

Australia

Perth & the Wild Southwest

Sun 14th-Tue 30th October 2018



Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Western Yellow Robin • Crested Pigeon • Nankeen Night Heron • Rock Parrot • White-necked Heron • Tawny Frogmouth and chicks. © tour leader Peter Taylor/Limosa Holidays

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

Australia | Perth & the Wild Southwest

Tour Leader: Peter Taylor

With Dave Elliot, Iain Elliot, Philip & Alison Hanmer, Heather Robertson and Anne Strahan

The biodiverse south-west of Australia is a little known and remote corner of the continent and, as in previous years, this year's tour uncovered plenty of surprises. With a complement of six, all from different parts of the UK, we eased gently into the tour at a little wetland across the road from our Perth hotel. Apart from a pair of nesting Black Swans, after whom Perth's Swan River is named, we soon found a range of unfamiliar waterfowl such as Hardhead, Pacific Black Ducks and both Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, as well as the all too familiar Eurasian Coot! As we walked around, a decidedly tame Nankeen Night Heron entertained us, watching intently as if expecting a fish, while in the reeds, only metres from the busy road, we could see Australian Reed Warblers darting back and forth.

Just a short ferry ride away, Rottnest Island awaited and with near perfect conditions we spent a very pleasant morning watching Caspian, Greater Crested and Bridled Terns as well as various resident shorebirds such as Banded and Pied Stilts, Pied Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers and the first trans-equatorial migrants in Red-necked Stints and Ruddy Turnstones. A male Red-capped Robin stole the day while a Western Gerygone with its discordant song and a skulking White-browed Scrubwren provided a "reality check". A Nankeen Kestrel with its unidentifiable prey and a blue-green Sacred Kingfisher provided a distraction on the golf course as we weaved across the fairways to avoid stray missiles! Of course, a visit to "Rotto" wouldn't be complete without a few Quokkas, the resident marsupials, that everyone (including even Roger Federer!) comes to see and photograph. This year we were particularly privileged when a female with her joey joined us for lunch!

Perth's premier inner suburban wetland, Herdsman Lake, rarely disappoints and this year we managed to see all eleven local species of duck including several rare Freckled Ducks. We also found all three ibis species as well as the notoriously shy Little Grassbird, which Alison managed to photograph. Still at the lake we had superb views of a nesting Tawny Frogmouth with two inquisitive chicks and found a breeding plumaged male Purple-backed (formerly Variegated) Fairywren, the first of five species in this endemic Australian genus that we were to encounter on this trip.

Heading for the hills we quickly found our second fairywren, this time a male Splendid Fairywren, almost unreal in his ten shades of blue, and a busy Grey Fantail that tried as he might to compete. Later we spent a warm afternoon in the expansive Dryandra Woodlands where Rufous Treecreepers (ironically mainly a ground dweller) and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters dominate. The highlight however had to be a female Painted Button-quail that strutted out in front of the group! Next morning we heard another one call as we walked around Foxes Lair, a pleasant little reserve opposite our motel in Narrogin. It turned out to be a wonderful spot with great views to be had of Red-capped Parrots (perhaps the most gaudy of any on this trip), a pair of unassuming Western Rosellas (also a SW endemic) and some tiny green Elegant Parrots. A male Scarlet Robin appeared then it was time for breakfast. We returned to Dryandra a bit later and explored some of the heathland where the wildflowers were spectacular. Attracted by the abundant nectar were an impressive seven honeyeater species, including the rare, nomadic Black Honeyeater, unusual this far south. Even that, though, was surpassed by our third fairywren, this time a breeding-plumaged Blue-breasted male decked out in electric blue and chestnut.

For something different after lunch we exchanged woodland for the delights of the Wagin sewage ponds where the Black-fronted Dotterels seemed to be protecting a nest from the clumsy feet of wandering shelducks and a familiar Common Sandpiper patrolled the banks. At a nearby salt lake under a dark and threatening sky we saw a rare Hooded Plover although we were quickly sent scampering back to the minibus by a sudden hail storm! Returning to parts further north we stopped for lunch at Corrigin Nature Reserve, another wildflower oasis, where White-eared Honeyeaters foraged and around the lookout a pair of magnificent Spotted Harriers displayed. We watched with concern as an Echidna, one of the world's two egg-laying mammals, stepped out on to the Brookton Highway and proceeded to cross. Luckily it's a quiet road and he made it but only just as an unsuspecting motorist appeared from the other direction and only swerved at the last second.

