



Contact Call



Birds Australia

Conservation Through Knowledge

Birds Australia—North Queensland Group

Birds are the saviour

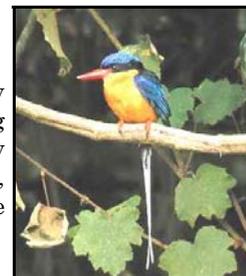
June 2005 Issue: Swamp Harrier

I have spent the last ten days surveying birds in the forest remnants in the Tully area as part of the CSIRO “Healthy Nation” project. It is ironic that it must be only marginally less challenging to your health to spend ten days in those swampy environs than it would be to conduct a garden birds survey in Baghdad at the moment. It is hot and humid in Tully in February. Extremely so. But we had to wear thick clothes from top to toe to keep the pestilential mozzies at bay. It was that or use very large quantities of Deet – yet another health challenge. Our clothes were of course soaking wet and I was never sure whether liquid sloshing around in my boots was seeping in or self-generated. The final curse was the lawyer vine that clutched us lovingly at every step – to the near detriment of my mental health. Healthy country indeed!

As usual with bird surveys, the birds that were absent were more intriguing than those that were actually encountered. Most striking was the paucity of birds in the dense lower tangles of vines and young trees. No sign of Cassowary, no Chowchillas, no Noisy Pittas, no Grey Fantails and precious few Whipbirds. Even the Large-billed Scrubwrens were feeding high in the canopy. Stranger than that, the Orange-footed Scrubfowl were nearly always found high in the trees.

Could it be that the mosquitoes had made life unbearable for them too?

Other species present but in unexpectedly short supply were Black-faced Monarchs, Grey Whistlers and Black Butcherbirds. We saw 72 species altogether, the commonest being Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Little Shrike-thrush, Yellow Oriole, Metallic Starling and Fairy Gerygone. We did get one real bonus – plenty of Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfishers, including a late nest with chicks. Birds are always the saviour – even in uncomfortable environments.



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BA North Queensland Group—Events Calendar March-June 2005

April 2005

Sunday 3rd April

Birding for Beginnings—Warrama, Cairns

This is fast becoming our most popular event. Graham Harrington has refined this day especially for beginners. Learn all the tips from the experts and have a great morning with the birds. All welcome. Meet at the car park, Johanna Road, Trinity Park, Cairns at 7:30am. Contact Keith Fisher for more details on (07) 4039 0972.

Sunday 10th April

Klaproths Scrub, Malanda

Atlas survey at Klaproth Scrub (Firewheel Farm), on Ball Road Malanda. Start 8:00am til 11:00am. Bring morning tea. Contact Ian Sinclair on (07) 4096 6690.

Sunday 10th April

Serpentine Lagoon, Townsville

With water in the wetland this should prove to be an interesting morning. Long pants and repellent may be needed. Meet at the Wulguru Mobil Service Station at 7am. Contact Jo Wieneke on (07) 4771 4707.

23-25th April—Anzac Day long weekend

Beach Stone-curlew survey, north Queensland

As it's five years since the April 2000 Beach Stone-curlew survey, so it's time to hit those beaches again. Full details on page 5 with an

updated survey form enclosed. More details contact Amanda Freeman at afreeman@qld.chariot.net.au or Ph (07) 4095 2655 before 8.30pm.

May 2005

Saturday 28th May—Members Day

Birds Australia North Queensland Group (BA-NQG) will host the national members day in Cairns. Registration form and program details will be available in March edition of Wingspan or by contacting the Secretary Jo Wieneke for a hard copy. Details on page 3.

June 2005

Saturday 11-13th June—Queen's Birthday long weekend

BA-NQG AGM at Cowley Beach Training Area, Innisfail

AGM at 1:00pm on Saturday and group dinner in the evening. Bird watching trips planned for the Sunday and Monday. Nominations are needed for Committee positions, including Convenor, Deputy Convenor and Secretary. Other committee positions are also available. Please fill out and return the enclosed AGM nomination form to our secretary at least a week before the AGM. This is a restricted access area, so RSVPs are necessary. Full details in the June newsletter or contact Jo Wieneke on (07)



Inside this issue:

- 2005 Members Day and AGM
- Executive Committee meeting
- Beach Stone-curlew survey
- Mt Isa Birding
- Trip Reports - Warrama Cairns Christmas Party, Kingfisher park,
- Yellow-legged flycatcher reports
- Black-throated Finch
- Activities on Cape York
- Unusual Sightings

Birds Australia now have a “Calendar of Events” link on their web site.

