



Sunrise Birding LLC
AUSTRALIA
Queensland & Top End
June 22 – July 4, 2013
TRIP REPORT





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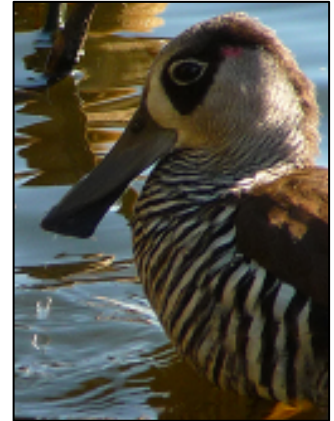
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June 22 – July 4, 2013

Leaders: Gina Nichol, Steve Bird & Barry Davies



HIGHLIGHTS:

BIRDS

- Rainbow Pitta
- Gouldian Finch
- Hooded Parrot
- Golden Bowerbird
- Australian Bustard
- Papuan Frogmouth
- Tawny Frogmouth
- Chowchilla
- Spotted Harrier
- Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon
- Pied Heron
- Black-necked Stork
- Black-breasted Buzzard
- Beach Stone Curlew
- Northern Rosella
- Double-eyed Fig Parrot
- Lovely Fairywren
- White-lined Honeyeater
- Fernwren
- Arafura Fantail
- Barking Owl
- Victoria's Riflebird

MAMMALS

- Duck-billed Platypus
- Sugar Gliders
- Striped Possum
- Dingo
- Small-eared Rock Wallaby

MOMENTS & EXPERIENCES

- Thousands of Brown Noddies and Sooty Terns at Michaelmas Cay
- Tawny Frogmouths too close to believe
- Tens of thousands of ducks and geese at Hasties Swamp
- The Chowchilla dawn chorus
- Wompoo Fruit Dove on a nest
- Golden Bowerbird male preening above our heads!
- Spotted Harrier flying along with the bus at close range
- Victoria's Riflebird displaying
- Aboriginal Art at Kakadu

Rarities

- Cotton Pygmy Goose at Catana Wetland
- Freckled Duck at Hastie's Swamp
- Masked Booby at Michaelmas Cay

Day 1, June 22 – Cairns area

Paul, Darryl, Gina and Steve arrived on the previous day and this morning before breakfast, we walked from our hotel to the Cairns Esplanade before breakfast. Just outside the hotel were male and female **Brown**



Honeyeaters and flocks of **Rainbow Lorikeets** flying over as we crossed the streets heading toward the waterfront. As we got onto the Esplanade, a flocks of **Metallic Starlings** shot by just above our heads. **Magpie Larks** and **Willie Wagtails** were all around and a couple of **Varied Honeyeaters** were sitting quietly in a tree lit up from behind by the morning sun. At the shore was a mixed group of shorebirds including **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Gray-tailed Tattlers**, **Masked Lapwings**, **Great Knot** and several **Gull-billed Terns** and **Silver Gulls** flew past. Along the beach were **Black-fronted Dotterel** (Photo: Gina Nichol) and **Red-capped Plover** but then some idiot let his dog run down the beach and flush all of the birds we were watching.



We walked along the waterfront and noted **Fairy Martins** and **Welcome Swallows** flying above the open lawn. While we were getting to grips with these a pair of **Black-necked Storks** flew over. **Australian Swiftlets** joined the mix of smaller aerobatic birds and there were a few **Australian White Ibis** around. A stand of fig trees in fruit played host to a feasting **Australian Figbirds** and some **Metallic Starlings** that looked smart and sleek in the sunlight.

After breakfast, we picked up Lynda, Mick, Dave and Alison at the airport and went to Redden Island Reserve along the Kuranda River. Scanning across the river we had several **Bar-tailed Godwits** and a **Pied Oystercatcher**. A nice adult **Brahminy Kite** flew over and as we were watching it a **Brown Goshawk** flew in and passed it speedily. We



walked the beach along the mouth of the river and found **Caspian Tern**, **Silver Gull**, **Whimbrel**, **Red-capped Plover**, and many **Gull-billed Terns**. Looking across the river, Barry spotted a **Beach Stone Curlew** near a large fallen tree at the edge of the water. A **White-bellied Sea Eagle** (Photo: Steve Bird) glided toward us over the water eventually making its way right above us and presenting great views. A **Whistling Kite** appeared also showing well and we studied the under wing pattern for future reference. Back across the river, we spotted a **Far Eastern Curlew** and a **Great Egret** before walking into a forest trail back to the van.

We walked into a track of monsoon dry forest along the river in another section of Redden Island. A **Varied Triller** called and sat out on a tree top for us. There were several **Green Ant** nests and Barry explained that they tasted like citrus (if you were inclined to taste such things). A male **Leaden Flycatcher** appeared, flitting behind one of the nests. Perhaps it liked the citrus taste? A tiny **Red-headed Rainbow Skink** on the track caught our attention as a **Black-necked Stork** flew over. **Welcome Swallows** flew above and as we reached the river again an **Australian Darter** was seen.

We went back to the Esplanade where the tide had retreated significantly exposing the sprawling mud flats where a **Collared Kingfisher** was hunting. Several **Red-capped Plovers** were around and **Black-fronted Dotterels** were seen at very close range. A **Great Knot** was more distant and there were **Australian Pelicans** and **Gull-billed Terns** present.



From here, we picked up lunch and then went over to Centenary Lakes. While we were having lunch a **Black Butcherbird** flew into a tree above us. A small lake held several striking **Pacific Black Ducks** and a couple of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** were flying out and grabbing something over the water. A **Ulysses Butterfly** caught our eye and a female **Leaden Flycatcher** (Photo: Steve Bird) was photographed nearby. We walked the trails and found a **Dusky Honeyeater**, three **Magpie Geese** across the lake, and a couple of **Collared Kingfishers** down the saltwater creek. A **Little**

Kingfisher disappeared quickly and we scanned the river bank vegetation but the bird could not be relocated. Back on the trails we found an **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** limping along the forest floor.

A **Hornbill Friarbird** (split from Helmeted) looked nice feeding on some bright orange flowers as we entered the Botanical Garden. An **Australian Brush Turkey** appeared and crossed an open lawn area at the same time another **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** appeared nearby. A **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** squawked and then flew into a distant tree showing well and a **Spangled Drongo** was seen. A female **Olive-backed Sunbird** called from a stand of ginger and we found it feeding on a large pink ginger flower. The male was singing above it and we soon spotted this gorgeous bird as it moved below the canopy. As we watched the Sunbirds a female **Cairns Birdwing** butterfly fluttered through looking as large as the sunbirds.

