



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

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

MARCH 2025

EDITION 510

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<div>Wednesday 9th April</div> <div>Walkers Springs Reserve Charles Dove 0417 422 302</div>																											
<div>Saturday 26th April</div> <div>Cooby Dam - Loveday Cove Jarrod Kath</div>																											
<div>PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND</div>																											

MID-WEEK WALK - APRIL 2025

Walkers Springs Reserve, Preston

Date: Wednesday 9th April 2025

Leaders: Charles Dove

Time: 8:00 am

Meet location: 234 Meynink Rd, Preston QLD 4352
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/b7W5mYCR2w85j4dCA>

Facilities at the morning tea location at Gormans Gap Road.
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mYtbxGCk7UrqXgQW8>

Other details: Moderate walking. ***Closed footwear required.*** BYO morning tea.

RSVP: Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 8th April 2025
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

MONTHLY WALK - APRIL 2025

Cooby Dam, Loveday Cove

Date: Saturday 26th April 2025

Leader: Jarrod Kath

Time: 7:00 am

Meet location: Cooby Dam boat ramp at Loveday Cove.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/9kD2DFLu35wDv6Lh9?g_st=com.google.maps.preview.copy

Facilities at the morning tea location. BYO morning tea.

Moderate walking. ***Closed footwear required.***

RSVP: Jarrod 0439 705 417 by 25th April 2025

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

WADER OUTING MARCH 2025

Wader Outing at Wynnum 2nd March 2025

Text by Mick Atzeni



Far Eastern Curlews. Photo by Pat Reed.

The wader outing was well-attended (7 members and 6 guests) and enjoyed by all, particularly, the wader-starved TBO members, like myself! I hadn't done any serious wader-watching for several years. It was a day of contrasts. There were only about 50 waders, including a solitary Far Eastern Curlew (endangered), counted at the first stop along the Wynnum Esplanade, compared with at least 1600 waders at the Lytton claypan high-tide roost, including 143 Far Eastern Curlew, highlighting the importance of Moreton Bay for wader conservation and protection.

The 6:30am start at the Wynnum Esplanade allowed us to view waders on the incoming tide. Highlights were Curlew Sandpiper (1), Siberian Sand-Plover (3), Grey-tailed Tattler (3), Pacific Golden Plover (6) and Great Knot (6). Pied Oystercatchers, Whimbrel, Red-necked Stints, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were also present. Next stop was Swan Lake at Port of Brisbane, while waiting for the high tide. Not having been there for many years, I managed to get lost, leading two followers astray in the process. Sorry Helen and Penny!



Siberian Sand-plover. Photo by Pat Reed.



Chestnut Teals and Grey Teal at back. Photo Mick Atzeni.



Bar-tailed Godwits. Photo by Pat Reed.



Common Greenshank. Photo by Pat Reed.

A good mix of waterbirds kept the outing list ticking over. There were several Chestnut Teal and Grey Teal, providing the chance to practice separating these species. There was also a single Pink-eared Duck—unusual in itself, and for there. Some rather grubby Magpie Geese, a Buff-banded Rail, and a juvenile White-bellied Sea -Eagle were also seen here.

Next stop was the nearby high tide roost. Very little there in the way of waders; 28 Sharpies and 3 Far Eastern Curlew. Brahminy Kite, Pied Stilt and Brown Quail were added to our list. Final stop was the Lytton Claypan. At the carpark, a Pied Butcherbird was photographed eating a rat. Unfortunately, we were unable to positively identify the species from the photos.

On the walk to the edge of the claypan, a Mangrove Honeyeater showed briefly. Soon after, a sea of waders greeted our eyes. We scanned long and hard to see what species were present, while Pat did counts of each species. Additions to the wader list were Black-tailed Godwit (2), Greenshank (1) and Red-capped Plover. Because of the wind direction, most of the waders had their backs to us making them harder to identify, but it was heartening to see so many, including the 143 Far Eastern Curlews, 126 Whimbrels and 50 Great Knots, some sporting lovely breeding plumage.

Pat and I were the only ones left standing after Lytton. We discussed visiting Wellington Point in the late afternoon, but I was knackered and happy to settle for a nanny nap and early dinner with my folks at Wynnum.



Pied Oyster Catcher. Photo by Mick Atzeni.

Thanks to all who attended. My sincere thanks to Pat Reed (Qld Wader Study Group) and Barb Collyer (TBO/QWSG) for organising and leading the outing; it required much more preparation than I originally thought. Thanks also to QWSG member, Gary Kane, for his assistance too.



Great Knots. Photos by Pat Reed.



Curlew Sandpiper. Photo by Pat Reed.



Australian Pelican & Magpie Geese. Photo by Mick Atzeni.

