

October 2025

EDITION 517

BIRD OF THE MONTH	IN THIS ISSUE
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Masked Lapwing



Photo by Kathy Bowly

Coming Events	P2
TBO Turns Fifty	P3
Outing Reports	P4-7
Shedding Light on the Red	
Goshawk	P8
TBO AGM President's Report	P9
What are these Sulphur-crested	
Cockatoos After?	P10
Bird of the Month	P10-11
Links of Interest	P11-12



OUTINGS & EVENTS 2025

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter
is 25th November 2025**

Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com

Wednesday 12 th November	Waterbird Habitat Tony & Jennie Bond
Saturday 29 th November	Cooby Dam Groomsville Dan Bishop

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND



CELEBRATING
FIFTY YEARS!



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Website	Dan Bishop

MID WEEK WALK – November 2025

Waterbird Habitat, Toowoomba

- Date:** Wednesday 12th November 2025
- Co-ordinator:** Tony & Jennie Bond
- Meeting Location:** Waterbird Habitat entrance gate, Mackenzie Street, Toowoomba
Lat/Long 27.59014° S, 151.97062° E
What3Words ///unhelpful.tiff.pages
- Time:** 7.30am
- Other Details:** Moderate walk. Closed footwear required.
In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.
BYO morning tea.
Facilities available at park.
- RSVP:** Tuesday 11th November Tony Bond 0412 638 406
-

MONTHLY WALK - November 2025

Cooby Dam - Groomsville

- Date:** Saturday 29th November 2025
- Leader:** Dan Bishop
- Time:** 7.00 am
- Meet location:** Groomsville Rd, https://maps.app.goo.gl/6W16iGjioczyHeVF6?g_st=ipc
Limited car parking at meeting place so please carpool if possible.
Numbers may have to be limited depending on response.
- Required:** Closed shoes, plenty of water, sun protection.
- Other details:** Moderate walking and potentially hot weather, likely to be long grass and snakes so wear appropriate PPE (closed shoes, snake gaiters if available), no facilities nearby, bring plenty of water and sun protection. Morning tea optional but the plan is to complete the birding before the mid-morning heat sets in. People can gather back at the meeting spot afterwards to catch up if desired.
- RSVP:** Dan Bishop by 28/11 on 0401 135 156 or danbishop@internode.on.net.
-

TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS TURNS FIFTY

Here we still are!

From TBO Newsletter No.1, October, 1975:

“We are here – all sixteen of us, with the aim of doing some useful birding in the Toowoomba area and hopefully enjoying ourselves in the process. The inaugural meeting of the Toowoomba Bird Club was held on Monday, 6th October 1975 when officers as advised below were elected and the annual subscription was set at \$2 per family payable each 1st October”

Now, fifty years on not just the sixteen of us listed in the opening to Issue One of what is now the TBO Newsletter, published in October 1975, but nowadays an active current membership of more than sixty keeping tabs on what's going on in our spectacular local world of birds.

Reading through the objectives and activities we set out to aim for at that time, I don't think it's too bold to suggest that we have jointly achieved those aims, as well as collectively continuing to enjoy and benefit from them.



Perhaps, fifty years on is not too soon to suggest that our little Bird Club that was, has been a success, both socially and in terms of adding significantly to the fund of knowledge about the natural history, and in particular the birds, of this very special corner of the world.

Rod Hobson and Eileen and I had a good chat and reminiscence the other day about the fun we all had learning and sharing in those early days in Toowoomba.

Eileen and I can still recall the very moment our birding began in England in the early 1960s. We were queuing on a cold morning in London awaiting entry to an exhibition of paintings – being entertained the whole time by what later proved to be a European Robin on the railings of the gallery. We were struck by its beauty and its personality – but had no idea what it was! Thus, we began our birding with a sixpenny paper bird booklet bought that day at a railway station kiosk.

And here we are now, so many decades later – enjoying our birding every bit as much as ever, and continuing to value both the birds and the wonderful friends we have met with it and shared through it over the best part of a lifetime!

Bill Jolly
4th October, 2025

Editor's Note: Attached to this newsletter is a copy of the very first TBO's newsletter – a great little piece of history of the club.

MONTHLY BIRD WALK

Oakey to Jondaryan

By Ann Alcock
Photos by Tony Bond



White-winged Fairywren

On Sunday, 5th October, 10 people attended the outing, which commenced in Oakey. There were two new members and one visitor. We car-pooled along Devon Park Road and Jondaryan-Sabine Road to Jondaryan, targeting the White-winged Fairywrens and Painted Honeyeaters. We sighted 50 species in total.



