

September 2025

EDITION 516

BIRD OF THE MONTH	IN THIS ISSUE
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### Grey-crowned Babbler



Photo by Kathy Bowly

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### OUTINGS & EVENTS 2025

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter  
 is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter  
 is 25<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Kathy Bowly [kathryn.bowly@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.bowly@gmail.com)

Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Upper Lockyer</b> Mick Atzeni
25 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> October	<b>Species Census</b> Pat McConnell

**PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
 TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS  
 Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 6pm  
 St Anthony's Parish Centre  
 Guest Speaker Chris MacColl  
 "Shedding Light on the Elusive Red Goshawk"

# MONTHLY WALK – SEPTEMBER 2025

## Postponed to 5<sup>th</sup> October

### Jondaryan

**Date:** Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2025

**Co-ordinator:** Ann Alcock

**Meeting Location:** Oakey Railway Station car park

**Time:** 7.30am

**Other Details:** Moderate walk. Closed footwear required.  
In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.  
BYO morning tea.

**RSVP:** Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October. Ann Alcock 0418 159 760

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### MID-WEEK WALK

#### “Yonder”, Upper Lockyer

**Date:** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025

**Leader:** Mick Atzeni

**Time:** 7.50 am

**Meet location:** Murphys Creek Tavern, Murphys Creek QLD 4352  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/WDDRa86V66s8a24D7>

**Required** BYO morning tea

**Other details:** Very Moderate walking. ***Closed footwear required.***  
In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.  
*Facilities at this location.*

**RSVP:** To Mick Atzeni by 7pm Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025  
Txt 0499 395 485

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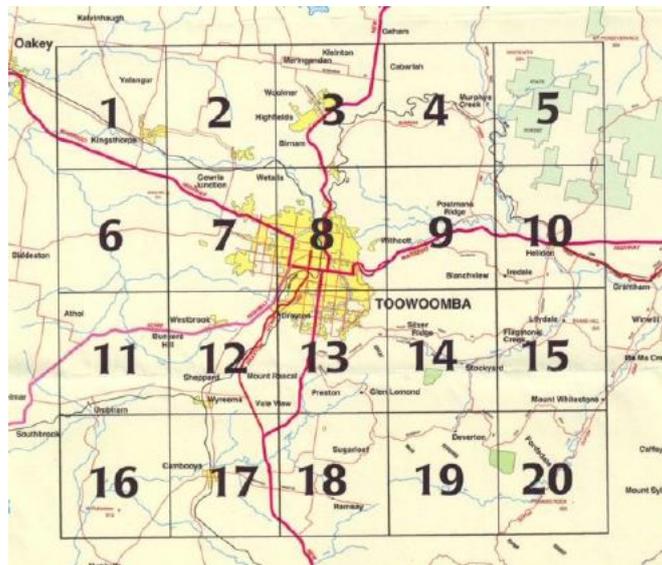
# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS ANNUAL BIRD SPECIES CENSUS

It is once again time for our annual census.

The census will take place from 25 - 31 October. This will give members some extra time to record their sightings. Here is everything you need to survey your favourite area of our patch.

1. A map of the area marked with observation grids.
2. A revised checklist for recording your observations. (Checklist is a separate attachment to the newsletter)

So, get your crew together and have a great time recording your sightings. Sightings can be emailed to Pat McConnell at [sootyowl81@icloud.com](mailto:sootyowl81@icloud.com) or sent to the TBO mailing address. If you have any queries, contact our records officer Pat McConnell. ( 0457 422 082 )



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## MONTHLY BIRD WALK

### Redwood Park Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2025

By Ross Begent  
Photos by Tony Bond

The message from outing leader Eduarda van Klinken on Friday afternoon before the bird walk said it all. *“With the strong winds tomorrow, make your own decision about whether you’d like to attend the bird outing.”* Sound advice indeed with winds of around 40 km/hour gusting to around 60 km/hour predicted.

In spite of the forecast winds and an apparent temperature of zero in Toowoomba, 10 hearty souls met at lower Redwood Park looking forward to exploring some of what this 250-hectare gem on the doorstep of Toowoomba has to offer.



Variegated Fairywren



**Grey Shrike-thrush**

It was good to welcome two university students from California and Tammy who was undertaking her first outing with a birdwatching group. All three were able to add new 'lifers' to their lists.

It was good to have Eduarda lead the outing given her extensive knowledge of Redwood Park and involvement in maintaining the park with Friends of the Escarpment Parks Toowoomba Inc.

reliable birdsong - welcome calls from Lewins Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Bar-shouldered Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Torresian Crow.