Just south of Merredin we visited a little known Nature Reserve before breakfast and *en route* surprised a pair of Cockatiels that had been feeding on the ground with a flock of noisy Galahs. Thankfully they didn't fly far and we were able to get excellent views of these well-known "cage birds" in the scope. At the same time, a pair of giant, Wedge-tailed Eagles soared into view and we were able to turn the scope onto their massive nest. In the reserve itself we easily found an inquisitive Southern Scrub Robin, then we were suddenly startled by a Spotted Nightjar which had been roosting on the edge of the track. It flew at knee level past us, then dropped to the ground briefly in front of us before fluttering up in a somewhat confused state and disappearing into the dense shrubbery. One of the best views of this very cryptic species that we could ever hope to get! On that same morning, after a

sumptuous breakfast at a Merredin café, we explored some of the more remote country to the north of the Great Eastern Highway on our way towards the gold-mining town of Kalgoorlie. A group of four, pale birds feeding in a roadside paddock brought us quickly to a halt and within seconds we were looking through the scope at Ground Cuckoo-shrikes, the first time we had ever recorded them on a tour (and the first that guide Peter had seen anywhere this year).

The arid zone north of Kalgoorlie, where the eucalypt woodland gives way to “Mulga” woodland dominated by acacias, gives us just a taster of the remote Outback Australia. The old Goongarrie sheep station, now resumed as a Nature Reserve, and the inland freshwater wetland of Rowles Lagoon are places where we can see some quite different wildlife. Gilbert’s Whistler with its loud chopping call, the Torresian Crow, its call more nasal than the ravens of further south and Zebra Finches in buzzing little flocks were all added to the list. For the first time on this tour however we were fortunate enough to also record Western Bowerbird, after we heard a strange combination of grunts and cackles coming from under large bushes behind the old homestead. Later as we ate our packed lunches, we heard the unmistakable call of a Spotted Nightjar, perfectly reproduced by one of the bowerbirds! On a short walk from the homestead we then found a pair of Southern Whiteface, ground feeding finch-like birds also not previously recorded on this tour, and finally, a male Redthroat. At Rowles Lagoon we watched a young Australian Hobby take its freshly-caught prey up into a nearby tree. Surprisingly it appeared to have caught a young Black-fronted Dotterel, and proceeded to pluck it in an ungainly fashion as we stood below. In the surrounding sheoaks we found a pair of Australia’s most widespread yet remotest treecreeper, White-browed, as they flew from bough to bough searching for grubs. On the way back to our motel we came across what looked originally like a stick across the road but turned out to be a Mulga Snake (also known as King Brown). Intrepid photographer Phillip leapt out of the vehicle to get a quick, yet respectfully distant, photo before the snake made its way to safety!

With only two scheduled stops at sewage ponds on this tour we made the most of our final morning in Kalgoorlie at their local facility. Always a magnet in arid zones, ponds like Kalgoorlie’s can be very rewarding and so it was to be. There was a large flock of Red-necked avocets, perhaps numbering 80+, as well as Red-kneed Dotterels (another resident wader) and some Wood Sandpipers, all the way from Siberia. There were also a few Black-tailed Native Hens (known locally as “Turbo Chooks” though these seemed to be in relax mode) and a pair of Black-shouldered Kites competing for airspace with Whistling Kites. Heather spotted a distant raptor over the slag heaps and with a little help from the scope it turned out to be a Black-breasted Buzzard. In nearby samphire we finally caught up with some male White-winged Fairywrens, resplendent in all blue with bright white wings.

Now it was time to make our way south to Esperance on the shores of the Southern Ocean. Before we had even boarded our cruise we found a couple of tiny Rock Parrots feeding patiently on seeds close to the jetty. They allowed us to get incredibly close and take photos at will while more bystanders gathered to see what we were looking at. The island cruise was a joy with mild, sunny weather and only a small swell. Cape Barren Geese were on several islands along with Sooty Oystercatchers, Pacific Gulls and Australian Sea lions. A juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagle (spotted by Alison) waited patiently on a low tree for food to be delivered. Back on *terra firma* we visited some of Esperance’s freshwater lakes, all of which were very full due to recent rains. Huge flocks of Banded Stilts and Red-necked Avocets loafed in the shallows while Whiskered Terns flitted above. A pair of raucous Masked Lapwings disturbed the peace and a lone Hooded Plover was found cowering from the wind on the far side. The nectar-rich banksias were full of Western Wattlebirds, squabbling over the flowers with the ever-present New Holland Honeyeaters.

