

# The Drongo

Number 139 August 2015



*Greg Bortolussi*

The  
Reluctant  
Booby

Owls

Canberra



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I represented the branch at Network Forum in Melbourne in May. The forum gives all branches and special interest groups the opportunity to meet face-to-face with each other as well as the Board and staff of BirdLife Australia. It is a good chance to find out what other branches are doing and let them all know what we have achieved in the last year. This year, there were two workshops on Grant Writing and Media Training. There was a lot of discussion about Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in Australia (IBA) and what each branch can do to support them.

By now, you will all be aware that Dr Golo Maurer will be situated in Northern Queensland. Golo is in the process of settling his family into the north – living in the Yungaburra area and working out of an office in Atherton. Golo is the IBA Coordinator and Conservation Partnerships Manager. Golo will be visiting Townsville in the next few months. He will be speaking at the club meeting and we plan to have a social gathering so that members and other conservation orientated groups will have the opportunity to meet Golo and discuss his role.

The committee decided it was time to break open the piggy bank – or the term deposit – and spend some of our hard earned money. BirdLife Townsville has donated a show case to the Museum of Tropical Queensland to be used for displaying the birds prepared by the volunteer taxidermists. Now there will be somewhere for all their hard work to be fully appreciated. As well as making these specimens available for the museum visitors to see, it will provide a focal point for publicizing the club. Make sure you check out the birds next time you are in the museum.

We will soon have a couple of new BirdLife Townsville signs for use at community events and education programs in schools. As soon as they are available, they will be displayed at a club meeting.

Following feedback from leaders and members (who are all prospective leaders) the committee has revisited the procedure for the leader's pack. Details will be circulated shortly via email.

Following our visit to Bushland Beach in March the committee forwarded photographs of unleashed dogs on the beach to the Townsville City Council. The good news is that the Council has taken immediate action to track the owners of the dogs in question and to enforce the by-laws in regard to dogs in a public place. Signs similar to those that can be seen at Toomulla Beach will be erected over the next few months.

Ian Boyd will now be coordinating monthly surveys at Wongaloo. If you are interested in visiting this wonderful wetland and helping out with these important surveys, make sure you register your interest with Ian at [ninox45@bigpond.com](mailto:ninox45@bigpond.com).

*Janet Robino*

### **YOUR COMMITTEE**

President: Janet Robino

Secretary: Wal Threlfall

Treasurer: Nina Doyle

Conservation Officer: Garrie Douglas

Education Officer: Norm Rains

Safety Officer: Janet Cross

Committee : Warren Charlton

Newsletter Editor Annette Sutton [amsgreat@gmail.com](mailto:amsgreat@gmail.com)

## THE RELUCTANT BOOBY

*It started as an evening attending the Night Markets with the family...and ended with a close encounter with Bob.*

Bob is a Brown Booby and, when first seen, was sitting quietly on a rock, just behind the dugong sculpture near the fishing pier. A little girl was trying to chase him so immediately I put on my best teacher voice and said "Please don't chase that bird. He is very special and he is sick." The child, recognising the teacher bit, asked "How do you know?" so I explained and she went off happily to inform the others in her family.



*Bob arriving for release*

With Wendy now seeking a table with the help of two year old Sofia, I stood guard and started to call for help. It is difficult when one doesn't have the Wildlife carer's number on the phone. I tried Deb Carter without success and then rang Jenny Sebba who was able to ring the wildlife carer's hotline for me and get one of them to phone me back. A few calls later I was asked if I could take the bird to the nearest vet within the next 15 mins...not possible, so the kind lady said she would try another carer. I had been standing, edging closer, for about an hour, when 'Daniel' and his wife rang for say they were on their way. I was getting concerned that I might have to catch 'Bob' myself and so had just rung Janet Cross, who lived nearby. Janet came straight away, armed with a box and a towel and arrived just as Daniel was dropped off by his wife...no parks at all by this time.

