

# The Drongo

Number 151 August 2018



*Ray Sutton*

Moorrinya

Spotlighting

Wongaloo

Shorebirds



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Several of our members made the trip down to Alva Beach on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June for the Burdekin Shire Council's 'Year of the Reef Community Fun Day'. It was a good opportunity for BirdLife Townsville to raise awareness of the importance of birds and wetlands with the general public. Unfortunately, owing to car trouble I spent the morning waiting for the RACQ on the side of the road near Alligator Creek. Luckily, we were close enough to the arranged meeting place for Janet Cross to double back and take my passengers the rest of the way. According to Norm Rains' report, I missed out on what was a busy but enjoyable day, with the people attending showing lots of interest. A big thank you to all the members who volunteered to make it a great success.

The Birds in Schools program is slowly but surely getting off the ground. This is an important step in ensuring that the future generations will work to ensure protection of birds and their habitats. If anyone is interested in getting involved with this or any of BirdLife Townsville's other educational activities, contact Norm Rains on [contact@birdlifetownsville.org.au](mailto:contact@birdlifetownsville.org.au).

Australia's Natures Laws are due for a 20 year review in 2019. Our national nature laws are supposed to prevent "unacceptable impact" to our threatened species but there are many examples of how they are failing. BirdLife Australia's Campaign "Act for Birds" aims to inform members of the community about these issues and encourage them to have their say when the review gets under way. Mark Horvath attended a public meeting in Cairns on 10<sup>th</sup> May to obtain information and ideas for a similar meeting in Townsville. He did a great job of organizing a public meeting for the specific purpose of establishing local support for the campaign. The Public Meeting on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June at the Sun Hotel with Birdlife Australia's Kim Garratt and Fiona Blanford and University of Queensland Conservation Biologist Dr April Reside as the main speaker on the Southern Black-throated Finch was a success with approximately 35 people in attendance, including the Federal Member for Herbert, Cathy O'Toole. Wal Threlfall and I will have a meeting with Cathy O'Toole to discuss the review once BirdLife Australia provide the information necessary to continue with the campaign. Members will be kept informed via email about the campaign and what they can do to ensure that our National Nature Laws actually protect our endangered creatures and habitat.

Many members took part in the June Challenge Count, counting birds in their designated areas. The counts were not conducted in such a way as to be used for scientific research but still give a very worthwhile overview on what is happening to bird populations in the Townsville region. A big thank you to Wal Threlfall for organizing the 'who counts what area' list and a really big thank you to Ivor Preston for his expertise and unending patience in collating the results.

*Janet Robino*

### **YOUR COMMITTEE**

President: Janet Robino	Michael McMAster	Norm Rains
Secretary: Wal Threlfall	Mark Horvath	
Treasurer: Nina Doyle	Julie Goldsbury	
Janet Cross	Annette Sibson	

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

Deadline for next Drongo is October 31<sup>st</sup>.

*The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Birdlife Townsville.*

## TRIP TO MOORRINYA AND BEYOND

We took our new caravan out to Moorrinya National Park in late June to get it acquainted with red dust and corrugations. A lot of travelling time is spent waving at oncoming travellers and checking what sort of van they have.

On the way in to Moorrinya we had to wait for a flock of Squatter Pigeons at the creek crossing. I took that as a good omen.

Camp was set up in double quick time so I could rush off and check out the bird life. The finches were busy feeding and fighting (Zebras mostly). The local Willie Wagtail and Jacky Winter gave us the once over and approved by hanging around, as did the Black-faced Woodswallows. There seemed to be lots of birds; it was wonderful. I did an initial walk around the campground tracks, finding twenty-two species by evening.



*Variegated Fairy-wren*

In the mornings I was up before the sun, I love the dawn chorus. I even beat the resident Little Eagle up one morning! There were (or appeared to me to be) many more birds around the camp area than the first time we visited Moorrinya (Easter 2017). There were Variegated Fairy-wrens just in front of our camp along with Crested Bellbirds, Plum-headed Finch, Brown Treecreepers came in as well. One afternoon a pair of Australian Hobbys flew in and played for a bit. On another afternoon a pair of Brown Falcons came in, with one giving the local birds a loud and long telling off.

Sam (my hubby) was sitting in the shade of the van and watched three Ground Cuckoo-shrikes feeding! Of course I was off chasing birds in the scrub at the time, so missed them.

