

# Cairns Esplanade Bird Species

Magpie Goose	R	Straw-necked Ibis	C
Wandering Whistling-Duck	R	Royal Spoonbill	C
Black Swan	R	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	R
Radjah Shelduck	R	Eastern Osprey	C
Australian Wood Duck	R	Black-shouldered Kite	R
Pink-eared Duck	R	Square-tailed Kite	R
Green Pygmy-goose	R	Pacific Baza	R
Grey Teal	R	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	U
Pacific Black Duck	R	Whistling Kite	U
Hardhead	R	Brahminy Kite	C
Red-tailed Tropicbird	R	Black Kite	U
Rock Dove	C	Brown Goshawk	R
Spotted Dove	C	Collared Sparrowhawk	R
Crested Pigeon	R	Grey Goshawk	R
Peaceful Dove	C	Swamp Harrier	R
Bar-shouldered Dove	C	Little Eagle	R
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	R	Nankeen Kestrel	R
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	R	Brown Falcon	R
Superb Fruit-Dove	R	Australian Hobby	R
Pied Imperial-Pigeon	C,Mn	Peregrine Falcon	U
Topknot Pigeon	R	Red-necked Crake	R
Tawny Frogmouth	R	Buff-banded Rail	U
Papuan Frogmouth	R	Australian Bustard	R
Australian Swiftlet	C	Bush Stone-curlew	C
White-throated Needletail	R,Mn	Beach Stone-curlew	U
Fork-tailed Swift	R,Mn	Australian Pied Oystercatcher	C
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	R	Black-winged Stilt	R
Lesser Frigatebird	R	Red-necked Avocet	R
Great Frigatebird	R	Pacific Golden Plover	C,Mn
Brown Booby	R	Grey Plover	R,Mn
Australasian Darter	U	Red-capped Plover	C
Little Pied Cormorant	R	Double-banded Plover	R,MNZ
Great Cormorant	R	Lesser Sand Plover	C,Mn
Little Black Cormorant	R	Greater Sand Plover	C,Mn
Pied Cormorant	R	Oriental Plover	R,Mn
Australian Pelican	C	Black-fronted Dotterel	C
Black-necked Stork	U	Red-kneed Dotterel	R
White-necked Heron	R	Masked Lapwing	C
Eastern Great Egret	C	Latham's Snipe	R,Mn
Intermediate Egret	C	Black-tailed Godwit	C,Mn
Great-billed Heron	R	Bar-tailed Godwit	C,Mn
Cattle Egret	R	Little Curlew	R,Mn
Striated Heron	C	Whimbrel	C
Pied Heron	R	Eastern Curlew	C
White-faced Heron	C	Terek Sandpiper	C,Mn
Little Egret	C	Common Sandpiper	R,Mn
Eastern Reef Egret	U	Grey-tailed Tattler	C,Mn
Nankeen Night-Heron	U	Wandering Tattler	R
Glossy Ibis	R	Common Greenshank	C,Mn
Australian White Ibis	C	Marsh Sandpiper	U,Mn

Common Redshank	V	Barking Owl	R
Wood Sandpiper	R,Mn	Eastern Barn Owl	R
Ruddy Turnstone	R,Mn	Little Kingfisher	R
Asian Dowitcher	R,Mn	Laughing Kookaburra	R
Great Knot	C,Mn	Blue-winged Kookaburra	R
Red Knot	U,Mn	Forest Kingfisher	R
Sanderling	R,Mn	Sacred Kingfisher	C
Little Stint	V	Collared Kingfisher	C
Red-necked Stint	C,Mn	Rainbow Bee-eater	C
Long-toed Stint	V	Dollarbird	R,Mn
Pectoral Sandpiper	R,Mn	Red-backed Fairy-wren	R
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	C,Mn	Lovely Fairy-wren	R
Dunlin	V	Large-billed Gerygone	U
Curlew Sandpiper	C,Mn	Fairy Gerygone	R
Broad-billed Sandpiper	U,Mn	Striated Pardalote	R
Ruff	V	Yellow-spotted Honeyeater	U
Australian Pratincole	R,Mn	Graceful Honeyeater	U
Common Noddy	R	Varied Honeyeater	C
Black Noddy	R	Yellow Honeyeater	C
Sooty Tern	R	Brown-backed Honeyeater	R
Little Tern	C,Mn	Dusky Honeyeater	U
Fairy Tern	R	Brown Honeyeater	C
Gull-billed Tern	C	White-throated Honeyeater	R
Caspian Tern	C,Mw	Blue-faced Honeyeater	R
Whiskered Tern	U	Helmeted Friarbird	C
White-winged Black Tern	R	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	R
Roseate Tern	R	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	C
White-fronted Tern	R	Cicadabird	U,h
Black-naped Tern	R	Varied Triller	U
Common Tern	U	Golden Whistler	R
Lesser Crested Tern	U	Grey Whistler	R
Crested Tern	C	Little Shrike-thrush	R
Kelp Gull	V	Australasian Figbird	C
Laughing Gull	V	Yellow Oriole	U
Franklin's Gull	V	White-breasted Woodswallow	C
Silver Gull	C	Black Butcherbird	U
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	U	Spangled Drongo	U
Rainbow Lorikeet	C	Rufous Fantail	R
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	C	Grey Fantail	R
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot	C	Willie Wagtail	C
Red-winged Parrot	R	Leaden Flycatcher	U
Pheasant Coucal	R	Satin Flycatcher	R
Eastern Koel	U,Mn,h	Shining Flycatcher	C
Channel-billed Cuckoo	U,Mn	Spectacled Monarch	R
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	R	Magpie-lark	C
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	C	Yellow-breasted Boatbill	R
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	R	Mangrove Robin	C
Brush Cuckoo	R,h	Horsfield's Bushlark	R
Oriental Cuckoo	R,Mn	Golden-headed Cisticola	R
Rufous Owl	R	Australian Reed-Warbler	R

