Our fantastic night “safari” on the Hay Plains produced multiple sightings of this strange species, (including this female), that is a monotypic family:
One of the tour favorites.

The same night drive also revealed Banded Lapwings, Little Buttonquails, and Stubble Quail, and in the afternoon leading up to it, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Pink Cockatoo, and a mob of Chestnut-crowned Babblers, making this day one of the most memorable of the tour.
**Introduction:**

In many ways this was a very normal eastern Australia tour, we saw most of the specialties, and racked up a very respectable **420+ species** in the process. However, in other ways it was a strange one. Over the last decade Australia has been suffering from a prolonged period of drought, and so we have become accustomed to warm weather and almost no rain at all. How different things were in 2010, where the country was experiencing a record wet season which had spilled over into this supposedly dry season. For the first time I got used to carrying an umbrella! Having said all of that, in spite of heavy rain threatening, and having to rethink plans to go after birds in alternative places, where roads were now impassable at our old haunts (something that has never previously been an issue), we still got everything that was to be expected, and actually our birding was little affected by the rains at all. By some luck we managed to pass through recently drowned areas, just after the heaviest rains had passed through!

The tour is varied and exciting as right up until the last minute we are still adding new birds, as we switched to new habitats and localities that bought ever more birds. The tour began **Cairns**, in the Wet Tropics of northern Queensland, where we experienced bird-filled swamps, vast tidal flats peppered with shorebirds, rich rainforests alive with strange creatures and odd Aussie birds, and also the extraordinary marine environment of the Great Barrier Reef. Highlights from this leg included a monstrous male **Southern Cassowary** stalking through the rainforest with several stripy chicks in toe; displaying young **Victoria’s Riflebirds** near the Hypipamee Crater; a glistening jewel-like **Noisy Pitta** hopping along a forest road near the small Queensland town of Julatten; marauding flocks of massive **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** near our hotel on the edge of the Queensland Outback; two statuesque, bark-like, **Papuan Frogmouths** beside their riverside nests on the Daintree Cruise; a glowing **Golden Bowerbird** sitting quietly beside his lichen-decorated bower in the shady Atherton rainforest; a very early, and therefore very surprising, **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** that glowed like a neon light in the rainforest understorey late one afternoon in Daintree; the strikingly beautiful **Pied Monarch** creeping up a forest trunk in Julatten; a wonderful **White-eared Monarch** that flitted around a forest canopy in Kuranda; **Australian Bustards** strutting around oblivious to the heavy tropical downpour at the time in Queensland’s Outback; a pair of drenched **Squatter Pigeons** hunkered down after an unseasonal rainstorm on the edge of the Queensland Outback; and the cute **Yellow-breasted Boabbill** flitting around the trees beside the impressive Curtain Fig Tree. Birds were not the only headliners though, as a female **Platypus** that happily fed in the open water in broad daylight was also an undoubted standout moment, and the striking **Striped Possum** that appeared (all be it briefly) outside Rick’s room at Cassowary House was a very pleasant surprise indeed.
The second leg started from Brisbane and took in coastal mangroves, and a very different, temperate rainforest and dry sclerophyl woodland in and around Lamington National Park. Highlights were not all avian as the large dusky shape of a Koala in the dry woodland below the O Reilly’s Plateau proved predictably popular with all. In the rainforest noisy Green Catbirds announced their presence and a dazzling male Paradise Riflebird that showed off its true colors in the early morning sun were standouts. The first afternoon walk in the shady rainforest produced two unforgettable moments in our first hour at Lamington: a pair of Southern Logrunners bounding straight up to us on the track, and a cute Australian Owlet-Nightjar that emerged from its roost hole a short time before dusk. And no one could forget the super Spotted Quail-Thrush we tracked down after a tip-off from another Tropical Birding group, that casually walked down an open track in front of a somewhat “shell-shocked” group! However, the real highlight on this leg is O Reilly’s itself where the birds are so tame, and so beautiful: the gorgeous gold-and-black Regent Bowerbirds of course took headline billing there, although the parrots, fairywrens, pigeons, scrubwrens and others that hopped around our feet will never be forgotten either. It truly is one of the great birding venues on Earth.

For our penultimate leg we flew further south to the cultural capital of Australia, Sydney. From this grand city we made a circuit inland, first taking in the temperate forest and coastal heaths of Royal NP, before making our way into the heartland of Australia’s agricultural lands and checking out some rich mulga and mallee habitats deep inland, before venturing onto the vast Hay Plains, and finally to the rich birding opportunities of the Capertee Valley. With such a varied New South Wales itinerary this leg more than any other was inundated with possible trip birds: the Australian national bird, the Emu turned up on three separate occasions; a “hidden” swamp just off the highway that was sprinkled with Pink-eared Ducks was a real treat; fairywrens in this state blew us away from the oh so cute Southern Emuwren that performed so spectacularly at Barren Grounds, to the neon White-winged Fairywren that brought dramatic color to the otherwise bland-looking Hay Plains, to the vibrant blue Splendid Fairywrens that hopped in and out of the mallee at Round Hill, they were all beautiful and all popular; then there was the Plains-wanderer itself, the ultimate reason for our journey onto these vast plains. Stunning views were had of numerous individuals at incredibly close range, and was topped off with the rare finding of a nest of this strange creature by our local guide. The Hay Plains also produced two separate sightings of the rare and highly nomadic Ground Cuckoo-shrike, and a trio of scintillating Orange Chats was most unexpected there too. A truly unforgettable day. On top of that New South Wales brought us into contact with another strange Aussie mammal, the odd Short-beaked Echidna shuffling its way across the
highway near Junee. The same journey also produced a striking male **Superb Parrot** at a gas station en-route to Leeton. The mallee of Round Hill was packed full of new species as ever, although the fearless male **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** that continued to sing from an exposed perch in front of us all especially stood out from our action-packed morning there. While the dry woodland of Binya always brings something dramatic, and once again so it proved with a very confiding **Painted Honeyeater** being the mornings showstopper, and the often hard-to-find **Black-eared Cuckoo** being noteworthy too. Finally, who could forget our experience with the world’s largest songbird, the master-mimic, **Superb Lyrebird** walking calmly across the boulders in Royal, a rock-strewn area within the forest that also bought us the spritely New South Wales endemic **Rock Warbler** too.

Lastly, we dropped down to **Hobart**, Tasmania’s capital, that was a great base for us to explore the forests, dramatic rocky coastlines and sandy beaches for an array of Tassie endemics and local specialties. Our first morning saw us run into Tassie’s most famous resident, the **Forty-spotted Pardalote** at a small reserve just outside Hobart. On Bruny Island the beautiful sandy beaches that outline this wonderful island bought us repeated encounters with the rare **Hooded Plover**. Tasmania is a treasure trove for Australian robins and we took in such gorgeous birds as **Flame, Scarlet and Pink Robins** during our time there. On top of that we found a patch of eucalypts decked out with abundant white blossoms that attracted a beautiful **Swift Parrot**, and Ken’s last gasp **Beautiful Firetail** near the Tasman Blowhole was unlucky not to make the top five birds of the trip, as it was not only “beautiful” but scarce and to get such choice looks that late in the day brought instant relief!

Typically on this tour there was an assortment of new, weird families for all and a bewildering array of new birds to choose trip highlights from. The top five birds chosen by the group were:

1. **Superb Parrot** (Oct. 24, Barren Grounds-Leeton, NSW)
2. **Plains-wanderer** (Oct. 26, Hay Plains, NSW)
3. **Pink Robin**
   - **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** (Oct. 25, Round Hill, NSW)
   - **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** (Oct. 15, Cassowary Hse, QLD)

These did not quite make it, although were popular mentions: Splendid Fairywren, Rainbow Lorikeet, Laughing Kookaburra, Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Spotted Catbird, Crested Pigeon, Spotted Pardalote, Beautiful Firetail, Southern Cassowary, Southern Emuwren, Crimson Rosella, Papuan Frogmouth, Golden Bowerbird, Superb Lyrebird, Buff-banded Rail, Eastern Whipbird & White-throated Gerygone (for their incredible songs), Willie-wagtail, Red-kneed Dotterel, White-winged Fairywren, and Weebill.
### Itinerary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Arrival in Cairns. Afternoon birding in Cairns/night Cairns (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Boat trip to Michaelmas Cay, Great Barrier Reef/night Cassowary House, Kuranda (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>AM Cassowary House PM Daintree/night Red Mill House, Daintree village (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>AM Daintree River Cruise  PM Julatten &amp; Mount Malloy/night Mareeba (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>AM Mount Hypipamee NP/Golden Bowerbird visit/Platypus trip PM Hasties Swamp &amp; Atherton Tablelands/night Mareeba (QLD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Lake Barrine/Hasties Swamp/Mareeba/Lake Tinaroo/night Mareeba (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>AM Julatten area/Lake Mitchell PM Yorkey’s Knob &amp; Cairns Esplanade/night Cairns (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Early am flight to Brisbane/Nudgee Beach area/Mt. Tamborine &amp; Lamington NP/night O Reilly’s, Lamington NP (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>O Reilly’s &amp; Lamington NP/night O Reilly’s, Lamington NP (Queensland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>O Reilly’s &amp; Lamington NP/Mt. Tamborine/afternoon flight to Sydney/night Sydney (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>AM Royal NP/lunch at Bass Point/PM Barren Grounds/night Jamberoo (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>AM Barren Grounds/drive to Leeton/Five Bough Swamp/night Leeton (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>AM Round Hill Nature Reserve/PM Five Bough Swamp/night Leeton (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>AM Binya/drive to Hay/PM &amp; night safari on Hay Plains/night Hay (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>AM Hay Plains/PM Blue Gum Swamp/drive to Lithgow/night Lithgow (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>AM Capertee Valley/PM fly to Hobart, Tasmania/night Hobart (Tasmania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>AM Peter Murrell Reserve/Bruny Island/night Hobart (Tasmania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>AM Mount Wellington/Hobart Airport/PM Tasman Peninsula/night Hobart (Tasmania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Departure from Hobart (Tasmania)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 1: October 13  CAIRNS Queensland
The tour began with an afternoon jaunt around Cairns, picking up some birds typical of Tropical Queensland. We started by stalking Bush Thick-knees among the gravestones of Cairns Cemetery. These oddball waders were soon found and admired for their goggle-eyed appearance, and ungainly gait. In bushes alongside our first Varied Triller showed up too. The parklands of Cairns produced many widespread tropical species for us: Dusky Myzomela, Yellow and Brown-backed Honeyeaters, and Helmeted Friarbird were found in the gum trees overhead, that also supported a few loudly calling Green (Yellow) Orioles, and a small squadron of Australian Swiftlets were seen soaring above. A gaudy male Mistletoebird in resplendent breeding dress got the juices flowing as it fed in a eucalypt. A roosting young Nankeen Night-Heron was found by another TB group in a neighboring park, so we made sure we took a look at that too, along with some colorful species that adorn the gardens and parks around Cairns: Rainbow Bee-eaters hawked insects on the wing; Australian Figbirds decorated the wires around town; Torresian Imperial-Pigeons zipped overhead on a regular basis; and several Black Butcherbirds dropped onto the park lawns to snatch prey right in front of us; while Orange-footed Scrubfowls scampered across the well-manicured grass. Our plan had been to scour the pack of shorebirds on the famous Cairns Esplanade, although the combination of a very high tide and an Aboriginal family determined to stone any shorebird that set down there that afternoon put paid to that idea, so we decided to return another day for the frantic shorebird action.

Day 2: October 14  GREAT BARRIER REEF Queensland
This day provided those still suffering from the rigors of the long journey down under with a relaxing day on a boat out on the reef; a bunch of seabirds packed on a tiny, remote sandy cay; and world class snorkeling for the more adventurous. The day started with a reminder of what a strange year it was this year in Australia: rain bucketed down at the dock, in what was supposed to be the dry season. Australia had just recovered from the wettest September on record, and it seemed the wet weather was spilling over into October, that in the previous ten plus years of drought-hit Australia could be relied on to be completely rain-free. We donned our rain jackets and boarded the boat, not knowing what to expect out of this stormy day. As it turned out the rain eased as we neared the sandy cay we were visiting, and by the time we had left Michaelmas Cay the clouds had parted, and the tropical sun was beating down on us more in the manner of what we would normally expect out of this trip. As we were nearing the island our first hint of what was to come was provided with our first Brown Noddies and Bridled Terns offshore, although nothing can prepare you for the spectacular show on offer once we set foot on Michaelmas Cay. The small island of white sand was blackened by thousands of nesting seabirds, dominated largely by Brown Noddies and very noisy Sooty
Terns that announced their presence continually. A slim rope prevented us from wandering into the colony itself, although the width of the rope was all that stood between us and the nearest nesting terns, completely unconcerned by us standing there ogling them at close range. In the colony a single Pacific Reef-Heron prowled around the colony, perhaps looking for an unguarded chick to prey on. Soon enough a pair of Bridled Terns alighted on the beach too and allowed for up close comparisons with the more common sooties. The few bits of drift wood that sat prominently on the island provided a post for Great Frigatebirds and a Red-footed Booby to stand sentry. Flocks of other terns on the beach comprised mainly Great Crested Terns, with a notable presence of Lesser Crested Terns too, and a handful of gleaming white Black-naped Terns (photo above). At one point a Black Noddy landed and was towered over by the larger Brown Noddies standing in large numbers alongside it (photo right). A short cruise around the island brought us views of all these and Brown Booby, Common Tern, and a brief pink-flushed Roseate Tern too. All too soon though our boat left this sandy paradise behind and we headed further out onto the reef for some world class snorkeling at Hastings Reef. A few boats moored in the area acted as a resting point for a small group of Little Terns. On the reef some experienced a myriad of marine life under the water: clownfish, angelfish, parrotfish, brain corals, blue starfish and others vied for their attentions, while the rest of us enjoyed a tour of this marvelous marine life from the comfort of a glass-bottomed boat.
After all this action it was time for a bit of shut-eye as we cruised back to Cairns, before we loaded up and headed into the tropical rainforest in the mountains north of Cairns. There was little light remaining although enough to stop in on a group of some fifty or so Crimson Finches flocking around a sugar cane train carriage. We settled in to our lodging at the well-named Cassowary House, with rain slashing down once more, although this did not deter a Striped Possum from being found feeding outside Rick’s room, although all too soon it scampered away from the bananas and disappeared into the forest.

**Day 3: October 15   CASSOWARY HOUSE & DAINTREE Queensland**

We awoke with trepidation and eager anticipation. Rain had been crashing down in the night, and so trepidation as to what this barmy year would bring. However, thankfully it managed to rain itself out during the night and the day dawned bright and clear. Eager anticipation as it was our first morning in the Wet Tropics of Queensland, and our first experience of the wonderful birds of the rainforest. Not long after dawn a new bird family for many fell, and a notable one too: the birds-of-paradise, as a male Victoria’s Riflebird appeared at his regular songpost. A female also appeared near the feeders, checking to see if the lodge owner, Sue, had put out any fruit for it yet. None visible, it slinked back into the rainforest once more! Our morning walk was full of exciting bird sounds: Noisy Pitta yelled its call further up the road, and Chowchillas called loudly down the road, while Yellow-breasted Boatbills “buzzed” nearby. However, none of these gave themselves up at this time, but they did serve to heighten our excitement. A short walk along the forested road saw us run into several Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrikes perched in a prominent dead tree, pick up our first Spectacled Monarchs and Pale Yellow Robins, and glimpse a Grey Goshawk take off from its nest.

Then suddenly we heard a dog barking, and I immediately turned back towards the lodge: this usually was a sign that a very special visitor had arrived in the garden. Seconds later, and a phone call from Sue confirmed my suspicions.
The male Southern Cassowary had just arrived, with three stripy chicks in toe (photo on page 8). We hurried back and then stood within a few meters of this rainforest giant, admiring the powerful legs and ominous looking claws. However, this individual was quite docile, happily wolfing down fruits in our presence, while our first ‘roo of the trip, the unimpressive and rodent like Musky Rat-Kangaroo scurried around behind it. A few lucky people also managed to catch a look at a young Red-necked Crake that was running around in the shady forest behind the rat-kangaroos. After a feast of tropical fruits and other Aussie “delicacies” (i.e. Vegemite!) over breakfast, when Macleay’s Honeyeaters squabbled at the sugar feeder (photo below), and a striking Spotted Catbird dropped in at the fruit feeder (photo above), we birded the surrounding forest once more. This led us to some notable finds: a lovely Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove lingered in the scope for some time, a White-eared Monarch fed actively in the forest canopy, and several colorful Wompoo Fruit-Doves drew attention to themselves with their strange “wompoo” calls.

In the afternoon we journeyed northwards to the most northern point of our tour: Daintree Village. Wires along the journey regularly held Forest Kingfishers on the lookout for prey, and a hulking Pheasant Coucal emerged out of the surrounding cane fields into a tree for our first looks at this
odd cuckoo. We took a car ferry across the huge Daintree River, cloaked on its flanks by mangroves and tropical forest. While we waited to board the ferry we admired a **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** perched on some near fruit. A forest walk on the north side of the Daintree seemed very quiet for a while aside from a pair of **Fairy Gerygones**, until a call emanated from the forest that stopped me dead in my tracks. Surely this was way too early to be hearing Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfishers just yet? This exquisite forest kingfisher spends the winter months across the Torres Strait in southern Papua New Guinea, before returning to breed in northern Queensland at the very end of October or early November. Now being mid-October we were certainly not expecting a shot at this one. I waited to hear it again, and this time there was no mistaking the downward trill of a **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**. We moved towards the sound and quickly found it lurking quietly in the forest understorey. A most unexpected find, that was hot news on the local list serves that night as it was the very first to be recorded in this part of Queensland for the season. We also enjoyed better views of **Grey Whistler** in the area, and picked up a male **Satin Flycatcher** on the journey to our superb lodge, **Red Mill House**. That night we enjoyed some classic Aussie hospitality from the legendary lodge owners, Trish and Andrew, and a typical Aussie meal of barbecued meats, washed down with cool XXXX beer, while a **Northern Brown Bandicoot** entertained us on the lawn below.

**Day 4: October 16  Daintree, Julattan, Mount Malloy  Queensland**

Our morning begun with a quick look for **Lovely Fairywren** along a forested road, which produced the distinctive female at least. This was followed by a gentle cruise along the Daintree River for a few hours, both jetting our way along the main river and wandering down a few side creeks. Not long after we boarded we picked up our first **Shining Flycatchers**, first the rufous, black and white female, and then the glossy deep blue male. And a fig tree in ripe condition shook from the flurry of activity caused by a number of **Wompoo Fruit-Doves** feasting on its fruits. The morning’s star bird though was **Papuan Frogmouth**, the local boatman and bird guide Glen pointing out two different nesting birds in the morning, that allowed for close up studies of their bark-like plumage, as they sat frozen on their riverside nests (**photo above**). A hanging mossy nest was attended by its owner, a **Large-billed Gerygone**, a pair of **Bush Thick-knees** were found lurking on a river bank, and a huge **Black-necked Stork** (referred to by the Australians as “Jabiru”), came flapping over
the boat. Another large and impressive bird, the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, a recent arrival from its wintering grounds in New Guinea was also seen flying past our boat. However, one of the other key birds of the area, **Great-billed Heron**, proved elusive for a while before Glen found it sitting boldly in the open, where it remained, long after we had taken its picture from every possible angle (*photo below*)! Glen’s careful maneuvering of the boat also got us crisp looks at a cute **Azure Kingfisher** perched on a thin branch overhanging the river.

