

# Australia

Blue Mountains, Cairns & O'Reilly's Thu 7th-Mon 25th November 2019



*Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Eastern Yellow Robin • Channel-billed Cuckoo • Great Frigatebird • White-browed Robin • Far Eastern Curlew • Australian Bustard. © tour leader Peter Taylor/Limosa Holidays*

**Report compiled by tour leader:  
Peter Taylor**

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**Tour Leaders:** Peter Taylor as principal guide, *with* Carol Probets (Capertee Valley), Alan Gillanders (Yungaburra) and Duncan Fowler (O'Reilly's)  
*and tour participants* Ray & Sue Hiley, Fridolin Kerr, Brendan Murphy, Ken Sutton, Lynda Vincent and Sally Wearing.

With the flight from London right on time and a quick detour to pick up some luggage from a nearby hotel, we were quickly on our way south towards Botany Bay. The Kamay-Botany Bay National Park usually gives a gentle introduction to Australia's diverse avifauna and the flocks of rowdy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Little Corellas with a few Noisy Miners and a Crested Pigeon suggested nothing different. However, the sight of two giant Channel-billed Cuckoos feeding in the low canopy above our heads hinted at more interesting times ahead. A stroll along one of the many pathways traversing the park soon yielded more unfamiliar species. A family of Variegated Fairywrens, the males showing brightly in red and blue and tiny Spotted Pardalotes appeared as well as Red Wattlebirds and the much more familiar Laughing Kookaburra, the world's largest kingfisher. A short drive away lies Royal National Park, second oldest only to Yellowstone and, as often happens on a warm and sunny Sydney weekend, there were lots of visitors, some canoeing, some picnicking and even some getting married!

After a hearty lunch we managed to find a quiet track and before long another fairywren, this time Superb. Voted bird of the trip by the group, the male of this species is resplendent in various shades of blue and black and appropriately adorns the cover of the bird checklist! More honeyeaters tantalised us here – Lewin's with its machine-gun call, New Holland and Yellow-faced – along with a Sacred Kingfisher and a Cicadabird that passed back and forth over our heads. On the placid waters of the Hacking River we encountered several species of waterfowl, all seemingly unconcerned by the presence of so many humans. Chestnut Teals, Pacific Black Ducks and two species of cormorant, both Little Pied and Little Black were noted.

Late afternoon saw us arrive at Jamberoo, a typical Aussie town with a typical Aussie pub! This was to be our first encounter with the rather generous portions typically offered up with pub meals (more chips anyone?). However the company was jovial and the birds performed on cue as we ventured out into the local park next morning. Flocks of Long-billed Corellas and Galahs shrieked from the tops of the pine trees and Topknot Pigeons feasted on the flowering fig trees, while the nectar rich yellow flowers of the Silky Oak trees attracted Satin Bowerbirds, Australian Figbirds, Little and Red Wattlebirds and Olive-backed Orioles.

About 500m above Jamberoo lies Barren Grounds on the Budderoo Plateau, dominated by heathland and low eucalypts. Here we had a rare glimpse of a male Southern Emu-wren, a little peculiar in that he appeared to have no tail! The mournful descending call of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo was heard and we were soon able to scope this annual visitor on his perch. Later a Rufous Fantail flitted around some of the denser shrubs near the park entrance. At the foot of the scarp lies the Minnamurra Rainforest, much wetter and typically dominated by rainforest species. When we arrived it was apparent that the Visitor Centre was in the process of being partially demolished ready for refurbishment but fortunately the Lyrebird Café was still open for business! Following a delightful lunch we meandered along the boardwalk and trails through the impressive forest looking in particular for lyrebirds, scratching through the undergrowth. A Bassian Thrush appeared and gave us false hope but lingered a while for photos. By the end of the 1.2 km loop we had had not a sign but as we approached the parked minibus, the sounds of many different bird calls seemed to be emanating from somewhere near the flowing creek. Sure enough, not 10m away over the brow of a small ridge was a young male Superb Lyrebird, digging away in the leaf litter, quite content for everyone to sneak closer to take photos. He then nonchalantly stepped down from the bank and strolled through the now empty outdoor café!

That evening, after another whopping serve of pub food, we drove back up the scarp intending to listen out for Ground Parrots at Barren Grounds at dusk. Part way up the hill we were stopped in our tracks by a couple of Common Wombats, feeding in a roadside garden, possibly just emerged from their burrows. This is an animal we rarely see in the daytime and one of the iconic Australian marsupials always hoped for. Moments later a Superb Lyrebird hurtled across the steep road in front of the minibus, diving into dense rainforest on the other side. Our euphoria was dampened however when minutes later we arrived at Barren Grounds to find the gate shut and a sign saying the park was now closed (as of an hour ago) because of the severe bushfire conditions forecast for the Greater Sydney area. These same conditions were to plague us for the next two days. Luckily however, Fitzroy Falls was open when we arrived there next morning (although the café was closed for yet more renovations!). Because of the forecast heat we decided to walk some of the west rim first and it turned out to be a fortuitous decision. Right on the edge of the trail, feeding in a patch of casuarinas, was a family of three Glossy Black Cockatoos only a few metres above our heads. We watched and photographed them from below, listening

as they chatted to each other and crunched their way through countless sheoak cones to extract the tiny seeds. More lyrebirds were spotted in the undergrowth, casually scratching for grubs and other delicacies and several Golden Whistlers were heard and seen in the over-storey. As we returned to the Visitor Centre we found the gate shut and a "park closed" sign in place. A Parks & Wildlife Ranger then escorted us from the premises explaining that the severe bushfire risk announcement meant that all visitors had to leave. A quick bite to eat at a local café then we began the longish drive northwards to the Blue Mountains, passing firstly through Bowral, home to the famous Bradman Museum.

Once checked into our motel in Katoomba, it was good to get out and stretch our legs with a short walk down to Echo Point and the Three Sisters Lookout. As we played at being tourists, a ghostly looking raptor soared down from a perch high above the rocky outcrops in front of us, effortlessly wheeling around before alighting in a tree. This was the first time a Grey Goshawk had been seen here on this tour and a great spectacle it was. That night we dined at the brand new RSL (Returned Serviceman's League) Club, only recently reopened after it had been burned down a couple of years prior. The building and décor was quite palatial and the food rather good so we decided to eat there again the following night too.

Next day the weather forecast was for hotter conditions which meant that all sections of the Blue Mountains National Park were closed due to catastrophic fire danger risk, even the ever reliable Blackheath Rhododendron Gardens. A detour along Hat Hill Rd found us at a deserted local dog exercise area where a pair of Scarlet Robins were perching on fence posts. This was an exciting development since this species had only been recorded on this tour once previously. However, within minutes of us arriving so did a convoy of dog-owners and before long the area was alive with bounding pooches. Still, we managed to find a relatively quiet track where the robins had taken refuge along with New Holland Honeyeaters and Brown Thornbills.

The Old Ford Reserve down the Megalong Valley Rd was also closed but we could still walk along the bitumen road and across the causeway. Here we found yet more honeyeaters in White-eared and White-naped and a few White-winged Choughs patrolling the empty campground. Over lunch back at a café in Katoomba we discussed our options for the afternoon and settled on a local park which had picnic facilities and a playground on the shores of an ornamental lake known as Wentworth Falls Lake. Not particularly inspiring to start off with just a handful of Maned Ducks and cormorants among the myriad Coot but as we explored some of the tracks we discovered an entertaining family group of Superb Fairywrens, and on the lake itself appeared a few Hardheads, a Great Egret and a Cattle Egret, very uncommon in the Blue Mountains!

