

# The Drongo

Number 162 May 2021



*Norm Rains*

Cairns

Thirty Years On

Migratory Data



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been a bit of a challenge this year to complete our surveys and outings. Many activities have had to be cancelled due to rain or threatened heavy rain. We are still eagerly waiting to kick off the Wongaloo Surveys for 2021. However, the rain has kept the roads throughout Wongaloo unfit for all vehicles other than that nifty six-wheeler that Mark Stoneman whizzes around in.

The Covid 19 pandemic has also caused lots of issues. The Committee is committed to providing as many outings as possible for members but to make sure this can happen, everyone needs to make themselves familiar with the BirdLife Townsville Covid Plan. This 'new normal' could be with us for quite some time so I'm sure we will all get used to it in time. It is important to register for any activity at least 48 hours beforehand by contacting the leader as per the Activities Page on the Website. If there are no registrations by the time required, the activity will be cancelled.

Our six new pull-up banners were unveiled at the March meeting. The banners are a great addition to our community and education efforts.

BirdLife Townsville has been able to negotiate a storage space at the Senior Citizen's Centre at Belgian Gardens. The space is much larger than the previous unit and \$20 cheaper per month.

BirdLife Townsville was successful in obtaining a grant from the Townsville City Council, partly to assist in the cost of the storage. The grant will also cover the cost of IT training in the area of managing the website and the communication system.

*Janet Robino*

### MR. WILLY WAGTAIL

A little Willy Wagtail was flirting in a tree.  
A tiny imp in black and white fluting a symphony,  
"Sweet pretty creature! sweet! sweet!" Exultant melody  
Came trilling from his swelling throat, as he burst his heart with glee.  
He looked about him for a mate, and she landed in his tree  
As he strutted up and down the twigs, and pranced in harmony.  
He bowed and scraped, and fluttered round and sang and sang,  
Till she came sidling up beside him, and he promptly winked at me.  
As if to say "Aren't I a dude? I know she can't resist  
My lifting serenade of love, she'll soon be mine, I wist  
I must away and build a nest." And as they pertly kissed  
I knew that many other Springs this rogue had made a tryst.

EXTRACT FROM 'SO YOU'RE GOING WALTZING MATILDA' by Clover F. Nolan 1994.

*Sent in by Julia Goldsburry*



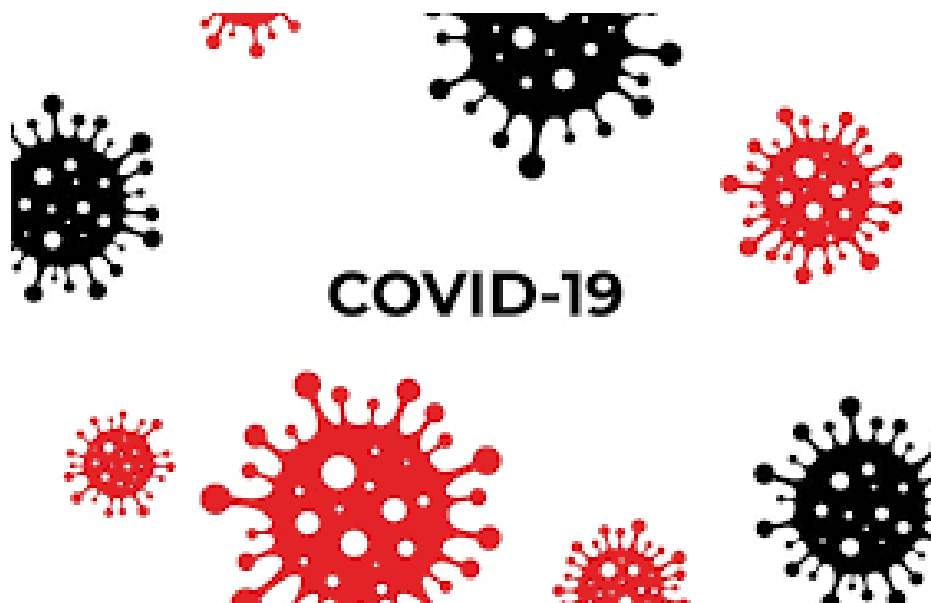
## COVID-19 PLAN

For **ALL ACTIVITIES** (MONTHLY MEETINGS, PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP MEETINGS, SURVEYS and OUTINGS) commencing as from **TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020** - All details on the Club website including contact details of the Leaders

