

Australia 27/07/2015 – 29/08/2015

Practical information

We booked a flight with British Airways. We flew from Brussel to Heathrow, Heathrow to Sydney by Singapore and then to Cairns. A pretty long trip. To cover the distance between Cairns and Brisbane we also booked an inland flight with Qantas. Our return flight was again with British Airways from Sydney to Singapore and Heathrow and then to Brussels. We doubted a long time whether we would fly back from Sydney or Victoria. In the end I think I would take Victoria the next time so you can first do all the coastal sites and then go inland, tick the plains wanderer and then fly back from Victoria. But anyway both options are good. We stayed from 29 July until 9 August in the north and the rest of the time we spent between Brisbane and Sydney. Maybe you can use 1 or 2 days extra in the north, certainly if you want to go further up north for palm cockatoo etc which we didn't.

The food in Australia is OK although the choice inland is mostly burger or pizza in the smaller towns. Australians like barbecue a lot apparently and you will find almost everywhere barbecues on gas, even in some more remote areas. Sleeping was not a problem. There were motels and campsites everywhere. We just booked some lodges in advance like O'Reilly's, Red Mill House, Cassowary house and Kingfisher lodge. We also booked the boat trip to Michaelmas Cay and the pelagic in advance, which can be necessary because they can be fully booked.

The climate in the north was very nice around 20 – 25 °C and some rain, apparently it was a dry wet. More in the south it was cooler and certainly around the capital area it was -4°C at night and chilly during the day. But anyway because this was one of the worst winters they had in years, for us a lot of days looked more like our summer. So if you are used to the western European weather, these are still very nice temperatures. Summer with temperatures above 40 °C would be not amusing.

We hired a car with Europcar and drove about 4.500 km. The distances in Australia are always big, certainly in the southern part of the trip. In the north everything is pretty close.

To find all the relevant places we used the book '**Finding Australian birds – a field guide to birding locations**' by Tim Dolby and Rohan Clarke. Although we had a lot of bird identification guides, the best one at the moment is '**The field guide to the birds of Australia**' by Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight.

All the relevant observations are visible on www.observado.org. The most important ones have exact X-Y coordinates, others sometimes are just put at the beginning of the walk to save batteries.

If you want more information, just contact me (Bram Vogels). (bramvogels@hotmail.com)

Day 1: arrival in Cairns

Although we started our trip on 27 July, we only arrived on 29 July at Cairns. On the trip we had a small amount of birds like Common myna in Singapore airport and Great cormorant, Great egret, starling and Silver gull on Sydney airport. The baggage reclaim in Cairns went very fast, collecting the car was no problem, we checked in to our hotel (Bay village) and could start birding around 14.00 hour on the esplanade. This was our first encounter with Australian birds, so we had a lot of new ones. We walked first to the north, just up to the mangroves and then went south. The high tide

roost is more or less where the swimming pools are, so if the tide comes up you better get there first. On the esplanade we had Willie wagtail, white-breasted woodswallow, Australian pelican, Silver gull, Australian magpie, Masked lapwing, Australian white ibis, Australian pied cormorant, Varied honeyeater, Straw-necked ibis, peaceful dove, Welcome swallow, Black butcherbird Australian figbird, Double-eyed fig parrot, Rainbow lorikeet, Brahminy kite, White-face heron, Spangled drongo, Little friarbird, Noisy friarbird, White-bellied cuckooshrike, Australian swiftlet; all very common. Shorebirds were present with pied oystercatcher, red-capped plover, Whimbrel, Far eastern curlew, Great knot, Grey-tailed tattler, Bar-tailed godwit, Pacific golden plover, Curlew sandpiper and red-kneed dotterel. One of the more beautiful birds were 5 Nankeen night herons roosting in a big tree. Check observado.org for the exact locations, when we returned here about two weeks later they were again in the same trees. In the evening Bush stone-curlews were calling on the grass at the esplanade.

Day 2: Cairns – Speewah

Thanks to our jet-lag we were awake around 2 am, so it was a long night. We were pretty happy we could start birding early in the botanical gardens. We spend most of the time in the area of the centenary lakes with Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed scrubfowl, Double-eyed fig parrot, Metallic starling, Australasian figbird, Olive-backed sunbird, Magpie-lark, Rainbow bee-eater, Radjah shelduck, Grey fantail, Fan-tailed cuckoo, Collared kingfisher, Straw-necked ibis, Little black cormorant, Australian white ibis, Australasian darter, Pacific black duck and Magpie goose. We found two Papuan frogmouths in the Flecker garden, their roost was in the podocarpus trees and had Laughing Kookaburra and Yellow oriole.

Around 12 am we drove to Kuranda, a little city of weirdo's but the visitor centre pointed us towards Speewah national parc to find a bush camping. The camping area is very nice with a very good view on the forest on the opposite site of the mountain. Here we had our first Sulphur-crested cockatoos, a very common bird but the first ones are very nice and so are the last ones. A walking trail starts a little bit down from the campground (Djina-wu track) and we focused on the first km with grey fantail, Australian swiftlet, graceful honeyeater (very common here), Macleay honeyeater, Spectacled monarch, Silvereye, Pied monarch, Wompoo fruit dove, Pale-yellow robin, Noisy pitta, Spotted catbird and Little shrikethrush. Around 4 pm we just sat down on the grass and watched to forest at the opposite site to find Whistling kite, Topknot pigeon, Wedge-tailed eagle, Barred cuckooshrike and Brown cuckoo-dove. The mammals in this area were Agile wallaby and Musky rat-kangaroo.