After a quality cooked “brekky” back at Red Mill we were on the road again, heading for **Mareeba**, where the Outback meets the rainforest. Although we didn’t actually arrive in Mareeba until much, much later, as we passed too many birding hot spots along the way. First up we stopped at a fish farm close to **Daintree** where 11 **Radjah Shelducks** were found resting on the banks, and a small party of Black-fronted Dotterels were found on one of the muddier ponds. Then shortly after Doug’s keen eyesight picked out a far off **Beach Thick-knee** on the shore. A quick turn around and a scramble down to the beach saw us get up close to this beefy shorebird as it hunted crabs along the shoreline, while a **White-bellied Eagle** cruised majestically overhead. Next up was a planned stop at Abbatoir Swamp that had to be aborted when a heavy rain shower put paid to all birding plans at the time. I decided to head west to the edge of the Outback where we found a few sodden **Australian Bustards**, which we could watch while rain slashed down, from the relative comfort of the car (*photo left*).

Next up was a stop at a local Outback school, where a **Great Bowerbird** attended his bower several times while we were present, while **Red-winged Parrots** perched in the trees alongside. Better still though were a pair of wet **Squatter Pigeons** that allowed us to drive right up to them. The long grass also brought us one of our first fairywrens: this time the **Red-**
backed Fairywren that included a jet black male with a bright vermillion mantle. These same grasses also twitched from the movements of a flock of Red-browed Firetails. The next stop was in a tiny rainforest patch close to Julatten, where White-headed Pigeons landed conspicuously in trees overhead, Olive-backed Oriole made its first appearance, and we added two stunning monarchs: a striking Pied Monarch appeared on a trunk nearby, and our first Black-faced Monarch landed on a branch just overhead. Last up we dropped in at Abbatoir Swamp, where the hoped for Northern Fantail, was found seconds after we alighted from our vehicle. Somehow we had managed to bird around the heavy thunderstorm, and even produced some stand out moments for the tour in our first brief foray into Australia’s Outback.

Day 5: October 17  ATHERTON TABLELANDS  Queensland
This day saw us venture for the first time up into the mountain rainforests of the Atherton Tablelands, home to a small crop of endemics. The morning opened with a bold Bassian Thrush bouncing along the road in front of our vehicle at Mount Hypipamee, where it remained feeding in the open even after we had all jumped out to take a closer look. The morning continued with further Victoria’s Riflebirds, this time including a young male practicing his display with wings spread at a traditional songpost. Gray-headed Robins, the largest of this family in Australia, hopped around the picnic tables while we prepared for breakfast in the field. Once breakfast was underway, a Bridled Honeyeater moved in, searching for scraps that we might have left behind, and approaching within just a few feet of us. Another Atherton specialty, the Bower’s Shrike-Thrush was seen closeby too. A bird working its way up a near trunk proved to be a new family addition for all, a White-throated Treecreeper, one of three different species from this Australasian family encountered on the tour. A walk along the forest edge produced several Eastern Whipbirds feeding in the open along the verge, an Atherton Scrubwren working the forest understorey, several Mountain Thornbills in the subcanopy, our first gorgeous male Golden Whistlers, and a fantastic Fernwren singing from the top of a dead stump in full view of everyone.
After meeting up with our enthusiastic local guide Alan Gillanders, a resident of the tablelands, who led us through the rainforest to the morning’s showpiece: the bower of the gorgeous Golden Bowerbird, decorated with white lichen and scattered with rainforest flowers that had been stolen from a neighboring male’s bower (photo on page 12). The male sat patiently, glowing, alongside while everyone took photos of the bird and his impressive bower. On our way out from there we stopped to take in another bowerbird, this time the less spectacular Tooth-billed Bowerbird, a mimic of note that gave us a rendition of both Crimson Rosella, and Golden Bowerbird while we were there (photo below). Indeed the mimicry of the catbird was Alan’s (and our) gain, for it was when he heard this very bird mimicking Golden Bowerbird a week before that led Alan to scour the area, and find this new Golden Bowerbird site, after his traditional bird had very inconveniently disappeared just prior to our arrival.

We then opted to go for one of Australia’s most famous residents, although this time not a bird, but an odd mammal. Ordinarily largely nocturnal, in some areas some individuals are day active, and a quiet lake saw us get up close to a fantastic hump-backed female Platypus that fed away in front of us for some time (photo below). The same area also held an adult Nankeen Night-Heron, and several Buff-banded Rails fed along the edge of the lawns there. However, it another small passerine that made a big impact there. A White-throated Gerygone was lured into a close tree where it belted out its powerful song at close range. A small bird with a big and impressive voice, the gerygones are appropriately named as this word means “bird of song”. A near swamp stop produced hundreds of Plumed Whistling-Ducks (photo on next page), in addition to a Pacific Golden Plover working the edge, our first White-eyed Ducks, and even a couple of Agile Wallabies quietly feeding along the swamp shore.
A visit to the massive **Curtain Fig Tree** was impressive not only for this mighty tree, but also for the **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** seen in the same area. A quick stop at Atherton police station on the way back produced a spectacular **Scarlet Honeyeater** feeding in the blooming bottle brush. As we neared our motel in Mareeba for the night we were stopped in our tracks by the sight of hundreds of **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** setting down in the trees by the motorway, blackening their limbs, and this stop to admire them also produced a pair of **Blue-winged Kookaburras** in the white gums nearby.

**Day 6: October 18  ATHERTON TABLELANDS** Queensland

Another day dawned with us in another mountain rainforest on the tablelands. This time though we were at **Lake Barrine**, where **Great Crested Grebes** peppered the lake itself. However, they were not the reason for our visit. Walking through the forest **Musky Rat-Kangaroos** scampered off the trail, and our *real* target, the **Chowchilla** announced their presence loudly in the half light of dawn. Following their loud calls we managed to track down a white-throated male throwing up leaves as it fed actively in the leaf litter.

Several more **Spectacled Monarchs** were also found along the trail, along with some decidedly less striking **Brown Gerygones**, and we also got our first looks at **Emerald Dove** nonchalantly wandering around the parking lot. Returning to the area around **Hasties Swamp**, where we had been the day before, there was a significant boost in crane numbers. Several fields held well over 300 cranes, dominated by **Sarus Cranes** bugling, dancing and feeding in the fields around us, along with smaller numbers of more subdued looking **Brolgas** too. An unexpected find there though was a superb **Spotted Harrier** quartering a field near the crane “festival”. Another brief stop at the **Curtain Fig**, brought us good looks at a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, another sighting of **Varied Trillers**, and another smashing **Black-faced Monarch** for those absent for the earlier bird in Julatten.

In the afternoon we headed into dryer country near **Mareeba** where we first stopped off at the local golf course to admire the resting **Eastern Grey Kangaroos** loafing on the fairway, and then dropped into a near creek where we managed to locate a **White-browed Robin** with not too much effort (**photo**). The same creek also held more **Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrikes** and
Yellow Honeyeaters, our first Rufous Whistler, and our only Little Bronze-Cuckoos of the trip. Heading deeper into the dry country, where white gums dominated the open woodland we found Australia’s smallest bird, the Weebill, along with several Pale-headed Rosellas. We then got a call from another TB group birding near Lake Tinaroo that had come across a White-cheeked Honeyeater feeding in some blooming bangsias. A quick drive to the spot and we were soon eyeballing them too. A pair of these striking honeyeaters defending their chosen blossoms from all comers (photo left), and we also picked up a Lemon-bellied Flycatcher and Whitethroated Honeyeater in the same area too, in addition to a Black-necked Stork that was feeding along the lake shore.

Day 7: October 19  JULATTEN & CAIRNS Queensland
A final morning was still available to us to try and mop up any missing species in the Cairns region, before we returned to Cairns itself, and gave The Esplanade one more try for eastern shorebirds. Our day opened near Julatten down a quiet forested road that held a few Red-legged Pademelons hopping alongside it as we drove in. We were here though for a spectacular rainforest bird that glistens, jewel-like, in the forest understorey and whose loud calls we heard on arrival but struggled desperately to see the bird in all our early attempts. So we opted to eat breakfast in the field, while we rethought our plan of attack. The Noisy Pitta though made life easier when it appeared dramatically on the road while we were still eating breakfast, where it returned a number of times to ensure we all got stellar looks. As if that was not enough, we also tracked a calling bird down that flew into a tree to call back at our tape, where it remained for some time, while we trained the scope on it, and allowed us all to soak up its exquisite, dreamy plumage. Also in the area were a few confiding honeyeaters that gave us our last looks, as they are only found in northern Queensland, with both Macleay’s and Bridled Honeyeaters feeding at eyelevel in front of us all. A return visit to another rainforest patch near Julatten saw us find another Yellow-breasted Boatbill, and after much chasing, and a little help from Chris, we finally clapped eyes on a male Cicadabird that had taunted us for a time beforehand, and also managed to locate a male Superb Fruit-Dove at long last too. A proper look at Topknot Pigeon was also much appreciated when Mike and Chris found a pair perched in an open tree.
After a quick stop at Lake Mitchell where we picked up Black Swan, Comb-crested Jacana and Green Pygmy-Goose for the trip, we made a brief stop near Yorkey’s Knob where we finally, (rather belatedly), tracked down a number of Chestnut-breasted Munias, among a mob of Crimson Finches and Nutmeg Mannikins. The lure of the shore then called us back to Cairns, where the tides this time were much more favorable. A healthy pack of shorebirds awaited us on the flats, both Greater and Lesser Sandplovers stood shoulder to shoulder; Terek Sandpipers hurried along the shore; Great Knots dropped in and out; a few “Sharpies” or Sharp-tailed Sandpipers hid out within a larger pack of stints; and best of all was a lone Broad-billed Sandpiper trying to hide out in a group of Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints. Far Eastern Curlews were also conspicuous, being the largest of all the waders present, as were a few Royal Spoonbills lazing on the shore.

Day 8: October 20  CAIRNS to BRISBANE to LAMINGTON Queensland

An early morning flight out of Cairns saw us arriving in Brisbane ready for a whole new set of birds. Still in Queensland, we had now traveled significantly south and so had left the tropics behind. Our first stop of the day was a set of mangroves near the airport at Nudgee Beach, which brought us a Collared Kingfisher loudly announcing its presence from a roadside wire. A pair of Mangrove Gerygones were appropriately enough seen within the mangroves, as was a Mangrove Honeyeater. Swimming down a narrow channel amongst the mangroves was our first dapper male Chestnut Teal. The nearby casuarina trees also held our first Striped Honeyeaters. Overhead Whistling Kite and White-bellied Sea-Eagle passed by. Next stop was a koala park near the city, with that flagship Australian mammal being our main target, along with a rare raptor. Both disappointed on this occasion, as heavy rain saw us retreat back to the vehicle before we had even had a real chance of locating a koala, and the weather also led the Square-tailed Kite to hunker down in its nest, so that only a tiny fraction of the bird could be seen. Our first Noisy Miners, a genuinely noisy honeyeater, were scant compensation for this!
With the rain still crashing down we decided to continue our journey south towards Lamington National Park, and the legendary O Reilly’s Rainforest Retreat. We stopped off in the town of Canungra, where we enjoyed our first taste of Australian meat pies, an Aussie staple, watched Green Figbirds and Olive-backed Orioles visiting a blooming tree in town, and also lucked into a small group of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos that alighted in the trees on the edge of town. In the late afternoon we finally arrived at O Reilly’s and could not resist checking out the Border Track that leads right from the reception of the lodge, where we found our first pair of Southern Logrunners that came comically bounding into my tape, and then near dusk we found an Australian Owlet-Nightjar emerge from its daytime cavity and rest at the edge of its hole to the joy of all (photo on previous page). Over dinner we admired the black morph of Mountain Brush-tailed Possum visiting the fruit feeder by the restaurant. A post-dinner hunt for Marbled Frogmouth though proved fruitless, a calling bird remaining firmly hidden within the forest on this occasion.

Day 9: October 21  LAMINGTON NP QLD
O Reilly’s has become world famous for the close up views that can be had of normally shy rainforest creatures. Habituated birds come in to be fed daily, allowing for rare looks at dazzling rainforest birds. Most notably this includes some colorful parrots and beautiful bowerbirds. Early on we saw some of these, as Crimson Rosellas hopped around the balconies looking for a handout, Satin Bowerbirds bounded across the lawns, and a number of beautiful Regent Bowerbirds sat impatiently in the trees, waiting for the first official feeding of the day (photo left), while striking Red-browed Firetails picked up scraps below (photo above). Later in the day Rick and Ken enjoyed some close attention from
Australian King-Parrots too (photo next page). Other tame birds were prominent too: Gray Shrike-Thrush hopped around our feet, striking Wonga Pigeons nonchalantly wandered around on the paved road close to our feet, and later in the day Superb Fairywrens entertained as they poked their way around the car park (photo page 19). Australian Brush-Turkeys while already familiar to us from our time around Cairns, border on being a nuisance at O Reilly’s, especially for those with a handful of grain. We saw this firsthand too! Later in the day the approachability of animals at O Reilly’s extended from birds to mammals too, as we watched some cute Red-necked Pademelons happily munching away on the lodge lawns (photo next page).

The forest edge also provided a good opportunity to view a calling Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, which had eluded us in our earlier attempts in the closed forest near Cairns. We entered the forest, and almost tripped over various scrubwrens that fed alongside the path, as did a very approachable Eastern Whipbird. This striking bird was a regular backdrop to our birding throughout, the bird that possesses the distinctive whip cracking call that will long be remembered by all. Another friendly Lamington resident, the Yellow Robin hopped on and off the path and clung to vertical trunks at extremely close range on many occasions. We also managed to track down a Rose Robin and a showy group of Green Catbirds too. A Russet-tailed Thrush though was typically elusive (and very unlike most of the other O Reilly’s residents), allowing just a
few of us a look before it slinked back into deeper cover. **Rufous Fantails** though were on better form, and this truly stunning rainforest bird gave us some great looks at its flashy plumage (photo left).

After lunch (where more tame birds hung around the lunch tables—including marauding **Pied Currawongs**, and inquisitive **Lewin’s Honeyeaters**), we changed tack and visited the more open drier eucalypt-dominated woodland on the slopes below the rainforest on the plateau, where the birding was markedly different. The dry woodland near the edge of the rainforest brought us a **Red-browed Treecreeper** and the so-called “Diamond Sparrow” or **Spotted Pardalote**. Dropping down lower from the plateau we tracked down a great **Koala** in a gum tree that had been reported earlier in the day by another diligent TB group in the area, and even managed to see it move! Close to the Koala came several **Bell Miners**, their bell-like calls ringing all around us, and a cryptic nesting **Tawny Frogmouth** blended in well nearby. The only **White-naped Honeyeaters** of the trip were seen near the dozing koala, even if they were right at the top of the tallest tree present. Several new thornbills were also found in the dry woodland, both **Buff-rumped and Striated Thornbills** being added to our list, (with **Brown Thornbill** having been added in the rainforest).

After another magnificent O Reilly’s dinner the TB faithful headed out for another shot at the **Marbled Frogmouth**, where this time the bird performed with distinction, coming in to glare at us with angry red eyes on several memorable occasions.
Day 10: October 22  LAMINGTON NP QLD to SYDNEY NSW

A final session at O Reilly’s was needed to go after some final additions. First we began overlooking a large fig tree, where shortly after dawn our target was admired in dramatic fashion: a male Paradise Riflebird flapped in and landed in the open, where it sat to soak up the early morning sun and call loudly. As it sat within the sun the light caught its shimmering plumage and brought it to life: the throat gleamed deep purple, the breast shimmered green, and the gape was revealed to be bright citrus yellow when the bird gave its loud rasping call. As we admired this magnificent bird-of-paradise we noticed a flock of swifts passing overhead: an early arrival of White-throated Needletails. Then we received a call from another TB group on site who had found the rare Spotted Quail-Thrush down the road. We aborted our original plan to walk the trail, loaded into the van and sped along a rather bumpy dirt road to the scene. On arrival we tried taping the recently lost bird back, to no effect. So we decided to walk up a dirt track where it was last seen and just as we turned a corner, there was the female Spotted Quail-Thrush feeding along the edge of the grass, where it remained for all of us to take it in, and even swoon over it. A most unexpected find, as this species has become quite rare in recent times in Lamington. On our way down from Lamington we finally managed to find the prettiest wallaby of them all, Whiptail Wallaby more aptly referred to by its old name, Pretty-faced Wallaby (photo below). A quick venture to Mount Tamborine in a last futile attempt to track down the elusive Albert’s Lyrebird unfortunately came to nothing, although we did see our first Gray Butcherbird, catch up with another Green Catbird too, and bid farewell to the last brush-turkeys of the tour. En-route back to Brisbane Airport we could not resist stopping in at the Square-tailed Kite nest again, and were rewarded for our persistence as this time we could actually believe there was a Square-tailed Kite in there, that gave us some great looks nestside. In the late afternoon we flew south to the next state down, New South Wales, which is also the most populous and diverse state. After arrival we adjusted our watches to the new time zone, and checked into a motel on the outskirts of Royal National Park, our next, markedly different, destination.
Day 11: October 23  ROYAL NP, BASS POINT & BARREN GROUNDS  NSW
Our change in scene was obvious even before we left our motel, as the dawn chorus contained up until now unfamiliar species to us like Red Wattlebirds and Australian Ravens. Soon enough we were on the edge of The Royal National Park, and walking Lady Carrington Drive, a dirt track flanked by subtropical rainforest. Being a Sunday we birded while dodging bikers speeding along the track between sightings: Eastern Spinebills showed well in the first section of the track, as did a marvelous male Leaden Flycatcher that got all excited flared up its crest and called back at us while perched at eye level. While Superb Fairywrens continued to show up, familiar to us from our time in Lamington, we also added another “fairy”, with a family party of dashing Variegated Fairywrens along the drive, and also got some stellar looks at Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. However, the morning’s showstopper came a little later. Mike glanced back down the track, and was speechless when a male Superb Lyrebird sauntered out onto the open track (photo next page). He quickly alerted us and we spun around to see the world’s largest songbird walk onto some near rocks and continue to feed away while we watched on. A notable new family addition for all. Moments later and the other notable bird in the area, Rock Warbler, an endemic to New South Wales, awoke and began singing from some nearby rocks to the pleasure of all (photo left). With our main forest targets seen, we then headed out onto the coastal heath within Royal, (noting a small group of massive Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos passing over the drive on our way out), where Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters were our main addition, as were a number of striking New Holland Honeyeaters. The shy Chestnut-rumped Hylacola though was less helpful only giving a couple of us a look before it went to ground, and the Southern Emuwren showed to no one after a brief spell of calling, and so we decided to look for it later in the day again.
The **Brush Bronzewing** that flushed from the track unfortunately ended up being our only record for the tour.

With the day warming considerably and the birds slowing with this, we headed back to the motel, picked up our bags and pointed the vehicle south to **Bass Point**, our planned lunch stop. As we made our way there the weather turned nasty, although on this occasion we were happy about it. Just what was needed to bring some seabirds close inshore. On arrival at Bass Point some close **Short-tailed Shearwaters** were a precursor of what was to come. Moving down to the point itself, and a strong onshore wind mixed with the odd burst of heavy rain had brought seabirds close inshore in their hundreds. A healthy stock of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** held the odd “Wedgie” too (**Wedge-tailed Shearwater**), and we also managed to identify a close **Sooty Shearwater** resting on the sea. Smaller paler shearwaters comprised of both **Fluttering and Hutton’s Shearwaters**, and some spectacular **Australian Gannets** also passed by on a regular basis. While we seawatched we also picked up our first **Red Wattlebirds** by the parking lot. Checking the rocky shoreline paid off for the hoped-for **Sooty Oystercatcher**, and several **Pied Cormorants** rested on the pier above. The car was brought to a halt for other new additions, notably the exotic **Red-whiskered Bulbul** an established bird that was originally introduced from southeast Asia, and we also saw our first **European Goldfinches**, although an **Australasian Pipit** in the same area looked a little more at home!

