

Contact Call

Newsletter of BirdLife Northern Queensland

Volume 11 Number 3

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Fernwren



Fernwren is a Wet Tropics endemic bird found in upland rainforest, usually above 600 m but can be found as low as 350 m. They favour wet areas such as near streams where they forage for insects amongst leaf litter. Fernwrens are often inconspicuous and can be hard to see.

There has been a substantial decline in the number of Fernwrens and the species is now considered endangered, probably due to climate change.

So, if you see Fernwren, your sighting is important.

Make your birding count by entering a survey record into Birdata.

Every time you share your bird surveys and sightings in Birdata, our collective knowledge of birds and their habitat grows. For more information go to: <https://birdata.birdlife.org.au/>

To find out more about Fernwren, check our event calendar for upcoming talks by researcher Dr John Grant.

Image courtesy of Martin Willis

In this issue...

 <p>Conservation Matters</p>	<p>Conservation Matters by Peter Valentine page 4</p> <p>Our Conservation Coordinator, Peter Valentine, discusses the State of the Environment Report, positive new commitments by the Australian Government, the threats posed by invasive species, climate change, and second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides (SGARs), and the opening of the rehabilitated Jack Barnes Memorial Mangrove Boardwalk.</p>
	<p>Birding Cairns Esplanade and Cairns Botanical Gardens with the Queensland Chief Scientist, Professor Hugh Possingham by Ed Bell page 7</p> <p>Read about Professor Hugh Possingham, Queensland’s Chief Scientist recent visit promoting bird watching and amateur citizen science.</p>
	<p>The Special Birds of Cape York Peninsula, report by Peter Valentine and images by Martin Willis page 8</p> <p>Hear about Martin’s stunning presentation to a packed house at the Malanda Hotel on the 28 July.</p>
	<p>New Birding Resources by Renee Cassels page 12</p> <p>Check out the recently released eight downloadable and printable flyers for each Northern Queensland birding region now available on our website.</p>
	<p>Our Conservation Priorities for Tomorrow by Kath Shurcliff page 16</p> <p>Have you ever wondered how the BirdLife Northern Queensland committee determines just which projects we should prioritise for our limited resources and efforts. Find out more in this article about our recent planning workshop.</p>
	<p>Recent literature about north Queensland birds, compiled by Don Franklin page 22</p> <p>Learn about the latest research findings about north Queensland birds.</p>
	<p>Finch Monitoring and Awareness on Country: Birds in Schools by Pippy Cannon page 30</p> <p>Have fun reading about a project providing education and awareness on Gouldian Finch habitat and their general requirements (and related topics) to school children in remote north Queensland communities.</p>

Also

<p>From the Convenor by Ceri Pearce page 3</p> <p>What can I do about climate change? page 6</p> <p>Springvale Road Birding by Peter Valentine page 10</p> <p>BirdLife Northern Queensland Success for Wet Tropics Birds page 11</p> <p>Cassowary Coast Social Birding by Sandra Christensen . page 14</p>	<p>Reopening of Jack Barnes Boardwalk by Hidetoshi Kudo (Mikey) page 15</p> <p>Grasswrens Galore during May 2022 by Kath Shurcliff page 20</p> <p>Graham Harrington Scholarship Awarded to Henry Stoetzel page 21</p> <p>Red-cheeked Parrot: Interesting feeding record by Del Richards page 24</p> <p>Birders spend big in regional Australia page 25</p>	<p>Hastie’s Swamp National Park and more by Peter Valentine page 26</p> <p>Photographic accolades for member, Geoff Stapley page 27</p> <p>News from Mount Isa by Rex Whitehead page 28</p> <p>TIP coast counts coming up in November! by Dr Julia Hazel and Rebel Warren page 32</p> <p>Noticeboard, Advertisements & Activities page 34</p>
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From the Convenor

By Ceri Pearce

BirdLife Northern Queensland (BNQ) activities continue at quite a pace, and this is reflected in this bumper issue of Contact Call. A big thank you to all contributors, as well as to all the people who work behind the scenes here in BNQ as well. What an inspiring group of birders/volunteers we have! They don't necessarily have the time, but they have a passion for bird life, the environment and conservation, and a joy in sharing it with you. They are my heroes!

BNQ has recently been awarded a Queensland Community Sustainability Action Grant for Conservation – Community Engagement on Queensland's National Parks and State Forests, 2022. The new project is entitled *Monitoring Wet Tropics Birds in Wooroonooran National Park*. You can learn about the project as well as find out how you can get involved on page 11.

Since the last edition of Contact Call we have had a strategic planning workshop to identify our priorities and goals for the next five years. Thank you to participants Edward Bell, Renee Cassels, Ceinwen Edwards, Lindsay and Keith Fisher, Amanda Freeman, Graham Harrington, Helen Larsen, James Matcott, Golo Maurer, Evizel Seymour and Peter Valentine, and especially to Kath Shurcliff for facilitating the meeting.

In particular, we were excited to have Golo Maurer (BirdLife Australia's Citizen Science Program Leader), James Matcott (BirdLife Australia's Network Liaison Officer and Community Organiser, from Melbourne), and Evizel Seymour (Terrain NRM) attend. To all three, thank you for taking the time to come along and share your valuable insights. You can read about the workshop on page 16. When you do, you will notice that there are still some potential project area omissions. This was because some of our project champions were unable to attend. We hope to address these gaps in the future.

Recently, four of our BNQ activity organisers had the opportunity to attend a two day course learning to provide first aid in a rural and/or remote location. The training was held at [Bush Heritage Australia's \(BHA\) Yourka Reserve](#) and participants were a mix of BHA staff and volunteers, and members of BNQ. Ed Bell said "I have done first aid courses numerous times over the last 15 years including a remote focused course in the Caribbean in 2009. This was by far the most comprehensive course with educators that went above and beyond the usual basics to make sure we were (hopefully) prepared for the more serious situations we could encounter in a remote location."

In August, some of us also attended a free, publicly available bush skills course at Yourka Reserve, which also proved to be a worthwhile experience. As well as learning about and practising navigation using a variety of tools, we also learned basic survival skills. These types of training are few and far between. If you go birdwatching in remote or rural locations, I strongly urge you to take personal advantage of any similar training opportunities as they arise, and as the boy scouts say, "Be prepared".

BirdLife Northern Queensland sincerely thank Leanne and Paul Hales and Bush Heritage Australia for inviting us to participate in their training courses and for hosting our visit to beautiful Yourka Reserve. We look forward to future opportunities to visit and help at Yourka.

Now, have you heard that we have eight gorgeous new regional flyers that highlight the incredible birding opportunities within our region. They are available on our website; click [here](#), and/or read about them on page 12 of this newsletter. You will also notice that our public Facebook page has been given a makeover to showcase all the activities you can attend. This is all thanks to our extremely talented Communications Coordinator, Renee Cassels.

We have an exciting program of activities in the coming months. Do check out our calendar at the end of this newsletter, or our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

Wishing you great birding 😊
Cheers Ceri

BirdLife Northern Queensland Committee

Contact us at northernqld@birdlife.org.au

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Conservation Matters

By Peter Valentine, 23rd August 2022

Since the National election in May many people have expressed to me that the results have brought a strong sense of optimism; that we seem to have emerged from a dark place. I suspect the source of these views is both social and environmental. It could be seen as an excellent indication of priority in the new Government that such a competent and experienced MP as Tanya Plibersek has been placed in charge of the environment portfolio. There is a huge amount of work to be done to address the many significant issues that Australia's environment (including its biodiversity) is facing. The fact that the previous Government hid the 2021 State of the Environment (SOE) Report from the electorate underlines the extremely parlous state of our environment. Overall, the state and trend of the environment of Australia is poor and deteriorating because of increasing pressures from climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution and resource extraction. And further, Australia's heritage and many of our most valued and iconic ecosystems are at risk from climate change and environmental extremes. For example, the Great Barrier Reef has suffered repeated bleaching from unprecedented marine heatwaves. There are so many indicators of the deterioration, it is hard to know where to start. But here is an amazing fact: Australia is burdened by thousands of non-native species introduced deliberately or by accident over the past 200 years and there are now more foreign plant species in Australia than there are native (quotes from SOE Report 2021).

It is a sad fact that Queensland leads Australia in many destructive practices that impact on the environment and threatened species. For example: nine of the 10 threatened species that have lost the most habitat to clearing occur in Queensland. The impacts from climate change are of a serious nature. An International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 2020 assessment concluded that no World Heritage properties in Oceania have improved their conservation outlook since 2017, and five properties, all Australian, had deteriorated: the Great Barrier Reef, the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, the Greater Blue Mountains Area, the Ningaloo Coast and Shark Bay (Gutharraguda).

On another more positive note, the new National Government has committed to join the international global target for protected areas of 30% of land, and 30% of marine habitat in protected areas by 2030. This "30 by 30" goal is an excellent prospect but will take an enormous increase in effort in Queensland because of the very low starting point. Here we have only 8% of our terrestrial environment in protected areas, meaning an additional 22% of the state must

enter into some protected area status in the next eight years. I look forward to seeing the plan on how that will be achieved.

The horrendous toll on our wildlife from invasive species, especially feral cats and foxes, contributes to the ever-increasing numbers of threatened species and the growing fear of mass extinctions. Experts consider that there is a good chance we could lose several species of birds in the next 20 years. Climate change increases the numbers of species at risk. The authors of the ground-breaking Action Plan for Australian Birds 2020 note that:

"We estimate that in just one day alone – January 6, 2020 – about half the population of all 16 bird species endemic or largely confined to Kangaroo Island were incinerated, including the tiny Kangaroo Island southern emu-wren." (The Conversation, December 1, 2021).

Such cruel and devastating losses of wildlife are now the norm in Australia and require urgent comprehensive climate action.

One of our many avoidable activities that is killing birds is the use of so-called second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides (SGARs) that have been permitted for use in Australia by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA) and are currently sold in retail stores like Bunnings. BirdLife Australia is campaigning to have these SGARs banned, as is the case in some other countries that clearly care more for their wildlife. "SGARs are powerful enough that a single feed can be lethal. But because of the time lag between taking a bait and feeling the effects, rodents can consume a more-than-lethal dose and still be wandering around - like walking time bombs. Predators that naturally eat rodents, like owls and birds of prey, can then easily consume multiple poisoned rodents, in turn becoming poisoned themselves. SGARs don't break down quickly – some can stay in tissues and organs for months, even years. Unfortunately, this just makes it easier for these bigger animals to get a lethal dose of toxins."



Barn Owl

Apart from lobbying to have these toxic products banned, individuals can ask their retailers to stop stocking these products and restrict themselves to the older first-generation rodenticides like Warfarin. "If the bait contains more harmful SGARs like Brodifacoum, Bromadiolone, Difenacoum, Difethialone, or Flocoumafen, leave it on the shelf." A young school student in Perth (Poppy Mahon) is working with local Bunnings people to get a change in labels and info. Other people are communicating with both AVPMA and local Bunnings stores to effect change. Everyone could assist with this.

The cumbersome APVMA inquiry continues but the final outcome of the drawn-out process is scheduled for July 2025 by which time much damage to our wildlife will surely have occurred. Direct action and lobbying to our local councils is likely to be much quicker and better for wildlife. While the task of the APVMA is enormous, it is not fit for purpose when it comes to these highly toxic substances threatening our wildlife.

To lobby your Council, visit the BirdLife website: <https://birdlife.org.au/rodent-control>

To end on a positive note, I have been delighted to engage with the Cairns Airport over the re-development of the Jack Barnes Memorial Mangrove Boardwalk. This was a terrific project where the community (led by Denis Walls at CAFNEC and others) reclaimed the boardwalk from the Cairns Regional Council (who had condemned it) and, with cooperation and leadership from the Cairns Airport Corporation, refurbished the boardwalk with ongoing active contributions from Traditional Owners (TOs), especially the Dawul Wuru team who did the actual re-building work and the Yirrganydji Rangers.

It was re-opened on August 19th. Mikey Kudo, our Cairns Coordinator, has also been actively involved with the project. I particularly acknowledge the Airport CEO Richard Barker and the Environmental Officer, Lucy Friend, who have given terrific support and who ensured opportunities for traditional owners were built in. The TOs did wonderful work on every aspect of the boardwalk and will continue with its maintenance.

