

July/August 2024

EDITION 503

### BIRD OF THE MONTH

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**Wedge-tailed Eagle**  
Windorah-Jundah Road

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### OUTINGS & EVENTS 2024

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Kathy Bowly [kathryn.bowly@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.bowly@gmail.com)

Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>17Bogong Court, Cabarlah</b> Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Saturday 28 September	<b>Private property, Flagstone Creek (LUCI survey with Birdlife SQDD)</b> Further details by email. Contact Sharon Warne <a href="mailto:pelican-fan@outlook.com">pelican-fan@outlook.com</a>

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

# MID-WEEK WALK

## 17 BOGONG COURT, CABARLAH

**Date:** Wednesday 11<sup>TH</sup> September 2024

**Leaders:** Charles Dove/ John Lehane

**Time:** 8:00 am

**Meet location:** 17 Bogong Court, Cabarlah  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/w3pms8YZg1F5X3uK8>

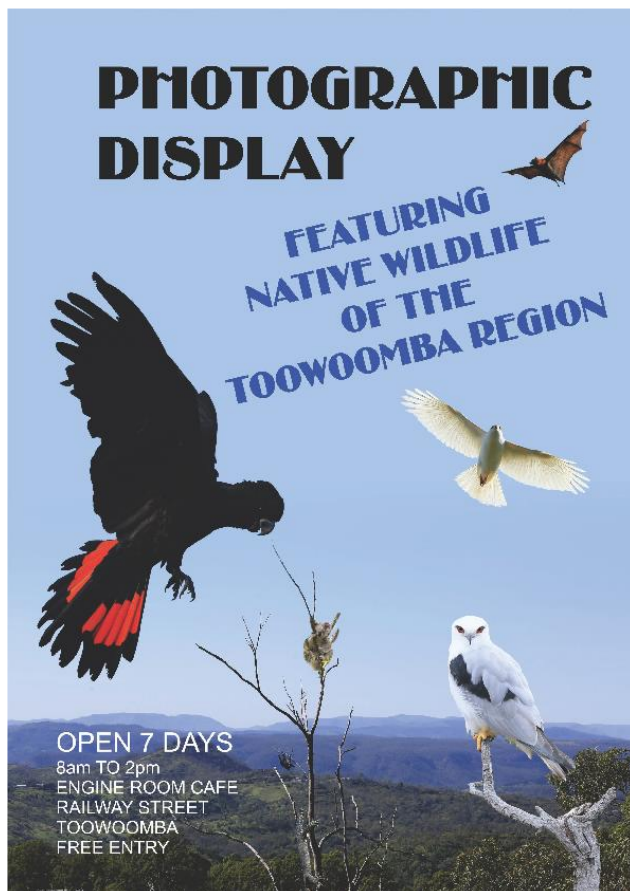
**Other details:** *Closed footwear required.* BYO morning tea.

**RSVP:** Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
Txt 0417 422 302 or email [powerart@bigpond.net.au](mailto:powerart@bigpond.net.au)

**In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.**

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**This fantastic display at the Engine Room Café in Railway Street, Toowoomba, is definitely worth a look.**



**This display is the result of a kind and generous invitation from the owners, Peter and Anne Eldridge, to use their premises to help promote the birds and other wildlife of our region.**

**Thank you, Peter and Anne!**

**And a big vote of thanks and congratulations to Charles Dove for setting up the display over recent weeks. Charles' stunning photographs, wildlife posters, and other resources have been used to great effect.**

**Please take the time to pop in and check it out – I promise you will not be disappointed.**

**The display will continue throughout September.**

## CLUB REPORTS

Midweek Walk, 10 July 2024,  
Lions Park Hodgsonvale

Kathy Bowly

As we gathered for the July midweek walk at Lions Park, Hodgson Vale we were quietly observed by a Pied Butcherbird sitting in a sapling, mere metres from us - such a handsome bird! It was a bleak, foggy morning but undeterred and positive we would eventually see some sunshine, our small group of seven headed off along Hodgson Creek to see what awaited us and we were not disappointed.

The lorikeets, both Rainbow and Scaly-breasted, were noisily feeding at the picnic area as we left and were to be found along the creek at various flowering gums. They were also on the hunt for nesting hollows with several old dead trees along the creek exhibiting some prime real estate. The Red-rumped Parrots and Musk Lorikeets were also checking the hollows along with a number of Galahs and Little Corellas.