With the weather clearing and some of the shearwaters moving offshore once more, we were drawn to our next destination: **Barren Grounds**. On the way down to Jamberoo we got our first decent looks at a large group of **Straw-necked Ibis**, and also had prolonged views of a **Swamp Harrier** quartering some close fields. In stark contrast to Bass Point’s balmy conditions we found Barren Grounds to be calm and without rain, perfect conditions to chase after **Southern Emuwren** that we had missed so pointedly that morning in Royal. That was soon forgotten when first a female, and then a beautiful male popped up several times at close range, the male revealing its seductive powder blue throat on several memorable occasions. Little else played ball though, both **Pilotbird** and **Eastern Bristlebird** being heard but remaining hidden at this time. A **Brush Wattlebird** was more helpful and let us all catch up with this heathland species that had eluded all but a few of us earlier in Royal. As the day waned we returned to our Jamberoo hotel come pub, and had a hearty meal in preparation for the next day’s long drive deep into inland New South Wales.
Day 12: October 24  BARREN GROUNDS to LEETON  New South Wales
We had just a few hours to check in once more at Barren Grounds and try and pick up some of the tough species to be found there. On this day though, with rain lashing down in freezing conditions a few hours felt like way too long! After picking up a pair of confiding Pilotbirds hopping around a deserted building we high-tailed it out of there, hoping as we drove deeper inland we would escape the truly awful conditions of that morning. Under the circumstances we were relieved to find any birds there at all! As we drove further inland the scenery changed, as we were entering the agricultural heartland of Australia. And with that too was a welcome change in the weather. I had told everyone to get some sleep for the early part of the journey, as I expected little until we were several more hours inland. Barbara did not heed my advice and it led to one of the finds of the trip: a fantastic male Superb Parrot that allowed us to watch it for a long period as it fed in the long grass by a gas station long before we would expect to find one (photo left). A most unexpected place to find it, right at the northeastern extremity of its range, and great to get stellar looks that eased the pressure on this species that was building for later that afternoon. As luck would have it another TB group was refueling in the same gas station, and got to enjoy this striking parrot too! Around lunchtime we were deep within pastoral country, and found our first Emus of the trip, with first an adult and then a short time later a whole family party. A short time before an odd shape shuffling along across the road turned out to be another bizarre Australian mammal, the Short-beaked Echidna, the nearest (albeit pretty far off) living relative of the platypus, that looks likes an overgrown long-snouted hedgehog (photo). Like the platypus it is a monotreme that lays eggs rather than giving birth to live young like the marsupials. Other additions included our first Rufous Songlarks and Brown Falcons. As we drove deeper into drier country the roadside verge brought us two new species, and a new family sweep in just minutes, with White-winged Chough on one side of the road, and several Apostlebirds on the other. Both members of an endemic, two species, Australian bird family. Then came our first Yellow Rosellas at a designated stop in an area of river Red Gums, feeding close to a lone Eastern Rosella.
In the late afternoon we made our first visit to the legendary **Five Bough Swamp** on the edge of **Leeton** *(photo below)*. Having only visited there a few weeks earlier I was shocked to see the affects of more recent heavy rains that forced us to wade our way through to the best lookouts on the marsh. For those of us who got wet feet it was well worth it as we got a barrage of new species: **Musk and Blue-billed Ducks** drifted in the open waters; **Red-necked Avocets**, **Pied Stilts**, **Red-kneed Dotterels**, and **Australian Shelducks** rested on the islands with **Australian Pelicans**; **Australian Reed-Warblers** sung continually from the dense reedbeds; a pack of **Whiskered Terns** fluttered over the waters picking off insects from the surface; **Swamp Harriers** circled low over the reedbeds; a small group of **Glossy Ibis** fed along the muddy edge; and all three grebe species dived in the open waters (including our first **Hoary-headed Grebes**). The bushes around the fringes of the march held new species too, with a trio of new thornbills: **Inland, Yellow, and Yellow-rumped Thornbills** all being found late in the afternoon. The wet feet did not feel quite so bad when we glanced down at the list of additions at the end of the day!

**Day 13: October 25**  
**ROUND HILL & FIVE BOUGH SWAMP**  
**NSW**

What a day this was. We started very, very early and headed north into the **mallee** of **Round Hill Nature Reserve**, and ended the day at **Five Bough Swamp** once more (this time better prepared for wading through the various flooded areas!) By making the long pilgrimage to Round Hill we put ourselves in range to get a number of **mallee** species not possible anywhere else on the tour. Although this required an awfully early start, all agreed at the end of the day what a cracking day this had been, bringing some people nearly forty new species in the morning alone! As we drove north Mike at least, alert in the front of the vehicle, managed to add **Spotted Nightjar** to the list that flew up into the car headlights, and then sadly went to ground. Mallee is a type of habitat dominated by multi-stemmed eucalypt species. It is also famed amongst experienced Aussie birders as one of the easiest places to get lost in Australia, as it looks so uniform. On arrival with nervous excitement as to what the day
might bring, we were not greeted with the most auspicious of starts when low-lying fog greeted us on arrival. We tried in vain to get looks at a **Restless Flycatcher**, although it was just a nondescript shape in the gloom. We did return later to find that it was sitting on a nest, where it gave much better views, and was our only one of the trip.

Driving slowly down the road we jumped out of the car at the first sound of a Chestnut Quail-Thrush emanating from the mallee, although this one refused to emerge from cover. Trying again a little later we first picked up a superb **Southern Scrub Robin**, that after initially proving difficult eventually settled down and gave some choice looks. We were still busy enjoying this classic mallee bird when the **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** decided to call again, so I took a GPS reading and we headed into the mallee in hot pursuit. Luck was not on our side at this point as it was calling from an area of deep cover, and just a brief look at the male was got as it slinked away (**photo above**). I tried to round the bird up and the pair flew up across the group and landed somewhere behind them. This did not deter the male though that immediately began calling back and we slowly walked in a line through the mallee to try and find it. We had not walked more than a couple of paces when Mike gestured into a eucalypt at eye level in front of us where a crisp male Chestnut Quail-Thrush was perched in full song. Even as we gave frantic directions to one another and some jostled for a better angle for a photo, there it remained in full glorious view to us all. A gob smacking moment, and one of the standout moments of the tour, let alone the morning. When it finally dropped onto the ground and wandered slowly back into deeper mallee cover, I informed everyone that the remainder of the morning was all downhill from here, I mean how can you top that!? Making our way back to the car we emerged back onto the wide red dirt road that cuts through the reserve, thankful we had not lost our way in this treacherous habitat, we immediately heard another key mallee bird calling from where we had just come from. This time though we managed to tempt the **Shy Heathwren** into a few open patches that allowed us to watch it from the road. With these three key species all bagged in one small patch of mallee we were simply buzzing with such a fantastic start to the morning. Next up, someone mentioned they had just seen a bright blue bird, and as it could be nothing else here, I put the I-Pod in play and soon enough a scintillating male **Splendid Fairywren** homed into view for all (**photo next page**), rightfully
bringing appreciative gasps all around, and everyone agreeing it would be better named “Stupendous” Fairywren! Another tiny bird with a big voice was then seen, with our only Western Gerygone of the tour, before we returned to an area of more mixed trees (termed “mulga” habitat).

The mulga was positively alive with new birds: several White-winged Trillers, including some dapper males were found feeding both in the trees and on the ground; a Brown Quail was flushed up from a waterhole; a Common Bronzewing took to the wing as we walked through and then alighted on an open branch ready for us to train the scope on it; small active parties of passerines contained both Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills; Brown-headed Honeyeaters made their first appearance, as did several noisy Yellow-throated Miners, sporting the bright white rump that identifies it from their commoner cousin the Noisy Miner. Best of all though were our first Cockatiels, a noisy bird that is so familiar to us from the cage trade, and great to see here in its native home flying wild and free.

We then decided to head north and check another area of mallee in the northern section of the reserve. As we headed up the dirt road, kicking up red dust behind us we ran into Iain Campbell with another TB group who directed us to a rich area for even more new honeyeaters. A stop there was very productive: Yellow-plumed Honeyeater dropping in for a time, several striking White-eared Honeyeaters returning to the area time and again, Singing Honeyeater popping up in the same tree, further Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were seen in this, our first, morning for the species, and better still was a superb White-fronted Honeyeater a new species for all the group, guide included. It was not all about honeyeaters at Round Hill though, Barbara getting a perched Pink Cockatoo that fled the coup before we could get the vehicle back for all of us to get it, and the honeyeater patch also produced a fine Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo. The morning had simply flown by, and after another lunch in the field we had to bid farewell to the bird-rich mallee of Round Hill and head south back to Leeton. As we emerged out of the mallee into the open agricultural fields to the north of Lake Cargelligo we started finding other new birds: several Pacific Herons circled low over the road, and
**Brown Songlarks** regularly took to the wing in display flight, and perched on roadside fenceposts. A small party of **Bluebonnets** (yet another parrot species) were also appreciated in the area too, that also brought us our first **White-fronted Chats** perching out on top of the vast fields of purple noxious weeds. It was becoming hard to leave the area at all what with all the new birds that popped up into view, and a vocal party of **Gray-crowned Babblers** stopping us along the road again, as did a strange lizard, the odd **Shingleback** that had us rushing out of the van for photos before it slithered back into cover.

As we headed south from Lake Cargelligo a low flying raptor brought us to another emergency stop, and a good job too as a **Little Eagle** glided low over the deserted highway. Finally, we arrived back in Leeton, picked up our sandals in readiness for the flooded **Five Bough Swamp** once more. This time everyone managed to make it to the end and soak up all the many wetland species on offer. In fact by the high standards of Five Bough this was a poor year, as the wettest of wet (and dry) seasons had led many inland species to remain deeper inland where there was still plentiful water. Before returning to the marsh though we managed to find our first zebra or **Chestnut-eared Finches**. The swamp itself though was still well worth a visit though with many of yesterday’s key birds still present: a **Red-necked Avocet** dozed among the **Pied Stilts** on the island; bands of **Musk Ducks** crossed the open waters including a female with a number of “mini-musks” in toe; **Little Grassbirds** called incessantly from the reedbeds and at least one was tempted into view; an **Australian Hobby** that scythed across the marsh was a new addition; **Swamp Harriers** again quartered the reeds; and our first **Australian Shovelers** dabbled at the edge of the smaller ponds.

**Day 14: Oct. 26 Binya & Hay Plains New South Wales**

Once again this was another landmark day on the tour, like no other and like the day before bring us many new species only recorded on this one magical day. Our day begun with a short drive north to **Binya State Forest**, an area of dry woodland and **mulga** near the city of Griffith. Binya offered us the chance to catch up with a number of birds missed around Round Hill, and to add some other new species too. As we munched on Cheerios in the field we listened to the dawn chorus for signs of nay key species. Some parrots that lazily flapped into a near dead tree brought breakfast to a halt for a little while as they were yet another new parrot for us: **Mallee Ringneck**. Then suddenly we heard the sound we really wanted to hear that day: **Painted Honeyeater**, a blossom nomad that wanders into the area especially when the mistletoe is in flower. However, when we moved toward the sound nothing more was heard and no striking black-and-white honeyeater flew into the recording. With that that three TB groups birding Binya that day all split in different directions, with cell phones on hand. I was feeling pretty chipper as our planned morning walk
headed straight into the area we had heard the honeyeater, leaving me with the cocky feeling we were going to be sending up the alarm. However, it turned out very different. After a quiet spell I received a call from another TB guide, Nick Leseberg, who had found a tree full of Painted Honeyeaters north of where we were! We turned about face and walked there as quickly as we could. It was only at this stage we realized quite how far we had wandered. However, there was no need to worry, for as soon as we arrived at a large clearing the distinct far-carrying calls of Painted Honeyeaters could be heard, and just a little playback brought a magnificent bird screaming into a tree right beside us (photo left). One of Australia’s finest honeyeaters there for all to see. Now we had found this patch of woodland we ran into quality birds that came to us thick and fast over the remainder of our morning there. Next was a mobile party of White-browed Babblers moving low through the mulga. This was followed soon after by a wonderful party of Mulga Parrots dropping down to drink at some puddles in the middle of an open muddy trail. Normally a difficult and scarce species on the tour, we ran into repeatedly that morning allowing for great looks at several spiffing males, a vivid green parrot with a scarlet belly patch and bright citrus yellow wing flashes. Another colorful species, popped up from time to time that morning, the dashing Red-capped Robin, a female of which we had seen earlier at Round Hill. This time however, we found a number of breathtaking males perched on low branches in the mulga. Walking circles through the woodland (and trying desperately not to get lost in the process, something I failed on later that morning!), we came across a pair of Speckled Warblers hopping around on the sandy ground beneath the pines; found more Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and a Striped Honeyeater within the few mistletoe patches in bloom; and came across another stupendous male Splendid Fairywren.
Keeping a sharp ear out for the shortest of calls we picked up the brief call of a Black-eared Cuckoo and moving toward the sound pressing play on the I-Pod brought the bird onto an open snag in front of us. With that we wandered back towards the vehicle, picked up another Little Eagle circling low overhead, and arrived after a little delay once I had wandered mistakenly off-route. Red-faced I arrived back at the vehicle and we headed to a tasty Italian bakery in Griffith for a slap up meal before we headed west to the Hay Plains.

As we drove westwards the terrain changed dramatically, becoming flat and uniform, and treeless. Just low scrub covered the plains, interspersed by the odd larger patch of saltbush. Although it looked kind of barren I was well aware these very plains would be our focus that evening for one of the tour’s biggest birding highlights: a night safari for the Plains-wanderer (photo left). The drive to Hay was pretty uneventful no new birds being added, and we made it to Hay with time for a rare break in activities, where some wandered about town and picked up the first Brown Treecreeper of the trip, and repeat views of Yellow Rosella. Late in the afternoon we stopped off in a takeaway in town and picked up some dinner for later, and then point the car south towards Deniliquin. In the middle of nowhere with “barren” plains sprawling to every horizon around us, we met our local guide Phil for some pre-wanderer birding. Phil drove us down dirt tracks onto private farms with scattered trees in pursuit of target birds to great effect. Although a little far off, there was no mistaking the pink flush on the Pink Cockatoo perched in the distance, a family group of Emus, and another small band of Bluebonnets. Attempts to
get closer to the cockatoo had to be aborted when some dangerously soft ground was encountered. We retreated back to the dirt track we had come in on, and set about “ticking off” a “neon” male **White-winged Fairywren** literally glowing on top of the saltbush, in stark contrast to the colorless, barren surroundings. Sadly, this was our last of seven possible fairywrens for the tour, every single one of them drop dead gorgeous. We also picked up some more **White-fronted Chats** for those who had missed them earlier at Round Hill. Driving along a dirt track we stumbled upon a feeding party mid-track that included more stunning fairywrens, and a group of seven or so **Southern Whitefaces**. A mob of low-flying swallows contained a squadron of **Tree Martins** to add to the Fairy Martins regularly recorded on the tour so far.

Wandering some barely drivable sandy tracks through private farms with a walkie-talkie radio to keep us in contact with Phil in his car, the radio crackled to life with the words “my mate is watching a Ground Cuckoo-Shrike”. We barely had time to digest these words from Phil when his car leapt into top gear and sped towards a neighboring farm. We just about managed to keep pace with Phil, who then stopped suddenly and jumped out, gesturing towards his mate and local sheep farmer Dave who was casually keep an eye on a **Ground Cuckoo-Shrike** wandering through one of his flower-sprinkled paddocks. A top find of a very scarce and difficult inland species. While under attack from a barrage of mosquitoes that had appeared out of nowhere we enjoyed fantastic views of this strange cuckoo-shrike that unlike its congeners dwells largely on the ground and possesses an unusual forked tail. We then retreated back to the vehicle to escape the mosquito horde, before hopping out moments later when Phil announced another surprise “**Chestnut-crowned Babbler**”, here at the very extremity of its range in southeastern Australia. The babblers played hard to get, always managing to escape most of our gazes and hide in the few trees that were scattered on the farm. However, after circling them from various angles we eventually found three birds feeding in an open paddock that remained there for us all to get scoped up. Definitely an unexpected bonus bird.

We then met up with Iain Campbell’s TB group and made our way onto a private farmstead where we checked their local pool at dusk and finished the
daylight hours watching over two hundred Black-tailed Native-Hens clambering and calling on the banks, and watched both Red-kneed and Black-fronted Dotterels feeding shoulder to shoulder along the near edge. After another short drive up another maze of dirt tracks, we all transferred into a group of five waiting 4WD drive land rovers specially arranged for our night safari on the Hay Plains, particularly for the area’s celebrity bird: the Plains-wanderer. This bird at first looks like a quail, but has unusually long, ungainly legs for that kind of bird. It is in fact a bizarre shorebird that occupies its own, one species family. The allure of this bird is made all the more by the fact that it is rare and very difficult to find, the best method being to drive across the plains at night with a spotlight in hand. Each car was armed with a radio and amazingly quickly the alarm went up from the newest driver in the team, Steve, who began his first drive with the announcement “I’ve got a Plains-Wanderer here”! Not a bad initiation! Not only that but it was a fantastic female bird that possesses by far the brightest plumage of the sexes and is also the larger of the two, just what we were after. By the end of this night safari multiple close range sightings had been enjoyed by all, and Phil even took a notch further by discovering an inconspicuous nest, which he took a careful note of. Moving into the paddocks with the longer vegetation we searched for another inconspicuous bird that once again that evening proved much easier than expected. A female Stubble Quail took to the wing and spotlights were trained on it, and expertly pinpointed its position when it landed, so we could approach and all see it up close (photo on previous page). Leaving the quail behind next up we were seeking another inland. Just a few weeks earlier, and before another bout of heavy rains and spurt in growth of the vegetation on the plains I had visited with another group and found numerous Banded Lapwings. However, with the changed conditions just a few remained. Luckily the local guides had been out the night before and knew just the right paddock to check. Soon enough, a pair of these striking plovers were also lined up in the spotlight. Lastly, we targeted a usually tricky gamebird, the tiny Little Buttonquail, although with the experts we had on hand that night it was no surprise when just minutes
later, a female buttonquail squinted back at us in the spotlight (**photo previous page**). We returned to our vehicles and drove back towards the highway, picking up a great **Wedge-tailed Eagle** roosting on a fencepost on the way out, and a massive male **Western Gray Kangaroo** closed out what had been a truly fantastic days birding in inland New South Wales.

**Day 15: Oct. 27  Hay Plains & Blue Gum Swamp to Lithgow NSW**

After yesterday’s exhilarating night safari, that led to an unusually late finish to our birding, we showed some heart today and awoke late for a leisurely breakfast to recover from the rigors of our recent birding adventures. After refueling with a hearty fry up in a local café we headed south back onto the Hay Plains to chase after a sighting from another TB group the day before. Iain Campbell’s directions were pinpoint and we rushed towards the spot where he had found a group of Orange Chats the evening before, while we were ogling Ground Cuckoo-shrike. Our journey there was delayed by some roadside **White-backed Swallows** that completed the set of all possible swallows for the tour. Then a few kilometers further on, a male **Orange Chat** glowed from the top wire of a fence while a couple of dowdy females were frankly ignored by all nearby! Then it was off for another slight diversion from our normal route to Lithgow to go after another find from yesterday. Although, a slight delay was in order (once again) when a couple of roadside roosting spoonbills contained a single **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** roosting right alongside a **Royal Spoonbill**, the former a new bird for us and the only one recorded on the entire tour. A pool alongside them contained another thirty or so **Black-tailed Native-Hens** scurrying around the edges and a couple of **Plumed Whistling-Ducks**. Then it was back on track (sort of), this time to the quiet town of **Darlington Point** that was playing host to a mob of corellas, both the smaller **Little Corellas** feeding with the rosy-faced **Long-billed Corellas**, which dominated the pack in the town park on arrival, feeding alongside the now very familiar **Galahs (photo above)**. While watching the mass of white shapes feeding on the well-trimmed lawns I noticed several pale gray forms at the edge of the lawn, and was incredulous when I realized it was another group of **Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes**. I had not **expected** one of them, let alone two sightings of four different birds! Another pair of **Yellow Rosellas** was also found feeding quietly on the same rich lawn.
With a long journey ahead we got our heads down and headed eastwards towards our final stop, Lithgow. Just one further stop was made at a fantastic swamp on the edge of the town of Forbes that brought us a good number of **Pink-eared Ducks**, some even having small parties of chicks in toe. This open swamp also had a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** glaring down from a perch beside its large stick nest, and contained further **Australian Shovelers** and **Musk Ducks**. Several confiding **Blue-billed Ducks** dived at the edge of the reeds, and **Hoary-headed Grebes** also cruised the open waters. The tall *eucalyptus* trees bordering the marsh also contained a small party of **White-plumed Honeyeaters**, which were new for most of the group at this stage. Before long though we had to leave this magical wetland behind and head in earnest for Lithgow, with a **Turquoise Parrot** darting in front of the vehicle being the only notable sighting during the rest of the journey, that unfortunately only flashed in front of Sam, and could not be relocated in a short search of the area.

**Day 16: Oct. 28**  
**Capertee Valley** New South Wales to **HOBART** Tasmania  
The small town of **Capertee** (a town of under two hundred people) sits at the head of the widest valley in the southern hemisphere (part of a canyon wider even than the Grand Canyon), and is at the western peak of the Great Dividing Range. This mountain range, that includes the picturesque Blue Mountains that we passed through later that day en-route to Sydney airport, acts a significant barrier to bird distributions, many species only occurring to the west, on the inland side of the range. It is also a major destination for birders, the valley offering us many species that were only gettable during this one morning, before we departed in the afternoon for our evening flight to the Tasmanian capital of Hobart. A predawn drive saw us climb up to the head of the valley at Capertee village (800m/2625ft), and then drop down steeply to a narrow creek in the valley (following a heavily-built kangaroo, the **Euro**, bouncing along the road ahead of us on the way down), fringed by open woodland. Having visited this area not long before this tour, I went straight after a couple of birds that I had seen there on my previous visit. After another “brekky” in the field I tried the tape of **Crested Shrike-Tit**, and just minutes later one of these striking whistlers flew into a tree directly overhead right on cue (**photo above**). The shrike-tit in the bag we then tried a call of **Fuscous Honeyeater** and not to be outdone by the shrike-tit they too
obliged very quickly and came into some near trees. Stopping in more open country further down the valley we found a rather belated **Double-barred Finch** for the trip list, and also picked up our first **Dusky Woodswallows** hawking in the chilly morning air overhead. We then checked a small reed-fringed pool for finches and nothing doing, headed back up the valley to another birdy creek. The tall trees at the base of the creel holding **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters**, and with a little use of the I-Pod a small noisy gaggle of playful **Black-chinned Honeyeaters** were brought onto our lists too. The same creek brought us the first **Jacky Winter** of the morning, although later birds perched close to us at eye level were more popular than this bird perched high in a dead tree. Another **Dollarbird** also occupied a lofty position in the same area. The high-pitched calls of the tiny **Turquoise Parrot** were heard, and not long after a single bird whizzed past us at high speed.

We then returned once more to the small reed-fringed pool that we had checked earlier, but this time found a very different scene. Within minutes we found our first **Plum-headed Finch**, which was why we were here, and also a dazzling **Diamond Firetail** that we all ogled in the scope. While all this finch activity held our attentions, a Hooded Robin sang continually nearby and provided a notable alternative distraction. I wandered down the road toward the sound, and quickly found a streaky young juvenile **Hooded Robin** that was fed by a striking adult male while Mike and I watched. We quickly gestured for the rest of the group to join us and both birds remained in the area for us all to enjoy. Back at the small pool again some quiet parrot-like noises in the roadside trees were tracked down to a couple of **Little Lorikeets** feeding in a roadside bloom, that were soon lined up in the scope before they took flight. Driving further down the valley towards the Scottish sounding town of Glen Davis, we stopped at some open fields to admire some **Australasian Bushlarks** that were perched on the roadside fenceposts. While we drove around the valley we found numerous **Red-rumped Parrots**, familiar to us from our time within inland New South Wales, and also saw a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** gliding across the edge of the canyon. Checking a *casuarina*-fringed creek for the area’s rarest bird, the Regent Honeyeater we unfortunately could not find any of these mega-rare honeyeaters, with no recent reports from the area, but found a few **White-throated Treecreepers** and a single pair of **Brown Treecreepers**. The latter though all too soon flitted away before most people could snatch a glance. This wrong was righted pretty quickly though as we stopped off at **Glen Davis** for our final lunch in New South Wales of the tour, and while we ate our picnic in came a **Brown Treecreeper** and landed on the public barbecue beside us! The same campground also brought us another **White-browed Babbler**, and the road near there got us our best looks yet at a **Chestnut-eared Finch**, that this time lingered long enough for everyone to enjoy it.
We then had to bid farewell to the Capertee and return back to Sydney, crossing the scenic Blue Mountains along the way. Unfortunately for us though heavy fog, and even bouts of driving rain prevented us from taking in some of the best views in the Great Dividing Range, as we drove towards Sydney Airport and our Tasmania-bound flight for the fourth and final leg of the tour.

Day 17: Oct. 29  Peter Murrell Reserve & Bruny Island  Tasmania
We awoke with eager anticipation of our time on Tasmania, having arrived in darkness we arrived at the tiny reserve of Peter Murrell on the outskirts of Hobart ready for our first Tasmanian endemics. While we were keen on all of them that came our way, we were here especially for one of Tasmania’s rarest residents, the endangered Forty-spotted Pardalote. Before we got to that though other “Tassie” endemics forced themselves into our attentions: a few Tasmanian Native-Hens fed on the lawns beside the small dam in the reserve (photo below), and several Yellow-throated Honeyeaters appeared in the windblown trees above. A stiff wind was expected in Tasmania, but it made finding our little pardalote a little trickier than we’d hoped. After an initial false alarm for a Spotted Pardalote, a glance up into a dead tree found our quarry, the Forty-spotted Pardalote sitting there in spite of the wind gusting in its plain face. The bird came and went from these dead branches over the following minutes giving us all a great chance to see it perched brazenly in the open. Having got one of Tasmania’s toughest birds so quickly, we could now focus on finding some of the easier targets on the island. Yellow Wattlebird quickly followed, in addition to another Brush Wattlebird for the tour, and our first Green Rosellas, another Tassie endemic. With this rush of new birds, and especially key endemics it was hard to tear ourselves away, but the first ferry to Bruny was calling and we knew if we missed it we would have a long wait for the next one. Over breakfast at the ferry dock in Kettering we found our first Black-faced Cormorant sitting on the dock itself, and our first Kelp Gulls flew around the harbor.

After a fifteen minute ferry ride across the D’Entrecasteaux Channel we arrived on North Bruny Island. Our reason for visiting Bruny was simple: all the Tasmanian endemics occur on the island. We headed our vehicle south to
South Bruny Island, with specific birds and hot spots in mind, but predictably were distracted on North Bruny, with Pallid Cuckoos on various wires, the endemic **Dusky Robin** feeding among a pile of fallen branches, and a gob smacking pair of **Scarlet Robins** using an open wire to survey for prey below. While we admired the smashing Scarlet Robins our first **Black-headed Honeyeaters** (*another* endemic) dropped onto the very same wire the robins had been using, one of several encounters with this species on Bruny. Making our way to a deserted dirt road through tall forest we had one very specific target in mind: the seductive **Pink Robin**. Bruny Island, and Tasmania is a Mecca for robins, with no fewer than four new robins falling to us there. Initial efforts to get the Pink Robin to call fell on deaf ears with no answers received, so we set about picking up other birds with our first **Tasmanian Thornbills** encountered in the area, and a super-elusive **Olive Whistler** that skulked determinedly in the undergrowth and only allowed marginal views for a few of us. Then out of the blue, the Pink Robin awoke from its slumber and began calling continually nearby. A little further playback of its own song, and a marvelous male **Pink Robin** landed right beside us, a very popular bird indeed. Bumping into some other visiting birders we got a tip-off for a **Strong-billed Honeyeater** nest and a visit in strong gusty conditions got us cursory glimpses of the bird. We did however pick up our first **Crescent Honeyeater** of the tour as we exited the area for our shorebird hunt.

With the wind not abating at this exposed spot, I decided we would change tack and go after Tasmania’s celebrity shorebird: the **Hooded Plover**. This formerly threatened Australian species occurs on the southern part of Australia and Tasmania, although the stronghold is Tasmania where they are most easily found. Although try telling us that as we combed one of their regular beaches to no affect for a while. I knew they must be here somewhere, and finally after walking nearly the whole length of the beach I saw a Hooded Plover chasing off a **Pied Oystercatcher** and so knew it must have a nest in the white sands closeby. We kept our distance and admired it through the scope. Of course by the end of the day our beach vigil looked futile as we stumbled across another three pairs of these supposedly rare plovers. The original beach did hold a pair of hulking **Pacific Gulls** sat on a rocky point completely oblivious to the chilling salt spray blasting in their faces! All this frenetic “ticking” (i.e. adding new birds) we had gained a healthy appetite and stopped at a local café for a break. Some people just could not stop birding though, a small party of **Tasmanian Scrubwrens** grabbing our attentions in the garden of the café, and a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** regularly overflew the picturesque shoreline in front of the cafe. In spite of the windy weather the skies were clear azure blue, and the beaches clean and gleaming white, Bruny left a massive impression on everyone, a beautiful place for a beach getaway, as it is literally peppered with deserted sandy beaches and scenic rocky shorelines, and of
course also a fantastic place for picking up those highly-desired Tassie endemics.

After lunch, where we met up with Nick Leseberg’s TB group and compared notes, still smarting that we had not yet all got a choice look at the scarcest of the trio of endemic honeyeaters, we went after it at another spot. This time though it was easy, after a brief false alarm when another Black-headed Honeyeater showed up, just before a small group of Strong-billed Honeyeaters gave us a great look when an adult fed a youngster in the towering eucalyptus trees overhead. Next we stopped in at “The Neck” checking the sea for seabirds we managed to pick up a few far off Shy Albatross cutting through the air, in addition to a few more Aussie Gannets for the trip. Unfortunately though an Arctic Skua harassing a passing tern, disappeared around the headland before anyone but Sam got a look. After admiring yet another pair of Hooded Plovers on the beach we headed back towards the ferry although made a special stop off at a place Nick’s group had come across a small group of Blue-winged Parrots earlier in the day. Nick paced ahead, nervously at first when the birds appeared to be absent, although the markedly stronger wind probably accounted for that. A few paces further though and a couple of small parrots flitted up in front of him and landed in a near tree, allowing scopes to be trained and Blue-winged Parrot to be added to the trip list.

Having found no Swift Parrots on Bruny, (usually a fair bet for this parrot), and having received a phone call giving us news of some on the mainland that very morning, we rather belatedly realized we could make the earlier ferry-just-and maybe even get a shot at the parrot before dusk. As we had essentially cleaned up the main Bruny birds we raced back towards the ferry, although our hearts sunk when we saw a drawbridge going up as we approached. However, all was not lost, they had merely loaded the top deck, and the bottom deck was open and welcomed us aboard. After a short drive once back on the mainland we found ourselves in a blustery park overlooking some empty looking eucalypts, which were full of white blossoms and by rights should also have been full of parrots. Not a peep being heard from them in strong windy conditions we decided to return the next morning. We loaded in the car, and then Doug remarked from the back of the car he had a parrot in the near blossoms. We quickly piled out of the car and soon locked onto a super Swift Parrot trying desperately to feed in a windblown blossom at the front edge of the tree. It was blown this way and that, and frequently in and out of the scope but in the end we all got some choice looks at this smart parrot. Our good work had left us with just a handful of birds to look for on our final day on Tasmanina, and the grand finale to our eastern Australia tour...
Day 18: Oct. 30   **Mount Wellington & The Tasman Peninsula**  Tasmania

We begun our day on the flanks of **Mount Wellington**, having another bowl of cereal in the field with temperate forest as a beautiful backdrop. Over breakfast we managed to find a much more obliging **Olive Whistler** than the day before, this one emerging out of the dark understorey, and perching in the open towards the top end of a tree in the open. Mount Wellington is a great place to catch up with **currawongs**, some of the birds sometimes even being tempted in by a bag of chips. However, on this morning no such trickery was required, both the black morph of **Gray Currawong** (**photo below**), and the dark-vented, endemic **Black Currawong** both being found on our drive up the mountain. Our main point of interest initially though was the open scrub and heath that cloaks the summit of Wellington. Believing earlier was best I set about trying to find two special heath birds. First up was another beautiful “Tassie” robin, this time the well-named **Flame Robin**, a male of which popped straight up on a dead branch bringing rapturous words all round. The same area brought us better looks at **Crescent Honeyeater** and further looks at the endemics **Yellow-throated Honeyeater** and **Tasmanian Scrubwren**. Feeling pretty cocky after our early success I tried for our next key bird, the **Striated Fieldwren** but just could not get a close response. Ego deflated, I decided (after quite some effort) we should return later and head to the lower flanks for our final forest bird for the trip. First though we headed up top and admired staggering views over the city of Hobart sprawled out below. While we admired the wonderful views of the city below, and of the mountains most distinctive geological feature, the “organ pipes”, a dramatic cliff of dolerite columns, I received a call from another TB group following behind us—they had the **fieldwren**! I sent up the alarm, and Ken went into overdrive rounding up the rest of the group who’d spread out to enjoy the wonderful features of the 1271m/4170ft high summit. Ken did a great job and soon enough we were all back in the van, and heading back to the very spot that had been so barren for us moments before. This time though the **Striated Fieldwren** performed with distinction steaming straight in to a near bush in the heath and then even hopping around in the open, making a complete mockery of my earlier efforts. I guess this bird was a late riser!?

There was nothing left to do but to head down to the temperate forest on the lower flanks and a known spot for one of Tassie’s toughest endemics: the
inconspicuous Scrubtit. I warned the group that this can often be one of the hardest to find, wandered to the very spot it had been seen in recent days, popped the call and immediately the bird appeared in front of us. Once again a bird had made a mockery of me, although this time I didn’t care, the Scrubtit was firmly on the list! Meeting with Nick’s group again we put our heads together and came up with a revised plan now that we had a bit of time on our hands. After a brief break back at the hotel in Hobart to arrange our transfers out the following morning, we whisked our way to the airport. On arrival at the airport I wound the window down and listened as we approached a set of blooming eucalypts along the approach road. As soon as the window came down calls of numerous Musk Lorikeets floated towards us. An impromptu bit of parking a police bay, which thankfully did not rile the local force, but did get us some wonderful views of multiple Musk Lorikeets that flew around the area alighting in trees regularly and dangling amongst the pretty pink blossoms just above eye level (photo left).

We finished the tour with a trip onto the Tasman Peninsula, where right on arrival a pair of Cape Barren Geese were found quietly grazing in a field (photo next page). Across the road an equally approachable Tasmanian Pademelon fed in an open paddock. Searching for a suitable lunch spot I found my usual café closed and so went in search of another and found a great little van serving up homemade venison pies and tasty locally caught fish. Even better though was that a strong onshore wind had brought some very unshy Shy Albatrosses inshore and gave us great views while we wolfed down pies and chips, along with some great close ups of Australian Gannets there too. Some people wandered off to admire the main geological attraction of the area, the Tasman Blowhole, and readying to leave I heard a frantic shout from Ken who came running in our direction. The words “I’ve got the other Firetail” got everyone’s attention and we hurried down to the parking lot where Ken had seen it. Unfortunately the bird had since buried itself in a rather large, densely leaved bush. I needed the I-Pod for this one. A little playback and suddenly the Beautiful Firetail leapt up into the open branches above. A great find on our final afternoon, and one we had missed in the atrocious conditions at Barren Grounds earlier on the tour. We then went on a mission
for Red-capped Plover, scouring any beach we could find, checking some interesting looking bays on the map to no avail. Then a stop at Dunalley Bay put us out of our misery: a small group of shorebirds huddled on a shingle spit held a Red-necked Stint, Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers and two dapper Red-capped Plovers. This beautiful Tasmanian bay also held a small group of beefy Pacific Gulls. Trying some other coastal spots as we headed back towards Hobart we added a displaying Eurasian Skylark to the list, a Peregrine Falcon scythed overhead, and got a surprise White-fronted Chat too. We stopped to admire a Tasmanian Native-Hen family feeding on a lawn, before our last addition, a Fairy Tern while we crossed one of the final bridges into Hobart.

Day 19: Oct. 31  DEPARTURE FROM HOBART  Tasmania
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 in December 2008 and further updates in December 2009.

H indicates a species that was HEARD only;
GO indicates a species recorded by the GUIDE ONLY.
Endemics are indicated in red.
NSW Indicates New South Wales
QLD Indicates Queensland
TAS Indicates Tasmania

CASSOWARIES: Casuariidae
Southern Cassowary Casuarius casuarius
This magnificent rainforest bird put on quite a show at Cassowary House, north of Cairns. While out walking the forested road, an alarm bark went up from the lodge’s dog and I immediately turned about and headed back towards the lodge knowing just what this meant. Seconds later the lodge owner Sue called to confirm my suspicions, a male cassowary had just wandered into the garden with his three stripy chicks in toe. On arrival back at the lodge, there it stood and fired off photos and appreciatives from just a few meters away. A magical, fairytale way to see this rainforest beast.

EMU: Dromaiidae
Emu Dromaius novaehollandiae
Australia’s national bird. Five sightings (all in New South Wales) was a very good haul for this tour: first a single adult and a family party of five birds were seen on our long drive to Leeton; then another single was seen near Round Hill; another group of six were seen on the Hay Plains; and finally another single was seen on the long journey between Hay and Lithgow.

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae
Magpie Goose Anseranas semipalmata
This species was formerly considered to be a monotypic family. Just four sightings were had on the tour, first in Cairns (QLD) itself, followed by further sightings on the journey between Kuranda and Daintree (QLD), on Lake Mitchell (QLD), and finally at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).
Plumed Whistling-Duck Dendrocygna eytoni
Three sightings in all: In Queensland several hundred birds were seen at Hasties Swamp (outnumbering the accompanying Wandering Whistling-Ducks on site); six birds were seen on Five Bough Swamp (NSW); and another two birds were seen on a small pool east of the Hay Plains (NSW) that also hosted our only Yellow-billed Spoonbill of the tour.
Wandering Whistling-Duck Dendrocygna arcuata
Just recorded twice in Queensland, on the Daintree cruise, and then later at Hasties Swamp.

**Cape Barren Goose**  *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*
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.

**Black Swan**  *Cygnus atratus*
Just recorded the once, on Lake Mitchell, in Queensland, although regularly seen on wetlands in New South Wales and Tasmania.

**Australian Shelduck**  *Tadorna tadornoides*
Only recorded at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), where it was seen on both of our visits to Australia’s best wetland site. A maximum of 13 birds was seen on second visit.

**Radjah Shelduck**  *Tadorna radjah*
Eleven birds were seen at a fish farm south of Daintree Village (QLD).

**Green Pygmy-goose**  *Nettapus pulchellus*
Common on Lake Mitchell (QLD), although only recorded on our one visit to this site.

**Maned Duck**  *Chenonetta jubata*
One of Australia’s most common ducks, recorded almost daily in southern Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

**Mallard**  *Anas platyrhynchos*
A scarce species in Australia, just recorded the once on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

**Pacific Black Duck**  *Anas superciliosa*
Another very common species in Australia, recorded on all but one day of the tour.

**Australian Shoveler**  *Anas rhynchothis*
Just two sightings on the New South Wales leg, at Five Bough Swamp in Leeton, and Blue Gum Swamp in Forbes.

**Gray Teal**  *Anas gracilis*
Recorded on four days in New South Wales, including at both Five Bough Swamp and Blue Gum Swamp, and also seen on Tasmania.

**Chestnut Teal**  *Anas castanea*
Recorded just three times on the tour: near Nudgee Beach in Brisbane (QLD), with a couple more sightings in New South Wales.

**Pink-eared Duck**  *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*
This beautiful and bizarre endemic was seen twice in New South Wales: a single bird was seen on a private farm on the Hay Plains just before we went on our Plains-wanderer safari, and many birds graced Blue Gum Swamp, including a number of young chicks.

**White-eyed Duck**  *Aythya australis*
Also known as HARDHEAD. Seen on five days of the tour, initially in Queensland at Hasties Swamp, with further sightings at Five Bough and Blue Gum Swamps in New South Wales.

**Blue-billed Duck**  *Oxyura australis*
This, one of Australia’s scarcest ducks, was seen three times in New South Wales: on both of our visits to Five Bough Swamp where a single male was seen, and several birds at Blue Gum Swamp too.

**Musk Duck**  *Biziura lobata*
Seen on both of our visits to Five Bough Swamp (NSW), where one female had a recent brood of chicks swimming with her, and another female was seen at Blue Gum Swamp (NSW).

**MEGAPODES: Megapodiidae**  
**Australian Brush-turkey** *Alectura lathami*  
A commonly recorded and often tame bird in Queensland, seen almost every day there. The first bird was seen in Cairns itself, and the best views were at O'Reilly’s where like so many other of the birds there, the brush-turnkeys are tame and bordering on a nuisance (especially if you have food in your hand).

**Orange-footed Scrubfowl** *Megapodius reinwardt*  
Seen five times in tropical Queensland, including within Cairns, Cassowary House, and at Lake Barrine.

**PHEASANTS, GROUSE AND ALLIES: Phasianidae**  
**Stubble Quail** *Coturnix pectoralis*  
An amazing night safari on the Hay Plains also pulled in a female of this species, that allowed for amazing close ups. On top of the Stubble Quail, and multiple Plains-wanderers, we also encountered a couple of Little Buttonquails, and a pair of Banded Lapwings.

**Brown Quail** *Coturnix ypsilophora*  
A single bird was flushed up from a waterhole near Round Hill.

**GREBES: Podicipedidae**  
**Australasian Grebe** *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*  
Recorded on at least six days of the tour, both in New South Wales and Queensland.

**Hoary-headed Grebe** *Poliocephalus poliocephalus*  
Seen on three days in New South Wales: a hundred or more birds were seen on both our visits to Five Bough Swamp, with much closer views obtained at Blue Gum Swamp.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*  
A good number of birds (100 or so) peppered Lake Barrine in Queensland, and a few birds were seen on both trips to Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales.

**ALBATROSSES: Diomedeidae**  
**White-capped (Shy) Albatross** *Thalassarche cauta*  
Recorded on both of our days in Tasmania: at least two birds were seen from Bruny Island; then superb views of at least four birds close inshore were obtained on the Tasman Peninsula.

**SHEARWATERS AND PETRELS: Procellariidae**  
**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*  
At least three birds were seen close in off Bass Point (NSW), and one bird cruised regularly low over the beach while we had lunch on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*  
One bird was identified resting on the sea off Bass Point (NSW).

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris*
The common shearwater off Bass Point (NSW) present in the hundreds, both in flight and perched on the sea. Another large group were seen off the Tasman Peninsula (TAS) on our final day.

**Hutton’s Shearwater** *Puffinus huttoni*
A large flock of Hutton’s and Fluttering Shearwaters were seen off Bass Point (NSW) allowing for great side-by-side comparisons of these similar species.

**Fluttering Shearwater** *Puffinus gavial*
Seen in a large mixed flock with Hutton’s, Short-tailed, Sooty and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters off Bass Point (NSW).

**BOOBIES AND GANNETS: Sulidae**

*Brown Booby* *Sula leucogaster*
Several birds were seen well on Michaelmas Cay, a tiny island on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

*Red-footed Booby* *Sula sula*
An adult bird was perched on a piece of driftwood on Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

*Australasian Gannet* *Morus serrator*
Recorded three times on the tour, thanks to some strong onshore winds when we visited some noted sea watching areas. In New South Wales some were seen off Bass Point, and on Tasmania they were seen off Bruny Island and on the Tasman Peninsula.

**PELICANS: Pelecanidae**

*Australian Pelican* *Pelecanus conspicillatus*
Recorded at a number of sites in both Queensland and New South Wales, including within Cairns and Brisbane (QLD), at Bass Point and Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

**CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: Phalacrocoracidae**

*Little Black Cormorant* *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
Regularly recorded in both Queensland and New South Wales.

*Great Cormorant* *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Recorded at a number of sites in Queensland and New South Wales, including at Lake Barrine, Bass Point, and Five Bough Swamp.

*Pied Cormorant* *Phalacrocorax varius*
Just two birds were seen resting on a pier at Bass Point (NSW).

*Black-faced Cormorant* *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*
Our first bird came at Kettering Dock, just before we crossed over to Bruny Island (TAS), with others being seen on the Forrestier and Tasman Peninsulas the following day.

*Little Pied Cormorant* *Phalacrocorax melanocephalus*
Recorded regularly throughout the tour in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania.

**ANHINGAS: Anhingidae**

*Darter* *Anhinga melanogaster*
Recorded in Cairns, Lake Mitchell, Hasties Swamp (all QLD), and also at several sites in New South Wales, including Blue Gum Swamp.
FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae
Great Frigatebird  *Fregata minor*
Five or so birds were seen at Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

HERONS, EGrets AND BITTERNs: Ardeidae
Australasian Bittern  *Botaurus poiciloptilus*
A booming bird was heard in the reeds of Five Bough Swamp (NSW).
Pacific Heron  *Ardea pacifica*
Also known as WHITE-NECKED HERON. Recorded on three days in New South Wales, including near Round Hill, and on the Hay Plains.
Great-billed Heron  *Ardea sumatrana*
One of the star’s of the Daintree Cruise, this bird made us wait right until the eleventh hour, when finally Glen found a bird standing statuesque at the side of the Daintree River itself. Amazingly this often shy heron just stood there while we watched on and reeled off a bunch of shots.
Great Egret  *Ardea alba*
Scattered sightings were made through Queensland and New South Wales.
Intermediate Egret  *Mesophoyx intermedia*
Recorded in Cairns several times, and at a few other Queensland sites, in addition to at Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales.
White-faced Heron  *Egretta novaehollandiae*
Recorded along the Daintree River (QLD), around Brisbane (QLD), and also at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).
Little Egret  *Egretta garzetta*
Seen on four days of the tour: in Cairns (QLD) twice, along the Daintree River (QLD), and also around Leeton (NSW).
Pacific Reef-Heron  *Egretta sacra*
Two sightings in Queensland: one was seen walking around the Brown Noddy/Sooty Tern colony on Michaelmas Cay, and another was seen on Wonga Beach.
Cattle Egret  *Bubulcus ibis*
Scattered sightings, mainly in Queensland, although a few were seen in New South Wales too.
Striated Heron  *Butorides striata*
Two sightings were made in Cairns (QLD), and another was seen in Brisbane (QLD).
Rufous Night-Heron  *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Also known as NANKEEN NIGHT-HERON. A juvenile was seen roosting in a park in Cairns (QLD) on the first afternoon, and another was seen while we were watching a female Platypus.

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae
Glossy Ibis  *Plegadis falcinellus*
In Queensland, seen at Hasties Swamp, and up to ten birds were seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).
Australian Ibis  *Threskiornis molucca*
A common Australian species, recorded regularly in both Queensland and New South Wales.

**Straw-necked Ibis** *Threskiornis spinicollis*
Just the one sighting in Queensland, in Cairns. Seen daily though in New South Wales.

**Royal Spoonbill** *Platalea regia*
Recorded at a number of sites in Queensland and New South Wales, including along the Cairns Esplanade, along the Daintree River, and at Hasties Swamp.

**Yellow-billed Spoonbill** *Platalea flaviga*
Just the one bird was seen on our drive from Hay to Lithgow, roosting alongside a Royal Spoonbill.

**STORKS: Ciconiidae**

**Black-necked Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
Known to Australian birders as JABIRU. All sightings came in Queensland: one was seen flying over the Daintree River, another feeding along the shore of Lake Tinaroo, and another was seen at Lake Mitchell.

**OSPREY: Pandionidae**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*
One was seen flying over Cairns Cemetery (QLD) on our first afternoon, and then another two were seen as we left the dock for our cruise to the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

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**

**Square-tailed Kite** *Lophoictinia isura*
This very rare Aussie raptor was seen at a traditional nest site near Brisbane. On our first visit the bird was hunkered down as an unseasonal rainstorm came through. However, when we returned as we traveled back to Brisbane Airport we were able to get much better looks at this distinctive kite on the nest.

**Australian Kite** *Elanus axillaris*
Recorded in small numbers in Queensland and New South Wales, including in Daintree (QLD), and on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**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*
All of our sightings came within Queensland, where small numbers were recorded on most days, including in the Cairns and Brisbane regions.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur Indus*
Four sightings in Queensland: over Cairns Cemetery, along the Daintree River, over The Esplanade in Cairns, and near Nudgee Beach in Brisbane.

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Six sightings on the tour: one flew over Wonga Beach (QLD) while we watched a Beach Thick-knee; another was perched at Hasties Swamp (QLD); another glided over while we watched a fantastic female Platypus in Queensland too; another flew over at Nudgee Beach (QLD); one was seen perched by its large stick nest at Blue Gum Swamp (NSW); and finally a bird was seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans*

Five sightings on the tour: our first confiding bird was quartering fields on the edge of Jamberoo (NSW); two further views were obtained at Five Bough Swamp (NSW); one floated over Brunt Island on Tasmania; and finally another was seen on the Tasman Peninsula (TAS).

**Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis*

Five different birds was a very good result for this tour. A couple of surprise birds were seen in Queensland: at Maryfarms while we watched **Australian Bustards** soaking up the heavy rain, and then another more confiding bird quartering a field by Hasties Swamp. In New South Wales two sightings were had on the Hay Plains, with another bird seen near Round Hill.

**Gray Goshawk** *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

A shy bird was seen several times around its roadside nest at Cassowary House (QLD).

**Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus*

A widespread bird that was surprisingly difficult on this tour, with just three brief sightings in New South Wales.

**Collared Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

Two birds flew over on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland, which was our only sighting.

**Wedge-tailed Eagle** *Aquila audax*

At least seven different individuals of this eagle were seen, which is Australia’s largest raptor. In Queensland birds were seen in the north around Hasties Swamp, and in the south around O Reilly’s in Lamington NP. In New South Wales a single bird was seen gliding above the Blue Mountains, and another was spotlighted roosting on the Hay Plains.

**Little Eagle** *Aquila morphnoides morphnoides*

Three different sightings in New South Wales was an excellent showing for this species. A low flying bird brought our car to a halt as we were heading south from Round Hill. Then two different birds were seen during one day, firstly at Binya, and then later perched on a private farm on the Hay Plains.

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*

Just the one bird was seen, hawking insects one evening over Five Bough Swamp (NSW).
Brown Falcon  *Falco berigora*
Recorded on four different days in New South Wales.

Peregrine Falcon  *Falco peregrinus*
One of the last new birds of the trip, seen near Dunalley on Tasmania, during our final afternoon.

**RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: Rallidae**

Red-necked Crake  *Rallina tricolor*
A couple of lucky people got a look at a young bird in the garden of Cassowary House (QLD).

Buff-banded Rail  *Gallirallus philippensis*
Two birds were seen feeding on the edges of the lawn at the Platypus site in Queensland. Excellent views of these two boldly-patterned rails, wandering around in the open, led one person to nominate this species among his top five birds of the tour.

Baillon’s Crake  *Porzana pusilla*
One was seen briefly by a few people at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

Australian Crake  *Porzana fluminea*
Ken at least got a brief look at one of these crakes as it crossed a gap in the reeds at Five Bough Swamp (NSW). With the unusually high water levels this year at Five Bough Swamp the crakes were difficult, their usual areas having been flooded in the week prior to our visit.

Spotless Crake  *Porzana tabuensis*
Patience paid off for Barbara, who got views of one of these crakes by quietly sitting in an area where they’d been calling at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

Purple Swamphen  *Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*
Recorded at a number of swamps, including Hasties in Queensland, around the ponds in Royal NP (NSW), at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), and also at the Peter Murrell Reserve in Tasmania.

Dusky Moorhen  *Gallinula tenebrosa*
Recorded at most major swamps visited in both Queensland and New South Wales.

Black-tailed Native-hen  *Gallinula ventralis*
Just two sightings on the Hay Plains (NSW): firstly at a private farm just before we set off on our “Plains-wanderer safari”, where a minimum of 200 birds swarmed the banks of a large dam. The same dam also held a Pink-eared Duck, and several Red-kneed Dotterels feeding alongside a Black-fronted Dotterel. The following day a small roadside dam as we headed east towards Lithgow held another thirty or so native-hens, a pair of Plumed Whistling-Ducks, and both Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills were roosting in the trees alongside.

Tasmanian Native-hen  *Gallinula mortierii*
Our first were found scampering across a well-trimmed lawn in the Peter Murrell Reserve near Hobart, with a few more seen as we made our way south to the Kettering Ferry over to Bruny Island. Then on our final day several birds were found on our journey back from the Tasman Peninsula to Hobart, with a party of chicks in tow.

Eurasian Coot  *Fulica atra*
First seen at Hasties Swamp (QLD), and then recorded at both Blue Gum and Five Bough Swamps in New South Wales.

**BUSTARDS: Otididae**
**Australian Bustard** *Ardeotis australis*
At least six birds were seen near Mount Carbine (QLD), including one puffed up male (seemingly oblivious to the heavy rain crashing down), standing appropriately in the drive of the Bustard Bed & Breakfast.

**CRANES: Gruidae**
**Sarus Crane** *Grus antigone*
By far the most numerous of the two crane species on the Atherton Tablelands (QLD), seen on both of our visits to the Atherton area. A massive flock of 300+ cranes near Hasties Swamp on one day held over 200 Sarus alone.

**Broga** *Grus rubicunda*
Outnumbered by the more common Sarus on the Atherton Tablelands (QLD), although at least 50 were present in a 300+ flock of cranes near Hasties Swamp one afternoon. Another pair were seen at close range at Lake Mitchell.

**THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae**
**Bush Thick-knee** *Burhinus grallarius*
Four sightings in Queensland. We began the tour stalking these goggle-eyed waders among the gravestones of Cairns Cemetery, where two were seen. Later that afternoon another three were seen in a neighboring park in Cairns. Two birds were also seen skulking on the banks of the Daintree River on our cruise along there, and then a final family party was seen on the Atherton Tablelands.

**Beach Thick-knee** *Burhinus magnirostris*
Thanks to Doug’s keen eyesight, who picked one of these out from some distance, we saw a singleton on a beach near Wonga (QLD). A quick drive back to the area, and scramble down to the beach brought us much closer looks at this beefy shorebird as it scoured the rocks for crabs.

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae**
**Banded Lapwing** *Vanellus tricolor*
A pair of these inland shorebirds was seen on our “Plains-wanderer night safari” on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Masked Lapwing** *Vanellus miles*
A very common Australian wader, seen on all but a few days of the tour.

**Red-kneed Dotterel** *Erythrogonys cinctus*
Two distant birds were seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), although much better views were had on a dam on a private farm on the Hay Plains, where three birds were feeding along the muddy edge alongside a Black-fronted Dotterel.

**Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
One was seen feeding along the muddy verge of Hasties Swamp in northern Queensland.

**Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius mongolus*
Seen along The Esplanade in Cairns, where they could be seen feeding alongside Greater Sandplovers.

**Greater Sandplover** *Charadrius leschenaultia*

A handful of birds were seen feeding alongside The Esplanade in Cairns.

**Red-capped Plover** *Charadrius ruficapillus*

This handsome shorebird had us biting our nails until the final afternoon, when a party of three birds was found in Dunalley Bay on Tasmania. Another group of ten or so roosting birds were seen later that afternoon near Marion Bay.

**Hooded Plover** *Thinornis cucullatus*

Checking a regular beach for them on Bruny Island, there was no initial sign and so we walked the entire beach until finally a single bird was seen chasing away a Pied Oystercatcher at the very far end of the beach. Believing the bird to be nesting we kept our distance and scoped it from there. In the same afternoon on Bruny three more pairs were found, which required decidedly less walking and could be seen at closer range from the road.

**Black-fronted Dotterel** *Elseyornis melanops*

Five birds were seen at a fish farm near Daintree (QLD), a lone bird was seen on the shore of Lake Tinaroo (QLD), and then another singleton was seen on a private farm on the Hay Plains (NSW), where it was seen feeding alongside three Red-kneed Dotterels.

**OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae**

**Pied Oystercatcher** *Haematopus longirostris*

Two along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD) were the first sightings of the tour, followed after by another two at Wong Beach (QLD). On Tasmania they were fairly common and recorded on both of our days on “Van Diemen’s Land”.

**Sooty Oystercatcher** *Haematopus fuliginosus*

Two sightings: one was seen on the rocks at Bass Point (NSW), and another single was seen at Dunalley Bay on Tasmania.

**STILTS AND STILTS: Recurvirostridae**

**Pied Stilt** *Himantopus leucocephalus*

Four sightings on the tour. The first came in Queensland at a fish farm near Daintree, and then a handful were seen during both of our visits to Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

**Red-necked Avocet** *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*

Just recorded at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), where two were seen on our first visit, and a single on our second trip there.

**JACANAS: Jacanidae**

**Comb-crested Jacana** *Irediparra gallinacea*

Just recorded on the one day of the tour, at Lake Mitchell in Queensland.

**SANDPIPERS: Scolopacidae**

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*

A small number were seen on both of our visits to the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Just a couple of sightings in Queensland.
Gray-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*  
A few were seen on both of our trips down the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*  
Just seen on the one day of the tour, alongside the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*  
A few of these giant eastern shorebirds were seen on the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*  
The less common of the two godwit species, a few being seen on both of our visits to the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*  
Several groups were seen during both of our trips to the shore at Cairns (QLD).

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*  
Recorded on two days of the tour: on Michaelmas Cay in Queensland, and Bass Point in New South Wales.

**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*  
Only recorded during our second visit to The Esplanade in Cairns (QLD).

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*  
One of the more common shorebirds down at The Esplanade in Cairns (QLD).  
Another single was seen at Dunalley Bay in Tasmania.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminate*  
A few of these rusty shorebirds were seen on both of our trips to The Esplanade in Cairns (QLD).

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*  
Two were seen during our first visit to The Esplanade (Cairns, QLD), although good numbers [with a more favorable tide] were seen on our second visit there.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*  
A rare Aussie shorebird that we were very happy to see a single individual of (hiding out in a mob of Curlew Sandpipers), on our final visit to The Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

**BUTTONQUAIL:** *Turnicidae*  
**Little Buttonquail** *Turnix velox*  
Two different birds were seen on our memorable night drive on the Hay Plains (NSW), that saw us rack up several Plains-wanderers, a Stubble Quail, and a pair of Banded Lapwings (not to mention the Ground Cuckoo-shrike and Chestnut-crowned Babblers seen prior to the drive).

**PLAINS-WANDERER:** *Pedionomidae*  
**Plains-wanderer** *Pedionomus torquatus*  
One of the undoubted highlights of the trip was our “Plains-wanderer safari”, and indeed the Plains-wanderer itself, several of which were seen. Stunning views of an orange-breasted female (the looker among the two sexes in this species) were had in the spotlight that literally stood within a meter of some of us. Later the local guide Phil also discovered a nest (a rare find) which was a further treat. In recent years, with the prolonged drought across Australia, the species has not been breeding in good numbers so this was a positive sign for this endangered species, now hopefully in recovery following the wettest of wet (and dry) seasons. In the same wonderful afternoon/evening we also found Pink Cockatoo, White-winged Fairywren, Ground
Cuckoo-shrike, Chestnut-crowned Babbler, Red-kneed Dotterel, Pink-eared Duck, Little Buttonquail, Stubble Quail and a pair of Banded Lapwings! Voted as number two species on our top five species of the trip (narrowly beaten by Superb Parrot).

GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS: Laridae

Silver Gull  *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*
The commonest gull, recorded in good numbers along the coasts and also at large inland swamps in New South Wales.

Pacific Gull  *Larus pacificus*
Just recorded in Tasmania, where two pairs were seen on Bruny Island, and the following another four were seen at Dunalley Bay.

Kelp Gull  *Larus dominicanus*
Recorded in good numbers on both of our days on Tasmania.

Brown Noddy  *Anous stolidus*
The most numerous tern on Michaelmas Cay where literally thousands were present, many of which could be approached to within a few feet.

Black Noddy  *Anous minutus*
Our first came before we had even docked for Michaelmas Cay (QLD), although the best one came on this small sandy island, when a single bird landed right next to us alongside a bunch of larger Brown Noddies, allowing for great side-by-side comparisons. Lastly, as we were moving away from the cay heading to Hastings Reef, we found another four or so birds perched on a small boat offshore.

Sooty Tern  *Onychoprion fuscatus*
Another bird that nests in their thousands on Michaelmas Cay, along with the Brown Noddies they blackened this white sandy island. At the time of our visit we were also able to watch many large barred chicks at extremely close range.

Bridled Tern  *Onychoprion anaethetus*
Nowhere near as numerous as Sooty Terns on the cay, although they were regularly found around the buoys and boats offshore. The best views did come on Michaelmas Cay (QLD) though, when a pair landed just the other side of the thin rope from us.

Little Tern  *Sternula albifrons*
At least ten birds were seen offshore from Michaelmas Cay (Great Barrier Reef, QLD), many of which were seen perched on top of a small boat. Another two birds were seen along The Esplanade in Cairns (QLD).

Fairy Tern  *Sternula nereis*
A brief view of a breeding plumage bird was had en-route back to Hobart on Tasmania during our final afternoon, our final new bird of the trip.

Whiskered Tern  *Chlidonias hybrida*
Around a hundred birds were seen hawking insects over Five Bough Swamp (NSW) one evening, and then another single was seen on our journey through the Hay Plains (NSW) to Hay itself.

Roseate Tern  *Sterna dougallii*
One pink-flushed bird was seen on the two short trips around Michaelmas Cay (QLD) in a small boat, with the first boat at least getting great looks at one perched on the white sandy beach.

Black-naped Tern  *Sternula sumatrana*
This slick, ghostly white tern was seen regularly in our few hours on Michaelmas Cay (QLD), where at least eight birds were seen.

**Common Tern**  *Sterna hirundo*
At least six birds of the black-billed *longipennis* race were seen on Michaelmas Cay (QLD) during our day on the Great Barrier Reef.

**Great Crested Tern**  *Thalasseus bergii*
Recorded along The Cairns Esplanade (QLD), and at Bass Point in New South Wales, although the greatest numbers and best views were had during our cruise to the Great Barrier Reef on Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

**Lesser Crested Tern**  *Thalasseus bengalensis*
A minimum of seven birds were seen on the sandy island of Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

**SKUAS AND JAEGARS: Stercorariidae**

**Parasitic Jaeger**  *Stercorarius parasiticus*
Also known as ARCTIC SKUA. A bird seen chasing a smaller tern around The Neck on Bruny Island (TAS), unfortunately shot out of sight after only Sam had managed to see it.

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon**  *Columba livia*
Regularly recorded throughout the tour.

**White-headed Pigeon**  *Columba leucomela*
An active flock were found in a small rainforest patch close to Julatten (QLD), where around ten birds were present.

**Spotted Dove**  *Streptopelia chinensis*
Recorded regularly in northern Queensland, at various towns on the Cairns leg of the tour.

**Brown Cuckoo-Dove**  *Macropygia phasianella*
Recorded on eight days of the tour, mainly in Queensland, although with a few sightings in New South Wales too. A particularly confiding bird fed unconcernedly on an open path at the Golden Bowerbird site on the Atherton Tablelands.

**Emerald Dove**  *Chalcophaps indica*
Just seen on two days in northern Queensland: one was seen walking around the parking lot at Lake Barrine, and another couple were seen near Julatten.

**Common Bronzewing**  *Phaps chalcoptera*
Four sightings, one in Queensland and three in New South Wales. The best views came at Round Hill, where a bird was scoped up perched in an area of *mulga*.

**Brush Bronzewing**  *Phaps elegans*
Just the one brief sighting of a bird flushed from a heathland track in The Royal National Park near Sydney (NSW).

**Crested Pigeon**  *Geophaps lophotes*
This comical pigeon was seen regularly in both Queensland and New South Wales.

**Squatter Pigeon**  *Geophaps scripta*
Fantastic views of two damp birds were obtained after a heavy tropical storm in Mount Malloy, right on the edge of the Outback in Queensland. Another two birds were later seen at the school there. Another few were flushed from a road through similar dry country close to Mareeba on another day.
Wonga Pigeon  *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*
Just recorded in Lamington NP, where the birds at O Reilly’s are unusually tame, wandering around literally at our feet on a daily basis. Also heard calling in The Royal National Park (NSW).

**Peaceful Dove**  *Geopelia placida*
Seen daily in northern Queensland on the Cairns leg of the tour.

**Bar-shouldered Dove**  *Geopelia humeralis*
As with Peaceful Dove, seen daily on the Cairns leg of the tour (QLD).

**Wompoo Fruit-Dove**  *Ptilinopus magnificus*
One of Australia’s great birds, both for its flashy, multicolored plumage and its distinctive “wompoo” call that brought amusement all round. For this reason it was voted to number three on the top five birds of the trip. All three sightings were in northern Queensland: first at Cassowary House, with others seen at The Curtain Fig Tree, and also on the Daintree River cruise.

**Superb Fruit-Dove**  *Ptilinopus superbus*
Despite hearing a number of calling birds at Cassowary House (QLD) we just could not tempt them in any closer. We had to wait until the final day of our leg in northern Queensland, when we managed two different sightings in this morning, both near Julatten. The first involved a female bird, and, with some relief, we found a male bird later that morning.

**Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove**  *Ptilinopus regina*
A fantastic male bird was scoped for some time in the orchard at Cassowary House (QLD).

**Torresian Imperial-Pigeon**  *Ducula spilorrhoa*
Regularly recorded in northern Queensland, especially around Daintree and Cairns.

**Topknot Pigeon**  *Lopholaimus antarcticus*
Three sightings in northern Queensland: a flight view of two birds at Mount Malloy, and again later at The Curtain Fig, and then later Mike and Chris found two fine perched birds on our final morning of this leg, near Julatten.

**COCKATOOS: Cacatuidae**

**Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo**  *Calyptorhynchus banksii*
Recorded on four days around Mareeba in northern Queensland, including flying over our motel in town itself. Hundreds of birds were also seen blackening the trees on the edge of town as they came into to roost in the evening.

**Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**  *Calyptorhynchus funereus*
Our first sighting was a bit of surprise, right at the northern extremity of their breeding range. Three noisy birds came in and perched by the village of Canungra while we stopped for lunch on our way up to O Reilly’s (QLD). Another two were seen flying over Lady Carrington Drive in The Royal NP (NSW), and then a last sighting came at Peter Murrell Reserve in Tasmania.

**Galah**  *Eolophus roseicapilla*
This beautiful cockatoo, with the pastel pink underparts was seen almost daily during our time in southern Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania. One bird was seen near Mareeba in northern Queensland too.

**Long-billed Corella**  *Cacatua tenuirostris*
At least thirty birds were seen near the town of Darlington Point in New South Wales, after a tip off from Iain Campbell, leading another TB group at the same time. The group was feeding on a well-trimmed lawn with a group of Little Corellas and Galahs, and the edges of the same park also played host to three Ground Cuckoo-shrikes, and a couple of Yellow Rosellas.

**Little Corella  \( Cacatua sanguinea \)**
A mixed flock of these and Long-billed Corellas were seen in parkland near the inland New South Wales town of Darlington Point.

**Pink Cockatoo  \( Cacatua leadbeateri \)**
Also known as MAJOR MITCHELL’S COCKATOO. Barbara was lucky to find a perched bird at Round Hill Nature Reserve, that had sadly disappeared once we got the van back to the spot. Another distant bird was seen on private farmland on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  \( Cacatua galerita \)**
A common Aussie species that was recorded every day.

**Cockatiel  \( Nymphicus hollandicus \)**
Seen on three days in inland New South Wales, with great views obtained at Round Hill Nature Reserve, and others seen in sparsely wooded farmland on the Hay Plains.

**PARROTS: Psittacidae**

**Rainbow Lorikeet  \( Trichoglossus haematodus \)**
Regularly recorded throughout Queensland.

**Scaly-breasted Lorikeet  \( Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus \)**
Seen on six different days in northern Queensland, including within Cairns itself.

**Musk Lorikeet  \( Glossopsitta concinna \)**
A line of blooming eucalypts at Hobart Airport on Tasmania attracted many noisy musks while we were, that allowed for some stunning looks at this attractive lorikeet feeding among the pretty pink blossoms.

**Little Lorikeet  \( Glossopsitta pusilla \)**
Two birds were scoped up feeding on some blossoms in the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

**Double-eyed Fig-Parrot  \( Cyclopsitta diophthalma \)**
Recorded around five times in northern Queensland, with our best looks coming while we waited for the ferry across the Daintree River, where a bird fed low on some roadside fruit.

**Mallee Ringneck  \( Barnardius barnardi \)**
Four birds were seen at Binya (NSW), while we ate breakfast in the field. A great way to start the day!

**Green Rosella  \( Platycercus caledonicus \)**
Recorded regularly during our time on Tasmania, with our first coming at Peter Murrell.

**Crimson Rosella  \( Platycercus elegans \)**
Recorded on seven days of the tour, in southern Queensland and New South Wales. As usual the best views came at O Reilly’s in Lamington NP, where birds literally perched on our shoulders and begged for food from our balconies!

**Yellow Rosella  \( Platycercus flaveolus \)**
Three different sightings in New South Wales: three birds were seen at a special stop for them en-route to Leeton, and then two were seen by some of the group in Hay, and lastly a couple were feeding on a lawn that also played host to a mixed flock of Long-billed and Little Corellas, and three Ground Cuckoo-shrikes.

*Eastern Rosella*  *Platycercus eximius*
In New South Wales this striking parrot was seen in the town of Narrandera, and in the Capertee Valley. Another was seen in an area of blooming eucalypts at Hobart Airport (TAS), that hosted a good number of Musk Lorikeets too.

*Pale-headed Rosella*  *Platycercus adscitus*
Five sightings in Queensland: our first came at Mount Malloy, with others seen at Lake Tinaroo, and en-route to O Reilly’s in southern Queensland.

*Red-rumped Parrot*  *Psephotus haematonotus*
Recorded on four days of the tour in New South Wales, with the highest numbers and best views coming in the Capertee Valley.

*Mulga Parrot*  *Psephotus varius*
At least six of these strikingly beautiful parrots were seen in Binya (NSW), where some birds dropped down onto the open tracks to drink from puddles caused from recent unseasonal rains.

*Bluebonnet*  *Northiella haematogaster*
Seen on three days in New South Wales: on the journey to Leeton, in Round Hill, and on the Hay Plains.

*Blue-winged Parrot*  *Neophema chrysostoma*
Two birds were seen perched while we were on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

*Turquoise Parrot*  *Neophema pulchella*
A male flew low past us as we were driving near Orange (NSW) on our way to Lithgow that flashed past Sam only and could not be relocated in a short search. Then another calling bird flew low over the group in the Capertee Valley the following day (NSW).

*Swift Parrot*  *Lathamus discolor*
A single bird was seen well feeding in a blooming eucalypt in a tiny village late one blustery afternoon on mainland Tasmania.

*Australian King-Parrot*  *Alisterus scapularis*
Recorded first at Mount Hypipamee NP in northern Queensland, with later sightings in New South Wales in the Capertee Valley. However, as expected the best views came at O Reilly’s in southern Queensland, where their tame birds were tempted onto Ken’s and Rick’s heads on occasion!

*Red-winged Parrot*  *Aprosmictus erythropterus*
Three of these striking parrots were seen at Mount Malloy (QLD).

*Superb Parrot*  *Polytelis swainsonii*
Barbara found a surprise group of these birds on our long journey westwards from Barren Grounds to Leeton. Although we were expecting to find them by the end of the day, the gas station where Barbara found them was well before we would normally expect to see them, right at the extremity of its range. A male of this fabulous parrot then gave us prolonged looks as it fed in the long grass, which was very highly appreciated, leading to this strikingly beautiful species being named as the **BIRD OF THE TRIP**.
CUCKOOS: Cuculidae

**Pallid Cuckoo** *Cuculus pallidus*
One flew over us at Round Hill (NSW), and then another was seen briefly at Binya (NSW). However, the best looks came on Tasmania, where they were seen on Bruny Island and on roadside wires at a number of spots.

**Brush Cuckoo** *Cacomantis variolosus*
Heard at several sites in Queensland and New South Wales, although seen just the once in Julatten in northern Queensland.

**Fan-tailed Cuckoo** *Cacomantis flabelliformis*
A calling bird was seen well at The Curtain Fig Tree in northern Queensland, and another was seen briefly in the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

**Black-eared Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx osculans*
This scarce and nomadic cuckoo showed well at Binya (NSW), in a truly fantastic morning when we also saw *Painted Honeyeater, Little Eagle, Mulga Parrots, Speckled Warblers*, and *White-browed Babblers* there.

**Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx basalis*
One was seen in a patch of *mulga* at Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

**Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus*
One was seen poorly in northern Queensland near Julatten, although much better looks came in southern Queensland, at O Reilly’s.

**Little Bronze-Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx minutillus*
Two different forms of Little Bronze-Cuckoo were seen in northern Queensland: firstly the nominate *minutillus* form was seen along a dry creek near Mareeba, where we found *White-browed Robin* too; and then the “*russatus*” form (formerly split off as a separate species, *Gould’s Bronze-Cuckoo*) was seen near Julatten.

**Australian Koel** *Eudynamys cyanocephalus*
Just the one was seen, briefly in Mount Malloy (QLD), with others heard around Daintree and Mareeba in northern Queensland too.

**Channel-billed Cuckoo** *Scythrops novaehollandiae*
Two of these massive cuckoos were seen in northern Queensland: two flying over our boat on our Daintree River cruise, and then another bird was seen in flight near Mareeba.

**Pheasant Coucal** *Centropus phasianinus*
Three or four sightings were had in northern Queensland (including near Daintree), and another was seen on our journey from Brisbane to O Reilly’s in southern Queensland.

**OWLS: Strigidae**

**Southern Boobook** *Ninox boobook*
Heard at very close range in the rainforest at O Reilly’s, although the bird flew away to some distance when we tried to locate it, and it could be tempted back in. A frustrating miss.

**OWLET-NIGHTJARS: Aegothelidae**

**Australian Owlet-Nightjar** *Aegotheles cristatus*
A very cute bird emerged from its roost hole at dusk where it sat for some time, giving us great scope looks, in the rainforest at O Reilly’s (QLD).
FROGMOUTHS: Podargidae
Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*
One was seen sitting on a nest in dry woodland near O Reilly’s (QLD).
Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*
After a barren first night looking for the species in O Reilly’s (QLD) most of the group decided to *not* try again the following night, when probably the same individual performed spectacularly, coming and perching at close range on several memorable occasions.
Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*
Our local boatman and bird guide Glen showed us two different nesting birds on our Daintree River Cruise (QLD), one of the undoubted highlights of this boat trip (along with the statuesque *Great-billed Heron* found a little later on).

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: Caprimulgidae
Spotted Nightjar *Eurostopodus argus*
Two birds flew up in the car headlights en-route to Round Hill (NSW), that Mike at least managed to see as he was fortuitously sat in the front seat.
White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis*
A bird was heard calling distantly near Mount Malloy (QLD).

SWIFTS: Apodidae
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*
While we were watching a pristine male *Paradise Riflebird* basking in the early morning sun at O Reilly’s (QLD), a flock of ten or so needletails passed overhead. Another of these late migrants was seen over Lady Carrington Drive in The Royal National Park (NSW).
Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae*
Recorded daily on the Cairns leg in northern Queensland.
Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*
A single of these migrant swifts was seen near Mareeba (QLD).

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae
Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*
A super bird allowed us to move the boat right up to it along the Daintree River (QLD), and another pair were seen along a narrow creek in the Capertee Valley (NSW).
Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*
This, the largest kingfisher in the world, was seen on all but one day of the tour.
Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*
A pair were seen on the outskirts of Mareeba (QLD) late one afternoon, one of which appeared to be checking out possible nest sites.
Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*
Commonly recorded on the Cairns leg of our trip in northern Queensland, where they were seen on five of our days in the area.
Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*
After hearing a number of frustratingly well-hidden birds in the mangroves at Cairns, we picked one up the following morning calling from a roadside wire near Nudgee Beach in Brisbane (QLD).

**Sacred Kingfisher Todiramphus sanctus**
Just recorded on three occasions: at Hasties Swamp and Julatten in northern Queensland, and another in New South Wales at Blue Gum Swamp.

**Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher Tanysiptera Sylvia**
A shocking find at Cape Tribulation NP in Daintree one afternoon, as it was much earlier than they would normally be expected to be in northern Queensland (from their wintering grounds in New Guinea). This was the very first record to have been reported in the area, although many followed in the days after.

