



## AUSTRALIA: *Birding With a Camera Down Under*

14<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018



*This male **Golden Bowerbird** decorating his bower was winner of the Bird-of-the-Tour competition, (voted for by the participants). It narrowly beat the **Southern Cassowary** family we observed near Cairns. (Sam Woods)*

**Tour Leaders: Sam Woods and Iain Campbell** (tour report written by Sam)

*The species photographed in this report are highlighted in red.*

Thanks to participants **Gary Brunvoli, Gail King, Chris Sloan and Michael Todd** for the use of their photos in this report. (Photographers are indicated for each photo)

## TOUR SUMMARY:

This Australia custom tour was arranged for very keen birders who also like to take photos of much of what they see. Thus, the objective was twofold; to get as many bird species as possible, making this a bird tour, but also to organize a tour that offered plentiful bird photography too. Hence a "Birding With a Camera" tour was devised, as Australia fitted this bill perfectly. The country served up its usual bounty of bird photo opps – so much so that some in the group took photos of more than 80% of what they saw; and also produced a substantial trip list, with 408 bird species recorded, more than 40% of the Australia's birds. The large bird list was achieved by covering 4 different states (Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales), and a multitude of sites covering numerous habitat types; (e.g. tidal mudflats, sandy beaches, rocky headlands, mangroves, tropical and temperate rainforests, highland forests of the Atherton Tablelands, wet and dry sclerophyll forests, coastal heathlands, farmlands, dams, swamps, mallee, brigalow, and inland saltbush plains). Among the birding highlights were a huddle of Little Penguins waddling ashore at nightfall on Tasmania, almost 20 species of waterfowl including Musk, Blue-billed and Freckled Ducks; regular Emus, (the national bird) within inland Australia, a few Australian Bustards there too, lots of shorebirds including some specialties like beach-nesting Hooded Plovers and plains-wandering Inland Dotterel at night, a nesting Square-tailed Kite that was stumbled upon by chance during the aftermath of our first Black Honeyeaters of the tour, 27 species of parrots and cockatoo, including Cockatiel, Budgerigar, and Superb and Swift Parrots, 5 species of owl, including Barking Owl at night and Powerful Owl by day; all 3 species of Australian frogmouth (Tawny, Papuan, and Marbled Frogmouths), 7 species of fairywren, with male Purple-backed and **Splendid Fairywrens (below, Sam Woods)** in the Queensland Outback being the standouts among them.



More than 40 species of honeyeaters, including the highly nomadic and erratic Black and Painted Honeyeaters within the same grove of blooming plants; Pied and White-eared Monarchs in Queensland's Wet Tropics; a displaying male Paradise Riflebird in the temperate rainforests of Lamington National Park; a vociferous Noisy Pitta in the same forest; a male Golden Bowerbird attending its lichen-littered bower in the highland forests of Queensland, a family of tame Southern Cassowary near Cairns; all of the 12 Tasmanian endemic species that included rare views of the rare Forty-spotted Pardalote; a series of attractive robins within the same state, including Flame, Pink and Scarlet Robins, as well as the handsome Red-capped Robin, Rose Robin and scarce White-browed Robin all in Queensland. Dozens of the unpredictable Plum-headed Finch were seen east of St. George, and a few Diamond Firetails too. This birding group, from Nashville and Chattanooga in Tennessee, was also comprised of people keen on mammals too, and to this end the tour was also fruitful, yielding 36 species, including the iconic Koala on the final day in Victoria, Platypus during the daytime in the Wet Tropics of Queensland, the spiky Short-beaked Echidna on the idyllic island of Bruny in the island state of Tasmania, and plentiful Red Kangaroos, (the largest of them all) on the parched plains of drought-affected New South Wales. For most of the group it was their first stop in the region of Australasia and so new bird families were in abundance, from emus to apostlebirds, pardalotes to logrunners, and boatbills to butcherbirds. It was an action-packed tour, cramming in maximum birds and birding sites, while seeing an extraordinary array of Australian scenery, from the scenic rocky coastlines of Bruny Island in Tasmania, to the boulder-strewn slopes of the Great Dividing Range, all of it mostly under an endless blue Australian sky...



A brief stint in **New South Wales** brought us this popular **Inland Dotterel** during a night drive (Sam Woods)

**Top Five Birds of the Tour:**

(Voted for by the participants)

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | <b>Golden Bowerbird</b> (male at bower)     | Herberton Ranges, Queensland                   |
| 2  | <b>Southern Cassowary</b>                   | Cassowary House & Hypipamee NP, Queensland     |
| 3  | <b>Paradise Riflebird</b> (displaying male) | O' Reilly's, Lamington NP, Queensland          |
| 4  | <b>Powerful Owl</b> (at a dayroost)         | Brisbane, Queensland                           |
| 5= | <b>Splendid Fairywren</b>                   | Moonie Highway, east of St. George, Queensland |
| 5= | <b>Inland Dotterel</b>                      | Between Hay and Deniliquin, New South Wales    |



This *Tawny Frogmouth* was nesting in a caravan park in **Mount Carbine in northeast Queensland** (Sam Woods)

## Top Five Other Animals of the Tour:

(Voted for by the participants)

- |   |                               |   |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <b>Koala</b>                  | Kennett River, Victoria                     |
| 2 | <b>Platypus</b>               | Tarzali, Queensland                         |
| 3 | <b>Short-beaked Echidna</b>   | Bruny Island, Tasmania                      |
| 4 | <b>Gray-headed Flying-Fox</b> | Canungra, Queensland                        |
| 5 | <b>Red Kangaroo</b>           | Between Hay and Deniliquin, New South Wales |



*This **Koala** at **Kennett River in Victoria** provided a fitting finale to this mammal-rich tour that recorded 36 species (Sam Woods)*



### DETAILED TOUR SUMMARY:

#### CAIRNS (Cemetery, Centenary Lakes, Cattana Wetlands, & Esplanade), QUEENSLAND

14<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Our first day, around the city of Cairns in the *Wet Tropics of northeast Queensland*, started out as we continued, with multiple sites and plentiful brightly colored birds. Indeed, some of the brightest avian stars in Australia are also some of the commonest species, which we got acquainted with early on, like **Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters** hawking in a local cemetery that also hosted two dozen **Bush Thick-knees** and a perched **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** (above **Sam Woods**), while **Masked Lapwings** and **Magpie-Larks** paraded around the nearby lawns. A nearby park (*Centenary Lakes*), brought us waterbirds and forest birds, like **Common Cicadabird**, **Green Oriole**, **Black Butcherbird**, our first **Laughing Kookaburras**, **Magpie-Goose**, and **Radjah Shelduck**. We also managed to see a pair of brief **Lovely Fairywrens**. Just north of *Cairns*, we visited a short street where seeding grasses attracted the hoped for **Crimson Finch** along with **Chestnut-bellied Munias**, while **Yellow Honeyeaters** were conspicuous overhead, and dozens of **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** foraged in the plowed fields alongside. *Cattana Wetlands* however was devoid of *White-browed Crakes*, but did yield our first **Comb-crested Jacanas** (page 7 **Sam Woods**) walking the lily pads, and some **Green Pygmy-Geese** among the floating vegetation, while **Brown-backed Honeyeaters** were also filed too, along with regular sightings of **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**.

A trip to the shoreline was not as good for shorebirds as hoped, due to a higher tide than expected during our visit, but the grove of trees that lined the shore held some vociferous **Varied Honeyeaters** within them. We also checked the *mangroves* at the north end, and managed to eke out a pair of **Mangrove Robins** even in the heat and humidity of the late afternoon. At dusk, a squadron of **Spectacled Flying-Foxes** emerged from a nearby “camp” (roost) in this small city.



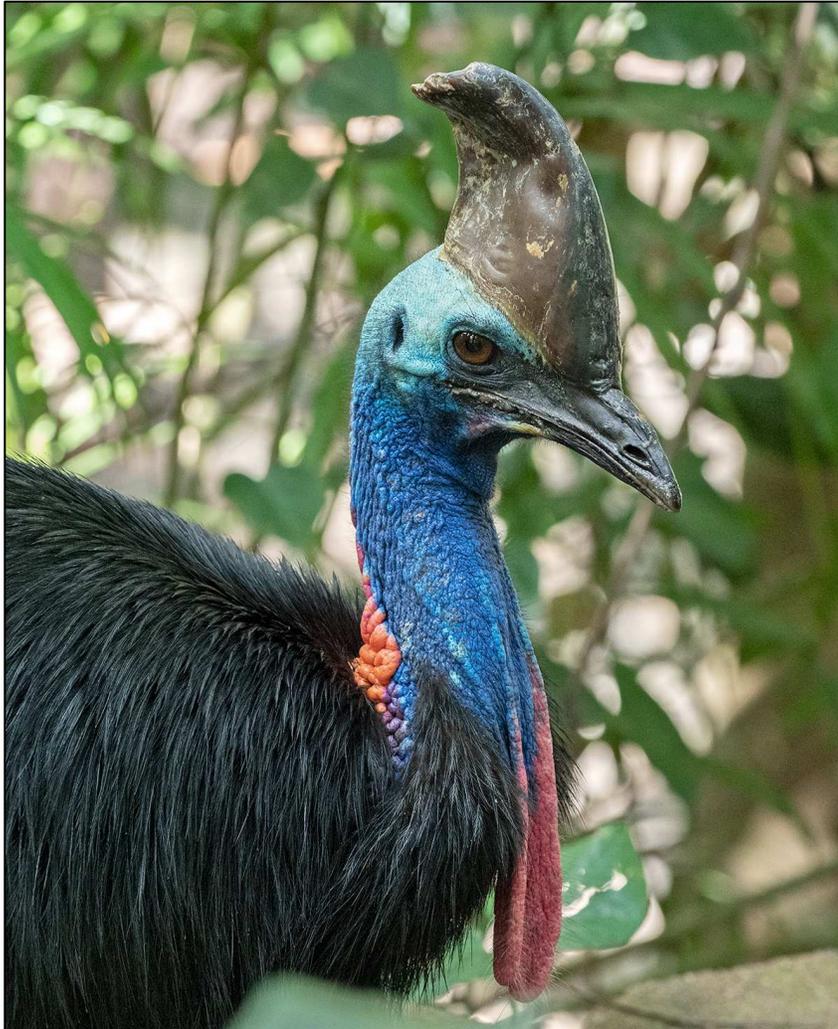
A *Comb-crested Jacana* among the Lilly pads of *Cattana Wetlands north of Cairns*

## The Great Barrier Reef (Michaelmas Cay) to Kuranda, QUEENSLAND

15<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Most of this day was spent out on a boat on *The Great Barrier Reef*, a 90-minute boat ride from the dock at *Cairns*. Our principal reason for visiting was to see the impressive seabird colony on the tiny sandy island (or “cay”) of *Michaelmas Cay*. The dominant species was **Brown Noddy** and **Sooty Tern**, although it did not take us long to locate our first **Bridled Terns** and **Brown Boobies** (next page, **Michael Todd**) too. A circuit of the island was also undertaken using the boat’s (*The Seastar*) smaller boat. By making this round trip, we were able to rack up a good list of terns resting mostly on the back side of the island (where no walking is permitted) – **Lesser and Great Crested Terns** were most conspicuous, but there was also a handful of **Black-naped, Common and Roseate Terns** too. A lone **Great Frigatebird** glided in and landed on the island too. A surprise bird was picked by *Chris* as it sailed close inshore and proved to be a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**. After lunch on board, some snorkeling, and a tour of the corals by glass-bottomed boat, we returned to *Cairns*, arriving at about 4:30pm, with just enough time to pick up our things and check a beach north of *Cairns* for *Beach Thick-knee*, which was unsurprisingly absent with the large number of people roaming the beach there. However, our trip was not wasted, as a **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove** joined the bird list within a patch of nearby monsoon forest.





**Cassowary House (Kuranda) to Daintree via Lake Mitchell, Mount Molloy & Julatten, QUEENSLAND** 16th Nov.

This day was all about the biggest target bird of the whole tour, by both weight, and by desire to see it; everyone wanted a **Southern Cassowary** (left Sam Woods), and wanted one bad. We were based at arguably the best place to see one, the well-named *Cassowary House* in *Kuranda*, where a number of individuals have been wandering into their forest block for decades. The recent news also gave us reason for hope; a male cassowary had been visiting daily with his recently-born chicks (which are entirely reared by the male in this species). We did not have to wait long either, just after 6am the said male and two striped juveniles walked along the driveway and sat for some time alongside the house. Later in the morning, a long-serving female also walked in, whilst the other birds were still present. Our pre- and post-breakfast walks were rewarding, with highlights including **Pied, White-eared and Spectacled Monarchs, Superb and Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves, Barred Cuckooshrike, female Victoria Riflebird, and Pale Yellow Robin.**

After an enormous breakfast served by *Sue* on the balcony of the lodge (with *cassowary* present throughout) and **Spotted Catbird** (page 8, **Michael Todd**) and **Black Butcherbird** for company, and some final birding in *Kuranda*, we set off for a series of sites, along the longer route towards *Daintree*, where we were to spend the night. Stopping off at *Lake Mitchell*, we found a **Black-necked Stork** among the more abundant species of waterbird, along with **Whistling Kites** and a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**. Near the far end of the causeway we notched up our first **Rufous Whistlers**, and a super young and adult male **Red-backed Fairywren** in the taller grasses there. On the way out we admired a pair of foraging *cranes*, these ones **Brolgas**, just before we departed the site. Moving to *Mount Molly* for lunch with some of the biggest burgers on the planet, we found **Great Bowerbird, Blue-faced Honeyeaters** and some **Red-winged Parrots** before lunch was out, while the fridge that held the ice creams on offer was also home to a wild **White-lipped Green Tree Frog**. In *Julatten* we stopped off in some rainforest, where our first views of **Noisy Pitta** were obtained, at a site where our first wallaby also featured, **Red-legged Pademelon**, as well as our first **Brush Cuckoo**. From there we headed north, to the most northerly point of the tour, the tiny hamlet of *Daintree* on the banks of the river bearing the same name.



