



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS INC

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

No. 370
January 2008

Editorial

By Plaxy Barratt & Michael Wood

Happy New Year to all! Hope everyone behaved themselves over the Christmas period and are now set for another big year of birding in 2008.

Well, what a year! For *The Challenge*, we managed to come within a solitary bird of the 2006 total, remarkable given where we were a few months earlier. Not only that, 2007 saw some new additions to the official club list and other rarities as well (see report page 2).

The Challenge – 2008 has begun with gusto too, with as many as **118** species recorded at this early stage. Keep the records coming in, for this may be the year that we top **250**!

Can we do better this summer? Yes! Forgotten your password? Contact the administrator at tboforum@westnet.com.au.

On a personal note, it was a year of quality rather than quantity in terms of birds for both of us. Michael: A few highlights of 2007 were Ground Parrot, Painted Snipe, Mallee Emu-wren,

Black-eared Miner and Superb Parrot. There are just so many!

Plaxy: Hearing the eerie call of 15+ Ground Parrots at dusk was an unforgettable experience. And having two baby Brush Turkey chicks frequent my garden has also been special.

A big welcome too must go to our newest members: Barbara & Rob Learmoth, Lonny Hogan, Brian & Wendy Henman, and our own Plaxy Barratt.

Apologies must go to those of you who did not receive the last newsletter. There have been a couple of hiccups which we hope have been rectified. If any of you do not receive this electronic newsletter please get in contact with either of us directly.

**2008
Challenge**
118 spp as at 15/1/08



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Prince Henry Drive. Meet at
the Katoomba Point Lookout
at 7am. Leader: Kay Williams

23rd February 2008
Spotlighting –
Ravensbourne NP. Leader:
Pat McConnell

(An affiliated Group of the Bird Observers Club of Australia)

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www.toowoombabirdobservers.org

MEMBERSHIP: Adults/Families \$22, Students \$11

(Subscriptions due 31 August)

2007: A Year in Review

Michael Wood

The year 2007 was a big one for the club. The official birdlist was boosted to the grand total of **293** species, firstly by the arrival in early May of an **Australian Pratincole** at 'Abberton', Helidon, and then by a **White-plumed Honeyeater** at Glen Lomond Park later that same month (the honeyeaters continued to turn up at a few other locations on the eastern side of the escarpment in the ensuing weeks.) At the club's establishment more than 30 years ago, who would have predicted that it would take so long for the latter species to be officially recorded?

Thanks to all your efforts we managed to record **226** species for "The Challenge -2007", just one short of the 2006 total. In November we didn't look like getting close to this figure. But towards the end, along with the rains, we came home with a "wet sail" and picked up an additional eight species in the final six weeks. A **Baillon's Crake** turned up in the Toowoomba CBD at a camping store in Margaret St (see article below); a **Little Button-Quail** (dead), near USQ; then a **Bush-hen** and **Little Egret** at 'Abberton', Helidon; a **White-eared Monarch** at Redwood Park; **White-breasted Woodswallow** along Lawlers Rd., Helidon; **Spotless Crake** at Iredale; and **Latham's Snipe** at a dam on Kluck's Rd, Carpendale.

And it was such a good year too for other species! A **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** and **Oriental Cuckoo** at Mt. Table Top for instance, as well as the **Superb Fruit-Dove** and **Noisy Pitta** near Picnic Point, a **Masked Owl** photographed at Stonehaven St., Toowoomba, and a male **Satin Flycatcher** at Boyce Gardens, Mt Lofty, were all quality records. And then finally there were the **Powerful Owls**, the birds treating us all by breeding at Highfields Falls and more than likely in Redwood Park.

We could have also reasonably expected to record the **Tawny Grassbird** and **Black-chinned Honeyeater**. Another is the **Crimson Rosella**, which is known to frequent the Queens Park area. So, given the omission of these and others, and the drought conditions for most of 2007, we did a remarkable job!

For full details of "The Challenge" results visit the Forum on the club's website: www.toowoombabirdobservers.org

During *Spring 2007*, 188 species were reported to the forum **within** the local survey area. Within a 250km radius of Toowoomba, but **beyond** the local survey area, 295 spp were reported. That's 64% and 68% of the total species, recorded in these respective areas.