See also Mikey's story about the reopening of the Jack Barnes Boardwalk on page 15.

Images from the Jack Barnes Memorial Mangrove Boardwalk



What can I do about climate change?

Do you sometimes feel helpless when it comes to climate change? And don't know what you can do?

Here are some things you could do right now to reduce carbon emissions and live a more planet friendly lifestyle.

- Eat for a sustainable planet (eat more meat-free meals, buy organic and local whenever possible, don't waste food and/or grow your own).
- Reduce your energy use (unplug appliances when no one is currently using, invest in low energy use appliances and light bulbs, use appliances only when you need to). It will reduce your bills too!
- Leave the car at home (consider sharing a car/using public transport, or ride a bike, or walk, or get a more energy efficient vehicle).
- Cut back on flying and/or offset your emissions.
- Respect and protect green spaces. Get involved with the Green Space Our Place Program (see Cairns Regional Council website for details) to improve Cairns community green spaces.
- Invest your money responsibly.
- Consume less, waste less, recycle and reuse, and enjoy life in the outdoors.

You can also become more politically active and urge the government to be bold and ambitious on climate action.

The Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) have a climate action campaign that allows locals to do something positive to make real change. Go to <https://cafnecc.org.au/climate/> to find out more.

David Suzuki suggests helping raise climate ambition by painting your town with climate art <https://david Suzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/>

Finally, it is worth noting that the Australian Psychological Society states 'Sometimes climate change seems too big a problem for any one person to tackle. This is one of the big psychological barriers that hinders action on climate change. But in fact we all can do something, and these contributions all add up'.

See their climate action guide for more ideas about what you can do. It's called [*101 Things you can do to help address climate change*](#). The guide also acknowledges that climate change can cause painful feelings such as anger, fear, and despair and provides good advice on how to look after yourself. Check out the guide. It's excellent.



If this article upsets you or you need to talk to someone about anxiety or depression related to climate change or anything else, don't hesitate to **call Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636** or check out their website for other ways to reach out and communicate <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Alternatively call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Birding Cairns Esplanade and Cairns Botanical Gardens with the Queensland Chief Scientist, Professor Hugh Possingham

By Ed Bell

After having come down from the chilly heights of Kuranda, the rising sun and warmth of Cairns was very welcome. I arrived to find Professor Hugh Possingham, Queensland's Chief Scientist, already entertaining a sizable crowd of keen amateur birdwatchers.

The Cairns Esplanade is a birdwatching haven well known throughout Australia, and overseas, for its mudflats which are ideal for wading shorebirds. Being August, we are just at the cusp of the migration with the first shorebirds beginning to return from their breeding grounds in the high arctic, to spend the Southern Hemisphere summer recuperating and feeding up in anticipation of the return journey next autumn.

We were treated to views of Whimbrel and the Critically Endangered Eastern Curlew – the world's largest shorebird, as well as a few Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and all the locals that call the Esplanade home like the Nankeen Night Herons and Australian Pelicans.

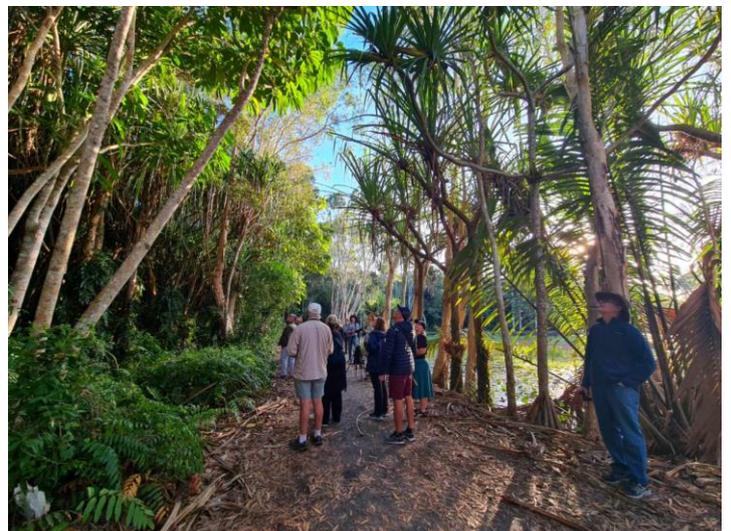
The Chief Scientist held two birding events, one on the Cairns Esplanade (19 August), and the other, the day before at the Cairns Botanic Gardens (18 August).

Queensland Chief Scientist Hugh is not just involved in advising and lobbying politicians: more importantly he is advocating for STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Math) in society and is a keen proponent of Citizen Science which is where we, as bird watchers, can contribute with our sightings to citizen science platforms like Birddata, eBird and iNaturalist to name a few. Aside from being on the board of Birdlife Australia Hugh is passionate about birds as they are a great way to get people thinking about our biodiversity. He responds when asked why he likes birds "do you not like natural history?".

Hugh's visit to Cairns coincided with National Science Week which is run every August to get people involved in STEM, and we can all agree what better way could there be than birding.



Professor Hugh Possingham, Queensland's Chief Scientist promoting bird watching and amateur citizen science.



The Special Birds of Cape York Peninsula

Report by Peter Valentine

Images by Martin Willis

BirdLife Northern Queensland committee member and master wildlife photographer Martin Willis gave a stunning presentation to a packed house at the Malanda Hotel on the 28 July. An estimated 90-100 people enjoyed spectacular images and video footage of some very special birds from a number of sites within Cape York Peninsula. Despite the cold weather, there was a warm and friendly feeling within the group of members and supporters in the audience. A young researcher from Austria, here to study Victoria's Riflebird, won the prize for furthest travelled visitor despite there being others from Melbourne and Perth!

Martin started the presentation with some excellent details about why Cape York Peninsula is so important and valuable as both a complex natural environment and an outstanding birding destination. But the key focus was the many species of birds only available in Australia within Cape York Peninsula. Included were all the iconic species such as the Golden-shouldered Parrot at Artemis Station, the Eclectus Parrot from Iron Range and the outstanding Palm Cockatoo from the northern parts of the Peninsula (both east and west).

As with many bird stories today, the beauty of the species is often accompanied by recognition of their tragic conservation circumstances. Martin drew attention to the parlous situation of the Golden-shouldered Parrot (tiny population and restricted current area of occupation) but pointed to the excellent work being undertaken at Artemis Station to identify the conservation issues and to improve the habitat for these fascinating ant-bed parrots. BirdLife Northern Queensland branch members have supported this research work and there is hope that the hard work on the ground will lead to success. Unfortunately, only two of the nests being monitored successfully fledged young this year.



Wildlife photographer Martin Willis presenting to a packed house at the Malanda Hotel.



Palm Cockatoo

The imposing Palm Cockatoo, our largest Australian parrot, was featured in many images and a fantastic piece of video footage. The special breeding requirements (tree hollows, in a vertical standing tree trunk, old features but vulnerable to fire and clearing) formed the basis of some excellent images, including of the drumming by the male as he courts his mate. The calls and plumage are magnificent, and we were treated to examples of these features.

One of the "much-wanted" species is the Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta, a bird that typically migrates to New Guinea during the dry season and is only present at Iron Range during the wet season, a time when roads are usually closed. Despite that, birders fly into Lockhart River airstrip and spend time trying to find and photograph this elusive species. But the effort can be well-rewarded with views of the spectacular plumage and fascinating behaviour. There are many other wonderful species in the rainforests of Iron Range, including the Frill-necked Monarch, Black-winged Monarch, Magnificent Riflebird and the elusive Trumpet Manucode (the last two being Birds of Paradise).



Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta

Others included were the Green-backed, White-streaked and Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters; the Northern Scrub-robin, the White-faced Robin and the Yellow-legged Flycatcher. A special treat was a series of images of the Yellow-billed Kingfisher bringing different prey to a nest site.

Martin pointed out the essential role of bird hides in achieving his images. For most species, a lot of effort goes into preparation and the careful location of portable bird hides (at feeding sites, or watering points) so that the birds follow normal behaviour and allow wonderfully natural images.



Yellow-billed Kingfisher bringing different prey to a nest site.

The audience was very appreciative of the thoughtfully prepared presentation with its gorgeous photos.

Tablelands Co-Coordinator Sam Willis pointed out that other presentations are now in the pipeline and that the Branch was keen to continue these evenings, available to the public free of charge. The local Tablelands newspaper (Express) has agreed to help publicise the talks and they will also be advertised on internet sites (the BirdLife Northern Queensland website <https://www.birdlifeng.org/events>) and social media (the branch [Facebook page](#)). The next talk will be on 22nd September when John Grant will present some of his work on the Fernwren, a little-known species of the Wet Tropics rainforests.



Upcoming talks by Dr John Grant

Thursday 22 September 2022, 7.30pm at Malanda Hotel, Malanda

Thursday 6 October 2022, 6.30pm Cominos House, 27 Greenslopes St, Edge Hill

A future for the Fernwren

Can this ancient species hang on in the face of changing landscape and climate?

The Fernwren, endemic to the Wet Tropics of northeast Queensland, has recently been listed as endangered. This upgrade in conservation status was based on the steep decline in its population recorded by long-term monitoring studies, but little is known about the ecology of the Fernwren and why its continued existence is so threatened. Broader studies have indicated that the Fernwren is very vulnerable to habitat loss and fragmentation, yet no accounts of its basic biology have yet been published. Within its tiny global range, the Fernwren is most typically found in upland and highland habitats and like other tropical montane species worldwide, considered at high risk from the impacts of climate change. As one of the celebrated ancient relict species of the Wet Tropics, its conservation is of high priority, but until we understand its needs better, our ability to manage for its benefit is very limited.

My studies of the Fernwren have developed over the past 20 years, and I have been able to draw on my long-term fieldwork to gain some insights into its habitat use and population density as well as the roles of habitat fragmentation, isolation and reconnection in its persistence on the Atherton Tablelands.

Fernwren image courtesy of Martin Willis

Springvale Road Birding

By Peter Valentine

On 29 July, the day after the BirdLife Northern Queensland talk at the Malanda Hotel by Martin Willis, eight people turned up for a birding morning at Springvale Road, Wondecla. For some there was a hope of warm sunshine after the cool evening in Malanda the night before. The cool breeze as we gathered also affected the birds and an early highlight was a large flock of Red-browed Finch that had been feeding in a grassy paddock, all taking shelter in a sunny nook within lantana brambles: clearly warming their feathers. There seemed to be 50 or 60 clustered together ruffling feathers to let in the sun. Peaceful Doves fed on the ground before flying into adjacent vegetation where close inspection revealed a Fan-tailed Cuckoo hunkered down. Whistling Kites were aloft, and occasional Magpie and Grey Butcherbird forays were noticed and the call of a Noisy Miner revealed their presence.

We walked down the road accompanied by the frequent calls of the "Herberton" Honeyeater. About half the records on eBird identify a Yellow-tinted Honeyeater presence, and the birds we saw looked a bit like that species. The other half of eBird records are Fuscous Honeyeaters and certainly some of the calls were more like those, but not really. This is an overlap zone for these two species and at least some people feel it may be either a separate species or perhaps a population of hybrids.



'Herberton Honeyeater'. Image courtesy of Peter Valentine

Lloyd Nielsen suspects it is an undescribed species and has assembled a deal of evidence relating to its anomalous qualities (discussed in his book on the Birds of the Wet Tropics of Queensland). The birds were plentiful and calling often.

We investigated an area of lemon-scented gum forest within which Painted Button-quail have been recorded and although no birds were seen there were plenty of platelets, some quite fresh, indicating their continued presence. The next day Martin Willis saw two crossing the road! Past the creek crossing we stopped to enjoy morning tea in the sun and the many birds feeding at the eucalyptus blossoms. In addition to many Bridled Honeyeaters, Yellow-faced and Lewin's Honeyeater, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, and Grey Fantails there were many rowdy lorikeets. Raucous Rainbow Lorikeets revealed their presence and then sharp-eyed Ceri spotted Scaly-breasted Lorikeets perched in a flowering gum with others checking out potential nest holes. Much to our delight we also saw a pair of Little Lorikeets in the same tree looking in various holes and cavities. There was a little inter-specific rivalry at the knot-hole sites, the larger species dominating.

