

# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

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

No. 409  
October 2011

## Editorial

Steve Burke

The recent AGM went off without a hitch, except for the failure to elect a President. Many thanks to the outgoing President, Mike McGoldrick, for the drive and enthusiasm he brought to the position. In the absence of a full-time President, the position will rotate through the other Committee members. The President's Report from the AGM will be in next month's Newsletter as well as a list of those people elected to the Executive Committee.

With the Species Census to be held this weekend, everyone is encouraged to participate in whatever way they can. You could get a group of friends or neighbours together and check your backyards, the local park or drive around a particular area. This is a very important event and adds much to the knowledge of our local birding environment, both from a practical birding point of view and from a research perspective, as all of the data is entered onto the WildNet database. So get out there, have some fun and do your bit for local birding research.

Chris Sanderson gave a very impressive talk after the AGM on technology and birding. As promised by Chris he has supplied the links to websites that he highlighted during his presentation as being of value to birders and I have included this information further on in this issue of the Newsletter. Thanks once again Chris for a very interesting presentation.



Tasmanian Native Hen.  
Photo: Vincent Dalton.

**2011 Challenge**  
**199 species as**  
**at 16/10/2011**



(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350  
[www.toowoombabirdobservers.org](http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org)

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

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## COMING EVENTS

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

November Outing  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>  
Breakfast with the birds  
Venue: Ravensbourne  
National Park, Cooby  
Dam to follow if numbers  
warrant  
Leader: TBA

**The enemy of my enemy is my pal**  
*Reproduced with the permission of Fairfax Press*

The beekeeper's one-time sworn enemy, the **Rainbow Bee-eater**, has proven to be a good friend in the battle against Asian Honeybees in Far North Queensland.

Asian Honeybee surveillance manager Wim De Jong is seeking public help to find Rainbow Bee-eater roosts around Cairns, Port Douglas, Mossman, Atherton, Lake Eacham, west of Mareeba, Flying Fish Point and south of Innisfail.

"The Rainbow Bee-eaters have returned to the far north and we want to 'recruit' as many as we can to help us locate Asian Honeybee swarms and nests," Mr De Jong said.

"When we locate the bee-eater roosts, we can use these birds to do a lot of work for us. The birds eat bees by day and regurgitate pellets by night when they return to their roosts. These pellets include undigested bee wings".

"Asian Honeybees have a distinctive wing pattern. If we find Asian Honeybee wings, we know we have the pest bee in the area and we will conduct more surveillance to locate and destroy the nest."



Rainbow Bee-eaters.

Photo: Steve Burke.

Asian Honeybee program co-ordinator, Corey Bell, said using Rainbow Bee-eaters to find honeybees was an asset to the surveillance program.

"To recruit the Rainbow Bee-eaters, we first need to locate their roosting sites," Mr Bell said. "Our teams are looking for roosts, but we are asking locals to help us identify roosts around their areas. The pretty Rainbow Bee-eater, with the distinctive long thin tail, flock into trees around dusk, usually roost around 5.30pm or 6pm."

"We ask residents to keep a look-out and call us if they see any bird roosts that could belong to bee-eaters."

Biosecurity Queensland has been running the Asian Honeybee program in North Queensland since 2007.

To report Rainbow Bee-eater roosts, suspect bees, bee swarms or nests contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or for more information visit [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)



**The Visitation: A miracle at Rockmount, July Outing Report**  
*By Mick Atzeni*

Firstly, we have Helen & Bill Scanlan at Stockyard and Trish Walton and Carol Stephens, both at Rockmount, to thank for access to their respective properties during this very leisurely and enjoyable outing in good company which included a visitor from the US. Trish, you really must consider yourself a miracle-worker having an outing led by me to your place within 4 months of an invitation because, for a quarter of a century, I've been promising my good friend and former DPI colleague Carol Stephens we'd rock up one day

to her place. As Carol said when I rang to ask if we could drop in, she had to pick herself up off the floor.

First stop at Scanlan's property along Stockyard Creek was all too short. We had several species showing nicely in vegetation on an elevated bank above the creek which kept the photographers busy. For new-comer Kylie Grose I'd done my little spiel about how to adjust the right ocular to compensate for the difference between eyes, to practice looking at inanimate objects so that the action was smooth - none of this tracking up trunks and out along branches stuff. Only later did I realise I failed to mention one important thing - how to focus. Doh! Sorry Kylie. Anyway the first of Kylie's lifers was a splendidly blurry **Scarlet Honeyeater** in full sun; her next a hazy **Grey Fantail**, and so on. The "focussed" picked up a female **Golden Whistler** and female **Rose Robin**. A **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** then graced the scene, taunting the photographers but Gail Lee managed a nice shot. Pulling stumps at Scanlan's we picked up two **Brown Falcons** on a tree on the horizon.



