



The bizarre and unique Plains Wanderer put in a fantastic performance and was one of many highlights (Simon Mitchell)

SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA INCLUDING TASMANIA

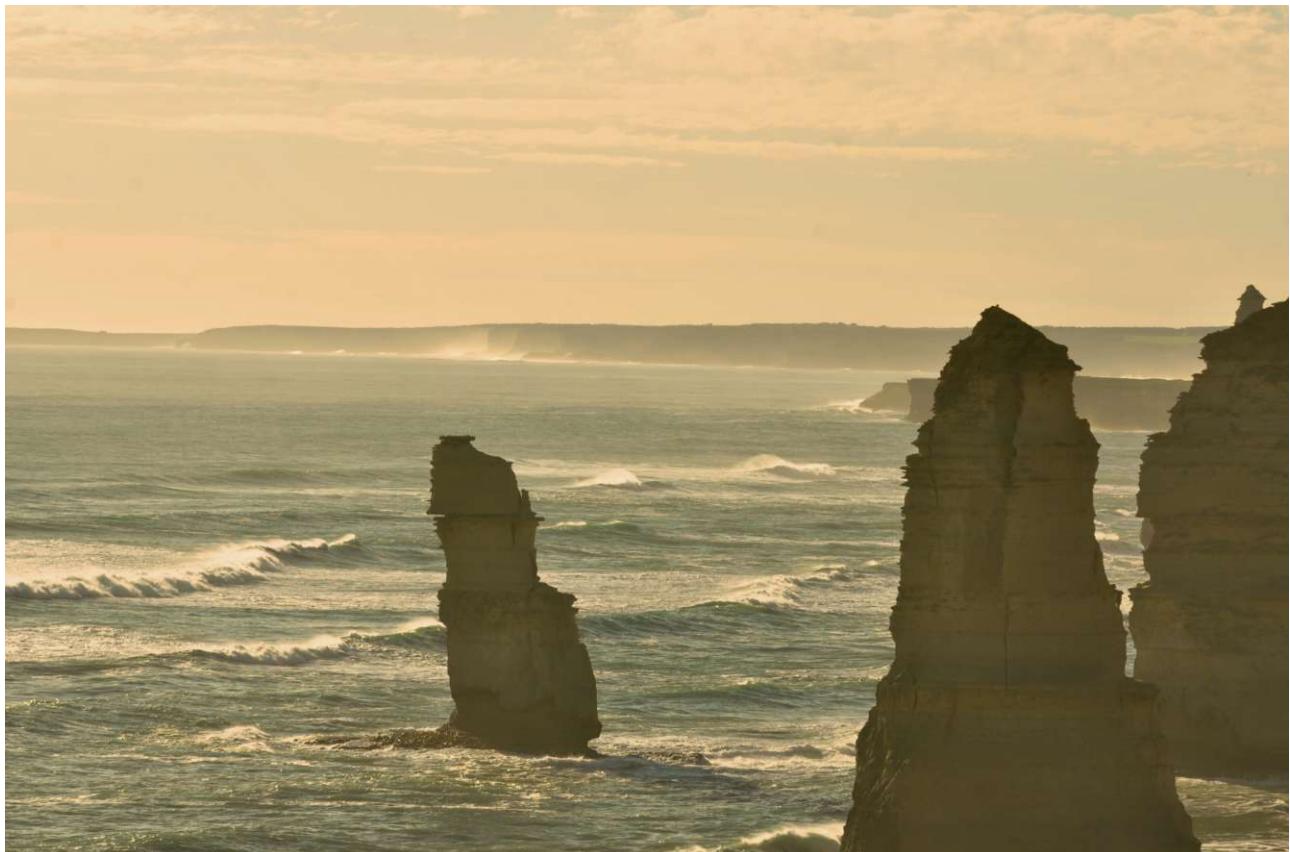
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LEADERS: ANDREW JENSEN and SIMON MITCHELL (author)

DRIVER / ASSISTANT: STUART PICKERING

Once you've visited Australia it becomes a mystery as to why the region does not appear at the very top of many 'most-wanted' birding destinations for more birders. Perhaps, since there is little cross-over with Palearctic and Nearctic species its avifauna remains 'off the radar' of many European and American birders. One suspects that there is also a perception that, with Western infrastructure, healthcare and amenities combined with many open-habitat birds, much of the region consists of 'easy birding' – try explaining that to a Grasswren! However, for the sheer variety of habitats, climates, genera and different types of birding the Southern Australian loop matches anything in even the most diverse parts of South America, Africa and Asia have to offer.

Our three week tour traversed such an amazing range of habitats that it is difficult to think of another tour that concentrates so many biomes and types of birding into one trip. Many habitats required different approaches to see the target birds, so one day we would spend time pottering around open wetlands, then next walking in organised lines across thick spinifex and the next scanning deserted stony gibber plains from the vehicles, each time finding a new community of birds in the process.



Twelve Apostles in the evening light (Simon Mitchell)

In the damp temperate rainforests, we found Superb Lyrebirds, Pilotbirds, Eastern Whipbirds and a variety of brightly coloured and very tame robin species. Along the sandy beaches open pastures of Phillip Island we found Cape Barren Geese, Hooded Dotterels and Little Penguins and rocky shores near Adelaide held Sooty and Australian Pied Oystercatchers. The montane heaths held Southern Emu-wrens, Striated Fieldwren, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and White-eared Honeyeaters. Dry mallee forests further inland held a variety of Honeyeaters as well as difficult target birds such as Striated Grasswren, Mallee Emu-wren, Hooded Robin, Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush, Crested Bellbird, Black-eared Miner and Gilbert's Whistler. Visiting mature dry woodlands also produced species like Painted and Lewin's Honeyeaters as well as other tough species like White-browed and Red-browed Treecreeper, Regent and Superb Parrots. Swamp Harriers and even a brief Australasian Bittern were seen in the expansive reedbeds and sub-urban wetlands held Freckled and Pink-eared Ducks, Australian Spotted Crake, Baillon's Crake and even Latham's Snipe. On the spiky spinifex hillsides we found Stubble Quails and Elegant Parrots and spot-lighting on the rolling agricultural plains produced Inland Dotterel, Little Button-quail and the bizarre and unique Plains Wanderer. Further inland Eyrean Grasswrens were found on the scrubby sand-dunes, with Thick-billed Grasswren located in nearby desert creek beds. A Grey Falcon held sentry on a radio mast, whilst Gibberbirds, Orange, Yellow and Crimson Chats were also located. Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Redthroat, Southern Whiteface, Flock Bronzewings, Chirruping Wedgebills were also found in these areas. A visit to dried out lignum swamps produced Grey Grasswrens and Pied Honeyeaters. In the acidic bogs and forests of Tasmania we found Orange-bellied and Eastern Ground Parrots and seeing all twelve endemic species was further augmented by the when we connected with the unique races of Masked Owl and Morepork. No doubt future 'armchair ticks' for the whole group!

As well an unimportant, but impressive list of 319 species we were very pleased to connect with the majority of the target species, some of them very difficult following the continuing drought. Of five species of Grasswren we recorded, four we seen extremely well an amazing 35 Honeyeater species included just about every conceivable species in the areas we visited. As well as the very many 'difficult' we were able to find, we also took time to appreciate the commoner species. Mammals too, were a prominent feature, with a number of kangaroos and wallabies seen almost every day. Of particular note were the fantastic views of Koalas.



This Koala was seen crossing the road and afterwards decided to sit unconcerned just a few feet off the ground (Simon Mitchell)



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Superb Lyrebird (Simon Mitchell)

After a staggered series of arrivals on multiple different flights the previous day we assembled in the hotel lobby before first light, keen to start seeing our first birds. We first headed to the temperate rainforests of the Dandenong Foothills, not far outside Melbourne. Here thick verdant understory included impressive tree-ferns and moss-covered trunks above towering eucalypts and gum trees.

In the understory we were soon greeted by tame Eastern Yellow and Rose Robins as well as White-browed Scrubwrens. Up in the canopy Crimson Rosellas and White-throated Treecreepers hopped between the trees. We soon heard our first Superb Lyrebirds, but in cold rainy conditions most seemed to be tucked away in the undergrowth. Whilst Simon and Andy were off searching for the Lyrebird, it or another individual moved close to the path where most of the group saw it. However, the leaders instead discovered a roosting Southern Boobook which all the group were able to enjoy after negotiating our ways a short distance from the path. Shortly after returning to the path we spotted another Lyrebird, this one performing well, picking its way slowly along the forest floor, relatively unconcerned about our proximity.



This Southern Boobook sat watching us from its roost (Simon Mitchell)

Continuing our walk back towards the vehicles we picked up a pair of difficult Red-browed Treecreepers and a brief Eastern Shrike-tit; a difficult bird in this area. Two Eastern Whipbirds performed well. As the rain abated we also gained good views of both New Holland and Crescent Honeyeaters as well as our first Shining Bronze Cuckoo. Several Grey Shrike-thrushes were seen, but a couple of Australian Golden Whistlers stole the limelight. Returning to the vehicles we found a flock of over fifty Crimson Rosellas accompanied by ten or so Australian King Parrots.

At our lunch stop Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were a very prominent feature, with over three hundred present. Also here were at least five Long-billed Corellas. Next we made our way towards Phillip Island where Woolamai Beach held our first coastal species. Silver, Kelp and Pacific Gulls showed well and tens of thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters passed offshore together with a few Shy Albatross. After a short walk along the beach we found a group of six Hooded Dotterel – an uncommon species throughout its range. Heading back to the vehicles we also picked up Nankeen Kestrel and Brown Falcon before narrowly avoiding a cloud-burst.

Making our way towards Nobbies Point and the Penguin Parade on Phillip Island we made numerous roadside stops for birds feeding in small marshes or ranging across the open pastures. Several groups of Cape Barren Geese included some feeding right at the roadside. A good variety of other species included, White-faced and White-necked Herons, Great Egret, Masked Lapwing, Royal Spoonbill, Straw-necked Ibis, Swamp Harrier, a very rufous-toned Peregrine, a showy Little Wattlebird, and our first Golden-headed Cisticola.

Heading down to Nobbies Point we located even greater numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters moving offshore together a good number of Crested Terns as well as Little Black and Great Cormorants. Australasian Gannet and Australian Pelican. Moving to the nearby Little Penguin colony prior to dusk we caught sight of our first Grey Currawong as it flew along the coast. Scanning out to sea we began to pick up our first small rafts of gathering Little Penguins, but a real surprise in the failing light was an immature Northern Giant Petrel which passed along the mouth of the bay slowly enough for the whole group to see. After watching several hundred cute Little Penguins waddle out from the sea we headed back to our accommodation.



Weird-looking Cape Barren Geese have a face only a month could love (Simon Mitchell)

The next morning we headed up into the Toolangi Forest. Several notable species were seen en route including our first Sacred Kingfishers, Australian Shelduck, Maned Duck, Rainbow Lorikeet and Brown Thornbill. More unusual species included a brief flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and an unexpected group of Satin Bowerbirds. Another Superb Lyrebird also ran across the road.

Continuing on we visited the Wirrawilla and Tanglefoot trails. In these areas we gained good views of Pilotbirds, as well as good views of Pink Robin, Rose Robin and Scarlet Robin, with many individuals giving phenomenal views at close range. A singing Fan-tailed Cuckoo was eventually co-operative enough to show well in the telescopes and a single Gang-gang Cockatoo flew overhead. Higher up into the forest we found a Large-billed Scrubwren, several Lewin's Honeyeaters and a brief Eastern Spinebill. Returning to the car park area we spotted a Pied Currawong close to the roadside.



Flame Robins really do have fiery breasts! (Simon Mitchell)

After enjoying our first 'famous Australian pies' for lunch in Yea, we headed to a nearby wetland site. Here Red-browed Finches and Bell Miners were exceptionally common. A variety of other species included Rainbow Bee-eater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Australasian Darter and Australian (Black-shouldered) Kite. We admired our first good views of Superb Fairy-wrens, Rufous Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

As we headed back towards the car we realized that looking silently down on us from the top of a small tree were a pair of Tawny Frogmouths on a nest. It took a few seconds for everyone to be able to locate the completely motionless birds, but eventually we all enjoyed fantastic views through the scope. Having had such amazing 'walk-away' views of an often difficult species we headed towards our next destination of Deniliquin. A stop en route produced both Eastern Rosella and Red-rumped Parrot as well as Yellow-rumped Thornbill and another Grey Butcherbird.



Tawny Frogmouth and Superb Fairywren (Simon Mitchell)

The next day we headed out around Deniliquin with Phil Maher. The open fields around the town produced a good variety of species including our first Little and Noisy Friarbirds. A pair of Cockatiel flew over and a variety of honeyeaters were seen. Next we headed out around Gulpa State Forest where the first few hours were extremely productive with Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped, Buff-rumped Striated, Brown, Yellow and Striated Thornbills, four Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoos, White-winged Trillers and a group of Hooded Robins. Two Eastern Shrike-tits showed well, as did White-throated Treecreeper and Yellow Rosella.



