



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

No. 398  
September 2010

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

## Editorial

Steve Burke

Thanks to members contributing their sightings and stories, we again have another informative newsletter for you to enjoy.

Spring is here and after a funny winter with plenty of rainfall around the region it will be interesting to see what the returning Spring birds make of all the full dams and creeks.

I notice from personal observation and member reports on the Club website that species like Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Fantail, Sacred Kingfisher, Dollarbird, Common Koel and Channel-billed Cuckoo are back.

To me, the call of some of these birds is the sound of my early childhood. In my mind I have a memory of late afternoon summer storms, sticky heat, "storm birds" announcing an imminent weather change and Channel-billed Cuckoos squawking but unseen through the heat haze along the creek flats.

Then the storm arrived with great gusto and bravado, lightning and thunder and rain; lots of rain. There always seemed to be more rain in the storms back then.

After the storm, the Koel and the Channel-billed are quiet; and have been replaced by swallows and martins making the most of the cool breeze before sunset and the chance of a light supper before bed.

**The meeting point for the Sept outing has changed. (See page 6). Also, Mick Atzeni has FOLA 2011 calendars for sale for \$10 each. Profits will help ensure Lake Apex becomes increasingly bird(er)-friendly.**



Buff-banded Rail at West Ck.  
Photo: Steve Burke.

**2010 Challenge:**

**211 spp**

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## COMING EVENTS

**September Outing**  
**Sat/Sun 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Sept.**  
**Venue: Durikai Forest, Lake Coolmunda & more.**  
**Leader: K & K Williams**

**October Species Census**  
**Sat/Sun 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.**  
**Venue: Local Survey Area**  
**Coordinator: Michael Atzeni**

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Venue: Uniting Church Hall**  
**Time: 7 PM**



TOOWOOMBA  
BIRD OBSERVERS

*(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)*

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350  
[www.toowoombabirdobservers.org](http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org)

MEMBERSHIP: Adults/Families \$22, Students \$11  
*(Subscriptions due 31 August)*

## **Kholo Kharisma – August Outing 29/8/2010**

*By Ken McKeown*

Our August outing to the Ipswich Botanical Gardens at Kholo saw ten members and Steve from the Fassifern Field Naturalists enjoy a balmy Sunday at this virtually unknown area which has three distinct sections.

We started at the fence overlooking the now weed-free Bremer River and quickly found **Silvereyes** complete with buff flanks migrating from the south, **Crow**, **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Magpie**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Laughing Kookaburra** and **Little Corella**.

As we moved down the fence we glimpsed many familiar waterbirds which included **Australian Pelican**, **Pacific Black and Wood Duck**, **Little Black Cormorant**, **Darter** and **Great Egret** all overseen by an ever present **Whistling Kite**. Luckily for me we found two **Pacific Bazas** being harassed by crows. Several years ago, on our last visit here, we were amazed to find six Bazas and I had rashly stated that we would see some this trip. Even more amazing was our sighting of a **Platypus** creating ripples in the river.

After all this excitement, we repaired to a shelter shed to take on some sustenance and for some birders to look up some of our more interesting sightings. During our break a cheeky **Grey Butcherbird** provided some entertainment with his lack of inhibition.

The group then followed a flowing creek down to Coal Creek where we had much discussion regarding hard to see **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, **Varied Sittellas** and **Eastern Whipbirds**. After completing a circuit under cool foliage, we decided to move to nearby Lake Manchester.



Brahminy Kite.

Photo: Peter Gelding.

**KHOLO SPECIES:** Australian Brush-turkey, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Pelican, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill, Pacific Baza, Whistling Kite, Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Little Corella, Rainbow, Scaly-breasted and Little Lorikeets, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, Striated Pardalote, Noisy Miner, Lewin's, Yellow-faced, Brown and Scarlet Honeyeaters, Eastern Whipbird, Varied Sittella, Rufous Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong Torresian Crow and Common Myna.

Monotreme: Platypus

Unlike the recent recce of Lake Manchester, I completed with Al and Mike, this trip we were not confronted with 90 knot winds. En route at the Kholo bridge, we witnessed great views of a soaring **Brahminy Kite** which was pronounced bird of the day by many.

The dam wall however, still leaked, providing a water source for the numerous bush birds below the dam. **Brown, Scarlet and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** took advantage of good supplies of blossom high in tall trees. Here we were lucky to have close views of a busy **Rufous Fantail** which was a new bird for many, and other additions were **King Parrot, Eastern Spinebill, Grey-Shrike-thrush** and **White-throated Gerygone**.



Australian Pelican.  
Photo: Steve Burke.

We then walked up the long ramp to the dam wall and then even further where we saw seven swans-a-swimming, more **Darter** and **Little-Pied Cormorant**. By now it was quite hot, so we elected to have lunch under a convenient shady tree. This time we were joined by a friendly **Pied Butcherbird** who sat above us and thankfully restrained himself. Also spotted here was a future trip leader in new member from North Star, Margie, who thoughtfully provided wild flowers for our table. A great day was enjoyed by all. Thanks to our visitor, Steve who provided me with a brochure featuring the Flinders Peak area. Could be a new area to discover?