Most of the party continued on the track past the old hut where David and Margaret had spotted a Crested Shrike-tit down low. Bird of the day for those lucky enough to see it. But there were also many more honeyeaters along the creek with Eastern Spinebills and Scarlet Honeyeaters quite active and numerous. White-cheeked Honeyeaters also flew in numbers. Eastern Yellow Robins displayed their bright plumage throughout, from the start of the track right along the road and created a brighter element for the day. Dusky Woodswallows finished the day nicely. There was a party of US birders present who expressed their excitement at so many lifers and reported enjoying bowerbirds at Mt Hypipamee NP.

The birders were David and Margaret Merrall, Ceri Pearce, Sandra Christensen, Tom Collis, Brendan Malone, Martin Willis and Peter Valentine.



Little Lorikeets. Image courtesy of Martin Willis

BirdLife Northern Queensland Success for Wet Tropics Birds

BirdLife Northern Queensland has been successful in obtaining \$10,747 funding support in the recent Community Sustainability Action grant program for Conservation – Community Engagement on Queensland’s National Parks and State Forests, 2022.

The project, entitled Monitoring Wet Tropics Birds in Wooroonooran National Park, aims to re-establish bird monitoring in Wooroonooran National Park by engaging and educating community volunteers and budding citizen scientists in bird identification and using the Birdata app to monitor Wet Tropics birds.

Focused on Wooroonooran National Park, the project will:-

- Provide training to volunteers/citizen scientists so that they can participate and contribute to Wet Tropics bird monitoring
- Complement the long-term monitoring undertaken by James Cook University researchers Williams and de la Fuente (2021) and others
- Monitor endemic Wet Tropics birds threatened by climate change
- Result in data that can be used to inform management decisions in the National Park such as where to concentrate feral animal control.

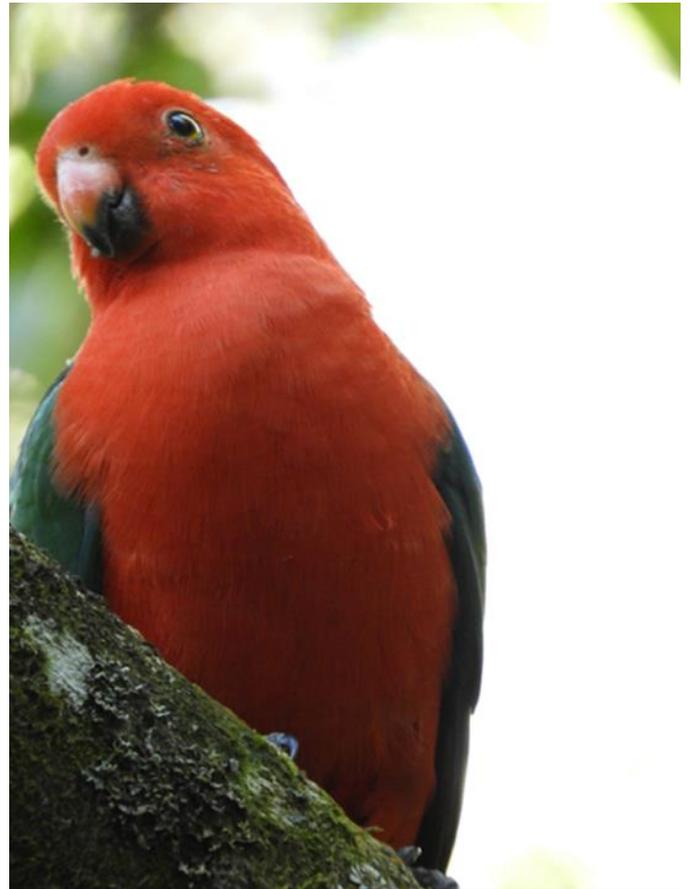
To kick the project off we are very excited to invite you to attend one of our three upcoming Wet Tropics bird monitoring workshops. The workshops will be held at Lake Barrine Teahouse on Saturday 3 September, in Innisfail Sunday 18 September, and in Cairns on Saturday 24 September. See our flyer for details or check out our website

<https://www.birdlifengq.org/> or facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeNQ/>

At the workshop, Dr Amanda Freeman will introduce participants to the intrinsic value of Wooroonooran National Park, and the plight of our Wet Tropics endemic birds. As well as learning about some of the threatened Wet Tropics birds, participants will be introduced to survey methods and have hands on learning opportunities using the Birdata app. Don't worry if you haven't used the app before, we will be there to help you, and practise makes perfect.

Once you become hooked on these special local birds, we can help you gain further skills monitoring them in our favourite locations in Wooroonooran National Park.

If you want to you can become part of our project monitoring team. Contact Ceri and Amanda at northernqld@birdlife.org.au for more information and to get involved.



The Wet Tropics subspecies of King Parrot is endangered. Image courtesy of Amanda Freeman

THE WOOROOOORAN CHALLENGE

You could win a copy of the latest Compact Australian Bird Guide by Jeff Davies, Peter Menkhorst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Peter Marsack and Kim Franklin (2021).

The competition winner will be the person who completes the most BirdLife Australia compatible surveys in Wooroonooran National Park and enters the surveys into Birdata.

The surveys must be undertaken between 4 September and 31 December 2022 and be entered in Birdata before 1 January 2023.

The winner will be announced in January 2023.

So come along to one of the workshops to learn how to survey.

New Birding Resources

By Renee Cassels

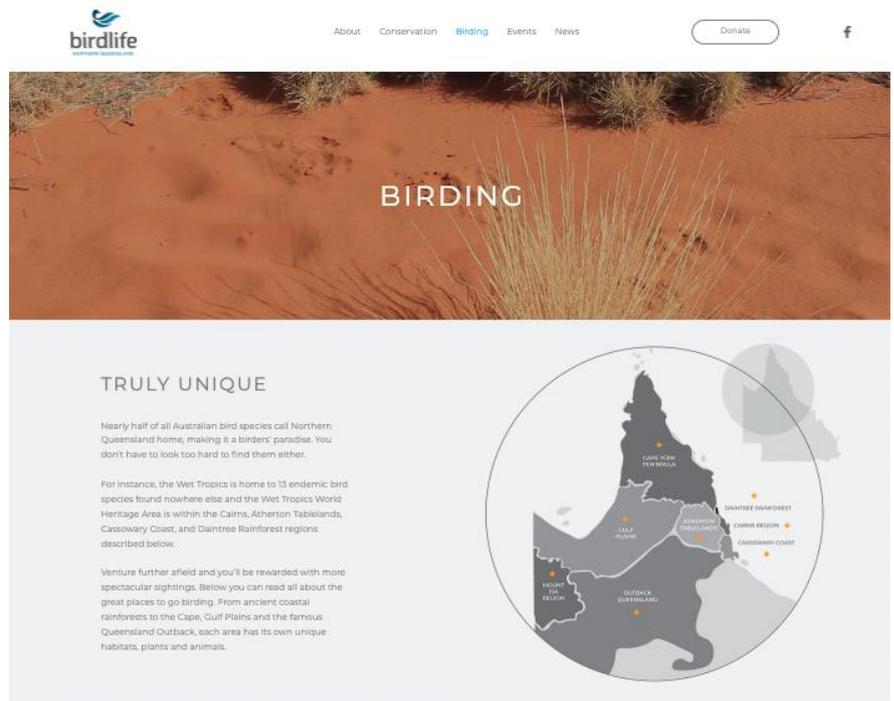
We are very excited to have recently released eight downloadable and printable flyers for each Northern Queensland birding region on our website. You can find them at www.birdlifeq.org/birding

The Committee receives many emails from people wanting to know how and where they can go to see our wonderful birds. Because northern Queensland covers such a vast area and has so many diverse regional biomes and unique bird communities, we wanted to create a set of simple, beautiful, and helpful flyers that would inspire people to discover each one, make the most of their time in the area, and get excited about which locals they might hope to spot.

Want to know the best watering holes in Mt Isa? Or the best place to encounter a 60 kg cassowary around the Cassowary Coast? Or how about when the best time to visit Cape York is? Designed by Renée Cassels, our Communications Coordinator, each flyer is full of information written by experienced birders and locals who know each destination well, including when and where to go, how to get there, and how you can get involved in protecting our birds. They are perfect for people of all ages, local backyard bird lovers, and interstate and international visitors alike.

A very special thanks to all contributors of the wonderful bird photos used in them. Many images were kindly licensed for use from BirdLife Photography photographers. Others were generously supplied by Keith Fisher and our Committee members Peter Valentine, Mikey Kudo, Martin Willis, Ceri Pearce.

We hope you enjoy and share them with your friends, family, and visitors. Happy birding everyone!



CAIRNS REGION

URBAN | FARMLAND | RAINFOREST | WETLANDS | COAST

Cairns is the bustling heart of Tropical North Queensland and a great base to start exploring from. Locally, the Cairns Esplanade, Fiedler Botanical Gardens, Centenary Lakes, and Cattana Wetlands are just some of the places to see some of our favourite birds. Hop on a boat for the Great Barrier Reef, venture further afield for even more birding excitement, or just kick back and embrace the laid-back tropical lifestyle with the locals.

[Download Flyer](#)

DAINTREE RAINFOREST

RAINFOREST | COAST

The Daintree is renowned for its ancient rainforests, jungle-clad mountains, crystal clear streams, and pristine beaches. And it starts only 95 km north of Cairns. This is a place to slow down, relax and take your time. Strolls along the beaches often yield sightings of Beach Stone-curlew. Exploring the forest trails can reveal Southern Cassowary and many other special rainforest birds. Take a specialised birdwatching boat trip on the Daintree River to see locals like the Great-billed Heron and Shining Flycatcher, as well as the iconic Daintree crocodiles.

[Download Flyer](#)



CASSOWARY COAST



CAPE YORK PENINSULA

RAINFOREST | SAVANNAH | WOODLANDS | COAST

Cape York Peninsula birding region is impressively vast, extending from Cooktown to the northern tip of Australia. The Coral Sea bounds the east, the Gulf of Carpentaria the west, and the Torres Strait the north.

There are more than 370 bird species known in this region, with a number found nowhere else in Australia, from large parrots to small honeyeaters. Several are Papua New Guinea annual migrants. Open eucalypt woodland is the dominant vegetation type, with notable tropical rainforests at Lookerbie Lagoon, Kulu-Niyemnu (Don Range), Kulu (Duffinwash Range), and small areas around Mt Cook and Mt Walea in the south-west. Tropical rainforests are located near Hoppersville and in the north-east.

On the west of the Peninsula Ridge, extensive river systems flow into the Gulf with associated gallery rainforests, waterfalls, billabongs and mangroves. On the east, shorter systems drain into the Coral Sea. During the summer wet season, flooding often limits road travel.

Visiting this remote region calls for forward planning and an adapted spirit as distances are long and settlements sparse, but the region always guarantees a fantastic, unforgettable birding and travelling experience.

WHEN TO GO

Both the summer wet and winter dry seasons are rewarding times to visit, offering very different birding experiences. The dry season is most popular for visitors as roads can flood in the wet season. Migratory species are present between August and April.

GETTING THERE

During the dry season access is generally by road with four-wheel drive vehicles a necessity as roads are mostly unsealed. A ferry crosses the Jardine River. Access during the wet season is by plane or ship from Cairns. Guided tours are available and vehicles can be hired at Bamaga, Lookerbie River and Weipa.

Top 3 spots



Kulu-Niyemnu (Don Range) National Park
Extensive rainforest and heath provide habitat to many specialist species, and coastal areas are abundant with shorebirds.



Lookerbie Scrub and the Tip of Cape York
Coastal ecosystems, heathlands, rainforest, and woodlands with some very special species.



Raymu (Lakeland) National Park and surrounds
Extensive wetlands, plains and riparian forest abound with finches and raptors.

BIRDLIFENG.ORG

SPOT THESE LOCALS WHEN YOU VISIT

COMMUNITY

Indigenous Ranger groups manage the country by monitoring seasons and fuel pits, protecting turtles and seabird nesting sites, assessing habitat, and using strategic burns. Visitors are well catered for with good facilities at wetlands, towns and stations throughout the region.

