



Birds Australia
Conservation Through Knowledge

ConTact Call

Newsletter of the Birds Australia
North Queensland Group



Birds Australia
North Queensland Group

Tully Heads revisited.....

June 2005 Issue: *Brown Goshawk*

In the last newsletter I reported on the apparent effect of heavy concentrations of mosquitoes on bird behaviour viz. avoidance by staying high in the canopy. This was in forests near Tully in February. I repeated these surveys in May and there were some differences, which may be of interest. The mosquitoes had declined from unbelievable densities to all-too-believable densities. Still quite sufficient to distress our international volunteers but not so dense that you breathed them in. The Orange-footed Scrubfowl had returned to the ground, which rather suggests they were avoiding mosquitoes by staying in the tree canopy in February. It was noticeable that the Cassowaries were constantly shaking their heads in response to mosquitoes biting - I guess this is quite normal but one wonders how much blood they lose in a year. There were more small birds in the lower vegetation this time, but I still got the impression they preferred to stay higher. One interesting observation was a sub-adult Mangrove Robin in inundated *Melaleuca quinquinervia*. I have never seen this species away from mangroves before and as far as I could tell we were possibly a kilometre from the nearest mangroves.

Some of you may be aware that a new regional group was recently approved by Birds Australia Council. The new group is called BA-Capricornia (BAC) and includes those areas within the postcode range of 4471-4478, 4671-4805 and 4829. This affects some members within the southern area of the North Queensland Group, which are now part of this group. Peter Hinton has been elected Convenor, with Allan Briggs Secretary. They have developed a website which is www.rock.com.au/~birdscapricornia. We wish Capricornia all the best with their group and look forward to any joint outings in the future.



Silvereye
Andrew Plant
© Birds Australia 2003

Our AGM is to be held on the Queen's Birthday long weekend and members are encouraged to attend. The Department of Defence have kindly offered their restricted Cowley Beach Training Area for the weekend. Details are enclosed in this newsletter. See you there.

On another note: We have a report and a photo of Silvereyes roosting on a pendulous bit of bamboo within 30cm of the ground. They roost about 30cm apart and have been in exactly the same positions every night for four months now. Has anyone ever seen this sort of behaviour before? Please let me know by emailing: riflebird@austarnet.com.au.

Graham Harrington, Convenor

BA North Queensland Group—Events Calendar July-Sept 2005

June 2005

- 4-11th June - Bird Awareness Week
- 5th June - World Environment Day: "Green Cities: Plan for the Planet"
- 11-13th June—Queen's Birthday w/e
- BA-NQG AGM at Cowley Beach Training Area, Innisfail

AGM at 1:00pm on Saturday and group dinner in the evening. This is a restricted access area, so RSVPs are necessary. People are required to be there by 11am for a debrief. See enclosed brochure for details.

August 2005

date to be confirmed - Cunggulla survey
Join the Townsville members for a visit to the Australian Institute of Marine Science site.

September 2005—Biodiversity month

3rd September - Bowling Green Bay and Cromarty wetlands survey
Join us in surveying the wetlands in this area when the Cranes are gathering momentum for their migration north. Check the BA website for details or contact the Secretary. Details page 2.

7th Sept - National Threatened Species Day

10-11th Sept - Cotton Pygmy-Goose Survey. Participate in the national survey at Townsville's Ross River/Dam, Serpentine Lagoon, Lake Tinaroo, Blackbrae's NP, Lake Mitchell or Valley of Lagoons. Check the BA website for exact details or contact the Secretary. Details page 2 and in Sept newsletter.

30th Sept - 7th Oct: 2005 Campout and Congress Bendigo Victoria. "Challenges for Conservation in the 21st Century: Birds in a changing environment" Details on BA website.

October 2005

Saturday 1st October—Annual Crane Count

Join us for the bigger than ever survey of Cranes in North Queensland. Teams throughout the Atherton Tablelands, Innot Hot Springs and Townsville. Contact Elinor Scambler on 40953296 or dacelo@austarnet.com.au. Full details in the September newsletter.



Inside this issue:

- Executive Committee meeting
- Duck & Quail Hunting Season
- Area reports: Weipa, Tville, Ayr
- In the News: Cockatoo shooting, Be Cass-O-Wary, Daintree land
- Black-throated Finch Plan
- Interesting Sightings
- Trip Reports - Serpentine Lagoon

Check out Birds Australia website "Calendar of Events" 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.

The Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* characteristic by predominant bony brow Southern and Tropical, of which the tropical smaller than the Brown Falcon, with shorter, broader wings, long rounded tail and long legs. The brown Goshawk is a solitary, secretive hawk of most wooded habitats, including farmland and trees in urban areas. Its flight action is rapid and powerful, with bursts of quick, deep wing-beats; it glides on slightly bowed wings and soars on slightly upswept wings. The Brown Goshawk's plumage is similar to that of the Collared Sparrowhawk. In flight, the former is best distinguished by its longer head and neck, straighter trailing edges to the wings, longer rounded tail and heavier, deeper wing-beats. The Brown Goshawk occurs throughout mainland Australia and Tasmania eating mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and arthropods and occasionally carrion. Although common and widespread, there have been local declines in southern Australia from habitat clearance.

Brown Goshawk

refers to the ventral barring. The species is ridges and robust feet. There are two races: race is smaller. The Brown Goshawk is slightly wings. It is a fierce, active hawk with rounded



Brown Goshawk
Robert Mancini
© Birds Australia 2003

The *Information sourced from The Birds of Prey of Australia by Stephen Debus.*

Atlas 2 continues...

Please continue to send your Atlas forms to the coordinators listed below, or submit them electronically to Birds Australia, via the web site:

Southern Region (Bowen to Cardwell)

Regional Organiser—Jo Wieneke 4771 4707

PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens Qld 4810

Northern Region (Cardwell to Cape York)

Regional Organiser—Graham Harrington 4096 5051

PO Box 680, Malanda Qld 4885



Other Contacts:

- Keith Fisher (Cairns) (07) 4039 0972
PO Box 2209, Cairns Qld 4870;
- Glenn Holmes (Atherton Tableland) (07) 4091 4364
PO Box 1246, Atherton Qld 4883; or
- Elinor Scambler (Atherton Tableland) (07) 4095 3296
MS1318 Gadgarra Road, Yungaburra Qld 4872.

2004-2005 BA-NQG Management Committee

Executive Committee

Convenor—Graham Harrington Ph: (07) 4096 5051

Email: riflebird@austarnet.com.au

Deputy Convenor—Keith Fisher Ph: (07) 4039 0972

Email: lkfisher@optusnet.com.au

Secretary—Jo Wieneke Ph: (07) 4771 4707

Email: bowerbird14@bigpond.com

Treasurer—Harry Cassidy Ph: (07) 4057 5278

Email: harrycass40@hotmail.com

Committee members

Tony Grice (Townsville) Cliff Frith (Malanda)

Helen McLaughlin (Townsville)

Ian Northcott (Cairns) Elna Kerswell (Townsville)

Committee-elected Positions

Conservation Officers—Graham Harrington (northern) & Jo Wieneke (southern)

Newsletter Editor—Helen McLaughlin

Publicity Officer—Cliff Frith

IBA Coordinators—Alastair Freeman & Graham Harrington

Project Contacts

Beach Stone Curlew Survey Amanda Freeman 4095 2655

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

Regional Contacts

Townsville: Jo Wieneke Ph: 4771 4707

Cairns: Keith Fisher Ph: 4039 0972

Atherton Tableland: Mark Newton Ph: 40484747 (wk)

Email: mark.newton@nrm.qld.gov.au

Mossman / Daintree: Del Richards Ph: 4094 1199

Email: info@finefeathertours.com.au

Cape York: Sue Gould 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



Birds Australia

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 Keith Fisher, Cairns.



Birds Australia



Committee Meeting in Cardwell—19th February 2005

The first Committee meeting for 2005, again at Cardwell's Reef and Rainforest Centre. The outcomes of the meeting are summarised below:

1. **General Business** included a discussion on the development of a regional group website, especially in light of the Members Day and the need to have regional information available.
2. **Sarus Crane research:** Researcher John Grant has applied to the group for some financial assistance to help with his research in the Gulf Plains.
3. **EnviroFund Grant:** North Queensland Group has been successful in gaining financial support for the project "Raising Community Awareness of North Queensland Birds". It is intended to produce specific interpretative material regarding key bird conservation issues, provide brochures where the group has done extensive surveys and to attend key agricultural field days (i.e. 2006 North Queensland Field Days in Townsville) and other community activities in raising bird conservation issues with
- landholders and children. Topics which will be targeted for posters include: Black-throated Finch, Cranes, Birds on Farms, Beach Stone-curlew, disturbance on beaches and dunes, management of riparian vegetation, grazing impacts on birds and the use of dead trees by birds. If anyone is able to help this worthwhile project, please contact Helen McLaughlin on (07) 4771 3239.
4. **Members Day 2005** in Cairns: we hope everyone enjoys this event hosted by our group.
5. **Important Bird Areas:** North Queensland Group have been investigating areas for inclusion as Important Areas. Letters to landholders have been drafted and will be sent very soon.
6. **BANQG AGM June 2005:** This year our own AGM will be held at the Cowley Beach Training Area. This special area is home to the endangered Southern Cassowary, the vulnerable Beach Stone-curlew and a significant population of Whimbrels, of which we will be surveying. More details in the enclosed brochure.