Beyond the Blue Mountains we dropped down to Lithgow where we picked up local guide Carol Proberts, who specialises in the Capertee Valley. First though we had to visit the Lithgow Water Treatment Ponds where there was an overwhelming array of waterfowl, particularly Pink-eared Duck. At nearby Lake Wallace we flushed a Latham's Snipe, found a pair of Musk Ducks along with some Blue-billed Ducks and even a Glossy Ibis, rare at this location according to Carol. Driving down the long incline into the Capertee Valley we could see the smoke haze from the massive bushfire in the Wollemi National Park. That night we were to see the various small fires glowing on the surrounding hillsides, barely a mile from where we were standing on the lawns of the Glen Davis Hotel itself. Once at Glen Davis we quickly checked into the Art Deco style hotel and had a delicious lunch prepared by our host, Alison, then it was off to explore the Valley. The Capertee River itself was bone dry as it often is late in the season but the birdlife was still incredible. The biggest highlight was the sighting of three Black Honeyeaters foraging on mistletoe in the riverside casuarinas. This was a new species for this tour and indeed the first time that Carol had ever recorded one in the Capertee Valley! Dry conditions inland due to the ongoing drought had no doubt had some influence so that nomadic species such as these were turning up in odd places. Here also were Brown Treecreepers, Double-barred and Zebra Finches, White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, White-browed Babblers and a brief flyby of a Turquoise Parrot amongst some 27 species we noted just along the river. We stopped at the little township of Glen Alice where Little Lorikeets were feeding on the nectar of flowering eucalypts. These tiny parrots can be really difficult to view, as they move about through the canopy, extremely well camouflaged. In the surrounding scrub we found our one and only Diamond Firetail for the trip and had great views of a male White-winged Triller. Just as we left we noticed a large brown object waddling across the paddock next to the bridge - another Common Wombat strolling around in the daytime! He seemed totally unconcerned and allowed us to take photographs from the minibus only metres away. After that we just had time to visit Carol's own patch of bush where Yellow-tufted, Fuscous, White-plumed and Brown-headed Honeyeaters were coming in to drink at the water tank. Best of all though was the male Turquoise Parrot that flew in and perched next to us before flying off in disgust. As we returned to Glen Davis for a well-earned dinner, parties of macropods started to appear out in the fields. Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Red-necked Wallabies and a few shaggy looking Wallaroos also known as Euros settled amicably into their evening foraging as did we back at the hotel, where a sudden power cut plunged us into darkness until Alison appeared with a stash of candles. The candlelit meal was enjoyed by all and the bird-log conducted under the same conditions. A final walk around the old ghost town of Glen Davis next morning found us a couple more species in Restless

Flycatcher and a party of squabbling Black-chinned Honeyeaters then it was time for a last sampling of Alison's cooking and we were on our way back to Sydney.

We bid our farewells to Carol in Lithgow, took the old Bell's Line of Road through the Blue Mountains and eventually crossed over the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, affectionately known as the "Coat hanger" to arrive at Sydney Airport seemingly in plenty of time for the next leg of our adventure. A couple of hiccups at the airport involving a lost boarding card and discovery of assorted items in hand luggage (you know who you are!) led to some anxious moments followed by a hastily scooped sandwich or too in the departure lounge. All this was forgotten however once we arrived in Tropical Cairns. With the flight on time and a favourable tide it meant that we could check in to our hotel quickly and get down to the famous Cairns Esplanade in time for some birdwatching before dusk. Along with the familiar Whimbrels and Bar-tailed Godwits we found a variety of other shorebirds such as Far Eastern Curlew, Black-fronted Dotterel, Grey-tailed Tattler, Lesser Sand Plover, Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper but the highlight was definitely a pair of Beach Stone-Curlews foraging at the edge of the mangroves.

Next day was the much anticipated trip out to Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef. Calm seas and a light passenger load made for a glorious day with numerous high points. As we arrived at the Cay, a Red-footed Booby, rarely recorded on this tour was seen perched on the submersible. All over the sandy cay itself hundreds of Common Noddies were well advanced in their breeding with many fledglings as were the Brown Boobies with their fluffy white chicks while many Sooty Terns were sitting on eggs. Two female Great Frigatebirds sat on the highest available perches on the Cay and Ruddy Turnstones scampered in and out of the flocks looking for morsels. Around the back of the Cay, courtesy of a private trip in the "beach buggy" organised for us by the skipper, we saw many more terns including both Greater and Lesser Crested, Bridled, Black-naped and Common. From the submersible we admired the many types of corals and too many multi-coloured fish species to remember as well as giant clams and a couple of Green Turtles.

Our full day's birding around Cairns started off before breakfast with a short drive out to Redden Island, a little patch of lowland tropical rainforest set in the delta of the Barron River. Our target here was the Lovely Fairywren and we weren't disappointed. Several blue and red males appeared and smart looking blue and white females, unusual for fairywrens as most females are quite drab. A Little Bronze-Cuckoo showed well and we had our first sighting of the prehistoric looking Orange-footed Scrubfowls scratching around the forest floor. After breakfast (memorable for the scrambled eggs which had the consistency of a blancmange), we returned to the Esplanade in search of some of the other local specialties. Soon we had found Varied Honeyeaters, Mangrove Robin and a delightful Rose-crowned Fruit-dove all close to the edge of the mangroves. Within the mangroves we could hear the constant calling of at least two pairs of Torresian Kingfishers. After several frustrating attempts at a number of locations we eventually had one visible (thanks to Brendan) though trying to photograph it through the tangled mangrove stems proved quite a challenge! In the nearby Centenary Lakes we found a group of four Bush Stone-Curlews roosting in the shade and further around were a party of Radjah Shelducks, also taking advantage of the tall, shady trees on the banks of the Freshwater Lake. There was also a surprise fly over of an adult Spotted Harrier, a species very rarely recorded in Cairns.

Time then for a relaxing lunch at a café by the Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre before heading back to the south end of the Esplanade to take advantage of the falling tide. Lots more shorebirds including a flock of Great Knot and a couple of Black-tailed Godwits roosting on the mudflats with newly split (from Gull-billed) Australian Terns and a lone Whiskered Tern. There were also a few Australian Pelicans here and a couple of Pacific Reef Egrets hunting in the shallows. Moving northwards towards Mossman, our home for the night, we stopped off at the man-made Cattana Wetlands for a brief look. Comb-crested Jacanas trotted across the lilies and the screeching of numerous Metallic Starlings could be heard overhead as flocks of these breeding migrants whizzed back and forth. It was also here that Sue spotted some brightly coloured finches in the long grass by one of the ponds. They turned out to be Crimson Finches, a species never recorded on this tour before! Dinner that night was at the delightful Mojo's Restaurant, by our motel in Mossman, and for those lucky enough to order the last remaining servings of it, the Gnocchi was apparently to die for (I promise I won't mention it again!).

Our second boat trip was an early morning outing on the Daintree River with Murray, the Daintree Boatman. With room for just 12 passengers and a shallow draft, Murray's boat could take us into hidden backwaters where he showed us several pairs of sexually dimorphic Shining Flycatchers, dazzling Azure Kingfishers and Large-billed Gerygones building their pendulous nests. A couple of Black Bitterns flushed from the river's edge as we crept by then Murray found us a pair of nesting Papuan Frogmouths, incredibly camouflaged just a few metres above the river. A Saltwater Crocodile was visible briefly as it lurked menacingly near the bank before sinking gently below the surface. Most excitingly (even for Murray) was a Little Kingfisher, a tiny blue jewel of a bird, not usually seen at this time of year, which appeared low down in a tangle of branches just above the water. After a welcome breakfast at the Crocodile Express Café, we took the Daintree River ferry and visited the Jindalba Boardwalk in

Daintree National Park. We were fortunate to run into a local birdwatcher who was photographing a Yellow-breasted Boatbill when a Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher also appeared down at eye-level. This is one of the key species of this tour and one that only arrives in November to breed so it was a very fortuitous meeting indeed. Also in the rainforest here we found a family group of Wompoo Fruit-doves and at the Madja Boardwalk, a Varied Triller with more Shining Flycatchers. Back on the ferry later we were accompanied by a party of White-breasted Woodswallows that took the opportunity to get a free trip across the river!

Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers' Lodge was our home for the next two nights and a host of new species awaited us around the wonderful grounds there. Great views of a Noisy Pitta perched at eye height, a Pied Monarch, Pale Yellow Robins, Scarlet and Dusky Myzomelas as well as other honeyeaters like Yellow-spotted, Graceful and the Tablelands endemic Macleay's. Excitement also at Bushy Creek where a resident Platypus popped up late in the afternoon while both Spectacled and Black-faced Monarchs came in for a splash. A Fawn-footed Melomys snuck in for a quick drink at one of the bird baths and a Boyd's Forest Dragon accepted pieces of banana while we ate breakfast on the deck. Up Mount Lewis we found a couple of parties of Chowchillas fossicking about on the forest floor and a pair of Fernwrens, unusually quiet as they also searched through the leaf litter with Yellow-throated Scrubwrens. Grey-headed Robins, Mountain Thornbills and Bridled Honeyeaters were added to the list and at the top of the walk we found another couple of platypus in a small pond. In the dry country near Mt Carbine we counted six Australian Bustards with at least two males in their full regalia. Stunning Red-backed Fairywrens appeared, chattering loudly as they worked their way through the dry scrub and a party of Weebills, Australia's smallest bird, foraged through the eucalypt canopy. At the Mary River crossing, Noisy Friarbirds were mobbing a raptor which turned out to be a Pacific Baza. The baza was not keen on leaving and it became apparent why shortly after when we found a large Stick-Insect, a favoured food of bazas. Late in the day we visited the Mt Molloy School where the sign says "Birdwatchers Welcome". Carefully fenced off to prevent the school's chickens from invading was a Great Bowerbird and his bower adorned in white and green items. It was an absolute pleasure to sit back and watch the male fine-tuning his creation with little additions and repairs. Nearby, in the school sand-pit, a group of Squatter Pigeons were relishing the shade along with some much smaller Peaceful Doves and a flock of at least 25 Red-winged Parrots were busy devouring mangos in a local backyard.

Following a tip-off from Carol Iles at Kingfisher Park we dropped in to Abattoir Swamp Reserve and found both White-cheeked and Banded Honeyeaters feeding on the blossom of flowering eucalypts alongside the boardwalk. In the carpark itself we found a single Northern Fantail, a species not regularly recorded on this tour. The gate to Lake Mitchell has now been closed permanently but birdwatchers can still walk in from the highway. Our persistence paid off and soon we were watching Green Pygmy-geese and both Intermediate (identified by their necks having a lesser kink – ie Dave rather than Ray Davies as Sally suggested) and Great Egrets feeding in the shallows. Little Friarbirds flew by sporadically to complete an impressive total of 32 honeyeaters for the trip. The Mareeba Rock-Wallabies put on their usual display of cuteness at Granite Gorge while a pair of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and some Pale-headed Rosellas really stole the show.

We stayed at Chambers Rainforest Wildlife Lodges at Lake Eacham for two nights, relishing the home-cooked dinner and breakfasts of local chef, Helen. A spot-lighting evening out with local guide Alan Gillanders proved a winner with wonderful views of four possum species and two bizarre geckos as well as an Eastern Barn Owl. Out with Alan again the next day we visited a number of local hotspots like Lake Eacham where Double-eyed Fig-parrots were feeding, Lake Barrine for the endemic Bowers Shrike-thrush, then private residences where Alan showed us a male Victoria's Riflebird and a Tooth-billed Bowerbird displaying. At Hasties Swamp we saw a huge flock of Plumed Whistling Ducks and then possibly bird of the day, a male Golden Bowerbird near his bower deep in the rainforest. Still we had failed to find any cranes or brolgas but as we returned late in the day, Lynda spotted a pair of likely candidates down below the East Barron Rd in a paddock. They turned out to be Sarus Cranes, much to the relief of Ken! Before dinner at the Yungaburra Hotel that night we dropped in at one of Alan's recommended spots on Peterson Creek and were delighted to find yet another two Platypus swimming within metres of us! Not to be outdone, the illuminated viewing platform at Chambers provided even more animals for those keen to put in the long hours – Striped Possums, Long-nosed Bandicoots and a Sugar Glider all put in an appearance.

For our final morning the birds of Chambers put on quite a display with Spotted Catbirds and Lewin's Honeyeaters coming in for a free feed of chopped up fruit from the balconies while several White-throated Treecreepers called noisily as they raced up and down the palm trees trying to compete with the Spangled Drongos and Australasian Figbirds. Descending from the Tablelands back to Cairns we stopped off at Davies Creek National Park, a reserve we hadn't visited on this tour for 10 years. The corrugated road was unchanged and amazingly, a White-browed Robin appeared in exactly the same location as one had ten years prior! Possibly even more memorable were a couple of reptiles, firstly a Two-lined Dragon, beautifully marked in green and pink, then in the middle of the road as we were leaving, a Frilled Lizard reared up and sprinted on its hind legs with its frill extended, ran up a nearby tree and waited to be photographed (and of course we obliged!).

No dramas at the airport this time and a smooth flight down to Brisbane where driver Alan was waiting to transfer us up to O'Reilly's in the Gold Coast hinterland for the finale of our trip. Even before we'd got out of the bus, a bevy of male Regent Bowerbirds was waiting outside reception to greet us. Then it was time to check in and get ready for the first of O'Reilly's famously sumptuous dinners. An early start next day and, armed with our boxed breakfasts, we met up with Duncan who was to be our local guide for the morning. With a 4x4 O'Reilly's bus and access to some of the private areas, Duncan was able to show us several new species including a nesting Tawny Frogmouth, Buff-rumped Thornbills and a Red-browed Treecreeper before taking us further down the mountain to find us a couple of Bell Miners and a beautiful White-eared Monarch. Left to our own devices for the next day and a half we explored the Booyong Boardwalk as well as the Centenary, Python Rock and Border Trails, finding Australian Logrunners, cousins of the more northerly Chowchilla, Green Catbirds with their bizarre calls (frighteningly similar to Fridolin's impressions), Paradise Riflebirds, giant Wonga Pigeons and the secretive Russet-tailed Thrush. The male Rose Robin maybe won the day although the Red-necked Pademelons were undoubtedly a close second. Finally, on the morning of our last full day we went out early before breakfast in search of lyrebirds. Along the Centenary Track we could hear at least two birds calling from different directions, both seemingly deep in the inaccessible rainforest. However, a closer call gave us hope and sure enough an Albert's Lyrebird walked out onto the road up ahead of us and disappeared round the bend. In hot pursuit we approached the bend to see it disappearing again into thick understorey but we finally caught up if only for a moment or two as it scratched away at the leaf litter on the side of road down to the Spa Chalets and then left abruptly. A leisurely and somewhat celebratory O'Reilly's breakfast followed then we spent our final day wandering the trails, climbing the Tree Top Walk and visiting the Mountain Gardens where a small pond provided much needed water for the thirsty birds. Despite our best efforts, the bird list had paused on 299 species and, try as we might, that's where it stayed! Early departures in the morning meant a hasty pack and with driver Alan having returned to spirit us away from O'Reilly's we made our farewells at Brisbane Airport and parted company. Many thanks to all for your joyful company, sparkling conversation and unstoppable wit on what turned out to be a most enjoyable trip for yours truly!

*Peter Taylor  
Limosa Holidays*

**SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED***(Total number of species recorded by the group – 299 including 4 that were heard only)***Magpie-goose *Anseranas semipalmata***

Relatively common in North Queensland, where they were seen at Lake Mitchell, Hastie's Swamp and Centenary Lakes in Cairns.

**Plumed Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni***

We saw a huge flock at Hasties Swamp on our day out around the Tablelands with Alan.