We continued walking in the Botanical Garden and found another **Hornbill Friarbird** (Photo: Gina Nichol) and while we watched it, when one of the workers offered to show us some **Papuan Frogmouths**. He took us to a small road just at the edge of the park to see an adult and well grown young bird perched and well visible. As we marveled at these birds, a **Black Butcherbird** flew in and landed above them causing the adult Frogmouth to turn its head sharply toward the interloper. Some **Rainbow Lorikeets** were feeding on yellow flowers in the treetops making a colorful scene. Back out to the small lake there were two **Radjah Shelducks** in with the **Pacific Black Ducks** and some **Australian Swiftlets** flying over. Part of the lake was filled it with lotus and



grasses making a pretty scene with an **Intermediate Egret** in the middle. On the other side, another **Great Egret** lurked.

We went back to the hotel so the terrific four could check in and get settled. Paul and Darryl went back to the Esplanade and found **White-faced Heron, Eastern Reef Egret,** and **Terek Sandpiper**. In the evening, we had dinner at a restaurant just off the Esplanade and then back at the hotel we reviewed our list of birds seen today, an excellent first day of the tour.

Day 2, June 23 – Michaelmas Cay

This morning we boarded the Ocean Spirit, a 32 meter luxury Schooner rig sailing catamaran, for a cruise out to Michaelmas Cay. The Cay, a small reef sand island on the western tip of Michaelmas Reef, rises just 3.5 meters (11.5 feet) above sea level on the Great Barrier Reef and is a major seabird nesting island. We took our position on the upper deck on port side of the boat and as we got



settled in an **Osprey** flew along the harbor. The boat set off and after an incredibly long, indoor safety briefing we came back out on deck to see **Crested Terns** and **Brown Boobies** (Photo: Steve Bird) flying over the open water. Eventually these birds came in at close range giving nice views. After a two hour cruise to the reef, we could see this birder's heaven and we moored in front of Michaelmas Cay noting the large swirl of birds over the island. A **Great Frigatebird** flew close above us as if to check us out and we noted several **Brown Boobies** perched on nearby boats. A **Masked Booby** was spotted in the flock of **Brown Boobies** roosting on the beach and we got closer views of this rare bird when we landed on the island later in the morning.

Darryl decided to take the opportunity to dive the reef and while he was preparing for that the rest of took a ride on a semi-submersible to get a close view of the underwater life which included many colorful fish and corals, a couple of **Green Sea Turtles** and some **Giant Clams**. After the submersible ride, we took a tender to the island which hosted thousands of **Common (Brown) Noddies** and **Sooty Terns** (Photo: Gina Nichol) with a few **Crested Terns** mixed in. There were also several **Brown Boobies** and a few more **Great Frigatebirds**. There were **Sooty Tern** chicks as well and we got amazingly close to all of this while remaining in the roped off visitor area.





We went back to the boat for a delicious lunch and then headed back to the Cay for a private walking tour around the island. A “supermoon”, a full moon occurring when the moon is at its closest to earth, and its corresponding “king” **low tide was revealing much more of the reef than normal.** (Photo: Gina Nichol) In fact, there was so much sand exposed that we were able to walk around the island (safely and with permission!) where most people never get to go. This gave

us a truly unique perspective of the Cay. An **Epaulette Shark** was seen in the shallows and we spotted 6 **Lesser Crested Terns** on the sand. The island looked amazing with so many birds flying above it and we marveled at the corals that were appearing above the water surface. This was a very special opportunity and a highlight of the trip. The sail back to the mainland was exhilarating to say the least with a strong wind in our faces but we all stayed on deck enjoying the sea air.

Back in Cairns, the Esplanade was alive with people and music but that didn't impact the birds on the exposed flats. Just off the walkway were **Australian Pelican** (Photo: Gina Nichol), **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Red-capped Plover**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Red-necked Stint**, **Great Knot**, **Gray-tailed Tattlers**, **Whimbrels** bathing, and a skulking **Striated Heron**. Flocks of **Rainbow Lorikeets** flew over and there were several **Australian Swiftlets**. In the evening we enjoyed a nice dinner in town and a review of our spectacular day at the Great Barrier Reef.



Day 3, June 24 – Daintree Village

This morning after breakfast we checked the Esplanade and found some very vocal, displaying **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** flaring their crests, allopreening and giving a great show. The open lawns held the usual **Magpie Larks**, **Willie Wagtails** and **Common Mynas** and the tide was up very high not leaving much room for shorebirds except a **Black-fronted Dotterel**. A pair of **Bar-shouldered Doves** was seen around a sand pile at the end of the Esplanade and then we searched the mangroves for **Mangrove Robin**. One was calling from deep in the shadows and around the corner there were two more, one seen at very close range. We circled back into town to see the colony of **Spectacled Flying Foxes** near the library and it was truly an amazing display. There were thousands of the large megabats hanging upside-down in the trees and a few flying around exhibiting their 1.5 meter (nearly 5 foot) wingspan. The colony, with anywhere from 8,000 to 12,000 bats, was noisy and if your car was parked below the



trees, it was a mess! Still the bats were a sight to behold, some with babies clinging to adults and looking wide-eyed at the surrounding mayhem.

We made a quick stop back at the Esplanade for some to catch up with **Varied Honeyeater** and then headed north along the coast to Yorky's Knob Golf Course where there was a small lake that held **Australasian Darter**, **Gray Teal**, **Hardhead**, **Little Black Cormorant**, and **Pacific Black Duck**. A couple of **Nankeen Night Herons** were partially hidden in the branches of a tree overlooking the water but eventually we all got on them. Above our heads there was a nice adult male **Mistletoebird** (the only Australian representative of the flowerpecker family). A couple of **Pacific Bazas** flew low over the distant trees and disappeared quickly. The trees above our heads also hosted two **Yellow Honeyeaters** and **Australian Figbirds** which flew across attracting our attention to a patch of forest where a **Double-eyed Fig Parrot** was

feeding on some fruits. A **Laughing Kookaburra** (Photo: Steve Bird) laughed in the background and soon we were looking at a pair of these large birds at close range on a tree branch at the edge of the adjacent playing field. A **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** flew over and a **Collared Kingfisher** was sat perched on a post across the field. We boarded the van and continued on making a quick stop for the first of many **Black Kites** that were kettling above a harvested cane field.

Our next stop was at Cattana Wetlands where we walked a short trail through the forest and saw a **Common Crow** butterfly and a couple of **Hornbill Friarbirds** in the trees above. Further on, a pair of **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** skulked just inside the forest around a little wet area. A lily pad-covered pond had at least four **Green Pygmy Geese**. As we approached the edge of the next pond, a large **Olive Python** slithered off and we



left with a **Little Pied Cormorant** perched on a dead tree in the middle of the pond that also had **Great Egret** and some **Pacific Black Ducks**. On the far side were **Straw-necked Ibis** and **Masked Lapwings**.

