



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

No. 434
August '14

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

Editorial

Sandy Robertson

Hi all,

Welcome to the August edition, jammed packed with articles and photos, thank you to everyone who has contributed.

I would love to hear from anyone who would like to submit an article or photo; you don't need to be a professional photographer or writer, just share your experiences and sightings with your fellow club members.

Here's one of mine – it's a bit blurry because it was so far away and I've had to zoom right in, but I just love the colouring and markings of this bird (to right), the **White-browed Woodswallow**.

Enjoy this edition, and I hope to catch up with some of you at an outing soon once The Sound of Music production is over.

Cheers
Sandy



Nankeen night heron
Photo Charles Dove



211 spp as at 13th August

This Issue

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Date Claimers

30th August:

Hartmann's Park, Crow's Nest

27/28th September:

Coolmunda Dam

Leader: Kay Williams

26/27 October:

Annual census

8th October:

AGM 7:00pm

29th November Breakup:

Breakfast with the birds, venue TBA

Membership Fees for 2014/2015 are due at the end of August.

Annual subscription remains at:
\$45 for adults and families.

\$40 for pensioners and students

Fees can be paid by cheque or money order payable to

Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc

Fees can also be paid by direct

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BSB 638-070 A/c 4312503

The PO Box is 4730 Toowoomba East



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BIRD OBSERVERS

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MEMBERSHIP: Adult/family \$45
Pensioner/student \$40

Grey Goshawk (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*)

By Geoff Sharp

This **Grey Goshawk** was perched in the canopy on Mount Kynoch keeping one foot warm on a cool July morning. They come in a range of fashionable colours so have a few names such as the Grey, White or Variable goshawk – but they always have those long yellow legs.

The Grey Goshawk is seen fairly regularly along the escarpment. It is a medium-sized bird of prey that can be all white or white with grey head wings and back. Some have grey banding (feather bling) on the chest. The long yellow legs, half yellow beak, rectangular tail and lack of a black shoulder help identify them.

The grey coloured form is the most common in the Toowoomba area but the white form has also been seen here. They are permanent residents and form stable pairs. The home range is defended all year and nest sites may be reused.

They prefer moist forests or woodland areas and are said to nest high in a live tree. Home ranges can be many square kilometres for each pair, so large connected habitat blocks like the Toowoomba escarpment are needed to maintain populations. Studies in Victoria indicate it requires forest at least 30 years old to breed, while in Tasmania the preferred nesting areas are at least 50 years old.

The species occurs from New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Northern and Eastern Australia to Tasmania. They are listed as Near Threatened in Queensland. They are thought to be secure here but need monitoring, retention of suitable habitat and avoidance of impact to breeding sites. In southern States logging, habitat loss and habitat fragmentation increases extinction risk so they are Vulnerable or Endangered there.

Grey Goshawks feed on small animals such as birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. They often hunt from a perch in the canopy and pursue prey in flight or chase it on the ground. Its long legs help it move on the ground, while the powerful feet can pluck a bird from the air.

Whatever you call them, they are another natural ornament retained in our large Escarpment Parks on Toowoomba's doorstep. You might see them at Jubilee Park look out (north end of Mckenzie street), Mount Kynock, Picnic Point or Table Top where many raptors cruise the range. They might even come to town occasionally.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Accipiter-novaehollandiae>

http://bird.net.au/bird/index.php?title=Grey_Goshawk

http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/68108/Grey_goshawk_2011.pdf



Linthorpe Outing Report

By Alastair Silcock

Linthorpe outing, Sunday 27 July

Despite a heavy fog that didn't lift until after nine o'clock, eight of us enjoyed a good morning of birding in the Linthorpe Valley, just north of Pittsworth.

The first site on Loveday Road gave us eight waterbird species on two farm dams, including dozens of **Straw-necked Ibis** and **Plumed Whistling Ducks**, three **Little Black Cormorants** and a pair of **Yellow-billed Spoonbills**. The farm garden and nearby timber revealed a further 15 bird species and a koala, always a good find in these days of decline.

