



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

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

No. 405
June 2011

Editorial

Steve Burke

Well the Raptor census is on again this weekend and I'm sure there will be plenty of good sightings reported.

I have heard from a fellow Club member today that their resident pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles is nesting on their property again this year. I'm sure we all look forward to future updates on their progress.

The Club is holding a hot-pot lunch at the Uniting Church Hall in August and all members and friends are warmly invited to attend. The date chosen is Saturday 13th and the time is 11.30 am. Please bring a hot dish to share with other attendees. The Committee looks forward to seeing a lot of members and friends come along to share some hot food and birding stories and holiday highlights.

July's outing is being held at a new venue and promises to be an interesting and rewarding morning. Contact Mick Atzeni if you think you might be attending.

The Committee would like to encourage members who plan to attend monthly outings to inform the outing leader of their intention to come along. This helps with planning and will assist the leader in determining whether to get the outing underway or whether to wait around for a little longer. It would also help if you give the outing leader a contact number so you can be contacted if running late.



Silvereyes enjoying a bath.
Photo: Steve Burke.

2011 Challenge
164 species as
at 23/6/2011



TOOWOOMBA
BIRD OBSERVERS

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COMING EVENTS

June Outing
Saturday 25th/Sunday 26th
Venue: Raptor Census
Leader: Pat McConnell

July Outing
Saturday 30th
Venue: Rockmount
Leader: Mick Atzeni

August Outing
Date: TBA
Venue: Leyburn
Leader: Ken McKeown

(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

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

Iron Range Trip – November 2010

By Pat McConnell

In November 2010 Kath and I went on a fantastic birding trip to Iron Range with Klaus Uhlenhut and four other birders. Ever since I started birding in 1976 I have heard fantastic stories about the birds of Iron Range and it was one of those locations that I always wanted to visit. Back in 1992 I did a trip to Cape York by myself but missed four bird species that are restricted to the Iron Range area – these are **Eclectus Parrot**, **Red-cheeked Parrots**, **Black-winged Monarch** and **Green-backed Honeyeater**. Kath had never been north of Cairns before so there were numerous species for her to see.

We meet Klaus at the Lockhart River Airport before lunch on 2nd November and got straight into the birding. Our accommodation was at Portland Roads and the road there took us straight through Iron Range. I was quite surprised to find out that Iron Range is only about five kilometres in length. We stopped for a quick look at Cook's Hut which is right in the middle of the rainforest and here we obtained very quick looks at Red-cheeked Parrot, Eclectus Parrot and could hear **Yellow-bellied Kingfisher's** calling from all around. We did not have time to dawdle for too long as Klaus had other targets in mind for that afternoon. After unpacking and checking out our home (a lovely house overlooking the mangroves and the ocean) for the next five days we headed down to a nearby waterhole to see what species were coming in to drink. Before long we were joined by a **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird**. This bird was new for most of the group and afforded great views on several occasions. After an hour or so spent at the waterhole we went to Chill Beach to look for waders and sea birds and if we were very lucky a **Spotted Whistling-Duck**. No luck with the duck but the birding was still good.



