



The gorgeous Blue-breasted Fairywren is endemic to southwestern Australia and is a real poser (Mark Van Beirs)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA INCLUDING CHRISTMAS ISLAND

3/7 – 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS



The enigmatic Black Grasswren was without a doubt the Bird of the Trip (Mark Van Beirs)



The quaint Abbott's Booby looks quite different compared to other boobies (Mark Van Beirs)

The little known and hard to see Black Grasswren was without a doubt the Bird of the Tour, not only because we saw this secretive and rare, iconic species so well, but also because of the major effort involved in getting to its remote haunts in the wilderness of the Kimberley in the extreme northwest of Australia. The Christmas Island pre trip produced amazing views of marvels like Red-tailed and exquisite "golden" White-tailed Tropicbirds, Christmas Island Frigatebird, the antediluvial-looking Abbott's Booby and Christmas Island Boobook. Lovely Christmas Island offered easy birding in a relaxed atmosphere with astonishing observations of high quality species. The first part of the main Western Australia tour concentrated on finding the endemics and specialities of the southwest where excellent species like Freckled and Musk Ducks, Tawny Frogmouth, the cute Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Black-eared Cuckoo, Hooded Dotterel, Square-tailed Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Boobook, the sneaky Noisy Scrubbird, Western Bowerbird, Blue-breasted and Red-winged Fairywrens, Western Bristlebird, Black-throated Whipbird, Western Quail-thrush, Crested Shrike-tit (western variety), White-breasted Robin and White-backed Swallow obliged. Black Grasswren, Black-backed Bittern and the gorgeous Gouldian Finch were the highlights of the northern section which concentrated on the Broome area, the Kimberley and the Kununurra surroundings. Here we also found quality species like Australian Bustard, Spinifex Pigeon, White-quilled Rock Pigeon, Brolga, Black-breasted Buzzard, Barking Owl, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Great Bowerbird, Purple-crowned Fairywren, Yellow Chat, Kimberley Honeyeater, Buff-sided Robin and Long-tailed, Masked and Star Finches. Australia is parrot country par excellence and on our travels through the west we enjoyed an amazing

selection with splendours like Red-tailed Black, Baudin's Black and Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, Western Corella, Regent Parrot, Red-capped Parrot, Western and Northern Rosellas, Rock Parrot and Purple-crowned and Varied Lorikeets. The wader spectacle at Broome was impressive and included Far Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper and Grey-tailed Tattler next to better known and more widespread shorebirds. Mammals are not a great feature of this tour, but we were able to add Southern Brown Bandicoot, Western Grey Kangaroo, Common Wallaroo, Short-eared Rock Wallaby and Irrawaddy Dolphin to the list. Several remarkable reptiles like Blue-tongued and King's Skinks, Gilbert's Dragon, Freshwater Crocodile and Green Tree Snake were also noted. 309 species were recorded on the tour.



The Blue Robber Crab offers quite a sight (Mark Van Beirs)

The group gathered for the pre tour extension to famous Christmas Island at Perth airport. The check in was quite a laborious affair as a lot of Christmas Islanders going home carried extra boxes containing precious food. After a smooth flight we arrived at the 135 km² large island, which is situated just 350 km south of the Indonesian island of Java. Two cars were waiting for us and after a hearty dinner we had our first try at the endemic Christmas Island Boobook. We heard our target not far away in the forest, but we couldn't entice it closer, so we left it in peace for the following evening. Some really impressive Blue Robber (or Coconut) Crabs showed very well.



The male Christmas Island Frigatebird is easy to identify (Mark Van Beirs),



while the female needs a little more scrutiny (Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn we had positioned ourselves at a strategic viewpoint on the coast, from where we obtained cracking views at dozens and dozens of frigatebirds. Most were Great Frigatebirds, but we identified fair numbers of Christmas Island Frigatebirds and also found two male Lesser amongst them... a terrific frigatebird identification workshop! Hundreds of Red-footed and smaller numbers of Brown Boobies flew past and a couple of prehistoric-looking Abbot's Boobies showed overhead. Over the ocean we noted a handful of Brown Noddies and a pod of Short-beaked Common Dolphins. The nearby trees held several ponderous Christmas Island Imperial Pigeons, several Island Thrushes of the endemic race *erythropleura* were hopping about on the short grass and a few endemic Blyth's Flying Foxes were flitting about. Very smart golden-hued White-tailed Tropicbirds (Golden Bosunbirds) were displaying overhead, sometimes together with the larger, pure white Red-tailed Tropicbirds. After a scrumptious breakfast we visited a stretch of woodland where Christmas Island White-eyes were feeding on papaya fruits and introduced Java Sparrows allowed good



We couldn't get better views of the endemic Christmas Island Boobook (Mark Van Beirs)

looks. At the Golf Course we obtained excellent scope views of both males and females Christmas Island Frigatebirds. Other interesting species included Red Junglefowl (feral here), Christmas Island Swiftlet, White-breasted Waterhen, Pacific Reef Heron, Nankeen Kestrel and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. After a break in the heat of the day we explored the forested plateau, where a Christmas Island Goshawk performed ever so well by posing in the open. Depending on the followed taxonomy, this bird of prey is sometimes considered a species in its own right or sometimes treated as a race of the widespread Brown Goshawk. A dozen occupied nests of Abbott's Boobies were found high up in the Syzgium trees. We were able to witness some interesting family life and some intricate display of these decidedly different looking boobies, whose only breeding place on earth is this small island. Several Common Emerald Doves were feeding on the roadsides. After dinner we tried again for the Christmas Island Boobook and soon we enjoyed fantastic looks at a pair of these attractive, endemic nightbirds at close range. A truly great experience and a fitting end of a fantastic day!

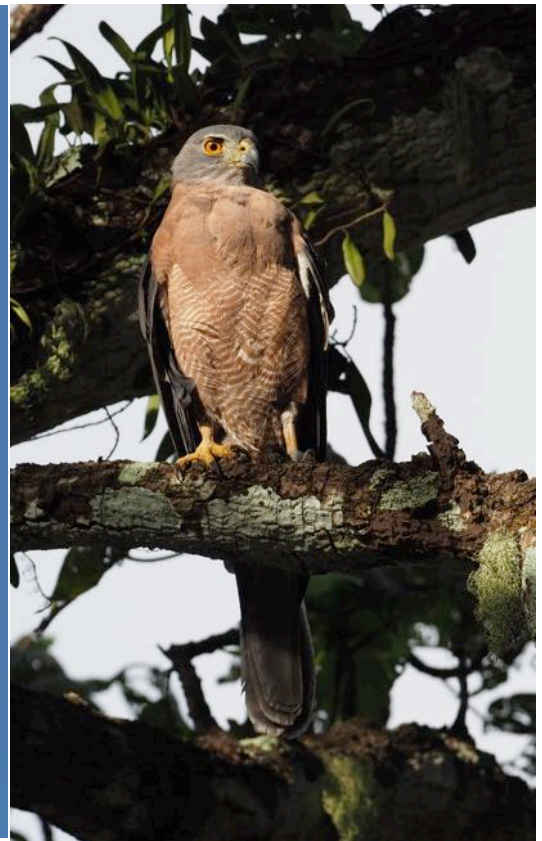


The fulvus race of the White-tailed Tropicbird is a real gem (Mark Van Beirs)

Our second full day on Christmas Island was a very enjoyable one without any stress, as we had already seen all the specialities of the island. We revisited several of the sites, explored others and obtained excellent views of most of the Christmas Island marvels. We birded near the infamous detention centre, where boat people await the verdict of the Australian immigration officers. A concentration of c30 Christmas Island Imperial Pigeons drinking and bathing was quite a sight. Three adult and two young Java Sparrows were attracted to the same water source. We spent some time at a viewpoint to obtain perfect views of the incredibly attractive Golden Bosunbirds (the *fulvus* race of White-tailed Tropicbirds). Bizarre Abbott's Boobies allowed terrific views both in flight and on their nests in the tall plateau trees. Elegant Red-footed Boobies performed nicely at and near their tree nests of which many contained a fluffy chick. At the edge of sea cliffs we found breeding, smart-looking Brown Boobies. New birds for the list included Great and Intermediate Egrets, a Greater Sand Plover, Common Sandpiper and Barn Swallow. Endemic Blyth's Flying Foxes were regular seen overhead.



Christmas Island Imperial Pigeons are attracted to fresh water (Mark Van Beirs)



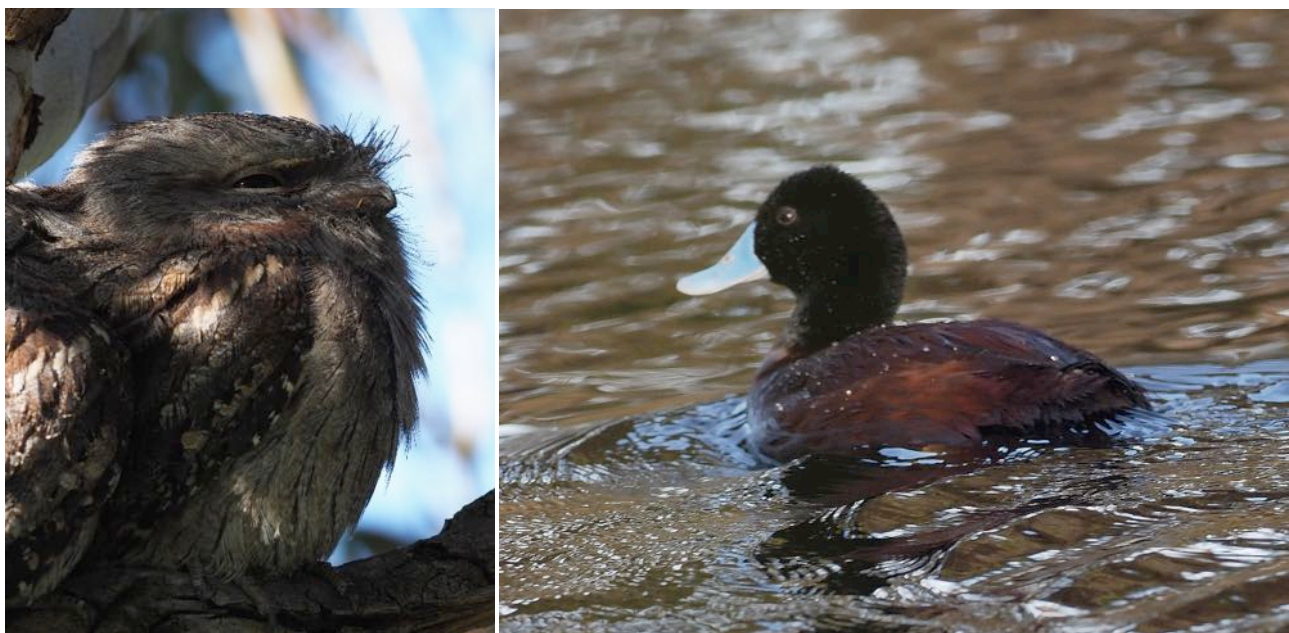
Abbott's Boobies have a peculiar silhouette; the Christmas Island Goshawk is an inquisitive species (Mark Van Beirs)

On our final morning on Christmas Island we returned to several of the more interesting sites and had a ball admiring the antics of Abbott's, Red-footed and Brown Boobies, Christmas Island Frigatebirds, Christmas Island Imperial Pigeons, a confiding immature Christmas Island Goshawk and a really impressive Blue Robber Crab. The wild coastal scenery was intriguing and inspiring and in the afternoon we waved goodbye to fabulous Christmas Island and flew to the busy city of Perth, the capital of Western Australia.



