



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

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

OCTOBER 2021

EDITION 473

BIRD OF THE MONTH

IN THIS ISSUE



Zebra Finch Oakey - 2020

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OUTINGS 2021

Oct 29 - 1/11	October Species Census 29 th Oct - 1 st Nov
Saturday 27 th Nov	Lockyer Valley M. Atzeni

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter
Is published monthly.

**The deadline for the November Newsletter
will be the 25th November**

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2021 CHALLENGE

212 as of 23/09/2021

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A BIT FROM OUR MEMBERS

To Toowoomba Bird Observer's Newsletter

On Friday 10 September, The Year One students from Fairholme College joined their teacher Eduarda van Klinken (who is a keen member of the Toowoomba Bird Observers) for an optional after-school excursion to the Toowoomba Bird Habitat. They were joined by three volunteers from the club, Mick Atzeni, Joe Scanlan and James Bradshaw. Two students have written a report for this newsletter.

In the Waterbird Habitat I saw a straw-necked ibis. It was kind of rainbow. Me and my friends saw a purple swamphen. My friend Phoebe yelled out, 'There is a purple swamphen!'. I saw a magpie lark and no other people saw it. I saw it in a tree. There was a nest of white ibises in a tree. My and my friends saw ten dusky moorhens. Ashni (aged 6)

Before the holidays we went to the Toowoomba Bird Habitat. I saw some white ibises. They were sitting in one big nest. I saw some baby white ibises and a hardhead. The male hardhead has white eyes. I also saw a dusky moorhen. It was sitting on the water. Emma (aged 7)



Straw-necked Ibis



Purple Swamphen



Magpie lark



Australian White Ibis

Toowoomba Bird Habitat Species List		Thank you to Ashni and Emma for their help with the list
Australian Wood Duck	Masked Lapwing	Noisy Miner
Pacific Black Duck	Little Pied Cormorant	Blue-faced Honeyeater
Hardhead	Little Black Cormorant	Grey Butcherbird
Rock Dove	Australian White Ibis	Pied Butcherbird
Spotted Dove	Straw-necked Ibis	Pied Currawong
Crested Pigeon	Galah	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Dusky Moorhen	Little Corella	Magpie-lark
Eurasian Coot	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Welcome Swallow
Purple Swamphen	Rainbow Lorikeet	

Reptile: Eastern Water Dragon

A couple more pics at the Waterbird habitat



Australian White Ibis



Dusky Moorhen



Hardhead

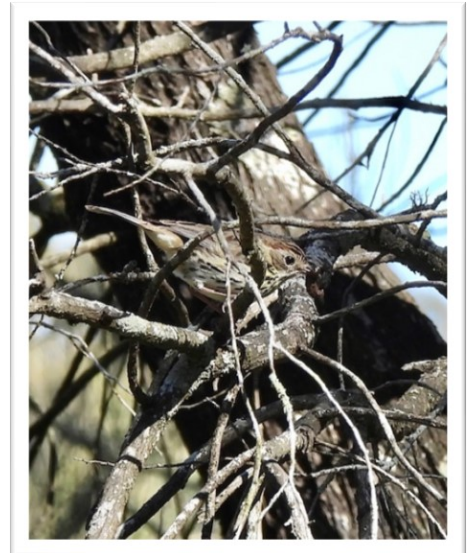
Ross and I have had some great birdwatching days recently.

The Granite Belt: - Base camp was the caravan park at Glen Aplin. We began our birding at the park itself, on the banks of the Severn River, 8am, finishing at Ballandean at 12.30pm, 08/10/21. From Glen Aplin we took the Mt Stirling Rd turning left in to Emu Swamp Rd which heads south to Ballandean. This is a quiet bitumen road and easy to pull up to check for birds. We spotted 56, mostly well-known woodland birds. Specials for us were shining bronze cuckoo, azure

kingfisher, yellow tailed cockatoos, spotted and striated pardalotes and 5 grey teal chicks with their parents.

Girraween NP has been a recent outing for members, wonderful as always. One lone Pelican and a flock of little black cormorants on Storm King Dam.

Sunday, 17th, on a whim we visited the Wondul Range NP, just out of Millmerran. Such a lovely surprise, wonderful wildflowers and apparently a list of 167 bird species. We saw only a few and watched an indignant family of grey headed babblers do battle with a pallid cuckoo. Well worth a visit, about an hour and a quarter from Toowoomba.