After sign-in at the car park, we walked down to the picnic area near Gatton Creek to the usual



**Grey Fantail**

Eddy then led us around the Rainforest Circuit showing us the extensive work that the volunteers had undertaken removing madeira vine and other introduced weeds, and also pointing out some favourite birdwatching spots in the dry rainforest along the banks of Gatton Creek. Grey Fantail came in close to check our credentials as we walked along their creek. A White-throated Treecreeper and a Varied Triller were really showing off, affording us excellent views. Both White-browed Scrubwren and Large-billed Scrubwren were also present. Endangered Black-breasted Button-quail

platelets were seen beside the circuit track as well as what appeared to be a Bowerbird bower.



**Varied Triller**

this be a first record for Redwood Park? Could the wind be so strong that it has blown the suspect about 80 kilometres from its closest regular habitat in the Southern Downs? The wind is coming from the South after all. The image on Tony's camera was not helping, especially given that there was a stick obscuring any possible white face. While the jury is still out on this one, Charles is of the view that it may be a juvenile Triller.

We then made our way up the Grasstree Track as the wind grew stronger. A Shining-bronze Cuckoo was spotted along with a Regent Bowerbird and both Variegated Fairy-wren and Red-backed Fairy-wren. Both Rufous Whistler and Golden Whistler were seen along with Rufous Fantail, Eastern Yellow Robin and Silvereye. Excitement reached a new level when what appeared to be a Southern Whiteface was spotted. Could



**Golden Whistler**

We then enjoyed morning tea at the picnic area enjoying the constant birdlife activity all around us. Those who were last to leave had the pleasure of spotting a Speckled Warbler on their walk



**Red-browed Finch**

back to the cars. Thanks to the work of the Friends of the Escarpment Parks Toowoomba, along with Toowoomba Bird Observers, Birdlife Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Field Naturalists, Lockyer Valley Upper Catchment Inc. and the Darling Downs Environmental Council, this significant area of endangered dry rainforest within Redwood Park has been saved from the construction of mountain bike trails. These would have seriously damaged habitat and breeding grounds of endangered bird and animal species. While mountain-biking undoubtedly attracts valuable visitor dollars to our region, it

is significant to note that birding continues to be recognised as one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation pursuits in the western world.

Thank you, Eddy for leading the walk and sharing your knowledge of this significant bushland park. We recorded 38 species during the morning.

Redwood Park		August 30th 2025		37 species
Spotted Dove	Regent Bowerbird	White-browed Scrubwren	Varied Triller	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Large-billed Scrubwren	Rufous Fantail	
Peaceful Dove	Variegated Fairywren	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Red-backed Fairywren	Varied Sittella	Torresian Crow	
Pacific Emerald Dove	White-naped honeyeater	Australasian Figbird	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Shining Bronze Cuckoo	Lewins Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole	Silvereeye	
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Red-browed Finch	
Little Corella	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler		
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Gerygone	Grey Shrike-thrush		
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Speckled Warbler	Eastern Whipbird		

## MID WEEK OUTING SEPTEMBER 2025

Murphy's Creek Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation

by Tony Bond

Wednesday 17th September was a beautiful day that started cool and warmed nicely as the sun came over the trees. It was a great day to be outside and thirteen TBO members agreed.

For this, the latest midweek outing, Charles took us to the Wildlife Rescue, Rehabilitation and Education Association property at Murphys Creek. The centre is run by Trish LeeHong with help from a selection of volunteers and students and is sited on a forested 40-acre property. Many cages and fenced areas have been built to house injured



**Koala**

by Charles Dove

animals which are undergoing convalescence before being released. Trish is very keen to ensure that the animals are not handled too much to prevent their being accustomed to human interactions, and in this vein, we were encouraged to stay in a tight group and not to get too close to any on the enclosures. The centre is within a listed Koala habitat.



**Koala joey**

**by Tony Bond**



**A puggle**

**by Charles Dove**



**Joey's waiting to be fed**

**by Kathy Bowly**

The onsite residence is filled with cages, tanks and trays, not to mention various socks, pillow cases and blankets housing puggles and joeys between feeding sessions.

Trish explained that sometimes tiny juveniles are just too small to survive alone without their mother after a vehicle interaction. Others can succeed but only if they can accept feed. It was a delight to see a tiny Koala, the size of your fist, cling onto the back of a stuffed Koala toy - who needs mum?

