



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

## NEWSLETTER

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

July 2023

EDITION 492

### BIRD OF THE MONTH



**Comb-crested Jacana**  
Cooby Dam, 2022

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### OUTINGS & EVENTS 2023

Wednesday August 9th	<b>Pittsworth</b> Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Saturday August 19th	<b>Lockyer Wetlands</b> Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter  
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter  
is 27<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

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

### 2023 CHALLENGE

**200 species as at 6/7/2023**

Please submit your sightings for 2023

### Management Committee:

President	Mick Atzeni
Vice-president	Sandy Robertson
Secretary	Peter Everest
Treasurer	Ann Alcock
Media officer	Ann Alcock
Editor	Charles Dove
Outings Coordinator	-
Records Officer	Pat McConnell
Facebook Admin	Sandy Robertson
	Mick Atzeni
	Ann Alcock

**MID-WEEK WALK****PITTSWORTH**

**Date:** Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Leader:** Charles Dove

**Meet location:** <https://goo.gl/maps/puRwqaabwc6uqsH78>

Meet at Rotary Park. cnr Clifton and Yandilla Sts, Pittsworth

Then proceed to Hill Street and Sewage Area ponds

**Time:** 8.15 am

**Recommended:** Please bring morning tea.

**RSVP:** Charles by 12:00 midday Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023  
text 0417 422 302 or E-mail powerart@bigpond.net.au

**Outing details:** casual walk can be easy. There are toilet facilities at Rotary Park.

*Closed footwear required.*

*In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.*

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**WEEKEND WALK****LOCKYER WETLANDS**

**Date:** Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Leader:** Mick Atzeni

**Meet location:** Lake Apex, Gatton, in public car park at the BBQ facilities

<https://goo.gl/maps/5P8wgKDNLUOKu5G56>

**Time:** 8.00 am

**Recommended:** Please bring Morning Tea and Lunch

RSVP: Mick by midday Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August on 0499 395 485 or email tiddalac@gmail.com.

*Closed footwear required.*

*In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.*

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**JOINT OUTING: TBO/BirdLife SQ-DD****LOCKYER UPLANDS**

**Date:** Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Leader:** Mick Atzeni

**Meet location:** Community Centre in Ma Ma Creek, located on the Gatton Clifton Road, here.

<https://goo.gl/maps/VSDgEAHc72Cdn8OP7>

**Time:** 7.30 am

**Note: Limited numbers**

**Recommended:** Please bring Morning Tea and Lunch

**RSVP:** Mick by midday Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August on 0499 395 485 or email tiddalac@gmail.com.

*Closed footwear required.*

*In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.*

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**MID-WEEK WALK report**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**REDWOOD PARK, TOOWOOMBA**

By Kathy Bowly

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 mid-week TBO outing saw 8 keen birders converge on Redwood Park at the Warrego Highway entrance. On a beautiful winter’s morning we were greeted by a Rose Robin and a Grey Fantail. Nearby on the ground a small group of Double-barred Finches fed while higher in the trees a feeding party of a number of small birds including Silvereyes and honeyeaters were moving through.

Slowly moving along Grasstree trail, a Spotted Pardalote (right) was spied sitting on a slight embankment off to the side of the trail. He was sitting very still staring into the bank – a real treat for the camera buffs as he remained there for a couple of minutes before disappearing into a tunnel with a couple little flicks of dirt as he went. Another couple of treats for the morning were the Crested Shrike-tit, Varied Triller and White-naped Honeyeater.



A large flock of corellas noisily passed overhead at one stage and whilst remaining unseen whipbirds were ever present along the trail.

After morning tea, a few birders went for a walk along the creek where a Grey Shrike-thrush, whilst blending in well with the grey rocky bank, foraged among the rocks and roots above the water. One final walk up the hill above the creek we were greeted by the big song of the little Scarlet Honeyeater.

After a beautiful morning with a great array of birds we were farewelled from Redwood Park by a young Brush-tailed Possum which must have lost track of time and forgot to get himself to bed before sun-up - who could blame him!!

Redwood Park, Toowoomba		Bird list, 12 July 2023	8 birders	33 Species
Brown Quail	Laughing Kookaburra	Scarlet Honeyeater	Torresian Crow	
Brown Cuckoo-dove	Regent Bowerbird	Brown Honeyeater	Rose Robin	
Peaceful Dove	White-browed Scrubwren	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Speckled Warbler	White-naped Honeyeater	Silvereye	
Square-tailed Kite	Brown Thornbill	Varied Sittella	Double-barred Finch	
Brown Goshawk	Spotted Pardalote	Varied Triller	Red-browed Finch	
Little Corella	Striated Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit		
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush		
Little Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie		

Amanda Robertson did well to capture some great images at Redwood Park during the mid-week walk in July.



