



A [Tropical Birding](#) CUSTOM tour

EASTERN AUSTRALIA

7 - 22 November 2016

Tour Leader: Sam Woods (Report and all photos by Sam Woods)



This **Southern Cassowary** was one of two seen well as *Etty Bay*, south of Cairns, with another two seen equally well at *Cassowary House* a few days later. It was considered one of the top five birds of the tour, and with views like this it is easy to understand why?!

INTRODUCTION

This custom tour was an abridged version of the [Eastern Australia Top to Bottom tour](#), covering most of the sites, except those in Inland New South Wales, in order to keep the trip shorter.

As with our “normal” set departure tour of the region, the tour started out in **The Wet Tropics of Northeast Queensland** around the city of **Cairns**, where we visited a range of habitats, including tidal mudflats, lowland rainforest, mangroves, a sandy cay on the Great Barrier Reef, montane forest, tropical wetlands, sandy beaches, rocky coastlines, and even tropical savannas right on the edge of the Outback. The diversity in habitats led to a varied set of birds too, with highlights including a sandy paradise island on the Great Barrier Reef packed with noddies, terns, and boobies; excellent views of two enormous **Southern Cassowary** at both Etty Bay and Cassowary House; the hills north of Cairns also yielded a wonderful **Noisy Pitta** that allowed us to ‘scope it while calling from the forest canopy, and also provided us with our first **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**, and only **White-eared Monarch** of the tour; the feeders at Cassowary House also hosted an iridescent male **Victoria’s Riflebird** and several **Spotted Catbirds**, both seen to within a meter of us; a beautiful **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** watched calling in the telescope from the mangroves in Cairns; a minimum of four **Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfishers** were seen in Daintree; a nesting **Papuan Frogmouth** from a river trip in that area, which shared the headlines on the cruise with a **Pied Monarch**; several male **Australian Bustards** strutting in the savannas of the Outback; the dry country also produced some immaculate male **Banded Honeyeaters**, over twenty **Squatter Pigeons**, a nesting **Tawny Frogmouth**, and the often difficult **White-browed Robin**; we also managed to observe **Great Bowerbirds** and their intricately decorated bowers while there; two wonderful **Australian Owlet-Nightjars** near our hotel in Mareeba one night; a superb daytime “**Lesser**” **Sooty Owl** (found by an earlier Tropical Birding group – thanks Laurie for the info!) on the Atherton Tablelands, which also produced a glowing male **Golden Bowerbird**, and a morning with seven different **Chowchillas** on Mount Lewis.



One of the tame, wild, **Australian King-Parrots** at O’ Reilly’s in Lamington National Park in Southeast Queensland

Seeing the magnificent **Curtain Fig tree**, near Yungaburra, was also an undoubted highlight, as was watching a family of **Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroos** in daylight - a normally scarce, nocturnal creature. Other avian highlights of this first section in northeast Queensland included watching a flock of over 200 **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** heading to roost near Atherton, observing four different **Platypus** during the day, and getting up close with a gang of giant **Eastern Gray Kangaroos** close to our hotel.



The second leg of the trip saw us heading to **Brisbane in Southeast Queensland**, and then to Lamington National Park, where we were based at the famous birder's hangout of O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, set within verdant temperate rainforest. The feeding areas yielded their usual throng of colorful species, like gaudy **Australian King-Parrots** and **Crimson Rosellas** at point blank range, and also **Satin and Regent Bowerbirds**. We also visited a blue-themed bower of the former as the bird sat alongside. The standout bird at O Reilly's was **Albert's Lyrebird**, two of which were seen with ease, and a male **Paradise Riflebird** was also seen displaying there briefly too. Other avian features of our time there were **Rose Robin, Green Catbird, Red-browed Treecreeper**, and excellent looks at three different nightbirds: "**Greater**" **Sooty Owl** by day, and **Marbled Frogmouth** and **Southern Boobook** by night.

The penultimate leg saw us flying south to **Hobart in the southeast corner of Tasmania**. The island holds 12 species found nowhere else, so was an obvious shoe in on the itinerary. A full day was spent on the idyllic Bruny Island, where scenery drew our breath away alongside the birds. However, a siege of new species came there, including **Dusky, Scarlet and Pink Robins, Swift Parrots, Forty-spotted Pardalotes, and Hooded Plovers**, along with endemic birds like **Strong-billed Honeyeater** and a tame family of flightless **Tasmanian Native-Hens**. Our time on Tasmania came to a close watching a huddle of 14 **Little Penguins** coming ashore at dusk after a day at sea.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (photo above) is one of Australia's most abundant and familiar birds

Lastly, we traveled to **New South Wales, in and around Sydney**. A day in the Capertee Valley, the widest valley in the world, and a favorite hangout for Sydney-based birders, saw us indulge in a stream of new birds, including the rare **Regent Honeyeater, Hooded Robin, Yellow-tufted and Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Zebra Finch, and Crested Shrike-Tit**. Local lakes and ponds produced some additional waterbirds, like **Blue-billed Duck, displaying Musk Duck, and Australasian Shoveler**. We finished off by visiting the Royal National Park and Royal Botanic Gardens to view the famous Opera House and Harbour Bridge, while snagging our last few birds, like **Beautiful Firetail**, and the largest songbird on Earth - **Superb Lyrebird**.

We should not fail to mention some of the fantastic scenery that is not always anticipated in eastern Australia; we especially enjoyed the rainforest waterfall of **Barron Gorge in Kuranda**; the magnificent **Curtain Fig Tree in Yungaburra**; the scenic headland of **Cape Bruny on Bruny Island in Tasmania**; the view down on Hobart from the pinnacle of **Mount Wellington in Tasmania**; the rocky coastline at **Wattamolla in Royal National Park**,

Cahill's Lookout over the Blue Mountains near Sydney; and the expansive Capertee Valley near Lithgow, which claims to be the widest valley in the world.



The beautiful, heath-clad headland at the southwestern tip of Bruny Island on Tasmania (Cape Bruny)

As you can see from the long intro, there was much to wax lyrical on, as Australia is so jam-packed with colorful and bizarre bird species, odd mammals, and unexpected scenic locales. In the end the following were picked as the top birds of the tour (in no particular order):

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Southern Cassowary | (Etty Bay and Cassowary House, NE Queensland) |
| Noisy Pitta | (Kuranda National Park, NE Queensland) |
| Powerful Owl | (J C Slaughter Falls, Southeast Queensland) |
| Regent Bowerbird | (Lamington National Park, Southeast Queensland) |
| Pink Robin | (Bruny Island, Tasmania) |
| Flame Robin | (Mount Wellington, Tasmania) |
| Little Penguin | (Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania) |
| Regent Honeyeater | (Capertee National Park, New South Wales) |



[LEG 1: NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND \(Cairns Region & The Atherton Tableland\)](#)

[Day 1: Cairns and Cattana Wetlands](#)

John and Irene landed in the early afternoon, leaving them time for some initial exploration in and around the small coastal city of **Cairns** during the afternoon. While Irene got some welcome downtime following a long, long flight in, John set about getting his first Aussie birds. The city offers excellent birding, and a great way to kickstart a tour checklist, with a varied set of birds possible in and around Cairns, which boasts mangroves, internationally important tidal mudflats, rainforest, wetlands, and parkland. All of these diverse habitats are within easy reach of each other, either right in the city, or just outside, making them easily visited even with only a few hours birding available. We left the mangroves for the following morning, but covered all the others on our first afternoon. We started out with a quick check of the sprawling tidal mudflats of The Esplanade, a seafront that hosts multiple people from the keep-fit community, as well as being a long time favorite for birders, due to the hordes of shorebirds that flock here. On this afternoon, the shorebirding was limited by the tide, which was already way higher than we would have hoped, but we did still manage to pick up some crisp **Red-capped Plovers** (*photo above*) close in on the foreshore while the trees alongside resounded with the rollicking calls of the local **Varied Honeyeaters**, which were also seen.



The *Bush Thick-knees* in Cairns were quite confiding!

Next stop was a local park just five minutes drive from the first one – *Centenary Lakes*, where **Black Butcherbird**, **Australian Brush-Turkey** and **Orange-footed Scrubfowls** were all quick new species, and represented two entirely new families too. The brush-turkey and scrubfowl are both odd, large-footed birds from the Megapode family, which build huge nest mounds in which to lay their eggs, letting the warm soils incubate them rather than their own bodies, unlike most other bird families. We headed towards a specific corner of the park, where as hoped, a pair of goggle-eyed **Bush Thick-knees** (*photo above*), was found resting in the shade. These are large-eyed nocturnal shorebirds that rest by day under the shadow of the trees, before setting off to forage around the city at night.

We quickly also familiarized with some of the cities most abundant birds, like **Rainbow Lorikeets**, a noisy, colorful, and near constant presence for the tour from that point forward; spritely and charismatic **Willie-wagtails**, (*photo page 7*), as well as **Magpie-larks**, and Technicolor **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, (*photo next page*), and our first **Laughing Kookaburra**, an iconic star of Australian nursery rhymes. Another town regular in Cairns were the pied forms of **Torresian Imperial-Pigeons**, which overflow regularly, or were found resting in the trees all around the city. The lakes refer to both a fresh and saltwater lake that the park possesses. The saltwater one offered us little on this afternoon, although we fared better on the freshwater lake, where a **Radjah Shelduck** and our first **Magpie-Geese** were also seen. As we were preparing to leave the park, we also chanced on a calling male **Common Cicadabird** in some Eucalypt trees overhead.

Two familiar birds in Cairns: *Willie-wagtail* and *Rainbow Bee-eater*...



Our last stop of an action-packed first few hours of the tour, was at *Cattana Wetlands*, around 10km north of the city. On the drive there, a **Pacific Baza** passed over the main highway, while at the marsh, our main hope here was to pick up a late afternoon **White-browed Crake** prowling the reed beds, (which obliged right on cue around 5pm)! This short visit also produced our first lily-trotting **Comb-crested Jacanas** and some dabbling **Green Pygmy-Geese**, although we narrowly missed some *Crimson Finches* there. That night, we ate at a local Balinese restaurant, which has become a regular feature on recent Tropical Birding tours, and retired to bed early to fully recover from our long journeys *down under*...

Day 2: Cairns Esplanade, The Great Barrier Reef and Yorkey's Knob

Before breakfast, we set out to try the mangroves at the north end of *The Esplanade in Cairns*, for a few species that are specialists of the habitat. Foremost in our minds was the sometimes-difficult *Mangrove Robin*, although on arrival a calling **Torresian Kingfisher** distracted us with its strident calls coming from deep within the mangroves. A little time later the bird came in close, and was located perched on a conspicuous branch at the mangrove edge. As we were watching this heavy-billed kingfisher, amazingly, a **Mangrove Robin** appeared lower down on the same branch! Fortuitous indeed. We also got great looks at a local **Magpie-lark** (*photo below*), which appeared yet to have awoken properly for the day, and then managed to see a calling **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** for a long spell in the 'scope. We then took a quick scan of the foreshore, as the tide was now low enough to attract a good selection of waders, which included **Far Eastern Curlew**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **Terek Sandpiper**, and **Gray-tailed Tattler**, while the nearby mangroves held our first **Leaden Flycatcher** and another **Varied Honeyeater** to cap off a great 40 minutes pre-breakfast birding!



Magpie-lark is an odd, terrestrial Monarch Flycatcher, which was regularly recorded on the tour

After the five minute drive back to our hotel, we took in a cooked breakfast, before heading out on the *Seastar* catamaran at 8am for a day out on the **Great Barrier Reef**, with a combination of birding, snorkeling and a glass-bottomed boat tour undertaken while out there, with lunch on board too. Just before boarding we also picked up our first squadron of **Australian Swiftlets** cruising the southern end of the *The Esplanade*. After a 90-minute boat ride out of Cairns, we docked at the headline site of the cruise – *Michaelmas Cay*, a small sandy island, which hosts tens of thousands of breeding seabirds. Before reaching land, and setting foot on the island, we found one of the rarest birds of the cay, **Red-footed Booby**, which is not seen on many cruises. The other birds seen whilst on land were more routine and to be expected – **Great Frigatebird**, **Brown Boobies** (some already with Ariel-white chicks), **Brown Noddy**, and **Sooty, Lesser Crested and Crested Terns**. On the offshore buoys, we also enjoyed some close ups with **Bridled Terns**, and a few **Little Terns** were also seen on the wing too. Sea cucumbers, clownfish, parrotfish, brain corals, and many others featured on the optional snorkeling excursions and glass-bottomed boat tours, before we got back into *Cairns* at around 4pm. Having tried, unsuccessfully, to find a pair of **Beach Thick-knees** the afternoon before, during a brief search in Cairns, and knowing the tide was now high enough for the birds to be using this traditional high tide roost, we tried again, and quickly found a pair of these bold shorebirds standing on the saltflat. We then went off in pursuit of another bird that had narrowly eluded us the day before – **Crimson Finch** (*photo below*) – that this time proved easy, being seen at both a new site we checked (where a minimum of 15 were seen), and a quick stop at another site we had been at the evening before, also produced another singleton too. The first spot also produced our first **Golden-headed Cisticolas**, and plenty of **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins** too. As we headed out to dinner that night, we stopped in on the large local roost (“camp”) of **Spectacled Flying-Foxes** and watched as these enormous bats regularly flapped lazily overhead, or were perched in the large fig trees in downtown Cairns.







The island of **Michaelmas Cay** is a haven for nesting seabirds! (Page 10: **Sooty Tern** & **Beach Thick-knee**)

Day 3: ETTY BAY AND THE ATHERTON TABLELAND

After a two-night stay in Cairns, we were ready to depart for other sites, and other bird species. This took the form of a busy day, where we started by heading south of the city, along the coast to **ETTY BAY**, but then turned west, and inland, in order to visit multiple sites on the diverse **ATHERTON TABLELANDS**, southwest of Cairns.

ETTY BAY is a tranquil white sandy beach, approximately 62 miles (100 km) south of Cairns. However, it was not so much the *beach*, than the surrounding *rainforest* that drew us there, as this is a stronghold for the *Southern Cassowary*, Australia's heaviest bird. We descended the steep road down towards the beach, but were stopped dead in our tracks, well before the bay, when a large black shape was noted on the side of the road – a **Southern Cassowary** (*photo page 1*) which continued to feed at close quarters for a good time afterwards. This was one of three seen in our 90-minute visit to the area that morning, two of which were seen very close on the road itself. The same area brought us our first **Varied Triller** and **Little Bronze-Cuckoo** in the adjoining rainforest, as well as a perched view of the minuscule **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot**, which passed overhead more regularly as tiny dots in the sky. Down on the beach, we ran into a very confiding **Beach Thick-knee**, (*photo page 10*), a species that had vexed me considerably on my previous tour, but appeared seamlessly easy on this one, following *three in our first three days!* The rocky coastline close by also hosted a dark morph **Pacific Reef-Heron**, and **Striated Heron** too.



The approach to *Michaelmas Cay* (above), and the scene on our *Daintree* River cruise...



From there, we turned our attentions to the considerable riches of the *Atherton Tablelands*, an area of highlands to the southwest of Cairns, which is comprised of endemic-rich highland rainforests, wetlands and agricultural lands. Our first stop was a series of ponds, fed by hidden underground creeks, which are home to the most reliable *Platypus* in the region, and notably, ones that regularly forage during *daylight hours*, something that they do not do at many other sites. A short walk to a pool, and a short wait was all that was needed to observe at least four of the **Platypuses** (*photo below*) quietly foraging in the middle of the day.