Scarlet Honeyeater.  
Photo: Steve Burke.

Next stop was Trish's place on Sawpit Gully Road. Trish has 300 acres including an impressive expanse of dry vine scrub. While things were a little quiet during Winter, this habitat will be starting to hum now the migrants are returning to breed and I can't wait to get back there this Spring. Highlights were **Wonga Pigeon**, **Regent Bowerbird**, an abundance of aloof **Scarlet Honeyeaters** and those cherry tomatoes in Trish's garden.

At Carol's the birding had slowed down but eagle-eyed Kev Williams found a **Koala** much to the delight of everyone particularly our US visitor Sam. Carol had everyone engaged with her historical knowledge of her beautiful property "Lowanna" which used to be old Rockmount School. Late in the outing a **Black Falcon** arced over; a good bird for the Rockmount area.

Thank you one and all.

#### **Species recorded:**

##### **Helen & Bill Scanlon's' Property, Stockyard Creek**

Australasian Grebe, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Brown Falcon, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Pale-headed Rosella, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Rose Robin, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Magpie-lark, Grey Fantail, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow, Mistletoebird, Welcome Swallow, Golden-headed Cisticola

### **Tricia Walton's property, Sawpit Gully Rd, Rockmount**

Australian Brush-turkey, White-faced Heron, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Little Lorikeet, Australian King-Parrot, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Spotted Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Rose Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Golden Whistler, Magpie-lark, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Varied Triller, Torresian Crow, Regent Bowerbird, Mistletoebird, Welcome Swallow

### **Carol Stephens property, "Lowanna", Rockmount-Preston road, Rockmount**

Australian Brush-turkey, Black Falcon, Rainbow Lorikeet, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Torresian Crow, Red-browed Finch, Welcome Swallow

## **Karara – Durikai August Outing**

*By Kay & Kevin Williams*

What a glorious Spring morning for us to gather at Karara Hall. A little windy but the sun was shining. Thirteen very keen birdwatchers took off to find those elusive birds. First destination was a new area for our team, with a lifer for Olive within the first ten minutes. The tally for this spot was over thirty species with the most exciting being the **Diamond Firetails**, **Southern Whiteface** and **Rose Robin** (female). We did spend a lot of time in this area so morning tea was had in a sunny spot heading to the next area.



Diamond Firetail.

Photo: Kevin Williams.

Our next port of call was near the railway line and Lorraine Welch, our leader for the morning, gave us a very informative history lesson. I am still thinking about those fossilised ferns having been around for millions of years. To think that we could pick them up out of the rubble on the ground so easily; once we knew what to

look for. Olive got tired of walking, so sat on her stool and waited for the train that never came. On the way back to the cars we found a g-gnome in the form of Al Young on the side of the tracks. It was such an interesting stop.

Over the highway to the dam with the reeds next. This was a little disappointing because of the lack of honeyeaters but there were still a good number of sightings. Most people circumnavigated the dam then branched out into the surrounding tracks. We saw **Yellow-faced**, **Yellow-tufted**, **White-eared**, **White-naped**, **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** and a lone **Bell Miner**. The highlight for some was the **Little Eagle** overhead that was chasing a

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.** The cockatoo was making such a noise that I had to see why, looked up and spotted the raptor following. The other interesting subjects here was a find by Kevin and Gayle; a pair of **Restless Flycatchers** building their nest. The group watched them for some time and they did not take any notice but kept on building. We farewelled Mick Atzeni, Plaxy Barrett, Kylie Grose and Steve Burke and the rest of the group had their lunch by the dam.

Our next spot was to check out the Durikai Mallee. This was starting to flower. Also flowering was the Mugga Ironbark which was a joy to see. Gayle was ready to go home as were Mike McGoldrick and Al Young so we went back to the Karara Hall to rearrange the car pooling. Now there was five; so back to the dam



Spotted Pardalote.

Photo: Kevin Williams.

opposite Back Creek Rd we went and found **Double-barred Finch, Rufous Whistler, King Parrot, Red-winged Parrot** while some **Royal Spoonbills** flew overhead. After we had left Al Young and Mike McGoldrick spotted a **Southern Boobook**. Our last area was Back Creek Road but this did not draw much to note.

