



JULY 2025

EDITION 514

BIRD OF THE MONTH		IN THIS ISSUE	
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OUTINGS & EVENTS 2025		Website: www.tboc.org.au Email: tboc4350@gmail.com Postal address: P.O. Box 4730 Toowoomba East 4350 Management Committee:	
The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly. <u>The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th August 2025</u> Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com			
Wednesday 13 th August	Lake Clarendon Charles Dove 0417 422 302	President	Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485
Saturday 30 th August	Redwood Park Eduarda van Klinken 0409 421 545	Vice-president	Dan Bishop 0401 235 156
PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND		Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS Tuesday 21 st October 6pm St Anthony's Parish Centre Guest Speaker Chris MacColl "Shedding Light on the Elusive Red Goshawk"		Treasurer	Ann Alcock 0418 189 760
		Newsletter Editor	Kathy Bowly
		Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond
			Peter Everist
			Jarrold Kath
		Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082
		Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock
			Dan Bishop
		Website	Dan Bishop

MID-WEEK WALK AUGUST 2025

LAKE CLARENDON

- Date:** Wednesday 13th August 2025
- Leader:** Charles Dove
- Time:** 8:00 am “**you can be late for this one**”
- Meet location:** Lake Clarendon and Lake Galletly
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/3BB3r9BOgSYtGXmHA>
from Lake Clarendon to Lake Galletly
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/CJSJrrTp1uqkyFtY8>

Approx 2 & 3 km - BYO morning tea maybe lunch as well
- Other details:** **Lake Clarendon has facilities** Moderate walking. **Closed footwear required.** In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.
Facilities at this location.
- RSVP:** To Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 12th August 2025
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au
-

MONTHLY WALK – AUGUST 2025

REDWOOD PARK, WARREGO HIGHWAY

- Date:** Saturday 30TH August 2025
- Co-ordinator:** Eduarda van Klinken 0409 421 545
- Meeting Location:** Redwood Park Lower section - Just inside gates of carpark – Toowoomba/Withcott entrance
- Time:** 7.00am
BYO morning tea/water
- Other Details:** Moderate walk. Closed footwear required.
Toilet at picnic area.
- RSVP:** Friday 29th August. Eduarda van Klinken 0409 421 545
Or email eduardavk@bigpond.com
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MID WEEK WALK JULY 2025

BOWENVILLE RESERVE Wednesday 9th July 2025.

By Ross Begent

Seven birders met at Bowenville Reserve on a cool, clear and still July morning. Toowoomba Regional Council have tidied up the reserve in recent years and added new visitor facilities to create a peaceful, close-to-nature experience for visitors with free camping for up to seven days. There were a number of caravan owners visiting, many from interstate, and the spacious reserve area enables uncrowded visitation and privacy for users.



Black Kite

by Tim Bowly

It is well known as a reliable birding location where many of the birds from the west meet the birds from the east. Charles Dove led us on a meandering route around the reserve which covered a variety of habitats including open grassland, woodland and along the banks of Oakey Creek. There was good waterflow along the creek. Raptors overhead included Black Kite, Whistling Kite and Nankeen Kestrel.

A Sacred Kingfisher was showing off in the woodland offering us excellent views. We spent quite some time watching a Striated Pardalote busily collecting material to create its future cosy nesting spot in a tree hollow. With both White-throated Gerygone and Western Gerygone along the creek, we enjoyed pausing to listen to their delightful cascading symphony of calls.



Western Gerygone

by Ed Crago



White-throated Gerygone

by Tim Bowly



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

by Ed Crago



Apostlebird

by Ed Crago

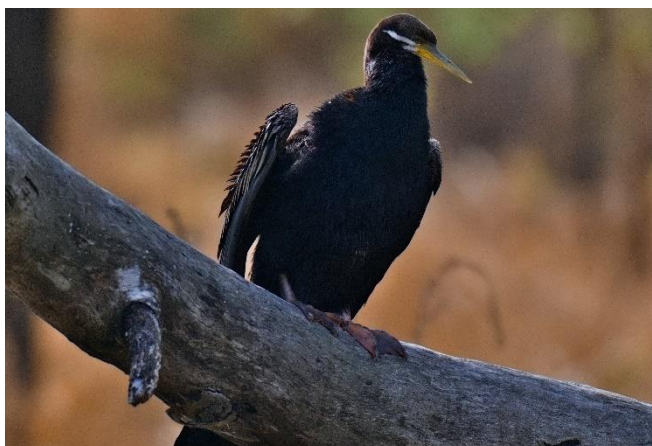


Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistler and an Olive-backed Oriole playing hide and seek with us and seemingly laughing at us with its warbling call. Red-rumped Parrots, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and