Red-footed Boobies abound on Christmas Island; immaculate Red-tailed Tropicbirds favour coastal cliffs (Mark Van Beirs)

The main part of the tour started at some birdy, reed-lined lakes within the city of Perth, where, in the early morning, we amassed a high quality list of waterbirds. The highlight was without a doubt the terrific Freckled Duck, which showed so splendidly. No fewer than six of these rarely-encountered ducks were found as they were roosting on logs at the lake edge, only meters away. Several lumbering Musk Ducks showed well, as did two attractive drakes Blue-billed Duck. A local bird lady, very kindly, showed us three fantastic, very well camouflaged Tawny Frogmouths on their day roost, the male of which was sitting on its nest, c10m up in a tree. Great stuff! Other goodies included Black Swan, Australian Shelduck, Pink-eared, Maned and Pacific Black Ducks, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Hardhead, introduced Spotted and Laughing Doves, Australian Swampphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Australasian, Hoary-headed and Great Crested Grebes, Pied Stilt, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Australian White Ibis, Nankeen Night Heron, White-faced Heron, some smart-looking Australian Pelicans, Swamp Harrier, Laughing Kookaburra (introduced here), Rainbow Lorikeet, Splendid Fairywren, Brown, New Holland and Singing Honeyeaters, raucous Red and Western Wattlebirds, Striated Pardalote, Willie Wagtail, Australian Raven, Welcome



This Tawny Frogmouth was roosting at eye-level in a Perth city park: drake Blue-billed Duck is an attractive species (Mark Van Beirs)

Swallow, Tree Martin, Australian Reed Warbler and Silvereye. After this marvellous, rather overwhelming introduction to the birdlife of southwestern Australia, we drove to the nearby Victoria Dam, where the eucalypt dominated woodland produced attractive Galahs, lovely Western Spinebills, Gilbert's Honeyeater, Weebill, Western Gerygone, Black-faced Cuckooshrike and a striking Western Yellow Robin. In the afternoon we travelled south to the famous Dryandra woodland. A first, short exploration gave us Australian Ringneck, Grey Fantail, a cracking male Scarlet Robin and Australian Pipit.



The Western Spinebill is endemic to southwestern Australia and is one of the more colourful-looking honeyeaters (Mark Van Beirs)

Our morning in the Dryandra Reserve started under rather cold and overcast conditions, so it took a while for the birds to become active. We took several walks through the appealing, open eucalypt woodland. A marvellous Square-tailed Kite sailed over at canopy level and gave tremendous, prolonged views. We scoped a pair of perched, impressive Carnaby's Black Cockatoos and could discern the distinctive, short

upper mandibles. Several pairs of showy Rufous Treecreepers performed beautifully, as did a family party of glorious Blue-breasted Fairywrens. We also obtained good looks at Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Bush Stone-curlew, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, White-browed Scrubwren (the local form is sometimes treated as a separate species: Spotted Scrubwren), Inland, Western and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Shrikethrush, Restless Flycatcher and Jacky Winter. Several Western Grey Kangaroos were also noted. In early afternoon we continued our travels south and made our way to the well-known Stirling Range. A short stop at a shallow saltwater lake gave us a pair of Hooded Dotterel (of the distinctive dark-backed western race *tregallasi*) with a chick. Although they were quite distant the scope views were much appreciated. While waiting for our terrace dinner at the local roadhouse, we were able to admire several colourful Purple-crowned Lorikeets feeding in a low, flowering eucalypt.



Rufous Treecreeper and Purple-crowned Lorikeet are both specialities of the southwest (Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn we were walking along a wide track through a lovely area of montane heath at the base of one of Western Australia's highest mountains, keeping our ears wide open for the distinctive song of the very secretive Black-throated Whipbird. We heard the creaking cartwheel call regularly and after a bit of effort, we all managed to get pretty good looks at this very localized mega skulker. Attractive White-cheeked and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters were much easier to see. Later we took a walk through a stretch of open mallee woodland where a rarely-seen Black-eared Cuckoo was the highlight. This usually hard to find brood parasite showed very well in the scope. A patch of flowering eucalypt bushes was visited by several gorgeous Red-capped Parrots. We had a few encounters with delicate Elegant Parrots and also recorded Shining Bronze Cuckoo, a smart Little Eagle, Spotted Harrier, Western Rosella, Varied Sitella and Western Whistler. After a break in the heat of the day, we explored the wooded surroundings of our lodgings and had a fun time observing the activity at the birdbaths as dozens of exceedingly colourful Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Splendid Fairywren, Brown-headed and Gilbert's Honeyeaters together with several already encountered species could be admired drinking or bathing. Several remarkable Regent Parrots were hanging about, but best of all was a male Crested Shrike-tit (of the distinctive western race *leucogaster*) that posed for us in the top of a small tree. A party of raucous, seemingly languid Red-tailed Black Cockatoos interrupted our outside dinner at dusk. A nightwalk produced excellent views of an Australian Boobook.



The Elegant Parrot is an unobtrusive denizen of open woodlands (Mark Van Beirs)



White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairywren obliged beautifully at Porongurup National Park (Mark Van Beirs)

As the sun was struggling with the horizon we were listening to the song of Western Fieldwrens in a nice stretch of heath, but the birds kept in hiding and didn't want to cooperate. Our first Brown Goshawk of the tour flew leisurely past allowing nice looks. A fairly brief stop in the beautiful Porongurup National Park with its impressive stands of huge Karri eucalypts produced excellent looks at localized and tame White-breasted Robins and a family of adorable Red-winged Fairywrens. Male and female Western Whistler showed well as did a single Rufous Treecreeper. We continued our travels west and explored the scenic surroundings of Rocky Gully and Lake Muir, where several parties of restricted-range Western Corellas were admired at close range. Some enormous Emus walked close to the road and a confiding party of cute Varied Sitellas kept the photographers very happy. In late afternoon we rolled into the coastal town of Albany, where a Common Bronzewing was spotted.



Western Corellas are very localized; the largest bird in Australia is the stately Emu (Mark Van Beirs)

Next morning, a bout of seawatching at The Gap was, sadly, a fairly useless affair as a strong wind blew from totally the wrong direction. A very distant albatross was the only bird noted... Reed-lined Lake Seppings

produced some attractive Blue-billed Duck, several bizarre Musk Duck and a few eye-catching Western Rosellas. We admired the large colony of Australian White and Straw-necked Ibises with its attending Whistling Kites. The nearby coast gave us a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers and a few imposing Pacific Gulls, next to Silver Gull, Caspian and Great Crested Terns, Australian Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, lots of Australian Pelicans and Pied Oystercatcher. The rest of the day was spent in the heathlands and along the scenic rocky coast and sandy bays of the famous Two Peoples Bay National Park, but, frustratingly, the high winds kept the passerines in hiding. Some seawatching yielded pretty good looks at Black-browed and Shy Albatrosses and Australasian Gannets.



The attractive Brush Bronzewing is restricted to coastal sites (Mark Van Beirs)

We spent the whole of the following day searching for two mega skulkers in the coastal heathlands near Albany. Just after dawn we were lucky enough to connect with a Western Bristlebird that was briskly walking along a sandy track, allowing us pretty decent looks. Later we saw this very localized endemic again, but only briefly. One of Australia's hardest birds to see, but definitely not to hear, is the rare Noisy Scrubbird, which is endemic to this corner of southern Western Australia. With lots of stamina and overdoses of patience, we all eventually had views of this extremely secretive bird as it dashed across a sandy track amidst dense thickets. A Black-throated Whipbird showed uncharacteristically well again. Endemic Western

Wattlebirds were visiting the flowering Banksias and a Red-eared Firetail showed briefly early in the morning. In between working on the two megas, we also found Brown Quail, several attractively-patterned Brush Bronzings, Eastern Osprey, lovely Southern Brown Bandicoots and several King's Skinks. The return drive to our Albany accommodation was enlivened by a foraging Yellow-billed Spoonbill.



We found Baudin's and Carnaby's Black Cockatoos feeding side by side (Mark Van Beirs)

As we hadn't connected with the localized, endemic Baudin's Black Cockatoo yet, we visited the beautiful Porongurup National Park early in the morning, but, sadly, a rather dense mist sabotaged our efforts. Luckily, after a couple of hours, the mist lifted a bit and soon enough we first heard and then saw our target. Quite a relief! On our way north we bumped in to a group of c20 more of these marvellous cockatoos feeding in pines along the roadside. We managed excellent looks at these splendid birds with their distinctive elongated upper mandible. A short stop in the Stirling Range gave us cracking looks at an Australian Owlet-Nightjar sunning itself in its nesthole. Glorious stuff. A couple of Regent Parrots also obliged as they were foraging just over our heads. On the way north we also added Crested Pigeon, Little Crow, Purple-gaped Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Miner to the tally. The rest of the day was mainly spent travelling north into the wheatbelt.



This adorable Australian Owlet-Nightjar was sunning itself at the entrance of its nesthole (Mark Van Beirs)

An early start took us to a very nice, remote area of mulga habitat at the edge of the outback by dawn. We explored the open woodland and had great looks at a pair of Spotted Pardalotes feeding in a small eucalypt, at several Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, at a well-behaved Crested Bellbird, at a cracking male and a subtle female Red-capped Robin and at a singing Gilbert's Whistler. Brown Falcon and Purple-gaped Honeyeater were also about, but, sadly, we only heard the much-wanted Copperback Quail-thrush in the distance. In the afternoon we continued travelling north to the hamlet of Kookynie, where a hungry, stubborn horse made us wait a bit before we could check in into the rather quaint Grand Hotel.



The male Red-capped Robin is a real jewel (Mark Van Beirs)

Next morning, the open woodland with its thin cover of undergrowth near our accommodation produced several goodies. A pair of Western Quail-thrushes played hide and seek and didn't cooperate that well. Luckily, most of the group managed to get at least a glimpse of this attractively patterned, fast moving ground dweller. A couple of smart-looking Western Bowerbirds showed off their intricate plumage details. A lovely Redthroat obliged as it was singing its heart out in a small tree as did a male Rufous Whistler. When the temperature began to rise we packed up and started our long return journey towards Perth. A couple of sedate Emus crossed the highway and several striking Wedge-tailed Eagles were pecking at roadkills, allowing for excellent views. Upon arriving at our accommodation several unexpected White-backed Swallows were noted overhead.



Wedge-tailed Eagles were regularly encountered on our travels (Mark Van Beirs)

After an early start we reached the Victoria Dam area near Perth, where we tried to get better looks at the secretive and unobtrusive Red-eared Firetail. We heard and glimpsed our target in the creek vegetation, but nothing more, so we were left rather frustrated. Family parties of Splendid and Red-winged Fairywren and a White-breasted Robin obliged beautifully instead. In late morning we drove north to the coastal village of Lancelin. After checking in into our cozy hotel, we explored the surroundings and soon found four well-behaved Rock Parrots feeding on a nearby lawn. The scope views of these localized beauties were very much appreciated. We spent a bit of time at a lookout and found good numbers of Brown Noddies and Bridled Terns, a pair of Eastern Ospreys, a White-bellied Sea Eagle, several very distant shearwaters and a couple of really large whales (Blue or Fin) loafing in the far distance.



Rock Parrots are always found close to the coast and feed exclusively on the ground (Mark Van Beirs)

Early in the morning, we had another good look at the ocean and the nearby island and observed the same selection of seabirds. Of the Rock Parrots not a sniff. The only new species for the trip was White-winged Fairywren, of which a moulting male and a female obliged very nicely. We then retraced our steps to Perth, where we briefly explored one of the local parks. Nothing of note was added to the tally, so we made our way to the airport to catch the afternoon flight to Broome, where the next chapter of the tour started. We were joined by Belgian Joris, who was going to be my co-driver on the long, rather arduous drives through the remote habitats of the northwest.

