



# Contact Call



Birds Australia  
North Queensland Group  
*Birding with a Purpose*

Newsletter of the Birds Australia  
North Queensland Group  
PO Box 37 Belgian Gardens Q4810

December 2006 Issue:  
*Little Eagle*

## Are you interested in the birds ...

One of the issues that face Birds Australia is membership. This is recognised in our draft Strategic Plan and has been the focus of discussions within Council and at meetings of convenors of Regional Groups. Currently, Birds Australia has around 7500 members and, in spite of a steady influx of new members, membership has remained steady for some time. This represents 1 person for every 2600 in the Australian population. By contrast, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, just one of the birding organizations in the United Kingdom, claims the support of over 1 million people, or around 1 out of every 60 people in the country's population. Is it the case that we are not a birding culture? Australians certainly express a general appreciation of their wildlife but is this more than superficial? Compare birding and fishing in Australia. That may not be a fair comparison but I will make it anyway. Fishing is big business and there are countless fishing clubs, large and small. On the other hand, many people fish without joining a fishing club and, in my experience, the same is true of birding. Many 'non-birders' are interested in birds. They like having birds around and they like to know the names of birds. How often have you been confronted by, "I saw this bird the other day..."? Those inquiries are usually sparked by a casual sighting of a bird that is, in the eyes of the observer, unusual (to them) in some way. One of the things that Birds Australia is about is building on this casual interest. So what is my point? As members of Birds Australia, we can each play a role in building interest, and interest is linked to appreciation and action. Who knows what might come from a positive response to that "I saw this bird the other day...".... and we should all carry a couple of membership forms in our backpacks for such an occasion. I wish all readers a happy Christmas, trust you have the opportunity to spend time with family and friends and do some birding.

*Tony Grice, Convenor*



## BA North Queensland Group—Events Calendar Dec 06 - March 07

~ Merry Christmas ~

*Wishing you a safe holiday*

### January 2007

#### Saturday & Sunday 20th & 21st - Summer Painted Snipe Survey

Members are encouraged to survey your local creek or wetland in search of the elusive Painted Snipe. Contact Ian Hance (03) 9882 2622 or email [tbn@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:tbn@birdsaustralia.com.au) for details.

#### Friday 26th until Sunday 28th Australia Day Long Weekend

Join Keith and Lindsay Fisher for our annual campout at Julatten. Communal dinner Saturday night, please bring a plate. Book accommodation directly with Keith and Lindsay on (07) 4094 1263. Details on page 5.

### February 2007

#### Friday 2nd - World Wetlands Day

Theme: "Fish for Tomorrow" in recognition of wetlands and fisheries. Check out the website [www.wetlands-ociania.org](http://www.wetlands-ociania.org) for more details.

### March 2006

#### Sunday 4th - Clean Up Australia Day

Register on line at [www.cleanup.com.au](http://www.cleanup.com.au) or call 1800 CUA DAY 282 329.



### April 2006

#### Anzac Day Weekend - Beach Stone-curlew survey

More details in the March newsletter.

### October 2007

#### Saturday 6th - Annual Crane Count

Put this one in your diary's today The annual BANQG research activity, across the Atherton Tableland, Upper Herbert, Townsville - Giru, Ingham, Gulf Plains and Cape York. Email Elinor at [cranesnorth@austarnet.com.au](mailto:cranesnorth@austarnet.com.au) and check out [www.ozcranes.net](http://www.ozcranes.net) for details closer to the date.

*Remember to keep an eye on the website for more events [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au), then click on calendar, and select Queensland.*

## Inside this issue:

- Town Common wetland, Crane Count, BANQ Polo Shirts
- Kingfisher Park sightings, new committee, David Suzuki in town
- Australia Day long weekend, finch and BBQ survey, committee meeting summary
- Townsville's unusual sightings, Interesting Sightings for the region

**The Little Eagle** (*Hieraetus* half), with a wingspan of 110-136cm . robust, with shorter wings and tail, a short, a solitary raptor of most wooded habitats, characteristic of woodland in rough hill country or of river gums in the inland. The Little Eagle occurs throughout mainland Australia and in New Guinea, however is uncommon. It eats mammals, birds (ie parrots and passerines, sometimes ducks and crows), reptiles, occasionally large insects and carrion, and rarely fish. The laying season varies, longer in the tropical far north, occupying the dry season with pairs nesting solitarily.

