

# Contact Call

Newsletter of BirdLife Northern Queensland

Volume 11 Number 2

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**Torresian Kingfisher**

Image courtesy of Dominic Chaplin

## Torresian Kingfisher

*(Todiramphus sordidus)*

Formerly known as Collared or Mangrove Kingfisher, the Torresian Kingfisher is found exclusively among mangroves and adjacent mudflats and rock-shelves.

Because Torresian Kingfishers either:

- breed in wetlands
- feed almost entirely in wetlands
- live in wetlands or abutting habitat

they are considered wetland indicator species by the [Queensland Department of Environment and Science](#).

For this reason, even though their conservation status is considered to be 'Least Concern', it is important to record your Torresian Kingfisher sightings in Birddata or similarly recognised apps.

If you want to learn more about wetlands and wetland management, [WetlandInfo](#) is your first-stop-shop for wetland management resources in Queensland.

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## From the Convenor

By Ceri Pearce

We have a bumper issue of *Contact Call* filled with inspiring and intriguing articles for you this June. A big thank you to all contributors!!

For those of you not aware of the election results, no, not the recent federal election, but the BirdLife Northern Queensland (BNQ) AGM in late March, the officer bearer positions remain unchanged, and we warmly welcome Martin and Sam Willis back as Tableland Area Coordinators, and Jenn Muir as Assistant Editor and Committee Member. We've already had a committee meeting, so the year is off to a flying start.

If you are interested in being on the committee and would like to learn more about what we do, we welcome expressions of interest to come along and 'shadow' a committee member.

A little bird may have already told you, that we are very excited with the news that Graham Harrington, has been awarded Honorary Life Membership by BirdLife Australia. Honorary Life Membership is the highest award available that recognises a member's distinguished contribution to the organisation. Read about Graham's award on page 7. Congrats Graham!

The Golden-shouldered Parrot fund raiser, largely driven by our Treasurer, Lindsay Fisher, has been very successful and doubled our impact for GSP's, and the Artemis Foundation working so hard to protect them (read the story on page 10).

I recently had the opportunity to go on a Gouldian Finch survey with Ray Pierce and his team of volunteers. It was a stunning weekend, perfect weather, gorgeous outback location, bush camping with inspirational friends, and lots of birds. Ray is meticulous about safety and training, so we were in good organisational hands, and very quickly started the search for Gouldians. What I loved most was how relaxing I found it, even though I was focused on listening intently, looking for and tracking moving bird feeding guilds, watching what they ate or did, looking for signs of nesting behaviour. Even the act of sitting near and watching a nest tree, looking for nesting action, was very 'Zen.' And the incredible sunsets and views of the milky way at night topped off a very enjoyable long weekend. If you are interested at all in learning about bird monitoring, with the tantalising possibility of seeing Gouldian Finches, then I strongly encourage you to contact Ray and get involved. See the story by Wayne and Ren Young on page 13.

Sadly, you will see on page 4 information about how second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) are killing our birds, our wildlife, and our pets!

These products can kill not only the rats and mice they are targeting, but any bird or animal that might eat a dead or dying rodent, including native animals and domestic pets. Studies have shown that endangered species like Powerful Owls, Wedge-tailed Eagles and quolls are all being impacted by rodenticides. And the crazy thing is, there are other ways to control rats and mice that don't use dangerous SGARs. There is a great article in *The Conversation* by Robert Davis, Senior Lecturer in Wildlife Ecology, Edith Cowan University, on *How to control invasive rats and mice at home without harming native wildlife*. Check out the link [here](#). There is also excellent information on the <https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison> website. How many of our local owls, raptors, other bird species, and native and pet animals are being killed following consumption of poisoned rodents? If you would like to join or organise an action group, to protect our communities from dangerous SGARs, go to <https://www.actforbirds.org/find-my-local-action-group>. There is a great example of how a local community is making a difference at Margaret River, Western Australia, thanks to [Gardening Australia](#).

Don't forget to check out our activities calendar at the end of this newsletter, and for updates on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). With luck, this latest round of east coast tropical rain, will be followed by some gorgeous sunshine and cooler weather that will encourage us all to get outdoors to do some winter birding and enjoy the wonderful tropical environment we live in.

Wishing you good birding 😊  
Cheers Ceri

### BirdLife Northern Queensland Committee

Contact us at [northernqld@birdlife.org.au](mailto:northernqld@birdlife.org.au)

<b>Convenor &amp; Newsletter Editor</b>	Ceri Pearce
<b>Secretary &amp; Communications Coordinator</b>	Renee Cassels
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lindsay Fisher
<b>Cairns Area Coordinator</b>	Mikey Kudo
<b>Cape York Area Coordinator &amp; Grasswren Survey Coordinator</b>	Kath Shurcliff
<b>Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator</b>	Sandra Christensen
<b>Tablelands Area Coordinators</b>	Martin and Sam Willis
<b>Conservation Coordinator</b>	Peter Valentine
<b>Website Manager</b>	Mikey Kudo
<b>Committee Member &amp; Birds in Schools Coordinator</b>	Pippy Cannon
<b>Assistant Newsletter Editor</b>	Jennifer Muir
<b>Facebook Manager</b>	Doug Herrington
<b>BirdLife Australia Representative</b>	Golo Maurer

## Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) are killing our birds, our wildlife and our pets!

### Get bird-killing rat poisons out of our local ecosystems

Owls, frogmouths, eagles, and other Australian birds are dying after eating rats and mice exposed to Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs).

**Will you help BirdLife Australia get these bird-killing poisons out of our local communities across the country?**

Key problems with SGARs:

- SGARs don't kill instantly; poisoned rodents spread the threat around
- Rodents remain contaminated for many months, even after they die!
- It's not just birds! Any animal that eats rodents is at risk, native mammals like quolls, native reptiles like snakes and goannas, and even pet cats and dogs!
- SGARs are regulated in the USA, Canada, and the EU because of the risks
- There are alternative products available for purchase in Australia, see the below resource.

This is a  
**safe home  
for birds.**

No deadly  
poisons used  
in this garden!



Help save threatened birds like the Powerful Owl:  
[actforbirds.org/ratpoison](https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison)



## WILL YOU HELP BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA GET THESE BIRD-KILLING POISONS OUT OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY!

To learn how you can take action to help protect birds and other animals in your community, or to find out how to control rodents at home without using SGARs go to <https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison>

## HERE ARE JUST SOME OF OUR LOCAL OWLS THREATENED BY SGARS



Rufous Owl

Image courtesy of (C) Brian O'Leary  
2015 [birdlifephotography.org.au](http://birdlifephotography.org.au)



Barn Owl.

Image courtesy of Peter Valentine.



Lesser Sooty Owl.

Image courtesy of Dominic Chaplin

# What is BirdLife Northern Queensland, and how do I get involved?

BirdLife Northern Queensland is a branch of BirdLife Australia, and as such, we are part of a network of over 33 branches, four observatories and reserves, four special interest groups plus other affiliates. BirdLife Australia, including the network, is Australia's largest bird conservation organisation.

For BirdLife Northern Queensland, local knowledge and enthusiasm makes a world of difference to our success! With several hundred members and supporters, we have a wide range of local projects, programs, and activities that contribute to the conservation of our region's birds and promote birding within our community.

We organise scientific and social activities such as bird surveys, birdwatching outings, workshops and presentations with guest speakers. We cater for all levels of expertise from beginner to professional, and emphasise fun as well as important conservation outcomes.

By joining BirdLife Australia as a Member, Wild Bird Protector or as a volunteer, if you are living in our region, you automatically become part of our BirdLife Northern Queensland community.

If you haven't joined us yet, please consider it.

As a Member, you can get much more involved and take part in shaping the future of BirdLife Australia. You can:

- Contribute to bird and habitat conservation through direct involvement in BirdLife Australia's organisation/governance;
- Receive the quarterly Australian Birdlife magazine. Printed copies of the magazine are snail-mailed to Full Members at Australian mailing addresses;
- Have your say and vote at the branch and national AGM;
- Be eligible to stand for key local Branch committee positions or for the Board of BirdLife Australia.

Annual membership fees are:

- \$79 for an Individual Full Member
- \$35 for a Concession Member (student ID or concession card required).

Please note that membership is not tax deductible.

If you would like to become a member or renew your membership, go to <https://birdlife.org.au/become-a-member>

Or, as a Wild Bird Protector, you can also help to save threatened birds from extinction via a regular tax-deductible donation to BirdLife Australia. It can be as little as \$10 a month. Wild Bird Protectors can also take part in local bird research and conservation activities and events in your area, and you will receive the FREE online edition of the award-winning quarterly Australian Birdlife magazine.

If you would like to become a Wild Bird Protector, go to <https://birdlife.org.au/support-us/join-us/>

You don't have to be a BirdLife Australia Member or a Wild Bird Protector to get involved and volunteer. We have volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds with a wide variety of experience. As a volunteer, you can make a valuable contribution by donating your time and skills.

To find out more about volunteering, and to register go to <https://www.networkbirdlife.org/volunteer-opportunities> or contact BirdLife Northern Queensland at [northernqld@birdlife.org.au](mailto:northernqld@birdlife.org.au) for local volunteering opportunities.

Nationally, the BirdLife Australia website renewal project is taking longer than expected. We ask for your patience as these changes are made. If you experience any problems joining, renewing or changing your membership details, contact the BirdLife Australia support team at [support@birdlife.org.au](mailto:support@birdlife.org.au)



# Lake Barrine social birding and AGM

26 MARCH 2022

Lake Barrine was the divine location for our BirdLife Northern Queensland Annual General Meeting (AGM) and social birding day out. Due to last minute staff changes at the tea house, our cruise on the lake had to be moved to an earlier timeslot. A last-minute notification went out, but if you didn't receive it in time, we are sorry you missed it. We were very lucky to have Steve Curry as our boat guide, especially given his long family history at the lake.

After a scrumptious morning tea which included the Lake Barrine teahouse's famous scones, jam and cream, we adjourned to the downstairs function room for the AGM, which went off with only a few minor technical glitches. To see a copy of the meeting minutes, and the Convenor's and Treasurer's Reports, click [here](#).

Sadly, Ray Pierce retired from the committee earlier this year, however, we warmly welcomed Martin and Sam Willis back as Tableland Area Coordinators, and Jenn Muir as Assistant Editor and Committee Member.

The social birding day concluded for most with a relaxing lunch on the veranda. The conscientious committee members stayed on after lunch for our first committee meeting.

Thank you to all 20 or so participants who joined us during the day. It was wonderful to see you in person, and to meet new people and catch up with old friends. To get a feel for the social vibe on the day, check out the images below.



Images courtesy of Keith & Lindsay Fisher, and Ceri Pearce



## BirdLife Australia awards Graham Harrington Honorary Life Membership

CONGRATULATIONS GRAHAM!



*Honorary Life Membership is awarded to someone for making a distinguished contribution to the objects of BirdLife Australia and its predecessor organisations. It is the highest award to recognise our members for their distinguished contribution to the organisation.*

*This year, at the BirdLife Australia Annual General Meeting (28 May) Graham Harrington's tremendous contribution to BirdLife Australia was recognised with Honorary Life Membership.*

### Citation

Graham joined the RAOU back in the early 1970's. Since then, he has continued to be an important, even critical, individual in the workings and achievements of our organisation, especially in achieving conservation results. He has succeeded in bringing scientific approaches to everyday members - recognising the importance of "citizen science" to deliver conservation results. As a highly regarded research scientist and leader in both savannah ecology and tropical rainforest ecology with CSIRO, he has always seen a sound scientific basis as one of the core strengths of our organisation. But he also understands and actively works to ensure that the science engages ALL of our members and anyone interested in birds as beautiful creatures.

### A SUMMARY OF GRAHAM'S ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Leadership roles in management committees of the organisation

- In 1994, at the inaugural meeting of the North Queensland chapter of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU), in recognition of Graham's significant role in organising and leading the meeting, he was voted in as the first convener. This inaugural branch ambitiously encompassed a huge area from Mackay north to the Torres Strait and across to the Northern Territory-Queensland border.
- Graham has been an integral part of what is now known as BirdLife Northern Queensland ever since, serving on its management committee in all years, except 1998-2001. Graham's committee roles have included Convenor 1994-1998 and 2004-2005, Conservation Representative (2001-2002, 2004 - 2008), Important Bird Area (IBA)/Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Coordinator (2005-2018), Grasswren Survey Coordinator (leading the first surveys in 2008 up to 2018 when he "retired" as coordinator but is still a critical member of the coordination group), and occasional Secretary and Tablelands Activities Co-ordinator.



Graham Harrington centre front (seated)



From left, Renee Cassells, Sam Willis, Peter Valentine, Martin Willis, Ray Pierce, Wendy Cooper, Tom Collis and Graham Harrington (right front) at a BirdLife Northern Queensland Committee meeting in 2018.

