



**Birds Australia**

Conservation Through Knowledge

Birds Australia Centenary 1901-2001

*Celebrating Bird Conservation*

# ConTact Call

**Birds Australia—North Queensland Group**

**September 2001— Issue: *Royal Spoonbill***

## Birds North Qld making a difference— Convenor's Report

North Queensland group is alive and well with a steady stream of new members joining our merry band each quarter. A big welcome to all those new members.

I would urge you all to make them feel included - perhaps a phone call to invite them to the next outing or just to say hello and to make yourself known.

Membership is our most important asset and we must make a concerted effort to grow our numbers if we are to have a serious effect in the great scheme of things.

As you may or may not know BirdFest which was to be held in October has been postponed. Due to lack of registrations the steering committee decided to try again in 2002 but with a more scaled down event. More to come on that at a later date.

On a more positive note the Hasties Swamp bird hide is a reality with the final earth works being completed and landscaping started. A consultant has been contracted to progress the interpretive signage and it will hopefully be in place by mid September.

As part of the Queensland Heritage Trails Network this project was jointly funded by Birds Australia and the Queensland and Federal Governments. This bird hide will be an important asset to the Atherton Tablelands both for tourism and for environmental education.

We have seen a change in the executive committee this year with the retirement of our secretary Lindsay Fisher and the Tableland representative Ian Sinclair. My

thanks to both for the efforts put in especially Lindsay & Keith Fisher who have been the strength of BANQ from the onset. Both Lindsay & Keith have put in a huge effort to make sure that things are always happening and I know that they will be sorely missed. However Keith is still the Cairns representative. We have a new secretary, Bill Bray, a new Tableland representative and a new conservation officer Graham Harrington.

The second meeting of the Regional Groups Chairs was held in August in Sydney. John Clarkson attended for me as I had other commitments. I look forward to his report back to the group. These meeting between regional groups are a great start to bringing us all together as a united organization with a common focus which will be our strength in the future.

Last of all I would just like to point out that even though at times there does not seem to be much happening with BANQ group there are many people quietly doing important work such as vegetation monitoring, attending vegetation management meetings & workshops, working on joint projects with Councils, and developing recovery plans and attending threatened species steering groups. My wife, Peta & I know all too well how much time these things take out of our already busy lives and I thank everybody involved for their ongoing commitment.

**Good birding  
Jon Nott**

## Birds North Group—Events Calendar

### **September—Biodiversity Month**

**3-9th**—LandCare Week. Check out local events.

**7th**—National Threatened Species Day

**9th**—Redden Island Count (Cairns). Meet at 8am, Cinderella Street, Machins Beach—the entrance before the toilet block—Keith Fisher Ph: (07) 4039 0972

**16th**—Dalrymple Gap walking track (Damper Creek to Dalrymple Creek) - Marty McLaughlin Ph (07) 4777 2822

**28-30th**—Charters Towers / Greenvale atlas trip - Jo Weineke Ph: (07) 4771 4707

### **October—BushCare Month**

**6th** Annual Crane Count, Atherton Tableland. Contact Elinor Scrambler Ph: (07) 4095 3296

**7-14th**—Weedbuster Week. Check out the web site: [www.weedbusterweek.info.au](http://www.weedbusterweek.info.au) for events

**27-28th**—2001 Twitchathon. Contact your local representative for events in your area

### **November**

**3-4th**—Bluewater State Forest Spring Campout—Marty McLaughlin Ph (07) 4777 2822

### **December**

Christmas Party— to be announced

### **Inside this issue:**

- *New Birds North Qld Mgt Committee appointed*
- *AGM report*
- *Future Twitching Events*
- *Trip Reports*
- *Around the Region*
- *Observations and News*
- *Birds North Qld involved in Native Vegetation*
- *Sightings*
- *Web Sites of Interest*

**Field Trips map change after publication. Contact local reps. for the latest information. This will allow for more flexibility, especially concerning weather conditions. Extra events may also be arranged.**

## Atlas FNQ—"...You have until the end of the year"



The Atlas project has been another great success with over 146 000 surveys completed in 78 500 different locations throughout Australia. Queensland alone has completed over 1 000 habitat forms and around 24 600 record forms.

The AGM in June discussed the Atlas project recognising the commitment members have already taken to the project. Despite the huge North Qld effort, there are plenty of areas which still need atlassing, so if you need some ideas, contact your nearest coordinator.

Visit the atlas website where you can view some preliminary results, and type in your Observer Code to see all of your own survey locations displayed ([www.abc.net.au/birds](http://www.abc.net.au/birds)). You can also get a list of species for each 1° grid square across Australia. Over 5000 people are visiting the website each week—so check it out, and be apart of Australia's biggest survey.

