



THE CAIRNS FROGMOUTH

*All correspondence to: cairnsbirders@yahoo.com.au
or connect with us on [Facebook](#).*

As we take our next step, let us remember the first people to walk this land.

Cairns Birders is a group of people who share common interests. We are not a club. There is no leader. Those joining in any outings/activities are expected to follow the 'common space' expectations and do so at their own risk. NO trespassing on habitat or private property.

EVENTS:

Sunday	26th April	7:30	Behanna Gorge Meet near the Highway - Cnr Bruce Hwy and Behana Gorge Rd. BYO morning tea
Sunday	3rd May	7:00	Centenary Lakes
Weekend away	May 15th - 19th		Camping at Artemis Station
ECOFIESTA	21st June	10 - 4pm	Munro Martin Parkland - vollies needed!
Cairns Birders' Festival	Friday 28th August - Saturday 5th September		
Cairns Birders' Epic Excursion	October 2026	TANZANIA	FULL

ONLINE SHOP

Cairns Birders merchandise

Look out for sales

All designs are available as car stickers, caps, T-shirts, cushions, aprons, telephone covers and many many other options.

All profits from sales of images displaying "Cairns Birders"

go to Cairns Birders for miscellaneous expenses. [Redbubble Store](#) Or log into [redbubble.com](https://www.redbubble.com) and search for "Cairns Birders"

Art by Yorz Trooley





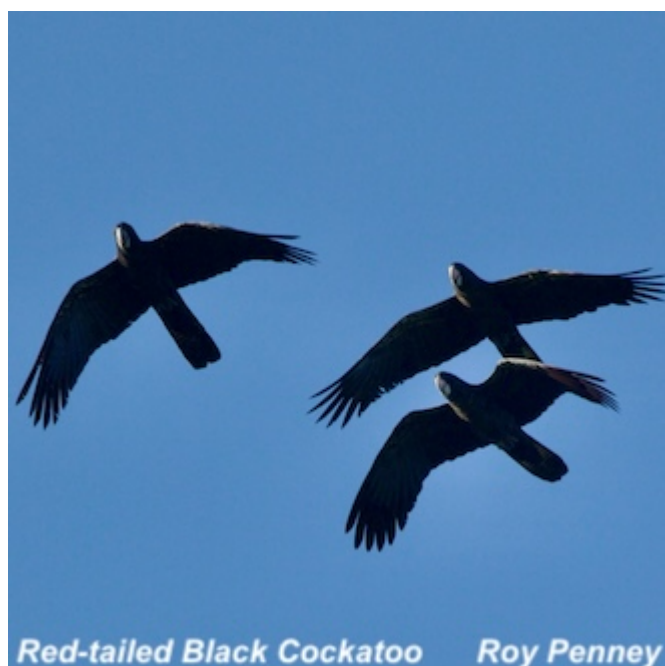
Before departure we enjoyed a coffee on the balcony. The golden horizon shimmered across the water's ripples, the Coral Sea resembling a hand-beaten platter of gold. The horizon itself was broken by a ragged line of clouds, like the spine of a dragon.

We weren't the only ones enjoying the dawn light show - at least 28 people turned up at Andy's Patch for our birding excursion. I'd been there a few days earlier and it had been very quiet, though that visit was at midday.



The trees around the car park were festooned with flowing mistletoe. Their orange blossoms were alive with **Brown Honeyeaters, Dusky Honeyeaters, and Helmeted Friarbirds**, while **Rainbow Bee-eaters** hawked insects from prominent perches with graceful arcs and rarely matched flamboyance. The latter had been scarce over the wet season, so it was good to see them back in numbers. At this point we virtually lost Jon and Peter, who wandered off in pursuit of the perfect bee-eater shot with the ideal morning light. Such is the lure of a beautiful bird. They rejoined us near the end - just in time for another splash of colour, the **Sacred Kingfishers**. Perfect timing.

We walked along the tree line, where we encountered **Spangled Drongos**, **Australasian Figbirds**, and **Varied Trillers**. **Yellow Honeyeaters** were plentiful, and a couple obligingly popped into view. **White-throated Honeyeaters** were heard but not seen. The **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos**, however, made their presence known - their melancholic calls drifting overhead as they passed in languid flight.



Sean seemed to be onto something high in a distant canopy. I could just make out a **Varied Triller** - then a **Brown Goshawk** burst out and away. Leah thought she had something too; she could hear a **Mistletoebird**.

"Where?" I asked.

"There," she said, pointing.

The nearest tree in that direction was nearly 200 metres away. I struggle when they're five metres off, but sure enough, as we approached, the bird revealed itself.