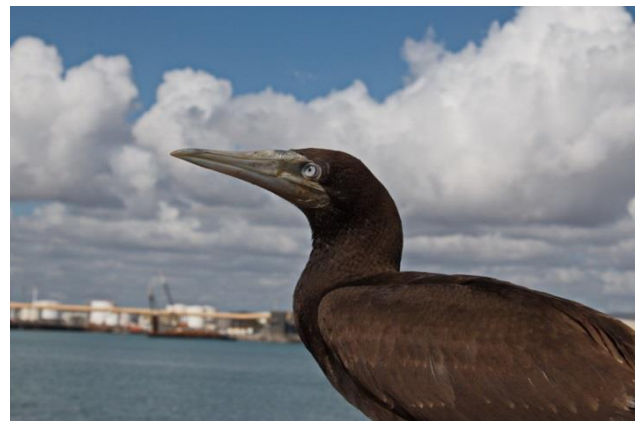
We all stood trying to work out just what to do. "How does this sound?" asked Daniel, "I will wait till he's not looking (a wise plan I thought), then catch him in the net and you grab him with the towel". With the plan hatched, we all tried to look totally innocent until the Booby again looked out to sea. The net came down and I sprang into action, covering his face then

putting my hands under to help hold his body till the net was removed and he could be lifted into the waiting box.

Now, 'Bob' didn't think much of his new accommodation and pecked at the box so Janet draped her towel across one end and I took off my jumper and covered the other. Now in the dark, 'Bob' settled down and was carried by Daniel and I to the road side to await collection. Daniel's wife had found a park at Jezzine Barracks, then started to walk back to the Pier to help. Advised of the successful capture, she turned around and walked back to get the car and drive around the block to collect Daniel and "Boxed Bob".

They headed to the JCU vet. I rang Deb to inform her they were on their way, having earlier spoken to her and asked if she would care for "Bob". Deb rang the vet to advise them the bird was on its way and that she had a permit to care for sea birds and was happy to pick him up when they had examined him. Everything set.

An hour or so later and Bob was with Deb with no clear cause of his stranding. Deb said that the bird would certainly have died during the night as he was very underweight and cold. Deb's neighbour was called to help hold the unwilling patient so that subcutaneous fluids could be administered...neighbour then posted to her Facebook that she had just been over to her neighbour to help her with her booby! Deb insisted she add a picture. After his rehydration Bob was tucked into the intensive care unit...it looked very like a rounded microwave and was a tight squeeze but was essential to get his temp back to 32 degrees.



*Bob contemplating freedom*

When I asked Deb if she would care for Bob, I said I would feed him. It is a lot for carers to do all the feeding, cleaning and washing and also pay for the privilege. Bob was soon eating a kilogram of W.A. whitebait a day at \$20 a kg! Deb was feeding him four times a day as she worked to get him fattened and strong enough to be released. Once Bob passed the 1000g mark, we knew he was a she. We visited 'Bob' at Deb's to see her sitting on a towel covered kitchen bench, having one of her four daily feeds. Deb had some whitebait thawed which she placed, one at a time, into a container filled with a rehydration fluid for sea birds. Bob carefully picked out each fish and down it went. She then lifted her tail and 'squirted' right across the kitchen floor. More cleaning for Deb.



Release ..mark one

On Tuesday many of us assembled at the entertainment centre at 10am and headed down to the end of the breakwater. With much anticipation we watched, cameras clicking, lifeguard on a jet ski at the ready...(in case Bob needed to be re-rescued)...Bob flapped, then stopped and looked around seeming to enjoy the attention. We all got lots of photos as Deb tried different spots...without success! "Maybe he would prefer a run off".. so down on the ground...Bob wasn't even keen to get onto the ground thank you. "Maybe closer to the sea"...Down to the rocks near the lapping waves they went. Bob looked at the water and promptly hopped and flapped her way from rock to rock closer to the birders and away from the sea then sat and preened.