Powerful Owl at Redwood Park, 21st Dec 2007. Photo by Esa Hohtola.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

I received a call from my father-in-law asking if I could help catch a 'water bird' that had got itself stuck in a camping store on Ruthven Street. Thinking it would just be an ibis or something similar, I reluctantly made my way down to the store to give the ibis a little help and kick up the tail out of the store.

On arrival one of the shop assistants said it was stuck behind a load of camping gear at the front of the shop. So not too delicately I pulled the place apart in search of my 'water bird' friend with no luck. I then decided I would go upstairs and see what was going on in the tent section. After about 15 minutes, and still no luck, I presumed the said bird had made his own way out of the shop.

As I made my way down the stairs I heard the flap of wings and the crash of a bird hitting a tent. So I ran back up the stairs to see a little bird, not an ibis, about 15 centimetres tall with a beautiful green beak. I herded him into a tent, caught him and put him in a box. On closer inspection the only thing I thought it could be was a Buff-Banded Rail, though it was neither buff or banded which left me feeling a little confused.

I took it down to the local QPWS office to employ the services of Bruce Thomson and Geoff Lundie-Jenkins. After much deliberation it was decided that this little fellow was a Baillon's Crake, not an ibis or a Buff-Banded Rail. What he was doing in a camping store in the centre of Toowoomba is anyone's guess, but a nice little find all the same.



Bruce Thomson (QPWS) took this stunning image of the Baillon's Crake after its capture. It was relocated to a river somewhere... in Highfields.

A Weekend of Firsts

By Kevin & Kay Williams

Well, firstly it began with three like-minded people sitting around a table and talking birding. Many different birds were discussed and ideas went around in my mind. So started the normal Williams' Saturday morning, with Kevin cooking breakfast then us sitting discussing what the weekend had in store for us as we ate it.

We decided as the forecast was for rain that we may go birdwatching as soon as the thermos was full. Our plan was to head out to Hampton and go from there.

We decided on Ravensbourne Nature Refuge as our first port of call as we had never been there before. We found it easily enough from the directions given on the Crows Nest 'East Bird Trail' sheet I had picked up in Hampton. We climbed over the fence as instructed and wondered what we would find the other side. The walkways were mowed in the last month, we guessed. They were wide and clear of rubbish most of the time, except for recently fallen trees which we had trouble getting over in three places. We walked for about an hour and the trail went on further than that.

Our first "first" encounter of the day was the most enjoyable sight! Six or seven **Topknot Pigeons**, a first for Kevin and me. We took some photos but they were so far up the very high eucalypt. Many birds were in the area, some being **Variegated Fairy-wrens**, **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Cicadabird**, **Australian King Parrot**, **Eastern Whipbird**, **Scarlet Honeyeater** and **Laughing Kookaburra**.



Topknot Pigeons in Eucalypt. Photo by Kevin and Kay Williams

Our second stop was at the first carpark into Ravensbourne National Park. Wow! What a lovely sight, all the black bean trees in full bloom! We could not believe our eyes, so many pairs of **Wompoo Fruit-Doves**. They are so pretty! I took so many photos as they just sat and posed for us on low branches. Yes..., I was in heaven! Topknots..., and now this! What more I say!

We walked around the circuit and found a **Pacific Baza**, **Eastern Whipbird**, **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Rainbow Lorikeets**, **Australian King-Parrots**, **Pale-headed Rosellas**, **Brown Cuckoo-Doves**, **Cicadabirds**, **Satin Bowerbirds**, **Dollarbirds** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** to name a few.

As if this was not sufficient for one morning, we had to go to Kevin's favourite spot on the way home, Highfields Falls. There we saw **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Pale-headed Rosella**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Eastern Whipbird**, **Crested Shrike-tit**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **White-naped Honeyeater**, **Common Bronzewing** and **White-winged Triller**, **Spangled Drongo** and the exciting **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. We had a great morning birding! We arrived home to a late lunch and spent many hours editing our photos.