CONSERVATION

The data for this area is sparse. Make your birding count by doing a bird survey and entering it into Birds. Every time you share your bird surveys, our collective knowledge of birds grows. For more information go to birds.birdlife.org.au

Indigenous ranger groups, Queensland Parks and Wildlife and others operate a range of projects in the region including habitat management and monitoring. To volunteer email volunteers@birds.birdlife.org.au

The Arantika Nature Fund is seeking to restore 5,000 ha of Golden-shouldered Parrot habitat to save the endangered Golden-shouldered Parrot. To learn more go to arantika.org.au

GET INVOLVED!

Visit birds.birdlife.org.au to find out more about what we do and subscribe to our newsletter to get notified about our events.























Top 5 spots

standing together to stop extinctions

SPOT THESE LOCALS WHEN YOU VISIT

COMMUNITY

There are only a few small but welcoming towns in this region - Georgetown, Clonville, Normanton, Kaurumba and Burketown. Kaurumba has nature-based tourism with river cruises.

CONSERVATION

The data for this area is sparse. Make your birding count by doing a bird survey in the Gulf Plains Key Biodiversity Area and entering it into Birds. Every time you share your bird surveys, our collective knowledge of birds grows. For more information visit birds.birdlife.org.au. Find out more about Key Biodiversity Areas by visiting keybiodiversityareas.org

BirdLife Australia's Migratory Shorebird Program monitors shorebird populations on the Gulf coast. Volunteers can find out how to assist at birds.birdlife.org.au/projects/mshorebirds/volunteering-sh

GET INVOLVED!

Visit birds.birdlife.org.au to find out more about what we do and subscribe to our newsletter to get notified about our events.























Top 5 spots

standing together to stop extinctions



CASSOWARY COAST

FARMLAND | RAINFOREST | WETLANDS | COAST

The Cassowary Coast birding region features rugged mountains, sparkling rivers and waterfalls, secluded beaches, a rainforest canopy walk, tropical islands, and abundant birds. Add the uniquely North Queensland character of the people, food, towns and farms (sugar cane, bananas, tropical fruit) and this area provides an unforgettable visitor experience.

Of the 333 bird species found here, as the region's name suggests, you are very likely to see a Southern Cassowary. Despite their impressive size, these 80 kg birds can be tricky to find in the forest - unless you know where to look. Reliable sightings occur at Elly Bay, where cassowaries regularly stroll along the beach, and at the Lush Park Fish Dam Walk near Mission Beach. These iconic birds can also wander along roads, so please be on the look-out and drive carefully.

As well as excellent birding, the region's attractions include the Dawn of Inland with its art and architecture, Mission Beach's restaurants, shaded sandy beaches, walking trails and holiday atmosphere, and Cardwell's separate charming town in Hinchinbrook Island. The all-year round lush greenness of the Cassowary Coast is nurtured by more than 3,000 mm average rainfall, so consider taking a raincoat or umbrella.

WHEN TO GO

Birding at any time of year is rewarding. In the drier season, from June to October, the spectacular highest season attracts large numbers of raptors and eagles. Waterbirds also concentrate as wetlands and waterways contract. From September to April, migratory species such as Torresian Imperial Pigeon, Buff-breasted Pheasant Kingfisher, and migratory shorebirds visit the region.

GETTING THERE

Most travellers fly into Cairns and travel by car or bus to the region. Roads are good, though during the summer Wet season flooding occasionally occurs. If you are fit and wise, getting the Mtly Mountain trails offer an opportunity to ride through rainforest close to the coast.

Top 3 spots



Warrior Lakes
Lush parkland in inland featuring over 100 bird species.



Elly Bay
The best place to see Southern Cassowary at a picturesque beach.



Djiru National Park Mission Beach
Lowland rainforest walking trails along pristine creeks.

BIRDLIFENG.ORG

SPOT THESE LOCALS WHEN YOU VISIT

COMMUNITY

BirdLife Northern Queensland have a monthly morning bird walk at Warrior Lakes. Check our events at birds.birdlife.org.au. Every time you share your bird surveys, our collective knowledge of birds grows. For more information go to birds.birdlife.org.au

The Johnstone Ecological Society is a volunteer group based in Inuvik and is responsible for local land restoration at Bulgarin Swamp and Lush Park.

CONSERVATION

Make your birding count by doing a bird survey in the Central Wet Tropics Key Biodiversity Area and entering it into Birds. Every time you share your bird surveys, our collective knowledge of birds grows.

GET INVOLVED!

Visit birds.birdlife.org.au to find out more about what we do and subscribe to our newsletter to get notified about our events.























Top 5 spots

standing together to stop extinctions

Cassowary Coast Social Birding

By Sandra Christensen

On Saturday 30 July, seven birders from our monthly Warrina Lakes group were joined by two from Cairns and four from the Mission Beach area for a social outing to the Bramston Beach area and Eubenangee Swamp.

We gathered at the bottom of Tower Access Rd, 12km from Mirriwinni, and car pooled up to the old, open gate. We walked uphill along the wide track enjoying the King Fern and glimpses of farmland as we went further up. The Sulphur-crested Cockatoos did their best to drown out the calls of smaller species but over the course of two hours we found many rainforest birds.

Our next stop was Eubenangee Swamp where we gathered in the parking area next to the Alice River for morning tea. Once fortified, the group followed the track alongside the river where some saw an Azure Kingfisher, and all were delighted by the antics of a Rufous Fantail which came close to the ground, especially pleasing some beginner birders. The group walked up the grassy hill and gathered at the top to look across the water at a crocodile with its head hiding in the grass, but its back and long tail visible giving an indication that it was quite large. As expected, there were not a large number of birds around the water but nonetheless the group enjoyed looking for egrets, Royal Spoonbill, Darter, Black-necked Stork and Jacana.

Most of the group then proceeded to the Garradunga Pub for lunch in the beer garden where a good time was had by all.



Reopening of Jack Barnes Bicentennial Boardwalk

Report and images by Hidetoshi Kudo (Mikey)

The Jack Barnes Boardwalk has been one of the most unique walking tracks in Cairns since it was built in 1988. It offers excellent opportunities to enjoy and learn about local mangroves, which are very important ecosystems that interface between the rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef. For birders including myself, the Jack Barnes Boardwalk has been an exciting place in which to see some unique birds such as Mangrove Robins, Torresian Kingfishers and Shining Flycatchers that rely on the mangrove habitats. Sadly, this Boardwalk had been closed on and off for many years due to structural issues.

After several discussions with Denis Walls (president of Cairns and Far North Environment Centre [CAFNEC] at the time, and also a Birdlife Australia member), we formed a boardwalk recovery team and had regular meetings to brainstorm ideas for how to get funding to repair and reopen the boardwalk.

As part of our activities, we collected more than 400 petition signatures. In November 2019, Bess Murphy (CAFNEC) and I made a 30-minute presentation to the Cairns Regional Council (CRC) explaining how valuable the Jack Barnes Boardwalk is for all of us. The presentation was well received and had good comments after the meeting. But it didn't have enough impact to make a change to their Motion to eventually remove the Boardwalk.

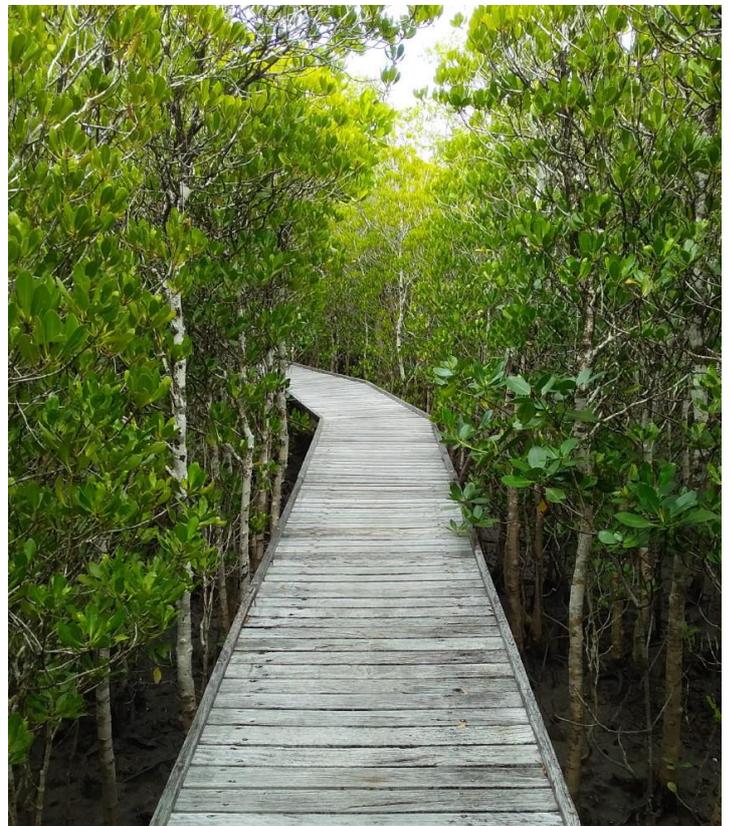


Nesting female Shining Flycatcher

We also took the CRC Division 5 Councillor, Amy Eden, on a guided tour along the Boardwalk. It was a great opportunity to explain the Boardwalk's educational and tourism values. She then successfully Moved an Amendment to the Council Motion that sought to remove the Boardwalk, which delayed any such action until late 2021.

In 2020, honestly speaking, I was almost giving up on the Boardwalk, but Denis Walls wasn't! He found the original Boardwalk designer, John Breen, who built the Boardwalk back in 1988 using bamboo from the Red Arrow Track in Cairns. Denis then organised a meeting with the new CEO of Cairns Airport, Richard Barker, in early 2021. Richard Barker then met with Cairns Mayor Bob Manning to persuade him to give the money (\$460,000) allocated for the Boardwalk's removal to the Airport for its repair. This was agreed to by CRC towards the end of May 2021 and the money was with the Cairns Airport before the end of the financial year in June.

The Boardwalk will be reopened by the time you read this article after 12 months repair work by Yirrganydji Land and Sea Rangers supervised by John Breen. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported the restoration of the Boardwalk and hope you can give us continuing support to look after this unique facility, so it lasts for a long time.



View as you wander along Jack Barnes boardwalk

Our Conservation Priorities for Tomorrow

By Kath Shurcliff

Have you ever wondered how the BirdLife Northern Queensland (NQ) committee determines just which projects we should prioritise for our limited resources and efforts - for example, why have we focused on crane counts or grasswren surveys? There are several criteria we use - is the species unique to our part of the world? endangered? of unknown status? And critically, do we have a local champion - someone who will drive our work and make sure it doesn't slip off the radar of our committee and members' attention! Some current projects which get past these first checkpoints are the crane counts, grasswren surveys, beach-nesting birds, our higher altitude Wet Tropics endemics (especially bowerbirds), our key biodiversity areas, and the communications and marketing which is needed across these projects to ensure they can engage our supporters and partners.



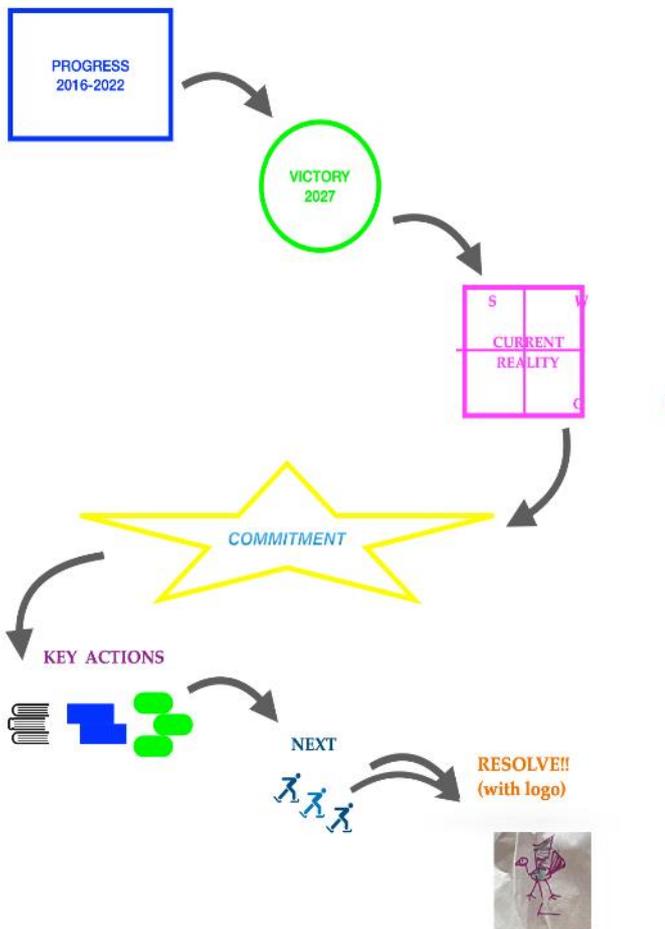
The strategic planning team.



