



Stunningly close roosting Letter-winged Kites were one of many huge highlights on this year's tour (Simon Mitchell).

SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA INCLUDING TASMANIA

11 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER 2015

LEADERS: SIMON MITCHELL, CRAIG ROBSON and FRANK LAMBERT



Plains Wanderers performed exceptionally well and were nominated bird of the trip (Simon Mitchell).

First time visitors to Australia heading there for birding trips seem to return from their travels with one common sentiment: The continent is an almost criminally underrated birding destination. Perhaps, since there is little crossover with Palearctic and Nearctic species it's avifauna remains 'off the radar' of many European and American birders. However, it's incredible the variety of habitats, climates, genera and different types of birding the on the Southern Australian loop matches anything in even the most diverse parts of South America, Africa and Asia have to offer.

The contrasts between biomes and avifaunal communities in such a short space of time was quite staggering. 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 and Gilbert's Whistler. Visiting mature dry woodlands also produced species like Painted Honeyeaters as well as other tough species like White-browed Treecreeper, Regent and Superb Parrots. 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, whilst Grey Falcons held sentry on various different radio masts. Gibberbirds, Orange, Yellow and Crimson Chats were also located each adapted to a slightly different specific habitat. Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Redthroat, Southern Whiteface and Banded Whitefaces and Chirruping Wedgebills were all encountered at the border between agricultural lands and desert outback. A visit to dried out lignum swamps produced Grey Grasswrens and Pied Honeyeaters whilst Brolgas, Corellas, Crakes and even Flock Bronzewing visited the watering holes. 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!



Dawn in the Flinders Ranges (Simon Mitchell).

For our first full day we headed off to the Sherbrook forest, arriving just before first light. This area constitutes a large area of temperate rainforests in the Dandenong Foothills, not far outside Melbourne. Here thick verdant understory included impressive tree-ferns and moss-covered trunks above towering eucalypts and gumtrees. Arriving before first light our first species of the trip was a calling Southern Boobook. After some sorting out of speakers and flashlights we were able to call the bird in for excellent looks before it headed off into the first greys of dawn. In the understory we were soon greeted by tame Eastern Yellow Robins as well as several Large-billed and 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 and brief glimpses on the paths frustrated us.

Continuing to a nearby site the difficult weather continued but didn't prevent us from locating our first Eastern Whipbirds. Superb Fairy-wrens, Eastern Spinebill and Crescent Honeyeaters all proved popular, giving terrific looks, whilst White-naped, New Holland and Singing Honeyeaters gave us an introduction to this amazingly diverse group; set to become familiar throughout the trip. As the rain eased off we heard a more accessible-sound Lyrebird. We soon established this to be a more confident bird and a little off-piste clambering through the vegetation allowed us all to gain fantastic views of this incredible songster blasting out its incredible repertoire of clicks, chirps and whistles.



Superb Lyrebirds are crazy looking things, but their incredible song means they are aptly named (Simon Mitchell).

At our lunch stop Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were a very prominent feature, as well as several five Long-billed Corellas. Next we made our way towards Phillip Island where Woolamai Beach held our first coastal species. Sliver, Kelp and Pacific Gulls showed well and tens of thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters passed offshore. After a short walk along the beach we pair of Hooded Dotterel – an uncommon species throughout its range. 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 as well as a few scattered Swamp Wallabies – our first Kangaroo. We also found a good variety of other species included, White-faced and White-necked Herons, Great Egret, Masked Lapwing, Straw-necked Ibis, Swamp Harrier, and a showy Little Wattlebird.



Swamp Wallaby and Little Penguin were highlights of Philip Island (Simon Mitchell).

Heading down to Nobbies Point we located a even greater numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters moving offshore together a good number of Crested Terns as well as Little Black, Great and 50 or so Black-faced Cormorants. Scanning the throngs of passing Shearwaters we located at least 6 Giant Petrels, one of which came close enough to see the pale-greenish tip to the bill confirming Southern Giant Petrel. An even bigger surprise was picking out at least 4 Fluttering Shearwaters tagging on to the flocks of Short-tailed. Our first Little Penguins were seen here, nosing out from inside one of the specially constructed nest-boxes. Heading across to main 'Penguin Parade' we witnessed several hundred of these ultra cute little birds waddle across the beach to their burrows.



The massive Powerful Owls near Melbourne were not to be messed with! (Simon Mitchell).

After a late evening arriving back in Melbourne we were out again before dawn the following morning in the hope of picking up an additional difficult species on the North side of the city. Walking through sub-urban riverine woodland before dawn we soon shone our torches on two amazing juvenile Powerful Owls perched up in our dead tree. Our stakeout worked perfectly and we even gained a close swooping flyover of one of the adults.

Having gained amazing views of the Owls so quickly we headed to our next sites further north in the Dandenong Hills. Here we gained excellent views of Eastern Yellow, Rose, Flame and Scarlet Robins. Brown Thornbill, Grey Shrikethrush, Willie Wagtail and Shining Bronze Cuckoo were all seen for the first time and a pair of Red-browed Treecreepers was heard. It was the unusual and skulking Pilotbirds that really stole the show however, with two birds eventually giving fantastic views right next to the roadside.

As the morning drew on we continued for our first 'famous Australian pies' for lunch in Yea and then called at a nearby wetland site. Here Red-browed Finches and Bell Miners were exceptionally common. A variety of other species included Rainbow Bee-eater good views of Superb Fairy-wrens, Rufous Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. A pair of Royal Spoonbills which dropped in close by were a welcome surprise.



Female Superb Parrots, although not as bright as their male counterparts are still a smart bird (Simon Mitchell).

The next day we headed out around Deniliquin with Phil Maher. Our first exploration along the dry riverside woodland produced a good variety of dry woodland species. Improved views of Red-browed Finches and Superb Fairy-wrens, Australian Darters and Common Bronzewing were all popular. Parrots were common in the red gums and we soon gained excellent views of Red-rumped Parrot and Yellow Rosella but it took us a little while to locate our first pair of Superb Parrots. Before moving on to our next site we also located a pair of nesting Tawny Frogmouths, which sat in full view for us to admire.

At nearby Gulpa State Forest we picked up a range of good selection of Brown, Inland, Yellow-rumped and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills. Robins also showed well with close views of Red-capped and Scarlet although we had to walk for a considerable while before Hooded Robins obliged us at another location. Phil's expert local knowledge also came good when he was able to show us a Australian Owlet-nightjar, which popped

out of its roost hole. Nearby a pair of White-backed Swallows showed up at the last minute, but a flock of Bluebonnet were sadly only a flyby.

That evening we headed out on one of key ventures of the trip. Through Phil's arrangements with private landholders we were able to head out around a couple of enormous paddocks, which held a couple of pairs of increasingly rare Plains Wanderers. 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 by 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 a pair, which even engaged in some courtship!

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 it is highly pleisomorphic. 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.



Male and female Plains Wanderer – spectacular! (Simon Mitchell).

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 as well as a couple of showy Eastern Barn Owls a Brush-tailed Possum and even a few splendid little Fat-tailed Dunnarts.



Multiple highlights of spotlighting included Inland Dotterel (top left), Banded Lapwing (top right), Fat-tailed Dunnart (bottom left) and Brown Songlark (bottom right) (all Simon Mitchell).

The next day we headed South towards the town of Heathcote. In breezy and cool conditions we found birding in this area relatively difficult. Around the One-eye Forest we tried to catch up with Speckled Warbler. In contrast to the previous tour we found multiple individuals with relative ease, some of which showed very well. However, Leaden Flycatchers did not seem to have arrived back for the spring, despite extensive searching. 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 Mistletoebird. An evening searching for Diamond Firetail unfortunately failed to produce, but we did manage to locate a pair of spectacular White-eared Honeyeater, at a much easier site than our previously anticipated stakeout.