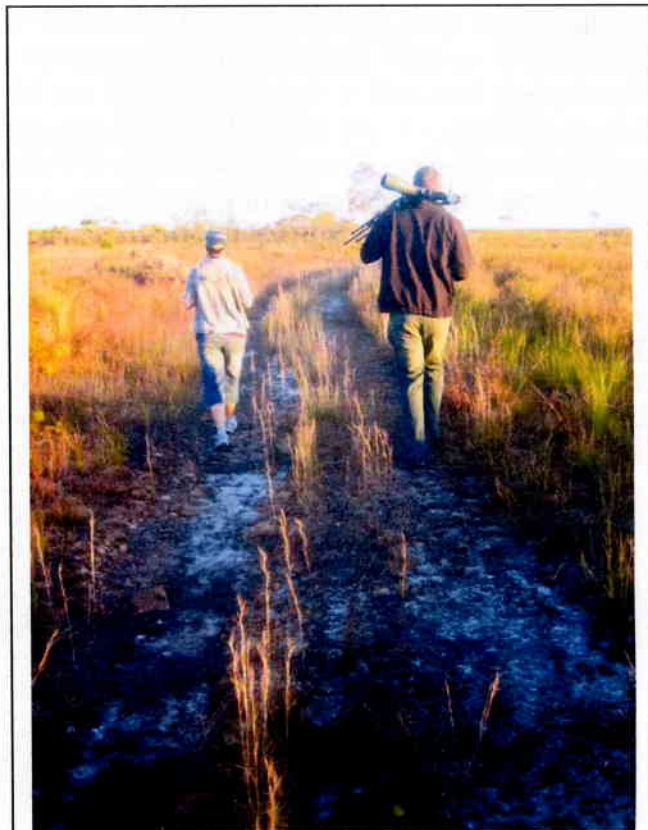
Sunday afternoon took us to our last "first" for the weekend. We went to the Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat to see if we could find the **Glossy Black-Cockatoo** we heard was seen in the area. Yes! We found it, and managed to get some pretty close photos. I must say this was a pretty exciting weekend all up, and we have photos to share as well.

Machinations of the Wasp and the Worm

By Michael Wood

In early August, 2007, I set out one gorgeous morning down the escarpment towards the coast. A group of us had planned to meet up and stay at Rainbow Beach for a weekend's birding, and if it was anything like a previous visit back in January we were in for one hell-of-a-time!

The excitement began early. On the way to Tin Can Bay from Gympie a line of vehicles was stacked-up tight on my backside. I began to worry they were too close, given I would have to pull-over in a hurry somewhere up ahead. Suddenly, a tallish man who looked a lot like my friend Dan walked out from the paddocks and gestured to me, but not in a rude way. Feverishly, I pulled over to the verge, and immediately the rear end began sliding-out on the damp grass. A couple of black and white striped cows were almost taken-out as I slid fifty metres or so along the fenceline, almost killing myself in the process. In due course, I came to a stop and looked back over my shoulder from where I'd just come. Dan looked beside himself.



Editor's prerogative: Mr and Mrs Mantle (aka Beth and Dan) on the hunt for Ground Parrot. Photo by Plaxy Barratt.

Dan, his fiancée Beth and I arrived safely at the rental house at Rainbow Beach and spent the time before the others turned-up looking at birds. Above the house four adult **Whistling Kite** circled, the birds noticed changing shifts at a nest in a tree that overhung the house, over the rim of which a nestling poked its beak –the history of the nest

extending over 17 years. Shortly after, a **Collared Sparrowhawk** flew over the house towards the town and joined the **Rainbow Bee-eaters** there.

After Jen, Plaxy and Tas had arrived, we set out for an evening's birdwatching at the heathland along 'Cooloola Way'. The early part of this visit was spent looking for **Southern Emu-wren** amongst the **Pearly Coral Fern** *Gleichenia dicarpa*. The bird's ever-so soft call was heard frequently, but its elusive reputation remained intact. Only on the second night did some of the group get to see a male. Standing on tippee-toes, we all lined-up at the edge of the heath, the shortest of us straining to see what the fuss was about. All I got to see was fluff, a tiny bundle of golden-brown and tan.

We hauled ourselves through the heath looking for ground parrots on both days. Some of the group walked the line, watching and listening, whilst others took the safer route along the path. Someone noticed a nice-looking **Brown Falcon** in a tree overlooking the track ahead. Not too long afterwards a scream rang out. We all rushed over to find a visibly distressed English girl recoiling from a brown snake. We realised then why the falcon hadn't taken off. Quite dead, its head nowhere to be found, the snake wasn't going anywhere or biting anyone.

