



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

## NEWSLETTER

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

October 2023

EDITION 495

### BIRD OF THE MONTH

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### Fairy Martin

Visits and nests at West Creek, Toowoomba

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### OUTINGS & EVENTS 2023

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter  
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter  
is 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

Charles [powerart@bigpond.net.au](mailto:powerart@bigpond.net.au)

Saturday December 16th	<b>Earlybird breakfast</b> Tony and Jennie Bond
Saturday January 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Beginner's outing</b> Dan Bishop

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

## WELCOME to new members for October

Srinath Subramani  
Hans & Judy Beste

#### Management Committee:

President	Mick Atzeni: 0499 395 485
Vice-president	Jarrod Kath: 0439 705 417
Secretary	Peter Everist: 0418 733 785
Treasurer	Ann Alcock: 0418 189 760
Media officer	Ann Alcock
Editor	Charles Dove: 0417 422 302
Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond. Dan Bishop: 0401 135 156
Records Officer	Pat McConnell:
Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni Ann Alcock

## EARLYBIRD BREAKFAST

### HIGHFIELDS

**Date:** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December

**Leaders:** Tony and Jennie Bond

**Time:** 7:00am.

**Meet location:** 9 Tara Court, Highfields - <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WfC6KcfGEWcW6AE87>

**Approx -** Tea and coffee and bread rolls provided. BBQ available.  
Please BYO breakfast.

**Parking:** Please do not park on verges in Tara Court. There is room for about 6-7 cars on our drive if first people squeeze up. If no room on arrival (or don't want to be blocked in) park on Clarke Road - short walk but lots of space.

**RSVP:** Tony & Jennie by 12:00 midday Friday 15th Dec  
Tony Mobile: text 0412 638 406 or email [jtbond19b@protonmail.com](mailto:jtbond19b@protonmail.com)

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## EARLY BIRD WALK

An introduction to birds for all

### PRINCE HENRY DRIVE

**Date:** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Leader:** Dan Bishop

**Time:** 7:00 am

**Meet location:** Prince Henry Drive. Near Katoomba Point Lookout  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/EzcgKjM4XJrfN8Tq6>

**Approx 2 & 3km -** BYO morning tea,

**Outing details:** Moderate walking. **Closed footwear required.** In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

No toilets at this location.

Nearest rest area is at Bridge St., Trailhead, Bridge Street  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/3P3UZ5nMWw4Gm6D78>

**RSVP:** To Dan Bishop by 12:00 noon Friday 26th January 2024  
Txt 04019 135 156 or email [danbishop@internode.on.net](mailto:danbishop@internode.on.net)

# AGM MEETING REPORT

Tuesday 24 October 2023

## President's Report

Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to reflect on our activities and highlights over the past year.

### Outings

This year we've continued to work more closely with other clubs, particularly BirdLife SQ's Darling Downs group. It began with the outings schedule, trying to minimise outing date clashes so members of both organisations were able to have the best of both worlds. We also participated in quarterly joint outings, surveying private properties in the Lockyer uplands as part of the BLUCAP initiative facilitated by Roger Jaensch through Lockyer Uplands Catchment Inc (LUCI). Charles Dove continued TBO his monthly mid-week outings, and I led a joint outing with the U3A birding group to Upper Lockyer.

Outing destinations included Sandy Robertson's Hirstglen property (for 'Brekky with the Birds' Christmas breakup), Oakey, Cooby Dam, Highfields, Ravensbourne NP, Bowenvile/Jondaryan and various local parks and reserves, including West Creek. My sincere thanks to our hosts, leaders and to all who attended outings.

### Newsletters and social media

The monthly newsletters have been well-supported by members regularly providing articles, snippets and photos. I particularly want to congratulate those members who have started using the newsletter to record their adventures. It's a good practice that many members have done over the years, and everyone benefits.

Behind the scenes, the historical, hardcopy newsletters have been scanned and uploaded to the website. Our Facebook page and website have continued to be important tools to promote the club. Many thanks to Charlie, Tony and Jennie Bond for doing the scanning, and Ann and Sandy for taking care of social media.

### Surveys and Interesting records

The annual Raptor census resulted in 11 species and 493 birds (about 100 more than last year).