The highlight was catching sight, in torchlight, of a Spotted Nightjar flying past our van one

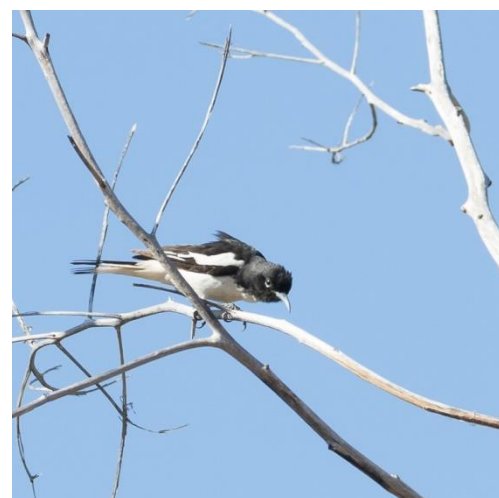
evening. A few minutes later we found it again in the upper branches of a dead tree about 80 metres from the van. It spent some time most evenings feeding from the dead tree. It would fly out and about from a branch, catch something and then return to a branch. Now we couldn't see what it was catching and eating but that certainly looked like what it was doing. Not once did I see it on the ground.

Our next stop was Kooroorinya Nature Reserve (for a long hot shower). On the way there, at a cuppa stop, I spied an Eastern Bearded Dragon relaxing in a tree just behind us. It was very obliging while I took photos.



*Black-breasted Buzzard*

We were greeted at Kooroorinya by a fly over of a Black-breasted Buzzard. I had photos before we'd set up camp. It appeared to be resident there so I got a number of opportunities to photograph it. The morning we left I watched a large flock of Squatter Pigeons take the long walk to water and back, cooing the whole time. There were forty all up, lovely to watch and hear.



*Pied Honeyeater*



We then headed to Torrens Creek pub and van park for a few nights. It's a great little pub with very friendly locals.

We were treated to a couple of fly overs by a Black-breasted Buzzard there too. A day was spent exploring White Mountains National Park, without the van. A very interesting place, I loved the plant life on the way to Poison Valley. There were birds down in the (mostly) dry creek bed, the most exciting bird was the Pied Honeyeater male that we saw on our way out of the park. What a find! Not only did he pose beautifully for me while cleaning his beak, I photographed him from the comfort of the car!

On the way back to Townsville I learned where the Burra Range gravel pits were, after passing it and where the Pentland Dam is. (Thanks Marleen A.) A couple of Red-kneed Dotterels were feeding there so that was a lovely way to finish our trip.

Our caravan passed the test with flying colours, so there's no stopping us now.

*Annette Sibson*

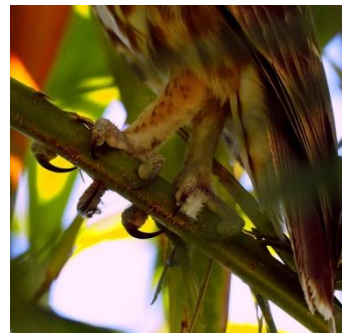
## NOT-SO-POPULAR VISITOR



It was a deafening commotion in our backyard late Friday afternoon, 29th June 2018, with lots of bird alarm noise happening and birds swarming in from everywhere. We raced to the side bedroom windows to see what was going on. There was this spectacular bird influx, a raucous cacophony of about forty upset birds. Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Yellow Honeyeaters, White-gaped, and Brown Honeyeaters, Spangled Drongos, Little Friarbirds, Helmeted Friarbirds, Great Bowerbirds, Magpie-larks, Australian Magpies, Torresian Crows, and even a handful of House Sparrows. It appeared like every bird in Mount Louisa was converging on our backyard garden. Their particular focus was the thick clumping palms in the side garden.

I scampered downstairs and into the garden to have a better look. There it was; a terrified **Southern Boobook**, trying to roost peacefully in the palm fronds. However, it was getting bombarded by all the local neighbourhood-watch birds. It was all happening. Len raced back upstairs to get a camera... then back down again to the show to try and get a few shots. This poor little Boobook was clearly bothered and appeared timid as and he copped it for about 10 minutes. Finally, a force of Great Bowerbirds chased him away. Even our local Brown Goshawk doesn't get such attention.

What a highlight for the afternoon. We haven't seen Boobooks in our yard for a couple of years, so this was awesome.