Kath Shurcliff facilitating the strategic planning group



Edward Bell presenting on crane working group outcomes



To be successful and to even know if they are successful, we need a plan to guide our work — you know the old saying “if you don't know where you are going then any 'ole path will do"! But we don't have the luxury of wondering around any which way, because time is running out for our unique birds - highlighted so dramatically by the recent report on the State of Our Environment released in July 2022. Also, as a volunteer group, we need to be realistic about what we can achieve - what can WE do to make a difference? So, to give us guidance on where exactly we should head over the next five years, the BirdLife NQ committee held a conservation planning meeting with invited local experts and champions.

Fifteen of us met at Halloran’s Hill, Atherton - in an environment reminding us why we make the effort to protect such wonderful places that are home to our unique birdlife. We were even joined by James Matcott from Melbourne, the BirdLife Australia Network Liaison Officer and Community Organiser, who provided some interesting insights into the new BirdLife national strategy plan. Both he and Golo Maurer (BirdLife Australia Citizen Science Program Leader) also gave various commitments on how our national office can support our efforts.

Also joining us was Evizel Seymour from Terrain Natural Resource Management (NRM) who came along to learn more about BirdLife NQ and to help us strategically plan.

The participants put their collective heads together and produced draft action plans based on their vision of where we could realistically be five years from now – if we work together and stay focused.

The day’s discussions followed a process used by myself as facilitator.

We settled on these priority projects along with their new tag line:

- Grasswrens after 2023 - “Grasswrens save the northwest”,
- Cranes on the Tablelands and beyond - “Make Cranes Great Again (MCGA)”,
- Altitudinal Threatened Species - “Birds with Altitude”,
- Key Biodiversity Areas - “the Key is Biodiversity”, and
- Communicating/Marketing our work - “You Better Like Birds” says Bird Catter.



James Matcott sharing results from one of the working groups

A quick summary of our results, plus the lead person for each is given in the table below. So, if you would like to find out more about each of these projects, or better still, get actively involved with our work, please contact each of them. We look forward to seeing regular updates on their progress in future issues of ‘Contact Call’.



Grasswrens (Kath Shurcliff)	“Grasswrens Save the North”
Monitor Carpentarian and Kalkadoon Grasswrens in the Carpentarian Corridor	Establish long-term conservation outcomes for both species with existing partners-S Gulf NRM, Calton Hills, Thornton, QNPWS
	Establish roles of BirdLife NQ in species’ long-term conservation and action plan
	Ensure enough volunteer recruitment and management for ongoing monitoring
Regional Fire Management Plan assessed based on monitoring	Develop recommendations and insights from current monitoring data
Extend partners to ensure all key land managers included	Bring mining companies into partnership
	Involve extended partners - indigenous ranger groups, more property managers in Carpentarian Corridor

Cranes (Ed Bell)	"Make Cranes Great Again"
Continue Annual Count across Atherton Tablelands	Identify new roosts, winter searches, training evening in August 2022
	Information packs- risk assessment, methodology info, ID guides
	Publish annual report, short summary to public, landholders, tourism operators
Increased engagement and awareness in general public	Engage with OZ Cranes and how BirdLife NQ can support
	Information to NRMs about cranes, and share with their networks
	Use social media, mailing lists more effectively - engaging images, video
Promote Annual Count and Reinstate Crane Week	Viewing nights, day tours, public talk
	School engagement
	Art Trail/statues and signage at Information Centres
Historic data on Birdata and ensure future data inputs	Investigate ways to enter data into Birdata annually
	Investigate use QR code link to Birdata
	Investigate scientific resources to help citizen science target surveys more easily
Scientifically robust population estimate across Gulf/Cape and Tablelands	Literature review
	Consult with researchers in region to identify gaps in knowledge on several issues
	Expand counts to Kowanyama, Normanton/Karumba?
	Investigate funding options for above via ABEF

Altitudinal Threatened Birds (Ceri Pearce)	"Birds with Altitude"
SMART Plan that identifies and prioritises actions to mitigate risks for each Wet Tropics threatened species/subspecies	Convene working group- identify birds, threats, questions, monitoring requirements, survey coordinator, survey sites.
Partners engaged and working together: Terrain, CAFNEC, C4, WTMA, Birds Qld, QNPWS, indigenous groups	Regular communications with partners
Robust monitoring methods to answer specific questions	Design survey and methods
All data in one place, standardised, accessible and analysed annually	Birdata modified to suit, shared sites at all altitudes, verify new sites
	Regular reports prepared by consultant specialist
Active, trained, confident volunteers providing results	Complete four year pilot project in Wooroonooran NP- training
	Training design and package
	Share information to volunteers and partners
	Make this survey 'a thing'

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) (Golo Maurer)	“The Key is Biodiversity”
Targets for KBA monitoring	Easter Health Check for all KBAs - read KBA report out soon
	Identify where KBAs are accessible
	Identify priority KBAs to be monitored
National support program for KBA guardians	National where, why, what, how and Feedback
	Clear instructions for volunteers
Increase understanding and support within community	KBA workshop

Communications/Marketing (Renee Cassels)	“You Better Like Birds” Bird Catter
BirdLife NQ marketing and communications plan and schedule	Every project has a communication plan
	Every project has a participation plan
	Stocktake to optimise assets
Undertake priority campaigns	Prioritise possible campaigns
	Secure national office tools to support our local campaigns
	Identify partners and expand
	Engage with State and Federal MPs to foster relationships
	Share our successes
Become the “GoTo” point for information on birds throughout entire branch area - Branding	Contact Call 4/year
	Regular column in local papers/media

If you would like to find out more about each of these projects,
or better still, get actively involved,
please contact northernqld@birdlife.org.au



Wet Tropics Endemics and Communications working groups



Golo Maurer presenting on working group outcomes

Grasswrens Galore during May 2022

By Kath Shurcliff

For the last five years we have worked in partnership with Southern Gulf NRM to monitor the impacts their regional fire management plan is having on both Kalkadoon and the endangered Carpentarian Grasswrens. We have been setting up long-term monitoring sites scattered across the core area where these species occur northwest of Mount Isa. The sites represent a range of fire histories where both wildfires and control burns have occurred over the past ten years. We will be able to track if birds remain or move out of areas with recent fires and if they move into areas of refuge from fires that have destroyed their spinifex cover. Over the last few years our monitoring has been informed by the work of University of Queensland PhD student Henry Stoetzel. He has developed habitat models predicting where to find Carpentarians incorporating these fire histories. He has also undertaken intensive field work providing us invaluable insights into breeding activities, population size and structure, and habitat requirements. This is proving to be a perfect partnership, as evidenced by our recent results.

Each year we make a call for volunteers to help us complete our surveys and we always get an enthusiastic bunch of people who answer this call. In May, we had a small group that made up for its lack of size with great skills and commitment. The result — we found more grasswrens than ever before!!: as measured by any feature we use. So rather than finish this article with a big thank you to them, I'll start off by naming this great group - Bill Brookes, Martin Cachard, Phillip Foster, Rhidian Harrington, Gill Harrington, Graham Harrington, Catherine Hirsch, David Houghton, Mike Johnston, Yayoi and Yuni Nishio, Yu Ota, Carolyn Scott, Jules Seabright, Henry Stoetzel and Kelvin Wykes. They are the real stars of this program, and we owe them so much for their dedication and expertise. And we also enjoy each other's companionship and fun in the field!!

Despite only having 10 volunteers for the first section based near Mount Isa, we were still able to complete our usual number of surveys. And it paid off, as we had more birds this year than ever before, even breaking our record returns from last year!

But now to the other stars — the grasswrens! What did we find out about them this year? They had bred earlier in the year, based on the field work done by Henry. He was able to show us a nest that had been used this past breeding season.



Our team at work!! Image courtesy of L. Skea

Surprisingly, it was right on top of a single spinifex clump, and not hidden down in the depths as one might suspect. Seems they are as wary as venturing into spinifex as we are!

We were able to find our Carpentarians more readily than before. We found birds at two-thirds of the locations we visited - our previous best year (2021) had been 50%, so a substantial increase. And there were more locations that had multiple groups of birds. It is now looking like successful breeding leads to some of those young birds moving "next door" to their parents - finding it difficult to leave the parental home! We again used Henry's habitat model, to help us fill in gaps between previously known groups of birds.

We only had a slightly higher 'return rate' for Kalkadoons this year. One interesting result was finding pairs of birds nicely spaced every 400m along a quartzite dyke running for several kms, similar to a "China Wall", with no less than five groups being found along this geographic feature.

Following two weeks of survey work in the Mount Isa area, we then turned our attention to Boodjamulla National Park, with an injection of some new volunteers. We journeyed out to the western boundary of the park where we had done some work in previous years. The fire history of this area is substantially different from that around Mount Isa, with more frequent and more widespread wildfires, a story that current park management is trying to address. We did find more Carpentarians here than we had ever found previously, but the number of groups in total was disappointing. Out of 27 sites, we had birds at only five of them. We covered several areas that 'looked' ideal but alas, yielded no

grasswrens. And the birds seemed to be much more secretive over there as well! And of course, this is an area that has no records of Kalkadoons. Despite access into this area being difficult, we hope to do more work here in future years.

So, if you would like to get involved in these surveys and see some outstandingly beautiful country as well, consider reserving some time in May next year to come and join us — you will be most welcome!



"Blue Sky Country" in Boodjamulla National Park.
Image courtesy of R. Harrington

Graham Harrington Scholarship Awarded to Henry Stoetzel

Congratulations to Henry Stoetzel, the winning applicant of the 2022 Graham Harrington Scholarship.

Henry will receive a \$3000 award, thanks to additional funds donated to increase the size of the award this year. A very big thank you to our special donor, Graham Harrington.

Henry will use the Graham Harrington Scholarship Award to support his PhD studies and specifically shipping and processing of Carpentarian Grasswren genetic samples (pin feathers). The primary aim of this investigation is to reveal the genetic structuring of the population across the species' distribution. From this, we can make inferences about population connectivity, and other genetic processes such as inbreeding and genetic drift, which have implications for conserving the species and understanding how wildfire, the key threatening process, shapes the species distribution.



Recent literature about north Queensland birds

Compiled by Don Franklin

WET TROPICS RAINFOREST BIRDS IN DECLINE – BUT SOME ARE INCREASING

Based on 1,977 surveys at 124 sites at elevations from sea level to 1,500 m above sea level (ASL) across Wet Tropics rainforests, and conducted over the period 2000 to 2016, Williams and de la Fuente (2021) found that “The local abundance of most mid and high elevation species has declined at the lower edges of their distribution by >40% while lowland species increased by up to 190% into higher elevation areas. Upland-specialised species and regional endemics have undergone dramatic population declines of almost 50%.” No species-specific data are analysed (raw species-specific data are presented in a Supplementary file), but “All species”, “Endemic species”, “Midland species”, “Upland species” and “Rainforest specialists” groups all suffered moderate declines whereas “Lowland species” and “Habitat generalists” groups increased moderately. They mention in Discussion that Mountain Thornbill is an exception to general trends, being an upland species that increased over the study period.

