

Every four years or so, the New Zealand Ecological Society and the Ecological Society of Australia hold a joint conference. The August 2006 'Ecology across the Tasman' meeting was held at the Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. Many of the papers had a conservation focus, and a good few dealt with the ecology and conservation of birds. While many Australian bird species have undergone severe declines and there have been several extinctions, at least at the subspecies level, the New Zealand avifauna has experienced a comprehensive collapse. This collapse was triggered in large measure by the arrival of humans, initially the Maori over 800 years ago, followed by Europeans in the last 200 years. Forest clearing, other habitat changes and the introduction of many mammal species to islands whose fauna had evolved in the virtual absence of mammals, gave many native bird species little chance of survival. That's the bad news. The good news is that New Zealand has made a major effort to preserve and restore what is left of its fauna, and is a world leader in recovering threatened bird species. The conference provided some interesting updates on these efforts.

A key component of New Zealand's conservation strategy has been to establish new populations of threatened species on mammal-free off-shore islands. This has required developing the means of eradicating various mammal species from islands, maintaining that mammal-free status, restoring appropriate native plant communities, and translocating and establishing populations of threatened birds (and reptiles such as the tuatara). Some New Zealand bird species now survive only on such off-shore islands. This applies, for example, to the kakapo, takahe and stitchbird.

New Zealand has managed to eradicate rats from 82 off-shore islands. When Campbell Island was cleared of Norway rats, the Campbell Island snipe naturally recolonised from a small surviving population discovered in 1997 on the nearby 19ha rat-free Jacquemart Island. Approaches developed in New Zealand have also been applied to bird species in other parts of the world, for example to the recovery of the Cook Islands kakerori (flycatcher) whose population has climbed from less than 40 individuals in 1987 to at least 98 pairs in 2006.

Another approach has been to attempt to drastically reduce mammalian predators in important mainland conservation reserves. In the case of small areas, including the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellington, mammal-proof fencing is used, but the use of poisons such as Brodifacoum, to which mammals are sensitive, has been critical. Repeated large-scale poisoning programs have meant that mainland populations that were seriously declining have been able to increase their numbers quite rapidly. Poisoning programs have, for example, helped protect some of the surviving mainland populations of kokako. The targets of these campaigns have been ship and Norway rats, brush-tailed possums, ferrets and stoats.

New Zealand, in common with many islands, has the advantage (from a bird-conservation perspective) that, with no native mammals (apart from a couple of small bats), it can quite safely employ mammal-specific poisons. However, these exercises are expensive and require repeated treatments. Rats can cross at least narrow stretches of sea and accidental reintroduction of pests by humans is always a risk. It will always be preferable to maintain natural habitat and avoid threats to bird populations, but it is encouraging to see what can be achieved when thought, effort and resources are applied to recover populations of bird species that have been so severely reduced.

Tony Grice, Convenor

BA North Queensland Group—Events Calendar Sept-December 06

<p>September—Threatened Species Month</p> <p>Saturday 30th September - Mount Lewis National Parks Volunteers are planning to visit Mt Lewis. BANQG members are welcome to join in as guests. Details on page 4. Contact Alan Gillanders.</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: #4F8127;">October</p> <p>Saturday 7 October - NQ Crane Count An annual BANQG survey activity, across the Atherton Tableland, Upper Herbert, Townsville-Giru, Ingham, Gulf country, Cape York. Email Elinor Scambler at cranesnorth@austarnet.com.au, write to PO Box 59, Atherton Qld 4883 or check out www.ozcranes.net for further details.</p>	<p>14-15 October - Black-throated Finch Waterhole Survey - Townsville Teams will be allocated waterholes for a coordinated survey between 6:30-9:30am. All Welcome. Contact Rosemary Payet on 4728 7402 or email rosemaryp@westnet.com.au.</p> <p>Saturday 25th November - BANQG Christmas Party Join Peter and Virginia Simmonds for a relaxing afternoon overlooking Lake Tinaroo. Starting at 2pm, bring drinks and plate of finger food. Be prepared for a round of Bocce. Contact Virginia on 4095 8302. Details on website www.birdsaustralia.com.au.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #4F8127;">Inside this issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mt Lewis, Crane Count , Crane Triplets, BANQ Polo Shirts</i> • <i>Butcherbird, Mt Mulligan, 2006 Committee meeting</i> • <i>New Logo, AGM, Ornithological Conference</i> • <i>QLD Landcare Conference, Sightings</i>
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Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) despite its size: an average weight (males) - Australia's largest raptor. A huge wedge-shaped tail and baggy feathery legs. is also quite awkward, having a large bill, small head, long neck and prominent shoulders when perched. They are a solitary eagle of most terrestrial habitats, except intensively settled or cultivated areas. Their diet consists of mammals, birds, reptiles and carrion, and in north Queensland often kangaroos and wallabies, especially road kill. There has even been accounts of them taking possums, cranes and bustards.

