

NOVEMBER 2024

EDITION 506

BIRD OF THE MONTH		IN THIS ISSUE	
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<p style="text-align: center;">OUTINGS & EVENTS 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The deadline for the next Newsletter is 20th December 2024</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com</p>		 <p>Website: www.tboc.org.au Email: tboc4350@gmail.com</p> <p>Postal address: P.O. Box 4730 Toowoomba East 4350</p> <p>Management Committee:</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday 7 December</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Breakfast with the Birds Highfields Pat McConnell 0457 422 082</p>	<p>President</p> <p>Vice-president</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <p>Newsletter Editor</p> <p>Committee</p>	<p>Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485</p> <p>Dan Bishop 0401 235 156</p> <p>Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446</p> <p>Ann Alcock 0418 189 760</p> <p>Kathy Bowly</p> <p>Jennie and Tony Bond</p> <p>Peter Everist</p> <p>Jarrod Kath</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 11th December</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dingo Mountain, Crows Nest Charles Dove 0417 422 302</p>	<p>Records Officer</p> <p>Facebook Admin</p> <p>Website</p>	<p>Pat McConnell 0457 422 082</p> <p>Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock</p> <p>Dan Bishop</p> <p>Dan Bishop</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND</p>			
<p>Toowoomba Bird Observers would like to thank all our members for their support in 2024 and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.</p> 			

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

LOCATION: Highfields

Date: Saturday, 7 December 2024

Contact: Pat McConnell 0457 422 082

Address: 5 Forest Rd, Highfields
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Sv31yoRa7bmdDw4M6>

Times: 6:30am bird walk (optional) at Highfields Falls, starting at the Dau Rd entrance. Breakfast at 8:30am at 5 Forest Rd.

Other details: BYO food and chair. Tea, coffee and bread rolls provided. BBQ available.

RSVP: Thursday, 5 December 2024, for catering purposes

In the event of inclement weather contact the relevant leader
Closed footwear required in the field on all outings.



MID-WEEK WALK DECEMBER 2024

Dingo Mountain

Date: Wednesday 11th December 2024

Leader: Charles Dove

Time: 8:00 am

Meet location: Dingo Mountain Rd
Dingo Mountain Rd, Crows Nest QLD 4355
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/v2M4GavPCoFCFVkp9>

Other details: Has facilities

Moderate walk: *Closed footwear required.* BYO morning tea.

RSVP: Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 10th December 2024
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

NOVEMBER MIDWEEK WALK

Midweek Walk, Lake Dyer, Wednesday 13th November

by Tony Bond

We met near the boat ramp at Lake Dyer. The weather forecast on the day was for developing rain but we set out anyway in anticipation of it being wrong, which paid off for the seven birders who attended - although it was still very humid. Despite the low stratus cloud, the sky was surprisingly very bright which made observation and photography of anything above ground level very challenging. While we assembled, we were treated to a fly-by of several Australian Pelicans, a Whistling Kite, and a Kestrel that was being harassed mid-air by two Noisy Miners. Flocks of feral pigeons circled around and a pair of Channel-billed Cuckoos were seen leaving the area.

From the car park we headed north on foot and were musically entertained by a pair of juvenile Grey Butcherbirds before leaving the picnic area and, although it was some way off, we could clearly see a Great Crested Grebe on the water. Taking the track along the top of the dam wall we continued north towards a piece of infrastructure in the water that was being used by many birds. From a distance we could identify several Little Pied Cormorants but as we got closer, we could also make out Little Black Cormorants, at least one Great Cormorant, a couple of Darters and several Australian Pelicans.



Australian Pelican
Lake Dyer



Magpie Lark
Lake Dyer

We watched a pair of Magpie Larks going back and forth to the structure but it was not until we got closer that we saw their destination was a mud nest under construction - precariously sited on a piece of exposed round railing. One Magpie Lark was fetching mud from the lake shore only a few metres away but the other was transporting large beak-loads from over a hundred metres away - it must have been good stuff to be worth all that effort.

As we observed all the inhabitants on the structure, a darter made a dive into the water only to surface with a sizeable fish in its bill. Others followed swiftly and then faced a serious decision - try to steal the fish or catch their own from the shoal that was passing beneath and

risk another bird stealing that!! Whatever the intentions, more darters, pelicans and cormorants all joined in and a huge commotion ensued. Eventually everyone got a fish and things settled down again. Welcome Swallows continued to swoop around completely undaunted by the fuss.