No Duck & Quail Hunting Season

As Queensland faced its third consecutive year of drought, State Parliament was told today that there would be no duck and quail recreational hunting season in 2005.

Environment Minister Desley Boyle told Parliament that sustained below average rainfall had seen duck and quail numbers dramatically fall, making a season unsustainable. Ms Boyle said a recent waterbird population survey had revealed numbers at their lowest level since surveying began in 1984; down from one million to just 200,000.

Ms Boyle said: "I know recreational hunting of ducks and quails is a topic about which there are strongly and passionately held views - both for and against. "However, in the end a decision was made based on science and fact - aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of these native species. "The annual survey showed just 20 birds in the key breeding ground of Macquarie Marshes in New South Wales. "This location averaged 30,000 birds in the 1980's," Ms Boyle said. Ms Boyle said approval for a duck and quail hunting season was based each year on an assessment of ecological sustainability. "In providing advice, the Duck and Quail Management Advisory Committee have looked at such things as rainfall records, long term weather forecasts, surface water in dams and wetlands, and population data," she said. Ms Boyle said since 1995 the hunting of duck and quail in Queensland has been controlled by the *Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail) Conservation Plan and Management Program 1995 - 2005*. There was no duck or quail hunting season in 2003, and no quail hunting season in 1995. Ducks and quails are listed as 'common' under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Last year there were 376 recreational harvesting licences issued.

*The Hon. Desley Boyle MP -
Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning & Women
21 April 2005*



Pacific Black Duck
John Peter
© Birds Australia 2003



UPDATE: Notes from the previous Regional Groups meeting in Melbourne (26 November 2004):

BA-Victoria Conservation Committee tabled a document that discusses the consistency of the BA Waterfowl Hunting Policy with the BA Vision and Mission, other BA policies and information documents. BA-Victoria concluded that the policy is not consistent with BA's Vision and Mission. The group recommended the withdrawal of the current policy and replacement with a position statement that says that BA does not see the practice as consistent with its Vision and Mission. BA -Victoria requests the support from other regional groups so that a revised edition can be forwarded to the BA Research & Conservation Committee (RACC) for consideration.

Any comments are welcome and should be directed to Mark Anderson at mafanders@hotmail.com.

A Letter from Weipa

The country is drying out. The **Pied Imperial-Pigeons** have left again and been replaced by the cheerful **White-breasted Woodswallows** although this year the switch wasn't quite as neat as usual. The **Brahminy Kites** are busy at the nest, the **Spotted Whistling-Ducks** are once again rearing ducklings at Awonga Point Sewerage Treatment Plant and some waders have arrived. We are seeing large numbers of **White-winged Trillers** with the males in eclipse plumage in a whole range of habitats including mangroves, salt pans and coastal dunes. This year for the second year running we are also seeing **Willie Wagtails** regularly.

On a recent four day trip to Janie Creek a pair of **Australian Hobby** roosted regularly in the casuarinas above our camp. We observed **Beach Thick-knees** catching small mud-crabs from the shallow clear water near the mouth of the creek and then stabbing them carefully until the mudcrabs were disabled and then dismembering them and swallowing large bits of crab whole, shell and all. A new sighting for us was four **Black-necked Storks**



Papuan Frogmouth
Ian Hance
© Birds Australia 2003

soaring gracefully in the thermals and even engaging in some "dog-fighting" in the air. Until now I had thought of them as being quite ungainly in the air. Another unusual sighting was a **Spangled Drongo** that we saw (while fishing) well offshore heading straight for the coast and into a very strong headwind coming from we know not where.

