Tropical Birding Tours

Australia: Birding with Camera

(Comb-crested Jacana - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Guide: Ben Knoot

The photos in this report were photographed by guide Ben Knoot

Tour Introduction

With almost 900 resident species, Australia is a one of a kind destination for birders and general nature enthusiasts. Our "Birding with Camera" Tour is a slower but still faced paced, intense vacation that targets a moderately high bird species list, with an extra emphasis on spending some time photographing the amazing wildlife Australia has to offer. We also target an impressive mammal list and in doing so, we are proud to offer a one of a kind experience for our guests. This 21-day excursion down the east coast of Australia starts in the north of Cairns, travels to Brisbane and then takes a large detour inland in search of the classic "outback" specialties. We then finish off this tour on the fantastic island of Tasmania. There were many excellent birds seen on this trip, ***387 species*** to be exact, but eventually the group was able to narrow down a list of their ***TOP FIVE*** and even a ***TOP BIRD*** of the trip. Similarly, even though there were a lot of excellent mammals seen on the trip, the group narrowed the list of ***24 species*** to their favorite ***TOP THREE***.

Top Five Birds

1. Southern Cassowary
2. Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo
3. Turquoise Parrot
4. Splendid Fairywren
5. Superb Parrot

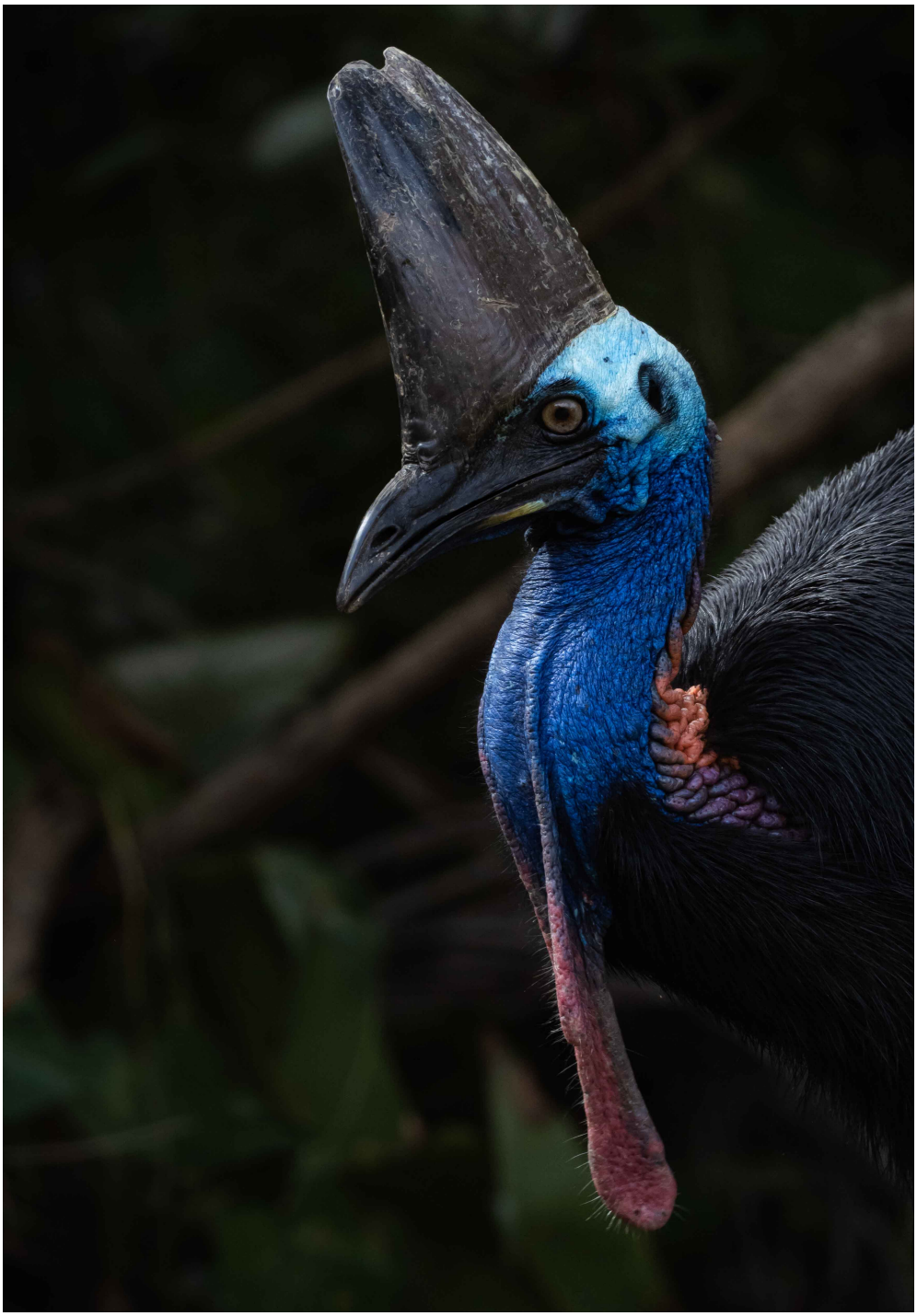
Top Three Mammals

1. Koala
2. Duck-billed Platypus
3. Short-beaked Echidna

Top Bird of the Trip

Well, what are you supposed to say when your guide asks this question during the last dinner? You're enjoying your wine and steak and then all of a sudden, you're hit with this impossible question. To select one bird out of 350+ is hard enough but to select one bird out of 350+ Australian birds?! That's just cruel. And to be frank, it's always a little fun for the guide to see the smiles appear when this question is asked, because the guests know it's coming so the whole trip you know they're toiling with the possibility of the most recent bird they've seen making the list. However, there is one bird that is always in the ***TOP FIVE*** and subsequently usually takes the gold for everyone's favorite bird of the trip. And that bird of course is the prehistoric, completely unique and insane looking SOUTHERN CASSOWARY. Congratulations again on your gold medal finish.