While there was plenty of water in the creek, the water birds were distinctly absent, with only one or two Little Pied Cormorants, some Pacific Black Ducks and Wood Ducks being present. The usual candidates, like Crested Pigeon, Willie Wagtail and Magpie-lark, were spotted as we headed over Freydings Road and followed an easement that divides residential homes from some grazing land along the creek that is fairly sparsely treed. However, one small clump of trees near the path soon yielded some frenetic activity. Firstly, our attention was drawn to a Restless Flycatcher darting around the lower parts of the trees with its distinctive scissor grinding call. Higher up some Striated Pardalotes were spied feeding in amongst the foliage with a Grey Fantail flying around keeping an eye on things. The Red-rumped Parrots also put in an appearance. It was a popular spot that kept the bird watchers attentively occupied with cameras and binoculars for a while.

Moving further along the creek, we were greeted by some British White cattle which with their natural curiosity, had to come over and check us out - very pretty looking animals with their black muzzles and black ears and the rest of them white. On the other side of the path, houses had given way to an area heavily covered in privet which was a haven to many silvereyes. Some low shrubs provided good coverage for Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. At this point we turned around heading back to the picnic area for some morning tea. A White-faced Heron was seen on the creek's edge below our picnic shelter. From here we then headed north along the creek via the sportsground. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was soaring above a couple small farms, maybe eyeing off some chickens that were roaming around. Further along a Brown Cuckoo-Dove flew across our path into some nearby trees and the Noisy Friarbird could be heard chattering in the trees ahead. We soon saw them also.

At this point we turned around and headed back walking close into the creek which was only a small trickle but nonetheless flowing. We could hear some wrens twittering away in the undergrowth (mostly lantana) beside the creek and soon the Superb Fairy-wrens appeared. Up in the trees, Rufous Whistlers, male and female, spent some time flitting around giving us a good look at them. What had started out as a very bleak day turned into sunshine and a successful bird watching outing with 44 different species seen. Thanks to Charles for leading the morning.



Australian Wood Duck



Yellow-faced Honeyeater



Rufous Whistler  
Images by Charles Dove



Yellow-rumped Thornbill



Red-rumped Parrot



Restless Flycatcher



White-necked Heron  
Images by Tony Bond



Willie Wagtail

Lions Park -Hodgson Vale 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2024		7 members	44 species
Australian Wood Duck	Little Corella	Striated Pardalote	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Torresian Crow
Spotted Dove	Rainbow Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Restless Flycatcher
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Brown Honeyeater	Magpie-lark
Crested Pigeon	Musk Lorikeet	Noisy Friarbird	Silvereye
Little Pied Cormorant	Little Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Pale-headed Rosella	Rufous Whistler	Common Starling
Australian White Ibis	Red-rumped Parrot	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna
Straw-necked Ibis	Laughing Kookaburra	Pied Butcherbird	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie	
Masked Lapwing	Weebill	Pied Currawong	
Galah	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Grey Fantail	

## Midweek Walk August 2024 Stevenson Street Toowoomba (Below Picnic Point)

Tony Bond

On a clear sunny Wednesday, five of us met at the end of Stevenson Street below Picnic Point for the latest of Charles' midweek walks. It was a very pleasant morning and, as we descended the range to the meeting place, there were stunning views of foggy pockets to the east lit by the early sun. While we waited until everyone had arrived, an Ergon contractor drew up with a load of steel conduits and post ramming equipment. Noting our binoculars and cameras, he came over to apologise in advance for the noise he was about to make and hoped it did not disturb the birds. We thanked him for the warning!! Although the noise did not seem as loud as he described, and in reality, it did not last very long, the birds disagreed and kept out of sight until well after it had ceased.

A couple of us started with a short stroll along the righthand path while the noise was on, but we saw nothing. After peace returned, we could hear fairy-wrens in the grass, but nothing could be seen yet. A single White-browed Scrubwren was the first to break cover and thereafter things got back to normal. With the whole team ready to roll we started along the lefthand track, aka the "Picnic Point Bridle Trail". The first bird sightings here were a pair of White-naped Honeyeaters before a small group of Little Lorikeets raced into some gum blossom high above us.

It soon became clear that two characteristics of this walk, at least to start with, would be lots of little birds in the distance and many, many Grey Fantails.

