



THE CAIRNS FROGMOUTH

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

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 28th June	8:00 Winfield Park, Malanda LINK
Sunday 5th July	7:30 Centenary Lakes
Thursday 9th July	Birdlife talk on Bird Flu - Malanda - LINK
Cairns Birders' Festival	Friday 28th August - Saturday 5th September 30th August - Michaelmas Cay - book now - see below 1st September - Daintree evening cruise - book now - see below 2nd September - Daintree morning cruise - book now - see below
Starry starry night	12 September - Tablelands - more info to come ...
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](#)

Art by Yorz Trooley



With Shane and Sean on other duties this week, Daniel stepped in to guide and scribe for our Sunday morning outing to Behana Gorge. Twenty-four birders gathered on a cool, slightly damp morning, joined by visitors Emily and Jason from Townsville.

Mist drifted down the mountainsides as we assembled near the start of the gorge road. A flock of **White-breasted Woodswallows** huddled together in a roadside tree, sheltering from the chill. The birding started well, with 21 species recorded before we had even left the meeting point.



Eden Gray-Spence



Aust'n Reed Warbler Miles Michaud

A calling pair of **Australian Reed Warblers** in the mature sugar cane delighted the group, with one bird eventually climbing onto the seeding plumes to give unusually good views of a species more often heard than seen. **Great White Egrets** drifted overhead, a **Black-shouldered Kite** quartered the cane fields, and a small flock of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** hawked insects nearby.

If last week's outing belonged to the kingfishers, this week's honours went to the honeyeaters. Nine species were observed during the morning, beginning with a busy flowering *Calliandra* tree that attracted **Cryptic**, **Brown**, **Yellow** and **White-throated Honeyeaters**. A pair of **Helmeted Friarbirds** provided excellent photographic opportunities, while a hovering **Nankeen Kestrel** added an early highlight.



Pale-yellow Robin

Miles Michaud

After half an hour, the convoy moved to the gorge carpark. **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were feeding noisily in the tall trees, while a variety of honeyeaters, including **Cryptic**, **Yellow-spotted**, **White-throated**, **Dusky** and **Macleay's**, were either seen or heard. Miles located a **Bridled Honeyeater** through her scope, a species not often recorded in the area, while our youngest member, Alexander, spotted a brilliant **Scarlet Honeyeater**. Daniel also picked up the call of a **White-eared Monarch** from the entrance road.

Unfortunately, there were no Noisy Pittas to be seen or heard during the morning, although several members stayed on afterwards in the hope of finding one.

The normally productive trees near the chlorination plant proved surprisingly quiet, and we continued along the service road. Initially bird activity was subdued, but after fifteen minutes the rainforest began to come alive. Mixed feeding flocks contained **Large-billed Gerygones**, **Little Shrikethrushes**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbills** and **Eastern Spectacled Monarchs**. Dominic spotted a female-form **Victoria's Riflebird** high in the canopy, while **Silvereyes** moved through the treetops and a **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** called nearby.

The return walk added **Rufous Fantails**, a **Pale-yellow Robin**, **Mistletoebirds** and a **Pacific Emerald Dove**. **Pied Monarchs** had remained elusive all morning until Dominic found one high above the carpark, providing a fitting final species for the day.

The rain held off, the rainforest was cool and inviting, and the group enjoyed another congenial morning in the field. By the end of the outing, a very respectable 56 species had been recorded - assuming Daniel managed to keep up with them all!

Australian Brushturkey, Australian Reed Warbler, Australian Rufous Fantail, Australian Spectacled Monarch (Eastern), Australian Swiftlet, Bar-shouldered Dove, Black Butcherbird, Black-shouldered Kite, Bridled Honeyeater,



Dusky Honeyeater

Eden Gray-Spence

Brown Honeyeater, Common Myna], Cryptic Honeyeater, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Forest Kingfisher, Great Egret, Grey Fantail, Grey Whistler, Helmeted Friarbird, House Sparrow, Large-billed Scrubwren, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Little Shrikethrush (Rufous), Macleay's Honeyeater, Magpie-Lark, Masked Lapwing, Mistletoebird, Nankeen Kestrel, Orange-footed Megapode, Pacific Emerald Dove, Pale-yellow Robin, Peaceful Dove, Pied Monarch, Rainbow Bee-eater, Rainbow Lorikeet, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Munia, Scarlet Honeyeater, Silvereye, Spangled Drongo, Spotted Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Varied Triller, Victoria's Riflebird, Welcome Swallow, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, White-breasted Woodswallow, White-eared Monarch, White-throated Honeyeater, Willie Wagtail, Wompoo Fruit-dove, Yellow Honeyeater, Yellow Oriole, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater.

