



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 9th August	7:30	Upper Mackey Ck; park behind Edge Early Learning, Cutters Bvd, Gordonvale Google Maps Link
Tuesday 11th August	7:30	Friends' House , Botanic Gardens, Collins Ave, Cairns
Sunday 16th August	7:30	Andy's Patch Meet near the corner of Little and Arthur Sts, Manunda
Cairns Birders' Festival	Friday 28th August - Saturday 5th September More details below	
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



It poured all night and early morning in this our 'Dry Season'. Yet, I was committed to Cattana as Shane and Sean had fled the town. Probably only a few die-hards would be there and we'd end up going for a coffee. But lo, t'were not the case. We sheltered by the toilet block as more and more vehicles turned up. The constant craving for birding usurped lazy lie-ins! There's no such thing as bad weather when it comes to Cairns Birders, only the wrong clothes; but we still need to engineer a solution to 'the birding equipment' in the rain problem! Anyway, by 7.50am we had 30 people ready and raring to go. The rain started to abate, we wandered around the carpark and the bird list grew - **Australasian Figbird**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Yellow/Green Oriole**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, a solitary **Magpie Goose**. Jake took on the number crunching responsibility with gusto.



Little Pied Cormorant

Patrick Howlett



Australasian Grebe

Patrick Howlett

Some of us glimpsed the **Little Kingfisher** at the creek crossing as we entered the reserve. **Bush Thick-knees** were mooching about as we headed to Kingfisher Pond where we scanned for the Estuarine Crocodile that has been sighted there in recent days. No joy. The path was muddy and the mozzies fierce as we reached the bridge crossing. A fine **Brown-backed Honeyeater** nest lay unattended and a **Little Pied Cormorant** fished in the creek. Otherwise things were quiet. One species that was behaving itself was the Leaden Flycatcher. I must have counted at least five throughout the morning.

We headed to the open country and saw a flock of **Scaly-breasted Munias** feeding in the grasses but there were no other seed eaters to be found. However, the skies lifted as did everyone's smiles. Suddenly, **Olive-backed Orioles** were competing with their **Yellow/Green** cousins and male **Mistletoebirds** were vocally piercing us from the tree tops giving show-off views of their red resplendence. It's got such a loud call for such a small bird.

Jabiru Lake was busy with at least six **Green Pygmy Geese**, four **Comb-crested Jacana**, three **Darters**, an **Australasian Grebe** and, on the central island, Miles spotted a **White-browed Crake** foraging by the water's edge. We dallied there for a time. The temperature was perfect, the visibility wonderful, and the company cheerful and eager for more.



White-browed Crake Patrick Howlett



Green Pygmy Geese Peter Manins

And so we meandered for another while and took the rainforest route back to the carpark where dark clouds, once again, threatened to burst their liquid load. We ended up with 45 species which ain't bad for a rainy morning in winter.



Magpie-larks Patrick Howlett



Mistletoebird Miles Michaud

Magpie Goose, Radjah Shelduck, Green Pygmy-Goose, Australian Brushturkey, Red Junglefowl (Domestic type), Bar-shouldered Dove, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Sahul Brush Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, White-browed Crake, Bush Thick-knee, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Royal Spoonbill, Nankeen Night Heron, Eastern Cattle-Egret, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Olive-backed Oriole, Green/Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Willie-wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Welcome Swallow, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia.

Cairns Botanic Gardens - Tuesday's Guided Bird Walk: Denis Walls

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.](#)

The world is in turmoil, wars are raging and forests burning. Trump is doing deal-less deals, creating wastelands in the Persian Gulf and calling them victories. And yet, in this little nook of Far North Queensland a world apart exists, a happy place where birders - local, regional and international - gather on Tuesdays at 7.30am, outside the suitably named Friends' House, to treasure the beauty of our natural world.

High-falutin words maybe but the sense of camaraderie and joy derived from these outings grows by the week as the tour gains in numbers and reputation. This week we had **locals**, Jake (doing the bird count), Jeff (doing the names), Peter, Tanya, Patrick, Kazu, Scott (returning from his Central Australian adventure) and Claudette; **regionals**, Lynn and Geoff (NSW), Bonny and Dave (SA), Libby, Michael, John, Kathryn, Greg and Barbara (Vic); Pamela (Alice Springs); **overseas**, Rose (NZ) and Kat (USA)



Little Kingfisher

P Manins



Spectacled Flying Fox

Scott Ritchie

Last week we dipped on the **Little Kingfisher** but there was no faulting this week's make-up viewing. Two of the wee beauties zipped around us and settled on prominent perches for prime photography. Some of the southerners were blasé about our single **Australasian Grebe** but we love these unusuals, for this part of the world, imagining it/them to be the same returning bird(s) forging a vanguard path into new territory. Is the sudden appearance of a juvenile **Comb-crested Jacana** another, more locally, who is seeking pastures new and a break from parental strictures? "Okay, Jackie, the time has come for you to tread your big feet elsewhere. These Cattana lily pads simply aren't big enough for all of us."

A **Nankeen Night Heron** was feeding lower down from the sushi train bridge and as we enjoyed its rich, rufous hues, a pair of **Shining Flycatchers** decided to make a mangrovia appearance; that is to say, mostly leaf-obscured in difficult light. The photographers were fully engaged in trying to get the best

capture. We'll have to wait and see what transpires. Just then a **Grey Goshawk** flew overhead, originally mistaken for a Pacific Baza.



Grey Goshawk

Peter Manins



Yellow/Green Oriole

Scott Ritchie

On the other side of the bridge **Brown and Yellow Honeyeater, Bush Thick-knee, Rainbow Lorikeets, Little Heron, Green/Yellow Oriole, Mistletoebird, Spangled Drongo and Australasian Figbirds**, in particular, were active. **Sahul Brush Cuckoos** have started calling again after a lengthy hiatus. The Little Bronze Cuckoos, on the contrary, decided to have a day off. A pair of **Double-eyed Fig Parrots** exploded in front of Jake and me and a **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Laughing Kookaburra** stopped by to say hello. **Four O'Clock Moths** had forgotten the time of day and feasted on the flowering Blueberry Ash and **Paper Wasps** were busy enlarging the size of their house - all the better to sting you from!



Four O'Clock Moth

Patrick Howlett



Paper Wasps

Patrick Howlett

My sons always remind me how much older people like to talk about the weather and I haven't done that yet! After a drizzly start to the morning, the day fined up beautifully although I must follow Sean's advice and get a pair of waterproof boots. I'm sick of getting home with saturated socks. Oh, and we had 45 species for the day, identical to Sunday's outing to Cattana Wetlands.

Special Festival events

Bird Photography with the OM system

All people interested in bird photography welcome, no need to register as indicated on the links below.

[Cattana Wetlands 7:30 Saturday 29th August](#)

[Centenary Lakes 16:00 Saturday 29th August](#)

Tank 5, Collins Ave on Sat 15 Aug from 10 to 2 - Birding and Science Week



Rowdy's Ramblings

Bird song and music: - [The Corries - The Skye Boat Song](#)

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 Editorial Staff,

Thanks for the brill newsletter! Clayton Smith's orchid expose was so interesting. I always wondered what testicles & orchid flowers had in common, & now (having never dug them up to look at their tubers) I understand. Bullockwort, indeed! And I enjoyed Shane's beautiful photos & report on the joys of swanning around on boats. Gotta agree there! And rounding out the trifecta; what a marvellous win for Korea, gaining recognition of the importance of their tidal flats. All the more reason, as if K-Pop & quirky movies weren't enough, to visit Korea.

Catch yuhs in Cattana!

Jeanette.

The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

What is this ?



Last week's quiz: What is this?

Female Australasian Figbird



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. (33 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.

Starry Starry Night

12 September 2026

SPECIAL OUTING: **Starry Starry Night** limited to 15
12 September - up on the Tablelands (near Kay Rd)
3 places left;

Includes:

- an evening meal,
- discussion about the night sky with access to a telescope,
- stories around the campfire inc Aboriginal night sky yarns.
- there is a campground nearby - [Emerald Escape Camping](#)



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 15 people.

Festival Picnic

Sunday 6th September

Catering assistance required

Our regular cook, Rowdy, will be doing the tea and coffee along with some light oceanic finger-food dishes while our good friend Annie will be providing more of her delectable cakes and sweets, however if anyone would like add to some savoury non-meat delights they are very welcome to contribute to the event.

Some tasty muffins, perhaps, an interesting baked slice or a wild terrine.

All costs will be covered from our bottles-return account and it will add a lovely touch to our end-of-festival feast.

SMS Rowdy anytime on 0406 068 295 if you'd like to lend a hand.

