



ConTact Call

Birds Australia—North Queensland Group

Looking after Australia's native birds since 1901

September 2003 Issue: **Black-breasted Buzzard**



Birds of Paradise a must see ...

Recently Amanda and I were lucky enough to make a trip to the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea where we stayed in the village of Herowana. During our time at the village we saw birds of paradise, tiger parrots and sickle-bills, the scenery was spectacular and the local people friendly. Crater Mountain WMA is 2700 square kilometres, 90% of which is primary rainforest and significant parts of which have a degree of protected status. Within the area live two groups of indigenous people the Gimi and the Pawai. Management of the area is based on the principal of promoting economic independence through enterprises targeted towards supporting research and ecotourism in the area. Unfortunately because of the reputation Papua New Guinea currently has as a country with a very high crime rate and political instability many of these enterprises are struggling as visitors and researchers avoid the country. The problem is that the local people have been told that if they stop hunting certain species (in particular birds of paradise) tourists will come to see these animals. The reality is that for conservation to work in areas such as the Highlands of Papua New Guinea local people need to be given viable alternatives to the extractive use of natural resources and we in the affluent west need to support these alternatives any way we can. So if you are considering an overseas birding trip I would encourage you to consider Crater Mountain Wildlife Area, not just for the birds but to see how some people in Papua New Guinea are trying to protect their natural environment while providing a future for themselves and their children. For more information on Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area visit their website: wcs.org/home/wild/Asia/686/.

At the next AGM the membership will need to elect a new President, Treasurer and Secretary. I would urge that members start to think about putting themselves forward to fulfill these or other roles on the committee. If you have any queries as to what it would involve do not hesitate to contact one of the present committee members.

Alastair Freeman

BA North Queensland Group—Events Calendar Sept-Dec 2003

September 2003—Biodiversity Month

19-26th September - FNQ Wildlife Week

Tropical Tablelands Tourism are organising FNQ Wildlife Week 2003. BANQG will be having a display at the Mareeba Wetlands as part of the events. Further details on page 6.



Sunday 28th September

Redden Island survey

Meet at 8am, Cinderella St, Machins Beach. From the Capt. Cook Highway, drive into Machins Beach and turn left

onto Marshall Street (one road back from the beach) and across the bridge over Redden Creek. The road now becomes Cinderella Street; meet at the entrance before the toilet block on the corner. Easy walking at a leisurely pace with plenty of time to identify the bird species - contact Keith Fisher on Ph 4039 0972.

October 2003

Saturday 4th October - NQ Crane Count

Count Brolgas and Sarus Cranes as they fly in to roost for the night, then add up the numbers (and celebrate) at the National Tally Room party. Atherton Tablelanders - Meet at 3:30pm at Hasties Swamp, on the Atherton-Herberton Road.



Townsville members - Meet at the Wulguru service station at 3pm for surveys of Cromarty and Ross River Dam. Townsville's Town Common will also be surveyed.

Other NQ sites very welcome- The Gulf, Ingham, Cape York whatever. Contact Elinor Scambler on ph (07) 4095 3296 or daceb@austarnet.com.au for survey forms and other details.

6-12th October - Alice River / Coen survey

This trip will be to the Alice River on the Dunbar Station to Oroners Station Road and then on to the Coen area. It will be 4WD, bush camping and you will need to be self sufficient. More details on page 3.



Sunday 19th October - Painted Snipe Survey

Anyone wanting to participate in this years survey, please contact Chris Tzaros on (03) 9882 2622 or email c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au or contact your Area Representative or Committee member.

Saturday 25th October - Yungaburra markets

Due to the success of the May markets, BANQG have decided to be there again for **National Bird Week**. If anyone has items they would like to donate for the stall (we have a few books/magazines so far) or would like to volunteer to help out for an hour or so please contact Keith Fisher for details.

Sunday 26th October - Leslie Creek Reveg Atlas

Meet at Ian and Rita Sinclair's at 8am to survey the recently revegetated creek. Meet @ RN280 Ball Road, Malanda. Bring smoko. Phone Ian on 4096 6690.

November 2003

Sunday 9th November - Fire Wheel Farm

New members welcome to help survey remnant vegetation on Ball Road, Malanda. Meet @ 8am at Fire Wheel Farm (Land For Wildlife). Bring smoko. For more details phone Ian on 4096 6690.

Sunday 30th November-Mission Beach Markets

For the first time, BANQG will have a stall at the Mission Beach markets. This is the last markets for the year, so lets make it a big one. Donations and helpers needed. Contact Keith for details. Markets are from 8am-1pm.

