



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 26th July	8:00	Lake Barrine, then Thomas Rd, then Hasties Swamp Meet at Lake Barrine.
Sunday 2nd August	7:30	Cattana Wetlands
Cairns Birders' Festival	Friday 28th August - Saturday 5th September 30th August - Michaelmas Cay - book now - see below 1st September - Daintree evening cruise - FULL 2nd September - Daintree morning cruise - FULL	
Starry starry night	12 September - Tablelands - see below for details	
Cairns Birders' Epic Excursion	October 2026 TANZANIA	FULL

ONLINE SHOP

Cairns Birders merchandise

Look 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



We've been meaning to "do" Little Mulgrave for some time now and with our last minute cancellation of the Yorkeys' walk this seemed like as good a time as any. It's always been pretty good, but there's also an additional step to organise as we need to seek permission to access a couple of key sites. I got onto Mary C, and at short notice she was able to get the green light.

What would it be like? Well, the omens were good. There was a spectacular sunrise over the Yarrabah Range with that jagged horizon lit from behind and fingers of light shooting up to the heavens. We parked up on the banks of the Mulgrave River, and on the other side of the road was a field of Sunflowers enjoying the first rays. We gathered there in the sun, hands in pockets and shoulders hunched against the cold. We may be tough birders up here in the north, but we are a bit wimpish when it comes to cold weather haha.

"**Topknot Pigeons!**" I called, "up in the canopy of that Quandong."



In accordance with *Murphy's Law of Birding*, they promptly exited, stage left! But our hands were out of our pockets now, and our senses heightened as we turned our attention towards the bank of trees across the road. There was movement, and bird calls, and we were starting to get glimpses of some good birds including;

Grey whistler, Silvereyes, Metallic Starlings, Green Orioles, Macleay's Honeyeater Northern and Rufous Fantail.

Mary C arrived during this period and mentioned she had a tree *chockers* with **Topknot Pigeons**, but we'd have to hurry as they'd be off as soon as they'd warmed up. Mary's place is key site number 2, and I hadn't asked if we could come so this was a pleasant surprise. Equally surprised were the Topknots who witnessed a steady stream of birders entering the bottom paddock. They took off before the last half emerged from the rainforest surrounds. In time, a few flew back in, so we all got a look.



and Sacred Kingfishers. We parked and immediately had a **Striated Pardalote** up in the eucalypts, **Spangled Drongos** and **Lewin's Honeyeater** hovering around. A small group had come to a stop a little up the road.

They had a **Northern Fantail** in view and a very rufous **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. There was a lot of discussion about it possibly being a Chestnut-breasted but the barring on the tail would suggest Fan-tailed. Some are still holding on to the hope that the photos might prove otherwise. Either way it's a lifer for a couple of people.



There was more here; one of the large pigeons up in the trees turned out to be a **Wompoo Fruit-dove**. Meanwhile a bit of a feeding party came out near the forest edge and included **Spectacled Monarch, Pale-yellow Robin** and **Silvereyes**.

We left Mary's and headed back to the other key site, *the ponds*. On the way we saw Bush Stone-curlews, Brown Quail, Tree Martins, Forest



Martin has subsequently informed us that Chestnut-breasted Cuckoos do not migrate and similar looking birds south of Mt Molloy can only be Fan-tailed Cuckoos.

On the edge of *the ponds* there was a bit of movement. Another feeding party with **Grey Fantail**, **Large-billed Gerygone**, **Little Shrike-thrush** and, to Mal's delight, a **Pied Monarch**. He'd not seen one all year. We moved on to the 2nd of the ponds and after some diligent searching Clayton announced an **Azure Kingfisher**. Both Mal and Michael had mentioned that they've been missing



Little Bronze-cuckoo Shane Kennedy

We had 68 species - that's epic. I jokingly said that we needed two before anyone could go home. Jan had a look at the list and filled in a few gaps. We reached 70 and leapt to 74! Back at the cars we heard **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** and then saw a **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** fly in and start feeding on a Celery Wood. 76.



Fan-tailed Cuckoo Shane Kennedy

this bird all year too. It was in clear view though the distance and busy background hindered good views. And then, another flash of blue. Were there two? No, this new blue belonged to a **Little Kingfisher**. What a way to end the day.



