

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher, Jim Butler

MY LOCAL PATCH (PART 3)

Bird fauna at a given site is dependent upon the types of habitat present. My local patch at Gap Creek Reserve is an open Eucalyptus forest of grey gum, spotted gum, ironbark and stringybark trees. The major variation of habitats is provided by the sculpturing of the landform into gulleys and ridges which produces differences in moisture levels, soil depths and foliage species. In some of the moister sections there are rainforest species.



These variations then determine the vertical structure of the foliage: ground, shrub, mid and canopy layers. The type of foliage at each layer then regulates what insects, fruit and seeds are available. In the grand scheme of habitats around Brisbane those available at my patch are very restricted; and clearly missing are grasslands, woodlands and open water which are home to many bird species.

Within the restricted habitats at my local patch, I found, over a five year period, 85 out of a total of about 300 bird species that are

within the greater Brisbane area. Of the 85, about 35 of the birds were residents in the Reserve, they could be found on almost every visit. Another 20 bird species were migrants; 14 of them came for the summer and 6 during winter. So as I write, two of most beautiful winter migrants, the Rose Robin and the Eastern Spinebill are there. Then there are the 15 nomads, principally the hawks and pigeons, which daily roam a large area in search of food. The remainder are very secretive and rarely seen within a two hour walk.

To increase my knowledge of birds beyond the 85 at Gap Creek I have had to move my local patch to where there are grassland and open water habitats and there I have gained a further 50 bird species.

Happy systematic birding!

~ Jim

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Image: Two Striated Pardalotes at a nest hole
Image taken by Ed Frazer at Brookfield