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.](#)

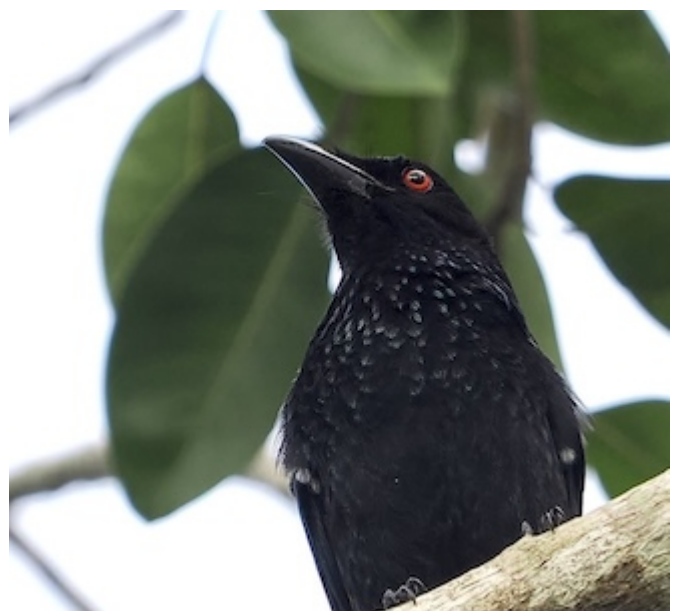


Sean and I arrived to find a nice little intimate group waiting for the bird walk. By the time we'd done our introductions the number had doubled, and then doubled again with 32 at last count. This included 9 from interstate and one from Portugal. We love the fact that this free service is popular for visitors but the true sign of success is the number of repeat visits and today, for example, 1/3 of attendees were visitors, 1/3 were regulars and the other 1/3 were locals, most of whom have been before!

We made our way to an exit, passing the fruiting coffee and cacao trees and walking under the African Sausage Tree (*Kigelia africana*). All three of these plants take me back to a time and place of exotic adventures in East Africa where I toured and

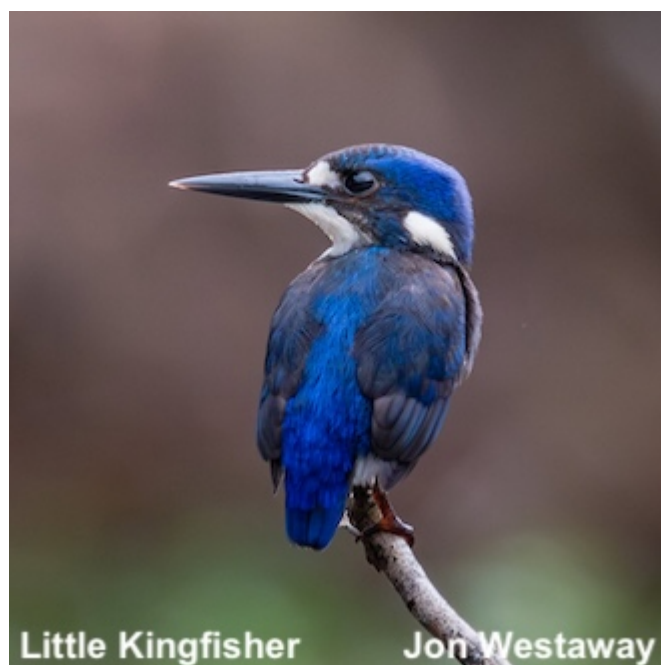
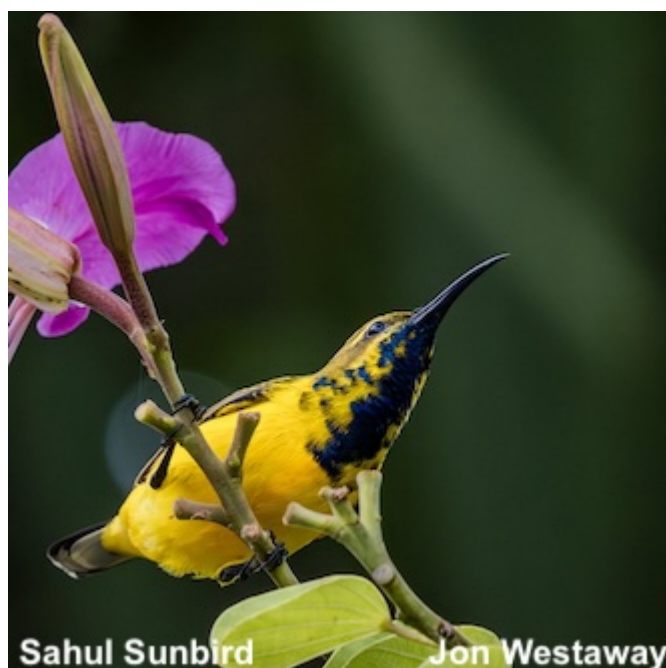
guided and lived in mud huts in remote places. I'm so looking forward to showing some of you around Tanzania this October.