We walked a little further past the structure but the temperature was beginning to climb so we decided to head back for morning tea in the picnic area. A small group of Cattle Egrets flew over, a much larger Eastern Great Egret was seen fishing in the reeds and a pair of Caspian Terns circled and dived on the far side of the lake. A small raptor sitting someway away on a power line by the road confused us as it was difficult to see too much detail with the harsh backlighting from the sky. We decided it was most likely an Australian Hobby after a later review.

After morning tea, we headed south around the water edge but there was little shade to be found and the birds were mostly keeping out of sight. Noisy Miners chased moths, a Willy Wagtail posed on a dead branch, and the Caspian Terns did another turn over the water. A pair of Channel Billed Cuckoos flew silently past a gap in the trees for folks that were looking in the right place at the right time. A solitary Australasian Grebe was seen paddling beside a hybrid Mallard and a second Mallard sat with a pair of Wood Ducks on the shore.

We didn't experience any of the forecast rain.

Thanks to Charles Dove for leading this walk.



Welcome Swallow
Lake Dyer

Midweek Walk, Lake Dyer, Weds 13th November		7 members	26 species
Australian Wood Duck	Little Black Cormorant	Australian Hobby	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Pied Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Grebe	Australian Pelican	Caspian Tern	Maggie-lark
Great Crested Grebe	Eastern Great Egret	Galah	Welcome Swallow
Australasian Darter	Cattle Egret	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Fairy Martin
Little Pied Cormorant	Whistling Kite	Red-backed Fairy-wren	
Great Cormorant	Nankeen Kestrel	Noisy Miner	

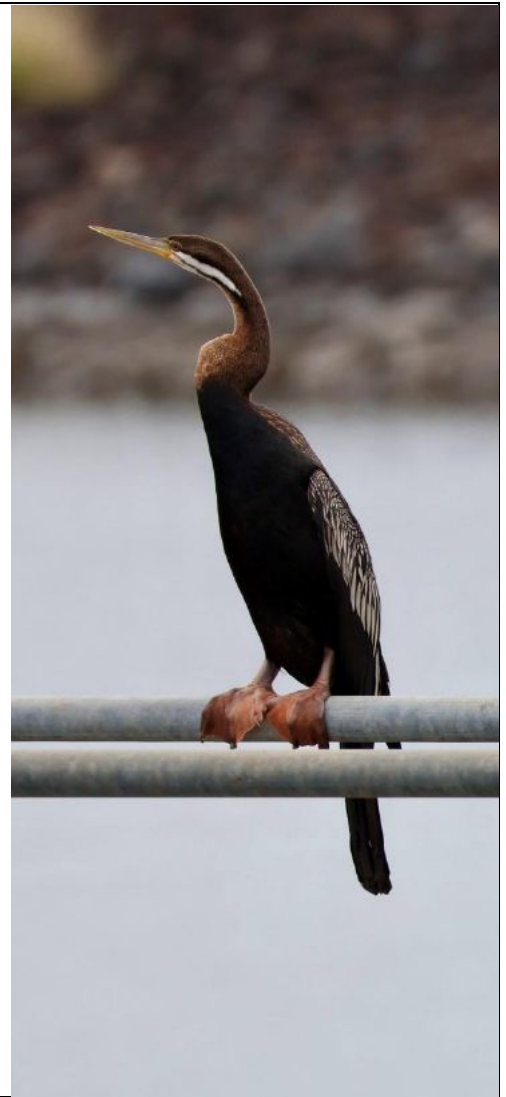


A few images from Tony Bond from the Lake Dyer outing

A few images from Lake Dyer on the November Midweek Walk

courtesy of Lareina Hagan

Pied Cormorant below and the Australasian Darter right



BIRD BEHAVIOUR

Interactions Between Species

Photos and text by Chris Cameron

We are all familiar with the aggressiveness of some birds when defending food supplies. Honeyeaters and Parrots are notorious for it!! Sometimes it is a Parrot defending against a honeyeater, as in this photo of a Musk Lorikeet against a Noisy Friarbird.





Then sometimes it is reversed, as with this photo of the Currawong being beaten off by Rainbows Lorikeets.

While recently up at The Bunyas, I witnessed an unusual one... We were up in one of the cottages with the usual birds about - King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas and White Cockatoos with Satin Bowerbirds - all looking for "a little something" for morning tea!!