We came across a flock of 17 **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** hovering over the heath in search of insects, plenty of **White-cheeked Honeyeater** and the odd **Tawny Grassbird**, but no parrot. Only on the second night did we manage to put a **Ground Parrot** up. Choking with excitement –the sight of this bird will always do it for me, I called out to the others and everyone briefly saw the bird before it dropped back down into the heath. Then, in the dying moments before dusk, the parrots began to sing their strange but sweet song. There must have been at least 15 birds in this small corner of heath.

Before daylight slipped away there was more cause for excitement. To the north-west a large raptor lazily patrolled the forest edge and heath, a **Spotted Harrier** gently pitching back and forth. Shortly after, a bird call sounded out from heath to the east and Plaxy shouted "Gallinule!" We listened in and speculated **Lewin's Rail**, something confirmed when we played a recording. Each call was getting ever closer, whereupon another rail called from somewhere behind it. We all became very excited, for none of us had seen the species. We hoped to rectify that by all perching on an embankment by the roadside and waiting for a bird to appear at the edge. But the bird stopped calling and everything fell silent –we were all strung-out, imagining a bird just there, metres away, watching us. Despite the lack of success, we all had a great time listening to its repertoire of calls; one had us all doubled-over with laughter, sounding much like the foot-fall of a galloping horse.



White-bellied Sea-eagle. Photo by Bill Jolly

It was then a matter of waiting for the owls. And, with the last semblance of light in the sky, a **Grass Owl** began calling from heath to the north and moments later another from the south. We played the call and waited. After a few minutes a bird put in an appearance,

followed almost without delay by another. Both circled the heath no more than 50 metres away, regularly crossing each other's path, causing confusion between Plax and I as we tried to keep each bird in the spotlight. It was one fine way to end a day!

Over the few days, Inskip Point didn't fail to divulge its usual diverse array. In fact, the majority of woodland birds were recorded within this small area. One group, the nectar-feeders, were particularly numerous; apart from the more common honeyeater species, both friarbird species and the **Little Wattlebird** that were seen fixed to the sides of banksia flowers, there were also **Mangrove Honeyeater** and **Scarlet Honeyeater**. Even **Varied Triller** and **White-browed Woodswallows** were getting stuck into this food source.

Out on the tidal flats of Tin Can Bay were **Whimbrels**, **Double-banded Plover**, **Eastern Curlew** and hundreds of other smaller species too distant to identify. An **Osprey** was seen in the distance, whilst another two raptors associated with aquatic environments, the **Brahminy Kite** and **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** were also present. **Gull-billed Tern** and a **Collared Kingfisher** were among other good sightings here.

A little later, whilst the others were sat amongst lantana waiting for a **Black-breasted Button-quail** to nonchalantly walk by, Plax and I decided to visit the opposite, eastern side of the peninsula and search for Beach Stone-curlew. Unfortunately, we dipped-out, but did manage something else quite extraordinary. Through the scope I began to scan the shoreline of nearby Fraser Island. As I was doing so I noticed something a little unusual to the north, a small shape moving on the beach, not too far from a wooden sign saying 'Eurong 35km'. Strolling casually along the beach, taking a sniff here and there, was a **Dingo *Canis lupus***. What a great find! And my first pure-blood?

We then set out back to the vehicle. On doing so, we noticed fresh button-quail platelets everywhere in the scrub alongside the bitumen. Ahead there was a small clearing in the woodland. We entered, and almost instantly heard something scratching to our left. It sounded incredibly close, but I was unable to see a thing. Plax pointed out that it was an **Australian Brush-turkey**. Eventually, I too observed the giant. But then, just as we were about to turn on our heels and leave, Plax whispered "button-quail", and the black v-shape of a female **Black-breasted Button-quail** gradually became perceptible. It emerged from the undergrowth and into mottled sunlight, casually heading towards the clearing. She ducked beneath the bottom strand of the fence and was so close we could see the whites of her eyes.



Tas, Plaxy, Beth, Dan, Jen, and Michael; six birders doing their best impersonations of their "bird of the trip". Photo, Plaxy Barratt

On the last morning of our stay Plax and I headed south of Rainbow Beach, just past 'Seary's Creek', to a spot known as 'Camp Milo' -the others had gone off chasing stone-curlews. Brush Bronzewing are reportedly seen here, so, as soon as it was warm enough we ventured into the lovely temperate woodland. Birds were active each and every inch of the way. And we had great success. There were robust numbers of just about every species typical of such woodlands, with some of the highlights a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Spangled Drongo** and **Spotted Pardalote**. Then some wing-flapping drew our attention to "The One" for the morning, the exquisite **Eastern Spinebill**.

