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THE SUNBIRD

Volume 25 No. 4

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AN ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE PALUMA RANGE, NORTH QUEENSLAND

A.C.M. GRIFFIN

INTRODUCTION

An annotated list of the birds of the Mt Spec rainforest north-west of Townsville, appeared twenty years ago (Griffin 1974). It was compiled from observations on weekend visits between July 1967 and May 1974. This revised annotated list is based on numerous additional observations since that time and since the author moved to Paluma village in January 1980. It includes the sighting of a number of species not previously recorded, and records and information from Clifford Frith (CBF), Dawn Frith (DWF), Roy Mackay (RDM), Margaret Mackay (MDM) and other Paluma residents.

The increased interest from both national and international birdwatchers in the birds of Paluma village and its environs, together with the two environmental educational facilities recently developed in the locality, indicates the need for an up to date list.

THE AREA

These observations have been made towards the northern end of the Paluma Range, from Paluma village (19°5'S, 146°13'E) approximately 10 km north-west to Paluma Dam and beyond towards Mt Spec; 8 km west to the Flooded Gum *Eucalyptus grandis* forest; and east down the Range road to the bridge over Little Crystal Creek at 360 m. The Paluma Range rises steeply from the coastal plain to approximately 900 m and is covered in dense rainforest above 600 m. The rainforest extends west from the top of the Range for 8 km.

Paluma village is in a small clearing in the rainforest on the crest of the Range at 890 m. Here there are gardens with native and introduced flowering shrubs and trees, including grevilleas, callistemons, banksias, melaleucas and calliandras, attracting birds. A recreation area adjoins the open area surrounding the Education Department's Field Study Centre where the grass is cut regularly.

West of the village, beyond 1.5 km of rainforest, is another clearing north of the road. This is mostly rough grassland with some *Pinus radiatus* plantations and fruit trees, and extends west for 0.5 km. Observations have been made along Hussey Road in this locality.

Paluma Dam at 900 m altitude is a man-made reservoir covering 260 hectares. It attracts very few water birds. The road to the Dam turns off 4 km west of Paluma and winds through rainforest for 11.7 km, continuing on beyond the Dam wall. The Flooded Gum forest replaces rainforest in the drier country 8 km west of Paluma, with Turpentine *Syncarpia glomulifera*, some casuarinas and banksias, and an understorey of shrubs and grasses.

These localities are identified in the annotated list as follows: Paluma Range - the Range; Paluma village - Paluma; Paluma Dam - the Dam; the clearing west of Paluma - Hussey Road; and the forest 8 km west of Paluma - *Eucalyptus grandis* forest.

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST FOR THE PALUMA RANGE

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*. This uncommon breeding resident has been seen along the Range road towards the top of the Range, on the western outskirts of Paluma, and along the road to the Dam. An adult with two stripey chicks has been recorded.

Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami*. Very common breeding resident.

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora*. May be seen some years feeding in gardens at Paluma, usually in January, February or March, but has also been recorded in May and December. In 1993 a pair was around from 20 January to 19 March.

King Quail *Coturnix chinensis*. Rare. In April 1979 a male was found dead on the road on the western outskirts of Paluma by CBF. On 8 March 1993 a female was seen briefly with button-quail at Paluma.

Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*. Birds calling as they flew over Paluma at night on 20 and 21 February 1979 (CBF).

Australian Wood Duck *Chenonetta jubata*. A female seen on the recreation area at Paluma on 4 May 1987 (CBF & DWF).

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*. Two to four may be disturbed occasionally in secluded arms of the Dam.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*. Seen occasionally at the Dam (RDM).

