

ConTact Call



Quarterly Newsletter of Birds Australia North Queensland



December 2008

Issue: Purple Swamphen

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

The Purple Swamphen is a large rail, mainly dusky black above, with a broad dark blue collar and dark blue to purple below. As the Purple Swamphen walks, it flicks its tail up and down, revealing its white under tail. The bill is red and robust and the legs and feet orange-red. For such a bulky bird, the Swamphen is an accomplished flier and will readily take to the air to escape danger. In flight, the long legs and elongated toes trail behind or hang underneath the body. They are proficient swimmers, but prefer to wander on the edges of the water, among reeds and on floating vegetation.

These birds are common throughout eastern and northern Australia, with a separate subspecies common in the extreme south-west of the continent. Birds have transported themselves from Australia to New Guinea and New Zealand and throughout the islands of the south-west Pacific. It has been suggested that the New Zealand population of Purple Swamphens (locally called the Pukeko) originated in Australia.

The Purple Swamphen is found around freshwater swamps,



Purple Swamphen.
Courtesy of Ian Montgomery birdway.com.au

streams and marshes. Their diet includes the soft shoots of reeds and rushes and small animals, such as frogs and snails. However, it is a reputed egg stealer and will also eat ducklings when it can catch them. It uses its long toes to grasp food while eating.

These birds are generally found in small groups and studies have shown that these consist of more males than females. More than one male will mate with a single female. All family members, and occasionally the young from a previous brood, share in incubation and care of the young. The nest consists of a platform of trampled reeds with the surrounding vegetation sometimes being used to form a shelter. Often two broods will be raised in a year.

Information sourced from *Birds in Backyard*—
www.birdsinbackyards.net

Inside this issue:

- from the Convenor
- Birding for Beginners Report
- Research news —
Cassowary Scats
- Planning for Australia Day 2009
- Project news —
~ NQ Crane Count
~ Torresian Imperial-Pigeon Count
and Christmas Party
~ Black-throated Finch Count
- Trip Reports
~ Serpentine Lagoon
~ Cardwell
- Townsville's First Ornithologist
- Members Corner
~ Diary of a Trip to Alaska (part 2)
- Interesting Sightings
- BANQ Committee
- **Notice Board**
~ Calendar of Events
~ New Members





'Birding with a Purpose' is part of our logo. While our personal enjoyment is a valid purpose we have been more purposeful than that over the last few months.

Work has continued on the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in defining their limits and recording the birds. The Crane Count is now a well established feature of the annual calendar and if you haven't marked in October 3rd 2009 in your diary, do it now. Bowerbird Blitz is well underway and if you would care to help map the Golden Bowerbird and Tooth-bill courts please contact Graham Harrington. On the 22nd of November the Pied Imperial Pigeon count occurred at Mission Beach and surrounds. The atlasing of unusual occurrences is of value but please remember to include the usual suspects also.

On a personal birding note, I was recently taken to McIvor River crossing north of Cooktown by Kath and Dave from Cooktown to see a Black-winged Monarch. I arrived home to be told that one had been seen near Julatten and then a week later saw what looked like a cross between that and a Black-faced Monarch at the carpark at Millaa Millaa Falls.

For those travelling over the festive season I wish you safe journeys and to all, lots of exciting birds.

Alan Gillanders

Birding for Beginners

On the 18th of October, 14 people gathered at Centenary Lake, Cairns for Birding for Beginners. This included four new members. It was a day of great learning and personal interactions. The day was warm and cloudy but not too hot. Rain fell as the leaders arrived to set up and then as the finished packing away but was not a serious inconvenience.

Graham Harrington led the day with some instruction and lots of reassurance that most beginners know more about birds than they think they do. Graham did wonderfully in helping the participants feel at ease in eliminating those birds which did not fit. The beginners were asked to first concentrate on where they were, what the birds were doing and what they most resembled in behaviour and size. By having small groups of two backed up by an experienced birder, the beginners were able to test their new found skills in a non-threatening way and reach success in their identification. The students chose the birds and described them to their support person. A little judicious questioning helped focus their observations when necessary. It worked wonderfully.



Tea, coffee and snacks were provided by Alan's Wildlife Tours.