Breaking News - The little guy is back. Wednesday afternoon, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018: - This time we were working downstairs in the garden and a gorgeous female Olive-backed Sunbird was perched nearby and calling continuously. Without a second thought, Len said to me, "It's probably just going off at the Boobook". I investigated and found that indeed our Southern Boobook had returned; and back on the exact same palm frond. Len took a couple of more photos and after reviewing his images on the big screen, we found that this particular palm frond has quite a lot of old scratches and scarring,... from needle-sharp owl talons, we suspect. That has lead us to the assumption that this frond happens to be a favourite roost for our Southern Boobook.



We have been checking his roost every morning since. Only once more did he return, on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July, but could only stay a short while as the local army "convinced" him there were quieter places to hang out.

*Chris and Len Ezzy*

## LUCINDA SHOREBIRDS

On Tuesday 17 July, seven people turned up to carry out the Shorebirds 2020 winter count at Lucinda. Thanks for a successful day to Annette Sibson, Trish Pontynen, Ian Montgomery, Len & Chris Ezzy and Wal Threlfall.



*Pacific Golden Plover*

*Len Ezzy*

The start of the trip to Lucinda gave us a good start with a Square-tailed Kite at Veal's Road. On arrival, smoko in the park (near the toilets of course), surrounded by inquisitive Bush Stone-curlews, while we organised ourselves for the survey.

Our first stop was to get a mixed flock of Tree and Fairy Martins sorted. Our next stop was at the land end of the sand spit. The view across the mud flats revealed the impressive spread of the mangroves since our last visit in January. No cyclone activity since 2012 has allowed the vegetation to keep expanding, making our survey task a bit more challenging.



*Northern Fantail*

*Len Ezzy*

Undaunted our tally started to grow in species if not numbers, with few challenges thrown up for this august group of birders. The final tally was 45 species and 345 individuals. We counted five species and fourteen individuals of over wintering shorebirds, with the least expected being Pacific Golden Plover.

We returned to the facilities for lunch (great fish & chips) and over lunch we decided to check out the Big Crystal Creek camping area for Lovely Fairy-wrens on the way home. The target bird proved elusive but we all enjoyed the hunt with

other good finds included Northern Fantail, Pied Monarch and Bridled Honeyeater. We all agreed that this was a good day's relaxed birding. Perhaps we will see you in the future at one of the many surveys organised by Birdlife Townsville.



*Pied Monarch*

*Len Ezzy*

*Ivor Preston*

## WHO OWNS THESE FEET?

In the last edition Bob Murphy sent us a picture of some mystery feet.



Did you guess what they were?



She will grow into a big girl.



## WONGALOO WETLANDS

### The Kakadu of Queensland

Thursday June 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 and I'm standing in the scrub looking out towards a wetland filled with thousands of magpie geese, hundreds of Brolga and many Pelicans, Black Swans and other water birds. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to view such an abundance of water birds.

Where am I?



*Magpie Geese Wongaloo*

Wongaloo Wetlands. It seems incredible to me that this natural wonder is barely forty minutes drive south of Townsville.

So how did I discover these wetlands?

It starts with a series of happy co-incidences. I was planning to visit my sister in Townsville in early June. Two weeks before my visit she rang to tell me about this wetland she had heard being discussed on the local ABC. She had never heard of Wongaloo before. Did I know anything about it as it sounded like it was a special place. I knew nothing about the wetlands but as luck would have it, I was attending the national Birdlife Australia conference the following week and surely someone there would know. At the conference I met Wal Threlfall, the secretary of Birdlife Townsville.



Of course the Townsville branch knew all about Wongaloo. So how do you visit there was really the question my sister and I wanted answered. Fortunately for us on the first Thursday of each month Birdlife Townsville does a bird count at Wongaloo and we would be welcome to join them and help out on the count.

So on Thursday June 6<sup>th</sup> my sister and I spent the day with Norm Rains and Janet Robino participating in the monthly count. We visited a selection of wetland, grassland and forest habitats and observed 66 different bird species. The number of bird species was not what was so amazing that day, it was the sheer quantity of water birds out on the various lagoons and wetlands. I felt that I had been transported to Kakadu as that is the only other place in Australia that I have ever had the pleasure to see such an incredible abundance of our magnificent birdlife.

Let me tell you a bit more about the Wongaloo Wetlands.