Hooded Robins eventually showed well at Gulpa State Forest (Simon Mitchell)

Venturing further into the forest we began to pick up a number of other species. Beautiful Red-capped Robins were seen well and even more impressive were the seemingly florescent green and yellow Superb Parrots. Although we couldn't locate Diamond Firetail, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Western Gerygone, Spotted

Pardalote, White-plumed, White-fronted and Singing Honeyeater, White-browed Babbler, Little and Red-Wattlebirds and Common Bronzewing were seen well. As we headed back from the vehicles a Painted Button-quail shot up from our feet. Fortunately we were able to relocate the bird and the entire group got reasonable flight views. The open glades and flower-covered meadows amongst the dry forest also gave a rather scenic backdrop to the morning's proceedings.

After lunch we explored the open agricultural area to the north of Deniliquin. A small marsh held Australian Purple Gallinule, together with three very elusive Baillon's Crakes, and nearby was a group of Grey-crowned Babblers. In the more open fields we spotted a White-bellied Sea-eagle (quite a surprise), as well as a brief pair of Blue Bonnet and another Cockatiel. More wooded areas held several Rainbow Bee-eaters, as well as mixed flock of Woodswallows which included Masked, Dusky and White-browed. We made a short circuit of the woodland, hoping that tapping on various tree cavities might reveal an Australian Owlet-nightjar, but on this occasion we did not strike lucky.

Next we visited a private farmstead where two difficult target species had recently been seen. The first of these was soon seen well when we spotted two juvenile Black Honeyeaters flicking between flowering bushes at the side of the property. Circling around to a more open area at the back, it wasn't long before we found a pair of Ground Cuckoo-shrikes performing well in the bare trees. After enjoying wonderful prolonged views we stood watching the fading light throwing colours across the wisps of cloud whilst eating our packed dinners. Finishing dinner, we headed further north, knowing our day still wasn't over.



Rainbow Bee-eaters and the increasingly rare Ground Cuckoo-shrike (Simon Mitchell)

The main event of the day had been at the back of our minds since dawn and was now upon us. By driving across the sparsely grassed pastures shining several spotlights we hoped to find some of Australia's most difficult to see birds – foremost among them the strange and unique Plains Wanderer.

Shining our spotlights across the open pastures we waited with baited breath, knowing that connecting with this difficult species was no means guaranteed. Then, after about half an hour of driving we suddenly spotted a female. All three vehicles carefully converged on the bird, and for the next 30 minutes we enjoyed fantastic views of the bird.

Plains Wanderer was initially treated as a gamebird in the order Galliformes. However, more recent DNA analysis has found that it is actually most closely related to Jacanas. Explanations as to its strange appearance are either it represents a remarkable example of convergent evolution (its short grass habitat has resulted in an appearance more resembling Button-quails, or, more likely, that is highly plesiomorphic). This means it is relatively unchanged from the ancestral form of most waders, and represents something close to what the ancestral species linking Jacana, Seedsnipe and Painted Snipes might have looked like. Plains Wanderer is now recognised as endangered by IUCN and continues to decline as a result of habitat conversion and drought linked to climate change. As an incredibly unique bird we all felt extremely lucky to have seen one.



Plains Wanderer is now known to be most closely related to Jacanas (Andy Jensen)

Our evening spotlighting still wasn't over however. We soon located the fantastic Inland Dotterel, another scarce and difficult to see species, and as well as several Brown Songlarks and Australian Pipits we also saw our only Banded Lapwings of the trip and even better an incredibly confiding Little Button-quail. Even as we headed back to our accommodation in Deniliquin we continued to add new birds with two Eastern Barn Owls sat on roadside fence posts.





Although always partly obscured in the long grass this Little Button-quail showed fantastically well (Simon Mitchell)

The next morning we headed to several wetland sites around Deniliquin, including an effluent lagoon adjacent to the rice factory and the water treatment works themselves. This produced a good variety of waterbirds which we hadn't previously encountered. The first lagoon alone held multiple Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-fronted Dotterel, Australian Spotted Crake and several Black-tailed Native-hens. The sewage treatment ponds held over a thousand Plumed Whistling-duck as well as smaller numbers of Black Swan, Australian Shelduck, Maned Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead and Hoary-headed Grebe. An Australian Pied Cormorant was our first, as were a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, White-headed Stilt and an Australian Hobby which performed extremely well, disturbing many of the duck as it shot right overhead across the ponds. However, the highlight of the morning came in the form of our first White-backed Swallows – several of which made extremely close passes as they fed over the lagoons with Welcome Swallows.



Black-tailed Native-hens prefer to run than fly (Simon Mitchell)

In the afternoon we headed to the town of Heathcote, where a loop of various spots in the area with an old friend Tom, produced another different community of birds, including many species we hadn't encountered previously on the trip. In a suburban garden we saw our first Musk Lorikeets and no sooner had we left the town than a Little Eagle came into view, circling very low over the road. Further stops produced an impressive array of Honeyeaters including Yellow-tufted, Fuscous, White-plumed, Blue-faced, Black-chinned and Brown-headed. A Collared Sparrowhawk shot through, as did three incredibly brief Purple-crowned Lorikeets. A White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike performed far better, giving good view to the whole group after initially being difficult to see.



White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes showed well in the Heathcote area (Simon Mitchell)

In the areas around One-eye Forest we tried to catch up with Speckled Warbler. This proved very frustrating as despite a close initial encounter the bird then remained over a hundred meters away through the open forest at all times, retreating further up the hillside each time we advanced slightly and refusing to do other than sing from distance. We did however get excellent views of Leaden Flycatcher and Scarlet Robin. A short distance away we tried for Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, but whilst waiting for a reply spotted a Diamond Firetail which shortly afterward flew in and landed on a nearby fencepost. Continuing down various forested drives we continued to encounter a good range of species, including Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Brown Treecreeper, Spotted Pardalote and Rufous Songlark. Just before dusk we located two new birds in the form of several Little Lorikeet and a singing White-throated Gerygone.

The next morning we headed from Heathcote to Clunes State Forest. We first headed to an area near the railway track where a Pallid Cuckoo showed well to the whole group. A mix of honeyeaters and wattlebirds were picked up along the tree lines and several Eastern Yellow Robins were seen. We then headed into a large open paddock, but were distracted by a large group of Varied Sittellas. We gained good views of several of these nuthatch-like birds (actually unrelated – but a good example of convergent evolution) as they crept up and down the tree trunks.

Next we spread out across the paddocks to search for our next quarry – the difficult Painted Honeyeater. This impressive black, white and yellow species is rather difficult to find, as it feeds almost exclusively on mistletoe berries. Spreading out soon paid off as Stewart located heard a distantly calling Honeyeater. Once the group had assembled we began trying to locate the source of the sound. There was no need however,

as the bird soon flew in, looking quizzically at us from a nearby tree. We were all impressed by this dapper male and pleased to connect with a species which is far from guaranteed.



The beautiful Painted Honeyeater is a difficult to find bird because of it's specific habitat requirements (Simon Mitchell)

Having seen our main target we headed for lunch in Drysdale. In the afternoon we checked several wetland areas close by. Firstly, just outside Drysdale we visited Lake Lorne. Here we found a good variety of waterbirds including over fifty Grey Teal, twenty Hardhead and thirty Maned Ducks. Amongst these were smaller numbers of Chestnut Teal, Black Swan, Blue-billed Duck and best of all, at least five Freckled Duck. Also present were a pair of Australian Grebe and a single Australasian Darter, which showed well. In the suburban landscape several more familiar species were seen including Blackbirds, Goldfinches and our first Greenfinches of the trip. More typically Australian were a very confiding pair of Grey Butcherbirds.



Even as juveniles, Grey Butcherbirds look pretty fearsome (Simon Mitchell)

From Lake Lorne we headed to Reedy Lake near Connewarre. Although most birds were rather distant here we did pick up a few interesting species including our first Brolgas and Musk Duck as well as three distant flyover Magpie Geese. New passerines included a highly elusive Little Grassbird as well as a Striated Fieldwren and White-fronted Chat. Superb Fairy-wrens were again in evidence as at most of the sites we had visited over the previous two days.

Next we moved to Avalon Beach where we were immediately greeted by several species of shorebird. Flocks of Curlew Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint were outnumbered by even more Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, some of which showed very well on the salt pans. Smaller numbers of Marsh Sandpiper, Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, White-headed Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Red-kneed Dotterel and Red-capped Plover were also present.



Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers migrate south from being born on the Siberian Taiga to winter in Southern Australia (Simon Mitchell)

A good variety of other species were also seen. Several Great-crested Grebes were on the sea as well as a few Little Black, Little Pied, Australian Pied and Great Cormorants. Numerous Whiskered and a couple of Greater Crested Terns were also seen. White-fronted Chats were common on the salt pans, with ten or so different individuals seen.

The following morning we headed to the Jellingot Reserve, arriving shortly after dawn. It didn't take long before we saw flushed our main target from the side of the marsh – two or three Latham's Snipe flew up calling. Circling the area we eventually recorded over forty birds and were even able to locate one perched in the open. Three separate Buff-banded Rails were also seen – a species we hadn't necessarily expected to record on the trip. Other species included our first Chestnut Teal as well as several other waterbirds, including good numbers of Australian Swamphens and Hardhead.

We then headed along the very scenic Great Ocean Highway towards Port Campbell. Our first stop was around Point Addis where it wasn't long before we found several Rufous Bristlebirds, including one which walked right towards us along the roadside. A brief seawatch from the end of the point yielded the expected Short-tailed Shearwaters and Shy Albatrosses, but also two distant Fluttering Shearwater and an Arctic Skua which sat on the sea for long enough for everyone to gain telescope views.



The landscape around Point Addis was postcard perfect (Simon Mitchell)

Having seen a brief fly-over Blue-winged Parrot at Point Addis we were still keen to get better views. Walking along a nearby wooded track for several minutes we eventually found a group of 10 or so birds, some of which performed exceptionally well. A beautiful male Scarlet Robin and several Galahs were also present in the area – some of which were performing that noisy display to one another.

We then continued to an area of heathland slightly inland of the highway where another different group of species were encountered. This included our first Southern Emu-wren and a very skulking Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, which stayed almost invisible in the blustery conditions. Three Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos performed a flyby – but were frustratingly obscured almost immediately by a line of trees, however a pair of

White-eared Honeyeater performed very well for the whole group to see. Leaving the area a brief King Parrot was noted flying across the road.



Blue-winged Parrot and Galah (Simon Mitchell)

Continuing towards Port Campbell we made several more stops along the way, including at Twelve Apostles where we encountered our first Black-faced Cormorants of the trip. Between the various stops we encountered good numbers of egrets and herons (including a total of c20 White-necked) and several less regular species we had recorded at only a few previous destinations. These included Eastern Rosella, Brown Thornbill, Grey Currawong, Forest Raven and Silvreye.



White-eared Honeyeater and Shy Albatross (Simon Mitchell)

The next morning our first visit was to the Princetown Marshes. Here we noted a good selection of wetland birds, including good views of Golden-headed Cisticola and several Swamp Harriers. André was lucky enough to get a brief view of an Australasian Bittern dropping into the reedbed but despite an hour of further searching the rest of us missed out. A slight surprise came in the form of a Southern Emu-wren in the reedbed itself.

We then headed onward to Little Desert, making a few stops along the coast en-route. Some of the scenery along this stretch was incredible and many photo opportunities of rock stacks and archways against a backdrop of huge thundering breakers presented themselves. A couple of Little Egrets were also seen during the morning. As we drove inland towards Little Desert the first Australian Shoveler and Yellow-billed Spoonbill of the trip were noted on some wetland areas.

We arrived at Little Desert in the mid-afternoon and wasted no time in searching for some of our key target species from the area. As well as at least four Buff-rumped Thornbills at least two Slender-billed Thornbills were seen in the roadside heath. However with both species forming a mixed species flock there was some

confusion as to who had seen which species, so we planned to return the next morning if possible. Also seen was our first Rufous Fieldwren, which was far more confiding than the thornbills and a group of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters. After dinner we attempted some night birding and although an Australian Owlet-nightjar was heard very close by it was impossible to get quite near enough to work out exactly where its call was emanating from.



Huge breakers rolled in at this rock formation, named London Bridge (Simon Mitchell)

The next morning we took a pre-breakfast walk around the nearby Stringybark Nature Walk. A Bush Thick-knee and Australian Owlet-nightjar were heard but not seen, both Inland and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills showed well. After breakfast we visited a predator-exclusion zone to the north of our accommodation. Here we were very quickly face-to-face with a habituated but wild male Malleefowl who was busy with his mound.



This Malleefowl wasn't nesting but just spring-cleaning his mound (Simon Mitchell)

After enjoying fantastic views of the Malleefowl we tried for several other species in the enclosure, but the dense Mallee scrub made viewing conditions extremely difficult. Several Purple-gaped Honeyeaters gave us the run-around before most of the group were able to get onto them. A Southern Scrub-robin showed a little better, but a Shy Heathwren was, as its name suggests, incredibly elusive.

After getting back for lunch we made another stop at the roadside heath we had visited the day before. This time we got good comparative views of Buff-rumped and Slender-billed Thornbills, and were able to confirm with photos the key features separating the two species. After this brief stop most of the rest of the day was taken up in our drive towards Ouyen.