Check it out at:

www.birdsaustralia.com.au

BA-NQG keeps with site updated with regional events. Field Trips may change after publication. Local contacts can provide you with the latest information. This will allow more flexibility, especially concerning weather conditions. Additional events may also be arranged.



Birds Australia Members Day ~ Saturday 28th May 2005

Birds Australia—North Queensland Group is hosting this years national Birds Australia Members Day and Annual General Meeting. A packed program includes guest speakers Carla Catterall, Andrew Dennis and David Westcott, Peter Buosi, Daryl Jones, Leonie Valentine, Steve Williams, Carol Erwin, Richard Noske, Anna Koetz and Elinor Scambler.

The weekend's program of events include:

- ✦ A full day of presentations from north Queensland avian researchers from 8am til 5:30pm
- ✦ National AGM and national office speakers on Saturday from 1:30pm til 2:30pm. **Poster displays** all day, with presenters available during lunch;
- ✦ **Evening Dinner** at Murraya, Faculty Close, James Cook University campus, Cairns
- ✦ Special **day tours** available on Sunday 29th May;
- ✦ **Extended tours and discounts** with local operators organised for a great week of bird activities in the wet tropics.
- ✦ Full conference details are within **March 2005 Wingspan**.
- ✦ **Register now** by sending your registration fee to BA-NQG, The Treasurer, PO Box 6445, Cairns Qld 4870.

James Cook University
Lecture Theatre A3.001 is
the location for this year's
national Members Day and
AGM.
ALL WELCOME

Committee Meeting in Cardwell—1st August 2004

The new Committee had a very productive meeting at Cardwell, their first for the new financial year. Jim Downey, the then Chief Executive Officer, attended our meeting to assist with national office (NO) issues. The following agenda items may be of interest to members:

1. **Promotion of bird tourism:** The Convenor led a discussion concerning the group's potential role in assisting groups, in particular north Queensland local governments, in the promotion of birds both nationally and internally. *Eds note: Graham Harrington has since given a presentation at the Malanda Hotel concerning this issue.*
2. BA-NQG to host **2005 Members Day and AGM:** Full details are in the brochure within *March Wingspan*.
3. **Reimbursement of travel expenses:** The Committee agreed that the purpose of this decision was for members not to be financially inhibited from being a member of the BA-NQG Committee. A fuel allowance was therefore considered reasonable.
4. **Funding of regional groups by NO:** Due to a limited budget, National Office has decided to limit funding to regional groups from 1st January 2006. Therefore regional groups will need to apply for funding from NO for projects in the future.
5. **Important Bird Areas (IBAs):** BA-NQG has developed a list of areas considered important to birds. These areas include both natural and manmade areas and have been identified using standardised, internationally agreed criteria.



Cotton Pygmy-Goose
Mike Bamford
© Birds Australia 2003

6. **Proposed new regional group—Capricornia.** BA-NQG has been negotiating with this group as to a logical boundary. The Birds Australia Council, at their last meeting (November 2004), approved the formation of a new regional group—Capricornia based in Rockhampton.

7. **Regional contacts, roles and responsibilities:** The Committee agreed these positions be renamed Regional Contacts. Their job is to provide two reports throughout the year and act as a local contact for travelling birders.
8. **Yungaburra market report:** Unfortunately wet winter weather limited the turnout at the July market.
9. **North Queensland Cranes:** Elinor Scambler was commended for her excellent work in organising the Annual Crane Count and managing the data. The Committee unanimously agreed that Elinor be the BA-NQG contact for the International Crane Foundation.
10. **Black-throated Finch survey:** A database has been formulated so that all BTF recordings can be centrally located. Numerous groups and individuals have recently been involved in more intensive surveys around Townsville. Please contribute to this database.
11. **Cotton Pygmy-Goose:** a north Queensland survey was planned for mid October. Although numbers were down in Mackay, Bowen and Townsville, there were good numbers at Blackbraes NP.
12. **Common Myna Control:** The Committee discussed the recent push by Warren Entsch's office to install traps around Cairns. BA-NQG has a representative on this committee.
13. **Duck and Quail Hunting:** the Committee discussed the recent lift on the moratorium on duck and quail hunting. BA policy is not to oppose sport duck hunting unless there is evidence to suggest that it affects the sustainability of the species. A review of the current BA policy is underway.
14. **Publicity of BA:** The Committee agreed to investigate BA-NQG's attendance to agricultural field days within north Queensland, specifically Lotus Glen (June 2005) and North Queensland (2006).