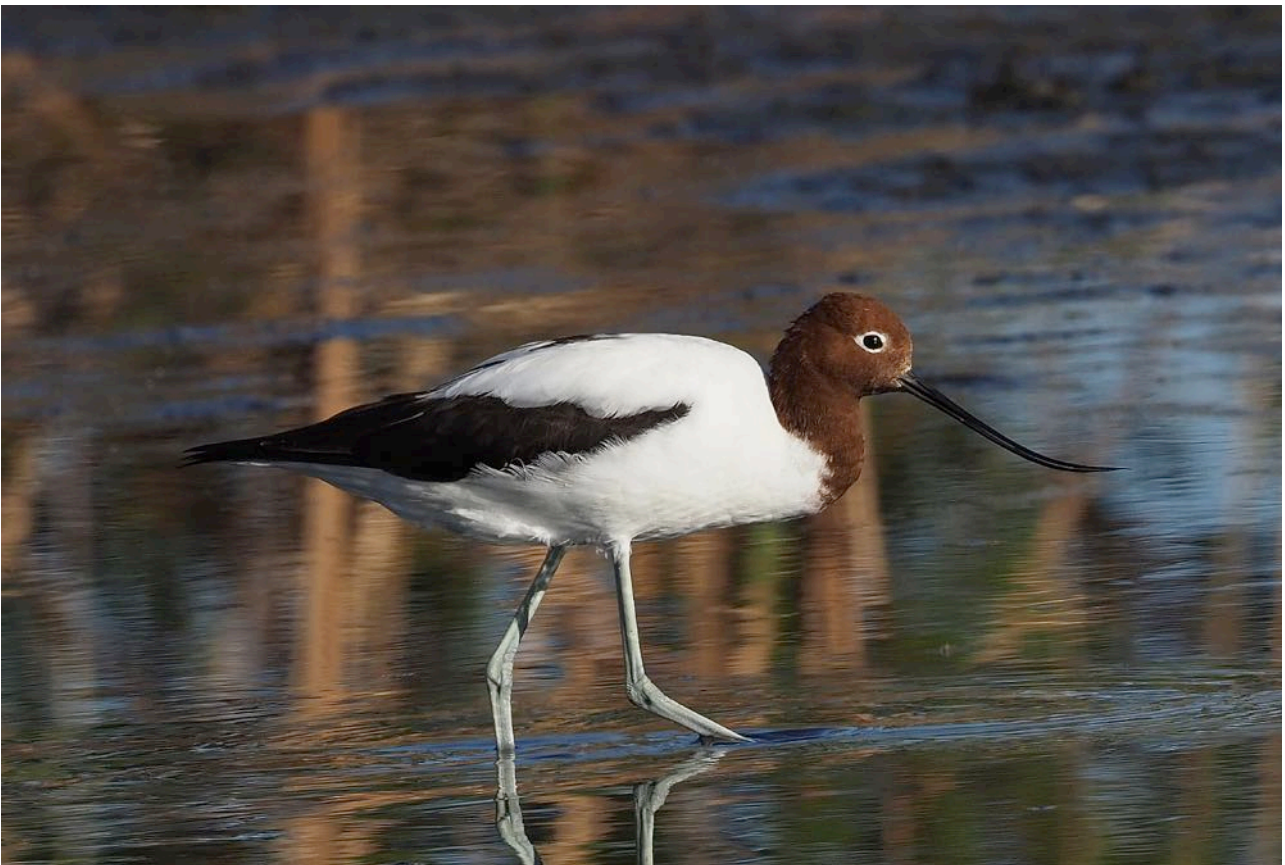


The Dusky Gerygone and the Broad-billed Flycatcher favour mangrove habitat (Mark Van Beirs)



The Broome wader spectacle is often a bit overwhelming (Mark Van Beirs)

Shortly after dawn we explored a nice stretch of mangrove, where we picked up several goodies like Red-headed Myzomela, the localized Dusky Gerygone, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Broad-billed Flycatcher, Lemon-bellied Flyrobin (the white-bellied Kimberley race is sometimes split off as Kimberley Flyrobin),



A Red-necked Avocet in breeding plumage is a sight to behold (Mark Van Beirs)

Canary White-eye and Mistletoebird, next to more widespread species like Brahminy Kite, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Friarbird and Torresian Crow. We also got one of our 4x4 vehicles stuck in the soft sand, but luckily it didn't take too long to dig it out. On the return drive a family of stately Brolga, a rarely-seen Black-breasted Buzzard and lots of Black and Whistling Kites were noted. We timed the tide right to be able to admire the famous shorebird spectacle at the edges of Roebuck Bay and had a great time scoping quality waders like gorgeous Red-necked Avocets in breeding plumage, impressive Far Eastern Curlew, lots of Great Knot, small numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, adorable Terek Sandpipers and charming Red-capped Plovers. Better known shorebirds included Grey Plover, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Ruddy Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Grey-tailed Tattler, Marsh Sandpiper and Greenshank. A good selection of terns was found as Australian Gull-billed, Caspian, Greater and Lesser Crested, Little, Common and Whiskered Terns were all about. A couple of Brown Boobies were fishing offshore and several dark morph Pacific Reef Herons were foraging along the rocky coast. A modestly-clad Great Bowerbird showed well and a small pod of Irrawaddy Dolphins could be scoped. We also located a strangely-shaped Northern Blue-tongued Skink. In late afternoon we paid a visit to the local sewage works where Plumed Whistling Duck, attractively-patterned Pink-eared Duck, several Hardhead, Black-fronted Dotterel, a single Little Curlew and a group of Little Corellas rounded off an excellent day.



Amongst the different tern species we found good numbers of Lesser Crested Terns (Mark Van Beirs)

An early morning visit to the Broome waterfront mangroves produced White-breasted Whistler, Mangrove Fantail and brief looks at a Dusky Gerygone. And then we started the long drive east into the famous

Kimberley. The stretch till Derby went smoothly and added a dainty Black-shouldered Kite to the list. A stop at a wide river gave us dozens of stately Brolga, a White-necked Heron, Intermediate Egret, Collared Sparrowhawk, a large group of Galahs, lots of Fairy Martins and a dozen or so Freshwater Crocodiles. The Derby sewage ponds provided us with a nice selection of waterbirds including new species like Red-kneed Dotterel, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Glossy Ibis, Royal Spoonbill and also White-breasted Woodswallow and Double-barred Finch. The rest of the day we drove along the Gibb River road eastwards. On the way we found three male Australian Bustards, a Bush Stone-curlew, four fabulous Black-breasted Buzzards, Blue-faced Honeyeaters and Grey-crowned Babblers. We arrived in late afternoon at the Mount Elizabeth Station, where a nightwalk produced a splendid, well-behaved Tawny Frogmouth.



Galahs are delightfully common in Western Australia (Mark Van Beirs)

A pre-breakfast stroll at the Mount Elizabeth Station proved to be quite birdy. We obtained excellent scope views of smart Northern Rosellas and admired flowering gum trees holding Silver-crowned Friarbird and Banded, White-throated, Rufous-throated, White-gaped and Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters. 30+ White-breasted Woodswallows were sitting tightly together offering a splendid spectacle. White-bellied Cuckooshrike, White-winged Triller and several Agile Wallabies also obliged. After a scrumptious breakfast we packed up and drove into the Kimberley to the Drysdale River Station. At a river crossing we observed a good selection of birds coming to drink. Very nice Crimson, Long-tailed and Double-barred Finches together with several species of already seen honeyeaters showed particularly well, while a gaudy Blue-winged Kookaburra kept an eye on things. Just before midday we arrived at our destination, where we enjoyed a fairly relaxed afternoon in the surroundings of our lodgings. We found a couple of male Purple-crowned Fairywrens, but they were both in non-breeding plumage, showing just a tiny bit of purple on the forehead. A Great Bowerbird was active at his bower and we also noted Oriental Dollarbird, a female Red-backed Fairywren and a showy Paperbark Flycatcher. We hit the sack early as a middle of the night departure was needed for our major target.



White-breasted Woodswallows often like bunching up; smart Crimson Finches visited remaining pools in the heat of the day (Mark Van Beirs)

We left our lodgings in the middle of the night and after a long and rather gruelling drive reached the Mitchell Plateau National Park before dawn. We immediately walked to a territory of the much wanted Black Grasswren and it didn't take eagle-eyed Joris too long to find a perched up female in the mid distance. Most of the group managed scope views before it disappeared, never to be seen again. We quickly made our way to another territory, where, after some respectful and patient waiting, we obtained excellent views of a male sitting on top of a rocky outcrop, c80 meters away. It stayed there for a while, allowing everyone to get satisfactory looks of this rarely-encountered speciality. While searching for the Grasswren we had really nice looks at a White-quilled Rock Pigeon and a Red-backed Kingfisher. In the nearby lush, riverine vegetation along the creek we managed scope studies of the highly localized, recently-described Kimberley Honeyeater. We stayed at this enchanting spot for a while and let the birds come to us. Torresian Imperial Pigeon, Bar-breasted Honeyeater, Little Woodswallow, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Spangled Drongo, Northern Fantail, Leaden Flycatcher and a pair of splendid Buff-sided Robins all performed very well. When the sun really started to beat down, we retraced our steps via the terribly corrugated track to the cold drinks and refreshing showers of the Drysdale River Station. What a day it had been!



Unobtrusive White-quilled Rock Pigeons and Olive-backed Orioles were found on the Mitchell Plateau while we were looking for the grasswren (Mark Van Beirs)



The male Purple-crowned Fairywren was only just moulting into his breeding attire (Mark Van Beirs)

Before sunrise we were already enjoying perfect scope views of a pair of wonderful Barking Owls in the nearby riverine forest. We also spotted Red-winged Parrot, Purple-crowned Fairywren and Bar-breasted Honeyeater here. After an excellent, tasty breakfast we loaded our faithful vehicles and started the long drive to the town of Kununurra. The rough, unpaved track tested our backs (the infamous Kimberley massage!), but we endured. Short stops at river crossings gave us cracking looks at terrific Spinifex Pigeons, a stately Black-necked Stork, gorgeous Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and modestly-clad Grey-fronted Honeyeaters. In

late afternoon we arrived at our well-situated hotel, which allowed great looks at a reed-edged lake from the garden. Wandering Whistling Duck, Green Pygmy Goose and Comb-crested Jacana were new for the ever-growing list.



Comb-crested Jacana and Common Wallaroo enlivened the Lake Argyle boat trip (Mark Van Beirs)

Our very enjoyable boat trip on Lake Argyle produced a mouth-watering list of goodies. The water level was very low this year, which resulted in a lack of several marsh-loving species. We had a tasty breakfast on the boat in a secluded bay where Golden-headed Cisticola and rare Pictorella Mannikins showed, next to well-behaved Red-kneed Dotterel, Comb-crested Jacana and Pied Heron. We explored the shoreline of several islands resulting in excellent observations of species like Magpie Goose, Raja Shelduck, White-quilled Rock Pigeon, Common Wallaroo and cute Short-eared Rock Wallabies. A hot walk on a mud-fringed low-lying island gave us a nice list of waterbirds, but the main species of interest here was the sublime Yellow Chat. About ten of these very attractive and very special birds were seen, including several exquisite males. A couple of Australian Pratincoles sat in the distance. After a break during the hotter hours, we visited several sites in the Kununurra area. The highlight was a fantastic male Black-backed Bittern in breeding condition with his bright red lore! This very rarely seen bird showed extremely well as it clambered about along a reedy edge. We also obtained terrific views of gorgeous Star Finches and Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. A Brush Cuckoo sat up for great looks and several White-browed Crakes walked about on the floating marsh vegetation. An attractive Gilbert's Dragon was found creeping through a patch of grass.



