

# Australia

Perth & the Wild Southwest

Sun 13th-Tue 29th October 2019

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Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Western Whistler • Bush Bronzewing • Spotted Pardalote • Freckled Duck • Australian Magpie • Splendid Fairywren. © tour participant Jack Levene

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

## Australia | Perth & the Wild Southwest

**Tour Leader: Peter Taylor**

**With Jack Levene, John & Sue Melling, Jim Scarff, Wim Vader and Stuart White.**

The South West of Western Australia is one of the remotest parts of the planet and consequently hosts a plethora of endemic flora and fauna. This year's tour featured a diverse group of participants hailing from England, the US and Holland. With the group arriving via the direct new Dreamliner flight, it meant we had a little more time available so a late afternoon drive up the escarpment above the hotel to King's Park was a must! We started appropriately enough on the Nature Trail and, as if on cue, a Painted Button-quail appeared right by the boardwalk and gave brief views before scuttling off into the thick undergrowth. A pair of Purple-backed Fairywrens soon followed as did the first of many honeyeater species in Red Wattlebird, Brown, Singing and White-cheeked Honeyeater. There was time also for a quick stroll across the road from our hotel to a little wetland where masses of Little Black Cormorants were roosting and Australasian Darters tended to their pale, almost transparent, young. A couple of Nankeen Night-Herons ventured out to the edge of the mud while Australian Reed Warblers darted back and forth across the water.

A 30-minute ferry ride from the Port of Fremantle found us on the famous Rottnest Island, home of the Quokka! However, it wasn't until lunch time that we got up close and personal with these unique marsupials when several enterprising individuals joined us on the picnic table! Beyond the hustle and bustle of the Settlement, we explored the various lakes and the golf course, surprisingly devoid of golfers. Resident shorebirds such as Pied Stilt, Pied Oystercatcher and Red-capped Plovers mingled with more familiar trans-equatorial migrants like Red-necked Stints and Ruddy Turnstones. White-fronted Chats and Red-capped Robins foraged around the fairways accompanied by the discordant call of Western Gerygones. A lone Sacred Kingfisher provided a flash of colour before a pair of menacing Brown Goshawks silenced them all. Overhead a party of four Eastern Ospreys circled, an unusual sight for a generally solitary species! Returning to Fremantle late afternoon, outside on the upper deck of the Rottnest Express we passed by a number of Australasian Gannets fishing amongst the numerous cargo ships, moored off shore.

Herdsmen Lake, just a few kilometres from our hotel in Perth, was an excellent spot to start coming to grips with the variety of Australian waterfowl. Along with nine of the eleven local duck species, including the rare Freckled Duck, we also had close views of a Spotless Crake and a Little Grassbird. From the boardwalk we sighted our second fairywren, this time a male Splendid, brilliantly decked out in various shades of blue. Further around the lake we found a family of Tawny Frogmouths, two adults trying to look inconspicuous while their two recently fledged young, reminiscent of characters from "The Muppets", watched our every move. Meanwhile, last year's surviving offspring sat forlornly in a neighbouring tree.

After grabbing some take-away lunches we headed up into the Darling Ranges for a picnic before embarking on the longish drive to the Dryandra Woodlands to complete the day. Here we encountered our first kangaroos, a party of Western Greys, coming out to feed on the lush grass around the cottages. Here also were Rufous Treecreepers, an often ground-dwelling species, Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters that dominated the tree canopies and yet another species of fairywren, this time a pair of Blue-breasted. Purple-crowned Lorikeets rocketed past giving no chance of a decent view but we would catch up with them later in the tour. Next morning we returned and added a variety of new and unfamiliar species, including a pair of Scarlet Robins, a male Western Whistler, the corvid-like Grey Currawong and a Shining Bronze Cuckoo, majestic in his metallic plumage.

Right opposite our motel in Narrogin, we made an early visit to a little reserve known as Foxes Lair. In next to no time we had chalked off four of the south west's endemics. Brightly coloured Red-capped Parrots cackled from their perches while Gilbert's Honeyeater and the beautiful Western Spinebill foraged for nectar in the flowering banksias and dryandras. Finally a flock of huge Baudin's Black Cockatoos settled in a grove of marri trees, heavily laden with nuts, and proceeded to feed noisily as we stood below. However, even this sight may have been eclipsed when a magnificent Square-tailed Kite soared low over the tree tops coming in very close as if to check us out.

An afternoon visit to Wagin provided us with a tourist opportunity in the form of the "Giant Ram", a huge statue, typical of a number of other "Big" features dotted across Australia (like the Big Banana, the Big Pineapple and the Big Galah!). Here also we found our first Common Bronzewing, a local dove species with wing patches that change hue as they move, and many White-cheeked Honeyeaters feeding on the red bottlebrush flowers. Wagin also has its own sewage ponds and we stopped by briefly to find a number of wader species such as the diminutive Black-fronted Dotterel as well as more familiar migratory species in Wood and Common Sandpiper.

We were also surprised by a female Mistletoebird that came in and plucked insects off the chain wire fence, totally oblivious to our presence!