Varied Triller - male



Varied Triller - female



Spotted Pardalote - female



Spotted Pardalote - male



Speckled Warbler



Brown Quail



Brown-headed Honeyeater



Yellow-footed Antechinus

**Photographs courtesy of Amanda Robertson**

**“Yonder”, Upper Lockyer Outing, 18 July 2023** Report by Mick Atzeni

It’s not every member that comes complete with a nice bush block so when new member Michael Cook suggested I have a look at his 20-acre property, “Yonder”, near Murphys Creek, I had no hesitation taking up his offer and, after checking it out, proposing an outing.

Tuesdays suited Michael best. As I also hold my fortnightly U3A birding outings on Tuesdays I suggested we invite both groups to which Michael kindly agreed. Thanks Michael!

After meeting at the Murphys Creek Tavern, we carpoled and headed into the bowels of “Yonder”. On arrival, we saw our first Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters. As the weather was overcast, it was proving difficult to appreciate the smart plumage of this attractive honeyeater but eventually everyone managed good views. At one stage ten or so Yellow-tufteds were chasing a Noisy Miner; a counter-intuitive interaction that was satisfying to witness! While walking through the stockyards, Michael’s donkeys, Pearl and Opal, and Merino sheep were a temporary distraction from the birding. A Spotted Pardalote got us back on track.



Walking along the dirt road into the property, we were entreated to a small flock of Dusky Woodswallows feeding low to the ground, which kept the photographers busy. Meanwhile, I spotted a single Varied Sittella. Unusual to only see one and despite efforts to locate more we failed, but in the process saw a mixed feeding flock including Silvereye, Rufous Whistler, Yellow-faced and a Brown-headed Honeyeater.



Varied Sittella



Restless Flycatcher

A final look after morning tea yielded a view of the Restless Flycatcher which we had only heard earlier, and some Double-barred Finches hiding in the lantana next to the chook pen.

Many thanks to Michael for hosting us. A thoroughly enjoyable outing and it was good for members of the two groups to have the chance to meet each other.

“Yonder”, Upper Lockyer Bird List, 18 July 2023			29 species
Peaceful Dove	Spotted Pardalote	Noisy Friarbird	Australian Magpie
Bar-shouldered Dove	Striated Pardalote	Little Friarbird	Willie Wagtail
Galah	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Striped Honeyeater	Torresian Crow
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Eastern Whipbird	Restless Flycatcher
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Fuscous Honeyeater	Varied Sittella	Double-barred Finch
Little Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Rufous Whistler	
Pale-headed Rosella	Brown Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow	
Laughing Kookaburra	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	

More images from "Yonder". Thanks to Joe Scanlan (TBO) and Pauline Bridge (U3A) for sharing their photos.



Fuscous Honeyeater



Galah



Little Lorikeet



Pied Butcherbird



Willie Wagtail



Donkeys and sheep

## NOTICES & ARTICLES of INTEREST

### THE BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE AND ME: “A Tale of Two Species”

by Dan Bishop

On 1 July 2023 I decided to go to Loveday Cove at Cooby Dam for an afternoon bird list. Just the regular route – about 1.5km from the playground car park area along the eastern arm of the dam, which usually takes me about an hour and a half. I’m most of the way along the trail when I spot four Black-shouldered Kites perching in a dead tree to the left – two adults, and two beautiful juveniles with their buff-coloured heads and chests. My first Black-shouldered Kite family! “Looks like a good photo opportunity,” I think to myself innocently, and I approach with the intention of snapping some family portraits.



I get to within about 15 metres and the adults take off, leaving the two young ones behind. Oh well, just pics of the babies, then, and I adjust my angle and distance to include both birds in the camera viewfinder. As I’m doing so, I notice movement at the corner of my eye, above me and to the right. I look there instinctively in time to see one of the adults coming straight for me, red eyes blazing! It pulls out of the dive about 2-3 metres from my head and wheels around for another go, forcing me to flap my arms wildly like a panicked, featherless Galah. The Kite pulls up farther from me this time, perhaps confused by my strange mammalian crazy dance, and hovers, glaring balefully. I scuttle away from the tree, hoping to appease Mum/Dad, and somehow manage to escape and live to photograph (and flap) another day. The pictures I took were worth the terror, but I’ll be more wary should the opportunity ever present itself again!

#### Dan’s “Swooped by” life list:

Australian Magpie, Masked Lapwing, Magpie-lark, Noisy Miner, Dollarbird, Grey Fantail, Jacky Winter, Sacred Kingfisher, Black-shouldered Kite.



