



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

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

February 2023

EDITION 487

BIRD OF THE MONTH



Pheasant Coucal

Picnic Point Toowoomba QLD 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

Outings & Events Details	P1-2
Club Reports	P2-3
Notices & Articles of Interest	P4-5
Bird of the Month	P6



OUTINGS & EVENTS 2023

Wednesday March 8th	Thiess Park- Toowoomba Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Saturday March 18th	Bowenville/Jondaryan Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Saturday March 25th	Cooby Dam Regan Scheuber 0407 274 133

Website: www.tboc.org.au

Postal address:

P.O. Box 4730

Toowoomba East QLD Australia 4350

Email: tboc4350@gmail.com

Phone: 0499 395 485

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter
is 26th March 2023**

Charles powerart@bigpond.net.au

2023 CHALLENGE

125 species

Please submit your sightings for 2023

Management Committee:

President	Mick Atzeni
Vice-president	Sandy Robertson
Secretary	Peter Everest
Treasurer	Ann Alcock
Media officer	Ann Alcock
Editor	Charles Dove
Outings Coordinator	-
Records Officer	Pat McConnell
Facebook Admin	Sandy Robertson
	Mick Atzeni
	Ann Alcock

UPCOMING OUTINGS

MIDWEEK WALK

Thiess Park

Date: Wednesday 8th March

Leader: Charles Dove

Meet location: 178-194 Handley St, Darling Heights QLD <https://goo.gl/maps/mLNRg3LWwOhptH5m7>

Time: 8:00am.

Approx 4km - Please bring morning tea

RSVP: To Charles Dove by 12:00 midday Tuesday 7th March 2023
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigond.net.au

Outing details: slight downhill and slight uphill grades

In the event of inclement weather contact Charles Dove on 0417 422 302 by 7.30am
Closed footwear required.

WEEKEND WALKS

Bowenville/Jondaryan Revised Date

Date: Saturday 18th March 2023

Leader: Charles Dove

Location: Bowenville Reserve Norwin Road <https://goo.gl/maps/kBVnBY1XPubEhpFp7>

Time: 8.00am

Approx 2km – 6km - Please bring morning tea and lunch

RSVP: To Charles Dove by 12:00 midday Friday 17th March 2023
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigond.net.au

Outing details: level grades grades. **2 locations**

In the event of inclement weather contact Charles Dove on text 0417 422 302
Closed footwear required.

Cooby Dam

Date: Saturday 25th March 2023

Leader: Regan Scheuber

Location: Cooby Dam Loveday Cove <https://goo.gl/maps/Wkqp7N2Dqdzvhe7e7> near boat ramp

Time: 7.00am

Approx 4-5hrs - Please bring morning tea, and lunch if you wish.

RSVP: To Regan Scheuber by 12:00 midday Friday 24th March 2023
Text 0407 274 133 or email regan.scheuber@live.com.au

Outing details: level grades.

In the event of inclement weather contact Regan Scheuber
Closed footwear required.

MIDWEEK WALK

Black Gully Reserve, Newtown
8/2/2023

by Michael Murtagh

A small, select (7) group of Toowoomba Bird Observers met at the carpark at the end of Moran St at 8am on Wednesday 8 February to be guided by Charles Dove through Black Gully Reserve.

First, we had to cross at the lights at the busy intersection of Bridge and Tor Streets and we were immediately rewarded as Charles spotted and identified, high above us, a Brown Goshawk while we waited for the lights to change.

The other highlight of the walk was also spotted very early on – a juvenile Tawny Frogmouth. It had much darker plumage than I am used to seeing, as it blended in with the darker bark of the tree it had chosen to perch on. It was quite exposed and since we couldn't spot any adult birds, we feared for its safety, given the number of Pied Currawongs and Noisy Miners in the vicinity.



You will see from the attached list that most of our sightings were of “common” species, though I always delight in hearing the distinctive repertoire of a Satin Bowerbird. His bower was close by as blue objects were seen, but the actual bower well hidden.