## Little Eagle

*morphnoides*) is only 45-55cm long (tail less than It is similar in size to a Whistling Kite but more broad head, and a stubby bill. The Little Eagle is although it usually avoids dense forest. It is characteristic of woodland in rough hill country or of river gums in the inland. The Little Eagle occurs throughout mainland Australia and in New Guinea, however is uncommon. It eats mammals, birds (ie parrots and passerines, sometimes ducks and crows), reptiles, occasionally large insects and carrion, and rarely fish. The laying season varies, longer in the tropical far north, occupying the dry season with pairs nesting solitarily.

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

## Birddata update ...

**B**irddata is Birds Australia's new web site for the Atlas of Australian Birds [www.birddata.com.au](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:tony.grice@csiro.au)

**Deputy Convener**—Alan Gillanders phone (07) 4095 3784

Email: [spotlighting@cyberwizards.com.au](mailto:spotlighting@cyberwizards.com.au)

**Secretary**—Helen McLaughlin phone: (07) 4771 3239

Email: [helen\\_marty2000@hotmail.com](mailto:helen_marty2000@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer**—Harry Cassidy phone: (07) 4057 5278

Email: [harrycass40@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:aafreeman@qldnet.com.au)

**Crane Count** Elinor Scambler 4095 3296

Email: [dacelo@austarnet.com.au](mailto: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@iqconnect.net.au](mailto:bowerbird14@iqconnect.net.au)

**Cairns:** Ron Hill Ph: 4057 9559

Email: [ronandlin@westnet.com.au](mailto:ronandlin@westnet.com.au)

**Atherton Tableland:** Mark Newton Wk Ph: 4048 4747

Email: [mlnewton@iprimus.com.au](mailto:mlnewton@iprimus.com.au)

**Mossman / Daintree:** Del Richards Ph: 4094 1199

Email: [info@finefeathertours.com.au](mailto:info@finefeathertours.com.au)

**Cape York:** Sue Gould Ph: 4069 7585

Email: [susanfgould@yahoo.com](mailto:susanfgould@yahoo.com)

**Mount Isa:** Bob Forsyth Ph: 4743 3210

Email: [Isabirds@bigpond.net.au](mailto:Isabirds@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](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au).

Check out the website for local and national events



**Birds Australia**  
CONSERVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

## Restoring the Town Common Wetlands

Since early 2004, CSIRO and Queensland Parks and Wildlife have been working together in an attempt to develop ways of improving the condition of wetlands on the Townsville Town Common Conservation Park. The freshwater wetlands of the Common have been largely taken over by para grass, an African grass species that was probably introduced to the area as a pasture for the cattle and horses that used to be grazed there.

When the area was gazetted as an Environmental Reserve in 1974, livestock were removed. Para grass has since increased to the point where, in many places, it is difficult to find other plant species. The heavy sward of para grass does not provide suitable feeding habitat for many of the bird species for which the Town Common was so well known.

The approach to restoration that has been tested involves burning and reintroduction of cattle. Burning has been done in the mid to late dry season (August-October) when water birds are elsewhere or concentrated around the few remaining waterholes. Fire greatly reduces the bulk of para grass and, importantly, removes the mass of material at the base of the sward. Some areas are then stocked with cattle. Areas that have not been burned are stocked heavily; burned areas are stocked lightly as the cattle are dependent on remnants left over after the fire and on the dry season para grass regrowth.

Some of the effects of burning are immediate with **Black and Whistling Kite** being present for the fires and **Australian Bustard** and **Richard's Pipit** arriving the day after to look for fresh pickings. While longer term benefits of burning relate to maintaining wet season

channels open which are utilised by the typical wetland species like **Royal Spoonbill** and three species of **Egret**. In some patches para grass has been almost totally eliminated although, in the absence of further treatment, the para grass starts to reassert itself.

