

SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA & TASMANIA TOUR REPORT 2024

3 - 26 / 27 October 2024

by Mike Watson

The 2024 Birdquest Southern Australia & Tasmania tour recorded our second highest total on this itinerary, a very respectable 324 species but more importantly this included a whopping 265 'diamond' birds (either Australian endemics or seen on few other Birdquest tours). In fact, 35 of these are 'double diamond' birds, not available on any other Birdquest tour, a number bolstered by the 12 Tasmanian endemics plus the two migratory parrots effectively only possible there. There is a lot of overlap across our Australian programme, but this itinerary probably has the best selection of Australia's special birds (and mammals!) in terms of rare species, as well as six of its seven endemic bird families (Emu, Plains-wanderer, Lyrebirds, Australian mud nesters, Bristlebirds and Pardalotes, only Scrub-birds is missing). These cold numbers give an idea of the extent of endemism but birding in this far-flung corner of Australia is special for so many other reasons. There were some truly iconic birding experiences on this year's tour including: a Powerful Owl in downtown Melbourne with a possum in its talons; Hooded Plovers on a beautiful surfing beach on the Great Ocean Road; the St Kilda harbour nocturnal Little Penguin cruise; Superb Lyrebird foraging among the tree ferns of a mossy eucalypt rainforest; point-blank night-time Plains-wanderers with the legendary Phil Maher on the plains north of Deniliquin; a pair of Malleefowl walked past us in the endless Mallee of northwest Victoria; six of the best grasswrens, seen by all of us and headlined by the unique Grey Grasswren, deep in a lignum swamp on the remote Birdsville Track; Grey Falcons, the ghosts of the outback; Chestnut-breasted Whitefaces and Letter-winged Kites along the famous Strzelecki Track; the critically endangered Swift Parrot watched feeding in a flowering eucalypt on Tassie with waves crashing on the beach behind us and finally, the small aircraft pilgrimage to Melaleuca (not accessible by road!) for Orange-bellied Parrot, one of the world's rarest birds – everyone serious about world birding goes there eventually! We also saw the iconic trio of Aussie mammals, Koala plus the two monotremes, the bizarre Short-beaked Echidna and Platypus. However, the animals were only part of the story of a 12,000km road trip (via some of the best bakeries) not to mention spectacular scenery, all in the comfort of 4WD SUVs, to some of the least populated places on the planet... and its best Outback pub, the Mungerannie Hotel. What an adventure we had and miraculously not a single puncture between our three vehicles!

Interest in habitats is increasing and the variety of birds seen was thanks to the number of special habitats we visited (as per Iain Campbell et al's 2021 'Habitats of the World'): Dune and Rocky Spinifex in the Gawler Range of the Eyre Peninsula; Chenopod and Samphire Shrubland at Deniliquin; Australasian Temperate Rainforest in the Dandenong Ranges and Great Otway National Parks; Australasian Tussock Grassland on the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks; Australasian Lowland

Heathland on the Great Ocean Road; Wet Sclerophyll Forest in Tasmania; Dry Sclerophyll Forest in South Australia; Mallee Woodland and Scrubland in Hattah Kulkyne and Murray Sunset National Parks and Gluepot; Mulga Woodland and Acacia Scrubland at Mount Korong; Australasian Temperate Wetland at Werribee; Australasian Rocky Coastline and Sandy Beach on the Yorke Peninsula and finally, Australasian Tidal Mudflat and Salt Marsh north of Adelaide). As well as generalists, each habitat added more endemic birds.

A PAIR OF BOOBOOKS

Our first birding location this year was a park in downtown Melbourne, where, among a plethora of common and widespread birds like Rainbow Lorikeet, Crested Pigeon, Superb Fairywren, White-plumed and New Holland Honeyeaters, White-browed Scrubwren, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Little Raven and Welcome Swallow, we tracked down our first Musk Lorikeet, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and the peculiar-sounding Bell Miner. All easier in the vicinity of the city than later on our intended circuit. We relocated to another nearby park, full of canoodling couples making the most of the spring sunshine, where high in the boughs of an evergreen was a giant Powerful Owl, the biggest of all the boobooks. It had a dead possum in its talons too, an addition since I took the image in this report the previous day. Happily, it had returned to the same roosting spot, after doing its bit to keep the downtown Melbourne possum population under control. The first bakery on the tour followed, Australia is still blessed with fabulous independent bakeries everywhere, although I see that corporate blandness is already creeping into petrol stations in the form of Pie Face. We grew to love our bakery visits as the tour progressed.

We needed to rearrange the itinerary at the start of the tour this year, owing to the Phillip Island penguin grandstand being full during the school holidays. Our change of plan included a visit to a headland on the South Victoria coast, where Tasmanian Boobook has been discovered to be a regular migrant in spring, as they wait to cross the Bass Strait to breed in Tassie. After a surreal evening meal, with the checklist log call interrupted by a pub quiz, we were on our way to the secluded spot, hot on the trail of a recent boobook sighting. We did not need the information after all, as the boobook was very easy to find, sheltering in bushes by the car park, buffeted by a strengthening wind. Showing well! It's underparts more densely spotted than its Southern cousin. What a great start, with a bird that is trickier to find when in its breeding range over the sea.

THE DANDENONGS RAINFOREST

After an excellent bakery stop in Healesville, we made our way uphill into the Dandenongs, home of eucalypts, the like of which I'd not seen before. Enormous temperate rainforest giants with huge trunks and lichen-clad snags reaching up into the mist. Beneath them lay a mossy underworld of tree ferns and rushing streams, home to a very special bird. It had already tantalised us, running across the road in front of our vehicles as we entered Toolangi National Park but it was still a very special moment when we properly set eyes on a Superb Lyrebird for the first time, digging in the leaf litter in the dark shadows of a large tree fern by the Sylvia Creek boardwalk on the Wirrawalla Rainforest Walk, only a few metres away. Wow! This is one of the most significant birds we saw on this tour. Lyrebirds are in fact the world's most primitive songbirds (together with their sister family the Scrub-birds) and evolved on the Australian plate of Gondwanaland. It was less than 20 years ago (!!!) that their position in the evolutionary tree of birds was finally established through DNA testing, not long after the hypothesis that songbirds evolved in the south rather than the north was first put forward. It felt a privilege to see them in their ancestral home! We were also lucky to have the author of the best book about bird evolution, John Reilly, on our 2024 tour. His

2018 'The Ascent of Birds' is an excellent read for anyone interested in this subject and will improve your understanding of what you are looking at whether it be a humble starling or an ancient lyrebird.

Today we added another of Australia's endemic bird families, the mudnesters, in the form of the subtle White-winged Chough. Those white wing patches are so difficult to see until it flies! Then followed a game of cat and mouse, for most of the rest of the day in fact. A Pilotbird sang in a nearby tangle of vegetation under the forest giants and it was seen very well by some of us as it crossed a large moss-covered log. It is such an important bird that everyone needs to see it and with no sites for it ahead of us, today had to be the day. We had no luck in seeing it again on the Wirrawalla Rainforest Walk but we did add some other very nice rainforest birds: Australian King Parrot; White-throated Treecreeper; Eastern Spinebill; Australian Golden Whistler; Flame and Rose Robins and Crescent and White-naped Honeyeaters. Both Striated and Brown Thornbills were noted, as was the grey trio of Grey Shrikethrush, Grey Fantail and Grey Currawong. Time passed, we checked more widely separated spots for Pilotbird, hearing a couple of Eastern Whipbirds, until finally its distinctive call rang out across the forest again. This time! Thankfully, with some laser guidance everyone was eventually able to catch a glimpse of this ace skulker and we could move on.

ST KILDA LITTLE PENGUIN CRUISE

Negotiating Melbourne's at least one million traffic lights is not an easy task at the quietest of times but with the added difficulty of roadworks and rush hour my nerves were rather frayed by the time we pulled up at St Kilda harbour, on Melbourne's southern outskirts, with no time to spare. Hurrying along the quay, we just made it onto the evening penguin cruise in time, as darkness fell. Small rafts of Little Penguins out in the bay could be seen immediately as we left the harbour, gathering in preparation to come ashore. We could all relax now and enjoy the spectacle. After a closer look at the swimming birds, we returned to the breakwater of the harbour and cruised along, spotting penguins by their burrows between the large rocks of the breakwater, every few metres in fact – around 700 pairs breed here! Although we had to watch them in red torchlight it was still a great experience, particularly those for whom this was their first penguin species! A bonus was a few Common Water Rats by the water's edge – previously a three-star mammal on this tour, although we will likely see it every time now. I was ready for a fairy cake and a lie down after today's excitement.

WERRIBEE

We had left one target behind in the Dandenongs, so we headed back into the hills above Melbourne next morning adding Brown Goshawk, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin and Silveryeye before we found a Red-browed Treecreeper, the trickiest of its family. It sought refuge in a hole in a large eucalypt, maybe a nest hole? A dark Swamp (or Black) Wallaby was present in the trailhead car park. We could now make a quick bakery stop and head west, across Melbourne once again, but happily leaving its traffic behind for the last time. We were headed for Werribee, and a massive complex of man-made lagoons at the head of Port Phillip Bay. It is a winter home to thousands of waterbirds and there are still many here in early October. We added a long list of new species to our list here and notable encounters included: the primitive Cape Barren Goose, the weirdest of all the geese; both Australian and Baillon's Crakes during a cloud burst; hundreds of stately Black Swans and smaller numbers of Australian Pelicans; the range-restricted Blue-billed Duck; a high count of 26 Musk Ducks (the weirdest of all the ducks); Great Knot (2 among a horde

of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers); one of each of Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits; three Marsh Sandpipers; at least 33 smart Red-necked Avocets among a couple of hundred Pied Stilts; delicate Fairy Terns and both Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. The surrounding marsh vegetation held some interesting passerines, including White-fronted Chats and Striated Fieldwren. A couple of Red-browed Finches at the exit gate was our only sighting of the tour. We were still missing an important shorebird, so we followed up a lead from our pals at Field Guides a couple of days previously. On a lake tucked away in the countryside near Geelong was a tight flock of around 50 lovely Banded Stilts. They breed far inland during the austral summer, so we were happy to catch up with them on the coast. As we left this spot a flock of seven mighty Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were in some tall bare trees, a nice way to end another very exciting although quite damp day!

THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

A spectacular day on the Great Ocean Road, Australia's equivalent of California's Highway One started with a ridiculously showy Rufous Bristlebird in cliff-top scrub, with a background of Shy Albatrosses and Short-tailed Shearwaters offshore. The bristlebird is another of the world's most primitive Gondwanaland passerines. The cliffs overlooked a picturesque surfing beach, and we wondered if it might have Hooded Plover. It did! On the strandline was a pair of these beautiful shorebirds, they were flagged and ringed, as many of them are on the mainland. We were able to approach them closely, take some nice eye level images and then leave them without flushing them, the ideal encounter with this much disturbed bird. A cracking bakery stop followed, Victoria really is a world hotspot for bakeries, setting us for another ten birding stops today! Bird racing along the Great Ocean Road was thrilling.

First up was Anglesey Bushland Reserve where we added Australian Hobby of note but no luck with the hoped-for Southern Emu-wren. A threatening sky delivered our first rain shower of the day, so we relocated a little way inland, where our second main target of the day obliged, the delightful Gang-gang Cockatoo. This miniature cockatoo has a head dress like a bottlebrush flower! White-eared Honeyeater was also added here and there was a showy Australian Golden Whistler, White-throated Treecreeper and a couple of Spotted Pardalotes. It was time for lunch and another fine bakery stop to go. We had lunch at the nearby Sheoak Picnic Area but the only bird of note here was a tame Australian Magpie that took food off our boots. A little further along the coast at Kennett River we spotted the hoped-for Koala and enjoyed some nice views of a slumbering individual in a eucalypt on a slope above the road. Sjoerd was even able to conduct an impromptu public digiscoping workshop! A small group of Satin Bowerbirds was a welcome addition to the bird list here. Making progress along the GOR we stopped at Marengo Reefs for Black-faced Cormorants, alongside a pile of Australasian Fur Seals on an offshore wave-lashed rock, before we detoured inland again into the lovely forests of the Great Otway National Park. Maits Rest boardwalk trail was very nice although birdless but we struck gold at our next stop, The Redwoods, where, ironically in an unlikely-looking alien habitat we found two of our A-list targets today, the gorgeous Pink Robin and the more subtle Olive Whistler among a throng of selfie-taking tourists. A *melanoptera* all-dark Grey Currawong was also interesting here. Another, lovely temperate rainforest site, Melba Gully produced an even more showy male Pink Robin for some and an equally showy Bassian Thrush for others. The forests echoed to the thrushes' songs, wonderful! A breathless visit to the Twelve Apostles viewpoint in the late afternoon, with a backdrop of storm clouds, added Little Corella and another Black-faced Cormorant, as well as some of the remaining apostles at this bucket-list spot, which was rammed with tourists all having a fun selfie-time. Our last birding stop was evening meal in Port Campbell interrupted by Long-billed Corellas coming to

roost in evergreens in the main street. We would not have bothered if we had known how many hundreds of them lay ahead, but lifers are always exciting! What a terrific day!

FARMING COUNTRY

Pre-breakfast birding on a stormy morning added a handful of new species. A male Southern Emu-wren showed nicely in some coastal heathland near Port Campbell and a little further along the coast at Peterborough some small roadside ponds were stuffed with Latham's Snipes, although they were very shy indeed. They must be hunted either here or on migration? A Little Wattlebird was surprisingly the only one of the tour! Maybe we did not pay enough attention to the lowly wattlebirds? Again, we had a lot of ground to cover today so we pressed inland, stopping at Terang, generally regarded as the best bakery of the tour! A lady in the queue said she had moved to the farming country here 13 years ago from Sydney to follow a self-sufficient farming lifestyle. So far so good with the self-sufficiency, and the excellent coffee available at the head of the queue! We continued through the gently rolling livestock farming landscape, cleared for dairy cattle and Merino Sheep. The heavy showers continued, and hundreds of Long-billed Corellas and a handful of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos dotted roadside fields. Our first Wedge-tailed Eagles appeared today. We made another bakery stop in Dunolly before finally reaching the Mount Korong Nature Conservation Reserve. We had noticed that natural habitats in the farming country seemed to be confined to the occasional granite outcrop, and this was the case with 364m ASL Mount Korong. The mistletoe-clad Mulga woodland, a new habitat for us, was full of birds, quickly producing our targets in this area. One of our most interesting birding locations. First, the scarce and unique Painted Honeyeater, the only member of its *Grantiella* genus, flashing its bright yellow wings and tail. It was not very approachable though, preferring to remain concealed within mistletoe clumps. Next came Diamond Firetail, followed closely by the smart Gilbert's Whistler. Also here were Red-rumped Parrot, Brown Treecreeper, Southern Whiteface, White-winged Chough and Mistletoebird. Under the acacias we came across our first Shingleback lizards, these harmless virtually tail-less lizards use both their bright blue tongue and the fact the front end looks like their back end to confuse potential predators. We pressed on, pausing at Bendigo where a patch of scrub not far from the airport produced the super-skulking Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, as well as our first Crested Bellbird. It was cloudy but at least the rain had stopped, for now.

TURQUOISE PARROT AND NED KELLY'S LAST STAND

What's this? A painted snipe sighting had been reported only just off our route yesterday, but not reported until after dark. After the excellent Segafredo's Heathcote bakery, we backtracked and were on site first thing this morning. Sadly, a thorough scouring of the tiny and eminently searchable Inglewood Reservoir drew a blank. Compensation came in the form of superb in-the-open views of Southern Scrub Robin, infinitely more confiding than its shy northern counterpart! A real WOW moment! In the 'also' category here Black-tailed Nativehen and Black-fronted Dotterel were of particular interest. Lunchtime saw us reach the small theme town of Glenrowan, notably the site of the last stand of outlaw Ned Kelly (1854-1880). We passed the 6m tall statue of him in the main street. His is a fascinating tale of a bygone frontier age in northeast Victoria. The son of a transported convict, he was an outlaw and bank robber and ultimately the only survivor of his ambushed gang, sustaining an incredible 28 wounds in the gun fight with police. Although his trademark homemade armour, fashioned in plough mouldboards, was impervious to bullets (it had 18 bullet marks in it and is displayed in a Melbourne museum) he was finally shot in the legs twice with a shotgun, captured, nursed back to health in captivity, tried and hanged in Melbourne jail. Despite his criminal activities he was very popular and 32,000 people signed a petition for his

reprieve, owing to his Robin Hood-like robbing from the rich and burning the bank's mortgage documents of the poor.

We had not come so far off-piste to investigate Ned Kelly though. The main reason was to search for a very special parrot in the nearby Warby Owens National Park. Turquoise Parrot is declining and can be tricky to find in its vast range, which stretches as far north as Brisbane, but it seems quite reliable here. Our first stop drew a blank with Little and Wedge-tailed Eagles as compensation but our next hit the jackpot with Dusky Woodswallow and then some lovely Turquoise Parrots in the sunlit Box-Ironbark woodland (Temperate Eucalypt Woodland for those interested in the habitat type, the box being the understorey wattle bushes and the ironbark, the deeply-fissured rough-barked eucalypts). The parrots belonged to the particularly lovely, fast-flying *Neophema* 'Grass Parrot' genus, of which we saw 5 out of the 6 members on this tour, only the rare Scarlet-chested was missing. There was still a lot of driving ahead to get back on track to Deniliquin, but we had time for another birding stop today, near Benalla, where in more open eucalypt woodland (once inhabited by Regent Honeyeater no less!) we tracked down a few excellent additions to our list: Buff-rumped Thornbill, Brown-headed Honeyeater and the delightful Speckled Warbler! We finally rolled into Deniliquin in the evening after a very productive detour!

WANDERING STARS

The town of Deniliquin, just over the state border in New South Wales, was established at the best crossing place of the Edward River, for stock being driven to markets in the south. Its first bridge was opened in 1861. Now it is probably more famous for its annual Ute (Utility vehicle) Muster, a country music festival attended by over 20,000 people, which raises more than A\$100,000 for community groups. Yikes it was cold this morning, only 2 degrees Celsius! Today was a very special day though. Our full day with legendary Deniliquin birder, Phil Maher. The main event was to come after dark, but Phil knows his local patch like the back of his hand and he and his pals always have some great birds staked out, although it is a different mix each year, according to rainfall and temperature, which dictate bird population movements in the interior. First, Phil took us on a walk around one of his study areas by the Edward River. While he did not have any Square-tailed Kites or Ground Cuckooshrikes this year, we were very lucky that Little Lorikeets had pitched up recently and were investigating nest holes, a potential banana skin on this itinerary that is sometimes missed. There was a good selection of other common and widespread parrots among our total of 11 species but the star of the show this morning was the aptly named Superb Parrot. We were treated to some excellent close views of this magnificent creature, including a male feeding a female and some territorial squabbles. FAB-U-LOUS! Dave excelled himself in spotting a cracking pair of Eastern Shrike-tits, foraging in the dead timber of a huge fallen eucalypt. Some nice views of a pair of nesting Tawny Frogmouths followed and Common Bronzewing on the path, its two-tone bronze wing feathers gleaming in the early morning sunshine. Swamp Wallaby and Grey-headed Fruit Bat were interesting mammals at this spot. We checked some more riverine forest habitat nearby, adding Yellow Thornbill, Red-capped and Scarlet Robins with males of both delighting our group. A final stop before lunch at a sandy area on the edge of town produced our first Red-backed Kingfisher as well as a Striped Honeyeater in a flowering eucalypt, another member of a monotypic genus.

