

Cairns Region

Urban | Farmland | Rainforest | Wetlands | Coast

The Cairns birding region extends north and south of Cairns city and encompasses Port Douglas, Kuranda and Babinda. Rocky headlands, mangrove swamps, sandy beaches and coastal forests fringe the Coral Sea and tropical offshore islands. Swamps, rivers, streams, cane-land, forests and small townships create a rich mosaic across the lowlands. Rainforest covered mountains transition to drier eucalypt woodlands in the west. All these diverse habitats provide opportunities for good bird watching.

Cairns city is often the entry point for birding visitors to North Queensland; many species can be readily seen in Cairns and its surrounds with minimal effort. Most accessible is Cairns Esplanade where migratory and resident shorebirds and mangrove species are abundant and easily viewed from the boardwalk.

Around the centrally located Flecker Botanic Gardens is an extensive precinct of wetlands, rainforest and mangroves where birds can be seen on short or medium walks. In the northern suburb of Smithfield is Cattana Wetlands where shady paths encircle vegetated lake edges and traverse feather palm forest. Bird-hides provide good vantage points.

The Cairns region is popular with Australian and International tourists drawn by the relaxed tropical lifestyle and the stunning natural environment that includes the Great Barrier Reef. It is a great location to combine birding with diverse accommodation, sightseeing and dining options.

When to go

Any time is a good time for birding in Cairns. Winter is cooler and drier and amenable to long walks. Summer is the time to see migratory waders from August to April. Papua New Guinea migrants such as Metallic Starlings, Torresian Imperial Pigeons, and Channel-billed Cuckoos are present in the warmer months.

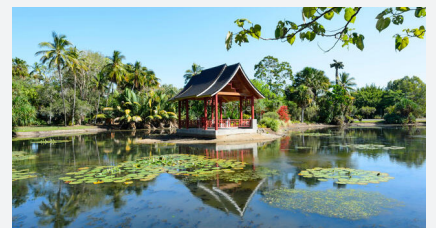
Getting there

The Cairns International and Domestic Airport makes getting to Cairns easy. Buses travel north and south along the coast. There are many tour companies and car and camper hirers in the region too.



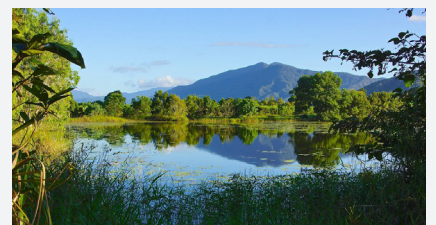
Cairns Esplanade

A migratory bird hot spot with more than 280 bird species



Centenary Lakes and Cairns Botanic Gardens

Unique swamp forest and mangrove park with freshwater and saltwater lakes right next to rich rainforest gardens



Cattana Wetlands

Diverse wetlands and remnant lowland rainforest with over 200 bird species