After morning tea we shuffled the individuals into new groupings and we began birding again. Confidence grew as the "newies" identified bird after bird with great accuracy. Beginners sometimes competed among themselves and were very pleased when they were able to tell their support person what had just flown away so it was no longer visible. A bird list of 50 species was compiled by the beginners.

Alan Gillanders



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Morning walks and evening spotlighting by arrangement.

Special group packages and a local bird guide can be arranged.

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Australia Day Weekend 2009

The traditional Australia Day weekend at Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge (KPBL) 23-26 January 2009 marks the 10th Anniversary of the get-togethers and will be celebrated in the traditional way with field trips, communal bring-a-plate dinner on the Saturday night and hopefully a few speakers. Cliff Frith has agreed to give a talk on their recent trip entitled "Mad. Birds - Portrait of Madagascan Birds". If there is enough interest we can have a 10 year celebratory dinner at the Highlander Restaurant 1.5km from KPBL on the Friday night. Currently a three course meal costs \$25.00, let us know if you are interested Ph 4094 1263 or email sootyowl@bigpond.com.

Eleven years ago we arranged to have the Australia Day weekend at KPBL with a few friends and enjoyed ourselves so much we thought it would be a good venue for BA-NQG the following year, so began the annual pilgrimage. **Continued on page 3**



Cassowary Scat Survey Mission Beach

David Westcott kindly provided the following brief overview of the results of the survey.

On Saturday 1st November 2008, we had 38 participants from the community, who came along as individuals in their own right, including members of C4, Mission Beach Community Alliance, Birds Australia, staff from the Cassowary Coast Shire Council and QPWS. In addition, two Wet Tropics Management Authority and seven CSIRO staff were present. Working in teams of three we covered a total of about 24km of line transects, covering 5 habitat types looking for dung. In total 64 dung samples were collected for analysis. However, 201 dung piles were mapped, the difference arising from the fact that most dung found was too old, dry and crusty for DNA testing. Two feathers were collected and three birds sighted and a host of photos of dung were taken.

Back in the laboratory, the collected dung has been assessed for its usefulness. DNA extractions were attempted from 57 of the 64 dung samples, the remainder were judged to be too dry and therefore a low probability of successful DNA extraction was anticipated. This high pass rate suggests that the collectors did a good job of assessing the dung freshness. From the 57 useful samples, the DNA was extracted; 14 of the samples came from males and 17 came from females. In the remainder, the DNA was either degraded and unambiguous sexing was not possible or concentrations of DNA were too low to provide clear results.

Additional analyses to examine the extent to which we can discriminate between individuals will not be completed until sometime in the new year when, hopefully, we will have many more samples to analyse. Overall, we are very pleased with how the day went. We've learned a few things and will modify the procedures slightly to take this into account. Thank you all for your time, efforts and enthusiasm.

We are planning to run another survey day in the near future and hope that you'll join us again.

David — On behalf of the CSIRO crew: Matt Bradford, Denise Hardesty, Dean Jones, Adam McKeown, Suzanne Metcalfe, David Westcott.

Australia Day Weekend 2009 continued...

On the first official weekend in 1998 local areas such as Abattoir Swamp, Rifle Creek, Mount Molloy Cemetery and Maryfarms were visited. The Mt. Lewis trip was not the usual one as there had been a landslide near the bottom of the Mt. Lewis Road, however this did not deter eight hardy souls who walked the 15km up and back to the "clearing".

Their reward was 20+ Blue-faced Parrot-Finches. Those that did not walk up Mt. Lewis had to put up with Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher and Red-necked Crake back at KPBL! The road up Mt. Lewis is always unpredictable at this time of year and on a few occasions we have had to clear trees off the road to reach the birding areas. Two years ago there was a car crash outside KPBL which disrupted proceedings as members helped the lady trapped in her vehicle. The monsoon has often arrived at the Australia Day weekend, but this has never dampened the spirit of the event!

Ron Stannard was our excellent host from 1998-2005 and who could forget Ron's excellent famous stews. Little did we know we would end up here for more than the Australia Day weekends!

Field trips will be organised and members will be notified by email. Look forward to seeing many members and especially those from 10 years ago.

