



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 | 10th May | 7:30 | Goldsborough Valley |
| | Meet this side of Upper Bridge - if you hit gravel, come back! LINK | | |
| Sunday | May 15th - 19th | | Camping at Artemis Station |
| | Bring cash, be fully self contained i.e. food, water, cooking, shelter.
There are 2 showers and 2 toilets. Road <u>could</u> be freshly graded.
Drive to conditions. No RSVP required, just turn up. | | |
| 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

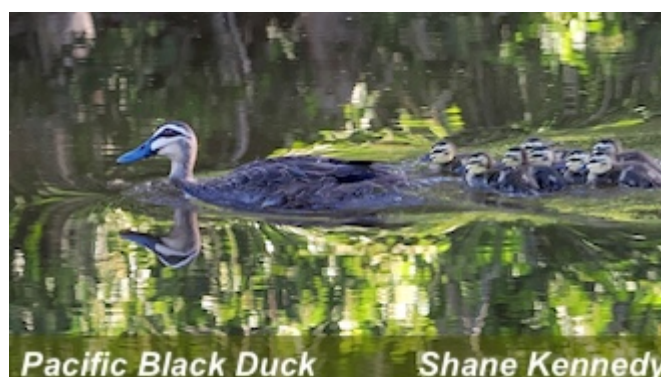


Looking west, we could still see the waning gibbous moon - bright and high - as we gathered. It slipped down behind the Osprey Tower, but by then Rowdy had already called us over to Freshwater Lake, where a **Black Bittern** was putting on a show. It lifted from the shore at our feet and flew out to the lilies, where it almost disappeared. Then it moved again, stretching that impossibly long neck before flying off.



We turned our attention to a **Pacific Black Duck** with her three ducklings, with **Moriarty** - the dumped domestic hybrid - not far away. Sean then drew our attention to a **Little Kingfisher** perched on a twig protruding from the water, only metres away. It sat in clear view, occasionally bobbing its head, before darting across to the other side of the lake.

A perfect ending to the beginning of our walk! We could easily have headed home with such special birds already under our belt, but the last of our 28 punters had just arrived, so it was best to continue.





Down at the overflow, the “sushi train” was standing room only. A **Little Heron**, living up to its name, was being bullied by a much larger juvenile **Nankeen Night Heron**. An adult Nankeen Night Heron was taking a break from feeding, resting up in the mangrove roots, while a **Great Egret** - with its black bill and greyish face showing it was coming out of breeding plumage - hung back, waiting for us to move on. We did, eventually, though Mikey and Scott returned later and found not only another **Little Kingfisher** but also an **Azure Kingfisher** lining up for a fresh shrimp meal.

The White Cedar hosted a single **White-throated Honeyeater** in clear view. It remained still, perhaps sunning itself after days of soft rain. We also saw **Green (Yellow) Orioles** doing the same. Meanwhile, the rain had brought grubs and worms to the surface, and a dozen **Australian White Ibis** were busy on the paddock, taking full advantage.

Freshwater Lake had more to offer. A battalion of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** filled the air above, and we discovered another family of **Pacific Black Ducks**. These days-old ducklings - eight in total - paddled furiously to keep up with their mother as she led them away from danger: this jostling group of birders.



Down at *Lerp Lane*, Sean pointed out a **Sacred Kingfisher** - a tough one to spot. He did well to pick it up. Nearby were **Yellow Honeyeaters**, **Magpie-larks**, and **Leaden Flycatchers**. A male **Mistletoebird** flitted between ant-plants overhead, flashing his red undies and vest, and a **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** kept us occupied for a while.



White-throated Honeyeater Miles Michaud



Sacred Kingfisher Michael McMaster

As we returned to our starting point, I was discussing the “non-bird of the day” with a few others when Michael called it: **Australasian Figbird**. It would have been incomplete if we hadn’t ended up with that on the list!

49 species for the morning; Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Moriarty the Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Peaceful Dove, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Sahul Brush Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Australasian Darter, Australian White Ibis, Black Bittern, Nankeen Night Heron, Little Heron, Great Egret, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Azure Kingfisher, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Green aka 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



Sean Han

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.](#)*



We are getting to that time of the year, which reminds me of why we live here. Blue skies, with a few clouds perhaps; gone is the humidity and high temperatures, and the birds are jumping!