Need a Day at the Beach? Beach Stone-curlew Survey 2005



On 1st April it will be five years since the Wet Tropical Coast **Beach Stone-curlew** survey began. On April 1st 2000, eighty-five people from BA-NQG, Nature Search, School for Field Studies and coastal communities took part in the survey that covered 160km of the accessible coastline between the Daintree and Tully Rivers. While I can't coordinate an all out one-day survey effort this year, it would be very, very useful to have stretches of coastline surveyed again, to see if the beaches used by **Beach Stone-curlews** five years ago are still in use. If you could handle a day at the beach (we have chosen Anzac Day weekend, but you can do another weekend if preferable) then please give me a call and volunteer to survey one of your favourite beaches. The stretches of coast listed below all need surveying and I'll match your name with a piece of our gorgeous coastline that suits you. You might even like to revisit the spot you surveyed in 2000 (if you took part back then).

Possible sites include: Daintree River mouth; Wonga Beach (various points); Rocky Point Beach; Newell Beach / Mossman; Port Douglas; Craiglie; Yule Point (various points); Palm Voe; Clifton Beach; Kewarra Redden Island; Ellie Point; Cairns Airport; Ella Bay; ETTY Bay; Browns Beach; Clump Point; North Mission Beach; Porter O'Shanter Point; Kennedy Bay; Hull Heads Park; Cardwell; Lucinda; Forrest Beach; Cungulla; Alva Beach; Molongle Creek; Abbot

The Action Plan 2000 recommends identifying and monitoring populations along the coast, in particular areas of high human usage.

A simple form to fill in is included with this sending in **Beach Stone-curlew** records at Surveying for **Beach Stone-curlew** is easy leisurely pace along your allotted stretch of location (GPS preferred but not essential) of any **Beach Stone-curlew**. You can also complete a Birds Australia Atlas Survey form for other birds you may find. All records from the survey will be added to BA-NQG's **Beach Stone-curlew** database, the Birds Australia Atlas and the QPWS Coastal Bird Atlas as part of on-going **Beach Stone-curlew** monitoring. All **Beach Stone-curlew** records sent in to the database are useful and thanks to BA-NQG members and others I continue to receive a steady trickle of **Beach Stone-curlew** reports. Inevitably though, these tend to be concentrated in the most regularly visited areas so we do need help to fill in the gaps. Has there ever been a better excuse for a day at the beach? Contact Amanda Freeman Ph: (07) 4095 2655 before 8:30pm or email aafreeman@qld.chariot.net.au.

newsletter for use during the survey months or for any other time during the year.

and fun. Essentially you simply need to walk at a beach, keeping a close watch out and noting the

Mount Isa Birding

For the past 12 months or so, I have concentrated on visiting the western shores of our 2375 hectare area Lake Moondarra. The western shores are noted for its black soil edges and shallow water favoured by the visiting Shorebird/Waders from the northern hemisphere. The floating grasses further out host many species of water fowl. My personal list for the Lake and immediate environs has reached 171 species of birds. The record of an orange (Victorian) tagged **Curlew Sandpiper** indicates that the lake is a resting location for birds entering Australia via the Gulf of Carpentaria on their way further south. Waders that have been recorded in the past 14 months include: **Red-necked Phalarope, Oriental Pratincole, Long-toed Stint, Red-necked Stint, Oriental Plover, Common Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper** (but more frequently seen at the Sewage Ponds), **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Swinhoe's Snipe** (from Ian Fox), and our own **Painted Snipe**. A pair of resident **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** have just fledged their two chicks. A pair of **Black Falcons** were sighted July 2003 and two **Ospreys** were last sighted a little over a year ago. But the top raptor recorded was the **Red Goshawk** (and with witnesses!). **Black-necked Storks** are regularly seen, yet the nearest nest I have recorded was at Lake Julius, 60km to the north. In the drier season it is possible to find drinking together **Painted, Long-tailed, Zebra and Double-barred Finches** with both **Chestnut-breasted & Pictorella Mannikin**. The extremely patient Don Hadden, when resident here, photographed **Buff-banded Rail** and **Spotted, Spotless, & Baillon's Crake** along the Clear Water Sedimentation Lagoon fence. But as