- As Convenor of the North Queensland Branch Graham served on the national committee of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU). In 1998 he was elected President of the Union, at a time of unprecedented change. Two critical projects, The Handbook of Australian and New Zealand Birds (HANZAB) and Atlas 2 were in full swing, demanding considerable resources. The Union adopted bird conservation as an equal partner to ornithological science, broke from New Zealand, and changed its name to Birds Australia. This was the brainchild of the CEO David Baker-Gabb, but it was enthusiastically supported by Graham and the national committee, although it was only achieved in the face of trenchant opposition from traditional power groups. However the membership accepted the changes with enthusiasm and the organisation has never looked back.



Ceinwen, Graham and Kath with the chopper that allowed our surveyors to access remote areas of Boondjamulla National Park in 2016, looking for grasswrens.

- The centenary of the RAOU occurred during Graham's presidency. He commissioned a centenary painting from William Cooper, the pre-eminent bird artist in Australia. Unfortunately due to misunderstanding it was sold to an American but a limited run of prints was enthusiastically received by the members.
- Even while serving as President, Graham never stopped contributing to the Northern Queensland group, becoming the coordinator of the major bird mapping activity (Atlas 2) for northern Queensland from 1998 until its completion in 2006, prior to its transition to Birdata.

## Conservation Achievements

- In 2014 Graham received a BirdLife Australia Distinguished Service Award (BDSA) because of his work as IBA/KBA Coordinator. His work has led to critical information being collected about north Queensland species at a time of major environmental change while generating enthusiasm for, and promoting the value of, citizen science.
- He has initiated and led surveys to establish the status of significant restricted-range species including the Carpentarian and Kalkadoon Grasswrens, and understanding the role of fire within their habitats. In 2016, these dedicated efforts led to the Carpentarian Grasswren being listed as Endangered. Soon after, Graham developed a strategic partnership between Southern Gulf NRM and BirdLife Northern Queensland which strengthened fire management for Carpentarian Grasswren conservation with on-ground monitoring provided by BirdLife Northern Queensland volunteers. This collaboration still stands today. This collaboration has achieved conservation actions and grasswren monitoring across approximately 700,000 hectares of critical grasswren habitat including the Buckley River and Boodjamulla KBAs.
- He also developed methods for ongoing monitoring of Tooth-billed and Golden Bowerbirds, and coordinated initial surveys within the Wet Tropics KBAs.
- He has been an influential member of the group that coordinates and analyses the Brolga and Sarus Crane counts on the Atherton Tablelands. He has co-authored several papers and articles on these results, including a recent paper (2020) that analysed 20 years of data collected by the citizen scientists he helped train and inspire. He also investigated crop damage caused by the cranes, which had resulted in illegal culling of these species on affected farmlands. He has himself trained and led many field volunteers, raised

funding, liaised with local landholders and ensured publication of results.

- He has had outstanding success rate in winning funds from corporations, trust funds, government grants and crowd-funding. This is based on his ability to effectively communicate projects' purpose and outcomes, and establishing good relations with the donors and funders.
- Graham's initiatives have resulted in the development of important long-term monitoring projects on these endangered/threatened species and at-risk indicator species in KBAs.



Team photo of the 2017 bowerbird survey volunteers following the briefing by Graham Harrington (seated).

## Champion of Citizen-Science

- Graham is a strong champion of ensuring that our organisation retains science at its core.
- He has pioneered methods for assessing the status of threatened species through simple techniques that can readily be used by everyday members without scientific backgrounds. This has resulted in literally hundreds of volunteers being able to contribute to the scientific work of assessing population status of the grasswrens, bowerbirds, and cranes.
- He forged an initial partnership with Bush Heritage to provide bird surveys as part of their ongoing monitoring of biodiversity on their reserves. This has had lasting benefit as the one initial reserve in north Queensland has now grown into four reserves, with more likely to be added. This partnership is now being developed at a national level between the two organisations.
- He was a regional reviewer for Atlas 1 and Atlas 2. In Atlas 1 he surveyed previously unsurveyed parts of northwest New South Wales. He also participated in a survey of the Gibson Desert. This was the first time Europeans had undertaken bird surveys in that country. At the end of Atlas 2 he co-ordinated volunteers' inputs, and led a push to survey under-surveyed parts of northern Queensland, especially on Cape York Peninsula, eg McIlwraith Ranges surveys back in 1992.

- In recognition of Graham's significant contribution to our Northern Queensland branch, BirdLife Australia and birding conservation in particular in our region, BirdLife Northern Queensland has created the Graham Harrington Research Scholarship, which is awarded annually to foster ornithological and conservation research by students on the region's threatened species.



Graham with Henry Stuetzel, the most recent recipient of a Graham Harrington Research Scholarship.

## Mentor to Us All

Graham's enduring legacy is that he has mentored so many of us to take on the roles that he has filled over these years. This has included:

- new program leaders for grasswrens, Bush Heritage surveys, crane counts, bowerbird counts.
- leading Birding for Beginners workshops to encourage new birders to develop the same passion for birds as he has.
- mentoring young birders and encouraging and supporting their career development.

In conclusion, we can say that Graham has made life-long contributions to lead and bring us all "standing together to stop extinctions" of our unique birdlife.

Graham Harrington is a very deserving recipient of a BirdLife Australia Honorary Life Membership.



From left, Lindsay and Keith Fisher, artists and Graham Harrington at the Mission Beach Cassoway Festival in 2019.

# An Update on the BirdLife Northern Queensland Golden-shouldered Parrot Fundraiser

by Lindsay Fisher

In the March 2022 issue of Contact Call we launched an appeal for BirdLife Northern Queensland (BNQ) members and supporters to contribute to an appeal to help the Golden-shouldered Parrot through \$4\$ donations to the Artemis Nature Fund (ANF).

We are pleased to say that \$2,549 was raised and BNQ will also contribute \$2,000 making a total of \$4,259. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Since then there has been good news for ANF as explained below.

The Australian Government, through the "Environment Restoration Fund – Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan – Priority Species Grants" has pledged ~\$130,000 over the next 18 months to help restore parrot habitats on Artemis Station. As part of the deal, Artemis Nature Fund has promised to contribute \$60,000 cash.

Golden-shouldered Parrots are declining because their habitats have become choked by invasive native trees. This has allowed ambush predators to kill an unsustainably large number of nestlings, fledglings and adults.

Thanks to the new funding, ANF will be able to make significant gains in tackling the woody thickening problem. With the funding, ANF have promised to:

- Restore 50 hectares of habitat: They will continue to restore areas where parrots still occur and expand into areas that parrots have recently abandoned. These areas are 3-6km from occupied territories. Once these new areas are restored, it is expected that parrots will disperse into them and re-establish territories, possibly assisted by supplementary feeding. Recolonisation will demonstrably improve the trajectory of Golden-shouldered Parrots by expanding their current range.
- Monitor parrots: A large proportion of parrots on Artemis now wear unique colour leg bands which allows detailed monitoring of individuals. ANF will use camera traps at supplementary feeders to monitor survival rate. They will also count the ratio of marked to unmarked birds at waterholes to calculate population size. Finally, they will monitor nest success annually. Each of these parrot-focused monitoring activities provides a direct way to measure the effectiveness of these actions on parrots.

- Monitor vegetation response: Ultra-high resolution, georeferenced drone photos will be taken pre & post-management. This allows accurate measurement of the amount of habitat restored and the type of restoration work (eg clearing vs thinning).
- Monitor termite mounds: Golden-shouldered Parrots nest in termite mounds. ANF are monitoring the availability and growth rates of termite mounds to see how this critical resource responds to habitat restoration.
- Monitor butcherbirds: Two of the restoration methods leave standing dead trees while the other razes stems to ground level. ANF will track Pied Butcherbirds (a key parrot predator) to determine how these different management outcomes affect predation. They will be using state-of-the-art tracking devices that record bodily movements, which are interpreted as different behaviours. ANF are most interested to see how hunting behaviour changes pre and post-management.

A large reason why the ANF funding application was successful was because of the work over the past couple of years. During that time, they have shown that they can tackle this conservation problem with practical actions. This was only possible because of previous grants and the generous donations from people like you... so thank you!

As noted above, Artemis Nature Fund has promised a ~\$60,000 cash co-contribution to the work over the next 18 months. They have set a fund-raising target of \$40,000 to supplement funds carried forward. If you can help, please visit <https://artemis.org.au/donations/>

If you would like more information, please visit <https://artemis.org.au/our-work/>

BNQ are very pleased to have been able to help this beautiful bird and look forward to hearing future news on the progress at Artemis.



# Conservation Matters

by Peter Valentine, 14th May, 2022.

Luckily, by the time you read this the Federal Election will be done. I cannot imagine a less uplifting experience than to endure more of a campaign that demonstrated precisely and repeatedly what is wrong with our country. How dispiriting to have such shallow engagement, such low-quality discussions, that are supposed to be helping people choose their representatives in the National Parliament.

The critical issues of our time took back stage through a series of concocted "gotcha" issues of no significance, and with an appallingly inadequate level of analysis. We might be willing to blame the "journalists", who were happy with the shallow quality of their work; or maybe the disappointing quality of the candidates who seemed incapable of developing and promulgating detailed policy.

The idea of returning a Government that has significantly reduced the funding for conservation, and which has failed to engage with alternative energy while actively promoting fossil fuels, might be troubling for many of our members. Unfortunately, the level of election campaign discussion about the Extinction Crisis has been negligible, the concerns about climate change vanishingly small.

Both our media and our candidates are to blame. And we also, for allowing our society to become so uncaring about either people or the planet. Let me express my hope that the next Parliament of Australia takes urgent and strong action on conservation, before we lose more of our unique and amazing species to our greed and our unsustainable life styles.

## NEW THREATENED SPECIES COMPUTER APP

Recently a digital service has been developed to help us track the conservation concerns within our electorates across Australia. You can find the computer application at:

<https://www.threatened.org.au/electorates/>

The app allows users to look for their electorate and then find species that are threatened (or you can enter your post code and be taken to your electorate). It's a beta version I suspect, and needs a bit of tweaking. Unfortunately, you cannot see a simple list of all the species, and have to click through the pages one at a time. And the species cannot be searched for by groups, such as birds, reptiles or mammals. But a few adjustments should leave this a valuable contribution to knowledge sharing.

Sadly, the Queensland electorate with most animals officially threatened is Kennedy where many of our members live. Of course, it is a very large electorate so that might not be too surprising, but having 61 animal species threatened is way too many.

But a better device for birders is the BirdLife Australia election guide:

<https://www.actforbirds.org/stopextinctions>

Here you can search across all electorates for a list of threatened bird species included in the 2020 Action Plan for Australian Birds. This shows 45 bird species in Kennedy are now threatened, and names each one. As we go to press, I have learned that Mr Albanese, the Labor Party alternative PM, has promised to implement the threatened species review by Graham Samuels and to allocate substantial funds to help address the Extinction Crisis. He has also promised more funds for better protection of the GBR, following the latest news that the reef has suffered yet another bleaching event: for the first time in a La Nina year. It is at least heartening to see a mainstream party acknowledge the dire circumstances of life on earth. If he is able to form a Government it will be up to all of us to make sure the promises are kept, and indeed even more is invested in conservation.

## USING THE LAWS.

Conservation interests had a small win when the 2018 decision by the Newman State Government, to allow clearing of 2,000 ha of Kingvale Station on Cape York Peninsula (CYP), was overturned by the Australian Environment Minister Sussan Ley. This was good news for threatened species and the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) at the time (2020). It appears that four Coalition MPs lobbied former Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg on behalf of the grazing interests, and the LNP member for Leichardt, Mr Warren Entsch was one of those named. The business interests involved had previously been fined \$450,000 in a Cairns Court for illegal clearing of grazing land on another CYP station, Strathmore. It is good to know that the existing Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) enabled the Federal Minister to exercise her powers to act. But this was only the 24th occasion in the past 22 years when the EPBC Act has been used by the Minister to deny a development application. We need more of this type of action in the face of criminal acts by land-owners, and we need Ministers for the Environment who show greater willingness to use their powers to better protect the Environment. And all the more reason for the implementation of the Samuels' Review of the EPBC Act.

## THREAT ABATEMENT

I recently read the threat abatement report released by the Invasive Species Council and to which BirdLife Australia contributed. It is available on-line:

<https://invasives.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Averting-extinctions-The-case-for-strengthening-Australias-threat-abatement-system-April-2022.pdf>

This is an excellent action plan for the incoming national government to take up and implement, and would go a long way towards better conservation outcomes for our wildlife. There can be no argument: that we do not know what to do. What is missing is political commitment. We have no time to waste.

## CRAZY ANTS – STILL

Reports of Yellow Crazy Ants in Townsville are disturbing. Our biosecurity failures with this species are manifold and it is costing us tens of millions, much of that cost due to inadequate initial management by State and Federal Authorities. Progress is at last being made in Cairns but without urgent, strong and effective investment, the Townsville infestation could soon spread to the southern Wet Tropics. Many bird species are highly vulnerable to this invasive ant and ongoing work at James Cook University to better control the species is good to see. Let us hope the lessons learned in Cairns are applied to the Townsville infestation.

