

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

President: Bill Jolly,

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Sec./Treasurer: Alan Graham,

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Ph: 35.4952



NEWS-SHEET No. 16 - MARCH, 1977.

Members will be sorry to learn that our Editor is temporarily incapacitated due to illness. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery are extended to our good friend Ron Hopkinson who we hope will be back on deck in the not too distant future.

Our recently published Annual Area Bird Summary and 1976 Bird Count Report have met with much favourable comment from a number of sources. The Chronicle continues to give us good coverage and their most recent article has produced a significant response from Toowoomba people interested in birds with the likelihood of our gaining several new members as a result.

The monthly breakdown of this year's sightings is well under way with a number of the gaps apparent from last year's records already filled for 1977. We are very encouraged by the involvement of so many members in this year's listings. It is valuable to the club to receive a monthly list from as many members as possible and in order to facilitate the collection of this data we shall, commencing this month, be including with each News-sheet a detachable checklist which may be notated throughout the month and returned at the month's end to any officer of the club.

An extra advantage of this new checklist is that species are now listed according to R.A.O.U. nomenclature, with Slater's variations shown in brackets where appropriate. The checklist comprises all 171 species for which we have Toowoomba records up to mid-April 1977 and includes at its foot provision for details of any sightings (not necessarily of new or even unusual birds, nor especially of Toowoomba birds) which members feel may be of interest, i.e. for inclusion in Members' Bird Notes.

Please let us have your Toowoomba checklist each month, as soon as possible after the month end, so we can publish interesting sightings while they are still hot and also gain as comprehensive as possible a picture, month by month, of Toowoomba's bird population.

Would any members who have not yet collected their Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds please endeavour to do so on or before the next club outing as books still held then will be offered to those on the waiting list.

Acting Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

168 Little Eagle (*Hieraetus morphnoides*). 12.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. Chris Bianchi, Eileen Jolly.

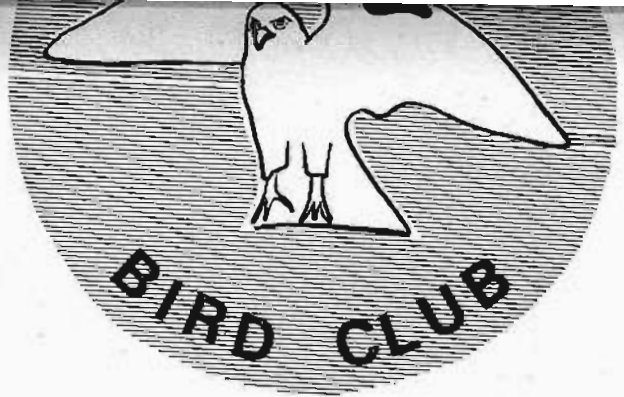
Large, broad-winged bird with short fanned tail. Distinctive dark mark below eye. Dark greyish/brown back and very pale underparts. Seen slowly circling above tree-tops.

169 Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*). 28.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. Eileen & Bill Jolly. Naliandrah, Withcott. Alan & Sylvia Graham.

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169 Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*). 28.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. Eileen & Bill Jolly. Naliandrah, Withcott. Alan & Sylvia Graham.

Two small parties of easterly moving swifts clearly showing deeply forked tails.

170 Red Goshawk (*Erythrotriorchis radiatus*). 10.4.77. Ruthven St. South, Toowoomba. John & Maurie Coman.

A single medium sized bird with long tail and broad wings. The bird was seen soaring

(cont/d.)

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS (cont/a.)

on flat wings (which distinguish it from the brown falcon). The tail is long, rounded and barred underneath. The flight feathers are barred underneath and the underwing coverts, throat and breast very pale rufous streaked with brown.

171 White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina papuensis*). 9.4.77. Naliandrah, Withcott. Chris & Reg Eley.

(Notes on this species to be included in next News-sheet).

