



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

p.o.box 67 - darling heights - 4350

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**MEMBERSHIP : Adults/Families \$18 Students \$10**

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**CLUB OFFICERS :**

President -	Pat McConnell	076 976141	Editor -	Don Gaydon	07 8221684
Vice-P/Records -	Rod Hobson	074 627364	Librarian -	Sharyn Frederiks	076 331169
Secretary -	Ann Shore	076 303207	Committee Member -	Pat Cleary	076 303352
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" To encourage the observation and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area "

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NEWSLETTER No. 211 - AUGUST 1993

**EDITORIAL:**

Well, the last month of Winter is upon us already leaving most wondering whether the cold weather is still coming or not. They used to say Toowoomba was a cold place in winter, but after this season one wonders whether they were talking about the same place? As the El Nino effect shows signs of breaking down, maybe we can look forward to good rains through Spring and Summer. It would certainly be welcome in the parched Lockyer landscape and Toowoomba City, not to mention further west.

This newsletter contains the Annual Species Summary for 1992, and details of our upcoming AGM. The 1987 Annual Species Summary, which was never completed and published, has been diligently compiled by President Pat from old checklists in the interests of completeness of club records. This document will soon be available from Ann, upon request.

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**TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS JULY OUTING No.1 - Spicer's Gap, 24-25 July 1993.**

Spicer's Gap, like all of the main range national parks, has much to offer visitors. Splendid scenery and an abundance of wildlife induced seventeen members and three visitors to attend what turned out to be a most enjoyable weekend. Seven people ended up spending the night at the Pioneer Picnic Area and after setting up camp on Saturday, headed for the magnificent views of the Governor's Chair Lookout. The scenery wasn't all that was impressive. While making our way up the mountain a Pacific Baza entertained us with its aerial antics. From very close quarters we observed the feeding behaviour of one of Australia's more interesting raptors. Feeding just above our heads, we watched as it crashed into the foliage with wings spread trying to flush its prey from cover. It was also on this walk that we saw White-headed Pigeons feeding on the track in front of us.

The spot-lighting that night proved to be well worth the effort. The raucous calls of distant Yellow-bellied Gliders had everyone running towards the spot. As usual, these vocal but very active gliders were difficult to find. But persistence pays off and after the initial frustrations good looks at one individual were obtained. We were even lucky enough to see it glide several times. Also seen that night was a magnificent Mountain Crayfish and on several occasions when the spotlights were out, luminous fungi could be seen. To top off the evening a Sooty Owl serenaded us to sleep, its voice being not as musical as that of Don who had previously kept us entertained with some campfire songs.

The following morning saw the Toowoomba Bird Observers arrive in force and a quick walk to Moss's Well prepared us for journeys to come. We tackled the Mt Matheson trail next. This would take us through to mid-afternoon and provide us with many highlights. Red-browed Treecreepers and Crested Shrike-tits quickly showed themselves to the delight of all and especially those for whom they were new. Birds became a bit scarce for the next hour or so but the scenery did not disappoint. Those leading quickly alerted the others to a snake-like creature crossing the track. The Common Scaly-Foot, though not a snake, superficially resembles one but differs externally in having external ear openings, a long tail a large hind-limb flaps. Further along the track as we entered some tangled vine scrub keen eyes spied a Woompoo Fruit-Dove who co-operated fully, allowing good looks. Now homeward bound, we saw a Pale-yellow Robin and once again the Pacific Baza feeding in the same trees as the day before. What a nice way to finish up.

Pat McConnell

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### TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS JULY OUTING No.2 - Stockyard Creek, 25 July 1993.

A small band of members met at the junction of the Stockyard and Flagstone Creek Roads for a chilly start to the day's alternative outing for those not feeling adventurous enough to travel as far as Spicer's Gap or not having that much time to spare. While admitting that our birds were more of the home-grown variety, we still found plenty to observe and enjoy as we relaxed in the early sun which strengthened quickly to give a surprisingly warm mid-winter's day. From the bird movement around us we were not the only ones to appreciate this with obvious signs of mating and nest-building activities.

Stopping at frequent intervals as we drove up the peaceful valley with its scattered farms and small areas of cultivated land below hills clad in remnant scrub and eucalypt woodland, we amassed a total of 55 species before our return to the city. It was especially good to see some of our less-often observed birds including Black-shouldered Kites, Red-rumped Parrots, Chestnut-breasted Manikins, Zebra Finches and a surprisingly large number of Bar-shouldered Doves. Several species were new to some members.

Ann Shore

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### VIEW FROM A WINDOW

Although of late various people have said, "There are no birds about - it must be the dry", I have been more than fortunate in numbers and diversity of birds at 'Shorelands'. In the short space of an extended lunch-hour in mid June I saw many comings and goings from my viewpoint in the house. Great activity was centred on the birdbaths and the surrounding bushes. Magpie-larks, a Willy Wagtail, Peaceful Dove, Crested Pigeons, Brown and Lewin's Honeyeaters and the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater who has recently been a fairly frequent visitor since he first appeared in late March - just for a start. From the other side of the house came the strident voices of a 'parliament of currawongs'; all trying to make their points at once. Another day brought a different selection including three Striped and three Lewin's Honeyeaters.

