



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](#)

Tuesday - every week

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

Sunday 11th October

7:30 JCU, Smithfield.

Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/8KfWwuPjB22f9JWa8>

Sunday 18th October

7:30 Glenoma Park, meet in the carpark.

Joint event with **Treeforce** to view their planting site.

Morning tea provided at 09:30.

Sunday 25th October

7:30 Warrina Lakes, Innisfail, TBC

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

Belying his nickname, Brian Lee was often the opposite.

Some would say gruff and a loner. Others a great birding companion full of anecdotes and stories ranging across a diverse topic list, who knew the best spots around Cairns. Brian welcomed the “newcomer” to the local birding group. He was one of the quiet birders who were passionate about birds and their environment. His Cairns Birders’ friends, especially Andy Anderson and Peter Everist, took him under their wings when he arrived from the Cape to take up residence here.



One of his favourite spots was the Jack Barnes Boardwalk where he religiously recorded the comings and goings of the Pacific Golden Plover. He has records dating back decades. Keeping track of our newsletter was another passionate pursuit, which as Shane noted in a previous edition came in handy recently.

He was always willing to share his cameras with beginning birders seeking advice on types to purchase. He persistently reminded us all to bring our containers for collection at the monthly Sunday walks at Centenary Lakes or Cattana Wetlands, Our kitty was always in great shape.

A great cook, who enlisted the support of Denny, his long time partner in life, who provided feasts for the birding festival, birthdays, farewells and Christmas parties. In fact, his final catering event for Cairns

Birders group was the last day of the 2026 Birding Festival. Although desperately short of breath and on oxygen he managed with the help of Balinda, his daughter, Greg, his brother, Annie and Dave Anderson and a few others to furnish a feast. Not long after he was admitted to Cairns Hospital with a lung infection which proved too hard to fight.

Brian died on Tuesday morning (06/10/2026) in Cairns Hospital. There will be no fanfare, no wake.

As Balinda says “...he is now drinking and singing songs with Denny! He will be cremated next Tuesday and his ashes scattered at his favourite waterfall on Friday. He asked for a non-attending cremation and for no services.”

However, we will remember him soon.

Tricia Gates

Cairns Birders' routine for the first Sunday outing of each month is to alternate our visits between Centenary Lakes and Cattana Wetlands. This Sunday it was the turn of the former of these two Cairns City Council attractions. Sundays at this location allows those of us who work on Tuesdays and cannot attend the regular Tuesday Botanic Walk to enjoy a group outing to this location.



Black-faced Monarch

Patrick Howlett

Despite the promising weather forecast, the day proved to be dull and overcast and rain affected the latter part of our birding. It was certainly a challenging day for our photographers!

Our as always enthusiastic and congenial birders managed a few highlights despite the meteorological challenges.

Again, a **Black-faced Monarch** made an appearance. This is an uncommon but most welcome species at this location and proved one of the highlights. One of the resident **Nankeen Night Herons** put on it's best avian aloof guise, hiding amongst the mangrove routes. We are blessed in Cairns with the presence of a delightful and popular species - the **Double-eyed Fig Parrot**, and one put on a show for the group.



Spangled Drongo

Patrick Howlett



Magpie Lark

Patrick Howlett

Cairns Botanic Gardens - Tuesday's Guided Bird Walk:

Jon Westaway

*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 walk was led by Jon Westaway, volunteering in Shane's absence.

A beautiful bright sunny morning with a cool light breeze greeted a small intimate group totaling 14 keen birders, which consisted of 11 locals and 3 internationals.

Special thanks to Jake and Leah for their invaluable assistance with the bird identification throughout the morning. Other participants included Jeff, Mary Brook, Kazoo, Roy, Tanya, Sonja, Chris, and Darren, along with our overseas visitors Wessel (Netherlands), Mayin (Malaysia), and Shuai (China).