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

- Little Grebe. 11/14.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- White Egret. 3.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- Nankeen Night Heron. 26.2.77. Flagstone Ck. (2 adult, 1 imm.) AG.
- Plumed Tree Duck. 26.2.77. Flagstone Ck. (approx. 100) AG.
- Crested Hawk. 17.1.77. Cunninghams Gap. Nesting at camp site No. 2. JC.  
19.3.77. Redwood Park. JC.
- Brown Goshawk. 8/11.4.77. Naliandrah, Withcott. CE. RE.
- Grey Goshawk. 12.3.77. Ocean St., Toowoomba. GC.
- Spotted Harrier. 19.3.77. Curzon St., Toowoomba. EJ. WJ.  
28.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- Black Falcon. 9.4.77. Boundary Rd., Toowoomba. JC.
- Little Falcon. 6.4.77. West St., Toowoomba. JC.
- Japanese Snipe. 26.2.77. Flagstone Ck. AG.
- Little Corella. 2.2.77. Oakey. JC.
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo. 9.4.77. Naliandrah, Withcott. CE. RE.
- Rufous-tailed Bronze Cuckoo. 13.3.77. Redwood Park. REH. WJ.
- Channel-billed Cuckoo. 2.2.77. Oakey. JC.
- Owlet Nightjar. 9.4.77. Naliandrah, Withcott. Several birds heard. CE. RE.
- White-throated Nightjar. 9.4.77. Naliandrah, Withcott. Heard. CE. RE.
- Azure Kingfisher. 13.3.77. Redwood Park. REH. WJ.  
13.3.77. Withcott. AG.
- Rainbow Bee-eater. 9.3.77. Ocean St., Toowoomba. GC.  
10.3.77. Harlaxton. 50 plus birds. JEC.
- White-backed Swallow. 20.3.77./9.4.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike. 9.2.77. Ocean St., Toowoomba. GC.
- Ground Cuckoo-shrike. 2.2.77. Oakey. JC.
- Scaly Thrush. 17.1.77. Cunninghams Gap. JC.
- Hooded Robin. 24.2.77. Cunninghams Gap. Male & female. JC.
- Crested Shrike-tit. 19.3.77. Redwood Park. JC.  
10.4.77. Redwood Park. GC.
- Chestnut-breasted Mannikin. 27.2.77. Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- Spangled Drongo. 6.3.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.  
13.3.77. Redwood Park. REH. WJ.
- Masked Wood-swallow. 6.3.77. Oakey. JC.
- Australian Raven. 26.2.77. Rowbotham St., Toowoomba. AG. SG.

JC: John Coman. GC: Graham Corbin. JEC: Jim Corbin. CE: Chris Eley. RE: Reg Eley. AG: Alan Graham. SG: Sylvia Graham. REH: Ron Hopkinson. EJ: Eileen Jolly. WJ: Bill Jolly.

OBSERVATION OF THE BLACK-BREASTED QUAIL (*Turnix melanogaster*).

While quietly sitting just inside the edge of the rain forest at the top picnic area at Ravensbourne National Park on Sunday, 26th March, I observed a group of eight large quail. Since they were on the forest floor in an area with many thin saplings observation conditions were not good even though the birds were quite close.

One of the birds moved into a small patch of sunlight very briefly and I was able to see that it had a dark head, throat and breast with spotting or speckling on back, wings and sides. The short brown tail and under rump and black parts were not obviously speckled. The bird moved into the dark and I tried to stalk the group for more views - most unsuccessfully. They very quickly moved in all directions out of sight. Their calls included a deep "oom", reminiscent of the call of the white-

underwing coverts, throat and breast very pale rufous streaked with brown.

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On examination of the field guides and other books the only quail I can find to fit these observations is the black-breasted quail (*Turnix melanogaster*)! A very rare bird and an exciting find so close to Toowoomba. In future I will be investigating those white-headed pigeon calls in Redwood Park.

John Coman.



### A NOTE ON NEST DEFENCE.

When defence of the nest is necessary, one of the pluckiest birds must be the Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*).