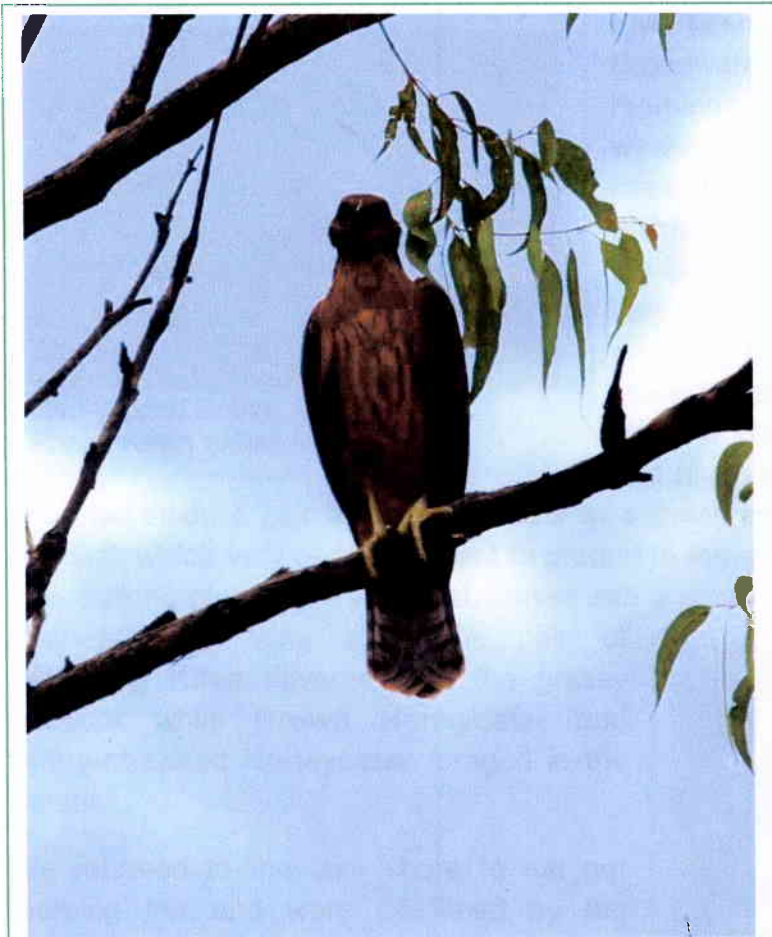
Golden-shouldered Parrot.

Photo: Pat McConnell.

For the next four days we visited sites like Gordon Creek, Lockhart River, Cook's Hut, Lloyd Bay and Chilli Beach. From our veranda we could see such species as **Great & Lesser Frigatebirds**, **Superb Fruit-Dove**, **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove**, **Pied Imperial Pigeon**, **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** and **Little Bronze-Cuckoo**. Iron Range was about a 20

minute drive away and on this drive we occasionally saw **Palm Cockatoos** with quick stops producing species like **Northern Scrub-robin**.

Iron Range is an easy place to bird in. A lot of the birding can be done from the main road, and with very little understory birding off the road is also easy. The temperature was pleasant and there were very few mosquitoes. Even at night we slept with the windows open and were never bothered by insects. Birds seen in the rainforest included **Eclectus Parrot** (at nest hollow), **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo**, **Rufous Owl** (adult and young), **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**, **Red-bellied Pitta** (heard only), **Green-backed Honeyeater**, **Yellow-legged Flycatcher**, **Northern Scrub-robin**, **White-faced Robin**, **Black-winged Monarch**, **Friiled Monarch**, **Magnificent Riflebird** and **Trumpet Manucode**. Good looks were obtained of all species – Klaus carries a telescope all the time which allows for great views of most species. I managed to see my four target birds and Kath saw about 20 new ones. Although regularly seen **Red-cheeked Parrots** were probably the hardest to get good looks at. We only managed to see them perched in the open on one occasion although we saw them flying over several times a day. While spotlighting we also saw **Marbled Frogmouth** and **Large-tailed Nightjar** and Australia's largest snake the **Amethyst Python**.



Red Goshawk.

Photo: Pat McConnell.

Our stay at Iron Range came too quickly to an end, and on 6th November we started our trek to Musgrave Station to look for a whole new range of birds. The drive back was very enjoyable as we crossed many creeks and rivers and saw some great scenery.

Kath and I found the Musgrave area also very enjoyable. Again, the weather was good and the birds were great. In this area we visited places like Artemis Station, Lotusbird Lodge, Saltwater Creek and the famous Nifold Plains. Species seen included **Wood Sandpiper**, **Black-breasted Buzzard**, **Red Goshawk**, **Golden-shouldered Parrot**, **Papuan Frogmouth**, **Black-backed Butcherbird**, **Masked Finch**, **Black-throated Finch** and **Star Finch**. I had waited half a lifetime to see **Golden-shouldered Parrot** and it was well worth the wait. We saw at least 15 birds from very close

range. The last time I went looking for them car troubles caused me to abandon the trip. The **Red Goshawk**, which is another speciality of the area, was also very co-operative with an adult and juvenile seen on several occasions. The heads of **Blue-winged**

Kookaburras littered the ground below the nest site. Seeing a flock of about 300 Star Finches on Nifold Plains was also very exciting. The Nifold Plains were a great place to bird with numerous species of finch seen flying from small tree to small tree while a **Bustard** displayed in the background and a **Spotted Harrier** flew overhead.

