



A Tropical Birding custom tour

AUSTRALIA: *Northern Territory, Queensland,
New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia*

22nd September – 24th October 2019



Honeyeaters were the dominant family group of the tour, with over 60 species seen, including this spectacular *Western Spinebill*.

Tour Leaders: Sam Woods, with Emma Juxon in the Northern Territory, and Ben Knoot in Western Australia.

Report written by Sam Woods. Thanks to participant Larry Dole for his photos in this report.

INTRODUCTION:

*This lengthy custom tour was set up for four people wishing to get the most out of Australia on a single month-long trip. Therefore, it started out in Darwin, covering first the Top End of the Northern Territory, with its own special suite of bird and mammal species, before flying across to Cairns in the Wet Tropics of Northeast Queensland. This was followed by another flight, and short leg, in Southern Queensland, after a flight into Brisbane. Following this section was the New South Wales leg, accessed by way of a flight into Sydney. Having covered both coastal and inland New South Wales, we took another flight to the island state of Tasmania, before one final leg in Western Australia led to us breaking the 500 species barrier, with a grand total of **517 bird species** recorded by the trip end (taxonomy dependent), and **42 different mammal species** too.*

*The tour started out with a meet up in Darwin, and coverage of some Top End sites, which led us to see some real cracking Top End and Northern Australia specialties, like Rainbow Pitta in the monsoon forests, a Rufous Owl perched low in the daytime in a Darwin park, Gouldian Finches coming to drink at an Outback waterhole early one morning, electric-blue Hooded Parrots taking shade by a local tavern, a pair of **Purple-crowned Fairywrens** (photo right Emma Juxon) perching on some riparian canegrass, and a huddle of extremely confiding Partridge Pigeons amongst the stunning scenery of Kakadu National Park that also gave us insight into the ancient Aboriginal rock galleries. A pair of Yellow Chats in Darwin were both unexpected and highly appreciated! This leg closed with a genuinely last gasp Chestnut Rail stomping through the mangroves at Buffalo Creek.*



Heading east, after about a week in the NT, we remained in the tropics, but moved into a wetter area of these by way of a flight into the gateway for this, Cairns. This city and suburbs provided us with Beach Thick-knee, Little Kingfisher and Lovely Fairywren. Moving up into some higher rainforests, a Golden Bowerbird sat stock still by its captivating bower, a White-browed Robin sat by a shady creek, an absurdly confiding Southern Cassowary walked out of the forest and onto a sandy beach full of beach-goers, while mammals were represented by daytime Platypus, sleeping tree-kangaroos, and some imposing Eastern Gray Kangaroos, to name a few.



Etty Bay proved once again to be one of the most reliable sites to see **cassowary**, and see it well; we saw two different individuals in an hour period there in the middle of the day.

Once we reached Brisbane, in the south of the same state of Queensland, we then ventured in the temperate zone, with a vagrant pair of Cotton Pygmy-Geese being some of the first birds seen on this leg, quickly followed by a daytime encounter with the well-named Powerful Owl, Australia's largest owl. At the World famous O Reilly's we had great looks at their logo bird, the well-chosen Regent Bowerbird, and we also had very good close ups of several foraging Albert's Lyrebirds there, a male Paradise Riflebird (a bird-of-paradise), as well as a lengthy period with a Noisy Pitta, a close-up of a Marbled Frogmouth by spotlight, and some entertaining logrunners. The mammal headline of this section was a pair of Koalas a short walk from the Powerful Owl within Brisbane itself (thank you Dean!).

The third flight of the trip brought us to Sydney, and the state of New South Wales, where we enjoyed a group of Superb Lyrebirds feeding in the temperate rainforest, a group of Superb Parrots well inland from there, a male Chestnut Quail-Thrush completely exposed in the mallee heathland, and the enigmatic Plains-wanderer (an endemic, monotypic bird family), during a dedicated night drive for this species on the saltbush- studded plains of inland New South Wales.



The logo bird at **O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat** (near **Brisbane**), *Regent Bowerbird*.

Other highlights of this state included Gang-gang Cockatoos, Crested (Eastern) Shrike-Tit, an early morning Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo, and very well-behaved Beautiful Firetail, Eastern Bristlebird, and Pilotbird during a balmy morning around Barren Grounds. It would be remiss of me not to mention yet more mammal highlights, which on this section included a roadside Short-beaked Echidna, some giant Red Kangaroos inland, and some Humpback Whales dramatically breaching just offshore of Bass Point.

The penultimate part of the tour was based out of Hobart on the island-come-state of Tasmania, a longtime favorite of visiting overseas birders and Australians too, by way of the combination of a discrete set of attractive endemic birds and specialties, and the indisputable scenic beauty of the island.

This was illustrated perfectly on Bruny Island, where a clean, pallid sandy beach held a pair of Hooded Plovers, some attractive flowering Eucalyptus trees hosted some excitable Swift Parrots, (which had only recently arrived into the area for summer), and produced a day of 4 robin species (Scarlet, Flame, Pink and Dusky Robins). Nighttime forays brought us up close to some Little Penguins waddling ashore following their daytime pursuits out to sea, a Morepork staring at us in the spotlight, and a Southern Brown Bandicoot.



Rainbow Pitta was an early highlight, found on our first afternoon of the tour at **Fogg Dam (Emma Juxon)**.

Lastly, Perth was our gateway for the final spell of the tour, spent south of that city in the various unique habitats of the state of Western Australia, ranging from Wandoo woodland, which held Rufous Treecreeper and Blue-breasted Fairywren, to heaths where the “terrible trio” of Western Whipbird, Western Bristlebird and Noisy Scrub-bird were anything but terrible, and were all seen well by the entire group. A striking Red-eared Firetail on our first afternoon provided a superb opening gambit to our time in this under-birded state (relative to the others visited).

Other standouts for the tour end included, Red-capped Parrots daubed in deep-purple, lime-green and scarlet-red, an obliging Western Spinebill, a handsome Western (Crested) Shrike-tit foraging amongst the peeling bark of a eucalyptus trees in the wonderful surrounds of Stirling Ranges National Park (thank you Larry), and an incredibly approachable Rock Parrot feeding among pink blossoms on the spotless sandy beach in scenic Bremer Bay. Indeed, the landscapes of Western Australia were very impressive, enhanced during our visit by large numbers of blooming flowers, like lemon-yellow Candle Banksias, bright red fuschias, and fiery-colored orchids; Honey Possum feeding on a bank of Banksias at Cheynes Beach was a mammal highlight too (thanks Carol).

As well as producing quality individual bird and mammal species, the numbers on this Australia tour were also impressive. The wide variety of habitats, combined with many uniquely Australasian bird families, led to see representatives from 88 different bird families, including 19 ducks, Magpie-Goose, 2 Cranes, several albatrosses, 6 owls, 8 kingfishers, 13 cockatoos, 28 parrots, 2 pittas and lyrebirds, 7 bowerbirds, 2 birds-of-paradise, 11 fairywrens, 65 honeyeaters, all 4 pardalotes, 2 bristlebirds, 1 scrub-bird, 7 cuckooshrikes and a couple of shrike-tits! Australia is bursting with endemic species, and more than 250 endemic species on this trip was testament to that! Picking birds of the trip from a month-long tour was impossible, and so highlights from each of the six legs of the trip are given at the start of each section of the tour summary to follow...



The well-named **Pretty-faced (Whiptail) Wallaby**; one of **more than 40 mammal species** seen on this tour.

PLEASE NOTE: The Cairns-Brisbane-Sydney-Hobart section followed exactly the itinerary of our Eastern Australia: Top to Bottom set departure tour; the first leg in the Northern Territory was planned exactly as our Top End: Victoria River to Kakadu tour (which links with the Eastern Australia tour). The Western Australia part of this tour is currently offered as a custom tour, which can be ran as a stand-alone tour, or one that attaches to the Eastern Australia tour. It is due to appear as a scheduled tour in the near future; please check the website.

TOUR SUMMARY: Northern Territory

Highlights: Chestnut Rail, Great-billed Heron, Gray Goshawk, Rufous and Barking Owls, Black-banded Fruit-Dove, Partridge and Spinifex Pigeons, White-quilled and Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeons, Large-tailed Nightjar, Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Budgerigar, Hooded Parrot, Red-collared Lorikeet, Northern Rosella, Rainbow Pitta, Purple-crowned Fairywren, Black-tailed Treecreeper, Varied Sitella, Green-backed Gerygone, White-lined Honeyeater, Red-headed Myzomela, Arafura Fantail, Sandstone Shrike-Thrush, Mangrove Golden (Black-tailed) Whistler, Buff-sided Robin, Silver-backed Butcherbird, Australian Yellow (Canary) White-eye, Yellow Chat, Gouldian, Long-tailed, Masked and Star Finches, and Pictorella Munia (Mannikin).

Day 1 (22 Sept): George Brown Botanical Gardens, Fogg Dam & Lee Point (Darwin area)-NORTHERN TERRITORY

The tour started in the afternoon, following lunch, with first a quick check of a *Darwin* site for roosting **Rufous Owl** (*right*). Sam and Emma had staked these out in the gardens the day before, and so were unusually confident of finding them. However, on reaching the large rainforest tree the owls were conspicuous by their absence! Panic set in, but on widening our search slightly, we soon found one sitting really low, which ignored some local walkers as they passed immediately beneath it! Emma also pointed out the scarce **Gray Goshawk**, which she had found nesting in the park a few days prior; this turned out to be the only sighting of the species during this month-plus custom tour. We also familiarized ourselves with a distinctive species of the tropical north of Australia, **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**, scratching around in the gardens with their oversized feet.

We continued with a trip to the east of *Darwin* to the famed wetland and *monsoon forests* of *Fogg Dam*. On the way in we found our first **Forest Kingfishers**, while in the forest, we soon found our main quarry, the gorgeous, glittering **Rainbow Pitta**, and also located **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove**, **Little Bronzecuckoo**, **Common Cicadabird**, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** (Flyrobin), **Broad-billed Flycatcher**, **Varied Triller**, **White-gaped Honeyeater**, **Gray Whistler**, and a typically hyper-active **Arafura Fantail**.

The day came to a close with us admiring the throngs of waterbirds on the remaining water on the dam (it was well into the dry season), dominated by **Magpie-geese** in their hundreds, some sharp **Pied Herons** (*photo next page*) **Green Pygmy-Geese**, huge **Australian Pelicans**, a stately **Black-necked Stork**, a handful of **Comb-crested Jacanas** and **Radjah Shelducks**, and a dozen or more **Royal Spoonbills**, among the hordes present. We also became familiar with the sight of circling **Black and Whistling Kites**, scavengers that are an almost permanent feature of the *Outback* sky in the *Top End* of the Northern Territory. After dark we tried for several nightbirds close to our hotel at *Lee Point*, but managed to locate only one of these, with good views of a **Large-tailed Nightjar** less than a mile from our *Darwin* hotel.





Pied Heron a specialist of the tropical north of Australia, at **Fogg Dam**, near Darwin.

Day 2 (23 Sept): **Buffalo Creek, Lee Point, East Point, Palmerston, Pine Creek & Katherine-NORTHERN TERRITORY**

The day opened as the one had closed the evening before, with a sighting of a local nightbird near our *Darwin* hotel; this time a **Barking Owl** giving its signature call. The morning was spent in the *Darwin* area, (a city peppered with birding hotspots); before we drove south into the *Outback* and to the town of *Katherine* for the night, following a stop in *Pine Creek*. Our first mangrove location met with little success, with no sign of the hoped-for *Chestnut Rail* at first light, hindered by a less than ideal tide; although we did see **Australian Yellow (Canary) White-eye**, **Mangrove Gerygone** and **Red-headed Myzomela** there; and over 20 species on the beach at *Buffalo Point*, including **Pacific Golden-Plover**, **Red-capped Plover**, **Far Eastern Curlew**, **Long-toed Stint**, **Great Knot**, and **Terek Sandpiper**; an (Australian) **Gull-billed Tern** was also seen there, a possible future split from the widespread form in Asia. Before leaving *Darwin*, we dropped in at *East Point*, picking up **Torresian Kingfisher** and **Green-backed Gerygone** in doing so. Moving east of the city, we visited some parkland, where one of the local **Silver-backed Butcherbirds** (*photo next page*), a *Top End* specialty, dropped on to the ground to pick up food scraps, and a flowering bush held **Bar-breasted Honeyeater** nearby. A short stop in *Pine Creek* did not turn up the *Hooded Parrot* we were there for, but did lead to an unanticipated **Partridge Pigeon**, earlier on the trip than originally planned, as well

as allowed us not only to watch our first **Great Bowerbird**, but take a good look at its bower too (*photo below*). The day ended near *Katherine*, looking for a finches at a waterhole, which did yield **Crimson** and **Double-barred Finches** and a **Rufous Night-Heron** and **Cockatiel**. We vowed to return for some further *finches* early the next morning when activity promised to be higher...



Day 3 (24 Sept): Katherine, Edith Falls Road, and Victoria River to Timber Creek-NORTHERN TERRITORY



We started out our day just a short drive from our *Katherine* hotel, along the *Edith Falls Road*. At this time of year, it is well into the dry season within the *Northern Territory*, and so water is hard to come by, with few waterholes available. However, when you find one, these can be magnetic for local birds, particularly in the early hours of the day. This precise series of three pools was the current hotspot for the gorgeous *Gouldian Finch* and so we were not surprised to find other birders milling around when we arrived. We stationed ourselves at some distance between two of the waterholes present, and waited. However, we soon needed to relocate the short distance to a third pool, when some visiting photographers from the Far East charged off in that direction, indicating the finches were feeding at the only water we were *not* next too. A flock of **Gouldian Finches** were soon located there, and held some prize red-headed ones among them, as well as dark-headed males too; they did not partake in the drinking at the hole itself, but **Masked, Long-tailed and Crimson Finches** all ventured in for a drink in the shrinking creek. *Emma* pointed out our first little **Diamond Doves** also sneaking into the pool too, and **Mistletoebird, Weebill, and Paperbark Flycatchers** were all also seen there too. However, a large raucous flock of some 70-odd **Hooded Parrots** arguably stole the show with their striking plumage, once they came down to the rocks to drink from the water. Not long later, the birds

thinned out, as once their thirst was quenched they set off into the bush to become largely unavailable again for the day. This was our cue to start birding somewhere else, so after breakfast at the *Finch Café*, with its appropriate **Gouldian Finch** logo, we birded several spots close to *Katherine*, hoping for *Great-billed Heron* but missing out on that monster wader in the process.

However, we did add **Banded Honeyeater** to the bird list get our first proper looks at **Silver-crowned Friarbirds**, and saw one of the only **Channel-billed Cuckoos** of the entire tour at *Katherine Gorge*. The latter site also yielded our first gaudy **Red-winged Parrots** foraging in the trees by the visitor center, and a local nesting **Brown Goshawk** too.

After lunch in *Katherine* we set off south for another *Outback* town, this one much deeper south, *Timber Creek*. This would be our setting for the next two nights. However, the journey there offered up plenty of birds, and so we took full advantage of this, making a stop in at a **Red-backed Kingfisher** that had been seen of late, and same too with a **Red-browed Pardalote**, which proved harder to see than expected until finally *Emma* spotted it for us all. Continuing west from there, we came to an abrupt stop at a dam surrounded by noisy trees full of *parrots*; the main ones present being **Cockatiels** (*photo page 13*), **Galahs**, and **Red-collared Lorikeets**. Then we made a planned stop at *Victoria River*, where one of the pairs of local **Purple-crowned Fairywrens** (*photo page 2*) put in a perfect performance, so arguably were the day's main "showstoppers". The remainder of the short journey to *Timber Creek* was uneventful save for a few hulking **Wedge-tailed Eagles** sitting by the roadside, probably intending to fight with the other local scavenging predators, **Whistling and Black Kites** (of which we saw many), for the next available road kill. We had dinner in the only restaurant in *Timber Creek* and went to bed with the sound of their local *Barking Owls* calling outside.



Blue-faced Honeyeaters were seen well in the **Northern Territory** section in particular (*Emma Juxon*).



Hundreds of noisy, wild *Cockatiels* were marveled at, as they gathered around several Outback waterholes in the NT.

Day 4 (25 Sept): Timber Creek area-NORTHERN TERRITORY

Our day started early, as we drove about an hour west from the hotel in order to check an Outback area shortly after sunrise, which was when the birds would be most active, and also when we would be comforted by cooler weather than later in the morning. This meant that soon after dawn, we were admiring small hurried groups of *Budgerigars* (*photo next page*) flying from tree to tree around us, and getting some great views on walking into the tropical savanna landscape we were in to approach them; some 300 or so “budgies” were seen in the area. This short walk also culminated in us finding one of the scarcer specialties of the *Top End*, *Golden-backed (Black-chinned) Honeyeater* (*photo page 15*), a pair of which were located. *Emma* picked out the first of several decent raptors to come that day, with a **Black Falcon** circling overhead. A waterhole located on the return journey to *Timber Creek* was alive with bird activity, **Rufous-throated and Banded Honeyeaters** were regular drinkers there, and **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiels** and **Budgerigars** were found in the surrounding trees, as were a group of **Gouldian Finches** and a few **Masked Finches** too. While we were all looking down at this exciting collection of birds, *Emma* looked up to spot a **Black-breasted (Kite) Buzzard** coming our way. The edges of the small dam also hosted a **Black-fronted Dotterel** too, while the surrounding trees provided perches for **Australian Hobby** and **Australian (Nankeen) Kestrel**, presumably attracted by the hive of small songbirds. This birdy stretch of deserted highway also produced our first **Australian Bustards** of the tour slowly walking alongside it. The rest of the journey back to *Timber Creek* was much quieter, although we did stop for our first close looks at some perched **Little Corellas**.



We were back in *Timber Creek* by mid-morning, and then focused our attentions on the small airfield just outside this Outback town. This is a known hotspot for *finches*, although the later than ideal timing of our visit (done deliberately in order to take our best chance to see *Budgerigars*), meant that no finches were initially evident. We drove around, but could not locate the hundred or so **Star Finches** ([photo page 17](#)) recently reported there. Frustrated at this, *Sam* dug deeper, and set off into the long grass that surrounds the airfield, where he eventually located a small group of them, which the rest of the group reassembled for. A **Little Eagle** also passed over us there too on a very decent day for raptors. Our next stop was a scenic lookout, where it took longer than expected to finally find another northern specialty, **Black-tailed Treecreeper**, within the same area as some foraging **Yellow-tinted, Gray-headed and Gray-fronted Honeyeaters**. A noisy rabble of **Gray-crowned Babblers** were also found nearby. We returned to our lodging for the two nights, in order to freshen up and take some food, before walking from there for our next quarry. Screeches from beside the creek gave away the position of a small camp of roosting **Black Flying-Foxes**. Our main reason for checking the creek though was a specialty of the *Top End*, **Buff-sided Robin** ([photo page 16](#)), which was located soon thereafter and was seen to be nest building at that time.

The afternoon saw us visit *Gregory Tree National Park*, in the hope of locating *Spinifex Pigeon* along the entrance road, which *Emma* and *Sam* had seen during their short recce before the tour.

The entrance road was, however, *pigeonless*, although a stop there did lead to some **Red-backed Fairywrens**, our first **Little Woodswallow**, and another good raptor for the day, **Spotted Harrier**. As well as marveling at some of our first specialty birds, we also took in some fantastic *Outback* scenery, some of which included some local *Baobab* trees. On getting back to the vehicle, the group were stopped dead in their tracks, when a pair of **Spinifex Pigeons** nonchalantly walked out on to the red dirt track in front of them, and then slipped into the grass and out of view; our cue to leave! During the last light of the day we spent time once again around the *Timber Creek airfield*, which was now alive with small and large groups of *finches* roaming the area, for their last feed of the day. Up to one hundred **Star Finches** were now conspicuous, as were similarly numerous **(Australian) Zebra Finches** too, while smaller numbers of **Double-barred Finches** also featured. The airfield also held foraging **Australasian (Horsfield's) Bushlarks** and **Black-faced Woodswallows** regularly used the fence to launch attacks on passing insects. On slowly driving around the airstrip, a small party of *finches* were noted foraging on the road ahead of us, and a quick check of their identity proved them to be a party of half a dozen **Pictorella Munia (Mannikin)**, a scarce species in this season in the *Top End*, due to exceptional drought conditions. A night time excursion to look for nightbirds resulted in none heard nor seen, unfortunately.



"Golden-backed Honeyeater", currently a form of Black-chinned Honeyeater, is a northern specialty, and may be split off as a separate species in the future. This was taken west of Timber Creek (Sam Woods).





Around a hundred *Star Finches* were observed in company with *Zebra Finches*, at *Timber Creek*.

Day 5 (26 Sept): Timber Creek and Victoria River to Katherine-NORTHERN TERRITORY

The evening before we had a tough decision to make, regarding this morning's plan; stay around *Timber Creek* and try again for the sizeable flock of *Yellow-rumped (Munias) Mannikins* reported recently, or set off early to give us our best chance at *White-quilled Rock-Pigeon* on the *Escarpment Trail* at *Victoria River*. The advantage of doing the latter earlier would be less oppressive heat to deal with. Being a custom tour for a group, this decision was taken by them, who opted to try for both! So, we started out, once more, at the *Timber Creek airfield*, which was as birdy as the previous late afternoon, with plentiful **Star and Zebra Finches**, a few **Masked Finches**, regular **Australasian (Horsfield's) Bushlarks**, and **Australasian Pipits** all seen, as well as a pair of **Australian Bustards** making direct use of the good feeding on the sides of the runway. A party of **Brown Quail** scuffled around in the red dirt in front of the van too, the only ones seen well during the entire, month-plus, tour. **Diamond Doves** were also unusually conspicuous, with some even opting to perch on the fence surrounding the airfield, which also provided a perch for a pair of **Red-backed Kingfishers** too.



A pair of *Australian Bustards* were observed in the early morning on the *Timber Creek airfield* (Sam Woods).

However, we made no headway on the *mannikins*, and so headed out of town, returning east to *Victoria River*, and immediately set off up the *Escarpment Trail*. This led us into beautiful red rock country, some of which were occupied by a part of **Wilkin's (Short-eared) Rock-Wallaby**. The scenery was superb, with vistas of the mighty *Victoria River*, the escarpment, and the surrounding bushland for all to see from several high lookouts. However, the birding was not fully satisfying; *Carol and Larry* located a single **White-quilled Rock-Pigeon**, which flew in and gave them choice looks and photo "ops", before bolting over the cliff edge and could not be relocated after we all regrouped later.

After being in harsh sunlight and making a hike within this, we were all ready for a rest in the local roadhouse, where we recharged with food and some of the excellent local Australian Ginger Beer. On the afternoon journey back east (and north) to *Katherine*, we first checked the drying river itself, which held **Caspian Tern**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Black-necked Stork**, and both **White-faced and Pacific (White-necked) Herons**, among others. We also stopped at some waterholes decorated with **Cockatiels**, which also attracted **Banded and Rufous-throated Honeyeaters**, and three species of *marsupial*: **Agile Wallaby**, **Antilopine Wallaroo**, and some giant male **Red Kangaroos (next page)**, which were very popular indeed. The trees surrounding these yielded our first decent looks at **Blue-winged Kookaburras** for the entire group, and likewise with a roaming party of **Apostlebirds**.



