

TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND
STUDY OF THE BIRDS IN THE TOOWOOMBA AREA

January 2021

Edition 464

BIRD OF THE MONTH

IN THIS ISSUE



STRIATED PARDALOTE

at Jack Duggan Park 2020

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OUTINGS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2021

Saturday 30 January	Ravensbourne - Beutels Lookout 7am RSVP Mick Atzeni by 29/01 – tiddalac@gmail.com - Mob. 0499 395 485
Sunday 21 February	Helidon/Lockyer Valley
Saturday 27 March	Toorbul, Waders date subject to tide times.
Sunday 2 May	Prince Henry Drive, Toowoomba
Sat-Sun 29/30 May	Durikai/Coolmunda Dam, possible overnight
Sat-Sun 26/27 June	Raptor Census

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter will now be published monthly a week before the last weekend of each Month with the deadline being 5 days prior to this.

The deadline for the February Newsletter will be the 16th February.

Any members can submit photos, stories etc to the TBO newsletter.

Charles powerart@bigpond.net.au



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

WEB FORUM ONLY

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	Mick Atzeni &
	Ann Alcock
Outings coordinator	Martin Clark

CLUB REPORTS & NOTICES

OUTING REPORT REDWOOD PARK, 29-08-20

BY MICHAEL ATZENI

There was a nice turnout for the August outing, our first (apart from the July raptor census) since the pandemic broke, and despite the late change in venue (originally Ballard) due to a tightening of restrictions in the Lockyer Valley region.

Diversity proved highest between the parking area and the creek crossing. Mistletoebird, Scarlet, White-throated, White-naped, Lewin's and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters were added in quick succession. Grey Fantails and Eastern Yellow Robins were common. A bright plumaged Rufous Fantail made a fleeting appearance while Rufous Whistlers were cause for a strain in the neck. Little Lorikeets were heard overhead.

At the creek crossing, Red-browed Finches, White-browed Scrubwrens and a Varied Triller were added. It was very quiet up in the dry vine scrub. A male Varied Triller, inexplicably missing its tail, showed well. Surprisingly, no Regent Bowerbirds, figbirds or orioles were seen or heard. And the only pigeons in evidence were Peaceful and Bar-shouldered Doves.



Varied Triller female

Back at the creek, Double-barred and Red-browed Finches loitered in the vicinity of a sad-looking rock pool, which was little more than a puddle; the only water in the creek, a far cry from how it was in the '70s and '80s; a lovely chain of ponds and flowing. A raptor spotted overhead had the photographers clicking madly, hoping to claim my \$200 reward for a Red Goshawk, a species recorded there historically. Alas, just a Brown. Around the picnic area, White-throated Treecreeper, White-throated Gerygone and a female Rufous Whistler showed, while a Shining Bronze-cuckoo called in the distance.

Redwood Park holds a special place in the hearts of many club members. Reminiscing with Barb Collyer and Richard Thomis, they both declared Speckled Warbler as the bird they associate with Redwood. It was a lifer for Barb, on an outing I led last century. For me, Redwood will always be associated with my first club outing. I was thrilled seeing my first Yellow-faced Honeyeater only to be blown away by a male Rose Robin. That day, Redwood and I got hitched.

To wind up, we decided to drive to Highfields Falls to check out the Powerful Owls and we were rewarded with unobstructed views of both adults. Seriously impressive birds! A memorable 'lifer' for some. The icing on the cake for all.

Thanks to all who came.

Attendees: Barb Collyer, Richard Thomis, Jimsie Varghese, Sacha Dyson-Holland, Dakota Dyson-Holland, Marie Gittins, Sandy Robertson, Mardy Clark, Michael Murtagh, Janina and Charlie Dove, Helen Proctor-Brown, Steven Doyle, Suzanne Combes, Michael Atzeni

REDWOOD PARK SPECIES LIST:

Redwood Park 29-08-2020		16 members	19 species
Brown Goshawk		Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Little Lorikeet		Scarlet Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Shining Bronze-cuckoo		White-throated Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
White-browed Scrubwren		White-naped Honeyeater	Double-barred Finch
Weebill		Varied Triller	Red-browed Finch
White-throated Gerygone		Rufous Whistler	
Lewin's Honeyeater		Rufous Fantail	

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS, WEST CREEK, KEARNEY SPRINGS, 16 JAN 2021

Our traditional end-of-year Breakfast with the Birds gathering was held over to 16th January and was also our first social event of 2021. Fifteen of us commandeered the rotunda at West Creek along Creedon Drive. It was a chance to catch up with old members and to introduce newer members, and for the executive to update everyone.