**Black Swan *Cygnus atratus***

Enroute to Katoomba, we saw one in a roadside paddock but there were quite a number at Lake Mitchell in Queensland.

**Raja Shelduck *Tadorna radjah***

We first saw four at Centenary Lakes in Cairns then about 20 on the Daintree River with Murray.

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

More than 50 were spotted at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds, our only sighting for the trip.

**Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata***

First seen in Royal National Park and again at Jamberoo. Fairly widespread on farm dams and wetlands throughout New South Wales.

**Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus***

About ten were seen at Lake Mitchell in North Queensland.

**Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis***

Several were seen at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds, NSW.

**Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa***

Widespread in NSW and Queensland, seen most days on farm dams and wetlands.

**Grey Teal *Anas gracilis***

First seen at Wentworth Falls Lake. Common at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds, NSW. Seen also at a number of places in North Queensland including Centenary Lakes and Hastie's Swamp.

**Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea***

Several were spotted on the Hacking River in Royal National Park on our first day and a single male at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds.

**Hardhead *Aythya australis***

First seen at Wentworth Falls Lake. Large numbers were also seen at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds in NSW then many more at Lake Mitchell in Queensland.

**Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis***

Two males and two females were seen at Lake Wallace in NSW.

**Musk Duck *Biziura lobata***

A pair was seen at Lake Wallace, NSW.

**Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami***

Very common and generally extremely bold in Queensland.

**Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt***

Fairly common in the rainforests in Tropical North Queensland.

**Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora***

A strange sighting of a single bird, spotted by Ken firstly, seen running through short grass on the side of the road in Richmond enroute to Sydney.

**Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae***

Seen in NSW at Wentworth Falls Lake where one was picked up in the scope by Sally then at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds and in North Queensland at Lake Mitchell.

**Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus***

Very common at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds, NSW.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Four of these familiar grebes were seen at Lake Wallace.

**Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca***

First seen at Royal National Park in NSW then common and widespread throughout.

**Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis***

Seen in small numbers in both NSW and North Queensland usually feeding in paddocks.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

One was seen firstly at Lake Wallace, much to the surprise of local guide Carol. We also saw a flock of 18 fly over Redden Island near Cairns and there was at least one more at Hasties Swamp on the Atherton Tablelands while we were out and about with Alan Gillanders.

**Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia***

A group of three was spotted at the Cattana Wetlands in Cairns and a few more at Hastie's Swamp.

**Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis***

Two individuals were flushed as we made our way along the Daintree River on our cruise with Murray.

**Striated Heron *Butorides striata***

Curiously, we saw our first of these albeit briefly at Jamberoo where one was being chased by other birds through the park. There were also two more on the Daintree River with Murray.

**Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus***

A rare record for the Blue Mountains we saw our one and only in NSW at Wentworth Falls Lake NSW. They were fairly widespread throughout North Queensland and over one hundred were counted feeding in the Nerada Tea Plantation.

**White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica***

One was seen near Jamberoo flying over paddock and another enroute to Sydney in NSW. In Queensland we had a couple of sightings on the Tablelands including two birds at Hastie's Swamp in North Queensland and then another near O'Reilly's.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

One was seen firstly at Wentworth Falls Lake then another at Lake Wallace in NSW. Several others were seen at various locations in North Queensland, including at Hastie's Swamp

**Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia***

First seen at Lake Mitchell where they outnumbered the Great Egrets and again at Hastie's Swamp.

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

Surprisingly uncommon this year, we only had four sightings of individual birds, at Jamberoo and Lake Wallace in NSW and at the Cattana Wetlands and Abattoir Swamp in North Queensland.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

A single bird was seen at the Cattana Wetlands in Cairns.

**Pacific Reef Egret *Egretta sacra***

One was seen flying over the water in Cairns as we waited on board Ocean Spirit prior to our Michaelmas Cay trip. Another two were seen on the foreshore at Cairns the next day.

**Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus***

Enroute to Katoomba, one was spotted from the minibus in a roadside pond. Another ten were seen at the Cattana Wetlands then more at Lake Mitchell and Hastie's Swamp.

**Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor***

Two females were seen on Michaelmas Cay.

**Red-footed Booby *Sula sula***

One was perched on the submersible as we arrived at Michaelmas Cay but flew off shortly after. Only our second ever record of this species on this tour.

**Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster***

Common on Michaelmas Cay and breeding with several fluffy white chicks present.

**Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos***

First seen at Royal National Park on our first morning, and again at Wentworth Falls Lake in NSW. Then reasonably common in North Queensland.

**Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris***

First seen at Royal National Park on our first morning then again at Wentworth Falls Lake. In North Queensland there were a few at Lake Mitchell.

**Australian Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius***

Several birds were seen near the Captain Cook monument at Botany Bay in NSW.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

To Murray's surprise, one of these most familiar of cormorants was seen on the Daintree River cruise, amazingly our only sighting for the tour!

**Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae***

Individuals were seen in North Queensland near Cairns on the way back from Michaelmas Cay, Centenary Lakes and Lake Mitchell.

**Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris***

Individuals were seen at Glen Davis in NSW and on the Atherton Tablelands in North Queensland.

**Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata***

While walking along a gravel road at Maryfarms we saw a group of friarbirds hassling a baza in creek-side trees. Here we also found several Stick Insects, a favourite food of Pacific Baza and probably the reason why the raptor refused to be moved on!

**Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae***

Excellent views of a single bird soaring over the Three Sisters at Katoomba. Two were seen briefly at the Nerada Tea Plantation in North Queensland.

**Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus***

A couple of brief sightings on the Atherton Tablelands then a more convincing view of two more at O'Reilly's.

**Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis***

A surprise sighting of an adult bird over Centenary Lakes, Cairns.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Relatively common in North Queensland, particularly near Daintree and in the Tablelands.

**Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus***

Enroute to Katoomba we saw a single bird from the minibus and another at Lake Wallace with local guide Carol in NSW. Seen most days in ones and twos in North Queensland.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster***

A single bird was seen on our first full day at Jamberoo scattering the Galahs and Corellas as it flew over!

**Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis***

At least six individuals were seen in fields and along the roadside at Maryfarms, north Queensland.

**Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus***

Several of these gallinules species were first seen in Royal National Park then a couple more at Wentworth Falls Lake. At both Lake Wallace in NSW and Hasties Swamp in North Queensland they were very common.

**Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa***

Seen in Royal National Park where they were plentiful on our first day. Also quite common at Lake Wallace.

**Common Coot *Fulica atra***

Very common in NSW, seen at Royal National Park, Wentworth Falls Lake and Lake Wallace in NSW but just the one record of two birds at Lake Mitchell in Queensland.

**Sarus Crane *Grus Antigone antigone***

On our day out with local guide Alan a pair was seen feeding in a field near Malanda in North Queensland, spotted by Lynda from the minibus as we were driving. Four more were seen a little later, also near Malanda.

**Beach Stone-curlew *Esacus magnirostris***

Two were spotted by Fridolin from the Cairns Esplanade and we were able to get great scope views.

**Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius***

Four of these statuesque birds were seen at the Centenary Lakes in Cairns. We also saw one while we were out spotlighting with Alan one evening near Yungaburra

**Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus***

A single bird was first seen at the Cattana Wetlands near Cairns. Many more were seen foraging on the mudflats at Hastie's Swamp in North Queensland.

**Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles***

Very common, seen almost every day, either the northern subspecies in Queensland or the southern in NSW.

**Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythrogonys cinctus***

A single juvenile bird was seen on the far side of Hasties Swamp on the Atherton Tableland.

**Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus***

At least three birds were feeding close to the Esplanade at Cairns.

**Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii***

One was seen distantly feeding out on the mudflats from the Cairns Esplanade.

**Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyonis melanops***

Just the one record of a single bird at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds in NSW. In North Queensland we saw three feeding on the mudflats on the Cairns Foreshore on two separate days and also a couple more with Murray on the Daintree River cruise.

**Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea***

At least four of these lily-trotting specialists were first seen at the Cattana Wetlands near Cairns in North Queensland. They were also very common at Lake Mitchell.

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

Two seen on the Cairns Foreshore but we also saw several others flying across the open water as we waited to depart from the Reef Fleet Terminal on our day out to Michaelmas Cay.

**Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis***

Two seen foraging on the mudflats by the Cairns Esplanade.

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

Common along the Cairns foreshore.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

Two were seen roosting with Bar-tailed Godwits on the Cairns foreshore.

**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

Common on Michaelmas Cay where we saw a dozen or so.

**Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris***

A large flock of these migratory waders was seen at the southern end of the Cairns foreshore, waiting for the tide to go out.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata***

We saw several of these trans-equatorial migrants feeding busily from the Cairns Esplanade. There were also another four feeding with Wood Sandpipers on mudflats at Hasties Swamp.

**Curlw Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Several were seen feeding with other shorebirds on the Cairns Foreshore.

**Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis***

Flocks of up to 20 birds were observed on the Cairns foreshore.

**Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii***

A single bird flushed from reeds at Lake Wallace in NSW then we also saw two more on the banks of the Daintree River with Murray.

**Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes***

There were at least three seen on the Cairns foreshore.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

We saw two birds foraging with Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Hasties Swamp on the Atherton Tablelands.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

A single bird was seen at Cattana Wetlands, north of Cairns.

**Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus***

Possibly hundreds on Michaelmas Cay.

**Black Noddy *Anous minutus***

Just the one bird seen perching on the semi-submersible as we arrived at Michaelmas Cay.

**Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae***

Australia's commonest gull, seen often in Cairns and around Sydney.

**Australian (Gull-billed) Tern *Gelochelidon macrotarsus***

Recently split from Gull-billed Tern, we saw as many as five birds along the Cairns Esplanade, including some in breeding and others in non-breeding plumage

**Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii***

Common at Michaelmas Cay.

**Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis***

Very common on Michaelmas Cay where they had just arrived ready to breed.

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

A couple were from the boat on our Great Barrier Reef cruise.

**Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus***

There were at least two seen perching on mooring buoys at Michaelmas Cay, one which followed us to shore as we travelled in the "Beach Buggy".

**Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscata***

Very common with many sitting on eggs on Michaelmas Cay.

**Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana***

Several were seen flying as we made our way out to Michaelmas Cay from Cairns and another flock of possibly eight was seen at the back of the Cay.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

We saw several around the back of Michaelmas Cay when we took a private trip in the "beach buggy".

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

One in adult breeding plumage on the foreshore at Cairns.

**Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia***

The familiar feral pigeon seen in cities such as Katoomba and Cairns.

**White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela***

Five were seen feeding on the ground one morning at Jamberoo in NSW.

**Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis***

Introduced dove first seen in Jamberoo, NSW then in Cairns in North Queensland.

**Brown Cuckoo-dove *Macropygia amboinensis***

Two were seen firstly along the Mt Lewis road near Kingfisher Park. Others were seen later at Chambers Rainforest Wildlife Lodges and at O'Reilly's.

**Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris***

Individuals were seen at a number of places in North Queensland particularly Kingfisher Park, on our drive up Mt Lewis and at Chambers.

**Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera***

Three were seen in the Capertee Valley on our day out with Carol.

**Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes***

First seen on our morning around Botany Bay. Reasonably common thereafter in NSW with several around Jamberoo. Several sightings also in North Queensland

**Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta***

First seen in the sandpit at Mt Molloy School! There were also several at Granite Gorge.

**Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca***

Several of these huge pigeons were seen strolling around the grounds at O'Reilly's.

**Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida***

Common in the Capertee Valley in NSW and North Queensland.

**Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis***

Seen regularly throughout North Queensland, especially around Cairns.

**Wompoo Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus***

We had great views of at least three of these colourful Fruit Doves, including a juvenile at Daintree NP. They were heard frequently at Kingfisher Park, Mt Lewis and at Chambers.

**Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus***

Heard calling at Chambers but remained frustratingly invisible!

**Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina***

Great view of a single bird in the mangroves near the Cairns Esplanade.

**Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa***

Many seen around Cairns and Daintree.

**Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus***

Several feeding in the park around Jamberoo. Also seen at Mt Lewis in North Queensland and at O'Reilly's.

**Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus***

Just one sighting from the minibus of a single bird as we drove out of Granite Gorge in North Queensland, although we had heard a pair calling along East Mary Rd near Mt Carbine earlier.

**Pacific Koel *Eudynamys orientalis***

Although heard several times in NSW it wasn't until we were in North Queensland that we finally got to see a shiny black male feeding on fruiting figs along the Daintree River with Murray.

**Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae***

Excellent close-up views of two of these huge migratory cuckoos at Kamay-Botany Bay National Park on our first morning. They were seen regularly from then on usually flying overhead.

**Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus***

A single bird was seen briefly at Chambers.

**Little Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus***

A very obliging bird at Redden Island perched down low for us all to see.

**Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis***

Great close-up views of two individuals at Barren Grounds in NSW. Individuals were also seen at Chambers and O'Reilly's.

**Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus***

Heard calling incessantly at three places – Kingfisher Park, Granite Gorge and O'Reilly's but remained elusive!

**Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica***

Spotlighting with Alan, we had great views of one bird during our evening session.

**Southern Boobook *Ninox boobook***

A single bird called quite close to the Viewing Platform late one evening at Chambers Wildlife Lodges.

**Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis***

Excellent views of a pair with a nest over the Daintree River with Murray.

**Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides***

At O'Reilly's, local guide Duncan showed us one sitting on a nest.

**Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae***

Reasonably common over Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands.

**White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus***

We first saw a flock of ten or so hawking over the Reef Fleet Terminal at Cairns before our Michaelmas Cay trip. Later there was a larger flock of maybe 20 or more hawking low over the Nerada Tea Plantation.

**Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis***

One flew over at Redden Island, Cairns. We also had several other sightings of mainly single birds on the Atherton Tablelands in North Queensland.

**Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera sylvia***

Fantastic views of these spectacular kingfishers firstly at the Jindalba Boardwalk in Daintree National Park then each day at Kingfisher Park where they come to breed in termite mounds.

**Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae***

Common and widespread, seen nearly every day.

**Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii***

Two could be heard calling from the garden of a private residence in Mt Molloy then one was seen perched at Lake Mitchell.

**Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii***

Several individuals seen around Kingfisher Park and Daintree, usually perched on powerlines.

**Torresian Kingfisher *Todiramphus sordidus***

We heard at least four birds clearly in the mangroves near the Cairns Esplanade and finally one came in close and perched for some time!

**Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus***

Individuals were seen at a number of sites in NSW, firstly at Royal National Park along the Hacking River, and also at Jamberoo. Just the one record from Queensland at Cattana Wetland.

**Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea***

At least three were seen during our Daintree River cruise with Murray. One was also seen at Bushy Creek, Kingfisher Park.

**Little Kingfisher *Ceyx pusillus***

A great sighting of this tiny kingfisher on the Daintree River with Murray, a species not generally found at this time of year.

**Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus***

Two were first seen in the Capertee Valley with local guide Carol. We also had a couple of sightings in North Queensland at the Centenary Lakes in Cairns and Granite Gorge.

**Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides***

There was a single bird near Glen Davis hunting from power poles and another was seen near Mt Carbine in North Queensland when we were looking for Bustards.

**Brown Falcon *Falco berigora***

A single bird was seen from the minibus as we drove through the Capertee Valley,

**Red-tailed Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii***

We saw a pair feeding in pine trees at Granite Gorge, the bright red panels in the tails of the male contrasting with the orange barring of the female.

**Glossy Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami***

Excellent close-up views of a pair with a youngster feeding in a Casuarina tree at Fitzroy Falls in NSW.

**Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus***

Three were seen flying over Royal National Park on our first day then another three, also flying in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

**Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla***

Widespread in NSW.

**Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris***

Large flocks were seen each day near our motel at Jamberoo either feeding on the ground or in nearby trees.

**Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea***

First seen at Botany Bay feeding with Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. Common also in the Capertee Valley

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita***

Very common, recorded nearly every day.

**Australian King Parrot *Alisterus scapularis***

These large red and green parrots were first seen at Royal National Park and Fitzroy Falls in NSW. Very common and very tame at O'Reilly's however!

**Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus***

A large flock of possibly 25 was seen feeding on mangos in private residences near Mt Molloy School. Another four were seen along the Lake Mitchell causeway and allowed us to get quite close.

**Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus***

Fairly common in the Capertee Valley.

**Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans***

A very common parrot both in the Blue Mountains and at O'Reilly's.

**Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus***

We were lucky enough to find three or four of these parrots in a large shady tree at Granite Gorge.

**Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius***

A pair was first seen at Jamberoo. Later with Carol we saw others at Lake Wallace and in the Capertee Valley

**Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella***

Excellent, though brief views of single birds, one along the dry Capertee River and the other coming into the dam at Carol's block.

**Little Lorikeet *Parvipsitta pusilla***

Great views of several of these tiny parrots feeding in flowering eucalypts at Glen Alice in the Capertee Valley on our day out with Carol.

**Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus***

Common, recorded most days.

**Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus***

After seeing several fly overhead on a few occasions, some were eventually seen well as they fed high in the canopy at Kingfisher Park. A few were also seen at Chambers

**Double-eyed Fig Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma***

Good views of several birds feeding at Lake Eacham on our day out with local guide Alan.

**Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor***

A single bird was seen very well at Kingfisher Park after we tracked down its call. Heard also at O'Reilly's.

**Albert's Lyrebird *Menura alberti***

Last day at O'Reilly's, two were heard calling on our pre-breakfast walk then one appeared on the road ahead of us. We found it gain briefly before it reappeared on the edge of the road down to the Spa Villas and everyone got see it.

**Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae***

Having walked the entire rainforest trail at Minnamurra we eventually tracked down a young male that was scratching in the leaf litter right by the Lyrebird Café! Another was seen briefly as it scurried across the road as we drove up to Barren Grounds one evening. Our only other sighting was of a single bird feeding quietly at Fitzroy Falls.

**Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris***

Heard often in the rainforest around O'Reilly's, we had our best views from the Tree Top Walk and at the Mountain Gardens.

**Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus maculosus***

Seen commonly around Chambers Rainforest Lodges where some would come in to take fruit put out on our balconies.

**Tooth-billed Bowerbird *Scenopoeetes dentirostris***

Good views of a calling male near his scruffy bower at Mt Lewis, where we heard several others as well. Best views though of one at a private residence in Malanda that Alan took us to. .

**Golden Bowerbird *Prionodura newtoniana***

Excellent views of this rainforest gem with Alan at an undisclosed site.

**Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus***

The emblem of O'Reilly's and a regular visitor to the feeders.

**Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus***

Numerous sightings in Royal National Park, Jamberoo, Minnamurra and the Blue Mountains in NSW and at O'Reilly's in Queensland.

**Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis***

Several birds, including a male tending his bower, were seen within the grounds of the Mt Molloy School. Other birds were seen later at Granite Gorge.

**White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaea***

Seen firstly in Royal National Park on our first day then on a number of occasions subsequently in the Blue Mountains and Capertee Valley, NSW. In Queensland we saw the smaller, northern race at Chambers where they were particularly vocal!

**Red-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris erythroptis***

Great views of a single bird at O'Reilly's with local guide Duncan then we found another in eucalypts along the Python Rock Trail.

**Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus***

Seen in the Capertee Valley and around Glen Davis.

**Lovely Fairywren *Malurus amabilis***

Excellent views of two males and a female together at Redden Island near Cairns.

**Variiegated Fairywren *Malurus lamberti***

At least six birds, including both males and females, were seen in Kamay-Botany Bay and Royal National Parks, NSW.

**Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus***

Several, including some brilliant males were first seen in Royal National Park. Later we came across more by the Lithgow Sewage Ponds and also at Glen Davis. They were also common at O'Reilly's.

**Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus***

Great views of our fourth and final species of fairywren at Maryfarms, North Queensland, where we watched several birds, both male and female, at close quarters.

**Southern Emuwren *Stipiturus malachurus***

Not an easy bird to see, particularly in windy conditions but we did spot a blue-throated male but which appeared to have no tail feathers!

**Black Honeyeater *Sugomel niger***

A first for this tour, even local guide Carol hadn't seen this nomadic species in the Capertee Valley before! We were lucky enough to find at least two males and a female feeding on mistletoe in riverside Casuarinas along the dry Capertee River.

**Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura***

One was first seen at Redden Island just north of Cairns then almost daily from then on in North Queensland.

**Scarlet Myzomela *Myzomela sanguinolenta***

Several stunning males were seen on all three days at Kingfisher Park.

**Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris***

Seen firstly at Royal National Park then Jamberoo but relatively common around the Blue Mountains and at O'Reilly's.

**Banded Honeyeater *Cissomela pectoralis***

Following a tip-off from Carol Iles at Kingfisher Park, we eventually found one of these uncommon honeyeaters feeding in a flowering eucalypt near the boardwalk at Abattoir Swamp. We also found another at Davies Creek National Park.

**Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta***

Two of these plain yet very loud honeyeaters were seen along the Cairns Esplanade.

**New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae***

The common honeyeater of southern Australia, seen at Royal National Park, Jamberoo and also at the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens on our way back to Sydney.

**White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris niger***

Two birds were feeding in a flowering eucalypt alongside the boardwalk at Abattoir Swamp, near Kingfisher Park in North Queensland.

**Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayanus***

Common Tablelands endemic around Kingfisher Park and at Chambers Rainforest Wildlife Lodges.

**Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis***

Several were seen moving quickly through vegetation along the causeway at Lake Mitchell.

**Helmeted (Hornbill) Friarbird *Philemon buceroides***

First seen in flowering trees at Redden Island then again at Cattana Wetlands and at Daintree before our morning cruise with Murray.

**Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus***

Seen most days in NSW particularly at Royal National Park and Jamberoo in flowering eucalypts. Also quite common in Queensland at Mt Lewis and Granite Gorge.

**Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis***

Three were spotted at Maryfarms in North Queensland where we were looking for bustards. A single juvenile was seen later feeding in a Silky Oak at the Mt Molloy School.

**Black-chinned Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis***

At least five were foraging in eucalypts around Glen Davis in NSW on our early morning walk with Carol.

**Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris***

A few came into drink at the water tank on Carol's block in the Capertee Valley.

**White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis***

Four were seen firstly at Kingfisher Park then others subsequently at Kingfisher Park.

**White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus***

Three were seen feeding in eucalypts high above the creek at Old Ford Reserve, NSW.

**White-eared Honeyeater *Nesoptilotis leucotis***

Just the one bird was seen at the Old Ford Reserve in the Megalong Valley, NSW.

**Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus***

Two of these migratory honeyeaters were seen at the Cairns Centenary Lakes, where they had their pendulous hanging nests. We also saw several more on at Abattoir Swamp near Kingfisher Park.

**Little Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera***

Very common in the park at Jamberoo and around the Blue Mountains.

**Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata***

Common in NSW, seen often in the Blue Mountains and the Capertee Valley.

**Bridled Honeyeater *Bolemoreus frenatus***

At least four were seen at Mt Lewis, particularly near the little pond up from the clearing.

**Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Caligavis chrysops***

Fairly common in NSW at the Royal National Park and again at the Old Ford Reserve in the Megalong Valley. Also seen in small numbers at Kingfisher Park.

**Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops***

Hard to find again this year because of the drought but we found two very obliging birds at local guide Carol's bush block in the Capertee Valley.

**Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys***

Near O'Reilly's, local guide Duncan showed us a couple of these amazing sounding honeyeaters. Previously on the trip we had heard others at a colony far below us at the Three Sisters lookout in the Blue Mountains.

**Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala***

Very common in NSW.

**Yellow Honeyeater *Stomiopera flava***

One was first seen right outside our hotel in Cairns! Others were seen later at Granite Gorge in North Queensland.

**Varied Honeyeater *Gavicalis versicolor***

Locally common alongside the mangroves and in trees near the Esplanade in Cairns.

**Fuscous Honeyeater *Ptilotula fuscus***

A few were seen around Carol's block in the Capertee Valley.

**White-plumed Honeyeater *Ptilotula penicillatus***

Very common in the Capertee Valley.

**Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis***

Several seen at Kingfisher Park, distinguishable from the similar Yellow-spotted by their clicking call and proportionately longer bill.

**Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga 15otata***

First seen at Redden Island near Cairns. Many were seen at Daintree, Kingfisher Park and Mt Lewis.

**Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii***

In NSW seen firstly at Royal National Park then at Jamberoo and Minnamurra Rainforest. Very common on both the Atherton Tablelands and at O'Reilly's in Queensland.

**Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus***

Not easy to find this year, one was seen on our first morning at Botany Bay National Park and another in the Blue Mountains.

**Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus***

There was a pair nesting in a fallen tree at Glen Davis, right outside the hotel. Luckily the nest was still accessible to the adult birds. Our host, Adam, was going to wait until the young had departed before removing the tree from across the driveway!

**Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis***

A pair was seen foraging through the undergrowth at Mt Lewis.

**Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis***

First seen at Mt Lewis in North Queensland then along the Boardwalk and various other trails at O'Reilly's.

**White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis***

Seen firstly at Botany Bay National Park then again at Minnamurra Rainforest where it appeared to be quite common. Also very common and amazingly tame at O'Reilly's!

**Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostra***

Common in rainforest in North Queensland then several more were seen at O'Reilly's.

**Weebill *Smicrorhis brevirostris***

Our only sighting, possibly because of the drought in NSW, was of a party of just three birds near Maryfarms in North Queensland.

**Brown Gerygone *Gerygone mouki***

Many seen foraging in rainforest in NSW at Minnamurra in NSW. Common also at O'Reilly's in Queensland.

**Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris***

A couple were seen in the mangroves just north of the Cairns esplanade then later with Murray we saw a few along the Daintree River on our cruise.

**White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea***

A single male with its obvious white throat was seen along the Megalong Rd when we stopped for some wallabies!

**Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa***

We found at least four in flowering shrubs at the Nerada Tea Plantations but trying to get a decent view of them as they raced back and forth proved rather difficult!

**Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina***

Two of these Tablelands endemics was spotted at Mt Lewis, high up in the canopy.

**Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla***

A few were seen firstly at Barren Grounds. Common in the Blue Mountains and also at O'Reilly's.

**Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides***

Once out into woodland down Duck Creek Road with local O'Reilly's guide, Duncan, we soon found a little flock of six or so of these mid-canopy foragers.

**Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa***

There was a pair outside the Glen Davis Hotel that were nesting in a tree that had fallen across the driveway.

**Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana***

A couple were seen feeding in a Casuarina in Jamberoo one morning. There were also others seen along the Capertee River.

**Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata***

Fairly common in the Royal National Park and Fitzroy Falls where we saw them foraging in eucalypt canopies.

Also at Old Ford Reserve along the Megalong Valley Road where we counted 14 flying out of one tree.

**White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus***

Just the one sighting of four birds in the Capertee Valley with local guide, Carol.

**Australian Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii***

Excellent views of these busy forest floor foragers each day at O'Reilly's, the white-throated males and orange-throated females.

**Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii***

Great close-up views of three groups at Mt Lewis comprising seven individuals.

**Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus***

First seen at Royal National Park in NSW then heard frequently after that. Great views also at O'Reilly's where they are incredibly tame.

**Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer***

Excellent views of a single bird along the Jindalba Boardwalk in Daintree National Park where we met a local bird photographer. Later that same day we saw another two by the banks of Bushy Creek at Kingfisher Park.

**White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus***

Fairly common around Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands. We also had a couple of them accompany us on the ferry across the Daintree River!

**Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus***

Two were with the more numerous White-browed Woodswallows in a mixed flock in the Capertee Valley.

**White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus***

Very common in the Capertee Valley.

**Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus***

Two birds seen along the Capertee River, NSW.

**Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi***

Seen well at the Centenary Lakes in Cairns and again at Chambers Rainforest Wildlife Lodges.

**Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus***

First seen in Botany Bay National Park and again in Jamberoo. Better views were had with Duncan at O'Reilly's while we were looking at a Tawny Frogmouth on its nest.

**Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis***

One was seen in the Capertee Valley, NSW then several others at O'Reilly's in southern Queensland.

**Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen***

Reasonably common throughout the more open areas of NSW and Queensland.

**Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina***

Very common throughout NSW and at O'Reilly's.

**Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae***

A couple were first seen at Jamberoo on our first morning walk there. Other individuals were seen at a number of places in NSW and Queensland most days.

**Barred Cuckooshrike *Coracina lineata***

Two feeding in a flowering fig tree at Kingfisher Park and three at Lake Eacham on our day out with Alan.

**White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis***

A single bird was first seen at the Cattana Wetlands just after everyone had piled back into the bus! Other single birds were seen at a number of locations around the Tablelands in North Queensland.

**Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris***

We had one at Royal National Park that did several flybys but wouldn't perch for a good view! We also saw one along the Daintree River with Murray but best views were of a single male high up in a tree next to the orchard at Kingfisher Park.

**White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor***

At least three were spotted in the Capertee Valley in NSW, including one male that perched obligingly for us at Glen Alice. Later on a par was seen foraging along the causeway at Lake Mitchell in North Queensland

**Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela***

One was seen from the Madya Boardwalk in Daintree National Park and another at Kingfisher Park.

**Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus***

Good views of two birds in the Capertee Valley with local guide Carol. Another was spotted along the Python Rock Trail at O'Reilly's.

**Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex***

Frustratingly close but always at the top of the rainforest, the sound of this songster soon became an "ear-worm", as at least one bird called repetitively around Kingfisher Park but never showed itself!

**Australian Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis***

A male was first seen in Royal National Park, then a female at Minnamurra Rainforest. Further sightings were in both NSW and North Queensland and also at O'Reilly's.

**Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris***

Seen frequently in NSW, firstly in Botany Bay Royal National Park. Common at Barren Grounds and in the Capertee Valley. Also seen at Lake Mitchell and Davies Creek in North Queensland

**Bower's Shrikethrush *Colluricincla boweri***

Excellent views of two birds with Alan at Lake Barrine.

**Little Shrikethrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha***

Individuals seen each day at Kingfisher Park especially around the orchard and at Chambers.

**Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica***

First seen at Royal National Park on our first morning. Elsewhere, mostly individuals seen at Barren Grounds in NSW and also at O'Reilly's.

**Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti***

Several seen feeding in the Silky Oaks near Jamberoo. Common also throughout north Queensland.

**Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus***

Several individuals seen at a number of places in NSW including Jamberoo and the Capertee Valley.

**Green Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus***

Frequent around Cairns including at the Esplanade. Also along the Daintree River on our cruise with Murray.

**Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus***

At least four were first seen at Cattana Wetlands then commonly throughout North Queensland and at O'Reilly's.

**Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys***

Very common throughout.

**Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris***

Great sighting of a single individual of this bird in the carpark at Abattoir Swamp as we prepared to walk down to the hide.

**Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa***

Moderately common throughout the tour.

**Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons***

First views of single birds at Barren Grounds and Minnamurra in NSW. Good views also of a couple of birds at Redden Island near Cairns and then at least three birds were seen at O'Reilly's.

**Spectacled Monarch *Monarcha trivirgatus***

Fairly common at Kingfisher Park.

**Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis***

First seen at Minnamurra in NSW. Also seen in the rainforest at Kingfisher Park and later at O'Reilly's in Queensland.

**White-eared Monarch *Carterornis leucotis***

Duncan thought that Charlie's waterhole, a few kilometres down the mountain from O'Reilly's, was our best bet for this species but even he was surprised how quickly we found one there!

**Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi***

Great sighting of a single bird at Kingfisher Park.

**Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca***

Very common, seen nearly every day throughout.

**Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula***

Four individual sightings, all in North Queensland at Kingfisher Park and O'Reilly's.

**Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto***

Excellent views of both males and females nesting on the Daintree River cruise with Murray and again later that day in the Daintree National Park.

**Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta***

A couple of birds were seen well in the Capertee Valley in NSW with local guide Carol.

**Torresian Crow *Corvus orru***

The common corvid seen in Brisbane and at O'Reilly's.

**Little Raven *Corvus mellori***

Several were seen at the Lithgow Sewage Ponds and around Lake Wallace in NSW.

**Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides***

The common corvid of Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

**White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos***

One was first seen at the Old Ford Reserve along the Megalong Valley Rd. Several more were around the Capertee Valley and particularly Glen Davis on our walk before breakfast.

**Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus***

Seen both days at O'Reilly's and particularly well in the Mountain Gardens where a couple of females or young birds were foraging down low.

**Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae***

Excellent views of several birds at Chambers and also at a private residence in Malanda that Alan took us to.

**Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito***

Fairly common in rainforest at Kingfisher Park and Chambers Rainforest Lodges.

**Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis***

First seen at Botany Bay National Park then at a number of locations in NSW including Minnamurra Rainforest, Fitzroy Falls and in the Capertee Valley. They were also very common at O'Reilly's.

**Mangrove Robin *Peneoenanthe pulverulenta***

Good views of a pair at the edge of the mangroves near the Cairns foreshore.

**White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa***

Great views of a single bird near the parking area at Davies Creek National Park, where we had seen one on a previous tour ten years earlier!

**Grey-headed Robin *Heteromyias cinereifrons***

Individual birds were seen briefly on the walk up Mt Lewis. They were also fairly common at Chambers Rainforest Lodges.

**Lemon-bellied Flyrobin *Microeca flavigaster***

A single sighting of just one bird that perched obligingly for us at Kingfisher Park on our first afternoon there.

**Jacky Winter *Microeca fascinans***

Good views of two of these flycatchers in the Capertee Valley on our day out with Carol.

**Rose Robin *Petroica rosea***

At least two or three brilliantly coloured males were seen at O'Reilly's.

**Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang***

A fortuitous find of a pair of these robins at a dog exercise park in Blackheath after we were forced to find alternative sites because of the bushfire warning!

**Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus***

A couple of these introduced birds were first seen at Jamberoo in the Southern Highlands one morning. Another was seen later at the Lithgow Water Treatment Works.

**Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena***

Common throughout the trip.

**Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel***

Several birds were seen soaring in association with Tree Martins over Wentworth Falls Lake in NSW.

**Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans***

Several birds were seen soaring in association with Fairy Martins over Wentworth Falls Lake. Also seen around the Capertee Valley in NSW and the Tablelands and O'Reilly's in Queensland.

**Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis***

Very common at Lake Wallace, NSW.

**Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi***

Just a single bird seen at Lake Wallace this year.

**Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis***

One was seen on a fence at Maryfarms in North Queensland.

**Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis***

Three birds seen firstly at Jamberoo. Also at a number of places in North Queensland including the orchard at Kingfisher Park and at O'Reilly's.

**Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica***

Very common around Cattana Wetlands, Kingfisher Park and along the Daintree River where they were nesting in huge colonies.

**Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis***

Seen most days but fortunately still not at O'Reilly's.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Common in NSW.

**Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei***

A couple of birds were seen along the Border Track and also the Python Rock Track at O'Reilly's.

**Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata***

Great views of single birds at Minnamurra and Fitzroy Falls in NSW.

**Common Blackbird *Turdus merula***

One seen briefly from outside the Blackheath Rhododendron Gardens in the Blue Mountains.

**Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum***

Both male and female were seen firstly in the Capertee Valley. Reasonably common in North Queensland where they were seen most days.

**Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis***

Our first sighting was of a male and a female at the Cattana Wetlands in North Queensland. Great views also at Kingfisher Park and very common at Redden Island in North Queensland.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Common in NSW and around Cairns.

**Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata***

A single bird was seen in the Capertee Valley with local guide, Carol.

**Red-browed Finch *Neochmia temporalis***

First seen around Jamberoo in NSW but it wasn't until we got to Kingfisher Park that we saw large numbers of these native finches. They were also extremely common at O'Reilly's.

**Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton***

A first for this tour, we saw a couple of these native finches, including a bright male at Cattana Wetlands, Cairns.

**Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata***

Four were seen in the Capertee Valley near the Capertee River on our day there with Carol.

**Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii***

Three were first seen with Zebra Finches in the Capertee Valley, NSW. Several more were seen later on outside the Mt Molloy School and along the causeway at Lake Mitchell in North Queensland.

**Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata***

Two of these introduced finches were seen feeding close to the mangroves at the north end of the Cairns Esplanade while we were searching for Mangrove Robins.

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax***

A common species at the feeders around Kingfisher Park but strangely not seen elsewhere.

**Australian Pipit *Anthus australis***

A single bird was first seen perched on a fence as we drove along the Megalong Valley Road in the Blue Mountains. There were a couple of subsequent sightings of one or two birds in the Capertee Valley where we had our best views.

**MAMMALS**

Duck-billed Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*  
 Common Wombat *Vombatus ursinus*  
 Short-eared (Mountain) Brush-tailed Possum *Trichosurus caninus*  
 Lemuroid Ring-tailed Possum *Hemibelideus lemuroides*  
 Herbert River Ring-tailed Possum *Pseudochirulus herbertensis*  
 Green Ring-tailed Possum *Pseudochirops archeri*  
 Torresian Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata*  
 Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps*  
 Red-necked Pademelon *Thylogale thetis*  
 Mareeba Rock Wallaby *Petrogale mareeba*  
 Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*  
 Common Wallaroo (Euro) *Macropus robustus*  
 Whip-tailed Wallaby *Macropus parryi*  
 Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*  
 Red-necked (Bennett's) Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus*  
 Swamp Rat *Rattus lutreolus*  
 Grey-headed Flying Fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*  
 Spectacled Flying Fox *Pteropus conspicillatus*  
 Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros diadema*

**REPTILES**

Estuarine Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* (on the Daintree River cruise)  
 Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (Michaelmas Cay)  
 Saw-shelled Turtle *Wollumbinia latisternum* (Granite Gorge)  
 Lace Monitor *Varanus varius* (Royal National Park)  
 Eastern Water Dragon *Physignathus lesueurii* (Minnamurra)  
 Boyd's Forest Dragon *Hypilurus boydii* (Kingfisher Park)  
 Two-lined Dragon *Diporiphora bilineata* (Davies Creek NP)  
 Frilled Lizard or Frillneck *Chlamydosaurus kingii* (Davies Creek NP)  
 Northern Leaf-tailed Gecko *Saltuarius cornutus* (Mt Hypipamee)  
 Chameleon Gecko *Carphodactylus laevis* (Mt Hypipamee)  
 Green Tree Snake *Dendrelaphis punctulata* (on the Daintree River cruise)

**BUTTERFLIES**

Orchard Swallowtail *Papilio aegaeus*  
 Ulysses Swallowtail *Papilio ulysses*  
 Richmond Birdwing *Ornithoptera richmondia*  
 Cairns Birdwing *Ornithoptera euphorion*  
 Caper White *Belenois java*  
 Australian Painted Lady *Vanessa kershawi*  
 Varied Sword-grass Brown *Tisiphone abeona*