Bird watching in the tropics

The Cairns Highlands has a wide variety of habitats such as rainforests, wetlands, grasslands, agricultural land and also has one of the largest extents of any region in Australia.

It is home to over 300 species of birds and 12 of these are local endemics, being:

• ferryman: generally seen in the higher altitude rainforests.
• Atherton Scrubwren: higher altitude rainforests.
• Masked Thrush: higher altitude rainforests.
• Macleay’s Honeyeater: common at lower and mid altitudes in all types of woodland.
• Bridled Honeyeater: common, found in rainforest and adjacent woodlands.
• Grey-headed Robin: common, seen at higher altitudes.
• Chowchilla: easiest when calling in the early morning, higher altitude scrub.
• Bower’s Shrike-thrush: fairly easy to find in higher altitude rainforests.
• Pied Monarch: throughout except at highest altitudes.
• Victoria’s Littletreat: throughout rainforested areas and riverine parks.
• Tooth-billed Bowerbird: easiest when displaying in mid to higher altitude canyons.
• Goshawk: Bowerbird: seen at bower during breeding season (Sep–Jan) at higher altitudes.

Additionally many distinct subspecies occur including:

• Double-eyed Fig Parrot: • Rosella
• Southern Boobook: • Masked Owl
• White-throated Treecreeper: • Yellow-browed Scrubwren
• Brown Gerygone: • Yellow-throated Long-crested Falcon
• Yellow-faced Honeyeater: • Eastern Spinebill
• Pale-yellow Robin: • Grey Fantail
• Satin Bowerbird • Bassian Thrush

Whatever time of year you decide to visit there will always be plenty of birds to see.

October to April may be our hotter and wetter months, but it is the time when the migratory species arrive from Papua New Guinea including the Superb Ornithorynchus Paradise Kingfisher, Channel-billed Cuckoo and Common Koel.

Many birds such as Noisy Pitta are also breeding at this time of year and are easier to observe as they search for food. During our cooler, drier, winter months (May to September) the Victoria’s Riflebird is displaying and winter breeders such as White-eared Monarch can be easier to see.

During the period, Breeds and Scaus Cranes are also found on the Tableland breeding on the agricultural fields.

Regional information is available to suit all styles of travel — bed and breakfast in historic villages, backpacker cabins and national parks provide for ample bushwalking opportunities and the numerous national parks and the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef are available to suit all styles of travel — bed and breakfast in historic villages, backpacker cabins and national parks provide for ample bushwalking opportunities and the numerous national parks and

Cairns Highlands

The Cairns Highlands has long been a favourite destination for locals from the coast. Plenty of quality accommodation is available to suit all styles of travel — bed and breakfast houses, self-contained cottages, motels, caravan parks and camping grounds.

Marvel at the picturesque volcanic crater lakes, cascading waterfalls, rainforest and woodland scenery. Numerous national parks provide for ample bushwalking opportunities and the rich and diverse flora and fauna. To tempt you for some tea, coffee, cheese and tropical wines welcome visitors.

Cairns is a place to explore and enjoy in all seasons.

Or contact the following friendly visitor information centres:

Atherton (07) 4091 4222
info@atherton.org.au
Mareeba (07) 4092 5504
info@mareebaheritagecentre.com.au
Kuranda (07) 4691 1931
Malanda (07) 4966 7657
info@malandaflatts@bigpond.com
Herberton (07) 4694 3424
info@herbertontouristcentre.com.au
Bewees (07) 4439 7900
chillagoeinfo@bigpond.com

Tropical Tablelands Tourism
www.athertontablelands.org.au

There are over 430 bird species in the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.
Mt Lewis Road winds its way as it wends its way through rainforest and pastures, where upland rainforest species such as Golden Bowerbird, Oswinville and Blue-faced Parrotlet (Olive and April) are found. This road is good for birdwatching and checking out the odd kangaroo that might be seen. This land area is part of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy property ‘Breakdown Nature Reserve’.

Abattoir Swamp

A boardwalk and hide overlook the swamp. The woodland area around the car park is often productive and when the paper bark trees are flowering, large numbers of orchids and warblers are attracted to this area. Cranes and rails can also be seen around the swamp. Northern Potterite and car park.

Davies Creek Falls National Park

Davies Creek flows over huge granite boulders surrounded by rainforest. There is a picnic and camping area and walking tracks. Fauna include Rainbow Rosellas, White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-browed Hermit and Lourie Australia. Flycatchers are found across the city by a convenient gravel road accessible for caravans.

Mt Molloy

Drive out onto the causeway at the southern end of the lagoon. The causeway is accessible by a sealed road. Wildlife observed at the Black-necked Stork often seen around the lagoon. The lagoon is home to many water birds including man-made wetland and good for dry-country birds. At the southern end of the causeway at the end of the causeway is a lookout for the sea eagle and with abundant waterbirds including sea eagles, magpie goose, black swan, and wood ducks.

Barron Falls National Park

Two short circuit walks wander through dense vegetation, where many birders and nature enthusiasts find what they are looking for. At the Barron Falls Lookout visitors can enjoy the park’s natural and cultural heritage. Look for Mick’s Whistler.

Mt Molloy

Recent rainforest habitat with Wattle-birded Sea Eagle and endangered Swamp Harrier. Located off Choaoro Road at Walkamin. Access to see a few species, including Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and sulphur-crested Cockatoos. A popular location for small birds to feed.

Nardello’s Lagoon

A tiny national park also known as Nardello Willands is home to more than 200 bird species. An early morning visit is the perfect place to spot varied species. Located 5 kilometres south of Mt Molloy, off Herberton Road. Bird highlights include Black Throated Scrubwren, thorn billed honeyeater, Dollarbird, and White-browed Scrubwren. A popular location for small birds and walking tracks.

Lake Mitchell

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