Suzanne Combes ©

In between Barb Collyer taunting us with her bacon and egg breakfast and discussing club matters, Ann did a photo shoot of some unsuspecting members as part of a new initiative for the newsletter. Meanwhile, others poked along the creek, some birding, some focusing on their bird photography, some just enjoying a chat with kindred spirits. Nothing unusual showed on the day but our secretary, Suzanne, retrospectively shared a cracking photo she took of a female Figbird in flight, which was the highlight for me.

I hope everyone left a little wiser about the birdlife of West Creek parklands, which has produced some local rarities in recent years in the stretch between Stenner and Spring Streets, notably, Baillon's and Spotless Crake, and Australian Little Bittern.

Thanks to all who attended. Barb, more bacon and eggs next time, please.

Mick Atzeni

Attendees: Marie Gittins, Mike McGoldrick, Sandy Robertson, Charles and Janina Dove, Ann Alcock, Suzanne Combes, Mardy Clark, Barbara Collyer, Mick Atzeni, Sacha, Shannon, Dakota and Dalton Dyson-Holland, Helen Proctor-Brown and Penny Ackland

Species list West Creek, Kearney's Spring 16th January

West Creek, Kearney Springs, 16 Jan 2021		15 attended	41 species
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Nankeen Kestrel	Noisy Miner	Magpie-lark
Australian Wood Duck	Purple Swampphen	Little Friarbird	Australian Reed-Warbler
Pacific Black Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Silvereye
Hardhead	Eurasian Coot	Australasian Figbird	Welcome Swallow
Rock Dove	Masked Lapwing	Olive-backed Oriole	Common Starling
Spotted Dove	Galah	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna
Crested Pigeon	Little Corella	Pied Butcherbird	Mistletoebird
Australasian Darter	Rainbow Lorikeet	Australian Magpie	House Sparrow
Little Black Cormorant	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Pied Currawong	
Cattle Egret	Satin Bowerbird	Willie Wagtail	
Australian White Ibis	Superb Fairy-wren	Torresian Crow	



