



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:

Check for updates [HERE](#)

Starry starry night 12 September

6pm Tablelands - see below for details

Saturday 12th

6:30pm Moth Night, Cattana Wetlands

Sunday 13th September

8am Kay Road, Kennedy Hwy, (before Mareeba)
Turn into Kay Rd and wait for start there.

Sunday 20th September

8am Rifle Creek then Abattoir Swamp
Meet at Rifle Creek Rest Area, Mt Molloy

Tuesday - every week

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

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](#)



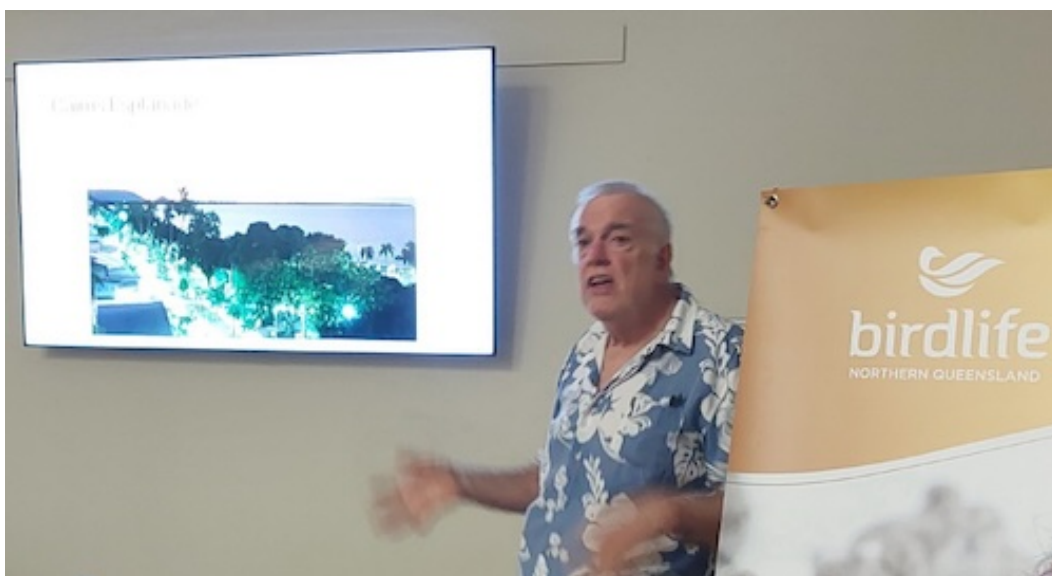
Art by Yorz Trooley

Cairns Birding Festival Day 8: Scott Ritchie on Backyard Birds: Mikey Kudo

Backyard Birds: Birding Gems in Urban Cairns

The Cairns Birding Festival concluded the three talk program with an inspiring photo presentation by Scott Ritchie on birds of the Cairns area. The talk was exceptionally well attended, with around 70 people joining us—the highest attendance at one of our recent Cairns events.

As part of BirdLife Australia's Backyard Birding initiative, which encourages people across Australia to discover and appreciate birds in their own local areas, Scott took us on a fascinating journey through some of the remarkable birding locations right here in urban Cairns.



Scott's message was both simple and encouraging: you don't have to travel to Africa or South America to experience incredible birdlife. Some truly spectacular birds can be found in our own backyards, gardens, parks, beaches and even cemeteries!

Through a wonderful collection of breathtaking photographs, Scott showcased the beauty and diversity of Cairns's urban birdlife. His presentation was also filled with plenty of humour, with some funny and unexpected images that kept the audience entertained throughout the evening.

Scott reminded us that amazing bird photography and memorable birding experiences can be much closer to home than we might think. His enthusiasm encouraged everyone to look a little more closely at the birds around us and appreciate the wildlife that shares our urban environment.

It was a fantastic way to finish the Cairns Birding Festival presentations, and we thank Scott and everyone who came along and made the evening such a success.

A recording of Scott's talk is available on our YouTube channel for those who missed it or would like to enjoy it again! www.birdlifeq.org/post/backyard-birds-birding-gems-in-urban-cairns

Since the rehabilitation work began at East Trinity in the early 2000s, I have been making regular trips there. I used to go alone or with one or two others but in 2009 I started bringing groups of birders with the permission of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the Mandingalby Yidinji Traditional Owners.

