

APRIL 2025
511

EDITION

BIRD OF THE MONTH		IN THIS ISSUE																									
<div>Eastern Whipbird</div> <div></div> <div>Photo by Peter Watt</div>		<div>Coming Events</div> <div>Outing Reports</div> <div>Birding in Vietnam</div> <div>Bird Disaster</div> <div>Bird of the Month</div> <div>Links of Interest</div>	<div>P2</div> <div>P3-5</div> <div>P6-7</div> <div>P8-9</div> <div>P9-10</div> <div>P11</div>																								
<div>OUTINGS & EVENTS 2025</div> <div>The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.</div> <div><u>The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th May 2025</u></div> <div>Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com</div>		<div></div> <div>Website: www.tboc.org.au</div> <div>Email: tboc4350@gmail.com</div> <div>Postal address:</div> <div>P.O. Box 4730</div> <div>Toowoomba East 4350</div> <div>Management Committee:</div> <table><tr><td>President</td><td>Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485</td></tr><tr><td>Vice-president</td><td>Dan Bishop 0401 235 156</td></tr><tr><td>Secretary</td><td>Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446</td></tr><tr><td>Treasurer</td><td>Ann Alcock 0418 189 760</td></tr><tr><td>Newsletter Editor</td><td>Kathy Bowly</td></tr><tr><td>Committee</td><td>Jennie and Tony Bond.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Peter Everist</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Jarrod Kath</td></tr><tr><td>Records Officer</td><td>Pat McConnell 0457 422 082</td></tr><tr><td>Facebook Admin</td><td>Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Dan Bishop</td></tr><tr><td>Website</td><td>Dan Bishop</td></tr></table>		President	Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485	Vice-president	Dan Bishop 0401 235 156	Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446	Treasurer	Ann Alcock 0418 189 760	Newsletter Editor	Kathy Bowly	Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond.		Peter Everist		Jarrod Kath	Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082	Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock		Dan Bishop	Website	Dan Bishop
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<div>Wednesday</div> <div>14th May</div>	<div>Waterbird Habitat</div> <div>Charles Dove 0417 422 302</div>																										
<div>Saturday</div> <div>31st May</div>	<div>Toowoomba Showgrounds</div> <div>Jennie & Tony Bond</div>																										
<div>PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND</div>																											

MID-WEEK WALK - MAY 2025

Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat

- Date:** Wednesday 14th May 2025
- Leader:** Charles Dove
- Time:** 8:00 am
- Meet location:** Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat, Mackenzie Street entrance.
- Special Note:** At 10am following the birdwalk, Trevor Watt MP, member for Toowoomba North, will hold a press conference to launch the School Pencil, Drawing and Poetry Competition.
- Facilities at the morning tea location at the waterbird Habitat.*
- Outing Details:** Moderate walking. ***Closed footwear required.*** BYO morning tea.
- RSVP:** Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 13th May 2025
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au
- In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.**
-

MONTHLY WALK - MAY 2025

Toowoomba Showgrounds

- Date:** Saturday 31st May 2025
- Leaders:** Jennie & Tony Bond and Charles Dove
- Time:** 7:00 am
- Meet location:** Just outside main showground entrance gate on Frank Thomas Avenue (End of Glenvale Road)
- Facilities at the morning tea location. BYO morning tea.*
- Moderate walking. ***Closed footwear required.***
- RSVP:** Tony on 0412 638 406 by 30th May 2025
- In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.**
-

MID WEEK WALK APRIL 2025

Walkers Springs Reserve 9th April 2025

Text by Sonya Little
Photos by Ed Crago

For the April mid-week outing Charles took us to Walkers Spring Reserve, to the south of Toowoomba. As the reserve was overgrown, we stuck to the road alongside the reserve. There were ten keen birders, including some new visitors, one person for whom it was their first time going on an organised bird walk.



Red-browed Finch

A bit further along Walkers Springs Road, there was a Grey Fantail and a White-throated Gerygone.

At our turn around point on Walkers Springs Road, there were a number of Welcome Swallow flying around.



Scarlet Honeyeater



Grey Shrike-thrush

Meynick Road where we saw a Grey Shrike-thrush in a tree beside the road. Several birders

As we were waiting for other birders to arrive, there was some activity in the bushes, along Walker Spring Road. Some saw some Grey Fantails and Red-browed Finches flitting in nearby bushes.

There was frenzied activity at the top of one of the flowering gum trees. It must have had lots of blossoms on it because the birds were so active, but being so high up made it hard to get a clear look at them. There were Lewin's Honeyeaters, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, White-naped Honeyeaters and Noisy Miners. Of particular interest was the red flash of some Scarlet Honeyeaters.