At local Monjigup Nature Reserve, well recovered now from devastating wildfires, we at last found our first cuckoos for the trip. It was becoming a bit of a long-running joke as everywhere we went we heard (alleged) cuckoos calling but none could be seen or enticed closer. Persistent calling by two competing Fan-tailed Cuckoos then the appearance of an obliging Horsfield’s Bronze-cuckoo finally put an end to the jinx. Western Spinebills, New Holland Honeyeaters and Western Wattlebirds were thick in the young banksia trees and a Restless Flycatcher was seen mobbing an Australian Raven that was getting too close.

Heading east we were plagued by masses of Cabbage White butterflies drifting across the highway and decorating the minibus for over 100kms. As Murphy would have it the water in the windscreen washers failed to materialise and we had to endure much reduced visibility until we found an unsuspecting roadhouse with a super strength squeegee and, as luck would have it, a fair stash of Iced Coffee for the thirsty troops! The butterfly storm had abated by the time we reached the Fitzgerald River National Park and it was once again time to enjoy some spectacular wildflowers, in particular the Royal Hakeas. *En route* to our evening’s destination of Jerramungup we detoured slowly via the Old Ongerup Rd where we had many a close (and close-up) encounter with Western Grey Kangaroos and Western Brush Wallabies that periodically launched themselves into our path. We also had a good look at some Emus that raced across in front of us too and were surprised to see a Common Greenshank standing in a shallow pond in a field.

The mallee reserve of Corackerup was suspiciously quiet next morning and it soon became apparent that a marauding Collared Sparrowhawk was doing us no favours. To add insult to injury, the annoying bush flies stepped up a gear to become even friendlier! However we did manage to add yet another final honeyeater to our list, this time the Purple-gaped which became our 18th honeyeater for the trip. Seemingly as compensation, Cheynes Beach was fly free and the birds performed as if on cue. A Red-eared Firetail greeted us on the lawn while White-breasted Robins and Brush Bronzewing looked on. Here we found our fifth and final fairywren, the Red-winged, yet another SW endemic. Impressively, all three of the notorious skulkers, Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird and Black-throated (recently split from Western) Whipbird were accounted for and great views were also had of a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo and a couple of waddling Brown Quail.

After a short but highly productive stay we were off again taking the long route to Pemberton via the Stirling Ranges. Lots more new species today starting with a pair of huge Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, a Regent Parrot having a bath and an Australian Owlet-Nightjar sunning himself outside his hollow! At Warrenup Nature Reserve we found a Western Yellow Robin and a pair of Restless Flycatchers displaying and calling right in front of us. Driving on to the west we found a flock of endemic Western Corellas then stopped quickly as a flock of 30 or so Red-tailed Black Cockatoos swept into view, screeching and feeding in roadside marri trees. With them were possibly 20 Baudin's Black Cockatoos which meant that we had seen all three black cockatoo species in the space of a day! From the tall timber country of Pemberton we enjoyed a 4x4 trip to the mouth of the Warren River over some of the tallest sand dunes in the world and through more amazing wildflower country. Great views of a Square-tailed Kite gave way to fantastic views of the Southern Ocean as we dropped down off the dunes to the beach. Here amongst the terns and the gulls we watched flocks of Sanderling busily feeding at this, their southern terminus, in readiness for returning to their breeding grounds in Siberia at the end of summer.

A final stroll around Big Brook Dam, Pemberton's water supply, before departing for our final destination of Busselton was relaxing. At last we got to see Spotted Pardalotes, a species that so far had eluded us bar its bell like call ringing out in the high canopy above. Firstly a male appeared on the path, truly a stunning little gem in red, yellow, black and white, then a pair gathering nesting material were seen working their way through the foliage at eye level. Tree Martins gave great photo opportunities as they dropped down on to the path to collect leaves for their nests.

At Cape Leeuwin, the weather was remarkably calm and we could watch Australian Gannets sail past without being blown away while at nearby Sugarloaf Rock we had comfortable views of Humpback Whales as they periodically broke the tranquil surface. Our grand finale at Busselton was highlighted with a tip-off from a local birder who knew of a pair of Banded Lapwings, a species that we had missed on Rottnest Island and not picked up anywhere else since. Dutifully following the instructions we went to a dubious looking vacant block behind a retail tyre outlet and immediately found the birds scolding a family of Maned Ducks that had inadvertently wandered too close!

