

TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

No. 400
November –
December 2010

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

Editorial

Steve Burke

As this is the last newsletter for this year, it's bigger than normal. The Club AGM has come and gone. There are only a couple of changes to the 2011 Committee and you can check those changes out on the last page of this issue. The President's Report is also in this issue. There weren't a lot of members there but it was a rather miserable night outside.

Mick Atzeni's Tanzania presentation after the AGM was very well received by the audience, and the Committee and those present would all like to thank Mick once again for the time and effort he put into his presentation. And thanks also to everyone who brought a plate, stayed for the presentation and added to the *bonhomie* of the evening. The Committee hopes more members are able to enjoy similar presentations planned for the next calendar year.

As the new full-time Editor I am looking forward to the challenges of getting a very highly regarded newsletter, not just by this Club's members, produced to a standard that will continue to make us the envy of many bird-watching clubs.

I encourage all members to revisit an earlier issue regarding supplying photos to the Club photograph library via Joe Scanlan.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a happy and safe holiday season and many hours of great birding. All we want for Christmas is another 10 species for the Challenge.



A male Superb Fairy-wren.
Photo: Steve Burke.

2010 Challenge:

219 spp as at 23/11

This Issue

President's AGM Report
Steve Burke

Inskip Point
Al & Helen Young

Species Census
Mick Atzeni

North Queensland
Jan Christensen

COMING EVENTS

November Outing
Saturday 27th November.
Breakfast with the birds.
Venue: Cooby Dam –
Loveday Cove.
Time: 7.00 am

January Outing
Saturday 29th January.
Venue: Prince Henry
Drive
Coordinator: Kay
Williams
Time: 7.00 am

February Outing
Sunday 27th February
Venue: Spring Bluff
Coordinator: Steve Burke



(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350
www.toowoombabirdobservers.org

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

President's AGM Report

By Steve Burke

It is my pleasure to be delivering this, my first, annual report and I can reflect on a year where I have learnt a lot about the complexities of the operation of a special interest club and I have also learnt more about myself and grown as an individual as a result. I would like to thank the Club for giving me that opportunity.

This past year has been a productive and satisfying one for both the Club Executive and for members. The Newsletter continues to be a valuable vehicle for communication and the Club website is becoming more and more popular with a great number of Australian bird-watchers as well as Club members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members who assisted with the publication of the newsletter during 2010, particularly Mick Atzeni and Ken McKeown.

Our monthly outings during 2010 included venues such as Goomburra Forest, Upper Lockyer, the Lockyer wetlands and, my favourite, the weekend trip to Durikai Forest and Lake Coolmunda. The Club once again ran a well-organised raptor survey and annual species census. An activity which the Executive are keen to explore is the reintroduction of mid-week social functions. As a result of these discussions there are to be two social events set down for the first half of 2011 as a means of gauging member acceptance and event viability. At least one of these events will be a photographic workshop.

As you will hear in the Treasurer's Report, the Club continues to be in a strong financial position and as a result has been able to purchase some equipment which is already proving to be extremely useful. The hand-held two-way radios are a case in point, and a GPS unit is making the addition of bird trails in the region to our Club tourist pamphlet a much more accurate exercise. A new first-aid kit has also been purchased which is more suited to our Club activities and membership demographics.

I would like to thank our Vice-President, Mike McGoldrick, for standing in for me when I was unable to attend Committee meetings. I would also like to thank our very able Secretary, Olive Booth, who has been a tower of strength for me during my first year as Club President, Ross Begent our Treasurer who has looked after the Club's finances with scrupulous integrity, Kay Williams for her energetic efforts as Outings Co-ordinator and Librarian, Pat McConnell for his knowledge and diligence as Records Officer and all the Executive Committee members. I would like to personally thank Gayle Lee for her outstanding devotion to the Club, during as difficult year, and for her incredibly good articles and her tenacity in getting these articles published in local newspapers.

On the occasion of my first annual report I would like to thank our Club members for their confidence in me, and the Executive Committee for their

support and guidance throughout the year. On behalf of the Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc. I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Committee and to all members of the Club. Without the hard work and dedication of our Committee members, our club would not function effectively. And without the support of our members we simply would not exist.