**BEE-EATERS: Meropidae**

**Rainbow Bee-eater Merops ornatus**
Seen several times in northern Queensland, including within Cairns itself, and also seen several times in inland New South Wales.

**ROLLERS: Coraciidae**

**Dollarbird Eurystomus orientalis**
Seen on seven different days of the tour, in both Queensland and New South Wales.

**PITTAS: Pittidae**

**Noisy Pitta Pitta versicolor**
This glittering rainforest bird was seen near Julatten. A visit to a forest flanked road at dawn saw us initially frustrated in our efforts to locate several calling birds. So we opted to have brekky in the field and try again after. However, while we were eating breakfast a bird popped onto the road in front of us stunning us all. On all occasions it did not linger for long and so we then taped the same bird in after brekky when it shot up into a tree above us, where we were able to watch it at length in the scope. A real rainforest jewel.

**LYREBIRDS: Menuridae**

**Albert’s Lyrebird Menura alberti**
This bird was heard on a number of occasions at O Reilly’s, although could never be located unfortunately. Sadly, this distinctive songbird seems to be becoming less numerous in the area.

**Superb Lyrebird Menura novaehollandiae**
Smarting from having missed the Albert’s, it was not long before we were on the trail of another lyrebird (the next morning in fact). The pressure was therefore high to add this significant family to everyone’s list. We walked Lady Carrington Drive in The Royal NP combing the forest floor for any sign of movement, and keeping a close eye on the track itself for any signs of this, the world’s largest songbird. Sam glimpsed one that took off before anyone else got a look, and then just as we were moving on from this frustrating miss, Mike glanced back down the track and was shocked to see presumably the same male lyrebird slowly walking across the trail behind us! We all swung around as he raised the alarm, although the bird skirted off the track all too quickly. Thankfully though, this brave male appeared quite unconcerned by our
presence and continued to feed away once it had crossed the trail, even climbing on to the top of an open rock to do so, where we could all admire its boldly patterned tail that revealed the bird as a fine male.

**BOWERBIRDS: Ptilonorhynchidae**

**Spotted Catbird** *Ailuroedus melanotis*
Cracking views were had of a bird that came in to the Cassowary House feeders, with brief sightings also coming along the Daintree River, and at Lake Barrine (all in northern Queensland).
The species also occurs in New Guinea.

**Green Catbird** *Ailuroedus crassirostris*
Two sightings in southern Queensland: excellent views of a low feeding pair in Lamington NP, and another pair were seen at Mount Tamborine. One of the great calls of the Lamington rainforest, that sounds remarkably like a cat in pain!

**Tooth-billed Catbird** *Ailuroedus dentirostris*
This master mimic was seen at the Golden Bowerbird site in northern Queensland, even heard giving impressions of the Golden Bowerbird itself while we were there. Sam at least also saw another of these streaky bowerbirds at Lake Barrine (also QLD). At the first site we also saw some large green leaves carefully laid out on the forest floor which comprised this birds “stage” (they make stages rather than bowers, leading to their other name, the “stagemaker”).

**Golden Bowerbird** *Prionodura newtoniana*
One of the undoubted tour highlights was being taken to a recently discovered bower by local naturalist guide Alan Gillanders, who had tracked this down by picking up on the Golden Bowerbird mimicry of the local Tooth-billed Catbird in the same area. Fantastic looks at a male were had in the Atherton rainforest, and great looks at his bower were achieved, that was decorated with white lichen and flowers that were believed to be stolen from another close Golden Bowerbird’s bower. Surprisingly, despite many Australians believing this rare bowerbird with the tiny range is in notable recent decline, the species is not currently listed as threatened.

**Regent Bowerbird** *Sericulus chrysocephalus*
O Reilly’s is THE place to see this strikingly beautiful bird, and for good reason they have chosen this black-and-gold beauty for their logo. Numerous birds were seen daily there, even popping onto people hands to feed on grain, giving us spectacular looks at it, that would simply not be possible anywhere else in the world.

**Satin Bowerbird** *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*
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.

**Great Bowerbird** *Chlamydera nuchalis*
A visit to a tiny Queensland Outback school saw us see both the bowerbird and his precious bower decorated with various white things from shells to plastic items.

**AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: Climacteridae**

**White-throated Treecreeper** *Cormobates leucophaea*
Recorded on four days of the day: in Queensland at The Curtain Fig Tree, Mount Hypipamee NP, and also in Lamington NP; in New South Wales in the Capertee Valley.

**Red-browed Treecreeper** *Climacteris erythrops*
One was seen in dry woodland bordering the rainforest within Lamington NP, Queensland.

**Brown Treecreeper** *Climacteris picumnus*
Barbara managed to track one down in Hay one afternoon, with another coming briefly later that day while we were tracking down a family party of Chestnut-crowned Babblers. The best views came later in the Capertee Valley, when a bird jumped onto the public barbecue grill right beside us while we had lunch in Glen Davis. Unfortunately this was a little unexpected and the cameras were just not ready for this extreme close up!

**FAIRYWRENs: Maluridae**

**Red-backed Fairywren** *Malurus melanocephalus*
Recorded in two days of the tour in the dry country on the edge of the Queensland Outback, at Mount Malloy, and then near Mareeba. This included several stunning vermillion-backed males.

**White-winged Fairywren** *Malurus leucopterus*
Our seventh and final fairywren came on the barren-looking Hay Plains (NSW), when a neon blue-and-white male popped up on the saltbush where it simply glowed against the colorless backdrop of the plains. Simply fantastic. Another male was seen shortly after, hopping on the dirt track in front of our vehicle feeding with a group of seven or so Southern Whitefaces. One person at least listed this species within their top five birds of the trip.

**Superb Fairywren** *Malurus cyaneus*
The most frequently recorded “fairy” on the tour, seen very well at O Reilly’s, QLD, (where it is just another one of their large assemblage of tame species!), also around Bass Point (NSW), and regularly in Tasmania too.

**Splendid Fairywren** *Malurus splendens*
Arguably the most stunning species within this stunning family. A glowing cerulean male was seen in the mallee at Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW), and another stupendous male was seen in the mulga at Binya (NSW).

**Variegated Fairywren** *Malurus lamberti*
Recorded on three days in New South Wales: along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal NP, and then around the marsh several times at Five Bough Swamp.

**Lovely Fairywren** *Malurus amabilis*
Just a couple of brief looks were obtained near Daintree village in northern Queensland. On the first occasion a female came in, and on the second a male.

**Southern Emuwren** *Stipiturus malachurus*
After being teased by some calling birds on the heath in Royal NP near Sydney, we tried again to see them on a calm afternoon at Barren Grounds (NSW). This time the birds performed in spectacular fashion, both the female and powder-blue throated male emerging on to the top of the heather to give us choice looks.

**HONEYEATERS: Meliphagidae**
Brown Honeyeater  *Lichmera indistincta*
Seen four times on the northern Queensland leg of the tour, including in Cairns, and at Lake Tinaroo.

Dusky Myzomela  *Myzomela obscura*
Just seen a couple of times in northern Queensland: in parkland in Cairns, and then at Cassowary House.

Scarlet Myzomela  *Myzomela sanguinolenta*
This gorgeous bright red honeyeater was seen in the garden of a police station in Atherton, where some flowering bottle brush drew a superb male in.

Graceful Honeyeater  *Meliphaga gracilis*
Recorded on two days in northern Queensland: at Cassowary House, and then near Julatten.

Yellow-spotted Honeyeater  *Meliphaga notata*
Recorded on three different days on the north Queensland leg of the tour: at Daintree, Julatten, and Cassowary House.

Lewin's Honeyeater  *Meliphaga lewinii*
Recorded first in north Queensland, although the best views were as usual at O'Reilly’s, where this was one of the tame species regularly hopping around the café tables and feeding in the low bushes around the gardens.

Bridled Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus frenatus*
This is one of thirteen species endemic to the Atherton Tablelands of north Queensland. Ridiculously close views were had of a bird that came to beg for scraps while we had breakfast in the field at Mount Hypipamee NP. Another three were seen near Julatten, and finally another single was seen while we were watching a Platypus.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus chrysops*
Recorded three times in Queensland: near Julatten, and around Hasties Swamp; and also in Royal NP in New South Wales.

Varied Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus versicolor*
This coastal species was seen along The Cairns Esplanade on our first afternoon in Queensland.

Mangrove Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus fasciogularis*
Our first stop after arrival in Brisbane (QLD) was at a small set of mangroves, where we found this species, Collared Kingfisher, and Mangrove Gerygone.

Singing Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus virescens*
Just recorded the once, in the mallee of Round Hill (NSW).

Yellow Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus flavus*
Recorded on three days in north Queensland: in Cairns itself, and at several sites near Mareeba.

White-eared Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus leucotis*
A minimum of five birds were seen at Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

Yellow-throated Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus flavicollis*
Seen at Peter Murrell Reserve and later on Mount Wellington (TAS).

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus melanops*
A minimum of five birds were seen along a creek within the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Fuscous Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus fuscus*
Three were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater  

*Lichenostomus ornatus*

Surprisingly, just the one bird was seen at Round Hill (NSW).

White-plumed Honeyeater  

*Lichenostomus penicillatus*

Three sightings in New South Wales: first seen in the town of Hay, with others being seen at Blue Gum Swamp and in the Capertee Valley.

Macleay's Honeyeater  

*Xanthotis macleayanus*

Recorded on four days in north Queensland: a gaggle of squabbling birds were seen at Cassowary House, and others were seen at The Curtain Fig Tree and in Julatten.

White-naped Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus lunatus*

Two were seen in dry woodland at O Reilly's (QLD).

Black-headed Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus affinis*

We enjoyed three sightings on Bruny Island (TAS).

White-throated Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus albogularis*

Just two sightings in north Queensland, at Lake Tinaroo and in Julatten.

Black-chinned Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus gularis*

A noisy, active group of four birds were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Strong-billed Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus validirostris*

We saw two different groups on Bruny Island, Tasmania, where on the second occasion we saw a young bird being fed by an adult.

Brown-headed Honeyeater  

*Melithreptus brevirostris*

Three birds were seen at Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

Little Friarbird  

*Philemon citreogularis*

Recorded first at Lake Mitchell in northern Queensland, and later seen at several sites in New South Wales, including at Round Hill.

Helmeted Friarbird  

*Philemon buceroides*

Recorded on five days in north Queensland, including within Cairns itself.

Noisy Friarbird  

*Philemon corniculatus*

Seen on seven days of the tour: in Queensland at Lake Mitchell, and at Lake Tinaroo; in New South Wales in Leeton, Royal NP, and in the Capertee Valley.

Orange Chat  

*Epthianura aurifrons*

After getting a recent tip-off from another TB group in the area we successfully “twitched” a group of these handsome chats on the Hay Plains (NSW), where two females and a flamey male were seen perched on a wire fence.

White-fronted Chat  

*Epthianura albifrons*

Recorded four times on the tour. First seen on the outskirts of Round Hill, then recorded twice on the Hay Plains (all NSW), and finally a surprise bird was seen on Tasmania.

Crescent Honeyeater  

*Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*

On Tasmania a bird was seen on Bruny Island, and then a few more were seen in the heath at the top of Mount Wellington.

New Holland Honeyeater  

*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*

Recorded on the heaths at Royal NP, and Barren Grounds in New South Wales, and then seen on both days in Tasmania too.

White-cheeked Honeyeater  

*Phylidonyris niger*

An aggressive pair of these striking honeyeaters was seen defending some flowering *banksias* at Lake Tinaroo.

White-fronted Honeyeater  

*Phylidonyris albifrons*
One was seen at Round Hill (NSW), a lifebird for the entire group, guide included!

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater**  *Phylidonyris melanops*

At least four birds were seen on coastal heath in Royal NP (NSW).

**Brown-backed Honeyeater**  *Ramsayornis modestus*

Four sightings in all in north Queensland, including within Cairns and along the Daintree River.

**Striped Honeyeater**  *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*

A pair were seen near Nudgee Beach (QLD), and another single was seen feeding in some mistletoe at Binya State Forest (NSW).

**Painted Honeyeater**  *Grantiella picta*

Arguably the best looking of all the honeyeaters, this blossom nomad was seen very well at Binya (NSW).

**Eastern Spinebill**  *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*

Recorded on just two days of the tour: a couple were seen at O Reilly’s (QLD), and then seen much better in Royal NP and Barren Grounds in New South Wales.

**Blue-faced Honeyeater**  *Entomyzon cyanotis*

Scattered sightings in dry country in both Queensland and New South Wales.

**Bell Miner**  *Manorina melanophrys*

A handful of these noisy honeyeaters were seen at O Reilly’s (QLD), while we admired a Koala dozing in a tree alongside.

**Noisy Miner**  *Manorina melanocephala*

Recorded regularly in southern Queensland and New South Wales.

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

Also known as WHITE-RUMPED HONEYEATER. Several were seen at Round Hill and Binya reserves (both NSW).

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

Just seen on two different days in New South Wales: at Round Hill and Binya.

**Red Wattlebird**  *Anthochaera carunculata*

Just a couple of sightings in New South Wales, including during our impromptu sea watch over lunch at Bass Point.

**Brush Wattlebird**  *Anthochaera chrysoptera*

After a brief sighting on the heath at Royal NP (NSW), another was seen much better at Barren Grounds (NSW), and one final bird was also seen on the edge of the heath at Peter Murrell Reserve (TAS).

**Yellow Wattlebird**  *Anthochaera paradoxa*

This Tasmanian endemic was seen on both of our days on “Van Diemen’s Land”, including at Peter Murrell Reserve.

**BRISTLEBIRDS: Dasyornithidae**

**Eastern Bristlebird**  *Dasyornis brachypterus*

This tricky skulker was heard on both of our short visits to Barren Grounds (NSW), although truly awful weather during our morning there scuppered any chances we had of actually seeing it.

**PARDALOTES: Pardalotidae**

**Spotted Pardalote**  *Pardalotus punctatus*
Good views of this “Diamond Sparrow” were had in Lamington NP (QLD), and another was seen on Tasmania during our successful search for the Forty-spotted Pardalote.

Forty-spotted Pardalote  *Pardalotus quadragintus*

On a blustery morning in Peter Murrell Reserve (TAS) we managed to track this endangered bird down during our first half hours birding on the island.

**Striated Pardalote  *Pardalotus striatus***

Three sightings: at Mount Malloy and near Nudgee Beach in Queensland; and a nesting pair at Round Hill in New South Wales.

**THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: Acanthizidae**

Pilotbird  *Pycnoptilus floccosus*

After being thwarted in the evening by a calling bird at Barren Grounds (NSW), we were very relieved to find possibly the same pair at the same site the following morning, which obliged us with fantastic views despite the appalling weather there.

**Rock Warbler  *Origma solitaria***

Two singles were seen along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal NP (NSW). This odd species used to be within a monotypic family, although is now considered a strange thornbill. The species is endemic to the state of New South Wales.

Fernwren  *Oreoscopus gutturalis*

This strange scrubwren was seen at Mount Hypipamee NP, where a male sang back at us from an exposed wooden stump. The species is confined to mountain rainforest on the Atherton Tablelands of northern Queensland.

**Yellow-throated Scrubwren  *Sericornis citreogularis***

Recorded on four occasions in Queensland: in Mount Hypipamee NP, Lake Barrine, and several times within Lamington NP.

**White-browed Scrubwren  *Sericornis frontalis***

Seen every day around O Reilly’s (QLD), and another was seen in Royal NP (NSW).

**Tasmanian Scrubwren  *Sericornis humilis***

Seen on both of our days in Tasmania, with the best coming over lunch on Bruny Island, where a small party was seen hopping around the garden of the tiny café we were in.

**Atherton Scrubwren  *Sericornis keri***

One of these Atherton endemics was seen along the entrance road into Hypipamee NP (QLD).

**Large-billed Scrubwren  *Sericornis magnirostra***

Seen on six occasions in Queensland, (at Cassowary House, The Curtain Fig Tree, Lake Barrine, Julatten, Lamington NP, and Mount Tamborine).

**Scrubtit  *Acanthornis magna***

This “Tassie” endemic proved to be way easier than expected, a bird coming straight into call near the base of Mount Wellington, when it gave us some great close up views.

**Speckled Warbler  *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus***

Two or three birds were seen hopping along the ground underneath the dry woodland in Binya (NSW).

**Striated Fieldwren  *Calamanthus fuliginosus***
Our initial searches drew a complete blank on Mount Wellington (TAS), only for another TB group to come behind us and get one hopping around in the open moments later. A short frantic phone call later, we were soon back at the same spot that had been so barren just half hour earlier. However, this time the fieldwren gave excellent views hopping around on the ground among the heathland scrub that cloaks the summit. I guess it was just a late riser?!

**Chestnut-rumped Heathwren  *Hylacola pyrrhopygia***
This shy heath bird was heard calling and, unfortunately, seen only briefly at Royal NP (NSW), when Sam and Ken at least managed to catch a look at it.

**Shy Heathwren  *Hylacola cauta***
This *mallee hylacola* was seen well from the road through Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

**Buff-rumped Thornbill  *Acanthiza reguloides***
Three were seen in the dry woodland below the plateau at O Reilly’s (QLD), on the edge of Lamington NP.

**Mountain Thornbill  *Acanthiza katherina***
This inconspicuous thornbill is endemic to the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland. Two were seen at Mount Hypipamee NP.

**Brown Thornbill  *Acanthiza pusilla***
Seen four times in southern Queensland, including within Lamington NP.

**Tasmanian Thornbill  *Acanthiza ewingii***
Seen on both of our days on Tasmania, on Bruny Island and also on Mount Wellington.

**Inland Thornbill  *Acanthiza apicalis***
Seen at Round Hill and Binya in New South Wales.

**Yellow-rumped Thornbill  *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa***
Seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), in the Capertee Valley (NSW), and also on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Chestnut-rumped Thornbill  *Acanthiza uropygialis***
Seen at both Binya and Round Hill in New South Wales.

**Yellow Thornbill  *Acanthiza nana***
First seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), and then others were seen at Round Hill and Binya (also NSW).

**Striated Thornbill  *Acanthiza lineate***
A family party was seen below the plateau at O Reilly’s (QLD).

**Weebill  *Smicrornis brevirostris***
Australia’s smallest bird was seen just once, in dry country near Mareeba in northern Queensland.

**Fairy Gerygone  *Gerygone palpebrosa***
Two were seen across the river at Daintree, in Cape Tribulation NP (QLD).

**White-throated Gerygone  *Gerygone olivacea***
One vocal bird was seen while we were watching the female Platypus in northern Queensland.

**Large-billed Gerygone  *Gerygone magnirostris***
Two were seen on the Daintree River cruise (QLD), including a bird that was attending its hanging nest.

**Brown Gerygone  *Gerygone mouki***
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 in the *mallee* in Round Hill Nature Reserve (NSW).

**Mangrove Gerygone**  *Gerygone levigaster*
A pair were seen near Nudgee Beach in Brisbane (QLD).

**Southern Whiteface**  *Aphelocephala leucopsis*
After a brief and unsatisfactory view of a bird at Binya, we all got great looks at up to seven different birds feeding along a dirt track on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**PSEUDO-BABBLERS: Pomatostomidae**

- **Gray-crowned Babbler**  *Pomatostomus temporalis*
  Four were seen between Lake Cargelligo and Round Hill (NSW).