We then spent an hour at the small Linthorpe Environmental Park, four kilometres to the north, where highlights included a single rose robin and a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** drifting overhead. A mystery bird spotted high in a faraway tree flew down to give us closer clues and photo opportunities for Kevin. Its reddish rump allowed a positive ID as **Rufous Songlark**.

All in all, 52 species for the morning - a rewarding mid-winter tally.

Loveday Road, Linthorpe (23)

Plumed Whistling Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Darter, Little Black Cormorant, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Spotted Turtledove, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Cockatiel, Red-rumped Parrot, Laughing Kookaburra, White-throated Gerygone, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Noisy Miner, Rufous Whistler, Magpie Lark, Dusky Woodswallow, Apostlebird, Welcome Swallow

Linthorpe Environmental Park (11)

Wedge-tailed Eagle, Variegated Fairy Wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Striped Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater (heard), Rose Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Tawny Grassbird

Both sites (18)

Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Pale-headed Rosella, Superb Fairy Wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Magpie, Pied Currawong, Crow, Double-barred Finch, Mistletoebird, Silveryeye



Rufous songlark (photo 1 and 2)
Eastern yellow Robin
Bar shouldered dove
Photos by Kevin Williams

April Outing

By Jocelyn Wilson

Twelve TBO members met at Gatton's Lake Apex on Sunday 27 April to visit a few well-known bird places of the Lockyer Valley. While waiting in the carpark for everyone to arrive the following species were observed:- **Darter** (these have recently nested successfully on both the Eastern and Western Islands), **Little Black Cormorant**, **Pacific Black Duck**, **Purple Swamphen**, **Australian Wood Duck**, **Australian White Ibis**, **Magpie Lark**, **Noisy Miner**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Eurasian Coot** and **Great Egret**. Having signed the book, we drove to Adare Road. The first stop was at the large dam, which was very full after recent rainfall. There was some cloud and no wind which afforded great reflections on the water. **Galahs** were checking out hollows in the tall, dead trees in the water. Other species included:- **Little Black Cormorant**, **Little Pied Cormorant**, **Eurasian Coot**, **Australasian Grebe**, **Little Egret**, **Great Egret**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Plumed Whistling-Duck**, **Hardhead**, **Australian Wood Duck**, **Grey Teal**, **Darter**, **Australian White Ibis**, **Welcome Swallow**, **Grey Fantail**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Little Lorikeet**, **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet**, **Pale-headed Rosella**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Noisy Miner**, **Torresian Crow**, **Magpie-lark** and **Common Starling**.

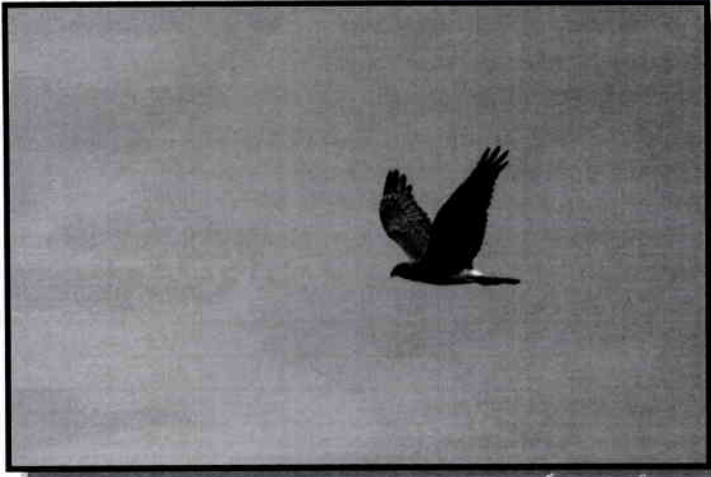
Proceeding to Redbank Creek, we walked along part of the creek near the horse paddock; then across the creek crossing and along the track. We were fortunate to see a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** (a first for the author). Unfortunately, several **Rainbow Bee-eaters** seen only the week before were not evident. Species at this location included:- **Jacky Winter**, **Magpie**, **Grey Fantail**, **Peaceful Dove**, **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Yellow Thornbill**, **White-browed Scrubwren**, **Red-browed Finch**, **Golden Whistler** (male and female), **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Variegated Fairy-wren**, **Red-backed Fairy-wren**, **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Brown Honeyeater**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Willie Wagtail**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Silvereye**, **King Parrot** and **Pied Currawong**.



Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Photo: Gavle Lee

Our third stop was along Coles Road, with a Melaleuca swamp on the left-hand side of the road, and a dam on the right. We were able to have a good look at a **Black Swan** sitting on a large nest constructed of vegetation, with its mate nearby. There were also several **Cotton Pygmy-geese**. Just as we were returning to our cars and after commenting on the lack of raptors, a **Swamp Harrier** flew low giving us great views, and then several **Black Kites** circled overhead. Other species recorded were:- **Masked Lapwing**, **Straw-necked Ibis**, **Australian White Ibis**, **Eurasian Coot**, **Royal Spoonbill**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Cattle Egret**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Great Egret**, **Australasian Grebe**, **Hardhead**, **Pacific Black Duck**, **Rufous**

Whistler, **Scarlet Honeyeater**, **Noisy Miner**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Grey Fantail**, **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet**, **Rainbow Lorikeet** and **Torresian Crow**.



Nankeen Kestrel and Whistling Kite were spotted on the drive to Lake Clarendon.

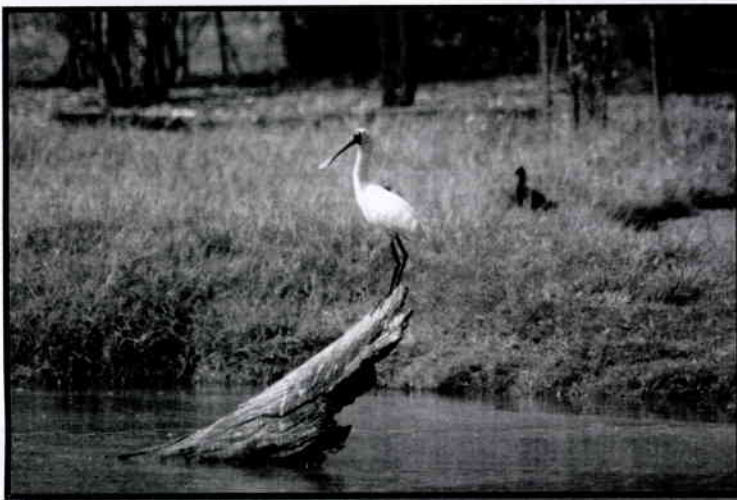
With two caravans set up, the picnic area was busier (and messier) than usual. It was quite warm, so birds were observed from the picnic shelter while we enjoyed our morning tea. Species recorded included: **Black Swan, Pelican, Great Crested Grebe, Eurasian Coot, Masked Lapwing, Grey-crowned Babbler, Striped Honeyeater, Magpie-lark and Yellow-rumped Thornbill.**

It was then agreed to drive to Lakes Galletly and Lenor at UQ Gatton Campus, before returning to Gatton. Species recorded included:- **Royal Spoonbill,**

Swamp Harrier
Photo: Gayle Lee

Magpie Goose, Great Egret, Plumed Whisting Duck, Australian White Ibis, Pacific Black Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Grebe, Hardhead, Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamp-hen, Masked Lapwing, Welcome Swallow, Brown Honeyeater, Superb Fairy-wren, Noisy Miner, Kookaburra, Golden-headed Cisticola and Grey Fantail.

A special thank you to Dinah for bringing her scope, I especially enjoyed those close-up views of Pink-eared Ducks. Thanks also to Gayle for the great photos included here. My personal thanks to everyone for travelling to the Lockyer for this outing and for helping me to identify those little bush birds and sharing your knowledge and expertise!