Thankyou,

Steve Burke

BBBQ's and Fools at Inskip Point
By Al & Helen Young

Recently we travelled north to Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay to escape Toowoomba's wintery gales. Inskip Point, which is just north of Rainbow Beach, is a well known spot to see **Black-breasted Button-quail** (BBBQ) and it is also a place to catch a barge to Fraser Island. However, in order to reach the barge you must traverse about 300m of soft sand. One morning while looking for BBBQ's we were



A Black-breasted Button-quail.
Photo: Al Young.

stunned to see a Saab sedan towing a dual axle caravan attempting to reach the barge. Needless to say it got bogged well before it reached the barge (no, the driver was not a 'grey nomad!'). After 2 hours and many attempts by others to tow it out of the sand it was still there when we left, but it was gone the next morning. It would have taken a tractor or a large tow truck to extract the car and van. It was a toss-up as to what was more interesting – watching people trying to reach the barge with inappropriate vehicles or looking for birds. Anyway back to things more avian.

Over two days we spent about six hours birding at Inskip Point. On the first day we saw five **Black-breasted Button-quail** (2 pairs plus a single bird) and on the second day in a different area two pairs were seen, making a total of nine birds. (See photo). However, we were unsure as to whether all the birds seen over both days were different individuals because I don't know the home range size of BBBQ's.

Other interesting birds seen at Inskip Point were: **Great Cormorant, Whistling Kite, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Brahminy Kite, Eastern Curlew, Pied Oystercatcher, Gull-billed Tern**, and several hundred **Crested Terns** loafing on a sand bank, **Little Friarbird, Mangrove Honeyeater, Little Shrike-thrush, Spectacled Monarch and White-breasted Woodswallow.**

Most of the migratory waders were absent, still making their incredible journey from their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere to Australia.



One of the 'spoilt' Spangled Drongos.
Photo: Al Youna.

At the caravan park we stayed in at Tin Can Bay one of the permanent residents would feed the birds every afternoon and 12 **Spangled Drongos** (See photo) would appear for a free feed- a 'happy hour' for drongos.

Other interesting sightings here were: **Buff-banded Rail** in the swampy area on the edge of the park, **Little Corella, Mangrove Honeyeater and White-cheeked Honeyeater.**

Vale Michael Hirst
By Malcolm Wilson

It is with much sadness that we heard of the passing of a past TBO member, Michael Hirst. Michael was a member of the club from December 1994 until 2006. During this time he was Secretary of the Club for a couple of years until Margaret's health forced him to resign the position.

All who knew Michael found him to be a person of good sense, innate decency and a true friend. He was a committed conservationist and naturalist and was involved with many natural history organisations and other groups as well. We will remember him for his concern for nature and the environment and how he loved to be out birding with friends.

October Species Census Report

By Michael Atzeni

Participants: Norma Sturdee, Wes Sturdee, Joe Scanlan, Sue Scanlan, Alison James, Chris James, Daryl Mears, Bill Jolly, Kay Williams, Kev Williams, Olive Booth, Steve Burke, Gloria Glass, Esther Townsend, Gayle Lee, Al Young, Mike McGoldrick, Ken McKeown, Dinah Greenlees, Mick Atzeni, Helen Wilson, Derek Wilson, Esther Townsend, Gloria Glass, Barb Learmonth, Rob Learmonth, Pat Cleary, Dave Cleary.

Each year, the ever-popular annual species census highlights what a common goal and team work can achieve. Thanks to the collective efforts of the 28 observers listed above, we covered 17 of the 20 grids making up the club's local area (Figure 1), and recorded 149 species over the 4-days survey period, 29/10/10-1/11/10 (Table 1).

Highlights this census were **Spotted Quail-thrush** in **two** locations (Amos Rd, Withcott; & White Mountain Rd, Fifteen Mile) – the first time I can ever recall this happening; **Grey Goshawk** at Highfields and Ramsay; **Pale-vented Bush-hen** at Helidon and Upper Lockyer; and two new birds for the year in **Topknot Pigeon** (a pair along Prince Henry Drive) and **Common Blackbird** (a male at 19 Tara St, Wilsonton).

It is apparent from the lists submitted that some teams and individuals excelled. Well done to Gloria Glass, Helen and Derek Wilson, and Esther Townsend, for their team's record tally of 84 spp in the Gowrie Junction area (N2), and to Esther for her personal best of 42 spp around Kingsthorpe (W1).