Check out our blog site for weekly updates on what's happening at and around KPBL
www.kingfisherparkbirdwatchers.blogspot.com.

Keith & Lindsay, Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge

Birding at Serpentine Lagoon

Birdwatching and dawn is oxymoronic for some, however eight people including two new comers, proved we are all different and met at the usual place in Wulguru ready for a morning at the Lagoons. The weather was ideal for a long morning walk. As usual, it took a good half hour for us to get away from the cars as we caught up with many bush birds at the roadside. Unlike previous visits in April, we had the luxury of short grass and no oozing mud to contend with. The lagoons have not dried out and are supporting a large number of birds in and beside the water. Unlike previous visits we didn't have much Finch activity, which is the down side of the meagre grass cover, providing very little food for them. We did see that the spring breeding season was well under way, with a number of juveniles such as Black Swans, Black-necked Storks (Jabiru), Pallid Cuckoo and Lemon-bellied Flycatcher. It was good to see a few Green and Cotton Pygmy-Goose and Wandering Whistling-Duck together with thousands of Plumed Whistling-Duck. Eventually we sauntered back to the cars for a late 'smoko' and as usual, even more species came to us as we rested, with a final fly past of a Brown Goshawk to end a delightful morning, adding 77 species to the Atlas data base.

Thanks go to those people who came along and to Jo Wieneke for organising the event.

Ivor Preston

Townsville's First Ornithologist - Nancy Hopkins 1904-2000

Nancy Hopkins who lived in Townsville from approx 1915 until 1960 was a keen observer of birds and the first person to document the birds in the Townsville area. Her paper *Birds of Townsville and District* in Emu Vol 47 1948 still makes fascinating reading 60 years later. Nancy joined Birds Australia (then the RAOU) in 1938. She was a State Representative for Queensland on Council from 1966 till 1968 and an Honorary Life Member at the time of her death in 2000. Everyone I contacted who had known her commented on her kind nature and said what a wonderful person she was. Nancy was born the fourth of five children in Ebagoolah, a gold mining town south of Coen on Cape York. The only sign of its existence now is the remains of the gold crushing battery. The family moved to Cooktown when she was approximately 11. Nancy had had spasmodic schooling but was a brilliant student. After passing the dreaded 'scholarship' exam she went to St Patrick's Convent in Townsville and passed her Junior with all 'A's then completed years 11 and 12 in one year also with all 'A's. She sat for the Public Service Entry Examination and was accepted into the Titles Office and remained in that department in Townsville then Brisbane until her retirement at age 66.



Nancy Hopkins - approx. 24 years

As well as working full time, caring for her mother, and her involvement with Girl Guides, she made time to keep records of birds observed around Townsville. These were mainly from her own garden in North Ward, Magnetic Island, the Town Common, Rowe's Bay, Cape Pallarenda, Ross Creek, Woodstock and Bluewater Creek. She describes lagoons bordering Belgian Gardens, after the rains filled with blue water lilies and many waterbirds including 'Lotus-birds', (Jacanas) and the Bird Sanctuary at Mt St John. Her records from 1938 till 1948 led to the publication in Emu of *Birds of Townsville and District*. In 1963 she co-authored with Dr Hugh Lavery a paper on *Birds of the Townsville District of North Queensland*.

One friend remembered with her binoculars round her neck, and driving with her in a little cream Ford Prefect being taken to see a bower at Rowes Bay (there's still one there today) and an owl in Paxton St North Ward. She never married but looked after her aged mother until her death in 1960. Nancy then went on a trip around the world and after that sold their house in Paxton Street and moved to Brisbane to be closer to her sister Gwen and her family.

She continued to work for the Titles Office in Brisbane and was one of the first women to take a department to court after being repeatedly passed over for promotion because she was a woman, even though she had better qualifications. She won and was 2 I C in the department when she retired.

In Brisbane she became an active member of the Queensland Ornithological Society - QOS (now Birds Queensland) as well as the Queensland Naturalists Club, and for many years went on outings, often as leader. Ian Venables remembered 'Nancy was always great with children and took to spending time with them on outings showing them the charm of natural things'. He commented 'What a gracious person she was'. She contributed articles to the QOS Journal Sunbird, often based on her observations in Townsville and for some years wrote a children's page.

