

RAINFOREST BIRDS

of the Southern Wet Tropics



Australian Government



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This project is supported by Townsville City Council, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

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Legend

Places mentioned in this book

Broadwater – that part of Abergowrie State Forest within about a 3km radius of the Broadwater Creek camping area. Remnant riverine rainforest jungle, signposted: 47km west of Ingham. Access to the massive Strangler Fig via the rainforest boardwalk was closed in 2011 due to Cyclone Yasi devastation. Consequently, the 1.6km rainforest forest circuit is also currently closed. The walking track to “The Overflow” through dryer riparian woodland beside permanent Broadwater Creek remains open. Broadwater offers great birdwatching opportunities, a large day-use area, clear freshwater swimming, toilets and showers, and safe and tidy camping.

Grandis Forest – About 8km west of Paluma Village, here is an excellent walking track for birdwatching. It is a disused logging track with parking just off to the north of the main Paluma Ewan Road. Large stand of *Eucalyptus grandis* with mixed understory, fringed on both sides by rainforest.

Paluma Range – A 20.5km drive along Forestry Road south-west of Bluewater brings one to a forestry shed/shelter in the thick rainforest of the Paluma Range National Park at an elevation of about 600m. Park here and walk many of the old forestry tracks. Caution is required as the area to the west of here is sometimes used by the military as a training area. At times the top-parts of Forestry Road may be physically locked when road conditions become too dangerous.



Managing threats to the Rainforest

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has the oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforests on earth. They are a living museum of how land plants have evolved since the break-up of Gondwana 40 million years ago, from ancient ferns, conifers and cycads to the more highly evolved flowering plants. The Wet Tropics is also a living record of the evolutionary history of animals – being home to some species that have changed little since ancient times such as the Musky Rat-kangaroo and the Chowchilla.

Australia has established strong layers of protection for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. A strict planning regime administered by the Wet Tropics Management Authority applies to the whole Area. Nearly 80% of the World Heritage Area is formally reserved as national park and Commonwealth laws protect World Heritage values in the wider Wet Tropics bioregion.

Despite these protections, the Area is still subject to significant threats.

Climate change is a threat to the environment everywhere, but the Wet Tropics is recognised as being especially vulnerable. Many rainforest species are high elevation specialists found mainly around the mountaintops. As temperatures rise, these relatively cool, cloudy and wet environments will begin to disappear. Researchers have predicted that as many as 50 species may become extinct in the region if predicted temperature rises eventuate.

As well as doing all that we can to reverse the trend of global warming, we must work to build resilience in rainforests by reducing the impacts of exotic species and re-establishing landscape connectivity.

Exotic pests, weeds and diseases are another poorly controlled and widespread threat to the health and resilience of the rainforests. Animal pests include feral deer, pigs, cats, tilapia and cane toads. Recent infestations of yellow crazy ant, electric ant and asian honey bee are also a serious concern. Many exotic plants are now established in the



Wet Tropics and some are regarded as serious weeds because of their impact on Wet Tropics environments or surrounding agricultural production. Examples include lantana, hymenachne, alligator weed, cabomba, pond apple and salvinia. The plant disease phytophthora is long established in the Wet Tropics, with locally severe impacts. Myrtle rust, an alarming new plant disease, is spreading rapidly.

The most important thing we can do to combat pests, weeds and disease is to prevent their introduction and spread through strict biosecurity measures. We can all help by observing quarantine regulation and reporting newly observed populations of weeds and pests to management authorities.

Clearing and fragmentation has substantially depleted the extent and condition of once extensive tropical lowland forests. While strictly regulated, roads, power lines and other infrastructure continue to create barriers and other disturbances for rainforest wildlife. Revegetation and rehabilitation projects play an important role in restoring forest health.

How can you help? You can contribute to rainforest protection through your careful observations. That unusual new plant you observe at a favourite birding site might be a new population of a serious weed. If you report it to the relevant land manager, you will help to ensure early, effective action. Your careful records over time of the distribution of birds in the rainforest will add to the pool of information available about the response of rainforests to climate change.

For further information about the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, go to www.wettropics.gov.au.

Andrew Maclean, Executive Director, Wet Tropics Management Authority.





Endangered

Southern Cassowary

Casuarius casuarius johnsonii

The Southern Cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius*) is a large, flightless bird that lives in rainforests and associated habitats in north-eastern Queensland and the lowlands of New Guinea and nearby islands. The subspecies *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii* occurs in Australia.

Adult cassowaries are striking birds. The sexes are similar in appearance, the females stand about 2 m high and weigh up to 75 kg, the males are slightly smaller. The body is covered with dense glossy black plumage. The head and neck are featherless. The head is light blue and the neck is dark blue on the front and red to purple on the back. A pair of long red wattles hangs from the lower part of the neck. The purpose of the prominent brown casque that extends from the base of the bill to the crown is unknown. The thick legs are bare, scaly and greyish in colour and the large feet have three claw-like toes; the inner toe is dagger-like. Chicks have



prominent longitudinal brown stripes. Subadults are uniform brown and lack the tall casque and long wattles.

The largest Australian cassowary population occurs in the wet tropics of north-eastern Queensland. Smaller populations occur in vine forests and rainforests on northern and eastern Cape York Peninsula.

Cassowaries mostly eat fruit (approximately 240 species) taken from the ground although they also consume fungi, flowers, invertebrates and carrion. They are one of only a few species able to disperse the seeds of large-fruited rainforest plants and therefore play an important role in rainforest dynamics. In addition to a year round supply of



fleshy fruit, cassowaries require fresh water for drinking and bathing.

Adult cassowaries are solitary and maintain dynamic and overlapping territories. Their movements are poorly known though adult birds readily travel linear distances of 3 to 5 km in a single day. Movements probably vary according to conditions and habitat suitability. Cassowaries are capable swimmers.

Cassowaries reach sexual maturity at three to four years of age, around the time they attain their adult plumage. Mating generally occurs from June to September although breeding has been recorded outside these times. Females may breed with several males each season. Three to five eggs are laid onto the ground in nests consisting of a faint depression and scattering of leaves. Males incubate the eggs and raise the chicks.

Vegetation clearing for agriculture and human settlement in the last century caused a dramatic (65-80%) loss of prime cassowary habitat and is the main reason for the cassowary's Endangered status under State and Commonwealth legislation. Although clearing has abated, many cassowary populations remain vulnerable to the combined impacts of habitat fragmentation, habitat degradation, and threats associated with human settlement such as vehicle strikes and dog attacks. Threats are greater where hand feeding of cassowaries has caused birds to lose their natural fear of people. The tendency for this habituation process to occur is greatest when natural foods are scarce, eg after cyclones. Cyclones cause at least temporary food shortages, and in turn some attrition in local populations (notably amongst the younger cohorts), and delays in breeding.

