

April 2026

EDITION 523

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OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026 The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly. <u>The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th May 2026</u> Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com		 Website: www.tboc.org.au Email: tboc4350@gmail.com Postal address: P.O. Box 4730 Toowoomba East 4350 Management Committee:	
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Wednesday 13th May	Pittsworth Charles Dove	Vice-president	Dan Bishop 0401 235 156
Saturday 30th May	Stevenson Street, Picnic Point Lareina Hagan	Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446
PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND		Treasurer	Ann Alcock 0418 159 760
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		Website	Dan Bishop

MID WEEK WALK – May 2026

MID-WEEK WALK

PITTSWORTH

Date: Wednesday 13th May 2026

Leader: Charles Dove

Meet location:

<https://goo.gl/maps/puRwqaabwc6uqsH78>

Meet at Rotary Park cnr Clifton and Yandilla St. Pittsworth
Then proceed to Hill Street and Sewage Area ponds

Time: 8.00 am

Recommended: Please bring morning tea.

RSVP: Charles by 12:00 midday Tuesday 12th May 2026

text 0417 422 302 or E-mail powerart@bigpond.net.au

Outing details: 2–3 km - casual walk can be easy. **There are toilet facilities at Rotary Park.**
In the event of inclement weather contact the leader. *Closed footwear required.*

MONTHLY WALK - May 2026

Stevenson Street, Picnic Point

Date: Saturday 30th May 2026

Leader: Lareina Hagan

Time: 7.00 am

Meet location: Stevenson St, which is accessed via the Old Tollbar Road
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/ySsLuFhcmC7CLPke6>

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

Other details: BYO Morning tea for after the walk, if you wish.

RSVP: Lareina by 27/04 on 0402 554 609 or lareinahagan@gmail.com.



SPECIAL BIRD OUTING WEEKEND MAIN RANGE NATIONAL PARK

With Ed Crago

Goomburra Section

Ever caught a glimpse of an Albert Lyrebird or an Australian Logrunner. The weekend of the 8th-10th May 2026 could be your opportunity.

TBO member Ed is planning on spending a weekend at Goomburra if anyone may be interested in joining him. This is one of Ed's favourite places to escape to and enjoy the sounds of the forest seeking out those elusive feathered friends and capturing them on his camera.

There will be opportunities for a number of walks:

- Official TBO Walk – Saturday 9th @ 8.00am
- Sounds of the rainforest at sunrise – Saturday and Sunday @6:00 am
- Morning Walk – Sunday @8:00 am

Meeting place for walks: Kurrajong Picnic Area

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/CSETCoPYSMUWZisL9>

The walks will start from locations up Lookout Rd which requires crossing a creek with flowing water and rocky bottom. Access will require either 4x4 or high clearance 2 wheel drive vehicle or car pooling.

TBO members are welcome to join Ed for the whole weekend or any part of the weekend. BYO food and water, closed shoes, binoculars &/ camera.

For further information contact Edwin (Ed) Ph. 0418 743 267 or email admin@blindshutters.com.au

RSVP: 7th May.



MONTHLY OUTING April 2026

COOBY DAM Wednesday 8th April 2026

By Ross Begent Photos by Charles Dove

With a forecast temperature of 34 degrees in Toowoomba, five brave souls met at Loveday Cove, willing to endure the unseasonable heat with a chance of spotting a Cotton Pygmy-goose recently reported on Lake Cooby. The lake is a hidden gem just 30 minutes from Toowoomba with excellent facilities. Toowoomba Regional Council promote a wide range of activities at the lake including boating, fishing, sailing, canoeing, windsurfing, rowing, bushwalking and picnicking but birdwatching does not seem to get a mention – quite surprising given that over 190 species have reportedly been recorded in the Loveday Cove area and are the very reason that many visit the lake. We set off from the car park near the boat ramp and headed east along the trail which runs around the lake.

Scanning across the lake revealed an abundance of waterbirds including Black Swans along with juveniles, Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal, Purple Swamphen, Australasian Grebes, Great Crested Grebes, Little Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter snaking its way across the lake and then hanging his wings out to dry, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot and Australian Pelicans. The trail is easy walking with a minimal climb and takes an elevated route through woodlands offering excellent views of the lake and the shoreline below. The diversity of habitat attracts a wide range of species.

With the water in the lake being a little lower we were able to enjoy good views of the birds on the water's edge. Along the shoreline we also spotted Masked Lapwing, Plumed Egret and White-faced Heron. One of the delights of the



Australasian Darter – Purple Swamp Hen



Australian Swan – immature

We did enjoy a Whistling Kite circling overhead in the distance and many more delights through the woodland including Noisy Friarbird, Peaceful Dove, Blue-faced Honeyeater and Striated Pardalote.

Along the trail we met up with another intrepid group of five sporting binoculars and led by Toowoomba Bird Observers President Mick Atzeni. Mick was showing some friends around along with a couple visiting from Texas. (that's the big one in the USA, not the little, tiny one down the road!) Wisely, they were heading up to the relative coolness of the Ravensbourne National Park rainforest.

day had to be a pair of Comb-crested Jacanas doing their trademark long-toed walk across the floating plants on the lake just below us. The walking trail passes a number of sections of thicker growth and reeds which provides ideal habitat for those elusive 'little brown birds' that are often so hard to identify. Someone would shout "Wrens!!!" which was followed by "What type of wrens?" and then "I don't know – just wrens!" Notwithstanding, we were able to identify Superb Fairy-wren and Red-backed Fairy-wren along with Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail and Silvereye. But where was that Cotton Pygmy-goose? Remember the Cotton Pygmy-goose?



Comb-crested Jacana



Grey Butcherbird



Masked Lapwing

Some very long grass along the trail made us wonder if a whipper-snipper should be part of our birdwatching kit but not enough to stop us from spotting Noisy Miner, Willie Wagtail, Magpie Lark and a Welcome Swallow which perhaps did not see the need to migrate further North just yet on this 34 degree autumn day. Pied Currawong, Grey Butcherbird and Torresian Crow were there to provide their cacophony of quintessential Aussie calls. Another delight was to watch an elegant Buff-banded Rail, well away on the far side of the lake, but kept popping in and out of the low, dense vegetation to forage with ever-flicking tail for our pure enjoyment.

And as for that Cotton Pygmy-goose....surely we could spot a big, predominantly white ball of cotton fluff amongst those hundreds of much darker coloured waterbirds? but alas.... we dipped out! But we did record 32 species during the morning, and with a claimed historical record of 190 species around Loveday Cove we have plenty of opportunity to come back againand again.

Thanks so much to Charles Dove for offering to lead this outing and to make it so interesting and enjoyable.

Cooby Dam		April 8th 2026	32 Species
Australian Black Swan	Eurasian Coot	Whistling Kite	Pied Currawong
Pacific Black Duck	Plumed Egret	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird
Grey Teal	White-faced Heron	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Grebe	Australian Pelican	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Great Crested Grebe	Little Pied Cormorant	Noisy Friarbird	Magpie Lark
Peaceful Dove	Australasian Darter	Noisy Miner	Torresian Crow
Buff-banded Rail	Masked Lapwing	Striated Pardalote	Welcome Swallow
Dusky Moorhen	Comb-crested Jacana	Brown Thornbill	Silvereye



Plumed Egret



Superb Fairy-wren, female

MONTHLY OUTING April 2026

Lockyer Wetlands

Avian Observation Team.
Mission: Lockyer Wetlands.
Targets Acquired :64 Species.

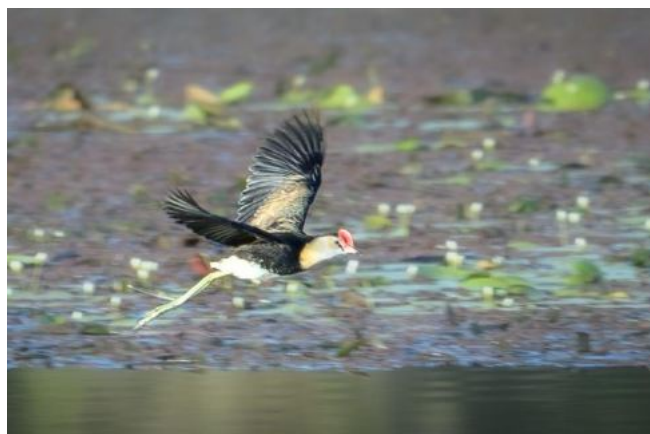
By Lareina Hagan

Well, no bird was safe from our savvy team of 12 this morning as we locked in on our common goal: Find the water. Find the birds. We'd chosen a big patch of water to meet at, so we were halfway to our goal already.

Promises of Comb-crested Jacanas (also known as Edward Scissor feet or The Bird Who Walks On Water) lured us into Lake Apex where they were still available, but barely accessible, much like petrol lately.



Comb-crested Jacana by Charles Dove



Comb-crested Jacana by Tony Bond



Rufous Whistler by Tamera Rettke

We weren't just stopping there though, Colquhouns Road was up next, and the big nosed Australian Shovelers were a major drawcard. Fortunately, we had plenty of help from some of our seasoned bird experts, helping out us newer birders with IDs. A juvenile White-bellied Sea-eagle was identified.

The next stage of the mission was to take in some pastoral visions at Cross Road. We didn't bog our low vehicle drivers by pulling off the road and everyone was mindful of passing cars. Shyly hiding in the grass once discovered, a stunning Spotted Harrier didn't keep us waiting long before it gained the confidence to put on a bit of a show.

Our keenest photographers were spoilt for choice at Pechey's Lagoon on Old Ropeley Road, where in particular a Rufous Whistler and Black Kite posed beautifully for us.

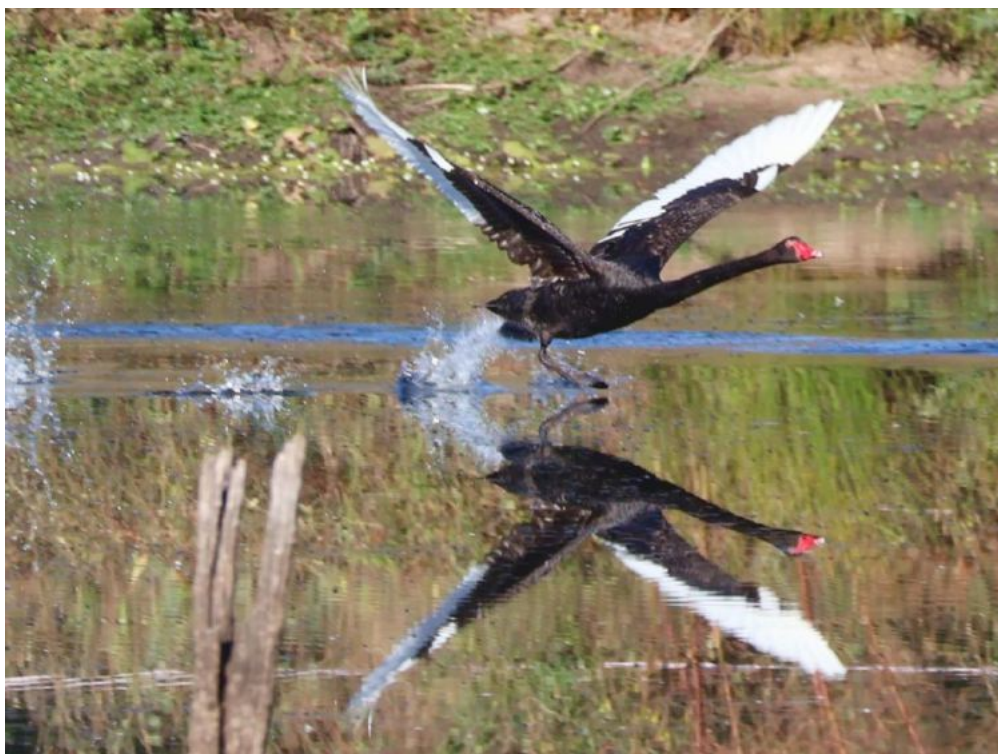


Black Kite by Charles Dove

No bird walk would seem complete without a wild goose chase (I promise I won't make a habit of it), so after accidentally missing a turn-off and recollecting the members, we all arrived at Karasch's Lagoon, Placid Hills. The club's scope had gotten a bit wobbly at that stage but we were able to come together to work out how to fix that.

A well-earned Wagon Wheel biscuit back at Lake Apex finally quelled my nerves as the first bird walk I was co-leading came to a close.

Huge thanks to Kathy and our TBO crew for all the help leading up to and on the walk, and to all the beautiful people who joined us on the day.



Black Swans preparing for flight

Top left by Tony Bond; Top right by Charles Dove; Bottom by Tamera Rettke



Plumed Whistling Ducks by Tony Bond



Wandering Whistling Ducks by Kathy Bowly



A bounty of waterbirds.

Clockwise from the top: Australian White Ibis by Tony Bond, Grey Teal by Charles Dove, Australasian Shoveller by Kathy Bowly, Spoonbills (royal & yellow-billed) by Kathy Bowly, Purple Swamphen by Kathy Bowly, Australasian Grebe by Charles Dove, (Centre) Pied Stilt by Charles Dove.



Raptors of the day from top to bottom:

Nankeen Kestrel by Tony Bond

Black Kite by Tony Bond

Swamp Harrier by Charles Dove

Juvenile White-bellied Sea-eagle by Tony Bond

Black Kite by Tony Bond



Lockyer Wetlands (combined)		April 26 th 2026	64 species
Brown Quail	White Ibis	Spotted Harrier	Striped Honeyeater
Plumed Whistling Duck	Straw-necked Ibis	Collared Sparrowhawk	Noisy Miner
Wandering Whistling Duck	Cattle Egret	White-bellied Sea-eagle	Striated Pardalote
Black Swan	Great Egret	Whistling Kite	Grey-crowned Babbler
Australian Wood Duck	Plumed Egret	Black Kite	Rufous Whistler
Australasian Shoveller	White-faced Heron	Laughing Kookaburra	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pacific Black Duck	Little Egret	Nankeen Kestrel	Australian Magpie
Grey Teal	Australian Pelican	Galah	Pied Butcherbird
Australasian Grebe	Little Pied Cormorant	Little Corella	Willie Wagtail
Hoary-headed Grebe	Great Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail
Great-crested Grebe	Little Black Cormorant	Red-rumped Parrot	Restless Flycatcher
Crested Pigeon	Australasian Darter	Pale-headed Rosella	Magpie Lark
Purple Swampphen	Pied Stilt	Rainbow Lorikeet	Torresian Crow
Eurasian Coot	Masked Lapwing	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Golden-headed Cisticola
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Comb-crested Jacana	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Welcome Swallow
Royal Spoonbill	Swamp Harrier	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Common Myna

April in Federation Park with Howard Ward

An early morning stroll through Federation Park always promises to turn up a few birds. This morning however proved to be a little different. Instead of doing much walking I found myself traversing back and forth about 20 meters between a small dead tree and a few bushes for about one and a half hours. All the while numerous birds were busy preening, feeding and going about their business without a care for my presence. These are the moments that bring such joy to people that take the time to observe the natural world around them.

It all started with dozens of Double-barred Finches that drew my attention with that delightful mewing call. At the base of a bush hidden by long grass was a stream of water feeding into the rock pool in the park. Unseen was a trickle of water the birds were bathing in, before returning to the bush to preen.



Double-barred Finch

Behind that bush was another shrub containing clusters of ripe red berries; the berries can be seen in the background of the picture above.

The Finches were flying back and forth but something else was also very active amongst the berries.

Silvereye

Whether hanging upside down or doing the splits they are delightful acrobats.



Just to the right of the bushes and slightly behind was the small dead tree I spoke of earlier and while enthralled by all this activity, things got better with the arrival of a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** (below left) joined by a **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** (below right) on a lower limb.



Now I was starting to think I should have brought a chair.

As the saying goes, the ice cream on the cake was yet to happen.

To my left I saw a flicker of red and movement across the short grass to the right. A family of **Red-backed Fairy-wrens** joined the party. (Below Male left. Female right)



Striated Pardalote

It truly was turning into a magical morning just circulating around 20 metres of the park. In the adjoining trees there was a dozen or so Striated Pardalote. Calling their 3-part call



Pied and Grey Butcherbirds added to the chorus along with the calls of flying Sulphur-crested Cockatoo as they left their nearby roost to set out on a day's foraging.

Did I mention the hare that bounded past? It was too quick for me to capture a picture. What about the Monarch Butterflies that added colour to the scene? I nearly forgot those.



A truly remarkable morning

Black-fronted Dotterel

Scientific Name: *Elseya melanops*

Atlas Number:

144

What does it look like?

Description:

The Black-fronted Dotterel is a small wader with a distinctive black facemask and breast-band and prominent chestnut scapulars (shoulder feathers). In juveniles, the breast-band is initially absent but a brown band slowly appears as the bird develops. Legs are pink orange, and the bill is red with a black tip. The dark eye is ringed with red. In flight the wings look broad and the tail short while the black and white contrast is striking. Flight is slow with almost hesitant wing beats. This species is also called the Black-fronted Plover.

Similar species:

The adult and immature Black-fronted Dotterel are unmistakable though the juvenile could be confused with the juvenile and immature [Red-capped Plover](#).

Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Black-fronted Dotterel is widespread throughout Australasia.

Habitat:

The Black-fronted Dotterel is found in the shallow margins of wetlands, lakes, rivers, sewage farms, storm drains and marshes. It is normally always near freshwater and is not often seen on the coast.

Seasonal movements:

Breeding resident.

What does it do?

Feeding:

The Black-fronted Dotterel eats small molluscs as well as aquatic and terrestrial insects. When it forages, it keeps its body horizontal while bobbing its head to look for food, often running then stopping suddenly to peck at food items.



Breeding:

The Black-fronted Dotterel lays its eggs in a shallow scrape often on pebbly ground and quite close to water. It may have more than one brood per year. Both parents incubate the eggs and look after the young.

Living with us

The Black-fronted Dotterel is secure in Australia though destruction of breeding sites may affect numbers.

Did you know?

The Black-fronted Dotterel is normally seen in small numbers, usually in pairs, sometime alone and rarely more than five. However, in winter they can form larger groups of a hundred or more.

Calls

Sharp 'tip' call, singular or repeated three or four times.

Breeding season:

September to February

Clutch Size:

2 to 3 eggs

Incubation:

27 days

Nestling Period:

25 days

Conservation Status

Federal:

Secure

LINKS OF INTEREST

New Night parrot population discovered.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-22/critically-endangered-night-parrots-detected-qld-outback/106587514>

With the use of audio recordings, a new population of the Night Parrot is believed to have been located in central western Queensland.

Singing to baby fairywrens.

<https://www.sciencealert.com/in-an-incredible-discovery-wrens-teach-their-babies-to-sing-before-theyre-hatched>

This is an amazing bit of research that has found that female Superb Fairywrens imprint song on their unhatched babies as a survival mechanism.

World's fattest parrot has record breeding season.

<https://www.livescience.com/animals/birds/worlds-fattest-parrot-has-record-breaking-breeding-season>

The kakapo, a flightless parrot endemic to New Zealand, has been on the verge of extinction. Only breeding every 2-4 years along with habitat destruction, feral predators and hunting, a comeback is difficult to foresee but positive breeding numbers is a good start.

White-tailed Eagle seen in Southern England

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp86mqd2vvlo>

Another bird which has seen its population plummet to extinction, this time in the UK, is the White-tailed Eagle. A re-introduction program has brought the bird back. Bird observers were thrilled with the unusual sighting of a young White-tailed Eagle flying over parts of southern England throughout the spring.

Shearwater migration

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/apr/26/indigenous-groups-australia-alaska-track-short-tailed-shearwater-bird>

Western Australian aboriginal rangers from Esperance are working together with traditional owners in Alaska to discover more about the Short-tailed Shearwaters. These amazing migratory birds come to Australia's southern coasts to breed and then fly back 15000 kilometres to Alaska with their chicks to feed on fish and squid in the Arctic summer. With less numbers and the appearance of sick, undernourished and dying birds, more is hoped to be discovered that may help improve numbers and survival of the shearwaters.