Bird of the Trip



(Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Itinerary

September 23rd……..Arrival in Cairns

September 24th……..Great Barrier Reef to Kuranda

September 25th……..Ngorongoro Lodge to Daintree

September 26th……..Daintree to Mareeba

September 27th……..Atherton Tablelands

September 28th……..Atherton Tablelands

September 29th……..Mareeba to Cairns

September 30th……..Cairns to Brisbane

October 1st…….Lamington (O'Reilly's)

October 2nd……Lamington to Goondiwindi

October 3rd……Goondiwindi to St. George

October 4th……Bowra Station and Area

October 5th……Cunnamulla to Mount Hope

October 6th……Round Hill to Binya to Leeton

October 7th……Binya & Five Bough Swamp

October 8th……Leeton to Chiltern

October 9th……Chiltern to Yea

October 10th……..Toolangi to Hobart

October 11th……..Mainland Tasmania

October 12th……..Bruny Island, Tasmania

October 13th……..….Departures

Tour Summary

Day 1 (September 23rd)

The tour began in Cairns around 1:00pm. There are several ways to start this tour but my favorite is with a bang. We traveled towards **Etty Bay** and there we found what would be the bird of the trip, the Southern Cassowary. After spending some quality time with this gorgeous female, we traveled back towards Cairns. We found ourself with loads of spare time so we made several more stops that afternoon. I opted to visit the **Cairns Botanical Gardens and Centenary Lakes**. Here we found some of the local birds like: Common Sandpiper, Australian Brush Turkey, Bush Thick-Knee, Willie Wagtail, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Olive-backed Sunbird, Torresian Imperial Pigeon, Welcome Swallow, Black Butcherbird and Laughing Kookaburra. On our way back to our hotel, we checked off all of the common species one might find in Cairns and on the rest of the tour. Birds like: Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis, Australasian Figbird, Masked Lapwing, Spotted Dove, Peaceful Dove, White-breasted Woodswallow, Brown Honeyeater, Sulfur-crested Cockatoo and Rainbow Lorikeet.

(Rainbow Lorikeet - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 2 (September 24th)

Today is one of the most anticipated days of the tour, the day trip to **The Great Barrier Reef**. We woke up early to catch the first rays of light that strike the mangroves along the **Cairns Esplanade**. Here, we try for several lovely birds before catching our boat out to the Great Barrier Reef. We found Mangrove Robin, Curlew Sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Sand Plover, Red-necked Stint, Black-fronted Dotterel, Whimbrel and Far Eastern Curlew. Our lovely Coral Tree Inn was beginning their breakfast service so we returned to grab a quick bite to eat before heading out on the boat for the day. The boat ride to **Michaelmas Caye** can be pretty good for seabirds but unfortunately, due to some high winds and slightly rough seas, the doors remained closed until we reached the Caye. Unfortunately, the tide was too low to circumnavigate the island so all of our birding was done via the designated observation section. From here we were able to find: Brown Booby, Sooty, Roseate, Black-naped, Great Crested and Lesser Crested Tern and Brown Noddy.

(Brown Noddy - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

We then ventured to **Hastings Reef** where we snorkeled and took a few glass bottom-boat tours. Here we got extremely lucky and were provided excellent views of two of the targets we were missing, the Black Noddy and Bridled Tern. The boat dropped us back on shore and we immediately took advantage of a decent tide on the **Cairns Esplanade.** Here we picked up most of our shorebirds for the tour: Pied Stilt, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwit, Gray-tailed Tattler, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Great Knot, Common Greenshank, Gull-billed Tern and Pied

Oystercatcher. The had three locations to visit before traveling up to Kuranda. First stop, **Barron River Mouth.** Here we added: Red-capped Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Pacific Plover and Mistletoebird. We then made our way over to **Redford Road** for one target in particular. Within a few minutes we were able to check off Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Golden-headed Cisticola and the main target Crimson Finch. Our last stop for the afternoon was a lovely location called **Cattana Wetlands.** Here we found Green Pygmy Goose, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Forest Kingfisher, Great, Little and Intermediate Egret, Pacific Heron, Comb-crested Jacana and for some, a very quick glimpse at Lovely Fairywren. After some good success in Cairns, we made our way up to Kuranda for our overnight halt at **Ngorongoro Rainforest Lodge.**

(Forest Kingfisher - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 3 (September 25th)

It is imperative that on this morning, we get an early start. This made possible in part due to the excellent service we are given at **Ngorongoro Lodge**. The rainforests of Kuranda are extremely

lively in the morning. The cocktail of song along **Black Mountain Road** provided us excellent views of a good number of species including: Wompoo Fruit Dove, Fairy Gerygone, Victoria's Riflebird, Barred Cuckooshrike, Little Shrikethrush, Black Butcherbird, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Pale-headed Robin, Spotted Catbird, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, and Australian Brush Turkey. The best bird of the morning was a surprise Red-necked Crake. A quick view of running across the track was luckily picked up by all of the guests. The honeyeaters of the area also showed quite nicely as well. Those were: McCleay's and Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Dusky Myzomela and Helmeted (Hornbill) Friarbird.

(Orange-footed Scrubfowl - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

We returned to **Ngorongoro Lodge** for a lovely breakfast before setting off for the day. We made our way towards **Lake Mitchell**. There is an area here that has historically been decent for some great birds. The most difficult being the White-browed Robin. Though we were unable to find that particular bird, we did manage a few other species. Notably, Red-backed Fairywren, White-throated Honeyeater and Rufous Whistler. We traveled just up the road to **Mount. Molloy** to see the very popular, Great Bowerbird bower. In the same area, we were able to see our first Squatter Pigeon. We had a fantastic lunch at one of the local cafes. When I say fantastic what I should say is "MASSIVE". The Mount. Molloy cafe boasts some of the biggest burgers in Australia and they weren't kidding. Around the lunch area we found Black Kite, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Laughing Kookaburra and Spangled Drongo.

(Great Bowerbird Bower - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

After a lovely lunch we made the drive to **Abattoir Swamp**. Here we were able to find all of our targets with the exception of one, the very tricky Tawny Grassbird. The birds we were able to find were: Northern Faintail, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Spectacled Monarch and Black-faced Monarch, Tree Martin, Brown and Yellow Honeyeater. With so many great birds around, it is always hard to leave but we had to start making our way towards Daintree. Here we met with our boat captain Murray for the lovely **Daintree River Cruise.** The cruise was quite successful and we were able to add the following birds to our growing list of species: Azure and Little Kingfisher, Nankeen Night Heron, Great-billed Heron, Papuan Frogmouth, Australian Swiftlet, Little Pied Cormorant, Black-necked Stork, Shining and Leaden Flycatcher, Australian Pelican, Radjah Shelduck, Black-fronted Dotterel, Cattle Egret, Fairy Martin, White-faced Heron and dusk brought us a fly-over White-throated Nightjar. Another fun highlight of this tour is a fairly reliable pair of Green Tree Snakes.