At the end of Black Gully, just on Mort St, we viewed some interesting industrial architecture which could interest an archaeologist specialising in early industrial buildings. As we had no “old” *Toowoobanites* in our group no one was able to say exactly what this abandoned building used to be. We would be interested in your local knowledge.



Thank you to Charles for leading these mid-week walks to local and easily accessible areas. We also welcomed Kathy Wilk from Tweed Heads who has joined TBO as she expects to visit Toowoomba regularly throughout the year.

Black Gully Reserve 8/2/2023		28 species	7 members
Rock Dove	Galah	Satin Bowerbird	Grey Butcherbird
Spotted Dove	Little Corella	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
Crested Pigeon	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Tawny Frogmouth	Rainbow Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Torresian Crow
Australian White Ibis	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Red Wattlebird	Magpie-lark
Brown Goshawk	Australian King-Parrot	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Silvereye
Masked Lapwing	Pale-headed Rosella	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Common Myna

Links

Family farewells pet cockatoo after 54-year friendship

When John was given a cockatoo at the age of eight, he had no idea his pet would remain his companion into his grandparenting years. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

Breeding birds & multiplying mice: what next for Gough?

<https://www.goughisland.com/post/breeding-birds-multiplying-mice-what-next-for-gough>

Budgie boom in outback Central Australia as rain creates perfect breeding conditions - ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-18/budgie-boom-after-rain-in-outback-central-australia/101937764>

Canberra's superb parrots caught in housing crisis

<https://reporter.anu.edu.au/all-stories/canberras-superb-parrots-caught-in-housing-crisis>

Christmas Island red-tailed tropicbird under threat by feral cats and climate change - ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-22/christmas-island-bird-loses-third-of-its-population/101795298>

Dodo, eagle, sparrow ... the 10 birds that changed the world for ever

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/feb/19/dodo-eagle-sparrow-the-10-birds-that-changed-the-world-for-ever?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Early 2023 Update – The Fairywren Project

<https://fairywrenproject.org/2023/02/06/early-2023-update/>

One hundred ducks reportedly found dead at Victoria's Bells Swamp, as authorities investigate - ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-12/ducks-found-dead-in-bells-swamp-victoria/101963290>

Record flooding in New South Wales wetlands triggers bird breeding bonanza

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-11/record-flooding-in-nsw-triggeres-bird-breeding-bonanza-/101812042?s=03>

Recovering Paradise: Lord Howe Island

<https://vimeo.com/739579902/eb83d6980d>

NOTICES & ARTICLES of INTEREST

UNCOMMON GARDEN VISITORS GATHER.

January 26th 2023. by Chris Cameron

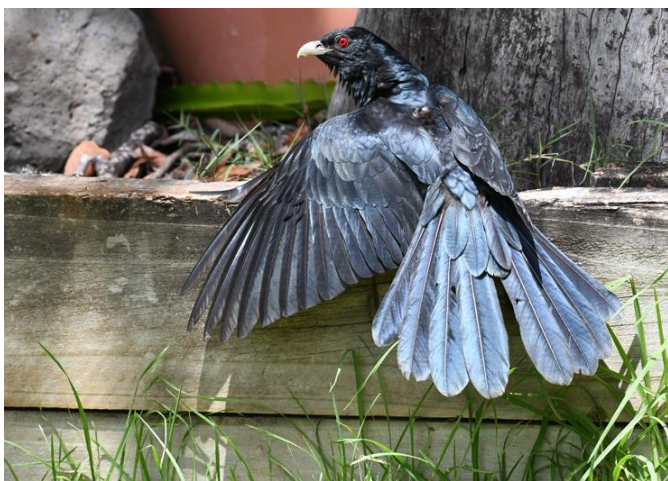
In the past few months I have been able to fulfil a long held desire to attract to and enjoy a lot more birds in my garden with a simple feeding platform and a water point. I have a considerable cat problem ... roaming domestics, rather than ferals, but equally destructive to our feathered friends ... being in a too-confined area to be able to lead-inject said felines is a problem.... The easy answer initially was to borrow an elevated feeding stand from Mick Atzeni and get the process going.