Another pond held several **Comb-crested Jacanas**, more **Green Pygmy Geese**, **Australasian Grebe**, **Pied Cormorant**, **Dusky Moorhens**, and a **Cotton Pygmy Goose** (a rarity spotted by sharp-eyed Steve). Back along the trail was a juvenile **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. On the way out there were several **Royal Spoonbills** (Photo: Steve Bird) with one

Yellow-billed Spoonbill in the middle of the group. As we left Yorky's Knob, there were several **Fairy Martins** flying around between the cane fields. We stopped for a quick look at a group of 30 or so **Agile Wallabies** under some trees in a large farm field. Then we continued on the Captain Cook Highway northward stopping in Mossman for supplies and then for a picnic lunch near a stream. At Newell's Beach the tide was quite high for shorebirds but an **Osprey** was seen. On the way out, the farm pastures offered **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins**, more **Laughing Kookaburras**, a **Forest Kingfisher**, and at least one **White-bellied Cuckooshrike**. A weedy area had **Golden-headed Cisticola** and more **Mannikins**. In front of a cane field, there was a **White-necked Heron**. Several **Cattle Egrets** were also seen in the fields as we traveled.

We turned off the main road to check a fish farm as a **Black-necked Stork** flew over. There were several **Black-winged Stilts** around the fish ponds, **Radjah Shelducks**, another **Osprey** and a **White-bellied Sea Eagle** flew over. **Royal Spoonbills** were



present and **Whistling** and **Brahminy Kites** circled overhead. As we drove toward Daintree Village, a **Black-shouldered Kite** was seen perched along the road and each time we passed this spot over the next two days, the bird was in the same place.

We arrived at Daintree Village and checked into our B&B – The **Red Mill House** (Photo: Gina Nichol). Some welcome

refreshments on the verandah allowed us views of a pair of **Orange-footed Scrubfowls** tending to their mound right out in the grounds below us. Also in the grounds were **Yellow-spotted Honeyeater**, **Macleay's Honeyeater**, and **Australian Brush Turkey**. We walked out toward the village and up Stewart Creek Road and found **Olive-backed Sunbird**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Spectacled Monarch**, **Rufous Fantail**, and **Varied Triller**. Some less colorful birds had us working hard but eventually we saw **Gray Whistler** and **Large-billed Gerygone**. Across the road, Steve pointed out a skulking **Emerald Dove**, and further on there were three **Yellow Orioles** and a **Metallic Starling** in a bare tree. An area overlooking the Daintree River held two **Rainbow Bee-eaters** doing their typical fly out foraging technique. We headed back toward the B&B adding **Black Butcherbird** for the day. For dinner, Barry prepared a wonderful barbecue complete with sausages and kangaroo steaks. Some **Long-nosed Bandicoots** came out on the lawn and foraged and through the night the **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** were heard.

Day 4, June 25 – Daintree River and Cape Tribulation

The loud sounds of **Laughing Kookaburras** in the Red Mill House Garden were our “bushman’s alarm clock this morning as we rose at dawn to head toward the Daintree River. We walked toward town passing a silhouetted **Spangled Drongo** perched on a power line. In town, a Bottlebrush was a venerable “tree of life” as it played host to **Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters, Olive-backed Sunbirds, Yellow Honeyeater, Macleay’s Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, and Hornbill Friarbird** all feeding on the nectar of the pink brushy flowers. We continued down to the river as the light mist over the landscape under clear blue skies and a huge full moon created an ethereal feel to the morning.



We met our boat driver, Sauce, and boarded the Crocodile Express. As we set off from the dock, a **White-faced Heron** was seen on the bank. We cruised up a small side stream and found an **Azure Kingfisher** posed on an open stump. We watched as the bird dropped down to the water once or twice returning to its perch seemingly unfazed by our presence. Behind it on the bank was a pair of **Shining Flycatchers**, the female looking quite smart and the male in basic black.

Three ducks flew over and after watching them for a few minutes it was determined that they were **Hardheads** and unfortunately not Barry's 700th Australian bird. On the other side of the riverlet was a **Nankeen Night Heron** lurking on the shore. We turned around and headed into the main channel of the Daintree River where the sunrise was lighting up the waterway. A **Little Kingfisher** was spotted on the shore and the shallowness of the channel made it impossible to get any closer. We continued up the river and were accompanied by several **Welcome Swallows** flying very close to the boat (later to land on the boat!). The morning mist was burning off allowing the sun to illuminate a perched **Sacred Kingfisher** making it look absolutely stunning. The bird was well photographed



and as we pulled away, another **Azure Kingfisher** (Photo: Gina Nichol) flew to an open perch. A **White-faced Heron** was also lit up by the sun but could not compete with the brilliant blues of the kingfishers.

We cruised along the quiet river and saw **Australian Darter, Varied Triller, Large-billed Gerygone** and **Little Egret**. Sauce took us to a secret spot to see a **Wompoo Fruit Dove** on a nest which was a real treat. Moving on there was a tree full of **Australian Figbirds** and several **Little Pied Cormorants**. Steve spotted a **Green Tree Snake** in the hole of a tree on

the bank just before we found a lone **Papuan Frogmouth** (Photo: Steve Bird) sitting in a tree about 20 feet up. Once again the bird seemed unfazed by our presence and just sat sleeping in the morning sun. The sky was sparkling clear blue now and we turned around to head back with several **Australian Swiftlets** performing acrobatics over the river.

After the cruise we walked back to our B&B for a hearty, home cooked breakfast and then headed out for the day to Cape Tribulation. We crossed the Daintree River by ferry and traveled along the Cape Tribulation Road into Daintree National Park and its lush lowland rainforest overlooking the stunning coastline. A dirt track that led out to the beach had us looking at a group of **Tree Martins** on top of a palm tree. Otherwise it was quiet so we walked back along the road and found **Little Bronze Cuckoo**, an **Emerald Dove**, **Spectacled Monarch**, **Mistletoebird**, and two **Forest Kingfishers**. We moved on to another area with a boardwalk that led through the forest. At first it was quiet but the rainforest was beautiful making for an enjoyable walk. Soon we found **Little Shrike Thrush**, **Pied Monarch**, another **Spectacled Monarch**, and a couple of **Large-billed Scrub Wrens**. We check another area and found a **Collared Kingfisher** perched on some dead trees washed up on the beach and our first **Estuarine/Saltwater Crocodile**.



After a picnic lunch we moved on to another boardwalk area with great exhibits. A walk through the mangrove forest here produced yet another **Spectacled Monarch** and we picked up **Bridled Honeyeater** along the path. Working our way back toward Daintree

Village, Barry drove us up Turpentine Road and stopped the car when he heard a **Victoria's Riflebird** (Photo: Steve Bird) call. We soon found the bird on its perch and displaying and enjoyed the show for several minutes while it raised its wings and danced on the top of a dead stump. A group of **Fairy Gerygones** worked through the trees on the other side of the road and a **Crested Baza** flew over and perched in a distant tree. The **Riflebird** took refuge when the **Baza** showed up but soon reappeared on another dead tree. We continued on stopping for ice cream and an overlook view before catching the ferry back across the river.