### Yellow crazy ants (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*)

Image courtesy of Seychelles Islands Foundation, CC BY 4.0  
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



### Yellow Crazy Ants

If you think you have seen yellow crazy ants, **please report them as soon as possible to (07) 4241 0525.**

Eradication relies on help from members of the public to report the ants when found, and to prevent yellow crazy ants from spreading.

To find out where the infested areas are and what you can do to help, go to:

<https://www.wettropics.gov.au/yellow-crazy-ants>

## Birds in Backyards

### Brand New Instructional Videos

Do you want to contribute valuable data to help Australia's birds?

Check out the new videos making it easier than ever to record your bird sightings using [Birdata](#). Learn how to record a [Birds in Backyards survey](#) (for your garden), and [2 hectare 20 minute survey](#) (for those on larger properties or in nature reserves or similar), both with bonus instructions for when you are lucky enough to see something you want to let us know about! Take a look and give the surveys a go.

There have been some recent upgrades to Birdata. For those of you already with a Birdata account, you will have had an email from us with instructions to reset your password. You may continue using the same password as before, but you still need to go through the password reset process. [For help see the log-in Q&A](#)



To find out more go to [How to submit a BirdLife Australia bird survey using the Birdata app | Birds in Backyards - YouTube](#)



And please join in and complete a winter survey in your backyard 😊

<https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/content/article/Brave-cold-Its-winter-survey-time>

# Gouldian Survey Works.

## FINDING A BOILED LOLLY – HOW HARD COULD THAT BE?

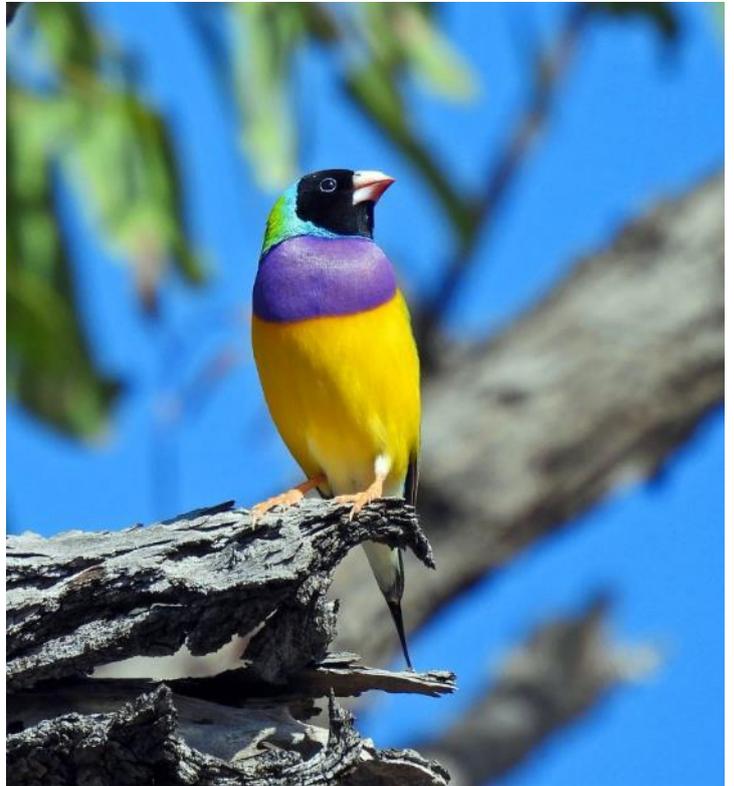
By Wayne and Renee Young

For several years now, a group of volunteers led by Dr Ray Pierce have been studying a population of Gouldian Finches located “within a few hours of Mareeba.” The exact location of the populations are not general knowledge at this stage, both for the sake of the birds, but also the property managers so they’re not humbugged by people less concerned about trespass laws and manners as our Birdlife Northern Queensland readership. Pleasingly, the knowledge of the locations has not become general knowledge from those involved in the surveys, and those aware of the birds know better than to ask.

The aim of the survey works, supported by a grant from Queensland Citizen Science (QCS) and auspiced by the North Queensland Natural History Group is trying to determine the basic biology and characteristics of these populations, how they are similar to those found elsewhere across northern Australia, and how they differ. The principal question is what are the landscape-scale characteristics that have helped this population hang on, and therefore what could be done to preserve, or better still, increase it.

We (Renee and I) were lucky enough to join a recent survey over a long week-end, led by Ray and joined by Amanda Freeman, Pippy Cannon and Ceri Pearce. This time of year, the surveys are looking to locate the birds as well as their nests and/or fledglings.

For a stunningly beautiful and colourful bird, the Gouldian Finch is ridiculously easy to miss in the bush. They have a very quiet and unobtrusive call (some people suffering even slight industrial deafness simply cannot hear the high pitch male’s call at all). When feeding they are often low or on the ground, and the birds tend to move around - all factors which make this feathered boiled lolly hard to spot.



A beautifully coloured black-faced male Gouldian Finch. Image Dr Ray Pierce

However, after some frontline training with Ray, things do get easier thanks to the Gouldian’s partnerships, especially with Black-faced Woodswallows. Ray’s work has continued to discover that these birds have a complex cooperative relationship that goes beyond just feeding. The woodswallows act as lookouts, and call loudly when intruders come into their realm, including bird-nerds sporting binos. They often perch in trees above the Gouldians feeding on grass seed below, possibly benefiting from insects disturbed. Willy Wagtails, Magpie Larks, Masked and Black-throated Finches, Rufous Songlarks, Jacky Winter all join the feeding guild, and everyone benefits.

The research has also found that nesting hollows in proximity to nesting woodswallows are prime real estate for the finches, again benefiting from the woodswallows’ protective nature, discouraging potential predators.

This association also makes finding the cryptic Gouldian easier, as the woodswallows are much easier to spot. After our in-depth training and eyes-on experience, we were soon able to find the birds and complete the survey techniques. We even managed to find several pairs without Ray’s supernatural powers,



The survey crew enjoy smoko in the shade between surveys, powered by Pippy’s delicious Orange Poppyseed cake.

and even a nesting pair not 20m from where we camped (well, Renee found them but I was there...).

The surveys are a great experience. We got the chance to see this amazing finch in the wild and observe some wonderful behaviours; we got access to areas that would just not otherwise be possible. We had a great time outdoors with some fun and passionate people, and maybe even helped a little with this important work.

If you get the chance to go along to these surveys, don't miss the opportunity. If you are out in woodland country and see Black-faced Woodswallows, have a good scan with the binos. You may be rewarded with Black-throated or Masked Finch, or even a Boiled Lolly.



A gloriously coloured red-faced male Gouldian Finch. Image by Dr Ray Pierce



Torresian Crow (C) Image by Con Boekel 2016 [birdlifephotography.org.au](http://birdlifephotography.org.au)

## What Corvid is that?

By Lindsay Fisher

Most Birdlife NQ members live in the Corvid comfort zone of Tropical North Queensland where the only Corvid call we ever hear is that of the Torresian Crow. But venture south and we find ourselves in Australian Raven territory, or even further south Little Raven or Forest Raven come into the equation.

Recently Torresian Crow eBird records from western Queensland have been queried and we are being asked to be extra vigilant in our observations. This is from eBird moderator John Lowry:

*A review of all Torresian Crow sightings in the Winton Region is currently in progress.*

*Identifying Australian crows and ravens can be a difficult task. In locations with a single corvid species, many observations are based on geography alone (e.g. Torresian Crow in Brisbane, Forest Raven in Tasmania).*

*In places with multiple possibilities, details of features of the bird (hackles, beak, posture) and their calls are needed to reliably identify to species level.*

*We appreciate that crows/ravens don't always get their due consideration. This is understandable given their wariness, and the presence of other exciting species in the area which attract a birder's attention.*

*To our knowledge, Torresian Crow is at best a rare bird in the Winton area, and indeed in Southwest Queensland – with few photos and no audio to support records of this species. Unfortunately, our filter settings have allowed many undocumented Torresian Crow sightings to pass through into the database.*

So next time you venture south or west, remember to think twice before you enter a corvid. Don't forget to enter details of the birds features (hackles, beak, posture) and their calls.

Do you want to identify your  
Corvids with Confidence?

Check out this video by Sean Dooley

“What bird is that? Ravens and Crows”

Just click [here](#)



Wandering Whistling-Duck

## Georgetown Easter Field Trip

15TH-18TH APRIL 2022

By Keith and Lindsay Fisher

Georgetown's Goldfields Caravan Park was the base for three days birding in the area. We birded in the morning and late afternoon to avoid the mid-day heat (top 35°C), which left plenty of time for socialising.

Cumberland Dam is the most well known birding location in the area, and we visited it twice. Both times there was little birdlife on the water.

Several other sites visited were on station properties with permission sought and kindly granted by the landowners. The wetland dams proved to be very productive with good numbers of waterbirds including Wandering Whistling-Duck (263), Grey Teal (142), Pacific Black Duck (116), Magpie Goose (85), Comb-crested Jacana (80) and Intermediate (Plumed) Egret (66). The best sighting for the trip was two adult Brolga with a small juvenile walking along the edge of a road. We only saw one each of Pied Stilt, Australian Pelican, Little Egret and Royal Spoonbill.

Many pairs of Comb-crested Jacana had chicks with them, so it looks like they have had a very successful breeding season.



Comb-crested Jacana

There was a general lack of bush birds with few trees and shrubs flowering to attract the locally nomadic honeyeaters. The most numerous species were the noisy ones, Galah, Apostlebird and Blue-faced Honeyeater.



Crested Pigeon

The Georgetown Racecourse has a small lagoon in its centre which was a good place to watch birds coming in to drink in the late afternoon. Four species of finch were seen there: Pictorella, Double-barred, Zebra and Black-throated; and a party of six Brown Quail came to drink. Crested Pigeon were taking up positions around the stables on the lookout for any spilt grain.

A single Australian Brush-turkey was seen walking along the edge of the road opposite the caravan park: this must be at the edge of its eastern distribution. Raptors were few and far between apart from Black and Whistling Kite. The resident Georgetown pair of adult White-breasted Sea-Eagle was calling from the Etheridge River before dawn and an immature was seen over the caravan park. Two Brown Falcon were on the Cumberland Dam chimney, and one each of Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Goshawk and Australian Hobby were seen.



Tawny Frogmouth

The resident Goldfields Caravan Park Tawny Frogmouth pair was seen before the field trip began, but this species was only heard after that along with the only other night-bird, Southern Boobook.

Some other species recorded included one each of Channel-billed and Brush Cuckoo, one Australian Bustard, two Red-backed Kingfisher, and Red-backed and Purple-backed Fairywren.

We not only looked at birds but other animals like insects, especially dragonflies, with Graphic Flutterer being the most numerous. We were also entertained at one of the dams by Australia's largest native bee, the Yellow Carpenter Bee feeding on what I think was *Monochoria cyanea*.

The Georgetown district has always proven to be an excellent birding area with a diverse range of habitats from wetlands to open woodland. Thanks to the nine members who attended the field trip we ended up with 102 species and visited some excellent wetlands. Thanks also to local landowners who allowed us onto their properties.



Graphic Flutterer



Yellow Carpenter Bee feeding



Birders hard at work!

# World Migratory Bird Day 2022

by Peter Valentine

I hope many members were able to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day this year on May 14th.

Our region is richly endowed with migratory bird species and for many of us, these form a wonderful part of our birding activities, and a focus for some of our conservation efforts. Here are just a few of my favourite local migratory species.



The Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher is probably high on many lists of beautiful migrants. This species turns up each year to nest and raise young before returning to New Guinea.

We are well endowed with migratory shorebirds including these Great Knots that fly to Cairns from Siberia, here in their duller non-breeding plumage. The eagle-eyed will find a very well-known Nordmann's Greenshank also pictured and a lone Black-tailed Godwit.



One of my local migrants (Malanda), the Black-faced Monarch is a common member of the rainforest bird community through summer but in winter it leaves us for warmer locations, some probably to New Guinea.



The rowdy joyfulness of Metallic Starlings attracts attention, whether at their communal nesting sites, or flying as a flock to and from feeding trees. In winter, they leave us and head to New Guinea.

What are your local favourite migratory birds?

