Australia
Kakadu NP & the Top End
2\textsuperscript{nd} to 16\textsuperscript{th} July 2018 (15 days)
Trip Report

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Trip Report compiled by Steve Davidson, Inala Nature Tours.
Tour Summary

The following report for this recent Rockjumper Worldwide Birding Adventures tour covers a vast swathe of the Australian landscape, encompassing the Red Centre, Kakadu National Park, and the Top End of the Northern Territory, extending to the east Kimberley region of Western Australia. It is very difficult to do justice to Australia’s wide-ranging avifauna in a short period of time, given both the size of the continent and the enormous range of habitats that require careful scrutiny and a fair bit of legwork to eke out the often skulking and shy inhabitants that are found within.

On this tour, we concentrated on a few avifaunal regions, starting in the Red Centre, where we took in a large part of the arid country around Alice Springs, an area broadly consisting of mulga woodland, spinifex dune systems, and rocky outcrops and gorges that has attracted a special suite of endemic bird species. We then moved on to the Top End, which is within the tropical zone of northern Australia, and visited remnant rainforest patches, tropical woodland, wetlands, and mangrove ecotones.

Moving on to the world-famous Kakadu National Park, we took in rocky sandstone escarpment country that is part of the extensive Arnhem Land plateau, as well as vast wetlands and floodplains, and extensive tropical woodlands. Sweeping through to the west and toward the east Kimberley region of Western Australia, we entered another bioregion not entirely dissimilar to that of Kakadu, but involving entering new areas of avian endemism, with a wide variety of honeyeaters and finches predominating.

Daily Diary

Monday, 2nd July 2018. Day One: The first leg of the tour commenced in the famous inland town of Alice Springs, where on a frosty morning the group met and headed south of town to the edge of the desert country. Our first birds before we left the hotel were a pair of Australian Ringnecks, followed by Pied Butcherbirds, the soon-to-be obligatory Little Crows, Magpie-lark, and the pugnacious Willie Wagtail. Once past the outskirts of town, we soon picked up our first Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, as well as Black and Whistling Kites and a magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagle. It was soon apparent that in these very dry conditions (as very little rain had fallen in the preceding few months) we were going to have to work hard for our birds. In spinifex and mulga country well south of Alice Springs, we picked up some regional specials in the form of Dusky Grasswren, Red-browed Pardalote, Crimson Chat, Singing Honeyeater, Red-capped Robins, Zebra Finch, Mistletoebird, and a party of the rather uncommon and nomadic Banded Whiteface – several of which put on a good show for us. On the route back, we had some fortune with a male White-winged Fairywren showing off with a harem in tow, as well as an obliging Red-backed Kingfisher on power lines.

At lunch in Alice Springs, we had Grey-crowned Babblers, White-plumed Honeyeaters, and Yellow-throated Miner. A short visit to the well-known Alice Springs Water Treatment Works gave us a good variety of waterbirds, the best of which consisted of good views of Pink-eared Duck, Red-necked Avocet, and...
Black-tailed Native-hen, Chestnut Teal, and Red-kneed Dotterel. Overhead were several White-backed Swallows, and in the shrubby margins, Purple-backed Fairywrens and Little Grassbird. Later in the day, we headed north of town to a location for Bourke’s Parrot. Waiting until dusk for the birds to appear at a waterhole, we enjoyed further views of Australian Ringnecks coming in to drink, as well as Mulga Parrot, Common Bronzewings, Hooded Robin, and Yellow-rumped and Inland Thornbills. The sun finally dropped below the horizon, and just as dark was set to fall we heard the Bourke’s Parrots come in, eventually seeing up to 30 birds drinking. A brilliant way to end our first day.

Tuesday, 3rd July 2018. Day Two: After an early breakfast, we set off to the west of Alice Springs to some of the rocky ranges and gorge country of the West MacDonnell National Park, but not before a brief stop at some mulga woodland on the edge of the town, where the exceedingly difficult and nomadic Grey Honeyeater had recently been reported. We found no Grey Honeyeater, but did see some other honeyeaters – Grey-headed, Spiny-cheeked, Brown, Singing and White-plumed – Western Gerygone, Red-browed Pardalote, a few Weebill – Australia’s smallest bird species – and Grey Shrike-thrush. Overhead we managed a Peregrine Falcon, our only one for the entire tour. Moving west into the national park, we stopped at Ormiston Gorge where we picked up a pair of the showy Western Bowerbird, a party of Spinifex Pigeon, Splendid Fairywren, Peaceful Dove, and a couple of somewhat distant Little Woodswallow. At the waterhole, we saw a single Painted Finch fly in briefly. We also had close views of more Grey-headed Honeyeaters and a solitary Sacred Kingfisher. The long drive back to Alice Springs produced a Rufous Songlark and a small number of Black-flanked Rock Wallaby.

Wednesday, 4th July 2018. Day 3: This morning, after breakfast, we headed just north of Alice Springs to look in an area of rocky outcrops and shrubland for Redthroat, with either a young male or female singing strongly atop a shrub. Other birds here consisted of a mixed flock with Splendid Fairywren, Inland Thornbill, Weebill, and Zebra Finch predominating; whilst good numbers of Galah passed overhead. In addition to the birds, we had outstanding views of Dingo here too, with a trio crossing the road in front of us and another pack seen on a nearby rocky hillside, even howling for us! Common Wallaroos (Euro) were here too, as were a few Black-flanked Rock Wallaby warming themselves in the early morning sun. We then headed to yesterday’s Grey Honeyeater site, and with some good fortune managed to see the bird this time. Whilst not the world’s most stimulating bird, it was nonetheless a treat to witness what is ostensibly one of the more difficult species of this region to come across. Leaving Alice Springs we headed south,
passing through large areas of mulga woodland en route to our accommodation in the roadhouse at Erldunda. A roadside stop along the way produced our only Slaty-backed Thornbill for the tour, with Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills also present.

Thursday, 5th July 2018. Day 4: An extra early start was required today, and just after arriving the first of many Chiming Wedgebills were heard heralding the dawn; we eventually saw up to 120 individuals in a large, loose flock. In this location, we had our first group of Southern Whiteface as well. Moving a short distance to the north, we came out onto wide open and gently undulating gibber plains (gibber is a small shiny pebble that covers large areas of inland desert country), where we found another desert specialist – the superbly camouflaged Cinnamon Quail-thrush, with 3 birds seen beautifully. Other birds seen included White-browed Babbler, Splendid and White-winged Fairywrens, more Banded Whiteface, Mulga Parrot, and Australian Pipit. Back toward Erldunda, we picked up our only Grey Butcherbird of the tour, as well as a small group of Purple-backed Fairywren. Moving on towards Uluru National Park, we made a few stops for our first Black-breasted Buzzard, as well as a few Brown Falcon, Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistler, and Black-faced Woodswallow. The afternoon was spent at Uluru National Park with a bit of sight-seeing, visiting the famous Uluru (Ayers Rock) and the surrounding area.

Thus ended our stint in this part of the country, and despite a lack of general bird abundance overall due to the drought conditions, it was a rewarding few days with several key species seen well. It was a good illustration of how an extended lack of rain can severely deplete a landscape; of further note was the fact we didn’t see any of the larger kangaroo species or a single Emu.

Friday, 6th July 2018. Day 5: Late morning, we boarded our flight from Yulara Airport to Alice Springs, and then onto Darwin. Arriving in Darwin, we collected the bus and after checking in at our hotel we met again for some birding in the rather steamier environs of the tropics. For half an hour we didn’t get much further than the carpark of the actual hotel, finding Rainbow Bee-eater, Bar-shouldered Dove, Blue-faced Honeyeater, White-breasted Woodswallow, Varied Triller, Double-barred Finch, White-gaped Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Australasian Figbird, and Rufous-banded Honeyeater. At the nearby Darwin Botanic Gardens, our first bird when walking in was a Pheasant Coucal – a female sitting very low in some shrubbery. Large numbers of Australasian Figbird were
present, as were Torresian Imperial Pigeons, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Yellow Oriole, and a pair of Grey Goshawk, with the female being of the grey phase, and the male the pure white phase. Reaching the rainforest gully that the site is famous for, we soon found our target—a beautiful Rufous Owl at its day roost, which was a magnificent way to end the day.