In the wheatbelt proper, to the east of Perth, we stopped by Lake Yealering where a few Banded Stilts roosted with flocks of Pied Stilts and Red-necked Avocets, fortunately quite close to the shore. More honeyeaters here and at nearby Corrigin Nature Reserve in the form of Spiny-cheeked, White-eared and White-fronted before we checked in at our deluxe chalets in Merredin. A large granite outcrop, known as Merredin Peak, provided us with our first male Red-capped Robin, an absolute beacon in the dry brush. Here too we found our fourth and final Thornbill being Chestnut-rumped having earlier ticked off Inland, Western and Yellow-rumped. A pre breakfast sortie to another local reserve was interrupted briefly as we came across a foraging party of stunning Crimson Chats on a quiet roadside. Black-faced Woodswallows and Crested Pigeons joined them and a couple of Australian Pipits patrolled an adjacent paddock. When we finally got to Maughan Nature Reserve we heard the rising whistle call of a Southern Scrub Robin and before long we found ourselves following a pair of these shy ground dwellers before they both perched up briefly in front of us.

The weather forecast for the next few days was hot and windy but even so we were lucky enough to find a pair of giant Red-tailed Black Cockatoos roosting in a tall eucalypt tree just east of Southern Cross. As we scoped these magnificent birds, a pair of rare Major Mitchell Cockatoos suddenly broke cover from an even closer tree and flew off through the woods, allowing clear if brief views of their bright pink underwings contrasting against their subtle pale pink and white plumage. North of Kalgoorlie the mercury soared even higher, topping 38C at one stage! Undeterred we made our way slowly through the eucalypts and acacia scrubland of Goongarrie Station finding Gilbert's Whistlers and a pair of White-winged Fairywrens. We had lunch in the relative shade near the old homestead where a pair of Torresian Crows nested, their nasal calls easily distinguished from the more common Australian Ravens that we'd encountered so far. A very cheeky Pied Butcherbird joined us at the table and would no doubt have helped himself given the chance! Just as we finished our sandwiches and cakes (and very welcome ice cold drinks), a pair of Western Bowerbirds suddenly flew in and began to forage through nearby bushes. Occasionally they popped out onto exposed branches and gave tantalising opportunities for the photographers. Later that afternoon we made our way to a huge freshwater lake called Rowles Lagoon. With the temperature still in the mid 30s and the wind incessant, it was a pleasant surprise to find a Brown Falcon perched at eye level as we drove by and a pair of Whistling Kites circling low over us, much to the annoyance of the local magpies! Eventually, at the third attempt in likely habitat, we found a pair of White-browed Treecreepers foraging quietly in a grove of she-oak trees then on the long drive back to Kalgoorlie we spotted a pale bird on the side of the road in the distance. As we got closer we discovered that it was a lone Cockatiel, a species rarely recorded on this trip and one that is rarely found all on its own.

On our last morning in Kalgoorlie we made a quick visit to the local sewage ponds before the temperature started to climb. Lots of waterfowl here including a few Musk Ducks and more Red-necked Avocets but our final bird was an Australian Spotted Crake, seen foraging in and out of some reeds in the corner of one of the ponds. Further south we encountered a beautiful male Spotted Pardalote, this one of the yellow-rumped race before finally escaping the heat as we drew closer to Esperance and the cool waters of the Southern Ocean.

With the jetty now fixed it meant that this year we could return to Woody Island in the Recherche Archipelago. Flesh-footed Shearwaters followed behind the boat as we powered across the Bay of Islands, while Cape Barren Geese could be seen on the rocky slopes of Thomas Island as we came in close. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle cruised high over the island but declined the offer of a free fish from our deckhand! A couple of Black-faced Cormorants posed on a rocky islet and Australian Sea lions basked on others. Landing on Woody Island we were greeted by a lone Sooty Oystercatcher then as we enjoyed our morning tea in the café, a brave Red-eared Firetail ventured into the bird bath, undaunted by the dozens of clumsy New Holland Honeyeaters and Silvereyes. A couple of Rock Parrots were less daring and we had to be content with more distant views as they perched out on bare tree branches.

Back in Esperance we went in search of Western Wattlebirds at Lake Warden and were well rewarded. However, bird of the day there was undoubtedly the Southern Emuwren, a couple of incredible males with their pale blue throats, working their way to within a few metres of us in the low shrubs. Nearby Monjingup Nature Reserve also had no shortage of Western Wattlebirds, the amazing display of banksias providing a more than sufficient nectar source for them. A pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters posed for us, the first to be so obliging since we began the tour ten days prior.

The Fitzgerald River National Park is massive and we can rarely do justice to the scenery and flora in the short time available. The wildflowers again were spectacular, particularly the extraordinary Royal Hakeas and Quaalup Bells and the panoramic views of the Southern Ocean from high on the slopes of Mt Barren were breath-taking. Along the northern boundary of the park as we headed towards Jerramungup late in the afternoon, two emus

sprinted across the track and several Western Brush Wallabies began to come out and feed, some more eager than others to test the brakes of the minibus.