Top&Bottom Female&Male Rufous Whistler by T Bowly

While the forecast promised a calm and clear morning, we were surprised by a sudden blast of chilly air as the wind seemed to appear from nowhere. The walk along the creekbank did not fail to delight with Australasian Darter, a Tawny Frogmouth family snuggled together, Striped, White-plumed and Spiny-cheeked



Australasian Darter

by Tim Bowly

Double-barred Finches seen feeding on the mown grass areas.

After recording 35 species for the morning, we enjoyed morning tea together before heading back to Toowoomba. Thank-you Charles for leading us on this delightful outing.



Striated Pardalote coming and going
Photos by E Crago and T Bowly

Bowenville Reserve		July 9th 2025		35 species
Australian Wood Duck	Sacred Kingfisher	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	
Tawny Frogmouth	Nankeen Kestrel	Noisy Miner	Grey Shrike Thrush	
Australasian Darter	Galah	Striated Pardalote	Olive-backed Oriole	
Straw-necked Ibis	Little Corella	White-throated Gerygone	Willie Wagtail	
Dusky Moorhen	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Western Gerygone	Grey Fantail	
Crested Pigeon	Red-rumped Parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpie Lark	
Great Egret	Superb Fairywren	Australian Magpie	Torresian Crow	
Black Kite	Striped Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	Apostlebird	
Whistling Kite	White-plumed Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Double-barred Finch	

SWIFT PARROT SEARCH JULY 2025

STEVENSON STREET, PICNIC POINT

Text by Kathy Bowly
Photos by Edwin Crago

A very dull morning with the impending threat of rain kept the bird observers away for the Swift Parrot Search outing, with only three keen birders arriving at the Stevenson Street entry to Picnic Point. The early part of the morning saw a little sun occasionally breaking through, but the morning overall was in very dull light – not ideal for our photographer.

Mick Atzeni gave us a quick insight into how the Swift Parrot Survey was conducted, showing us how to access the Birdata app and record data collected at each site, before we set off along the track heading towards South Street. Along this route there are five survey sites. At each site it is noted what vegetation type is present, flowering intensity, number of observers and then all bird species within a fifty-metre radius are counted for a 5-minute duration. The monitoring sites can be found on the Birdata app on your phone and the surveys for the Swift Parrot can be done until August 31st at any of the monitoring sites.

With the Swift Parrot numbers in decline, with an estimated population between 500-750, it is important to continue to monitor their population and movements. Ongoing habitat destruction is the main concern for these birds. The Toowoomba region is sometimes a non-breeding, winter range for the Swift Parrot but this is dependent on the flowering status. Main tree types for suitable blossom include Narrow-leaved Ironbark, Forest Red Gum and Yellow Box with some bloodwood and Angophora species, Rough-barked Applegum, Silver-leaved Ironbark and Sheoaks found at various locations along the route. Long-flowered Mistletoe and Box Mistletoe are also a significant blossom producer in the area. However, the only tree flowering at present is the Forest Red Gum and blossoms are not in abundance. Unfortunately, with little to no blossom about, Swift Parrots have not made their way to the Toowoomba region at the time of surveying.

Aside from no Swift Parrots, the mornings outing was very successful with 41 species recorded.

As we started along the track from Stevenson Street, our attention was immediately drawn to a flurry of activity



Regent Bowerbird

above us. A number of Regent Bowerbirds were busy feeding and chasing each other although no males were seen.

The canopy was full of little birds throughout the entirety of our walk in and out, with waves of White-naped Honeyeaters, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Silvereyes, Rufous and Golden Whistlers, and Striated and Spotted Pardalotes being the main contenders.