According to the QLD Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing these wetlands are listed in the 'Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia' (DIWA) and adjoin the Bowling Green Bay Ramsar site. They are part of one of the largest coastal wetland complexes on the east coast of Australia and have remained a natural ephemeral hydrological system. The swamps vary from very wet with dense stands of 'Bulkuru' - the primary breeding and food source for Magpie Geese - to barren and dry 'playgrounds' for the Brolga, as part of a critical annual cycle. The wetland system is home at various times of the year to some 255 species of birds, 51 species of reptile, 44 species of mammals and countless species of invertebrate and is a vital stage on the migratory 'flyway'.

The Wongaloo Wetlands are managed by the Wetlands and Grasslands Foundation (WGF) as Trustee for QLD National Parks and Wildlife Service. As the wetlands were previously a cattle property there is a need for vigorous weed control measures. Interestingly, as well as the use of chemicals to control the weeds, the foundation use about 400 head of agisted cattle to "work" on weed control. Fencing keeps the

cattle in the targeted areas. The intensive cattle grazing appears to work quite well. During our day in the wetlands we observed cattle happily munching their way through various invasive pest species.

If Wongaloo was just about wetlands that would be amazing enough but wait there is more! As well as the freshwater lagoons themselves there are interesting creeks and gullies, melaleuca swamps and woodlands, stands of *Livistona* palms and pandanus, lowland vine forest and open grassland. The woodland is habitat for the endangered Black-throated Finch as well as many other bird species.



How can I visit Wongaloo?

Birdlife Townsville will welcome any Birdlife Shoalhaven members to join them on their monthly surveys on the first Thursday of the month. Contact them via the address below:-

[contact@birdlifetownsville.org.au](mailto:contact@birdlifetownsville.org.au)

Thanks to Wal Threlfall for making our visit possible and to Norm Rains and Jane Robino for taking us out for a most amazing day of birding.

*Yolande Cozijn*

## CORSICA

My Sister and I have just spent two weeks sailing with my niece and husband, from Sardinia up to Corsica and back. The most often seen birds were Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and Shags diving for food. The most interesting birds were a Manx Shearwater, and a Corys Shearwater just off Corsica. Whilst we were eating ashore in Sardinia, a bird which acted like a wagtail but not the colouring for a Wagtail was seen in the garden next to us, the nearest I could think of was a Pipit, but could not see it close enough to identify !!!

It goes without saying on shore, feral pigeons and sparrows were in plentiful numbers, but we did see an Egret on a couple of occasions.

*Barbara Reidy*

## TYTO

Early last November I dropped into Tyto Wetlands at night to look for Grass Owls. I dipped on the owl, but saw about a dozen Large-tailed Nightjars, including one very small juvenile. They were sitting out in the open on the tracks, flying circles around me, and calling their little hearts out. My mate, Richard, has never seen many night birds, so we went up to Tyto in June to try our luck. The plan was to stay at the local van park, have a bit of a look at night, then return the following day. We picked the coldest night of the year and typically the activity was minimal- lots of wallabies but no birds. Richard got there before me and thought he heard a Barn Owl before I caught up but that was it.



*Little-Bronze-Cuckoo*

We had much better luck in the morning with perfect light. Highlights were some very close views of Yellow Oriole, White-browed Robin, a pair of Little Bronze-Cuckoos, and a pair each of Sacred and Forest Kingfishers. The cuckoos were warming up in the sun which made them hard to ID since they insisted on keeping their backs to us. Eventually we got to see the distinctive red eye of the male and he even posed for a photo. All up we saw 37 species in about 90 minutes before getting lost on one of those treacherous unmarked Tyto tracks which loop around in a circle when you think it is taking you back to the carpark!

We will definitely be heading back in a few months during the Nightjar breeding season to see if they are as abundant this year, and hopefully we'll get lucky with those Grass Owls too.

*Graham Castles*



## OUT WEST

Graham and I recently went to the outback to visit with family and friends. We had an interesting trip siting 88 species of birds in just over a week.

On the trip out we saw a large flock of Flock Bronzewings and just down the road hundreds of Australian Pratincoles grouped within a short distance of each other which we had never seen before. Also on the whole trip we noticed a very large numbers of birds of prey, especially Brown Falcons.

These birds of prey certainly kept the smaller birds alert. While camped, Graham noticed a family of four Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush passing nearby. He was amused to see one bird was perched under our car and another on a drum under a bush as a Brown Falcon and a Wedge-tailed Eagle flew over. There was a lot of flowering bushes and a family of four Black-chinned Honeyeaters visited us daily.