My team concentrated on the north-eastern grids and we bagged the highest number of species for a grid with 105 spp in the Murphy's Creek grid (N3). This is the first time I can ever recall the Helidon grid (C7; 93 spp) not taking out the honours. In stark contrast to these two grids is their common neighbour, the intriguing N4 grid. This seldom-surveyed grid, which encompasses White Mountain SF, was relatively species-poor, with only 30 spp recorded there, despite some serious attention from me.

This year, as expected, the number of species was down, but not through lack of trying. We normally would expect 160 to 170 species but the optimal conditions inland have meant several nomadic species, notably, Pallid Cuckoo, Rufous and Brown Songlarks, Horsfield's Bushlark, White-winged Triller, and White-browed and Masked Woodswallows have stayed put.

There has also been a major exodus of waterbirds to the inland water systems to breed. Hood's dam looks great, but yielded only a handful of species: a perfect habitat going to waste at present. Helidon Spa is normally good this time of year for stilts, Red-kneed Dotterels, the odd Latham's Snipe, and avocets. Its offering this census? A pair of **Black-fronted Dotterels** - in

the carpark! We were hard-pressed finding an egret, heron, ibis, spoonbill, and ducks (other than Wood and Pacific Black) anywhere. How ironic that, after years of drought thwarting a big tally, we fare worse at the other extreme.

Raptors were also in short supply. Collectively, we managed only seven species over the four days. Hark back to the raptor census in Winter when we saw 13 species in the Lockyer alone in a single day. It's definitely tougher for raptors in Spring.

Varied Triller, Spectacled Monarch, Brown Gerygone and Large-billed Scrubwren were amongst the dips; four relatively easy ones we missed because the lower part of Redwood Park wasn't surveyed to my knowledge. One that I did look for and dipped on was Yellow-tufted Honeyeater. This species had been reliable around Murphys Creek and Upper Lockyer in recent years but no sign of them this time.

Finally, I must congratulate Steve Burke who, after having his fill of Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush recently at "Bowra Station", Cunnamulla, reckoned his first **Spotted Quail-thrush** was going to be just as easy, and blow me down, he came up trumps in White Mountain SF.

W1 (Kingsthorpe) 27°27'30"S 151°47'30"E 42 spp	N1 (Gowrie Junction) 27°27'30"S 151°52'30"E 88 spp	N2 (Highfields) 27°27'30"S 151°57'30"E 70 spp	N3 (Murphy's Ck) 27°27'30"S 152°02'30"E 105 spp	N4 (N of Helidon) 27°27'30"S 152°07'30"E 32
W2 (W of Gowrie Mtn) 27°32'30"S 151°47'30"E	C1 (NW Toowoomba) 27°32'30"S 151°52'30"E	C3 (NE Toowoomba) 27°32'30"S 151°57'30"E 79 spp	C5 (Withcott) 27°32'30"S 152°02'30"E 63 spp	C7 (Helidon) 27°32'30"S 152°07'30"E 93 spp
W3 (Athol/Umbiram) 27°37'30"S 151°47'30"E 12 spp	C2 (SW Toowoomba) 27°37'30"S 151°52'30"E 33 spp	C4 (SE Toowoomba) 27°37'30"S 151°57'30"E 78 spp	C6 (Upper Flagstone Ck) 27°37'30"S 152°02'30"E 57 spp	C8 (Lower Flagstone Ck) 27°37'30"S 152°07'30"E 43 spp
W4 (W of Cambooya) 27°42'30"S 151°47'30"E 16 spp	S1 (Cambooya) 27°42'30"S 151°52'30"E 11 spp	S2 (Ramsay) 27°42'30"S 151°57'30"E 45 spp	S3 (Rockmount) 27°42'30"S 152°02'30"E 30 spp	S4 (Fordsdale) 27°42'30"S 152°07'30"E

Figure 1. Grids surveyed (shaded) and number of species recorded during census. (These are 5-minute grids. For Atlassing purposes, each grid lies within a 5km radius of the given central reference point).