Peter Buosi,
NRA Environmental Consultants



Southern Cassowary

Casuarius casuarius

DESCRIPTION:

Size 1.5-2.0m. Second largest Australian bird. Flightless, can be aggressive. Massive powerful legs, three toes, innermost an elongated spike. Coarse, drooping, glossy-black plumage, bright blue and pink bare skin on head and neck, two long red wattles on front of neck, a tall horny helmet on top of the head. Chicks heavily striped yellow and black.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mainly on fallen rainforest fruits, fungi and insects, sometimes invading orchards or gardens for cultivated fruit.

BREEDING:

June-November. Nest is a collection of leaves in rainforest litter. After eggs are laid, usually four, female takes no more interest. The male takes over and looks after the chicks for nine months, then chases them away to fend for themselves.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Occasionally seen at Paluma, more likely at Broadwater and Wallaman Falls, edges of rainforest around Mission Beach, South Mission Beach, (Licuala Walk). Frequently seen at Ettu Bay Beach.

THREATS:

Habitat loss, Cars, Dogs.



Australian Brush Turkey

Alectura lathami

DESCRIPTION:

Size 60-70cm. Large, black ground-dwelling 'fowl' with long vertically flat tail. Head and neck almost bare red skin, with sparse black hair-like feathers. At the base of the neck the male has a yellow wattle, most noticeable during breeding. Breast and belly have grey-edged black feathers. Bill and eye black. Powerful legs and feet. Call: loud deep grunt.

FEEDING HABITS:

Insects, seeds, fallen berries, fruit and small vertebrates are their favoured food.

BREEDING:

August-February. Large incubator-mound is made of leaves, soil and debris from the forest floor, maintained throughout the year by the male. Heat to incubate eggs is generated by litter fermentation. Females lay up to 20 eggs then have nothing to do with the young. Upon hatching the chicks dig out of the mound and are self-sufficient. Mounds are able to be used for several years by adding more material.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma Range, Broadwater, Town Common, Palmetum.



Orange-footed Scrubfowl

Megapodius reinwardt

DESCRIPTION:

Size 40-60cm. Sexes similar. Ground-dwelling, dark chestnut brown back with a dark slate grey neck and belly, reddish brown bill, short pointed crest and powerful orange legs and feet. Run or fly away quickly into undergrowth if disturbed. Call: loud chuckling, often at night.

FEEDING HABITS:

Often in pairs, scratching in leaf litter for seeds, new shoots, fruits, insects and other small creatures.

BREEDING:

August-March. Male and female build a huge mound of fallen leaves and debris. Which, the male then maintains throughout the year, controlling humidity and temperature 35-38°C and turning eggs. Used for several years and sometimes by more than one pair. Each female lays 6-12 eggs, incubation takes up to 50 days. Chicks on hatching, dig out of the mound and are able to look after themselves.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Lowland rainforest, beach and vine thickets of coastal North Queensland. Magnetic Island and Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Brown Cuckoo-Dove

Macropygia amboinensis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 38-45cm. Large, slender, rusty/brown pigeon with a long tail. Underparts lighter cinnamon/brown, grey bill, red legs and feet. Male, iridescent mark on neck reflecting hints of violet or green. Female, rufous on the crown with dark scalloping on throat and breast. Immature, have distinct barring on head, neck and breast. Flies with slow wing beats. Call: repeated whoop-a-whoop.

FEEDING HABITS:

Usually singly or in pairs, feeding in fruiting trees, shrubs or vines. Occasionally comes to the ground near roadsides or pathways, looking for berries like lantana and inkweeds or searching for grit.

BREEDING:

July-January. Often twice a year. Nest is a flimsy platform of dry sticks and vine tendrils in a bush, vine or tree fern. 1-2 eggs are laid, incubation and care of the young until fledged is done by both parents.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest and adjacent open forest at all altitudes, Paluma, Wallaman Falls, Broadwater Abergowrie State Forest.



Emerald Dove

Chalcophaps indica

DESCRIPTION:

Size 23-25cm. This plump, ground dove has a purplish/brown head, neck and underparts, iridescent green wings and small white shoulder patch. Lower back and tail are dusky brown. Bill is bright red/orange. Feet are reddish brown. During the breeding season, they send out a monotonous 'hoo' call for long periods.

FEEDING HABITS:

Usually solitary feeders, walking along forest tracks picking up fallen seeds and fruits. When disturbed, takes flight with a whirr of wings, moving swiftly and silently through the trees showing brown under-wings.

BREEDING:

September-December. Males perch on a low branch, softly calling and performing a typical bowing and tail display mainly to attract females but also when aggressively defending their territory. The nest is a platform of woven twigs, hidden in low bushes. 2 eggs are laid, both parents share incubation and care of the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma Range, Little Crystal Creek, Mount Elliot, Magnetic Island.



Wompoo Fruit-Dove

Ptilinopus magnificus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 38-45cm. Sexes similar. Light grey head and throat, deep purple breast with the lower belly to vent rich yellow. Back and wings varying shades of rich green. There is a broken yellow wing-bar. Bill orange/red with a straw/yellow tip. Eye red. Underwings have noticeable yellow in flight. Even though the colours seem bright this bird blends in with the canopy and is very difficult to see. Immature, duller with some mottling effects. Call: loud far- carrying "wollock-a-woo".

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds entirely on fruit and berries of numerous palms, vines and trees. Fruit are swallowed whole. The seeds are then voided and dispersed intact.

BREEDING:

June-March. Frail untidy platform of dry twigs placed on a thin horizontal fork in a leafy position, anywhere from 4-20m above ground. 1 egg is laid with both parents sharing incubation and care of the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma Range, Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Superb Fruit-Dove

Ptilinopus superbus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 22-24cm. Small green and white pigeon, outer-tail tipped with white, red feet and bright yellow eyes. Male, purple crown, rufous nape, throat and breast grey with lilac tinge, black breast-band and green flanks. Female, small purple/blue patch on the back of the head, rest of plumage green with white abdomen. Immature, mostly green/grey. Call: two syllable whoop, and softer low single oom.

FEEDING HABITS:

Most foraging is high in the rainforest, but can be in lower shrubbery for fruits from laurels, figs and palms. Sometimes located, by hearing fruit dropping as it feeds.

