

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher,
Jim Butler



LAWNS AND BIRDS

As urbanisation increases and the natural environment becomes increasingly fragmented, the significance for biodiversity conservation of the remaining vegetation grows and urban habitats become increasingly important for bird survival. When combined, the wooded acreage properties and domestic gardens in our area, make up a very extensive landscape of habitat vegetation under private stewardship. Therefore, our properties and gardens have huge importance as bird conservation locations. However, they are not always friendly to birds.

Spacious lawns around high isolated trees attract only big and aggressive birds like Noisy Miners, Magpies and Pied Currawongs. Of the small birds, perhaps only the Willie Wagtail prefers lawns, while the Eastern Spinebill and many other birds avoid them. Looking at your own property and garden is

it simply a smooth lawn with a few scattered trees, or is it structurally complex with lots of layers: trees and shrubs of different heights, grasses, ground cover, leaf litter? A more structurally diverse property or garden will support more bird species. To bring the small birds into your garden the key is to create structural diversity at a low level – so lots of plants and lots of different shrub layers. Gardens do not have to have trees to attract birds, a garden consisting of shrubs and grasses can still be effective. Retaining patches of open grass (not lawn!) is important for the rosellas and finches to forage on.

The photo shows the Variegated Fairy-wren which is found in our local woodland and shrub habitats; but it seldom strays into the open and certainly not onto lawns. These birds are primarily insectivorous and forage and live in the shelter of scrubby vegetation across 90% of continental Australia. Around Brisbane it is found in areas with dense undergrowth. To bring this beautiful bird and other small birds onto your property, go to http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/page/attachments/doc_16_guidelines_domestic_gardeners_0.pdf



Image: Variegated Fairy-wren
by Ed Frazer at Brookfield

Protect biodiversity – Jim

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