Table 1. Results of species census 29/10/10-1/11/10

	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Australian Brush-turkey					N2	N3			S2		C2	C3	C4	C5		C7	
Brown Quail				N1		N3									C6	C7	C8
Plumed Whistling-Duck				N1		N3										C7	C8
Black Swan				N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Australian Wood Duck			W4	N1	N2	N3			S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Pacific Black Duck			W4	N1		N3			S2		C2	C3	C4			C7	C8
Grey Teal				N1												C7	
Hardhead																C7	
Australasian Grebe				N1		N3			S2				C4			C7	
Darter																C7	
Little Pied Cormorant				N1									C4		C6	C7	
Little Black Cormorant	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Great Cormorant				N1									C4			C7	
White-faced Heron				N1		N3								C5		C7	
Intermediate Egret				N1													
Cattle Egret				N1					S2				C4			C7	
Australian White Ibis				N1								C3	C4			C7	
Straw-necked Ibis												C3				C7	
Pacific Baza						N3											
Black-shouldered Kite				N1		N3			S2						C6	C7	
Brown Goshawk																C7	
Grey Goshawk					N2				S2								
Collared Sparrowhawk																C7	
Wedge-tailed Eagle				N1	N2	N3	N4		S2								
Brown Falcon																C7	
Australian Hobby				N1							C2					C7	
Peregrine Falcon						N3											
Nankeen Kestrel	W1	W3		N1	N2	N3			S2		C2				C6	C7	C8
Buff-banded Rail													C4				
Pale-vented Bush-Hen *						N3										C7	
Purple Swamphen													C4			C7	
Dusky Moorhen				N1									C4			C7	
Eurasian Coot				N1									C4			C7	
Comb-crested Jacana *																C7	
Black-fronted Dotterel				N1												C7	
Masked Lapwing	W1			N1	N2	N3			S2			C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Rock Dove	W1		W4	N1							C2	C3	C4			C7	
White-headed Pigeon												C3					
Spotted Turtle-Dove	W1			N1	N2	N3						C3	C4		C6	C7	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove						N3						C3	C4		C6		
Common Bronzewing					N2	N3											
Crested Pigeon	W1		W4	N1	N2	N3			S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Peaceful Dove				N1	N2	N3			S2			C3		C5	C6	C7	C8
Bar-shouldered Dove			W4	N1	N2	N3					C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Wonga Pigeon										S3		C3	C4		C6		
Topknot Pigeon												C3					
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo																C7	
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo					N2												
Galah	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3		S1	S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Little Corella	W1	W3	W4	N1		N3			S2		C2		C4	C5	C6		

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo				N1	N2	N3			S2			C3	C4	C5	C6		
Cockatiel	W1	W3		N1												C7	
Rainbow Lorikeet				N1	N2	N3		S1	S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet				N1	N2	N3			S2			C3	C4	C5		C7	
Musk Lorikeet						N3						C3	C4				
Little Lorikeet						N3						C3				C7	
Australian King-Parrot					N2	N3						C3	C4	C5	C6		
Pale-headed Rosella	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3			S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Red-rumped Parrot	W1	W3		N1					S2		C2		C4				
Brush Cuckoo						N3	N4					C3		C5	C6		
Fan-tailed Cuckoo					N2	N3						C3					
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo																C7	
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo						N3											
Little Bronze-Cuckoo						N3											
Common Koel	W1			N1	N2	N3			S2	S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Channel-billed Cuckoo				N1	N2	N3						C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Pheasant Coucal	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4		S2	S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Southern Boobook					N2								C4				
Barn Owl									S2								
Tawny Frogmouth				N1		N3			S2			C3	C4				
Australian Owlet-nightjar				N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Azure Kingfisher						N3											
Laughing Kookaburra	W1		W4	N1	N2	N3	N4		S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Sacred Kingfisher	W1			N1	N2	N3								C5	C6	C7	C8
Rainbow Bee-eater						N3				S3		C3		C5		C7	
Dollarbird	W1			N1	N2	N3						C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
White-throated Treecreeper					N2	N3	N4					C3					
Superb Fairy-wren	W1			N1	N2	N3				S3			C4	C5		C7	C8
Variigated Fairy-wren				N1	N2	N3	N4					C3					
Red-backed Fairy-wren						N3								C5		C7	C8
Spotted Pardalote					N2	N3	N4			S3		C3	C4				
Striated Pardalote	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4	S1		S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
White-browed Scrubwren				N1	N2	N3	N4					C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Speckled Warbler					N2	N3							C4	C5		C7	
Weebill				N1		N3	N4							C5			
White-throated Gerygone	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4							C5			
Brown Thornbill				N1	N2	N3	N4			S3		C3					
Buff-rumped Thornbill						N3	N4							C5			
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	W1			N1		N3			S2		C2	C3	C4			C7	
Yellow Thornbill	W1			N1												C7	
Striated Thornbill						N3											
Red Wattlebird												C3					
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater				N1													
Striped Honeyeater	W1			N1		N3				S3				C5	C6	C7	C8
Noisy Friarbird				N1	N2	N3	N4			S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
Little Friarbird						N3								C5	C6	C7	C8
Blue-faced Honeyeater				N1	N2	N3			S2		C2	C3		C5		C7	C8
Bell Miner													C4				
Noisy Miner	W1			N1	N2	N3			S2	S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Lewin's Honeyeater				N1	N2	N3				S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Yellow-faced Honeyeater					N2	N3	N4		S2			C3	C4	C5	C6		
Fuscous Honeyeater						N3											