BREEDING:

Mainly September-January. Nest a flimsy platform of fine twigs, in forks of trees or shrubs. Only 1 egg laid, both parents share nest-building and incubation.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest at all altitudes and woodland adjoining rainforest. Town Common near Bald Rock and along Many Peaks Range walking track. Paluma, Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Topknot Pigeon

Lopholaimus antarcticus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 40-45cm. Impressive, large grey, nomadic pigeon with bulky, back-swept rusty crest. Wings and tail darker. Tail has large white band. Bill, legs and feet red. Eye yellow with red eye-ring. Usually flies in large fast flocks, long distances in search of food. In flight has distinctive silhouette because of long tail with light band. Stays in canopy to drink dew or rain from leaves. Immature, plainer colours, brown bill, smaller crest. Call: seldom heard, single low 'coo'. Short sharp screeches when feeding in flocks.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds entirely on fruit of palms, vines and trees high in rainforest, hanging from branches, flapping wings loudly, and dislodging fruit which showers to forest floor.

BREEDING:

June-January. Nest is bulky-looking platform, but is often flimsy, hidden in foliage 20-40m above ground. Both parents incubate 1 egg and raise young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Forestry Road, Paluma Range. High in canopy. Watch for falling fruit.



Grey Goshawk

Accipiter novaehollandiae

DESCRIPTION:

Size 40-54cm. Sleek, powerful goshawk, with two colour morphs: 1- pure white, 2- grey-backed whitish below, with yellow cere and black bill, yellow legs, light barring on breast. Wings broad and rounded, medium tail, slightly round or square. Call: shrill, rising whistle, mainly during nesting and courting, otherwise silent.

FEEDING HABITS:

Flies directly in pursuit of prey, striking suddenly at speed. Preys mainly on small birds and mammals, reptiles, grasshoppers, cicadas and other insects.

BREEDING:

September-December. Nest is a solid construction of sticks, lined with twigs and green leaves, high above the ground in a tree fork. Usually 3 eggs, incubated by the female, male will relieve her for short periods, while she feeds. Young fledge in 5-6 weeks.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Heavily wooded rainforests, Eucalypt forests with overhead canopy and open understory. Alligator Creek, Forestry Road Bluewater, Grandis Forest, Birthday Creek Falls, and Lake Paluma, but are fairly elusive.



Australian King-Parrot

Alisterus scapularis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 40-43cm. Male, brilliant red head, breast and underparts. Back bright green, rump and tail dark blue. Female, dull green plumage, red belly. Bill orange/black. Males develop full coloured plumage after 2 years.

FEEDING HABITS:

Small flocks, often seen feeding on fruits, flowers, nectar and leaf-buds. Move clumsily on the ground picking up fallen seeds and fruits with the left foot, then tearing them apart with their bill to get at the rich kernels. They fly to communal roosts at night.

BREEDING:

They mate for life and have an elaborate courtship display. He feeds her before nest building begins in spring. Nest in a deep, hollow tree trunk, which is enlarged and layered with wood dust. 3-5 white eggs are laid and incubated by the female. Both parents feed the young for several weeks until fully fledged.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Wet mature eucalypt forests, rainforests, orchards, Paluma, Lake Paluma Road, Jourama Falls.



Crimson Rosella

Platycercus elegans

DESCRIPTION:

Size 32-37cm. Body is red, wings and back have black scalloping, edged in red, with blue flight feathers. The long tail and cheek patches are blue. The bill is pale grey. Immature, has green scalloping on the back.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage in bushes, trees and on the ground for fruit, seeds, berries and nuts. Also eat insects and larvae. In the breeding season they feed in pairs but form groups of up to 20 birds at other times.

BREEDING:

September-January. Nest in tree hollows, up to 30m above ground. Pairs are monogamous and will not tolerate other pairs in neighbouring trees. The female incubates an average of five eggs, which take about 3 weeks to hatch. Both parents rear the young, who fledge at about 5 weeks.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma in the rainforest or gardens, Grandis Forest, top of Forestry Road, Paluma Range.

THREATS:

Loss of suitable nest trees with hollows.



Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Cacomantis flabelliformis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 25-27cm. Sexes similar, female is duller. Yellow ring around the eye, head back and tail blue/grey. Long tail has noticeable white notches along the edges. Throat and breast light chestnut fading to paler on the belly and vent, under-tail barred grey/black and white. Immature, is very different, with a mottled rufous brown back, underparts irregular brown barring, lighter towards the vent. Call: mournful descending trill.

FEEDING HABITS:

Sit very quietly on open branch (often quite low) waiting and watching for moths, caterpillars or flying insects. Will drop to the ground or fly to foliage to take prey.

BREEDING:

August-January. Places 1 egg in the nest of an unsuspecting small bird such as Scrubwren or Thornbill who, then have the task of incubation and attending to the chick. It is unknown how many nests they parasitise.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma Range, Palmetum, Town Common, rainforest, woodland, parks and local gardens.



Azure Kingfisher

Ceyx azureus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17-19cm. Sexes similar. Long heavy bill, buff/white spot on each side of neck, wings and upper parts deep violet/blue, buff throat to rufous/brown underbelly. Bill black, feet orange/red, very short tail. Call: thin high-pitched squeak, usually in flight.

FEEDING HABITS:

Seen singly or in pairs, waiting for prey, sitting very still looking into the water from low branches overlooking streams or in mangroves. Diet is small fish or yabbies. They dive suddenly, seizing prey in their bill, then return to the branch to swallow it.

BREEDING:

November-April often twice a year. Nest is a narrow tunnel up to 1m into bank of a stream, enlarged into a small chamber at the end. 4-7 eggs are laid. Both parents incubate and feed the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Always found near water. Forested coastal and rainforest streams, lagoons and mangrove lined waterways. Palmetum, areas in the Town Common like Barramundi Lagoon, Paluma, Birthday Creek and Broadwater.



Little Kingfisher

Ceyx pusillus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 11-13cm. Smallest Australian kingfisher. Head, upper body and flanks are a shining royal blue, flight feathers tinged with black. Breast and underparts white. There is a white plume at the side of the neck and white spots at the base of the relatively long, black bill. They fly low over water, giving out a high-pitched whistle when disturbed.

FEEDING HABITS:

Usually solitary, spending time silently perched on low branches over water, occasionally bobbing as they watch for prey. Diving down they seize tiny fish, crustaceans or aquatic insects in their bill, then return to their perch to eat. A "perch and pounce" strategy.