- Australasian Grebe** *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*. Rare. A lone bird seen on the Dam in November 1969.
- Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*. One or two birds seen occasionally at the Dam.
- Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*. One or two seen occasionally at the Dam.
- Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*. One or two seen occasionally at the Dam. Small flocks of ten or more have been recorded.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*. Recorded very occasionally in the upper reaches of the Dam.
- White-necked Heron** *Ardea pacifica*. It has been recorded flying over Paluma and perched high in a dead emergent tree on the western outskirts of Paluma. Recorded on 31 March 1980 (CBF) and 4 April 1991.
- Great Egret** *Ardea alba*. Sometimes seen perched on dead trees in the upper reaches at the Dam, and occasionally one may land on the recreation area when there is standing water after heavy rain.
- Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia*. Seen occasionally on the recreation area where it has been photographed (CBF).
- Nankeen Night Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus*. An adult was seen on rocks at the Dam edge on 26 July 1978 (CBF). Heard and identified in a spotlight beam at the top of an emergent dead tree at the western end of Paluma on a very misty night on 24 February 1990 (RDM).
- Australian White Ibis** *Threskiornis molucca*. One has been recorded in grassland along Hussey Road (MDM).
- Straw-necked Ibis** *Threskiornis spinicollis*. Recorded flying over Paluma on 5 February 1990; also in 1991 (RDM).
- Pacific Baza** *Aviceda subcristata*. Uncommon, although heard and two often seen in most years circling over the rainforest at Paluma; usually in April-May or September-October.
- Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus axillaris*. One perched at the top of a dead emergent tree at the edge of rainforest at Paluma for 10 minutes or more on 26 April 1986.
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- Square-tailed Kite** *Lophoictinia isura*. Rare. Most sightings have been in November although it has been seen in February, March and August soaring over or flying just above the rainforest, but below the emergent trees, at Paluma. One seen over Birthday Creek Falls on 19 February 1993 (Jo Wieneke & AG).
- Black-breasted Buzzard** *Hamirostra melanosternon*. One was seen flying over the open grassland on Hussey Road on 31 December 1994 (Ian & Pauline Clayton pers. comm.).
- Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*. Rare. Seen on 7 and 16 October 1978 (CBF & DWF) and very occasionally since, over Paluma and at the Dam.
- Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus*. Recorded fairly regularly at the Dam. On 16 July 1990 two adults and three immature birds were seen there. Rare elsewhere.
- Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis*. Seen once on 17 July 1993 over the cleared land along Hussey Road (RDM & MDM).
- Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus*. Occasionally seen around Paluma.
- Grey Goshawk**. *Accipiter novaehollandiae*. Uncommon breeding resident. Nested in a Hoop Pine *Araucaria cunninghamii* below Little Crystal Creek bridge in 1991. Recorded fairly regularly and the white form has been seen.
- Collared Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*. Occasionally seen around Paluma.
- Wedge-tailed Eagle** *Aquila audax*. Occasionally seen flying high over Paluma. A pair was seen over rainforest 3 or 4 km along the Dam road on 4 August 1978 (CBF), and one flew up from the waterhole on Benham Creek at Paluma and perched in an emergent sparsely foliated tree at the edge of the rainforest on 11 April 1986.
- Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*. Rare. Has been seen perched at the eastern end of the rock buttress north of the second Widts Lookout and occasionally over Paluma.
- Brolga** *Grus rubicunda*. Calls heard from time to time, then birds seen high in the sky. Very occasionally two or three come down low, as if to land, but regain height when the "water" turns out to be sunlight on a tin roof. One has been recorded briefly, after heavy rain, at a pool on the recreation area. In 1993 one was seen being chased by a raptor, eventually landing
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at the eastern end of the village by the National Park ranger's house, where it stayed for 3 or 4 hours (Kelly Davies pers.comm.).

Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor*. Calls heard occasionally in most years along the creeks on either side of Paluma, usually after rain, between September and March or April, although it has been heard in May and August. In 1982, an adult, an immature and a juvenile were seen frequently near a drainage soak in the Ivy Cottage garden from July to late September. In 1991, a pair with two young were seen behind the Mithaven Units and adjacent, at that time unoccupied property, now the Presbyterian's Camp Paluma, abutting the rainforest at the eastern end of Paluma.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*. Rare. Recorded in January 1983 and seen occasionally since. On 25 June 1994 one was seen on the cleared area along Hussey Road (MDM).

Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis*. An adult, freshly dead bird, was brought to a Paluma resident by her cat on 9 January 1992. It was identified by Lloyd Nielsen and lodged at the Museum of Tropical Queensland (Nielsen 1992).

Bush-hen *Amaurornis olivaceus*. No recent records, but on 9 January 1982 a nest with five or six black downy young was found in a clump of tall coarse grass in a cleared area about 2 km west of Paluma. Seen in January 1983 and on 6 February 1983 in Paluma, and calls were heard in December 1984 and December 1985, but it has not been seen or heard since.

Red-backed Button-quail *Turnix maculosa*. The most frequently seen button-quail at Paluma. Males and females are recorded in gardens in most years, in January, February, March and October, and it has also been seen in May. It possibly breeds here. On 9 December 1993, a male was seen in a very small area of roadside grass in the rainforest on the Dam road (P. Britton pers.comm.).

Little Button-quail *Turnix velox*. Recorded at Paluma in March and April 1983 and February 1990. From 7 to 13 March 1993, a female was seen regularly feeding on seed scattered for Red-browed Finches and squatting under small shrubs in a Paluma garden.

Red-chested Button-quail *Turnix pyrrhotorax*. Irregular sightings around Paluma and along the edges of roads and tracks in the rainforest, mostly in February and March; although in 1986 a female was seen on 16 and 18 January feeding along the edge of Smith Crescent. From 5 to 14 March

1993 a male and a female were seen around Paluma.

Painted Button-quail *Turnix varia*. A female was observed in a garden in Paluma in February 1992, and a pair was seen in the same garden on 18 and 19 January 1993, the male being seen occasionally until 23 February.

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*. On 18 November 1979 a bird was seen in a garden at Paluma (CBF).

Gallinago sp. One was seen on 31 January 1978 at Paluma (CBF), and one was disturbed in a garden at Paluma, moving off in a southerly direction near the recreation area on 13 November 1990.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*. Very occasionally two or three or small groups of up to ten birds stop briefly at the Dam.

Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyornis melanops*. Seen occasionally at the edge of the Dam. On 13 November 1976 a nest with two eggs was found, and on 2 October 1977 a pair of birds was watched in the same area.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*. Rare visitor. One seen on the recreation area and road verge in Paluma on 30 April 1983 and 8 December 1992.