Day 5, June 26 – Julatten and Mt Carbine

This morning there were **Australian Brush Turkeys** and **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** walking around the lawns as we enjoyed an elaborate breakfast on the verandah. After breakfast we drove up Stewart Creek Road through the expansive cow pastures where there were several **Cattle Egrets** in attendance, some standing on top of the cows perhaps to warm their feet from the chill of the morning. It was another sparkling clear day and we were accompanied by local birder Ellen Terrell who was ready to share her local knowledge of the area. Beyond the cow fields, we reached a patch of forest where there were several birds in the trees along the edge including a nice male **Mistletoebird**, **Grey Whistler**, 4 **Barred Cuckooshrikes** in a treetop, **Spectacled Monarch**, **Fairy Gerygone**, **Little Shrike-thrush**, **Varied Triller**, **Rufous Fantail**, and a pair of **Wompoo Fruit Doves** on an open branch over the road. There also were **Yellow-spotted** and **Dusky Honeyeaters**, **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters** and a **Yellow Oriole** feeding on umbrella tree fruit. Driving out, we saw a pair of **Hardheads** on a small pond.

We headed back to the lodge, packed up and bid farewell to our gracious hosts. From here we drove up the coastal range to Julatten and checked in to Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge. The lodge feeders held **Lewin's**, **Macleay's** and **Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters** to be viewed at very close range as well as **Red-browed Finches** (Photo: Steve Bird) at arm's reach away. We had lunch on the verandah and then went out to the dry savannah country near Mount Carbine for a complete change of habitat and a whole new selection of birds. A quick stop at Sides Road offered a quickly disappearing **Lovely Fairywren**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Large-billed Scrubwren**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, a female **Victoria's Riflebird** and **White-cheeked Honeyeater**.

We drove on and the landscape changed into grassland dotted with trees. We saw several **Brown Falcons** on the power lines and posts, **Black-shouldered Kite** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. We turned off the main road at Hurricane Road and stopped for a group of **Black-faced**





Woodswallows, some flying and some perched on a dead tree. We stopped at a small pond and found **Diamond Doves**, **Peaceful Doves**, and the northern subspecies of **Double-barred Finch** coming down to drink from the pond. In the trees beyond the pond there were **Black-throated Finches** working around an old **Magpie-lark** nest and a pair of **White-throated Treecreepers** on a dead tree. A female **White-winged Triller** came in and a **Grey Fantail** was seen. A **White-throated Gerygone** flew in close and a pair of **Striated**

Pardalotes (Photo: Steve Bird) flitted around a nearby tree, the male carrying food perhaps to a nest nearby. As we watched the Pardalotes, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** flew over fairly high in the sky but still showing the characteristic shape of its tail. A **Pied Butcherbird** passed through and a **Weebill** showed briefly. A flock of **Budgerigars** flew in the distance but never reappeared. As the day heated up, we decided to try another area.

We traveled back toward Julatten stopping at the Mount Carbine Caravan Park and with permission we birded the grounds for a while. The very friendly lady at reception showed us the bower of a **Great Bowerbird** and while we were inspecting it Steve pointed out some **Galahs** on a treetop. **Australian Magpies** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** were flying around and the first of many **Pale-headed Rosellas** was seen. A **Blue-winged Kookaburra** gave great views on a horizontal branch as we searched for the alleged Tawny Frogmouths that roosted in the park. We walked to another area where there were two more bowers and a **Great Bowerbird** in the trees above. Some **Apostlebirds** caught our attention and as we tried to count them making sure there were 12, Steve whispered that the **Tawny Frogmouth** (Photo: Gina Nichol) was perched right above our heads. If it were any closer it would have been perched on someone's hat! Dave found the second **Tawny Frogmouth** in the next tree and we were amazed to see how cryptic the birds were and how close we were to them.



We continued birding the grounds and got views of **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, **Little Friarbird**, and many more **Pale-headed Rosellas**. A **Galah** drank from a faucet near a caravan and another water spigot was visited by a **Great Bowerbird** and a couple of **Rosellas**. As we left the park and headed up the main road a **Spotted Harrier** took flight from the verge and flew along right next to the bus at least a half kilometer giving spectacular views in the afternoon light. There were several **Torresian Crows** around and as we turned off the main road on to Marys Farm Road, there were **Nankeen Kestrels** about. Just down the road there were two **Australian Bustards** in the grasses. We drove slowly and saw two **Agile Wallabies** down a side road, more **Bustards** and a

large group of **Red-winged Parrots**. Trees along the road held **Rufous Whistler**, **Laughing Kookaburra**, and as we walked the road, we heard the calls of both species of Kookaburra. As the sun set, we headed back to the lodge for a nice dinner on the verandah. After dinner we walked the entrance road to see a very cooperative **Barking Owl** (Photo: Gina Nichol) perched on an open branch near the gate.



Day 6, June 27 – Julatten and Mt Lewis

A pre-breakfast walk around the grounds of Kingfisher Park got us **Rufous Fantail**, **Large-billed Scrubwren**, **Dusky Honeyeater**, **Emerald Dove**, **Pale Yellow Robin** and **Spectacled Monarch**. A stand of fig trees behind the nursing home held a **Varied Triller**, **Double-eyed Fig Parrots**, **Australian Figbirds**, and there were a few nice looking **Barred Cuckoo-shrikes** around. On the way back for breakfast we had **Striated Pardalote**, a small flock of **Silvereyes**, a very close **Pale Yellow Robin**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Graceful Honeyeater** and **Little Shrike Thrush**.

After breakfast we departed the lodge for the high mountain rainforests of Mt Lewis. Our first stop yielded **Brown Gerygone** and more **Silvereyes**, yet another **Spectacled Monarch**, **Bridled Honeyeaters**, and **Grey Fantail**. We drove up a dirt road and got out in the car park where we immediately found a **Mountain Thornbill** flitting low in some bushes near the trail head. We walked up the forest trail and over the course of the morning found several species including some endemics to North Queensland. First up was **Yellow-throated Scrubwren** right in front of us on the track, then a female **Golden Whistler**, **Yellow-breasted Broadbill**, **Atherton Scrubwren**, two close **Fernwrens**, the mountain subspecies of **Grey Fantail** and **Wompoo Fruit Dove**. A brilliant male **Golden Whistler** showed well above the trail and a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** was seen. A **Bower's Shrike-thrush** came in low over the trail and a **Spotted Catbird** was seen briefly. A group of **Chowchillas** were foraging in the leaf litter and we watched their unique feeding technique as they balanced on their tails and scratched the ground alternating their feet. Several **Grey-headed Robins** were seen along this trail and all in all it was a great morning of birding.



We went back to the lodge for lunch and watched **Rainbow Lorikeets** (Photo: Gina Nichol) and **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** vie for position at the feeders as we ate our sandwiches. After lunch we set off again from the lodge and did a big loop around through Mount Molloy and back to



Julatten. There were **Forest Kingfishers** perched on power lines, **Whistling Kites** foraging in a cut cane field and a **Black-shouldered Kite** hovering over another field. A quick stop at Sides Road found us **Pale Yellow Robin, Spectacled Monarch, Red-browed Finches, Grey Fantail, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** and a **Silvereye**. Our next stop at a marsh found us a pair of **Red-backed Fairywrens** (Photo: Gina Nichol) that came in allowing great views. In the car park, we had **Lewin's Honeyeater** feeding on some Mistletoe flowers.