One of the strangest animals that had been dropped off was an Emu chick. Since Emus don't normally live in the area, it was probably an escapee. We also saw plenty of Echidnas, young and old. Squirrel gliders were in a special quiet enclosure among tall trees. All these animals are waiting to be cleared for release once fully recovered.

In one cage a particularly noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoo named "Charlie" was overjoyed to meet his namesake.

Trish explained that most rescued animals come from "across the border" in Toowoomba region but the centre itself is located in Lockyer region. This makes for special challenges in applying for grant support with both councils seeing it as the other's responsibility.



**Charles meeting Charlie the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**  
**By Tony Bond**

This outing was less about birds and more about wildlife rescue. However, we couldn't resist the urge to tune our ears to sounds of the surrounding woodlands and scan the treetops as the group moved around the enclosures. In the trees we saw King Parrots, Torresian Crow, Australian Magpie, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Australasian Figbird while the sound of Bar-shouldered Dove was constant. Nearer ground level, the occasional monotonous sound of a Wonga Pigeon was also heard as was the instantly recognisable call of the Eastern Whipbird. Among the "LBBs" in the scrub and canopy, we saw

Straited Pardalote and White-naped Honeyeater. Kookaburras and Noisy Miners provided the background chatter.

We did produce a bird list for the day and thanks should go to the spotters for keeping track of sightings. We finished with a bird count of 23 and followed up with morning tea in the picnic area.

Thanks Charles, for this slightly different outing and to all the spotters who helped to populate the bird list and to Jennie for collating the results. For more information on the wildlife centre see the website at <https://www.wildliferescueeducation.org/>



**Echidnas**

**by Tony Bond**



**By Charles Dove**



**Squirrel Gliders**

**by Kathy Bowly**



**Barn Owl**

**by Kathy Bowly**

Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation		September 17th 2025		23species
Australian Wood Duck	Little Corella	Noisy Miner	Australian Magpie	
Wonga Pigeon	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Striated Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Crimson Rosella	Australasian Figbird	Willie Wagtail	
Black Kite	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Shrike-thrush	Restless Flycatcher	
Laughing Kookaburra	Australian King Parrot	Eastern Whipbird	Torresian Crow	
Galah	White-naped Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		

## OUT AND ABOUT - LAKE COOLMUNDA SPRING EXCURSION.

Leyburn, Karara, Lake Coolmunda, Greenup and Inglewood Area.

With Margaret & Ross Easton

Ross and I have just returned from Lake Coolmunda, where we based ourselves for 3 days from 30<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> September. The principal reason was to search for wildflowers, however the bird list became quite a treat. The wildflowers are wonderful in the district and the spectacular golden haze of wattle extends from Leyburn to Goondiwindi. The drive is worthwhile for the Wattles alone. The district from here to Goondiwindi has a bird count of 221 birds. Our bird list is within 10 km of our base.

All roads to and from Greenup were lined with wattle, any hills presented a golden haze. We were also in Goondiwindi 10 days prior and Botanic Garden there is great for birds and Australian Natives.



We were based at the Greenup Campground (private), which is on Lake Coolmunda (I think day visits are \$5). We were principally looking for the wildflowers of the region of which there were many. However, there were birds a plenty. A local birder said this area including Goondiwindi has a bird count of 221- our count was much less and within 10 to 15 km from Greenup. No 'lifers' for us.

The Department of Environment has an excellent list for the "Wildlife of Coolmunda Conservation Park" to download. The park is on Tobacco Road with shrubby woodland and has wildflowers and birds galore. We drove the boundary of this park in a 2-wheel drive. Some special sightings included Scarlet Honeyeaters flitting in a wattle, along with Pale-headed Rosellas, Red-winged Parrots and Red-rumped Parrots.

Greenup Cafe and grounds along with the campground itself saw plenty of wetland birds and

woodland birds. Parrots, thornbills, honeyeaters, whistlers, White-throated Gerygone, Jacky Winter and lots more.



**Pelican on Lake Coolmunda**

One muddy puddle in the Greenup State Forest had a nice collection of Yellow-faced, Singing, White-eared, Yellow-tufted, Fuscous, White-plumed and Brown Honeyeaters along with Grey Fantails, Willie Wagtails, Double-bars and Red-browed Finches, all diving in and out. Half an hour of magic before dark set in.

The weather was clear and warm, the State Forests are open forests and woodland with a groundcover of grasses and wildflowers.

If you have time, this region is such an eye opener and only one and a half hours away.

At Coolmunda Olives on Mosquito Road, there were Pacific Baza, parrots, honeyeaters, while a special was a Blue Bonnet just north of there.