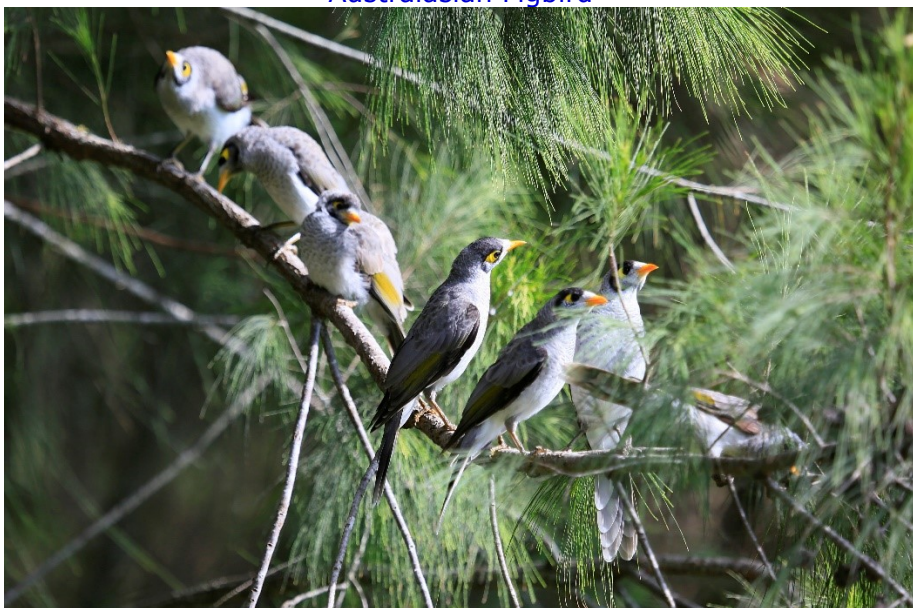
Group Photo by Mick Atzeni



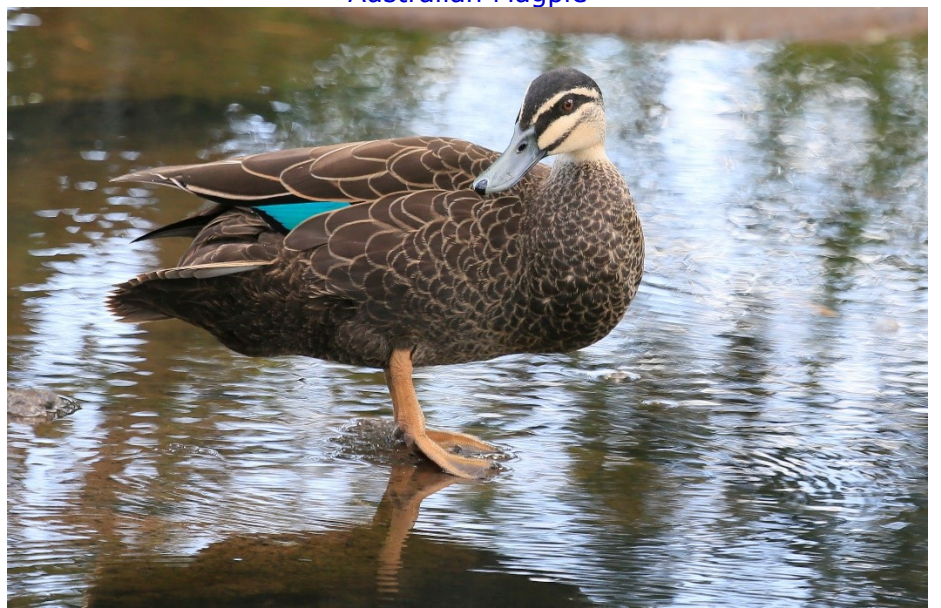
Australasian Figbird



Australian Magpie



Noisy Miner



Pacific Black Duck

More photos from breakfast with the Birds

CLUB PROFILES

by Ann Alcock



Name: Sandy Robertson

Position in TBO: President

How long have you been a member of TBO?

I can't remember 😊😊

How did you first get involved with TBO?

I work in Natural Resource Management and had been conducting fauna surveys, but my bird knowledge was a bit lacking so I joined the club to improve my knowledge, especially of the smaller, more cryptic, hard to recognise bushland birds.

What do you enjoy about being a member of TBO?

Going on the outings with like-minded people and learning from others who know more than me.

How long have you been interested in birding?

Always loved the outdoors and animals, birds are just a part of that. I am fortunate to live in a property with plenty of bushland around me, so am constantly surrounded by the sounds of birds calling. I have a list of 70+ species (and counting) that I have observed on my property/in my front yard. You couldn't pay me to live anywhere else 😊

Your most memorable birding experience:

That's almost as difficult as the next question.... Seeing a Rose Robin in my garden; finally identifying the red flash I was seeing in my garden, after chasing it around for a few days with my camera, to be a Scarlet Honeyeater; seeing eastern spinebills in my eremophila; having Nankeen Night Herons roosting in trees I planted around my dam; seeing my first Jabiru (Black-necked Stork) in the wild on a recent trip up north; stumbling upon a pair of White-bellied Sea- Eagles (super close), when working at Lawn Hill station in 2019, hearing the first calls of the Channel-billed Cuckoos and Eastern Koels in late Sept early October each year signalling the coming summer; seeing Spangled Drongos in the tree belt I planted behind my house.....like I said too many, I could go on 😊

Your favourite bird?

Hahah that's impossible to answer.

Is there anything else you would like to see the TBO doing?

I'd like to see more people put their hand up to lead an outing. You don't have to be an expert, just take us and show us around your favourite birding spot. More people contributing pictures and articles for the newsletter. We have some workshops on topics of interest planned this year, so seeing members support that and attending, and also letting us know what topics they would be interested to learn more about.

What are your other interests?

Far too many! I also run the SEQ brumby Association (rescuing and rehoming brumbies that have been removed from State forests and National Parks), I am treasurer of Horse Archery Queensland - Lockyer Valley, run a farm, work away as an ecologist for long stints occasionally, and am currently renovating 2 houses, so I am extremely grateful for the awesome management committee we have helping out this year and particularly for Charles for taking on the newsletter, which I was struggling to find the time to do.



Buff-banded Rail with juvenile

The Buff-banded Rail is a regular on West Creek and will often breed in different locations along the creek so one to keep an eye open for when visiting West Creek in Toowoomba

Image courtesy of Ann Alcock

CONGREGATION, OR MIGRATION??

By Chris Cameron. 11.8.2020

Beginning in early March 2019, I began a regular commute from home in Toowoomba down to a new compost-making worksite at Whyalla Feedlot, between Texas and Yelarbon. The normal travel route took me out to Millmerran and then down through Inglewood to get to work. The trip took me through the extensive areas of forestry country on either side of Inglewood, where I had high hopes of seeing a few interesting species, despite the long-running dry weather.