Day 4 (September 26th)

Our time in Daintree is split between two general areas, **Steward Creek Road** and the **Daintree River** itself. Our boat trip was the previous afternoon so this morning was spent on **Steward**

Creek Road. Here we found: Graceful Honeyeater, Silvereye and Sacred Kingfisher. After our time in Daintree, we traveled towards our next city, Mareeba. On the way, we stopped off in the town of Mossman. There is a large nesting colony of Metallic Starling that are usually quite photogenic so we made a quick stop to admire these under appreciated birds.

(Metallic Starling - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

With still plenty of daylight to burn, we made our way towards **Granite Gorge Nature Park.** On the way over to this fantastic place, we found Blue-winged Kookaburra, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Crested Pigeon and Black-faced Cuckooshrike. **Granite Gorge** is a fantastic place for birds but really, the attraction here are the adorable little Mareeba Rock Wallabies.
On the grounds we also found, Double-barred Finch, Brown Honeyeater, Fairy Gerygone, Squatter Pigeon, Striated Pardalote, Yellow (Green) Oriole, Whistling Kite, Little and Noisy Friarbird, Pale-headed Rosella, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Olive-backed Sunbird and the surprise of the afternoon, a stunning Banded Honeyeater. A lovely afternoon for sure!

(Mareeba Rock Wallaby - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

(Australian Owlet Nightjar - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Our day wasn't done. We spent an hour or so after a lovely dinner in search of some nighttime species. We went to an area called **Davies Creek.** This habitat is pretty good for a few birds but the one we were after was readily present. Within minutes we picked up a pair of beautiful Australian Owlet Nightjar.

Day 5 (September 27th)

We left early in the morning, around 5:30am as the drive up to our next location would take a bit of time. **Mount. Lewis** is a fantastic location that needs to be visited as early as possible. The morning provided us great views of: Fernwren, Chowchilla, Bower's Shrikethrush, Grey Fantail, Mountain Thornbill, Topknot Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Gray-headed Robin, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Golden Whistler, White-throated Treecreeper, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Pacific Emerald Dove, Bridled Honeyeater, Superb Fruitdove and Atherton Scrubwren. After this cold morning, we decided it best to head back down the mountain and grab some lunch. We stopped in at the Mt. Lewis Pub and were rewarded with views of Scarlet Myzomela and White-cheeked Honeyeater. We drove down the rest of the mountain towards our next destination, **Bustard Downs** and **East Mary Road**. These two areas are usually quite good for Australia's only bustard species, the Australian Bustard.

(Australian Bustard - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

(Tawny Frogmouth - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

We had several views of this species and added a few better views of some previously seen birds; Red-backed Fairywren and Blue-winged Kookaburra. Next it was time for the legendary **Mount. Carbine.** We were able to check off some great birds here. Specifically: Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Noisy Friarbird, Apostlebird, Galah, Pied Currawong, Pied Butcherbird, Great Bowerbird and the highlight, the Tawny Frogmouth. After lunch nearby, it was time to make our way towards our overnight halt in Mareeba. We arrived just before sundown and were able to check off a Little Corella that we saw feeding near a flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

Day 6 (September 28th)

Today was another early morning (as if we ever start that late) as we had a decent drive towards **Mount. Hypipamee.** This location is excellent. It consists of more rainforest like Mt. Lewis with one or two additional birds, the Golden Bowerbird and Southern Cassowary. Having already excellent views of the cassowary, we had all morning to find the Golden Bowerbird. After a few hours of walking around just listening for the display call, I finally gave up on that plan and went into the forest. We found a beautiful bower and were able to locate a 1 to 2-year old bird tending it. This bird doesn't reach it's full plumage until about 4-years into his life span so our bird was mostly brown. We also had another visit from a Southern Cassowary. A young bird this time. We walked the **"Crater Trail"** and were able to find a few new birds: Sacred Kingfisher, Shining Bronze Cuckoo, Crimson Rosella and our first look at Brown Gerygone. We also found a female

Golden Bowerbird and spent some time with her. Back down the mountain now and onwards towards **Hasties Swamp.** Here we found: Plumed and Wandering Whistling Duck, Hardhead, Royal Spoonbill, Whistling Kite, Purple Swamphen, Pacific Heron, Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Eurasian Coot and Marsh Harrier. Our lunch location was the famous, **Nerada Tea Plantation.** This also happens to be the best (but not only) place to pick up the Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo. We were able to find a couple of these unique characters lounging about the trees. Next, one of Australia's most unique species. In the beautiful park of **Tarzali Lakes** we were able to locate at least two Platypus. Also present was "roadie" a Buff Banded Rail.

(Buff-banded Rail - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Another quick stop for us was **The Curtain Fig Tree** where we aimed to find the spectacular little Yellow-breasted Boatbill. A few minutes in and we got some brief views of our target. Around the grounds we also found: White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Victoria's Riflebird, Spotted Catbird and White-throated Treecreeper. The sun began to sink and the skies darkened, directing us to make our way to our hotel and on to a nice meal. We were going to try for another night of night-birding but some light drizzles and moderate winds changed our minds. We opted to call it an early night so we could leave back towards Cairns the next morning.

Day 7 (September 29th)

Today was our day to get back to **Cairns** to try for some of the species we missed on the first afternoon. The first location we decided to give another try was **Cattana Wetlands.** Here we found Comb-crested Jacana, Leaded Flycatcher, Australasian Darter and a very interesting young Cuckoo. Juvenile cuckoos are very difficult to identify especially when they are wet but eventually I decided it was a young Fan-tailed Cuckoo. By far the coolest bird of our visit to this location was the Double-eyed Fig Parrot. This was by far the best view I've ever had of this species.

(Double-eyed Fig Parrot - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

On the way back towards the city we found a Rainbow Bee-Eater. Our next stop was to a small park to locate a very special bird. Our stop, **Les Davies Park.** Our bird, the epic Rufous Owl. A beautiful female had been roosting in that park for some time, year after year during that time frame and with a little bit of searching (a solid 1-minute) I was able to find sleeping beauty high in a tree. Also present in the park were some common species like: Common Myna, House Sparrow, Peaceful Dove, Spotted Dove and a nesting pair of Rainbow Lorikeet.