With a little spare time on our way back to Perth we made one final detour to the Coodanup Foreshore, sometimes a good spot for migratory waders, but on this occasion host to a couple of tiny Fairy Terns which allowed us to get close enough for final photos. Then it was suddenly all over and we were back in the hustle-bustle of the city and bidding our farewells, some returning home to a chilly autumn, others heading for the wet tropics and more birding adventures!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

(Total number of species recorded by the group – 188 including 4 heard only)

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae*

Our first sighting was of a male with three chicks seen in a wheat paddock along the Bullfinch Rd NE of Merredin. Another two crossed in front of the minibus on the Old Ongerup Rd, near the Fitzgerald River NP and four more after we left Pemberton *en route* to Cape Leeuwin.

Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*

Many were seen on the various islands of our cruise from Esperance.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

First seen at John Oldham Park opposite our hotel where they were nesting, this emblem of Western Australia was seen regularly throughout the trip with particularly large numbers at Rowles Lagoon, north of Coolgardie and Mullet Lake near Esperance.

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*

About 8-10 of these rare ducks were seen at Herdsman Lake, a first for this tour!

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*

A few were seen on our first full day when we visited Rottnest Island. After that they were fairly common and seen most days.

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 Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

A couple of pairs were first seen 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 *Spatula rhynchotis*

Two were first seen at Herdsman Lake near Perth then not spotted again until we visited the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands at Busselton.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

Common wetland species, seen widely.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

Reasonably common, first seen on Rottneest Island then frequently throughout the trip.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*

A few uncoloured birds either eclipse or females at Herdsman Lake, then ten or more at Esperance on an ornamental pond near the miniature railway. Many also at Culham Inlet and lastly at Busselton.

Hardhead *Aythya australis*

Very common at John Oldham Park. Seen throughout the trip at places such as Herdsman Lake, the Wagin and Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, various Esperance lakes and the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*

A single male was at Herdsman Lake then a pair was spotted from the Busselton Bird Hide on our last day.

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*

There were two juveniles and a male firstly at Herdsman Lake. Other birds were sighted later in the trip at Rowles Lagoon, Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds and Monjingup Nature Reserve.

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora*

Two birds were seen well at the Cheynes Beach caravan park just as we were about to leave!

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes*

Two or three were seen from the boat as we cruised the islands from Esperance, one coming in quite close as we stopped to look for a dolphin. Several more were seen from Warren Beach near Pemberton.

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 the Wagin Sewage Ponds then in large numbers at Lake Yealering, Rowles Lagoon and the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds in particular.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Apart from a lone bird at Busselton, these very familiar grebes were only seen at Herdsman Lake in Perth where they were quite numerous.

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*

Three birds were first seen flying over Herdsman Lake then another three over Woody Lake at Esperance and another flock of eleven birds over Monjingup Nature Reserve. We finally saw some perched when we visited 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.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*

One was seen briefly flying overhead at Herdsman Lake and another at Monjingup Nature Reserve. Best views were of a single bird perched outside the Malbup Bird Hide near Busselton.

Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

A very tame bird was seen in the wetland outside our hotel in Perth then another adult and juvenile nearby. At least another three were at Herdsman Lake. A single bird was also seen briefly by Dave at the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands on our last morning.

White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica*

A single bird was seen flying enroute to Merredin and another was seen in a roadside paddock along the South Coast Highway west of Esperance. Two birds were spotted feeding at the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands near Busselton on our final morning.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

A few sightings of these well-known egrets at various sites from Herdsman Lake in Perth to Lake Warden near Esperance and at the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Surprisingly our first proper sighting wasn't until Woody Lake near Esperance. Seen fairly frequently after that near Kalgoorlie, and along the South Coast around to Busselton.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two individuals at Herdsman Lake were our only records for the trip.

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

First seen across the road from our Perth hotel at John Oldham Park two sitting on top of light poles! Several also seen at Herdsman Lake, Woody Lake, the Culham Inlet Warden and at the Vasse Estuary Wetlands.

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*

A couple of birds were seen as we travelled over to Rottnest Island. Another three were seen quite close to the lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin.

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*

At least 20 were seen on the old Tanker Jetty at Esperance from our cruise.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

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 in the trip at Esperance and Cape Leeuwin.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One seen firstly at Herdsman Lake then another at the end of the old Tanker Jetty in Esperance. Four were also seen at Big Brook Dam, Pemberton.

Australasian Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Several nests with chicks were seen at the little lake across the road from our hotel in Perth. A single bird was seen perched at Herdsman Lake. A couple more were seen near Esperance.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris*

Two were first seen hunting over the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds. Our only other sightings were near Esperance and on the drive into Cheynes Beach.