As we headed back up Walkers Springs Road towards Meynick Road, a group heard the Eastern Whipbirds calling back-and-forth and several birders were able to see the Whipbirds as they moved through the thick bushes alongside the road.

There was also a flock of Australian Magpies that flew overhead - Charles suspected that there might be a bird of prey close by. We then walked up

did spy a couple of raptors high above us, one being a Brown Goshawk and speculation of perhaps a Collared Sparrow Hawk. Some of the birders braved the long grass and walked into the reserve to have a look at the Springs which did have water visible. They even saw a Golden Orb Spider in its large web.



We then got in our cars and after several scenic routes, we ended up at Gormans Gap picnic area where we had morning tea. Then several birders continued onto the Gormans Gap lookout track. As we reached the start of the track a large fig tree was providing fruit for a number of Australasian Figbirds. However from there on in it was a bit windy, so not many birds were around. Instead we did get to see some butterflies (Monarchs) and a number of golden orb weaver spiders in their beautiful golden webs.

Also of interest on the track was a watering station, a Tree Troff, for koalas and other native animals.

Great views at the lookout finished off a wonderful morning of birding. Thanks Charles for taking us to another great birding spot.

Tree Troff at Gormans Gap. Photo Kathy Bowly

Walkers Springs Reserve		April 9 th 2025	24 species
Bar-shouldered Dove	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird	Australian Magpie
Brown Goshawk	Lewin's Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	Pied Currawong
Galah	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Grey Fantail
Pheasant Coucal	Scarlet Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Welcome Swallow
Laughing Kookaburra	Brown Honeyeater	Australasian Figbird	Tree Martin
White-throated Gerygone	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Red-browed Finch

MONTHLY OUTING AT COOBY DAM IN PHOTOS APRIL 2025

Photos by Tony Bond



Azure Kingfisher



White-faced Heron



Fan-tailed Cuckoo



Little Pied Cormorant



Black Swan with cygnet

BIRD EXPERIENCE IN VIETNAM

Text and Photos by Lareina Hagan

Whilst kayaking away from an older gentleman that had developed some romantic feelings for me, I experienced one of the most euphoric birding experiences I have ever had. You see I was 15 days into my 17 day tour of Vietnam.

I was travelling with my mum and Wendy Wu Tours, a tour company which caters (wonderfully so) to clientele who prefer to travel in comfort. On this day I was afforded the opportunity to let loose on a kayak around a local floating fishing village in Ha Long Bay, which is known for its thousands of imposing steep karst peak islands. Despite only managing to perform half a donut around my fellow passengers and wave a quick goodbye to any would-be pursuers, I zoomed off to a little inlet to where I could hear a symphony of foreign language among the sharp vegetated cliff faces.

Small grey crabs scabbling over the mollusc-rich waterline did little to dampen my spirit as I still hadn't caught sight of any of these choral passerines. I decided to float a little longer around the inlet, wondering if any monkeys might also inhabit these islands. Surely there wouldn't be enough food and it'd be too far to... Oh! What's that loud noise? It looks like two Willie Wagtails with mohawks down their backs! They're chasing each other up, down, through branches, up, down, disappearing quickly into a cave hollow. Wow. What a delight. Oh, they're back out again, this time flying low across the water circling my kayak with their playful dance before perching back high on the cliffside.

At this stage I wasn't sure if I'd been watching them for two or twenty minutes, and without a way to know the time I figured I'd better paddle over to the floating dock lest I be left in paradise for ever. I disrupted a displeased egret and a heron, before being joined by another (sinking) kayaking companion who thoughtfully joined me in watching two hawks overhead competing to snatch more flying insects than the other. We managed to (just) safely disembark before re-boarding the tender bound for an evening of cocktails on board the cruise ship for a final night celebrating this amazing country.

Despite not being able to catch my Willie wagtail friends on film, I've included some other less camera-shy Vietnamese feathered friends for you. They were a pleasure to photograph.



White-shouldered Starling



Swinhoe's White-eye



Streak-eared Bulbul



Black Rooster – likely a melanistic Red Junglefowl



Rock pigeons



Stripe-throated Bulbul

BIRD DISASTER – How Play can Lead to Disaster!

Text and Photos by Chris Cameron

In this past week I have been the unfortunate witness to a rather sad ending to a play session just up from my house. Sad because of the constant rain, which meant I was not paying much attention to things outside, and missed the event, possibly the opportunity to free the bird before it died...

There are a lot of Little Corellas that live in the Centenary Heights area, around Lake Annand and the Centenary Heights High School Oval where they feed on the grass, sometimes in large numbers. Being very playful creatures, they are often rolling around on the ground, either singly or in company, "play fighting".... They also swing off the basketball hoops frequently, and off the nets that are occasionally left on the hoops..... This is where the problem started.