After that, it was a matter of returning to the house and comparing notes. Everyone had a story to tell.

Species recorded over 3 days:

Common Myna, Silveryeye, Mistletoebird, Double-barred Finch, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, House Sparrow, Tawny Grassbird, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Richard's Pipit, Torresian Crow, Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, Grey Butcherbird, Varied Triller, White-breasted Woodswallow, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Green Catbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Magpie-lark, Restless Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Little Shrike-thrush, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Brown Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Mangrove Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, Noisy Friarbird, Little Wattlebird, Brown Thornbill, Brown Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, White-throated Treecreeper, Southern Emu-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Rainbow Bee-eater, Collared Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Grass Owl, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Pale-headed Rosella, Ground Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Bar-shouldered Dove, Peaceful Dove, Crested Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Spotted Turtle-Dove, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcon, Spotted Harrier, Whistling Kite, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Collared Sparrowhawk, Osprey, Black-shouldered Kite, Crested Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Silver Gull, Black-winged Stilt, Masked Lapwing, Double-banded Plover, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Pied Oystercatcher, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, White-faced Heron, White-necked Heron, Lewin's Rail (heard), Dusky Moorhen, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe, Magpie Goose, Black Swan, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Darter, Australian Pelican, Australian Brush-turkey, Black-breasted Button-quail, Emu.

Outing: Galvin's Property, via Thornton 27-28th Oct 2008

By Mick Atzeni

Attendees: Michael Atzeni, Ross Begent, Dan Begent, Al Young, Helen Young, Olive Booth, Mike McGoldrick, Joe and Sue Scanlan, Esther Townsend

Turned out two overnights in as many months proved too overwhelming for members – only Esther Townsend and I did so this time - but along with our day-trippers we collectively clocked up 108 spp for the weekend, counting species seen on a quick trip to Lake Dyer Saturday arvo as well. A total of 79 spp were recorded on Galvin's property up until I left around 10am on the Sunday.

The outing got off to a disastrous start at home when I couldn't find my main set of car keys which also had a borrowed key to unlock the property gate. Consequently, I had to chase up another one and didn't get down until 9:45. By then, the others had already

compiled a good list near the entrance of the property including a pair of **Brown Falcons** with a chick on the nest. I'd also seen a displaying **Pacific Baza** along Main Camp Creek Road on the way into the property.

The tantalising aspect of Galvin's is the easy birding along Main Camp Ck, which has a number of magnificent fig trees dotted along the creek. I have always maintained this property would one day yield my first Coxen's Fig-Parrot as it offers a good situation for viewing them. The Galvin's have related three such possible sightings to me in the past.

Unfortunately, the fig trees weren't fruiting this trip and species like Topknot Pigeon and Wompoo Fruit-Dove seen on past visits were absent this time. Nevertheless, in the fig trees and denser creek vegetation we picked up the likes of **Brown Cuckoo-Dove, White-headed Pigeon, Emerald Dove, Crimson Rosella, Black-faced Monarch, Large-billed Scrubwren, Satin Bowerbird, Spangled Drongo** and **Barred Cuckoo-Shrike**. Young Dan Begent did well to pick up a **Green Catbird** sitting quietly in the foliage. A lifer for Dan too! It was also pleasing to obtain good views of a **Brush Cuckoo**. We heard a few calling but this was the only one to materialise all weekend.

There were plenty of other bush birds, and Esther and I managed to add nine more to the property list on the Sunda - **White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove, Australian King-Parrot, White-naped Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Varied Sittella** and **White-winged Triller** before I had to depart around 10am.

For the record, I also saw a **Koala** just north of Cedar Gully Rd, Mulgowie, that I reported for the survey conducted that weekend. Geoff Galvin tells me he has only seen Koalas twice on their property.

A **Rufous Fantail** was the only species I saw on the property a week earlier on my reconnoitre, but not on the club outing.

Once again, my thanks to the Galvin family for continued access to their wonderful property and for allowing TBO the use of their facilities; to Geordie Galvin for saving my reputation with his spare key! and to Geoff Galvin for his company and hospitality on the Saturday night. Geoff is happy for members to visit the property at other times, provided they contact him beforehand on 0427 731 666.