This was a great trip and I can highly recommend Klaus as a guide if you are ever heading up to north Queensland.

May Outing – Lake Broadwater & Bunya Mtns foothills

By Mike McGoldrick

LAKE BROADWATER OUTING SATURDAY 28 MAY



Red-capped Robin.
Photo: Kevin Williams.

Five keen club members gathered at Lake Broadwater on a beautiful crisp autumn morning for the club's annual campout weekend. Because the lake was at full capacity due to the recent rainfall over the previous months, waterbirds were scarce so we ambled across to "Lakeview" the home of May Bennie, a lake local who had volunteered to be my co-leader for the day. Here we were rewarded with stunning views of a male **Red-capped Robin** resplendent in his red white and black livery displaying on the fence. Very

soon Bill spied a pair of **Blue Bonnets** in a Belah tree (*Casuarina cristata*) in the back paddock which very obligingly went to ground to forage. The group had excellent views of their striking plumage – yellow abdomen with a splash of vermilion and their electric blue forehead and wing stripe. A pair of **Whistling Kites** hovered over the grassy paddock while **Brown Honeyeater** and **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** foraged in the Belahs.

We returned to the lake shore to eat our morning tea and were deafened by the cacophony of calls from **Little Corella** perched in the River Red Gums (*E.camaldulensis*) lining the lake shore. While a lone **Gull-billed Tern** patrolled over



Red-winged Parrot.
Photo: Kevin Williams.

the surface of the lake, a **Great Egret** stalked through the shallows. At this point Jim and

Christine and Marion joined us from Brisbane and we all proceeded to the bird hide overlooking the neck inlet area of the lake. However waterbirds were poorly represented due to the depth of water but we did manage to see **Eurasian Coot, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Sacred Kingfisher, Little Friarbird, Willie Wagtail**



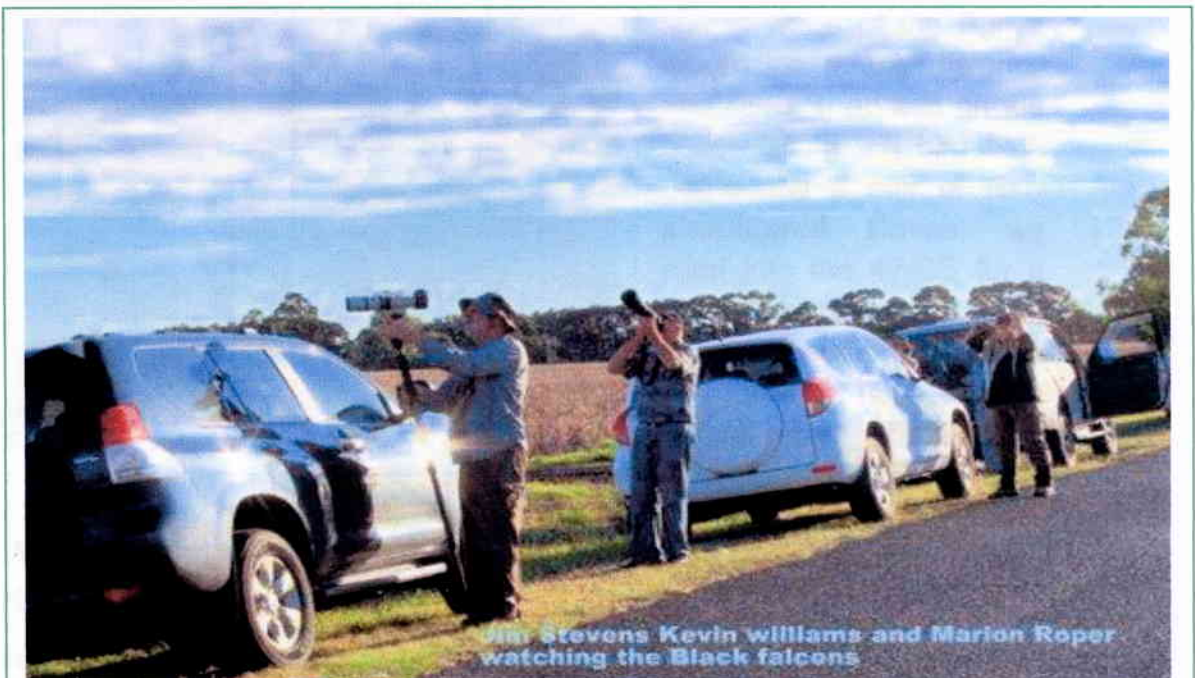
Blue Bonnet.