Suddenly a White-headed Pigeon flew into the tree adjacent to the verandah where we were sitting. It was sitting quietly for a few moments before one of the Crimson Rosellas flew across and sat beside it ... a neat picture opportunity! However there was nothing friendly about the encounter as the Rosella began actively shouldering the Pigeon further away from the verandah and food!! The size differential was marked, but that didn't worry the Rosella, who continued to shove the Pigeon till it flew to a branch further away!! It did not get a chance to come across to the verandah at all, just its proximity was enough to set the Rosella off!!



Rather an unusual confrontation, I thought...

Raptor Interactions

Photos and text by Joe Scanlan



Among my favorite bird photos are those in which different species interact. During a recent trip to western NSW and South Australia, Sue and I saw two such 'interactions'. The first was in the northern Flinders Ranges at Arkaroola. Generally the birdlife there was quite modest – local guides attributed this to recent droughts that had severely depleted the production of plants, insects, reptiles and mammals. While walking at Stubbs Waterhole, we heard some harsh screeching high on the ridgetop. We could see two birds – one perched on a dead tree and another flying around, being a nuisance to the other larger bird. Through our binoculars, we could see they were raptors and I initially thought it might be a small male Brown Falcon and the larger female Brown Falcon. We then could see that the smaller bird had a dark strip across its tail near the tip. That, and the yellow legs and the dark line down from its eye, led us to believe it was a Nankeen Kestrel. The grey legs, brown 'trousers' and the barring under its wings and tail suggested that the larger bird was a Brown Falcon. The kestrel must have made 15-20 swoops at the falcon during the five minutes or so that the display went on for. The birds

were a long way up and the photos are not great, but are good memories of what was an unusual interaction for us to witness.

The next 'interaction' involved another Brown Falcon – this time in the Gundabooka National Park near Bourke in NSW. This one was a much darker individual perched on a dead tree branch that we saw as we drove through the park. Despite having taken hundreds of photos of Brown Falcons, I thought the light was coming from the right position and there was a clean background, so I may as well take a photo. Once I looked through the camera lens, I could see that it indeed had caught a lizard (bearded dragon?). This was not initially obvious as the colour blended in with the dead wood. Even though we were quite some distance from the bird, it was uncomfortable with our presence and flew off to another tree nearby. Just before it took flight, I got this shot and we left it to have its meal.



Checking out the Locals

Photos and text by Tony Bond

While strolling in Williams Park recently I found a pair of Southern Boobook Owls. We often hear Boobooks at night in Highfields, in fact one used to rest regularly during the day near the front of our house, but it hasn't been there for several months.

These new sightings were in the creek line, perched high up in a fern tree. They were wide awake and very active, constantly hopping and bobbing but unfortunately too well obscured by the fronds of the fern tree to get a good photo of them together. One of the birds, which had been facing away, suddenly noticed me, turned and shot a piercing stare through a gap in the greenery.

I passed the same spot on my return walk but could only see one.

As for any Powerful Owls, which was the purpose of my walk, I saw the male last week. I didn't see him on this walk but the tree where they often perch had fresh droppings underneath - so I'm sure at least one has dined there since it last rained.



Annual Bird Census – Toowoomba Region

Toowoomba Bird Observers Annual Census – 25 October to 3 November 2024

Once again, the Club's Annual Census was a great success. All 20 sectors were surveyed and a total of 174 species recorded.

Species of special interest were – Stubble Quail, Spotted Harrier, Painted Button-Quail, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Blue Bonnet, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Black Falcon, White-winged Fairy-wren (in multiple sectors), Brown-headed Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Miner, Little Shrike-thrush, White-eared Monarch, Satin Flycatcher and Little Grassbird.

The following members participated – Ann Alcock, Mick Atzeni, Dan Bishop, Olive Booth, Elsie Dallinger, Marie Gittins, Col Hughes, Roger Jaensch, Bill Jolly, Jarrod Kath, Eduarda van Klinken, Pat McConnell, Kath O'Donnell and Jane Thomas.

The Records Officer would like to thank all those who participated.

The full report of the TBO Annual Census is attached with the November Newsletter.

Pat McConnell – Records Officer

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Text courtesy of <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Satin Bowerbird **Scientific Name:** [Ptilonorhynchus violaceus](#)

Atlas Number:

679

What does it look like?