Black-breasted Buzzard *Hamirostra melanosternon*

Distant views of a single bird being mobbed by Ravens over the slag heaps behind the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, spotted by Heather. First record of this species for this tour!

Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*

A single bird was seen well flying over the heath near Warren Beach on our morning tour from Pemberton.

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*

A pair soaring high over the Dryandra Woodlands was our first record of Australia's largest flying bird. A pair with a nest near Maughan Nature Reserve south of Merredin was seen well in the scope and another two over Hopetoun was our last sighting.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

One was seen on Rottnest Island, hunting over Government House Lake. Other records of single birds at Silvers Dam near Goongarrie Homestead and in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

A single bird flew over at Corackerup Nature Reserve, possibly explaining the complete lack of other bird calls!

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

Usually seen hunting low over wetlands we recorded single birds at Herdsman Lake, Monjingup Lake and the Vasse Estuary Wetlands.

Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*

Great views of two birds circling over the Corrigin Lookout as we had lunch. Another sighting on the South Coast Highway west of Esperance as we overtook a truck! Strangely, a first record for this species on this tour.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Another species commonly seen hunting over wetlands we recorded singles and/or pairs at Herdsman Lake, the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, Woody Lake at Esperance and at the Vasse Wetlands.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

A single juvenile bird, possibly waiting for its parents to return with food, was spotted by Alison on the Esperance Islands cruise. An adult was subsequently seen over the Culham Inlet when it spooked all the stilts and avocets! Other adults were also seen at Cheynes Beach and at the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

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. Two or three were heard at Lake Herdsman from the boardwalk and a number were also heard calling from reed-beds in the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands.

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. Also seen at the Vasse Wetlands.

Black-tailed Nativehen *Gallinula ventralis*

Three were seen at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

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

Painted Buttonquail *Turnix varius*

Great views of a female at Dryandra where we also heard its "oom" call. Heard twice at Foxes Lair, Narrogin on our pre-breakfast walks and also at Monjingu Nature Reserve near Esperance.

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*

About five were seen on Rottnest Island and another two at the Culham Inlet, near Hopetoun.

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*

Many were seen during the Esperance Islands cruise and two more at Cheynes Beach, loafing in the seaweed. Another later on rocks at Cape Leeuwin.

Pied Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Two were first seen on Rottnest Island. Several other sightings including a large number at the Wagin Sewage Ponds and Lake Warden.

Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*

Hundreds were seen in the lakes on Rottnest Island, many in breeding plumage. Hundreds more at Lake Warden, Esperance with Avocets and again at the Culham Inlet near Hopetoun.

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*

A large flock of 80+ birds was seen at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds and even larger flocks at Lake Warden near Esperance and the Culham Inlet.

Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*

A lucky sighting on our last morning of the tour at Busselton! Having missed seeing any on Rottnest Island earlier in the trip, we went to a vacant lot behind a retail tyre outlet following a tip-off from a local birder where we found a pair of these striking waders.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus novaehollandiae*

Self-introduced from south eastern Australia, we saw just a single pair at Lake Warden, Esperance.

Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythrogonys cinctus*

We found eight of these resident waders at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds. At the ibis rookery in the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands we also saw another three at close quarters.

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*

Usually the most common resident wader, we found just three on Rottnest Island this year and only singles at three other locations.

Hooded Dotterel *Thinornis rubricollis*

With so much surface water in the landscape this year it was difficult to find shorebirds but we did get distant scope views at Martinup Nature Reserve (admittedly during a hailstorm!!!) and another at Lake Warden, Esperance.

Black-fronted Dotterel *Euseyonis melanops*

Two birds were seen at the Wagin Sewage Ponds then another pair along Beaufort Rd on Day 4. Others were seen at Rowles Lagoon (including an unfortunate juvenile caught by an Australian Hobby), Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds and a pair at a roadside creek crossing near Corackerup Nature Reserve in the Mallee.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was first seen at the Culham Inlet then another from the minibus in a pool in a paddock along the Old Ongerup Rd on our way to Jerramungup.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Three of these migratory waders seen at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Two seen firstly at the Wagin Sewage Ponds. Singles also at an ornamental pond in Esperance and at Woody Lake in Esperance and at Cheynes Beach.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Four birds were seen feeding in a shallow salt lake on Rottnest Island.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

About 15-20 were seen at the mouth of the Warren River during our morning tour from Pemberton.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

Common on Rottnest Island, with a few others seen at Martinup Nature Reserve near Wagin and Lake Warden, Esperance.

Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*

The ubiquitous, common gull of Australia!

Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*

Seen firstly at Esperance and on the islands of the Recherche Archipelago where they were quite numerous. Also seen at Cheynes Beach and from Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Fairly common on Rottnest Island where we first saw them. Another two were seen perched on a rocky islet on our Esperance Islands cruise with more at the Culham Inlet and the Coodanup Foreshore on our final morning

Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*

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

Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*

Just a single bird was scoped at the Culham Inlet before it quickly departed. Luckily we found another two at the Coodanup Foreshore on our final morning and were able to get quite close to these tiny, delicate terns.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

From the lighthouse on Rottneest Island we saw three of these dark-backed terns out on rock stacks, from which they were fishing.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Just the one sighting of a flock of nine birds circling at Lake Warden near Esperance.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

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

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Introduced dove to Perth, first seen at the John Oldham Park across the road from our hotel in Perth.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

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

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*

First seen at Foxes Lair Nature Reserve in Narrogin then most days thereafter.

Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans*

One was first seen as it flushed from in front of the minibus along the Old Ongerup Rd and another the next day near Corackerup. Most obliging was the one in the carpark at Cheynes Beach Caravan Park!

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*

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

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalix*

Good sighting of a single bird at Monjigup Nature Reserve near Esperance.

Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

After hearing them call at several locations we finally got to see one at Cheynes Beach.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*

Two were seen well at Monjigup Reserve. Heard more often than seen!

Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*

Fantastic views of a male on the nest with two fluffy chicks at Herdsman Lake.

Spotted Nightjar *Eurostopodus argus*

Surprise sighting at Maughan Nature Reserve near Merredin of one that flushed from the side of our track and flew past at knee level to land briefly in front of us before circling back again to give even better flight views!

Australian Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*

Excellent view of one sitting outside a hollow at the Stirling Range Retreat.

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*

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

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*

This spring/summer breeding migrant was seen on more than half the days. First one was on the golf course on Rottneest Island. Two were even observed mating at Woody Lake, Esperance.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

Seen first at Dryandra, these spectacular breeding visitors had only recently arrived in the South West. Sightings were regular throughout the trip with the largest count of 17 recorded at Merredin peak.

Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

Fairly common, seen most days as we drove through the agricultural lands. The first one we saw was on the golf course at Rottneest Island with a catch.

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*

A young bird was first spotted hunting at Rowles Lagoon then a few minutes later was seen dismantling an unfortunate Black-fronted Dotterel.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

A pair was seen feeding on the ground with a flock of Galahs near Maughan Nature Reserve, south of Merredin. Curiously, this was at the same location we had recorded Budgerigars on two previous visits!

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii*

A great sight of at least 30 of these huge cockatoos feeding loudly in marri trees east of Manjimup with Baudin's Black Cockatoos.

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

In a mixed flock with Red-tailed Black Cockatoos we counted around 20 of these raucous endemics. Later we saw two in Pemberton flying over our hotel one afternoon.

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

Two birds were seen perched in old Eucalyptus wandoo trees in the Stirling Ranges where we had lunch.

Galah *Eolophus roseicapillus*

Common, seen most days.

Western Corella *Cacatua pastinator*

Several 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 Busselton.

Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus*

After several high speed flybys missed by almost everyone we finally had great views these sleek-looking parrots at the Stirling Range Retreat including one having a bath!

Red-capped Parrot *Purpureicephalus spurius*

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

Western Rosella *Platycercus icterotis*

First views of this colourful endemic parrot were at Foxes Lair Reserve in Narrogin. Other close sightings which kept the photographers happy were at Cheynes Beach and at the Gloucester Tree in Pemberton where a male paraded in front of the minibus for one and all to admire!

Australian Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius*

Common, seen most days.

Elegant Parrot *Neophema elegans*

The third of three parrot lifers before breakfast for some, two of these tiny gems were first spotted at Foxes Lair, Narrogin! Later another two were seen in the Dryandra Woodlands and another was seen flying overhead at Sandford Rocks.

Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila*

One bird was observed very briefly on Rottnest Island near the Settlement as it flushed and vanished. Two more were seen at the wharf before we boarded our Esperance Islands cruise, allowing us superb views from only metres away as they fed.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*

Alerted by their rasping screech, we heard flocks of these tiny lorikeets in many places before finally getting to see some. They were particularly common in flowering eucalypts, around Pemberton.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

Common introduced lorikeet to Perth.

Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus*

A male finally crossed the famous "Scrub-bird Track" at Cheynes Beach after making us wait for what seemed like an eternity!