Photo: Kevin Williams.

and Restless Flycatcher. May suggested that we lunch at the Natural History Association cottage by the lake and here we were afforded excellent views of a group of 4 **Red-winged Parrots** in a Poplar Box (*E. populnea*) displaying their brilliant red and green plumage. Just then a goanna decided to also join the photo shoot by poking his head out of a nearby hollow!

After enjoying a picnic lunch, May and I decided we would walk the Wilga Track, a departure from the usual practice of walking the South-West Track. Here we were treated to a suite of bush birds frequenting the Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) and Wilga (*Geijera parviflora*) woodland with **Grey Fantail** very evident as well as **Double-barred Finch, Red-browed Finch, Weebill, Spotted and Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey-crowned Babbler** to name a few. A feeding party of LBJs taxed our identification skills as they flitted unceasingly through the foliage but after much deliberation we decided that they were **Yellow Thornbill**. A **Sacred Kingfisher**

posed in the sunlight at the overflow of the lake as we emerged from the forest while a **Restless Flycatcher** gave his distinctive "scissor-grinding" call nearby.



Jim Stevens, Kevin Williams and Marion Roper watching the Black Falcons.
Photo: Kevin Williams.

After thanking

May for her valuable assistance we took the long way home to Dalby via the Nandi-

Daandine flood bypass road and serendipitously came upon a magical sight of 7 **Black Falcons** soaring and stooping over a recently harvested cotton field presumably seeking in turn a bountiful harvest of rodents disturbed by the passage of the cotton picker! What a great way to end a rewarding and enjoyable birding day!

BUNYA MOUNTAINS FOOTHILLS OUTING SUNDAY 29 MAY

After a short detour to view a mixed flock of **Double-barred** and **Plum-headed Finches** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** at the Dalby Water Treatment ponds, the convoy of cars headed to Kaimkillenbun (affectionately known to locals as "The Bun") and beyond to "Warmga Park", the property of Don and Bernice Seton nestled in the foothills of the scenic Bunya Mountains. We met up with our hosts Don and Bernice on the Woodlawn Road where we quickly added birds to our tally, **Brown Honeyeater**, **Grey Fantail**, **Cockatiel**, **Galah**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**, **Striped Honeyeater**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Rufous Songlark** to name a few. We then proceeded slowly along Spies Road where we ticked off **Red-rumped Parrot**, **Pied** and **Grey Butcherbird**, **Galah**, **Black-shouldered Kite** (carrying nesting material to its nest in a Brigalow tree) and a **Pheasant Coucal** (skulking in the top of another tree). Then excitement gripped the group as a male **Spotted Harrier** put on a dazzling mating display to its partner, at once stooping at speed to treetop level then swooping up to soar high above.



Plum-headed Finches.

Photo: Kevin Williams.

After morning tea on the verandah of the homestead simultaneously taking in the scenic views of the Bunya Mountains in the distance and keeping an eye on the birds visiting the bird bath particularly a pair of **Black-shouldered Doves**, we piled into the 4WDS for a tour of the property. Down in the scrub, after a discourse by Don on the natural history of the **Black-breasted Button-quail**, we

came across a feeding party of **Silvereye**, **Red-browed Finch**, **Variegated Fairy-wren**, and **Speckled Warbler**. Then a **Restless Flycatcher** put on a great display that had the cameras clicking away.