**Can you find the Nordmann's Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwit among the Great Knots?**



# Australia's rainforest species gain ground through landscape linkages

By [Amanda Freeman](#) on 24 December 2021

This article has been republished from Mongabay: news and inspiration from nature's front line <https://news.mongabay.com/>

*Corridors of planted rainforest trees — landscape linkages — are a straightforward, but costly, on-ground action that can repair past damage and bolster ecosystem resilience in Australia's Wet Tropics region.*

*In the Atherton Tablelands wildlife corridors, now in their third decade, the diversity of naturally regenerating plant species has increased, with trees, vines, rattans, shrubs, palms, ferns and orchids colonizing the planted sites.*

*The corridors are providing connectivity and additional habitat for a range of rainforest wildlife, including some threatened by climate change.*

*To thoroughly measure the biodiversity outcomes of the linkages, monitoring would need to be more regular, and target a broader range of taxa.*

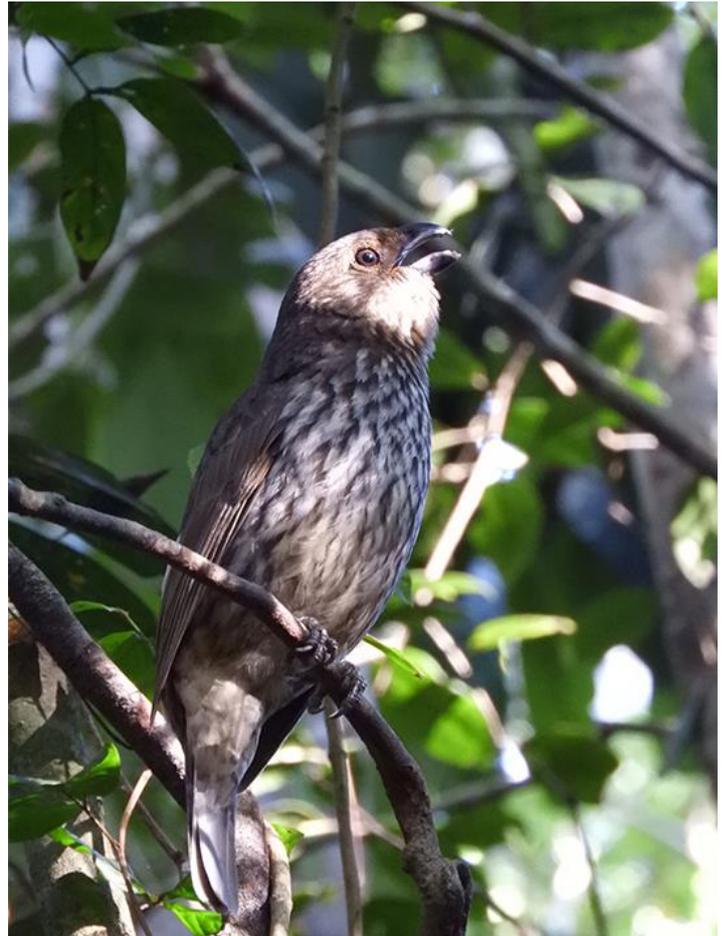
The Tooth-billed Bowerbird gave itself away with a not-quite-right call. Suspicious, I'd panned my binoculars toward the sound and there he was, the mimic, high in the canopy of a rainforest tree. It was a satisfying sight.

Like many of Australia's Wet Tropics-endemic species, Tooth-billed Bowerbird populations have declined rapidly in recent years, their climate change-induced retreat to higher elevations acknowledged in Birdlife Australia's new [Action Plan](#) for Australian birds.

It was not just seeing this charismatic bird that was so satisfying, however, but where it appeared. It wasn't found in a survey in a large expanse of World Heritage-listed rainforest. Or even in remnant forest surrounding the Atherton Tablelands' famous Crater Lakes.

It was in a 25-year-old rainforest restoration site in Donaghy's Corridor, a 1-kilometer (0.6-mile) linkage of planted habitat.

The Tooth-billed Bowerbird shows that the linkage is working, at least for some species.



A Tooth-billed Bowerbird was seen in a 25-year-old rainforest restoration site in Donaghy's Corridor. Image courtesy of Amanda Freeman.

## LANDSCAPE LINKAGES: 'ACTS OF FAITH'

Stretching hundreds of kilometers along Australia's northeast Queensland coast, the Wet Tropics includes nearly 800,000 hectares (2 million acres) of World Heritage-listed tropical rainforest and is one of the country's most biodiverse regions.

[Donaghy's Corridor](#), the [Peterson Creek wildlife corridor](#) and the [Lakes Corridor](#) are a network of rebuilt forest linkages joining the otherwise isolated Lake Eacham, Lake Barrine and Curtain Fig National Parks, each 300-500 hectares (700-1200 acres), to Wooroonooran National Park. At nearly 80,000 hectares (200,000 acres), Wooroonooran is one of the largest continuous forest blocks in the [Wet Tropics World Heritage Area](#).

Located near the small town of Yungaburra, on the Atherton Tablelands, the three habitat linkages were "acts of faith" when they got underway in the 1990s. They were a response to past land clearing and forest fragmentation, but nobody had proof they would assist wildlife.

By the 1990s, [metapopulation theory](#) was beginning to influence conservation management. The theory implied that restoring habitat and reconnecting forest fragments would re-establish movement and gene flow between species' populations and maintain biodiversity. But when Donaghy's Corridor began in 1995, it was largely untested.

"I guess all I was really thinking about was joining up an isolated reserve with a continuous forest," said Nigel Tucker, director of environmental consultancy [Biotropica Australia](#).

It was Tucker, then manager of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's (QPWS) Lake Eacham Nursery, who approached the Donaghy family about planting a wildlife corridor on their land, and mobilized QPWS state agency staff and community volunteers to grow, plant, and maintain the trees, and then to monitor the outcomes.



Donaghy's Creek Crossing, 1995 tree planting. The metapopulation theory implied that restoring habitat and reconnecting forest fragments would re-establish movement and gene flow between species' populations and maintain biodiversity. Image courtesy of QPWS/TREAT.

## TREAT THE LANDSCAPE

Volunteer tree-planting organization Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands ([TREAT](#)) is on the front line of the Atherton Tablelands rainforest restoration efforts. Established 40 years ago, and with more than 400 participating households, TREAT partners with QPWS to produce trees for rainforest restoration projects.

On a recent visit to the QPWS Lake Eacham Nursery, 50 TREAT volunteers were busy preparing seed and potting seedlings ready for future plantings. A hundred people can turn out to community tree-planting days, where a few thousand trees may be planted in just a couple of hours.

The non-profit says collaboration is a core element of its work.

"Number one is the relationship between the Queensland government [QPWS] and TREAT," Angela McCaffrey, TREAT's president said, in an interview. "The fact that we have their support, and that there are full-time staff looking after the trees during the week, that we don't even have to think about or worry about."

It has indeed proven to be a productive synergy.

Both the Donaghy's and the Peterson Creek wildlife corridors are products of the partnership. QPWS planned and prepared the planting sites, TREAT and QPWS raised the seedlings at the Lake Eacham Nursery, and TREAT volunteers planted them.

Similarly, the Lakes Corridor was completed by the North Johnstone and Lake Eacham Landcare Association, another community organization, with assistance from the Tablelands Regional Council.



Satellite view of the Crater Lakes, Yungaburra and the Atherton Tablelands wildlife corridors. Image by Google Earth 2021.



Peterson Creek wildlife corridor, pre-planting. Image courtesy of QPWS/TREAT.



Tree-planting day at Peterson Creek wildlife corridor, 1999. Image courtesy of QPWS/TREAT.

Working with landholders is also vital, McCaffrey told me.

“We’re not out to revegetate all the available land on the Tablelands,” McCaffrey said. “We look for strategic areas that can link up remnants. We work with farmers, and offer things like water quality improvement, creek bank stabilization, and shade for livestock — many things that are positive for the farmer. It’s not just about taking land off them and revegetating it for the wildlife.”

It’s an approach that has gained international recognition. The Global Restoration Network listed the three corridors, under the collective name Southern Atherton Tablelands wildlife corridors, in [Australia’s Top 25](#) restoration projects for 2000-2010.

Government and community organizations have adopted rainforest restoration as practical action that can repair past damage and bolster ecosystem resilience.

But it’s expensive.

Biodiversity plantings, like those making up the corridors, use a diverse mix of advanced native tree seedlings and typically need two to three years of

herbicide treatment before the canopy closes, weeds are suppressed, and maintenance crews can walk away.

Estimates for biodiverse rainforest planting on the Atherton Tablelands average around AUS \$35,000 per per hectare. The three corridors have, between them, had more than 180,000 trees planted over more than 50 hectares (120 acres) and cost in excess of AUS \$1.7 million.



Donaghy’s Creek Crossing, pre-planting. Image courtesy of QPWS/TREAT.



Tree planting day at Donaghy’s Corridor, 1998. Image courtesy of QPWS/TREAT.

## BIODIVERSITY BANG FOR THE BUCK

Most plantings in the three Atherton Tablelands wildlife corridors are in their third decade. The [U.N. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) (2021-2030) has motivated researchers and restoration practitioners to examine whether the developing linkages have improved habitat and connectivity for Wet Tropics flora and fauna. They want to know the biodiversity bang for the buck.

Most is known about Donaghy’s Corridor. Plant, bird and mammal communities have been surveyed here in 2021 and compared with baseline data collected during the corridor’s establishment phase. Less is known about flora and fauna in the Peterson Creek and Lakes

Corridors, and there haven't been any recent systematic surveys.

In the [recent surveys](#) of Donaghy's Corridor, Biotropica Australia's Tucker and fellow plant ecologist David Tng say they've found that the diversity of naturally regenerating plant species has doubled since 2000.

A variety of trees, vines, rattans, shrubs, palms, ferns and orchids have all colonized the planting sites, say Tucker and Tng. Significantly, the number of species with large fruits has doubled.

"It's not just the number of species, it's the species themselves," Tucker said. "Hairy walnut [*Endiandra insignis*] and yellow walnut [*Beilschmiedia bancroftii*] — they're plants of intact forest. They're not plants of regrowth or secondary forest."



In 2021, David Tng stands next to a planted quandong from the 1995 planting at Donaghy's Corridor. Image courtesy of Nigel Tucker.

Despite comparable plant species diversity, and vertical layers of vegetation giving a rainforest-like appearance, the composition of the planted corridor still differs from primary forest. It may be centuries before they converge.

Most rainforest trees and shrubs bear fleshy fruits whose seeds are dispersed by mobile vertebrates, especially birds. Frugivorous birds are therefore crucial to ongoing regeneration, and development of more complex forest, in restoration sites.

Eight key frugivores have been recorded in Donaghy's Corridor during the 2021 bird surveys. These include highly mobile figbirds, fruit-doves, bowerbirds, and the migratory Channel-billed Cuckoo, which can disperse medium-large rainforest fruits. Four species with mixed diets are also contributing to seed dispersal.

Back then, no rainforest specialist species were using the planted sections of the corridor. In 2021, there are 19. Among them are 13 species that have [declined at mid-elevations](#) due to climate change. Some, like the [Wet Tropics brown gerygone](#) (*Gerygone mouki mouki*), used to be considered common and resilient. Its decline has been so dramatic that the subspecies is now considered endangered.

Donaghy's Corridor also boasts four endemic species: the Grey-headed Robin (*Heteromyias cinereifrons*); Pied Monarch (*Arses kaupi*); Tooth-billed Bowerbird (*Scenopoeetes dentirostris*); and Victoria's Riflebird (*Ptiloris victoriae*), the region's only bird-of-paradise. Four other endemics, which occur in the forests at either end of the corridor, are absent.

[Cassowaries](#) (*Casuaris casuaris*), large and flightless, are also conspicuously absent. They're versatile frugivores with distinctive, seed-loaded scat. The patches of seedlings germinating in their "plop and grow" potpourri piles are calling cards for this disperser long after the bird has moved along.

There's been no sign of these calling cards in the corridor to date.



A couple of cassowaries (*Casuaris casuaris*). Image by Brian Gratwicke via [Flickr](#) (CC BY 2.0).

Originally aspiring to be a "[cassowary corridor](#)," Donaghy's Corridor has yet to deliver on this early promise. The large-seeded recruits found by Tucker and Tng have been dispersed there by [giant white-tailed rats](#) (*Uromys caudimaculatus*). These rodents, weighing up to 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds), consume rainforest seeds. Sometimes, though, they forget their cached meals, leaving the seeds to germinate.

Tucker has caught them on his camera traps throughout Donaghy's Corridor.

“Undoubtedly they’re predating a stack of things as well,” Tucker said. “But the number of times that something like hairy walnut germinates in the corridor shows that their scatter-hoarding behavior is a functionally important part of restoration in this environment. Seed size means that they’re the only species which could be doing that.”

Giant white-tailed rats, along with bush rats (*Rattus fuscipes*) and Cape York rats (*Rattus leucopus*), were quick to colonize Donaghy’s Corridor. Tucker and his co-workers [detected them](#) only three years after the linkage was completed.

In 2021, they’re still there, among an assortment of small ground-dwelling mammals that are relatively unchanged since those early surveys. There are rodents, bandicoots and echidnas, but still no sign of red-legged pademelons (*Thylogale stigmatica*) or [musky rat-kangaroos](#) (*Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*), the smallest and most primitive member of the kangaroo family.



Lakes Corridor in 2021. Image courtesy of Amanda Freeman.