There was some discussion today about the growing popularity of this walk. It's the 18th week of the year, and so far we've had 388 people attending, with 300 of those returning locals, plus 38 from interstate and 50 from overseas. We must be doing something right!



Joining me today were locals Sean, Denis, Scott, Leah, Laurie, Lois, Michael, Joanna, Peter M, Jon, Chris, Dave, Kazu, Roy, Mary, Dianne, Delene, Bruce, Robert, Dennie, and Nigel. Ursula and Susan were visiting from Melbourne, Jia and Wei from China, and Ineke and Gebhard from Germany.

We made our way towards the exit. It was slow going because there is a lot to see in the Gardens: handkerchief trees, coffee and cacao trees in fruit, and my favourite, the African Sausage tree! We could not locate a caterpillar on the vine, but nearby we had a **chrysalis of the Cairns Birdwing Butterfly** on display.



We made it through the swamp with little more than Orange-footed Scrubfowl and Brush-turkeys for our viewing, but once at the '*Western Finger*,' we quickly latched on to one of our targets, the **Little Kingfisher**. This flew back and forth between a couple of perches, giving us all a good view. Further on, we had an **Australian Darter** and **Great Egret** on the peninsula. Above, there was quite a bit of activity, including **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, **Green Oriole**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Varied Triller**, and a couple of **Spectacled Monarchs**.



We'd been scouring the shoreline for our other target, the resident **Black Bittern**. It was spotted as it flew to the island and quickly disappeared. We walked on and could see it on the other side of the island, but it was challenging. Next minute, it flew out to a clump of water lilies and then posed nicely. This bird is spoiling us and we took full advantage.

The Freshwater Lake overflow, the '*sushi train*,' was occupied by a couple of **Nankeen Night Heron** and **Little Heron**. There was an **Azure Kingfisher** nearby too. We heard it but a flash of blue was the best we were going to get.

Lerp Lane was quiet. A **Little Bronze-cuckoo** was giving its alternative *trrrill* call. Sean eventually got eyes on it, but it wasn't cooperating. A pair of **Double-eyed Fig-parrots** spent some time investigating a potential nest site over Lily Creek, and then they moved closer, though they were harder to see in the leafy canopy!



Hugging Lily Creek, we played leap-frog with a pair of **Sacred Kingfishers**. **Australian White Ibis**, **Masked Lapwings**, and **Bush Stone-curlews** were about too, but we had dilly-dallied on the big items earlier, so it was time to make for the café, where we could indulge and debrief.



Somewhere in that debrief we added another bird to the list pushing it up to 50 species. Happy with that! Radjah Shelduck, Moriarty the Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Spotted Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Australasian Darter, Australian White Ibis, Black Bittern, Nankeen Night Heron, Little Heron, Great Egret, Osprey, Grey Goshawk, Rainbow Bee-eater, Azure Kingfisher, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Australian Spectacled Monarch, Magpie-lark, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia

Centenary Lakes the other evening.

Graceful frogs were so vocal at many places.



last 15 years. *These are 'fishing bats', which use echo location to detect ripples and then rake the surface with those large feet to catch their aquatic prey. Editor*

We also noticed that a good number of Large-footed Myotis were flying over the Saltwater Lake. Probably the most numbers I have seen in the

If you're an armchair traveller, what do you imagine when you think of Namibia - lots of sand dunes and wide, dry, open spaces covering huge distances and, perhaps, scattered with roaming elephants and giraffes? Or am I just projecting my faulty memories of long ago secondary school geography lessons taught by that bore-in-chief Mr Ding-dong (aka Boozy) Bell.



