

The Drongo

Number 150 May 2018



Ray Sutton

Paluma

Birds In Schools

Burdekin

Pentland and Burra Range



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm sure almost everyone heard that the Port of Townsville held an official opening for Berth 4. Norm Rains and I attended to represent BirdLife Townsville. This is all part of the redevelopment of the Port. BirdLife Townsville is represented on the Townsville Port Community Liaison Group by Norm. While Norm is in England visiting family – and, of course, checking out the birds over there – I get to go in his stead. The May meeting was held on Magnetic Island. The Group was taken on a bus tour to view the placement sites for the buoys for monitoring water quality. These buoys will all be in place and operating before the necessary dredging starts. If you are interested in following the development and expansion of the Port there are regular updates on www.townsvilleport.com.au.

Wal Threlfall is heading off to Melbourne at the end of May to represent BirdLife Townsville at the BirdLife Australia's Branch Network meeting. See Wal's article below about the Birds in Schools program.

We have recently donated \$225.50 to the Museum of Tropical Queensland to cover the cost of a specially designed portable display case. This case will contain a collection of Kingfishers which we will be able to get on loan for our education programs.

We have also made a donation of \$200 to Fight4Flight to help with Deborah's work to rehabilitate injured and sick birds of prey.

There have been several sightings of a Rufous Owl near the Owl box at the Bush Gardens. Let's hope this means they like the box and will use it for nesting.

Janet Robino

YOUR COMMITTEE

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

Newsletter Editor Annette Sutton amsgreat@gmail.com

Deadline for next Drongo is Tuesday July 31st.

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

LORD HOWE

We arrived at Lord Howe and were met by the lodge owner. He took us on a bit of a tour and told us heaps of information, most of which I missed because I was busy looking out the window and trying to id every bird I saw. Peering at them as we went by at 25kph, I was imagining that they were all Lord Howe Woodhens. And of course they weren't.



Lord Howe Woodhen

Annette Sibson

A wonderful new place to explore and lovely new birds to find and photograph was very exciting. I leapt out of bed at dawn on the first day and wandered down to Ned's beach. Wow, birds are just flying around waiting to be photographed or sitting on the beach waiting patiently. I didn't know what to photograph first.

We cycled the length of the island on our first full day. The weather was glorious and we were so excited to be there. I didn't see any Woodhens.

The weather was glorious again on our second day. While my husband played golf, I cycled nearly the length of the island, stopping to look here and there and photographing birds as I went. Opposite the airport entry road I spied a little bird under the bushes. Yay, my very first Woodhen. I sat on the ground near it while it foraged and peered at me, then it walked up past me, way too close for a photo. I was thrilled to see at such close quarters a bird that has been rescued from extinction. It was so trusting. Of course, that's one of the reasons it was disappearing, way too trusting.



Buff-banded Rail

Annette Sibson

We had a couple of days of not so good weather, but made the best of it. We found an area at the southern end of the island, on the way to Little Island, that quite a number of Woodhens hung around. I sat on the ground there too and watched them feeding and preening and

again had one that came up so close I was unable to focus to photograph it.

We went to the Golf Club for tea one night, and there were Woodhens just wandering about in amongst the crowd. We did a ramble one day with a local, at one point being introduced to a Woodhen who comes out to be fed rolled oats as part of the ramble!!

I really enjoyed spending time with a Buff-banded Rail family at our lodge, mum, dad and the babies. It was great to be able to sit and watch them feed and hear the soft calls of the parent birds. I had no idea they made such a wide range of sounds.

An amazing place with amazing birds.

Annette Sibson

CLEVER RATS AT PALUMA.

Recently Trish and friends were staying at our house in Paluma. Kind Trish noted that the fish food, kept in the garage near the pond, had been knocked over and chewed by a White tailed rat. Knowing that if she replaced the fish food container on the shelf, the rat, having discovered the wonderful taste of fish, would attack again, Trish carefully decanted what was left into a bottle with a tight fitting lid. Trish carefully placed the bottle in a styrofoam box which was well weighted with wood.

Trish reported all was well and while I needed to bring more on my next trip what was left was safe!

When I arrived the next weekend I went looking for the box and the bottle. There was an empty bottle without a lid snugly lying in the box. Further investigations revealed that the rat had carefully chewed at the lid, all the way around until it was able to remove same. What a clever rat.