Wedge-tailed Eagle

is normally a shy and wary bird, of 3.9kg (female) and 2.9kg eagle with long wings, long However the wedge-tailed eagle



© Australian Museum

Information sourced from "The Birds of Prey of Australia—A field guide" by Stephen Debus.

Birddata update ...

Birddata is Birds Australia's new web site for the Atlas of Australian Birds www.birddata.com.au. Birddata can be used to enter new atlas data, map bird distributions and download bird lists. Birddata is funded by the WildlifeLink program of the Tony & Lisette Lewis Foundation. Remember that username: membership number and password: Surname. Your password is case sensitive and users are able to change their initial password if they wish.
Regards, Andrew Silcocks & Cameron Williams.

You can of course, still send your Atlas forms to the north region coordinators listed below:

Bowen to Cardwell Regional Organiser

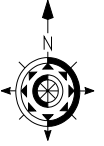
Jo Wieneke (07) 4771 4707

22 Bishop Street, Belgian Gardens Qld 4810

Cardwell to Cape York Regional Organiser

Graham Harrington (07) 4096 5051

PO Box 680, Malanda Qld 4885



HANZAB: Copies of Volume 7 of HANZAB are now being distributed to all those who took advantage of the pre-publication offer. The pre-publication offer remains open but will close soon. Further information: Jen Sutfin, National Office, j.sutfin@birdsaustralia.com.au.



Birds Australia
North Queensland Group

2006-2007 BANQG Management Committee

Executive Committee

Convener—Tony Grice phone: (07) 4725 7201

Email: tony.grice@csiro.au

Deputy Convener—Alan Gillanders phone (07) 4095 3784

Email: spotlighting@cyberwizards.com.au

Secretary—Helen McLaughlin phone: (07) 4771 3239

Email: helen_marty2000@hotmail.com

Treasurer—Harry Cassidy phone: (07) 4057 5278

Email: harrycass40@hotmail.com

Committee members

Ian Montgomery (Townsville) John Frois (Cairns)

Elna Kerswell (Townsville) Elinor Scambler (Atherton)

Dick Eussen (Mareeba) Ron Hill (Cairns)

Committee-elected Positions

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

Newsletter Editor—Helen McLaughlin

IBA Coordinators—Alastair Freeman & Graham Harrington

Project Contacts

Beach Stone-curlew Survey Amanda Freeman

4095 2655 or Email: aafreeman@qldnet.com.au

Crane Count Elinor Scambler 4095 3296

Email: dacelo@austarnet.com.au

Townsville Egret & Ibis Count Jo Wieneke 4771 4707

Cape York Atlas Graham Harrington 4096 5051

Regional Contacts

Townsville: Jo Wieneke Ph: 4771 4707

Email: bowerbird14@bigpond.com

Cairns: Ron Hill Ph: 4057 9559

Email: ronandlin@westnet.com.au

Atherton Tableland: Mark Newton Wk Ph: 4048 4747

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

Mossman / Daintree: Del Richards Ph: 4094 1199

Email: info@finefeathertours.com.au

Cape York: Sue Gould Ph: 4069 7585

Email: susanfgould@yahoo.com

Mount Isa: Bob Forsyth Ph: 4743 3210

Email: isabird0@bigpond.net.au

Birds Australia Membership

Subscriptions (as at 1 April 2006): \$75 Single \$55 Single Concession \$119 Family \$96 Family Concession Library \$55

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.