The Lake itself was a bit light on, although there were fifty Eurasian Coots to every Pelican and cormorant.



**Scarlet Honeyeater in the wattle**



**Wattle along Thanos Creek, Leyburn**



### Margie & Ross' LAKE COOLMUNDA Bird List

Emu	Masked Lapwing	Brown Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Black Swan	Caspian Tern	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Australian Wood Duck	Whiskered Tern	Noisy Friarbird	Pied Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Black-shouldered Kite	Scarlet Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Grey Teal	Square-tailed Kite	White-plumed honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Grebe	Pacific Baza	Fuscous Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Great Crested Grebe	Whistling Kite	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Restless Flycatcher
Common Bronzewing	Black Kite	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Magpie Lark
Crested Pigeon	Azure Kingfisher	White-eared Honeyeater	Torresian Crow
Peaceful Dove	Laughing Kookaburra	Singing Honeyeater	White-winged Chough
Dusky Moorhen	Nankeen Kestrel	Noisy Miner	Apostlebird
Eurasian Coot	Cockatiel	Striated Pardalote	Jacky winter
Straw-necked Ibis	Galah	White-throated Gerygone	Eastern Yellow Robin
White-necked Heron	Little Corella	Weebill	Fairy Martin
White-faced Heron	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Tree Martin
Australian Pelican	Red-rumped Parrot	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Bluebonnet	Grey-crowned Babbler	Common Starling
Great Pied Cormorant	Pale-headed Rosella	Crested Shrike-tit	Common Myna
Little Black Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Australian Darter	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Zebra Finch
White-headed Stilt	Red-winged Parrot	Grey Shrike-thrush	Double- Barred Finch
Black-fronted Dotterel	Superb Fairywren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	

## New or Unusual Bird Report Form – Greater Sooty Owl

**Observer Names:** Dan Bishop & Jarrod Kath

**Phone:** 0401 135 156

**Others Present:** None

**Species Name:** Greater Sooty Owl (*Tyto tenebricosa*)

**Date of Observation:** 21/09/2025

**Duration of Observation:** 5 - 10 minutes. Total nocturnal survey duration: ~50 minutes.

**Distance/Height to Bird:** Approximately 40 m away, and ~20-30 m up in gum tree.

**Optics Used:** Binoculars (10x42) and headlamps/LED torches



**Location:** Highfields Falls

**Habitat:** Eucalypt Woodland with riparian corridor.

**Conditions:** Cool temperatures (approx. 16°C), v. light winds, New Moon. Owl was observed at approximately 18:30.

**Description of Bird:** Large, grey to dark grey Tyto owl with large eyes and silvery-white speckling throughout plumage. **Photos taken by Jarrod.**

**Behaviour of Bird:** When sighted, the bird was perched high up in a large Eucalyptus tree (species unknown), having possibly just emerged from a roosting hollow. The individual remained perched for approximately 5 – 10 minutes before flying silently towards the gully in Highfields Falls.

**Prior Experience with this Species:** Dan's second field observation (first was in Ballard on private property early in 2023). A lifer for Jarrod. Distinctive species with many photos online.

**How does it differ from similar Species:** Readily distinguishable from other Tyto species based on its unique "Sooty" grey plumage; its underparts are essentially an inverse version of the other Tytos: dark plumage with light speckling as opposed to darker speckling on light. Possibly for better camouflage in this species' thick, canopy-covered habitat.

Dan Bishop



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## Birds of a Feather Flock Together

Have you heard of:

- A Paddling of Ducks
- A Rafter of Turkeys
- A Charm of Finches
- A Deceit of Lapwings
- A Flight of Swallows
- A Parliament of Owls



## BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

### **Grey-crowned Babbler**      **Scientific Name:** *Pomatostomus temporalis*

**Atlas Number:** 443

What does it look like?

#### **Description:**

The Grey-crowned Babbler is the largest of Australia's four babbler species. It is dark brown-grey above, with a distinctive grey crown stripe and a dark face mask that contrasts with a white eyebrow. The chin and throat are white, running into a pale grey lower breast. It has a long, curved bill, short rounded wings with cinnamon brown wing patches and a long tail tipped white. The eye is pale yellow in adults. There is a darker-coloured subspecies, *rubeculus*, in north-western Australia (often called the Red-breasted Babbler), that has a rufous lower breast and darker crown stripe. The Grey-crowned Babbler is a noisy and gregarious bird, usually found in small groups of four to twelve, and is often seen on the ground or in low trees. It is sometimes called the Yahoo, after one of its calls.



Where does it live?