Wynnum Bird List

Pink-eared Duck	Little Egret	Whimbrel	White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Black Swan	Australian Pelican	Far Eastern Curlew	Brahminy Kite
Pacific Black Duck	Little Pied Cormorant	Bar-tailed Godwit	Little Corella
Grey Teal	Little Black Cormorant	Black-tailed Godwit	Rainbow Lorikeet
Chestnut Teal	Great Pied Cormorant	Great Knot	Blue-faced Honeyeater
Magpie Goose	Australasian Darter	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Mangrove Honeyeater
Crested Pigeon	Pied Oystercatcher	Curlew Sandpiper	Noisy Miner
Buff-banded Rail	Pied Stilt	Red-necked Stint	Pied Butcherbird
Dusky Moorhen	Pacific Golden Plover	Grey-tailed Tattler	Willie Wagtail
Australian White Ibis	Red-capped Plover	Common Greenshank	Tree Martin
Striated Heron	Siberian Sand Plover	Silver Gull	Welcome Swallow
Great Egret	Masked Lapwing	Caspian Tern	

ORIENTAL CUCKOO IN REDWOOD PARK

Text and photos by Roger Jaensch



Australia is richly endowed in cuckoos, with a dozen species regularly occurring on the mainland; in contrast, only two species occur in North America and two in Europe. Some of the Australian species are long-distance migrants, notably the Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* which breeds in Mongolia, China and Japan. Although apparently more common in northern Australia, some birds reach the central east coast (e.g. Brisbane River) but the species is not commonly reported. In the Toowoomba district, reliable records have been infrequent and from only a handful of sites, including a dead bird picked up in the city a few years ago.

On 20 March under overcast sky, semi-retired ornithologist Roger Jaensch was photographing an away-facing cuckoo perched in mid-storey at lower Redwood Park, when the bird turned, revealing the boldly barred underparts and bright orange-yellow feet typical of Oriental Cuckoo. The bird's tail feathers had small white spots on both edges and both sides, and several straddling the quill along the middle of the upper side of the central tail feather.

As this predominantly dark grey, medium-large cuckoo moved to several other perches, better images of record quality were obtained and eventually the bird swiftly departed into dense creekside forest. Habitat at the sighting place was open forest of forest red gum and ironbarks over a tall shrub layer, next to semi-evergreen vine thicket. The Oriental Cuckoo was not seen to feed on this occasion but is known to target caterpillars; several small trees in the vicinity held clusters of caterpillar nests at this time.

Unlike other cuckoos, the Oriental Cuckoo is usually silent when visiting Australia which is a relative disadvantage to observers given how readily species such as Brush Cuckoo can be detected by its penetrating calls. Looking out for cuckoos feeding in or near trees and shrubs—such as the weedy castor oil plant along larger creeks—during the warmer months may eventually reveal the Oriental Cuckoo to patient birdwatchers.



Bird Sound Recordings

We (Ken Bissett (new TBOC member) and Jarrod Kath) had the good fortune of attending a [eBird](#), Cornell of University sound recording workshop at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, December last year. The day was a great opportunity to meet some fellow birders and see some nice spots around Brisbane, while also providing a great introduction into the world of sound recording.

Unfortunately, sound recordings for many Australian birds are lacking. This means Australian birders are missing out on the sound (call) ID component of the Merlin App, a free app which is able to identify birds from pictures or calls via your mobile phone. The eBird team from Cornell University, which runs the Merlin App, needs 100-150 annotated sound files per species so that they introduce sound ID via the Merlin app for Australia. Most of our birds don't have this many recordings. So, getting out and recording birds and making those data available is a great way of helping to get tools like Merlin working for Australia.

In regards to gear required (see the link below), Jarrod is currently using the cheaper / compact option - a [Zoom H1essential](#) with a shotgun microphone like a [Rode NTG2](#). These are both pictured below. I've also got hold of a shock handle and "dead cat" to help deal with wind. Ken uses an Olympus LS-P5 digital voice recorder with a Rode Videomic shotgun mic and dead cat. Apart from your budget considerations, make sure you look for a recorder that allows you to control the recording level (the ones on the list do, as does Ken's).



For those unfamiliar with sound recording, below are some links to some resources on sound recording that have been provided by Jay McGowan from eBird at <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/merlin-sound-id-project-overview/> :-

- [Sound recording tips](#), the basics of what we learned last month condensed into one page
- [Audio upload guidelines](#), a summary of the editing steps we took and a few links to some other resources, like guides to Ocenaudio and Audacity

- The basics of uploading media, with links for tagging and other aspects of the upload process.
- How to upload "historic" media - how to create checklists for recordings you made without keeping an eBird checklist in the past.
- How to set up the Zoom F3 recorder for best results, including settings and other tips, for anyone who has invested in this machine or plans to.
- Recording gear recommendations, with links to some of our preferred equipment. A bit out of date, but still relevant for the F3, the Wildtronic parabolas at the bottom, and most of the other comments there.

