



## THE CAIRNS FROGMOUTH

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

|                                |                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday 15th August           | Birding and Science Expo - @ The Tanks, 10 - 2pm                                                                                           |
| Sunday 16th August             | 7:30 - Andy's Patch - meet on Little St next to the cemetery behind Cominos House at the junction with Greenslopes St <a href="#">LINK</a> |
| Tuesday 18th August            | 7:30 <a href="#">Friends' House</a> , Botanic Gardens, Collins Ave, Cairns                                                                 |
| Sunday 23rd August             | 7:30 Goldsborough Valley - more info on <a href="#">website</a>                                                                            |
| Cairns Birders' Festival       | Friday 28th August - Saturday 5th September<br>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



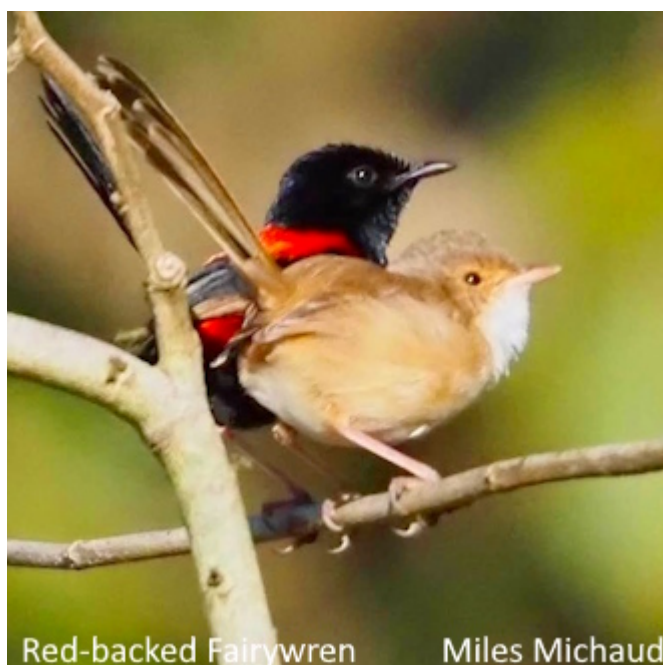
The sky was clear, the sun was shining, and the crowd had arrived. We couldn't ask for better conditions, so it was sure to be a great morning of birding! Twenty-six eager people made up our group today, both regulars and newcomers. Once the usual catching-up conversations were had, we headed off.

The walk down the field was relatively quiet. That is, until a raptor was spotted flying along the tree line, which earned a few excited exclamations. The dark, long-winged glider which was in the process of selecting a perch was quickly identified as a **Black Kite**. These beautiful birds have a large range throughout the Old World (Eurasia, Africa, and Australasia). Around here, though, they are much more frequent in Mareeba and down towards Townsville, so this was a nice sighting! Maybe it would bring us some good luck. Of course, plenty of **Masked Lapwings** and some **Magpie-larks** also dotted the landscape.



Golden-headed Cisticola

Mikey Kudo



Red-backed Fairywren

Miles Michaud

Soon after, some sharp eyes spotted an **Australasian Pipit** standing along a dirt ridge, forming a lovely silhouette. As we approached the tree line, some chatter began to be heard. **Yellow Honeyeater**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Large-billed Gerygone**, **White-bellied Cuckooshrike**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Little Shrike-thrush**, **Yellow/Green Oriole**, and **Australasian Figbird** were actively moving about. Denis noted hearing the beginnings of a **Grey Whistler** call, though they refused to show. Foreshadowing, perhaps? A bit further, a **Cryptic Honeyeater**, as well as some **Dusky Honeyeaters** were chattering away. **Welcome Swallows** began to soar overhead, soon after joined by **Australasian Swiftlets** higher above, and a couple of **White-breasted Woodswallows**. Between the trees, **Metallic Starlings** shot past in flocks of various sizes, alerting us with their robotic chatter and noisy wingbeats. A **Spotted Dove** cooed in the distance while some **Peaceful Doves** flitted between powerlines and bare branches, no doubt enjoying the warm sunshine. We picked up more species as we followed the path, and were managing to stick together as a single group! After ticking Varied Trillers, a lone **Topknot Pigeon** overhead,

**Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters, Rainbow Lorikeets, and Rainbow Bee-eaters** off the list, the group went through a little mitosis of sorts.