Swift Parrot Search co-ordinator. Beau Meney from Birdlife Australia was able to time a visit to SEQ and instruct us this year, and we were able to show him the sites of historical records. Beau has established several publicly accessible sites for the purpose of future surveys for Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters. He also left some valuable resources about Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters to share.

The annual October Species Census resulted in an exceptional 149 species. Thanks to the 12 participants. (We'd like to see more participation this year.)

From the monthly surveys, 204 species were recorded during 2022 and reported in the Annual Summary. Thanks, Pat, for compiling this.

Powerful Owl monitoring during the breeding season resulted in confirmation of successful breeding at two known sites. Three members attended a Powerful Owl Project workshop at Helidon in August, following the Project obtaining additional funding to work on Powerful Owls in the Lockyer Valley.

No new species were officially added this year, but the Rarities Committee is awaiting a submission for a most bizarre sighting, namely, four Crested Terns over Toowoomba by Pat McConnell and Kath O'Donnell on a very windy day in August.

Coming out of a very wet and cold winter last year, and a bumper breeding season out west, made for an interesting year locally with an unexpected influx of some western species including Red-backed Kingfisher and Western Gerygone at multiple locations.

Other nice records were:

- King Quail and Little Grassbird near Westbrook
- Black-breasted Button-quail regularly in Redwood Park
- Breeding Powerful Owls (two pairs x two young) following widespread breeding failures the previous wet winter
- Spotless and Australian Spotted Crakes across multiple sites.

Congratulations to Regan Scheuber for finding a Common Greenshank at Cooby Dam, possibly the first record in the Toowoomba LGA. And congrats to Dan Bishop for the club's first Barking Owl record for Highfields.

### **Events, campaigns and projects**

- A Birddata training workshop was conducted by Roger Jaensch. A great initiative by Roger and many thanks
- The 'Flyways' documentary on migratory waders was well attended. Thanks to Scot McPhie for organising this local screening.
- BirdLife Australia are currently negotiating with DigiVol to have our historical monthly records (1975 to 2000) entered into Birddata.
- Bill Jolly's comprehensive monthly records for their Helidon property, 'Abberton', have been scanned and supplied to LUCI for the Birds of Lockyer Uplands Conservation Action Plan (BLUCAP) project.
- In July, we attended a workshop about the Border to Bunyas project, a project by the Great Eastern Ranges (GER) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to create wildlife corridors.
- The campaign to stop Stage 2 approval of the Helidon Rocket Engine Testing facility is ongoing. I've represented the club at the Lockyer Community Action meetings and attended LVRC Council meetings.
- The Painted Honeyeater Project took on a broader scope and is now called Habitat Jondaryan. It resulted in the recent 'Bioblitz' at Jondaryan by ~30 volunteers, including a number of TBO members who helped with bird surveys on privately owned properties and public land, to gain base line biodiversity data ahead of proposed habitat regeneration.
- We raised concerns about the proposed Inland Rail route through the remnant woodland at the northern end of Ashlands Drive, Helidon Spa
- For the Birds of Lockyer Uplands Conservation Action Plan (BLUCAP), TBO and BirdLife SQ-Darling Downs members conducted seasonal standardised surveys on three properties. Thanks to the owners, and to Roger Jaensch and Diane Guthrie for facilitating these visits.
- Charlie and I re-visited two local State primary schools, Goombungee and Gowrie Junction, presenting them with additional resources and taking students on a bird walk around school.

- James Blackburn and I guided the Grade 1 Fairholme girls on their annual Waterbird Habitat excursion. Thanks to their teacher, TBO member Eddy, her class already knew all the birds!
- Jarrod Kath and Chris MacColl are analysing our 20 years of raptor census data and have drafted a journal paper. Congratulations to Chris for having his paper on Black Falcons (published last December).
- We've requested bird tourism be written into the TRC's next Tourism and Events Strategy, which is still being finalised.

Thank you to the committee—Sandy, Ann, Peter, Charlie, Pat, Jennie, Tony and Regan—for all you do for this club. Teamwork is the only way this club can survive. It's a blessing knowing you have a committee that supports each other.

