**Tours and Guides for Birders**

**A** Daintree Boatman Nature Tours
The “Daintree Boatman” Murray Hunt, is a professional and passionate birdwatcher. He provides cruises on the Daintree River and 4WD birding tours of the local area.
Ph: 0417 651 929  www.daintreerivertours.com.au

**B** Daintree River Wild Watch
Small, personalised tours operated by Ian “Sauce” Worcester provide excellent sunrise and sunset birdwatching and photographic opportunities.
Ph: 07 4098 6278  www.daintreeriverwildwatch.com.au

**C** Birdwatching Tropical Australia
Doug Herrington provides full or half day bird and photography tours in the Port Douglas, Daintree, Julatten and Mareeba areas for small groups of 4 or less.
Ph: 0418 757 288
www.birdwatchingtropicalaustralia.com.au

**D** Fine Feather Tours
Del Richards, with eighteen years local experience, offers a range of half and full day birdwatching tours from the Daintree River to Julatten, Mount Lewis and the outback.
Ph: 07 4094 1199  www.finefeathertours.com.au

**E** Cassowary Tours
Expert guides offer a wide range of day trips or fully accommodated tours around Tropical North Queensland and the Cape York Peninsula.
Ph: 07 4093 7318  www.cassowarytours.com.au

**F** Alan’s Wildlife Tours
Alan Gillanders is a natural history generalist with a particular passion for birds and nocturnal mammals who finds the local endemics and iconic species.
Ph: 07 4095 3784  www.alanswildlifetours.com.au

**G** Jabiru Safaris at Mareeba Wetlands
Early Bird and Sunset Safaris enable visitors to explore the Reserve by 4WD with an experienced savanna guide. Pre-booking essential for specialist Birders’ tour.
Ph: 07 4093 2514  www.jabirusafarilodge.com.au

**Accommodation for Birders**

**H** Red Mill House
Long established birdwatching B&B in Daintree Village with large gardens and pond. Ideal for exploring the Daintree River and surrounds. Guided tours and packages available.
Ph: 07 4098 6233  www.redmillhouse.com.au

**I** Thala Beach Lodge
5 star eco lodge with glorious beach and rainforest setting close to the natural attractions of Cairns, Port Douglas and the Great Barrier Reef. Bird guide available.
Ph: 07 4098 5700  www.thalabeach.com.au

**J** Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge
Self-contained units in a 5ha rainforest nature reserve. Also has a camping ground and bunkhouse. Access to Mount Lewis close by. Guiding, morning and night walks available.
Ph: 07 4094 1263  www.birdwatchers.com.au

**K** Cassowary House
Naturalists guest-house within World Heritage rainforest at Kuranda near Cairns. Ideal base to explore coast and highlands. Cassowaries and riflebirds are frequent visitors.
Ph: 07 4093 7318  www.cassowary-house.com.au

**L** Jabiru Safari Lodge at Mareeba Wetlands
African-style safari tents with en-suite in 2000ha wildlife refuge. Walking trails, canoe hire, eco-cruise on Clancy’s Lagoon and free entry to visitor centre also available to day visitors.
Ph: 07 4093 2514  www.jabirusafarilodge.com.au

**M** Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat
Self-contained tree houses, secluded in 93ha of rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest with restaurant, private walking tracks and birding tours available.
Ph: 07 4096 8360  www.rosegums.com.au

**N** The Canopy Treehouses
Relax and enjoy luxury accommodation set in 40ha of ancient rainforest teeming with wildlife and with a river running through. Birding tours available.
Ph: 07 4096 5364  www.canopytreehouses.com.au

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**Cairns Region**
Daintree, Cairns Highlands, Mission Beach

www.birdingtnq.com.au
Check the website for more information, sites, directions and bird lists.

Cover photos: Jun Matsui, Keith & Lindsay Fisher
Rainforests, mountains, dry country, swamps, lakes, mudflats and reef

It is no wonder that so many birds call the Cairns region home. With the variety of habitats such as mountain, coastal, riverine, mangrove, wetland, woodland, grassland, rainforest, rural and urban parkland, this area has the largest avifauna of any region in Australia. It is home to over 450 species of birds of which 12 of these are local endemics. The higher altitude rainforests that some of these species occur in, is usually above 600m.

Wet Tropic Endemic Species

Tooth-billed Bowerbird - easily seen when displaying in mid- to high-altitude rainforest between August & December.

Golden Bowerbird - best seen at bowerwars during breeding season (Sep-Jan), chance sightings out of this period, generally at higher altitudes.