'After sometime it was declared a non-event and everyone, including Bob, packed it in. Deb and Bob made a second stop at Jezzine Barracks on the way home to see if she liked the higher elevation.....she didn't!



*Bob on the breakwater*

Deb discussed the situation with her friend at "Pelican Sea Bird Rescue" and was informed that Boobies need wind to get airborne. The lifeguards have kindly agreed to let Deb know when the wind picks up on the strand and once again Deb and her Booby will attempt to part. She will tell me, and I will let you know, although there may not be much warning. At this stage the venue for the separation is to be Jezzine. I do hope she goes as this is now the start of her 3rd week in care and her muscle tone will start to drop after that.



*Bob going home*

Beth Snewin

Photographs Annette Sutton

## IBARRIVED

This June BirdLife Australia has opened up the North (see picture) well in advance of the Prime Minister's White Paper on Northern Australia. The national IBA (Important Bird and Biodiversity Area) program manager, Dr Golo Maurer, and the Production Editor for Australian Field Ornithology and in-house designer, Dr Leeann Reaney, have now touched down in Cairns. While Leeann flew into FNQ, Golo took a more earthly path.



Together with BirdLife Australia Board Member, Dr Stuart Cooney, he traversed the continent by car, visiting no less than 11 IBAs: Warby-Chiltern Box Ironbark Region, Binya & Cocoparra, Central NSW Mallee, Paroo Floodplain and Currawinya, Fitzroy Floodplain & Delta, Clarke Range, Repulse Bay to Ince Bay, Paluma, Coastal Wet Tropics, Atherton Tablelands. On the side Stuart and Golo also clocked up 250 species, with the last one, the Bush Stone-curlew, found on the Cairns Esplanade after sunset.

The highlights of the seven day trip were, however, the IBA visits with some of our fantastic BirdLife Australia members and meetings with Parks staff looking after critical bird habitat. A real fact finding mission and the fact found is: The IBA program is very much alive and an inspiration to dedicated conservationists, both volunteers and professionals.

Cheers

Golo

*Because some places are richer in bird diversity than others, conserving a relatively modest network of sites can be a very cost-effective and efficient way of ensuring the survival of a large number of species.*

*These IBAs provide the BirdLife Partnership with a focus for conservation action, planning, and advocacy. IBAs are large enough to safeguard a viable population of a species, group of species, or entire avian community during at least part of its life-cycle, but are small enough to be conserved in their entirety.*

## DIPPED

Saturday 20 June 2015 and Norm and I are off to Bushland Beach to do the mid-year challenge count. We arrive earlyish in the morning with the tide out but on its way in. We gather up all the paraphernalia required to conduct the count and head off towards the Black River mouth. It looked like it was going to be hard going as there was not a lot of activity. At the river mouth we spy the usual critters such as Red-capped Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Eastern Curlews and a couple of other species of little significance. Norm however draws my attention to a few small birds on this side of the river so I promptly swing the scope around. Well what do you know, Norm has spotted some Pacific Golden Plovers, one of which was almost in full breeding plumage. Nice pick up Norm. The Plovers stayed fairly close for a little while but unfortunately Norm and I had work to do, more counting. The trek back to the start point was not what you would call awe inspiring, with only a few extra species to add to the list. Numbers may have been a little disappointing but the morning was enjoyable overall.

A week later I've grabbed my Ground Pod and camera gear and headed back to Bushland Beach in the slim chance that the Pacific Golden Plover was still hanging around and that I could get an image or two. Wasn't holding my breath but hey miracles do happen....to some people. A quick walk to the river mouth in the early afternoon sun and then a good sit and scan. Hmmm, couldn't see them anywhere. Had to content myself with whatever else was around, Red-capped Plovers, Red-necked Stints, Pied Oystercatchers, and a White-faced Heron.

