

# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS



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

No. 407  
August 2011

## Editorial

Steve Burke

The August outing is scheduled for Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the unavailability of the venue on the previous weekend. It is hoped that the **Regent Honeyeater's**, being the focus of the outing, will make many people wildly happy by showing up.

Some Members, who have already let Kay know they are attending, are planning to sleep over on the Saturday night. The floor of the Karara Hall is available for laying down a swag, with a kitchen and other amenities on site. Cost is \$8 per person. It is very important that you call **Kay Williams** (number listed on last page) to confirm the hall if you plan to utilise the floor-space.

Also, the Club is attempting to grow the number of people attending outings by encouraging a car-pooling scheme. If you are going to attend an outing you should first inform the Outing Leader of your attendance and then also inform the Leader if you are able to offer a car-pooling seat. Then other Members will be able to

call the Outing Leader and find out if there are available spaces in cars heading along to the outing.

The Annual General Meeting is to be held on Wednesday night October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Uniting Church Hall on the corner of Tor Street and North Street at 7pm. Call Olive Booth if you plan to attend. All are invited.



Little Shrike-thrush at Inskip Point.  
Photo: Steve Burke.

**2011 Challenge**  
**178 species as**  
**at 26/8/2011**



TOOWOOMBA  
BIRD OBSERVERS

(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)

## This Issue

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## COMING EVENTS

August Outing  
Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Venue: Karara  
Leader: Kay Williams

September Outing  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>  
Venue: Redwood Park  
Leader: Pat McConnell

October Outing  
Sat/Sun 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>  
Venue: Species Census  
Leader: Mick Atzeni

## Sunday walk with Lloyd & Lynne Davies

*By Lloyd Davies*

Whilst out on one of our normal Sunday morning walks near our property at Geham we went on what we call our **Wedge-tailed Eagle** trek, to a large Yellow Box tree about 1Klm south from home. It has been an active Wedgetail's nest for an estimated 40 years. Sure enough we observed a bird sitting on the nest, just its head and beak peering out just above large numbers of twigs and sticks, with recent additions a sign of occupation. Its mate flying off as we approached.

However our attention was drawn to an *Allocasuarina torulosa* (Forest She-Oak) behind us with three **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** feeding on the cones.



Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

Photo: Lynne Davies.

We approached quietly & cautiously at first but it was soon apparent the birds were not at all bothered by our presence. We both stood immediately below the birds (about 2-4metres up), Lynne all the time catching the images on camera and I with the binoculars. This went on for the best part of an hour.





Glossy Black-Cockatoo.  
Photo: Lynne Davies.

With the birds still enjoying the cones and dropping many to the ground, our dog "Mate" by now had taken a fixed interest in them. The birds were moving about, still feeding and calling quietly.

About 10.00hrs, with the birds still content in the tree, we moved off having experienced a very special morning.

Footnote: It is recommended that The Toowoomba Bird Observers Club visit the Davies property on/about 2<sup>nd</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> October for a walk to the **Wedge-tailed Eagle** tree where we expect to see young white fluffy eagles at the nest. We will keep you informed of these developments.

### Storms and rough waters *By Jenny Matheson*

It was a dark and stormy night. Piercing sheets of rain and treacherous waves whipped up by the cyclonic winds perilously left us at the mercy of the elements. Alone, we could only cling to our vessel and pray. Uhhmm, well not quite. It was actually reasonably warm and sunny, with a medium strength south-westerly wind creating waves of just under three metres – quite pleasant really! The only dark and stormy feature was the ever-present petrels!

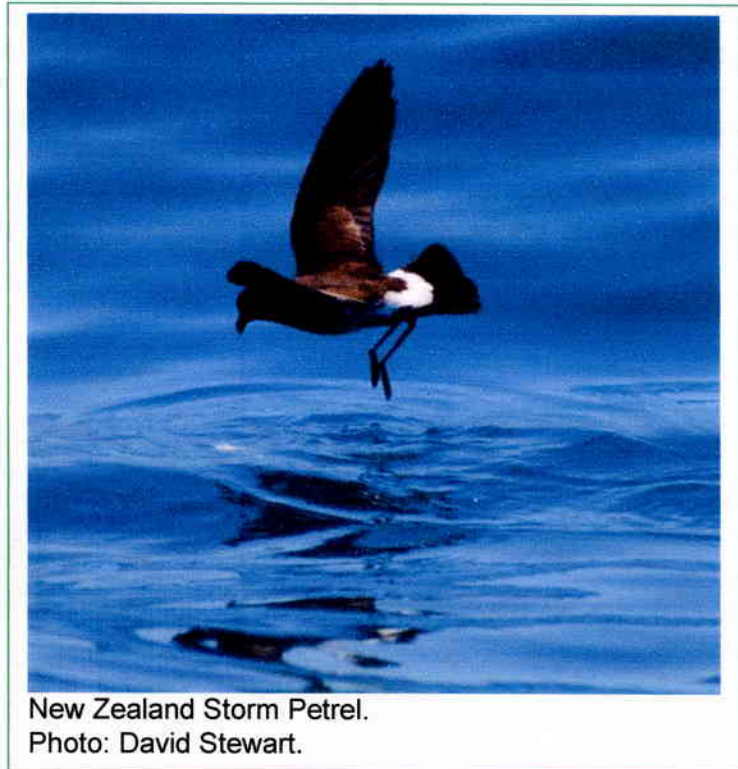
Let's go back a tad. You guessed it – Nick and I, with a generous dose of good luck tucked in our kitbags, were on the June Southport pelagic which spotted the **Antarctic Prion** and **New Zealand Storm Petrel (NZSP)**. Since much has already been published about the

NZSP sighting, I decided to share some of my new found knowledge thanks to Paul Walbridge and Rob Morris.