Send your forms to the following coordinators:

### Atlas Coordinators

#### Northern Region (Cardwell north including Cape York)

##### Regional Organiser—Graham Harrington (07) 40965051

- Stephen Garnett (Cairns) (07) 4052 3088  
Email: [stephen.garnet@env.qld.gov.au](mailto:stephen.garnet@env.qld.gov.au)
- Glenn Holmes (Atherton Tableland) (07) 4091 4364  
Email: [dasyornis@ledanet.com.au](mailto:dasyornis@ledanet.com.au)
- Lloyd Nielsen (Nth Atherton Tableland) (07) 4094 1549  
Email: [nielsenl@tpg.com.au](mailto:nielsenl@tpg.com.au)
- Elinor Scrambler (Atherton Tableland) (07) 4095 3296  
Email: [dacelo@austarnet.com.au](mailto:dacelo@austarnet.com.au)

#### South Region (Cardwell to Bowen)

##### Regional Organiser—Jo Wieneke (07) 4771 4707

- Ian Clayton (Townsville) (07) 4725 6489  
Email: [birds&bush@ultra.net.au](mailto:birds&bush@ultra.net.au)
- Jon Wren (Bowen/Ayr) (07) 4786 2614  
Email: [maluras5@tpg.com.au](mailto:maluras5@tpg.com.au)

#### Southern Region (Bowen to Mackay, including Mt Isa)

##### Regional Organiser- Marion Crowther (07) 4958 4613

## 2001-2002 BA-NQG Management Committee

### Office Bearers

**Convener**—Jon Nott (07) 4096 8230

Email: [nott@austarnet.com.au](mailto:nott@austarnet.com.au)

**Secretary**—Bill Bray (07) 4032 2698

**Treasurer**—John Clarkson (07) 4092 2702

Email: [john.clarkson@dnr.qld.gov.au](mailto:john.clarkson@dnr.qld.gov.au)

**Conservation Officer**—Graham Harrington (07) 4096 505

Email: [treetop@austarnet.com.au](mailto:treetop@austarnet.com.au)

### Project Contacts

#### Beach Stone Curlew Study

Amanda Freeman (07) 4095 2148 (w/ends)

[procella@ozemail.com.au](mailto:procella@ozemail.com.au)

#### Gouldian Finch and Birds at Waterholes Survey

Klaus Uhlenhut (07) 4065 5181

**Redden Island Survey** Keith Fisher (07) 4039 0972

#### Sarus / Brolga Tableland Crane counts

Elinor Scrambler (07) 4095 3296 [dacelo@austarnet.com.au](mailto:dacelo@austarnet.com.au)

#### Townsville Egret & Ibis Counts

Jo Wieneke or Glenda Jeffries (07) 4773 1802.

### Area Representatives

**Mackay:** Marion Crowther (07) 4958 4613

**Bowen / Ayr:** Jon Wren (07) 4786 2614

Email: [maluras5@tpg.com.au](mailto:maluras5@tpg.com.au)

**Townsville:** Jo Wieneke (07) 4771 4707

Email: [bowerbird@msm.com.au](mailto:bowerbird@msm.com.au)

**Ingham:** Helen McLaughlin (07) 4777 9191

Email: [helen.mclaughlin@dnr.qld.gov.au](mailto:helen.mclaughlin@dnr.qld.gov.au)

**Innisfail / Tully:** Klaus Uhlenhut (07) 4065 5181

Email: [kirrama@4kz.com.au](mailto:kirrama@4kz.com.au)

**Cairns:** Keith Fisher (07) 4039 0972

Email: [lkfisher@austarnet.com.au](mailto:lkfisher@austarnet.com.au)

**Atherton Tableland:** Marion Buchanan (07) 4092 2702

**Mossman / Daintree:** Del Richards (07) 4094 1199

**Cape York Peninsula:** Michael Barnett (07) 4069 8916

Email: [mike.barnett@bigpond.com](mailto:mike.barnett@bigpond.com)

**Charters Towers:** Elna Kerswell (07)

Email: [elnakers@httech.com.au](mailto:elnakers@httech.com.au)

**Mount Isa:** Bob Forsyth (07)

Email: [isabirido@austarnet.com.au](mailto:isabirido@austarnet.com.au)

## Birds Australia Membership

Subscriptions \$62

Concession \$46

Family \$99

This includes membership of the national organisation plus membership of the regional group,

### Birds Australia—North Queensland Group.

Members also receive four issues of the full-colour bird magazine *Wingspan* and four issues of the *Contact Call*, the BA-NQG newsletter.