Scarlet Honeyeater. Photo by Bill Jolly.

Species lists:

Thornton – Mulgowie:

Grey Teal, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing, Rock Dove, Spotted Turtle-Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Little Corella, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet,

Little Lorikeet, Laughing Kookaburra, Dollarbird, Striated Pardalote, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Restless Flycatcher, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Figbird, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Common Starling, Common Myna

Galvin's property, Main Camp Creek Rd, via Thornton:

Australian Brush-turkey, Brown Quail, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Brown Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Masked Lapwing, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Australian King-Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Pale-headed Rosella, Brush Cuckoo, Common Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Southern Boobook, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Varied Sittella, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Restless Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Barred Cuckoo-shrike, Cicadabird, White-winged Triller, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow, Green Catbird, Satin Bowerbird, Richard's Pipit, Double-barred Finch, Red-browed Finch, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Silveryeye

Lake Dyer: Brown Quail, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe, Darter, Australian Pelican, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Black-shouldered Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Black-winged Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Masked Lapwing, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern

"Deshon's Retreat"

Frank and Jayne Deshon

"Deshon's RETREAT" consists of our home and two B&B units on the Eastern fall of the Boobie Range, 10 kms from Kingaroy.



Frank and Jayne at their "Deshon's Retreat", near Kingaroy.

It is similar in climate to Toowoomba with the same altitude as Picnic Point. We bought the 60 acres from Crane Winery next door as a block of steep vine scrub down to open

grassland, having most of the birds implicit with that terrain. It has great views over the Booie Valley which drains to Bjelke Peterson Dam (40 minutes away).

We get bird watching people mainly from the Brisbane/Sunshine coast. They love the quiet and solitude after the freeways etc, and generally see a new bird or two. It is useful as a base to explore the Bunya Mts, (30 minutes towards Toowoomba) and the dams for water birds. We are sure you will enjoy bird watching in the day, with a wine tasting or two on the way (research pays!).

Please refer to our website for our summer specials and for more detail. (www.deshonsretreat.com.au).

Frank and Jayne Deshon.

Updated local mistletoe guide, by Dr Gillian Scott

Rod Hobson (Resource Ranger QPWS)

I've got a few extra copies of *A Guide to the Mistletoes of South-eastern Queensland*, which has just been updated, by Dr. Gillian Scott. It covers all mistletoes in this area and has very good and user-friendly keys. As mistletoes form a major food source for many Australian birds I thought that some TBO members might be interested in a copy. I can sell them at cost, which is \$7.00 including postage. Interested persons should contact me: email: thehobsons@bigpond.com or ph. 4635 6270 (home), 46994319 (work) to arrange for payment and despatch. It's a great little publication. I've used it many times and it's always 'comes up trumps'.



Grey mistletoe, *Amyema quandang*.
Photo by Craig Eddie

Spotlighting at Ravensbourne National Park Saturday 23 February 2008

Pat McConnell

Meet at the bottom picnic area at 4.30pm. From here we will birding in the rainforest areas until about 5.30pm. We will then head up to the top picnic area (Gus Beutell's Lookout) and have tea prior to spotlighting from about 7.00pm. Kath and I will take some fire wood if anyone would like to have a barbecue. There are toilets, tables and a shelter shed at this spot. The mosquitoes might be bad so I recommend that everyone bring insect repellent and have long trousers and long-sleeved shirts. Wear sturdy, non-slip footwear. Please watch the weather as strong winds or rain may mean that it will have to be cancelled. We will probably spotlight for about an hour or so. Several spotlights will be provided but everyone should also bring their own torches.

COMING EVENTS

20th January 2008 – Beginner's outing, Prince Henry Drive. Meet at Katoomba Point Lookout at 7am. Leader: Kay Williams (Contact: 07 4659 5475)



Last year's outing to Prince Henry Drive was a hit. Photo by Al Young.

23rd February 2008 – Spotighting; Ravensbourne NP. Leader: Pat McConnell

29th March 2008 – Goomburra State Forest. Leader: Michael Wood (Contact: 0402 283 856) (Details to be advised)

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Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 13th February 2008

Please e-mail or snail-mail your articles to Plaxy Barratt or Michael Wood.

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