

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher, Jim Butler

Contact Jim at: beautifulbirds@y7mail.com

Western residents monitoring bird biodiversity



Peter Doherty's name and his achievements, (Nobel Prize, The Australian of the Year) since his early life and education in Brisbane are well known. What is less well known is his passion for birds. He has written about birds in his 2012 book "Sentinel Chickens: What birds tell us about our health and the world." The book is a fascinating read.

The first message of this book is the highly significant role birds play in research on human health. The bird-human interface was part of Peter's professional work for 30 years. In Sentinel Chickens Peter argues that all of us should be focussed on recording the responses of the birds to the management of our shared environment because caring for the well-being of birds is directly related to caring for ourselves.

The second message concerns our role in collecting data about the responses of the birds to environmental change. Peter

became aware, while writing this book, of how scientifically significant are the efforts of devoted bird watchers whose recorded observations are collected nationally by BirdLife Australia. Becoming a contributing bird watcher is achieved with minimal outlay: a good pair of binoculars; a bird identification guide in book form or as a phone app; time to watch, record and learn; and time to electronically submit data online to the Australian databases. The impact on local birds of climate change, of habitat destruction, of revegetation processes can only be measured by long-term, careful observations. Residents are ideally placed to provide this long-term data. To make your observations count, contact the bird organisations: BirdLife Southern Queensland, Birds Queensland or me.

Happy Birding!

~ Jim

Image: Peaceful Dove by Mike Ford ©