White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela*. Breeds in the area and may be heard or seen from mid-August to April or May. Absent or inconspicuous in June and July most years. Feeds in fruiting trees of *Neolitsea dealbata* around Paluma between February and May.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*. Common breeding resident in rainforest and secondary growth. Feeds on fruit of the Bleeding Heart trees *Omalanthus populifolius*.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*. Common breeding resident. Most easily seen feeding along the edges of roads and tracks in the early morning and evenings.

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*. One feeding in Paluma along the edge of the road and recreation area on 16 February 1980 and one seen once briefly since.

Diamond Dove *Geopelia cuneata*. Very unusual visitor to Paluma. Single birds recorded on 30 March 1983, 15 April 1985, 16 March 1992 and 7 May 1994. Usually heard and seen along the edge of Smith Crescent and eroded driveways.

- Peaceful Dove** *Geopelia striata*. Rare visitor to open areas in Paluma. Usually a single bird around for a few days. Most records are for January, March and April although in 1993 two were seen regularly from 19 to 26 January and a lone bird from 21 to 25 February.
- Wompoo Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus magnificus*. A breeding resident although rarely heard in June or July.
- Superb Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus superbus*. Common in the rainforest from about September to late March-early April in most years. More often heard than seen. Nesting recorded in January and February.
- Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus regina*. Uncommon but heard occasionally some years from September or October to January or February. Has been seen feeding on the fruit of *Neolitsea dealbata* in February.
- Topknot Pigeon** *Lopholaimus antarcticus*. Breeding visitor from August to March but may be seen flying over the rainforest occasionally in most months. Usually seen flying over in twos or threes or flocks of 15 to 30 or more, or perched in tall sparsely foliated trees emergent from the rainforest. A flock of pigeons feeding in the canopy at Mt Spec on 11 January 1970 was incorrectly identified as Pied Imperial-Pigeons *Ducula bicolor* in the 1974 Birds of Mt Spec list.
- Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus banksii*. Recorded flying over the rainforest, mostly in January, February and March, occasionally in other months. Usually 4 to 20 birds, although flocks of up to 50 have been recorded. Small numbers feed in casuarinas in the *E. grandis* forest.
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua galerita*. Breeding resident in small numbers usually seen singly or in pairs. Occasionally flocks of 20 to 50 birds invade the area for a few days, as they did from 2 to 15 February 1993.
- Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus*. Common west of Paluma when the Flooded Gums and Turpentine are in flower. Occasionally one or two birds stop briefly in Paluma.
- Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*. Very occasionally a few stop in Paluma to feed in banksia blossoms. Common west of the rainforest when Flooded Gums and Turpentine are in flower.
- Little Lorikeet** *Glossopsitta pusilla*. May be heard and sometimes seen west of Paluma when Flooded Gums and Turpentine are in flower.
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Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*. Inconspicuous. Seen occasionally feeding in fruiting figs in the canopy. Most sightings have been in February, March and April.

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*. Breeding resident. Usually seen in small parties, but flocks of 20-30 have been recorded feeding in Sarsparella *Alphitonia petriei* blossom in March and also on the seeds. In July 1993 and May 1994, 20 or more were feeding in Umbrella Trees *Schefflera actinophylla* in Paluma.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*. Common breeding resident. Easily seen in rainforest secondary growth and gardens in Paluma.

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus*. In 1993, one to three birds were seen with Crimson Rosellas in Paluma in May and June, and one was still around in December.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*. A small flock of about eight birds was seen at Paluma on 5 May 1983. They flew up from the recreation area and perched briefly on the telephone wires over the road.

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*. One was seen at the Dam on 1 August 1971.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*. Irregular visitor. In some years it is heard and occasionally seen from October to March. In other years it is not recorded at all. Most records have been in October and November. In 1993 one was calling and seen at Birthday Creek Falls in January, February and March.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*. Common both in rainforest and open areas. Seen and heard most frequently in April-May, but it has been recorded in every month. Often calling a lot and seen well in Paluma in July and August.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*. Very unusual but five birds were seen at the edge of rainforest at the western end of Paluma on 4 September 1993 (RDM).

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*. Common. More often heard than seen but it has been recorded in every month of the year.

Common Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*. Heard and occasionally seen at Paluma, usually in February and/or March and sometimes in November and December. In 1993 it was recorded from 1 to 5 January (RDM). Birds move through on migration.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*. Calls heard some years from birds moving through on migration. Most records are for November, but they have been heard in September and on 22 August 1993. The only records of birds returning north are on 19 February 1983 and 24 January 1994 (RDM).

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*. May sometimes be seen and heard in the cleared area on the western outskirts of Paluma.

Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae*. Resident but rarely seen. Calls are mostly heard in June-July and November-December.

Lesser Sooty Owl *Tyto multipunctata*. Sparse breeding resident.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. Has been reported perched on posts at night on the road up the Range (RDM).

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*. Very probably resident. May be seen near the lights in Paluma. Birds swoop down to take prey on the road and are occasionally hit by cars and killed. Two died in this way in January 1994 but another was subsequently heard calling.

White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis*. Road-kill found above Little Crystal Creek bridge in April 1978.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*. Heard calling at the eastern end of Paluma on 4 September 1971, 14 July 1973 and 2 November 1974, but not heard recently at the top of the Range.