Bird communities in the Peterson Creek wildlife corridor were last surveyed in 2015-2017. At that time, there were already considerable changes since the [previous surveys](#) in 1999-2005 when the corridor was being established. More rainforest-dependent species had moved in, including four Wet Tropics endemics. Whereas no fruit pigeons or bowerbirds were recorded in the earlier surveys, catbirds, Wompoo Fruit-Doves (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) and Superb Fruit-Doves (*Ptilinopus superbus*) had moved in by the later survey rounds.

Over at Lakes Corridor, a 2016 [study](#) of bird communities found that the species of birds using the linkage differed substantially from those next door in the fragments. But several rainforest-dependent species were using the corridor, and, as at Peterson Creek, four Wet Tropics endemics were detected there too.

Rainforest rodents were slower to colonize the Peterson Creek plantings than they were at Donaghy’s Corridor, presumably because the 5-km (3.1-mi) strip of streamside vegetation between Lake Eacham and Curtain Fig is a considerably longer linkage.

There is no update on ground-dwelling mammals, but [tree climbers](#) are making a comeback, according to locals.

Simon Burchill, whose family hosts the corridor on their property at the lower end of Peterson Creek, reported in [TREAT News](#) that he regularly sees Lumholtz’s tree-kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*), including adult females with joeys. Coppery brushtail possum (*Trichosurus johnstonii*) and green ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirops archeri*) are also regularly seen.



A Wompoo Fruit-Dove (*Ptilinopus magnificus*). Recent surveys found that rainforest-dependent species like catbird, Wompoo Fruit-Dove and Superb Fruit-Dove had moved into the Peterson Creek wildlife corridor. Image courtesy of Alastair Freeman.



Lumholtz tree-kangaroos. Tree climbers like Lumholtz’s tree-kangaroo, coppery brushtail possum and green ringtail possum are also making a comeback. Image courtesy of Alastair Freeman.

## WATER WATCH

The three Atherton Tablelands wildlife corridors all incorporate waterways; cool, moist places where fauna often concentrate. Aquatic species benefit too, as streamside vegetation creates shade and reduces bank erosion.

Key to establishing streamside vegetation in the Peterson Creek and Donaghy's Corridors, where cattle graze adjacent, has been fencing cattle out and installing off-creek watering. This has been a win-win for fauna and farmers.

"We've no regrets," Patrick Donaghy said in a phone interview about the water troughs on his family's farm. "They're the best thing ever. You see the job they do for the water and the stream banks, by getting the cattle out, and it all makes sense."

Residents and visitors have benefited too.

At Allumbah Pocket near Yungaburra, the Yungaburra Landcare Group has continued the Peterson Creek wildlife corridor downstream into the peri-urban area. It has transformed the stream banks, previously overrun with exotic grasses and lantana, into wildlife habitat — and a popular place to look for tree-kangaroos and platypuses.



Peterson Creek wildlife corridor, 2021. Image courtesy of Amanda Freeman.

## SIGNS OF SUCCESS

When it comes to rainforest restoration, success is incremental. For McCaffery, success comes with planted trees being used.

"I can remember seeing a fruiting lilly pilly [*Acmena smithii*]," she said. "Absolutely loaded with beautiful purple fruit. There were Tooth-billed Bowerbirds, Wompoo Fruit-Doves, catbirds and Brown Cuckoo-Doves [*Macropygia phasianella*]. The whole tree was alive and moving with birds. It was staggering to see so much activity. That tells you that that tree has been a success."

For Tucker, success, if achieved, will come later.

"Birds, bats, big rats — they're fairly mobile," he said. "The real measure of success will be things like possums, and rainforest reptiles and amphibians. The less mobile specialists."

But with limited resources, and so many possible aspects to measure, monitoring in the Wet Tropics has seldom targeted these logistically more challenging groups. In some respects, rainforest restoration is still an act of faith, based on the assumption that "[if you build it, they will come](#)."

They may not.

"You can't extrapolate and say that once you've got the ecological generalists, that the ecological specialists will follow," Tucker said. Monitoring would need to be more regular, and target a broader range of taxa, to thoroughly measure the biodiversity values against the funds invested.

Those values will change through time. "Nobody can plant a rainforest," McCaffrey said. "You can only plant the structure, the trees that you think will speed the process up, get all those transformations happening."



Aerial view of Donaghy's Corridor in 2021. Image courtesy of Tim Holt.

## Footnote

After this article was published by Mongabay, Nigel Tucker reported a musky rat-kangaroo caught on camera in a 1995 Donaghy's Corridor planting.

**Disclosure:** Amanda Freeman plans to publish the 2021 Donaghy's Corridor survey along with Nigel Tucker and David Tng, two of the researchers cited in this article. She is also the co-author of a 2009 paper on an earlier bird survey, cited. Her household is a financial member of TREAT and participates in voluntary community tree-planting days.

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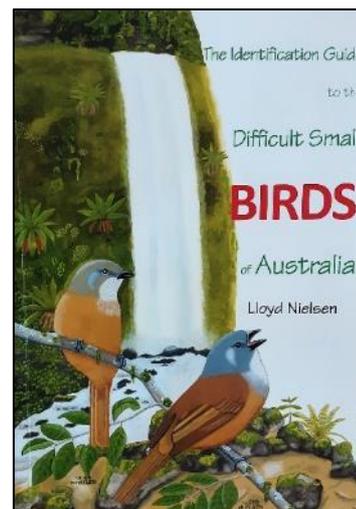
## Book Review

By Lindsay Fisher

### The Identification Guide to the Difficult Small Birds of Australia.

by Lloyd Nielsen

Self published 2021



Once again Lloyd has produced a book that provides birdwatchers with an alternative way of identifying birds. His book *Birds of the Wet Tropics of Queensland & Great Barrier Reef: & where to find them* [Lloyd loves long titles!] which was first published in 1996 and revised in 2015, provided an innovative way of working out identification by colour and plumage.

His new book has the same approach by illustrating similar species on the same page and describing the differences. For those of us in the Wet Tropics there are four pages of text and illustrations for those troublesome "Yellow-spotted" honeyeaters.



Confused about the differences between Leaden, Satin and Broad-billed Flycatchers? All are beautifully illustrated on one page showing all the subtle differences and text on the diagnostic features.

Likewise those baffling thornbills are analysed so we can work them out with comparative ease!

Distribution maps are provided at the end of the book in alphabetical order of the 182 birds described as another aid to narrowing down the correct identifications.

This slim volume will easily fit in your vehicle's glove compartment so when you're travelling it is at hand for you to work out the latest challenge in a new territory.

Thank you Lloyd, in a world of apps and downloads, for producing such a useful and thoughtful book.

\$40 Available at local bookshops.

Or email Lloyd [lloydnielsen@westnet.com.au](mailto:lloydnielsen@westnet.com.au)  
\$47 including postage.

He is in the process of updating his website to include his new book. [www.birdingaustralia.com.au/](http://www.birdingaustralia.com.au/)

Contact us: BirdLife Northern Queensland committee

Email: [northernqld@birdlife.org.au](mailto:northernqld@birdlife.org.au)

Internet: [www.birdlifengq.org](http://www.birdlifengq.org)



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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.

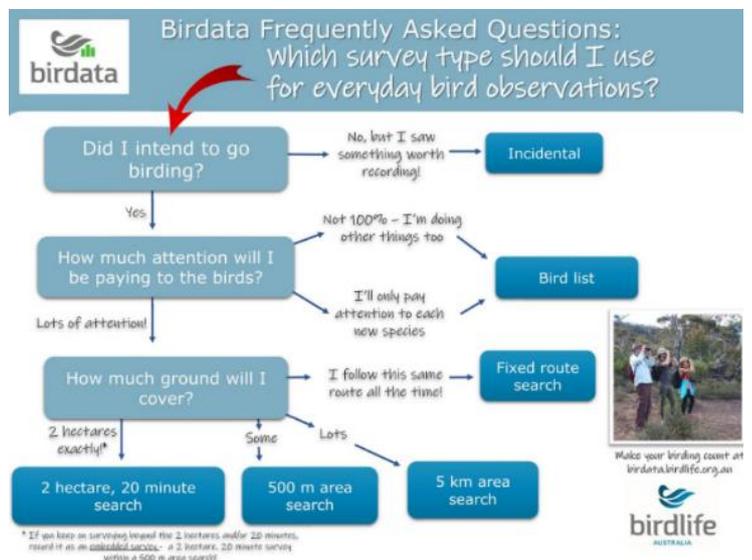
As well as making things easy for you, the Birdata web portal has many features that let you take control of your own data: it's simple to keep your own lists (site, species, or the last month or year, for example) and generate distribution maps and site lists with the click of a button. You can even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

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



# Birds, Germs and Worms

By Dr Rob Reed

Is birding, commercial bird farming, consumption, or even bird-fancying/breeding dangerous to humans?

Well, it depends.

I have continued to expand my life-long fascination in all things infectious, particularly zoonoses (infections transmissible from the animal world to humans). The SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic has brought much of this to the public eye for the first time, at least in terms of the putative origin of the virus. Social media has had its place in the dissemination of knowledge, much of it erroneous if not downright laughable. However, for the first time, most of us now understand droplet and airborne spread, various infection control prevention principles, and what a PCR test is. We all now have some appreciation of the term "immunocompromised" and whether or not you, as an individual, are thus so.

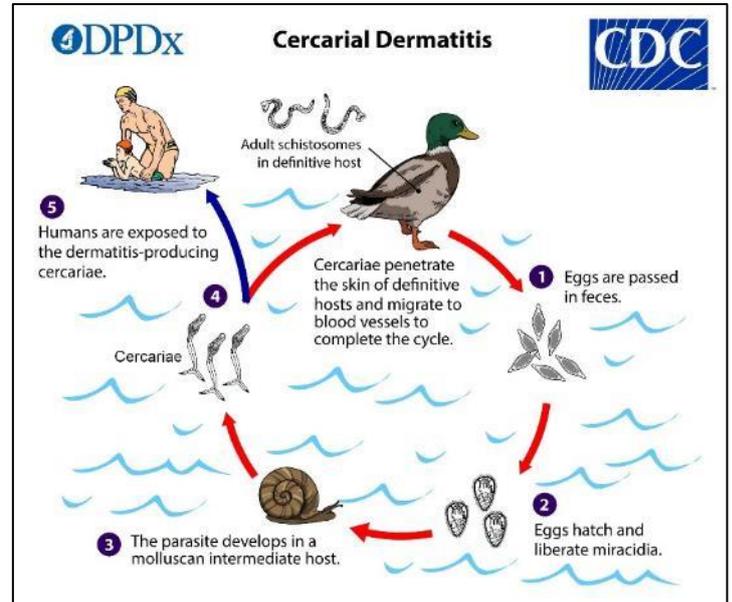
Hence, I thought the following anecdotes and bird-related infections may be of interest to members (for something completely different to actually birding). I promise I will not mention Covid-19 again.

Not infrequently (with my medical hat on) I am asked to see a group of kids in remote locations by a newly arrived, city-trained nurse baffled by mysterious rashes. More often than not, the Mum volunteers the diagnosis to the unsuspecting nurse: "Duck lice!"

This is usually seen after a weekend of swimming and fishing in one of the local lakes. The kids have a total body spotty, itchy rash and the adults too about the knees. This corresponds to swimming and fishing water exposure respectively. The best spot for both of these activities, I am reliably informed, is usually right under the crocodile warning sign. A few days later an allergic type rash occurs and a quick epidemiological history is revealing if the diagnostic appearance of the rash (cercarial dermatitis) is missed.

Ducks and other water birds, it is true, are implicated. They harbour the adult worm (the schistosome) in the gut. Eggs of the worm are released in the faeces into the water. There they develop into a free-swimming "miracidium" (a larval stage) which seeks a specific species of water snail. Within the snail it undergoes transformation to a "cercaria" which burrows out of the snail into the water. These cercariae in turn penetrate, or are ingested by, the aquatic bird and find their way to the gut via the bloodstream, where they develop into fully adult schistosomes ready for the cycle to repeat. Humans are "Dead end hosts" (DEH) in that the cercariae penetrate the skin and cause an allergic reaction: but there the cycle ceases. Dead end hosts

cannot pass the infection to species of their own kind. There is no specific treatment for this and it will resolve within a few days.



This illustration is from the [Centre for Disease Control & Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/dpdx)

We are all aware (now) of Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus and its recent spread from its endemic base north of Australia (Papua New Guinea and South East Asia) to the rest of the country. Briefly then, this is most likely due to the carriage of the virus in certain migratory water birds which need large water bodies with a ready food source to breed. Recent flooding events in Australia have provided this opportunity as well as the requisite mosquito explosion. The birds are seemingly unaffected by the presence of the virus (Reservoir Host or RH), and the vector responsible for maintaining the "wild cycle" among birds and between birds and pigs is the *Culex* mosquito.