Day 8 (September 30th)

Today is travel day. An extremely early flight to **Brisbane** means were are able to spend more time birding around the city. We began a small patch of mangroves just north of the airport, **Nudgee Beach Mangroves.** Here we were able to find: Grey Butcherbird, Noisy Miner, Mangrove Gerygone, Mangrove Honeyeater, Crested Pigeon, White-faced Heron and Brahminy Kite. We took a side trip to an area called **Lake Samsonvale**. We were able to add a few new species; Great-crested Grebe, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Great Cormorant. Next it was time to travel up to **O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat**. We spent the entire afternoon targeting the common species of this rainforest retreat, that way we could spend the entire next day focusing on the more difficult birds. That afternoon we were quite successful and found: Eastern Whipbird, Australian Logrunner, White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Eastern Yellow Robin, Brown Thornbill, Grey Shrikethrush, Superb Fairywren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Satin and Regent Bowerbird, Golden Whistler, Pied Currawong, Australian King Parrot and Crimson Rosella, Red-browed Firetail. After a great day of birding, we indulged in the delicious food made by the O'Reilly's chefs and returned to our rooms. We gave the evening a bit of time but ferocious winds prevented us from doing any sort of night time searching.

(Eastern Yellow Robin - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 9 (October 1st)

Today was our full day in O'Reilly's and thanks to yesterday's success, we only had a handful of birds to find. Just how I wanted it. The day found us: Wonga Pigeon, Albert's Lyrebird, Paradise Riflebird, Green Catbird, Noisy Pitta, Crested Shriketit, Rose Robin and Eastern Spinebill. We were also able to add Red-necked Pademelon. By far the coolest experience I have ever had on an Australian Tour happened next. Almost all of the guests and myself were privileged to witness a male Satin Bowerbird display to a female in his bower. This is the first time I have seen this display and it was absolutely amazing. This is exactly what I wanted to happen so that we could head out of O'Reilly's good and early the next morning to get to our next location, Goondiwindi. With no other target species and several hours to kill, I gave the group some free time to bird, do some photography or better yet, catch up on some sleep. We had another great dinner and prepared for an early departure the next morning.

(Satin Bowerbird - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 10 (October 2nd)

Today was a big driving day. We had a lot of miles to cover so we left early in order to get to our next location at a decent time. On the way to our location, we had a very fun photoshoot with a Galah. A few lucky road side stops granted us views at Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Varied Sitella, Jacky Winter and Dusky Woodswallow. Our most fruitful stop of the day was a road called

Cement Mills Road. Here we found: Fuscous Honeyeater, Speckled Warbler and the incredible Turquoise Parrot. We continued towards **Goondiwindi** just as the sun was starting to set and we got super lucky as I had just spotted a Short-beaked Echidna on the side of the road. Then, some Emu's. What a welcome into this fun little town.

(Short-beaked Echidna - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day11 (October 3rd)

Today we started off in the **Goondiwindi Botanical Gardens.** A quick walk around found us, Olive-backed Oriole, Apostlebird, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, White-plumed Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Yellow Thornbill, Weebill, Purple-backed and Superb Fairywren and Double-barred Finch. We then began our long drive towards our next city, Cunnamulla. This tour has a lot of driving but it is all aimed towards listing a variety of species. When we travel towards Cunnamulla we start entering what is known as "The Outback". These are areas of very low human impact/activity. Mostly the habitat is comprised of Mulga and Mallee. We were able to find some nice birds on the way out of Goondiwindi towards our lunch destination, St. George. On the roadside we managed, Australian Hobby, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Zebra Finch and Brown Falcon. Then, and this why I love birding, we made a stop for ICE CREAM, yes ice cream in the town of **Bollon**. While the guests started inside I noticed a medium sized bird hopping around in the street. I quickly identified it as a major target for our tour, the Spotted Bowerbird. I called everyone out and we got some excellent views of this normally difficult bird. Better yet, we were

able to watch this bird while enjoying ice cream…epic! Other birds in the **Bollon Area** were Restless Flycatcher and Australian Ringneck (Mallee).

(Restless Flycatcher - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

We continued on from Bollon towards our overnight halt in **Cunnamulla.** We made it with just enough time to grab a late dinner and call it quits for the day. The tour is a lot of driving but frankly, it's the only way to see this country for all it's worth so as the guide I am more than happy to bear that responsibility.

Day 12 (October 4th)

Today we had a full day at one of the best birding and bird photography locations in eastern Australia. We arrived at **Bowra Station** good and early so as to maximize our time at this wonderful place. We spent the entire morning in Bowra and were able to find: Diamond Dove, Halls and Gray-crowned Babbler, Budgerigar, Pink Cockatoo, Galah, Brown Treecreeper, White-browed Woodswallow, Masked Woodswallow, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Fairy Martin, Cockatiel, Rufous Songlark and White-winged Fairywren. On the way out of Bowra, we were told about a small flock of Banded Lapwing that were hanging around a small grass patch near the only gas station in town. Fantastic luck! We got some lunch, took an hour rest and returned to **Bowra Station** for the afternoon. Besides the glorious afternoon light, we added a few more birds to our list: Black Falcon, Chestnut-crowned Babbler, Emu, Chestnut Teal, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-tailed Nativehen, Crimson Chat and Splendid Fairywren. We returned to our hotel to have a late dinner after a great evening of photography.

(Cockatiel - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 13 (October 5th)

Guess what? Yep, another early morning and another long drive. Today we travel towards **Mount Hope** with the sole purpose of being nice and close to our destination for the next morning. On this route, we made several stops along the way at random habitat spots I thought might hold some new species of bird. Some of them paid off and we found: Speckled Warbler, Red-rumped Parrot, Black-faced and Little Woodswallow, Hooded Robin, Striated Pardalote, and another Short-beaked Echidna.

Day 14 (October 6th)

It is essential that this day start early. Our location's **Round Hill and Nombinni Reserve** are both excellent birding locations, but they have to be done early in the morning. We arrived just before dawn and the chorus of birds was electric. The morning started off EXCEPTIONALLY well when a Grey Falcon was spotted perched by the side of the rail line. This is an exceptional bird that was a first for me personally. Just goes to show that when you put the time in, you'll get lucky! We continued on into the reserve and were able to pick up some very special species; Southern Scrub Robin, Rufous Whistler, Shy Heathwren, Emu, Mulga Parrot, Chestnut Quail Thrush, Rainbow Bee-eater, Splendid Fairywren and Spiny-cheeked and White-eared Honeyeater.