On arrival in Ouyen we had planned for a relaxing hour or so prior to dinner in the motel rooms, however the raucous call of a Major Mitchell's Cockatoo soon shattered the peace, and the ground gathered (in various states of dress!) in the car park to enjoy fantastic point blank views of this gorgeous cockatoo. Another pre-dinner bonus was a couple of White-breasted Woodswallows seen on the walk to the pub for dinner, the first of the tour.



The open heaths at Little Desert were often a blustery place to be (Andy Jensen)

We left our accommodation before dawn on the morning of the 21st and headed to Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. Our focus for the morning was on the Old Calder Highway and Nowingi Track. This area proved to be very productive. Good numbers of honeyeaters were present including Striped and Yellow-plumed. Several commoner species included numerous Striated Pardalotes and Weebills and a pair of Restless Flycatchers were very responsive. A Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush put in a good performance running along the ground not far ahead of us, and the first stunning Mulga Parrots were seen. Best of all, a cracking Malleefowl crossed the track ahead of the vehicles as we approached the junction of the Nowingi Track - a slightly less habituated individual than that at Little Desert!



Female Mallee Emu-wren and male Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush (Ed Wilson left, Simon Mitchell right)

We then took a walk into the thick spinifex–carpeted mallee itself. After half an hour of walking and listening we heard our first target bird – a Mallee Emu-wren. We soon located a pair of these impressive birds right in front of us, and the female bird even posed for some photographs. After enjoying a great performance from the Emu-wrens it wasn't long before we located our other main target, a singing Striated Grasswren. By the leaders gently chivvying the bird forward from the opposite direction the group was able to eventually gain excellent views of this difficult species.

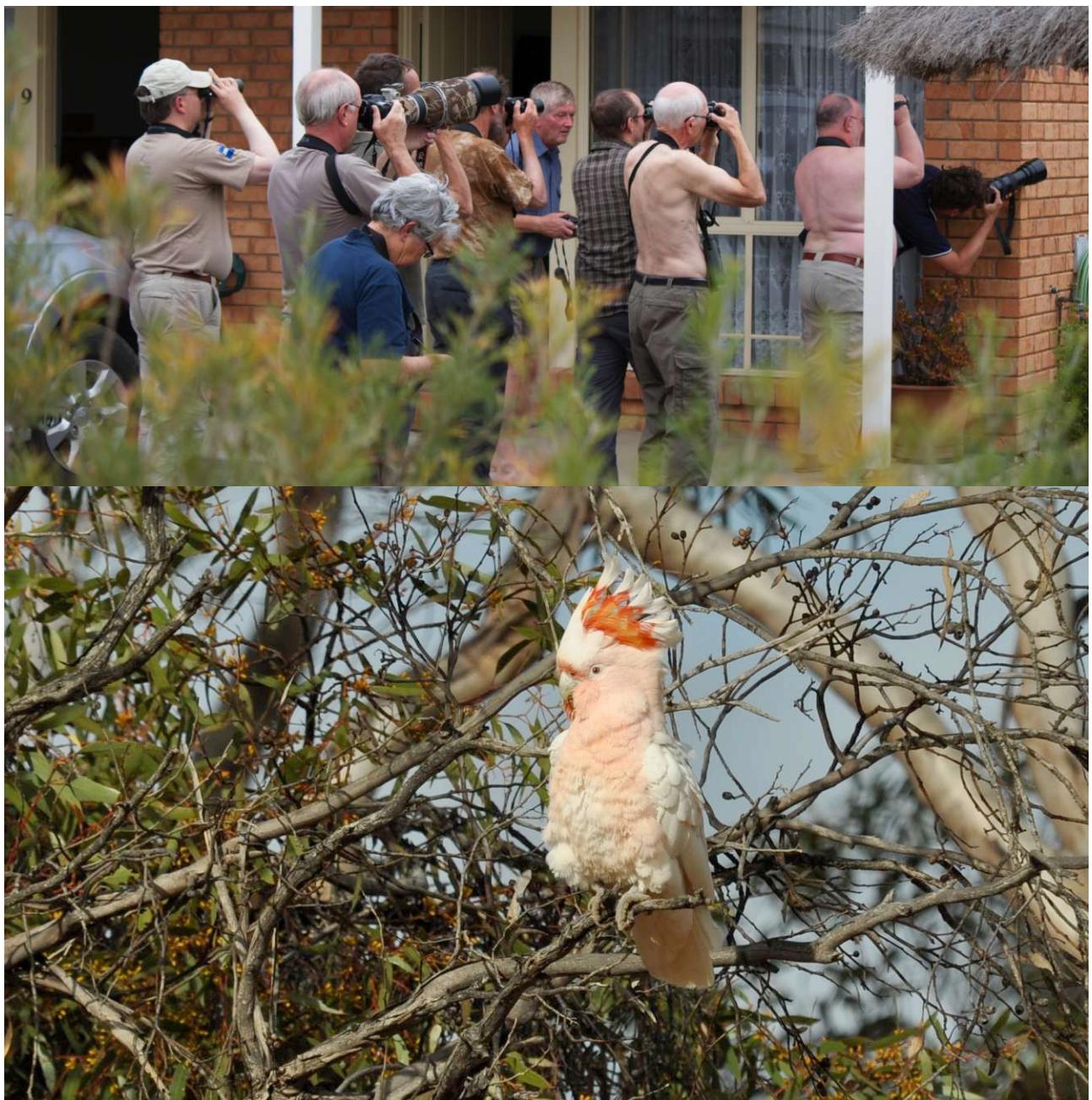
With morale very high after just seeing our first Grasswren we continued to the nearby Hattah Lake. Although the lake itself was dry a variety of Parrots were seen in the dead trees including Mulga Parrot, Regent Parrot (a local speciality), Australian Ringneck and Yellow Rosella. A pair of Little Eagles on a nest was also an excellent highlight. In adjacent scrub we also gained fantastic views of both Splendid and Variegated Fairy-wrens. Several White-winged Chough and a Peregrine were also noted. Just as we were about to leave we spotted distantly a group of Apostlebirds. As is typical for the species they soon came to investigate us and began hopping around our feet in the hope of being fed, a single Noisy Miner coming to join them.



Splendid Fairywrens certainly live up to their name (Simon Mitchell)

The nearby Mournpall Lake still had some water and held at least 15 Yellow-billed Spoonbills as well as 57 Red-necked Avocets. Several White-headed Stilts and Whiskered Terns were also present . A different pair of Little Eagles were also seen overflying the area, and a pair of Diamond Doves was seen on the drive to the lake.

After a late lunch we spent some time in the afternoon recuperating. However, from inside their room Simon and Andy heard a strange Cockatoo sound. Investigating the sound they quickly found a Major Mitchell's Cockatoo sat very close by in a nearby bush. Quickly running to knock on each door it was only a few seconds before the group assembled to see the bird. With no idea if the bird would stay and many people taking a well earned nap it was with some confusion that the group walked down to see the bird each of us in various states of undress! Although the commitment to seeing all the difficult birds was impressive none of us need to have rushed, since the Cockatoo sat quite happily feeding on fruits for several minutes afterwards.



Some group members showed dedication to the cause but putting this Major Mitchell's Cockatoo ahead of dressing! (Simon Mitchell)

The following morning we headed back to Hattah N.P. A few additional species were seen, including a Crested Bellbird and another pair of Major Mitchell's Cockatoo. Other Parrots included Australian Ringnecks as well as more Mulga Parrots and Yellow Rosellas. Leaving mid-morning and heading toward Mildura we called at several sites and made a few roadside stops, most notably for a group of Blue Bonnet. Our stop at Yarrara Flora and Fauna reserve after lunch in Mildura was rather brief but still productive. The woodland here held our only pair of White-browed Treecreepers of the trip as well as a wonderfully tame pair of Red-capped Robins.

The 24th saw us spend a full day in the Gluepot Reserve. We were joined by Helga whose expertise in the local area proved invaluable. A short walk in open woodland early morning produced a very showy Southern Scrub-robin as well as both Gilbert's Whistler and Shy Heathwren which performed well. Another Crested Bellbird was seen as well as our first Red-backed Kingfisher.



This Southern Scrub-robin was so busy singing it barely noticed us (Simon Mitchell)

Our next target was the difficult Red-lored Whistler. We visited several known spots for the bird and walked extensively through the mallee without success. However, we did see several Whistling Kites a Red-caped Robin, Yellow-plumed and Brown-headed Honeyeaters and both Rufous and more Gilbert's Whistlers as well as our first party of Chestnut-crowned Babblers. Our frustration continued for several hours as we failed to locate any of our target birds until we finally located a party of White-fronted Honeyeaters. During the heat of the day activity slowed down greatly as temperatures rose into the mid-thirties. It took over two hours searching through groups of Yellow-throated Miners (often frustratingly elusive) until we were happy enough that we'd located at least a couple of Black-eared Miners a species now in grave danger of extinction as a result of habitat change and subsequent integration with the much commoner Yellow-throated Miner.

For the rest of the day we tried again for Red-lored Whistler, taking in another site where birds had been seen recently. However, having still not connected we had to make do with attempting again the next morning.



Black-eared Mines differ rather subtly from Yellow-throated Miners and especially hybrids. A contrasting pale throat combined with concolourous upperparts and rump are the best separation criteria (Simon Mitchell left, Andy Jensen right)

Despite trying again from dawn the next morning Red-lored Whistlers still eluded us. A few interesting species were seen including a few Mulga Parrots and a group of Varied Sittella. An Australian Owlet-nightjar flushed from right in front of one of the group, but immediately flew a good distance and couldn't be relocated. Undeterred we headed towards our next site, just outside the town of Morgan. Here we quickly found two localised species we'd been hoping for. A Southern Whiteface hopped up on a fenceline and at least three different Redthroats sang from the low saltbush scrub. Our first group of White-winged Fairy-wrens were also seen as well as another party of Variegated Fairy-wrens. A group of Chestnut-crowned Babblers gave much improved view on the previous day and numerous showy White-fronted, Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters were also seen.



Redthroat and Variegate Fairywren (Simon Mitchell)

Continuing on from Morgan, we glimpsed a single Crimson Chat flick across the road as we approached Hawker. Pulling up at the roadside we located at least three birds, which gave reasonable 'scope views for all of us. Also present here were a couple of small parties of Zebra Finch; our first of the trip, and numerous Brown Songlarks.

At Hawker itself, we stopped along a productive side road towards a lookout where Australian Pipits were common. Several Chirruping Wedgebills were also found, but the highlight was at least two Spotted Harriers, which at times showed very close to the vehicles. The first Black-faced Woodswallow of the trip was also spotted.

From Hawker we headed in the Flinders Ranges the following morning. Our main target here was the difficult Short-tailed Grasswren. A brief stop on the way was made when we spotted a Budgerigar right by the roadside, which unfortunately didn't stay long enough for more than the group in the last vehicle to see it. Whilst searching for the bird a few more Crimson Chats and several Australian Pipits were seen, and a large group of Black-tailed Native-hen. Once at our grasswren stakeout site we spread out into wide lines so as to cover the maximum amount of ground, and combed through the spinifex for several kilometres. Despite this we had no luck with the grasswrens. A few Elegant Parrots flew past and we later located a pair perched in a nearby dead tree for the whole group to enjoy. A flock of Orange Chats were also a good sighting and at least two Stubble Quails were flushed by different members of the group and seen by the majority. On the mammal front several Euros and a few Red Kangaroos added interest. We then tried another site at nearby Stokes Hill, but once again our long walk was in vain except for a few Common Bronzewings, Southern Whiteface and Inland Thornbills. By the end of the morning we estimated that between the group we had covered over 100km of ground to no avail!

In the afternoon we visited Brachina Gorge. Here a single White-fronted Honeyeater was seen as well as at least three Grey-fronted Honeyeaters, which was our only encounter of the trip. The other main highlight of Brachina however, were several Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies which seemed relatively unconcerned by our presence as they sat feeding between the boulder strewn bases of the mountains.



A bouncing Euro was not an excuse to make currency-related puns (Simon Mitchell)

Making the long drive towards Lyndhurst we stopped off shortly before arrival at the large retention dam a few kilometres south of the town. Low water levels meant that the lake was a haven for wildfowl and waders. Duck included our first Pink-eared Duck, good numbers of Maned Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead, and Hoary-headed Grebe. Two Australasian Grebes, four Great-crested Grebe and two Musk Duck were also present. Waders included six Red-necked Avocet, two Red-kneed Dotterel, sixty Red-capped Plover, fifteen Red-necked Stints, four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and at least two Australian Pratincoles.



Australian Pratincole was one of many waders seen on the retention dam lake near Lyndhurst (Simon Mitchell)

The next morning we headed straight out on the Strzelecki Track, as we began our first day in proper outback Australia. Conditions in central Australia preceding the trip had been very dry for the past couple of years, evidenced by the parched landscape - a stark contrast to the 2011 trip which necessitated a boat crossing in the desert!