Shaft-tailed Whydah

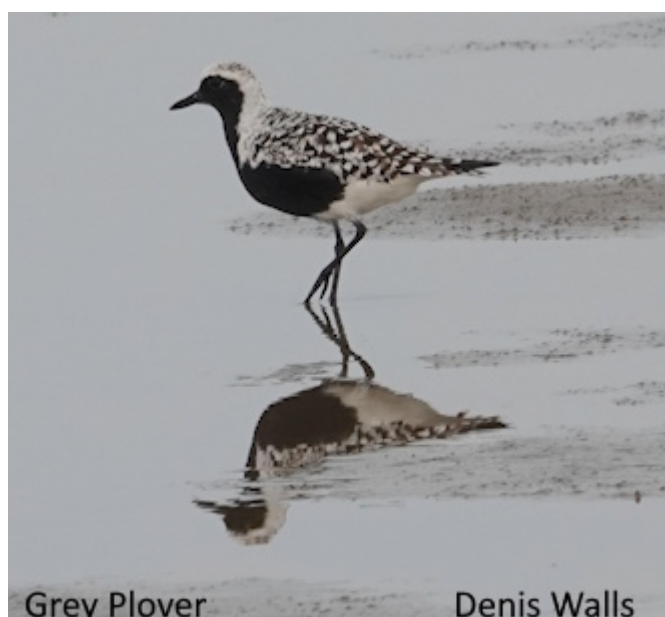
Denis Walls



Mountain Chat/Wheatear

Denis Walls

Actually, most of it is still pretty accurate but Ding-dong's teaching omitted to mention the staggeringly beautiful mountains, the rock paintings and ancient petroglyphs, AND the burgeoning greenery as a result of diluvian rains. Noah and his Ark would have fitted in well to the April 2026 Namibian waterscape. Unfortunately, all the big cats were hiding in the tall grasses or satisfying their thirst at waterholes where there wasn't a conga line of rapid-fire cameras taking snaps without feline consent!



Grey Plover

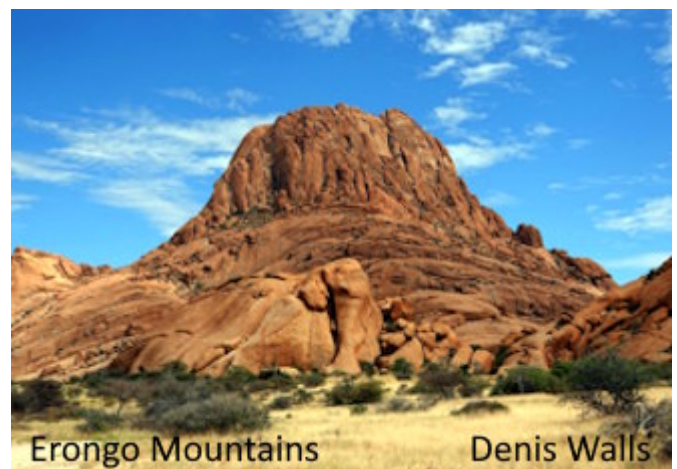
Denis Walls

Swakopmund, in the Skeleton Coast, is Namibia's coastal getaway and renowned for its huge colonies of **Cape, Bank and Crowned Cormorants** - the Cape Cormorants, in particular, numbering in their thousands - as well as pelicans and flamingoes. **Grey Plovers** were plentiful and still dressed in their breeding plumage. Because we don't often see shorebirds in their pomp in the Cairns region, it's easy to forget just how seasonally stunning they are. **Gray's Lark** and **Tractrac Chat** were our two main targets and, while I am exceedingly fond of larks and chats, most will not win any photographic competitions which shows how shallow I am by not

showing them in this article! Space limits and all that. But they were damned hard to find, the Gray's especially.



One rare chat photo is enough per article and the **Herero Chat** has been selected. This decision is based on degree of difficulty and location. How many boulders did we trip over and how close



were we to running out of water or getting lost? We eventually tracked it down close to the astounding Spitzkoppe (the African Matterhorn) which are amazing granite outcrops reminiscent of Kata Tjuta (the Olgas). So, when you look at the picture of the Herero I want you to imagine the effort that went into getting that snap. And what a feeling it was to get such good, if distant, views of this highly sought after bird. Definitely one for the listers and bedwetters! On the subject of

excitement, on returning to the car we heard a scuttle in the bushes and one of the Small Five sneaked an appearance - the **Elephant Shrew**. It's a lovely little critter which we added to sightings of Leopard Tortoise, Buffalo Weaver and Antlion. The fifth member of the club, the Rhinoceros Beetle, was absent despite rainy, favourable weather conditions.