Inside this issue:

- AGM at Lake Barrine
- Nyleta wetland Open Day
- Black-throated Finch
- Executive Committee meeting in Yungaburra
- Trip Reports - Serpentine lagoon, Beginners Day.
- Current Research
- BANQG brochures
- Book Review
- GBRMPA Draft Zoning Plan
- Unusual Sightings
- Notice Board

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

Birds Australia now have a "Calendar of Events" link on their web site. Check it out at:

www.birdsaustralia.com.au. BANQG will endeavour to keep this site updated with regional events.

Black-breasted Buzzard (*Hamirostra* characterised by a rather long bill, bulbous scaling. The generic name ('hook bill') refers name ('black breast') describes one of the bird's most characteristic features in adulthood. The adult is unmistakable: mainly black from below with contrasting white wing panels and a pale short square tail. The **Black-breasted Buzzard** is a solitary hawk of wooded and open habitats, particularly riverine woodlands and forests, in northern and inland Australia. The **Black-breasted Buzzard** eats mammals, birds, reptiles, carrion, large insects, young rabbits, bird nestlings and eggs of birds, and large lizards. The **Black-breasted Buzzard** is notable for its stone-throwing behaviour, being one of only two raptors, and very few birds, that regularly use tools to assist in their feeding. [We saw this fascinating behaviour at Darwin's

Black-breasted Buzzard

melanosternon) is an endemic, monotypic genus, cere, slight brow-ridge, robust feet with reticulate to the prominent upper mandible, and the specific Territory Wildlife Park a few years ago]. The **Black-breasted Buzzard** is not nationally threatened, but its conservation status is of concern. It is generally uncommon, and populations have declined due to habitat clearance. Jo Wieneke has noted that one was seen in Townsville in 1983.

This information sourced from The Birds of Prey of Australia by Stephen Debus.



Atlas 2 Report nearly here!!

The Atlas Report is due out soon.

Please continue to send your Atlas forms to the following coordinators:

Northern Region (Cardwell north incl. Cape York)

Regional Organiser—Graham Harrington 4096 5051

PO Box 680, Malanda Q4885

- Keith Fisher (Cairns) (07) 4039 0972
PO Box 2209, Cairns Q4870
- Glenn Holmes (Atherton Tableland) (07) 4091 4364
PO Box 1246, Atherton Q4883

- Elinor Scambler (Atherton Tableland) (07) 40953296

MS1318 Gadgarra Road, Yungaburra Q4872

Southern Region (Cardwell to Bowen)

Regional Organiser—Jo Wieneke 4771 4707

22 Bishop Street, Belgian Gardens, Q4810

- Jon Wren (Bowen/Ayr) (07) 4786 2614
PO Box 868 Bowen Q4805
- Southern Region (Bowen to Mackay, including Mt Isa)
Regional Organiser- Marion Crouther 4958 4613
PO Box 1, Dalrymple Heights Q4757

2003-2004 BA-NQG Management Committee

Executive Committee

President—Alastair Freeman Ph: 4095 2655

Email: procella@ozemail.com.au

Deputy President—Jo Wieneke Ph: 4771 4707

Email: bowerbird14@bigpond.com

Secretary—Keith Fisher Ph: 4039 0972

Email: lkfisher@optusnet.com.au

Treasurer—Amanda Freeman Ph: 4095 2655

Email: procella@ozemail.com.au

Conservation Officer—Graham Harrington Ph: 4096 5051

Email: treetop@austarnet.com.au

Project Contacts

Beach Stone Curlew Survey Amanda Freeman (Ingham north) 4095 2655 and Paul O'Neill QPWS Rockhampton (Ingham to Bowen) 4936 0547.

Redden Island Survey Keith Fisher 4039 0972

Tableland Crane Count Elinor Scambler 4095 3296

Email: dacelo@austarnet.com.au

Townsville Egret & Ibis Count Jo Wieneke 4771 4707 or

Glenda Jeffries 4773 1802.

Cape York Atlas Surveys Graham Harrington 4096 5051

Area Representatives

Mackay: Marion Crouther Ph: 4958 4613

Bowen / Ayr: Jon Wren Ph: 4786 2614

Email: maluras5@tpg.com.au

Townsville: Jo Wieneke Ph: 4771 4707 and

Helen McLaughlin Ph: 4771 3239

Ingham/Cardwell: vacant

Charters Towers: Elna Kerswell Ph: 4787 7718

Email: elnakers@httech.com.au

Innisfail / Tully: Tony Jurgensen 0408 190 605 (>6pm)

Email: raj@naturelover.com.au

Cairns: Keith Fisher Ph: 4039 0972

Atherton Tableland: vacant

Mossman / Daintree: Del Richards Ph: 4094 1199

Cape York: Sue Gould Ph: 4069 8415 (wk)

Email: susanfgould@yahoo.com

Mount Isa: Bob Forsyth Ph: 4743 3210

Email: isabirdo@austarnet.com.au



Birds Australia Membership

Subscriptions: \$68 Single \$108 Family \$50 Single Concession \$87 Family Concession

This includes membership of the national organisation plus membership of our regional group, Birds Australia—North Queensland Group.