The first official bird list, in recent times, was in October 2009 when we identified 91 species between 6.30 and 11am. This has probably been the most thorough bird count conducted with my involvement, as it was a large group and we covered all the different habitats in the 740ha property, including rainforest. There was also a large number of migrants present and the tide was low allowing us access to a greater number of waders than usual.

Since then, groups have been smaller, sometimes the month visited has been before migrants return and sometimes the tide has been unfavourable when we have been able to visit. In addition, after the successful de-acidification program of acid sulphate soils over the past 20 years and the tidal interchange through the bund wall sluice gates, mangroves have replaced the melaleucas which grew when the land was protected from the sea. This has meant that it is much harder to see waders and do an effective count within the property. Nevertheless, the bird numbers have invariably been in the mid-70s during our visits demonstrating the immense bird diversity of the area.

It was in this context that Cairns Birders and BirdLife NQ visited East Trinity on Saturday morning as part of Bird Week, meeting at 6.30am in front of Gate 2 into the property. It was a stunning day with perfect visibility: cool, cloudless and windless. The plan, as often, was to go down Lee Yan Rd and enter via Gate 1 and then exit by Gate 2 after doing a significant tour of the property to maximise our bird sightings. Six cars were left by the Yarrabah roadside as the big group of 25 people squeezed into seven vehicles.

Inside the property the dirt roads were in a much poorer state than last year with large potholes due to the recent rains, so we had to proceed slowly. This was not a problem as it allowed for great viewing as we



Grey Whistler

Scott Ritchie



Mistletoebird

Patrick Howlett

drove beside the fence line getting out on two occasions to enjoy and photograph the flocks of **Chestnut-breasted and Scaly-breasted Mannikin, Crimson Finch and Golden-headed Cisticola** feeding on the Guinea Grass. **Red-backed Fairywrens** were everywhere. I counted five **Forest Kingfishers**. Whatever you think of feral grasses, they certainly provide good tucker for some of our most beautiful small birds.

Our next destination was Little Halls Creek and, one of my favourite places, Peat Swamp. It's hard to imagine that this iconic spot was touted as a dumping ground for dredge spoil from the deepening and widening of Trinity Inlet in the late 2010s to allow in massive cruise ships. Fortunately, common sense prevailed following environmental pressure and the spoil went to a less damaging location. Along the riverbank and adjacent open area there were **Yellow-spotted, Yellow and Brown Honeyeaters** galore with **Shining Flycatcher** calling loudly and a male coming into view. **Australasian Figbird, Yellow/Green and Olive-backed Orioles, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Leaden Flycatcher and Varied Triller** were also active. A **Grey Whistler** made an appearance, always a great bird to see.

Along the Peat Swamp track, **Brown-backed Honeyeaters** were starting to call and nest build but otherwise the area was surprisingly quiet. As we joined Middle Road – the major artery within the property which would connect with Abbott St in the centre of Cairns were you to cross Trinity Inlet – **Little-bronze and Sahul Brush Cuckoos** were calling. The drivers went back to fetch the cars and rejoined the rest of the group in the area known for Tawny Grassbird but they were not to be seen or heard.

The walkers got back into the vehicles and we turned left towards the Firewood Creek water wonderland. Almost immediately I saw a **Great-billed Heron** fly up from the bank edge. Mikey wasn't so sure, but when we got out of the cars, perched high up in a melaleuca, Mikey immediately confirmed it as our largest and most majestic heron. The birders were in seventh heaven. It was a lifer for at least six in the group and the bird was so obliging that it stood regally and mostly motionless for at least 15 minutes before it got bored and took off. Everyone got killer views. Definitely the trip highlight. Look how a bracket fungus is supporting its left foot.



I had been thinking of going to another spot where these giant herons are sometimes found but there was no need so we all settled down for morning tea and biscuits a little further on, looking across at **Australasian Darter** and multiple kingfishers. There would have been about 10 **Sacred** and, perhaps, eight **Torresian Kingfishers** seen or heard during the morning. Combining that with the Forests seen earlier made this the biggest haul of kingfishers that I have ever witnessed at East Trinity. Daniel called a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** in our picnic surroundings and going back along the track towards the bund wall we stopped for a little party of **Lovely Fairywrens**. Prior to that while some were drinking coffee a small group were thrilled with an entertaining and confiding pair of **Shining Flycatcher**. They're such stunning dimorphic birds.