They enjoy climbing on and swinging off these nets, occasionally even going down the inside of the nets, obviously not realising that there is a chance for entanglement....

I was very upset when I looked out and around after the rain and stopped to see something caught in one of these nets Grabbed my binoculars and saw that it was a Corella, and very much dead!



It was well entangled and obviously had been struggling for a while to get free.....
Even more sad was seeing another bird fly up to it and spend some while with it, trying to see, possibly, if it was still alive, or if it could be freed After some minutes it flew off and rejoined the feeding flock...

These pictures were taken over a couple of days, hence the differences in lighting....

BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Eastern Whipbird **Scientific Name:** [Psophodes olivaceus](#)

Atlas Number:

421

What does it look like?

Description:

Adult Eastern Whipbirds are mostly dark olive-green above, with a long tail, and a grey-white belly. The head and breast are black, with a broad white patch on the side of the face and a black crest. The eye is pale cream and the bill is black. Young whip birds are generally duller, with a smaller crest. The white cheek patch is absent in very young birds,



Photo by Peter Watt

and increases in size as the birds mature.

Similar species:

Eastern Whipbirds are hard to confuse with any other Australian bird. The much rarer Western Whipbird, *Psophodes nigrogularis*, of southern and south-western Australia, has an olive-brown crest and a smaller white face patch. It is also smaller, measuring 22 to 24 cm.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

The range of the Eastern Whipbird is from northern Queensland to Victoria along the coastal band of eastern Australia.

Habitat:

Eastern Whipbirds live in wet habitats, including rainforest, eucalypt forest and dense scrub near watercourses, in dense vegetation near the ground. The birds are secretive, but can be curious, and will be seen if the observer remains patient.

Seasonal movements:

Sedentary; The birds remain in the same area all year round.

What does it do?

Feeding:

The Eastern Whipbird feeds on insects and other small invertebrates, which are caught on the ground by bill. Feeding takes place alone, in pairs or in small family groups.

Breeding:

A breeding pair of Eastern Whipbirds occupies a territory, which is defended year round, with the mates staying together for many years. The female makes a cup nest of sticks and bark, which is lined with finer grasses, and placed in dense vegetation near the ground. The female also incubates the eggs. The young birds are fed by both parents. Sometimes two broods are raised in a single season.

Living with us

In the north, the Eastern Whipbird's distribution has become patchy where its habitat has been cleared.



Juvenile Whipbird. Photo by Peter Watt.

Did you know?

The Whipbirds' long whip call, one of the most characteristic sounds of the Australian bush, is performed as a duet. The male makes the drawn out whip crack and the female usually follows quickly with a sharp "choo-choo".

Calls

Male: drawn out whip crack; female: a sharp "choo-choo".

LINKS OF INTEREST

How to record video footage of birds.

<https://www.weekendbirder.com/podcast/112-bird-videos-with-scot>

Local ornithologist and co-ordinator of Lockyer-Toowoomba Birds on Farms Project, Scot McPhie, gives some great tips for creating bird videos in his chat with Week-end Birder host Kristy Costa. Episode 112.

Five good news endangered bird stories.

<https://birdlife.org.au/news/5-good-news-stories-from-the-bird-world/>

The Orange-bellied Parrot, Red Goshawk, Night Parrot, Plains-wanderer and Lord Howe Island Woodhen all have had some success in their endeavours for survival.

Bird watching good for your health.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31UkPVCdaF0>

As bird watching becomes a popular hobby for many, research shows it is providing additional benefits especially for mental health. And it is also proving to be a great conservation tool as well with many enthusiasts becoming involved in citizen science.

Solo bird pilgrimage to overcome grief.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-30/solo-pilgrimage-to-eyre-bird-observatory-helps-grieving-woman/104640808>

Seventy-nine-year-old Christina Sobey took the 2500 kilometre journey for her home in northern Victoria to the Eyre Bird Observatory near Cocklebiddy in south east Western Australia where she joined a course looking at the recovery of the EBO following severe bushfires in 2016.

Malleefowl nesting mounds built to withstand bushfires.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-30/malleefowl-survive-bushfires-in-little-desert-national-park/105050998>

When bushfires ravaged the Little Desert National Park in Victoria in January 2025, conservationists held grave fears for the vulnerable Malleefowl. However, to some degree their fears have been unfounded due to the ingenious nest building of these birds. "The mounds are good insulation, so the fires don't cook or burn the eggs or chicks, they can survive afterwards" says scientist Dr Mark Norman.

Hope is the thing
with feathers
that perches in the
soul. And sings the
tune without the words,
And never stops at all.
Emily Dickinson