A walk through the mallee woodland of Corackerup found us plenty of Purple-gaped Honeyeaters and an amazing number of Spotted Pardalotes that nest in tunnels dug into low sandy banks. Every now and then, in the distance we could hear the creaky call of a Whipbird, giving us a taste of what we might see later at Cheynes Beach. And we weren't disappointed! A very early walk before breakfast found us out in the heathland of Waychinicup National Park behind our chalets where after some persistence we had great view of both a Black-throated Whipbird and Western Bristlebird. Noisy Scrub-birds called from the inaccessible depths of the undergrowth but wouldn't be enticed. A persistently calling Brown Quail however did eventually break cover and scuttled across the carpark between flowerbeds.

North of Cheynes Beach lie the imposing Stirling Ranges and it was on our way there that we were stopped in our tracks as a large flock of noisy cockatoos was spotted feeding in roadside pine trees. They were Carnaby's or Short-billed Black Cockatoos and one of the south west endemics we were looking for. Precariously parked on the edge of a busy highway, we spent several minutes watching these raucous birds squabbling and screeching as they fed then continued on through the National Park. At the Stirling Range Retreat, a privately owned accommodation property, we took a walk through the grounds, where we found plenty of birdlife – lots of Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, Restless Flycatchers, tiny Elegant Parrots and eventually, just as we had been about to leave, a Western (Crested) Shrike-tit foraging high in a eucalypt.

Continuing on our way to Pemberton, in the tall karri forest country, we took a break at a small woodland reserve dominated by Wandoo, a type of eucalypt. Apart from a leg stretch, our main aim was to look for Western Yellow Robin, much more reserved than its cousin in the east. Sure enough a pair was soon located and as an added bonus, a pair of Western Rosellas appeared too, adding to our tally of endemics. Minutes later, after we recommenced our journey westwards, a lone Western Corella was spotted feeding in a roadside paddock – unusual to see just one of these gregarious birds but it wasn't long before we were seeing more of these large white cockatoos, mostly on the ground feeding.

We were to spend two nights in the little town of Pemberton, nestled in amongst the giant karri trees. One such tree is the Gloucester Tree, used as a bushfire lookout from a 50m high platform, and available to climb via a set of stakes that spiral up into the canopy for those of an intrepid nature. More of interest to us were the Red-winged Fairywrens, White-breasted Robins, White-browed Babblers and Western Rosellas that frequented the carpark! A highlight of our visit to Pemberton is the opportunity to join a local tour operator in a 4x4 trip through old growth forest and up and over the mighty Yeagerup Dunes to the mouth of the Warren River where it empties into the Southern Ocean. The forest rang with the bell-like calls of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, both species seen collecting nesting material from the forest floor, and the shrieks of Purple-crowned Lorikeets feasting on the karri blossom. On the beach itself, flocks of Sanderling and Red-necked Stints had arrived from their breeding grounds in Siberia and joined Red-capped Plovers on the sandy spits. After lunch we revisited the coast, this time at Windy Harbour, where we found more familiar shorebirds in the form of Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and even a Grey-tailed Tattler, a "county tick" for yours truly!

The lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin is considered to be the most south-westerly point of Australia and can often be a wild and woolly spot. On this occasion it was a mild and sunny day and made all the more pleasant by the arrival of four Rock Parrots which proceeded to feed quietly on the lawns in front of us, and presenting possibly the best and most prolonged photo opportunities for the trip! After a very enjoyable lunch at the lighthouse café we turned northwards towards Busselton, our final destination. Here we made a quick trip out to the industrial area where a pair of Banded Lapwings had decided to again nest in the middle of a vacant lot. It was very pleasing to note that the local council had provided them with sanctuary of sorts, in the form of a set of bright orange bollards joined by strips of plastic hazard tape, positioned closely around the nest!

For our last morning before our return to Perth we took an early morning walk around Ambergate Reserve, maintained by a local Natural History group. Lots of wildflowers, many of them identified and named with individual signs as well as lots of birds. A Pallid Cuckoo called in the distance and a mixed feeding flock provided us with a new species for the trip in White-winged Trillers, recently arrived breeding migrants to southern Australia. Further north at Lake McLarty we finally caught up with some Regent Parrots, a species that had been evasive to date and finally, at Coodanup, we found some Fairy Terns fishing and roosting in the estuary and a lone Little Egret.

Sadly, this had to be our last stop, with a hotel drop-off and planes to catch so we valiantly joined the freeway throng and finally made it full circle back to Perth for our final goodbyes.

**SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED***(Total number of species recorded by the group – 180 including 3 heard only)***Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae***

Our first sighting was on the edge of the Fitzgerald River National Park when two crossed in front of the minibus on the Old Ongerup Rd while a 3<sup>rd</sup> was spotted a few minutes later. Another two were seen in a paddock on the north side of the Stirling Ranges and several more near Pemberton on both days.

**Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae***

Possibly up to eight birds were seen on Thomas Island as we cruised towards Woody Island from Esperance. Later that afternoon we saw dozens more feeding in a paddock near Esperance.

**Black Swan *Cygnus atratus***

The bird emblem of Western Australia was seen regularly throughout the trip with particularly large numbers at Herdsman and Monger lakes in Perth, Rowles Lagoon, north of Coolgardie and Mullet Lake near Esperance.

**Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa***

Once considered extremely rare in Perth we now see these ducks regularly at Herdsman Lake, where we counted four on this occasion.

**Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides***

A large number, maybe 50 or so including many young birds, were seen on our first full day at Rottnest Island. After that they were fairly common and seen most days, including possibly 60 or more at Lake Yealering.

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

These strange looking ducks with their double-keeled bills were first seen at Herdsman Lake in Perth then again at the Wagin Sewage Ponds and just one at a bird-hide in the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands at Busselton.

**Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata***

A pair with four chicks was first seen at a lake in Kings Park then a couple more at John Oldham Park opposite our Perth Hotel. Common duck of farm dams and ponds, mostly on the south coast and around Busselton.

**Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos***

Two were first seen at John Oldham Park, across the road from our hotel in Perth and a few more at Herdsman Lake near Perth.

**Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa***

Common wetland species, seen widely.

**Grey Teal *Anas gracilis***

Reasonably common, first seen at Herdsman Lake then frequently throughout the trip.

**Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea***

Our first views were of several birds swimming in a large flotilla of various duck species at Mullet Lake Esperance. A few more were seen at the Culham Inlet near Hopetoun.

**Hardhead *Aythya australis***

Three were first seen at John Oldham Park, opposite our hotel in Perth. Others were seen later in the trip at places such as Herdsman Lake, Rowles Lagoon, the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, and a couple of the Esperance lakes.

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

A single male and two females were seen at Herdsman Lake.

**Musk Duck *Biziura lobata***

There was a male and three females at Lake Monger in Perth. Other birds were sighted later in the trip at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, Woody Lake and Lake Monjigup Nature Reserve, Esperance.

**Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora***

A single bird was seen well running across the carpark at the Cheynes Beach caravan park after we were alerted by its call outside reception!

**Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes***

Two or three were seen from the boat as we cruised the islands from Esperance.

**Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae***

At the little lake across the road from our Perth hotel on our first evening. They were also quite common at Herdsman Lake.

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

First seen at Lake Monger where there were at least six birds. Also at Rowles Lagoon and the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds in particular.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

These very familiar grebes were only seen at Herdsman Lake in Perth where they were quite numerous and many were sitting on nests.



**Australian White Ibis** *Threskiornis molucca*

Recorded at a few wetlands, including Herdsman Lake in Perth, Lake Warden at Esperance and the Vasse-Wonnerup estuary.

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

Several were first seen flying over Woody Lake at Esperance. Big flocks were seen later around Pemberton and enroute to Cape Leeuwin as well as at the huge ibis rookery in the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands, Busselton.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

A couple were seen feeding in the shallows at Herdsman Lake as we arrived.

**Yellow-billed Spoonbill** *Platalea flavipes*

Two were seen at Herdsman Lake and another six were noted flying overhead at Woody Lake in Esperance.

**Nankeen Night Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus*

A couple were seen at the wetland outside our hotel in Perth and others at Herdsman Lake. A single bird was also seen briefly from a bird-hide at the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

Strangely, only two sightings this year, two birds from Herdsman Lake in Perth and a single bird flying over Woody Lake near Esperance.

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

Seen fairly frequently from Perth onwards to Wagin, Kalgoorlie, and along the South Coast around to Pemberton.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

A single bird feeding at Coodanup Foreshore on our last day was our only record for the trip.

**Australian Pelican** *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Several seen initially at Herdsman Lake, then a number flying overhead at Woody Lake, a single bird at the Warren River Estuary and several more at the Vasse Estuary Wetlands in Busselton.

**Australasian Gannet** *Morus serrator*

A few birds were seen as we travelled back on the ferry from Rottnest Island. Another six were loafing on the water as we cruised out to Woody Island from Esperance and one was seen off the rocks at Cheynes Beach.

**Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Fairly common in small numbers at a number of wetlands. Many seen on our first afternoon across the road from our hotel in Perth.

**Black-faced Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*

Two seen on a rocky islet from our cruise out to Woody Island from Esperance.

**Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Huge number at John Oldham Park. Fairly common in small numbers, more so at Herdsman Lake and particularly at the Vasse Estuary where they were roosting at the ibis rookery.

**Australian Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax varius*

A coastal species seen firstly at Rottnest Island then later sitting on rocks offshore at Windy Harbour.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Seen firstly at Herdsman Lake then another at Woody Lake in Esperance..

**Australasian Darter** *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

Several nests with chicks were seen at the little lake across the road from our hotel in Perth. There were also a few at Herdsman Lake and curiously, one sitting out on rocks at Windy Harbour with Pied Cormorants.

**Eastern Osprey** *Pandion cristatus*

Four were soaring over the golf course on Rottnest Island, and one was seen both days at Cheynes Beach.

**Square-tailed Kite** *Lophoictinia isura*

Great views of a single bird flying over the woodland at Foxes Lair, near our motel in Narrogin one morning.

**Little Eagle** *Hieraaetus morphnoides*

Good view of a single bird at the Stirling Range Retreat.

**Wedge-tailed Eagle** *Aquila audax*

A single bird was first seen soaring high over the Dryandra Woodlands. Another three were scoped on the far shore of Lake Parkeyerring near Wagin. We also had another couple of sightings at Corackerup Nature Reserve and along Salt River Road on the north side of the Stirling Ranges.

**Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus*

A pair were seen flying over the golf course on Rottnest Island and another pair on Woody Island. The identities of other sightings of accipiter species could not be agreed upon!

**Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans*

There were five sightings in all of single birds from Herdsman Lake, Lake Warden, Cheyne Road twice and Salmon Beach near Windy Harbour.

**Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus*

A pair was seen at Rowles Lagoon where they appeared to have recently nested. We also recorded others at the Vasse Wetlands and near Lake McLarty.

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

A single bird was seen soaring high over one of the islands during our cruise from Esperance but refused to come down for a free fish! Another adult bird was spotted at Cheynes Beach.

**Australian Crake *Porzana fluminea***

Good views of a single bird at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

**Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis***

A very elusive bird, particularly in wetlands that are too full to have exposed mud-banks for the birds to appear openly. However we had brief views of a single bird in the reeds at Herdsman Lake from the boardwalk, its red legs easily identifying it

**Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus***

Very common at Herdsman Lake but also seen on our last morning at the Vasse Wetlands.

**Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa***

Common around Herdsman Lake and also in the little lake across the road from our hotel in Perth. One was also seen flying across Big Brook Dam at Pemberton after being flushed from the edge of the path.

**Common Coot *Fulica atra***

Common at a number of lakes including Herdsman, and particularly so at Rowles Lagoon and the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

**Painted Buttonquail *Turnix varius***

A great find at Kings Park, virtually our first bird for the trip! In typical fashion however it slunk off quickly into dense vegetation.

**Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris***

Several were seen on Rottnest Island and another at the Culham Inlet, near Hopetoun. A final one was also seen on our last day at Coodanup Foreshore near Perth.

**Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus***

One was seen on the rocks as we landed at Woody Island cruise and another at Cheynes Beach, also on rocks close to the sea. At Windy Harbour there were three feeding along the sandy beach amongst the seaweed with other shorebirds. Another later on rocks at Cape Leeuwin.

**Pied Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

One was first seen on Rottnest Island. A couple of other sightings including about eight at Herdsman Lake and 40+ at Lake Yealering.

**Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus***

Nine were recorded at Lake Yealering loafing alongside Red-necked Avocets and Pied Stilts and oddly, just a single bird at Lake Warden in Esperance.

**Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae***

A flock of 35 birds was seen at Lake Yealering. We also counted another five individuals at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

**Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor***

Just as we did the previous year following a tip-off from a local birder, we found a pair of these striking birds behind a retail tyre outlet where they were nesting in full view!

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Two were seen distantly from the bird-hide at the Culham Inlet near the Fitzgerald River National Park.

**Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus***

There were several of these widespread resident shorebirds around the lakes on Rottnest Island plus two more inland at Lake Yealering. Also seen at the Culham Inlet and Warren Beach.

**Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyornis melanops***

Two birds were seen at the Wagin Sewage Ponds.

**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

A couple of birds were seen feeding in a shallow salt lake on Rottnest Island, then we found a flock of at least 35 feeding in seaweed at Windy Harbour Beach, south of Pemberton.

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

A single bird was seen in the seaweed at Windy Harbour Beach feeding with other shorebirds.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Many were seen feeding in the shallows at Lake Warden with Red-necked Stints.

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

Fairly common on Rottnest Island, at Lake Warden near Esperance and at Warren Beach.

**Sanderling *Calidris alba***

A large flock was seen at the mouth of the Warren River during our morning tour from Pemberton.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

A single bird was seen at the Wagin Sewage Ponds.

**Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes***

A single bird was spotted feeding in the seaweed with other shorebirds at Windy Harbour Beach, not a common species at this location and a "county" tick for guide Peter!

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

Wagin SP, Rowles Lagoon. At least six of these migratory waders seen at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Two sightings of single birds, one at Mullet Lake and the other on our final day at Coodanup Foreshore.

**Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae***

The ubiquitous, common gull of Australia!

**Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus***

Seen firstly at Esperance and Woody Island then again at Windy Harbour, Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse and Sugarloaf Rock.

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

Two or three were first seen on Rottnest Island, then another single bird on Warren Beach.

**Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii***

Common at several locations around the coast including the Esperance Islands and particularly around Rottnest Island, Cheynes Beach and Warren Beach.

**Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis***

Three at the Coodanup Foreshore south of Perth on our final afternoon.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

Two were seen feeding at Rowles Lagoon in very strong winds.

**Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia***

Feral species in Australia, seen mainly in city areas around Fremantle, Narrogin, Kalgoorlie and Esperance.

**Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis***

Introduced dove, first seen on Rottnest Island and again at Herdsman Lake.

**Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis***

Common introduced dove, seen mainly in and close to towns.

**Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera***

Two birds were first seen near the Giant Ram in Wagin. Fairly common once we got to Pemberton.

**Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans***

Only seen at Cheynes Beach Caravan Park where they had to compete with the ever increasing numbers of Common Bronzewings.

**Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes***

Common, seen most days away from Perth and the forest country.

**Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis***

Good sighting of a single bird at the Stirling Range Retreat.

**Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus***

Several sightings in a number of habitats ranging from the Dryandra Woodlands, Cheynes Beach Caravan Park, mallee woodland of Corackerup Nature Reserve and open woodland at Warrinup Nature Reserve.

**Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus***

One was heard while we were at Ambergate Reserve near Busselton on our last morning.

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

Heard several times but two good sightings at Dryandra Woodlands and Monjینگup Nature Reserve near Esperance.

**Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides***

Excellent views of this well-known family! We found two adults with two fluffy youngsters and a nearby sub-adult, probably last year's offspring.

**Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae***

Introduced Kookaburra to the south west, now well established in the forests and seen on a number of occasions

**Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus***

First sighting was of one on the golf course on Rottnest Island. Other sightings at Woody Lake and Monjینگup Nature Reserve, both near Esperance.

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

Several sightings of these stunning spring/summer breeding migrants from Kings Park and Rottnest Island to Merredin and Esperance and again on our last morning at Ambergate Reserve near Busselton.

**Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides***

Fairly common, seen most days as we drove through the agricultural lands. Our first was over the Wagin Sewage Ponds.

**Brown Falcon *Falco berigora***

Surprisingly just the one sighting of a single bird flying overhead north of Kalgoorlie.

**Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus***

A single bird was seen feeding on the side of the Coolgardie Rd as we headed south from Rowles Lagoon.

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

We had a brief view of a pair flying away at Foxes Lair Nature Reserve near Narrogin then a very obliging pair roosting in eucalypts at Ghooli near Southern Cross.

**Long-billed (Baudin's) Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii***



Excellent views of many birds feeding on marri nuts at Foxes Lair on our walk before breakfast, their very long upper mandibles clearly visible. We also found another three feeding in a roadside ditch in association with a large flock of Carnaby's Black Cockatoos near Frankland.

**Short-billed (Carnaby's) Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris***

While driving towards the Stirling Ranges we stopped on the busy roadside to watch a raucous flock feeding in pine trees. Another large flock of maybe 50 or so was seen feeding in a Canola crop near Frankland.

**Galah *Eolophus roseicapillus***

Common, seen most days.

**Major Mitchell's Cockatoo *Cacatua leadbeateri***

Only our second ever record of this species, we saw two birds flush from a nearby roost site at Ghooli near Southern Cross. Ironically, we were watching a pair of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos at the time and were unaware of their presence!

**Western Corella *Cacatua pastinator***

Surprisingly our first sighting was of a single bird along Wingebellup Rd near Frankland then small flocks of birds were seen feeding in roadside paddocks enroute to Pemberton.

**Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea***

Fairly common around Perth including at Kings Park and Herdsman Lake. Also seen around Merredin.

**Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus***

Two flew past us one morning at Foxes Lair but were too fast for anyone to get binoculars on! Fortunately we were able to stop off at Lake McLarty on our last day before returning to Perth and saw at least six more.

**Red-capped Parrot *Purpureicephalus spurius***

Best views of these endemics were at Foxes Lair, a small reserve over the road from our motel in Narrogin. Other sightings at Woody Lake and Monjigup Nature Reserve near Esperance and near Pemberton.

**Western Rosella *Platycercus icterotis***

First views of this colourful endemic parrot were at Warrinup Nature Reserve. Other good sightings were at the Gloucester Tree and Big Brook Dam in Pemberton.

**Australian Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius***

Common, seen most days.

**Elegant Parrot *Neophema elegans***

Great scope views of these tiny parrots perched up at Foxes Lair both mornings. Later we found a couple feeding by the side of the road near Merredin and several around the grounds of the Stirling Range Retreat.

**Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila***

A couple were first seen perched in a dead tree on Woody Island but by far the best views were at Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse where we watched four birds feeding on the lawns at close quarters.

**Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala***

Alerted by their rasping screech, we heard and saw flocks of these tiny lorikeets in many places. They were particularly common wherever there were flowering eucalypts.

**Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus***

Common introduced lorikeet to Perth.

**Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus***

Heard at Cheynes Beach

**Western Bowerbird *Chlamydera guttata***

Two birds were seen at the Goongarrie Station Homestead just as we were having lunch there.

**White-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris affinis***

On our way out of Rowles Lagoon Reserve we stopped by areas dominated by sheoak and bluebush and eventually found a pair of these arid zone treecreepers in very hot conditions!

**Rufous Treecreeper *Climacteris rufus***

Very common at Dryandra but not seen anywhere else.

**Purple-backed (Variegated) Fairywren *Malurus assimilis***

Great views of a pair at Kings Park on our first afternoon.

**Blue-breasted Fairywren *Malurus pulcherrimus***

We saw a brilliantly coloured male and his mate at Dryandra. Subsequently we had another pair at Maughan Nature Reserve near Merredin

**Red-winged Fairywren *Malurus elegans***

Our fifth and final fairywren for the trip, this striking endemic was fairly common in denser vegetation around the deeper south west at places such as Cheynes Beach and both Big Brook Dam and the Gloucester Tree near Pemberton.

**Splendid Fairywren *Malurus splendens***

Often voted best bird of the trip the stunning all blue male was no disappointment again this year with great views firstly at Herdsman Lake, then Wungong Gorge and especially around the chalets at Cheynes Beach.

**White-winged Fairywren *Malurus leucopterus***

A pair popped up on top of a blue-bush at Goongarrie Station north of Kalgoorlie, very welcome but quite unexpected in the very hot and windy conditions!