What a great day we had and finished with a lovely meal at the Karara Hotel. On behalf of the Toowoomba Bird Observers I would like to say a BIG thank you to Lorraine Welch for her time and effort on our behalf. To Jan Kelly from Brisbane and Magda Dodd from the Bellerine Peninsula; thank you for joining us on the Saturday and Sunday. We hope your trip home was safe. Also, on behalf of the Toowoomba Bird Observers Committee and Members, we extend our condolences to Gayle Lee on the loss of your dad.

**Bird list:** Australian Wood Duck, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Black-shouldered Kite, Little Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Masked Lapwing, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, King Parrot, Eastern Rosella, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Red-winged Parrot, Southern Boobook, Laughing Kookaburra, White-throated Tree creeper, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, White-throated Gerygone, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Bell Miner, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-

naped Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, Rose Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Restless Flycatcher, Magpie Lark, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Dusky Woodswallow, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Torresian Crow, White-winged Chough, Apostlebird, Richards Pipit, Double-barred Finch, Diamond Firetail, Mistletoebird, Fairy Martin, Common Starling, Inland Thornbill, Welcome Swallow.

Going West  
By Jan Christensen

What better thing to do in winter than get out of the cold Toowoomba days for a while? My sister & I decided to go west to Charleville, then head up the highway to Winton, with plenty of stops along the way for R & R. Without getting too energetic about it, we hoped to see some interesting birds along the way. And with the little red Barina as our transport, we wouldn't be doing anything too adventurous in the way of off-roading!

First stop was Myall Park, and in spite of there being not a lot of flowers out, there were a few honeyeaters making the most of what was offering: **Spiny-cheeked, Striped, White-eared, Brown Honeyeaters**, and of course, **Noisy Miners**. **Weebills** were proving that little birds can make plenty of noise! We overnighted at Surat, and were deafened by a huge flock of **Little Corellas** being stirred up by a **Whistling Kite**. **Apostlebirds** added their harsh cries to the mix. Where was the peace of the bush??

Up to Roma and then on toward Charleville. We enjoyed a stop near Morven to look at the Ooline trees in Tregole National Park. There weren't too many birds around – it was cold and windy, but we added **Singing and White-plumed Honeyeaters** (That was the last time we got excited about them – they were everywhere) to our list, and a **Hooded Robin**, which was a new bird for me. In the town of Morven, a number of immature **Emus** were making themselves at home. With all the wind, they were really having a bad hair day!



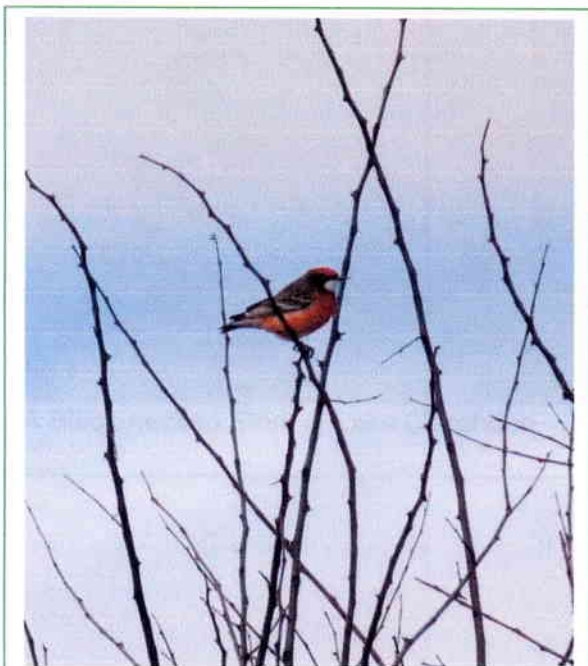
Plum-headed Finches.

Photo: Jan Christensen.

Charleville didn't give us anything exciting in the way of birds, but we loved our visit to the **Bilbies** and to the Cosmos Centre. On a clear but freezing night, we had great views of the Moon, Jupiter and faraway galaxies with their large telescopes. Definitely worth getting cold for and definitely time to go north to some warmer weather. Longreach was our first goal. **Brolgas, Wedge-tailed Eagles, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Cockatiels** and many other birds added interest along the way.

I love these outback towns, and the way they all have created – or found - interesting things for us to look at. This time we visited the Qantas Founders Museum. Contrary to my expectations, it was really interesting, and we went all the way and added a wing walk on the Boeing 747. An early morning walk in a nature reserve was a riot of birds everywhere: **Red-winged Parrot, Variegated Fairy-wren, Splendid Fairy-wren** (identification difficult since none of them were in breeding plumage), **Jacky Winter, Plum-headed Finches** in large numbers, and one **Chestnut-breasted Mannikin**. A ramble out in the bush near a waterhole one day was a little disappointing for its lack of variety, but it did produce emu and kangaroo drinking, so who can complain?

