

82. *Pleiogynium Solandri* Engl., Tulip Plum.  
Fruit very acid when fresh. If buried in sand for day or two is quite refreshing.

**PORTULACACEAE :**

83. *Portulaca oleracea* L., Purslane.  
Whole plant eaten raw or cooked. Splendid substitute for spinach. Tap root tastes like radish.  
84. *P. australis* Endl., Me-mama.  
Rootstock roasted and eaten (Bailey).

**AMARANTHACEAE :**

85. *Amaranthus spinosus* L., Needle Burr.  
Whole plant eaten as green vegetable.  
86. *A. leptostachyus* Benth.  
Young shoots make excellent greens when cooked.  
87. *A. pallidiflorus* F. Muell.  
Young shoots make excellent greens when cooked.  
88. *A. Mitchellii* Benth.  
Used as a vegetable.  
89. *A. interruptus* R. Br., Native Amaranth.  
Young shoots make excellent greens when cooked.  
90. *A. viridis* L., Green Amaranth.  
Young shoots make excellent greens when cooked.  
91. *Achyranthes aspera* L., Chaff-flower.  
In East Indies young leaves eaten.

**CHENOPODIACEAE :**

92. *Enchylaena tomentosa* R. Br.,  
Fruit eaten raw.  
93. *Suaeda maritima* (L.) Dumort. Sea Blite.  
In East Indies young plants after boiling well, eaten.

**AIZOACEAE :**

94. *Susuvium portulacastrum* L., Seaside Purslane.  
Whole plant after washing out excess salt, eaten raw or cooked.

**NYCTAGINACEAE :**

95. *Boerhaavia diffusa* L., Tah-vine.  
Thickened leaves and somewhat fleshy stems cooked and eaten. Roots roasted and eaten. Mealy sweet taste (Palmer).  
96. *Elaeagnus latifolius* L., Millai Millai.  
Fruit eaten and said to be pleasant.

**LEGUMINOSAE :**

97. *Psoralea badocana* Benth., A-maga.  
Roots scraped, roasted and eaten.  
98. *Sesbania grandiflora* Pers., Large-flowered Sesbania Pea.  
Young leaves, young pods, large flowers and flower buds cooked and eaten. (Do not eat mature seeds.)  
99. *S. aegyptiaca* Pers., Ngean-jerry.  
Green pods as well as seeds nutritious (T. Gulliver).  
100. *Arachis hypogaea* L., Peanut.  
Seeds eaten raw or cooked.  
101. *Hardenbergia retusa* Benth., Kong-an.  
Roots roasted and hammered on stone before being eaten (Roth).  
102. *Erythrina vespertilio* Benth., Grey Corkwood.  
Roots eaten raw. (Roth).  
103. *Mucuna utilis* Wall ex Wight, Native of Tropics.  
Dried ripe seeds eaten roasted.  
104. *Phaseolus Mungo* L., Komin.  
Roots after being baked, eaten (Thozet).  
105. *Vigna vexillata* Benth.  
Pods used as French beans.  
106. *V. marina* (L.) Merr. Beach Bean.  
Pods and seeds eaten.

(To be Continued)

163  
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**NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS' CLUB**

Meets at Cairns Public School, Abbott Street, Cairns,  
usually on second Tuesday in alternate months, at 8 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING, TUESDAY, 13th MARCH, 1945.**

Address by F/O R. G. Handley, R.A.A.F. "The Weather for the  
Man in the Street."

**MEETING OF CLUB**

Tuesday, 9th January, 1945. Address by Commander A. E. Salzberger, U.S.N.,  
"Snakes of the World."

**NOTES ON BIRDS BREEDING WITHIN THE CAIRNS  
CITY LIMIT**

(S. R. White.)

The following list of birds is compiled from field notes on species found breeding within the Cairns city limits between August, 1944, and January, 1945, inclusive. The list is not claimed to be comprehensive but is submitted as a beginning to an aspect of local bird observation that should prove to be of considerable interest with the passing of time.

Closer settlement, and the spread of residential areas, with all the modifications to environment caused by draining, clearing and reclaiming, will, without a doubt, enforce the entire disappearance of some species, greatly limit the activities of others, and create new niches in which new arrivals will establish themselves. Already the city has a numerous bird population that is distinctly metropolitan in character, namely, such introduced species as the Common Myna and the Rock Pigeon. The native Peaceful Dove appears, by comparison with its distribution through surrounding bush areas, to have adjusted itself remarkably well to conditions brought about by closer settlement. It is common even in the most busy section of the city, that

parties of up to fifty birds feeding along the asphalt streets, roadsides and lawns are not an uncommon sight. It breeds in numbers among the street trees and gardens, maintaining its numerical strength despite the ever present menace of domestic cats. What will become of this bird when the Indian Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) is released from Gordonvale some years ago, extends its range to Cairns, remains to be seen.

The White-breasted Wood Swallow which has only lately shown a liking for agricultural areas, breeds freely among the coconut palms in public parks and private homes. Sunbirds often display a preference for nesting about houses and buildings, a practice that is sometimes adopted by the Northern Warbler. Yellow Fig-birds, Noisy Friar Birds (*Philemon corniculatus*), Varied Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga versicolor*), and Yellow Honeyeaters (*M. flava*) are common enough birds in the city at present, but their future appears to be closely associated with street trees, and the flora of Public Parks and private homes. The Mistletoe bird is a well established city resi-

dent, feeding almost exclusively on berries of the various species of mistletoe, for the spread of which it is no doubt largely responsible, and its future is linked accordingly, with that of the mistletoe.

Two species of Fairy Wrens resident locally, have a more obscure outlook. The Red-backed Wren usually prefers an environment of Blady grass, and the less familiar but equally numerous Lovely Wren appears in this district to be inseparable from a plant association in which lantanas are dominant. When these types of flora disappear from within the city, the wrens will probably vanish with them.

Both the Stone Curlew, and the Black-fronted Dotterel, which were found breeding on the same salt pan environment, will undoubtedly be eliminated as reclamation reduces their habitat. The Spangled Drongo, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Papuan Frogmouth and Rainbow Bird already breed only in more secluded areas on the fringes of the city.

The Red Backed Sea Eagles, and Whistling Eagles breeding at Edge Hill, have apparently been established there for some years, and may continue to use their present nesting sites for many years, provided they are not in any way interfered with. Should the trees that they have occupied be destroyed, it seems most unlikely that other suitable sites could be found within the bounds of the city, even if the birds showed any desire to remain. Indeed, their present existence must be almost unique.

**PEACEFUL DOVE** (*Geopelia placida*):

Probably the most numerous city dwelling bird. These doves were observed to be breeding during every month covered by the period August to January, inclusive, but were most active between September and November. In one case, where a more detailed observation was possible, it was found that two broods were raised.

**BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL** (*Charadrius melanops*):

25/10/44 a depression containing two eggs within a few yards of the Stone Curlews' egg.

**STONE CURLEW** (*Burhinus magirostris*):

A nest of a single egg on which one of the parents was brooding, 20/10/44 on the borders of a salt pan area at the North Western end of the Esplanade. This egg hatched on 25/10/44.

**WHISTLING EAGLE**. (*Haliastur sphenurus*):

27/10/44, birds were in attendance at a nest in the Edge Hill area, which apparently contained young.

**RED-BACKED SEA EAGLE**. (*Haliastur indus*):

The nest in the Edge Hill School ground appeared to contain young birds. 30/8/44.

**PAPUAN FROGMOUTH**. (*Podargus papuensis*):

A single breeding record. 6/12/44. One of the parent birds which flushed, was brooding. The young bird flew from this nest on 12/1/45.

**RAINBOW-BIRD**. (*Merops ornatus*)

Numerous nesting tunnels were found at Edge Hill during September, October and November.