So I walked up to my first subject, a Red-necked Stint, placed the Ground Pod down, fitted the camera to it and then laid down behind it. Next came the process of sliding forward in order to get closer to the Stint. Sand/mud was damp but not wet. However, all the water filled holes made the process or creeping forward a little more difficult. I should point out at this time that the tide was coming in. I had checked its vanguard before proceeding to stalk the Stint. However, time has a habit of speeding up when you are fully engaged in what you are doing.

Suffice it to say that I had a few shots in the bag but was still inching closer when I felt a dampness on the lower half of my body. Initially I imagined I had placed my knee into one of the water filled holes but when the dampness proceeded further up my thigh to my stomach I realised that my assumption was probably incorrect. I looked to my left and yep, there it was, the sea's vanguard had not only reached me but was swallowing the lower half of my body at an alarming rate. I decided to make a hasty retreat so as not to get my camera immersed. Good idea do you think?

Back on relatively dry land I found that my small bum bag, containing my phone etc, was saturated. It had slid down my belt and been sitting in the water. A quick check to confirm all was okay and then a good giggle. You have to watch that water as not only is it wet but it's silent, quick and cold.

I moved further up the beach and continued practicing my stalking technique. You may end up dirty and wet but lying around for the afternoon taking photos is not a bad way to spend your time. The images with this story were taken on the day. What do you think?

*Mark Horvath*



*Red-capped Plover*



*Pied Oystercatcher*



*Red-necked Stint*



*What I was doing when the sea swallowed me*



## MY BOWER FINAL

The Great Bowerbird that I came to consider to be 'my bowerbird' has given me a lot of pleasure over the last five years. It all started in early 2010. I would find little piles of twigs that had been the beginnings of a bower but ended up just a jumbled mess. Finally, by September 2010 he had success with a reasonably impressive bower under the lemon tree. One odd thing about this bower was that much of the 'base' decoration was lumps of dried mud.



*New bower*

In 2011, Cyclone Yasi blew the bower into a wide-spread mess over the back yard. Undeterred, my bowerbird got straight to work and built not only a new bower, but a tidier and more impressive bower. He seemed to be quite happy in that bower for a few years. The main decorations were little green plastic soldiers and silver clothes pegs.

For some unknown reason, in July 2014, he deserted this bower and built a new one in another section of the garden. This one was right beside the garden bag but this did not seem to disturb him too much. Whenever I was putting rubbish in the bag, he would sit in a nearby shrub and complain to me but as soon as I left he would get back to work making sure all was well in the bower.



*The Extension*

The significant things about this bower were that one of the main decorations was money (coins) and there were several blue bits and pieces.

Sadly, in May 2015, the bower was deserted. I'll never know if my bowerbird just decided it was time to move on or was deposed by a younger, stronger bird or died.

A new bower has since materialized on my neighbour's footpath – about 30 metres away. My

garden was still very busy as many of the treasures were re-located from the old to the new bower.

Late in June, an extension was built on this new bower. Both sides of the bower appear to have about the same amount of decoration so who knows why the extra building works were necessary.



*Prized treasures*

On 20 July I decided I needed to clear away the debris of the deserted bower in preparation for re-mulching the garden. I got two and a half buckets of gravel – most of which was stolen from my ag-drain. There was one full bucket of rubbish including broken glass, wire, screws, broken pegs, silver duct tape and an underwire from a very large bra.

The last photo shows some of my bowerbirds most prized treasures which had been buried deep in the gravel. Maybe the \$2.50 in coin could be regarded as payment for the use of the garden space!

*Janet Robino*

## Limerick

The church hall was crowded that day,

The sermon was "lay and let lay",

A Rhode Island Red

Passed the plate and then said

"We must now thank the Lord, let osprey!"

*Angela Ward*



## PLAINTIVE CRY

Why are you going to leave me? I have relatives in WA!



On the morning when we were doing our final packing for leaving on our trip to WA, a Rufous-throated Honeyeater became very attached to us - initially sitting on the pack rack as Warren tried to tie the extra spare tyres down. The rack had not been used for some time and possibly had some webs, insects on it - a perpetual feast! Then the bird perched on our shoulders, arms, head and camera - even following us into the house. I found it on my shoulder when I went upstairs to the kitchen. If it hadn't been so endearing, I would have classified it as a pest.