Day 3: Speewah – Cassowary house

During the night we heard Lesser sooty owl calling around the campground. In the morning it was raining pretty hard, unfortunately. We focused again on the same walking trail because a bush walker had a cassowary on this trail. Unfortunately we couldn't locate it. In the rain we had Eastern whipbird (what a nice sound), Emerald dove, Fairy gerygone, Australian brushturkey and Wompoo fruit dove. To get some food we went to the store in Kuranda and found a flock of Bush stone-curlews in the centre. We then drove to the Cassowary house and arrived pretty early so we could bird the grounds which was pretty nice. Just walk around on the grounds and the dirtroad and a lot of birds are active in these areas. To find the cassowary house, take care that it is a little bit further than written in the book, you will have to drive further on the dirt road until you see an arrow. The

first day we had in this area Wompoo fruit dove, Superb fruit dove, Victoria's riflebird (some nice lecks), Rufous fantail, Olive-backed sunbird, Macleay honeyeater, Little shrikethrush, Australian swiftlet, Azure kingfisher, Brown cuckoo-dove, Australasian figbird, Red-necked crane, Spotted catbird, Mistletoebird and off course Eastern whipbird. An area which proved very productive was the clearing you cross when you walk to the creek in the back of the garden with flocks of rufous fantail, spectacled monarch, superb fruit dove calling, yellow-spotted honeyeater, tropical scrubwren, Victoria's riflebird, Macleay honeyeater, varied thriller and dusky honeyeater.

Day 4: Cassowary house – Daintree

Birding in the morning was again very wet because of a lot of rain, but the breakfast is very nice with a lot of birds around the feeders like Victoria's riflebird, Helmeted friarbird, Spotted catbird, Macleay honeyeater, Yellow-spotted honeyeater, ... On the morning walk we also had Wompoo fruit dove, Rufous fantail, Australasian figbird, Red-browed finch, Rainbow bee-eater, Victoria's riflebird, Spectacled monarch, Mistletoebird, Little shrikethrush and Pale-yellow robin. To end the morning we looked for and found Yellow-breasted boatbill which was on the access road to the Cassowary house. Around 11.00 am we hit the road for Daintree. We checked in the Red Mill House and got a lot of birding information from the very friendly owners. Because we missed Southern cassowary in the Cassowary house, our focus was on Cape tribulation and more precisely the Jindalba boardwalk because this area had cassowary sightings. On the ferry crossing we had Leaden flycatcher. We first did the short loop, but probably too much people for any wild Southern cassowary to hang around so we started the longer loop and had Eastern whipbird, Superb fruit dove, Noisy pitta, Wompoo fruit dove, Rufous fantail, Spectacled monarch, Tropical scrubwren, ... and because cassowary is pretty heavy and you sometimes can hear them walk we often got tricked by orange-footed scrubfowls which made a lot of suspicious noise. But then suddenly we had a nice immature Southern cassowary in front of us, awesome. We walked out of the forest enjoying some Victoria's riflebirds and the Australian brushturkeys. After the ferry crossing we spent a small amount of time in the small wetlands just along the roads with Royal spoonbill, Intermediate egret, Great egret, Eastern cattle egret, Tree martin, Forest kingfisher, Whistling kite, Black kite and Little pied cormorant. We finished the day with a show of probably more than a thousand cattle egrets flying to their roost at the Daintree river.

Day 5: Daintree river – Cape tribulation

We made in advance a reservation with the Daintree Boatman (daintreerivertours.com) which focuses on wildlife and particularly some interesting birds. The cruise starts on the Daintree river and then goes to the Barrot creek. We started the day with white-bellied sea eagle, Little pied cormorant, Azure kingfisher, Whistling kite, Radjah shelduck, Little grebe, Little egret, Great egret, Australian white ibis and then the first interesting one Little kingfisher. In the creek you also get some other birds like Double-eyed fig parrot, yellow oriole, pied monarch, Wompoo fruit dove and two roosting Papuan frogmouth but definitely the most important one was first an immature Great-billed heron and a little bit further a nice adult. You get pretty close views from the boat. We continued the trip with Shining flycatcher, Large-billed gerygone and in the end two interesting birds of prey Pacific baza and Australian hobby and a Brahminy kite.

We had a nice breakfast afterwards and then decided to try again Southern cassowary in Cape tribulation because on the same track were some sightings of an adult male with three chicks. We

had Yellow-spotted honeyeater and graceful honeyeater for the start and quickly found the male Southern cassowary with the chicks, but it was deep in the bushes walking away from other walkers. So we unfortunately were five minutes too late to have magnificent views of this bird. Other birds on the track were Double-eyed fig parrot and Pied monarch. We then went to the discovery center for some views on the treetops in the hope to finally also see a superb fruit dove instead of only hearing. But we had no success in seeing one but had Varied triller, Topknot pigeon, Olive-backed sunbird, Mistletoebird, ... We then decided to try again the trail in late afternoon in the hope to find the Southern cassowary but had Yellow oriole, Orange-footed scrubfowl, Wompoo fruit dove, Victoria's riflebird, Superb fruit dove and Brown cuckoo-dove. On the way back to Daintree we had White-tailed kite and Blue-winged kookaburra.

Day 6: Mount lewis

We had an early breakfast to start our drive to Mount Lewis. On the way we stopped at Wonge beach to search for Beach stone curlew but without success and added Sacred kingfisher. In Mossman we had a Satin flycatcher. The access road is pretty good so you don't need a jeep. We drove up to the 'clearing' and started birding the walking trail which starts at this point. The birds were pretty active with brown treecreeper, Grey-headed robin, Atherton scrubwrens, Grey fantail, Blue-faced honeyeater, several singing fernwrens, Chowchillas, Golden whistler, Yellow-throated scrubwren, Bridled honeyeater, Eastern spinebill, Eastern whipbird, Spotted catbird, Topknot pigeon, Mountain thornbill and Lewin's honeyeater. To reach the lake you need to take the left on the first crossing, otherwise you will start a very long descend apparently. We had lunch at the clearing, but the blue-faced parrot finches are not in the mountains in winter so we missed this one. In the afternoon we tried again the trail and could add white-headed pigeon and Victoria's riflebird. On the return drive we were lucky to find a female Golden bowerbird. She was foraging around the concrete bridge some hundred meters down from the clearing. Some red bellied black snakes were also present in the area. At dawn we tried for the platypus at kingfisher lodge, but had no luck. The birds we had from the viewpoint for the platypus were Australian brushturkey, scaly-breasted lorikeet, rainbow bee-eater, brown goshawk, pied monarch, little shrikethrush, spectacled monarch, yellow-throated scrubwren, silvereye, pale-yellow robin large-billed scrubwren, laughing kookaburra, macleay honeyeater and rufous fantail. We also had a Papuan frogmouth on a roost in the garden.