Check out the website for local and national events



Birds Australia
CONSERVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Have you ever wanted to visit Mt Lewis but were too afraid to go??

National Park Volunteers are planning to visit Mt Lewis on Saturday 30th September. BANQG members are welcome as guests for the day. This will be a long day including birding, botanising and a spotlight before heading down the mountain. Current agenda for the day includes:
0630 Birding around Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge
0800 Breakfast
0900 Meet at the base of Mt Lewis Road, birding on the way to the clearing
1130 Gather at clearing to enter restricted access area
1230 Lunch near CSIRO site and botanising
1500 Afternoon tea at shelter and more botanising and birding
1800 Snack and walk to end of track to spotlight for white lemuroid possums on the way back to cars
2000 Depart for the descent down the mountain.

Please remember that this is a wilderness area and one should be self sufficient. For further information, please contact Alan Gillanders on Ph (07) 4095 3784 or email spotlighting@cyberwizards.com.au.



Southern Cassowary
Nan Lapinath
© Birds Australia 2003

Crane Count - our tenth year of counting cranes

Saturday October 7th 2006 - a day when every crane counts!

Recent visitors to the Gulf and Cape regions are reporting an unusual event - "thousands" of cranes in late August and early September. At the same time, usual winter sites on the Tablelands have very few Sarus or Brolgas so it seems the long heavy wet season has enticed the birds to forego migration and stay on in productive western and northern wetlands. This raises some interesting long-term questions like, how will the generation of 2006 learn about migration to the coast and Tablelands, if they didn't come with their parents in their first year of life?



But in the short term what we need to know on **Saturday October 7th**, is where the Brolgas and Sarus are, and just how many of them BANQG members and friends can find. One or two key sites (especially Mt Garnet) still need a team but overall we probably have good resources available on the Tablelands this year, so do consider taking a trip south, west or north to count cranes anywhere you like. Lakeland - Lakefield -Normanton - or, could it even be Townsville?

The forms and Crane News newsletter can be downloaded from <http://ozcranes.net/> (follow links on Home Page). Ozcranes also has photos and tips on how to ID Brolgas and Sarus.

To join your Tablelands team: meet Hasties Swamp 3.30pm, travel to roost and count from 5pm to dusk. Bring binoculars, sensible shoes, small torch to exit site in dark. Dinner at Malanda Hotel (the Tallyroom), PLEASE book dinner with hotel Ph (07) 4096 5488. Phone or text remote results to 0418 154 191.

Enquiries for Tablelands, Gulf and the Cape should be directed to Elinor Scambler Ph (07) 4095 3296 or email dacelo@austarnet.com.au or Alan Gillanders Ph (07) 4095 3784. For the Townsville district, contact Jo Wieneke Ph (07) 4771 4707 or email bowerbird14@bigpond.com or Helen McLaughlin 4771 3239.

Elinor Scambler, Yungaburra



Sarus Crane
Kate Gorringer-Smith
© Birds Australia 2003

Sarus Crane Triplets - A first for Australia?

Sarus usually have two eggs, sometimes three and on one known occasion, four. Twins are relatively common in both India and Australia in good years, but triplets are very rare. Australia may now have its first record of Sarus triplets at Bromfield Swamp, on 3rd July 2006. At 0800h Glenn Holmes watched a close-knit group of five Sarus feeding about 100m apart from all other cranes present near the Bromfield Swamp viewing platform (17.37369

145.543888). They gradually moved closer, uphill towards the platform, and despite mist he was able to observe the birds closely. The group consisted of two adults and three same-size immatures with similar plumage and skin colouring. Based on the appearance and behaviour of the group, they were acting as an integrated 'family'. Even if adoption is involved the pair is still, apparently, raising three similar age young. So far, searches have failed to locate them again but most roosts still have no settled core group of birds and searches continue.

Elinor Scambler, Yungaburra

North Queensland Group Polo Shirts

In celebration of our new logo (details on page 5), the Committee have decided to print club shirts. These 100% cotton polo shirts are navy in colour with a white trim, pocket and logo on the chest. At this stage, they are a limited edition with only 50 being printed. Sizes are medium, large and extra large, however if a further order is placed we can arrange for other sizes. They retail for \$25 and available from the secretary. Postage will be extra. Please contact Helen McLaughlin on (07) 4771 3239 or email helen_marty2000@hotmail.com. First in best dressed—literally.