**Southern Emuwren *Stipiturus malachurus***

Fantastic close views of two males at Lake Warden, Esperance. Often an elusive species which was also heard frequently in the heathland at Cheynes Beach as we searched for the skulkers!

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Glyciphila melanops***

Generally restricted to heathlands, a couple of this species was first seen at Dryandra then again at Corrigin Nature Reserve, on the sandplain heath of Kumarl Rd and in Monjingup Nature Reserve near Esperance.

**Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus***

First spotted in the Dryandra Woodlands then again at Monjingup NR near Esperance and at Cheynes Beach.

**Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta***

Common, seen or heard most days

**New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae***

The most common honeyeater over southern Australia, seen frequently throughout the tour.

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

At least two were seen firstly at Kings Park then again at Foxes Lair Nature Reserve and Corrigin Nature Reserve. They were also fairly common in the heathland around Cheynes Beach.

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

Two were seen firstly at Foxes Lair Reserve, Narrogin and then others at Corackerup Nature Reserve.

**Gilbert's Honeyeater *Melithreptus chloropsis***

First seen at Foxes Lair near Narrogin on our early morning walk. Particularly common around Big Brook Dam at Pemberton though hard to see in the tall karri trees!

**White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis***

Relatively common at Corrigin Nature Reserve and also seen at Merredin Peak near Merredin.

**Crimson Chat *Epthianura tricolor***

Excellent views of at least six birds near Merredin early one morning, a rare species for this trip.

**White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons***

Reminiscent of White Wagtails to some, we saw at least four feeding around the lakes and on the golf course on Rottneest Island. One was also seen with a flock of Crimson Chats near Merredin but best views were of six birds feeding on the shore of Rowles Lagoon north of Kalgoorlie.

**Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis***

First seen at Lake Yealering feeding in eucalypts then another at Merredin Peak and also at Goongarrie Station, north of Kalgoorlie.

**Western Wattlebird *Anthochaera lunulata***

Very common in banksias around Lake Warden, and Monjingup Nature Reserve, Esperance.

**Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata***

Common, seen almost every day.

**Purple-gaped Honeyeater *Lichenostomus cratitius***

Relatively common but an often elusive and restless honeyeater at Corackerup Nature Reserve, we eventually got on to a number of birds that perched up briefly.

**Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula***

Common honeyeater of the agricultural areas, and around Esperance in particular.

**White-fronted Honeyeater *Purnella albifrons***

More regularly associated with the arid zone, we spotted several of these noisy honeyeaters at Corrigin Nature Reserve and around Merredin Peak.

**Singing Honeyeater *Gavicalis virescens***

Common around Perth, we saw several at Kings Park and on Rottneest Island with a couple of other sightings at Goongarrie Station and Monjingup Nature Reserve.

**Yellow-plumed Honeyeater *Ptilotula ornata***

Common honeyeater of the open woodlands, particularly Dryandra and the Stirling Ranges.

**Western Bristlebird *Dasyornis longirostris***

One seen well early in the morning at Cheynes Beach, as it foraged along the sandy track.

**Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus***

A male of the Yellow-rumped form, xanthopyge, was seen along Kumarl Rd on our way south from Kalgoorlie and then later we found that they were surprisingly common at Corackerup Nature Reserve where a few nesting burrows were noted. The nominate red-rumped race was also common in Warren NP and fantastic close up views were had of a pair at Big Brook Dam, Pemberton.

**Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus***

A male was first seen in Kings Park then regularly from then on in most habitats. Of particular interest was a sighting of a male collecting nesting material in Warren National Park on the forest floor alongside a male Spotted Pardalote, also collecting nesting material!

**Redthroat *Pyrrholaemus brunneus***

A pair was seen feeding with Chestnut-rumped Thornbills at Sandford Rocks and at least two more were spotted at Goongarrie Station, north of Kalgoorlie.

**Spotted (White-browed) Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis***

First seen on Rottnest Island, skulking in undergrowth, this recently split Scrubwren turned out to be fairly common at various spots, particularly around Cheynes Beach and Pemberton.

**Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris***

Common though easily overlooked, Australia's tiniest bird was recorded in dry woodlands on several days.

**Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca***

Its discordant song heard more often than the bird was seen, we did get several sightings particularly on Rottnest Island and in Kings Park.

**Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis***

A single bird was seen firstly at Wungong Dam Reserve. At least two were seen foraging in shrubs around Big Brook Dam near Pemberton.

**Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis***

The common thornbill of the drier areas, a pair was seen firstly at Merredin Peak then several more around Sandford Rocks and Goongarrie Station.

**Western Thornbill *Acanthiza inornata***

A flock of at least six of this local endemic was seen at Foxes Lair Nature Reserve in Narrogin one morning.

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

A few of these generally ground feeding thornbills were firstly seen at Herdsman lake then in various diverse habitats throughout the tour.

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

We came across small flocks of these gregarious yet often shy birds at a number of locations firstly at Dryandra Woodlands. Other sightings at Merredin Peak, in arid country near Goongarrie Homestead where we counted at least ten and great photo opportunities of a number of birds bouncing across the ground at the Gloucester Tree near Pemberton.

