

TRIP REPORT
Atherton Tablelands
 23rd – 25th November 2021



Golden Bowerbird (*Prionodura newtoniana*)

CLIENTS: Brian & Lyn Reid

GUIDE: Phil Gregory

An excellent couple of days touring a variety of spots and seeing what we might encounter, with some memorable mammals too. Based at Malanda Lodge. We had good early summer weather, so welcome after such a long-wet season that hung on until well into September.

Itinerary

November 23

Cairns area 0700-0800 Esplanade and Northern Mangroves

A few nice things on the Esplanade, starting with a splendid **Beach Thick-knee**, my first of the year, plus an assortment of shorebirds including 2 **Pied Oystercatcher**, 2 **Lesser Sand Plover**, 4 **Whimbrel**, 2 **Far Eastern Curlew**, 10 **Bar-tailed Godwit**, 5 **Grey-tailed Tattler**, 30 **Great Knot**, a lone

Greenshank and 5 **Red-necked Stint**. **Caspian Tern** and **Silver Gull** were also present. The mangrove area gave a stunning view of a **Rose-crowned Fruit Dove** in figs by the playground, tiny **Peaceful Doves** on the path, and a great **Torresian Kingfisher** with its huge bill in a Casuarina. Other good birds were **Torresian Imperial Pigeons** not long back from New Guinea, fabulous views of **Varied Honeyeater**, **Australian Figbird** with its yellow underparts and red face patch and best of all a pair of the Macleay's taxon of **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** which were calling well and spotted by Lyn right above us. **Mangrove Robin** also showed nicely. also **Australian Swiftlet**.

Machan's Beach

A quick visit after **Lovely Fairywren** was successful, although challenging for photographs.

Wright's Lookout, Kuranda

A second bite at the **Lovely Fairywren** with better results, although still challenging as ever. **Yellow-spotted Honeyeater** showed quite well as did **Fairy Gerygone**.

Jack Bethel Park, Mareeba

No sign of White-browed Robin, but **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, **Brown Honeyeater** and **Yellow Honeyeater** were seen.

Granite Gorge

Great looks at the very localised endemic **Mareeba Rock Wallaby**, the very close **Squatter Pigeons**, an elusive **Pale-headed Rosella**, **Dollarbird**, **Great Bowerbird**, **Grey-crowned Babbler** 1, **Little Friarbird**, **Noisy Friarbird**.

Small lake on Chewko Road

White Pygmy Goose 1, a good find of what has become a very uncommon species here.

Atherton Tablelands sites

Hastie's Swamp

En route to the swamp we saw several hundred **Magpie Geese** near Dairyland, but couldn't pull over safely, so it was nice to see these strange long-legged nomadic wildfowl close by at Hastie's. **Australasian (Pacific) Swamphe**n showed well in all their purple finery, a lone **Dusky Moorhen** swam by and there were more **Coots** and **Australasian Grebes**. Ducks were good too with **Plumed Whistling Duck**, chestnut coloured **Hardhead**, **Pacific Black Duck** with their metallic green speculum, **Grey Teal** and a dozen **Maned Ducks** which are quite scarce here.

Intermediate (Plumed) Egret showed nicely, as did 2 **White-necked Heron**, one of which was preening in bizarre poses. **Royal Spoonbill** and **Glossy**, **Australian White** and **Straw-necked Ibis** were also present. **Black Kite** was the large raptor we saw several times around here too. **Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** showed well and was quite photogenic

November 24

Mt Hypipamee

A wonderful **Golden Bowerbird** male near his double maypole bower, **Grey-headed Robin**, **Atherton Scrubwren**, a quick look at a silent **Fernwren**, **Bridled Honeyeater**, **Barred Cuckooshrike**, **Grey Fantail** and **Bower's Shrike-thrush** plus a female plumage **Victoria's Riflebird**.

Springvale Road, Wondecla

Pale-headed Rosella 4, **Fuscous-type (Herberton) honeyeaters**, **Banded Honeyeater** 2, **Yellow-**

facéd Honeyeater, Grey Butcherbird heard, Dusky Woodswallow, Eastern Yellow Robin, Olive-backed Oriole, Striated Pardalote.

Wondecla Showground

White-browed Scrubwren, Scarlet Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote.

Hastie's Road near Atherton

White-cheeked Honeyeater, Nankeen Kestrel nearby, Pied Butcherbird

Nerada Tea estate

A great look at a **Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo**, a very range restricted macropod. **Bush Stone-curlew** pair with 2 juvs. **Black-faced Cuckooshrike** 1

Old Boonjie Road, Topaz

Nice looks at **King Parrot** by Sue and Phil's home and the countable established introduction **Helmeted Guineafowl** with 3 babies, **Pied Currawong**.

Yungaburra

Good looks at a **Platypus** from the viewing platform, perfect timing.

November 25

Lake Barrine 0730-1030

We saw **Common Coot** and **Great-crested Grebe** on the lake, and **Little Black Cormorant**.

The Rainforest walk track gave a small group of **Chowchilla** which showed very well; a singing **Tooth-billed Bowerbird** also showed beautifully above his silver-underside leaf stage which this species makes for display purposes on the forest floor, clearing an oval area about 2 m long and then arranging the leaves as sort of stage on it, whilst singing nearby. **Victoria's Riflebirds** called quite close by but stayed out of sight, but **Spotted Catbird** showed quite well. **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** 2, **White-throated Treecreeper** 1, **Olive-backed Sunbird** at the teahouse.

The two enormous bull kauri trees were singularly impressive too in what was a good day for spectacular trees.

Skytrans check-in for Lockhart River at 1230, arrive Lockhart River 1600.



Tooth-billed Bowerbird



Bush Stone-curlews