Pigs, in particular, can amplify the virus so are very good at spreading it back to the mosquito and so on. Horses and humans (both DEH) develop similar clinical illness in about the same proportions (encephalitis in about 1% of diagnosed infections and 30% mortality. Most survivors have neurological sequelae - often severe). Piggeries and the wild porcine groups around the country are being monitored closely for endemicity of the virus. Local workers will be offered vaccination. Humans are DEH so cannot transmit to other humans. It would be judicious to cover up and repel at times when the vector bites (nocturnally). Note that the mainstream media is fond of putting up a photo of a mosquito when it runs a story about this virus, but it is not the *Culex* species responsible, but usually the far more glittering in appearance *Aedes*, which is not the vector.

This is just another example of Arboviral diseases (ARthropod BORne VIRus) of which there are many in Australia and the world. Most have mammals as their reservoir hosts (eg. Ross River and Barmah Forest

viruses in Australia with macropods as RH) and humans are DEH.

West Nile/Kunjin virus, however, also has water birds as an RH and *Culex* the vector: occasionally causing nasty illness in humans as a DEH. This virus has had limited media traction, thus is probably a new name to you.

Avian influenza is carried in and transmitted between birds – water birds and poultry farms being the main wild and domestic sources. A particularly virulent strain of this virus can decimate birds quite quickly. Occasionally humans are infected but they need constant close contact with infected birds, eg. poultry farmers, wet market operators. This has up to a 50% mortality rate in humans. Although not yet seen in Australia, speculation is rife and monitoring is aggressive both overseas and at home.

The “Spanish flu” of 1918 was a “combination” of both human and avian influenza genetics and was extremely potent. Should this current Avian influenza virus have an opportunity to undergo “genetic re-assortment” between us, birds and particularly pigs, then a new lethal strain has potential for humans. The media had hold of this alarming concept to some degree about 10 or so years or so ago but dropped it pretty quickly for something else more newsworthy; perhaps a tennis match. It did rattle the global financial markets for a while; sufficiently so to receive a question from my accountant as to the likelihood of half the world's population being wiped out before he considered stashing all his cash in his mattress.

Psittacosis, a lung infection mainly seen in keepers of caged parrots (also poultry workers, vets and pet shop owners) is caused by an unusual bacteria called *Chlamydia psittaci*. It is transmitted by aerosols of droppings, feather dust, respiratory secretions and less commonly, from beak to mouth transmission. It can be particularly nasty in pregnant women and those otherwise immunocompromised. It can have an archetypal chest x-ray appearance which aids in diagnosis but is relatively uncommon (I have seen the odd case). Do not kiss your pet parrot and maintain social distancing from the cage. Handle droppings with respect.

Birds, wild and domestic, are prone to bacterial infections particularly with *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*. These can be transmitted in droppings to humans and cause gastrointestinal infections. Also, when birds are slaughtered these bacteria disseminate throughout the meat and that is why it (including eggs routinely) needs to be thoroughly cooked before consumption to avoid gastro. The commonest cause of such “food poisoning” is the consumption of undercooked chicken. Reject any poultry meat which is even slightly pink even at the bone no matter how finger-licking it may seem to the eye.

We have covered viruses, bacteria and parasites: what about fungi?

*Cryptococcus neoformans* is a fungus carried in the faeces of birds and found among other environmental sources (rotting wood and soil). It is breathed in and can cause catastrophic chronic meningitis particularly in those immunocompromised.

*Histoplasma capsulatum* is a fungus found in bird and bat droppings mainly built up in caves but also around chicken coops and pigeon lofts, etc. It is rare in Australia in humans. It usually causes lung infections: again the immunocompromised are more affected.

Finally “sentinel chickens”. The arboviruses mentioned above (plus others) have traditionally been monitored for outbreak activity around the country by regularly checking for seroconversion (exposure to the virus from mosquito bite, and development of antibodies to it by testing the serum) in exposed chicken flocks. After 50 years this is being dismantled to be replaced by direct examination of amplified genetic material of the various viruses in trapped mosquitoes.

Astute observers will have noticed various insect traps increasingly popping up in the bush. Some are for this purpose. In a former life, I spent many years flying weekly to the Kalumburu clinic on the north coast of the Kimberley (yes, Black Grasswren country). This was one of the many sites of sentinel flocks, and procuring the requisite specimens for analysis and transporting them back to the lab became another fascinating aspect of my life. As you can envisage, the location of this flock was of major importance geographically as a “first strike” to Australia should a virus appear in the sera of the birds.

This is simply a very limited, localised and fun list of infections our avian friends can potentially inflict upon us.

However, if you ask me if you should be worried when associating with birds in any capacity, my opinion is to avoid at all costs walking under an active magpie nest during breeding season.

About the author:

*Rob is a medically trained generalist with added qualifications in microbiology which has stimulated his interest in infectious diseases. He has worked among refugees and Indigenous communities for over 40 years globally and within Australia. He currently undertakes remote community work in Australia.*

**Editor’s Note:** please also see Scott Ritchie’s article that specifically discusses Japanese encephalitis virus, on page 28.

# Japanese encephalitis virus hits outback Australia

By Scott Ritchie, PhD

Professor (Adjunct), James Cook University  
Cairns, Queensland Australia

Recently, the Australian outback has been subject to an outbreak of a new deadly mosquito-borne disease. That disease is Japanese encephalitis (JE) caused by the Japanese encephalitis virus. In about 1% of cases, encephalitis can cause permanent brain damage, even death. I have worked on JE since it first appeared in 1995 in Australia, in an outbreak on the small island of Badu in the Torres Strait. That outbreak resulted in three human cases and tragically two deaths. This was a new virus for Australia that had come from South East Asia via Papua New Guinea. It is carried by *Culex* mosquitoes, particularly *Culex annulirostris*. The current outbreak, at press, has resulted in 37 human cases and tragically, three deaths. Rural areas of southern Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have reported cases.



*Culex annulirostris* by Paul Zborowski

The natural vertebrate host for the virus includes birds, particularly wading birds, and pigs. Australia has plenty of both. Indeed, when JE first showed up in the late 1990s, it was thought that it would soon break out on the Australian mainland and rapidly move through populations of feral pigs throughout eastern Australia. At the time I rather foolishly predicted that it might make Sydney by the 2000 Olympics, for which I was chastised heavily by my boss. Well it turns out I was probably 25 years too early (although Sydney is spared, JE virus being west of the Dividing Range), but JE has finally arrived in outback areas from Queensland to South Australia.

So I write this brief summary of JE for Birdlife Northern Queensland's Contact Call newsletter because birds are involved in the story.



Intermediate Egret

Wading birds, including Nankeen Night-Herons and Intermediate Egrets are listed among the species that had been shown to be able to harbour the JE virus.

However, it is suspected that many other ardeid and other water birds are natural hosts for JE. These birds move opportunistically when large monsoonal rain events flood outback areas. Waterbirds migrate in from swampy areas of northern Australia and soon begin breeding in prolific numbers. Birds such as Magpie Geese and Australian White Ibis come to mind and could be potential hosts of the JE virus. Millions of mosquitoes can breed in these floods, especially *Culex annulirostris*. And we know that similar viruses such as Murray Valley Encephalitis virus and Kunjin virus exploit monsoonal flooding and create outbreaks.



Nankeen Night-Heron adult (L) and juvenile (R). Young birds are important sources of virus as they have never been exposed to it, and thus are not immune.

So what do we as birders, who often travel and camp in outdoor areas frequented by waterbirds, need to concern ourselves with regarding this virus?

First of all, these viruses are outback viruses, and occur west of the Great Dividing Range in eastern Australia. I don't think you're going to see JE along the eastern seaboard anytime soon. But if you've organised to travel into outback areas of almost any state in Australia, perhaps to see an explosion of parrots such as Budgerigars, you should be prepared.

The mosquito that carries this virus feeds at night. So if you are camping, especially in an area where birds are very common, wear your mosquito repellent at night. Make sure that your tent is sealed so that mosquitoes cannot enter. Follow public health advisories. People who live in those areas, especially near a commercial piggery, will probably be vaccinated.

Lastly, how did the virus get here so suddenly?

We do not know, and that question is being actively researched now. But I suspect that large flooding rains associated with the 2021-22 La Nina led to an explosion of wading birds and mosquito populations in outback Australia. These birds may have travelled from northern Australia and some of them may very well have been infected with JE virus. Last year there was a case of JE that killed a man in the Tiwi islands of the Northern Territory. That virus is almost identical to the virus they recovered from dead pigs this year. So, we suspect the virus has been in the outback for at least a year, and that the heavy rains of November 2021 unleashed it to its full potential.

It is important that we better understand the relationship between the virus, birds and the environment so that we can gauge the risk that the JE virus poses. Will it overwinter, and reappear every wet season? Or will it seemingly disappear, only to explode into action during wet summers such as the last one? Is JE virus established in northern Australia, and is it introduced to southern areas such as the Murray-Darling Basin by waterbirds as they move to exploit seasonal flooding? What bird species are the dominant hosts? Are feral pigs involved as sources of the virus? Are other mosquito species involved? Can we monitor the virus by sampling bird faeces from rookeries, much like we monitor COVID in sewage water? Hopefully this virus, albeit tragic, will be an impetus to fund research on the seasonally flooded Australian outback ecosystems, and seasonal or nomadic movement of birds.

### Further Reading

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**Editor's Note:** please also see Rob Reed's article entitled: "Birds, Germs and Worms" on page 26

The following advice is thanks to the Department of Health, State Government of Victoria. For more information go to: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/beat-the-bite>



**Beat the bite!**

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito-borne diseases

- Wear loose-fitting clothing when outdoors. Cover up as much as possible.
- Use mosquito repellent that contains picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin.
- Make sure your accommodation is mosquito-proof.
- Make sure there is no stagnant water around your home.

For more information visit [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)



# Beach Stone-curlews on the Wet Tropics coast - hassled but hanging on

By Amanda Freeman, 7 May 2022

BirdLife's far northern shorebird project is finishing up. The project team has drawn a line under Beach Stone-curlew data collection and begun to analyse the information and report on the results.

The project has been a collaboration between BirdLife, volunteers, and the Yirrganydji, Mandingalbay Yidinji, Gunggandji, and Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji Indigenous ranger teams, funded by a Queensland Government Community Sustainability Action Grant. Over the course of the project, more than 250 Beach Stone-curlew records have been collated, mostly contributed to the project by 25 volunteers (thank you everyone!), or direct to Birddata. Some records have also come from eBird and even Facebook posts.

There's good news. Beach Stone-curlews are still widely distributed along the mainland Wet Tropics coast, and still occur in most of the locations where they were recorded 20 years ago. There are some changes though. Beach Stone-curlews appear to be gone from some of Cairns' northern beaches, and they've popped up in a few wetland spots, a couple of kilometres inland, where they seem not to have been recorded before.

During the project, breeding attempts, as indicated by a nest or a sighting of an immature bird, were also distributed along the Wet Tropics coast but were only recorded in 11 locations. However, Beach Stone-curlews are sneaky. Nests are easily overlooked, and immature birds can be hard to separate from adults. We've more work to do with the data, using group size as a proxy for past breeding success, that may give us a clearer picture of breeding up and down the coast.

There have been 18 known nesting attempts on the Wet Tropics coast over the project's three breeding seasons. Of these, we know that five successfully raised a chick and seven failed for various reasons, including predation and being washed out by a high tide.

What can we say about the threats to Beach Stone-curlews on the Wet Tropics coast, and have they changed over the last 20 years? First, they do seem to tolerate some sorts of regular disturbance. For example, there's a pair that nests adjacent to Cairns airport, in sight of the runways, and there's another pair that nests on dredge spoil next to the harbour.

Both have successfully raised a chick over the course of the project. And the mudflats at the Cairns Esplanade are still frequented by Beach Stone-curlews despite the numbers of people. These activities don't seem to directly disturb the Beach Stone-curlews.

Disturbance by dogs and quad bikes is quite different, however. Interestingly, dogs scarcely rated a mention in Birdlife Northern Queensland's Beach Stone-curlew database which collected records up until 2006. Quad bikes didn't feature at all. Now, comments about both are frustratingly commonplace.

We weren't so aware of the risks of climate change 20 years ago either. Now, coastal erosion and inundation may threaten nest sites adding another challenge. This has probably always happened to these beach nesters but could become more common. In areas of coastal development, they may not always be able to simply shift their nest inland as the foreshore gets narrower.

In conclusion, the good news is that Beach Stone-curlews are still widely distributed along the Wet Tropics coast, and the Cairns region is quite a hotspot due to the largely inaccessible areas to its north and south. There's no room for complacency though, as some former sites are no longer occupied, and breeding records are sparse. Beach Stone-curlews face threats from climate change, dogs, and quad bikes which now make even remote beaches much more accessible.

Although with the end of the project I'm no longer collecting and collating Beach Stone-curlew records, sightings are still very valuable. You can assist ongoing Beach Stone-curlew monitoring by recording your sightings in Birddata or eBird, especially noting any breeding behaviour or juveniles seen and any threats observed.