Fernwren - generally seen in the higher altitude rainforests.

Atherton Scrubwren - higher altitude rainforests.

Mountain Thornbill - higher altitude rainforests.

Bridled Honeyeater - common, some altitudinal migration in winter, found in rainforest and adjacent woodlands.

Macleay's Honeyeater - common at lower and mid altitudes in and around rainforest areas.

Chowchilla - easiest when calling in the early morning, usually in higher altitude rainforest.

Bower's Shrike-Thrush - fairly easy to find in higher altitude rainforests, some altitudinal migration.

Pied Monarch - throughout rainforest and adjacent woodlands, except at highest altitudes, but can be elusive.

Victoria's Riflebird - throughout rainforested areas and adjacent woodlands, but can be elusive.

Grey-headed Robin - common in rainforest, generally at higher altitudes.

(Lesser Sooty Owl has now been lumped with Sooty Owl and is no longer a “Wet Tropics” endemic.)

Names and Taxonomic order taken from:

Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds

Christidis L & Boles W E (CSIRO, Melbourne 2008)

Additionally many distinct subspecies occur including:

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot
Crimson Rosella
Southern Boobook
Masked Owl
Satin Bowerbird
White-throated Treecreeper
Yellow-throated Scrubwren

Brown Gerygone
Yellow Thornbill
Eastern Spinebill
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Grey Fantail
Pale-yellow Robin
Bassian Thrush

Great-billed Heron - Jun Mansil
Sooty Owl - Keith & Lindsay Fisher

Whatever time of year you decide to visit there will always be plenty of birds to see. October – April may be our warmer and wetter months, but it is the time when migrant species arrive from Papua New Guinea including the beautiful Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, Channel-billed Cuckoo and Eastern 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-Sept) the Victoria’s Riflebird are displaying and winter breeders such as White-eared Monarch can be easier to see.

Trips on the Daintree River are good for riverine and mangrove species like Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher and Shining Flycatcher. Enjoy the tranquil experience of an early morning trip watching birds and wildlife start their day or a late afternoon trip ending with a tropical sunset. All these options provide great opportunities for wildlife photography.

Join a wildlife tour with any of our experienced guides to fully appreciate the huge diversity of birds and other wildlife in our region and learn about the habitats they live in.

Apart from birding there is also a whole host of other wildlife and environmental related activities available in the region. Have a day on the reef at the seabird breeding colony of Michaelmas Cay off Cairns, where you can also snorkel, dive and view the reef. Take the Skyrail cable car from Kuranda or Cairns and observe the birds from above the rainforest canopy.

Other interesting animals occurring in North Queensland include Platypus, Echidna, Tree Kangaroo, a variety of possums, the iridescent Cairns Birdwing and Ulysses butterflies, Giant White-lipped Tree Frog and Boyd’s Forest Dragon.

Trails

To help you find your way around to see the best birds, we have suggested some bird trails which will take you to some of the diverse habitats found in the Cairns region.

1 Stone Curlew Trail
Cairns & northern beaches.
Experience shorebirds, lowland species such as Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves and Pied Imperial Pigeons (Aug-April) and both Bush and Beach Stone-Curlew.

2 Kingfisher Trail
Mossman & Daintree
Eight of Australia’s nine species of kingfisher maybe found in this area including the Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher. This species can be found in northern Australia during the summer months (November-April) where they nest in arboreal termit mounds before returning to New Guinea for the winter.

3 Honeyeater Trail
Julatten & Mt Lewis
20 species of honeyeater have been recorded in this area. Wet Tropic endemics, Macleay’s and Bridled Honeyeater, along with the other 10 Wet Tropic endemic species can be found on Mt. Lewis.

4 Bustard Trail
Mt Carbine to Mareeba
The Australian Bustard can be found along this dry country trail, especially at Maryfarms. Open woodland and several wetlands ensure an excellent variety of bush and waterbirds throughout.

5 Catbird Trail
Kuranda to Mareeba
Mid-altitude rainforest and drier woodland give a huge variety of species including the Spotted Catbird.

6 Riflebird Trail
Cairns Highlands (Atherton Tablelands)
A number of days can be spent exploring the wide variety of sites on this trail. Victoria’s Riflebird may be found in any of the many rainforest areas.

7 Cassowary Trail
Cairns south to Mission Beach
Mission Beach has long been the stronghold for Southern Cassowary which may be encountered on walking tracks in the rainforest along with many other lowland species.
1 Cairns Foreshore (Eupalana)
Often cruise viewing of many migratory waterbirds, shorebirds, egrets, gulls and terns, unexplored areas in the world. Main season for migratory waterbirds is August-October.