**Saturday, 7th July 2018. Day 6:** We had a full day in the Darwin area, and after a very early breakfast we headed east of town to a well-known site for Rainbow Pitta. Along the way, we saw our only Brahminy Kite for the entire tour. Reaching the location in which we’d search for the pitta, a remnant rainforest and woodland area, we soon enjoyed Silver-backed Butcherbird, Large-billed Gerygone, Varied Trillers, Arafura Fantail, our first pair of Shining Flycatcher, Grey Whistler, Green-backed Gerygone, Spangled Drongo, a calling Little Shrike-thrush, and, last but not least, wonderful views of a trio of tiny Rose-crowned Fruit Dove. Soon enough, our quarry was heard in the rainforest gully nearby, and after some judicious jostling and positioning, we all had fantastic views of a close male Rainbow Pitta that sat quietly and in clear view for several minutes. By now the heat was steadily rising and it was time for some H2O—the weather was markedly different from the cold nights and mild days we’d experienced in the Red Centre.

Moving on, we stopped at some ephemeral wetlands and quickly ticked off a suite of tropical waterbirds, with Brolga on the water’s edge while Green Pygmy and Magpie Geese, scads of Comb-crested Jacana, Pacific Black Duck, and Australasian Grebe were out amongst the water lilies and emergent vegetation. Then three huge Black-necked Stork flew in, such a magnificent bird. Pied and White-faced Herons, Great and Intermediate Egrets, Australasian Darters, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, and Whiskered Tern were also added. In some nearby mango trees, we had both Brush Cuckoo and Little Bronze Cuckoos, Sacred and Forest Kingfishers, and our first Lemon-bellied Flycatcher. Back in Darwin and on a high tide roost at East Point, we picked up our only Sooty Oystercatcher, plus several Pacific Golden Plover and Grey-tailed Tattlers, and a flock of Red-necked Stint. A single Great Crested Tern was also roosting with the shorebirds.

Later in the afternoon, we headed out to the coast north of town and spent a bit of time looking along the mudflats and mangrove edges. Here we had good views of a pair of Torresian Kingfishers (recent split from Collared Kingfisher), Far Eastern Curlew, Eastern Osprey, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Red-capped Plover, Black-bellied Plover, more Grey-tailed Tattlers, Gull-billed Tern, and Silver Gull. Nearer
to the mangrove forest, we saw Red-headed Myzomela (Honeyeater), Helmeted Friarbird, and a number of Pacific Reef Heron. In the littoral woodland nearby, we had our first good looks at Red-winged Parrot.

**Sunday, 8th July 2018. Day 7:** The next morning, we made a quick stop at a stand of coastal mangroves on the coast just north of Darwin, hoping to connect with a few mangrove-dependant specialities. There were Canary White-eye and Mangrove Grey Fantail, as well as more Red-headed Myzomela and a Striated Pardalote; however, the hoped-for Mangrove Robin showed for literally a second and only a couple of the group saw it. Mangrove Gerygone was a bit more obliging, as was a female Shining Flycatcher. Thereafter we headed east, stopping at a patch of remnant rainforest for some resident day-roosting Large-tailed Nightjars, followed by a hurried roadside stop for Northern Rosella. We then made a visit to Fogg Dam, an area of wetlands, woodland and remnant rainforest patches, and it was here we had Wandering Whistling Ducks, a distant Swamp Harrier, Nankeen Night Herons at their roost, both Broad-billed and Paperbark Flycatchers, Azure Kingfisher, and Olive-backed Oriole. Just before lunch we stopped at Adelaide River, and after a bit of searching found Mangrove Golden Whistler. A large chunk of driving after a late lunch was required to get to our accommodation in Kakadu National Park, and after settling in we had dinner, followed by some spotlighting around the immediate area, with the local Barking Owl pair viewed nicely.

**Monday, 9th July 2018. Day 8:** First thing the following morning, we headed into the world-famous Kakadu National Park, and as we drove out over the vast South Alligator floodplain we quickly started picking up new birds like White-necked Heron, Spotted Harrier, Cattle Egret, and Striated Heron. In some open tropical woodland, we saw our first Masked Finches, as well as Long-tailed Finch and a party of Red-backed Fairywren nearby. Driving further into Kakadu, we soon started seeing some of the sandstone outcrop country for which the park is famous, looming out of the woodland in the distance. This sandstone country, and Kakadu NP itself, is on the edge of what’s known as Arnhem Land, a vast swathe of Aboriginal land that encompasses a huge part of the Top End. At the first and closest section of cliffs we could get to, we commenced birding. Here we saw Black Wallaroo high up on the escarpment, and our first Arnhem Land endemic bird species with a pair of Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeons. A patch of rainforest was nestled in a gully at the base of the cliffs, and it was here we saw a Black-banded Fruit Dove fly in – another regional endemic – while nearby we saw Crimson Finches, Leaden Flycatcher, White-breasted Sea Eagle, and Wilkin's
(Easter Short-eared) Rock Wallaby. There we had a picnic lunch followed by a slow drive along a quieter road through some tropical woodland, with a trio of Black-tailed Treecreepers seen well, as well as a pair of Little Woodswallow and many Peaceful Doves.

Our final activity for the day was Kakadu's famous Yellow Waters Cruise on the wide, flooded Alligator River wetlands. There were thousands of birds present, with 1000s of Plumed and Wandering Whistling Ducks, Magpie Geese, four egrets – Eastern Great, Intermediate, Little and Cattle – Brolga, Black-necked Stork, White-faced and White-necked Herons, Glossy Ibis, Green Pygmy Goose, and Radjah Shelduck. Along the vegetated and quieter backwaters were many Nankeen Night Heron, Shining, Paperbark and Broad-billed Flycatchers, Azure Kingfisher, different honeyeaters, and the most-wanted of all, the tiny Little Kingfisher perched very unobtrusively under a shady overhanging limb. It was a great way to end our full day in Kakadu NP.

**Tuesday, 10th July 2018. Day 9:** With another day in Kakadu up our sleeves, and still a few regional endemics to find, we went about exploring more of the sandstone outcrops. By mid-morning, we had Silver-crowned Friarbird, Northern Fantail, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Great Bowerbird, the sandstone race *ammitophila* of Helmeted Friarbird, and finally a pair of White-lined Honeyeater – a very restricted range endemic. Searching for Partridge Pigeons gave us a flat tyre, and after some help from a local we were back on the road, with a tip-off about a recent sighting of Partridge Pigeon. Sure enough, there they were, a flock of seven Partridge Pigeon, and another regional special under the belt! With a bit of time lost we had to hustle, and so we headed southward, with a stop for a very conveniently perched Red Goshawk! Driving through southern Kakadu at sunset was a surreal experience and a great way to end our stint here.

**Wednesday, 11th July 2018. Day 10:** Birds were in great supply around the small town of Pine Creek this morning, with the local Hooded Parrots putting on a good show first thing, providing wonderful views in the early morning light. Blue-faced Honeyeaters were plentiful here too, and around the area we also found a big flock of Cockatiel, Pallid Cuckoo, Red-backed Kingfisher, White-throated Honeyeater, and Australasian Figbird. At a random stop south of town, we picked up our first Gouldian Finches, as well as large numbers of Diamond Dove, White-winged Triller, Yellow-tinted Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, Masked and Long-tailed Finches, Black-tailed Treecreeper, and Black-faced Woodswallow. Approaching the outskirts of Nitmiluk NP, we saw a
roadside Australian Bustard, and at lunch our first Rufous-throated Honeyeater, as well as Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Northern Fantail, and our best looks yet of Red-collared Lorikeet. Some local kids had found a Greater Black Whipsnake, and we had good close views of this potentially dangerous species.

**Thursday, 12th July 2018. Day 11:** Today, we started our sojourn toward the Kimberley region of north-west Australia. Stopping en route near Katherine gave us our first Apostlebirds, whilst a long trudge through grassy woodlands finally yielded a covey of the rare Chestnut-backed Buttonquail, as well as a Tawny Frogmouth, Varied Sitella, and overhead a large flock of Masked Woodswallow. Heading west the landscape steadily changed, and in the tropical woodlands amongst the rocky outcrops of Gregory National Park we started seeing birds like Banded and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters. A stop at a waterhole yielded more Cockatiel, Galah and a lone Dingo coming in to drink, as well as a covey of Brown Quail flushed from the long grass. Close to Victoria River Roadhouse, good close views of a large mob of Antilopine Wallaroo was an unexpected treat too.