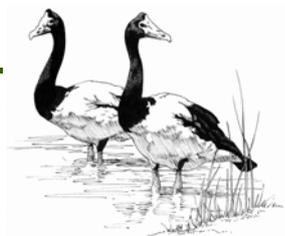
Two species that are especially important to the birds that use the wetland are wild rice and bulkuru. In the 2005-2006 wet season wild rice was quite abundant in the wetter burnt plots. This attracted **Magpie Goose** for which it is an important food source during their breeding season. **Brolgas** have been seen feeding on the treated areas too, possibly drawn by the increased amounts of bulkuru.

Monthly bird surveys have been carried out on each of the plots covered by the work. More than 90 bird species have been recorded during these surveys. Others, including **Grass Owls** that use heavy para grass for shelter during the day, have been observed at other times.

We hope to continue the work for at least another two years and then use the results to develop ways of maintaining bird habitat. In particular the seasonal wetlands of the lower Burdekin and Ross River floodplains which includes the proposed IBA of Bowling Green Bay.

Are you familiar with the wetlands of the Townsville Town Common? Have you noticed any changes in bird species using the area or in their abundance? We are aware of significant declines in **Brolga**. Has this been the case for other species. We would be keen to hear of your observations.

*Tony Grice, Townsville*



## Crane Count - our tenth year of counting cranes

Full moon rising over crane wetlands and hills delighted Crane Counters on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Many teams noted though, that their sites were so full with water there wasn't much room for the birds to roost. It's very unusual for dams and swamps to be so full in October, both in our count areas and out in the Gulf and on the Cape. Roost conditions and numbers on the night help us confirm that many Sarus Cranes and Brolgas did not migrate to our region this year. Others may have arrived on the Tableland but left early, due to the poor maize crop following extended rains.

Total birds counted by all teams, 3043: 54% of the birds counted last year, by about the same number of teams and people.

Sarus Cranes, 1030: 75% of 2005 (our previous lowest number for Sarus), and 60% of the 10-year average (1744). As in most years, only a few (nine) Sarus Cranes were in outer, drier areas like Mareeba and Mt Garnet, the rest were in the Inner Tablelands (Atherton, Malanda, Tinaroo).

Total Brolgas, 2013: 46% of 2005 (the long-term average is not meaningful for Brolgas due to site changes). 168 Brolgas were at Bromfield Swamp Malanda, all the rest were in Mareeba-Mt Garnet or Ingham-Townsville.

Thanks very much to everyone involved. For Christmas 2006 you'll receive an email introducing the Crane E-news, a new way for past and present Crane Counters to keep up to date on Brolga and Sarus events. So please, if you've changed your email address recently let me know the new one on [dacelo@austarnet.com.au](mailto:dacelo@austarnet.com.au).

**Next Crane Count: Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007. See you there!**

*Elinor Scambler, Yungaburra*



Sarus Crane  
Kate Gorrington-Smith  
© Birds Australia 2003

## BA North Queensland Group Polo Shirts

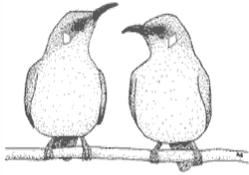
Thanks to the many supporters in purchasing our new poloshirt. We have had lots of interest and have been sending the shirt to Birds Australia members all over the country - Perth, Bundaberg, Melbourne, Mackay, Weipa, Bowen, Fraser Island and Armidale. An excellent response. If you have not ordered one, don't despair, there are still some available from Townsville, Atherton and Cairns, or they can be posted to you for only \$30 (\$25 for the shirt and \$5 postage). These 100% cotton polo shirts are navy in colour with a white trim, pocket and logo on the chest. Sizes available are medium, large and extra large, however other sizes can be ordered.

Please contact the Secretary - Helen McLaughlin on (07) 4771 3239 or email [helen\\_marty2000@hotmail.com](mailto:helen_marty2000@hotmail.com).



## Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge alive with birds

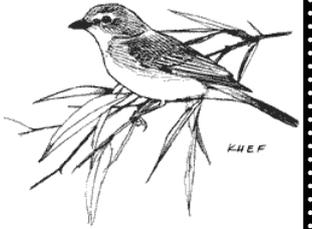
On the 9th November 2006 a **Yellow-spotted Honeyeater** was observed in an open rainforest area holding a light brown leaf in the middle by its bill. The leaf was approximately 150mm long and the bird was approx 1m off the ground on a horizontal vine. The bird was hopping sideways, moving backwards and forwards along the vine whilst flicking its head from side



Yellow-spotted Honeyeater  
Andrew Silcocks  
© Birds Australia 2003

to side causing the leaf to glint in the dappled sunlight showing the lighter underside then the dark topside. Eventually the leaf broke in half after several minutes and the bird tried to catch it before hopping onto the ground searching for another leaf. It found a similar leaf and proceeded to repeat the

previous behaviour but flew off after about 30 seconds dropping the leaf. This behaviour appeared to be a display, possibly to another bird which was not sighted. Maybe it thought it was a Bowerbird!



Grey Whistler  
Kim Franklin  
© Birds Australia 2003

Even more interesting.....

I have a sighting of a **Grey Whistler** on Mt. Lewis at an altitude of 900m ASL on 10th December 2006. This is the highest recorded altitude for this species in HANZAB. I was surprised to see it beside the dam, it also called confirming identity. This is the first record I've had of this species at this altitude but have 3 records for lower down the Mt. Lewis road at about 500m ASL.

*Keith Fisher, Julatten*

## Your New Committee

Our committee has welcomed four new members into the team for 2006-07. We shall be including their profiles over the coming months.



**Dick Eussen JP** is a full-time outdoor writer and photographer who specializes in fishing, 4WD travel, history, shooting, and destinations, and writes for a dozen magazines. He is the 4WD Editor for National Australian Fishing Annual and its quarterly publications, Barra, Bass & Bream, Field Editor for Trailerboat Fisherman and contributing writer for Express Publications. He is the author of five books, and has two books coming out soon, Australia's Tropical Wetlands, and A Guide to the Savannah Way.

He has spend most of his working life in the mining industry, Mount Isa and Jabiru. He also operated a five-star rainforest and bird watching operation out of Port Douglas for ten years.



Wishing you a very Merry  
Christmas and a safe New Year.  
...from the Committee

## David Suzuki visits north Queensland

On Tuesday 3rd October at the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre, David Suzuki gave an inspirational address to more than 3000 people. Birds Australia North Queensland was part of that night, the biggest environmental event Townsville has ever seen. Thank you to the organisers and especially Tony Grice, Jo Wieneke and Rosemary Payet who were busy all night talking about local bird conservation efforts such as the Black-throated Finch, Crane Count, the importance of wetlands, migratory birds and threatened species.

BANQG have been given a copy of the DVD which has been produced by TCC and the Department of Defence, which includes David Suzuki's address, the awesome cultural welcome, photographs of the event and other material. This is available for loan from the secretary. However if you are interested in purchasing the DVD for only \$10, go to the Townsville City Council website for more details:

[www.townsville.qld.gov.au/yourcouncil/suzuki\\_dvd.asp](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/yourcouncil/suzuki_dvd.asp)

*Helen McLaughlin, Townsville*



Bruce the Brolga  
Thanks to Qld Museum

## Australia Day Long Weekend ~ the tradition continues...

Arrive Thursday night (25th January) or early Friday (26th) morning. There will be field trips to Mt Lewis road conditions permitting. Other areas of birding interest which may be visited include Mowbray National Park, Mt Carbine Dam and other local areas. The day's program will be available in the communal kitchen for those arriving at different times. There will be the traditional communal dinner on Saturday night.

Although access to Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge is via the Rex Highway, and accessible by conventional vehicle, 4WD's are recommended due to the clearance needed along forest tracks. Car pooling on the day may be available and will help to reduce the number of vehicles on those roads.