BREEDING:

October-March. Both parents help to construct a narrow tunnel into a stream bank. The end is enlarged into a nesting chamber where 4-5 eggs are laid. Both parents share in incubating the eggs and feed the young until fledged.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Town Common, Paluma streams, Alligator Creek.



Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher

Tanysiptera sylvia

DESCRIPTION:

Size 30-35cm. Spectacular royal blue and black kingfisher with chestnut breast, massive red bill, and long white tail streamers, about half the length of the bird. Tail is best seen when it first arrives from PNG, before it is damaged during nesting. Rump and back white, legs and feet red. Immature, duller, breast is buff with darker scalloping, black beak and short tail. Call: soft downward metallic trill and piping upward call.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on lizards, frogs, beetles and spiders taken from the rainforest floor or amongst foliage.

BREEDING:

October-January. Migrant from PNG October-March in lowland rainforest south to Mt Spec. They drill a 15-20cm tunnel into a low active rounded termite mound on the rainforest floor. Lay 3-4 eggs in the nest chamber. Both parents incubate the eggs and care for the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Mid to lower-level rainforest, sitting almost motionless and silent. Mount Spec Road, Broadwater.



Noisy Pitta

Pitta versicolor

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17-19cm. Face, nape and throat black. Crown deep chestnut, upper parts green. Shoulder and rump iridescent turquoise. Short tail black with bronze-green tip. Underparts buffy yellow. Lower belly black, vent and under tail red. Legs pinkish/brown. White wing spots visible in flight. Distinctive hopping walk. Immature, duller. Call: loud carrying 'Walk-to-work', or single long mournful note. Often heard but hard to see in forest where light is poor.

FEEDING HABITS:

Flicks leaf litter all around as it forages on forest floor in search of insects, worms and snails, using a rock or piece of wood as an anvil to crack open the shell.

BREEDING:

October-December. Nest is domed, bulky, loose construction of sticks, moss, leaves and bark built into base of a buttressed tree. Lined with plant fibres and decayed wood. Both parents incubate eggs and care for young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Often seen on road side or in gardens at Paluma.



White-throated Treecreeper

Cormobates leucophaea

DESCRIPTION:

Size 13-15cm. Dark grey/brown head and back with cream breast and boldly-streaked flanks. Tail has a broad black band near the tip. Male, has a white throat. Female, a white throat with a small rust/orange patch on the neck. Noticeable buff band through wings in flight. Usually solitary except in breeding season. Call: loud rapid peet-peet-peet.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly or in pairs, spirals rapidly up trees searching bark or decaying branches for insects then swoops down to begin low in the next tree.

BREEDING:

August-December. In a hollow branch or tree trunk 5-18m above ground, cup shaped nest made by the female, of bark shreds lined with feathers, fur and moss. 2-3 eggs are incubated by the female whilst the male feeds her at the nest. The male then helps with feeding the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Lake Paluma, Grandis Forest, Paluma Range and Broadwater.



Spotted Catbird

Ailuroedus melanotis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 26-30cm. Sexes similar. Brown and buff scalloped pattern on crown, nape, throat and belly, black chin and ear patch, buff face markings, dark red eye, short pinkish/cream bill, back and tail bright olive/emerald green. Call: frequent nasal very drawn out 'here- -I- -are'.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feed with quick movements from ground level to forest canopy, primarily on fruit but also eat young leaves, insects, buds and small reptiles.

BREEDING:

September-March. The female builds a deep bulky bowl-shaped nest with assorted sticks, rotting wood, leaves, dried fern or palm fronds. This is then lined with vine tendrils and fine twigs. Nest is built in the top of tree ferns, small palms, or trees with thick foliage 2-5m above ground. 2-3 eggs laid and incubated by the female. The male defends the territory and helps care for the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma walking tracks, Lake Paluma and Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Tooth-billed Bowerbird

Scenopoeetes dentriostrius

DESCRIPTION:

Size 26-27cms. Secretive. Dark olive/brown head and back with coarse dark streaks on fawn breast and abdomen, robust bill. Call: extremely varied, melodious through to harsh high-pitched notes, often mimics other birds.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forages in the canopy feeding on fruit, leaves and insects.

BREEDING:

October-January, when the male calls loudly from a perch 1-6 m above his bower to attract the female. His bower is a cleared area on the forest floor, roughly oval which he has decorated with upturned leaves showing their pale underside. When the female visits he drops to the ground, displays, lunging forwards and sideways with spread wings, flicking tail and wide open bill to show white interior. Nest is a flimsy saucer of twigs in a vine tangle or fork in rainforest canopy 10-30m above ground, 2 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Highlands in North Queensland 300-1400m often found along Lake Paluma Road.



Golden Bowerbird

Amblyornis newtoniana

DESCRIPTION:

Size 23-25cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Male, wings, back and head pale olive/brown. Crown, nape, throat and underparts golden yellow. Yellow eye, bill brownish/black, legs black. Entire plumage is glossy and reflects light. Female, olive/brown above, underparts ash/grey. Call: raspy, ratchet-like, whistles and mimicry.

FEEDING HABITS:

Fruit, beetles and cicadas.

BREEDING:

September-January. Male constructs a maypole-shaped bower, usually around two sapling trunks up to 1m apart, joined at the base. Fallen branch connecting both uprights is used as display perch. Decorated with grey-green lichen, pale cream flowers and small greenish fruits. Display includes a variety of calls while posturing and jerking head to highlight the reflective feathers. After mating the female builds nest and raises young alone. Nest, deep bulky cup-shaped structure of sticks and leaves, often in a crevice of tree 1-3m above ground with overhead protection.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma, Birthday Creek Falls.

THREATS:

Loss of habitat.



Satin Bowerbird

Ptilonorhynchus violaceus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 27-33cm. Male, entirely black with glossy blue/black sheen, eye lilac/blue, the yellow/bluish bill is short and thick. Female, head and upper parts dull brownish/green, wings and tail dark brown/rufous. Underparts cream, with crescents of dark olive/grey, becoming bolder on the belly and flanks, giving a scalloped effect. Eye blue, bill dark grey/brown. Call: harsh wheezing hiss or buzzing sounds. Can mimic other birds.

FEEDING HABITS:

Main diet is fruit, shoots and occasionally insects picked from trees and bushes.

BREEDING:

September–January. Display bower an avenue of thin sticks, in two walls. Platforms at both ends are decorated with, flowers, berries, feathers and mainly blue man-made objects. After mating, the female builds the nest, incubate and rear the young. Nest is a shallow saucer of twigs distant from the display bower.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Usually found in rainforest and nearby Eucalypt forest, moving to drier areas in winter. Paluma gardens and Lake Paluma.