Several fairy-wrens were seen at different points, male and female Red-backed, male and female Superb, and one male Variegated. Noisy Friarbirds and Red Wattlebirds were constantly calling, and several were seen, along with several Striated Pardalotes. There was plenty of blossom up high and at several points along the trail we saw Scarlet Honeyeaters working the tops. A female Rufous Whistler flew in, and male and female Golden Whistlers were also seen. A couple of Olive-backed Orioles had obviously found their favourite tree because they looped and returned to the same spot many times.

At various points along the track, we could hear the distinctive descending call of a White-throated Gerygone, but they were hiding well - too well.

Howard witnessed a fairy-wren crossing the track to hide below a bank on the downhill side. We tip-toed to the edge and found him - a male variegated. It was bathing in some water trapped in an old car tyre, but we couldn't get a good look because of the steepness of the bank. Very obligingly it finished up and settled on a perch at eye level about four metres away. Then, oblivious to us, it went through multiple contortions to complete its morning ablutions and dry out before heading off, sparkling clean, to enjoy the day.

We decided to continue to the track junction but resisted the temptation to loop back via a steep climb to Picnic Point for an ice-cream, mainly due to lack of time. So we headed back the same way, but not before we located a pair of White-throated Treecreepers on Stevenson Street below us. Galahs, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, kookaburras and Little Corellas were also around.

On the return trip we heard a White-throated Gerygone again, but this time it was very close and low down. Looking for these little yellow and white birds in among dense yellow, green and white foliage proved difficult for everyone. Finally, two were spotted in a thick bush at eye level and we watched them for several minutes. A Brown Thornbill was also seen in the vicinity.

The sun was well up by now and there were a lot more birds around. Among the constant calls of Brown and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Charles was able to pick out the faint sound of a Grey Goshawk, one of which had been seen in this vicinity before. He spotted it just below the ridge line, but it was gone too quickly for the rest of us.

Back at the cars we reviewed the bird count, which was in the high thirties, and which was not too bad considering how slowly things had started. But just then a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared past so one more was added. To finish things, Howard also spied the Grey Goshawk as it zipped between the trees on the side of the range above us.

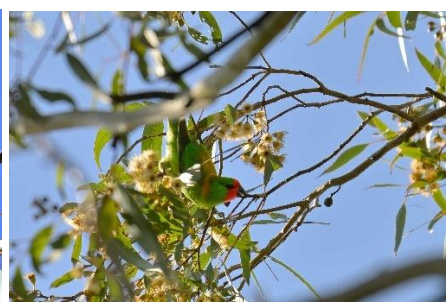
We finished just after midday. It was a long walk but mostly on level ground and the weather was perfect. Thanks again to Charles for leading and sharing his expertise, and thanks to Kathy for keeping the records.



Grey Fantail



Noisy Friarbird



Little Lorikeet

Images by Tony Bond



White-throated Gerygone



White-throated Trecreeper

Images by Howard Ward

**Birdlist Stevenson Street**

Australian Brush-turkey	Scarlet Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Grey Goshawk	Noisy Friarbird	Pied Currawong
Laughing Kookaburra	White-naped Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Galah	Red Wattlebird	Golden whistler
Little Corella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Noisy Miner	Grey Shrike-thrush
Little Lorikeet	Lewin's Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Rainbow Lorikeet	Spotted Pardolote	Grey Fantail
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Striated Pardolote	Silvereye
White-throated Trecreeper	White-browed Scrubwren	Torresian Crow
Variiegated Fairy-wren	White- throated Gerygone	Yellow Eastern Robin
Superb Fairy-wren	Brown Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Red-backed Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird	Willie Wagtail

# Monthly Outing July 2024

## Lake Apex and Lake Galletly

Tony Bond

It was a cool morning, a bit brisk but not too much so, when eight members met at the car park at Lake Apex. Early fog had transformed to clear, bright sunlight and some good sightings were anticipated.

First-arrivals in our group were welcomed by an army of Little Corellas that descended noisily onto everything perchable nearby - only to move on after some unseen signal. A Royal Spoonbill glided past. Early looks at the lake revealed an Eastern Great Egret in the shallows and Euraisian Coots on the water. Purple Swampheens were plentiful, while a pair of Torresian Crows preened each other silently high in a tree oblivious to everything. Looking across to one of the islands we could see dozens of resting Plumed Whistling Ducks while White Ibis perched, seemingly impossibly, on the flimsiest of branches.