Large flocks in formation of **Australian White Ibis**, **Royal Spoonbills** and **Pelicans** passed over the camp regularly and could be seen

circling high over the coastal wetlands during the day. In the evening large flocks of **Brolgas** and **Magpie Geese** also passed over the camp. The sound of the wind whistling through the feathers, the wild trumpeting of the **Brolgas** and the soft honking of the **Magpie Geese** as they pass overhead in the soft light of dusk is thrilling. The thought of a world falling silent to the sounds of birds is appalling. Other records for the Janie Creek trip were **Pied Oystercatchers**, **Spangled Drongos**, **Great-billed Heron**, **Pied Heron**, **Striated Heron**, **Great Egret**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Little Egret**, **Black Kite**, **Brown Falcon** (dark phase) hunting over wetlands, **Brahminy Kite**, **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**, **Whistling Kite**, **Swamp Harrier** hunting over wetlands, **Darter** in large numbers circling high overhead, **Straw-necked Ibis**, **Whimbrel**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Black-fronted Plover**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Golden Plover**, **Common Greenshank**, **Lesser-crested Tern**, **Gull-billed Tern**, **Little Tern**, **Black Butcherbird**, **Azure Kingfisher**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Yellow-spotted Honeyeater**, **Brown-backed Honeyeater**, **White-throated Honeyeater**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Magpie Lark**, a sole **Australian Pratincole**, **White-breasted Woodswallow**, **Welcome Swallow**, **White-bellied Cuckoo Shrike**, **Yellow Oriole**, **Large-tailed Nightjar**, **Papuan Frogmouth**, **White-winged Triller**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Peaceful Dove**, **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Double-barred Finch**, **Yellow-bellied Sunbird**, **Mistletoebird**, **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, **Rainbow Lorikeet**, **Red-winged Parrot**, **Pale-headed Rosella** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**.

Happy Birding!

Sue Gould, Regional Contact -Cape York (Weipa)

A couple of snippets

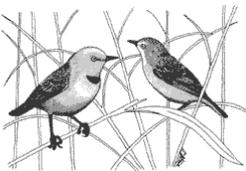
1. Saw two **White-bellied Sea -Eagles** and two **Black-shouldered Kites** sitting in the same huge tree with some dead limbs at the top of it, on Ernie Hodgson's farm at Mossman on the morning of 27th April. I think there was also a **Brown Goshawk** with them, but he was harder to identify from the foot of the hill where I was standing in the slush after 1/2 inch rain that morning. Did see the **Brown Goshawk** there two days prior. I think the **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** may have a nest in that tower on the nearby hill, but Ernie thinks they have it further west of the pine trees. I couldn't see any there, but they do fly in that direction quite often. Perhaps the tower nest is an **Osprey's**.

Also, 30+ **Cattle Egrets** were roosting each night in the trees beside the new dam beside the road to Daintree. An **Osprey** was carrying sticks and placing them carefully at the top of the tallest mast of the "Wave Dancer" catamaran, which sails to Low Island each day. We wondered how it felt when its "tree" disappeared and the sticks with it. Only 4 sticks there, but I guess it starts again each day. That was at 10am just before it sailed.

2. Saturday, 5pm, Beth and I walked up the Ross River dam wall (Townsville), and there was a flotilla of 40 **Pelicans** and 300+ **Great Crested Grebes** ducking and diving as they floated in unison after a school of fingerlings. Wonderful to see. Must get up there again as soon as possible.

3. On the way to Charters Towers yesterday, saw **Black-shouldered Kites**, several **Nankeen Kestrels**, **Whistling-Ducks**, heaps of **Black Kites** and two different families of **Australian Bustards**. Two adults and a juvenile in the paddock near the farm dam wall west of the mango farm after Oakey Creek; and two more in the Toonpan paddock with a mob of cattle. I was looking for egrets and saw those instead.

Elna Kerswell, Townsville



Yellow Chat
Annie Rogers
© Birds Australia 2003

In search of Queensland's Yellow Chat

Funded by the Fitzroy Basin Natural Resource Management Group, two scientists Bob Black and from Central Queensland University have been conducting searches from Burdekin to Mackay to investigate whether there are any further potential sites for the **Yellow Chat** on the east coast. There is currently a small population of **Yellow Chats** around Curtis Island, being only recently rediscovered. Similar habitat types and conditions have been surveyed. Details of their trip will be in the September newsletter.



Black cockatoo shooting sparks warning from QPWS

Reports of **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** being shot in the Townsville area have prompted a warning by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) that anyone found interfering with, injuring or killing Queensland's native fauna could face severe penalties.