## Daintree to Mareeba via Newell Beach, Julatten & Granite Gorge, QUEENSLAND

16<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Our day started out within rainforest along a side road near *Daintree* village, where the hoped for **Lovely Fairywren** showed well to all present (and provided considerably better views than earlier in *Cairns*); **Fairy Gerygone** was new to us there also. Following that, we walked to the dock, and boarded the boat of *Murray Hunt*, an extremely knowledgeable local guide for the river trip. *Murray* wasted no time in showing us one of the bigger headline stories of recent years in *Daintree*; **Spotted Whistling-Duck** (above *Sam Woods*), which has just in the last few years started to breed in the area. The species was formerly considered a New Guinea endemic, then vagrant to Australia, and now is establishing a small breeding population in northeast Queensland. An extremely relaxing, and enjoyable few hours were spent cruising the *Daintree River* with *Murray*, who plucked one bird after another out of thin air. The biggest headline act was a bark-like **Papuan Frogmouth** sitting on an invisible nest (there is no real nest to speak of); other birds that featured included **Black-shouldered Kite**, the only **Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron** of the tour, **Large-billed Gerygone**, some spritely pairs of **Shining Flycatchers**, a handful of male **Australasian Darters**, **Brown-backed and Graceful Honeyeaters**, and regular flyovers from the local **Torresian Imperial-Pigeons**. He also managed to sidle us right alongside several **Azure Kingfishers** which paid us no attention. *Mike's* sharp eyes also picked out a **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** sitting beside the river, a deep forest bird that is rarely seen in this way! We returned to *Red Mill House in Daintree* for a late, and more than ample breakfast, before some final birding in *Daintree* yielded little, so we set off in search of **Beach Thick-knee** (page 12, *Michael Todd*)...



For this target, we tried its most reliable stake out, *Newell Beach*, where a pair were sitting on the beach waiting for us on arrival! After we had all set eyes on these beastly shorebirds, we returned to a wet pasture where *Iain* had spotted some shorebirds on the way in; significantly, **Little Curlew** was present, as were some **Pacific Golden-Plovers** too. However, we could not set eyes on a *Channel-billed Cuckoo*, a migrant species that had recently been reported from the area.

Moving on to *Julatten*, we stopped off at *Sides Road*, a stop off that was intended to be short, but was extended when we clapped eyes on first a **White-cheeked Honeyeater**, and then a **Scarlet Myzomela (Honeyeater)**, to make it well worth our while. From there, we headed out of the rainforest and into drier country on the edge of the Outback near *Mareeba*, where we intended to visit *Granite Gorge* for the best chance of **Squatter Pigeon** (page 12 **Sam Woods**), which was found by the roadside before we had even entered there (more were seen there at extremely close quarters too). While *Iain* and *Sam* sorted out paying the entrance fees to the gorge, *Terri* wasted no time in spotting a pair of unusually obliging **Pacific Baza**s (above **Sam Woods**), which were presumably nesting in the area, and afforded unusually close approach. Little else was seen there (aside from their headliners, the incredibly tame **Mareeba Rock-Wallabies**), before we set off for *Mareeba* and our hotel for the next three nights. However, we had not long left the park of *Granite Gorge*, when *Kathy* had us pulling the vans off the side of the road to view our first **Pale-headed Rosellas** of the trip to round out another day of “habitat bingo”, dipping into varied habitats, and gaining a diverse set of birds to go along with that.



## Hypipamee NP, Hasties Swamp, Nerada Tea Rooms, Tarzali Lakes, the Herberton Range, and the Curtain Fig Tree, QUEENSLAND 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.



This was our first “big” day planned in the upland rainforests of the *Atherton Tablelands*, an area of northeast Queensland that holds a discrete set of endemic bird species. Soon after our arrival at a deserted *Hypipamee National Park*, one of these showed itself, **Bridled Honeyeater**, which was quickly followed by several others from this group – **Bower’s Shrike-Thrush** and **Mountain Thornbill**, although the near terrestrial **Atherton Scrubwren** took its merry time to show up. However, the most unnerving sighting of the morning was a **Southern Cassowary** steadily walking towards us on the road, which thankfully soon lost interest in us, and took its giant frame off into the forest, where it quickly melted out of sight. Next up was the wonderful *Hasties Swamp* on the outskirts of Atherton, which dry or wet, seems to always hold fascinating birds. This day was no exception. Before we reached the wetland some red dirt potato fields held our second and final *crane* of the trip, this time the red-legged **Sarus Crane**. The usual mob of *Plumed Whistling-Ducks* were not around, but were more than compensated for by a large number of **Pink-eared Ducks** dabbling in the water. In the flowering shrubs and trees leading up to the bird hide we found a few **Crested Shrike-Tits**, more **White-cheeked Honeyeaters**, and several **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** too. After that, we set our sights on *mammals* for the next few sites, firstly stopping at *Nerada Tea Rooms*, where we

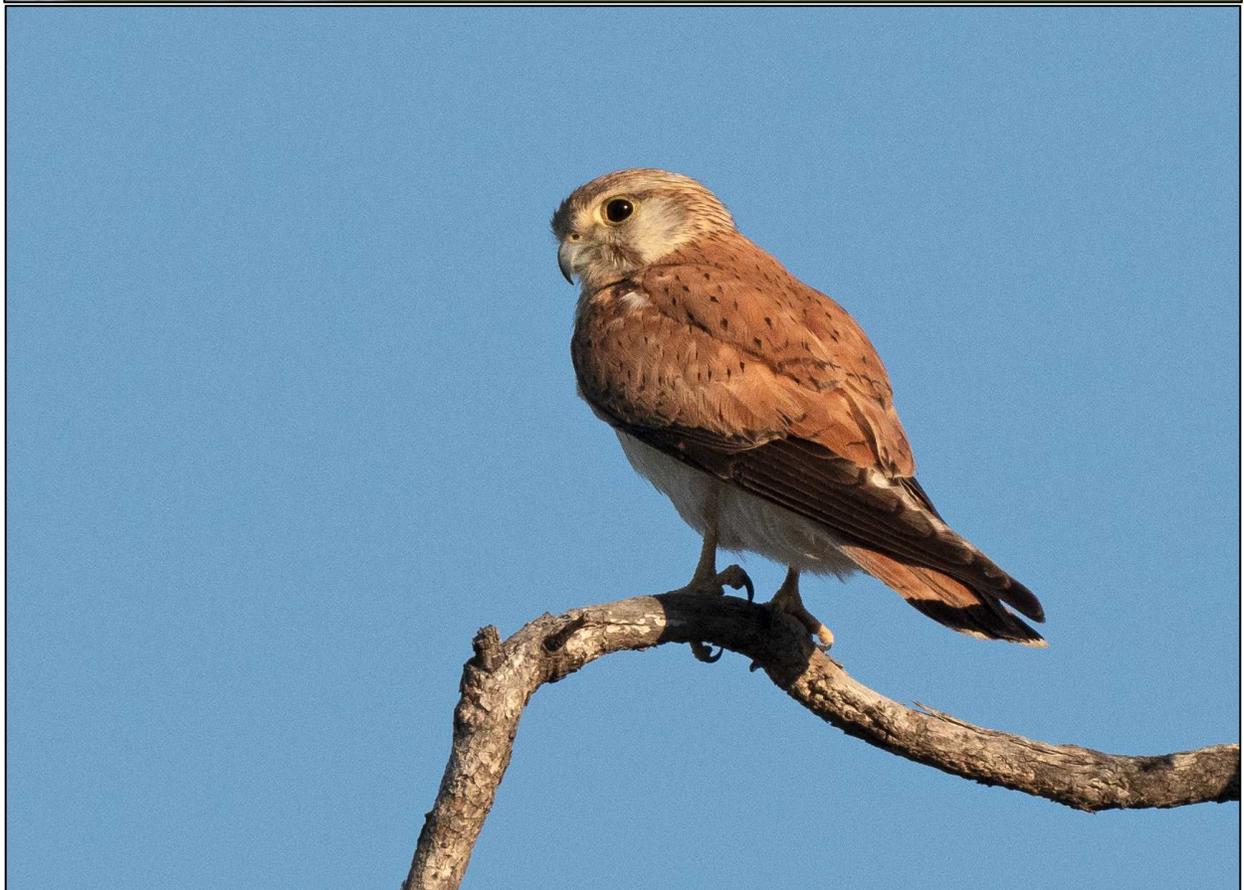
were vexed to find them closed, although that did not stop *Iain* from locating our main reason for being there, **Lumholtz’s Tree-Kangaroo** (next page, [Chris Sloan](#)) lazing in a tree alongside the main road. A **Green Ringtail-Possum** was a bonus, unexpected daytime mammal there too. By late morning we were at *Tarzali Lakes*, where we observed at least four **Platypus** (page 15, [Gary Brunvold](#)) feeding during the daytime.

After a rather hurried lunch in *Yungaburra*, (caused by an unforeseen road detour), we met up with local guide *Alan Gillanders* for a very special avian appointment indeed. *Alan* led us up into the forested slopes of the *Herberton Ranges*, filling our heads with his intimate knowledge of the rainforest as he did so, checking off one fern after another while driving there and back. At an unspectacular spot, which looked rather like many others we had passed, *Alan* pulled over and walked us into the rainforest, where a large structure made of sticks and decorated with whitish lichen betrayed what we were looking for – **Golden Bowerbird**. *Alan* has got to know this particular male bowerbird over some time, and therefore knew its habits intimately. Invariably it would be sitting nearby its treasured property, or bower, but in spite of its bright golden-yellow body, it can be amazingly hard to spot in the dark forest understorey.



While we waited, with cameras at the ready, facing the bower, Alan checked behind, and soon found our quarry sat just out of our sightline. However, this was not the time for panic, *Alan* advised where it would land when it comes to the bower, and to have our cameras set for that particular spot. We did so, and were soon unleashing a barrage of shots as a bright male sat in a position even *David Attenborough* would have been envious of. *Chris* muttered something about “*that will take some beating*”, which was later borne out when the species and this magnificent experience won the BIRD-OF-THE-TOUR competition, due in no small part to the nature of the sighting, and *Alan*’s intimate knowledge of the bird and its habits.

After we had all successfully visited the bower, (in two separate groups), due to space issues, we ventured to *The Curtain Fig Tree* (page before, *Gail King*), more than anything to just admire this truly marvelous tree. However, while we were busy admiring *the* tree, *Iain* was occupied finding our first **White-headed Pigeons** of the tour in the car park. We were swiftly alongside *Iain* and also had the pigeon trained in the *Swarovski* ‘scope. Although it was still light, we retreated to a pub for dinner, before a spotlighting session with *Alan Gillanders* nearby later. It looked like it would start off with a bang, when *Alan* interrupted our checklist to inform us of a calling **Barking Owl** outside his house! We hurried there, but they had gone quiet in the meantime, and only the merest of glimpses were had. Our night foray did yield some **Australian Fishing Bats** clinging to the underside of a bridge, many **Spectacled Flying-Foxes**, **Coppery Brushtail Possum**, and another **Green Ringtail Possum**. A late finish saw us retire to our hotel in *Mareeba* with a long list of both birds *and* mammals for the day.



## Abattoir Swamp, Mount Lewis, Julatten, Maryfarms, and Mount Carbine, QUEENSLAND 19th Nov.



“Habitat Bingo” was the name of the game again on this day with sharp contrast between the mountain forests of the morning on *Mount Lewis* and the dry Outback of Queensland in the afternoon around *Mount Carbine*. We started out the day by searching again for **Northern Fantail** around the *Abattoir Swamp* car park, soon finding it and swiftly moving on to *Mount Lewis* to try and mop up our final highland specialties. Up on *Mount Lewis* Iain indicated a **Topknot Pigeon** that landed in a bare tree for all to see, before we set off along a mountain trail, quickly locating a **Tooth-billed Bowerbird** sitting above us, and bringing relief for this species that had proved so elusive just the afternoon before. By the close of our time there we had also found another sitting above its stage of large leaves spread out on the forest floor. Not much further up the trail we heard the distinctive whistles of a **Fernwren**, and located a pair, the male of which was seen calling from a fallen tree. Our last major possible target would likely take more effort, *Chowchilla*, as were yet to hear one, in spite of passing through much suitable habitat on the way up. However, a little further along the trail Sam noticed some dead leaves being kicked up from the forest floor, which led us all to a pair of **Chowchillas** unconcernedly feeding next to the trail. With this bird in the bag, we pushed off for the edge of the Outback, pausing around “Bustard Downs”, where **Australian Bustards** were conspicuously *absent* in the taller grasses of the late spring. We moved further along the road and were relieved to find a *bustard* slowly walking away from the road. We then had one of the weirder cultural experiences of the tour. First stopping at a gas station in *Mount Carbine*,

where a fully stocked pied warmer greeted us, we were soon scared off by the bite of the owner who took umbrage to a large group arriving unannounced. The much more friendly landlord of the pub across the street, *Dale*, was only too happy to let his wife cook for us, and regale us with stories of the local politics! After a hearty lunch in the pub it was time to visit the local birder-friendly caravan park, where the owner there was only too happy to show off their pair of **Tawny Frogmouths**, and indicate the nest of a local **Blue-winged Kookaburra**.

**Galahs**, **Red-winged Parrots** (page 18 Sam Woods), and **Pale-headed Rosellas** (above Sam Woods) were all also conspicuous there, and we also enjoyed seeing a close-up of an active **Great Bowerbird bower** (next page Michael Todd), with its owner hanging around nearby.



*Great Bowerbird, Mount Molloy (Michael Todd) and Great Bowerbird bower, Mount Carbine (northeast Queensland)....*





*Red-winged Parrots* were seen first while enjoying giant burgers in **Mount Molly (northeast Queensland)**, then later in inland **southern Queensland** (Sam Woods)

McCleod River was our next short stop – promised to be only brief, it turned into something more substantial, when abundant bird activity led us to **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** and **White-gaped Honeyeater**, among many others. The last official site of the day was along the *Hurricane Road*, (north of *Mount Carbine*), where Australia's smallest bird, **Weebill**, was found, along with the local race of **Brown Treecreeper**, **Nankeen Kestrel** (page 15 Sam Woods), **Red-browed Pardalote** (for Mike only unfortunately), and several melodious **White-throated Gerygones**. The way back produced **Gray-crowned Babbler**, **Agile Wallaby** and our first **Pallid Cuckoo**. After eating in the *Mount Molloy* pub on the return journey, we returned to *Mareeba* where some took off to do some much needed laundry, while others visited some nearby woodland to try for **Australian Owlet-Nightjar** (next page Michael Todd). At least four birds were heard taunting us before Mike put us out of our misery and found one sitting out for us. Once we got back to our *Mareeba* hotel we all went to bed for the night, but were soon reunited once Gary heard and then located a pair of **Barking Owls** (next page Sam Woods) just behind our hotel!



## Big Mitchell Creek, Wondecla State Forest and Cairns, QUEENSLAND

20th Nov.