On the Hills Creek bridge the view was spectacular and we enjoyed Brahminy Kite, jumping fish and Purple Climber Crabs aplenty. There wasn't time for us to head down to George Creek to get better views of some waders and Mangrove Robin which we had heard previously. We exited the property around 10.45 and then spent a further 30 minutes past the now barricaded Gate 4 to check out the mudflat species on the seaside of East Trinity. Although it was a gorgeous scene, the tide was so far out that it was difficult to do an effective count. Nevertheless, we added another 10 species to the list bringing the total for the morning to 71, three fewer than last year.

Here is the alphabetical list with birds of special note or rarity in bold: Australasian Darter, Australasian Figbird, Australian Tern, Australian Swiftlet, Australian White Ibis, Bar-shouldered Dove, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black Butcherbird, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Brown Honeyeater, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Crimson Finch, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Dusky Honeyeater, Far Eastern Curlew, Forest Kingfisher, Golden-headed Cisticola, Great Egret, **Great-billed Heron**, Green/Yellow Oriole, **Grey Whistler**, Grey-tailed Tattler, Helmeted Friarbird, **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, Large-billed Gerygone, Leaden Flycatcher, Little Black Cormorant, Little Egret, Little Heron, Little Pied Cormorant, **Lovely Fairywren**, Magpie-lark, **Mangrove Robin**, Masked Lapwing, Mistletoebird, **Olive-backed Oriole**, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Pacific Baza, Pacific Black Duck, **Pale-vented Bush-hen**, Peaceful Dove, Pheasant Coucal, Plumed Egret, Rainbow Bee-eater, Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Sacred Kingfisher, Sahul Brush Cuckoo, Sahul Cicadabird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia/Mannikin, Shining Flycatcher, Silver Gull, Spangled Drongo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Torresian

Imperial-Pigeon, Torresian Kingfisher, Varied Honeyeater, Varied Triller, Welcome Swallow, Whimbrel, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, White-breasted Woodswallow, White-faced Heron, White-throated Honeyeater, **Wompoo Fruit-Dove**, Yellow Honeyeater, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater. (71)





The Welcome Waders Return to Cairns event was held on Saturday from 2 to 4pm, as part of the final weekend of the Cairns Birding Festival. The weather was perfect, with sunny skies and a light breeze, creating ideal conditions for enjoying the returning migratory shorebirds.



Eastern Curlew **Warwick Norman**



Grey-tailed Tattler **Shane Kennedy**

The event began in 2017 after a conversation with Andy Anderson, who asked me, “Why not celebrate the arrival of waders, rather than just saying goodbye to them in March?” That simple question inspired the Welcome Waders event, which has continued as a relaxed celebration of the return of these remarkable birds.

The concept is simple: enjoy watching waders with family, local friends and visitors who appreciate these often-overlooked brown and grey birds. These avian travellers undertake incredible journeys of thousands of kilometres, taking enormous risks along the way to survive and return to their feeding grounds.

This year’s event was well attended, with more than 40 people joining us. It was particularly wonderful to see familiar faces from Innisfail and Malanda, as well as local birders and visitors sharing their appreciation of the waders.



Because the event was held a couple of weeks later than usual this year, we were rewarded with a much larger number of birds.

Unfortunately, I was a bit too busy chatting with my friends to do a proper bird count. But I'd estimate there were around 350–400 waders present.

The wader species observed included Great Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler, Bar-tailed Godwit, Terek Sandpiper, Greater Sand Plover and Pacific Golden Plover



The final event of the Festival started with an early gathering at Cattana Wetlands. Our events to date had been well attended with up to 40 participants, and so it was again today. Our quiet little Cairns Birders' elves had already arrived and hidden themselves in the bushes preparing our sumptuous morning tea!



We started off with a stroll around the carpark where we got some of the usual suspects, **Magpie-lark**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Green aka Yellow Oriole** and **Mistletoebird**. We moved in to Crake Pond which is looking a bit sad after having some herbicide applied to rid it of invasive weeds. Nonetheless there were two **Sacred Kingfishers**, several **Pacific Black Ducks** and a couple of **Plumed Egrets** in view. As I scanned the dead reedy growth I picked out a **Black Bittern**. I got the front-runners on to it and then rushed back to rally the stragglers. This bird-of-the-day was difficult to see even when it was in plain sight, but it stayed in view for quite some time slowly moving to the bank. Most of us had moved on before it disappeared. Not too far away, Jon lay sprawled on the path, sniper position, and held his nerve as a **Pacific Emerald Dove** just kept walking towards him, a great bird for Cattana.