Members also receive four issues of the full-colour bird magazine *Wingspan* and four issues of *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

You can now join directly through our web site: www.birdsaustralia.com.au

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 from the Secretary.



AGM - 50th Anniversary campout at Lake Barrine



The AGM for 2003 was based at the Centre for Rainforest Studies (CRS) near Yungaburra. The weekend started with at get to know everyone over dinner on the Friday night and continued on the Saturday morning with a walk around Lake Barrine. The weather was overcast and drizzled at times but it did not stop us from surveying the birds around the lake, we managed 50 species in a few hours, with one of the highlights a raft of 66 **Great Crested Grebe**. Ending up at the tea house we were grateful for the coffee and cake and a quick comparison with the birds seen 50 years ago. Back at the CRS we had lunch before the AGM got underway.

Alastair Freeman outlined the activities undertaken by the group over the past year, these included field trips, projects, events, fundraising, conservation issues and the purchase of our display boards and two pairs of binoculars. Amanda Freeman then tabled the financial report which showed the group was still financial.

Jon Nott kindly offered to preside over the elections with the following candidates being elected:

J Alastair Freeman – President.

J Keith Fisher – Secretary.

J Amanda Freeman – Treasurer.

J Jo Wieneke – Deputy President

Ordinary Committee Members of BA-NQG were elected as follows: -

J Graham Harrington - Conservation Officer.

J Helen McLaughlin - Newsletter Editor.

As can be seen this is the same committee as the previous year. Alastair, Amanda and Keith all indicated that this would be the last year that they would stand for executive committee positions.

The area representatives all stayed the same with vacancies for the Ingham/Cardwell and the Atherton Tablelands positions, any takers for these positions would be most welcome.



Following the election several issues were discussed. Interpretive signage at Nyleta Wetlands (Hasties Swamp), future field trips (more suggestions welcome), FNQ Wildlife Week organised by the Tropical Tableland Tourism to be held at Mareeba Wetlands in September (Jon Nott), Crane count data (Elinor Scambler), birdwatching promotion in schools (Ron Stannard) and tourism and birdwatching. (The AGM minutes, which cover the above in more detail are available to any member who would like a copy – email or post).

The late afternoon saw us aboard a boat for a leisurely trip around Lake Barrine; we added **Grey Goshawk**, **Azure Kingfisher** and a semi tame **Wandering Whistling-Duck** to our morning list. Thanks to all those who came on the trip we raised \$100 for the State of Australia's Birds Appeal, also thanks to Bill Bayne from the Lake Barrine Teahouse for donating the boat trip.

The AGM dinner was held back at the CRS before we were entertained for the evening by Stephen Garnett. Stephen enlightened us about Important Bird Areas (IBA's), an initiative of BirdLife International. Australia is one of the last major countries in the world to adopt IBA's and BA-NQG is going to identify all the important areas in our region. By doing this we will have a database of IBA's to refer to in the future for management of areas. Any further information can be obtained from Stephen at stephen.garnett@env.qld.gov.au or from the BirdLife International web site www.birdlife.net

Sunday morning had the few stragglers left wandering through the CRS rainforest to check out the birds. The promised **Blue-faced Parrot-Finches** were nowhere to be found but turned up two days later when everyone had left! Thanks to Alastair and Amanda for organising the weekend which was a great success and to the members from Townsville who made the effort to join in the weekend.
Keith and Lindsay Fisher.

Survey of Alice River and Coen ~ 6-12th October 2003

We will be atlassing and looking to confirm sightings of **Trumpet Manucode** and **Bassian Thrush** in these areas. Both will represent range extensions if confirmed. Road conditions will determine if this trip takes place. Please contact Graham Harrington and leave your details if you are interested. Email Graham on treetop@austarnet.com.au or ph 4096 5051.