Brown Cuckoo-Dove Shane Kennedy



Looking back I don't think we've done this as a group for more than 18 months! That'll have to change, whaddya reckon?!



Orange-footed Megapode, Brown Quail, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing (Masked), Australasian Darter, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Eastern Cattle-Egret, Great Egret, Plumed Egret, Pacific Baza, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Rainbow Bee-eater, Azure Kingfisher, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher (Australasian), Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian King-Parrot, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Spotted Catbird, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Cryptic Honeyeater, Yellow Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Macleay's Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Striated Pardalote, Fairy Gerygone (Fairy), Large-billed Gerygone, Barred Cuckooshrike, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Little Shrikethrush (Rufous), Golden Whistler, Grey Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Green aka Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, White-breasted Woodswallow, Northern Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Australian Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail (keasti), Spangled Drongo, Australian Spectacled Monarch, Pied Monarch, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Pale-yellow Robin, Golden-headed Cisticola, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Tree Martin, Silvereye, Metallic Starling, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Australian Pipit.

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.



I've been checking my orchid lately and this morning, as we prepared for our day, the first flower was fully open. The omens were good! So was the coffee!

Thirty-four gathered outside the Friends' office, including 17 locals, 11 from interstate, two from New Zealand, two from the USA and three from South Africa. There was a bit of commotion nearby as the old café was being reduced to its concrete slab. Rumour has it the site will make way for a PNG garden and the obligatory amenities block. We wasted no time moving away from this mini war zone, past the cacao and coffee trees and along the boardwalk. We were serenaded along this sinewy track by the *demented chook* call of the unseen **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**. We had visual confirmation later in the morning.



We approached Freshwater Lake along the 'north-west finger' with nothing to show for our stealth until we reached the open water. Here, a **Plumed Egret** fished from the bank, and a **Pacific Black Duck** swam towards us, mimicking an **Australasian Grebe**. It fooled me, but the **grebe** appeared moments later. Phew! **Comb-crested Jacanas** are rarely seen on this lake, though they are common on waterways all around Cairns. We have one visiting at the moment and it has been visible for the past week. We enjoyed good views again today. A **Darter** perched on its favourite branch with its wings spread to dry, and a **Little Pied Cormorant** left its perch to fish in the waters below. The ubiquitous **Moriarty**, that dumped domestic duck, graced us with his presence, as he always does, even when the lake is otherwise devoid of birdlife.



Little Kingfisher Jon Westaway

Jon and Kelvin were approaching from the other direction, pausing and aiming their lenses at the island. Ahhhh, safari guiding tip 101: look where others are looking! Unlike Leah, I kept my powder dry and didn't let on what I hoped they were onto.

By the time we reached them the bird had gone, but it wasn't long before I spotted it – the **Little Kingfisher** – perched in a leafy branch. It sat there for all to see, only leaving to plunge after prey. Leah redeemed herself by finding a second one. It was less cooperative, darting into the trees on the island as we approached.

Down at the lake's overflow was another regular, **Clancy** (in deference to Banjo Paterson), a **Nankeen Night Heron**. Apparently I had a little mind *pffft* and called it a Nankeen Kestrel ... It wasn't me, Your Honour!



Rainbow Lorikeet Daniel Winters-McAppion



Spangled Drongo Daniel Winters-McAppion

Half of our group had moved on in the wrong direction. I tried to call them back with the *Kennedy whistle*, but they were engrossed in some birding endeavour, necks craning towards the nearby canopy. Daniel had found a **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** up there. It wasn't going to show itself until we left, so we did.



Pacific Baza

Shane Kennedy

We had a couple of **Ospreys** fly over and, soon afterwards, saw a pair of **Pacific Bazas** sitting atop the mangroves. We enjoyed clear and wonderful views of these spectacular raptors as they caught what looked like large green caterpillars. Undoubtedly the birding highlight of the day.

Lerp Lane was not particularly busy, but we had good views of **Spangled Drongo**, **Black Butcherbird**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Green Oriole** and **Bush Stone-curlew**. We disturbed a **Common Sandpiper** from the muddy bank of Lily Creek and, nearby, a **Sacred Kingfisher**.