A special thanks to Sandy who is stepping down as Vice-president. In her roles over the years, including President, Sandy has kept this club ticking along on more than one occasion. We're sorry to see Sandy leave the committee and wish her all the best. Regan is also stepping down and moving to the Gold Coast. Regan contributed many interesting sightings during his mammoth effort to record as many species as he can in the Toowoomba LGA. Thank you Regan and we wish you all the best, too.

I also acknowledge and thank Charlie for all he achieved. In addition to putting the newsletter together each month, Charlie has produced several new posters and walkabout sheets as resources for schools, and for the Council during the Carnival of Flowers.

I am very pleased to see our membership is growing; it is possibly the highest it has been. I'm aware some members are unable to attend outings but continue to support the club. Thank you for your loyalty. Two members are not well; I ask you to keep Annette Bourke and Suzanne Combes in your thoughts and prayers.

Finally, we've started planning for the club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in two years. We look forward to sharing more about that over the coming months.

Mick Atzeni, President

### [Cr Megan O'Hara Sullivan - Toowoomba Regional Council](#)

24 October at 19:51 ·

I went to the most gorgeous lecture tonight; "The Unmasking of Our Mystery Lyrebird, Come and Meet Albert".

Unfortunately, I didn't get a pic of Anna Fearnley, the deliverer of said speech. Anna was so engaging, obsessive even (to use her term).

I was at the [Toowoomba Bird Observers](#) AGM. Pictured here with President Mick Atzeni, 1975 founding member Bill Jolly and the very aptly named Charles Dove who takes charge of the newsletter.





## A Big congratulations to two of our long-term members being accepted as Life Members to TBO

### Michael Atzeni – Life Member #3

I am very pleased to announce that the Toowoomba Bird Observers executive have voted unanimously to make Michael Atzeni a Life Member of the Club. Mick was the 69<sup>th</sup> member of the Club and has been a member for over 44 years. During that time Mick has made a substantial contribution to the Club. He was first on the executive in 1981 as Records Officer – a position he held for four years. He first took on the office of President in 1990 and since then has been president on numerous occasions. He has also been Vice-President, Records Officer (again), Editor and Website Manager.

He has led numerous outings, written many articles for the newsletter and supplied countless Members' Bird Notes and monthly checklists. He has added a staggering 36 plus new species to the Club list.

He has forged strong ties with other local clubs, including the Toowoomba Field Naturalists, Birdlife Australia Southern Downs and the Friends of the Escarpment Parks, to name a few. He has overseen many changes to the Club, and over the years his contribution has been outstanding. Well done, Mick, and well deserved.

Pat McConnell



### Pat McConnell – Life Member #4

Pat joined the TBO 42 years ago, in August 1981. Since that time he has become not only a reliable contributor to our ongoing studies in this remarkably rich birding corner of Australia, but has also served the club in many formal roles, including Newsletter Editor, Vice-president, President in 1992 and importantly as a meticulous Records Officer over many years up to and including the present, as well as organising the club's Annual Surveys and Raptor Surveys.

In short, an invaluable member of the TBO and a pillar of the Club's well-earned respect in the Australian birding community, along with my personal respect for his commitment, ability and dependability – all in all a good friend to the club and its members.

For all of the above reasons, I propose that Pat's contributions merit recognition in the form of the award of Life Membership of the Toowoomba Bird Observers.

Bill Jolly



## MID-WEEK WALK REPORT Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**CAMBOOYA** by Tony Bond

The 11th October was the second Wednesday of the month so it was time for another midweek walk. On this occasion Charles introduced the group to Hodgson Creek in Rolleston Park at Cambooya and eight attendees met at the picnic area in Ramsay Street for an 8am start.

Our first impression was that there must be a pigeon fancier in the area because there were Rock Doves everywhere - on roofs, on fences, on the road and on the power lines. We even had flocks of several dozen circling overhead. Meanwhile, anyone who dared to visit the toilet in the park risked being swooped by a guardian Magpie - but we had been forewarned by a council signage so no serious damage was done. Still at the park we noted Rainbow Lorikeets and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets while a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo posed high up on a silo by the railway line.