Finally, even if you can't get to record bird sounds, you can still contribute by identifying bird sounds from the recordings of others. See [here](https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/merlin-sound-id-project-overview/) for more details - <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/merlin-sound-id-project-overview/>

If you have any further questions about sound recording feel free to get in touch with Ken jillken288@gmail.com or Jarrod kath.jarrod@gmail.com

Ken Bissett & Jarrod Kath

BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Whimbrel **Scientific Name:** [*Numenius phaeopus*](#)

Atlas Number:
150

What does it look like?

Description:

The Whimbrel is a medium-sized curlew, which is mainly streaked brown, with twin dark streaks along the crown and bill. The bill is long and slightly de-curved (curved downwards), with a pink lower base. The legs and neck are long. The body is white below, with coarsely streaked brown upperparts. In flight, the light-coloured rump and streaked tail is obvious. Whimbrels feed in small groups and roost in large flocks, often with other waders.



Similar species:

The Whimbrel is larger and bulkier than the Little Curlew, *N. minutus*, which has a shorter less curved bill. The Eastern Curlew, *N. madagascariensis*, is the largest curlew, with a much longer bill and legs.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

Whimbrels are common across northern Australia and uncommon to rare further south. They breed in central Siberia to Iceland. The subspecies *variegatus* is the one mainly found in Australia and also the Bay of Bengal through to Melanesia, Micronesia and to New Zealand in small numbers.

Habitat:

Whimbrels are found mainly on the coast, on tidal and estuarine mudflats, especially near mangroves. They are sometimes found on beaches and rocky shores.

Seasonal movements:

Whimbrels are migratory, moving north from Australia to breed in the northern hemisphere, leaving the north and north east coasts by late April. On return to Australia, they move down the coast of east Asia, leaving the breeding areas in July, along the [East Asian-Australasian Flyway](#), arriving in the north of Australia from August to October, then moving southwards along the east coast. Small numbers over-winter in Australia and there is some local movement.



What does it do?

Feeding:

Whimbrels feed on intertidal mudflats by day and night, on worms, crustaceans and occasionally fish and nestling birds. They run nimbly and take prey by probing with their long curved bills in the mud or pecking briskly at the surface.

Breeding:

The migratory Whimbrels breed widely in the Arctic Circle, on drier and higher ground than the Eastern Curlew. The males display over their territory, rising high in the air with rapidly vibrating wingbeats, then spiralling down again. The eggs and chicks have cryptic colouring, speckled to be hidden in their shallow nest among the grass and other vegetation.

Living with us

Threats on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (the migration route to Australia) include economic and social pressures such as wetland destruction and change, pollution and hunting.

Did you know?

A Whimbrel that was banded in New South Wales was re-captured on the Kamchatka Peninsula in Siberia.

Calls

The commonest call is a far-carrying rippling 'bibibibibibibi'.

LINKS OF INTEREST

Chick Cam

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/royal-albatross/>

The Northern Royal Albatross gets a helping hand from rangers of the New Zealand Department of Conservation. To help ensure the successful hatching of this vulnerable species, rangers collect the albatross egg and incubate it until fully hatched to prevent fly strike, which is a common fatality for new hatchlings, and then return the hatchling to its parents.

New records for Orange-bellied Parrot migration

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-10/orange-bellied-parrot-record-breaking-migration-expected/105029354>

Wildlife experts are predicting over 200 hundred parrots will migrate north this breeding season, a combined population of wild and captive bred birds.

Creating your own garden habitat for birds

<https://birdlife.org.au/news/birdlife-australia-launches-free-habitat-gardening-online-course/>

No matter how big or small your backyard, you can create your own bird friendly space with the help of this free course which provides practical, step-by-step guidance on designing, creating and maintaining your bird habitat offered through Birdlife Australia and Birds in Backyards.

Seabirds blown up to 100 kilometres inland by Cyclone Alfred

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-14/tropical-cyclone-alfred-injured-native-animals-care/105045888>

Wildlife carers have been kept busy with injured and weak seabirds blown off course when Cyclone Alfred hit South-east Queensland in March 2025. While some will not make it, many will be able to be returned to the wild following their rehabilitation from dedicated carers.

Avian influenza spreading through the Antarctic region

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2025-03-05/bird-flu-infections-alert-australian-island-avian-influenza/105006040>

Australian virus-watchers are closely monitoring the long-distance spread of avian influenza H5N1 as it has reached some of the subantarctic islands in the Atlantic Ocean.