Our first stop was about 30km north of Lyndhurst where a few small patches of scrub and long grass were nestled between the rolling desert hills. Again we formed wide lines to check the area for grasswrens and whitefaces. After over an hour of all of us searching Simon radio'd through to say he had found a Thick-billed Grasswren. After carefully moving into position we were able to lure the bird out into the open for a couple of minutes, providing good views for the whole group. Also in the area were several Chirruping Wedgebills and Singing Honeyeaters, and raptors included Brown Falcons, Nankeen Kestrels, Black Kites and Wedge-tailed Eagles

The remainder of the day was spent driving up to and exploring the Strzelecki crossing. We inspected as many trees as possible for Letter-winged Kites, but sadly couldn't locate any. Several Diamond Doves were seen and one particular creek crossing held Red-browed Pardalote, over forty Budgerigar and at least two Black Honeyeaters. Another flock of Blue Bonnets also added excitement. We arrived back at Lyndhurst just before dusk.

Departing Lyndhurst the following morning, we made another pre-breakfast attempt to find Chestnut-breasted Whiteface at our two stakeout sites. Unfortunately there was again no sign of the birds, but we did see two Australian Bustards fly over. These birds appeared to be undertaking a significant movement as they powered from one horizon to the other and disappeared. A Cinnamon Quail-thrush behaved more like a locustella warbler than a typical Quail-thrush in the breezy conditions, diving for thick cover each time we tried to coax it into the open. After a rapid breakfast we headed across to Marree and the start of the Birdsville Track.

After a reasonable drive to Marree we began covering the start of the Birdsville Track in earnest keeping an eye out for several species we still hadn't encountered. As on the previous day Australian Pipit, Black-faced Woodswallow and White-backed Swallows were all reasonably common and we also noted several Australian Pratincoles. Here the landscape became even more barren, and what sparse tufts of grass

vegetation had previously scattered the desert we no longer present, with the strata removed of all soil by the wind and only shining glass-like stones remaining – extensive areas of ‘gibber’. A group of Orange Chats showed well in this area, but a party of four Gibberbirds which landed right at the side of the vehicles performed even better.



Gibberbirds shared their habitat with free-roaming Horses and One-humped Camels! (Simon Mitchell)

We arrived at Mungerranie in the late afternoon and immediately headed out around the Mungerranie Bore and adjacent dunes. Three Brolga flushed from the edge of the pool as well as single Glossy Ibis and Australasian Pied Cormorant. Several Black-fronted Dotterel, White-headed Stilt and Pink-headed Duck were present as was a single White-necked Heron. We focussed our time at the back of the pool in the dunes where we hoped to find an Eyrean Grasswren. After numerous encounters with White-winged Fairy-wrens and a single glimpse of an extremely un-cooperative Grasswren we accepted defeat for the day and headed back to watch Crested Pigeons, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Little Corellas gathering to roost. As darkness fell the leaders caught sight of a Letter-winged Kite leaving its roost and hovering briefly over the back of the bore, but within the seconds it took to run inside to get the group the bird disappeared into the gathering dusk.



Thick-billed and Eyrean Grasswrens took several hours each to find (Simon Mitchell)



Grey Grasswren showed well once we finally located them (Simon Mitchell)

We headed up the Birdsville Track early the next morning, knowing we had a long day ahead of us to mop up the target species for this area. Our initial target was Grey Grasswren which we hoped to find in the dry lignum swamps a few kilometres from the main track. Once again this involved spreading in wide lines and trying to detect song or movement for several hours and at multiple sites. Having begun at around 7am it was almost 11am when we finally located a pair of Grasswrens. However, having had to work for the bird made them even more satisfying and they performed extremely well running in circles around us with their tails cocked and even presenting some brief photographic opportunities. During our search we encountered several other species, White-winged Fairywren perhaps the most numerous among these. Something of a surprise for a couple of the group was catching sight of a flock of 25 or more Pied Honeyeaters flying through together – perhaps bound for less parched habitat.

Continuing north to Pandie Burra Bore we noted a pair of Camels that were spotted drinking at a roadside waterhole near Goyder Lagoon and a Dingo was also spotted nearby. At the bore itself we found a pair of Yellow Chats which showed well as they picked around the short sedges of the wetland. Several commoner desert species such as Brown Falcons and Wedge-tailed Eagles provided interesting interludes on the way back, but no new species were noted.



Dingos are considered a sub-species of Grey Wolf by many taxonomic authorities! (Simon Mitchell)

Arriving back at Mungerrannie we made another evening attempt to see Eyrean Grasswren in the nearby dunes. This time, after another hour or so of trudging through the dunes we decided to stop and wait for the birds to come in and hope we could attract them to a particular spot whilst scanning from over fifty meters away. Within a couple of minutes of playing the tape the birds materialised right next to it as if from nowhere. After we had all enjoyed a couple of minutes viewing the bird disappeared as inconspicuously as they had arrived. Around the Mungerrannie Bore a few interesting species were found towards dusk, including a Baillon's Crake and Australian Spotted Crake. A good selection of ducks were present on the previous day. Four Flock Bronzewing came into drink briefly but were only seen by a few of the group. Despite holding vigil until well into the dusk we didn't spot anymore, nor could we replicate the previous night's kite encounter.

The next morning we headed to the Cowarie Station Road. Having checked every radio mast we had passed in the previous two days in the hope of Black or Grey Falcons we were amazed that this morning there was an adult Grey Falcon sat atop the mast! With a great find to start the morning we spent the next couple of hours searching the hillside scrub for other species we hadn't managed to connect with. A much more co-operative pair of Cinnamon Quail-thrushes performed well for us and we were able to track down a couple of Flock Bronzewing at a nearby waterhole.



Grey Falcon (Andy Jensen) and Cinnamon Quail-thrush (Simon Mitchell)

Heading back through Lyndhurst we again stopped at the retention lake. Although there were fewer waders and duck present, several Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stints were still present. Notably Eurasian Coot had increased from our previous visit and now numbered over two hundred. Continuing south we again noted Spotted Harriers near Hawker. En route to Port Augusta we also called in briefly at the Dutchman's Stern Conservation Park near Quorn, where several Adelaide Rosellas and a couple of Elegant Parrot were seen.

Arriving into Port Augusta we stopped in at Bird Lake. As well as fifty or so Banded Stilts we were surprised to spot a Short-tailed Shearwater sat on the water not far from the beach. Pulling in for a closer look we were amazed to count a total of over 25 birds, obviously involved in a large scale wreck, had been blown right into the centre of the town. In varying condition several birds were seen flying around right outside our hotel! Our first two Sooty Oystercatcher of the trip were also noted on the beach.

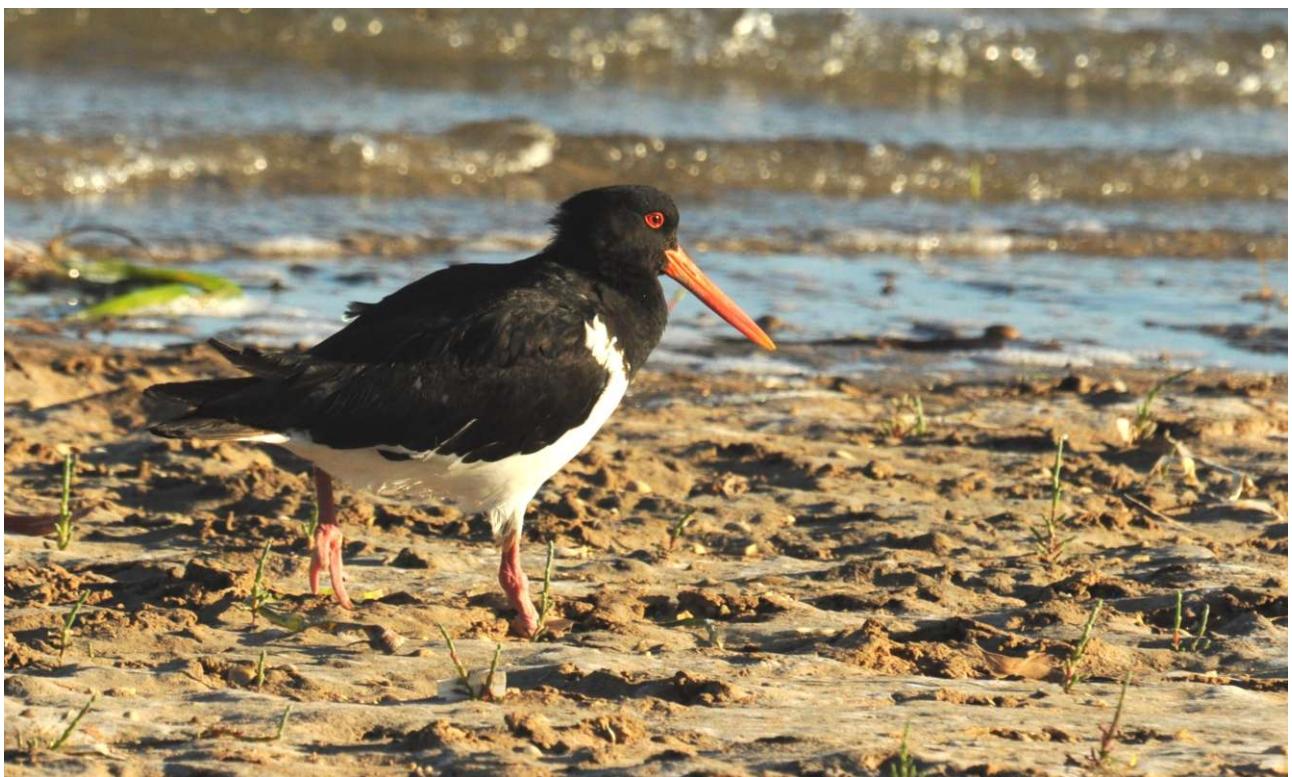


Watching Short-tailed Shearwaters cruise through the middle of a town was a somewhat surreal experience (Simon Mitchell)

In an attempt to connect with an extra Grasswren we took a detour out to Whyalla Conservation park, to the West of Port Augusta. Upon leaving the vehicles we very quickly heard a Western Grasswren. However, try as we might we could not get the bird to co-operate and it offered only the briefest of glimpses to Andy before going to ground. No other birds could be found in the adjoining areas, although good numbers of Crested Bellbirds were heard and a group of White-browed Babblers were seen.

Back in Port Augusta we ate our lunch in a suburban park where Purple-crowned Lorikeets seemed likely to occur. Over the next hour we gained several views of Purple-crowned as they flew over calling. However, we were unable to locate any of them perched. By contrast both a Brown Goshawk and a Collared Sparrowhawk perched up the shade of the trees close to us. In the afternoon we headed towards Adelaide.

In the early evening the beaches around St Kilda, just outside Adelaide produced more Sooty Oystercatchers, as well as a couple of Australian Pied Oystercatchers, Little Egret, a brief Nankeen Night-heron as well as good numbers of Black-tailed Native-hens, Whiskered Terns and Goldfinches! An interesting mix of species for such a sub-urban landscape.



Australian Pied Oystercatchers appear very similar to the Eurasian species familiar to most of us (Simon Mitchell)

On December 1st most of the day was taken up by our transfer, from Adelaide to Hobart, via Melbourne. However in the morning we first spent a few hours around Greenfield's Wetland where a good selection of duck were present including several confiding Chestnut Teal. Several Little Grassbirds, Purple Gallinules and Dusky Moorhens were present in the sedges and unexpected bonuses came from an Australian Kite and a flock of fifteen or so Royal Spoonbill which flew overhead. A Barbary (African Collared) Dove was also seen near the hotel by one of the group – a species which is now considered to be an established feral population in Adelaide.

After our long transfers we arrived into Hobart shortly before dark. Several Musk Lorikeets at the airport and a couple of brief roadside Tasmanian Native-hens the only species of interest before we lost the last of the daylight.

The following day we arrived at a nearby airstrip ready for our flight down to Melaleuca on the south-west side of Tasmania. This isolated area of acidic bogs, poor soils and scattered woodland nestled into fissures and contours of imposing mountain ranges. As we waited for our two small planes to make their checks a White-bellied Sea-eagle drifted past. Our forty minute flight took us along the south side of Tasmania, over some incredible scenery and was very much an experience in itself, Some of the group even managed to spot a few Australasian Gannets from the aircraft.

As we left the airstrip André glimpsed what could only have been a Ground Parrot as it flushed around the corner. Checking where the bird appeared to have landed we couldn't relocate it so decided to try later. Next we walked across the airfield to the feeder area. It wasn't long before we spotted our first Orange-bellied Parrot a nearby dead tree. Although it was somewhat distant, this bird and brief flyover meant we all had at least an 'insurance sighting'. With a population of less than 40 adult birds (only 13 had returned for the current breeding season but the time the majority would normally have arrived), this species is sadly on the very brink of extinction in the wild.