At the next stop we had **Brown Honeyeaters** on some flowers and a **Brown Falcon** flying over. We drove

through Mount Molloy village and stopped at the playing fields where there were **White-throated Honeyeater**, an **Eastern Spinebill** attending to a nest (bringing in food and feeding chicks), a flock of **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins** in the tall grasses, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** and **Yellow Honeyeater**. A side road offered a quickly disappearing **Collared Sparrowhawk** and a molting raptor that had us guessing and was later identified as a **Whistling Kite**. As we passed through some farm fields we had **Brown Falcon, Rainbow Bee-eaters** in the road, **Australasian Pipits** in the grasses and on the fence posts, **Tree Martins**, and **White-bellied Woodswallows**. Some **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins** flew across the road and landed in the grasses next to a small pond that held **Magpie Geese, Hardheads, Grey Teal, Great Egret, Plumed Whistling Ducks** and **Pacific Black Ducks**.

We stopped at a friend of Barry's to see the birds in his garden which included **White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-faced Honeyeater** and many of the other birds we had seen during the day. At the local school we had **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Rainbow Lorikeets, Great Bowerbird** and **Australian Figbird**. Back at the lodge, Keith took us to a nearby park to see **Eastern Barn Owls** emerging from their tree hollows just after dark.

Day 7, June 28 – Atherton Tablelands

This morning during breakfast Mick reported that there was a **Duck-billed Platypus** at the small stream so we walked down to look for it and sure enough, there it was working along the bank of the stream. Once we had our fill of this strange and uniquely Australian animal, we went back to the lodge and loaded the van for a full day of birding. Sides Road was a little more active today with **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and **Scarlet Honeyeater** as soon as we got out of the bus! Also in the Eucalyptus trees and surrounding vegetation along the trail were **White-throated Honeyeater, Pale-Yellow Robin, Rufous Fantail, Grey Whistler, Rufous Whistler, White-cheeked Honeyeater** and **Red-browed Finch**. Some of us had quick views of the **Blue-faced Parrot Finch** but it got away before all could get a look. A **Black-shouldered Kite** was perched on a distant dead tree over the cane fields.

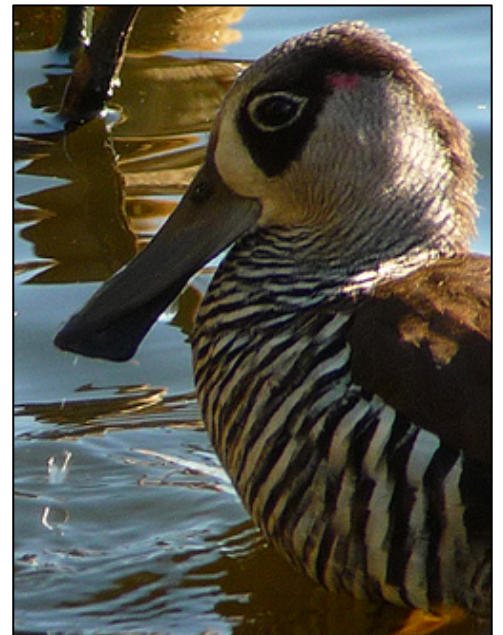
Our next stop was at a private house with several plantings and feeders in the yard and we counted 11 species of Honeyeater at the feeders including **Dusky, Black-chinned, Yellow, White-cheeked, White-naped, White-throated, Lewin's, Yellow-faced, Blue-faced, and Macleay's**. (Photo: Gina Nichol) There were also **Rainbow Lorikeets** a plenty and our session here was absolutely delightful.



Further down the road, there was a tree full of **Chestnut-breasted Mannikins** and **Red-browed Finches**. A stop for a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** chasing a **Brown Falcon** had us overlooking a small pond that held **Pink-eared Ducks** (reported to the area's rare records committee), **Plumed Whistling Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe** and some **Magpie Geese**. Our next stop offered **Little Shrike Thrush** and a pair of gorgeous **Lovely Fairywrens** showing well, a **White-naped Honeyeater**, and **Bridled Honeyeater**.

We moved on to the local school where a **Brown Goshawk** flew over. Also around were **Bar-shouldered Doves, Rainbow Bee-eaters**, and a very vocal **Gray-crowned Babbler**. We drove on through Mareeba and as we got out of town there were a hundred or so **Black** and **Whistling Kites** kettling above some farm fields. Further on some plowed fields hosted several **Sarus Cranes** and **Brolgas** and the mixed group made for good comparisons as we worked them out.

Our next stop was at Emerald Creek Falls Reserve where we were greeted by **Noisy Friarbirds** and some **Scarlet Honeyeaters**. There was also **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** and a nice adult **Mistletoebird, Little Shrike Thrush, and Eastern Yellow Robin**. We searched the forest along the stream and got quick glimpses of a **Rufous Owl** carrying a **Ring-tailed Possum** but the bird got away quickly. We had our picnic lunch here and as we finished Dave wandered off and found a **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** in a flowering tree and we got great views. We continued on stopping for a **Little Eagle** flying above the road. Back on the main road, there were several **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos** in the roadside trees and we pulled over to enjoy the views.



Our next stop was Hasties Swamp National Park where there were thousands of ducks including **Plumed Whistling Duck, Pink-eared Duck** (Photo: Gina Nichol), **Hardhead, Pacific Black Duck, Magpie Geese, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot** and a rare **Freckled Duck**. A **White-bellied Eagle** came

in and took one of the ducks causing an eruption of flight. The Eagle landed in a tree on the far shore and was joined by two others as the ducks settled back down. There were a few **Purple Swamphens** along the shore and a **Nankeen Night-heron** in a nearby tree. All in all it was an amazing spectacle of waterfowl and much enjoyed. On the way out there we noted a **Sacred Kingfisher** perched on a power line.



By late afternoon we reached the Atherton Tablelands (752 meters above sea level) and as we made our way toward our lodge there was another **Spotted Harrier** coursing over a grassy field giving fabulous views. We entered Crater Lake National Park and soon arrived at our lodge for the night. Positioned in the middle of the forest, the lodge was quiet and offered some unique wildlife viewing opportunities including **Victoria's Riflebirds** and **Spotted Catbirds** on our verandahs. A couple of **Grey-headed Robins** showed well for us as we investigated the grounds and later on we were treated to a commentary about the **Red-legged Pademelons** that visited the open lawn in front of the lodge. That evening, we also spent some time watching **Sugar Gliders** licking honey from some tree trunks in front of an observation platform and later on a **Striped Possum** (Photo: Gina Nichol) visited allowing views at very close range.

