



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

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

February 2026

EDITION 521

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Noisy Friarbird



Photo by Kathy Bowly

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OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th March 2026

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Management Committee:

Wednesday
11th March

**West Creek, Toowoomba
Charles Dove**

Saturday
28th March

**Redwood Park
Dan Bishop**

President	Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485
Vice-president	Dan Bishop 0401 235 156
Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446
Treasurer	Ann Alcock 0418 159 760
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Bowly
Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond. Lareina Hagan
Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082
Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock Dan Bishop
Website	Dan Bishop

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

MID WEEK WALK – March 2026

LOCATION: West Creek, Kearneys Spring

Date: Wednesday 11th March 2026

Leader: Charles Dove 0417 422 302
powerart@bigpond.net.au

Meet location: Corner of Lemway Ave and Marwedel St, Kearneys Spring

<https://goo.gl/maps/TYdi7a5xLibzXMBp8>

Time: 8 am

Other Please bring morning tea

RSVP: by the 10th March 2026 to Charles 0417 422 302

Outing details: Sunscreen and insect repellent might be needed.
Facilities available.
Easy walking approx. 4km.

In the event of inclement weather contact Charles Dove

Closed footwear required.



MONTHLY WALK - March 2026

Redwood Park

Date: Saturday 28th March 2026

Leader: Dan Bishop

Time: 7.00 am

Meet location: [Redwood Park carpark](#), Toowoomba Connection Road. Limited car parking – car pooling recommended if possible.

Required: Closed shoes, plenty of water, sun protection, binoculars.

Other details: Moderate walking with inclines in areas. Facilities available at the picnic area. BYO Morning tea for after the walk, if you wish.

RSVP: Dan Bishop by 27/02 on 0401 135 156 or danbishop@internode.on.net.



MONTHLY OUTING JANUARY 2026

Ravensbourne National Park

January 31st saw the gathering of a number of TBO members at Gus Beutel Lookout in Ravensbourne National Park where they spent time walking the track through the rainforest. Following morning tea at the lookout, the group then walked along Walshes Road. Highlights of the morning included seeing the Paradise Riflebird and several species of fruit doves. 46 species were observed throughout the morning. Thanks to Mick for leading the morning.



Silvereye

by Charles Dove



Brown Cuckoo Dove

by Ed Crago



White-headed Pigeon

by Charles Dove



Varied Triller

by Charles Dove



Varied Triller

by Charles Dove



Black-faced Monarch

By Ed Crago



Rufous Fantail

by Ed Crago



Paradise Riflebird

by Ed Crago



Paradise Riflebird

by Charles Dove



Paradise Riflebird by Ed Crago

Ravensbourne National Park		January 31st 2026		46 species
White-headed Pigeon	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Large-billed Scrubwren	Rufous Fantail	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Australian King Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Green Catbird	Australasian Figbird	Black-faced Monarch	
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Regent Bowerbird	Golden Whistler	Torresian Crow	
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	Satin Bowerbird	Little Shrike-thrush	Paradise Riflebird	
Topknot Pigeon	White-throated Treecreeper	Grey Shrike-thrush	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Pheasant Coucal	Superb Fairywren	Eastern Whipbird	Welcome Swallow	
Laughing Kookaburra	Red-backed Fairywren	Common Cicadabird	Silvereye	
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Eastern Spinebill	Varied Triller	Russet-tailed Thrush	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	Red-browed Finch	
Crimson Rosella	Brown Gerygone	Australian Magpie		
Rainbow Lorikeet	White-browed Scrubwren	Pied Butcherbird		

MONTHLY MIDWEEK OUTING FEBRUARY 2026

Back Plains/Passmore Reserve

By Kathy Bowly

Our meeting spot for the mid-week February outing was along the Clifton-Pittsworth Road not far from the Back Plains State School. With 10 enthusiasts eager to go, a quick look in the surrounding trees and shrubs yielded greetings from Willie Wagtail with a couple of Superb Fairywrens and a Zebra Finch spied in nearby bushes.

Some Golden-headed Cisticolas had been seen by several members as they drove to the meeting spot so a reconnoitre back to that paddock of sorghum was decided on. On arrival sure enough the

Cisticolas were there but further looking found a couple of Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. They were very obliging with a good barrier of long grass between us and the sorghum. The Mannikins were happy to go about their business of feeding on the sorghum and displaying effusive behaviour of whose

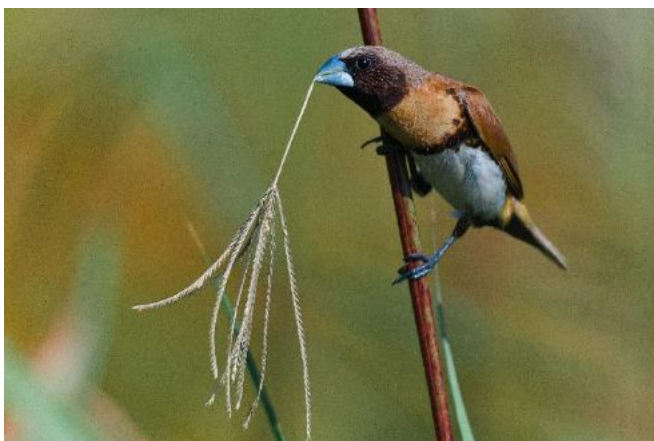
piece of grass was longer – and compared to the size of the little birds the pieces of grass were large! The camera people happily snapped away while the rest of the observers were caught up in the little birds' delightful behaviour. Eventually Charles had to bring us back to our senses and move us along.



Golden-headed Cisticola

by Ed Crago

Mannikin Mania – Chestnut-breasted Mannikin



Top Left by Ed Crago

Top Right by Kathy Bowly

Bottom Left by Tim Bowly

Bottom Right by Howard Ward



Whistling Kite

by Ed Crago

Heading back past the school with several stops along the way, we stopped at a small creek. Again, the Golden-headed Cisticola were seen and heard but also the Tawny Grassbird was flitting in the tall grass beside the creek. The search for White-winged Fairywrens, seen in this area previously, resolved naught but Superb Fairywrens were definitely there. Perhaps the Whistling Kite circling high above us was a deterrent for the more timid White-wings.

It was time to keep moving with a stop at the Clifton Golf Club for morning tea. Apart from Noisy Miners and Galahs not much else was seen as the golfers moved through in their buggies keeping the birds a bay.

Passmore Reserve was our final stop for the morning and what a great spot on the Condamine River. We pulled up under the magnificent river red gums, some of which looked like they have been there for centuries. With the river extending off in both directions, we tended to spread out in varying directions. Consequently, a wide variety of birds were seen.

Away from the river a garrulous group of Grey-crowned Babblers were chasing each other through the trees, while along the river there were White-plumed Honeyeaters and Striped Honeyeaters. Little Corellas

and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos continuously set of the alarm calls as we explored the riverbanks.

As the morning began to heat up, there was a gradual departure of bird watchers with just a couple of us remaining. Our reward was high up in among the gum leaves where Striated Pardalotes and White-throated Gerygone busily searched for lerps and small insects. A family of Little Friarbird arrived in the casuarinas along the riverbank, feeding with a juvenile who loudly and persistently demanded attention. An Eastern Rosella also put in a lonely appearance. And as we were leaving, the Chestnut-breasted Mannikins flew into the reeds on the riverbank – what a delightful way to end the day!



Grey-crowned Babblers

by Tim Bowly

Thank you Charles for another great location in our diverse bird watching region



Little Friarbirds

by Kathy Bowly



Zebra Finches

by Howard Ward

Back Plains/Passmore Reserve		February 11 th 2026		43 species
Rock Dove	Nankeen Kestrel	Striped Honeyeater	Leaden Flycatcher	
Spotted Dove	Galah	White-plumed Honeyeater	Magpie-lark	
Crested Pigeon	Little Corella	Noisy Miner	Torresian Crow	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Straited Pardalote	Apostlebird	
Straw-necked Ibis	Red-rumped Parrot	White-throated Gerygone	Golden-headed Cisticola	
White-faced Heron	Pale-headed Rosella	Grey-crowned Babbler	Tawny Grassbird	
Little Pied Cormorant	Eastern Rosella	Rufous Whistler	Common Myna	
Masked Lapwing	Australian King Parrot	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	
Whistling Kite	Red-winged Parrot	Australian Magpie	Zebra Finch	
Sacred Kingfisher	Superb Fairywren	Pied Butcherbird	House Sparrow	
Laughing Kookaburra	Little Friarbird	Willie Wagtail		

In Search of Shorebirds

with Ann Alcock & Eduarda van Klinken
Photos by Ann Alcock



Eastern Curlew

Each October, the birding community anticipates the arrival of approximately 9 million shorebirds. These remarkable birds undertake an arduous journey spanning up to 11,000 kilometres from their Arctic breeding grounds to join resident shorebirds. In total, 37 different species make this migration, seeking refuge from the harsh northern winter.

Observations in the Ballina District

Flat Rock, just north of Ballina, proved to be an excellent spot for observing a variety of shorebirds. Among those sighted were Sanderlings, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Ruddy Turnstones.



Red-necked Stint



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

At the sandbars of North Creek, in Ballina, we encountered Far Eastern Curlews, Eurasian Whimbrels, Pacific Golden Plovers, and Pied Oystercatchers. We hoped to see birds in their vibrant breeding plumage and were delighted when a single Bar-tailed Godwit (amongst a flock of 20) was observed displaying russet-coloured feathers.



Bar-tailed Godwits

From a vantage point, we observed a Beach Stone-curlew purposefully scurry 150 metres, crab in mouth, to join what may have been its partner. Perhaps they had some young ones nearby?

Conservation Concerns

Despite the excitement and beauty of these migrations, there is an underlying tragedy: all these shorebird species are currently listed as vulnerable or threatened.



Beach-stone Curlew



Sanderling

January in Highfields

By Tony Bond



Is it just me or do we seem to have been hearing more Pheasant Coucals this summer? Early in the new year, we found three hopping alongside a track at the recreation grounds on Barracks Road.

The Spangled Drongos in Williams Park have also been very active this summer - for a while it was not unusual to see eight or more.



Powerful Owls can still be seen from time to time in the vicinity of their roosting area. They go away for a while before returning and are often heard in and around our backyard - usually around 4 am!!



A lone Eastern Koel was still calling in the early hours right into February but has not been heard or seen since the big wet weekend mid-month.

The family of five Tawny Frogmouths that we spotted at the Early Bird Christmas walk was sighted once more subsequently but they seem to have moved on now. Individual adults still visit our backyard from time to time.



BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Noisy Friarbird

Scientific Name: *Philemon corniculatus*

Atlas Number:

645

What does it look like?

Description:

The Noisy Friarbird is a large member of the honeyeater family with a distinctive naked black head and a strong bill with a prominent casque (bump) at the base. The upperparts are dark brown to grey, the underbody is off-white, with silver-white feathers around the throat and upper breast, and the tail has a white tip. It is a noisy and conspicuous bird mainly seen in small groups, usually up in trees.



Similar species:

The Noisy Friarbird differs from other friarbirds by having a completely bare black head and upper neck. It can be distinguished from the similarly sized Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata* when flying by its plain unstreaked upperparts, square tail with white tips, as well as the distinctive black head and bill.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Noisy Friarbird is found in eastern and south-eastern Australia, from north-eastern Queensland to north-eastern Victoria. It is also found in southern New Guinea

Habitat:

The Noisy Friarbird prefers dry forests and eucalypt woodlands, as well as coastal scrub, heathlands and around wetlands and wet forests, and is found in most climate zones, extending into arid areas along rivers.

Seasonal movements:

Partial migrant in south of range, moving north in autumn and south in late winter.

What does it do?

**Feeding:**

The Noisy Friarbird eats nectar, fruit, insects and other invertebrates and sometimes eggs or baby birds. They spend most of their time feeding on nectar high up in trees, only coming down to the ground occasionally to feed on insects. Often feed in noisy flocks, and with other honeyeaters such as the Red Wattlebird.

Breeding:

Noisy Friarbirds form long-term pairs, with both parents defending the nest and surrounds. The female builds the large, deep cup-shaped nest from bark and grass, bound with spider webs, slinging it in a tree-fork. She alone incubates the eggs, but both parents feed the young, up to three weeks after fledging.

Living with us

The Noisy Friarbird can be a pest of orchards. Often found in remnant forest patches after agricultural clearing.

Did you know?

The Noisy Friarbird has a naked head and a large casque (bump) on its bill.

Calls

Noisy, harsh and discordant; deep honking sound: 'tobacco' or 'four o'clock'. Also a sharp 'owk owk'.

Breeding season:

August to March

Clutch Size:

2 to 4, usually 3

Incubation:

18 days

Nestling Period:

18 days

Conservation Status

Federal: Secure

LINKS OF INTEREST

A birding life with Peter Menkhorst

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/what-the-duck/peter-menkhorst-bird-guide-book/106266446>

Listen to this inspiring podcast where Ann Jones, from ABC's What the Duck, talks with zoologist Peter Menkhorst who wrote The Australian Bird Guide.

Banning the sale of rat poisons.

<https://birdlife.org.au/rat-poison-regulation-review-scorecard/>

Rat poison works its way through the food chain. Not only are the target species, ie the rat, affected by the poison but also anything that may eat the poisoned rat. Would banning these products help and what can you do to help?

Ramsar Wetlands of Australia.

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/water/wetlands/australian-ramsar-wetlands>

Ramsar wetlands are internationally recognised sites that represent rare or unique environments or have been chosen to conserve biological diversity. There are 67 sites in Australia of which five are in Queensland. Through this link explore the diverse wetlands across our continent.

Do birds have a sense of smell?

<https://theconversation.com/the-brilliant-and-bizarre-ways-birds-use-their-sense-of-smell-from-natural-cologne-to-pest-control-274571>

While in the past it was believed that birds had no sense of smell, recent research is looking into ways birds use their sense of smell and how it helps in their survival.

Bringing order to bird species lists

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/nature-wildlife/2026/02/avilist-a-new-bird-order/>

A new cataloguing of birds globally has led to AviList. This new species list will not only alter the number of species found globally but also hopefully help with conservation, determining the status of species which in turn may lead to improved conservation tactics.