I recently saw a pair drive off a Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus notatus*). The wagtails had a nest near the pumping station in Mackenzie Street. The kite took a mouse from the paddock and retired to a fence post to eat. While the kite's head was lowered to the talon-held mouse the two wagtails arrived. One alighted on the fence wire next to the kite and the other landed on the kite's back. This brought the kite's head up to investigate the intruder, at which point the wagtail lifted off.

The kite lowered its head to the meal and again the wagtail alighted on its back. Again the kite lifted its head and again the wagtail lifted off.

This action was repeated several times until the kite flew off, still clutching the mouse, and settled on a tree several hundred metres further away.

When one considers the difference in body weight and size it seems that the human term "courage" could be applied to the wagtail's actions.

Ron Hopkinson.

(This interesting item demonstrating the Willie Wagtails tenacity of purpose reminds me of my local Willies who would not only harass passing crows but would often 'ride' their backs, looking for all the world like water-skiers until the invader left the wagtails' air space).

Acting Editor.

### WHAT BIRD WAS THAT?

On Friday, 25th February the Grade 11 Biology students were participating in a field excursion at Cunningham's Gap. While at the area known as picnic area No. 1 we observed a bird which was well seen by several of us but to which we cannot put a name.

The bird was seen flying in the tree-tops from tree to tree and perched on large branches. It gave the appearance of being a pied currawong with typical currawong head, beak, general size, under wing white flashes, dark grey to black body colours and white under-tail coverts. The tail however in flight is gradated with the outer tail feathers white and appears quite long. When perching the tail is straight sided and square ended with the white feathers overlapping all the way along underneath to make the tail white underneath but black on top. Can you help with a suggestion?

John Coman.

### A BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA?

On Monday, 28th March near Rosewood I had a very clear view of what appeared to be a Blue-winged Kookaburra (*Dacelo leachii*), flying from the railway embankment into a tree. The time was late afternoon about 1740 hours and the low angled sunlight on the iridescent blue wings was unmistakable.

Viv was with me and the observation was made from the moving diesel motor train so I couldn't follow up the observation. I would be interested to hear if anyone has heard of this bird so far south, and would not claim this as a "definite".

Ron Wilson.

### ISLAND BIRDWATCHING.

One of the most rewarding interests and pastimes must surely be that which enables you to explore and enjoy the particular environment you are in wherever it may be. Whilst on Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands with a friend during the recent January holidays we found that our interest in seeing the birdlife there lead us to exploring many of the more isolated regions of the islands which we may otherwise not have discovered.

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Lord Howe Island especially afforded us extensive bush tracks (with mountainous tendencies) which would invariably lead to an isolated cliff edge, a vantage point where one could sit for hours and become slowly immersed in the tranquil atmosphere and beauty of the life. It was raining as often as not, misting, with the sea grey and swelling and no matter where you looked out at sea there was a bird soaring or

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(cont/d.)

ISLAND BIRDWATCHING (cont/d.)

skimming above the water distinct against the dullness.

We spent many pleasurable hours just sitting quietly and observing the sea-birds from various cliff tops. Generally we would find ourselves surrounded by the breeding Red-tailed Tropic-birds (*Phaethon rubricauda*) a white bird with a fine red wisp trailing behind it, so fine that it is difficult to pick up with the naked eye before they are very close to you. These birds are especially interesting to observe as they appear to soar steadily in towards the cliff face, hover for a few seconds then stop still for some time (seemed a long time) before letting the up-lifting air currents take them into the cliff ledges or to continue up over the cliff top and out to sea again.

The massive size and patterned wingspan and face of the breeding Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) made its presence distinctive when skimming just out to sea each late afternoon and morning. Most playful and garrulous of the sea birds were the numerous Black-winged Petrels (*Pterodroma nigripennis*) invariably never seen without being heard.

Each evening on dusk the sky above our lodging would fill with black soaring forms moaning and wailing as the Fleshy-footed Shearwaters (*Puffinus carneipes*) came into their burrowed nests for the night. Although these birds may be graceful in flight they are extremely clumsy and awkward on land. They fly over the canopy and drop down to the ground where they pull themselves along to their burrow. On morning a laborious walk to the cliff edge gains them their dignity in flight once more.