Day 7: Kingfisher lodge – Mount molloy to mount carbine – Mareeba wetlands

Although the people of kingfisher lodge are extremely friendly, this lodge was extremely expensive for the quality of the rooms which were very old. So probably the worst quality/price we had on our complete trip, better put your tent on the camping or sleep in the next village because the distances aren't that big. We birded the gardens very early in the morning with graceful honeyeater, spotted catbird, the Papuan frogmouth on his roost, northern fantail and brown honeyeater but left very early because a lot of new birds were waiting. We started at Bustard downs and took the west route where we immediately had several Australian bustards. The quick stop also added Australian pratincole, Brown falcon and blue-faced honeyeater to the list.

The next stop was Mt Carbine campground. Just ask the lady friendly if it's possible to bird, which is no problem only park the car where they like it and don't look in the garden of the neighbors. The campground was full of birds with pale-headed rosella's, great bowerbirds, galah, tawny frogmouth (around the sanitary block), apostlebird, noisy friarbird, pied butcherbird and rainbow lorikeet.

We then continued to lake Mitchell which is easy to view from the roadside: green pygmy goose, magpie goose, comb-crested jacana, black swan, Eurasian coot and swamp harrier. We then wanted to bird in Big Mitchell Creek but were a little bit unfortunate with snakes because we had some big ones in front of us and decided to return because it was also getting hot. The only birds we got here was pheasant coucal, yellow-faced honeyeater, whistling kite, white-bellied cuckooshrike and northern fantail. The area was also completely dry, maybe that has an impact on birdlife.

We continued to Mareeba wetlands and had on the way chestnut-breasted manikin and double-barred finch which are also numerous at the feeders at the restaurant. We were lucky and could camp at the garden of the owners so could start birding very early the next morning because the reserve normally opens later. After this practical arrangement we returned to the dirt road which crosses lake Mitchell more or less opposite from big Mitchell creek. It was very nice birding in this area: red-backed fairywren, white-necked heron, white-throated honeyeater, cotton pygmy goose, eastern osprey, magpie goose, black swan, little grebe, Australian pelican, comb-crested jacana, Caspian tern, rainbow bee-eater, white-faced heron, white-bellied sea eagle, olive-backed oriole, spangled drongo and brown honeyeater. We returned to Mareeba wetlands to be on time inside the reserve before it's closed. In the little ponds next to the dirt road we had tawny grassbirds. We had a nice dinner in the restaurant while flocks of red-tailed black-cockatoos were flying over and torresian crow, yellow honeyeater and rainbow bee-eater were foraging around. During the night we had a Bettong jumping around.

Day 8: Mareeba wetlands, Hasties swamp and Bromfield crater

In the morning we got an early start and walked towards the other lake which is bigger and less deep so has more birds than the one at the restaurant. On the way we saw whistling kite, red-tailed black cockatoos, pied butcherbird, blue-faced honeyeater, pale-headed rosella, striated pardalote and blue-winged kookaburra. The lake itself was interesting but didn't produce the cranes we hoped for. The birds around the lake were hardhead, swamp harrier, black swan, Eurasian coot, pacific black duck, Australian pelican, chestnut-breasted manikin, magpie goose and comb-crested jacana. When you complete the loop towards the first lake, take a left towards the dam of this lake. The area around the dam proved to be interesting around a creek with willie wagtail, pied currawong, white-breasted cuckooshrike, red-backed fairywren, double-barred finch, brown treecreeper, yellow honeyeater, tawny grassbird, golden-headed cisticola and at the other side of the dam grey-crowned babbler and apostlebird. On several places were also agile wallaby and eastern grey kangaroo present.

Around noon we drove to Hasties swamp. A nice wetland with a pretty comfortable hide, although the openings are so big that hiding is not very relevant. The lake proved productive with some freckled ducks and pacific black duck, magpie goose, purple swamphen, white-necked heron, grey teal, white-cheeked honeyeater, white-headed stilt and red-backed fairywren. We also drove to lake Tinaroo which was not very good for birding only wood duck, Caspian tern, great crested grebe, rainbow lorikeet and brown-backed honeyeater.

We ended the day at Bromfield crater which is an old volcano crater where a lot of cranes come to roost. It's a wonderful sight to see arriving the cranes, while they circle down below the viewpoint. A lot of brolga and sarus cranes were present and I really love the sound of these animals. We returned

to our campground 'BIG4 Atherton Woodlands Tourist Park' to scan for platypus but were again not successful but spotted a Pacific Baza.

Day 9 Mammal day

When we came to Australia we really wanted to see Platypus. Petersons creek apparently is the place to be and this really is a spot with a lot of Platypus. We saw at least 5 platypus and all were very nice to see. So don't waste your time at other places to find Platypus, just go to this creek and Platypus is probably almost guaranteed. Just by walking along the creek you will find several Platypus. Concerning birds we got Rufous whistler, Little shrike-thrush, Weebill, Yellow-spotted honeyeater, Victoria's riflebird, Brown gerygone, Atherton scrubwren, Brown cuckoo-dove and Swamp harrier.

The next stop was the Nerada Tea factory where the Lumholtz tree kangaroos were in the trees. Our next stop was lake Eacham after Lake Baine where there were not many birds. You can walk around lake Eacham which is a nice trail with Hardhead, White-tailed kite, Brown cuckoo-dove, Pale-yellow robin, Laughing Kookaburra, Australian brushturkey, Victoria's riflebird, Yellow-spotted honeyeater, Chowchilla, Eastern whipbird, Brown gerygone, Orange-footed scrubfowl, Atherton scrubwren, Little shrike-thrush, Grey-headed robin and Azure kingfisher. We did a last stop in Hasties swamp with extras like Plumed whistling duck, Pink-eared duck and Red-kneed dotterel.