I suspect if I were to ask our international visitors what their bird of the day was, it would be a contest between the **Rainbow Lorikeet**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and the **Laughing Kookaburras** that treated us to their full-throated chorus near the White Cedar. Whatever their favourite, it was a great day, with 47 species under our belt.



Sacred Kingfisher

Jon Westaway

Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Peaceful Dove, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Common Sandpiper, Australasian Grebe, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Nankeen Night Heron, Plumed Egret, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird

If you can't join a trip, just copy it, I guess ...

I had always wanted to go to Artemis Station but was unable to join the Cairns Birders' recent 'Artemis mission'. So, with some long-service leave this month, I decided on a solo birding trip inspired by their trip report.

Apart from the Golden-shouldered Parrots, highlights at Artemis itself included seeing an **Australian Hobby** hunt and eat breakfast down at the dam.



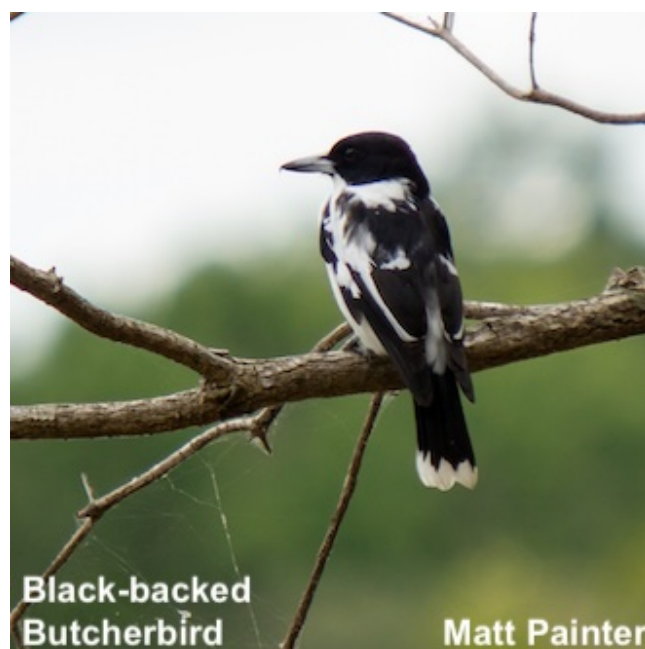
Down towards the plains, plenty of **Brolga** and a small selection of raptors were on offer. Spending two hours birding on the fringe of varied habitats I bagged 38 species, one highlight being a lone **Golden-headed Cisticola** tagging along with a large group of **Red-backed Fairy-wrens**.

For beauty and sheer numbers of birds, a side-trip to the stunning Low Lake was well worth it, a lone **Glossy Ibis** and close views of **Black-backed Butcherbird** being highlights.



But the best sites for me were around Lakefield National Park, following some of the route that the birders took before me, with some add-ons.

In only a short time I spotted the resident pair of **Red Goshawks** east of Musgrave/Yarraden, both morning and afternoon, and observed them nest-building. Three **Little Woodswallows** at this beautiful (but dusty) forest site were also lifers for me.



But perhaps the best spot was a small 'dip' east of Musgrave I found on the way home, where several species were drinking and bathing with golden-hour sun. I thanked God for close views of a single **Bar-breasted Honeyeater** – another lifer.

That spot was well worth investing some time in. Just step back when the cars come through the dip, or you'll end up having a bath, too.

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/548608>



Pictures below of mating Red Goshawks are from Grahame Magarry, in June



Rowdy's Ramblings:

Bird song and music: - [The Andrew Sisters - Chickery Chick](#)

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.



She moved to the Big Island of Hawaii and started working on multiple plate woodblock prints. Instead of using a single block of wood, she hand-carves multiple separate wooden plates for a single artwork. This highly technical method allows her to layer vivid colors, rich textures, and complex architectural compositions on top of one another. She was captivated by the plight of the nearly extinct 'alalā (Hawaiian Crow) and is well known for her series of prints on these incorporating various native plants.