Helen Horton remembered her on outings and weekend camps carrying a shooting stick and pushing it into the ground, unfolding its tiny seat to perch on while she looked at birds. She acted as a very efficient Honorary Librarian for the QNC from 1971-1979 and wrote many articles for the QNC News. Hugh Lavery commented on her industry and attention to detail in her work. These are very apparent in her writing and meticulous observations. She visited Townsville on holidays and continued to write papers on the birdlife of Townsville even after she had left.



Nancy at about 50 yrs

Nancy's story continues

Much of what we know about Australian birds has come from amateur ornithologists who have documented their local birds and published accounts of long term observations and studies. We are extremely fortunate that Nancy Hopkins has left us a wonderful legacy - a record of birdlife as it was 70 years ago in Townsville.



Nancy—80 years

Acknowledgments

This article would not have been possible without the help of Rhondda Todd, Nancy's niece, for information about her beloved aunt's life from her early days till her death in 2000. Helen Horton and Ian Venables provided information about Nancy's birding activities in Brisbane. Hugo Phillips sent details of her involvement with Birds Australia. Hugh Lavery provided insights into her industry and attention to detail, her interests and 'most especially her kindly nature'. Muriel Christie recounted memories of Nancy as an enthusiastic Brownie Leader - 'Mother Owl'.

Publications

Hopkins, N. (1948). Birds of Townsville and district. *Emu*, **47**, pp. 331-347

Hopkins, N. (1953). Observations of a Bowerbird's playground. *Emu*, **53**, pp. 279-280

Hopkins, N. (1974). Some Observations of the Great Bowerbird. *Sunbird*, **5**, pp.10-15

Lavery, H.J. & Hopkins, N. (1963). Birds of the Townsville district of North Queensland. *Emu*, **63**, pp 242-253.

Note: Relevant copies of the *Emu* can be found in the JCU Library.

Jo Wieneke

Trip Report

Birding at Cardwell

With the invigorating Saturday committee meeting over the few that remained standing met at the Cardwell melaleuca walk way for a look around for an hour or so. We were quickly rewarded with sightings of a few waders such as Whimbrels working the incoming tide. After walking along the beach a bit we rejoined the path in a patch of vine scrub between the bridge and a corner by the beach. A Collared Kingfisher could be heard and was eventually seen. Mangrove Robins called from the thick forest and it did not take long for Ivor and Greg to spot a trio in what looked like a territorial dispute. Bar-shouldered Doves foraged in the wet litter. Sunbirds, Varied, Yellow-spotted and Dusky Honeyeaters and Little Shrike-Thrush were also seen at the site. Others in the group picked up a few Little Egrets and White-faced Herons. Those that stayed back later got to witness the waves on Common Mynas and Magpie Larks heading south across the mangroves presumably to their evening roosting places.

We decided over dinner to head to the lookout and waterfall behind town the next morning. The author made an early start and headed out to Meunga Creek boat ramp and turned up 18 species including Large-billed Gerygones and Macleays Honeyeaters but was driven back to town by the hordes of annoying mosquitoes. After the Sunday morning muster at the Information Centre and a quick walk along the beach where we had good views of a Beach Stone-Curlew hanging out near a fisherman we headed off only to find our way blocked by a car rally in the State forest. An alternative plan was quickly agreed and we headed south out of town towards the Dalrymple Track carpark.

Arriving at the carpark just before 0900 we got organised for a 30 minute walk along the track. On the way to the car park a Bush Stone-Curlew and some Red-browed Finches were flushed out. An Olive-backed Oriole flew across as we got ready to head down into the creek to investigate a calling dove. Highlights of the morning were a family of uncooperative Lovely Fairy-Wrens, Emerald Dove, Northern Fantails, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Grey Whistler and a very co-operative Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove. Elna saw a Grey Shrike-Thrush in the same tree as the Grey Whistler. Rainbow Bee-eaters and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were seen overhead in the canopy. The birds were quite shy all morning which made for very challenging birding. Over twenty species for our efforts.