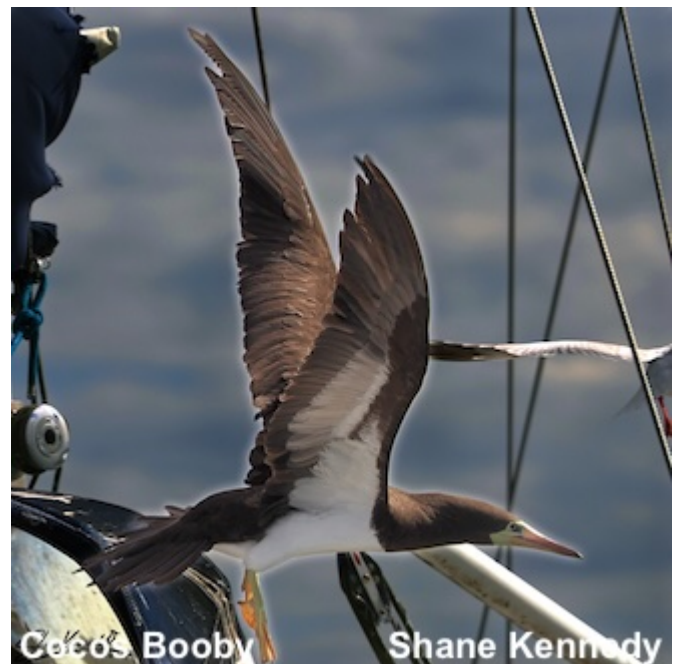




The bird was first spotted in **late May**, but was initially thought to be an unusual Brown Booby. As more and better photographs became available, experts noticed a combination of features that didn't quite fit. Its distinctive white forehead, bill shape, facial pattern and plumage all pointed to a **third-cycle female Cocos Booby**. The identification was made even more interesting because the Cocos Booby was only recognised as a separate species from the Brown Booby in **2024**.

The Cocos Booby – Australia's Latest Mega

One bird has been creating quite a stir recently, a **Cocos Booby** that has taken up residence at Lake Macquarie in New South Wales. Hundreds of birders have travelled from around Australia to see what is believed to be the country's **first confirmed record** of this eastern Pacific seabird – a true **mega-rarity**.



Cocos Boobies normally breed on islands off **Mexico, Costa Rica and Colombia**, so finding one on Australia's east coast is extraordinary. Whether it was blown off course or simply wandered far beyond its normal range is anyone's guess, but for Australian birders it represents the ultimate prize. A **mega-rarity** is a bird that occurs so rarely that many birders may only get one chance in a lifetime to see it. Fortunately, this bird has decided to stay around long enough for plenty of people to enjoy the experience.

What's About: Cairns & Tablelands Birding.

[Part of What's About: our weekly birding wrap - see all editions](#)

A quieter week in the field, and a wetter one. Both regions ran well below their recent average, the Tablelands down to 63 observers over the week and Cairns to 100, off sharply from the fortnight before. The rain through the week is the likely reason; fewer people out, fewer checklists logged. It happens, and the birds do not mind a wet week one bit.

The migration keeps building

The season is still turning in our favour. The best of the week was a run of fresh arrivals as more spring migrants filtered in. A Papuan Eclectus near Craiglie and a Dollarbird in the Daintree were the pick of them, alongside a Pacific Koel up on the Tablelands and a Siberian Sand-Plover on the Barron River mouth. On the wetlands, a Great-billed Heron, a Common Greenshank and a Pied Heron all showed, and the Cairns Esplanade shorebird build-up carried on with Latham's Snipe now at more than one site. It is a good time to be watching the coast.

Where everyone was

Up on the Tablelands the Julatten patch and the Mount Molloy country did the heavy lifting, with Crater Lakes and Hasties Swamp steady as always. On the coast the Cairns Esplanade and the Daintree cruises drew the crowds. Even in a quiet week the good sites keep producing.

Flagged as unusual by eBird

Four records were flagged as unusual by eBird over the week. As always, we treat these as provisional until they are confirmed:

- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo - multiple reports from the Tablelands, near Mount Molloy.
- Latham's Snipe - reported at two sites on the coast.
- Ashy-bellied White-eye - reported from Green Island, off Cairns.
- Satin Flycatcher - a single report from the Tablelands.

These records are flagged as unusual by eBird's automated filters and may be reviewed, corrected or withdrawn afterwards. We re-check each one against eBird before posting, but a flagged sighting is provisional until it is confirmed.

Our thanks, as ever, to everyone who got out in the wet and logged what they saw; the whole picture is built from those checklists, and a quiet week still adds to the record.

That was the week around Cairns and the Tablelands. Wet or not, the migration is only building from here, so it is a fine time to be out.

Extra Extra! Read all about it ...

We don't know how well threatened species fight off bird flu – [but we need to](#)

Powerless against bird flu? Not entirely. Here are eight ways to help protect Australia's birds and mammals - [LINK](#)

Cane toads of the sky - what's happening with the Common Mynah in the ACT - [LINK](#)

Birding Influences Brain Health and Mental Health - [LINK](#)

Woodland species decline in urban areas due to the lack of shrubby midstory plantings - a Birdlife Australia webinar - [LINK](#)

Farmers chuffed with the Barn Owl baby boom amidst mice plague in WA - [LINK](#)

BIRDSCRIBE is up and running - Voice control bird listing, inc. exporting to ebird - [LINK](#)

Norty Corner

