



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

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

July 2026

EDITION 526

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Pied Stilt



Photo by Kathy Bowly

OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter
is 25th August 2026**

Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com

Wednesday
12th August

**Oakey
Charles Dove**

Saturday
29th August

**Ravensbourne National Park
Mick Atzeni**

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

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MID-WEEK WALK AUGUST

ARTHUR SHOOTER MEMORIAL PARK, OAKEY

Date: Wednesday 12th August

Leader: Charles Dove

Time: 8:00 am

Meet location: Oakey Railway Station Public Toilet
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/D1Hv3Hg6mS9LBMkS8>

We will then proceed to outings location at car park 69 Stanley St, Arthur Shooter Memorial Park

Other details: BRING MORNING TEA
No Facilities Available at Arthur Shooter Park

Moderate walk: *Closed footwear required.* BYO morning tea.

RSVP: Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 11th August
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

MONTHLY OUTING - AUGUST 2026

Gus Beutel Lookout, Ravensbourne National Park

Date: Saturday 29th August 2026

Location: Ravensbourne National Park

Leader: Mick Atzeni

Start Time: 7.30 am

Recommended: Closed shoes, water. Please bring morning tea for afterwards.

Meeting: Gus Beutel Lookout, National Park Road, Ravensbourne

Outing details: Moderate walking. Toilet and picnic table available in park.

RSVP: Friday 28th August to Mick 0499 395 485

In the event of inclement weather, contact the leader.



MID WEEK OUTING JULY 2026

CAMBOOYA Wednesday 8th July 2026

By Ross Begent

The morning started cool, crisp and clear as we met at Cambooya Memorial Park indicating good conditions for our walk, further supported by Telstra ensuring that their national outage would not interrupt our bird outing with any annoying phone calls, emails or access to the outside world! (Let's hope that we don't need to call Emergency!) We were immediately surrounded by Noisy Miners, Magpie Larks, Pale-headed Rosellas, Australian Magpies, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Rainbow Lorikeets and around a hundred or so Rock Doves feasting in one of their favourite locations - around the grain silos.

Twelve keen birders set off to the east along Hodgson Creek as a Restless Flycatcher flew low over our heads and Striated Pardalotes fed high up in the tall gums. We were observing Zebra Finches, Double-barred Finches and Superb Fairy-wrens in a neighbour's back yard when the owner, Mark, came out to meet us. Mark was an employee



Restless Flycatcher by Tony Bond

of Qld National Parks & Wildlife Service and had worked with some of our club members and was keen to share his knowledge of the area along with his list of birds spotted from his property. Nearby we enjoyed a very long and close view of a delightful pair of Zebra Finches, snuggled up together in a bush as they warmed up in the morning sun.



Rainbow Lorikeets by Tony Bond



*Zebra Finches(l) and Double-barred Finches(r)
by Kathy Bowly*

A further delight was to watch a pair of Black-shouldered Kites flying back and forth with sticks as they built their nest. A possible glimpse of a platypus was reported. While we did not hear any Barking Owls, there were plenty of barking dogs engaged in border control and loudly announcing our arrival in their jurisdiction obviously without the necessary visas.

We walked as far as the Charles Road ford across Hodgson Creek, had a look around Patterson Park and then made our way back to Cambooya Memorial Park for morning tea. On the way we kept an eye out for any possible platypus without success, but did catch a glimpse of what may well have been a native Water Rat, also known as Rikali, (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) such a delightful little otter-like creature.

During morning tea, we were joined again by Mark and his wife Kayleen and we all started out to the west along Hodgson Creek, crossing what seems like the world's most illogical traffic intersection, walked through Rolleston Park, returning along Paterson and Quarry Streets. With water flowing in the creek, we observed Australian White Ibis, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot and Pacific Black Duck. In the grass and reeds along the riparian area, we found Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola. In the adjoining parkland and surrounds we spotted Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Olive-backed Oriole, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistler, Australian Golden Whistler, Weebill and the ever-present flocks of melodious and industrious Brown Honeyeaters. A Yellow-throated Miner was a special treat.



Brown Honeyeater by Tony Bond



Yellow-rumped Thornbill by Tony Bond

The outing was so enjoyable that we did not finish until Noon. Yes, time just flies when you're having so much fun! Lunchtime cooking aromas emanating from the 124-year-old Bull & Barley Inn over the road were just too hard for some of us to ignore. A beautifully restored colonial style inn with the original cedar ice chiller boxes still in place. A highly recommended lunch spot with a good menu!

Hodgson Creek has much to offer, but like Crows Nest, Cambooya is experiencing strong population growth, exceeding 310% in the 20 years from 2001 to 2021 evidenced by the new subdivisions and around 300 homes on the edge of town. Careful management will be required to protect the local ecosystem.

Thank you to Charles for leading the outing and also to Mark and Kayleen for sharing their local knowledge along with some interesting history of the town.

Cambooya		July 8 th 2026		41 Species
Australian Wood Duck	Galah	Australasian Figbird	Torresian Crow	
Pacific Black Duck	Pale-headed Rosella	Olive-backed Oriole	Golden-headed Cisticola	
Rock Dove	Rainbow Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Little Grassbird	
Spotted Dove	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Welcome Swallow	
Crested Pigeon	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie	Common Myna	
Dusky Moorhen	Brown Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	Zebra Finch	
Eurasian Coot	Yellow-throated Miner	Grey Butcherbird	Double-barred Finch	
Australian White Ibis	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	House Sparrow	
Masked Lapwing	Striated Pardalote	Grey Fantail		
Black-shouldered Kite	Weebill	Restless Flycatcher		
Nankeen Kestrel	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpie Lark		



Magpie Larks by Tony Bond

Courting Black-shouldered Kites at Cambooya

by Kathy Bowly

As we walked along Hodgson Creek at Cambooya, a pair of Black-shouldered Kites were ever present. Clearly, they were in nest building mode as we saw them carrying sticks to the top of gumtree along the creek bank. The opposite side of the creek is a cultivation with the remains of last season's crop and undoubtedly a good place for mice and other small mammals to live. Certainly, an ideal location for a pair of kites to consider raising a family. During our walk several observers were treated to an intimate display from the kites. What initially looked like a bit of a squabble between the two birds, as they appeared to lock talons and tumble down, was actually revealed to be an exchange of a mouse. As part of their courtship the male is known to bring food to the female which they often exchange in flight. What better way to keep your partner in favour than to bring her a tasty mouse morsel! A fascinating exchange to watch and a well captured moment by Ed.

*Photos by Tony Bond (top)
Ed Crago (bottom l & r)*



Main Range, Goomburra. 18th July 2026

Text By Kathy Bowly

Albert's Lyrebirds and Australian Logrunners were the targets for our weekend at the Main Range National Park, Goomburra section, in mid-winter. Arriving Friday at mid-afternoon with weather that was not necessarily favoured for bird watching, we set up camp and noted the birds in our immediate vicinity. Kookaburras, Lewin's Honeyeaters, Grey Butcherbirds and Brush Turkeys checked out the campers and later in the afternoon a pair of Glossy Black Cockatoos passed overhead.

After a few very light showers through the evening, the sky cleared to reveal a stunning night sky, the Milky Way stretching above us in all its beauty. If only I was clever enough to capture that beauty on my camera but as it was to turn out capturing anything on camera proved to be a real challenge for all of us over the weekend.



Lewin's Honeyeater by Kathy Bowly

Saturday morning dawned fine though a little breezy and with Ed as our guide, we headed off to seek out the Lyrebirds and Logrunners in the rainforest. We were greeted by King Parrots high in the treetops munching on some seeds with the discarded pods raining down on us. The Scrubwrens were darting through the bracken fern covering the forest floor and our eyes were peeled for other movement among the bracken fern in the hope of spying a lyrebird. The Eastern Whipbirds were our constant companions although we only rarely caught glimpses of them despite calls being very close at hand.

As we moved in further along the track, we heard the Lyrebird calling and there seemed to be a couple of different birds in fairly close proximity. Eventually Ed caught sight of a bird busily scratching through the earth in search of worms and bugs. With their large feet they can move incredible amounts soil across the forest floor.

Logrunners were briefly sighted as we headed to the lookout which gave us views across the Fassifern Valley. However, the wind was quite strong coming up the escarpment so we headed back into the forest.



Bell Miner by Kathy Bowly

Suddenly in front of us a lyrebird scooted up the track. Ed quickly took the lead while we held back and he found where it had gone back into the ferns. Fortunately, it was still close to the path and we were able to observe it moving its way across the forest floor constantly scratching and eating as it went. Did I mention the lack of good photographing conditions?! - so despite having plenty of time observing the bird, light conditions were not in our favour!

Later in the morning, further along Lookout Road we followed the track to the lookout. While this track is not noted for lyrebirds we instead came across more Scrubwrens, both White-browed and Yellow-throated, as well as Eastern Yellow Robins, Brown Thornbills and Brown Gerygone. At the lookout we could see the skyline of the CBD of Brisbane.

The afternoon saw us head off to the Dalrymple Creek circuit among the open eucalypt forest where the Bell Miners 'tink, tinkling' call accompanied us. The White-throated Honeyeater was spied in the gums

and a group of Superb Fairywrens bounced along the track. Welcome Swallows flew overhead and a couple of Red-necked Pademelons posed in the long grass.

An early start on Sunday morning had us head back to the rainforest as we really wanted to check out the Logrunners having only caught a brief glimpse them the day before. Perhaps an early start might catch them and sure enough this theory paid off! Not far in, we caught our first sighting of these delightful little birds although they quickly disappeared into the undergrowth.

However just a short distance up the track another pair were spied and they seemed totally oblivious to our presence. Despite their small size, they are very busy little birds, scratching around and flicking and tossing leaf litter, bark and soil in all directions. We were able to observe them for quite some time before heading off to find a lyrebird which was calling in the distance. A very keen pair of young eyes caught a glimpse of the lyrebird down in the gully. Ed identified it as an older female and she gave a couple of observers a lovely display by hopping up on a log and singing.

We thought our lyrebird spotting was done as we headed down a different track to the waterfall. We heard a couple of birds calling but weren't hopeful of seeing one. But our luck was in and suddenly the lyrebird was just off the path. It scurried away but we were able to follow its movements as it moved alongside the path. They really are special birds to catch sight of and it was great that we had a number of opportunities over the weekend to do just that. And I did love the little Logrunners as well – little bundles of cuteness!

Thank you, Ed, for sharing your knowledge of this special place with us – we had a great weekend.



Australian Logrunner by Ed Crago



Red-browed finch by Ed Crago



Albert's Lyrebird by Ed Crago



Dalrymple Creek, Main Range NP.



In the rainforest at Main Range NP

Main Range National Park, Goomburra		July 18 th 2026	34 Species
Australian Brush Turkey	Satin Bowerbird	Brown Gerygone	Pied Currawong
Australian Wood Duck	Superb Fairywren	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Australian Magpie
Brown Cuckoo Dove	White-throated Honeyeater	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Butcherbird
Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill	Large-billed Scrubwren	Torresian Crow
Glossy Black Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Golden Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Rainbow Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Logrunner	Red-browed Finch
Australian King Parrot	Bell Miner	Grey Shrike-thrush	
Albert's Lyrebird	Noisy Miner	Eastern Whipbird	

MONTHLY OUTING 25th JULY 2026

Williams Park, Highfields

By Ross Begent

Outing leader, Tony Bond sent an outing reminder text which included “The forecast predicts it will be cold”. It sure was – just one degree as I drove up the range, but a beautiful day followed for us to explore the area. Thirteen keen birders arrived as the frost thawed, including two who were looking forward to experiencing their first group outing. Williams Park is a hidden gem, with good facilities, tucked away in the heart of Highfields. Tony and Jennie live very close by and have an excellent knowledge of the area. Tony also advised that he had observed a Powerful Owl and two chicks on the Thursday prior to our Saturday outing. The challenge was on!



Apostlebirds by Charles Dove



Eastern Whipbird by Tony Bond

In the park, even before we started our walk, we spotted or heard Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Noisy Miner and Laughing Kookaburra. We set out on the 1.3-km walk to the north through a grassy area along Klein Creek behind neighbouring backyards to a footbridge at Reis Road where the walking track leads back to our starting point along the other side of the creek. We watched a highly social group of Apostlebirds chattering noisily in a neighbour's yard. Eastern Yellow Robin darted through the undergrowth. The creek was flowing and the walking track passes through a narrow gully supporting bracken ferns, beautiful tree ferns, figs, vines and some huge eucalypts including Sydney Blue Gums, collectively giving the walk quite a rainforest feel.

As we walked through this delightful wildlife corridor, we enjoyed seeing Musk Lorikeet, Tawny Frogmouth, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Satin Bowerbird and excellent views of a Pale-headed Rosella politely perched right in front of us for quite some time. Flashes of brilliant scarlet kept circling us as Australian King Parrots flew overhead. What a delight to come across a pair of brightly coloured Spotted Pardalotes with their jewel-like spots flying in and out of their freshly excavated nesting tunnel on the edge of the walking track embankment.



Spotted Pardalote by Charles Dove

The air was alive with the sound of Eastern Whipbird



Long-billed Corella by Charles Dove

calls. While they are often so hard to observe as they secretively explore or dash through the undergrowth, we watched a most obliging inhabitant clearly moving up and down a log lying parallel to the creek in full view as it displayed its loud whip-cracking skills. A pair of Long-billed Corellas provided some amusement as they excitedly and noisily searched for their 'Goldilocks' (not too big, not too small) nesting hollow. One would announce with raucous alarm screeching and wing flapping that it had found the perfect nesting hollow, even cleaning it up with its large upper mandible while the other would come over to inspect and say "nah,.....not good enough!!"

A Common Bronzewing walked along the track in front of us showing off its metallic blue, green and red colours shimmering in the morning sun. But what about those Powerful Owls Tony? Will they still be there? Will they be in the same tree? Indeed they were! Perched high above us we were entertained with excellent views of a pair of adult owls and two chicks. Mum and Dad appeared to be sleeping but the chick in front was looking down at us with big black eyes peering out of a huge ball of white cotton fluff looking like a freshly made snowman. Perhaps the bird world is a bit like ours with the kids not wanting to sleep! What a delight to see them and to observe this species, now vulnerable in Queensland, breeding in this small but beautiful wildlife corridor surrounded by suburbia.



Musk Lorikeet by Tony Bond

Highfields has experienced substantial growth with over 400% increase in population in the past 30 years. While Williams Park is an absolute delight, it is quite small and narrow with residential areas abutting it on all sides and some of the larger Highfields blocks being subdivided to build more houses and new estate developments encroaching close by. The Friends of Escarpment Parks Toowoomba Inc. website refers to Williams Park as an endangered ecosystem. Condamine Country Group members have compiled a list of plants found in the park including many invasive species.

We counted 34 species for the morning. Thank you Tony and Jennie for your joint efforts in hosting the bird walk, sharing your local knowledge of the area and hosting a very relaxing and enjoyable morning tea.



Powerful Owl chick by Tony Bond

Williams Park, Highfields		July 25 th 2026		34 Species
Australian Brush Turkey	Little Corella	Brown Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	
Australian Wood Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Whipbird	
Common Bronzewing	Pale-headed Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	
Crested Pigeon	Musk Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
Tawny Frogmouth	Rainbow Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Grey Butcherbird	
Powerful Owl	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Spotted Pardalote	Apostlebird	
Laughing Kookaburra	Australian King Parrot	Striated Pardalote	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Galah	Satin Bowerbird	White-browed Scrubwren		
Long-billed Corella	Superb Fairywren	Brown Thornbill		

Who Am I...? Revealed

We came across this little bird on the Bullocky's Rest/Dingo Mountain walk on Wednesday 10th June.

There were three responses to the "Who Am I" question from last month's walk at Bullocky's Rest/Dingo Mountain (picture attached).

The main features discussed were:

- the slight heart shape in the tail
- the change in the "lie" of the plumage between the throat and the chest
- the trace of colouration along the edge of the wing and also the tail
- the possibility of a faint eye ring - or is it a trick of the light?



I don't feel too bad about not being able to id it in the field given that the replies were from some of the club's most experienced birders (thanks Charles, Edwin, Mick).

Result - Rufous Whistler - one vote, Silvereeye - two votes. The [silver] eyes have it.

...Tony

Raptor Census June/July 2026

Pat McConnell

Northern Section

Pat McConnell, Kath O'Donnell and Megan Rees surveyed the northern section on Tuesday 30 June. 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 9.30 am and 2.30 pm. Six species and 18 individual birds of prey were reported (see table below for summarised results). The weather during the survey was cool, overcast with light winds. One hundred and sixty-six kilometres were travelled.

Southern Section

The southern section was surveyed by Sandy Robertson and Jacalyn Robertson on Tuesday 30 June. 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 Hennessey to Greenmount/Etonvale to Faulknau to the New England Hwy to Steele Rudd to Hirstvale. One hundred and forty five kilometres were travelled. The weather was overcast with winds slight to brisk. Five species and 84 individual birds of prey were reported.

Eastern Section

The eastern section was surveyed by Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock, Eddy Van Klinken and Marie Gittins on Saturday 4 July between 9.05 am and 2.05 pm. The weather was fine, cloudless with no wind. The route surveyed was Lockyer, Helidon, Grantham, Placid Hills, Gatton north, Adare, Lake Clarendon, Lake Apex, Helidon Spa, Postmans Ridge and Murphys Creek. Nine species were seen and 164 individual birds of prey were reported. Distance travelled was 114 km.

Western Section

The western section was surveyed by Chris MacColl, Jarrod Kath, Marie Gittins and Mike McGoldrick on Thursday 18 June. The route surveyed was Toowoomba to Oakey (via Cecil Plains Rd), Jondaryn, Bowenville Reserve, Norwin, Cecil Plains, Dalby, 'Bun' & Quinalow to Jondaryn (via Mt Tyson Rd), Biddeston to Toowoomba via the Mt Tyson Rd (past the Wellcamp airport). The weather was overcast. Six species and 171 individual birds of prey were reported.

Table of Sightings

Species	N	S	E	W	Total
Black-shouldered Kite	1	25	2	16	44
Black Kite			124	32	156
Whistling Kite	2		13	10	25
Spotted Harrier		1			1
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	1	2		5
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2				2
Brown Goshawk			1		1
Brown Falcon	1	2	2	3	8
Black Falcon			1	2	3
Nankeen Kestrel	10	55	18	108	191
Australian Hobby			1		1
Total number of raptors	18	84	164	171	437

The above table shows that eleven species were seen in 2026 which is two less than in 2025. There were 437 individual birds of prey seen in 2026 which is 304 less than in 2025.

A big thank you to all involved, especially the leaders.



Black-shouldered Kite by Kath O'Donnell

The Pencil Drawing and Poetry Competition 2026.

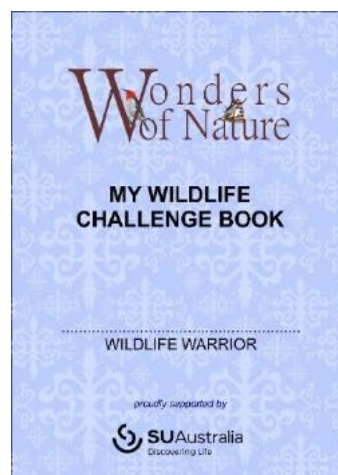
By Charles Dove

With 2026 now here and once again I was thinking about doing the Drawing Competition.

I started getting inquiries early for the event - so here we go. I had previously approached Toowoomba North Public School to assist in hosting this event along with the use of the new spectacular hall with all the modern media facilities, all inbuilt and extremely easy to use. With a positive response, I needed to get a blue card due to numerous visits to the school, and once again TNSS assisted by allowing me to be a blue card volunteer (no annual fee) to TNSS.

From the past two years I was partly organised with the entry forms and conditions (new dates and location) and approaching past sponsors. Judges proved no problem at all along with another new judge, Jenny Whitnall, who said she would be honoured to be added to the panel along with The Chaplain, Phil, from TNSS as contact with the school.

I still needed to confirm the costs and list of prizes for the competition - fortunately the budget was easy to work out with the hall being free and the prize winner's booklet being supplied by Trevor Watts' office. This year I decided to add more to the competition so instead of the Birds, Mammals and Reptiles, I added Butterflies and Dragonflies drawings as well as keeping the special awards for Indigenous style drawings.



The gift voucher costs were covered by Trevor Watts, Fida Forsberg and a very good friend. As another bonus I included some of my new booklets (which I had just completed) donated by a very good friend, "Wildlife Warrior", and is now being published as a brochure by Trevor Watts and available at his office and also at the Tourism Visitors Centres.

The Lions Club agreed to look after the food and drinks with a sausage sizzle and drinks and fortunately the new hall also contained a well-equipped kitchen.

After confirming the dates, it was now time to contact the schools and set up posters in shopping centres around the Toowoomba Region. The emails were sent out to all the schools earlier due to a lot of requests, in early March instead of April, over a few weeks throughout the Toowoomba region with the help of MP Trevor Watts, Toowoomba Counsellor Trevor Manteufel and myself.

Everything was now in place. With this in mind I proceeded to place collection boxes for the entries at the DDEC office, Toowoomba Council Chambers, Trevor Watts' office and TNSS and most of the visitor information centres in the Toowoomba region. I also visited a lot of schools leaving them a set of 11 wildlife posters I had created over the last few years and presented them with my personal invitation (lots of driving), as well as letting the schools know I would pick up the entries if needed.

Philip Bryce's (School Chaplain) enthusiasm to assist a few schools proved very beneficial, encouraging the kids to enter this competition.

It was now getting a lot closer to the presentation afternoon and entries were coming in finally. The final cut-off time for entries had arrived on the 4th of June; I now started sorting through the entries into age groups, it was unusual with only very few for the 12yr olds so for those that did enter this category this proved very beneficial for them by guaranteeing a prize.

Next day the judging started and was held at the TNSS in the halls meeting room. It was much appreciated by me for the judges Frida Forsberg, (environmental artist) Jenny Whitnall (environmentalist) and Peter Frazer (president of QLD Bush Poets) for volunteering their time, not to mention Chappy Phil who helped with coffee etc.

I had decided earlier in the day due to the lack of 12yr old entries and a huge abundance of 5yr old entries which would normally be included in the 6yr old entries, to add another category for the 5yr olds and I think will be included in the next year's competition.



Judging now completed. I collected all the winning entries to now complete and name the gift certificates, award certificates and scanned all the winning entries and typed out all the poems. All that was needed now was to create an A4 printout and assemble the book – all done. Thank goodness for Keiran from Trevor Watts' office who printed the book on the hightech office printer. Meanwhile I had printed and laminated the certificates along with the A4 pages.

Saturday the 20th June – the presentation day. I went down early along with Chappy Phil who opened the hall up to start setting up. Phil helped greatly with the final day set up. I set up the computer and checked the screens to view the presentation on and Phil organised the chairs. All was working well with the electrics, checked the prizes were co-ordinated in order with what I was displaying on the big screen – all good.

The people and kids started to arrive, along with a fine day, which was really great unlike the last two years when we had big storms with hail. We had previously set up a display board with all the prize-winning entries, along with numerous posters of the birds and wildlife and with some excellent paintings from Frida for the families to view. With the presentation underway now it was a great joy to see all the proud parents and happy children with constant smiles accepting their well-earned prizes.

We were successful again this year with the Pencil Drawing and Poetry competition and looking forward to it being an “Annual Event”. It has now been booked for the next five years at TNSS and all sponsors, judges etc have agreed to join us as the competition continues to grow.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO ASSISTED THIS YEAR, WHO WITHOUT THEIR ASSISTANCE IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN.

Charles

Most of the winners with Tim Loughland (Principal), Peter Frazer, Trevor Watts MP, Councillor Trevor Manteufel, Jenny Withnall and Frida Forsberg.



Comments:

“Love seeing the creativity of our region’s youngest artists 🎨
The 2026 Charles Dove Pencil Drawing & Poetry Competition was a hit!

Hosted by local nature photographer Charles Dove, the competition encourages kids to get outdoors, get creative, and express themselves through art 🎨🌿

Our office was proud to support Charles in creating the ‘Wildlife Warrior’ brochure, helping inspire kids to keep exploring long after the competition ends.

A huge congratulations to all of this year’s finalists and winners!” Trevor Watts MP

“An absolute pleasure to Emcee the 2026 Pencil Drawing & Poetry competition.

Instigated 3years ago by local nature photographer Charles Dove, every year goes from strength to strength. Aimed at involving students aged from age 5 to 12 across the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

Some schools represented this year were: *Back Plains, Mount Tyson, Cambooya, Downlands, Concordia, Middle Ridge, TAS and some Home school students.*” Counsellor Trevor Manteufel

“Wonderful event with so many talented budding artists and poets. Thanks, Charles Dove, for organising and running the competition.” Peter Frazer

If I was a bird

I’d fly so very high.
Up towards the clouds
And almost touch the sky.

I’d like to be a Parrot
With feathers oh so bright.
I’d eat grass seeds for dinner
And sleep in a hollow tree each night.

Perhaps I’d be an Owl
With eyes so big and bright.
And sleep all through the day.
Then hunt for my food at night.

If I was a Kookaburra
I’d laugh so very loud.
And if I was a Swan
I swim so very proud.

Maybe I’d be a Willy Wagtail
Or a tiny Fairy-wren,
If I lived down by the lake
I could be a water hen.

If I didn’t want to fly.
I’d be an Emu, don’t you know.
Then I’d run so very fast
Where ever I did go.

Yes I’d like to be a bird
If only for a Day.
I’d sing my songs loudly
And then just fly away.

By Peter Frazer

BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Pied Stilt Scientific Name: *Himantopus himantopus*

Atlas Number: 146

What does it look like?

Description:

The Pied Stilt is a large black and white wader with long orange-red legs and a straight black bill. It has black on the back of the neck, a white collar and a red iris. Both sexes are similar, and the plumage does not change during the year. Pied Stilts give a repeated high-pitched barking call. Young Pied Stilts lack black on the back of the neck and have grey-brown wings



and back, speckled with white. They have a smudged grey crown, which extends down the back of the neck as the birds get older.

Similar species:

Pied Stilts are related to Banded Stilts, *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*, which have a broad chestnut band across the breast (absent in young birds) and lack the black on the back of the neck. Young Banded Stilts can be separated from young Pied Stilts by their all white back and black wings.

Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Pied Stilt has a wide range, including Australia, Central and South America, Africa, southern and south-eastern Asia and parts of North America and Eurasia. More locally it also occurs through Indonesia, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines and New Zealand. Although widespread on the Australian mainland, it is an uncommon visitor to Tasmania.

Habitat:

The Pied Stilt is a social species, and is usually found in small groups. Pied Stilts prefer freshwater and saltwater marshes, mudflats, and the shallow edges of lakes and rivers.

What does it do?

Feeding:

Pied Stilts feed mainly on aquatic insects, but will also take molluscs and crustaceans. They rarely swim for food (unlike the Banded Stilt), preferring instead to wade in shallow water, and seize prey on or near the surface. Occasionally, birds plunge their heads below the surface to catch sub-aquatic prey.

Breeding:

As with other activities, Pied Stilts nest in small colonies; within these, the mated pairs strongly defend their individual territories. The nest may be anything from a simple shallow scrape on the ground to a mound of vegetation placed in or near the water. Both sexes incubate the eggs and look after the young.

Did you know?

Pied Stilts, like many shorebirds, don't swim while feeding. They feed by pecking at food items while wading in the water.

Calls

Pied Stilts give a repeated high-pitched barking call.

Breeding season:

Highly variable; normally August to December

Clutch Size:

3 to 4 eggs

Incubation:

25 days

Conservation Status Federal:

Secure

LINKS OF INTEREST

Can bird flu be managed?

<https://theconversation.com/the-warning-signs-are-over-australia-now-faces-a-devastating-bird-flu-outbreak-in-wildlife-288889>

With the confirmed arrival of bird flu on Australian shores the next big question is how far it will spread and what impact it will have on wildlife populations. Trying to contain the spread is difficult with large flocks of birds congregating together and also the long distant movement birds. Can there be any containment and is it possible to vaccinate mammal populations?

Indian Mynas – the cane toads of the sky.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-07-25/indian-mynas-introduced-control-pest-insects-now-the-pest/106954824>

Like cane toads Indian Mynas were introduced to control insect pests but as we know they have become a pest themselves with their aggressive behaviour towards our native species. A Canberra action group has been working to eliminate the Indian Mynas for the last 20 years but while there has been much progress on reducing numbers has the progress stalled?

Birding has a positive influence on brain health.

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/birding-influences-brain-mental-health/>

This is a fascinating story on how birding can be a powerful, nature-based prescription for people's mental well-being. The author of this article suffered a brain injury herself and discovered the benefits of birding as part of her healing process and also some of the scientific research underway to support the associated cognitive and mental advantages.

Bring back the missing midstorey for urban birds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXy0968HO0E>

This is a recording of a webinar by Birdlife Australia held recently on the lack of the complex shrubby midlayer that is missing from our urban green spaces which is causing a decline in woodland bird species that could exist if this layer was restored.

Advice from a Magpie .



Not everything is black and white