As a specific illustration, Kowalski *et al.* (2022) documented trends at the School for Field Studies in the Gillies Range, elevation 740–780 m ASL, comparing reporting rates for 2000–2005 with those for 2014–2019. “Reporting rates of most mixed-forest (61%) and nearly half (47%) of rainforest-dependent bird species ... decreased ... between the two time periods, despite the quality of rainforest habitat improving at the site.” Most marked declines were noted for Macleay’s Honeyeater and Large-billed Scrubwren, whilst most marked increases were noted for Spectacled and Pied Monarchs.

BIRD BEHAVIOUR

“Male Great Bowerbirds (*Ptilonorhynchus* [*Chlamydera*] *nuchalis*) build and decorate stick structures (bowers) to attract females. In some populations, they arrange grey and white decorations by size, with smaller decorations closer to the bower entrance. This size-distance gradient has been hypothesized to create a “forced perspective” illusion that females prefer. I assessed whether a common type of red decoration – red wire – was also arranged by size at 18 bowers in Townsville, Queensland.



Mountain Thornbill. Image courtesy of Doug Herrington.

Males placed shorter wires closer to the bower structure, but most wires were outside of the females’ field of view, precluding them perceiving forced perspective. Instead, males might keep shorter wires closer to the bower because they frequently use red wires during display, and shorter wires might be easier to handle during display movements. Longer wires farther away might aid in long-distance mate attraction.” (Doerr 2021)

“Observations made at an active nesting colony of Metallic Starlings *Aplonis metallica*, during the nest-building phase of the breeding cycle, resulted in the description and photographic illustration of a vigorous wing-flapping greeting or pair-bonding display performed on or beside nests under construction. Erectile eyebrow tufts of elongate sharply pointed feathers above each eye are described and illustrated, apparently for the first time in this species.” (Frith 2021)



Great Bowerbird at its bower. Image courtesy of Doug Herrington.

ORNITHOLOGICAL HISTORY

Three recent papers document the history of ornithology in north Queensland. McGregor (2022) delved into the diaries of Sid Jackson from his 1908 expedition to Tinaroo. Scambler & Austin (2021) documented ornithological activity at Bromfield Swamp from 1914 to 1967 and particularly that of Captain A. Frank Austin (also Barnett, Bourke and Bravery). Scambler (2022) documented the ornithological contributions of entomologist James Franklin Illingworth who was stationed near Cairns from 1917 to 1921. Though Jackson was a collector, the record “shows that despite the disparities between his modes of birding and those of today, there are many parallels and congruences”. Illingworth “helped position Queensland Government entomology research as part of a first wave of Australian bird conservation”.

GENERAL ORNITHOLOGY

Leonard Andy (2022) is a Djiru Traditional Owner of the Mission Beach area. He is concerned both with the loss of habitat in the area for Cassowaries with development including tourism, the lack of inclusion of traditional owners in Cassowary management, and lack of recognition of the Traditional Owners’ spiritual and cultural connections to the Cassowary.

“The Australian endemic Chowchilla ... remains biologically little known. An interpretation of the significance of its dorsal plumage, common to both sexes, and the sexually dimorphic ventral plumage is given. The terminally spine-shafted tail feathers of logrunners present an example of convergent evolution with tail morphology and function in non-passerine woodpeckers (family Picidae), and these are illustrated. Knowledge of the unusual nesting biology of Chowchillas is briefly summarised. Recent observations at a nest found a longer incubation period than previously known. Limited observation of social interaction between flock members including a female and her juvenile offspring suggest the possibility of an unusual, indirect, form of cooperative breeding but too little is known to confirm this.” (Frith & Frith 2021)

A phylogenetic study of the Spectacled Monarch suggests it comprises three species, one in Australia and the Lesser Sundas islands, one from the Louisiade Archipelago in New Guinea, and one in the Moluccas (McCullough *et al.* 2021). However, they also recommend that the three subspecies currently recognised in Australia be reduced to two with the merging of *melanorrhous* resident in north-east Queensland with *gouldii* which migrates south to sub-tropical Australia. The third subspecies, *albiventris* of Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands is retained as is.

Nielsen (2021) confirmed the presence of Ashy-bellied (Pale) White-eye on Green Island north-east of Cairns,

with observational and photographic evidence (photos by Tanner Martin). This is a 220 km southward extension to the species’ known range.

In a study conducted near Cairns and Lockhart River, begging calls of Little Bronze-cuckoo chicks were most similar to those of chicks of their Large-billed Gerygone hosts “shortly after hatching (when rejection by hosts typically occurs) but become less similar as cuckoo chicks get older” (Noh *et al.* 2021).

It is now 100 years since “the last irrefutable sighting of the elusive Buff-breasted Button-quail”. Webster (2022) presented evidence and argued that most sightings in the last 40 years were likely to be Painted Button-quail because:

- the reported size difference doesn’t exist;
- female Painted Button-quail have a wet-season plumage that hasn’t been adequately described and more nearly resembles that of the Buff-breasted species;
- Painted Button-quail occur further north than previously reported; and
- he investigated all sites from which recent reports had been made and found only Painted Button-quail.

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Red-cheeked Parrot: Interesting feeding record

by Del Richards

Identified beside a road near Gordon Creek in Iron Range area in early May, were eight Red-cheeked Parrots gathered to feed on emerging gum tips.

This hasn't been noted in HANZAB as a food resource and may constitute a new feeding record. They stayed in the tree busily feeding for more than 20 minutes.



Immature female Red-cheeked Parrot photographed in a *Eucalyptus terminalia*

Birders spend big in regional Australia

BirdLife Australia has just released a *Bird and Nature Tourism in Australia* report, prepared by Dr Rochelle Steven.

The report identifies the astounding economic benefit of birdwatching tourism, with domestic birding trips contributing \$283m to the Australian economy annually, much of this in regional communities.

Report's key findings

- Over half a million Australian travellers incorporate birdwatching into their travels each year. Of our survey respondents, over 80 % incorporated birdwatching into their travel plans.
- Bird tourism contributes around \$283 million to Australia nationally, with negligible government investment in marketing or infrastructure for birdwatching as an activity in either domestic or international market.
- Birdwatching tourists tend to spend more than other tourists, especially on overnight trips.
- Birdwatching tourists encompass all levels of experience and engagement, from the keen birder and professional ornithologist (15 % of survey respondents) through to the casual or even non-birder (around 42 % cent).
- Birdwatching tourists commonly combine other nature-based activities and cultural experiences with their birdwatching travel, including other wildlife experiences, food and wine, and Indigenous cultural and historical tours.
- While bird tours and guides are popular, the vast majority of bird and nature tourism occurs independently.
- Bird and nature tourists are among the most environmentally aware ecotourists: 83 % indicated they are willing to record and share survey data, and over 90 % are willing to pay entry fees for the conservation and management of the places they visit.

Go to the BirdLife Australia website to find out more about the report [here](#), you can read the full report by clicking [here](#) or read an entertaining article about the value of birding tourism in [The Guardian](#).



Hastie's Swamp National Park and more

By Peter Valentine

Friday 5 August was the regular monthly survey at Hastie's Swamp National Park, led by Ron Schweitzer. Nine enthusiastic old hands and newbies joined forces in the hide at 7.00 am and started the counts. Massively overwhelming other species was the huge number of Plumed Whistling-duck, which after several attempts was estimated to be 6,000 strong. Almost every metre of the water's edge was occupied by ranks of roosting whistlers while a few more were swimming. An occasional disturbance brought about hundreds aloft briefly before returning to their rest. While Magpie Goose were only about half as abundant, the next greatest numbers were for the Pacific Black Duck and Australasian Swamphen.

Waterbirds kept us busy until about 7.45 am with highlights being a pair of Green Pygmy-goose, but the usual pair of Great Crested Grebe of the previous two months could not be found and there was only a single raptor (Whistling Kite). Perched in a tree above the hide was a solitary Nankeen Night-heron. The walk along Koci Rd past the hide was quite productive with Eastern Yellow Robins active and nesting; Spectacled Monarchs busy and lots of Brown Gerygone including one pair nesting. Honeyeaters and Silvereye were a bit light in numbers but it was pleasing to see the Yellow-breasted Boatbill present again. Both Golden and Rufous Whistlers were present; Pale-yellow Robin also, and a late addition was a single Australasian Reed-Warbler, quite curious while following a party of Red-backed Fairywren along the shoreline.

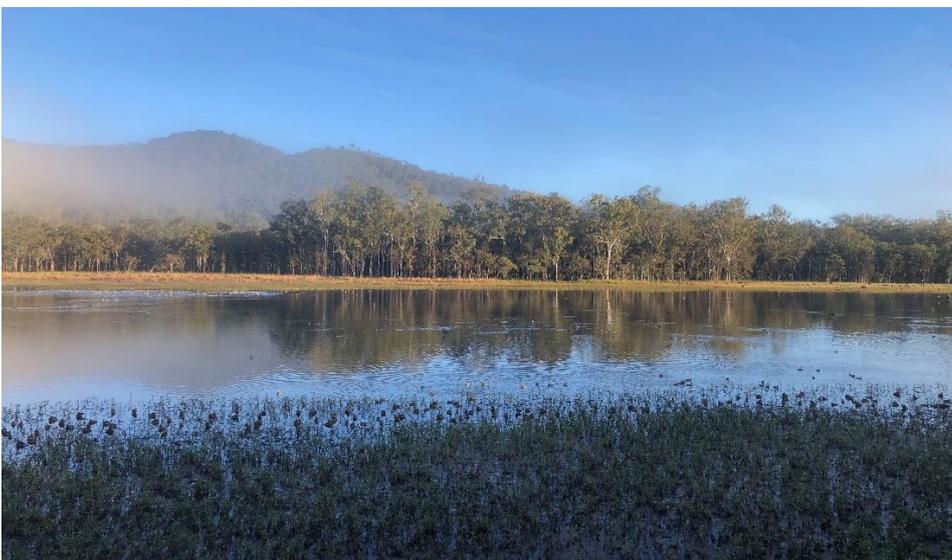


Nesting Peregrine Falcon

It was good to see Thomas MacGillivray and Marco Sensi join us, having recently arrived from Europe to study courtship in Victoria's Riflebird. Repeat offenders attending were Barbara (from Mareeba with Ron), Noel (from Atherton), Jen Browne (from Malanda) and Graham Wardle (from Malanda) as well as crane count supremo Ed Bell who made the dash from Kuranda.

After Hastie's, a couple of us went to Mt Hypipamee to view the nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons. It was rather astonishing that they are nesting on such a sheer cliff face and in full view of hundreds of tourists who visit the lookout platform daily. Ed Bell and I spent a couple of hours enjoying the Peregrines and encouraging visitors to enjoy the view. Those who showed interest or who asked were helped with views through Ed's scope or my binoculars, or shown photos to better appreciate what the distant black blob actually was. The vast majority, many from interstate,

were very appreciative and thanked us very much for helping them appreciate the birds. A big crowd of school children (60 or more) gave us some respite and a couple of people whose interests were more in throwing things or generating an echo did not detract from the overall positive interactions. The nesting pair did not seem disturbed by all the people traffic and at one point there was a changing of the brood responsibilities as one sitting bird left, and another bird took over. They are sitting on three eggs. We had an excellent day with birds!



Early morning mist rising over Hastie's Swamp

Photographic accolades for member, Geoff Stapley

A keen photographer, Geoff Stapley entered some of his favourite images in the local Tully Show and was awarded for these efforts with Champion, First and Second prizes.



For those interested in the technical aspects of the images, the images were taken on a Canon EOS 7D Mk11. Lens Canon 100-400 mm f4.5-5.6 IS II USM. Post processing was by DPP4 & Adobe elements 2020. Both images were taken in the Mission Beach area.



Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (female). ISO 800, f 5.6 1/400 AWB



Tree Martin. ISO 1600, f5.6, 1/1000 AWB

News from Mount Isa

August/September 2022

By Rex Whitehead

Birding is going well in Mount Isa. Many birding visitors are passing through with their main targets being Kalkadoon and Carpentarian Grasswrens (GWs). I believe that most are getting the Kalkadoon GWs at the Pamela Street water tank site, whereas the Carpentarian GWs are more difficult, being on private property where permission is required for access. It appears the professional bird guiding tours are having no trouble in this respect as I understand they have made arrangements with the management for access. I have seen some great images of Carpentarian GWs from these sources appearing on eBird.

