

North Queensland Observations

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In view of the excellent papers on the Cairns District and Atherton Tableland which have appeared in *The Emu* in recent years, a detailed account of observations made on a short visit to north Queensland would not be justified. However, it may be of interest to prospective visitors to such area to learn that, travelling as a tourist rather than as a bird-watcher, I recorded over one hundred species of birds in the space of ten days.

The notes which follow refer only to species less frequently noted, migrants, nomads and a few species which appeared of special interest for other reasons. All observations were made between April 17 and 27, 1954.

Myristicivora spilorrhoea. Torres Strait Pigeon.

A flock of about twenty birds was seen in flight over Green Island on April 18, and a flock of about fifteen birds over Point Douglas on April 24.

Gallinula tenebrosa. Dusky Moorhen.

Three birds were swimming on a lagoon on the northern boundary of Innisfail. Jacanas were also present.

Phalacrocorax varius. Pied Cormorant.

One bird on Cairns waterfront.

Gelochelidon nilotica. Gull-billed Tern.

Though I was watchful for this species at Cairns, I saw none. *Sterna bergii* was the most frequent tern.

Charadrius mongolus. Mongolian Dotterel.

A number was present and noted on several occasions. In some, the breast plumage was chestnut, the chestnut plumage sometimes extending to the abdomen.

Numenius madagascariensis. Eastern Curlew.

Noted frequently on Cairns waterfront.

Numenius phaeopus. Whimbrel.

Present at Cairns. Probably less numerous than Curlew.

Limosa lapponica. Bar-tailed Godwit.

One of the more frequent waders at Cairns.

Tringa (sp.). Tattler.

A few Tattlers observed at Cairns.

Tringa hypoleuca. Common Sandpiper.

One noted at Cairns on April 27.

Tringa nebularia. Greenshank.

One bird observed at Cairns.

Xenus cinereus. Terek Sandpiper.

Up to five individuals were seen during visits to the Cairns waterfront.

Erolia ruficollis. Little Stint.

This was one of the more plentiful waders at Cairns.

Erolia acuminata. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

A few noted at Cairns. One bird, seen on April 26, appeared to have the throat and breast russet.

Trichoglossus moluccanus. Rainbow Lorikeet.

Flocks of up to twenty birds were observed, both on the coast and on the Tablelands. When I lived on the Tablelands, over thirty years

ago, the birds occurred at Mareeba, where they fed upon ripe mulberries in season, but I do not recall seeing them at Atherton. Certainly we did not encounter them frequently and we did not consider them a pest in maize crops (*cf.* Bourke and Austin, *Emu*, vol. 47, p. 98). It seems possible that these birds have become more frequent with the spread of settlement.

Aprosmictus scapularis. King Parrot.

A flock of four, perhaps five, seen between Millaa-Millaa and Ravenshoe.

Eurystomus orientalis. Dollar-bird.

One seen near Etty Bay.

Merops ornatus. Rainbow-bird.

This was one of the most frequently encountered species on the coastal plain and at Kuranda, but not on the Tablelands.

Machæirrhynchus flaviventer. Boat-billed Flycatcher.

Several observed, associated, at Yungaburra.

Psophodes olivaceus. Eastern Whip-bird.

This species, which almost entirely escaped notice prior to 1940, has been recorded by all recent observers in north Queensland. It may therefore be desirable to record that I often encountered this species in the Atherton district round about 1920. Recently I found it at Yungaburra, Lake Barrine and Kuranda.

Artamus leucorhynchus. White-breasted Wood-Swallow.

One of the most frequently encountered species but almost confined to the coast. Except for a few birds at Kuranda, none was seen on the Tableland.

Aplonis metallica. Shining Starling.

S. R. White (*Emu*, vol. 46, p. 120) recorded a colony of these birds at Paronella Park, South Johnstone. I found no evidence of the species there, and on inquiry from the proprietor, J. Paronella, learned that the birds deserted the nesting tree, a red penda, which I estimated at about one hundred feet in height, in 1945, after having persisted for about ten years. I noted nests in a roadside tree two miles south of Bellenden Ker, at Frenchman's Creek, which were almost certainly attributable to this species.

Streptopelia suratsensis. Indian Turtle-dove.

S. R. White (*Emu*, vol. 46, p. 122) records the introduction of this species to the Cairns district and noted that it was spreading rapidly. I encountered the species at Innisfail and in the surrounding country, at Babinda, where several were observed, and at Cairns where the birds seemed well-established, though not particularly numerous.

Black-fronted Dotterel Swimming.—No doubt the majority of the waders must at times swim. Actual observations are rare however and perhaps are worthy of record. Recently I disturbed a loose party of twelve Black-fronted Dotterels (*Charadrius melanops*) from the edge of a small pool. They alighted on the opposite edge of the pool, with the exception of one bird. This one settled on water about two feet deep and then swam two or three yards to rejoin the party on the mud. The bird floated quite buoyantly and seemed in normal physical condition.—JOHN N. HOBBS, Deniliquin, N.S.W., 23/3/55.