The Eastern Whipbird kept us company for the first half of the walk in but as usual were not making themselves visible. The White-throated Treecreeper was also quite vocal but only occasionally spied. Along the path



Golden Whistler



Red-browed Finch

the lantana along with a number of females/juveniles. Then suddenly in the mix a male Variegated Fairywren appeared – we were in fairywren heaven for a while – these little birds are so time consuming!!

With all the Silvereyes around, Mick told us about the Tasmanian Silvereye which is seen in the region, and he was on the lookout for them. After telling us about identifying features, namely the chestnut flank of the Tasmanian compared to the mushroom flank of our usual species, we carefully looked at all the Silvereye with a different purpose. While the mushroom grey flank became so apparent no chestnuts were spied.

keeping their distance ahead of us were Red-browed Finches. Always a delight to watch, these little birds flit from the tall grass and lantana on the side of the track down onto the track until we get too close then they dart back into the grasses and lantana. A small group of Varied Sittella created a bit of excitement for a while.

While occasionally we heard the little fairywrens soft twittering, it wasn't until we had passed the last survey site that they revealed themselves. Firstly, we saw the male Red-backed Fairywren bouncing in



Varied Sittella



Spotted Pardalote

A highlight of our return walk was a Spotted Pardalote nest building. This little bird was seen on a small tree just above our heads with some nesting material in its beak. Suddenly it dived down just in front of us into an almost invisible, well camouflaged hole in the bank beside the track. Well, you don't just walk on by – no instead eyes and camera were trained on this almost invisible little hole for what seemed like an interminable amount of time, and we waited and waited... then we could just see the pardalote creeping its way

to the front of the tunnel and suddenly whoosh -out like a rocket it shot and was gone.



Grey Fantail

As we started our final survey of the morning a Pheasant Coucal was seen clumsily fluttering through the trees. Our final bird for the morning was the Olive-backed Oriole. While initially we thought we were back to the Regent Bowerbirds, as the light was now very poor, a quick photo from Ed told a different story.

Despite the “no show” of our star guest, the Swift Parrot, and despite the dull weather, our heads and hearts were certainly lifted by our wonderful and varied morning of bird watching. Thank you to Mick for most enlightening morning, and to Ed for the great photos.

And remember if you have the opportunity to do a couple of quick Swift Parrot surveys in the region through the Birdata app you have until the end of August to help this endangered parrot.



Australian King Parrot

Stevenson Street, Picnic Point		July 26 th 2025		41species
Brush Turkey	Australian King Parrot	Striated Pardalote	Australian Magpie	
Spotted Dove	Regent Bowerbird	White-throated Gerygone	Grey Butcherbird	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	
Pheasant Coucal	Variegated Fairywren	Varied Sittella	Torresian Crow	
Laughing Kookaburra	Red-backed Fairywren	Olive-backed Oriole	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Galah	White-naped Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Scarlet Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	Mistletoe Bird	
Pale-headed Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red-browed Finch	
Little Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Whipbird		
Rainbow Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Spotted Pardalote	Pied Currawong		

Raptor Census June/July 2025

Pat McConnell

Northern Section

Pat McConnell and Kath O'Donnell surveyed the northern section on Saturday 5 July. This section was divided into four sub-sections as in previous years. These were Highfields to Cooby Dam, Cooby Dam to Goombungee, Goombungee to Cooyar and Cooyar to Highfields. The survey was completed between 11.30am and 4.45pm. Four species and 33 individual birds of prey were reported (See table below for summarised results). The weather during the survey was cool, overcast and fine. One hundred and sixty-six kilometres were travelled.



Black-shouldered Kite

Photo by Kath O'Donnell

Southern Section

The southern section was surveyed by Sandy Robertson and Jacalyn Robertson on Sunday 29 June from 9.30am until 4.00pm. The route surveyed was Hirstvale to Buckle Lane to Manapouri to Pilton Valley to Saddletop to Finlay to Gilmore to Upper Forest Springs to Forest Springs to Goomburra to Hentschell to Mt Marshal to Hendon to East St Warwick to Allora to Clifton to Willow Springs to Fett to Nobby to Greenmount to Watts Siding to Cudmores to Perrins to Hennesey to Greenmount/Etonvale to Faulknau to the New England Hwy to Steele Rudd to Hirstvale. A total of 145 km were travelled. The weather was overcast and cool with some showers. Seven species and 172 individual birds of prey were reported. This did not include two unidentified birds.