Membership forms are available from the Secretary or send subscriptions directly to:

#### Birds Australia

415 Riversdale Road

Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123

[www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au)



Birds Australia

# Birds Australia—North Queensland Group Annual General Meeting

Members met at the Reef and Rainforest Centre's lecture room in Cardwell on the Saturday afternoon for the 2001 **AGM**. The formalities began with Convenor Jon Nott outlining the previous years activities and achievements followed by various reports from the local representatives and coordinators of our projects. Then followed elections with the following people being elected: -

**Treasurer - John Clarkson**

**Secretary - Bill Bray**

It was a non-election year for the Convenor position.

The local representatives were re-elected with the following changes - Atherton Tablelands - Marion Buchanan: Western Queensland (Charters Towers) - Elna Kerswell. Conservation Officer - Graham Harrington.

Welcome to the new members of the committee, Bill, Marion, Elna and the return of Graham.

After the elections **Alistair Freeman** gave a short talk describing the habitat types found in the Cardwell district and showing how clearing of the lowland forests had resulted in fragmentation affecting a range of animals. The maps on display graphically illustrated the extensive clearing. One animal affected by the clearing is the Mahogany Glider, which was the subject for the next talk given by **Mark Parsons** from QPWS based in Ingham. Mark had been studying the glider and the effects fire was having on them, he started off by giving us a history of the species from its initial discovery and its subsequent re-discovery, after being missing for over 100 years, in 1989 by Steve Van Dyck. The glider lives in a 130km stretch of woodland between Tully and Ingham where 80% of their former distribution has been cleared leaving about 87,000 hectares and a population of 2000 - 3000. Only a small fraction of this area is in National Parks but the Queensland Government has bought back some habitat and added it into National Parks recently. The gliders prefer open Eucalypt woodlands and have home ranges of 10-20ha which is a large area when compared to Sugar Gliders whose home range is 1-4ha. It was a fascinating talk and we agreed to give the gliders honorary bird status as they almost fly! Thanks to **Mark** for giving up his Saturday afternoon to enlighten us about the gliders.

After we had eaten our evening meals the after

dinner speech was provided by **Graham Harrington**. Graham gave us an account of mishaps, which had occurred on some of his overseas bird trips, it was very entertaining and had us in stitches. Unfortunately most of it is unrepeatably here!



On the Sunday morning we headed back north before turning off the highway at Euramo to investigate **Barretts Lagoon**, which was the site of the Mahogany Glider re-discovery. Along this stretch of road was a **Red-backed Kingfisher** (only seen by two people) and Crimson Finches sitting on the power lines for all to see. We spent a few hours wandering around the lagoon atlassing as we went, highlights were a **Wompoo Pigeon** sitting on a nest over the water and a **Little Kingfisher** diving into the lagoon. There were plenty of **Cattle Egrets** in an adjacent paddock foraging around the cattle, a total list of 28 species for here. We headed back south stopping off at a lagoon on **Stamps Road**, here a few waterbirds were seen, **Australasian Grebe** and **Comb-crested Jacana** were on the water and more **Crimson Finches** were feeding in the grassy edge. Next stop was **Deep Creek** rest area where there is a small patch of gallery forest. We had good views of **Azure Kingfisher** and **Shining Flycatcher** here. The afternoon was spent pleasantly ambling around Daryl and Geoff's property out the back of Cardwell. A Noisy Pitta hopped around the house entertaining everyone as we sipped our cappuccinos.

Monday saw us heading through two locked gates to arrive at an area where Cardwell's water supply intake is located, in the foothills of the **Kennedy Valley**. We admired the scenery, with the water tumbling down over huge boulders, before heading back along the track atlassing as we went. By mid morning we had finished atlassing and everybody headed off in different directions for home. It was an interesting weekend and **thanks to our Cardwell members** we accessed areas not normally open to the public. **Thanks to Alistair Freeman and Lindsay** for organising the weekend. Thanks also to **Daryl and Geoff** for their hospitality and showing us some of the Cardwell area. Copies are available of the AGM minutes from the Secretary.

*Keith Fisher, Cairns*

## Future Twitching Events.....

### **Dalrymple Gap Walking Track—16th September 2001**

The revamped Dalrymple Gap walking track starts at Damper Creek on the Bruce Highway (15km south of Cardwell) rising 3km to the historic stone-pitch bridge, continuing through the Cardwell Range and finishing in Abergowrie State Forest. The walk is 10km in total and takes around 5hours. Adventurers should meet at the Damper Creek car park at 8am. Return transport will be organised. Contact Marty McLaughlin Ph (07) 4777 9191.