We made our way to the causeway via the grassy field where we saw dozens of **Scaly-breasted Munia** and a lone **Golden-headed Cisticola**. **Brown-backed Honeyeaters** and **Brown Honeyeaters** were in the melaleucas and Callistemons on the other side of the track. Once at the causeway, Jude picked out a distant speck of blue, a **Little Kingfisher**, another highly



Little Kingfisher Emma Steele

Surprisingly our time was up and we retraced our steps. Jude, a few steps ahead, was doing that weaving dance, trying to look through the foliage. She had a female **Sahul Cicadabird**. It was a tough one to get and it'd moved out of sight for most. Walking on we passed Jabiru Lake giving us our water birds including **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Green Pygmy-Goose** and a pair of fighting **Little Pied Cormorants**.



Papuan Frogmouth Jon Westaway

prized bird. There were nesting **Large-billed Gerygones** here, so too were **Little Bronze-Cuckoos** that looked like they may have been wanting to lay an egg in the Gerygone's nest.

A little further on, that more open grassland, we had **Black-faced Cuckooshrike** and **White-bellied Cuckooshrike** and lo and behold a raptor on the raptor platform! **Brown Goshawk** was the call. Bruce had a treat in store, he knew of a **Papuan Frogmouth** in a tree around the other side of this patch. Could he find it? Yes, he did; who was the Doubting Thomas!? This bird is only 2m off the ground and peculiarly wrapped around a branch, doubly effective camouflage.



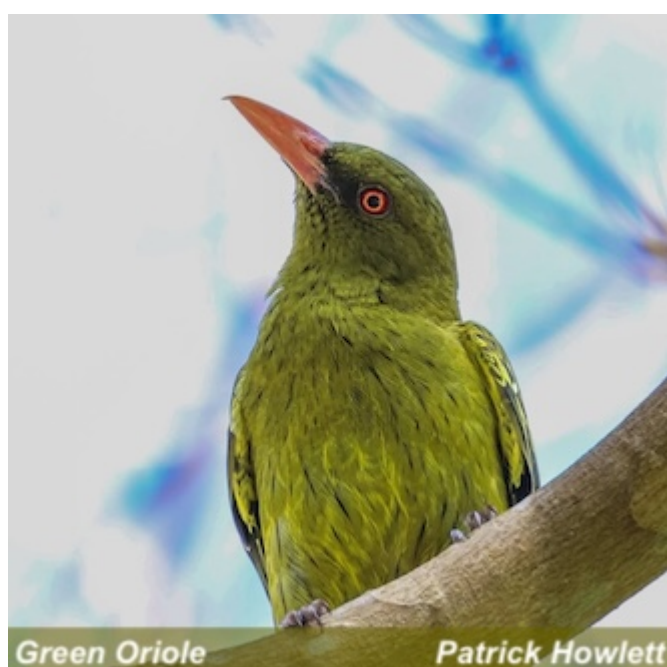
Little Bronze-cuckoo Shane Kennedy

It had been a great walk, with several GREAT birds on the list, a fitting way to conclude the Festival ... or had we? We took a little detour and entered a glade, where we found Rowdy and his team of wood elves with tables laden with goodies, savoury and sweet. It was a merry gathering, though bittersweet as it meant farewells to some of our interstaters.

Thanks to all those who helped out with guiding the walks, writing reports, speaking at our info sessions, catering and participating. I think it was the best Festival ever!!

48 species

Green Pygmy-Goose, Pacific Black Duck, Orange-footed Megapode, Red Junglefowl (Domestic type), Pacific Emerald Dove, Peaceful Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Papuan Frogmouth, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Black Bittern, Eastern Cattle-Egret, Plumed Egret, Osprey, Brown Goshawk, Pacific Baza, Little Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Little Shrikethrush, Olive-backed Oriole, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Golden-headed Cisticola, Welcome Swallow, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia



This remains a very popular event for locals and with many folk travelling from interstate to join in. We are blest to live in this part of the world, so rich in natural beauty and avifauna.