From 1895 to this century, no NZSP sightings occurred, thus manifesting belief in the species' demise. However, in November 2003 two British birdwatchers photographed and videoed ten to 20 NZSP off Great Barrier and Little Barrier Islands in New Zealand's Hauraki Gulf. Subsequently, many such sightings have occurred there.

Smaller than the Black-bellied Storm Petrel, the NZSP is of medium size with a noticeably smaller head, long legs and long feet, the latter protruding beyond the square tail when in flight. It has a similar flight progression to the Wilson's Storm Petrel, but it does alternate flapping and gliding.

Ecologists believe that throughout its breeding season, extending from November to May, it uses burrows only on Hauraki Gulf islands. Interestingly though, no nest sites have yet been found. Here, small crustaceans and plankton propelled by the warmer waters flowing into the Hauraki Gulf appear to be its main food sources. Furthermore, it is readily attracted to chum slicks.



Some existing claims relate to NZSP sightings in the New Caledonian southern waters. However these probably involved a different species as the birds were much larger and had little or no feet projection. Contrastingly according to Paul, during the Autumn and Winter months in Australia, NZSP were photographed during Port Stephens, Wollongong and Ulladulla pelagics. Once ratification by BARC occurs, the Southport sighting too can be added to this honour roll.

Unfortunately, the species is listed as critically endangered as its population is believed to be declining due to predators present on the Hauraki Gulf islands. However, this proposition remains speculative until NZSP breeding grounds are positively identified.

A NZSP working group is now established with the goal of quickly and accurately documenting this species' status, needs and threats. Given its limited population, a comprehensive understanding of its feeding, breeding and migratory habits is therefore imperative. Hopefully, without the hindrance of too many dark and stormy New Zealand nights, this storm petrel species can navigate through its current rough waters and secure, with the help of researchers and conservationists, a sustainable prospect for its future generations.



**New Club Members**  
*By Steve Burke*

The Committee of the Toowoomba Bird Observers would like to welcome two new members to the fold. **Kylie Grose** from Cranley on Toowoomba's northern outskirts, **Marita Bodman** from Enoggera and **Holly Lister** from Severnlea are most welcome new additions to the Toowoomba birding fraternity. Both Kylie and Marita came along to the last Committee Meeting to see what happens behind the scenes of the Club and it was great to see them there. The Committee would like to remind all Members that any Member can attend a Committee Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month at the Immunisation Clinic in Little Street from 7.30pm.



A White-browed Woodswallow in the rain.

Photo: Steve Burke.

## Hot-pot Luncheon – August 2011

*By Kay Williams*

With the sun shining outside and cheerful smiles and chatter all around, the club luncheon commenced at the Uniting Church Hall in Tor Street.

I felt this was a good time to give the Club Library an airing as well as showing off the new books that had been donated to us recently. Two large bins and a bag weighing Many!! kilograms. Kevin and I set them all up in one corner of the hall. Lots of interest was shown in the new books.

With a total of 14 attendees and almost as many dishes to sample, we all enjoyed ourselves. Declaring it was going to be tea and sympathy for dinner as we had all eaten our fill.

A short meeting to decide the new Membership fees was held.

This over, Kevin Williams and Gayle Lee showed some of their photography from the past months, which went down well.

Many thanks to all who attended .The success of this function means, we will schedule more in the future.



Some of the attendees at the luncheon.

Photo: Kay Williams.

## 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.

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Little Eagle	13/08/2011	Harristown Toowoomba	PM; KO
Spotted Harrier	28/07/2011	Formartin	RH
Peregrine Falcon	10/08/2011	Mary St. Toowoomba	RA
Bush Stone-curlew (2)	5/08/2011	Somerset Dam	WS; NS
Diamond Dove	28/07/2011	Mt Tyson	RH
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	27/07/2011	Rockmount	CS
Pallid Cuckoo (female)	28/07/2011	Jondaryan Homestead	RH
Fan-tailed Cuckoo – present for three days	2/08/2011	Highfields	PM; KO
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	30/07/2011	Stockyard Ck Rockmount	TBO
Red-backed Kingfisher	28/07/2011	Mt Tyson	RH
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	6/08/2011	Highfields	PM; KO
Eastern Spinebill	1/05/2011	Middle Ridge Toowoomba	MA
White-winged Chough	9/08/2011	Nev Bidgood Park	SB
Common Blackbird	14/08/2011	Highfields	PM; KO

**RA**, R. Ashdown; **MA**, M. Atzeni; **SB**, S. Burke; **RH**, R. Hobson; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell; **CS**, C. Stephens; **NS**, N. Sturdee; **WS**, W. Sturdee.  
**TBO** – Club Outing.

Bird notes can be submitted by email to [mccommel@usq.edu.au](mailto:mccommel@usq.edu.au), by post, or via the forum [www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/index.php](http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org/forum/index.php)

Thanks

Pat McConnell



## COMING CLUB EVENTS

### August Outing

**Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011**

**Venue:** Karara

**Time:** 7.00 am

**Meet:** Karara Hall

**Leader:** Kay Williams

**Phone:** 07 4659 5475 or 0429 465 954

### September Outing

**Sunday September 25<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**Venue:** Redwood Park

**Time:** 7.00 am

**Meet:** Carpark near the bottom of range

**Leader:** Pat McConnell

**Phone:** 07 4631 5573

### October Outing

**Saturday/Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Venue:** Species Census

**Time:** Own arrangements

**Leader:** Mick Atzeni

**Phone:** 07 4688 1318

## Committee Members

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**Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 20th September 2011**

Please e-mail or post articles to the Editor.

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**Surface Mail**