Spectacular birds are (almost) guaranteed, such as the **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**, **Masked Owl**, **Noisy Pitta**, **Tooth-billed Bowerbird** and of course **Blue-faced Parrot-Finch**.

Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge is offering BA members a 10% discount on accommodation and a three day camping package of \$30.00 per person (normally \$14.00 per day) + \$1.00 per site a day if you need power. The facilities, as always, will be available to all. Contact Keith and Lindsay directly to book your accommodation for this great weekend on phone (07) 4094 1263 or email [sootyowl@bigpond.com](mailto:sootyowl@bigpond.com).



Tooth-billed Bowerbird  
Andrew Plant  
© Birds Australia 2003

## In search of threatened finches...

As part of a project examining the decline of seed-eating birds in the tropical savannas of northern Australia, 10-15 volunteers will again be required in September 2007 to assist with an annual census of finches at Mornington Wildlife Station. Owned and managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy the station is located in the central Kimberly region of Western Australia. There is a sizeable population of **Gouldian Finches** on the property, and the project revolves around this species to some extent. Experienced birdwatchers are sought for this activity, especially those skilled at reading colour-bands. The project lasts for a week. A campground with toilet, showers and

BBQs is available, but volunteers must be self-sufficient in terms of providing their own transport, food, etc.

For more information, or to register in this activity, please contact Threatened Bird Network Dean Ingwersen on (03) 9882 2622 or email [d.ingwersen@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:d.ingwersen@birdsaustralia.com.au)

Gouldian Finch  
© Threatened  
Bird Network



Volunteers are also needed to continue assisting staff with the **Gouldian Finch Reintroduction Project** at the Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve in Far North Queensland. Tasks include:

- Ongoing monitoring and survey work for **Gouldian Finches** and other threatened granivorous birds on the Reserve and surrounds, including the **Buff-breasted Button Quail** and **Black-throated Finch**;
- From August to October to monitor released birds (volunteers need to have good bird ID skills and be astute observers of colour bands);
- Assist with general bird surveys throughout the year.

Training can be provided if no previous experience, and a regular commitment is preferable. Free basic accommodation is provided on the Reserve. For further information, please contact Gwyneth Nevard on (07) 4093 2514, or email: [info@mareebawetlands.com](mailto:info@mareebawetlands.com). Anyone who has recent (within past 10 years) records of Gouldians in the wild is encouraged to submit details to the recovery team.

## Buff-breasted Button-Quail Conservation Project

The Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland is undertaking a ground-breaking project to determine the status and habitat requirements of the **Buff-breasted Button-quail** (BBBQ) in the Mareeba Shire, far north Queensland. We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to assist with surveying, capture and tracking of BBBQs.

The project will run from December 2006 to March 2007. This is a hot and humid time in the tropics so volunteers must be reasonably fit as a lot of walking will be involved in surveying potential habitat sites. Accommodation will be available at the Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve.

For more information please contact Lisa on phone (07) 4093 2514 or email [visitor\\_centre@mareebawetlands.com](mailto:visitor_centre@mareebawetlands.com)



Buff-breasted Button-quail  
Ian Hance  
© Birds Australia 2003

## Committee meet in Cardwell

The new (2006-07) committee met for the first time since the AGM in Cardwell on 19th August 2006. Here is a summary of issues:

- the long awaited website was approved by the committee and is now up and running. Ian Montgomery is managing this website and we are gradually getting information on the site. We encourage all members to visit the site and provide us with feedback on what should be on it. The address is [www.birdsaustralianq.org](http://www.birdsaustralianq.org);
- In line with the national office developing a strategic plan, BANQG are developing our own action plan to be based on national objectives and local priorities;
- Our updated logo had full committee support and we went ahead with printing our club poloshirts. There are still some available from Cairns, Tablelands and Townsville;
- BANQG has been very active in commenting on a State land planning project in Townsville & Thuringowa which involves thousands of hectares, including important Black-throated Finch habitat. We also made a submission on the Townsville City Council City Plan involving the protection of a nesting pair of White-bellied Sea-Eagles at Louisa Creek
- Have completed the Crane Count and Black-throated Finch posters and still working on the other four.