**Friday, 13th July 2018. Day 12:** In the exceedingly beautiful Gregory River National Park this morning, we found a major target in the form of a male Purple-crowned Fairywren, with several Star Finch nearby. On top of the sandstone escarpment, a Sandstone Shrikethrush was most obliging, and Silver-crowned Friarbird gave us good views. Further on, we passed areas of flowering bloodwood trees, with large numbers of Banded Honeyeaters and Masked Woodswallow present. Also here we found our first Budgerigars, more Gouldian Finches, and the golden-backed race *laetior* of the Black-chinned Honeyeater. Rufous-banded, Rufous-throated, and Singing Honeyeaters were here too. Late in the day, we pulled in at Timber Creek, our base for the next two nights.

**Saturday, 14th July 2018. Day 13:** We had a full day to explore the Timber Creek area, and started out in great form with a pair of Buff-sided Robin, a few Bar-breasted Honeyeaters, a White-bellied Sea Eagle overhead, Leaden Flycatcher, Jacky Winter, and more Gouldian Finches. In the creek behind our accommodation were some sizeable Freshwater Crocodiles. In the afternoon, a lack of wind created some particularly hot conditions, so later on we decided to check out more flowering bloodwood trees in the nearby woodlands, and it paid off with our first Varied Lorikeets feeding amongst the blossom. Also here were Horsfield’s Bushlark, more Budgerigar, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, and hundreds of Masked Woodswallow.
Sunday, 15th July 2018. Day 14: Leaving Timber Creek, we headed further east toward the last of our destinations – the township of Kununurra, situated on the banks of the Ord River and home to the mighty Ord River Irrigation Scheme, as well as a base from which to explore the area and include a morning cruise on the enormous Lake Argyle. Just out of Timber Creek, we stopped when we found some finch flocks. Amongst the hundreds of Star Finch, we managed to pick out a few Yellow-rumped Mannikins. In nearby long riparian grasses was our only Tawny Grassbird for the tour, and flocks of Fairy Martin buzzed overhead. Reaching Kununurra mid-afternoon after a long, hot drive was a welcome relief, and we started birding the edges of Lake Kununurra immediately, with good results. There were Baillon's Crane, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Australian Reed Warbler, and Golden-headed Cisticola. Out on the water were several Green Pygmy Goose, Wandering Whistling Duck, many Comb-crested Jacana, Australasian Grebe, Whiskered Tern, Australian Pelican, and Dusky Moorhen. At another site nearby, we managed great views of our first White-browed Crakes, with better views of Australian Reed Warbler and several Crimson Finch along the edge. At our accommodation, we were greeted by a very friendly pair of Buff-sided Robin.

Monday, 16th July 2018. Day 15: This was the last day of the tour, with all of us very much looking forward to the Lake Argyle Cruise starting at dawn. Leaving an hour before sunrise, we headed to the Lake Argyle Tourist Village, with a Tawny Frogmouth crossing the road at one point. An Azure Kingfisher at the dock was officially the first bird of the cruise, whilst at our first stop for breakfast there was Australian Pratincole, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Australian Pied Cormorant, Pied Heron, Eastern Osprey, Hardhead, Comb-crested Jacana, Grey Teal, and more Baillon's Crane. Making our way out further into this vast waterway, we stopped at a large island where we disembarked and walked around the perimeter. Along the edges were plenty of Red-capped Plover, Red-kneed Dotterel, Pied Stilt, Masked Lapwing, and big numbers of Green Pygmy Goose out on the water. Yellow Chat was the target here, and we soon found small numbers of female and immature birds, then finally a superb male Yellow Chat was seen well in the scope. While we were watching these, an odd and distant shorebird turned out to be none other than the very rare Australian Painted-snipe, a bird none of us had envisaged seeing. Elsewhere on the cruise, we picked up Great Crested Grebe, 3 more Australian Bustard, Caspian Tern, Glossy Ibis, a singing Sandstone Shrikethrush, Paperbark Flycatcher, good views of Short-eared Rock Wallaby, and last but by no means least a small party of the regionally range-restricted White-quilled Rock Pigeon.
It was a rather fitting end to what had been a great tour, with some fantastic company and amazing and varied scenery. We recorded 251 species, 3 of which were heard only.

**Annotated list of species recorded**

Checklist: IOC  v. 7.3

**IUCN Shortcodes:** CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, EW=Extinct in the Wild, NT=Near Threatened, DD=Data Deficient

**Birds**

**MAGPIE GOOSE - Anseranatidae**

*Magpie Goose*  
*Anseranas semipalmata*

Commonly seen at Fogg Dam, Kakadu NP and Lake Argyle.

**DUCKS, GEESE, AND WATERFOWL - Anatidae**

*Plumed Whistling Duck* - E  
*Dendrocygna eytoni*

Seen well on Yellow Waters Cruise, Kakadu NP and on Lake Argyle Cruise.

*Wandering Whistling Duck*  
*Dendrocygna arcuata*

Seen well on Yellow Waters Cruise, Kakadu NP and on Lake Argyle Cruise.

*Black Swan*  
*Cygnus atratus*

Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

*Radjah Shelduck*  
*Tadorna radjah*

First seen as a pair in the harbour at Darwin, good numbers at Fogg Dam, Kakadu NP and on Lake Argyle Cruise.

*Pink-eared Duck* - E  
*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*

Small numbers at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds and good views at Pine Creek Water Treatment Plant.

*Maned Duck* - E  
*Chenonetta jubata*

Flock feeding on lawn areas adjacent to Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

*Green Pygmy Goose*  
*Nettapus pulchellus*

First seen on the lagoon at South Alligator, Kakadu NP, also on Yellow Waters Cruise, Kakadu NP. Up to 90 seen on Lake Argyle as well.

*Pacific Black Duck*  
*Anas superciliosa*

Reasonably common species in most wetlands throughout.

*Grey Teal*  
*Anas gracilis*

Reasonably common species in most wetlands throughout.

*Chestnut Teal*  
*Anas castanea*

Single drake seen at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

*Hardhead*  
*Aythya australis*

Several at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds, also one at Pine Creek Water Treatment Plant.

**MEGAPODES - Megapodiidae**

*Orange-footed Scrubfowl*  
*Megapodus reinwardt*
Common around rainforest patches and vine scrub in areas like Darwin Botanic Gardens, Fogg Dam and Kakadu NP.

*Note: subspecies tumulus was observed.*

**PHEASANTS, GROUSE, AND ALLIES - Phasianidae**

**Brown Quail** *Coturnix ypsilophora*
Small covey flushed from the long grass around a waterhole east of Timber Creek.

**GREBES - Podicipedidae**

**Australasian Grebe** *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*
Reasonably common species in most wetlands throughout the tour.

**Hoary-headed Grebe** *Podiceps poliocephalus*
Small numbers at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds, single bird at Glen Helen Gorge, West MacDonnell Ranges.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*
Small number whilst on Lake Argyle cruise.

**STorks - Ciconiidae**

**Black-necked Stork** - NT *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
First seen at Knuckey Lagoon, Darwin with two adults and a young bird, then seen quite regularly throughout Top End, with a group of two adults and four recently fledged young birds a highlight near Pine Creek.

**IBISES AND SPOONBILLS - Threskiornithidae**

**Australian White Ibis** *Threskiornis molucca*
Reasonably common throughout.

**Straw-necked Ibis** *Threskiornis spinicollis*
Seen every day whilst in Top End and Kimberley.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
Good numbers seen whilst on Lake Argyle Cruise.

**Royal Spoonbill** *Platalea regia*
A few seen in Kakadu NP, also near Pine Creek.

**HERONS, EGrets, AND BITTERNs - Ardeidae**

**Nankeen Night Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Colony seen by day at Fogg Dam, and birds foraging on edges of wetlands whilst on Yellow Waters Cruise.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*
Single bird seen along banks of South Alligator River, Kakadu NP.

*Note: we observed ssp stagnatilis.*

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*
Small numbers seen in Top End and Kimberley, usually around water buffalo or domestic cattle.

