

# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

No. 388  
October 2009

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

## Editorial

By Plaxy Barratt

October is a busy month for TBO. The AGM this Wednesday 21 Oct promises to be an enjoyable evening, with guest speaker Pat McConnell presenting on the birds of Christmas Island.



Christmas Island Frigatebird.  
Photo: Pat McConnell

Birds Queensland has brought their November Twitchathon forward to this weekend, October 24/25<sup>th</sup>. This was the weekend of the club's popular October Species Census, so the Census has now been shifted to the following weekend, 31 Oct/1 Nov. If you enter the Twitchathon let us know how you go. Best of luck to Toowoomba teams The Unleaded Petrels (QLD reigning champions) and The Crowned Monarchs!

The Challenge 2009 tally is growing slowly; latest additions are Australasian Reed-warbler, Pink-eared Duck, and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Hopefully the Twitchathon and Census will provide a boost in our endeavour to reach 250 species.

While not exactly a 'cracker' of a bird, I was delighted to hear the sweet song of a Brown Honeyeater in my backyard last weekend, bringing my backyard bird list to 50 since I moved in one year ago. No match for backyards like Bill Jolly's and Mick Atzeni's, but enjoyable none-the-less!

This is my final newsletter as Editor; after two years in the role I've decided it's time to pass on the baton. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed articles and photos, and to Michael Wood, Mick Atzeni, and Nicci Thompson for their valuable editorial assistance. I've particularly enjoyed the correspondence with members, and it was a great way to get involved in the club. If you'd like to offer your editorial services to the club contact Mick Atzeni.

At which point I'll say, 'so long, and thanks for all the fish birds [Ed]'

**2009  
Challenge**  
217 spp as of 16/10/09



TOOWOOMBA  
BIRD OBSERVERS

## This Issue

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By Al Young

**Toorbul Outing**  
By Kay Williams and  
Olive Booth

**Members' bird notes**  
By Pat McConnell

**"Toki" – My Rarest Bird**  
By Russell Jenkins

## Correspondence

## COMING EVENTS

**Wednesday 21 Oct 2009**  
AGM 7.00pm start

**24 / 25 October 2009**  
Birds Queensland  
Twitchathon

**31 Oct / 1 Nov 2009**  
Species Census

**Saturday 28 Nov 2009**  
Breakfast with the Birds  
Venue TBA

(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350  
www.toowoombabirdobservers.org

MEMBERSHIP: Adults/Families \$22, Students \$11  
(Subscriptions due 31 August)

## Redwood Park Outing 26 September 2009

By Al Young

Attendees: Ross and Dan Begent, John Carr, Brian and Wendy Henman, Alison and Chris James, Mike McGoldrick, Pat Moreton, Ernie Potts, Kevin and Kay Williams, Helen and Al Young (leader).

As the trucks monstered their way down the Range, a hardy troop of 14 club members met at the down Range entrance to Redwood Park. It was a less than ideal morning for birding due to the very strong winds, however by mid-morning 36 species had been recorded.

On our way from the entrance to the creek we heard **Torresian Crow, Lewin's Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, Eastern Whipbird** and the downward tinkling call of a Gerygone; **White-throated or Western Gerygone?** To my ear the so-called differences between the calls of these two species are not very clear-cut. Luckily, about six people got good views of a Western Gerygone and then not far away another downward trilling call was heard which was a **White-throated Gerygone**.

Next a short trek up the hill through the vine scrub which is extremely dry with a lot of fallen timber. It looks dry enough to burn which would be a disaster. Some of the birds seen and/or heard in the vine scrub were: **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Monarch, Silvereeye, Varied Triller, Grey Shrike-thrush, Wonga Pigeon and Bar-shouldered Dove**. In the transition zone (ecotone) between the vine scrub and open *Eucalyptus* forest we saw a **Crested Shrike-tit** doing its bark stripping routine looking for succulent morsels.

After a short walk up the Grasstree Track we decided that the best birding was over for the day and everyone departed by about 9:30 am. I would like to thank everyone who attended.

**Species list:** Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Little Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Laughing Kookaburra, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Weebill, Western Gerygone, White-throated Gerygone, Noisy Friarbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Varied Triller, Olive-backed Oriole, Torresian Crow, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird and Silvereeye.



White-throated Gerygone. Photo: Kevin Williams



Scarlet Honeyeater. Photo: Kevin Williams



Crested Shrike-tit. Photo: Kevin Williams

## Toorbul Waders' group outing

By Kay Williams and Olive Booth

Our Visit to Toorbul to join the Waders' group outing. We (Kevin, Olive and Kay) left Toowoomba at approx 6.30am on the Saturday, for a leisurely drive to the coast.