White-browed Crakes were easily located on lily-covered ponds; Raja Shelduck favour more open lakes (Mark Van Beirs)



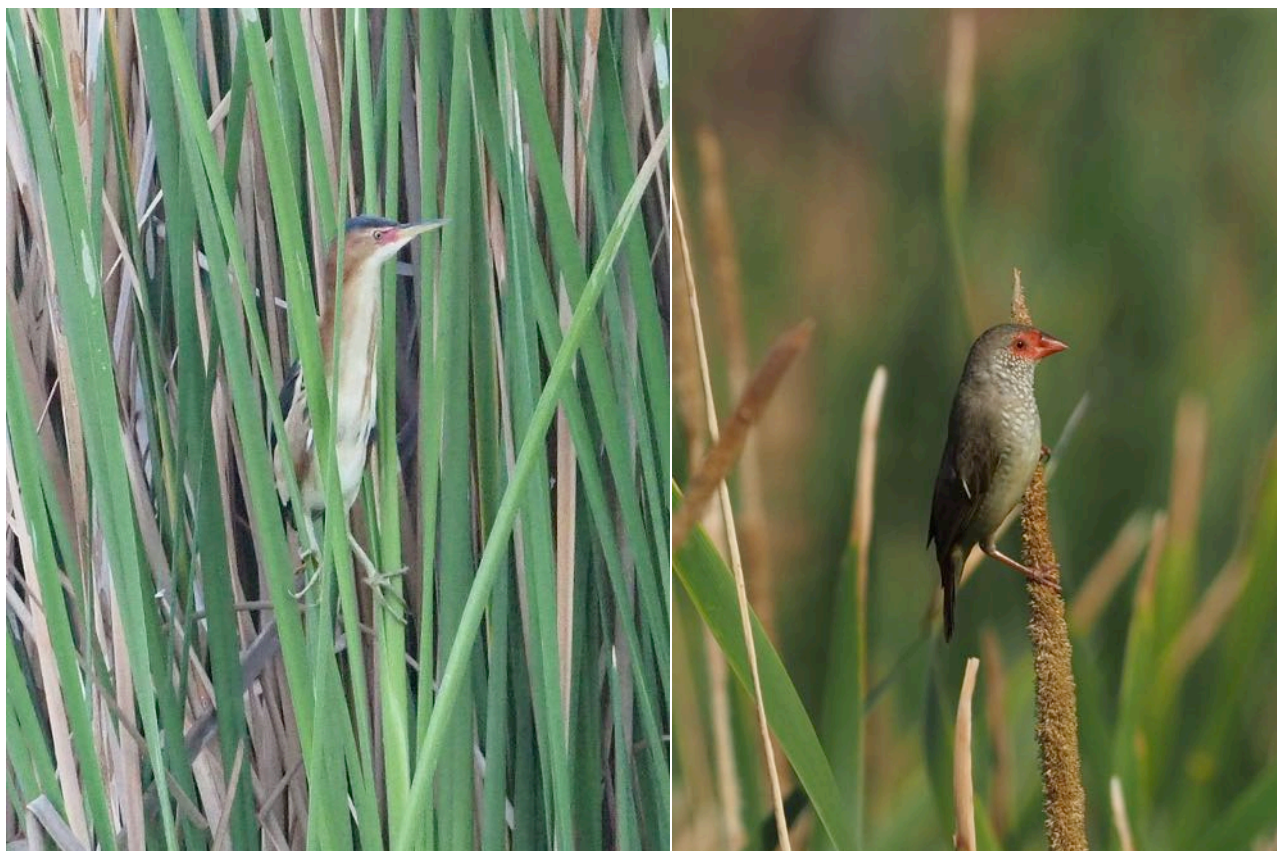
The glorious Yellow Chat inhabits truly inhospitable habitat (Mark Van Beirs)

A very early start got us to the Wyndham area by dawn. At the famous caravan park we waited, full of expectation, at the puddles for the goodies to come and drink. A sedate Pheasant Coucal was the first bird to come in and it was soon followed by scores of Banded and Rufous-throated Honeyeaters. Next were the Double-barred, Long-tailed and Masked Finches and suddenly one of the nearby trees held a party of marvellous Gouldian Finches. Most of them were young birds, but soon we were able to study exquisite black-faced and red-faced males as they came down to drink. Magic moments. We counted no fewer than 45 of these severely threatened birds during our short stint. Later we also found them foraging on a stretch of short grass lawn. A party of attractive Varied Lorikeets showed beautifully in the scope. In mid-morning we explored the Parry Creek billabong where lots of Diamond Doves, a Red-backed Kingfisher and some Zebra Finches obliged. At a viewpoint an impressive yellow morph Green Tree Snake was slithering about. At the well-known Grotto three White-quilled Rock Pigeons were noted. In the afternoon we again searched the surroundings of Kununurra for finches and eventually several of us had brief looks at some Yellow-rumped Mannikins. A swift Australian Hobby was the final bird of the day.

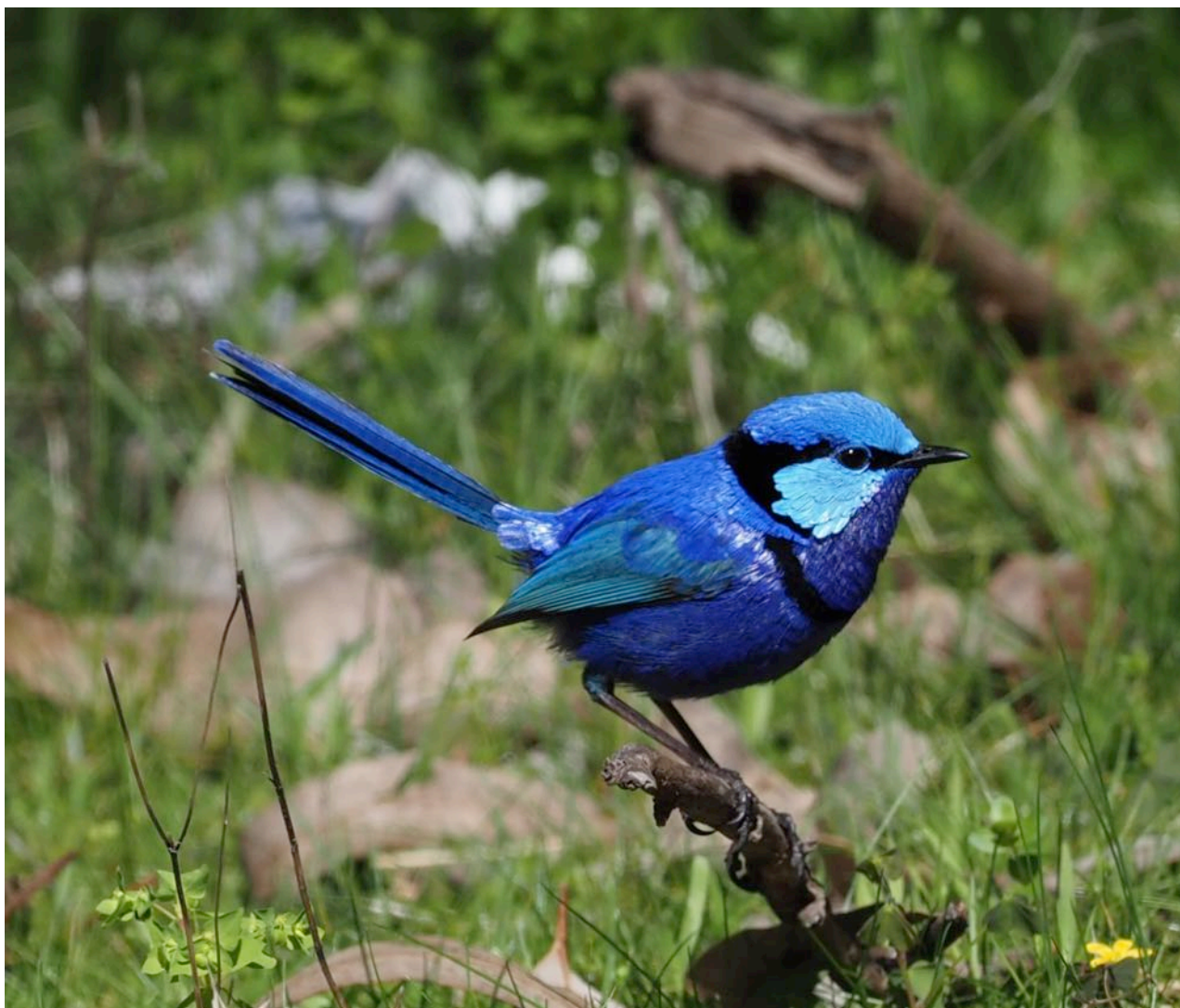


We saw both red-faced and black-faced male Gouldian Finches (Mark Van Beirs)

On the last morning of the tour we resumed our search for Yellow-rumped Mannikin. At a patch of tall grasses where we had seen Crimson, Star, Masked and Long-tailed Finches, we finally all connected with several Yellow-rumped Mannikins. They sat up in the morning sun and allowed great studies of their subtle plumage. A singing Pallid Cuckoo and a party of Variegated Fairywrens gave nice views and an Australian Hobby showed again. After this success we had another look at the reed-lined lake in town and obtained splendid looks again at a Black-backed Bittern creeping about in the reeds.



The rarely-seen Black-backed Bittern allowed scope studies; a reed-lined pond was visited by smart Star Finches (Mark Van Beirs)



The male Splendid Fairywren is a real cracker (Mark Van Beirs)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

CR = Critically Endangered, **E** = Endangered, **VU** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.



Emu (Mark Van Beirs)

Emu ♦ *Dromaius novaehollandiae* Great looks at Australia's largest bird on several occasions.
 Brown Quail* ♦ *Coturnix ypsilophora* A nice showing in the Albany area.
 Red Junglefowl (introduced) *Gallus gallus* Very common on Christmas Island.
 Magpie Goose ♦ *Anseranas semipalmata* Common at Lake Argyle.
 Plumed Whistling Duck ♦ *Dendrocygna eytoni* Many at the Broome sewage works.
 Wandering Whistling Duck ♦ *Dendrocygna arcuata* Regular in the Kununurra area.
 Black Swan ♦ *Cygnus atratus* Regular observations in the southwest.
 Freckled Duck ♦ *Stictonetta naevosa* Scope studies of six birds in Perth. Rare!
 Raja Shelduck ♦ *Radjah radjah* Regular in the Kununurra area.
 Australian Shelduck ♦ *Tadorna tadornoides* Commonly encountered in the southwest.
 Pink-eared Duck ♦ *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* Regular in the southwest. A really smart duck!
 Maned Duck ♦ *Chenonetta jubata* Common in the southwest.
 Green Pygmy Goose ♦ *Nettapus pulchellus* Regular in the Kununurra area.
 Australasian Shoveler ♦ *Spatula rhynchotis* Regular in the southwest.
 Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Common along our mainland itinerary.
 Grey Teal ♦ *Anas gracilis* Even more common than the previous species.
 Hardhead ♦ *Aythya australis* Regular in the northwest.
 Blue-billed Duck ♦ *Oxyura australis* Great looks at attractive drakes in Perth and near Albany.
 Musk Duck ♦ *Biziura lobata* Nice studies in Perth and near Albany. Some fun display.