Migratory waders are starting to arrive at Lake Moondarra. As always, the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are the first to arrive. I checked there today (13-08-22) and estimated there would have been over 100 of them. This is always an exciting time as one never knows what may turn up from the Northern Hemisphere.

In mid-July we went to a local area that we visit on a regular basis and came across a Painted Honeyeater, which is the first of this species I have seen in Mount Isa in the 60 years I have been here. I did many more trips to this site but didn't see it again. There was a small waterhole in the creek nearby where I could sit for hours watching many species of birds watering/bathing there. Good for the heart and soul I say.



Painted Honeyeater

We have done two trips to the Winton area recently followed by a more recent trip to the Birdsville area. Just some of the species recorded were: Black, Pied and Painted Honeyeaters; Bourke's Parrot; Mallee Ringneck; Black, Brown and Grey Falcons; Emu-wren; and Opalton Grasswren. There were huge flocks of Budgerigars, and the Black Falcons were giving them curry. Also recorded were large flocks of Flock Bronzewing. All species mentioned plus many others were successfully photographed.



Bourke's Parrot

I noticed that the Painted Honeyeaters were being harassed by Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, and the Pied Honeyeaters were being harassed by Singing Honeyeaters. On many occasions I have noticed both White-plumed and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters harassing both Golden-backed (Black-chinned) Honeyeaters and Red-browed Pardalotes.

Also noticed were Black Honeyeaters (mainly the females) collecting charcoal all day from an old fireplace. The male would occasionally join in. I have also seen Painted Finches do the same.

On the Birdsville trip, again Flock Bronzewing were recorded, not as many, but good numbers just the same. We were also able to get good shots of Inland Dotterels, and both Banded and Southern Whiteface, plus many other species.

The country is still very green in most areas visited due to the good rain received earlier in the year.

Back in Mount Isa, I have recently noticed parrots and lorikeets arguing (if you could call it that) over tree hollows. On one morning at Tom O'Hara Park, Cockatiels, Varied and Rainbow Lorikeets, and Cloncurry Ringnecks were all inspecting hollows. This looks like being a good year for them if there are enough hollows to go around.

It appears it will be a good year for the bird watchers too.

Good birding, and safe travels to all. The Isa is a great spot to visit for birders.



Pied Honeyeater



Inland Dotterel



Gouldian Finch head colours.
Image by Dr Gary Fitt

Finch Monitoring and Awareness on Country

Birds in Schools

Article by Pippy Cannon. Images by Dr Pam Schultz

The North Queensland Natural History Group (NQNHG) has been awarded a Queensland Government Engaging Science Grant for spreading the word on finches and their needs. This is a follow-up to the Queensland Citizen Science project on Gouldian Finch led by Dr Ray Pierce. For the past couple of months Dr Pamela Schultz and I have been busy on the schools' component of this project, and Ray has started with Indigenous Rangers.

Gulf Savannah Natural Resource Management (NRM) has been very helpful to us in the planning, as have BirdLife Northern Queensland (BNQ) and the Department of Environment and Science. It is sometimes challenging to get past the schools' administration staff and curricula are filled to overflowing, but persistence has paid off.

Typically, Pam and I would arrive at schools at the allotted time armed with images, a great package filled with goodies from NQNHG and BNQ, including binoculars from Dr Golo Maurer, as well as a short PowerPoint display prepared by Ray and Pam.

Although the focus is on Gouldian Finch habitat and their general requirements, we touched on all native species including grasses, trees, dingoes, etc. Country children are already in close touch with their natural world, and some showed great observation skills. With Pam's knowledge of the native grasses and my experience with school children as the BNQ Birds in Schools Coordinator, we felt confident we could get the message across.



Pippy Cannon presenting to Chillagoe school students



Dimbulah school students in the field

We had a lot of fun with the children sifting through all the information and exercises. We were hoping to have Years four, five and six, but in the smaller schools the whole school would attend, always with a couple of teachers.

The smallest school we attended was Forsayth. Here we stayed with the principal who has six children enrolled at her State School. We had been worried about the prospect of hot days, but it was absolutely freezing that morning! We would give our talk and then the PowerPoint display. Measuring the attention of the children was important... their attention spans are short and before long they start fidgeting.

The younger children were given colouring in which also identified bird anatomy, courtesy of Birds Queensland. The older children were given an interesting Wordsearch based on conservation and Gouldian country habitat, courtesy of Alexandra Johnson, Birds in Schools Project Officer, Birdlife Australia.

We provided locally tailored species lists. Included in the package was the important role of citizen scientists and data entry, Birddata especially. Alexandra had provided the relevant information re Birds in Schools for interested parties.

The children loved the walk in the gardens and sharing the binoculars, more challenging at Georgetown, Dimbulah and Bibbohra which were the largest schools with over 20 students to engage. The only convent in the area was at Dimbulah and we paid them a visit as well.

The importance of the woodswallow association with Gouldians was stressed as well as the powerful aid of hearing and listening to bird calls. We played the calls from the Finch Queensland website for the children. These are excellent and not from caged birds. The nesting in tree hollows, unusual for a finch, is a good link to make with old growth woodland.

The problem of feral animals was noted as well as the value of dingoes in controlling piglets and potentially feral cat numbers and behaviour. In the latest Wildlife Australia (Vol 59 No. 2 Page 29) magazine an article by Charles Darwin University states that foxes and cats kill 2.6 billion wild mammals, birds and reptiles a year.

Most of the students came from the land where dingoes are sometimes persecuted. We hope a little food for thought may rub off, including discussion with parents!

Naturally plenty of families had cats: fingers crossed they noted the shocking damage that is inflicted on our wildlife by these feline killing machines.

We are following up with more materials including posters, the species list for each school, as well as stressing the importance of citizen scientists particularly in remote areas, links to NQNHG, Birddata and the Birds in Schools programme. Some good apps for identifying bird species and, for follow up or further information, contact details for Ray and myself were included.

There will be a short article in the August edition of the "Gulf Kids News" magazine as well as a wordsearch based on Gouldian conservation and assessment. Gouldian Finch images will be included.

On 9 September Gulf Kids Day is to be held at Croydon. This is arranged by Gulf Savannah NRM and all schools in the Carpentaria and Etheridge Shires are invited. Sandra Christensen, who has a Blue Card, has agreed to help with that event.



Join us on Facebook



TIP coast counts coming up in November!

By Dr Julia Hazel and Rebel Warren

The coast count project is gathering long-term data about Torresian Imperial-Pigeon (TIPs) in Queensland. These birds, also known as Pied Imperial-Pigeon or Torres Strait Pigeon, have a hugely important ecological role in dispersing seeds of our native forest fruits.

As local birders know, TIPs build their nests on offshore islands that lack suitable food, so they fly to the mainland coast to feed each day. They usually return to their islands in the late afternoon, giving us an excellent opportunity to count them as they fly from the coast out to sea.

The coast count project has expanded greatly from a small start in 2007. We now have count sites spread out over more than 800 km of the Queensland coast.

Some sites have been counted only once or twice, while other sites have had consistent coverage for many years and thus provide very important data. It will become even more valuable if we have enough volunteers to repeat the counts on successive afternoons at important sites.

More than 200 people have done coast counts since 2007. Many thanks to all involved and huge thanks to the wonderful people who have kept on counting over the years!

We urgently need more participants for the next round of counts. Our target dates for 2022 are 18, 19 and 20 November. If those days are unsuitable, any nearby date can be substituted.

Please consider contributing one afternoon of your time to help keep these counts going!

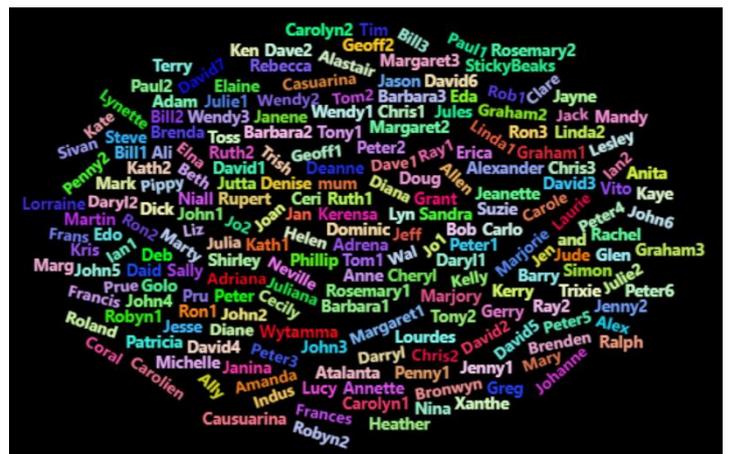
Please email our count coordinator Rebel Warren at rebelwarren51@gmail.com to express interest or request more details.



TIPs flying off the coast heading back to their nesting island. Image courtesy of Julia Hazel



One of our stalwart counters at work. Image courtesy of Helen Larsen



Just some of the counters over the years.



JOIN THE BIRDATA REVOLUTION AND MAKE YOUR BIRDING COUNT!

Birdata is birding for conservation

With Australian birds facing so many pressures, it's crucial that we collect the information needed to identify and address those threats. Birdata provides the platform to collect the scientific data that researchers use to help keep Australian birds safe.

Anyone with an interest in birds can make an important contribution to our knowledge of Australian birds by getting involved in Birdata.

The improved and easy-to-use [Birdata web portal](#) is making it simple to register and to submit your bird surveys. A free Birdata mobile app for Apple and Android is available from the app stores and allows for direct data entry in the field. The portal has replaced previous versions of Birdata in 2016, but don't worry: all of your existing data has been transferred across.

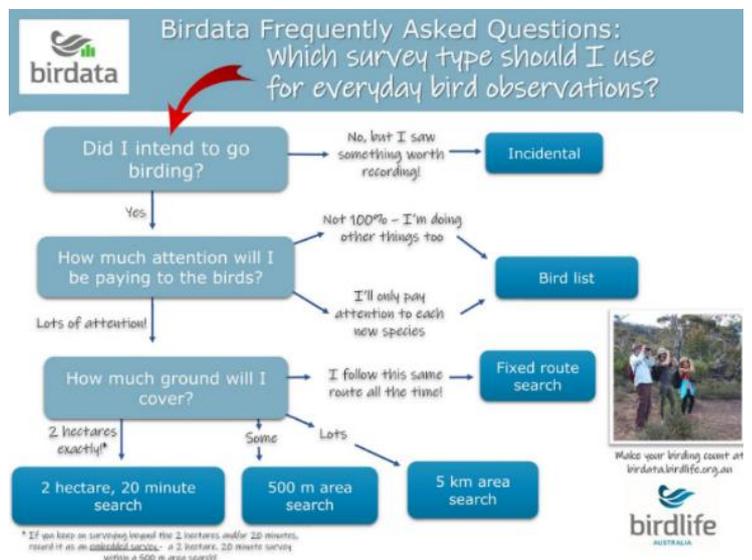
As well as making things easy for you, the Birdata web portal has many features that let you take control of your own data: it's simple to keep your own lists (site, species, or the last month or year, for example) and generate distribution maps and site lists with the click of a button. You can even edit your records if you've made a mistake.

So why don't you register. Every survey completed in Birdata helps us learn more about our precious birds.

LEARNING HOW TO USE BIRDATA HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER.

Check out the new video [Birdata App Tutorial- learn how to navigate through the Birdata app - YouTube](#)

And go to [Survey Techniques | Birdata \(birdlife.org.au\)](#) to learn more about Survey Techniques



Noticeboard

FROM THE EDITORS

Thank you to all contributors to this edition of Contact Call. We really appreciate your articles, reports, and images. If you would like to submit to the newsletter, don't hesitate to contact the editor or assistant editor.

Newsletter deadlines for 2022

- ✓ October 15th for the December Edition

BirdLife Northern Queensland Newsletter
'Contact Call'
birdlifengnewsletter@gmail.com
www.birdlifeng.org

WANT TO ADVERTISE IN CONTACT CALL?

Advertisements and sponsorship help support the local BirdLife group in Northern Queensland. Any profit is used for education and conservation projects in our region. The advertisements must be relevant to BirdLife Northern Queensland (BNQ) members and compatible with BirdLife Australia objectives and fund-raising guidelines.