Australian Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*. Has been recorded in *E. grandis* forest.

White-rumped Swiflet *Collocalia spodiopygius*. Occasionally seen hawking over Paluma in November-December and February. On 6 January 1973 a large flock was seen drinking or collecting insects from the surface of the water at the Dam.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*. Big flocks seen in some years hawking over Paluma in February-March and November. Occasionally a few birds are seen in late January and also towards the end of October and in December.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*. One seen in April 1970 and very occasionally a few identified with the flocks of White-throated Needletails.

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*. Rare. Has been seen on secluded arms of the Dam. On 26 August 1983 one was seen on Benham Creek at Paluma, and on 6 March 1994 one was recorded at Birthday Creek above the falls.

Little Kingfisher *Alcedo pusilla*. Rare. In November 1971 a pair was reported nesting along Gracie Creek on the Paluma Range, and one has been seen occasionally on Birthday Creek near the bridge on the Dam road. On 6 November 1978, the Friths recorded one in their study area in rainforest about 3-4 km along and to the west of the Dam road, and on 16 October 1979 one was seen in a Paluma garden (CBF & DWF).

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera sylvia*. Arrives to breed in early November and leaves towards the end of February or in early March. It has been observed nesting in termite mounds on the Range from near Mountain Creek to about 4 km below Paluma. Very rarely seen at the top of the Range.

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*. A bird seen and heard at Paluma on 2 October 1988.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*. Occasional visitor. In June-July 1979, one was around at the western end of the village for about a month. On 6 April 1993 one was seen near the McLennons Lookout carpark. Other visits to Paluma have been on 25 March 1985 and 21 April 1986.

Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*. Irregular visitor. Has been recorded in all months of the year. Usually only single birds are seen but there have been up to five together. In some years birds may be seen regularly for several months, whereas in other years they may just stay for one or two days as if moving through on migration.

Red-backed Kingfisher *Todiramphus pyrrhopygia*. On 27 March 1993 one bird perched on the electricity cable to the public toilet block in Paluma off and on from about 8.45am to 10.30am, fluffing up its feathers and sunning its back.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*. Irregular visitor. Possibly comes through the area on migration. Seen at Paluma mostly in February-April and September-November, occasionally in May and July. In 1991 one remained around Paluma from mid-March to mid-July, but usually birds only stay for a few days.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*. Mostly recorded flying over the rainforest, moving north in February-April and south in September-October, although a few may be about in other months.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*. Irregular, unpredictable visitor. Occasionally it has arrived in October or December and stayed to mid-March or early April, being seen regularly flying out to catch insects from a dead limb above the rainforest at Paluma. In other years, one or two birds may stop over for a week or two on arrival mid or late November. Seven birds were recorded together in March 1983 and ten or more were recorded on 25 February 1989, four of which remained in the area to mid-March. No birds were recorded in 1991 or 1992 and there was a single sighting of one bird on 17 November 1993 (RDM). In 1994 one was seen along Hussey Road on 6 November (MDM) and one in Paluma on 7 November.

Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor*. Common breeding resident in the Paluma Range rainforest although it moves to lower altitudes in winter when it may be seen at Jourama National Park. It arrives back at the top of the Range in September.

White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaeus*. Breeding resident at the top of the Range in rainforest and regenerating areas, extending west into the *E. grandis* forest.

Red-backed Fairy-wren *Malurus melanocephalus*. Seen occasionally in the *E. grandis* forest.

Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*. Has been heard and seen in eucalypts and regrowth areas around the Dam and it is common in *E. grandis* forest at the western edge of the rainforest.

Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*. One bird was seen on 6 December 1970 at the Star Valley Lookout 3 km west of Paluma.

Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis*. Common breeding resident in rainforest. Inconspicuous on the forest floor and more often heard than seen.

Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis*. Common breeding resident in rainforest, mostly west and north of Paluma. Seen less frequently along the Widts Lookout and Cloudy Creek tracks or in the forest in the vicinity of Paluma.

White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*. Race *laevigaster*. Uncommon breeding resident in cleared areas and Lantana *Lantana camara* at the edge of the rainforest, occasionally visiting gardens in Paluma. More common west of Paluma in *E. grandis* forest.

Atherton Scrubwren *Sericornis keri*. A nest with three eggs, said to be of this species, was found by John Young (pers.comm.) near the bridge over Birthday Creek on the road to the Dam.