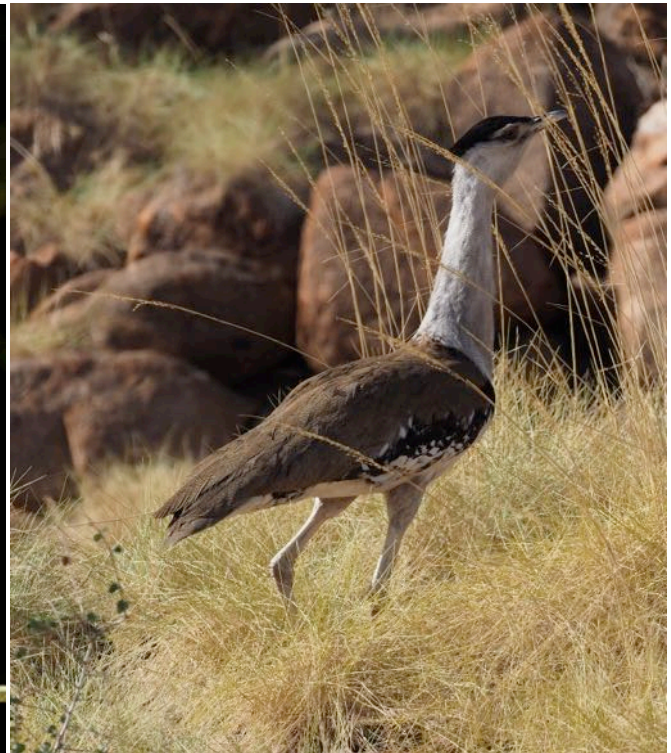
Wandering Whistling Duck; Australasian Shoveler (Mark Van Beirs)

Tawny Frogmouth ♦ *Podargus strigoides* Superb on a day roost in Perth and at night in the Kimberley.

Spotted Nightjar* ♦ *Eurostopodus argus* Flushed at night in the outback.

Australian Owlet-Nightjar* ♦ *Aegotheles cristatus* Fantastic daytime views in the Stirling Range.

Christmas Island Swiftlet ♦ *Collocalia natalis* Common on Christmas Island.



Tawny Frogmouth; Australian Bustard (Mark Van Beirs)

Australian Bustard ♦ *Ardeotis australis* Three excellent observations in the north.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* One showed particularly well at the Gouldian Finch spot.

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo ♦ *Chrysococcyx basalis* (H) We heard one in the distance in the outback.

Black-eared Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx osculans* Excellent scope views in the Stirling Range. Rare!!

Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Nice looks in the Stirling Range.

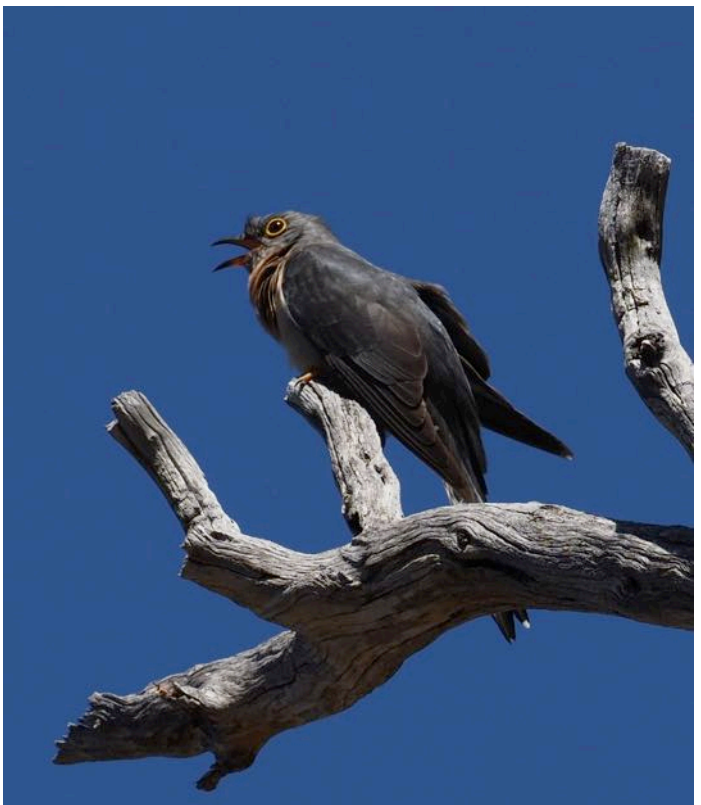
Pallid Cuckoo ♦ *Cacomantis pallidus* Scope looks of a distant, singing bird at Kununurra.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo ♦ *Cacomantis flabelliformis* Perfect scope studies at Dryandra. Heard elsewhere.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus* Nice looks at a singing bird near Kununurra.



Pheasant Coucal (Mark Van Beirs)



Black-eared Cuckoo; Fan-tailed Cuckoo (Mark Van Beirs)

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis* A few in the Perth area.

Laughing Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia senegalensis* Regular in the surroundings of Perth.



Common Emerald Dove; Diamond Dove (Mark Van Beirs)

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* Common on Christmas Island.

Common Bronzewing ♦ *Phaps chalcoptera* Regular observations, especially in the southwest.

Brush Bronzewing ♦ *Phaps elegans* Several excellent sightings of this beauty near Albany.

Crested Pigeon ♦ *Ocyphaps lophotes* Regular observations.

Spinifex Pigeon ♦ *Geophaps plumifera* Several excellent encounters in the Kimberley.

White-quilled Rock Pigeon ♦ *Petrophassa albipennis* Regular observations in the north.

Diamond Dove ♦ *Geopelia cuneata* Common in the north.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida* Very common in the north.

Bar-shouldered Dove ♦ *Geopelia humeralis* Regular on the northern circuit.



Christmas Imperial Pigeon; Australasian Swamphen (Mark Van Beirs)

Christmas Imperial Pigeon ♦ (C Island I P) *Ducula whartoni* Delightfully common on Christmas Island.

Torresian Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula spilorrhoa* A single bird showed well on the Mitchell Plateau.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Several showed well on Christmas Island.

Baillon's Crake* *Porzana pusilla* (H) We heard one at Kununurra.

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* Great looks at Kununurra.

Australasian Swamphen ◇ *Porphyrio melanotus* Regular along our route.



Dusky Moorhen; Australasian Grebe (Mark Van Beirs)

Dusky Moorhen ◇ *Gallinula tenebrosa* We only saw it at a lake in Perth.

Eurasian Coot (Australasian C) *Fulica [atra] australis* Fairly common.

Brolga ◇ *Antigone rubicunda* Common in the Broome and Kununurra areas.

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* Regular.

Hoary-headed Grebe ◇ *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* Nice encounters in Perth and at Kununurra.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps [cristatus] australis* A few in Perth and on Lake Argyle.

Bush Stone-curlew ◇ (B Thick-knee) *Burhinus grallarius* Several very nice sightings.

Pied Oystercatcher ◇ (Australian P O) *Haematopus longirostris* Regular near Albany and at Broome.

Sooty Oystercatcher ◇ *Haematopus fuliginosus* Good looks in the Albany area.

Pied Stilt ◇ *Himantopus leucocephalus* Common and feisty.

Red-necked Avocet ◇ *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae* Regular at Broome. Appealing in breeding attire.

Banded Lapwing* ◇ *Vanellus tricolor* (H) Heard at night in the Stirling area.

Masked Lapwing ◇ *Vanellus miles* Common.

Red-kneed Dotterel ◇ *Erythronyctes cinctus* Seen well at Derby and on Lake Argyle.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* Small numbers were at Broome.

Red-capped Plover ◇ *Charadrius ruficapillus* Common at Broome and on Lake Argyle.

Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian P) *Charadrius [mongolus] mongolus* Regular at Broome.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* One on Christmas Island; regular at Broome.

Hooded Dotterel ◇ (H Plover) *Thinornis cucullatus* Scope views of a pair with a chick on an inland lake.

Black-fronted Dotterel ◇ *Elseyaornis melanops* Regular in the north, even at small ponds.

Comb-crested Jacana ◇ *Irediparra gallinacea* Regular in the Kununurra area.

Whimbrel (Eurasian W) *Numenius phaeopus* Regular at Broome.

Little Curlew ◇ (L Whimbrel) *Numenius minutus* A single bird was noted at the Broome sewage plant.

Far Eastern Curlew (Eastern C) *Numenius madagascariensis* Small numbers showed well at Broome.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* Common at Broome.

Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern B-t G) *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* Fairly common at Broome.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Regular at Broome.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* Delightfully common at Broome. Some still in breeding attire.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* Regular observations in the north.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Small numbers at Broome.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Regular at Broome.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* Several nice parties at Broome.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Regular at ponds and rivers.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* Common at Broome.



Brolga (Mark Van Beirs)

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Just a few observations at Derby, Broome and Lake Argyle.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Small numbers in the north.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Regular at Derby, Broome and Lake Argyle.

Australian Pratincole ♦ *Stiltia isabellae* Three were seen at lake Argyle.

Brown Noddy (Common N) *Anous stolidus* Common on Christmas Island and at Lancelin.

Silver Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* Common along the coast.

Pacific Gull ♦ *Larus pacificus* A few observations of this impressive species at Albany and at Lancelin.

Australian Tern (A Gull-billed T) *Gelochelidon macrotarsa* Regular at Broome.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Small numbers along our route.

Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii* Seen in numbers at Albany, Lancelin and Broome.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* Excellent looks at Broome.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* A few were noted at Broome.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Common at Lancelin.



Sooty Oystercatcher; Pied Stilt (Mark Van Beirs)



Masked Lapwing; Black-fronted Dotterel (Mark Van Beirs)



Bar-tailed Godwit; Great Knots (Mark Van Beirs)

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* Several were identified at Lancelin.

Common Tern (Eastern C T) *Sterna [hirundo] longipennis* A single bird was seen at Broome.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Regular in the north. Both in breeding and non-breeding plumage.

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* Delightfully common on Christmas Island.

White-tailed Tropicbird ♦ (Golden Bosunbird) *Phaethon [lepturus] fulvus* Regular on Christmas Isl.



Brown Noddies (Mark Van Beirs)



Australian Gull-billed Tern; Whiskered Tern (Mark Van Beirs)



Great Frigatebird (female); Lesser Frigatebird (male) (Mark Van Beirs)

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* An immature bird was identified off Albany.

Shy Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche cauta* A single bird showed quite well off Albany.

Black-necked Stork ♦ *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* Only seen at a river crossing in the Kimberley.

Christmas Frigatebird ♦ *Fregata andrewsi* Many excellent encounters on Christmas Island.

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor* The most common frigatebird on Christmas Island.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Several were identified on Christmas Island.

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator* Regular off Albany; an immature showed well at Lancelin.



Abbott's Booby; Brown Booby (Mark Van Beirs)

Abbott's Booby ♦ *Papasula abbotti* Fantastic views of this very special bird on Christmas Island.

Red-footed Booby ♦ *Sula sula* Very common on Christmas Island.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Common on Christmas Island. Also seen off Broome.

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* Regular observations along our route.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Common on Lake Argyle. Singles elsewhere.

Australian Pied Cormorant ♦ (Pied C) *Phalacrocorax varius* Regular all along our itinerary.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Just a few observations of this widespread species.

Australasian Darter ♦ *Anhinga novaehollandiae* A single bird in the south. Regular in the north.