**White-necked Heron** *Ardea pacifica*
Seen well at a few wetlands such as in Kakadu NP.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
Commonly seen throughout Top End and Kimberley Wetlands.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia*

Best views were had at Fogg Dam and Kakadu NP, where direct comparison could often be made to other egret spp nearby.

**Pied Heron** *Egretta picata*

Common at places like Fogg Dam and on Yellow Waters Cruise, also seen well whilst on Lake Argyle cruise.

**White-faced Heron** *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Small numbers seen at wetlands throughout the tour.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Several seen well on wetlands at Fogg Dam and in Kakadu NP, also on Lake Argyle.

**Pacific Reef Heron** *Egretta sacra*

Several dark phase birds seen very well on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**PELICANS - Pelecanidae**

**Australian Pelican** *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Seen well at Lake Kununurra and whilst on Lake Argyle Cruise.

**CORMORANTS AND SHAGS - Phalacrocoracidae**

**Little Pied Cormorant** *Microcarbo melanoleucos*

Reasonably common on waterways throughout tour.

**Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds, Kakadu NP and Lake Argyle.

**Australian Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax varius*

Good numbers seen whilst on Lake Argyle Cruise.

**ANHINGAS - Anhingidae**

**Australasian Darter** *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

Seen throughout the tour on most large water bodies.

**OSPREY - Pandionidae**

**Eastern Osprey** *Pandion cristatus*

Single bird seen at Buffalo Creek, Darwin, and another on Lake Argyle.

**HAWKS, EAGLES, AND KITES - Accipitridae**

**Black-breasted Buzzard** - E *Hamirostra melanosternon*

First seen near Curtin Springs en route to Uluru, then several times whilst in Top End and en route to Kununurra.

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

Seen well on a few occasions around the Red Centre, less common in Top End.

**Red Goshawk** - E - VU *Erythrotriorchis radiatus*

Single bird near nest, south section of Kakadu NP.

**Grey Goshawk** - E *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

Mated pair (one white phase and one grey phase) in Darwin Botanic Gardens.

**Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus*
Seen on a number of occasions whilst in Top End.

Note: the small and distinct didimus ssp was seen.

**Collared Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter cirrocephalus*
Juvenile watched very well through the scope at South Alligator, Kakadu NP.

**Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans*
Single bird seen distantly at Fogg Dam.

**Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis*
Adult seen quartering grasslands over South Alligator Floodplain, Kakadu NP.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Common species seen every day.

**Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus*
Common species seen every day.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*
Seen only around Darwin.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Seen well around Darwin, Kakadu NP and Kununurra/Lake Argyle area.

**BUSTARDS - Otididae**

**Australian Bustard** - NT *Ardeotis australis*
Small party seen well on grasslands near Victoria River Roadhouse and on Lake Argyle Cruise.

**RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS - Rallidae**

**Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla*
Seen very well on edge of Lake Kununurra and Lake Argyle.

**White-browed Crake** *Porzana cinerea*
Two birds seen well in the telescope, Lake Kununurra.

**Australasian Swamphen** *Porphyrio melanotus*
Commonly seen in a few locations around edges of wetlands.

**Dusky Moorhen** *Gallinula tenebrosa*
Out of range individual on Yellow Waters Cruise, Kakadu NP and several on Lake Kununurra.

**Black-tailed Native-hen** - E *Tribonyx ventralis*
Small party at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*
Reasonably common in wetlands throughout the tour.

**CRANES - Gruidae**

**Brolga** *Antigone rubicunda*
First seen at Knuckey Lagoon in Darwin, then in Kakadu NP and also around Lake Argyle and Kununurra.

**BUTTONQUAILS - Turnicidae**

**Chestnut-backed Buttonquail** - E - NT *Turnix castanotus*
6 birds flushed and seen by only a small number of the party, in the grassy woodland west of Katherine.
THICK-KNEES - Burhinidae

**Bush Stone-curlew** - NT  
*Burhinus grallarius*
Unfortunately heard only, Darwin area.

OYSTERCATCHERS - Haematopodidae

**Pied Oystercatcher**  
*Haematopus longirostris*
Only small numbers on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**Sooty Oystercatcher**  
*Haematopus fuliginosa*
Single bird at East Point, Darwin.  
*Note: northern ssp. ophthalmicus was seen.*

STILTS AND AVOCETS - Recurvirostridae

**White-headed Stilt**  
*Himantopus leucocephalus*
Seen at most freshwater wetlands throughout the tour.

**Red-necked Avocet** - E  
*Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*
Good numbers at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS - Charadriidae

**Masked Lapwing**  
*Vanellus miles*
Reasonably common throughout, especially in Top End.  
*Note: northern subspecies miles was seen.*

**Red-kneed Dotterel**  
*Erythrogonys cinctus*
Small numbers at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds, Pine Creek Water Treatment Plant and on Lake Argyle Cruise.

**Pacific Golden Plover**  
*Pluvialis fulva*
Small number at high tide roost, East Point, Darwin.

**Grey Plover**  
*Pluvialis squatarola*
Small numbers on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**Red-capped Plover**  
*Charadrius ruficapillus*
Small numbers on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin, and several present on shores of Lake Argyle.

**Black-fronted Dotterel**  
*Eseyornis melanops*
Seen at a number of wetlands, around muddy edges.

PAINTED-SNIPES - Rostratulidae

**Australian Painted-snipe** - E - EN  
*Rostratula australis*
A male of this very rare species was seen well on edge of Lake Argyle.

JACANAS - Jacanidae

**Comb-crested Jacana**  
*Irediparra gallinacea*
Common at tropical wetlands in places like Fogg Dam, Kakadu NP, Lake Kununurra and Lake Argyle.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES - Scolopacidae

**Far Eastern Curlew** - VU  
*Numenius madagascariensis*
Two birds on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**Red-necked Stint**  
*Calidris ruficollis*  
A small group at high tide roost, East Point, Darwin.

**Grey-tailed Tattler - NT**  
*Tringa brevipes*  
A small group at high tide roost, East Point, and small numbers on mudflats at mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

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**PRATINCOLES AND COURSERS - Glareolidae**

**Australian Pratincole**  
*Stiltia isabella*  
Excellent views of several birds along the shoreline of Lake Argyle.

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**GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS - Laridae**

**Silver Gull**  
*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*  
A single bird at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds, several on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**Gull-billed Tern**  
*Gelochelidon nilotica*  
Several on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin, also seen on successive days at Kakadu NP.

**Caspian Tern**  
*Hydroprogne caspia*  
Seen over Victoria River in Gregory NP, also good numbers on Lake Argyle.

**Greater Crested Tern**  
*Thalasseus bergii*  
Single bird roosting, high tide at East Point, and on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin.

**Whiskered Tern**  
*Chlidonias hybrida*  
First seen in a flock at Knuckey Lagoon in Darwin, then numbers at wetlands in Kakadu NP and at Lake Kununurra and Lake Argyle.

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**PIGEONS AND DOVES - Columbidae**

**Spotted Dove - I**  
*Spilopelia chinensis*  
Seen in Alice Springs township where a resident population exists.

**Common Bronzewing - E**  
*Phaps chalcoptera*  
Several birds seen coming in to drink on dusk at an artesian bore north of Alice Springs whilst waiting for Bourke’s Parrot. There were also some seen pre-dawn leaving a watering hole near Yulara.

**Crested Pigeon - E**  
*Ocyphaps lophotes*  
Commonly seen throughout Red Centre and in drier areas through East Kimberley.  
*Note: ssp lophotes was observed.*

**Spinifex Pigeon - E**  
*Geophaps plumifera*  
A small group in the picnic area at Ormiston Gorge entrance, West MacDonnell Ranges.  
*Note: ssp leucogaster seen in the Red Centre.*

**Partridge Pigeon - E - NT**  
*Geophaps smithii*  
Group of birds eventually found at Jabiru Airport, adjacent to Kakadu NP.  
*Note: ssp smithii was seen.*

**Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon - E**  
*Petrophassa rufipennis*  
Up to five birds seen on top of Arnhem Land Escarpment near Ubirr in Kakadu NP. Reasonable views obtained through spotting scope.