Here's a HUGE thank you to those who have stepped up to help out including (and there is the risk of leaving someone out) Sean, Doug, Jan, Denis W, Mikey, Graham, Daniel, Rowdy n Annie and the catering team.

Thanks to our guest speakers Luke (OM), Denis Moeser, Iain Campbell and Scott Ritchie.

Thanks too to our participants (the best) and partners [Seastar](#) and Murray ([Daintree Boatman](#)) and sponsors Jan, Chris @ [Camera House](#) and Ian at [Night Sky Secrets](#)

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/567936?continue> **173 species**

Catering wrap:

Festival picnic included tea and coffee for 45 people along with a choice of 15 different dishes.

Add cups, plates, cutlery, serviettes, garbage bags and the list goes on - \$400.

Annie's famous cakes and sweetings - only \$80 and worth far, far more.

Income from the donation box etc was \$171.35 which is more than double our best ever.

There was also a \$20 donation, all of which will appear on next month's statement.

I like to think to it was a fitting finale to a wonderful festival,

Our Major Sponsors



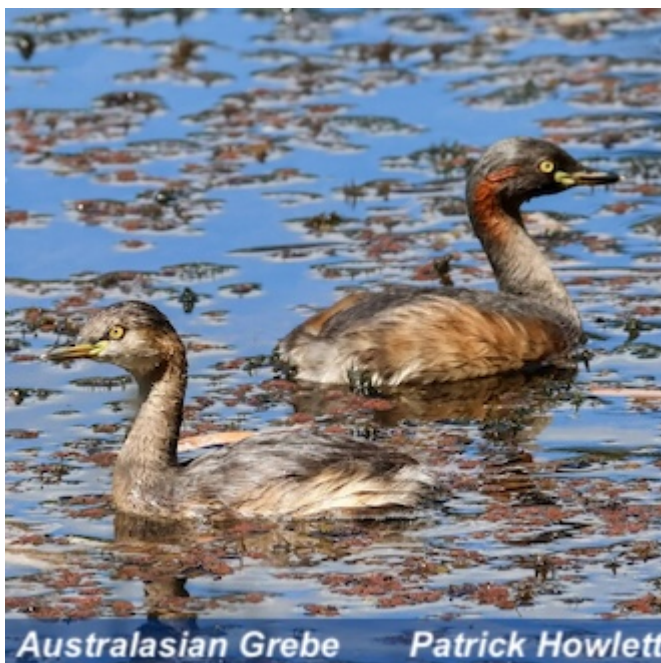


Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all for participating.
Winners should make contact with the editor to collect your prize!

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.](#)

Another Tuesday rolls around, and what a magic start it was. There were enough dark grey clouds, rippled with pink, the colour of galahs, and the horizon was yellow. How does that work? So often we see the yellow horizon blending into blue, or in this case pink, without the transition through green or orange??

Twenty eight gathered at the designated spot including folk from the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. Denis gave the Acknowledgment of Country before we headed out, pausing for the coffee, chocolate (cacao) and Sausage trees! Scott pointed out our only Cairns Birdwing Butterfly, high in the Saraca Tree and Denis again demonstrated the colouring properties of the Achiote or Lipstick Tree.



Birdwise we had been getting the usual suspects, **Helmeted Friarbirds**, **Torresian Imperial-Pigeons**, **Spangled Drongo** and **Australian Swiftlets**. That changed when we arrived at Freshwater Lake. **Moriarty** and **Holmes** (dumped domestic ducks) were there in company with the **Pacific Black Ducks**, our juvenile **Comb-crested Jacana** seems to be colouring up, and our **Australasian Grebe** has been joined by another!

Moving around to the island we caught a glimpse of the **Black Bittern** before it disappeared into the forest. Some of us moved on, others stayed behind. Their focus on "something" was intense so we returned and were rewarded with two **Little Kingfishers**. We spent quite a bit of time with them before most of us moved on. Those who stayed were rewarded with a return of the **Black Bittern**!





