

IBA Report for the Birdlife NQ AGM 2nd March 2013

Graham Harrington.

1. To my knowledge there has been no traffic on the IBA front from National Office in the past year. This is of concern.
2. Wet Tropics IBAs. We maintain a database of Tooth-billed and Golden Bowerbird bower locations with the long term aim of discovering whether these birds may act as indicators of population changes due to such factors as climate change. We have 177 toothbill courts registered over an altitude range of 420 - 1100, WE have only 27 Golden BB bowers located over an altitude range of 630-1200m. Clearly we need more Golden locations and a wider geographical spread of our coverage. This project needs a review, a concentrated planned data-gathering exercise and a check on the persistence of those currently on record. Alistair Freeman may be able to be active in this regard next breeding season. Of the six located near my house only one now survives.
3. Carpentarian Grasswren IBAs. A party of volunteers were paid by National parks to survey in Boodjimulla (Lawn Hill) National park in May last year. They found five groups of birds but these were all burnt out a few weeks later and our application to the Biodiversity fund for funding for a helicopter return to see whether they had survived was not supported. Over the last 12 months there has been extensive burning and I am working with Steve Murphy to map it in detail with the position of unburnt islands within the firescar mapped also. We will then be able to undertake our annual assessment of how much country within the IBAs is more than four years old and thereby suitable for Cassowaries. We plan to return in May this year and investigate as many fire refuges as we can. Steve Murphy is preparing maps so that we can locate fire refuges. Steve and I are preparing an article for the June edition of Wingspan, which will document the increasing fire challenge.
4. Atherton Tablelands IBA. The Crane Count continues and it is no longer confined to the IBA as there is some evidence that the Sarus Crane is spreading south and west - possibly due to irrigated grain crops. The boundaries of this IBA may have to be extended.
5. No other IBAs are subject to monitoring by this branch although we do contribute funds to the Golden-shouldered Parrot. We should formalise this so we have some idea of what is happening in that IBA,