Those of us who lingered spotted a **Torresian Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ed: later found to be a mis-identified Magpie-lark!*), **Little Bronze-cuckoo, Black Butcherbird, Brown Honeyeater**, and some more bush birds. A few of us had excitedly continued onward to a fork in the road. Here, the cleared, tufty fields made way to a wall of sugarcane. The path we were to take, between the cane and forested gully, had some activity which caught our attention and made us pause. While trying to determine if an object on the path was leaf or bird, one of us saw a **Red-backed Fairywren! Golden-headed Cisticolas** squeaked away as we set our sights on the thicket, and were rewarded with not only this adorable female fairywren, but also her partner male. Thankfully for everyone, the rest of the group had arrived right on time to see them both. These two tiny, charismatic birds delighted us by perching on a bare branch together, side-by-side. As the pair preened one another and took in the sun, we slowly, slowly inched our way forward, taking photos as we went. The female hopped around to face us a couple of times, but the pair allowed us to get fairly close. But before we knew it, they darted down into the bush, and moved on. We went on as well!



But yet again, we didn't make it far: there was movement and chattering coming from the sugarcane. Cisticola, grassbird, and reed warbler were thrown around as guesses as we all lined up to try to get a view of this bird, which called away without a care in the world. A loud **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (as they typically are) went almost unnoticed, despite its screeching, due to our focus on this obscure grass-dweller. A singing **Mistletoebird** did attract a little more attention, though. While a cisticola came by, a couple of us recognised the call of the mystery bird— if you guessed Number Three, you were right! It was an **Australian Reed Warbler** that was taunting us from the cane, too quick and hidden for most of us to get photos. Though there were a couple of successes! ID confirmed by way of a photo of the cute warbler's face, we finally could move on. Birding is hard work, of course!

Right as I was noting the absence of crimson finches in my birding sessions of late, a small, long-tailed, red bird flew out of the cane... Well, it was in fact a **Crimson Finch**! As we kept along the path, we got some good views of a pair of them. The male took to the cane flowers while the female skipped around

the canopy. The more progress we made, the more birds we got! Our next feathered friends made us work to get an eye on them, but they finally showed! **Grey Whistlers**, as Denis heard earlier, had finally made their appearance. A **Little Shrikethrush**, **Dusky Honeyeaters**, and a **Willie Wagtail** were in their company as they made their way through the foliage. No doubt that they were terrorising the local insect population!

More birds caught our attention as we were about to turn to check out a small creek. The bird of many names, aliases, monickers, which has caused confusion among many... **Scaly-breasted Munias**, AKA **Spice Finches**, AKA **Nutmeg Munias** or **Mannikins**, AKA something else I'm sure, populated a weedy thicket. Plenty of little finches, young and old, preened and flitted around. A cisticola and some Sahul Sunbirds were among them, too. Down around the creek area, we got some more fairywrens, gerygones, **Willie Wagtails**, and a couple of other common birds. Jake spotted a small flock of **Topknot Pigeons** flying overhead, adding to our tally of them. Plenty of figbirds and friarbirds were taking advantage of some fruiting and flowering trees here.



As we arrived at Draper Rd., we got even more species! **Forest Kingfishers** dotted the powerlines, a Spangled drongo screeched in the distance, and we saw usual suspects like **Common Mynas** and **House Sparrows**. By the time we made it back to our starting point, we had accumulated around 40 species. With the sun properly blazing now, many of us called it a day: it was hot out and it was time for breakfast and coffee! However, as some of us in the tail-end of the group caught up, my 'kestrel-less' sadness was quickly put to rest! Off into the field, there hovered a **Nankeen Kestrel**. As it was a little far away for good snaps, some of us busied ourselves getting photos of pipits while most of the group went their own separate ways. Finally, the kestrel perched up on a utility pole next to us. This handsome fellow was a male kestrel, a bit smaller than females, with a grey head and stronger 'teardrop' markings, as well as a lack of dark fletching on the rufous back. This made a lovely conclusion to the outing, with the last three species of the list being a **Straw-necked Ibis**, **Bush Thick-knee**, and **Fairy Martin**.

Overall, a very delightful sunny morning! A total of 46 species were recorded, plus a couple more for some of us given a little neighbourhood post-birding tour by Mary Brook. Thanks again! Let's hope this wonderful weather holds up for the Cairns Birders' Festival, starting up soon!

## **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.*

Today's **local** hitlist was Jake, Leah, Kazu, Jeff, Denny, Nigel, Barbara, Peter, Julie, Kyden, Scott and Jon (12); **elsewhere in Oz** - Anna (WA), Catherine, Geoff and Lynne (NSW), Nina and Brian (ACT), Misa (Brisbane), Margaret (Adelaide). (8) Where were the Victorians? **Overseas**; James and Jason (USA), another Jason (Germany), Robbie (Belgium), Oriol (Spain), Jo and Andred (NZ). (7) And David from the **People's Republic of Kuranda** (1). That makes a whopping 29, plus me, and it's not even Bird Week yet.



Gee, the weather was glorious. Not-a-cloud-in-the-sky. Heaven sent. And the birds were lovin' it. There was a real feeling of seasonal change. Birds that hadn't been seen or heard for a while put on a performance. Freshwater Lake was in hyperdrive, and not just with waterbirds - **Radjah Shelducks, Little Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Canardius Discardius (Moriarty), Australasian Grebe, Comb-crested Jacana, Pacific Black Ducks, Little Kingfisher, Australian White Ibis,**

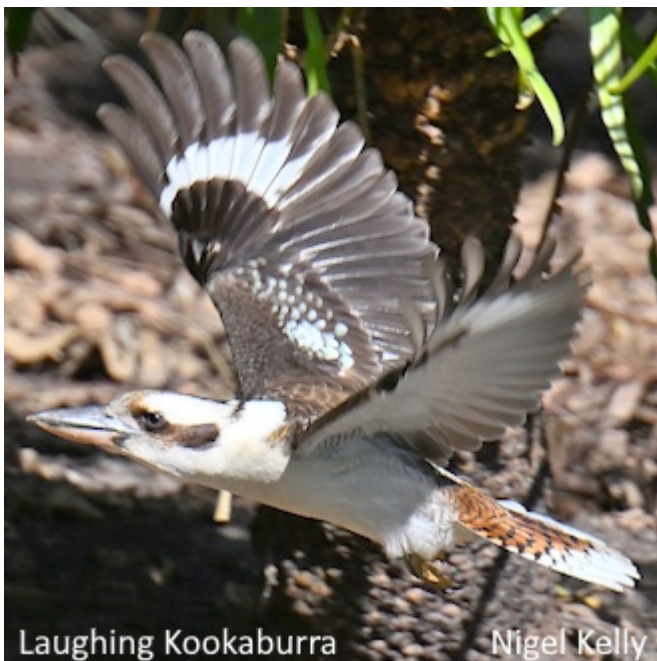
**Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill** flyover, were all in evidence. That's not bad for starters but it was the activity around the lake that amazed, captivated and rocked our sockless sandals off. It's a cliché in birding, I know, but we seriously didn't know where to look next. It was a classic bird wave/mixed flock around a couple of flowering trees on the Greenslopes side of the lake.



A **Sahul Cicadabird** was calling loudly. How can a call, so annoying when emanating from a reversing truck, sound so delightful when coming from the top of a tree. Not everyone thinks that, mind you! I had an acquaintance who wanted to shoot them over at East Trinity. **Helmeted Friarbirds, Australasian Figbirds and White-bellied Cuckooshrikes** were skittering about. A **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** told us, incessantly, of its toilet needs, 'got to pee', 'got to pee'. Many of us got killer views of the 'singing' bird which is a brood parasite of multiple small passerines, laying a single egg in their nest.



As we peered into the canopy Scott came over, "what the heck is that" as he showed me his photo? Mixed in with the other flower-seeking mobsters was a perched **Barred Cuckooshrike**. They like to come down to Cairns occasionally for their winter holidays and are always most welcome. I think of winter visitors - Barreds, Blue-faced Kookaburras and Olive-backed Orioles - a bit like seasonal fruit. It's so nice to see them and eat them (the fruit, silly!) after a period of deprivation. **Double-eyed Fig Parrots** dashed over our heads. Jon W got his pic of the **Little Kingfisher** before a dog chased it away. The **Osprey** was standing, regally, above its nest in the Telecom Tower. A **Brahminy Kite** was visible in the sky. How much more excitement could one bear?



Over the bridge and into the Ant Plant lecture area an **Azure Kingfisher** made off without letting us share its dazzling beauty. A **Torresian Kingfisher** called repeatedly. This is the first for several weeks and another indication that the breeding season is getting underway. Jake crouched down to show the bird, through the mangroves, to those whose knees were not too creaky. Our lack of a birding youth policy was on display as only a handful were able to make it without requiring a lifting device!

In a flowering tree across the creek large numbers of **Rainbow Lorikeets** were squawking loudly and amongst them, which is not as common as it used to be, was a **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet**. This is a very attractive bird with its rich green plumage and eponymously named chest. Last week the Brown Honeyeaters were going gangbusters in the mangroves. This week, nada, despite what looked

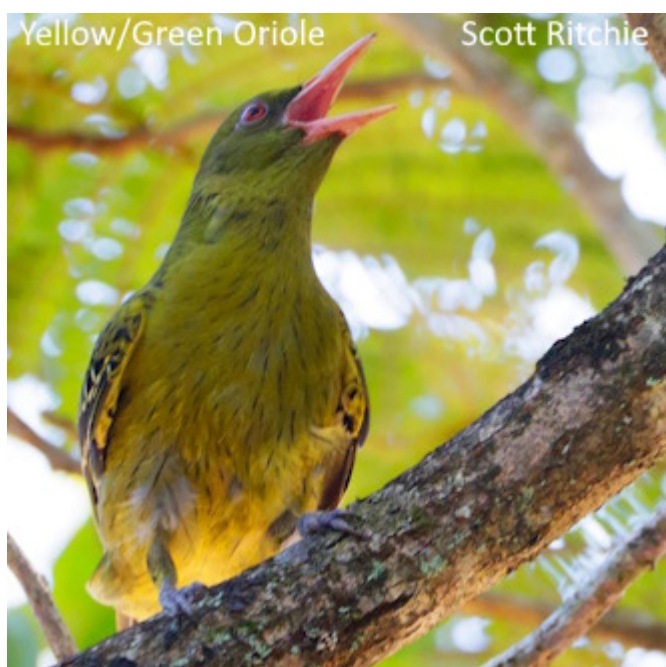
like a flowering food supply. Likewise, Large-billed Gerygones were silent. The mystery of bird watching is part of its joy.



Round the corner in the land of the Three Big Melaleucas, the **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were active in Melaleuca One but the Bush Thick-knees had vamoosed as they had from The Ecotone and White Cedar Paddock. Curiouser and curiouser. But, one of the **Double-eyed Fig Parrots** was busy in a low hollow of the dead tree across Lily Creek. These delightful little parrots are in danger of running out of viable nesting holes if they go any lower. A **Sacred Kingfisher** sat close by and, with an earlier sighting of a **Laughing Kookaburra**, that brought the total to a five kingfisher morning.



The heat of the sun around 9.30 started to tell us that winter is nearly over. The returning presence of **Torresian Imperial Pigeons** told us the same. Their arrival seems to come earlier every year. As we headed back to Collins Ave Jake and Jon snapped an unusual bird. What was it? Oriole or Figbird? After examining the photos in good light and consulting the birding oracles we settled on **Immature Olive-backed Oriole**. It's strange to have a young one down here so early in the breeding season.



Yellow/Green Oriole

Scott Ritchie

Okay, I've run out of superlatives. I need a coffee and that's just from sitting at my computer.

Here's the bird list, up nine from last week, with my morning specials in bold:

Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Peaceful Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, **Sahul Brush Cuckoo**, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Grebe, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Nankeen Night Heron, Great Egret, Osprey, **Brahminy Kite**, Rainbow Bee-eater, **Azure Kingfisher**, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, **Scaly-breasted Loriekeet**, Rainbow Loriekeet, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Yellow Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, **Barred Cuckooshrike**, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, **Olive-backed Oriole**, Green/Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Willie-wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia, Peaceful Dove (54)



Little Kingfisher

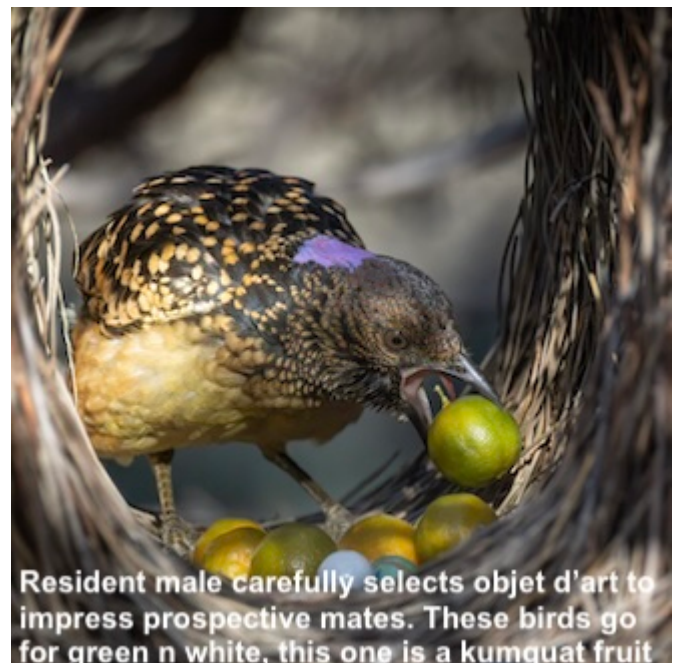
Jon Westaway



The bower is right along a path used by the public. There's even a sign pointing you to it. The birds are very used to people, and accommodating to photographers. I sat about 5m behind the path so as not to get in the way of the public and the birds. I used a small three-legged stool so I could get my camera down at bird level.



I've been 'camping' in central Australia for the last two weeks. I became very enchanted by the antics of the male Western Bowerbirds at the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens in Alice Springs. I spent at least five different sessions taking photos of these amazing birds. The light was a bit tricky, with direct morning light making exposures a mosaic of light and shadow that had to be dealt with in editing. Lots of masking in Light Room Classic. I did have one morning with nice, even soft light due to overcast conditions.



The bower is not a nest. But rather it is an extravagant bachelor's pad used to impress the female. 'To build and maintain this pad, this boy has gotta be hot, with great genes.' The Western Bowerbirds really like white and green decor. White consisted of pieces of plastic, bone, styrofoam, and rocks. Green was primarily the round fruit of kumquat. And he is very picky about where he puts them. Right at the front of the bower, with green fruit in the bower.



Sometimes another male would come by and move them to disrupt the display. They were constantly sneaking around the bower like kids playing tag, looking for a way to disrupt the bower. This really pissed off the resident male. The big boss bird, with a stylish pink crest that he would flare out, would let out a throaty growl, flare out his wings and jump in the air. Then chase the interloper away. The birds would fly to nearby trees to keep an eye on things. But eventually, the pull of the bower brought them all back. Lots of twigs and knickknacks to keep in order. I never did see the female bowerbird. But the boys are ready for her. I hope you enjoy my images as much as I did in getting them.

Here are some of my favourites



Rival males frequently visited the bower, stealing decorations or even twigs. The main male (with the pink crest in foreground) was fanatical about chasing them off.



He would growl, raise his crest, spread his wings and tail, and jump at the rival. It worked for a short time.

Then off he would go in search of new baubles.



**Locals on the Loose      Jimmys Beach, mid NSW coast      Shane and Sean**

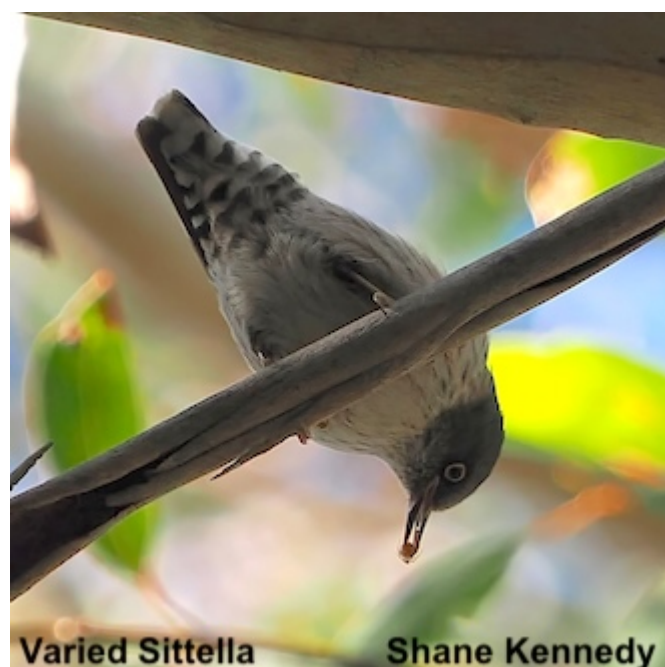
We arrived at Jimmys Beach late afternoon for the family reunion. We had cabins on a bushy neck of land separating Jimmys Beach Cove and Bennett Beach, aka Pacific Ocean. One of the other birders in the family had already spotted a Tawny Frogmouth nearby and showed us pictures from the camera. It was getting dark when we finally realised it was only 20 meters away and in full view! I was tempted to go, unpack the camera, and get pictures of my own, but the meet-n-greet was important, and frogmouths will return to their usual roost each day ... won't they? It didn't! And I was a little miffed.



There were surprises in store for us. There often are when you haven't planned or done some research. First up were Varied Sittellas. Their erratic path between trees and that typical feeding pattern of working down branches, often upside down, prying under bark for morsels are typical of the species. These are becoming one of our favourite birds but not easy to find. If you are lucky, you'll see a flock moving together, rapidly feeding above you, but they keep moving from tree to tree and are soon gone from sight. There are five distinct sub-species around Australia, and I understand they were once



There were various beach access tracks through the banksia and melaleuca scrub and in small groups we took to these in-between the family feastings. These tracks were rich in birdlife with Golden Whistlers, Little Wattlebirds, Grey Butcherbirds, Striated Thornbills, Yellow-faced and Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Eastern Whipbirds, Variegated Fairywrens and many others.



considered separate species. These ones had distinct orange windows in their wings, still commonly called Orange-winged Sittella, ssp *chrysoptera*.

Second was the Brown-headed Honeyeater, think of a dull version of the White-throated Honeyeater. These are common enough down this way but the significance was in the fact that Sean spotted them, and knew what they were, even though they were lifers! We don't get these in North Queensland so it's worth looking out for them as you travel south.



Thirdly were the terrestrial orchids. These weren't on my radar at all, but the first one was an early blooming Painted Fingers, *Caledonia picta*. The bright white flower stood out against the dark leaf litter and had us down on our haunches for the portrait. Once down at this level we noticed lots of other terrestrial orchids; Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis nutans*, and Small Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis hispidula*, and we could have easily missed the tiny Pixie Caps, *Acianthus fornicatus*.



And then, wonder of wonders, the Tawny Frogmouth returned to its roost. It gave me a sly look before closing its eyes and transforming into just another broken branch.

Birding and Science Week Tank 5, Collins Ave Saturday 15th 10 - 2pm.