(Rainbow Bee Eater - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Unfortunately, though we searched and searched we could not locate the mythical Malleefowl; maybe next time! Even so, with such a successful morning behind us, we made our way towards Leeton. After a nice lunch in Griffith and with the addition of Greater Blue Bonnet to our list, we continued on towards our hotel. After a quick rest, we made our way towards our afternoon location, **Five Bough Swamp.** I love this place. I think it is one of my favorite locations we visit and there are a ton of birds here for us. Here we found: Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Australian Spotted Crake, Baillon's Crake, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Black-tailed Nativehen, Australian Pelican, Australian Reed Warbler, Little Grassbird, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Australian Shelduck, Wood Sandpiper, Red-necked Avocet and Whiskered Tern. A fantastic evening but we were still missing a couple of species so I decided we should return here the next morning. We returned to our hotel in Leeton for a nice dinner and some rest.

Day 15 (October 7th)

As we decided yesterday, we quickly returned to **Five Bough Swamp** hoping to pick up a few of the species we had missed the previous afternoon. With a little bit of searching, we found one of them, the Orange Chat. Unfortunately, though we scanned and scanned, we could not locate a Marsh Sandpiper. We then made our way towards **Binya State Forest.** This area has historically been a great place for a huge target on this tour, the Painted Honeyeater. However, upon arrival, all seemed quite quiet. We found: White-browed Babbler, Red-capped Robin and Yellow Thornbill, but no honeyeaters were heard or seen. The reason for this was simple, none of the trees were flowering. So we moved on and I found us a place with some flowering trees. Upon arrival at **McCann Road,** the atmosphere was electric with sound. We were on the birds. Here we found: Pied, Striped, Singing and our biggest target, Painted Honeyeater.

(Striped Honeyeater - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Time for us to head out and move on to Chiltern. But first, we had two parrot species to find on the outskirts of Leeton. After a short drive, I spotted one of our targets, the "Yellow" Rosella. The Yellow Rosella is a subspecies of the Crimson Rosella and differs exactly how the name suggests, it is yellow rather than red. We pulled over and watched for a bit when all of a sudden, one of the participants spotted a different parrot. It turned out to be a female Superb Parrot, the other target we were after. Shortly after the male was seen as all of the parrots we were watching popped up into a nearby tree. We got excellent looks and terrific photos of the male Superb Parrot.

(Superb Parrot - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

After this great find, we continued on towards Chiltern. We had a few spots I wanted to visit before the sun got too low so we quickly dropped the bags off at the hotel and set out. Our first stop was an area around **Mt. Pilot National Park** called **"Honeyeater Picnic Grounds".** When we arrived , we were met with stormy skies, high winds and hundreds and hundreds of woodswallows. This made finding our targets rather difficult as it seemed like every bird that was hoping around in the trees was a woodswallow. However, after a bit of diligent searching we finally managed to find our honeyeater targets for the area. Those birds were: White-naped, Black-chinned, Yellow-tufted and Brown-headed Honeyeater. As a storm brooded, we abandoned

our search for a few of the other targets we needed knowing we had the whole morning to find them. We then considered our finds a great victory and returned back to the hotel for dinnertime.

Day 16 (October 8th)

We returned to **Mt. Pilot National Park** early in the morning to catch a few of the species we had missed the previous day. We were able to find Spotted Pardalote and we had great looks at Spotted Quail Thrush. We continued on and just out of nowhere, I spotted a large grey mammal cross the road. I knew instantly what it was. I pulled everyone back into the car quickly and hurried just up the road and told everyone to look out the left side of the van because a giant male Koala had just crossed the road. And sure enough, sitting there amongst the trees was a very large male. We would have to wait for our robins in Tasmania.

(Spotted Pardalote - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

After a lovely morning of birding, we continued on towards Yea. We made a quick stop in **Mangalore Flora and Fauna Reserve.** Here we picked up Musk Lorikeet, Little Eagle and Square-tailed Kite. Three fantastic birds that we had missed earlier in the trip. Better yet, the Little Eagle and the Square-tailed Kite were actually chasing each other right in front of us for some excellent views. Really quite amazing! From here we checked into our hotel and prepared for the next day. That day was going to be quite busy as we had several targets to find and then a

plane to catch for the last leg of our journey, the beautiful island of Tasmania. But first, with a few hours of daylight, I wanted to scout out our next location. We spent a few hours in **Toolangi State Forest** looking around hoping to bump into something special but unfortunately, it was so late in the day that we just ended up taking a lovely walk through this beautiful rainforest environment and had to settle for some hard work the next day.

(Koala - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 17 (October 9th)

The main reason we travel to **Toolangi State Forest** is for a chance at our second lyrebird. If you go early in the morning, you have a pretty good chance of finding them feeding along the roadside. Just a few miles from the parking lot, I spotted a lovely male Superb Lyrebird feeding along the roadside. Everyone hoped out of the van and got some pretty decent looks at this spectacular species. This is the wrong time of year to see them displaying but even so, their tail is just as majestic and it really is something you have to see to believe. In the park we also found, Large-billed Scrubwren, Flame Robin (for one person), White-browed Scrubwren and Bassian Thrush. Eventually we had to return to Melbourne to make our flight to Tasmania. We landed and traveled right to our hotel and dinner for the evening.

Day 18 (October 10th)

We landed in Tasmania last night at a decent time to get some good sleep so we could start this day nice and early. Something that has been working out very well for my tours is to work mainland Tasmania and the Tasman peninsula on this day and then finish up the tour on Bruny Island the next. This is exactly what we did. We started off at the top of **Mount. Nelson** and we were able to check off: Yellow-throated and Crescent Honeyeater, Yellow Wattlebird, Green Rosella, Dusky Robin and Tasmanian Thornbill. Our next stop was one of my favorite locations on Tasmania, **The Waterworks Reserve.** Here we were able to find: Scarlet Robin, Striated Pardalote, Black Currawong, Green Rosella, Common Bronzewing, Black-headed Honeyeater, Brown Thornbill, Forest Raven and an excellent look at Fan-tailed Cuckoo. After a lovely morning here, we made our way up **Mount Wellington.** We stopped in a place coequally known as **"The Big Bend".** Here we were able to get everyone a look at the stunning Flame Robin. Unfortunately, some super cloudy conditions made going to the top of the mountain rather pointless but the view is just as good from 90% up the mountain. Once everyone got a fill of the incredible view so we went down the mountain and into Hobart for lunch.

(Scarlet Robin - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

After a nice lunch, we ventured towards **Gould's Lagoon** where we were able to find: Mallard (difficult in Australia), Australian Nativehen, Chestnut Teal, Marsh Harrier and Freckled Duck. As the afternoon progressed we went to **Eagle-hawk Neck** for some birding before our appointment with the Little Penguin. On the way over I noticed a small bird flying high above the farm fields and knew instantly what it was. It was an Eurasian Skylark performing its flight display. Such a privilege to witness this amazing display. We found Pied Oystercatcher, Tree Martin, Kelp and Pacific Gull. As the sun faded we checked the farm fields just outside of **Taranna.** Here we were able to find Cape Barren Goose. Finally, it was time to see if we could find our Little Penguin. We arrived in **Pirates Bay** at the perfect time to have a bit of a snack before stepping out of the car to find a group of Little Penguin huddled together. On they way back we attempted some owl-ing but a strong wind and a small drizzle keep the night silent.

