

Birding in Cairns

A few days around Cairns can be very rewarding with a range of habitats and a good variety of birds. Here's a few places to visit...

1 Cairns Foreshore

Cairns Foreshore is renowned worldwide as an easy place to observe shorebirds in comfort, at close range. Depending on the time of year you may see 30-40 species (Sept-May for migrants). Check out tide times, viewing is best on an incoming tide in the evening. Look in the mangroves at the N end of the Esplanade for Collared Kingfisher, Mangrove Robin, Shining Flycatcher and Black Butcherbird.

2 Flecker Botanic Gardens & Centenary Lakes

Centenary Lakes consists of two lakes, one freshwater, the other saltwater, alongside Greenslopes Street, North Cairns. Several walks take you around the lakes and a boardwalk traverses a lowland swamp forest to the botanic gardens along Collins Avenue. The boardwalk is best walked in the very late afternoon or at dawn for a chance to see Red-necked Crake, several pairs live here. Also Noisy Pitta is a possibility. The backwaters of the freshwater lake are worth investigating for Black Bittern and Little Kingfisher. Double-eyed Fig-Parrots and Brown-backed Honeyeaters also occur here in the trees around the lake. The gardens are good for Yellow Oriole, Black Butcherbird and Olive-backed Sunbird.

Maps, self guided botanic walk and bird list available from the gardens information office, next to the restaurant.

3 Mt Whitfield Conservation Park

Adjacent to the botanic gardens, off Collins Avenue, is Mt. Whitfield Conservation Park. There are two walks: the Red Arrow loop and the longer Blue Arrow, which take you up onto the Mt. Whitfield Range. Lookouts along the way give great views back to the city and across the airport to the coast. The birds you may see include the Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Noisy Pitta, Grey Whistler and Yellow Oriole. From November to March Buff-breasted Paradise-fishers nest in the termite mounds along the hills.

4 Pioneer Cemetery

Bush Stone-curlews often rest up during the day amongst the headstones. Turn off the Captain Cook Highway into James Street (Shell garage). Head west, then turn north into Little Street and park in Arthur Street. Woodland west of the cemetery is worth checking for summer migrants, such as Oriental Cuckoo.

5 Jack Barnes Bicentennial Mangrove Boardwalk

This boardwalk is situated along Airport Avenue, the access road to Cairns International Airport. An information brochure about the boardwalk is available from Cairns Regional Council. There is a car park on the right hand side as you approach the Airport. Two walks start from here, the northern one traverses low mangroves via a 700m loop to Middle Creek, with a canopy tower and viewing platform. The southern route is 600m through a tall mangrove forest. The southern walk is more open and it's easier to see such species as Collared Kingfisher and Shining Flycatcher. Mangrove Robins can sometimes be found near the end. Look out for Lovely Fairy-wrens in the smaller dense species of mangroves. Both walks have interpretive signage. Don't forget the insect repellent!

6 Redden Island

In Machans Beach N of Cairns Airport, on the Barron River, this 68ha island is accessed by a low level bridge over Redden Creek, on Marshall St. Follow the road over the bridge and park at the end of Cinderella St, before the amenities block. Walk through the gate: the paths take you through woodland and mangroves. BANQ surveys have identified 155 species, including Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, sometimes seen in the open woodland, and Double-Eyed Fig-Parrots. Great-billed Herons may be in mangroves on Redden Creek by the bridge. Returning to your car continue along the road to the Barron River mouth, good for shorebirds - make sure it's not a high tide. Many species have been recorded here including rare vagrants such as Ruff and Double-banded Plover.

7 Yorkeys Knob - Golf Course Lagoon

Wattle Street, where this lagoon is situated, forms part of the Half Moon Bay Golf Course. Currently it is home to several pairs of Darter who have nested here along with Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants. Usually several pairs of Green Pygmy-geese can be found and Crimson Fiches are often in the grasses surrounding the lagoon. Occasionally Little Kingfisher and Black Bittern make the lagoon home. Other good birds to have turned up here are Pied Heron and Yellow Wagtail. At the end of Wattle Street there is a path on the left, between the Golf Course and the mangroves, follow around and check out the tidal flats on the left for both Beach and Bush Stone-curlew and other shorebird species. Further along in the mangroves Great-billed Heron has been recorded.