This Beautiful Firetail seemed rather confused as to what to do with the nesting material it had collected at Melaleuca (Simon Mitchell)

Two Striated Fieldwrens (of the obviously larger Tasmanian race) showed well near the track and a pair of Southern Emu-wrens were equally obliging. Watching from the birdfeeders we waited patiently hoping closer for better views of Orange-bellied Parrots. Over the next hour we gained fantastic views of Dusky Robin, Tasmanian Scrubwren, Green Rosellas, several Beautiful Firetails and Superb Fairy-wrens (as well as enjoying some excellent snacks supplied by our pilots)!, but no Parrots arrived at the feeders. We decided to head out to other parts of the area in search of other remaining target species and return later.

We walked a short loop around the open bogs on several well maintained paths. Two or more Yellow-throated Honeyeater were the first new birds seen. Although at first the birds responded well they could be elusive in the swaying trees, and not all of the group connected immediately. An impressive vista over the lake had us expecting a few waterfowl, but the lagoon seemed either too saline, or too oligotrophic to hold more than a pair of Black Swans. Over lunch we also located at least two Olive Whistlers, but Strong-billed Honeyeaters eluded us. Making our way back towards the airfield and feeders we took care to walk back through the area where Andre has seen the Ground Parrot fly from when we first arrived. Suddenly not one, but two Eastern Ground Parrots shot from exactly the same spot as before. This time we were able to locate one of the bird on the ground and eventually the male showed exceptionally well down to just a few meters. On one occasion the bird could manage to disappear in the relatively short grass even when we had it virtually surrounded.



This amazing Eastern Ground Parrot crept out right in front of some of the group at Melaleuca (Ed Wilson)

Returning to the feeders it wasn't long before three Orange-bellied Parrots came in to feed right in front of us. With only a short amount of time before our return flight watching these incredibly rare birds was a fitting way to end our time at Melaleuca.



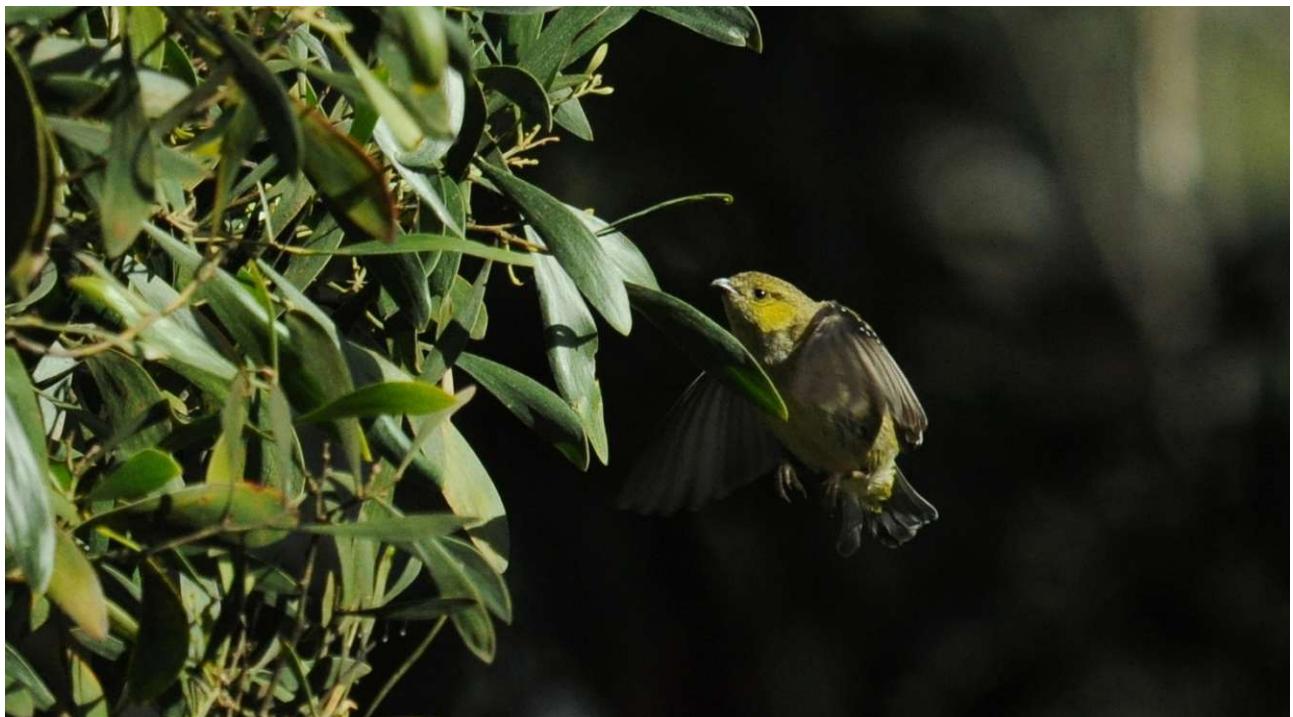
Orange-bellied Parrots showed down to a few feet at Melaleuca (Simon Mitchell)

With no time to rest if we wanted to connect all our target species we headed immediately towards Port Arthur. Our first call however was near Mount Rumney, where very quickly we located several Black-headed Honeyeaters flitting around alongside several both Brown-headed and Yellow-throated Honeyeaters. A singing Tasmanian Thornbill was another of the endemics we were hoping for.

After dinner near Port Arthur (interrupted for a Yellow Wattlebird) we visited a nearby site where the enormous Tasmanian race of Masked Owl had been seen on a fairly regular basis. As darkness fell we struggled to discern whether we were in exactly the right position. However, peering through the dusk Simon realised that an extra chimney pot had appeared on the adjacent buildings. Focussing on the spot we realised it was in fact a hulking female Masked Owl sat staring straight at us. The bird sat for a good few seconds before taking off and landing more distantly and then drifting off into the night.

Whilst heading back Andy glimpsed what could have only been a Boobook fly across the road. Listening hard we soon heard the bird calling nearby. After that it didn't take long before we located the bird sat high up along one of the main trucks. Other stops were made on the way back for several Brush-tailed Possums and a very confiding Tawny Frogmouth.

After a late return we headed out in time for the first ferry to Bruny Island the next morning. At our first destination close to Dennes Point we anticipated a tough uphill walk to connect with one of the more difficult target birds. However, the uphill struggle was saved us by Johannes, who immediately upon leaving the vehicle spotted a Forty-spotted Pardalote flicking around in the trees. With their diminutive and agile nature all the Pardalotes are smart birds. We agree that this however must be the most impressive of them all! Soon after we also heard Swift Parrots calling from the same patch of woodland, and watching carefully it wasn't too long before we were able to all gain good view through the telescope.



A Forty-spotted Pardalote did its best Pallas's Warbler impression (Simon Mitchell)

Next we headed onward to Adventure Bay, where several more Swift Parrots were noted as well as both Sooty and Australian Pied Oystercatcher and a single Musk Duck. As the wind increased and several squalls past through things began to look rather difficult. Two showy Bassian Thrushes at nearby campsite provided an excellent distraction.

We then moved on the Mavista Nature Walk where a good variety of forest species were seen. As well as Pink, Flame and Scarlet Robins, several Tasmanian Scrubwrens and the local race of Eastern Spinebill we also located a pair of Scrubtits right at the end of the trail. These showed well and at times were flicking around a few meters from our feet

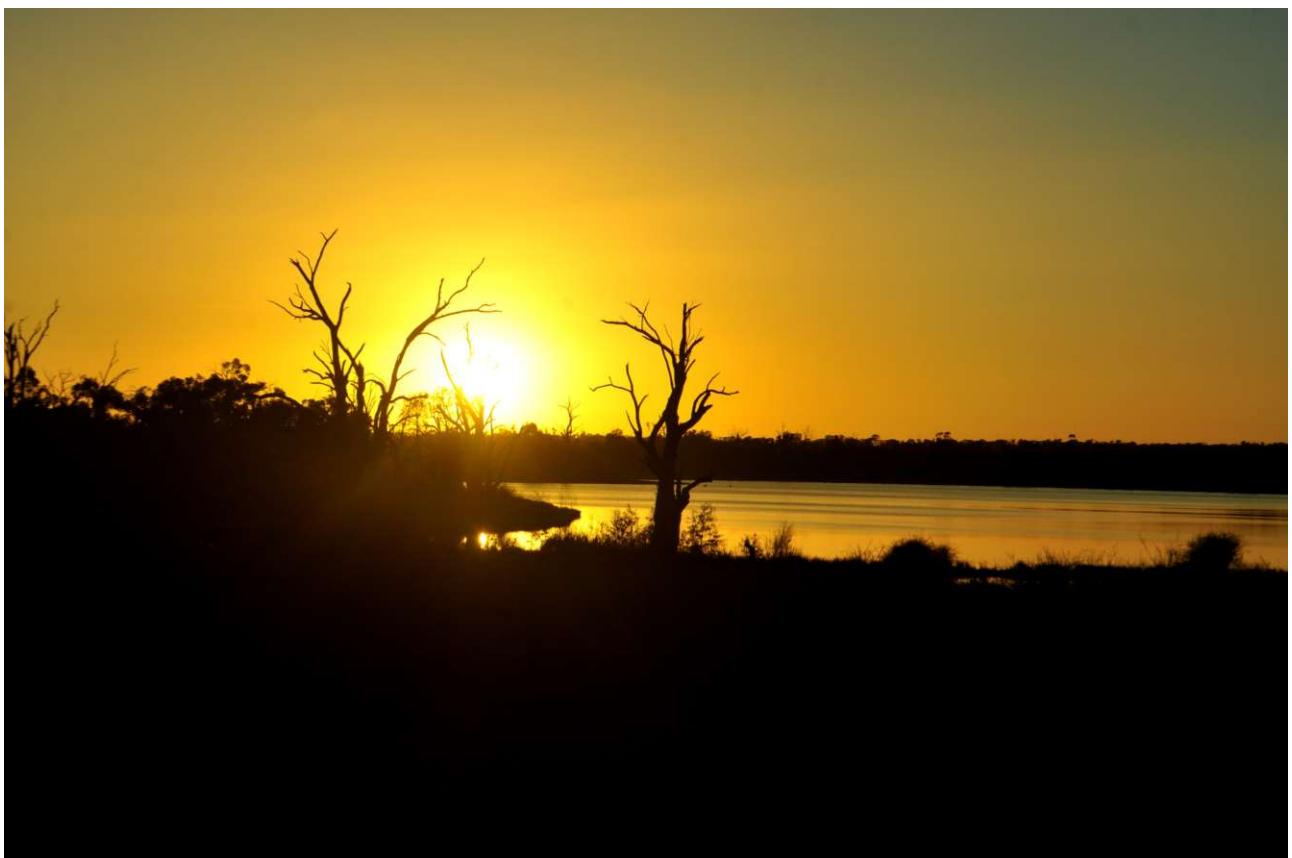
Stopping for our first Black Currawong by the roadside as we headed towards Lunawanna we realised we only had a single Tasmanian endemic yet to see. But it took until our third or forth stop on the drive over the peak to Lunawanna before a single Strong-billed Honeyeater hopped out with the several Black-headededs we seen flicking around. Eventually we discerned that there were in fact several Strong-billeds around and one bird dropped out of the trees to even perch at eye level for us!

Having seen all the Tasmanian endemics we headed to Cape Bruny. Although thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters were passing the cape the wind had become so strong that we realised it would be virtually impossible to discern anything else amongst them. With the weather deteriorating and only a few hours light left we decided to head back towards Hobart. Another White-bellied Sea-eagle at the Bruny Island ferry terminal being the final new bird of the trip for those who had missed out on the previous two encounters.

The next morning, due to early flight times there was unfortunately no spare time for additional birding. We decided to head straight to the airport. Upon parting we all agreed that it had been an exceptional and varied trip and that as well as the amazing avifauna, scenery and interesting 'outback survivalist lifestyle' the jokes and conversation over meals and on long car journeys had made for a fantastic trip.



*Formerly conspecific with White's Thrush as 'Scaly Thrush' the shy Bassian Thrush exhibited the typical wing shimmering and skulking behaviour of many *Zoothera* thrushes. (Simon Mitchell)*



The river crossing near Port Augusta was spectacular at dawn (Simon Mitchell)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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>

E = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

Emu ◊ *Dromaius novaehollandiae* First noted around Deniliquin and thereafter at multiple open country sites.

Malleefowl ◊ *Leipoa ocellata* A male was in the anti-predator enclosure north of Little Desert and one at Hattah N.P

Stubble Quail ◊ *Coturnix pectoralis* Two flushed whilst walking in the Flinders Ranges with most seeing one or other.

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata* Four were seen in flight at Reedy Lake on 18th.

Plumed Whistling Duck ◊ *Dendrocygna eytoni* Around 1000 were at Deniliquin Sewage Treatment Works.

Cape Barren Goose ◊ *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Numerous around Phillip Island, where at least 40 were seen.

Black Swan ◊ *Cygnus atratus* Present at wetland sites in small numbers throughout. 20 or more on Bruny Island.

Freckled Duck ◊ *Stictonetta naevosa* Five were seen at Lake Lorne, Drysdale.

Australian Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna tadornoides* Fourteen across four locations, including eight at Deniliquin Works.

Pink-eared Duck ◊ *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* Commonest up the tracks, where small numbers daily.