Beach Stone-curlew Image courtesy of Doug Herrington

# The Tyto Wetlands

By Lindsay Fisher

Many of you will have driven past the Tyto Wetlands, on the southern side of Ingham, on your way to Townsville and thought that you should stop and visit one day. We have stayed in Ingham three times now to visit this amazing wetland and highly recommend it as a birding destination.

The Tyto Wetlands is one of Australia's largest urban wetland rehabilitation projects. It covers 120 hectares; over 250 species of birds have been observed and there is a large wallaby population. It all started in 1996 when Hinchinbrook Council engaged renowned local wildlife specialist John Young to conduct a study of the area. Results indicated that the wetlands had a healthy bird population including nine pairs of Eastern Grass Owl (*Tyto longimembris*). By August 1997, the Tyto Restoration Project had commenced to restore and conserve the natural values of this once degraded wetland. Lagoons were created and trees and plants put in strategic positions to enable birdwatchers to observe the habitat and birdlife easily.

There are four kilometres of pathways meandering around the lagoons with lookouts, signs, a hide, picnic areas and seats. It is easy to spend 2-3 hours birdwatching, or even a full day. In addition, an Information and Wetlands Centre at the entrance was opened in 2007 and is well worth a visit with some excellent interpretive signs and information.

Obviously with all the wetlands and lagoons, there are plenty of waterbirds to see, but it is also an excellent place to find bush birds too. Crimson Finch are easy to see along with Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and Red-browed Finch. White-browed Robin seem to be calling around every corner and are easy to observe. The habitat and viewing opportunities make it ideal for finding normally difficult birds such as Spotless and White-browed Crake and even Black-backed Bittern (Little Bittern) if you are lucky. The best time to see the Eastern Grass Owl is at dusk from the viewing area overlooking the main lagoon. Throughout the year conditions vary and so too do the birds so it is well worth visiting any time you are passing.

There are a number of other places to visit around Ingham. Wallaman Falls National Park is just 51km in the hills south west of Ingham and accessible on a bitumen road. There are plenty of birding opportunities, walking tracks and a stunning waterfall too. Just south of Ingham is Jourama Falls National Park with walking tracks and picnic areas set in rainforest along Waterview Creek. A trip out to the coast gives other birding options too. Staying a few nights also gives you the chance to visit Tyto Wetlands at different times of the day.



Green Pygmy Goose



Crimson Finch



White-browed Robin

## News from Mount Isa

By Rex Whitehead

The birding has been relatively quiet in Mount Isa of late: since the good rain we had in January, with some more good follow up rain in April.

Just prior to the rain in April, we thought the last of the migratory waders, the Swinhoe's Snipe and Wood Sandpipers had left. A trip to Lake Moondarra on the weekend, however, proved us wrong as there were some Sharp-tailed Sandpipers there foraging in the more recently exposed mudflats. Whether these birds were on their way to their northern breeding grounds, and stopped off for a feed on their journey, or may stay longer, who knows? I'll see if they are still there next week.



Swinhoe's Snipe

With regards the Wood Sandpipers, this is the most I have seen in a group. They are mostly in one's or two's. This time, I counted groups of up to 13 birds together.



Wood Sandpiper

I had planned on doing a trip to the Birdsville area just prior to the late April rains. But the much heavier rain in the Winton, Longreach, and Boulia areas, has put that trip on hold due to road closures from flooding. The bridge over the Burke River at Boulia, went under water: a rare occurrence for this time of year.

As the Burke River runs into the Georgina River, which then becomes Eyre Creek at Bedourie, I expect movement may be limited in these areas for a while yet.

Just a few days ago, it was interesting to witness a huge flock of Straw-necked Ibis (I would estimate about 200 birds) taking off from the Horse Paddock area. I watched as they formed up over the hills, looking for a thermal. Once on the thermal, they gained considerable height, then headed south: I guess, heading for the recently flooded areas further south. How do they know about the flooding taking place elsewhere? This will always be a mystery, I'm sure.

Last week-end, after getting permission for access from the station manager, we decided to give the Carpentarian Grasswrens a go, as it was 12 months since our last effort there. Well, following a day of searching our usual spots, we came up empty handed. I often get calls from visiting birders asking, can I give them directions on finding these very elusive little birds. All I can give is a general area, as the birds appear to be on the move quite a bit. At a guess, my success rate on these birds would only be about 20%. I also stress to visitors, or any others for that matter, that permission from station manager or owner to enter the property, is a must.

Over the last few days, I have been lucky in having up to five Spotted Bowerbirds in my back yard. It appears to be two adults with three juveniles in tow. I think the adults are trying to shake the juveniles, as they aren't very friendly with them.

The Varied Lorikeets keep visiting my neighbour's bird bath each morning and through the day. They are a delight to see. But they sure are little squabblers.

The weather has cooled somewhat, with more rain forecast along the way. Bring it on, I say.

I have included images of a Swinhoe's Snipe, Wood Sandpiper, along with one of a Jacana, showing the size of its feet, for interest.

Happy birding to all

Rex Whitehead



Comb-crested Jacana

# Megapodes Part 1

By Jennifer H Muir

Considered in most literature to be in the Order Galliformes (Latin galli = chicken), birds of the family Megapodiidae are a group of stocky, medium-sized, chicken-like birds with small heads and large feet (Greek: mega = great, large; and pou = foot).

The 20 or so currently recognized megapode species have mainly black, plain grey, or dusky brown plumage, and some have short 'hairy' crests, or brightly coloured bare skin or wattles on head and neck. They have short sharp bills, and short, rounded wings. Their strong legs have stout feet with long powerful toes (three in front, one shorter behind), and sharp claws.

Usually, sexes are similar, though males in some species are slightly larger and darker than females. Macho male Australian Brush-turkeys, like the handsome lad pictured, have very impressive wattles that suggest he has good genes, which is what the females seek for their young.



Australian Brush-turkey (*Alectura lathami*) of eastern Australia, from Cape York Peninsula, Queensland to Sydney region, New South Wales (NSW). Image: Jennifer H Muir

Megapodes vary in size from domestic fowl to small turkey size. The largest megapodes are brush-turkeys of the *Alectura* and *Talegalla* genera.

Of the two smallest megapodes, one is the Near Threatened Micronesian Scrubfowl (*Megapodius laperouse*) - named after French Captain Jean Francois la Perouse, 1780s explorer in the Pacific.

The other (pictured) is the Vulnerable and decreasing Moluccan Scrubfowl (*Eulipoa wallacei*) - named for British Zoologist Alfred Russell Wallace: father of zoogeography.



Moluccan Scrubfowl (*Eulipoa wallacei*) of Indonesia. Image courtesy of Benoit Segerer. [iNaturalist.org/taxa/88288-Eulipoa/browse\\_photos](https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/88288-Eulipoa/browse_photos)

Megapodes are terrestrial and omnivorous, mainly feeding on fallen fruit, seeds and fungi; but some also eat small animals including crabs. They're good runners and fly well for short distances, though flying abilities vary between species; and they roost in trees. Most megapodes call with noisy cackles and squawks.

## DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

Megapodes occur in the broader Australasian region: including Australia; New Guinea; Indonesia (east of the Wallace Line - so named to honour Alfred Russell Wallace); Philippines; and some Western Pacific islands including New Ireland, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Of at least six megapode genera, there are around 20 living species, three of which are found in Australia. Two of these, the common, but decreasing Australian Brush-turkey (pictured) and the Vulnerable and decreasing Malleefowl (pictured below) are endemic. The other, Least Concern and stable Orange-footed Scrubfowl, is of a widespread species group that occurs in Australia and on some of the above-mentioned islands.

Megapode distribution in the Pacific contracted with the arrival of humans, and several island groups such as Fiji, Tonga and New Caledonia have lost many or all

of their megapodes. Based on early settler reports, Raoul Island in New Zealand's Kermadec Islands, may also have once had a megapode.

Megapodes inhabit primary and secondary rainforest, monsoon forest, and beach sands and vegetation.

Only Australia's Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) (pictured below) lives in a semi-arid habitat.



Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) of the more arid parts of south-western WA, South Australia (SA), Victoria and NSW. Image: Jennifer H Muir

Three species of brush-turkeys in the genus *Talegalla* are of Least Concern, but restricted to New Guinea, as are two of genus *Aepyptodius*. Of these, the Wattled Brush-turkey (*A. arfakianus*), is of Least Concern and stable, but the other, the Waigeo Brush-turkey (*A. bruijnii*) is Endangered and decreasing.

Of the scrubfowls, the Vulnerable and decreasing Moluccan Scrubfowl (*Eulipoa wallacei*) is restricted to the Moluccas. The Vulnerable but increasing Tongan Scrubfowl (*Megapodius pritchardii*) is found only on Tonga's Niuafou Island; and the Near Threatened (population status unknown) Micronesian Scrubfowl (*M. laperouse*) in the Mariana Islands and on Palau in Micronesia.



The Critically Endangered and decreasing, massive Maleo (*Macrocephalon maleo*) is found only in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Image: Ariefrahman, CC BY-SA 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>, via Wikimedia Commons

However, the Least Concern, stable Orange-footed Scrubfowl (*Megapodius freycinet*) (pictured below) occurs virtually throughout the entire range of the family.

In Australia it's found from WA's Kimberley to Cape York, and south to about Byfield in Queensland, as well as islands in Torres Strait and along the Barrier Reef. Common in north Qld, especially in lowlands, they're infrequent over 800 m altitude.



Orange-footed Scrubfowl having a scratch (*Megapodius freycinet*) "... you put your right foot in, and you shake it all about....(doing the 'Hokey Pokey')". Image: Jennifer H Muir

## MEGAPODE NESTING BEHAVIOUR

Megapode nesting behavior is unique. Instead of incubating their eggs with their own body heat in nests as do those of other bird groups, megapodes bury and incubate their eggs in mounds they build themselves, or in sand nests or burrows they dig into the ground. Different species have different incubation strategies depending on their local environment. These variations have led to alternative names such as "mound-builders" and "incubator birds".

Brush-turkeys and some scrubfowl species build large mounds of leaf litter, twigs and sand that, using their long toes they scratch up from the surrounding area. The parents (mainly the male in some species) consistently attend this mound of decaying vegetation, adding or removing litter to regulate the internal heat while the eggs develop. Some megapodes use the same mounds year after year, throwing fresh vegetation on them.

Scrubfowls have the greatest variation in nesting behaviour. On many small islands, instead of building a mound, some species dig nests in hot beach sand so their eggs are incubated by the heat of the sun, the warmth being retained in the sand overnight.

In Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Critically Endangered Maleo (pictured left) lays its eggs in black volcanic

sand along certain beaches that best absorb the sun's heat.

Eggs of some scrubfowls have been found in leaf litter between heat-absorbing black rocks; in warm rotting logs; or in plant material piled against a log.

Other megapodes dig burrows on the sides of volcanoes, harnessing the underground volcanic heat to incubate their eggs. At Garu, New Britain, more than 11,000 egg burrows were counted in about 67 hectares of heated soil. Under Traditional Laws that ensured conservation of the species, local villagers harvested the eggs for food. However, those Traditional Laws are now ignored, and eggs are being over-harvested and the birds' forest feeding grounds cleared.

In Australia, it's believed megapode eggs are no longer eaten, but we do clear forests, and the future of the species is probably no more secure here than in New Britain.

Generally, Australia's Malleefowl builds mounds that are not as high as the mounds of the other megapodes. Malleefowls dig a deep sand pit which is then filled with leaf/twig litter. When winter rains start, and the litter gets wet enough to ferment, it's subsequently covered with a thick layer of sand into which an egg chamber is dug, then overtopped again with sand.



A typical Malleefowl mound in WA's southern wheatbelt in the late 1960s. Image: Jennifer H Muir

## MEGAPODE YOUNG

Megapode young are super-precocial, hatching in the most mature condition of any bird. Their eggs are unusual in having a large yolk that makes up 50–70% of the egg weight. This undoubtedly provides the best possible start in life for chicks that, being so highly precocial, are fully independent from hatching. Once hatched the chicks receive no further parental care.

Unlike chicks of other avian species, megapode chicks don't have an egg tooth. They use their powerful claws to break out of the egg, and tunnel their way to the surface of the mound while lying on their backs scratching, at the sand and plant matter, with their long toes and sharp claws. They hatch with open eyes; sufficient body coordination and strength to run and pursue prey; and full wing feathers. Some species can fly on the day they hatch.

With the non-social nature of the start in life of megapode young, one wonders how the hatchlings can learn to recognise other members of their species. In many other bird species, recognition of their own kind is due to imprinting on parents and siblings in the shared nest, and during general parental care.

Further research may confirm whether or not megapode chicks communicate with each other in the nest from inside their eggs, enabling them to recognise each other's voices. If chicks then live within hearing of each other after hatching and leaving the nest, maybe they continue to recognise their siblings by voice, and subsequently by sight. Then, as they mature towards adulthood, they may also learn to recognise adults by sight, and voice. Perhaps the parent/s communicate when around the mound and the chicks hear the adult voices....