Jacky Winter

**FOXBAR FALLS** 21<sup>st</sup> July

by Jarrod Kath

I visited Foxbar Falls, about 2 hours south of Toowoomba, for a couple of days of camping last week and managed to do a bit of birding. The property is set up for camping and caravans and is located on a working farm with various dams and creeks running through it. The vegetation and geology are much like the nearby Girraween National Park, the main difference being the presence of several large dams, which provide habitat for numerous species of water bird. Birding was good and I was able to see various water birds and bush birds in a small amount of time. The list of birds from one morning is here <https://ebird.org/checklist/S145143897>. Red-rumped Parrots were also plentiful around the dam edges in the mornings, providing some good photo opportunities.





# POWERFUL OWL UPDATE

by Chris Cameron

Around midday on Sunday (23/7) I paid a quick visit to two Powerful Owls breeding sites on the north side of town.

Presumably the females were busy with domestic duties, as there was only one bird visible at each site. At one site, the bird was not holding prey, but there was a very fresh, adult Magpie carcase (left) directly below him in the shrubbery. I left it there! It was missing the head and one leg, with the other leg broken and stripped of flesh.



Magpie carcase



Powerful Owl, Highfields



Powerful Owl, Highfields

At the other site, the bird had been more careful. It had a Black Flying Fox firmly held and was happily dozing.

## Links

### Penguin that 'should never pop up on the mainland' discovered on SA beach

For the first time in 17 years, a Northern Rockhopper Penguin has been discovered in SA. Carers hope the drastically underweight migratory bird will make a full recovery and return to the wild. [Read the full story](#)

### Renewed push to save Southern Cassowary, Australia's own 'living dinosaur'

The endangered Southern Cassowary looks akin to its prehistoric ancestors and there's a national push to save this "beautiful" giant bird from disappearing. [Read the full story](#)

### Plural breeding among unrelated females and other insights on complex social structure in the cooperatively breeding Variegated Fairy-wren: Emu - Austral Ornithology: Vol 0, No 0

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01584197.2023.2230478>

### The Mystery of Australia's Paralyzed Parrots - Scientific American

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-mystery-of-australias-paralyzed-parrots/>

# EAST CREEK BATHS

by Charles Dove

The 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023 was a nice, sunny day so I went for a walk down along East Creek. I hadn't seen much until, on the return trip, I came across a pair of Pale-headed Rosellas enjoying a quiet bath in the creek.



I managed a large number of photos of the Pale-headed Rosellas and considered moving on, until I looked up, and noticed a number of Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets perched alongside each other on a branch; not something you'd expect to see, given Rainbow Lorikeets are normally aggressive to other species in close proximity. After a few photos I noticed the Musk Lorikeet seemed to have a nesting hole on the other side of the tree trunk.



I managed to find a way across the creek to obtain a better view of the "nesting hole". As I approached, I soon realised it was a bit more than a nesting hole but a communal bathing hole.



A pair of Musk Lorikeets was vigorously enjoying their time in the bath, while another on a branch nearby awaited its turn. Soon a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets moved a bit closer, isolating and forcing the lone Musk Lorikeet to move over a bit. They sat for a moment or two, then made a move on the bath, letting the Musk Lorikeet know it was their turn. Soon they were deep into it with only their heads appearing over the ledge.



Hoping to be next, the lone Musk Lorikeet edged a bit closer to the bath when, out of nowhere, another pair of Rainbow Lorikeets came in and made it move to a higher branch. They soon decided to make a move themselves for the bath, then both pairs of Rainbow Lorikeet's ended up in a squabble and left the bath empty after a short while.



Well; finally, the lone Musk Lorikeet had a chance to bathe, even if the water level was lower than what it would have wanted.

**COUPLE OF BITS OF INTEREST**

By Chris Cameron

**The first one's in two parts.....**

On the 18th of June I was down in Redwood Park, at a drinking and bath spot on the creek below the picnic area when a strange one came in for an extended bath.

It appeared to be a young male Golden Whistler (right) just gaining adult garb. I had not seen one like it before ... managed a picture before it was totally soaked and bedraggled:



**Then a follow-up** out at the little "Painted Honeyeater Dam" near Jondaryan where there was a Rufous Whistler (below) in a similar state of transformation!



**Earlier in the day, at work near Irvingdale**

I had happened to see the arrival of 7 Banded Lapwings that dropped down near vertically to a nearby cultivation. It looked as though they had come a fair way, as for the rest of the afternoon they hardly moved, just rested, preened, or simply sat. Sadly, they were well out into a planted paddock, so could not get closer to them.

I'd not seen them in the area since August 2021.



Banded Lapwings

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**NEWS FROM MYALL PARK BOTANICAL GARDENS**

by Tony Bond

I'm typing this under a Queensland Peppermint tree at Myall Park Botanical Gardens where Jennie and I are camping this week (from 23/7). Initially it was grey and overcast with rain throughout the first night and very little bird activity. Even the water feature at the bird hide was deserted, but once the cloud started to clear more and more came out.

The most common birds here are easily Brown Honeyeaters - they are simply all over the park and they are first to call each morning and last to fall silent each night. Next two most common species would be Weebills and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters.

The Queensland Peppermint tree by which we set up camp is “owned” by a very aggressive Grey Fantail. When other visitors such as Rufous Whistler, Weebill, or Mistletoebird approach they are seen off quickly.

Volunteers have obviously been busy since we last visited here more than a year ago and there is new signage on many of the exhibits and on the paths. It looks like there has been some new planting activity too. The new camp kitchen is still not available for public use but the covered area outside has power and lights - so, although you can't actually cook inside, you can shelter.

We've walked most of the paths and come across more and more bird activity each time. Things we have noticed are: 1) we have not seen a single raptor, 2) we have not seen any rosellas or lorikeets, and aside from an unusually lonely Double-barred Finch, we have not seen any finches. The water level in the lake is very low. We did spot a couple of egrets in the distance on private property but otherwise there were no waterbirds to be seen anywhere.

There is a fair amount of blossom in evidence and honeyeaters we identified are Brown, Spiny-cheeked, Yellow-faced, White-plumed, White-eared, and Striped. There are also Mistletoebirds, Weebills, Striated Pardalotes, White-throated Gerygones, two female fairy-wrens (yet to be positively identified) and Varied Sitellas.

“Normal” campsite residents are also present, such as Australian Raven, Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Apostlebird, Grey-crowned Babbler, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah and Little Corella - plus a single Cockatiel.

Best of all - after the first night we've had the place to ourselves.



Apostlebird



Rufous Whistler



Brown Honeyeater



Weebill

**BIRD OF THE MONTH****COMB-CRESTED JACANA**Scientific Name: *Irediparra gallinacea*

Atlas Number: 171

image by Charles Dove

Text courtesy <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>**DESCRIPTION:**

The Comb-crested Jacana, also known as the Lotusbird, has a red fleshy forehead comb, a black crown, back and breast and brown wings. The belly, face and throat are white, and there is a faint yellow tinge around the eye and throat. Both sexes are similar in appearance, but the female is larger than the male, and slightly brighter in colour. In flight, the long legs and toes trail behind the body. Young Jacanas resemble the adult birds, but are rufous to black on the head and nape, and have a rufous-black breast band. The red fleshy comb is much smaller and darker.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Comb-crested Jacanas occupy coastal and sub-coastal regions from the Kimberleys, Western Australia, through northern Australia to about Grafton, New South Wales. They are more common in the north of their range.

**HABITAT:**

Comb-crested Jacanas are found in tropical and subtropical freshwater wetlands, including lagoons, billabongs, swamps, lakes, rivers, sewage ponds and dams, providing there is adequate floating vegetation.

**SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:**

Comb-crested Jacanas will move to new locations, particularly in response to changes in their current habitat, such as droughts or excessive flooding.

**FEEDING:**

The Comb-crested Jacana feeds on aquatic insects, which it seizes from floating vegetation or the surface of the water. It also feeds on seeds and aquatic plants. Birds rarely come to shore. When searching for food, the Comb-crested Jacana bobs its head and flicks its tail continuously.

**BREEDING:**

The female Comb-crested Jacana may mate with several males, while the male alone builds the nest, incubates the eggs and cares for the young. If danger threatens the young birds, the male has the curious habit of picking the chicks up under his wings and carrying them off to safety.

**MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Southern Cassowary (2)	28/05/2023	Etty Bay	PM; KO
Radjah Shelduck (2)	1/06/2023	Cooloola Cove	PM; KO
Square-tailed Kite	10/06/2023	Cawdor Rd, Highfields	MA
Square-tailed Kite	6/07/2023	Kuhls Rd, Highfields	MA
Square-tailed Kite	25/06/2023	Cooroy	PM
Little Eagle	19/07/2023	Woden St, Murphys Creek	MA
Little Eagle	27/07/2023	O'Briens Rd, Highfields	MA
Squatter Pigeon	03/06/2023	Undara	PM; KO
Squatter Pigeon (2)	05/06/2023	Cobbold Gorge	PM; KO
Australian Bustard (10)	09/06/2023	Guthalungra	PM; KO
Red-necked Avocet (2)	22/07/2023	Helidon Spa	MA
Buff-banded Rail	27/07/2023	Thomas Rd, Murphys Creek	MA
Red-backed Kingfisher	06/05/2023	Lilydale	PM
Channel-billed Cuckoo *	12/06/2023	Poverty Point, Great Sandy Region	PM
Black-chinned Honeyeater	13/07/2023	'Yonder', Upper Lockyer	MA; MC
Australian Raven	25/07/2023	Goombungee Dam Rd, Douglas	MA

\* Rare winter record

MA, M. Atzeni; MC, M. Cook; PM, P. McConnell; KO, K. O'Donnell