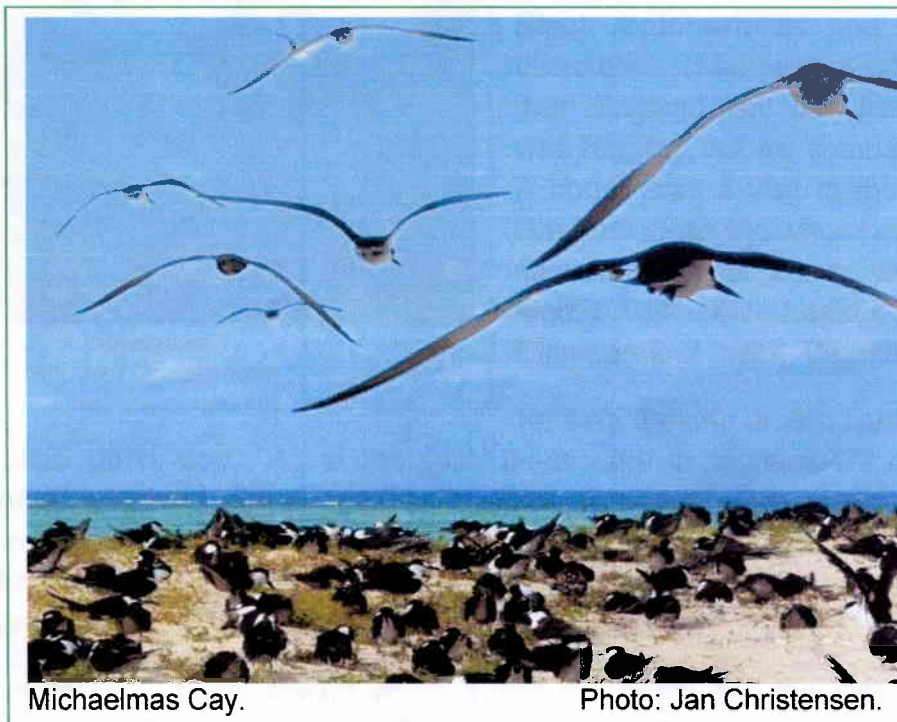
Brown-headed Honeyeater						N3												
White-throated Honeyeater						N3						C3		C5		C7		
White-naped Honeyeater					N2	N3						C3		C5				
Brown Honeyeater	W1			N1	N2	N3						C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Scarlet Honeyeater				N1	N2	N3	N4									C6		
Jacky Winter						N3	N4											
Eastern Yellow Robin					N2	N3				S3		C3	C4				C7	
Grey-crowned Babbler				N1	N2	N3				S2			C4	C5		C7	C8	
Eastern Whipbird					N2	N3				S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7		
Spotted Quail-thrush *						N3									C5			
Varied Sittella						N3	N4						C4					
Rufous Whistler				N1		N3	N4					C3		C5		C7		
Grey Shrike-thrush				N1	N2	N3							C4	C5		C7	C8	
Black-faced Monarch												C3						
Leaden Flycatcher				N1		N3	N4						C4	C5		C7		
Magpie-lark	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3		S1	S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Rufous Fantail					N2							C3	C4					
Grey Fantail					N2	N3	N4					C3	C4					
Willie Wagtail	W1			N1	N2	N3			S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Spangled Drongo					N2	N3				S3			C4	C5	C6			
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8		
Cicadabird					N2	N3	N4					C3	C4	C5	C6			
Olive-backed Oriole	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4			S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Figbird	W1			N1	N2	N3			S2	S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Dusky Woodswallow						N3												
Grey Butcherbird			W4	N1		N3			S2		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6			
Pied Butcherbird	W1	W3		N1	N2	N3			S2		C2	C3	C4		C6	C7	C8	
Australian Magpie	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Pied Currawong	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4	S1	S2	S3	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7		
Torresian Crow	W1	W3	W4	N1	N2	N3	N4		S2	S3		C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
White-winged Chough				N1														
Apostlebird	W1			N1	N2				S2									
Regent Bowerbird												C3						
Satin Bowerbird												C3	C4					
Richard's Pipit	W1					N3						C3						
House Sparrow	W1			N1	N2	N3		S1			C2	C3	C4			C7	C8	
Zebra Finch				N1							C2			C5		C7	C8	
Double-barred Finch	W1			N1	N2	N3				S3	C2	C3		C5		C7	C8	
Plum-headed Finch													C4					
Red-browed Finch					N2	N3	N4					C3	C4			C7		
Mistletoebird				N1		N3									C6	C7	C8	
Welcome Swallow				N1	N2	N3			S2	S3		C3	C4		C6	C7		
Tree Martin	W1																	
Fairy Martin				N1												C7		
Clamorous Reed-Warbler			W4	N1												C7		
Tawny Grassbird				N1		N3										C7	C8	
Golden-headed Cisticola	W1		W4	N1		N3									C6	C7	C8	
Silvereye	W1			N1	N2	N3	N4			S3		C3	C4	C5		C7	C8	
Common Blackbird *												C3						
Common Starling	W1	W3	W4	N1					S2		C2	C3	C4					
Common Myna	W1	W3		N1	N2	N3		S1	S2		C2	C3	C4		C6	C7	C8	