We were very fortunate to see a lifer for us on this trip, a pair of Grey Falcons. We got a nice flying shot and saw the pair mating. This made our trip.



*Australian Pratincole*

*Ray Sutton*

There were a large number of tea trees in various locations in full blossom this trip and with this blossom, lots of honeyeaters. The Black Honeyeaters were the stand out for us as at some of the locations we had never seem them there before.

We also saw a White-winged Fairy-wren near Winton, a lovely Red-backed Kingfisher, a Little Eagle and some Ground Cuckoo-shrikes on a back road. All in all, a very enjoyable time.

*Denise and Graham Holder*

*Scientists believe that birds evolved from theropod dinosaurs.*

*They even think some dinosaurs, including Tyrannosaurus Rex, may have had feathers as well as scales.*



## MUSEUM MUSINGS

*Magpie*

I am currently working on an adult magpie to finally complete the Magpie family. The two juveniles have waited for a few years for a parent and it will be good to have the group complete. Magpies must be intelligent and able to avoid windows, animals and most cars.



*Dinosaur Evolution*

I encourage any of you who haven't visited the Dinosaur Evolution to come for a visit. It is an informative exhibition with lots of information about the link between birds and dinosaurs. Look up as you go into the display and you will see our Pelican skeleton. You have to look up to see it but we were pleased to have it at last on display.

Can I suggest you come on the free Tuesday (2nd Tuesday in the month) when there is an interesting talk on at lunch-time, or on an afternoon. The mornings have been quite busy with interstate visitors and mums with young children but after lunch it is very quiet and you can take your time, with less noise and few distractions.

*Dolphins*

Ian has been working on replacing the teeth in the Dolphin skulls we rescued from disposal. I took the smaller lower jaw to the Birdlife display in the Burdekin and it has also been taken to a school and a kindy. The children are fascinated by something with teeth!

*Education*

Team members will be doing a talk on Taxidermy and birds for the Aitkenvale Girl Guides and another for the Cathedral school primary children in the next few weeks so we certainly get around. We learnt recently that one of the Fig Parrot's tissue samples we sent to Brisbane is to be included in a research study in Brisbane. I think it is wonderful to know that the birds that come to us are being useful in educating folk about their species and in furthering science.

*Beth Snewin*



## BREAKFAST

I headed up to Hervey Range on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July to join in the Birders' breakfast at the Tea Rooms. We had a leisurely stroll around behind the Tea Rooms to look for birds. There were 'heaps' of Grey Fantails flitting all over the place as well as a lot of other 'goodies'. My favourite was some really wonderful views of a very obliging Fantail Cuckoo.



*Fantail Cuckoo Janet Robino*

After breakie when everyone else headed down the hill for home, Bob, a visitor from BirdLife Melbourne, and I joined Pam Cocks at her place for a bit more birding. The path down to the creek was a little rough but well worth taking the risk. The air was alive with the calls of Scarlet Honeyeaters. We had some really nice views of both male and female. I noticed a 'brown lump' in some foliage high up in a eucalyptus across the other side of the creek. Couldn't decide if it was a bird, a nest or just a brown lump.



*White-eared Monarch Janet Robino*

I took a photo and was able to enlarge it on the camera to discover that, tucked away amid a very thick patch of leaves, was actually a beautifully formed little nest with a bird sitting in it. It was a long way away but we thought it was most likely a Female Scarlet Honeyeater.

To remove all doubt, a pair of Scarlet Honeyeaters made several trips to and from the nest while we watched.

I really thought that was the highlight of the morning.....but then.....as we were getting ready to set off Pam spotted a 'small black and white bird'. It eventually revealed itself to be a White-eared Monarch. It had been years since I had seen one so it certainly pushed the Scarlet Honeyeater into 'second-best bird of the morning' place. A very excited Bob declared it was a 'lifer' for him. Pam had never seen one before either so we were a very happy little band of birders.

*Janet Robino*

## LOCAL KINGFISHERS ON DISPLAY

Five species of kingfishers are about to take up residence in a new portable display case at the Museum of Tropical Queensland.

The clear perspex cover, visible at the right of the photo, was custom-made, thanks to a generous contribution from Birdlife Townsville. I have just completed the bottom of the case and mounted the perching birds:



Azure, Forest, Red-backed and Sacred kingfishers, plus two Little Kingfishers.

Next I will fix the perspex in place, and then make a fabric cover to protect the case during travel and storage.