Sadly, where I live, and likely as a factor of having too many felines, I have no small species as regular visitors, the main residents are all large, Magpies, Pied Butcherbirds, Magpie Larks, Galahs, Satin Bowerbirds, and more recently Little Corellas and Koels.

All enjoy having a cool and clean drink available, and all seem to enjoy the odd meal. The diet is as varied as I can make it, Wild Bird Mix that almost everything picks through, finely cut mature cheese that Magpies, Butcherbirds and Peewees love, and some fruit, Papaya or Avocado from the garden tree for Bowerbirds and the Koels....



It makes for some interesting combinations at the breakfast table, as here, where Galah, Bowerbird and Koel seem unlikely partners!



Comfortable Koels.

Normally a quite shy species, the pair of Koels that have been pretty much living in my garden are becoming a lot less so since they have been enjoying the amenities!

They both enjoy sunning, but were initially wary, and there were only fleeting chances for pictures... However, as they became much more used to my movements, they relaxed more, and now both enjoy coming out onto the lawn to enjoy the sun!

They often do this as a couple, though shallow depth-of-field makes getting both in focus quite a challenge!

TBOC Presentation Report from School of Total Education, Warwick

The Grade 5/6 class enjoyed bird watching for ODED (Outdoor Education) accompanied by Charles & Mike from The Toowoomba Bird Observers Club.

The children identified many species of birds, butterflies and dragonflies while exploring nature sites around the Warwick area.

After returning to school, Mike and Charles continued the session with an interesting presentation about endangered birds that can be found in our local area.



A big thank you for the resources donated by The Toowoomba Bird Observers Club to the students, and 2 books and 7 posters for the library.



Images courtesy of Rachael Eastwell

PHEASANT COUCAL

Scientific Name: *Centropus phasianinus*
Atlas Number: 349

image by Charles dove
Text courtesy <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

Description:

A large 'pheasant-like', ground-dwelling cuckoo, the Pheasant Coucal has a long tail and short rounded wings. In its breeding plumage, it has a black head, neck and underbody with the upperparts and wings reddish-brown with black and cream barring and the black tail is barred orange. Out of breeding, the head and back return to a reddish chestnut colour and the underparts are cinnamon brown, with all streaked boldly white. The eye is red. Sexes are similar in plumage, but females are larger than males. Young birds look like paler, non-breeding adults with orange spots on the head, neck and upper body. When disturbed, coucals run rather than fly, or fly clumsily, plunging into cover. Unlike most other cuckoos, the Pheasant Coucal is not a nest parasite.



Distribution:

The Pheasant Coucal is found in northern and eastern Australia, as well as New Guinea and East Timor. It is found from the Pilbara, Western Australia, to south-eastern New South Wales. In New South Wales it is mainly found east of the Great Dividing Range from the Queensland border to the southern Hunter region, with some around Sydney and further south to Illawarra.

Habitat:

The Pheasant Coucal prefers dense understorey vegetation, particularly grasses, rushes, bracken and sedges, in open forests and woodlands, and around wetlands. Often found in sugar cane plantations near wetlands, on farmlands with thick grasses and weed-infested thickets, such as Lantana. Often seen in parks, gardens and along roads or railway lines.

Feeding:

The Pheasant Coucal feeds on the ground on large insects, frogs, lizards, eggs and young of birds and, sometimes, small mammals.

Breeding:

Pheasant Coucals form lasting pairs and, unlike other Australian cuckoos, build their own nests and raise their young themselves. The nest is usually hidden in thick grass or sugar cane or in weedy thickets and is a platform of sticks, grass or rushes, lined with leaves and grasses. The male usually incubates the eggs and feeds the young, with the female helping with feeding. More than one clutch can be laid in one season.

Living with us

Pheasant Coucals have benefited from land clearing where weedy thickets have grown up, especially of Blackberry or Lantana. However, have been adversely affected by widening urban development and where overgrazing by livestock has occurred.