**NORTHERN WARBLER**. (*Gerygone mouki*):

A nest was found near Edge Hill 6/12/44. It was not examined, but two of the birds were busily engaged feeding a young Bronze-Cuckoo, species undetermined, and were still in the same locality a week later.

**LOVELY WREN**. (*Malurus amabilis*):

Three immature birds were captured and examined before release, 18/9/44, in lantana at Edge Hill, where a nest containing three eggs was located 27/10/44.

**WHITE-BREASTED WOOD SWALLOW**. (*Artamus leucorhynchus*):

Numbers of these birds were present throughout the whole period, but nests were not noted until September. During October several records of nests with eggs; and other nests, not examined, but upon which the birds could be seen brooding were made. All were situated in coconut palms which

appear to be highly favoured for this purpose. Numbers of feathered young were on the wing by December.

**MAGPIE LARK**. (*Grallina cyanoleuca*):

\* Birds were feeding young in a nest at Edge Hill 27/11/44.

**MISTLETOE-BIRD**. (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*):

Although only a single nest was found, 20/10/44, the species was common enough. The birds had built in an orange tree overhanging a much used footpath, and just above head high. Its location was well known to a number of children who paid it a great deal of well meaning attention, on one occasion even removing the eggs to see if they were alright. Despite this somewhat unusual treatment, two young were successfully raised, flew, and remained in the locality for some weeks after they were abandoned by their parents. During the latter stages of their family raising, the adults became so tame that it was possible to photograph the female by hand from a distance of fifteen inches, as she fed her offspring at the nest.

**YELLOW-BREASTED SUNBIRD**. (*Cyrstostomus frenatus*):

Two unoccupied nests were recorded, fastened to pieces of rope on buildings in the Edge Hill area.

**BROWN-BACKED HONEY-EATER**. (*Gliciphila modesta*):

Nests of this species were only found in the one locality at Edge Hill where the predominant tree was *Melaleuca* sp. A strange and unusual feature of many of the nests recorded was the manner in which a new structure had been built almost adjoining one used for a previous clutch or during a previous season. Nests with eggs were found during September, October, November and December, and one examined during January contained a

young Cuckoo of an undetermined species. Probably the Fantailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*).

**DOUBLE BANDED FINCH**. (*Steganopleura bichenovii*):

Small parties and pairs were often seen about gardens and homes in the city, and on several occasions birds were noted carrying grasses. The only nest examined appeared to be used by a family regularly as a roosting shelter.

**RED BROWED FINCH**. (*Aegintha temporalis*):

Common about the city in small parties and flocks. Young birds in immature plumage were seen 27/8/44. Two nests were found at Edge Hill, 27/11/44. On this occasion, one of the birds was seen displaying. It held a piece of grass in its bill and proceeded to hop up and down on its perch.

**YELLOW FIG-BIRD**. (*Sphecothebes flaviventris*):

Nests were found in street trees, and about the outskirts of the city during November and December.

**SPANGLED DRONGO**. (*Chibia bracteata*):

Only one breeding record was made. 27/11/44, at Edge Hill, both birds were engaged in building.

**COMMON MYNA** (*Acridotheres tristis*) (Introduced):

Breeds freely in crevices, cavities, gutterings and suchlike all through the main business area of Cairns. Birds were observed carrying grass and feathers into these nesting sites throughout the whole period of observation.

**PARK PIGEON**. (*Columba livida*) (Introduced):

Flocks of these birds are always to be seen foraging over the streets in the busiest portion of the city. They have established themselves among the ledges of public buildings.

**EDIBLE PLANTS OF NORTH QUEENSLAND.**

By H. FLECKER.

Continued

**LEGUMINOSAE:**

107. *Dolichos Lablab* L., Hyacinth Bean. Pantropical. Green pods cooked and eaten as vegetables. Flowers, young leaves and ripe seeds cooked and eaten.