## MEGAPODES IN AUSTRALIA

Orange-footed Scrubfowl and Australian Brush-turkey are well-known in Tropical North Queensland, and the Malleefowl is still recorded in declining numbers in drier parts of southern WA, SA, Victoria and NSW.

Australian megapodes will be discussed in greater detail in Part 2 of this series in the next *Contact Call*.

A reference list is available on request.

### Malleefowl video resources to check out

Malleefowl work in pairs, shifting sand around their mounds to adjust the temperature inside where their eggs are incubating, but sometimes things don't quite go according to plan as this video thanks to Australian Geographic illustrates. Click [here](#). As Jenn, our assistant editor noted, they must have been feeling a bit 'featherbrained' that day.

See also this great video of a Malleefowl chick emerging from a nest – Click [here](#). So cute!!

## 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

- ✓ August 10th for the September Edition
- ✓ October 10th for the December Edition

#### **BirdLife Northern Queensland Newsletter 'Contact Call'**

[birdlifengnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:birdlifengnewsletter@gmail.com)

[www.birdlifeng.org](http://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](mailto:northernqld@birdlife.org.au)

## Advice on BirdLife Northern Queensland Activities and COVID-19

BirdLife Northern Queensland activities are managed in line with Queensland Government COVID-19 requirements. Activities may be cancelled at short notice if circumstances change.

### 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/>



### Join us on Facebook



### Or visit our new website

<https://www.birdlifeng.org/>

## ADVERTISEMENT

## Botanic Gardens Guided Bird Tours For Visitors

Hello. Are you a resident birder who knows the local birds, and would like to be part of a relief team to take visitors on guided Bird Walks of Cairns Botanic Gardens?

The weekly Tuesday morning Guided Bird Walk has been part of Cairns Botanic Gardens Friends' volunteer program for the past 17 years, and is popular with locals as well as interstate and international visitors.

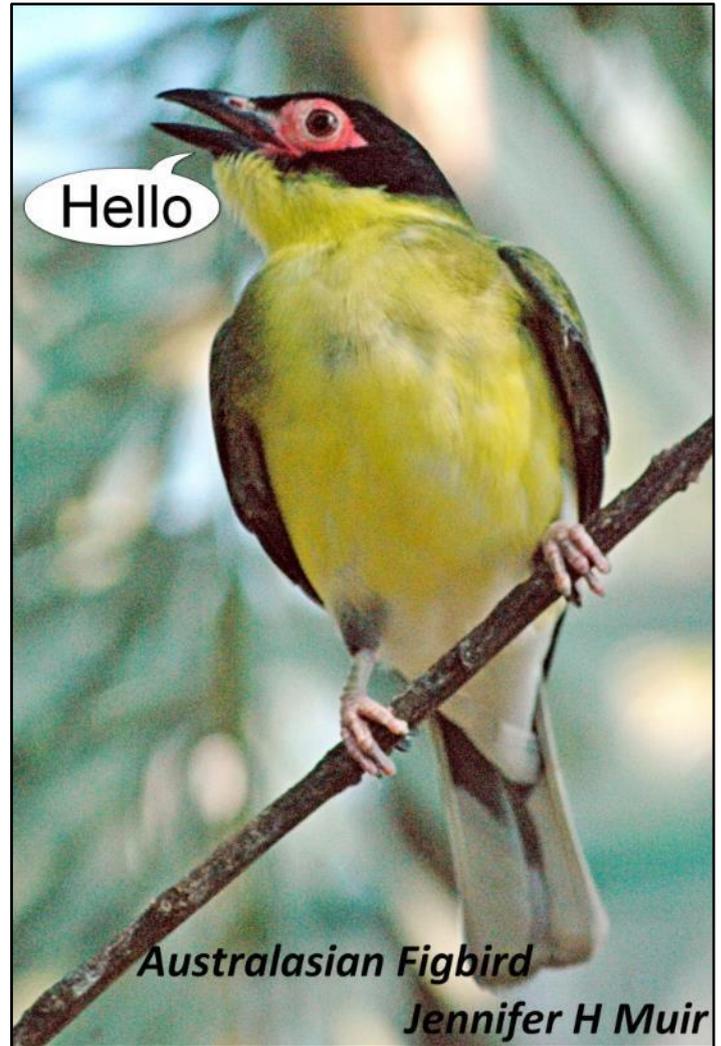
Since the retirement of its two primary guides, this Walk is in jeopardy. The current guide, Shane Kennedy, and the Cairns Botanic Gardens Friends, are concerned that the Walks could eventually stop if it is left dependent on Shane's availability alone.

Can you help? We need volunteers, with local bird knowledge, who would like to do the training to become one of a team to assist with this bird guiding work on Tuesday mornings when Shane is not in town.

If you're interested, please email:  
[cairnsbirders@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cairnsbirders@yahoo.com.au)

Kind regards, Jenn Muir

Friends' Management Committee Liaison for Cairns Birders and the Gardens' Bird Guides.



### The 2022 BirdLife Australia Photography Awards are now open!



Entries are open from May 27<sup>th</sup> – Monday August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Enter before Monday June 27<sup>th</sup> 2022 for early bird pricing – 20% off entry fees!



#### The categories for 2022 are:

- Special Theme: Australasian Robins
- Backyard Birds
- Birds in Flight
- Bird Portrait
- Bird Behaviour
- Landscapes and Habitat
- Human Impact
- Youth
- Portfolio

When photographing wildlife, please always ensure that you follow the [BirdLife Photography ethics standards](#).

For more info go to <https://www.birdlifephotoaward.org.au/>

We can't wait to see this year's entries!



## Go Hide-ing @ Wonga Beach

Stay lakeside in 'The Hide' cabin or 'The Cottage.'

- 2.5 acres absolute beachfront tropical gardens
  - Coastal, wetland and forest birds
- 90 species recorded 500m radius in last 12 months
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- Daintree Rainforest, Mossman Gorge, Atherton Tablelands, local tours

### Self-contained 1BR units:

#### The Cottage

1 double bed + sofa bed

#### The Hide

1 double bed + triple bunk

### Contact:

[jhterracall@bigpond.com](mailto:jhterracall@bigpond.com)

Judy 0409 262 462

89-93 Snapper Island Drive,  
Wonga Beach, QLD



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The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitat and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Located in the Hinterlands of Port Douglas just 90 minutes from Cairns Airport, activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and Daintree River nature tours, Mossman Gorge and other attractions.

Check our website for details on rates and bookings and view photos of the property and wildlife:

[www.feathersnfriends.com.au](http://www.feathersnfriends.com.au)

#### Hosts:

Wendy and Richard

244 Clacherty Road

Julatten QLD 4871

Email:

[feathersnfriends@outlook.com](mailto:feathersnfriends@outlook.com)



Contact us: BirdLife Northern  
Queensland committee

Email: [northernqld@birdlife.org.au](mailto:northernqld@birdlife.org.au)

Internet: [www.birdlifeq.org](http://www.birdlifeq.org)

## Volunteers needed for 2022 Crane Count

We are looking for volunteers to assist with the annual Crane Count on the Atherton Tablelands.

No experience needed so please get in touch if you'd like to get involved.

I'd also be interested in hearing from any Birdlife North Queensland members based in the Gulf in regards to crane counting.

Save the date: Saturday 10th September

Email: [edbelljsy@icloud.com](mailto:edbelljsy@icloud.com) to get on the mailing list and find out more.



A Brolga (left) and a Sarus Crane (right).

Image courtesy of David Merrall.

## Cairns Birders Festival 13 - 20 August 2022

ORGANISED BY THE CAIRNS BIRDERS GROUP

*Below is a DRAFT timetable of events to help you plan your day. More information will follow.*

CAIRNS BIRDING FESTIVAL			
Saturday, 13 August 2022	1830	Cominos House	Talk by David O'Brien On Michaelmas Cay confirmed
Sunday, 14 August 2022	700	Michaelmas Cay	
	700	Centenary Lakes	
	Tide ?	Esplanade	
Monday, 15 August 2022	700	Yorkeys Knob Golf Course	
	Tide	Esplanade	
	1830	Camino House talk	
Tuesday, 16 August 2022	800	Lake Morris Rd - Meander up, (gate opens 8am) meet 10 at the top - BYO morning tea (tea n coffee provided)	
	Tide ?	Esplanade	
	1830	Camino House talk	
Wednesday, 17 August 2022	700	Goldsborough Valley	BYO Picnic lunch
	Tide ?	Esplanade	
	1900	Crystal Cascades spotlighting - meet in the car park	
Thursday, 18 August 2022	700	Franklin Island Cruise	
	700	Redden Island	
	Tide ?	Esplanade	
Friday, 19 August 2022	730	Black Mountain Rd:	meet at beginning of Black Mountain Rd
	1400 - 1600	Welcome to the Waders	Mikey
Saturday, 20 August 2022	700	Cattana Wetlands - Morning tea. Catered RSVP	

For more information contact [cairnsbirders@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cairnsbirders@yahoo.com.au)

# BirdLife Northern Queensland 2022 Activities

Date	Time	Locality	Meeting place and other information	Contact the leader
June to August 2022		Various locations	<p><b>FINCH SURVEY AND STUDIES</b></p> <p>Help conduct studies on the distribution and ecology of Gouldian and other finches in June to August in NE Qld. The project aims to train more people in finch survey techniques for application more widely in Qld.</p> <p>This project is in collaboration with NQ Natural History Group <a href="http://www.nqnhg.org">www.nqnhg.org</a></p>	For more information contact <a href="mailto:raypierce@bigpond.com">raypierce@bigpond.com</a>
Friday 3 June 2022	7:00-9:00am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	<p><b>HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY</b></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>	For more information please contact Ron Schweitzer <a href="mailto:rgschweitzer@gmail.com">rgschweitzer@gmail.com</a>
Sunday 12 June 2022	7:00-9:30 am	Warrina Lakes, Innisfail Meet in the carpark in Park St, off the corner of Emily and Charles St, Innisfail	<p><b>BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES</b></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).</p> <p>Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and morning 'smoko'. We hope you can make it!</p>	For more information, please contact Sandra Christensen, Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator by Ph 0448 845 842, or Ceri Pearce on 0488 131 581
Friday 1 July 2022	7:00-9:00 am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	<p><b>HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY</b></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>	For more information please contact Ron Schweitzer <a href="mailto:rgschweitzer@gmail.com">rgschweitzer@gmail.com</a>
Sunday 10 July 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><b>BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES</b></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).</p> <p>Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and morning 'smoko'. We hope you can make it!</p>	For more information, please contact Sandra Christensen, Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator by Ph 0448 845 842, or Ceri Pearce on 0488 131 581
Thursday 28 July 2022	7.30-9.00pm	Malanda Hotel Dinner served from 6.00pm at own cost. Best to pre-book a table.	<p><b>TABLELAND BIRD TALK</b></p> <p><b>Endemic Birds of the Cape York Peninsula.</b></p> <p>This talk will focus on locating and photographing the endemics of the Cape. Presenter: Martin Willis</p>	For more information please contact Tableland Area Coordinators: Sam & Martin Willis by Ph: 0740966581 or 0412642141
Friday 5 Aug. 2022	7:00-9:00am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	<p><b>HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY</b></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>	For more information please contact Ron Schweitzer <a href="mailto:rgschweitzer@gmail.com">rgschweitzer@gmail.com</a>

# BirdLife Northern Queensland 2022 Activities

Date	Time	Locality	Meeting place and other information	Contact the leader
Sunday 14 Aug. 2022	7:00– 9:30am	Warrina Lakes, Innisfail  Meet in the carpark in Park St, off the corner of Emily and Charles St, Innisfail	<b>BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES</b>  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
Friday 2 Sept. 2022	7:00– 9:00am	Hastie's Swamp, Atherton  Meet at Hastie's Swamp Hide car park	<b>HASTIE'S SWAMP MONTHLY BIRD SURVEY</b>  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 10 Sept. 2022	Various locations in afternoon	Atherton Tablelands	<b>ANNUAL TABLELAND CRANE COUNT</b>  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.  12:00–2:00pm – Driving Transects (Volunteers needed)  3:00pm – Meet up with team leaders for briefing  4:00–6:30pm – Counting at crane roosts  7:00pm – Dinner at Malanda Pub (at own cost). Join us for a social evening to catch up with the other teams, recount the day, and share the results.	Contact Edward Bell  Email <a href="mailto:edbelljsy@icloud.com">edbelljsy@icloud.com</a>  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	<b>BIRDING AROUND WARRINA LAKES</b>  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
Thursday 22 Sept. 2022	7.30-9.00	Malanda Hotel  Dinner served from 6.00pm at own cost. Best to pre-book a table.	<b>TABLELAND BIRD TALK</b>  Topic to be confirmed.	For more information contact Tableland Area Coordinators: Sam & Martin Willis by Ph: 0740966581 or 0412642141

## Australia's voice for birds since 1901

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats.

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