Day 10 Mount Hypipamee national parc – Emerald Falls creek

We arrived early on the parking area of Mount Hypipamee national parc and there was an immature Southern cassowary walking along the forest edge. The bird gave extremely good views but took cover in the forest when parking the car. Anyway this was the best view of a cassowary we had on the trip. There are two trails in this area and we did both which are pretty short. Although we were early I have the impression best birding is around the parking area and the entrance road to the parking area. The forest was also pretty cold and birds only started to move when the sun got up. On the trails we had Brown cuckoo-dove, Grey-headed robin, Wompoo fruit dove, Yellow-throated scrubwren, Pale-yellow robin, Pied monarch, Lewin's honeyeater, Victoria's riflebird, Spotted catbird and Pheasant coucal. We then continued to the Emerald creek falls. There is a nice trail up to some falls with a lot of honeyeaters. The birds along the trail were: Rufous whistler, Red-backed fairywren, Yellow-bellied flycatcher, Mistletoebird, White-bellied cuckooshrike, Striated pardalote, White-throated honeyeater, Yellow honeyeater, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Northern fantail, Grey fantail and Eastern yellow Robin.

We then continued to Cattana wetlands but this was a little bit of a disappointment. It's a restored area but a little bit devoid of birds when we were there. We spent only little time here and got Leaden flycatcher, Olive-backed oriole, Varied triller, Brown honeyeater, Orange-footed scrubfowl, Australasian darter, Comb-crested jacana, Green pygmy goose, Spangled drongo, Little shrike-thrush and Spectacled monarch. We drove towards Cairns and went again to the Esplanade with a lot of nice bikini chicks around so try to stay focused on the mud where the birds are: Black-fronted dotterel, Grey-tailed tattler, Great knot, Whimbrel, Black-winged stilt, Nankeen night heron, Rainbow lorikeet and Double-eyed fig parrot.

Day 11: Michaelmas cay

We had a reservation with Seastar cruises, but when we arrived in the morning the boat was unable to leave because of technical problems. They rebooked us on the 'Ocean spirit', but this didn't went very smoothly so it was a little bit of uncertainty whether we would make it. But in the end everything was OK and we could go. Michaelmas cay is very nice with a very nice breeding colony of Greater crested tern , Brown booby, Brown noddy and Sooty tern. Other birds were Great frigatebird and Black-naped tern. Snorkling in this area is also very nice, so after birdwatching get in the water and enjoy of the wonderful underwater world. Although the amount of species is not very high, they come sitting just next to you. So you will get very good photo opportunities. On the way back we had a breaching Humpback whale in the distance.

Day 12 Cairns to Brisbane and Binna Burra

We had an early flight from Cairns to Brisbane, got our car and drove to Binna Burra. On the way we had Brahminy kite, Australian magpie, Rainbow lorikeet, Australian white ibis, Sulphur crested cockatoo. We camped in Binna burra. The campground is not very beautiful but you are very close to the walking trails. In the afternoon we did the start of the lower bellbird circuit until the viewpoint from this point we followed the cliff track with Laughing kookaburra, Noisy miner, Eastern whipbird, Lewin's honeyeater, Pied currawong, Pale-yellow robin, Australian logrunner, Wompoo fruit dove, White-throated treecreeper, Paradise riflebird, Golden whistler, Brown thoernbill, Eastern yellow robin, Yellow-throated scrubwren, Grey shrikethrush, Pale-yellow robin, Wonga pigeon, Pied currawong, White-throated treecreeper and White-browed scrubwren. During the day we had a lot of Red-legged pademelons and during the night some Red-necked pademelons came on the picnic area.

Day 13 Binna burra

Binna burra is actually very nice. It's more quiet than O'Reilly's, the birds aren't tame but the views are also magnificent and birding is a little bit more hard to get all the species. Anyway we tried the Lower bellbird circuit which was pretty silent at times, but we got some nice birds: Grey shrikethrush, Paradise riflebird, Brown thornbill, Australian king parrot, Crimson rosella, Yellow-throated scrubwren, White-browed scrubwren, Eastern yellow robin, Eastern whipbird, Green catbird, Russet-tailed thrush, Spotted pardalote, White-throated treecreeper, Sulphur-crested treecreeper, Lewin's honeyeater, Yellow-spotted honeyeater, Satin bowerbird, Noisy miner, Brown cuckoo-dove, Grey goshawk, Brown thornbill, Pied currawong, Green catbird and Australian logrunner. We continued on the Caves circuit with the same range of species, but our only wild Koala just behind the visitor center. What a beauty. In the evening we had Greater sooty owl.

Day 14 Binna burra – O'Reilly's (11/08)

On the way towards O'Reilly's we had Common bronzewing, Galah, Wood-duck and Whiptail wallabies and a Black wallaby. O'Reilly's doesn't need no introduction, it's just a magnificent area, with a very nice lodge and most of all the restaurant serves terrific food. We arrived around noon and birded around the lodge with Satin bowerbird, Crimson rosella, Australian king parrot, Scaly thrush, Regent bowerbird, Noisy pitta (very close), Lewin's honeyeater, Brown thornbill and Australian logrunner. In the evening we went for the Python walk to look for Lyrebirds. Halfway there is an information plate about Lyrebirds, just go up the track into the forest and turn right. We had at least two Albert's lyrebirds singing in this area. Although we didn't see them, the sound was so nice

we enjoyed it a lot. Other birds in this area were Rose robin, Green catbird, Topknot pigeon, Pied currawong, Superb fairywren. In the evening at the restaurant a short-eared brushtail possum came to the feeder.

Day 15 O'Reilly's (12/08)

In the morning we joined the feeding of the birds. A very nice way to see these magnificent and very colorful birds extremely close with a lot of regent bowerbirds, satin bowerbirds, Australian king parrots, crimson rosella's, etc. After breakfast we tried the border track today towards the area for the Rufous scrub-bird. It was very windy and pretty silent in the forest, so we didn't see any scrub-bird, which will always be a very difficult one. When we were around Mount Merino, thunderstorms started to come in, so we hurried back towards the lodge. We got it mostly dry, but some heavy thunderstorms brought a lot of rain. Late afternoon we went to the observation tower and had green catbird, eastern whipbird, scaly thrush, topknot pigeon and emerald. In late afternoon we tried again for the lyrebird, but we had no birds at all because of the very hard wind. During the night a pretty severe storm came through with very heavy winds.