As we departed our *Mareeba* hotel for the last time, the giant frame of a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** labored on the wing overhead, but did not stop unfortunately. With our remaining bird list in the area now looking rather trim, we opted to start out by trying again for the scarce **White-browed Robin** (left *Sam Woods*). However, this time we tried *Big Mitchell Creek*, which brought rapid success, with a robin found within 30 minutes of our arrival and perching out in the open for all. A male **Leaden Flycatcher** flicked his tail regularly nearby too. Little else was on offer in the immediate area, so we headed south to *Wondecla State Forest* in the hope of some extras, most notably *Little Lorikeets*, which had been seen there in recent days. On arrival some noisy **Fuscous Honeyeaters** were not hard to find, and a pair of **White-naped Honeyeaters** provided

the only sighting of this species for the tour. Another **Horsefied's Bronze-Cuckoo** appeared overhead, while **Dusky Woodswallows** there were also our first ones, but we could not locate any of the recently reported *Little Lorikeets*, and so headed off for a local lunch before we headed back into *Cairns* for a final night in *northeast Queensland*. Checking the shoreline again, we found **Far Eastern Curlews**, **Whimbrel**, **Black and Bar-tailed Godwits**, **Great Knots** and **Gray-tailed Tattlers**, as well as **Pied Oystercatcher**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **Pacific Reef-Heron**, and **Gull-billed and Caspian Terns**. A single **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** was noted passing by further out from shore too. With the tide getting ever higher, we knew chances of any more shorebirds were getting lower with every passing minute, and so we returned for a second visit to *Centenary Lakes in Cairns*, where we soon found the hoped-for **Torresian Kingfisher**, and a **Little Bronze-Cuckoo** within the same stretch of mangroves, as well as other regulars there like **Black Butcherbird**, **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**, **Large-billed Gerygone**, and **Australian Brush-Turkey**. A hearty pub dinner closed our time in the northeast, when *Jeffery* in particular was happy to get some roasted *kangaroo* to sample, having seen a number of these odd creatures already on the tour!

## Kedron, J.C. Slaughter Falls, Beechmount, and O Reilly's (Lamington NP), QUEENSLAND 21st Nov.

After a very early morning departure from our *Cairns* hotel, and a flight into the south of the same state, we arrived in the city of *Brisbane*, ready for a whole new suite of birds and animals, having now moved from tropical *Queensland* into the temperate zone. Shortly after our arrival there, we were met by local birder *Stuart Pickering*, who met us at *Kedron*, where a good spread of shorebirds was present, including a 100 or so **Red-necked Avocets** and plentiful **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**. The handful of **Chestnut Teals** in the deeper waters were a new species for the trip too. In the vegetation alongside two more targets fell to the sword – **Mangrove Gerygone** and **Mangrove Honeyeater**.

We then moved on to *J. C. Slaughter Falls* in the hope of finding one of the regular roosting *Powerful Owls*. However, in spite of plentiful whitewashed rocks, revealing their recent presence in the area, no owls could be found and we left with little to show for the site, save for our first **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and a **Sand Monitor** clasped to the side of a tree. We bid farewell to *Stuart*, who returned to his *Brisbane* home, vowing to meet again on our way through the city, as we headed south to *Lamington National Park*, and the legendary *O' Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*. A few hours later we were near the base of the winding road that leads up to *O Reilly's* and took a lunch of pies and other local fare in the town of *Canungra*. At our next stop nearby, our arrival was accompanied by the chorus of our main target species at the site, the persistent calls of **Bell Miners**, which were seen after some searching. A party of **Gray-crowned Babblers** were also found foraging shortly after arrival. The flowering *lantana* shrubs below also hosted a powder-blue headed **Variegated Fairywren (below Sam Woods)**, which posed up on top on several photo-filled occasions.



A little further along, the same road we visited the large resident camp of bats, which was very popular among the group, as they got to see both **Black and Gray-headed Flying-Foxes (next page, Chris Sloan)** hanging at their regular roosting site. After that, we headed up to *O' Reilly's* in earnest, making some stops on the way up for **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, **Pretty-faced (Whiptail) Wallaby**, and both **Green Catbird** and a beautiful male **Rose Robin** at a trailhead in the rainforest. Below this popular robin, on the leaf litter, a very tame **Bassian Thrush** allowed both close approach, and subsequent identification to be made.



© Chris Sloan



Once at the lodge, we set out on foot for our final birds of the daytime, which included **Red-browed Firetail**, the usual extraordinarily tame **Crimson Rosellas** and **Australian King-Parrots** (that are fed on site), **Superb Fairywrens**, an obliging **Eastern Spinebill** (page before Sam Woods), and best of all, a single **Wonga Pigeon** pacing around in the open during this quieter time of day. A tip off from the lodge also led us to a hollow, where *Terri* pre-empted our search by announcing she had the target bird before she had even received news of where to look for it: a **Southern Boobook** sat sleepily resting in its daytime roosting cavity. In the evening we enjoyed the food and locally produced wines that *O' Reilly's* is famed for, although still found some energy to head out after dinner to try for one of the local *Marbled Frogmouths*. We got a quick call back from our first spot, but in spite of much effort, the bird could simply not be located. At that point, following our incredibly early start to catch our flight in from *Cairns*, some people faded and were dropped back at the hotel. As rain began to fall in earnest, some people remained and soon tried another spot within the rainforest, where again, another **Marbled Frogmouth** (right Sam Woods) replied enthusiastically from nearby. However, on this occasion, the individual remained interested and was soon perched right overhead, where it stared down at us as we reeled off a series of photos of this rainforest frogmouth, our third and final Australian frogmouth of the tour.



## O' Reilly's (Lamington NP), QUEENSLAND

22<sup>nd</sup> Nov.

A full day was spent in both the rainforest and the very different dry *sclerophyll* forest near *O' Reilly's Rainforest Retreat*, located within *Lamington National Park*. This critical day of the tour was the only one hindered by weather, our morning was accompanied by heavy rains and mists, clearly depressing bird activity, and making the guide's jobs somewhat harder! However, an early morning walk soon revealed some of the local **Australian Logrunners** hopping along the forest floor, and several **Green Catbirds** were seen on and off during the day. We took time in the morning to acquaint ourselves with the birds that *O' Reilly's* is most famous for; the tame *parrots* and *bowerbirds* that hang around the lodge reception.

Jeffrey, Dan and Kathy were only too happy to have **Crimson Rosellas** and **Australian King-Parrots** (below Sam Woods) perch on their heads and shoulders and **Regent Bowerbirds** (page 25, Chris Sloan) feed from their hands! **Satin Bowerbirds** clambered around the trees nearby, while **Superb Fairywrens** and **Red-necked Pademelons** foraged within the nearby scrub. As rain persisted, we ventured downhill to try and get out of it (unsuccessfully) searching a site where a *Koala* has been recently seen, to no avail, but having better luck with our stop off for **Red-browed Treecreeper**, and a party of **Striated Thornbills** along *Duck Creek Road*. Our drive into there also saw an **Albert's Lyrebird** jump across the road too. After a lunch accompanied by scavenging **Crimson Rosellas** and **Pied Currawongs**, and where a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and several **Topknot Pigeons** cut through the sky alongside the café, we headed out for some further rainforest birding in the afternoon, with a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** being the main highlight. After dinner, those who had retired to bed early the night before, were out with fervor, when we returned to the site of the *frogmouth* of the evening before, this time under clearer conditions. The **Marbled Frogmouth** performed perfectly landing in the same tree and giving us all much appreciated views; the same area also gave us our only **Mountain Brushtail Possum** of the tour, with the regular ones at the restaurant having failed to appear over two dinners there!



*Tame parrots and bowerbirds are what has made O' Reilly's a must visit site for the visiting birder.*

*This **Australian King-Parrot** occasionally chose shoulders and heads to perch on too!*



## O' Reilly's (Lamington NP) to Goondiwindi via Warwick and Durikai State Forest, QUEENSLAND

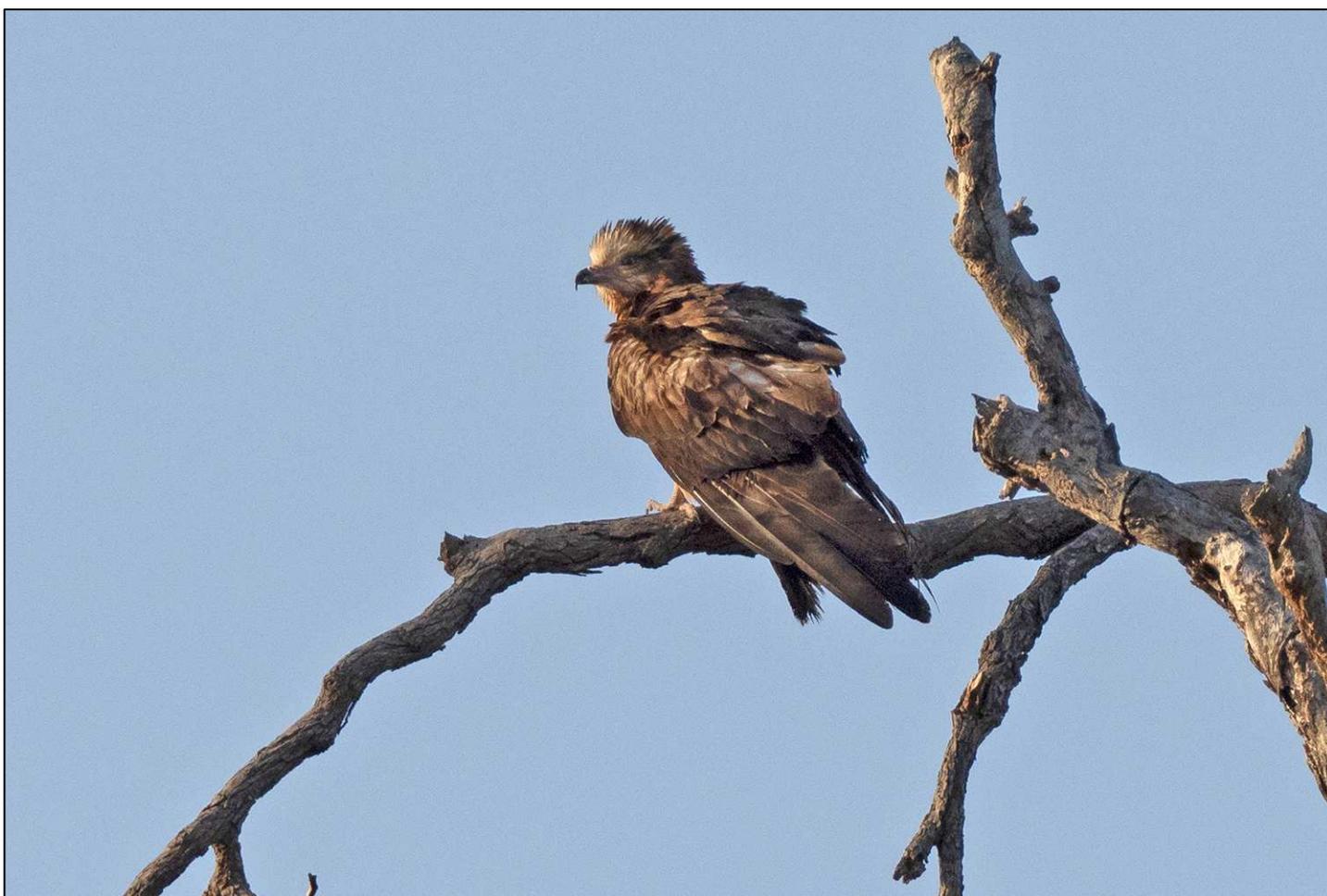
23rd Nov.

Another day of extreme contrasts, habitat-wise, beckoned on this day, as we started out within the temperate forests of *Lamington National Park*, chasing our final targets there, before we drove west into Inland Australia and the *brigalow* habitat of *Durikai State Forest*. Both ends of this varied day were successful; in the morning the rainforest will be remembered for one of the highlights of the whole tour, a *displaying* male **Paradise Riflebird** (photo next page, Chris Sloan), with its wings held aloft visible at length through the *Swarovski* 'scope. This was rather unsurprisingly voted as one of the TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR, no doubt due to the extreme quality of the sighting (this species is rarely seen in display after all!) We also finally laid to rest the niggling **Noisy Pitta**, which had showed on several previous occasions, but not well to all. That all changed on this morning, and no one seemed more relieved than Gail, who clearly *really* wanted this bird! Gary and Chris at least also managed identifiable views of several **Russet-tailed Thrushes** among the thrushes feeding on the forest floor.



As we traveled downslope from *Lamington*, the vans were stopped for a moment of catchup “mammaling”, with the striking **Pretty-faced (Whiptail) Wallaby**. Moving inland, a city park in *Warwick* was not as full of parrots as it can be, but still came up with our first **Red-rumped Parrot**, first decent looks at **Little Corellas**, and a first view of **Musk Lorikeet** during our brief visit.

Moving further west, towards *Goondawindi*, we arrived in *Durikai State Forest* after lunch, and *Iain* quickly set about putting us on to a delightful **Speckled Warbler** and feisty **Restless Flycatcher** in quick succession. The next stop within the same area gave us **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, and several more striking **Red-winged Parrots**. We pushed on to the *Gore* area, where recently some *Black Honeyeaters* had been reported. This species is very erratic, being a blossom nomad, and covering great distances to find blossoms. Therefore, a tip off was felt required to find it, and this worked out well, not only did we find several **Black Honeyeaters** where indicated, but we also saw hundreds of **White-browed and Masked Woodswallows** (page 26, [Chris Sloan](#)) in some large mixed woodswallow flocks in the area.



Like the *honeyeater*, these species are also roaming blossom nomads. **Rufous Songlarks** also called nearby and soon led us to them, and our first **Jacky Winters** were also noted. Moving on, someone announced they had a large nest and joked that it would be amazing if it turned out to be a *Square-tailed Kite* nest; moments later the words “it’s a friggin’ **Square-tailed Kite’s** nest” (above, [Sam Woods](#)) penetrated the air, and the ‘scope was swung into rapid action, as we noted this pale-headed kite sitting on a conspicuous nest, an unexpected and unbelievable turn of events.

Nearby, some **Striped Honeyeaters** showed to Sam only, but some **Little Lorikeets** that had remained hidden for some time, finally walked out onto a viewable branch in a large *Eucalyptus* tree. At this point, Dan was perched precariously close to his 3,000<sup>th</sup> lifebird, sitting at precisely 2999. That all changed when Mike alerted us to a raptor passing over. Firstly, this was a **Square-tailed Kite** returning to its nest on paddle-shaped wings.

