

TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

No. 412
February 2012

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

Editorial

Steve Burke

This month's outing gives our participants' a great opportunity not only to get out and do some birding but also to assess the recovery of the Spring Bluff Railway Station and the surrounding gardens and bush land brought about by an army of QR employees, council workers and volunteers tirelessly toiling away over the last twelve months.

The March outing is to be conducted at Toorbul again this year. This outing gives participants the opportunity to hone and improve their wader identification skills by joining the S.Q. Wader Group for the day and making use of some very knowledgeable birders. Meet at the right hand end of the Toorbul esplanade at 11 am and remember to bring lunch, insect repellent, chair etc. Toilet facilities are available at the boat ramp near the shop.

Kevin and Kay Williams and Olive are going to Toorbul before the outing and other outing participants who want to join them at the Toorbul Caravan Park should call Kevin

or Kay beforehand. Other accommodation is also available on Bribie Island which isn't too far away. They have a list of great birding spots to keep all who attend for the weekend happy and busy.

Leaders are required for some of the future outings. It's not difficult. Please talk to Kay if you would like to help.



Red-rumped Parrot.
Photo: Steve Burke.

2012 Challenge

Tally: 176 spp as at Feb
15th



TOOWOOMBA
BIRD OBSERVERS

(An affiliated member of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia)

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350

www.toowoombabirdobservers.org

MEMBERSHIP: Adult/family \$30,

Pensioner/student \$25 (Subscriptions due 31 August)

This Issue

Some February action!

Bill Jolly

New Members

Steve Burke

A mighty effort.....

P. McConnell & M.

Atzeni

Members' Bird Notes

Pat McConnell

COMING EVENTS

February Outing

Sunday 26th

Venue: Spring Bluff

Leader: Kay & Kev

Williams

March Outing

Sunday 25th

Venue: Toorbul

Leader: Kay & Kev

Williams

April Outing

Saturday 28th

Venue: Glen Lomond Pk

Leader: TBA

Some February action!

By Bill Jolly

Breakfast on the verandah is very pleasant - unthinkable without binoculars

- but how often something special turns up when I haven't bothered to bring the camera outside. I guess we just get lazy, or hungry....

This-morning, I made the effort - two dishes of fruit, two pairs of binoculars, one camera. (Still I didn't bring the scope out!)

Well, things were quietish, lots of garden birds, just the usuals, but very pleasant for all that. Then maybe 20 seconds of drama when a **Spotted Harrier** appeared from upstream following the creek towards us, low over the margin, wings set. Eileen grabbed her binoculars, I grabbed the camera. His path brought him right in front of us, a little below us in fact. What a beauty!



Spotted Harrier.

Photo: Bill Jolly.

I confess that I do enjoy lazy verandah birding, but I'll follow a cuckoo into the woods anytime. All through breakfast a **Brush Cuckoo** was repeating its loud, somewhat monotonous call from somewhere on the other side of the creek. We scanned a bit, but couldn't find him.



Brush Cuckoo.

Photo: Bill Jolly.

But just a few minutes after we got back indoors, the cuckoo was calling from much closer by in the garden. I had no choice but to regather binoculars and camera and see if I could find him. Cuckoos do make it easy for us, being noisy and obvious.

We've opened up one end of the sitting room to the garden with French doors where there used only to be small windows. It gives us a view to a part of the garden that we don't usually see from indoors, and consequently it just demanded a new birdbath. We picked up a big old terrazzo dish at a second-hand place. I don't know what it was for originally, but it makes a good long shallow excuse for a birdbath, so we set it up. After a couple of days it became a regular stop-off point for finches, fairywrens, honeyeaters and such. It's

ing well-used. Then last week a **Spangled Drongo** turned up and spent a huge time washing around, retiring to an adjacent tree at intervals. He looks a little shocked in the attached photo, almost as if someone has turned up with a camera while he was having a bath!

So, the new bath is a great success, but there is a sub-plot to this. I'm really hoping that it will tempt a few of our local raptors close enough to be photographed from inside the house. Time will tell.



Spangled Drongo. Photo: Bill Jolly.

New Members *By Steve Burke*

The Committee would like to welcome a past Member back to the Club. **Genevieve Reeves** is a keen bird watcher and was a member of Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc some years ago. We look forward to hearing from Genevieve on the Forum, in the Newsletter or meeting Genevieve on a future outing.