Painted Honeyeater



Cockatiel



Masked Lapwing



Red-rumped Parrots

Oakey Jondaryan		October 5 th 2025		50 species	
Brown Quail	Sacred Kingfisher	Striped Honeyeater	Magpie Lark		
Australian Grebe	Nankeen Kestrel	Painted Honeyeater	Restless Flycatcher		
Rock Dove	Galah	Scarlet Honeyeater	Torresian Crow		
Crested Pigeon	Little Corella	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Apostlebird		
Peaceful Dove	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Noisy Miner	Welcome Swallow		
Bar-shouldered Dove	Cockatiel	Yellow-throated Miner	Golden-headed Cisticola		
Masked Lapwing	Red-winged Parrot	Yellow Thornbill	Common Myna		
White-necked Heron	Pale-headed Rosella	Pied Butcherbird	Mistletoebird		
Cattle Egret	Bluebonnet	Australian Magpie	Zebra Finch		
Straw-necked Ibis	Red-rumped Parrot	Pied Currawong	Double-barred Finch		
Black-shouldered Kite	Superb Fairywren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Australasian Pipit		
Black Kite	White-winged Fairywren	Grey Shrike-thrush			
Whistling Kite	Brown Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail			

MID WEEK OUTING OCTOBER 2025

“Yonder”, Murphy’s Creek

by Kathy Bowly

A small group of bird observers met our leader for the morning, Mick Atzeni, at the Murphy’s Creek Tavern and from there headed out to “Yonder”, 10 minutes outside Murphy’s Creek. As we arrived, we were greeted by the resident menagerie – a dachshund, a couple of sheep, a pig and two donkeys. Our host Michael also met us to lead us around his property.

High up in the eucalypts near the house our first sighting for the morning was some Little Lorikeets foraging in the blossoms. These little parrots proved tricky to see with their smallness and being right at the top of the trees among the leaves and flowers. Once we had strained our necks for a while it was time to move on.

We then headed off down through the animal pens amidst a cacophony of baaing and braying and into the first paddock. Here amongst the tall grass, a number of Red-backed Fairywren were seen flitting around.

Mick was also tuned in to the call of the Sacred Kingfisher but it remained allusive until later in the morning. Michael



Little Lorikeet

by Tony Bond



Red-backed Fairywren

by Tony Bond

then took us up to an area where he had built a set for a music video and included a couple of watering points. As we approached a number of different birds were seen both bathing and drinking. Quite a few Fuscous Honeyeaters were present being both adult and juvenile birds. A number of striking Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters also vied for spots in the water and the two species mingled well together.

However, the Noisy Friarbirds created more of a fracas and cleared the deck with their presence. A Speckled Warbler also briefly popped in for a look but didn’t stick around for long. After spending some time watching the bathing antics of the honeyeaters and getting plenty of photos we headed back towards the house. A pair of Rainbow Lorikeets were seen high up in a hollow of a



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

by Tony Bond

As we reached the top of the rise, the Scarlet Honeyeater could be heard but again their proximity in the treetops among the blossom made it very difficult to get a good look at them. However, a couple of observers were very fortunate to see one briefly as it paused in a tree right in front of them before it zipped back to the heights of the blossoming gums.



Australian Magpie

by Tony Bond

Honeyeaters were popping in and out of a small bird bath in a nearby tree, while high above us a pair of Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes were busily building their nest.

A delightful morning with some new sightings for a number of bird observers. Thank you to Michael for offering to share his little piece of paradise with us and thank you to Mick for leading the morning with his infinite wealth of birding knowledge, well-attuned ear and passion for our feathered friends.



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

by Tim Bowly

eucalypt and again Mick's ear was tuned in, this time to the call of the Little Bronze Cuckoo and which again remained allusive although we did all hear it calling.

Past the house we headed up towards the second residence on the property. Along the road in among the lantana, another little group of Red-backed Fairywren was spied. These little birds are such a delight and captured our attention as the male showed off his striking red and black plumage, dancing barely metres from us in the lantana.