The Erongo Mountains were next with **Hartlaub's Spurfowl** the must see. This is the strangest of strange spurfowls that leads a monogamous life with its mate on steep mountain gullies. They form a duet,

shortly after dawn, making a call like a squeeze bag, which is the best way to track them down. We were on the point of giving up when, with breakfast beckoning, a pair bagpiped their entrance on to the rocks high above. It's amazing how often you get to see a rare bird at the last minute, but rarely one playing Scotland's national instrument.



Pale-chanting Goshawk / Denis Wall



Flap-necked Chameleon DW

Twice, en route, we stopped to remove ambling **Flap-neck Chameleons** from dusty death. This is one of only three species of chameleon found in Namibia. Periodically a korhaan would appear close to the road, peering around with its head slightly elevated checking out the terrain. These small bustards, of which we saw five different species, are fynbos (scrubland) and grassland specialists whose males put on the most theatrical of mating performances jumping up in the air with their piping or popping calls and then plummeting to earth, giving them the local nickname, suicide birds. This photographed pair of **Ruppell's Korhaan** got very excited, chikking and popping to the heavens, mouths agape.

On we went along endless dusty roads. Just as I was getting the elderly gentleman sleepy nods, Andrew would screech to a halt, chuck a uey and stop in front of a raptor. Miraculously, some didn't fly off straightaway which is the norm. **Pale Chanting Goshawks** were obliging and, as well as being a beautiful bird, isn't it a lovely name? **Pygmy Falcon** was another. I'm not going to list all of the amazing raptors that we saw. Aficionados can ask me later. Suffice to say that BIFFERS (Birds In Flight experts) with better cameras than me would have had a field day.



Pygmy Falcon / Denis Wall



Our next destination was Khorixas in Damaraland and the famous Namibian **Desert Elephants**, savannah elephants that have adapted to the harsh climatic conditions of the region. We eventually found both family groups which must have been relishing the surprisingly verdant conditions. I can't end this piece without mentioning ground squirrels. Everyone knows about Meerkats but **South African Ground Squirrels** must be a serious competitor for the stand up trophy. We couldn't get enough of their antics.



Next week Etosha National Park.

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	Peter Manins		
12:00 - 14:00	Scott		
14:00 - 16:00	Denis Walls		
Packing up 15:30 -	Denis Walls	Shane	

As usual, Denis Moeser is setting up a 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: Chickens today and Feathers tomorrow - [Carmen McRae](#)

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:

*Good morning Team,
My computer problems are less bad (but not really good yet). At least I can enjoy the birding bulletin. Loved Scott's Aust swiftlet & Shane's Burmese hanky!
Will catch you at the Chinese pavilion.
Jeanette.*

Dear team
I'm wondering how to be added to this newsletter? I'm in the early days of learning more and think this would really help.
Thanks in advance. Best, Lisa
Welcome, we've added you to the mailing list

The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

Louise's Trivia Quiz from the BLNQ AGM - part 4

1. What food source do Glossy Black-Cockatoos predominately eat;
2. Excluding Catbirds How many species of Australian Bowerbirds are there;
3. How tall is a female Plains Wanderer;

Answer to last week's quiz;

How fast can an Emu run; 50 km/h

How long is the bill on a Latham's Snipe; 65 - 75mm

Which White-tailed Black-Cockatoo has the longest bill – Baudin's or Carnaby's; Baudin's

Why do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in our driveways and put our useless junk in the garage?

Extra Extra! Read all about it!

[Birds Queensland](#)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Birding and Mental Wellbeing: How does birding shape your sense of restoration and mental wellbeing? Researchers from The University of Queensland would love to hear from you.

About this study: Researchers at The University of Queensland are exploring how birding contributes to mental wellbeing, including feelings of relaxation, mental clarity, and freedom. Researchers are interested in birders of all levels, from casual backyard observers to committed enthusiasts!

What's involved? Complete a short anonymous online survey about your birding habits, motivations, and mental wellbeing. No identifying information is collected.

 DURATION 10-15 minutes

 WHO CAN PARTICIPATE? Australian adults (18+) who engage in birding at any level

 FORMAT Anonymous online questionnaire

Interested? Click the following link to take the survey:

<https://uniofqueensland.syd1.qualtrics.com/.../SV...> (Look for a blue arrow, bottom right to start)

Norty Corner

