

# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

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

No. 428  
August 2013

## Editorial

Pat McConnell

Winter is nearly over and my favourite time of year is just around the corner. I love spring because the days are starting to get longer and the temperatures are starting to increase. But most of all I like spring because many of the migrants start to return to Toowoomba. The bee-eaters have already arrived with small flocks passing over Toowoomba, Highfields and the Lockyer Valley. Soon Channel-billed Cuckoos, Eastern Koels and Dollarbirds will be arriving.

But before spring arrives we have to finish winter and this month's newsletter contains some great reading including the Blackbutt outing report by Gayle Lee, and some interesting local sightings and photos from members.

### New Member

A warm welcome to Kylie Somersett of Geham, SEQ



Channel-billed Cuckoo  
(juvenile)  
"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer  
12/12  
Photo: Mick Atzeni

### 2013 Challenge

Tally: 225 spp as of 12/08/13

### This Issue

#### Blackbutt Outing Report

By Gayle Lee

#### Members' Notes

By Pat McConnell

#### Photographers' Page

Several photographers

**AND MORE...**

### OUTINGS

#### August Camp-out

Fri 23rd- Mon 26<sup>th</sup>, August, 2013

Venue: "Jeslands" Jandowae and surrounds.

More details Page 7

Contact: Kay Williams

4659 5475/ 0429 465 954

#### September Outing

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Venue: Lockyer Wetlands

Meet: Lake Apex @ 7am

Contact: Mick Atzeni

0458 948 955



TOOWOOMBA  
BIRD OBSERVERS

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

MEMBERSHIP: Adult/family \$45  
Pensioner/student \$40

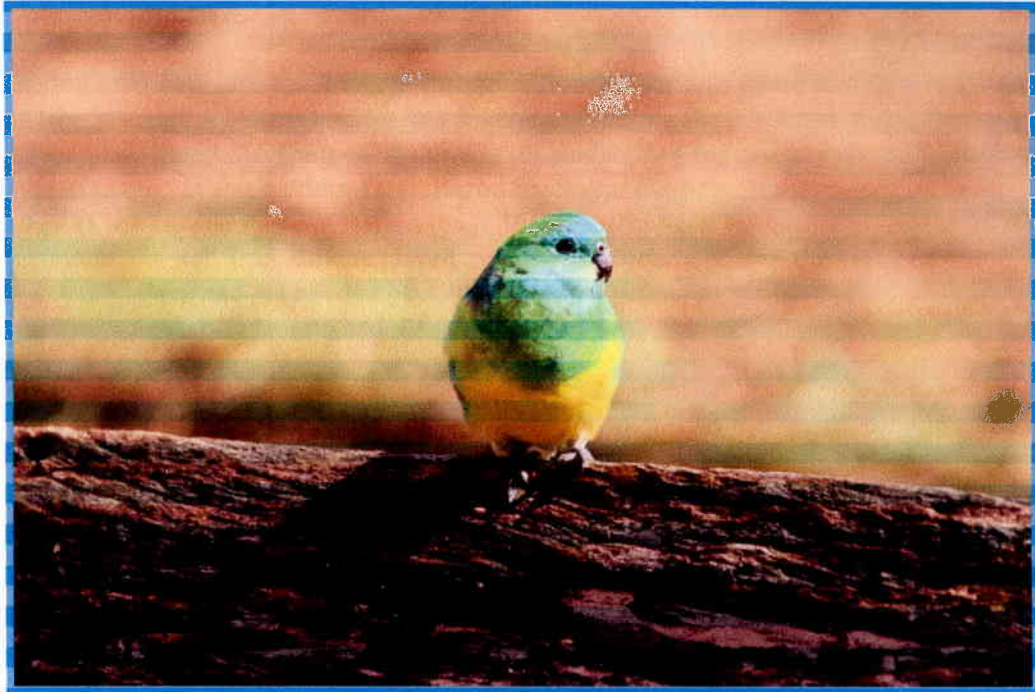
# Report

## **Blackbutt Campout, 10<sup>th</sup>-12th May 2013**

**Article & photos: Gayle Lee**

Steve and I loaded up the caravan early on the Friday morning, left Toowoomba at 9am, and headed off to the Blackbutt showgrounds on our first trip away with our caravan. It was an exciting and nervous time for us, to be going to a little timber town that neither of us had visited before, towing a caravan.