Then it was time for a late lunch back at the homestead where we were entertained by a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** sipping nectar from a **Grevillea** bush. After the bird list was called, the president thanked our hosts Don and Bernice for their hospitality and providing us with such an enjoyable day. Then a few raindrops had everyone scurrying for home as the cumulo-nimbus clouds gathered menacingly overhead.

We sighted a total of 88 species for the 2 days, a creditable achievement.

Bird list for the outing: Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Little Egret, Great Egret, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Eurasian Coot, Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Spotted Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Black Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Grey-crowned Babbler, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Restless Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Masked Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, Rock Dove, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Galah, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Cockatiel, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Australian King Parrot, Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Blue Bonnet, Red-rumped Parrot, Pheasant Coucal, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Australian Raven, Torresian Crow, White-winged Chough, Apostlebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Olive-backed Oriole, Red-browed Finch, Double-barred Finch, Plum-headed Finch, Mistletoebird, Welcome Swallow, Rufous Songlark, Silvereeye, Common Starling, Common Myna.

Raptor Census - 2011

By Pat McConnell

The Raptor Census will be held on the weekend of 25th and 26th June. Contact the various sector leaders for details of what day they are going, and the time and location of the meeting point. Leaders are asked to survey the same route as in previous years wherever possible.

Southern Sector – Ken Wells – Tel: 4661 2547 or 0429 612547

Eastern Sector – Mick Atzeni – Tel: 4635 1617 or 0458 948955

Northern Sector – Pat McConnell – Tel: 4631 5573 (work)

Western Sector – Pat McConnell – Tel: 4631 5573 (work)

TBO Club Social
By Steve Burke

The Club would like to invite all Members along to a hot-pot lunch on Saturday August 13th at the Uniting Church Hall on the corner of Tor and North Streets at 11.30 am. Would everyone attending please bring along a hot dish to share with other attendees. The occasion is just a casual social get together where we can sit around, have a nice warm meal (Toowoomba in mid-Winter will probably mean this will be appreciated), and chat about birding.

If you know of anyone who is not a Member that might like to attend and learn more about the Club please pass on this information and bring them along and introduce them to some other Members. The Committee looks forward to seeing as many Members and friends as possible come along to enjoy a warm lunch with a friendly bunch of fellow birders.

For more details please contact Olive Booth on 4633 0553 or email Olive at o.booth@bigpond.com



Square-tailed Kite photographed at Bollon.

Photo: Steve Burke.

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.

Wandering Whistling-Duck	13/06/2011	Hood's Dam Helidon	MA
Australian Hobby	17/05/2011	Kettle St. Toowoomba	OB
Buff-banded Rail (3)	2/06/2011	Lake Annand Tmba	RH
White-headed Pigeon (2)	26/05/2011	Margaret/Curzon Sts. Tmba	MA
Topknot Pigeon	12/06/2011	Queen's Park Tmba	RA
White-winged Chough (10)	28/05/2011	Highfields	PM, KO
Plum-headed Finch	28/02/2011	Spiers Rd. Meringandan	GG, ET

RA, R. Ashdown; **MA**, M. Atzeni; **OB**, O. Booth; **GG**, G Glass; **RH**, R. Hobson; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell; **ET**, E. Townsend.

Bird notes can be submitted by email to mccannel@usq.edu.au, by post, or via the forum www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/index.php

Thanks

Pat McConnell

COMING CLUB EVENTS

June Outing

Saturday/Sunday, 25th & 26th June 2011

Venue: Raptor Census

Time: To suit your group

Meet: To suit your group

Leader: Pat McConnell

Phone: 07 4635 7371 or 0447 517324

July Outing

Saturday, 30th July 2011

Venue: Rockmount

Time: 7.30 am

Meet: Flagstone Ck Rd & Stockyard Ck Rd intersection

Leader: Mick Atzeni

Phone: 07 4688 1318 or 0458 948955

August Outing

TBA

Venue: Leyburn

Time: TBA

Leader: Ken McKeown

Phone: 0408 303774

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Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 20th July 2011

Please e-mail or post articles to the Editor.

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