QPWS wildlife ranger Andrew Murrell said five injured birds were rescued by a local resident in the last two months, a sixth cockatoo was found shot dead, and QPWS was investigating the shootings.

"Based on the x-rays, it appears the birds have been shot with an air rifle," Mr Murrell said. "Many of the injured **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** also have broken bones, indicating that for most birds the projectile was powerful enough to injure them but not penetrate the skin. "The nature of the shootings is inhumane and illegal."

Mr Murrell said **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** were a familiar sight around the Townsville area. "Their slow-flying nature may make these birds easy targets, but killing, injuring or disturbing native animals is a serious offence under Queensland law. "Individuals convicted of breaching the Nature Conservation Act by killing wildlife may face a maximum penalty of up to \$225,000 or two years jail. "Residents that witness or have any information regarding illegal shooting of native animals should contact QPWS immediately."

Mr Murrell said that QPWS appreciated the support and actions of veterinarians, wildlife carers and the general community in looking after wildlife.

Information and reports of illegal shooting should be referred to the local QPWS office. Injured birds can be taken to local veterinary clinics or referred to the local wildlife care organisation on 0414 717 374.

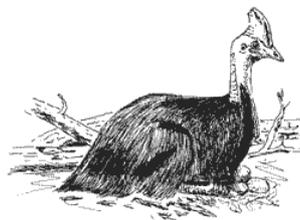
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
4 April 2005

'Be casso-wary' during breeding season

It's **Cassowary** breeding season in north Queensland, and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is reminding residents and visitors to "be casso-wary".

QPWS Wildlife Ranger Cameron Allanson said that now and over coming months, male cassowaries would abandon chicks from last breeding season, leaving chicks to fend for themselves, establish their own territories and develop survival skills.

"This cycle of desertion allows the male to search for a new mate," Mr Allanson said. "Female cassowaries lay 3-5 large, bright green eggs, but the male cassowaries are solely responsible for incubating these eggs and raising chicks. "Males will defend chicks and have been known to kick with their large clawed feet which can be dangerous."



Southern Cassowary
Nan Lepinath
© Birds Australia 2003

Mr Allanson said that everyone could take steps to ensure they did not place themselves and cassowaries at risk, by following a few guidelines when visiting or living in cassowary territory. "People should avoid cassowaries and never approach them," he said. "It is important to never feed cassowaries — especially those with chicks, or young solitary cassowaries — as it sets up a cycle of reliance on an unnatural food source and often leads to demanding and potentially dangerous behaviour.

"QPWS urges residents and visitors to dispose of food scraps in closed bins as cassowaries will scavenge along roadsides and in high-use areas.

"Scavenging for scraps places this endangered animal at risk from car strikes and dog attacks."

Residents and visitors are encouraged to report cassowary sightings and encounters to the nearest QPWS office.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
28 April 2005

Daintree land sales top \$2m in buyback scheme

Land purchases in the Daintree have today passed the \$2m mark with the purchase of a 58th property in a combined State Government and Douglas Shire Council buyback scheme.

Environment and Local Government Minister Desley Boyle said the buyback program was the 'quiet achiever' in resolving longstanding development issues in the Daintree. Ms Boyle said 78 hectares had been purchased so far, with a further 30 property owners indicating an interest in selling. She said the State Government had set aside \$5m for land purchases, with further funds committed by the Douglas Shire Council. Ms Boyle said: "I am so pleased at our success, and I can assure residents that we are still very keen to purchase properties of high conservation value." "This land will now remain in public ownership forever," she said. Ms Boyle said the Council's and State Government's approach stood in stark contrast to the inaction of the Howard Government. "Since before the last Federal election, Warren Entsch and his Canberra colleagues have been talking about matching the State Government's \$5m contribution to the buyback scheme. "Yet to date not one cent has been spent, and not one square metre of

land has been protected," she said. Ms Boyle said block sizes purchased ranged in size from 1 hectare to almost 10 hectares.

The Douglas Shire Council's planning scheme - the tool responsible for regulating future development in the Daintree - is due to the State Government this month.

