



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

## NEWSLETTER

TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND STUDY OF THE BIRDS IN THE TOOWOOMBA AREA

MARCH 2021

EDITION 466

### BIRD OF THE MONTH

### IN THIS ISSUE



*Painted Honeyeater*

*Jondaryan - 2021*

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### OUTINGS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2021

Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Photographic Workshop</b> See attached notice for details. or contact Ann Alcock 0418 159 760 tboc4350@gmail.com
Sunday 2 May	Prince Henry Drive, Toowoomba
Sat-Sun 29/30 May	Durikai/Coolmunda Dam, possible overnight
Sat-Sun 26/27 June	Raptor Census

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter will now be published monthly on last weekend of each Month with the deadline being 5 days prior to this.

**The deadline for the April Newsletter will be the 20<sup>th</sup> April.**

Any members can submit photos, stories etc to the TBO newsletter.

Charles [powerart@bigpond.net.au](mailto:powerart@bigpond.net.au)



**TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.**

**WEB FORUM ONLY**

[www.toowoombabirdobservers.org](http://www.toowoombabirdobservers.org).

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Outings coordinator	Martin Clark

## CLUB REPORTS & NOTICES

### OUTING REPORT THE LOCKYER VALLEY

#### A Day in the Lockyer Valley

Well -- 'Team' Sunday February 20th, in spite of the considerable heat and a very dry landscape we had a surprisingly good day, a total of 66 species, from 104 sightings across all selected birding spots. Thank you all for contributing.

We gathered at Lake Apex in Gatton at 7.30, Sandy organised us for a few spots to visit for the morning. We had a lovely group from Brisbane join us. Owing to the predicted heat the general consensus was to not linger too long at the different spots.

We spent an hour wandering the shores of two very dry lakes, Apex and Freeman, in Gatton, here 26 species were seen. There were a number of birds on the waterhole opposite Duff Engineering just west of the lakes, spotted by the Eastons on the road back to Toowoomba.

Next stop at what will be called 'Bennets' Waterhole' on Colquhoun Rd. Mr Bennet has set up a waterhole with an island in the centre, such a great idea for the birds. There was water here and a number of birds were observed.

Then on to Peaches Lagoon, owing to a totally dry lagoon this was very quiet, though a sighting of an Australian Hobby and 3 Nankeen Kestrels pleased us.

Morning tea seemed a good idea at Lake Dwyer with a shady gazebo for us. As we arrived the lake looked very promising and so it was. The waterbirds, particularly the majestic Pelicans, were in goodly numbers. From here we called it a day and we were on our way home at 11.30.

**Attendees:** Margie and Ross Easton, Ann Alcock, Sacha and Dokata Dyson Holland' Jane Butler, Jimsie Varghese, Janina Dove, Richard Thomis, Bob Gilbody, K Wright, Suzanne Combes and Charles Dove.

A bird count was done at each site.

#### Lake Apex :-

Australian Brush Turkey; Rock Dove; Crested Pigeon; Little Pied Cormorant; Little Black Cormorant; Eastern Great Egret; Intermediate Egret; Little Egret; Cattle Egret; Australian White Ibis; Straw Necked Ibis; Royal Spoonbill; Purple Swampphen; Masked Lapwing; Galah; Little Corella; Rainbow Lorikeet; Laughing Kookaburra; Red-backed Fairywren; Noisy Miner; Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike; Pied Butcherbird; Australian Magpie; Willie Wagtail; Magpie Lark; Golden-headed Cisticola. (26)

#### Bennets' Waterhole: -

Grey Teal; Australasian Grebe; Cattle Egret; Purple Swampphen; Pied Stilt; Black-fronted Dotterel; Masked Lapwing; Noisy Miner; Grey Crowned Babbler; Grey Butcherbird; Pied Butcherbird; Australian Magpie; Torresian Crow; Magpie Lark; Common Myna. (15)

#### Peaches Lagoon:-

Rock Dove; Peaceful Dove; Eastern Great Egret; Intermediate Egret; (Grey Teal & White-faced Heron, roadside.); Nankeen Kestrel; Australian Hobby; Laughing Kookaburra; Sacred Kingfisher; Striated Pardalote; Olive-backed Oriole; Leaden Flycatcher; Tawny Grassbird. (14)

#### Lake Dwyer:-

Australian Wood duck; Pink Eared Duck; Australasian Shoveler; Grey Teal; Chestnut Teal; Pacific Black Duck; Hardhead; Australasian Grebe; Great Crested Grebe; Rock Dove; Spotted Dove; Crested Pigeon; Australasian Darter; Little Pied Cormorant; Pied Cormorant; Little Black Cormorant; Great Cormorant; Australian Pelican; Intermediate Egret; Little Egret; White Ibis; Straw-necked Ibis; Royal Spoonbill; White-bellied Sea Eagle; Whistling Kite; Eurasian Coot; Pied Stilt; Black-fronted Dotterel; Red-kneed Dotterel; Masked Lapwing; Silver Gull; Laughing Kookaburra; Red-backed Fairy-wren; Noisy Miner; Grey Butcherbird; Pied Butcherbird; Australian Magpie; Golden-headed Cisticola; Welcome Swallow. (39)

#### Waterhole Opp. Duff Engineering:-

Plumed Whistling Duck; Australian Wood duck; Pacific Black Duck; Australasian Grebe; Little Pied Cormorant; Little Black Cormorant; Australian White Ibis; Royal Spoonbill; Dusky Moorhen; Black-fronted Dotterel. (10).



