

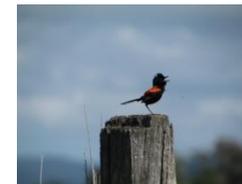


# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"

February 2022 - Number 44



### SAVE THE DATE

**ALL ACTIVITIES  
at the Common**

**(Tuesday Common Carers, Walk  
and Weed, Bush and Beer)  
are postponed indefinitely.  
A safety check will have to be  
conducted. Groups will be  
notified when it is safe to  
return to the site.**

**Hopefully, our meeting for May will  
proceed as scheduled.**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
FOOCC Bird walk 6.30am  
Annual General Meeting and  
Morning Tea 10.00**

### THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**Hugh Possingham**

#### **Changes in bird abundances at Oxley Creek Common – January 2022**

From 2004 to 2013, I counted birds every month at Oxley Creek Common over 100 minutes, partly on foot, partly on bicycle (120 counts). Overseas work got in the way of my regular counts for a while, but I recommenced my surveys in 2021. Here is some preliminary analysis of some of the biggest changes between that early period and the last year.

The passage of time has seen two major changes in habitat which may have caused some increases in terrestrial birds – fewer cattle (and longer grass), and more shrubs and trees both in the open fields and along Oxley Creek. I think we have all noticed the increase in Brown Quail so nobody will be surprised that from 2004-2013 I averaged 2.0 a visit, now I average a count of 9.7. Buff-banded Rail, which I saw with young at the start of January 2022, has gone from 0.23 to 1.3 birds a visit. Fan-tailed Cuckoo was once an uncommon winter visitor (0.02 per visit) and this year I heard them in five of the twelve counts. Pheasant

Coucal is up from 0.54 to 1.5; they also seem to be breeding in a couple of places this summer. Increased trees and shrubs along the creek may explain increases in Striated Pardalote (1.8 to 2.9), White-browed Scrubwren (3.5 to 8.4), Superb Fairywren (7.6 to 15), Lewin's Honeyeater (4.6 to 8.4), Brown Honeyeater (21 to 29 – always more common in winter), Grey Shrike-thrush (2.6 to 5.2), Rufous Fantail (0.04 to 1.0), Olive-backed Oriole (1.5 to 2.5), Grey Butcherbird (2.8 to 4.0) and Pied Currawong (1.3 to 2.8, part of a city-wide increase).

Possibly the most spectacular increase has been the Red-browed Finch. This species wasn't recorded on the Common until 2009, when a few arrived near the Red Shed, then disappeared (averaging 0.02 per visit from 2004 to 2013). Now I see on average almost 8 each visit. Another surprise arrival was Black Kite, which was only recorded a couple of times before 2013. Rainbow Bee-eaters have increased from an average of 0.54 to 4.3. I am not sure why.

Some of the native species which appear to be decreasing are species which prefer very short grass created by more cattle (or mowing): Cattle Egret (20 to 2.1 – they really just like more cattle); Yellow-rumped Thornbill (1.1 down to 0.3 – this is a very unusual bird in Brisbane, and the small flock

is over just south in Cliveden Road Reserve); Australasian Pipit (2.8 down to 0.08) and Torresian crow (17 down to 10). The lack of short grass may be causing some of our birds of prey to move away – Brown Falcon, Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel – but counts for these species are low and hence any change speculative. Few people will be upset by the apparent declines of two introduced species, probably for similar reasons: Common Starling (1.6 to 0, they may have moved to Cliveden Road Reserve where the grass is still short) and Common Myna (3.8 to 1.8). Worrying declines include Mangrove Gerygone (0.18 to 0.8, seems like two to three pairs are now just one pair), White-breasted Woodswallow (1.1 down to 0.2, they once regularly bred on the Pelican Lagoon island), and Mistletoebird (5.7 down to 2.7), although, if anything, the mistletoe itself seems more abundant.

As we all know, one year of data is not a lot to go on, so we will wait for next Christmas to do another stocktake. In general, the waterbirds have fared very badly because of the poor management of Pelican lagoon and Jabiru Swamp; but given the enormous variability in waterbird numbers from year to year, I will also wait for a second year of data to report on them.

## TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

Mary Lou Simpson

An enthusiastic 12 people mustered at the beginning of February to tackle the massive growth in weeds, from the summer rain. Several people worked during January, to maintain the areas close to the Shed. The green panic was shoulder high; the Rhodes grass was creeping across the track; Rivina, Commelina, Billy-goat weed and Glycine were erupting everywhere. Below is an example of the infestation of Glycine along the creek.



On a positive note, last year's plantings were flourishing, with some trees doubling their size; natives (Acacias, Emu Foot, Tuckeroos) were regenerating and plants were producing berries. The long grass had been a boon for

the Quail. Walkers could meet more than six families, scurrying into the grass.



Quail's eggs, which could easily have been destroyed during clearing of grass.

Little did we know what was in store in the last week of February.

## THE FLOOD

After a week of welcome wet weather, Brisbane was hit with three days of torrential rain. By **Saturday afternoon, the 26<sup>th</sup> February**, there was significant flooding at the Common and Sherwood Road was cut where the Oxley Creek overflow crosses the road.



Oxley Creek before high tide Saturday pm.



Water carrying green debris (probably Water Hyacinth) down the overflow.



The track leading to the gate.

Matthew Mendel canoed through the flood waters on **Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> February**. These are his photos.



The track just past the gate.



Sadly, not all these cattle survived.



One of the 6 Tanks on the site, which Matthew secured with a rope.



The following day, **March 1<sup>st</sup>**, Matthew canoed again. Waters had receded a little.



Faseny McPhee reported seeing Brown Quail at Nosworthy Park, so it is possible some escaped. As most of the wildlife has the ability to swim or to fly (Matt Mendel was canoeing beside green tree snakes) survival depends on reaching safety in time, heading in the right direction and finding food while the waters subside.

By Wednesday morning, **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Sherwood Road was open to traffic. The overflow was still running strongly. Birds, (Double-barred finches and Red-backed fairy-wrens) were in the trees beside the road. The frogs were enjoying the conditions and water-birds could be seen in the distance. Photos: M Simpson



The Water Hyacinth has been cleared from the lagoons, but is now everywhere. How long will it survive out of water?



The steps down to the pontoon.



Unexpected destinations of a pallet, a rubbish bin and Water Hyacinth.

Below: Aerial view of Corinda Pony Club. Notice the pines. Photo: Paul Wuersching.





Steve Gray's photo shows Pacific black ducks enjoying the water.



One of the toilet doors wedged in the doorway.  
Photo: Steve Gray

Please send Contributions, Comments and Corrections to Mary Lou Simpson  
[maryloulit@hotmail.com](mailto:maryloulit@hotmail.com)  
 Thanks to: Matthew Mendel; Steve Gray and Paul Wuersching for sharing photos.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**President:** Hugh Possingham  
**Secretary:** Karen Gillow  
**Treasurer:** Matthew Mendel  
**Newsletter Editor:** Mary Lou Simpson  
**Committee:** Zena Dinesen, Faseny McPhee, Lynn Whitfield, Simon Murray, Robyn Mulder, Justine Ward and Erica Heaton.

## BECOME INVOLVED IN OXLEY CREEK COMMON

### HELP WITH THE CLEAN-UP OF THE COMMON

**JOIN** Friends of Oxley Creek Common.

**LIKE** the **Facebook Page** of Friends of Oxley Creek Common to keep in touch.

**CHECK** bird sightings on **Oxley Creek Common Birds Facebook Page** and **eBird**.

**VISIT** the Friends of Oxley Creek Common website:  
<https://friendsofoxleycreekcommon.org>

**CHECK** you have paid your membership fees. See the form below.

**SIGN** your friends up to receive the newsletter.

**Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.**  
 is dedicated to preserving this natural habitat for wildlife.

**Become a friend of The Common**

**Pay** your membership directly into our BOQ account BSB 124017 – Ac 20161909 and send the appropriate details to:  
[friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com)  
 or  
**Return** a cheque with this form or the appropriate details  
 PO Box 319, SHERWOOD, Qld 4075  
 You will automatically receive the Newsletter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

P/code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Membership:</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>5 years</b>	
Single	\$15	\$60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concession:	\$12	\$48	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family:	\$20	\$80	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group:	\$30	\$120	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate:	\$80	\$320	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Membership	\$400	Concession \$320	
Donation:	\$...		