We made our way along the boardwalk through the paperbark and pandanus swamp. Much of the water has dried up now and there is evidence of pigs snouting their way through the soil. One walks through these rich habitats on the verge of excitement. We've had some wonderful encounters here but mostly the dense vegetation is all we get to see. Today was no different but we did hear the wonderful chorus of **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** as they belted out their bawdy ballads.



Spangled Drongo Shane Kennedy

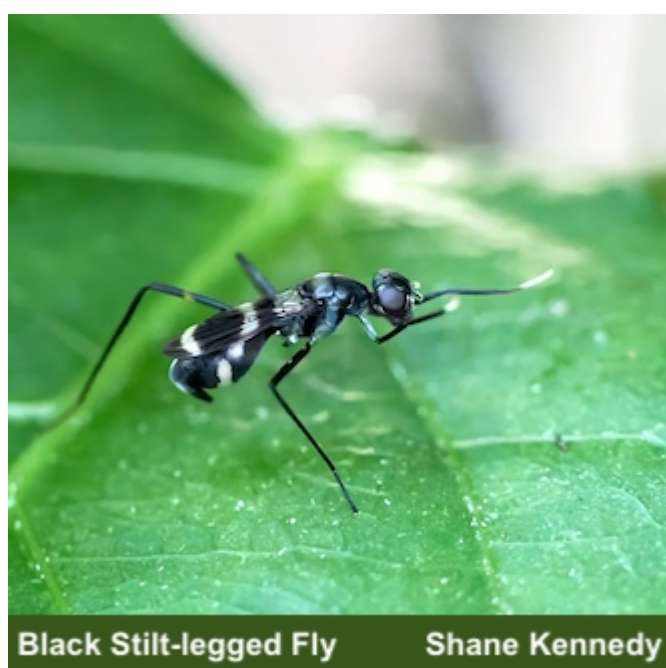
We emerged on the western finger of Freshwater Lake. We slowed down, scouring the reedy bank and wispy branches as we crept ahead. It paid off. I spotted a **Little Kingfisher** perched above the water. As our conga line bunched up, it dove into the water and then off to another branch. We spent a bit of time with this little gem of a bird. This is one of our target species at this time of the year.



Freshwater Lake was quite good. **Moriarty** (the dumped domestic duck) wagging its tail feathers and the young **Pacific Black Ducks** were head down, tails up, as they fed. The **Osprey** was on the nest, **Rainbow Bee-eaters** and **Welcome Swallows** were about, and the flowering Bauhinia was throwing a nectar party for the **Sahul Sunbirds**. A large flock of pigeons flew over, "Topknots" went the shout ... cancel that, **Rock Doves**!

One of the Melaleucas was busy, Sean spotted a **Sahul Cicadabird**, seemingly being harassed by **Helmeted Friarbirds** and **Yellow Honeyeaters**. It was a frenzy of activity and I wonder now, in hindsight, if there wasn't a little Tree Snake up there.