- Large-billed Scrubwren** *Sericornis magnirostris*. Common breeding resident in rainforest. Often in small parties, feeding mostly in the lower to middle layers of the forest, moving through the foliage of vines.
- Brown Gerygone** *Gerygone mouki*. Common breeding resident feeding actively at all levels, often with Large-billed Scrubwrens and Mountain Thornbills.
- Fairy Gerygone** *Gerygone palpebrosa*. Does not occur at the top of the Range but has been recorded at the Little Crystal Creek bridge and as far up the Range as Mountain Creek.
- Mountain Thornbill** *Acanthiza katherina*. Breeding resident in rainforest at the top of the Range. Not common. Usually one or two birds seen, occasionally small parties. Often with Brown Gerygones and Large-billed Scrubwrens.
- Spiny-checked Honeyeater** *Acanthagenys rufogularis*. Two were seen on 30 June 1982 in *E. grandis* forest flying out from small casuarinas after insects. Possibly they arrived with the big flock of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows that were feeding in *E. grandis* blossom the same day.
- Noisy Friarbird** *Philemon corniculatus*. One or two recorded in Paluma gardens, and occasionally seen perching briefly in emergent sparsely foliated trees above the rainforest, usually in September-November. They rarely stay long because they are chased by the resident honeyeaters if they attempt to feed in flowering grevilleas or callistemons. However, from 16 to 30 September 1992 a large flock invaded Paluma.
- Little Friarbird** *Philemon citreogularis*. Two recorded on 6 September 1987; six on 23 August 1992 in Paluma; and from 16 to 30 September 1992 a few were around with a flock of Noisy Friarbirds.
- Macleay's Honeyeater** *Xanthotis macleayana*. Common breeding resident. Conspicuous in gardens in Paluma, but less so in the rainforest, where it is more often heard than seen.
- Lewin's Honeyeater** *Meliphaga lewinii*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest and Paluma gardens.
- Yellow-spotted Honeyeater** *Meliphaga notata*. Usually not heard above Mountain Creek, but from time to time it comes to the top of the Range, mainly along the escarpment and in Paluma, and it has been heard at the Star Valley Lookout.
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Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis*. Has not been recorded above Little Crystal Creek bridge where it has occasionally been seen feeding in a flowering Black Bean *Castanospermum australe*.

Bridled Honeyeater *Lichenostomus frenatus*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest west and north-west of Paluma and in the *E. grandis* forest. At one time rarely seen in Paluma except when the Coral Trees *Erythrina phlebocarpa* and callistemons were in flower, but two or three seem to have moved into the village recently.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops*. One or sometimes two or three birds make brief stopovers in Paluma gardens to feed on grevilleas and drink at bird baths. Breeding resident in *E. grandis* forest.

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*. Common breeding resident west of Paluma in the *E. grandis* forest, and single birds have been seen in regrowth areas around the Dam.

Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*. Lone birds recorded feeding briefly in grevilleas and callistemons in Paluma on 2 December 1984, 23 September 1988, 29 January 1992, 23 May 1993 and 16 April 1994.

White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris nigra*. Has become a common breeding resident in Paluma since the planting of callistemons, banksias, grevilleas, melaleucas and other nectariferous flowering shrubs in gardens. Rarely seen in the village during the 1970s. Does not go into the rainforest but is common in the *E. grandis* forest.

Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*. Common breeding resident. Frequents blossom in Paluma gardens where it is more easily seen than in the rainforest.

Dusky Honeyeater *Myzomela obscura*. Visits flowering shrubs in Paluma singly or in pairs erratically throughout the year. Fairly common and there is probably a resident population. Hard to see in the rainforest where it feeds mostly in the canopy.

Scarlet Honeyeater *Myzomela sanguinolenta*. Nomadic. Recorded in gardens in Paluma sometimes in March-April, occasionally in February. May also be seen and heard occasionally in some years between September and November. Occurs in regrowth along the fringes of the rainforest. Has been recorded nesting in the casuarina and eucalypt woodland west of the *E. grandis* forest.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*. Seen in eucalypt woodland

near the bridge over Little Crystal Creek on 29 July 1967.

Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito*. Common breeding resident. Most easily seen clinging to a tree trunk or perched on a low branch, dropping to the ground to feed at the edge of the road.

Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis*. Common in *E. grandis* forest. A single bird was seen at the road junction 3.5 km along the Dam road on 16 September 1978 (CBF), and it has been recorded very occasionally in regrowth areas at the Dam.

Grey-headed Robin *Heteromyias albispecularis*. Common breeding resident. Its loud four or more single note piping calls are heard frequently in the rainforest where it clings to tree trunks and perches on low branches, usually only 1 metre or so above the forest floor.

Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii*. Common, vocal breeding resident in the rainforest.

Eastern Whippbird *Psophodes olivaceus*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest, occasionally coming out into cleared areas.

Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*. Seen very occasionally in the *E. grandis* forest. Among other records a single bird was recorded on 29 February 1976 and a party of seven was investigating knot-holes and the strips of peeling bark on *E. grandis* on 30 January 1982. At the Dam on 8 January 1995, a single bird was seen in casuarinas below the spillway.

Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus*. Single birds have been seen occasionally in the *E. grandis* forest tearing at strips of bark on the eucalypts.

Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*. Common breeding resident. Frequents rainforest as well as fringe vegetation along the edges of roads and tracks and Paluma gardens.

Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*. Rare at the top of the Range where its distinctive call has not been heard. Recorded at lower altitudes and sometimes heard and seen at the bridge over Little Crystal Creek. Can easily be confused with immature Golden Whistlers. One was feeding in Paluma gardens in June 1994.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*. Uncommon. Seen occasionally in the *E. grandis* forest, more frequently in the 1970s and early 1980s

than recently. On 1 August 1971 and April 1978, one was seen at the Dam. On 12 April 1986, a male turned up in a Paluma garden. On 1 April 1987, a female or immature was seen in Paluma.

Little Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*. Common breeding resident along the fringe of the rainforest and in secondary growth and gardens. It does not penetrate far into the rainforest.