Description:

Satin Bowerbirds are medium-sized birds. The adult male has striking glossy blue-black plumage, a pale bluish white bill and a violet-blue iris. Younger males and females are similar in colour to each other, and are collectively referred to as 'green' birds. They are olive-green above, off-white with dark scalloping below and have brown wings and tail. The bill is browner in colour. Young males may begin to acquire their adult plumage in their fifth year and are not fully 'attired' until they are seven.



Similar species:

Immature or female Satin Bowerbirds can resemble [Green Catbirds](#), but are distinguished by a blue eye, a darker bill and a more scalloped patterning on the underbody. They also tend to be more olive-green rather than a bright green.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

Satin Bowerbirds are found along most of the eastern and south-eastern coast of Australia.

Habitat:

Satin Bowerbirds prefer the wetter forests and woodlands, and nearby open areas, although those around the Atherton Tableland are largely rainforest inhabitants.

Seasonal movements:

The mature male Satin Bowerbirds are mostly solitary, but the 'green' birds are often seen in groups or quite large flocks. In winter (outside of the breeding season), birds move to more open country, and occasionally enter orchards. At this time, mature males may join the 'green' bird flocks.

What does it do?

Feeding:

Satin Bowerbirds feed mostly on fruits throughout the year. During summer (breeding) the diet is supplemented with a large number of insects, while leaves are often eaten during the winter months.

Breeding:

The male Satin Bowerbird is perhaps the best known and well documented of all the bowerbirds in Australia. This fame partially stems from its practice of building and decorating a bower to attract females. This consists of two parallel walls of sticks, is built on the ground, and is used as a courtship arena during the breeding season. The male decorates it with bright blue coloured objects that it collects; blue clothes pegs, drinking straws and bottle tops are among the favourite stolen items, while bright blue parrot feathers, flowers and brown snail shells, make up the majority of decorations away from human habitation. A mixture of chewed vegetable matter and saliva is used to paint the walls of the bower. The bower owner meticulously maintains it throughout the year. The breeding season runs from September through to about February, and both mature and immature males build bowers and display to prospective females.

On the arrival of a female, the male Satin Bowerbird leaps into a ritualised display of exaggerated movements, such as strutting and bowing, with wings outstretched and quivering, and accompanied by a variety of mechanical-sounding calls, such as buzzing and rattling interspersed with mimicry. One of the bower decorations is usually carried in the male's bill. If impressed, the female moves into the bower avenue for mating and then leaves to perform the nesting duties on her own, while the male readies himself for courting more prospective females.

The female places a loose nest of sticks in a tree or bush, up to 30 m – 35 m above the ground.

Did you know?

A male Satin Bowerbird only develops his wonderful satiny sheen after seven years. Up until this time, the males possess the same plumage and colouring as the females.

Calls

Satin Bowerbirds have an amazing variety of sounds, including whistles, buzzing and hissing, as well as mimicry. The male also gives a loud "weeoo".



A fledgling Satin Bowerbird by Kathy Bowly

LINKS OF INTEREST

Blasted towards extinction

<https://birdlife.org.au/news/whalers-way-emu-wrens-blasted-to-extinction/>

The endangered Mallee Whipbird and the Eyre Peninsula Southern Emu-wren could face further difficulties for survival with the approval by the federal government of a rocket launch facility at Whalers Bay, South Australia.

Forty-spotted pardalote edging closer to extinction

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-01/forty-spotted-pardalote-bird-species-endangered/104469574>

The forty-spotted Pardalote is endemic to Tasmania with only two known populations on Maria Island and Bruny Island. This tiny little bird desperately requires help to ensure its survival into the future with calls for funding to provide habitat and captive breeding programs.

Gus the Emperor Penguin a long way from home

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-22/gus-emperor-penguin-released-after-20-day-recovery/104636800>

Gus the Emperor Penguin was recently found on a Western Australia Beach thousands of kilometres from home and starving. After rehabilitation he has been returned to the Southern Ocean.

What beak is that?

<https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/environment/education-resources-and-events/environment-resources-and-publications/native-animals/bird-beaks>

Bird beaks have evolved to adapt to habitat and dietary needs. Check out which beaks are suited to which foods.

A brush with a turkey

<https://www.weekendbirder.com/episodes/89-brush-turkeys-with-ann>

Check out this podcast on the Australian Brush-turkey with Dr Ann Goth as she discusses this incredible mound builder that starts life as an orphan.