(Little Penguin - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

Day 19 (October 12th)

Today is our last full day of the tour and there is nowhere better to end this tour than **Bruny Island.** We spent the entire day searching for the remaining Tasmanian Endemics. We woke up

early to catch one of the earlier ferries to the island. Once on the island we found: Strong-billed Honeyeater, Forty-spotted Pardalote, Swift Parrot, Hooded Plover, Pink Robin, Forest Raven, Pallid Cuckoo, Olive Whistler and Dusky Robin. We went to bed, extremely satisfied with the tour but ready to fly home the next day.

(Hooded Plover - Photo by guide Ben Knoot)

***See below for a full species account**

Species Account

Summary:

- Birds: 387 Species (with 7 "Guide Only")
- Mammals: 24 Species

*E denotes endemic to Australia

*TE denotes endemic to Tasmania

- Seen: Bird was seen by at least one member of the group and the guide
- Photographed: By guides standard, there was a decent photographic opportunity, taken or not
- Guide Only: Bird was seen by the guide only

BIRDS	Seen	Photographed	Guide Only
Cassowaries and Emu: Casuariidae			
Southern Cassowary			
Emu (E)			
Magpie Goose: Anseranatidae			
Magpie Goose			
Ducks, Geese and Waterfowl: Anatidae			
Plumed Whistling Duck			
Wandering Whistling Duck			
Cape Barren Goose (E)			
Freckled Duck (E)			
Black Swan			
Australian Shelduck (E)			
Radjah Shelduck			
Green Pygmy-Goose			
Maned Duck (E)			
Mallard			
Pacific Black Duck			
Australian Shoveler			

Gray Teal			
Chestnut Teal (E)			
Pink-eared Duck (E)			
White-eyed Duck (Hardhead)			
Megapodes: Megapodiidae			
Australian Brushturkey (E)			
Orange-footed Scrubfowl			
Pheasants, Grouse, Allies: Phasianidae			
Brown Quail			
Grebes: Podicipedidae			
Australasian Grebe			
Hoary-headed Grebe			
Great Crested Grebe			
Penguins: Spheniscidae			
Little Penguin			
Storks: Ciconiidae			
Black-necked Stork			
Boobies and Gannets: Sulidae			
Brown Booby			
Cormorants and Shags: Phalacrocoracidae			
Little Pied Cormorant			
Great Cormorant			
Little Black Cormorant			
Black-faced Cormorant			
Anhingas: Anhingidae			
Australasian Darter			
Pelicans: Pelecanidae			
Australian Pelican			

Herons, Egrets and Bitterns: Ardeidae			
Pacific (White-necked) Heron (E)			
Great Egret			
Intermediate Egret			
White-faced Heron			
Little Egret			
Cattle Egret			
Striated Heron			
Rufous (Nankeen) Night Heron			
Ibises and Spoonbills: Threskiornithidae			
Glossy Ibis			
Australian Ibis			
Staw-necked Ibis			
Royal Spoonbill			
Yellow-billed Spoonbill			
Osprey: Pandionidae			
Osprey			
Hawks, Eagles and Kites: Accipitridae			
Australian Kite (E)			
Little Eagle (E)			
Wedge-tailed Eagle			
Swamp Harrier			
Gray Goshawk (E)			
Brown Goshawk			
Collared Sparrowhawk			
Black Kite			
Whistling Kite			
Brahminy Kite			

Square-tailed Kite (E)			
White-bellied Sea Eagle			
Owls: Strigidae			
Rufous Owl			
Southern Boobook			
Bustards: Otididae			
Australian Bustard			
Rails, Gallinules and Coots: Rallidae			
Buff-banded Rail			
Red-necked Crake			
Australian Crake (E)			
Baillon's Crake			
Australasian Swamphen			
Dusky Moorhen			
Black-tailed Nativehen (E)			
Tasmanian Nativehen (TE)			
Eurasian Coot			
Cranes: Gruidae			
Brolga			
Thick-Knees: Burhinidae			
Bush Thick-knee			
Stilts and Avocets: Recurvirostridae			
Pied Stilt			
Red-necked Avocet (E)			
Oystercatchers: Haematopodidae			
Pied Oystercatcher			
Sooty Oystercatcher (E)			
Plovers and Lapwings: Charadriidae			

Pacific Golden Plover			
Banded Lapwing (E)			
Masked Lapwing			
Lesser Sand Plover			
Greater Sand Plover			
Red-capped Plover			
Red-kneed Dotterel			
Hooded Plover			
Black-fronted Dotterel			
Jacanas: Jacanidae			
Comb-crested Jacana			
Sandpipers and Allies: Scolopacidae			
Whimbrel			
Far Eastern Curlew			
Black-tailed Godwit			
Bar-tailed Godwit			
Ruddy Turnstone			
Great Knot			
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			
Curlew Sandpiper			
Red-necked Stint			
Latham's Snipe			
Terek Sandpiper			
Common Sandpiper			
Gray-tailed Tattler			
Common Greenshank			
Wood Sandpiper			
Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers: Laridae			

Silver Gull			
Pacific Gull (E)			
Kelp Gull			
Brown Noddy			
Sooty Tern			
Bridled Tern			
Gull-billed Tern			
Caspian Tern			
Whiskered Tern			
Roseate Tern			
Black-naped Tern			
Common Tern			
Great Crested Tern			
Lesser Crested Tern			
Pigeons and Doves: Columbidae			
Rock Pigeon			
White-headed Pigeon (E)			
Spotted Dove			
Brown Cuckoo-Dove			
Pacific Emerald Dove			
Common Bronzewing (E)			
Crested Pigeon (E)			
Squatter Pigeon (E)			
Wonga Pigeon (E)			
Diamond Dove (E)			
Peaceful Dove			
Bar-shouldered Dove			
Wompoo Fruit-Dove			