**White-quilled Rock Pigeon - E**  
*Petrophassa albipennis*
After much searching great views were eventually obtained of this species, whilst on Lake Argyle cruise.

*Note: these were of the nominate ssp albipennis.*

**Diamond Dove** *Geopelia cuneata*
A good number of birds in partially burnt woodland with lots of finches, honeyeaters, trillers, etc, between Pine Creek and Katherine.

**Peaceful Dove** *Geopelia placida*
Commonly seen species throughout the Top End section of the tour.

*Note ssp placida seen.*

**Bar-shouldered Dove** *Geopelia humeralis*
Commonly seen and heard species throughout Top End section of tour.

*Note: we observed ssp inexpectata.*

**Black-banded Fruit Dove - E** *Ptilinopus alligator*
Single individual seen briefly on a number of occasions in a rainforest gully at the base of Arnhem Land Escarpment near Ubirr, Kakadu NP.

**Rose-crowned Fruit Dove** *Ptilinopus regina*
3 to 4 birds seen well in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin.

*Note: we observed ssp ewingii.*

**Torresian Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula spilorrhoa*
Several birds seen in Darwin Botanic Gardens and around the streets of Darwin.

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**CUCKOOS - Cuculidae**

**Pheasant Coucal** *Centropus phasianinus*
First seen in Darwin Botanic Gardens; a bird low down in shrubs near the entrance. Other birds seen throughout the remainder of the tour but never as well as first time.

*Note: ssp melanurus seen.*

**Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx basalis*
2-3 birds seen on margins of Lake Argyle, foraging on the ground mostly.

**Little Bronze Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx minutillus*
Single bird seen well at Howard Springs Nature Park, Darwin. One or more birds in mango trees at Knuckey Lagoon later that day also.

*Note: we saw ssp minutillus.*

**Pallid Cuckoo** *Cacomantis pallidus*
Single adult bird seen at the edge of town in Pine Creek, near a large flock of Cockatiel.

**Brush Cuckoo** *Cacomantis variolosus*
Single bird with Little Bronze Cuckoos in mango trees adjacent to Knuckey Lagoon, Darwin.

*Note: ssp dumetorum was seen.*

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**OWLS - Strigidae**

**Rufous Owl** *Ninox rufa*
One of a resident pair seen at a day roost, in Darwin Botanic Gardens.

*Note: these birds were of the rufa ssp.*

**Barking Owl** *Ninox connivens*
Very vocal pair seen well at night in grounds of Aurora Kakadu Resort, South Alligator, Kakadu NP. Others heard at night elsewhere in Kakadu NP and at Kununurra.
Note: ssp peninsulae was observed.

**Southern Boobook**  \( Ninox boobook \)
Up to three birds heard at night in the woodland of Gregory NP, adjacent to Victoria River homestead.
*Note: the birds we heard were of the ssp. ocellata*

**FROGMOUTHS - Podargidae**

**Tawny Frogmouth** - E  \( Podargus strigoides \)
Single bird flushed from daytime roost and seen briefly in the spotting scope, west of Katherine. Another observed in the headlights flying across the road, pre-dawn whilst en route to Lake Argyle.
*Note: these birds are of the phalaenoides ssp.*

**NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES - Caprimulgidae**

**Large-tailed Nightjar**  \( Caprimulgus macrurus \)
At least one bird flushed from a daytime roost in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin. Good views obtained in flight.

**KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae**

**Blue-winged Kookaburra**  \( Dacelo leachii \)
Moderately common species seen in Top End and Kimberley sections of the tour.
*Note: we saw ssp leachii.*

**Forest Kingfisher**  \( Todiramphus macleayii \)
Best views were obtained of birds at Fogg Dam, west of Darwin. Others seen in Kakadu NP.
*Note: we observed ssp macleayi*

**Torresian Kingfisher**  \( Todiramphus sordinus \)
A pair of birds seen well in spotting scope on mudflats at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, Darwin. This species is a recent split from the widespread Asian species of Collared Kingfisher.
*Note: ssp sordinus observed.*

**Sacred Kingfisher**  \( Todiramphus sanctus \)
Single bird seen well at Ormiston Gorge, then more commonly seen in Top End and Kimberley sections of tour.

**Red-backed Kingfisher** - E  \( Todiramphus pyrrhopygius \)
First seen on powerlines south of Alice Springs, and at least 7 seen in irrigation country on the final day of the tour in Kununurra.

**Azure Kingfisher**  \( Ceyx azureus \)
Best views obtained of a very confiding individual alongside the boat whilst on the Yellow Waters Cruise in Kakadu NP.
*Note: we saw ssp ruficollaris.*

**Little Kingfisher**  \( Ceyx pusillus \)
Single adult seen well in overhanging vegetation on the edge of the wetland, whilst on the Yellow Waters Cruise in Kakadu NP.
*Note: we saw ssp ramsayi.*

**BEE-EATERS - Meropidae**

**Rainbow Bee-eater**  \( Merops ornatus \)
Common species seen every day whilst on Top End and Kimberley sections of the tour.
FALCONS AND CARACARAS - Falconidae

Nankeen Kestrel  
*Falco cenchroides*
Commonly seen species throughout the tour.

Australian Hobby  
*Falco longipennis*
Adult bird seen distantly at Fogg Dam, others seen in flight elsewhere on tour.  
*Note: paler subspecies murchisonianus was observed.*

Brown Falcon  
*Falco berigora*
Commonly seen species throughout the tour, many different plumage phases noted.

Peregrine Falcon  
*Falco peregrinus*
Single bird passing overhead, Alice Springs. Not seen well and only identified on structure and flight pattern.

COCKATOOS - Cacatuidae

Cockatiel - E  
*Nymphicus hollandicus*
First seen in a flock at Pine Creek, thereafter good numbers seen in various locations throughout the remainder of the tour.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo - E  
*Calyptorhynchus banksii*
Commonly seen on most days of the tour.  
*Note: In the Red Centre we observed ssp samueli, whilst in the Top End they were ssp macrorhynchus.*

Galah - E  
*Eolophus roseicapilla*
Commonly seen on most days of the tour.  
*Note: Top End ssp was kuhli, whilst in the Red Centre we were in a zone of intergradation between ssp kuhli and ssp albiceps. Ssp kuhli has a more pronounced pink orbital ring.*

Long-billed Corella - E  
*Cacatua tenuirostris*
Feral individual seen amongst a flock of Little Corellas, Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

Little Corella  
*Cacatua sanguinea*
Seen most days, especially through Top End and Kimberley.  
*Note: ssp gymnopsis seen in the Red Centre, ssp sanguinea seen in the Top End.*

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
*Cacatua galerita*
Seen every day of tour once we were in Top End and through to the Kimberley.  
*Note: we observed ssp fitzroyi.*

OLD WORLD PARROTS - Psittaculidae

Red-winged Parrot  
*Aprosmictus erythropterus*
Common from east of Darwin onwards through to end of tour.

Mulga Parrot - E  
*Psephotellus varius*
Great views of birds coming in to drink on dusk at an artesian bore north of Alice Springs. Also seen north of Erelunda.

Hooded Parrot - E  
*Psephotellus dissimilis*
A number of birds seen well in the early morning at the township of Pine Creek.

Northern Rosella - E  
*Platycercus venustus*
Adult seen near Howard Springs, and a pair seen near Pine Creek. Also seen in southern Kakadu NP.  
*Note: ssp venustus was seen.*

Australian Ringneck - E  
*Barnardius zonarius*
A common species around Alice Springs and the Red Centre.

View more tours to Australia
Note: ssp zonarius seen in the Red Centre.

**Bourke's Parrot** - E  
*Neopsephotus bourkii*

Several birds seen to come in and drink on dusk at an artesian bore north of Alice Springs. A number of birds were witnessed leaving a waterhole pre-dawn near Yulara as well.

**Varied Lorikeet** - E  
*Psitteuteles versicolor*

After a number of frustratingly brief fly-overs we had satisfying and close views of a few adults feeding in eucalypt blossom east of Timber Creek.

**Red-collared Lorikeet**  
*Trichoglossus rubritorquis*

Commonly seen throughout Top End and west to the Kimberley.

**Budgerigar** - E  
*Melopsittacus undulatus*

Small number of birds seen well, west of Timber Creek. Others were heard in the following days.

