

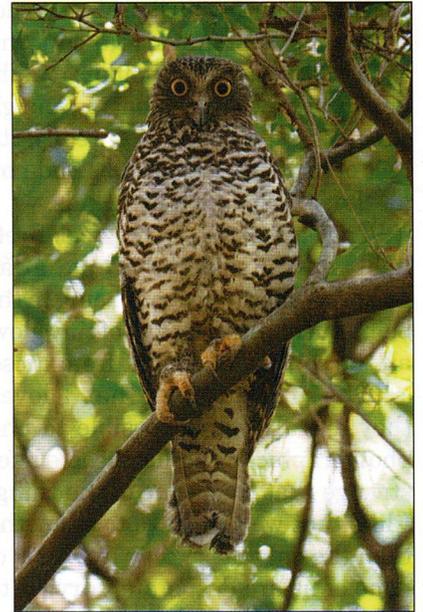


Powerful Owl's threatened existence

Did you know that Greater Springfield has a number of threatened species, such as Powerful Owls, Tusk Frogs and Brush-tailed Phascogales living in bushland surrounding Opossum Creek? Recently the critically endangered Regent Honey Eater paid a short visit to our suburb. Unfortunately habitat loss is affecting many of these keystone species.

The Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*), is Australia's largest owl. Their name stems from the fact that they have very strong and powerful claws to carry their prey, which can weigh as much as a small possum or around 1.7kg. It is a strikingly beautiful bird with a small head, large yellow eyes, and brown or grey feathers with multiple 'V' patterns. They feed on arboreal mammals that live in trees, such as possums, gliders and black and grey headed flying foxes or sometimes tawny frog mouths. They measure from 45 to 65cm and have an impressive wing span which measures 112 to 135cm enabling them to fly large distances.

They are found in south-eastern and eastern Australia within 200km of the coast. They prefer open forests and woodlands, as well as sheltered gullies in wet forests with dense understoreys, especially along watercourses. Sadly, in March this year a Powerful Owl was found dead in bushland in Greater Springfield. From initial inspection there did not appear to be any obvious injury. The owls are opportunistic hunters, chasing whatever they can find, such as rats and rabbits. It could have sustained an injury from chasing or catching its prey or by ingesting a poisoned rat. Since we know these birds inhabit our region perhaps we should consider using methods other than rat bait to eradicate rodents.



These owls are very territorial and do not do well in heavily developed areas or forest plantations because they require tree hollows to raise their chicks. This is another reason why we need to protect the wet sclerophyll forest surrounding Opossum and Woogaroo creeks. Otherwise these animals will decline even further and possibly become locally extinct.

They have a distinctive and impressive low rather mournful sounding woot woot. To hear some of the owl calls you can go <http://birdlife.org.au/projects/powerful-owl-project>

If you have you seen or heard a Powerful Owl you can report your sightings on Bird Data. It is free to use or you can download the free app on your android or apple device. To get started visit <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/get-started>

Bird Life Queensland's Dr Rob Clemens has been running Powerful Owl workshops throughout Brisbane and surrounding shires. The Powerful Owl Project aims to:

- Inspire the general public, and educate them about owls, and their habitat requirements.
- Train citizen scientists to conduct surveys to find owls and track breeding success.
- Monitor the distribution and abundance of owls and uncover why owls are present in some areas and absent in others.
- Uncover habitat characteristics associated with greater breeding success in Powerful Owl.
- Develop a species distribution models of sufficient accuracy to be used as planning layers by state and council.
- Identify site-specific management recommendations for Powerful Owls.
- Understand the impact of threats such as vehicle strike, or electrocution.
- Inform, and support land management for the conservation of Powerful Owl.

If you are interested in volunteering to be part of the Powerful Owl surveys or attend a workshop, please email powerfulowl-bris@birdlife.org.au.

If anyone would like to join our Group, membership is free and meetings are held on the first Monday of the month. You can contact us through info@SpringfieldLakesNatureCare.org.au or you can follow us on www.facebook.com/SpringfieldLakesNatureCare. *Photo courtesy of Josh Boswell.*

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