8 Lake Morris, Copperlode Dam

Situated in the Isley Hills behind Cairns. Turn off the Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road and take the scenic 16km road, stopping at lookouts to bird the surrounding bush. The Kiosk at the end of the road overlooks the dam. From here walk down to and across the dam wall where the road climbs steeply and goes into rainforest. Southern Cassowary has been seen here as well as Pied Monarch and Yellow-breasted Boatbill. BANQ surveys have identified a total of 120 species in this area. Finish the visit at the kiosk with coffee and cake!

9 Southern Treatment Works - Woree

Situated in Kate Street off the Portsmouth Connector Road. No access, but can be viewed from the street. Pied Herons and Black-necked Storks are often seen here. Weekends are usually better as there is no disturbance from the workers.

WHO ARE WE?

Birds Australia North Queensland (BANQ) is a regional group of the national organisation Birds Australia (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, RAOU), formed in 1901 - the oldest Australian society concerned with national and international bird study and conservation.

The BANQ area covers Queensland from Ayr north to the Torres Strait Islands and west to the Northern Territory border. Area representatives are based in Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Mossman/ Daintree, and Cape York.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter *Contact Call* and enjoy Australia's best bird magazine *Wingspan*. Regular field trips and campouts cater for all levels of expertise from beginner to professional and emphasise fun as well as worthwhile projects.

'Birding with a purpose'

Have a real impact on the conservation of our wild birds and their habitats. Contact us ...

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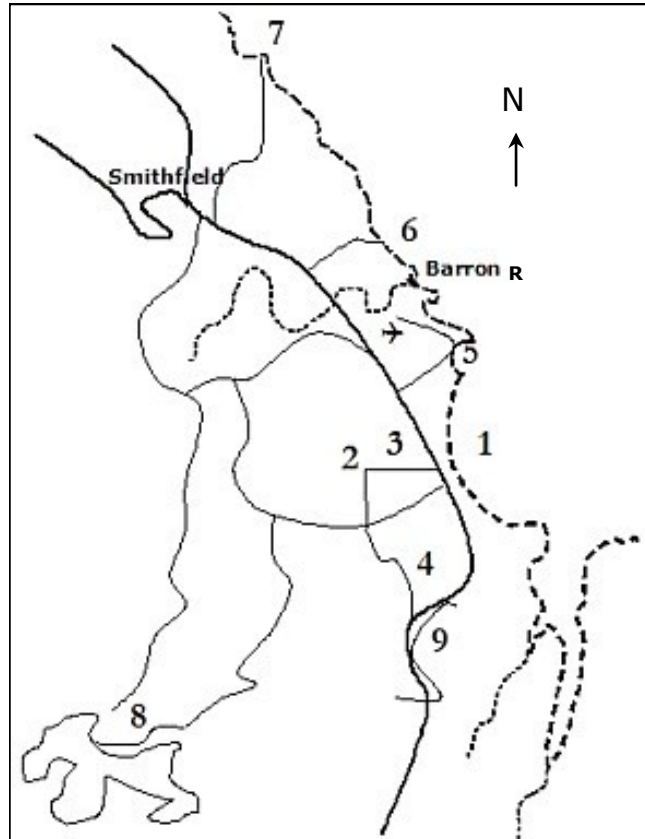
For more on birds, birding, bird lists and bird conservation in Cairns and North Queensland, visit our website www.birdsaustralianq.org/

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Cairns Birding Map



- 1 Cairns Foreshore (BANQ Bird Lists No. 7 & 11)
- 2 Flecker Botanic Gardens & Centenary Lakes
- 3 Mt Whitfield Conservation Park
- 4 Pioneer Cemetery
- 5 Jack Barnes Bicentennial Mangrove Boardwalk
- 6 Redden Island (BANQ Bird List No.2)
- 7 Yorkeys Knob - Golf Club Lagoon (Bird List No.8)
- 8 Lake Morris, Copperlode Dam (Bird List No. 12)
- 9 Southern Treatment Works - Woree

BIRDING in CAIRNS

Far North Queensland

**Birds Australia
North Queensland**

**Birding Information
and Species List**

No 13



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