After a short stroll toward Hodgson Creek we turned through a well-hidden gap in the scrub that became a path heading east along the creek edge. Within just a few metres there we sighted Silvereyes, Superb Fairy-wrens, Black-faced Monarch and female Rufous Whistler. As the initial dense cover became progressively more open we spotted a Golden-headed Cisticola perched on a slender stem on the far side. All the while we were accompanied by the constant song of Brown Honeyeaters that busied themselves in the creek-side bushes. The distinctive call of White-throated Gerygones could be heard high in the eucalypts but they were unfortunately too far to be sighted until conveniently one flew to a casuarina beside the path. A Yellow-rumped Thornbill was also seen.

A small bridge that led onto private property was our turnaround point. Before backtracking, we noted Pacific Black Ducks, then an Australasian Grebe in a rocky pool. Charles photographed an LBB that he later confirmed was a juvenile Red-capped Robin.

After returning to the road, we crossed over and followed the creek west. This side was more open and, as it was beginning to warm up, small birds were becoming less evident. We did see Australian White Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis further up. There were more Pacific Black Ducks and several Australian Wood Ducks. We also found the male Rufous Whistler.

At one point, after a few of us had managed to get ahead, we were called back by Charles who was pointing up at a small tree. There, on a branch in plain sight, was an Australian Hobby that we had all walked right past. That was certainly the highlight of the day.

We looped back through the houses and found another White-throated Gerygone going back and forth to a garden shrub which it entered at about head height. The thick foliage made it hard to see once inside.

We adjourned to the picnic area for morning tea, not forgetting to keep an eye on that Magpie, which seemed to dislike anyone with sunglasses. A Pale-headed Rosella was added after it arrived into a nearby tree.



Australian Hobby – by Tony Bond

Thanks again to Charles for introducing us to the spot and to Jennie for recording the 45 sightings for the day.



Wed 11th Oct 8 am Cambooya		8 Observers	45 Species
Australian Wood Duck	Little Corella	Brown Honeyeater	Tawny Grassbird
Pacific Black Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Little Grassbird
Little Grebe	Rainbow Lorikeet	White-winged Triller	Silvereye
Rock Dove	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Dove	Pale-headed Rosella	Pied Butcherbird	Common Starling
Crested Pigeon	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Magpie	Common Myna
Pied Cormorant	Sacred Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail	Zebra Finch
Australian White Ibis	Superb Fairy-wren	Torresian Crow	Double-barred Finch
Straw-necked Ibis	White-throated Gerygone	Black-faced Monarch	House Sparrow
Australian Hobby	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpie-lark	
Dusky Moorhen	Striated Pardalote	Red-capped Robin	
Masked Lapwing	Noisy Miner	Golden-headed Cisticola	

**Images from the Cambooya mid-week walk courtesy of Tony Bond.**



**Black-faced Monarch**



**Rufous Whistler**



**Double-barred Finch**



**Australralasian Grebe**



**Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**



**White-throated Gerygone**



A couple more images from Cambooya outing of the Golden-headed Cisticola by Howard Ward



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## NOTICES & ARTICLES of INTEREST

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### Fairholme College

*by Eddy van Klinken*

The girls in Year 1 at Fairholme College have been keen bird watchers this year, along with their teacher (TBO member), Eddy van Klinken. They are looking forward to their mentor, Mick Atzeni, visiting soon to answer some VERY curly questions. We wonder whether how many bird club members could answer them? On another note, it would be wonderful if the TBO could trial a focused children's birding event for 2024. The children were asked what they were curious about...

- How do they pick up spider webs to make their nests?
- How do birds fly?
- Why are rainbow lorikeets so colourful?
- How do kookaburras laugh?
- How do birds learn how to fly?
- What do birds eat?
- Why are birds all different colours?
- How do their families work? Do they have grandparents?
- How do wood ducks get food when the water is muddy?
- How do birds learn their own special calls?
- Why do birds make noises?
- How do they use their beak to make a call?
- Why do willie wagtails wag their tails?
- Why do ducks stay in the water for most of the time?
- What happens to the shells after the chick is born?

## Life and Death on the Roads...

by Amanda Robertson.