However, in the same view above *Mike* was also indicating a **Little Eagle**, the first of our trip, the first for Dan and his landmark 3,000<sup>th</sup> bird! Finally, we had to drag ourselves reluctantly from the site to continue west to the town of *Goondiwindi*, our base for making forages west, deeper into the Queensland Outback, but not before getting our first serious looks at a **Red-necked Wallaby** as we were preparing to leave.



We enjoyed an excellent tour for this species **Black Honeyeater**; a nomadic and erratic species. We were fortunate to see them in 3 different areas, in **Queensland** and **New South Wales**. (Michael Todd)

## Queensland Outback, east of St. George, QUEENSLAND

24th Nov.

Little did we know, as we left our hotel at the Ungodly hour of 3:30am, that this would unfold to be the best day of the entire tour. The focus was on getting out *west*, as far as we could, so that we would get into rich *brigalow* habitat, which would offer up some significant birds at the eastern edge of their inland ranges. The day was so good, no one even mentioned tiredness or the early start, it was completely justified by the sightings that came our way on a very fortuitous spell of Outback birding. During the first hour of the day, largely nocturnal mammals were still out in force, with **Western Gray Kangaroo** being the most dominant species, but a few smaller and darker **Swamp (Black) Wallaby** were picked out from them too. While Iain had a plan for where we should make our first stop, the birds had other ideas, and before long, once daylight had arrived, a series of multiple roadside stops paid significant dividends. We had been happy to get **Black Honeyeater** (above, Michael Todd) at all on this trip, but within a few hours, we could say that we'd seen them on two consecutive days.

Amazingly, the same patch of plants that held them were also being attended by several **Painted Honeyeaters** (below, **Sam Woods**), a harder bird still! Early on we also filed one of Chris's main target bird for the day, with the first of hundreds of **Cockatiels**.



The early period of the morning saw us familiarize ourselves with Australia's national bird, the **Emu**, which were foraging close to the road at this time. **Yellow-throated Miners** were conspicuous and regular through the day from early on too, as was the striking **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**. **Western Gerygone** also entered proceedings at an early hour. Once we reached some decent habitat, just to the east of *St. George*, along the *Moonie Highway*, we set out on foot for the morning's main quarry. Not long after, first a reply came, then an electric blue bird landed on a nearby branch; the unbelievable, well-named, **Splendid Fairywren**, which quickly became one of the most well-liked birds of the entire tour. An extended period was spent in this habitat, as Iain and Sam felt their way to some superb birds; a **Red-capped Robin** (next page, **Sam Woods**) glowing in the understorey being the headliner of these. We had also hoped that we might track down a *Black-eared Cuckoo* at this sight, although in spite of one of these scarce birds being clearly heard there, the only cuckoo seen was another **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. A small waterhole led us to get good observations of the smart **Striped Honeyeater**, which had eluded so many the day before. Terri was alert to new species, and also led us to another striking one, a pair of **Australian Ringnecks** perched near the *Splendid Fairywren*. We were satisfied with this stop to say the least, even if a little frustrated by only hearing a **Black-eared Cuckoo** (next page, **Sam Woods**), which was now firmly in our sights. Iain put this frustration to bed right at the next stop, when he found one sitting conspicuously, with a **Brush Cuckoo** sitting close by also.





More **Red-winged Parrots**, another **Little Eagle**, and some further **Wedge-tailed Eagles** seemed merely foot notes among a star-studded cast of birds that morning. Our move west had also put us in play for a number of new *thornbills*, with *four* species added that morning alone: **Yellow, Chestnut-rumped, Inland and Buff-rumped Thornbills**. With such an early start and successful morning afoot, we opted to head to *St. George* for an early lunch, but *again* the birds had their say and delayed this yet further. A short stop at a roadside dam finally got us all views of some sleeping **Yellow-billed Spoonbills**, a species that had been only seen briefly before then. However, the big find at the dam were some close-feeding **Plum-headed Finches** (*above, Sam Woods*), which posed for lists and photos alike. Just as we were fixin' to leave, *Mike* announced the presence of a party of **Varied Sitellas** (*next page, Sam Woods*) in trees alongside us, which provided not only a new species, but new bird family for most participants. A calling **Sacred Kingfisher** also became the first proper sighting of this species for the tour. Finally, we reached a café in *St. George* for lunch and some welcome coffee following this veritable "blitz" of birds.



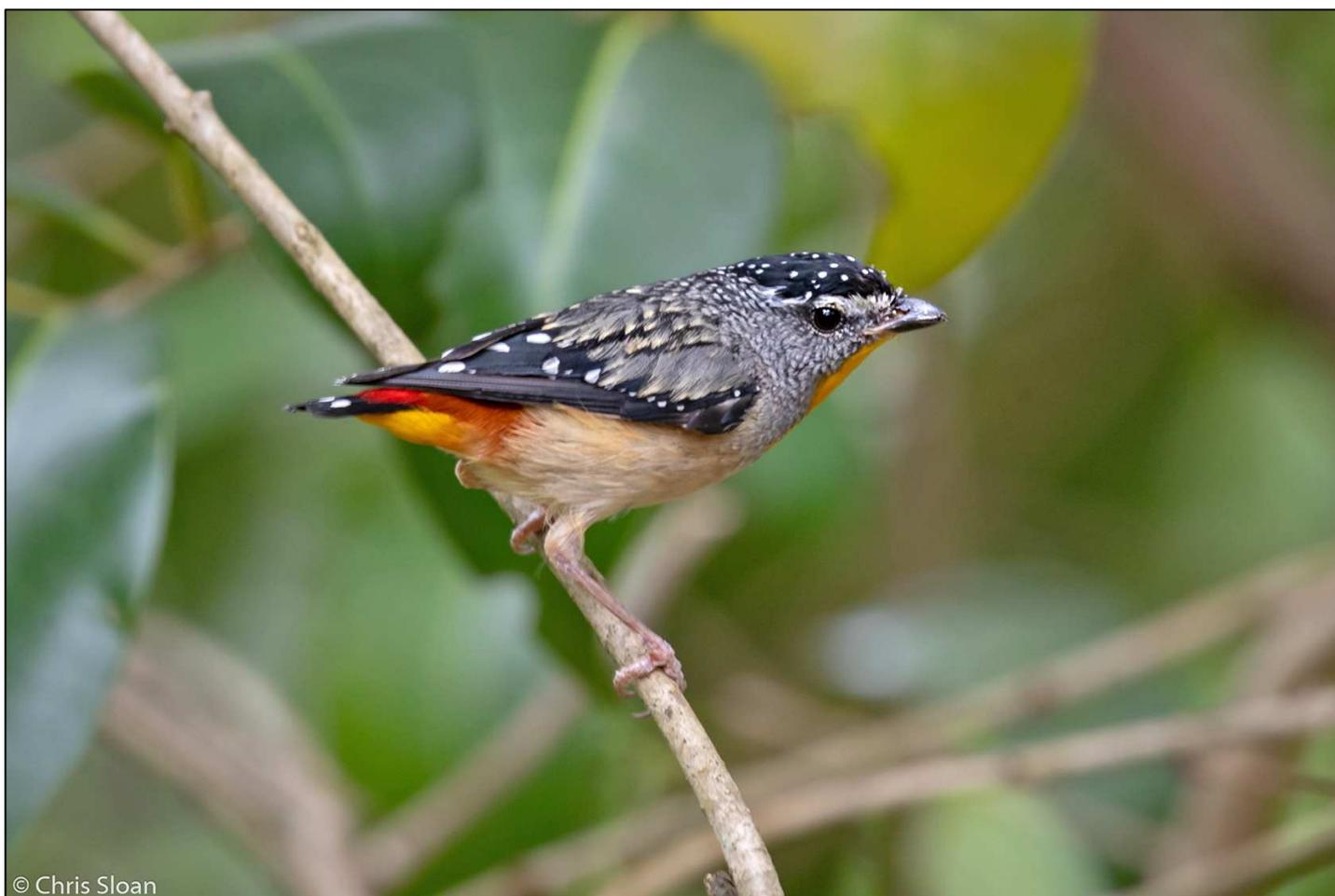
After such an amazing morning, the afternoon was inevitably going to struggle to compete. However, a short stop for a roadside **Black-necked Stork** (the second of only two seen on the tour), ended up with something a whole lot better, once *Chris* announced he had a *very small parrot* flying overhead. It took a little while for the penny to drop, but it soon became clear that *Chris* had spotted a **Budgerigar** (next page, *Sam Woods*), a rare wanderer to the region. We tried to re-find it for a while, when we came upon a large flock of some 60 finches, mostly more **Plum-headed Finches** (!), but also with around a dozen **Zebra Finches** thrown in too. *Mike* and *Jeffrey* also got on to a *quail* that had flown into some low grasses, and so we quickly formed a line and drove the grass, whereupon we were able to see it again and firmly identify it as a **Brown Quail**. More **Masked Woodswallows** (ordinarily a nomadic and scarce species) were seen on the roadside wires nearby. Finally accepting the lone *Budgie* had long gone, we loaded up and set to leave in the vans, only for the front van to pull off the road seconds later as a small group of eight **Budgerigars** were found sitting by the roadside, where we could all enjoy them at last...The remainder of the afternoon was not too shabby either, with another **Australian Bustard** slowly walking off of the roadside, some flighty **Australian Shovelers**, and an incredibly confiding **Purple-backed Fairywren** (next page, *Sam Woods*) located by *Iain*; this species was recently named following a split up of the *Variiegated Fairywren* group. On the journey back, multiple **Common Bronzewings** took off from the roadside as we headed back east. We arrived back in *Goondawindi* late, but exhilarated, it had been one Hell of a day!



## Goondawindi to Brisbane via Keong's Lagoon and Cooby Dam, QUEENSLAND

25th Nov.

We began our day by clearing up some angst from the day before, when one of our two vans had chanced upon some **Greater Bluebonnets**, but the other had not. Therefore, we headed out to some open country near *Goondiwindi*, and soon found some that remained perched for all this time. From there, we started our journey east towards *Brisbane* on the coast. However, we made a couple of significant scheduled wetland stops on the way. Before these, **White-winged Choughs** and **Apostlebirds** were seen on the roadsides, and a **Brown Songlark** was found calling from a roadside cable. First up was *Keong's Lagoon*, near *Oakey*, where **Hoary-headed Grebe** and **Black-tailed Native-Hen** both made their first appearances. **Red-necked Avocets** were also seen there too. The next stop was a major one, at *Loveday Cove*, part of *Cooby Dam*. Soon after we got there, we found the first of our hoped for species, **Freckled Duck**, which were found among a throng of wetland birds that included an **Australian Shoveler**, many **White-eyed Ducks**, many **Plumed Whistling-Ducks**, dozens of **Pink-eared Ducks**, and a few **Musk Ducks**. **Black Swan** was also conspicuous on the lake too. Along the muddy edges both **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** and **Red-kneed Dotterels** were watched feeding, while a large flock of **Whiskered Terns** was also resting on a muddy bar. Singles of both **Glossy Ibis** and **Marsh Sandpiper**, and some **Royal Spoonbills** were also found foraging along the lake shore, and a **Golden-headed Cisticola** posed in top of the reeds. As we traveled east, we made a stop in some wetter sclerophyll forest, where *Kathy* located an extremely close **Spotted Pardalote** (below, *Chris Sloan*) that had sneaked in silently and was blocked from all but her. A **Purple-backed Fairywren** was also seen well in the same block of suburban habitat.



© Chris Sloan



A late lunch was taken during our long journey to *Brisbane*, where *Dan* noticed a group of **Channel-billed Cuckoos** passing by that landed in some close trees, and finally gave us the perched views we had been craving, following a series of brief views in northern Queensland. After a traditional Aussie meat pie, we made our way to *Brisbane*, where *Stuart Pickering*, a local birding friend of Sam's had checked on a local site for a roosting *Powerful Owl* that morning, and had informed us that the bird was "in position". We arrived excitedly to find Stuart in the car park eyeing a small group of **Pacific Swifts** hawking overhead (a rarity in *Brisbane* and our only ones of the tour), with one **White-throated Needletail** among them too. He then walked us straight up to a **Powerful Owl** (left, Sam Woods) sitting calmly in a forest thicket. We admired the bird at length, sure that we were watching one of the top five birds of the tour, before we left the site via a couple of **Tawny Frogmouths** on the walk back. A last night was spent in *Queensland*, before we flew to another endemic "Mecca", the island-state of *Tasmania*, the next morning...

### Taranna and Eaglehawk Neck, TASMANIA

26th Nov.

We flew out of *Brisbane* and into *Hobart, Tasmania*, from where we checked in, took lunch, and took off with a packed dinner for a packed afternoon and evening's activities during our first period on this endemic rich-island. En-route to our first stop we were tempted to stop by the form of a hulking **Pacific Gull**, one of the largest *larids* on Earth, and our first **Black-faced Cormorant** appeared in the creek alongside while we took in the gull; a brief survey of some flats further along led to our first pair of **Sooty Oystercatchers**. Our birding began in earnest with a pair of **Cape Barren Geese** grazing in a large paddock, before we entered into the wet forest that dominates much of Tasmania; here we hoped for, and found, an endemic and an attractive sidekick. The endemic was the trickiest of the four Tasmanian endemic honeyeaters, **Strong-billed Honeyeater**. While, the "sidekick" was none other than a striking male **Pink Robin** (next page, Sam Woods) that was being chased off at times by an aggressive male **Flame Robin**! As afternoon wore into evening, we relocated to *Eaglehawk Neck*, where we watched the sea while taking our field dinner. The sea was largely quiet, but still gave us **Australian Gannet**, **Short-tailed Shearwater**, and a distant **Shy Albatross**. The coastal heathland surrounding the headland also hosted the first of many **New Holland Honeyeaters** to come. Following a dinner and some staring at the sea, we moved to *Pirate's Bay*, where we took some Tasmanian beers onto the beach and waited for sunset. **Kelp Gulls** walked up and down the shore, although once even they were nearly lost from view, when engulfed by darkness, the first of our target birds arrived on to the beach, a single **Little Penguin** made its way warily up the beach to its nesting burrow. Several more were seen before we decided to leave the main "March of the Penguins" to continue without us, and so retreated to the van.

However, on reaching the steps up from the beach it became clear that many penguins had crept past us in the dark unnoticed, as they occupied nearly every step! We sidled our way quickly past them, made sure the gate was closed behind them, (ensuring they did not wander on to the road), and left them in peace for their nocturnal activities.

