

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher, Jim Butler

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MY LOCAL PATCH (PART 1)

There is something enduringly wonderful about creating and anchoring beautiful bird memories in a local patch of bush. It is like placing permanent post-it notes on particular branches, in special bushes and points along the tracks. The patch of bush becomes a matrix of special places that trigger the image of a bird, what it was doing, the time of day, the ambient colours, the magnitude of the thrill. I have created my own local patch over five years. I did this for myself, over sixty consecutive, 2 hour monthly visits to the bush at the Gap Creek Reserve. The Reserve is "my local patch"!

I can fill pages with stories of the birds that I have encountered at the Reserve. The dark branch where the Powerful Owl roosted. The very low bush where the Variegated Fairy-wren nest hung. The lonely Casuarina where the Yellow-tailed Black Cuckoo was feeding its fledgling. The high tree where the young Koel cuckoo was being rejected by the Noisy Friarbirds. The bend in the track where I was totally startled by the Tawny Grassbird. These incidents



are the waypoints of my watchful meanderings now at the Reserve. They have transformed the patch of common eucalypt forest at the Reserve into a magical place for me. Memory and magic glowing in my local patch.

My local patch is my unique creation; it belongs to me, visible only to me, enriching me. But my wonderful store of bird memories in the Reserve does not in any way exhaust the resources and richness of the birds and the bush there. If we look after the Reserve by continuing the great work of the Council, the Moggill Creek Catchment Group and others it will always be there for numerous others, now and in the future, to create beautiful "local patches" of their own.

~ Jim

Image: Jim in the Bush
Photo: Anne Butler