Day 6 (27 Sept): Katherine to Pine Creek-NORTHERN TERRITORY

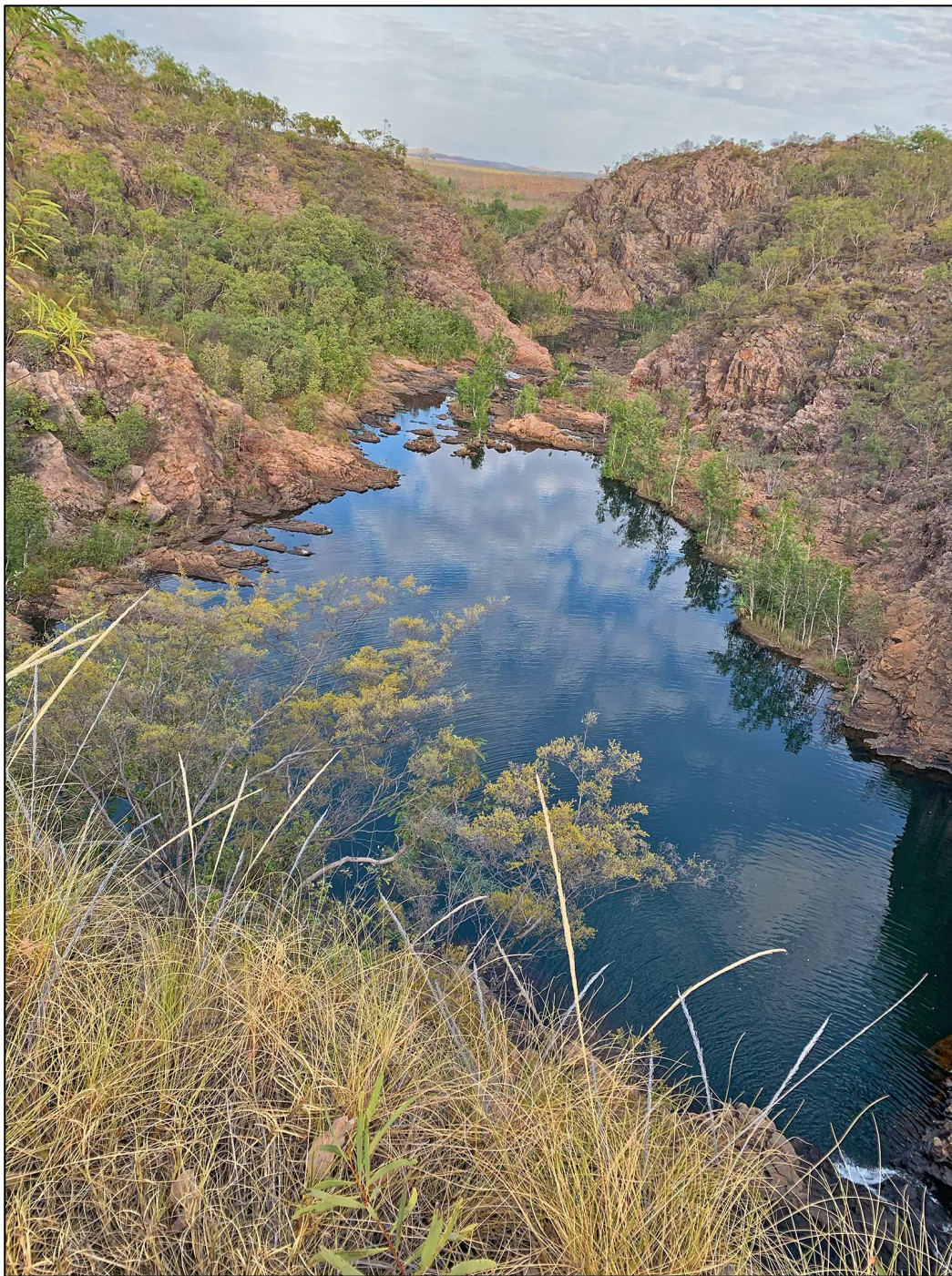
This was a day of mixed fortunes; we got some excellent birds, but missed a bunch too in spite of much effort spent pursuing them. On top of that, we also lost *Emma* from the tour entirely, after an accident left her with an ankle injury, preventing her from continuing on. We were all very sad to lose her, she had been great company, and found a good percentage of the top birds too. The day started just outside of *Katherine*, where we tried to find some *buttonquail*, but could not find any sadly. The same area did yield a **Brown Falcon**, and our first **Northern Fantails** lit up by the first rays of sunlight of the day. Planning for a late breakfast back in *Katherine*, in order to avoid the only early morning option of “Maccas” (MacDonald’s), we were forced into a very late one, once a visit to an *Aboriginal* town turned into something of a birding hotspot; on arrival we noticed a pair of **Hooded Parrots** sitting by the local sports field, the trees alongside, and later that fence too, held our first **Northern Rosellas** (photo below) of the trip, the first in a flurry of new species that came out of this town. **Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Common Bronzewing** were all new to us there, while **Masked and Long-tailed Finches** were merely handsome repeats, as was a party of **Apostlebirds**. After breakfast, our fortunes dipped again, as we gave it a good try for “*Northern*” **Shrike-Tit**, the rarest of the three shrike-tits. In spite of us visiting the very best spot for it, we simply could not find one, and had to accept the rather unequal compensation of our first **Varied Sitellas** and **Jacky Winters**, and more **Black-tailed Treecreepers**, **Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters** and **Silver-crowned Friarbirds**. The afternoon saw us visiting the local sewage treatment plant in *Katherine*, where our first, very distant, **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** were scoped, and a **White-throated Gerygone** sung its heart out in the surrounding *Eucalyptus* savanna. A couple of **Australian Bustards** featured for the third consecutive day, but were the final ones seen on the tour. Following a very unfortunate accidental fall at this site, we visited the local hospital with *Emma*, and dropped her and her supplies in *Katherine*, where she needed further tests in the coming days. We continued on north to the tiny town of *Pine Creek*, home of the *Hooded Parrot*, and a gateway into *Kakadu National Park*...



Day 7 (28 Sept): Edith Falls to Kakadu; Yellow Water cruise-NORTHERN TERRITORY

This day involved some missed birds, all be it amongst the dramatic landscapes of *Edith Falls* (worth the entry fee alone!), before we drove into world famous *Kakadu National Park*, where an afternoon boat cruise on a private vessel saw us face to face with numerous waterbirds right within the heart of the Outback on one of the standout activities of the entire tour.

The scenery at our first stop, *Edith Falls (below)*, was breathtaking, and it was quickly abundantly clear why people choose to camp there in good numbers, with clear waterholes reflecting the awesome landscapes that they sit within providing memorable images from the morning. However, the hoped for *Northern Shrike-Tit* remained elusive once more, and we left empty-handed on that front, but did manage to find some **Northern Rosellas** finding a damp, cool, wet refuge in the well-watered campground with many other species there too, like **Red-collared Lorikeet** and **White-gaped Honeyeater**. A **Pallid Cuckoo** on the walk was also the first to appear on the tour in a part of the trail where we also observed some **White-winged Trillers** too. After some food, we crossed into *Kakadu National Park*, and a short visit to the bumpy, corrugated entrance road to *Gunlom Falls* found us at a deserted campsite where our only company was a party of **Partridge Pigeons** – *photo next page* - (13 of them!), that allowed remarkably close approach....





A party of thirteen extremely confiding **Partridge Pigeons** sitting in the shade at a deserted **Kakadu** campsite provided a memorable opening gambit in the park.

On most days *Partridge Pigeon* would have provided the headlines, but then we slipped on to a private cruise of the *Yellow Water* billabong in the afternoon, which was always going to provide the most notable experience of the day/Top End. Even before the boat had pulled out of the dock, we were noting new birds like **Rufous-banded Honeyeater** coming into to drink with **Long-tailed, Crimson and Double-barred Finches** and a few **Bar-breasted Honeyeaters**. While we could have been accused of restricting the birdlist seen on the boat trip by focusing on getting two scarce species for which this boat trip offered our best opportunity (*Great-billed Heron* and *Little Kingfisher*); even under these circumstances, we enjoyed a sizeable afternoon bird list with plentiful birds to see and photograph among the 60 or so recorded during this two-hour trip alone. Our chief quarry was seen early on, to calm the nerves, with a single **Great-billed Heron** (*photo next page*) lurking in the shade; at least two more were seen by the end of our two hours on the water. However, our other principal avian target, *Little Kingfisher*, was elusive, and remained unseen in spite of much effort among the best areas. While searching for that water-loving gem, we did get repeated looks at several **Azure Kingfishers** that allowed us to drift right up alongside them. Some parties of grazing **Brolgas** were also much appreciated, but were seen much closer the next day. **Comb-crested Jacanas** were plentiful, the odd **Shining Flycatcher** would dart in and out from the banks, and hundreds of **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** sat well within photographic range regularly.



Great-billed Heron is found in a number of places in Australia but is genuinely scarce at all of these, and is also famed for rarely venturing into the open, as this shot from our private boat trip in **Kakadu** illustrates well!

Among the long list of other species seen during this period on the water were, **Green Pygmy-Goose**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Australasian Darter**, **Australasian Swamphen**, a few **Black-necked Storks** (*photo next page*) both **Royal** and **Yellow-billed Spoonbills**, and many, many, many grazing, honking **Magpie-Geese**. However, the star turn of the afternoon was undoubtedly made by a female **Black Bittern** (*photo next page*) that, rather than fleeing the gentle approach of our boat, chose to stand still in the open where she no doubt hoped she could not be seen. 9 species of heron were seen that boat ride, including multiple very bold **Rufous Night-Herons** and plenty more **Pied Herons** too. She was very wrong, as a series of images were taken by the excitable photographers among us! A pair of **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** were also on show to prove what a great outing this is for bird photography, sitting on a dead snag in the water, seemingly completely unconcerned about our small boat drifting right alongside them. Several **Pheasant Coucals** were also found from the boat, and a truly memorable concentration of **Bar-shouldered Doves**, which were seen in their hundreds. It was a memorable part of our *Northern Territory* trip, and overshadowed the lack of nightbirds seen on our last venture that night! No cruise on the *Yellow Water* would have been complete without Australia's apex predator, and indeed we did see a **Saltwater Crocodile** while searching the banks for birds too.

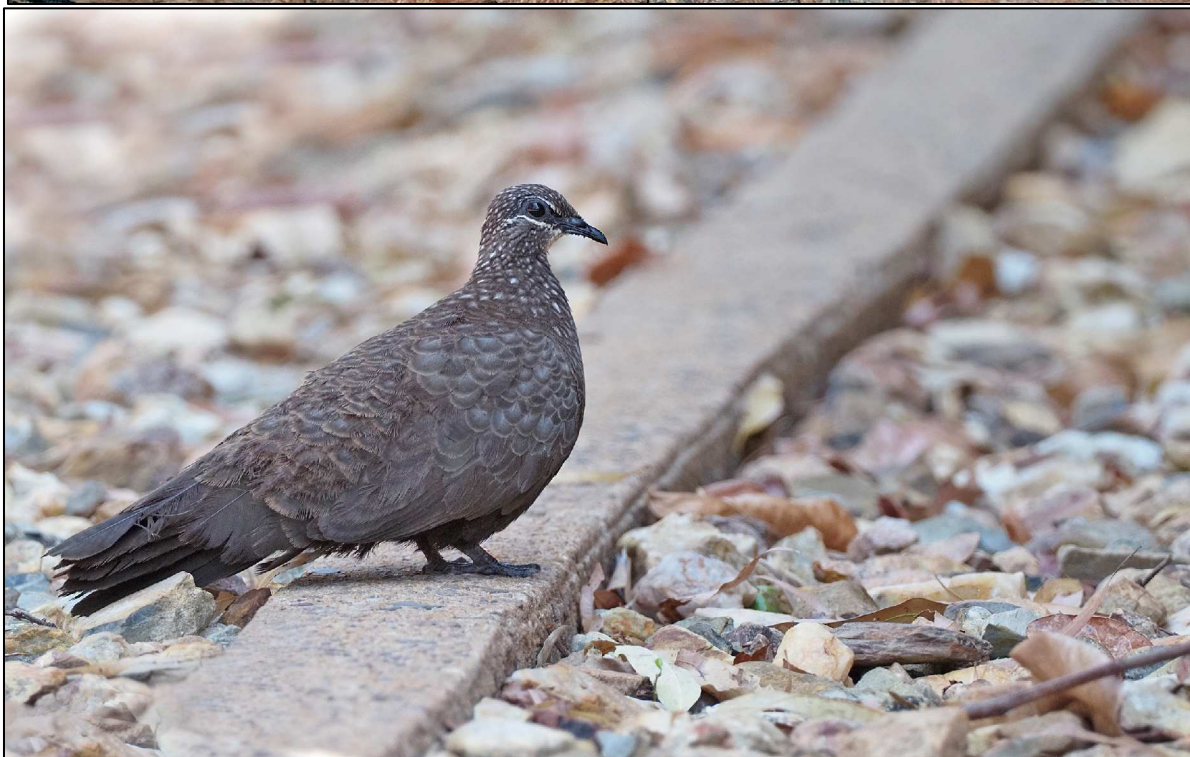


Day 7 (29 Sept): Kakadu (Nourlangie Rock, Jabiru, Ubirr), and Adelaide River to Darwin-NORTHERN TERRITORY

This epic day of the tour featured an exciting combination of dramatic *Kakadu* scenery, good local specialty birds, and ancient Aboriginal rock art to compliment all of this also. We were now located within *Arnhem Land*, Aboriginal land of northern Australia characterized by impressive outcrops of burnt red sandstone. It is these latter rocks, and the other habitats associated with them, which were our focus that morning, for they host some real regional specialties. We set off from the hotel in the cool early morning near dawn, and stopped shortly before reaching *Nourlangie Rock*, where the *monsoon forest* at its base yielded two key species for the morning, the extremely local **White-lined Honeyeater** (actually seen better in the same spot later that morning), and the attractive **Black-banded Fruit-Dove**. It was obligatory to admire the towering, 193m/633ft-high rock itself, which held a **Sandstone Shrike-Thrush** singing from its summit (another wanted specialty) as well as survey the ancient rock art for which it is most famous, dating back thousands of years. The local *sandstone form* of **Helmeted Friarbird** was also found in the forest at the rock base, a potential future split.



The absorbing ancient Aboriginal rock galleries at *Ubirr* were complimented by *Wilkin's (Short-eared) Rock-Wallaby* and a pair of *Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeons* took shade in the nearby picnic area.



On stopping at another rock art site, *Ubirr*, we were again impressed by the dramatic setting, but were there also for the incredibly confiding **Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeons** that seemed oblivious to tourists, as did the local **Wilkin's (Short-eared) Rock-Wallabies** (*both photos on page before*). On the way back to *Darwin* during the afternoon, we found a party of **Brolgas** feeding right beside the road, and picked up another **Black-breasted (Kite) Buzzard** passing over the motorway. We stopped off by the *Adelaide River*, where we eventually managed to locate a pair of **Mangrove Golden (Black-tailed) Whistlers**, (our main quarry) along with **Black-necked Stork**, **Red-headed Myzomela**, **Gray Whistler** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** too. That night, over dinner, we were reunited with *Emma*, who would return to the UK early in the coming days, unfortunately for us. After another large dinner (the portions are typically sizeable in Australia), we set out for another of the local nightbirds. During our earlier spell at this particular *Darwin* hotel we had already seen both *Large-tailed Nightjar* and *Barking Owl* closeby, and now it was the turn of **Australian Owlet-Nightjar** (*photo below*) to show itself within a few miles of the lodging too...





TOUR SUMMARY: Northeast Queensland

Highlights: Southern Cassowary, Pink-eared Duck, White-headed and Squatter Pigeons, Wompoo and Superb Fruit-Doves, Papuan and Tawny Frogmouths, White-browed and Spotless Crakes, Sarus Crane, Beach Thick-knee, Latham's Snipe, Red-footed Booby, Azure Kingfisher, Pacific Baza, Double-eyed Fig-parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Lovely Fairywren, Golden and Tooth-billed Bowerbirds, Spotted Catbird, Victoria's Riflebird, Scarlet, Macleay's and White-cheeked Honeyeaters, Fernwren, Atherton Scrubwren, Chowchilla, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Pied, Spectacled and

White-eared Monarchs, Barred Cuckooshrike, Crested (Eastern) Shrike-Tit, and White-browed and Mangrove Robins; Platypus, Eastern Gray Kangaroo and Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo.

Day 8 (30 Sept): Darwin (Coconut Mangroves, Knuckey's Lagoon, Buffalo Creek)-NORTHERN TERRITORY to Cairns (and Cattana Wetlands)-QUEENSLAND

Although our thoughts were already straying towards northeast *Queensland*, (where an afternoon flight would take us to *Cairns*), we could not afford to lose our focus on the *Northern Territory* completely, with a vital morning left in the *Darwin* area before that. We started out at *Coconut Mangroves* searching for some missing *mangrove* species, and finding **Australian Yellow (Canary) White-eye**, **Red-headed Myzomela (Honeyeater)**, **Broad-billed Flycatcher**, **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Crimson Finch**, and our first **Black Butcherbirds** there, but not sadly either *White-breasted Whistler* or *Mangrove Fantail*, which were also on our shopping list. We did, however, locate a pair of **Mangrove Robins**, which showed well initially but then went to ground, leaving half of the group wanting more. With limited time available and a high tide making this perhaps poor timing for the former at least, we stopped in at *Knuckey's Lagoon*, on the outskirts of *Darwin*. This wetland had hosted a major rarity of late, but even if we failed to find that, we felt the visit would be worthwhile for a number of other waterbirds too. The shrinking pond had plenty around its edges, including **Marsh and Wood Sandpipers**. However, it was as we were preparing to leave there that *Chris* found one of the birds of the tour: **Yellow Chat** (*photo above*)! This inland species only rarely (not even every year) wanders to the coast, and we had heard intermittent reports of them there, but were still stoked to get such good views of a typically tough Australian bird.

We returned to *Buffalo Creek* by mid-morning, when it was clear that the tide was dropping just enough that we might be in with a chance of the elusive *Chestnut Rail*. With this in mind, we rushed back to the hotel and packed up our stuff, returning to the creek a short time later, by which time the tide had fallen further, exposing mud for the *rail* to feed on. However, *rails* were not found during our first sweeps of the mud or on checking inside the nearby *mangroves*. Tensions were high; we knew we had a flight to make, but also knew that within the next hour was going to be prime time for the *rail*, with the tide reaching the ideal levels for it to wander out in the open. A **Striated Heron** was seen, as was a dark morph **Pacific Reef-Heron (Egret)**, and our last **Paperbark Flycatcher** of the tour, a species we had become very familiar with over the past week in the *Northern Territory*. Just as the time was slipping away, *Sam* spotted the large form of a **Chestnut Rail** passing through the edge of the mangroves on the opposite bank; the bird was moving with purpose, and so did not stay in one spot for long. *Larry* then also found it, wandering well to the right of where we had initially seen it, but similarly, it melted back into the mangroves before all could see it. Further tense moments followed, as we understood we needed to leave for our flight soon, but then someone again picked up this monstrous rail, slowly walking among the same mangroves. This time, this gray-headed, chestnut bodied, and powerful *rail* was seen by all, and so we were quickly into the vehicle and off to the airport for our flight out of the *Northern Territory* and into *Northern Queensland*, which offered some very different birding indeed...



This *Little Kingfisher* was photographed a few days after our first at **Cattana Wetlands near Cairns**; this one was taken on the **Daintree (QLD)** boat cruise north of there.

Touching down in *Cairns* at 4pm gave us just enough time to drop our bags at our nearby hotel, and venture out into a wetland just north of the city. This visit to *Cattana Wetlands* was an unqualified success, but not really in the way we had planned. Our visit there had been scheduled with an opportunity at *White-browed Crake* in mind.

Unfortunately, on getting to the wetland, it was clear that *northeast Queensland* was considerably wetter than in recent years, revealing much more areas for the bird to relocate to, and we simply could not find one while there. However, we set about seeing some northeast specialties, like **Yellow and Brown-backed Honeyeaters** and **Hornbill (Helmeted) Friarbird**. However, it was while Sam searched in vain for the *crake* that the sighting of the site appeared. He glanced down to see a tiny **Little Kingfisher** (*photo page before*) perched at the water's edge. He quickly backtracked to the group, and soon all were enjoying this miniscule blue-and-white bird as it quietly waited for prey just above the water. **Comb-crested Jacanas** and **Royal Spoonbills** fed vigorously in the last light of the day too. Another excellent sighting followed the *kingfisher*, when trying an area for the inconspicuous and scarce **Lovely Fairywren**, a male popped up in full view, and was quickly trailed around by several blue females that accompanied him from bush to bush, to bring an amazing day to a close; by the close of the day we were seeing the first of many **Rainbow Lorikeets** to come too, now we'd moved into their range.

Yellow Chat, *Chestnut Rail*, *Lovely Fairywren*, and *Little Kingfisher* were way more than we could have expected out of this mixed day, where we started out in tropical *Northern Territory*, then moved into the *Wet Tropics of Northeast Queensland* near *Cairns*. Our first night in *Cairns* was capped by a night of *kangaroo* steaks and *pies* at the local pub, washed down with a customary ginger beer/real beer!



Beach Thick-knee was initially elusive in the **Northern Territory**, but then were straightforward once we got to **Cairns**. They flew in and landed on a beach in the city before we took off on a boat cruise to the Great Barrier Reef for much of the day.

Day 9 (1 Oct): Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef-QUEENSLAND

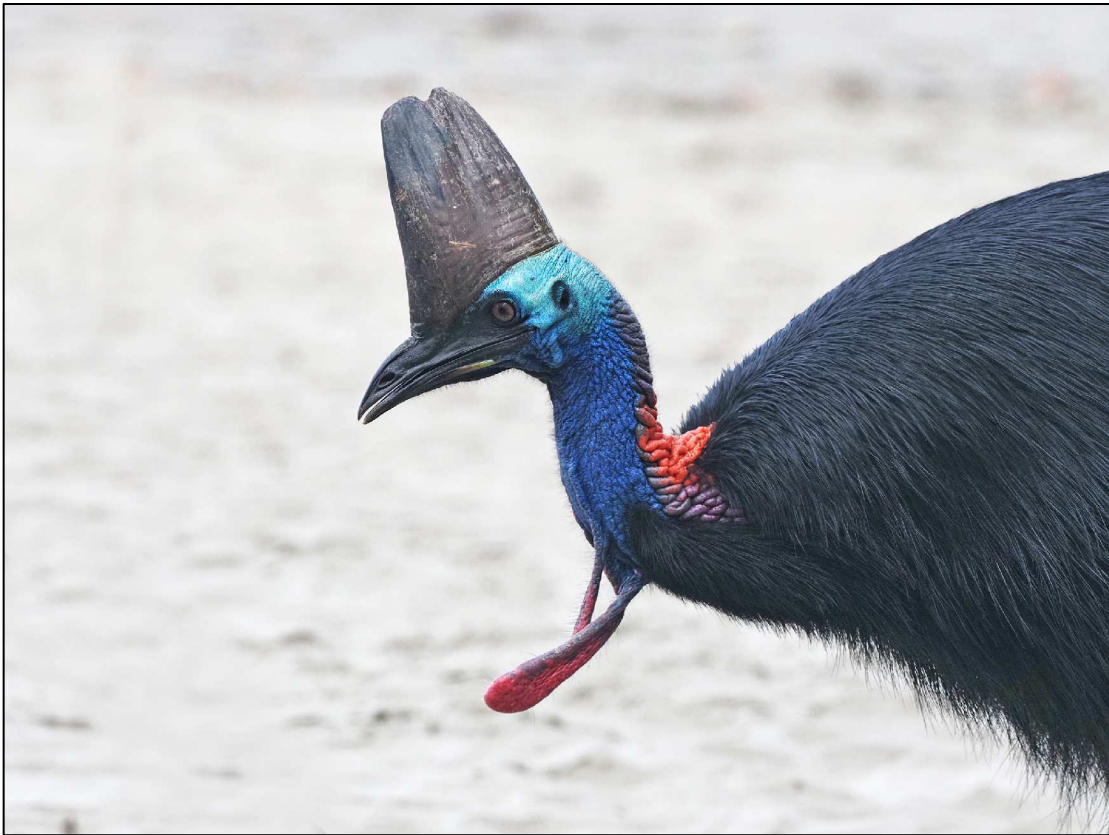
After a period of the tour where we had expended a lot of energy, and made some very early starts to combat the heat of the *Outback*, this day provided something of a respite, with a boat cruise for much of the day out on the reef. Before breakfast and time on the boat though, we dropped in for a 30-minute birding session along the north end of the *Esplanade* in *Cairns*. It did not take long at this hour to find our main target, **Mangrove Robin**, a pair of which showed to all at this time. Next up was an aggressive pair of **Varied Honeyeaters** that reacted strongly, landing in the mangroves immediately alongside us, while **Metallic Starlings** darted overhead. We had a few minutes left before we had to return to our *Cairns* hotel for breakfast, and so we checked the seafront, or *Esplanade*, for waders, and were amazed to watch a pair of **Beach Thick-Knees** (*photo page before*) fly in and land on the mud in front of us, where a few **Black-fronted Dotterels** were also feeding, among other “repeat” shorebirds we had already seen in *Darwin*, like **Far Eastern Curlew**. After breakfast, we set off from the dock in *Cairns* for the 90 minute trip to the small sandy islet of *Michaelmas Cay*, on board the *Seastar*. Until we neared the island little was seen aside from the odd **Great Crested Tern**, and some **Bridled Terns** idling on some buoys just offshore. The best find was waiting for us on top of the glass-bottomed boat anchored just off the cay; a young **Red-footed Booby**, a regular rarity into these waters. Once on the cay, we admired the very confiding breeding **Brown Noddy**, **Sooty Terns**, **Brown Booby** (*photo next page*), and crowds of terns at close quarters; 8 species of tern were recorded, including **Black-naped**, **Roseate**, and **Lesser Crested Terns**. Other highlights, apart from the experience of being surrounded by thousands of nesting seabirds, and clean, white sands on the *Great Barrier Reef*, were **Great Frigatebird** and **Ruddy Turnstone**. At 4pm, we arrived back in *Cairns*, following snorkeling and glass-bottomed boat tours. We drove direct into the forested hills in *Kuranda*, and the famous *Cassowary House*, where **Long-nosed Bandicoots** were scampering around the yard after dark...





Day 10 (2 Oct): **Cassowary House, Etty Bay, and Hasties Swamp to Daintree-QUEENSLAND**

We assembled at 6am with the forest already wide awake, and spent some time birding cool rainforests on the Cassowary House property and nearby *Black Mountain Road*. We enjoyed a very productive morning; before an 8am breakfast we had already seen **Wompoo Fruit-Dove**, **Chowchilla**, **Spectacled** and **Pied Monarchs**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**, **Barred Cuckooshrike**, **Pale Yellow Robin** and **Yellow-spotted** and **Graceful Honeyeaters**. The breakfast spread by Sue on the balcony at Cassowary House is rightly legendary and a wonderful way to spend an hour watching birds close up. Unfortunately, this day was not to include *Southern Cassowary* on the list there, as the male had yet to come in with the chicks, an unexpected turn of events. However, there was plenty of wildlife to keep us occupied, like the **Musky Rat-Kangaroos** scuttling around below with the **Australian Brush-Turkeys**, a **Macleay's Honeyeater** came in and out to feed at the sugar feeder, a **Black Butcherbird** preferred cheese, and an **Asian Emerald-Dove** wandered in to feed at length below us. A male **Victoria's Riflebird** gave its harsh calls regularly while we ate, but remained firmly out of view. After breakfast though, some further searching led us to a dead stump, where the male called from regularly. On looking at it in the scope, we could see all the subtle gloss and iridescence on the plumage too, when it came to life. A final walk in *Kuranda National Park* brought us one final addition in the form of a superb **White-eared Monarch**, before we set off south for Etty Bay having also picked up our first **Australian Swiftlets** before doing so



Our visit there was not originally planned, but we quickly added this to the itinerary following our miss of the cassowary that morning. A 2-hour drive was needed, and we arrived to see a beach packed with beach-goers. A caravan park on site hosts permanent residents and tourists, and is fringed with wet rainforest, home to a number of wild cassowaries, including a handful of them that have become extremely habituated to people. *Dean* quickly spotted a female **Southern Cassowary** (*photos page before*) sitting in the shade of a low tree just behind the beach. Not long after, this bird became restless and strolled along the beach, to the obvious surprise and delight of some people in from out of town, but no surprise at all to local residents, who are well used to such bizarre sights. Better views or photos of a cassowary could not have been had. The first of many **Laughing Kookaburras** featured too, and a young cassowary was seen walking alongside the road on the way out. We spent a bit of time in the car next to right our journey back north into *northeast Queensland*, and to reach our most northerly point in this state of the tour, *Daintree* village, where we overnighted at the wonderful *Red Mill House* for one of the meals of the tour—thank you *Holly and Leilana*. We took a short detour on the way to look in on *Hasties Swamp* and the fields surrounding it, where red potato fields held a party of **Sarus Cranes**, and **Swamp Harriers**; while at the swamp itself we admired a pair of **Pink-eared Ducks** hiding among the masses of commoner duck species, like **Magpie-geese**, **Plumed and Wandering Whistling-Ducks**, and **Hardheads (White-eyed Ducks)**. Some small shrubs were in flower on the edge of the wetland, and attracted some dashing **White-cheeked Honeyeaters** (*photo below*), along with **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** too. Soon after, we departed for *Daintree* for the night, taking a look at some giant **Eastern Gray Kangaroos** at a golf course en route.



Day 11 (3 Oct): Daintree, Wonga, Newell Beach, and Mount Lewis-QUEENSLAND



The day began in some rainforest on the outskirts of *Daintree*, where a pair of **Fairy Gerygones** were found. At 6:30am, we boarded a small boat and took a two-hour cruise along the *Daintree River* with local boatman/birdman, *Murray Hunt*. Soon after leaving the dock, we watched a **Black-shouldered (Australian) Kite** sail and land beside the river, and **Striated Heron** crossed the river in front of the boat. A good number of **Australian (White-rumped) Swiftlets** were on the wing, and whenever we moved closer to the mangrove-lined banks a few **Shining Flycatchers** were seen foraging in these riparian areas. It was a great time on the river, and a perfect piece of relaxed birding after some intense sessions either side of this. The highlights of the trip were to come though, once *Murray* maneuvered the boat into a narrow space, we could all look up at a roosting **Papuan Frogmouth (photo left)**, the largest of the three Australian frogmouth species, but the first to be added to our lists. Then, just as it seemed that the boat trip was over, *Murray* spotted a **Little Kingfisher**, that gave even better views than we'd had in *Cairns*. It was a great day for kingfishers with 6 species for the day (including **Azure and Forest Kingfishers**, and both **kookaburras**). We pulled in to the dock at the close of the cruise, as a sizeable **Saltwater**

Crocodile lounged on the opposite bank. Tradition dictated that we take a breakfast spread on the balcony of *Red Mill House*, From *Daintree*, we headed inland and westwards towards our base for the next three nights, *Mareeba*, situated on the edge of the *Outback*. As we journeyed there, we dropped in on a number of birding sites that dot the route. First up was *Wonga Barra Farm*, where some **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, **Radjah Shelducks** and a **Black-necked Stork** were present, but nothing new, so we swiftly moved on. Next up was at nearby *Newell Beach*, where we got our best views of **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** foraging in some mangrove-side trees, which also hosted some bright **Olive-backed Sunbirds**. After lunch at a roadside café, we visited one of the premier birding sites in northeast Queensland, *Mount Lewis*, which comprises an area of highland rainforest that is home to a number of restricted-range species.

Soon after arrival, two of these were located, with some twittering, social groups of **Mountain Thornbills** feeding by the roadside, and **Atherton Scrubwren** foraging at ground level. Shortly after this pair, came other local specialties, with a number of vociferous **Bower's Shrike-Thrushes**, a handful of **Bridled Honeyeaters**, and a late appearance by some **Gray-headed Robins**. Having somehow missed **Spotted Catbird** at *Cassowary House*, we were pleased to see a few of these on the mountain. Indeed, *bowerbirds* were a focus of the afternoon, and with some work we made our way to a stage of a local **Tooth-billed Bowerbird (Catbird)**, which comprised of large bright green leaves carefully placed on a cleared area of forest floor. We also bumped into up to 8 different **Chowchillas** feeding in the leaf litter, and enjoyed extended looks of these. Several small groups of **Topknot Pigeons** also passed overhead through the afternoon. At the end of the day we retired to our hotel in *Mareeba*, and enjoyed a substantial (is there any other kind in Australia?!) pub dinner in town.



Double figures of *Squatter Pigeons* were found at **Granite Gorge**, which also hosted very tame **Mareeba Rock-Wallaby** and **Pale-headed Rosella** during our visit.

Day 12 (4 Oct): **Big Mitchell Creek, Mount Lewis, Julatten, Granite Gorge and Mount Carbine-QUEENSLAND**

Having trimmed our northeast *Queensland* hitlist considerably in recent days, we had a fairly clear-cut group of birds we were now seeking. One of these was the scarce **White-browed Robin**, a riparian species that can often be hard to find. With this bird in mind, we visited *Big Mitchell Creek*, and worked our way along the creek to where the vine tangles became denser, which is where we managed to find a pair of these scarce *robins* early that morning. We then returned to *montane rainforest*, and *Mount Lewis* again, as in spite of our good start there the afternoon before, we had not find either a *Fernwren* or a *Golden Bowerbird*, and so those became our principal focus. As we searched for them, we again found **Spotted Catbird**, **Tooth-billed Bowerbird (Catbird)**, **Bower's Shrike-Thrush**, **Gray-headed and Pale Yellow Robins**, and several **Topknot Pigeons**. *Dean* also put us on to our first confirmed **White-headed Pigeon** of the trip (perched out in full view), following some possible flybys the evening before. We also located another pair of **Chowchillas**, which were noisily rummaging in the leaf litter betraying their location to us in doing so. Finally, the high-pitched song of the **Fernwren** reached our ears, and shortly after we were watching a male as it hopped up and sang from low rocks and branches in the cool rainforest. Searching the forest floor for this local specialty turned up more of another, **Atherton Scrubwren**, which is also largely terrestrial. No sight nor sound of *Golden Bowerbird*, lead us back down the mountain instead to search for other species. As we descended the mountain we had our final views of the tropical-dwelling **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**, while at the base, where rainforest gave way to more open, wet *eucalypt* woodland, the sweet calls of a **Scarlet Myzomela (Honeyeater)** were heard, and after some effort, we managed to see the strikingly scarlet male as it fed feverishly in the blooming treetops.



Mount Carbine provided great photo opps for **Pale-headed Rosellas** and **Blue-winged Kookaburras**.

Mount Lewis sits very close to the town of *Julatten*, an area littered with excellent sites for birding. We chose to check a wetland at one of these, not finding the *crakes* we were hoping for, but instead getting decent looks at a perched **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** that had been eluding us until then. Driving the roads of *Julatten* also led us to stop suddenly for a *raptor* overhead that alighted alongside the highway, and were found to be a pair of **Pacific Bazas**, which allowed us completely satisfying scope looks after that.



We then changed habitat markedly, by visiting *Granite Gorge Nature Park*, an area of rocky, open *Outback* woodland, close to the town of *Mareeba*. The park is mostly known for its healthy population of **Mareeba Rock-Wallaby**, a very local species of *marsupial* for which this site offers the best chance of finding; we found them shortly after arrival, sitting among the rocks, awaiting their next feed from the many visiting tourists! Before we had seen them though, we were already watching the first of several small groups of **Squatter Pigeons** (*photo page 36*) feeding in and around the impressive granite outcrops. **Gray-crowned Babblers** also scampered around quietly in the neighboring trees. A couple of **Pale-headed Rosellas** (*photo page 37*) were found in the trees above, (and were our first ones), quickly followed by better views still at our next stop, *Mount Carbine*.

The latter stop also brought another landmark bird, our second and perhaps best-liked *frogmouth* of the trip, with a low roosting **Tawny Frogmouth** (*photo below*) shown to us by the very helpful park staff. While we were all very familiar with **Blue-winged Kookaburras** (*photo page 38*) by this point, following our time in the Northern Territory, we were still astounded by the exceptional views and photo opps given by several confiding local birds. Another familiar Outback bird was seen again, **Great Bowerbird**, and we again saw a well decorated active bower, this one sporting some red items that were lacking in the bower seen in the NT individual we'd seen earlier on the tour. A little further west, we finished up with a **Brown Treecreeper** and a further **Australian Kestrel** as the afternoon waned, and led us back to *Mareeba*, via a pub dinner in *Mount Molloy*.



Day 13 (5 Oct): Hypipamee, Hasties Swamp, Curtain Fig, Nerada Tea Rooms, Tarzali Lakes, Lake Barrine-QUEENSLAND

As with the day before, we started the day in *upland rainforest*, but this time at *Hypipamee National Park*, where signs reminded us that *cassowaries* roam this forest and to be alert for them. We did not see any cassowary though, but found a young male **Golden Bowerbird** hanging out near his impressive bower. We visited the stunning crater for which the park is more usually visited, and picked up **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, and an **Eastern Spinebill** while doing so, and a male **Golden Whistler** was added to the birdlist nearby. **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** perched in the open, but a number of calling **Superb Fruit-Doves** did not, and proved very hard to actually see, culminating in us hiking well off trail to find one particular male. **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** also featured again there too. **Brown Gerygone** was also new for us at this site, although **Tooth-billed Bowerbird (Catbird)** and **Gray-headed Robin** had both been seen previously at *Mount Lewis*.



Moving on from there, our closeness to *Atherton*, made it only natural to stop in on *Hasties Swamp* again, following breakfast in the nearby town. This swamp is one of the best in all of Australia, and was typically packed with birds, dominated by **Australasian Swamphens**, **Plumed Whistling-Ducks**, **Hardheads**, **Dusky Moorhens**, and **Pacific Black-Ducks**. Dotted among them were **Royal Spoonbill**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, and, finally, a small group of **Latham's Snipe** foraging inconspicuously at the edge of the marsh.

Sarus Cranes again were found in the agricultural fields close to the swamp. The flowering shrubs at the edges were also alive with honeyeaters, including **White-cheeked** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**; and a male **Red-backed Fairywren** (*photo page 40*) gave us as good a view as we could ever hope for. The *Eucalyptus* trees above this yielded our first solo **Olive-backed Oriole** too.



A fine cup of tea and these **Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroos** were on show at **Nerada Tea Rooms, QLD**.

The next stop was part birding, part obligatory sight-seeing, as we were passing by the famous *Curtain Fig Tree*, and so could not resist checking out this extraordinarily, massive tree, over which the similarly impressive form of a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** passed during our short spell there. From then on, the focus of the day turned to *mammals*, as we had some significant ones in play for the day. Road signs had already alerted us to this with “Warning tree-kangaroo!” crossing signs already having been photographed by *Chris*! We stopped in to purchase some *Nerada Tea*, one of Australia’s most famous tea brands, but were really there to see the local group of **Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroos** (*photo above*), which we were shown to us by someone sitting at a table sipping their local tea, which seemed somehow appropriate! Few birds were seen there, but that was not what we were there for anyway, and so we moved on to *Tarzali Lakes*, where a *mammal* was set to headline once more. A short walk led us to a small lookout over a beautifully crystal-clear lagoon, where ripples on the surface soon led us to the first of at least four **Platypus** (*photo next page*), which fed unconcernedly just out from the lookout, one even coming in extremely close to feed among the pond weed lining the shore.

We were also hoping to pick up a **Buff-banded Rail** at the site, but returned to the center/café empty-handed. However, the extremely helpful friendly local lady-come-platypus expert, was critical in us finding it. She had recently become friendly with a pair that joined her every day for lunch, and so further searching of the premises led us to find “roadie”, the rail she had named so, as it often walks on roads! This wild bird came so close, only head shots were permissible! There were no complaints from us. We finished the day in *Crater Lakes National Park*, and *Lake Barrine* to be precise, where hundreds of **Great Crested Grebes** on the lake were our first ones for the tour, and a few **Great Cormorants** there were also a new addition. Another highlight was seeing the two giant *Kari* trees that were sitting alongside the lake, and can claim to be some of Australia’s largest tree species.



Platypus, one of Australia’s strangest and most iconic mammals, was seen at *Tarzali Lakes, Atherton Tablelands QLD* (Sam Woods).

Day 14 (6 Oct): **Julatten, Mount Garnet and Wondelba State Forest NP, QUEENSLAND**

This was to be our last day in the *Wet Tropics of northeast Queensland*, before we flew to the markedly different south of the state. Therefore, this provided our final chance at some of the birds we had not yet seen, and so the day’s flexible itinerary reflected this. We started out at *Sides Road in Julatten*, where we had some great birds, like **Spectacled Monarch**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** (*photo next page*), and **Little (Rufous) Shrike-Thrush**, but could not find the few *Blue-faced Parrotfinches* that were heard there. Staying in *Julatten*, we then visited a small, reed-lined pond, where we hoped we might find a *crake* or two. It did not take long before *Larry and Dean* were gesturing towards several small figures feeding on the muddy edges;

first a close **Spotless Crane**, and then several **White-browed Cranes** a little way out. **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Golden-headed Cisticola** and the final **Forest Kingfishers** and **Dusky Myzomelas** of the tour were also noted at this site too.



One of the last stops of the leg, near *Mount Garnet* much further south, was hoped to yield a *Cotton Pygmy-Goose*, but none could be found on this large lake but did hold some **Green Pygmy-Geese**, **Black Swans** (our first), a few **Brolgas**, a single **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**, and several **Great Cormorants** and **Comb-crested Jacanas**. Our final birding stop on this *Cairns/Northeast Queensland* leg was at *Bluff State Forest in Wondecla*, south of *Herberton*. One of our main objectives of visiting there was to see *Little Lorikeet*, which we knew would be difficult, even at some latter sites. However, in spite of hearing some soon after arriving, none were seen. The visit was far from wasted though, we set eyes on our first rambunctious **Fuscous Honeyeaters** fighting anything that landed anywhere near them, and better still, a superb “**Eastern**” **Crested Shrike-Tit**. The fastest bird in the World, **White-throated Needle-tail** also flew over, but was fast enough to avoid some people’s gaze! It had only recently arrived in the region, being a summer visitor to Australia. We returned to *Cairns* for one final night, and another substantial steak, before our next day’s flight southwards...

TOUR SUMMARY: Southern Queensland

Highlights: Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Baillon's Crake, Marbled Frogmouth, Powerful Owl, Wonga Pigeon, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Australian King-Parrot, Albert's Lyrebird, Noisy Pitta, Green Catbird, Regent and Satin Bowerbirds, Australian Logrunner, Red-browed Treecreeper, Eastern Whipbird, Paradise Riflebird, Rose Robin, and Bassian and Russet-tailed Thrushes. Koala, Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallaby, and Red-necked Pademelon.

Day 15 (7 Oct): Boondall Wetlands, Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Minnippi Parklands, Jolly's Lookout to O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat (Lamington NP)-QUEENSLAND

Before first light we set off from our Cairns hotel, and took a flight to the city of Brisbane, in the temperate south of Queensland. We had now left the humid tropics of northern Australia behind for good. Our first stop was not far from the airport, where Boondall Wetlands protects an extensive area of coastal mangroves. This habitat held one species we were seeking, which to our astonishment was sitting on a roadside wire as we pulled up: **Mangrove Honeyeater!** This was on our scheduled itinerary, although the next few sites in the Brisbane area were not, but were added at the advice of a local birder and friend Stuart



Pickering, who met us at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, where a pair of **Cotton Pygmy-Geese** were dabbling amongst the floating vegetation, as is their wont. This species is a vagrant from northeast QLD, but had been sighted at this location, very on and off, over the previous few months, and had luckily been refound there only the evening before. A **Gray Butcherbird** in the surrounding trees was our first of the tour too, as were a small group of dabbling **Chestnut Teal** on the lake with the pygmy-geese. It was then time to stop in on Stuart's own local patch in Brisbane, Minnippi Parklands, which was in great condition this year (following low rainfall), with plenty of muddy edges on the ponds for shorebirds, which had led some **Pied (White-headed) Stilts** to breed there for the first time in modern history. A chick stilt was observed that must have only been a few days old. Wetland birds were prominent with **Glossy Ibis** noted, along with our first **Red-kneed Dotterels** and a single **Latham's Snipe** foraging along the edges. **Black-fronted Dotterel** was also feeding on the same ponds. On closer inspection, Stuart also located one of the recently seen **Baillon's Crake**, still choosing to feed in the open, even though we were by now in one of the late hours of mid-morning. A **Buff-banded Rail** also did the same. Moving into the surrounding parkland, we located a calling **Brush Cuckoo** (a first of season for the site), and admired the first of *three different fairywrens on site*, a male **Variegated Fairywren** led the charge, but remained hard to photograph in spite of excellent views. The first of many **Superb Fairywrens** came there too, and repeats of **Red-backed Fairywren** were also had.

A *Tawny Grassbird* called loudly nearby, but refused to show, a familiar story on this unfortunate tour for this species! Other birds of note in the parkland included **(Common/Oriental) Dollarbird** and **Sacred Kingfisher**. Then *Stuart* led us into some other parkland in *Brisbane*, where we hoped to find a roosting *Powerful Owl* or two. *Stuart* had been keeping track of them, and so we were fairly confident (he had already checked on them that morning before our arrival). However, before we had reached that particular point, *Dean* caused us to stop dead in our tracks with the simple word "**Koala!**" (*photo page before*). In spite of his later protestations, it was a Hell of a find; the animal was not beside the trail, and required us to go off trail to get



a proper look at it, when it was found to be one of a pair dozing in the same area. This was one of the standout moments of the tour, and a much wanted species for people like *Carol* and *Larry*. Our progress to the owl had been delayed somewhat, but no one cared. *Stuart* quietly led us to where he had seen a pair of **Powerful Owls** (*photo above*) that morning, (before we hand landed), only to arrive and find the owls were no longer there. We were a little perturbed, but *Stuart* continued on alone and quickly found them hiding in another nearby spot, no doubt having been inadvertently disturbed by a passing, unaware jogger, whom was probably more shocked than the owls at the encounter! This, the largest of all the Australian owls, was admired at length, before we set off for one final site with *Stuart*, *Jolly's Lookout*. We'd chosen to visit there in reaction to multiple recent sightings of the rare and difficult *Glossy Black-Cockatoo*. Soon after arrival at this scenically stunning site, we added **Striated Thornbill**, which climbed down from its usual treetop positions to come within twenty feet of us at knee height. However, we simply could not find the *black-cockatoos* anywhere, and so had to admit defeat on that one during our limited stop there, as we still needed to drive on to *O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*. We made a brief stop to look in on a noisy colony of **Bell Miners** before we left though and said our farewells to *Stuart*.

After several hours, we arrived at the impressive winding road up to *O Reilly's* within *Lamington National Park*, moving initially through grass-dominated wet, *sclerophyll* forest and then into verdant, *temperate rainforest* on the top of the plateau, where the lodge is situated. We had barely turned in, when we came upon a large feeding group of **Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallaby**, utilizing the local farmland to good effect. A few **Red-necked Wallaby**, a more thick-set, less strikingly-patterned wallaby species was also noted among them too. With *nightbirds* on our agenda, we took dinner as early as we could following check in, and then set off by car, and foot, into the local *rainforest*. *Southern Boobooks* were heard calling, but we decided to leave them for later, and focus first on finding one of the local *Marbled Frogmouths*, a dweller of dense *rainforest* understory. Our first spot failed us, with nothing being heard except another distant *boobook*; and so we tried another roadside trail.

Sam ventured down first, and finally got a response from a close *frogmouth*; he returned to the vehicle and brought the group back to the same spot swiftly after. We waited in perfect darkness for a little while, with an unburnished starlit sky staring down on us, before a clear, unbroken reply came from a **Marbled Frogmouth** (*photo below Larry Dole*) very close by. We swept the area with a flashlight, and soon found this orange-eyed bird staring down at us, so close that head shots were the best option! A *Sooty Owl* was also heard, but never came in, and the handful of *bookooks* that were only heard remained that way, and we vowed to return to them the next night; a single **Mountain Brushtail Possum** seen during our *frogmouth* quest ended up being the sole sighting of our time there too...



We got a fantastic close up with a **Marbled Frogmouth** near the legendary **O Reilly's** (*Larry Dole*)

Day 15 (8 Oct): **O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat (Lamington NP)-QUEENSLAND**

A full day was spent within the wonderful surrounds of *O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*, an area of *temperate rainforest* just a few hours south of *Brisbane*. This allowed us to walk straight from our rooms into decent birding right on our doorstep. The lodge is famous among birders and "Brisbanites" alike as a haven for birds and a place to see birds well, with some superb local feeders. This helped to explain the *parrot* welcome we received as we emerged from bed, with the bold local **Crimson Rosellas**, only slightly more daring than the **Australian King-Parrots**, which were around in lesser numbers. **Regent and Satin Bowerbirds** were also seen around the reception with ease as usual! Checking the *parrot* feeding area, we soon located one of the local **Wonga Pigeons**, which typically come there during the quieter periods of the day; a small flock of **Red-browed Firetails** were even more popular as they fed in this paved area, next to the large memorial for the 1937 Stinson plane crash, famously located by one of the lodge founders, *Bernard O Reilly*.

We continued on foot, this time taking a track to look for forest interior species. The first part of the trail is barely into the rainforest though, and this is where we ran into two people already looking at our main target species, **Albert's Lyrebird** (*photo below*). Moments later, we were watching one of these giant, pheasant-like songbirds, using its powerful feet to rummage in the leaf litter for food. By the day's end, we had managed to see 5 different *lyrebirds*, most of which were close and photographable; this is not always the case on a short visit! Moving away from the *lyrebird* and further along the trail, we found our first **Australian Logrunners**, typically noisy and conspicuous at this early hour; we observed them doing what they are best known for, resting on their tails like a prop, while they freed up their powerful legs to scrape away leaves below them to expose food. They were seen scurrying along logs too for good measure! Continuing our pre-breakfast walk, we soon heard the riotous calls of a **Noisy Pitta**, a bird that had eluded us expertly during our spell in *northeast Queensland*. This time was very different; pursuing the sound led us to a treetop bird, which happily remained in full sight as it called enthusiastically from a tall rainforest tree. Other birds, which were no less impressive, included a male **Rose Robin**, and a glossy, velvety-black male **Paradise Riflebird** that sat in view at length. **Green Catbirds** also made their first appearance of the trip, and were only seen at this one site. It was hard to conceive that this all happened before breakfast! We returned to the main lodge on foot and enjoyed a hearty, and lengthy, cooked breakfast, safe in the knowledge we had already put a massive dent in our birdlist for the area.



After breakfast, we set off by vehicle, driving to *Duck Creek Road*, where we could see the stark division between dense, lush, vine-tangled temperate *rainforest*, and open, grassy, sparsely wooded wet *sclerophyll* forest. Just outside of this biological division we found a pair of **Red-browed Treecreepers**, and an extremely confiding **Spotted Pardalote**, aside from a startled juvenile **Albert's Lyrebird** that scuttled off of the road once back inside the rainforest.

Driving further down the road we were astonished to run into a pair of local **Dingos**, which on later discussion with the lodge, had been known to be in the area for some time, but were very unexpected for us!

We drove out of the rainforest again on a different road deliberately, this time with another avian quarry in mind. We had heard that **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** (*photo next page*), (a species that we had already unhappily missed on this tour at another site already), had been very recently sighted in the area, and were driving down there with these specifics of these sightings in mind. However, *Chris*, who was completely unaware of the directions that suggested we continue further down the road, calmly announced she had some *black-cockatoos* by the road. She spotted these from the back seat of the vehicle, and were found to be away from the road, hence the troubles the rest of us had in trying to find them. It was a remarkable bit of spotting for sure. After some anxious minutes, we parked up along the winding road and then found a good position, where we could watch these scarce cockatoos feeding on their favored *casuarina* (*Sheoak*) trees. We returned for lunch with a very lean list remaining, and enjoyed a lunch on the balcony with a number of **Pied Currawongs** lurking with intent nearby, ready to pounce on any unattended food items at a moment's notice. Other notable moments were provided by several male **Eastern Whipbird** seen and heard giving their characteristic whipping sounds, which has haunted us (and *Larry* in particular) at previous sites on the tour. We also managed to identify one responsive **Bassian Thrush**, a tricky ID challenge on site alone. As usual, *O Reilly's* proved itself to be *the* place to see it on this itinerary! In the evening, we set out in pursuit of *Southern Boobooks* and *Sooty Owl*, which had been heard the evening before; on a very blustery night, none were seen or heard though.



Day 16 (9 Oct): O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat (Lamington NP)-QUEENSLAND to Sydney & Lithgow-NEW SOUTH WALES

We started out by trying to plug the few gaps in our O Reilly's list, before returning to *Brisbane* airport, and flying south to *Sydney* in the state of *New South Wales*. By this time we were fortunate to have precious few new birds to find in *Lamington National Park*, though we did manage to add one, with a very responsive **Russet-tailed Thrush** along one of the O Reilly's trails. Thus, our final time there was largely about taking in the incredible sights that are daily features there, and which make this such a special place to visit. We made sure we were there for the daily morning feeding of the local *bowerbirds*. In particular, this offered unrivaled opportunities to shoot **Regent Bowerbirds** (*photo page 4*) at close quarters, while their brethren, **Satin Bowerbirds** were waiting in the wings. *Parrots* were also at the fore, with **Crimson Rosellas** vying with the local **Australian King-Parrots** (*photo page 48*), for our attentions during this frantic feeding session. Other last *Queensland* highlights, were **Green Catbird**, **Wonga Pigeon**, **Eastern Whipbird**, and **Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallaby**. While on the way down we had even better views of a local group of **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** (*below*), allowing even better photos than before. Our short try for *Square-tailed Kite* near *Brisbane* failed on that front, yielding merely a nesting **Brown Goshawk** Once we landed in *New South Wales*, we drove directly to *Lithgow* for the night, our base to explore the Capertee Valley the next day.



TOUR SUMMARY: New South Wales

Highlights: Emu, Freckled, Pink-eared, Musk and Blue-billed Ducks, Australian Crane, Plains-wanderer, Red-necked Avocet, Banded Lapwing, Inland Dotterel, Southern Boobook, (Eastern) Barn Owl, Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo, Long-billed Corella, Turquoise, Superb, and Mulga Parrots, Greater Bluebonnet, Little Lorikeet, Superb Lyrebird, Southern Emuwren, White-winged and Purple-backed Fairywrens, Crested Bellbird, "Eastern" Crested Shrike-Tit, Ground Cuckooshrike, Painted, Black and Pied Honeyeaters, Chestnut Quail-Thrush, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Rockwarbler, Pilotbird, Chestnut-rumped and Shy Heathwrens, Southern Whiteface, Eastern Bristlebird, Hooded Robin, and Masked and White-browed Woodswallows. Beautiful and Diamond Firetails. Short-beaked Echidna and breaching Humpback Whales.

Day 17 (10 Oct): Capertee Valley, Lake Wallace and Orange to Forbes-NEW SOUTH WALES

We arrived in *New South Wales* via a *Cairns to Sydney* flight the afternoon before; now we got to see it in the daylight, starting with a visit to one of the most scenic sites local to *Sydney*, the *Capertee Valley*, vaunted as the widest valley in the world. We had bumped into another birding group the evening before at our hotel, who had informed us they'd had an amazing day in the *Capertee*, and so the pressure was on! We departed the hotel (after a cooked breakfast) at 6:45am, arriving in the valley, and *Coco Creek* about an hour later. Things started well with an active pair of **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** seen from the

bridge there, before we drove further down the valley. As we descended the valley some trees in blossom were surrounded with birds, both on the tree itself and in the air above; this signaled for us to get out of the vehicle, and to find the first of hundreds of **White-browed Woodswallows** for the day, which also held a much smaller number of closely related **Masked Woodswallows** (*photos on page 52*) amongst them. Our next stop yielded another new *honeyeater*, this time the underrated, handsome, **Black-chinned Honeyeater** (*above*), which somehow managed to elude the attentions of the very aggressive local **White-plumed Honeyeaters**. Another morning stop was caused by a passing *cockatoo* that looked "off"; we stopped the vehicle and soon solved the mystery, when a party of nine **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were located in some nearby trees, before they set off over the fields and were gone. If this sounds like things were fast paced with barely a moment to catch our breath between birds, this is not inaccurate, it felt like that on the ground too. Taking a side road led us to a particularly interesting paddock, where a pair of **Hooded Robins** foraged alongside **Rainbow Bee-eaters** (*photo next page*), while nearby trees added one more *honeyeater*, with the striking **Striped Honeyeater**. **Rufous Songlark** was conspicuous by its song there too, and soon was found perched up mid-territorial song on the top of a large, gnarled dead tree. However, best of all were the two small shapes that darted past us and then landed nearby: **Turquoise Parrots**!

Indeed, *parrots* started to pop up more regularly, in particular our first of many **Red-rumped Parrots** and vermilion-headed **Eastern Rosellas**. A smattering of lone *woodswallows*, not joining the hordes of **White-browed Woodswallows**, on the wing that day, included some **Dusky Woodswallows**, which were also new for the trip. A series of new *thornbills* also opened our birding time in *New South Wales*, with a few **Yellow Thornbills**, and several pairs of both **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** being found during the morning. So far, so good! Moving yet further down the valley we enjoyed great panoramic views of this gorgeous site as it unfolded in front of us, and turned off to another site where we managed to find **White-browed Babbler**, picked up our first **Restless Flycatcher**, and located a flowering *eucalypt* that hosted both **Little** and **Musk Lorikeets**, and an assortment of *honeyeaters*, like **Noisy Friarbird**, **Yellow-faced**, **Fuscous**, and **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, plentiful **White-plumed**, and **Red Wattlebird**. A *White-eared Honeyeater* seen by Sam in the same area proved to be the only one seen on the entire tour, a completely unexpected result. The conspicuous **White-winged Chough** joined the list that morning too, and was to become a familiar sight in the coming days foraging in the red dirt at the side of the roads. **Jacky Winters** also featured again too.



All too soon, our time in the *Capertee* had ended (*with more than twenty new bird species added in the morning there*) and we backtracked back up the valley, took lunch from a local café, and were soon off to nearby *Lake Wallace* for some waterbirding...*Lake Wallace* was packed with people visiting the lake, and birds right on the lake. Thousands of **Eurasian Coots** were not the reason we came, but were hard to ignore! Searching along the reedbeds soon brought us several uniquely ugly **Musk Ducks** and a single, furtive **Blue-billed Duck**, which remained firmly within the reeds with so many people around. **Hoary-headed** and **Great Crested Grebes** and **Chestnut Teal** were all also noted on the lake. We then undertook the long drive to the inland town of *Forbes*, making some ill thought out stops in *Orange* on the way. Ill thought out, as all they achieved was delaying our arrival in *Forbes*, and did not yield any *Superb Parrots*, as we'd hoped, with only *Sam* getting a brief flyover before we had to leave, with the sweet sounds of our first **Eurasian Blackbirds** in our ears, a species we were to become familiar with in the following days...



Day 18 (11 Oct): **Back Yamma State Forest, Blue Gum Swamp and Lake Cargelligo-NEW SOUTH WALES**

A short drive from our hotel in the small inland town of *Forbes* brought us into *Back Yamma State Forest*, an area of *mulga* habitat, which therefore offered up some new species as this was our first venture into this neat Australian habitat. We drove towards a small dam, noticing our first **Emus** in doing so; as these oases of water in a dry landscape can be magnets for birds. While activity was lower than expected, this did not stop *Larry* from spotting a **Diamond Firetail** coming in to drink there (our primary target for *Back Yamma*), and a **Crested (Eastern) Shrike-Tit** from being found in the nearby trees. A pair of **Southern Whiteface** also dropped in to the edge of the dam, and were to be the sole sighting of the tour. Spreading our search further afield from the dam itself, we found **Speckled Warbler** and a beautiful **Red-capped Robin** in the nearby dry woodland. Another noisy, buzzing **Restless Flycatcher** was also observed there too. **Gray-crowned Babbler**s also passed by, while a **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill** there also turned out to be the only one seen on the tour.

Western Gerygone and more **Weebills** (Australia's smallest bird, being *kinglet*-sized), were also seen, as was a roosting **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** (our first) as we first entered the state forest.



After a late hot breakfast/brunch back in the town of *Forbes*, we visited nearby *Blue Gum Swamp*. This super swamp is a mandatory stop on the tour, with its massive collection of waterbirds. Some of the most prominent of these were the hundreds of **Pink-eared Ducks** (left, *Larry Dole*) floating in the shallows, and sitting on the emergent woody stumps. The latter also hosted a small number of the endangered **Freckled Duck**, our main quarry there. A pair of **Australasian Shovelers** were also much appreciated, being a scarce and hard to come by species in some years on this itinerary. More **Yellow-billed**

Spoonbills were present on the swamp, while around its edges the woodland hosted **Eastern Rosellas** and **Cockatiels**. By now we were approaching late morning, and we decided to backtrack a little in order to try and find some **Superb Parrots** (photo next page, *Larry Dole*), which had eluded us in our searches around the city of *Orange* the evening before. We did not go back quite that far, centering our search west of there, near *Cudal*. It took only a short stop there before a mix of **Superb Parrots** and **Eastern Rosellas** were found feeding in some roadside blossoms, while others chose to feed on the ground instead, where *Larry* photographed this one.

After a long drive, with lots of roadside **Apostlebirds**, and a single, adorable **Short-beaked Echidna** just before our arrival, the final part of the day was spent at the superb *Lake Cargelligo Sewage Treatment Works*. In spite of some of the pools having shrunk in recent years following drought, there was still plenty on offer on the wet areas, and in the surrounding scrub and saltbush. We had been hoping for some *Red-necked Avocets* on the ponds, but the size of them quickly indicated this might have been a bit hopeful. However, there were dozens of **Red-kneed Dotterels** working the muddy edges, while hundreds of **Whiskered Terns** rested on the ponds and took to the air rather dramatically on occasion as one. A dark shape walking behind a group of stilts was quickly identified as a bold **Australian Crane**, which allowed us to walk right up to the opposite side of the pond from it for better views of its subtle features. The shrubbery bordering the pond seemed quiet at first, but then the first of several sightings of a party of **White-winged Fairywrens** brightened things up, which included a breathtaking *purple-and-white* male. Closer to one of the ponds, on its banks, we added a second new fairywren species for the day, with our first **Purple-backed Fairywren**, a recent split off from *Variegated Fairywren* (the latter we had already encountered in *Brisbane*). Just before leaving, *Dean* noticed something bright and beautiful sitting up behind the ponds, a super male **Crimson Chat**. On a pond that had appeared near birdless just moments before, the approaching dusk had encouraged out a group of dozens of **Black-tailed Native-Hen**, a nomadic inland *gallinule*, for one final new bird for the day. A rowdy Outback pub was the location for dinner in a town with few options, which provided some fascinating local culture and entertainment, no doubt spurned on by excessive intake of alcohol among just a few, very loud residents!



Superb Parrot, a specialist of Southeastern Australia is very well named! (Larry Dole)

Day 19 (12 Oct): Round Hill & Nombinnie Reserves and the Hay Plains-NEW SOUTH WALES

This was one of the key days of the tour; we started out in the *mallee* (a heathland habitat dominated by a selection of species of *Eucalyptus*); our first time in this habitat, before moving well inland and taking a night drive for one of Australia's most wanted birds, *Plains-wanderer*. Leaving the hotel at 6am, we made our way to *Nombinnie Reserve*. This *mallee* reserve is fantastic and holds numerous specialties that we had precious few chances at on the tour. However, when flowers are not blooming in the area, and therefore noisy *honeyeaters* have moved elsewhere, it can feel like a birdless place! This is largely how it began, (aside from a glowing-green **Mulga Parrot** perched on the road), until suddenly a **Crested Bellbird** piped up nearby. Knowing how difficult this bird can be to see, and how ventriloquial the call can be, *Sam* set in for a lengthy battle to find it. However, *Dean* made light work of it and announced he had within mere moments of its presence being announced! It remained on top of the stunted tree in crystal clear view for all to see. While it felt quiet, this was a great start and a bird that is frequently missed on tour. The general feeling of birdlessness continued post-bellbird for a while, before we hit the jackpot with a close calling **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** (*next page*) that paced out on to the open red dirt track in front of us and sung in full glorious view! Around the same time, another skulker, which had been conspicuous by voice, hopped out on to the same track, **Southern Scrub-Robin**, another *mallee* specialist. However, *honeyeaters* were worryingly silent. Thus we continued on by searching for another *mallee* specialist, and another that can be difficult to see, and specifically to see well. However, like the other furtive ground dwellers that preceded this one, it too proved unusually straightforward to see, and even confiding, a pair of **Shy Heathwrens** hopped in and out of the open, pausing there on several memorable occasions. Another notable addition in the area was a pair of **Splendid Fairywrens** bringing a sudden burst of color to the heathland, that a pair of drab **Inland Thornbills** did not contribute to!

We continued searching for *honeyeaters* to no avail, finding a couple more **Red-capped Robins** in the process, but eventually quit with little time remaining, and opting to visit a reserve a little further afield on the tip off of recent *malleefowl* sightings. Unfortunately, we did not see that shy *mallee* species, but we did track down some **Yellow-plumed and Singing Honeyeaters** on the journey there, as well as some **Greater Bluebonnets**, and were rewarded for the extra travel time by a swarm of flies on arrival!



We arrived in to small town of *Hay* by mid-afternoon, checked in, purchased some food for dinner in the field, and were soon on our way to meet the *Plains-wanderer* guru, *Phil Maher*. He took us out for the final 90 minutes of daylight, and quickly added some sterling species to our list. First off was a male and then female, **Orange Chat**, frequenting the same saltbush plains as **White-fronted and Crimson Chats** (*next page*), the both of which were seen very well. The *Crimson Chats* were the first Phil had seen in this area for some ten years, proving what a rare chat year we were having in 2019. In the midst of watching various chats, dozens of **Banded Lapwings** were seen sitting on the same plains, where they outnumbered the few **Masked Lapwings** in the area, a weird anomaly for this tour. Another male **White-winged Fairywren** also lit up a drab shrub as it sat on top of it. A good period for raptors included **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Brown Falcon**, and culminated in an **Australian (Nankeen) Kestrel** perched right beside an **Australian Hobby**! However, arguably, *Phil* kept the best for last, when we went to view a **Ground Cuckooshrike** nest, a short time before the sun started to fall. Three birds were part of the nesting cohort, and the nest had only been found a few days before.

We felt very fortunate indeed, to see this very scarce and extremely nomadic outback species. As the sun set, and we ate our takeaway dinner in the field at a local ranch, we watched dozens of **Black-tailed Native-Hens** emerge to forage on a pond at dusk.

After dark, we divided into two 4WD vehicles, both equipped with radios, and set off out on the plains, taking no roads, but seemingly driving randomly across the plains. However, there

was nothing random about this in reality, *Phil* and his henchman, local farmer and landowner Rob, were on the trail of the **Plains-wanderer** (below, *Larry Dole*), and this time it was very straightforward; a pair being found within a short time, and watched at close range. The rest of the night drive was just gravy after this, with more **Banded Lapwings**, a few **Brown Songlarks** (the only ones encountered on the entire tour), a single **Australasian (Horsfield's) Bushlark**, and numerous **Australasian Pipits**.



With another night bird in mind, we were driven to a small grove of largely dead trees, where an **(Eastern) Barn Owl** was found sitting out in the open as planned; the final stop was in a larger stand of trees, which on the plains can be few and far between. In this particular patch it did not take long before a **Southern Boobook** flew in silently and was spotlighted next to us all. We drove back to *Hay*, via a handful of **Red Kangaroos** on the way out of this private sheep ranch.

Day 20 (13 Oct): Hay Plains to Darlington Point and Griffith (Lake Wyangan and surrounds)-NEW SOUTH WALES

Following the exertions of the evening before, a lie-in was needed, and so we met up at 9am for a cooked breakfast in a lovely café beside a village green in the quiet rural town of Hay. After that, we returned to the Hay Plains, in order to try and locate an *Orange Chat* for the person who had missed the male the afternoon before, and see if we can add anything else in the process. Little of note was seen, until we came upon a flowering bank of *Eremophila* shrubs, which were attended by **Pied and Black Honeyeaters**, both unpredictable blossom nomads, numerous in times of blooms and locally absent altogether at other times. From there, we set off for the town of Griffith, making a scheduled stop in Darlington Point, a center of distribution for the local **Long-billed Corella**, a *cockatoo* species. Normally easy to find, (if very local), we had to work for them this year, until a small flock was found just outside town, to much relief. We put our heads down for a bit then, heading directly for the town of Griffith for a one-night stay. Just outside of town a wooded area had come to light in recent weeks, when some flowers bloomed and a number of birds came to the site as a result from miles around. The headliner among these were some **Painted Honeyeaters** (*below, Larry Dole*), one of the more striking and scarce species in the family. Happily, they were very locally abundant at the time, and we managed to record at least six individuals there, one of which perched right alongside a male **Black Honeyeater** in the late afternoon sun at one stage. Another **Pied Honeyeater** was also seen in the area too. We finished off by checking Lake Wyangan in the hope of an *avocet*; we did not find any of them, but did see **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **Red-capped Plover**, and **Yellow-billed Spoonbill**, and were taunted by a calling *Little Grassbird* that refused to budge.



Day 21 (14 Oct): Griffith (Lake Wyangan and surrounds), Binya & Five Bough Wetlands to Robertson-NEW SOUTH WALES

Although this day involved a long travel period for the latter part of the day, as we moved out of *Inland* New South Wales into the *Coastal* New South Wales; we managed to add a handful of the birds in the morning. We started our day by departing our Griffith hotel straight for the local golf course in the hope of finding a **Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo**.

Amazingly, just a few minutes from our hotel, one of these striking birds was found sitting beside the road. Around this area we also noted **Mulga and Red-rumped Parrots** and **Greater Bluebonnets** too. We then returned to another close *Griffith* site, *McCann Road*, where **Painted Honeyeaters** featured again in this woodland, although *Black and Pied* did *not* this time. **Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** were also seen there, as were our last **Cockatiels** of the tour. Moving to nearby *Lake Wyangan*, unlike the evening before, the same water now held a small group of five **Red-necked Avocets** along the edge, as hoped. *Binya* was also visited in the hope of a *Black-eared Cuckoo* or something else we were missing, but was eerily quiet, with presumably few flowering trees at the time; **Western Gerygone** and **Red-capped Robins** were recorded but little else. We then decided to visit another wetland a 30-minute drive away-*Five Bough Swamp*, one of the most highly-rated wetlands in the state. It was indeed fantastic; we added the species we'd most hoped to see, **Little Grassbird**, which were hanging out in the reedbeds with **Australian Reed-Warblers** outnumbering them. Also, outside of the wetland areas were a good number of **Purple-backed Fairywren**, which gave some great looks, and were locally common on site. Some stunted *saltbush* also held a pair of **White-fronted Chats**, but none of the *Orange Chats* that had been reported in recent weeks. The wetland areas themselves were loaded with birds; **Australian Shelduck**, **Black-tailed Native-hen**, **Australian Shoveler**, **Red-kneed Dotterels**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Hardhead** and others were seen during an hour or so on site. The rest of the day was formed of a half day drive to *Robertson*, in coastal *New South Wales*, near the temperate rainforest and heathland of *Barren Grounds*. After a lovely dinner in the local tavern in *Robertson*, *Chris*, *Sam* and *Dean* went for a night drive searching the *Jamberoo Mountain Road* for mammals in particular. A *Southern Boobook* was heard calling by the hotel as we set off, and then about thirty minutes into our search, we found a **Common Wombat** feeding on the grassy verge.



Day 22 (15 Oct): Buderoo National Park, Barren Grounds, Minnamurra Falls and Bass Point to Sydney-NEW SOUTH WALES

This is a day of the tour that guides approach with a little nervousness; *Barren Grounds* has been well named, for in spite of an exciting bird list, the unpredictable spring weather can make birding there very difficult at such times. However, on this day we ascended *Jamberoo Mountain Road* to *Buderoo National Park*, in fine clear weather, critically, with little wind blowing. Just what we would want for time on the open heathland. We drove the road into the rainforest higher up first, in hope of encountering an early morning **Superb Lyrebird** foraging on the road verge. This worked in a sense, as we did see one, but it was so skittish, it was not counted by anyone; we decided to return to that species later, with another, better site up our sleeve for later that morning. Moving on to the heathland at *Buderoo*, we soon heard our first, often elusive quarry, **Eastern Bristlebird**.

The species is not especially rare at this site, being heard often, but they occupy the denser parts of the heath, and sometimes choose to remain low down, and infuriatingly just out of view. However, the fine sunny weather, and calm conditions led to one appearing on top of one of the dense shrubs in full glorious view, and even lingering for plenty of time so that *Dean* and *Larry* could reel off a series of shots. This was a great start to the morning, which only continued with some nice looks at the spiny-tailed **Southern Emuwren** out on the heath too, and a **Beautiful Firetail** that sang from high in the trees over the same heath. Some very conspicuous **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** in full song, on the same heathland, were also hard to miss. All these sightings led us away from there and to *Barren Grounds*, to search for a *Pilotbird*, where this reserve offered our best chance. Hearing none though, we decided to drop down slope and visit the beautiful temperate rainforest at *Minnamurra Falls*, a known hangout for *Superb Lyrebirds*. The *New South Wales* park system has this for a logo bird, which was emblazoned over the entrance into the park, suitably. On entering into the park we were forlorn to see that some noisy construction work was going on at the center itself, and so decided not to look for the *lyrebirds* in their regular haunts by this building, but assumed it best to go where the noise faded a little. This turned out to be completely wrong, finding none at all in the quieter sections of the nearby forest, only to return to the heart of the construction area, where four different **Superb Lyrebirds** foraged in the open, showing no signs of being disturbed either by us or the building work going on nearby! We watched them both there, and then later wandering around the quiet parking lot too, before we left there and returned to *Barren Grounds*. We had already tried for *Pilotbird* in a dank creek below *Barren Grounds*, at *Minnamurra*, and now we had one final try for the day back at *Barren Grounds*, but in a different spot. We tried several spots to no avail, by which time *Sam* was already thinking that they had left it too late; the clock was already striking 11:30am by this point, when suddenly, the strident calls of a **Pilotbird** (photo page before, *Larry Dole*) reached our ears. The bird worked its way ever closer, and then appeared as it stood out on an open perch for an age, while *Larry* and *Dean* shot off a series of photos at this rare moment of tameness from this species.



Our time in the temperate rainforest was done for the day, and so we headed out to a nearby headland to look for seabirds, many of which we were lacking. *Bass Point* was visited after a lunch in *Shell Cove*. The winds blowing onshore promised something at least, and so it proved; numerous **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** foraged up and down the coastline, with good numbers of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** further out. On closer inspection by 'scope a few pied **Fluttering Shearwaters** were also in the mix, as was one distant **Shy (White-capped) Albatross**. **Australasian Gannets** were also new for us there, and a variety of plumages were seen, some of which were close in. On the rocks on the shore **Sooty Oystercatchers**, **Great Crested Terns**, and our first **Kelp Gulls** were noted. A particularly interesting observation occurred when we picked up the large form a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** passing by several times. On looking closer we realized it had some prey in its talons, and further inspection still revealed it to be a *shearwater*, probably *Short-tailed*! As we set to leave and head for suburban *Sydney*, a gathering of people suddenly appeared, all with cameras, which quickly alerted us to some breaching **Humpback Whales** (*photo page before, Larry Dole*) just offshore. We stood captivated as a mother and calf breached regularly just off the rocks, as if they were there purely for human consumption! The calf's movements were less dramatic than the adults high leaps and breaches, but it was very absorbing stuff to watch. On our way out of *Bass Point*, when *Sydney-bound*, we found a couple of **Red-whiskered Bulbuls** perched out in the open too, an Asian species that has become established in this area. A great close to our land-based coastal birding in *New South Wales*. We returned to *Sydney* and took a break in the afternoon. After some lengthy recent days in the field, this was well-deserved!



Rockwarbler, a species of thornbill confined to the state of **New South Wales**, was seen amongst the dramatic sandstone outcrops of **Wattamolla** in **Royal National Park** (*Larry Dole*)

TOUR SUMMARY: Tasmania

Highlights: Cape Barren Goose, Hooded Plover (Dotterel), Morepork, Little Penguin, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Green Rosella, Swift Parrot, Musk Lorikeet, Black-headed, Crescent and Strong-billed Honeyeaters, Yellow Wattlebird, Scrubtit, Tasmanian Thornbill, Tasmanian Scrubwren, Forty-spotted Pardalote, Black Currawong, Olive Whistler, Forest Raven, Scarlet, Pink, Flame and Dusky Robins, and Beautiful Firetail. Short-beaked Echidna, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Rufous-bellied (Tasmanian) Pademelon and Bennett's Wallaby.

Day 23 (16 Oct): **Royal NP to Sydney, NEW SOUTH WALES; to Hobart and Eaglehawk Neck-TASMANIA**



Our day began with a visit to the wonderful *Royal National Park*, (a large area of protected habitats close to suburban *Sydney*); after a morning in *Royal*, we returned to *Sydney* airport and flew to *Hobart* on *Tasmania* for the next leg of the tour. With a choice of habitats on offer in the national park of *Royal*, we chose to start out on some coastal heathland, and the *Mount Bass Fire Trail*. On arrival we added one of the heathland birds we were lacking, **Little Wattlebird**, which were seen several times throughout the morning. A short time up the trail we got another much-wanted species, **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** that was observed hopping around on the ground, before bolting back into the dense cover that it favors.



As usual, handsome **New Holland Honeyeaters** were both numerous and conspicuous in this habitat too. We set off for another, rockier location for our next port of call, the beautiful headland of *Wattamolla*. Comprised of *Hawkesbury Sandstone*, this spectacular location is excellent for finding *Rockwarbler*, a bird species that is endemic to the state of *New South Wales*, where it is restricted to this local rock type, that forms the bedrock of *Sydney* and its suburbs but not beyond. The breathtaking views of

the *Tasman Sea*, and this “yellow rock” soon had our smartphones working overtime. Trying a few patches of heathland where it abuts the rock, we finally tracked down first a pair of **Rockwarblers** (*photo page 60*), and then another singleton that made good use of a new boardwalk cutting through the heath, making it very visible to us! We continued to try and locate *Tawny-crowned Honeyeater*, which can also be found in the local area, but were forced to leave that species until the *Western Australia* leg, with none being found. Just offshore of the headland at *Wattamolla*, several **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** cruised in the pelagic waters, but not much else.

By lunchtime, we had driven the short distance to *Sydney* airport, where we flew south to *Hobart*, the capital of the island-state of *Tasmania*. There was still a little daylight left after arrival, and this gave us time to stop at some noisy trees on the edge of the airport grounds, where a constant stream of activity was provided by **Musk Lorikeets** excitedly taking advantage of the local nectar harvest provided by *Eucalyptus* trees in full bloom. This keen group were keen to continue out after dinner and try for some local nightbirds, up to 90 minutes-drive from the hotel. Thus, after checking in, we took some dinner in the local deli, and drove towards *Eaglehawk Neck* for a try at some of the night birds there. Our main targets were the local form of *boobook* in *Tasmania*, currently classified as the same species as in *New Zealand*, *Morepork*, (and not the same as *mainland Australia*); and the rarer possibility was *Australian Masked-Owl*. The latter only frustrated us, being heard intermittently, but seemingly uninterested in showing itself. This is also the impression given by a calling **Morepork** (*photo above*) in the same area, until finally it called close, and was found glaring down at us from its rainforest perch...

Day 24 (17 Oct): Bruny Island and Eaglehawk Neck-TASMANIA

This day was one of the most popular of the tour, as it always is, with its staggeringly beautiful location on *Bruny Island*, and a regular drip feed of endemics only found on *Tasmania* associated with this. As we waited for the car ferry to transport us the twenty minutes over to *Bruny*, we noted **Kelp Gull** and **Black-faced Cormorant** in the harbor. As soon as we reached the island, we took off down *Apollo Bay Road*, with news that *Swift Parrots* had been seen there in recent days. This species migrates from *mainland* Australia to *Tasmania* in this season, its arrival often associated with the mass blooming of the local *eucalyptus* trees on *Bruny Island*. It did not take long for us to find trees in bloom, with plentiful of activity around them. Some of the activity was provided by **Black-headed Honeyeaters** and **Yellow Wattlebirds**, two more state endemics. But soon after, we located and scoped a number of different **Swift Parrots**, which were well-named, coming and going swiftly; (although proving good views for all by the end). Then, someone noticed a tiny bird sitting on the side of the road, which amazingly turned out to be *Tasmania's* rarest, and flagship bird, **Forty-spotted Pardalote**, a bird we had expected to spend considerably more energy on finding! Moving south from there we crossed the scenic neck of the island, and stopped at a site for *Blue-winged Parrot*, finding none of these, but finding another **Beautiful Firetail**, and a short way from there a striking **Scarlet Robin** (*below*), which posed in the sunlight.



Moving further south on *South Bruny*, we made another stop for a scenery shot (one of a number to happen on this day), and also found a **Strong-billed Honeyeater** (*below*) in the trees above. We steadily made our way towards *Cape Bruny*, but stopped off at the *Jetty Beach Campground*, which always seems to have a bird or two around the camp; this year was no exception with an **Olive Whistler**, **Tasmanian Scrubwrens**, another **Beautiful Firetail** foraging in the car park, and a **Dusky Robin**. Reaching *Cape Bruny*, we were rightly awed by the sight of Australia's southerly most active lighthouse, and the surrounding rocky headlands, on a gorgeous sun-bathed day. We were also glad to finally catch up with some **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** that landed on the coastal heathland nearby. Taking a walk up to the lighthouse in the hope of a *Tawny-crowned Honeyeater* did not lead to that species, but did lead us straight to a male **Flame Robin** (*photo next page*) using the fences as a launching pad to stalk local insects on the ground. This was our third new robin of the day, and we had one more to go, which promised to be even more impressive indeed...



For lunch, we appropriately ate at a new café called the *Pardalote and Penguin* in *Adventure Bay* (we had seen the *pardalote* of the title that morning, and were setting off the *penguins* in that evening). After lunch, we walked on to the beach there to admire the local breeding pair of **Hooded Plovers (Dotterels)**, for which the beach is a nesting haven. Further down the coast a lone male **Mallard** was the only one encountered of the tour, but we could not find any *Brush Bronzewing*s as hoped. Some **Bennett's Wallaby** were found as we moved to our final location of the day, the large area of protected *rainforest* in the center of *South Bruny*. The calls of *Crescent Honeyeaters* became regular, but we simply could not get sights of any.



Our first attempts at a rock solid locale for *Pink Robin* yielded the species quickly, but unfortunately only involved a very drab bird lacking any pink, and so we moved on to try for another. Crossing the island via a deserted dirt road, we were bordered on both sides by tall, wet, *temperate rainforest*. Here and there, where there were some denser tangles and a good understory, we stopped and tried for *Scrubtit*, one of the most challenging of the Tasmanian endemics. The first few stops brought an endemic, **Tasmanian Thornbill**, but not the **Scrubtit** until our third try, when it played with us for a while before finally relenting and giving us all the views we craved, which was our cue to leave. One final stop near the ferry, saw *Dean* gesture to a male **Pink Robin** clasped to the side of a large *eucalyptus* tree, which then was found to be part of a group of at least three foraging *robins*, two of which were rose-breasted *males*. We set off back for the ferry to the mainland soon after, via another quick look for *Blue-winged Parrots*, which gave us some excellent looks at **Green Rosellas** (*photo next page*) on the ground, and a significant upgrade to our looks earlier that day, but sadly no *Blue wings*.

Once back on mainland *Tasmania*, the decision was made that we should go for the *Little Penguin* “parade” on this night, due to inclement weather being indicated for the next and final night. So, with this in mind, we visited a local deli, picked up some healthy dinner items and drove east to *Eaglehawk Neck*. We reached the penguin nesting area after dark, and *Sam* quickly checked the beach alone, when he was happy to find a huddle of **Little Penguins** gingerly making their way up the beach towards their nesting burrows at the top end. We stood in darkness for a while, letting them pass us and avoid blocking their progress, before we took a short look at them packed together as one unit, before we left them and other *penguins* to it, for their nightly parade from daytime feeding area in the *Tasman Sea* to nighttime location on the beaches of *Tasmania*.



Day 25 (18 Oct): **Truganini (Mount Nelson), Mount Wellington, and Eaglehawk Neck-TASMANIA**

For our final day on *Tasmania*, we started close to *Hobart*, visiting the *Truganini* area of *Mount Nelson*. Our reason for choosing to visit there was its well-deserved reputation as a good place to see *Brush Bronzewing*. As if to confirm this, several were quickly heard after our arrival, but unfortunately none of them could actually be seen, remaining out of sight, within a dense forested gully. We did finally clap eyes on our first **Crescent Honeyeaters** of the tour before we left for *Mount Wellington*, the largest of the local “hills”, reaching 1271m/4170ft at its summit. Taking breakfast at a welcome café/van on its lower flanks, we were happy for a hot drink on a cold morning. After breakfast with a scavenging local **Gray Currawong** getting under our feet at times, we drove higher up the mountain, stopping where the vegetation became stunted, which is where we got some superb looks at a pair of **Crescent Honeyeaters**. The same area yielded a steady flow of **Black Currawongs** moving through the trees. We stopped in at the summit, where whipping chilly winds kept some in the car, but the scenery led some out to take shots of the dramatic local geology, or views down on the city of *Hobart*. We were oddly, inexplicably, missing one of Tasmania’s easiest endemics, so decided to visit *Peter Murrell Reserve*, close to *Hobart*. Here, we found more **Green Rosellas**, **Yellow Wattlebirds**, another **Black-headed Honeyeater**, the odd **Flame Robin**, and, finally, got some cracking looks at **Yellow-throated Honeyeaters**! After lunch in *Hobart*, we headed back out towards *Eaglehawk Neck*. Our main quarry proved straightforward to find, with a pair of **Cape Barren Geese** grazing in a large paddock. **Shy (White-capped) Albatross** was seen drifting far out from the blowhole at *Eaglehawk Neck*, and some further **Black-faced Cormorants** were seen there too, as well as a small party of **White-fronted Chats**, before a heavy downpour moved in and was our signal to head back towards *Hobart* for our final night on *Tasmania*.

TOUR SUMMARY: Western Australia

Highlights: Brush Bronzewing, Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Australian Fairy Tern, Carnaby's (Short-billed) and Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoos, Western Corella, Regent, Elegant and Rock Parrots, Western Rosella, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Noisy Scrub-bird, Southern Emuwren, Red-winged, Blue-breasted and Splendid Fairywrens, Western Spinebill, Western Wattlebird, Tawny-crowned and Gilbert's Honeyeaters, Western Bristlebird, Western Fieldwren, Western Thornbill, Western (Black-throated) Whipbird, "Western" Crested Shrike-Tit, Western Whistler, Varied Sitella, Western Yellow and White-breasted Robins, Southern Scrub-Robin, and Red-eared Firetail. Honey Possum, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Western Gray Kangaroo, Australian Sea-Lion and Humpback Whale.

Day 26 (19 Oct): **Hobart, TASMANIA to Perth and Armadale-WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Early in the morning we flew out of the *Tasmanian* capital and into one of the most isolated cities in the World, *Perth* in *Western Australia*. The closest city to *Perth*, (*Adelaide*) is a 28-hour, 2,600km+ (1600+miles) drive away! We touched down in *Pert* at midday, with plenty of time to explore one of the many birding sites around the city. We met up with another Tropical Birding guide, *Ben Knoot*, who was to help with the driving and learn this leg of the trip for future tours. After lunch in a suburb, and some rest during the steamy middle of the day, (when *Perth* was undergoing something of a heat wave), we set off for *Victoria Dam* in the *Perth Hills*. This is one of the most well-regarded places close to the city for birding, and offered us a series of Western Australian specialties straight off the bat. However, before we left the hotel, *Dean* had located a **Western Wattlebird**, **Laughing Dove**, and some **Red Wattlebirds** in our *Armadale* hotel garden. Once at *Victoria Dam*, it was clear that a significant bloom of flowers was in place, and attracting plenty of wattlebirds to them, along with plentiful **New Holland Honeyeaters** too. A new parrot form was seen, with the *Twenty-eight* version of the **Australian Ringneck** looking quite different from the *Mallee Ringneck* we had seen in *New South Wales*. The flurry of activity surrounding the various flowering shrubs drew in a much wanted western specialty, with several striking **Western Spinebills** (*photo title page*) in the area.



Investigation of the sound of a fairywren calling from the undergrowth, ended up in wonderful views of a pair of **Splendid Fairywrens** just off the road. *Thornbills* twittered by the roadside, with first several **Inland Thornbills**, and then a pair of **Western Thornbills**. **Western Whistlers** were vocal along there too, with several females showing before a gaudy male was recorded too. This species was only recently (2014) split off from the more widespread *Golden Whistler*. The loud cries of a *black-cockatoo* were detected by *Ben*, and not long after we got views of a pair of **Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo**, which followed shortly after we final got our first decent looks at another regional endemic, the resplendent **Red-capped Parrot**, a vision in purple, lime green, and red. Our first of the brace of endemic robins was noticed by the dirt road too, with a pair of **Western Yellow Robins** watched hawking insects from a raised perch.

Searching the skies for *Square-tailed Kite* produced no rewards, and with little new revealing itself along the road, we decided to spend a final thirty minutes or so along a nearby trail, which allowed us to go deeper into the bushland. This paid off very quickly, when *Ben* noticed a small group of **Gilbert's Honeyeaters** foraging in *eucalypts* overhead. Only a little further along the trail, we managed to call in a small group of **Red-winged Fairywrens**, our ninth species from this group on the trip! While trying to re-find some of the fairywrens, a pair of **White-breasted Robins** were located foraging around a large fallen tree. Finally, trying the call of a **Red-eared Firetail** (*photo page before*) at a likely looking spot, yielded an immediate response, with a bird appearing suddenly in the bush next to us, before it hopped up higher into the trees to sing back to us regularly, a superb close to our opening round in Western Australia, when we had seen no less than 11 specialties in two hours!

Day 27 (20 Oct): **Wearne Road, Dyandara and Narrogin (Foxes Lair) to Stirling Range Retreat-WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



Having left the hotel at 6am, we drove a short way to an area of *Wandoo Woodland* (a *eucalyptus*-dominated habitat type that is only found in *Western Australia*). **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters** became a familiar sight there, with this being the most conspicuous species. In an area where lots of dead branches and logs littered the floor, we found the first **Rufous Treecreepers** (*above*) of the tour, one of our premier targets for the morning. Noise also drew us to blossoms in the *Wandoo* trees that held our first handsome **Purple-crowned Lorikeets**. **Western Gerygone** and **Weebill** were also recorded there, and were fairly abundant on site.

The next major hope for the morning was to find the other of the two endemic species of fairywren found in *Western Australia* (we had picked up the more widespread *Red-winged* the evening before near Perth); **Blue-breasted Fairywren** (*below*). With this species in mind, we checked an area where the understorey was more densely covered, and walked in and played the call. We received an almost immediate reply, and the spectacular male suddenly popped up an open log for excellent photo opportunities; we could not have asked for more! We also found a familiar species from our time in Tasmania, with a few further **Scarlet Robins** there. During the morning we were on red alert for black-cockatoos, and after seeing some **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** (a striking species that we observed in three different states on this tour, *Northern Territory*, *Northeast Queensland*, and now *Western Australia*), we found the one we were looking for, the decidedly scarcer **Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo**.



This male **Blue-breasted Fairywren** was very photogenic along the **Wearne Road**, south of Perth.

During the morning we also visited the famous *Dryandra Woodland*, which was of similar habitat type to that we'd been on first thing in the morning along the *Wearne Road*; it was beautiful there, but our late arrival time, meant we added little new save for a rather belated addition of **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, which had somehow eluded us at some inland *New South Wales* sites earlier on the tour. We did see some more **Rufous Treecreepers**, **Scarlet Robins**, and a male **Western Whistler** there, as well as **Rainbow Bee-eaters** and **Dusky Woodswallows**.

After taking lunch in the nearby town of *Narrogin*, which was rather like a ghost town come the afternoon of a *Sunday*, we visited the neighboring *Foxes Lair*, a wonderful reserve just outside of this quiet town. As we wandered among the *Wandoo* and *Marri* trees (marri nuts littered the ground) in this bushland reserve, carpets of yellow **Common Popflowers** caught our eyes, and as *Sam* bent down to photograph them flushed a *Painted Buttonquail*, which could unfortunately never be refound amongst the rocks it appeared to go to. We decided to stay closer together as a result, which turned out to be a good plan when *Ben* gesticulated wildly at a raptor passing very low overhead, which turned out to be a beautiful **Square-tailed Kite** (*below*), the main species that had led to us adding this species to our itinerary. The other much appreciated sight on site was a pair of **Red-capped Parrots** (*photo next page*) perched up close, which were found to be an adult and juvenile, which was regularly being fed against an unblemished, deep-blue sky.



Arguably the raptor of the tour was this **Square-tailed Kite** gliding above the Wandoo woodlands at **Foxes Lair, Narrogin Western Australia**.

We also visited *Lake Flagstaff* and surrounds in the hope of finding some recently reported *Banded Stilts*. This massive saline lake was quite a sight with its smooth white shores, but there were no stilts in evidence, just a pair of Hooded plovers in the distance, while the sight of some 300 or more **Black Swans** on one of the neighboring lakes made for quite the scene, with water tinged deep blue in the afternoon sun. We got excited on finding around 80 **Red-necked Avocets** on another near lake, but once again, no stilts seemed to be present, and before we long we needed to move on. Much of the rest of the day was spent working our way through part of the southwest wheatbelt to the *Stirling Ranges*. This may sound very uninteresting, but it was anything but, as we probably saw more parrots on this route than on any other day of the tour.

Without doubt the most numerous bird of the day, and this part of the journey, was the “**Twenty-eight**” **Australian Ringneck**, which took off from the roadsides continually for hours on this journey. Less numerous, but still positively common were the hundreds of **Galahs** that were also part of this “parrot run”; at a certain point in the journey we started to see lesser numbers of a new parrot for us, the distinctive **Regent Parrot**, which we stopped the car for at the first sighting. Another roadside stop was made for trees full of “parrots”, where our best views came of **Western Rosella**, in addition to more *ringnecks*, *galahs*, and **Red-capped Parrots**. While overall parrot and bird diversity on this journey were not high, the numbers of colorful birds was nothing short of epic. In the evening we took a good dinner at a welcoming tavern in the near deserted town of *Borden* before we arrived at our base for the next two nights, the wonderful *Stirling Range Retreat*. Set within the national park of the same name, the park encloses the *only major mountain range in the southern part of Western Australia*.



The adult **Red-capped Parrot** on the left was regularly feeding this juvenile during a visit to **Foxes Lair** bushland reserve in **Narrogin** (**Sam Woods**).

Day 28 (21 Oct): Corackerup Nature Reserve and Stirling Ranges NP-WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Early in the morning we drove out east of the *Stirling Ranges* to a small *mallee* reserve, *Corackerup*. As we drove out there, a number of hefty **Western Gray Kangaroos** bounded across the road, which would become very familiar to us on the final days of the tour. Our main hope for the visit was to spot the elusive *Malleefowl*, but sadly, in spite of various strategies employed (driving the roads extensively around there, plus on foot searches too), none were found. The reserve, like many of the places we visited on this leg of the trip, was carpeted in blooms of flowers like *banksias*, *wattles*, and *orchids*. These, no doubt, contributed to the ease with which we found one of the scarcest *honeyeaters* of the tour, the *mallee*-loving **Purple-gaped Honeyeater**, and before that we had cracking views of our first **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** (*photo above*). However, neither of these provided the ultimate highlight of our morning venture there; that went to an unexpectedly confiding **Western Whipbird** (*photo next page*). The distinctive call was heard, causing an immediate rise in tension, then *Dan* quickly spotted the bird that quickly dropped back down in cover; this part was expected. What was less expected was the moment when the bird emerged up into a sparsely vegetated bush top, where it remained singing in full view of all for some time. A more tortuous battle had been anticipated with this species!



Other highlights from *Corackerup*, were a male **Western Whistler**, a single **White-browed Babbler**, several **Southern Scrub-Robins** that randomly hopped out into the open, and the sea of wildflower blooms themselves.

After a morning in that reserve, we retreated back to the scenic *Stirling Ranges*, taking lunch at the wonderful *Bluff Knoll Café*. We attempted to go in for lunch, but were quickly distracted by the many birds attending the flowers gums, banksias and birdbath just outside the door, a must for birders and photographers alike. Among the attractive attendees,

were some **Gilbert's Honeyeaters** (*photo page 75*) foraging among some bright *pink* flowers, several hyperactive **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** rummaging in some *creamy-white* blossoms, and **New Holland Honeyeaters** (*photo page 76*), which fed feverishly among the post-like *burnt-orange* *Banksia* flowers. Rumors from *Chris*, the entertaining owner of the café, that *shrike-tits* might drop in too, kept us with one eye on the window throughout lunch! After lunch, we took a gentle walk around the grounds of *Stirling Range Retreat*, where the combination of well-placed bird baths and more plants, like *bottlebrush*, in peak flowering condition, kept the activity constant. The baths were dominated by visits from **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters** (*photo page 75*), but all of a sudden, an **Elegant Parrot** dropped in too, our first of only a handful seen on the tour. **Australian (Twenty-eight) Ringnecks** were also seen again and again, as were some very close **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** (*photo next page*), plus more **Regent Parrots**, and a pair of **Restless Flycatchers** that were nesting right beside the cabins. As we walked the grounds, taking in these avian sights, a low-flying Little Eagle drifted overhead too. As early afternoon became mid-afternoon we took a short drive out to a specifically indicated area of heathland (thanks Dan and Plaxy!), where we soon picked up the calls of a **Western Fieldwren** (*photo next page*) coming from the taller shrubs a little off of the roadside. We walked in a little to get an angle on these taller plants and soon found the *fieldwren* perched on an emergent shrub, in the open branches, just below the densely vegetated crown of these *malleeform* trees. This bird was of particular interest this year, as it had just recently been officially split from its sister species, *Rufous Fieldwren*. We returned to the *Bluff Knoll Café* for more entertaining stories from the owner *Chris*, and to take an early supper. That was meant to be the end of the day, but news that we might pick up a *shrike-tit* by visiting *Moingup Springs Campsite*. We raced over there for the final flurry of bird activity of the day after our early dinner, and had some great birds, including some **Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoos** perched closer than ever before, and a **Western Rosella** sitting close by too before the light began to fade. Some decided to venture out in search of mammals, finding it very hard going, with some more **Western Gray Kangaroos** being the only mammals seen, though we'd been hoping to see a recently-sighted *Quokka* (a rare find on mainland WA), or find a *Honey Possum* foraging among the flowering *Matchstick Banksia*. Further searches on foot around the retreat led to a *Southern Boobook* being heard, and another calling owl was chased up by *Sam* and found to be an **(Eastern) Barn Owl**.





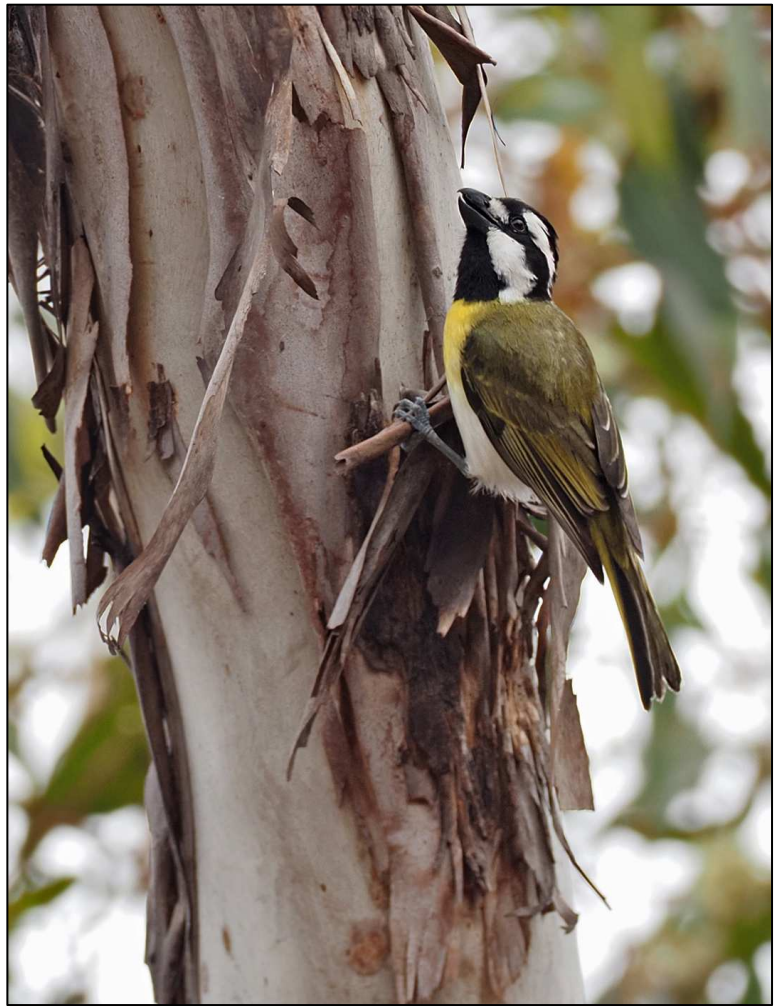


The striking **New Holland Honeyeater** was abundant in the heathlands of **Western Australia**; this was photographed just outside the **Bluff Knoll Café in the Stirling Ranges**.