Our first stop was not for a bird but a mother and baby Koala at Esk. They were going across a park and we had to see if they got up a tree safely. The first tree was too thin so Mum had to return to ground and find a better tree. Many photos later we continued on our journey.

A short stop at Kilcoy, then to Bishop's Marsh to see the **Brolgas** in the swamp. After checking in to our accommodation and a spot of lunch we went to Buckley's Hole on Bribie Island, to see **Beach Stone-curlew, Mangrove Gerygone, Variegated Fairy-wren, Wandering Whistling Duck**, to mention a few (several 'firsts' for the Williams). We were joined by Michael and Claire McGoldrick at this point, so Kevin and Mike went back down the beach so Mike could see the Beach Stone-curlews. After much talking we went on to Woorim for a fish-and-chip tea at The Crab Pot.

Early Sunday Kevin went for a stroll along the waterfront and found **Collared Kingfisher, Mallard Duck, Rainbow Bee-eater** and **White-breasted Woodswallow**. We Joined up with all the Waders' Group at the high tide roost. Also from the TBO were Richard and Daniel Thomis, Rob and Barbara Collyer, Sandra Dungleison, and Esther Townsend. This was another enlightening morning with these vary knowledgeable folk. Judy Caughley was among them and wished to be remembered to all her friends at T B O.

There were many species of returning waders in attendance, some with breeding plumage and others without. Approximately 12 -15 **Nankeen Night Herons** were found in a tree in the paddock next to the roost.

Once again a great outing and a big thankyou to the Waders' group for assisting us in identifying the waders. A personal thanks to Esther for notifying us of the outing.



Mother koala with young. Photo: Kevin Williams



Pair of Beach Stone-curlews. Photo: Kevin Williams

### Species List for Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September

Wandering Whistling Duck, Plumed Whistling Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Black Swan, Hardhead, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Pelican, White-necked Heron, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Straw-necked Ibis, White Spoonbill, Royal Spoonbill, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Osprey, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brolga, Dusky moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Beach Stone-curlew, Pied Oyster-catcher, Black-winged Stilt, Red-capped Plover, Black-fronted Dotterel,

Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Whiskered Tern, Caspian Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Spotted Turtle-dove, Peaceful and Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Little Corella, Rainbow lorikeet, Scaly-breasted lorikeet, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow bee-eater, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated

Pardalote, Mangrove Gerygone, Little Friarbird, Noisy Friarbird, Striped Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Mangrove Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Rufous Whistler, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced cuckoo-shrike, White-breasted Wood-swallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie Lark, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow, House Sparrow, Welcome Swallow, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Silvereye.

**Additions to list from Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September.**

Mallard Duck, Nankeen Night Heron, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Red Knot, Great Knot, Sharp-tailed sandpiper, Curlew sandpiper, Sulphur-crested cockatoo, Cockatiel, Pale-headed Rosella, Collared Kingfisher, Tree Martin, Starling, Common Myna.

**Members' Bird Notes**  
By Pat McConnell

**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.

Black Bittern	-/09/2009	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Spotted Harrier	7/10/2009	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Pale-vented Bush-hen *	26/09/2009	Upper Lockyer	MA
Little Corella (2)	6/10/2009	USQ Toowoomba	PM, KO
Little Bronze-Cuckoo **	24/09/2009	Upper Lockyer	MA
Little Bronze-Cuckoo ***	9/10/2009	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
White-throated Needletail	3/10/2009	Upper Lockyer	MA
White-browed Woodswallow	3/10/2009	Upper Lockyer	MA
White-browed Woodswallow	19/09/2009	Highfields	PM, KO
Masked Woodswallow	3/10/2009	Upper Lockyer	MA
Masked Woodswallow	19/09/2009	Helidon	PM, KO

- \* Heard regularly since that date
- \*\* Heard regularly since that date
- \*\*\* Male & female seen and photographed in yard

**MA**, M. Atzeni; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell;

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

**October Species Census**  
31 Oct / 1 Nov 2009

Please note Birds Queensland have brought their **November Twitchathon** forward to October 24/25th. This was the weekend we were to hold the club's popular October Species Census.

To allow myself [Mick] and others to participate in the Twitchathon, the **Species Census** will now be held the following weekend, i.e. **31 Oct/1 Nov**. Hope this hasn't inconvenienced anyone.

Sightings from Friday 30th Oct and Monday 2nd Nov will also count. That way you have the best of four mornings :-)

This species census will cover the whole survey area [Ed: contact Mick for map] but, as with last year, please make an effort to visit the grids that are under-surveyed during the year. These grids are: W1 , W2 , W3 , W4 , S1 , S2 , S3 , S4 and N4.