Jake spotted a **Little Heron** in the mangroves. It scrambled over the roots and disappeared leaving me free to do my little spiel about the wondrous Ant Plant. Nearby was a **Black Stilt-legged Fly**, an interesting critter that mimics wasps with their narrow body and striped wings. Their larvae feed on decaying vegetation.



Lerp lane was kind, giving us great views of the **Green Oriole** and **Spangled Drongo** and then Bronwyn, I think it was, pointed out a **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot**. There were 4 as it turned out and I think we all got decent views, but they weren't exactly out on a branch doing the can can!



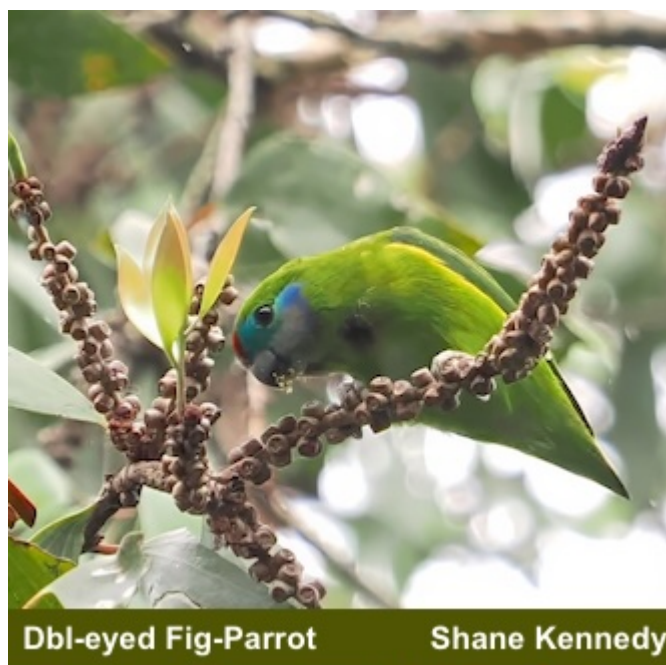
Green Oriole

Peter Manins



Rainbow Lorikeet

Jon Westaway



DbI-eyed Fig-Parrot

Shane Kennedy

39 species for the day, and a nice little gathering over coffee to finish it off.

Magpie Goose, Pacific Black Duck, Moriarty - the Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Masked Lapwing, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Little Heron, Great Egret, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Green aka Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird

Festival: Daintree River Boatman 1st AND 2nd September

Daintree River Boatman

- 1st September 4pm evening cruise - 9 people (Fully Booked - 0 on waitlist)
- 2nd September 7am dawn cruise - 9 people (Fully Booked - 0 on waitlist)
- **Book Direct - text or email - 0417 651 929 - <https://www.daintreerivertours.com.au/>**
- Cairns Birders special price of \$60/person is extended to all other cruises during the festival, just mention "Cairns Birders Festival" when booking.

Festival: Michaelmas Cay Cruise Sunday 30th August

Seastar is hosting another Birders Only Michaelmas Cay cruise. Must book and pay before Sunday, July 26. As we cater for a small group of 36 passengers we do recommend booking ahead to save disappointment. (17 of 36 already booked)

Full Day at Michaelmas - Included in your day is:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| · Unlimited island time | Glass Bottom boat tour |
| · Island circumnavigation depends on weather and tides. | Snorkel equipment |
| · Morning and afternoon tea, Lunch | Guided snorkel tour |

All for the special price of \$228 per person.

We are seeking expressions of interest of any who would like to travel. To book please phone us with payment by Visa or MasterCard on (07) 4041 6218.

We require Full Names, Email Address and phone number of all passengers.

Locals on the loose New Zealand Pelagic Daniel Winters-McAppion

In early June, I travelled to Kaikōura on New Zealand's South Island to take part in my first pelagic birding trip. It proved to be one of the most memorable birding experiences I have had.

Kaikōura is renowned among birders for its exceptional pelagic opportunities. Just offshore, the seabed drops dramatically to depths exceeding 1,000 metres, bringing nutrient-rich waters close to the coast. This creates ideal feeding conditions for a remarkable variety of seabirds, allowing visitors to encounter species that, elsewhere in the world, may require many hours of travel to reach.