Day 8, June 29 – Kuranda, Skyrail, Cairns and Darwin

This morning, some of us were out before dawn to experience the dawn chorus at Lake Barrine. As the sun come up, the forest was full of the sounds of **Chowchillas**, **Eastern Whipbirds**, **Fernwrens**, **Butcherbirds**, and **Treecreepers**. As the light came up we could see the **Chowchillas** scratching the leaf litter and we got a quick glimpse of a **Musky Rat-Kangaroo** that scurried out of sight. There were some **Large-billed Scrubwrens** around and the lake had **Great-crested Grebes**, **Australasian Grebes** and **Eurasian Coots**. We went back to the lodge for breakfast and then walked up the entrance road getting good views of **Brown Cuckoo-dove**, **Bower's Shrike Thrush** and hearing a **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**. We continued on to another spot in the National Park and when we got out to the lake there were **Great-crested Grebes**, **Pied Cormorant**, **Little Black Cormorant** and some **Top Knot Pigeons** that flew by in the distance. A quiet forest trail here offered **Lewin's Honeyeater** and **Brown Gerygone**.

Another lake near Atherton had **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, and **Australian Pipit** on the lawn, **Australian Wood Ducks**, **Black-winged Stilts**, **Great Cormorant**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Grey Teal** and **Plumed Whistling Ducks**. With all of the birds to see, a **Brown Honeyeater** above us in the trees didn't get much notice. We drove on through Yungaburra stopping for two **Bush Thick-knees** at the edge of town. A quick visit to the Curtain Fig Tree offered little more than a couple of **Spotted Catbirds** and a **Grey-headed Robin**. Continuing on some **Pied Carrarongs** were seen as we traveled.

Our next stop was a real thrill as with the help of a local guide we were able to see the bower of a **Golden Bowerbird**. It was an amazing structure built mainly of twigs and decorated with lichens and stood nearly three feet tall. The bird was not around so we waited quietly for a while and just as we were about to leave, Dave looked up to see the bird perched in the branches above. The beautiful male **Golden Bowerbird** (Photo: Gina Nichol) sat and preened for a few minutes and was well photographed (despite bad light) before it flew toward the bower. We were thrilled to see this bird so well and it was a trip highlight for many.



Our next stop in another lovely patch of forest found us another **Brown Gerygone**, **Large-billed Scrubwren**, and a **Leaf-tailed Gecko**. Outside the forest we found **Shining Bronze Cuckoo** and **Golden Whistler**. We continued on to Kuranda and rode the Skyrail down to Cairns enjoying spectacular views of the landscape and the canopy of the tropical wet forest below under sunny blue skies. A tree full of **Top Knot Pigeons** and a **Freshwater Crocodile** in the river were noted. As we got down to the Cairns end, there were **Agile Wallabies** in an open field and two of them were jousting - caught on film by Paul.

We ended the day at the Cairns Esplanade where the tide brought several shorebirds up for close views including **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Lesser Sand Plover**, **Grey-tailed Tattler**, **Red-capped Plover**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **Red-necked Stint**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Whimbrel**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Gull-billed Terns**, **Silver Gulls** and **Australian Pelicans**. **Rainbow Lorikeets** were flying over in numbers as well as **Australian Swiftlets** and it was once again a glorious evening on the Cairns waterfront. From here we headed to the airport for our flight to Darwin. We arrived late in the evening and picked up the van which was equipped with a Yellow Strobe Safety Light on the top that would come in handy over the next few days.

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Day 9, June 30 – Darwin, Fogg Dam and Kakadu National Park

This morning after breakfast we loaded up the van and headed east from Darwin toward Kakadu National Park. As we traveled out of the city there were **Black Kites**, **Magpie Geese**, **Pacific Black Ducks**, and **Little Corellas** flying over. We passed through the village of Humpty Doo and turned off the main road to Fogg Dam stopping for a dark morph **Brown Falcon**, one of many of these species that we would see over the next days. We drove the causeway at Fogg Dam which stretched between sprawling marshes on either side but we could not get out of the van due to some large crocodiles in the areas. From the van, we saw several of the water birds we had already seen and stopping for **Glossy Ibis**, **Pied Herons**, **Australian Pratincole**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, a close **Australian Darter**, and a **Little Corella** on the road having a confrontation with a **Willie Wagtail**. There were several **Magpie Geese** and **Radjah Shelducks** in the marsh, and on the other side a **Swamp Harrier** was seen flying low over the grasses. A few

Whiskered Terns were noted and a pair of **Brolgas** was foraging not far from the road. There were **Royal Spoonbills** and **Black-necked Storks** and the marsh stretched almost as far as we could see.

We went into a hide at the end of the causeway and scoped the marsh adding **Red-kneed Dotterel**. **Egrets**, **Hérons** and **Magpie Geese** suddenly took flight above the marsh indicated a raptor nearby and sure enough a **White-bellied Sea Eagle** was seen flying in the distance. In the trees around the parking lot we had the "Paperbark" version of **Restless (Paperback) Flycatcher**, **Double-barred Finches**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Dusky Honeyeater**, **White-gaped Honeyeater**, **Varied Triller**, and several **Tree Martins** flying around. We went back out to where we could walk a forest path and found **Rufous-banded Honeyeater**, **White-throated Honeyeater**, **Northern Fantail**, **Little Bronze Cuckoo**, and **Yellow Oriole**. A side trail into an open area got us a tree full of **Tree Martins**, **Grey Whistler**, **Arafura Fantail**, and male and female **Shining Flycatcher** displaying to each other. We continued on the Arnhem Highway to the Adelaide River where we had lunch and then had a look around next to the river. In the mangroves were **Broad-billed Flycatcher**, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** and **Grey Whistler**. Continuing east we stopped for some **Channel-billed Cuckoos** flying over the forest and several **Torresian Crows** were around. Our next stop to pick up beverages offered some good views of **Agile Wallaby** including two with Joeys in their pouches. A quick stop at a small lily-covered pond yielded some dragonflies and some noisy **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos**.

We entered Kakadu National Park in the middle of the afternoon and noticed some recent burn areas along the road. Barry explained that there were managed burns in the park during the cool season to reduce the fire risk at other times of the year. Several **Whistling Kites** and a few **Brown Falcons** (Photo: Gina Nichol) were foraging around a burn and they didn't move too far as we drove in to get closer views. We continued on adding another **Spotted Harrier** and then stopped at Mamakala Wetland adding **Crimson Finch**,

Red-backed Fairywren and **Rainbow Bee-eater** on the way in. In the car park were several **Gray-crowned Babblers** (Kakadu subspecies with the chestnut breast) showing well and a **White-winged Triller** (female) and **Rufous-banded Honeyeater**. We got to the elaborate bird hide which overlooked the open water of the wetlands and found **Wandering Whistling Duck**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Green**



Pygmy Geese, Whiskered Tern and Pied Cormorant. Back out on another trail we had **Blue-winged Kookaburra, White-throated Honeyeater,** and **Long-tailed Finch** and we added **Masked Finch** as we loaded the van to continue to Jabiru. We checked into our tented rooms with the sounds of **Barking Owls** in the background and as we walked to dinner a **Dingo** crossed the road ahead of us.