Speckled Warbler

This little fellow snapped at Dawns' farm at Allora.

Margaret Easton

AUSTRALIAN SWIFTLETS!

It was very stormy here at Helidon on the morning of Friday 14th October 2021.

After a thunderous downpour around 8am, I was relieved to see on the online radar that a huge storm front had just passed through from the Northwest, albeit that a smaller one which was approaching via Toowoomba was due to reach us in another 30 minutes or so.

At this point, while I was looking at the weather radar, I heard Eileen call loudly to me from another room:

"Swiftlets!!".

"Where?"

"Across the driveway, I just saw them through the window!"

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely!"

"Crikey!" (Or something like that....)

I was at my desk on the same side of the house. I grabbed my binoculars and was outside in seconds.

And there they were, a dozen or more Australian Swiftlets (*Aerodramus terrareginae*) adjacent to and over the house, sweeping arcs through the sky over house and garden, with individuals occasionally rising vertically to pursue higher-flying or windswept target prey, but generally moving to the south-east in a spread-out group, feeding as they went in the same general direction as the front which had passed over – as well as the one which was to shortly follow.

They are of course unmistakable birds, which we are familiar with from North Queensland sightings. These birds were similar in size to Fairy Martins, while entirely different in shape and flight. Generally dark above, obvious narrow pale rump-band, and distinct notch in the tail. Proportionately longer-winged than Fairy or Tree Martins, with faster more aerodynamic flight and constant sweeping changes of direction.

In our birding travels to many countries over many years we have been fortunate to identify more than 20 spp of swift and swiftlet, as well as over 30 spp of swallows and martins, and we are both confident about the identity of these Aussie Swiftlets.

I have seen Australian Swiftlets here before (January 1991, December 1991, November 1998 and December 1999) but although they were equally unmistakable on those occasions, those sightings weren't submitted for formal addition to the club's records on the basis that I was alone when I saw them.

However, on this occasion a Rare Bird Report was submitted, and I am pleased to report that the species has now been added to the TBO local list.

And we're heading into just the right season for more local sightings!

Bill Jolly
23/10/2021

Critically endangered Plains-wanderers gifted 13,000ha of habitat by farmers to stop extinction

[ABC Riverina](#) By [Shannon Corvo](#)
Posted Wed 20 Oct 2021 at 2:08pm

More than 13,000 hectares of prime Plains-wanderer habitat in south-west New South Wales has been conserved with the help of rural landholders.

Fondly known as the Goldilocks bird because it does not live in areas too dense or too sparse with vegetation, the Plains-wanderer is one of Australia's rarest birds.

There are estimates of only 500 in the wild, found mainly in NSW's Riverina and the northern plains in Victoria, with some hanging on in south-east South Australia.

The elusive ground-dwelling bird is listed as critically endangered nationally.

About 25 landholders have now set aside room for its habitat across about 200 kilometres from Hay to Jerilderie in the south.

They are part of the Paddocks for Plains-wanderer project, in partnership with Local Land Services in the Riverine Plains.

Read more at...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-20/plains-wanderers-gifted-13000ha-of-habitat/100552434>

LINKS : for those on the internet

Birdwatching doesn't make me forget Covid, but it helps me see life anew | Debbie Lustig | The Guardian
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/commentisfree/2021/oct/05/birdwatching-doesnt-make-me-forget-covid-but-it-helps-me-see-life-anew>

Collins Street Falcons and their fans have a new domestic drama
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/for-melbourne-s-falcons-and-their-fans-a-new-domestic-drama-20211001-p58who.html>

Conservationists say rocket launch site could push endangered southern emu-wren to extinction | Endangered species | The Guardian
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/28/conservationists-say-rocket-launch-site-could-push-endangered-southern-emu-wren-to-extinction?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other

Critically endangered plains-wanderers gifted 13,000ha of habitat by farmers to stop extinction - ABC News
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-20/plains-wanderers-gifted-13000ha-of-habitat/100552434>

From Spangled Drongos to the Gang-gang Cockatoo: how well do you know Australian birds? | Birds | The Guardian
https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/sep/25/from-spangled-drongos-to-the-gang-gang-cockatoo-how-well-do-you-know-australian-birds?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Full article: Avifaunal use of an artificial waterpoint in the Strzelecki Desert during an extended dry period
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01584197.2021.1966311>

If your cat is roaming free, it could be killing the local wildlife. Here's what you can do to prevent that - ABC News
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-16/pet-cat-curfew-roaming-free-local-wildlife-how-to-help-/100422136>

MEMBERS PROFILES

By Ann Alcock

Name: Michael Atzeni

Position in TBO: President

How long have you been a member of TBO?