*NB: The November meeting was postponed until January 2007.*

## What a week in Townsville...

About the 20th to 27th November, the Town Common in Townsville was abuzz with excited "birdos", eagerly peering through binoculars and telescopes at a variety of waders, not least of which were five **Oriental Pratincoles**. These had arrived unexpectedly to indulge in what must have been a rare treat in one of the last remaining remnants of "wetland". Word spread fast per email and phone to members of Birds Australia and Townsville Region of Birds Observers Club, so it was no surprise to find a constant stream of twitchers, who had dashed off from the city offices and shops to have extended lunch, or smoko breaks. Some arrived without any binoculars or scopes, but as there were generally others there, properly equipped, most able to get some sort of a look. Those lucky ones who had joyfully abandoned house-cleaning, gardening, or washing, had been able to come prepared



Australian Pratincole  
Andrew Silcocks  
© Birds Australia 2003

for the viewing, which was quite a distance away, as the rapidly drying-out wetland had receded considerably.

The list read - apart from the **Oriental Pratincoles** - **Australian Pratincole**, **Red-necked Stint**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, **Red-capped Plover**, **Glossy**, **Straw-necked** and **Sacred Ibis**, **Royal Spoonbill**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Grey Teal**, **Intermediate Egret** and **Brolga** (2), as well as **Welcome Swallows** and **Fairy Martins**. Another small patch of muddy water near the viewing tower provided a further selection, which included an immature **Pied Heron**, and an adult **Black-necked Stork** and an immature one.

Very exciting indeed and as all the birds hung around for at least a week, most Townsville Birdos were able to enjoy

the rare viewings.

I also took my sister and Beth on Sat a.m. to Loam Island. Saw usual bush birds, but were thrilled to see three **Barking Owls**. One flew away very soon after we found them, but the other two stayed and peered back at us with their huge yellow eyes. One had his back to us and head twisted 180 degrees and the other had to tip his head sideways to peer with one eye under the branch that he was hiding behind. Great fun. Like a little kid playing peekaboo. Also had two sightings of **Azure Kingfisher** (possibly the same bird at different times), as it flew across the river from our side to other side. We could just make it out as it sat above the water on a low branch, doing an occasional dip for a fish or something. Huge numbers of cicada cases abounded in the bush at Riverside Gardens yesterday and we saw both a **Little Friarbird** and a **Noisy Friarbird**, enjoying a juicy cicada. Also 3 **Pied Imperial-Pigeons** at Riverside and **Blue-winged Kookaburras**, one **Varied Triller** and several **Rainbow Bee-eaters**. Hadn't seen any of those along the northwest of river. There have been five **quail** (unidentified, as yet) at my sister and brother-in-law's place near me. I haven't managed to see them and they didn't get their bird book out in time to check carefully. Have seen them a few times now, so I'm hoping they get an identification soon. I only have 20 to 30 **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins**. Bruce gets 50 or more at his feeders. Haven't seen the **Squatter Pigeons** since coming home from our trip. (**Red-tailed**) **Black Cockatoos** still roost in the few gum trees along Beck Drive and Hervey Range Road. They fly over each morning and afternoon. Happy Birding



Pied Heron  
Susan Tingay  
© Birds Australia 2003

*Elna Kerswell, Townsville*

## Interesting sightings...continued

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Pictorella Mannikin	11.11.06	100km N of Julia Creek	BH	Mixed flock + Zebra Finches
Little Tern	12.11.06	Townsville shipping channel	TG	
Little Kingfisher	13.11.06	Tarzali Lakes	AG	Opening again of Dec 1st
Little Eagle	13.11.06	Kairi	AG	Uncommon on Tableland
Latham's Snipe	13.11.06	Tarzali Lakes	AG	2 birds
Baillons Crake	19.11.06	Tinaburra boat ramp	BV&GS	
Painted Snipe	19.11.06	Tinaburra boat ramp	BV&GS	
Oriental Pratincole	20.11.06	Townsville Town Common	AA	5 birds
Pied Heron	22.11.06	Townsville Town Common	AA	1 bird
Brown Songlark	24.11.06	Millaa Millaa	BV	Unusual in area