#### **Distribution:**

The Grey-crowned Babbler is widespread throughout north-western, northern, central and eastern Australia. It is also found in Papua New Guinea.

#### **Habitat:**

The Grey-crowned Babbler is found in open forests and woodlands, favouring inland plains with an open shrub layer, little ground cover and plenty of fallen timber and leaf litter. May be seen along roadsides and around farms. In south-east Melbourne, small populations survive on golf courses.

#### **Seasonal movements:**

Sedentary.

What does it do?

#### **Feeding:**

Grey-crowned Babblers feed on insects and other invertebrates and sometimes eat seeds. They forage in groups of two to fifteen birds on the ground among leaf litter, around fallen trees and from the bark of shrubs and trees (they tend to use trees more than other babblers).

#### **Breeding:**

Grey-crowned Babblers live and breed in co-operative territorial groups of two to fifteen birds (usually four to twelve). Groups normally consist of a primary breeding pair along with several non-breeding birds (sometimes groups may contain two breeding pairs or two females that both breed). Most members of the group help to build nests, with the primary female contributing the most effort. Two types of nest are built: roost-nests (usually larger and used by the whole group) and brood-nests (for the breeding females), and often old nest sites are renovated and re-used from year to year. The large domed nests are placed in a tree fork 4-7 m high and are



made of thick sticks with projections that make a hood and landing platform for the entrance tunnel. The nest chamber is lined with soft grass, bark, wool and feathers. The brooding female (sometimes more than one) is fed by the other group members and all help to feed the nestlings. Larger groups tend to raise more young, and two broods are usually raised per season.

#### Living with us

Grey-crowned Babbler populations have declined throughout their range as a result of land-clearing practices



that leave habitats fragmented. When groups become isolated, numbers decline to a level where they cannot continue to successfully breed. Habitat degradation is also a factor in declines, with fuel-reduction burning, grazing, weed invasions and removal of timber decreasing leaf litter build-up, which then reduces the amount of invertebrate food available. Eastern populations are near threatened, while they are classified as endangered in Victoria and South Australia. It is locally extinct in the south-eastern region of South Australia. Overall populations have declined by 95% since European settlement.

#### Did you know?

The old nests of Grey-crowned Babblers are used by a variety of other birds: Blue-faced Honeyeaters sometimes nest on top of the dome. Yellow-rumped Thornbills may nest underneath and are even tolerated in active nests.

#### Calls

Loud scolding and chattering calls: 'wee-oo'. Also distinctive 'ya-hoo' duet by breeding female ('yah') and male ('ahoo') repeated six to eight times.

## LINKS OF INTEREST



### The Aussie Bird Count is back for 2025

<https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

With one in six Australian birds facing the threat of extinction, keeping an eye on their presence is more important than ever. We need our birds so this is your opportunity to participate in some citizen science and help our feathered friends. Just 20 minutes of your time can help build a picture of how our birds are doing. Go to this website to check out all the details, including registering, for the 2025 Aussie Bird Count from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.



Nesting grounds for Rainbow Bee-eaters getting covered in preparation for festival

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-17/rainbow-bee-eaters-prevented-from-nesting-at-agnes-water-site/105773530>

Up to 200 nesting sites of the underground nesting Rainbow Bee-eater are in jeopardy as preparation is under way for a festival held in early October in the Gladstone region. This area is of considerable importance being one the birds largest nesting colonies, however festival organisers have been covering the grounds to prevent the birds from building their underground nests.

Birding by ear

<https://theconversation.com/birding-by-ear-how-to-learn-the-songs-of-natures-symphony-with-some-simple-techniques-260874>

How often when you are out birding and you hear a bird call but don't know what it is and wish you had better knowledge of bird calls? Ornithologist, Chris Lituma, gives some tips and tricks to help develop skills in birding by ear.

Gouldian Finch sightings dropping

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-14/gouldian-finch-sightings-drop-northern-wa/105763736>

Dramatic decline in Gouldian Finch numbers in the Kimberley's in Western Australian maybe due poor wet seasons and bushfires according to researchers. Where once there were 100's of thousands of these colourful little birds now numbers are around 2500.

Could the dodo be brought back from extinction?

<https://www.kidsnews.com.au/animals/second-coming-for-the-dodo-bird-after-bold-science-project-revealed/news-story/f58c0a83c3c7c235290cdd7c4b29e4cf>

A technological leap in genetic engineering could see the possibility of the dodo brought back to life by 2032. Hunted to extinction by 1681, seeing the dodo make a comeback would be truly an amazing for science and conservation.