### **Charters Towers / Greenvale Atlassing Trip—28-30 September 2001**

Put your exploration boots on and head out for a long weekend of adventure and bird watching. The trip will head via Charters Towers to Greenvale and surrounds. Self sufficient camping is being organised. Contact Jo Weineke on 4771 4707 or Helen McLaughlin on 4777 9191 to confirm details.

### **Atherton Tablelands Crane Count—6 October 2001**

Be apart of the annual Crane (Sarus and Brolga) count in Queensland. Groups will split up to cover many of the favourite crane haunts. For more details contact Elinor Scrambler on (07) 4095 3296.

### **Bluewater State Forest Campout—3&4 November 2001**

The April campout was such a success that the group have requested another weekend out in 2001, so here it is. Meet at the gate on Forester Road, Bluewater at 9am Saturday. Confirm details with Marty McLaughlin Ph (07) 4777 2822.

### **Christmas Party—??December 2001**

Watch this space.....



## Trip Reports

### 17-18th March 2001—Bluewater State Forest Atlas

Around 25 birdwatchers from Mackay, Townsville and Ingham gathered at Bluewater State Forest to explore the southern extent of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The State forest has been closed to the public since December 1996 due to bad weather and road conditions. Birdo's were the first official recreational group to camp within the State forest since that time. Their aim – to identify as many bird species as possible through a range of habitats to assist the now Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service – Forest Management (formally the Dept of Natural Resources) with their management.

After a quick smoko and swim at nearby eastern branch of Keelbottom Creek on Saturday, the group was keen to split up and start their explorations. Three groups visited a range of sites, predominantly wet sclerophyll and rainforest communities along the road to the western branch of Keelbottom Creek. All groups were able to find interesting birds including the **Tooth-billed bowerbird**, the elusive **Yellow-billed Boatbill** and a spectacular array of forest dwellers such as the **Eastern yellow robin** and **Crimson rosella**. Of most intrigue however was the sighting of a **Southern Cassowary** by RAAF officers' just weeks before our visit near their training area. This sighting has been officially recorded by Birds Australia – with a GPS reading (thanks RAAF) future attempts will be made to confirm this, probably the most southern recorded location.

That night ten birdo's camped overnight and were lucky enough to see a **Spotted nightjar** and micro bats investigating our campsites on dusk, while the **Lesser sooty owl** called nearby once we all hit the sack. Unfortunately we didn't see the elusive owl, even with some high-powered spotlights. I'm sure the red wine didn't influence our vision!

The next morning the group was asked to be a bit more physical as they ventured into some higher elevation (700m) woodland. While the birding was quiet on the higher ridges, the walk provided some splendid views over Cleveland Bay and west over Paluma Range. The weekend was a great success with the rain holding off the entire weekend – it was agreed that there should be a revisit to this area in Spring for another search for the bowerbirds and cassowary. Thanks to QPWS - Forest Management for organizing the permits for the weekend and to Hinchinbrook Shire Council for the use of one their portable toilets.

*Helen McLaughlin, Ingham*



### 4-14th August 2001—Cape York Atlassing Campout

The Cape York atlassing trip was again a success with seven birdo's (Grahame Harrington, Philip Brook from Sydney, Keith and Lindsay Fisher, Rod Thorn and Sue Gould from Weipa, and me of course) spent a week atlassing in the Heathlands Resource Reserve. A full report will be in the December issue of Contact Call.

*John Clarkson, Atherton Tablelands*

### Daintree River Trip 26-27th May 2001

Saturday afternoon we gathered at the property of Barbara and Peter Maslen, situated just before Daintree Village. Their property is registered with the *Land for Wildlife* scheme, and consists of natural bush, an orchard and a small dam. The natural bush has been allowed to regenerate on land used for cattle grazing and now forms quite dense stands. After a couple of hours wandering around we ended up with a species list of 40 birds including **Double-eyed Fig Parrot**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** and **White-eared Monarch**. Following on from the birding we were surprised by Peter who had organised refreshments, somehow he had read past issues of Contact Call that we did not mind the odd glass of wine! How wonderful, a table full of various bottles of wine and nibbles to go with it—a delightful gesture and a great end to the afternoon. After this hospitality we staggered back to our overnight accommodation and prepared for evening meal in the village. A very social evening was had with the odd bottle of wine again.