We were concerned it would end up shut in the house when we left. Finally, it sat on the towbar of the car and watched as we coupled up the van to the vehicle and then appropriately perched in front of the BirdLife sticker, "Give a Flying Flock - birdlife.org.au".

Pat Charlton

## COMMON GROUND?

Robert and George had been visiting the Town Common for 40 years. Early one bright Sunday morning not so long ago they came to the first wetland viewing point, where they intended to stay for a while, but found it occupied by a bunch of khaki-clad individuals sporting all sorts of optical gear. So the two chums continued to the next viewing point, set up their chairs, and commenced their happy observations. Not long after, sundry 4WDs carrying the wild bunch passed them by. It looked like a game of tag might ensue. Sure enough, as the pals moved on and arrived at the terminal car park, khaki characters were emerging from the woodland. After appropriate salutations, 'Anything about?' the boys asked. 'Just a few cormorants, oh, and a White-browed crane' was the reply. So off went Robert and George to the concrete bunker where, no sooner had they seated themselves, than an interesting bird came out of the reeds, crossed the mud to the pool's edge, then turned round and went back again.



White-browed Crane

'Buff-banded rail,' said Robert. 'Agreed' said George. The boys looked at each other but, to give them their due, neither said 'Crane my foot.' Which is just as well, because at that moment George saw from the corner of his eye a small flurry of feathers cross the pool and land on an overhanging branch. Then it was gone. 'I, um, think I just saw the crane' said George, to which one of Robert's eyebrows was raised to a surprising height. 'Crane my foot,' a phrase he had never contemplated in 60 years, was clearly crossing his mind for the second time in five minutes when, bold as brass, said crane marched past at the water's edge. The boys said 'Oo.' Left unsaid was the apology due to the nice bunch they'd met earlier.

Richard Pearson





## WINTER IN CANBERRA

Who amongst northern Queensland birders would willingly plan a winter in Canberra?

When our youngest daughter decided to present us with twin grandchildren in mid winter I was convinced it would be hopeless for birding. We had to go to help care for Oscar (21 months) while Kate went through the final few weeks of pregnancy and her husband was recovering from surgery. And of course staying a while to see the twins arrive and settled. So it was we drove from NQ to Brisbane where we swapped our Honda for a second-hand 100 series Landcruiser we had bought on-line and then on to Canberra in late June. Five weeks here has been extremely interesting and I am a convert to the joys of woodland birding in a Canberra winter. Of course, there has been the occasional day when it was crazy to venture out, except for a quick look for a bird of the day. But most days, while cold, have been very acceptable, often sunny and comfortable for walking (in a couple of layers and a beanie).

Canberra is blessed with a very extensive, if discontinuous, nature park. All the hills have been protected and remain covered with natural grasslands and wonderful woodlands. Slightly further afield there are sites like Tidbinbilla and other wet forest environments where a different suite of species occurs. In Canberra of course there is the famous Jerrabomberra wetlands although these are best in summer. And the National Botanic Gardens provide opportunities for many species to enjoy the continuous blossom.



*Spotted Pardalote*

Amongst the woodland reserves my favourite site is the Campbell Park section of the Mt Ainslie Reserve. Adjacent to a huge set of offices housing Defence Department staff, every walk I have done there has been very rewarding. Generally I walk for a while listening for calling birds and try and track down a mixed species feeding party. These amazing groups of birds can include honeyeaters, robins, thornbills, weebills, pardalotes, treecreepers, whistlers, sittellas and shrike-thrushes. Occasionally a pair of Grey Currawongs walk by or a small flock of White-winged Choughs feed their way over the ground. I have sometimes spent an hour or more with a single

feeding party and I rate this amongst my very best birding experiences.



