This bird list was created from sightings recorded by members of Townsville Region Bird Observers Club. Other birds may be seen that are not listed in this brochure. A copy of your bird sightings with dates and contact details would be appreciated by the Townsville Region Bird Observers Club.

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There are numerous bird watching locations in the Townsville region. This brochure details ten of the most accessible and diverse of those locations that will give local residents and visitors a chance to see a good number of birds you will come to the region. The locations range from easy short walks to white day or overnight trips that take you into the bush, or across Cleveland Bay to the edge of the outback, through pristine rainforests to the seeds and mangroves of the local beaches.

For satisfying bird watching you will need a good field guide and a pair of binoculars with a magnification of about 7 x 30 or 8 x 40.

Birdwatchers are encouraged to wear a wide brimmed hat and to apply sunscreen and insect repellent.

Townsville is the home of a number of Australia’s threatened, endangered and vulnerable birds including the Southern Cassowary, Cotton Pygmy-goose, Australian Bustard, Brush Stone-curlew, Beach Stone-curlew, Rufous Owl, Masked Owl and Black-faced Cuckoo. It is estimated that one in five of Australia’s bird species is threatened with extinction, so it is important that native birds and their habitat are protected. Please do not disturb birds, their nests or their habitat.

There is even one that will take you across Cleveland Bay to Magnetic Island off the coast of Townsville.

Further birdwatching information can be found on the Townsville City Council State of Environment website at www.townsville.qld.gov.au or on the Townsville Region Bird Observers Club website at www.tbbc.org.au.
The northern beaches

Townsville’s Northern Beaches are located off the Bruce Highway north of Townsville, and are all well sign-posted. Beaches in the region, including Bushland, Saunders, Toolooyas, Tumula and Baigal, are popular bird watching areas. All provide ideal habitats for seabirds and migratory waders. Of particular note are the Beach Stone-curlew, Australian Pied Oystercatchers, Red-capped Plovers and several species of terns. Raptors are ever-present in the sky, while a good assortment of forest birds can be spotted in the vegetation behind the dunes.

Birds likely to be seen include:

Bluewater

At the southern end of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is the Bluewater section of Paluma State forest, which is the closest and most accessible rainforest to Townsville, offering great views over the coast and offshore islands. This location is a popular retreat in summer, but few facilities are provided so visitors must be self-sufficient. Good bird watching is also available in the parkland and a designated camping area is located at Bluewater Park on Forestry Road (note: camping is not allowed in the forest).

Bluewater is a 30 minute drive north of Townsville on the Bruce Highway. Turn left off the highway into Forestry Road at Bluewater and drive two kilometre into the forest. The road is closed during the wet season but is generally accessible by conventional vehicle in dry weather. Caution is advised when driving on the gravel road up the range.

Before venturing into the area, it is suggested that information regarding accessibility and road conditions be sought from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Ingham on (07) 4777 2822.

The Paluma region is a bird watcher’s paradise. Some of the Little Crystal Creek picnic area is located about half way up the range, and Paluma Lake is approximately six km past the township of Paluma. A further 4km past the lookout to Lake Paluma and the landscape starts to change to the open grandis forests of Hidden Valley.

mt. spec national park & the paluma region

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Birds likely to be seen include:

The drive from Townsville along Hervey Range Road to the top of the range shows the change of habitat and the diversity of the species of birds. Tea Rooms are located at the top of the range – a perfect stop for refreshments. From there, continue along Hervey Range Road for 6km to the Star River – a good spot for bird watching.

Birds likely to be seen include:

The open woodlands, grasslands, beaches, wetlands and swamps of the Town Common offer a range of habitats and very diverse bird-life. Over 300 species of birds have been recorded here. These ephemeral wetlands, changing dramatically from the wet to dry season, are often used by migratory waders (shorebirds).

The Many Peaks Range with its forested gullies divides the Town Common on the northern boundary from Half Bay. The forest walk, birds hides and observation points give the birdwatcher many opportunities to stop, look and listen. The Town Common has a long and interesting history with remiders of its role in the World War II conflict. To visit the Town Common Environmental Park (open 6:30am – 6:30pm) take the road from Rosses Bay to Cape Pallarenda and turn left at the main road sign, about six km from the city centre.

Australian Swiftlet

The Bowling Green Bay National Park features numerous and mountainous terrain including sections of Mt Elliot, Cape Cleveland and Cape Bowling Green. The importance of the park lies in its diversity of habitat, ranging from mangroves at sea level to mountain-top rainforests at 1200m altitude. The wetlands of Bowling Green Bay are classified under the Ramsar Agreement.

Just a 20 minute ferry ride from Townsville is the beautiful Magnetic Island. Maggies, it’s affectionately referred to by locals, features huge granite boulders covered in hoop pines, eucalypts and forest trees. There are also mangrove swamps and tea tree swamps on the island. Two thirds of the island is National Park, with 25 kilometres of walking trails linking the island’s main bays. Koalas can usually be seen on the walking trail to the forts, which were built to defend Townsville in World War II.

Australian Brushturkey

Bird-watching opportunities are best early in the morning and during non-holiday periods. The riparian woodlands along the creek hold a good selection of Honeyeaters and Flycatchers, while the whistlers prefer the drier bush lands on the slopes of Mt Elliot. White-browed Robin frequent the picnic area and Australian Swiftlets are often recorded flying high over the creek.

The turn-off to the Cape Bowling Green National Park and Alligator Creek is located approximately six km south of Townsville off the Bruce Highway, and is well sign-posted.

Birds likely to be seen include:

The Bush Stone-curlew is the iconic bird of Magnetic Island’s. Its eerie cry can be heard echoing across the bays at night. They are accustomed to people and wander around the roadside edges and gardens, day and night. Magnetic Island is also home to a few families of Orange-footed Scrubfowl. A careful search will disclose the mounds of these small megapodes. Bramahim Kites can usually be seen at the Nelly Bay marina where they scavenge bait from fishers. White-bellied Sea Eagles can often be seen soaring over the hills between Nelly and Picnic Bays. Easter Reef Egrets and Striated Herons usually patrol Geoffrey Bay at low tide.

The island is easily accessible from Townsville by both passenger ferry from the Breakwater Terminal on Sir Leslie Thiess Drive and by car ferry at the terminal on Ross Street.

In the wet season Maggie Green and Bridges, among other water birds, may inhabit the swampsland at the back of the beach in Horseshoe Bay.

Birds likely to be seen include:
- Cloudy-faced Sooty Owl, Shining Riflebird, Green Honeyeater, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Eastern Reef Egret, Striated Heron, Pied Currawong, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Laughing Kookaburra, Figbird, Rainbow Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Monarch, Grey Fantail, Varied Tiller, Victoria’s Riflebird, Welcome Swallow. In the wet season Maggie Green and Bridges, among other water birds, may inhabit the swampsland at the back of the beach in Horseshoe Bay.

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