Also on the water were Dusky Moorhens, a pair of Black Swans and several Australasian Grebe. Galahs and Magpie Larks were also noisily evident. Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants were seen both on the water and drying out on whatever they could find to sit and stretch their wings. Willy Wagtail was ever-present.

Charles led us anti-clockwise around the perimeter passing the small transport museum and a display of old railway artifacts to our right. The distinctive sound of a Whistling Kite was evident, but he was not spotted until later when it flew out and returned with nesting material. The sound of a Figbird had us all looking towards the trees again and one male was eventually located high up. The thick reeds at the water's edge were home to Australian Reed Warblers and Golden-headed Cisticolas and several were seen when they popped up fleetingly only to disappear again. Several Superb Fairy-wrens were also seen on the other side of the path.

At one point, while attempting to focus my camera through some branches onto a Brown Honeyeater that I had seen land, the scene was rudely interrupted by an unidentified raptor, possibly an Australian Hobby, smashed through and picked up my subject. The raptor continued almost without breaking step (flap??) and landed in thick scrub behind a fence about twenty metres away but was unfortunately then out of sight. We waited to see if anything would emerge but neither bird was seen again - so no pictures on this occasion, unfortunately.

The path led us to a turnaround point projecting out into the lake and along this section there were many sightings of Red-backed Fairywrens and more Cisticolas. A lone Hardhead sat on the water.

On the return trip towards the carpark the bird hide was a good position to view the Whistling Kite at rest.

We returned to our starting point for morning tea. Charles suggested that after tea we might adjourn to another location, Lake Galletly, in the USQ campus where he had seen Pink-eared Ducks and Blue-billed Ducks on a previous visit. All agreed and we travelled in convoy and parked between two lakes on arrival.

We were initially intrigued by movement in a tree next to us and found a family of four Figbirds, two males and two females, quietly watching on. The movement had been a Grey Fantail, but without that we would have missed the Figbirds completely.

We first walked around the smaller of the lakes, Lake Lenore, and were met by a Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Grey Teal, White-necked Heron, two Black-fronted Dotterels, two Pied Stilts, another Willy Wagtail, Grey Fantails, Brown Honeyeaters and Silvereyes.

The larger of the lakes, Lake Galletly, was also rewarding. A flotilla of Pink-eared Ducks was spotted at a distance, initially timid before gingerly heading back to shore. Later we witnessed a pair performing a circular courting dance. Several Blue-billed ducks were also present, as hoped, and we witnessed a pair of males showing off to a not-disinterested female. The competition would be strong with roughly double the number males seen compared to females.

On the far side we saw Welcome Swallows while Fairy Martins and Tree Martins were also present. We watched several Tree Martins repeatedly returning to the same muddy spot below a culvert before heading across the water - presumably to build a nest with the mud collected.

On the return path some sharper-eared among us recognised the song of a Little Grassbird but, aside from a fleeting glimpse that could really have been anything, no firm sighting was made. One grassbird was heard calling in thick vegetation less than two metres from us before going silent without revealing itself.

It was well after midday by the time we thought about leaving and it had been a very rewarding outing. Thanks to Charles for leading and sharing his knowledge and to Jennie for maintaining our list. And thanks also to the participants, including some new faces, who shared their knowledge on the way round. It was a good day.



**Blue-billed Duck**



**Pink-eared Duck**



**Eastern Great Egret**



**Golden-headed Cisticola**

Images by Tony Bond

**Lake Apex Gatton**

Plumed Whistling Duck	Little Pied Cormorant	Laughing Kookaburra	Australasian figbird
Black Swan	Little Black Cormorant	Galah	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Australasian Darter	Little Corella	Magpie Lark
Hardhead	Whistling Kite	Superb Fairywren	Torresian Crow
Australasian Grebe	Australasian Swamphen	Red-backed Fairywren	Welcome Swallow
Australian White Ibis	Dusky moorhen	Brown Honeyeater	Tree Martin
Straw-necked Ibis	Eurasian Coot	Striped Honeyeater	Australian Reed-warbler
Royal Spoonbill	Masked Lapwing	Noisy Miner	Golden-headed Cisticola
Eastern Cattle Egret	Spotted Dove	Australian Magpie	Common Myna
Great Egret	Crested Pigeon	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike	
Little Egret	Bar-shouldered Dove	Rufous Whistler	
Lake Galletly			
Pink-eared Duck	White-necked Heron	Variiegated Fairywren	
Blue-billed Duck	White-headed Stilt	Fairy Martin	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Black-fronted dotterel	Silvereeye	



## New Bird Report

**Observer Name:** Dan Bishop

**Phone:** 0401 135 156

**Others Present:** None, though same bird was observed by many other birders over the course of nearly 3 weeks post-discovery.