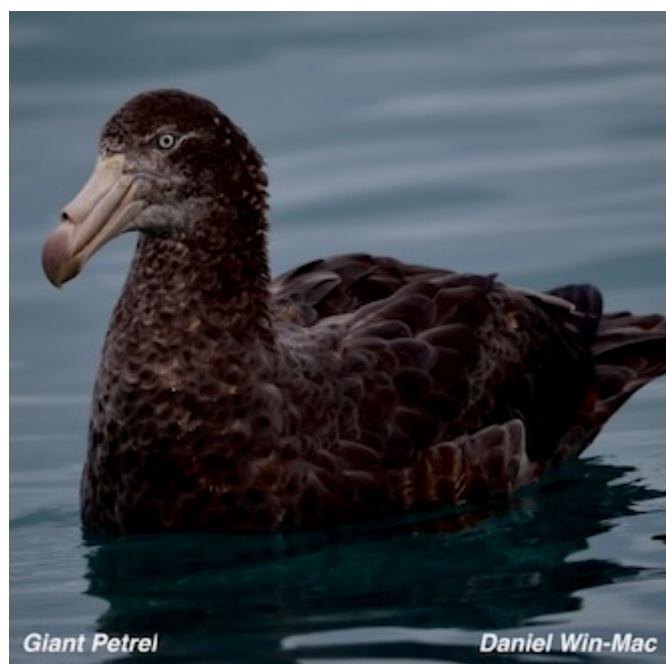


I joined a tour operated by *Albatross Encounter*, which takes small groups into the Pacific Ocean aboard a purpose-built vessel. With a maximum of just 12 passengers, everyone has ample space for observation and photography. The deep-water feeding grounds are only 15–20 minutes from shore, and the entire excursion lasts around two and a half hours.

Conditions on the day were excellent, with a moderate swell, little wind and no rough seas. These calm conditions provided outstanding opportunities to observe and photograph birds both on the water and in flight, often at surprisingly close range.

Although the skipper deployed a small amount of chum to attract seabirds, I noticed a large concentration of birds feeding around a pair of sea lions that appeared to be hunting fish and squid nearby.

During the trip I recorded 12 bird species, many of them listed as threatened or endangered. The most numerous were Cape (Pintado) Petrels, including both the Snares and Antarctic subspecies. The undisputed stars of the voyage, however, were the albatrosses.



The presence of several Antipodean Albatrosses was particularly impressive. Formerly regarded as part of the Wandering Albatross complex, these immense birds possess the largest wingspans in the avian world. They dominated the feeding activity, frequently displacing smaller birds and engaging in noisy disputes with one another.

The most common albatross species was the Shy Albatross, known in New Zealand as the White-capped Albatross. Their distinctive dark eye markings made them easy to identify. We were also treated to views of Northern Royal Albatrosses and Black-browed Albatrosses, known locally as Mollymawks.

Other highlights included Giant Petrels (sadly featuring in many news reports about bird flu over the past week), whose size and power were immediately apparent as they quickly consumed the chum and asserted themselves among the feeding flock. Most other species gave them plenty of room.

Whenever the vessel paused, Red-billed Gulls—the New Zealand equivalent of our Silver Gull—quickly gathered around us, accompanied by numerous Kelp Gulls. We were also fortunate to encounter an endemic and endangered Black-fronted Tern and a Westland Petrel, another threatened New Zealand endemic. Several Short-tailed Shearwaters, familiar to Australian birders, rounded out the day's sightings.

For me, this pelagic trip ranks among my most memorable birding experiences, alongside watching displaying Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise in Papua New Guinea and witnessing the evening arrival of thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters at Port Fairy.



Cape (Pintado) Petrel

Daniel Win-Mac

With direct flights between Cairns and Christchurch, Kaikōura is surprisingly accessible. The town lies only a scenic two-and-a-half-hour drive north of Christchurch, with plenty of birding opportunities along the way. I also found accommodation and dining costs generally lower than in Australia. Fuel prices were higher, but this was easily offset by hiring an electric vehicle, with charging stations readily available throughout New Zealand.

For anyone with an interest in seabirds, I can highly recommend a pelagic excursion from Kaikōura. Few places in the world offer such easy access to some of the ocean's most spectacular birds.