Finally, we headed for Winton. A stop off at a rest area along the way proved to be a highlight of the trip. The place was alive with bird sounds, and we quickly spotted **Black-faced Woodswallows** hovering above the grass, hundreds of **Zebra Finch, Horsfield's Bushlark** and then something I'd never heard before – a **Brown Songlark** making quite a cacophony. Singing? Hmmm! Then came the absolute best of the day: a cloud of **Budgerigars** rose up out of the grass, and with the sun highlighting their green underwings against a black, cloudy sky, they were a truly lovely sight.



Crimson Chat.  
Photo: Jan Christensen..

I love Winton, and both times I've been there it's produced some interesting birds. This time started slowly, because we had rain, and all the best places to see birds are hard to get to in a Barina. However, we made the best of it, and a round of the town produced **Spotted Bowerbird, Diamond Dove, Yellow-throated Miner, Red-backed Kingfisher** and a **Red-capped Robin**. The next day it started to dry out a bit, and we carefully put our Barina to the challenge on some of those sticky black soil roads. The Pelican Waterhole road was not too bad, and the birds were plentiful. Many of them we had seen elsewhere, but a crowd of birds is always a treat. To top it off, we saw a flash of red. A lot of searching around and finally there was a flock of **Crimson Chats**. They obligingly sat up in a tree and let me take a couple of photos before moving off again. Another new bird for me – thanks, Winton!



## New Club Members

*By Steve Burke*

The Committee of the Toowoomba Bird Observers would like to welcome two new members to the fold. **Sandy Robertson** from Hirstglen and **David Scott** from Darling Heights are both avid birders and will be valued new contributors to the Club.



A Black-necked Stork at Lake Clarendon.

Photo: Kev Williams.

**A Totally Wild Experience**  
*By Kay Williams*

What a privilege to be invited by Trish Lee-hong to be involved in the "Totally Wild" TV report on the floods in January and the effects on the animals at the centre since then. We as well as the other volunteers that Trish had chosen all arrived at the centre on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 1-30 pm to meet the TV crew.

The next day and a half was so much fun. The interviews were held in the echidna compound, the wallaby and kangaroo pens, over at the bandicoot compound and many other parts of the centre. We had a crisis with one of the teams own animals, so proceedings were halted to attend to this emergency. We attempted to release some of the wallabies and kangaroos on Wednesday but only one wanted to go.

Cameron had completed the new bandicoot enclosure on Wednesday pm to allow the last of the juveniles to be introduced to his new home on Thursday am. What a lovely spot to reside in until they are released into the wild. Stephanie, Kelly and Miriam planted it so nicely. Two of the **Pacific Baza's** have gained their freedom as well.

The very special echidnas got some new ant mounds to pull to bits at their leisure. One special little fellow is such a card, he insists on climbing on everything in his path, even if it is rounded, he took some tumbles but insisted on trying again and again.

One of the birds who was released some time back insists on staying around to keep an eye on the goings on at the centre. This **Laughing Kookaburra** was everywhere we went, to the echidnas, over to watch the Pacific Baza's being released. He even sat on a skeleton on a tree stump so as to be close to the sound man (Shane).

We were so fortunate to see some of the animals that we have helped feed over the last 7 or 8 months, released back into the wild. It all ended too soon. We had lunch together before disbanding and going our own way.

To Trish thank you for including Kevin and myself. To the Channel 10 "Totally Wild" crew, Jess, Tim, Shane and Lisa thanks for making it so easy to talk to you even with the camera in my face.

Lastly, to Trish, the animals and other volunteers we will see you again soon.

## Members' Bird Notes

*By Mick Atzeni*

Latham's Snipe 26/10/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly  
Yellow-billed Spoonbill 16/10/2011 farm dam, Murphys Creek Rd, Lockyer Mick Atzeni  
Intermediate Egret 15/10/2011 farm dam, Murphys Creek Rd, Lockyer Mick Atzeni  
Black-faced Monarch 15/10/2011 Redwood Park Pat McConnell  
Long-billed Corella 2/10/2011 Kuhls Rd, Highfields Pat McConnell  
Spectacled Monarch 2/10/2011 Redwood Park Bill Jolly  
Rufous Songlark 1/10/2011 Helidon Bill Jolly  
Little Egret 29/09/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly  
Nankeen Night-Heron 29/09/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly  
Little Bronze-Cuckoo 28/09/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly  
Great Cormorant 24/09/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly  
Black Bittern 24/09/2011 "Abberton", Helidon Bill Jolly