When all is ready, these Kingfishers will join the Barn Owl (already mounted in its own case) for educational presentations by MTQ and by Birdlife Townsville.

*Julia Hazel*

## GLOSSIES

John and I have never managed to see the Glossy Black-Cockatoos who live up at Paluma. Tried a few times but they either weren't there or we just couldn't see them. So when we were on Kangaroo Island recently we were super hopeful of seeing one at last. In the course of touring the island we visited Lathami and many other spots, always keeping one eye open for Glossies but they were conspicuous by their absence. We could see the tell-tale orange leftovers on the ground under the Casuarina trees where they had obviously been feeding on the nuts recently. But no birds.

On our second morning, at American River, we thought we had a glimpse of one flying but not a definitive look. On dusk that day we went for a walk at American River and the darker it got, the gloomier we felt. Then we heard the unmistakable screech and ran back to some towering gums, one of which had a nesting box (the islanders are committed to ensuring their survival). And there they were, the female poking out of the box and the male nearby. We could hardly see them but then they flew off and their red tails were like neon lights in the gloom. High-fives all round. We were happy and satisfied.

The next morning, while waiting for a lift near our accommodation, we walked a few metres up the road next to a bank of casuarinas loaded with their favourite food. It looked a promising spot for Glossies so we looked diligently but couldn't see any. Then I thought I could hear a munching, crunching sound in the distance. 'Could it be?' I said.



*Glossy Black-Cockatoo Maureen Goninan Echoactive.com*

We peered in amongst the trees again and craned our necks in every direction and crouched for better vantage points but nothing. 'Wishful thinking,' says John. We couldn't get in amongst the trees as they were fenced off, private property. Then, just as we reached back at our pickup point, out flew the Glossie over our heads and I'd swear he was saying, 'look at me'!

We mightn't have jagged seeing him feeding but knowing we heard him feeding was still special.

*Christine Stewart*

## PHOTO TIME

Warren thought members might be interested in a tourist photo idea he saw at Warrnambool. You can set up your camera on the pole provided via the tripod screw, set the timer and, bingo, you are in the photo. Saves taking a selfie which can be a bit difficult with a camera.



## RIFLE BIRD

These photos were taken at Paluma when we went up for the Wattle N Gum bush dance, which is held every year on the winter solstice. We visited Cecily, who was staying at Beth's house, and were treated to the amazing spectacle of the Riflebird's display whilst sitting on the veranda.



*Philip Haig*

## MISTLETOE BIRD

I was trying to do some housework when I heard the distinctive trill of the Mistletoe Bird. Of course, I can never resist rushing outside to have a look for him.



I always assume it will be a 'him' as I have only ever seen a male trilling. The females may well do it but it always seems to be the male. There he was in the callistemon singing his little heart out. To my surprise there was another male in the same tree. I had always assumed that he trilled to impress a female. Maybe it is a territorial thing. Anybody got any ideas? Regardless, it is always a 'thrill to hear the Mistletoebird trill'. (Sorry about the bad pun).



Thanks to Greg Calvert's advice about planting a Grewia tree, Mistletoebirds are just about daily visitors to my garden. I often have the pleasure of sitting in my lounge and watching a very demanding baby being fed by frantic looking parents.

*Janet Robino*

*A bird's lungs are much more complicated and efficient and take up more space than those of mammals, such as humans. A human's lungs compose about 1/20 of its body, but a bird's takes up 1/5.*

## CURRAJONG GARDEN

An orange-footed Scrub Fowl has settled in to my small back garden for more than a week now. The pots of herbs are not happy!



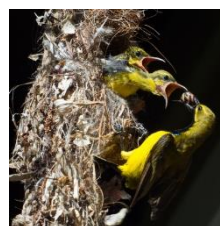
The even smaller front garden has an Alpha male Great Bowerbird & his splendid bower. Trinkets, silver and green, are daily additions.

I'll let you know if he is successful in the mating stakes!

*Rosemary Payet*

## ROBBERY

Last year we were very happy to have a pair of Olive-backed Sunbirds build one of their beautiful nests on a rope dangling outside our kitchen window. They raised three successful broods with two chicks in each brood. We spent many hours photographing them. They do not mind your presence at all.



Lately they have been back, enjoying the nectar from the beautiful Zygo cactuses that have been in full flower. Their nest has been waving away in the breeze and we were hoping they might return later in the year.

