

# Save the quail

LET'S talk about the Turnix melanogaster. Not sure what it is? Here's a clue – it has feathers. Yes, it's a bird.

The Black Breasted Button-Quail (BBBQ) lives in Redwood Park on Toowoomba's escarpment and is a threatened species.

Graham Pizzey's Field Guide to Birds of Australia, tells us that "the female BBBQ is unlike any other Australian button-quail, having a black head and black breast with massed prominent white spots".

In his Handbook Field guide to Australian Birds, Michael Morcombe explains that BBBQ are ground dwellers in low canopy forests and vine thickets, scratching about in a circular fashion for seeds and insects.

They build their nests on the thicket floor in a small bowl-like depression.

If disturbed, the BBBQ defence mechanism is to squat and freeze or run, although they can fly.

The BBBQ is indigenous and endemic to Australia, it occurs nowhere else on earth. Their habitats lie only in Qld's south eastern corner.

These little birds are a treasure living right on our doorstep, and really are as cute as a button.

Why know all this? Because the Toowoomba Regional Council's Mountain Bike Plan proposes 20-plus km of new high speed, racing mountain bike trails right through the escarpment's Redwood Park in which these vulnerable birds live.

To see a video of Turnix melanogaster in Redwood, go to Save Redwood Park YouTube channel.

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