A recent **Tropical Birding** tour had recently just blasted through the area, and fortuitously found a roosting “*Lesser*” **Sooty Owl** nearby. After bumping into Yungaburra-based, local bird guide Alan Gillanders, we got confirmation that he had seen the owl just shortly before. Therefore, in spite of rumbling stomachs and it being distinctly lunchtime by this point, and due to our high anxiety to see the owl, we headed straight there. After some initial confusion regarding which trail we were actually on (and finding a few **Mountain Thornbills** while doing so), we found the owl quickly after we corrected ourselves. We happily watched this rare and difficult “*Lesser*” **Sooty Owl** at length! This was formerly considered a separate species to the “*Greater*” **Sooty Owl**, although most recent checklists currently lump the two together. We had been hoping for a *tree-kangaroo* in the same area, but were quickly directed towards the **Nerada Tea Rooms**, by the helpful local volunteers in the *Malanda Falls Visitor Centre*, who indicated we were likely to have better luck there with this odd marsupial. On arriving at the tea rooms, we went straight for lunch, but while ordering were informed by the local catering staff as to the whereabouts of the *tree-kangaroos* that day. After some simple, though excellent, food on site, we strolled over to the **Lumholtz’s Tree-Kangaroos** (*photo last page*), which were still lolling about nearby. After refueling with food, we were re-energized for yet more avian specialties, and so went after one of the most beautiful in all of the *Atherton Tablelands*. For this one, we needed to go into the rainforest at **Mount Hypipamee**, as this local species is confined to higher forests on the Tablelands. The bird we were after was the **Golden Bowerbird**, a bird that can be reasonably easy to see, when a bower staked out, but can otherwise be very inconspicuous and difficult to find. Not for the first time that day, we bumped into Alan Gillanders and his group, on the very same quest as we were. It did not take us long to locate either its conspicuous maypole-style bower, (decorated with white objects from the surrounding forest, such as lichen and fruits), or the gaudy golden male himself, which lurked nearby,

keeping a watchful eye on his treasured possession. After picking up another Tablelands specialty on site, **Gray-headed Robin**, it was off to our final stop of the day, **Hasties Swamp** near the town of **Atherton**. This wetland is typically bursting at the seams with birds, and a reliable place to rack up many of Australia's diverse waterbirds. However, a very prolonged dry spell in the region (with no substantial rain since February according to local sources), had taken its toll on the swamp, leaving all but a tiny patch of moisture in the middle, and the area atypically light on waterbirds! We did manage to see a stately **Black-necked Stork** feeding on the remnants of the wetland, but precious few other waterbirds. We also added our first **Agile Wallaby** on site, as well as **Rufous Whistler**, a rowdy mob of **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets**, and a single **White-cheeked Honeyeater** in the line of trees alongside. A **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** also stood sentry in a large dead *Eucalypt* overlooking the swamp. With the afternoon waning, it was time to head on to our lodging for the night, the well-named **Cassowary House** in the town of **Kuranda**, just north of Cairns. We knew we would be too late for birding by the time we arrived, and so took a leisurely drive getting there, picking up our first **Blue-winged Kookaburras** along a creek on the edge of **Mareeba**, just as the shock news of a Donald Trump victory in the US presidential elections came through on the radio! We then ate pizza in **Kuranda**, while taking in this dramatic, unforeseen twist in world events.



There can be few better places to get up close to **Squatter Pigeons** than at **Granite Gorge!**

Day 4: Cassowary House and Granite Gorge; to Daintree



This **Tawny Frogmouth** nesting in a local garden at Granite Gorge was our first of three frogmouths on the tour

With the cassowary “in the bag” from the day before, the morning had considerably less pressure to it than it might have had. However, that is not to say that **Cassowary House** and the surrounding **Kuranda National Park**, is some sort of “one-trick-pony”; far from it, as there is much more besides the cassowary to look for. Soon after leaving our rooms, we saw one of the rarer species in the area, a **Red-necked Crake**, which typically left as fast as it came. The regular local male **Southern Cassowary** also attended a fruiting tree right outside our rooms, rapidly rounding up *all* of the fallen fruits before departing back into the forest once more. Along the drive, we found a cute and spritely **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**, yet another new family for John, (which is confined to Australasia). Soon after entering nearby **Kuranda National Park**, we heard the call of another bird for which the area offered our only chance, **White-eared Monarch**. It was initially skittish, and refused to show as anything other than a black-and-white blur, but then settled and fed on the outside of the canopy leaves, where we were even able to watch it through our *Swarovski* ‘scope. We also saw our only **Pale-yellow Robins** of the tour in this same area. These were already good scores before our later than usual breakfast, but then came a bigger one still, when we heard the raucous calls of the aptly titled **Noisy Pitta**. This one took much more work to get onto, and even saw us walking off-trail into the vine-strewn forest. This led to some quarrels with some of the spiny tangles, before we finally managed to locate a position with a direct view of the still-calling **Noisy Pitta** that also allowed us long scope looks of its glittering

plumage, before brekky (=breakfast in Australian speak) summoned us back to the lodge. We had a wonderful spread of tropical fruits, toast, eggs, fresh juices and tea and coffee on the *Cassowary House* veranda, overlooking their feeders, and the fruit laden patio below. While we ate at length, we got to watch the world's smallest kangaroo foraging on the fruits below, **Musky Rat-Kangaroo**, and also watched another **Southern Cassowary** (a female this time), come in to feed too. At the feeders at balcony level, we got to see **Black Butcherbird**, **Macleay's Honeyeater**, **Spotted Catbird** and even an iridescent male **Victoria's Riflebird** (a type of *bird-of-paradise*), all come in to feed within a few meters of us! After breakfast, a very hot day was already evident (peaking at around 38 Celsius/100 Fahrenheit), and so the forest was quick to quieten down. We did manage to add a dowdy **Gray Whistler**, and our first handsome **Spectacled Monarch** and **Mistletoebird**, before we decided to pack up and move on, with the area largely quiet otherwise. The odd **Dollarbird** was seen hawking insects from a lofty dead snag just before we left.



Australia's tallest bird, the **Emu**, was seen well at Mareeba. It is also the national bird.

Our next stop was very different indeed, and this is indeed one of the undoubted thrills and appeals of birding this area – the extreme diversity of habitats within a short distance of each other. While the morning had been spent in humid, highland rainforest, we then switched to drier country and the edge of the Outback, near the town of **Mareeba**. Specifically, we visited **Granite Gorge Nature Park**, home to both the easiest **Mareeba Rock Wallabies** and **Squatter Pigeons** in the region. We had 18 different **Squatter Pigeons** (*photo page 14*) whilst there, most of which were seen before we had even checked in for the park, and were soon after hand-feeding the absurdly tame wild wallabies! These were not the only birds seen though; we

also got close ups of several **Yellow Honeyeaters** and **Double-barred Finches**, and were shown a nest of a cryptic **Tawny Frogmouth** (*photo page 15*) in a local garden. We also got to see a **Great Bowerbird** sitting and calling in the tree overlooking his well-adorned bower, which was mostly decorated with white seashells. From there, we returned to town and visited the nearby **Mareeba Wetlands Visitor Centre**, where a small group of tame **Emus** (*photo page before*), Australia's massive national bird, was waiting on site, drinking from a local pond in this incredibly dry area. Looking out from the impressive center itself, we soon found the hoped for **Cotton Pygmy-Goose**, a pair of which was swimming around close to the considerably more abundant **Green Pygmy-Geese**. Just outside the center we also added a melodious **White-throated Gerygone** to the trip list, and got to see more **Double-barred Finches** too. I had alerted John to keep a sharp eye for **Australian Bustard** (*photo below*) on the way in, but we had come up empty-handed, in spite of our vigilance. However, on the way out, the penultimate stanza of the day was walking into a strutting, displaying male bustard, which allowed fantastic close range views from the vehicle.



Our last stop was back in rainforest, this time close to the rural town of **Julatten**, where our first **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** made an appearance, but some calling **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfishers** frustrated us by remaining hidden deep within the forest, so we vowed to return to this species at another site the next day. At the end of the day we rolled into **Daintree**, a village that was to represent the northerly most point of this tour, and the comfortable surrounds of **Red Mill House**, complete with the wonderful, welcoming hosts of Trish and Andrew on arrival. After dinner in a local eatery, Irene retired to bed to catch up with the post US election aftermath, (which was still very raw), while John and I went off in pursuit of nightbirds and other Australian creatures. We missed out on the birds, neither seeing nor hearing a **Papuan Frogmouth**, but at least hearing a

distant *Large-tailed Nightjar*. On returning to *Daintree* village, we checked in on one of the regular **White-lipped Treefrogs** clasped to the side of *Red Mill House* (*photo below*) to end the day on another high!



Day 5: Daintree, Wonga, Mount Lewis and Yungaburra

Our main activity in the morning was to be a *Daintree River Cruise*, although a short time before that was available to bird nearby *Stewart Creek Road*, where we managed to add a male **Pacific Koel**, which was then subsequently seen on the cruise afterwards. What we'd been hoping for was a *Lovely Fairywren* to open the batting for this family, but all of our overtures fell on deaf ears and they were neither seen nor heard at that time. Our boat cruise was an absolute pleasure, with Murray Hunt as our local boatman and skilled bird guide. He gently drove us up side rivers and the main river as we racked up some of the local specialties; we got off to a great start with a **Black Bittern** seen perched by the Daintree River itself. Kingfishers were hoped for, and we got cracking looks at an **Azure Kingfisher**, although the rare *Little Kingfisher* screamed past at such a pace that we were blindsided, and only heard its call. Further along, Murray showed us a nesting **Brown-backed Honeyeater**, which was our first of the tour. One of the regular highlights of the river tour is getting up close to several male and female **Shining Flycatchers** (*photo next page*), a riparian species. We also got very close to an adult **Australian Darter**, standing sentry alongside the river. The two clear avian highlights of the tour however, was first, a nesting **Papuan Frogmouth**, a bark-like nightbird that Murray had staked out, and a striking male **Pied Monarch**, a local specialty we were expecting to have

considerably more trouble in finding. Unfortunately, try as we might, we could not find the hoped for *Great-billed Heron*, getting scant compensation with our first **White-faced Heron** of the trip that had our pulses racing for a moment. Getting back to land, we took in a great cooked breakfast at **Red Mill House**, with Trish and Andrew providing a substantial spread that set us up for much of the day. As we were departing to leave this wonderful lodge behind, Trish shouted to us to alert us to a male **Lovely Fairywren** she had just seen in the garden, while hanging the laundry. John and I raced to try and relocate it; and the male soon appeared close by, and was quickly followed by the female as they foraged through the forest – thank you Trish, we had our first fairywren, and a *lovely* one at that (the scarcest on offer)!



We then went after one of Australia's great migrant bird species – **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** – that had only recently arrived from their wintering grounds to the north, on the island of New Guinea. A traditional haunt for them is the rainforest segment at the far end of **Stewart Creek Road in Daintree**, and Andrew had confirmed they were now in, in good numbers. A few hours spent on site led us to views of at least 4 males, mostly excitedly chasing each other around the canopy, but finally John found one perched in a good position too. During our time there we also saw a couple more **Gray Whistlers**, another male **Common Cicadabird**, and an upgrade to our looks at the spectacular mauve, green-and-gold **Wompoo Fruit-Dove**. With our main target, the dazzling *paradise-kingfisher*, under the belt, we then left **Daintree** behind and headed south to **Wonga**, checking the local fish farms, where waterbirds like **Radjah Shelduck**, **Sharp-tailed** and **Common Sandpipers**, and **Pacific Golden Plover** featured. After lunch in a Mossman Café, we were soon back in the field, this time making our first venture up the forest-clad **Mount Lewis**, the most accessible of the higher mountains in the area, reaching around 3940ft/1200m at its highest point. On the way up, we counted our first **Pacific Emerald Doves** walking along the forest-shaded road, as did a **Bassian Thrush**, and also got out for a singing **Black-faced Monarch**, which showed well

beside the deserted road. On arriving at the infamous clearing at the top, birders who had just seen a *Blue-faced Parrotfinch* greeted us, but we simply could not relocate this difficult bird amongst the abundant **Red-browed Firetails** there. We racked up some other notable species, confined to such highland forest on the Tablelands, like **Bridled Honeyeater** and **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**, the latter of which was heard imitating *king parrot* among others. We also saw a gorgeous **Mistletoebird** in the same area, and regularly encountered **Gray Fantails** too. As this very hot afternoon wore on, we descended the mountain and headed to **Yungaburra**, a meeting point for a night tour searching for mammals with local expert *Alan Gillanders*. On the way there, a series of enormous black shapes in the sky had us pulling the car quickly off the road, so we could admire a minimum of 200 **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, as they passed over noisily, on their way to roost. Our stop there proved fortuitous, as this was also the time when a couple of **White-throated Needletails** also decided to swoop low overhead, a swift species that is stated to be the fastest species on Earth in level flight, (only beaten by a *peregrine* in a stoop). That night, we visited a few nocturnal mammal sites near **Herberton**, the first of which was a wet *sclerophyl* forest site, dominated by large *Eucalyptus* trees, and crucially with some large *Red Gums* mixed in. Alan walked us to a known tree where 3 different **Yellow-bellied Gliders** (*photo below*), along with several tiny **Feathertail Gliders** (which were dwarfed by the former species), were seen feeding on the sap of the large gum by gnawing small holes into the huge trunk. Our last stop was in an area of highland rainforest, where the activity was lower than hoped, but we still added a **Coppery Brushtail Possum** (a species confined to these northeastern mountain rainforests) to our growing mammal list, before we called it a day and headed back to **Mareeba** for the night.



One of three **Yellow-bellied Gliders** watched drinking sap from the trunk of a large gum tree, alongside several tiny **Feathertail Gliders** in attendance too.

Day 6: Mount Lewis, Atherton, and Mount Carbine

We started out the day much as we had ended the afternoon before, by ascending up *Mount Lewis*, to bird the highland forest on its upper slopes. One of our chief targets for the site, was the excitable *Chowchilla*, which has a rollicking call of considerable volume, given most often early in the morning. Indeed, before we had got up to the main birding spot, we had pulled to the side of the road after hearing its raucous call. The first threesome of **Chowchillas** did not oblige with anything but short, and tantalizing views. However, the second group we encountered, which included two cherry-throated females, paused in the open for some time. By the morning's end, we had racked up *seven* different *Chowchillas*, after they regularly serenaded us through the first few hours of the day. Our route up the mountain also saw us observing several **Bassian Thrushes** foraging along the dirt road. On arriving at the clearing near the top again, we were greeted by a ground-foraging **Atherton Scrubwren**, but could not locate a *parrotfinch* as hoped among the throng of **Red-browed Firetails** feeding there. A few more **Bridled Honeyeaters** were also seen in that area, as was a **Rufous Fantail**, and a nesting **Gray Fantail**, which kept us company regularly. The bold and striking **White-headed Pigeon** that drifted across the clearing ended up being our sole sighting of the tour. Hiking for a kilometer or so on a mountain trail, we were quick to pick up our first target, a responsive, black-bibbed **Fernwren** (one of the toughest of the Atherton specialties), which came in very close on several occasions. Further up the trail, we got looks at a smashing male **Golden Whistler**, and finally picked up a **Bower's Shrike-Thrush**, our final of the regular local endemics that we were seeking. Seeing several dramatic **Ulysses Butterflies** drift slowly across the clearing, daubed in shocking electric blue-and-black, also delighted us. Back on the mountain road, we also found **White-throated Treecreeper**, another **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**, and a gorgeous male **Scarlet Myzomela (Honeyeater)** as we descended the mountain for the final time.



Four male **Banded Honeyeaters** were seen together just north of Mount Carbine

After lunch in *Atherton*, we went off in search of the local *crane* flock, finding a remarkably confiding **Buff-banded Rail** while doing so that bought obvious pleasure to John. *Cranes* had been unnervingly scarce this year. However, after a good tip off from Alan the night before, we managed to track down a mixed group of some 60 or so **Brolgas** and **Sarus Cranes** resting in a plowed field. We also made a short stop to admire the enormous **Curtain Fig Tree**, just outside of *Yungaburra*. This massive *strangler fig* represents one of the largest trees in all of Queensland, reaching almost 50 feet (15m) in height, and is incredibly impressive close up, when the true scale of this beast of a tree can be truly appreciated.

The last part of the day saw us heading north, out of moist highland rainforest and into the parched *Outback*, north of **Mount Carbine**. The sharp contrast of habitats within such close proximity was particularly evident on this afternoon, as we left behind dense, verdant vine-tangled *rainforests*, instead replaced by *tropical savanna* with open *eucalypt* trees, a grassy understory, and dotted with massive termite mounds. These all took over even as we could still see the forested slopes of *Mount Lewis* looming on the horizon. The drive



beyond Mount Carbine was broken with a stop at the *McLeod River*, where we added both **White-gaped** and **Rufous-throated Honeyeaters**. The last stop of the day was further north, along the *Hurricane Road*. On arrival at the site the regular chattering of the local **Apostlebirds** soon led us to them, as did the regular piping calls of the **Brown Treecreepers** in the area. We also encountered Australia's smallest bird, the kingleet-sized **Weebill**, and admired more **Squatter Pigeons**, along with our first **Common Bronzewing**. A dam in the area draws in local species, and parrots were soon in evidence nearby, as **Galahs** and **Pale-headed Rosellas** were seen in the surrounding trees. We also added a chunky Australian wallaby, a **Euro** (or **Common Wallaroo**), the single sighting of the tour. However, the star find of this late afternoon spell was a quartet of male **Banded Honeyeaters**, (*photo page 21*), an erratic, and irruptive blossom nomad, which responds to local flowering nectar sources. On the way back to *Mareeba* for dinner, we were again stopped in our tracks by a small gathering of confiding male **Australian Bustards**. After dinner, Irene retired to bed, while John and I went off in search of a particular strange nightbird. On arrival at the woodland where they occur,

we quickly heard at least four different **Australian Owlet-Nightjars** (*photo above*), which after just brief views, seemed to steadfastly refuse to show again, in spite of their calls being regularly heard nearby. As a final attempt, we moved further down the road, and tried another likely spot, and got our second sighting of the night that proved to be a significant upgrade to our earlier one. This time the bird perched in several good positions, and gave us the quintessential "walk away" views, as it was still on the same branch when we left. It was a late finish, but well worth it for this entirely new Australasian family.

Day 6: Big Mitchell Creek, Mt. Molloy, Abattoir Swamp, Lake Mitchell, Mareeba, Barron Gorge, and Cairns



This *White-browed Robin* required some work, before giving us great looks at Big Mitchell Creek

As usual, on our final day of the this leg, we had only a small discrete set of target birds remaining, which were all rather disparately distributed. Thus, we visited a variety of sites in quick succession to try and get as many of these as we could during the limited time left available. We started out by visiting a dry creek bed, **Big Mitchell Creek**, with two particular targets in mind: the languid *Northern Fantail*, and inconspicuous *White-browed Robin*, the latter often one of the trickier birds on this leg of the tour. As the *robin* typically likes to be deep within the dense gallery forest, we tried our best to walk the creek bed itself, as much as we could, but made slow progress with the heat already being high at this time, and the tangles hindering our progress somewhat. A small flock came through that held several hyperactive **Rufous Fantails**, and the conversely *lethargic Northern Fantail*. We also found a **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** in the area too. About 300m along the creek, we caught sight of two birds flying into a neighboring tree, which proved to be our principal objective from this site, a wonderfully friendly pair of **White-browed Robins** (*photo above*). With the robin “bagged”, it was soon time to move on to the similarly dry and hot **Mount Molloy** nearby, and the odd setting of a local schoolyard for our birding. However, this may be one of the most welcoming of all schools, with a sign proclaiming “*Welcome Birders*” on the entrance gate. The site has been locally famous for years, due to the presence of a **Great Bowerbird** bower right in the center of the yard. Over the years, birders have flocked there, and have frequently been welcomed in by the local teachers, who would routinely indicate the position of the latest active bower. However, this being a Sunday, the teachers and pupils were all away, and we would have had the place to ourselves, were it not for another pair of visiting birders, and the local caretaker watering the bird-friendly local plants. The bowerbird was swiftly seen, as was its impressive bower, decorated largely with shells, and also, oddly, a silvery plastic toy hand grenade! The local *Bottle Brush* was in full bloom and was attracting a frenzy of nectar-feeding birds, some of which proved very

photogenic. Among the honeyeaters present were **Brown and Blue-faced Honeyeaters**, and **Noisy and Little Friarbirds**. However, it was for a parrot we had come there, and a quick search just outside the school grounds, saw us watching several **Red-winged Parrots** alight in the near trees. We also added two new cuckoos to the list – the massive **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, whose huge frame flew over us (this is the largest brood parasite in the World), and a **Brush Cuckoo** was tracked down to a local tree through following its sound.



*Blossoms at Abattoir Swamp drew in a bounty of honeyeaters, with this **White-cheeked Honeyeater** battling with **Eastern Spinebills** for this rich source of nectar*

The third stop of the morning was at nearby **Abattoir Swamp**, which is much nicer than it sounds. Deceptively, there is not much of a swamp these days, following years of low rainfall and drought conditions. However, the dry woodland is still very productive, particularly when some of the local trees are in flower, as they were during our short visit. Around the parking lot we heard another *Northern Fantail*, but having just had decent views, did not bother to follow it up, instead enjoying some low down views of a local nesting pair of **Mistletoebirds** and a tail-flicking **Leaden Flycatcher** instead. A short walk brought us to the bird blind/hide, which was a hive of activity, due to some nectar-rich blooms being present. **Brown, Brown-backed, Yellow, and White-cheeked Honeyeaters** (*photo above*) battled with the local **Eastern Spinebills** for a place at the nectar-rich, lipstick-colored flowers. We also got cracking looks at a male **Red-backed Fairywren** in the adjoining grasslands, and a sharp **Forest Kingfisher** perched close by. We then moved on to **Lake Mitchell**, as we traveled back to our **Mareeba** hotel to check out. The lake was not

as productive as in some years, duck numbers being generally low, but we did see **Magpie-Goose**, **Green Pygmy-Goose**, **Black Swan**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, and **Australasian Darter** in our short visit there. After checking out, and heading out to lunch in Mareeba, we stopped off at the local golf course, where there were no golfers teeing off during the intense heat of the day, but there were a small troop of **Eastern Gray Kangaroos** resting under the sanctuary-like shade of the local trees. From there, we headed east back to Cairns, taking a break to admire the spectacular **Barron Gorge Falls** near **Kuranda**, en route, and finding our first **Large-billed Scrubwrens** while there.



The odd **Magpie-Goose** is a monotypic family, confined to Australasia

The ultimate birding session of the day was back in **Cairns**, where a check of the local parks produced more **Magpie-Geese**, (*photo above*), a late addition in the form of a showy local **Royal Spoonbill**, and another **Radjah Shelduck**, among others. The final part of the day was spent back on the **Cairns Esplanade**, where the incoming tide was just right for excellent views of a wide variety and great number of *shorebirds*. Some of these like **Gray-tailed Tattler**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, and **Great Knot** were repeats, but others like **Red Knot**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, and both **Greater and Lesser Sandplovers**, standing side-by-side, were new. In all, **16 species of shorebird** were seen, as well as a close-feeding dark morph **Pacific Reef-Heron** (*photo next page*) to close out this fantastic leg in *Northeast Queensland*; early the next morning we were to fly south, into the markedly different *southeast* of the state...



This *Pacific Reef-Heron* was seen fishing at close quarters beside the *Cairns Esplanade*

LEG 2: SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND (O'Reilly's, Lamington National Park)

Day 8: Boondall Wetlands, J. C. Slaughter Falls, and O'Reilly's (Lamington N.P.)

After waking at an ungodly hour to take our early morning flight from Cairns to **Brisbane**, in the south of the same state, we arrived with much of the morning left still to bird. We quickly shook off our slumber at the prospect of a stellar selection of species to come, following our change from *tropical* to *temperate* Queensland. Our first stop was a mangrove area close to the airport, close to *Nudgee Beach*, known as **Boondall Wetlands**. Although a boardwalk invited us into the mangroves, we opted to start on the road, where we quickly located our first target, the suitably named **Mangrove Honeyeater**. Moving swiftly from one honeyeater to another, we tried a local patch of mangrove-side *casuarina* trees and quickly located one of the local **Striped Honeyeaters**, a far more striking species in real life than the dowdy field guide illustrations would suggest. Our final target on site was another mangrove species, **Mangrove Gerygone**, a tiny dull brownish warbler that is confined to this coastal habitat. Its song is more exciting than its appearance, and initially that is all we were permitted, as one sang back at us from deep within the mangroves though refused to show. However, after we changed position, and walked a short distance along the boardwalk we got closer looks at one, which was our signal to leave; with all three avian objectives achieved. We hoped that our next stop would be a very special one indeed, as we visited the slopes of *Mount Coot-tha*, at the ominously-named **J. C. Slaughter Falls**, located just 6 miles/10km from the Brisbane central business district (CBD) itself. This area had a dark history of murder, suicide and mysterious deaths in

the early part of the 20th Century, although is now merely looked on as a beautiful mountain overlooking the city that provides a tranquil weekend getaway for Brisbanites looking to escape the urban sprawl! Our reason for coming was simple; this has been a long time hangout for the urban-dwelling *Powerful Owl*, Australia's largest owl species. In particular, it had been known in recent months that some recently fledged young ones were still frequenting a certain creek, and were often very conspicuous in their choice of daytime roost sites, making this visit a very attractive proposition indeed. To help with our search, I met with one of my ex-pat birding friends from the UK, Stuart Pickering, who now calls Brisbane home, and lives close by to the owls. He met us in the parking lot, and led us straight to the chosen creek, which at first sight appeared bereft of large, intimidating-looking owls. However, Stuart gestured that we should check further down the languorous brook, as that was where at least one of the juveniles had most recently been seen. We slowly walked our way down, glancing all around for any sign of an owl hiding deep within the denser tangles overhanging the stream. However, in the end, this appeared rather naive, as once we rounded the corner, there was a massive juvenile **Powerful Owl** (*photo below*) perched brazenly in the open with not a branch obscuring it at all. The owl was completely fearless, but I guess when you are one of the largest owls on Earth – (approaching the immense *Great Gray Owl* in size), you have very little to fear in life! Unlike that species though, this one has massive, oversized talons, and much in the manner of a *Harpy Eagle*, these appear like



they have been attached to the wrong bird's body. We were gob smacked at the stunning views and enjoyed a long period of staring at one another. Indeed, we were so dumbstruck by the spectacle of this huge avian predator that we didn't initially realize that it had a *dead possum* clasped in its substantial claws, evidence of a catch from the night before. This was very clearly one of the birds of the tour, sitting right there in front of us, which we eventually dragged ourselves away from, as we headed south towards the magnificent **Lamington National Park**.

Before we reached that legendary birding site though we stopped in on a local Brisbane-based nest of a rare raptor, *Square-tailed Kite*, although in spite of some time there, we did not manage to connect with the pair, which was apparently regularly foraging for long periods away from their nests, with no chicks present at that time. Therefore, we pushed on, taking another stomach straining, hearty Australian lunch en route. As we neared **Canungra**, at the base of the mountain that holds the **O Reilly's Plateau** at its apex, we took a side road, where we soon heard the distinctive chiming of the local **Bell Miner** colony. This aggressive

honeyeater was soon seen; a sight that many Australian conservationists do not welcome, for this species often drives out many other bird species from their colony, and leads to an overall lowering of faunal diversity in the area, both in terms of plants, birds and insect species. However, it was new for us, and we were happy to see it at that time. There were also several **White-naped Honeyeaters** found at the fringes of the miner colony. At ground level, we also located a dapper male **Variegated Fairywren**, our third from this family of the tour. We then continued on down the road to where a large yellow sign commanded "DO NOT DISTURB THE FLYING FOXES!", for we were keen on seeing these too. By the sign was a large mixed "camp" (roost) of these enormous fruit-eating bats, mostly comprising of **Gray-headed Flying-Foxes**, but with a handful of **Black Flying-Foxes** mixed in too. By now, the afternoon was moving swiftly towards its close, and we hoped to have some time for birding as we ascended the road up to the rainforest-capped plateau, or at least along the drive up through the markedly different eucalypt forest that cloaks its flanks. This led us to our first

Red-necked Wallabies, but little else was seen on the drive up to the lodge at the top end. Finally, we entered the *Green Mountains section of Lamington National Park*, located on an outlying ridge of the *Great Dividing Range*, known as the *McPherson Range*, and to our fantastic accommodations at *O Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*. This is a favored haunt, not only for weekend warriors and honeymooners from Brisbane, but also for birders from all over the globe. While I checked in, I let the group loose to explore the bird-friendly surroundings, as regular feeding areas just a stone's throw from the hotel reception, host a variety of tame, wild, forest birds that are remarkably approachable. By the time I had checked in, John and Irene had quickly racked up **Regent Bowerbird** (the O' Reilly's flagship species), **Australian King-Parrot** and **Crimson Rosella**! Meanwhile, Sam's check in was not without drama either, as he got wind that a group of birders were currently viewing a day roosting "**Greater**" **Sooty Owl**, (*photo left*), although he was having trouble getting the necessary specifics of its exact whereabouts. This would not have caused such a panic had it not already reached 5pm, with only a short time left of daylight, knowing full well come nightfall, the owl would be gone for the night and would most likely not return to the same spot the next day. *Sooty Owls* are only very rarely seen during daylight hours at all. Finally, as we were



just about to give up and go to our rooms, the large O' Reilly's bus came trundling up the road, bearing the bird group who had been watching the owl just a short time earlier. Sam quickly accosted the local guide, who gave pinpoint directions to the bird. John and him quickly drove to the trailhead, and raced along the trail. Searching where we had been told, we quickly found both the only strangler fig tree, and the large hollow containing this ashen owl! A great *end* to the day; *or so we thought...*

After a smashing dinner of roast lamb, where we were reunited with Irene again, we decided to make a push for another couple of nightbirds, this time by the more traditional method of searching *at nighttime*. Our principal target was the rainforest-dwelling *Marbled Frogmouth*. We listened for its knocking and gobbling calls along a favored trail, but came up empty-handed, and so opted to try near where we'd seen the owl.

This time we received a spine-tinglingly close response, and soon after had two of these chunky nightbirds perched up in full view of us, their large angry-looking orange eyes staring down at us. On the way back to our rooms by car, its considerably more abundant sister species, **Tawny Frogmouth**, was flushed from a roadside post too at the forest edge. A fantastic close to one of the great days of this tour, having seen both *Powerful and Sooty Owls* by day, and *Marbled Frogmouth* (*photo below*) by night.



A pair of *Marbled Frogmouths* were seen incredibly close in the rainforest close to O' Reilly's

Day 9: O' Reilly's (Lamington N.P.)

A full day was spent around the *Green Mountains Section of Lamington National Park*, while based at the wonderful *O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*. Typically, for this site, we awoke to bustling bird activity right around the lodge, encouraged no doubt by long established feeding areas on site. Wild **Crimson Rosellas** and **Australian King-Parrots** waited impatiently in the trees around the feeding station, while a small flock of **Red-browed Firetails** (*photo page 30*) gathered on the well-manicured lawn below. Alongside this was a spiffing pair of **Superb Fairywrens**, which at one point perched on the infamous *Stinson Statue* that commemorates the Airlines of Australia Stinson plane crash, which was discovered by one of the founders of this lodge-Bernard O Reilly, back in 1937, at which time the guesthouse had been operating for some 25 years already. After some time around the open edges, we entered the temperate rainforest that surrounds the guesthouse. Our chief aim here was to try a find an *Albert's Lyrebird*, one of the signature birds of O' Reilly's. We tried one trail, without luck, but made our walk worthwhile by visiting the blue-themed bower of a local male **Satin Bowerbird**, which lurked nearby, keeping a close eye on his

gathered azure possessions, which included plastic water bottle tops and drinking straws! On switching to the *Wishing Tree Trail* we had better luck though, first finding a boisterous pair of **Australian Logrunners** (*photo next page*), which appropriately enough alighted on a log and also the charismatic **Eastern Whipbird**, whose unmistakable, whip-cracking duet resounded around O' Reilly's all day long. Soon after, we also walked into a foraging **Albert's Lyrebird**, which barely acknowledged our presence as it continued to scratch at the forest floor with its oversized feet. It's hard to comprehend that this pheasant-shaped bird, with legendary mimicry skills, is actually one of the largest of all songbirds, and quite far removed from what they appear to be to the western birder's eye.



Red-browed Firetail is a finch species that is typically very confiding at O' Reilly's

After a hearty spread back at the lodge, which included sampling the local *Vegemite*, a popular yeast-based Australian spread that is often repellent to all but Australians, we took another stroll on another easy forest trail, the *Python Rock Track*. We soon racked up some of our avian targets, like **Rose Robin**, several **Green Catbirds**, and also added two new cuckoo species: **Shining Bronze- and Fan-tailed Cuckoos**. We also enjoyed more *logrunners*, a showy **Rufous Fantail**, and another **Black-faced Monarch**. At the forest edge we had several confiding **Striated Thornbills** and a trunk-hugging **White-throated Treecreeper**. The best sighting was arguably a displaying male **Paradise Riflebird**, which did not linger long after his brief dance. Back at the lodge for lunch, we admired the dapper **Eastern Spinebills** foraging in the garden blossoms, which were outnumbered by the raucous **Lewin's Honeyeaters**, one of which attended our lunch. Over lunch on the balcony, we fought off the attentions of a stout, velvety-blue, male **Satin Bowerbird** (*photo page 46*) and some ever-watchful **Pied Currawongs** that lurked with intent in the

surrounding trees. Several tame **Eastern Yellow Robins** also foraged around the gardens too. After lunch, we went off in search of a species that is known for its preference for the transition zone between the dense rainforest and open sclerophyll woodland, which stands right alongside, and starts very abruptly just below the main forest-clad plateau. The species was **Red-browed Treecreeper**, which initially appeared absent, and so we set about finding some of the calling **Spotted Pardalotes** instead, which we did, before John picked up a treecreeper foraging overhead. It clearly displayed a red brow through the 'scope; job done! We also visited a **Bell Miner** colony down the entrance road, where we found the miners, but not a hoped for *Koala*, which seemed to have gone AWOL during our visit.

As the afternoon wore on, some of the local small wallabies, **Red-necked Pademelons**, emerged to feed, and we went off for an early dinner. After dinner, we made a united effort to find an owl that had eluded us the evening before, in spite of being heard – **Southern Boobook**, which is an onomatopoeic name. On trying around the lodge, to zero affect, we headed off down the road, to another traditional spot. However, on reaching that section of the road, we heard a pair calling back in the direction we had come in! We drove slowly back up the road, stopping at regular intervals, until we could hear the owl calling just behind the car. We hurried to the spot, and soon found the bird rooted to an open branch, still happily calling away in the spotlight, and trained 'scope shortly thereafter, a great finish to another classic Australian day.



Australian Logrunner was appropriately seen running along a mossy log at O' Reilly's

Day 10: O'Reilly's (Lamington N.P.) to Hobart

A big chunk of this day involved us moving out of *Queensland* and into *Tasmania*, although we snuck in some final birding at *O'Reilly's* and on the edge of *Brisbane* before we departed by air. Early on, John got a good look at one of the local **Wonga Pigeons** walking around the parrot feeding station. We took an early morning drive along the entrance road in the hope of thrushes, and quickly found a **Russet-tailed Thrush**, a new species for the tour. As we were looking for very little new around the lodge at this point, we admired repeats of many of the most stunning birds of the area, not least the dashing male black-and-gold **Regent Bowerbirds** (*photo right*), which are the well-chosen logo bird for the guesthouse and further **Satin Bowerbirds** and *king-parrots*. We then decided to try for *Square-tailed Kite* again in *Brisbane*, but were thwarted again with their recently used nests lying empty, but we did add **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Gray Butcherbird** as new birds in the area at least, before we flew to *Hobart* (in southeast Tasmania), via Melbourne.



LEG 3: TASMANIA

Day 11: Peter Murrell and Bruny Island

Another busy day for birds was enjoyed, with our new location of *Tasmania* offering not only some southern species we had not yet got into range for (like *Hooded Plover* and *Swift Parrot*), but also a discrete set of a dozen endemic birds confined to the island state. Our day started out close to Hobart, at the small **Peter Murrell Reserve**, a known site for one of the rarer Tasmania's endemics, *Forty-spotted Pardalote* (named after a neat line of dots on its wings). Sadly, there was no sign of that species in our short visit, but we quickly set about adding some of the more abundant Tasmanian specialties, like **Yellow-throated Honeyeater** and **Tasmanian Native-Hen**, as well as our first **Chestnut Teals**, gently drifting across a small dam. With a big day on Bruny looming, and no obvious sign of the hoped-for *Pardalote*, we set off for **Kettering Docks**, to take the car ferry over to Bruny. Twenty minutes after boarding, we drove onto **Bruny Island**, and took a side road to search for *Swift Parrots*, which had recently been reported there by another *Tropical Birding* tour. Our first stop found plentiful potential parrot trees, with white blossoms decking the *eucalypts* all around us, but no immediate sign of any *Swift Parrots*. However, we did see another Tasmanian endemic, in the form of several **Black-headed Honeyeaters** chasing each other around the canopy of a tall tree. At our second stop though we struck gold when Irene noticed a couple of small bright, gem-green parrots darting into the near treetops. We quickly

trained the 'scope on the white blooms peppering the stated tree, and soon found a stunning **Swift Parrot** sipping its nectar. This was a very good early score, as this nomadic species is entirely missable, and can be incredibly difficult to find in the absence of any accessible local blossoms. With one of the day's major targets achieved, we set about trying for the next most difficult species, the endangered *Forty-spotted Pardalote*, which had already eluded once that day. On going to a GPS spot provided by another recent visitor who'd been through the area, we found **Striated Pardalotes**, but none of their dowdier and rarer, cousins among them. Having at least another two spots to try, we moved on, but stopped short of there at signs of frantic activity in the large white gums overhead. Dismissing the first few songbirds as "merely" more *Striated Pardalotes*, we then found some smaller ones; a trio of **Forty-spotted Pardalotes**, which gave us extended views as they chased each other from tree to tree. Things were going swimmingly, with two of the days potentially most challenging species seen before we'd even reached mid-morning. The pardalote and parrot were our two principal avian targets on **North Bruny**, and so we now set off south to **South Bruny**, crossing the narrow spit of land known as *The Neck* that divides these in doing so.

Our next designated stop was a small, scenic cove that over recent years has held a small, reliable flock of *Blue-winged Parrots*. It did not take us long to find *parrots*, although the first of these were larger ones, but a new endemic all the same: **Green Rosella**. A short time later we located a group of the main target, **Blue-winged Parrot**, at least eleven of which were seen perched on a low shrub near the deserted beach. We tried this area too for *Beautiful Firetail*, but in spite of hearing its feeble call, we did not manage to locate the culprit. Nearby, a **Pallid Cuckoo** was located on an overhead power cable, and a tail-wagging, glossy male **Satin Flycatcher** (*photo right*), was added to the list too as reward for taking a side road in error. Our next stop was motivated partly by birding, but also as it is a fantastic scenic spot on the coast, with a wonderful 180-year old lighthouse as its centerpiece, **Cape Bruny**. This is located on a promontory at the southwestern tip of the island, and represents the most southerly accessible lighthouse in Australia. Before reaching Cape Bruny though, we planned to stop off at the **Jetty Beach Campground**, a known birding site that often offers up good birds right around the campground. Scenic lookouts, however, led us to break up this journey, and we added both **Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers**, and **Black-faced Cormorant** along a rocky shoreline at one of these, and a pair of **Strong-billed Honeyeaters** calling from a tall gum tree at another of these unscheduled stops. Once at *Jetty Beach*, we quickly found **Tasmanian Scrubwrens** foraging around the parking area, and a **Bassian Thrush** bounding along with complete indifference to people camping nearby. Just as we were about to leave, we also found an **Olive Whistler** perched above the camp. On reaching Cape Bruny, we admired both the lighthouse, the view out into the Tasman Sea, and the tame **Dusky Robins**, (another state endemic). Around the foot of the lighthouse, some particularly confiding **Superb Fairywrens** (*photo next page*) swiftly brought our cameras back into action.



After this, we opted to go for lunch further north near **Adventure Bay**, taking food at a small cafe along the way, after passing a **Swamp Harrier** quartering the side of the narrow highway. *Adventure Bay* is a long, white sand beach, flanked by tall eucalypt trees, with rocky headlands bookending it on either side. The sheltered nature of this east-facing beach is attractive to visiting tourists, looking to swim in the cool Tasman waters, but also makes it an ideal location for nesting **Hooded Plovers** (*photo page 36*). Evidence of their presence is unavoidable on arrival, with signs encouraging visitors to respect their space; and avoid walking on the upper edges of the beach, where these rare shorebirds choose to situate their nests. A quick sweep of the bay with binoculars revealed no *plovers*, and so we drove further along the beach, and then quickly came upon a pair of these plovers resting close by at the next stop. We also saw a hulking juvenile **Pacific Gull** at the far end of the bay, one of only a few seen on the tour. This species is a southern specialty, confined to the coasts of southern Australia.



Superb Fairywrens were very confiding within the blossoms at the base of the lighthouse at *Cape Bruny*

A local garden also hosted a family of **Tasmanian Native-Hens**, a bold, and conspicuous *flightless* rail that is confined to Tasmania. One of our final stops on Bruny was to be a forested road that dissects the island, home to yet more endemics and local specialties. One of these, *Crescent Honeyeater*, was immediately heard when we arrived at our next scheduled stop. However, we focused on a forested gully nearby, where we hoped we might find a *Pink Robin*. As we tried to find that species, a subtle movement in the damp gully

revealed a **Scrubtit** feeding nearby; a bonus find, which we were due to make our first real foray for the following day. Not long after the soft warbling sound of a **Pink Robin** (*photo below*), was heard, and this gorgeous robin was soon located above us, which then afforded us beautiful looks

Shortly after, we set off for the ferry back to mainland Tasmania, but having only just landed two of our four robin target species, decided to make a try for a third on the return journey to the **Bruny Island Ferry Terminal**. On stopping at a quiet, wooded stretch of road, we were delighted to quickly find a striking male **Scarlet Robin** beaming at us from the trees overhead!



*This stunning male **Pink Robin** was a popular entry on to our bird list in the wet forests of Bruny Island*

That evening, following dinner back near the waterfront in **Hobart**, John and I set out to find *owls* and *mammals* at the nearby **Hobart Waterworks Reserve**, finding/hearing no birds but plentiful *marsupials*. We saw goodly numbers of **Bennett's Wallabies** (a markedly different local subspecies of *Red-necked Wallaby*), **Tasmanian (Rufous-bellied) Pademelons**, and lots of **Common Brushtail Possums**, many of the latter with young joeys clasped to the backs of their mothers. It had been a long, though very fulfilling day in the field, with plentiful mammals and birds to keep us busy throughout.



We surprised this *Hooded Plover* on the idyllic, sandy beach at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island

Day 12: Truganini Reserve, Peter Murrell Reserve, Mt. Wellington & Eaglehawk Neck

Having already seen 11 of the 12 Tasmanian endemic birds on offer, we had much less pressure, and greater time available on our final day on the island. However, we also had some additional regional specialties to find. It was for one of the latter that we started out the day at *Truganini Reserve in Hobart*. This small reserve comprises a wet gully (Cartwright Creek) through rainforest, on the southeast flank of 1100ft (350m)-high *Mount Nelson*. On arrival, we quickly noticed a new parrot in the parking area – a gorgeous pair of *Eastern Rosellas*. Our principal objective here though was trying to track down the soft “moo-ing” of a *Brush Bronzewing*, an underrated pigeon species that is often difficult to see perched, more often encountered as a burst of noisy wings as they take off from near your feet. We arrived soon after dawn, and soon after that were hearing the low, cow-like calls of the *bronzewing*, and so ventured onto the forest trail that climbs up the creek. Although we could hear several of them, it was only once we had walked past one that we managed to triangulate its position and located it as it sat calling from the slim limbs of a tall, pale gum tree. As we were leaving the area, we also got some cracking looks at the official bird of Tasmania – *Yellow Wattlebird*, one of the largest honeyeaters on Earth, and also tracked down some *Musk Lorikeets*

feeding in some roadside blossoms. We then made a short return to *Peter Murrell Reserve*, where we managed to get some good views of the local **Dusky Woodswallows**, which were collecting nesting material, and got other repeats like the endemic **Yellow-throated Honeyeater**.

After connecting with Irene, and enjoying a rare sit down hot breakfast in *Hobart*, we went to see *Mount Wellington* that looks down on this small city, and some of its native bird species. This included our twelfth and final “Tassie” endemic, **Black Currawong**, which was located on the way up. As we ascended this mountain the forest soon gave way to stunted woodland and finally, heathland. It was here that we found one of the most striking birds on Tasmania, a glowing male **Flame Robin** (*photo below*), having worked our way through a few females first, before we landed a much-desired male bird.



This male **Flame Robin** was a highlight of our final day on Tasmania, on the scenic Mt. Wellington

Crescent Honeyeaters called frequently alongside the *Flame Robins*, although were devilishly difficult to see at first, but finally gave us some long looks, when the striking nature of this honeyeater was finally appreciated. After admiring the “*Organ Pipes*” at the pinnacle of the mountain, (its central geological feature), we descended back to *Ferntree* for lunch on the lower flanks of the pile, picking up the huge, distinctive shape of a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** (Australia’s largest raptor), passing overhead on the way down. Lunch was eaten while overlooking some bright *rhododendron* blossoms at the forest edge, which were flushed pink at the time, during which our food was often admired by the marauding local currawongs that included both **Black and Gray Currawongs**.

After some time off for souvenir shopping in *Hobart*, we went out for a final venture on Tasmania. We stopped off at *Eaglehawk Neck*, where we connected with a few **Australian Gannets** drifting past offshore, while we ate our dinner in the field, in readiness for the main event...As the evening waned and dusk threatened to arrive, we made our way to a secluded beach, and settled ourselves down on the top end of the beach, where we kept a close eye on the breaking surf for signs of any movement. The day drew to a slow and gradual close, at which time it became very difficult to pick up signs of life at the edge of the breaking waves, but finally, we noticed some white bellies break the surf, and waited patiently until they moved up the sand towards us. Finally, once we felt the huddle of birds was more relaxed and were close by, we turned on our red-tinted spotlight to get great looks at a small group of **Little Penguins** that had made their way up the beach under the sanctuary of darkness, after a day out at sea fishing, to reunite with their mates in their nesting burrows. On the drive back to *Hobart* we encountered a fair number of **Common Brushtail Possums**, before we pulled back into our hotel parking lot at nearly 10:45pm!

LEG 4: NEW SOUTH WALES

Day 13: Hobart (Tasmania) to Sydney; Lithgow and the Capertee Valley



The odd male **Musk Duck** was seen displaying at Lake Wallace in New South Wales

Another early start saw us this time on an early flight out of the Tasmanian capital, and into the southeastern state of **New South Wales**, and the most populous city in Australia. However, we soon left **Sydney** behind and headed west inland to the town of **Lithgow**, our destination for the night. After enjoying a traditional Aussie meat pie for lunch in Lithgow, we were ready to visit the local sewage works! Ducks had been thinner on the ground on this tour than normally expected, due to a combination of *Hasties Swamp* being largely

empty of water, whilst in northeast Queensland, and also too perhaps that the amount of wet areas in Inland New South Wales had drawn a lot of the birds away from the coastal areas we had birded, an unpredictable nomadism that occurs often with Australian birds in relation to recent rains. Thus the sewage works offered an opportunity to put some of our duck misses straight; and we quickly chalked up our first **Gray Teal**, a male **Blue-billed Duck**, a lonely **Australian Shoveler**, and even **Hoary-headed Grebe** during our short visit. We then traveled north to **Lake Wallace**, hoping for yet more water-related birds. Quickly, we racked up half a dozen or so of the odd **Musk Duck** (*photo page before*), which included observations of the even stranger displays of a male displaying with throat sac inflated, and tail erected. In the reeds close by, we saw some of the many calling **Australasian Reed-Warblers**, and got short, but close looks at a calling **Little Grassbird**. On the water several dapper **Great Crested Grebes** also drifted past. We also located a couple of sturdy **Red Wattlebirds** in a neighboring **Weeping Bottlebrush** tree.

We finished up with an early visit to the upper end of the **Capertee Valley**, a favored haunt of Sydneysiders looking for birds, or views of the widest valley in the World, right at the periphery of the **Blue Mountains**. John, a great lover of mountains and their associated landscapes, welcomed the scenery that greeted us there. However, the siege of bothersome flies was far from welcome; and we struggled to keep them at bay. They were not biting flies, but this seems to have been an epic year for them all the same. We searched unsuccessfully for *Yellow-tufted Honeyeater* at one creek, but received compensation with a displaying **Rufous Songlark**, and better still, a super **Crested Shrike-Tit**, an endemic species and family to the country. Happy with our bright start in New South Wales, we headed back to the hotel for a superb dinner of roast lamb, before retiring before our proper onslaught of the **Capertee** area, due to the next day...



Day 14: The Capertee Valley to Sydney via the Blue Mountains

The entire morning was spent in the scenic **Capertee Valley**, one of the widest canyons on Earth, spanning over 18 miles (30km) across at its widest point, *1km more than the Grand Canyon of North America*. Hence, the Capertee has been referred to as the “*Secret Grand Canyon*”, for relatively few know of it around the world. It was a grand setting for our birding, where we started out by trying once more for the handsome **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** at its traditional breeding haunt along **Coco Creek**. We hoped the earlier, cooler hours of the morning would result in *less flies*, and *more honeyeaters*. We were right – *just* - on both fronts; with a lone **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** showing up just as we were beginning to lose hope! Our early morning descent into the valley had led us to multiple mammal sightings, still active during the early hours of the day, and included plenty of **Red-necked Wallabies**, with a few taller, grayer **Eastern Gray Kangaroos** too. We drove deeper down into the valley, which opened up dramatically in front of us, and found our first handsome **Red-rumped Parrots**, which took flight and alighted alongside the agricultural fields at the bottom end of the vast canyon. A lone **Zebra Finch** was found perched on a roadside wire a little later, the lone sighting of the tour for this handsome relative of the *African waxbills*. Not long after, another wire brought another bird, a burly **Brown Falcon**, which took off just as we got within photographic range! Our first flushed pink **Little Corellas** also featured too nearby, as did a noisy rabble of **White-winged Choughs**. We then visited a recent hotspot for **Hooded Robins** (*photo below*), finding the first of around half a dozen seen that morning, with a pair found in a tiny Glen Davis garden. The same local garden also hosted both a small mob of **White-browed Babblers**. The nearby **Glen Davis Campground** was typically lively with birds, as usual, with several **Brown Treecreepers** seen, and plenty of **White-plumed Honeyeaters**.



A pair of **Hooded Robins** showed well in a tiny local garden in **Glen Davis**

As 9am approached, we made our way for a very special appointment in *Capertee National Park*, where we went to visit an area for the rare *Regent Honeyeater*, which had recently been witnessed visiting a series of blooming gum trees. On the way in, we came across a dusky **Swamp Wallaby** on the side of the road, and on reaching *the main spot*, found a hive of bird activity. This included mostly **Musk Lorikeets** (*photo page 39*), excitedly moving from blossom to blossom; and so I alerted all to be on the lookout for any large, striking black-and-gold honeyeaters! Irene paid close attention, and just moments later proclaimed she had seen something matching the description fleeing the activity of the gum tree that buried itself in a near *casuarina*. However, it could not resist the abundant, rose-colored blooms on the surrounding gum trees for long, and a **Regent Honeyeater** (*photo below*), soon appeared where it had been a short time before. A quick group discussion, following a long observation of the bird hanging upside down with its bill buried within the nectar-rich flowers, revealed what the field guides had indicated – that this really is one of the most handsome of all honeyeaters. After an hour or so on site, we saw at least four of these critically endangered birds, which currently numbers only some 350-400 individuals. After getting to grips with the rarest bird in attendance, we rested by a short *bottlebrush* tree that was laden with bright red, nectar-rich flowers. In this small shrub were at least one **Regent Honeyeater**, several excitable **Noisy Friarbirds**, a few **Musk Lorikeets**, and a few **Scarlet Honeyeaters (Myzomelas)**, and all at eye level or below! Backtracking the way we had come in, we added yet more *honeyeaters*, during a rich vein of form for this group, with the dowdy **Fuscous Honeyeater**, (which had some trouble escaping the unwanted attentions of the feisty local **White-plumed Honeyeaters** in the same area, which took issue with its presence); and also got the underrated **Black-chinned Honeyeater**, which shared the same *Glen Alice* churchyard with our second handsome **Crested Shrike-tit**.



Unquestionably, the rarest bird on this tour was the **Regent Honeyeater**

Several **Jacky-winters** in the area were also new and the only see on the entire tour. At the end of a hot morning for birds and climate, the flies had moved in once more, and so we were happy to start making our back towards **Sydney**, taking in the scenic drive overlooking the **Blue Mountains** as we did so, getting breathtaking looks at these red-tinted, *Hawkesbury Sandstone* hills, from the well-situated **Cahill's Lookout**. After an excellent pizza in a Sydney suburb, we were ready for our final push of birds on the tour, the next day...

Day 15: The Royal National Park and Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens



Beautiful Firetail is a specialist of coastal heathland

Just under 20miles (30km) south of downtown Sydney, lays the magnificent **The Royal National Park**, which comprises of coastal heaths, temperate forests, rocky headlands, and wetland areas. It is one of the oldest national parks, established in 1879, only pre-dated by North America's *Yellowstone*, although "The Royal" was the first to have the moniker "National Park" attached to its name. We started out on the coastal heaths, shortly after dawn, when the flowers are usually loaded with the most nectar, and therefore can attract a range of species. Often the inclement weather in this temperamental, coastal area, is the biggest barrier to seeing birds. However, we were greeted by perfect weather for birding, but in spite of this, the birds proved challenging. We did manage to find a handful of **Southern Emuwrens** that popped up for only short periods. Plentiful **New Holland Honeyeaters** were also seen. Moving on to the stunning scenery of **Wattamolla**, we quickly picked up the soft calls of a **Beautiful Firetail** (*photo above*) coming from a thicket of heathland which was soon coaxed out to the edge, for superb views of this subtly patterned finch. Several **Little Wattlebirds** also featured in this area too, another heath specialist. We also got the best views yet of **Crested Pigeons** (*photo next page*) foraging around the picnic tables whilst below, several **Common Bearded Dragons** (*photo page 44*) took advantage of the sun-baked rocks.



Crested Pigeon in "The Royal", a comical species seemingly off of the pages of *Alice in Wonderland*!

In the late morning we entered our final habitat for the time at "The Royal", this time the temperate forest that flanks the open track known as **Lady Carrington Drive**, a long-time haunt of Sydney birders, and also the local lyrebirds. However, on this occasion, the lyrebirds remained both strangely quiet, and unseen. We did add a new species in the form of several perched **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, and chanced upon a sleepy **Australian Owlet-Nightjar** peering out from its daytime hollow. Other birds seen were mostly regular species in the habitat, like **Golden Whistler** and **Eastern Spinebill**, (both dashingly brilliant species all the same), and singles of both **Satin Bowerbird** and **Green Catbird**!

In the afternoon, we moved right to downtown **Sydney** to get the obligatory shots of the world famous **Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge**, while getting many close ups with common Australian birds around the wonderful gardens, like **Rainbow Lorikeets**, **Masked Lapwings**, and **Australian Ibis**, but there was no sign of the local **Powerful Owl** around **Government House** as hoped, and we felt relieved we had got this one in earlier on the tour in hindsight! We made a brief stop at **Wattle Flat**, back in the **Royal National Park** in the late afternoon, trying for, and getting our first **Superb Lyrebird**, and also seeing a **Bassian Thrush** perched in a fallen log. However, the brevity of the lyrebird sighting simply left us yearning for more...



A *Common Bearded Dragon* takes advantage of the warming rocks in *The Royal*, one of the oldest national parks in the World

Day 16: The Royal National Park and departure from Sydney

With precious little time remaining, and us still smarting from a relatively poor showing from the supposedly reliable **Superb Lyrebirds** in the *Royal National Park the day before*, we made another brief visit there, before packing up and departing for Sydney airport, and home. This time, we voted against *Wattle Flat* and went instead back to their usually dependable home, *Lady Carrington Drive*. Soon after dawn, we heard the impressive mimicry of the *lyrebird* (including *Satin Bowerbird* within its repertoire on this occasion). Then, suddenly one burst forth on to the track, quickly followed by another; and we watched them scurry through the forest as they pursued one another, when even a third lyrebird joined in the action! This was a great opener, which was backed up by a further two different lyrebirds seen well as we walked back along the same track. Soon after, we had to reluctantly make our leave, and return to the hotel to prepare to leave Australia behind, a country that we had seen firsthand is chock full of odd and gaudy birds.

*It had been a great trip stretching from the humid rainforest of the Wet Tropics in the Daintree in northeast Queensland, right down to the temperate forests, coastal heaths and rocky coasts of Tasmania, the ever-popular, evergreen, island state. Among the highlights were some of Australia's most iconic bird species and bird families. This included all possible 7 species of bowerbirds, several of which were seen residing over their well-decorated bowers (blue-themed in the **Satin Bowerbirds** we saw, and white-themed in the **Great and Golden Bowerbirds** seen); close-ups of enormous **Southern Cassowaries** strolling through the rainforests of northeastern Queensland; a dazzling **bird-of-paradise** (*Victoria's Riflebird*) coming to eat*

cheese at a forest feeder in northeast Queensland; the same region also got us the scarce **White-eared Monarch** and sharp **Pied Monarch**, the latter a regional specialty; **paradise-kingfishers** chasing each other around the forest canopy in the Daintree; Australia's tall national bird, the iconic **Emu**; several strutting male **Australian Bustards** looking for the attention of females on the edge of Australia's Outback.



This well-known bower of a **Great Bowerbird** in the Mount Molloy schoolyard, featured a toy hand grenade!

Australia can boast the two largest songbirds on Earth, the remarkable **lyrebirds**, of which both species were seen: **Albert's Lyrebird** foraging in the temperate rainforest of Lamington National Park in southeast Queensland, and at least six different **Superb Lyrebirds** were seen in the wet forests of Royal National Park just south of Sydney. Other specialty bird families encountered included **Logrunners**, **Shrike-tit**, and **White-winged Chough** and **Apostlebird**. The jewel-like **Noisy Pitta** was a popular entry on the trip list, when seen calling from a rainforest canopy near Cassowary House, north of Cairns; as were all the **fairywrens**, of which all possible species were seen, including the scarce **Lovely Fairywren** beside Red Mill House in Daintree. Tasmania provided us with all twelve island endemics, and a range of other specialties, including the rare **Swift Parrot** and rarer still **Forty-spotted Pardalote**, males of three gorgeous robin species: **Pink**, **Scarlet**, and **Flame Robins**; and the wonderful sight of fourteen **Little**

Penguins coming ashore on a deserted beach on the Tasman Peninsula at night following a day out at sea, one of the overall tour highlights.

It was also a notable tour for nightbirds that included exceptional views of a daytime **Powerful Owl** in Brisbane that had a dead possum held within its considerable grip; both **Lesser and Greater forms of Sooty Owl** seen in daylight in the north and south of Queensland respectively; all three possible species of frogmouths, including nesting **Tawny and Papuan Frogmouths** in northeast Queensland, and a feisty pair of **Marbled Frogmouths** in the rainforests of O' Reilly's. Three separate **Australia Owlet-Nightjars** was not be scoffed at either, one by day, and two by night. On top of all of these birds were some odd, distinctive Australian mammals too, like **Platypuses**, **tree-kangaroos**, and an **echidna**.



This purple-eyed male **Satin Bowerbird** was seen beside its blue-themed bower at O' Reilly's, which included a collection of plastic items such as bottle tops and drinking straws!



One of the confiding *Black-fronted Dotterels* seen along the *Cairns Esplanade* in NE Queensland

BIRD & MAMMAL LISTS

BIRDS:

The taxonomy of the bird list follows: **Clements, James F., White, Anthony W., and Fitzpatrick, John W.** *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*. Cornell, 2007. Includes 2016 updates.

KEY:

Endemic bird species are indicated in **RED**.

H indicates a species that was **HEARD** only.

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

QLD refers to the Australian state of Queensland.

NSW refers to the Australian state of New South Wales.

TAS refers to the Australian state and island of Tasmania.

CASSOWARIES & EMU: Casuariidae**Southern Cassowary** *Casuarius casuarius*

A great tour for this species; 3 were seen (2 very well) during a 90-minute period at Etty Beach, south of Cairns. Another two singles (male and female) were seen at the well-named, ever-reliable site of Cassowary House (both Northeast QLD). ***VOTED AS ONE OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOUR***

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

Australia's national bird was seen at Mareeba Wetlands (Northeast QLD), where 4 were seen.

MAGPIE GOOSE: Anseranatidae**Magpie Goose** *Anseranas semipalmata*

Seen on 7 days of the tour, in both Northeast and Southeast QLD leg, including in Cairns itself.

DUCKS, GEESE & WATERFOWL: Anatidae**Wandering Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata*

Only a single was seen at Lake Mitchell in Northeast QLD.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Seen at Lake Mitchell and Mareeba Wetlands in Northeast QLD, and on Bruny Island, TAS.

Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*

A single bird was seen on both of our visits to Centenary Lakes in Cairns (Northeast QLD).

Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus*

Seen at three sites in Northeast QLD; Lake Mitchell, Mareeba Wetlands, and Cattana Wetlands.

Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

A pair was seen at Mareeba Wetlands; (Northeast QLD).

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata* **ENDEMIC**

Regularly recorded from Southeast QLD south.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A few were seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

One of Australia's most abundant ducks; recorded regularly.

Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos*

Seen once in New South Wales; a single was seen at Lithgow Sewage Treatment Works.

Gray Teal *Anas gracilis*

Only seen in Lithgow, in NSW.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea* **ENDEMIC**

A pair was seen at Peter Murrell Reserve (TAS), and another was seen in The Royal NP (NSW).

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

A male of this uncommon species was seen in Lithgow (NSW).

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen in Lithgow, and 6 birds were seen at Lake Wallace, including a displaying male (both NSW).

MEGAPODES: Megapodiidae**Australian Brush-turkey** *Alectura lathami* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on most days in Queensland.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*

Recorded on 4 days in Northeast QLD, including in Cairns, Daintree, Cassowary House, and Mt. Lewis.

GREBES: Podicipedidae**Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae***

Seen at Tarzali Lakes in Northeast QLD and Lithgow in NSW.

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*

Just the one was seen, at Lithgow Sewage Treatment Works (NSW).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Just recorded on Lake Wallace in NSW.

PENGUINS: Spheniscidae**Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor***

14 birds were seen walking together ashore at night, at a beach on the Tasman Peninsula.

VOTED AS ONE OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOUR

STORKS: Ciconiidae**Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus***

Hasties Swamp was almost out of water, following drought, but 1 of these was still present (Northeast QLD).

FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae**Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor***

4 were seen at Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: Sulidae**Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster***

A number of birds were nesting on Michaelmas Cay during our boat trip out to the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

2 were seen resting on a boat, just offshore from Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*

At least 2 birds were seen off of Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: Phalacrocoracidae**Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos***

Recorded 4 times in Northeast QLD, including at Cattana Wetlands, Mareeba, Daintree, and Lake Mitchell.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Seen at Peter Murrell Reserve, just outside of Hobart (TAS).

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Recorded just a couple of times, in Northeast QLD and NSW.

Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*

Seen on Bruny Island and on mainland Tasmania.

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae**Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae***

Recorded on 4 days in Northeast QLD, including at Cattana Wetlands, on the Daintree River and Mareeba.

PELICANS: Pelecanidae**Australian Pelican** *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Seen on 4 days in Northeast QLD.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNs: Ardeidae**Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis*

2 were seen well on the Daintree river cruise (Northeast QLD), with local boatman/birdman Murray Hunt.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Scattered sightings in Northeast QLD.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*

Just seen a couple of times in Northeast QLD.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

1 was seen on the Daintree cruise (QLD), and another was seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Just seen on one occasion, on the Cairns Esplanade in QLD.

Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*

Two single dark morphs were seen in Northeast QLD, at ETTY Beach and along the Cairns Esplanade.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Seen regularly in QLD.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

Seen 4 times in Northeast QLD, (Cattana Wetlands, Cairns, and Daintree).

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae**Australian Ibis** *Threskiornis moluccus*

Seen on all but a few days of the tour.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

Just recorded in Cairns in QLD, where some great looks were had at Centenary Lakes.

OSPREY: Pandionidae**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*

1 was seen at Lake Mitchell, in Northeast 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****Australian Kite** *Elanus axillaris***ENDEMIC**

Seen on four occasions, in Northeast QLD, including at Hasties Swamp and Mareeba Wetlands.

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*

Seen twice in flight just north of Cairns, and another was seen perched by Sam at the Curtain Fig Tree (QLD).

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*

One was seen gliding above Mt. Wellington, near Hobart in TAS.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

One was seen near Atherton in Northeast QLD, and another 2 on Bruny Island (TAS).

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

1 was seen around Brisbane (QLD).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Recorded on 5 days in Northeast QLD.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Recorded on 3 different days of the tour, in Northeast QLD, including near Lake Mitchell.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*

Seen three times in QLD, including at Boondall Wetlands, near Brisbane.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

1 was seen sitting beside Hasties Swamp (Northeast QLD).

BUSTARDS: Otididae**Australian Bustard** *Ardeotis australis*

Strutting males were seen along the road into Mareeba Wetlands, and also near Mt. Carbine (Northeast QLD).

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: Rallidae**Red-necked Crake** *Rallina tricolor*

One was seen at Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

Two birds were seen in a field near Atherton (Northeast QLD).

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea*

One was seen feeding at the edge of the reeds late one afternoon at Cattana Wetlands (QLD).

Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus*

Seen at Hasties Swamp in QLD, and at Lake Wallace in NSW.

NOTE: Purple Swamphen was split into six species recently (2015).

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Recorded regularly on wetlands in southern QLD and NSW, including in and around Sydney.

Tasmanian Native-hen *Tribonyx mortierii* **TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

This flightless species was seen around Peter Murrell Reserve and Bruny Island on TAS.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Seen near Brisbane (QLD) and at Lake Wallace (NSW).

CRANES: Gruidae**Sarus Crane** *Grus Antigone*

About 15 birds was seen in a 60-strong flock of cranes near Atherton (Northeast QLD).

Brolga *Grus rubicunda*

About 45 Brolgas were seen in a mixed crane flock near Atherton (Northeast QLD).

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae**Bush Thick-knee** *Burhinus grallarius*

A pair was seen in Cairns by day, and others by night there; also seen at Kuranda and Yungaburra (QLD).

Beach Thick-knee *Esacus magnirostris*

A pair was seen in Cairns, and another single was seen on Etty Beach (both Northeast QLD).

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae**Pied Stilt** *Himantopus leucocephalus*

Recorded on two days in Northeast QLD, at Wonga Fish Farms and Hasties Swamp.

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae**Pied Oystercatcher** *Haematopus longirostris*

A handful was seen on Bruny Island in TAS, some were sharing a beach with the next species.

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus* **ENDEMIC**

A pair was seen on Bruny Island, standing alongside some *Pied Oystercatchers* (TAS); 2 were also seen while waiting for penguins in the Tasman Peninsula.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae**Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*

5 of these Asian plovers were seen at Wonga Fish Farms (Northeast QLD).

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

Seen on every single day of the tour.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*

About ten birds were seen on the Cairns Esplanade, in company with the next species (Northeast QLD).

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Small numbers were seen on two visits to the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*

Up to 10 birds were seen on the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus* **ENDEMIC**

A confiding pair was seen at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island (TAS).

Black-fronted Dotterel *Euseyornis melanops*

3 singles were seen along the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

JACANAS: Jacanidae**Comb-crested Jacana** *Irediparra gallinacea*

Seen at three sites in Northeast QLD; at Cattana Wetlands, Mareeba Wetlands, and Lake Mitchell.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Seen during our two visits to the Cairns Esplanade.

Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*

A handful of birds (up to 6) were on the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Outnumbered by *Bar-tailed Godwits* on the Cairns Esplanade, but we did manage to find around 6 birds.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Small numbers were seen on our two visits to the Cairns Esplanade.

Ruddy Turnstone ***Arenaria interpres***

2 were seen on Michaelmas Cay (QLD).

Great Knot ***Calidris tenuirostris***

Up to 20 birds were seen on the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).

Red Knot ***Calidris canutus***

A single was seen by the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper ***Calidris acuminata***

Up to 20 birds were seen by the Cairns Esplanade, and others were seen at Wonga Fish Farms (both QLD).

Curlew Sandpiper ***Calidris ferruginea***

15 or so birds were seen beside the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Red-necked Stint ***Calidris ruficollis***

Abundant along the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Terek Sandpiper ***Xenus cinereus***

Up to 4 birds were seen along the Cairns Esplanade (QLD), over several visits there.

Common Sandpiper ***Actitis hypoleucos***

Just 2 were seen at Wong Fish Ponds, near Daintree (Northeast QLD).

Gray-tailed Tattler ***Tringa brevipes***

Seen on both visits to the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Common Greenshank ***Tringa nebularia***

A few were seen on each of our visits to the Cairns Esplanade.

GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS: Laridae**Silver Gull** ***Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae***

Recorded on eight days of the tour, in QLD, TAS and NSW.

Pacific Gull ***Larus pacificus*****ENDEMIC**

This brute was seen on one day of the tour, on Bruny Island (TAS), where an adult and juvenile were seen.

Kelp Gull ***Larus dominicanus***

Seen on both of our full days on Tasmania.

Brown Noddy ***Anous minutus***

Thousands were nesting on Michaelmas Cay, during our boat trip to the Great Barrier Reef (Northeast QLD).

Sooty Tern ***Onychoprion fuscatus***

Many of these noisy terns were nesting on Michaelmas Cay, and therefore seen at extremely close quarters.

Bridled Tern ***Onychoprion anaethetus***

A good number of these terns were seen near Michaelmas Cay (QLD), mostly resting on buoys offshore.

Little Tern ***Sternula albifrons***

Just seen twice on the Great Barrier Reef boat trip, (Northeast QLD).

Caspian Tern ***Hydroprogne caspia***

A single was seen beside the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Whiskered Tern ***Chlidonias hybrida***

One was seen at Wonga (Northeast QLD).

Great Crested Tern ***Thalasseus bergii***

Good numbers were seen resting on Michaelmas Cay, and a few more were seen in Cairns (QLD).

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

A handful of birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay, on the Great Barrier Reef (Northeast QLD).

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Commonly recorded in urban environments throughout.

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

A single bird was seen flying low over the clearing in Mount Lewis, Northeast QLD.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Recorded around Cairns and Brisbane (both QLD).

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella*

Good views were had on Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD).

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris*

Only seen in Northeast QLD, where seen best at Mount Lewis, but also too at Malanda Falls.

NB. Emerald Dove was recently (2016) split into two geographically separated species.

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen well just north of Mount Carbine in Northeast QLD.

Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans* **ENDEMIC**

A calling bird was seen perched at Truganini Reserve near Hobart (TAS).

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* **ENDEMIC**

Seen in QLD and NSW, with the best looks coming in The Royal NP.

Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta* **ENDEMIC**

19 were seen at Granite Gorge, and another 7 were seen north of Mt. Carbine; (both Northeast QLD).

Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on at least three occasions near O' Reilly's; others were heard in The Royal NP (NSW).

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*

Recorded daily in Northeast QLD.

Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*

Recorded on most days in Northeast QLD.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*

A magnificent, boldly colored fruit-dove, seen in Julatten and Cassowary House (both Northeast QLD)

Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus* **H**

A calling bird could not be located in Daintree (QLD), despite considerable effort, the only one heard.

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina*

An excellent bird showed well in the mangroves early one morning in Cairns (Northeast QLD).

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*

Commonly recorded around Cairns, and also in Daintree (both Northeast QLD).

Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus* **ENDEMIC**

Several seen in flight only; at Mount Lewis and O' Reilly's (both QLD).

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae**Pheasant Coucal** *Centropus phasianinus*

A few were seen north of Cairns in Northeast QLD.

Pacific Koel *Eudynamys orientalis*

Seen well a few times in the Daintree area (QLD).

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*

This massive cuckoo flew over us at Mount Molloy (Northeast QLD); also heard in The Royal NP (NSW).

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

One was seen along the Python Rock Track at O' Reilly's (QLD).

Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*

One was seen at Etty Beach in Northeast QLD; also heard around Cairns.

Pallid Cuckoo *Cacomantis pallidus*

One was seen on a roadside wire on Bruny Island in Tasmania. Also heard in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*

One was seen beside Mount Molloy School (Northeast QLD); many others were heard.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*

One was seen along a forest trail at O' Reilly's (Northeast QLD). A couple more were seen on TAS.

BARN-OWLS: Tytonidae**"Greater" Sooty Owl** *Tyto tenebricosa tenebricosa*

This rarely seen owl was seen, even more rarely, by day, at O' Reilly's, thanks to the help of the local staff at the Rainforest Retreat. The bird was seen within a whisker of time, not long before darkness descended, and it would then disappear. The next day the hollow where it had been was empty again, making it crucial that we rushed there, as we did on that vital final hour of daylight!

**This form and the next are currently treated as a distinct subspecies of Sooty Owl, T. tenebricosa under the Clements/eBird taxonomy adopted here and by Cornell. However, they are still treated as complete separate species under IOC classification.*

"Lesser" Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebricosa multipunctata* **ENDEMIC**

In a feat almost certainly never to be repeated, we were extremely fortunate to see *both* Greater and Lesser Sooty Owls during the daytime. Typically, on this tour we do not record either species, by day or night, as they are genuinely hard to find. We managed to see a roosting Lesser at Malanda Falls, where a recent Tropical Birding tour, led by Laurie Ross had stumbled magnificently, on this bird, which was still present when we got there several weeks later! Thanks also to Alan Gillanders for pinpoint directions, which aided us in finding the bird after some initial wrong turns!

OWLS: Strigidae**Powerful Owl** *Ninox strenua* **ENDEMIC**

We visited the slopes of Mt. Cooth-tha on the outskirts of Brisbane, where a fantastic juvenile bird was seen at length, while it sat fully in the open, with a dead possum clasped in its massive talons. A very memorable sighting.

VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP BIRDS OF THE TOUR

Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae*

A calling bird was 'scoped and photographed on the entrance road to O Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

FROGMOUTHS: Podargidae**Tawny Frogmouth** *Podargus strigoides* **ENDEMIC**

A nesting bird was seen in a local garden at Granite Gorge that included an adult and chick; another one was flushed from the side of the road near O' Reilly's (both QLD).

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*

Two close calling birds were seen extremely well at Lamington National Park (Southeast QLD).

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*

A nesting bird was shown to us by Murray Hunt on our Daintree River cruise in Northeast QLD.

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: Caprimulgidae**Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus* **H**

One was heard at night along Stewart Creek Road in Daintree (Northeast QLD).

OWLET-NIGHTJARS: Aegothelidae**Australian Owlet-Nightjar** *Aegotheles cristatus*

Two birds were spotlighted at night near Mareeba in Northeast QLD, and another was found during the daytime, as it roosted beside Lady Carrington Drive in The Royal National Park in NSW.

SWIFTS: Apodidae**White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*

The fastest flying bird in the World was seen near Atherton (NE QLD), when 2 birds came overhead.

Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae* **ENDEMIC**

Three sightings in Northeast QLD, including 20 or so birds in Cairns itself.

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae**Azure Kingfisher** *Ceyx azurea*

1 was seen on our Daintree cruise (Northeast QLD); Sam saw another in The Royal NP (NSW).

Little Kingfisher *Ceyx pusillus* **H**

Just heard on the Daintree River cruise, as one flashed past out of sight (NE QLD).

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on all but two days of the tour, including within Cairns.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*

A couple were seen on two days in Northeast QLD, including near Mareeba.

Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*

Recorded three times in Northeast QLD, including at Hasties Swamp and Abattoir Swamp.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*

Seen in Brisbane (QLD), and also close to Glen Alice, near the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Torresian Kingfisher *Todiramphus sordidus*

One showed well at the edge of the mangroves in Cairns (Northeast QLD).

NOTE: This species is a split from Collared Kingfisher, which was split up into six species in August 2015.

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanyiptera Sylvia*

At least 4 birds were seen at the end of Stewart Creek Road in the Daintree, John located one perched that gave us good looks of this migrant species, which had only recently arrived from New Guinea.

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae**Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus*

Recorded on six days of the tour in QLD.

ROLLERS: Coraciidae**Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis*

Seen on four days of the tour, all in Northeast QLD.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae**Australian Kestrel** *Falco cenchroides*

Recorded on three days of the tour in Northeast QLD, including in Cairns and near Granite Gorge.