Golden-headed Cisticola



Plumed Whistling Duck

## Wader Outing - Toorbul Roost

20 March 2021

Seventeen members and friends made the trip to the high tide roost at Toorbul to view the migratory birds before they begin their long journey to their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere. One of the advantages of visiting at this time of year is being able to see the birds coming in to their breeding plumage.

High tide was around 2:00 p.m. and we were lucky the rain held off for a couple of hours to allow an uninterrupted period of birding. The mangroves and foreshore at Toorbul also provided additional birdwatching opportunities.

We counted 250 Whimbrel, many more than our previous visit two years ago and 500 Bar-tailed Godwit which is around the same number as last time. There were 100 Grey-tailed Tattler, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 12 Great Knot, 6 Common Greenshank, 20 Eastern Curlew and 4 Black-tailed Godwit. Amongst these birds were also 12 Caspian Tern, 18 Pied Oystercatcher and 8 Australian Pelican.

Some of the birds had green flags which indicates they were banded in Moreton Bay.

Other sightings around Toorbul throughout the weekend included:

Striated Heron, Pale-headed Rosella, King Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Black Swan, Royal Spoonbill, Mangrove Gerygone, Mangrove Honeyeater, Australian White Ibis, White-breasted Woodswallow, Welcome Swallow, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Peaceful Dove, Brown Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spangled Drongo, Sacred Kingfisher, Torresian Kingfisher, Golden Whistler, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Leaden Flycatcher, Little Egret, Brown Honeyeater and Little Pied Cormorant.

An exciting find was 12 Pacific Golden-plover in breeding plumage at Godwin Beach.

It was lovely to see some of our newer members there and I am grateful to Mike McGoldrick, Barbara Collyer, Richard Thomis and Charles Dove for their assistance during the outing. Ann Alcock



Pacific Golden-plover



Eastern Curlew



Great Knot



Whimbrel



Bar-tailed Godwit - Grey-tailed Tattler



Bar-tailed Godwits

## MEMBERS PROFILES

By Ann Alcock

**Name:** Ann Alcock

**Position in TBO?**

Treasurer

**How long have you been a member of TBO?**

Two years

**How did you first get involved with TBO?**

I was looking for organisations where I might be able to learn more about birds and meet like-minded people

**What do you enjoy about being a member of TBO?**

I love going on outings and enjoy the fellowship of other birders

**How long have you been interested in birding?**

For as long as I can remember but have only recently had time to indulge my passion

**Your most memorable birding experience:**

Almost any encounter with birds is memorable but there are certainly a few stand-outs – It was a great experience photographing the Black-breasted Button Quail in Redwood Park, going to Skomer Island to see Atlantic Puffins and it was exciting to finally photograph the Rufous-crowned Emu Wren at Winton.

**Your favourite bird?**

I love Quails and hope to add a few more to my list.

**Is there anything else you would like to see the TBO doing?**

Possibly some education classes

**What are your other interests?**

Photography, Bushwalking and weightlifting

**Are there any other comments you wish to make?**

It would be lovely to have more new members this year and to be able to have regular outings after a difficult 2020.



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### Twenty years of birding at home

Joe and Sue Scanlan

Since moving to Highfields from Brisbane in 1997, we have been interested in the variety of birds seen in our garden and in the skies along the edge of the escarpment. One of the features of our steep house block is that we can look directly out into the canopies of the eucalypts in our back yard, rather than standing beneath them and having to look up. Thus, we can see the pardalotes 'at eye level'. From our back deck, we can see back towards Toowoomba and can see raptors soaring over and along the escarpment.

We have become better at identifying birds by their calls, though we often hear birds that we have heard before but cannot remember which bird it is. The calls on the Pizzey and Knight bird app are quite helpful, but the calls on the app are only the most common ones. Also, there are more birds that can and do mimic other birds that we ever knew.

As a way of maintaining an interest in the birds that we see and hear, we have kept a monthly list of all the birds that we have identified on or over our block since 2000. In 2002, we began recording the first date each month that we recorded the species. This gives an index of abundance as the common species are identified during the first few days, while rare species can be observed at any day of the month. Also, this system records the first occurrence of the summer migrants, but we have not recorded the last occurrence of the migrants. The analysis of abundance is a work in progress.

To date, we have recorded 157 species, not including the rose-crowned fruit dove that we found dead on our lawn. Fifty seven bird species have been recorded at least once in every year. The lowest species count in a year has been 89 (4 times) and 113 was the greatest number (in 2011).