Since 1979 (42years)

How did you first get involved with TBO?

Read the snippet in The Chronicle in 1975 about the club starting up. Took me 4 years to make the call and join up but, in the interim, I religiously dropped into the City Library to read their copy of the club's monthly newsletter.

What do you enjoy about being a member of TBO?

Engaging with kindred spirits who appreciate the birdlife of this area. I joined when the club list was around 190 species—it's now 304 species. I've found it deeply satisfying and rewarding to be actively involved in building a comprehensive picture of the local avian diversity over many years. Then there's the pleasure of being able to help others see species they ordinarily wouldn't get to see locally.

How long have you been interested in birding?

Birds have interested me all my life. As a kid, our earliest family holidays were at Tugun but, for me, it became more about going to Fleay's Reserve and Parrot Park (this used to be at Miami Beach) than going to the beach! By the age of eight, I was certainly a keen student of bird diversity as I started to borrow field guides for various countries from the library and study them intently. I also loved books about extinct and threatened birds.

Most memorable birding experiences?

- First outing with the club, which was to Redwood Park. I was 17, had never been out with other birders, had never been to Redwood, and had never seen a Yellow-faced Honeyeater and a Rose Robin. It was a watershed moment.
- Two weeks in Tanzania with my father. This is also my most treasured birding experience, being a gift from dad. It was also my first overseas trip. We saw over 200 species including many I'd longed to see from childhood but thought I never would.
- In Australia, the trip to Iron Range with Russ Jenkins (he twisted my arm), dad and Dino Greenlees. Finally saw and photographed my bogey bird, the Red Goshawk!
- Locally, the day Shane Brady and I found Squatter Pigeon and Painted Snipe in the TBO survey area. Both lifers. Both new birds for the official club list.

Your favourite bird?

Variegated Fairy-wren. Top marks to the Creator for that colour combination.

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

- Forming a sub-committee devote to entering TBO's records into appropriate database for easy extraction and reporting
- Encouraging more members to record and submit sightings for a patch over time. I consider this the best way to learn and become an expert for your area.
- Implementing pre-emptive, longitudinal surveying of our key habitats like Redwood Park.
- Publishing a book on the birds of the area and history of the club. There's a wonderful legacy the club has created. It deserves to be told.



ZEBRA FINCH

Scientific Name: *Taeniopygia guttata*
Atlas Number: 653

text courtesy of <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>
Image by Charles dove

Description:

Zebra Finches are mainly grey, with characteristic black 'tear drop' eye stripes and 'zebra like' black and white barring on the rump and upper tail. The throat and upper breast are pale grey, with fine black barring, and there is a broad black band on upper chest. The sides of the belly are chestnut with many white spots. The remainder of the belly and the undertail are white. The male is distinguished from the female by its chestnut cheek patches, a character that gave the species the alternative name of Chestnut-eared Finch. Both sexes have red eyes and bill. The legs and feet are orange yellow. Young are similar in plumage to the female, except that the clear black and white markings of the head are absent. The eyes are grey-brown and the bill is black.



Distribution:

Zebra Finches are the most common and widespread of Australia's grass-finches, found across the Australian mainland, with the exception of Cape York Peninsula and some coastal areas. They are also found in Timor and the Lesser Sunda Islands.

Habitat:

Zebra Finches are most commonly found in the drier areas of Australia, living year round in social flocks of up to 100 or more birds. They can be found in a variety of habitats, mainly dry wooded grasslands, bordering watercourses.

Feeding:

Zebra Finches feed in large flocks on fallen or ripening grass seeds. Insects may be taken at any time of the year, but are particularly favoured when feeding young. Feeding takes place on the ground, and, unlike some other grassfinches, birds never pull seed heads down with their feet.

Breeding:

Zebra Finches pair for life. The female alone selects the nest site, but both birds care for the eggs and young. The male gathers almost all the nesting material, with which the female constructs the loose dome-shaped nest. Birds have also been reported to nest in hollows in the ground, although this behaviour is uncommon.