Eastern Section

The eastern section was surveyed by Mick Atzeni on Wednesday 2 July between 9.20am and 2.25pm. The weather was fine and windy. The route surveyed was Lockyer, Helidon, Grantham, Placid Hills, Gatton north, Adare, Lake Clarendon, Lake Apex, Helidon Spa, Postmans Ridge and Murphys Creek. Eight species were seen and 126 individual birds of prey were reported. Distance travelled was 123 km.

Western Section

The western section was surveyed by Chris MacColl and Jarrod Kath on Friday 13 June. The route surveyed was Toowoomba to Oakey (via Cecil Plains Rd), Jondaryan, Bowenville Reserve, Norwin, Cecil Plains, Dalby, 'Bun' & Quinalow to Jondaryan (via Mt Tyson Rd), Biddeston to Toowoomba via the Mt Tyson Rd (past the Wellcamp airport). Ten species and 410 individual birds of prey were reported.

Table of Sightings

Species	N	S	E	W	Total
Black-shouldered Kite	21	50		46	117
Square-tailed Kite			1		1
Pacific Baza		1			1
Black Kite			101	227	328
Whistling Kite			10	9	19
Spotted Harrier		1	2	4	7
Wedge-tailed Eagle		2	1	3	6
White-bellied Sea-Eagle				1	1
Brown Goshawk	1				1
Brown Falcon	2	9	2	17	30
Black Falcon		2	2	3	7
Nankeen Kestrel	9	107	7	99	222
Australian Hobby				1	1
Total number of raptors	33	172	126	410	741

The above table shows that thirteen species were seen in 2025 which is the same as 2024. There were 741 individual birds of prey seen in 2025 which is 262 more than in 2024.

A big thank you to all involved especially the leaders.

Pat McConnell
Records Officer

BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Australasian Darter **Scientific Name:** *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

Atlas Number:

101

What does it look like?

Description:

The Darter is a large, slim water bird with a long snake-like neck, sharp pointed bill, and long, rounded tail. Male birds are dark brownish black with glossy black upperwings, streaked and spotted white, silver-grey and brown. The strongly kinked neck has a white or pale brown stripe from the bill to where the neck kinks and the breast is chestnut brown. Females and immatures are grey-brown above, pale grey to white below, with a white neck stripe that is less distinct in young birds. The Darter is often seen swimming with only the snake-like neck visible above the water, or drying its wings while perched on a tree or stump over water. While its gait is clumsy



Photo by Tim Bowly

on land, it can soar gracefully to great heights on thermals, gliding from updraft to updraft. It has a cross-shaped silhouette when flying.

Similar species:

The Darter's slender body, long, snake-like neck and its pointed, rather than hooked, bill distinguishes it readily from the bulkier cormorants with which it is often found.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

In Australia, the Darter is found from Adelaide, South Australia, to Tennant Creek, Northern Territory and then to Broome, Western Australia. It is also found in south-western Australia, from Perth to Esperance. Worldwide, it has been thought of as one of two main *Anhinga* species (the other, *A. anhinga*, is found in North America), found in the southern half of Africa, Madagascar, Iraq, Pakistan, India, south-east Asia, Indonesia and New Guinea. However, *A. melanogaster* is now considered to be further divided into three species, with *rufa* being found in Africa, *melanogaster* in south Asia and *novaehollandiae* in New Guinea and Australia (the Australasian Darter).



Habitat:

The Darter is found in wetlands and sheltered coastal waters, mainly in the Tropics and Subtropics. It prefers smooth, open waters, for feeding, with tree trunks, branches, stumps or posts fringing the water, for resting and drying its wings. Most often seen inland, around permanent and temporary water bodies at least half a metre deep, but may be seen in calm seas near shore, fishing. The Darter is not affected by salinity or murky waters, but does require waters with sparse vegetation that allow it to swim and dive easily. It builds its nests in trees standing in water, and will move to deeper waters if the waters begin to dry up.