Maned Duck (Australian Wood D) *Chenonetta jubata* Moderate numbers seen almost daily. 30 were at Lake Lorne.

Mallard (introduced) *Anas platyrhynchos* Three birds of dubious providence were seen on 21st.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Recorded in small numbers at virtually all wetland sites.

Australasian Shoveler ♀ *Anas rhynchotis* Five or more were on a roadside lake south of Harrow on 20th.

Grey Teal ♀ *Anas gracilis* Numerous at coastal wetland sites, including 50 at Lake Lorne.

Chestnut Teal ♀ *Anas castanea* Far less common than the former, maximum 10 at Jellingot Reserve on 19th.

Hardhead ♀ *Aythya australis* Recorded at 7 different sites, including ten or more at Jellingot Reserve on 19th.

Blue-billed Duck ♀ *Oxyura australis* Two were seen at Lake Lorne on 18th.

Musk Duck ♀ *Biziura lobata* Small numbers at several wetland sites included four at Reedy Lake.

Little Penguin ♀ *Eudyptula minor* Arriving birds at Phillip Island totalled over 300 and 1 at Twelve Apostles.

Shy Albatross ♀ *Thalassarche cauta* At least 30 off Nobbies Pt, Phillip Island, some off Pt Addis and Cape Bruny.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* A single flew past relatively close inshore at the Penguin Parade.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* 1000s from Nobbies Pt and Cape Bruny. 25 or more in Port Augusta!

Fluttering Shearwater ♀ *Puffinus gavia* Two flew past Point Addis on 19th.

Australasian Grebe ♀ *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* Two at Lake Lorne and three at Lyndhurst retention lake.

Hoary-headed Grebe ♀ *Poliocephalus poliocephalus* Around 50 at Lyndhurst retention lake was the highest count.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Twenty at Avalon Beach and 4 at Lyndhurst retention lake.

Australian White Ibis ♀ *Threskiornis moluccus* Common in the South. 80 at Reedy Lake the maximum. See note.

Straw-necked Ibis ♀ *Threskiornis spinicollis* More numerous than the former, c300 seen en route to Phillip Island.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* A surprising record of one at Mungerannie.

Royal Spoonbill ♀ *Platalea regia* One on Phillip Island, 3 near Avalon Beach, and one in fields near Waikerie.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill ♀ *Platalea flavipes* Three in fields en route to Harrow. 15 at Mournpall Lake.

Australasian Bittern ♀ *Botaurus poiciloptilus* One at Princetown Marsh on 20th was too quick for most (AWP)

Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* (LO) One briefly at Keith Jones Memorial Park

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Forty in the Dandenong Foothills on 14th. Ones and twos elsewhere.

White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* Seen near-daily. Twenty or more were along the Great Ocean Highway.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* About fifteen individuals seen across multiple sites throughout the more verdant areas.



White-faced Herons were common at wetland sites throughout the trip (Simon Mitchell)

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* Seen almost daily. 8 or more scattered along Great Ocean Highway.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* One along the Great Ocean Highway and two around Adelaide.

Australian Pelican ♀ *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Recorded near-daily. Twenty-five or more seen en route to Mildura.

Australasian Gannet ♀ *Morus serrator* Seen from headlands and ocean viewpoints, but no tallies of greater than 20.

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucus* Small numbers on most days, particularly at coastal sites.

Black-faced Cormorant ♀ (B-f Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscescens* A few at coastal sites; 6 at Twelve Apostles.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Small numbers throughout, excluding areas north of Lyndhurst.

Australian Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius* Less common than the former. Maximum 3 at Avalon Beach.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* The commonest Cormorant, recorded between one and ten recorded daily.

Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae* Three singles at Deniliquin, Lake Lorne and Gluepot N.P

Black-shouldered Kite ♀ (Australian K) *Elanus axillaris* Eight in total scattered across five sites.

Letter-winged Kite ♀ *Elanus scriptus* (LO) One shortly after dark hovered briefly by the lake at Mungerranie.



Swamp Harrier and Little Eagle (Simon Mitchell)

Little Eagle ♀ *Hieraetus morphnoides* One at Heathcote, two at Mournpall Lake two at Nowingi Track, Hattah N.P.

Wedge-tailed Eagle ♀ *Aquila audax* 47 individuals in total, commonest at the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

Brown Goshawk ♀ *Accipiter fasciatus* Nine birds in total across seven different sites.

Collared Sparrowhawk ♀ *Accipiter cirrocephalus* One near Heathcote and another in Port Augusta.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Seen in reasonable numbers in wetland areas, 20 around Princetown Marshes.

Spotted Harrier ♀ *Circus assimilis* Drier areas than the former four together between Port Augusta and Lyndhurst.

Whistling Kite ♀ *Haliastur sphenurus* Over forty seen across the whole trip, ten around Gluepot the maximum.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* One seen distantly at Deniliquin was a surprise, two on Tasmania.

Nankeen Kestrel ♀ (Australian K) *Falco cenchroides* Common throughout, particularly in drier regions.

Australian Hobby ♀ *Falco longipennis* Four singles, the best views of which were at Deniliquin Sewage Works.

Brown Falcon ♀ *Falco berigora* Recorded across a variety of sites, including four along the Strzelecki Track.

Grey Falcon ♀ *Falco hypoleucus* One on the radio mast near Mungerranie was an excellent sighting.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Four seen including an very rufous-toned individual at Phillip Island.

Australian Bustard ♀ *Ardeotis australis* Two over North of Lyndhurst seemed to be undertaking a migration.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* Three were seen at Jellingot Reserve.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* Three were on a pool North of Deniliquin and one was at Mungerranie.

Australian Crake ♀ (A Spotted C) *Porzana fluminea* Two at Deniliquin rice factory and one at Mungerranie

Australian Swamphen *Porphyrio [porphyrio] melanotus* Common at wetlands around Melbourne and Adelaide.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* Small numbers were seen at multiple wetland sites, inc. 10 near Adelaide .

Black-tailed Nativehen ♀ *Tribonyx ventralis* Surprisingly common at a number of sites, including 200 near Hawker.

Tasmanian Nativehen ♀ *Tribonyx mortierii* Reasonable common on Tas., where present even around small dams.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Fairly numerous at wetland sites including over 200 at Lyndhurst retention lake.

Brolga ♀ *Grus rubicund* Four were at Reedy Lake and five at Mungerranie.

Bush Stone-curlew ♀ *Burhinus grallarius* (H) One heard before dawn far from the accommodation at Little Desert.

Painted Buttonquail ♀ *Turnix varius* One flushed at Gulpa Island State forest was seen in flight by the whole group.
Little Buttonquail ♀ *Turnix velox* One seen well whilst spot-lighting near Deniliquin, another flushed at Little Desert.
Pied Oystercatcher ♀ (Australian P O) *Haematopus longirostris* One near Adelaide and several on Tasmania.
Sooty Oystercatcher ♀ *Haematopus fuliginosus* Fourteen in total were seen only on Tasmania.
White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* Groups of 10 – 35 recorded at 4 sites, smaller groups elsewhere.
Banded Stilt ♀ *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus* Fifty at Port Augusta was the largest group, few other sightings.
Red-necked Avocet ♀ *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae* Noted at five sites including 57 at Mournpall Lake.
Banded Lapwing ♀ *Vanellus tricolor* Only recorded spotlighting near Deniliquin, when 7 were seen.
Masked Lapwing ♀ *Vanellus miles* Common throughout, although absent from most areas north of Lyndhurst.



Red-kneed Dotterel (Simon Mitchell)

Red-kneed Dotterel ♀ *Erythrogonys cinctus* Small numbers on most wetlands, 40 were around Deniliquin on 17th.
Inland Dotterel ♀ *Peltohyas australis* Five were spotlighted near Deniliquin on 16th.
Red-capped Plover ♀ *Charadrius ruficapillus* Generally uncommon, although 60 were at Lyndhurst retention lake.
Hooded Dotterel ♀ *Thinornis cucullatus* Six at Woolamai Beach, Phillip Island on 14th were the only group recorded.
Black-fronted Dotterel ♀ *Elseyornis melanops* Seen at several locations including 10 around Mungerranie.
Plains-Wanderer ♀ *Pedionomus torquatus* A female show exceptionally near Deniliquin on night of 17th.
Latham's Snipe ♀ (Japanese S) *Gallinago hardwickii* Forty were seen at Jellingot Reserve.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Three were at Avalon Beach and one at Lyndhurst retention lake.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Five were at Avalon Beach on 18th.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Two were with Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Avalon Beach on 18th.
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Seen at only a few sites, including 30 at Avalon Beach and 15 at Lyndhurst Dam.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* 80 at Avalon Beach was the largest group. Seen at five different sites.
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Over 200 were at Avalon Beach, but not recorded elsewhere.
Australian Pratincole ♀ *Stiltia isabella* Small numbers along the Birdsville Track and at Lyndhurst retention dam.
Silver Gull ♀ *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* Large numbers along the coast included 2000 at Phillip Island.
Pacific Gull ♀ *Larus pacificus* Ten on Phillip Island and a few each day on Tasmania.
Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* Ten or so on Phillip Island and several each day on Tasmania.
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Small numbers along the coasts, including Tasmania.
Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii* Over 200 at Phillip Island, a few on elsewhere on the coast.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid* Small numbers at both inland and coastal marshes inc. c350 near Port Augusta.

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus* One offshore at Point Addis landed on the sea.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Common around urban areas.

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis* Small numbers around urban areas along the coast.

African Collared Dove (Barbary D.) (introduced) *Streptopelia roseogrisea* One seen near the hotel in Adelaide.

Common Bronzewing ♀ *Phaps chalcoptera* Small numbers were recorded from multiple sites, some seen well.

Brush Bronzewing ♀ *Phaps elegans*Flushed from the roadside on two occasions on Tasmania

Flock Bronzewing ♀ *Phaps histrionica* Three came in to drink at Mungerranie on 30th and four nearby the next day.

Crested Pigeon ♀ *Ocyphaps lophotes* Common throughout including c250 passing early morning at Birdsville Track.

Diamond Dove ♀ *Geopelia cuneata* First recorded at Hattah Lake, commoner on Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida* Several around Deniliquin and also at Mungerranie.



Yellow-tailed Cockatoos showed so well by the roadside some of the group almost forgot about the traffic! (Simon Mitchell)

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo ♀ *Calyptorhynchus funereus* Seen well near Port Arthur, Tas.

Gang-gang Cockatoo ♀ *Callocephalon fimbriatum* One flew over calling at Toolangi Forest; the only record.

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo ♀ (Pink C) *Lophochroa leadbeateri* One at the hotel in Ouyen and 3 in Hattah N.P

Galah ♀ *Eolophus roseicapilla* Abundant throughout the mainland. Up to 500 roosting at Mungerranie.

Long-billed Corella ♀ *Cacatua tenuirostris* Common throughout more verdant coastal areas.

Little Corella ♀ *Cacatua sanguine* Replaced the former species in drier interior areas where it was common.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo ♀ *Cacatua galerita* Common throughout coastal forested areas.

Cockatiel ♀ *Nymphicus hollandicus* Two around Deniliquin and a further two seen in Gluepot N.P.

Rainbow Lorikeet ♀ *Trichoglossus moluccanus* Twenty at scattered sites, including 10 around Adelaide

Musk Lorikeet ♀ *Glossopsitta concinna* Forty or more around Heathcote and several recorded on Tasmania.

Little Lorikeet ♀ *Glossopsitta pusilla* Small numbers were seen with the previous species around Heathcote.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet ♀ *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala* Two briefly near Heathcote and 5 or so at Port Augusta.

Australian Ringneck ♀ *Barnardius zonarius* Small numbers at several sites and 20 at Hattah N.P.

Green Rosella ♀ *Platycercus caledonicus* Small numbers each day on Tasmania.

Crimson Rosella ♀ *Platycercus [elegans] elegans* 300+ at Dandenong Foothills, smaller numbers elsewhere.

Adelaide Rosella ♀ *Platycercus [elegans] adelaideae* Five or so were seen at a stakeout north of Port Augusta.

Yellow Rosella ♀ *Platycercus [elegans] flaveolus* Small numbers around Deniliquin, Hattah and Gluepot.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* Small numbers around Heathcote and Great Ocean Drive.
Bluebonnet ♀ *Northiella haematogaster* More than 20 were seen in total, including 8 each at Hattah and Strzelecki.