A total of 44 species were recorded, highlighting the richness of the Gardens and Lakes habitats.

Before we got started, the distinctive call of a **Pacific**



Koel could be heard from high up in the canopy of the Gardens. No visuals.

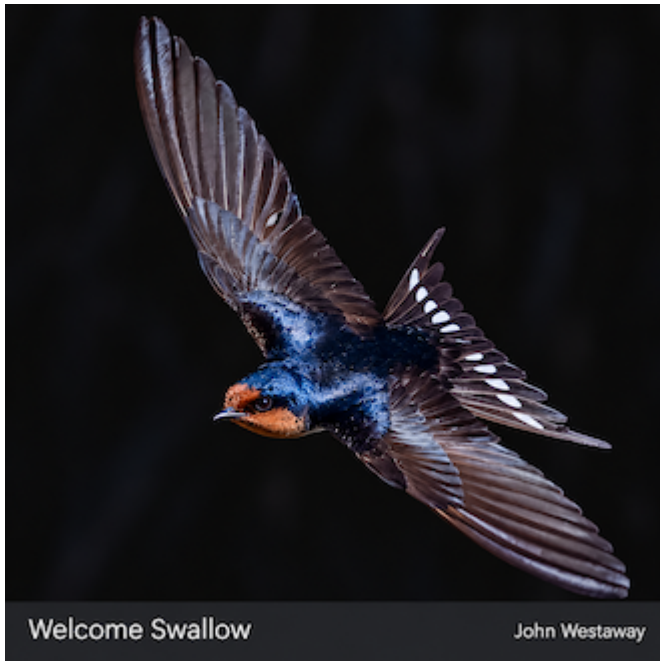
The usual suspects were found at the Freshwater Lake; a **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Plumed Egret**, Australasian **Darter**, A **Little Pied Cormorant** which showed off its fishing skills when it surfaced with what looked like a large prawn. Other notables were the resident dumped duck, affectionately named Moriarty and some **Pacific Black Ducks**, **Rainbow Lorikeets**, **Rock Dove**, **Sahul Sunbird**, **Dusky Honeyeater**, **Sahul Cicadabird**, **Torresian Imperial-Pigeon**.

Sadly, the celebrity of the Lake, the **Little Kingfisher** did not make an appearance for the group.

Moving on from the Freshwater Lakes we came across; **Black Bittern**, **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Great Egret**, **Peaceful Dove**, **Orange-footed Megapode**,



Australian Brushturkey, **Green/ Yellow Oriole**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Mistletoebird**, **White-throated Honeyeater**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Varied Triller**, **Bush Thick-knee**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Yellow Honeyeater**, **Australian White Ibis**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Black Butcherbird**, **Magpie Lark**, **Australian Swiftlet**, **Welcome**



Swallow, Common Myna, Scaly-breasted Munia, Pacific Baza, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, and both Torresian and Sacred Kingfishers, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, and Sahul Brush Cuckoo and Dusky Moorhen.

So, 44 species was quite a nice result from just a few hours, we then headed off to Tank 64 for a drink and a chat.

OUT BUSH

Dominic Chaplin

The Mangroves at Karumba, Far North Queensland is the only place I have ever seen or photographed an uncommon mangrove specialist, the **White-breasted Whistler**, back in 2013.

But in 2015 there was a dramatic event. 40 Million mangroves died over an area of 7500 hectares. It was concluded that climate change resulting in extreme weather, higher than usual sea temperatures, coupled with low rainfall caused the dieback. It was suggested they may never grow back.

In mid 2025 I was interested to go and check out the condition of the mangroves and look for the Whistler. I was surprised to see the mangroves had actually grown back. While the beach was littered with dead mangrove trunks and the mud was still bare in patches, the trees had returned. Most were taller than me.



But had the mangrove birds returned? At first, I came across a few **Mangrove Gerygones**, a good sign. I was just about to turn back when I heard the unmistakable sound of the **White-breasted Whistler**.