Mount Isa is on the faunal border of the Timorean and Eyrean regions, species in residence change according to the seasons! The **Green Pygmy-goose** breeds in the (restricted access) Clear Water Lagoon. But the numbers appear to be down since the introduction of the water weed removing machine. A pair of vagrant **Cotton Pygmy-goose** have been in residence for several years. At one time over 500 **Black-tailed Native-hen** were running about. Several pairs of **Black Swans** were able to raise their cygnets before the lake flooded. **Torresian Crows** are now being identified around the lake. Previously the **Australasian Raven** had the Isa area to itself. Torresians seem to like the occasional drinks at the waters edge. Foliage birds such as **Black-tailed Treecreepers** have their favourite spots. Birds such as the **Spinifexbird** and **Spinifex Pigeon** come and go dependent on the seasons. The main access road to Wide Bay is currently closed while a pipeline from Lake Julius is being duplicated. A **Carpentarian Grasswren** was sighted several years ago along this road (The habitat is identical to the popular McNamara's Rd site 60km NW of Mount Isa.) Alternative accesses to the western shores are mainly via old, rough, non-maintained tracks which require a high clearance vehicle. Another problem is that when the rains fill the lake (like now) the good wader feeding localities get covered and I have to be patient until the water level drops.

Route charts are available from the Gazetteer section of Birds Queensland web page www.birdsqueensland.org.au.

Bob Forsyth, Regional Contact (Western Qld)



Ballions Crake
Andrew Plant

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Warrama Bird Survey, Cairns 5th December

BA-NQG had been asked to conduct some bird surveys in an area of land at Trinity Park in Cairns northern suburbs. This area provides CDEP training for traditional owners and consists of several habitats, wetland, urban landscaping, riparian and an open weedy/grassed area, which was once a pineapple plantation. There is a program proposed to revegetate the area and an ideal opportunity for us to compare bird species before, during and after the revegetation. Surveys followed standard Birds Australia atlas techniques and were pretty laid back with plenty of time to note the finer points of identification. Three areas were surveyed: urban landscape, wetland and riparian. Whilst nothing unexpected was found during these surveys, several breeding events were noted. **Brown-backed Honeyeaters** were nesting over the water in the lagoon, with at least five active nests were observed. A recently fledged juvenile **Forest Kingfisher** was being fed by two adult birds. A juvenile **Laughing Kookaburra** was also observed being fed by two adult birds in the riparian habitat. A **White-browed Crake** was seen foraging in the lagoon. Several trees were fruiting and flowering in the riparian area attracting pigeons, honeyeaters and figbirds. The morning was finished off with cake and coffee overlooking the lagoon whilst we tallied up to find we had seen 40 bird species.



Buff-banded Rail
Krystii Melaine
© Birds Australia 2003

2004 Christmas Party—Lake Tinaroo 11th December

An excellent turnout of northern BA-NQG members gathered at Virginia and Peter's property alongside Lake Tinaroo for an afternoon of entertainment, good food and the odd drink or two. Despite a large thunderstorm passing overhead we manage to retire to the front lawn for a few knockout games of Boules, which was very entertaining. Amanda and Lindsay put together two very good quizzes, which taxed our brains and got us thinking about birds again. It was a great afternoon's entertainment and gossip session for which we thank our hosts Virginia and Peter.

Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, Australia Day weekend, 28-30th January

Most people arrived late Friday afternoon and were rewarded with great views of a pair of **Lesser Sooty Owls** and an **Owlet Nightjar** whilst spotlighting in the evening. The owls were a particularly good find, being lifers for several people. Saturday morning had a few heading off early for a walk around the lodge which turned up 57 species including a **Leaden Flycatcher** feeding two nestlings 20m up a eucalypt tree. Other good sightings included **Channel-billed Cuckoos** flying by, two parent **Dollarbirds** feeding three youngsters, good views of several **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** and a **Noisy Pitta**. After breakfast we travelled to the Mowbray State Forest for a walk through the rainforest. **Wompoo Fruit-Dove**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** and **Pied Monarch** were seen. We then detoured through Weatherby Station to check out the lagoon. With plenty of water around from

recent rains there was not much on the lagoon, but we had good views of **Brown Quail** and **Buff-banded Rail**. **Bush-hens** were heard calling, but would not make an appearance. After lunch we headed north to the Mt. Carbine dam. Although plenty of water, there were just a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** and **Wedge-tailed Eagle** cruising overhead. The sports oval produced three **Australian Bustard**. It was then back to

Kingfisher Park through a rain storm. After an excellent communal dinner we were treated to a slide show by Cliff & Dawn Frith who cooled everyone down by showing some stunning photos of Antarctica and South America. Cliff and Dawn certainly managed to get some fantastic shots of the bird life and scenery. This had everyone wanting to head south to Antarctica by the end of the show. Sunday morning we all travelled back towards Mt. Carbine to meet Brooklyn Station manager, Mick Blackman. This property has recently been bought by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). Mick gave us an overview of the plans AWC has for the property and most members were surprised at the vast size of the property (60,000 hectares) and now have an appreciation of the huge job ahead to manage it. We were given access to an area along the Mitchell River where we atlassed. It was good to see species such as **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** and **Cicadabird** amongst others. We have an invitation to return to the station in the future and spend longer atlassing the area. The morning was finished off at Lustre Creek on the way back to Kingfisher. Once again we must thank Ron at Kingfisher for his hospitality and support of the traditional January weekend field trip. Also thanks to all the members who made it an excellent weekend; especially Bob Forsyth who made the effort to come from Mt. Isa and Cliff and Dawn for their effort in showing excellent photos.

Warrama Bird Survey, 20th February

This visit was the second to Warrama to survey the various habitats occurring here. Interestingly we thought it was a quiet morning but 5 more species were seen than the previous survey in December. We saw 13 new birds in our list of 45, bringing the total for the two surveys to 53 species. Several species we could have expected to see were not recorded, which was due to our inability to access the riparian area fully, as we did on the first survey. Interesting sightings this time included a **Torresian Crow** flying over calling: a sign of the increasing numbers being reported over the last few years in Cairns. In the lagoon a **Comb-crested Jacana** was attracted to the water lilies, which had blossomed since our last visit but the high water level had probably pushed the **White-browed Crake**, we saw in December, out of the lagoon, as it was not recorded this time. A family party of **Lovely Fairy-wrens** was foraging around on the edge of the riparian area and several **Golden-headed Cisticolas** were perched in the grassland advertising their territories. Our next visit here will be the Birding for Beginners day in April.

All reports by Keith and Lindsay Fisher, Cairns

In recent months there has been two reports of possible sightings of **Yellow-legged Flycatchers** outside their normal range. The last published record is from Ravenshoe in 1986. However, on 10/12/04 a resident on the Rex Range south of Mossman caught an injured bird which was identified both by the rescuer and the wildlife carer as Yellow-legged Flycatcher. Unfortunately this bird was not kept for verification. The second report was from Lake Eacham by a visiting birder who with the aid of Slater Field Guide, could not identify it to be anything else. **Del. Richards, Regional Contact (Mossman)**. *Note: From time to time this species is reported in our area. HANZAB states that there are 'several unconfirmed reports in the Atherton region'. However, it would seem unlikely given the vast amount of unsuitable habitat between the Tablelands and its usual range on Cape York. Jo Wieneke*



Today (10/02/05) a letter from the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage Senator the Hon Ian Campbell arrived. The Minister advised that **Black-throated Finch** (southern) *Poephila cincta cincta* will shortly be listed as an endangered species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Details of the listing will be available on the Department of the Environment and Heritage website at www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/index.html shortly.