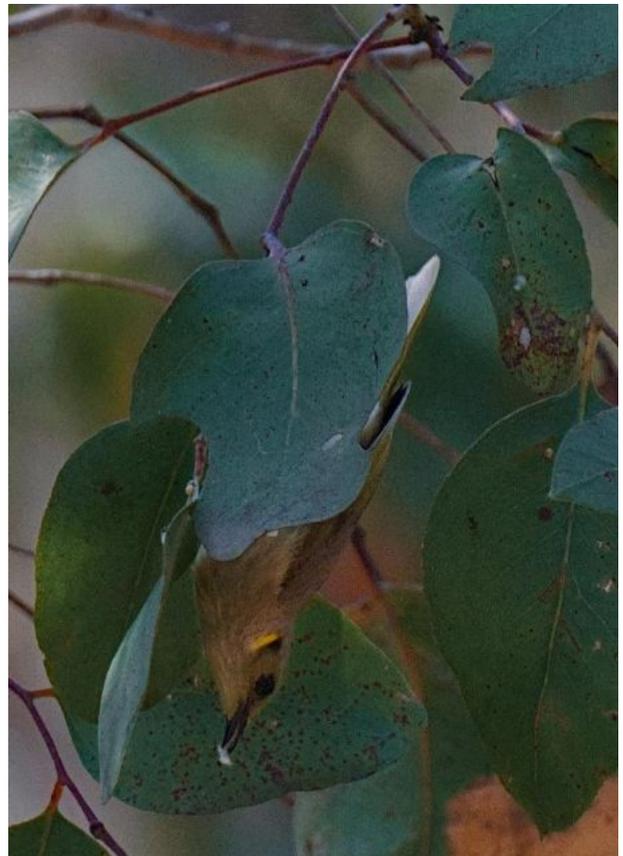


Fuscous Honeyeater

by Tony Bond

As we turned to head back down to our initial gathering point, the Sacred Kingfisher was seen near a termite mound in the gum trees. The kingfishers have been known to nest in the termite mounds on Yonder.

Once back at the house, we settled down for some morning tea with the resident Australian Magpie cheekily hoping for a hand out. Some Fuscous



Fuscous Honeyeater feeding on Lerps by Tim Bowly



Noisy Friarbird

By Tim Bowly



Rainbow Lorikeet

by Tony Bond



Fuscous Honeyeaters

by Tim Bowly

Yonder, Murphy's Creek		October 8th 2025		31 species
Common Bronzewing	Pale-headed Rosella	Little Friarbird	Olive-backed Oriole	
Peaceful Dove	Little Lorikeet	Noisy Friarbird	Rufous Whistler	
Pheasant Coucal	Rainbow Lorikeet	Scarlet Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	
Channel-billed Cuckoo	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Fuscous Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Little Bronze-cuckoo	Superb Fairy-wren	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
Brown Goshawk	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	
Oriental Dollarbird	White-throated Honeyeater	Striated Pardalote	Torresian Crow	
Sacred Kingfisher	Striped Honeyeater	Speckled Warbler		

Shedding Light on the Elusive Red Goshawk with Chris MacColl

By Kathy Bowly

At the recent Toowoomba Bird Observers AGM, the Guest Speaker was Chris MacColl, a researcher and PhD candidate of the University of Queensland. Chris' major research is the Red Goshawk, Australia's rarest bird of prey and this was his topic for the evening. Once known to inhabit parts of our region, the range of the Red Goshawk has over the last few decades reduced and receded to the Northern parts of Australia. The reasons for this decline are almost as elusive as the Red Goshawk itself, although changes to habitat are probably a leading cause.

Chris informed the audience of the habitat of the bird, its distribution and its position as an apex predator along with its environmental requirements. He also discussed the limited number of nesting/breeding territories and the tagging and tracking of juvenile birds. The tracking has led to some intriguing finds. Through his research the Red Goshawk's conservation status has been moved from Vulnerable to Endangered.

By collecting data through tagging and tracking, and continuing observations in the field, this hopefully can lead to conservation actions that may ensure the survival of this beautiful, endangered bird of prey.

For more information on Chris' work on the Red Goshawk check out these links-:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYUJspD6v_Q

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/06/going-extinct-right-under-our-noses-the-quiet-plight-of-australias-rarest-bird-of-prey?>

President's Report - TBO AGM 21/10/25 St Anthony's Parish Centre

It's my pleasure to report on the activities and highlights over the past year, a year that has also had its share of sadness with the passing of three people, who have been great supporters of our club, and whom I knew well, namely, Clare McGoldrick, committee member Peter Everist, and Helen Young. Our sincere condolences to their spouses, Mike, Sharon and Al, and families. I dedicate this report to Clare, Peter and Helen.