Yellow-throated Scrubwren

Sericornis citreogularis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 12-15cm. Male, is brighter, long narrow white to yellow eyebrow. Red eye in a black mask, crown and back dark olive brown, throat bright yellow. Underparts patchy buff and white. Wings brown, flight feathers edged pale yellow. Legs cream or pinkish. Female, facial markings duller. Immature, mottled brown with pale fawn underparts. Call: Melodious high-pitched song. Alarm call is a harsh chatter.

FEEDING HABITS:

Solitary or in pairs, foraging on the rainforest floor amongst leaf litter and around mossy logs for small insects and grubs.

BREEDING:

July-February. Build an untidy large pendulous or globular nest made of blackish rootlets, fern, moss and bark strips. Occasionally build above a rainforest stream, resembling flood debris. 2-3 eggs are laid, both parents share incubation and care of the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Mount Spec, Paluma Range inland to Atherton Tablelands. Look in gloomy understorey of highland rainforest 100-1000m, usually near water.



Large-billed Scrubwren

Serconus magnirostra

DESCRIPTION:

Size 12-13cm. Small plain brown bird, darker on the back, paler underneath, with a prominent dark eye in a pale bluff face. Sunlight through the vegetation "alters" its colour. Longish straight slender black bill that appears slightly inclined upwards due to a straight upper edge and curved lower edge. Call: musical twittering and harsher scolding.

FEEDING HABITS:

Often in small mixed flocks or family parties, foraging in lower and mid-levels of rainforest, over branches, trunks and bark or among debris suspended in vines. Feeds mainly on insects.

BREEDING:

July-January, from 50cm-8m off the ground in a domed nest with side entrance made of bark and fern fibre, moss, feathers, grass. Placed in thick patches of vines or attached to saplings, often uses old nests of Yellow-throated Scrubwrens or Brown Gerygones which it relines. 3-4 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Tropical rainforest. Paluma Range, Broadwater and Wallaman Falls.



Brown Gerygone

Gerygone mouki

DESCRIPTION:

Size 9-11cm. Sexes similar. Plain greyish/brown back, underparts creamy white to soft grey on throat, neck and breast. Tail greyish brown with broad dark band, white spot on tip of tail feathers other than central pair. White eyebrow to bill marking, red/brown eye. Indistinct whitish eye ring. Call: often located by its cheery 'what-is-it', and a variety of persistent insect-like calls.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly and small mixed flocks. Very active, flutters through foliage at all levels feeding on insects. Sometimes hovering with rapid wing beats.

BREEDING:

August-February. Long, slender dome nest with a little hood over entrance. It narrows into a long thin tail and is slung from a slender stem or vine 1-15m above ground, often near water. Nest material can include plant fibres, moss, lichens or spider web. Both parents feed young. Often the unsuspecting host for Little Bronze-Cuckoo.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Coastal and mountain rainforest, Forestry Road, Paluma, Broadwater.



Fairy Gerygone

Gerygone palpebrosa

DESCRIPTION:

Size 10-11cm. Head and upper parts a dull olive/brown, distinct white spot on either side of forehead. Male, white 'moustache' stripe down sides of throat with blackish throat and neck merging to lemon below. Female, throat white merging to lemon below. Eye red, legs and feet black.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage in pairs or small parties in the foliage canopy, seeking insects on the wing, sometimes with other small forest birds. Attracts attention with constant twitterings and song as it gleans.

BREEDING:

September-March, but may breed at any time. Nest a short, spherical dome with wispy tail and hood-type side-entrance made of plant fibre and spider web, suspended from branch near or over water, often near wasp nests. Eggs 2-3. Both parents feed the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Live and feed in lower altitude rainforest, woodlands and mangroves. Forestry Road, Bluewater, below Ross River Dam, Toomulla Beach and Little Crystal Creek.



Lewin's Honeyeater

Meliphaga lewinii

DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-22cm. Largest and darkest of three similar honeyeaters which overlap in this area. Lewin's having the heaviest-looking bill of the three. Large pale yellow variable ear patch, upper parts to tail plain mid-brown to olive/green, fine cream/lemon line from base of bill to below eye. Underparts pale brown olive/grey with darker mottling on the breast. Call: distinctive machine-gun rattle and harsh scolds.

FEEDING HABITS:

Range singly or in pairs to eat fruit, take nectar from blossoms, and pick out insects from crevices in the bark. They are bold and will approach picnic tables at Lake Paluma in search of handouts.

BREEDING:

August-January, cup-shaped nest of bark strips, leaves and moss, bound together with spider web, suspended in leafy foliage in gullies or over streams. Lay 2-3 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Resident in rainforest, secondary growth, wet sclerophyll forests. Paluma gardens, Hervey Range down to Alice River, Rupertswood and Mt. Elliot in winter.



Yellow-spotted Honeyeater

Meliphaga notata

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17-19 cms. The second of three similar honeyeaters which overlap in this area. Slightly smaller than Lewin's and having a longer, finer bill. Dark olive green/grey back and head, paler underparts and very lightly streaked throat, fine yellow line from base of bill to below eye, the yellow ear mark forms a more rounded (variable) triangle. Call: loud, metallic high-pitched scolding. (Learn the calls. This helps identification a lot).

FEEDING HABITS:

Aggressive, usually single but can be in small parties, foraging for nectar, berries, fruit and insects.

BREEDING:

September-February. Nest is a cup of bark shreds, palm fibre and lichen, bound with spider web, lined with plant down, suspended by the rim 0.5-4 m above ground in dense growth of a low shrub or mangrove. Female incubates 2-3 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest, vine thickets, mangroves and nearby eucalypts. Often seen at Little Crystal Creek and Pallarenda Quarantine Station.



Graceful Honeyeater

Meliphaga gracilis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 14-16cm. Smallest and final member of a trio of similar honeyeaters which overlap in this area. Sexes similar. Upper parts olive/brown, wings faintly edged olive. Underparts pale light grey. Yellow oval shaped ear patch. The easiest way to identify this small active bird is the slender body shape, yellow gape and long fine, down-curved bill. Call: sharp repetitive 'tick' helps identification, especially when the Yellow-spotted Honeyeater is in close proximity.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly or in pairs, foraging actively at all levels from ground to higher in the canopy for insects, spiders, fruit and nectar.

BREEDING:

October-February. Builds deep cup of grass, shredded bark and moss bonded together with spider web, decorated with green moss and lichen, which hangs from its rim in a horizontal fork, usually low, sometimes over water. 2 eggs are laid.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Little Crystal Creek, Mount Spec to Cape York in rainforest and nearby eucalypts up to about 500m.