**NOTE:** There are still a few Wompoo Pigeons around Townsville while Painted Snipe and Satin Flycatchers have been in far higher numbers than usual on the Tableland. Sorry space does not permit more sightings. My apologies for an incorrectly reported sighting of Ground Cuckoo-shrikes in Cairns in the last Contact Call. They were in fact seen by Martin Cachard and Adam Arnold at Greenhills Station Rd Dam, 10km S of Cumberland Dam, Georgetown. Chris Hassell of Broome was in Mapoon in July and on a swamp close to the community saw 30 masked Lapwings. All were northern form (subspecies miles) except for one eastern form (subspecies novaehollandiae).

### OBSERVERS:

AA-Alex Appleman; AAr- Adam Arnold; AG – Alan Gillanders; IS – Ian Sinclair; BH- Bill Holmes; BV – Brian Venables; DR- Dell Richards; GH - Glenn Holmes; GS – Graham Snell; HC-Harry Cassidy; JM-Jonathon Munro; JS- John Seale; L&CE- Len and Chris Ezzy; PG-Phil Gregory; PL-Peter Lloyd; SG- Sue Gould; T&AF- Trish & Andrew Forsyth; T&SC- Tom & Sylvia Claxton; TG- Tony Grice; JW- Jo Wieneke. Thanks also to BOCA's Drongo and John Seales website. Thanks to observers for sending in their sightings ~ Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings.

## Interesting sightings

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comment
Spotted Nightjar	4.8.06	Bladensburg National Park	L&CE	5 birds
Red-browed Pardalote	. 8.06	Wolfram Camp, Dimbula	RP	Edge of range
Spotless Crake	5.8.06	Bladensburg National Park	L&CE	Bough Shed Waterhole
Plum-headed Finches	3.9.06	Winton Sewage Ponds	L&CE	1000s in flocks of 100s
Red Goshawk	25.9.06	Batavia Downs Rd east of Weipa	SG	
Wilson's Storm Petrel	3.10.06	Cow Bay, Daintree	DR	1 bird
Atherton Scrubwren	5.10.06	Seamark Road, Malanda	GH	Nest on ground and eggs
Black-necked Stork	8.10.06	Townsville Town Common	JW	Very young juvenile
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	8.10.06	Black Mt Road, Kuranda	PG	
Black-chinned Honeyeater Golden backed form intergrade	13.10.06	Geraghty Park, Julatten	K&LF	Only 2 <sup>nd</sup> record in area. Last was at Abattoir Swamp 1994
Dollarbird	13.10.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	First for season here
Dollarbird	19.10.06	Ross River Rd 34km SSW of Townsville	BH	First for season here
Satin Flycatcher	22.10.06	Ball Road, Malanda	IS	Male, with male Leaden Flycatcher for comparison
White-throated Nightjar	22.10.06	Freshwater, Cairns	MC	Late record
Satin Flycatcher	22.10.06	Freshwater, Cairns	MC	Adult pair
Satin Flycatcher	23.10. 06	Pelican Point, Tinaroo	AG	male
Little Curlew	23.10.06	Malanda / Atherton Rd	JM	7 birds
Black-chinned Honeyeater	26.10.06	Yungaburra	AG	Unusual here
Painted Snipe	28.10.06	Hasties Swamp, Atherton	PL	2 birds
Red-browed Pardalote	28.10.06	Hurricane Rd west of Mt Carbine	DR	
White-throated Needletail	29.10.06	Kingfisher Park, Julatten	K&LF	First of season
Yellow Oriole	29.10.06	Aplins Weir Ross River, Townsville	TG	
Pied Heron	29.10.06	Greenhills Station Dam – 10 km south of Cumberland Dam Georgetown	MC & AAr	1 bird
Painted Snipe	29.10.06	As above	MC & AAr	9 birds - 4 female, 5 male
Australian Pratincole	30.10.06	Forsayth Road, Atherton	AG	5 birds
Marsh Sandpiper	31.10.06	Hasties Swamp	HC	
Spotless Crake	31.10.06	Hasties Swamp	HC	
Pied Heron	31.10.06	Hasties Swamp	HC	
Satin Flycatcher	31.10.06	Mareeba Wetlands	T&AF	
Hoary-headed Grebe	31.10.06	Mareeba Wetlands	T&AF	
Rufous Owl	31.10.06	Freshwater, Cairns	MC	Single bird calling
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch	1.11.06	Gourka Track, 0.9 km from Bartle Frere end of road	AG	
Southern Cassowary	1.11.06	As above	AG	Sub adult male
Barking Owl	2.11.06	Belgian Gardens, Townsville	JW	2 adults & 3 recently fledged young
White-throated Nightjar	2.11.06	Laudham Park Dam, Townsville	BH	First sighting this season
Brolga	3.11.06	Giru	JW	700-800 birds
Little Bittern	4.11.06	Ball Road, Malanda	IS & GH	
Painted Snipe	6-13.11.06	Bilwon Road, Biboohra	T&SC	At least 1 male, 2 females
Southern Cassowary	11.11.06	Warrigal near Ravenshoe	JM	Adult male
Australian Pratincole	7.11.06	Townsville Town Common	TG	4 birds
Crimson Chat	8.11.06	100km north of Julia Creek	BH	Edge of range