**LAKE MANCHESTER SPECIES:** Black Swan, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Great Egret, Masked Lapwing, Australian King-Parrot, Striated Pardalote, White-throated Gerygone, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced, Scarlet and Brown Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebill, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Magpie Lark, Rufous Fantail, Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Australian Magpie, Welcome Swallow, Silvereye and Common Myna.

## ***Why do birds roost where they do?***

*By Pat McConnell*

During numerous spotlighting forays over many years I have often come across birds roosting in very conspicuous places. Species seen perched in the open have included **Australian Brush-turkey**, **Laughing Kookaburra**, **Noisy Pitta**, **Noisy Miner** and **Magpie-lark** just to name a few. To me this seems to be a very dangerous behaviour and I often wonder why a bird would present itself as an open target for predation, not to mention exposing itself to the elements such as strong winds, freezing temperatures and heavy rain.



Roosting Noisy Miners.  
Photo: Pat McConnell.

One explanation I have heard is that, if a bird is perched on a thin, open branch, it is less likely to be taken by surprise by a snake because as soon as the snake moved onto the branch it would be detected as the branch would move. I guess the birds in question are basically playing the odds game. Do I risk being taken by a snake or do I risk being taken by an owl? From my thinking I would imagine that predation by an owl would be much more likely especially as there would be little warning of an attack. Just ask the brush-turkey and the crow that have been taken by the **Powerful Owl** at Highfields Falls.

The reason I started thinking about this again was because of some **Noisy Miners** Kath and I saw roosting at home on 17 July. There were five of them roosting in the front yard (see photo) in a very small tree in the middle of winter on a bitterly cold night. They would have been very visible to a predator. Several nights later I saw them roosting in another, but equally exposed site. This was despite the fact that there are numerous other trees close by that would have provided excellent cover. If anyone has some explanations I would be keen to hear them.

## Members' Bird Notes

By Pat McConnell

**MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES:** 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.

Black Bittern (1)	11/09/2010	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA, RH
Gull-billed Tern (5)	31/08/2010	L. Broadwater C.P.	RH, MW
Pacific Baza (2)	01/09/2010	Highfields	PM
Swamp Harrier	05/08/2010	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ
Bush Stone-curlew (1)	05/09/2010	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA
Musk Lorikeet (30+)	30/08/2010	Garnet Lehmann Pk. T'mba.	RH
Turquoise Parrot (3)	27/08/2010	Hickling Lane, Wyberba	RH
Forest Kingfisher	31/08/2010	L. Broadwater C.P.	RH, MW
Little Bronze-Cuckoo *	01/09/2010	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ
Superb Lyrebird	26/08/2010	Girraween N.P.	RH
Red-browed Treecreeper	27/08/2010	Girraween N.P.	RH
Hooded Robin (male)	27/08/2010	Hickling Lane, Wyberba	RH
Diamond Firetail	27/08/2010	Hickling Lane, Wyberba	RH
Diamond Firetail	27/08/2010	Breens Rd near Eukey	RH

\*Male and female seen

**MA**, M. Atzeni; **RH**, Rod Hobson; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **PM**, P. McConnell; **MW**, M. Wilson.

If anyone wishes to submit bird notes they can do this directly to me at [mccommel@usq.edu.au](mailto:mccommel@usq.edu.au) or via the Club's mailing address.

Thanks  
Pat McConnell

## Club Annual General Meeting

By Steve Burke

All members are invited to attend the 2010 AGM being held at the Uniting Church hall on the corner of Tor and North Streets on Wednesday night October 20th. I would like to kick the meeting off at 7 pm to give plenty of time for a light supper afterward. We have also managed to talk Mick Atzeni into giving a presentation on his trip this time last year to Tanzania with his father Laurie. From what I have seen of Mick's photos of the trip, it will be a presentation well worth seeing. Please bring a plate. A cushion might also come in handy. If you are interested in offering your talents to the Club as a Committee member please make contact with any of the current Committee.

## COMING CLUB EVENTS

### Sat/Sun, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2010

**Venue:** Karara, Durikai, L. Coolmunda

**Time:** 7.00 am

**Meet:** Karara Hall – near hotel

**Coordinator:** Kay & Kev Williams

**Phone:** 07 4659 5475 or 0429 465 954

BYO binoculars, food, chair, camping gear or accommodation available at Lake Coolmunda Caravan Park.

### Sat/Sun, 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2010

**Venue:** Within TBO survey area.

**Details:** Teams and individuals will focus on 'underdone' grids and species not yet reported this year. For planning, please let coordinator know if you want to lead, or be part of, a team. More details next newsletter.

**Coordinator:** Mick Atzeni

**Phone:** 07 4688 1318 (WK)

### Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010

**Venue:** Uniting Church Hall, cnr Tor & North Sts

**Time:** 7.00 pm sharp

## Committee Members

<b>President</b>	Steve Burke	0434 397 532 <a href="mailto:sburke@heritageseeds.com.au">sburke@heritageseeds.com.au</a>
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Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 22nd October, 2010

Please e-mail or post articles to the Editor.

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Surface Mail

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