We paused for lunch before driving north with Phil. Before we began searching the plains we visited one of his regeneration plots where he has planted around 20,000 trees in the last couple of decades to provide a refuge for wildlife. We spotted a family of Purple-backed Fairywrens along the way. Unfortunately, his nesting White-backed Swallows were not at home, so we continued

north onto the Hay Plains. We added the nemesis-like Banded Lapwing, only a pair though, on the track ahead of us. There are usually tens of them, but it had been quite dry lately. Red Kangaroos and Emus were present in numbers here as the sun set over the endless flat rough pastures. A couple of family parties of White-winged Fairywrens proved hard to approach, as usual.

Our main reason for making the pilgrimage to this remote corner of rural Australia was to see the unique Plains-wanderer, which put sleepy little Deni on the world birding map. Another bird that if you waited here, you would meet every serious world lister eventually. Phil must have met them all over the years! Happily, the way that you see it now has been transformed recently with the advent of thermal cameras. Instead of trundling around over their habitat in vehicles shining spotlights we can walk a short distance to a heat signal. It did not take long. Pulling up way out in a featureless short grass pasture, on a still night with the Southern Cross overhead and a rich smell of herbs in the air, it was actually our Paul who picked up the first signal with his thermal and there it was, a male Plains-wanderer only a few metres away! The males look like pheasant chicks rather than shorebirds, clambering through the grass in an ungainly style but it was nevertheless a thrill to see an ancestor of modern shorebirds at last. We found another two males before Phil finally located a chestnut-breasted female, which we were able to watch for as long as we wanted. Also, here we found a pair of Stubble Quails and back at John's farmstead, the kind owner of the land, we added Australian Boobook. The Australian Owlet-Nightjar calling in the distance would not play though. On the way home an Eastern Barn Owl was perched on a roadside fence post. What. A. Day! One of my all-time classics. We said goodbye to Phil and turned in for the night.

INTO THE MALLEE

Tucked away in the northwest corner of Victoria, right up against the border with South Australia is The Mallee – a vast sea of Mallee eucalypts, low bushy gum trees sprouting numerous trunks from ground level, interspersed with pin cushions of spinifex grass – a new habitat for most of us. The mallee trees grow in poor, dry sandy soils and that is probably why they were spared from clearance for agriculture. A couple of bakery stops at Deni and Ouyen kept us going until the afternoon session. We started off with a small, protected area of forest rich in pines and acacias that produced some nice view of the desired White-browed Treecreeper, a genuinely scarce bird on this tour! This left us free to explore the vast Lake Hattah/Kulkyne and the adjacent Nowingi State Forest where the rest of the Mallee specials were waiting for us. After being greeted by some habituated Apostlebirds (the other Aussie mudnester) in the car park at Lake Hattah, we made a couple of inroads into our wish list with the tiny Mallee Emu-wren, which performed nicely for everyone skipping through clumps of spinifex and a couple of Mulga Parrots also showed well.

Ouyen's Mallee Bakery scored highly! Finding the special birds of the Mallee takes energy, they are thinly spread and unobtrusive. We enjoyed more successes today in the Lake Hattah/Nowingi area starting with the smart Chestnut-crowned Babbler and the even smarter Regent Parrot (sister to Superb and Princess). Then came a couple of tougher nuts to crack, Chestnut Quailthrush (average shyness for a quailthrush to start with and then a ridiculous point-blank encounter with a pair carrying food, we must have been very close to their nest!) and an incredible view of a pair of tame Striated Grasswrens, they did not behave like they had seen humans before. We saw an even better male Mallee Emu-wren, a couple of Gilbert's Whistlers (their song is so similar to Red-lored!) and some Mallee Ringnecks. Hooded Robin was new for the tour and we saw another Crested Bellbird. The widespread and unassuming Jacky Winter also made its first appearance. Yellow-plumed was the default honeyeater in the Mallee and after dark we finally connected with Australian Owlet Nightjar, although it was adept at putting a network of branches between us and

it and avoiding a photo. They do exist! Another great day on a tour fast gathering momentum! We still had some work to do in the Mallee though.

We had not yet seen its flagship bird species of the same name, Malleefowl! We had heard several last evening, so it was back into the Lake Hattah/Kulkyne National Park for another try. Sjoerd saw a large bird fly across a track, strange behaviour for a megapode but what else could it be? It was also in the vicinity of a mound, which we had seen the previous day and had been recently disturbed, so why not? We entered the woodland and not long afterwards Michael spotted a pair of Malleefowl approaching us! The male was calling and leaning forward and spreading its wings as it made a booming noise, wonderful stuff! The daft creatures came right at us for a while before veering off and going on their way through the forest, a magical encounter. Lucky as there was not a 'show mound' anywhere at the moment. Shy Heathwren was also on our wish list, and we connected with that one too before it was time to leave. There was only one bird still missing now from those we were looking for in this area and with not much chance of it ahead we decided to detour to another good site for it, Wyperfield National Park. Our best snake sighting occurred here, a huge Eastern Brown Snake that quickly slid away across a field. Before long we found our quarry, the outrageous Pink (formerly Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo! The cockatoos performed brilliantly, feeding in low conifers and eventually we had some very close views of a pair on a nesting tree. Major Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell (1792-1855) was an early surveyor and explorer of Australia but has been cancelled, mostly owing to incidents in which aboriginal people were killed. We could now make our way west to the town of Berri for the night, passing the South Australia border checkpoint where our boot was searched for illegal food stuffs. They are very keen to keep pests out of their agricultural system. Later, we checked a few spots around town, including the excellent Berri Basin, which held thousands of common waterbirds. There was no Freckled Duck yet though, the toughest of Australia's ducks to connect with.

DOWN IN THE MALLEE

We ventured back into the northwest corner of Victoria again this morning to Murray Sunset National Park, the western continuation of the huge area of Mallee that we had birded in the previous couple of days. We were after one of Australia's most range-restricted birds today, Red-shouldered Whistler. Michael has done a lot of birding in Murray Sunset and has a couple of pairs of this very tricky bird up his sleeve. We visited Michael's stakeouts and found a pair at each of them, within 50 metres of their usual spots. The first male showed briefly to Paul who managed a quick photo, but it disappeared quickly. However, an immature bird with buff tones to its underparts also showed here at point blank range. The second pair was eventually much more obliging, and we could all watch them duetting at close range. Another FAB-U-LOUS encounter! Whilst searching for the whistler we came across another (rather tatty) Southern Scrub Robin. We also saw Mallee Emu-wren and Striated Grasswren again but did not need to persevere for more views this time. However, there was not much else of note, diversity is low and birds are few in the Mallee! A group of Striated Pardalotes were mobbing something in the car park of our picnic spot, which turned out to be a large Sand Goanna, hiding in plain sight in the foliage. Its intricately spotted body meant we did not see it at first, like a 'magic eye' painting. The afternoon was spent back around Berri. Cooltong Conservation Park on the edge of town was very nice indeed, with our best looks at Mulga Parrot so far and another lovely male Red-capped Robin of note. The basin was better today, especially when Paul excelled himself once more, spotting an Australian Owlet-Nightjar's head poking out of a dead tree on the bare lakeshore. Some awesome views were had... after we had all looked at the three immature Freckled Ducks, also hiding in plain sight among the many hundreds of Grey Teals on the water. What strange birds they are, with a weird, angular head

shape for a duck, again among the most primitive of their family. There were many familiar waterbirds here again, hundreds of Red-necked Avocets was probably the other highlight. A walk in some low bushland at Lyrup Flats produced a gaggle of Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoos, they must have bred here? No Black-eared yet though, the search continued.

GLUEPOT

At 514 sq. km, Gluepot Reserve protects one of the largest tracts of Mallee left in Australia. Its name is derived from the state of its access tracks after rain(!) and without any landmarks this flat almost continuous landscape of featureless woodland would have been a daunting place to explore before the advent of GPS. It can be a tricky place to find your way around off trail even now, attested to by a group of birders who were lost in here for 3 or 4 days not long ago. We found our way around and although we did not have any luck with its dying star Black-eared Miner, which is hybridised out of existence, we added a couple of typical Gluepot birds Masked Woodswallow and with them a fine White-browed Woodswallow, which proved tricky to follow in the flock, which had now dropped out of the sky and was feeding in low eucalypts. There were also several of the smart nomadic White-fronted Honeyeater here and there. There were some miners around but all were pale-rumped Yellow-throated but the stars of our visit were our now familiar commoner birds drinking at the variety of bird blinds: Mulga Parrots and Mallee Ringnecks; Spiny-cheeked and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebird. Saying goodbye to the Mallee after an excellent few days unlocking its secrets we drive west back into South Australia, on our way to our next set of new habitats. Stopping at some low scrubland at Red Banks Conservation Park, we quickly added another pair of Australian Warblers, Redthroat and Rufous Fieldwren. Eventually we rolled into Port Augusta at the head of the Spencer Gulf, where a group of colourful Purple-crowned Lorikeets was very helpfully feeding outside our restaurant this evening!

THE EYRE PENINSULA

This morning, we embarked on another adventure, this time into the 'remote areas ahead', as the adjustable road sign read, onto the Eyre Peninsula and beyond the so-called Eyrean Barrier (the Flinders Range and Eyre Basin line proposed by Dolman and Joseph in 2015, as responsible for shaping the evolution of Australian birds). We sought a pair of grasswrens today, the very rare spinifex-loving Short-tailed and the less particular Western. Both are of subspecies endemic to this corner of South Australia. Sadly, Short-tailed Grasswren habitat in the Flinders Range is now badly degraded and they are very difficult to find there, so we found ourselves driving a long way into the Gawler Range. The rocky spinifex habitat of the grasswren is not uncommon here but the bird itself is not found in every bit of it. Michael has spent a lot of time here and had a good spot, which happily came up trumps quickly with one of these perky, yet quite shy birds. It even popped up onto the odd dead branch and rock making spotting it easier. It was a female with a bold buff flank patch. The second, Western Grasswren, is much less fussy in its choice of habitat and is content with rather degraded scrubland and we were able to find it easily. It is also showier too and a pair approached us quite closely, affording great views for all. We added a third very significant bird today, Ground Cuckooshrike, thanks to some information from friends at another tour company! Their nest in a very remote spot was still occupied, with two large youngsters, not long off fledging. The rather demonic-looking adults, the biggest of the cuckooshrikes, were bringing in large locusts every few minutes. More FAB-U-LOUS stuff! A fly-by flock of Budgerigars was new for the tour, as were Crimson Chat and Southern Whiteface. Diversity was otherwise typically very low. On the long way back to civilisation we had time to stop for lunch at Lake Gairdner near Mount Ive Station.