*Gang-gang Cockatoo*

In winter, robins will sometimes form quite large flocks and feed together. Lately I have been enjoying flocks of 10-20 Flame Robins feeding through the woodlands - with perhaps 4 or 5 beautifully coloured males in view at once. With them will frequently be ground feeding thornbills (Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills), Speckled Warblers, Superb Fairy-wrens, Weebills and several species of honeyeater. Last week I was delighted to see a Rose Robin male also - being part of the feeding group. One good clue is to listen for White-throated Treecreepers calling as they are often central to the feeding party. Another stalking horse is the busy Grey Fantail who likes to move with the other species and calls continuously. The woodlands are also rich with flocks of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, fossicking on the low regrowth of eucalypts. The male Spotted Pardalotes are delightful and show very well as they feed.

We have done some short trips to neighbouring areas after particular species. We enjoyed Superb Lyrebirds calling brilliantly at Tidbinbilla Nature Refuge (on the well-named Lyrebird Trail) and have spent a day up at Wee Jasper chasing Diamond Firetail Finches (successfully). I finally found Gang-gang Cockatoos at the Australian National University campus - spending an hour or so with a feeding flock of 12. These really are beautiful birds and appropriate icons for Canberra. A day in the wet sclerophyll forests over the border south of Bungendore gave me a good view of Red-browed Treecreepers - my last of the six species in Australia.

One novel sighting has been large flocks of Satin Bowerbirds. Apparently they flock up in winter and patrol in the paddocks around Canberra. I have now seen two flocks. They are mostly green birds but the last flock had one black male with it. It was quite astonishing to see so many (10-12 in a flock). They were too skittish to photograph and in any event were on private farm lands.



Although I had not appreciated the options available in Canberra I am certainly a convert now. I thoroughly enjoy my 2-4 km walks through the different woodland reserves and the usually excellent array of species seen. Between 30-40 species is typical of a walk. Since coming to Canberra I have added a few lifers. One impressive bird was the Powerful Owl who camps near the Turner bowls club. It often is holding prey in its talons as it roosts well up in a pine tree. These can be ringtail possums or sugar gliders or different bird species. What huge birds they are, making our Rufous Owls appear much smaller. Another lifer was the Diamond Firetail and



*White-eared Honeyeater*

the third so far was the Red-browed Treecreeper. But the Rose Robin views I have had have been far superior to my previous view and that is true for quite a few species also. I have enjoyed capturing good photographs of many species while here.

Shifting to Canberra while trying to stay in the BirdADay challenge has been interesting (this is a challenge to see a new species each and every day without exception). While Canberra did give me a few new species to include, the prospects ahead are looking grim. Today is day 213 and I am still going. But with a little more time yet in Canberra it may be difficult to stay ahead. Unless the spring migration starts soon! However one consolation is that my target of 400 species in Australia for 2015 has already been exceeded so I am happy with that.

Given that we have been a little confined to the immediate Canberra surrounds, I am pleased to report that there are many positives to be found in spending a winter birding here. The local birders, who have been wonderfully helpful, say that spring in the woodlands is amazing with huge breeding events and nests throughout the reserves. Already I have been seeing early nest-building activity and there are reports of thornbills, currawongs, magpies and sittellas starting to build. The next few weeks could be outstanding. In fact for someone from northern Queensland there is an excellent array of birds we rarely see and great opportunities to get better views of other species. Strange as it may seem I am happy to commend Canberra for a winter visit. But leave your shorts home!



*Flame Robin*



*Rose Robin*



*Scarlet Robin*

Bob Murphy submitted the following:-



There is quite a lot of information about this find on the internet.

## WOODSTOCK

If you are looking for somewhere to go birding for a few hours, don't forget Woodstock.

We always turn down Gunnado Road and then head left along Buck's Road. Then there are all the side roads and up Jones Road and finally a cuppa in the park.



Crimson Chat

It has been so dry this year and this can make birding hard but sometimes it throws up a couple of unusual species. Earlier this year we came across White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, as well as Plum-headed Finches. They are usually seen a good deal further west.