After a smorgasbord morning tea we headed for home. The last birds seen were a flock of White-rumped Swiftlets overhead.

Greg Bortolussi

Project Counts

Annual NQ Crane Count 2008

Over 150 members and friends of BANQ surveyed cranes on 4th October, from Townsville/Giru, north through Ingham right up to Lakeland Downs and west across the Atherton Tableland to Mt Garnet. Others helped beforehand by checking sites, talking with landowners, recruiting and training teams. –

Many results were messaged through on the night to the Tallyroom Dinner at Malanda Hotel, where Atherton Tablelands counters gathered to recover and socialise. One Tumoulin site had 723 cranes landing, including 100 Sarus Cranes. Unusually high numbers of Sarus were also recorded in other sites on the drier margins of the Tableland, including a new roost mid-stream in the Walsh River. Mareeba Wetlands recorded 405 cranes including 156 Sarus, 134 Brolgas and 115 unidentified, as a successful conclusion to the Cairns Highlands Bird Week.

However, long-term renowned roost Bromfield Swamp near Malanda had unusually low numbers, under 450. Many sites reported that cranes seemed “edgy” which may signify the migration had already begun. However Townsville/Giru had over 420 Brolgas, the highest total since October counts began in 1997. Other significant Brolga totals came from Ingham and Innot Hot Springs. On the downside, Ingham reported mega-numbers of sandflies and mosquitoes and two Tableland teams were ready to declare fishing boats a pest species.

In all, a successful and enjoyable Crane Count, with valuable results for BANQ IBA monitoring and other projects. Thank you all! And thanks also, for helping BANQ implement the new safety forms and procedures.

Next year’s count: Saturday 3rd October 2009.

Elinor Scambler



Annual Torresian Imperial-Pigeon Count and Christmas Party

22 November 2008 at Mission Beach — On a hot and humid afternoon, even by Mission Beach standards, a group of 21 dedicated BANQ members and loyal friends gathered in Mission Beach to be briefed by Jo Wieneke on where they would be counting. Numbers were sufficient to monitor sites at Garners Beach, Bingil Bay, Clump Point, Wongaling Beach and South Mission Beach. As we finished the briefing and were all preparing to head to our respective sites, we were rewarded by a flyover at close range of 2 female Great Frigatebirds. For many of us, a “lifer” to begin the count was a good omen. As the counting began at 4pm, a welcome sea breeze kept us comfortable and the steady flow of birds kept us on our toes. Interestingly, the extremes of the weather seemed to keep the number of other species down. The final count for the day was 2352 Torresian Imperial-Pigeons heading out to an island to roost for the night.

After checking back with Jo, we all went to prepare ourselves for the dinner at the Mission Beach Resort. An even greater number of supporters turned out for our final event of the year—Christmas Dinner. The buffet presented plenty of choice to show off the eating talents of the group, with the greatest flair coming in the combinations created for the desert.

It was a very successful day, made all the better by the company of people with shared interests. Thank you to all those of you who made the effort to join us. A special thanks to Jo Wieneke, who organised the count and all the paperwork that goes with it.

Ivor Preston



Annual Black-throated Finch Count

The annual waterhole count was held over the weekend 18 and 19 October. The count involved 10 different sites, 20 different waterholes or dams and more than 40 watchers. We all had to be on site and ready to start at 6am each morning. Although the results are not available, the numbers so far show that some core waterholes did not record a single bird. Other sites had between 30 and 50 birds. General agreement that the date was too early, with cooler morning temperatures and different rainfall patterns. A full review will be done in New Year 09. There is still so much to learn about these beautiful finches. Once again thanks to all those dedicated counters who braved the early morning to help make this yet another successful count. Special thanks to Rosemary Payet, for her tireless efforts in coordinating this count.

Ivor Preston



Diary of a Trip to Alaska

Part 2

Adapted from several Bird of the Week emails by Ian Montgomery
<http://www.birdway.com.au>

8th July 2008

I finished the last bird of the week with the note "must fly" as I was waiting in Anchorage airport to board my flight to St Paul Island in the west of Alaska. That comment proved unfortunate as, many hours later, the flight was cancelled owing to poor weather in St Paul and I had to cool my heels in Anchorage and cope with much uncertainty for 24 hours before getting on another flight.