When travelling on our inland roads, it is not uncommon to come across road-kill (often, but not limited to kangaroos, wallabies and the like). And where there is road-kill, one will inevitably find a variety of birdlife, including some of our beautiful raptor species.

On our travels, we've encountered countless crows, Whistling Kites, Black Kites and the occasional Wedge-tailed Eagle feasting off the carrion on or beside the roads. Sadly, we've also encountered the remains of raptor species that have also succumbed to motor vehicle strike. Wedge-tailed Eagles are particularly susceptible, due to them being larger and slower to take off, when a vehicle approaches. So, what can we do to reduce the carnage?

When encountering sizeable road-kill, if safe to do so, I pull over (ensuring my car is well off the road). I have a kit that is always in my vehicle that includes disposable gloves, for the removal of road-kill and leather gloves, an old pillow case and old towels for the handling of live and possibly injured animals.



Whistling Kite and Grey Kangaroo by Amanda Robertson

On a recent trip west, this all came in handy, when we came across a group of Whistling Kites making the most of fresh road-kill. As it wasn't on a main highway, we had plenty of time and space to pull the car over safely. I did take the opportunity to take a photo of this amazing scene before putting on a pair of disposable gloves and pulling the carcass off the road, where the Kites could continue to feed in safety.

The leather gloves also came in handy in removing a rather grumpy Western Bearded Dragon, from the middle of road, that wasn't at all appreciative of our attempts at ensuring he/she didn't become another statistic.

## Local Birding October 2023

I thought it was time I contributed a report and, to my surprise, it is a year since I last wrote one. Much of September 22's report could be repeated, especially my apologies that, due to other commitments, including an overseas trip, I have not been able to participate in many Bird Observers' outings.

The main reason for submitting this brief report is my excitement this past week or so, of spotting Tawny Frogmouths on nests with one or two chicks each in **three** different locations (West Creek, East Creek and Norman Street). I love spotting these.

The second and just as, if not more, exciting, was seeing the Powerful Owl family. Two juveniles were low and in the open. The adults were much harder to see but were eventually located in the dense foliage of two different nearby trees. I was pointed in the right direction by a Yorkshire couple from the Sunshine Coast.

My fairly regular visits to Redwood Park haven't produced any highlights though I did meet an 'American visitor from Ipswich who was thrilled to report she had finally seen our Black-breasted Button-quails after being there for a couple of hours. I still haven't seen them after a number of years so I will just have to keep going back.

Always good to spot fellow birders when out in the field.

Michael Murtagh

*PS 28 Tawnys have been seen now.*



Tawny Frogmouths by Janice Canning's



Powerful Owls by Michael Murtagh

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## Cooby Dam Wader Lesson

Jarrold Kath followed up on my "stint" sighting at Cooby on Sunday and managed to get some much better photos. It appears to just be an exceptionally small Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on account of its proportionately longer bill, thick white eye ring and streaked vent. I had originally discounted Sharpie pretty early on because of its very small size - when I saw it, it appeared to be slightly smaller than a Black-fronted Dotterel and copped some bullying from one.

So, lesson learned - Sharpies can be that small. Sorry for any undue excitement! A couple of Jarrold's photos are attached.

Cheers,  
Regan Scheuber 9/10/23







This **Barking Owl** that was in my front yard (Highfields) early October. I was halfway out the door heading for work, when I stopped to check out a tree where something was setting off about 20 birds made up of 5 different species. Peered up into the dense canopy and staring back at me was this pair of big beautiful yellow eyes. Not a bad yard tick! By Dan Bishop

## Cooby Dam

03/10/23; 11.30 - 1.30 Cool, Clear and Windy

Four of us visited the dam today, the best sightings were two White-bellied Sea-Eagles.

Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Grebes: - Australasian, Hoary-headed and Great Crested, Australian Darter, Cormorants: - Little Pied, Great and Pied, Pelican, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Australian White Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, White-headed Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Pale-headed Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Superb Fairy-wren, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Lewin's and Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Magpie-Lark, Magpie, Torresian Crow, Australian Reed Warbler.

Cheers,  
Ross and Margie Easton and friends.