After another early morning attempt for Diamond Firetail and Chestnut-rumped Heathwren (unfortunately not located, although a number of showy Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets, as well as an excellent selection of Honeyeaters including White-plumed, Yellow-tufted, Brown-headed as well as the more difficult Fuscous and Black-chinned all feeding around a small section of flowering Ironbark trees – wonderful stuff!

We soon headed further to the West where a small area at Clunes State Forest provided our stakeout for Painted Honeyeater. It didn't take long before we gained excellent view of the species, as well as a plethora of other honeyeaters including excellent views of Yellow-faced. Good numbers of Lorikeets were also flying around and we gained improved views of Purple-crowned as well as a few fly-over Little Lorikeets.

In need of a good lunch we headed next to Ballarat, where the town lake provided a wonderful selection of waterbirds. These included several regulars such as Black Swan, Maned Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead and Blue-billed Duck as well as more difficult species such as several Chestnut Teal and Pink-eared Duck. The undoubted highlights here were several show Freckled Duck and a few Black-tailed Nativehens – both our first encounters of the trip.



Freckled Ducks were incredible confiding at Lake Wendoree (Simon Mitchell).

Heading down to the coast after lunch we visited Avalon Beach, where despite blustery conditions we picked up several excellent species including groups of both Red-necked Avocet and Banded Stilt. With the uncanny sound of Skylarks overhead we also gained excellent views of Striated Fieldwren and several more Superb Fairy-wrens. A couple of flybys Fairy Terns were unfortunately brief.

The next morning we visited a small reserve on the outskirts of Geelong. As well as excellent views of more Chestnut Teal and our first pair of Australian Shoveler. The highlight however, was a number over 20 Latham's Snipe which took flight from the marshy areas around the lake. This bruiser of a Snipe is more or less limited to Japan and South Korea and winters through Eastern Australia, so we were extremely pleased to connect with the species given this was our only real 'stake-out' location for the trip.

After a hearty breakfast we headed South-west along the coast. Our first stop was at Point Addis, where after a few attempts further down the road we gained reasonable views of Rufous Bristlebird. Our attempts to locate Blue-winged Parrots were more frustrating, with only a couple of flyover individuals. Our next stop was on the inland heaths, where, having already lucked on to a pair of White-eared Honeyeaters earlier in the trip, we focused our efforts on connecting with the difficult Chestnut-rumped Heathwren. In warm and blowy conditions, most of the group was able to gain excellent views of a normally extremely difficult to see, and even find, species.

After lunch and a failed attempt to improve our Blue-winged Parrot views we began our journey along the winding Great Ocean Highway. A short interlude at Cape Ottway produced amazing views of one of the mammalian highlights of the trip – at least a dozen Koala!

The next morning we spent the early part of the morning admiring the remaining seven of Twelve Apostles –

a still spectacular row of limestone turrets protruding into the seas and isolated by the erosive effects of wave action. Amazing views of Rufous Bristlebird and Southern Emu-wren were also a highlight here and a pair of half-hidden Little Penguins was also great entertainment.



Despite their shyness Rufous Bristlebirds eventually showed well at Twelve Apostles (Simon Mitchell).

From here we cut back inland, stopping for lunch at a selection of lakes where we gained closer views of a range of waterfowl, gulls and terns. We arrived in the Little Desert area in the early evening where we had time for a very productive trip out onto the heaths. Although much of the habitat had been recently burned it didn't take too long before we found a good stretch of mature, varied heath. Here Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters performed well, and we eventually found a gained good looks at a pair of Slender-billed Thornbills, which appeared to have an active nest. A Rufous Fieldwren sang a couple of times, but was very elusive in the low shrubs.

Not to be beaten, the majority of our group returned to the same spot on the morning of 19th in the hope of gaining improved views of the fieldwren. This turned out to be tremendous success, with amazing views of two individuals performing atop the roadside scrub in the first of the morning sun.

Next we headed to a private predator enclosure, where it didn't take long before we were face-to-face with a pair of truly wild, but habituated Malleefowl. These pre-historic –looking creatures are a unique species of megapode, which build enormous mounds of sand and compost in order to incubate their eggs. Watching the two adults check the sand temperature and clear their mound was a wonderful moment, and one of the undoubted highlights of the trip. Around the enclosure we also actively sought-out several other difficult mallee species. We gained excellent views of Southern Scrub-Robin and Shy Heathwren, but a pair of Purple-gaped Honeyeaters remained distant and rather quiet, refusing to allow us anything more than the merest glimpses. Variegated Fairy-wrens, Brown-headed and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters also provided interest through the morning. However, as the day warmed up the flies gradually increased in number, we decided it was time press on.



Malleefowl attended their mounds totally unconcerned by our presence (Simon Mitchell).

After a restful evening at our accommodation in Ouyen we were refreshed for an early start the following day in Hattah-Kulkyne N.P. Our top priorities here were both difficult and elusive species; Mallee Emuwren and Striated Grasswren. Arriving in the cool at 0630 we picked up a handful of species including a Crested Bellbird, and numerous Variegated Fairy-wrens.

Mallee Emuwrens took a little more time to find, although by mid-morning we had encountered four or five family groups and everyone had seen at least one bird well. Striated Grasswrens however, appeared to be nowhere to be found. We spent the majority of the morning fanned in wide lines, carefully listening for the indicative song but could only draw a blank despite a few heart-racingly similar twitters from fairy-wrens. Then, at the last moment, as we adjourned into a single group and headed back along the track to the vehicles we suddenly heard a bird sing close by. Not thirty seconds later the singing male was almost on top of us and we all enjoyed brilliant views of an unusually showy individual.

Satisfied with a wonderful, 'bird of the day' we took a tour of some of the lakeside habitat around the various Hattah Lakes. Here we gained a number of exciting parrot species in the dead trees around the lake. As well as good numbers of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Little Corellas and Galahs we also picked up several Mulga Parrots and Regent Parrots. A few Musk Lorikeets were also seen and we encountered a single 'Mallee Ringneck' associating with several Yellow Rosellas.

A few further stops around the lake produced more interesting sightings. We had excellent fun interacting with a group of extremely tame Apostlebirds – a prehistoric-looking species in the 'Australian mud-nesters' family with White-winged Chough. As well as good numbers of waterbirds on the lake fringes a pair of Little Eagles showed several times. With some searching we located several groups of Splendid Fairy-wrens; a species only present at a couple of locations on this tour, despite its regularity elsewhere. Grey Shrike Thrushes and Australian Golden Whistlers also showed well and we had wonderful views of our first group of Southern Whiteface picking around longer grasses.



Striated Grasswren might have taken a while being spiked in the spinifex – but was worth it (Simon Mitchell).

That evening we picked up our first Major Mitchell's Cockatoos. It didn't take long to figure out that the birds were actually nesting just behind our accommodation. Although views were exceptional, the dull conditions, coupled with the way the birds spent much of their time inside tree cavities, made photography somewhat difficult.

Much of the next day was taken up driving from Hattah to Waikere, but we made several stops en route. Revisiting Hattah lakes didn't provide the hoped-for Quail-thrush, but we did gain improved views of Crested Bellbird and encounter another group of flyover Major Mitchell's Cockatoos. After a lunch stop (traditional Australian pies!), we arrived called at small reserve near Yarrarra. From the road here we made several stops and gained wonderful views of both Blue Bonnet and Mulga Parrots. Even in warmth of the afternoon our stake out for White-browed Treecreeper succeed for the third consecutive tour. Wonderful views of a pair in open roadside woodland we a real coup for and otherwise potentially very tricky species.



Confiding Apostlebirds entertain the group at Hattah Lakes (Simon Mitchell).

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 an eventually agreeable Gilbert's Whistler. 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. In the process we encountered 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. In over two hours searching through groups of Yellow-throated Miners (often frustratingly elusive) through we couldn't all get on to the only certainly 'pure' Black-eared Miner; a species now in grave danger of extinction as a result of habitat change and subsequent integration with the much commoner Yellow-throated Miner.