**IF YOU ARE UNWELL or HAVE ANY COVID-19 LIKE SYMPTONS YOU MUST GET TESTED and SELF ISOLATE AT HOME UNTIL YOU RECEIVE YOUR TEST RESULTS**

1. All **ACTIVITIES** will be organised on the basis of a **maximum of 30 Members/Participants only, ensuring the correct physical distancing requirements (1.5m) and two (2) persons per vehicle are followed.** In accordance with TCC and QLD Govt. guidelines.
2. **Members/Participants who wish to attend an ACTIVITY must RSVP the Leader at least 48 hours prior to the activity.** **ACTIVITIES** will be organised on a "FIRST COME" basis --- Members/Participants who **DON'T RSVP** will not be able to participate.
3. The Leader to advise those Members/Participants who RSVP, who will be able to attend the **ACTIVITY.**
4. The Leader to ensure all Members/Participants sign and record their contact details in the "Sign on Book". This is to provide trace contact details if required. Further if required (Meetings only) the Leader is to complete the TCC Covid-19 Community Checklist. The Secretary will then provide these details to the TCC.
5. The Leader is to ensure these guidelines of a maximum of 30 Members/Participants, physical distancing requirements (1.5m) and two (2) persons per vehicle only are followed.
6. The Leader is to ensure all equipment (tables/chairs/light switches/etc) touched by Members/Participants must be wiped down (sanitised) prior to and at the conclusion of the Meeting.
7. The Leaders Safety Bag will be supplied with hand sanitiser and sanitising wipes which will be dispensed by the Leader as and when required.
8. All Members/Participants must have their own binoculars/telescopes etc as there will be no sharing of equipment.
9. Those Members/Participants who breach the above guidelines will be directed to leave.

President: Janet Robino 17/07/2020



## RADIO PROTOCOLS

Often people ask about which channel to use - their newer sets have 80 channels, older ones have 40. Here is the Channel allocation, use chart, along with some information on aerials for installed sets in cars.

BirdLife Townsville when in convoy generally uses Channel 9.

NB - improper use of Channel 5 & 35 can incur jail time or a heavy fine.

Warren Charlton

Channels	Use
<b>Channels 1-4</b>	<b>Repeater Output Channels</b>
<b>Channel 5</b>	<b>Emergency Use ONLY</b>
<b>Channels 6-8</b>	<b>Repeater Output Channels</b>
Channel 9	General Chat Channel
Channel 10	4WD Clubs or Convoys & National Parks
Channel 11	Call Channer
Channels 12-17	General Chat Channels
Channel 18	Caravaners & Campers Convoy Channel
Channel 19-21	General Chat Channels
<b>Channel 22 &amp; 23</b>	<b>Telemetry &amp; Telecommand only (NO Voice or Data)</b>
Channel 24-28	General Chat Channels
Channel 29	Road Safety Channel, Pacific Highway between Brisbane & Sydney
Channel 30	General Chat Channels
<b>Channel 31-34</b>	<b>Repeater Input Channels</b>
<b>Channel 35</b>	<b>Emergency Use ONLY</b>
<b>Channel 36-38</b>	<b>Repeater Input Channels</b>
Channel 39	General Chat Channels
Channel 40	Road Safety Channel, Truckies Channel
<b>Channel 41-48</b>	<b>Repeater Output Channels</b>
Channel 49-60	General Chat Channels
<b>Channel 61-63</b>	<b>Reserved for Future Expansion</b>
Channel 64-70	General Chat Channels
<b>Channel 71-78</b>	<b>Repeater Input Channels</b>
Channel 79-80	General Chat Channels
Aerial	Use
3dBi	Cities, Heavy forest
6dBi	General all round coverage with some restriction
9dBi	<b>Flat open</b> country, convoys. High gain
	NB - Aerials refer to installed radios, not hand held



## THIRTY YEARS ON

This year we reach the 30 year anniversary of our club, how fabulous is that.

I was casually leafing through an old copy (July 2007) of 'The Drongo', trying to come up with an article for the next Drongo issue when I read that our club started in 1991.

In 1991 a group of friends discussed the need for a bird observers club in the Townsville region. They made contact with the Bird Observers Club of Australia (Melbourne based) and asked about forming a branch in the Townsville Region. Melbourne sent up a mailing list of 15 BOCA members in the area. The first Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 14th March 1991. Over 50 people attended and many expressed an interest in joining the club. BOCA is now known as Birdlife Australia.

As I read a few more copies of The Drongo I discovered that the Bird Quest that we all love to be involved with began in 1994. John Lowry devised the quest and put it to members in the November 1993 issue of The Drongo. Then it was called The Great Bird Quest and you had to pay \$2 as an entry fee and 5 cents per bird when you had finished for the year. 27 years later and we are still only paying 5 cents per bird. I did read that in the beginning only North Queensland birds could be included.



*Marleen Acton was the Editor at this time*

Reading the old copies of The Drongo is really interesting. Our club has steadily grown in what we do, with the monthly outings and counts being carried out to keep an eye on our local bird numbers. The Bush Garden area has been counted for nearly as many years as the club has been running. It would be interesting to see the types and numbers of birds seen back then, compared to now.

There are many familiar names in the pages of the old issues, some of our members have been a part of the club for its entirety or close to its entirety. What a fabulous achievement.

*Annette Sibson.*

## UP NORTH

Every time we thought we might head up north this year it rained. Quite often it wasn't raining here, but up Cairns way it was. So on 20<sup>th</sup> April we decided to go in the face of the weather forecast. Rain for the first two days then cloudy and showery for a few days. It turned out pretty much the opposite.



*Cassowary*

First stop, Etty Bay near Innisfail. Two nights in the caravan park on the beach. The weather was grey and drizzly and the sea was dirty and very choppy. The beach was badly eroded by all the rain they had experienced in the last week. But it didn't matter because we had hardly been there when a Cassowary turned up and made an inspection tour of the caravan park, leaving a mound of seed laden poo in its wake. We had three visits from the Cassowary, one for each day we were there. This Cassowary is fearless and very used to humans. It walks up quite near you, gives you a bit of a stare and then wanders off around the park or along the beach. It doesn't mind being photographed but rarely stands still and poses.



*Double-eyed Fig-parrot*

Driving back down the steep hill to the park one afternoon, we saw another Cassowary – same size and colouring but different casque. Then we drove to Coquette Point out from East Innisfail and saw a smaller one crossing the road. We stopped and it came right up to my window. Perhaps people feed it which is a bad thing.

In the rainforest behind the park there were a lot of birds calling and chattering. I suspected Metallic Starlings and then suddenly they appeared. Many of them were juveniles in their black and white dress.



*Varied Honeyeater*

Next stop, Cairns where we spent three nights. They had just had huge rainfall and part of Cool Waters Caravan Park where we stayed had to be evacuated. The creek had risen to within inches of the camp kitchen, perched high up on the bank. Cordylines and other plants were covered in mud, witness to the height of the water. The creek had dropped a lot but it was still racing through. A huge tree had fallen and crossed the creek, its crown resting on the opposite bank from its roots. A system of vines reached across above the tree, still attached to the upper branches and made the whole thing look like a bridge with rope rails.



*Sharp-tailed Sandpipers*

A visit to the Esplanade was productive as usual, but most of the waders, including Nordman's Greenshank, had flown off to the other side of the world. We did find some Great Knots, Bar-tailed Godwits, Grey-tailed Tattlers and Eastern Curlews. In the fig tree above us we had lovely views of Double-eyed Fig-parrots, Figbirds, Varied Honeyeaters and Metallic Starlings. Meanwhile, down on the mud, a Sacred Kingfisher caught and ate a few crabs. Further north on the Esplanade we picked up Pied Oystercatchers and an Eastern Reef Egret, grey morph.

We went out to Edmonton to a Turf farm. All there was was a bit of a puddle by the side of the road. We found about seven Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and two Black-fronted Dotterels but not a lot more. We went for drive

up to Port Douglas along one of the most scenic drives in the world. Lovely lunch of fresh barramundi at Palm Cove that we are still paying off.