Royal Spoonbill – Lake Lenor

Photos Gayle Lee

Magpie Geese – Lake Galletly

Members' Bird Notes

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.

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Pink-eared Duck	6/06/14	Jandowae Dam	NS, WS
Pacific Heron	7/08/14	Highfields	KO
Osprey	5/05/14	Cressbrook Dam	NS, WS
Spotted Harrier	9/06/14	Glenvale Rd Glenvale	MA
Grey Goshawk (white morph)	7/06/14	Connors Rd Helidon	MA
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	5/05/14	Cressbrook Dam	NS, WS
Bush Stone-curlew	30/05/14	Bridge St near McDougall St Toowoomba	MA
White-headed Pigeon	25/05/14	Kenilworth Showground's	NS, WS
White-headed Pigeon	30/05/14	Culliford Dve. Middle Ridge	DF, MW
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (2)	29/06/14	Meringandan West Environmental Park	GG, MH, ET,
Long-billed Corella (4)	3/08/14	Highfields	PM, KO
Southern Boobook	29/06/14	Gowrie Junction	GG, MH, ET
Barn Owl	10/05/14	Mt Kynoch Toowoomba	PM, KO
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	25/05/14	Kenilworth Showground's	NS, WS
Logrunner	17/05/14	Little Yabba Creek Kenilworth	NS, WS
Yellow-throated Miner	6/06/14	Jandowae Dam	NS, WS
Yellow-throated Miner (6)	29/06/14	Kingsthorpe	ET
Rose Robin	5/05/14	Cressbrook Dam	NS, WS
Russet-tailed Thrush	11/07/14	Redwood park Toowoomba	HK
Plum-headed Finch	6/06/14	Jandowae Dam	NS, WS
Plum-headed Finch (16)	29/06/14	Meringandan West Environmental Park	GG, MH, ET
Common Blackbird (male)	5/08/14	Highfields	PM

MA, M. Atzeni; **DF**, D. Fielder; **GG**, G. Glass; **MH**, M. Harch; **HK**, H. Krenske; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell; **NS**, N. Sturdee; **WS**, W. Sturdee; **ET**, E. Townsend; **MW**, M. Wood.

If anyone wishes to submit bird notes they can do this directly to me at mccannel@usq.edu.au or via the Club's mailing address.

Thanks
Pat McConnell

Members' Photo Page

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



'Shapes and Textures'
Brown Falcon
Photo: Allan Young



'Loafers in Cairns'
Photo: Allan Young



'Togetherness'
White-breasted Woodswallows
Photo: Allan Young

Raptor Census June 2014

By Pat McConnell

Northern Section

Pat McConnell and Kath O'Donnell surveyed the northern section on Saturday 28 June. This section was divided into four sub-sections as in previous years. These were Highfields to Cooby Dam, Cooby Dam to Goombungee, Goombungee to Cooyar and Cooyar to Highfields. The survey was done between 11.30am and 4.20pm. Four species and 24 individual birds of prey were seen which was five less species than in 2013 and 48 fewer individual birds. (See table below for summarised results). The weather during the survey was warm for this time of year, overcast with a light breeze that became much stronger as the day progressed. One hundred and sixty five kilometres were travelled.

Southern Section

The southern section was surveyed by Gayle Lee and Steve Zell on Sunday 29 June. They saw four species and 24 individual birds of prey which was one more species than in 2013 and the same number of individual birds of prey. The route they surveyed included Wyreema, Cudmore, Nobby and Felton. The highlight of the day was an **Australian Hobby**. A flock of 20+ Masked Woodswallows near Clifton was also a good sighting. The weather was clear and sunny but cold and windy.

