Kedron Brook Wetlands is a unique site in the inner Brisbane suburbs. Accessed via a roundabout at the eastern end of Toombul Rd, it is a flat site made up of wetlands, grasslands, mangroves, scattered clumps of woodland trees and lantana thickets in patches along the perimeter. Pathways form a circuit around the area and link with the bike path along Kedron Brook. There are many mown strips amongst the grasslands to act as firebreaks in dry times and these can be walked when the area is not inundated after heavy rains.

This variety of habitats has resulted in an impressive species tally for this site—currently standing at 200! Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve is renowned for one special bird in the Brisbane LGA – the Australasian Grass Owl, a species sought after by birders from far and wide. Accordingly, the site is visited at dusk by observers all eager to locate it and the species has a relatively high site observation rate of 14.6%* with many ebird lists containing just that 1 species. Caution is needed though, because Barn Owls have recently been discovered at the site, and confusion between the species is certainly possible. The other owl species currently have... (Continued p. 4)

Special feature: Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve

Bird news, June 2019

The standout bird in June was a fine Red-rumped Parrot found by Brad Woodworth at Swan Lake (Port of Brisbane) on 2nd, and ultimately staying until the last day of the month. This species is scarce east of the Dividing Range, and the bird was widely twitched by local birders keen to add it to their Brisbane tally. At least 37 observers went to see the bird (and reported their sighting to eBird), demonstrating... (Continued p. 4)
how much interest there is in local rarities such as this. The bird showed no obvious signs of a captive origin, and the time of year is consistent with a coastward movement of several other dry country species. An excellent find by Brad Woodworth, although the bird was also possibly seen by other observers in the days leading up to Brad’s discovery.

Otherwise, June was a rather subdued month in Brisbane birding, with the cooler months not yet bringing in too many rare inland vagrants and the vast majority of summer migrants gone as well. Nevertheless, a band of dedicated birders did manage to pick up some goodies over the course of the month.

Shorebirds, as would be expected for June, were not around in high numbers, although the majority of regular species for the city were still picked up over the course of the month, mostly owing to dedicated shorebird observations by the Queensland Wader Study Group at the Port of Brisbane and Manly Wader Roost. Shorebirds encountered over the month included (but not limited to) Terek Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Lesser Sand-Plover and Double-banded Plover. Also on the coast, a Lesser Crested Tern was seen on the 1st at Manly (BW) and then on the 2nd at Wynnum (KC), a good record for the city, although a handful of birds make it to Manly annually. There are Lesser Crested Tern records from all months in Brisbane, but it is distinctly a winter visitor, presumably from Great Barrier Reef breeding grounds further north. The main peak of records is from May to August, but it is a rare bird even in winter. And apparently becoming rarer in the last few years, with a distinct drop in reporting rate between 2005 and 2017. Although there hasn’t been a blank year in this period, it has come very close, and for whatever reason, the species now appears to have become very rare in Brisbane. Just outside our city boundary, up to six Lesser Crested Terns were at Wellington Point (Redland) during June.

A sprinkling of migrant passerines graced the mainland, with a Spectacled Monarch at Kenmore Hills on 2nd (JB), and a Black-faced Monarch at Anstead on 6th (JD, KB). These records are interesting, as little is known about the overwintering habits of some of our landbird summer migrants. Keep an eye out for more!

Several notable scarce species around the city were recorded throughout the month too, with a Black-necked Stork at Oxley Creek Common on the 18th (LB, MB), Red-backed Buttonquail at Hawkesbury Road on the 4th (RG), Painted Buttonquail also at Hawkesbury Road on the 24th (RG), and at Lake Manchester on the 2nd (CB), and Little Bronze-Cuckoo at Fitzgibbon on the 28th – a highly unusual record for this time of year (RS).

Nocturnals were around in good numbers for those who searched, with Barn Owl at Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve on 18th June. Photograph by Terence Alexander.

Noteworthy was the sighting of a Tawny Frogmouth at Mitchelton on the 18th (LB, MB), a record for the city, although a handful of birds make it to Manly annually. There are Tawny Frogmouth records from all months in Brisbane, but it is distinctly a winter visitor, presumably from Great Barrier Reef breeding grounds further north. The main peak of records is from May to August, but it is a rare bird even in winter. And apparently becoming rarer in the last few years, with a distinct drop in reporting rate between 2005 and 2017. Although there hasn’t been a blank year in this period, it has come very close, and for whatever reason, the species now appears to have become very rare in Brisbane. Just outside our city boundary, up to six Lesser Crested Terns were at Wellington Point (Redland) during June.

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Nocturnals were around in good numbers for those who searched, with Barn Owl at Kedron (TA, MD) on the 18th, Grass Owl at Kedron throughout the month, Powerful Owl at Mt Coot-tha on 30th (JO) and Hawkesbury Road on the 24th (RG), and Southern Boobook at Hawkesbury Road on the 24th (RG), and Kenmore on the 30th (JB). Owlet-Nightjars were around in several locations, including Enoggera Reservoir on the 12th (NB), Gold Creek on the 8th (JC) and England Creek on the 26th (LB). Tawny Frogmouth were reported in good numbers across the city. No-one ventured up to the highland rainforest at night.

Most of the common raptor species around the city were reported throughout the month, while scarcesties included Square-tailed Kites at Boondall, Dowse Lagoon and Brookfield, Little Eagle at Dowse Lagoon, Port of Brisbane, Kedron Brook, Enoggera Reservoir and Oxley Creek Common, Spotted Harrier at Tinchy Tamba, Brisbane Airport, Oxley Creek Common and Shelley Road Park. Black...
Falcons at Dowse Lagoon on the 24th (GT, SM) and Oxley Creek Common on the 17-18th (JV, MGi, JC) were probably the highlights for the month. This species is enigmatic in Brisbane, with one or two birds being frequently seen, but not yet pinned down to any particular location. Perhaps that will change in the future should a breeding event occur.

Finally, some noteworthy winter nomads were reported throughout the month. These included Red Wattlebird photographed at Sandy Camp on the 29th and 30th (GD) and Whites Hill on the 22nd (GN), continuing the fantastic year for this species locally. Other winter passerines included Jacky Winter at Kholo Road (CB, JC, AN); Dusky Woodswallow at Gold Creek (CB), Kholo (AN) and Lake Manchester (CB, AN, JC, WS); Musk Lorikeet at Prior’s Pocket (RG) and Lake Manchester (CM, AN).

All in all, not a bad 30 days for the city’s birds, but let’s hope July brings more rarities!

Round-up by Louis Backstrom, Richard Fuller and Sandra Gallienne. Note that sightings reported here may or may not be confirmed, and records of rarities are pending acceptance by relevant rarities committees.

Spot the odd one out! Eagle-eyed Ged Tranter noticed this Rock Pigeon flying with Topknot Pigeons over Dowse Lagoon on 16th June.

This pair of Red-backed Fairywrens at Adavale Street on 28th June was engaged in mutual preening, a pair bonding behaviour. Photograph by Ed Frazer.
a much lower reporting rate—Southern Boobook has just 3 sightings (0.35%) and Barn Owl, four (0.46%), the most recent record for it being on 18th Jun 2019 by Michael Daley and Terence Alexander.

Other than the Australasian Grass Owl, the site is special for the diversity of waterbird species, especially the waders that inhabit the wetland areas in the summer months with the most prolific being the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, currently reported at 35.5% and Marsh Sandpiper at 11%.

Past records indicate there is always a chance of something rare appearing. Unusual species such as Long-toed Stint have appeared twice – first reported just once in 2004 by Dez Wells and not seen again until 2018 when up to 3 individual birds were reported another 51 times, currently it is recorded at a rate of 6.1%. Australian Spotted Crane has also appeared twice and was first reported on Birdline on 29th August 2013 by Roger Jaensch. The species reappeared in January 2018 and up to 3 individuals were reported another 39 times in that year between January and November giving it a current reporting rate of 4.7%. There are no records for 2019.

Pectoral Sandpiper was first reported in October 2011 by Dez Wells, there were a further 2 records in 2015 by Roy Sonnenburg, 9 records from September to November in 2017 and 24 records in 2018. The species has a current reporting rate of 4.2%.

Despite the euphoria of locating some of these unusual species, many dedicated birders have taken the time to provide more general data to eBird which also generates other interesting statistics: Along with the waders, many ducks frequent the wetlands. Chestnut Teal are the most commonly reported at (57.7%), with Pacific Black following about 10% behind on (47.6%). Some of the more unusual species seen are Plumed and Wandering Whistling-Ducks with only 5 records each (0.6%), Freckled Duck which was reported 9 times in April/May 2013 giving it a reporting rate of 1.05%, Australasian Shoveler on 3.6%, Pink-eared Duck x 35 on 3.9% and the Australian Wood Duck comes in at a surprisingly low rate of just 4% despite being one of the most widely encountered species around Brisbane! Red-necked Avocets, Plovers, Dotterels, Gulls, Cormorants, Australian Pelicans, Egrets, Herons and Spoonbills all call the wetlands home. Black Swans appear at a rate of about 25% whilst Magpie Geese, currently reported at a rate of just 5.3%, seem to have recently discovered the site for a night roost with up to 560 birds being reported by Ged Tranter and John O'Shea in May 2019. 450 reported by Malcolm Graham and Steve Pratt and 500 by J&P Manins on recent June lists. Pied Stilt are the most frequently reported species on 82.85% jostling for position with Australian White Ibis on 82.5%, whilst Torresian Crow ranks third at 78.5%, Australian Pelican fourth at 73.7% and Masked Lapwing fifth at 70%.

Eurasian Coot have not yet been recorded in 2019 and numbers much lower than might be expected for a Brisbane wetland with a reporting rate of just 3%. It's also not a site favoured by Comb-crested Jacana with just 7 records and no reports since 2013. Black-necked Stork has only 3 records and has not been seen since 2015.

Some relatively common Brisbane species have only ever been reported at Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve once – Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Pale-headed Rosella, White-throated Tree Creeper, Little Wattlebird and Eastern Whipbird being amongst those, keeping company with other one-time and much less common species such as Pallid Cuckoo, Great Knot, Black-faced Monarch, Shining Flycatcher, Little Grassbird, House Sparrow and Wedge-tailed Eagle – all 0.11%.

Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve is exceptional for raptors with Black-shouldered Kite being reported 466 times – 54%, Brahminy Kite x
354 (49%) Whistling Kite x 256 (29.9%), White-bellied Sea-Eagle x 247 (28.9%) and Swamp Harrier x 159 (18.3%). Both Square-tailed Kite and Pacific Baza have even been seen 3 times or 0.3%, Black Falcon and Grey Goshawk x 6 (0.7%), Peregrine Falcon x 12 (1.4%), Little Eagle x 14 (1.6%), Collared Sparrowhawk x 18 (2%), Black Kite x 23 (2.5%) with Niko-las Haass reporting the first record for the site of a massive 85 birds on 14/8/2013, Spotted Harrier x 27 (3.2%), Nankeen Kestrel x 32 (3.8%), Australian Hobby x 33 (3.9%), Brown Falcon x 39 (4.6%), Osprey x 42 (5%), and Brown Goshawk x 86 (10%).

Parrot species are represented by Galahs, Long-billed and Little Corellas, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets all in reasonable numbers with Little Lorikeets just getting a look-in with 2 sightings only.

Apart from the Black and White Brigade of Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Willie Wagtail and Magpie-Lark, bush birds are generally uncommon at this site except for those that favour mangroves with Mangrove Gerygone at 56.5%, Brown Honeyeater at 50.6%, Mangrove Honeyeater at 36.5% Silvereye at 35.4% and Tor- resian Kingfisher at 15.6% reported far more frequently than anything else. Noisy Miner is only reported at a rate of 7.5%, with Noisy Friarbird at less than 4% and Lewin's, Yellow-faced and Scarlet Honeyeaters, Little Friar-

Kedron Brook Wetlands Reserve supports one of the highest densities of Red-kneed Dotterels in Brisbane. This photograph was taken on 10th February 2018 by Hayley Alexander.

3DJH 9ROXPH,VVXH Superb Fairywren 45.8% and Red-backed Fairywren 41.6% occur in predictably high concentrations. Even some of the more western grassland specialists have put in an appearance at the site with records of Rufous Songlark at 1.2%, Brown Songlark at 1% and Australian Bushlark at 0.6%. Finches are surprisingly scarce apart from Chestnut-breasted Mannikin at 39.4% with 29 records for Double-barred Finch at 3.4%, 11 for Red-browed Finch (1.3%), 4 for Scaly-breasted Munia (5%) and 1 for Zebra Finch (0.11%). Plum-headed Finch which does occasionally occur at sites around Bris-
bane has never been reported here.

About 70% of the species recorded at the site have been photographed at least once but there are still some notable omissions such as Australian Wood Duck, Hardhead, Crested Pigeon, Dusky Moorhen, Pied Butcherbird and Mistletoebird but the biggest lack in the media department is sound recordings with the only species ever recorded at this site being: King Quail by a very diligent Michael Daley.

Further details of other photographs and sound recordings missing can be seen by viewing the Il-
lustrated Checklist for the site on eBird.

Story by Sandra Gallienne
eBird skills: Adding sound recordings to your checklists

Equipment to make sound recordings of bird vocalisations is now widely and relatively cheaply available. Good quality recordings can even be made on a smartphone, and audio editing software is freely available, e.g. Audacity. There is extensive help on this topic on the eBird website, and here are some notes to help you get started. The guiding principle is that the file you upload should be an accurate copy of an original field recording. This means doing a minimal amount of editing to sound files.

Key points for audio media include:

- Create and submit .WAV Files
- Trim the start and end of recordings. Don’t trim silent periods within the recording, for example between intermittent calls of a bird. Full guidelines on editing sound files in Audacity for eBird can be found on the eBird help pages.
- Group multiple recordings of the same individual into the same sound file
- Avoid filtering or cosmetically editing the file. Sound editing software allows you to “erase” background birds, loud insects, raindrops, stomach growls, etc. But this can interfere with many aspects of the sound file. Filter only where a critical sound is being masked.
- Adjust the level of each recording so that the level of the peak bird sound reaches -3 dB.
- Include voice announcements on your recording, such as species, date, time, and location information, as well as any other important notes about behaviour, habitat, recording equipment, and weather.
- Save copies of your original sound files before editing.

Mystery photo

Can you identify this bird? The picture was taken in Brisbane. Answer next month.

Last month’s challenge was clearly a kingfisher, but which one? There are three candidates in Brisbane—Forest, Sacred and Torresian. Forest is strongly blue in colour, and doesn’t normally occur perched on mudflats. Sacred does often perch on mudflats, but has an ill-defined streak, rather than spot, above the lores (the word “lores” refers to the area between the bill base and the eye), which is often buffy. The bird in this photograph is primarily green, has a robust bill, a crisp white supraloral (“above the lores”) spot, and clean white underparts. A Torresian Kingfisher.

Contributing to the Atlas

If you can, please donate your time and expertise to help make the Atlas of the Birds of Brisbane the best it can be. For full details, see the Contributing section of the Atlas website—http://brisbanebirds.com. Here are some of the key things you can do to help create this landmark resource.

Go birdwatching in the Brisbane City Council area and enter your observations on eBird, a free tool for recording bird observations. All eBird records in Brisbane will be automatically included in the Atlas. If you have old records stored away on notebooks and such, you can enter them into eBird too!

Write some text for the Atlas, or edit and improve the existing text. Full instructions are in the Contributing section of the Atlas website, or contact an administrator for a Word document that you can edit.

Contact the Atlas administrators with any questions or suggestions: Louis Backstrom (louis.backstrom@gmail.com) or Richard Fuller (r.fuller@uq.edu.au)

“All eBird records in Brisbane will be automatically included in the Atlas”
Undersurveyed Atlas Square: Damascus Barracks

Brisbane is divided into 2 x 2 km Atlas squares. Each square has a target of 12 birdwatching visits in each of the four seasons. Very little data currently submitted for this industrial grid square. While it is unlikely that the Atlasser will notch up an impressive species list here, it is important to survey these sorts of squares as they inform us about how birds are adapting to increasingly humandominated environments. Try birding in some of the patches of green visible on the map, or just around the industrial estates. Nocturnal work also needed. Download the survey sheet here.

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Widespread resident of cooler, dense forests around the city. Occasionally ventures into urban parks and gardens, but prefers remnant habitat. Not of conservation concern, but vulnerable to habitat modification and rising temperatures. Photo by Louis Backstrom, Gold Creek Reservoir, 22 Feb 2018.

From the Atlas: Australian King-Parrot

A familiar parrot to many Australians, both birders and non-birders alike, the Australian King-Parrot is a large, distinctive endemic with bright red and green plumaged males and vibrant green females. They are typically found in pairs or small family groups, although counts of up to 20 have been recorded. They are widely distributed across suitable habitat in Brisbane, and do wander occasionally.

A widespread species of parrot, the Australian King-Parrot is a familiar site to birders from Cooktown...
in the north to Melbourne in the south, with some evidence for local increases in abundance across its range. Within Brisbane, they are an uncommon yet widely distributed species, although they can be moderately common in the right habitat. There is no apparent trend in their population size currently.

King-Parrots are widely distributed across much of the city, but are mostly concentrated around the forested western suburbs north of the river, from Enoggera in the north east to Anstead in the south west; there is also evidence to suggest they are common throughout the Camel’s Head and Body, but currently very little data exist for this region so this is unverified. Although never occurring in large numbers in Brisbane, counts of up to 20 birds have been reported, with a high count in July 2015 at Gold Creek Reservoir (Prowse 2015), a key location for this species. Counts of over a dozen birds have been recorded from a further 8 locations, including Anstead Bushland Reserve, Sherwood Arboretum and Araucaria Circuit at Enoggera Reservoir.

Birds are present in Brisbane year-round, with no clear seasonal changes in their abundance. Currently very few breeding data exist for the species, with only one report of nest-building activity at Bellbird Grove in late October. As a species somewhat dependent on remnant denser forest habitats, this species is at a low risk of habitat loss and degradation across its range in Brisbane, but given the large amount of habitat still available to them, as well as their ability to adapt to urban habitats across other parts of their range, the species is not currently of any significant conservation concern.

**Distribution and Habitat**

Australian King-Parrots are found across a large area of Brisbane, but are mostly found in the western forests of the D’Aguilar Range. They are also occasionally reported from the remnant tracts of bushland on the Southside, including White’s Hill, Forest Lake and Toohey Forest. They are mostly absent from the lowlands near the coast and on Moreton Island, where the species has never been reported.

With regard to elevational distribution, King-Parrots are a mid-range species withing Brisbane, occurring at an average elevation of approximately 100m, although they have been reported from sea level all the way up to the highest parts of the LGA over 600m. Birds do not appear to move across elevational gradients on a seasonal scale.

King-Parrots have been recorded from nearly every filled Atlas grid square west of the city, indicating that the species is likely common across the whole of the D’Aguilar and Taylor Ranges, including the sections of the Camel’s Head and Body which currently have no data available from them. As such, the species is likely more common in Brisbane than the data suggest, but is typically found further away from human disturbance.

The distribution of King-Parrots in Brisbane shows no clear seasonal variation, with birds being found in roughly the same areas across the year, and at the same elevations as discussed above. Given the scarcity of breeding data currently available, it is possible that birds move to less surveyed areas (or regions beyond Brisbane) to breed, but this seems less likely than the alternative that birds are simply less conspicuous when nesting, as with most species. More data are needed to confirm this.
Seasonality

Not much is currently known from the data regarding Australian King-Parrot’s breeding habits within Brisbane. The current limited data suggest a spring-summer nesting period, in line with the broader literature (Higgins 1999). Interestingly, the two months with the lowest reporting rate for this species, November and December, are during this period, so it is possible that birds are more difficult to observe or simply less abundant during the breeding period. However, more data are needed to ascertain the nature and cause of this minor pattern.

Trends

The annual reporting rate for King-Parrots has been quite variable over the last decade, with some years having birds reported on nearly 15% of all complete checklist and others having fewer than 5% of all checklists reporting the species. Additionally, over the past 5 years each successive year has had a lower reporting rate than the previous, indicating that these birds may be declining somewhat. Given the overall variation seen in the long-term data it is hard to be sure of this, but the abundance of these birds should be monitored into the future to ensure no large-scale population decline is occurring.

The species is not of any broader conservation concern across Australia, and given Brisbane's population is somewhat peripheral to the bulk of this species range along the forests of the Great Dividing Range it is unlikely that local declines in Brisbane, if they are occurring, are necessarily related to broader declines across the entire population. Nonetheless, large-scale deforestation and land clearing do threaten this species, as with many others.

Information Gaps

- Collect more breeding data
- Determine whether birds remain in Brisbane to breed, and if so why they are more difficult to detect
- Ascertain the reason behind the slight dip in reporting rate toward the end of the year
- Collect distribution data from within unsurveyed Atlas squares in the western forests

Key Conservation Needs

- Protect old growth forests from being cleared
- Monitor population size for any local or large-scale declines

Contributors to Species Account

“If you spot errors, or see any additions that can be made, contact an editor—see back cover.”
Birding Brisbane: Birds and Birdwatching in the River City

We would love to able to use your photographs from eBird in future issues of Birding Brisbane. Please email Richard Fuller (r.fuller@uq.edu.au) to give us permission to reproduce your images directly from eBird.

Birding Brisbane is a monthly newsletter aimed at sharing information about birds and birdwatching in Brisbane. It is a companion project to the Atlas of the Birds of Brisbane, which is compiling all known information about the birds of Brisbane into a single reference work. The Atlas uses eBird data. Any eBird records submitted in Brisbane will automatically be incorporated into the Atlas.

The Atlas is being written by the birdwatching community, and is freely available at [http://brisbanebirds.com](http://brisbanebirds.com).

The geographic area encompassed by this newsletter is the Brisbane Local Government Authority boundary, and all coordinates offshore that are closer to Brisbane LGA than any other LGA.

Please feel free to contact the Atlas editors with any questions, suggestions or offers of help: Louis Backstrom (louis.backstrom@gmail.com); Richard Fuller (r.fuller@uq.edu.au).

List of Observers

AN Andrew Naumann; BW Brad Woodworth; CB Chris Burwell; GD Geoff Dennis; GN Greg Neill; GT Ged Tranter; JB Jim Butler; JC Jo Culican; JD Jill Duncan; JO John O'Shea; JV Jason Vassallo; KB Ken Bissett; KC Katherine Clark; LB Louis Backstrom; MB Mike Bennett; MD Michael Daley; MGi Mat Gilfedder; NB Niel Bruce; RG Rod Gardner; RS Ross Smith; SM Stephen Murray; TA Terence Alexander; WS Wayne Schulz.

Golden Whistler, Ransome, 15 Jun 2019 (Hayley Alexander)