You'd be forgiven for thinking this technique may lend itself to simplistic, small, stylised works, but her pieces feature large, exceptionally detailed, hand-carved patterns contrasted against bright, bold tropical color schemes imbued with conservation and cultural messages. Her works are on display in various places including the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and US Senate offices in Washington DC.

Margaret and I met on a birding tour in Ecuador and if any of you have been on any of these group tours you'll know there are people you click with ... and others! We clicked. We've subsequently kept in touch and indeed did a little more birding together when she last visited Cairns.

Margaret grew up in the northeast corner of the United States with a bird feeder outside the dining room window. That fostered her interest in birds and nature generally. She used to print her own Christmas cards from cut linoleum blocks before studying sculpture and metal smithing at Rhode Island School of design. She then spent many years of jewelry making in Maine and New York City. Many of her designs were based on insect forms.





"I Dream of 'Alalā, Orange 'Ōhi'a" is the signature, defining masterpiece of Margaret Barnaby's career.

Margaret actually created this piece during the long window of time when the 'alalā was **completely extinct in the wild**. Because she couldn't walk into the forest and see them, she titled it "I Dream..." to represent a conservationist's ultimate fantasy: seeing these vital "forest builders" returned to their native trees. It was her way of keeping their story alive until real-world scientists finally began releasing the birds back into the Big Island's reserves. This is a large piece, 108cm x 75cm. margaretbarnaby.com



"Testing the water"

Cattana Capers FREE! Microbat call training Geoff McClure

"The training course is normally offered at \$380 per day for a beginner's course but due to our Engaging Science grant, we've got the bat researchers and bat call experts here and can offer the course for free!

A four-day course normally costs in excess of \$1,000 pp. But this time it's **FREE!**

FNQ Bat survey and call ID Training

Mon 24 – Wed 26 August 2026

Cairns – venue TBA

Some evening field trips

Free course valued at over \$380 pp

EOI to info@batsc.org.au

The course will cover:

- How to set up an acoustic bat survey
- Bat detector set up and deployment
- Bat call identification and analyses

It will focus on FNQ bat species.

Venue for the training course, in Cairns:
We'll select the training place once we get
an idea of how many people are coming."



**Calling all people interested in
identifying bats around FNQ**

We're building a FNQ Bat Call Library,
and we need your help!

This course is for all volunteers or
potential volunteers with BatSoc or its
partners who would like to be involved in
bat surveys and call identification,
including participants at our bat walks.

Experts, Greg Ford and Julie Brokenbow,
will be running this free training course.
This is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity
for FNQ community.



Over the last two weeks Denis reports that a Black-necked Stork has been spotted, several times, overflying the Cattana Wetlands' car park (Eastern end) carrying nesting material.

The bird seems to be heading to and from the southern parts of Kingfisher Pool or Cuckoo Lake area ?

CAIRNS BIRDERS FESTIVAL

28th August - 6th September 2026

Table 1

CAIRNS BIRDING FESTIVAL 2026			
Friday, 28 August 2026	PHOTO COMP		Doug
	1800	Stratford Library - Nest box success	Denis Moser
Saturday, 29 August 2026	730	Cattana Wetlands	Bird Photography with OM Rep - Luke
	1600	Centenary Lakes	Bird Photography with OM Rep - Luke
Sunday, 30 August 2026	700	Cruise: Michaelmas Cay	
	1600	Centenary Lakes	
Monday, 31 August 2026	800	Lake Morris/Copperload Dam	BYO morning tea
	1600	Centenary Lakes	
	1800	Stratford Library - Habitats of Australia	Iain Campbell
Tuesday, 1 September 2026	730	Botanical Gardens walk	Shane
	1600	Cruise: Daintree River Cruise	Shane n Murray
Wednesday, 2 September 2026	700	Cruise: Daintree River Cruise	Shane n Murray
	1500	Esplanade across from the RSL	
Thursday, 3 September 2026	730	Lake Barine then Thomas Rd – BYO chairs, morning tea	Louise
	1600	Esplanade northern end	
	1830	Spot-lighting tour - TBA	Mikey
Friday, 4 September 2026	730	Behana Gorge – BYO chairs, morning tea	
	Tide ?	Esplanade across from the RSL	
	1800	Stratford Library	Scott Ritchie
Saturday, 5 September 2026	630	East Trinity - BYO morning tea	Denis
	1400 - 1600	Welcome the Waders: Esplanade	Mikey
Sunday, 6 September 2026	700	Cattana Wetlands - Morning tea. Catered RSVP.	Various various!