But the Brown Honeyeaters had other ideas. They started robbing the nest building material from the Sunbirds' nest until, eventually, they knocked the whole nest off the rope. Now the nest lies forlornly on the path. Will the Sunbirds come back to that piece of rope, so close to us, or will they find another spot elsewhere? Time will tell.

*Annette Sutton*



## SPOTLIGHTING

A dozen excited Birdlife Townsville members gathered at about 6:00 p.m. Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018, at the front gates of the Townsville Town Common Conservation Park for limited seats on a glorious evening's Spotlighting. Our three 4WDs idled off, cutting a passage of light through the dark as we searched along the five km, publicly-accessible section of the Park. We found it very quiet here, with only a few birds and reptiles encountered.



*Barking Owl*

*Len Ezzy*

Arriving at the Causeway Road heavily-locked gate, the Club's Permit Key opened our way further afield, 4WD vehicle access to the rest of the park. As we were approaching our second locked gate near "Bald Rock", a beautiful warm orange/red, one-night-old full-moon was rising over the salt pans as it emerged over a horizon of Castle Hill and a shimmering strip of distant city lights.



*Blue-winged Kookaburra*

*Len Ezzy*

This outing had been planned and organized with QParks well in advance, and we were delighted to find they had been in there a week earlier and slashed all the 4WD tracks, especially for us, making for our safer and more comfortable passage along these less-travelled tracks. Our terminus; the "Big Mango Tree" turnaround area near the Shelly Beach mangroves, and adjacent to the "Under-the-Radar" foot/mountain-bike track. We parked

here, some had supper, and the rest braved the mozzies and explored the area on foot for a couple of hours. Our return trip took much less time. The event finished about 11:30pm and we were home before the midnight bewitching hour.

Highlights of last night's group sightings were: - 2x Barking Owls, 1x Southern Boobook, and roosting high in the Eucalypts were at least 8x Australian Brush-turkeys (one which tried sh!t-bombing me... haha missed me by inches), 1x Tawny Frogmouth, about 6x Large-tailed Nightjars, 1x Australian Owlet Nightjar (heard only, too dangerous to get/climb to), 1x roosting Blue-winged Kookaburra, lots of Bush Stone-Curlews, Little Black Flying Foxes, 2x Green Tree Snakes, and a few Frogs.

The previous evening's group found similar, but also scored an Eastern Grass Owl, roosting on the ground. That bird let them walk to within about 20 metres of it. That would have been nice to add to our list but wasn't to be.

Our thanks to Wal Threlfall for organizing and leading these two most enjoyable, consecutive nights out, AND under clear skies and a full moon.



*Large-tailed Nightjar*

*Len Ezzy*

Personal note: - In our car, we had Marleen Acton, Graham Castles, and Trish Pontynen. Trish had had a fall the day before, breaking one of her ribs, and she couldn't make it along for her scheduled Saturday night's seat as she was having X-Rays in hospital simultaneously. So, Trish came with us. As she was first boarding, tentatively climbing into the back seat, she politely asked if we could please refrain from making her laugh, as laughing hurt her ribcage... That was the first point of humour, and well... that was when the laughter really started. Trish is such a happy person and indeed, we ended up laughing with her most of the night. As I was Tail-End-Charlie, I was able to drive extra-slowly and super-smoothly over the rocks, pot-holed and corrugated tracks, dry creek crossings, and such other terrain, so as not to aggravate her rib injury. However, she still needed painkillers. I reckon her ribs would be hurting today.

*Len Ezzy*

## QUEST

Janet Robino	308	04-11-17
Rosemary Payet	288	15-10-17
Graham Castles	274	01-10-17
Marleen Acton	264	21-09-17
Beth Snewin	259	16-09-17
Elna Kerswell	256	13-09-17
Annette Sibson	249	06-09-17
Wal Threlfall	228	16-08-17
Janet Cross	227	15-08-17
Ian Leach	212	31-07-17
Pat Charlton	197	16-07-17
Warren Charlton	188	07-07-17
Annette Sutton	160	09-06-17
Julia Goldsbury	109	19-04-17
Carolyn Osterhaus	76	17-03-17

## A few more spotlighting photos from Len Ezzy



*Australian Brush-turkey*



*Large-tailed Nightjar*



*Tawny Frogmouth*

Photos from around

Townsville,

including Cleveland Palms, Major's Creek, Woodstock, Reed  
Beds Road and the Town Common. Photography by Ray  
Sutton.