The morning arrived, cold and misty, but with much anticipation as to what we might see out on the river. Chris Dahlberg was waiting for us at the jetty and we quickly boarded his boat. As usual the trip was excellent giving us good views of **Little and Azure Kingfishers** as well as **Shining Flycatchers** flitting around the tree roots along the river bank. We traveled up Barrat Creek in search of the **Great-billed Heron** but only found the **Nankeen Heron** which obliged us with great close up views. Chris was busy reeling off birds as he saw and heard them, but still no Great-billed Heron. Our of the creek and back onto the main river we headed back to the village still looking for that heron. Just as we had almost given up the cry went out "Great-billed Heron on the right", sure enough here was the heron foraging around the edge of the river. Great views were had and for six people it was a new bird. Thank goodness we had seen it after all the promises we made to attract people along! It was another magic morning on the river with a species list of exactly 50. Thanks to Chris who never fails to put on a memorable boat trip and to Lindsay for organising the weekend.

*Keith Fisher, Cairns*



### Birds Australia 100th Birthday—1st July 2001

There are many celebrations across the nation for Birds Australia's Centenary. Check out the BA web site for more details on Centenary events.

**Congratulations** must go to **Keith and Lindsay Fisher** who recorded the most species for the Big Birthday Birdwatch—140 species while atlassing round Cairns and the Atherton Tableland. A highlight being 5000+ Plumed Whistling Ducks and 2500+ Magpie Geese at Hastie's Swamp, viewed from the new bird hide which BA NQG had a major role in organising.

### Mt Isa News...Bob Forsyth

After several days atlassing in the Northern Territory with Graham Harrington and Brian Venables (who were returning from an extended Atlassing survey in WA and NT), I stayed over at Camooweal on 18-19 July to recheck out a few sites. Lakes Francis and Canellan on the Georgina River (1-1/2 km from town) offered the normal excellent variety of birds. They are accessed via an un-signposted, gravel track 50 metres east of the Georgina River causeway. This time 32 species. A couple of dozen **Brolgas** were feeding alongside the Barkly Hwy causeway. Two pair **Green Pygmy-goose** ....at the limit of their range, were swimming through the lilies and both **Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were present. Three years ago I was advised a pair of **Swans** were breeding. I recommend that Birdo's passing through the town, stop and check out these lakes. I can not think of a better place to boil the billy before leaving for the NT.

At the Old Nowranie waterhole 14 km south of town, on the Urandangie road, I recorded 41 species. This water hole is just within the SW corner of the National Park boundary. I was fortunate to have a **Square-tailed**

**Kite** in close view for 20 minutes. This is the same water hole where 2 years ago, I recorded **Freckled Ducks**.

The Camooweal Caves National Park road has been graded and is now capable of accepting (with care) a caravan. The camping area is 24km from town and the surrounds are very dry. Only 24 species this time but not the **Pictorella Mannikins** which I recorded here on my last visit.

Even the town environs (including the sewage ponds) provided 16 species. Unfortunately one of these was a dead **White-browed Woodswallow** being eaten by the hotel cat.

The sewage ponds are 200 meters NNW from the Shell roadhouse along the Rocklands Station road. Both **Australian Ravens** and **Torresian Crows** are present to make Corvid identification a bit of a challenge.

Anyone proceeding west should look for and record the **House Sparrow** which has reached Tennant Creek in the NT. We recorded it at Gallipoli Station (90 km NNW of Camooweal). The sparrow arrived in Mount Isa 1964-65.



### Townsville News...Jo Wieneke

The continuing dry weather has brought more **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** to the Townsville area with the latest sighting in the Belgian Gardens cemetery. In July/August the Townsville Common was at its best with thousands of waterbirds on the long swamp but a fire of unknown origin has completely destroyed the Jacana Hide.

This year has seen exceptionally large numbers of **Magpie-larks** with flocks of up to 100. The Toonpan end of Ross River Dam has been excellent with the first waders as well as **Latham's Snipe** and **Pink-eared Duck**.

### Cairns News...Keith Fisher

Some of you who have visited Cairns may remember an **Osprey's** nest not far from Centenary Lakes, this was always a reliable spot to see the Ospreys for many years. About 18 months ago a cyclone blew it down and despite feeble attempts to replace some sticks the birds deserted the tree. The pair moved about 1km to the Anderson Road Ambulance Station's Communication Tower where they set up camp. The nest must have been interfering with communications, so the ambulance service moved the nest about 2m by extending the tower and mounting a large dish offset from the point of the tower. The

collection of sticks was put into the dish and the birds did not miss a beat in returning to the nest. The good news is the two adult birds not (late July) have three healthy youngsters currently standing in the nest exercising their wings and getting ready for their first flight. The proud parents are usually perched on the tower below the nest when not off trying to get some prey to feed three hungry mouths. **Congratulations must go to the Queensland Ambulance Service** for solving their problem and ensuring the birds continued nesting, resulting in a very successful outcome this season.