The fish food now lives under the house.

Beth & Wendy



SURPRISE VISIT

Just before cyclone Iris decided to visit the coast, we had an unexpected visitor across the road from the house in the grass. My eagle-eyed husband, Graham, spotted the small bird thinking it was a mouse. He was most surprised to see in his photo that it was a Red-backed Button-quail, which is a new species for us. He hid in the grass for a short time and we haven't seen him since, but it sure made Graham's day.



Red-backed Button-quail

We have been watching the local shorebirds in the Burdekin delta through summer and the numbers have been high. We have seen various terns, with a large number of the Little Tern, even had over 100 Pied Oystercatchers there for several weeks. Godwits, Sand Plovers, Sandpipers, Turnstones, even Pacific Golden Plovers visited. The cyclone made it hard to keep checking and most of the birds were gone by the time we made it back out in the boat.



Red-necked Avocets

We did get to Wunjunga through the wet though on 21st of March and were lucky enough to find a large number of birds on that day.

An interesting sight was over 30 Avocets walking with over 200 Black-winged Stilt, but the most unusual sight was a Melanistic Little Egret feeding with the Glossy Ibis. The Black-tailed Godwits were coming in to colour to.

When we went back two days later, nearly all the birds were gone. Mind you, it could have had something to do with the Peregrine Falcon there. The Marsh Sandpipers weren't bothered by him though.

Denise and Graham Holder

BIRD MELANISM

By [Melissa Mayntz](#) Updated 04/04/17

What Is Melanism

Melanism, or melanosis, is a condition caused by a genetic mutation that gives a bird excess amounts of melanin or dark pigmentation in its feathers.

This makes the feathers much darker than normal plumage, and many melanistic birds appear completely brown or black or may only show accents of other colors. There are two ways melanism can affect birds' plumage:

- Normally dark markings, such as a bib, hood, eye line, malar stripe or wing bars, are bolder and noticeably "overrun" their typical boundaries
- All the plumage is darkened and appears completely dark brown or black with very little variation overall and other typical markings obscured by the deep color

Just like with [leucism](#) or very pale plumage, melanism can vary for different birds. Some individuals will show much darker plumage than normal with very obvious color changes that make them nearly unrecognizable. Other birds will have less noticeable color changes, particularly if they already have dark markings and such changes may be less prominent.



Melanistic Egret

D and G Holder

How to Identify Melanistic Birds

When a bird's typical plumage and field marks can no longer be seen, identification can be more challenging. When looking at a melanistic bird, it is impossible to rely on color alone to determine the species, since much of the color will be overshadowed by the darker plumage. Instead, birders should pay particular attention to the bird's size and shape, behavior, feeding, range and song. If the bird is found in a flock, its associates can be strong clues about the species, even in mixed flocks. Carefully examining the bird's legs, feet, eyes and bill is also useful, as melanism only affects the feathers and other body parts - a pale bill, colored legs or bold eyes - will be unchanged.

Acknowledgement to <https://www.thespruce.com/>

NOISY NEIGHBOURS

ANZAC Day, 25 Apr 18, 15:06.

I was opening up the shed to start a few little jobs that need doing. As I latched back the rear door I heard an almighty din coming from the branches of an African Mahogany tree 60 metres down the road. Blue-faced Honeyeaters (BFHs) were making an awful racket. I saw a bunch of them fly out, appearing to harass one another, and then return to the tree. The racket continued unabated. In flew a Great Bowerbird and then another. Within seconds three Australian Magpies joined the rest in the tree and the din increased. Something had stirred the locals up. Another Bowerbird flew overhead to join the throng and then more Magpies from a long way off alighted in the tree. Then a couple of Figbirds and another Bowerbird. What was going on?

I stood there for a little while hoping to see what happened next and if the subject of the commotion would make an appearance. I was thinking to myself 'I wonder if these species would make such a commotion if it's the Brown Goshawk, which we see around the place quite often, cornered in the tree?' About seven BFHs flew out of the tree, headed off some distance and for an instant I thought that the din would subside. No, they circled and returned to the tree taking up the racket once more.

