

Endemics and seabirds of Western Australia and Tasmania

Birdwatching Breaks are pleased to offer you this unique opportunity to visit the southwestern corner of Western Australia and the adjacent dry interior. This tour gives you an opportunity to see some of Australia's less well-known species. Western Australia is a huge state covering a third of the country. The following itinerary covers the key areas around Perth and Albany plus the dry interior where a major proportion of the Western Australian endemics reside. There is also an optional extension to Tasmania, which has a further selection of endemic species.

Days 1-2: Fly to Perth, the state capital of Western Australia, with arrival early Day 3.

Day 3: After leaving the hotel we travel to the coastline an hour's drive south of Perth where we look for Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Buff-banded Rail, Australian Spotted Crane, Little Grassbird, Splendid Fairy-wren, Fairy Tern, Pied Oystercatcher and migratory shorebirds. With luck the nomadic Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet will be present. We also look for Australian Sea-lion. If we have time, we visit known sites for Stubble Quail, Banded Lapwing and Tawny Frogmouth. One-night stay in Perth.

Day 4: We start today by visiting one or two of the many wetlands around Perth, then drive to Lancelin. Herdsman Lake has the best variety of waterbirds including Blue-billed Duck and Musk Duck, as well as Swamp Harrier and Australian Hobby. If the water levels are suitable we visit another nearby lake to search for more waterbirds including crakes. The drive to Lancelin is about 1.5 hours but along the way we look out for Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo and Western Corella. At Lancelin we may locate Common Noddy, Bridled Tern, Roseate Tern, Fairy Tern and Rock Parrot. Transfer to Geraldton for a two-night stay.

Day 5: We drive north to Kalbarri at the mouth of the Murchison River. We spend

Dates

Wednesday September 26th -
Thursday October 12th 2018*
*Tasmania extension Saturday
October 12th - Tuesday October
16th 2018

Leaders: Frank O'Conner
and Mark Finn
Group size: 8
Birds: 220-280

much of the time in the heathland of Kalbarri National Park where there should be a profusion of flowers attracting honeyeaters including the WA endemic Western Spinebill and Western Wattlebird, as well as Tawny-crowned White-cheeked Honeyeaters and chances of the nomadic White-fronted, Black and Pied Honeyeaters. There are good chances of Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and Southern Emu-wren. Other birds in the area include Rufous (Western) Fieldwren, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Peaceful Dove, cuckoos and a variety of raptors, hopefully including Square-tailed Kite. En route back to Geraldton, we visit a site for Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet.

Day 6: Today we travel east passing through coastal vegetation, eucalypt woodland and reaching the very different habitat of mulga. The latter habitat is dominated by



Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Photo: Suzanne Bowden

several species of acacia plus flowering plants such as eremophilas and grevilleas. This is where we find many species that do not occur in the southwest. We look out for Emu, Pied Butcherbird, Zebra Finch, Diamond Dove, Common Bronzewing, Budgerigar, Cockatiel, Mulga Parrot, Crested Bellbird, Brown and Rufous Songlarks, Crimson Chat, Masked Woodswallow, Variegated Fairy-wren, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, White-winged Triller, Red-capped and Hooded Robins, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-browed and Grey-crowned Babblers. We will specifically look for Chestnut-breasted (Western) Quail-thrush, which is now regarded as an almost WA endemic, as well as Grey Honeyeater, White-browed Treecreeper and Black-eared Cuckoo, but these species can be difficult to locate. Two nights' stay at Mount Magnet.

Day 7: Today we bird several different habitats in the area, including samphire, salt lakes, a freshwater lake, more mulga and stony plains. We will target Banded Whiteface, White-winged Fairy-wren, Chiming Wedgebill, Western Bowerbird,

Redthroat, Bourke's Parrot, Little Button-quail, Black-tailed Native-hen, Red-kneed Dotterel, Little Woodswallow, White-backed Swallow, Red-backed Kingfisher, Slaty-backed Thornbill, Orange Chat, Rufous Fieldwren, Slender-billed Thornbill and anything we missed the previous day. We should add to our list of raptors including Spotted Harrier.

Day 8: If we need to, we make another concerted effort to look for Chestnut-breasted (Western) Quail-thrush, before we drive southwards. If the weather allows, we will try to access a river with a series of pools lined with thick flowering vegetation located southeast of Mt Magnet. We will target White-browed Treecreeper, Gilbert's Whistler, Chiming Wedgebill, Southern Scrub-robin, Mistletoebird and any honeyeaters in the flowering vegetation. There are more chances for Bourke's Parrot, Mulga Parrot, Banded Lapwing, Black-tailed Native-hen plus anything we are still missing from Day 6. We could get lucky and find Major Mitchell's Cockatoo. En route to Wubin, we pass through an area of sand plain heath which should have extensive flowering. We look out for Red-tailed Black-

Cockatoo (race *samueli*), Western Corella (race *derbyi*) and Black-breasted Buzzard. One night stay at Dalwallinu.

Day 9: Today we travel to Narrogin via Wongan Hills, Goomalling and Northam. We have more chances for the endemic Western Corella (race *derbyi*). At Northam we will visit the weir for a few waterbirds. If we arrive at Narrogin early, we visit a nearby Nature Reserve to look for Regent Parrot, Elegant Parrot and Jacky Winter. Two nights' stay at Narrogin.