The **Spotted Whistling Ducks** are still here (last count 23 on the Awonga Point Sewage Treatment Plant). Re-atlassing a spot this morning came across a number of immature **Black-faced Monarchs** (without the black faces) and a pair of **White-browed Robin**, haven't seen either in the general area before.

With Rod Thorn and Sue Gould, we are still chipping away at the red and green dots in the area. After

### Weipa News...Michael Barnett

reviewing the bird list that Sue collated for the Catchment Strategy we've identified species that we have not yet Atlassed and are going to try and target dots of particular vegetation types especially those types that we haven't covered yet. Also a lot of shore and sea birds missing.

A representative from Birdlife International will be here next week to do some work on a "RIO Tinto Birds and the Environment" project.

#### **Are you going south for the Spring?—here's a exciting opportunity**

*On 13-16th September 2001 the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment are conducting Eastern Bristlebirds surveys on Howe Flat- east of Mallacoota. If you are interested in joining this expedition, contact Peter Mitchell on (03) 5155 4863 or Mick Bramwell on (03) 5152 0400.*

## Identification, Observations and News

### Around the Towers ... *Elna Kerswell*

Welcome *Elna to Contact Call*. Despite the dry months, Charters is still home to many interesting species. Flocks of **galahs** upwards of 50 birds, smaller flocks of **sulphur-crested cockatoos**, and small flocks of **crested pigeons** which carry on with their business of waddling and bobbing of tails regardless of we humans, solitary **grey fantails**, families of **brown honeyeaters**, **blue-cheeked honeyeaters**, **yellow-throated miners**, **singing honeyeater**, **peewees**, **magpies** and **butcher birds** are constant in this area. A pair of **mistletoe birds**, **lorikeets**, **double-barred finches**, **great bower birds** and a pair of **rufous whistlers** are currently present in my garden. **Striated pardalotes** and a delightful **white-throated gerygone** also visit fairly regularly. Yesterday I was thrilled to see six! **Grey-crowned babblers** pecking around in the leaf litter and among the lower branches of shrubs in my backyard.

I have a favourite walk—around 3km— that takes me along the perimeter fence of the Airport towards a dam at the back of Mt Carmel College. Yesterday 26 **zebra finches** sat uncaring in a dead chinee apple tree until I was within 3m of them. Four female **red-backed wrens** and a **singing honeyeater** were flipping about in another area; the **double-barred finches** were not visible yesterday, but were there the day before. They seem to swap with the **zebras**.

On and around the dam were **black ducks**, 50 **wood ducks**, 3 **Australian darters**, **masked lapwings**, **crows**, 16 **straw-necked ibis**, 2 **black-winged stilts** and a **willy wagtail**. The resident **purple swamphen** were not on show today. A month ago however, 6 **yellow spoonbills**, **piebald cormorants** and a couple of **pelicans** were there, too. The **babblers** have nests in the chinee apple trees beside the track and I have seen up to 10 on one occasion.

### Winter records Blue-faced Parrot Finch... *Del Richards*

There has always been a paucity of winter records of the Finch which remains part of the mystery of this little known species. On 10th August 2001 a Finch hit a window of a home in Julatten and was rescued by the householder. I advised her to keep the bird warm and I would check it within the hour. It was a first year female and in good condition. When I released her, the bird flew about 15 metres, preened for a couple of minutes and then vanished into the nearby rainforest. Regrowth wattle and smaller rainforest trees surround the dwelling. The bird had hit a

darkened reflective window about 1.5m from the ground. Because of the lack of winter records it was pleasing to be notified.

Some years ago (30/6/1981) Dawn MacGarry told me of her first contact with the Finch. It was feeding on casuarinas with a flock of **red-browed finches** extracting seed at Davis Creek National Park. Eventually it is hoped the winter food resources this species uses will be worked out; however Green on Green makes it a challenge.

### Ingham's Tyto Wetland on track... *Helen McLaughlin*

Spring has certainly hit Ingham with birds being extra vocal in this great weather. A lot of birds have now made Tyto their home with the **White-gaped**, **Brown**, **Yellow** and **Dusky honeyeaters** all currently breeding. The pandanus trees have also become home for the largest breeding colony of **Crimson Finches**. The **Grass owls** (*of which the wetlands were named*) have had a successful breeding season with 15 pairs now residing in this reserve. The Hinchinbrook Shire Council have recently built a viewing platform so visitors can get an easier view of these magnificent birds.