2 Century Lakes
Preserved with fresh and saltwater lakes, lowland swamp forest, melaleuca wetlands and boardwalks provide varied habitat. Look for Little Kingfisher and Black Stilt.

3 Flecker Botanic Gardens and Mt. Whitfield Conservation Park
Conservation and recreation provide the Whitfield Range (through rainforest and eucalypt forests).

4 Pioneer Cemetery – James Cairns
This site is on Bush Stone-curlew.
5 Jack Barnes Bicentennial Mangrove Boardwalks – Cairns Airport Drive
Two boardwalks within the mangrove allow easy access to mangrove species such as Chestnut-backed Kingfisher, Brown Creeper, White-faced Heron, Rosy Crowned Spoonbill and Mangrove Robin.

6 Redden Island
Road access via Malanda Beach. Contains a high diversity of habitats in a small area and should be a good species range including dories near the Damen River mouth.

7 Catton's Wetlands
Operated in 2009, this rehabilitated creek field is now a Native Conservation Park and provides habitat for a great variety of bush and water birds. Accessible by either Yeronga Knob Road or McGregor Road, Smithfield.

8 Yule Point
Extensive flats with a fringing reef which is exposed at low tide. Many migratory shorebirds found here including Curlew. Also Beach Stone-curlew and Little Tern.

9 Michaelmas Cay National Park – Great Barrier Reef
Important seabird breeding site for Common Murre, Shearwater. Crested Tern. Frigatebirds and boobies often seen. Access with commercial tour companies.

Blingfisher Trail – Mossman & Daintree

10 Mossman Gorge – Daintree National Park
Dive spotted leaf lettuce. Use 2.4 km loop walking track to avoid the crowds in the picnic area. Double-eyed Fig-Pigeon, Noisy Pitta, Pardalote and Yellow-breasted B Eqbird are present.

11 Newell Beach area
Area is known for Red-naped and Barn Swallow in summer months, check pterodactyls. The beach at the Mossman River mouth also good for waders and Cigalid Kingfisher in mangroves.

12 Wonga Beach
This is a reliable Beach Stone-curlew location and is also a good place to find Double-eyed Fig-Pigeons to open vegetation.

13 Daintree Village
Tiny township on the Daintree River encompassed by rainforest and wetlands. The river is accessible by tour boat from the Daintree River Wharf, Well known for Great-billed Heron, Black Bittern, Little Kingfisher and Pampa Frogmouth.

14 Stewarts Creek Road
A historic road through Daintree Village. Travels through different forest types, fernland, wetland and creeks. Lawley Forksten, Little Bronze-Crowned, Dusky Gerygone, kingfishers and raptores.

15 Jindalba Creek to Daintree National Park
North of the Daintree River. Provides easy access to the rainforest and species such as Southern Cassowary, Victoria’s Riflebird, Bush-crested Pheasant-Fish, Wompoo Fruit-Dove and Noisy Pitta.

Barron Headwater – Cairns – northern beaches

16 Mt. Lewis
The road winds up 10km to 950m where uplifted rainforest species such as Golden Bowerbird, Choughs, fowlers, Aerthom Sandgrouse and Blue-faced Parrot-Finch (Mouru) are found. The road is closed due to the conditions before you go.

17 Abattoirl Swamp Environmental Park
A bird hide overlooks the swamp. The woodland area around the car park is often productive and when the paperbark trees are flowering large numbers of larger passerine and honeyeaters are attracted to the area.

18 Mowbray National Park
Walking tracks through rainforest, which can turn up some of the more difficult to see rainforest species. Has a isolated population of Chestnut-crested Cuckoo.

Honeysuckle Trail – Mt Lewis & Julatten

19 Maryiarmys
East and West Maryiarmys provide a relatively good location for Australian Russet, other species recorded include: Squirrel Pigeon, Brown Crowheath, Red-rumped Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella and Blue-winged Kookaburra.

20 Mount Molloy
Toucan is good for Red-legged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Great Bowerbird which are common, Blue-faced Honeyeater and Double-banded Finch. Other species in area include Superb Fairy-wren and Little Echidna.

21 Lake Mitchell
Waterbirds, with Broome, Black Swans, Green Pigeon-green, whistling duks, Black-necked Stork and some shorebirds when the water level is low. Also Grey-rumped Bower Bird, Apostlebird, and Red-backed Fairy-wren. Eastern Osprey is regular.