## Links

ABC News: Artificial intelligence technology to analyse status of 'cryptic' bird, bilby and kowari on outback station Shared from [ABC app](#)  
The search for the plains-wanderer will involve AI and bio-acoustic recorders to detect it and other highly vulnerable species.  
[Read the full story](#)

This tiny bird has just flown 10,000km. Getting it on camera was a miracle  
Rangers and scientists capture the moment a bird no bigger than a walnut completes a migration from the Arabian Sea to a coastal town in WA's south-west. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

'We can't stop it': Bird flu strain that has devastated seabirds worldwide will likely reach Antarctica this year  
A deadly strain of bird flu that has already killed millions of seabirds across the world is likely to land on Antarctic shores this summer, threatening already struggling penguin colonies and marine mammals. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

**Birdlife Australia's Powerful Owl Project** continues in urban NSW, Queensland with help from citizen scientists - ABC News  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-31/birdlife-australia-powerful-owl-project-citizen-scientists-help/103019658>

Brush turkeys possibly 'poisoned' at Allan Border oval  
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/fowl-play-who-s-poisoning-brush-turkeys-on-sydney-s-lower-north-shore-20230926-p5e7ot.html>

How to identify birds by sight — Weekend Birder  
<https://www.weekendbirder.com/how-to-guides/how-to-identify-birds-by-sight>

Orange-bellied parrots - ScienceDirect  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960982223008618>

### Ruckus at Highfields Falls

Jennie and I were on the last leg of a circuit around Highfields Falls on Sunday morning when we heard a tremendous ruckus high up behind some trees. Almost immediately two raptors appeared, one chasing the other.

The first was carrying a large item of prey precariously in one of its talons. These were followed by a cacophony of Noisy Miners, which is what attracted our attention in the first place.

While the first raptor perched on a dead branch to re-secure the hold on its prey, the Miners withdrew and the chasing raptor flew off and wasn't seen again.

I managed to bang off a few photos and only then could we confirm that the leading raptor was almost certainly a Brown Goshawk, especially since we have seen one near this location previously. The only picture I got of the chasing bird was a part wing and head and I'm guessing it was probably another BG.

Having secured its prey the first bird then flew off and disappeared behind the trees. The whole episode took just a few seconds.

I thought at first that the prey was a domestic chook as the incident seems to have commenced from a property just outside the park - but looking at those pinkish feet and feathered legs I don't think so - maybe someone has another suggestion.

Tony Bond



### Two Marycairn Cross Park Mementos by Chris Cameron



**Wompoo Fruit-Dove**

This was only about 12 feet up!!



**Noisy Pitta**

Then, almost at my feet!!:





This is Dad Peregrine Falcon



Then this was Mum, I was a long way back, so think she was just having a good stretch

**Nesting  
Peregrine  
Falcons**

**By Chris  
Cameron**

Then there are the kids, close to sundown...





## BIRD OF THE MONTH

### FAIRY MARTIN

Scientific Name: *Petrochelidon ariel*  
Atlas Number: 360

Image by Charles Dove

Text courtesy <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

#### DESCRIPTION:

The Fairy Martin is a small bird, with dark wings, a white underbody and a pinkish-red head. The short, slightly forked tail appears square in flight. It is gregarious, feeding in large flocks and nesting in colonies.

#### SIMILAR SPECIES:

The related Tree Martin, *H. nigricans*, has a black head and a 'dirty' white rump. Martins are generally smaller and 'dumpier' than swallows, and have a shorter, squared rather than forked tail in flight.



#### DISTRIBUTION:

The Fairy Martin is found across Australia.

#### HABITAT:

The Fairy Martin prefers open country near water, and is usually seen near its nest sites, in cliffs, culverts or bridges.

#### SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:

Seasonally migratory, moving north for winter, with some birds flying to New Guinea.

#### FEEDING:

The Fairy Martin feeds high in the air on flying insects, usually in large flocks.

#### BREEDING:

A colonial nester, the Fairy Martin builds bottle-shaped mudnests that are packed closely together on the ceilings of caves, and under bridges or other similar structures. Both sexes build the nest and share incubation and care of the young.

#### LIVING WITH US

The Fairy Martin readily uses artificial structures such as bridges to attach its nests to, and will also use inhabited buildings to make its nests on.