012	Picnic Point, Toowoomba	MW
Whiskered Tern	1/10/2012	Hood's Dam, Helidon	MA
Red-winged Parrot	16/09/2012	Highfields	AB
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	7/09/2012	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ
Channel-billed Cuckoo	12/09/2012	Middle Ridge, Toowoomba	BL
Powerful Owl	24/09/2012	Table Top Estate	DG
Noisy Pitta	11/09/2012	Rockmount	MW
Yellow-throated Miner	1/09/2012	Kingsthorpe	PM, KO
Eastern Spinebill	13/09/2012	Middle Ridge, Toowoomba	BL
Spectacled Monarch	20/09/2012	Redwood Park, Toowoomba	BJ
Spangled Drongo	18/09/2012	Darling Heights	MW
White-winged Triller	15/09/2012	Darling Heights	MW
Rufous Songlark	11/08/2012	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ

MA, M. Atzeni; **PB**, P. Barratt; **BH**, B. Holmes; **AB**, A. Blokland; **DG**, D. Greenlees; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **BL**, B. Learmonth; **PM**, P. McConnell; **NM**, N. McKilligan; **KO**, K. O'Donnell; **MW**, M. Wood.

Anyone wishing to submit bird notes can do this directly to me at mccommel@usq.edu.au or via the Club's mailing address.

Members' Photo page

For all photographers - amateur, professional and anywhere in between - please send your photos in to be published in our monthly newsletter.



Red-rumped Parrot
Mt Annan, Narellan
09/2012
Photo: Charles Dove



Spotted Harrier
Carpendale, Lockyer
Valley, 1/9/12
Photo: Kylie Grose



Striated Pardalote
Kleinton (North of Tmba)
15/9/12
Photo: Judi Gray



Australian Painted Snipe, Lake Lenore, UQ Gatton. Photo: Bill Jolly

Photography Weekend
By Paul Laurie

On the weekend of 2-4 November (Friday evening included), several TBO members attended a Bird Photography weekend conducted by Tom Oliver of Birdlife Southern Queensland's photography department. Based at the Crows Nest Caravan Park, the weekend was attended by people from as far afield as Maryborough in Queensland and Gippsland in Victoria.

After a sausage sizzle on the Friday evening the group moved into the hall at the caravan park for a meet and greet and housekeeping. Saturday began with a bird walk at Bullocky's Rest from 7am. This provided a further opportunity for the participants to get to know each other, to compare equipment, to view some birds and get in some practice with their cameras. Interesting birds seen on the walk included a **White-throated Gerygone**, **Azure Kingfisher** and **Musk Lorikeet**.

Also of interest was the large number of birds' nests that were seen. These ranged from **Magpie Lark** and **Noisy Miner** nests at the car park, to Kookaburras and the **Musk Lorikeets** that kept some of the group waiting patiently for just the right shot. Patience was rewarded however, with one participant getting an excellent shot of the lorikeets leaving the nest and another getting one of the kookaburra bringing a centipede to its chicks. But for the writer, the most interesting nests were several belonging to **Noisy Friarbirds**. These are slightly weird-shaped constructions of dried leaves, often dangling from a very spindly branch. It gave us all a giggle to see mum incongruously perched on the nest with her tail sticking out one side and her head the other.

After the bird walk, the group broke up for lunch followed by a presentation on Digital Cameras and Bird Photography. This was followed by free time where some went for another bird walk while others relaxed around the park before dinner. At 7pm we assembled in the hall again for the next presentation, Photographing Small Birds.

Sunday started with another bird walk, this time at the Settling Ponds at the Crows Nest Waste Water Treatment Plant. Participants were keen to apply the lessons learned from Saturday's sessions, to try new settings and practice various techniques. **Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** and **Latham's Snipe** were seen. These were "lifers" for some participants as were the three mentioned from Saturday's walk. Sunday's presentations were entitled Photographing Birds in Low Light and Using a Fill Flash.

The weekend provided a very enjoyable experience. There were a couple of great characters in the group who could put a smile on everyone's face with a quip now and then. Tom Oliver's sessions were bright and wittily presented, drawing on his vast collection of bird photographs and his knowledge of both birds and photography. There was something for all in the weekend and this writer, for one has been able to produce some vastly improved shots over those he had before the course.

Thanks to everyone involved and especially Tom, his wife, Di and Grahame Rogers who handled some of the administrative tasks for a wonderful and very informative weekend.

Little Bronze-Cuckoo Field Characteristics
By Bill Jolly

Little Bronze-Cuckoos are calling in the garden every day lately. These photos were taken from the verandah, and the bird is a bit distant (which is just my way of explaining why they're not really sharp), but I'm including them because they show some of this bird's clearest field characteristics, including the red eye and rufous inner tail feathers. In particular, note the bold white eyebrow, a common feature of Little Bronze-Cuckoos, which isn't well illustrated in the Pizzey field guide, or mentioned in the text.



COMING CLUB EVENTS

November Outing

Sat 24 November

“Breakfast with the Birds”

Venue: West Creek Reserve, Lemway Ave, Kearney Springs, between Stenner & Spring Sts. BYO food and drinks.

Time: 7am

Cambooya Bird Surveys

Sun 25 November, Thur 29 November,

Mon 3 December, Sat 8 December

Venue: Various

Organiser: Paul Laurie 0417 676 722

January Outing

Sun 27 January 2013

Venue: Highfields Falls, Dau St Highfields

Organiser: TBA

Time: 6.30am

Committee Members

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Photo Librarian		
Committee Member	Joe Allen	

Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 15th December 2012

Please e-mail or post articles and photos to the Editor.

If undeliverable return to
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PO Box 4730, Toowoomba East Q 4350

Surface Mail