

September 2026

EDITION 528

BIRD OF THE MONTH		IN THIS ISSUE																							
Dusky Moorhen  Photo by Tony Bond		Coming Events Outing Reports TBO Calendar Common Birds and Not-So-Common Birds Coffs Coast Bird Observers Toowoomba Sojourn Bird of the Month Links of Interest	P2 P3-8 P8 P9-12 P12-15 P15-16 P17																						
OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026 The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly. The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th October 2026 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: <table><tr><td>President</td><td>Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485</td></tr><tr><td>Vice-president</td><td>Dan Bishop 0401 235 156</td></tr><tr><td>Secretary</td><td>Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446</td></tr><tr><td>Treasurer</td><td>Ann Alcock 0418 159 760</td></tr><tr><td>Newsletter Editor</td><td>Kathy Bowly</td></tr><tr><td>Committee</td><td>Jennie and Tony Bond.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Lareina Rettke</td></tr><tr><td>Records Officer</td><td>Pat McConnell 0457 422 082</td></tr><tr><td>Facebook Admin</td><td>Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Dan Bishop</td></tr><tr><td>Website</td><td>Dan Bishop</td></tr></table>		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 Rettke	Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082	Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock		Dan Bishop	Website	Dan Bishop
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS Tuesday 20TH October at 6pm, St Anthony's Parish Centre, Memory St Harristown Guest Speaker Scot McPhie "Birds on Farms Project"																									
Wednesday 14th October October 24th-30th	Lions Park, Hodgsonvale Charles Dove Species Census Pat McConnell																								
PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND																									

MID-WEEK WALK OCTOBER

Lions Park, Hodgsonvale

Date: Wednesday 14th October

Leader: Charles Dove

Time: 8:00 am

Meet location: Lions Park, New England Highway, Hodgsonvale.
<http://maps.app.goo.gl/JwhCNNTKdHLRei3r5>

Other details: Bring morning tea.
Facilities & BBQ Available

Moderate walk: *Closed footwear required.* BYO sunscreen, insect repellent and water.

RSVP: Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 13th October
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au

In the event of inclement weather, contact the leader.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS ANNUAL BIRD SPECIES CENSUS

It is once again time for our annual census.

The census will take place from 24 - 30 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 or sent to the TBO mailing address. If you have any queries, contact our records officer Pat McConnell . (0457 422 082)



Midweek Outing September 2026

Lake Dyer, Laidley

9th September

Text By Ross Begent

Lake Dyer is located at Laidley Heights between Laidley and Forest Hill in the Lockyer Valley. Managed by SEQ Water, along with Lake Clarendon as part of the Central Lockyer Irrigation Scheme, it supports irrigation in dairy, vegetable and forage crops as well as replenishing groundwater supply. The Visitor area provides excellent facilities including a popular privately run caravan & camping ground. The lake offers fishing, swimming, water skiing and jet skiing etc. Fortunately, there were no noisy powerboats on the lake during our visit. In fact, there were no watercraft at all and the lake when we arrived was as calm as the proverbial duck pond. Ideal conditions for our morning outing.

Seven keen birders arrived and before we had left the car park we saw Australasian Grebe, Black Swan, Crested Pigeon, Australian Magpie, Noisy Miner and nesting Grey Butcherbirds busily and noisily moving to and from the nest to maintain the food delivery service. We set out in a westerly direction along the southern shoreline of the lake. While the water level was lower than usual, the



Grey Butcherbird by Kathy Bowly

birdlife was plentiful. Lake Dyer is home to native fish species including Spangled Perch and Eel-tailed Catfish and has been artificially stocked with Australian Bass, Golden Perch, Silver Perch and Mary River Cod. From the number of fish jumping out of the glass-like surface it appears to provide an excellent range of cuisine for the local waterbirds who don't even need a fishing license!



Black Cormorants by Ed Crago

Australian Wood Duck, Black Swan, Great Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant and Australian Pelican were in abundance with the Pelicans looking like a



Caspian Tern by Tony Bond



Pied Cormorants by Kathy Bowly

squadron of large flying boats coming in to land with absolute precision. We also observed Great Crested Grebe, Pacific Black Duck, Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Eastern Great Egret and Royal Spoonbill. One of the many Australasian Darters appeared so used to

human habitation that it allowed us to approach very closely without being disturbed. A Caspian Tern provided a delightful display as it patrolled the lake, swooping, hovering and plunging to ensure its daily dose of Omega 3. In the woodland along the lakeside we saw Cockatiel, Red-backed Fairywren, Superb Fairywren, Little Corella, Pale-headed Rosella and Magpie Lark.

Brown Goshawk, Whistling Kite and a juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagle flew overhead. Following morning tea in the parkland we proceeded along the wall of the Bill Gunn Dam towards the Laidley Golf Club. Along the way we spotted Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Pied Stilt, Galah and Rock Dove. In the scrub on the boundary of the golf club we saw more Red-backed Fairywrens, a Striated Pardalote, Dusky Moorhen and flying at low altitude overhead, a pair of Grey-winged RAAF C-17A Globemasters seemingly looking for a very large nesting hollow!



Pied Stilt by Kathy Bowly

Ed and Tony scaled the rustic barbed-wire fence and disappeared into the golf club grounds sparking speculation about what they were actually doing. Were they visiting the 19th hole? Did they realise that Wednesday was Ladies' Day? On his return, Ed told a tale of heroically fighting off a python which sounded about the size of an anaconda but alas, they were in the golf club chasing a birdie – in this case another Red-backed Fairywren!



Red-backed Fairywren (m) by Tony Bond



Red-backed Fairywren (f) by Ed Crago

On our return to the car park, Jenni did the bird call which revealed that we had recorded 40 species for the morning. A most enjoyable outing and thank you to Charles Dove for offering to be leader once again and for sharing his extensive knowledge of the area.



White-bellied Sea Eagle (j) Ed Crago



White-bellied Sea Eagle (j) by Tony Bond



Striated Pardalote by Tony Bond



Little Corella by Ed Crago

Lake Dyer, Laidley		September 9 th 2026	40 Species
Black Swan	Great Egret	Brown Goshawk	Noisy Miner
Australian Wood Duck	Australian Pelican	White-bellied Sea Eagle	Striated Pardalote
Pacific Black Duck	Little Pied Cormorant	Whistling Kite	Rufous Whistler
Australasian Grebe	Great Cormorant	Cockatiel	Australian Magpie
Great Crested Grebe	Little Black Cormorant	Galah	Grey Butcherbird
Rock Dove	Great Pied Cormorant	Little Corella	Willie Wagtail
Crested Pigeon	Australasian Darter	Pale-headed Rosella	Magpie Lark
Dusky Moorhen	Pied Stilt	Superb Fairywren	Torresian Crow
Royal Spoonbill	Masked Lapwing	Red-backed Fairywren	
Australian White Ibis	Caspian Tern	Brown Honeyeater	

MONTHLY OUTING 26th September 2026

Jondaryan

Text by Ross Begent

While 12 birders met at Memorial Park at 7:30 in the morning I was very mindful of the changes which had occurred in Jondaryan over recent years. The area is rich in history with the Jondaryan Station claimed when it was still part of New South Wales. Once only famous for its 165 year-old heritage listed Woolshed (which also claims a list of over 112 native bird species) this quiet rural community has seen little or no change in population while mining and agriculture have brought major changes on the edge of the township. Nearby New Acland Coal Mine has production approval for 7.5 million tonnes per annum and the recently expanded Broadbent grain storage and handling facility has a capacity of 130,000 tonnes. Huge four-trailer road trains trundle down the coal haul road at the rate of around one every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day to the mountain of high-quality thermal coal just over the road at the rail loading facility. Yet, with all of this activity, the area offers a reliable diversity of birdlife and habitat which also attracts a number of species more commonly found further west.

We were joined by a keen birder on her first group birding outing with us and a very keen young lady who has just



Painted Honeyeater by Tim Bowly

arrived from Barcelona to study in Toowoomba. I quickly lost count of how many lifers she ticked off that morning!



White-winged Fairywren by Ed Crago

We drove along Jondaryan-Sabine Road and made our first stop outside the entrance to the grain storage and handling facility, in close proximity to the mountain of coal. The diversity of birdlife however, was immediately apparent with surrounding woodland, more open grassland and a small reed-lined dam which hosted Pacific Black Duck and Australasian Grebe. An Australian White Ibis scurried away and a White-faced Heron was seen. Galah, Golden-headed Cisticola and Red-rumped Parrot were seen and the strong and varied

The Jondaryan area, including along the Jondaryan-Sabine Road is well known as a prime birdwatching hotspot, famous for reliable sightings of the nomadic Painted Honeyeater, usually active from this time of the year, with recent recorded sightings in our favour. We were also hoping to see White-winged Fairywren and were planning to drive through Devon Park which is recognised as a reliable eBird hotspot for this species as well as Superb Fairywren.



Australasian Grebe by Ed Crago



Brown Honeyeater by Kathy Bowly

Moving further along Jondaryan-Sabine Road we made a number of stops to explore the roadside woodland. Honeyeaters were in abundance through the woodland sections with Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater and of course there is no show without Punch – Noisy Miners! Painted Honeyeaters played a little ‘hide and seek’ for a while and we could hear them but not see them



Double-barred Finch by Kathy Bowly



Striped Honeyeater by Ed Crago

clearly through the foliage but eventually they came into clear view. Rufous Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike were seen along the way.

EBird list this road as a popular roadside birding area where you bird straight from your car. We passed some other birders doing just that.

We also ventured offroad along a bush track through relatively undisturbed woodland. White-throated Gerygone, Grey Fantail and Willie Wagtails were active, as was the Mistletoe bird with much of the Mistletoe in flower, also a favourite with the Painted Honeyeater. A Goanna clinging to a tree at eye height was an unexpected delight as it tried to convince itself that we could not see it. We enjoyed a morning tea break on the bush track surrounded by birds!

We then turned into Devon Park Road and through to Devon Park Boundary Road towards Oakey and into the known White-winged Fairywren habitat.

Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black Kite, Whistling Kite and Nankeen Kestrel flew overhead. After some searching we were delighted to find White-winged Fairywren to top off our trio of wrens which also included Purple-backed Fairywren and Superb Fairywren – what a delight!



Australian Pipit by Ed Crago

We were delighted with the list of 45 species for the day. A most enjoyable morning and thanks to Kathy Bowly for planning the outing and leading the group.



Cockatiels by Tim Bowly



White-winged Fairywren (m) by Kathy Bowly



White-winged Fairywren(f) by Kathy Bowly

Jondaryan Sabine/Devon Park Roads		September 26 th 2026	45 Species
Pacific Black Duck	Whistling Kite	Striped Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Grebe	Black Kite	Painted honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Rock Dove	Nankeen Kestrel	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Magpie Lark
Spotted Dove	Cockatiel	Noisy Miner	Torresian Crow
Crested Pigeon	Galah	White-throated Gerygone	Golden-headed Cisticola
Peaceful Dove	Red-rumped parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Bar-shouldered Dove	Pale-headed Rosella	Olive-backed Oriole	Common Myna
Channel-billed Cuckoo	Purple-backed Fairywren	Rufous Whistler	Mistletoebird
Australian White Ibis	Superb Fairywren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Zebra Finch
White-faced Heron	White-winged Fairywren	Australian Magpie	Double-barred Finch
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	House Sparrow
			Australasian Pipit

Have you got your Calendar?

TBO Celebrating 50 Years

To acknowledge our 50th birthday, the club has created a 2027 calendar using
photographs contributed by our photographers.

The calendars are free to members. They can be collected from:

Joe Scanlan, Highfields, 0400 709 446

Mick Atzeni, Murphys Creek, 0499 395 485

Ann Alcock, Middle Ridge, 0418 159 760

Please message to arrange a time.



If you would like extra calendars they are available for \$20.00 each. Please contact Joe, Mick or Ann if you wish to purchase one (or more).

Common birds and not so common birds: Birds seen on our recent travels.

Text and photos by Joe and Sue Scanlan

Sue and I have been doing a bit of travelling and looking for birds in various places this year. I can't help but take photos of birds (mainly), even if it is just with my travel-style camera with a zoom (Sony RX-10IV). My preferred birding camera is Nikon D500 using either a 300mm F4 lens or the (much heavier) 200-500mm F5.6).

Below is a selection of those photos I wanted to share. They all have something in common.



In case you hadn't figured out what they had in common – it is that these photos weren't taken in Australia. Rather they are from Botswana, in southern Africa. We were struck by how similar some of the birds were to the Australian counterparts. In fact, the Great Egret is the same species. Some of the vegetation is also similar to that found in Queensland. This particularly applied to pasture grasses, many of which originated in southern and eastern Africa.

The birds are (L-R down): Kori Bustard; Black-winged Kite; Great Egret; Striped Kingfisher; Black-winged Stilt; African Fish Eagle; White-fronted Bee-eater; and Little Heron

And then there are these. Some birds were very different from anything in Australia.

The **Lilac-breasted Roller**(*right*) is probably one of the prettiest birds in southern Africa. It was a photo of this bird (that a friend showed me) that was the catalyst for our trips to Botswana. Even though they are common, they still impressed us every time we saw them, especially as they flew.



The **African Hoopoe** (*left*) is a small to medium-sized bird that is also stunning to look at.

Red-billed Spurfowl (*right*) are omnivorous. One of their favoured sources of food is elephant dung. They search through the dung for beetles as well as seeds. We also saw lots and lots of guinea fowl in the national parks. These were often in large groups of 20-50.



The **Goliath Heron** (*left*) is a very large heron, about 1.5 metres tall, probably the largest in the world although there are two others in Asia. Its diet is mainly fish, with a common size being 500-600 g although they can consume fish up to 1 kg and 30 cm long!



Hammerkops (left) build a nest that is a massive structure made from sticks, mud, and vegetation, often reaching up to 1.5 metres in diameter. It can support the weight of a human. The Hamerkop is widely associated with a variety of superstitions and occult beliefs. There is a widespread African superstition which holds that people are struck by lightning as a punishment for tampering with Hamerkop nests. For this reason, the Hamerkop is associated with magic and paganism. Another belief is that the nests are inhabited with dangerous snakes and must not be interfered with.



Ground Hornbill



Yellow-billed Hornbill

Hornbills nest in tree hollows. The female stays with the eggs in the nest and the hole to the nest is covered except for a small hole through which the male passes food to his mate through laying, hatching and fledging.

Ground Hornbills are very large carnivorous birds – bigger than our brush turkeys. Given that they also nest in tree hollows, it is not surprising that suitable nesting places are hard to find. They are also slow to breed, not reaching maturity till about 6 years of age. Breeding occurs about every third year and birds are usually 10 years old before they breed. They are cooperative breeders with a breeding pair needing two other birds to assist with raising the young for the first few years. Although up to three eggs are laid and may hatch, only one young is raised as the dominant chick kills the others. In the wild, birds live till 30-50 years of age.

We found the Merlin app to be really useful. The database for Botswana contains a bit less than half of all the birds that are there - but those represent (probably) over 90% of the birds you are likely to see. With a reasonable knowledge of which group your bird would be in, your search in the app will give you images and names of the ones that it could be. There are some traps: there is only one rare finch but a lot of birds that we would call finches; these were called waxbills. There is only one common parrot - Meyer's parrot which is quite non-descript. But they do have a range of beautiful bee-eaters.

If you are considering travelling to Africa to look for unspoilt habitat, then we would recommend Botswana. Their philosophy is centred on low-volume tourism. Much of the Okavango Delta and the Kalahari Desert are held in private concessions or national parks. We saw few signs of the wildlife behaviour being influenced by the presence of safari vehicles. I'm sure many readers will have seen the horrible images (from other parts of Africa) of dozens of vehicles jostling for position around lions hunting

or after a kill. Botswana is a very safe destination. It was never colonised by a European country, but rather the British were invited to help protect it. We think it is the only country in Africa that has not had a civil war.

Note from the Editor: Well-known TBO member Charles Dove recently led the Coffs Coast Bird Observers to some of his favourite local birding haunts to give them a taste of our local species. They should have been well pleased with their haul over the 4 days of 110 species plus one domestic ring-in. Please enjoy their report and photos of their visit to the Downs.

Coffs Coast Bird Observers Toowoomba Sojourn

Campout to the **Toowoomba** area –Monday 14th – Thursday 17th September 2026

Attendees:

Charles Dove (*Toowoomba Bird Observers*) *Leader*

Anne Evans

Terry Evans

Laurie Piper

Priscilla Piper

Ian MacDougal

Sandra MacDougal

Linda Rose

Jean Meiklejohn

Mandy Wright

Pam Kenway

Nick Sheppard

Ann Sheppard

George Filet

Jenny Kenna

Annabel Speight

Carol Horner

Dell Beasley

Greg Ellem

Susan Coleman (Organiser)

Tony Bond (*Toowoomba
Bird Observers*)

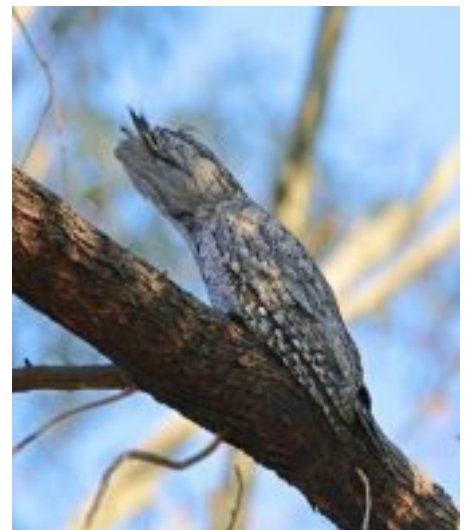
September in Toowoomba is generally glorious and we were fortunate to have beautiful weather throughout the campout. We were also there at the beginning of their Festival of Flowers and much effort has gone into large displays of beautiful annuals around the city.

Monday 14th: The group arrived at the Toowoomba Big 4 Caravan Park in Eiser St, Harristown, at various times during the day, Toowoomba being a journey of between 440 and 489 km from Coffs Harbour depending on the route taken. Those who travelled via Kyogle and ventured to Harrison St, Geneva, nearby, were lucky to see the 4 Cotton Pygmy-Geese on the lake there.

At 4pm the group met Charles Dove, our local guide at West Creek, the corner of Cortess St and Creedon Drive, and circumnavigated the lake there, seeing many water birds and two Tawny Frogmouths.

Tuesday 15th: Charles took us to the Jondaryan area near Oakey. At our first birding stop we were rewarded with an abundance of interesting sightings including Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, Striped Honeyeaters and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. At our second stop, we observed several Mistletoe Birds and the highlight: Painted Honeyeaters. In another location, we photographed a White-bellied Sea Eagle in a tree. It was very dry in the Oakey area and had not rained for some time.

On Tuesday evening we met for dinner at the Southern Hotel in Toowoomba.



Tawny Frogmouth



Powerful Owl

Wednesday 16th: Charles took us north to Cooby Dam via Highfields. Tony Bond, a Highfields resident, joined us for this day. We were excited by the number of species on the dam, including 2 Black Swans with 7 or 8 cygnets, Darters displaying, Stilts, Spoonbills, Grebes and Jacanas. We also were surprised by a domestic goose shepherding two American Cayuga domestic ducks. In the grasses around the dam, we found a Golden headed Cisticola, an Australian Reed Warbler and a Tawny Grassbird. Later, we visited Williams Park and ventured along Klein Creek. One highlight was seeing two young Grey-crowned Babbler on the same branch as a beautiful Bronzewing. On the other side of the creek, we encountered our first Lewin's Honeyeater, but then 2 fluffy Powerful Owls, which were voted the bird of the day.

On Wednesday evening, we met for our annual Quiz. Thanks to Jenny Kenna for a very interesting and memorable quiz. Ian won the competition for guessing the number of species we had seen.

On Thursday, 17th: Some of us joined Charles at Murphys Creek, Lockyer Valley to visit Trish Le Hong's Wildlife Rescue, Rehabilitation and Education Centre. Amongst other native wildlife, she is rehabilitating one Emu, two Powerful Owls, and a Wedge-tailed Eagle as well as Squirrel Gliders, Koalas, Echidnas, Kangaroos and Wallabies.

111 Species

Thanks to Pam Kenway and Annabel Speight for their beautiful photos.



Left to right clockwise: Leaden Flycatcher, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Painted Honeyeater, Red-rumped Parrot



Top left to right clockwise: White-bellied Sea Eagle (j), Pied Stilt, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-backed Fairywren, Painted Honeyeater, Tawny Grassbird.



Toowoomba Birds For Coffs Coast		14 th -17 th Sept 2023	111 Species
Brush Turkey	Great Egret	Superb Fairywren	Australian Magpie
Brown Quail	White-faced heron	Red-backed Fairywren	Pied Butcherbird
Black Swan	Australian Pelican	White-winged Fairywren	Grey Butcherbird
Australian Wood Duck	Little Pied Cormorant	Brown Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Hardhead	Little Black Cormorant	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Pacific Black Duck	Australasian Darter	Striped Honeyeater	Leaden Flycatcher
Mallard	Pied Stilt	Painted Honeyeater	Magpie-lark
Grey Teal	Black-fronted Dotterel	Little Friarbird	Torresian Crow
Australasian Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Noisy Friarbird	Australian Raven
Hoary-headed Grebe	Comb-crested Jacana	Lewin's Honeyeater	Apostlebird
Great Crested Grebe	Powerful Owl	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Rock Dove	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Red Wattlebird	Golden-headed Cisticola
Spotted Dove	White-bellied Sea Eagle	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Reedwarbler
Common Bronzewing	Whistling Kite	Noisy Miner	Tawny Grassbird
Crested Pigeon	Laughing Kookaburra	Spotted Pardalote	Fairy Martin
Peaceful Dove	Nankeen Kestrel	Striated Pardalote	Tree Martin
Bar-shouldered Dove	Cockatiel	White-throated Gerygone	Welcome Swallow
Tawny Frogmouth	Galah	Weebill	Silvereye
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Little Corella	White-browed Scrubwren	Common Starling
Fantail Cuckoo	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Common Myna
Buff-banded Rail	Red-rumped Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Mistletoebird
Purple Swamphen	Pale-headed Rosella	Grey-crowned Babbler	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Dusky Moorhen	Rainbow Lorikeet	Australasian Figbird	Red-browed Finch
Eurasian Coot	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Olive-backed Oriole	Zebra Finch
Royal Spoonbill	Blue Bonnet	Grey Shrike-thrush	Double-barred Finch
Australian White Ibis	Satin Bowerbird	Eastern Whipbird	House Sparrow
Straw-necked Ibis	White-throated Treecreeper	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Helmeted Guinea Fowl
Cattle Egret	Variegated Fairywren	Pied Currawong	

BIRD OF THE MONTH

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

Dusky Moorhen

Scientific Name: *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Atlas Number: 56

What does it look like?

Description:

The Dusky Moorhen is a medium-sized, dark grey-black water bird with a white undertail. It has a red bill with a yellow tip and a red facial shield. Young birds are much duller and browner than adults, with a greenish bill and face shield.

Similar species:

Two other water hen species are similar to the Dusky Moorhen but can be easily distinguished. The similarly sized [Eurasian Coot](#), *Fulica atra*, has a white bill and face shield and a red eye. The [Purple Swamphen](#), *Porphyrio porphyrio*, is much larger and has a distinct purple-blue colouring.



Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Dusky Moorhen is found from Indonesia through New Guinea to Australia. It is widespread in eastern and south-western Australia, ranging from Cooktown to eastern South Australia and in the southern corner of Western Australia.

Habitat:

The Dusky Moorhen is found in wetlands, including swamps, rivers, and artificial waterways. It prefers open water and water margins with reeds, rushes and waterlilies, but may be found on grasses close to water such as parks, pastures and lawns.

What does it do?

Feeding:

The Dusky Moorhen feeds in the water and on land on algae, water plants and grasses, as well as seeds, fruits, molluscs and other invertebrates. It will also eat carrion (dead animals) and the droppings of other birds. It does not dive when feeding; its tail is always visible above the water when upended.

Breeding:

During breeding season, the Dusky Moorhen forms breeding groups of two to seven birds, with all members defending territory, building nests and looking after young. The shallow platform nests are made of reeds and other water plants over water, among reeds or on floating platforms in open water. Two or more females will lay their eggs in the same nest and all members of the group help to incubate the eggs and feed the young.

Living with us

The Dusky Moorhen has been favoured by artificial water sources such as dams, ponds and lakes in parks and gardens and associated grassy areas. However, wetland drainage in other areas may have negative impacts.



Did you know?

The Dusky Moorhen does not dive when feeding; its tail is always visible above the water when upended.

Calls

Sharp guttural crowing or harsh shrieks.

Breeding season:

August to March

Clutch Size:

5 to 18, usually from more than one female.

Incubation:

24 days

Nestling Period:

28 days

LINKS OF INTEREST

It is time for the Aussie Bird Count again!

<https://birdlife.org.au/events/aussie-bird-count-2026/>

The great citizen science event of the Aussie bird count relies on you to participate in helping our Aussie birds. All that is required is 20 minutes of your time and the Aussie bird count app. With many of our beautiful birds facing extinction it is important that we know more about them in trying to protect them. Just over 2 weeks away, from 19th-25th October 2026, you can register now to participate in this important event.

The joy of birdsong

<https://theconversation.com/the-joy-of-song-where-songbirds-came-from-and-why-we-should-listen-to-them-290708>

Like humans, birds have to learn to sing, as opposed to being born with their innate calls. Zoomusicologist Hollis Taylor has dedicated a career to birdsong sounds, where it originated and how it affects us and improves our mental wellbeing. A dawn chorus is a great way to slow down!

A nightparrot chick found in remote Western Australia

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2026-09-24/young-night-parrot-found-in-wa-desert-by-indigenous-rangers/107178414>

The night parrot was thought to be extinct until recent sightings in Queensland in 2013 while in Western Australia they are rarely seen but known to be there through evidence. Now, through Ngururrpa Rangers continuous searching, a chick has been located, a very emotional find for these dedicated rangers.

Magpie Alert data base

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/australia-magpie-alert-jon-clark-swooping-season-database/zu7vq2r8s>

A data base logging where magpie swoopings have occurred was created by web developer Jon Clark, with the idea of helping communities stay alert and safe particularly through the breeding season. With the development of suburbs with parks and gardens we have created the ideal space for magpies to live and breed and unfortunately there are just a small few who become very territorial and menacing through breeding season. Perhaps one day there will be an app for that!

Australia's bird from the dinosaur age

<https://phys.org/news/2026-09-ancient-bird-australian-species-cretaceous.html>

Rare, fossilised bird bones have been found near Richmond, Queensland. To date very few bird bone fossils have been found in Australia. This find adds information to what is already known about the ancient environment and diversity of animals around what is now Richmond.