Birds Australia
North Queensland Group
Birding with a Purpose

Black Butcherbird takes snake

Whilst conducting an early morning bird walk around Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, Julatten on 3rd August 2006 my attention was drawn to the scalding calls of **Yellow-spotted Honeyeater** *Meliphaga notata* and **Large-billed Scrubwrens** *Sericornis magnirostris*. The birds had found, amongst the rainforest understorey, an adult **Black Butcherbird** *Cracticus quoyi* who was jabbing at something on the ground. After several minutes the butcherbird hopped onto a low branch gripping a one metre long Green Tree Snake *Dendrelaphis punctulata* in its bill. The snake was presumed dead as it was not making any movements. The butcherbird was holding the snake behind the head and proceeded to hop up a tree until it disappeared out of view about five metres from the ground. The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds Vol 7 part A (2006), lists lizards as the only prey item recorded for reptiles. This is shown as a reference to Hall in the text but not shown in the reference section at the end of the species description. Other references from various sources I found are vague and give reptiles as food items without any qualification. I'm not aware of any records which specifically state that snakes are a food item but would like to hear from anyone who knows of a reference or has seen this before. It could be a new recorded food item.



Black Butcherbird
Nic Day
© Birds Australia 2003

Keith Fisher, Julatten (Ph 4094 1263)



Birding through the eyes of an Amateur

It seems the perfect time to go to Mt Mulligan is around the end of July, beginning of August. The Cairns Show weekend gives some people the chance of three days out. This year in particular we got away from the drizzle and wind and into the warm sunshine. The campsite is pleasant beside a grassy weir with plenty of shade trees and clean toilets. If we were a big enough group they would close the camp to the rest of the public.

While waiting for Barbara and Terry Warren to rendezvous; John Seale and John Frois found their own way there, I watched a flock of **Sulfur-crested Cockatoos** and a pair of **Black Kites** having a tussle. Terry said he has watched this behaviour a number of times involving sulfur cresteds. In one case it was with peewee who seemed to be enjoying the game, actively keeping it going. I also saw a **White-faced Heron** being harassed by what must have been a very hungry juvenile. A **Pheasant Coucal** called and the majestic calls of the **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** rang around the sky.

Within minutes of setting out we came across a paddock where a bean crop - probably navy beans had been reaped. The paddock was full of (**Red-tailed**) **Black-Cockatoos** and (**Torresian**) **Crows** feeding. I was intrigued; would the litter from a harvested bean crop harbour sufficient insects to interest so many crows or were they feeding on the spilled beans? Three **Pale-headed Rosellas** came out of and went



Torresian Crow
Bevly Hughes
© Birds Australia 2003

back into a dense stand of tee trees on the opposite side of the road and a few metres beyond there a group of six or eight **Bustards** was ambling across. These birds are accustomed to farm vehicles and so we got very close to them.

The dirt road was in pretty good condition and presented plenty of opportunities for on route birding particularly where creeks had quite substantial pools. In the vicinity of the old Thornborough town site we saw our first **Squatter Pigeon**. Also a **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Pale-headed Rosellas**, plenty of **Blue-faced** and **Brown Honeyeaters** feeding on a pale cream / lemon bottlebrush flowering throughout the bush. Further on we spotted a tree with tomato red pea like flowers that attracted various birds including **Black-faced Woodswallows**. Stopping there on our return John Seale and I saw a **Grey-crowned Babbler** go into what we thought was a small group's night roost and we wondered if it was feeding chicks. A **Rufous Whistler** was again in evidence then too. On the outward journey between there and Thornborough I saw a **Welcome Swallow** and soon after a **White-rumped Swiflet**. Raptors were not much in evidence on this trip - a **Nankeen Kestrel** closer to the cropping areas, a **Whistling Kite**, then a **Black Kite**. All in all I listed 51 birds and then I forgot to mention the **Jabiru (Black-necked Stork)** John Seale and I saw.