- **White-browed Babbler**  *Pomatostomus superciliosus*
  Around five birds were seen at Binya (NSW), and another was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

- **Chestnut-crowned Babbler**  *Pomatostomus ruficeps*
  A surprise find, right at the extremity of their range, on a private farm on the Hay Plains (NSW), where at least three birds were seen, shortly after we had tracked down a *Ground Cuckoo-shrike* in the same area.

**LOGRUNNERS: Orthonychidae**

- **Southern Logrunner**  *Orthonyx temminckii*
  A pair of these comical birds came bounding up to us in Lamington NP (QLD).

- **Chowchilla**  *Orthonyx spaldingii*
  A white-throated male was seen feeding along a forest track at Lake Barrine (QLD).

**WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: Psophodidae**

- **Eastern Whipbird**  *Psophodes olivaceus*
  This striking bird has one of the most distinctive calls in Australia, having an unmistakable whip-cracking call. The calls were heard throughout the tour, and some great views of a tame bird were had in Lamington NP (QLD), with another party of them being seen at Mount Hypipamee too (QLD). For the calls alone this was singled out as one of the tour’s best birds.

**QUAIL-THRUSHES AND JEWEL-BABBLERS: Cinclosomatidae**

- **Spotted Quail-thrush**  *Cinclosoma punctatum*
  Another TB group led by Nick Leseberg, stumbled onto a female of this secretive and scarce species near O Reilly’s (QLD). A phone call and a rather bumpy ride later we were also on site, with no sign of the bird that had since vanished up a dirt track. We decided to walk slowly up this undriveable track and amazingly stumbled onto the bird feeding quietly alongside it. One of the best sightings of our time around O Reilly’s for sure.

- **Chestnut Quail-thrush**  *Cinclosoma castanotum*
  Excellent prolonged views of a singing male were had in the *mallee* at Round Hill (NSW), the bird singing from an open eucalypt in the *mallee* while we all watched
on. A magical moment, and for that reason a popular choice among the tour highlights, leading it to be voted into joint third on the top five birds of the trip list.

**BOATBILLS: Machaerirhynchidae**

*Yellow-breasted Boatbill Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

This distinctive bird was seen first at The Curtain Fig Tree (QLD), and then again near Julatten (QLD). The boatbills were formerly considered monarch-flycatchers (*monarchidae*), although have recently been re-classified in their own two-species family.

**WOODSWALLOWS: Artamidae**

*White-breasted Woodswallow Artamus leucorynchus*

Seen on six different days in Queensland.

*Dusky Woodswallow Artamus cyanopterus*

Four birds were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW), and seven or so birds were also seen on our first day in Tasmania.

**BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: Cracticidae**

*Gray Butcherbird Cracticus torquatus*

Six sightings in Queensland, including at Mount Tamborine.

*Pied Butcherbird Cracticus nigrogularis*

Five or six sightings in both Queensland and New South Wales.

*Black Butcherbird Cracticus quoyi*

Two were seen in a park in Cairns on our first afternoon (QLD), and another came in to feed on cheese at Cassowary House (QLD).

*Australasian Magpie Gymnorhina tibicen*

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

*Pied Currawong Strepera graculina*

The most frequently recorded currawong on the tour, in both Queensland and New South Wales. The best views though came of course in O Reilly’s where a number of menacing birds were hanging around the café, and would swoop in at the first sign of any unattended food.

*Black Currawong Strepera fuliginosa*

One was seen at Peter Murrell Reserve, and another four birds were seen on Mount Wellington on Tasmania.

*Gray Currawong Strepera versicolor*

Two birds were seen near the base of Mount Wellington (Tasmania).

**CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae**

*Ground Cuckoo-shrike Coracina maxima*

To see one at all was a bonus, although to get two sightings in two days was remarkable for this scarce and highly-nomadic inland species. The first came on a private farm on the Hay Plains (NSW), and another group of three birds were seen near Darlington Point the following day (NSW).

*Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike Coracina novaehollandiae*

Recorded on at least thirteen days, in both Queensland and New South Wales.
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina lineate*
Also known as BARRED CUCKOO-SHRIKE. Two were seen near Cassowary House (QLD), and another was seen near Mareeba (QLD).

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina papuensis*
Recorded four times in Queensland, including in Julatten and Cairns.

Cicadabird  *Coracina tenuirostris*
A male was seen near Julatten (QLD), thanks to Chris’s sharp eyesight.

White-winged Triller  *Lalage tricolor*
Recorded at Round Hill and Binya in New South Wales.

Varied Triller  *Lalage leucomela*
Seen three times within northern Queensland, around Cairns, Daintree, and at The Curtain Fig Tree.

**SITELLAS: Neosittidae**

Varied Sittella  *Neositta chrysoptera* H
Some calling birds could not be located in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

**WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: Pachycephalidae**

Crested Shrike-tit  *Falcunculus frontatus*
One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Crested Bellbird  *Oreoica gutturalis* H
A number of calling birds at Round Hill remained firmly hidden the whole time (NSW).

Olive Whistler  *Pachycephala olivacea*
An elusive individual was seen on Bruny Island (TAS), although a much more obliging bird showed to all on Mount Wellington (TAS) on our final day.

Gray Whistler  *Pachycephala simplex*
Recorded on just one day in northern Queensland: at Cassowary House, and also around Daintree.

Golden Whistler  *Pachycephala pectoralis*
Seen several times within Queensland, firstly at Mount Hypipamee NP, and then later in Lamington NP.

Rufous Whistler  *Pachycephala rufiventris*
Recorded at a number of sites on the tour, including near Mareeba (QLD), Barren Grounds (NSW), Round Hill (NSW), and Binya (NSW).

Rufous Shrike-Thrush  *Colluricincla megarhyncha*
Also known as LITTLE SHRIKE-THRUSH. Recorded at Cassowary House, Daintree and Julatten all in northern Queensland.

Bower’s Shrike-Thrush  *Colluricincla boweri*
This shrike-thrush is confined to mountains on the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland. A bird showed well at Mount Hypipamee NP, with others recorded at The Curtain Fig Tree.

Gray Shrike-Thrush  *Colluricincla harmonica*
Recorded at least five times on the tour: some approachable individuals were seen at O Reilly’s (QLD), and also recorded several times on Tasmania too.

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae**
Olive-backed Oriole  *Oriolus sagittatus*
Just three records on the tour: at Julatten (QLD), Canungra village (QLD), and also in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Green Oriole   *Oriolus flavocinctus*
Also known as YELLOW ORIOLE. Recorded four times in northern Queensland, including within Cairns and also on the Daintree River cruise.

Green Figbird  *Sphecotheres viridis*
Several were seen in a flowering tree in the village of Canungra, en-route to Lamington NP (QLD).

**Australian Figbird**  *Sphecotheres vieilloti*
Seen on at least six occasions in northern Queensland.

**DRONGOS: Dicruridae**

**Spangled Drongo**  *Dicrurus bracteatus*
Recorded on seven occasions in Queensland.

**FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae**

**Northern Fantail**  *Rhipidura rufiventris*
A single bird was seen at Abattoir Swamp in northern Queensland.

**Willie-wagtail**  *Rhipidura leucophrys*
This charismatic Aussie species was seen on all but one day of the tour.

**Gray Fantail**  *Rhipidura albiscapa*
Five sightings on the tour. First seen near Mount Hypipamee NP (QLD), and then again in Lamington NP (QLD), Royal NP (NSW), and several times on Tasmania.

**Rufous Fantail**  *Rhipidura rufifrons*
Two sightings in Queensland: at The Curtain Fig Tree, and also in Lamington NP.

**MONARCH-FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae**

**Black-faced Monarch**  *Monarcha melanopsis*
Two of these striking monarchs were seen in northern Queensland, near Julatten and also at The Curtain Fig Tree.

**White-eared Monarch**  *Monarcha leucotis*
Wonderful views of a feeding bird were had in the rainforest near Cassowary House (QLD). Another was seen briefly as we were driving along just downhill from there too.

**Spectacled Monarch**  *Monarcha trivirgatus*
Five or six birds were seen in northern Queensland.

**Pied Monarch**  *Arses kaupi*
This stunning and local species was seen near Julatten (QLD), and some people in the group saw another near The Curtain Fig Tree (QLD).

**Magpie-lark**  *Grallina cyanoleuca*
Seen on all but a few days in Queensland and New South Wales. The species does not occur in southern Tasmania.

**Leaden Flycatcher**  *Myiagra rubecula*
A male was seen in Royal NP (NSW).

**Satin Flycatcher**  *Myiagra cyanoleuca*
Two birds were seen on one day in northern Queensland, a female at Cassowary House and a male beside the Daintree River.

**Restless Flycatcher** *Myiagra inquieta*
A nesting pair was seen at Round Hill (NSW), with one bird actually seen on the nest.

**Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto*
At least four birds were seen along the Daintree River (QLD), including one bird actually on a nest.

---

**CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: Corvidae**

**Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru*
The common crow in the Brisbane region, recorded regularly in this area of Queensland.

**Little Crow** *Corvus bennetti*
A couple of sightings around Leeton and Round Hill (NSW).

**Australian Raven** *Corvus coroneoides*
The common crow in the Sydney region, recorded around Royal NP, and also at a number of other New South Wales sites.

**Little Raven** *Corvus mellori*
Recorded a number of times around the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Forest Raven** *Corvus tasmanicus*
Commonly recorded on Tasmania.

---

**WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH AND APOSTLEBIRD: Corcoracidae**

**White-winged Chough** *Corcorax melanorhamphos*
Recorded on five days in New South Wales.

**Apostlebird** *Struthidea cinerea*
Also recorded on five different days in New South Wales, and sometimes in company with White-winged Choughs along the roadsides.

---

**BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: Paradisaeidae**

**Paradise Riflebird** *Ptiloris paradiseus*
A magnificent male was seen sunning itself in the treetops in O Reilly’s (QLD), and also calling, revealing its shimmering iridescence in the process. A wonderful and popular sighting.

**Victoria’s Riflebird** *Ptiloris victoriae*
Recorded on three occasions in northern Queensland, at Cassowary House, Mount Hypipamee NP, and Lake Barrine. At Mount Hypipamee NP a young male was seen practicing its display on a tall rainforest snag.

---

**AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: Petroicidae**

**Jacky-winter** *Microeca fascinans*
Three different birds were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

**Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** *Microeca flavigaster*
One was seen near Lake Tinaroo (QLD).

**Scarlet Robin** *Petroica multicolor*
A lovely pair were seen on a fence on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Red-capped Robin** *Petroica goodenovii*
After some disappointing immature birds at Round Hill (NSW), several gob smacking males were seen at Binya (NSW) the following day.

**Flame Robin** *Petroica phoenicea*
Two fantastic males were seen in the heath near the summit of Mount Wellington (TAS).

**Rose Robin** *Petroica rosea*
One immature male was seen in the rainforest at Lamington NP (QLD).

**Pink Robin** *Petroica rodinogaster*
A super male bird was seen on Bruny Island (TAS), that was considered one of the top birds of the tour, making into the final five choices for best tour birds.

**Hooded Robin** *Melanodryas cucullata*
An adult male and a young bird were seen in the Capertee Valley in New South Wales.

**Dusky Robin** *Melanodryas vittata*
One was seen by the road on North Bruny Island (TAS).

**Pale-yellow Robin** *Tregellasia capito*
Recorded on at least four occasions in northern Queensland, including in Julatten, Cassowary House, and at Lake Barrine.

**Yellow Robin** *Eopsaltria australis*
Recorded on at least seven occasions, in both Queensland and New South Wales.

**White-browed Robin** *Poecilodryas superciliosa*
A singing male was seen very well in a creek bed near Mareeba (QLD).

**Gray-headed Robin** *Heteromyias albispecularis*
At least two birds were seen at Mount Hypipamee NP, and another was seen at The Curtain Fig Tree, both in northern Queensland.

**LARKS: Alaudidae**

**Australasian Bushlark** *Mirafra javanica*
One was seen near Round Hill (NSW), and another two were seen perched on fence posts in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*
A displaying bird was seen late on our final afternoon on Tasmania, one of the final new birds of the trip.

**SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae**

**Welcome Swallow** *Hirundo neoxena*
The common swallow in Australia, recorded every day on the tour.

**Fairy Martin** *Petrochelidon ariel*
Recorded on three days in Queensland, and another three times within New South Wales.

**Tree Martin** *Petrochelidon nigricans*
First recorded on the Hay Plains in New South Wales, and then again on Tasmania.

**White-backed Swallow** *Cheramoeca leucosterna*
Three birds were seen just south of Hay in New South Wales.

**BULBULS: Pycnonotidae**

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*
One of this striking introduced species was seen as we were leaving Bass Point (NSW).

**REED-WARBLERS AND ALLIES: Acrocephalidae**  
**Australian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus australis*  
Common at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), where a number of them were seen. Also seen at Blue Gum Swamp and in the Capertee Valley (also both NSW).

**GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Megaluridae**  
**Tawny Grassbird** *Megalurus timoriensis* **GO**  
Just a brief flight view for Sam only, near Hasties Swamp (QLD).  
**Little Grassbird** *Megalurus gramineus*  
A couple were seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).  
**Brown Songlark** *Cincloramphus cruralis*  
Recorded first on the way out of Round Hill (NSW), with others seen on the plains south of Hay (NSW).  
**Rufous Songlark** *Cincloramphus mathewsi*  
First seen en-route to Leeton, near the town of Junee (NSW), with records on four days in total, all in New South Wales.

**CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae**  
**Golden-headed Cisticola** *Cisticola exilis*  
One was seen well near Lake Mitchell, in northern Queensland.

**THRUSHES AND ALLIES: Turdidae**  
**Olive-tailed Thrush** *Zoothera lunulata*  
Also known as BASSIAN THRUSH. Excellent views of a bird were had on the entrance road to Mount Hypipamee in northern Queensland. Another two birds were flushed from the road up Mount Wellington in Tasmania.  
**Russet-tailed Thrush** *Zoothera heinei*  
Despite a number of birds in song while we were there, just the one was seen, and unfortunately all too briefly for some, in Lamington NP (QLD).  
**Eurasian Blackbird** *Turdus merula*  
Recorded in Hay (NSW), and also on both of our days on Tasmania.

**BABBLERS: Timaliidae**  
**Silver-eye** *Zosterops lateralis*  
Recorded on nine different days on the tour, in Queensland, New South Wales, and also in Tasmania.

**STARLINGS: Sturnidae**  
**Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica*  
Seen on four different days during the north Queensland leg of the tour.  
**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*
Six records on the tour: firstly in Cairns (QLD), and also recorded at Five Bough, Binya, and Capertee in New South Wales.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: Nectariniidae
Olive-backed Sunbird  *Cinnyris jugularis*
Recorded on five different days in northern Queensland.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae
Australasian Pipit  *Anthus novaeseelandiae*
Three were seen 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 Goldfinch  *Carduelis carduelis*
One was seen at Bass Point (NSW), and several were seen at various spots on Tasmania.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae
House Sparrow  *Passer domesticus*
Regularly recorded, in urban areas, throughout.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae
Beautiful Firetail  *Stagonopleura bella*
Ken pulled this one out at the “eleventh hour”, while we lunched on the Tasman Peninsula on our final day in Tasmania.
Diamond Firetail  *Stagonopleura guttata*
Two superb adults were seen around a small pool that was also attracting a number of Plum-headed Finches in the Capertee Valley (NSW).
Red-browed Firetail  *Neochmia temporalis*
Recorded six times on the tour, at Mount Malloy, Julatten, and O Reilly’s in Queensland. Also seen at Barren Grounds (NSW).
Crimson Finch  *Neochmia phaeton*
A remarkable flock of some fifty or so birds was seen around Yorkey’s Knob near Cairns.
Plum-headed Finch  *Neochmia modesta*
At least two birds were seen around a small pool in the Capertee Valley (NSW), which also attracted several Diamond Firetails at the time too.
Chestnut-eared Finch  *Taeniopygia castanotis*
Also known as ZEBRA FINCH. Two were seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW), three on the Hay Plains (NSW), and one in the Capertee Valley (NSW).
Double-barred Finch  *Taeniopygia bichenovii*
One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).
Nutmeg Mannikin  *Lonchura punctulata*
Several small parties were seen near Yorkey’s Knob (QLD), and another was seen at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

**Chestnut-breasted Munia** *Lonchura castaneothorax*

Twenty or so birds were seen near Yorkey’s Knob (QLD).

**Mammal list**


**Short-beaked Echidna** *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

One shuffled across the road in front of our vehicle just east of Junee, on our journey to Leeton (NSW).

**Platypus** *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

A day active female gave superb views in near Atherton in northern Queensland. It was truly superb to see this often nocturnal animal active during the day and get repeated views as it fed in a small lake.

**Northern Brown Bandicoot** *Isoodon macrourus*

One was feeding on the lawn of Red Mill House in Daintree village (QLD).

**Koala** *Phascolarctos cinereus*

One was seen in dry woodland down from the plateau at O Reilly’s (QLD). We even saw it move!

**Mountain Brushtail Possum** *Trichosurus caninus*

A black morph was seen from the restaurant at O Reilly’s (QLD), with some gray morphs seen in the forest there at night too.

**Striped Possum** *Dactylopsila trivirgata*

This beautiful possum was seen outside Rick’s room at Cassowary House (QLD).

**Common Ringtail Possum** *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*

One was seen at O Reilly’s (QLD).

**Musky Rat-kangaroo** *Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*

Three of these tiny ‘roos were seen at Cassowary House (QLD), and another few were seen in the forest at Lake Barrine (QLD).

**Agile Wallaby** *Macropus agilis*

A few were seen at both Mount Malloy and Hasties Swamp (QLD).

**Whiptail Wallaby** *Macropus parryi*

Also known as PRETTY-FACED WALLABY. One of these handsome wallabies was seen as we were leaving O Reilly’s (QLD).

**Eastern Grey Kangaroo** *Macropus giganteus*

These large kangaroos were seen at Mareeba in Queensland, and then later in New South Wales near Capertee.

**Western Grey Kangaroo** *Macropus fuliginosus*

A massive male of this giant species was seen right at the very end of our “night safari” on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Euro (Common Wallaroo)** *Macropus robustus*

This heavy set wallaby was seen twice in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

**Red-necked Wallaby** *Macropus rufogriseus*
A couple of people saw one of these wallabies on the journey between Orange and Griffith (NSW).

Rufous-bellied Pademelon  *Thylogale billardierii*
Also known as Tasmanian Pademelon. One was seen on the Tasman Peninsula.

Red-legged Pademelon  *Thylogale stigmatica*
Around five animals were seen in the forest at Julatten (QLD), and another was seen at O Reilly’s (QLD).

Red-necked Pademelon  *Thylogale thetis*
A few of these cute wallabies were seen on the lawns around the lodge at O Reilly’s (QLD).

Spectacled Flying-fox  *Pteropus conspicillatus*
A few were seen around Cairns (QLD), and also a massive flock was seen flying to roost one morning between Mareeba and the Atherton Tablelands.

Water Rat  *Hydromys chrysogaster*
Barbara saw one of these at Five Bough Swamp (NSW).

Red Fox  *Vulpes vulpes*
Recorded at Round Hill and Hay in New South Wales.

European Rabbit  *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
Seen regularly on the Hay Plains (NSW), and also in Royal NP (NSW), and near Mareeba (QLD).

European Hare  *Lepus europaeus*
Several were seen on journeys in New South Wales.

**Others**

Lace Monitor  *Varanus varius*
One was seen at Round Hill in New South Wales.

Shingleback  *Trachydosaurus rugosus*
One of these strange reptiles was seen between Round Hill and Griffith (NSW).