Minister for the Environment, Local Government, Planning & Women, Ms Desley Boyle
11 May 2005

Black-throated Finch Recovery Plan

The Recovery Plan for the **Black-throated Finch** southern subspecies (*Poephila cincta cincta*) developed by the Recovery Team, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is currently on display for comment. There have been only five records of the finch in NSW since the early 1970's, and it was not located during a search conducted in 2000 in Inverell district in NSW where there had been regular sightings until a severe drought in 1967. There have been very few records in Queensland south of Clermont since the late 1970's and the range of the subspecies between the Desert Uplands bioregion and the Atherton Tablelands has contracted substantially over the last 20 years. The Recovery Plan considers the requirements of the subspecies across its known range, identifying actions to be taken to ensure the long-term viability of the subspecies in nature and the parties who will undertake these actions. For copies of the plan go to Commonwealth Government web site: www.deh.gov.au.



Interesting sightings

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Wandering Whistling-Duck	1/03/05	Northern Treatment Works	JS	Smithfield, 3 pairs with 10+ chicks each
Oriental Cuckoo (1)	4/03/05	Skyrail Terminal, Smithfield.	DR	
Rufous Owl	8/03/05	Taravale Reserve, 12km W of Paluma	RM & AGR	In tall rainforest tree harassed by Drongos
Masked Owl	12/03/05	Yungaburra State Forest	AG	
Lesser Sooty Owl	12/03/05	Yungaburra State Forest	AG	
Great Billed Heron (1)	13/03/05	Trinity Inlet, Cairns	DR	
Oriental Cuckoo (1)	14/03/05	Wongabel State Forest picnic area	JS	
Common Tern	16/03/05	Cairns Esplanade	JG	(European form - Hirundo)
Oriental Cuckoo (1)	18/03/05	Petersen Creek, Yungaburra	AG	
Dusky Woodswallow (7)	22/03/05	Hasties Swamp	AG	
Little Kingfisher (6+)	25/03/05	Centenary Lakes, CNS Botanical Gardens	KF&TBOC	Unusual number.
White-browed Crake (2)	25/03/05	Centenary Lakes, CNS Botanical Gardens	KF&TBOC	Foraging on lawn area in open.
White-throated Needletail	25/03/05	Centenary Lakes, CNS Botanical Gardens	KF&TBOC	20+
White-throated Nightjar (1)	27/03/05	Moore Reef.	BB	Reef Magic Pontoon. Very unusual location.
Red-necked Crake (1)	1/04/05	Jum Rum Jungle Boardwalk	BB	Kuranda
Brush Cuckoo	1/04/05	Centenary Lakes, CNS Botanical Gardens	JS	Juvenile being fed by Brown-backed Honeyeater.
Brolga (2)	6/04/05	Tailings Dam, Mt. Carbine.	DR	
Bush-hen (1) + 2 chicks	10/04/05	McGregor Road, Smithfield	DR	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	11/04/05	Mt. Lewis, 10Km clearing	DR	Unusual this location, 2 seen in wet & windy conditions
Lewin's Honeyeater	14/04/05	Near Hilton Hotel, Wharf St, Cairns	BV	Very unusual in Cairns, 2nd record in last year
Satin Flycatcher (1M)	16/04/05	Daintree Village	T&AF	Red Mill House
Great Cormorant (1 Juv.)	16/04/05	Daintree River, Daintree	T&AF	Uncommon
Little Lorikeet (8+)	16/04/05	Smith Street, Cairns	BV	Small flock flying south towards Cairns Central Swamp
Papuan Frogmouth	17/04/05	Centenary lakes boardwalk	BV	Present in am. Not present at 6.00pm
Masked Woodswallow	22/04/05	Kuranda	PG	Est. 100 over Cassowary House, Black Mountain Road
White Br. & Masked Woodswallow (200+)	23/04/05	Koah, SW of Kuranda	DR	Rare in area. Feeding on flowering eucalypts
Brolga	24/04/05	4kms south of Innot Hot Springs	JS	500+
Brown Songlark	26/04/05	Near Mary Farms, S of Mt. Carbine	DR	Observers second local record in ten years
Square-tailed Kite	27/04/05	1km South of Mt. Molloy	PG	
Masked Booby	27/04/05	Michaelmas Cay	PG	1 sub adult with Brown Boobies on cay.
Lesser Frigatebird (4)	27/04/05	Michaelmas Cay	PG	
Shearwater sp.	27/04/05	Off Green Island	PG	Small B & W shearwater with a fast fluttering flight interspersed with glides. Suspect Little or perhaps Fluttering. 1st true pelagic I've seen out there.
Square-tailed Kite	28/04/05	Black Mt Road, Kuranda	PG	
Black-necked Stork	28/04/05	Cairns Esplanade.	JS	Unusual. 4 Immatures
White-browed Woodswallow (100's)	30/04/05	Hervey Range- Mingela Rd	L&CE	Less than 1km S of Military Training Area. Also Bugarigars, Cockatiels & Varied Sittelas present
Masked & Black-Faced Woodswallow	30/04/05	Hervey Range- Mingela Rd	L&CE	Less than 1km S of Military Training Area.