Day 16 O'Reilly's – Lake Cargelligo (13/08)

We decided to bird in the morning in O'Reilly's and then start driving towards Lake Cargelligo, pretty far inland. We tried very early again for the Albert's Lyrebird, we had on the same spot as earlier two singing males but were not able to get views of the birds. Sometimes they can be very tame around the lodge apparently, but more secretive when on the boulders. Rose robins were also singing again in the forests. While driving downhill we had a lot of Satin bowerbirds on the road. We chose to drive on the inland routes, towards Roundhill but this was pretty slow in the beginning because you pass a lot of villages. So we didn't make it to Roundhill and stopped in Stanthorpe I think when it became dark. Driving long distances at night doesn't look that nice with all these kangaroos if you see all the roadkill.

Day 17 Lake Cargelligo (14/08)

On the way towards Lake Cargelligo where we arrived in the afternoon we had white-winged chough, red-rumped parrot, eastern grey kangaroo, black-shouldered kite, Cockatiel (two groups around Condobolin) and bluebonnet. Birding around Round Hill has two interesting places. One hide just before entering the village at the right when arriving from the east. But on the lake were not that many birds: white-face heron, crested pigeon, yellow-throated miner, blue-faced honeyeater, spiny-cheeked honeyeater and some common waterfowl. The more interesting spot is the hide around the golf course to the left of the route with Caspian tern, Australian shelduck, Australian shoveler, white-bellied sea eagle, red-necked avocet, white-backed swallow, little grebe, Pacific black duck, black swan and common blackbird.

Day 18 Round Hill (15/08)

On the road towards Round Hill which is pretty good and you don't need a 4x4 we had a lot of kangaroos and also some we thought were euro's, but couldn't finish them. We missed the more skulky species because the weather was a little bit windy and they probably weren't singing at this time of year. We amused ourselves with some local birds like white-eared honeyeater, spotted pardalote, weebill, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, striped honeyeater, yellow-plumed honeyeater and

white-plumed honeyeater. We then continued to Whoey tank and got striped honeyeater, grey butcherbird, grey-crowned babbler, yellow-throated miner, bluebonnet, silveryeye, Australian ringneck, white-winged chough, inland thornbill, wedge-tailed eagle, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, blue-faced honeyeater but we were still missing some parrots and cockatoos. After lunch we started to drive back very slowly and finally found some mulga parrots and saw two emus. When coming out of Round hill a lot of bluebonnets and red-rumped parrots were feeding in the fields. We decided to try again the hides around lake Cargelligo. When driving out lake Cargelligo we suddenly had some Major Mitchell's cockatoos which were feeding on the pine trees just outside the village around the golf. This was one of our targets which gave extremely good views. We went towards the hide around the golf and flushed a Latham's snipe beside hardhead, red-necked avocet, white-faced heron, black-winged stilt, black-fronted dotterel, fairy martin, welcome swallow and variegated fairywren.

Day 19 Cocoparra national park (16/08)

We drove towards Cocoparra, but because we missed one crossing we lost more than an hour. Besides the road we had galah, red-rumped parrot, bluebonnet, major mitchell's cockatoo, yellow-throated miner and apostlebird. Cocoparra has a very nice bushcamping. The area has a huge amount of eastern grey kangaroos and several emus. We walked the fire trail starting from the campground and saw emu, jacky-winter, noisy miner, yellow-throated miner, white-plumed honeyeater, yellow-plumed honeyeater, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, Australian ringneck, weebill, white-browed babbler, brown-headed honeyeater, eastern yellow robin, yellow thornbill, grey butcherbird, white-winged chough, blue-faced honeyeater, grey-crowned babbler, striped honeyeater and Southern whiteface.

Day 20 Cocoparra national park – Leeton (17/08)

We tried to take the dirtroad towards the southern end of the park, but this proved not possible with a normal car, the campground has a much better road. During our try we had again lots of eastern grey kangaroos, several emus, blue bonnets, white-browed babbler and red-rumped parrots. We decided to drive towards Leeton instead of making a detour to reach the southern end of the park. In Leeton we got the bad news that fivebough wetlands was closed due to maintenance. Luckily you can have good views from the roadside in the north where there is a viewing platform (Hooey Rd lookout) and walk the ponds around the wastewater treatment area. Because of the distance you will miss some of the smaller birds but we got the next list: yellow-throated miner, black-winged stilt, pink-eared duck, fairy martin, black swan, Australian shelduck, Australian shoveler, grey teal, brown falcon, red-necked avocet, straw-necked ibis and Australian kestrel. Our next try was Tuckerbill wetlands which took a long time, because it's not indicated and we didn't know the exact location. The roads are also only possible to drive in dry conditions with a normal car, don't try it after heavy rain. Finally we found the area which is hidden behind a railway, but check our observations on www.observado.org to get the exact coordinates. There were a lot of waterfowl on the lakes but nothing really special: Australian shoveler, Australian pelican, grey teal, spotted harrier, hardhead, purple swamphen, variegated fairywren, white-necked heron and white-face heron. Anyway it looks a very interesting place with better weather (it was very windy) and probably in spring with a lot of breeding birds. We returned towards our campground (Leeton Oasis Camping) to have a shower, but just before entering the shower a flock of Superb parrots flew over. Normally they aren't present in

the area during winter, but they were feeding on the trees in the campground. So ran back to get the scope and camera and enjoyed this wonderful birds. We counted 22 birds on the campground, and they were easy to find with their special soft voice compared to other parrots. IN the evening we returned to the viewing area at Fivebough Wetlands but could only add Brolga, Yellow-billed spoonbills and swamp harrier.