The other day we saw a flash of a red rump and the next thing we knew, we had a Crimson Chat. They aren't seen around here all that often.

On our way in along Buck's Road we saw two adult Brolgas and two juveniles at the dam and there was a White-faced Heron there as well. Coming back we encountered a flock of fifteen or so budgerigars. They were wanting to land at the side of the dam but a hovering Black Kite kept them moving.



Green Tree Frog

Then there is always the chance that you will see Black-throated Finches and Squatter pigeons but we dipped on these this time. Years ago we saw Pictorella Mannikins and it is not unusual to find Diamond Doves.

Then there is always the thrill of flushing a few big green tree frogs out of the toilet.

Annette Sutton

Contributions for the next Drongo due on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2015. [amsgreat@gmail.com](mailto:amsgreat@gmail.com)



## OWL BOXES

Rufous Owls are the largest tropical nocturnal predatory birds in our region and their presence in the local environments is highly desirable in maintaining balanced ecosystems.

Their prey includes a wide range of other bird species, including water birds, as well as arboreal mammals such as fruit bats and possums. Ground dwellers such as rodents and the like are also on the Rufous Owl's menu, as are insects, especially the larger species.



Past and present Committees of BirdLife Townsville have been concerned for some years about the loss of natural nesting sites for Rufous Owls and other species in the Townsville area. Rufous Owls require tree hollows as nesting sites, as do some of their natural prey such as possums and other creatures of the night. Unfortunately the number of suitable nesting trees has been gradually depleted over time through natural events such as bushfires and cyclones and also by loss/fragmentation of habitat through encroaching urban development. There are even reported incidents of illegal felling of habitat trees in at least one area in the outer suburbs where Rufous Owls were known to breed a few years ago.

As a result of members of BirdLife Townsville's Committee attending a Funding Workshop conducted by NQ Dry Tropics in November 2014, BirdLife Townsville formed an Owl Box sub-committee and subsequently submitted an application for funds to place a total of six nesting boxes in various locations in the Townsville Area. With only one week's lead time before the closing date for the funding application we had to work quickly to complete the Application Form, provide a Budget in the required format, provide a map of the project area (thanks Google Mapping), provide a management Plan for the project, provide evidence of approval by the landholders where the nesting boxes were to be located and lastly provide evidence of insurance.

Our completed application was forwarded to BirdLife Australia for comment before submission to NQDT and we received advice from Golo Mauer of BirdLife Australia who made several valuable suggestions to enhance the application. Golo also provided contact details for Dr David Bain, Threatened Species Officer

of the NSW Department of Environment who kindly sent an article by Ed McNabb and Jim Greenwood dealing with Artificial Nest Boxes for the Powerful Owl in Victoria, published in Australian Field Ornithology 2011. Powerful Owls are larger than, but are similar to, Rufous Owls in many other respects. The Field Ornithology article was a valuable source of information on dimensions for the artificial nesting box and details of mounting the boxes to the trees in the final locations.

Our Application failed to attract funding initially, simply because it did not closely follow the funding criteria which were based on a typical Landcare Project dealing with on-ground tree planting and rehabilitation works. NQDT however thought our's was a very worthwhile project and eventually BirdLife Townsville received a total of \$3317 for the project from that source.

Arrangements were made for The Men's Shed to manufacture the boxes to a plan similar to that used for the Powerful Owl boxes in Victoria. All that is left to do is to make and fit the steel mounting brackets and this is currently under way. After that the boxes will receive a final coat of paint in preparation for mounting in their final locations. NQDT has generously made available cameras to monitor some of the boxes in their final locations. These will be required for several months if everything goes to plan and the boxes are occupied this year, either by the Rufous Owls or other species.



*Ian Boyd*

Many people have contributed to this project to date and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Laura Dunstan, Tamara Large and Kirralee Donovan from NQDT, the members of the Owl Sub Committee, Janet Robino, Wal Threlfall and Ian Boyd as well as Janet Cross and the other members of BirdLife Townsville Committee who were generous in their support of this project.