Hasties Swamp (Nyleta Wetland) Open Day ~ Sunday 20th July 2003

Around 100 people of all ages and (maybe) 5000 **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** attended this very successful field day. Despite the cold early drizzle some keen punters were there even before the intrepid BA-NQG early shift arrived at 0730h. Despite the continuing cold drizzle, the guided walks were popular all day and the hide really proved its worth as an all-weather public venue. It's large enough for us to host a range of activities under cover, without crowding. A steady stream of visitors – locals plus Australian and overseas tourists – enjoyed the on-site displays and our own new BA-NQG display boards with posters and brochures, including the new BA Hasties/ Nyleta bird list. Upstairs kids did interesting wildlife things and on both floors, the telescopes and 'borrow binos' were in constant use with BA members to answer questions. Two **Australasian Shovellers**, some **Pink-eared Ducks** and a **Red-kneed Dotterel** were the outstanding sightings and a **Clamorous Reed-Warbler** was heard in edge vegetation. Only a few **Magpie Geese** remained (hundreds had just moved camp to Quincan Swamp). But the scene-stealer of the day must have been the panoramic views of thousands of Whistling-Ducks periodically flushed from the Swamp by raptors overhead, particularly two **Swamp Harriers** and three **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** (two adults and an immature). The woodland was quieter but altogether we listed around 50 species for the day. Thanks to everyone who helped – with such good public response, this field day is worth considering as an annual event. **Elinor Scambler, Atherton Tablelands.**



Black-throated Finch Recovery Team *on the hunt*

The **Black-throated Finch** *Poephila cincta* is a small, native, seed-eating bird that was once common in grassy woodlands from Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf country to north-eastern New South Wales. Unfortunately, the species has declined greatly, though the reasons for this are not known. It has disappeared from NSW and southern Queensland, so that the distinctive southern form is now known from only a very few locations. The Townsville region is one area where a small number of southern **Black-throated Finch** still exist.

The **Black-throated Finch** Recovery Team has recently been formed to develop and implement a recovery plan for this bird. To help in this task, the group is gathering detailed information on the size and location of the remaining populations of the finch.

If you see the **Black-throated Finch**, record the precise location, date/time and, if possible, the number of birds.

Please report your sightings and direct enquiries to:

Bernie Davis, Coordinator Black-throated Finch Recovery Team

Telephone: (07) 4788 9904 or email: bushlandbeach@bigpond.com.

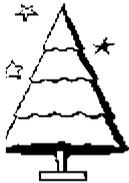
Black-throated Finch are 9-11cm long, with a grey head, pink-brown back, distinct black bib and short black tail. They can be seen in pairs or small flocks in open, grassy woodlands, either feeding on the ground or perched in trees. They often drink at farm dams.

Bernie Davis, BTF Coordinator Townsville



Photo courtesy Ian Montgomery

~ Christmas Party 16th December 2003 ~



This year members are invited to an evening of entertainment at Marion and John Clarkson's farm @ RN1450 Topaz Road, Topaz. Look out for the gate on your right as you head south. The BANQ banner will be tied to the gate. BYO plate and drinks. People are welcome to arrive mid afternoon for a bird walk, but festivities will start around 6pm.

For more details phone Marion and John on 4096 8017 (weekends only)



Yungaburra Committee meeting—July 2003

In preparation for the Open Day at Hasties Swamp, the Committee held a meeting to discuss the events and issues concerning BANQG. Some of the issues discussed are as follows:

White-bellied Sea-Eagles: Following conservationists repeated requests, local developers relocated an ancient sea-eagle nest to a nearby creek because it 'got in the way of progress'. However, to our amazement, two chicks recently emerged and are currently being raised by their doting parents. BANQG members are closely monitoring the site, and what a sight to see. BANQG have now asked for the area of vegetation be permanently protected through a conservation agreement and/or tree preservation order under the Planning Scheme. More details in the December newsletter.



Photo courtesy Ian Montgomery

GBRMPA Zoning Plan: Jo Wieneke has studied the draft rezoning plans with Anna Leshko, a BA member and currently undertaking a PhD on Terns. The conclusion from this was that the majority of the seabird colonies were within the green protection zones of the Marine Park. Any submissions must emphasize this and not permit the vocal fishing lobby to get these zones reduced in and around the seabird colonies. The fact that most of the colonies are within the proposed protected zones should be commended, especially the Bustard Bay and Thirsty Sound/Port Clinton areas as they were the only areas where birds are actually mentioned in the draft. More details on the BANQG submission are given on page 6.

Cairns Post / Wet Tropics Management Authority - Birds of the Wet Tropics posters: 10 wildlife posters (including two depicting birds) have been created by WTMA and distributed through the Cairns Post. *Wet Tropics Birds 1* was available on Friday 15th August with *Wet Tropics Birds 2* available on Monday 18th August. Congratulations must go to Keith Fisher, as, without his persistence and expertise, WTMA would not have been able to produce such a professional product. Thanks also to other members who supplied photos.

Pied Imperial-Pigeon data: The Committee have discussed on many occasions what should be done with the years of data accumulated by volunteer counters and QPWS staff. Investigations are under way for a PhD student to analyse this data in conjunction with QPWS as supervisors. Stephen Garnet will oversee this research.