We saw once again on Norfolk most of those birds we had sighted on Lord Howe. However the White Tern was in greater numbers on Norfolk Island nesting on the bare limb of the giant Norfolk Island Pines. These terns are completely white with a distinctive dark eye and when hovering in the trees deserve the colloquial name of fairy tern.

We gained some magnificent views of White-capped Noddies colonizing in vast numbers and also the nest and young of the Masked Booby before our return.

It was a holiday well worth the experience of remembering. Following is a list of bird sightings on both islands.

	<u>Lord Howe</u>	<u>Norfolk.</u>
Black-winged Petrel	X	X
Fleshy-footed Shearwater	X	X
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	X	X
Masked Booby	X	X
Black Cormorant	X	X
Little Black Cormorant	X	
Red-tailed Tropic-bird	X	X
White-faced Heron	X	X
Black Duck	X	
Nankeen Kestrel	X	
Eastern Golden Plover	X	X
Turnstone	X	X
Whimbrel	X	X
Greenshank		X
Bar-tailed Godwit		X
Sooty Tern	X	X
White Tern	X	X
White-capped Noddy	X	X
Green-winged Pigeon	X	X
Domestic Pigeon	X	X
Crimson Rosella		X
Sacred Kingfisher	X	X
Welcome Swallow	X	X
Blackbird	X	X
Song Thrush		X
Ashy-fronted Warbler	X	X
Grey Fantail	X	X
Golden Whistler	X	X
Eastern Silvereye	X	X
Long-billed Silvereye		X

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Black Duck	X	
Nankeen Kestrel	X	
Eastern Golden Plover	X	X
Turnstone	X	X
Whimbrel	X	X
Greenshank		X
Bar-tailed Godwit		X
Sooty Tern	X	X
White Tern	X	X
White-capped Noddy	X	X
Green-winged Pigeon	X	X
Domestic Pigeon	X	X
Crimson Rosella		X
Sacred Kingfisher	X	X
Welcome Swallow	X	X
Blackbird	X	X
Song Thrush		X
Ashy-fronted Warbler	X	X
Grey Fantail	X	X
Golden Whistler	X	X
Eastern Silvereye	X	X
Long-billed Silvereye		X
Common Starling	X	X
Magpie Lark	X	X
Lord Howe Pied Currawong	X	
Scarlet Robin		X

Vernacular terminology is generally that of the List of Norfolk Island Flora & Fauna by the Norfolk Island Flora & Fauna Society.

Joris Bianchi.

bird and an excellent calls in new...



FIELD DAY REPORT - 27.3.77.

News from Marilyn Jacobs of a Letter-winged Kite at Felton coupled with confirmation from the property-owner where the bird was sighted that it was still around only 36 hours before our scheduled outing on Sunday, 27th March, caused hurried rearrangements to be made.

So, once again we were diverted from our long-time intention to explore Koorootang Plateau and instead an afternoon excursion to Felton was substituted in search of this exciting wanderer from the West.

Our quarry had been reported as appearing in the vicinity of a particular property just prior to dusk on a number of occasions, (he had obviously read all the books which tell us that is what a good Letter-winged Kite is supposed to do) and a substantial party of club members was accordingly on the spot and at the ready at about 4 p.m.

Unfortunately a considerable storm broke about our heads almost as soon as we opened the car doors and the next hour or so doubtless provided something of a cabaret for the man-on-the-land at Felton as a number of bird-watchers wandered around his farm yard, in the rain, peering through binoculars at anything that moved, in the hope of finding a 'chicken hawk' with a line on its wing.

Now the great thing about bird clubs, certainly about this one, is that most of us enjoyed it! We didn't see the Letter-winged Kite, we didn't see much at all. But we had the occasional premature excitement that is unavoidable when one is hunting a particular bird and we shared a communal commiseration as we sheltered in a barn being gradually overtaken by an awareness that we really were not going to find our bird that day.