Superb Parrot and Bluebonnet (Simon Mitchell)

Red-rumped Parrot ♀ *Psephotus haematonotus* Small numbers at a variety of sites included 25 at Heathcote.
Mulga Parrot ♀ *Psephotus varius* Fourteen were seen in small groups in Hattah and Gluepot N.Ps.
Blue-winged Parrot ♀ *Neophema chrysostoma* Ten were near Point Addis on 19th.
Elegant Parrot ♀ *Neophema elegans* Several in the Flinders Ranges and a few between Lyndhurst and Port Augusta.
Orange-bellied Parrot ♀ *Neophema chrysogaster* Five of showed well at Melaleuca, where two visited the feeders.
Swift Parrot ♀ *Lathamus discolor* At least two small groups were seen on Bruny Island, Tasmania.
Budgerigar ♀ *Melopsittacus undulatus* At least 40 of this incredibly mobile species were on Strzelecki Track on 27th.
Eastern Ground Parrot ♀ *Pezoporus wallicus* Two were seen (eventually very well) at Melaleuca on 2nd.
Australian King Parrot ♀ *Alisterus scapularis* Ten were at Dandenong Foothills and one near the Peregrine Track.
Superb Parrot ♀ *Polytelis swainsonii* Thirty or more were seen in Gulpa State Forest, Deniliquin.
Regent Parrot ♀ *Polytelis anthopeplus* Several were seen around Hattah-Kulkyne N.P on 22nd and 23rd.
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo ♀ *Chrysococcyx basalis* At least 4 seen in Gulpa State Forest, others heard elsewhere.
Shining Bronze Cuckoo ♀ *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Two in the Dandenong Foothills and several heard elsewhere.
Pallid Cuckoo ♀ *Cacomantis pallidus* Seen at Clunes State Forest, Heathcote and also around Little Desert.
Fan-tailed Cuckoo ♀ *Cacomantis flabelliformis* Two seen in Toolangi Forest and noted at five other sites.
Brush Cuckoo ♀ *Cacomantis variolosus* (LO, H) One heard briefly at Clunes State Forest, Heathcote
Australian Masked Owl ♀ *Tyto novaehollandiae* One of the enormous Tasmanian race seen at Port Arthur.
Eastern Barn Owl ♀ *Tyto delicatula* At least two were seen after dark to the north of Deniliquin.
Southern Boobook ♀ *Ninox boobook* One found roosting in the Dandenong Foothills saved a lot of work at night!
Morepork (Tasmanian Boobook) ♀ *Ninox [novaeseelandiae] leucopsis* One seen near Port Arthur, Tasmania.
Tawny Frogmouth ♀ *Podargus strigoides* A pair were roosting at Yea Wetlands and one at night near Port Arthur.
Australian Owlet-nightjar ♀ *Aegotheles cristatus* (LO). One briefly at Little Desert and one flushed at Gluepot N.P
Laughing Kookaburra ♀ *Dacelo novaeguineae* Small numbers everywhere excluding the dry outback.
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* A total of six seen, including three en route to Toolangi Forest.
Red-backed Kingfisher ♀ *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius* One in Gluepot National Park at one at Strzelecki N.P
Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus* Heard at Little Desert on 21st.



Rainbow Bee-eaters were common throughout (Simon Mitchell)

Rainbow Bee-Eater ♀ *Merops ornatus* Small numbers throughout. Common on Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks.

Superb Lyrebird ♀ *Menura novaehollandiae* 1+ at Sherbooke and one crossed the road near Toolangi Forest.

Satin Bowerbird ♀ *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* Five or so were seen by the roadside not far from the Toolangi Forest.

White-throated Treecreeper ♀ *Cormobates leucophaea* Small numbers seen at multiple sites in more verdant areas.

Red-browed Treecreeper ♀ *Climacteris erythrops* Three were seen in the Dandenong Foothills on 14th.



White-browed Treecreepers were found nesting at Mildura (Simon Mitchell)

White-browed Treecreeper ♀ *Climacteris affinis* Two were seen nesting at a site near Mildura.

Brown Treecreeper ♀ *Climacteris picumnus* Good numbers seen around Heathcote and a few heard elsewhere.

Variegated Fairywren ♀ *Malurus lamberti* Small numbers around Hattah, Gluepot and Adelaide.

Superb Fairywren ♀ *Malurus cyaneus* Commoner than the former, although rarely overlapping in distribution.



This Superb Fairywren flicked around below the feeders at Melaleuca (Simon Mitchell)

Splendid Fairywren ♀ *Malurus splendens* A total of 8 were encountered in the Hattah-Kulkyne N.P area.

White-winged Fairywren ♀ *Malurus leucopterus* Common in drier areas, particularly ay Lyndhurst and Mungerranie.

Southern Emu-wren ♀ *Stipiturus malachurus* Recorded at Anglesea Heath, Princetown Marsh and Melaleuca.

Mallee Emu-wren ♀ *Stipiturus mallee* A pair were located in Hattah Kulkyne N.P and another heard the next day.

Grey Grasswren ♀ *Amytornis barbatus* Two were seen very well not far from the Birdsville Track on 29th.

Striated Grasswren ♀ *Amytornis striatus* One seen well and another heard in Hattah Kulkyne N.P.

Eyrean Grasswren ♀ *Amytornis goyderi* Two showed well on a couple of occasions at Mungerranie.

Thick-billed Grasswren ♀ *Amytornis modestus* Two seen in separate areas along the Strzelecki Track.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus chrysops* Recorded in small nos. in coastal forests. 10 at Deniliquin.

Singing Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus virescens* Small numbers throughout, commonest in drier areas.

White-eared Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus leucotis* Four at Anglesey Heath and 2 more later the same day.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus flavicollis* Two at Melaleuca and one on Bruny Island. Several heard.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus melanops* At least 20 were seen around Heathcote on 17th and 18th.

Purple-gaped Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus cratitius* Three of four were around near Little Desert, although elusive.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus ornatus* Good numbers were around Hattah and Gluepot.

Grey-fronted Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus plumulus* Three showed well at Brachina Gorge on 26th.

Fuscous Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus fuscus* Five were seen around Heathcote though viewing was difficult

White-plumed Honeyeater ♀ *Lichenostomus penicillatus* Small numbers at sev. sites, including 20+ at Heathcote.

White-fronted Honeyeater ♀ *Purnella albifrons* Fifteen or more were around Gluepot, one at Brachina Gorge.

Lewin's Honeyeater ♀ *Meliphaga lewinii* Three were seen at Toolangi Forest.

Bell Miner ♀ *Manorina melanophrys* Only recorded at Yea Wetlands, where ten or so were seen.

Noisy Miner ♀ *Manorina melanocephala* Small numbers throughout, the maximum was 20 at Hattah Lake.

Yellow-throated Miner ♀ *Manorina flavigula* Seen daily in small numbers between Gluepot and Adelaide.

Black-eared Miner ♀ *Manorina melanotis* 1 or 2 individuals at Gluepot met the criteria for 'pure'. Many hybrids.

Blue-faced Honeyeater ♀ *Entomyzon cyanotis* A total of 5 were scattered around the Deniliquin and Heathcote area.

Black-chinned Honeyeater ♀ *Melithreptus gularis* Two flocks totalling about fifteen birds were seen near Heathcote.

Strong-billed Honeyeater ♀ *Melithreptus validirostris* Our final Tasmanian endemic was located on Bruny Island.

Brown-headed Honeyeater ♀ *Melithreptus brevirostris* 15 were near Heathcote, others at Little Desert and Gluepot.

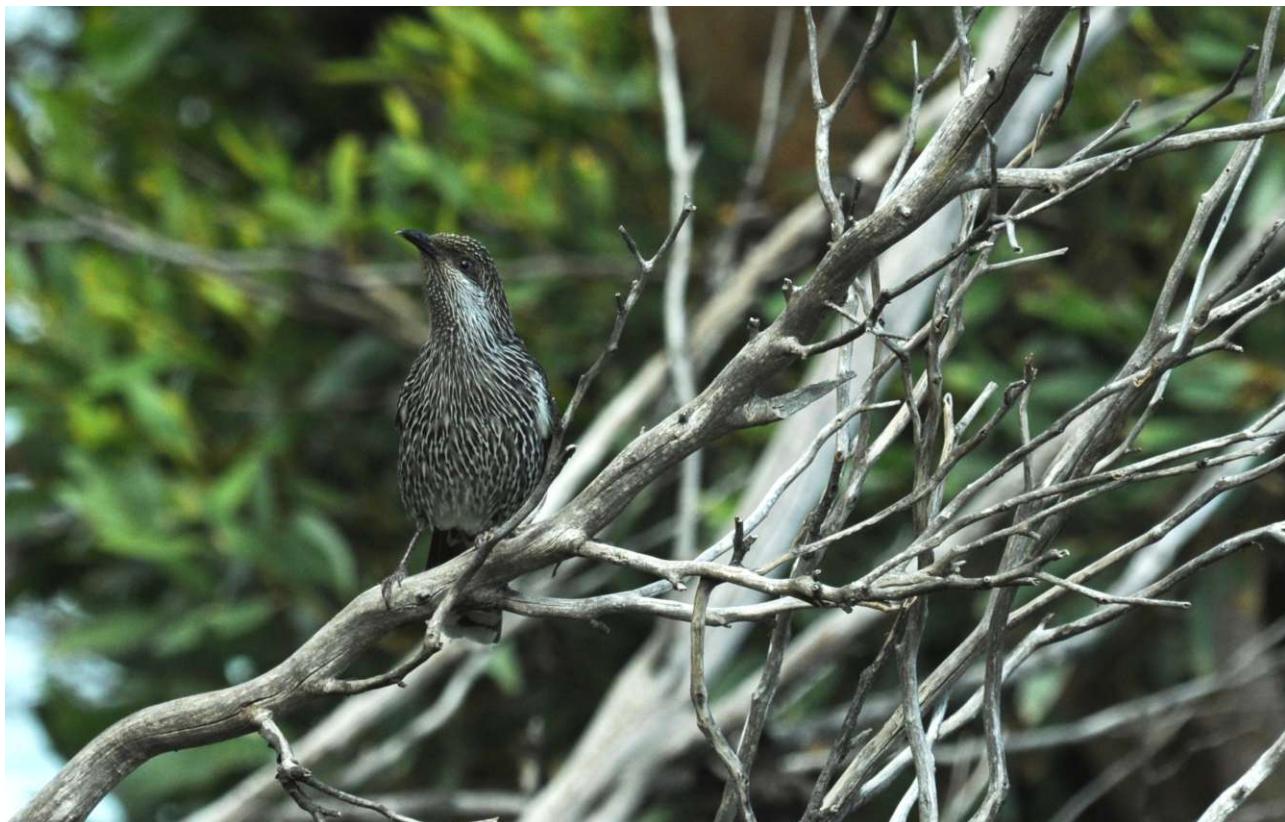
Black-headed Honeyeater ♀ *Melithreptus affinis* A total of ten seen on Tasmania, six of those on Bruny Island.

Little Friarbird ♀ *Philemon citreogularis* Ten or so around Deniliquin were the only ones seen.

Noisy Friarbird ♀ *Philemon corniculatus* Five near Deniliquin were the only individuals recorded.

Striped Honeyeater ♀ *Plectrorhyncha lanceolata* A few were seen in the Hattah Kulkyn N.P.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater ♀ *Acanthagenys rufogularis* A few at Deniliquin. Common North of Lyndhurst.



Little Wattlebirds are less common than their larger red-wattled cousins (Simon Mitchell)

Little Wattlebird ♀ (Brush W) *Anthochaera chrysopera* Ten seen in total including three around Port Augusta.

Red Wattlebird ♀ *Anthochaera carunculata* Small numbers throughout excluding the drier outback.

Yellow Wattlebird ♀ *Anthochaera paradoxa* Fifteen or so seen in total on Tasmania.

Painted Honeyeater ♀ *Grantiella picta* One seen well at Clunes State Forest near Heathcote.

Crescent Honeyeater ♀ *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus* Some in the Dandenong Foothills and a few on Bruny Island.

New Holland Honeyeater ♀ *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* Small numbers throughout, particularly urban gardens.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater ♀ *Gliciphila melanops* A total of 8 were recorded around Little Desert.

Eastern Spinebill ♀ *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* Singles at Sherbrooke and Toolangi, 3 on Bruny Island (*dubius*).

Pied Honeyeater ♀ *Certhionyx variegatus* A flyover near Brachina Gorge and 25 flew through near Birdsville Track.

Black Honeyeater ♀ *Sugomel nigrum* Two were seen near Deniliquin and another two were on Strzelecki Track.

Crimson Chat ♀ *Epthianura tricolor* Ten or more were seen near Morgan and three more South of Lyndhurst.

Orange Chat ♀ *Epthianura aurifrons* A few in the Flinders Ranges and 20 at the start of the Birdsville Track.

Yellow Chat ♀ *Epthianura crocea* Two were at Pandie Burra Bore, Birdsville Track.

White-fronted Chat ♀ *Epthianura albifrons* Several seen on coastal heaths around salt pans at Avalon Beach.

Gibberbird ♀ (Gibber Chat) *Ashbyia lovensis* Four were together near the start of the Birdsville Track.

Rufous Bristlebird ♀ *Dasyornis broadbenti* Three were seen at Point Addis and one at Twelve Apostles.

Spotted Pardalote ♀ *Pardalotus punctatus* Four seen at Gulpa State Forest and three noted around Heathcote.

Forty-spotted Pardalote ♀ *Pardalotus quadragintus* Two showed very well on Bruny Island.

Red-browed Pardalote ♀ *Pardalotus rubricatus* Two were at a creek crossing along the Strzelecki Track.

Striated Pardalote ♀ *Pardalotus striatus* Small numbers seen in all but the driest areas. Ten or more at Hattah.