Tolga Cockatoos: Measures have been undertaken by EPA/QPWS staff in relation to the damage large numbers of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo were doing to a listed endangered Type 5b Mabi Forest in Tolga. Birdfrite was being used by the Atherton Shire Council in the evening to disperse the birds away from their roost site in the forest and EPA/QPWS staff along with volunteers were counting the number and direction of the birds as they left. There are at least 2000 birds coming to this roost at night. Graham Harrington has had a big involvement on behalf of BA-NQG last year and had put forward suggestions on this issue which were taken on board at the time but it now seems that these have been forgotten about. The committee felt that when appropriate, BA-NQG could comment to the Atherton Shire Council about the current situation. The committee will inform the community of the situation.

Helen McLaughlin



Serpentine Lagoon - 5th July 2003

Well, as everyone had guessed, there was no water left in Serpentine. As a consequence, not many water birds. However we still took the opportunity to check out the new bird hide, which Townsville City Council have constructed. All we need now is water! There was still plenty of activity in the neighbouring forests with **White-winged Triller**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Forest Kingfisher** close by. We then went back to the main entrance and had great views of **Little Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Fantailed Cuckoo**, and **Pallid Cuckoo** all within cooe. Both **Scaly-breasted** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** were feeding in the flowering *Melaleucas*, along with the **Noisy Friarbirds**. Although not much water in the creek either, it was enough to keep a **Darter** and **Little Hack Cormorant** happy. Right on cue, approximately a dozen **Black-throated Finch** came to drink on the edge of the water. Other birds of note were **Restless Flycatcher**, **Squatter Pigeon** we flushed from the water's edge, **Pied Butcherbird**, **Crested Pigeon** and **Cockatiel**. Congratulations to the landholders who have been doing some active removal of Chinese Apple and fencing the cattle from the creek. **Helen McLaughlin**



Beginners Day - 28th July 2003

I would like to thank the members who were able to support me at the Birding for Beginners course at Emerald Creek Falls. It was a great turn out. Alistair and Amanda Freeman, Keith and Lindsay Fisher, Harry Cassidy (all the way from Mission Beach), Virginia Simmonds, Alan Gilanders (busman's holiday), Lloyd Nielsen, Andrew and Carol Iles, Jack & Pat Leighton all helped to give the visitors an interesting time. I have had quite a lot of positive feedback about the approach to bird identification I proposed. I suggested that beginners should concentrate on first "typing" the bird on behaviour. The essence of bird ID is to narrow down the options so working with a local list is essential (Lloyd Nielsen's and Jo Wieneke's books are ideal). Having got the bird type worked out, the size and shape can be compared with a bird known to the observer. Then use plumage to choose between the few candidates left. Any member who would like a copy of the notes can contact me. I would be grateful for any critical comments as I would like to turn them into one of our Group's brochures. Also I am thinking of expanding them to a TAFE course.

Good birding folks, Graham Harrington

Current Research

Impacts of weed management burning on bird assemblages in grazed open woodlands

I started this project a couple of years ago as a Masters through the School of Tropical Biology, JCU, and upgraded the project to a PhD earlier this year. The aim of the project is to try and find out how fire (in this case controlled burns used to remove an introduced weed, rubber vine) affects bird assemblages along potentially sensitive riparian habitat. Previous research in Australia shows that fire is an important force structuring tropical savannas, and is important in determining species composition of an area. However, there is very little information on the impacts of fire in Queensland savannas. This project uses experimental study sites that were initially established by CSIRO – Sustainable Ecosystems to examine the effectiveness of different fire types in removing rubber vine. The study sites are along three small tributaries of the Burdekin River, on grazing properties south east of Charters Towers. Each creek has a number of fire treatments, including a dry season burnt area, a wet season burnt area and an unburnt control. I have surveyed bird abundance and species number in each treatment during two wet seasons to look at the short-term and medium term impacts of fire on birds. So far, my

results indicate that in the short-term (6-12 months following a fire) bird abundance is higher in the dry season burnt areas compared to the unburnt areas.

However, I am in the process of analysing the medium-term data collected this year (2.5 years following fire), and preliminary analysis suggests that bird abundance in the dry season burnt areas is now lower compared to the unburnt areas. Further analysis is underway to investigate differences in bird assemblages between different fire treatments. This project will provide Queensland land managers, particularly for the north Queensland grazing region, with information on how our burning practices are impacting on the bird fauna, and hopefully lead to recommendations on suitable fire management practices. Parts of the PhD project have been kindly funded by the Stuart Leslie Bird Research Award from Birds Australia (2002 and 2003).

For further information, or if you're interested in volunteering with me in the field, please feel free to email me at Leonie.Valentine@jcu.edu.au.

Leonie Valentine



BA-NQG Brochures

The latest brochure in our information series, No 10 Hasties Swamp, is enclosed with this newsletter. Thanks must go to Elinor Scambler for producing this brochure and collating the species list supplied by members and friends of BA-NQG. The layout has inspired us to upgrade the existing brochures when time permits. Elinor is currently working on a 40 Mile Scrub brochure and would like any bird species lists you may have from there. Please forward to the secretary who will pass them on – thanks.