Although a visit to Banrock Station the following morning wasn't everything we'd hoped for we still gained some nice views of species we'd seen earlier in the trip and took time to enjoy several particularly. Next we continued on to another spot of low salt-brush type habitat near the town of Morgan. It didn't take long before we found our target species in the form of a pair of showy Redthroat here. However, we were totally unprepared to find the birds were actually feeding a young cuckoo. After careful observation we determined it was in fact a freshly fledged Black-eared Cuckoo. This species is something of a 'mega' in amongst aussie birders, because despite its wide range, it's very low density makes it an almost impossible species to find predictable locations for.



Its large distribution but extremely low density makes Black-eared Cuckoo one of the toughest Australian birds to find (Simon Mitchell).

Continuing on from Morgan we found several large flocks of chats around Jarvis lookout. These were predominantly non-breeding Orange Chats, but also included several smart full-plumaged Crimson Chats and even a number of White-fronted Chats. Nearer to Hawker itself, we stopped along a productive side road towards a lookout where Australian Pipits were common. Eventually we located several Chirruping Wedgebills and several groups of Elegant Parrots were an added bonus.

From Hawker we headed in the Flinders Ranges the following morning. Our main target here was the difficult Short-tailed Grasswren. At the famous Stoke's Hill 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 were picked up as well smaller numbers of Red-rumped and Mulga Parrots. 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 Bronzewing, Southern Whiteface, Yellow-rumped and Inland Thornbills.

Moving on to another potential site we again began covering as much ground as possible. Just as we thought we had failed to connect Craig and Heidi glimpsed a grasswren scuttling ahead of them. With hurried co-ordination we soon managed to encircle one individual. An amazing 'diving save' as the bird by Romney as the bird attempted to run past her ensured everyone was able to gain excellent views.



Short-tailed Grasswrens showed well, all thanks to an amazing 'save' by one of the clients! (Simon Mitchell).

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. Despite the heat one sharp-eyed member of the group also picked out the other main highlight of Brachina; a single Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies half hidden in a shaded cave.

Continuing to Lyndhurst we stopped briefly at Copley Retention Dam (previously referred to as Lyndhurst Retention Dam in 2013 report), where a splendid array of waterbirds included over 100 Freckled Duck, 200 Pink-eared Duck, 100 Pacific Black Duck, 800 Grey Teal, 100 Hardhead, 2 Musk Duck, 25 Australian Pelican, 3 Little Pied Cormorant, 10 Little Black Cormorant, 5 Australian Pied Cormorant (our first of the trip), 3 Australian Darter. Also present were over 100 Black-tailed Nativehens, 700 Eurasian Coot, 10 Banded Stilt, 5 Red-necked Avocet, 3 Red-kneed Dotterel, 4 Red-capped Plover and 3 Black-fronted Dotterel as well as 3 Curlew Sandpiper and 30 Whiskered Terns. Arriving at Lyndhurst we ate a good pub dinner and prepared our-selves for a long drive up the Strzelecki track the following day.

Our first stop was about not too far 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 Thick-billed Grasswrens and Chestnut-breasted Whitefaces. Although the Whitefaces appeared to be a very sporadic bird here (not seen since 2011), it appeared that a combination of very dry conditions and pressure from scientific collection has resulted in extremely low numbers of grasswrens. After an initial six hours of searching only a few of the group caught the briefest glimpses of a grasswren (although various Rufous

Fieldwrens gave a couple of heart-racing moments of confusion). Hoping for better we tried again briefly the following day, and on our way back from Mungeranie, but to no avail.

Nevertheless the morning produced a few interesting species, including Brown Falcons, Nankeen Kestrels, Black Kites and Wedge-tailed Eagles. Numerous White-winged Fairy-wrens and Variegated Fairy-wrens distracted were a welcome distraction from our grasswren search, although their high-pitched calls caused a few false alarms when heard at distance. Several flushed Little Buttonquail showed well enough for the entire group to see and a pair of Hooded Robins were a real surprise. Continuing North towards the Strzelecki crossing we hoped to find another of our major targets – Letter-winged Kite.

After a long drive toward the crossing we checked several trees in hope of getting lucky with a these notoriously erratic and difficult nocturnal raptors. At only the second tree we were in luck – hidden up in the canopy two pairs of beady yellow eyes gazed back at us – Letter-winged Kites!



Fierce-looking Letter-winged Kites were an 'injury-time victory' after a long day of driving (Simon Mitchell).

The dunes in this area contained a few other surprises, including a few Blue Bonnets and Diamond Doves, as well as a single roosting Barn Owl. Even better, at least three Cinnamon Quail-thrushes stopped in the open and close enough to the vehicles for wonderful looks. One the return journey we noted at least 20 Inland Dotterel and a similar number of Australian Pratincoles on the road at dusk and just after dark.

The next day we tried some alternate areas in the hope of locating Thick-billed Grasswren. Although we failed to find our quarry several showy Diamond Doves, White-winged Fairy-wrens and Orange Chats provided plenty of entertainment. Our first flock of Budgerigars flew over at Farina Campground, where a single furtive Pied Honeyeater was our first, but fortunately not only bird of the trip.

Heading north to the Mungeranie Roadhouse, we picked up a wonderful suite of outback species. Small flocks of Pied Honeyeaters totaled 35 birds and Budgies abounded – we had totaled over 600 by the time we arrived at Mungeranie. Plenty more Orange Chats were located and we found over first flocks of Cockatiel – over 150 birds in all. We were further enthused to find that the desert in this area was significantly greener than around Lyndhurst – boding well for our next few days searching for sometimes difficult nomadic species in the area.

Another stop closer to Lyndhurst held another target species. A trio of Grey Falcons (an adult with two fledges young), sat surveying the open ground from a radio transmitter tower. Although they didn't offer any fly-around it was wonderful to be able to connect so easily with Australia's 'true outback falcon'.

That evening we headed out a stakeout in some nearby dunes. Using the approach from previous years we gained phenomenal views of a family group of Eyrean Grasswrens. These birds were almost unbelievably easy compared to our other grasswren encounters, which was especially surprising considering this surreptitious species avoided detection between its initial description in the 1870s and subsequent rediscovery in the early 1960s.



Thanks to repeating the technique from the last tour we gained excellent views of Eyrean Grasswren in minutes (Simon Mitchell).

At Mungeranie waterhole we also encountered an array of water birds as well as desert species coming down to drink. As well as various duck three showy Brolga were a highlight. Just before dusk we gained good views of several Flock Bronzewing, including one birds which came down to drink right in front of us. Whilst watching we also gained excellent looks at several Litte Grassbirds and Australian Reed Warblers, and even better, at least two Australian Spotted Crakes!

The next morning we headed out for a full day along the Birdsville Track. Our first target was yet another tough bird – the ghost of lignum swamps – Grey Grasswren. Our first endeavor was in a rather dry area where the lignum was perhaps too desiccated. A single non-breeding bird gave us the run around for over an hour, disappearing around large clumps before any time we caught sight of it and uttering only a single thin contact call. After struggling to get good views of this individual we moved on to some healthier-looking areas of swamp. Almost immediately we got a strong response from a pair of Grey Grasswrens, which showed wonderfully for the whole group. Nearby several groups of Variegated Fairy-wrens and a few Pied Honeyeaters also added interest



Initially ghost-like, finding the right pair of Grey Grasswrens meant we eventually got up-close-and-personal (Simon Mitchell).

Continuing North we made a stop in an open area of wind-polished open stone with almost no vegetation. The open 'gibber' plains are the specific habitat of the restricted and appropriately named Gibberbird. In the end everything seemed quiet and that we'd drawn a complete blank until the ever-intrepid Craig shouted the group over to a small ridge where he'd found a family group which provided splendid close views.