**PITTAS - Pittidae**

**Rainbow Pitta** - E  
*Pitta iris*

A magnificent adult seen well in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin.  
*Note: we saw the Top End ssp iris.*

**BOWERBIRDS - Ptilonorhynchidae**

**Western Bowerbird** - E  
*Chlamydera guttata*

Several seen in the West MacDonnell Ranges, west of Alice Springs.  
*Note: we observed the widespread ssp guttata.*

**Great Bowerbird** - E  
*Chlamydera nuchalis*

Common in Top End and west to the Kimberley, many with a preference for human habitation.  
*Note: ssp nuchalis observed.*

**AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS - Climacteridae**

**Black-tailed Treecreeper** - E  
*Climacteris melanurus*

First seen very well as a family party in Kakadu NP, then a number of times for a few days thereafter.  
*Note: ssp melanura was seen.*

**FAIRYWRENS - Maluridae**

**Purple-backed (Variegated) Fairywren** - E  
*Malurus lamberti*

A recent split from Variegated Fairywren, this species was seen well at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.  
*Note: ssp assimilis was seen. We looked unsuccessfully for the Lavender-flanked ssp dulcis and rogersi in Kakadu NP and Hidden Valley NP respectively.*

**Splendid Fairywren** - E  
*Malurus splendens*

Several parties of these birds were seen throughout the Red Centre; however, no full coloured males were evident.  
*Note: ssp musgravi was observed*

**Purple-crowned Fairywren** - E  
*Malurus coronatus*

A superb male was seen beautifully in tall canegrass, Gregory NP. A lot of suitable habitat had been burnt throughout the area so we were fortunate to get onto this bird.  
*Note: nominate ssp coronatus was seen.*

**Red-backed Fairywren** - E  
*Malurus melanocephalus*
Reasonably common in grassy tropical woodlands, we saw several birds; however, no coloured males were in evidence at this time of year.

*Note: we saw ssp cruentatus.*

**White-winged Fairywren** - E  
*Malurus leucopterus*  
A small party of this species, including a beautiful male bird, was encountered south of Alice Springs.  
*Note: we saw ssp leuconotus.*

**Dusky Grasswren** - E  
*Amytornis purnelli*  
Brief spotting scope views were obtained by the group of one individual south of Alice Springs. Unfortunately, no others seen despite visiting suitable habitat elsewhere in the Red Centre.

**HONEYEATERS** - Meliphagidae

**Dusky Myzomela**  
*Myzomela obscura*  
A fairly common small honeyeater seen throughout Darwin and Kakadu NP.  
*Note: we observed ssp obscura.*

**Red-headed Myzomela**  
*Myzomela erythrocephala*  
A striking honeyeater seen over the space of two visits to different mangrove habitats in the Darwin area.  
*Note: ssp erythrocephala was seen.*

**Banded Honeyeater** - E  
*Cissomela pectoralis*  
Increasingly common as we headed west through the Timber Creek and Kununurra areas, always in flowering eucalypt blossom.

**Brown Honeyeater**  
*Lichmera indistincta*  
Common species, especially throughout the Top End and Kimberley sections.  
*Note: ssp indistincta was seen.*

**Little Friarbird**  
*Philemon citreogularis*  
A common component of the avifauna in woodlands throughout the Top End through to the Kimberley.  
*Note: we saw ssp sordidus.*

**Helmeted Friarbird**  
*Philemon buceroides*  
Coastal race gordoni seen in mangroves around Darwin area, race ammitophila (Sandstone Friarbird) seen in sandstone escarpment country in Kakadu NP.  
**Silver-crowned Friarbird** - E  
*Philemon argenticeps*  
Seen over a number of days in tropical woodlands through Kakadu NP and west toward Kununurra.  
*Note: sspargenticeps was observed.*

**Blue-faced Honeyeater**  
*Entomyzon cyanotis*  
A common species seen throughout Top End and toward Kununurra.  
*Note: the subspecies encountered, albibennis, may be split in future from the two eastern Australian ssp to form a separate species – the White-quilled Honeyeater.*

**Black-chinned Honeyeater** - E  
*Melithreptus gularis*  
Heard then seen in woodland in the vicinity of Timber Creek.  
*Note: this distinctive subspecies laetior is often called the Golden-backed Honeyeater.*

**White-throated Honeyeater**  
*Melithreptus albogularis*  
Commonly seen and heard throughout Top End and Kimberley sections of the tour.  
*Note: nominate ssp albogularis seen.*

**Crimson Chat** - E  
*Epithianura tricolor*
A small party of these brightly coloured terrestrial honeyeaters was seen south of Alice Springs.

**Yellow Chat** - *Epthianura crocea*

Wonderful close views obtained of several birds whilst on the Lake Argyle cruise.

*Note: we observed the widespread ssp crocea.*

**Rufous-banded Honeyeater** - *Conopophila albogularis*

First seen in the courtyard area of the hotel in Darwin, and again in Kakadu NP.

**Rufous-throated Honeyeater** - *E* *Conopophila rufogularis*

Quite common in the tropical woodland west of Timber Creek area, often the dominant honeyeater, and almost always in the same species of tree.

**Grey Honeyeater** - *Conopophila whitei*

A single bird heard and then seen in mulga woodland on edge of Alice Springs township. Considering how dry the Red Centre had been, we were quite fortunate to see this very rare species.

**Bar-breasted Honeyeater** - *E* *Ramsayornis fasciatus*

Small number attending flowering trees bordering riparian vegetation in Timber Creek.

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

Reasonably common larger honeyeater throughout Red Centre.

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

Relatively common throughout Red Centre, also seen a number of times between Timber Creek and Kununurra.

*Note: ssp lutea was seen in the Top End, and ssp wayensis in the Red Centre.*

**White-gaped Honeyeater** - *E* *Stomiopera unicolor*

Quite common in garden areas, townships and woodlands from Darwin onwards.

**Singing Honeyeater** - *E* *Gavicalis virescens*

Reasonably common throughout Red Centre, also seen on a few occasions in Timber Creek district.

*Note: we saw ssp forresti in the Red Centre, and ssp cooperi in the Top End.*

**Yellow-tinted Honeyeater** - *Ptilotula flavescens*

First seen south of Pine Creek, thereafter reasonably common in tropical woodland areas.

*Note: ssp flavescens seen.*

**Grey-headed Honeyeater** - *Ptilotula keartlandi*

Best views of this species were obtained at a waterhole in the West MacDonnell Ranges, west of Alice Springs.

**Grey-fronted Honeyeater** - *Ptilotula plumula*

We had excellent views of a pair on in the rocky woodland on the escarpment country above Timber Creek.

*Note: ssp planasi was observed.*

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

A commonly seen honeyeater around open timbered country of the Red Centre.

*Note: ssp leilavalensis was seen.*

**White-lined Honeyeater** - *Meliphaga albilineata*

Two pairs of birds eventually seen well by the whole group in sandstone escarpment country around Ubirr in Kakadu NP.

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**PARDALOTES - Pardalotidae**

**Red-browed Pardalote** - *Pardalotus rubricatus*

Excellent and close views of a few birds in and south of Alice Springs.
Note: ssp rubricatus was observed.

**Striated Pardalote - E**  
_Pardalotus striatus_  
Best views were had in Darwin, otherwise this species was heard much more often than it was seen.  
_Note: ssp uropygialis seen._

### THORBILLS AND ALLIES - Acanthizidae

**Redthroat - E**  
_Pyrroholaemus brunneus_  
A very vocal female bird eventually seen well by all in shrublands on northern outskirts of Alice Springs.

**Weebill - E**  
_Smicrornis brevirostris_  
Australia’s smallest bird species, seen well on a number of occasions.  
_Note: we saw the northern yellow ssp flavescens._

**Mangrove Gerygone**  
_Gerygone levigaster_  
Heard and seen in mangroves along coast in suburban Darwin.  
_Note: ssp levigaster was observed._

**Western Gerygone**  
_Gerygone fusca_  
Seen around Alice Springs in mulga woodland, noted for its fluttering foraging behaviour around the lower, outer canopy of trees.  
_Note: we saw ssp mungi._

**Large-billed Gerygone**  
_Gerygone magrirostris_  
Pair seen well in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin.  
_Note: ssp magrirostris seen._

**Green-backed Gerygone**  
_Gerygone chloronota_  
Single adult seen well and up close in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin.  
_Note: nominate ssp chloronota was seen._

**Inland Thornbill - E**  
_Acanthiza apicalis_  
Reasonably common in mulga woodland in and around Alice Springs area.  
_Note: ssp whitlocki was seen._

**Chestnut-rumped Thornbill - E**  
_Acanthiza uropygialis_  
Heard more than seen, we eventually had satisfactory views of this species in the Alice Springs area.

