



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

## NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL 2022

EDITION 478

### BIRD OF THE MONTH

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*Oakey 2021*

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### OUTINGS 2022

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**Sunday**  
May 29<sup>th</sup> - 8am

**Crow's Nest National Park**  
Mick Atzeni  
Ph: 0499 395 485 to register attendance

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter  
Is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter  
will be the 28<sup>th</sup> May**

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### 2022 CHALLENGE

Get your sightings in.

## OUTINGS REPORT

### Highfields Falls and Williams Park April 30<sup>th</sup>

by Charles Dove

A wet and foggy morning did not prevent the avid 14 members of TBOC from going birdwatching. Proving very successful with a number of species seen, even though we missed out on seeing the Powerful Owls on the day. Great to see a few of the younger birdwatchers along for the walks.

The first part of the walk at Highfields Falls did take a bit of time with many observing a good number of species on the downhill unnamed track, then along a few other tracks to the lower waterfall, where we were hoping to see the Powerful Owls there, unfortunately they were away for the day.

Making our way back on the Lorikeet walking track, we came across the Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren and the Long-billed Corella. We did manage over 36 species on the Highfields walk

Onward to Williams Park for morning tea and a bit of a yatter yatter, then back into the birding doing the circuit around the creek, not a lot of birds sighted, the Fan-tailed Cuckoo was a good one to come across up close and some managed a few pics. Thank you to all those that came along for the morning.

Highfields Falls			36 species
Brown Quail	Little Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Pied Currawong
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Pale-headed Rosella	Scarlet Honeyeater	Rufous Fantail
Peaceful Dove	Laughing Kookaburra	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Bar-shouldered Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Whipbird	Willie Wagtail
Wonga Pigeon	Variegated Fairy-wren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Torresian Crow
Galah	Brown Gerygone	Grey Shrike-thrush	Magpie-lark
Long-billed Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Australasian Figbird	Eastern Yellow Robin
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	Double-barred Finch
Rainbow Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	Red-browed Finch

Williams Park			18 species
Common Bronzewing	Pale-headed Rosella	Noisy Miner	Torresian Crow
Crested Pigeon	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Pied Butcherbird	Magpie-lark
Pacific Baza	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Magpie	Eastern Yellow Robin
Rainbow Lorikeet	Superb Fairy-wren	Pied Currawong	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Lewin's Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	



Eastern Whipbird – at Highfields



Eastern Yellow Robin – at Highfields





Fan-tailed Cuckoo – at Williams Park

## MEMBERS

Tony Bond has been fortunate to capture some fantastic pics at Highfields earlier in May of the Powerful Owl and Pacific Baza.



Pacific Baza – at Highfields Fall  
by T Bond



Powerful Owl – at Highfields Falls  
by T bond



A Couple more from Tony at Highfields -





## BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

Scientific Name: *Elanus axillaris*  
Atlas Number: 232

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

### DESCRIPTION:

Black-shouldered Kites are medium to small raptors (birds of prey), and are mostly pale grey above, with a pure white head, body and tail and black shoulders. The wings are white underneath, with black wing tips and the wing span is 80 cm to 100 cm. Females are larger than males. The red eye is marked by a black comma that extends behind it. The nostrils are yellow and the legs and feet are also yellow. The Black-shouldered Kite has a direct flight with quick shallow wing beats interspersed with glides on upswept wings (like a seagull), and is often seen hovering, with feet dangling.

### SIMILAR SPECIES:

The Black-shouldered Kite is very similar to the related raptor (bird of prey) species, the Letter-winged Kite, *E. scriptus*, but has a distinctive black comma shape above and behind the eye, lacks the black underwing 'w' or 'm' pattern, and has a white rather than grey crown. The Letter-winged Kite also has a slower, deeper wing beat when flying.

### DISTRIBUTION:

The Black-shouldered Kite is found across mainland Australia.

### HABITAT:

The Black-shouldered Kite is found in treed grasslands and on farms, along roads, and in vacant waste lands of urban and coastal areas.

### SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:

Nomadic; populations may irrupt in response to mouse plagues in particular areas.

### FEEDING:

The Black-shouldered Kite feeds mainly on rodents, particularly the introduced House Mouse, *Mus musculus*, often following mouse plagues in agricultural areas. Also, will eat insects such as grasshoppers. It prefers to hunt during the day, particularly early morning and late afternoon, often hovering with its wings held upright in a V-shape, before dropping down and grabbing prey with its talons. Prey items are eaten while flying or on a perch, which can be a high tree or an artificial structure, e.g., a powerpole.

### BREEDING:

The Black-shouldered Kite forms monogamous pairs. During courtship, the male will feed the female in mid-air: she will flip upside down and take food with her feet from his, while both are flying. Both sexes build the nest, which is a large untidy shallow cup of sticks, on high tree or on an artificial structure such as a bridge or power pole. The young birds can feed themselves seven days after fledging and leave their parents within a month.