So we disbanded, each and every homeward journey to be punctuated by sudden roadside stops to examine the multitude of Black-shouldered Kites which turned out to emphasise for us that this really is their territory, that they are a magnificent bird just as they are without any extraneous adornments or embellishment, and perhaps to ask "which bird did this club choose as its emblem anyway?"

Bill Jolly.

FIELD DAY FOR APRIL.

Date: Sunday, 24th April, 1977. Place: Koorootang. Leader: Alan Graham.

Assembly Point: Pigott's car park. Time: 8.30 a.m.

NEW MEMBERS.

The club is pleased to welcome the following new members:-

Maurie Coman, 6, Gray Street, Toowoomba.  
Shane Kennedy, Downlands College, Toowoomba.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Urimburra, Vol. 11, Nos. 2, 3.  
Bird Observer, March, April, 1977.  
G.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 8, Nos. 2, 3.  
Darling Downs Naturalist, April, 1977.

So, once again we were diverted from our long-time intention of Plateau and instead an afternoon excursion to Felton was substituted in search of this exciting wanderer from the West.

Our quarry had been reported as appearing in the vicinity of a particular property just prior to dusk on a number of occasions, (he had obviously read all the books which tell us that is what a good Letter-winged Kite is supposed to do) and a substantial party of club members was accordingly on the spot and at the ready at about 4 p.m.

Unfortunately a considerable storm broke about our heads almost as soon as we opened the car doors and the next hour or so doubtless provided something of a cabaret for the man-on-the-land at Felton as a number of bird-watchers wandered around his farm yard, in the rain, peering through binoculars at anything that moved, in the hope of finding a 'chicken hawk' with a line on its wing.

Now the great thing about bird clubs, certainly about this one, is that most of us enjoyed it! We didn't see the Letter-winged Kite, we didn't see much at all. But we had the occasional premature excitement that is unavoidable when one is hunting a particular bird and we shared a communal commiseration as we sheltered in a barn being gradually overtaken by an awareness that we really were not going to find our bird that day.

So we disbanded, each and every homeward journey to be punctuated by sudden roadside stops to examine the multitude of Black-shouldered Kites which turned out to emphasise for us that this really is their territory, that they are a magnificent bird just as they are without any extraneous adornments or embellishment, and perhaps to ask "which bird did this club choose as its emblem anyway?"

Bill Jolly.

#### FIELD DAY FOR APRIL.

Date: Sunday, 24th April, 1977. Place: Koorootang. Leader: Alan Graham.

Assembly Point: Pigott's car park. Time: 8.30 a.m.

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Bird Observer, March, April, 1977.  
N.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 8, Nos. 2, 3.  
Darling Downs Naturalist, April, 1977.

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(cont/d.)

TOOWOOMBA CHECKLIST.

(10 km. radius of Margaret St., P.O.)