Red-winged Parrots.

Photo: Steve Burke.

A mighty effort in the Gowrie Junction area (Sector N1)

By Pat McConnell & Mick Atzeni

The Records Officer when compiling the report for the October Census failed to carefully check all the attachments on all the emails that he received and he missed one. Unfortunately the one he missed was a very thorough survey that had been conducted by **Gloria Glass** and **Esther Townsend**. These records made a big difference to what was recorded on the census.

Gloria and Esther surveyed (among other areas) Northern Zone 1. Here they recorded 87 species including some good ones like – **Great Cormorant**, **Pied Cormorant**, **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**, **White-winged Chough**, **Apostlebird**, **Rufous Songlark** and **Brown Songlark**. With these additional birds the number of species seen in Sector N1 increased from 20 to 87 and it also increased the grand total of species seen on the census from 162 to 167.

Gloria seemed to think that this was the highest number they had ever recorded on a census and I would have to say that it certainly was a great effort.

To quote Gloria:

“We think this is our highest number so far, though we missed on some common birds that Diana and I see almost every day, eg **Brown Quail**. However we were very pleased to see and hear both the **Rufous Songlark** [3] and **Brown Songlark** [1] at Gowrie Little Plain. The pair of **Black-fronted Dotterels** were still in the exactly same spot in the Meringandan Nature Reserve, in the northern edge of N1, that we have recorded them in for two previous Censuses! Also into that spot flew, dislodging the **Dotterels**, a **White Ibis** and a **Royal Spoonbill**, who seemed to be ‘good mates’ as they stood close together, then flew together to the bare branches of a high tree, then later to another set of high bare branches before leaving the site together! A **Double-barred Finch** was gathering nesting material and flying to a partially built nest in which its mate was placing the material. A **Red-browed Finch** was gathering seeds to eat from the same place; Esther saw it with a second bird before we moved on. **Clamorous Reed-Warblers** were at three sites, so we didn’t need to look at Beal’s farm dam where there are usually situated. The **White-winged Chough** seemed to be a single bird, though our attention had been drawn by their usual wondrous melodious piping, so there may have been others; that was south of the Meringandan-Boodua Road. It really was a **Pied Cormorant** on the edge of the water under the Gowrie Creek bridge. It had caught and we watched it swallow what seemed a fairly large fish. It had a small yellow patch in front of its eye”.



Superb Fairy-wren.
Photo: Pat McConnell.

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
Stubble Quail	8/02/2012	Carpendale Road	RH
Black Bittern	2/02/2012	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Pacific Baza (3)	8/01/2012	Highfields	PM, KO
Black Kite	20/01/2012	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ, EJ, K&KW
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	21/01/2012	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
Grey Goshawk (2)	28/01/2012	Redwood Park	MA, KG
Painted Button-quail	14/01/2012	Highfields Falls	K&KW
White-headed Pigeon (2)	24/01/2012	Mt Ridgley	RH
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	3/02/2012	Queen's Park Toowoomba	RA
Black-eared Cuckoo	11/01/2012	Prince Henry Drive	RH
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	18/01/2012	"Abberton" Helidon	BJ
White-throated Nightjar	15/01/2012	Upper Lockyer	MA
Red Wattlebird	14/01/2012	Highfields Falls	K&KW
Plum-headed Finch	7/01/2012	Helidon Spa Golf Course	MA
Little Grassbird	5/02/2012	West Creek Wetlands	RH

RA, R. Ashdown; **MA**, M. Atzeni; **KG**, K. Grose; **RH**, R. Hobson; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **EJ**, E. Jolly; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell, **K&KW**, K. & K. Williams.

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

Thanks

Pat McConnell

COMING CLUB EVENTS

February Outing

Sunday 26th February 2012

Venue: Spring Bluff

Time: 7 am

Meet: Top carpark

Leader: Kay & Kevin Williams

Phone: 0429 465 954

March Outing

Sunday 25th February 2012

Venue: Toorbul

Time: 11 am

Meet: Waders' Roost - Toorbul

Leader: Kay & Kevin Williams

Phone: 0429 465 954

April Outing

Saturday 28th April 2012

Venue: Glen Lomond Park

Time: TBA

Meet: TBA

Leader: TBA

Phone: TBA

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Deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is 20th March 2012

Please e-mail or post articles to the Editor.

**If undeliverable return to
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Surface Mail