Day 10: Dryandra State Forest is our destination today with this woodland covering a total area of 28,000 hectares. It is among the largest and most valuable areas for nature conservation in the central western wheatbelt of Western Australia. Trees such as wandoo, powderbark, marri and some jarrah are found here with areas of kwongan heath, and the vegetation provides habitat for several of Dryandra's rare mammals including Tammar Wallaby and Woylie (Brush-tailed Bettong). There is also a chance of seeing a Numbat and Short-beaked Echidna. We target the southwest endemics Red-capped Parrot, Western Rosella, Western Thornbill, Western Spinebill and Swan River (White-naped) Honeyeater as well as Elegant Parrot, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Currawong, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Bush Stone-curlew, Crested (Western) Shrike-tit, Rufous Treecreeper, Western Yellow Robin, Scarlet Robin, Jacky Winter, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Painted Button-quail and Varied Sittella.

Day 11: Travel to the Stirling Range today, stopping at a number of good birding and wildlife viewing places en route to look for Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet, and visit the local water treatment plant for a chance of crakes. We pass through the wheatbelt towns of Katanning and Gnowangerup. We look out for Grey Butcherbird, Australasian Pipit and White-fronted Chat and plan to reach the Stirling Range National Park for lunch. The Stirling Range has a variety of habitats including

wandoo, yate, mallee, stunted jarrah and heath. Where we stay we will look for Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Regent Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Western Rosella, Red-capped Parrot, Western Yellow Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Crested (Western) Shrike-tit, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Little Eagle and Australian Owllet-nightjar. Further afield we target Southern Emu-wren, Rufous (Western) Fieldwren, Hooded Plover, Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo and the very elusive Western (Mallee) Whippbird. In the evening we will quickly look for Southern Boobook, Eastern Barn Owl and Brush-tailed Possum. One night at Borden.

Day 12: We spend the morning in the Stirling Range, and then travel to the Porongurup National Park. This is an area of tall karri forest with thick undergrowth. This will be our first chance to look for the southwest endemics Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin, Red-winged Fairy-wren and Baudin's (Long-billed) Black Cockatoo. We continue to Albany, our base for the next four nights. We should have time to visit areas along the coastline at Albany for a short seawatch for Australasian Gannet, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Yellow-nosed Albatross plus chances of Black-browed Albatross, Shy Albatross, Great-winged Petrel, giant-petrels and Brown Skua.

Day 13: We have an early start today and travel one hour east of Albany to Cheyne Beach. Our objective is to find the "big three" skulkers Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird and Western Whippbird. We need luck to find all three. We have more chances for the endemic Western Spinebill, Western Wattlebird, Red-winged Fairy-wren, White-breasted Robin and Red-eared Firetail as well as Southern Emu-wren. We will also look for Sooty Oystercatcher, Pacific Gull, Brown Quail, Brush Bronzewing and Fan-tailed Cuckoo and we should add more raptors to our list. There is also a chance of Southern Right Whales from the shore. Quenda (Southern brown Bandicoot) is also possible in this area.

Day 14: Another early start. We will travel two hours northeast to an area of mallee where we target Western (Mallee) Whipbird, Southern Scrub-robin, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Spotted (Yellow-rumped) Pardalote, Shy Heathwren, Southern Emu-wren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and White-browed Babbler. We also visit an old Malleefowl mound but the bird may not be in attendance. After lunch we look for Chestnut Teal and Black-fronted Dotterel. Returning to Albany we make a detour to the coast if we need Rock Parrot or Hooded Plover.

Day 15: This is a flexible day to chase whatever we still need in the Albany area and we will decide that on the day. Options are to revisit Cheyne Beach or the Stirling Range. We may also choose to visit Two People's Bay where the Noisy Scrub-bird was rediscovered in 1961, or we can head west to Denmark and Walpole. We should find time for another seawatch.

Day 16: We drive back to Perth looking for the southwest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (race *naso*). We should have time to visit more wetlands south of and around the Perth area. One night stay in Perth.

Day 17: Transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Tasmania or an international connection back to Europe where arrival is on the following morning.

Day 18: Our main interest today is birding at Mount Wellington National Park which holds twelve of Tasmania's endemic bird species. Walking along trails through the wet sclerophyll forest we search for Pink Robin, Olive-tailed Thrush, Scrubtit, Tasmanian Thornbill, Yellow-throated Honeyeater and Black Currawong. Other Tasmanian endemics present include Green Rosella, Brown Scrubwren, Black-headed and Strong-billed Honeyeaters, Yellow Wattlebird and Dusky Robin. We will visit one of Hobart's parks for Swift Parrot, a localised breeding endemic. In the evening, we embark on a night trip for Tasmanian Masked Owl.

Days 19-20: Today we drive down to

Kettering and take the ferry journey to Bruny Island where we have two full days searching for Tasmanian endemics. At Waterview Hill we search for Forty-spotted Pardalote, a scarce endemic which usually mingles with Spotted and Striated Pardalotes. In the evening we visit a Little Penguin colony and Short-tailed Shearwaters at their burrows. Other species we may encounter around the coast include Black-faced Cormorant, Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers, Pacific Gull, Hooded and Double-banded Plovers, Caspian Tern, Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo, Olive Whistler and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. Transfer to our base in North Bruny for two nights. On Day 20 we concentrate on the rainforest for all of the remaining Tasmanian endemics plus Tasmanian Native Hen which is found on most farm dams. Other species on the island include Forest Raven, Beautiful Firetail, Crescent Honeyeater, White-fronted Chat, Flame Robin and Satin Flycatcher.

Day 21: Return to Hobart and onward connections to Europe where arrival is on the following day.

Prices

Ground Price: £4,775
Single room: £700
Deposit: £500
*Air Fare: £1,100
Tasmania extension: £2,495
Single room: £230
Deposit: £250
*Air Fare: £220

This holiday is fully inclusive of flights, accommodation and meals, transport, boat trips, permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, items of a personal nature, airport departure tax and fuel surcharges. Visa to enter Australia.

**Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights*