



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:

Friday 28th August - 6th Sept

Cairns Birders Festival Please refer to the program below
and on Cairnsbirders.com

Tuesday - every week

7:30 [Friends' House](#), Botanic Gardens, Collins Ave, Cairns

Thursday 10 September

7pm BirdLife talk, Malanda Hotel, Dr Cliff Frith
"Bird discoveries made through the camera lens"

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



CAIRNS BIRDING FESTIVAL

28th August - 6th September 2026

CAIRNS BIRDING FESTIVAL 2026			
Friday, 28 August 2026	PHOTO COMP	Entries closed 21st August - Judging underway	Doug
	1800	Stratford Library - Nest box success 11 Kamerunga Rd, Stratford	Denis Moser
Saturday, 29 August 2026	730	Cattana Wetlands Bird Photography with OM Rep - Luke Meet in the carpark	
	1600	Centenary Lakes Bird Photography with OM Rep - Luke Meet Greenslopes St, opposite the Rhondo Theatre, Pagoda	
Sunday, 30 August 2026	700	Cruise: Michaelmas Cay for those who've booked	
	1600	Centenary Lakes Meet near the Pagoda, self guided	
Monday, 31 August 2026	800	Lake Morris/Copperload Dam BYO morning tea Meet at the bottom gate - it is closed until 8am, if late, drive on	
	1600	Centenary Lakes Meet near the Pagoda, self guided	
	1800	Stratford Library - Habitats of Australia 11 Kamerunga Rd, Stratford	Iain Campbell
Tuesday, 1 September 2026	730	Botanical Gardens walk Meet at the Friends' Office, near the conservatory	Shane
	1600	Cruise: Daintree River Cruise For those who've booked - meet at Daintree Village Boat Ramp	Shane n Murray
Wednesday, 2 September 2026	700	Cruise: Daintree River Cruise For those who've booked - meet at Daintree Village Boat Ramp	Shane n Murray
	1500	Esplanade across from the RSL - self guided, look for other birders!	
Thursday, 3 September 2026	730	Lake Barrine, Thomas Rd, Hastings - BYO chairs, morning tea Meet at Lake Barrine Car Park	
	1445	Esplanade northern end - self guided, look for other birders!	
	1900	Spot-lighting tour - Yellow Arrow Walk Yellow Arrow Car Park, Aeroglen	Mikey
Friday, 4 September 2026	730	Behana Gorge - BYO chairs, morning tea Meet on Behana Gorge Rd, just after Bruce Hwy	Daniel
	1530	Esplanade across from the RSL - self guided, look for other birders!	
	1800	Stratford Library 11 Kamerunga Rd, Stratford	Scott Ritchie
Saturday, 5 September 2026	630	East Trinity - BYO morning tea Entry via a LOCKED gate - you MUST be on time and you can't get out until we are finished - could be 3+ hours. Meeting place 1812 Pine Creek, Yarrabah Rd	Denis
	1400 - 1600	Welcome the Waders: Esplanade opposite RSL	Mikey
Sunday, 6 September 2026	700	Cattana Wetlands - Morning tea. Catered RSVP. Meet in the carpark	Various various!

Festival: Michaelmas Cay Cruise Sunday 30th August.

Must book and pay before Sunday, July 26. (Fully booked - try the wait list)

All for the special price of \$228 per person. To check the wait list - (07) 4041 6218.

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.

If you have booked, and cannot go, PLEASE contact Murray - he has a waiting list.

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.

Luke will have cameras and lens to “play with” - more information in the links below.

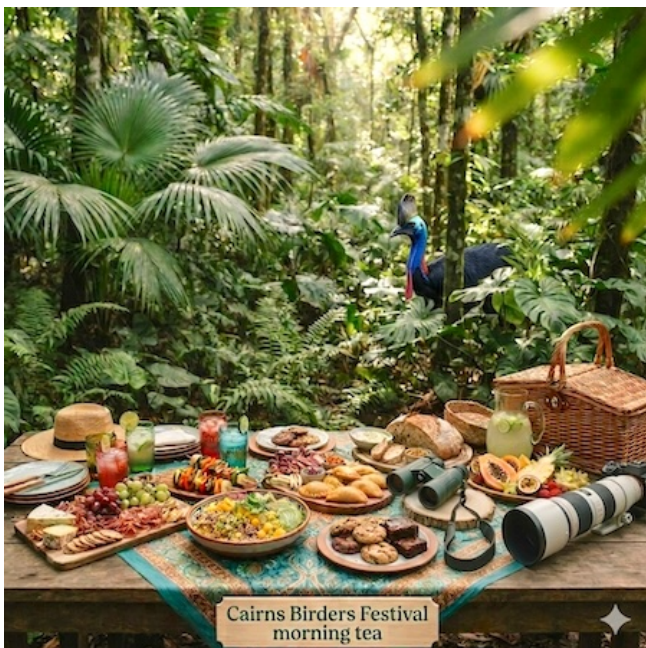
[Cattana Wetlands 7:30 Saturday 29th August](#)

[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.

Festival Photo Comp

VOTE NOW for the People's Choice award!

Members of Cairns Birders can join the [Cairns Birders Photo comp](#) page - please go through THIS YEAR'S entries and vote with a "LIKE".

Prizes are sourced from

- [Cairns Birders Online Store](#)
- [Night Sky Secrets](#) - thanks Ian
- [Cairns Camera House](#) - thanks Chris
- Private donations - thanks Jan



Sean Han

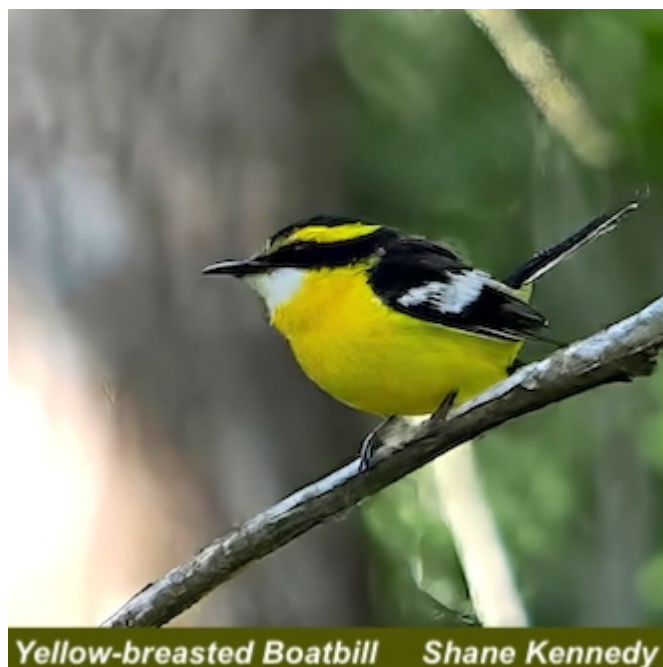
The tapestry of the new day began unfolding before us as we broke our fast. Rich golds woven into the deepening blue were brought to life by thousands of **Spectacled Flying-foxes** spread across the sky from the Yarrabah Peninsula, fleeing the rising sun. By the time they were settling, we were heading out on a bit of a blind date in Wooroonooran National Park.



Barred Cuckoo-shrike Shane Kennedy

We moved on to our second stop: an ecotone (the transition zone between two habitats) between the riverine forest and more open woodland. This spot kept us busy with **Northern Fantails**, **Grey Fantails**, **Brown-backed Honeyeaters**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbills**, and **Golden Whistlers**. Miles picked out **Red-backed Fairywrens** and **Red-browed Finches**. Two birds rocketed off the ground, disappearing just as quickly. Sean caught sight of white windows on the wings — they had the distinctive *jizz* of **nightjars**, our mystery birds of the day, or the “one that got away!”

We were the first to arrive at Upper Bridge, which was still shrouded in fog — a testament to the cool night. We were soon joined by about 14 other birders, some of whom had never been out this way before. **Cryptic Honeyeaters** were calling all around us. In contrast, we only heard a few of their cousins, the **Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters**. **Australasian Figbirds** were gathering on high, bare branches, seeking the sun’s warmth. Lovely as they are, we were more interested in the **Barred Cuckoo-shrikes** that were sunning and preening in significant numbers.



Yellow-breasted Boatbill Shane Kennedy

Our third stop, a woodland/rainforest ecotone, was less busy. We had good views of a male **Rufous Whistler**, but it was the calls of **Noisy Pittas** that got us a little excited. There were at least three calling from either side of the road. We wandered up the road in the midst of it all, peering into the shadows. None came into view, but we saw the **Fairy Gerygone**, **Grey Whistler**, and **Lemon-bellied Flyrobin**.



Rufous Fantail *Shane Kennedy*

We drove further into the rainforest. As we approached another gully, a **Noisy Pitta** flew across the road. We pulled over and again found ourselves surrounded by their calls, with at least another three birds in the vicinity. Though they were heard but not seen, the **Victoria's Riflebird**, **Spotted Catbird**, **Superb Fruit-dove**, and **Wompoo Fruit-dove** added to the chorus.

We moved on to our final stop. This is an open picnic and camping area in the heart of the rainforest, hugging the upper reaches of the Mulgrave River. We walked up the road to the trailhead and added a few more birds to our list, including the **Macleay's Honeyeater**, as well as **Spectacled Monarchs** and **White-eared Monarchs**. We were entertained by a cooperative **Rufous Fantail** that flitted about only metres away, darting in and out of cover, and in and out of the shade.

We had been at it for over three hours, though it didn't seem that long. However, we all agreed it was time for morning tea. As we settled down, we were joined by Heather and Peter, who had come this way for a Sunday drive. Good timing.

Fifty-eight birds for the day — we were very happy with that!

Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Pacific Emerald Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Superb Fruit-Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Pheasant Coucal, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Pacific Baza, Rainbow Bee-eater, Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Noisy Pitta, Spotted Catbird, Red-backed Fairywren, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Cryptic Honeyeater, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Macleay's Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Fairy Gerygone, Barred Cuckooshrike, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Bower's Shrikethrush, Little Shrikethrush (Rufous), Golden Whistler, Grey Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Australasian Figbird, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Black Butcherbird, Northern Fantail, Australian Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Victoria's Riflebird, White-eared Monarch, Australian Spectacled Monarch, Lemon-bellied Flyrobin, Welcome Swallow, Silvereye, Metallic Starling, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Red-browed Finch

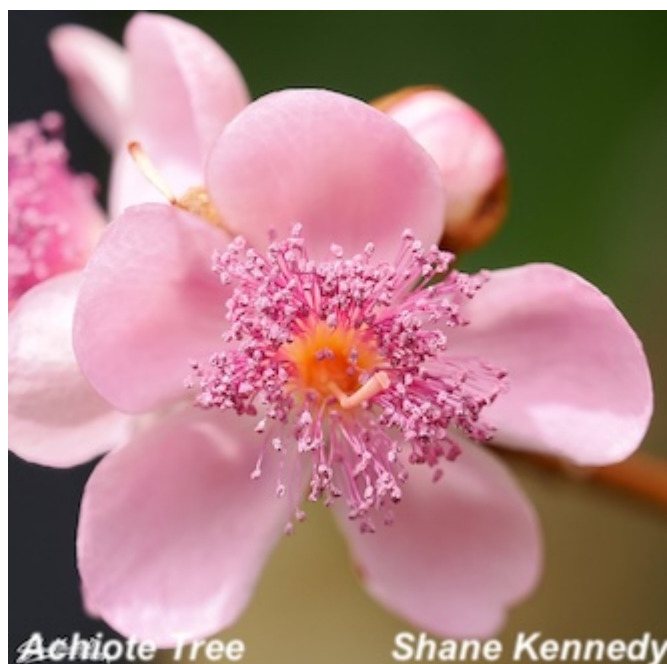
Cairns Botanic Gardens - Tuesday's Guided Bird Walk: Shane Kennedy

*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.*



Our usual meeting place was fenced off due to ongoing construction works, so we had to improvise. Those approaching from the east may have struggled to find us, but we ended up with 25 participants, including 14 locals, 10 from interstate, and 1 from Switzerland, in the hi-vis!

There is so much to get excited about at the moment in and around the Gardens, including coffee and cacao trees, handkerchief trees, Golden Bouquet, and Saraca trees in bloom. This is also a great time for our epiphytic orchids; we saw Pencil, Tea-tree, and Golden orchids all blooming this morning, and Denis gave his famous Achiote (aka Lipstick Tree) demonstration. Jake even managed to find a Cairns Birdwing caterpillar for a bit of show-and-tell.



Achiote Tree

Shane Kennedy



Rainbow Lorikeet

Scott Ritchie

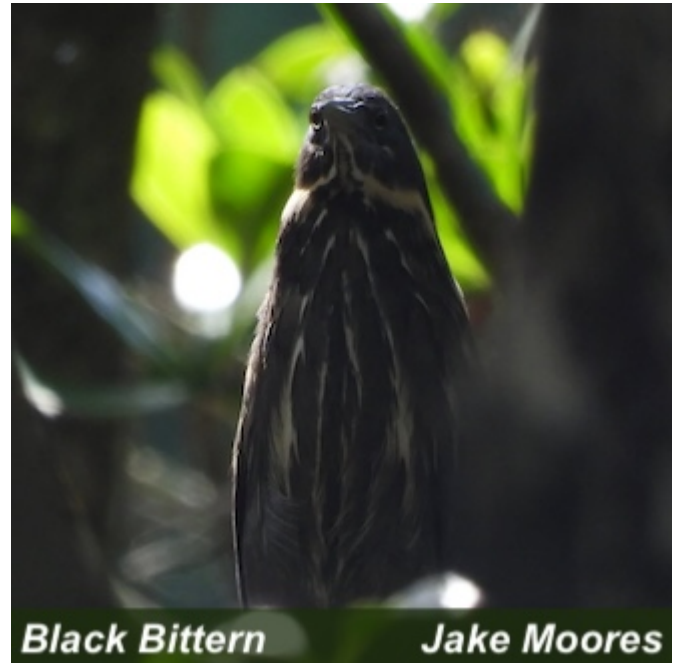
Walking up the back of the gardens, we saw our native Silk Handkerchief Tree, *Maniltoa lenticellata*, richly decorated in new growth to the point of diminishing the flowers. It didn't fool the birds, though; we had **Dusky Honeyeaters**, **Helmeted Friarbirds**, and **Rainbow Lorikeets** enjoying what the flowers had to offer. A bit further down the road, we had **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, **Sahul Sunbirds**, **Torresian Imperial-Pigeons**, and **Spangled Drongos** in good view, and caught just a glimpse of a **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** as it shot through.

Having circumnavigated the Gardens, we entered the boardwalk and made our way to Freshwater Lake. Leading the pack, Jake and I glimpsed a **Black Bittern** as it flew into the reeds and disappeared. We later saw a second one deep in the mangroves near Saltwater Lake. These have been scarce lately, so is this a sign of things to come?

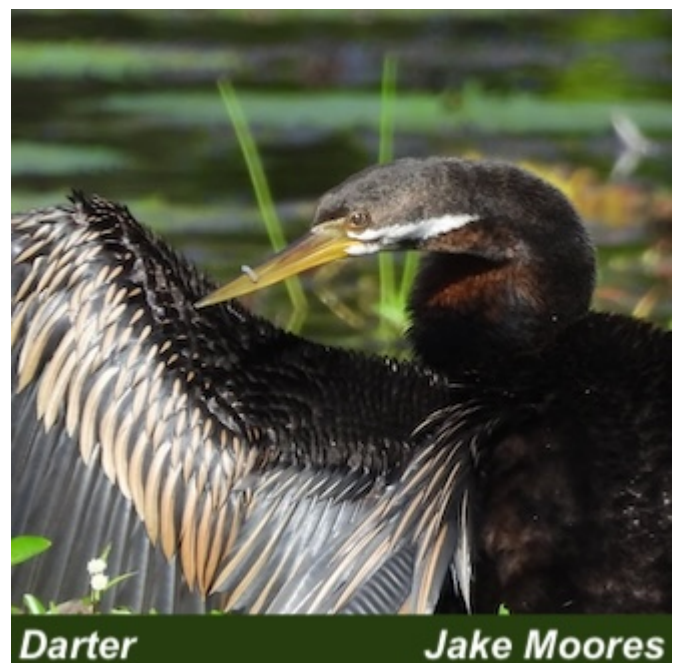


We got better views of the **Little Kingfisher**, as well as a couple of **Radjah Shelducks** who seemed determined to come up and say hello. We heard a **Sahul Cicadabird** nearby, but it did not show.

On the other side of Saltwater Creek, just as I was about to get into the Ant Plant routine, I noticed movement in the mangroves. A **Great Egret** was there, and a **Little Egret** too. Jake, a little further down, called out a **Little Heron** — and another movement deeper still revealed yet another **Black Bittern**. Pointing out the bittern, even with a laser pointer, was a job in itself, but several people are eating lifer pie with this one!



Still on Freshwater Lake, we saw our for-now-resident **Australasian Grebe** and **Comb-crested Jacana**. Neither species is truly resident here, and they rarely stay long. Denis spotted our target bird, the **Little Kingfisher**, away over on the island. We made our way there, adding an **Australasian Darter** and **Pacific Black Ducks** along the way. We also met **Holmes**, a new arrival and playmate for **Moriarty** — both dumped domestic ducks, with Muscovy genes showing strongly in **Holmes**.



Just a stone's throw away, Lois put us onto a couple of **Double-eyed Fig-Parrots** that seemed to be exploring potential nesting sites. These stunning little birds kept us entertained for a while, and then one of the vocal **Torresian Kingfishers** put in an appearance, so we moved away to get better views.

Lerp Lane was alive with **Australasian Figbirds**, while the **Green (aka Yellow) Orioles** were harder to see. Here too were **Yellow Honeyeaters**, **Spangled Drongos**, and **Leaden Flycatchers**.



Torresian Kingfisher Scott Ritchie



Dble-eyed Fig-Parrot Shane Kennedy

We moved on to the White Cedar. This tree can be good. Today, there was a pair of **Torresian Kingfishers** calling in clear view. Not to be outdone, a **Laughing Kookaburra** flew into a prominent perch and gave a full-throttled chuckle, much to the delight of our international guest.

50 species. All this and more - it had been a cracker of a morning, and so said all of us over coffee.

Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrids aka *Moriarty and Holmes*), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Sahul Brush Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Grebe, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Black Bittern, Little Egret, Little Heron, Great Egret, Plumed Egret, Osprey, Pacific Baza, Brahminy Kite, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Torresian Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Yellow Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Welcome Swallow, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird

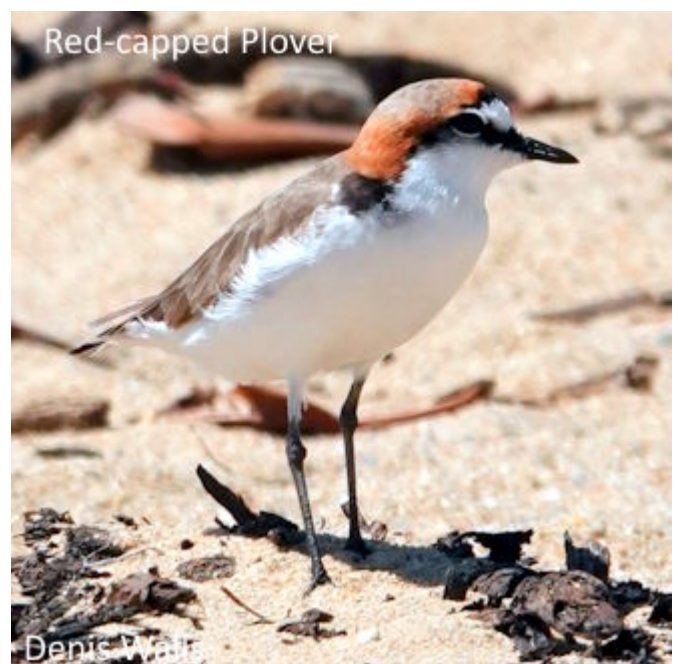
When I was involved with the *Places You Love initiative* in the late 2010s, the southern boffins asked me what bird might represent FNQ in the battle to strengthen the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. I thought it needed to be a threatened shorebird and suggested the Far Eastern Curlew; consequently, that magnificent creature became the poster bird for our region during that long campaign.

The problem with the migratory FE Curlew was that many people confused it with the Bush Stone-curlew and I got abused on radio for saying how threatened they are. (FE Curlew numbers have collapsed by over 80% in the last three decades). That's the reason, to this day, that I call the BSCs, Bush Thick-knees, following their global family nomenclature. Also, with FE Curlews disappearing for half the year to the northern hemisphere it was harder to maintain permanent, emotional engagement with the bird.

We've always struggled a bit in FNQ to name one single bird that can resonate the way that Hooded Plover, Regent Honeyeater, Carnaby Cockatoo and other important species do in regions down south. Since most of our listed species are coastal, maybe we need to choose a beach bird that is present all year where people and dogs are plentiful. In this way we can inform and expand the birding message which in turn will hopefully lead to greater shorebird protection and awareness all round.

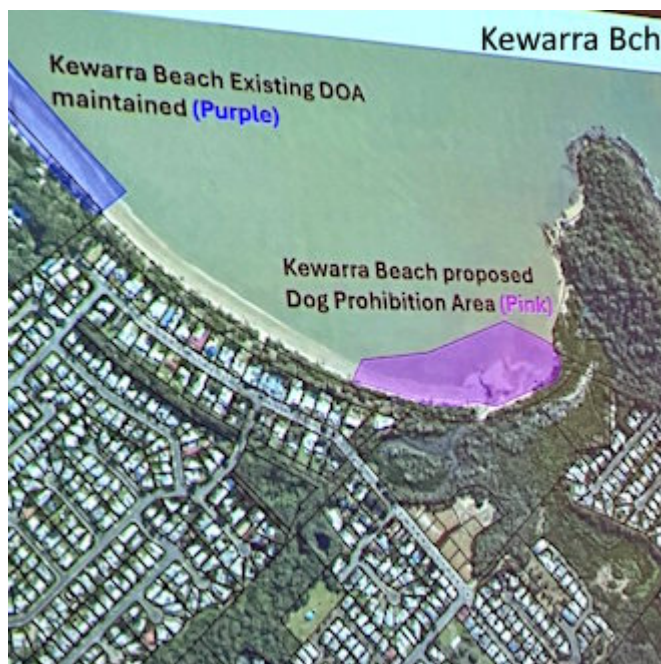
I'm advocating the **Red-capped Plover**! First of all, it's a gorgeous little bird. Plus, very few of our shorebirds are beach nesters, but the RCP is one and is very active at the moment on the Northern Beaches. Nests and eggs are very prone to getting trampled, and the birds chased by dogs, so what better time to increase their protection when all our migratory, non-breeding waders are returning from the northern hemisphere exhausted and needing a peaceful feed. They would gain vicarious benefit from greater public awareness!

Our sub-group has raised this matter with Cairns Regional Council at our quarterly meeting on 26th August regarding cordoning and signage, and I'll raise it with BirdLife Australia, regarding promotional paraphernalia on the delightful Red-capped Plover. BL have already agreed to send RCP stickers for distribution to schools and elsewhere. Do you agree with my choice of shorebird to be our regional icon?



There were two main agenda items discussed at this morning's meeting. Scott, Shane and I were present along with six council officers. Paul Fisk, Sally Sheldon and Mikey Kudo sent their apologies.

1. Proposed changes to off leash dog areas, principally in Kewarra and Machans Beach areas. This is a very positive outcome from lobbying that has occurred over time to protect our beach dwelling birds. Under this proposal, dogs would be excluded from the southern sections of Kewarra and Machans Bchs. This would dramatically increase the protection of Beach Stone-curlews and Red-capped Plovers (see previous article). Naturally, this has to go through a community consultation and approval from councillors. There will be resistance but the intent is to offset lost off leash areas with replacements, less impactful on birds, as compensation.
2. The building of a wider new bridge over Saltwater Ck in Centenary Lakes. This probably won't happen until next year as planning is still in the early stages. We have been invited to meet with council officers at the site of the proposed new bridge on 9 September to get a sense of what this work will entail and ascertain the kind of environmental footprint it will inflict. We will be particularly keen to protect all significant trees in the process although there will, inevitably, be mangrove and small tree removal.



3. A third item on Bird Flu did not get an airing largely because we ran out of time but also because there is not much to add from the council's perspective. The response is being led by the Federal Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). At the State level the response is from the Dept of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) and at Local Govt responsibilities include **Surveillance and Reporting**. Support surveillance activities by ensuring council staff and contractors promptly report suspected disease events involving sick or deceased wildlife. **Carcass Management**. Assist State biosecurity and environmental agencies with the assessment, collection, transport, and disposal of deceased wildlife located on council managed land, in accordance with approved biosecurity and workplace health and safety procedures.

Seabird colony photography: How I'm preparing for Michaelmas Cay. Scott Ritchie.

The Cairns Bird festival is upon us! And one of the most exciting trips is a visit to the seabird colonies on Michaelmas Cay. I've had the privilege of photographing on this coral cay twice. The first time I went was in the middle of the wet, and while it wasn't raining, at least not all the time, there was a lot of cloud. I was using the Canon RF 100-500 lens. The birds were under nice, soft, even light and made for great photography opportunities. The second time, I went in the dry season, a very bright, sunny day. I use my Canon RF 100 to 500 lens with a polarizing filter. The filter helped to cut the glare, making the skies a nice deep blue and bringing out the bird's colours. It also serves to protect the lens element from sand and salt.

Forget about low light, golden hour photography. By the time you get out on the cay the sun's going to be beating down, it'll be 10 AM maybe even 11. So get ready for a bright day. Make sure you wear plenty of sunscreen and as it's sandy and saltwater, you might have to want a dry bag to haul your camera gear in. Here are a few styles of photos you want to think about employing.

1. **Close-ups of seabirds.** Seabirds are often on the nest. You might get lovely pictures of terns feeding chicks or helping to build the nest, or closeup portraits of birds such as a Brown Booby, staring at you with its brilliant blue eyes. Although we are relatively close to the birds, you want to have some reach with your lens to capture intimate closeups.



Crested Terns feeding chick. You will have numerous opportunities to shoot and film intimate interactions between birds.

2. **Birds in flight.** Before you start firing away, have a look at the birds and observe what they're doing. Are they flying in with fish to feed chicks or their mate. They usually feed just offshore, and you'll be able to get good BIF shots of them coming in to feed their family. Try to get the sun behind you. Or wait for a passing cloud to avoid harsh sunlight. You also save a variety of different birds, including Crested Terns, boobies, and perhaps frigatebirds that can be taken while they are flying. As it's going to be very light, even if it's a bit cloudy, you have plenty of light for a high shutter speed. I recommend using at least 1/4000s of a second, with whatever ISO works best for the bird. This might be approximately ISO 3000. Set your exposure before you start shooting.



Crested Tern with 6-barred Wrasse. You will have no shortage of BIF opportunities!

3. **Birdscapes.** Really nothing captures the atmosphere of seabird nesting colonies like landscape images that encompass the bird, the sea, and the substrate. Take quite a few photos of this if you can, and if you can bring a wide-angle lens, please do. Otherwise, I think you could probably get decent images with your phone. They also take great video including slo-mo of birds flying above the cay.



Birdscape at Michaelmas Kay. This classic FNQ landscape captures the sand, the beautiful Coral Sea, the background mountains, and the chaos of a marine bird nesting site.

So what am I going to take? Canon RF5-2 camera. I think I'll go with RF 100 – 500 zoom, and as I want a bit more reach, I put the 1.4X extender on too. There's plenty of light so I'm not worried about losing a F stop or two. I'll add the polarising filter too. And I'm going to bring my original R5 with my 24 to 105 zoom lens to get some interesting birdscape shots. I'd also bring at least two batteries with you and maybe an extra memory card. You don't want to be out there for two hours and run out of memory, or juice. Afterall, if you're shooting BIF, you really eat up the battery and the memory card. And of course I'm bringing a sun shirt, towel, reef sandals, a broad hat, plenty of sunscreen and plenty of water.

I look forward to seeing you out there. I think you'll have a great time. And bring some togs you might want to go for a swim too.

Good birding and great shooting.

Blue Skies and Bushland: Walking Bradley Head

We lived and worked in Sydney for some 30 years, and subsequent return trips have always been purely social. This time, however, we had a bit more free time to "discover" places we'd never been and even sneak in some birding.

On this particular day, we took full advantage of the clear blue skies and the sparkling harbour by catching the ferry across to Taronga wharf, then embarking on the coastal walk around Bradley Head. The ferry service remains the absolute best way to explore the area, offering awesome views of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House. The coastal walk itself presents wonderful vistas of this great harbour, looking across the water to the city skyline, Rose Bay, Watson's Bay, the Heads, and Manly.

**New Holland Honeyeater** Shane Kennedy**Aust'n Brush-turkey** Shane Kennedy**Grey Butcherbird** Shane Kennedy

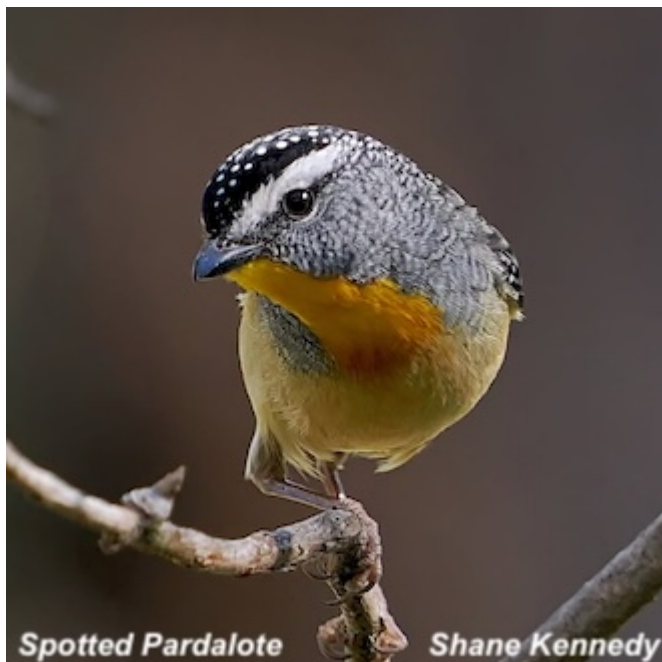
One of the first birds we noticed on our walk was an impressive **Australian Brush-turkey** strutting his stuff. We never saw them when I lived here, though a few small populations existed in the northern suburbs. We had heard news of their steady move south—including one memorable headline announcing they had crossed the harbour! On this trip, we saw many south of the



harbour; they are apparently reclaiming their old haunts as far south as the Illawarra. They became locally extinct during the Depression nearly 100 years ago, as their eggs were highly favoured, while the tough old birds were less so.

The coastal bushland here was rich with flowering plants, including Banksia, Wattle, and Bottlebrush. This provides an ideal habitat for various birds, including the **Eastern Whipbird**, **Red Wattlebird**, and **New Holland Honeyeater**. **Grey Butcherbirds** found rich pickings among the flora, while **Australian Magpies** frequented the open patches of grass.

At one point, a loud commotion broke out in the undergrowth. A group of **Variegated Fairywrens** was kicking off at an unseen threat. Their alarm calls attracted **White-browed Scrubwrens**, and together they made brief appearances as they poked about in the thicket. A beautiful **Spotted Pardalote** grew curious too, flying right down to a bare branch at head height and paying us no heed at all. It was our last day out and about in Sydney, and we couldn't have asked for a better send-off.



Look Up! Why Right Now is Peak Orchid-Spotting Season in Cairns

If you've been needing an excuse to lace up your walking shoes and soak in some fresh air, the local flora just gave you a spectacular one. Right now, Cairns is putting on a masterclass in wild botany, and all you have to do to witness it is look up.

Our native epiphytic orchids—those clever "air plants" that grow harmlessly on the rough bark of our city's trees—are officially waking up and bursting into full bloom.

We were lucky enough to catch a sneak peek of this seasonal showcase during last Tuesday's group walk through the [Cairns Botanic Gardens](#). Tucked away in the lush canopy, a trifecta of local orchid royalty was flowering simultaneously:



- **The Golden Orchid** (*Dendrobium discolor*): A heavy hitter of the tropical coastline. It features spectacular, twisted, bronze-yellow petals that look like they've been sculpted out of warm gold.
- **The Pencil Orchid** (*Dendrobium calamiforme* aka *Dendrobium teretifolium* var. *fasciculatum*): This beauty produces heavy, cascading masses of delicate, spidery white blossoms that contrast beautifully against its thick, reed-like green leaves. When in full bloom, the masses of white spindly petals resemble lace, hence it is also affectionately known as the "Bridal Veil" orchid.



- **The Brown Tea-Tree Orchid** (*Dendrobium canaliculatum*): A smaller but highly fragrant beauty that typically settles into the papery bark of local melaleucas, showing off white and yellow flowers with purple spots in the labellum. Their pseudobulbs are generally short and stout leading to another common name of Onion Orchid!

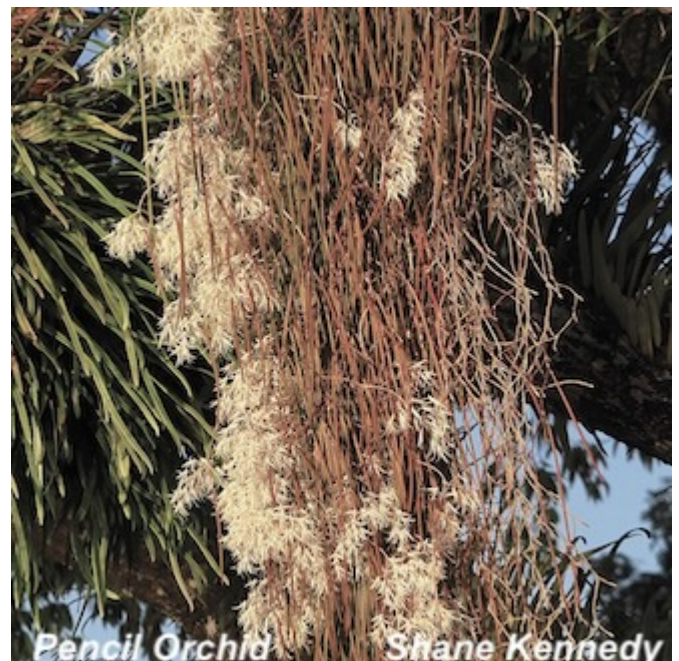
Your Shortcut to the Best View in Town

You don't have to hike deep into the rainforest to see them. If you want to see these botanical gems putting on a show right this second, grab a coffee and take a casual stroll down the [Cairns Esplanade](#).



The absolute best hotspot right now is a single, magnificent host tree located **just north of the Cenotaph war memorial**. If you pause under its branches and look up into the lower fork, you will find massive, decades-old wild clumps of both the **Pencil Orchid** and the **Golden Orchid** absolutely covered in fresh flowers.

It's a beautiful reminder of how wild and uniquely tropical our little corner of the world truly is. Don't miss the window—get out there this week, stretch your legs, and enjoy the free local show!



Rowdy's Ramblings

Bird song and music: - [Free Bird - Chapman Stick Duo](#)

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?

Black-faced Monarch



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.

Extra Extra! Read all about it ...

North Queensland Naturalist Journal - If the Cairns Frogmouth has just whet your appetite and you are wanting more substantive information on the natural world, then check this out! - [LINK](#)

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

Our Major Sponsors

CameraHouse



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

Last week a Common Redshank turned up on the Cairns Esplanade and set off the twitch of the year. This week the story is simpler, and rather lovely: it stayed. Eight days on, the same bird is still working the same stretch of mud, and birders are still coming from near and far to see it.

The bird that would not leave

A vagrant wader like this usually gives you a day, maybe two, before it moves on or vanishes. This one has settled in. It has now been reported every day for more than a week, confirmed by reviewers, and was still being logged on the Esplanade late on Sunday afternoon. Word has travelled well beyond Cairns, and the visitor books tell the story, birders down from interstate, guides bringing clients, and no shortage of first-timers getting a long-awaited lifer. For a bird that spends its life on the far side of the world, it has made itself very much at home on our foreshore. By week's end the northern end of the Esplanade had racked up more checklists than anywhere else in the region, the clearest sign yet of how many people made the trip.



Common Redshank

Mikey Kudo

If you have been meaning to go and have not yet, the message is simple: it is still there, and it is not shy about the northern end of the Esplanade at the right tide.

Shorebird season hits its stride

The Redshank did not arrive in a vacuum. It rode in on the leading edge of the returning shorebird migration, and this week that wave built in earnest. A Marsh Sandpiper appeared at the northern end of the Esplanade, Black-naped and Roseate Terns turned up out on the reef, and a Sooty Oystercatcher was found up at Ellis Beach. The Sanderling at the Barron River mouth carried on through the week. It is shaping up as a strong season on the coast, and the next few weeks should only add to it.

Around the region

Away from the shorebirds there was plenty about. A White-throated Gerygone and a Great Bowerbird were nice additions on the coast, and up on the Tablelands the Julatten patch, Crater Lakes and the Mount Molloy country kept ticking over. Effort eased off a little midweek with some cooler, quieter days, but the weekend brought people back out in good numbers.

Flagged as unusual by eBird

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

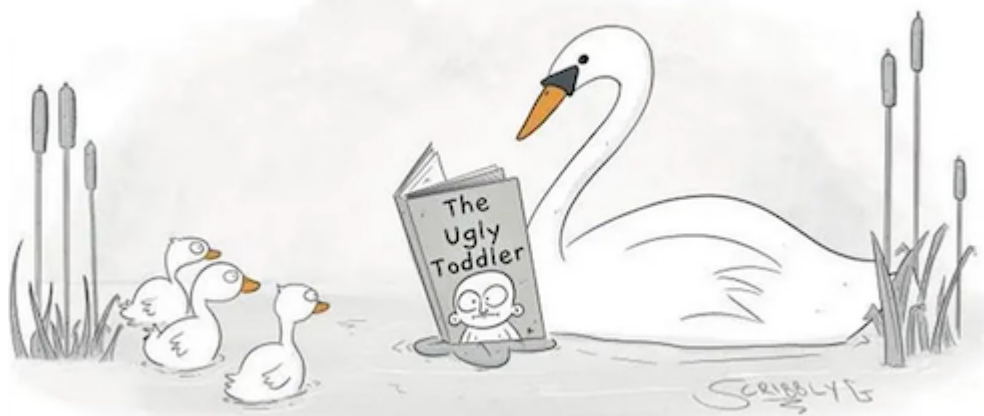
- **Common Redshank** - reported daily, and confirmed, on the Cairns Esplanade.
- **Sanderling** - reported at the Barron River mouth and the Esplanade.
- **Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo** - reported on the Tablelands and at the Esplanade.
- **Australian Boobook (red morph)** - reported on the Tablelands.
- **Ashy-bellied White-eye** - reported from Green Island, off Cairns.

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, and to the local photographers who share their shots; the whole picture is built from all of it.

That was the week around Cairns and the Tablelands. With the Redshank still in residence and the shorebirds pouring in, there has rarely been a better time to be on the coast.

Norty Corner



Swan fairy tales

