

# Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher,  
Jim Butler



## BEST SINGER

Last month I nominated the Australian Magpie as our greatest songbird. Tim, a friend from Savages Rd Brookfield, wrote to contra nominate the Grey Butcherbird. His superb story in support of his nomination is presented here:

“Quite some years ago now, I was sitting on the patio pavers, with legs outstretched across the lawn, eating my lunch when I was joined by a Grey Butcherbird, who naturally thought it appropriate that I share. I did of course. At the conclusion of the meal, he jumped onto the paver edge somewhat less than a metre from me and started to tell me how thankful he was. I guess it must have been close to half an hour before we concluded our get together. There was none of the typically shrill “chee, chee, chee, cheeee” that is usually uttered from a tree top, No, in this time he continually chatted, sang, whistled and chortled in a quiet melodious voice with only the briefest of pauses, but the remarkable thing was that he never, once repeated a passage!

I will never know to this day exactly what this was all about, clearly an appreciation of the meal

consumed but perhaps far more. I believe he expressed friendship by way of complicated muse or verse. Or was this a saga? Was he telling me about the lives and loves of Butcherbirds? One thing is certain however, and that is that, he clearly felt comfortable with me and the world around him, that things were just fine, contentment, and that I was considered to be a just a part of that feeling of well-being. What more can I say?”

Tim’s experience is clearly supportive of the second great revolution in ornithology over the last ten years – the discovery that some of our birds have mental attributes once thought to be specific to humans and apes!

No more insults: “You big Galah”!

~ Jim

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Image: Grey Butcherbird by Richard Slaughter