That's it, I thought. I had to go and have a look. I walked through the alleyway and stopped at its end closest to the tree. Yep the din was continuing and from my vantage point I could see the Magpies flitting back and forth within the canopy of the tree. I moved closer. Moving slowly so as not to spook whatever may be the subject of the commotion, if there is a subject. Within 10 metres of the tree I could see the BFHs hanging upside down on the far side, screeching and looking to their right. I noticed a couple of Magpies swoop in the direction the BFH were looking. However I could not see the subject of their attention. I moved a little closer and out of the corner of my eye I saw a shadow fly off through the branches on the far side of the tree. Damn, did I spook it?

Maybe not as the din continued. I took another couple of tentative steps while peering high into the tree and there hard up against a vertical branch was a Southern Boobook. It looked down at me as if to say 'oh no not you too'. Other than that it seemed quite unperturbed by the ruckus. Having satisfied my curiosity I got back to what I had planned to do. A Southern Boobook, a first for me in Kirwan.

Mark Horvath



Ian Boyd

MUSINGS FROM THE MUSEUM

Night at the Museum

At the recent Night at the Museum, on Friday 13th of course, Taxidermy was on display out in the Great Gallery.

We were kept very busy with lots of folk watching and asking questions about the Dollar Bird Julia was working on, the Dolphin skull that Ian was replacing teeth in and the Blue-winged Kookaburra I had.

Many visitors were surprised to find out that we have a Taxidermy team at MTQ and that while interested, the majority know very little about our local birds.

While working on my beautiful Blue-winged Kookaburra, a young boy, about 7, asked if he "could look inside its mouth?" I obliged and was as surprised as he when there, inside the beak were two toad legs! No prize for guessing what this bird died from. For the remainder of the evening I was kept busy opening the beak as word spread amongst the children as to the surprise within! Some of the adults asked if I was going to remove the toad....but as I wasn't looking forward to that, and wasn't sure just what condition the toad would be in, replied that I needed to continue to remove the body and the toad would come out still in the crop....(I hope).



It was also asked if I planned to mount the bird with the toad legs sticking out of the beak..... I am considering that and have spoken to John about skinning toads....

Suggestion was, "throw that one and get a fresh one" and that the legs would be 'easy' to do..... Time will tell!

Insects

Sadly we found an insect alive in the taxidermy room. This was cause of great concern as the threat of insect attack on our mounts is ever present. It is for this reason that any birds that leave the room to visit schools, libraries or other venues must come 'home' via the quarantine freezer. Any biological item is placed in the -20° freezer for 3 weeks to ensure that any insect or eggs hiding in or on the bird, branch, skin etc is well and truly disposed of. Sadly at some time there was a slip up and a tiny insect came in! Then Julia discovered that her flying

mount of a Little Kingfisher, destined for the Birdlife Perspex display case was losing feathers and needed to be disposed of.

The incidents were reported to the conservator and the word came back..."Remove, freeze, clean, then fumigate!" Now any of you who have visited the Taxi room will know that we have lots of treasures....Well they all had to leave and be refrozen as there was no way of telling if any others were affected. It took a week with everyone helping to get the job done...then after 3 weeks they all had to return.

This process is still underway due now to the goods life being refurbished... Life is never dull at MTQ

Birdlife Case

Recently the club generously agreed to fund the construction of another perspex case, similar to the one that houses the Barn Owl. Many of you will have seen the Barn Owl in its case at Ian Boyd's last presentation, while others will have used it at various schools and displays. Julia has been hard at work putting together a display of Kingfishers of Townsville. Included are The Azure, Sacred, Forest, Little and Red-backed. We didn't have a Collared or Mangrove to add...they are hard enough to see alive and obviously even harder to find dead. They are now beautifully arranged and the case size has been carefully measured and these measurements sent off to the Perspex manufacturer for a quote. Julia will construct the base to fit neatly inside once the case is returned.



Barn Owl Ray Sutton

The Barn Owl, is currently living in the freezer. When it comes back to the Taxi room, Julia plans to open it and check the bird as it was noted that the Owl was a little wobbly on its perch. Can we please ask that when these cases are transported they continue to sit on someone's lap or be secured with a seatbelt. The cases protect the birds from fingers but the birds within are still fragile. The thin wire that holds them in place isn't able to cope with much movement.

Beth Snewin



BIRDING BREAK

For the past weekend I've enjoyed being indoors after two weeks of living in a tent in various national parks throughout SE Queensland.



Speckled Warbler

I'd never visited Lamington, and with a three week break from uni, that's where I decided to go. On the way from Townsville I travelled inland to avoid the weather and stopped at a couple of free camps, then spent two nights at Bunya Mountains. There I heard (but didn't see!) several Sooty owls calling near the campsite.

From Bunya, I spent weekend at Girraween where I saw lots of birds I'm familiar with from living in Sydney and the Hunter but had never seen in Queensland: Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Superb Lyrebird, New Holland and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters.

Next stop was Sundown for Turquoise Parrots and Speckled Warblers, and a reminder as to how prickly pears got their name. I then headed east to Lamington for three nights and got the first lifer for the trip- Paradise Riflebird. I dipped on Albert's Lyrebird and the two thrushes which were not happy with the massive numbers of people at Green Mountains for Anzac Day.



Turquoise Parrot

Tomorrow I'm going after my nemesis bird (Black-breasted Button-quail) before the long drive back up the coast. I'm up to 134 birds for the trip including 20 species I've never seen in Queensland before, have taken lots of bad photos of good birds and had loads of fun!

Graham Castles

LORD HOWE ISLAND MK 2

Pat wrote last edition about our trip to Lord Howe. Here is a bit more from my perspective.



Buff-banded Rails

The first time I flew to Australia the pilot pointed out Lord Howe Island and Ball's Pyramid and I thought I'm going there one day. Only took 47 years but I made it, woo hoo! It did not disappoint. It is beautiful and the weather was great with no rain, loved every minute of this trip.

Malcolm and I did the strenuous walk to Malabar Cliffs/Kim's Lookout. While this trip only required about 6000 steps, let me tell you they were almost all straight up or straight down. Our legs were tired after that but it was worth the effort. We had lots of Red-tailed Tropicbirds, Sooty Terns, Masked Boobies and Common Noddies, some cruising at eye level and the views of the island and surrounds were spectacular.



White Tern

For our second boat trip we had to wait until the afternoon of our last day when the wind eventually died down enough for us to take the trip around the island. One of the little offshore islands had dozens of nesting Masked Boobies with rather large chicks, and then on to Ball's Pyramid, about 25kms south of Lord Howe Island

On departure right there at the new airport terminal which was still in the process of being built (we departed from a container and tent) we saw a Woodhen wandering through the new building, a brilliant end to our trip. I finished up with nine lifers.

Just a few words of wisdom:-

1. Book a car well in advance, (you will be pleased you did). If you leave it until you arrive you will more than likely miss out.
2. The Top Shop supplies BBQ packs (good value, plus they deliver).

Marleen Acton



Lord Howe Woodhen



Look Out Malcolm



Sooty Tern

Who Owns These Feet?

This photo was taken by Bob Murphy. You will have to wait until August to find out.



Easter at Pentland

Eleven of us travelled to our meeting point at the Pentland Caravan Park, with most arriving on Friday. Our first short trip on Friday afternoon was to the Pentland Dam which was the first time in several years and although the water wasn't deep, a number of birds were busy feeding here, including Black-winged Stilt, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Marsh Sandpiper, Royal & Yellow-billed Spoonbill, White-necked Heron, Coot, and in the vicinity, Restless Flycatcher, Zebra & Plum-headed Finch, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Dollar Bird and Pale-headed Rosella.



Yellow-billed Spoonbill Annette Sutton

On Saturday we headed west to White Mountains National Park. Our first stop was the gravel pits just outside the park, usually a good spot for honeyeaters and small birds feeding on the grevillea. To our disappointment, the gravel pit is now an active work site after many years of inactivity and much of the growth has been destroyed so birds were very scarce. Here we saw two Diamond Doves, Striated Pardalote, Rufous Whistler, Red-backed Kingfisher and numbers of Brown Honeyeaters.



White-eared Honeyeater Ray Sutton

Continuing into the National Park, again birds were hard to locate. Our list here included Jacky Winter, Noisy and

Little Friar Birds, Grey-crowned Babbler and our target birds, two White-eared Honeyeaters which put on a show at our morning tea spot. This is the northernmost area of its range.

On Sunday, two of the group had to leave and the rest of us explored the Gregory Springs Road. Just east of Pentland along the road, we stopped to admire the numbers of Squatter Pigeons sunning themselves. Some kilometres further up the road a dam we had been given directions to was worth exploring and here we saw more Squatter Pigeon, Weebill, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel, White-throated Honeyeater, Pale-headed Rosella, Diamond Dove, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike just to name some.

Around the caravan park we saw Great and Spotted Bowerbird, Pied Currawong, Galah, Apostle Bird, Red Winged Parrot, Brown Goshawk.

Altogether a good weekend, good company and good birds.

Warren Charlton

A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO FEATHERS

www.glenchilton.com

Curious to learn more about birds? There is a wealth of information in the scientific literature. However, many of these studies are written for Ornithologists and so are in the specialised language they share. Many research articles have complex methods and statistics which may make them difficult to understand. All scientific articles assume that the reader is already aware of previous work in the field. Consequently, reading the scientific literature can be quite a challenge.



With this in mind, Professor Glen Chilton is posting weekly descriptions of recent Ornithology studies on his website, www.glenchilton.com. These "A Traveller's Guide to Feathers" have all the content but none of the jargon, and are put into context for you.

Glen's writings are meant for bird enthusiasts who are curious about the latest advances in Ornithology. The

studies are global in scope, and consider birds of all types. From penguins on Bouvet Island to snake-eagles in Israel, *A Traveller's Guide to Feathers* provides fascinating insight into birds, in all their beauty and complexity.

Glen Chilton is a Professor Emeritus with St. Mary's University in Canada, and an adjunct professor of biology at James Cook University in Townsville, specializing in bird biology and behavioural ecology. He is also the author of the bestselling books *The Curse of the Labrador Duck* and *The Last Place You'd Look for a Wallaby*. Glen writes a weekly column concerning recent advances in the field of bird biology under the title *A Traveller's Guide to Feathers*; this column can be found on his website: glenchilton.com.

Lisa Chilton

DUCKS

This pair of Pink-eared Ducks obviously knew they were on to a good thing. Just before the entrance to Blandensberg National Park we came across a waterhole. Among some other really nice birds was one pair of Pink-eared Ducks. They just sat in this one spot, ignoring our presence, feeding continuously. There must have been something really appetising in this particular bit of very



un-appetising looking water.

Janet Robino

BIRDS IN SCHOOLS

This year your Club is partnering with Birdlife Australia, Townsville City Council and a number of Primary Schools (Years 5 and 6) within the Townsville region (Weir State School, Townsville Grammar Junior School and St Michaels on Palm Island) to implement the "Birds in Schools" Program.

The Program is designed to foster enthusiasm, conservation action and a life-long interest in the wonderful world of Australian birds

The Program will consist of 4 modules:

Module 1: A background module (Bird is the Word: teaching notes plus one lesson to be delivered to students). This is to support the three hour training workshop (which was held on Monday 23 April at Riverway Arts Centre). Ten members of Birdlife Townsville volunteered and attended the workshop as well as Teachers and Helene James from TCC Community Programs Officer.

Module 2: All about Birds - how to bird watch and do a survey, three lessons - Term 2) This is where we help support the Teacher.

Module 3: Crunch the numbers - how to analyse the data (three lessons - Term 3)

Module 4: Take Action - how to complete an Action Plan (three lessons - Term 4)

Each lesson has a number of activities and most lessons take sixty minutes with the Action Plan implementation being the creation of a bird friendly garden (at each school), courtesy of the Townsville City Council.

At this stage Birdlife Townsville has visited the three schools and prepared the ground work (a brief lesson on the Program itself, Bird ID and Surveys) as well as attending the Workshop (a special thank you to our volunteers)

Currently I'm in discussions with Cathedral Junior School and hopefully they will also come on board.

Wal Threlfall

Email from St Michael's Palm Island

We put this on our Facebook page:

Mr Wal and Mr Norm from Birdlife Townsville visited Year 5 today. They taught us a lot about birds, their habitats



and what to look for when observing them. We compared the weight of different animal skulls and realised that bird bones are very light - this allows them to fly.

We used telescopes and binoculars to observe bird photos on the fence and then used charts to identify and name the birds. Now we can't wait to find and record all birds that live around our school!