Living with us

The introduction of artificial dams and water tanks has actually increased the Zebra Finch's natural range, as the birds need to drink on a regular basis.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Species	Date	Location	Observer
Common Blackbird (male)	22/09/21	Bailey St, Southbrook	KM
Blue-billed Duck *	17/10/21	Lake Galletly	PM; KO
Australian Owlet-nightjar (2)	09/10/21	Redwood Park	PM
Australian Swiftlet (12–15) **	14/10/21	“Abberton”, Helidon	BJ; EJ
Black-chinned Honeyeater (2)	17/10/21	Thomas Rd, Upper Lockyer	MA
Apostlebird (6) ***	19/10/21	West Creek	CD; AA
White-throated Needletail (20)	25/10/21	Western Ck SF, Dunmore	AA; CD; MA
White-browed Woodswallow	16/10/21	Murphy's Creek	MA
Masked Woodswallow	16/10/21	Murphy's Creek	MA
Masked Woodswallow	25/10/21	Western Ck SF, Dunmore	AA; CD; MA
Little Woodswallow	25/10/21	Western Ck SF, Dunmore	AA; CD; MA
Ground Cuckoo-shrike (3; nesting)	23/10/21	Hirstglen	AA; CD;
Green Pygmy Goose (2) ****	22/10/21	Millers Rd, Adare	AA; CD; MA
Wandering Whistling-Duck (4)	22/10/21	Karraschs Lagoon, Gatton	AA; CD; MA
Silver Gull (2)	22/10/21	Karraschs Lagoon, Gatton	AA; CD; MA
Grey Goshawk (1)	27/10/21	Prince Henry Drive	PW, SW, MA
Barred Cuckoo-shrike (2)	27/10/21	Redwood Park	PW, SW, MA
Barred Cuckoo-shrike (1)	27/10/21	Prince Henry Drive	PW, SW, MA
Topknot Pigeon (11)	27/10/21	Prince Henry Drive	PW, SW, MA

* At least three males, two females and five ducklings.

** **New species for Club area.** First new species since 29/07/2017.

*** First nesting recorded in Toowoomba.

Hello everyone,

Time for our Annual Census is fast approaching.

This year it will run from Friday 29th October through to Monday 1st November 2021.

The following information is attached for your convenience
a copy of the bird list.

a map to help you determine what grid cell you're in.

Any and all records are helpful! Team up or go solo, and record as many birds (or as few birds) as you can over the survey period.

Please also feel free to survey **whichever grid cells you want**. There is no formal structure and no-one is required to participate, but all survey work is highly valued and everyone is encouraged to submit at least one list. All you need to do is record what birds you have seen and in what sectors (1 – 20) they were seen in. Even lists from your own yard are helpful.

Send all completed lists to me and I will collate them for the newsletter.

Regards
Pat McConnell
Records Officer

Bird List page 8, 9, and new map 10 of newsletter.

TBOC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021

Toowoomba Bird Observers Checklist as at October 2021 (303 species)

