

CRANE COUNT REPORT 2019

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The Annual Crane Count took place on Saturday 7 September 2019 with a supplementary count at General Plains Swamp on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

A further count was undertaken at General Plains Swamp at dawn on Thursday 12 September 2019.

CENTRAL TABLELANDS

The number of birds counted on the Central Tablelands rebounded from 649 cranes last year to 1797 this year but this is entirely due to large numbers observed at Willett Swamp.

The traditional roosts on the eastern side of Lake Tinaroo such as Reisen's Farm, Godfrey's Farm, the former DPI Research Station, Tobacco Hill and Pelican Point appear to have been largely abandoned.

Hasties Swamp, which in former days would reliably return over 100 birds recorded none this year.

Between 1997 and 2017 Bromfield Swamp averaged close to 700 birds per year but since then this has dropped to 153 in 2018 and 106 in 2019.

This change has coincided with a dramatic increase in cranes counted at Willets Swamp, 10 kms away from Bromfield Swamp. Willets Swamp has only been counted since 2017. This location has recently changed hands and has not been artificially drained since. This possibly explains why the birds have shifted their roost site from Bromfield to Willet's. Coincidentally this is the site of the very first records of Sarus Cranes on the Tablelands. Twenty-three cranes were recorded in 1967 by an optometrist from Mareeba. This is the year after Billie Gill reported them in the Gulf for the first time.

In response to reports of birds overflying Pelican Point in 2018, counters were positioned in a boat east of Tinaroo township. 440 birds were reported flying northeast and only 30 were seen to alight. There are obviously significant roost sites in the north east of Lake Tinaroo which have not been discovered.

Roost Count

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
Bromfield Swamp	82	3	21	106
Willets Swamp	7	8	1412	1427
Hasties Swamp	0	0	0	0
Mt Quincan Farm and Swamp	17	0	111	128
Reisen Farm 1 and 2	20	0	3	23
Pelican Point *	3	4	23	30
Lagoon Road Swamp	27	12	10	49
Lakeside	34	0	0	34
TOTALS	190	27	1580	1797

- **18 at Pelican Point and 12 on a beach east of Platypus Rock**

Day Count

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
Willets Swamp	17	24	36	77
Kairi Route	99	3	34	136
Mt Quincan Route	145	20	88	253
East Barron Route	9	6	65	80
Mareeba to Rocky Creek	4	0	11	15
TOTALS	274	53	234	561

SOUTHERN TABLELANDS**Roost Count Saturday 7 September 2019**

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
Elicks Dam	0	27	48	75
Hardwicks Dam	0	28	26	54
Bullock Swamp	11	53	30	94
Sinapius/Edwards Dam	2	0	30	32
TOTALS	13	108	134	255

Roost Count Tuesday 10 September 2019

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
General Plains Swamp	0	310	1288	1598
Nettle Creek Ponds	0	0	0	0
Avocet Dam	0	0	0	0
Clearwater Dam	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	310	1288	1,598

Dawn count on Thursday September 2019

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
General Plains Swamp	44	1608	0	1652

Interestingly a panoramic photograph was taken as part of this survey with the birds counted from the photograph. The number counted from the photograph was 1526 Brolga.

Day Counts

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
Innot Hot Springs Area	84	6	1175	1265
Kaban Route	5	77	2	84

MAREEBA AREA

	Sarus	Brolga	No ID	Total
West Barron Storage	2	40	130	172

The day count of feeding areas between Mareeba and Rocky Creek found 4 Sarus Cranes and 11 unidentified cranes.

The manager at Mareeba Wetlands advised that there were no cranes there and so this location was not counted. He thought the absence was due to high grass on the verges of the ponds. Steps are being taken to remove the grass so we may see a return of cranes in 2020.

Feeding Areas

The type of areas cranes were feeding on as observed in the day counts were:

	Ploughed	Ex Wheat	Ex Maize	Pasture	Other	Total
Sarus	19	0	54	271	19	363
Brolga	0	3	3	127	3	136
No ID	6	0	491	906	8	1411
Total	25	3	548	1304	30	1910

61% of birds observed were not positively identified as species which is disappointing.

Crane Count 2020

Subject to the removal of Covid 19 regulations Crane Count 2020 will be held on Saturday 5 September 2020. Please make a note in your diaries.

Thank you to all the following who took part:

<i>Eda Addicot</i>	<i>Amanda Freeman</i>	<i>Molly Nelson</i>
<i>John Allen</i>	<i>Tessa Freeman</i>	<i>Simon O'Brien</i>
<i>Deborah Apgann</i>	<i>Andrew Forsyth</i>	<i>Des O'Neill</i>
<i>Anna Avinger</i>	<i>Trish Forsyth</i>	<i>Gwyneth Nevard</i>
<i>Sophie Baker</i>	<i>John Frois</i>	<i>Tim Nevard</i>
<i>Viola Barnes</i>	<i>Rob Garrett</i>	<i>Liz Lovett</i>
<i>Bryony Barnett</i>	<i>Jesse Gilman</i>	<i>Ceri Pearce</i>
<i>John Barnett</i>	<i>Elizabeth Hamilton-Shaw</i>	<i>Catherine Pohlman</i>
<i>Judith Barnett</i>	<i>Graham Harrington</i>	<i>Isobel Ruff</i>
<i>Delaney Brubaker</i>	<i>Dominic Harrington</i>	<i>Emma Salecki</i>
<i>Simon Burchill</i>	<i>Terry Heidenreich</i>	<i>Virginia Simmons</i>
<i>Renee Cassels</i>	<i>Sigrid Heise-Pavlov</i>	<i>David Slayter</i>
<i>Wylie Cassimell</i>	<i>Allison Hren</i>	<i>Christine Suttner</i>
<i>Sandra Christiensen</i>	<i>Fiachra Kearney</i>	<i>Ellen Terrell</i>
<i>Sandra Clague</i>	<i>Olivia Konieczny</i>	<i>Jade Thurnham</i>
<i>John Clarkson</i>	<i>Darlene Krea</i>	<i>David Tng</i>
<i>Marion Clarkson</i>	<i>Matt LaFemina</i>	<i>Peter Tuck</i>

Crane Count 2019

<i>Louisa Crossle</i>	<i>Ethan Landen</i>	<i>Trixie Tuck</i>
<i>Lucy Davis</i>	<i>Chu Lao</i>	<i>Luke Ullman</i>
<i>Mark Davis</i>	<i>Ruojim Li</i>	<i>Reanna Unwalla</i>
<i>Stetson Dierlam</i>	<i>Nick Lobasco</i>	<i>Peter Valentine</i>
<i>Jack Dimmock</i>	<i>Mal MacDonald</i>	<i>Graham Wardle</i>
<i>Erin Dodd</i>	<i>Mick McClusky</i>	<i>Barbara Warren</i>
<i>Jo Doeke</i>	<i>Carol McGoldrick</i>	<i>Terry Warren</i>
<i>Ceinwen Edwards</i>	<i>David Merrall</i>	<i>John Williams</i>
<i>Ajah Ellis</i>	<i>Margaret Merrall</i>	<i>Jill Windle</i>
<i>Alison Faignez</i>	<i>Helen Miles</i>	<i>John Winter</i>
<i>Alistair Freeman</i>	<i>Marley Mullin</i>	<i>Thomas Woltmann</i>
<i>Wise Lum</i>	<i>Jonathan Munro</i>	

Apologies to anyone missed and for any spelling errors.

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