A little-known endorheic Salt Lake, the third largest in Australia, it is 160km long and has been used for various land speed record attempts. It was very white!

BEYOND THE EYREAN BARRIER

We returned to the Eyre Peninsula this morning, for some birds of a western distribution at the easternmost limit of their range here. We had barely left our vehicles at Lake Gillies, when the first of them was called, the smart Copperback Quailthrush, albeit a rather unconvincing split. A pair was walking through the dry eucalypt forest towards us. Simply stunning! We enjoyed some even better views of a singing bird a little later. The second addition to our lists was Blue-breasted Fairywren, followed quickly by Rufous Treecreeper and then Western Yellow Robin. We had a great early morning in this lovely forest – a very welcome bonus, not to be expected every time, after our success with the grasswrens yesterday bought us some time. Slender-billed Thornbill showed itself in the scrub back along Nonning Road and in the afternoon we returned to Port Augusta and its Australian Arid Lands Botanical Garden. The peculiar Chirruping Wedgebill was new here and another White-fronted Honeyeater delighted. A quick scan over the mudflats from the Matthew Flinders Lookout produced a few common species, most notably a Common Greenshank, one of the longest distance shorebird migrants we saw.

BIRDSVILLE TRACK

Today was a truly surreal day weatherwise. It started with a drive north along the edge of the Flinders Range into a huge thunder and lightning storm. Miraculously we avoided the worst of the weather, and we were able to do some birding under leaden skies, a terrific backdrop to the awesome River Red Gum trees at the historic Kanyaka Station, and then Moralana Scenic Drive, where Sjoerd made his best spot of the tour, a lovely Elegant Parrot perched high in a gum tree from a moving vehicle. No-one could quite understand how he managed it. Eventually we saw seven of them, another beautiful member of our favourite parrot genus *Neophema*! We had a long way to go today, passing through small settlements like Leigh Creek and Lyndhurst. The landscape became flatter as we left the Flinders Range behind, and the habitat gradually turned to classic Australian Tussock Grass Scrubland. We made a stop for waterbirds at Leigh Creek Retention Dam, adding the rather scarce Red-kneed Dotterel at last, with a supporting cast that included Musk Duck, Caspian Tern, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-capped Plover of note. We stopped for lunch at the awesome Marree Roadhouse, little did we know we would be seeking refuge here a couple of days later. Back to the weather, as we headed north the temperature steadily rose to a maximum of 44 degrees Celsius and a northwest wind built in strength throughout the day, feeling like a dust-laden hairdryer by mid-afternoon. Conditions were almost unbirdable. As we hit the gravel north of the famous Birdsville Track, just north of Marree, the occasional waterbodies were absolutely thronged with birds, no doubt desperate for water in these extreme conditions. Well over a hundred Australian Pratincoles and a pair of stately Brolgas were at one bore. Coopers Crossing was lifting with birds including a couple of Australian Crakes and a sky full of Fairy Martins (it was almost deserted on our return). There was also the first White-backed Swallow for some here. As we neared our destination, after a long afternoon of 200km on the gravel we veered towards a tall telecommunications aerial, on which a Grey Falcon was nesting. The Ghost of the Outback! However, it dared not show too much as it clung to its nest, if it had opened its wings, it might have ended up in Adelaide! We would have to wait until tomorrow for better views. What a wonderful feeling it was to finally roll up to the front doors of the world renowned Mungerannie Hotel, often cited as the best Outback pub. It did not disappoint with its collection of over 150 bush hats around the ceiling (the collection of head hairs has gone now though!) and notes pinned to

the wall behind the bar. The Mungerannie Burgers were popular tonight! Mungerannie means '*big ugly face*' in aboriginal. Richard Forbes Sullivan first opened a depot and hotel at the present site along the Birdsville track in 1887 to supply shepherds, drovers and travellers. There are few places in the world with more character in as remote a location! Although our accommodation was incredibly basic, I loved it here, my favourite place on the tour and there were some good ones too!

GRASSWREN TRIO

The rain hammered down on the roof of the Mungerannie Hotel overnight, with the occasional rumble of thunder and I wondered what scene would greet us this morning. Thankfully things were not too bad as we had more than another 100km to go up the track, this would be the furthest north we reached on this tour, only 200km south of Birdsville (that is around only 300km south of our southernmost point on our Cape York & Queensland Outback tour last autumn). We were blissfully unaware of what was happening to the south of us, while the storm registered 5mm of rain at Mungerannie, the rest of Southern Australia received more than ten times that figure, causing serious flooding and widespread power outages. In this situation somewhere off-grid like Mungerannie is a safer place to be, with its own solar power generator and fuel. The weather had changed too, the high today was only 32 degrees Celsius in a much lighter wind. That was good news, as we were now looking for one of the toughest birds of the tour, Grey Grasswren. They are quite unique among grasswrens, in having different habitat requirements. They are marsh-loving, living in seasonally flooded Lignum swamps and they look different too, not just another variation on a theme like many of the other closely related grasswrens. They are very mobile and fly between bushes readily too! As we got to see before too long, they have a long tail and a frosty plumage with a striking face pattern that includes a weird brand mark on their cheek. We were so lucky that everyone got onto at least one of a pair of birds, eventually atop a bare bush. A tour highlight! The other two grasswrens we wanted on the Birdsville Track were quite easy in comparison. Eyrean Grasswren performed nicely on its cane-covered low sand dunes, another strange habitat requirement. We also saw our first Cinnamon Quailthrush here and the tiny Banded Whiteface. Thick-billed Grasswren gave itself up in the low scrubland grazing pasture out on the Cowarie Station. That was six out of six for the whole group, not something we have managed every time to date! Next on our hitlist was that weird honeyeater(!) Gibberbird. An inhabitant of the barren stony desert of the same name. We came across some of these lemon-yellow birds on the track itself and in the surrounding scrubland. They behave more like chats, without a tree in sight, perching on small rocks at times. Its cousin Orange Chat (which in some plumages is quite yellow) was common today, with over 30 tallied. There were several Little Buttonquail sightings, all trying to get away from us as quickly as possible. Another addition to our list was Little Crow, helpfully in the company of Australian Ravens. Our final encounter of note was a fine pair of Grey Falcons at another communications aerial next site. We were lucky that they made a few flybys too before we left, again not something we see every time.

WHERE THE BLOODY HELL IS MARREE?

Read the sticker at Marree Roadhouse, a self-sufficient establishment, having invested in solar power and a standalone generator. We were lucky they did, as our intended accommodation for the night at Lyndhurst was closed, owing to the statewide power outage. We made our way back south to Marree along the Birdsville Track, birding along the way and adding another trio of great birds in Australian Bustard (a singleton flying by and out of sight, on its way somewhere) and Black Falcon (a pair near a cattle station bore). The smart Flock Bronzewing also showed up in big

numbers today, with hundreds crowding in the vicinity of a bore, they really do behave like sandgrouse! Everyone caught up with White-backed Swallow at the same spot. We also had some nice views of a family of Banded Lapwings with some adult sized juveniles by the track. Decent sized flocks of both Cockatiel and Budgerigar were a delight for cagebird lovers to see them in their natural environment along the Birdsville. The highlight of our non-avian sightings today was a pair of Dingos, running away from the track, pausing to look back at us now and then, simply Grey Wolves now of course. The highlight of the day was still to come. Prior to the tour, Michael and his friends had searched for the scarce and enigmatic Chestnut-breasted Whiteface and had come up with a couple of spots for them. We were lucky that a pair was still in residence at one of them and we were treated to some close views of this tiny and very tricky Outback bird.

THE STRZELECKI TRACK

The other of Australia's two most famous tracks, the Strzelecki Track lay ahead today. We did not mind staying at Marree and the extra 160km on the tarmac to get to and from Lyndhurst as we were simply grateful to have somewhere to stay in such a remote spot, although this did make for another long driving day of not far off 700km, much of which was on gravel. The food at the roadhouse was very tasty too! However, unlike the Birdsville, the Strzelecki does have the occasional stretch of tarmac, a welcome relief from the bumping and dust, and the first 80km from Lyndhurst is also tarmac! We were very relieved to reach our destination not far short of the famous Strzelecki Crossing to find that the gathering of Letter-winged Kites was still present in this far northeast corner of South Australia. What beauties they are too! Incredibly graceful in flight, they bounced across the sky like terns, flashing their black lettering before gradually returning to their isolated Coolibah nesting trees – there is not much choice around here. In the Australian song 'Waltzing Matilda', the coolibah tree is where a swagman (the traveling worker) camps under the shade while he boils his billy. Coolibah gum trees have an attractive erratic shape, with strangely curved, smooth limbs and long slender leaves. The kites lead a nomadic lifestyle, pitching up every so often, where there is a good population of Long-haired Rats. This area is an historic site for the kites, although not in recent years until now. From this raptor hotspot we also saw both Brown and Black Falcons and Spotted Harrier among the commoner Black Kites passing by. We backtracked for an unusual raptor, which turned out to be an immature Little Eagle from photos after all, as was first thought. The rare Square-tailed Kite looks like a kite rather than an eagle, not something that is as obvious from images. There were a few White-backed Swallows again today and our next addition today was Red-browed Pardalote, which appeared to be nesting in a low gum tree in a creek bed. There was still one bird left and after some diurnal searching, our last throw of the dice was a night drive back up the Birdsville Track one last time, which finally produced the goods in the form of a spotlighted Inland Dotterel under the Milky Way. They seemed to be in short supply this year, so we were very relieved not to leave this one behind. Interestingly there was no eyeshine, it was simply feeding on the track itself!

OUTBACK TO THE SEA

Today was our biggest driving day, nearly 800km, almost all on tarmac, although driving on gravel does tend to concentrate your mind more! We were bound for Marion Bay but there were a few stops along the way to fill some gaps. First, we stopped at Farina, for a well-known Black-breasted Buzzard nest. One of the adults was on the nest and gradually relaxed in our presence to show a bit more of its strange form. A head and bill more like an eagle than a buzzard. We had some nice Purple-backed Fairywren views in the car park before it was time to go. Back in the Flinders Range, we detoured to the lovely Brachina Gorge for Grey-fronted Honeyeater, as well as Yellow-footed

Rock Wallaby, both of which showed quickly. The latter at very close range, thought by some to be the prettiest of all the kangaroos? I can't say the rest of the journey was fun, it was more a case of getting from one rest stop to another, although it was interesting to hear from Michael when we passed Snowtown, that 12 bodies of murder victims were discovered in barrels in a disused bank vault here in 1999 in probably the grizzliest serial murder case in Australian history. Yikes! Finally, we rolled up in Marion Bay in the evening just in time for dinner, it was a welcome sound to hear the waves and smell the salty air after days spent in the dust.

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

The reason we had come to Marion Bay was for an outlier beyond the Eyrean Barrier, White-bellied Whipbird. Not only rare with a tiny range, but it is also the most difficult bird to see of the tour by some margin. Well, everyone saw it in the coastal scrub of the beautiful Innes National Park, but some only in flight. It did give a couple of nice views of its all-important head features as it stuck its head out bushes before flying though. A Birdquest lifer no less! We saw some other excellent birds here starting with Bush Bronzewing, which was common completing the *Phaps* genus trio on this tour, as well as a couple of nice honeyeaters, Purple-gaped and Tawny-crowned. Spotted Scrubwren was our final mainland Aussie warbler and another *Neophema*, Rock Parrot was very welcome and showed very nicely. The gaudy (well, the male is) Western Whistler also showed outrageously back at the vehicles but might be heading for a lump? It was also nice to see Emus and Western Grey Kangaroos in a different habitat, sometimes with the sea in the background. It amazes me how much we can pack into transfer days with one-night stays! En route to the end point of the mainland tour, Adelaide, we had time for one last roll of the dice. Although it is usually considered a pointless list-padding tactic, to lurch for the nearest wetland, the mudflats of Michael's local patch at Bald Hill were an excellent choice. We could walk out to the water's edge at low tide for closer views of Far Eastern Curlew, Australian and Fairy Terns and a good comparison between Great and Red Knots. That is four threatened birds, two of which are endangered! Ruddy Turnstone was our last mainland addition, also now near threatened. I like to think about what these birds see in their lifetimes, undertaking massive migrations every year, not to mention how many airmiles they must clock up. I couldn't see anything to recommend Adelaide by, it is more industrial than pretty Melbourne, so we were happy to follow the Tasmanian Boobooks across the Bass Strait the following morning.

BRUNY ISLAND – TASSIE IN MINIATURE

We arrived in Hobart, Tasmania and quickly made our way south to Kettering, site of another excellent café and the ferry to Bruny Island. Bruny is a 362 square kilometre island – Tasmania in miniature and well known as the easiest place to see most of Tasmania's breeding endemic birds, as well as some great mammals. We made our way to a good spot for some of the tougher birds. The first was the ubiquitous Forest Raven, followed by Yellow Wattlebird (the largest honeyeater) and then an A-list Tassie endemic, the delightful little Forty-spotted Pardalote. There was not much chance of counting its spots though, it was fast moving and remained high in the canopy of a tall eucalypt, literally falling between the leaves. Next came Black-headed Honeyeater, Satin Flycatcher (well-spotted by Dave), the lovely Blue-winged Parrot (not a Tassie endemic but we missed it on the mainland), Green Rosella and then Dusky Robin. This was exciting! However, the Short-beaked Echidna foraging on the edge of an adjacent field was the cause of the most excitement! The Tassie form is covered with fur, with only its longest spines showing through its ginger pelt. Tassie is home to two critically endangered parrots, one of which breeds on Bruny Island. They are both migratory, returning to Tassie from the mainland in the spring, in the case of Swift Parrot, in ever

decreasing numbers. We were lucky to have some good recent information of their whereabouts, and we had a number of encounters, one of which was particularly fabulous! Next day we were entertained by one tumbling through a flowering eucalypt, using its beak like a third foot, with waves crashing on an idyllic white sand beach behind us. There was a pair of Hooded Plovers on this beach too. We did not need to hurry to see everything in one day and as we had invested quite a lot of time in Swift Parrot, we still had plenty of unfinished business.

It was cold next morning on Mount Mangana as we hiked up through gorgeous moss-covered eucalypts. The remaining Tassie endemics took a little time to find. Tasmanian Thornbill and the tiny Scrubtit were easy enough. A Black Currawong called from trees above the forest track, a very discordant noise indeed! Tasmanian Scrubwren surprisingly proved more retiring than Scrubtit but only a little more so than Strong-billed Honeyeater, which took a while to appear, as a small party of them worked their way through some massive gum trees, foraging in the flaky bark as they went. A lovely male Pink Robin also appeared briefly. Another non-Tassie-endemic seen today was Shining Bronze Cuckoo, with a nice group of these two-tone birds taking in the morning sun. The weather today was grim and as the rain set in, we decided to explore the far south of the island. We managed another echidna and a white morph Grey Goshawk (the cockatoo plumage mimic) and landscape viewing of the coastal basalt columns was futile, so we tried one of the nearby campsites, where we were rewarded with some great views of a male Satin Flycatcher. On the nearby beach, Superb Fairywrens were searching for food among the seaweed next to Hooded Plovers, what a nice combination! Our final new bird for the tour today was a Beautiful Firetail, which was unfortunately flushed by one of our hotel staff on a fag break! That is definitely a first for me. In the evening, we went in search of shearwaters. At 'The Neck', the isthmus connecting North and South Bruny, is a huge, combined colony of shearwaters and penguins. Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers were present on the beach and a Brown Falcon unusually hovered over the boardwalk, but sadly no penguins appeared this evening before we had to leave (we had bigger fish to fry tonight) but we did witness the awesome spectacle of hundreds of Short-tailed Shearwaters returning to their burrows. The sky was filled with their mad calls as they sped by overhead. Magical! We continued to North Bruny and retraced our daytime birding steps, this time catching up with lots of nocturnal mammals. The highlight was at least four Eastern Quolls, a Long-nosed Potoroo, Rufous-bellied Pademelons and a good number of Common Brush-tailed Possums. Eventually our time on Bruny came to an end and it was time to return to Hobart on the mainland. After a terrific al fresco lunch at the wonderful Pigeonhole Café, the rest of the day was spent in the outskirts of the city searching along a pretty, fast-flowing stream looking for Platypus. We had a couple of very close misses, one even shown to us on the back of a camera by some nice ladies, but no cigar. We had a spotlighting session this evening near Hobart but we did not have any luck with our target, masked owl. Instead, a few Tawny Frogmouths and a couple of Eastern Ring-tailed Possums were spotlighted, in addition to many brush-tailed.

PILGRIMAGE TO MELALEUCA

This tour included another of those one-site only birds, the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot, which breeds only in a tiny area of buttongrass heathland in the far southwest of Tasmania. Getting there is an adventure, but one that every serious world lister makes eventually. With such a tiny population, as well as breeding range, combined with the added risk of migration, sooner is probably a good idea. We checked in at the Par Avion counter at Hobart's tiny Cambridge Airport. We were weighed, along with our bags and were then allocated to the aircraft, which would take us on the one hour very scenic journey, south along the D'entrecasteaux Channel, past Bruny Island and then west over Tasmania's rugged south coastline, the course of

the South Coast Track. The flight also serves as a return journey for hikers having completed the SCT at Melaleuca. We boarded our respective planes, some of us in a 10 seat Britten Norman BN2 Islander and the rest in a Cessna 206 6-seater. Both have a 130 knots cruising speed, so, earphones on, we were able to enjoy a spectacular view of the countryside with hardly a cloud in the sky, until we reached the far southwest. After a relatively smooth landing on Melaleuca's white gravel airstrip, we were given a brief orientation in 'arrivals' and we could then begin our exploration of this special place. The parrots share the remnants of a small-scale tin mining operation, which continued here until the leases were relinquished in 2011. The miners were instrumental in the placement of nest boxes for the parrots and now only the parrots and a few researchers remain here. We saw at least 12 Orange-bellied Parrots, probably more, but only one without a ring and therefore an original wild bird and not part of the captive-bred release scheme. Their tinkling calls were a regular sound overhead, as these fast-flying parrots, our final *Neophema* of the tour, whizzed to and from the feeding station. We felt very privileged to have been able to make this journey! There were some other good birds here, Beautiful Firetail was common, and we brushed up views for some of Southern Emu-wren, but we now had but one target left, Ground Parrot. We failed to find a bird which Paul saw, while the rest of us enjoyed a terrific post flight picnic meal, and then a rather long and fruitless hike along a section of the SCT followed. We were beginning to write this one off as our time ticked away, until Jan said she'd heard one! She certainly had, awesome skills indeed by her! We managed some views of it both in flight and on the ground, but it was quite shy, maybe Paul's bird from the other side of the airstrip, which had flown in this direction? Bennett's Wallaby was also here, as was Australian Swamp Rat, under the parrot feeders. Our return flight took us across the wild landscape of Tasmania's interior and through a pass called 'The Portal' by our young pilots, back to Hobart, where the sun was still shining. We really were in the Last Chance Saloon now for Platypus, but it was worth one last try. It was still a much-wanted lifer for some of us! We returned to the stretch of stream, where we were quite certain that a Platypus had a burrow and this time, we were lucky! Soon after we arrived, we were thrilled to see a Platypus appear quickly from upstream and swim right past us, expertly shooting the small rapids. We followed it for a short while, before it disappeared under the roots of a riverside tree. What a way to end the tour. We had covered more than 12,000km in 24 days, on some of the roughest roads in Australia. Thanks to our very enthusiastic group for their persistence and good humour, not to mention some excellent spotting skills. We will be back again in Oz next year!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). **2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.1)**.

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

Where the code BE is used, this stands for Breeding Endemic. The other codes refer to the IUCN Red List status.

BIRDS

Emu ◇ *Dromaius novaehollandiae* c.250 tallied, first at Deniliquin. BE.
Cape Barren Goose ◇ *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Three Werribee. BE.
Black Swan ◇ *Cygnus atratus* c.2500 tallied, first Werribee.
Freckled Duck ◇ *Stictanetta naevosa* Three Berri Basin. BE.
Australian Shelduck ◇ *Tadorna tadornoides* First noted Werribee.
Pink-eared Duck ◇ *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* First noted Werribee. BE.
Maned Duck (Australian Wood D) *Chenonetta jubata* First noted Melbourne. BE.
Australasian Shoveler ◇ *Spatula rhynchotis* First noted Werribee.
Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* First noted Melbourne.
Grey Teal ◇ *Anas gracilis* First noted Melbourne.
Chestnut Teal ◇ *Anas castanea* First noted Werribee. BE.
Hardhead ◇ *Aythya australis* First noted Werribee. BE.
Blue-billed Duck ◇ *Oxyura australis* Three Werribee. BE.
Musk Duck ◇ *Biziura lobata* 26 Werribee, three Leigh Creek. BE.
Malleefowl ◇ *Leipoa ocellata* Pair Hattah Lake/Kulkyne NP. VU. BE.
Stubble Quail ◇ *Coturnix pectoralis* Pair Hay Plains. BE.
Tawny Frogmouth ◇ *Podargus strigoides* Pair Deniliquin, 3 Hobart. BE.
Australian Owlet-nightjar ◇ *Aegotheles cristatus* Seen Nowingi Track & Berri.
Australian Bustard ◇ *Ardeotis australis* One in flight Birdsville Track.
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo ◇ *Chrysococcyx basalis* 5 Lyrup Flats, Berri.
Shining Bronze Cuckoo ◇ *Chrysococcyx lucidus* 1 Inglewood, 4 Bruny Is.
Pallid Cuckoo ◇ *Cacomantis pallidus* 2 Bruny Is.
Fan-tailed Cuckoo ◇ *Cacomantis flabelliformis* First at Royal Park, Melbourne.
Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Noted
Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis* Noted Melbourne
Common Bronzewing ◇ *Phaps chalcoptera* First noted Dandenong Ranges NP BE
Brush Bronzewing ◇ *Phaps elegans* Common Marion Bay, 1 Melaleuca BE
Flock Bronzewing ◇ *Phaps histrionica* Hundreds on the Birdsville Track BE
Crested Pigeon ◇ *Ocyphaps lophotes* First noted Melbourne BE
Diamond Dove ◇ *Geopelia cuneata* First noted Birdsville Track BE
Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida* Several Deniliquin
Australian Crane (A Spotted C) *Porzana fluminea* 3 Werribee, 2 Birdsville Track BE
Black-tailed Nativehen ◇ *Tribonyx ventralis* First noted Inglewood Res. BE
Tasmanian Nativehen ◇ *Tribonyx mortierii* Common Tasmania, first Bruny Is. BE
Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* First noted Melbourne
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* c.2000 at Werribee
Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus* c.200 Werribee
Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla* One Werribee
Brolga ◇ *Antigone rubicunda* 5 Werribee, 2 Birdsville Track
Australasian Grebe ◇ *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* First noted Werribee
Hoary-headed Grebe ◇ *Poliocephalus poliocephalus* First noted Werribee
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* 1 Werribee
Little Buttonquail ◇ *Turnix velox* Seven Birdsville Track BE
Pied Oystercatcher (Australian P O) *Haematopus longirostris* First Werribee
Sooty Oystercatcher ◇ *Haematopus fuliginosus* 11 Clinton were the first BE
Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* First noted Werribee
Banded Stilt ◇ *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus* c.50 Lonsdale Lake BE

Red-necked Avocet ◊ *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae* First noted Werribee BE
Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* c.25 Bald Hill mudflats VU
Hooded Plover ◊ (H Dotterel) *Charadrius cucullatus* 2 Addis Pt. & 6 Bruny Is. VU BE
Black-fronted Dotterel ◊ *Charadrius melanops* First noted Werribee
Banded Lapwing ◊ *Vanellus tricolor* 2 Hay Plains & 6 Birdsville Track BE
Masked Lapwing ◊ *Vanellus miles* First noted Melbourne
Red-kneed Dotterel ◊ *Erythrogonyx cinctus* 4 Leigh Creek & 1 Birdsville Track
Inland Dotterel ◊ *Peltohyas australis* 1 nr. Marree, Birdsville Track BE
Red-capped Plover ◊ *Anarhynchus ruficapillus* 5 at Berri Basin were the first
Plains-wanderer ◊ *Pedionomus torquatus* Four Hay Plains (1 female) EN BE
Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* 1 Bald Hill mudflats EN
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* 1 Werribee NT
Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern B-t G) *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* 1 Werribee NT
Latham's Snipe ◊ (Japanese S) *Gallinago hardwickii* c.20 Peterborough NT
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* 3 Werribee
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* First noted Werribee
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 1 Bald Hill Mudflats NT
Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* 2 Werribee, 4 Bald Hill mudflats EN
Red Knot *Calidris canutus* c.200 Bald Hill mudflats NT
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* First noted Werribee VU
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* First noted Werribee VU
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* First noted Werribee NT
Australian Pratincole ◊ *Stiltia isabella* First noted Birdsville Track
Fairy Tern ◊ *Sternula nereis* c.10 Werribee, 2 Bald Hill mudflats VU
Australian Tern ◊ *Gelochelidon macrotarsa* 2 Bald Hill mudflats BE
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* First noted were 2 at Berri
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* First noted Werribee
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* 1 Point Addis
Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii* First noted Point Addis
Silver Gull ◊ *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* First noted Melbourne
Pacific Gull ◊ *Larus pacificus* 32 tallied, first Point Addis BE
Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* 1 Point Addis & common on Tassie
Little Penguin ◊ *Eudyptula minor* c.200 St Kilda
Shy Albatross ◊ *Thalassarche cauta* c.10 Point Addis/Great Ocean Road sites
Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* Steady passage Addis Pt., c.1000 Bruny Is.
Australasian Gannet ◊ *Morus serrator* First noted Point Addis
Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae* First noted Deniliquin
Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* First noted Werribee
Black-faced Cormorant ◊ (B-f Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscescens* First noted Marengo Reefs BE
Australian Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius* First noted Werribee
Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* First noted Werribee
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* First noted Werribee
Australian White Ibis ◊ *Threskiornis molucca* First en route to Tarwin Lower
Straw-necked Ibis ◊ *Threskiornis spinicollis* First noted Tarwin Lower
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Six Werribee
Royal Spoonbill ◊ *Platalea regia* 18 Werribee
Yellow-billed Spoonbill ◊ *Platalea flavipes* First noted 6 Werribee BE
Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus* 1 north of Deniliquin

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* One Clinton
White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* First en route to Tarwin Lower
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* c.20 Werribee
White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* First en route to Tarwin Lower
Great Egret ◇ (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* First noted Werribee
Australian Pelican ◇ *Pelecanus conspicillatus* First noted Werribee
Black-shouldered Kite ◇ *Elanus axillaris* First noted Werribee BE
Letter-winged Kite ◇ *Elanus scriptus* 13 Strzelecki Track NT BE
Black-breasted Buzzard ◇ *Hamirostra melanosternon* One at a nest Farina BE
Little Eagle ◇ *Hieraaetus morphnoides* First noted Warby Owens NP BE
Wedge-tailed Eagle ◇ *Aquila audax* 44 tallied, including 1 Bruny Is.
Grey Goshawk ◇ *Accipiter novaehollandiae* 1 white morph Bruny Is. BE
Brown Goshawk ◇ *Accipiter fasciatus* Seven sightings, first Sherbrooke
Collared Sparrowhawk ◇ *Accipiter cirrocephalus* Two sightings, first Deniliquin
Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Three Werribee & three Innes NP
Spotted Harrier ◇ *Circus assimilis* Eight sightings
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Common, first Werribee
Whistling Kite ◇ *Haliastur sphenurus* Frequent sightings, first Werribee
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Ichthyophaga leucogaster* One subadult Deniliquin
Eastern Barn Owl ◇ *Tyto javanica* One north of Wanganella
Powerful Owl ◇ *Ninox strenua* One in downtown Melbourne BE
Australian Boobook ◇ *Ninox boobook* One Hay Plains, two Timberoo Reserve
Tasmanian Boobook ◇ *Ninox leucopsis* One seen Cape Liptrap, heard only Bruny Is. BE
Laughing Kookaburra ◇ *Dacelo novaeguineae* First noted Great Ocean Road BE
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* First for all was at Deniliquin
Red-backed Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius* Pair Deniliquin BE
Rainbow Bee-eater ◇ *Merops ornatus* First noted Deniliquin
Nankeen Kestrel ◇ *Falco cenchroides* First noted Great Ocean Road
Australian Hobby ◇ *Falco longipennis* First noted Anglesea
Brown Falcon ◇ *Falco berigora* First noted Werribee
Grey Falcon ◇ *Falco hypoleucos* 3 plus 1 juvenile Birdsville Track VU BE
Black Falcon ◇ *Falco subniger* Two Strzelecki Track BE
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo ◇ *Zanda funerea* Seven Lonsdale Lake were the first BE
Cockatiel ◇ *Nymphicus hollandicus* First noted Birdsville Track BE
Gang-gang Cockatoo ◇ *Callocephalon fimbriatum* Pair near Anglesea VU BE
Galah ◇ *Eolophus roseicapilla* Common BE
Pink Cockatoo ◇ (Major Mitchell's C) *Cacatua leadbeateri* Seven Wyperfield NP BE
Little Corella ◇ *Cacatua sanguinea* Small numbers noted away from coast
Long-billed Corella ◇ *Cacatua tenuirostris* First noted Port Campbell BE
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo ◇ *Cacatua galerita* Common
Superb Parrot ◇ *Polytelis swainsonii* Eight Deniliquin BE
Regent Parrot ◇ *Polytelis anthopeplus* 17 sightings Lake Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Australian King Parrot ◇ *Alisterus scapularis* Six sightings Dandenong NP BE
Red-rumped Parrot ◇ *Psephotus haematonotus* c.30 sightings Victoria BE
Eastern Bluebonnet ◇ *Northiella haematogaster* First noted Deniliquin BE
Mulga Parrot ◇ *Psephotellus varius* First noted Lake Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Green Rosella ◇ *Platycercus caledonicus* 15 sightings on Tassie BE
Crimson Rosella ◇ *Platycercus elegans* Common in Victoria