**Species Name:** Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)

**Date of Observation:** 21/06/2024

**Duration of Observation:** Several hours

**Distance/Height to Bird:** Approximately 20m away, and approx. 20m in altitude.

**Optics Used:** Binoculars (10x42)

**Location:** Highfields Falls, Kingfisher Walking Track (approx. -27.475456, 151.9541832 lat/long)

**Habitat:** Eucalypt woodland.

**Conditions:** Bird was observed at approximately 8:30am on a cool, sunny winter's day.

**Description of Bird:** Medium-sized honeyeater with black head and neck, yellow breast with black scale pattern, and yellow undertail coverts. Distinctive yellowish warty bare skin surrounding the eyes. Photos taken.

**Behaviour of Bird:** Bird was in the canopy of a Yellow Box gum tree, aggressively defending its patch of flowers against White-naped and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. It rarely left its territory, except to chase other birds, and always returned to the same patch. Calls were infrequent and vaguely reminiscent of a Little Friarbird. Audio recordings taken.

**Prior Experience with this Species:** First field observation but have seen numerous photos in the past.

**How does it differ from similar Species:** Slightly larger than New Holland Honeyeater (which is also rarely seen in the Toowoomba region), with more extensive yellow colouring, dark eye and unmistakable yellow and black scaly pattern on breast. Bare skin patch around eye another distinguishing feature.



## Northern Section

Pat McConnell surveyed the northern section on Wednesday 10 July. 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 completed between 9.55am and 1.00pm. Six species and 26 individual birds of prey were reported (See table below for summarised results). The weather during the survey was cool, overcast and fine. One hundred and sixty-three kilometres were travelled.

## Southern Section

The southern section was surveyed by Sandy Robertson and Jacalyn Robertson on Saturday 29 June. The route surveyed was East Greenmount, Greenmount, Nobby, Clifton, Allora, Hendon, Talgai area, Allora, Mt Marshall, Forest Springs, Upper Spring Creek, Upper Pilton to East Greenmount. (Jackson Road from Nobby to Greenmount was impassable from Williamson Road). There was a slight change in route with the inclusion of Watts Siding Road and Cudmore Road through to Cambooya and return to east Greenmount via Perrins and Hennesey Road. The survey was completed between 10.15am and 3.45pm (survey time 4.5hours). The weather was cool, breezy and partly cloudy with approximately 80% cloud cover. Five species and 118 individual birds of prey were reported. The highlight was seeing two Spotted Harriers on Manapouri Road.

## Eastern Section

The eastern section was surveyed by Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock and Steven Doyle on Monday 8 July from 9.15am until 2.40pm. The weather was overcast, and light rain fell briefly around 11.35am but soon cleared. The route surveyed was Lockyer, Helidon, Grantham, Placid Hills, Gatton north, Adare, Lake Clarendon, Lake Apex, Helidon Spa and Postmans Ridge. Nine species and 62 individual birds of prey were reported.

## Western Section

The western section was surveyed by Chris MacColl and Jarrod Kath on 3 July. The route surveyed was Toowoomba to Oakey (via Cecil Plains Rd), Jondaryan, Bowenville Reserve, Norwin, Cecil Plains, Dalby, Kaimkillenbun & Quinalow to Jondaryan (via Mt Tyson Rd), Biddeston to Toowoomba via the Mt Tyson Rd (past the Wellcamp airport). Nine species and 275 individual birds of prey were reported excluding three that were unidentified. This included an incredible seven Spotted Harriers.

## Table of Sightings

Species	N	S	E	W	Total
Black-shouldered Kite	8	41	4	68	121
Square-tailed Kite	1				1
Pacific Baza			2		2
Black Kite			26	58	84
Whistling Kite	1	4	10	12	27
Spotted Harrier		3		7	10
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1		1	1	3
White-bellied Sea-Eagle				1	1
Little Eagle				1	1
Brown Falcon	1	3	1	13	18
Black Falcon			1		1
Nankeen Kestrel	14	67	14	114	209
Australian Hobby			3		3
<b>Total number of raptors</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>481</b>

The above table shows that thirteen species were seen in 2024 which is two more than 2023. There were 481 individual birds of prey seen in 2024 which is 12 less than in 2023.

A big thank you to all involved, especially the leaders.

Pat McConnell  
Records Officer

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

## Wedge-tailed Eagle

Scientific Name: *Aquila audax*

Atlas Number: 224

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

### Description:

The Wedge-tailed Eagle has long wings (wingspan 2.3 m), a characteristic long, wedge-shaped tail, and legs that are feathered all the way to the base of the toes. The bill is pale pink to cream, the eye brown to dark brown, and the feet off-white. Young Wedge-tailed Eagles are mid brown in colour with reddish-brown heads and wings. They become progressively blacker for at least the first ten years of their lives; adults are mostly dark blackish-brown.

The only difference in plumage between the sexes is that a female adult is generally slightly paler than her mate. Females (4.2 kg - 5.3 kg) are also larger and heavier than males (3.2 kg up to 4.0 kg). Wedge-tailed Eagles are Australia's largest raptors (birds of prey). The Tasmanian subspecies (*Aquila audax fleayi*) is listed federally as endangered.

### Similar species:

Australia's second largest eagle (and second-largest raptor or bird of prey), the White-bellied Sea-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, has shorter, more rounded wings and no feathers on its lower legs. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle is 75 cm - 85 cm long and has a wingspan of 1.8 m - 2.2 m.

### Distribution:

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is found throughout mainland Australia, Tasmania and southern New Guinea.



Image by Charles Dove

### Habitat:

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is found from sea level to alpine regions in the mountains, but prefers wooded and forested land and open country, generally avoiding rainforest and coastal heaths. Eagles can be seen perched on trees or poles or soaring overhead to altitudes of up to 2000 m. Wedge-tailed Eagles build their nest in a prominent location with a good view of the surrounding countryside. It may be built in either a live or dead tree, but usually the tallest one in the territory. In some parts of Australia, where tall trees are absent, small trees, shrubs, cliff faces or even the ground may be used. The density of active nests depends on the abundance of prey and other resources. In most years, nests are usually 2.5 km - 4 km apart. If conditions are particularly good, the distances apart may be less than 1 km because the birds require smaller areas to find sufficient food.

### Feeding:

Wedge-tailed Eagles eat both live prey and carrion. Their diet reflects the available prey, but the most important live items are rabbits and hares. Rabbits usually comprise about 30-70% of the diet, but may comprise up to 92%. The introduction of the calicivirus has resulted in the decline of rabbits in many parts of Australia. It is not yet known how this will affect the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Other food items include lizards, birds (weighing over 100 g) and mammals (usually weighing over 500 g). Wedge-tailed Eagles

will kill lambs, but these make up only a small percentage of their total prey. Carrion is a major food source; roadkills and other carcasses are readily eaten. Many of the reports of predation on lambs result from birds scavenging already dead animals. Up to 20 birds may attend a carcass, although only two or three feed at any one time. Wedge-tailed Eagles may hunt singly, in pairs or in larger groups. Working together, a group of eagles can attack and kill animals as large as adult kangaroos. This explains the scientific name of the Wedge-tailed Eagle which means 'bold eagle'. Under ideal conditions, an eagle can lift about 50% of its body weight. Often, eagles may cache food items on a branch near the nest area.

#### Breeding:

Wedge-tailed Eagles are monogamous and apparently mate for life. If one bird of a pair is killed, the survivor will find a new mate. Established breeding pairs are territorial and live in the one area throughout the year, defending around their nest sites from other Wedge-tailed Eagles. (They are also known on occasion to attack intruding model airplanes, hang gliders, gliders, fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.) Surrounding the territories are large home ranges in which the birds hunt for food but do not defend. There is usually overlap between the home ranges of two or more breeding pairs and of non-breeding birds.