Bower's Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla boweri*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest. Rarely seen outside the forest.

Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*. One seen on a Paluma lawn on 21 July 1978 (CBF & DWF). Has been recorded in regrowth areas around the Dam. Common west of Paluma in *E. grandis* forest.

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*. More often heard than seen. Breeding resident, most easily seen when it feeds in trees along the edge of the rainforest.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*. Summer breeding visitor. May be seen and heard in the rainforest and around Paluma from about mid-September to the end of March or early April.

Spectacled Monarch *Monarcha trivirgatus*. Fairly common. May be a breeding resident in the rainforest moving to lower altitudes in winter, for it is rarely seen or heard in June or July.

White-eared Monarch *Monarcha leucotis*. Inconspicuous and uncommon. Possibly a breeding resident, as, over the years, it has been recorded in every month. Hard to see as it feeds actively on the outer foliage of tree crowns in the canopy. It nests high in the canopy. Immatures and adults have been seen.

Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi*. Uncommon. Has been seen near the bridge over Little Crystal Creek, in trees further up the Range, and along the road to the Dam. It also occurs occasionally in trees along the edge of the rainforest at Paluma.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*. Recorded about 14 times in the last 21 years. Most sightings have been in Paluma in February and October, none in the winter months. Usually a single bird is seen, often female or immature, and it rarely stays for more than one day. Seen occasionally in the *E. grandis* forest.

Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*. Rare passage migrant. Most sightings

have been in October. Usually a lone male (although females and a pair have been seen), only staying for a few days. In 1988 a male was recorded off and on in Paluma and along the road to the Dam from 25 September to 8 October, mostly in *Alphitonia petreii*.

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*. Irregular visitor to Paluma. Some years in April and May one or a pair may feed on open grassed areas for a day or two, but in 1991 a pair arrived on 8 May and stayed until 30 November; and in 1993 a pair was seen around Paluma from 17 May to 13 August. Not recorded in 1994 until one was heard on 2 August calling from the recreation area.

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*. Most frequently seen in the rainforest at the top of the Range from January to May, fewer sightings September to December and no records in June, July or August. Some birds may be breeding residents with an altitudinal migration in winter, while others may be passage migrants.

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. Common breeding resident in rainforest at the top of the Range. The resident birds are very dark, almost black. Paler birds, probably migrants from the south, winter in Paluma in most years between April and August or early September.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*. Irregular winter visitor to Paluma. Some years one arrives in April and stays for a day or two. In other years it may winter around Paluma. In 1985 and 1986 one stayed from mid-April to mid-August; in 1993 from 20 April to 4 August with one being sighted on 16 September. None were recorded in 1990, 1991, 1992 or 1994.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*. Summer visitor. Recorded most years from October to April, occasionally until May. Birds have been seen feeding young in a nest in Paluma in January.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*. A rare visitor. One recorded at Paluma on 5 June 1993.

Barred Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineata*. Probably a breeding resident although rarely heard or seen in June, July or August, when it may be absent. Hard to see, but their calls may be heard from fruiting trees in the rainforest canopy.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*. Recorded from time to time around Paluma and in rainforest fringe vegetation with *E. grandis* about 2 km west of Paluma. The most frequent sightings have been in

January-February and November, but it may turn up anytime. It is more common in *E. grandis* forest.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*. Summer visitor. Calls are first heard in Paluma in most years in the mid-October - early November period and it may be seen or heard up to the end of March or early April. Both male and female have been seen collecting nesting material from a leptospermum in a Paluma garden in November. They possibly nest in the rainforest along Benham Creek. Immatures have been seen in February.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*. Inconspicuous and more often heard than seen. Recorded in rainforest fringe vegetation, mostly in Paluma from January to May, but it has been recorded in every month. Male, female and immatures seen.

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*. Heard and seen in Paluma in some years for a day or two in March and April and in late October or November.

Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*. Recorded in small numbers in most years from November to April, sometimes in September and October.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*. Unpredictable. Two to six birds are seen from time to time perching on electricity cables and bare emergent trees, and hawking over Paluma, and they have nested in the area. Occasionally flocks of 20 to 40 hawk over the village, usually at the end of March and in early April, but at other times also. On 23 June 1991, 50 or more roosted in trees on the western outskirts of Paluma (RDM).

Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*. Recorded in *E. grandis* forest on 30 June 1982 and 1 July 1982 circling above and feeding in the *E. grandis* blossom.

White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus*. Recorded in *E. grandis* forest on 30 June 1982 and 1 July 1982 hawking above and descending to feed in the *E. grandis* blossom.

Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*. One bird was recorded at Paluma from 12 to 25 May 1985, and one perched briefly in a *Neolitsea dealbata* at the edge of Smith Crescent briefly on 17 April 1986.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*. Three recorded at Paluma on 26 June 1993 and one seen later feeding with Pied Currawongs on the recreation area.