Day 21 Leeton – Canberra (18/08)

In the morning we enjoyed again of the superb parrots on the campground and set off towards Canberra. We visited Tidbinbilla but this was a little bit of a disappointment, a lot of animals were behind fences and because of the cold probably most birds were lower at this time of year. We had scarlet robin, Sulphur-crested cockatoo, crimson rosella and gang gang cockatoo. Because they predicted very cold weather (-4 °C) and I only took my summer sleeping bag with me, we decided to drive further towards the coast. Hotels are also very expensive in the capital territory, so that would be a waste of money. Before leaving we had a visit in the Deep Space communication center, with a nice little museum. But anyway they still didn't get a message from ET.

Day 22 Wollongong – Kiama – Huskisson (19/08)

We drove towards Wollongong to see if we could do some touristic whaling trip, but although this port is known from the pelagics there were no whaling trips. Our pelagic which SOSSA also was moved to Kiama, so we continued to this village which is more quiet and nice than Wollongong. It's also a better fall-out base to visit Barren grounds etc. In the information center they pointed us towards Huskisson north of Nowra from where touristic whaling trips are done. So we continued south and were just in time to join a whaling trip. The weather was nice and the sea calm perfect to see the square-tailed kite at the parking lot and the Caspian terns, greater crested terns, Australian gannets and black-browed albatross at sea. But the most impressive were two humpback whales just next to the boat, and one was breaching very close. Nice! We also had a group of common dolphins and a fur seal. In the evening we went seawatching from the blowhole in Kiama: sooty oystercatcher, Australasian gannet, black-browed albatross, fluttering shearwater and indian yellow-nosed albatross.

Day 23 Barren grounds – Falls rainforest centre (20/08)

We drove up to Barren grounds very early and before arriving at the reserve we already had seven Superb lyrebirds along the road and black wallabies. This species proved very easy, compared to the Albert's lyrebird. We had breakfast on the parking lot with eastern spinebill, crimson rosella, superb lyrebird, yellow-face honeyeater, white-throated treecreeper, white-browed scrubwren, new Holland honeyeater, eastern whipbird and gang-gang cockatoo. We walked the Griffith trail and heard eastern bristlebird and pilotbird and got good views of rose robin, beautiful firetail, red wattlebird and white-naped honeyeater. Just after the viewing platform we flushed an eastern ground parrot from the walking track, which was unexpected but nice. We also had southern emu-wren on several places and pilotbird and little wattlebird.

In the afternoon we went to the Falls rainforest centre which has some nice waling tracks. Most impressive were the Superb lyrebirds which were dancing and calling around for the females. I remember the track in 'life of birds' with David Attenborough and the mimicking Superb lyrebird and

was extremely happy to see this myself. Other birds in this area were several scaly thrushes and groups foraging satin bowerbirds.

The evening was spent again seawatching from the blowhole in Kiama with Fluttering shearwater, wedge-tailed shearwater, black-browed albatross, Australasian gannet and greater crested tern.

Day 24 Bomaderry creek regional park – Booderee national park (Jervis bay) (21/08)

We started at Bomaderry creek to try for Rockwarbler, an endemic which lives on the sandstone rocks in the area. We did the walk around the creek and looked on all the cliff faces but couldn't locate the Rockwarbler. Although we missed this species, it is a nice area for birding: Australian king parrot, yellow-faced honeyeater, red wattlebird, eastern whipbird, eastern yellow robin, yellow-tufted honeyeater, rufous fantail, grey shrikethrush, grey fantail, spotted pardalote, crimson rosella, satin bowerbird, black-faced cuckooshrike and white-breasted cuckooshrike.

In the afternoon we went for Booderee national park. There is a big colony of lesser penguin, although impossible to see during the day, I didn't want to leave before trying it even. Although I think it must be possible to see them if you camp in the area and scan from the viewpoint during dawn or at dusk with a full moon. The island is very good visible so this should be possible, but unfortunately we were sleeping in Kiama so couldn't stay long enough. From the viewpoint to the little island we walked along the coast but this wasn't very productive with only a lot of New Holland honeyeaters and a peregrine falcon. On the sea were some Black-browed albatrosses flying and breaching humpbacks. We went to the botanical garden for a quick last stop and found some Hoary-headed grebes on the lake.

Day 25 Pelagic Kiama (22/08)

Finally this was the day I was looking forward to since very long. I remember reading an article in British birds or Dutch birding about these pelagics from Wollongong, so tension was very high. The weather was good, the sea was a little bit rough but we could go out. We had a reservation with SOSSA which goes out every month and does research on the seabirds. So certainly check their site and join their trips, so you are sure to have knowledgeable guides on the boat.

We were not yet that far offshore when we had huge flocks of Fluttering shearwater passing and some Hutton's shearwaters. Again a little bit further it was the turn for the wedge-tailed shearwaters and a lot of fairy prions. Also the first albatrosses came to the boat with Indian Yellow-nosed albatross, Shy albatross and Black-browed albatross. The boat went further towards the continental shelf where we were waiting for some other species. Also the numbers were not that high, the diversity was pretty OK. Besides the earlier mentioned species we could add brown skua, white-face storm petrel, antipodean albatross, providence petrel and northern giant petrel. All the species came close to the boat which gave extremely good views and the banding of the Indian yellow-nosed albatrosses and the antipodean albatross was one thing we'll never forget. Another thing I learned was that you get seasick if you are only watching through your camera to photograph albatrosses just next to the boat. This was my first experience with seasickness, which quickly went over when I started to look at the horizon. So make mental note: stop taking pictures from time to time to look around a little bit. The boat is pretty small, so the waves get it everywhere. On the way back we had our only Buller's albatross and had again a chumming session at the place with all the fairy prions and

wedge-tailed shearwaters. Even with my little lens on the camera, I got pretty good pictures of most of the species we've seen. Anyway this was one of the things you can't miss on any trip along the east coast and it was one of our most memorable birding days we've ever had. Seeing albatrosses was a dream, seeing a lot of albatrosses on the trip and seven species of albatross in total was extraordinary for us, seeing albatrosses just sitting next to you on the sea was pretty unforgettable. Besides albatrosses we also had humpback whales and a minky whale.