Our next move was to Atherton where it rained most of the time. When the BOM radar said all was clear I realised the radar can't spot that fine misty rain. So although BOM said it was OK we were in misty rain a lot of the time. Hastie's Swamp was very quiet. There were a score or so of Plumed Whistlers, a half a dozen Hardhead, a couple of Australasian Grebes and a bunch



*Purple Swamphen and chick*

of Purple Swamphens, some with chicks. The first day we went to Lake Barrine we saw about fifty Great Crested Grebe out on the middle of the lake. Didn't see them on subsequent visits as the visibility was so poor.

At the van park and at the back of Lake Tinaroo we found Bridled, Lewin's, Macleay's, Dusky, Yellow-faced and White-cheeked Honeyeaters as well as a couple of Eastern Spinebill. One lone Great Crested Grebe showed up at Downfall Creek. Red-browed Finch, Little Shrike-thrush, White-headed Pigeon, and Wood Ducks added to the list. All in all, I added thirty birds to my Quest which was lucky as I was about to fall off the perch.



*Great Crested Grebe*

One day we will go up north and it won't be raining. Maybe.

*Annette Sutton*

## DISPLAY BANNERS

Birdlife Townsville receives ABEF Grant for Display Banners

Birdlife Townsville was awarded an Australian Bird Environment Foundation (ABEF) grant last year. The funding has been used to produce six retractable display banners focusing on local bird species and their particular habitats. The banners will be an important resource for the club when participating in community events, information days and educational programmes.



A sub-committee was elected to design banners with colourful visual impact with the aim of attracting public attention and providing opportunities to engage with people interested in regional birdlife and the club's activities. A striking design was drafted and replicated in different colours with each colour representing the six environment categories; Rainforest (red), Woodland (green), Wetland (blue), Coastal (yellow/brown), Raptors (orange) and Endangered (black). Photos were sourced with permission from club members and the Birdlife Australia photography gallery. A short paragraph about the habitats, their conservation status and importance to birdlife was included as well as the clubs contact details. The display banners will be an important educational tool as they are informative and appealing to school students. They come in durable carry bags that can be easily stored.

*Julie Goldsbury*

## APRIL VISITORS

I had a very short visit from a Rufous Fantail on 27 April. I was fortunate enough to be at the kitchen sink at the right moment as it made its way through the garden. A nice little distraction from doing the dishes!

A more persistent visitor is the Orange-footed Scrubfowl. I had first noticed some patches of mulch that had been dug over in the garden on 14 March. At first I blamed a stray cat. However, the patches increased in number and got to the stage where plants were being dug up..... and it is still here on 1 May!

I was rather excited when I first spotted it, but it is starting to wear out its welcome! In the beginning, I thought, "Oh, well, I can sort out the garden when the O-F Scrubfowl moves on to a more suitable area". Obviously, it thinks my back yard is a suitable area.

*Janet Robino*

## MUSEUM MUSINGS

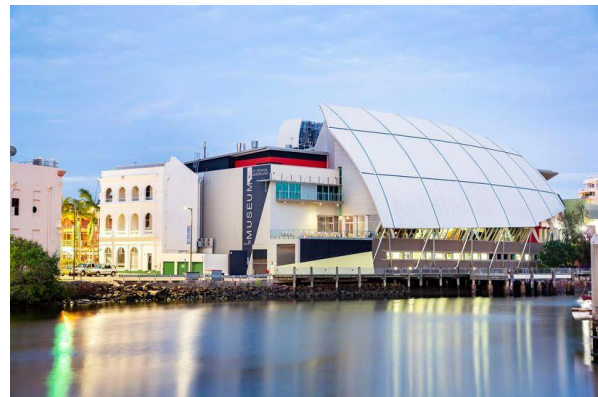
Well the museum will open again with a soft opening on May 1st for members only. Times will be from 9.30am until 4pm daily.

The Pandora exhibition has been refurbished and will look very good I feel sure with new objects and interactive text.

A new exhibition called "Antiquities" is being installed and will open on Friday 7th I believe. This is a travelling exhibition and has items from both Roman and Greek times.

The Box Gallery will be used for the World Science Festival and will then feature an Ancient Roman exhibit.

The two bird cases will have some different birds displayed. These attract a lot of interest from both local folk and that rare species "Overseas visitors". Hopefully they will soon be able to think about migration routes and may pass our way.