We arrived around noon and began to set ourselves up. It was not long before the birds made their presence felt. First were the **Welcome Swallows**, **Pied Butcherbirds**, and **Magpie-larks**, then the soft “sweety-sweet-sweet” calls of the **Red-rumped Parrots** could be heard as they fed around the stockyards along with the **Crested Pigeons**. **Striated Pardalotes** and a **Laughing Kookaburra** called from across the road and I couldn’t wait to get out there amongst them, but there was work to be done first, as the weather was closing in and it looked like it could rain any minute.



Red-rumped Parrot

After setting the caravan up, we took a quick walk around the town (a slow walk would have taken five minutes longer). What a pretty little place! After buying a few provisions and adding **Masked Lapwing** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** to my list, we headed back to the Showgrounds where we received a visit from our local guide Valdamay Jones, and Dorothy, who tends the Showgrounds and collects the camp fees. Shortly after they left, a flock of 14 **Australian King-Parrots** flew overhead. Within 30 minutes, down came the first shower of rain and it got very cold, very quickly. Any thoughts of going for a bushwalk were quickly dashed. Later that evening the rain stopped and by 9.30pm the stars were out and brilliant.

Early the next morning the club members started to arrive for a 7.30 start, but I received a call from Valdamay to say she had slept in and was running late. She suggested that we start to walk along the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail which begins 30kms away at Moore at the bottom of Blackbutt Range and terminates just beyond the showgrounds. So the nine of us headed off to start our day. The bird list grew rapidly and **Grey Fantail**, **Lewin’s Honeyeater**, **Red-backed Fairy-wren**, **White-browed Scrubwren**, and **Noisy Miner** were the easy ones. A

**Golden Whistler** and **White-throated Gerygone** were heard and soon found, and an **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **White-naped Honeyeater**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Apostlebird** were seen by some of the group. **Silvereye** and **Red-browed Finch**, as well as a **Grey Butcherbird** were soon spotted because of their distinct calls. We then turned back along the track to meet up with our guide only to be greeted at the trail entrance by a **Common Bronzewing**. The **Rainbow** and **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were highly visible in a tall gum tree by the wood-chopping ring.

We car-pooled at the showground, piling into three cars. The first stop was outside the Taromeo Station gates where we had an informative talk about the station and surrounds and added to our list **Mistletoebird** and **Superb Fairy-wren**. Next stop was Jesse's Well for morning tea. This area yielded **Weebill**, a **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **Eastern Whipbird**, a **Little Friarbird** and **Bell Miners**. We walked across the road to look over the old sawmill cottages and added a lovely **Eastern Spinebill** that was feeding on the remnants of the old gardens. The other little guy worth a mention was a **White-browed Scrubwren** that was making a home for himself in the ruins of one of the cottages and was spotted carrying food in through one of the empty window frames.

We then visited a private property on the edge of town and were delighted to meet a Mountain Katydid, which is a type of cricket. This little fellow was almost stepped on when we arrived, and it put on a colourful display by raising his wings and showing his vivid red and blue striped thorax. Whilst not a bird, it held us in utter fascination for some 15 minutes and had its picture taken many times, just like a rock star. What a strange creature. Even Valdamay, our local, had never seen one.

This property yielded little new birdlife. A **White-throated Treecreeper** was heard and seen working his way around and up a tree looking for insects and we saw several other birds already listed. It was then we decided to travel down the much altered Blackbutt Range that is still undergoing massive repairs from the floods. The only extra bird added to our list was a **White-faced Heron** feeding at the edge of a dam.