Great Egret

Scott Ritchie

In the mangroves behind the Ant Plant site was a **Great Egret** and a **Nankeen Night Heron** while nearby was a large **Golden Orb Spider**. On to Lerp Lane where we had good views of **Bush Stone-curlew**, **White-bellied Cuckooshrike**, **Little Bronze-Cuckoo** and **Australasian Figbirds**. There's a melaleuca here that hosts a **Tea-tree Orchid**, **Dendrobium canaliculatum** which is currently in flower. The whole thing is quite discrete, fortunately, as they are still collected, illegally, by orchid thieves and horticultural hooligans! Nearby, along Lily Creek, where the Holy Mangrove is in flower, we saw a **Leaden Flycatcher** and deep in the dark a **Sacred Kingfisher**.

There were other birds, of course, but interestingly no 'honeyeaters', not even the call of a Yellow Honeyeater. But for all that we had 44 species with a couple of highly sought after species among them. A good day at the office.

Magpie Goose, Pacific Black Duck, Muscovy Duck x Mallard (hybrid), Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Megapode, Peaceful Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Swiftlet, Bush Stone-curlew, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant, Black Bittern, Nankeen Night Heron, Great Egret, Plumed Egret, Osprey, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Kingfisher, Torresian Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Sahul Cicadabird, Olive-backed Oriole, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-lark, Leaden Flycatcher, Welcome Swallow, Metallic Starling, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Sahul Sunbird



Sahul Sunbird

Patrick Howlett



Sean Han

Letters:

As my first birders' week draws to a close I managed just under half the events. Despite this (and my severe sea-sickness on the Michaelmas event), I managed 19 lifers over the week, as well as some good pictures of old friends, so I was really pleased. Thanks to all the organisers for their efforts. Ian Wright

Thank you, Cairns Birders, for the best Sunday morning - birders are the best people! I love the double-eyed fig parrot bag [Shane Kennedy](#) ❤️ Annie, your gluten and sugar free orange cake was amazing and whoever thought of the corn on the cob, you're a genius!— ☐ feeling special. Emma Steele

And I'd like to thank the organisers of the Bird Festival. I met many visiting birders who really enjoyed our piece of heaven. Thank you Shane and others! Scott Ritchie

A huge thank you to the Cairns Birders and especially those who organised and led us on such wonderful birding outings over the 10 days. It was a fantastic time to renew friendships with both humans and tropical birds! We left the sumptuous 'Rowdy' morning tea with both full stomachs and hearts.

Thanks 🙏 again and see you next year!

Dianne Tobias

To the team

Thank you for inviting Luke from OM to come up and thanks for allowing me to attend.

I learnt SOOOO much in a few short hours. I have, as recommended, purchased and just received the 1.4 converter. Now I am armed and in need of lots more practice.

Thanks again

Von

BIRDSCRIBE Our home grown app taking over the world! Dave Lyons

G'day Cairns Birders,

A progress report and a favour, and the favour isn't more testing from you, you've done your share.

Since some of you kicked the tyres on **BirdScribe** over winter, it's grown up. Free on both app stores, and the big change this fortnight: it learns. Correct a bird once, "sistickle" to Golden-headed Cisticola, and it ranks first every time you say it that way again. Flick Auto-log on a name you trust and it logs the bird the moment you say it, eyes still on the canopy. Full list at birdscribe.com/whats-new.

Here's the thing. The app runs region by region now, and each region's built-in names come from the birders who train it there. The UK list is being built as we speak by some serious birders over there, and FNQ is covered because it's home ground. The rest of Australia is empty. A birder in Sydney or Perth is still starting from scratch, and it'd be a poor show if the Poms end up with better coverage than most of the country.

So the favour: your networks. Every one of you knows birders down south and out west, club mates, trip mates, the rellies who bird. If you know someone who'd enjoy putting their stamp on their patch, point them at birdscribe.com/trailblazers. First birder in a region sets its voice, their corrections become the defaults everyone after them starts with, and there's a straight line to me for anything the app gets wrong.

It's free, it stays free, and the more of the country it learns, the better it gets for all of us.

Rowdy's Ramblings

Bird song and music: - [Ballet of the Birds - Pearl n Dean](#)

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.

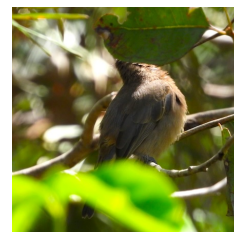
The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

What is this ?



Last week's quiz: What is this? Dusky Honeyeater



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.

Attendees meet at 6pm, Kay Rd, just off the Kennedy Highway.

Extra Extra! Read all about it ...

Live-cam of the falcons at 367 Collins St, Melbourne.