Eastern Rosella ◇ *Platycercus eximius* First noted Melbourne BE
Australian Ringneck ◇ *Barnardius zonarius* First for all 'Mallee' Lake Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Swift Parrot ◇ *Lathamus discolor* Up to six Bruny Is. CR BE
Ground Parrot ◇ *Pezoporus wallicus* 1-2 Melaleuca BE
Turquoise Parrot ◇ *Neophema pulchella* 3 Warby Ovens NP BE
Blue-winged Parrot ◇ *Neophema chrysostoma* Seven North Bruny Is. VU BE
Elegant Parrot ◇ *Neophema elegans* Seven Moralana Scenic Drive BE
Rock Parrot ◇ *Neophema petrophila* c.20 Innes NP BE
Orange-bellied Parrot ◇ *Neophema chrysogaster* Min.12 Melaleuca, 1 female unringed CR BE
Purple-crowned Lorikeet ◇ *Parvipsitta porphyrocephala* Up to six Port Augusta BE
Little Lorikeet ◇ *Parvipsitta pusilla* Four Deniliquin BE
Musk Lorikeet ◇ *Glossopsitta concinna* First were four in Melbourne BE
Rainbow Lorikeet ◇ *Trichoglossus moluccanus* First noted Melbourne BE
Budgerigar ◇ *Melopsittacus undulatus* First noted Birdsville Track BE
Superb Lyrebird ◇ *Menura novaehollandiae* Two plus another heard only Dandenongs BE
Satin Bowerbird ◇ *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* 4 (1 male) Kennett River BE
White-throated Treecreeper ◇ *Cormobates leucophaea* First noted nr. Anglesea BE
Red-browed Treecreeper ◇ *Climacteris erythrops* 1 Sherbrooke BE
White-browed Treecreeper ◇ *Climacteris affinis* 1 Timberoo BE
Rufous Treecreeper ◇ *Climacteris rufus* 2 L. Gilles BE
Brown Treecreeper ◇ *Climacteris picumnus* First noted Mt. Korong BE
Purple-backed Fairywren ◇ *Malurus assimilis* First noted Deniliquin BE
Blue-breasted Fairywren ◇ *Malurus pulcherrimus* 4 L. Gilles BE
Superb Fairywren ◇ *Malurus cyaneus* First noted Melbourne BE
Splendid Fairywren ◇ *Malurus splendens* First noted Timberoo BE
White-winged Fairywren ◇ *Malurus leucopterus* First noted Deniliquin BE
Southern Emu-wren ◇ *Stipiturus malachurus* Male near Port Campbell & pair Melaleuca BE
Mallee Emu-wren ◇ *Stipiturus mallee* Eight sightings Hattah Lake/Kulkyne/Murray Sunset NP EN BE
Grey Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis barbatus* Pair Goyder Lagoon, Birdsville Track BE
Short-tailed Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis merrotsyi* One Gawler Range, Eyre Peninsula NT BE
Striated Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis striatus* Four Hattah Lake/Kulkyne/Murray Sunset NP BE
Eyrean Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis goyderi* Five Birdsville Track BE
Western Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis textilis* Two Nonning Road, Eyre Peninsula, one Iron Knob BE
Thick-billed Grasswren ◇ *Amytornis modestus* Two Birdsville Track BE
Eastern Spinebill ◇ *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* Four sightings Dandenongs BE
Gibberbird ◇ (Gibber Chat) *Ashbyia lovensis* Four Birdsville Track BE
Crimson Chat ◇ *Epthianura tricolor* First noted Birdsville Track BE
Orange Chat ◇ *Epthianura aurifrons* Common Birdsville Track BE
White-fronted Chat ◇ *Epthianura albifrons* First noted Werribee BE
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater ◇ *Gliciphila melanops* c.10 Innes NP BE
Little Friarbird ◇ *Philemon citreogularis* Two Deniliquin
Noisy Friarbird ◇ *Philemon corniculatus* Five Heathcote – Deniliquin
Striped Honeyeater ◇ *Plectorhyncha lanceolata* First noted Deniliquin BE
Painted Honeyeater ◇ *Grantiella picta* One Mt Korong BE
Crescent Honeyeater ◇ *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus* First noted Dandenongs, six on Tassie BE
New Holland Honeyeater ◇ *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* First noted Melbourne, common BE
White-eared Honeyeater ◇ *Nesoptilotis leucotis* First noted nr. Anglesea BE

Yellow-throated Honeyeater ◊ *Nesoptilotis flavicollis* Six noted on Tassie BE
Blue-faced Honeyeater ◊ *Entomyzon cyanotis* First noted Melbourne BE
Strong-billed Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus validirostris* c.15 Mt. Mangana, Bruny Is. VU BE
Brown-headed Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus brevirostris* First noted Reef Hills BE
White-naped Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus lunatus* First noted Dandenongs BE
Black-headed Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus affinis* Five noted Bruny Is. BE
Lewin's Honeyeater ◊ *Meliphaga lewinii* One Sherbrooke BE
White-fronted Honeyeater ◊ *Purnella albifrons* Eight sightings, seven at Gluepot BE
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus melanops* First noted Heinz St., Bendigo BE
Purple-gaped Honeyeater ◊ *Lichenostomus cratitius* c.15 Innes NP BE
Singing Honeyeater ◊ *Gavicalis virescens* Common after North Vic. BE
Grey-fronted Honeyeater ◊ *Ptilotula plumula* Two Brachina Gorge, Flinders Range BE
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater ◊ *Ptilotula ornata* Common in the Mallee BE
White-plumed Honeyeater ◊ *Ptilotula penicillate* First noted Melbourne BE
Yellow-faced Honeyeater ◊ *Caligavis chrysops* First noted Great Ocean Road BE
Little Wattlebird ◊ *Anthochaera chrysoptera* Two Peterborough was the only sighting BE
Red Wattlebird ◊ *Anthochaera carunculata* Common from Melbourne BE
Yellow Wattlebird ◊ *Anthochaera paradoxa* 10 noted on Tassie BE
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater ◊ *Acanthagenys rufogularis* Common from Mt Korong BE
Bell Miner ◊ *Manorina melanophrys* Six Melbourne the only sighting BE
Noisy Miner ◊ *Manorina melanocephala* First noted Melbourne BE
Yellow-throated Miner ◊ *Manorina flavigula* First noted for all Murray Sunset NP BE
Rufous Bristlebird ◊ *Dasyornis broadbenti* Fantastic views Point Addis, heard 12 Apostles BE
Spotted Pardalote ◊ *Pardalotus punctatus* First noted nr. Anglesea BE
Forty-spotted Pardalote ◊ *Pardalotus quadragintus* One North Bruny Is. EN
Red-browed Pardalote ◊ *Pardalotus rubricatus* One Strzelecki Track BE
Striated Pardalote ◊ *Pardalotus striatus* First noted Terang BE
Pilotbird ◊ *Pycnoptilus floccosus* 3 sightings plus another 2 heard Dandenongs NP BE
Redthroat ◊ *Pyrrholaemus brunneus* 10 noted, first Red Banks CP BE
Speckled Warbler ◊ *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus* 1 Reef Hills BE
Shy Heathwren ◊ *Hylacola cauta* Five Lake Hattah/Kulkyne/Murray Sunset NP BE
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren ◊ *Hylacola pyrrhopygia* One plus one heard nr. Bendigo BE
Striated Fieldwren ◊ *Calamanthus fuliginosus* Two Werribee & Melaleuca BE
Rufous Fieldwren ◊ *Calamanthus campestris* 2 Red Banks CP BE
Weebill ◊ *Smicronis brevirostris* Common from Mt Korong BE
Tasmanian Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis humilis* 10 noted on Tassie BE
White-browed Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis frontalis* Common in Victoria BE
Spotted Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis maculatus* 5 Innes NP BE
Scrubtit ◊ *Acanthornis magna* Two pairs Mt Mangana, S. Bruny Is. BE
Southern Whiteface ◊ *Aphelocephala leucopsis* Five Mt Korong the first VU BE
Banded Whiteface ◊ *Aphelocephala nigrinicta* Two Birdsville Track BE
Chestnut-breasted Whiteface ◊ *Aphelocephala pectoralis* 2-3 Strzelecki Track NT BE
Yellow-rumped Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* First noted Werribee BE
Yellow Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza nana* 6 Deniliquin BE
Striated Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza lineata* First noted Dandenongs NP BE
Inland Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza apicalis* Two L. Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Tasmanian Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza ewingii* Seven noted on Tassie BE
Brown Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza pusilla* Common in Vic. & Tassie BE