Festival: Daintree River Boatman 1st AND 2nd September

Daintree River Boatman

- 1st September 4pm evening cruise - 9 people (Fully Booked - try the waitlist)
- 2nd September 7am dawn cruise - 9 people (Fully Booked - try the 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

Must book and pay before Sunday, July 26. (31 of 36 already booked)

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

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

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.

Letters:

Hi Cairns birders,

Back in 2018 I visited Cairns, birdwatching with a friend. Your group kindly showed us many birds on one of your Sunday visits to the Botanic gardens, for which we were very grateful. We had birded our way up from Sydney and back and had a great time in NSW and Queensland.

Now we are planning a return trip to N Queensland (Sept 2027), to see the stuff we missed. Our initial thought is to hire a camper/motorhome and try to get to the Iron Range.

So I am asking for any ideas, suggestions and hints on this planned adventure.

I still get regular emails from Cairns Frogmouth, so it's your fault that we are planning on returning ;)

Regards, Paul (from England) - caspersdoghouse@aol.com

Hello, I am the editor of the Birds Queensland monthly newsletter and receive your weekly newsletter The Cairns Frogmouth which I enjoy reading.

In your most recent issue 2026#29 on pages 9-10 was an interesting article:

BirdLife Northern Queensland – Tablelands Talk, Thursday 9 July, Malanda Hotel

I think this article would be of interest to our members given the recent discovery of avian influenza in Australia so I am writing to request your permission to reprint this article and associated photos and map in our next newsletter, August, due to be published in 10 days. If approved, I would include the following notation at the end of the article to acknowledge the source:

This article was re-printed with the kind permission of the editors of the The Cairns Frogmouth (2026#29), the Cairns Birders Newsletter

Looking forward to receiving your response. Regards, Chris Hendry, Editor, BQ Newsletter

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

A nice news item of a chap, a list keeper, who visited the same park for 40 years and its scientific value. [LINK](#)

The Kingfisher lads are producing a [Weekly Wrap](#) of bird sightings as listed on eBird

Now this is extraordinary! that memory survives metamorphosis - caterpillar to butterfly! [LINK](#)

Special outing . . . Starry Starry Night

12 September 2026

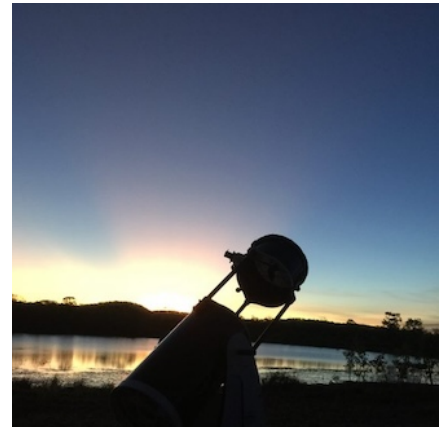
SPECIAL OUTING: **Starry Starry Night** limited to 14
12 September - up on the Tablelands (near Kay Rd)
5 places left;

Includes:

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

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.

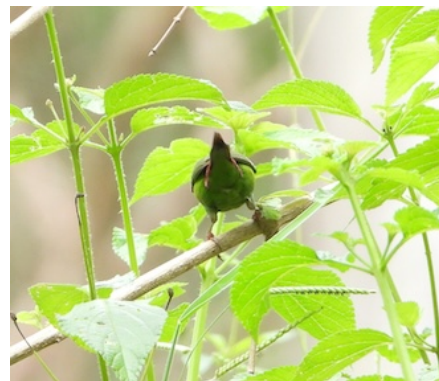
So if you want to help Doug and Carolyn celebrate then book here [STARRY STARRY NIGHT](#) and use the discount code **FNQastro** for 20% off. This is a regular NightSky event but this date is set aside just for us birders. - limited to 12 people.



