

New bird sighting bolsters argument against bike tracks

The sighting of a new native bird in escarpment has called for the Toowoomba Regional Council to reconsider mountain bike trails at Redwood Park.

Birdwatcher Roger Jaensch spotted a fairy gerygone during his trek through Redwood Park on Friday, November 19.

Usually found from Gympie through north east Queensland, the records have shown the bird to be sighted as far south as Bribie Island and the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

The Toowoomba Regional Council endorsed the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley Escarpment Mountain Bike Master Plan 2019-26 on Tuesday, December 17. The plan proposes several tracks at various spots around the escarpment, with one going through Redwood Park.

Birdlife Southern Queensland

Darling Downs convenor Scot McPhie said it was a surprise to hear the species was in the region.

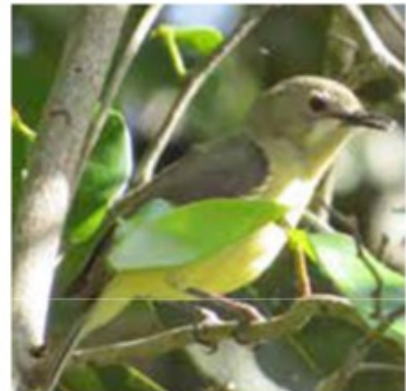
"It seems to be that the fairy gerygone is expanding its habitat which emphasises how important Redwood Park is to the ecosystem," he said.

"Redwood Park is one of the major destinations for birdwatchers and hikers throughout South East Queensland. We estimate the park draws about 10,000 people annually.

"We're not opposed to mountain bike trails but we want there to be reconsideration of putting 30km of tracks through Redwood."

The Toowoomba Regional Council will follow the findings of an environmental impact statement early next year.

TRC Cr Tim McMahon said



Fairy Gerygone spotted at Redwood Park

Photo Roger Jaensch

the council would have more work to do if the findings report against mountain bikes impact on biodiversity.

"If we're finding new species in the park, who knows what else is in that destination," Mr McPhie said. - **Sean White**