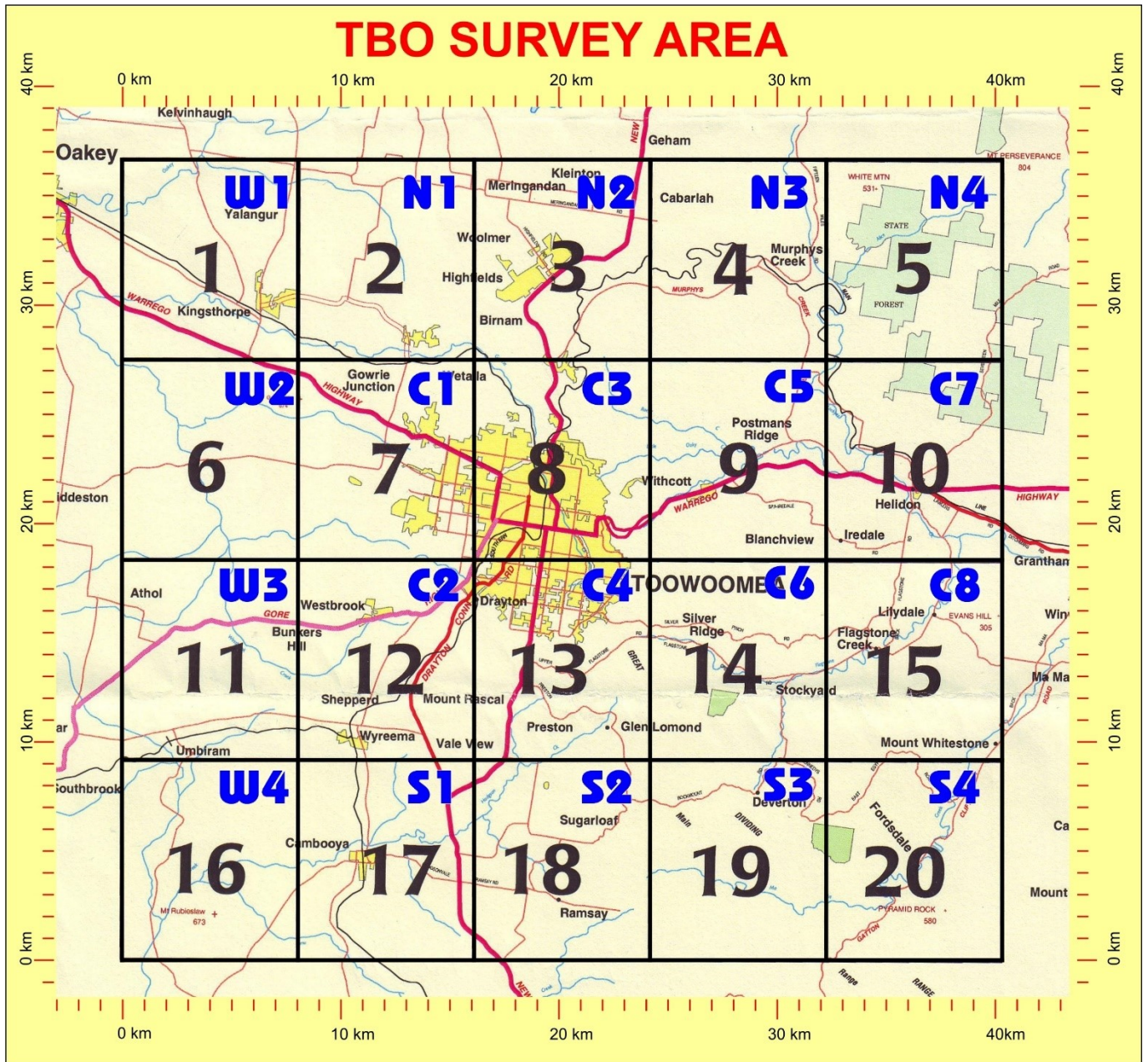
Observer

Month & Year

Magpie Goose	Australian Bustard	White-winged Black Tern
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Tawny Frogmouth	White-tailed Tropicbird
Wandering Whistling-Duck	Spotted Nightjar	Gould's Petrel
Blue-billed Duck	White-throated Nightjar	Wedge-tailed Shearwater
Pink-eared Duck	Australian Owlet-nightjar	Black-necked Stork
Black Swan	White-throated Needletail	Australian Pelican
Hardhead	Fork-tailed Swift	Australian Little Bittern
Australasian Shoveler	Lewin's Rail	Black Bittern
Pacific Black Duck	Buff-banded Rail	Nankeen Night-Heron
Mallard	Australian Spotted Crake	Striated Heron
Grey Teal	Baillon's Crake	Eastern Cattle Egret
Chestnut Teal	Spotless Crake	White-necked Heron
Freckled Duck	Pale-vented Bush-hen	Great Egret
Musk Duck	Australian Swamphen	Intermediate Egret
Australian Wood Duck	Dusky Moorhen	White-faced Heron
Cotton Pygmy-goose	Black-tailed Native-hen	Little Egret
Australian Brush-turkey	Eurasian Coot	Australian White Ibis
Stubble Quail	Brolga	Straw-necked Ibis
Brown Quail	Bush Stone-curlew	Yellow-billed Spoonbill
King Quail	Red-necked Avocet	Royal Spoonbill
Australasian Grebe	White-headed Stilt	Glossy Ibis
Hoary-headed Grebe	Pacific Golden Plover	Little Pied Cormorant
Great Crested Grebe	Red-capped Plover	Great Cormorant
Rock Dove	Black-fronted Dotterel	Little Black Cormorant
White-headed Pigeon	Banded Lapwing	Pied Cormorant
Spotted Dove	Masked Lapwing	Australasian Darter
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Red-kneed Dotterel	Eastern Osprey
Wonga Pigeon	Australian Painted-snipe	Black-shouldered Kite
Squatter Pigeon	Comb-crested Jacana	Square-tailed Kite
Common Bronzewing	Whimbrel	Pacific Baza
Crested Pigeon	Black-tailed Godwit	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Diamond Dove	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Little Eagle
Peaceful Dove	Curlew Sandpiper	Swamp Harrier
Bar-shouldered Dove	Red-necked Stint	Spotted Harrier
Pacific Emerald-Dove	Latham's Snipe	Grey Goshawk
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Common Sandpiper	Brown Goshawk
Superb Fruit-Dove	Common Greenshank	Collared Sparrowhawk
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	Marsh Sandpiper	Red Goshawk
Topknot Pigeon	Red-necked Phalarope	White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Pheasant Coucal	Red-backed Button-Quail	Whistling Kite
Eastern Koel	Black-breasted Button-Quail	Brahminy Kite
Channel-billed Cuckoo	Painted Button-Quail	Black Kite
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Red-chested Button-Quail	Sooty Owl
Black-eared Cuckoo	Little Button-Quail	Masked Owl
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Australian Pratincole	Eastern Barn Owl
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	Silver Gull	Powerful Owl
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Sooty Tern	Barking Owl
Brush Cuckoo	Gull-billed Tern	Southern Boobook
Pallid Cuckoo	Caspian Tern	Rainbow Bee-eater
Oriental Cuckoo	Whiskered Tern	Dollarbird
Azure Kingfisher	Eastern Spinebill	Spangled Drongo
Forest Kingfisher	Lewin's Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Sacred Kingfisher	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Rufous Fantail