Day 10, July 1 – Kakadu National Park

This morning we were up before dawn for our cruise on the famous Yellow Waters Billabong, a deep pocket of water on Jim Jim Creek. As we left the dock, an **Australian Pelican** flew in looking like a sea plane landing. It was another clear day and the rising sun lit up the beautiful waterway as we drifted along looking at **Green Pygmy Geese** and **Little Corellas** in the trees

above the bank. A large **Saltwater Crocodile** was hauled out on the bank and we pulled up to get a closer view noting a **Black-necked Stork** (local name Jabiru) trying to eat a rather large fish behind the croc. The usual **Whistling Kites** were present and the first of several **Nankeen Night Herons** was seen along the bank. We cruised on out to South Alligator River where we saw **Australian Darter, Plumed Whistling Ducks, Intermediate Egrets,** many **Little Corellas** flying over and a perched **White-bellied Sea Eagle.** A **Caspian Tern** came by and disappeared all too quickly and a **Brown Goshawk** did its best to hide in the riverside trees. A **Blue-**



winged Kookaburra was perched on the right side of the river and a few more **Crocodiles** were seen lurking along the edges. Also along the edges of the river were **Crimson Finch, Restless (Paperback) Flycatcher,** and an **Australian Darter** warming up in the morning sun.

We cruised by an open grassy area where a **Swamp Harrier** was flying over. Near the edge of the grass were **Comb-crested Jacanas** and **Wandering Whistling Ducks,** and a **Glossy Ibis** flew over. Further on we added **Little Black Cormorant** and then our boatman pulled up alongside a nest of a **Restless (Paperback) Flycatcher** with two half grown chicks. The parent birds were feeding the babies every few minutes as we floated at a safe distance so as not to disturb the operation. We returned to the dock and then to breakfast where there were several **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** in a nearby tree making a racket.

We moved on to Nourlangie Rock and walked the track by the Aboriginal paintings and

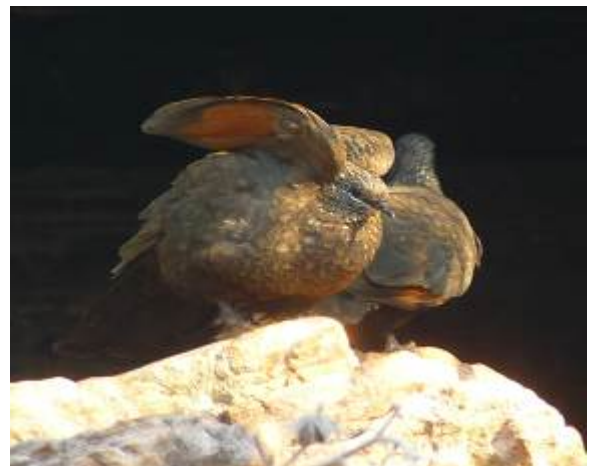
into an area of monsoon rainforest. Here we found the very range restricted **White-lined Honeyeater**. Also around were the usual **Dusky Honeyeaters**, **Spangled Drongo**, **White-bellied Cuckooshrike** and **Great Bowerbird**.



(Photo: Group at Nourlangie Rock by Gina Nichol)

We checked Anbangbang Billabong on the way out and found the usual suspects including **Plumed** and **Wandering Whistling Ducks**, **Royal Spoonbills**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Green Pygmy Goose**, and more **Little Corellas** in the trees above our heads. Heading back toward Jabiru we had our first **Black-breasted Buzzard** flying above the road and earning the now traditional “new bird light flash” with the top mounted yellow light.

In the afternoon, we stopped by Lake Jabiru Park where there was **White-necked Heron**, several **Little Corellas** and some **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. Heading out of town there was another **Dingo** seen down a dirt track. We continued to Ubirr at the eastern edge of Kakadu National Park and walked a sandy track through an area of sandstone rock formations where we found **Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon** (Photo: Gina Nichol) - the first one up on a cliff. The bird flew off revealing its



chestnut wings and then was relocated and scoped as it sat in the sun. Some **Little Woodswallows** were flying around above our heads and then two more **Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeons** were spotted perched on a rock in front of a small cave. One of these stretched its wings again revealing the chestnut color which was captured in a few photos. Other birds here included several **Varied Trillers**, more **Little Corellas**, **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**, **Green-backed Gerygones**, and a pair of **Western Brown Snakes** which moved slowly away from the trail.



We moved on to another trail adjacent to the East Alligator River and searched the forest for **Rainbow Pitta** (Photo: Steve Bird). There were several **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** scratching around in the leaf litter but otherwise this patch of forest was very dry and quiet. The search was beginning to feel like a forced march as we trudged our way around the trail. Finally in view of the car park, the sun was going down and we were about to give up when Barry alerted us to a **Rainbow Pitta** in the undergrowth right next to the road. We got fantastic views of this colorful little bird and at one point it hopped up on to a fallen branch allowing unobstructed views as the cameras clicked away photo after

photo. This fantastic bird was celebrated with the ceremonial light flash! Then we moved on to another Aboriginal art site where we saw a **Small-eared Rock Wallaby** and a **Sandstone Antechinus** scurrying among the rocks. We headed back to Jabiru and were treated to another delicious barbecue prepared by Chef Barry. It was Northern Territory day which meant fireworks displays which thankfully ended by midnight allowing a few hours' sleep.

Day 11, July 2 – Kakadu and Pine Creek

This morning we once again visited Nourlangie Rock early. There were few people looking at the **Aboriginal Art** and Steve decided he liked the Nabalwinjbulwinj painting which was the spirit who ate females after striking them with yams (Photo: Gina Nichol). Amidst the forest and rock landscape, we found **Red-winged Parrots**, **Restless (Paperback) Flycatcher**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **Northern Fantail**, **Dusky Honeyeater**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, and a couple of **Spangled Drongos**. Gina spotted some **Northern Rosellas** feeding on some Mistletoe flowers. They flew off and were relocated on the Bush Walk Trail where we watched them well as they fed and moved along the branches.



Nearby, some **Silver-crowned Friarbirds** were working on a **Green Ant** nest and eventually allowed good views. After the celebratory light flashes for our new birds, we drove on passing a dark morph **Swamp Harrier**. At Barramundi Creek there were **Black-faced Woodswallows** and a small pool offered refreshment to **Diamond** and **Peaceful Doves**. We moved on to another random spot along the road where we found **Striated Pardalote**, **White-throated Honeyeater**, **Dusky Honeyeater**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Bar-breasted Honeyeater** and a **Brown Honeyeater** collecting silk from spider webs in the grass presumably to build a nest.