We journeyed on to the furthest point of our excursion for the day where we reached an open and verdant marsh formed from an agricultural bore. Here both Swamp and Spotted Harriers performed well and it wasn't long before we located a good number of Yellow Chats. Around the green fringes of the bore we had the unusual opportunity to compare both Yellow and Orange Chats at the ecotone between their respective habitats. Heading back to base, we made a stop at a dry river bed, where the vegetation was large enough to hold a single Red-browed Pardalote.

We arrived back at Mungeranie with enough time to make an attempt for one of our few remaining target species. Another high-sought and difficult species, this time one inhabiting open hills of low scrub, and present only in years of good rain. Again our luck held and it wasn't long before we were watching a singing Banded Whiteface zipping back and forth in the brush. As an added bonus another transmitter tower here held yet another trio of Grey Falcons!

The next morning we headed back south to Lyndhurst where we made a final attempt to connect with Thick-billed Grasswren, this unfortunately wasn't to be, so we continued our journey south, arriving in Port Augusta in the early evening. A brief scan of the nearby salt pans revealed a handful of Whiskered Terns and Banded Stilts. We were all keen for a relaxing evening after such a long day of driving.

The 29th saw us take a slight deviation from our original itinerary and head a little further South-west along the coast to Whyalla where some coastal heath held yet another possible grasswren; Western Grasswren. This species used to be considered conspecific with Thick-billed Grasswren, but has recently been considered by the IOC to be an entirely different species. Arriving at the car park and taking a short walk around a rocky outcrop we were luck enough to see one bird skitter across the track. With such thick ground cover gaining better views was difficult, but after a short while one obliging individual sat at the side of the track for long enough to gain good views (although not brilliant photos!). More obliging were two adult Crested Bellbirds, which sat extremely close by feeding young.



Some Grasswrens remained brief and tricky, at least too much so for good photos – Thick-billed Grasswren (left - 2013) and Western Grasswren (right – 2015) (Simon Mitchell).

Back in Port Augusta for lunch we picked up good numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeets as well as enjoying improved views of both Banded Stilts and Red-necked Avocets. A few other bonus birds included some smart Red-capped Plovers in close proximity and a few White-fronted Chats. After lunch we continued our journey back to Adelaide.

With a little extra time available the next morning, but few other target species in reach, we decided to backtrack to the dry mallee habitats east of Adelaide. We covered several sites in close proximity to one another, but focused most of our attention around Monarto Conservation Park. Despite not being able to find any Diamond Firetails in the area, we did record a number of interesting species, including Shy Heathwren and Southern Scrub-Robin. Best of all however, was a showy Purple-gaped Honeyeater, which more than made up for the poor views earlier in the trip.

Flying to Hobart there was just enough time to check into our accommodation before heading out again. We made a beeline for the Tasman peninsular, where we hoped our stake out for Tasmanian Masked Owl would come good. After a careful walk out to the site through the dark (our first Tasmanian Pademelons, Red-necked Wallabies and Ringtail Possums all spotlighted en route), we began a quite vigil. After only a couple of minutes a single owl – a truly massive Tyto – swept silently into the trees opposite. Through the scope we all gained good views of the spotlighted bird for a few minutes, before it seemed to bid us farewell, and made a single graceful pass directly overhead, before continuing, ghost-like, back into the tall eucalyptus woodland it had appeared from.

After overnighting in Hobart we took what was to be one of the non-birding highlights of the trip in the form of our flight down to Melaluca at the South-west tip of Tasmania. The absolutely bell-clear weather gave us incredible views of Tasmania's beautiful rugged terrain. Landing at Melaluca airstrip we soon spotted our first overflying Orange-bellied Parrots.

Not far from the airstrip we soon found gained much closer views of Orange-bellied Parrots as they fed just in front of a specially erected hide. The lack of space in here (only enough for two!) meant we decided to formulate a rotor system whilst the rest of us potted around looking at the various other Tasmanian

endemics and specialties on offer in the area. This wonderful selection included several Dusky Robins, Olive Whistler, Beautiful Firetails, the massive yellowish *diemenensis* subspecies of Striated Fieldwren, Yellow-throated Honeyeater (perhaps the most attractive of them all) and a few secretive Tasmanian Scrubwren.



Although the tiny hide at Melaleuca was cramped, it was worth it for these views of Orange-bellied Parrot (Simon Mitchell).

Ever intrepid, Heidi and Craig dropped lucky in locating a single Eastern Ground Parrot, which they managed to keep track of. With the rest of the group assembled we were able to all get decent flight views as the bird burst out of the heath a couple of times, before we lost track of it. An evening flight back provided equally clear, spectacular views of the island before arriving back for some excellent locally caught seafood in Hobart.

Our final full day of the main tour extension was an important one, with several potentially trick Tasmanian endemics still to see. We headed South to Bruny Island, where we covered a range of different spots, many of the stake-outs for particularly difficult species. Although our first attempt to find one of the few remaining Forty-spotted Pardalote territories on the Tasmanian mainland failed we quickly found at least two individuals just after arriving on Bruny Island. Shortly after we achieved our first good views of Tasmanian Native-hen, Yellow Wattlebird and Black-headed Honeyeater.

Moving to the Adventure Bay area we had a very productive hour at one of the island's campsites. Swift Parrots showed well in the tall Eucalypts whilst Frank located a singing Strong-billed Honeyeater nearby. Tasmanian Thornbills also showed well, treating us to good comparative view with the Brown Thornbills seen earlier.

Finally we headed to the South Bruny National Park. A forest trail here provided an all to brief Bassian Thrush, but we also all managed good views of Scrubtit, Tasmanian Scrubwren and the beautiful Pink Robin, a species which is far easier to find here on Tasmania than on the mainland. Heading back to our accommodation in Hobart those of us with enough energy remaining headed out on a successful owling session, finding not only showy Tasmanian Boobooks (currently bizarrely lumped with New Zealand's Morepork), but also great views of Ring-tailed Possums and, even better Eastern Bandicoot.

For the great majority of the group the morning of 2nd November was our final morning of birding before

heading for the airport. As well as numerous good views of several endemics, we also gained much improved views of both Black Currawong and the blackish *arguta* Tasmanian subspecies of Grey Currawong. Bidding farewell to the majority of the group we all agreed it had been an exceptionally diverse and successful trip.

For a small group of us our trip had not quite finished, and we headed to the North side of the island for a wonderful two nights in the mountains. Here we amazingly witnessed several different Tasmanian Devils visiting the outside of cabins for small cuts of meat specially left for them. Mammals in general were very much the theme, with wonderful bonuses in the form of Duck-billed Platypus, Wombat and Eastern Tiger Quoll. Birds were still impressive too, and we gained improved views of Currawongs, Native-hens, Pink Robin, very confiding Scrubtit and some very showy Blue-winged Parrots.



A real mammal-fest on Tasmania included (clockwise from top left) Tasmanian Paddy Melon, Tiger Quoll, Tasmanian Devil, Duck-billed Platypus, Burshtail Possum and Eastern Barred Bandicoot! (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).

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.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

- Emu** ◊ *Dromaius novaehollandiae* First noted around Deniliquin and thereafter at multiple open country sites.
- Malleefowl** ◊ *Leipoa ocellata* A pair at predator enclosure near Little Desert and one (LO) was at Hattah N.P
- Plumed Whistling Duck** ◊ *Dendrocygna eytoni* A few on the outskirts of Deniliquin.
- Cape Barren Goose** ◊ *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Numerous around Phillip Island, where at least 60 were seen.
- Black Swan** ◊ *Cygnus atratus* Present at wetland sites in small numbers throughout. 20 or more on Bruny Island.
- Freckled Duck** ◊ *Stictonetta naevosa* Fifty at Lake Wendoree, Balarat and over 100 at Copley Retention Dam.
- Australian Shelduck** ◊ *Tadorna tadornoides* Over 100 at Lake Hawthorne, small numbers throughout.
- Pink-eared Duck** ◊ *Malacorhynchus membranaceus naevosa* 25 at Lake Wendoree and 200 at Copley.
- Maned Duck (Australian Wood D)** *Chenonetta jubata* Moderate numbers seen almost daily.
- Mallard (introduced)** *Anas platyrhynchos* One of dubious provenance seen on 19th.
- Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa* A few at all wetland sites; 40 Wendoree and 100 Copley Retention Dam.
- Australasian Shoveler** ◊ *Anas rhynchotis* Pairs at Jellingot Reserve and Hattah Lakes.
- Grey Teal** ◊ ++ *Anas gracilis* Numerous. 1200 at Hattah Lakes and 800 at Copley Retention Dam.
- Chestnut Teal** ◊ *Anas castanea* 3 at Lake Wendoree, 20 at Avalon Beach and 5 at Jellingot Reserve.
- Hardhead** ◊ *Aythya australis* Recorded at 8 different sites, including 100 or more at Copley Retention Dam.
- Blue-billed Duck** ◊ *Oxyura australis* Ten were at Lake Wendoree on 17th and 4 near Port Augusta on 29th.
- Musk Duck** ◊ *Biziura lobata* Small numbers at several wetland sites included ten at Lake Wendoree.
- Little Penguin** ◊ *Eudyptula minor* Arriving birds at Phillip Island totalled over 300.
- Shy Albatross** ◊ ++ *Thalassarche cauta* At least 10 off Cape Ottaway on 17th.
- Southern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes halli* A single identified at the Nobbies amongst 5 other Giant Petrel sp.
- Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris* 1000s from Nobbies Pt and Cape Bruny. 25 or more in Port Augusta!
- Fluttering Shearwater** ◊ *Puffinus gavia* Four flew close past Nobbies Pt on 12th.
- Australasian Grebe** ◊ *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* Seen at Yea Wetlands, Lake Wendoree and Port Augusta.
- Hoary-headed Grebe** ◊ *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* Around 50 at Hattah Lakes was the largest total.
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Several at Lake Wendoree, Avalon Beach and a single at Copley.
- Australian White Ibis** ◊ ++ (Australian I) *Threskiornis moluccus* Common in the South.
- 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 Mungeranie.
- Royal Spoonbill** ◊ *Platalea regia* Two at Yea Wetlands and 3 near Avalon Beach.
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill** ◊ *Platalea flavipes* Five at Hattah Lakes and one near Taylorville Station.
- Eastern Cattle Egret** ++ *Bubulcus coromandus* Forty in the Dandenong Foothills on 14th. Ones and twos elsewhere.
- White-necked Heron** *Ardea pacifica* Single on at least 6 occasions, 5 on Bruny Island.
- Great Egret** ++ *Ardea alba* About ten individuals seen across multiple sites throughout the more verdant areas.
- White-faced Heron** *Egretta novaehollandiae* Seen almost daily normally as singles near the roadside.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Six scattered individuals including two near Banrock Station.
- Australian Pelican** ◊ *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Recorded near-daily. Twenty-five at Copley Retention Dam.
- Australasian Gannet** ◊ *Morus serrator* Seen from headlands and ocean viewpoints, but no tallies of greater than 20.
- Little Pied Cormorant** *Microcarbo melanoleucos* Small numbers on most days, particularly at coastal sites.
- Black-faced Cormorant** ◊ (B-f Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscescens* A few at coastal sites inc. 50 at Twelve Apostles.
- Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* At least 10 at Copley Retention Dam and a few elsewhere.

Australian Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius* Only seen at Copley Retention Dam where 5+ were present.

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

Australasian Darter ++ *Anhinga novaehollandiae* Three at Copley and one on Phillip Island

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

Letter-winged Kite ♦ *Elanus scriptus* A pair showed fantastically well near the Srzelecki crossing.

Little Eagle ♦ *Hieraaetus morphnoides* Three at Hattah N.P. and one seen near Morgan.

Wedge-tailed Eagle ♦ *Aquila audax* Seen almost daily, including 4 each around Lyndhurst and Mungeranie.

Brown Goshawk ♦ *Accipiter fasciatus* One at Little Desert N. P.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Three on Phillip Island and several singles scattered throughout.

Spotted Harrier ♦ *Circus assimilis* One near Yea Wetlands and another between Hattah and Mildura.

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

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

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

Grey Falcon ♦ *Falco hypoleucos* An amazing total of 6 in the Lyndhurst and Mungeranie area.

Black Falcon ♦ *Falco subniger* One at the dump near Deniliquin was good, given this species increasing rarity.

Australian Crane ♦ (A Spotted C) *Porzana fluminea* Two at Deniliquin Mungerannie showed extremely well.

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

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

Black-tailed Nativehen ♦ *Tribonyx ventralis* Surprisingly common at anumber of sites, including 100 at Copley.

Tasmanian Nativehen ♦ *Tribonyx mortierii* Reasonable common on Tas.; even around small wetlands.



Tasmanian Native-hen (Simon Mitchell).

Eurasian Coot ++ *Fulica atra* Fairly numerous at wetland sites including over 700 at Copley retention lake.

Brolga ♦ *Grus rubicund* Ten at Mungerannie.

Painted Buttonquail ♦ *Turnix varius* One heard at Heathcote (LO).

Little Buttonquail ♦ *Turnix velox* Two flushed near Lyndhurst.

Pied Oystercatcher ♦ (Australian P O) *Haematopus longirostris* 2 at Avalon Beach and a couple at Port Augusta.

Sooty Oystercatcher ♦ *Haematopus fuliginosus* One on Phillip Island and 5 on Tasmania.

White-headed Stilt ++ *Himantopus leucocephalus* Ten at Copley retention dam and a few groups elsewhere.

Banded Stilt ◇ *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus* Hundreds around Port Augusta and a few at Avalon Beach.



Banded Stilts were brilliantly close at Port Augusta (Simon Mitchell).

Red-necked Avocet ◇ *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae* Eight at Avalon Beach and 200 at Lake Hattah.

Banded Lapwing ◇ *Vanellus tricolor* One recorded spotlighting near Deniliquin, and four near Lyndhurst.

Masked Lapwing ◇ *Vanellus miles* Common throughout, although absent from most areas north of Lyndhurst.

Red-kneed Dotterel ◇ *Erythronyctes cinctus* Small numbers on wetlands from Copley northwards.

Inland Dotterel ◇ *Peltohyas australis* Two were spotlighted near Deniliquin and 15 north of Lyndhurst after dark.

Red-capped Plover ◇ *Charadrius ruficapillus* Generally uncommon, ten around Lake Hawthorne the maximum.

Hooded Dotterel ◇ *Thinornis cucullatus* Two at Woolamai Beach, Phillip Island on were the only ones recorded.

Black-fronted Dotterel ◇ *Elseya melanops* Seen at several locations including 6 near Goyder Lagoon.

Oriental Plover ◇ *Charadrius veredus* Three close to the road on the way back from Mungeranie – an excellent bonus!

Plains-Wanderer ◇ *Pedionomus torquatus* At least three seen exceptionally well near Deniliquin.

Latham's Snipe ◇ (Japanese S) *Gallinago hardwickii* Thirty were seen at Jellingot Reserve.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Four at Avalon Beach on 16th

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* Fifteen at Avalon Beach was the only and 3 at Port Augusta.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Three at Copley Retention Dam and one along the Birdsville track.

Australian Pratincole ◇ *Stiltia isabella* Small numbers along the Strzelectki and Birdsville tracks.

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* Five or so on Phillip Island and several each day on Tasmania.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Two near Banrock Station and one at Port Augusta.

Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii* Over 60 at Phillip Island, a few on elsewhere on the coast.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid* Fifty at Avalon Beach was the maximum. Also at Wendoree and Copley.

Fairy Tern ◇ *Sternula nereis* Two flybys at Avalon Beach.

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

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

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

Brush Bronzewing ◇ *Phaps elegans* Flushed from the roadside near Yea Wetlands and Anglesea Heath.

Flock Bronzewing ◇ *Phaps histrionic* Up to 20 came in to drink at Mungerannie including one seen very well.

Crested Pigeon ◇ *Ocyphaps lophotes* Common throughout including 50 or more around Hattah N.P.

Diamond Dove ◇ *Geopelia cuneata* Fifty around Mungerannie was the maximum.

Peaceful Dove ++ *Geopelia placida* Several around Heathcote and also at Mungerannie.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo ◇ *Calyptorhynchus funereus* 2 along the Great Ocean Highway and 8 on Tasmania.

Gang-gang Cockatoo ◇ *Callocephalon fimbriatum* Two flew over at Toolangi Forest (NL).

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

Galah ◇ *Eolophus roseicapilla* Abundant throughout the mainland. Up to 500 roosting at Mungerannie.

Long-billed Corella ◇ *Cacatua tenuirostris* Small numbers 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* Over 100 along the Birdsville track.

Rainbow Lorikeet ◇ *Trichoglossus moluccanus* Twenty at scattered sites, including 50 near Monarto Cons. Park.

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



Musk Lorikeets entertained us by feeding on bottlebrush trees around Heathcote (Simon Mitchell).

Little Lorikeet ◇ *Glossopsitta pusilla* At least two flew over at Clunes State Forest.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet ◇ *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala* Several at Clunes State Forest and Port Augusta.

Australian Ringneck ◇ ++ *Barnardius zonarius* Small nos at several sites and 10 'Mallee Ringnecks' at Hattah N.P.

Green Rosella ◇ *Platycercus caledonicus* Two showed separate pairs showed well on Tasmania.

Crimson Rosella ◇ ++ *Platycercus [elegans] elegans* Over 50 at Dandenong Foothills, smaller numbers elsewhere.

Adelaide Rosella ◇ ++ *Platycercus [elegans] adalaidae* 2 at Burra (*subadalaidae*); 4 at Murray Bridge (*adalaidae*).

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* Eighty near Yarrarra and small numbers up the tracks.

Red-rumped Parrot ◇ *Psephotus haematonotus* Small numbers at a variety of sites included 10 at Little Desert.

Mulga Parrot ◇ *Psephotus varius* A dozen or so near Yarrarra with smaller flocks near Ouyen and and Jarvis.

Blue-winged Parrot ◊ *Neophema chrysostoma* Two flyovers near Point Addis. Two showed well on devils ext.

Elegant Parrot ◊ *Neophema elegans* Several in the Flinders Ranges and a few between Lyndhurst and Port Augusta.

Orange-bellied Parrot ◊ *Neophema chrysogaster* At least a dozen at Melaleuca, where two visited the feeders.

Swift Parrot ◊ *Lathamus discolor* Up to 70 seen on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

Budgerigar ◊ *Melopsittacus undulatus* At least 800 of this mobile species along Strzelecki and Birdsville tracks.

Eastern Ground Parrot ◊ ++ *Pezoporus wallicus* One flushed several times at Melaleuca on 31st.

Australian King Parrot ◊ *Alisterus scapularis* Ten were at Dandenong Foothills and one near Yea Wetlands.

Superb Parrot ◊ *Polytelis swainsonii* Thirty or more were seen in Gulpa State Forest, Deniliquin.

Regent Parrot ◊ *Polytelis anthoepus* Several were seen around Hattah-Kulkyne N.P.

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx basalis* One near Port Augusta and one at Monarto Conservation Park.

Black-eared Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx osculans* One seen near Morgan being fed by 2 adult Redthroats! A real coup!

Shining Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Three in the Dandenong Foothills and several heard elsewhere.

Pallid Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis pallidus* Four seen together on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis flabelliformis* One seen in Sherbrook Forest and two on Tasmania.

Brush Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis variolosus* One heard briefly at Hawker (LO).

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.



Eastern Barn Owl and the massive Tasmanian Masked Owl (Simon Mitchell)

Powerful Owl ◊ *Ninox strenua* An adult and two young showed well at Banyule Flats.

Southern Boobook ◊ ++ *Ninox boobook* One before first light in Sherbrook Forest was almost the 1st bird of the tour!

Morepork (Tasmanian Boobook) ◊ ++ *Ninox [novaeseelandiae] leucopsis* Two near Port Arthur, Tasmania.

Tawny Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus strigoides* A pair were roosting at Little Desert N.P.

Australian Owlet-nightjar ◊ *Aegotheles cristatus* A showy bird near Deniliquin and another in Hattah N.P.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Two near Deniliquin.

Laughing Kookaburra ◊ *Dacelo novaeguineae* Small numbers everywhere excluding the dry outback.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* At least two in Hattah N. P. and a couple of other singles elsewhere.

Red-backed Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius* One near Copley Dam and two near Port Augusta

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

Superb Lyrebird ◊ *Menura novaehollandiae* Four or more at Sherbrook and two heard at Toolangi Forest.

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

Red-browed Treecreeper ◊ *Climacteris erythrops* Heard only in the Dandenong Foothills.

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

Brown Treecreeper ◊ *Climacteris picumnus* Five at Dunach Conservation area and a few heard elsewhere.

Variiegated Fairywren ◊ *Malurus lamberti* Small numbers around Hattah, Gluepot and Adelaide.

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

Splendid Fairywren ◊ *Malurus splendens* A total of 12 encountered in the Hattah-Kulkyne NP area (*melanotus*).

White-winged Fairywren ◊ *Malurus leucopterus* Common in dry areas, particularly near Lyndhurst and Mungeranie.

Southern Emu-wren ◊ *Stipiturus malachurus* Small groups at Twelve Apostles and Melaleuca.

Mallee Emu-wren ◊ ++ *Stipiturus mallee* Several groups were located in Hattah Kulkyne N.P.

Grey Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis barbatus* A showy pair and an elusive single were seen not far from the Birdsville track.

Striated Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis striatus* One seen well in Hattah Kulkayne N.P.

Short-tailed Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis merrotsyi* A pair showed well at Appolina Ruins.

Eyrean Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis goyderi* Three showed extremely well in the dunes near Mungerannie.

Thick-billed Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis modestus* One very brief elusive bird seen by some on the Strzelecki track.

Western Grasswren ◊ *Amytornis textillis* One showed well at Whyalla on 29th.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus chrysops* Recorded in small numbers in coastal forests.

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

White-eared Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus leucotis* Two not far outside Heathcote and a one near Anglesey Heath.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus flavicollis* Several seen at Melaleuca and one on Bruny Island.



Yellow-throated Honeyeaters are a candidate for the most attractive of all the Australian honeyeaters (Simon Mitchell).

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

Purple-gaped Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus cratitius* Two heard near Little Desert, seen well at Monarto Park.

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

Grey-fronted Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus plumulus* Ten or more showed well at Brachina Gorge.

Fuscous Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus fuscus* Six seen at Heathcote and pairs also at Clunes and Anglesea Heath.

White-plumed Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus penicillatus* Small numbers at number of sites, inc. 20+ at Heathcote.

White-fronted Honeyeater ◊ *Purnella albifrons* First seen at Heathcote and common up the tracks.

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 30 at Hattah Lake.

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

Black-eared Miner ◊ ++ *Manorina melanotis* One individual at Gluepot met the criteria for 'pure'. Many hybrids.

Blue-faced Honeyeater ◊ *Entomyzon cyanotis* One at Hattah-Kulkayne N.P.

Black-chinned Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus gularis* One flock of three birds were seen near Heathcote.

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

Brown-headed Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus brevirostris* Singles at Sherbrook, Toolangi and Whyalla.

Black-headed Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus affinis* A total of fifteen or so seen on Tasmania, mostly on Bruny Island.

Striped Honeyeater ◊ *Plectorhyncha lanceolata* Three in Hattah Kulkayne N.P and two in Gluepot N.P.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater ◊ *Acanthagenys rufogularis* A couple at Deniliquin. Common North of Hattah.

Little Wattlebird ◊ ++ (Brush W) *Anthochaera chrysoptera* Ten or so around Cape Ottway was the maximum.

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 couple at Cape Ottway.