Thanks again

Janet



A SHORT TRIP OUT WEST

Janet and I decided to get away for a few days to see some different birds. We drove to Pentland where we had intended to stay overnight, BUT there was a mix-up with my booking and all they had was a single bed, which was for two of us -----so we travelled on to Hughenden for the night, which meant we had a comfortable night in a Motel!!!! Next day we drove to Richmond and saw flocks of Budgies and Cockatiel, Little Eagle, Black-breasted Buzzard, Black Falcon and several Spotted Harriers, Masked and White-Browed Woodswallows.



Flock Bronzewings

Janet Robino

Next morning we left early to travel to Winton, where we intended to stay three nights. It is mostly a gravel road in good condition, and that was when we had our biggest thrill. Some pigeons flew over and we identified them as Flock Bronzewings, "Lifer" for both of us. Then we noticed a Dam about 150 metres away with flocks of them around the edge, when, lo and behold, a flock flew off and landed on the road behind us. A quick turn about and we sat and admired about thirty of them just sitting and moving around on the road. Janet took plenty of photos!!!! We estimated approximately 100 altogether. What a sight! We then travelled a little further and had a flock of Pratincoles, which were also very obliging, sitting for Janet to take photos again. Apart from Swirling flocks of "Emerald Jewels" sparkling in the sun and many Cockatiels, that was all until we reached Winton.



Banded Lapwing Janet Robino

The Sewerage Ponds are always a must, but this time were very disappointing, with a Hoary-headed Grebe and Little Grass bird the only birds on offer. The water was too high, and there were no flattened reeds for Crakes etc. So across the road to Pelican waterhole, where we saw Crimson Chats and Spinifex Pigeons. Next day we drove to Opalton. On the way at Scraggs Bowzer we saw Hooded and Red-Capped Robins, also Halls Babbler, only two, but close views. Opalton was very disappointing, apart from the flies almost carrying us away, no birds of note. There is so much large heavy machinery, noise and

many tracks, plus the strong breeze, we found only Magpies and a White-Plumed H.E.

The following day we were joined by Elna and Beth and spent the day at Bladensberg. Banded Lapwings and two Pink-Eared Ducks were good to see. Nothing at Scrammy Gorge, except the wonderful view!! We saw plenty of other birds that we had seen previously, and had a lovely day, although we did need our Fly Veils!!!!

We ate lunch in the car rather than face the battle of getting the food to your mouth without ingesting some extra protein in the form of flies.

A bonus was that we discovered that you can very successfully use binoculars with the fly veils firmly in place.

Barbara Reidy

WONGALOO SURPRISE

On Thursday, 3rd May, it was a cool, overcast morning. Only four hardy souls braved it to do the survey at Wongaloo. The skies cleared, temperature remained nice and cool and there were no mosquitos. There was lots of water in the wetlands. The tracks had very recently been slashed so driving was mostly pretty easy. There were a few boggy, slushy patches which unfortunately meant we could not get to the Emmet Creek site. BUT.....what a reward we got for our early, damp, dreary start!

Some of the highlights were: 350 Black Swans; Pallid Cuckoo calling his little heart out; lots of Rainbow Bee-eaters flashing about in the sun; pair of Black-fronted Dotterels doing the 'broken-wing thing' (we didn't see the eggs but were very, very careful about where we walked); and a couple of richly coloured Sacred Kingfishers.



Square-tailed Kite Ray Sutton

The really big hit with us all was the appearance of a Square-tailed Kite. It was in no hurry. It glided and floated overhead, showing himself from every possible angle. At one stage, it was so low we didn't really need binoculars to make a firm identification. I personally had not seen one for about 10 years so I don't need to explain how excited I was! We all agreed this was the bird of the day, and well worth getting up early for.

Janet Robino

IAN BOYD – ‘BOYDIE’

17 February 1945 – 23 February 2018

I first met Ian when he was a member of the Townsville Town Common Natural History Association. The association conducted regular walks for members of the community to raise awareness of the importance of this area. Ian continued to work with various Government and Non-Government agencies for the conservation of the Common for the rest of his life.

In 1991, Ian and a few other members of the association founded Townsville Region Bird Observers Club which morphed into BirdLife Townsville which has just over 150 members. Ian was a long standing member of the committee and President of the club for several years. He was a Director of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia. Ian was always very modest about his achievements but they were recognised by several awards. Ian was a holder of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia's Distinguished Service Award and a Townsville Volunteer Award.



Powerful Owl Ian Boyd

He was very involved in a whole range of projects. He developed and delivered many education programs for school children. He would often have the children, and the teachers, spellbound with his wonderful photos, sound effects, his enthusiasm and vast knowledge. These sessions formed the basis of BirdLife Townsville's ongoing School education program. He was tireless in his efforts to raise awareness of birds and the need to protect their habitat. Ian gave many talks to community groups and was frequently asked for a repeat performance. He represented BirdLife Townsville on many organisations' working groups to ensure the best possible outcomes for birds and their habitat.

Ian combined his love of birds with his love of photography. He was part of a small group who formed BirdLife Photography which now has a membership of 500 plus. He served as Convenor of this group. He then went on to get BirdLife Townsville's Photography Group up and going. Both groups support photographers of all levels to develop their skills and increase their enjoyment in photographing birds. Right to the end, Ian was helping

people understand and make the most of their new cameras.



Grass Owl Ian Boyd

Ian was known far and wide for his interest in Owls. His email address having the word *Ninox*, which is a genus of true owls, was a bit of a give-away. It was often said that he was on a first name basis with every owl in the Townsville region. He was very involved in our Owl Box project to replace breeding hollows lost during Cyclone Yasi. BirdLife Townsville was privileged to have Ian as the guest speaker for our AGM on 10th February where he shared with us his pictures, knowledge and love of the local Owls.

During this last week, BirdLife Townsville has received many messages of support from members, Government and non-Government agencies and members of the community. Every message expressed sorrow at the loss of such a gentleman, and how much he will be missed. Ian has certainly left huge boots to fill.

Janet Robino

President BirdLife Townsville

PAULINE TAYLOR

We have lost another of our Founding Members of Townsville Regional Bird Observers Club. Pauline Taylor (Payet) served as club secretary for several years. It is thanks to the hard work of these early committee members that BirdLife Townsville developed into the successful branch of BirdLife Australia it is today. Although Pauline was not active with the club in recent years, she remained interested in all of nature's creatures and the natural world. Pauline died after a long illness but lived life to the fullest right to the end, enjoying a wonderful cruise with her husband Ken.

QUEST

Name	Quest Number	Date
Janet Robino	297	24-10-17
Graham Castles	264	21-09-17
Marleen Acton	233	21-08-17
Beth Snewin	226	14-08-17
Ian Leach	212	31-07-17
Wal Threlfall	205	24-07-17
Pat Charlton	197	16-07-17
Warren Charlton	188	07-07-17
Rosemary Payet	162	11-06-17
Elna Kerswell	161	10-06-17
Annette Sutton	160	09-06-17
Janet Cross	157	06-06-17
Annette Sibson	156	05-06-17
Carolyn Osterhaus	76	17-03-17
Julia Goldsbury	65	06-03-17

Social Media

There have been some very interesting sightings and great birding appearing on my social media over the last few weeks. It is a good way to see what your fellow birdwatchers are up to. Some are from former members who have moved away but joined other groups within Birdlife Australia. Some are locals.

Beth and Elna have been out west and found Painted Finches near Mt. Isa. She reckons the Painted Finches were worth a dose of duck lice at Lake Moondarra. Not sure about that myself.

Chris Corbett and Rosemary Payet have been out at Winton. Crested Bellbirds, Spinifex Pigeons, Spotted Crake, Baillion's Crake and Hall's Babblers are just a few they have seen.

Warren and Pat recorded Red-backed Kingfisher at Woodstock. Ivor saw Rufous-throated Honeyeaters at the northern end of the Borrow Pits. We saw three Beach-stone Curlews on the reclaim near Ross Haven Marine.

Peter Valentine is having a great time way over in the west. He saw eight species of finches in one day, including Gouldian, Star and Masked out near Wyndham.

Greg Bortolussi posted a great picture of a Double-eyed Fig-parrot he saw on the Cairns Esplanade.

Annette Sutto



Double-eyed Fig-parrot Greg Bortolussi