Quarter page advertisements for four issues can be purchased for \$80 plus GST, or \$25 plus GST for single-issue advertisements. Contact the Editor of Contact Call or the BNQ Treasurer for further information.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORGANISE AN ACTIVITY IN YOUR AREA? OR PERHAPS A CAMP OUT?

The BirdLife Northern Queensland role of activities coordinator is currently vacant. If you would like to take on this role, or even just help with organising a single event, don't hesitate to contact us at northernqld@birdlife.org.au

Advice on BirdLife Northern Queensland Activities

BirdLife Northern Queensland activities may be cancelled at short notice, for example, in the event of adverse or severe weather. Please register to attend activities by contacting the activity leader. That way they are aware of your intention to attend and have your contact details should the event be cancelled.

Additionally, BirdLife Northern Queensland activities are managed in line with Queensland Government COVID-19 requirements.

Please remember, if you plan on attending BirdLife Northern Queensland activities or events:

- ❖ Contact the activity organiser to confirm your attendance
- ❖ Stay at home if you are unwell
- ❖ Wear a mask if that makes you comfortable or if mandated by Queensland Government COVID-19 requirements.
- ❖ Complete the event sign in sheet on arrival

For more information:

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/>



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by **Pete Marshall**
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At
 Tableland Regional Gallery

August 23rd - September 24th

Opening Friday 26th August 5pm

All Welcome

e: windsong@bigpond.com p: 0417037554



2022 CRANE COUNT

SATURDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER | ATHERTON TABLELANDS

The Crane count has been running annually since 1997 to monitor the population of Sarus Cranes (*Antigone antigone gilloe*) who migrate from the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York to winter on the Atherton Tablelands. The Atherton Tablelands were designated as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in 2009, part of a global network of protected areas. The cranes are a key species within the KBA. Organised with the support of Birdlife North Queensland and a great team of volunteers.

Right now, we are looking for volunteers for this year's Crane Count!

Each year we separate the day into two parts. The first part is driven transects on predefined routes between 12:00 and 2:00 pm looking for Cranes (both Sarus and Brolga) foraging in flocks. We count both species and try to identify the crop they are feeding on. The second part is a count as the cranes come into roost. This is carried out at multiple roosting areas across the Tablelands starting 2 hours prior to dusk and carrying on till dark. We like to round off the day with a bite to eat and a tally of the count at a local restaurant or pub, followed by a talk from a guest speaker.

It's always a fun day out and a great chance to meet other birders and spend some time watching a truly amazing species. No experience necessary and we always welcome new counters but we do encourage previous counters to get in touch as their experience is vital and greatly appreciated.

REGISTER TODAY

To register please scan the QR Code to complete our online registration form and we'll be in touch! We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any issues with registering via the form, or have any other questions please contact Edward Bell via email at edbell@icloud.com.



Photo by Martin White

Volunteers are required for both afternoon and evening surveys but spaces on the daytime transects are limited.

ITINERARY

12:00 – 2:00 pm
Driving Transects

3:00 pm

Meet up with team leaders for briefing

4:00 – 6:30 pm

Counting at crane roosts

7:00 pm

Dinner at "The Top Rail" Malanda and talk by Martine Maron – President Birdlife Australia



standing together to stop extinctions



BIRDLIFENQ.ORG



BIRD MONITORING IN THE WOOROODDORAN NATIONAL PARK

WET TROPICS BIRD WORKSHOP

WET TROPICS BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP!

Evidence is mounting that Wet Tropics rainforest birds are disappearing because of climate change. There has been a substantial population decline in the last 10 years alone. You can help by joining our citizen science project that will look for and monitor threatened endemic birds in Woorooddoran National Park.

Come along to a BirdLife Northern Queensland workshop and:

- Learn about our iconic Wet Tropics birds
- Hear how they are affected by climate change
- Be introduced to Australia's longest-running citizen science program
- Find out how you can get involved

RSVP

Please contact Ceri Pearce on 0488 131 581 or Amanda Freeman on 0484 960 773 for more information. Numbers are limited so please email us at northernqld@birdlife.org.au to reserve your place at a workshop.

This project has received funding support from the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action grant program.



WHERE

Lake Barrine Teahouse
Lake Barrine Access, Lake Barrine

WHEN

Saturday, 3 September
10:00am – 4:00pm

ALL WELCOME

WHERE

Terrain Conference Room
2 Stitt Street, Innisfail

WHEN

Sunday, 18 September
10:00am – 4:00pm

WHERE

Cominos House
27 Greenslopes Street, Edge Hill

WHEN

Saturday, 24 September
9:00am – 12:00pm

BIRDLIFE.ORG

BirdLife Northern Queensland 2022 Activities

Date	Time	Locality	Meeting place and other information	Contact the leader
Friday 2 Sept. 2022	7:00– 9:00am	Hastie’s Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie’s Swamp Hide car park	HASTIE’S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY You're invited to join us for a great morning of birding and collecting data on the birdlife in and around the swamp. Based mainly at and around the bird hide, members will survey the birds present at the wetlands and count the numbers of each species. Both waterbirds and bush birds in the adjacent fringing vegetation are included. We hope to follow the seasonal changes through the year. Bring binoculars/scope, field guide, notebook and pen, and morning 'smoko'.	For more information contact Ron Schweitzer rgschweitzer@gmail.com
Saturday 3 Sept. 2022	10:00am – 4:00pm	Lake Barrine Teahouse, Lake Barrine	WET TROPICS BIRD WORKSHOP Come along to a BirdLife Northern Queensland workshop and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about our iconic Wet Tropics birds • Hear how they are affected by climate change • Be introduced to Australia’s longest-running citizen science program • Find out how you can get involved 	Contact Ceri Pearce on 0488 131 581 or Amanda Freeman on 0484 960 773 for more information. Numbers are limited so please email us at northernqld@birdlife.org.au ASAP.
Saturday 10 Sept. 2022	Various locations in afternoon	Atherton Tablelands	ANNUAL TABLELAND CRANE COUNT We are seeking volunteers to help with our annual survey of Brolgas and Sarus Cranes. Please contact the leader, Ed Bell, to register your interest and to be assigned your survey location. Beginners welcome. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12:00–2:00pm – Driving Transects • 3:00pm – Meet up with team leaders for briefing • 4:00–6:30pm – Counting at crane roosts • From 6:30pm Dinner at The Top Rail (at own cost). Join us for a social evening to catch up with the other teams, recount the day, and share the results. There will be a talk at 7:45pm from Professor Martine Maron - President of BirdLife Australia. 	Contact Edward Bell Email edbellisy@icloud.com We hope you can join us!
Sunday 11 Sept. 2022	7:00– 9:30am	Warrina Lakes, Innisfail Meet in the carpark in Park St, off the corner of Emily and Charles St, Innisfail	BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES You’re invited to join us for a couple of hours of social birding around Warrina Lakes. After birding we’ll have morning tea at the lakes (BYO morning tea). Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and morning 'smoko'. We hope you can make it!	For more information, contact Sandra Christensen, Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator by Ph 0448 845 842
Sunday, 18 Sept.	10:00am – 4:00pm	Terrain Conference Room Old high school, 2 Stitt Street, Innisfail	WET TROPICS BIRD WORKSHOP Come along to a BirdLife Northern Queensland workshop and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about our iconic Wet Tropics birds • Hear how they are affected by climate change • Be introduced to Australia’s longest-running citizen science program • Find out how you can get involved 	Contact Ceri Pearce on 0488 131 581 or Amanda Freeman on 0484 960 773 for more information. Please email us at northernqld@birdlife.org.au ASAP to reserve your spot
Thursday 22 Sept. 2022	7.30-9.00 pm	Malanda Hotel Dinner served from 6.00pm at own cost. Best to pre-book a table.	TABLELAND BIRD TALK 'A future for the Fernwren - can this ancient species hang on in the face of changing landscape and climate?' presented by Dr John Grant	For more information contact Tableland Area Coordinators: Sam & Martin Willis by Ph: 0740966581 or 0412642141

BirdLife Northern Queensland 2022 Activities

Date	Time	Locality	Meeting place and other information	Contact the leader
22 -24 October 2022	7.00 am start each day	<p>Sat Oct 22 Seamark Road, Malanda. 2 km walk. Mild uphill. Meet at start of Seamark Rd at 7.00am at junction with Malanda-Millaa Millaa Highway.</p> <p>Sun Oct 23 Mt Lewis. 3 km walk. Flat. Meet at Bushy Creek Bridge at the bottom of Mt Lewis Road at 07.00am</p> <p>Mon Oct 24 Kahlpahlim Track. Davies Creek Rd. 6 km walk. Tough steep uphill. Meet at start of Davies Creek Rd at 07.00am (Kennedy highway junction)</p>	<p>BOWERBIRD MONITORING WEEKEND</p> <p>We have a new long term monitoring project to count the number of Tooth-billed Bowerbirds calling along 1km transects in Wet Tropics. The idea is to see if there is any variation in bird numbers into the future caused by climate change.</p> <p>You can walk any of the 20 transects (Cooktown to Paluma) outlined on the Birdlife Northern Queensland webpage - Bowerbird section https://www.birdlifeng.org/conservation There is more detailed information and a form to fill out. You can fill out as much or as little of the form as you like. The main thing we need to know is how many you can hear calling along the 1 km transect.</p> <p>The bowerbirds will be calling October-December so any day early morning is a good time to have a walk. Or we have some group walks arranged.</p>	<p>Contact Dominic Chapin at dominic@pinecreekpictures.com.au or phone him on 0419 028 077</p>
Monday – Sunday 17 - 23 October 2022		National	2020 NATIONAL BIRD WEEK and AUSSIE BACKYARD BIRD COUNT	https://birdlife.org.au/get-involved/whats-on/bird-week
Friday 4 Nov. 2022	7:00–9:00am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	<p>HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY</p> <p>You're invited to join us for a great morning of birding and collecting data on the birdlife in and around the swamp. Based mainly at and around the bird hide, members will survey the birds present at the wetlands and count the numbers of each species. Both waterbirds and bush birds in the adjacent fringing vegetation are included. We hope to follow the seasonal changes through the year. Bring binoculars/scope, field guide, notebook and pen, and morning 'smoko'.</p>	<p>For more information contact Ron Schweitzer rgschwitzer@gmail.com</p>
Sunday 13 Nov. 2022	7:00–9:30am	Warrina Lakes, Innisfail Meet in the carpark in Park St, off the corner of Emily and Charles St, Innisfail	<p>BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES</p> <p>You're invited to join us for a couple of hours of social birding around Warrina Lakes.</p> <p>After birding we'll have morning tea at the lakes (BYO morning tea). Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and morning 'smoko'. We hope you can make it!</p>	<p>For more information, contact Sandra Christensen, Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator by Ph 0448 845 842</p>
18, 19 or 20 Nov. 2022			Torresian Imperial Pigeon Count	<p>Please email count coordinator Rebel Warren at rebelwarren51@gmail.com to express interest or request more details.</p>

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Thursday 24 Nov. 2022	7.30-9.00 pm	Malanda Hotel Dinner served from 6.00pm at own cost. Best to pre-book a table.	TABLELAND BIRD TALK "Grasswren Habitat Mapping and more" by Henry Stoetzel More details to come.	For more information please contact area Tableland area coordinators Sam or Martin Willis 0740966581 0412642141
Friday 2 Dec. 2022	7:00- 9:00am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY You're invited to join us for a great morning of birding and collecting data on the birdlife in and around the swamp. Based mainly at and around the bird hide, members will survey the birds present at the wetlands and count the numbers of each species. Both waterbirds and bush birds in the adjacent fringing vegetation are included. We hope to follow the seasonal changes through the year. Bring binoculars/scope, field guide, notebook and pen, and morning 'smoko'.	For more information contact Ron Schweitzer rgschweitzer@gmail.com
Sunday 4 Dec. 2022	7:00- 9:30am	Warrina Lakes, Innisfail Meet in the carpark in Park St, off the corner of Emily and Charles St, Innisfail	FESTIVE BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES You're invited to join us for a couple of hours of social birding and our festive season breakup at Warrina Lakes.	For more information, contact Sandra Christensen, Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator by Ph 0448 845 842

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Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats