



Eastern Australia



Rainbow Bee-eater: one of Australia's *common* birds!

20 October – 7 November 2011

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Report written by Sam Woods

Introduction:

*This intense tour packed a lot into a small space: in just 19 days we scored over half of the continent's birds (433 species), and covered sites from the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland all the way down to the cool temperate island of Tasmania off of Australia's southeast coast. In between we packed in visits to southern Queensland and enjoyed an extended stay in New South Wales too. This allowed us to visit an extraordinary array of habitats and amass an extraordinary bird list in the process. We covered the humid tropical forests of Queensland, the edge of the Outback in Queensland, the open plains of New South Wales, the sandy cays, or islands, of the Great Barrier Reef, the cool temperate forests of Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania, the odd mallee of inland New South Wales, and open eucalypt woodlands and regular swamp stops in between. This not only yielded a hefty bird list but also allowed us to find some of Australia's most iconic animals too, like a mother and child **Koala** in Lamington National Park, the strange **Platypus** in broad daylight on the Atherton Tableland, a confiding **Short-beaked Echidna** in Royal National Park (**photo below**), and a variety of wallabies and kangaroos from the smallest-the **Musky Rat Kangaroo** at Cassowary House-to the largest-**Red Kangaroo**-on the Hay Plains during a successful search for the enigmatic **Plains-Wanderer**.*



*Of course along with these iconic mammals came some of Australia's most iconic birds, from the monstrous **Southern Cassowary** near Cairns to the massive **Emus** on the plains to the secretive **Malleefowl** in Round Hill to the gaudy male **Golden Bowerbird** visiting its bower on the Atherton Tableland to the host of glittering **fairywrens** seen throughout the continent, there was never a dull moment, and a bewildering host of possibilities for birds of the tour. We did well on nightbirds too with all the Australian Frogmouths seen (**Tawny and Papuan Frogmouths** at nest sites during the day, and **Marbled Frogmouth** in the depths of night), and a day roosting **Australian Owlet-Nightjar** too.*

We had some long drives, and long days in the field, but looking through the checklist we left only a handful of east Australian birds behind!

Itinerary:

The itinerary took the form of 4 distinct legs: North Queensland, New South Wales, South Queensland, and Tasmania.

Note though that ordinarily the order of this would have been different, with the Brisbane leg following the Cairns leg, although this was changed to unavoidable logistical reasons.

Cairns Leg (Northern Queensland):

- October 20 Cairns/night Cairns
- October 21 Great Barrier Reef/night Daintree
- October 22 Daintree & Mount Malloy/night Mareeba
- October 23 Mount Lewis, Mount Malloy, Maryfarms & Mount Carbine area/night Mareeba
- October 24 Atherton area, Curtain Fig, & Granite Gorge/night Mareeba
- October 25 Lake Mitchell, Tarzali Lakes, & Curtain Fig to Cassowary House/night Kuranda
- October 26 Cassowary House & Cairns/night Cairns

Sydney Leg (New South Wales):

- October 27 Flight: Cairns- Sydney. Royal National Park & Bass Point/night Jamberoo
- October 28 Barren Grounds to Five Bough Swamp/night Griffith
- October 29 Binya to Hay. Night Plains-Wanderer "safari"/night Hay
- October 30 Hay to Lake Cargelligo Sewage Works/night Lake Cargelligo
- October 31 Round Hill to Blue Gum Swamp/night Lithgow
- November 1 Capertee Valley to Royal National Park/night Sydney

Brisbane Leg (Southern Queensland):

- November 2 Flight Sydney-Brisbane. Brisbane mangroves to O Reilly's/night O Reilly's
- November 3 O Reilly's/night O Reilly's
- November 4 O Reilly's to Brisbane. Flight Brisbane-Hobart, Tasmania/night Hobart (Tasmania)

Hobart Leg (Tasmania):

- November 5 Bruny Island/night Hobart
- November 6 Mount Wellington to Port Arthur. Eaglehawk Neck boat trip/night Hobart
- November 7 Departure from Hobart, Tasmania

Daily Log:

October 20 Cairns (Queensland)

We kicked off the tour in the city of Cairns, in the Wet Tropics of Northern Queensland. We started after lunch with a late afternoon check of the parklands around Cairns, which hold a mass of new birds for first-timers to Australia. The continent of Australia is so far removed from anywhere else, that even the common birds are odd, new and interesting. And that was what this afternoon was about: familiarizing ourselves with some common tropical species, with the odd “goodie” thrown in amongst these. We began with the visit to the local graveyard. This may not sound very exciting as a first stop in the colorful world of Australian birds, but it is a great place for **Bush Thick-Knees**, (*photo below*), and we soon found a couple of these creeping around among the gravestones. However, some hawking **Rainbow Bee-eaters** may have created more of a stir, by virtue of their array of gaudy colors, one of Australia’s delightfully *common* birds.



We then moved to Centenary Lakes, an area of parkland loaded with cool tropical species. A **Black Butcherbird** introduced us to this Australasian family, and provided the first of many new bird families for the group. Another new family, with which we were to get very familiar, were the *honeyeaters*, Australia’s most diverse family with more than 70 species! 50 of them were recorded on this tour alone. The open *eucalypt* woodland within

the park held both **Yellow and Brown-backed Honeyeaters**. After brief views of our only **Lovely Fairywrens** of the tour which were devilishly difficult to see on this occasion, Jean-Jacques picked out a superb **Superb Fruit-Dove** perched quietly nearby that compensated somewhat for the poor showing from the fairywrens. One of the ponds within the park provided an unexpected lone **Radjah Shelduck**, not always a given to see on this tour, and after a fortuitous meeting with another visiting birder we were put on to a striking **Little Kingfisher**, a stunning blue-and-white bird, perched up close by. The latter was a real bonus find, as it is often a tricky to find species on this tour, being much easier in Australia’s Northern Territory than on the east side. The trees above also hosted a male **Cicadabird** that helpfully lingered for some time, and gave its distinctly insect-like calls overhead. We also found a **Collared Kingfisher** perched in the mangroves, betraying its

other common name, *Mangrove Kingfisher*, and got cracking looks at **Little Bronze-Cuckoo** in the same area.

After this enticing opening and barrage of new birds we returned to our hotel, and enjoyed some fantastic Vietnamese cuisine before retiring to bed with thoughts of the Great Barrier Reef running through our minds...

October 21 Great Barrier Reef (Queensland)

After the rigors of the long journey to Australia this provided a welcome and relaxed start to the tour, with much of the day spent out on a boat around the **Great Barrier Reef**. We boarded the boat after breakfast (during which some enjoyed another **Bush Thick-knee** visible from the front of our hotel), and were soon whisking our way out to a tiny sandy island, or *cay*, which is home to thousands of nesting seabirds. While not bringing a whole load of species, *relative to many other days on the tour*, this is a seriously fun day, more about the sheer *spectacle* of so many birds packed onto a tiny island, many of which were perched at arm's length from us. On top of that we also got

to snorkel, or view the reef from a glass bottom boat, and taste the marine life which is this area's more traditional draw card. The scarcer of the two noddy species on Michaelmas Cay- **Black Noddy**-was seen perched on a small boat drifting just off the island, which it shared with several **Red-footed Booby** too. While, the white sandy island itself was literally blackened by the presence



of thousands of nesting **Brown Noddy** that allowed remarkably close approach. The other dominant nesting species were the **Sooty Terns**, which after careful scrutiny revealed a **Bridled Tern** or two among them too (*photo above*). Sharp-dressed **Brown Boobies** were also on the island, some of which were nesting and boasted a scruffy looking white chick in tow. A variety of terns-10 *species in all*-were seen both on the cay, by taking a boat trip around the entire small, sandy islet, and also later in the day when we visited a reef for snorkeling, which included **Little, Black-naped, Lesser Crested, Great Crested, Common, and Roseate Terns** among them. Every so often frigatebirds would drift overhead and circle the cay, which included small numbers of both **Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds**.

In the late afternoon we returned to land, and traveled north from Cairns up to the tiny village of **Daintree**, stopping for a few **Crimson Finches** on the way, and also finding a remarkable group of 55 **White-breasted Woodswallows** roosting shoulder-to-shoulder at a gas station en route. As

usual our fantastic hosts, *Andrew and Trish*, were waiting for us at our guest house, Red Mill House, and served up a true real treat, an Aussie barbecue on their veranda, a lovely close to the day.

October 22 Daintree River Cruise & Mount Malloy (Queensland)

Another relaxing start to the day occurred with a gentle boat cruise along the **Daintree River**, and one of its narrow tributaries. The cruise got off to a cracking start when a **Black Bittern** flew low in front of our boat, one of three seen that morning on the two hour cruise. As expected on a boat cruise of this nature we found the odd kingfisher with one particular dazzling **Azure Kingfisher** lingering for some time on a low perch over the dark waters of the river. Several **Shining Flycatchers** were seen along the banks, feeding low over the water, with the lush rainforest casting a shadow overhead. Thanks to some skilled work from our boat driver we drifted up underneath a nesting **Papuan Frogmouth**, frozen, bark-like on the banks of the main river-reason alone, to take a cruise along the Daintree. We were also guided to a dead tree, where a hollow was hosting a nesting **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** before we returned to Red Mill House and enjoyed a hot and hearty breakfast waiting for us on arrival.

After some further birding in the Daintree area, which yielded our first **Red-backed Fairywrens** of the tour, and the first fairywren *period* for many in the group, we lunched and headed south



towards Mareeba. Not far south of Daintree we stopped in at some fish ponds where a healthy number of **Radjah Shelducks** (22) were found, as well as a stately **Black-necked Stork**, and a variety of shorebirds including **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** and **Black-fronted Dotterel**. Unfortunately other short stops along the coast en route could not yield the hoped-for Beach Thick-knee, and so we turned inland and headed into the rainforest once more.

Earlier in the day we had tried for Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher around Daintree village but were thwarted by an unusually elusive calling individual. This crippling species left me smarting, and I decided to try another traditional spot en route near the village of Julatten. This quiet forested road proved to be a very successful short stop

as not only did we find a recently arrived **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** that, unlike our first one at Daintree, sat quietly in our scope for everyone to enjoy. We also got to see some cool mammals with both **Red-necked Wallaby** and **Red-necked Pademelon** seen in the rainforest there too. Finally, a very smart male **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** and several **White-headed Pigeons** more than justified our short diversion into the rainforest there.

One of the beauties of birding the Cairns region is the abundance of sites within close proximity to each other, and so it is easy to rack up a good bird list by making multiple short stops in a day. And so our day did not end there, as between the last stop and our final destination, the town of Mareeba, lay a number of quality birding sites. The biggest conundrum for the guide is to decide where NOT to stop! We finished our day in some drier habitat close to the edge of the Outback, around the tiny town, come village, of **Mount Malloy**. Again we only had a short stop in the area, although only a short time was needed to pick up a host of new and exciting species: chief among them was the striking **Red-winged Parrot** found feeding in a school yard with **Great Bowerbird** also seen in the same magical yard. **Blue-winged Kookaburra** (*photo on page before*) in the area was our first of that large, spectacular species, and was our *sixth* kingfisher of the day (along with the **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**, and **Laughing Kookaburra**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Azure Kingfisher**, and **Forest Kingfisher** all seen earlier around the Daintree!)

At the close of the day we checked into our hotel in the town of Mareeba, which would be our centrally-located base for exploring the rich region of the Atherton Tableland over the coming days.

October 23 **Mount Lewis, Maryfarms & Mount Carbine (Queensland)**



As with much of our time in northern Queensland we split our time between multiple sites during the day, with so many sites being within easy reach of each other. So we visited a variety of habitats on this day alone and racked up a varied bird list in the process.

We started the day in the cool forest on the upper slopes of **Mount Lewis**. The chilly and windy opening conditions were perhaps not the picture-postcard image of Australia! This region of Australia is not especially hilly or mountainous, and so even a mountain as low as this one (3935ft/1200m), can produce a different avifauna on its upper slopes from that found lower down, and it was these higher-ranging species we were especially interested in as many of the Atherton specialties, which are only found in this region of northern Queensland, are montane

species. And almost all of them were offered by Mount Lewis, making it a perfect site for targeting these mountain specialties. We were fortunate to be following a week or so behind another Tropical Birding tour led by Nick Leseberg, so that consequence of regular late night phone calls between the guides we could get tip offs of the latest birding hotspots. And so it proved that morning when Nick's helpful "bird gen" (i.e. information) led us to a pair of **Chowchillas** bouncing around the dark forest leaf litter shortly after dawn on the way up the mountain. Once at the top of the road we turned our collars up against the far from welcoming chilly winds, and set about pumping up the bird list. Specialties came thick and fast: **Bridled Honeyeaters** showed us their striking face patterns (*photo page before*), **Mountain Thornbills** revealed their pale eyes to us, **Atherton Scrubwren** foraged low down close to the trail, and the master-mimic, the **Tooth-billed Bowerbird** appeared suddenly overhead and lingered in time for all. Susan was the proverbial "pied piper" with a stunning **Fernwren** that hopped merrily along the forest floor towards her accurate whistled imitations of its call. Other mountain species we found up there included our first **Macleay's Honeyeaters** (a species confined to northern Queensland), the similarly localized **Bower's Shrike-Thrush**, and another Atherton specialty, the **Gray-headed Robin** boldly hopped on and off the road around us. By late morning we had picked up all of the regular specialties that we could have hoped for and so we made our way down the mountain, stopping for a typically hyper-active and tame **Rufous Fantail**, a pair of whip-cracking **Eastern Whipbirds**, and also found our first, female, **Victoria's Riflebird**, the first bird-of-paradise for everyone in the group.



By late morning we were off the mountain and in much warmer climates, just a stone's throw from its base. A visit to a swamp did not produce many swamp birds but was well worth it for the pair of **Northern Fantails**, and a marvelous male **Mistletoebird** in the car park though (*photo above*).

After some welcome refreshment, and lunch, in Mount Malloy we headed west into the edge of Queensland Outback. In stark contrast to our morning birding we moved out of the damp rainforest into dry grasslands and tropical savannas dominated by sparsely distributed *eucalypt* trees. Of course, this stark change in our environment led to a stark change to our bird list. Checking a well-known area of open grasslands produced a handful of **Australian Bustards**, including some strutting males with their throats puffed up to show off their masculine features to nearby females. Header further west we stopped off at **Mount Carbine**, where, thanks to another Nick Leseberg tip-off we soon found the local nesting **Tawny Frogmouth** doing a superb impression of a dry branch (*photo next page*), while neighboring trees held our first **Pale-headed Rosellas** of the trip too.

Driving deeper inland, giant termite mounds decorated the sides of the road, revealing a very different world to where we had been just hours before, and several massive black shapes perched



in an open tree led us to slam the breaks on: a fantastic group of prehistoric-looking **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos**. Our final stop of the day came in the open woodland just beyond **Mount Carbine**, where several **Black-faced Woodswallows** hawked on the wing, a foraging party of **Varied Sittellas** yielded yet another new bird family for all, and we also found Australia's smallest bird, the miniature **Weebill**. Although best of all, was a **Red-backed Kingfisher**

perched on an open branch for all but Sam! On our return journey with time running out, and duck approaching we squeezed in a rather confiding **Common Bronzewing** perched by the road which rounded out a truly action-packed day for birds.

October 24 Atherton area, Curtain Fig, & Granite Gorge (Queensland)

Once again we spent the day zipping around between various Queensland hotspots, this time in and around Atherton and Mareeba. Our first scheduled stop was at the fantastic Hasties Swamp, although some activity around a flowering *banksia* along the way had us pulling over. Such banksia blooms can be a magnet for nomadic honeyeaters that have large home ranges and travel great distances between flowering plants. And it proved a winner as we found several **White-cheeked Honeyeaters** in attendance, a flashy and boldly-marked honeyeater. Hasties Swamp is a marvelous swamp on the outskirts of Atherton that comes complete with a double-decker blind, and a mass of waterbirds: A **Latham's Snipe** feeding in the open greeted us from the blind, along with a handful of **Plumed Whistling-Ducks**, **Comb-crested Jacanas** walked on their characteristic gangly legs across floating vegetation, and a tame **Black-fronted Dotterel** fed just to the side of the blind. Sparse trees line the driveway alongside the swamp, and after a little work, we managed to get wonderful looks at a gaudy male **Scarlet Honeyeater** there, along with our first **Rufous Whistler**, **White-throated Gerygone**, and a roadside flock of **Chestnut-breasted Munias** that made the feathery heads of the grasses quiver as they fed among them. Susan caught site of the rarest bird in the area, a **Square-tailed Kite** that overflowed her, and then vanished before we could respond to her anguished cries.

Reluctantly, we had to leave this fantastic, bird-packed wetland behind, as we had a very special date indeed to come...However, as we left we stopped to admire a large flock of bugling cranes, that held among them both **Brolga and Sarus Cranes**. We drove back up into the rainforest cloaked mountains near **Hypipamee National Park** for arguably the most wanted of all the Atherton specialties, and certainly the most colorful. Sam went off in search of the bower, which he had been assured by Nick Leseberg, was still very much present, and very much active just days before. While the group waited on the track I ventured in with the intention to return shortly after once I had re-found the exact position of the bower. However, since my visit just the year before, and even armed with Nick's recent directions, I was horrified to find multiple paths, and therefore a myriad of options, and...no bower. I continued to try one patch after another, and finally almost walked straight into the large maypole bower of the Golden Bowerbird that had been masked from my view behind a large trunk (or that is my excuse anyway!) Relieved, after this longer search than expected had left me exasperated, I settled down by the bower, and used the wonders of modern technology to call Susan to bring in the group. At this point I relaxed looked up, and realized there was a glowing male **Golden Bowerbird** perched above me! Thankfully, this regular male is remarkably tolerant, and even when a group of thirteen people were gathered around his prize, possession, the bower, it showed no fear, and even dropped in to adorn it with clean white lichen while we watched on in amazement (*photo below*).



We then dropped in to the magnificent **Curtain Fig**, a monstrous and dramatic strangler fig that is quite literally one of the largest trees in all of Queensland. It was worth the visit alone for that, but the trees around also yielded a fantastic **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** betraying its location by giving its

characteristic garbled “wompoo” call. Indeed, the concentration of fruiting trees in the area also attracted a handsome pair of **Barred (Yellow-eyed) Cuckooshrikes** too, which Susan soon put us onto.

While some of the group opted to relax around Mareeba for the afternoon, after the rigors of our recent extended birding excursions in the field, the rest of us visited **Granite Gorge**. This area on the edge of the Outback a short distance from Mareeba was planned for a two-fold purpose: seeing their incredible rock-wallabies, which are remarkably tame, and catching up with Squatter Pigeon,



that had eluded us in the Mount Malloy area. Finding the **Mareeba Rock-Wallabies** was, of course, straightforward, as they hopped right towards us as we arrived in the hope of another handout, which made for some great looks and unrivaled photo opportunities of these tiny “roos” (*photo next page*). As it turned out, so too were the **Squatter Pigeons**, (*photo left*) as everyone was already watching them by the time I had paid the entrance fee, a pair of which almost rivaled the

wallabies for tamest animal of the trip! Another pair of roosting **Tawny Frogmouths** was also much enjoyed there, before we departed for a quick look along the entrance track to **Mareeba Wetlands** in the late afternoon which yielded numerous **Agile Wallabies** bounding along the tracks, several roosting **Rufous Night-Herons**, and a few foraging **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets**.

October 25 **Lake Mitchell, Curtain Fig, & Cassowary House (Queensland)**

We spent another day dipping into numerous sites in and around Mareeba, before departing back east towards Cairns. Our first stop of the day was right within the town we were staying in, **Mareeba**, where the local golf course held a number of boxing **Eastern Gray Kangaroos**, as hoped. This is one of the largest kangaroos, standing over 4 feet (1.3m) tall. Then it was off to Lake Mitchell, where more **Comb-crested Jacanas** walked confidently across mats of floating vegetation, as only jacanas can do, and small groups of **Green Pygmy-Geese** were the only ones encountered on the tour. We then returned to the Atherton Tableland for another date with another iconic Aussie mammal: the extraordinarily odd **Platypus**. An egg-laying mammal, which looks like no other mammal with its strange duck-like beak.



Over much of their range in Queensland they are largely nocturnal, although at the site we visited they have a number of day active animals, making them easier to see than most other sites in the region. We saw up to four different animals actively foraging, and located by the bubbles which betrayed their presence below the water, and got our eyes in position for their frequent forays to the surface. In the trees alongside a **White-throated Gerygone** displayed what a loud song such a tiny bird can have, while a **Little Kingfisher** darted, all to briefly across the pond, and vanished into thin air.

We then made a return to the dramatic **Curtain Fig** to settle a score with the local **Pied Monarch** that had, rather uncharitably, the day before showed to Susan only. This time though it proved straightforward, showing to all of us in the same area it had eluded us before, and observed in its typical, odd foraging fashion-*on the trunks of trees* in the manner of a nuthatch. This was not the only monarch seen there either with the more colorful **Black-faced Monarch** seen in the area too, which forages more in the usual manner of other monarchs and flycatchers. We also had an exceptional number of **Topknot Pigeons** in the fruiting trees around with more than a hundred individuals seen, and also saw another **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** to boot.

We then left headed eastwards back towards Cairns to Cassowary House. However, we needed to make what I hoped would be a short stop en route to search a regular spot for the scarce **White-browed Robin**. Wary that the regular Southern Cassowary at Cassowary House could come in at any time in the afternoon I anticipated just a short search for the robin so that we could spend a

good deal of time at Cassowary House waiting for their most famous resident later in the afternoon. However, the best laid plans of mice and men do not always come to fruition in quite the way they were planned. As it turned out the robin “played up” and we spent a good deal longer than I expected looking for it, though thankfully in the end, due to a conscious group effort, we all got to see it well. I had left my cellphone number with Sue Gregory, who runs Cassowary House, so that she could alert me if the cassowary wandered into her garden. However, on coming out of the gully for the robin and checking for missed calls, I realized we were out of cellphone range! I was a little troubled by this, and was keen to get on the road for this iconic bird.



However, in the end my worries proved ill-founded. We arrived in the area with plenty of time to spare and news that it had not been in during the afternoon. And so we birded the rainforest-lined road nearby, now safe in the knowledge if this monstrous birds walks into the garden we would quickly be alerted by Sue. Things were rather quiet in a very hot afternoon there, although this mattered little as soon after we got the call we were waiting for; we hurried to into Cassowary House and enjoyed incredible looks at a massive and docile female **Southern Cassowary** wolfing down fruits in the garden (*photo above*). It is always a colossal relief to see this bird on the tour, as it is such a huge target bird in so more than one way! The day closed with us checking into a nearby hotel in the town of Kuranda, where a **Bush Thick-Knee** alarmed everyone with its loud and haunting night time calls as we sank to sleep.

October 26 Cassowary House & Cairns (Queensland)

With the cassowary under the belt already we could be a little more relaxed while we birded the road near Cassowary House. The breakfast of tropical fruits laid on by Sue on the balcony of Cassowary House was simply magnificent. While we feasted on custard apples and sapotes we could overlook the feeders and garden that attracted the smallest kangaroo of them all: the odd rodent-like **Musky-Rat Kangaroo**. The feeders were lively attracting a velvety black male **Victoria's Riflebird** (*female photo on next page*), **Macleay's Honeyeaters**, and a super-tame **Emerald Dove**, while **Australian Brush-Turkeys** scurried around on the ground below. A post breakfast walk in the surrounding tropical rainforest was much more productive than our pre-

breakfast forays, (producing little aside from a **Spotted Catbird** and more **Barred Cuckooshrikes**), and turned up our only **Gray Whistler** of the trip, and perched views of the pallid local nesting **Gray Goshawk**. However, the star bird of the morning was undoubtedly a wonderful **White-eared Monarch** seen near the lodge.



Jean-Jaques had seen one alone while the rest of us breakfasted, and although we could not relocate that one, we found another of these striking and scarce birds a little further up the road.

After enjoying the gourmet pies (an Aussie staple) at the local pie shop we hit the road for **Cairns**. We had planned an afternoon along the **Esplanade** in the city. This tidal area is a magnet for shorebirds, which were desperate to see as our previously planned visit there on day one coincided with an appalling tide and a distinct lack of shorebirds. This time though we knew that the tide would be perfect for us in the late afternoon: rising, and pushing the feeding shorebirds right towards us. On arrival many of the birds were way out, although the rapidly rising tide soon changed that and steadily the birds moved in closer, and closer giving remarkable views. Many of the usual, expected Australasian shorebirds were present: **Curlew, Terek, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Sandpipers, Great Knots, Red-necked Stints, and Far Eastern Curlews**. However, the pick of the bunch was picked out well by Susan who had been sifting systematically through a tight-knit pack of sandpipers, and hit the jackpot when she found a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** hiding among them. It is remarkable to think that some of these shorebirds spend

the summer breeding in Siberia, and then wing it all the way down to Australia to winter. A remarkable journey of some 9,000miles/14,485km!



And so ended our leg in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland. It ended, as it began, with a marvelous Vietnamese meal in Cairns, while our thoughts turned south to the state of New South Wales, and its vastly different birding experience...

October 27 Cairns to Sydney. Royal NP & Bass Point (New South Wales)

In the morning we flew out of the humid tropics south into the temperate zone, and the city of Sydney. Of course we soon left the city behind, to visit **Royal National Park**. Although some of the specialties I had been hoping for (like *Superb Lyrebird*) were nowhere to be found, our first taste of New South Wales birds brought us many new species none the less. **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** fed on the lawns, **Laughing Kookaburras** literally dropped down by our feet, and a male **Australian King-Parrot** simply glowed red in the trees above. The roadside shrubbery hosted our first **Superb Fairywrens**, exquisitely patterned **Eastern Spinebills** foraged in the blooms, while **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** acquainted themselves with us in the trees above. With the temperate forest fairly quiet we opted to check out the coastal heathlands that dominate the eastern edge of the park.

Upon the heath the most conspicuous bird was, as usual, the striking New Holland Honeyeater, although I was more interested in the **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** that popped up in the *banksias*

up there. The loud squeals of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** had me rushing onto the heath in a panic to search for them flying overhead. However, my panic was unfounded as the birds were, on this occasion, perched on the heath and showed well there. These massive cockatoos are the largest of their kind on the planet, with slow, labored wingbeats and an almost prehistoric appearance in flight. Unfortunately, the wispy call of a **Southern Emuwren** did not lead us to the bird, although we would return to that species the following morning. Our best finds though came along the heath-lined edges of the road, when our vans were brought to a halt for first, a **Short-beaked Echidna** waddling, precariously, across the road, and then a “spinning” group of **Painted Buttonquails**, making circular platelets from their characteristic feeding action.

We then headed south along the coast initially, making a short stop at **Bass Point** en route. This is a known land-based seawatching spot, and although the winds were not in our favor that day, and we had precious little time there anyhow, we did pick up some groups of **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** offshore. Furthermore, several **Australasian Gannets** were also noted there too. While on the blackish rocks several “carrot-beaked” **Sooty Oystercatchers** foraged, and on the large pier several large **Pied Cormorants** were drying out. It may have only been a short visit, but it was a fruitful one, before we had to head westwards inland to the tiny town of Jamberoo.

October 28 **Barren Grounds to Five Bough Swamp (New South Wales)**

We began our day by driving up to **Barren Grounds**. The winding and narrow road up produced no less than *three* different **Superb Lyrebirds** feeding on the verges. However, due to the nature of the road, and the difficulty in safely stopping along these sections, only around a third of the group got to see this iconic Aussie bird at this time. A short time after dawn we checked the heathland on the top, but were thwarted by inactivity at this chilly hour and so moved into the surrounding woodland, where the understory held a vocal **Pilotbird** that showed well to only one of us unfortunately. Best of all though came when some softly-calling **Gang-gang Cockatoos** passed low overhead, and I feared, and presumed they had kept on going without anyone else seeing them. On reaching the spot through I looked up to see the red-crested male glaring back at me from very close range. Amazingly it stayed put (along with a near female), for everyone to get a great look at them. Sadly though they were not patient enough for me to return with my camera, the photo miss of the tour! The heath did however yield a stunning male **Southern Emuwren** complete with powder-blue throat and. For some at least a very fortuitous sighting of an **Eastern Bristlebird** that uncharacteristically appeared right on the top of a *banksia*.

We then undertook one of the longest drives of the tour as we headed deep into inland New South Wales. A long drive, but with plenty to see at the other end. En route we picked up a new family, with a party of **White-winged Choughs** feeding in a parking lot, and also saw some neon green **Superb Parrots** that flew parallel with the vehicle for a time on the edge of Leeton town. Due to delays caused by a frustrating flat tire en route we did not arrive at Five Bough Swamp until late afternoon, so quickly set about racking up lots of new birds: **Red-necked Avocets** swam in the shallows, **Australian Shelducks** loafed on the islands, **Hoary-headed Grebes** were all over the place, and a **Collared Sparrowhawk** surprised us by swooping in and landing close by.

October 29 Binya to the Hay Plains (New South Wales)

As usual this ended up being my favorite day of the tour. We opened in the open woodland and *brigalow* of **Binya State Forest**, and closed on the endless **Hay Plains** with a “night safari” with the legendary Phil Maher in search of the **Plains-Wanderer** and much more besides. Another long day sure, but absolutely jam-packed, with quality birds.

Binya has long been one of my favorite sites of the tour, and an underappreciated gem within inland New South Wales. A maze of trails cut through the open scrub and woodland, and when there are blooming trees attract birds from all around. This place has been very good to Tropical Birding guides over the years, giving up Painted Honeyeaters almost every time. I had heard from Nick Leseberg that they were especially abundant there this year, but dared not believe it, and did not prematurely check it off on the bird list knowing that they are famously nomadic. We pulled up and began unpacking our breakfast in the field. All the time I had one ear open for their distinctive calls. Nick’s advice was sound and only minutes after our arrival we had our first golden-winged, pied **Painted Honeyeater** lined up in the ‘scope. Pure magic! Indeed they were absurdly common there during our morning, with others seen, and many more heard. We were rarely out of earshot of a singing Painted Honeyeater for the whole morning! New birds came thick and fast as Susan and I

and the group picked up birds left, right and center. Not far from the vehicle the buzzing call of a **Red-capped Robin** gave away the position of a red, white, and black male and yielded appreciative comments all round. Flocks of dazzlingly bright **Mulga Parrots** came to drink at a small dam on site, a babble of **White-browed Babblers** bounced across the ground, a **Speckled Warbler** was enticed on to a lofty branch from the woodland floor to sing, and roaming flocks of thornbills revealed the scarce **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill**, in addition to **Inland and Yellow Thornbills** too. However, the real showstopper that morning was arguably the gem-like male **Splendid Fairywren**, glistening all kinds of bright blue in a short *casuarina* tree, and making the term *splendid* seem altogether insufficient. *All* the fairywrens are special, although this one takes it to a whole new level in my book at least, perhaps only rivaled by a male *White-winged Fairywren* in terms of sheer breathtaking beauty. We had lunch in the field on the edge of a golf course where in this



dry country the well-manicured and moist lawns can attract a number of parrots. En route to there we found our first **Mallee Ringnecks**, and completed a family that we had only opened the day before, with a gaggle of noisy **Apostlebirds** (that share a two-species family with the strikingly different *White-winged Chough*). Lunch went by without incident, and *notably* without any new parrots. And so we reluctantly started to leave, although at that moment a small puddle at the side of the road attracted the attention of a couple of parrots that came in to land within easy view of our vehicles: the **Bluebonnets** that we had been searching for over lunch (*photo above*)!

With lunch in the belly and a parrot in the bag we set our course for Hay, arriving in time for a little afternoon rest before the long night ahead of us. For good reason this is always one of the most highly-rated experiences among the participants: you go after one of Australia's most wanted birds, and a unique one species family, the Plains-wanderer. However, it is much more than that, you see a bunch of other cool birds and it is a rather odd experience all round. But, more of that later. First off we had a few hours in the late afternoon to fill before darkness fell. And so we met *the* guide in the region, Phil Maher, whose name is synonymous with the Plains-Wanderer. However, he knows a lot more besides that bird and I quickly handed him a long target list for our precious few hours of daylight. Before we reached Phil though, we noted some new raptors along the way, with both **Little Eagle** and **Spotted Harriers** on the hunt over the plains. Indeed, this appears to have been a record breaking year for raptors in the area, with a rabbit plague in the area, and both these species became a regular sight in the afternoon. Another stop was a must too as Australia's massive national bird homed in to view alongside the road – **Emu**, quickly proving what a spritely bird they can be once people jumped out of the car, whereupon the bird moved away with remarkable speed and guile. Phil quickly set about finding almost everything on our target list, and a few more besides. First up was a **White-backed Swallow** hawkling above an open pasture. Then a little work was required to find the right hollow, and the right angle, from where an **Australian Owlet-Nightjar** stared sleepily out of it. Then we moved to a swampy area which was simply loaded with rails and crakes, which like the raptors were undergoing a boom year. Multiple **Australian Crakes** and **Baillon's Crakes** were seen very well there, as well as **Black-tailed Native-Hens** and **Little Grassbird**, and our first **White-winged Fairywrens**. However, the latter were a little underwhelming as they were all "brownwrens" (i.e. female types). We then moved to a rapidly shrinking swamp where we worked our way between the large grassy clumps to get looks at a



small group of **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** actively feeding there in the late afternoon, and numerous **Red-kneed Dotterels** scurried around the edges looking resplendent in the evening light. Then, after quite some time, the real stars, several **Australian Painted-Snipes** emerged to feed in the open just as the sun began to sink below the horizon. The latter is a rare shorebird (also enjoying a boom year) that displays *reverse sexual dimorphism*, whereby the female is the larger and more colorful gender. Luckily for us we saw both males and

females among the group of four.

The sun had virtually dropped out of sight once we had finished watching the painted-snipes, and so we readied ourselves for the centerpiece of the day: a night safari on the Hay Plains to search for the enigmatic Plains-Wanderer. So we took dinner in the field, (adding a party of giant **Red Kangaroos** to the growing mammal list en route-the largest of all the 'roos), and split into a number of waiting vehicles, all driven by experienced plains-wanderers themselves, assembled by Phil to find this rare bird. Phil and the local sheep farmers, who own the land, have been roaming these plains for years, and finding the Plains-Wanderers for years, by targeting them at night when they are more docile and easier to find. And so, in formation, our vehicles set off into the darkness. Our first gamebird we found though was not the wanderer, but another scarcity, a **Little Buttonquail** that blinked back at the spotlight while we all looked admiringly on. A great opener, and far from guaranteed during a night on the plains. The next stop on the drive though was what brings birders here every year in growing numbers...the Plains-Wanderer. And not just a **Plains-Wanderer**, but a female Plains-Wanderer, the brighter and larger of the sexes with a rich chestnut bib...(photo page before)



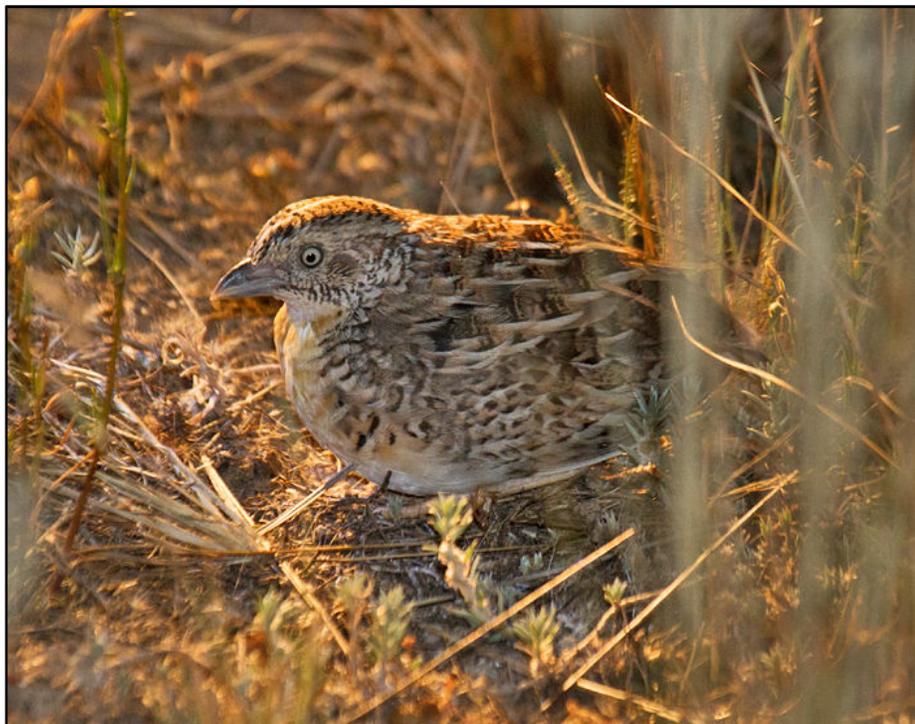
This was shaping up to be one of the best night drives imaginable in the area. And so it continued. Next up on the “roster” of game birds was a stunning male **Stubble Quail**, this one, more traditionally, the brighter of the sexes. We were to see numerous “Stubbies” on the night drive but none so gorgeous and well as this opening male...(photo above)



We then took a break from the game birds to take in some other rather special wanderers of the plains. A pair of **Inland Dotterels** huddled together on the ground (*photo left*), and a party of **Banded Lapwings** noisily vented their anger at being woken up! We then found a diminutive male **Plains-Wanderer** that made us fully appreciate the remarkable size difference between the sexes of this one species family. Indeed it turned out to be quite the

tour for buttonquails and their relatives, as next up was a surprise **Red-chested Buttonquail**, a real scarcity, which Phil informed us must have only just come in to the area that very day, as it had not been seen in the season until that point (*photo below*). A lifebird for *guide* and group alike. In between all these star finds were **Brown Songlarks** and **Australian Bushlarks**.

We did not roll into bed until *post-midnight*, but what a day it had been: From the *Painted Honeyeaters of Binya* at daybreak to the *Painted-snipes at dusk* to the *Plains-Wanderers in the middle of the night*, it was a truly memorable day. Thus it as not surprising that this was one of the favorite days of the tour among the group (as it frankly has been on every eastern Australia tour!)



October 30 Hay to Lake Cargelligo (New South Wales)

After the rigors of the night before we deserved, and took, a well-earned lie in, followed by a hearty fried breakfast in town. After breakfast, and stocking up on supplies for food in the field the next day we headed north to the town of Lake Cargelligo, our base for our single foray of the tour into the *mallee* of New South Wales, the following day. Traversing the edges of the Hay Plains en-route though was not without incident. A dark falcon circling overhead had us stopping the cars and jumping out to examine it more closely. Susan and I were well-chuffed to realize it was just what we had hoped for: **Black Falcon**. We also found our first purple-blue male **White-winged Fairywrens** which created quite the stir after we jumped out of the car for some roadside **White-fronted Chats**. We also enjoyed more **Emus** bounding across the plains along the way, and Susan picked out our first flock of **Cockatiels** to enjoy on the journey too.

In the late afternoon we rolled into **Lake Cargelligo** with one thing on our minds: *the sewage works!* Word had come to us that they were “on fire” this year, with the wet weather of the previous

year creating spectacularly good conditions for breeding inland birds. And so it proved. On arrival at the tiny blind we saw rails scurrying around in the open outside. To take the phrase from an Australian, this was simply “too easy”. Rails are not meant to be this simple! Among them were **Australian Crake**, **Baillon’s Crake**, then the one we were really hoping for, as we’d not yet



seen it, **Spotless Crake**, which showed off its bubble-gum pink legs out in front of the tin blind (*photo above*). The place was simply alive with birds, looking fantastic in the wonderful late afternoon light: **Red-kneed Dotterels** dipped in the shallows, **Red-necked Avocets** waded in the deeper waters, and a small group of **Pink-eared Ducks** rested on the water further out. While alongside the marsh the scrub held our first **Variegated Fairywrens**, and males at that, while the saltbush held **White-winged Fairywren**, **White-fronted Chat**, and better still, the nomadic **Orange Chat**.

October 31 Round Hill & Blue Gum Swamp (New South Wales)

The morning was a highly significant one, as we took our one and only trip into the *mallee*. This habitat, which undergone a severe decline is home to many specialties that are only found in this habitat, which comprises mainly mallee *eucalypts*, *acacias*, *hakea*, and *melaleucas*. It has a distinctive look, with many of the trees under six meters in height and with thin multiple stems.

Birding the *mallee* is tough work at times: it all looks the same, and indeed this uniform is famously easy to get lost in, and many of the birds that reside there are nomadic, responding to blooming trees, and covering large areas in doing so. Thus, it is hard to predict what will be seen out of the morning, although one thing is sure, it offers up a multitude of species not possible on any other part of the tour.

Being in two vans we had one of the moments that you cannot counter for, the dreaded moment when one van sees a key species and the other does not. And what a bird they had, a **Maleefowl** treated Susan and her group to a memorable moment when it walked across the track, behind our vehicle by some way, but immediately in front of theirs!

Blooming trees in the area attracted a good variety of nomadic honeyeaters like **Black, White-fronted, Yellow-plumed, White-eared, and Gray-fronted Honeyeaters**. The promise of nectar from blossoming mallee trees also drew in a large flock of woodswallows, dominated by the handsome **White-browed Woodswallow**, but a single **Masked Woodswallow** was also seen hiding out among them, as they so often do. These are both nomadic species too, in great numbers in some years, although completely absent in others. However, it was arguably the ground skulkers that the mallee is most appealing for and we saw quite a few of them. A male **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** was the showstopper of the morning, while other mallee skulkers like **Southern Scrub Robin** scurried boldly around us, and a **Shy Heathwren** defied its name by appearing and giving a good look, although the **Gilbert's Whistler** in the area was far less charitable giving only a couple in the group a look.

In the afternoon we had another long journey to undertake as we headed east out of the mallee, towards the **Capertee Valley**, our destination for the following day...Although much of the afternoon was spent driving our way there we made a stop for some **Emus** along the way, although a **Pink Cockatoo** that overflowed the car frustratingly carried on going before anyone but those at the front got to see it. However, we did make a stop at **Blue Gum Swamp** along the way to pick up some missing waterbirds. A first sweep of the swamp produced no sign of any of our targets and my plan to make just a short stop quickly went a little awry! However, after further searching we found several male **Blue-billed Ducks** skirting the edges of the reeds, and better still, a huddle of three **Freckled Ducks**, our main target at the swamp snoozing at the back of the wetland. The same area also held a single **Australian Shoveler**, our final target there, and the only one seen on the entire trip. Other notable birds were a bunch of **Pink-eared Ducks** swimming in the shallows and adorning the many emergent dead logs in the water, and a **Cockatiel** was seen perched above the fringe of the marsh.

November 1 Capertee Valley & Royal NP (New South Wales)

The **Capertee Valley** is a very scenic area of New South Wales. Perched on the edge of the beautiful Blue Mountains, the Capertee is the widest enclosed valley in the world. It is also home to some very cool birds, and we quickly racked up new birds: our first stop produced one of the more handsome honeyeaters of the tour, an aggressive Yellow-tufted Honeyeater that would not get much else have a look in within these trees. However, a neighboring *eucalypt* drew in a fantastic **Crested Shrike-Tit**. We steadily made our way down the valley, moving through scenic wooded rocky areas, until we reached the wide open valley bottom, where the habitat opened up into grazing lands at the valley base. On the way down we stopped off and picked up a less flashy



honeyeater in the form of **Fuscous Honeyeater**, many of which were scrapping over the flowering food sources, and soon chased away a

Black-chinned

Honeyeater that was also new for us in the area. At the bottom end of the valley as we approached the Glen Davis junction we admired both **Zebra and Double-barred Finches** perched on the fence line. Checking out the cemetery in Glen Alice we found a very confiding Jacky-Winter also using a

fenceline as a perch. Moving into a wooded gully lined with casuarina trees we hoped to find the rarest of the Capertee's birds, the endangered Regent Honeyeater, but despite recent sightings in the area, found flowering trees nor this elusive and rare honeyeater. However, our time was not

wasted we added **Restless Flycatcher** in the area (*photo above*), watched an **Olive-backed Oriole** attending its nest, and observed a high-flying flock of woodswallows that held among them both **White-browed and Masked Woodswallows**. We also watched a **Brown Treecreeper** hugging a tree trunk close to a sister species, the **White-browed Treecreeper**, foraging just a few trunks away. **Rufous Songlarks** were delightfully common and a late addition to the list, while at the Glen Davis campsite we admired several **Dusky Woodswallows** sallying for insects, and were gifted a few perched **Little Lorikeets**. We also met up again with Susan and her group who had started a little later, and picked up a **Diamond Firetail** and a pair of **Hooded Robins** on their way down the valley. On our way out, and back up the valley, we managed to find the confiding pair of Hooded Robins before we began our journey back towards Sydney.



Stopping on the outskirts of Sydney for the night (and after first taking in a **Red Wattlebird** in the hotel garden), we made another, late afternoon, trip to **Royal National Park**. We spent a few hours along Lady Carrington Drive, dodging joggers, and picking up new birds like **Fan-tailed and Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**, and several of the hoped-for **Superb Lyrebirds** were also seen along there, our main reason for returning. The day was finished off with some of the best food of the trip at a local Thai restaurant, proving that outside of Thailand Australia must have some of the best Thai food in the world.

November 2 **Sydney to O Reilly's (Queensland)**

So after a pre-dawn rise, and a flight out of Sydney we landed in Queensland once more. However, this time we had swapped the humid Wet Tropics of northern Queensland for the cooler temperate climate of the south. We landed in Brisbane and wasted little time in getting out birding close to the airport, where a roadside set of mangroves produced two specialties of the habitat, the well-named **Mangrove Honeyeater** and **Mangrove Gerygone**. These were the only crucial birds to get there, and so we were soon on our way to another spot. This time we visited some parkland just outside Brisbane we hoped to find another iconic Aussie animal, the Koala. However, we could not find one anywhere, and after finally picking up **Pacific Baza** (which had eluded us in the Cairns region), with

a displaying pair overhead, and admiring some recently fledged young **Brown Goshawks** (under the watchful eye of one of the parents close by), we were soon on our way to **O Reilly's** and the vast promise of **Lamington National Park**.

After a lunch stop en-route, and a **Bell Miner** or two along the road, we began climbing the hill to this legendary birding spot. Before we reached the rainforest-cloaked plateau though, we could not resist stopping for a party of **Pretty-faced Wallabies** munching grass at the road verge, one of which was remarkably tame (*photo page before*). We also found our only **White-naped Honeyeater** on the way up before we entered the rainforest that cloaks the summit of the hill, where the lodge itself is located.



I checked quickly us all in and let everyone out of the vans to take in the extraordinary scenes before them. I came out from reception, keys in hand, although was rather distracted by the sight of one of the group with a gorgeous male **Regent Bowerbird** perched on his back! We had not even checked in and we already had wonderful views of one of the parks most attractive residents. And this is the appeal of visiting O Reilly's: they have a number of extraordinarily tame birds that hang around the feeding areas, and allow normally shy rainforest creatures to be seen close at hand. Some of the other classic O Reilly's headliners were also on show that afternoon, with **Crimson Rosellas** glowing scarlet from the bushes alongside the feeding areas (*photo above*), with a smattering of equally bright **Australian King-Parrots** among them too.

An afternoon stroll on a rainforest trail across the road from the lodge reception took us on to the **Tree Top Walk** for fantastic views of the rainforest from up on high. There were not too many birds on view up there though, and back on firm ground we found our first comical pair of **Australian Logrunners**, appropriately enough bouncing along logs, amusing bundles of nervous energy (*photo above*). Another ground dweller, the **Eastern Whipbird**, a striking species both in terms of its appearance and its remarkable sounds, showed well, as they so often do in this part of Lamington National Park. We closed the afternoon with a seductive male **Rose Robin** perched overhead at the foot of the trail. The days birding was not over though, as after dinner, with a **Mountain Brushtail Possum** for company (on view from through the window, from the dinner table, at their well-placed feeder), we went out on a prowl for nightbirds. Susan quickly found a **Southern Boobook** not far from reception, although our search further afield for a **Marbled Frogmouth** left us frustrated by a calling bird that refused to show. We would return again to that bird the next evening though...



November 3 O Reilly's (Queensland)

A full day was spent birding the different environments around **O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat**, which included the dense and lush rainforests on the plateau at the top, and also the wet *sclerophyl* forests on the slopes. By mixing our time between these two markedly different habitats, we picked up a healthy variety of animals and birds. Shortly after dawn we emerged from our comfortable



cabins, and admired super-friendly **Wonga Pigeons** wandering around the road verges (*photo left*), and approachable **Red-necked Pademelions** (a diminutive wallaby) grazing on the lawns. A pre-breakfast walk from the lodge straight into the temperate rainforest which surrounds this beautifully-located lodge brought us more *logrunners*, and our first real looks at several meowing

Green Catbirds, one of the few bowerbirds that does not actually construct a bower, and which sounds uncannily like a cat in pain. However, the “show stealer” during our early morning walk was clearly the fantastic **Noisy Pitta** that perched up and revealed its remarkable array of dazzling colors to us all. One member of the group chased off further in to the forest, skipping breakfast, but picking up a fleeting view of an **Albert’s Lyrebird** for his efforts. Sadly, this bird eluded the rest of

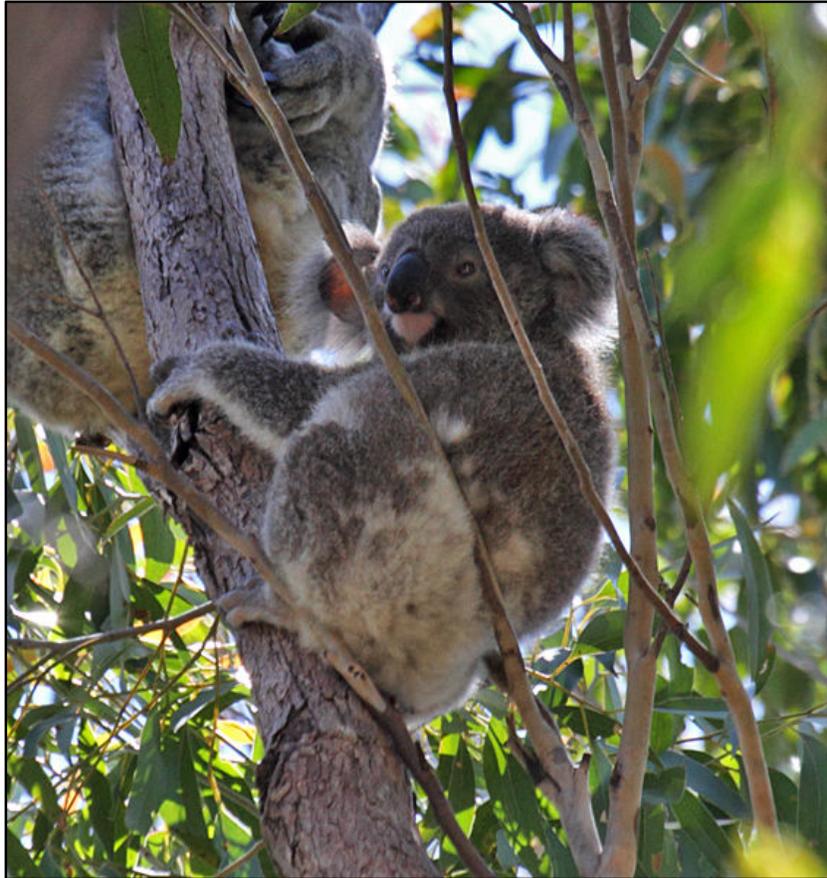


us during our stay, and the species appears to be getting inexplicably scarcer, and more difficult to find in this area.

The rest of us enjoyed a hearty breakfast at O Reilly’s, before departing for another rainforest trail a little further afield. The rainforest there produced another male **Rose Robin**, and some very playful **Rufous Fantails**, which flitted excitedly along the trail edge affording some great looks at this striking fantail species. With nothing new though to show for this, we opted to spend the latter part of the morning in the wet *sclerophyl* forest that carpets the slopes of the hill that leads up to O Reilly’s. The difference between the rainforest-covered top of the hill, and the sparsely wooded slopes dominated by eucalypts and exhibiting an open grassy understory, is very striking indeed. Although in general greater numbers of species can be found

within the rainforest we had a few targets that could only be found below that habitat. We started well and soon found one of these – **Red-browed Treecreeper** – although for the camera-wielding members of the group a superb **Spotted Pardalote** visiting its low roadside nest proved more absorbing (*photo page before*). With a map in hand, describing the location of a mother and baby **Koala**, (provided by the ever-helpful staff at O Reilly's staff), which had been seen just the day before, we drove down a bumpy track to a scenic lookout on the hunt for this Australian icon. Thankfully, this time though we found it with little effort at all, sitting in the very tree indicated on the map (*photo right*)! While we all admired and photographed this docile animal, some of the group disturbed a female **Spotted Quail-Thrush** from the grassy understory, which gave some of the group stunning close views, before it took off and flew down the side of the plateau. This was a very rare and fortunate sighting indeed, as the local staff estimate as few as two single females continue to exist on the area.

With stomachs rumbling after this action-packed morning, we headed to the café for a late lunch, during which we were hounded by **Pied Currawongs** and **Crimson Rosellas**, ever-eager for a handout at the café tables. However, a huge **Wedge-tailed Eagle** that came gliding low past us stole the headlines there. Although we had seen this, the largest of all Australian raptors, before, we had not seen one quite like that!



In the afternoon, while some chose to take advantage of the luxurious spa facilities on site at O Reilly's the rest of us took another stroll into the rainforest, essentially on the search for either a lyrebird or a riflebird, which had both eluded us thus far. We came back empty-handed in this regard, but our afternoon walk was not wasted as we managed to obtain good views of both of the rainforest thrushes there: **Russet-tailed Thrush** seen well, perched within the forest interior, while a **Bassian (Olive-tailed) Thrush** was found feeding along the road verge in the late afternoon. We closed the day though with another night foray for the **Marbled Frogmouth** that had taunted us the evening before. And so after another glorious and wholesome dinner at O Reilly's we returned to rainforest, and soon heard the knocking sound of a calling frogmouth. This time though it responded marvelously to a little playback, coming in and perching in the open above the trail, where this disproportionately large-headed bird glared back at us with big orange eyes, leaving us with an indelible image of this our third, and final frogmouth of the tour (*photo next page*).



November 4 O Reilly's (Queensland) to Tasmania

Our final morning within the temperate rainforest of **Lamington National Park** at **O Reilly's** was spent searching for the final few birds we could find there, before we returned to Brisbane, and took a flight south to Hobart, on the island of **Tasmania**. The headliner of the morning was undoubtedly a satin male **Paradise Riflebird** that sat above us calling in the rainforest. Of course while we searched for this bird-of-paradise we also saw some of the classic birds of O Reilly's, and enjoyed final views of **Australian Logrunners**,



gorgeous black-and-gold male **Regent Bowerbirds** (*photo page before*), deep blue male **Satin Bowerbirds**, striking **Eastern Whipbirds**, and “moaning” **Green Catbirds**. We also added a **White-throated Treecreeper** while searching for the riflebird. Laval at least, while walking a rainforest trail alone, also picked up a brief **Albert’s Lyrebird** to his delight. Finally, we had to leave the rosellas, bowerbirds, parrots, pigeons, and pademelons of O Reilly’s behind and head to the airport for flights out to Tasmania. En route Susan’s van was treated to a pair of writhing and mating **Eastern Brown Snakes** on a town bowling green.

November 5 Bruny Island (Tasmania)



We started our time on Tasmania, in much the same vein that we had used for the trip until this point: trying to amass as many species as possible in as short a time as possible. We had arrived in Hobart under cover of darkness, and so woke today with our first views of the scenic island of Tasmania. Our first looks of “Tassie” were to come in the tiny **Peter Murrell**

Reserve, just outside of Tasmania’s capital, Hobart. The reserve comprises a diverse mix of coastal Black Peppermint Woodland, coastal heath and buttongrass. Although this reserve would offer a host of Tassie endemic birds (of which there are around a dozen species), we were hear essentially for just the one, the rare and endangered Forty-spotted Pardalote. Our first Tasmanian endemics came in the form of an amorous pair of **Tasmanian Native-Hens** on the path (*photo above*), although the male bird may have been a little keener on the action than the attendant female! This is one of only three landbirds (not including penguins) in Australia that are flightless. Also at Peter Murrell were **Green Rosella**, **Yellow-throated Honeyeater**, and the largest, and arguably loudest, Australian honeyeater, the endemic **Yellow Wattlebird**. However, constant scouring of the many **Striated Pardalotes** in the eucalypts revealed none of their rarer cousins. We thought we heard them once or twice, but then suddenly Susan noted a plainer bird up in the trees, that lingered in the open for a time and left us in no doubt we had just seen Tasmania’s rarest endemic, the **Forty-spotted Pardalote**.

With this main target in the bag, we drove onto to Kettering Dock for our short boat ride over to **Bruny Island**. However, before we boarded the ferry itself we had business at the dock, where **Black-faced Cormorants** were drying out their wings on one of the jetties. Once over on the extraordinarily scenic Bruny Island we drove slowly along the road, making stops where the habitat looked good or there were any obvious signs of activity. Multiple stops were made as we traveled south towards **Adventure Bay**. Robins feature heavily on Tasmania, and Bruny Island, and this proved with our five robin day on the island. A stop along the highway revealed both the inconspicuous endemic **Dusky Robin**, and the breathtaking **Flame Robin** sharing the same grove of trees. **Black-headed Honeyeaters** in the same area, were our third of the four endemic honeyeater species on offer on Tasmania. We then continued our journey towards the southern of Bruny we admired a number of **Swamp Harriers** en route, and checked a regular area for **Blue-winged Parrots** that yielded the birds in record time, and so we were soon on the road again, heading south. As we passed through The Neck we got fantastic views of the rugged Bruny coastline, littered here and there with small flocks of both **Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers**.

Finally, we arrived at **Adventure Bay** and took a lunch on the picnic tables on the edge of a sandy beach. With time pressing, I decided to go off in search of birds on the beach, while the group took some down time and a sandwich beside the beach. Checking the white sandy beaches I was



horrified to realize it was a weekend, and the beach was a hive of activity, not what I wanted when looking for the beach-nesting

Hooded Plover (photo left).

However, soon enough I found this sand-colored plover with the jet black hood, hiding on the upper end of the beach. Luckily it stayed put, and we were all soon enjoying this scarce shorebird huddled on the sand. After lunch, and the

Hooded Plover, we returned to bird within temperate forest. We were there to rack up more endemics, which we did with a party of **Strong-billed Honeyeaters**, and several **Tasmanian Thornbills** in the area, although were just as interested in some of the non-endemic birds in the area, that included another two robin species. We visited a stake out for **Pink Robin**, and despite a

quick vocal response from the territorial male in the area, it gave only the briefest of glimpses. We then undertook a prolonged pursuit of this bird, when it seemed to play peek-a-boo with us within the forest understory. I am glad to say though that finally, after more than a few frustrations, we all managed decent looks of this beautiful, rose-breasted male bird. A **Crescent Honeyeater** also showed in the same area, before we moved on to search for our fifth and final robin of the day, the striking **Scarlet Robin**. Once again, a tip-off from another Tropical Birding guide, Nick Leseberg, who had visited Bruny just days before on tour paid off handsomely when we found a pair of these boldly-marked robins perched in the trees overhead. I checked my watch, and realized that we might just have enough time to make the second to last ferry, which would give us enough time for a late afternoon visit to an area of mainland Tasmania. So we loaded up, Susan and I put our foot to the floor and we just managed to sneak onto our desired ferry. We then checked an area near Tinderbox, where a hill overlooking the sea held some trees that we hoped might host one of our last Tassie targets: **Swift Parrot**. On reaching the site though we found that the trees were no longer in bloom, and I barely had time to ponder this, when remarkably a small flock of Swift Parrots flew in and perched in plain sight! Another flock of **Blue-winged Parrots** in the same area vied for our attentions too. Then, just as we were about to leave, (with many people already back in the vans, and thinking of dinner), a **Beautiful Firetail** popped into view in a near tree. I quickly shouted to the group, but watched in panic as this striking finch flew overhead and dived down to who knows where. We pushed forward as a group and were relieved to find it happily feeding in the open on the lawn! A great end to a truly fantastic day, where we had amassed literally *all* of our target species!

November 6 **Mount Wellington & Eaglehawk Neck Boat Trip (Tasmania)**

Our day began on the chilly lower slopes of **Mount Wellington**, which are enshrouded with dense temperate forest that is home to the last few Tasmanian endemics we were looking for. The first of these arrived right on cue, **Scrubtit**, and was quickly followed by another, the **Tasmanian Scrubwren** that hopped around on the dark, dank leaf litter. Then as we returned to the parking bay we found our third and final endemic target, **Black Currawong** that alighted in some trees alongside: our final of the dozen endemic species on Tasmania. However, I birding was far from over, as we still had some target birds that while not confined to Tasmania, are generally a hell of a lot easier to find there than anywhere else. And so we drove up higher along the Pinnacle Road on Mount Wellington to where the rainforest gave way to scrub, and where our next targets could be found. We had already seen one of our traditional Wellington targets the day before on Bruny, although I am sure no one was complaining about further looks at a male **Flame Robin**, which emerged onto the tips of the scrub to sing in the early morning sunlight. However, the other main bird in the area: **Striated Fieldwren** proved more elusive, until Susan saved the day and found one right by the road as we headed back to the vans in defeat! We then took a trip to the pinnacle of Mount Wellington, which give wonderful views high above the city of Hobart, and also boasts a dramatic geological feature, the so-called "Organ Pipes".

Once we had all taken in the spectacular setting on top of "the mountain" as it is simply known locally, we descended to the slightly warmer (and distinctly less windy) climes down near the base around the quaint village of **Ferntree**, where it did not take too long to find a pair of nesting **Gray**

Currawongs to complete the triumvirate of *currawong* species on the tour, and in Australia. Then we hit the road once more as we headed northeast on Tasmania for our finale to our time in Australia: a short boat trip along the dramatic Tasmanian coastline. On the journey there we admired a hulking **Pacific Gull** on top of a telephone pole (*photo below*), and were stopped in our tracks by a large blooming roadside tree that was ringing with the



sound of parrots. On further investigation these were revealed to be **Musk Lorikeets**, and another addition to our bird list. Finally, just before we joined the boat trip we scoured fields for geese, which initially drew a blank until Laval shouted from the back of the van...a pair of **Cape Barren Geese** had chosen to feed a little further up the road than usual, causing us a little delay in finding them!

In the afternoon, we rounded out this action-packed, endemic-fueled, and mammal-rich tour, with a gentle boat trip along the rugged coastline of Tasmania. We boarded the boat in Eaglehawk Neck



where we got to see the blowhole, and other geological features along the spectacular coastline. While we all took in the dramatic geology of the region we also added new birds in the form of several low flying **White-capped Albatrosses** that glided effortlessly past the boat without taking a wingbeat. We also moved into the middle of a cloud of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** that swirled around the

boat. On top of all that we also checked out colonies of both **Australian and New Zealand Fur Seals** on the jagged coastline (*photos on page 33, and 35*).

It had been a long, sometimes exhausting, but undoubtedly exhilarating, tour of eastern Australia, which covered everything from the Wet Tropics of the north, the Outback of inland Australia, down to the spectacular coastlines of Tasmania in the far south of this rich continent. This yielded an impressive bird list of 433 species in 19 days, which included over 200 endemics, and many of Australia's most iconic birds and mammals. From cassowaries to emus to kangaroos, koalas, and platypus no one left without feeling they sampled a great many of Australia's natural treasures, and having seen much of what this amazing continent has to offer.

Stunning scenery...



...Concentrations of Short-tailed Shearwaters...



...And colonies of fur-seals closed our tour on Tasmania on our final day



Bird List

The taxonomy of the 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 early 2011.

QLD refers to Queensland; **NSW** to New South Wales, and **TAS** to Tasmania

H indicates a species that was HEARD only;

GO indicates a species recorded by the GUIDE ONLY.

Endemic birds are indicated in **red**.

CASSOWARIES: Casuariidae

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*

An enormous female came in to Cassowary House in the afternoon, where it lingered for well over half an hour, giving us extraordinary photo opportunities, and long, lingering memories of this flightless rainforest bird.

EMUS: Dromaiidae

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

Australia's national bird. Seen on three days in inland New South Wales, with up to ten seen in one day.

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*

This species was formerly considered to be a monotypic family. A strange goose that often sits in trees, something that most geese do not. Recorded on six different days on the northern Queensland leg out of Cairns. Good numbers were seen around Lake Mitchell.

Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni* **ENDEMIC**

Just the one sighting in northern Queensland, where half a dozen were seen at Hasties Swamp. Greater numbers are normally expected on this tour, and at this site.

Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*

Just the one sighting, of 8 birds, at Hasties Swamp (QLD).

Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

This species is confined to southern Australia and Tasmania. We found a pair of these birds on the Tasman Peninsula, quietly grazing in a field alongside the highway.

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* **ENDEMIC**

Four of these scarce ducks were seen at Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

Black Swan

Cygnus atratus

ENDEMIC

Recorded just a few times in Queensland, including on Lake Mitchell. However, regularly recorded on wetlands in New South Wales and Tasmania.

Australian Shelduck

Tadorna tadornoides

ENDEMIC

Only recorded at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), 5 birds was seen.

Radjah Shelduck

Tadorna radjah

A single shelduck was seen on our first afternoon in Cairns, and another 22 birds were seen at a fish farm just south of Daintree Village (QLD).

Green Pygmy-goose

Nettapus pulchellus

Easy to find at Lake Mitchell (QLD), although this was the only site where we recorded them on the tour.

Maned Duck

Chenonetta jubata

ENDEMIC

One of Australia's most common ducks, recorded almost daily in southern Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

GO

A scarce duck on this tour, only recorded by Sam on Bruny Island.

Pacific Black Duck

Anas superciliosa

A very common duck species in Australia, recorded on all but a few days of the tour.

Australian Shoveler

Anas rhynchos

Just the one was seen, at Blue Gum Swamp in New South Wales.

Gray Teal

Anas gracilis

Recorded regularly on wetlands in New South Wales, and also seen in Hasties Swamp in Queensland.

Chestnut Teal

Anas castanea

A single male was seen in in New South Wales.

Pink-eared Duck

Malacorhynchus membranaceus **ENDEMIC**

Recorded twice in New South Wales: 2 were seen at Lake Cargelligo, and good numbers were seen at Blue Gum Swamp.

White-eyed Duck

Aythya australis

Also known as HARDHEAD. Seen on five days of the tour, both in Queensland and New South Wales.

Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis* **ENDEMIC**

This, one of Australia's scarcest ducks, was seen just once in New South Wales. Four birds, including at least three males, were seen at Blue Gum Swamp.

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata* **GO** **ENDEMIC**

Just the one bird was seen by Sam at Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

MEGAPODES: Megapodiidae

Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami* **ENDEMIC**

This common rainforest bird was seen regularly in Queensland (on 7 days), where they were most visible and numerous around O Reilly's.

Malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata* **ENDEMIC**

One of the sightings of the tour. Susan's van were treated to a bird walking in front of their vehicle in the *mallee* at Round hill (NSW). Unfortunately for the rest of us, the bird quickly melted back into the *mallee* and was lost from view. A tough bird to find throughout its range, and even more so in New South Wales where they are a genuinely rare species.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*

Despite being heard a number of times in Queensland, only seen just the once, at Centenary Lakes in Cairns where a pair was seen.

PHEASANTS, GROUSE AND ALLIES: Phasianidae

Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded regularly (10+ birds) on our night safari on the Hay Plains with Phil Maher for the Plains-Wanderer. In addition to those two birds we also found **Banded Lapwings**, **Inland Dotterels**, **Red-chested** and **Little Buttonquails**, and **Red Kangaroos!** A great night's birding.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

Recorded on at least seven days of the tour, both in New South Wales and Queensland.

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on three days in New South Wales: at Five Bough Swamp, Lake Cargelligo, and Blue Gum Swamp.

PENGUINS: Spheniscidae

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* **GO**

Also known as FAIRY PENGUIN. Sam spotted one briefly on the crossing to Bruny Island on Tasmania.

ALBATROSSES: Diomedidae

White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*

Formerly referred to as SHY ALBATROSS. At least four different birds were seen gliding close to our boat during a short boat cruise along Tasmania's coastline on our final afternoon.

SHEARWATERS AND PETRELS: Procellariidae

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

A large flock of these dark shearwaters was seen just off Bass Point (NSW).

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*

Hundreds, if not thousands, of these shearwaters were seen off of Tasmania during a short boat trip off Eaglehawk Neck during our final afternoon.

STORKS: Ciconiidae

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*

Known to Australian birders as JABIRU. Just the one was seen, just south of Daintree (QLD).

FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

At least one bird was seen around Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

One was seen at Michaelmas Cay on our Great Barrier Reef trip (QLD).

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: Sulidae

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Up to 9 birds were seen very well on Michaelmas Cay, a tiny island on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD). This included some white fluffy chicks among them.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

Two birds were seen perched on boats just off of an island on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*

Seen on two days of the tour: 2 birds were seen at Bass Point (NSW), and up to 20 birds were seen on our short boat trip off Tasmania.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: Phalacrocoracidae

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

This common cormorant was regularly recorded in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scattered sightings throughout, including at Bass Point (NSW), and also in Tasmania.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

Three birds were seen resting on a pier at Bass Point (NSW).

Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscescens* **ENDEMIC**

An endemic species confined to the southern Australian coastline and Tasmania. Ten birds were seen resting around Kettering dock, as we made our way over to Bruny Island, and a large colony was also seen during our Eaglehawk Neck boat trip on our final afternoon.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Recorded regularly throughout the tour in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania.

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae

Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

Recorded in Daintree, Lake Mitchell, Hasties Swamp (all QLD), and also at several sites in New South Wales, including Blue Gum Swamp.

PELICANS: Pelecanidae

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Recorded at a number of sites in both Queensland and New South Wales.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNES: Ardeidae

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*

Three different birds were seen during our cruise along the Daintree River in Queensland.

Pacific Heron *Ardea pacifica*

Also known as WHITE-NECKED HERON. Small numbers were seen on five different days in New South Wales, and another single was seen near Mareeba Wetlands in Queensland.

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana* **GO**

Unfortunately, a single bird that took off in front of the boat on our Daintree (QLD) cruise, was only seen by Sam.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Regularly recorded in Queensland and New South Wales.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*

Regularly recorded in Queensland, with scattered sightings in New South Wales also.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Scattered sightings in New South Wales, and also on Tasmania. A single was also seen near Mareeba in Queensland.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scattered sightings were made on the first half of the tour in northern Queensland and New South Wales.

Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*

Just a few were seen one afternoon at the Cairns Esplanade (QLD), including a very confiding dark morph.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Regular sightings were made in Queensland, and through much of the New South Wales leg too.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

Just two were seen one afternoon in Cairns (QLD).

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

Also known as NANKEEN NIGHT-HERON. Recorded twice on the tour, a juvenile and adult were seen at a day roost near Mareeba (QLD), and another adult was seen at Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales.

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Recorded at Hasties Swamp and Lake Mitchell in Queensland, and Lake Cargelligo, Five Bough Swamp, and Blue Gum Swamp in New South Wales.

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

A common Australian species, recorded regularly in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*

Recorded regularly in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

Recorded at a number of sites in Queensland (e.g. Cairns, Daintree), and New South Wales (e.g. Hay, Blue Gum Swamp).

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes* **ENDEMIC**

A small group of five birds was seen on the Hay Plains during a fantastic afternoon in New South Wales, which also yielded **Emu, Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Australian Painted-Snipe, White-backed Swallow, and Australian Crake** to name but a few.

OSPREY: Pandionidae

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus cristatus

Seen on three occasions: during our journey out to the Great Barrier Reef from Cairns, at Lake Mitchell (QLD), and Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

NOTE: The Osprey found from Sulawesi through Australia has been split off from the western forms as Eastern Osprey, *P. cristatus* on the IOC list. The western birds are listed as a separate species, Western Osprey, *P. haliaetus* (that covers *all* the ospreys, *except those from Sulawesi to Australia*).

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES: Accipitridae

Pacific Baza

Aviceda subcristata

Two birds were seen displaying over Daisy Hill, near Brisbane in southern Queensland.

Square-tailed Kite

Lophoictinia isura

ENDEMIC

Susan caught a look at a single bird around Hasties Swamp (QLD), which unfortunately dropped out of sight before the rest of us could reach Susan. Often on this tour we also have the opportunity to see this species at a nest site near Brisbane, although unfortunately the birds had already fledged and left the area by the time of this tour.

Australian Kite

Elanus axillaris

Seen on five occasions in New South Wales.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Also known in Australia as FORK-TAILED KITE. Scattered sightings in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Whistling Kite

Haliastur sphenurus

Recorded around Hasties Swamp and Lake Mitchell in Queensland, and a further few times in New South Wales.

Brahminy Kite

Haliastur Indus

Just a few sightings: in Cairns and near Daintree in northern Queensland, and also near Brisbane in the south of the same state.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle

Haliaeetus leucogaster

Five sightings on the tour: on the Great Barrier Reef boat trip (QLD), near Daintree (QLD), around Hasties Swamp (QLD), and Tarzali Lakes (QLD), Blue Gum Swamp (NSW), and near Eaglehawk Neck on Tasmania.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

Just Sam saw one distantly over Five Bough Swamp (NSW). However, up to six different birds were seen during our day on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis* **ENDEMIC**

Good numbers were on the Hay Plains (NSW) this year, a result of a rabbit plague in the area, where we saw at least four different birds in our afternoon there.

Gray Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

A nesting bird was seen at Cassowary House (QLD).

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

One was seen at Binya (NSW), and a recently fledged group of three chicks, along with one of the adults, were seen near Brisbane (QLD).

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

One was seen well perched alongside Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales.

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*

Australia's largest raptor was seen six times on the tour, with our best views coming over lunch at O Reilly's (QLD) when a bird glided low past the outside tables. Others were seen at Capertee Valley and on the Hay Plains in New South Wales.

Little Eagle *Aquila morphnoides morphnoides* **ENDEMIC**

A minimum of four different birds were seen during our afternoon on the Hay Plains (NSW), which was enjoying a record year for this scarce species, due to a rabbit plague in the area.

NOTE: The *weiskei* race of Little Eagle that occurs in New Guinea and the Moluccas has been split from this Australian form under the IOC checklist (*but not on the Clements list*), as Pygmy Eagle *A. weiskei*, making this "race" an endemic Australian species.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

Scattered sightings throughout, with most coming in New South Wales.

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*

Recorded four times on the tour: at Lake Mitchell (QLD), on the Hay Plains and Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales, and another was seen en-route to O Reilly's (QLD).

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*

Seen near Davies Creek in Queensland, and five further sightings came in New South Wales (e.g. Hay Plains and Royal National Park).

Black Falcon

Falco subniger

ENDEMIC

One was seen on the journey between Hay and Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales.

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: Rallidae

Buff-banded Rail

Gallirallus philippensis

Recorded on two days in northern Queensland, with some excellent views of a bird feeding on a lawn near Hasties Swamp.

Rufous-tailed Bush-Hen

Amaurornis moluccana **H**

This notoriously difficult to see species was heard in Daintree (QLD).

Baillon's Crake

Porzana pusilla

In a very good year for rails we saw at least three one day on the Hay Plains (NSW), and then another two the following day at Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Australian Crake

Porzana fluminea

ENDEMIC

A bumper year for rails yielded at least two of these crakes on the Hay Plains (NSW), and another at Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Spotless Crake

Porzana tabuensis

During a great evening at the Lake Cargelligo Sewage Works we saw this species along with **Baillon's and Australian Crakes, Red-necked Avocet, Pink-eared Duck, Orange Chat, and White-winged Fairywren.**

White-browed Crake

Porzana cinerea **H**

A constantly calling bird at Lake Mitchell could not be tempted in to the open.

Purple Swamphen

Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus

Recorded at Hasties Swamp in Queensland, and around a number of wetlands in New South Wales, including within Royal National Park.

Dusky Moorhen

Gallinula tenebrosa

First recorded in northern Queensland around Hasties Swamp and Lake Mitchell, and at Blue Gum Swamp, Five Bough Swamp and Royal National Park in New South Wales.

Black-tailed Native-hen

Tribonyx ventralis

ENDEMIC

Two sightings in New South Wales: on the Hay Plains and at Lake Cargelligo.

Tasmanian Native-hen

Tribonyx mortierii

ENDEMIC

Endemic to Tasmania. Typically, our first came at the Peter Murrell Reserve near Hobart, where an amorous male bird was seen chasing a female along the path. Another was seen on our journey to Eaglehawk Neck the following day.

Eurasian Coot

Fulica atra

First seen at Hasties Swamp (QLD), and then recorded on five days in New South Wales.

BUSTARDS: Otididae

Australian Bustard

Ardeotis australis

Three males and two females were seen at the traditional site of Maryfarms in northern Queensland.

CRANES: Gruidae

Sarus Crane

Grus Antigone

A couple of small groups were seen near Hasties Swamp in Queensland.

Brolga

Grus rubicunda

At least four birds were seen in a mixed crane flock near Hasties Swamp (QLD).

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae

Bush Thick-knee

Burhinus grallarius

Recorded five times in northern Queensland during our Cairns leg. Great views were had of two birds walking among the grave stones in the Cairns Cemetery. Another was running along the road and creating a racket one night as it called outside our hotel in Kuranda.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Banded Lapwing

Vanellus tricolor

ENDEMIC

Four were seen on a magnificent "Plains-wanderer night safari" with Phil Maher on the Hay Plains (NSW). The same drive also produced three different **Plains-Wanderers**, a **Little Buttonquail**, a surprise **Red-chested Buttonquail**, more than ten **Stubble Quail**, and a group of **Inland Dotterel**.

Masked Lapwing

Vanellus miles

A very common Australian wader, seen on all but a few days of the tour.

Red-kneed Dotterel

Erythrogonys cinctus

Around ten birds were seen on a small swamp on the Hay Plains (NSW) that also hosted a small group of **Australian Painted-Snipe** and a party of **Yellow-billed Spoonbills**. Another fifteen or so were later seen at Lake Cargelligo, also in New South Wales.

Pacific Golden-Plover

Pluvialis fulva

Just the one was seen, near Daintree in northern Queensland.

Lesser Sandplover

Charadrius mongolus

Only seen along The Esplanade in Cairns, where they were seen feeding alongside **Greater Sandplovers**.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultia*

A handful of birds was seen feeding alongside **Lesser Sandplovers** on the Cairns Esplanade.

Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus* **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen on Bruny Island in Tasmania, a stronghold for this southern species.

Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyornis melanops*

Recorded on two occasions in northern Queensland: two near Daintree, and five or so at Hasties Swamp.

Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis* **ENDEMIC**

Four birds were seen huddled together in the spotlight on the Hay Plains (NSW) during our successful search for the Plains-wanderer (of which we saw three separate birds).

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*

Only recorded in Tasmania, where it was seen in double figures on both of our days there.

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus* **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen at Bass Point on the mainland (NSW), with multiple sightings also came on both of our days on Tasmania.

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae

Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*

Two were seen at Hasties Swamp in Queensland, and others were seen at Five Bough Swamp and Blue Gum Swamp in New South Wales, and near Brisbane (QLD).

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*

A few distant birds were seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), although better views were obtained at Lake Cargelligo (NSW), where at least ten birds were seen one afternoon.

JACANAS: Jacanidae

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacean*

Seen at both Hasties Swamp and Lake Mitchell in northern Queensland.

SANDPIPERS: Scolopacidae

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

At least two were seen along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Just one sighting, near Daintree in northern Queensland.

Gray-tailed Tattler

Tringa brevipes

Five or so birds were seen along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Several birds were seen at the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Marsh Sandpiper

Tringa stagnatilis

One was seen at a fish farm near Daintree (QLD).

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Two were seen at the bustling Lake Cargelligo Sewage Works (NSW).

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Only recorded along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Far Eastern Curlew

Numenius madagascariensis

A handful of these giant eastern shorebirds were seen on the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Over twenty birds were seen at the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

Several groups were seen along the Cairns shore (QLD).

Ruddy Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Only recorded on Michaelmas Cay (Great Barrier Reef, QLD), where four birds were seen.

Great Knot

Calidris tenuirostris

Several groups were seen along the Esplanade in Cairns (QLD).

Red-necked Stint

Calidris ruficollis

Commonly recorded along the Cairns Esplanade, Queensland.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Calidris acuminata

Recorded four times on the tour; near Daintree (QLD), Hasties Swamp (QLD), more than twenty individuals along the Cairns Esplanade, and finally at Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales.

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

Good numbers were observed along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Broad-billed Sandpiper

Limicola falcinellus

Susan found one of these rare Asian shorebirds huddled within a large group of **Red-necked Stints** and **Curlew Sandpipers** at the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Latham's Snipe

Gallinago hardwickii

A good tour for this erratic species, with two sightings: Two were seen well foraging along the edge of Hasties Swamp (QLD), and others seen at Tarzali Lakes (QLD).

BUTTONQUAIL: Turnicidae

Painted Buttonquail

Turnix varius

Two birds were seen feeding, and busy making distinctive round marks on the ground known as "platelets", beside a road in Royal National Park in New South Wales. They were so focused on this they allowed both of our vans to roll up and watch them at length.

Red-chested Buttonquail

Turnix pyrrhothorax

ENDEMIC

A shock find on the night safari with Phil Maher for the Plains-Wanderer (NSW). This was the first record of the species they had seen for the season. It turned out to be phenomenal night drive with three **Plains-Wanderers**, a **Little Buttonquail**, over ten **Stubble Quail**, **Banded Lapwings**, and four **Inland Dotterels**. All of these species were typically seen very well as they froze in the spotlight.

Little Buttonquail

Turnix velox

ENDEMIC

One bird was seen at the start of our night drive on the Hay Plains (NSW) for the Plains-Wanderer among others.

PLAINS-WANDERER: Pedionomidae

Plains-wanderer

Pedionomus torquatus

ENDEMIC

The night drive or night safari on the Hay Plains is always one of the most popular events of the tour, and this one was no different, and capped off a superb day within Inland New South Wales. Our day began in Binya which produced cracking views of **Painted Honeyeaters** and **Mulga Parrots**. In the afternoon we met up with our local guide and host for the night drive, Phil Maher. Before we undertook the night drive though we spent several hours targeting key species in the area with Phil. In just a few hours we racked up **White-backed Swallow**, **White-browed Woodswallow**, **Little Eagle**, **Spotted Harrier**, **Australian Crake**, **Australian Painted-Snipe**, **Yellow-billed Spoonbill**, **Red-kneed Dotterel**, and a day roosting **Australian Owlet-Nightjar**! Then we undertook the night drive where we opened with a **Little Buttonquail**, and continued with **Banded Lapwings**, **Inland Dotterels**, **Red-chested Buttonquail**, and found three separate **Plains-wanderers**. These included one adult female (larger and brighter than the males who lack the female's chestnut breast patch), one young female, and also the smaller male.

PAINTED-SNIPES: Rostratulidae

Australian Painted-snipe

Rostratula australis

ENDEMIC

One of the highlights of the trip was seeing at least four of these handsome shorebirds on the Hay Plains (NSW), shortly before our successful night drive for the Plains-wanderer there. This group included the brighter, larger female among them. The species displays

reversed sexual dimorphism, where the female, instead of the male, is the brighter, more colorful and larger of the sexes.

GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS: Laridae

Silver Gull

Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae

The most abundant and widespread of the three regular gull species in Australia. We recorded them on six different days, including around Cairns (QLD), Bass Point (NSW), Lake Cargelligo (NSW), and on Tasmania.

Pacific Gull

Larus pacificus

ENDEMIC

Recorded on both of our days in Tasmania. Our best view came on a roadside pole as we made our way to Eaglehawk Neck for the boat trip on our final afternoon.

Kelp Gull

Larus dominicanus

Small numbers of them were seen on both of our days on Tasmania.

Brown Noddy

Anous stolidus

The most numerous tern on Michaelmas Cay (Great Barrier Reef, QLD), where literally thousands were present, many of which could be approached to within a few feet.

Black Noddy

Anous minutus

Two birds were seen perched on small boats just off Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef boat trip (QLD).

Sooty Tern

Onychoprion fuscatus

Another bird that nests in their thousands on Michaelmas Cay (QLD), along with the Brown Noddies they blackened this white sandy island.

Bridled Tern

Onychoprion anaethetus

A few were seen while we were on Michaelmas Cay (QLD), where at least one bird landed the white sand just a few meters from us. A handful of birds were also seen later on the same day as we traveled to Hastings Reef.

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

At least four birds were seen on our cruise to the Great Barrier Reef (QLD), and another two birds were seen near Daintree (QLD).

Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

Recorded on four days of the tour, including northern Queensland around the Esplanade, and Daintree.

Caspian Tern

Hydroprogne caspia

Some of the early arriving group members had some along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD) at the start of the tour.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid*

Recorded on three consecutive days in New South Wales: at Five Bough Swamp, over a swamp on the Hay Plains, and at Lake Cargelligo.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Half a dozen birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay, Queensland.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*

At least five birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay, during our boat trip out to the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

One bird was seen on Michaelmas Cay (QLD) during our boat trip to out to the Great Barrier Reef.

Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

Recorded along The Cairns Esplanade (QLD), during the cruise to the Great Barrier Reef on Michaelmas Cay (QLD), and also on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

A handful of birds (half a dozen or so) were seen on our Great Barrier Reef boat trip on Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Regularly recorded in urban areas through the tour.

White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela* **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen near Julatten in northern Queensland, at a site that also held **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** and **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Recorded regularly in northern Queensland, at various towns on the Cairns leg of the tour, and another was seen on Tasmania.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on six days of the tour, at Daintree (QLD), Curtain Fig (QLD), Royal National Park (NSW), and O Reilly's (QLD).

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

Seen on three days in northern Queensland, around Cassowary House and Daintree.

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen in the Queensland Outback near Mount Carbine, another couple was seen at

Capertee Valley (NSW), and a final bird was seen at the Peter Murrell Reserve on Tasmania.

Brush Bronzewing

Phaps elegans

ENDEMIC

One was seen briefly in the Capertee Valley (NSW), and Sam alone had a good view of one on Bruny Island (TAS).

Crested Pigeon

Ocyphaps lophotes

ENDEMIC

A common bird on the southern leg of our mainland section of the tour, with regular sightings in New South Wales.

Squatter Pigeon

Geophaps scripta

ENDEMIC

A smashing group of four showy birds were seen at Granite Gorge in northern Queensland.

Wonga Pigeon

Leucosarcia melanoleuca

ENDEMIC

Our first came walking along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park (NSW) one afternoon. However, the best views came, as ever, in Lamington National Park, where several tame birds were seen waddling along the lawns at O Reilly's (QLD).

Diamond Dove

Geopelia cuneata **GO**

ENDEMIC

Just Sam saw one jump off the side of the road near Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Peaceful Dove

Geopelia placida

Seen daily in northern Queensland on the Cairns leg of the tour.

Bar-shouldered Dove

Geopelia humeralis

Recorded around Cairns (QLD), Daintree (QLD), and Round Hill (NSW), as well as on several other occasions in New South Wales.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove

Ptilinopus magnificus

Seen three times in northern Queensland: on both of our visits to the Curtain Fig, and also at Cassowary House.

Superb Fruit-Dove

Ptilinopus superbus

Seen three times in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland, (Cassowary House, Cairns Centenary Lake, and Daintree).

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon

Ducula spilorrhhoa

This coastal pigeon was seen on all of our days around the city of Cairns (QLD).

Topknot Pigeon

Lopholaimus antarcticus

ENDEMIC

Recorded three or four times on the tour. Around 100 birds were seen at the Curtain Fig in northern Queensland, with other sightings coming en-route to O Reilly's in southern Queensland.

COCKATOOS: Cacatuidae

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on two of our days based out of Mareeba in Queensland. Our first, and best, view came near Mount Carbine, where we pulled the vehicles over for a small flock of these massive cockatoos perched along the roadside. They were later seen again between Mareeba and Granite Gorge.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus* **ENDEMIC**

Wonderful views were had of ten perched birds on the coastal heathland within Royal National park in New South Wales. This was our only sighting on the tour.

Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum* **ENDEMIC**

The unquestionable highlight of our brief visit to Barren Grounds reserve (NSW) was a superb pair of these softly-spoken cockatoos that perched above the entrance track, and allowed all of us to get excellent views.

Pink Cockatoo *Cacatua leadbeateri* **ENDEMIC**

Also known as MAJOR MITCHELL'S COCKATOO. Sadly only Sam and one other person (who was sitting in the front of the van) managed to get views of a flying bird that passed over the van as we traveled east from Lake Cargelligo (NSW). We quickly spun the van around and tried to relocate it, although it appeared to have continued flying.

Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla* **ENDEMIC**

A beautiful and common cockatoo species within inland Australia. Just the one sighting came on the edge of the Queensland Outback near Mount Carbine, with the vast majority of sightings coming in New South Wales, (where they were encountered daily).

Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris* **ENDEMIC**

A few people in the group had one on the journey between Royal National Park and Jamberoo in New South Wales.

Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*

Seen several times on the tour in New South Wales: at Royal National Park and also near

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

A common Aussie species seen on all but a few days of the tour.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded twice in New South Wales. Susan found a group en-route to Lake Cargelligo, and another group was perched beside Blue Gum Swamp.

PARROTS: Psittacidae

Rainbow Lorikeet

Trichoglossus haematodus

A colorful common species in Australia, encountered on ten days of the tour, with the greatest number of sightings coming on the Cairns leg in northern Queensland.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

***Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus* ENDEMIC**

Recorded three times around Cairns (QLD): In Cairns itself, and also twice around Mareeba.

Musk Lorikeet

***Glossopsitta concinna* ENDEMIC**

A big blossoming tree en-route to Eaglehawk Neck (TAS) held at least four of these colorful parrots.

Little Lorikeet

***Glossopsitta pusilla* ENDEMIC**

Two birds were scoped up feeding on some blossoms at the Glen Davis campsite, near the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot

Cyclopsitta diophthalma

Two were seen very well during our boat cruise in the Daintree area (QLD), which were attending a nest hole, and another three birds gave great views along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD) as we surveyed the shorebirds there.

Mallee Ringneck

***Barnardius barnardi* ENDEMIC**

Two were seen in Binya (NSW), and another two were seen during our journey from Hay to Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Green Rosella

***Platycercus caledonicus* ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. Recorded first at the Peter Murrell Reserve near Hobart, with others seen on Bruny Island, and also on our journey to Eaglehawk Neck the following day.

Crimson Rosella

***Platycercus elegans* ENDEMIC**

Recorded on seven days of the tour, with the best views, as usual, coming at O Reilly's, where a number of tame birds permanently hang around the lodge searching for a handout.

Crimson (Yellow) Rosella

***Platycercus elegans flaveolus* ENDEMIC**

This was formerly considered a distinct species, Yellow Rosella, although is now widely regarded as a distinctive color form (found in inland southeast Australia) of Crimson Rosella. Unlike that form the dominant color in the plumage is *yellow* as the name suggests. One was seen at Darlington Point (NSW), and another in Hay (NSW).

Eastern Rosella

***Platycercus eximius* ENDEMIC**

Our best views came in the Capertee Valley (NSW), and at the Peter Murrell Reserve in Tasmania.

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus* **ENDEMIC**

We came across them twice in northern Queensland: a small group were seen at Mount Carbine, and then another group was seen near Granite Gorge.

Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus* **ENDEMIC**

Encountered on four days in New South Wales, with good numbers seen in the Capertee Valley especially, and others seen at Binya.

Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius* **ENDEMIC**

Up to fifteen different birds were seen during our morning at Binya (NSW), our only encounters of the tour.

Bluebonnet *Northiella haematogaster* **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen visiting a tiny puddle to drink beside Griffith golf course (NSW), and a few other sightings were made within inland New South Wales.

Blue-winged Parrot *Neophema chrysostoma* **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen at a regular site on Bruny Island (TAS) one morning, and later the same day, another single was seen on the Tinderbox Peninsula on mainland Tasmania.

Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella* **GO ENDEMIC**

A fast-flying group of three birds was seen by Sam while driving near Orange (NSW), although could not be relocated after we stopped by the roadside.

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* **ENDEMIC**

An endangered species that is a **breeding endemic to Tasmania**. We managed to find a group of four birds that alighted in a tree for us on the Tinderbox Peninsula (TAS).

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis* **ENDEMIC**

Our first encounters came in New South Wales, in Royal National Park. However, as usual, our best views and largest numbers were seen around the lodge at O Reilly's (QLD) where good numbers visited the feeding areas and trees around the lodge daily.

Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*

These striking parrots were seen twice around Mount Malloy in northern Queensland, with a maximum of three birds.

Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii* **ENDEMIC**

A small group were seen briefly by some of the group near Yass (NSW) on our long journey from Barren Grounds to Leeton. However, a better sighting came on the edge of Leeton (NSW) town where a flock of ten of the neon green parrots flew close, low and parallel with our vehicle for a short time before disappearing. A strikingly bright parrot.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae

Pallid Cuckoo

Cuculus pallidus

Just two sightings: one at Daintree (QLD), and another in the Peter Murrell Reserve on Tasmania.

Oriental Cuckoo

Cuculus optatus

Some of the group saw one near Cairns.

Brush Cuckoo

Cacomantis variolosus

Heard more often than seen, with just two sightings, at Daintree and Mareeba in northern Queensland.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Cacomantis flabelliformis

Again, heard more often than seen, with just two sightings. Two were seen at Royal National Park (NSW), and another was seen on Bruny Island (Tasmania).

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx basalis

Two were seen at Binya (NSW), and another was seen at Round Hill (NSW).

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx lucidus

Heard regularly at a number of sites (e.g. Mount Lewis, QLD), although seen on just one occasion, along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park (NSW).

Little Bronze-Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx minutillus

Encountered on our first afternoon only, where two birds were seen well at Centenary Lakes in Cairns (QLD).

Australian Koel

Eudynamys cyanocephalus

Heard regularly in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland, although just the one female was *seen* during our Daintree river cruise.

Channel-billed Cuckoo

Scythrops novaehollandiae

This massive bird is the world's largest cuckoo, and is the world's largest brood parasite. After several brief sightings (e.g. on the Daintree cruise, QLD), we got good prolonged looks during the journey between Mareeba and Granite Gorge (QLD). A bold and distinctive bird, with a bold and distinctive call too.

Pheasant Coucal

Centropus phasianinus

Two birds were seen in the Daintree area (QLD), with further encounters during various journeys in northern Queensland.

BARN-OWLS: Tytonidae

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Up to four birds were seen on the Hay Plains (NSW) on our night drive there for Plains-wanderers.

OWLS: Strigidae

Southern Boobook

Ninox novaeseelandiae

One was spotlighted close to our rooms at O Reilly's (QLD).

OWLET-NIGHTJARS: Aegothelidae

Australian Owlet-Nightjar

Aegotheles cristatus

Thanks in no small part to Phil Maher, of Plains-wanderer fame, we found a day roosting bird sunning itself in the late afternoon, on the Hay Plains (NSW).

FROGMOUTHS: Podargidae

Tawny Frogmouth

Podargus strigoides

ENDEMIC

Two nesting birds were seen, both in northern Queensland: at Mount Carbine and Granite Gorge.

Marbled Frogmouth

Podargus ocellatus

After hearing, and failing to find one, on our first night in O Reilly's (QLD), we went out with renewed vigor on our last night there. This time we positioned ourselves in the rainforest and were treated to awesome views of this bull-headed nightbird when it came in and perched above the trail.

Papuan Frogmouth

Podargus papuensis

A nesting bird was seen during our boat cruise along the Daintree River (QLD). This is a traditional site for the species.

SWIFTS: Apodidae

White-throated Needletail

Hirundapus caudacutus

Four birds were seen briefly near Mount Carbine (QLD), two were seen near cassowary House (QLD), and, finally, another single shot over the lodge at O Reilly's (QLD).

Australian Swiftlet

Aerodramus terraereginae **ENDEMIC**

Recorded regularly during the Cairns leg of the trip in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland.

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae

Azure Kingfisher

Ceyx azurea

Recorded three or four times on the tour: on the Daintree River cruise (QLD), and several times within Royal National Park (NSW).

Little Kingfisher

Ceyx pusillus

Our tour got off to a flying start with a fantastic view of a perched bird at Centenary Lakes in Cairns (QLD); another was seen briefly flashing across a pond, while we were watching several Platypus in northern Queensland.

Laughing Kookaburra

Dacelo novaeguineae

ENDEMIC

This is the largest kingfisher in the world. A delightfully common species, encountered on at least eleven days of the tour, with great views obtained at Royal National Park (NSW) in particular.

Blue-winged Kookaburra

Dacelo leachii

Seen six times within northern Queensland, with the best encounter coming with a very friendly individual in Centenary Lakes in Cairns.

Forest Kingfisher

Todiramphus macleayii

Seen on four different days within the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland. More than seven birds were seen in one day in the Daintree area.

Red-backed Kingfisher

Todiramphus pyrrhopygius **ENDEMIC**

One of these dry country kingfishers was seen in an area of tropical savanna near Mount Carbine (QLD).

Collared Kingfisher

Todiramphus chloris

Also known as MANGROVE KINGFISHER. One was seen in the mangroves at Cairns (QLD) on our first afternoon, and another was seen in an area of mangroves near Brisbane Airport (QLD).

Sacred Kingfisher

Todiramphus sanctus

Encountered on nine different days of the tour in both Queensland (e.g. Hasties Swamp), and New South Wales (e.g. Royal National Park).

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher

Tanysiptera Sylvia

After being frustrated by a calling bird near Daintree (QLD) on one morning, we had much better luck near Julatten (QLD) in the afternoon, where this time the bird lingered long enough for everyone to get a scopeful. This species is a migrant kingfisher that spends the winter in Papua New Guinea, coming to the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland to breed during the austral summer. They usually arrive in late October or early November.

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae

Rainbow Bee-eater

Merops ornatus

Encountered on at least six days of the tour, including within Cairns (QLD), and also around Round Hill in New South Wales.

ROLLERS: Coraciidae

Dollarbird

Eurystomus orientalis

Seen on nine different days of the tour, with most sightings coming in northern Queensland.

PITTAS: Pittidae

Noisy Pitta

Pitta versicolor

ENDEMIC

Often a difficult species to see well, with just few opportunities coming on this tour. However, this year they were exceptionally abundant and very vocal during our visit to O Reilly's (QLD), where at least two different birds were seen well. Jean-Jacques also enjoyed this species around Cassowary House in northern Queensland.

LYREBIRDS: Menuridae

Albert's Lyrebird

Menura alberti

ENDEMIC

Just a few people managed to see this species during our time at O Reilly's (QLD). Jean-Jacques skipped breakfast and hiked deeper into the rainforest there, where he was rewarded a brief view of this shy species. Laval also found another while quietly walking alone there the following day.

Superb Lyrebird

Menura novaehollandiae

ENDEMIC

Three different birds were seen briefly from the van as we climbed up to Barren Grounds one morning, and another few birds were seen along Lady Carrington Drive (Royal National Park, NSW) on another afternoon.

BOWERBIRDS: Ptilonorhynchidae

Spotted Catbird

Ailuroedus melanotis

We encountered them three times in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland: at Julatten, Cassowary House and on Mount Lewis. The species also occurs in New Guinea.

Green Catbird

Ailuroedus crassirostris

ENDEMIC

Recorded in small numbers on each of our three days in the O Reilly's area (QLD).

Tooth-billed Catbird

Scenopoeetes dentirostris

ENDEMIC

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. One was seen by all on Mount Lewis, and another was seen close to the Golden Bowerbird bower near Hypipamee National Park.

Golden Bowerbird

Amblyornis newtoniana

ENDEMIC

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the bower of this species in the montane rainforests of northern Queensland. This bold male happily came to his bower on several occasions to decorate it with white lichen, while we watched on from just a short distance away.

Regent Bowerbird

Sericulus chrysocephalus **ENDEMIC**

The logo and one of the star birds in the temperate rainforests of Lamington National Park. O Reilly's offers an unrivaled opportunity to see this dazzling forest bird, as a number of individuals are extremely tame right around the lodge there. Our first view involved a male that even jumped on to the back of one of the group! They were encountered daily around O Reilly's (QLD).

Satin Bowerbird

Ptilonorhynchus violaceus **ENDEMIC**

As with the Regent, an unusually tame bird at O Reilly's, where great looks were had of multiple birds bouncing around on the lawns, beside our cabins, and dropping down by the restaurant to the bowerbird/possum feeder. A few were also seen at Royal National Park in New South Wales.

Spotted Bowerbird

Chlamydera maculate **ENDEMIC**

One was seen briefly by Sam only in Round Hill (NSW).

Great Bowerbird

Chlamydera nuchalis **ENDEMIC**

Seen on both of our visits to Mount Malloy (QLD), where we also visited the bower of the bird, which was decorated with various shiny, and plastic man-made items.

AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: Climacteridae

White-throated Treecreeper

Cormobates leucophaea **ENDEMIC**

One was seen near Glen Alice, near the Capertee Valley (NSW), and another was seen at O Reilly's (QLD).

Red-browed Treecreeper

Climacteris erythrops **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen in wet *sclerophyl* forest at O Reilly's (QLD), at a traditional site for this uncommon species.

Brown Treecreeper

Climacteris picumnus **ENDEMIC**

Three were seen at Round Hill (NSW), and another in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

FAIRYWRENS: Maluridae

Red-backed Fairywren

Malurus melanocephalus **ENDEMIC**

Good views were had of a family party near Daintree village (QLD), which included a scarlet-backed male among them.

White-winged Fairywren

Malurus leucopterus **ENDEMIC**

This stunning bird was seen on two days within Inland New South Wales, with bright purple males seen at Lake Cargelligo, and also on the journey between Hay and there. A real stunner, even within this family that is loaded with beautiful species.

Superb Fairywren

Malurus cyaneus

ENDEMIC

Seen in Royal National Park (NSW), on Bruny Island (TAS), and also at O Reilly's (QLD).

Splendid Fairywren

Malurus splendens

ENDEMIC

Arguably, the most splendid of all the fairywrens. Males were seen at both Binya and Round Hill in inland New South Wales.

Variegated Fairywren

Malurus lamberti

ENDEMIC

Seen on three days in New South Wales: on the Hay Plains, Lake Cargelligo, and also in Royal National Park.

Lovely Fairywren

Malurus amabilis

ENDEMIC

A poor showing for the species on this tour involved just the one brief view, of an elusive party in Cairns (QLD).

Southern Emuwren

Stipiturus malachurus

ENDEMIC

Our initial search on the coastal heathland of Royal National Park yielded merely a calling individual that refused to show. However, the following day we visited another area of heathland, this time at Barren Grounds Reserve (NSW), where a male gave repeated views, exposing his powder blue throat to us on numerous occasions.

HONEYEATERS: Meliphagidae

Eastern Spinebill

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on seven different days of the tour: on Mount Lewis in Queensland, and Royal National Park, Barren Grounds in New South Wales, and O Reilly's (QLD).

Graceful Honeyeater

Meliphaga gracilis

Seen at three different sites within the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland.

Yellow-spotted Honeyeater

Meliphaga notata

ENDEMIC

Heard at a number of sites with tropical Queensland, and seen at Daintree and Cassowary House.

Lewin's Honeyeater

Meliphaga lewinii

ENDEMIC

Recorded on around half of the days of the tour, with most coming within Queensland, and the best sightings coming from O Reilly's (QLD).

Bridled Honeyeater

Lichenostomus frenatus **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Three birds were seen up on Mount Lewis.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Lichenostomus chrysops **ENDEMIC**

Recorded at several sites in northern Queensland, and also commonly noted within Royal National Park (NSW).

Varied Honeyeater

Lichenostomus versicolor

Two birds were seen along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Mangrove Honeyeater

Lichenostomus fasciularis **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen in an area of mangroves close to Brisbane Airport (QLD).

Singing Honeyeater

Lichenostomus virescens **ENDEMIC**

Just recorded the once, at Binya within inland New South Wales.

Yellow Honeyeater

Lichenostomus flavus **ENDEMIC**

Recorded five times within the Wet Tropics of Queensland: in Cairns, Mount Malloy, at Granite Gorge, and also at Lake Mitchell.

White-eared Honeyeater

Lichenostomus leucotis **ENDEMIC**

Encountered three times in New South Wales: Royal National Park, Binya, and Round Hill.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater

Lichenostomus flavicollis **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. Seen on Bruny Island, at the Peter Murrell Reserve, and also on Mount Wellington.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

Lichenostomus melanops **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Fuscous Honeyeater

Lichenostomus fuscus **ENDEMIC**

Good numbers, (20+), were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW)

Gray-fronted Honeyeater

Lichenostomus plumulus **ENDEMIC**

Four birds were seen in the *mallee* at Round Hill (NSW).

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater

Lichenostomus ornatus **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen at Round Hill (NSW).

White-plumed Honeyeater

Lichenostomus penicillatus **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on four days in New South Wales, including at Blue Gum Swamp and the Capertee Valley.

White-fronted Honeyeater

Purnella albifrons **ENDEMIC**

This often-elusive, and striking, inland honeyeater was seen four times in Round Hill (NSW), where some good views obtained.

Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys* **ENDEMIC**

Five birds were seen en-route to O Reilly's (QLD).

Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on four days within inland New South Wales.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis* **ENDEMIC**

Commonly seen at both Binya and Round Hill in inland New South Wales.

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata* **ENDEMIC**

Just the one was seen, in our Sydney hotel garden.

Brush Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera* **ENDEMIC**

Several were seen in coastal heathland in Royal National Park (NSW), and others were seen on Bruny Island and at the Peter Murrell Reserve on Tasmania.

Yellow Wattlebird *Anthochaera paradoxa* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. This, the largest of the Australian honeyeaters, was seen at the Peter Murrell Reserve and on Bruny Island.

Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*

Seen just three times in the Cairns (QLD) area: at Centenary Lakes and also along the Esplanade.

Crimson Chat *Epthianura tricolor* **ENDEMIC**

Susan and on other person saw one briefly at Round Hill (NSW), which did not linger unfortunately.

Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons* **ENDEMIC**

A single bird was seen at Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons* **ENDEMIC**

Four birds were seen on the journey between Hay and Lake Cargelligo (NSW), and another three birds were seen at sewage works in Lake Cargelligo.

Black Honeyeater *Sugomel niger* **ENDEMIC**

A male was seen well in the *mallee* at Round Hill Nature Reserve in New South Wales.

Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura*

Recorded four times in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland, including within Cairns.

Scarlet Myzomela *Myzomela sanguinolenta*

Seen several times in Queensland: a male was seen well at Hasties Swamp, with another near Granite Gorge, and finally another on the way up to O Reilly's.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Gliciphila melanops* **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen on the coastal heaths of Royal National Park (NSW).

Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*

Encountered almost daily on the northern Queensland leg of the tour.

Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus* **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen near Adventure Bay on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

This striking honeyeater was seen on the heaths of Royal National Park (NSW), and also on Bruny Island and at Peter Murrell Reserve on Tasmania.

White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris niger* **ENDEMIC**

Arguably the most handsome of all the honeyeaters, which was seen in Atherton (QLD) itself, and then another three birds were seen at Hasties Swamp (QLD).

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus* **ENDEMIC**

Just the one was seen on the way up to Lamington National Park (QLD).

Black-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus affinis* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. Commonly encountered on Bruny Island, where it was the most abundant honeyeater.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

Just a couple of sightings in northern Queensland, in Cairns and also near Julatten.

Black-chinned Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis* **ENDEMIC**

Just the one was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Strong-billed Honeyeater *Melithreptus validirostris* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. One of four endemic honeyeaters in Tasmania, and usually the hardest to find. Half a dozen birds were seen in an area of temperate forest on Bruny Island, which also yielded a handsome male **Pink Robin**.

Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris* **ENDEMIC**

Encountered on three days in New South Wales: at Round Hill, Binya, and in the Capertee Valley.

Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*

This large and spectacular honeyeater was seen just twice, in the Mount Malloy area of northern Queensland.

Little Friarbird

Philemon citreogularis

Seen a couple of times in Queensland, and twice also in New South Wales.

Helmeted Friarbird

Philemon buceroides

This big ugly honeyeater was seen five or six times on the Cairns leg of our tour.

Noisy Friarbird

Philemon corniculatus

Encountered six times on the tour, including around Mount Malloy, Royal National Park (NSW), and the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Macleay's Honeyeater

***Xanthotis macleayanus* ENDEMIC**

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Recorded five times in this area, around Cassowary House, Daintree, and on Mount Lewis.

Striped Honeyeater

***Plectorhyncha lanceolata* ENDEMIC**

A few were seen at Binya (NSW), Round Hill (NSW), and in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Painted Honeyeater

***Grantiella picta* ENDEMIC**

A spectacular and nomadic honeyeater, which is far from assured in many parts of its range, due to its nomadic nature. Around seven birds were seen at Binya (NSW), where their songs could be heard constantly throughout our morning there, in what appears to have been a bumper year for the species in the area. One of my all-time favorite honeyeaters.

BRISTLEBIRDS: Dasyornithidae

Eastern Bristlebird

***Dasyornis brachypterus* ENDEMIC**

Several people in the group were stunned as this normally shy species emerged onto the top of the scrub, if only briefly, at Barren Grounds in New South Wales.

PARDALOTES: Pardalotidae

Spotted Pardalote

***Pardalotus punctatus* ENDEMIC**

Good views of this "Diamond Sparrow" were had of a nesting bird at O Reilly's (QLD), and another was seen on Tasmania during our successful search for the Forty-spotted Pardalote.

Forty-spotted Pardalote

***Pardalotus quadragintus* ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. A pair was found by Susan in the Peter Murrell Reserve (TAS), just outside of Hobart, a traditionally reliable site for the species.

Striated Pardalote

Pardalotus striatus

ENDEMIC

Encountered on six occasions during the tour, including at Abattoir Swamp in northern Queensland, Round Hill (NSW), and in the Peter Murrell Reserve in Tasmania. Particularly abundant at the latter site, which made finding the endangered Tasmanian endemic, the **Forty-spotted Pardalote** all the more difficult!

THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: Acanthizidae

Pilotbird

Pycnoptilus floccosus

ENDEMIC

A very vocal bird was unfortunately only seen well by one person in Barren Grounds (NSW), as for most of the time it remained within dense cover.

Fernwren

Oreoscopus gutturalis

ENDEMIC

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. A pair was seen up on Mount Lewis. Susan's whistled imitations of its song brought the male in extremely close, which then obliged all of us with cracking looks.

Yellow-throated Scrubwren

Sericornis citreogularis

ENDEMIC

Recorded first in Royal National Park (NSW), although seen best, and often, in Lamington National Park (QLD).

White-browed Scrubwren

Sericornis frontalis

ENDEMIC

Seen regularly and well in Lamington National Park (as usual), in Queensland; also recorded at Barren Grounds and Royal National Park in New South Wales.

Tasmanian Scrubwren

Sericornis humilis

ENDEMIC

Endemic to Tasmania. After a brief and poor showing of one on Bruny Island, another was seen much better in the temperate forest on Mount Wellington.

Atherton Scrubwren

Sericornis kerri

ENDEMIC

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Two birds were seen up on Mount Lewis (QLD).

Large-billed Scrubwren

Sericornis magnirostra

ENDEMIC

Several birds were seen up on Mount Lewis (QLD), and another was seen at the Curtain Fig (QLD).

Scrubtit

Acanthornis magna

ENDEMIC

Endemic to Tasmania. One was seen with remarkable ease, in the forests on Mount Wellington.

Speckled Warbler

Pyrrholaemus sagittatus **ENDEMIC**

Two different birds were seen in the dry woodland of Binya (NSW), including one bird that flew up into a tree and began singing right in front of us.

Striated Fieldwren *Calamanthus fuliginosus* **ENDEMIC**

Thanks to the persistence of Susan, we all got great looks at this reclusive bird up on Mount Wellington (TAS), just as we were fixing to leave.

Shy Heathwren *Hylacola cauta* **ENDEMIC**

This *mallee* specialist was seen well in the Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides* **ENDEMIC**

Just recorded on the one day, at Round Hill in New South Wales.

Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Two birds were seen on Mount Lewis, and another was seen at the Golden Bowerbird site.

Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla* **ENDEMIC**

Seen several times at both O Reilly's (QLD) and Royal National Park (NSW).

Tasmanian Thornbill *Acanthiza ewingii* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. Seen on both of our days on Tasmania, on Bruny Island and also on Mount Wellington.

Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on two days within inland New South Wales, at Round Hill and Binya.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* **ENDEMIC**

Encountered twice in New South Wales, at Lake Cargelligo and in the Capertee Valley.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis* **ENDEMIC**

Three of these scarce thornbills were seen at Binya (NSW).

Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at both Binya and Round Hill in New South Wales.

Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata* **ENDEMIC**

Just recorded the once, along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park (NSW).

A family party was seen below the plateau at O Reilly's (QLD).

Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris* **ENDEMIC**

Australia's smallest bird was seen twice, in dry country near Mount Carbine in northern Queensland, and in the *mallee* at Round Hill (NSW).

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*

One was seen briefly by some in the Daintree area (QLD).

White-throated Gerygone

Gerygone olivacea

Gerygones are often unattractive and dull birds, but this one breaks the mold. Seen well at Hasties Swamp (QLD), and also seen while watching Platypus in the Wet Tropics of Queensland.

Large-billed Gerygone

Gerygone magnirostris

Two were seen at Centenary Lakes in Cairns, and another was seen by some people on the Daintree River cruise (QLD).

Brown Gerygone

Gerygone mouki

ENDEMIC

Recorded on both of our visits to the Curtain Fig (QLD), and also several times at O Reilly's (QLD).

Just the two records on the tour: at Lake Barrine, and at O Reilly's (both in Queensland).

Western Gerygone

Gerygone fusca

One was seen at Binya (NSW).

Mangrove Gerygone

Gerygone levigaster

Four were seen near Nudgee Beach in Brisbane (QLD).

Southern Whiteface

Aphelocephala leucopsis **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen at Binya (NSW).

PSEUDO-BABLERS: Pomatostomidae

Gray-crowned Babbler

Pomatostomus temporalis **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen at Mount Malloy (QLD), and another group were seen near Mount Carbine (QLD).

White-browed Babbler

Pomatostomus superciliosus **ENDEMIC**

At least three birds were seen bouncing along the ground at Binya (NSW).

LOGRUNNERS: Orthonychidae

Australian Logrunner

Orthonyx temminckii **ENDEMIC**

Also known as SOUTHERN LOGRUNNER, a recent split from the form (which has a markedly different song) in New Guinea. Five or so sightings in the rainforest at Lamington National Park (QLD), a great area to get up close with this comical forest bird.

Chowchilla

Orthonyx spaldingii **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. One bird was seen along the road up to Mount Lewis (QLD).

WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: Psophodidae

Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus* **ENDEMIC**

One of the characteristic sounds of the eastern forests is the remarkably loud, whip cracking sound of the Eastern Whipbird. First seen on the road up to Mount Lewis (QLD), with regular sightings coming later at O Reilly's, where they are famously tame, and delightfully conspicuous.

QUAIL-THRUSHES AND JEWEL-BABLERS: Cinclosomatidae

Spotted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma punctatum* **ENDEMIC**

A shock find by the group involved a female bird at O Reilly's (QLD) while we were watching a mother and joey Koala. A fast declining bird at this site, where local naturalists estimate maybe only two females exist in the area.

Chestnut Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma castanotum* **ENDEMIC**

A striking male was seen in the *mallee* at Round Hill (NSW).

BOATBILLS: Machaerirhynchidae

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

Two sightings in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland: near Julatten, and at the dramatic Curtain Fig. This species also occurs in southern New Guinea.

WOODSWALLOWS: Artamidae

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorynchus*

Regularly recorded in northern Queensland, where seen on at least six days.

Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus* **ENDEMIC**

In a good year for nomadic woodswallows we saw this species twice: at Round Hill (NSW), and in the Capertee Valley (NSW). On both occasions, it was (typically) seen in company with **White-browed Woodswallows**.

White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus* **ENDEMIC**

Two were seen over the Hay Plains (NSW), although bigger flocks were encountered at both Round Hill (NSW), and near Glen Alice at the base of the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus* **ENDEMIC**

Four birds were seen just west of Mount Carbine (QLD).

Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus* **ENDEMIC**

Four were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW), and others were seen on Tasmania.

BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: Cracticidae

Gray Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* **ENDEMIC**

Just four sightings split between Queensland and New South Wales.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis* **ENDEMIC**

At least three sightings in Queensland and New South Wales.

Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*

Seen on both of our visits to Centenary lakes in Cairns (QLD), and also seen in the garden of Red Mill House in Daintree (QLD). Also occurs in New Guinea.

Australasian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*

Recorded on all but a few days, (in the tropics of northern Queensland), of the tour.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on eight days of the tour, with the best sightings coming as usual from the O Reilly's area (QLD) where they are common, conspicuous, and always ready to grab any leftover food at the café!

Black Currawong *Strepera fuliginosa* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. Just the one was seen, on Mount Wellington.

Gray Currawong *Strepera versicolor* **ENDEMIC**

Two nesting birds were found at Ferntree (TAS), and another was seen near Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Recorded widely in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Barred Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineate*

Also known as YELLOW-EYED CUCKOO-SHRIKE. Two were seen near Cassowary House (QLD), and another pair was seen at the Curtain Fig (QLD).

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

Recorded five times in Queensland, and once in New South Wales.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

A male was seen in Cairns on our first afternoon, and another was seen at Cassowary House (QLD).

White-winged Triller *Lalage suerii*

Encountered on three days of the tour, near Mount Carbine in Queensland, and at Round Hill and the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

Seen several times within Cairns.

SITELLAS: Neosittidae

Varied Sittella

Daphoenositta chrysoptera

A party of four birds was seen near Mount Carbine on the edge of Queensland's Outback.

WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: Pachycephalidae

Crested Shrike-tit

Falcunculus frontatus

ENDEMIC

One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Crested Bellbird

Oreoica gutturalis **H**

ENDEMIC

A number of calling birds at Round Hill remained firmly hidden the whole time (NSW).

Olive Whistler

Pachycephala olivacea

ENDEMIC

Just one person got a look at a calling bird on Mount Wellington in Tasmania.

Gilbert's Whistler

Pachycephala inornata

ENDEMIC

One was seen at Round Hill (NSW).

Gray Whistler

Pachycephala simplex

ENDEMIC

One was in the garden at Cassowary House (QLD).

Golden Whistler

Pachycephala pectoralis

Seen first on Mount Lewis (QLD), and then recorded regularly around O Reilly's (QLD), traditionally the best site for the species on this tour.

Rufous Whistler

Pachycephala rufiventris

Seen first beside the blind at Hasties Swamp in northern Queensland, and later recorded on at least four days in New South Wales.

Rufous Shrike-Thrush

Colluricincla megarhyncha

Also known as LITTLE SHRIKE-THRUSH. Seen on four days on the Cairns leg of our trip in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland.

Bower's Shrike-Thrush

Colluricincla boweri

ENDEMIC

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Seen at three sites: Curtain Fig, Mount Lewis, and near Hypipamee National Park.

Gray Shrike-Thrush

Colluricincla harmonica

Seen at three sites in New South Wales (Binya, Round Hill, and Capertree), once on Mount Wellington (Tasmania), and also regularly seen around O Reilly's in southern Queensland, where they were remarkably tame and conspicuous.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*

Encountered four times on the tour: at Hasties Swamp, near Brisbane, and Abattoir Swamp in northern Queensland, and Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

Green Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus*

Also known as YELLOW ORIOLE. Seen three times in the Wet Tropics of Queensland (in Cairns, Daintree, and at Catana Wetlands).

Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*

Seen daily in northern Queensland, including within Cairns itself.

DRONGOS: Dicruridae

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*

Recorded five times in northern Queensland, including around Cassowary House.

FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*

A pair was seen at Abattoir Swamp in northern Queensland.

A single bird was seen at Abattoir Swamp in northern Queensland.

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

This charismatic Aussie species was seen on every single day of the tour.

Gray Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*

Encountered on ten days of the tour, including within Lamington National Park (QLD), on Mount Lewis (QLD), and Royal National Park.

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*

Recorded in northern Queensland on Mount Lewis and at the Curtain Fig, and regular sightings came at O Reilly's (QLD).

MONARCH-FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae

White-eared Monarch *Caterornis leucotis* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen very well near Cassowary House in the Wet Tropics of Queensland.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*

Seen at least four times in Queensland: firstly at Red Mill House in Daintree village, at Cassowary House, at the Curtain Fig, and lastly in Lamington National Park.

Spectacled Monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*

Seen three times in the Wet Tropics (QLD): Daintree, Curtain Fig, and Cassowary House.

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: Paradisaeidae

Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus* **ENDEMIC**

A magnificent male was seen on our final morning at O Reilly's (QLD).

Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland. Seen four times in northern Queensland: at Mount Lewis, and a couple of times at the Curtain Fig. However, the best sighting of all involved a shimmering, velvety black male that dropped onto the banister of the veranda at Cassowary House.

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: Petroicidae

Jacky-winter *Microeca fascinans*

One of these dull robins was seen at Binya (NSW), although much better views were had of a bird perched along a fence line near Glen Alice (NSW).

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

One was seen in the parking lot at Abattoir Swamp (QLD), and another was seen at Granite Gorge (QLD).

Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang* **ENDEMIC**

At least two females and two males of these strikingly beautiful robins were seen on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii* **ENDEMIC**

A stunning inland robin, which was seen well at both Binya (NSW), and Round Hill (NSW).

Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea* **ENDEMIC**

A beautiful male was seen just after we arrived on Bruny Island (TAS), with another singing male on Mount Wellington the following day (TAS).

Rose Robin *Petroica rosea* **ENDEMIC**

Two separate males were seen in the temperate forests within Lamington NP (QLD).

Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster* **ENDEMIC**

A super male bird was seen on Bruny Island (TAS). It taunted us for a while, and frustrated many for a while, but with patience and persistence we were all rewarded with good views of this seductive robin.

Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata* **ENDEMIC**

Thanks to some good work by Susan, a pair were seen in the Capertee Valley of New South Wales.

Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata* **ENDEMIC**

Endemic to Tasmania. At least three birds were seen on Bruny Island.

GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Megaluridae

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

Seen by a small swamp on the Hay Plains (NSW), and also seen at the sewage works at Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis* **ENDEMIC**

One was spotlighted on the Hay Plains at night during our successful night safari for the Plains-wanderer (NSW).

Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi* **ENDEMIC**

Regularly recorded in the Capertee Valley (NSW), where they were vocal, common, and conspicuous. A nesting bird was also seen briefly on the Hay Plains (NSW), and another bird was seen by some at Lake Cargelligo (NSW).

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

Seen near Daintree (QLD), and Lake Mitchell (QLD).

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: Turdidae

Olive-tailed Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*

Also known as BASSIAN THRUSH. Two different birds were seen at O Reilly's (QLD), including one bird seen well late one afternoon, feeding along the roadside.

Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen very well perched in the rainforest at Lamington NP (QLD).

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

This introduced species was encountered at least seven times in New South Wales and Tasmania.

WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*

Recorded on at least seven different days on the tour, in Queensland, New South Wales, and also in Tasmania.

STARLINGS: Sturnidae

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*

Regular sightings were made in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

This introduced species was seen on all but a few days of the tour.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Seen daily in New South Wales and Tasmania.

FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

Seen in Cairns and several other sites in northern Queensland, and also seen in Binya, Round Hill, and the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: Nectariniidae

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*

Also known as YELLOW-BELLIED SUNBIRD. Regularly recorded in northern Queensland.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

One was seen during a brief stop at Bass Point (NSW), and others were seen on the Hay Plains (NSW), and in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS AND ALLIES: Fringillidae

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

One of these introduced birds was seen by Kettering Dock in Tasmania.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Recorded regularly on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Regularly recorded, in urban areas, on all but a few days of the tour.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae

Beautiful Firetail *Stagonopleura bella* **ENDEMIC**

One was found, at “the death”, just as we were preparing to leave the Tinderbox Peninsula on Tasmania, an area that also yielded **Blue-winged and Swift Parrots**.

Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Red-browed Firetail *Neochmia temporalis* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded six times on the tour, with the best views coming at O Reilly’s in Queensland, where they were seen daily.

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*

Two bright males were seen en-route to Daintree from Cairns, and another sighting came at Catana Wetlands near Cairns (QLD).

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia castanotis*

Also known as CHESTNUT-EARED FINCH. A small flock was seen perched on wires within the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Double-barred Finch

Taeniopygia bichenovii

ENDEMIC

Ten birds were seen in Mount Malloy (QLD), and a smaller group was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Nutmeg Mannikin

Lonchura punctulata

Several small parties were seen in northern Queensland.

Chestnut-breasted Munia

Lonchura castaneothorax

A maximum of twenty five birds was seen at Mareeba (QLD), with smaller groups seen at Hasties Swamp (QLD), and near Daintree (QLD).

Mammal List

The taxonomy of the list follows: **Menkhorst, Peter and Knight, Frank. *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia. Second Edition.* Oxford, 2004.**

Short-beaked Echidna

Tachyglossus aculeatus

One of these odd creatures shuffled across the road in front of our vehicle in Royal National Park (NSW).

Platypus

Ornithorhynchus anatinus

At least four day-active animals were seen at one site in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland.

Northern Brown Bandicoot

Isodon macrourus

One was seen by some feeding on the lawn at night at Red Mill House in Daintree village (QLD).

Fat-tailed Dunart

Sminthopsis crassicaudata

At least one was seen on our night drive on the Hay Plains(NSW) for the Plains-wanderer.

Koala

Phascolarctos cinereus

A dozing mother and joey were seen well at O Reilly's (QLD).

Mountain Brushtail Possum

Trichosurus caninus

A single individual was seen from the dinner table on both of our nights in O Reilly's (QLD).

Musky Rat-kangaroo

Hypsiprymnodon moschatus

Up to three of these were seen at Cassowary House (QLD). This is the smallest kangaroo species.

Agile Wallaby

Macropus agilis

Several were seen at Mount Malloy, Mareeba, and at Lake Mitchell (all in Queensland).

Feral Pig *Sus sp.*

One was seen in northern Queensland.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Seen on the Hay Plains (NSW), and also in Tasmania.

Others

Carpet Python *Morelia spilota*

Also known as Diamond Python. One of these striking snakes was seen during a night search for Marbled Frogmouth in Lamington National Park (QLD).

Common Brown Snake *Pseudonaja textilis*

Also known as EASTERN BROWN SNAKE. A writing mating pair were seen on a village bowling green in the town of Canungra, near O Reilly's (QLD).

Sand Goanna *Varanus gouldii*

Also known as GOULD'S GOANNA. One was seen at O Reilly's (QLD).

Shingleback *Trachydosaurus rugosus*

One of these strange reptiles was seen near Lake Cargelligo (NSW).



Eastern Spinebill