Rowdy's Ramblings:

Bird song and music: [The Moody Blues- Voices in the Sky](#)

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:

Hi Shane

Congratulations on your website! I marvel at the variety and quality of the photos and hope that I will be able to join your group one day... Meanwhile, I'll be setting up my camera for the huge 250th celebration of USA on July 4th. Maybe I'll be lucky with some birds too ... Diana

Hi, Yep, the website looks good and the newsletter link from the email and via the newsletter both work. Cheers, Chris Chafer

Hi, Certainly worked seamlessly for me. Hope the change is helpful at your end (and maybe lowers the workload at least a little?) Always appreciate the Cairns Frogmouth every week. Cheers, Mal

Good work Shane and others involved. It all looks good and works well - all links work. How long will the Newsletter be available on the Web browser for; eg, days, weeks, months, years. Louise **ED: We hope to store about 12 months worth of newsletters at a time**

Just previewed you new Frogmouth delivery. Exceptional work. Congratulations to the team who do such a wonderful job. Regards Paula Bowler

Well done! The new format opened easily, looks crisp and non-glitchy and easy to navigate if wanting a specific section. Super exciting changes. Smiles from Joanna

Hello Cairnsbirders,

Thank you for continuing to send me the group's newsletters. Even though other non-birding commitments keep me from attending many outings, I enjoy reading the accounts. And now you have a website! Great! Cheers, Dave O'Brien

News of the avian H5 virus will have sent a shiver through all who have fondness and admiration for wild creatures. To offer a cheering bit of counterpoint, this year our portion of Mt Molloy is home to quite a few Northern Fantails. There are two quite near our home off Fraser Rd, two across Fraser Rd on Babbler Hill, and at least one in Tall Gums, the patch of Forest Redgum trees near the Molloy Labyrinth.

This happy number of Northern Fantails contrasts with some recent years when only Tall Gums may have had a single bird, and none closer to home.

Rupert Russell



H5 Bird Flu is in Australia

I guess it was inevitable that this day would come. Interested parties including the Federal Government have been preparing for the last couple of years. The Cairns Frogmouth has mentioned it several times, the latest being just weeks ago in issue 2026#22, reminding us to;

If you find a sick or dead bird that you suspect could have Avian Influenza (H5N1), remember to:

- **AVOID** contact with sick or dead wildlife and their environment. Do not touch, move or approach the bird, and do not allow pets to touch or eat sick or dead wildlife.
- **RECORD** what you see, the location the animal was found, and take photos or video (if possible) without approaching the bird.
- **REPORT** any unusual illness or death in wild birds and other wildlife immediately via the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or 13 25 23.

Taken from Birdlife - [LINK](#)

Hi Denis and others,

Very worrying news and one that could be tragic for Australian birdlife and more. I note that the BirdLife Australia statement rightly emphasizes the concern and also highlights their past calls for action. I am disappointed that the statement says nothing about the Australian Government's actual work on preparedness (a program of action over the past two years). An allocation of \$100 million has been made and significant expenditure has occurred to support preparedness across a large number of areas. The Department of the Environment announced in April a budget of \$35.9 million within that department alone. There is a section of their website that covers this issue (and has been for a while). It is great that BLA has pressed for this to happen and I for one am pleased there are already funds being used to try and improve preparedness. This is an occasion to be grateful that a Government might listen and act.

Closer to home, not without a remarkable sense of timing, the next BLNQ Talk in Malanda is on July 9th and the title is: "Bird movements and the ecology of avian influenza in Australia". Dr David Roshier (one of our members and an international expert of waterfowl movements) will be presenting the talk based on a lot of work undertaken to better understand Australian waterfowl movements. I will send Renee a brief description and a couple of photos to please promote the talk on our various mechanisms. I suspect interest in this talk will be high.

Best wishes, Peter Valentine

Good afternoon,

H5 bird flu has been confirmed in 2 migratory wild birds found on the south coast of Western Australia. The WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has activated its emergency arrangements.

A key priority is to undertake surveillance to determine the extent of infection in wildlife. There have been no detections in poultry and there is no evidence of other species mortalities at this time.