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](mailto:redmill@austarnet.com.au)**

**Website: [www.redmillhouse.com.au](http://www.redmillhouse.com.au)**

## Welcome to our new members...

- ✦ Mr Edward Pierce, TOWNSVILLE;
- ✦ Mr Rob & Suanne Gegg, TOWNSVILLE;
- ✦ Dr Nancy and Mr S Lanskey, EDMONTON;
- ✦ Ms Rhonda Winger, HERBERTON;
- ✦ Prof Peter Valentine, TOWNSVILLE;
- ✦ Mr Rosy Maccarrone, Cedar Park Resort, KURANDA.

*Welcome to our new members.*

*Please join us on any of our outings.*

Check out Birds Australia website [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://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.

**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](mailto: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@iqconnect.net.au](mailto:bowerbird14@iqconnect.net.au).

Just Released - **"Evolution and Biogeography of Australasian Vertebrates"** Edited by J.R.Merrick, M. Archer, G.M.Hickey and M.S.Y.Lee. It is hoped this resource book will increase awareness of the unique Australasian vertebrate faunas; emphasize the importance of Australasian environments and the associated biodiversity; provide background for decisions that limit biodiversity loss in the region - against the trend in the current world-wide extinction crisis. Visit [www.auscipub.com](http://www.auscipub.com) for more details.

**Don't forget: National Office will have a new address from February 2007 at the Green Building, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton VIC 3053.**



Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge now have **Nekta-Vite Bird Feeders and Vitamin Supplement** in stock. Phone or email for more information or a brochure Ph (07) 4094 1263 or email [sootyowl@bigpond.com](mailto:sootyowl@bigpond.com).

Watch this space: [www.birdsaustralianq.org](http://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*



Contact Call is now produced on 100% Australian paper using 80% recycled material from waste fibre diverted from Australian landfill



At **Kingfisher Park** we provide accommodation in Self-Contained Units and two Bedroom Villas, Bunkhouses, Camping and powered Caravan Sites within a rainforest sanctuary. Being central to a variety of habitats ensures many different bird species as well as mammals and reptiles. Local expertise and maps are provided.

**Keith & Lindsay Fisher**

RN6 Mt. Kooyong Road, Julatten, QLD 4871

Ph: (07) 4094 1263 or Fax: (07) 4094 1466

Email: [sootyowl@bigpond.com](mailto:sootyowl@bigpond.com)

Web Page: [www.birdwatchers.com.au](http://www.birdwatchers.com.au)

Please send items for March 2007 Contact Call by mid February 2007 to: Helen McLaughlin, Newsletter Editor, PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens 4810 or Email [helen\\_marty2000@hotmail.com](mailto:helen_marty2000@hotmail.com)