Our search following this for owls was completely blank, although we did add some mammals; **Tasmanian (Rufous-bellied) Pademelon**, **Bennett's (Red-necked) Wallaby**, and **Long-nosed Potoroo** all featured, but were arguably outshone by a mother and tiny baby **Eastern Barred Bandicoot** that froze beside the roadside in our spotlights. A random **Tawny Frogmouth** was also spotted sitting on a roadside post too.



### Bruny Island and Mount Wellington, TASMANIA

27th Nov.

Normally, this would have been billed as the “best day of the tour” by both Iain and Sam, although with our killer day in the Outback of *Queensland near St. George* they were reticent to push this too much, for fear of failing to live up to that epic example. However, with the exception of that exceptional day, this was probably the other standout day of the tour. We crossed over to *Bruny* by car ferry, and soon went after – unsuccessfully as it turned out – the rarest bird on the island, *Forty-spotted Pardalote*, which called to Iain, then vanished without a trace. Thus, we checked another area of the island, *Great Bay*, for **Blue-winged Parrots** and **Beautiful Firetail**. In spite of *Terri* quickly finding the *firetail*, it took off and disappeared before most could see it. However, the **Blue-winged Parrots** were very cooperative, and so we moved on. A short way along the road from there a low-flying harrier had us pulling off the road, so that we could all chalk up **Swamp Harrier** for the list. Moving on from there, it was time for the penultimate (of four) Tasman robins to appear, a roadside **Scarlet Robin** to add to yesterday's *Flame and Pink Robins*; now just the dowdy *endemic one* to go.

Moving on to *Adventure Bay* we were pleased to see the resident pair of **Hooded Plovers** (below, **Sam Woods**) gracing the beach, while behind there the *eucalyptus* trees were in full bloom and therefore attracted a regular procession of **Swift Parrots** (page 38, **Chris Sloan**), which could have proved a difficult bird had it not been for the abundant nectar sources in this area. Over lunch nearby we continued to admire both the parrots, and **New Holland Honeyeaters** (page 39, **Sam Woods**) that were by then something of a striking regular feature...



*Hooded Plover* was found frequenting the beach at *Adventure Bay* on the idyllic **Bruny Island on Tasmania** (**Sam Woods**)

Heading south to *Jetty Beach*, the car park was as lively with birds as ever, with several very showy **Olive Whistlers**, our first **Dusky Robin**, and a pair of **Satin Flycatchers** to make the pull-off very worthwhile. From there, we headed to Australia's most southerly lighthouse at *Cape Bruny*, where the scenery soon caught people's breath, as did a party of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** (page 39, **Sam Woods**) feeding on the coastal heathland. While admiring these *Iain* called to say he had some **White-fronted Chats**, and so we were quickly pulled away, and within a few circuits of the buildings, and a game of hide-and-seek, we all got onto at least one of the pair of chats.



*Swift Parrots* can be hard to find if there are no conspicuous blooming trees around: thankfully the trees in Adventure Bay on **Bruny Island in Tasmania** were covered in blossom, making the parrots easy to find (Chris Sloan)

By this point there was little missing from our “hoped-for” list, but there was one species burning a rather large hole in our minds, the *pardalote* for which Tasmania is most famous for. Therefore, we backtracked to *North Bruny* and tried the area where Iain had heard one that morning, but to no avail, until a fortuitous stop from a local put us on to a breeding site where they had recently been monitored. Amazingly, as we pulled up to the spot a **Forty-spotted Pardalote** (page 37, Sam Woods) was waiting, sitting at just above eye level, and then going down really low to bathe in a tiny creek by the roadside. Better views and photos of this bird could simply not have been possible. With the *pardalote* well and truly “in-the-bag”, we set off for the ferry hoping to make a particular one on time, only to be delayed by a pair of thorny **Short-beaked Edhidas**; we still made the ferry, but with an *echidna* to show for it! On arrival back on mainland “Tassie”, we could not resist popping into *Mount Wellington*, to try and add just one more endemic, but got two, the toughest one, **Scrubtit**, and also **Tasmania Thornbill** in the same vicinity, which led to us to call it a day with our watches touching seven o’ clock.





This **Forty-spotted Pardalote** coming to a roadside puddle to drink on North Bruny could not have performed any better!  
(Sam Woods)

## Truganini Reserve, Snug Tiers, Orielson Lagoon, and Tinderbox TASMANIA

28th Nov.

The day opened just a stone's throw from our hotel, at *Truganini*, where a **Brush Bronzewing** walked straight along the trail towards a satisfied group. Then, rain started falling and our efforts to do *Snug Tiers* went awry. Once the weather had cleared, we visited *Orielson Lagoon*, hoping for waders and waterfowl. We got both, with our first (if distant) **Australian Shelduck**, and **Red-capped Plovers** of the tour, more **Musk Ducks**, as well as **Eastern Rosellas** joining the list in the same area. In the afternoon, we visited *Tinderbox*, a scenic site near Hobart, hoping to see **Beautiful Firetail** better, but only *Sam* got to see one well before it too, like the last one, bolted, and was never seen again in spite of much searching. Dusky Woodswallows, **Green Rosellas**, and **Pallid Cuckoos** dared us to photograph them there, and we duly obliged, before returning to *Hobart* (and another fantastic Italian meal) for another, final night. Next stop, *Victoria*, quickly to be succeeded by *New South Wales*...

## Melbourne to Yan Yean Reservoir Park, VICTORIA and Deniliquin, NEW SOUTH WALES

29th Nov.

Arriving in a cool and wet *Melbourne of Victoria*, it was hard to conceive we would be sweating it out in the *Outback of New South Wales* by the day's end. *Yan Yean Reservoir Park* was visited as a recently reliable site for **Blue-billed Duck**, one of few ducks we were still missing by this, the sharp end of the trip. Reports of 30 odd birds made us reasonably confident, although once we got there and racked up at least 100, we felt that it was a truly reliable site! **Musk Duck**, **Hoary-headed Grebe**, **Pink-eared Ducks** (below, **Michael Todd**) and **Australian Shoveler** were all also netted there. As we set to leave, our first **Gray Currawongs** alighted in a tree nearby.



The long drive to *Deniliquin*, was just that, *long*. However, once we connected with local bird guru *Phil Maher*, the birds came in thick and fast; first **Black Falcon** circling the local tip (unattractive site, stellar bird!), then came **Singing and White-fronted Honeyeaters**, and yet more **Black Honeyeaters** on this exceptional tour for them. Several failed tries were made to track down one of the local **White-backed Swallows** (above, **Michael Todd**) before *Phil* drew success beside one of the nesting



banks that he had created in the area, which seemed wholly appropriate. For the final act of the day *Phil* coaxed an

**Australian Owlet-Nightjar** to peek out of its hole, much to the delight of those who'd forsaken the night showing earlier near *Mareeba* in favor of laundry!



Just as the day was nearing its close, we came upon the first of many **Red Kangaroos** (above, **Sam Woods**), the largest of them all, and a small group of **Banded Lapwings**, which were both to show up again on the night drive. A field dinner was taken of subs from a takeaway in *Deniliquin*, and then we set out with *Phil, Robert and John* in pursuit of the most famous bird of the plains, the *plains-wanderer*. In normal years, of which this was anything but with the severest drought in history, that team of people can reliably put you on a *Plains-wanderer*, but in this weirdest of years, even a 1:15am finish could not produce this much-wanted bird, but did yield one of the top five birds of the tour, an **Inland Dotterel** (page 3, **Sam Woods**) hunkered down in the spotlight. **Fat-tailed Dunnarts** and several **Australian Bushlarks** were also seen, as well as an (**Eastern**) **Barn Owl** or two and a pair of young **Southern Boobooks** to close another fascinating day.

## Deniliquin, NEW SOUTH WALES to Horsham, VICTORIA

30<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Following our late night efforts, even this most focused of groups could not deny a lie in was needed, and so we met for breakfast at the unfamiliar time of 9am! After breakfast, a local park in *Deniliquin* produced both the “**Yellow**” **Crimson Rosella**, and better still, a small group of **Superb Parrots** (next page, **Sam Woods**), which we’d hoped for out of this stop. The next stop was for a rather more mundane bird, a **Little Grassbird**, which soon emerged from the reeds and signaled us to leave. However, just after we were all loaded up to leave *Mike and Sam* spotted a striking finch in the trees by the parking lot, panic went up, and soon we were all on to a fine adult **Diamond Firetail**. With a long journey to put is in touching distance of the *mallee* habitat that was to be the focus of the final morning, we pushed on, making our way to the edge of a park which was convenient following lunch.

Searching of the internet for nearby sightings led us to a rocky outcrop at *Mount Korong* surrounded by *brigalow*, which was productive, holding **Black-chinned Honeyeater**, **Southern Whiteface** and **White-browed Babbler**, and a few **Painted Honeyeaters** were heard there too. Some sooty black **Euros** were also seen bouncing through the boulders on our arrival.



## Little Desert NP, and Kennett River to Lake Victoria and Melbourne, VICTORIA

1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

And so, the final day had finally arrived. We were still *Koala*-less, and still *needing* some local *mallee* birds, and so Iain planned for us to do both in one *insane* day... We found ourselves at *Little Desert NP* before the sun had risen, and so a **Spotted Nightjar** was heard nearby, but could not be found. Once dawn was in attendance, we quickly picked up a **Southern Scrub-Robin** that had been calling from well before dawn. **White-eared Honeyeater** soon followed, that was then succeeded by a brief but extremely good view of a **Shy Heathwren**, which then went to ground. Moving into an area of heath, **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** was quick to answer the call, and Iain spotted the local **Slender-billed Thornbill** close by. Another stop in the heath brought prolonged views of **Rufous Fieldwren** to cap off our time there. Try as we might, we just could not track down our final few honeyeaters on site, before we needed to leave on a last-minute planned chase for *Koala*, by popular demand.



A long drive broken up by roadside kebabs and **Musk Lorikeets**, ended once we'd reached the gorgeous rich wet sclerophyll forests of *Kennet River*, just off the *Great Ocean Road*. The quest ended once Mike announced he had found our quarry, the iconic **Koala**, from a moving car! The animal was sat nicely, with face revealed, and even made some slow, sloth-like movements for us. There was nothing left to do now, but hotfoot it back towards Melbourne, along with the achingly scenic *Great Ocean Road*, with sea flanking us for some time. A quick check of recent sightings on *eBird* revealed some **Banded Stilts** kind of on the way back, and the group could not resist one more stop west of *Melbourne*, where after a short time Chris noticed a single lonely **Banded Stilt** coming in to land among some **Pied Stilts**, while a handful of **Curlew Sandpipers** were a late addition there too. **Red-capped Plovers** gave us our best looks yet, while **Freckled Ducks** were also in attendance. The last addition to our trip list, now teetering beyond 400 species for the group, was a triplet of **Australian Fairy Terns** fishing offshore.

*We arrived back in Melbourne with all sorts of emotions running through our veins; sad for the end of an epic trip*

*that had produced plentiful photos and a host of birds and mammals for all. Mixed emotions were not found when it came to the votes for mammals of the tour though, when the final day's Koala won with 100% of the votes, while a battle between two northeast Queensland "avian statesman of the Wet Tropics", was narrowly won by the Golden Bowerbird, over the fantastic views of cassowary enjoyed there too. Good picks all round.*



*Satin Bowerbird* at **O' Reilly's** above Michael Todd; *Magpie Goose*, **Cairns** below Sam Woods



**CHECKLISTS:****BIRDS**

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

*This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell up until **August 2018**.*

- H** indicates a species that was **HEARD**, but not seen.  
**GO** indicates a species that was seen by the **GUIDE ONLY**.  
**QLD** indicates the state of Queensland.  
**NSW** indicates the state of New South Wales.  
**TAS** indicates the state of Tasmania.  
**VIC** indicates the state of Victoria.

Endemics are highlighted in **red** (this includes birds not split by all).

**CASSOWARIES and EMU: Casuariidae**

**Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius***: A family of one male and his two chicks were seen at length before and over breakfast at Cassowary House; a larger female also came in whilst they were there too. Another, more intimidating bird, which is less habituated to people, was seen at Hypipamee; we gave it a wide berth! Long stated as one of the goals of the tour, this was therefore extremely popular, being VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

**Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae***: Seen on four days of the tour in Outback QLD and NSW.

**MAGPIE GOOSE: Anseranatidae**

**Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata***: Recorded on 7 days of the tour, mostly in northeast QLD.

**DUCKS, GEESE & WATERFOWL: Anatidae**

**Spotted Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna guttata***: 8 were seen on the Daintree River (ne QLD), a very recent colonizer.

**Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni***: Good numbers were seen near Cairns and at Loveday Cove both in QLD.

**Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata***: Just seen the once, at Cattana Wetlands near Cairns.

**Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae***: Around half a dozen birds were seen in a pasture on Tasmania.

**Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa***: A good tour for this endangered duck, recorded at 3 sites in QLD and VIC.

**Black Swan *Cygnus atratus***: This conspicuous Australian bird was noted on 6 days of the tour.

**Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides***: A distant one near Hobart (TAS) was upstaged by 6 near Melbourne.

**Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah***: The regular group were seen at Centenary Lakes in Cairns (QLD).

**Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus***: Seen at two sites in Northeast QLD; Lake Mitchell and Cattana Wetlands.

**Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata***: Regularly recorded from Southeast QLD south.

**Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa***: One of Australia's most abundant ducks; recorded on almost all of the days.

**Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis***: A group near St. George, 1 at Loveday Cove (QLD), and 1 near Melbourne (VIC).

**Gray Teal *Anas gracilis***: Noted on 8 days of the tour, in QLD, VIC and NSW.

**Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea***: Recorded on 5 days, near Brisbane (QLD), on TAS, and in VIC.

**Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus***: 3 sites; Hasties Swamp, Loveday Cove (QLD) & Yan Yean Res (VIC).

**White-eyed Duck *Aythya australis***: A regular species of Australian duck, seen on 8 different days at multiple sites.

**Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis***: Over 100 birds were encountered during a brief stop at Yan Yean Reservoir (VIC).

**Musk Duck *Biziura lobate***: Recorded at 3 sites; Loveday Cove (QLD), near Hobart (TAS) & Yan Yean Reservoir (VIC).

**MEGAPODES: Megapodiidae**

Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami*: Common and conspicuous in the rainforests of QLD.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*: Recorded on 5 out of 7 days in northeast QLD.