*Norm Rains Education Officer 2015*

## QUEST

Chris Ezzy	361	26/12/2012
Len Ezzy	359	24/12/2012
Marleen Acton	281	7/10/2012
Mark Horvath	264	20/09/2012
Rosemary Payet	235	22/08/2012
Janet Cross	217	4/08/2012
Annette Sutton	184	2/07/2012

## CALENDAR

### August

8<sup>th</sup> - Saturday - Committee Meeting (12.00) and General Meeting (2.00pm) Held in the Townsville City Council Sound Shell. Guest speaker Golo Maurer (Conservation Partnership Manager) from BirdLife Australia.  
 12<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday - Bush Garden Survey - Meet at end of Thompson St Mundingburra 7.00am. Leader Malcolm Calvert  
 16<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - Ross River Dam Survey.- Meet in the Dam car park 7.00am. Leader Ian Boyd  
 Friday 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> - Mungalla Campout. This includes the monthly outing on the Sunday for those who cannot attend the campout. More details closer to the date. Leader Ian Boyd.

### September

6<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - Town Common Survey.- Meet at the main gate 7.00am. Leader - Mark Horvath  
 8<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday - Photography Group Meeting - Theme is Anything Goes. Meeting place TBA 7.00pm.  
 9<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday - Wongaloo Bird Survey. Meet for 6.30 departure from the Coles Carpark at the Annandale Shopping Centre, University Drive Annandale. Bring morning tea. Car pooling encouraged.  
 12<sup>th</sup> - Saturday - Committee Meeting (12.00) and General Meeting (2.00pm) Held in the Townsville City Council Sound Shell meeting room Thuringowa. Guest Speaker TBA.  
 16<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday - Bush Garden Survey.- Meet at end of Thompson St Mundingburra 7.00am.  
 20<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - Ross River Dam Survey.- Meet in the Dam car park 7.00am.  
 27<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - Sunday Outing - Spotswood Property via Homehill- Meet for 6.30 departure from the Coles Carpark at the Annandale Shopping Centre, University Drive Annandale. This is an all-day outing bring morning tea and lunch. Car pooling encouraged.

### October

**Note - BirdLife Townsville display at the Aitkenvale and City libraries all month.**

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Monday 5<sup>th</sup> (LabourDay long weekend) - Flat Creek Station (via Georgetown) for a Finch Survey. More details closer to the date. Leader TBA.

4<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - Town Common Survey.- Meet at the main gate 6.30am. Leader Mark Horvath.  
 6<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday - Photography Group Meeting - Theme is Finches and LBJ's. Meeting place TBA 7.00pm.  
 7<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday - Wongaloo Bird Survey. Meet for 6.30 departure from the Coles Carpark at the Annandale Shopping Centre, University Drive Annandale. Bring morning tea. Car pooling encouraged.  
 10<sup>th</sup> - Saturday - Committee Meeting (12.00pm) and General Meeting (2.00pm) Held in the Townsville City Council Sound Shell meeting room Thuringowa. No guest speaker as we will have members short presentations.  
 14<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday - Bush Garden Survey. - Meet at end of Thompson St Mundingburra 6.30am. Leader Malcolm Calvert  
 Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> - Annual Black-throated Finch Survey. Leader Tomy Grice. Must register via [www.blackthroatedfinch.com](http://www.blackthroatedfinch.com) . More details closer to the date.  
 18<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - **No Ross River Dam Survey this month.**

20<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday - Barratta Creeks Survey -- Leader: Norm Rains -- 6.30 am, meet at the Alligator Creek Road house, bring morning tea and lunch.

25<sup>th</sup> - Sunday Outing - Ingham/The Orient. Meet in the Reading Cinema carpark, Thuringowa Central, for a departure at 6.30am sharp. This is an all-day outing bring morning tea and lunch. Car pooling encouraged. Leader TBA.