Advice for Queensland local governments

Please see attached:

- Updated local government fact sheet about H5 bird flu
- First nations posters (including Creole translated poster).

Links for more information:

- [Avian influenza](#) – Biosecurity Queensland
- [Avian influenza \(bird flu\)](#) – Australian Government
- [H5 bird flu resource centre](#) – Wildlife Health Australia

Specific information about bird flu in wildlife and human safety:

- [H5 bird flu – public guidelines for carcass management](#) - Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- [Working with bird and bat droppings](#) - Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
- [National guidelines for avian influenza: protecting people who work with birds and wildlife](#)
- [Risk mitigation toolbox for wildlife managers](#) - Wildlife Health Australia
- [Avian influenza in humans \(bird flu\)](#) - Queensland Health
- [Understanding avian influenza in the workplace](#) - Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Advice for general public

- **AVOID** contact with sick or dead wild birds or wildlife and their environment. Do not touch or collect sick or dead wild birds or wildlife.
- **RECORD** what you see. If safe, record information on the number of dead birds/animals, species, location, date and time.
- **REPORT** sick or dead wild birds to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 (24/7) or 13 25 23.

Actions for bird and livestock owners

Early detection of H5 bird flu is paramount. Unusual signs and mass deaths of livestock or wildlife should be reported immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 (24/7) or 13 25 23.

Signs of bird flu include:

- sudden death
- lack of coordination, tremors, swimming in circles
- twisted necks or other unusual posture
- inability to stand or fly
- diarrhoea
- difficulty breathing, coughing or sneezing
- swelling around the head, neck and eyes
- cloudiness or change in colour of the eyes.

Please visit birdflu.gov.au for the latest information on the WA incident.

KEEP WATCH FOR BIRD FLU

AVOID!



🕒 Time
📅 Date
📍 Location

RECORD!



REPORT!



🕒 Time
📅 Date
📍 Location



**Call the Emergency Animal
Disease Hotline on: 1800 675 888**

Special outing . . . Starry Starry Night

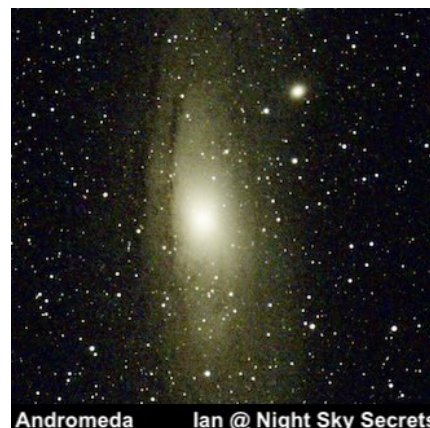
12 September 2026

SPECIAL OUTING: **Starry Starry Night** limited to 14
12 September - up on the Tablelands (near Kay Rd)

4 places left

Includes

- an evening meal,
- discussion about the night sky with access to a telescope,
- then stories around the campfire.
- There is a campground nearby



Andromeda Ian @ Night Sky Secrets

Doug is organising this to celebrate Carolyn's birthday and thought, rather than joining a group of 12 randoms, wouldn't be nice to do it with folk he knows.

So if you want to help Doug and Carolyn celebrate then book here [STARRY STARRY NIGHT](#) and use the discount code **FNQastro** for 20% off. This is a regular NightSky event but this date is set aside just for us birders. - limited to 12 people.

Bargain Birding at Bamaga - the Tip of Cape York Mid- March 2027

This is a once in a lifetime, AT COST, fly in, fly out, 5 day safari with a chance to see the wet season specials and other Cape York residents including [Palm Cockatoo](#) (check the link), Papuan Pitta, Eclectus Parrot, Trumpet Manucode, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Green-backed Honeyeater, Frill-necked Monarch ... and the list goes on.

Plus a selfie opportunity at the TIP.

We will be accompanied by 2 professional Cape York specialists, Rob and Doug, who will donate their time for our cause!

Those going would pay for airfares, accommodation, shared vehicle hire and food.

Send in your expressions of interest!



Palm Cockatoo Shane Kennedy

Which of these is the
Mangrove Honeyeater?



A



B

Last week's quiz:

A) Western Yellow Robin

B) Eastern Yellow Robin



A



B

Norty Corner