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*

1 was seen well near Glen Davis, close to the Capertee Valley in NSW.

COCKATOOS: Cacatuidae**Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus banksii* **ENDEMIC**

Around 200 birds were seen going to roost one evening, near Atherton (Northeast QLD).

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

3 birds were seen along Lady Carrington Drive within The Royal NP in NSW.

Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla* **ENDEMIC**

This spectacular pink cockatoo is wonderfully abundant, seen on 5 days of the tour in both QLD and NSW.

Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*

Seen at two sites in NSW; Capertee Valley and The Royal NP.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

Recorded on all but a few days of the tour. We enjoyed particularly, a "dancing" bird that raised its crest at Nerada, after significant encouragement by an elderly local lady who danced in front of it!

PARROTS: Psittacidae**Australian King-Parrot** *Alisterus scapularis* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on four days in QLD, and once in NSW. The tame wild ones at O' Reilly's were (as ever) the best ones!

Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*

A few were seen around Mount Molloy school (Northeast QLD), a traditional hangout for the species.

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

A single flock of 11 birds was seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella* **ENDEMIC** H

Despite being heard at Capertee (NSW), these inconspicuous birds could not be located in a short search.

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* **ENDEMIC**

Two were found by Irene near the ferry terminal on Bruny Island (TAS); a good early score on the island!

Green Rosella *Platycercus caledonicus* **TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

Half a dozen birds were seen on Bruny, and some others were seen on our other TAS day too.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans* **ENDEMIC**

O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD) provided unparalleled views of this bird, as ever, where they visit feeders on site.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* **ENDEMIC**

A pair was seen at Truganini Reserve (TAS), with several others seen in NSW too.

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

Up to ten birds were seen near a small dam north of Mount Carbine (Northeast QLD).

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

Only seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW), when these gorgeous birds were encountered regularly.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*

Mostly seen as tiny dots flying over, but our best views were of a perched bird at ETTY Bay (Northeast QLD).

Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna* **ENDEMIC**

A single group was seen close to Truganini Reserve (TAS); many others were seen in Capertee NP (NSW)

Little Lorikeet *Trichoglossus pusilla*

A few were seen, along with many **Musk Lorikeets** at the **Regent Honeyeater** site in Capertee NP (NSW).

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

A common Aussie parrot, seen nearly every day of the tour.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus* **ENDEMIC**

Good views were obtained at Hasties Swamp in Northeast QLD.

PITTAS: Pittidae**Noisy Pitta** *Pitta versicolor* **ENDEMIC**

This glittering, jewel-like bird was seen well as it sat calling from a rainforest canopy in Kuranda NP (QLD).

LYREBIRDS: Menuridae**Albert's Lyrebird** *Menura alberti* **ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen very well near O' Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, Southeast QLD.

Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae* **ENDEMIC**

A total of at least six birds were had in Royal NP (NSW), including 5 in 15 minutes on Lady Carrington Drive!

BOWERBIRDS: Ptilonorhynchidae**Spotted Catbird** *Ailuroedus melanotis*

A couple each was seen at Cassowary House and Mount Lewis in Northeast QLD.

Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris* **ENDEMIC**

A handful was seen at O Reilly's, in Southeast QLD; another was seen in The Royal NP, NSW.

Tooth-billed Catbird *Scenopoeetes dentirostris* **ENDEMIC**

Seen on three occasions on Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD).

Golden Bowerbird *Amblyornis newtoniana* **ENDEMIC**

A beautiful male was seen near its famous bower, at Hypipamee NP (Northeast QLD).

Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus* **ENDEMIC**

As usual, these stunning birds were seen well by the lodge at O Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP BIRDS OF THE TOUR**Satin Bowerbird** *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* **ENDEMIC**

Seen very well at O Reilly's (Southeast QLD), with a male seen at its bower too, which was decorated with various blue items, mostly comprising plastic human trash.

Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis* **ENDEMIC**

The birds, and their silver-and-white decorated bowers, were seen at Granite Gorge and Mt. Molloy (QLD).

AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: Climacteridae**White-throated Treecreeper** *Cormobates leucophaea* **ENDEMIC**

Seen twice on the tour; at O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD), and in The Royal NP (NSW).

Red-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris erythroptera* **ENDEMIC**

John picked up a bird perched high in the trees, near O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at two sites, just north of Mount Carbine (Northeast QLD), and at Glen Davis in NSW.

FAIRYWRENS: Maluridae**Southern Emuwren** *Stipiturus malachurus* **ENDEMIC**

Four birds were seen in the heaths of The Royal NP (NSW), although none of them came out for long.

Variiegated Fairywren *Malurus lamberti* **ENDEMIC**

This gorgeous bird was seen at O' Reilly's (QLD), and in the Capertee Valley and in The Royal NP in NSW.

Lovely Fairywren *Malurus amabilis* **ENDEMIC**

Thanks to Red Mill House (Daintree) owner Trish, a pair was seen in the forest close to there (Northeast QLD).

Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus* **ENDEMIC**

The most frequently encountered fairywren; seen on seven days (in QLD, NSW and TAS).

Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus* **ENDEMIC**

A stunning male and a female were seen at Abattoir Swamp in Northeast QLD.

HONEYEATERS: Meliphagidae**Eastern Spinebill** *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at Mt. Lewis, Abattoir Swamp and O' Reilly's (QLD); others at The Royal NP and Capertee (NSW).

Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata* **ENDEMIC**

Seen around ETTY Bay, Kuranda, and the Daintree in Northeast QLD.

Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded at Hasties Swamp, Mount Lewis, and O' Reilly's in QLD, and also in The Royal NP (NSW).

Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at both Cassowary House and in the Daintree, in Northeast QLD.

Yellow Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flava* **ENDEMIC**

See at both Granite Gorge Nature Park and Abattoir Swamp in Northeast QLD.

White-gaped Honeyeater *Lichenostomus unicolor* **ENDEMIC**

One was seen at the McLeod River crossing near Mount Carbine in Northeast QLD, at the limit of their range.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Caligavis chrysops* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded at both Hasties Swamp, in QLD, and at The Royal NP in NSW.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops*

1 was seen at Coco Creek in Capertee, and another 3 were seen in the national park there (NSW).

Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys* **ENDEMIC**

Two different colonies were visited near O' Reilly's (QLD), with half a dozen birds seen at each.

Noisy Miner *Manoria melanocephala* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded around Brisbane (QLD) and Sydney (NSW).

Bridled Honeyeater *Bolemoreus frenatus* **ENDEMIC**

Up to 6 birds were seen during our two visits to Mount Lewis in Northeast QLD.

Little (Brush) Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at the Peter Murrell Reserve near Hobart (TAS), and also in The Royal National Park, near Sydney (NSW).

Regent Honeyeater***Anthochaera phrygia*****ENDEMIC**

This magnificently striking and very, very rare honeyeater was seen inside Capertee NP (NSW), where at least 4 were visiting an area of blooming trees that was being raided by many **Musk Lorikeets, Little Lorikeets, Noisy Friarbirds, Scarlet Myzomelas, and Fuscous and White-plumed Honeyeaters.** Not only is this bird very striking, daubed in black-and-gold, but it is also one of Australia's rarest species, a dramatic decline having left this species with just under 400 individuals left. There cannot be too many tours when this bird will be available, as it is also a nomadic species in relation to unpredictable blooming of its nectar sources, making this very fortuitous. John quickly mentioned on seeing the bird that it was his favorite honeyeater. Unsurprisingly, due to its great rarity, its extraordinary looks, and the wonderful views we had it was

VOTED AS ONE OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOUR**Red Wattlebird*****Anthochaera carunculata*****ENDEMIC**

A few were seen visiting a Weeping Bottle Brush beside Lake Wallace in NSW.

Yellow Wattlebird***Anthochaera paradoxa*****TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

The largest Australian honeyeater, seen at Peter Murrell and on Bruny Island (TAS).

Varied Honeyeater***Gavicalis versicolor***

A couple of singles were seen along The Esplanade in Cairns (Northeast QLD).

Mangrove Honeyeater***Gavicalis fasciularis*****ENDEMIC**

Two birds were seen along the Nudgee Beach Road in Brisbane (Southeast QLD).

White-plumed Honeyeater ***Ptilotula penicillata*****ENDEMIC**

Seen a number of times in the Capertee Valley area (NSW).

Fuscous Honeyeater***Ptilotula fusca*****ENDEMIC**

Two singles were seen around the Capertee Valley in NSW.

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

Murray Hunt showed us a nesting bird in the Daintree, and others were also nesting at Abattoir Swamp (QLD).

Dusky Myzomela***Myzomela obscura***

A few were seen around Cassowary House and Mareeba, in Northeast QLD.

Scarlet (Honeyeater) Myzomela ***Myzomela sanguinolenta*****ENDEMIC**

Seen first on the slopes of Mount Lewis in QLD, although incredible views were had in Capertee NP (NSW).

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

Only heard in Wattamolla, Royal NP (NSW); although the search was cut short after flies descended on us!

Banded Honeyeater***Cissomela pectoralis*****ENDEMIC**

4 immaculate, "tuxedo", males were seen sitting together in a bare tree near Mt. Carbine (Northeast QLD).

Brown Honeyeater***Lichmera indistincta***

Seen three times in Northeast QLD.

Crescent Honeyeater***Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*****ENDEMIC**

Only heard on Bruny Island, but then seen well later on Mount Wellington (both TAS).

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

Commonly recorded on the coastal heaths of NSW and TAS.

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

Seen at two sites in QLD; Hasties Swamp and Abattoir Swamp.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater ***Nesoptilotis flavicollis*****TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

Seen at Peter Murrell Reserve and on Bruny Island (TAS).

Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*

A common and handsome Aussie honeyeater, recorded four times in Northeast QLD.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

Just seen the once, near Mount Carbine in Northeast QLD.

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

Seen twice near O Reilly's in Southeast QLD.

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

Seen at Peter Murrell and on Bruny Island (TAS).

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

A single was seen in Glen Alice, in the Capertee Valley area (NSW).

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

A pair was seen along the road into Cape Bruny on Bruny Island (TAS).

Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayanus***ENDEMIC**

Three birds were seen at Cassowary House in Northeast QLD.

Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolata***ENDEMIC**

Just one was seen, at Boondall Wetlands, near Brisbane (Southeast QLD).

Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis*

Seen just twice in Northeast QLD; just north of Mount Carbine, and in Mount Molloy.

Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*

A few were seen in the Cairns area.

NOTE: This NE Australia form is often split as **Hornbill Friarbird**, *P. yorki*.

Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus*

Recorded in both QLD and NSW; they were especially confiding and numerous in Capertee NP (NSW).

PARDALOTES: Pardalotidae**Spotted Pardalote** *Pardalotus punctatus***ENDEMIC**

Seen on two occasions near O' Reilly's Rainforest Retreat (Southeast QLD).

Forty-spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus quadragintus***TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

Three birds were seen on North Bruny (TAS).

Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus***ENDEMIC**

Seen close to Canungra, and near O' Reilly's in Southeast QLD, and then on Bruny Island (TAS).

THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: Acanthizidae**Rockwarbler** *Origma solitaria***ENDEMIC** H

Frustratingly, a bird started calling just as we called it quits, as a result of an attack of flies crawling all over us at the time! A few less flies, and a little more time on site and I am sure we would have had it!

Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis***ENDEMIC**

2 were seen well up on Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD).

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

Recorded at Mount Lewis and O' Reilly's in QLD.

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

Recorded on Mount Lewis, at O' Reilly's (both in QLD); and also in The Royal NP in NSW.

Tasmanian Scrubwren *Sericornis humilis***TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

Seen on Bruny Island, and also on Mount Wellington (TAS).

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Atherton Scrubwren | <i>Sericornis kerri</i> | ENDEMIC |
| At least two birds were seen up on Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD). | | |
| Large-billed Scrubwren | <i>Sericornis magnirostra</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Seen at both Barron Gorge in Kuranda, and at O' Reilly's in the southeast of the state. | | |
| Scrubtit | <i>Acanthornis magna</i> | TASMANIAN ENDEMIC |
| Arguably the toughest of the Tassie endemics; seen once on Bruny Island (TAS). | | |
| Mountain Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza katherina</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Two were seen at Malanda Falls, and another up on Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD). | | |
| Brown Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza pusilla</i> | ENDEMIC. |
| Encountered at O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD), and on Bruny Island (TAS). | | |
| Tasmanian Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza ewingii</i> | TASMANIAN ENDEMIC |
| A couple each were seen on Bruny Island and Mount Wellington (TAS). | | |
| Yellow-rumped Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i> | ENDEMIC |
| A few birds were seen on Bruny Island (TAS). | | |
| Yellow Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza nana</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Two were seen in Capertee NP, in NSW. | | |
| Striated Thornbill | <i>Acanthiza lineata</i> | ENDEMIC |
| A group of three birds showed very well near O' Reilly's in Southeast QLD. | | |
| Weebill | <i>Smicrornis brevirostris</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Australia's smallest bird was seen just north of Mount Carbine (Northeast QLD). | | |
| Fairy Gerygone | <i>Gerygone palpebrosa</i> | |
| Seen at Malanda Falls and at Big Mitchell Creek; (both Northeast QLD). | | |
| White-throated Gerygone | <i>Gerygone olivacea</i> | |
| One was seen well beside the visitor center at Mareeba Wetlands, another was heard near Mount Carbine. | | |
| Large-billed Gerygone | <i>Gerygone magnirostris</i> | |
| One was seen during our Daintree River cruise (Northeast QLD). | | |
| Brown Gerygone | <i>Gerygone mouki</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Seen at Granite Gorge and O' Reilly's, (both in QLD). | | |
| Mangrove Gerygone | <i>Gerygone levigaster</i> | ENDEMIC |
| One was seen at Boondall Wetlands near Brisbane (Southeast QLD). | | |
| PSEUDO-BABLERS: Pomatostomidae | | |
| Gray-crowned Babbler | <i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i> | |
| 4 were seen at Mareeba Wetlands (Northeast QLD). | | |
| White-browed Babbler | <i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i> | ENDEMIC |
| 2 different groups were observed in the Capertee Valley (NSW). | | |
| LOGRUNNERS: Orthonychidae | | |
| Australian Logrunner | <i>Orthonyx temminckii</i> | ENDEMIC |
| Two pairs were seen very well at O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD). | | |
| Chowchilla | <i>Orthonyx spaldingii</i> | ENDEMIC |
| 7 different birds (3 groups) were seen on the slopes of Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD). | | |

WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: Psophodidae**Eastern Whipbird** *Psophodes olivaceus* **ENDEMIC**

As usual, O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD) gave us some excellent looks at this odd bird.

BOATBILLS: Machaerirhynchidae**Yellow-breasted Boatbill** *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

1 was seen along the entrance drive to Cassowary House, and another was seen on Mount Lewis (NE QLD).

WOODSWALLOWS: Artamidae**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus*

Recorded regularly in Northeast QLD, including within Cairns itself.

Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus* **ENDEMIC**

Seen at three sites; the Capertee Valley in NSW, and also on Bruny Island and at Peter Murrell (both TAS).

BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: Cracticidae**Gray Butcherbird** *Cracticus torquatus* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded three times, in Brisbane (QLD), and at The Royal NP and Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis* **ENDEMIC**

Scattered sightings in QLD and NSW; recorded on at least 4 days of the tour.

Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*

2 were encountered in Cairns, and another came in for cheese at Cassowary House (both Northeast QLD).

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on all but a handful of days on the tour.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded on eight days of the tour, in QLD and NSW.