Virginia Simmonds, Kairi

New committee have their first meeting in Cardwell

On Saturday 19th August 2006 the new 2006-07 BANQG committee had their first meeting for the year. Once again it was held in the beautiful meeting room at Girringun which is proving to be quite popular. The morning was spent going through action items from the previous meeting, of which the main points of discussion were: the commencement of our own website (www.birdsaustralianq.org); the launch of our new logo and finalisation of our new logo shirts; a plan on finishing the (Australian Government Envirofund) posters; discussion on the proposed future use of large areas of currently vacant State land in Thuringowa and Townsville cities. While most of these actions related to the promotion of the group and our activities, the afternoon was spent on bird conservation issues such as the black-throated finch recovery plan and waterhole survey; important bird areas; and the annual crane count.

The next meeting is scheduled for 18 November 2006. If anyone has any issues which they would like the committee to discuss, please email them to the secretary Helen McLaughlin at helen_marty2000@hotmail.com.



Our new North Queensland logo

Thanks to Cathy James and Jo Wieneke for organising the new Birds Australia North Queensland logo.

Discussions have been going on for some time to "clean up" the old logo for use on our promotional material, including our new poloshirts.

The Committee (both 2005 and 2006) decided to keep the Pied Imperial-Pigeon and add the orange sun, to be consistent with the national logo.

The finished product is shown here.

This logo is available to members electronically who need it to help promote our group.

*Helen McLaughlin, Secretary, North Queensland Group,
PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens Q4810*



Birds Australia
North Queensland Group
Birding with a Purpose

North Queensland Group's Annual General Meeting

Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge at Julatten was the host for the 2006 AGM. The AGM took up a small but important part of the weekend on the Saturday afternoon and it was great to see some new people elected onto the committee. This is important to move the group forward with new ideas.

The following were elected onto the committee: Tony Grice (Convenor), Alan Gillanders (Deputy Convenor), Harry Cassidy (Treasurer), Helen McLaughlin (Secretary), Elna Kerswell, Elinor Scambler, Ian Montgomery, John Frois, Ron Hill, Dick Eussen. Thanks to the new committee as we hope we can achieve some great things this year. If members want to raise an issue, please contact your nearest committee member so they raise it at the next committee meeting.

Our guest speaker for the day was Marty McLaughlin who provided some feedback on the issues being faced by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service post Cyclone Larry. These include

management of cassowaries, feeding stations and re-establishing access to visitor areas throughout the region effected.

On the Saturday morning before the AGM a morning walk was held around Kingfisher Park and the surrounding areas. The resident **Papuan Frogmouth** were roosting in the orchard.



Bar-breasted Honeyeater
Andrew Silcocks
© Birds Australia 2003

The Sunday saw us heading up Mt. Lewis into the famous "clearing" which is no longer a clearing with woody acacias dominating the previously grassy area. This area is known for the **Blue-faced Parrot-Finches** which appear here between November & April/May and is now owned by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy as part of Brooklyn Station. Mt. Lewis always has good upland rainforest species and the morning did not disappoint. Some of the birds seen were **Mountain Thornbill**, **Fernwren**, **Chowchilla**, **Atherton Scrubwren**, dark form of the **Grey Fantail**, **Victoria's Riflebird** and a female **Golden Bowerbird**. Tony reckoned the best bird of the day was the giant blue worm *Terriswalkerius terrareginae* we found on the track to the dam. This worm can grow up to two metres long, this one was not quite that big but pretty impressive all the same.

After lunch we went north to Mt. Carbine Dam where the highlight was a **Bar-breasted Honeyeater** feeding on a Melaleuca flower beside the dam. This is a rarely seen honeyeater around this area. After this it started raining and we headed back south to Kingfisher, spotting a soggy **Bustard** at Maryfarms along the way. In the evening a spotlighting expedition found **Masked Owls** and a few also saw a **Barn Owl**. Monday saw most people heading home after a very good weekend, despite the rain periods, and a very productive AGM. My thanks to Ian Montgomery for helping me remember what we actually did over the weekend!