St Paul is known for its fur seals, nesting seabirds and Russian Orthodox church and proved to be well worth the wait. Predominant among the seabirds were 8 species of Auks - the northern hemisphere's answer to the (unrelated) Penguins - and, in addition to Puffins, there were 2 species of Murre ("Guillemots" in Europe), 3 species of Auklet and a Murrelet.

If, like me, you were brought up in Europe, you probably thought of the Puffin as The Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*). In fact there are 3 species of Puffin and these are the other two: the Tufted Puffin (*F. cirrhata*) with the black body above and the Horned Puffin (*F. corniculata*) below. I assumed that the name Horned had something to do with its horny bill, but it isn't. In breeding plumage, the birds acquire eye make-up in the form of small fleshy vertical horns.



Horned Puffin (Fratercula corniculata)

St Paul Island, Alaska, USA, 26 June 2008

C68470 © Ian Montgomery birdway.com.au



Tufted Puffin (Fratercula cirrhata)

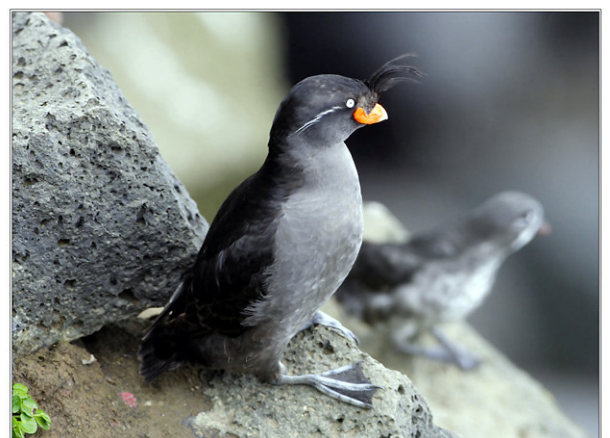
St Paul Island, Alaska, USA, 26 June 2008

C68483 © Ian Montgomery birdway.com.au

Of the 3 Auklets, the one that took my fancy, and the least common, was the Crested Auklet. I expect frivolous plumage in tropical birds like Birds of Paradise, but to find it in a seabird on an icy, rocky cliff in a tundra-covered island in the middle of the Bering Sea was delightfully bizarre. Crested Auklets are about 23cm/9.5in long and have the long crest and white plumes only in the breeding season. The nest only on the islands west of Alaska and spend the rest of the year at sea.

I had a wonderful three days on St Paul. I had intended to rent a vehicle and find my own way around as I had done in Barrow, but the local birding tour operators www.alaskabirding.com were so good that I threw in my lot in with them. They teamed me up with two American bird photographers and we did three flexible, 3-hour outings per day in a 4WD, led by one of the 3 guides, all of whom were excellent birders. The morning and afternoon outings ended up at the local seafood canning factory for lunch and dinner in the canteen, where the food was great. The hotel, the King Eider, was attached to the small airport.

Anyway, I'm back home in North Queensland now after a grand adventure in Alaska. It is lovely to be home, particularly after the awfulness of modern air travel - endless security, packed planes, cancelled flights, baggage restrictions and excess baggage charges!



Crested Auklet (Puffinus cristatus)

St Paul Island, Alaska, USA, 26 June 2008

C68411 © Ian Montgomery birdway.com.au

Interesting Sightings



For more interesting sightings lists go to
Birdline North Queensland www.eremaea.com



