TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS NEWSLETTER

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

October 2026 EDITION 529

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Little Friarbird



Photo by Ed Crago

IN THIS ISSUE

Coming Events	P2
Outing Reports	P3-5
TBO Annual General Meeting and President's Report	P5-7
Ten Special Birds	P7-10
TBO Calendar	P10
Bird of the Month	P11-12
Links of Interest	P13

OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th November 2026

Kathy Bowly kathryn.bowly@gmail.com

Wednesday 11th November	**Jondaryan** **Charles Dove**
Saturday 28th October	**Cooby Dam** **Dan Bishop**

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

Website: www.tboc.org.au
Email: tboc4350@gmail.com

Postal address:

P.O. Box 4730
Toowoomba East 4350

Management Committee:

President	Jarrod Kath 0439 705 417
Vice-president	Ross Begent 0418 472 592
Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446
Treasurer	Maria Mazzanti
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Bowly
Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond.
	Lareina Rettke
	Megan Rees
Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082

MID-WEEK WALK- November 2026
Jondaryan

Date: Wednesday 11th November

Leader: Charles Dove

Time: 7.30 am

Meet location: Duke St, Jondaryan QLD 4403
https://maps.app.goo.gl/p1uKSqMueL4JSGYV6

Other details: Easy walking approx. 4 km
Bring morning tea.
Facilities Available

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

RSVP: Charles Dove by 12:00 noon Tuesday 10th November
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigpond.net.au

In the event of inclement weather, contact the leader.

MONTHLY OUTING - November 2026
Loveday Cove, Cooby Dam

Date: Saturday 28th November

Leader: Dan Bishop

Time: 7.00 am

Meet location: Loveday Cove, Cooby Dam
Cooby Dam Boat Ramp Car Park

Other details: Bring morning tea.
Facilities Available
BYO sunscreen, insect repellent and water.

Moderate walk: ***Closed footwear required.***

RSVP: Dan Bishop by Friday 27th November on 0401 135 156
or danbishop@internode.on.net

In the event of inclement weather, contact the leader

MID-WEEK WALK OCTOBER 2026
Lions Park, Hodgson Vale

14th October 2026

By Ross Begent

Lions Park is located on the New England Highway (Australia's Country Way) in Hodgson Vale at the southern entrance to Toowoomba. For many, it has been a convenient place to stop along the highway without realising the extent of the park or diversity of birdlife embodied within. A short walk down the hill from the carpark soon reveals the delightful range of birds within a relatively small remnant woodland along Hodgson Creek.
Lions Park was established in the early 1990s through local stewardship from the Lions Club, the Hodgson Vale community and the then Cambooya Shire Council prior to amalgamation into the Toowoomba Region in 2008.

Eight keen birders met in the car park and set out to the north following Hodgson Creek. The wide concrete pathways and mown grass provide for easy walking. Noisy Miners, Crested Pigeons, Galahs, Torresian Crow, Pied Currawong, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Magpie Lark were in abundance as well as the introduced Rock Dove, Common Myna, and Common Starling. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes watched us from their lofty lookout high in a pine tree. Little Friarbirds were nesting nearby. Willie Wagtails were busy feeding their young while the fledglings were practicing their flying with a few learner-plate "bunny-hops" along the way.



Galah by Ed Crago



Willie Wagtail by Tony Bond

"Oom, oom, oom," The deep repetitive call of the Common Bronzewing echoed through the valley overshadowed by the high-pitched Bee Gees style falsetto call from flocks of passing Little Corellas. Those intrepid enough to explore a longer circuit along the creek were rewarded with a Buff-banded Rail. Surprisingly, there were few waterbirds along this section of the creek but lots of delightful dragonflies. While the water level was extremely low, one wonders if the water quality is also poor given the many residential developments bordering the park. Dollarbirds were observed high in a dead tree and Striated Pardalotes called as we turned around to head back to the excellent picnic area facilities for morning tea.



Oriental Dollarbird by Kathy Bowly

We then headed off again, crossing Freyling Road and heading south along another excellent concrete pathway which broadly followed Hodgson Creek. Charles shared that while Red-capped Robins come and go, they had been seen along this walk as well as Black-faced Monarch, flycatchers and kingfishers. Would they be here today? Possibly not with the water levels so low. A Collared Sparrowhawk most likely looking to raid nests was quickly extradited by the local avian residents. More waterbirds were spotted on this section of the walk including Australian Wood Duck, White-faced Heron, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Dusky Moorhen and Australian White Ibis. While we observed Red-backed Fairywrens and waited for a long time, the full-coloured males just did not show. Didn't they know it was Wrensday? A female Satin Bowerbird was heard calling. We observed a Rainbow Lorikeet peeking out of a tree hollow with what appeared to be a fluffy chick alongside but alas, junior turned out to be a piece of light-coloured bark! One dead tree housed a pair of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets in a nesting



Red-backed Fairywren (f) by Ed Crago



Rainbow Lorikeet by Kathy Bowly

hollow with two Galahs in the nesting hollow above and further up a Rock Dove, another Galah and two Dollarbirds in the penthouse. Could this model of high-density living be the cure for the government's housing crisis? Grey-crowned Babblers chortled beside us as we walked along the path. Delightful Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Double-barred Finch grazed across the lawns and Pale-headed Rosellas watched us curiously as we passed by. Other birds that are always a delight to share included Little Lorikeet, Superb Fairywren, Spotted Pardalote, White-throated Gerygone and Grey Shrike-Thrush.



Double-barred Finch by Tony Bond



Grey-crowned Babblers by Tony Bond

We have 48 species on the list so far. Can we make it to 50? No, you can't count the Muscovy or the Rhode Island Reds!! Indeed, we did make it! A total of 51 species for the day, which was very pleasing given the dry conditions, and also provided strong indication of the diversity of birdlife within this relatively small area of remnant woodland and surrounds.

Thank you, Charles for sharing your knowledge of this area, advising us about other species that can be seen if we keep coming back, and for leading our very pleasant outing.



Olive-backed Oriole by Tony Bond



Blue-faced Honeyeater by Tony Bond

Lions Park, Hodgsonvale	October 14th 2026		51 Species
Australian Wood Duck	Collared Sparrowhawk	Brown Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Oriental Dollarbird	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird
Rock Dove	Laughing Kookaburra	Little Friarbird	Grey Butcherbird
Spotted Dove	Galah	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail
Crested Pigeon	Little Corella	Spotted Pardalote	Restless Flycatcher
Pheasant Coucal	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Striated Pardalote	Magpie Lark
Buff-banded Rail	Pale-headed Rosella	White-throated Gerygone	Torresian Crow
Dusky Moorhen	Little Lorikeet	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Fairy Martin
Australian White Ibis	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey-crowned Babbler	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Olive-backed Oriole	Common Starling
Little Pied Cormorant	Satin Bowerbird	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Myna
Little Black Cormorant	Superb Fairywren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Double-barred Finch
Masked Lapwing	Red-backed Fairywren	Pied Currawong	

.

Toowoomba Bird Observers Annual General Meeting

By Kathy Bowly

The Annual General Meeting of the Toowoomba Bird Observers was held on Tuesday 20th October. A small number of members were present and our guest speaker was Scot McPhie, the co-ordinator for the Lockyer Toowoomba Birds on Farm Project.

In his presentation, Scot informed us on this local project which was commenced in January 2025. This is a BirdLife Australia program with a number of projects across Eastern Australia that are privately funded. The program aims to get a better understanding of woodland birds in the rural and agricultural setting through working with landholders and volunteer bird observers.

Scot showed us the extent of the Lockyer Toowoomba project which includes Crows Nest, Toowoomba, Gatton and Rosevale. He is now working with a number of landholders in this area and hopes to take on few more over time. The project involves regular monitoring on properties each season and also aims to guide landholders on protecting and creating woodlands on their properties. Scott related a story of one landholder in the project who would like to extend a roadside woodland habitat into his property to create a woodland corridor. The Birds on Farm team will be able to give the landholder details of birds in this habitat, their needs and guidance into how to develop an appropriate habitat on their property to support some woodland birds.

There is a strong need to ensure sustainable practices on private land are encouraged so that our bird populations can survive and thrive. This is a very worthwhile project and if you would like to help support it through volunteering some bird watching time, please contact Scot at scot.mcphie@birdlife.org.au.

President's Report - TBO AGM 20/10/26 St Anthony's Parish Centre

It's my pleasure to report on the club's activities and highlights since our last AGM. To celebrate our 50th year, the club produced a superb 2027 calendar showcasing our local birds. We ordered 150 copies. Members were given a free copy; the rest are available for sale. Thanks to our photographers for donating their chosen images, and congratulations to Ann Alcock, Pat McConnell and Charles Dove for a job well done.

Outings and newsletter

Our mid-month and end-of-month outings have been well-supported. Local outings included: Williams Park, West Creek, Redwood Park, Picnic Point, Cambooya, Hodgson Vale and Cooby Dam. Outings further afield included Ravensbourne, Goombungee, Crows Nest (Dingo Mountain), Oakey/Jondaryan, Pittsworth, and Back Plains/Ellengowan.

Ed Crago initiated and led two additional winter outings to his favourite patch, Goomburra, in the Main Range NP, and was successful in finding his two target species, Australian Logrunner and Alberts Lyrebird, for the attendees. Thank you, Ed, and well done!

My sincere thanks to all our leaders, particularly Charles Dove, who led the majority of the mid-month outings, as he has done for the past few years.

If you don't make the outings, you can always read about them! Kathy Bowly has done a great job with the Newsletter, as have those who have written the outing reports.

To everyone who contributed to the newsletter, thanks.

Committee

I have been heavily involved with the BirdLife Australia's Birds on Farms project in the Lockyer Valley/Toowoomba region.

Joe Scanlan has performed the Secretary role magnificently. Likewise, Ann as Treasurer. Ann continued to graciously host our meetings. It has been a pleasure meeting there. Ann has also managed the FaceBook page.

Dan Bishop has looked after the website and we have continued to benefit from the interactive Membership Form Dan set up last year.

Our committee members, Lareina Rettke, and Tony and Jennie Bond, have all helped me out in various ways and I am most grateful to them.

Records

For the first time, the October Species Census was conducted over 10 days (it's usually 4), from 25 October to 3 November. A remarkable 181 species were recorded, and all 20 grids were surveyed. Notable records included: Pallid Cuckoo, Spotless Crake, Banded Lapwing, Little Egret, Glossy Ibis, Great Pied Cormorant, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Bluebonnet, White-winged Fairy-wren (amazingly, in seven grids), Satin Flycatcher, White-eared Monarch, Plum-headed Finch, Russet-tailed Thrush and Common Blackbird.

During 2025, a total of 220 species were recorded in our survey area.

Some notable records in our survey area over the past year include Sooty Owl, Masked Owl, Barking Owl, Noisy Pitta, Diamond Firetails (several locations including Kearney Springs!), and Forest Kingfisher (two records).

The annual Raptor Census yielded 11 species and a total of 437 birds; 304 fewer than last year due to lower Black Kite numbers.

Swift Parrots reached SEQ this winter (turned up in the Logan area), but none were found locally during our formal and informal searches. Again, the local blossom this year was significantly less than two years ago when the Swifties were present. As our survey area contains key habitat for this critically endangered species, it was important we searched and we should continue doing so every winter.

This year, the Rarities Committee accepted an historical record of Green Catbird (Deverton,16/11/21) submitted by Roger Jaensch. The official list now stands at 309 species.

Thanks to our Records Officer, Pat McConnell, for his reports and summaries, and to all those who contributed one way or another to our records, which nowadays can include records from wildlife cameras and other sources. These are vetted to retain the integrity of our records.

Events

BirdLife SQ-Darling Downs (BSQDD) and TBO organised the second Toowoomba Birding Festival during Carnival of Flowers. Guided walks and presentations were again conducted over three weekends. Special thanks to Scot McPhie for his tireless work as facilitator.

TBO continues to support the Habitat Jondaryan project. Five members assisted in the second biodiversity survey last October and we have pledged $500 towards the printing of the next report.
Charles Dove organised another successful Drawing and Poem competition for primary school children. Well done Charlie and the competition's sponsors.
Sadly, long-time member Gloria Glass passed away in August. I was privileged to represent the club and say a few words at Gloria's private funeral. Gloria had stints as Editor and Treasurer in the '80s, and was a diehard "Atlasser"; so much so, that she organised her travel time around fitting in a 20-min, 2ha survey wherever she was going.
My father, Laurie, passed away in July. Dad was an active member before retiring to Wynnum. Suffice to say, Dad had a servant heart and was a huge inspiration to me.
This year, Ann, Dan and I will not be seeking re-election. We do so knowing that the club is greatly appreciated and strongly supported by the membership, and that there are members willing and able to take over our roles.
Finally, on a personal note, thanks to my fellow committee members for your understanding and support during this difficult time.
I now move that my report be accepted.

Mick Atzeni, TBO President

Ten Special Birds

By Pat McConnell – Records Officer

The original Toowoomba Bird Observers species list was generated on 6th October 1975 beginning with 131 species. There have now been 309 species seen within the Club's boundaries. With the 50th year coming to an end, I decided to review the records and focus on 10 species that I think are of special significance for various reasons.

Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*



By Pat McConnell

The Squatter Pigeon was species number 222 and was first seen on 11/12/1981 at Postman's Ridge. It was never a common species in the area and was only recorded at a handful of locations, most of which were near Helidon. From when it was first seen it was rarely observed again until 1988 when members started to record it regularly at the Helidon Livestock Dip where it was not uncommon to see up to four birds. Unfortunately, it was one of those species that quickly disappeared from the area. The last Club record for this species was in January 1992.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

The Red-necked Phalarope was species number 258 and was found on 8/10/1988 at Hood's Dam Helidon. Although not rare globally, at the time of its sighting it was only Australia's 13th record and the second for Queensland. Visiting birders came from south-east Queensland and New South Wales and included photographer and bird artist Peter Slater. The bird stayed for twenty-one days and at first appeared very tame allowing observers to approach within several metres. In hindsight it was probably just exhausted from becoming lost during migration. The day before it departed it was seen swimming and feeding at the centre of the dam, a behavior typical of phalaropes. This sighting shows



By Pat McConnell

the importance of large bodies of fresh water in attracting numerous species including occasionally some very rare and unusual birds. This was the only large body of water club members had access to. After access was denied in 2000, records of water birds and waders reported in our annual summaries dropped considerably.

Black-breasted Button-quail *Turnix melanogaster*

The Black-breasted Button-quail was species number 277 and was first recorded by members on 27/03/1993 in Redwood Park. A literature search of this species revealed it was first reported from Redwood Park in September 1955 by H. Nix. Has it always been present in the park, frequenting rarely visited areas, or does it leave the park from time to time when food resources become scarce? That is a difficult question to answer. Even now it can be very difficult to locate within the park, and many recent sightings have been records from strategically placed motion cameras. It has always been one of my favourite birds.



By Pat McConnell

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fucatus*

The Sooty Tern was species number 164 and was first recorded on 25/01/1976 when a dead bird was found on the Toowoomba Range Highway. The bird was found after Cyclone David had lashed the Queensland coast. This sighting shows the significance that wild weather has on bird movements. Since that sighting several other species have been found locally after such weather. These species have included Gould's Petrel, White-tailed Tropicbird and Wedge-tailed Shearwater as well as several more Sooty Terns.