* Rare/Unusual locally

A Tale of Birding, Business and Bloomin' Awful Weather

By Jan Christensen

It's a pretty good job that sends you to north Queensland in the middle of winter, so I guess I have a pretty good job! As it's also a part-time job, I knew I could make time for a bit of birdwatching along the way as an added bonus. A lot of rainy and windy weather, however, made the birding a little difficult but there were some very enjoyable highlights.



Michaelmas Cay.

Photo: Jan Christensen.

Number one would have to be a trip to Michaelmas Cay, something that's been on my wish list for a long time. I chose to go with the boat *Seastar*, as it arrives at the cay first and only has thirty passengers. My first sight of the cay was breathtaking – wonderfully blue sea, white sand, and hundreds of birds flying overhead, littering the beaches, and stacked in the grassy centre of the island. The fishy smell was also breathtaking, and the noise of the birds amazing. Birdwatchers were given first chance to be ferried to the island, and since there were only two of us, the rest being snorkelers and divers, I had no trouble getting on the first dinghy trip to shore.

The birds took almost no notice of us. They sat patiently while we took photos at close range and gazed around us. There were only a few species, but for sheer numbers of birds, it was fantastic. There were large numbers of **Sooty Terns** with young, **Common Noddies** and **Brown Boobies**, some **Crested Terns** with a funny little baby, **Silver Gulls**, and overhead the occasional **Great Frigatebird** glided by. Definitely worth the trip!



Scarlet Honeyeater.
Photo: Jan Christensen.

I love to wander around the Centennial Lakes Park in Cairns. I was rewarded quite quickly there with good sightings of a **Little Kingfisher** (unfortunately I forgot to check the setting on my camera & all my photos of it were absolute failures), **Papuan Frogmouths** (male & female), **Rajah Shelducks**, **Shining Starlings**, **Black Butcherbirds** and a host of other birds. Meeting up with a birder from England and one from Victoria was fun, too, as we compared notes. A bonus was a visit to the Botanical Gardens close by, where many of the stunning tropical plants were in full bloom, with **Olive-backed Sunbirds** flitting around them. Beautiful!

Hastie's Swamp on the Tableland was another good stop. As in the past, there were large numbers of **Plumed Whistling-ducks** and all manner of other waterbirds. I was about to leave when I glanced up into a nearby gumtree, and there, sitting quietly, were two **White-bellied Sea-eagles**. I daresay things on the swamp were due to be livened up once they took to the air!

Another place that's always worth a visit is Ingham and the Tyto Wetlands. While there didn't seem to be the range of birds I've seen in the past, it was still good enough for multiple visits. Highlights were standing right beside a **Rufous Whistler** while it opened up in song, and a **Brush Cuckoo** which sat still for quite a few photos. Close encounters with **Crimson Finches** are always enjoyable too.