Australian White Ibis (Australian I) *Threskiornis molucca* Common.

Straw-necked Ibis ♦ *Threskiornis spinicollis* Regular sightings. Nice activity at a colony near Albany.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Small numbers at Lake Argyle.

Royal Spoonbill ♦ *Platalea regia* Seen at Derby and near Wyndham.



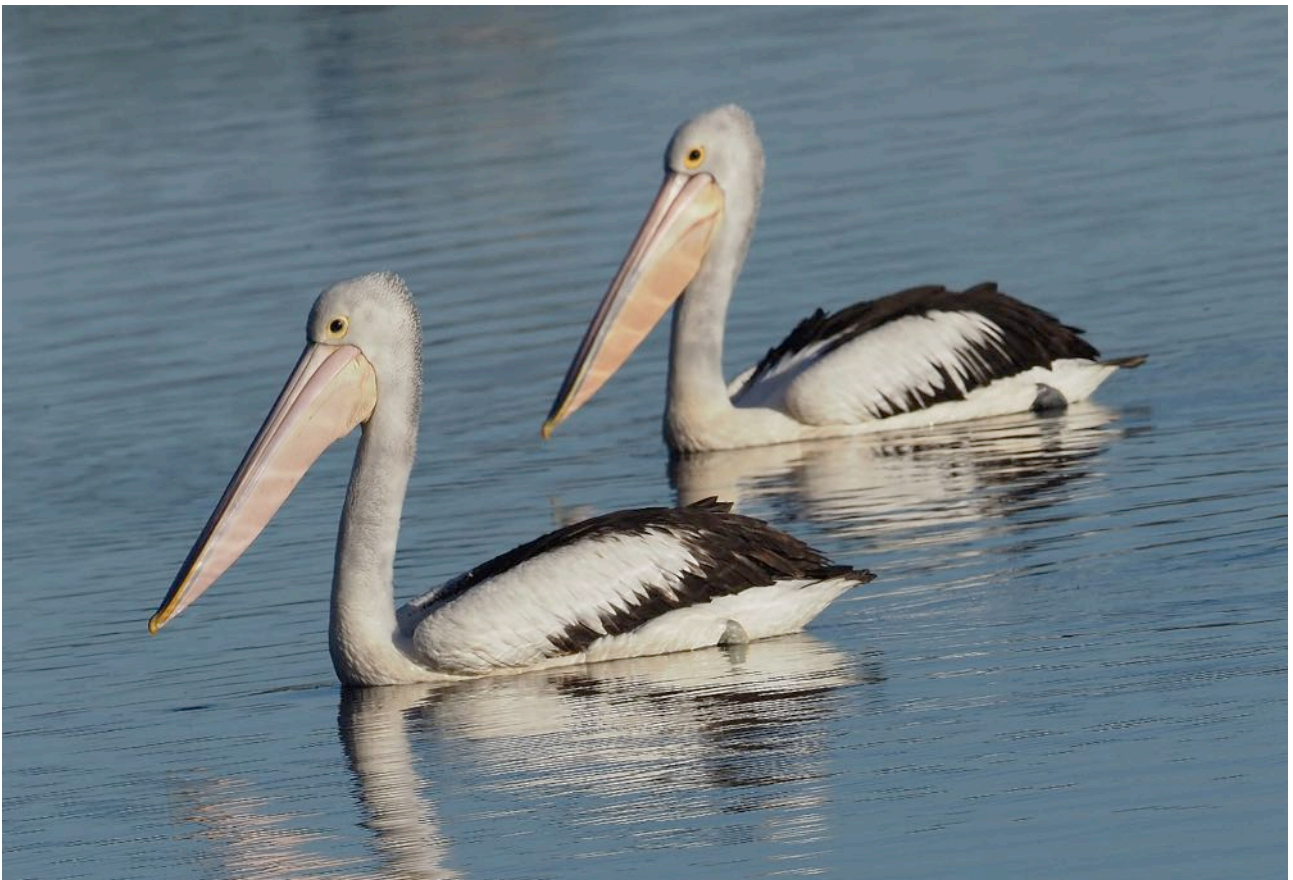
Royal Spoonbill; Nankeen Night Heron (Mark Van Beirs)

Yellow-billed Spoonbill ♦ *Platalea flavipes* A single bird was noted near Albany.

Black-backed Bittern ♦ (Australian Little B) *Ixobrychus dubius* Scope views of a male at Kununurra.

Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* A few here and there.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* We only saw this well-known species at Lake Argyle.



Australian Pelican (Mark Van Beirs)

White-necked Heron ♦ (Pacific H) *Ardea pacifica* A handful of observations in the north.

Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* Regular.



White-necked Heron; Square-tailed Kite (Mark Van Beirs)



Eastern Osprey (Mark Van Beirs)

Intermediate Egret ♦ (Plumed E) *Ardea [intermedia] plumifera* Fairly common.

Pied Heron ♦ *Egretta picata* This attractive species showed in small numbers around Kununurra.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* Regular.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Small numbers all along our route.

Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern Reef Egret) *Egretta sacra* Seen on Christmas Island and at Broome.

Australian Pelican ♦ *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Common, attractive and often approachable.

Eastern Osprey ♦ *Pandion cristatus* Best sightings were at Lancelin, where a pair showed very well.

Black-shouldered Kite ♦ (Australian K) *Elanus axillaris* Three observations. Scope views at Broome.

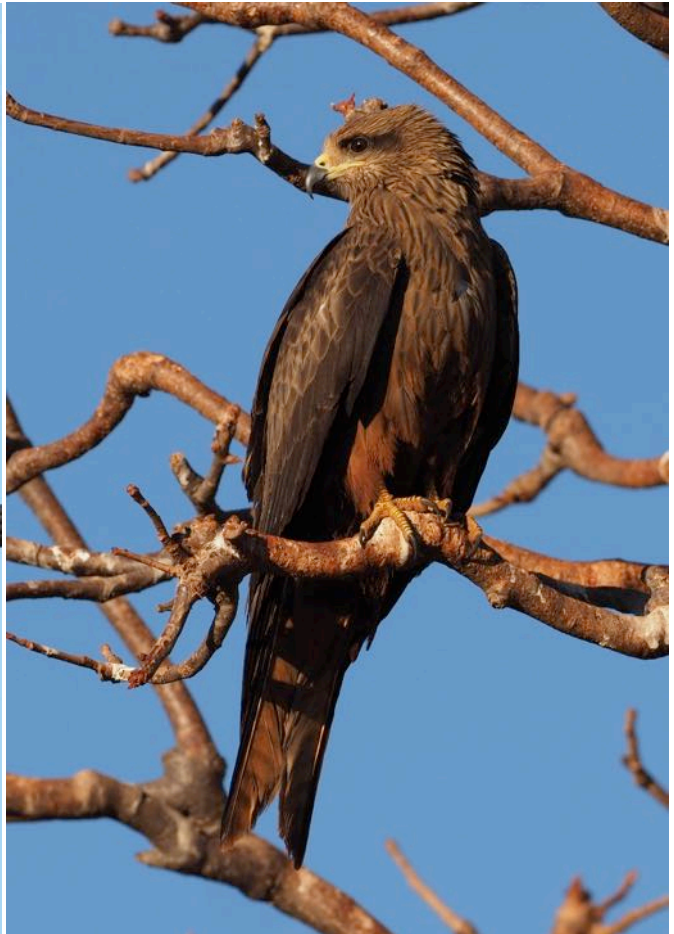
Square-tailed Kite ♦ *Lophoictinia isura* One showed unusually well at Dryandra.

Black-breasted Buzzard ♦ *Hamirostra melanosternon* Five excellent observations in the Kimberley.

Little Eagle ♦ *Hieraaetus morphnoides* Good looks at one at the Stirling Range.

Wedge-tailed Eagle ♦ *Aquila audax* 20 encounters with this impressive bird of prey. Some at close range

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* Five encounters.



Christmas Island Goshawk (immature); Black Kite (Mark Van Beirs)

Brown Goshawk ♦ (Christmas Island G) *Accipiter [fasciatus] natalis* Good looks on Christmas Island.

Collared Sparrowhawk ♦ *Accipiter cirrocephalus* Six sightings of this small bird of prey.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Eleven observations, both in the north and the south.

Spotted Harrier ♦ *Circus assimilis* A distant bird at the Sterling Range was our only sighting.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Very common in the north.

Whistling Kite ♦ *Haliastur sphenurus* Common in the north, but also seen in the Albany area.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* A handful of observations around Broome.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Four sightings of this impressive bird of prey.

Barking Owl ♦ *Ninox connivens* Excellent scope views of a pair in the Kimberley.

Australian Boobook ♦ *Ninox boobook* Good looks at a bird in the Stirling Range.

Christmas Boobook ♦ (C Island Hawk-Owl) *Ninox natalis* A splendid with two birds on Christmas Island.



Whistling Kite; White-bellied Sea Eagle (Mark Van Beirs)

Oriental Dollarbird (Dollarbird) *Eurystomus orientalis* A handful of sightings in the north.

Laughing Kookaburra ♦ *Dacelo novaeguineae* Regular in the southwest. Introduced there.

Blue-winged Kookaburra ♦ *Dacelo leachii* Quite common and impressive in the north.



Brown Falcon; Little Corella (Mark Van Beirs)

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Just a few encounters. They were obviously just arriving.

Red-backed Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius* Two nice observations in the north.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Marvelously common in the north. 200+ together at Kununurra!

Nankeen Kestrel ♦ (Australian K) *Falco cenchroides* Regular.

Australian Hobby ♦ *Falco longipennis* Two observations in the Kununurra area.

Brown Falcon ♦ *Falco berigora* 17 sightings of this large falcon.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Three observations of this well-known bird of prey.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo ♦ *Calyptorhynchus banksii* Regular encounters with this splendid species.

Baudin's Black Cockatoo ♦ (Long-billed B C) *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* Very good looks, eventually.

Carnaby's Black Cockatoo ♦ (Short-billed B C) *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* Excellent observations.

Galah ♦ *Eolophus roseicapilla* Delightfully common, sometimes in big flocks.

Western Corella ♦ *Cacatua pastinator* Good looks at Rocky Gully. Also seen east of Perth.

Little Corella ♦ *Cacatua sanguinea* Common and vociferous in the north.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* Small numbers were seen in the north.

Regent Parrot ♦ *Polytelis anthopeplus* Excellent sightings in the Stirling Ranges. A beauty.



Rainbow Bee-eater (Mark Van Beirs)

Red-winged Parrot ♦ *Aprosmictus erythropterus* Common in the north.

Red-capped Parrot ♦ *Purpureicephalus spurius* This smart SW Australian endemic showed very well.

Northern Rosella ♦ *Platycercus venustus* Several perfect encounters in the north.



Blue-winged Kookaburra (Mark Van Beirs)

Western Rosella ♦ *Platycercus icterotis* Regular in the south.