continued

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Banded Lapwings	30/04/05	16 km NW of Mingela	L&CE	Unusual in area. 5 adults and 2 juveniles
Pink-eared Duck (8)	1/05/05	Airstrip Bay of Lake Dalrymple	L&CE	Appear to be scarce this year in area.
Torresian Crow (1)	1/05/05	Airstrip Bay of Lake Dalrymple	L&CE	Feeding Channel-billed Cuckoo (2)
Ground Cuckoo-shrike (7)	1/05/05	8 km South of Burdekin Falls Dam	L&CE	20°42'25"S; 147°09'19"E
Emerald Dove (1)	4/05/05	Property between Bilwon & Biboohra	T&SC	Near Mareeba. Unusual location, seen on bird feeder
Red-chested Button-quail	5/05/05	Mt. Lewis, 10Km clearing	DR	Male seen. Rare here.
Square-tailed Kite (2)	5/05/05	Anderson Rd., Cairns	KF	Flying towards Cairns Central Swamp
Square-tailed Kite (1)	10/05/05	Trinity Beach	HC	
Painted Snipe (6)	11/05/05	Wunjunga, South of Ayr	BBk	Visible 1 hour before sunset. Record sent to TSN
Long-billed Corella (5)	11/05/05	Smithfield Capt. Cook Hwy	JS	Perched on street light. Feral population
Golden-headed Cisticola	12/05/05	Daintree Village	ET	Stewart Creek Rd, unusual
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	12/05/05	Daintree Village	TF	Stewart Creek Rd
Mangrove Robin	12/05/05	Near Tully	GH	Sub Adult in inundated <i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> probably more than 0.5 km from mangroves
Pink-eared Duck (3)	13/05/05	Cairns Esplanade	JC	Northern End. Very rare.
Sarus Crane (2)	14/05/05	Kaban Road, 1k north of Station Ck	JS	On Atherton Tableland, with 40+ Brolga
Australian Bustard (1)	18/05/05	Cairns Airport	KF	Very unusual in Cairns, 3 yrs. since last sighting here.

Note from Keith Fisher: A few cranes to add to the ongoing BA-NQG databases. Interesting to see a few Square-tailed Kite & Oriental Cuckoo sightings coming in. The influx of various woodswallows & the Little Lorikeets in Cairns could be aided by the inland drought pushing species further east. An Asian Dowitcher (6/5/05) was reported on the Cairns Esplanade by a visiting Dutch birder who was very competent at identifying waders. This would be very unusual at this time of year. Can anyone confirm this sighting? A suspected Redshank was seen on Cairns Esplanade in April, yet to sight photos. Thanks to observers for sending in their reports and John Seale's Cairns recording service (cairnbirds@yahoo.com.au). Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings.

Please send any unusual or interesting sightings to Keith Fisher - Thanks.

Editors note: Unfortunately there was not enough space to print all sightings, for a full list, please contact Keith.

Thanks to all who participated in the Beach Stone-curlew survey. Amanda Freeman will provide a summary of this years sightings in the September newsletter.

Contributors: JS-John Seale, RM-Roy Mackay, AGR-Andree Griffin, HC-Harry Cassidy, BV-Brian Venables, BB Ben Blewitt, DR-Del Richards, BF-Bob Forsyth, AG-Alan Gillanders, KF-Keith Fisher, JG-John Grant, T&AF-Trish & Andrew Forsyth, PG-Phil Gregory, L&CE-Len & Chris Ezzy, T&SC-Tom and Sylvia Claxton, ET-Ellen Terrell, GH-Graham Harrington, BBk-Bob Black, TBOC-Townsville Bird Observers Club.

Trip Report

Serpentine Lagoon, Autumn Survey

There was still plenty of water at Serpentine Lagoon on April 10th, despite the lack of a proper wet season in the previous months. Close to the gate we found the pair of **Barking Owls** in their usual roost site in the tamarind trees. In the first patch, none of the eucalypts or melaleucas were flowering and honeyeater numbers were down on previous visits but **Lemon-bellied Flycatchers** were calling high in the eucalypts.