22 Mareeba Wetlands
Dry country species such as Squirrel Pigeon, Brown Tree-creepers, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Western Spiny-cheeked, Grey-browed Babblers, and Black-throated Finch. The lagoon can hold Birds and both pugnacy, crete, comb-tined Jacanas and some ducks.

Beaded Bittern Trail – Mt. Lewis to Mareeba

23 Black Mountain Road – Kuranda National Park
Rainforest habitat close to Kuranda, with a good chance of Cassowary, Red-necked Cuckoo, Wompoo and Superb fruit doves, Double-eyed Fig-Pigeon, Lawley’s Honeyeater, Star quaker of monarchs, Yellow-billed Rosella, Tooronga’s Rigil and Spotted Cattleya.

24 Tinango Creek Road
Driving the length of this road near Mareeba gears a good chance of Squirrel Pigeon, Red-rumped Rosella, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Tree-creepers, Great Bowerbirds and possibly Black-throated Finch.

25 Davies Creek National Park
Davies Creek flows over massive granite boulders surrounded by eucalypt forest. Excellent habitat for dry country birds. For the fit and adventurous, a hike up into the hills behind the falls offers a wide range of mid to high altitude birds including Superb Fairy-wren and even Cuckoo Bowerbirds.

26 Emerald Creek – Dinden State Forest
Beep forest and wet tree-creepers, good for Pale-headed Rosella, honeyeaters including Bowerbird (T. varius), Yellow and White-rumped, Yellow-browed Robin, Westfalia and a chance of Rufous Owl.

Hinchinbrook Bird Trail – Cairns Highlands

27 Hinchinbrook Creek – Wooroonooran National Park
Camping sites and access to walking tracks through level to steep treed rainforest (1000-6000 feet) are available.

28 Tully Gorge and Tully Falls National Parks
Tully Falls trail passes rainforest and wet sclerophyll forests before reaching Kooralum Dam 36km south of Rennelton.

29 Kabun area
Dry sclerophyll forest and forestry plantations providing habitat for dry country species such as Cassowary, Kingfisher, Pardalote, Brown Treecreeper, Red-browed Pardalote, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Rosella, Spotted Honeyeater, Stiletto and Crested Shrike-Wren.

30 Mt Hysipomamus National Park
Offer good viewing of several endemics, including Redtail, Marbled, Grey-headed Rosella, Chough and has habitat for Golden Bowerbird. Keep a lookout for the occasional Southern Cassowary.

31 Wongabel State Forest
A special site of many rainforest attractions many rainforest birds including Emerald Dove, Wompoo Fruit Dove, White-throated Treecreeper, Fernbirds, Toothed-billed Bowerbird and Brown Treecreeper are found in the 1 hour circuit.

32 Hulse Swamp National Park
A week-end stop, this known in Kabun Wetlands has recorded more than 220 bird species. The two-way bird lists is the perfect spot to see wetland species.

33 Bruneifield Swamp
This extinct volcanic crater is a roosting site for hundreds of Sugar Crane and Brolgas in winter (June-October). Best viewing is early morning on dusk when the black fly is for the evening after feeding in the nearby paddocks.

34 Curtain Fig National Park
Touristy but spectacular, free access to rainforest and a great spot for Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Brown Cockatoo, Rose’s Bittern, Grey-headed Robin, Parrot and Black-faced Monarch. White-throated Treecreeper and Eastern Whipbird.

35 Lake Esham and Barrine – The Crafter Lakes National Park
Walking tracks along these scenic lakes give good opportunities for most of the local endemics and a range of other species.

36 Pelican Point
20ha of regrowth woodland, rainforest and grasses on the shore of Lake Tinaroo has 193 species recorded. Sons Crane may roost here (June-October).

Casuarina Trail – Cairns south to Mission Beach

37 Golborneborough Valley – Wooroonooran National Park
Compagnoi is levelled rainforest along Mulgrave River. Kasewoys’s Fruit trails travelling rainforest and a good levelled site for Victoria’s Riflebird and fruit-doves.

38 Eubenangee Swamp National Park
One of the most beautiful wetland between Ingham and Cooktown. home to waterbirds, grebe and forest doves, Black-necked Stork, egret, herons and bitin the roadwells.

39 Etty Bay
Small pine area with camping and caravan park. Reliable for Southern Cassowary and Beach Stone-curlew.

40 Lancy Creek and Lisima – Yarr O’Shanter National Park
Lancy Creek (1.3km) and Lisima Fan Palm Walk (3.5km) with rich walk of them. Look for Southern Cassowary, Rose-crowned & Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Red-winged Cuckoo, Choughs and Yellow-browed Rosella.