We returned via the eastern bank of Lily Creek which, even this far upstream, supported several saltwater mangrove species, including Holly Mangrove and Fern Mangrove. A few dragonflies flitted about, along with **Radjah Shelducks** and **Leaden Flycatchers**.

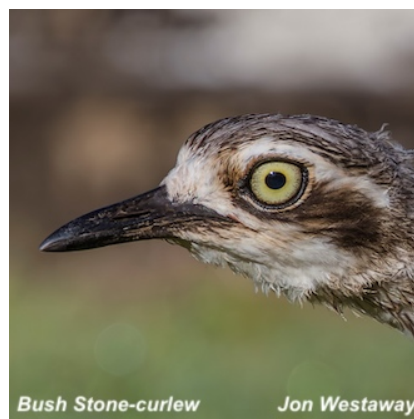
It had been a fine day, and with 40 species under our belt, we were more than satisfied.

Radjah Shelduck, Orange-footed Megapode, Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Spotted Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Australian White





Ibis, Eastern Cattle-Egret , Osprey, Brown Goshawk, Rainbow Bee-eater, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Green aka Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia



Cairns Botanic Gardens: Tuesday's Guided Bird Walk: Shane Kennedy

*This walk is free and open to all. It is part of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens program of activities.
7:30 Tuesday mornings. [Meet near the 'Friends' office, near the Conservatory.](#)*



Peeps - Jon Westaway



"stinky horns"

Shane Kennedy

What a glorious day - blue skies, comfy temps, low humidity... the locals definitely approved. And it was a locals kind of day too - no tourists in sight. Joining me were the regular crew: Sean, Graham, Gen, Scott, Peter O, Peter M, Jannette, Laurie, Kazu and Darren, plus Dennie and Nigel (Mt Sheridan), Dave (Kuranda), Clayton (Speewah), and a surprise halfway appearance from Brian V.

With no visitors to slow us down, we moved through the gardens pretty quickly - but I couldn't resist stopping at the "handkerchief" trees, which were looking fantastic. The coffee and cacao trees were fruiting as well, so plenty to point out. At the Aristolochia vine we paused for a big, juicy Cairns Birdwing caterpillar right by the gate. It gave us a great display of its "stinky horns" (*osmeterium*), then got back to munching.

After the pandanus/paperbark swamp, we reached the "north arm" of Freshwater Lake - as Peter calls it. I still prefer "west finger," what do you say Jannette?! Either way, it's a hotspot right now and well worth slowing down for. Straight away we spotted not one but two **Little Kingfishers**, with one chasing the other off. The remaining bird was a bit skittish, but we still managed a few good looks before it vanished into the swamp.



Little Kingfisher

Jon Westaway



Walking on and the lake opened up and we spotted movement down near the overflow. **Moriarty** - the large dumped domestic duck - took off like a lumbering Catalina, flew straight toward us, then veered past the pagoda to land. He's a heavy bird so it's not something we get to see every day!



The **Rainbow Bee-eaters** are back too, perching out in the open and darting after insects, flashing those beautiful burnished bronze wings. Worthy though they were, there was another target species that drew our attention. In a slow, slinking, crouched walk the **Black Bittern** crossed the peninsula and down to the reeds at the waters edge where it all but disappeared. But wait, there's more! After months of absence a **Pacific Black Duck** has appeared, and she's not alone. Five ducklings were taking little forays from her side, but when they got too far, they'd scurry back, helter skelter. Freshwater Lake is really delivering the goods at the moment.

As we headed toward Saltwater Lake, we did what birders do best - revisited old stories and checked the "owl trees." They bred and roosted here last year, so fingers crossed they might return. Not today, though. Darren spotted a **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** dart across our patch of sky while nearby, a recently **dumped chicken** (she'll need a name if she hangs around) was scratching around with **Australian Brush-turkeys**, and a lone **Radjah Shelduck** floated out on the water.





Spectacled Flying-Fox

Shane Kennedy

On the way to the Rainbow Gum, Sean pointed out a lone **Spectacled Flying-fox** roosting above the path. We thought that might wrap things up - but as we neared the café, Clayton stopped and scanned the sky. High above, an **Australian Hobby** was circling among **Australian Swiftlets** and **White-breasted Woodswallows**.

A pretty great bird to finish on!

At the White-cedar paddock we added **Peaceful Dove**, **Spotted Dove**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Green Oriole** and **Torresian Kingfisher**. A few usuals were missing, but as we crossed the footbridge Darren spotted a well-camouflaged gecko on the rail - later identified as a **Mourning Gecko**. In the water below were the usual **Green-backed Mullet**, **Archer Fish** and **Northern River Garfish**, plus schools of **Striped Scats**.



Australian Hobby

Peter Manins

44 species for the day: Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Red Junglefowl (Domestic type), Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Spotted Dove, Peaceful Dove, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Masked Lapwing, Australian White Ibis, Black Bittern, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Australian Hobby, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Fairy Gerygone, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird,

ECOFIESTA 21st June 2026 @ Munro Martin Parklands, Cairns

Ecofiesta is a one-day festival celebrating the natural environment and the practical steps we can all take to leave a lighter footprint on the planet. [Link to CRC Events page](#)

BIRDLIFE North Queensland has long had a stall at this annual event and we are looking to our local community for volunteers to engage with stall visitors.

ECOFIESTA			
Set up 8:30 - 10:00	Shane	Vishy	Denis Moeser
10:00 - 12:00			
12:00 - 14:00			
14:00 - 16:00			
Packing up 15:30 -	Shane		

As usual, Denis Moeser is setting up nestbox display on an additional table. So you can ask him any questions.

Entry is free so even if you are not volunteering grab your mates and come down to Munro Martin Parklands for a day of fun, friendship and eco-inspiration, popping in to say hello, of course .

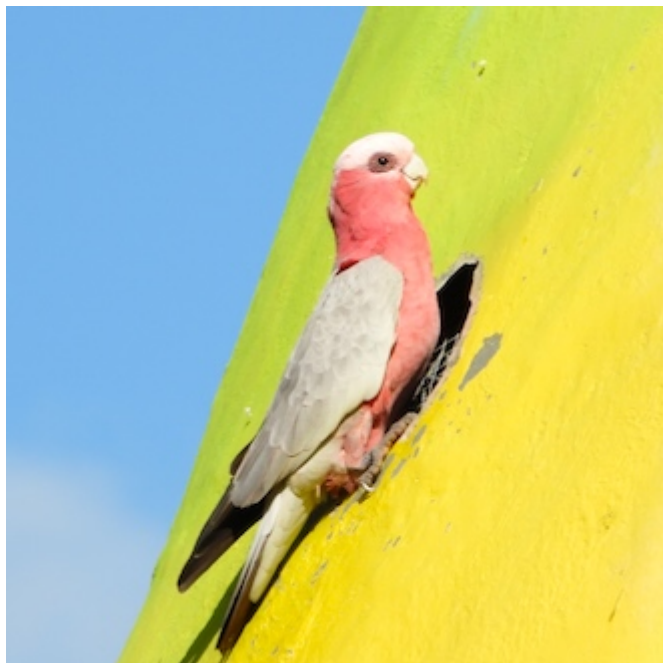
Please contact Mikey Kudo at kudo555@hotmail.co.jp

Rowdy's Ramblings:

Bird song and music: Birds of Paradise with lyrics -[Peter, Sue & Marc](#)

Cairns Birders' Archives are now available for a mere \$5 each including postage. The flash-drive contains more than **830 newsletters** and related articles going back some **27 years** and you can update it yourself as each new newsletter appears. Simply SMS your postal address to Rowdy B on 0406 068 295 and promise to buy him a beer someday. Remember, if you want to contribute to Cairns Birders funds, consider taking your cans and bottles to a recycling point near you and direct the funds to the account below. Alternatively, meet us on our **'first outing of the month' Centenary Lakes or Cattana Wetlands) and hand over your empties to Rowdy.** CAIRNS BIRDERS Containers for Change Account C10211514.

Letters:



Hello all,

In May 2024 traveling through Bowen I came across the recently situated 'Big Mango' along the beach rather than on the Highway.

I was educated then-and-there to find a pair of Galahs having almost completed a nesting hollow inside. Fibre glass seemed not to have been a real barrier to the exercise.

The mate sat on the very top of the mango watching progress.

They were the only Galahs that I observed in the region. Del. Richards

The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

Louise's Trivia Quiz from the BLNQ AGM - part 2

1. Who is the current Birdlife Australia CEO;
2. According to Ebird – how many species have been recorded at Hasties Swamp;
3. What species of bird is *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Answer to last week's quiz;

What Penguin Species breeds in Australia

Little Penguin

How many PRIMARY flight feathers does the average bird have on each wing; 10

What was Birdlife Australia 2025 Bird of the Year;

Tawny Frogmouth

Extra Extra! Read all about it!



In a flip from the norm, it is the female Eclectus Parrot that is the most colourful. Why is it so and why do random males bring her food? [Link](#)

Critically endangered Night Parrots detected in south-west Queensland! [LINK](#)

Norty Corner

