



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

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

No. 433  
June '14

## Editorial

Sandy Robertson

Hi all,

Welcome to the June edition.

A huge thank you to Pat McConnell who has written the lion's share of the articles for this edition.

If you have any photos or articles you would like to share with other members, please email it to me by the 18<sup>th</sup> July.

Sandy

Below and to the right are some photos by Charles Dove taken recently in various locations around southern New South Wales including Ulladulla, Lake Illawara and Mittagong



Grey Butcher Bird



Black winged Stilt



Bar-tailed Godwit



Crested tern

## 2014 Challenge

203 spp as at 18th May



TOOWOOMBA  
BIRD OBSERVERS

## This Issue

- Two articles by Pat
- Members' Bird Notes
- Members' Photo Page
- Highfields Falls
- Outing Report
- Bits and pieces
- Coming events

### Sat/Sun 28/29 June:

Raptor census  
Leader: Pat McConnell

### Saturday 12th July:

Pot luck lunch and talk  
Leader: Olive Booth

### Sunday July 27th:

Linthorpe with Alastair Silcock  
Leader: Olive Booth

### 30<sup>th</sup> August:

Hartmann's Park, Crow's Nest

### 27/28<sup>th</sup> September:

Lake Coolmunda dam  
Leader: Kay Williams

### 26/27 October:

Annual census

### 15<sup>th</sup> October:

TBO AGM 7:00pm  
Immunisation Clinic on the corner of Little and Victoria Streets

### 29<sup>th</sup> 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

transfer to Heritage Bank to:

BSB 638-070 A/c 4312503

The PO Box is 4730 Toowoomba East

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350

[www.toowoombabirdobservers.org](http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org)

MEMBERSHIP: Adult/family \$45

Pensioner/student \$40

# Short-tailed Shearwater Deaths

**By Pat McConnell**

While holidaying at Marcus Beach near Noosa from 24 – 29 November 2013 Kath and I noticed numerous dead Short-tailed Shearwaters on nearby beaches. Later when I read an article in the March 2014 issue of Australian Birdlife “The Fatal Shore” I realised just how widespread and severe this ‘wreck’ was. The article reported the logging of more than 56,000 Short-tailed Shearwater deaths and went on to say it was highly likely that hundreds of thousands of deaths went unreported. The report also went on to say that it was the fourth recorded ‘wreck’ in the past seven years – a much more frequent-than-usual occurrence. Autopsies revealed that most of the birds were severely emaciated.

The Short-tailed Shearwater is probably Australia’s most abundant seabird and anyone who has done regular boat trips will no doubt have seen them on numerous occasions and in large numbers. They are a migratory bird that returns to Australian waters in September each year prior to breeding.

Kath and I have rarely seen this bird close to shore but on this occasion thousands of birds could be seen within 100 metres of the beach. They were present for the entire six days we were there. While doing a quick walk along the beach it was obvious that many birds had perished in the area. I did some quick counts and some calculations and estimated that there were about 2,250 birds dead on Marcus Beach alone.



# Pelicans Aplenty

**By Pat McConnell**

I recently received a letter from Malcolm Wilson about a birding trip he and some friends did on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014 to a property south-west of Dalby.

While there Malcolm observed 1000+ Australian Pelicans, 29 Caspian Terns, several Gull-billed Terns, many Pacific Black Duck, Masked Lapwings, four species of cormorant, Yellow-billed and Royal Spoonbills, four Black Kites, six Whistling Kites and one juvenile White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

I thought to myself what an impressive sight this would have been. To see 50 Australian Pelicans in a group is quite spectacular but to see over 1000 would be something you would never forget. Well done Malcolm and thanks for passing on the sighting.



# 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
Cotton Pygmy-goose	4/05/2014	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Pied Cormorant	26/04/2014	Thomas Rd Upper Lockyer	MA, RH, TR
Osprey	24/05/2014	"Tiddalac" Upper Lockyer	MA
Swamp Harrier	1/04/2014	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ, MW
Little Eagle	26/04/2014	Wyreema Sewage Treatment Plant	MA, RH, TR
Squatter Pigeon	27/05/2014	Goldfields Rd Amiens	GM
Australian Owlet-nightjar	25/03/2014	Penderests Rd Carbarlah	MW
Eastern Spinebill	8/04/2014	Middle Ridge Toowoomba	BL
Rose Robin	10/04/2014	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Spotted Quail-thrush	26/04/2014	Killarney	AS

**MA**, M. Atzeni; **RH**, R. Hobson; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **BL**, B. Learmonth; **GM**, G. McRae; **AS**, A. Silcock; **TR**, T. Reis; **MW**, M. Wood.

If anyone wishes to submit bird notes they can do this directly to me at [mccommel@usq.edu.au](mailto:mccommel@usq.edu.au) or via the Club's mailing address.

Thanks  
Pat McConnell



**Lewin's Rail**  
Photo: Charles Dove

# 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.



**Peregrine Falcon surveying the world from his eerie about 120m above the Greenough River east of Geraldton. He has a number of perches along the cliff face.**

Photo: Ross and Margaret Easton



**One of two Bustards feeding on new grass at Warmga Park, Bell.**

Photo: Don and Bernice Seton



**Musk Duck putting on a show at the Ellerdale Pool**

Photo: Ross and Margaret Easton



**Pied Currawong, Hirstglen**

Photo: Sandy Robertson

# Spotlighting Highfields Falls

**By Pat McConnell**

It is not often that the number of members attending an outing outnumbers the amount of vertebrates seen but that was the case on this spotlighting outing. Rain at 6.40pm had me wondering whether the outing would be cancelled but it didn't last long and things were fine, but overcast when I arrived at Highfields Falls at 6.55pm. There were four other members there all hoping to see something spectacular like a Powerful Owl.

As we walked the tracks for about an hour and a half the odd bit of mist passed through but it was basically a fine and warm evening for this time of the year. Strangely enough the highlight of the outing was a Great Barred Frog *Mixophyes fasciolatus* that was hopping along the track just above the creek. I must admit that they are one of my favourite frogs and I am always happy to see one. Apart from a few tadpoles in the creek the only other species seen was a Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*. At least the two vertebrates we saw were very co-operative and gave us excellent views – unlike many bird species that disappear into the foliage.

No Powerful Owl this time, and despite the lack of creatures seen everyone seemed to enjoy the walk and the talk.



**Common Brushtail Possum**  
*Trichosurus vulpecula*



**Great Barred frog**  
*Mixophyes fasciolatus*

# Bits and Pieces

## Got a birdbath?

National Parks Association of New South Wales in partnership with Birds in Backyards and The University of Sydney are seeking participants for an exciting new citizen science initiative: **Bathing Birds**. In this initiative, we will be exploring which birds are using bird baths and how our gardening habitats are influencing which birds are present.

The project will run from Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of June until Sunday the 27 of July 2014. We will run the project again in January 2015 to compare differences in birds using the bath. To take part, all you need is a birdbath that you can monitor for 20 minutes up to 3 times a week

If you are already registered with us as a citizen scientist from the Koala Count and you would like to take part in Bathing Birds, please contact Dr. Gráinne Cleary at [grainnec@npansw.org.au](mailto:grainnec@npansw.org.au).

If you are a new NPA citizen science, go to [www.bathingbirds.org.au](http://www.bathingbirds.org.au) to sign up!

## Cooloola Birding

The Brochure "Birds of Stirlings Crossing" is now available for Printing through our Website "Birding Cooloola Mountains to Shore".

Direct Link below to the "Birds of Stirlings Crossing" Site:

<http://www.birdingcooloola.org.au/along-the-bird-trails-of-cooloola---stirlings-crossing.html>

Please Assist in the Promotion of the Birds of Cooloola by visiting and passing on the following link through your Networks –

"Birding Cooloola Mountains to Shore" – [www.birdingcooloola.org.au](http://www.birdingcooloola.org.au)

Regards,  
Kelvin & Amelia Nielsen  
COOLOOLA NATURE  
[www.birdingcooloola.org.au](http://www.birdingcooloola.org.au)

Ph (07) 54 826721

**Eastern Reef Egret**  
Photo: Charles Dove



## Coming Events

### **28/29 June 2014: Raptor census**

Contact Pat McConnell for details of the four leaders (north, south, east and west).  
The area leaders will determine a date, time and meeting place for their area.  
Tel: 46315573 (work)

### **Saturday 12th July 2014: Pot luck lunch and talk**

Leader: Olive Booth  
11:00am start  
Uniting church hall Cnr Tor and North Street bring a plate to share (crockery and cutlery provided)

### **Sunday July 27th: Linthorpe with Alastair Silcock**

Leader: Olive Booth  
Sunday, 7:30am  
Meeting place: 35 Loveday Road, Pittsworth.

## Committee Members

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**Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is Friday 18th July 2014**  
Please e-mail or post articles and photos to the Editor.

**If undeliverable return to  
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PO Box 4730, Toowoomba East Q 4350**

**Surface Mail**