Superb Fruit-Dove			
Torresian Imperial Pigeon			
Topknot Pigeon (E)			
Cuckoos: Cuculidae			
Pheasant Coucal			
Channel-billed Cuckoo			
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo			
Shining Bronze Cuckoo			
Pallid Cuckoo			
Fan-tailed Cuckoo			
Frogmouths: Podargidae			
Tawny Frogmouth (E)			
Papuan Frogmouth			
Nightjars and Allies: Caprimulgidae			
White-throated Nightjar			
Owlet-Nightjar: Aegothelidae			
Australian Owlet-Nightjar			
Swifts: Apodidae			
Australian Swiftlet (E)			
Kingfishers: Alcedinidae			
Little Kingfisher			
Azure Kingfisher			
Laughing Kookaburra (E)			
Blue-winged Kookaburra			
Forest Kingfisher			
Sacred Kingfisher			
Bee-eaters: Meropidae			
Rainbow Bee-eater			

Falcons and Caracaras: Falconidae			
Australian Kestrel			
Australian Hobby			
Brown Falcon			
Gray Falcon (E)			
Black Falcon (E)			
Cockatoos: Cacatuidae			
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (E)			
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (E)			
Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo (E)			
Galah (E)			
Long-billed Corella (E)			
Little Corella			
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo			
Cockatiel (E)			
Old World Parrots: Psittaculidae			
Superb Parrot (E)			
Australian King-Parrot (E)			
Red-winged Parrot			
Turquoise Parrot (E)			
Swift Parrot (E)			
Australian Ringneck (Mallee) (E)			
Green Rosella (E)			
Crimson Rosella (E)			
Crimson "Yellow" Rosella (E)			
Eastern Rosella (E)			
Pale-headed Rosella (E)			
Greater Bluebonnet (E)			

Red-rumped Parrot (E)			
Mulga Parrot (E)			
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot			
Musk Lorikeet (E)			
Rainbow Lorikeet			
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (E)			
Pittas: Pittidae			
Noisy Pitta (E)			
Lyrebirds: Menuridae			
Albert's Lyrebird (E)			
Superb Lyrebird (E)			
Bowerbirds: Ptilonorhynchidae			
Spotted Catbird (E)			
Green Catbird (E)			
Tooth-billed Bowerbird (E)			
Golden Bowerbird (E)			
Regent Bowerbird (E)			
Satin Bowerbird (E)			
Greater Bowerbird (E)			
Spotted Bowerbird (E)			
Australasian Treecreepers: Climacteridae			
White-throated Treecreeper (E)			
Brown Treecreeper (E)			
White-browed Treecreeper (E)			
Fairywrens: Maluridae			
Lovely Fairywren (E)			
Purple-backed Fairywren (E)			
Splendid Fairywren (E)			

Superb Fairywren (E)			
White-winged Fairy Wren (E)			
Red-backed Fairywren (E)			
Honeyeaters: Meliphagidae			
Eastern Spinebill (E)			
Pied Honeyeater (E)			
Yellow-spotted Honeyeater (E)			
Lewin's Honeyeater (E)			
Graceful Honeyeater			
Yellow Honeyeater (E)			
White-fronted Honeyeater (E)			
Yellow-faced Honeyeater (E)			
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (E)			
Bell Miner (E)			
Noisy Miner (E)			
Yellow-throated Miner (E)			
Bridled Honeyeater (E)			
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (E)			
Little Wattlebird (E)			
Red Wattlebird (E)			
Yellow Wattlebird (E)			
Varied Honeyeater			
Singing Honeyeater (E)			
White-plumed Honeyeater (E)			
Fuscous Honeyeater (E)			
Brown-backed Honeyeater			
Crimson Chat (E)			
Orange Chat (E)			

White-fronted Chat (E)			
Dusky Myzomela			
Scarlet Myzomela (E)			
Banded Honeyeater (E)			
Brown Honeyeater			
Crescent Honeyeater (E)			
New Holland Honeyeater (E)			
White-cheeked Honeyeater (E)			
White-eared Honeyeater (E)			
Yellow-throated Honeyeater (TE)			
Blue-faced Honeyeater			
White-throated Honeyeater			
White-naped Honeyeater (E)			
Black-headed Honeyeater (TE)			
Brown-headed Honeyeater (E)			
Black-chinned Honeyeater (E)			
Strong-billed Honeyeater (TE)			
Macleay's Honeyeater (E)			
Striped Honeyeater (E)			
Painted Honeyeater (E)			
Little Friarbird			
Helmeted Friarbird			
Noisy Friarbird			
Pardalotes: Pardalotidae			
Spotted Pardalote (E)			
Forty-spotted Pardalote (TE)			
Striated Pardalote (E)			
Thornbills and Allies: Acanthizidae			

Fernwren (E)			
Yellow-throated Scrubwren (E)			
White-browed Scrubwren (E)			
Tasmanian Scrubwren (TE)			
Atherton Scrubwren (E)			
Large-billed Scrubwren (E)			
Scrubtit (TE)			
Speckled Warbler (E)			
Shy Heathwren (E)			
Buff-rumped Thornbill (E)			
Mountain Thornbill (E)			
Brown Thornbill (E)			
Tasmanian Thornbill (TE)			
Inland Thornbill (E)			
Yellow-rumped Thornbill (E)			
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill (E)			
Yellow Thornbill (E)			
Striated Thornbill (E)			
Weebill (E)			
Fairy Gerygone			
Brown Gerygone (E)			
Western Gerygone (E)			
Mangrove Gerygone (E)			
Southern Whiteface (E)			
Pseudo-Babblers: Pomatostomidae			
Gray-crowned Babbler			
White-browed Babbler (E)			
Chestnut-crowned Babbler (E)			

Hall's Babbler (E)			
Logrunners: Orthonychidae			
Australian Logrunner (E)			
Chowchilla (E)			
Whipbirds and Wedgebills: Psophodidae			
Eastern Whipbird (E)			
Quail-Thrushes: Cinclosomatidae			
Chestnut Quail-thrush (E)			
Spotted Quail-thrush (E)			
Boatbills: Machaerirhynchidae			
Yellow-breasted Boatbill			
Woodswallows: Artamidae			
White-breasted Woodswallow			
Masked Woodswallow (E)			
White-browed Woodswallow (E)			
Black-faced Woodswallow			
Dusky Woodswallow (E)			
Little Woodswallow (E)			
Bellmagpies and Allies: Cracticidae			
Gray Butcherbird (E)			
Pied Butcherbird (E)			
Black Butcherbird			
Australian Magpie (E)			
Pied Currawong (E)			
Black Currawong (TE)			
Cuckooshrikes: Campephagidae			
Barred Cuckooshrike			
Black-faced Cuckooshrike			