**Black-throated (Western) Whipbird *Psophodes nigrogularis***

Heard at Corackerup. Great views at Cheynes Beach of a single bird in heathland behind the caravan park

**Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus***

We saw a big flock of 30-40 birds near Merredin early one morning then several more at Goongarrie Station north of Kalgoorlie.

**Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus***

Many birds seen around Dryandra, with a few other sightings at Woody Lake and Monjigup Nature Reserve near Esperance and in the Pemberton region.

**Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen***

Common, seen nearly every day.

**Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus***

Often seen perched on fence posts or dead tree branches we first saw two at Merredin Peak then numerous others usually in ones or twos throughout the tour.

**Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis***

Locally common near Merredin and Kalgoorlie, a couple of these talented songsters entertained us during lunch at Goongarrie Station!

**Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor***

A couple were first seen at Corrigin Nature Reserve then others regularly throughout the trip.

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

Fairly common throughout, usually seen in ones and twos.

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

It wasn't until our last day when we found two males and a female of these breeding migrants at Ambergate Reserve near Busselton, feeding often at ground level and competing with a group of Woodswallows and various parrots.

**Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis***

The clear "Morse-code" like call was heard at Sandford Rocks and particularly at Goongarrie Station north of Kalgoorlie but the birds remained elusive (as usual).

**Crested Shriketit *Falcunculus frontatus***

Excellent views of a single bird foraging near the Stirling Rage Retreat just as we were about to give up!

**Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata***

A couple of views of rather flighty birds at a couple of spots at Goongarrie Station in hot and windy conditions.

**Western Whistler *Pachycephala occidentalis***

A male was seen well at Dryandra Woodlands one morning after we had stopped for a Scarlet Robin. Other sightings were from Esperance and again at Warrinup Nature Reserve while we were looking for Western Yellow Robins.

**Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris***

Good views of a female at Kings Park then both males and females seen at regular intervals during the trip.

**Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica***

Individuals of this pleasant songster were seen or heard at a number of locations throughout including at Dryandra, Goongarrie and Warrinup Nature Reserve.

**Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys***

Common, seen most days.

**Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa***

Common in woodland and forest areas throughout particularly along the south coast.

**Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca***

Common, seen most days.

**Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta***

One was first seen at the Dryandra Woodlands then two more at Warrinup Nature Reserve.

**Torresian Crow *Corvus orru***

Two birds were seen at a nest while we were having lunch at the Goongarrie Homestead.

**Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides***

Common, seen every single day!

**White-breasted Robin *Eopsaltria georgiana***

One of these South West endemics was first seen very briefly at Wungong Gorge Picnic area early in the trip.

Fairly common in the SW corner of the state, especially at Cheynes Beach and Big Brook Dam, Pemberton.

**Western Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria griseogularis***

Just the one sighting of a single bird at close quarters in Warrenup Nature Reserve.

**Southern Scrub Robin *Drymodes brunneopygia***

Excellent views of two birds at Maughan Nature Reserve near Merredin. Heard later at Corackerup Nature Reserve but not as cooperative!

**Jacky Winter *Microeca fascinans***

A pair was seen hunting from low perches at the Dryandra Woodlands.

**Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang***

A pair was first seen at Foxes Lair near Narrogin and also at the Dryandra Woodlands.

**Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii***

Our first sighting was of a female and juvenile on Rottnest Island, then another female as we walked part of the Wait-jen Trail near Lake Parkeyerring. Best views were at Merredin Peak, where we saw a splendid male.

**Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena***

Common, seen most days.

**Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans***

Common, seen most days, some gathering leaves from the path as we walked around Big Brook Dam at Pemberton.

**Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis***

Good views were had at John Oldham Park, the little wetland across the road from our hotel in Perth on our first day. A couple more were seen and heard calling at Herdsman Lake in Perth and another was heard calling in dense reeds at Lake Monjingup near Esperance.

**Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus***

Two were seen in reed-beds from along the boardwalk at Herdsman Lake.

**Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis***

Common, seen most days.

**Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum***

Our first experience of this species was at the Wagin Sewage Ponds when a female appeared right next to us on the chain-mesh fence. Subsequently we found a male and another female near Lake Parkeyerring, also near Wagin.

**Red-eared Firetail *Stagonopleura oculata***

Several times while we were watching from the café on Woody Island one would appear at the bird bath and take its chances amongst the New Holland Honeyeaters and Silvereyes. Another showed briefly in the heathland at Monjingup Nature Reserve near Esperance.

**Australian Pipit *Anthus australis***

Usually fairly common throughout the agricultural zones, this year we had few sightings. Best views were early one morning at a roadside stop near Merredin where we found some in a mixed feeding flock of Woodswallows, chats and parrots.

**MAMMALS**

Quokka *Setonix brachyurus*  
Western Grey Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus*  
Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus*  
Western Brush Wallaby *Macropus Irma*  
Australian Sealion *Neophoca cinerea*  
Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* (deceased)  
Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*  
Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus*  
European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*  
Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

**REPTILES**

Bobtail Lizard *Tiliqua rugosus*  
Rosenberg's Monitor *Varanus rosenbergi*  
Spotted Military Dragon *Ctenophorus maculatus*  
Gould's Monitor *Varanus gouldii*