We will also be looking to add to the Annual Challenge tally of 217 species. Those species still to be reported this year are:

King Quail *	Black-tailed Godwit *	Blue Bonnet *
Magpie Goose *	Whimbrel *	Swift Parrot *
Blue-billed Duck *	Marsh Sandpiper	Budgerigar *
Musk Duck *	Common Greenshank *	Turquoise Parrot *
Freckled Duck *	Common Sandpiper *	Pallid Cuckoo
Cotton Pygmy-goose *	Red-necked Stint *	Barking Owl *
Mallard *	Curlew Sandpiper *	Sooty Owl *
Chestnut Teal *	Red-necked Phalarope *	Masked Owl *
Hoary-headed Grebe *	Painted Snipe *	Spotted Nightjar *
Great Crested Grebe *	Comb-crested Jacana *	Australian Owlet-nightjar
Gould's Petrel # *	Pacific Golden Plover *	Forest Kingfisher *
Little Bittern *	Red-capped Plover *	Red-backed Kingfisher *
Black-necked Stork *	Red-kneed Dotterel	Noisy Pitta *
Osprey *	Australian Pratincole *	White-plumed Honeyeater *
Brahminy Kite *	Silver Gull *	Painted Honeyeater *
Red Goshawk *	Gull-billed Tern *	Black Honeyeater *
Grey Falcon *	Caspian Tern *	Scarlet Robin *
Brolga *	Sooty Tern ## *	Satin Flycatcher *
Baillon's Crake *	Whiskered Tern	Black-faced Woodswallow *
Australian Spotted Crake *	White-winged Black Tern *	Little Woodswallow *
Spotless Crake *	Squatter Pigeon *	Australian Raven *
Black-tailed Native-hen *	Diamond Dove *	Diamond Firetail *
Red-backed Button-quail *	Superb Fruit-Dove *	White-backed Swallow *
Little Button-quail *	Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	Little Grassbird *
Black-breasted Button-quail *	Topknot Pigeon	Russet-tailed Thrush *
Latham's Snipe	Red-winged Parrot *	

\* Rare Bird Report may be requested

\*\* Report required for all sightings

# Single historical record - injured bird

## Single historical record - dead bird

Please contact the Co-ordinator Michael Atzeni for further information (46881318 wk; 0458 9489 55 mobile).

## Correspondence

### Lake Apex, Gatton

Further to previous emails, we can now advise you that Gatton Shire Council have agreed to holding a public meeting re the formation of a 'Friends of Lake Apex' Group. The meeting will be held in the Shire Hall in North Street at 3pm on Sunday 1st November 2009. It would be terrific if any of your members could attend and provide information on the wildlife at Lake Apex/Lake Freeman. Once we have the group formed, we will work on putting a submission together to persuade Council to have the area declaration a Conservation Park or something like that, so as to protect the area from further development and to ensure it's preservation for future generations. If you have any concerns or enquires please contact us as soon as possible. Our phone number is (07) 54621230.

We do hope your members are able to assist us in our endeavours to save what is left of the Lake Apex greenspace. By the way, DERM are still completing their investigations into the clearing of the Western Is. We have no idea yet when that will be completed.

Sincerely,  
Rob & Jocelyn Wilson

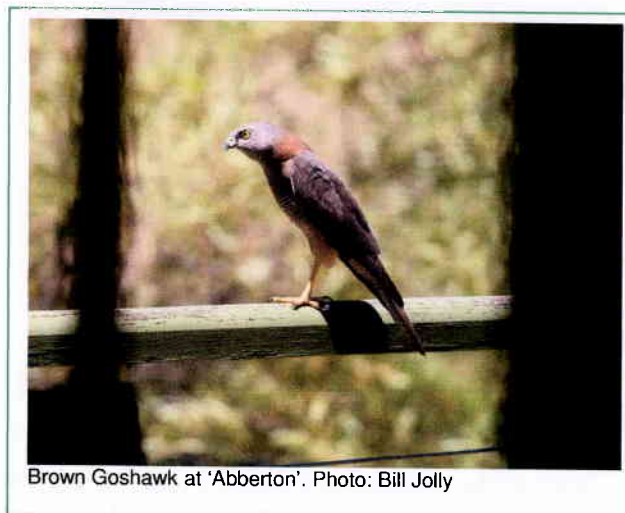
#### Raptors of 'Abberton'

October thus far has been good for raptors at 'Abberton'. Of course the concept of 'raptor-watching' here isn't at all the same as the image it conjures up of migration time in Europe and North America.

Here, several raptors are ever-present in our local environment, occupying territories that overlap our garden; others just wander in along the creek or pass overhead as they explore the valley.