We continued on stopping quickly for a low flying **Black-breasted Buzzard**. We turned off the main road onto a dirt track and stopped for some **Crimson Finches** and a **Golden-headed Cisticola**. At Gunlom Falls, we climbed the trail up to the escarpment above the 100 foot waterfall. On the way up we had **Red-collared Lorikeet**, **Barred Honeyeater** and **Rufous-throated Honeyeater**. At the top, there were several **Little Woodswallows** flying low, **Brown Falcons**, **White-lined Honeyeaters**, **Torresian Crows**, and **Brown Honeyeater**. An accipiter came through close and turned out to be **Brown Goshawk**.



The **scenery** (Photo: Gina Nichol) was spectacular and we spent some time taking it in before climbing back down the rocky trail. The large pool at the base of the waterfall was also appreciated as some **Rainbow Bee-eaters** flew around catching insects. On the way out we stopped for a **Crested Baza** and then a **Pheasant Coucal** skulking in the grasses above the road. After helping some French girls fix a puncture we continued on flushing **Partridge Pigeons** off the road. We got out and had varying views of the birds before

they vanished into the landscape. It was getting late in the day so we continued toward Pine Creek stopping to look at four **Water Buffalo** and then arrived after dark at the Pine Creek Railway Resort the checked into our rooms. It was Steak Night in the restaurant which some of us took advantage of and then we reviewed our sightings noting several new birds (and ceremonial flashes) for the day.

Day 12, July 3 – Pine Creek and Darwin

In the evening, Barry had obtained some inside information and proceeded to a waterhole at dawn with the hopes of seeing some special birds come in to drink. As we settled in there were **White-throated Honeyeaters** around and soon some **Double-barred Finches** came in to the rocks on the far shore. An **Azure Kingfisher** flew into the tree right in front of us and **Great Bowerbirds** and **White-winged Trillers** were in the trees behind us. Some **Striated Pardalotes** were very vocal and active in the trees around us and a **Weebill** showed well in the morning light as it perched on a fallen tree on the other side of the water. The birds were flying from the shore side vegetation, and then dipping (more like throwing themselves) into the water and then flying back to a branch to preen. It was fabulous to witness this morning ritual as we waited for our target birds to arrive.

The stars of the show soon appeared, first in the trees behind the waterhole and then coming down to drink. Amazingly we had two types of brightly colored male **Gouldian Finches** (Photo: Gina Nichol) - both the red-faced and black-faced varieties. There were perhaps 5 birds in total, all males and at one point one landed in the tree right in front of us! Fantastic!



As we were getting ready to go back for breakfast some flocks of **Hooded Parrots** flew over and we decided to check an area further down the road before driving back to Pine Creek. It was a good decision as we found a spot that had a good flock of **Crimson Finches** and more **Double-barred Finches**. Even better, across the road we found several **Hooded Parrots** feeding in some fruiting trees and also **Long-tailed Finches**, **Black-faced Woodswallows**, **Jacky Winter**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, and more **White-winged Trillers**. On the way back we had a nice looking **Red-backed Kingfisher** on the power lines and Barry put on the celebratory flash for this our 250th species.

After breakfast, we birded around Pine Creek and found **Red-winged Parrots**, three **Australian Bustards** and more **Jacky Winters**. The local sewage ponds offered **Black-winged Stilt**, **Plumed Whistling Ducks**, **Hardheads**, **Pacific Black Duck**, **Wattled Lapwings**, **Grey Teal**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Pink-eared Duck**, and new for the trip, **Hoary-**

headed Grebe. We inspected some very large termite mounds as **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos** flew around us. At our next stop, Steve knocked on a tree and to our surprise and delight an **Australian Owlet-nightjar** flew out - another flash!

At the war cemetery in Adelaide we easily found a singing **Silver-backed/Grey Butcherbird** (Photo: Steve Bird) and Dave spotted a high flying **Little Eagle**. A **Crested Baza** flew in and there were the usual **Little Corellas** around.



In the afternoon, we arrived in Darwin and made the best of the remaining daylight birding around town. A pair of **Bush Stone-Curlews** was seen at the edge of a golf course. At Knuckey Lagoons we had several egrets, **Pied Herons, White-necked Heron, Green Pygmy Geese, Magpie Geese, Pacific Black Ducks, Australian Pratincoles, Galahs, Australian Pelicans, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Comb-crested Jacanas** with chicks, and **Sacred Kingfisher**. Next we went to Lee Point where we found two **Forest Kingfishers** on the beach, **Brahminy Kite, Emerald Dove, White-gaped Honeyeater, Green-backed Gerygone, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** and **Silver-crowned Friarbird**. At Buffalo Creek we had **Crested Tern, Yellow White-eye, White-gaped Honeyeater, Rufous-banded Honeyeater**, and a **Beach Stone Curlew** that flew down to the river mouth and landed on the beach. We went into the mangroves and found **Grey Whistler, Mangrove Gerygone, Yellow White-eye, Red-headed Honeyeater, Leaden Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher** and **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher**. A lookout across the river gave us the chance to see a **Striated Heron, Azure** and **Sacred Kingfishers** and a couple of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** foraging over the water. Flocks of **Red-winged Parrots** were flying in the distance and as the sun set we made our way to another spot where we saw **Large-tailed Nightjars** coming out of the mangroves and flying over the road before heading out to hunt for the night. We celebrated our successful tour with a nice dinner at the local yacht club and as we reviewed 261 species proving that birding in Queensland and the Northern Territories at this time of year was quite productive.

Day 13, July 4 – Departures from Darwin

Today was our departure day but with afternoon flights we took advantage of a few last hours of birding. After breakfast we walked from our hotel to the Darwin Esplanade where there were **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** scratching in the mulch under the planted trees. The trees held **Northern Fantail, many Australian Figbirds, Rainbow Bee-eaters, White-gaped Honeyeater** and **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**. At the Botanical Garden



we had **Forest Kingfisher**, more **White-gaped Honeyeaters**, **Spangled Drongos**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, and **Olive-backed Oriole**. At Holmes Jungle Park, a tract of semi-deciduous monsoon rainforest, we had another subspecies of **Gray-crowned Babbler**, **Double-barred** and **Crimson Finches**, **Brown**, **Dusky** and **White-throated Honeyeaters**, **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Nankeen Night Heron**, **Mistletoebird**, **Varied Triller**, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher**, and hundreds of **Whistling** and **Black Kites**.



We dropped Paul and Darryl off at the airport and went back to Buffalo Creek where we had **Red-headed Honeyeater** in the car park, **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Grey Whistler**, **Azure Kingfisher**, **Little Bronze Cuckoo** and a **Striated Heron**. On the beach there was a flock of **Red-capped Plovers** and more kites and then it was time for the rest of us to get back to the airport to catch our flight. We thanked Barry for a superb trip and all of his efforts to make it so and were off with many great memories, photos and stories from our trip down under.

Gina & Steve

Agile Wallaby (Photo: Gina Nichol)