

# Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher, Jim Butler

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## THE SINGING PLANET : DAWN CHORUS

Our spinning Earth continuously creates a longitudinal semicircle of dawn! Always, somewhere, the sun is rising over the eastern horizon and the birds burst into song. As Kroodsma says "It is the combined, unadulterated, prolonged concert that pleases me the most... dawn's first light sweeps relentlessly around our globe, evoking a continuous dawn chorus of birdsong." This dawn singing extravaganza has been circling Earth for 150 million years! It comes to Brisbane each and every morning. *"The earth has music for those who listen."* Shakespeare.

The birds' dawn chorus is a beautiful daily event available to most of the planet's inhabitants for their enjoyment. One of the first to sing is the Eastern Yellow Robin, he begins in the dark just before the sun appears. The time just around dawn is a good time to sing because the air is normally still and sound transmission is good. It is also a time when many of the daytime predators are not on the move yet because the air



has not heated up. Thirdly, for insectivorous birds food is not easy to find until later in the day when the air has warmed up. Fourthly, many female birds lay eggs in the morning (so they are lighter when they are feeding later) and the best time to mate is in the hour before the eggs are laid. A male then is getting the best of several worlds if he sings well enough to attract a mate in the morning. The female can benefit as well because the quality of a male's song depends partially on the amount of food he had the day before, so a male who sings well after a long night with no food is likely to be good at finding food and therefore worth mating with.

Happy Birding

- Jim

Image: Eastern Yellow Robin by Ed Frazer ©