Slender-billed Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza iredalei* Two Nonning Rd. BE
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza uropygialis* Common in the Mallee BE
Buff-rumped Thornbill ◇ *Acanthiza reguloides* Six sightings Heathcote – Deniliquin BE
Western Gerygone ◇ *Gerygone fusca* Three sightings Heathcote – Deniliquin BE
Grey-crowned Babbler ◇ *Pomatostomus temporalis* c.20 Deniliquin
White-browed Babbler ◇ *Pomatostomus superciliosus* First noted Mt. Korong BE
Chestnut-crowned Babbler ◇ *Pomatostomus ruficeps* 11 sightings L. Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Eastern Whipbird ◇ *Psophodes olivaceus* Two heard only Dandenongs BE
White-bellied Whipbird ◇ *Psophodes leucogaster* 1 seen Innes NP BE
Chirruping Wedgebill ◇ *Psophodes cristatus* First noted Port Augusta BE
Chestnut Quail-thrush ◇ *Cinlosoma castanotum* Four sightings L. Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Copperback Quail-thrush ◇ *Cinlosoma clarum* 3 Lake Gilles BE
Cinnamon Quail-thrush ◇ *Cinlosoma cinnamomeum* Eight noted Birdsville/Strzelecki Tracks BE
White-breasted Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus leucorhynchus* First noted Deniliquin
Masked Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus personatus* First noted Gluepot BE
White-browed Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus superciliosus* 1 with the Masked W at Gluepot BE
Black-faced Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus cinereus* Noted throughout
Dusky Woodswallow ◇ *Artamus cyanopterus* First noted Warby Ovens NP BE
Australian Magpie ◇ *Gymnorhina tibicen* Common throughout
Grey Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus torquatus* First noted Deniliquin BE
Pied Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus nigrogularis* First noted Mt Korong BE
Pied Currawong ◇ *Strepera graculina* First noted Great Ocean Road BE
Black Currawong ◇ *Strepera fuliginosa* Eight noted on Tassie BE
Grey Currawong ◇ *Strepera versicolor* First noted Dandenongs NP BE
Ground Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina maxima* Pair + two young Eyre Peninsula BE
Black-faced Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina novaehollandiae* Regular throughout
White-winged Triller ◇ *Lalage tricolor* Several after the first at Deniliquin
Varied Sittella ◇ *Daphoenositta chrysoptera* Two L. Hattah/Kulkyne NP for some
Crested Bellbird ◇ *Oreoica gutturalis* A scatter after the first nr. Bendigo BE
Eastern Shriketit ◇ *Falcunculus frontatus* Pair Deniliquin BE
Olive Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala olivacea* Singles Great Otway NP & Melaleuca BE
Red-lored Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala rufogularis* Four noted Murray Sunset NP VU
Gilbert's Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala inornate* First Mt Korong BE
Australian Golden Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala pectoralis* First Dandenongs NOP
Western Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala occidentalis* Pair Innes NP BE
Rufous Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala rufiventris* First at Lonsdale Lake
Grey Shrikethrush ◇ *Colluricincla harmonica* First Dandenongs NP
Olive-backed Oriole ◇ *Oriolus sagittatus* 1 Reef Hills
Willie Wagtail ◇ *Rhipidura leucophrys* Almost daily sightings
Grey Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura albiscapa* Common from Dandenongs NP
Magpie-lark ◇ *Grallina cyanoleuca* Ubiquitous, even on the Birdsville Track
Leaden Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra rubecula* 1 Reef Hills
Satin Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra cyanoleuca* 2 sightings Bruny Is.
Restless Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra inquieta* 1 Warby Ovens NP BE
Little Crow ◇ *Corvus bennetti* A couple of definite sightings on the Birdsville Track BE
Forest Raven ◇ *Corvus tasmanicus* The default raven on Tassie BE
Little Raven ◇ *Corvus mellori* Noted from Melbourne BE
Australian Raven ◇ *Corvus coronoides* Noted from Deniliquin BE

White-winged Cough ◇ *Corcorax melanorhamphos* First noted Dandenongs NP BE
Apostlebird ◇ *Struthidea cinerea* c.20 Lake Hattah/Kulkyne NP BE
Red-capped Robin ◇ *Petroica goodenovii* Nine, first at Deniliquin BE
Rose Robin ◇ *Petroica rosea* Male in the Dandenongs NP BE
Pink Robin ◇ *Petroica rodinogaster* 3 Great Otway NP, 1 S. Bruny Is. & 1 Hobart BE
Flame Robin ◇ *Petroica phoenicea* 4 Dandenongs NP BE
Scarlet Robin ◇ *Petroica boodang* Male Deniliquin BE
Jacky Winter ◇ *Microeca fascians* Four in the Mallee
Southern Scrub Robin ◇ *Drymodes brunneopygia* 1 Inglewood Res. & Murray Sunset NP BE
Hooded Robin ◇ *Melanodryas cucullata* Six in the Mallee BE
Dusky Robin ◇ *Melanodryas vittata* 5 sightings on Tassie VU BE
Eastern Yellow Robin ◇ *Eopsaltria australis* 6 sightings from Sherbrooke BE
Western Yellow Robin ◇ *Eopsaltria griseogularis* Pair L. Gilles BE
Singing Bush Lark (Australasian B) ◇ *Mirafra javanica* 1 Deniliquin
Eurasian Skylark (introduced) ◇ *Alauda arvensis* First noted Werribee
White-backed Swallow ◇ *Cheramoeca leucosterna* 10 sightings Birdsville/Strzelecki Tracks BE
Welcome Swallow ◇ *Hirundo neoxena* Common
Fairy Martin ◇ *Petrochelidon ariel* Common
Tree Martin ◇ *Petrochelidon nigricans* Common
Australian Reed Warbler ◇ *Acrocephalus australis* First seen Berri
Little Grassbird ◇ *Poodytes gramineus* 2 Werribee
Brown Songlark ◇ *Cincloramphus cruralis* First Deniliquin BE
Rufous Songlark ◇ *Cincloramphus mathewsi* First Mt Korong BE
Golden-headed Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola exilis* Noted at Werribee
Silvereye ◇ *Zosterops lateralis* First noted at Sherbrooke
Common Myna (introduced) ◇ *Acridotheres tristis* Common in Victoria
Common Starling (introduced) ◇ *Sturnus vulgaris* Common
Bassian Thrush ◇ *Zoothera lunulata* 1 seen plus 3 heard Great Otway NP BE
Common Blackbird (introduced) ◇ *Turdus merula* Common
Mistletoebird ◇ *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* First noted Mt Korong BE
House Sparrow (introduced) ◇ *Passer domesticus* Small numbers throughout
Diamond Firetail ◇ *Stagonopleura guttata* Singles Mt Korong & Warby Ovens NP VU BE
Beautiful Firetail ◇ *Stagonopleura bella* 1 S. Bruny Is. & c.15 Melaleuca BE
Red-browed Finch (R-b Firetail) ◇ *Neochmia temporalis* 2 at Werribee the only sighting BE
Australian Zebra Finch ◇ *Taeniopygia castanotis* Common Birdsville/Strzelecki Tracks
Australian Pipit ◇ *Anthus australis* First for all at Deniliquin.
European Greenfinch (introduced) ◇ *Chloris chloris* 3 S. Bruny Is.
European Goldfinch (introduced) ◇ *Carduelis carduelis* A scatter in Vic. & on Bruny Is.

MAMMALS

Platypus ◇ *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* 1 Hobart Rivulets
Short-beaked Echidna (S-nosed E) ◇ *Tachyglossus aculeatus* GOR for some & 2 on Tassie
Eastern Quoll ◇ *Dasyurus viverrinus* Minimum four on N. Bruny Is.
Koala ◇ *Phascolarctos cinereus* 1 Kennett River
Common Wombat ◇ *Vombatus ursinus* Two near Cape Liptrap
Common Brush-tailed Possum ◇ *Trichosurus vulpecula* Common on Tassie
Eastern Ring-tailed Possum ◇ *Pseudocheirus peregrinus* Two near Hobart
Long-nosed Potoroo ◇ *Potorous tridactylus* 1 N. Bruny Is. & 1 near Hobart

Western Grey Kangaroo ◇ *Macropus fuliginosus* Common
Eastern Grey Kangaroo ◇ *Macropus giganteus* Common
Red-necked Wallaby ◇ *Notamacropus rufogriseus* Noted on Tassie
Common Wallaroo (Euro) ◇ *Osphranter robustus* Eyre Peninsula
Red Kangaroo ◇ *Osphranter rufus* Noted from Deniliquin
Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby ◇ *Petrogale xanthopus* 7 Brachina Gorge, Flinders Range
Rufous-bellied Pademelon ◇ *Thylogale billardierii* Common on Tassie
Swamp Wallaby (Black W) ◇ *Wallabia bicolor* First noted Sherbrooke
Domestic Cat (introduced) ◇ *Felis catus* Noted
Grey Wolf (Dingo) ◇ *Canis lupus* Two Birdsville Track
Red Fox (introduced) ◇ *Vulpes vulpes* First noted Mt. Korong
Afro-Australian Fur Seal ◇ *Arctocephalus pusillus* c.30 Marengo Reefs
Domestic Goat (introduced) (Feral G) ◇ *Capra hircus* Noted
Common Bottlenose Dolphin ◇ *Tursiops truncatus* 1 GOR & 1 Innes NP
European Hare (introduced) ◇ *Lepus europaeus* Noted
European Rabbit (introduced) ◇ *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Noted
Common Water Rat (Beaver-Rat) ◇ *Hydromys chrysogaster* Four St. Kilda
Australian Swamp Rat ◇ *Rattus lutreolus* 1 Melaleuca
Grey-headed Fruit Bat ◇ *Pteropus poliocephalus* c.10 Deniliquin

REPTILES

Shingleback Lizard *Tiliqua rugosa* 21 sightings from Mt Korong onwards.
Central Bearded Dragon *Pogona vitticeps* 5 sightings from Deniliquin onwards.
Eastern Brown Snake *Pseudonaja textilis* 1 Wyperfield NP.
Sand Goanna *Varanus gouldii* Noted Murray Sunset NP & Brachina Gorge.