The nest is a large structure of dead sticks, usually reused for years, often reaching considerable size. Nests 1.8 m across, 3 m deep and weighing about 400 kg are known. Nests have a shallow cup on the top, lined with fresh twigs and leaves. Sticks are added by a bird while it stands in the nest. If these sticks are dropped outside the nest, no effort is made to retrieve them. Piles of dropped sticks 1.8 m high have been recorded under the nest trees. The timing of breeding may vary from location to location and from year to year according to the local availability of food. Both parents share in the duties of nest building, incubation and feeding of the young. A clutch consists of white eggs measuring 73 mm x 59 mm with varying amounts of reddish-brown spots and blotches. These are laid at intervals of two to four days. Incubation starts with the laying of the first egg. Because of the intervals between laying, the eggs do not hatch simultaneously.

The first chick hatches larger than the second, which in turn is larger than the third. Survival rates of the chicks vary considerably depending on local conditions, including prey abundance and the amount of disturbance. A breeding pair usually rears only one young per clutch, although in a good year, two chicks may fledge in some nests. Because of the differences in size, the oldest and largest chick has the best chance of surviving. If food is scarce, it will kill and eat its smaller nest mates. Chicks hatch covered with a white down. For the first five weeks or so, the adults must deliver food to their mouths. After this time, they are able to recognise bits of food on the floor of the nest and can feed themselves. The young acquire their first feathers during the second week after hatching. If threatened by predators, the chicks lie flat in the nest but will defend themselves if required. The adults, in contrast, make little defence of the young. The juveniles remain with the adults for about 11 weeks after leaving the nest. Young and nonbreeding birds disperse, moving to wherever conditions are suitable. Juveniles are known to have moved over 850 km in a seven to eight month period.

#### Living with us:

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is the most common of the world's large eagles. It is nonetheless affected by several human activities. It has benefited by the opening of forests in eastern Australia and the increased availability of rabbits. Wedge-tailed Eagles however, are sensitive to forestry operations. In the more arid zones, extensive clearing has reduced the nesting resources. If a breeding pair is disturbed when they are preparing to lay eggs, they may abandon the nest.

Wedge-tailed Eagles were persecuted for many years for supposedly killing lambs. Bounties were offered for dead eagles, and large numbers were poisoned or shot – 147 237 in Western Australia in 1928 -1968 and 162 430 in Queensland in 1951-1966. Indirect poisoning through Dingo baits and pesticides continues to be a major hazard. In Tasmania, the Wedge-tailed Eagle is threatened by habitat loss and deliberate persecution.

## LINKS OF INTEREST

### Little Brown Birds

<https://www.weekendbirder.com/episodes/07-little-brown-birds-with-ricki?rq=little%20brown%20birds>

Listen to Ricki Coughlan in this episode chat about how to identify common little brown birds by looking at their body parts and the joys of birdwatching in Royal National Park in Sydney.

### The Secret Lives of Urban Birds Episode 4 Perth

<https://iview.abc.net.au>

Follow Dr Ann Jones on her latest journey to Perth, Western Australia, where she helps tag a fledgling Wedge-tailed Eagle and discovers the delights of the Splendid Fairy-wren.

### Eastern Curlew, AAK and her extraordinary migratory journey.

Check out Sydney Weather Nerds Facebook page for the story of this amazing bird and her annual migration from Australia to Russia.

### Australian Brush-turkey's Dramatic Fall and Rapid Rise in Cities

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2024-07-13/brush-turkey-urban-bird-conservation-sydney-brisbane-cities/104077432>

Are we seeing more brush-turkeys in our urban areas? This article looks at the initial decline of the bird and then its amazing comeback in Australian cities.

### Retirees, empty-nesters flock to WA's historic Eyre Bird Observatory as volunteer caretakers.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-07-03/eyre-bird-observatory-caretakers/104041104>

Volunteer care-takers are being sought at the Eyre Bird Observatory WA -would you do this?

### Am I a bad Birder?

<https://science.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/am-i-bad-birder>

Do you do birding as a citizen scientist, as a photographer or simply for the pleasure of being out in nature or perhaps all the above. Olivia Congdon looks at the different reasons that people observe birds and whether there is more we can do for our feathered friends.

### Nesting Peregrine Falcons in Melbourne's CBD

<https://367collins.mirvac.com/workplace/building-overview/falcons-at-367-collins>

Keep up to date with the pair of peregrine falcons now nesting in the Melbourne CBD via this webcam.