For quite a while there was little of interest to be seen, families of Choughs were quite numerous, along with the odd Common Bronzewing. Lack of flowering trees and surface water seemed to be major limiting factors, as well as it being Winter!

It was not until late June that there was some rain to put a dint in the drought that had so much of the country down to near-bare ground.

Just enough to make a little surface water in places where birds, animals and the odd reptile could come in for a drink.

Towards the end of July, I spotted what looked like a promising spot where water was holding in an old "borrow-pit" a short distance off the road about 12km South of Inglewood, in the densely timbered forestry country, the only obvious water around for quite some distance. It seemed well worth a bit of a look, and on the 29th July, I stopped for the first time to investigate!

It was a rolling, chattering mass of birds, mostly honeyeaters, that had somehow found this isolated pond, and were using almost every fallen branch as perches to drink or splash from! In the 20 minutes that I gave myself there I recorded 8 species of honeyeater.... Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Yellow-tufted, Yellow-faced, White-eared, Fuscous, Brown-headed and Brown Honeyeaters. I had been hanging out to see Regents, but no luck with them. There was quite a large flock of Dusky Woodswallows in the upper branches of the big Iron Barks overhead as well. The friarbirds were about neck-and-neck with Fuscous Honeyeaters for being the most numerous, a dozen or more at a time, with Yellow-faced, Noisy Miners, White-eared, Brown-headed, Yellow-tufted and Brown in descending order. At any one time there would have been up to maybe 50 individuals scattered around the perimeter of the little waterhole. With pretty thick overhanging and surrounding timber, it was a relatively safe place for them to gather and chat!



Next visit, about 10 days later, had much the same as far as numbers go, but a few new species, Striped and Black-chinned Honeyeater, a few and only one pair respectively, a pair of Spotted Pardalotes, a single Olive-backed Oriole, and a small group of Double-barred Finches.

Most of these, once they had finished their drink, simply dispersed back into the timber, not heading in any particular direction.

Next visit was mid-August, where the friarbirds were still coming down in numbers, but were all heading off South once they had rested a while, fairly obviously on migration. Still, plenty of the smaller species, a few Striped Honeyeaters and a couple of Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters this time, along with Pale-headed Rosellas and a couple of Rainbow Lorikeets. I did see a pair of smaller, long-tailed, lorikeet-like parrots going over very fast. Sadly, they did not stop, so unsure of them.

A couple of bits of side interest this time when two Red-necked Wallabies, both does, came in for separate drinks. They did not seem too worried that I was sitting quietly nearby, and each spent close to 20 minutes lapping rather than sucking their drink up. It seemed strange that a potentially vulnerable animal would spend so long drinking, head down, in an area where there were dogs about....By early September, the waterhole was almost dry again, still large numbers of birds were visiting, and I added Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Spotted Bowerbird, White-throated Treecreeper, White-naped Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Restless Flycatcher, Eastern Yellow Robin, Superb Fairy-wren and Silvereye. A real surprise was seeing a family group, two adults and two juvenile Pacific Bazas coming down to drink. Seeing any hawk drinking is unusual, especially so with these when they eat fairly juicy phasmids! Have had a similar family group of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos a couple of times, and a pair of Brown Treecreepers occasionally.



By early October, the little waterhole had given out completely, so the birds obviously had to relocate. By the middle of the month there had finally been some quite widespread rain, surface water was abundant and almost nothing at the little waterhole.

Since then, with the odd bits of rain we have been getting, there is widespread surface water available, and it is often near-silent when I have a look in passing at the waterhole, so very different from this time last year. It seemed that the friarbirds were on migration South. They would come in a couple of dozen at a time, rest for a while, drink, bathe sometimes, then head off in a mob again. The smaller honeyeaters, especially the Fuscous that were so much in the majority, seemed to loosely disperse after their visit, that it did not seem like they were on a migration flow. However, the near total absence this year has me wondering??



At the time of finishing this little note, early September 2020, the little waterhole is near to brim full, but so is almost every other bit of a depression around the area, so the wildlife can get a drink almost anywhere, no need to congregate. About the only surprise was getting a single Diamond Dove, along with a few Peaceful Doves, on 30/8/20. No honeyeater activity at all.

Chris Cameron, Toowoomba, 2/9/2020



Diamond Dove



Leaden Flycatcher



Yellow-faced Honeyeater



Fuscous Honeyeater

Images supplied by Chris Cameron