Pilotbird ♀ *Pycnoptilus floccosus* Two briefly at Sherbrook. One seen well and two more heard in Toolangi Forest.

Scrubtit ♀ *Acanthornis magna* One showed well on Bruny Island.

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren ♀ *Calamanthus pyrrhopygius* An elusive bird was seen by some at Anglesea Heath.



Shy Heathwren and White-throated Gerygone (Simon Mitchell)

Shy Heathwren ♀ *Calamanthus cautus* One was heard at Little Desert and one showed well in Gluepot.

Striated Fieldwren ♀ *Calamanthus fuliginosus* One was at Reedy Lake on 18th and four (*diemenensis*) at Melaleuca.

Rufous Fieldwren ♀ *Calamanthus campestris* One at Little Desert showed well and one briefly on Strzelecki Track

Redthroat ♀ *Pyrrholaemus brunneus* Four or so were seen at a stakeout between Gluepot and Morgan.

Speckled Warbler ♀ *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus* A frustratingly elusive bird was seen by some near Heathcote.

White-browed Scrubwren ♀ *Sericornis frontalis* Common in the verdant coastal forest and heath habitats.

Tasmanian Scrubwren ♀ (Brown S) *Sericornis humilis* Two showed well at Melaleuca.

Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostra* One was seen in the Toolangi Forest.

Weebill ♀ *Smicromys brevirostris* One of the commonest birds around Hattah and Gluepot.

Western Gerygone ♀ *Gerygone fusca* Four were seen in Gulpa State Forest, Deniliquin.

White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone chloronota* One near Heathcote and another the next day at Clunes Forest.

Brown Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza pusilla* Common in more Dandenong Foothills, Toolangi and along Great Ocean Road.

Inland Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza apicalis* A total of 17 recorded between Little Desert, Hattah and Gluepot.

Tasmanian Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza ewingii* Six or more seen on Tasmania, mainly on Bruny Island.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza uropygialis* A few at Gulpa State Forest, Little Desert and Hattah.

Buff-rumped Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza reguloides* Small numbers at Gulpa State Forest, Heathcote and Little Desert.

Slender-billed Thornbill ♀ (Samphire T) *Acanthiza iredalei* 5+ were seen on the heaths around Little Desert.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* Small numbers at several sites, 10 at Brachina Gorge.

Yellow Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza nana* Two at Gulpa State Forest were the only ones seen.

Striated Thornbill ♀ *Acanthiza lineata* Perhaps the commonest Thornbill in forested area; 30 totalled near Heathcote.

Southern Whiteface ♀ *Aphelocephala leucopsis* Thirteen seen across various sites between Gluepot and Lyndhurst.

Grey-crowned Babbler ♀ *Pomatostomus temporalis* Eight were seen around the farmland to the North of Deniliquin.

White-browed Babbler ♀ *Pomatostomus superciliosus* Groups of 4 – 10 birds were noted at least six sites.

Chestnut-crowned Babbler ♀ *Pomatostomus ruficeps* Large groups seen in Gluepot and near Morgan.

Eastern Whipbird ♀ *Psophodes olivaceus* Only noted in the Dandenong Foothills at Sherbrooke Picnic site.

Chirruping Wedgebill ♀ *Psophodes cristatus* First seen around Hawker with a few more on the Strzelecki Track.

Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush ♀ (Chestnut Q-t) *Cinclosoma castanotum* A total of three were seen in Hattah N.P.

Cinnamon Quail-thrush ♀ *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum* One on the Strzelecki Track and 5 more near Mungerranie.

Grey Butcherbird ♀ *Cracticus torquatus* Heard or seen very occasionally throughout.

Pied Butcherbird ♀ *Cracticus nigrogularis* Four at Deniliquin and a further four in Hattah N.P.

Australian Magpie ♀ *Gymnorhina tibicen* Abundant throughout and seen every day, in all open habitat

Pied Currawong ♀ *Strepera graculina* Four seen around the Dandenong Foothills and Toolangi Forests.

Black Currawong ♀ *Strepera fuliginosa* Five or more were seen on Bruny Island.

Grey Currawong ♀ *Strepera versicolor* The commonest Currawong with 15 in total. Five along the Ocean Highway.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorynchus* Quite common along the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

Masked Woodswallow ♀ *Artamus personatus* Ten near Deniliquin and three near Ouyen.

White-browed Woodswallow ♀ *Artamus superciliosus* Common between Little Desert and Gluepot; flocks up to 60.

Black-faced Woodswallow ♀ *Artamus cinereus* Common along the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

Dusky Woodswallow ♀ *Artamus cyanopterus* Several groups around Deniliquin and Heathcote.

Ground Cuckooshrike ♀ *Coracina maxima* Two were seen very well just North of Deniliquin.

Black-faced Cuckooshrike ♀ *Coracina novaehollandiae* Small numbers throughout the trip

White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* Three near Heathcote were the only birds of the trip.

White-winged Triller ♀ *Lalage tricolor* 15 at Deniliquin, a few at Heathcote and small numbers along the tracks.

Varied Sittella ♀ *Daphoenositta chrysoptera* Ten at Clunes State Forest and 4 at Gluepot.

Eastern Shriketit ♀ *Falcunculus [frontatus] frontatus* One at Sherbrooke and at least two at Gulpa State Forest.

Olive Whistler ♀ *Pachycephala olivacea* Two were seen at Melaleuca, Tasmania.

Gilbert's Whistler ♀ *Pachycephala inornata* Three or four were noted in Gluepot Reserve.

Australian Golden Whistler ♀ *Pachycephala pectoralis* A few each at Sherbrooke and Toolangi Forests.

Rufous Whistler ♀ *Pachycephala rufiventris* Small numbers daily between Deniliquin and Gluepot.

Grey Shrikethrush ♀ *Colluricinclia harmonica* Common in most habitats, though absent from the dry outback areas.

Crested Bellbird ♀ *Oreoica gutturalis* Seen at Hattah, Gluepot and Whyalla with many more heard.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* Seen in single figures at almost every site visited. Uncommon on Tasmania.



Crested Bellbirds eventually performed well and Willie Wagtails may have been the commonest bird of the trip (Simon Mitchell)

Grey Fantail ♀ *Rhipidura albiscapa* Common in more verdant and forested areas.

Magpie-lark ♀ *Grallina cyanoleuca* Ubiquitous on the mainland but only seen once on Tasmania.

Leaden Flycatcher ♀ *Myiagra rubecula* Two showed well near Heathcote on 17th.

Restless Flycatcher ♀ *Myiagra inquieta* Two responded well, if a little briefly, at Hattah on 22nd.

Little Crow ♀ *Corvus bennetti* Commonly recorded North of Lyndhurst along the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

Forest Raven ♀ *Corvus tasmanicus* One along the Great Ocean Highway on 19th. The only crow on Tasmania.

Little Raven ♀ *Corvus mellori* Common as far north as Little Desert.

Australian Raven ♀ *Corvus coronoides* Common between Little Desert and Adelaide. Smaller nos. in the outback.

White-winged Chough ♀ *Corcorax melanorhamphos* Common in Deniliquin, Hattah and Gluepot.

Apostlebird ♀ *Struthidea cinerea* Several showed extremely well at Hattah Lake on 22nd.

Eastern Yellow Robin ♀ *Eopsaltria australis* Single figures seen daily as far north as Clunes State Forest.

Hooded Robin ♀ *Melanodryas cucullata* Three in Gulpa State Forest and two at Hattah-Kulkyne N.P.



Dusky Robins are subtle but smart Tasmanian endemic (Simon Mitchell)

Dusky Robin ♀ *Melanodryas vittata* Ten seen between Melaleuca and Bruny Island on Tasmania.

Jacky Winter ♀ *Microeca fascinans* Small numbers in drier forests; 10 or so around Deniliquin.

Rose Robin ♀ *Petroica rosea* Several in the Sherbrooke and Toolangi Forests.

Pink Robin ♀ *Petroica rodinogaster* One at Toolangi Forest and at least six on Bruny Island.

Flame Robin ♀ *Petroica phoenicea* Two showed well at Toolangi Forest and tow more were seen on Bruny Island.

Scarlet Robin ♀ *Petroica boodang* 3 seen. near Heathcote and also heard at Point Addis. 2 on Bruny Island.

Red-capped Robin ♀ *Petroica goodenovii* A total of 11 included 4 at Gulpa State Forest and three at Gluepot.

Southern Scrub Robin ♀ *Drymodes brunneopygia* One was north of Little Desert and another seen well at Gluepot.

Horsfield's Bush Lark (Australasian B) *Mirafra javanica* (NL) One was seen by some of the group nr Deniliquin.

Eurasian Skylark (introduced) *Alauda arvensis* A few heard or seen between Melbourne and Port Campbell.

White-backed Swallow ♀ *Cheramoeca leucosterna* Two near Deniliquin and 30+ each at Birdsville and Strzelecki.

Welcome Swallow ♀ *Hirundo neoxena* Common in open habitats throughout.

Fairy Martin ♀ *Petrochelidon ariel* Forty each at Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks and other smaller scattered groups.

Tree Martin ♀ *Petrochelidon nigricans* Similarly distributed to the former, although less common in the driest areas.

Australian Reed Warbler ♀ *Acrocephalus australis* Seen at Yea Wetlands and heard at further 11 sites.

Rufous Songlark ♀ *Megalurus mathewsi* Three around Heathcote and four at Hawker Airfield. Heard at Little Desert.

Brown Songlark ♀ *Megalurus cruralis* Two just north of Deniliquin and 5+ around Hawker.

Little Grassbird ♀ *Megalurus gramineus* First seen at Avalon Beach and recorded at another six sites thereafter.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* One on Phillip Island, 2 at Princetown Marshes and one near Little Desert.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* Small numbers around the Dandenongs, Heathcote, Deniliquin and Great Ocean Road.

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* Common between Melbourne and Port Campbell.

Common Starling (introduced) *Sturnus vulgaris* Common in all areas except Lyndhurst and Mungerranie.

Bassian Thrush ♀ *Zoothera lunulata* One briefly at Sherbrook Forest, two performed fantastically on Bruny Island.

Common Blackbird (introduced) *Turdus merula* Common as far north as Hawker. Abundant on Tasmania.

Mistletoebird ♀ *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* First noted at Deniliquin. Four other sightings at scattered locations.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Common around habitations throughout.

Beautiful Firetail ♀ *Stagonopleura bella* Perhaps as many as 40 at Melaleuca.

Diamond Firetail ♀ *Stagonopleura guttata* One showed well near Heathcote.

Red-browed Finch ♀ (R-b Firetail) *Neochmia temporalis* 100+ were at Yea Wetlands, but absent from other sites.

Zebra Finch ♀ *Taeniopygia guttata* Common from about Hawker northwards, seen everyday in the outback.

Australian Pipit ♀ *Anthus australis* 40+ at Hawker Airfield. Common along the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.

European Greenfinch (introduced) *Chloris chloris* Six or so were seen around Lake Lorne.

European Goldfinch (introduced) *Carduelis carduelis* Ten on Phillip Island and 15 or so around Avalon Beach.



Waves crashing on the rocks along the Great Ocean Highway (Simon Mitchell)



There's something a little intimidating about a death-glare from an adult Red Kangaroo! (Simon Mitchell)

MAMMALS

Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* Two were seen at Cape Otway Road, once of which showed incredibly well.

Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* Several were seen at night at Little Desert and near Port Arthur.

Western Grey Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus* Ten or so each day around Heathcote.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus* Several small groups around Deniliquin and c50 at Princetown Marsh.

Euro (Common Wallaroo) *Macropus robustus* Over a hundred seen in the Flinders Ranges.

Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus* Small numbers each day from Hattah northwards.

Yellow-footed Rock-Wallaby *Petrogale xanthopus* Two were seen Brachina Gorge.

Tasmanian Pademelon *Thylogale billardierii* A total of six noted on Tasmania.

Black Wallaby (Swamp W) *Wallabia bicolor* Three on Philip Island and a few singles elsewhere.

House Mouse (introduced) *Mus musculus* One at Lyndhurst.

Dingo (introduced) *Canis familiaris* Two separate individuals seen north of Mungerranie on the Birdsville Track.

Red Fox (introduced) *Vulpes vulpes* A total of five seen across various sites.

House Cat (introduced) (Feral C) *Felis catus* A few in proximity to urban areas.

Australian Fur-Seal (Afro-Australian F-S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* Four or more at Philip Island, two off Port Arthur.

One-humped Camel *Camelus dromedaries* Two north of Mungerranie on the Birdsville Track.

Brown Hare (introduced) *Lepus europaeus* Four seen in agricultural coastal areas.

European Rabbit (introduced) *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Common except in the driest areas and on Tasmania.

Goat (introduced) (Feral G) *Capra hircus*



Eastern Yellow Robins frequently showed down to few feet. (Simon Mitchell)

TOP 5 BIRDS OF THE TRIP

1 Plains Wanderer, 2 Grey Grasswren, 3 Eastern Ground Parrot, 4 Grey Falcon, 5 Orange-bellied Parrot



Orange-bellied Parrot: Let's hope this isn't one of the last photos of a wild-bred bird. (Simon Mitchell)