Some of the winter migrants, **Grey Fantails**, **Rufous Whistlers**, and **Leaden Flycatchers** were back, and a single late-departing **Dollarbird** was present. Five species of finch were seen with small flocks of **Double-barred**, **Zebra**, **Chestnut-breasted Mannikin**, **Plum-headed** and 15 **Black-throated Finches** which will be reported to the Black-throated Finch Recovery Team. Also seen on the walk to the far wetland were **Crested Pigeons**, a **Squatter Pigeon**, **Restless**

Flycatcher and three species of **cuckoo**. A flock of **Cockatiels**, unusual at this time of year, suggested that conditions were dry further inland. There were some waterbirds in the long stretch of water but far more were congregated at the wetland at the end of the paddock. **Magpie Geese**, both **Whistling-Ducks**, **Hardheads**, **Black Duck**, **Grey Teal**, **Green Pygmy-goose**, **Black Swans**, **Coot** and the usual **egret**, **ibis**, and **heron** species were all noted. At about 10:30am as we returned to the gate, the cloud that had kept us cool all morning turned to drizzle. Near the tamarinds some members fortunate to see a **Grey Goshawk**, possibly the first one we have recorded here.

Thanks to Glenis and Ellis Jones for allowing us access and all who came, especially Andree Griffin and Roy Mackay who had a very early start from Paluma that morning.



Plum-headed Finch
Barry Jahnke
© Birds Australia 2003

Jo Wieneke, Townsville

Padaminka



NATURE REFUGE

**Padaminka Wildlife Reserve
Bird & Nature Oasis
161 Kellys Road, Walkerston, QLD**

- ◆ 184 acres of endangered bushland under a conservation agreement with QPWS (regional ecosystem 8.11.4)
 - ◆ 160 bird species for the year (including Bush-hen)
 - ◆ 6.5km of walking tracks
 - ◆ 15 minutes from Mackay, Queensland
- Affordable Accommodation**
- ◆ Fully Self Contained cottages (including single rooms)
 - ◆ 5 un-powered & 1 powered camp sites
 - ◆ Small and friendly (up to 20 guests)
- Additional Services**
- ◆ Workshop and conference facilities up to 50 people
 - ◆ Public environmental educational days (World Wetlands and World Environment Days)
 - ◆ Tag-along-tours welcome
- Easy drive to**
- ◆ Eungella NP, Kinchant Dam and Hinterland

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

Thanks

Birds Australia—North Queensland is very grateful for the support given by **Member for Townsville, Mike Reynolds** for the printing of this edition of Contact Call, And the continuing support given by the office of the **Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch**.



We regretfully advise of the sudden loss of Jock Payet, of Townsville, who was a great friend, mentor, birder and, along with his wife Rosemary, were members (and a past president) of the Birds Observers Club of Association and Birds Australia for many years. He will be greatly missed.

kindest regards

BQ North Queensland Group



Birds Queensland Research Grants for 2005:

BQ wishes to encourage research relevant to the conservation of Queensland birds and their habitats, including those under threat and associated threatening processes. BQ will offer a limited number of research grants, each to a maximum of \$3000 for projects scheduled for 2005. Closing Date for applications is 31 June 2005, with successful applicants being advised 31 August 2005. Grants are for projects of one-year duration, although consideration may be given to further funding on suitable, on-going projects. Information regarding these grants, including copies of the submission form, can be obtained from Birds Queensland or from emailing the secretary: sulacox@aapt.net.au.



Notice Board

Welcome to our new members...

- ☛ Mr M & S England, BURKETOWN;
- ☛ Mr Nigel Arnold, WEIPA;
- ☛ Mr Peter Barratt, SMITHFIELD;
- ☛ Ms Anna Koetz, CAIRNS.

**Welcome too all our new members.
Please join us on any of our outings.
Check out www.birdsaustralia.com.au for an update of outings in our region.**



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

Daintree Village North Queensland



Convenient location for bird watching in the Daintree area. Close to the Daintree River, specialist bird and wildlife tours and to Daintree National Park.

Tasteful, ensuite accommodation with wide verandas overlooking the large tropical garden. Fully cooked breakfast included.

Daintree Village, Queensland 4873
Ph/Fax: 07 4098 6233
Email: redmill@austarnet.com.au
Website: www.redmillhouse.com.au

Please send items for September 2005 Contact Call by Mid August to:
Helen McLaughlin, PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens 4810 or Email Helen on helen_marty2000@hotmail.com