Western Bowerbird *Chlamydera guttata*

A first for this tour, two birds were seen well at the Goongarrie Station Homestead.

White-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris affinis*

On our way out of Rowles Lagoon Reserve we stopped by an area dominated by sheoak and bluebush and found a pair of these arid zone treecreepers foraging.

Rufous Treecreeper *Climacteris rufus*

Very common at Dryandra but not seen anywhere else this year.

Purple-backed (Variegated) Fairywren *Malurus assimilis*

Seen on just the one occasion at Herdsman, where we spotted a breeding plumaged male and a female.

Blue-breasted Fairywren *Malurus pulcherrimus*

We saw a brilliantly coloured male and his mate at Dryandra. Subsequently we had great views at Maughan Nature Reserve near Merredin and in heathland near Peak Charles then again at the Culham Inlet. Our fifth and final view was of another male with his mate bouncing around the Stirling Range Retreat. Often not an easy bird to locate!

Red-winged Fairywren *Malurus elegans*

Our fifth fairywren for the trip, this striking endemic was fairly common in denser vegetation around the deeper south west at places such as Cheynes Beach, 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 at Wungong Gorge and especially around the chalets at Cheynes Beach.

White-winged Fairywren *Malurus leucopterus*

Two uncoloured birds were first seen at Goongarrie Station then several more at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds before we found a couple of adult males in their brilliant blue and white plumage.

Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus*

Often elusive. A brief view of a single bird at Monjingup. Also seen in the heathland at Cheynes Beach.

Black Honeyeater *Sugomel nigra*

Great find at Dryandra Woodland, a single male was seen well. A rare sighting this far south of this sometimes irruptive species from the arid zone.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Glyciphila melanops*

First seen at Dryandra then again at Foxes Lair Reserve in Narrogin and fairly common at Cheynes Beach.

Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*

Several females were at Dryandra. Quite common 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 three were seen firstly at Kings Park then again at Foxes Lair Reserve and in the Dryandra Woodlands. Fairly common in the heathland around Cheynes Beach.

Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris*

A small flock was seen firstly at Foxes Lair Reserve, Narrogin and soon after in the Dryandra Woodlands. One was also seen in a bird bath at the Stirling Range Retreat.

Gilbert's Honeyeater *Melithreptus chloropsis*

First seen at Foxes Lair near Narrogin on our early morning walk but not again until we saw one in a bird bath at the Stirling Range Retreat. Common around Big Brook Dam at Pemberton.

White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis*

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

White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*

Reminiscent of White Wagtails to some, we saw at least six feeding around the lakes and on the golf course on Rottne Island. Our only other sighting was of two birds at the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*

A few birds seen at Goongarrie Station, north of Kalgoorlie.

Western Wattlebird *Anthochaera lunulata*

Very common in banksias around Lake Warden, Monjigup Esperance..

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*

Common, seen almost every day.

Purple-gaped Honeyeater *Lichenostomus cratitius*

Usually the common honeyeater at Corackerup Nature Reserve, we eventually got on to just one bird in strangely quiet conditions.

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 two of these honeyeaters at Merredin Peak and a couple more at Binaronca Nature Reserve on our way to Norseman.

Singing Honeyeater *Gavicalis virescens*

Fairly common away from the south coast seen firstly at John Oldham Park over the road from our Perth hotel.

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*

Heard frustratingly on a number of occasions throughout the trip! Great views finally of a male then a pair at Big Brook dam, Pemberton.

Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*

A male was first seen in Kings Park. Commonly heard throughout but often difficult to spot as they forage in tree canopies.

Shy Heathwren *Calamanthus cautus*

Brief views of three birds in heathland along the edge of Kumarl Rd south of Norseman.

Redthroat *Pyrrholaemus brunneus*

A male was seen at Goongarrie Station, north of Kalgoorlie.

White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*

First seen on Rottne Island. A fairly common bird at various spots mainly along the south coast.

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 Rottne Island and in Kings Park.

Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*

A single bird was seen firstly at Wungong Dam Reserve. Another was seen at Foxes Lair where we also saw both Western and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. At least three were seen from the track around Big Brook Dam near Pemberton.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis*

The common thornbill of the drier areas, especially around Sandford Rocks.

Western Thornbill *Acanthiza inornata*

At least three of this local endemic were seen at Foxes Lair.

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.

Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*

Two birds were seen roosting in an acacia at Goongarrie Station.