QPWS has asked BA-NQG members to check bird species list for national park areas they are currently revising. The committee decided we will do this and in return QPWS has offered to include the BA logo on their species list leaflets/brochures.

Previously BA-NQG's policy was that if we were to be associated with QPWS bird lists then they should be presented in the BA accepted form of capitalising names (Christidis and Boles, 1994). QPWS insist that their style manual be adhered to and all names are to be presented without capitalisation. We have now agreed to follow this policy with QPWS produced publications, but all BA-NQG produced brochures will follow the BA accepted form even if they cover National Parks (eg. Hasties Swamp NP brochure).



Book Review ...

Here is the ultimate picture book for a parent, grandparent or anyone hoping to encourage an interest in birds in a young child. **BIRDS, BIRDS and MORE BIRDS** is written and superbly illustrated by Matt Cosgrove, who was obviously encouraged at an early age by his grandparents to whom he has dedicated this book. One grandmother was the model for his drawings.

The story of Nancy, whose house is invaded by just about every Australian bird in the field guide, is simply written with humour and some artful alliteration that will add to the enjoyment of the reader and/or listener. But the colourful drawings really make the book outstanding. All the birds are illustrated accurately and are in fact better than those in some field guides. There are both Little and Long-billed Corellas in the cupboard and at least 3 species of rosellas rallying on the roof.

BIRDS, BIRDS and MORE BIRDS by Matt Cosgrove is published by Weldon and comes highly recommended by Tom Cross. It's his favourite book and one that his father Ken never tires of reading to him. It is now available in paperback and my copy came from Mary Who Bookshop in Sturt Street, Townsville but all good bookshops should be able to order it.



Jo Wieneke

Editors note: RRP is \$21.95

Queens Birthday campout

Over the weekend, ten birders took to the forests with an aim to find new species. Although drier than some of the other surveys to date, 104 species were recorded. Of particular note were the large number of **Cotton Pygmy-Goose** at Emu Swamp Dam. Members estimated 80 on the water, which would constitute an Important Bird Area (ie greater than 1% of the bioregion population). This species is considered near threatened Garnett & Crowley in the *Action Plan for Australian Birds 2000*. The **Noisy Miner** was also in greater numbers than other surveys and was observed chasing a **Little Friarbird** from some flowering mistletoe. The aggressive behaviour these birds exhibit will drive all other species from their communal territories. Other species of note include: **Brown Quail, Green Pygmy-Goose, Pink-eared Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Pacific Baza, White-bellied Sea-Eagle** (2 adults and 1 juvenile in nest), **Brolga, Australian Bustard, Painted Button-Quail, White-headed Stilt, Budgerigar, Pallid Cuckoo, Brown Treecreeper, and Tawny Grassbird**. As always, a spotlight along Gorge Creek Road was conducted following a relaxing drinks break at the tower. As always, there were great views of Greater Glider and Rufous Bettong, **Tawny Frogmouth** and **Owlet Nightjar**. While some birders chose to head home via Emu Swamp Dam, others headed back through Toomba to check out the wetlands along the way. A great weekend for all. Thanks again to QPWS Rangers Steve Christie and Helen Wood and to the BA members for their assistance with the surveys. Steve now has 180 species recorded for the Park!!! **Helen McLaughlin**

Representative Areas Program Draft Zoning Plan – GBRMPA

The Representative Areas Program has been conducted by the Great Barrier Marine Park Authority over the last few years. There are many issues being discussed regarding the future management of the Reef. BANQG have made a submission on the draft Plan which is summarised below:

1. Comments on overall level of protection for the Marine Park

- Around 50% of the Marine Park should be zoned green, that is, be protected from commercial and recreational fishing.
- A core 'pink' zone should be established in every one of the 70 biological regions in the Marine Park Area.
- With a few exceptions important seabird-breeding islands are well-protected in proposed Green zones.