Brown Songlark	R	Nutmeg Mannikin	C
Silvereye	R	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	R
Barn Swallow	V	House Sparrow	C
Welcome Swallow	C	Australasian Pipit	R
Fairy Martin	R	Eastern Yellow Wagtail	V
Tree Martin	R		
Metallic Starling	C		
Common Myna	C	216 species	
Mistletoebird	U		
Olive-backed Sunbird	C		
Red-browed Finch	R		

LIST ANNOTATIONS	
<b>C=Common</b>	<b>Likely to be recorded on most visits</b>
<b>U=Uncommon</b>	<b>Recorded regularly but not every visit</b>
<b>R=Rare</b>	<b>Recorded infrequently</b>
<b>V=Vagrant</b>	<b>Does not usually occur in Australia</b>
<b>h=More often heard than seen</b>	
<b>Mn=Migrant from the North (approx Oct-Mar)</b>	
<b>Mw=Migrant from the West (approx May-Sep)</b>	
<b>MNZ=New Zealand Migrant (approx May-Sep)</b>	
<b>Definition:</b> The C/U/R annotations in this list give an indication of how easy or difficult it might be to find a species. They indicate the likelihood that an experienced birder might record the species, during a day bird-watching, at the right time of year, in the appropriate habitat.	

*See also-*  
BANQ Brochure no.11  
Migratory Shorebirds of the Cairns Esplanade

Information compiled from Birds Australia Atlas  
Reports with additional information from John Seale  
and John Crowhurst

# 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.

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Updated July 2010

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# INFORMATION

The *Cairns Esplanade*, with its boardwalk and viewing platforms, is only minutes from the CBD. It offers an easy vantage point to view the varied bird life including significant numbers of migratory waders (shorebirds) as well as Australasian migrants, nomads, residents and vagrants. This list covers birds that have been found on the mud flats as well as adjacent mangroves and gardens.

Identifying waders can be a challenge but the Cairns foreshore offers easy close-up viewing, among the best in the world. From August to March-April over 20 species of long distance migrant can be seen at once, probing in the mud for the valuable food source. For these migrants, Cairns is a key refuelling stop for them to build up fat reserves for the long journey back to breeding grounds in Alaska, Siberia and N China. Peak numbers are from Aug-Dec (returning breeders and young) and the north-bound migration peak is in Mar-April. Small numbers stay over summer and some stay all year, mainly first and second year birds. Best views on the Cairns mudflats are on an incoming tide in the evening (tide tables are available at tourist outlets).

Resident waders also feed along the foreshore, sometimes including the uncommon Beach Stone-curlew. Nomads include egrets, terns and the Australian Pelican. Land-based migrants, including Pied Imperial-Pigeons, arrive from New Guinea in late August and stay to breed until March-April.

Rare vagrants occasionally arrive on the Esplanade, bringing a rush of birdwatchers from all over Australia. These have included Laughing Gull, Franklin's Gull, Dunlin, Common Redshank and Long-toed Stint. Due to the large number of birders who have visited the Esplanade over the years there are also many records of one off sightings of ducks etc that are not normally expected. Other pelagic species are sometimes brought in by cyclones.

# CAIRNS ESPLANADE

**Far North Queensland**

**Birds Australia  
North Queensland**

**Birding Information  
and Species List**

**No 7**



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