Keith Fisher, Julatten

Australasian Ornithological Conference 2006

The Fourth Biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference will be held in Perth, Western Australia on 3rd to 5th of December 2007. This conference provides a regular forum for the exchange of information and ideas between avian researchers and conservationists throughout the Australasian region. The venue will be the University of Western Australia, and the Western Australian group of Birds Australia (RAOU) will host the conference. A post-conference field excursion will be available.



Ornithological Society of
New Zealand



You are invited to express your interest in attending this conference, and presenting a paper by visiting www.birdswa.com.au/aoc2007 or link through www.birdswa.com.au or www.birdsaustralia.com.au or by writing to the conference coordinator: S. Mather, Birds Australia Western Australia, 167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat WA 6014
Email: aoc2007@birdswa.com.au, Telephone: (08) 9389 6416



2006 Queensland Landcare Conference a Huge Success

As a sponsored community representative, Alan Gillanders attended the 2006 Queensland Landcare Conference along with about 510 others over four days last month. The 17th annual conference, with the theme, 'Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide,' featured more than 100 speakers, 35 concurrent sessions and eight field trips. Catching up with a few old friends was wonderful but it was particularly pleasing to be one of the oldies rather than the younger generation of landcarers. While some of the younger set were employees and students, it was a great source of satisfaction to observe that many volunteers in their thirties and forties were able to make it to the conference.

The keynote address presented by Professor Robert A Cummins was entitled, "Wellbeing within the rural-urban divide: Does it matter where you live?" Since 2001 the subjective wellbeing of Australians has been monitored using the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index. Wellbeing was defined as, 'A normally positive state of mind that involves the whole of life.' In broad terms the research has found that the highest levels of wellbeing are found within regional towns and the lowest wellbeing found in cities and very remote regions. Professor Cummins also explained how these data can be used to advise policy makers as to the most useful distribution of government resources to achieve the highest level of wellbeing for the Australian population. The prospect for those of us living in areas with the highest wellbeing values is that others will move in and change the dynamics so that it will not be the place it used to be.

Alan attended a number of the concurrent seminars of which are summarised below:-

Links between Landcare and the protection of coastal systems – Simon Baltais, SeagrassWatch

Research by the Coastal CRC suggests that Australian's coastal natural resources could be worth more than \$200 billion a year ... equivalent to one third of the total value of all goods and services traded in Australia during 2004-05. Landcare is as much about protection our coastal zone as it is about protecting the land. The use of volunteer researchers is important to the success of this program.

The economics of ecosystem services in rural residential areas – Anthea Coggan, CSIRO

This presentation provided an introduction to market based instruments (MBIs) as a means to manage ecosystem services and with a focus on those that may be most appropriate for rural residential areas. The presentation focused particularly on the many design issues revealed through a recent investigation into the potential of an MBI to manage ecosystem services in a rural residential area developed by Murrindindi Shire of Victoria. However it was obvious that ecosystem services are too poorly understood to be easily quantified so that the study looked instead at ecosystem assets without acknowledging that was the case. It became clear that 'sustainability was a euphemism for something, although not sure what, but it was not sustainability. If site 'sustainability' does not equal catchment sustainability and this does not equate to bioregional and continental sustainability then what does it mean?

Urban communities investing in healthy land: a case study from the Cooby Dam Catchment – Rick Gailbraith, Crows Nest Shire Council

Landholders are increasingly being expected to undertake management activities to protect and enhance the natural resources under their custodianship. Community expectations are increasing, while the ability of the land managers to fulfil these expectations is often limited. This session provided an overview of an ecosystem service incentive model trial in the Cooby Dam catchment (which provides water for Toowoomba City and surrounds). It was hoped that by looking at the processes used to engage and support landholders in their management actions, participants would be able to take ideas and tools with them to trial on projects in their own regions but there is a need for further development. Again it is difficult to calculate the service provided. If urban dwellers are not getting 'value for money' they will not support landholders in fulfilling their duty of care.



"Down the Drain – water in urban and rural environments" with Graeme Miligan (NRM&W), David Matthews (Brisbane Valley Kilcoy Landcare), Darren Hayman (Gold Coast Water), Peter Schneider (SEQ Water), Kevin Flanagan (Toowoomba City Council) was the most stimulating of all the sessions. David Matthews pointed out that it made little sense to harvest water from where there was least rainfall and use that to supply areas with more rain. Examples of how much water was wasted from urban storm water runoff were remarkable. The integration of water services by the Gold Coast Council proved inspiring and provided optimism but failure of the controversial Water Futures Toowoomba Project left participants shaking their heads at their fellow man.