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* Two at Sherbrooke and one at Toolangi.

Pied Honeyeater ◊ *Certhionyx variegates* A total over over 40 along the Birdsville Track.

Crimson Chat ◊ *Epthianura tricolor* Five South of Hawker and another 3 along the Birdsville Track.

Orange Chat ◊ *Epthianura aurifrons* Good numbers up the tracks and over 100 in en route to Lyndhurst.

Yellow Chat ◊ *Epthianura crocea* At least four were at Pandie Burra Bore, Birdsville Track.

White-fronted Chat ◊ *Epthianura albifrons* Several seen on coastal heaths and 750+ near Jarvis lookout!

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

Rufous Bristlebird ◊ *Dasyornis broadbenti* One seen at Point Addis and one showy bird at Twelve Apostles.

Spotted Pardalote ◊ ++ *Pardalotus punctatus* Odd birds on the main tour and as many as 8 on Bruny Island.

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

Red-browed Pardalote ◊ *Pardalotus rubricatus* One at a creek crossing along the Birdsville Track.

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

Pilotbird ◊ *Pycnoptilus floccosus* One seen well and two more heard in Toolangi Forest.

Scrubtit ◊ *Acanthornis magna* A few showed well on Bruny Island and excellent views on the devil's extension.



Scrubtits are often frustrating owing to the dense forest they inhabit – not this one though! (Simon Mitchell)

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

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

Striated Fieldwren ◊ *Calamanthus fuliginosus* One was at Avalon Beach and 4 (ssp. *diemenesis*) at Melaleuca.

Rufous Fieldwren ◊ *Calamanthus campestris* 2 near Little Desert showed well and two briefly on Strzelecki Track

Redthroat ◊ *Pyrrholaemus brunneus* Two seen at a stakeout between Gluepot and Morgan.

Speckled Warbler ◊ *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus* Several seen well near Heathcote.

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

Tasmanian Scrubwren ◊ ++ (Brown S) *Sericornis humilis* Seen by some at Melaleuca. Several groups on Bruny Is.

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

Weebill ◊ *Smicronis brevirostris* One of the commonest birds around Hattah and Gluepot.

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

Inland Thornbill ◊ ++ *Acanthiza apicalis* Several 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 ◇ (Sapphire T) *Acanthiza iredalei* A nesting pair seen on the heath at Little Desert.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* Small numbers at several sites..

Yellow Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza nana* A couple at Dunach conservation area and one at Hattah.

Striated Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza lineate* Perhaps the commonest Thornbill in forested areas; 10 at Dunach.

Southern Whiteface ◇ *Aphelocephala leucopsis* A total of about 50 in all, including 15 at Hattah.

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

Chestnut-crowned Babbler ◇ *Pomatostomus ruficeps* A few seen in Gluepot.

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* Two seen in Gluepot.

Cinnamon Quail-thrush ◇ *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum* Three on the Strzelecki Track, one of which showed very well.

Grey Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus torquatus* Four in Sherbrook forest were the first and a few other singles.

Pied Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus nigrogularis* Seven in our day around Hattah was the maximum.

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 three in Toolangi Forests.

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

Grey Currawong ◇ *Strepera versicolor* The commonest Currawong with about 25 in total.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Fairly common along the Strzelecki and Birdville Tracks.

Masked Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus personatus* Six at Heathcote and over 200 on the Birdsville Track the max.

White-browed Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus superciliosus* 85 at Heathcote and 80 at Hattah Lakes the biggest groups.

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

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

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

White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* One briefly at Heathcote (LO).

White-winged Triller ◇ ++ *Lalage tricolor* One at Hattah and another at Whyalla.

Varied Sittella ◇ *Daphoenositta chrysoptera* A couple at Clunes State Forest.

Eastern Shrike-tit ◇ ++ *Falcunculus [frontatus] frontatus* One at at Gulpa State Forest.

Olive Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala olivacea* Three were seen at Melaleuca, Tasmania.

Gilbert's Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala inornata* Ten or so were noted in Gluepot Reserve.

Australian Golden Whistler ◇ ++ *Pachycephala pectoralis* A few at Sherbrooke, Toolangi Forest and Little Desert.

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

Grey Shrike-thrush ◇ *Colluricincla 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.

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.

Restless Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra inquieta* One briefly at Toolangi on 13th.

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 melanoramphos* 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* Two near Deniliquin and a surprising pair north of Lyndhurst.

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

Jacky Winter ◇ *Microeca fascinans* Small numbers in drier forests; 3 in Toolangi Forest.

Rose Robin ◇ *Petroica rosea* A couple showed well on Bruny Island, Tasmania

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

Flame Robin ◇ *Petroica phoenicea* A dozen or so at Toolangi Forest and two more were seen on Bruny Island.

Scarlet Robin ◇ ++ *Petroica boodang* One at Toolangi, two at Point Addis and several on Bruny Island.

Red-capped Robin ◇ *Petroica goodenovii* A total of 9 across the trip included 4 at Stokes Hill Lookout.

Southern Scrub Robin ◇ *Drymodes brunneopygia* One north of Little Desert and another showed well at Monarto.
Eurasian Skylark (introduced) *Alauda arvensis* A few heard or seen between Melbourne and Port Campbell.
White-backed Swallow ◇ *Cheramoeca leucosterna* Two near Deniliquin and 5+ each at Birdsville and Strzelecki.



A confiding Pink Robin on Tasmania (Simon Mitchell).

Welcome Swallow ◇ *Hirundo neoxena* Common in open habitats throughout.
Fairy Martin ◇ *Petrochelidon ariel* 20 each at Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks and various smaller scattered groups.
Tree Martin ◇ *Petrochelidon nigricans* Common all but the driest areas, including over 200 around Hawker.
Australian Reed Warbler ◇ ++ *Acrocephalus australis* Seen at Yea Wetlands and heard at further 11 sites.
Rufous Songlark ◇ *Megalurus mathewsi* Heard at Little Desert.
Brown Songlark ◇ *Megalurus cruralis* 12+ north of Deniliquin and a few around Whyalla.
Little Grassbird ◇ *Megalurus gramineus* One at Lake Wendoree and several at Mungeranie waterhole.
Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* Seen well at Jellingot.
Silveryeye *Zosterops lateralis* Small numbers around the Dandenongs, and on Tasmania.
Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* Common near habitations between Melbourne and Port Campbell.
Common Starling (introduced) *Sturnus vulgaris* Common in all areas except Lyndhurst and Mungerannie.
Bassian Thrush ◇ ++ *Zoothera lunulata* One briefly at Toolangi Forest and one briefly on Bruny Island.
Common Blackbird (introduced) *Turdus merula* Common as far north as Hawker. Abundant on Tasmania.
House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Common around habitations throughout.
Beautiful Firetail ◇ *Stagonopleura bella* Perhaps as many as 10 at Melaleuca.
Diamond Firetail ◇ *Stagonopleura guttata* Heard only at Anglesy Heath despite extensive effort in several areas.
Red-browed Finch ◇ (R-b Firetail) *Neochmia temporalis* A few at Toolangi Forest and Yea Wetlands.
Zebra Finch ◇ *Taeniopygia guttata* Common from about Hawker northwards, seen everyday in the outback.
Australian Pipit ◇ ++ *Anthus australis* Common along the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks.
European Greenfinch (introduced) *Chloris chloris* Two at Avalon Beach and two on Bruny Island.
European Goldfinch (introduced) *Carduelis carduelis* A few scattered sightings along the coast and on Tasmania.



Wombats are hefty looking creatures and somehow manage to look simultaneously cute and ugly

MAMMALS

Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* Two showed well in the River at Mountain Valley (extension).

Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* One on the main tour and a total of 6 on Tasmania.

Tasmanian Devil *Sarcophilus harrisii* Up to 6 were seen between the different groups at Mountain Valley (extension)

Tiger Quoll *Dasyurus maculatus* One seen by some at Mountain Valley (extension)

Fat-tailed Dunnart *Smithopsis crassicaudata* Four on night-drives north of Deniliquin.

