

# Birding Sites



Double-eyed Fig-Parrot



Radjah Shelduck



Helmeted Friarbird



Australasian Darter

## Cooktown

### 1. botanic gardens & finch bay

Hear the very vocal Yellow Oriole, Figbird, Varied Triller, Wompoo and Rose-crowned Fruit-doves, Yellow-spotted, Dusky and White-throated Honeyeaters, Helmeted Friarbird, and Pied Imperial Pigeon in wet season. Not as conspicuous are Leaden Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher, Lovely Fairy-wren.

### 2. mt cook walking path

Patch of rainforest with notable Tropical Scrubwren, Lovely Fairy-wren, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Peregrine Falcon, Grey Goshawk, Macleay's Honeyeater, Barred Cuckoo-shrike, Noisy Pitta, Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher.

### 3. adelaide street to old cemetery

Along the old Cooktown-Laura railway line through mangroves and saltpans, waders, terns, Nankeen Night-heron, Beach Stone-curlew.

### 4. endeavour river boat cruises

Waders, Black-necked Stork, Egrets, Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher, Mangrove Robin.

### 5. quarantine bay - Waterbirds, Kingfishers.

### 6. keating's lagoon

Ducks, Herons, Egrets, Jacana, Pygmy-Geese and Magpie-Geese.

### 7. archer point

Beach Stone-curlew, Eastern Reef Egret, Varied Honeyeater, Waders.

### 8. annan river gorge - Honeyeater species.

## Lakeland & Laura

### 9. normanby river crossing

Riverine forest, Grey Whistler, White-streaked, White-gaped and Black-chinned Honeyeater.

### 10. laura river & lakefield national park

Lagoons and waterbirds, Crimson Finch (white-belly form), dry country species including Black-backed Butcherbirds.

### 11. laura escarpment

Dry country species such as Black-backed Butcherbird, Diamond Dove, Peregrine Falcon, Squatter Pigeon.

### 12. lakeland & honey dam

Brolgas, Sarus Crane, Bustard, Black-breasted Buzzard, Square-tailed Kite.



## Hope Vale & Elim

### 13. endeavour river valley

Riverine forest with Tropical Scrubwren, Grey Whistler, Macleay's and Graceful Honeyeaters, Shining Flycatcher, Large-billed and Fairy Gerygone, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Red Goshawk. Also farming land with Bustards, Black-throated Finch.

### 14. endeavour river escape

Lagoon and riverine rainforest species such as Tropical Scrubwren, Grey Whistler, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo.

### 15. alkoomie station

Dry country species such as Black-backed Butcherbird, Diamond Dove, Peregrine Falcon, Squatter Pigeon.

### 16. hope vale coastal heaths & elim beach

White-streaked, Graceful, Macleay's Honeyeater plus Waders.

### 17. mcivor river & mt webb national park

Black-winged Monarch and Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher in wet season, Spectacled Monarch, Grey Whistler, Tropical Scrubwren, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo.



White-throated Honeyeater

## Rainforest Coast

### 18. bloomfield falls & granite creek

Mix of rainforest and drier eucalypt species, including Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher in wet season, Macleay's, Graceful, Yellow-spotted, White-throated, Scarlet honeyeaters, Lovely Fairy-wren.

### 19. weary bay

Waders and terns on beach, and in the freshwater swamps behind the beach, including Wood Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Grey-tailed Tattler.

### 20. hope islands

Boat charter, especially for terns and waders, Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers, Bridled, Sooty, Black-naped, Common, Lesser Crested, and Crested Terns, Masked and Brown Booby.

### 21. cedar bay national park

Start of walking track, 14.5 km north of Ayton. Rainforest species.

### 22. home rule & falls

Rainforest species, Cassowary.

### 23. lion's den

Rainforest and riverine species.

### 24. mungumby lodge walking track

High elevation rainforest species.

### 25. shipton's flat

Two specialities here are Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo and White-streaked Honeyeater.

### 26. mt misery & mt poverty tracks

High elevation rainforest species, Blue-faced Parrot-finch, Bower's Shrike-thrush, Tooth-billed Bowerbird.



Rainbow Bee-eater



Pied Heron



Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher





Side excursions allow the opportunity to see higher altitude species and there are local lodges which cater well for bird watchers.

Further north at the Hopevale coastal heathlands, when the banksias and grevilleas flower, White-streaked Honeyeaters are numerous. Travel out to Eilm Beach to find some more good wader spots.

**Wet tropics rainforest**

**Rainforest Coast**

A well kept secret, but this area just south of Cooktown boasts all the same Wet Tropics endemic species that you are likely to see near Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands. So if you want some real discovery birding head up north on the sealed Mulligan highway or the 4WD Bloomfield Track. These rainforests are home to such species as Macleay's Honeyeater, Bridled Honeyeater, Pied Monarch, Victoria's Riflebird, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Boatbill and during the summer wet season – Pied Imperial Pigeons, Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher.

On the Normanby River is Lakefield National Park with its lagoons and waterbirds. At the Laura River crossing search among the pandanus for the Crimson Finch (white-belly form), as well as other finches. The road from Laura to Lakefield crosses the Laura River several times. Stop and search for any of the riverine species you may still be missing. The escarpment country here is also home to those you may have missed in the drier country further east. As you return down to Lakefield keep an eye out for the bustards, brolgas, and birds of prey such as Black-breasted Buzzard, Square-tailed Kite and Peregrine Falcon.

**Lakefield national park**

**Lakefield & Laura**

**endavour river valley**

**Hope Vale & Eilm**

**cooktown walking tracks**

**beaches and wetlands**

**endavour river**

**elim**

**Australian Bustard**

**Cooktown**

**Green Pygmy-goose**

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**Birding in Cooktown**

Cooktown is an ideal place for bird watching because there are four main geographical regions that meet here, each with its own set of special birds – Wet Tropics rainforest, Cape York Peninsula forests, coastal wetlands and mangroves and the drier woodlands of the Laura and Battlecamp escarpments. And that's without even counting the Great Barrier Reef and islands.

We've suggested some day trips that can be made based out of Cooktown that will give you a good selection of the diverse birds that the Cooktown district has to offer.

*Being the gateway to Cape York Peninsula, there are some Cape York special species that do in fact get as far south as Cooktown itself so please let us know if you find any!*



Wompoo Fruit-dove



Yellow Oriole



Black-winged Monarch

**Best Times to Visit**

If you want to maximise your chances of seeing our Cape York specialities and the northern wader migrants, then plan your trip for October - early December. This is when the New Guinea migrants have generally arrived back in this part of Queensland and the wet has not yet limited access to some further locations. This is also when the waterbirds are at their most spectacular.

**Further Reading**

If you have any target species be sure to check the Birds Australia North Queensland brochure, which indicates if the species is seasonal.



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Thanks to Birds Australia for their assistance in compiling the information on bird records needed for this brochure.

Photos by Lynette Ensor / Black-winged Monarch by Ian Montgomery  
 On cover: Blue-faced honeyeater

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