**PHEASANTS, GROUSE AND ALLIES: Phasianidae**

Brown Quail *Synoicus ypsilophorus*: Geoffrey and Mike helped us all to get this one, east of St. George in Inland QLD.

**GREBES: Podicipedidae**

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*: Recorded six times, in northeast QLD, southern QLD and TAS.

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*: 3 sightings; Keong's Lagoon (QLD), Yan Yean, Lake Victoria (VIC).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: Seen at Orielton Lagoon (TAS), & Yan Yean and Lake Victoria (both VIC).

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae**

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*: Commonly recorded in urban environments throughout.

White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela*: Iain found our first at the Curtain Fig; others were seen at O' Reilly's.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*: Seen around Cairns, Brisbane and Melbourne.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella*: Only recorded in QLD, at Hypipamee, Mount Lewis, and Lamington NP.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*: Just a few flight views were obtained in ne QLD.

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*: Recorded near Goondawindi (QLD), Bruny (TAS) & Little Desert (VIC).

Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans*: Excellent views were had by all at Truganini Reserve in Hobart (TAS).

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*: Commonly recorded; on at least 11 days of the tour.

Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*: Around 10 birds were seen at Granite Gorge Nature Park (QLD).

Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*: This striking pigeon was seen close on 3-5 occasions at O Reilly's.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*: Recorded regularly throughout, on all but a few days of the tour.

Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*: Recorded regularly in northeast QLD only.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*: Seen at Cassowary Hse, Julatten, Daintree, Hypipamee & O'Reilly's, QLD.

Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*: A pair was located at Cassowary House, and another on Mount Lewis, ne QLD.

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina*: Seen twice just north of Cairns (including at Cassowary House).

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhhoa*: Commonly recorded around Cairns and Daintree (ne QLD).

Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus*: Perched views on Mount Lewis were followed by flight views at O'Reilly's.

**BUSTARDS: Otididae**

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis*: Seen near Maryfarms (ne QLD), and near St. George (s QLD).

**CUCKOOS: Cuculidae**

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*: 1 was seen at Hasties Swamp, and another was just south of Daintree (QLD).

Pacific Koel *Eudynamys orientalis*: Seen twice in ne QLD, Yungaburra and Lake Mitchell.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: Seen on three days in QLD, including in Mareeba.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*: Encountered at Mt. Carbine, Wondecla, and near St. George (QLD).

Black-eared Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx osculans*: Iain picked up a bird east of St. George in the QLD Outback.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: A pair was found in the temperate rainforest of Lamington NP (QLD).

Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*: One was seen during our final afternoon in Cairns (QLD).

Pallid Cuckoo *Cacomantis pallidus*: One was seen near Mount Carbine (QLD), and many were seen on TAS.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*: 3 sightings in QLD (Julatten, Daintree, and near St. George).

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*: One was seen in Brisbane (QLD).

**FROGMOUTHS: Podargidae**

**Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*:** Roosting pairs were seen at Mount Carbine and Brisbane; 1 at night on TAS.  
**Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*:** The same individual was seen on consecutive nights at O' Reilly's.  
**Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*:** A roosting/nesting bird was seen with Murray Hunt on the Daintree River.

**NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: Caprimulgidae**

**Spotted Nightjar *Eurostopodus argus*: (H)** One was heard close by at Little Desert NP, VIC.

**OWLET-NIGHTJARS: Aegothelidae**

**Australian Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*:** 1 at night near Mareeba (QLD); in daytime with Phil Maher in NSW.

**SWIFTS: Apodidae**

**White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*:** 1 journeying west from Lamington; another in Brisbane.  
**Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae*:** Recorded on all but one day in northeast QLD.  
**Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*:** A flock of 10 birds was found by Stuart Pickering circling above White's Hill in Brisbane.

**RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: Rallidae**

**Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus*:** Recorded on 12 days of the tour, in both QLD and VIC.  
**Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*:** Seen at 3 sites: Hasties Swamp, in Warwick, and at Loveday Cove, all in QLD.  
**Black-tailed Native-hen *Tribonyx ventralis*:** Just seen once by all of the group, at Keong's Lagoon, QLD.  
**Tasmanian Native-hen *Tribonyx mortierii*:** This flightless endemic was seen each day on Tasmania.  
**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*:** Recorded on at least 6 days, with well over 1000 birds on Yan Yean Reservoir in VIC.

**CRANES: Gruidae**

**Sarus Crane *Grus Antigone*:** Several small groups were seen in potato fields near Atherton (QLD).  
**Brolga *Grus rubicunda*:** 2 were seen at Lake Mitchell, another 2 flying over Granite Gorge, and another in VIC.

**THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae**

**Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus grallarius*:** 20 were seen in Cairns Cemetery, others scattered sightings came in ne QLD.  
**Beach Thick-knee *Esacus magnirostris*:** A pair was waiting for us on arrival at Newell Beach (northeast QLD).

**STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae**

**Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*:** Recorded on 6 days of the tour, in both QLD and VIC.  
**Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*:** Chris found one at Lake Victoria (VIC) in our final hours of birding.  
**Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*:** Dozens seen in Brisbane, Keong's Lagoon, and Lake Victoria.

**OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae**

**Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*:** Our first was in Cairns, with others at Bruny Island (TAS).  
**Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*:** Seen regularly (daily) on Tasmania.

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae**

**Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*:** Recorded at 3 sites; Cairns, Newell Beach (both QLD) & Orielton Lagoon (TAS).  
**Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*:** At least ten birds were seen during our night drive on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*:** A common Aussie shorebird, seen on all but a few days of the tour.  
**Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*:** Mike had two along the Cairns Esplanade.  
**Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*:** 2 at Orielton Lagoon, near Hobart (TAS); another 2 at Lake Victoria (VIC).  
**Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythrogonyx cinctus*:** Dozens were seen at Hasties Swamp, Kedron, and Loveday Cove, all QLD.  
**Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*:** A pair was seen on their usual nesting beach on Bruny Island (TAS).  
**Black-fronted Dotterel *Elsayornis melanops*:** A few were seen around Cairns only (e.g. Esplanade, Cattana).  
**Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*:** One was found eventually during our night drive on the Hay Plains (NSW). Voted as ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

#### JACANAS: Jacanidae

**Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacean*:** A few sightings in northeast QLD (e.g. Lake Mitchell, Cattana).

#### SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

**Little Curlew *Numenius minutus*:** Iain located a few in a roadside field at Newell Beach (ne QLD).  
**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*:** A small group was seen on the seafront in Cairns (northeast QLD).  
**Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*:** 6 in Cairns, and another dozen were seen near Hobart (TAS).  
**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*:** Two birds were seen in a flock of the next species at The Esplanade, Cairns (QLD).  
**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*:** One flock in Cairns (QLD); and another at Orielton Lagoon, Hobart (TAS).  
**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*:** 2 birds on Michaelmas Cay (QLD) were the only ones recorded.  
**Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*:** A group of ten birds was found at the Cairns Esplanade (QLD).  
**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*:** Many seen in Brisbane and Loveday Cove (QLD) and Lake Victoria (VIC).  
**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*:** A few at Lake Victoria (VIC) were the only ones seen.  
**Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*:** Seen at the Cairns Esplanade, Orielton Lagoon near Hobart, and at Lake Victoria.  
**Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*:** Just the one was seen on the Cairns Esplanade, before it took flight.  
**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*:** Seen in Cairns (QLD) and Hobart (TAS).  
**Gray-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*:** Some small groups were seen in Cairns (QLD).  
**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*:** 8 were seen in Hobart (TAS).  
**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*:** Singles were seen at Hasties Swamp, Brisbane, and at Loveday Cove (QLD).

#### GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS: Laridae

**Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*:** Recorded about half the tour days.  
**Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*:** A few were seen at both Eaglehawk Neck and Bruny Island, both on TAS.  
**Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*:** A common gull species in the south, seen each day in Tasmania, and also in Victoria.  
**Brown Noddy *Anous minutus*:** Thousands were nesting on Michaelmas Cay, on the Great Barrier Reef.  
**Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*:** Many were nesting on Michaelmas Cay near Cairns (QLD).  
**Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*:** A few were seen on Michaelmas Cay, with more offshore.  
**Australian Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*:** 3 at Lake Victoria (VIC) added the final species of the tour.  
**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*:** Good numbers were seen on the beach in Cairns (northeast QLD).  
**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*:** One was seen at The Esplanade in Cairns (northeast QLD).  
**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*:** Many were seen at Loveday Cove (QLD); others were seen at Lake Victoria (VIC).  
**Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*:** Half a dozen birds were seen on Michaelmas Cay (Northeast QLD).  
**Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*:** Double figures were seen on Michaelmas Cay (ne QLD).  
**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*:** A couple were seen among the tern horde on Michaelmas Cay (ne QLD).  
**Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*:** Many were seen on Michaelmas Cay; others were seen near Hobart on TAS.  
**Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*:** Many were noted during our day on the reef at Michaelmas Cay.

#### PENGUINS: Spheniscidae

**Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*:** Watched coming ashore at twilight near Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

**ALBATROSSES: Diomedidae**

**White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*:** Seen distantly at Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

**SHEARWATERS AND PETRELS: Procellariidae**

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica*:** One was found by Chris off of Michaelmas Cay, near Cairns.

**Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris*:** Many were foraging offshore from Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

**STORKS: Ciconiidae**

**Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*:** Just seen twice, at Lake Mitchell, and east of St. George (both QLD).

**FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae**

**Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*:** One came in during our visit to 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 on the Great Barrier Reef (QLD).

**Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*:** Good numbers were seen off of Eaglehawk Neck (TAS).

**ANHINGAS: Anhingidae**

**Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*:** Recorded on 6 days, (e.g. Cairns, Daintree, & Lake Mitchell all in QLD).

**CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: Phalacrocoracidae**

**Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*:** Recorded regularly throughout.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*:** Recorded on five days of the tour, in southern QLD and VIC.

**Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*:** Recorded on nine days of the tour.

**Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*:** Seen once, in the Outback near St. George (QLD), a strange location!

**Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*:** Seen regularly on Tasmania.

**PELICANS: Pelecanidae**

**Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*:** Recorded on all but a few days of the tour.

**HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS: Ardeidae**

**Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*:** One was seen on the Daintree River cruise (QLD).

**Pacific Heron *Ardea pacifica*:** Noted on 8 days, including at Mareeba, Hasties Swamp and Keong's Lagoon, all QLD.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba*:** Recorded on 8 days of the tour.

**Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*:** Recorded regularly throughout, including in and around Cairns (QLD).

**White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*:** Recorded on at least 9 days, mostly in QLD.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*:** Only seen a few times, at Wonga Beach, and Loveday Cove, both in QLD.

**Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*:** One dark morph was spotted on our final visit to the Cairns Esplanade (NE QLD).

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*:** Seen regularly in QLD in particular.

**Striated Heron *Butorides striata*:** Two were seen in northeast QLD, once at Daintree and then in Cairns.

**Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*:** A single bird was seen on our Daintree River cruise with Murray Hunt.

**IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae**

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*:** Recorded at Cattana Wetlands, Lake Mitchell, Hasties Swamp & Loveday Cove, in QLD.

**Australian Ibis *Threskiornis moluccus*:** The beloved “Bin Chicken” was seen most days, and hanging around bins too!

**Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*:** Regularly observed in QLD and VIC.

**Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*:** Recorded at Hasties Swamp and Loveday Cove in QLD, and at Lake Victoria (VIC).

**Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*:** Recorded on 4 days, at Lake Victoria (VIC), and various spots in south QLD.

**OSPREY: Pandionidae**

**(Eastern) Osprey *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*:** 1 was seen in Cairns, and another on the Daintree (both ne QLD).

**HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES: Accipitridae**

**Black-winged (Australian) Kite *Elanus axillaris*:** Seen on six occasions, firstly along the Daintree River in QLD.

**Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*:** A pair was seen near Gore (southern QLD).

**Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*:** A confiding pair was seen at Granite Gorge, near Mareeba (northeast QLD).

**Little Eagle *Hiraaetus morphnoides*:** 3 sightings. The first held the most significance, Mike spotted one passing over Cement Mills Road in Gore, which was in view at the same time as a Square-tailed Kite in the air. More significantly, this marked Dan’s 3000th species! Other were seen east of St. George in QLD, and on the journey north to Deniliquin.

**Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*:** This monstrous eagle was seen on 10 days of the tour.

**Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*:** Seen on four occasions, with the best one coming on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Gray Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*:** One darted past us at Hypipamee, only seen by some.

**Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*:** A single was seen near Julatten in northeast QLD.

**Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*:** Singles seen at Mount Molloy, Granite Gorge, and near Gore, in QLD.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans*:** Recorded on 12 days of the tour.

**Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*:** Recorded on 13 days, with multiple sightings around Lake Mitchell in ne QLD.

**Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*:** Just seen a couple of times in northeast QLD (e.g. Daintree).

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*:** One at Lake Mitchell, and another in Cairns (northeast QLD).

**BARN-OWLS: Tytonidae**

**(Eastern) Barn Owl *Tyto alba delicatula*:** 2 seen around Yungaburra, and 1 on the deck at night near Deniliquin, NSW.

**OWLS: Strigidae**

**Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua*:** Thanks to the help of local birder Stuart Pickering, we managed to get a roosting birding in Brisbane, one of the TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

**Barking Owl *Ninox connivens*:** A pair was found behind our Mareeba hotel by Gary (ne QLD).

**Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae*:** A roosting bird was seen sitting at its hollow in Lamington NP (QLD).

**KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae**

**Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azurea*:** 2 seen extremely well on the Daintree cruise with Murray Hunt were our only ones.

**Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*:** A very regular tour bird, seen on all but one day.

**Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*:** A nesting pair was seen at Mount Carbine, in northeast QLD.

**Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*:** Four sightings in northeast QLD, all in the Daintree area.

**Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*:** Just seen a couple of times, best near St. George in QLD.

**Torresian Kingfisher *Todiramphus sordidus*:** A bold individual showed to all on our final afternoon in Cairns (QLD).

**Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera Sylvia*:** Mike found one perched during our Daintree river cruise.

**BEE-EATERS: Meropidae**

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: Regularly encountered in ne QLD, and a few times in the south of the state too.

**ROLLERS: Coraciidae**

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: Recorded on 9 days in QLD; a rare sighting came on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae**

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*: Encountered on 10 days of the tour (QLD, TAS, NSW, and VIC).

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*: 4 sightings, including in Mount Carbine (QLD), and Little Desert NP (VIC).

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: 6 sightings in QLD and VIC.

Black Falcon *Falco subniger*: One was seen circling low over the Outback north of Deniliquin (NSW) with Phil Maher.