Seasonal movements:

Darters can move over long distances (over 2000 km) when not breeding, but populations tend to contract to breeding areas during summer.

What does it do?

Feeding:

The Darter catches fish with its sharp bill partly open while diving in water deeper than 60 cm. The fish is pierced from underneath, flicked onto the water's surface and then swallowed head first. Smaller items are eaten underwater and large items may be carried to a convenient perch and then swallowed. Insects and other aquatic animals, including tortoises, may also be eaten, as well as some vegetable matter. In hot weather, adult birds may pour water from their bills into the gullets of their young chicks when they are still in the nest.



Breeding:

The Darter is usually a solitary bird, forming pairs only while breeding. Breeding is erratic, happening whenever water levels and food supplies are suitable, but most often occurs in spring and summer. Nests are usually solitary, but Darters may nest within loose colonies with other water birds that nest in trees, such as cormorants, spoonbills and ibis. The male decorates a

nest-site with green leafy twigs and displays to attract a mate, with elaborate wing-waving and twig-grasping movements. The male carries most of the nest material to the nest-site, which is normally in the fork of a tree standing in water, usually about 3.5 m above the water's surface. Both sexes complete the nest, incubate the eggs and raise the young. Chicks are kept warm by brooding continuously (or cooled down by shading with spread wings) for up to a week after hatching and both adults stay in the nest with the chicks overnight. In hot weather, the adults will even shake water over the chicks after a swim. Chicks can swim after about four weeks in the nest and start to fly at about 50 days.

Living with us

Although the deep, open water bodies that Darters favour suffer less from drainage than other wetland types, Darters are still threatened by increased salinity, clearing, grazing, increased fire frequency and extraction of groundwater. Because Darters often feed on introduced fish species such as [Carp](#) and [Redfin Perch](#), they may be adversely affected by attempts to reduce numbers of these fish species. Darters are also often casualties of duck-shooting, with birds being shot or disturbed from their nests and losing their eggs to ravens. Adults may also drown if trapped in fishing nets.

Did you know?

Darters spread their wings and tail underwater to lure fish into the shade underneath, before spearing them with their sharp bill.

Calls

Usually quiet; away from nest, makes clicking sounds, at nest, makes variety of caws, hisses and clicks.

LINKS OF INTEREST

Mass gathering of Swift Parrots

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-18/massive-flock-of-critically-endangered-swift-parrots-sighted/105535670>

What is thought to be almost the entire national population of Swift Parrots have been sighted near the Central Victorian regional city of Bendigo.

Gang-gang Cockatoos suffering from hypothermia

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-28/gang-gang-cockatoos-frozen-wings-and-tails-victorian-alps/105568878>

With thick blankets of snow in the Victorian Alps, the Gang-gang Cockatoos have been caught out in the freezing temperatures leading to numbers of these endangered birds suffering from frozen wings and tails making it impossible for them to fly and thus risking death. Visitors to the ski slopes have been asked to keep an eye out for suffering birds and if they see them, gently wrap them up and get them to the nearest wildlife rescue centre.

Check out the story of talented bird illustrator Elizabeth Gould.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-25/elizabeth-gould-illustrator-of-birds-of-australia-overshadowed/8051070?section=science>

Elizabeth Gould was a talented bird illustrator from the 1800s who, despite doing most of the illustrations for her husband John Gould, was not very well recognised for her amazing work.

How do cuckoos trick other birds into raising their young?

<https://www.livescience.com/how-cuckoos-trick-birds>

Cuckoos have a number of tricks that they use to help them lay their eggs in other birds' nests which in turn means another bird does the parenting for them.

Iconic Irish predator struggles to survive reintroduction program

<https://theconversation.com/golden-eagles-were-reintroduced-to-ireland-but-without-prey-theyre-now-struggling-to-thrive-258832>

Despite being a landmark in Irish conservation, the reintroduction of the Golden Eagle to Northwest Ireland has not been the success that was hoped for. The choice of landscape for release has proved to be lacking in the right prey and while a few birds are surviving, breeding and increasing the population has been unsuccessful.