Common Wombat *Vombatus ursinus* One showed wonderfully at Mountain Valley.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot *Perameles gunii* One, possibly two nor far outside Hobart whilst 'owling' on 1st Nov.

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

Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* Several near Port Arthur and Hobart.

Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus* One crossed the road nr Banyule Flats, and several on Tas.

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* One seen at Brachina Gorge.

Tasmanian Pademelon *Thylogale billardierii* A total of 20 or more on Tasmania and common.

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

Red Fox (introduced) *Vulpes vulpes*

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

Australian Fur-Seal (Afro-Australian F-S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* Around 200 from Philip Island.

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

Brown Hare (introduced) ++ *Lepus europaeus* Odd sightings in agricultural coastal areas.

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



This Crested Bellbird at Whyalla was feeding recently fledged young (Simon Mitchell).

TAXONOMIC NOTES

BIRDS

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

This form was formerly lumped in Sunda Teal *A. gibberifrons*, with the name Grey Teal being used for the enlarged species.

Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*

Some authors split off White-capped Albatross *D. steadi* of New Zealand as a separate species. Those seen on the tour are either 'White-capped' or 'Shy' Albatrosses and although to date we have been unable to identify any individuals with certainty to subspecies level they are more likely Shy as this is the form breeding in the Tasman Sea.

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

This form is sometimes lumped in Sacred Ibis *T. aethiopica*.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Ardea coromandus*

This form was formerly lumped in Western Cattle Egret *A. ibis*, with the name Cattle Egret being used for the enlarged species.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

The form concerned, *modesta*, may be better treated as a separate species Eastern Great Egret.

Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

This form was formerly lumped in Oriental Darter *A. melanogaster*, with the name Darter being used for the enlarged species.

Black-shouldered (Australian) Kite *Elanus axillaris*

Confusingly, the IOC use the name Black-shouldered Kite for this species, but it may be better to avoid this for *axillaris* as it has long been used for the widespread *E. caerulescens* of Eurasia and Africa, from which *axillaris* was split, though the latter is now often called Black-winged Kite.

Australian Swamphen *Porphyrio [porphyrio] melanotus*

The IOC include this distinctive form in Purple Swamphen *P. porphyrio*, but morphological and genetic studies have shown that it is probably better treated as a distinct species.

Eurasian (or Common) Coot *Fulica atra*

The Australian form *australis* is much smaller than its Eurasian cousin, with a bluish bill and very little white on the trailing edge of the wing. It may be split in the future, together with forms occurring in Java and New Guinea, as Australasian Coot.

White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*

This species was formerly lumped in Black-winged Stilt *H. himantopus*.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*

Some authors lump this form in Zebra Dove *G. striata* of southeast Asia, using the name Peaceful Dove for the enlarged species.

Australian Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius*

The various forms in the Australian Ringneck complex are sometimes treated as separate species. The form seen on most of this tour, *barnardi*, is colloquially known as the Mallee Ringneck. Around the Flinders Ranges, we just get into the edge of the range of the nominate form, colloquially known as Port Lincoln Ringneck.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus [elegans] elegans*

The IOC lump Yellow Rosella *P. [elegans] flaveolus* and Adelaide Rosella *P. [elegans] adalaidae* in this species. The different forms may perhaps however best be treated as allospecies, in spite of some hybridization. Historically, Green Rosella *P. caledonicus* (of Tasmania) was sometimes lumped in this species, with the enlarged species being known as Blue-cheeked Rosella.

Adelaide Rosella *Platycercus [elegans] adalaidae*

See the entry for Crimson Rosella *P. elegans*.

Yellow Rosella *Platycercus [elegans] flaveolus*

See the entry for Crimson Rosella *P. elegans*.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

Sometimes Pale-headed Rosella *P. adscitus* and Northern Rosella *P. venustus* are lumped in this with the name White-cheeked Rosella being used for the enlarged species.

Eastern Ground Parrot *Pezoporus wallicus*

Formerly, Western Ground Parrot *P. flaviventris* was lumped in this species with the name Ground Parrot being used for the enlarged species.

Australian Masked Owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*

The form concerned is sometimes split off as a separate species Tasmanian Masked Owl *T. castanops*. It is very distinctive, being larger and darker than most of the mainland forms.

Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica*

This form is often lumped in Western Barn Owl *T. alba*, with the name Barn Owl being used for the enlarged species. This rather over-simplified treatment of the Barn Owl complex is surely in need of further work!

Southern Boobook *Ninox boobook*

Some authors lump this form in Morepork *N. novaehollandiae* of New Zealand, using the name Southern Boobook for the enlarged species. Note also that some publications (e.g. Handbook of Birds of the World) split these two species but place the boobooks on Tasmania with Morepork rather than with Southern Boobook!

Mallee Emu-wren *Stipiturus mallee*

This form was formerly lumped in Rufous-crowned Emu-wren *S. ruficeps*.

Short-tailed Grasswren *Amytornis merrotsyi*

This form (found in the Northern Flinders Ranges) was formerly lumped in Striated Grasswren *A. striatus*.

Black-eared Miner *Manorina melanotis*

This critically endangered mallee specialist has at various times in the past been treated as a subspecies of Yellow-throated Miner *M. fulvigula*, a species with which it regularly hybridizes. Current thinking is that Black-eared Myna is a good species that has been brought into contact with Yellow-throated Miner unnaturally due to human activities.

Little (or Brush) Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera*

This form is sometimes lumped in Western (or Little) Wattlebird *A. lunulata* with the name Little Wattlebird being used for the enlarged species. Rather confusingly, the name Little Wattlebird has been used for both forms of the split by various authors.

Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*

The yellow-rumped form (found in the mallee areas) was previously split off as a separate species: Yellow-rumped Pardalote *P. xanthopygos*.

Tasmanian Scrubwren *Sericornis humilis*

This form was formerly lumped in White-browed Scrubwren *S. frontalis*.

Inland (or Broad-tailed) Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*

This form was formerly often lumped in Brown Thornbill *A. pusilla*.

White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor*

Some authors lump this form in White-shouldered Triller *L. sueurii* of Indonesia, using the name White-winged Triller for the enlarged species.

Eastern Shriketit *Falcunculus [frontatus] frontatus*

The IOC lump Western Shriketit *F. [f.] leucogaster* and Northern Shriketit *F. [f.] whitei* in this species, using the name Crested Shriketit for the enlarged species, but they are probably better treated (as by some other authors) as allospecies.

Australian Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*

This species was formerly known as Golden Whistler, but has been renamed following the splitting-off of several closely related forms.

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*

The IOC treat the albiscapa group of Australia and Melanesia as distinct from the fuliginosa group of New Zealand and Lord Howe Island, which they name New Zealand Fantail.

Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang*

The IOC split the Australian mainland forms (the boodang group) as a species distinct from the multicolor group of Melanesia, Polynesia and Norfolk Island, which they name Pacific Robin.

Horsfield's (or Australasian) Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*

This form was formerly lumped in Singing Bushlark *M. cantillans*.

Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*

This species was formerly lumped in Clamorous Reed-Warbler *A. stentoreus*.

Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*

This form was formerly lumped in Scaly Thrush *Z. dauma*.

Australian Pipit *Anthus australis*

Some authors lump this species in New Zealand Pipit *A. novaeseelandiae*, using the name Australasian Pipit.

MAMMALS

Dingo *Canis familiaris*

Menkhorst & Knight treat this form as a domesticated form of the (Grey) Wolf and refer to it as *C. lupus dingo*. Its exact ancestral routes remain uncertain.

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*

Menkhorst & Knight lump this form in Cape Hare *L. capensis*, using the name Brown Hare for the enlarged species.

TOP 5 BIRDS OF THE TRIP:

- 1) Plains Wanderer
- 2) Letter-winged Kite
- 3) Malleefowl
- 4) Powerful Owl
- 5) Short-tailed Grasswren