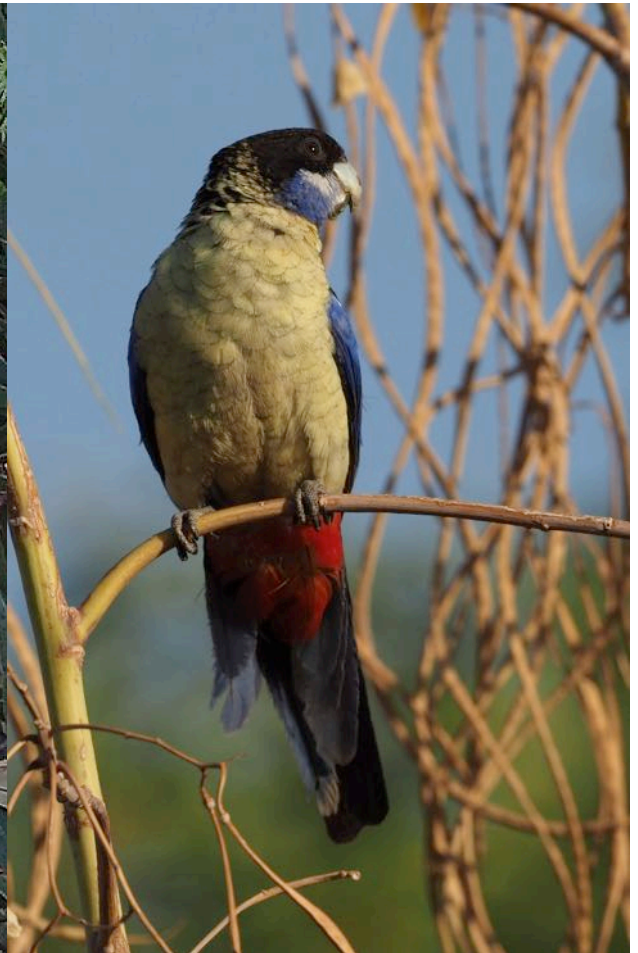
Australian Ringneck ♦ *Barnardius zonarius* A common inhabitant of the southwest.

Elegant Parrot ♦ *Neophema elegans* Several perfect observations in the southwest.

Rock Parrot ♦ *Neophema petrophila* Cracking looks at foraging birds at Lancelin.



Regent Parrot; Red-winged Parrot (Mark Van Beirs)



Red-capped Parrot; Northern Rosella (Mark Van Beirs)

Purple-crowned Lorikeet ♦ *Parvipsitta porphyrocephala* These colourful SW endemics showed well.

Varied Lorikeet ♦ *Psitteuteles versicolor* Scope views of perched birds at Wyndham.

Rainbow Lorikeet ♦ *Trichoglossus moluccanus* Common and introduced around Perth.

Red-collared Lorikeet ♦ *Trichoglossus rubritorquis* Common, colourful and noisy in the north.

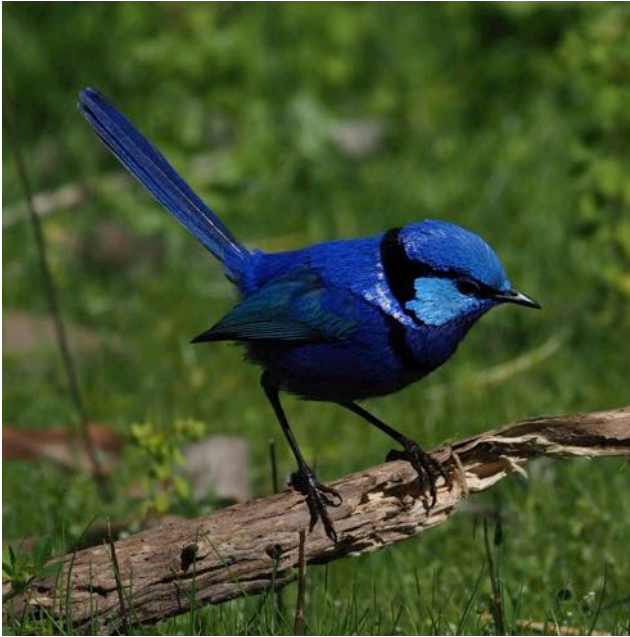


Western Rosella; Australian Ringneck (Mark Van Beirs)



Western Bowerbird; Great Bowerbird (Mark Van Beirs)

- Noisy Scrubbird ♦ *Atrichornis clamosus* The usual brief looks of this mega skulker near Albany.
- Western Bowerbird ♦ *Chlamydera guttata* Excellent scope studies in the Kookynie area.
- Great Bowerbird ♦ *Chlamydera nuchalis* Fairly common in the north. Also seen at the bower.
- Rufous Treecreeper ♦ *Climacteris rufus* Fairly common and showy at Dryandra.
- Variegated Fairywren ♦ *Malurus lamberti* Several on our last morning at Kununurra.
- Blue-breasted Fairywren ♦ *Malurus pulcherrimus* Marvelous looks at this SW endemic in Dryandra.
- Red-winged Fairywren ♦ *Malurus elegans* Regular encounters with this smart SW endemic.
- Splendid Fairywren ♦ *Malurus splendens* Several exquisite encounters. A real jewel!
- Purple-crowned Fairywren ♦ *Malurus coronatus* Good looks, but none were in breeding plumage yet.



Splendid Fairywren; Red-headed Myzomela (Mark Van Beirs)

Red-backed Fairywren ♦ *Malurus melanocephalus* Several encounters with female-plumaged birds.

White-winged Fairywren ♦ *Malurus leucopterus* A young male and two females showed at Lancelin.

Black Grasswren ♦ *Amytornis housei* Excellent looks at male and female on the Mitchell Plateau!

Red-headed Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela erythrocephala* Regular in the Broome mangroves.



Tawny-crowned Honeyeater; Banded Honeyeater (Mark Van Beirs)

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater ♦ *Gliciphila melanops* Regular and attractive in the southern heathlands.

Western Spinebill ♦ *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus* Several showed very well in the south. A cracker.

Banded Honeyeater ♦ *Cissomela pectoralis* Quite common in the north.

Brown Honeyeater ♦ *Lichmera indistincta* Common, ubiquitous and very vocal.

New Holland Honeyeater ♦ *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* Common and attractive in the south.

White-cheeked Honeyeater ♦ *Phylidonyris niger* A handful of encounters in the southern heathlands.

Little Friarbird ♦ *Philemon citreogularis* Very common and obvious on the northern part of the trip.

Silver-crowned Friarbird ♦ *Philemon argenticeps* Regular in the north.

Blue-faced Honeyeater ♦ *Entomyzon cyanotis* Some nice encounters with this smart boy in the north.

Brown-headed Honeyeater ♦ *Melithreptus brevirostris* A handful of observations in the south.

White-throated Honeyeater ♦ *Melithreptus albogularis* Regular in the north.



New Holland Honeyeater; Little Friarbird (Mark Van Beirs)



Silver-crowned Friarbird; White-throated Honeyeater (Mark Van Beirs)

Gilbert's Honeyeater ♦ (Swan River H) *Melithreptus chloropsis* Small numbers in the south.

Crimson Chat ♦ *Epthianura tricolor* (NL) Tom saw a male near Broome.

Yellow Chat ♦ *Epthianura crocea* Regular and so attractive at Lake Argyle.

Rufous-throated Honeyeater ♦ *Conopophila rufogularis* Regular observations in the north.

Bar-breasted Honeyeater ♦ *Ramsayornis fasciatus* A few encounters in the north.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater ♦ *Acanthagenys rufogularis* Seen at Porongurup and near Kookynie.

Western Wattlebird ♦ *Anthochaera lunulata* Excellent looks at foraging birds near Albany.

Red Wattlebird ♦ *Anthochaera carunculata* Very common and feisty on the southern circuit.



Yellow Chat; Western Wattlebird (Mark Van Beirs)



Red Wattlebird; Yellow-throated Miner (Mark Van Beirs)

- Purple-gaped Honeyeater** ♦ *Lichenostomus cratitius* Several observations in the outback.
- Yellow-throated Miner** ♦ *Manorina flavigula* Regular at several inland venues.
- White-gaped Honeyeater** ♦ *Stomiopera unicolor* Small numbers were noted in the north.
- Singing Honeyeater** ♦ *Gavicalis vireescens* Regular all along our route.
- Yellow-tinted Honeyeater** ♦ *Ptilotula flavescens* Common in the north.
- Grey-fronted Honeyeater** ♦ *Ptilotula plumula* Good looks at two in the Kimberley.
- Yellow-plumed Honeyeater** ♦ *Ptilotula ornata* Regular in the Stirling Ranges.
- Kimberley Honeyeater** ♦ *Meliphaga fordiana* Scope views of this subtle speciality in the Kimberley.
- Western Bristlebird** ♦ *Dasyornis longirostris* A couple of excellent encounters near Albany.
- Spotted Pardalote** ♦ *Pardalotus punctatus* Eye-ball to eye-ball looks at two in the outback.
- Striated Pardalote** ♦ *Pardalotus striatus* Regular encounters in the south.
- Weebill** ♦ *Smicronis brevirostris* Regular observations, both in the south and in the north.
- Western Fieldwren** ♦ *Calamanthus montanellus* Heard by all and seen by Gwen in the Stirling Ranges.



White-gaped Honeyeater; Yellow-tinted Honeyeater (Mark Van Beirs)



Yellow-plumed Honeyeater; Striated Pardalote (Mark Van Beirs)

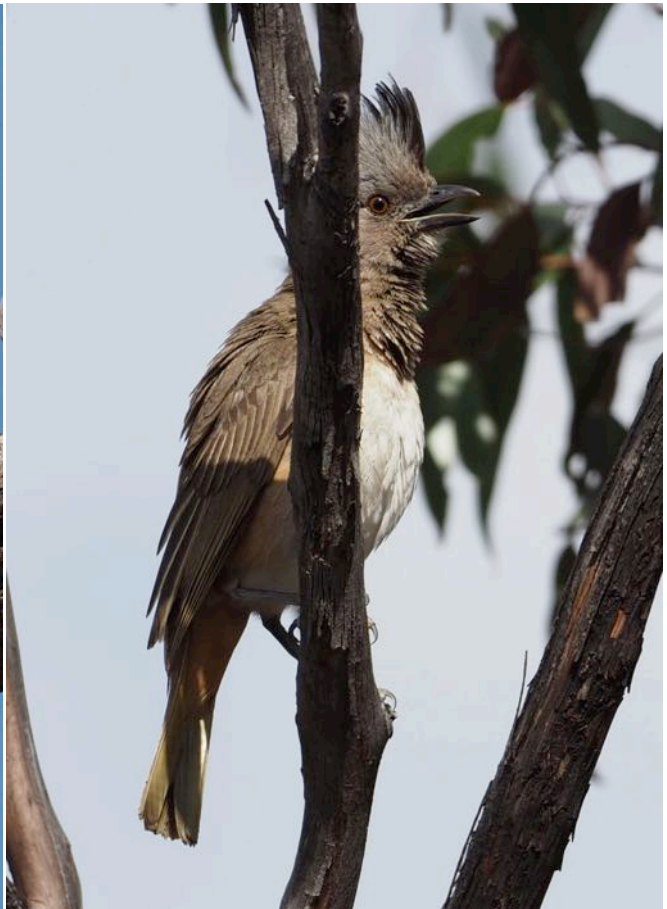
- Redthroat** ♦ *Pyrrholaemus brunneus* Very nice looks at a singing male at Kookynie.
- Spotted Scrubwren** ♦ *Sericornis maculatus* Regular sightings in the southwest. A recent split.
- Western Gerygone** ♦ *Gerygone fusca* Regular observations in the south.
- Dusky Gerygone** ♦ *Gerygone tenebrosa* A couple of sightings in the Broome mangroves.
- Inland Thornbill** ♦ *Acanthiza apicalis* Regular in the south.
- Chestnut-rumped Thornbill** *Acanthiza uropygialis* Only seen in the outback.
- Western Thornbill** ♦ *Acanthiza inornata* Excellent encounters at Dryandra. Heard elsewhere.
- Yellow-rumped Thornbill** ♦ *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* Regular observations in the south.
- Grey-crowned Babbler** ♦ *Pomatostomus temporalis* Regularly seen on the northern circuit.
- White-browed Babbler** ♦ *Pomatostomus superciliosus* A single encounter on our way to Kookynie.
- Black-throated Whipbird** ♦ *Psophodes nigrogularis* Great looks in the Stirling area; also near Albany.
- Copperback Quail-thrush** ♦ *Cinclosoma clarum* (H) We heard in in the outback, but no joy.