One way or another, there are 20 raptor species on our house list, and in the first two weeks of October we've seen 8 of those from the verandah - and one of them on it, viz

**Black-shouldered Kite, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Spotted Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon and Australian Hobby.**



Brown Goshawk at 'Abberton'. Photo: Bill Jolly

Surprisingly, not a Nankeen Kestrel or Whistling Kite yet this month.

The photo is...from yesterday, of...a **Brown Goshawk** who landed on the verandah rail, then to and fro'd a few times between it and the nearby rustic fencing behind the rock outside the window. Most of the Brown Goshawks we see tend to be first or second year birds, which really are brown, but this beautiful adult belies its unimaginative name.

There's a lot of dark surround on the pic - I was photographing from the kitchen, across a room and through a closed glassed door. I haven't cropped it out because for me it recaptures the tension of the moment as I crept forward, breath held, hoping not to be spotted.

Bill Jolly

#### Newsletter correspondence

Did you know that the club receives newsletters from a number of fellow birding and naturalist groups each month? This month includes:

- 'The Darling Downs Naturalist' - Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club Inc.
- 'Urimbirra' - Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club Inc.
- Fassifern Field Naturalists Club Inc. Newsletter
- Suncoast Bird Observers Group Newsletter
- Birds Queensland Newsletter

If you would like to see any of these publications please contact TBO Librarian, Kay Williams (4659 5475/ 0429 465 954 [kevkaywills@hotmail.com](mailto:kevkaywills@hotmail.com) ).

## "Toki" – My Rarest Bird By Russell Jenkins

The last of the wild born "Toki", *Nipponia nippon*, **Japanese Crested Ibis** died in 2003. In 2008, 10 birds from a breeding program on Sado Island, Niigata, were released into the wild.

On Sunday, August 2 2009, my birding friend Mr Honma, called and asked if I'd like to try to see a Toki. Late that afternoon, we drove to a fairly residential area with a heavily tree-lined river. When we arrived, I was surprised to see what seemed to be hundreds of people lining a bridge and roads by the river. Cars were parked illegally and police were driving by with a loud speaker asking people to move on. We soon found a place to put the car and walked back up onto the bridge. I could see people around me and down by the river pointing to a group of trees about 300 metres up the river, below us. I couldn't see anything. Suddenly excited voices and sighs filled the air and I could see a large, white bird flying up the river towards us. I stood motionless for a moment, reminded of watching an Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca* in flight. I soon woke up and reached for my camera bag which was still zipped up. Panicking, I got it open, reached in and felt my sweat drip around the lens. Unfortunately, I'd prepared a 400mm lens with an added 1.5X teleconverter thinking I'd be using it on a tripod. It was too big and slow for hand-holding. I lifted the camera. A butterfly flapped its wings in western Brazil, and I shook as the camera slowly focussed. I guess it was about 5.30pm + and light was poor but I have uploaded the best of my results. I would have been better off with a 300mm lens for the overhead encounter but it was a wonderful experience. The perched photographs were taken with the a fieldscope and digital camera through the mesh siding of the bridge so they're also not as clear as I'd like, but anyway, I hope I'll have many more chances to meet a Toki!



"Toki" - Japanese Crested Ibis. Photo Russell Jenkins

Russell

Ed: Russell is our own Toowoomba birder living and working in Japan. The above article is a posting from Russell's new blog which I mentioned in last month's newsletter: <http://russelljenkinsstoop.blogspot.com>. Russell writes 'Still learning but please check it out. At least look at my first post, "Big Eagles at Shiretoko" which includes my most treasured photographs.'

These are *impressive* birds (photo, right). Russell has permitted me to include a couple of his photos from the site in this month's newsletter, and if you haven't visited the site I recommend you check it out!

Cheers,  
Plaxy



Steller's Sea Eagle. Photo Russell Jenkins

## COMING EVENTS

**Wednesday 21 October 2009**

**AGM 7.00pm start**

**Meet:** Wilsonton Uniting Church hall,  
corner of North and Tor streets

**Guest speaker: Pat McConnell** on the  
birds of Christmas Island.

Bring a plate to share at supper time.

**Contact:** Olive Booth

Ph. 07 4633 0553

**31 October / 1 November 2009**

**Species census**

**Contact:** Mick Atzeni for details and  
forms Ph. 07 4688 1318

**Sunday 1 November 2009**

**Public Meeting** re: the formation of a  
'Friends of Lake Apex' Group

**Meet:** 3pm in the Gatton Shire Hall in  
North St

**Saturday 28 Nov 2009**

**Breakfast with the Birds**

Venue TBA

## Committee Members

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**Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 15th November 2009**

Please e-mail or snail-mail your articles to Plaxy Barratt or Nicci Thompson

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

**Surface Mail**