## October Species Census

*By Mick Atzeni*

Please keep an eye out for these species not yet reported for the year in the survey area:

Blue-billed Duck  
\*

Freckled Duck \*

Cotton Pygmy-  
goose \*

Mallard \*

Australasian

Shoveler

Pink-eared Duck  
\*

Hoary-headed  
Grebe \*

Great Crested  
Grebe \*

Pied Cormorant \*

Little Bittern \*

Glossy Ibis \*

Black-necked

Stork \*

Osprey \*

Brahminy Kite \*

Swamp Harrier \*

Red Goshawk \*

Grey Falcon \*

Brolga \*

Lewin's Rail \*

Baillon's Crake \*

Australian

Spotted Crake \*

Spotless Crake \*

Black-tailed

Native-hen \*

Red-backed

Button-quail \*

Little Button-quail

\*

Red-chested

Button-quail \*

Black-breasted

Button-quail \*

Black-tailed

Godwit \*

Whimbrel \*

Marsh Sandpiper

Common

Greenshank \*

Common

Sandpiper \*

Red-necked Stint

\*

Sharp-tailed

Sandpiper

Curlew

Sandpiper \*

Red-necked

Phalarope \*

Painted Snipe \*

Red-necked

Avocet

Pacific Golden

Plover \*

Red-capped

Plover \*

Red-kneed

Dotterel

Banded Lapwing

Australian

Pratincole \*

Silver Gull \*

Gull-billed Tern \*

Caspian Tern \*

Whiskered Tern

White-winged

Black Tern \*

Emerald Dove \*

Squatter Pigeon

\*

Diamond Dove \*

Wompoo Fruit-

Dove \*

Superb Fruit-Dove *	Sooty Owl *	Honeyeater *	Woodswallow *
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *	Masked Owl *	Black Honeyeater *	Australian Raven *
Red-winged Parrot *	Spotted Nightjar *	Red-capped Robin	Singing Bushlark
Crimson Rosella	Fork-tailed Swift	Spotted Quail-thrush *	Diamond Firetail *
Blue Bonnet *	Forest Kingfisher *	White-eared Monarch *	White-backed Swallow *
Swift Parrot *	Red-backed Kingfisher *	Barred Cuckoo-shrike	Tree Martin
Budgerigar *	Western Gerygone	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	Little Grassbird *
Turquoise Parrot *	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	White-winged Triller	Brown Songlark *
Oriental Cuckoo *	White-plumed Honeyeater *	Black-faced Woodswallow *	Russet-tailed Thrush *
Pallid Cuckoo	Black-chinned Honeyeater *	Little	* Rare/unusual locally
Black-eared Cuckoo *	Painted		
Barking Owl *			

### Interesting Birding Links

*Chris Sanderson*

As promised, here are a number of links from the talk last week.

Bird-O: <http://bird-o.com/>

Birding and Alzheimer's article: <http://bird-o.com/2011/09/22/bird-watching-in-my-back-yard/>

And to buy the book (Bird-O has no commercial interest, we just think it's a good idea): [http://www.thelittlegreenbooks.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=18](http://www.thelittlegreenbooks.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=18)

Greg Roberts' Sunshine Coast birding page: <http://bird-o.com/sunshine-coast-birding-guide/>

My SEQ birding page: <http://bird-o.com/south-east-queensland-birding-guide/>

Wildiaries sign up page: <http://wildiaries.com/signup>

Some example trip reports: <http://aussiebirding.wildiaries.com/trips/10713>, <http://aussiebirding.wildiaries.com/trips/10664>

Xeno Canto bird calls (Australasia): <http://www.xeno-canto.org/australasia/>

Xeno Canto (world): <http://www.xeno-canto.org/>

Atlas of Living Australia (good for taxonomy and threatened status): <http://www.ala.org.au/>

Our facebook and twitter sites (so you can see an example of how it can work): <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bird-O/117732794921095>, <http://twitter.com/#!/birdodotcom>

Hope all this is of use to someone!



A Tawny Frogmouth and chick on nest.

Photo: Steve Burke.

## COMING CLUB EVENTS

### October Outing

Sat/Sun 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Venue: Species Census

Time: Make own arrangements

Meet: Make own arrangements

Leader: Mick Atzeni

Phone: 07 4688 1318

### November Outing

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Venue: Ravensbourne National Park

Time: 7 am

Meet: First carpark

Leader: TBA

Phone: ~~TBA~~

*Kay Williams if*

## Committee Members

### President

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

Please e-mail or post articles to the Editor.

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