Somewhat surprisingly, we rarely see a few of the common introduced species. The common myna was last seen in 2019, house sparrow not seen since 2016 and the common starling has been seen in only one year. The main highway through Highfields is only 400 metres west from our house, yet we regularly see the myna and the sparrow on/at the highway and occasionally see the starling. We have never seen the red-rumped parrot here but we often see it west of the highway. Cockatiels are rarely seen on our place but are common west of the highway.

The following lists have been extracted from our database (up till December 2020).

**Birds seen only in one year:**

Great Cormorant, Barred Cuckoo-shrike, Great Egret, Black Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Black-shouldered Kite, Red-winged Parrot, Red-capped Robin, Little Shrike-thrush, Common Starling, Fork-tailed Swift, White-browed Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Masked Woodswallow, White-breasted Woodswallow.

We have seen a White-backed Magpie once.

**The most common birds** (recorded in more than 90% of months):

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Common Bronzewing, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Black-backed Magpie, Pale-headed Rosella, Torresian Crow, Pied Currawong, Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Honeyeater, Rainbow Lorikeet, Brush-turkey, Lewin's Honeyeater, Galah, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Bar-shouldered Dove, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Scrubwren, King Parrot, Spotted Dove, Grey Shrike-thrush.

**Birds that have increased**

Only two birds have increased over the 20 years – Noisy Miner and Common Blackbird

**Birds that have decreased**

A number of species have decreased over time. The Speckled Warbler has been much less frequently observed in recent years. We think this is because of the change of land use in adjoining areas. These paddocks were initially grazed by cattle and they are now housing blocks. A substantial area of shrubby understory was cleared on the one remaining large block (about 2 ha).

The Yellow-rumped Thornbill was last seen in 2016 and the Restless Flycatcher in 2011. There are no particular reasons for this that we are aware of.

**Birds more common in winter**

Restless Flycatcher (though we have not seen it for quite a few years), White-headed Pigeon, Regent Bowerbird, Red Wattlebird, Golden Whistler.

**Birds more common in summer**

Pacific Baza, Rainbow Bee-eater, Cicadabird, Brush Cuckoo, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Dollarbird, Spangled Drongo, Cattle Egret, Rufous Fantail, Leaden Flycatcher, Little Friarbird, Tawny Frogmouth, Sacred Kingfisher, Common Koel, Black-faced Monarch, White-throated Needletail, Powerful Owl.

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## MEMORIAL

With deep regrets the members of TBOC wish to pass on our symphony to Col Hughes with the passing of his wife Lyn.

Lyn Hughes passed away on the first of March 2021 after a long battle with cancer.

Col Hughes was Club Secretary for three years from 2015 to 2018.

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### A FEW LINKS THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO VIEW ONLINE

**Locals fight to save Kangaroo Island's endangered hooded plovers as beach car access increases.** *Shared from [ABC app](#)*

An increase in car beach access on Kangaroo Island — which is home to around 200 adult hooded plovers — has seen the bird's population decline, conservationists say. [Read the full story](#)

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**Bad Birds in Quarantine – Guernica**

<https://www.guernicamag.com/bad-birds-in-quarantine/>

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**Watch an Albatross Make a Royal Gaffe While Landing**

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>

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**Male Lyrebirds resort to artful deception in the pursuit of procreation**

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/26/male-lyrebirds-resort-to-artful-deception-in-the-pursuit-of-procreation?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/26/male-lyrebirds-resort-to-artful-deception-in-the-pursuit-of-procreation?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

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**Rare quail spotted in Coffs Harbour, NSW, after wet weather results in bird explosion - ABC News**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-04/rare-bird-in-coffs-harbour/13215532>

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**ONLY THE LONELY: AN ENDANGERED BIRD IS FORGETTING ITS SONG AS THE SPECIES DIES OUT**

Regent honeyeaters are most vocal during the early stages of their breeding season. Before the population decline, the birds were known for their soft, warbling song produced with characteristic head-bobbing. But with few birds left in the wild, their song is changing – with potentially tragic consequences. For the full story go to <https://bit.ly/3qUabGL>

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**Studies suggest some birds exhibit consciousness**

<https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/news/science/studies-suggest-some-birds-exhibit-consciousness/>

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**WHERE TO SLEEP IN THE CITY? HOW URBANISATION IMPACTS ROOSTING HABITAT AVAILABILITY FOR AN APEX PREDATOR**

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989421000445>

# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS



## BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

*Free to Toowoomba Bird Observers Club Members*

### CLASSROOM SESSION

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
2pm - 4pm

- Camera settings
- Camera equipment
- Birds in flight
- Composition
- Image quality

### PRACTICAL SESSION

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
7am - 9am

- Practical help in the field
- Review camera settings
- Answer questions
- Review images
- and much more

### PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY TUTORS

Ann Alcock, Julie Ramsey and Lucy RC Photography

RSVP: Please advise as soon as possible whether you will be attending  
So we can source an appropriately sized venue (possibly Highfields)

Email: [TBOC4350@gmail.com](mailto:TBOC4350@gmail.com) or contact Ann Alcock ~ M: 0418 159 760

**Can you let me know what type of camera and model you will be using**

On the day please bring: Camera and manual, batteries and charger,  
spare cards, note book and pens