Bridled Honeyeater

Lichenostomus frenatus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-22cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes similar. Distinctive 'bridle' with its black and yellow bill, and pinkish blue line from the bill to bare patch under the eye, behind the eye a small white patch, head is dark brown. Back, dark to mid brown, underparts paler grey/brown with light mottling effect. Blue eye, legs black. Call: loud clear "we are".

FEEDING HABITS:

Very active and aggressive, often high in the foliage searching for insects, nectar and forest fruit when available. Likely in pairs, small parties or singly.

BREEDING:

September-January. Nest is cup-shaped, made with pieces of fern, vine tendrils and soft plant stems lined with soft plant fibre. Suspended in a vine tangle or leafy outer foliage of tree, can be up to 8m above ground with 2 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Eucalypt woodlands, rainforest above 450m, top of Forestry Road, Paluma, Lake Paluma and Grandis Forest.



Dusky Honeyeater

Myzomela obscura

DESCRIPTION:

Size 12-15cm. Sexes similar. Easily identified by lack of markings, appears to be uniformly rich brown but head and throat are darker, belly and vent becoming paler, legs grey/brown, long thin down-curving black bill. In sunlight a coppery sheen may be evident. In pairs or larger mixed flocks, competes aggressively with other honeyeaters. Call: persistent whining whistle, scolding chatter.

FEEDING HABITS:

All levels of foliage, flits about actively hovering and hanging upside-down, while feeding on nectar, insects and occasionally fruit. Often has scattering of pollen on the forehead.

BREEDING:

July-March. Nest is a small neat but flimsy cup, built with fine bark, small roots and thin grass bound together with spider web. Nest suspended from small fork in thick outer foliage up to 15m above ground. Both parents participate in nest building and raising young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Little Crystal Creek, Paluma Range, gardens, rainforest edges and woodlands.



Scarlet Honeyeater

Myzomela sanguinolenta

DESCRIPTION:

Size 10-11cm. The male is bright scarlet, fading to white on the underbelly with black wings and tail. The female is much duller, being a tawny colour with a flush of pink under the chin. Immature, are similar. Call: a high-pitched descending tinkling, generally from the top of tall trees.

FEEDING HABITS:

While fruit and insects make up a small portion of the diet, they feed mostly on nectar, foraging on flowers in the upper canopy. They also frequent open forest around wetlands and rainforests.

BREEDING:

June-January. Nest is a small cup of fine grasses and bark bound together by spider web. The female incubates the eggs but both parents care for the young. They may have up to three broods in a season.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma, Running River, Hervey Range, Broadwater. Because of their tiny size and frequenting the upper canopy, they are hard to spot.



White-cheeked Honeyeater

Phylidonyris niger

DESCRIPTION:

Size 16-19cm. Black head and throat, white eyebrow and broad white cheek-patch. The back and tail are black, thinly striped in white. Both tail and flight feathers edged in bold yellow. Underparts are white, streaked with black. Often found in noisy groups using a range of contact calls, whistles and songs especially in the breeding season.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mainly on nectar and insects making hurried visits to nectar-rich flowers of grevilleas, banksias and tea trees. Also hawk for insects, especially when feeding nestlings. Often continue feeding their young after fledging, when they form small family groups.

BREEDING:

Anytime throughout the year. The female builds a cup-shaped untidy nest low in a shrub or grass clump, using twigs, rootlets and grass, lining it with flowers and spider web. 2-3 eggs are laid and incubated by the female. The nest site is strongly defended by the male.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma village and Grandis Forest.



Macleay's Honeyeater

Xanthotis macleayanus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-21cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes similar. Black cap, and rufous area around the eye, the black nape is streaked and the back is a shell like pattern of brown, rufous and white feathers. Flight feathers are brown. The grey breast is streaked. The bill is black.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage high in the trees among the leaves and epiphytes, hunting for insects and spiders which make up 80% of their diet. The rest is fruit and nectar. They are important pollinators of rainforest vegetation.

BREEDING:

July-December. Their nest is a deep bowl, made of leaves, bark and twigs, bound together with spider web. It is attached by the rim to thin branches high in the canopy.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Commonly seen in Paluma, especially around the village gardens. They can become very tame and will eat fruit put out by local residents.



Chowchilla

Orthonyx spaldingii

DESCRIPTION:

Size 26-29cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes differ. Ground-dwelling. Male, black/dark brown with white underparts. Female, black/dark brown with chestnut breast and white belly. Both have bluish/white eye ring, spine tipped tail feathers, black legs and feet. Call: early morning and late afternoon with very loud repeated ringing, often drowning out other birds' calls. Several birds will join in.

FEEDING HABITS:

Usually in small family groups. Often revealed by rustling sounds as they scratch in the leaf litter, propping on their tail as they scratch, looking for insects, beetles and larvae.

BREEDING:

Mainly April- August. Domed nest made with sticks and dry leaves, lined with moss often low to the ground in dense vines, on logs, or in ferns, moss and dry leaves often cover the top to help keep it hidden. One egg is laid, female incubates.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Floor of the rainforest; check all walking tracks at Paluma.



Eastern Whipbird

Psophodes olivaceus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 25-30cm. Shy birds with prominent crested, black head, prominent white cheek-patches, throat and chest black. Back, wings and tail olive green, tail feathers tipped with white. Black bill and feet. Call: the male builds up a series of whistles ending in a resounding whip-crack followed immediately by soft chirrups from the female; a characteristic call and answer sequence.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage in pairs, scratching through leaf litter and fallen logs on the forest floor, feeding on insects, larvae and worms. Keeping in touch with whip crack-calls and soft chuckles.

BREEDING:

July-January. Build a shallow, loose nest of woven twigs, rootlets and grasses. 2 eggs are incubated by the female. She is fed by the male as she broods the young, who leave the nest before being fully fledged. They hide in the under-growth, being fed and guarded by both parents until independent.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Forestry Road, Paluma
walking tracks, Broadwater.



Barred Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina lineata

DESCRIPTION:

Size 24-26cm. This Cuckoo-shrike is easily identified by the prominent barring on the underparts and its yellow eye. Throat and chest are grey, with a fine black mask from bill to eye. The back is grey and the wings are grey, tipped with black. Call: is a rather metallic toy trumpet sound.

FEEDING HABITS:

Their diet consists mainly of fruit and seeds. They also take insects and caterpillars, which they find in rainforests and eucalypt forests. They sometimes visit gardens and orchards. Figs are a favourite food.