Day 29 (22 Oct): Stirling Ranges NP, Rocky Gully, Ocean Beach to Cheynes Beach-WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Today, we moved from the mountainous inland of *Western Australia* in the *Stirling Ranges*, to the coastal location of *Cheyne's Beach*, with a significant side trip to *Rocky Gully* in between. The latter tangent led us not to arrive in *Cheyne's Beach* until well into the evening. Our day begun with a short drive to the *jarrah* and *marri* woodland at the *Moingup Springs Campground* (within *Stirling Ranges National Park*), in pursuit of *Western Shrike-Tit* in particular. Our brief visit was perfectly acceptable and birdy, but did not yield the *shrike-tit*. However, we were more than compensated for with **White-breasted Robins** foraging close to us, and another viewing of the stunning **Red-capped Parrot**, arguably one of the most attractive of all the parrots seen on the tour.

With activity lower than expected, we returned to the seemingly continuously active grounds of the *Stirling Rang Retreat*. Here, we saw our final **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters** of the tour, the odd **Elegant Parrot**, yet more views of the very handsome **Purple-crowned Lorikeet**, and then, (best of all), thanks to Larry's keen eyesight, a smashing **Western (Crested) Shrike-Tit** (*right*) foraging amongst the flaking bark of a tall *Eucalyptus* tree. We spent some further time at the retreat hoping to bump into one of the recently-sighted Painted Buttonquail, but had no joy there, so moved off after breakfast at the local café. Our next stop was for another (awkwardly-located) Western Australia endemic, which required a significant detour. However, we knew that our chances at finding a **Western Corella** would be good, once we entered into its very limited range. Diligently scanning the farmland, once we entered into its range, *Dan* spotted a rose-tinted figure on the ground, which proved to be the bird that we were looking for. A handful more *corellas* were seen during our short period in the area, which also led to only our second sighting of **Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoos** of the tour, (and easily our best view), with several feeding overhead on large pine cones. We then headed south towards Cheynes Beach, which we would not reach until the evening. Stopping for lunch in the town of Denmark, we were happy to be greeted at the local town café by a spectacular male **Splendid Fairywren** (*photo next page*) hopping around on the decking behind! This astonishing species is actually common in *Western Australia*, and there can be few better common birds on Earth!?



Following lunch in the café, we departed for the coast, stopping at *Ocean Beach* to view the scattering of coastal birds in the *Prawn Rock Channel*. Our main hope here was **Australian Fairy Tern**, a recent arrival in the area (they return to southwest WA to breed in this season), and it did not take long to find a pair of them sitting on the gloriously clean, white sands. Other terns were on site too, with **(Australian) Gull-billed, Great Crested, Common, and Caspian Terns** also noted. A good selection of other species were also present, including a **Hooded Plover, Red-capped and Greater Sand Plovers, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Great Knot and Red-necked Stint**. An **(Eastern) Osprey** was also seen there, and the dramatic coastal scenery was not lost on us either! A confiding **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** was also seen feeding on a roadside pool nearby too. From there we drove directly to *Cheyne's Beach* along the coast, by took a short nighttime walk there after arrival in search of nightjars and possums. We came up short on both of those, but only narrowly on the latter, when we could see a couple observing a distant bush by spotlight, which on meeting them informed us they had been observing a *Honey Possum*, precisely the possum we had been looking for. A quick check of the very same blooming *banksias* that had hosted this cute nocturnal marsupial moments earlier revealed nothing more than the stunning blooms themselves! We did get to see some more **Western Gray Kangaroos** and a single **Common Brushtail Possum** before we retired for the night, in readiness to tackle two of the trickiest endemic birds in the west the next day (*Western Bristlebird* and *Noisy Scrub-bird*)...



Day 30 (23 Oct): **Cheyne's Beach (Arpentur Nature Reserve), Bremer Bay and Henry's Point-WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

This day had been looming in the mind of the guide for some time. *Cheyne's Beach* and the surrounding coastal heathland of *Arpentur Reserve*, are home to the “terrible trio” of *Western Australian* endemics: *Noisy Scrub-bird*, *Western Bristlebird* and *Western Whipbird*. We had been fortunate to have already seen the latter, and so had already sliced the trio into a duo for us on this day. However, the two that remained are arguably the most difficult of the trio to see, in particular the *scrub-bird* is notoriously difficult to see well. Therefore, this had been looming in the mind of the guide, for it could provide a substantial obstacle to success in the final stages of the tour. For this reason two nights had been set aside for this area, allowing us two mornings and an afternoon in which to try and see these “master skulkers”. We decided to set out shortly after sunrise, for the *bristlebird* first, walking directly from our comfortable cabins at the *Cheyne's Beach Caravan Park*, directly to a sandy path that cuts through the heathland, which is situated in the *Arpentur Nature Reserve*. As we walked on the loose sand, seeing plenty of the abundant **White-cheeked** and **New Holland Honeyeaters** on the heath, we finally heard the distinctive call of the **Western Bristlebird** (*photo next page*), and so took position on the trail, where we hoped it might cross.

This did happen, *but not as expected*; instead of zipping across at lightning speed, (and providing a mere brown blur), this individual lingered on the open sand to allow us to reel off a series of photos as it stood completely in the open. As if that was not enough, it then emerged up on to the top of a stunted piece of flowering heathland for glamorous surrounds in which to photograph it too. We really could not have asked for a better view or start to the day, the guides were gobsmacked.



Views like this of **Western Bristlebird** were not anticipated, it is usually a difficult bird to see well; (Arpenteur Nature Reserve, near Cheynes Beach Caravan Park).

Next up, we needed to deal with arguably the toughest bird of the entire tour to see adequately; *Noisy Scrub-bird*. Thankfully, we did not have to walk far for the coming experience, less than half a mile from the *bristlebird*. As we slowly walked back towards the caravan park, *Carol* announced she had a *mammal*, none other than the supposedly nocturnal **Honey Possum** (*photo next page*) feeding brazenly on a flowering yellow *banksia* in full daylight; it was a superb moment! Another standout moment came when *Ben* spotted some **Varied Sitellas** feeding in the low heathland, something of a surprise and a species we had only seen once much earlier on the trip in the *Northern Territory*.



As we walked towards our next, (beachside), venue we picked up **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, a brief **Brown Quail**, some more delightfully conspicuous **Splendid Fairywrens**, and some fearless **Western Gray Kangaroos** by the caravan park. A short time later we arrived at the infamous beachside track that offered our best chance at seeing the *scrub-bird*. A red dirt gravel track cuts through the tall (well over head height), dense, tangled coastal heathland that the bird calls home. The usual drill for the bird is to listen for its loud strident calls, and then watch carefully for it crossing the track, which it usually does at considerable speed! We were stunned to hear the bird swiftly, and then see the **Noisy Scrub-bird** cross several times, and even pause briefly on occasions on the track edge, allowing multiple binocular views of the bird; another moment of sheer good fortune. Flushed with this success, we then noticed what had become something of a nemesis for us, **Brush Bronzewing** (*photo next page*), calling nearby (we had only had some very poor in flight views on at this stage). After an impatient wait, we managed to see the bird pacing along the track right where the *scrub-bird* had been, giving marvelous “on the deck” views.

We now had some time on our hands, having dealt with the biggest two targets in the area in significantly less time than anticipated, and so decided to take the scenic drive out to scenic *Bremer Bay*, a reliable site for the coastal *Rock Parrot*. A tip off from some very helpful *Perth*-based birders (thanks again *Plaxy and Dan!*), led us to a particular car park, where *Ben*, (from the driver’s seat no less!), declared he had two birds on the fence. We all raised our binoculars in unison to see two **Rock Parrots** (*photo page 83*) sitting there, but all too briefly they darted off into some distant dunes; we had the bird, but only just. We thought we should get out and walk at this point. On approaching the nearby beach just minutes later, another handful of *Rock Parrots* burst out of the terrestrial pink blossoms and vanished as quickly as they had appeared. Clearly, our strategy for seeing *Rock Parrots* well left a little to be desired! However, we wandered on, and a short time later a much more cooperative individual was found quietly picking at the same carpet of pink flowers, a short distance away on the very same beach.



Photographers and birders among us were all entranced by this close feeding “beach parrot”, foraging alongside a beautiful bay to boot. It was a great end to a fantastic morning, which was soon to lead us to a local restaurant for lunch. We came upon a bay with birds just before we got our “tucker” though, and soon turned up **Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers**, **Greater Sandplover**, **Red-capped Plover**, **Australian Shelduck** and **Chestnut Teal**.

After lunch, we drove up to the nearest headland to try and pad the list with some regular southwestern seabirds that we were missing, what with a steady onshore wind blowing at that time providing potentially good conditions for land-based seawatching. We could not drive all the way out to *Henry’s Point*, so made the final 500m or so on foot, through the scenic coastal heath, which revealed a **Southern Emu** on the way out. Once we could see out to sea, we quickly picked up hundreds of **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** cruising up and down the coast, and further out were a pair of **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**, the jumbo **Pacific Gull** also passed by, as did a smattering of **Australasian Gannets** (the latter species we had also seen off of a headland in *New South Wales*, earlier on the tour). *Mammals* also cropped up too, with a **Humpback Whale** and a pod of **Common Bottlenose Dolphins** offshore. We returned to *Cheyne’s Beach* for the final night, and a final search for *nightbirds*, which unfortunately came up blank, although plentiful hulking **Western Gray Kangaroos** were out (as usual for this part of Australia).

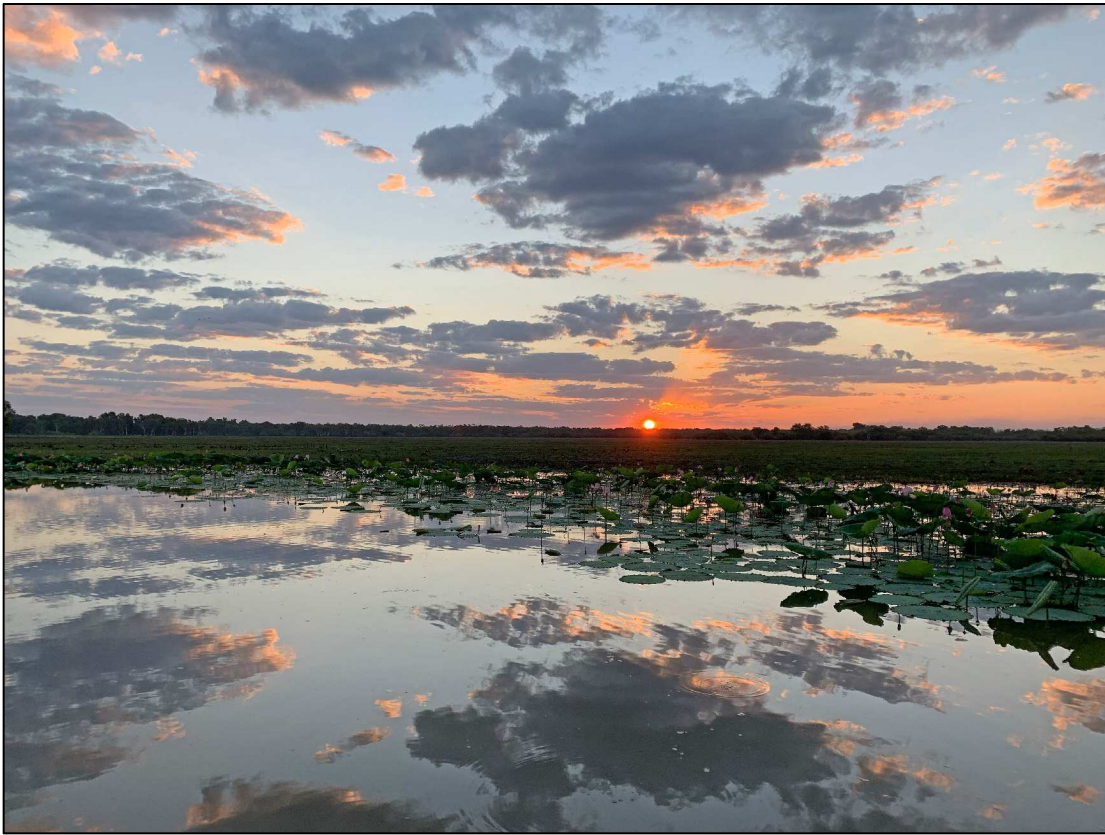


Western Gray Kangaroos were especially conspicuous (i.e. tame) around the **Cheyne Beach Caravan Park**.

Day 31 (24 Oct): **Foxes Lair, Dryandra and Marrundah to Perth WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

With few major targets left for us, (following a fortunate few days in *Southwest Australia*), and after what had been an unusually long tour, we took a bit of a lie in, and then drove away from the resident tame *Western Gray Kangaroos* (*above*) at *Cheyne Beach* north towards *Perth* for evening flights, taking in a few birding sites en route. Stops at *Foxes Lair* and *Dryandra* produced some outstanding views of **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** and *Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos* (*next page*), but not the hoped for other additions. Our final few birds came in *Marrundah*, where hundreds of *stilts* dotted the far flats, and a few of them were found to be **Banded Stilts**, our final new addition of the tour, before we all headed our separate ways at *Perth* airport, following a final pub dinner in the city.





Sunset in Kakadu, NT; and Stirling Ranges NP, WA with a Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo road sign, (Sam Woods)



BIRD & MAMMAL LISTS:**BIRDS**

The taxonomy of the bird list follows: **Clements, James F., White, Anthony W., and Fitzpatrick, John W.** *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*. Cornell, 2007.

This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell up until August 2019.

Australia country endemic bird species are indicated in **RED**.

H indicates a species that was *HEARD only*.

GO indicates a species recorded by the *GUIDE ONLY*.

QLD refers to the Australian state of *Queensland*.

NSW refers to the Australian state of *New South Wales*.

TAS refers to the Australian state and island of *Tasmania*.

CASSOWARIES AND EMU: CASUARIIDAE

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*: A bold female was seen scrounging food from beach-goers at Etty Bay (QLD).

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae*: Australia's national bird was seen on two days in New South Wales (e.g. Round Hill).

MAGPIE GOOSE: ANSERANATIDAE

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*: This monotypic family was commonly seen (7 days) in the tropical north of Australia, in the NT (e.g. Kakadu) and the Wet Tropics of QLD (e.g. Hasties Swamp).

DUCKS, GEESE and WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE

Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*: Good numbers were seen in Kakadu NP (NT) and Hasties Swamp (QLD).

Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*: Seen on 5 days (Yellow Water NT, Hasties Swamp & Minnipi QLD).

Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*: A regular pair was seen at Taranna TAS.

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*: At least 7 birds were seen at Blue Gum Swamp near Forbes (NSW).

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*: Good numbers were seen in NSW, TAS and WA (over 300 in the Lake Flagstaff area WA).

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*: Hundreds at Mandurah (WA); also Lake Cargelligo & Five Bough (NSW).

Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*: Encountered regularly in the tropical north (e.g. Darwin, NT & Cairns, ne QLD).

Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus*: Recorded at Fogg Dam and Yellow Water (NT) and Mount Garnet (QLD).

Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*: A long staying vagrant pair was seen in Brisbane (s QLD).

Maned (Australian Wood) Duck *Chenonetta jubata*: Commonly seen from s QLD, and NSW, TAS and WA.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: A male was seen at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island (TAS).

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*: Regularly encountered throughout; one of Australia's most common ducks.

Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis*: A pair was seen close up at Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

Gray Teal *Anas gracilis*: Regular sightings throughout the tour (recorded on at least 11 days).

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*: Recorded on at least 5 days, in NSW, TAS and WA.

Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*: 2 Hasties Swamp (QLD); a few Lake Wyangan, 100s Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

White-eyed Duck (Hardhead) *Aythya australis*: Abundant, seen in QLD and NSW (e.g. Five Bough Swamp).

Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*: A single reclusive male was seen in the reeds at Lake Wallace (NSW).

Musk Duck *Biziura lobate*: At least two birds (one of them a male), were seen on Lake Wallace (NSW).

MEGAPODES: MEGAPODIIDAE

Australian BrushTurkey *Alectura lathami*: Abundant in tropical QLD (e.g. Cairns, O Reilly's).

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*: Wonderfully conspicuous around Darwin (NT) and Cairns (ne QLD).

PHEASANTS, GROUSE & ALLIES: Phasianidae

Brown Quail *Synoicus ypsilophoru*: A group showed well at Timber Creek airfield (NT).

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*: Seen on at least 7 days (NT, QLD and NSW).

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*: Noted at Lakes Wallace, Wyangan (NSW) & Flagstaff (WA).
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: Observed at 2 sites; Lake Barrine (ne QLD) and Lake Wallace (NSW).

PIGEONS & DOVES: COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon (Domestic Pigeon) *Columba livia*: Scattered sightings around urban areas from QLD south.
White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela*: A few were seen on Mt. Lewis (ne QLD), the only ones of the tour.
Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*: About four scattered sightings, in QLD only.
Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella*: Singles were seen at Cassowary House and Hypipamee (ne QLD).
Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris*: Great views were had over breakfast at Cassowary House (ne QLD).
Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*: Recorded on 10 days of the tour in NSW, TAS and WA.
Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans*: Excellent views were obtained at Cheynes Beach in WA.
Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*: This gorgeous pigeon was encountered on more than half of the tour days.
Spinifex Pigeon *Geophaps plumifera*: A pair were seen at Gregory's Tree near Timber Creek (NT).
Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*: 12 were observed at Granite Gorge, and another on the Hurricane Road (ne QLD).
Partridge Pigeon *Geophaps smithii*: A few were seen in Pine Creek, and better still was a confiding group in Kakadu (NT).
Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon *Petrophassa rufipennis*: An incredibly approachable pair were at Ubirr in Kakadu (NT).
White-quilled Rock-Pigeon *Petrophassa albipennis*: Larry & Carol got smashing views at Victoria River Escarpment (NT).
Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*: Noted on both days at O Reilly's in Lamington NP (se QLD).
Diamond Dove *Geopelia cuneata*: Recorded on 5 days in the NT, including regularly in Timber Creek.
Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*: Recorded regularly in NT, QLD and NSW (18 days of the tour).
Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*: Recorded on 11 days in NT and ne QLD; 400+ on the Yellow Water cruise.
Black-banded Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus alligator*: This northern specialty was seen twice at Nourlangie Rock (NT).
Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*: Seen well at both Cassowary House and Hypipamee (QLD).
(Eastern) Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus superbus*: After a chase, we finally got a male at Hypipamee (ne QLD).
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina*: Found on our first afternoon at Fogg Dam (NT).
Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*: Commonly seen in the tropical north (i.e. NT and ne QLD).
Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus*: Only a handful seen, at Mount Lewis in ne QLD.

BUSTARDS: OTIDIDAE

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis*: Recorded on 3 days in the NT; including at Timber Creek.

CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE

Pallid Cuckoo *Cacomantis pallidus*: First seen at Edith Falls (NT); others were seen on Bruny Island (TAS).
Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*: One was found at Minnippi Parklands in Brisbane (se QLD).
Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*: Our first came at O Reilly's (QLD), with others at Barren Grounds (NSW).
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*: Seen at 2 sites in NT, Binjari near Katherine and Adelaide River.
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: Seen at Hypipamee (QLD), Stirling Ranges and Cheynes Beach (both WA).
Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*: 2 were found at Fogg Dam (NT).
Pacific (Eastern) Koel *Eudynamys orientalis*: A male was seen from our boat on the Daintree River (ne QLD).
Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: A single was seen at Katherine Gorge (NT).
Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*: Recorded regularly in NT (e.g. Yellow Water), and also seen in ne QLD.

FROGMOUTHS: PODARGIDAE

Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*: A nesting pair were seen in the daytime in Mount Carbine (ne QLD).
Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*: A marvelous bird was seen in Lamington NP (se QLD).
Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*: Murray Hunt showed us a sleeping bird on the Daintree River Cruise (ne QLD).

NIGHTJARS & ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*: A few were seen near our hotel in Lee Point, Darwin (NT).

OWLET-NIGHTJARS: AEGOTHELIDAE

Australian Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*: A pair was found close to our Darwin hotel (Buffalo Creek), NT.

SWIFTS: APODIDAE

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*: A single bird was seen at Bluff State Forest (ne QLD).

Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae*: Observed regularly in ne QLD (e.g. Cassowary House, Mount Lewis).

RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS: RALLIDAE

Chestnut Rail *Gallirallus castaneiventris*: A last gasp bird was seen at Buffalo Creek, shortly before we departed the NT.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*: A tame individual at Tarzali Lakes (ne QLD); another was seen in Brisbane.

Black-tailed Nativehen *Tribonyx ventralis*: Only recorded in NSW: Lake Cargelligo, Hay Plains and Five Bough Swamp.

Tasmanian Nativehen *Tribonyx mortierii*: This flightless species was seen regularly on TAS (e.g. Bruny Island).

Australian Crane *Porzana fluminea*: A bold individual was found feeding in the open in Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*: Recorded on 6 days of the tour in QLD, NSW and WA.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*: Recorded regularly from se QLD southwards.

Australasian (Purple) Swampphen *Porphyrio melanotus*: Recorded on at least 8 days of the tour (NT, QLD, NSW).

White-browed Crane *Amaurornis cinerealis*: 2 were on a small wetland in Julatten (QLD), which also held Spotless Crane.

Baillon's Crane *Zapornia pusilla*: Thanks to Stuart Pickering for showing us this species at Minnippi in Brisbane (se QLD).

Spotless Crane *Zapornia tabuensis*: A single bird was seen on a wetland in Julatten that also held White-browed Crane.

CRANES: GRUIDAE

Sarus Crane *Antigone antigone*: Seen in fields near Hasties Swamp (Atherton, ne QLD) on both of our visits to that site.

Brolga *Antigone rubicunda*: Encountered several times in NT, including some excellent looks in Kakadu.

THICK-KNEES: BURHINIDAE

Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus grallarius*: Seen regularly around Darwin (including in our hotel grounds) in the NT.

Beach Thick-knee *Esacus magnirostris*: A pair flew in and landed next to us, at the north end of the Esplanade in Cairns.

STILTS & AVOCETS: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Pied (White-headed) Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*: Recorded on at least 19 days of the tour, in all states visited.

Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*: A few young birds were picked out at Creery Wetlands (WA).

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*: 5 near Griffith (NSW) and 80 in the Lake Flagstaff area (WA).

OYSTERCATCHERS: HAEMATOPODIDAE

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*: Seen side-by-side with Sooty Oyster. in Darwin (NT) & Bass Point (NSW).

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*: Encountered in Darwin (NT), Bass Point (NSW) and Bremer Bay (WA).

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE

Black-bellied (Grey) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: 2 were found at Buffalo Creek (NT).

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*: 8 were noted at Buffalo Creek near Darwin (NT).

Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*: At least 25 were seen on the Hay Plains with Phil Maher (NSW).

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*: One of Australia's most conspicuous birds, seen in all states and on more than 20 days.

Lesser Sand-Plover *Charadrius mongolus*: 6 were seen at Buffalo Creek, Darwin (NT).

Greater Sand-Plover *Charadrius leschenaultia*: 25 at Buffalo Creek (NT); and a few in WA (Bremer Bay & Ocean Beach).

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*: Seen at Buffalo Creek NT, Lake Wyangan NSW, and at a few sites in WA.

Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythronyx cinctus*: Seen first in Brisbane, then at 4 sites in NSW (e.g. Lake Cargelligo).

Hooded (Dotterel) Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*: A pair on Bruny Island (TAS), and twice in WA (e.g. Ocean Beach).

Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseya melanops*: Recorded on 5 days (e.g. Timber Creek NT, Esplanade and Minnippi QLD).

Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*: An immature bird was seen with Phil Maher near Hay (NSW).

PLAINS-WANDERER: PEDIONOMIDAE

Plains-wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus*: A male and female were seen well with Phil Maher on a night drive in NSW.

JACANAS: JACANIDAE

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*: Recorded on 7 days in northern Australia (NT and neQLD).

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: Recorded in Buffalo Creek, Darwin (NT), and in Cairns (ne QLD).

Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*: Seen at Buffalo Creek in Darwin and in Cairns (QLD).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: Two records on the tour, in Cairns (QLD), and at Ocean Beach (WA).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: Only seen on the one day, at Buffalo Creek in Darwin, NT.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: In the NT seen at Buffalo Creek, in QLD on Michaelmas Cay on the reef.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*: Two records, at Buffalo Creek in NT, and at Ocean Beach in WA.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*: First at Fogg Dam (NT), then Cairns and Wonga (QLD) & Five Bough NSW.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*: A single was found on the beach at Buffalo Creek near Darwin (NT).

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*: Recorded in Darwin NT, in Cairns QLD, and Ocean Beach and Bremer Bay WA.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*: A handful was seen on the beach at Buffalo Creek in Darwin (NT).

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*: Three birds were seen at Hasties Swamp and another was seen in Brisbane (QLD).

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*: One was located at Lee Point in Darwin, NT.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Noted on four occasions in the NT (e.g. Kakadu); also at Wonga in QLD.

Gray-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*: A dozen or so birds were seen at Lee Point in Darwin (NT).

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Three records in the NT (Lee Point, Knuckey's Lagoon, and Yellow Water).

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: Recorded twice, at Knuckey's Lagoon in Darwin NT and Five Bough Swamp NSW.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: 3 Knuckey's Lagoon near Darwin NT, and another single at Five Bough Swamp NSW.

BUTTONQUAIL: TURNICIDAE

Painted Buttonquail *Turnix varius* **GO**: Birds were flushed by Sam at both Laminton (QLD) and Foxes Lair (WA).

GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS: LARIDAE

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*: A widespread gull seen repeatedly through the tour.

Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*: Seen on 2 days; at Bruny Island (TAS) and at Henry's Point (WA).

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*: Recorded on 4 days of the tour, mostly on TAS, but also NSW.

Brown (Common) Noddy *Anous stolidus*: Thousands were seen nesting on Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*: One of the dominant nesting species on Michaelmas Cay (ne QLD).

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*: A few scattered sightings offshore of Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*: A few were seen from the boat while out on the reef off of Cairns (QLD).

Australian Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*: At least two birds were seen resting on Ocean Beach (WA).

(Australian) Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica macrotarsa*: 1 at Lee Point (NT) and another at Ocean Beach (WA).

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*: Timber Creek and Yellow Water in NT; also Boondall QLD, and several sites in WA.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*: Recorded 4 times in NT; also at several sites in NSW (e.g. 150 at Lake Cargelligo).

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*: 6 birds were encountered on Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef (ne QLD).

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*: 8 birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay, Great Barrier Reef (ne QLD).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: A few at Lee Point (NT); several others at coastal sites in WA.

Great Crested (Swift) Tern *Thalasseus bergii*: Recorded on 6 days of the tour, in NT, QLD, NSW, and WA.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*: 30 or so birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay out on the reef (ne QLD).

PENGUINS: SPHENISCIDAE

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*: A small troop were seen coming ashore at night near Eaglehawk Neck on TAS.

ALBATROSSES: DIOMEDEIDAE

White-capped (Shy) Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*: One was seen off Bass Point (NSW) and Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

(Indian) Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos carteri*: At least one was seen off Henry's Point (WA).

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys*: One was found off Henry's Point, WA.

SHEARWATERS and PETRELS: PROCELLARIIDAE

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica*: Good numbers were noted offshore from Bass Point (NSW).

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris*: Good numbers of this species were also seen at Bass Point (NSW).

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*: Just a few of these distinctive shearwaters were seen at Bass Point, NSW.

STORKS: CICONIIDAE

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*: Frequently seen in the NT (e.g. Yellow Water); once in ne QLD too.

FRIGATEBIRDS: FRIGATIDAE

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*: 4 were seen on Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef (ne QLD).

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: SULIDAE

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*: Nesting on Michaelmas Cay, where many white chicks were noted (ne QLD).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*: An immature bird was found resting on a boat off of Michaelmas Cay (ne QLD).

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*: 6 were noted off Bass Point NSW and others were seen off Henry's Point, WA.

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae

Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*: Recorded on 14 days of the tour; in NT, QLD, and NSW.

CORMORANTS & SHAGS: Phalacrocoracidae

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos*: Recorded on 18 days of the tour, in NT, QLD and NSW.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: 2 in ne QLD (e.g. Lake Barrine) and 2 in NSW (e.g. Bass Point).

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*: Recorded on 9 days; NT, QLD, NSW and WA.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*: Recorded at 3 sites (Lake Wyangan and Bass Point NSW and Ocean Beach WA).

Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*: Encountered several times on TAS.

PELICANS: PELECANIDAE

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*: Recorded on at least 15 days of the tour in NT, QLD, NSW and WA.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*: A very confiding bird was photographed on the Yellow Water cruise in Kakadu (NT).

Pacific (White-necked) Heron *Ardea pacifica*: Recorded on 7 days; e.g. Yellow Water NT, Cattana and Hasties QLD.

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*: Three different birds were seen on the Yellow Water cruise in Kakadu (NT).

(Eastern) Great Egret *Ardea alba modesta*: Recorded regularly particularly in the first part of the trip in NT and QLD.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia*: Encountered regularly, mainly in NT, QLD, but also recorded in NSW.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*: Encountered regularly; on 18 days and across all 5 states visited.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Noted only on about 5 days, mainly in NT (Katherine) and ne QLD (e.g. Cattana Wetlands).

Pacific Reef-Heron (-Egret) *Egretta sacra*: Single dark morphs were noted at Buffalo Creek NT, and at Ocean Beach WA.

Pied Heron *Egretta picata*: This handsome northern species was noted regularly in NT (e.g. Kakadu, Darwin, Fogg Dam).

(Eastern) Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis coromandus*: Recorded on at least 8 days; mainly in NT and ne QLD.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*: Observed at least 3 times, in NT (Edith Falls and Yellow Water) and ne QLD (Daintree).

Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*: 1 at Edith Falls; multiple views on the Yellow Water cruise NT.

IBISES & SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: Recorded on 9 days of the tour, in NT, QLD and NSW.

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*: An abundant, conspicuous bird in Australia, seen on at least 19 days of the tour.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*: Another common Australian species, recorded on at least 16 days.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*: Noted on 7 days in northern Australia (NT and neQLD), including Kakadu and in Cairns.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*: Recorded on 3 days in NSW (e.g. Forbes) and once in WA.

OSPREY: PANDIONIDAE

(Eastern) Osprey *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*: 1 was seen in NSW and another in Ocean View Lookout in WA.

Australian and far eastern Indoneian forms are a possible split (already split by IOC).

HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE

Black-shouldered (Australian) Kite *Elanus axillaris*: 4 sightings in QLD and another in NSW.

Black-breasted Kite (Buzzard) *Hamirostra melanosternon*: 1 west of Timber Creek and 1 the outskirts of Kakadu (NT).

Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*: A low flying bird was spotted by Ben at Foxes Lair in WA.

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*: A pair was seen perched in Julatten, ne QLD.

Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*: 1 near the Timber Creek airfield NT; another excellent view at Stirling Ranges WA.
Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*: On at least 8 days; (Victoria River NT, O Reilly's QLD, Capertee NSW, & Dryandra WA).
Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*: Three were seen quartering the fields near Atherton (Hasties Swamp), ne QLD.
Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*: 2 sightings; 1 at Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve, NT, 1 over fields near Atherton QLD.
Gray Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*: Emma led us to a nesting bird she'd found a few days earlier in Darwin NT.
Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*: Recorded on 9 days in 4 different states (NT, QLD, NSW and WA), included 2 nests.
Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*: Recorded just 3 times, in NT (Edith Falls) and ne QLD (Julatten).
Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: Recorded on 20 days of the tour, where it was especially common in the Outback of the NT.
Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*: Recorded on 17 tour says; especially common in the Outback of the NT.
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: Noted on 5 days of the tour; mainly in NT (Darwin) and ne QLD (Daintree).
White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*: Recorded on 13 days in NT, QLD, NSW and WA. 1 individual at Bass Point had caught a shearwater (possibly Short-tailed).

BARN-OWLS: TYTONIDAE

(Greater) Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebricosa tenebricosa* (H): One was heard at night in Lamington NP (se QLD).
Australian (Tasmanian) Masked-Owl *Tyto novaehollandiae castanops* (H): 1 was heard near Eaglehawk Neck TAS.
(Eastern) Barn Owl *Tyto alba delicatula*: 2 seen; 1 with Phil Maher in NSW, and Sam in the Stirling Ranges WA.

OWLS: STRIGIDAE

Rufous Owl *Ninox rufa*: A single, low roosting bird was seen in the botanical gardens in Darwin NT.
Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua*: Local birder Stuart Pickering showed us a pair roosting in Brisbane (QLD).
Barking Owl *Ninox connivens*: A single bird giving its characteristic call, was found near our Darwin hotel (NT).
Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae boobook*: 1 was seen well at end of the "Plains-wanderer Safari" in Hay NSW.
Morepork *Ninox novaeseelandiae leucopsis*: This Tasmanian form was found near Eaglehawk Neck one night (TAS).

KINGFISHERS: ALCEDINIDAE

Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus*: Seen close from the boat on Yellow Water (NT) and on the Daintree cruise (ne QLD).
Little Kingfisher *Ceyx pusillus*: 1 was seen well at Cattana, and then another better still in Daintree (both ne QLD).
Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*: Recorded on 18 days of the tour in all states except the NT.
Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*: Noted regularly in NT and ne QLD; our best views came at Mount Carbine.
Red-backed Kingfisher *Todiramphus pyrrhopygus*: 2 in Timber Creek and 1 by Stuart Highway south of Katherine NT.
Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*: Scattered sightings in the tropical north (NT and ne QLD).
Torresian (Collared) Kingfisher *Todiramphus sordidus*: 2 at East Point (NT); also recorded in Cairns (ne QLD).
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*: Recorded on 16 days of the tour and in 4 states (NT, QLD, NSW and WA).

BEE-EATERS: MEROPIDAE

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: Pleasantly common in NT and ne QLD in particular; recorded on 14 days.

ROLLERS: CORACIIDAE

(Oriental/Common) Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: Recorded on 5 days in the NT (Katherine) and QLD (Brisbane).

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE

Australian (Nankeen) Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*: Recorded on 10 days of the tour in NT, QLD, NSW (e.g. Hay) and WA.
Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*: 2 records (at Timber Creek NT, and 1 sitting next to a kestrel near Hay NSW).
Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: Noted on 7 days in NT (e.g. Fogg Dam, Timber Creek) and NSW only.
Black Falcon *Falco subniger*: Emma found a low flying bird west of Timber Creek (NT) on a good day for raptors.
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: One of the final additions of the trip was a bird found by Ben south of Perth (WA).

COCKATOOS: CACATUIDAE

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksia*: This striking bird was seen in NT & WA; also seen in QLD.
Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*: A confiding group of 4 was seen twice below O Reilly's QLD.
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus*: Oddly, only seen once, by Cape Bruny Lighthouse in TAS.
Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris*: Recorded twice; at Victoria Dam and in the Stirling Ranges (WA). WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ENDEMIC.

Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii*: A group was seen tearing into giant pine cones at Rocky Gully (WA). WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ENDEMIC.

Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*: A flock of 9 birds were seen perched in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo *Lophochroa leadbeateri*: A single bird was found in Griffith (NSW).

Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla*: Recorded on 17 days of the tour, and in all 5 states visited

Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris*: This local cockatoo was found around the NSW town of Darlington Point (20+).

Western Corella *Cacatua pastinator*: About a dozen of these local endemics were seen near the town of Rocky Gully WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ENDEMIC.

Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*: Recorded on 6 days, with 150+ near Timber Creek (NT). Also in QLD, NSW.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: Abundant, recorded on at least 23 days of the tour.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*: Recorded on 6 days, in the states of NT and NSW only. Flocks of 100s were seen in NT.

OLD WORLD PARROTS: PSITTACULIDAE

Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus*: Observed regularly over 3 days in WA, around Stirling Ranges in particular.

Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii*: Some wonderful views west of Orange in NSW.

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*: Spectacular views (sitting on us) at the feeding sites in O Reilly's (se QLD).

Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*: Seen on 4 days in NT (e.g. Timber Creek), and again once in ne QLD.

Elegant Parrot *Neophema elegans*: A handful were seen immediately around Stirling Range Retreat, WA.

Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila*: Excellent views were had of a beach-based bird at the scenic Bremer Bay in WA.

Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella*: A pair was located during a wonderful morning in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*: About 10 birds were seen on Bruny Island in TAS.

Australian (Mallee) Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius barnardi*: Recorded on 2 days in NSW, all around Griffith.

Australian (Twenty-eight) Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius semitorquatus*: Often seen in WA, with 100s in a day there.

Green Rosella *Platycercus caledonicus*: Seen on each day in TAS. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans elegans*: Recorded on 6 days in QLD and NSW. Best views at the O Reilly's feeders.

Crimson (Yellow) Rosella *Platycercus elegans flaveolus*: This local form was seen a few times in NSW, (e.g. in Hay).

Northern Rosella *Platycercus venustus*: Found 3 times in NT, at Binjari near Katherine, and at the Edith Falls campsite.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*: Recorded on 5 days in NSW, (e.g. Capertee Valley, Back Yamma and Darlington Pt.).

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus*: Only seen in ne QLD, at Granite Gorge and Mount Carbine.

Western Rosella *Platycercus icterotis*: Quite scarce, only found 4 times in WA (e.g. Victoria Dam, Stirling Ranges). WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Greater Bluebonnet *Northiella haematogaster*: Seen on 3 different days in NSW (e.g. Griffith, Hay, Round Hill).

Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus*: Seen on 4 different days in NSW (e.g. Capertee Valley, Lake Cargelligo).

Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius*: A few were seen at Nombinnie reserve, and others were seen close to Griffith (all NSW).

Hooded Parrot *Psephotus dissimilis*: Seen near Edith Falls, where a flock of at least 70 was observed coming to drink at a waterhole. NORTHERN TERRITORY ENDEMIC.

Red-capped Parrot *Purpureicephalus spurius*: Recorded at least 4 times in WA, with an adult feeding a juvenile at Foxes Lair particularly memorable. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*: Only found perched once, in Julatten (ne QLD).

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*: Recorded twice; 300+ west of Timber Creek NT, and others on the Hay Plains NSW.

Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*: Seen in the Capertee Valley NSW and a tree full of them at Hobart airport TAS.

Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*: A handful of these tiny parrots were in a blooming tree in the Capertee Valley NSW.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*: Good, regular views came in the Stirling Ranges (WA).

Varied Lorikeet *Psitteuteles versicolor* **GO**: Emma had a group flyover, while driving, near Victoria River

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus moluccanus*: A common species recorded often in QLD and NSW.

Red-collared Lorikeet *Trichoglossus rubritorquatus*: Regularly encountered in the NT. NORTHERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*: A few sightings in ne QLD leg of the trip (e.g. Newell Beach).

PITTAS: PITIIDAE

Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor*: This beautiful bird was watched at length calling from a treetop in O Reilly's (se QLD).

Rainbow Pitta *Pitta iris*: 2 were seen in the monsoon forest at Fogg Dam NT. NORTHERN TERRITORY ENDEMIC.

LYREBIRDS: MENURIDAE

Albert's Lyrebird *Menura alberti*: Encountered five times in a single day at O Reilly's (se QLD).

Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae*: Four very confiding birds were seen at Minnamurra Falls NSW.

SCRUB-BIRDS: ATRICHORNITHIDAE

Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus*: Amazingly, seen well at Cheynes Beach WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

BOWERBIRDS: PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus maculosus*: A few were encountered on both of our visits to Mount Lewis (ne QLD).

Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris*: Several groups were found at O Reilly's (se QLD).

Tooth-billed (Catbird) Bowerbird *Scenopoeetes dentirostris*: A few were found on each of our trips to Mount Lewis (ne QLD).

NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Golden Bowerbird *Amblyornis newtoniana*: A young male was seen by his bower at Hypipamee (ne QLD).

NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*: This fabulous species was seen extremely well at O Reilly's (se QLD).

Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*: Some wonderful views were had at O Reilly's (se QLD).

Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis*: Commonly encountered in the NT.

AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: CLIMACTERIDAE

White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaea*: A handful was seen in ne QLD (e.g. Mount Lewis, Hypipamee).

Red-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris erythrops*: A pair was seen just outside of the rainforest at O Reilly's (se QLD).

Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus*: Only seen once, along the Hurricane Road, north of Mount Carbine in ne QLD.

Black-tailed Treecreeper *Climacteris melanurus*: Noted at 3 sites in NT, including Timber Creek and Gregory's Tree.

Rufous Treecreeper *Climacteris rufus*: Observed at 3 WA sites: Wearne Rd., Dryandra and Stirling Range Retreat.

FAIRYWRENS: MALURIDAE

Southern Emuwren *Stipiturus malachurus*: Seen on the coastal heaths of Budderoo NSW and Henry's Point WA.

Purple-crowned Fairywren *Malurus coronatus*: This popular fairywren was seen up close at Victoria River NT.

Red-winged Fairywren *Malurus elegans*: A small party were seen in the Perth Hills at Victoria Dam WA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Blue-breasted Fairywren *Malurus pulcherrimus*: A smashing pair performed at Wearne Road south of Perth.

Purple-backed Fairywren *Malurus assimilis*: First seen at Lake Cargelligo, and then multiple times at Five Bough NSW.

Variegated Fairywren *Malurus lamberti*: A party were found with Stuart Pickering in Brisbane (se QLD).

Lovely Fairywren *Malurus amabilis*: We found a group on our first afternoon in Cairns, at Cattana Wetland (ne QLD).

NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Splendid Fairywren *Malurus splendens*: First seen in Round Hill NSW; then multiple times in WA (e.g. Cheynes Beach).

Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus*: One of Australia's most conspicuous bluewrens, seen repeatedly in QLD, NSW & TAS.

White-winged Fairywren *Malurus leucopterus*: A fine pair was seen in Lake Cargelligo NSW.

Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus*: Recorded in NT (Timber Creek) & ne QLD (Hasties Swamp, Julatten).

HONEYEATERS: MELIPHAGIDAE

Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*: Noted at Hypipamee and O Reilly's (both QLD); also at Bass Point NSW.

Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*: At least three birds were seen in the Perth Hill at Victoria Dam WA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Pied Honeyeater *Certhionyx variegatus*: This nomadic species was noted at 2 NSW sites; Griffith and on the Hay Plains.

Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata*: Noted on 3 days in ne QLD; at Cassowary House, Daintree and Julatten.

Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*: Recorded 8 times, mostly in ne QLD and also NSW. Common at O Reilly's.

White-lined Honeyeater *Meliphaga albilineata*: This local species was seen at Nourlangie Rock NT.

NORTHERN TERRITORY ENDEMIC.

Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis imitatrix*: Recorded on 2 days in ne QLD, at Cassowary House in Julatten.

Yellow Honeyeater *Stomiopera flava*: First observed at Cattana Wetlands; also seen in Julatten (both ne QLD).

White-gaped Honeyeater *Stomiopera unicolor*: Regularly encountered in the NT.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Caligavis chrysops*: Found at Hasties Swamp in QLD; in NSW at Barren Grounds and Capertee.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops melanops*: A gorgeous pair was found in the Capertee Valley NSW.

Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys*: A colony was visited close to Jolly's Lookout near Brisbane (se QLD).

Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala*: Regularly encountered in coastal QLD and NSW.

Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula*: Regularly seen within inland NSW (e.g. Round Hill), and also in NT.

Bridled Honeyeater *Bolemoreus frenatus*: A handful was seen at Mount Lewis and Hypapamee (both ne QLD).

NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*: Seen around Lake Cargelligo and Griffith, NSW.

Little Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera*: A handful were found on the coastal heaths within Royal NP (NSW).

Western Wattlebird *Anthochaera lunulate*: Surprisingly easy to find, in Armadale, Victoria Dam, and in Stirling Ranges.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*: Recorded on 4 days, in NSW (Capertee Valley) and WA (near Perth).

Yellow Wattlebird *Anthochaera paradoxa*: Recorded on Bruny Island and on Mount Nelson TAS.

TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Varied Honeyeater *Gavicalis versicolor*: A pair was seen on the Esplanade in Cairns (ne QLD).

Mangrove Honeyeater *Gavicalis fasciogularis*: A confiding pair was seen at Boondall near Brisbane airport QLD.

Singing Honeyeater *Gavicalis virescens*: Recorded in Griffith and Hay in NSW.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater *Ptilotula ornata*: Commonly encountered in the mallee in WA (e.g. Stirling Ranges).

White-plumed Honeyeater *Ptilotula penicillata*: Seen on a few days in NSW, in the Capertee Valley and at Back Yamma.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Ptilotula flavescens*: Noted on 4 days in NT; e.g. Timber Creek, near Katherine.

Fuscous Honeyeater *Ptilotula fusca*: First seen at Wondecla in ne QLD, then once more in NSW in the Capertee Valley.

Gray-headed Honeyeater *Ptilotula keartlandi*: A few were seen around Timber Creek, NT.

Gray-fronted Honeyeater *Ptilotula plumula*: 6 birds were seen near Timber Creek, NT.

Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*: 2 were seen at Cattana Wetlands near Cairns (ne QLD).

Bar-breasted Honeyeater *Ramsayornis fasciatus*: Seen twice in the NT, in Palmerston and at Kakadu.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*: Seen during both of our days in Kakadu, NT.

Rufous-throated Honeyeater *Conopophila rufogularis*: Commonly encountered in the NT (e.g. Darwin).

Yellow Chat *Epthianura crocea*: One of the undoubted highlights in the NT, was a party of 3 at Knuckey's Lagoon.

Crimson Chat *Epthianura tricolor*: A good year, with sightings at Lake Cargelligo, Round Hill and on the Hay Plains NSW.

Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons*: Phil Maher led us to a male and female on the plains near Hay, NSW.

White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albigularis*: Recorded at 2 sites in NSW (Hay Plains and Five Bough), and on TAS.

Black Honeyeater *Sugomel nigrum*: Encountered 3 times in NSW, on the Hay Plains and near Griffith.

Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura obscura*: Encountered regularly in the tropical north (i.e. NT and ne QLD).

Red-headed Myzomela *Myzomela erythrocephala*: Recorded on 3 days in the NT (e.g. Buffalo Creek and Coconut Grove).

Scarlet (Honeyeater) Myzomela *Myzomela sanguinolenta*: A male at Mt. Lewis (QLD), and another in Capertee NSW.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Gliciphila melanops*: Not found until WA, where superb looks were had at Corackerup.

Banded Honeyeater *Cissomela pectoralis*: Noted on 3 days in the NT, including near Katherine and in Timber Creek.

Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*: Recorded on 12 days of the tour, in NT, QLD, and WA.

Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*: Superb looks on TAS, at Mount Nelson and on Mount Wellington.

New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*: Commonly encountered on heaths in NSW, TAS and WA.

White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris niger*: Seen first at Hasties Swamp (ne QLD), then again at Cheynes Beach WA.

White-eared Honeyeater *Nesoptilotis leucotis* **GO**: Sam saw one on the Capertee Valley, NSW. Oddly, never found again.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater *Nesoptilotis flavicollis*: A few were seen in the Peter Murrell Reserve near Hobart, TAS.

TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*: Noted on 8 days, all in NT and ne QLD (e.g. Pine Creek).

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*: Recorded 3 times in the NT (Kakadu, Edith Falls).

Gilbert's Honeyeater *Melithreptus chloropsis*: Observed on at least 2 days in WA, at Stirling Ranges and Victoria Dam.

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*: Recorded at O'Reilly's in QLD and in the Capertee Valley in NSW.

Black-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus affinis*: Seen on Bruny Island and at Peter Murrell Reserve on TAS.

TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris*: Only recorded during our two visits to Dryandra WA.

Black-chinned Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis gularis*: This handsome bird was seen in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Black-chinned (Golden-backed) Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis laetior*: This gorgeous honeyeater was seen west of Timber Creek. A possible split from Black-chinned.

Strong-billed Honeyeater *Melithreptus validirostris*: 3 birds were found on Bruny Island, TAS. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayanus*: A few were seen coing to the feeders at Cassowary House, ne QLD. NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*: Recorded on 3 days in NSW, in Capertee, and around Griffith.

Painted Honeyeater *Grantiella picta*: At least six of these stunning honeyeaters were seen in Griffith, NSW.

Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis*: Recorded on 4 days in the NT, and then on 1 day in ne QLD.

Helmeted (Hornbill) Friarbird *Philemon buceroides yorki*: A few in ne QLD (e.g. Cattana Wetlands, Cassowary House). [A possible split.](#)

Helmeted (Sandstone) Friarbird *Philemon buceroides ammitophilus*: 2 at Nourlangie Rock, NT. [A possible split.](#)

Silver-crowned Friarbird *Philemon argenticeps*: Regularly seen in the NT, not recorded elsewhere.

Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus*: Recorded in ne QLD (Granite Gorge) and in NSW (Capertee, Griffith).

BRISTLEBIRDS: DASYORNITHIDAE

Western Bristlebird *Dasyornis longirostris*: We were fortunate to get smashing views at Arpenteur Nature Reserve, WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Eastern Bristlebird *Dasyornis brachypterus*: Good weather aided us in getting great looks at Budderoo in NSW.

PARDALOTES: PARDALOTIDAE

Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*: This "Diamond Sparrow" gave jaw dropping views at O Reilly's, se QLD.

Forty-spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus quadragintus*: We were shocked to discover an individual foraging on the ground at Apollo Bay on Bruny Island. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Red-browed Pardalote *Pardalotus rubricatus*: After a struggle, Emma finally found this one south of Katherine, NT.

Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*: Recorded on 11 days of the tour in all 5 states (NT, QLD, NSW, TAS, WA).

THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: ACANTHIZIDAE

Pilotbird *Pycnoptilus floccosus*: An extremely obliging individual was seen late in the morning at Barren Grounds, NSW.

Rockwarbler *Origma solitaria*: 3 tame birds were seen hopping on the boardwalk at the stunning Wattamolla, NSW. The species is a NEW SOUTH WALES ENDEMIC (the only one).

Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis*: Super looks of a male singing from a boulder on Mount Lewis, ne QLD. NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis*: Recorded 4 times in QLD, including regularly in O Reilly's.

White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*: Recorded on 5 days (e.g. O Reilly's QLD, Victoria Dam & Bremer Bay WA).

Tasmanian Scrubwren *Sericornis humilis*: Multiple birds were seen on Bruny Island, TAS. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Atherton Scrubwren *Sericornis keri*: We had some really good looks on Mt. Lewis, neQLD. NORTHEAST QLD ENDEMIC.

Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostra*: Found at Cassowary House and Hypipamee in neQLD.

Scrubtit *Acanthornis magna*: A pair were found in the afternoon on Bruny Island, TAS. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Speckled Warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*: Just the one was seen at Backyamma State Forest in NSW.

Western Fieldwren *Calamanthus montanellus*: This recently split species was seen very well in Stirling Ranges NP, WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren *Hylacola pyrrhopygia*: 1 showed up on the heathland in Royal NP, near Sydney, NSW.

Shy Heathwren *Hylacola cauta*: This mallee species was seen well at Nombinnie in NSW.

Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides*: Seen on 2 days in NSW, in the Capertee Valley and at Backyamma.

Western Thornbill *Acanthiza inornate*: A pair was found during our afternoon at Victoria Dam near Armadale in WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina*: 6-10 birds were seen up on Mt. Lewis. NORTHEAST QLD ENDEMIC.

Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla*: Recorded on 5 days in QLD, NSW & TAS (e.g. O Reilly's, Barren Grounds, Bruny Island).

Tasmanian Thornbill *Acanthiza ewingii*: A couple of parties were seen on Bruny Island. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*: Noted on 3 days, in NSW (Nombinnie, Binya) and WA (Victoria Dam).

Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*: Recorded on 5 days in NSW and once in WA.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis*: One was found at Backyamma in NSW.

Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana*: One sighting in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata*: A party of 5 were found at Jolly's Lookout near Brisbane (QLD).

Weebill *Smicromis brevirostris*: Australia's smallest birds was seen on at least 7 days (NT, QLD, NSW, WA).

Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronota*: We picked this one up during a short visit to East Point in Darwin, NT.

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*: Two were seen early in the morning in Daintree, neQLD.

White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea*: Only seen the once, in Katherine (NT), but heard at several other sites.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*: Recorded on 3 days in NT (Adelaide River) and neQLD (Daintree).

Brown Gerygone *Gerygone mouki*: Recorded several times over two days in neQLD (e.g. Hypipamee, Julatten).

Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca*: Recorded on several days in both NSW and WA.

Mangrove Gerygone *Gerygone levigaster*: Seen at Buffalo Creek and Coconut Grove in NT.

Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*: 2 birds came in to drink at a dam in Backyamma State Forest, NSW.

PSEUDO-BABBLERS: POMATOSTAMIDAE

Gray-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis*: Seen at Timber Creek NT, Granite Gorge QLD & Back Yamma NSW.

White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*: Only seen in the Capertee Valley NSW and at Corackerup WA.

LOGRUNNERS: ORTHONYCHIDAE

Australian Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii*: A few pairs were seen bounding around the forest floor in O Reilly's se QLD.

Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii*: 2 were seen at Cassowary House, then groups of 8 and 2 were seen on different days on Mt. Lewis, ne QLD. NE QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

QUAIL-THRUSHES AND JEWEL-BABBLERS: CINCLOSOMATIDAE

Chestnut Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma castanotum*: A male sung from an exposed perch, at Nombinnie Reserve, NSW.

CUCKOOSHRIKES: CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Ground Cuckooshrike *Coracina maxima*: This, by far the rarest of the cuckooshrikes, was nesting on the Hay Plains NSW.

Barred (Yellow-eyed) Cuckooshrike *Coracina lineata*: A couple were found at Cassowary House by Larry (ne QLD).

Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*: An abundant species seen often (on 20 tour days).

White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis*: Noted on at least 6 days in NT (e.g. Darwin), and once in ne QLD.

White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor*: Noted on 9 days, mainly in the NT, but also NSW and WA.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*: Noted at Fogg Dam, East Point & Adelaide River, NT; also on Mt Lewis QLD.

Common Cicadabird *Edolisoma tenuirostre*: Emma found a male at Fogg Dam, NT. Others were heard in ne QLD.

SITELLAS: NEOSITTIDAE

Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*: A group south of Katherine in NT, and another one at Cheynes Beach WA.

WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: PSOPHODIDAE

Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus*: We got multiple good looks at O Reilly's, se QLD.

Western (Black-throated) Whipbird *Psophodes nigrogularis oberon*: We were fortunate to get excellent looks at Corackerup Nature Reserve. *The Western Whipbird complex may be split into 2 or 3 species.*

AUSTRALO-PAPUAN BELLBIRDS: OREOICIDAE

Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis*: One of the first birds seen during our morning in Nombinnie/Round Hill, NSW.

SHRIKE-TIT: FALCUNCULIDAE

Crested (Eastern) Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus frontatus*: 3 at Wondecla QLD and again at Back Yamma NSW.

Crested (Western) Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus leucogaster*: A superb individual was found by Larry stripping bark in Stirling Range Retreat, WA. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC. *The shrike-tits (3 forms) are possible splits.*

WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: PACHYCEPHALIDAE

Sandstone Shrikethrush *Colluricincla woodwardia*: 1 was watched singing from the apex of Nourlangie Rock, NT.

A SPECIALIST OF SANDSTONE ESCARPMENTS IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA.

Bower's Shrikethrush *Colluricincla boweri*: Multiple sightings on Mount Lewis, and also at Hypipamee, ne QLD. NE QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Gray Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica*: Noted on at least 12 days, in NT, QLD, NSW, TAS and WA.

Little (Rufous) Shrikethrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*: Only recorded in ne QLD, at Cassowary House and Julatten.

Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea*: One was seen near Cape Bruny on Bruny Island in TAS.

Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata* H: Heard in the mallee around Round Hill, NSW.

Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*: Recorded on 7 days: Mt Lewis, Hypipamee & O Reilly's in QLD; also Royal NP.

Western Whistler *Pachycephala occidentalis*: Seen at 4 sites in WA: Victorian Dam, Dryandra, Corackerup, Stirling Ranges. WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Black-tailed (Mangrove Golden) Whistler *Pachycephala melanura*: A male was seen at the Adelaide River, NT.

Gray Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*: Seen twice, at Fogg Dam and Adelaide River in the NT.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*: Noted on 11 days of the tour, in NT, QLD, NSW, and WA.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: *ORIOLIDAE*

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*: Noted at Hasties Swamp and in Brisbane in QLD.

Green (Yellow) Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus*: Conspicuous on the NT and ne QLD legs (e.g. Darwin, Fogg Dam, Cairns).

Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*: Recorded at least 8 times on NT and QLD (e.g. Fogg Dam, Darwin, Julatten).

BOATBILLS: *MACHAERIRHYNCHIDAE*

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*: Sighted twice in ne QLD, at Cassowary House and in Julatten.

WOODSWALLOWS, BELLMAGPIES & ALLIES: *ARTAMIDAE*

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*: Recorded on 14 days, mostly in NT and QLD.

Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*: Double figures were seen in the Capertee Valley NSW.

White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus*: c.400 birds were seen in a single day in the Capertee Valley NSW.

Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus*: Recorded regularly in the NT (e.g. Timber Creek, Victoria River).

Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*: Noted in the Capertee Valley NSW, and Dryandra & Stirling Ranges in WA.

Little Woodswallow *Artamus minor*: Observed on 3 days in the NT (Gregory's Tree, Victoria River, Nourlangie Rock).

Gray Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*: A couple were seen around Brisbane in se QLD.

Silver-backed Butcherbird *Cracticus argenteus*: This northern specialty was seen in Palmerston, and in Kakadu, NT.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*: Frequently recorded, on at least 12 tour days in NT, QLD and NSW.

Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*: A tropical species, seen in Darwin NT, and also at Cassowary House & Daintree QLD.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*: A common, widespread species seen almost daily except in the northern tropics.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*: Recorded regularly in se QLD (e.g. O Reilly's) and NSW (e.g. Royal NP).

Black Currawong *Strepera fuliginosa*: More than a dozen were noted on Mount Wellington TAS: TASMANIA ENDEMIC.

Gray Currawong *Strepera versicolor*: First recorded on TAS (Mt. Wellington), then regularly in WA.

FANTAILS: *RHIPIDURIDAE*

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*: Seen at Chainman Creek & Kakadu in NT; Sam also saw one in ne QLD.

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*: One of Australia's most familiar birds, seen regularly in all states except TAS.

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*: This acrobatic fantail was encountered at O Reilly's se QLD.

Arafura Fantail *Rhipidura dryas*: Found first at Fogg Dam and later again at Yellow Water (both NT).

Gray Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*: A widespread species recorded on 13 days, in QLD, NSW, TAS and WA.

DRONGOS: *DICRURIDAE*

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*: Encountered 8 times in NT and QLD (e.g. Kakadu, Darwin, Daintree).

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: *PARADISAEIDAE*

Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus*: A male was found during an amazing day at O Reilly's se QLD.

Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae*: A calling male was admired at length through the scope at Cassowary House QLD.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: *MONARCHIDAE*

White-eared Monarch *Carterornis leucotis*: A single bird was seen mid-morning near Cassowary House, ne QLD.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*: We finally found during our amazing full day in O Reilly's, se QLD.

(Australian) Spectacled Monarch *Symphysarchus trivirgatus melanorrhous*: Noted in Kuranda & around Julatten.

Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi*: A pair was seen near Cassowary House, ne QLD. NE QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*: Ubiquitous, recorded on most days in all states except TAS, where it does not occur.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*: Recorded on 8 days, in NT (e.g. Darwin, Kakadu) and QLD (e.g. O Reilly's).

Broad-billed Flycatcher *Myiagra ruficollis*: This northern specialty was only seen in NT (e.g. Darwin, Fogg Dam).

Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*: Noted 3 times; Capertee & Back Yamma NSW, and nesting in Stirling Ranges WA.

Paperbark Flycatcher *Myiagra nana*: Frequently encountered in the NT (e.g. Fogg Dam, Edith Falls, Kakadu).

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra Alecto*: Seen on 2 boat trips, at Yellow Water, Kakadu NT and then nesting in Daintree QLD.

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH AND APOSTLEBIRD: *CORCORACIDAE*

White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos*: Recorded on 5 days in NSW (e.g. Capertee Valley, Griffith).

Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea*: A widespread inland species recorded on 7 days in NT, QLD and NSW.

CROWS, JAYS, AND MAGPIES: *CORVIDAE*

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*: Recorded on 12 days, in NT (e.g. Darwin) and QLD (e.g. Brisbane) only.

Little Crow *Corvus bennetti*: Noted on 2 days in the NT, at Victoria River and in Kakadu.

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*: Observed daily in NSW and WA.

Little Raven *Corvus mellori*: Recorded on 4 days in inland NSW (e.g. Back Yamma, Round Hill).

Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus*: Frequently seen on TAS.

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: *PETROICIDAE*

Jacky-winter *Microeca fascians*: Seen one morning in the NT, and then twice in NSW (Capertee Valley & Back Yamma).

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher (Flyrobin) *Microeca flavigaster*: Noted on 4 days in the NT (Fogg Dam, Darwin, Kakadu).

Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang*: Recorded on 3 days; on Bruny Island TAS, others at Dryandra & Wearne Rd WA.

Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*: Observed 3 times in NSW (Back Yamma, Nombinnie, Binya).

Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea*: Superb views were had at Cape Bruny; another was seen at Peter Murrell (both TAS).

Rose Robin *Petroica rosea*: A male was seen in the temperate rainforest of O Reilly's in se QLD.

Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster*: After a dowdy female, a group of 3 (including 2 males) was seen on Bruny Island TAS.

Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata*: A pair was found feeding in a lively paddock in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata*: Seen on four occasions on Bruny Island. TASMANIAN ENDEMIC.

Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito*: Seen at 4 sites in ne QLD (Cassowary House, Mt. Lewis, Julatten, Curtain Fig).

Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis*: Recorded on 4 days: O Reilly's QLD and Capertee Valley & Wattamolla NSW.

Western Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria griseogularis*: 2 were found at Victoria Dam WA.

White-breasted Robin *Eopsaltria georgiana*: Recorded repeatedly in WA (e.g. Victoria Dam, Stirling Ranges).

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Mangrove Robin *Eopsaltria pulverulenta*: A pair was found at Coconut Grove NT, and another was seen in Cairns QLD.

White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa*: A pair was seen early one morning at Big Mitchell Creek, ne QLD.

Buff-sided Robin *Poecilodryas cerviniventris*: A pair was seen nest building behind our hotel at Timber Creek, NT.

Gray-headed Robin *Heteromyias cinereifrons*: Seen at 4 sites in ne QLD; Mt. Lewis, Curtain Fig and Hypipamee.

NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND WET TROPICS ENDEMIC.

Southern Scrub-Robin *Drymodes brunneopygia*: 1 close at Nombinnie NSW; others were seen well at Corackerup, WA.

LARKS: *ALAUDIDAE*

Australasian (Horsfield's) Bushlark *Mirafrja javanica*: Seen repeatedly at Timber Creek airfield NT; also near Hay NSW.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* **H**: One was heard just before a heavy downpour kicked near Eaglehawk Neck, TAS.

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: *CISTICOLIDAE*

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*: Recorded on 7 days; Darwin & Timber Creek NT; Cassowary Hse & Julatten QLD

REED WARBLERS AND ALLIES: *ACROCEPHALIDAE*

Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*: Recorded on at least 5 days, in QLD and NSW.

GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: *LOCUSTELLIDAE*

Little Grassbird *Poodytes gramineus*: After several failed attempts, we finally saw one well at Five Bough Swamp NSW.

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*: Only seen on the Plains-wanderer drive with Phil Maher, near Hay in NSW.

Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi*: A singing bird showed well in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Tawny Grassbird *Cincloramphus timoriensis* **H**: Heard at a few sites in QLD, including in Brisbane.

SWALLOWS: *HIRUNDINIDAE*

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*: Not recorded in NT, but seen on almost every day in all other states visited.

Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel*: Noted on at least 4 days of the tour in QLD and NSW.

Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*: Recorded on at least 8 days of the tour, and recorded in all states.

BULBULS: PYCNONOTIDAE

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*: A pair was seen at Bass Point, and another near Sydney airport, NSW.

WHITE-EYES, YUHINAS, AND ALLIES: ZOSTEROPIDAE

Australian Yellow (Canary) White-eye *Zosterops luteus*: Several parties were found at 2 mangrove sites in Darwin NT.

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*: Recorded on 9 days; in QLD, NSW, TAS and WA.

STARLINGS: STURNIDAE

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*: Noted on at least 4 days in ne QLD (e.g. Cairns, Daintree, Julatten).

European (Common) Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: Recorded daily in NSW and TAS.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*: Noted daily in ne QLD.

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE

Bassian (Olive-backed) Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*: 1 came in to call at O Reilly's, QLD; other possibles were seen there!

Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei*: An individual was identified by call at O Reilly's, se QLD.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*: Conspicuous in some parts of NSW (e.g. Orange) and TAS (Bruny Island).

FLOWERPECKERS: DICAIDAE

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*: Recorded on 11 days; in NT (e.g. Edith Falls), ne QLD, and NSW (e.g. Griffith).

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: NECTARINIIDAE

Olive-backed (Yellow-bellied) Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*: Seen on 3 days in ne QLD; Cairns, Julatten & Newell Beach.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: ESTRILDIDAE

Beautiful Firetail *Stagonopleura bella*: A good tour for it, seen twice on Bruny Island, TAS, and also at Budderoo, NSW.

Red-eared Firetail *Stagonopleura oculata*: Seen on our first afternoon in WA, in the Perth Hills at Victoria Dam.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ENDEMIC.

Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*: Larry spotted one coming in to drink at a dam at Back Yamma, NSW.

Red-browed (Finch) Firetail *Neochmia temporalis*: Seen at several sites, with the best views coming at O Reilly's, QLD.

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*: Only recorded in NT, where recorded at multiple sites (e.g. Edith Falls) on 5 days.

Star Finch *Neochmia ruficauda*: c. 100 birds were seen by the airfield at Timber Creek, NT.

(Australian) Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata castanotis*: Good numbers (100+) were seen at Timber Creek airfield NT.

Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii*: Recorded on 9 days of the tour, mostly in the NT, but also QLD and NSW.

Masked Finch *Poephila personata*: Noted on 4 days in NT; at Edith Falls, Timber Creek, and Binjari (near Katherine).

Long-tailed Finch *Poephila acuticauda*: Seen on 3 days in NT; near Edith Falls, at Binjari, and at Yellow Water, Kakadu.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa* **H**: It was extremely frustrating to hear this multiple times at Julatten, QLD.

Gouldian Finch *Erythrura gouldiae*: One of Australia's most wanted birds; seen in NT (near Edith Falls & Timber Creek).

Scaly-breasted Munia (Mannikin) *Lonchura punctulata*: Only seen the once, at Wonga in ne QLD.

Chestnut-breasted Munia (Mannikin) *Lonchura castaneothorax*: Seen a couple of times in the NT and again in ne QLD.

Pictorella Munia *Heteromunia pectoralis*: 5 birds were found late in the afternoon at the Timber Creek airfield, NT.

OLD WORLD SPARROW: PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Seen a half a dozen times or so, in QLD, NSW and TAS.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: MOTACILLIDAE

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*: 1 at Timber Creek NT, others Hay Plains and Bass Point NSW; also in WA.

FINCHES, EUPHONIAS, AND ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: One was seen near the ferry dock over to Bruny on TAS.

MAMMALS

ECHIDNA: Tachyglossidae

Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*: 1 near Lake Cargelligo NSW and another on Bruny Island TAS.

PLATYPUS: Ornithorhynchidae

Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*: At least 4 were seen in the daytime at the wonderful Tarzali Lakes, ne QLD.

BANDICOOTS: Peramelidae

Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus*: Recorded near Eaglehawk Neck (TAS) and also Cheynes Beach (WA).

Long-nosed Bandicoot *Perameles nasuta*: 2 were scampering around the flowerbeds at Cassowary House QLD.

WOMBATS: Vombatidae

Common Wombat *Vombatus ursinus*: One was found foraging along the road at night, up to Barren Grounds NSW.

KOALA: Phascolarctidae

Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*: Arguably, Australia's most wanted mammal; Dean found a pair in Brisbane to our relief!

BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS: Phalangeridae

Mountain Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus caninus*: 1 was found during our Marbled Frogmouth search at O Reilly's QLD.

Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*: Recorded in NT, NSW, TAS and WA.

Tarsipedidae

Honey Possum *Tarsipes rostratus*: This little marsupial was found by Carol feeding on a banksia at Cheynes Beach WA.

MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO: Hypsiprymnodontidae

Musky Rat-kangaroo *Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*: This, the smallest kangaroo, was seen at Cassowary House ne QLD.

KANGAROOS, WALLABIES AND TREE-KANGAROOS: Macropodidae

Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo *Dendrolagus lumholtzi*: A wonderful joey and mother were seen at Nerada Tea Rooms QLD.

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*: Regularly encountered in NT, with a few more in ne QLD too.

Antilopine Wallaroo *Macropus antilopinus*: This thickset wallaby was seen twice around Victoria River, NT.

Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallaby *Macropus parryi*: This handsome wallaby was on the hillsides below O Reilly's, se QLD.

Western Brush Wallaby *Macropus irma*: One was seen crossing the road between Stirling Ranges and Corackerup WA.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*: These huge kangaroos were seen well on the golf course at Mareeba QLD.

Western Grey Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus*: Good numbers in WA, where they were very tame at Cheynes Beach.

Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus*: Our first shared a waterhole with Agile Wallaby & Antilopine Wallaroo in NT; more were seen on the plains within inland NSW. This imposing kangaroo is the largest species.

Euro (Common Wallaroo) *Macropus robustus*: This round-eared wallaby was seen at Back Yamma in inland NSW.

Red-necked Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus*: Recorded in Lamington NP QLD and in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Bennett's Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus rufogriseus*: A handful was seen on Bruny Island, TAS.

Black (Swamp) Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*: 2 sightings in inland NSW; at Back Yamma and in Round Hill.

Eastern (Wilkins') Short-eared Rock Wallaby *Petrogale wilkinsi*: Seen on the escarpment at Victoria River & Ubirr NT.

Short-eared Rock Wallaby was recently (2014) split into two (western and eastern) species.

Mareeba Rock Wallaby *Petrogale Mareeba*: This extremely local species was seen at Granite Gorge, ne QLD.

Rufous-bellied (Tasmanian) Pademelon *Thylogale billardieri*: About a dozen were seen near Eaglehawk Neck, TAS.

Red-necked Pademelon *Thylogale thetis*: This cute wallaby was seen bounding around the grounds of O Reilly's se QLD.

FRUIT BATS: Pteropodidae

Black Flying-fox *Pteropus Alecto*: Several close camps were seen, in Timber Creek NT and at Beechmont in QLD.

Spectacled Flying-fox *Pteropus conspicillatus*: A few were seen near our Mareeba hotel, ne QLD.

Gray-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*: Just a few were seen at a traditional roost near O Reilly's, se QLD.

Little Red Flying-fox *Pteropus scapulatus*: A few were spotlighted near Mareeba, ne QLD.

DOGS AND FOXES: Canidae

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*: A few were seen in inland NSW.

Dingo *Canis lupus dingo*: 2 were seen downslope from O'Reilly's se QLD, which were being regularly reported at the time.

EARED SEALS: Otariidae

Australian Sea Lion *Neophaca cinerea*: 5 were seen resting on island, in Bremer Bay WA.

PIGS: Suidae

Feral Pig *Sus scrofa*: A few were encountered in the NT (e.g. Yellow Water cruise).

RABBITS AND HARES: Leporidae

European Hare *Lepus europaeus*: A few were seen in se QLD, NSW, and in WA.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*: Scattered sightings in NSW and in WA.

CLOVEN-HOOFED MAMMALS: Bovidae

Swamp (Water) Buffalo *Bubalus bubalis*: At least ten were seen during the Yellow Water cruise in Kakadu NT.

DEER: Cervidae

Rusa *Cervus timoriensis*: A few were seen in inland NSW between Forbes and Lake Cargelligo.

DOLPHINS: Delphinidae

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*: 3 were seen off Bass Point NSW and another 3 off Bremer Bay WA.

RORQUALS: Balaenopteridae

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*: A spectacular breaching mother and calf were seen off Bass Point NSW.

OTHER NOTABLE WILDLIFE

Freshwater Crocodile *Crocodylus johnstoni*: 1 was seen in Pine Creek and another in Timber Creek, both NT.

Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*: 2 were seen on the Yellow Water cruise and another in Daintree.

Eastern Long-necked Turtle *Chelodina longicollis*: A handful of these were seen at Blue Gum Swamp in Forbes, NSW.

Kreff's Turtle *Emydura macquarii krefftii*: One was found at Cattana Wetlands, NE QLD.

Sand Monitor *Varanus gouldii gouldii*: One was seen scavenging on a kangaroo at Binya, NSW.

Lace Monitor *Varanus varius*: A striking, broad-banded "Bell's" form was seen east of Hay in inland NSW.

Two-spined Rainbow Skink *Carlia amax*: One was seen at Nourlangie Rock, NT.

Eastern Banded Dragon *Pogona barbata*: A number of these striking lizards were seen in the Capertee Valley, NSW.

Shingleback *Tiliqua rugosa*: We encountered about a dozen of these around the mallee of Corackerup in WA.

Common Tree Snake *Dendrelaphis punctulata*: One was seen on the Daintree cruise, ne QLD.