- Pied Currawong** *Strepera graculina*. Very numerous in some years, especially in the winter months. In other years only one or two are seen occasionally.
- Victoria's Riflebird** *Ptiloris victoriae*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest, coming out to feed at bird tables in Paluma. Also occurs in *E. grandis* forest.
- Australian Raven** *Corvus coronoides*. Rare. Calls have been heard in the winter months.
- Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru*. Rare. Occasionally heard flying over Paluma or seen at the council refuse tip.
- Spotted Catbird** *Ailuroedus melanotis*. Common breeding resident in the rainforest, coming out to feed in the orange and mandarin trees and at bird tables in Paluma.
- Tooth-billed Bowerbird** *Scenopoeetes dentirostris*. Common breeding resident although hard to see when not at its court on the rainforest floor. From a perch above its court, the male sings loudly to attract females, usually from September to late January or early February.
- Golden Bowerbird** *Prionodura newtoniana*. Moderately common breeding resident above about 900 m in the more westerly and northern rainforest on the Range. Most active at their bowers from September to February.
- Satin Bowerbird** *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*. Moderately common breeding resident. Constructs its bowers just inside the rainforest and in regenerating areas near tracks.
- Spotted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera maculata*. One bird recorded in Paluma from 5 to 9 June 1993. Fed in fruiting trees and visited a bird bath.
- Great Bowerbird** *Chlamydera nuchalis*. One bird recorded in Paluma on 12 April 1989, perching in *Neolitsea dealbata* and adjacent *Alphitonia petrei* at the edge of Smith Crescent before flying off west.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*. On 4 January 1992 one was seen on the rock wall of Paluma Dam (RDM). From January to March 1993 there was one on Birthday Creek above the falls. Not seen in 1994.
- Red-browed Finch** *Nechmia temporalis*. Common breeding resident around Paluma and in secondary growth at the edges of roads and tracks in the rainforest.
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Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax*. Rare visitor. One at a bird bath in Paluma on 14 March 1983 and 10 December 1984. One feeding along the edge of Smith Crescent and the recreation area on 10 February 1987, and two feeding with Red-browed Finches on scattered seed in a Paluma garden on 5 April 1994.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis*. Unusual and erratic visitor to Paluma gardens. On 2 December 1984 one male was seen in a Paluma garden; from 12 February to 5 March 1990 one male and two females were recorded, one female or immature being seen up to 17 March. On 25 August 1993 one female was seen at the eastern end of Paluma, where a female was also seen on 8 and 9 May 1994.

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*. Common breeding resident.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*. A pair usually seen at the Dam.

Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*. Seen flying over Paluma on 21 October 1987 (RDM) and occasional possible sightings with mixed flocks of birds hawking over Paluma and the Dam.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*. Single record on 6 August 1983 in Lantana along Smith Crescent, Paluma.

Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis*. One bird was seen on 28 November 1983 and one was recorded from 14 to 27 February 1990 in rough grass along Smith Crescent and around the recreation area.

Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi*. Lone birds recorded in cleared areas in Paluma on 1 March 1982, 24 to 29 April 1987, 13 March 1989 and 14 to 27 February 1990.

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*. Two records only: on 12 March 1983 and on 12 March 1990 on Smith Crescent road reserve and at the edge of the recreation area.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*. At least six in grass along Hussey Road on 13 August 1978 (CBF).

Silveryeye *Zosterops lateralis*. Probably a resident population. Small flocks of 4-20 birds may be seen along rainforest fringes in lantana and secondary growth. In Paluma one or two sometimes visit bird baths and it has been recorded nesting.

Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*. The musical calls of this species, which resemble those of the Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*, have been heard and the bird has been seen in Paluma gardens and in the rainforest.

Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei*. The two-note call of this species may also be heard in the rainforest on the Paluma Range.

Zoothera sp. These have been seen in all months of the year, mostly around Paluma, but also throughout the rainforest and by the road up the Range above Mountain Creek. However, in my experience, unless the bird calls, it is difficult to distinguish between *Z. lunulata* and *Z. heinei* by plumage. It seems that both species may be breeding residents.

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*. In February 1987 and February 1993 flocks of 20 to 30 mostly immature birds were seen in the tops of tall, sparsely foliaged trees at the edge of rainforest in Paluma. From 1987 to 1989, and in some years since, there has been a nesting colony about 3.5 km down the Range road from Paluma.

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**A FLOCK OF ORIENTAL PLOVERS *CHARADRIUS VEREDUS*
IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND**

IAN GYNTHYER, DAVID STEWART and TOM TARRANT

The Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* breeds in parts of Mongolia and China, migrating south each year to spend the austral summer in Indonesia, New Guinea and Australia (Lane 1987, Pringle 1987). In early September the species arrives in northern Australia, where it occurs in loose, sometimes immense, flocks in inland and coastal habitats such as semi-arid or overgrazed plains, paddocks, airfields and playing fields, as well as saltmarshes, mudflats and beaches (Lane 1987, Pizzey 1991, Pringle 1987, Slater *et al.* 1989). Oriental Plovers are much less common in southern Australia and, although small numbers occur regularly each year in South Australia (Lane 1987), individuals or parties reaching New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania are considered vagrants (Pizzey 1991, Pringle 1987).