TBOC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021

Red-backed Kingfisher	Little Wattlebird	Grey Fantail
Laughing Kookaburra	Red Wattlebird	Torresian Crow
Nankeen Kestrel	Fuscous Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Australian Hobby	White-plumed Honeyeater	Leaden Flycatcher
Brown Falcon	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Satin Flycatcher
Grey Falcon	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Restless Flycatcher
Black Falcon	Bell Miner	Magpie-lark
Peregrine Falcon	Noisy Miner	Spectacled Monarch
Cockatiel	Yellow-throated Miner	White-eared Monarch
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Black-faced Monarch
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Striated Pardalote	White-winged Chough
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Brown Gerygone	Apostlebird
Galah	White-throated Gerygone	Rose Robin
Long-billed Corella	Western Gerygone	Scarlet Robin
Little Corella	Weebill	Red-capped Robin
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Speckled Warbler	Jacky Winter
Australian King-Parrot	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin
Red-winged Parrot	Large-billed Scrubwren	Mistletoebird
Red-rumped Parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Blue Bonnet	Yellow Thornbill	Diamond Firetail
Crimson Rosella	Striated Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Pale-headed Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Plum-headed Finch
Eastern Rosella	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Zebra Finch
Swift Parrot	Grey-crowned Babbler	Double-barred Finch
Turquoise Parrot	Varied Sittella	House Sparrow
Musk Lorikeet	Ground Cuckoo-shrike	Horsfield's Bushlark
Little Lorikeet	Barred Cuckoo-shrike	Australasian Pipit
Rainbow Lorikeet	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Golden-headed Cisticola
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	Brown Songlark
Budgerigar	Cicadabird	Rufous Songlark
Noisy Pitta	White-winged Triller	Tawny Grassbird
Regent Bowerbird	Varied Triller	Little Grassbird
Satin Bowerbird	Spotted Quail-thrush	Australian Reed-Warbler
Spotted Bowerbird	Rufous Whistler	White-backed Swallow
White-throated Treecreeper	Golden Whistler	Fairy Martin
Variegated Fairy-wren	Little Shrike-thrush	Tree Martin
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Welcome Swallow
Red-backed Fairy-wren	Crested Shrike-tit	Silvereye
White-winged Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird	Common Starling
Black Honeyeater	Australasian Figbird	Common Myna
Scarlet Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole	Russet-tailed Thrush
Painted Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	Common Blackbird
Striped Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
Noisy Friarbird	Pied Butcherbird	
Little Friarbird	Grey Butcherbird	
Brown Honeyeater	Masked Woodswallow	
Blue-faced Honeyeater	White-browed Woodswallow	
Black-chinned Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow	
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Black-faced Woodswallow	
White-throated Honeyeater	Little Woodswallow	
White-naped Honeyeater	White-breasted Woodswallow	



Notes: