

The common birds of Oxley Creek Common – two page handout

Professor Hugh Possingham – 2007

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Oxley Creek Common is home to a remarkable variety of birds. An experienced observer can find as many as 70 species in one hour of observation during the spring – about 10% of all Australia's bird species and several times the diversity one could find walking the suburbs. In the past three years over 150 species have been recorded on the Common. The more regularly seen species are listed overleaf. This handout discusses some aspects of the interesting birdlife on Oxley Creek Common.

Waterbirds

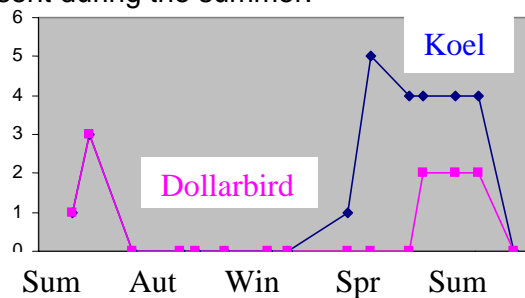
The abundance and variety of waterbirds is a feature of the Common. The huge Black-necked Stork (Jabiru) is not uncommon. Black Swans, Australian Pelicans, cormorants, ducks, ibis and as many as four species of egret can be seen in a single visit. Pelican Lagoon provides permanent fresh water, which becomes especially valuable in dry times. Ephemeral lagoons and associated wet grass and mud are habitat to a continually changing mix of species, while Oxley Creek itself is home to the specialized mangrove species like the Mangrove Gerygone. Unfortunately Pelican Lagoon is threatened by an aquatic weed, *Salvinia*, and the nearby wetlands are heavily grazed.

Latham's Snipe

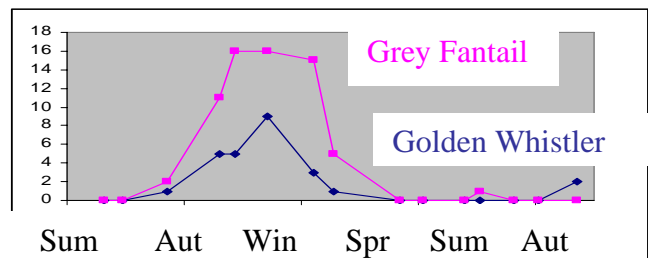
A regular summer visitor to the Common is the Latham's (formerly Japanese) Snipe. This species migrates each year to Australia from its breeding grounds in Japan. It is protected by an international treaty with Japan and federal biodiversity legislation – the EPBC Act (1999). This means that all changes in management on the Common *should* be referred to the federal Minister for The Environment.

Seasonal changes

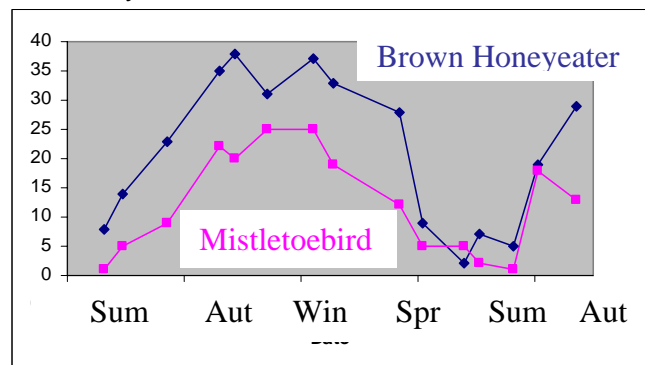
Some species, like the Koel and Dollarbird are only present during the summer.



Species like the Grey Fantail and Golden Whistler are mainly winter visitors.



Some species are always present but show clear changes in abundance – often due to the seasonal availability of food like nectar.



The Fairy-wrens

Oxley Creek Common is home to three species of Fairy-wren: Superb (blue and white), Variegated (blue and red), and Red-backed (black and red). Fairy-wrens are rare or absent from suburban gardens because of lack of cover and domestic predators (mainly cats). Wild places like Oxley Creek Common are the last refuge for these delightful birds in the city. If we fail to keep these places free from development, then Brisbane may become like Adelaide – which has no species of Fairy-wren in the city.

Grassland birds

Plum-headed Finches, Chestnut-breasted Mannikins and Brown Songlark are three of a wide variety of grassland birds that are otherwise hard to find in and around Brisbane. Golden-headed Cisticola, Cattle Egret, Tawny Grassbird, Pipit, Brown Quail and several birds of prey are all regular in the extensive grasslands. These species are absent from built-up areas.

Ticklist of the **Common birds of Oxley Creek Common** – the percentages reflect the chance of seeing these species in a 100 minute visit (data from 35 visits by Hugh Possingham, 2004-2006). Many rarely recorded species are not on this list. Email me for the full annotated list, h.possingham@uq.edu.au.

Brown Quail	40%		Australian Warblers	Superb Fairy-wren	97%	
Waterbirds				Variegated Fairy-wren	49%	
Magpie Goose	14%		Red-backed Fairy-wren	100%		
Australian Wood Duck	54%		Striated Pardalote	43%		
Pacific Black Duck	100%		White-browed Scrubwren	89%		
Grey Teal	71%		Mangrove Gerygone	69%		
Hardhead	37%		Honeyeaters			
Australasian Grebe	86%		Striped Honeyeater	60%		
Darter (Anhinga)	37%		Noisy Friarbird	23%		
Little Pied Cormorant	43%		Little Friarbird	54%		
Little Black Cormorant	66%		Blue-faced Honeyeater	60%		
Great Cormorant	23%		Noisy Miner	100%		
Australian Pelican	29%		Lewin's Honeyeater	74%		
White-faced Heron	54%		Brown Honeyeater	100%		
Little Egret	26%		Scarlet Honeyeater	23%		
Great Egret	34%		Thickheads/Flycatchers/Monarchs			
Intermediate Egret	71%		Eastern Whipbird	94%		
Cattle Egret	100%		Eastern Yellow Robin	26%		
Nankeen Night Heron	31%		Golden Whistler	31%		
Glossy Ibis	34%		Rufous Whistler	49%		
Australian White Ibis	89%		Grey Shrike-thrush	77%		
Straw-necked Ibis	60%		Magpie-lark	100%		
Royal Spoonbill	34%		Grey Fantail	46%		
Buff-banded Rail	26%		Willie Wagtail	100%		
Purple Swamphen	97%		Spangled Drongo	80%		
Dusky Moorhen	80%		Others			
Eurasian Coot	54%		Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	94%		
Latham's Snipe	29%		Olive-backed Oriole	66%		
Black-winged Stilt	94%		Figbird	97%		
Black-fronted Dotterel	40%		White-breasted Woodswallow	40%		
Red-kneed Dotterel	14%		Grey Butcherbird	97%		
Masked Lapwing	97%		Pied Butcherbird	97%		
Raptors			Australian Magpie	100%		
Black-shouldered Kite	17%		Pied Currawong	20%		
White-bellied Sea-eagle	20%		Torresian Crow	100%		
Brown Goshawk	14%		White-throated Needletail	17%		
Brown Falcom	17%		Richard's Pipit	91%		
Australian Hobby	11%		Double-barred Finch	91%		
Nankeen Kestrel	20%		Plum-headed Finch	14%		
Pigeons			Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	41%		
Rock Dove	57%		Mistletoebird	94%		
Spotted Turtle-Dove	91%		Welcome Swallow	80%		
Crested Pigeon	77%		Tree Martin	69%		
Bar-shouldered Dove	97%		Fairy Martin	37%		
Parrots			Clamorous Reed-Warbler	66%		
Galah	51%		Tawny Grassbird	91%		
Little Corella	17%		Golden-headed Cisticola	100%		
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	69%		Silvereye	100%		
Rainbow Lorikeet	100%		Common Starling	34%		
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	89%		Common Myna	77%		
Pale-headed Rosella	63%					
Cuckoos and Kingfishers						
Common Koel	37%					
Channel-billed Cuckoo	29%					
Pheasant Coucal	34%					
Laughing Kookaburra	80%					
Sacred Kingfisher	40%					
Rainbow Bee-eater	20%					
Dollarbird	11%					