

# Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher,  
Jim Butler



## WATTLEBIRD



Image: Little Wattlebird feeding on Grevilleas  
by Alison Staines

This is a remarkably beautiful photo! But even more remarkable is the bird in the photo! It is a "Little Wattlebird" which has never previously been recorded in the Moggill Creek Catchment in the long history of bird observations in our region. Indeed, the historical records of BirdLife Australia (1901-2016) and Birds Queensland (1969-2016) don't have a single record of the bird in the Catchment. Other parts of Brisbane have had infrequent sightings over this time. This stunning Little Wattlebird paused and posed on 17 April 2016 at Adavale St Brookfield.

Little Wattlebirds are found throughout coastal south-eastern Australia and Tasmania. Brisbane is at the northern end of the distribution. Little Wattlebirds feed on nectar which is obtained using a long, brush-tipped tongue. Other foods include insects, flowers and berries. The photo clearly shows the flowers they are seeking; it

also shows another aspect: that Grevilleas are a bird-pollinated species.

The number of Little Wattlebirds in an area is significantly correlated with flower abundance. They are nomadic in search of nectar. This is the probable reason for the presence of the Little Wattlebird at Brookfield. The abundant flowers at Brookfield, coupled with a drought

induced scarcity elsewhere in Brisbane, drew the large nomadic honeyeater to our area for the first time. Great!

The Moggill Creek Catchment website (<http://www.moggillcreek.org/>) contains an up-to-date list of Catchment birds. The Little Wattlebird has now been added! Historically, 206 bird species have been observed in the Catchment since 1901. At the present time, 202 species are observable over a five year weather cycle. The locally extinct species are: Grey-crowned Babbler, Apostlebird, and Jacky Winter. The Website contains helpful information for finding each species: their habitat requirements, where they feed, their prey, what times of the year they are here and how findable they are!

Help keep a record of our birds

– Jim

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