After a month of back-to-back megas on the Esplanade, this was a quieter, settling week. The **Kelp Gull** has moved on, no new headline bird stepped in to replace it, and the numbers eased back to something like normal. No bad thing, the spring migration is ticking along steadily, and a quiet week is a good chance to catch your breath and enjoy the regulars.



If anything was the theme of the week, it was the **Satin Flycatcher**. What started as a scattered report or two has turned into a proper little influx, with birds popping up right across the region, around Kuranda and Tinaroo on the Tablelands, and down at Cattana, Redlynch, Palm Cove and Thala Beach on the coast. It is a passage migrant, a neat black-and-white flycatcher very like the commoner Leaden, so worth a careful look, and this is the time of year to catch them moving through. A nice reminder that you do not need a once-in-a-decade vagrant for a rewarding week's birding.

The season kept delivering fresh arrivals too. The pick on the coast was an **Oriental Plover** at the France Road turf farm and an **Australian Bustard** out at Heritage Lane, with a **Spotted Whistling-Duck** back at Freshwater, a **Grey Teal** at the airport and a **Pink-eared**

Duck up at Hasties Swamp. In the rainforest a **Shining Flycatcher** and a **White-throated Treecreeper** turned up, a **Tawny Frogmouth** near Lake Placid, and up on the Tablelands an **Australian Masked-Owl** was heard out towards Ravenshoe. A **Black-backed Butcherbird** at Port Douglas rounded off a varied week. The migrants are still coming, and the next few weeks should keep building.

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

Our top flagged records for the week, by number of reports. These are pulled straight from eBird's automated rare-bird filter, not verified by us, and may be reviewed, corrected or withdrawn. eBird also flagged a number of common species on subspecies grounds this week; we have left those out.

1. **Satin Flycatcher** - reported widely across Cairns and the Tablelands, the bird of the week.
2. **Sanderling** - reported at the Barron River mouth.
3. **Australian Masked-Owl** - reported near Ravenshoe.

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. A quieter one after the madness, but with **Satin Flycatchers** about and the migrants still arriving, there is always something to go and find. See you Thursday.

Letters

We have for a number of years had the pleasure of your newsletter as well as joining your group on various excursions when visiting Cairns. We are writing as we are concerned that the number of Bush Stone Curlews appear to be in decline particularly around where we generally stay in the Palm Cove caravan park. Given the birds nesting habits we think a big part of the problem is dogs in the park. While the rules are clear about them being on a leash, enforcement is highly variable with many owners simply ignoring them. We think that a good compromise would be no pets allowed in the park during the nesting season. I am proposing to raise this with NRMA who manage the park. It would be very beneficial if your group was to support our proposal. Your thoughts/comments would be much appreciated before I approach NRMA.

Bill & Anne Pahl

The Bird Quiz

Louise Baume

What is this ?



Last week's quiz: Peregrine Falcon



Rowdy's Ramblings

This week we dedicate Rowdy's regular music spot to Rowdy himself, with a final bird-themed song in his memory — Neil Young's beautiful and poignant *Birds*:

▶ Neil Young - Birds (Official Audio)

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 the group coordinator. **Please note there has been a change to the number for our Containers for Change account. CAIRNS BIRDERS GROUP Containers for Change new Account C11810460.**

Extra Extra! Read all about it ...

Everything you need to know about this year's Aussie Bird Count day: [Aussie Bird Count](#)

Do Cornish fishers catch floating pasties? [Floating scarecrows: how Cornish fishers are stopping seabirds drowning in their nets | Fishing | The Guardian](#)

Returning Kiwis to the wild [Iwi and community-led effort return kiwi to Wellington for first time in over a century](#)

Check out some birds from the cold. Live stream of Australian Gannet Colony at Pope's Eye Marine Reserve in Port Phillip Bay https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVXH8gA_TUc

Norty Corner