2. Comments about specific areas within the Marine Park

It is very pleasing that the following important seabird breeding areas have been protected:

<i>Far Northern Management Area – from north to south</i>	
MNP11-31	includes Maclennan Cay, Raine Island, Moulter Cay, Saunders Islet and Cholmondeley Islet
(HPA)	includes Magra Islet NP, Quoin Island NP, Piper Islands NP, Chapman Is, Sherrard Island.
MNP 12-35	includes Sand Bank No 7, Sand Bank No 8
HPA	includes Fife Is NP, Pelican Is NP
MPA 13-39	Includes Tydeman Reef, Sand Bank No1
MNP 17-68	South Barnard Islands – Sisters Is NP
MNP 18-74	Brook Islands

Mackay-Capricorn Management Area

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| MNP 21-123 | Bell Cay |
| MNP 21-127 and MNP 128 | – These 2 areas should be linked to get greater connectivity. They include Aylund, Gannet, Price, Frigate, Bacchi and Thomas Cays |
| MNP 23-146 | This should be extended to take in Lady Musgrave Island National Park. |

It is commendable that the following two areas will protect migratory and other endangered bird species.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| CPZ - 22-233 | Thirsty Sound Port Clinton |
| CPZ - 24-242 | Bustard Bay |

3. Comments regarding uses and activities in the Marine Park

- Trawling is not an appropriate use in a World Heritage Area. GBRMPA should set a phase-out date for trawling in the Marine Park, with an appropriate social –economic package. Research into alternative prawn capture methods should be a priority
- Current spearfishing rules should not be relaxed
- Intensive aquaculture with the addition of feed should not be permitted in any zones of the Marine Park.
- Recognised bird breeding areas should be closed to the public during the breeding season as is already done on North Brook Island.

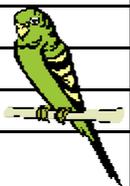
Jo Wieneke
Deputy President



GREAT BARRIER REEF
MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Interesting sightings

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Grey Falcon	28/5/2003	Cloncurry -Dajarra Road	Klaus Uhlenhut	Noted 30km south along the road
Grey Goshawk	1/06/2003	Whitfield, Cairns	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Regularly used nest, birds rebuilding
Torresian Crow	5/6/2003	Lower Freshwater Road, Cairns	Keith Fisher	2 adults feeding juvenile
White-throated Gerygone	9/06/2003	Lake Mitchell (Quaid's dam) near Mareeba	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Feeding Little Bronze-Cuckoo
Rufous Whistler	9/06/2003	Lake Mitchell (Quaid's dam) near Mareeba	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Feeding large Juvenile (striped plumage)
Masked Finch	11/06/2003	On Highway 35km west of Georgetown	Tony Grice	Sighting at 8:15am
Variegated Fairy-wren	12/06/2003	Karumba	Tony Grice and Bill Holmes	
Scarlet Honeyeaters	13/06/2003	Between Mt Surprise and the Lynd Junction	Tony Grice and Bill Holmes	Feeding in flowering ironbark
Koel	18/06/2003	Rockhampton	Marnie McCullough	Heard calling
Masked Woodswallow	19/6/2003	Princess Charlotte Bay	Klaus Uhlenhut	
Scarlet Honeyeater	21/06/2003	Granite Vale	Tony Grice and Bill Holmes	Feeding flowering Melaleuca
Spectacled Monarch	21/06/2003	Granite Vale	Bill Holmes	
Papuan Frogmouth	25/06/2003	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher	A pair calling and bill snapping at 4:00am
Little Kingfisher	26/06/2003	Yorkeys Knob Golf Course Lagoon, Cairns	Keith Fisher, Grahame & Pam Chapman	Fishing in lagoon, 4th sighting
Darter	26/06/2003	Yorkeys Knob Golf Course Lagoon, Cairns	Keith Fisher, Grahame & Pam Chapman	Several pairs, nesting & building
Peaceful Dove	26/06/2003	Yorkeys Knob Golf Course Lagoon, Cairns	Keith Fisher, Grahame & Pam Chapman	Nesting over water
Blue-winged Kookaburra	29/06/2003	Cattana Wetlands, Cairns	Dawn & Arnold Magarry	Unusual around Cairns, isolated pop. in North Cairns
Square-tailed Kite	June 2003	Manunda, Cairns	Wild World employee	A pair in & around Cairns Central Swamp
Brown Songlark	29/06/2003	Reedbeds Road, Giru	Bill Holmes	
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot	June/July	Kamerunga, Cairns	Keith & Lindsay Fisher, Grahame & Pam Chapman	100+ coming in to roost at dusk
Metallic Starling	4/07/2003	Woopen Creek, south of Miriwinni	Keith Fisher	50+ Adults feeding at side of road, over wintering
Square-tailed Kite	12/07/2003 & 16/7/03	O/H Hoare St. Cairns Reservoir Road, Cairns	Lindsay Fisher Keith Fisher	Chased by Common Myna & Magpie Lark, probably Cairns Central Swamp bird.
Rufous-crowned Emu-Wren	Approx. 14/7/2003	200km Nth of Camoweal (12km East of NT border)	Bob Forsyth	North of known range
Double-banded Plover	15/07/2003 & 23-30/7	Redden Island - Barron River	John Crowhurst & Glenn Holmes	Approx. date - full breeding condition 1 seen in breeding plumage
Red-tailed Tropicbird	22/7/03 & 28/7/03	Trinity Inlet, Cairns	22nd Birding Aus 28th Mathias Glavind	Also reported over Centennial Lakes at Botanic Gds.!
Whimbrel	25/07/2003	Mouth of Ross River	Bill Holmes	Seen with Eastern Curlew and Bar-tailed Godwit
Budgerigar	27/07/2003	Tinaroo	Glenn Holmes	200 birds
Banded Lapwing	29/07/2003	Tolga	Glenn Holmes	Single bird
Black Falcon	30/07/2003	Lake Moondarra, Mt. Isa	Bob Forsyth	1st sighting for Bob near Mt. Isa.
Great-Billed Heron	5/8/2003	Seven Mile Waterhole, Lakefield National Park	Glenda Jefferies	Also seen here in August 2001
Spotted Whistling - Duck	6/8/2003	Seven Mile Waterhole, Lakefield National Park	Glenda Jefferies	Believed to be a first for Lakefield National Park
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	16/08/2003	Lamb Range	Glenn Holmes	Single bird