## Rowdy's Ramblings

### Bird song and music: - [The Beatles - Free as a Bird](#)

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.

## The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

What is this ?



Last week's quiz: What is this?

Double-eyed Fig-parrot



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.

## 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.

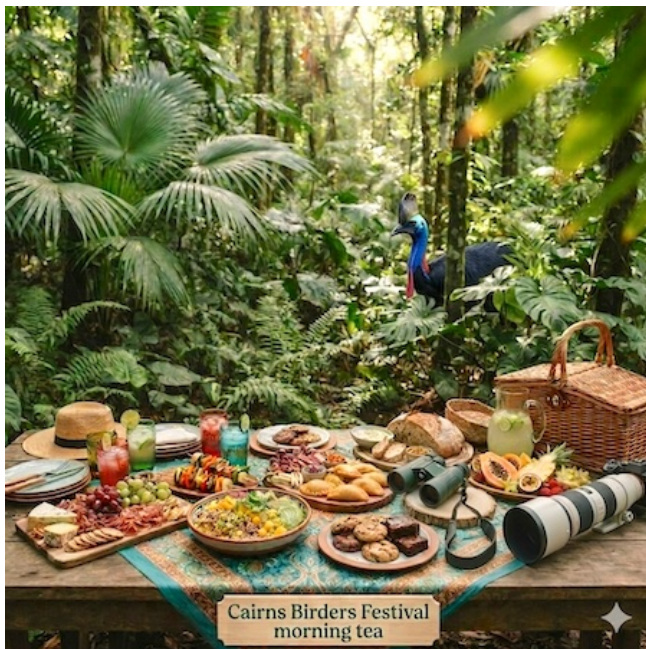
[Cattana Wetlands 7:30 Saturday 29th August](#)

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

## 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.

## 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;**

- 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.

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

A better week for quality, if not for numbers. Effort eased off on the Tablelands (around 56 observers over the week against 63 the week before), while Cairns held steady near 97. But the Tablelands more than made up for the quieter turnout by producing the best run of unusual birds we have seen in a while, most of it up around the southern Tablelands towns.

### **A rich few days on the Tablelands**

The standout was a Spotted Quail-thrush near Irvinebank, a cracking and elusive bird that is always a highlight when one turns up. It came in the middle of an unusually good stretch: a couple of night birds in a Masked Owl and a red-morph Australian Boobook out towards Ravenshoe, and a yellow Australasian Figbird at Speewah. Four genuinely notable birds in a few days is a good week in anyone's book, and a reminder that the quieter southern Tablelands country repays a visit.

### **Arrivals and movement**

The season kept ticking over too. A Little Eagle at Yungaburra and a Double-barred Finch down at Gordonvale were the pick of the fresh arrivals, with a Yellow-tinted Honeyeater on the western Tablelands. Latham's Snipe, the returning migrant we have been following, turned up inland this week as well as on the coast, a nice sign of birds still filtering through.

### **Where everyone was**

Up top the Julatten patch and Abattoir Swamp did the steady work, with Crater Lakes and Hasties Swamp always worth the stop. On the coast Cattana Wetlands and the Daintree drew the crowds, and Saturday brought a real burst of activity across both regions. Even in a mixed week the good sites keep producing.

### **Flagged as unusual by eBird**

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

- Spotted Quail-thrush - reported near Irvinebank.
- Australian Masked-Owl - reported near Ravenshoe.
- Australian Boobook (red morph) - reported on the Tablelands.
- Australasian Figbird (yellow) - reported at Speewah.
- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo - further reports from the Tablelands, near Mount Molloy.
- Latham's Snipe - reported on the coast and inland.

*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 and logged what they saw; the whole picture is built from those checklists. That was the week around Cairns and the Tablelands. The good birds are about, so it is a fine time to be out.

**Extra Extra! Read all about it ...**

H5 Bird Flu: some guidance for bird lovers, Tanya Loos [LINK](#)

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

**Norty Corner**



“You imbecile! We flew 12,000 miles for THIS?”