**Yellow-rumped Thornbill - E**  
_Acanthiza chrysorrhoa_  
Small numbers of this terrestrial species were seen north of Alice Springs on the first day of the tour.  
_Note: ssp normantoni was observed._

**Slaty-backed Thornbill - E**  
_Acanthiza robustirostris_  
A difficult species to track down, often hiding amongst flocks of the aforementioned thornbill species, we eventually obtained good views of at least one bird in mulga woodland, south of Alice Springs.

**Southern Whiteface - E**  
_Aphelocephala leucopsis_  
Small numbers seen with Chiming Wedgebills north of Erldunda.  
_Note: we saw ssp leucopsis._

**Banded Whiteface - E**  
_Aphelocephala nigrigincta_  
We had excellent views of this true desert nomad south of Alice Springs on our first morning, then again with small numbers north of Erldunda.

### PSEUDO-BABBLERS - Pomatostomidae

**Grey-crowned Babbler**  
_Pomatostomus temporalis_
Seen fairly regularly throughout, from Red Centre through to Kimberley.
*Note: we saw ssp rubeculus throughout.*

**White-browed Babbler - E**  *Pomatostomus superciliosus*
Small party seen in arid shrubland north of Erldunda.
*Note: ssp centralis was seen.*

**WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS - Psophodidae**

**Chiming Wedgebill - E**  *Psophodes occidentalis*
Several birds seen in a large loose congregation of up to 120 birds, in arid shrubland north of Erldunda. All appeared to be foraging together en masse.

**Cinnamon Quail-thrush - E**  *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*
A small party of 3 birds consisting of two males and a female seen in stony desert country north of Erldunda.
*Note: we were in the range of ssp cinnamomeum.*

**WOODSWALLOWS, BUTCHERBIRDS AND ALLIES - Artamidae**

**White-breasted Woodswallow**  *Artamus leucorynchus*
Fairly common once we were in the Top End and across to the Kimberley.

**Masked Woodswallow - E**  *Artamus personatus*
Large numbers seen firstly in flight high in the sky near Timber Creek then later down in trees and on eucalypt blossom as we moved west toward the Kimberley.

**Black-faced Woodswallow**  *Artamus cinereus*
Commonly seen in dry country around Red Centre and west of Katherine.
*Note: ssp melanops observed.*

**Little Woodswallow - E**  *Artamus minor*
A few seen in West MacDonnell Ranges, then more in rocky areas around Kakadu NP and Kununurra.
*Note: we saw ssp minor around the Red Centre, and ssp derbyi in the Top End.*

**Australian Magpie**  *Gymnorhina tibicen*
Commonly seen around Red Centre section of the tour, generally absent from Top End.
*Note: ssp tibicen observed.*

**Grey Butcherbird - E**  *Cracticus torquatus*
Single adult seen in shrublands north of Erldunda.
*Note: ssp torquatus was observed.*

**Silver-backed Butcherbird - E**  *Cracticus argenteus*
Pair seen well at Howard Springs Nature Park.
*Note: we observed ssp argenteus.*

**Pied Butcherbird - E**  *Cracticus nigrogularis*
Fairly common species seen throughout the tour.
*Note: ssp picatus was seen.*

**CUCKOOSHRIKES - Campephagidae**

**Black-faced Cuckooshrike**  *Coracina novaehollandiae*
Fairly common species, especially in northern Australia.
*Note: ssp melanops seen.*

**White-bellied Cuckooshrike**  *Coracina papuensis*
Commonly seen species throughout Top End woodlands.

*Note: ssp hypoleucos was observed.*

**White-winged Triller** *Lalage tricolor*
Commonly seen from Pine Creek to end of the tour, often in large numbers and with other species in mixed foraging flocks.

**Varied Triller** *Lalage leucomela*
Commonly seen around Darwin to Kakadu NP in rainforest, riparian woodlands and mangrove habitats.

*Note: ssp rufiventris was observed.*

**SITTELLAS - Neosittidae**

**Varied Sittella** - E *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*
Small flock seen in the tropical woodland west of Katherine, very responsive to pishing.

*Note: We observed ssp leucoptera.*

**WHISTLERS AND ALLIES - Pachycephalidae**

**Grey Whistler** *Pachycephala simplex*
The beautiful song was heard first then the bird seen well in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin, heard elsewhere.

*Note: ssp simplex seen.*

**Mangrove Golden Whistler** - NE *Pachycephala melanura*
Single female seen briefly, however not by all in the party, in riparian vegetation at Adelaide River.

*Note: the robusta ssp was seen, with the female having yellow underparts.*

**Rufous Whistler** - NE *Pachycephala rufiventris*
Quite commonly seen throughout the tour.

*Note: we saw ssp rufiventris in the Red Centre, and ssp falcata in the Top End.*

**Little Shrikethrush** *Colluricincla megarhyncha*
Heard and seen incredibly briefly by only a few in the group, in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin.

*Note: the bird we saw was ssp parvula.*

**Grey Shrikethrush** *Colluricincla harmonica*
Woodland species seen infrequently throughout the tour.

*Note: around the Red Centre we observed the ssp rufiventris with a buff vent, and in the Top End ssp brunnea, which is slightly browner overall.*

**Sandstone Shrikethrush** - E *Colluricincla woodwardi*
A fine adult bird seen exceptionally well up on sandstone escarpment in Gregory NP near Victoria River Roadhouse. The beautiful song from another bird was heard from the boat whilst on the Lake Argyle cruise.

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES - Oriolidae**

**Australasian Figbird** *Sphecotheres vieilloti*
Common around Darwin, Kakadu NP and through to Katherine.

*Note: we observed ssp ashbyi, with bright yellow underparts.*

**Olive-backed Oriole** *Oriolus sagittatus*
Seen on only a few occasions, including a bird nest-building at Aurora Kakadu in South Alligator, Kakadu NP.
Note: ssp affinis was seen on this tour.

**Green Oriole** *Oriolus flavocinctus*
Frequently seen and heard in the Top End and through to Kununurra.
*Note: we saw ssp flavocinctus in the Top End*

**DRONGOS - Dicruridae**

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus*
Frequently seen around Darwin and Kakadu NP areas, often sitting prominently on wires or exposed branches.
*Note: ssp baileyi is the race we saw.*

**FANTAILS - Rhipiduridae**

**Willie Wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys*
A common terrestrial fantail species seen every day of the tour.
*Note: ssp leucophrys was seen around the Red Centre, and ssp picata was seen in northern Australia.*

**Northern Fantail** *Rhipidura rufiventris*
Seen on a few occasions whilst in Kakadu NP area. Also seen at Edith Falls in Nitmiluk NP near Katherine.

**Grey Fantail** *Rhipidura albiscapa*
Unfortunately heard only, in riparian vegetation along Victoria River, Gregory NP.

**Mangrove Fantail** *Rhipidura phasiana*
A single bird heard and seen briefly in mangroves along the coast near Darwin.

**Arafura Fantail** *Rhipidura dryas*
Our best views were had of a close individual in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin. Others were heard elsewhere.

**MONARCH FLYCATCHERS - Monarchidae**

**Magpie-lark** *Grallina cyanoleuca*
A common terrestrial species seen every day of the tour.
*Note: in Red Centre we saw ssp cyanoleuca, whilst in the Top End we saw ssp neglecta.*

**Leaden Flycatcher** *Myiagra rubecula*
Woodland species seen on a number of occasions in the Top End and towards Timber Creek. Not so vocal at this time of year so was seen less than I expected.
*Note: we saw ssp concinna.*

**Broad-billed Flycatcher** *Myiagra ruficollis*
Several birds seen well along riparian vegetation at Fogg Dam and Kakadu NP.

**Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto*
This striking species first seen well in a rainforest remnant east of Darwin, thereafter in mangroves in Darwin and in Kakadu NP. Striking sexual dimorphism.
*Note: ssp melvillensis was observed.*

**Paperbark Flycatcher** *Myiagra nana*
Quite a common species in woodland and riparian vegetation, especially on Yellow Waters Cruise in Kakadu NP.
CROWS, JAYS, AND MAGPIES - Corvidae

Torresian Crow - Corvus orru
Commonly seen and the only corvid in the Top End and through to Kimberley.

Little Crow - E - Corvus bennetti
The only corvid we saw around the Red Centre, and commonly seen whilst we were there.

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH AND APOSTLEBIRD - Corcoracidae

Apostlebird - E - Struthidea cinerea
A small party in Katherine, followed by a larger flock at a watering hole east of Victoria River.
*Note: we saw the ssp dalyi, a geographically isolated population of which occurs in the Top End.*

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS - Petroicidae

Buff-sided Robin - E - Poecilodrya cerviniventris
A striking species, with at least two birds in Creekside vegetation west of Timber Creek, also in hotel gardens in Kununurra.

Mangrove Robin - Peneoenanthe pulverulenta
Heard and seen very briefly by only a few people at mangroves in coastal Darwin.
*Note: ssp alligator seen.*

Hooded Robin - E - Melanodryas cucullata
Seen a few times in arid mulga woodland around the Red Centre.
*Note: we saw ssp westralensis in the Red Centre.*

Lemon-bellied Flyrobin - Microeca flavigaster
Seen around Top End and Kakadu areas, its song often the first indication of its presence.
*Note: we saw the flavigaster ssp.*

Jacky Winter - Microeca fascinans
A pair seen very well near Katherine in recently burnt woodland amongst large assemblage of other species such as Diamond Doves, finches and trillers.
*Note: the pale northern ssp pallida was seen.*

Red-capped Robin - E - Petroica goodenovii
Male and female seen south of Alice Springs on the first day of the tour, thereafter a few more times around the Red Centre.

LARKS - Alaudidae

Horsfield's Bush Lark - Mirafra javanica
Small party seen in the woodland west of Timber Creek, more seen in grasslands surrounding Timber Creek airfield.
*Note: ssp forresti was seen.*

SWALLOWS - Hirundinidae

White-backed Swallow - E - Cheramoeca leucosterna
Small numbers of this striking swallow over Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

Welcome Swallow - Hirundo neoxena
As above species, small number over Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.
*Note: ssp neoxena seen.*

Fairy Martin - Petrochelidon ariel
Only ones seen were part of a nesting colony west of Timber Creek.

**Tree Martin**  
*Petrochelidon nigricans*  
Small numbers seen throughout the tour.  
*Note: ssp neglecta seen.*

**REED WARBLERS AND ALLIES - Acrocephalidae**

**Australian Reed Warbler**  
*Acrocephalus australis*  
A few birds were singing in reeds at Lake Kununurra, eventually seen well.  
*Note: we observed the longer-billed ssp gouldi.*

**GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES - Locustellidae**

**Rufous Songlark - E**  
*Megalurus mathewsi*  
A couple of unobtrusive and silent individuals seen in the Red Centre.  

**Little Grassbird**  
*Megalurus gramineus*  
A few heard and one seen very briefly, flitting between reed patches at Alice Springs Waste Stabilisation Ponds.  
*Note: we saw ssp goulburni.*

**Tawny Grassbird**  
*Megalurus timoriensis*  
Single adult bird seen briefly in tall canegrass alongside Victoria River, west of Timber Creek.

**CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES - Cisticolidae**

**Golden-headed Cisticola**  
*Cisticola exilis*  
Brief views in various grassy locations over the last five days of the tour, from Timber Creek to Kununurra.  
*Note: ssp alexandrae seen.*

**YUHINAS, WHITE-EYES, AND ALLIES - Zosteropidae**

**Canary White-eye - E**  
*Zosterops luteus*  
A few birds seen briefly at mangroves in coastal Darwin.  
*Note: ssp luteus was seen.*

**FLOWERPECKERS - Dicaeidae**

**Mistletoebird**  
*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*  
A common species seen almost every day of the tour.

**WAXBILLS AND ALLIES - Estrildidae**

**Painted Finch - E**  
*Emblema pictum*  
Sadly only one individual of this species was seen all too briefly at a rocky gorge in the West MacDonnell Ranges, west of Alice Springs.  

**Crimson Finch**  
*Neochmia phaeton*  
First seen well in Kakadu NP, thereafter in several places, usually where Pandanus grows.  
*Note: ssp phaeton observed.*

**Star Finch - E - NT**  
*Neochmia ruficauda*
Large groups seen in tall grassed areas, from Victoria River onwards, though Timber Creek and at Kununurra.

*Note: we saw ssp subcalessens.*

**Masked Finch - E** | *Poephila personata*
---|---
Numbers seen in grassy tropical woodland around Kakadu NP, though Pine Creek to Timber Creek and Kununurra.

*Note: the brown-cheeked ssp personata was observed.*

**Long-tailed Finch - E** | *Poephila acuticauda*
---|---
Reasonably common in grassy woodland areas from Kakadu NP onwards to end of the tour. Both red-billed and yellow-billed forms seen.

*Note: both acuticauda and hecki ssp were seen.*

**Zebra Finch** | *Taeniopygia guttata*
---|---
Reasonably common species around Alice Springs and Red Centre.

**Double-barred Finch - E** | *Taeniopygia bichenovii*
---|---
Not uncommon but seen sporadically from Darwin area onwards, usually in small groups.

*Note: we saw the black-rumped ssp annulosa.*

**Gouldian Finch - E - EN** | *Erythrura gouldiae*
---|---
This stunning species was seen on quite a few occasions, from near Katherine through Timber Creek to Kununurra. Both red-faced and black-faced forms seen.

**Yellow-rumped Mannikin - E** | *Lonchura flaviprymna*
---|---
A few individuals seen only briefly with Star and Gouldian Finches, in tall grassland at Timber Creek Airfield.

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** | *Lonchura castaneothorax*
---|---
Small numbers seen at Lake Kununurra, first juveniles then a group of adults.

**WAGTAILS AND PIPITS - Motacillidae**

**Australian Pipit** | *Anthus australis*
---|---
Only seen in open areas through Red Centre section of the tour.

*Note: we observed the widespread ssp australis.*

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**Mammals**

**KANGAROOS, WALLABIES - Macropodidae**

**Black Wallaroo - E** | *Macropus bernardus*
---|---
Single individual seen very briefly high on sandstone escarpment country near Ubirr, Kakadu NP. This species is restricted to the Arnhem Land sandstone escarpment country of the Top End, and Kakadu NP encompasses most of this distribution.

**Antilopine Wallaroo - E** | *Macropus antilopinus*
---|---
A large and loose mob of this distinctive, sandy-coloured species of kangaroo was watched quite closely whilst we were en route to Victoria River Roadhouse.

**Common Wallaroo - E** | *Macropus robustus*
---|---
This stocky and shaggy looking kangaroo was seen on a number of occasions through the Red Centre and west of Timber Creek; the best example was of a male, female and joey near Lake Argyle.

**Agile Wallaby - E** | *Macropus agilis*
A common species across the Top End and seen frequently.

**Short-eared Rock Wallaby** - *Petrogale brachyotis*
Great close views on rocky outcrops whilst on Lake Argyle Cruise. A single animal also seen distantly on a rocky defile west of Timber Creek.

**Wilkins’ Rock Wallaby** - *Petrogale wilkinsi*
Excellent close views of a male at Ubirr Rock Art Walk in Kakadu NP. This is a recent species split from the Short-eared Rock Wallaby from further west in the Kimberley region of northern Australia.

**Black-footed Rock Wallaby** - *Petrogale lateralis*
Close views of this distinctive wallaby seen at the Old Telegraph Station in Alice Springs as well as at Simpsons Gap, just west of Alice Springs.

**WOLVES, COYOTE, FOXES, JACKALS - Canidae**

**Dingo** - *Canis lupus*
A couple of close encounters with the wild dog at the Old Telegraph Station in Alice Springs, including some howling animals. Also seen in Kakadu NP.