Lunch was enjoyed at the Linville Railway station (built 1910), surrounded by caravans and hikers who were enjoying that section of the Rail Trail. **Galahs** played on the wires overhead and the clouds grew thicker and rain was imminent once again, and we headed back up the range. Valdamay stopped off to allow us to admire the beautiful ancient stone cottage perched beside the highway. Numerous photos later we left for a "mysterious" destination.



Deep in the local forestry, Valdamay pulled over and directed us to an aboriginal Bora ring close to the road. These rings were made by the local aboriginals for ceremonial purposes and this one was large and for the use of the whole tribe including the women. Further along the same road a smaller ring was to be found, this one for male initiations only. The fact that these rings still exist, and are maintained by Forestry staff, is marvellous.

You couldn't help but feel a sense of history and sacredness at the site, just by standing there and looking at them.

We then returned to Valdamay's house to admire the **Satin Bowerbird's** bower in her garden and see the male bird high up in a tree, at his nest. He then flew over to a nearby bush and perched for a spell, allowing us time to admire and photograph him in all his glory. The **Pied Currawongs** could be seen and heard calling incessantly over the township. We then travelled a couple of local roads, over some great birding spots (one reportedly great for owls and quails) and returned to the Showgrounds for afternoon tea. Several members walked down to the sewage works for a look and tried to spot the resident platypus. No luck with the platypus but four waterbird species were added to the list.

Then down came the rain. We beat a hasty retreat to our cars where we sat inside the caravan and watched. Most Club members decided then and there to head for home, and the last two couples packed up and headed off about an hour later, leaving Steve and myself to sit it out alone. I didn't blame them as it got cold again very quickly, and camping in the mud and slush is no fun, especially with two young lads. They were sorry to go, as they had planned to go spotlighting later in the evening.

Next morning was again overcast and threatening rain at any minute but it held off long enough to get in one last walk along the Rail Trail. As soon as we entered the trail a raptor took off from the side of the path, pursued by a couple of very vocal magpies. My best guess was that it was a **Spotted Harrier**, but I am no raptor expert and couldn't swear to it in court, but still a nice start and the first and only raptor for the whole three days. I added **Variegated Fairy-wrens**, a **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Double-barred Finches**, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, several **Brown Thornbills**, **Brown Honeyeaters** and a group of vociferous **Rufous Whistlers** to my list. We had walked down to the highway and decided it was time to turn back when we came across a group of about 15 processional caterpillars that were making their way along the path in the same direction that we were going - fascinating critters. Before leaving town we just had to check out the sewage works and added **Pacific Black Duck**, **Hardhead** and **Grey Teal** to my personal list, but still no platypus. Time to pack the caravan up and leave Blackbutt before it started to rain again!

We had a great weekend and the only sore spot for me was where a tick had latched itself onto my shoulder, sometime on Saturday morning and remained there until I found it at 3pm. By then it had a good grip on my skin and took three good tugs with the tweezers to remove. But the story doesn't end there. Over the next two days the shoulder became swollen, very red and sore, and hot to touch. The doctor's verdict was a secondary bacterial infection from the bite. So two lots of antibiotics and a tetanus shot later and it is now slowly on the mend. We didn't learn anything from that first day, as we both forgot to use repellent again on the Sunday as well.

**Species list:** Australian Wood Duck, Torresian Crow, Australian Magpie, Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Splendid Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Rock Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Double-barred Finch, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Brown Thornbill, Brown Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Weebill, Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Little Friarbird, Bell Miner, Eastern Spinebill, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Spotted Harrier (?), Pied Currawong, Satin Bowerbird, White-necked Heron, White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Fantail, Noisy Miner, White-throated Gerygone, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-naped Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Apostlebird, Silvereye, Grey Butcherbird, Common Bronzewing, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Welcome Swallow, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie-lark, Red-rumped Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Crested Pigeon, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, Laughing Kookaburra, Masked Lapwing, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah, Australian King-Parrot, Australasian Figbird.

A total of 58 species for the weekend.