Spotted Scrubwren; Yellow-rumped Thornbill (Mark Van Beirs)

Western Quail-thrush ♦ *Cinclosoma marginatum* Good looks for most of this swift-moving species.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Common in the north.



Black-faced Woodswallow; Crested Bellbird (Mark Van Beirs)

Black-faced Woodswallow ♦ *Artamus cinereus* Regular in the outback and in the north.

Dusky Woodswallow ♦ *Artamus cyanopterus* Regular excellent sightings on the southern circuit.

Little Woodswallow ♦ *Artamus minor* A handful of observations in the Kimberley.



Varied Sitella (Mark Van Beirs)

Australian Magpie ♦ *Gymnorhina tibicen* Common. The race in the south is really distinctive.
Grey Butcherbird ♦ *Cracticus torquatus* (H) We heard several at dawn in the south.
Pied Butcherbird ♦ *Cracticus nigrogularis* Common in the north.
Grey Currawong ♦ *Strepera versicolor* Fairly common in the south.
Black-faced Cuckooshrike ♦ *Coracina novaehollandiae* Common all along our route.
White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* A handful of observations in the north.
White-winged Triller ♦ *Lalage tricolor* Regular in the north.
Varied Sittella ♦ *Daphoenositta chrysoptera* Some splendid sightings in the south (race *pileata*).
Crested Bellbird ♦ *Oreoica gutturalis* Several excellent observations in the outback. Often heard.
Crested Shriketit ♦ (Western S) *Falcunculus [frontatus] leucogaster* Very nice looks at a male.

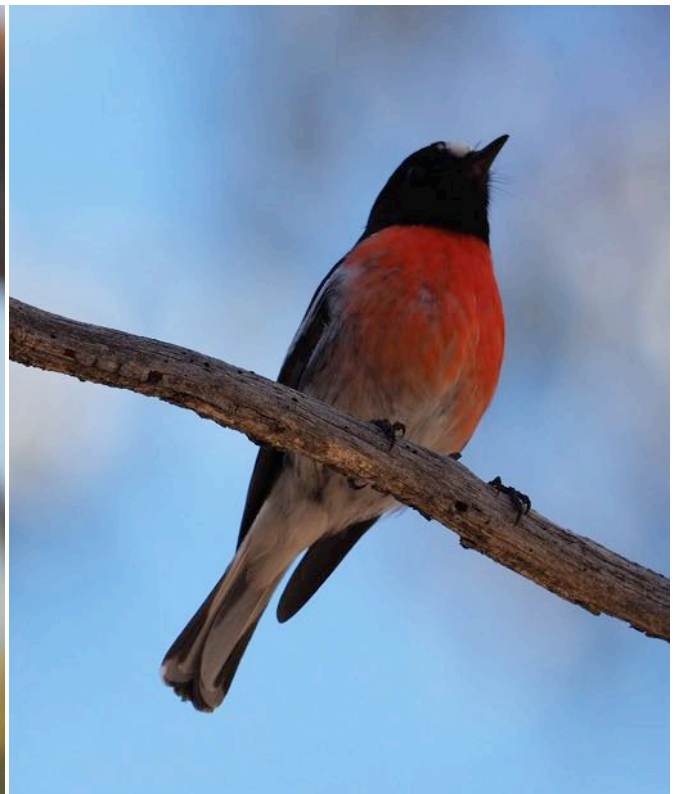


Gilbert's Whistler; White-breasted Whistler (Mark Van Beirs)

Gilbert's Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala inornata* A posing male delighted us in the outback.
Western Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala occidentalis* A few observations in the south. More often heard.
Mangrove Golden Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala melanura* A male showed well in the Broome mangroves.
Rufous Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala rufiventris* Regularly recorded along our route.
White-breasted Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala lanioides* Good looks at male and female in Broome.
Grey Shrikethrush ♦ *Colluricincla harmonica* A handful of observations.
Sandstone Shrikethrush ♦ *Colluricincla woodwardi* Nice looks at several on the Lake Argyle boattrip.
Australasian Figbird ♦ (Green F) *Sphecotheres vieilloti* Two females were seen in the Kimberley.
Olive-backed Oriole ♦ *Oriolus sagittatus* Three sightings in the north.
Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* A single bird was seen in the Kimberley.
Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* Common and very showy.
Northern Fantail ♦ *Rhipidura rufiventris* Several obliged in the Kimberley.
Grey Fantail ♦ *Rhipidura albiscapa* Regular in the south.
Mangrove Fantail ♦ (M Grey F) *Rhipidura phasiana* Two showed well in the Broome mangroves.
Magpie-lark ♦ (Australian M-l) *Grallina cyanoleuca* Very common along our mainland route.
Leaden Flycatcher ♦ *Myiagra rubecula* Only seen on the Mitchell Plateau.
Broad-billed Flycatcher ♦ *Myiagra ruficollis* A few in the Broome mangroves.
Paperbark Flycatcher ♦ *Myiagra nana* Regular in the north.
Restless Flycatcher ♦ *Myiagra inquieta* A few were seen on the southern route.
Torresian Crow ♦ *Corvus orru* Very common in the north.
Little Crow ♦ *Corvus bennetti* A few were identified in the outback.



Sandstone Shrikethrush; Leaden Flycatcher (Mark Van Beirs)



Paperbark Flycatcher; Scarlet Robin (Mark Van Beirs)

Australian Raven ♦ *Corvus coronoides* Very common in the south.

White-breasted Robin ♦ *Quoyornis georgianus* This SW endemic performed well at several sites.

Western Yellow Robin ♦ *Eopsaltria griseogularis* Good looks near Perth and in the Stirling area.

Buff-sided Robin ♦ *Poecilodryas cerviniventris* A pair showed ever so well on the Mitchell Plateau.

Lemon-bellied Flyrobin ♦ (Kimberley F) *Microeca [flavigaster] tormenti* Terrific looks at Broome.



Buff-sided Robins (Mark Van Beirs)



Long-tailed Finches; Double-barred Finches (Mark Van Beirs)

Jacky Winter ♦ *Microeca fascians* Just a few observations of this unobtrusive species.

Scarlet Robin ♦ *Petroica boodang* Several excellent encounters with this gem in the south.

Red-capped Robin ♦ *Petroica goodenovii* Fantastic looks at several in the outback.

Horsfield's Bush Lark (Australasian B) *Mirafra javanica* A few sightings in open areas.

White-backed Swallow ♦ *Cheramoeca leucosterna* Nice looks at several at Carrabin. Unexpected.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Two were seen on Christmas Island.



Christmas White-eye (Mark Van Beirs)

- Welcome Swallow** ♦ *Hirundo neoxena* The most widespread hirundine of the tour.
- Fairy Martin** ♦ *Petrochelidon ariel* Several colonies at bridges were noted in the north.
- Tree Martin** ♦ *Petrochelidon nigricans* Fairly common in open woodland in the south.
- Australian Reed Warbler** ♦ *Acrocephalus australis* A few sightings at reedbeds.
- Little Grassbird** ♦ *Poodytes gramineus* (H) Heard at a lake in Perth.
- Tawny Grassbird** *Cincloramphus timoriensis* Brief looks near Kununurra.
- Golden-headed Cisticola (Bright-capped C)** *Cisticola exilis* Good looks in the Kununurra area.
- Christmas White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops natalis* Common on Christmas Island.
- Canary White-eye** *Zosterops luteus* Regular in the Broome area.
- Silvereye** ♦ *Zosterops lateralis* Common on the southern circuit.
- Island Thrush** (Christmas Isl. T) *Turdus [poliocephalus] erythropleurus* Common on Christmas Isl.
- Mistletoebird** ♦ *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* A few observations in the north.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced)** *Passer montanus* Common on Christmas Island.
- Red-eared Firetail** ♦ *Stagonopleura oculata* A couple of all too brief sightings in the south.
- Crimson Finch** ♦ *Neochmia phaeton* Fairly common in the north.
- Star Finch** ♦ *Neochmia ruficauda* Regular in the Kununurra area.
- Masked Finch** ♦ *Poephila personata* Good looks at several in the Kununurra/Wyndham area.
- Long-tailed Finch** ♦ *Poephila acuticauda* This smart-looking species was regular in the north.
- Zebra Finch** ♦ *Taeniopygia guttata* Just a few in the north.
- Double-barred Finch** ♦ *Taeniopygia bichenovii* The most regularly encountered finch in the north.
- Gouldian Finch** ♦ *Erythrura gouldiae* Very good looks in the Wyndham area. We counted 45 birds!
- Yellow-rumped Mannikin** ♦ *Lonchura flaviprymna* Good looks at a few near Kununurra.
- Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** ♦ *Lonchura castaneothorax* A few near Kununurra.
- Java Sparrow** *Lonchura oryzivora* Excellent looks at three adults and two young on Christmas Island.



Island Thrush (Mark Van Beirs)

Pictorella Mannikin ◇ *Heteromunia pectoralis* A couple of brief encounters near Kununurra.
Australian Pipit *Anthus australis* Four observations of this open country species.



Java Sparrows; drive into the Kimberley (Mark Van Beirs)



Western Grey Kangaroo (Mark Van Beirs)

MAMMALS

Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus* Good looks at this cutie near Albany.

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis* Common in the north.

Western Gray Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus* Common in the south.

Common Wallaroo (Euro) *Macropus robustus* Good looks at one on an Lake Argyle island.
Short-eared Rock Wallaby *Petrogale brachyotis* Excellent sightings at Lake Argyle.
European Rabbit (introduced) *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Regular in the south.
Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis* A small pod showed well off Christmas Island.
Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris* Three of these blunt-headed dolphins were seen off Broome.
Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* One showed quite well near Albany.
Black Flying Fox (Central F-f) *Pteropus alecto* A few were seen in the north.
Blyth's Flying Fox(Christmas Island F-f) *Pteropus melanotus* Regular on Christmas Island.



Agile Wallaby; Short-eared Rock Wallaby (Mark Van Beirs)



Blyth's Flying Fox; Roebuck Bay near Broome (Mark Van Beirs)



Green Tree Snake (Mark Van Beirs)

REPTILES

Gilbert's Dragon *Lophognathus gilberti* One showed well at Kununurra.

Western Blue-tongued Skink *Tiliqua occipitalis* Good looks at one at Lake Muir.

Northern Blue-tongued Skink *Tiliqua scincoides* Several in the north.

Shingleback Lizard *Tiliqua rugosa* One obliged in the Stirling area.

King's Skink *Egernia kingi* Several near Albany.

Freshwater Crocodile *Crocodylus johnstoni* Regular observations in the north.

Saltwater Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* A single, impressive one near Wyndham.

Brown Snake *Pseudonaja nuchalis* A large individual was sunning itself on the River Gibb track.

Green Tree Snake *Dendrelaphis punctulatus* A very nice encounter of a yellow morph near Wyndham.



Northern Blue-tongued Skink (Mark Van Beirs)



Dryandra woodland (Mark Van Beirs)



Brown Booby (Mark Van Beirs)



Eucalypt woodland with Grass Trees near Perth (Mark Van Beirs)



King's Skink (Mark Van Beirs)