Day 26 Kiama – Capertee valley (23/08)

The last birding days we would spend in Capertee valley. On the way to Capertee we had a little stop at Evans lookout in the blue mountains (around Blackheat) to break the trip. The view here is extraordinary, one of the most beautiful landscapes we've seen on the trip and most importantly two Rockwarblers were feeding on the viewpoint. We continued towards Capertee and camped at Glen Davis. We birded the roads between Capertee, Glen Davis and Glen Alice to look for Regent honeyeater. We got Australian pipit, restless flycatcher, Splendid fairywren, little lorikeet, zebra finch, eastern rosella, red-rumped parrot, little corella, yellow-rumped thornbill, yellow-billed spoonbill, diamond firetail, white-winged cough, Black-faced cuckooshrike, white-plumed honeyeater, yellow-faced honeyeater, white-naped honeyeater, red wattlebird, striated pardalote and noisy friarbird. The campground at Glen Davis is terrific, but take everything with you because there really is nothing over there. The village is deserted and the remaining people live in the old post office, etc...

Day 27 Capertee valley (24/08)

Unfortunately it started raining during the night and didn't stop for the rest of the day. So birding was pretty difficult. Luckily the dirt roads were still very well to drive with a normal car, which worried me a little bit during the night. But no stress in this area, rain or no rain the dirt roads are still OK. In the morning we found a completely soaked Southern boobook in the middle of the road which didn't react at all. We placed it under a plate and when we returned at noon it was drier and flew off. So we saved at least one animal in Australia. The next animal was a probably very old Wombat which was sitting in a field.

We checked the same areas as yesterday looking for the regent honeyeater. We got some interesting birds: brown tree creeper, dusky woodswallow, grey shrike thrush, superb fairywren, white-browed babbler, diamond firetail, hooded robin, little lorikeet, black-chinned honeyeater, crested shrike tit, white-browed babbler and then a malfunctioning phone so I couldn't add more data. But we were still missing regent honeyeater at the end of the day. Red-necked wallaby was also a new one for the trip.

Day 28 Capertee – Blue mountains (25/08)

We spent another morning birding in the Capertee area, but couldn't locate the regent honeyeater because of the bad weather. Unfortunately we gave up after three days and went to the Blue mountains. Maybe you'll have more luck with better weather because several couples were breeding in the area but apparently they don't like wind and rain. We drove to the blue mountains because we liked the landscape and walked the cliff track starting at Evans lookout around Blackheat. On the cliff track we had Rose robin, Golden whistler, Eastern whipbird, Striated thornbill, White-browed

scrubwren, Pilotbird, Striated pardalote, Eastern spinebill, New Holland honeyeater, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Superb lyrebird and Yellow-tailed Black cockatoo. On our sleeping place in Penrith there was a big sleeping place of long-billed corella's.

Day 29 Pitt town lagoon & Longneck lagoon – Sydney (26/08)

We first tried to find a last spot for Regent honeyeater but couldn't find the described spot in Londonderry. So we continued to Pitt town lagoon where we had Australian hobby, Black-fronted dotterel, chestnut teal, Black-faced cuckooshrike, Dusky moorhen, Red-kneed dotterel, Purple swamphen, Pacific black duck, Pink-eared duck, Red-necked avocet, Australian pelican, Black-winged stilt, Splendid fairywren, Royal spoonbill, Australian shoveler, Black swan, Australian white ibis and red-whiskered bulbul. Our next stop was Longneck lagoon where we walked around. There were only very limited birds on the lagoon, but we had some nice birds in the shrubbery around the lagoon: eastern whipbird, silvereye, yellow thornbill, splendid fairywren, eastern yellow robin, eastern rosella, great egret, dusky moorhen, striated thornbill, little black cormorant, olive-backed oriole, grey shrikethrush, chestnut teal, red-rumped parrot, bell miner, galah, common blackbird, azure kingfisher, Australasian darter, variegated fairywren, black-faced cuckooshrike and yellow-faced honeyeater. In the afternoon we started driving towards Sydney so we would arrive before rush hour and looked for a hotel around the airport.

Day 30 Sydney (27/08)

We spend our last day in Sydney. We would visit the Taronga zoo, but before we tried the botanical gardens. Unfortunately the powerful owl moved because of construction works so we only had rainbow lorikeet, Sulphur-crested cockatoo, Australian white ibis, pied currawong, dusky moorhen, little black cormorant and white-faced heron. The rest of the day we spent in Taronga zoo which is easily reached with these public transport boats. The zoo is pretty nice with a lot of breeding programs and a lot of birds seen on the trip. Although I normally don't like zoos or bird shows, this one was pretty OK. So this was our last birding in Australia, next day we had to take our plain back home...