**COCKATOOS: Cacatuidae**

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksia*: A pair over Lake Mitchell, and another group near Mareeba.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus*: Excellent views of a perched group at Cape Bruny (TAS).

Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla*: One of Australia's pleasantly common species, seen on at least 10 days of the tour.

Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris*: Commonly encountered in VIC, with some flocks numbering three figures.

Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*: Seen on three days of the tour, in areas within inland QLD.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: A bold and conspicuous native, recorded on all but a few days.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*: Hundreds, if not thousands, were seen during a day east of St. George in inland QLD.

**PARROTS: Psittacidae**

Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii*: A small group was found at the Island Sanctuary in Deniliquin, NSW.

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*: Recorded on 6 days, with the best views coming at O'Reilly's.

Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*: At Mount Molloy; others around Goondawindi/St. George (all QLD).

Blue-winged Parrot *Neophema chrysostoma*: 10 birds were seen on Bruny Island (TAS).

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*: Good numbers were seen in blooming trees at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island (TAS).

Australian Ringneck *Barnardius barnardi*: A pair was found by Terri during our epic day west of Goondawindi (QLD).

Green Rosella *Platycercus caledonicus*: This Tassie endemic was seen on Bruny Island and also at Tinderbox.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*: Excellent (on head/hands) views were had at O'Reilly's (QLD).

'Yellow' Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans flaveolus*: This distinctive inland form was seen near Deniliquin (NSW).

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*: Recorded regularly in VIC, after initial views in TAS.

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus*: Kathy got our first at Granite Gorge; others were seen near Goondawindi.

Greater Bluebonnet *Northiella haematogaster*: West of Goondawindi (QLD); with Phil Maher near Deniliquin (NSW).

Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematodotus*: Recorded on 6 days in inland QLD and VIC.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*: Excellent perched views were had during our first hour in Cairns.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulates*: Chris spotted the first of 7 birds east of St. George, inland southern QLD.

Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*: After our first in Warwick (QLD), several others scattered sightings came in VIC.

Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*: These tiny parrots were seen near Durikai SF in southern QLD.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*: A few were seen briefly by some around Melbourne (VIC).

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: A very conspicuous raucous bird, seen on all but a few days.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*: Recorded on 7 days in QLD, including within Cairns.

**PITTAS: Pittidae**

Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor*: Seen in Julatten and at O'Reilly's, where excellent views were finally achieved for all.

**LYREBIRDS: Menuridae**

**Albert's Lyrebird *Menura alberti*:** Terrible luck, probably not helped by a morning of heavy rain, left us with only two brief sightings of this bird at O'Reilly's. Seen by only a few people.

**BOWERBIRDS: Ptilonorhynchidae**

**Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus maculosus*:** 2 were seen from the balcony at Cassowary House (ne QLD).

**Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris*:** Recorded on all 3 days in the temperate forests of O'Reilly's (southern QLD).

**Tooth-billed Catbird *Scenopoeetes dentirostris*:** Excellent views of a male sitting by its stage at Mt Lewis (QLD).

**Golden Bowerbird *Amblyornis newtoniana*:** Alan Gillanders provided us with wonderful views of a male adding decorations to its bower in the highland forests in the Herberton Range (QLD). Voted as THE TOP BIRD OF THE TOUR.

**Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*:** This, the flagship bird of O'Reilly's, was seen extremely well there.

**Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*:** Seen repeatedly at O'Reilly's (QLD), where a male was seen by its blue-themed bower.

**Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis*:** Commonly encountered in Mt Molloy and Mt Carbine; bower also seen.

**AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: Climacteridae**

**White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaea*:** 1 at Hypipamee in QLD, and a pair in Little Desert (VIC).

**Red-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris erythroptis*:** A pair was seen in Lamington NP (southeast QLD).

**Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus*:** A few near Deniliquin (NSW); another north of Mt Carbine (ne QLD).

**FAIRYWRENS: Maluridae**

**Purple-backed Fairywren *Malurus assimilis*:** A superb, confiding bird was found by Iain east of St George (QLD).

*Note:* Recently split from *Variiegated Fairywren* (Aug 2018).

**Variiegated Fairywren *Malurus lamberti*:** A very popular bird was seen near Canungra (se QLD).

**Lovely Fairywren *Malurus amabilis*:** A pair was seen briefly in Cairns; another pair showed well in Daintree.

**Splendid Fairywren *Malurus splendens*:** A popular party of 3 were seen in our day out west from Goondawindi (QLD).

Voted for as ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

**Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus*:** Commonly encountered from southeast QLD south.

**White-winged Fairywren *Malurus leucopterus*:** Two perfect males with Phil Maher on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus*:** Two males were seen at Lake Mitchell (ne QLD).

**HONEYEATERS: Meliphagidae**

**Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*:** One was seen at O'Reilly's and another on Bruny Island (TAS).

**Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata*:** Just seen at the one site in Northeast QLD, Cassowary House.

**Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*:** Recorded a number of times at various sites in northern and southern QLD.

**Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis*:** A couple were seen at Cassowary House and Daintree, in Northeast QLD.

**Yellow Honeyeater *Stomiopera flava*:** Recorded just north of Cairns and in Julatten only (ne QLD).

**White-gaped Honeyeater *Stomiopera unicolor*:** Two were seen at the McLeod River crossing near Mount Carbine.

**White-fronted Honeyeater *Purnella albifrons*:** One on the Hay Plains (NSW), and another at Little Desert NP (VIC).

**Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Caligavis chrysops*:** Recorded on 4 days in QLD, including Hasties Swamp and Julatten.

**Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops*:** 2 were observed in Durikai State Forest, in inland southern QLD.

**Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys*:** Two colonies were seen near O'Reilly's (southern QLD).

**Noisy Miner *Manoria melanocephala*:** Commonly encountered in south QLD and VIC.

**Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula*:** Encountered regularly near St. George (QLD) and Deniliquin (NSW).

**Bridled Honeyeater *Bolemoreus frenatus*:** Recorded at three highland sites: Hypipamee, Tarzali & Mt Lewis (ne QLD).

**Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*:** Near St. George (QLD), Deniliquin (NSW) & Little Desert (VIC).

**Little (Brush) Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera*:** Noted on a number of occasions on Tasmania.

**Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*:** Regularly noted in VIC.

**Yellow Wattlebird *Anthochaera paradoxa*:** Seen daily on Tasmania, where it is the unofficial emblem of the state.

**Varied Honeyeater *Gavicalis versicolor*:** Several birds were seen within the city of Cairns (ne QLD).

**Mangrove Honeyeater *Gavicalis fasciogularis*:** Three birds were seen near Brisbane airport (south QLD).

**Singing Honeyeater *Gavicalis virescens*:** Some excellent views were had on the Hay Plains (NSW).

**White-plumed Honeyeater *Ptilotula penicillate*:** Near St George, QLD, Deniliquin (NSW), and Little Desert (VIC).

**Fuscous Honeyeater *Ptilotula fusca*:** Seen at two sites. Wondecla State Forest and near Gore (both QLD).

**Rufous-throated Honeyeater *Conopophila rufogularis*:** 2 were seen at the McLeod River crossing near Mt Carbine.

**Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*:** Observed 3 times in ne QLD: Cattana, Daintree & Julatten.

**White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*:** A pair was found by Iain at Cape Bruny, TAS.

**Black Honeyeater *Sugomel niger*:** 3 sightings was an excellent result for this erratic blossom nomad. Seen at Cement Mills Road in Gore and west of Goondawindi in QLD, and near Deniliquin with Phil Maher in NSW.

**Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura*:** Recorded at 4 sites in ne QLD (e.g. Cassowary House, Daintree).

**Scarlet Myzomela *Myzomela sanguinolenta*:** Heard at numerous sites, with a male seen in Julatten (ne QLD).

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Gliciphila melanops*:** A pair were seen in an area of heath at Little Desert NP (VIC).

**Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*:** Recorded on 10 days, all in QLD.

**Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*:** 1 was seen at Terrana, and another on Bruny Island, both in TAS.

**New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*:** Observed repeatedly in TAS, with further sightings in VIC.

**White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris niger*:** First found in Julatten; others seen at Hasties Swamp (both ne QLD).

**White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis*:** Just the one was seen, at Little Desert NP (VIC).

**Yellow-throated Honeyeater *Nesoptilotis flavicollis*:** A few on Bruny Island, and another at Tinderbox.

**Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*:** Encountered repeatedly in Queensland; recorded on 6 days.

**White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*:** Seen at Abattoir Swamp and at McLeod River (both ne QLD).

**White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*:** Two were seen at Wondecla State Forest (QLD).

**Black-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus affinis*:** Observed a few times on Bruny Island, and then again at Tinderbox.

**Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris*:** A few were seen west of Goondawindi (inland southern QLD).

**Black-chinned Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis*:** One was seen at Mt Korong (VIC).

**Strong-billed Honeyeater *Melithreptus validirostris*:** A very showy bird was seen at Terrana (TAS).

**Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayanus*:** Seen on two days in ne QLD, at Cassowary Hse. and Daintree.

**Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolate*:** Great looks were had during our day out west of Goondawindi (QLD).

**Painted Honeyeater *Grantiella picta*:** A superb pair was observed with *Black Honeyeaters*, west of Goondawindi (QLD).

**Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis*:** Recorded on six different days in the state of QLD only.

**Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*:** Noted repeatedly in northeast QLD (on 6 days).

**Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus*:** Recorded on 5 days in QLD, including in Mount Molloy.

#### PARDALOTES: Pardalotidae

**Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*:** This "Diamond Sparrow" was spotted by Kathy at a reserve in Toowoomba.

**Forty-spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus quadragintus*:** Exceptional, low views of this rarity were had on North Bruny.

**Red-browed Pardalote *Pardalotus rubricatus*:** Heard at two sites (Mt Carbine & The Hurricane Rd, ne QLD); only Mike managed views at the latter.

**Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*:** Seen very well at Tinderbox on Tasmania; also recorded at Mareeba (ne QLD).

#### THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: Acanthizidae

**Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis*:** Excellent views were obtained of a pair along a forest trail on Mt Lewis, ne QLD.

**Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis*:** At Mt Lewis, Julatten and regularly at O'Reilly's (all QLD).

**White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*:** Seen daily in O'Reilly's (southeast QLD).

**Tasmanian Scrubwren *Sericornis humilis*:** A couple on Bruny Island for some, and for all on Mt Wellington.

**Atherton Scrubwren *Sericornis kerri*:** One was seen at Hypipamee NP, and another was observed on Mt Lewis.

**Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostra*:** 2 at Cassowary House and another in Julatten (both ne QLD).

**Scrubtit *Acanthornis magna*:** Typically, one of the toughest "Tassie" specialties, we found a pair on Mt Wellington.

**Speckled Warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*:** This handsome thornbill was seen in Durikai State Forest (QLD).

**Rufous Fieldwren *Calamanthus campestris*:** A pair showed well in Little Desert (VIC).  
**Shy Heathwren *Hylacola cauta*:** One, amazingly, hopped out into the open (if only briefly) at Little Desert NP (VIC).  
**Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides*:** A couple were seen near St. George (QLD).  
**Slender-billed Thornbill *Acanthiza iredalei*:** A pair of these local birds was seen at Little Desert (VIC).  
**Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina*:** Recorded at 3 highland sites in ne QLD (e.g. Hypipamee, Mt Lewis).  
**Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla*:** Seen in O'Reillys (southeast QLD), and also a few times in TAS.  
**Tasmanian Thornbill *Acanthiza ewingii*:** A pair was foraging close to some *Scrubtits* in wet forest on Mt Wellington.  
**Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*:** 3 were seen in our day just east of St. George in inland southern QLD.  
**Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*:** On TAS and between Toowoomba and Brisbane, QLD.  
**Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis*:** A pair was found east of St. George within inland QLD.  
**Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana*:** Recorded near Melbourne (VIC), and in inland QLD near St. George.  
**Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata*:** A small party were seen along Duck Creek Rd in Lamington NP (southeast QLD).  
**Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*:** Seen twice, north of Mt. Carbine (QLD), and in the south QLD Outback near St. George.  
**Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*:** Seen at 2 ne QLD sites; Daintree and Julatten.  
**White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea*:** A couple were warbling alongside the Hurricane Road (Northeast QLD).  
**Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*:** Seen in mangroves along the Daintree River and in Cairns (ne QLD).  
**Brown Gerygone *Gerygone mouki*:** Recorded at Hypipamee and in O'Reilly's (both QLD).  
**Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca*:** A couple were recorded during our day out west from Goondawindi (south QLD).  
**Mangrove Gerygone *Gerygone levigaster*:** A pair of these Australian warblers were seen at Kedron, in Brisbane.  
**Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*:** A single within the scenic surrounds of Mt Korong Scenic Reserve (VIC).

#### PSEUDO-BABBLERS: Pomatostomidae

**Gray-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis*:** Recorded north of Mt Carbine, and also in Canungra (QLD).  
**White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*:** One appeared in the shadow of Mt Korong (VIC).

#### LOGRUNNERS: Orthonychidae

**Australian Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii*:** Some good views were had of this charismatic bird at O'Reilly's.  
**Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii*:** A Pair was watched at length flipping leaves, on the slopes of Mt. Lewis (ne QLD).

#### WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: Psophodidae

**Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus*:** Seen very well at O'Reilly's on several occasions; also in Julatten (both QLD).

#### BOATBILLS: Machaerirhynchidae

**Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*:** This charming little bird was seen at Cassowary Hse and in Julatten (ne QLD).

#### WOODSWALLOWS: Artamidae

**White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*:** Recorded on 7 consecutive days in ne QLD.  
**Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*:** This normally scarce, but nomadic, bird was extremely numerous during our two days in Outback southern QLD (e.g. Gore, St. George area). As usual, in mixed flocks with the next species.  
**White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus*:** Hundreds were seen in company with Masked in inland s QLD.  
**Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus*:** 3 were seen along the Hurricane Road, north of Mt Carbine (ne QLD).  
**Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*:** Noted at Wondelcla State Forest (QLD), and then regularly in TAS.

#### BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: Cracticidae

**Gray Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*:** Seen first around Brisbane and then again in TAS and VIC.  
**Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*:** Recorded on nine days of the tour in QLD and VIC.

**Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*:** Seen around Cairns, at Cassowary House and Daintree, all in Northeast QLD.  
**Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*:** A Daily feature of the tour except in ne QLD, where only a few.  
**Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*:** Particularly common and conspicuous at O'Reilly's scavenging food from us.  
**Black Currawong *Strepera fuliginosa*:** Noted at a few sites on TAS, including Bruny Island and Mt Wellington.  
**Gray Currawong *Strepera versicolor*:** A few were seen in VIC, including near Yan Yean Reservoir Park.

#### CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae

**Barred Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineata*:** A good early score, shortly after dawn near Cassowary House (ne QLD).  
**Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*:** Observed on 11 days, mostly in QLD, but also in TAS and VIC.  
**White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*:** Seen at Granite Gorge and in Cairns in ne QLD.  
**White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor*:** Recorded 3 times in QLD (Mt Carbine, Durikai State Forest and near St George).  
**Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*:** Recorded at 3 sites in Northeast QLD; Cairns, Cassowary House and Mt Lewis.  
**Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*:** A male in Cairns was followed by others on the Daintree River cruise.

#### SITELLAS: Neosittidae

**Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*:** Mike spotted a group during our day in the Outback east of St. George QLD.

#### SHRIKE-TIT: Falcunculidae

**(Eastern) Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus*:** A few were seen close to the hide at Hasties Swamp (ne QLD).

#### WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: Pachycephalidae

**Little Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*:** First seen at Cassowary House, then in Julatten, both in ne QLD.  
**Gray Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*:** Sightings in O'Reilly's, Durikai, St George (QLD), and Little Desert, VIC.  
**Bower's Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla boweri*:** Seen in the ne QLD highlands, (e.g. Hypipamee, Mt Lewis).  
**Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea*:** Excellent views at Jetty Beach on Bruny Island (TAS).  
**Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata*:** Mike put us on to one at Karong Scenic Reserve in VIC.  
**Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*:** Surprisingly inconspicuous this time, only seen by all in O'Reilly's (s QLD).  
**Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*:** Recorded 6 times (Lake Mitchell, Mt Carbine, Julatten, Gore, Little Desert).

#### OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae

**Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*:** Recorded four times in QLD (e.g. Granite Gorge, Slaughter Falls).  
**Green (Yellow) Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus*:** Seen well in Cairns, on the Daintree and also in Julatten, all ne QLD.  
**Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*:** This common and conspicuous bird was found on 7 days, in ne QLD only.

#### DRONGOS: Dicruridae

**Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*:** Noted on 7 days in ne QLD; also in Warwick (south QLD).

#### FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae

**Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*:** Found at the second attempt at Abattoir Swamp (ne QLD).  
**Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*:** Australia's most familiar bird, recorded on all but a few days.  
**Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*:** A few were seen in ne QLD (e.g. Mount Lewis), and also at O'Reilly's.  
**Gray Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*:** Noted at Mt Lewis and near Goondawindi in QLD; also Bruny Island (TAS).

#### MONARCH-FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae

**White-eared Monarch *Carterornis leucotis*:** A wonderful bird gave good looks near Cassowary House, ne QLD.

**Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*:** Recorded at 4 sites in QLD (Julatten, Hasties Swamp and O' Reilly's).  
**Spectacled Monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*:** Recorded at two sites in ne QLD, at Cassowary House and in Julatten.  
**Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi*:** Pairs were observed in Julatten, Daintree, and Hypipamee (ne QLD).  
**Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*:** Recorded daily except in TAS, where it does not occur.  
**Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*:** 2 were seen in ne QLD; along the Daintree River and at Big Mitchell Creek.  
**Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*:** A pair was found on Bruny Island (TAS).  
**Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*:** One was found by Iain in Durikai State Forest (QLD), which came in very close.  
**Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra Alecto*:** Murray Hunt got us good looks at several pairs on our Daintree river trip with him.

#### CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: Corvidae

**Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*:** Seen very regularly in southern QLD.  
**Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*:** Commonly encountered in Southern QLD, also in VIC.  
**Little Raven *Corvus mellori*:** Regularly noted in the Melbourne area of VIC.  
**Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus*:** Encountered daily in TAS.

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

**White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos*:** Good number seen east of St. George in inland QLD; also in VIC.  
**Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea*:** Seen just north of Mt Carbine and regularly within inland QLD, near St. George.

#### BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: Paradisaeidae

**Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus*:** A male gave us a prolonged view of his display pose in Lamington NP (s QLD), which was quickly elevated to one of the [TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR](#) as a result of its exceptional performance.  
**Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae*:** A female was seen at Cassowary House (ne QLD).

#### AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: Petroicidae

**Jacky-winter *Microeca fascinans*:** Recorded at 2 sites in QLD, first in the Gore area and then west of Goondawindi.  
**Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang*:** One was seen on Bruny Island, and another at Tinderbox, both in TAS.  
**Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*:** An excellent male was seen along the Moonie Highway, inland QLD.  
**Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea*:** Made a spectacular entrance, when it tussled with a *Pink Robin* at Terrana (TAS)!  
**Rose Robin *Petroica rosea*:** A male showed well shortly after our arrival in Lamington NP (s QLD).  
**Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster*:** This beautiful robin was seen being chased by a *Flame Robin* at Terrana, TAS.  
**Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata*:** Seen foraging in the car park at Jetty Beach on the idyllic Bruny Island.  
**Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito*:** First seen at Cassowary House and also in Julatten, both in Northeast QLD.  
**Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis*:** Recorded 6 times in Queensland.  
**Mangrove Robin *Eopsaltria pulverulenta*:** A pair was seen in Cairns on our first busy afternoon's birding.  
**White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa*:** One came in close at Big Mitchell Creek, QLD.  
**Gray-headed Robin *Heteromyias cinereifrons*:** Observed at both Hypipamee and Mount Lewis in Northeast QLD.  
**Southern Scrub-Robin *Drymodes brunneopygia*:** 1 gave excellent views to all shortly after dawn at Little Desert, VIC.

#### LARKS: Alaudidae

**Australasian Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*:** A couple were seen in VIC, and others were seen on a night drive in NSW.  
**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*:** 2 were seen doing song flights near Hobart on TAS.

#### SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae

**Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*:** Recorded daily on the tour, one of the most regularly-noted species.  
**Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel*:** Seen on 3 days in QLD (north of Cairns, Newell Beach, and in Brisbane).  
**Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*:** Seen on 10 days of the tour (in QLD, TAS, VIC and NSW).

**White-backed Swallow *Cheramoeca leucosterna*:** *Phil Maher* showed us 7 of these swallows beside a nesting bank that he had constructed, on the plains near Deniliquin (NSW).

#### REED-WARBLERS AND ALLIES: Acrocephalidae

**Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*:** Seen first in Warwick in QLD and near Deniliquin in NSW.

#### GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Locustellidae

**Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*:** 2 were seen just outside of Deniliquin (NSW).

**Brown Songlark *Megalurus cruralis*:** Between Goondiwindi and Brisbane (QLD), also on *Plains-wanderer* night drive.

**Rufous Songlark *Megalurus mathewsi*:** A few were seen in the Gore area near Durikai State Forest in QLD.

#### CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae

**Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*:** 3 sightings, near Cairns, on the Daintree River, and at Loveday Cove (all QLD).

#### WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae

**Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*:** Seen at Hasties Swamp (QLD), and also recorded in TAS and VIC.

#### THRUSHES AND ALLIES: Turdidae

**Bassian (Olive-tailed) Thrush *Zoothera lunulate*:** Some extremely close birds were seen at O'Reilly's (QLD).

**Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei*:** Several people got identifiable looks at O'Reilly's (southeast QLD).

**Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*:** Regularly recorded in TAS and VIC.

#### STARLINGS: Sturnidae

**Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*:** Seen on 3 days in ne QLD, including in Daintree and Cairns.

**European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*:** Recorded daily on the tour on the last third in s QLD, TAS and VIC.

**Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*:** Commonly recorded throughout the tour, except from TAS.

#### FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae

**Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*:** Recorded on 7 days, in QLD and VIC.

#### SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: Nectariniidae

**Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*:** Recorded on 7 consecutive days in northeast QLD.

#### WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae

**Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*:** Recorded on 6 days of the tour (in QLD, TAS, and VIC).

#### FINCHES, EUPHONIAS AND ALLIES: Fringillidae

**European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (H):** Heard close Hobart (TAS).

**European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*:** Seen on Bruny Island on TAS.

#### OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*:** Seen on each day of the tour.

**WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae**

**Beautiful Firetail *Stagonopleura bella*:** Terri and one or two other people had one on Bruny Island, and Sam had one at Tinderbox (both TAS); on both occasions the birds quickly took off.

**Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*:** A single was found near Deniliquin in NSW.

**Red-browed Firetail *Neochmia temporalis*:** Seen in Julatten, on Mt. Lewis, and at O'Reilly's, all in QLD.

**Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*:** A group of these striking birds was found on our first afternoon just north of Cairns.

**Plum-headed Finch *Neochmia modesta*:** Seen at 2 spots east of St George (QLD), with as many as 50 at the second.

**Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*:** A handful were found in a mixed flock with *Plum-headed Finches*, east of St. George.

**Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii*:** Recorded 3 times in QLD; Mt Molloy, Mt Carbine & near St. George.

**Chestnut-breasted Munia *Lonchura castaneothorax*:** Seen north of Cairns, Mount Molloy and Hasties Swamp (QLD).

**MAMMALS****ECHIDNA: Tachyglossidae**

**Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*:** This charismatic animal was seen a few times on Bruny Island (TAS).

**PLATYPUS: Ornithorhynchidae**

**Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*:** Around four individuals were seen in broad daylight on the Atherton Tablelands in ne QLD. ONE OF THE TOP NON-AVIAN ANIMALS OF THE TOUR.

**DASYURIDS: Dasyuridae**

**Fat-tailed Dunart *Sminthopsis crassicaudata*:** As usual, seen well during the Plains-wanderer night drive (NSW).

**BANDICOOTS: Peramelidae**

**Eastern Barred Bandicoot *Perameles gunni*:** A mother and baby at Eaglehawk Neck (TAS) gave prolonged views.

**Long-nosed Bandicoot *Perameles nasuta*:** 1 was seen at Red Mill House, Daintree (ne QLD).

**KOALA: Phascolarctidae**

**Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*:** A mad dash to Kennett River in VIC resulted in superb views of this iconic Australian animal. *Overwhelmingly* (100% of votes) voted for as the TOP NON-AVIAN ANIMAL OF THE TOUR!

**BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS: Phalangeridae**

**Mountain Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus caninus*:** Surprisingly only seen the once, at night at Lamington NP (s QLD).

**Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*:** A few were seen at night near Eaglehawk Neck, TAS.

**Coppery Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus johnstoni*:** 4 were seen with *Alan Gillanders* on a night tour near Yungaburra.

**RINGTAIL POSSUMS: Pseudocheiridae**

**Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*:** One at O'Reilly's (QLD), and another on TAS.

**Green Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus archeri*:** 1 in day at Nerada and a night sighting near Yungaburra (ne QLD).

**MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO: Hypsiprymnodontidae**

**Musky Rat-kangaroo *Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*:** The smallest 'roo was seen at Cassowary House (QLD).

**KANGAROOS, WALLABIES AND TREE-KANGAROOS: Macropodidae**

**Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo *Dendrolagus lumholtzi*:** Iain spotted one of these sloth-like marsupials at Nerada, ne QLD.

**Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*:** A few were seen around Hasties Swamp and Mount Molloy/Carbine in ne QLD.

**Pretty-faced (Whiptail) Wallaby *Macropus parryi*:** A party of these pretty wallabies was seen near O'Reilly's (QLD).

**Eastern Gray Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*:** This huge kangaroo was seen well at Mareeba and also in NSW.

**Western Gray Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus*:** Good numbers were seen west of Goondawindi in inland south QLD.

**Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus*:** Incredibly high numbers of this huge kangaroo were seen north of Deniliquin, NSW.

**Euro *Macropus robustus*:** A few of this round-eared wallabies were seen at the Karong Scenic Reserve (VIC).

**Red-necked Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus*:** Seen twice in QLD, at Wondecla and near Gore.

**"Bennett's Wallaby" *Macropus rufogriseus rufogriseus*:** The TAS form of *Red-necked Wallaby* was seen on Bruny Island and elsewhere on the mainland.

**Black (Swamp) Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*:** A few of these ebony wallabies were seen in inland southern QLD.

**Mareeba Rock-Wallaby *Petrogale Mareeba*:** Common and conspicuous at Granite Gorge Nature Park (ne QLD).

**Rufous-bellied (Tasmanian) Pademelon *Thylogale billardieri*:** A handful were seen at night near Eaglehawk Neck.

**Red-legged Pademelon *Thylogale stigmatica*:** Seen a few times in Julatten (QLD), including with joeys in pouches!

**Red-necked Pademelon *Thylogale thetis*:** Typically easy to see at O'Reilly's (Southeast QLD).

**FRUIT BATS: Pteropodidae**

**Black Flying-fox *Pteropus Alecto*:** A mixed camp of these and *Gray-headed Flying-foxes* was seen near Canungra (QLD).

**Spectacled Flying-fox *Pteropus conspicillatus*:** Many seen during our night tour with Alan Gillanders near Yungaburra.

**Gray-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*:** This species dominated a large roost near Canungra, QLD. Voted as ONE OF THE TOP FIVE NON-AVIAN ANIMALS OF THE TOUR.

**VESPER BATS: Vespertilionidae**

**Large-footed Myotis (Australian Fishing-Bat) *Myotis macropus*:** Some nice views were had during a night tour with Alan Gillanders in Yungaburra (ne QLD).

**RATS and MICE: Muridae**

**Giant White-tailed Rat *Uromys caudimaculatus*:** Several with Alan Gillanders on night tour near Yungaburra (QLD).

**DOGS AND FOXES: Canidae**

**Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*:** A few were noted east of St George in inland southern QLD.

**PIGS: Suidae**

**Feral Pig *Sus scrofa*:** One was seen from the car in inland southern QLD.

**RABBITS AND HARES: Leporidae**

**European Hare *Lepus europaeus*:** Observed regularly in the Outback of southern QLD and NSW.

**European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*:** Regularly recorded in NSW and VIC.

**OTHERS:**

**Shingleback *Tiliqua rugosa*:** One was seen during our final day in Victoria.

**Gould's (Sand) Monitor *Varanus gouldii*:** One near St George, and another in Brisbane (QLD).

**Australian Water Dragon *Intellagama lesueurii*:** 1 was seen in Warwick, southern QLD.

**Gibber Gecko *Lucasium byrnei*:** This superb creature was seen on the Hay Plains with Phil Maher (NSW).

**Red-bellied Black Snake *Pseudechis porphyriacus*:** 1 was seen with *Alan Gillanders* in the Herbeton Range in ne QLD.

**White-lipped Tree Frog *Litoria infrafrenata*:** One was seen on the side of a refrigerator at Mount Molloy, and another

**Ulysses Butterfly *Papilio Ulysses*:** Australia's answer to the Neotropical morpho was seen several times in ne QLD.