BREEDING:

September-March. 2 eggs are laid in a well concealed, small saucer-shaped nest made of fine sticks and spider web, usually in the fork of a branch up to 20m above ground. Both parents share nest building and care for the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Little Crystal Creek, Paluma village, Paluma Range, Mount Elliot, Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Varied Triller

Lalage leucomela

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17.5-20cm. Sexes differ. Male, white eyebrow, black eye line, dark eye and bill. Upper parts glossy-black with prominent white wing bars and tail tips. Grey rump. Underparts white with cinnamon vent. Female, brown/grey upper parts, eyebrow not as noticeable as male, underparts fine dark barring on buff/grey with a cinnamon vent. Immature, paler bird with paler scalloped upper parts and barred underparts. Call: distinctive high chirring, repeated several times.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forages steadily through the foliage at all levels for insects, spiders, fruit and nectar, often in pairs or with small mixed flocks.

BREEDING:

August-April. Build a small shallow cup-shaped nest of grass, fine bark, twigs and spider web on horizontal tree fork, blending into the tree. Both parents build the nest, One egg is laid, then both incubate the egg and care for the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Palmetum, Town Common, Paluma, Forestry Road, Broadwater.



Golden Whistler

Pachycephala pectoralis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17cm. Sexes differ. Male, black head connecting with black band circling a white throat, underparts, shoulders and nape bright yellow, Olive/grey back, wings and tail darker. Female, various shades of olive to grey/brown, paler underparts often with lemon wash under the tail. Immature, have rufous-edged wings and tail. Call: loud and persistent, melodious, end resembles whip cracking.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly or in pairs hopping from branch to branch searching for insects or their larvae. Occasionally will eat berries.

BREEDING:

September-January. Cup shaped nest made with coarse grass, fine dry twigs, bark shreds, dry leaves, basically whatever is available, all loosely bound together with spider web. Lined with softer material. From 0.5-5m above ground in fork of tree well concealed in thick foliage usually with 2 eggs. Both parents assist with incubation and care of young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest, open woodland, Grandis Forest, Paluma, Forestry Road, Broadwater.



Little Shrike-thrush

Colluricincla megarhyncha

DESCRIPTION:

Size 17-19cm. Sexes similar. Upper parts brown/olive, face paler, underparts cinnamon brown with a buff/white throat, faintly streaked. Stout pale pinkish bill and pinkish/grey legs. Call: they have a variety of flute-like calls, whistles, and a wheezing alarm call. Often located by the rustling of leaves as they search for insects.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly or in pairs, they feed on the ground or hop from branch to branch at all levels in the forest. Birds move through vines, tearing at bark and picking out beetles, spiders and large insects. Also eat seeds.

BREEDING:

September-February. Nest is usually a well-hidden deep cup of leaves, bark, moss and tendrils, often in tangled lawyer vines, tree ferns, palm fronds or pandanus. Occasionally in an open site. 2-3 eggs are laid, incubated and reared by both parents.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Vine thickets, open forest, Town Common, Alligator and Crystal Creeks, Paluma.



Bower's Shrike-thrush

Colluricincla boweri

DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-21cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes similar. Small bird with a large blue/grey head and thick dark grey or black bill. The back is also dark grey. Wings and tail grey brown edged mid brown. Underparts are cinnamon, more buff at the throat with noticeable grey streaking. Grey legs. Immature, duller, browner and heavily streaked. Call: is made up of rich far carrying musical trills and chirps.

FEEDING HABITS:

Often solitary, searching under bark, through vine tangles, in trees, and on the ground for lizards and insects.

BREEDING:

October-February. Build a small cup-shaped nest using fine bark strips, leaves and fine twigs bound together with spider web in an enclosed spot like a vine tangle or leafy tree fork. Lay 2 eggs.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest, rainforest edges, gardens in Paluma, mainly above 400m from Cooktown to Paluma and inland to Atherton Tablelands.



Rufous Fantail

Rhipidura rufifrons

DESCRIPTION:

Size 15-16.5cm. Distinctive, small and very active bird. It has brown/grey wings and cap with rufous on the rump and into the upper half of the tail. The rest of the tail is grey. The eye-brow is rufous and the throat is white, leading into a dappled black and white breast. Call: high-pitched and squeaky sounding.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on insects, mostly in the lower parts of the canopy. Pursues insects in short acrobatic flights, often returning to perch on the same branch for a length of time, fanning the tail and flicking the wings.

BREEDING:

October-January. Build a small, cup-like nest from fine grasses, bark and spider web. The nest is usually quite low to the ground, usually perched on a fork with a long tail hanging underneath. Both parents incubate and raise a clutch of two to three young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Town Common, Forestry Road, Paluma, Broadwater.



Black-faced Monarch

Monarcha melanopsis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 15-20cm. Sexes similar with the female slightly duller. Forehead, chin and throat black. Rest of upper parts and breast grey, tail and wings are darker grey. Underparts rufous. Legs blue/grey. Bill blue/grey with hooked tip. Dark eye and eye ring. Immature, no black face mask instead having a wholly grey head, black bill and buff wing tips. Call: "why-you-which-you" also variable deliberate whistles and scratchy sounds.

FEEDING HABITS:

Singly or in pairs, searching amongst branches or leaves for insects and spiders. Often at mid-level in the forest.

BREEDING:

September-February. Female alone builds a very neat, deep cup-shaped nest with fine dry leaves, decorated with moss. A tree fork with little or no screening for camouflage is the preferred site. 2-3 eggs are laid. Incubation and care of the young is shared by both parents.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforests, dense eucalypt forests, moist gullies, Forestry Road, Paluma Range, Paluma, and Broadwater.



Spectacled Monarch

Symposiarchus trivirgatus

DESCRIPTION:

Size 15-16.5cm. A small bird with blue/grey back and wings and a black tail with white tips. The face has a black mask that covers the eyes and extends to the ear coverts and continues down the throat. Cheeks and breast are a reddish/orange, merging into a white belly. Tail is often spread, making the white tips noticeable. Immature, missing the black face, which is replaced with grey. Call: scratchy buzzing sounds.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage singly or in pairs, usually low in the canopy or close to the ground, searching for insects and spiders.

BREEDING:

September-February. A small deep cup nest is built of fine grasses, moss and bits of leaves held together with spider web. The outside is decorated in bright green moss. Nests are usually built about 1.5 to 2m above ground. Usually two eggs are laid.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest at all levels, Forestry Road, Paluma and Broadwater.



Yellow-breasted Boatbill

Machaerirhynchus flaviventer

DESCRIPTION:

Size 11-12cm. Bright yellow breast, black crown, black line through the eye with long bright yellow brow above. Large flat black boat-shaped bill, white throat, black wings with two prominent white shoulder bars, and white edges to wing and tail feathers. Male, blackish above, female, dark olive/grey, female overall is not as bright as the male. Often cocks tail in wren-like posture. Call: musical trills, rapid chuckling.

FEEDING HABITS:

Foraging alone or in pairs, through the canopy and lower branches for insects, often caught on the wing.

BREEDING:

September-February. Nest built mostly by the male. Hammock of fine vine tendrils, pliable twigs, soft dry plant stems, attached by spider web to a slender horizontal fork amongst leaves 4-20m above ground. 2 eggs incubated by both parents.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Often seen at the top of Forestry Road Bluewater, Paluma walking tracks, Wallaman Falls and Broadwater, Abergowrie State Forest.



Victoria's Riflebird

Ptiloris victoriae

DESCRIPTION:

Size 23-25cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes differ. Male, velvety-black back, crown and throat iridescent greenish/blue, black breast-band, belly and vent black with yellow/green toning. Long black bill with yellow gape. Flight is noisy sounding like rustling paper. Female, crown and back grey/brown, buff eyebrow, throat buff, breast and belly light rufous with small brown markings. Call: rasping yaass.

FEEDING HABITS:

They probe the bark of tree trunks and rotting branches with their powerful bill digging out insects. Also eat fruit.

BREEDING:

September-February. The male displays, calling from the top of a bare stump or limb with wings stretched upward. After mating the female builds a nest of leaves, vine and twigs often decorated with snakeskin castings. Well hidden high in the crown of a palm or dense tangle of vines. She incubates and cares for the young alone.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Paluma walking tracks,
Lake Paluma and
Broadwater.



Pale-yellow Robin

Tregallasia capito

DESCRIPTION:

Size 12-14cm. Underparts pale yellow. Pinkish/buff lores, black bill, brownish/grey head shading to olive/green back, shoulders and rump. Chin and throat white. Call: single squeaks advertise its presence. The male has a harsh alarm call, which is also used to advertise his territory.

FEEDING HABITS:

Forage in the lower or mid-stages of the forest on insects. Sitting still and silent on a bare branch or tree trunk, often sideways, it drops onto prey either on the ground or on low foliage. Sometimes catches prey in mid-air.

BREEDING:

July-January. Female builds a nest in the fork of a sapling or vine using dried leaves, bark strips and grass, bound with spider web. The nest is lined with soft fibres, outside is decorated with scraps of bark, moss and lichen. 2 eggs are incubated by the female while the male feeds her.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest at all altitudes,
Paluma, Forestry Road,
Paluma Range.



Eastern Yellow Robin

Eopsaltria australis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 15-16cm. Sexes similar. Small, plump. Upper parts and head grey. Lower back washed olive. Underparts and rump rich yellow. Chin pale grey. Eye dark. Pale brow is just noticeable. Legs blackish. Pale wing-bar visible in flight. Undulating flight, glides into landing. Inquisitive. Very tame around picnic areas. Usually in pairs. Immature, rich brown with paler streaks. Call: monotonous clear piping. Alarm call harsh repeated 'chit'.

FEEDING HABITS:

Drops to ground to catch prey then returns to perch on branch or side of tree trunk. Eats mainly insects.

BREEDING:

July-January. Often more than one clutch each season. Nest in fork of tree usually 1-6m but can be up to 15m. Small cup-shaped nest of fine bark and grass. Very well camouflaged with long pieces of bark. Outside of nest often decorated with lichen. Both parents incubate eggs and raise young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Rainforest edges, Paluma, Grandis Forest and Broadwater.



Grey-headed Robin

Heteromyias cinereifrons

DESCRIPTION:

Size 16-18cm. Endemic to North Queensland. Sexes similar. Dark grey crown and nape, the chin and throat are white, olive/brown ear coverts. The back is rufous and the wings grey with white markings. The belly and flanks buff. The heavy bill is dark with a pale tip and the legs and feet are pink. Call: is reminiscent of a truck reversing.

FEEDING HABITS:

Hunt for insects and larvae in the leaf litter, spending a lot of time hopping along the ground or perching sideways on vertical tree trunks and vines.

BREEDING:

August-January. Build a cup nest of fine grasses and paperbark decorated with lichen and moss, usually in a lawyer-vine 1-4m above ground. 1-2 eggs are laid.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Around Paluma they can usually be seen in gardens and roadside verges. Frequently fly across the roads that lead in and out of the village.



Silvereye

Zosterops lateralis

DESCRIPTION:

Size 11-13cm. There are six Australian races, all are nomadic and migratory, races will interbreed. Males are generally a little darker than females. Easily identified by their small size and conspicuous white eye-ring. Throat and under tail yellow, breast pale grey, dark blue/grey back, and olive rump. The bill is black with a faint bluish base. Call: constant high-pitched single note, often while feeding, through to warbles and trills.

FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on nectar, insects, seeds, fruit both orchard and wild. Often in small feeding groups, moving rapidly.

BREEDING:

September-January. Frequently twice a year. Nest, a compact cup of grass, plant down and hair bound with spider web and suspended in a low fork or vine, 1-4m above ground. 2-4 eggs, both parents incubate and care for the young.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Often found at Little Crystal Creek, Forestry Road Bluewater, and Broadwater, also in gardens and eucalypt woodland.



Bassian Thrush

Zoothera lunulata

DESCRIPTION:

Size 26-29cm. Face and upper parts olive/grey to coppery/brown, feathers edged in a scaly crescent form. Flight feathers brown, a white wing bar shows in flight. Underparts white with upper breast washed a russet/brown. The feathers of the breast and flanks are boldly edged in dark brown. Large brown eyes have a white eye ring. Legs and feet pale pinkish/brown.

FEEDING HABITS:

A quiet ground-feeder, probing in dense moist leaf litter, for worms insects, snails and fallen fruit. When startled it 'freezes', its mottled plumage blending perfectly with the surroundings. The bird then flies away silently through the undergrowth.

BREEDING:

July-September. An untidy bowl of bark, leaves and grasses is built in a low fork or tree stump then decorated with moss and lined with fine tree rootlets. 2-3 eggs are laid. The young are fed by both parents.

PLACES TO LOOK:

Upland cool wet eucalypt and rainforest, Paluma, Wallaman Falls.

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