Emu	Southern cassowary	Orange-footed scrubfowl
Australian brush-turkey	Helmeted guineafowl	Plumed whistling duck
Freckled duck	Black swan	Australian wood duck
Magpie goose	Radjah shelduck	Australian shelduck
Cotton pygmy goose	Green pygmy goose	Hardhead
Northern mallard	Pacific black duck	Australian shoveler
Pink-eared duck	Grey teal	Chestnut teal
Great crested grebe	Hoary-headed grebe	Australasian grebe
Spotted dove	Rock dove	Peaceful dove
Bar-shouldered dove	Brown cuckoo-dove	Topknot pigeon
White-headed pigeon	Common bronzewing	Wonga pigeon
Crested pigeon	Superb fruit-dove	Wompoo fruit-dove
Emerald dove	Tawny frogmouth	Papuan frogmouth
Australian swiftlet	Fork-tailed swift	White-faced storm petrel
Antipodean albatross	Black-browed albatross	Campbell albatross
Indian yellow-nosed albatross	Shy albatross	White-capped albatross
Buller's albatross	Northern giant-petrel	Fairy prion
Wedge-tailed shearwater	Fluttering shearwater	Hutton's shearwater
Providence petrel	Great frigatebird	Brown booby
Australasian gannet	Australasian darter	Great cormorant
Little black cormorant	Pied cormorant	Little pied cormorant
Great-billed heron	Australian pelican	White-necked heron
White-faced heron	Cattle egret	Little egret
Eastern reef egret	Great egret	Intermediate egret
Nankeen night heron	Straw-necked ibis	Australian white ibis
Royal spoonbill	Yellow-billed spoonbill	Black-shouldered kite
Pacific baza	Black kite	Square-tailed kite
Whistling kite	Brown goshawk	Grey goshawk
Brahminy kite	Eastern osprey	White-bellied sea-eagle
Wedge-tailed eagle	Spotted harrier	Swamp harrier
Black falcon	Brown falcon	Nankeen kestrel
Peregrine falcon	Australian hobby	Sarus crane
Brolga	Red-necked crane	Dusky moorhen
Purple swamphen	Eurasian coot	Australian bustard
Bush stone-curlew	Australian pied oystercatcher	Sooty oystercatcher
White-headed stilt	Red-necked avocet	Pacific golden plover
Grey plover	Red-capped plover	Red-kneed dotterel
Black-fronted dotterel	Masked lapwing	Comb-crested jacana
Latham's snipe	Bar-tailed godwit	Eastern curlew
Whimbrel	Grey-tailed tattler	Great knot
Curlew sandpiper	Australian pratincole	Brown skua
Sooty tern	Caspian tern	Crested tern
Black-naped tern	Kelp gull	Red-tailed black-cockatoo
Yellow-tailed black-cockatoo	Major mitchell's cockatoo	Gang-gang cockatoo
Galah	Long-billed corella	Little corella
Sulphur-crested cockatoo	Rainbow lorikeet	Scaly-breasted lorikeet
Little lorikeet	Double-eyed fig-parrot	Australian king-parrot
Superb parrot	Cockatiel	Crimson rosella
Pale-headed rosella	Eastern rosella	Australian ringneck
Blue bonnet	Red-rumped parrot	Mulga parrot

Eastern ground parrot	Eastern koel	Pheasant coucal
Fan-tailed cuckoo	Southern boobook	Lesser sooty owl
Greater sooty owl	Little kingfisher	Azure kingfisher
Laughing kookaburra	Blue-winged kookaburra	Forest kingfisher
Sacred kingfisher	Collared kingfisher	Rainbow bee-eater
Noisy pitta	Albert's lyrebird	Superb lyrebird
White-throated treecreeper	Brown treecreeper	Spotted catbird
Green catbird	Golden bowerbird	Regent bowerbird
Satin bowerbird	Great bowerbird	Superb fairy-wren
Variiegated fairy-wren	Red-backed fairy-wren	Southern emu-wren
Eastern bristlebird	Rock warbler	Pilotbird
White-browed scrubwren	Yellow-throated scrubwren	Fernwren
Large-billed scrubwren	Atherton scrubwren	Tropical scrubwren
Brown gerygone	Large-billed gerygone	Fairy gerygone
Mountain thornbill	Brown thornbill	Inland thornbill
Yellow-rumped thornbill	Striated thornbill	Yellow thornbill
Weebill	Southern whiteface	Spotted pardalote
Striated pardalote	Eastern spinebill	Lewin's honeyeater
Yellow-spotted honeyeater	Graceful honeyeater	Bridled honeyeater
Yellow-faced honeyeater	Yellow honeyeater	Varied honeyeater
White-eared honeyeater	Yellow-tufted honeyeater	Yellow-plumed honeyeater
White-plumed honeyeater	New Holland honeyeater	White-cheeked honeyeater
Brown-backed honeyeater	Macleay's honeyeater	Dusky honeyeater
Scarlet honeyeater	Brown honeyeater	Black-chinned honeyeater
Brown-headed honeyeater	White-throated honeyeater	White-naped honeyeater
Spiny-cheeked honeyeater	Striped honeyeater	Blue-faced honeyeater
Little wattlebird	Red wattlebird	Little friarbird
Noisy friarbird	Helmeted friarbird	Bell miner
Yellow-throated miner	Noisy miner	Grey-crowned babbler
White-browed babbler	Eastern whipbird	Black-faced cuckooshrike
White-bellied cuckoo-shrike	Barred cuckoo-shrike	Varied triller
Red-whiskered bulbul	Crested shrike-tit	Golden whistler
Rufous whistler	Grey shrike-thrush	Little shrike-thrush
Olive-backed oriole	Yellow oriole	Australasian figbird
White-breasted woodswallow	Dusky woodswallow	Black butcherbird
Grey butcherbird	Pied butcherbird	Australian magpie
Pied currawong	Australian raven	Torresian crow
Rufous fantail	Willie wagtail	Grey fantail
Northern fantail	Leaden flycatcher	Satin flycatcher
Shining flycatcher	Restless flycatcher	Pied monarch
Spectacled monarch	Yellow-breasted boatbill	Magpie-lark
Apostlebird	White-winged chough	Spangled drongo
Paradise riflebird	Victoria's riflebird	Lemon-bellied flycatcher
Jacky winter	Scarlet robin	Rose robin
Eastern yellow robin	Pale-yellow robin	Hooded robin
Grey-headed robin	Australian logrunner	Chowchilla
Australian pipit	Golden-headed cisticola	Tawny grassbird
Silvereye	Welcome swallow	White-backed swallow
Tree martin	Fairy martin	Common blackbird
Russet-tailed thrush	Bassian thrush	Metallic starling

Common starling	Common myna	Olive-backed sunbird
Mistletoebird	Double-barred finch	Red-browed finch
Zebra finch	Beautiful firetail	Diamond firetail
Chestnut-breasted manikin	European goldfinch	House sparrow

Platypus	Koala	Common wombat
Short-eared brushtail possum	Rufous bettong	Musky rat-kangaroo
Lumholtz's tree kangaroo	Agile wallaby	Whiptail wallaby
Eastern grey kangaroo	Euro	Red-necked wallaby
Black wallaby	Red-legged pademelon	Red-necked pademelon
Red fox	European rabbit	European hare
New Zealand fur seal	Short-beaked common dolphin	Humpback whale
Dwarf minke whale		