The Taxidermy team after being away from the museum for many months decided we had better start practising our craft. We met at my place and while the first few days were lots of "I've forgotten what to do here" and "This is harder than it used to be" we were soon feeling more confident and our skills improved as our confidence returned. Two new volunteers will start on our return to MTQ, Kerry Johns and Mark Spinks. They will bring our team to 5. Visitors will see some action in the taxidermy room on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Birdlife Far North has requested a second box of bits and that is what we are currently working on.

*Beth for the taxidermy team*



## HABITAT DIRECTORY

BirdLife’s Migratory Shorebird Habitat Directory was launched on April 21st on World Curlew Day!

It’s really a landmark accomplishment for all of us, celebrating thousands of surveys undertaken by volunteers over many years. Now we need your help: After we’ve done the science, we need to make the Directory known, its very existence, what it is and can do for the protection of migratory shorebirds. The word needs to be spread! Your local council, consultants, NRMs, teachers, rangers, really anyone interested in the environment, involved with planning, assessments, or protected areas has to be made aware that the Directory exists to be able to make use of the information it contains.



Eastern Curlew

Annette Sutton

Please help us reach them all and spread the news – on social media. Pick it up in your branch newsletter, call your trusted local radio station or journalist to highlight an important area near you, do an excursion to this site some time, forward the link to stakeholders and organisations you work with. While the Directory certainly does not contain all sites important to shorebirds, it does offer a selection of highlights which you can use in your local outreach work. Don’t know what to write? Find below a media release BirdLife will send out tomorrow for your use, add details on your local area, or take text from the introduction or discussion sections of the Directory to help you get started!

And if you haven’t had the chance to have a proper look yet, find some more detail and the entire Directory for download here: [www.birdlife.org.au/directory](http://www.birdlife.org.au/directory)



Dr Steve Klose | Migratory Shorebird Program

## STILL GOING

Wisdom the Albatross, the world's oldest known wild bird, has had a chick at the age of at least 70. The Laysan Albatross hatched the chick on 1 February 2021, in a wildlife refuge in the North Pacific Ocean. (Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge)

Laysan Albatrosses usually only live for 12- 40 years. Wisdom was first identified by researchers in 1956 and tagged with Z333. Wisdom's partner, Akeakamai, who she has been with since 2012, has been sharing the nesting duties.



From the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Midway\\_Atoll/News/Where\\_Is\\_Wisdom.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Midway_Atoll/News/Where_Is_Wisdom.html)

Annette Sibson

## FRIGHTENED LITTLE BABY

Hearing a bit of a clamour at the door in the breezeway, I went out to find a very frightened looking juvenile White-gaped Honeyeater clinging onto the insect screen. It was ruffled and trembling and watching over its shoulder. Obviously, something had chased it and got pretty close. After about five minutes of calming time it flew off to the front garden and sat very quietly for at least another thirty minutes. It eventually started to call to the parents for a feed and seemed to be a happy little bird again.

Janet Robino





## QUEST

Name	Quest Number	Date
Len Ezzy	276	3/10/2021
Anne Lawrance	238	26/08/2021
Janet Robino	234	22/08/2021
Barbara Reidy	227	15/08/2021
Marleen Acton	224	12/08/2021
Mark Horvath	214	2/08/2021
Paul Thompson	213	1/08/2021
Warren Charlton	199	18/07/2021
Ian Leach	199	18/07/2021
Annette Sibson	195	14/07/2021
Pat Charlton	195	14/07/2021
Wal Threlfall	190	9/07/2021
Elna Kerswell	176	25/06/2021
Beth Snewin	173	22/06/2021
Greg Calvert	168	17/06/2021
Rosemary Payet	167	16/06/2021
Brigid Glass	155	4/06/2021
Wendy Kaus	147	27/05/2021
Annette Sutton	142	22/05/2021
Jill Staunton	130	10/05/2021
Peter Staunton	130	10/05/2021
Julie Goldsbury	129	9/05/2021
Kathleen Vowles	120	30/04/2021
Paul Thompson	74	15/03/2021
Trish Jordan	45	14/02/2021



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

[Deadline for next Drongo is July 31st. Please send articles as Word documents, photos as attachments.](#)

[The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Birdlife Townsville.](#)