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| .... Little Grebe (Australian)             | .... Pallid Cuckoo                           |
| .... Darter                                | .... Brush Cuckoo                            |
| .... Little P. Cormorant                   | .... Fan-tailed Cuckoo                       |
| .... Black Cormorant                       | .... Rufous-t. Br.-cuckoo(Hors. Bronze-c.) * |
| .... Little Bl. Cormorant                  | .... Shining Br.-cuckoo(inc. Gold. Br.-c.)   |
| .... White-necked Heron                    | .... Indian Koel (Koel)                      |
| .... White-faced Heron                     | .... Channel-b. Cuckoo                       |
| .... Cattle Egret                          | .... Pheasant Coucal                         |
| .... Large Egret (White Egret)             | .... Powerful Owl                            |
| .... Plumed Egret                          | .... Spotted Owl (Boobook Owl)               |
| .... Nankeen Night-heron                   | .... Barn Owl                                |
| .... White Ibis                            | .... Tawny Frogmouth                         |
| .... Straw-necked Ibis                     | .... Owlet Nightjar                          |
| .... Royal Spoonbill                       | .... White-thr. Nightjar                     |
| .... Yellow-b. Spoonbill                   | .... Spine-tailed Swift                      |
| .... Plumed Tree-duck (Grass Whistle-duck) | .... Fork-tailed Swift                       |
| .... Black Duck                            | .... Azure Kingfisher                        |
| .... Grey Teal                             | .... Kookaburra (Laughing K.)                |
| .... Wood Duck                             | .... Sacred Kingfisher                       |
| .... Black-sh. Kite                        | .... Rainbow Bee-eater (Rainbow Bird)        |
| .... Crested Hawk                          | .... Dollar Bird                             |
| .... Brown Goshawk                         | .... Noisy Pitta                             |
| .... Grey Goshawk                          | .... White-backed Swallow                    |
| .... Red Goshawk                           | .... Welcome Swallow                         |
| .... Wedge-tailed Eagle                    | .... Tree Martin                             |
| .... Little Eagle                          | .... Fairy Martin                            |
| .... Spotted Harrier                       | .... Richard's Pipit (Aust. Pipit)           |
| .... Black Falcon                          | .... Black-f. Cuckoo-shrike                  |
| .... Little Falcon                         | .... Y.-eyed Cuckoo-sh.(Barred C.-sh.)       |
| .... Brown Falcon                          | .... Wh.-bellied Cuckoo-sh.(Little C.-sh.)   |
| .... Nankeen Kestrel                       | .... Cicada Bird                             |
| .... Brush Turkey                          | .... White-winged Triller                    |
| .... Stubble Quail                         | .... Varied Triller                          |
| .... Dusky Moorhen                         | .... Rose Robin                              |
| .... Swanphen                              | .... E. Yellow Robin (S.&N. Yellow R.)       |
| .... Coot                                  | .... Jacky Winter (Brown Flycatcher)         |
| .... Masked Plover                         | .... Cr. Shrike-tit(inc. E,N.&W. Sh.-t.)     |
| .... Banded Plover                         | .... Golden Whistler                         |
| .... Sooty Tern *                          | .... Rufous Whistler                         |
| .... White-headed Pigeon                   | .... Grey Shrike-thrush                      |
| .... Domestic Pigeon                       | .... Black-faced Monarch (Flycatcher)        |
| .... Spotted Dove (Sp. Turtledove)         | .... Spectacled Monarch (Flycatcher)         |
| .... Brown Pigeon                          | .... Leaden Flycatcher                       |
| .... Peaceful Dove                         | .... Satin Flycatcher                        |
| .... Bar-shouldered Dove                   | .... Restless Flycatcher                     |
| .... Emerald Dove (Green-w. Pigeon)        | .... Rufous Fantail                          |
| .... Common Bronzewing                     | .... Grey Fantail                            |
| .... Crested Pigeon                        | .... Willie Wagtail                          |
| .... Wonga Pigeon                          | .... Eastern Whipbird                        |
| .... Red-t. Black Cockatoo                 | .... Grey-crowned Babbler                    |
| .... Galah                                 | .... Tawny Grassbird                         |
| .... Sulphur-cr. Cockatoo                  | .... Golden-headed Cisticola                 |
| .... Rainbow Lorikeet                      | .... Rufous Songlark                         |
| .... Scaly-br. Lorikeet                    | .... Brown Songlark                          |
| .... Musk Lorikeet                         | .... Superb Blue Wren                        |
| .... Little Lorikeet                       | .... Variegated Wren                         |
| .... King Parrot                           |  |

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 .... Musk Lorikeet  
 .... Little Lorikeet  
 .... King Parrot  
 .... Cockatiel  
 .... Crimson Rosella  
 .... Eastern Rosella  
 .... Pale-headed Rosella  
 .... Red-rumped Parrot  
 .... Oriental Cuckoo

.... Brush Cuckoo  
 .... Fan-tailed Cuckoo  
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 .... Variegated Wren  
 .... Red-backed Wren  
 .... Wh.-br. Scrub-wren  
 .... Speckled Warbler  
 .... Weebill  
 .... Wh.-thr. Warbler  
 .... Brown Thornbill