The Council, along with John Young's assistance, have also launched a large dead tree on the Reserve so that the **ospreys** can have the best view over the wetland. **Masked terns**, **Little bitterns** and **Varied trillers** are also in breeding plumage.

Although Tyto wetlands are not yet officially open (*the Council is still completing some work*) people can take a preliminary peek from the already completed walking tracks. Ask at the Hinchinbrook Shire Visitor Information Centre on the highway in Ingham for directions.

## Around the Reserves.....

### Newhaven Reserve

The newly formed management committee met for the first time in April 2001. A management plan is currently being drafted with the extensive consultation with traditional owners and relevant organisations. Controlled burning has already begun, and a fire management strategy is underway. Volunteers are always needed, and there is a request currently out for anyone with fire experience, or wanting to spend some time on the Reserve to coordinate the volunteers, to contact Elaine Sheridan on (08) 8952 0190 or email Elaine on [grems@telstra.easymail.com.au](mailto:grems@telstra.easymail.com.au)

"There is a wonderful opportunity to become involved in conservation through volunteer activities"

### Gluepot Reserve takes out National Award

**Congratulations** Gluepot Reserve Management Committee as the 2001 winner of the South Australian "Buchcare Nature Conservation Award". The Committee received a framed certificate and a \$1000 cheque. The Reserve will now go on to the National Finals to be held in Canberra March 2002. This award recognises the magnificent achievements of our many volunteers in building a conservation reserve of international standard.

## Sightings .....

SPECIES	DATE	LOCATION	OBSERVER	COMMENTS
Glossy Ibis	07/05/2001	Lake Mitchell	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Flock of 24
Royal Spoonbill	07/05/2001	Lake Mitchell	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Flock of 50
Noisy Pitta	18/05/2001	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	Calling in the morning & evening.
Russet-tailed Thrush	27/05/2001	Daintree	Denis Walls & Stella Martin	Lowland rainforest edge
Black Butcherbird	27/05/2001	Tinaroo	Bill Hall	
Little Corella	01/06/2001	Southern Treatment Works, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	1 bird calling
Long-billed Corella	01/06/2001	Southern Treatment Works, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	2 birds attending hollow in tree, possibly nesting. Been in area 5+ years
Cattle Egret	01/06/2001	Southern Treatment Works, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	100+ flew in, numbers increasing in area
Red-Backed Kingfisher	12/07/2001	Euramo	Jack & Pat Leighton	Not common on the coast
Metallic Starling	17/06/2001	Clifton Beach, Cairns	Ian Cowan	1st for season
White Tern (adult)	18/06/2001	Wallaman Falls Road, Ingham	L.Gardner / J.Young	Found 23km west of Ingham whose main breeding ground is Norfolk Island-2300km away.
Red-backed Kingfisher	24/06/2001	Lower Freshwater Road, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	1, unusual
Darter	30/06/2001	Yorkeys Knob Lagoon	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	2 nests, 1 with 3 almost full grown young.
Superb Fruit-Dove	11/07/2001	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	1st heard this season
Spotted Catbird	11/07/2001	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	Cold weather bringing them down to the coast
Restless Flycatcher	16/07/2001	Cairns Crocodile Farm	Phil Gregory	Very unusual on the coast
Pied Currawong	17/07/2001	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith Fisher	Cold weather bringing them to lower altitude
Sarus Crane	18/07/2001	Townsville Town Common	Jo Wieneke	A 1st for Jo at this location
Beach Stone-curlew	20/07/2001	Barron River, Redden Island, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher. Kath Shurcliff	4 flying along the river away from the coast.
Pied Monarch	28/07/2001	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	Cold weather bringing them down to the coast
Pink-eared Duck	29/07/2001	Cairns Esplanade	Andy Anderson	Very unusual & unexpected
Red Goshawk	29/07/2001	Euluma Ck Rd, Julatten & Kingfisher Pk	Carol & Andrew Iles	Flew low across road.
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot	30/07/2001	Centenary Lakes	John & Ruth Walter	Nesting
Red-capped Robin	30/07/2001	10km from Mingella, west of T'ville	Jon Wren	1 female- limit of northern Qld.range?
Cotton Pygmy-Goose	31/07/2001	Mullers Lagoon, Bowen	Jon Wren	2 female + 1 male, 1st since starting records in 1984
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	1/08/2001	Kingfisher Park Orchard	Carol Iles	Adult seen 10m away repeatedly landing in raspberry canes with wings and tail spread for balance catching caterpillars
Beach Stone-curlew	12/08/2001	Forrest Beach, Allingham	Marty & Helen McLaughlin	First for us on northern end of Forrest Beach over the past four years.
Little Kingfisher	19/08/2001	Ball Road, Mt Quincan	Ian Sinclair	Sighted in 10 year old revegetation area

## Vegetation Management Planning Update.....Helen McLaughlin

The Regional Vegetation Management Planning process has begun with the formation of management committee's across the state. Representatives from agriculture, indigenous and local government, conservation and community representatives. There are nine committees within North Qld, being the bioregions of: Cape York Peninsula, Desert Uplands (northern), Einasleigh Uplands (2 working groups), Gulf Plains (2 working Groups), North West Highlands, Wet Tropics and Brigalow Belt (Northern).