Species	Date	Obs.	Site	Comments
*Black-chinned H'eater	3.9.08	K&LF	Geraghty Park Julatten	Unusual here
*Lewin's Rail	7.9.08	SB	Hastie's Swamp	Rarely seen in the north
Latham's Snipe	7.9.08	IB	T'ville Common	2 birds
*Blue-faced Parrot Finch	8.9.08	SB	Rex Highway	Flock of about 30 birds
Yellow Oriole	11.9.08	TG	Bush Garden T'ville	Regular summer visitor?
*Little Kingfisher	11.9.08	KD&IP	Rowes Bay mangroves	Unusual visitor
*Little Kingfisher	11.9.08	GB	Yorkey's Knob	Golf course pond
* White-eared Monarch	14.9.08	EP	Townsville Common	Scarce winter migrant
Orange-footed Scrubfowl	16.9.08	A Ap	Queens's Garden T'ville	Unusual here
Square-tailed Kite	16.9.08	P&JM	Shaw's Rd n of T'ville	Unusual
White-winged Chough	19.10.08	TG	SSW of T'ville	Breeding
*Tooth-billed Bowerbird	20.9.08	DR	MacAllister Rnge N of Kuranda	'Bower' at 423m lowest record for this species
*Spotted Nightjar	22.9.08	TA	Tyto Wetlands	Unusual here
*Yellow White-eye	25.9.08	JW	Giru boat ramp	Small flock in mangroves
* White-bellied Sea-Eagle	28.09.08	GB	Bromfield Swamp	Few records from here
* White-thr. Needletail	28.09.08	MC	Redden Is. Cairns	First for season
Red-footed Booby	1.10.08	JW	Townsville Strand	To carer but did not survive.
Long-billed Corella	4.10.08	BH	32 km W of Woodstock	Aviary escapees spreading
*Little Bittern	9.10.08	TA	Tyto Wetlands	Hard to find resident
*Red-necked Avocet	10.10.08	DC	Mareeba Wetlands	1 bird – unusual here
Painted Button-quail	12.10.08	EK&BS	Paluma	unusual
Crested Shrike-tit	15.10.08	MN	Speerwah	First sighting here
*Black-naped Tern	16.10.08	GB	Cairns No2 Wharf	Unusual coastal record
*Pied Oystercatcher	17.10.08	JS	Alva Beach	White with brown patches
*Cicadabird	18.10.08	EP	T'ville Common	Uncommon
*Banded Honeyeater	18.10.08	EP	T'ville Common	Rare here
*Black-faced Monarch	19.10.08	GB	Holloways Beach	+young, early breeding record
*Banded Honeyeater	21.10.08	C&LE	Laroona	x15 At edge of range
*Singing Honeyeater	21.10.08	C&LE	Laroona	x5 At edge of range
Fernwren	22.10.08	C&LE	Birthday Crk Paluma	Unusual here
*Bush-hen	23.10.08	A Ar	Lake Morris	2 birds
Shining Flycatchers	25.10.08	TG	Oonoomba Mangroves	Pair - uncommon
*White-winged Black Terns	31.10.08	L&CE	Blakey's Crossing T'vl	Flock of 20
*Painted Button-quail	1.11.08	TG	Bush Garden T'ville	Rare here
*White-thr. Needletail	6.11.08	TA	Tyto Wetlands	2 birds flying S
Banded Honeyeater	7.11.08	BH	32km SSW of T'ville	Another vagrant
Beach Stone-curlew	7.11.08	PF	Cairns Esp – N end	High tide
*Black-breasted Buzzard	7.11.08	AF/JW	Magnetic Island	1 bird seen on W side of Is
*Buff-br. Paradise K/f	9.11.08	AW	Mission Beach	First record for season
*Dusky Woodswallow	9.11.08	C&LE	Grandis forest Paluma	Unusual here
*Black-breasted Buzzard	9.11.08	KD et al	Lake Ross	Seen from boat cruise
Banded Honeyeater	11.11.08	JR	Tinaroo Creek	x6 - unusual on Tableland
Painted Snipe	15.11.08	AS	Cluden	1 female – few sightings
*Broad-billed Sandpiper	20.11.08	AAr	Cairns Esplanade	2 birds
*Wandering Tattler	20.11.08	JW	Nth Brook Island	Foraging on rocky shore
Chowchilla	21.11.08	JW	Murray Falls	Less common at low alt.
Buff-br Paradise K/f	21.11.08	JW	Murray Falls	Heard towards lookout.
*Great Frigatebird	22.11.08	GB et al	Wongaling Beach	2 females
Wandering Tattler	27.11.08	BH	Townsville Breakwater	
*Crimson Chat	29.11.08	EP	Townsville Common	1 female
*Oriental Cuckoo	30.11.08	EP	Townsville Common	First of season here

Interesting sightings

The summer migrants have arrived – too many reports to put them all in. Of note are the more than usual reports of Banded Honeyeaters.