Eastern Section

The eastern section was surveyed by Rob and Jocelyn Wilson on Saturday 28 June. They saw seven species and 356 individual birds of prey which is one more species than in 2013 and 80 more individual birds of prey. The route they surveyed included Lake Freeman, Lowes Road, Grantham, Flagstone Creek Road, Ma Ma-Lillydale Road, Tent Hill, Caffey, Ingoldsby Road, Peaches Lagoon, Colquhouns Road and Cross Road.

Western Section

The western section was surveyed by Mike McGoldrick, Al Young and Gayle Lee on Saturday 28 June. They saw six species and 157 individual birds of prey which was three less species than in 2013 and 337 fewer individual birds of prey. It should be noted though that 2013 had large numbers of **Black Kite** records that explained the high numbers of birds seen in that year. The route they surveyed was Toowoomba – Oakey – Jondaryn – Bowenville – Formartin – Norwin – Cecil Plains – Dalby – Kaimkillenbun – Quinalow - Oakey - Toowoomba. The weather was cool with strong westerly winds and 80% cloud cover.

Table of Sightings for 28 – 29 June and 1 July 2014

Species	N	S	E	W	Total
Black-shouldered Kite	7	4	4	19	34
Black Kite			338	67	405
Whistling Kite		1	2	1	4
Square-tailed Kite			3		3
White-bellied Sea- Eagle	1		1	2	4
Brown Falcon	1		2	7	10
Australian Hobby		1			1
Nankeen Kestrel	15	18	6	61	100
Total number of raptors	24	24	356	157	561

The above table shows that eight species were seen in 2014 which is three less species than in 2013. There were 561 individual birds of prey seen which was 305 less than in 2013.

On Sunday 29 June Gloria Glass, Esther Townsend and Marie-Claire Harch recorded one **Black-shouldered Kite**, 24 **Black Kite**, six **Nankeen Kestrel** and one **Southern Boobook**.

On Tuesday 1 July Pat McConnell and Kath O'Donnell recorded 100+ **Black Kite**, one **Black-shouldered Kite**, two **Whistling Kite**, two immature **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**, one **Spotted Harrier**, one **Brown Falcon** and one **Black Falcon** in the Helidon/Carpendale area.

Kev and Kay Williams also did a raptor count in the eastern sector and visited Karreches, Adare, Clarendon and Gatton. They saw five **Black-shouldered Kite**, four **Square-tailed Kite**, 356 **Black Kite**, 14 **Whistling Kite**, two **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**, one **Brown Goshawk**, one **Collared Sparrowhawk**, two **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, two **Black Falcon** and 29 **Nankeen Kestrel**. This was a fantastic 10 species and 416 individual birds of prey.

A big thank you to all involved especially the leaders.



Eagle sculpture, Myall Park Botanic Gardens
Photo: Sandy Robertson

Top End Tourist

By Alastair Silcock

A first time trip to Darwin and the Top End provides good opportunities to add to a birder's lifer list.

In early July, I was able to add more than 20 including **Pied Imperial Pigeon, Bar-breasted Honeyeater, Red-headed Honeyeater, Northern Fantail, Long-tailed Finch, Magpie Goose, Radjah Shelduck, Partridge Pigeon, Little Kingfisher, Yellow Oriole, Northern Rosella and Hooded Parrot.**

In Darwin, the Botanical Gardens and Casuarina Coastal Reserve proved easily accessible with good sightings.

Around Kakadu, a dawn cruise at Yellow Water, Coinda, provided hundreds of waterbirds and almost as many crocodiles but the national park also offers some great escarpment and dry country habitats.

Unfortunately, I wasn't one of the lucky ones in our party to see the Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeons.

Along the way, I picked up a little booklet called 'Top End Birdwatching' by Mike Reed which I found most useful. It's a 2014 publication and gives good directions for some great birding sites from Kununurra to Kakadu.

It helped me find Northern Rosellas and Hooded Parrots near Pine Creek but Gouldian Finches in the wild, and a few others, will have to wait for a return visit.

Photos from Kakadu National Park, July 2014



Jabiru



Lemon-bellied Flycatcher



Whistling Kite



Sea Eagle