White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*

We came across small flocks of these gregarious yet often shy birds at a number of places; firstly at a roadside stop on Beaufort Road, SW of Wagin. Other sightings in arid country near Goongarrie Homestead and Binaronca Nature Reserve and also around Big Brook Dam and the Gloucester Tree near Pemberton.

Black-throated (Western) Whipbird *Psophodes nigrogularis*

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

Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus*

Several were first seen on the road to Dryandra the commonly on power lines and fence posts in the drier agricultural areas from Merredin to Kalgoorlie.

Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*

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

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*

Common, seen nearly every day.

Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*

A single juvenile was spotted firstly at Binaronca Nature Reserve north of Norseman and another along the Old Ongerup Rd on our way to Jerramungup.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*

Locally common near Merredin and enroute to Kalgoorlie.

Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor*

One was first seen briefly in the Dryandra Woodlands then others regularly throughout the trip including some surprisingly large flocks of up to a dozen birds along the Old Ongerup Rd

Ground Cuckooshrike *Coracina maxima*

An amazing sighting of four of these rarely recorded cuckoo-shrikes and a first for this tour!

Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Fairly common throughout, usually seen in ones and twos.

White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor*

We saw a female briefly at Herdsman Lake before it was chased off by a honeyeater then a small flock of several, mainly male, birds along Beaufort Rd SW of Wagin. There was also two females at Merredin Peak.

Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis*

The clear "Morse-code" like call was heard at Sandford Rocks and at Goongarrie Station north of Kalgoorlie.

Crested Shriketit *Falcunculus frontatus*

Heard on two occasions near Pemberton, once at the Gloucester Tree and then again at Big Brook Dam.

Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata*

Excellent views of a singing male at Goongarrie.

Western Whistler *Pachycephala occidentalis*

A male and a female were both seen well at Dryandra but from then on they were only heard.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

Good views of a male at Herdsman Lake then a pair at Beaufort Bridge Nature Reserve.

Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

Individuals of this pleasant songster were seen or heard at a number of locations including Dryandra and the Gloucester Tree at Pemberton.

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Common, seen most days.

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*

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

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*

Common, seen most days.

Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*

First seen mobbing an Australian Raven at Monjingup Nature Reserve near Esperance. Fantastic views of two more hovering and displaying at Warrenup Nature Reserve on our way to Pemberton.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

One bird was seen at the Goongarrie Homestead, its nasal call first alerting us to its presence.

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*

Common, seen every single day!

Western Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria griseogularis*

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

White-breasted Robin *Eopsaltria georgiana*

Seen first at the Cheynes Beach Caravan Park then fairly common in the SW corner of the state, especially at Big Brook Dam and the Gloucester Tree, Pemberton.

Jacky Winter *Microeca fascinans*

A pair were seen hunting from low perches at Dryandra.

Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang*

A pair was first seen at Foxes Lair then another pair at Dryandra.

Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*

Our first sighting was of a stunning male on Rottnest Island. Great views also at Merredin Peak, where we found a female sitting on a nest.

Southern Scrub Robin *Drymodes brunneopygia*

Excellent views of several birds firstly at Maughan Nature Reserve near Merredin then two more at Corackerup Nature Reserve.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

Common, seen most days.

Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel*

A couple were noted at the Wagin Sewage Ponds and a couple more at Beaufort Bridge where they were nesting. Also seen flying high over the Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds.

Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*

Common, seen most days.

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. Others were heard calling at Herdsman Lake in Perth and again at Vasse Estuary on our last morning of the tour in Busselton.

Little Grassbird *Poodytes gramineus*

At least two were seen along the boardwalk at Herdsman Lake. Several were heard calling in the samphire at the Vasse Estuary on our last morning.

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*

Several males were seen displaying over a wheat field south of Merredin.

Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi*

One was heard across the heathland at Monjینگup Nature Reserve near Esperance but remained invisible.

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*

Common, seen most days.

Red-eared Firetail *Stagonopleura oculata*

Seen at Cheynes Beach feeding on the lawn behind the cabin!

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*

Several were seen at Goongarrie Station.

Australian Pipit *Anthus australis*

Fairly common throughout the agricultural zones.

MAMMALS

Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus*

Quokka *Setonix brachyurus*

Western Grey Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus*

Western Brush Wallaby *Macropus irma*

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Feral Cat *Felis catus*

Australian Sealion *Neophoca cinerea*

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

REPTILES

Bobtail Lizard *Tiliqua rugosus*;

Gould's Monitor *Varanus gouldii*;

Mulga Snake *Pseudechis australia*

Dugite *Pseudonaja affinis*

Tiger Snake *Notechis scutatus*