NOTE: Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings. Please send any sightings to Keith Fisher - post or e-mail OK. Thanks to the contributors to this sightings column, plenty of interesting birds over the last few months.

Welcome to new members..

U Dr A.Grice, AIKENVALE;
Mrs A. Strang, SARINA;
U Mr G. Busby, WHITFIELD;
U Mr J.FROIS, MT SHERIDEN;
U Mrs C.Leech, YUNGABURRA;
U Mrs A.Ward, BAYVIEW HEIGHTS;

Welcome new members.
Please join us on any of our outings.

Check out these websites

Tropical Savannas CRC: www.savanna.ntu.edu.au

CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems: www.cse.csiro.au

GBRMPA: www.qbrmpa.gov.au

Tropical Tablelands Tourism: www.athertontableland.com

Aust. National Wildlife Collection: www.anwc.csiro.au

Padaminka Wildlife Reserve

184 acres of bushland under a conservation agreement with QPWS. 155 bird species for the year (including the Bush-hen).

Five camp sites on creek, 2 campervan sites, free BBQ, Fully self-contained cottages, single rooms. Small workshops and seminars catered. Affordable rates. Tag-along-tours welcome. Only 15 minutes from Mackay, easy drive to Eungella and Kinchant Dams.



Contact Maureen Cooper
P.O. Box 113, Walkerston, 4751.
Phone (07)4959 3770.
Email: padaminka@mrbean.net.au

Notice Board

FNQ Wildlife Week—19-28th September

Tours include: Birds that go Beep—Rainforest radiotracking; Hasties Swamp tour followed by owl spotting in Tolga; Pelican Point @ Lake Tinaroo and much more. Two days of displays and guest speakers at the Mareeba Wetlands Information Centre. For more information call Travel Experience Atherton on (07) 4093 2700 or check their web site.

World Bird Conference - 6-14th March 2004

Birdlife International are sponsoring next years world conference in Durbin, South Africa. BANQG are hoping to have a stall at this conference to promote birding in North Queensland.

2nd Biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference

Australian National University, Canberra from 10-13th December 2003.

Abstracts close 15th September. For more details check out www.birdaustralia.com.au/aoc/index.html. All enquiries to Penny Olsen, ANU [email penny.olsen@anu.edu.au] or Denis Saunders, CSIRO [email saunders@csiro.au].



Details on page 4.

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.

Birds Australia Atlas Report Wins Award



Last night Birds Australia won one of the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research - for the shortly-to-be-published **New Atlas of Australian Birds**. "Birds Australia have done a remarkable job in creating the Atlas," says Professor Mike Archer, Director of the Australian Museum. "It gives the first truly national perspective on the status of Australian bird life." For more information about the award, please go to: www.amonline.net.au/eureka/biodiversity_research/2003_winner.htm For those who have ordered, and waited patiently for, the Atlas book, I am informed that it will be available in about three weeks. For others who have not ordered it but are interested in getting a copy, it will be available from The Birding Shop (contact details on the BA website -see below). For those who have contributed to the Atlas by sending in data - thanks for your efforts, but please DO continue. The main product of the Atlas of Australian Birds project is the Atlas database, and this is ongoing, growing in value over the years. The publication of the Atlas book is NOT the end of the project. Anybody who wants to start atlassing is very welcome; please contact us at the address and phone/fax numbers below, or email the Atlas project direct at: atlas@birdsaustralia.com.au.

Hugo Phillipps, Communications Officer, National Office (email dated 13/8/03)

Please send items for December 2003 Contact Call by Mid November to: Helen McLaughlin, 44 Bishop Street, Belgian Gardens 4810 or Email Helen on helen.mclaughlin@nrm.qld.gov.au.