They've been nesting here since the early 1990s and this pair have four eggs laid about a week ago so they're due to hatch around the end of the month. [LINK](#)

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

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

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.

An extended edition, bringing What's About onto its new schedule. From here it publishes each Thursday, covering the week to the Wednesday before.

This was festival week. The Cairns Birders Festival filled the calendar with walks, cruises, talks and self-guided sessions right across Cairns and the Tablelands, and it drew a genuine crowd, plenty of visitors from well beyond the region among them. From the people we spoke to, the feedback was warm and the mood was better still. A big congratulations to the organisers and everyone who pitched in; a lot of work goes into a week like that, and it showed.

A week to remember

It had everything, including the weather. The festival opened under grey skies and rain, weathered a properly rough crossing out to Michaelmas Cay, and came good in the end with a run of beautiful days to finish. In between there were dawn walks and rainforest strolls, river cruises, evening spot-lighting, library talks and easygoing self-guided sessions on the Esplanade. We managed to dip in and out of a few ourselves, an evening on backyard birds, a morning at Cattana Wetlands, and a Welcome the Waders session on the foreshore, and every one was well attended and good fun. The photography sessions and the photo competition rounded it out nicely. It was the kind of week that reminds you how good this birding community is.

And then, a Kelp Gull

Just as the festival wound down, the Cairns Esplanade produced another one. A Kelp Gull, a genuinely rare bird for tropical Queensland, turned up on the northern end and was seen by a steady stream of observers through the following days, one lucky birder even picking it up from their balcony. Coming so soon after the Redshank, it is a remarkable run of form for one stretch of foreshore. The record was still firming up through eBird's review as we went to press, so we have listed it below with the rest, but a good many people have now had eyes on it.



The birds kept coming too

Underneath all the events, the season did its own thing, and spring migration is now well and truly on. The Tablelands turned up a Spotted Quail-thrush back in the Mount Carbine country, always a cracking bird, alongside a swag of fresh arrivals: an Australasian Grass-Owl, a Black Falcon, a Painted Buttonquail, a Banded Honeyeater and a Rufous Songlark. Out in the dry country around Chillagoe a different cast appeared, a Red-backed Kingfisher, a Restless Flycatcher, Masked Finch and even Red Junglefowl. In the rainforest a Fernwren showed at Mossman Gorge and a Black Bittern along the coast, while a White-throated Nightjar and a Barking Owl called after dark. On the water the waders and terns kept building, with a Pacific Golden-Plover, a Whiskered Tern and a Pacific Swift logged, and the woodswallows moving through in numbers. After the winter quiet, the place is filling up fast.

The Redshank bows out

And so, quietly, an era ends. After three extraordinary weeks on the Cairns Esplanade, the Common Redshank dwindled to a couple of sightings early in the period and then slipped away. It was a genuine event while it lasted, the bird that flew halfway around the world and stayed long enough for half of Cairns to see it. Safe travels, wherever it has gone.

Flagged as unusual by eBird (relayed, not verified by us)

The records below are pulled straight from eBird's automated rare-bird filter. They are not compiled or verified by us, and some are flags for out-of-range subspecies rather than rare birds. They may be reviewed, corrected or withdrawn. We re-check each against eBird before posting, but a flagged sighting is provisional until it is confirmed.

- Kelp Gull - reported on the Cairns Esplanade.
- Spotted Quail-thrush - reported on the Tablelands, in the Mount Carbine country.
- Masked Finch - reported out around Chillagoe.
- East Australian Silvereye, Buff-lored Pale-yellow Robin, Straight-billed Large-billed Scrubwren, White-cheeked Honeyeater - subspecies flags from the southern Tablelands.
- Common Redshank - a last couple of reports on the Cairns Esplanade.

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 extended fortnight around Cairns and the Tablelands. A festival to remember, a Kelp Gull to cap it, and the migrants arriving daily. Spring is well and truly here, and we will see you Thursday.

Cattana Wetlands Moth Night

Cattana Wetlands
MOTH NIGHT



Saturday 12 September
6.30pm
meet in the carpark

Light sheets to attract moths and insects to identify with
David Rentz AM

Popular nocturnal tours by expert guides using infrared torches.

Wear good walking shoes, bring bug sprag and torch

GREEN SPACE
OUR PLACE

 Cairns
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Norty Corner