The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

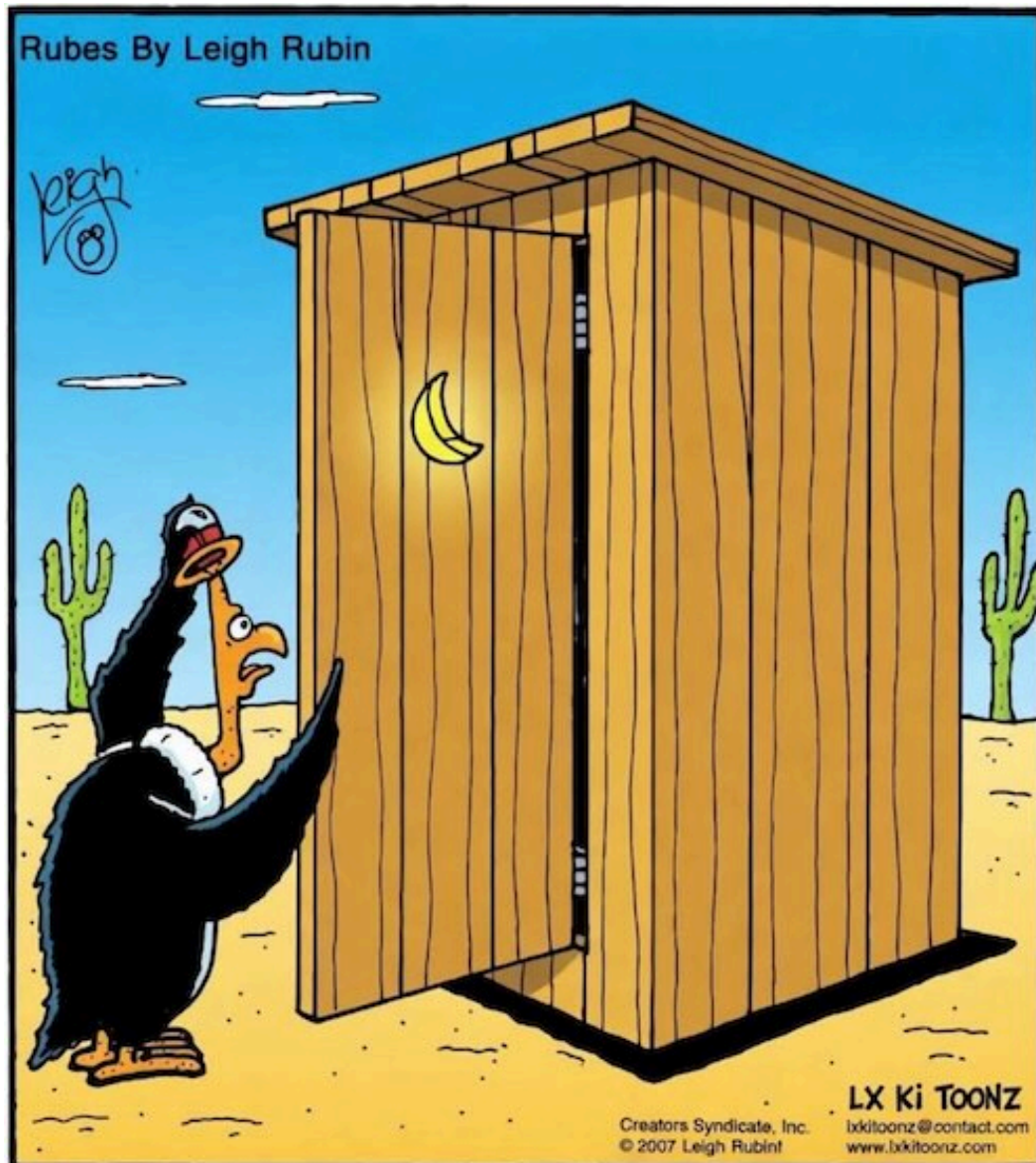
What is this ?



Last week's quiz: What is this?

Female Sahul Sunbird (and Bottlebrush)





"My sincerest apologies, sir ... I thought something died in here."