White-bellied Cuckooshrike			
White-winged Triller			
Varied Triller			
Sitellas: Neosittidae			
Varied Sitella			
Shrike-tit: Falcunculidae			
Crested Shrike-tit (E)			
Whistlers and Allies: Pachycephalidae			
Little Shrikethrush			
Gray Shrikethrush			
Bower's Shrikethrush (E)			
Olive Whistler (E)			
Golden Whistler (E)			
Rufous Whistler			
Old World Orioles: Oriolidae			
Olive-backed Oriole			
Green (Yellow) Oriole			
Australasian Figbird (E)			
Drongos: Dicruridae			
Spangled Drongo			
Fantails: Rhipiduridae			
Northern Fantail			
Willie-wagtail			
Rufous Fantail			
Gray Fantail			
Monarch Flycatchers: Monarchidae			
Black-faced Monarch			
Spectacled Monarch			

Magpie-Lark			
Leaden Flycatcher			
Restless Flycatcher (E)			
Shining Flycatcher			
Crows, Jays and Magpies: Corvidae			
Torresian Crow			
Little Crow (E)			
Australian Raven (E)			
Little Raven (E)			
Forest Raven			
White-winged Chough and Apostlebirds: Corcoracidae			
White-winged Chough (E)			
Apostlebird (E)			
Birds-of-Paradise: Paradisaeidae			
Paradise Riflebird (E)			
Victoria's Riflebird (E)			
Australian Robins: Petroicidae			
Jacky-Winter			
Hooded Robin (E)			
Scarlet Robin (E)			
Red-capped Robin (E)			
Flame Robin (E)			
Rose Robin (E)			
Pink Robin (E)			
Dusky Robin (TE)			
Pale-yellow Robin (E)			
Eastern Yellow Robin (E)			
Mangrove Robin			

Gray-headed Robin (E)			
Southern Scrub Robin (E)			
Larks: Alaudidae			
Eurasian Skylark			
Swallows: Hirundinidae			
Welcome Swallow (E)			
Fairy Martin			
Tree Martin			
White-backed Swallow (E)			
Reed-Warblers and Allies: Acrocephalidae			
Australian Reed Warbler			
Grassbirds and Allies: Locustellidae			
Little Grassbird			
Rufous Songlark (E)			
Cisticolas and Allies: Cisticolidae			
Golden-headed Cisticola			
White-eyes and Allies: Zosteropidae			
Silver-eye			
Thrushes and Allies: Turdidae			
Bassian Thrush (E)			
Eurasian Blackbird			
Starlings: Sturnidae			
Metallic Starling			
European Starling			
Common Myna			
Flowerpeckers: Dicaeidae			
Mistletoebird			
Sunbirds and Spiderhunters: Nectariniidae			

Olive-backed Sunbird			
Wagtails and Pipits: Motacillidae			
Australasian Pipit			
Finches, Euphorias and Allies: Fringillidae			
European Goldfinch			
European Greenfinch			
Old World Sparrows: Passeridae			
House Sparrow			
Waxbills and Allies: Estrildidae			
Red-browed Firetail (E)			
Cimson Finch			
Zebra Finch			
Double-barred Finch (E)			
Chestnut-breasted Munia			
Scaly-breasted Munia			
MAMMALS			
Platypus			
Northern Brown Bandicoot			
Short-beaked Echinda			
Common Wombat			
Koala			
Musky Rat Kangaroo			
Lumholt'z Tree Kangaroo			
Agile Wallaby			
Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallaby			
Eastern Grey Kangaroo			
Red Kangaroo			
Red-necked Wallaby			

Bennett's Wallaby			
Black (Swamp) Wallaby			
Mareeba Rock Wallaby			
Rufous-bellied (Tasmanian) Pademelon			
Red-necked Pademelon			
Spectacled Flying-fox			
House Mouse			
Feral Pig			
European Hare			
European Rabbit			

Participant Photos

*Here are 5 photos chosen by each of the participants as their favorites

Photos by Participant: ***Andrés Vasquez***

Short-beaked Echidna

Green Rosella

Brown Noddy

Crimson Finch

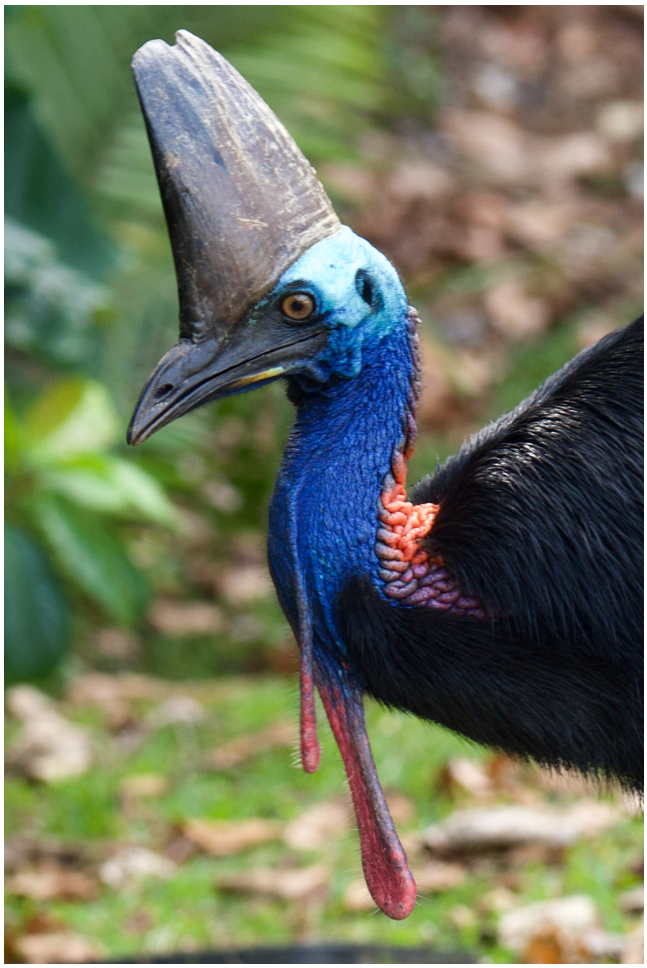
Koala

Photos by Participant: ***Laurie Kleespies***

Red-capped Robin

Spotted Pardalote

Black-fronted Dotterel



Southern Cassowary

Pink Cockatoo

Photos by Participant: ***Querida Smith***

Southern Cassowary

Galah

Spotted Pardalote

Chestnut Quail Thrush

Red-capped Robin