Thanks is due to a number of people who either wrote the **Black-throated Finch** Recovery Plan or worked it through Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency or the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation. In particular I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Stephen Garnett. Without Stephen's input it is most likely that the Queensland program would not have emerged. Stephen also negotiated with E&C (NSW) initially to have the Recovery Plan proceed to Canberra with the support of both State ministers.

Over the past twelve months several steps have been implemented on behalf of the Recovery Program and include:

- Three sets of GPS equipment have been purchased so sightings in the Townsville region can be accurately identified
 - Landholders, local authorities and organizations on whose property birds occur have been visited to inform them of the program and ask for their cooperation
 - As the BTFRP is a, unincorporated community driven activity we have had to find a home for funding which will meet the audit requirements of funding bodies. To this end a formal request has been made of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board to meet this need.
 - Marnie McCullough visited the Northern Territory in late 2004 to work on the **Gouldian Finch** program with the idea of learning from the experiences of people on that particular program
 - Several group members have contributed to the development of a data bank to record sightings. The data bank is under constant revision and development.
- It seems with the endangered listing, Recovery Program members can now proceed to apply for funding to get the Recovery Program underway.

Bernie Davis
Chair

Black-throated Finch Recovery Program

Activities on Cape York Peninsula

A wet and soggy wet season walk:

Rod Thorn, Mike Barnett and myself went for a walk on the 5th February to the far eastern end of Uningan Nature Reserve with hopes of seeing a **White-browed Crane**. We started off by wading through a small creek, got rained on a number of times and were walking through water for much of the time as the low lying ground is all currently waterlogged. All in all it was a wet walk. We walked for four hours passing through Ghost Gum open grassy woodland, Melaleuca woodland, tall *Eucalyptus tetradonta* woodland, past mangrove lined salt pans and around a small ti-tree swamp. Species recorded (some heard but not seen) were **Blue-winged Kookaburra, Rainbow Lorikeet, White-throated Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Spangled Drongo, Forest Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Pheasant Coucal, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Laughing Kookaburra, Pied Butcherbird, Little Friarbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Striated Pardalote, Leaden Flycatcher, Cicadabird, Yellow Honeyeater, Red-winged Parrot, Bar-shouldered Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Brolga, White-streaked Honeyeater, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Mistletoe Bird, Red-browed Pardalote, Brush Cuckoo, Radjah Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Shrike-thrush,**



Radjah Shelduck
Steve Bamford
© Birds Australia 2003

Black-backed Butcherbird, Tawny Frogmouth, Grey-crowned Babbler. On the way home in the car we also heard **Brown Treecreepers** (Black-backed form) calling in the *Eucalyptus tetradonta* woodland.

Breeding activity:

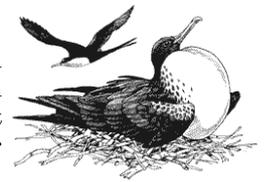
In the last few months we have observed breeding of **Great Bowerbird, Black Butcherbird, Black-backed Butcherbird, Yellow Oriole, Brown Goshawk, Dollarbird, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Mangrove Gerygone.**

Unusual sightings:

On 4th February Michael Barnett spotted a solo **Banded Lapwing** which Rod and I have also now seen. It is a first sighting for this area and a long way outside of its usual range. During December we also observed a large mixed flock of adult and immature **Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters** in *Eucalyptus tetradonta* woodland around east Weipa on a number of occasions. Nothing appeared to be in flower at the time. We have recorded them here before but not in the numbers observed last December.

Conservation issues:

An area of regrowth vegetation between Evans Landing and Lorim Point at Weipa is a significant roosting area for **Great and Lesser Frigatebirds**. Our preliminary estimate is that about 2,000 birds use the area as a roost (although numbers fluctuate seasonally and from year to year). Some of the area was recently cleared by Comalco for their new power station. Another significant slice of the area is now proposed for clearing and use as a heavy industrial area. I have started preparing a report on the frigatebirds and have mapped out the roost site to identify the overlap between the roost site and the proposed area for development. There is a large overlap. We need to get estimates of the ratio of **Great to Lesser Frigatebirds** and an estimate of the overall population. Does anyone have any information about other frigatebird roosts on the mainland? We are not aware of any other roost sites and believe that the Weipa roost may be a significant site.