By Pat McConnell

Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua*

The Powerful Owl was one of the original 131 species recorded by Club members. It is a highly sort after species being nocturnal as well as being Australia's largest owl. I recall when I joined the Club it was one of the species that I most wanted to see, and I can still remember when I sighted my first owl in Redwood Park in 1982. It was perched in clear view quite low to the ground, where the current rainforest track crosses Gatton Creek. Sightings from then on were irregular, with most observations being in the Ferny Gully area of the park. Even in this area sightings were not guaranteed. In recent years it has become one

of those species that is now easily observed at Highfields Falls or Williams Park. I suspect they are becoming more common locally with reports from many locations along the escarpment. Perched birds are often seen beside tracks where human presence doesn't seem to disturb them.



Powerful Owl By Pat McConnell



By Pat McConnell

Red Goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus* (above right)

The Red Goshawk was species number 170 and was first recorded on 10/04/1977 in 'Toowoomba'. It is classified as Endangered and is Australia's rarest bird of prey. Sightings locally have been very infrequent and the last report in the Club's records was in June 2002. Unfortunately, like the Squatter Pigeon it appears to have become extinct in the Club area. Research by Club member Chris MacColl shows it could have disappeared from 34% of its breeding range over the last four decades. There has certainly been a significant decline in numbers across eastern Australia over this time.

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*

The Swift Parrot was species number 263 and was first recorded on 21/07/1990 near Helidon. Toowoomba birders are very fortunate that this Critically Endangered species occasionally visits the area. Sightings are mainly along or near the Toowoomba escarpment but there have also been several sightings from the Helidon area. Fortunately, these areas have suitable winter feed trees for this migratory species. Numbers have been as high as 27 in Glen Lomond Park in June 2000 and 15 near Helidon in the winter of 1990.



By Pat McConnell



By Ann Alcock

White-winged Fairy-wren *Malurus leucopterus*
The White-winged Fairy-wren was species number 303 and was first recorded on 29/07/2017 in the Kingsthorpe area. It has been one of the success stories for local species as its numbers seem to be increasing with groups now seen in seven of our 20 sectors. It will be interesting to see if this eastward movement continues.

Black Honeyeater *Sugomei nigrum*
The Black Honeyeater was species number 280 and was first recorded on 3/10/1994 at Lockyer Creek, Helidon. The sighting of this species shows just how erratic bird movements can be in Australia in response to our variable climate. Severe inland drought conditions at that particular time forced this species closer to the coast than its usual distribution. At first several birds turned up to feed on the flowering callistemons, but by the time numbers peaked four days later there were at least 32 birds at this location.



By Ann Alcock



By Pat McConnell

Regent Honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia*
The Critically Endangered Regent Honeyeater was species number 307 and was recorded on 21/06/2024 at Highfields Falls. I never expected to see this species in the Club area and I think it is one of the Club's most significant sightings. Once again it shows how important it is to protect our local habitat, and habitats in general – you never know what species will use it and how important it will be to their survival.

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).

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Text courtesy of https://www.birdsinbackyards.net

Little Friarbird

Scientific Name: *Philemon citreogularis*

Atlas Number: 646

What does it look like?
Description:

The Little Friarbird is the smallest of the friarbirds, with a medium, curved bill with no casque (a bump, characteristic of other friarbirds) and a squared off tail when spread. It is brown-grey above, paler grey on neck and collar, with a distinctive bare blue-grey face patch, and pale greyish white below with fine white streaking on the breast. Females are slightly smaller, but otherwise similar. Young birds are browner above, with more yellowish colourings on chin and throat. It is a conspicuous and noisy bird, often chasing other honeyeaters, and is mostly seen higher up in trees.



Photo by Tony Bond

Similar species:

The Little Friarbird overlaps with, but is smaller than, the Silver-crowned Friarbird, *P. argenticeps*, and is much smaller and slimmer than either the Helmeted, *P. buceroides*, or Noisy, *P. corniculatus*, Friarbirds. Its blue-grey face patch and the lack of a casque on its bill also help to distinguish it from these species.

Where does it live?
Distribution:

Widespread in northern and eastern Australia, the Little Friarbird is also found in New Guinea. Found from Broome, Western Australia across the Top End to Queensland, and down the coast of New South Wales as far as the Central Coast. Widespread in Western New South Wales and northern Victoria along Murray River, to South Australia.

Habitat:

The Little Friarbird is found near water, mainly in open forests and woodlands dominated by eucalypts. Also found in wetlands, monsoon forests, mangroves and coastal heathlands. Only extend into arid zone along waterways. Mostly tropical, but also common in semi-arid zone. It will also be seen in gardens and orchards.

Seasonal movements:

Considered resident in northern Australia; further south, partially migratory in autumn and spring.

What does it do?
Feeding:

Little Friarbirds feed alone, in pairs or small flocks, almost entirely in trees, and are rarely seen on ground. Their diet is mainly nectar and invertebrates, sometimes also eating flowers, fruit and seeds. Sometimes feed in mixed groups with other honeyeaters.

Breeding:

Little Friarbirds form monogamous pairs. Both parents build the nest, a large deep open cup, often see-through, lined with fine grasses and other soft materials, which is always near or overhanging water. The female alone incubates the eggs, but both parents feed the young. Two broods may be raised in a season. Often parasitised by the Common Koel, *Eudynamys scolopacea*.

Living with us:

Sometimes killed by cats. May eat fruit in orchards.

Did you know?

Unlike other friarbirds, the Little Friarbird has no casque (bump) on its bill.

Calls
Noisy, harsh calls. Also, some musical 'che-weep, chewip, chewip, chew-will, che-will' notes give in breeding season.
Breeding season:
August to April
Clutch Size:
2 to 3, sometimes 4
Incubation:
13 days
Nestling Period:
14 days
Conservation Status
Secure

LINKS OF INTEREST

The Common Myna – from friend to foe.
https://theconversation.com/from-gentle-and-graceful-to-the-cane-toad-of-the-sky-how-australia-turned-on-the-common-myna-287303
Introduced to Australia over 160 years ago, the Common Myna has gone from being a much-admired bird, for its chatter and insect foraging, to a loathed bird now seen as bold and aggressive. It is now in the sights of conservationists and bird watchers alike to eradicate them but is it an unwinnable war?

Darwin - the city of birds.
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-18/darwin-nt-city-of-birds-unique-species-colourful-photos-top-end/107267296
With 250 plus bird species calling the Northern Territory home, Darwin provides a great gateway for birdwatchers. Could you be tempted by what is on offer from the bird world there?

Macquarie Island evacuation.
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-20/expeditioners-questioned-macquarie-island-evacuation-bird-flu/107282988
Bird flu forced the government to evacuate all expeditioners from the island as a safety precaution. However, the expeditioners are querying the rationale behind this decision from an environmental point of view.

Do birds suffer jetlag?
https://www.kgou.org/science-technology-and-environment/2026-10-29/even-birds-get-jet-lagged-study-shows
A study on Manx Shearwaters has revealed interesting data regarding long flights. It shows these birds which go out on a feeding frenzy for a couple of weeks during breeding become somewhat disorientated on return flights. The birds appear to use the sun as their compass and if they head back at the wrong time of day, things can go a little awry.

Better options for bird nesting material.
https://theconversation.com/birds-are-building-nests-with-our-rubbish-can-we-offer-them-something-better-292611
With the ongoing clearing of land and the spread of suburbia, natural nesting material for birds is disappearing. Resourceful birds turn to other sources which may include string, fishing line and plastic twine all of which can endanger their well-being. Can we offer them something better? – the Peckable Architecture project is designed to do so.