BA-NQG are also involved with this process by having three members on these planning groups; Graham Harrington (Einasleigh Uplands), Ian Fox (Northern

Gulf Plains) and Daryl Dickson (Wet Tropics).

These committees will, over the next 18 months, develop a management plan, which will include new guidelines for native vegetation management under the Vegetation Management Act 1999.

Meetings are being held for each bioregion every three months, with newsletters and minutes available to those interested. These newsletters are currently being sent to numerous twitchers, including Jon Nott.



Please contact me for more information about the planning process, or to receive a newsletter for your area.

## Welcome to new members.....

Mr M.Cachard, Freshwater; Ms J.Carter, Holloways Beach; Miss C.Everitt, Cairns; Mr F.Kearney, Mareeba; Miss K. Kohlman, Mission Beach; Mr W.Onton, Magnetic island; Mrs J.Phillips, Rowes Bay; Mr W.Pitcher, Atherton; Mr G. Robertson, Port Douglas; Ms E.Siddons, Mission Beach; Miss R.Wisbey, Glenden.

***We look forward to seeing you all on some of our many activities.***



## Classifieds.....

**Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat**

Private self-contained timber chalets with spa, fireplace and spectacular mountain views—great bird watching (150+ species). Look for specialties such as Blue-faced Parrot-finch, Red-backed Button-quail, Lesser Sooty Owl, Victoria's Rifle Bird and King Parrot.

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www.rosegums.com**

**Thanks**

Birds Australia—North Queensland Group is very grateful for the continuing support given by the office of the Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch, who is himself a keen birdwatcher

**Web Sites of Interest.....**

**Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland:**  
[www.wildlife.org.au](http://www.wildlife.org.au)

**Birding in Southern Queensland** (and everywhere else!)  
[ats.com.au/~aviceda/](http://ats.com.au/~aviceda/)

**Centenary of Federation—North Queensland**  
[www.federationnorth.com](http://www.federationnorth.com)

**Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.env.qld.gov.au](http://www.env.qld.gov.au)

**Birdwatching Australia: [www.ausbird.com](http://www.ausbird.com)**

Klaus Uhlenhut's "Birdwatching Australia" web site has been rated number 20 in a recent world wide review. Of these twenty sites only 3 cover the whole of a country, the rest are regional. The 'ausbird' site, while a commercial site, is a valuable tool in promoting Australia wide Bird Watching to the World. Ausbird helps bird orientated business' big or small have an equal chance to promote themselves and the natural wonders they have to share. It also offers a free service of recognition to non- profit bird organisation around Australia. It is the site of the future and well worth a look at.

## Notice Board.....

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HANZAB TEAM**

The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds Volume 5: Tyrant Flycatchers to Chats, was judged as the best zoological handbook of the year by 2001 Whitley Committee of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

**CAR STICKERS**

BA-NQG car stickers, featuring a Pied imperial Pigeon on a tropical green background are still available. A donation of \$2.50 each or two for \$4.50 plus postage will secure them for you. They will be available on field trips and the Secretary.

**BLACK-NECKED STORKS PROJECT**

Adam Lamont is a research assistant at the University of Sydney, currently involved in a study of Black-necked storks on the east coast of Australia. Adam will be visiting north Queensland in September to check out nest sites. If you know of any recent records of nesting (previous 10 years), Adam would appreciate any information. Please email Adam on [alamont@bio.usyd.edu.au](mailto:alamont@bio.usyd.edu.au).



After 31/2 years of producing Contact Call, Keith Fisher has retired (well from Editor anyway). BA-NQG would like to take this opportunity to thank Keith and Lindsay for their time in coordinating the development of Contact Call. Please send items for Contact Call to: Helen McLaughlin, PO Box 91, Ingham Q4850 or Email either Helen or Ian on [helen.mclaughlin@dnr.qld.gov.au](mailto:helen.mclaughlin@dnr.qld.gov.au) or [ian.sinclair@dnr.qld.gov.au](mailto:ian.sinclair@dnr.qld.gov.au) by 17th November 2001 for the December edition.