In south-east Queensland, the Oriental Plover is rare, with only a handful of reported sightings during the past 15 years. In September 1992, an Oriental Plover was observed with other waders at a high tide roost site at Manly (27°27'30"S, 153°11'20"E) in Brisbane (C. Corben pers. comm.). R. Hobson (pers. comm.) reported single birds at two locations in the Lockyer Valley during successive years (Karrasch's Dam, 27°33'15"S, 152°14'40"E, 25 September 1991; Seven Mile Lagoon, ca. 27°27'S, 152°25'E, 26 September 1992). Prior to this, a single bird was seen in October 1980 (Woodall 1980) at Atkinsons Dam (ca. 27°26'S, 152°27'E), also in the Lockyer Valley.

This report details the sighting of a small flock of Oriental Plovers at Archerfield Airport (27°34'00"S, 153°00'30"E) in Brisbane during November 1994 (see Tarrant & Palmer 1994). Since this time, additional sightings of a party of Oriental Plovers at Fisherman Islands (27°22'00"S, 153°10'40"E) have been made (Driscoll 1995).

At approximately 6:00 am on 13 November 1994, after watching a flock of 34 Little Curlew *Numenius minutus* at Archerfield Airport, T.T. and a companion, Graham Palmer, noticed a flock of 14 small, plover-like birds nearby on the airfield's short open grassland. Initial views were directly into the sun and so observations were subsequently made from several points around the perimeter of the aerodrome in an attempt to see the birds clearly. This task was made more difficult because the flock was unsettled and on two occasions flew to different locations within the airport grounds. Only after about three hours had elapsed, and views from as close as 100 m obtained, were the birds confidently identified as Oriental Plovers.

On 14 November 1994, I.G. visited the same site during the late morning, expecting to confirm the sighting of what, due to an unfortunate error in the chain of communication, was reported as being a flock of Oriental Pratincoles *Glareola maldivarum*. As hoped, the 14 birds in question were located close to the site at which they were seen the previous day. However, they were very obviously not Oriental Pratincoles. Members of the flock stood or crouched amongst small clumps of taller grass or weeds on the airfield, some 80-100 m from the perimeter fence. Here they were viewed for one hour in bright light with a 25x77 spotting scope. Despite the presence of considerable heat haze (the temperature was not measured, but was estimated to be about 30-32°C), the birds were clearly recognisable as Oriental Plovers. The flock of 34 Little Curlews was also observed close by.

During mid-afternoon of the same day, I.G. again visited the site, this time accompanied by D.S.. The temperature was then appreciably cooler (approximately 26-28°C), and the heat haze had dissipated. On this occasion, one of the original party of 14 Oriental Plovers could not be seen. The flock was observed for 55 minutes, at a distance of about 80 m, while the following plumage description was taken:

Plover-like appearance; forehead, chin and throat off-white, with forehead blending into buff supercilium; crown brown, sharply demarcated anteriorly and at sides, and extending posteriorly into a truncated 'V' on nape; lower nape and hindneck buff; ear coverts paler brown than crown and with more rufous wash, darker around outer edges; sides of neck dark brown; mantle and back brown, some birds possessing several feathers with darker brown centres; upperwing coverts brown with narrow, indistinct buff fringes giving overall paler effect than mantle and back; primaries dark brown, bordering on black; wing tips extending beyond tail at rest; breast and flanks washed with buffish-brown, some birds with a partial band of this colour on breast, others lacking it; belly, vent and undertail coverts white; bill slender, black, shorter than head length; legs yellowish-brown.

During the observation period, most of the plovers flew a short distance away when disturbed by a foraging Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*. Two birds remained in their original positions for about five minutes before then flying off to rejoin the main flock. When in flight, the birds' dark rumps, indistinct wing bars and grey underwing coverts were discernible. The Oriental Plovers were all non-breeding birds because none showed any sign of the chestnut breast colouration typical of breeding plumage. The flock remained at Archerfield Airport for at least ten days, during which time it was seen by numerous observers. The last sighting of the birds of which we are aware took place on 22 November 1994 (P. Grimshaw pers. comm.).

To our knowledge, this is the first time a flock of Oriental Plovers has occurred so close to the coast in south-east Queensland. All previous reports of the species from this region have been of single birds (C. Corben, R. Hobson pers. comm., Woodall 1980). Similar records have been documented for coastal New South Wales. For example, Larkins & McGill (1978) described six birds at Bankstown Airport in Sydney, and Bigg (1981) recorded a flock of 18 Oriental Plovers near Newcastle. As this paper was being prepared, Driscoll (1995) reported a small party of Oriental Plovers at Fisherman Islands near the mouth of the Brisbane River. He observed six birds on 2 February 1995 and a flock of seven precisely one week later. Whether these birds represent part of the Archerfield flock has not been ascertained.

Interestingly, other bird species normally associated with the semi-arid plains and grasslands of northern and inland Australia were present at Archerfield Airport over the same period as the Oriental Plovers described here. In addition to the Little Curlews already mentioned, two, possibly three Australian Pratincoles *Stiltia isabella* were sighted on 16 November 1994 (C. Pavey & M. Mathieson pers. comm.). The presence of such species in coastal or near-coastal south-east Queensland is very likely a consequence of the severe drought that gripped much of Australia during 1994. Presumably, the lack of suitable conditions in the species' usual haunts forced birds southwards and towards the coast, into areas in which they do not normally occur.

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