The Gala Conference Dinner was held at the Gabba where the Landcare Leadership Bursary and SKM Landcare Innovation Award were presented and Jock Douglas was inducted into the Landcare Hall of Fame. Roma resident and cattle producer, Jock joins one other person, co-founder of the Queensland Landcare Foundation, Gordon Brown into the Hall of Fame. As well as being a past chair of the Queensland Landcare Council he is credited with bringing together those organisations responsible for driving Landcare in Queensland some 20 years ago. The food was great and the musicians talented.

For a conference entitled, "Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide," it was disturbing how often country folk derided the values of our city cousins and their actions. Understanding cannot be a one way street. It still seems that decision making will continue to be made on too small a scale. Even the Queensland Murray Darling Committee made too much of this being Queensland and we are different up here. Yes we are, as are our landscapes but it is a worry that we are demanding the right to make the same mistakes others have made.

However, it is pleasing to note the number of schemes being put in place to assist and to pay for the work done by landholders which will benefit us all. If it is not to be yet another form of rural socialism we must find a way to quantify (establish a metric for) these services. The implications are international because of the potential for hidden trade subsidies and for the health of the planet.

Alan Gillanders, Yungaburra

Alan represented BANQG as Deputy Convenor and our representative on the FNQ NRM Board.

Interesting sightings

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Topknot Pigeons	10.6.06	Ross River Dam, Townsville	BH	37 birds
Red-backed Kingfisher	16.6.06	Queens Rd, Townsville	BH	
Spotted Nightjar	17.6.06	West of Woodstock	BH	
Owlet Nightjar	17.6.06	West of Woodstock	BH	Birds calling
Victoria's Riflebird (male)	18.6.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	Feeding on striped cucumber (<i>Diplocyclos palmatus</i>)
Banded Lapwings	23.6.06	Woodstock, Townsville	BH	Annual visitors
Common Koel	29.6.06	Mt Louisa, Townsville	C&LE	Very late in season
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch	Early July	2km south of Daintree Village	ET	
Southern Cassowary	1.7.06	Lower Mt Lewis Road, Julatten	K&LF	
Owlet Nightjar	2.7.06	Mt Zero	C&LE	
Black-faced Monarch	2.7.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	Adult and juvenile. Overwintering birds, still present early August
Glossy Black Cockatoo	1-2.7.06	Mt Zero	C&LE	Also Taravale
Pied Imperial-Pigeon	7.7.06	Belgian Gardens, Townsville	JW	1 bird
Gouldian Finch	8.7.06	Hann River Crossing	NSW birders	Full report submitted to Del Richards
Mangrove Golden Whistler	20.7.06	Cape Weymoth	BV	First record here
Topknot Pigeon	24.7.06	Freshwater, Cairns	MC	250++ in one flock
White-eared Monarch	26.7.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	Juvenile with unusual facial pattern. Vertical unconnected stripe through eye caused some guests to announce they had seen Northern Scrub-Robin!
Masked Lapwing	31.7.06	3km south of Atherton	MC	Leucistic bird
Great-billed Heron	2.8.06	Bushy Creek, Mt Kooyong Road, Julatten	K&LF	Seen several times over 10 days
Dusky Moorhen	6.8.06	Centenary Lakes	JS	Unusual here
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	12.8.06	Clacherty Road, Julatten	DR	One adult
Double-banded Plover	13.8.06	Cairns Esplanade	B&V	
Green Pygmy-goose	13.8.06	Serpentine Lagoon, Townsville	BANQG	Small flock 10+
Rufous Owl	16.8.06	Cairns City	BV	Took Laughing Kookaburra in yard
Large-tailed Nightjar	17.8.06	Julatten	K&LF	First for season
Square-tailed Kite	18.8.06	Hallorans Hill, Atherton	JH	
Square-tailed Kite	18.8.06	Gordonvale	JS	
Pied Imperial-Pigeon	18.8.06	Wangetti Beach	DR	2 birds
Pied Oystercatcher	20.8.06	Mossman River Sandbar	DR	12 birds
Plum-headed Finch	20.8.06	Cumberland Dam	MC & AA	10 birds
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	20.8.06	Greenhill St, Cairns	AA	3 birds
Rufous Owl	20.8.06	Cromarty Siding Rd, Townsville	JW	Eating Blue-winged Kookaburra
Whistling Kite	20.8.06	Julatten	K&LF	Building nest
Latham's Snipe	21.8.06	Caravonica, Cairns	JS	
Latham's Snipe	22.8.06	Centenary Lakes, Cairns	JS	
Black Bittern	22.8.06	Centenary lakes, Cairns	BV	
Fairy Gerygone	26.8.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	Few nesting records
White-headed Pigeon	27.8.06	Bushy Creek, Julatten	K&LF	Uncommon in area