Black Currawong *Strepera fuliginosa* **TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

3 birds were seen at Mount Wellington (TAS), including an aggressive scavenging bird at a Ferntree café!

Gray Currawong *Strepera versicolor* **ENDEMIC**

A few were seen on Bruny Island, then another was seen at the base of Mount Wellington (all TAS).

CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae**Barred Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina lineata*Also known as **YELLOW-EYED CUCKOO-SHRIKE**.

Only seen briefly, in flight, at Mount Lewis and around Kuranda (QLD).

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Recorded on seven days of the tour, in both QLD and NSW.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

Seen around Hasties Swamp and Mount Molloy, in Northeast QLD.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

Four sightings in Northeast QLD; including in the Daintree and at Etty Bay and Abattoir Swamp.

Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

A male was seen well on our first afternoon in Cairns, at Centenary Lakes (Northeast QLD).

SHRIKE-TIT: Falcunculidae**Crested Shrike-tit*****Falcunculus frontatus*****ENDEMIC**

We saw one in the Capertee Valley, and another nearby in Glen Alice churchyard (NSW).

*This species was formerly classified as a *whistler*, but has now been split off into its own, monotypic, endemic bird family.

WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: Pachycephalidae**Little Shrike-Thrush*****Colluricincla megarhyncha***

One was seen close to Cassowary House, and another at nearby Barron Gorge, Northeast QLD.

Also known as **RUFOUS SHRIKE-THRUSH**.

Gray Shrike-Thrush***Colluricincla harmonica***

Seen first near O' Reilly's in Southeast QLD, then repeatedly around The Royal NP (NSW).

Bower's Shrike-Thrush***Colluricincla boweri*****ENDEMIC**

Two singles were seen up on Mount Lewis in Northeast QLD.

Olive Whistler***Pachycephala olivacea*****ENDEMIC**

One was seen well in a campground on Bruny Island (TAS).

Golden Whistler***Pachycephala pectoralis*****ENDEMIC**

This gorgeous bird was seen at Mount Lewis (Northeast QLD); and in O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

Gray Whistler***Pachycephala simplex***

A pair was seen in the Daintree, and another was found at Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

Rufous Whistler***Pachycephala rufiventris***

A striking male was seen at Hasties Swamp (NE QLD), and others were seen in The Royal NP (NSW).

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae**Olive-backed Oriole*****Oriolus sagittatus***

Just a few were seen, at J. C. Slaughter Falls near Brisbane (QLD), and also near Capertee, (NSW).

Green Oriole***Oriolus flavocinctus***

Also known as **YELLOW ORIOLE**. One was seen along the Cairns Esplanade (Northeast QLD).

Australasian Figbird***Sphecotheses vieilloti*****ENDEMIC**

Recorded on nine days in QLD, the only state where it was seen.

DRONGOS: Dicruridae**Spangled Drongo*****Dicrurus bracteatus***

Seen on five different days of the tour, including in Cairns and the Daintree.

FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae**Northern Fantail*****Rhipidura rufiventris***

Recorded twice in Northeast QLD, at Abattoir Swamp (where only heard), and at Big Mitchell Creek.

Willie-wagtail***Rhipidura leucophrys***

Australia's most familiar bird, recorded on all but a few days of the tour.

Rufous Fantail***Rhipidura rufifrons***

This flashy, hyperactive fantail, was seen on Mount Lewis, at O' Reilly's and at Big Mitchell Creek (all QLD).

Gray Fantail***Rhipidura albiscapa***

Recorded on at least five days of the tour; at Mount Lewis, on Bruny Island (TAS), and in The Royal NP (NSW).

MONARCH-FLYCATCHERS: *Monarchidae***White-eared Monarch** *Carterornis leucotis* **ENDEMIC**

This often-difficult bird turned out to be surprisingly straightforward during a short pre-breakfast walk into Kuranda National Park, near Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*

This handsome songbird featured on Mount Lewis and at O' Reilly's, (in QLD).

Spectacled Monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*

One showed well along the road near at Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi* **ENDEMIC**

Murray Hunt had a nesting bird staked out on our Daintree cruise (Northeast QLD).

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*

An abundant bird in Australia, seen on nine different days at least.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*

Seen in the mangroves at Cairns, and later at Abattoir Swamp too (both Northeast QLD).

Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*

A glossy-blue male was seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta* **ENDEMIC**

John saw one of these near Glen Alice (NSW).

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

At least three birds (male and 2 females) were seen on the Daintree cruise with Murray Hunt (Northeast QLD).

CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: *Corvidae***Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru*

A few were seen in Northeast QLD, but were daily in Southeast QLD.

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* **ENDEMIC**

Recorded daily in NSW.

Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus*

Commonly seen on Tasmania.

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH AND APOSTLEBIRD: *Corcoracidae***White-winged Chough** *Corcorax melanorhamphos* **ENDEMIC**

A few small groups were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea* **ENDEMIC**

Seven or more of these noisy birds were seen just north of Mount Carbine in Northeast QLD.

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: *Paradisaeidae***Paradise Riflebird** *Ptiloris paradiseus* **ENDEMIC**

A male was seen displaying-albeit briefly-along the Python Rock Track in Lamington National Park (SE QLD).

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

A male and female both come in to feed on cheese, at Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: *Petroicidae***Jacky-winter** *Microeca fascinans*

Recorded two or three times in the Capertee area (NSW).

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

Two were found at Big Mitchell Creek, in Northeast QLD.

Scarlet Robin*Petroica boodang***ENDEMIC**

Three different birds, including a jaw-dropping male, were found on Bruny Island in TAS.

Flame Robin*Petroica phoenicea***ENDEMIC**

A super male gave excellent looks on Mount Wellington (TAS), where several females were also seen.

VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP BIRDS OF THE TOUR

Rose Robin*Petroica rosea***ENDEMIC**

A single female was seen along a forest trail near O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

Pink Robin*Petroica rodinogaster***ENDEMIC**

An exquisite male showed well on Bruny Island in TAS.

VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP BIRDS OF THE TOUR

Hooded Robin*Melanodryas cucullata***ENDEMIC**

A pair gave excellent looks in Glen Davis, with others seen briefly in the same area (NSW).

Dusky Robin*Melanodryas vittata***TASMANIAN ENDEMIC**

Three different birds were seen at Cape Bruny Lighthouse on Bruny Island (TAS).

Pale-yellow Robin*Tregellasia capito***ENDEMIC**

Just a couple were seen near Cassowary House in Northeast QLD.

Eastern Yellow Robin*Eopsaltria australis***ENDEMIC**

A few tame ones were seen at O' Reilly's in QLD; others were seen in The Royal NP in NSW.

Mangrove Robin*Eopsaltria pulverulenta*

Amazingly, one landed on the same branch as a Torresian Kingfisher, while we were watching that bird in Cairns!

White-browed Robin*Poecilodryas superciliosa***ENDEMIC**

A pair showed well at Big Mitchell Creek (Northeast QLD).

Gray-headed Robin*Heteromyias cinereifrons***ENDEMIC**

Seen at both Hypipamee NP and Mount Lewis, in Northeast QLD.

LARKS: Alaudidae**Australasian Bushlark***Mirafra javanica*

One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW), one of the widest valleys in the World.

SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae**Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

This rare species was seen perched on a wire at Yorkey's Knob (Northeast QLD), close to a group of *Welcome Swallows*.

Welcome Swallow*Hirundo neoxena***ENDEMIC**

The common swallow in Australia, recorded every day of the tour.

Fairy Martin*Petrochelidon ariel*

A small party of 6 or so birds were seen in Mount Molloy (Northeast QLD).

Tree Martin*Petrochelidon nigricans*

Commonly encountered during our wonderful day on Bruny Island (TAS).

BUBULS: Pycnonotidae**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*

One was bumped into, in a garden, as we crossed the beautiful Blue Mountains west of Sydney (NSW).

REED-WARBLERS AND ALLIES: Acrocephalidae**Australian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus australis*

Very vocal and conspicuous during our short visit to Lake Wallace (NSW).

GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Locustellidae**Little Grassbird** *Megalurus gramineus*

A calling bird popped out of the reeds at Lake Wallace (NSW).

Rufous Songlark *Megalurus mathewsi***ENDEMIC**

A handful were seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW), including several giving their distinctive display flights.

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae**Golden-headed Cisticola** *Cisticola exilis*

Seen on three occasions; at Hasties Swamp, Cattana Wetlands and Yorkey's Knob (QLD); and in the Capertee Valley (NSW)

WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae**Silver-eye** *Zosterops lateralis*

Seen at Cassowary House and on Mount Lewis in Northeast QLD, and then again on Bruny Island (TAS).

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: Turdidae**Bassian Thrush** *Zoothera lunulata***ENDEMIC**

Several seen feeding high up the mountain road on Mount Lewis (QLD), and another near Cape Bruny (TAS).

Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei*

A very showy roadside bird was seen near the lodge at O Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

This introduced species was encountered regularly on Tasmania.

STARLINGS: Sturnidae**Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica*

Recorded on five days in Northeast QLD, including within Cairns.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Recorded daily in TAS and NSW.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Seen on all but a few days of the tour. The species does not occur in TAS.

FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae**Mistletoebird** *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

Recorded on four days of the tour in Northeast QLD (e.g. Cassowary House, Mt. Lewis, Abattoir Swamp).

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: Nectariniidae**Olive-backed Sunbird** *Cinnyris jugularis*

Seen four times in Northeast QLD; in Cairns, Cattana Wetlands, ETTY Bay, and at Abattoir Swamp.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae**Australasian Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Seen on 5 occasions (Etty Bay, QLD; Bruny Island, TAS: and in the Capertee Valley, NSW).

FINCHES, EUPHONIAS AND ALLIES: Fringillidae**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris* **H**

Heard from the vehicle near Hobart (TAS), where it was only briefly searched for.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A pair was seen near Eaglehawk Neck in TAS.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Recorded regularly in urban areas in both QLD and NSW.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae**Beautiful Firetail** *Stagonopleura bella* **ENDEMIC**

Two of these subtly patterned "finches" were seen at Wattamolla in The Royal NP (NSW).

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

Recorded 7 times; at Cassowary House, Mount Lewis, and O' Reilly's in QLD, and in The Royal NP (NSW).

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*

A minimum of 15 birds were seen at one site, and 1 at another site, both near Yorkey's Knob, Northeast QLD.

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata* **ENDEMIC**

A single bird showed well near Glen Davis (in the Capertee Valley, NSW).

Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii* **ENDEMIC**

Flocks of this handsome finch were found at Granite Gorge, near Mt. Carbine, and Mareeba Wetlands (all Northeast QLD).

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*Also known as **NUTMEG MANNIKIN**. About thirty were seen at Cattana Wetlands, in Northeast QLD.**Chestnut-breasted Munia** *Lonchura castaneothorax*

Two groups of 20 each were seen at Cattana Wetlands and near Yorkey's Knob, near Cairns (Northeast QLD).

***Please see next pages for mammals and other wildlife...**

MAMMALS:

ECHIDNA: Tachyglossidae

Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

One waddled off the road at Jetty Beach on Bruny Island (TAS).

PLATYPUS: Ornithorhynchidae

Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

At least 4 were seen foraging in daylight hours at Tarzali in Northeast QLD.

BANDICOOTS: Peramelidae

Northern Brown Bandicoot *Isoodon macrourus*

One was seen feeding briefly in the Daintree (Northeast QLD).

BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS: Phalangeridae

Mountain Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus caninus*

One was seen at a feeder by the O' Reilly's restaurant, during dinner one night (Southeast QLD).

Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*

Many were seen at Hobart Waterworks Reserve (TAS), when many of them had joeys clasped to their backs.

Coppery Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus johnstonii*

This very localized, highland possum, was seen near Herberton, on a spotlighting tour with Alan Gillanders.

STRIPED POSSUM, Leadbeater's Possum, Wrist-winged Gliders: Petauridae

Yellow-bellied Glider *Petaurus australis*

Three were seen extremely well, near Herberton, with Alan Gillanders on his spotlighting tour.

RINGTAIL POSSUMS: Pseudocheiridae

Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*

One was seen while searching for night birds near O Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

FEATHERTAIL GLIDER: Acrobatidae

Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus*

Two of these tiny, mice-like gliders were seen nibbling the trunk of a tree on the night tour with Alan Gillanders, near Herberton (Northeast QLD).

MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO: Hypsiprymodontidae

Musky Rat-kangaroo *Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*

Three were seen from the balcony at Cassowary House (Northeast QLD).

KANGAROOS, WALLABIES AND TREE-KANGAROOS: Macropodidae

Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo *Dendrolagus lumholtzi*

3 of these oddball animals were seen over lunch at Nerada Tea Rooms, including a large joey that was seen disappearing into its mother pouch!

Agile Wallaby ***Macropus agilis***

1 was seen at Hasties Swamp in Northeast QLD, oddly the sole sighting.

Eastern Gray Kangaroo ***Macropus giganteus***

This massive roo was recorded on 4 days; at Mareeba and Mount Carbine, in QLD, and at Capertee (NSW).

Euro ***Macropus robustus***

Also known as **COMMON WALLAROO**. 1 was seen in the Outback, north of Mount Carbine (QLD).

Red-necked Wallaby ***Macropus rufogriseus***

Seen on the lower slopes of the hill up to O Reilly's (Southeast QLD); others were seen at Capertee (NSW).

"Bennett's Wallaby" ***Macropus rufogriseus rufogriseus***

The Tasmanian form of *Red-necked Wallaby* was seen at Bruny Island, and many were also at Hobart Waterworks Reserve by night.

Black Wallaby ***Wallabia bicolor***

Also known as **SWAMP WALLABY**. One of these dark wallabies was seen at Capertee NP (NSW).

Rufous-bellied Pademelon ***Thylogale billardierii***

Also known as **TASMANIAN PADEMELON**.

Many were seen at Hobart Waterworks Reserve in Tasmania.

Red-legged Pademelon ***Thylogale stigmatica***

Two singles were seen around the rainforest at O' Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

Red-necked Pademelon ***Thylogale thetis***

Seen daily at O Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

FRUIT BATS: Pteropodidae**Black Flying-fox** ***Pteropus alecto***

Small numbers (several only) were noted in a large camp of Gray-headed Flying-foxes near Canungra (QLD).

Spectacled Flying-fox ***Pteropus conspicillatus***

A large camp was seen at dusk in downtown Cairns, and seen both perched and flying (Northeast QLD).

Gray-headed Flying-fox ***Pteropus poliocephalus***

A mixed colony of roosting bats involving this species and Black Flying-foxes was seen near Canungra (QLD).

Little Red Flying-fox ***Pteropus scapulatus***

About twenty birds flew over our hotel in Mareeba one evening (Northeast QLD).

RABBITS AND HARES: Leporidae**European Hare** ***Lepus europaeus***

One was seen in the Capertee Valley (NSW).

European Rabbit ***Oryctolagus cuniculus***

A few scattered sightings were made.

OTHERS:**Cane Toad*****Rhinella marina***

Also known as **Marine Toad**. This introduced menace was seen at a few sites.

White-lipped Tree Frog***Litoria infrafrenata***

Three of these handsome, vivid green frogs was seen at Red Mill House in Daintree (NE QLD).

Ulysses Butterfly***Papilio ulysses***

This spectacular large black and electric blue butterfly was seen several times on Mt. Lewis, Northeast QLD.

Cairns Birdwing***Ornithoptera euphorion***

This magnificent, large butterfly was seen near Cassowary House in Northeast QLD.



A mother *Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo* on the Atherton Tablelands provides the sanctuary of its pouch to its joey