A **Beach Stone-curlew** at the Mackay harbour, **Scarlet Honeyeaters** down low enough to see them & photograph them at the



Beach Stone-curlew.

Photo: Steve Burke.

Gladstone Botanical Gardens, a **Brahminy Kite** with the sun shining through its wings at Sarina Beach – all bonuses as the weather deteriorated on my way south. My consolation for the bad weather was that it was worse in Toowoomba.

In all though, it was an enjoyable time of birding. In case you were wondering, I did do the work I had to do up there as well, and the outcomes there were very pleasing as well.

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.

Musk Duck (female)	14/11/10	Hood's dam, Helidon	MA, WJ
Cotton Pygmy-goose (male)	14/11/10	Hood's dam, Helidon	MA, WJ
Wandering Whistling-duck (2)	14/11/10	Hood's dam, Helidon	MA, WJ
Hardhead	29/10/10	"Abberton", Helidon	WJ
Black Swan (pair with young)	30/10/10	Hood's dam, Helidon	Census
Black Swan (6)	14/11/10	Cooby Dam (near wall)	BG, JG
Brown Falcon	29/10/10	"Abberton", Helidon	WJ
Comb-crested Jacana (8)	14/11/10	Hood's dam, Helidon	MA, WJ
Black-fronted Dotterel	30/10/10	Helidon Spa	MA
Silver Gull	08/10/10	"Abberton", Helidon	WJ
Squatter Pigeon	09/11/10	Cressbrook Dam Camp area	NS, WS
White-headed Pigeon	31/10/10	Prince Henry Dr., T'mba	K&KW
Topknot Pigeon (2)	31/10/10	Prince Henry Dr., T'mba	K&KW
Rose-crowned Fruit-dove*	12/10/10	19 Nichols Rd, Highfields	JS, SS
Long-billed Corella (2)	21/11/10	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA
Blue Bonnet	10/10/10	Gowrie Mtn School Rd	SB
Turquoise Parrot	05/10/11	"Peakvale", via Texas	RH, MW
Australian Owlet-nightjar	30/10/10	Berghofer Dr, Table Top Est.	DG
White-throated Needletail	20/11/10	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA
White-winged Fairy-wren **	12/11/10	Doctors Ck Rd, Jondaryan	CS, SW
Painted Honeyeater	21/10/10	10 km E of Moonie	SB
Painted Honeyeater (1)	07/11/10	Doctors Ck, Jondaryan	SB, AB
Black-faced Monarch	31/10/10	Redwood Park	K&KW
White-eared Monarch	03/11/10	Redwood Park	K&KW
Spotted Quail-thrush	30/10/10	White Mtn. Rd, Fifteen Mile	SB
Dusky Woodswallow	29/10/10	Thomas Rd, Upper Lockyer	MA
Plum-headed Finch	30/10/10	Lower Flagstone Ck	K&KW, OB
Diamond Firetail	05/10/11	"Peakvale", via Texas	RH, MW
Common Blackbird (1M)	01/11/10	Tara St, Wilsonton	MA
Common Blackbird (1F, 1J)	17/11/10	Gracene Crt, Wilsonton	MMcG, AY
Common Blackbird (1F, 1M)	22/11/10	Gracene Crt, Wilsonton	MA
Common Blackbird (1M)	23/10/10	12 Tregair St, Ipswich	MM

* Dead bird; first record from Highfields.

<http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2200>

** Very easterly record

<http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2223>.

MA, Mick Atzeni; **AB**, Allan Benson; **OB**, Olive Booth; **SB**, Steve Burke; **BG**, Brendon Gray; **JG**, Judie Gray; **DG**, Dinah Greenlees; **RH**, Rod Hobson; **WJ**, Bill Jolly; **K&KW**, Kay & Kev Williams; **MMcG**, Mike McGoldrick; **MM**, Michael Mathieson; **CS**, Chris Sanderson; **JS**, Joe Scanlan; **SS**, Sue Scanlan; **NS**, Norma Sturdee; **WS**, Wes Sturdee; **SW**, Stuart Warren; **MW**, Mark Weaver; **AY**, Al Young.

Bird notes can be submitted by email to mconnel@usq.edu.au, by post, or via the forum www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/index.php



Wandering Whistling-ducks.

Photo: Steve Burke



Female Common Blackbird on nest.

Photo: Al Young.