Plum-headed Finch
Barry Janke
© Birds Australia 2003

Observers: AA- Adam Arnold; BANQG - records for survey at Serpentine Lagoon, BH- Bill Holmes; BV-Brian Venables; B&V -B&V Radnell; DR- Dell Richards; JH- Jack Hunt; JS- John Seale; K&LF – Keith and Lindsay Fisher; L&CE- Len and Chris Ezzy; MC-Martin Cachard; JW- Jo Wieneke. Thanks also to TRBOC's Drongo and John Seales website.

Thanks to observers for sending in their sightings. Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings.

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Welcome to our new members...

- ✦ S.Carroll, YUNGABURRA;
- ✦ Mr P.Franklin, MISSION BEACH;
- ✦ P & D Cooper, MOSSMAN;
- ✦ Fur 'n' Feathers Rainforest Tree Houses, MALANDA;
- ✦ Mr L. Grange, MISSION BEACH;
- ✦ Ms K. Patrick, CAIRNS;
- ✦ R. Pople, INGHAM.

Welcome to our new members.

Please join us on any of our outings.

Check out Birds Australia website www.birdsaustralia.com.au for up to date information on north Queensland field trips as details may change after publication. Local contacts can also provide you with the latest information. This will allow the event coordinators more flexibility, especially concerning weather conditions. Additional events may also be arranged post publication.

Notice Board

HELP - The Committee is still searching for a large blue plastic envelope (possibly from the Yungaburra Markets). Inside this envelope are several plastic brochure holders for our display boards. Could everyone please look out for that envelope as these are very expensive to replace. Please contact the Secretary to arrange a pickup. THANKS.

2006 Congress will be held 19-20 October in Albany WA. The Congress will be followed by the Campout 21-24 October in the Albany area. For further information check out the website: <http://birdswa.iinet.net.au>.

Australasian Ornithological Conference 2007 will be held at the University of Western Australia, Perth 2-5 December 2007. Check out <http://birdswa.iinet.net.au/> or email Suzanne Mather: aoc2007@birdswa.com.au.

Please note that Jo Wieneke is the coordinator for collating **Interesting Sightings**. Please send any unusual or interesting sightings to Jo at bowerbird14@bigpond.com.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have agreed on a joint approach to the investigation of reports of **sickness or deaths in native birds**. A key point of this policy is that the **DPI&F Business Information Centre 13 25 23** forms the primary point of contact for all reports about all bird deaths—native, wild or domestic. If a report needs to be made out of business hours, a back up number to use is the **Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888**.

BANQG attended this years' **Townsville EcoFiesta** as part of Environment Week on Sunday 4th June. Thanks to Jo Wieneke, Elna Kerswell and Tony Grice, who not only 'manned' the display but took visitors to see the Wompoo Pigeons - an unusual site for Townsville.

Watch this space: www.birdsaustralianq.org

Thanks

Birds Australia—North Queensland is very grateful for the support given by **Member for Townsville**, the Honourable, **Mike Reynolds** for the printing of this edition of *Contact Call*



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Ph: (07) 4094 1263 or Fax: (07) 4094 1466
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Web Page: www.birdwatchers.com.au

Please send items for December 2006 Contact Call by mid November to: Helen McLaughlin, Newsletter Editor, PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens 4810 or Email Helen at helen_marty2000@hotmail.com