Great Frigatebird
Andrew Plant
© Birds Australia 2003

Sue Gould, Regional Contact (Cape York)

Please email information regarding other frigatebird roost sites on the mainland to susanfgould@yahoo.com.

Interesting sightings

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Red-necked Avocet (1)	14/11/04	Melinda Downs	IF & THM	Between Cloncurry and Burke and Wills Roadhouse.
Yellow Wagtail (1)	4/12/04	Smithfield , Cairns	HC	Northern Treatment Works, McGregor Road. Non-breeding female.
Grass Owls (2)	19/12/04	Townsville Town Common	TG & JJ	Both individuals seen on the same evening.
Oriental Pratincole (17)	5/12/04	Mt. Isa	BF	Lake Moondarra's Wide Bay
Glossy Ibis (16)	8/12/04	Hasties Swamp	AG	Including one juvenile
Little Curlew (2)	14/12/04	Kaban	AG	In a ploughed field.
Latham's Snipe (7)	14/12/04	Hasties Swamp	AG	
Atherton Scrubwren (2)	20/12/04	Allumba Pocket	AG	Yungaburra, feeding Fan-tailed Cuckoo fledgling.
Little Grassbird	21/12/04	Hasties Swamp	AG	Flew out of newly mown paddock, perched on NP sign.
Wood Sandpiper (2)	21/12/04	Hasties Swamp	AG	
Sarus Crane (10 imm.)	27/12/04	near Bromfield Swamp	TH via ES	Last Tableland sighting of this species for 2004.
Painted Snipe (1F)	27/12/04	10km N of Mutchilba	DR	West of Mareeba.
Pallid Cuckoo (1 Juv)	29/12/04	Julatten	DR	Being fed by White-breasted Woodswallows.
Pied Oyster-catcher (6)	30/12/04	Mossman River	DR	Uncommonly large number here.
Tooth-billed Bowerbird (2)	2/01/05	Wongabel SF, Atherton	KF & LF	Adult feeding at least one young in nest 10m AGL in a clump of leaves on a small branch 0.5m from the trunk. Rarely observed nest.
Pacific Baza (2ad + 2Juv)	14/01/05	Kamerunga, Cairns	KF & LF	Recently fledged birds being mobbed by Black Butcherbirds.
Brush Cuckoo	16/01/05	Mt. Isa Golf Course	BF	Uncommon in Mt. Isa.
Banded Honeyeater (6 inc. Juv.)	16/01/05	Stone Axe Ck. Mt. Isa	BF	NW corner of Lake Moondarra. Several birds had the buff chest of immatures.
Australian White Ibis (7)	18/01/05	Lake Street, Cairns	KF	Northern end in swampy area of old rubbish dump. Normally absent from Cairns at this time of year.
Spotted Catbird (1)	20/01/05	Kamerunga, Cairns	LF	Unusual to be at this low altitude at this time of year.
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (5)	26/01/05	Kamerunga, Cairns	KF & LF	Very unusual on the coast around Cairns.
Grey Wagtail (1)	1/02/05	Kauri Creek	JL	Uncommon vagrant, recorded on video.
Banded Lapwing (7)	5/02/05	27km South of Townsville	BH	1 pair with 3 or 4 chicks, 1 pair on 3 eggs. Edge of range.
Brush Cuckoo (1 Juv.)	5/02/05	Upper Mowbray	DR	Fostered by Lovely Fairy-wrens.
Painted Button-quail (1M)	6/02/05	Mt. Lewis	DR	near Blue-faced Parrot-Finch site.
Radjah Shelduck (5)	8/02/05	Smithfield, Cairns	KF & HC	Northern Treatment Works. Uncommon in Cairns.
Little Curlew (1)	8/02/05	South of Curtain Fig.	AG	Near Yungaburra in open paddock.
Beach Stone-curlew (2)	10/02/05	Port Douglas Oval	DR	During King Tide.
Glossy Black Cockatoo	12/02/05	10km West of Paluma	RM & AGR	1st & early record for this year.
Oriental Cuckoo (1)	13/02/05	Laudham Park	BH	30 km SW of Townsville - first since December 2003.
Spotless Crake (Juv)	14/02/05	Paluma Village Green	RM, AGR,MA	5m up in Glochidion sp. 1st for Roy.
Southern Cassowary	14/02/05	Mt. Hypipamee NP	AG	(The Crater). Bird returned after being absent for a while.
Snipe sp. (1)	16/02/05	Lake Street, Cairns	KF	Northern end in swampy area of old rubbish dump.
Snipe sp.	16&18/02/05	South of Townsville	BH	First since April last year. Suspect they're working their way north
Grey Goshawk (1)	20/02/05	Malcolm Rd. Tinaroo	JL	Male white morph, 1st seen around here for 3-4 years.
Southern Cassowary (1)	20/02/05	Paluma Dam Road, Paluma	JH	Seen on road. Has photographic proof!
Latham Snipe (5)	25/02/05	Townsville Town Common	TG et al	Largest number seen in some time
Topknot Pigeon (200+)	February '05	Koah	SE	Cedar Park Rainforest Resort. Large concentration.