Thanks to everyone for sending in these and other sightings. Please check with observers before quoting any of these sightings. AAP Alexandra Appleman; AAR- Adam Arnold; AS – Annette Sutton; AW – Adrian Walker; BS – Beth Snewin; BH – Bill Holmes; C&LE – Chris & Len Ezzy; DC – David (Chook) Crawford; DR – Del Richards; EK – Elna Kerswell; EP – Ed Pierce; GB-Greg Bortolussi; IB- Ian Boyd; JR – Jim Ross; JS – John Stewart; JW – Jo Wieneke; K&L Fisher – Keith and Lindsay Fisher; KD&IP- Karen Doyle & Ivor Preston; MC – Martin Cachard; MN – Mark Newman; P&JM – Pat and Jphn Mant; SB – Simon Blanchflower; TA – Tony Ashton; TG – Tony Grice

Birds with an asterisk* are from **Birdline North Queensland** www.eremaea.com. Many thanks to **John Seale** whose www.cairns.blogspot.com and **TBOCA's Drongo** which provided many of the others.

Thanks

Surplus bird journals / magazines need a home:

Sunbird (Birds Queensland/QOSI journal): 1991 (Vol 21 No 1) to (Vol 26 No 4), plus June 2008 (Vol 38 No 1). AND *Interpretive Birding Bulletin* – magazine: Vol 1 No 1 (1997) to Vol 5 No 6 (2004).

Email Elinor:

cranesnorth@austarnet.com.au



Calling for Expressions of Interest for Editor of

ConTact Call

If you are interested or would like to know more,
please contact Karen Doyle, or

The Secretary—Ivor Preston:
banq@birdsaustralia.com.au



Committee Members wish everyone a Merry Christmas

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Karen Doyle (Townsville) Elna Kerswell (Townsville)
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Graham Harrington (Malanda)

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NOTICE BOARD



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2009

24th to 26th—Australia Day weekend at Kingfisher Park, Julatten see page 3



February 2009

Shorebirds 2020 count—refer to the website for the date

14th/15th - Cardwell. Committee meeting and birdwatching outing

March 2009

21st—Cairns Esplanade. Wave the Waders Goodbye
Meet 3.30pm at viewing area opposite RSL

April 2009

10th to 13th Mt Surprise. Easter Campout

May 2009

2nd to 4th Paluma. AGM

23rd/24th—Pajingo Station (75km S of Charters Towers). Joint Campout with TRBOC

June 2009

20th—Southern Tablelands. field day

October 2009

3rd—Annual Crane Count

Black-throated Finch Count

November 2009

Annual Torresian Imperial-Pigeon Count and Christmas Party



FROM THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your contributions throughout 2008.
Merry Christmas to you all
happy birding and looking forward to receiving your contributions to *Contact Call* in 2009.

March newsletter deadline ~ 22 February 2009

Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc to:

The Editor — banq@birdsaustralia.com.au

or c/- The Secretary,

PO Box 37, Belgian Gardens Qld 4810

Visit Birds Australia website

www.birdsaustralia.com.au for up to date information on national and other regional events.



NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome our new members:

Neil Bruce	CURRAJONG
Beverley Parker	SMITHFIELD
Sheryll Oliver	ATHERTON
Anne Peever	EAST BARRON
Patrick Peever	EAST BARRON
Clayton Smith	MACHANS BEACH

If you have any friends or relatives who are interested in birds then please encourage them to join or why not buy them a membership for their birthday!

For current information specific to North Queensland visit the BANQ website ~

www.birdsaustralianq.org.

Please note that additional events may be arranged post publication.



Thank you ...

Birds Australia North Queensland is very grateful for the support of the **Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr MP**, the Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth, for printing *Contact Call*.

Birds Australia Membership

Membership includes the national organisation plus membership of our regional group,

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Subscriptions:

\$75 Single \$55 Single Concession

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Members receive four issues of the full-colour bird magazine *Wingspan* and four issues of the BANQ newsletter *Contact Call*.

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You can also join directly through our web site:

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Check out the regional website for local information and events.

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