We held mid-month and end-of-month outings. Local destinations included Highfields Falls for our 'Brekky with the Birds' Christmas breakup, Cooby Dam, Redwood Park, Picnic Point (Swift Parrot search), Lake Dyer, Murphys Creek, Upper Lockyer, Toowoomba Showgrounds, and Hodgson Vale. Other destinations included Wynnum (March wader outing), Stonehenge, Bowenville Reserve, Jondaryan, Pittsworth, and Back Plains. Thanks to our outing leaders, attendees and hosts, particularly Charles Dove, who continues to lead the popular mid-month outings.

We again participated in some joint outings with BSQDD, surveying private properties in the Lockyer Valley. With BirdLife Australia's Birds on Farms project now up and running in the Lockyer Valley/Toowoomba region, volunteers, including some TBO members, have started doing standardised surveys on qualifying properties.

Joe Scanlan has performed the Secretary role magnificently, and Ann has done likewise as Treasurer. Kathy Bowly has continued doing a tremendous job as Newsletter Editor, and I'm pleased to see more members contributing reports, articles, snippets and photos. On that subject, I can vouch for the fact that it's beneficial to document your birding experiences in the newsletter, after reading some of my old contributions. Plenty of long-forgotten events, sightings

and people from those halcyon days when so much was new. Glad I made the effort to contribute those articles.

Behind the scenes, Dan Bishop has been tweaking our website and done a great job creating an interactive Membership Form, which is already reaping rewards, with several new members signing up 'on the spot'. Ann and Dan have monitored our Facebook page and kept our followers informed.

Dan and Jarrod, and Roger Jaensch (BSQDD) have kept the interesting bird records coming in and continue to educate us about the birdlife throughout the Toowoomba LGA. Two notable sightings so far this year are Oriental Cuckoo (Redwood Park) and Sooty Owl (Highfields Falls), both rarely reported in our survey area.

The annual Raptor census resulted in 13 species and 741 birds (262 more than last year due to higher Black Kite numbers). No swift parrots were found this year in our winter Swift Parrot Search. The annual October Species Census yielded a healthy total of 174 species. From the monthly sightings submitted to the Records Officer for 2024, an impressive 223 species (227 last year) were recorded in our survey area. Thanks to all who contribute to the records, and to Records Officer, Pat McConnell, for diligently collating the data and compiling the summary reports.

BirdLife SQ-Darling Downs (BSQDD) and TBO organised the inaugural Toowoomba Birding Festival during Carnival of Flowers. Congratulations to Scot McPhie (BSQDD) for his tireless work as facilitator. Events included guided walks and prepared talks, held over three weekends. Thanks to Mitchell Roberts who compiled a slide show showcasing favourite bird images of several local bird photographers; and to Dan, Tony and Jennie for assisting on the walks. All events were well-supported. We are awaiting the council's feedback.

We continue to support the Habitat Jondaryan project. Some members are participating in a second biodiversity survey over the coming weekend. Three members (Ken Bissett, Jarrod Kath and Dan Bishop) have taken up the eBird challenge of capturing more sound recordings for Australian species. Charles Dove organised another successful Drawing and Poem competition for primary school children. Well done, Charlie, and those from the local community who supported you in this endeavour.

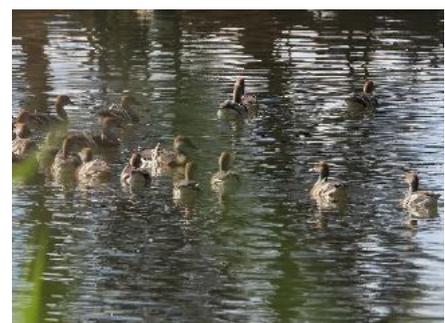
In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for your understanding and support. I know it has been a challenging year for a few of us, privately. We all need a little 'nursing' sometimes, even birders! And as long as there are good people like you in this club, it will always have a future.

Thank you. I now move that my report be accepted.
Mick Atzeni, President

Birds of a Feather Flock Together

A few more to add to the list:

- A congregation of Plovers
- A flight of Swallows
- A company of Parrots
- A colony of Penguins
- A tidings of Magpies



What are these Sulphur-crested Cockatoos after?

Joe and Sue Scanlan

We have a native wattle in our yard and each year it gets lots of insect galls on it. For about three weeks in September-October, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos spend hours in the tree eating something out of these galls. Why are they eating galls, I wondered?

A quick internet search indicated that they often eat galls. They may be searching for the plant material that encloses the insect larvae that causes the gall. Also, they may actually be eating the larvae – this was news to me.



Whatever they were after, the ground beneath the tree was covered with partly eaten galls.



BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Masked Lapwing

Scientific Name: *Vanellus miles*

Atlas Number: 133

What does it look like?

Description: Masked Lapwings are large, ground-dwelling birds that are closely related to the waders. The Masked Lapwing is mainly white below, with brown wings and back and a black crown. Birds have large yellow wattles covering the face and are equipped with a thorny spur that projects from the wrist on each wing. The spur is yellow with a black tip. The Masked Lapwing has two subspecies resident in Australia. The southern subspecies has black on the hind neck and sides of breast and has smaller facial wattles. Northern birds are smaller, without the partial black collar, but have a much larger wattle, which covers most of the side of the face. The sexes are similar in both subspecies, although the male tends to have a larger spur. Young Masked Lapwings are similar to the adult birds but may have a darker



back. The wing spur and facial wattles are either absent or smaller in size. The southern subspecies is also known as the Spur-winged Plover.

Similar species:

The [Banded Lapwing](#), *V. tricolor*, is much smaller (25 cm to 29 cm). It has a mostly black head and upper breast, with a distinct white eyestripe and bib. It also has a distinctive red patch at the base of the bill.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Masked Lapwing is common throughout northern, central and eastern Australia. Masked Lapwings are also found in Indonesia, New Guinea, New Caledonia and New Zealand. The New Zealand and New Caledonian populations have been formed from birds that have flown there from Australia.

Habitat:

The Masked Lapwing inhabits marshes, mudflats, beaches and grasslands. It is often seen in urban areas. Where this bird is used to human presence, it may tolerate close proximity; otherwise, it is very wary of people and seldom allows close approach.

What does it do?

Feeding:

Masked Lapwings feed on insects and their larvae, and earthworms. Most food is obtained from just below the surface of the ground, but some may also be taken above the surface. Birds are normally seen feeding alone, in pairs or in small groups.



Breeding:

Masked Lapwings may breed when conditions are suitable. Both sexes share the building of the nest, which is a simple scrape in the ground away from ground cover. This nest is often placed in inappropriate locations, such as school playing fields or the roofs of buildings. Both sexes also incubate the eggs and care for the young birds. The young birds are born with a full covering of down and are able to leave the nest and feed themselves a few hours after hatching.

The Masked Lapwing is notorious for its defence of its nesting site. This is particularly the case after the chicks have hatched. Adults will dive on intruders, or act as though they have a broken wing in an attempt to lure the intruder away from the nest.

LINKS OF INTEREST

And the winner is...

<https://birdlife.org.au/news/australias-2025-bird-of-the-year-the-tawny-frogmouth/>

Did you vote for the Tawny Frogmouth in the 2025 Aussie Bird Count? After 3 years as the runner up, the enigmatic Tawny Frogmouth finally gets the crown.

Housing crisis for Palm Cockatoos.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-23/artificial-nest-trial-for-cape-york-palm-cockatoo/105925758>

The Palm Cockatoo has very particular needs for nesting and with supply at a crisis point, conservationists have taken up cause and are developing artificial nests for these large birds. The birds nest in hollows which can take up to 250 years to form but with habitat under threat, conservation group *People for Wildlife* are developing artificial nesting hollows in the hope that the birds will be enticed to use them.

Regent Honeyeater breeding program.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-16/critically-endangered-regent-honeyeaters-released-hunter-valley/105897506>

Fragmented woodlands threaten the Regent Honeyeaters survival so each year a small number of zoo-bred birds are released into the wild. Hopefully, with less than 300 birds in the wild, this continuing program will help sustain and perhaps help build Regent Honeyeater numbers up to save them from extinction.

What's in a name?

<https://ebird.org/news/2025-taxonomy-update>

Every year changes come about to the taxonomy of birds as new scientific data is found. This can lead to the splitting of species into new species or the lumping together of species. This year 40 new species were created while 18 species were lost.

Protecting our shores from Avian influenza and other biosecurity threats.

<https://phys.org/news/2025-10-australian-biosecurity-society-approach.html>

The Federal government has committed \$100million to develop and integrate tools to protect from biosecurity risks entering the country. Pre, post and at-the-border responses must be strong to avoid animal disease outbreaks that threaten our biodiversity and livestock industries.