Contributors: JH- Julie Holden KF-Keith Fisher RM-Roy Mackay AGR-André Griffin MA-Marlene Acton HC-Harry Cassidy
SE-Sieglinde Edwards TH- Terry Heidenreich LF-Lindsay Fisher DR-Del Richards BF-Bob Forsyth AG-Alan Gillanders BH-Bill Holmes
RS-Ron Stannard IF-Ian Fox THM-Trish Hammond JL-Jack Leighton ES-Elinor Scambler TG-Tony Grice JJ-Janice Jackson

Note from Keith Fisher: Blue-Faced Parrot-Finches have been reported in Feb. 10km up the Mt. Lewis road in numbers of 50+ inc. juvenile birds - via RS. Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfishers 45 km north of Mackay have suffered a high predation rate, only one nest out of 10 was successful. It would seem that the main culprit is the Goanna - Richard Atkinson. Snipe sp. & Sacred Kingfisher have turned up in Townsville & Cairns January/February & would appear to be migrating north-BH & KF. Thanks to all the observers for sending in their reports. Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings. Please send any unusual or interesting sightings to Keith Fisher .

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🐦 **Cairns email/website service** has been set up to record and inform local and visiting birdwatchers of recent rare and interesting sightings in the local area. Sightings are received via email or phone and collated into a single report. These reports are then emailed back to a list of subscribers. Each report is then summarised and added to a monthly report which is posted to a website. The website contains all records for the current month with a summary of previous months in the archive. The email service is intended for local birdwatchers and the website for visiting birdwatchers who are currently here or intending to



visit the Cairns area. Currently the reports are posted every couple of days. This is a non-commercial service. To send or receive reports via email please contact cairnsbirds@yahoo.com.au. The website address is www.cairnsbirds.blogspot.com.

🐦 **The Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF)** has joined forces with private enterprise to help save the Southern Cassowary. Australia's rare and endangered birds are to end up on the dinner plate to help raise money for wildlife habitat protection. The images of the **Southern Cassowary, Red Goshawk, Orange-bellied Parrot, Gouldian Finch, Mallee Fowl, Golden Bowerbird, Lyrebird** and the **Lesser Sooty Owl** will be immortalized on a series of collectable ceramic plates. The limited edition plates, released yesterday, were produced by The Stokes Mint and are the initiative of the Australian Rainforest Foundation. For each \$110 plate sold, \$10 will go to the foundation.

To order please contact ARF on 1300 559 095. For information go to www.sstransfers.com.



Contact Call is now produced on recycled paper: 50% recycled fibre and 50% plantation fibre !!

Welcome to our new members..

- 👤 Mr D Christensen; AYR;
- 👤 Ms D de Voil; EARLVILLE, CAIRNS;
- 👤 Mr & Mrs K & R Edmeades, TOWNSVILLE;
 - 👤 Ms J Nisbet, BAMAGA;
 - 👤 Mr V Petkov, MACKAY;
- 👤 Mr & Mrs K & R Scagliotti, TOWNSVILLE;
 - 👤 Mr M Willis, TOOLAKEA;
- 👤 Ms W Wiggins, FRESHWATER, CAIRNS

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

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.

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

Please send items for June 2005 Contact Call by Mid May to: Helen McLaughlin, 44 Bishop Street, Belgian Gardens 4810 or Email Helen on helen.mclaughlin@nrm.qld.gov.au.