Yet even this assembly seemed tame when compared to the unexpected pleasures of another week. Again observing from my kitchen window 'front row of the stalls', I noticed a grey-backed bird at the birdbath and when he turned saw him to be a male Rufous Whistler. Maybe a common visitor to many backyards but another first for mine. The next day the big honeyeater was back, bathing, but harassed by an aggressive little Brown relative and a Lewin's. Then, a little later, on the hand-rail by the front door another strange back-view - black with an almost crimson flash of breast colour. Ah ha, a male Mistletoebird thought I - but wait - he had a respectable tail, half cocked! Alas, just a flick of wings and tail and he was gone. I chased outside and hunted madly through trees and shrubs but he'd

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES : All sightings as submitted by members of Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc. Accuracy not vouched for by TBO. Please check with observer before citing.

Bl.-browed Albatross	Spit Point, V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Great Cormorant (c100)	Helidon	24.07.93	P.McC.
Australian Shelduck	Elmore, V.	12.07.93	R.H.
Osprey (juv.)	Perseverance Dam	01.04.93	P.McC.
White-bell. Sea-Eagle *	Helidon	18.07.93	P.McC.
Plains-wanderer ****	Wanganella, N.S.W.	12.07.93	R.H.
Latham's Snipe (2) ***	Freeman's Waterhole	15.08.93	R.H.
Topknot Pigeon *****	Gatton Uni	03.08.93	R.H.
Palm Cockatoo	Bamaga	06.01.93	P.McC.
Musk Lorikeet	Cumner's Rd., T'mba	06.06.93	N.T.
Purple-crown. Lorikeet	You Yangs S.F., V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Swift Parrot	You Yangs S.F., V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Crimson Rosella	Mt. Lofty High School	06.07.93	K.B.
Blue-winged Parrot	Lake Connewarre, V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Orange-bellied Parrot	Werribee, V.	18.08.93	C.D.
Turquoise Parrot	Helidon Dip	08.08.93	M. & L.A., P.McC.
Chestnut-breast. Cuckoo	Bamaga	09.01.93	P.McC.
Red-back. Kingfisher **	Cranley	14.08.93	N.T.
Yellow-bill. Kingfisher	Bamaga	10.01.93	P.McC.
Red-bellied Pitta	Bamaga	09.01.93	P.McC.
North. Scrub-robin	Bamaga	09.01.93	P.McC.
Flame Robin	Lake Connewarre, V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Gilbert's Whistler	Whipstick S.F., V.	12.07.93	R.H.
Yellow-leg. Flycatcher	Bamaga	09.01.93	P.McC.
Rufous Bristlebird	Spit Point, V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Shy Hylacola	Whipstick S.F., V.	12.07.93	R.H.
Calamanthus	Murtnaghurt Lagoon, V.	10.07.93	R.H.
"	Werribee, V.	18.08.93	C.D.
Spiny-cheek. Honeyeater	Withcott	16.06.93	A.S.
Wh.-streaked Honeyeater	Jardine River	08.01.93	P.McC.
Crescent Honeyeater	Angahook F.P., V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Fawn-breast. Bowerbird	Bamaga	11.01.93	P.McC.
Grey Currawong	Point Addis, V.	11.07.93	R.H.
Forest Raven	Angahook F.P., V.	11.07.93	R.H.

L. & M.A., L. & M. Atzeni; K.B., K. Booth; C.D., C. Dollery; R.H., R. Hobson; P.McC., P. McConnell; A.S., A. Shore; N.T., N. Thompson.

\* Two birds observed, an adult and juvenile.

\*\* This bird sighted on same area of creek bank as one of this species in residence from May until August, 1991. Possibly same bird!

\*\*\* A pair of snipe feeding on exposed mudbank. First of the season? Do any members have an earlier record? If so, let's know.

\*\*\*\* Single male sighted just before 11pm after 3.5hrs spotlighting. Also in same area put-up several hundreds of Stubble Quail and a pair each of Little Button-Quail and Red-chested Button-Quail. A few Banded Lapwings also.

\*\*\*\*\* A single " Toppie " being harassed by Noisy Miners, Pied Butcherbirds and Magpies over university grounds just before midday. Unusual to see this rain-forest species over open agricultural country. Similar event recorded 02.07.91, R.H., when a single bird of this species observed being harried over open eucalypt forest at " Boxmore " cattle stud, Grantham. Lost or young birds perhaps?

- Records Officer

made a clean get-away. However the next day I disturbed a bevy of small birds from the birdbath area and among them was my black and rose/crimson stranger. Just enough of a sighting to confirm my suspicions. Yes, it really was a male Rose Robin!

Two days later it was not one but three Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters at the birdbath. From the generally softer coloured plumage, most noticeably the apricot bibs of two of the trio, I assumed them to be immatures. While the supposed adult splashed about with abandon the other two remained on the sidelines, advancing cautiously to the water, standing on the edge but not daring to go further. To date I have seen one have a hasty and timid dip but have never again observed all three around at once.

Due to the recent mild weather there are various signs of apparent Spring - like activity with the little Brown Honeyeaters singing again - a pleasant change after their persistent scolding calls - and erratic chasing flights of these and Lewin's Honeyeaters and much posturing and fanning of tails by the Crested Pigeons. With all these fascinating things to watch is it any wonder that the home chores are again suffering! And what may I expect to see next?

Ann Shore

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\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*

August 1993 Outing:

Location: Mulgowie/Blenheim area  
Assembly Point: Lake Dyer, Laidley  
Time: 7.30 am  
Date: 29 August  
Leader: contact Ann Shore (076) 303 207

September 1993 Outing:

Location: Withcott area  
Date: 26 September  
Leader: contact Ann Shore

Info: Local bush-birds expected.

TBO Annual General Meeting:

Location: QCWA Hall, Withcott  
Date: Monday, 11 October  
Time: 7.30 pm

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**SURFACE MAIL**

**THE TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS NEWSLETTER**

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