# 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
Cotton Pygmy-goose	24/06/13	"Abberton", Helidon	MW
Eastern Osprey	23/06/13	"Abberton", Helidon	MW
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	01/06/13	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA
Spotted Harrier	11/08/13	Gowrie Junction	PM, KO
Little Eagle	21/07/13	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA
Black Falcon	27/06/13	"Abberton", Helidon	MW
Black Falcon	28/06/13	Old Goombungee Road	PM, KO
Black Falcon	11/08/13	Gowrie Junction	PM, KO
Red-kneed Dotterel	13/07/13	Postmans Ridge	MA
Blue Bonnet (2)	23/06/13	Gowrie-Glencoe Road	K & KW
Budgerigar (25)	05/07/13	Kulpi	PM
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	11/08/13	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ
Rainbow Bee-eater (8)	11/08/13	Highfields	PM
Red-capped Robin (male)	22/06/13	Old Goombungee Road	PM, KO
White-winged Triller (an eclipse male)	24/07/13	"Tiddalac" Upper Lockyer	MA
White-backed Swallow	12/08/13	"Abberton", Helidon	BJ, EJ
Rufous Songlark	02/07/13	"Tiddalac", Upper Lockyer	MA

**MA**, M. Atzeni; **BJ**, B. Jolly; **EJ**, E. Jolly; **PM**, P. McConnell; **KO**, K. O'Donnell; **K & KW**, K & K Williams; **MW**, M. Wood.

If anyone wishes to submit bird notes they can do this directly to me at [mconnell@usq.edu.au](mailto:mconnell@usq.edu.au) or via the Club's mailing address.

Thanks  
Pat McConnell

# Photographers' Page

For all bird photographers... amateur, professional and anywhere in between, please send your favourite photos in to be published in our monthly newsletter.



**Swamp Harrier**  
**"Abberton", Helidon 08/13**

Photo: Bill Jolly



**Australian Bustard**  
**Mt Tyson 06/13**

Photo: Fraser McIntyre



**Wonga Pigeon**  
**Mapleton 08/13**

Photo: Kylie Grose



**White-necked Heron**  
**Mapleton 08/13**

Photo: Kylie Grose

# Miscellaneous

## **August Outing details**

The outing will run from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August. We will be making good use of the Wambo Shire bird trail information. Each day will start at Jandowae Showgrounds. Day-trippers are welcome to join in at any stage. The plan is as follows:

**Friday** - Make your own way to Jandowae in the morning. From 1pm, we will bird the area around Jandowae Dam and the Dingo Barrier fence.

**Saturday** – Meet 7.30am. We will do the Warra Trails in the morning and Jandowae Trail No.2 after lunch.

**Sunday** - Jandowae Trail No. 1 and a stroll around a private property “Jeslands”. The owners will not be there as we originally planned but we still have their permission to have a wander.

**Monday** - We will be birding any spots people wish to return to. Then back for lunch at the Showgrounds, pack up and leave for home.

Remember to bring hats, water, own food, sunscreen, chair, etc. The trails mentioned above are in the “Birding areas of the Wambo Shire” brochure which you can pick up at the Information Centre, or download at the following link:

<http://www.jandowaetimbertown.org.au/links/jandowae/birdingtrailbooklet.pdf>

If you do intend coming, please notify Kevin and Kay Williams on 07 46595475 or 0429 465 954 beforehand, and indicate when you plan to be there.

Campers:      Powered site \$15-00 daily  
                  Non-powered site \$10-00 daily

Hot and cold showers and toilets are available on site.

## **AGM Reminder**

The AGM is on 23rd October. Members are welcome to nominate for any position on the executive. All positions are open. Positions include President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Editor, and Records Officer. Other current positions are listed on the back page of the newsletter. Nomination forms will be sent with the next newsletter.

Committee members represent the Club. They have the chance to voice their opinion on club activities and procedures, and vote during the committee meetings. The club recognises that people have busy lives and has tried to keep these roles to limited duties so they are not too time-consuming or overburdening.

The committee meets monthly on the first Wednesday. Meetings are relaxed and no more than 1.5hrs long. Please feel free to attend the next meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm at the Dr Price Room in Little Street, to get a feel for what’s involved in running the club. Also feel free to talk to any of the executive about any role you may be considering.