

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

IRON RANGE, CAPE YORK PENINSULA

8th – 14th January 2016

TOUR REPORT

LEADER: Chris Doughty

We began our Cape York adventure in Cairns, from here we flew to Lockhart River, where we stayed at the comfortable and more importantly, air conditioned, Iron Range Cabins. On most days we followed a pattern of early breakfast, followed by a mornings birding in the Iron Range National Park and then back for lunch. After lunch we enjoyed a siesta during the heat of the middle of the day, followed by a birding session in the late afternoon. During our seven days here we had ample time to find the many special birds of Iron Range, with the added advantage of staying in comfortable accommodation and enjoying delicious meals prepared for us by Greg and Sheree, from Out of the Blue Cafe, at Portland Roads. This combination enabled us to do our birding at a comfortable, relaxed pace.

Iron Range National Park protects the largest area of lowland, tropical rainforest in Australia. It is a complex mosaic of intact tropical rainforest, eucalypt and paperback forest and heath-shrouded hills, which provide a backdrop to long sweeping beaches, rocky outcrops and mangrove forests. Almost 250 species of birds have been observed in the park, while many of these birds are resident, some of the most sought after birds are migrants from New Guinea, which only arrive, with the first rains, which occur any time from December onwards. Birding highlights were plentiful and we saw all of the most sought after specialities including such exciting species as Southern Cassowary, Spotted Whistling-Duck, Oriental Plover, Palm Cockatoo, Eclectus and Red-cheeked Parrots, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Papuan and Marbled Frogmouths, Yellow-billed and Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfishers, Red-bellied Pitta, Black-winged, Frill-necked and White-eared Monarchs, Yellow-legged Flycatcher, Northern Scrub-robin, White-faced and White-browed Robins, Tropical Scrubwren, Tawny-breasted, Green-backed and White-streaked Honeyeaters and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, plus two species of bird-of-paradise, the Magnificent Riflebird and the Trumpet Manucode.

Iron Range is a tropical wonderland, we were surrounded by large expanses of dense tropical rainforest, giant trees festooned with creeping vines and aerial orchids. Much of the flora and fauna is unique, from giant epiphytes, rare ferns and moths to a spectacular variety of reptiles, birds, butterflies and animals. The flora and fauna is closely akin to that of New Guinea. Many of the birds found here are at their southernmost limit, while still others are summer migrants from New Guinea.

On our first afternoon in the park, we birded along the edge of the main road which runs through the park, we observed a staggering array of colourful tropical birds which included Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Australian Brush-turkey, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pheasant Coucal, Australian Swiftlet, Frill-necked Monarch,

Little Shrike-Thrush, Silveryeye, Graceful Honeyeater, Metallic Starling and Red-browed Finch.

As always, early morning was the time when the forest birds were most active, so in the mornings we concentrated our efforts in the large stands of tropical rainforests, which radiated out from the rivers. On our first full day in the park, we birded one of the narrow trails in the darkened interior and one of the wider, more open roads. New birds for the tour included Brahminy Kite, the aptly named Superb Fruit-Dove, the equally impressive Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Peaceful and Pacific Emerald Doves, Palm Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Carol pointed out our only Little Bronze-Cuckoo of the tour, we also saw the stunning Yellow-billed Kingfisher and the dazzling Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Varied Triller, Golden-headed Cisticola, Black-winged and Spectacled Monarchs, Northern Scrub-Robin, White-faced and White-browed Robins, Grey and Rufous Whistlers, Little Shrike-Thrush, Red-backed Fairywren, Tropical Scrubwren, Fairy Gerygone, Mistletoebird, Helmeted Friarbird, Tawny-breasted, Yellow-spotted, Green-backed and Dusky Honeyeaters, Yellow Oriole, Australasian Figbird and Spangled Drongo. We also visited the Lochart River sewage farm, where we added Pied Heron, Green Pygmy-goose, Brown Goshawk, Common Sandpiper, Rainbow Bee-eater, Leaden Flycatcher, Olive-backed Sunbird and White-throated and Brown-backed Honeyeaters. In the township itself, we added Masked Lapwing and White-breasted Woodswallow.

The following morning, we spent some time birding in the rainforest, where we added Pacific Baza, a superb white colour morph Grey Goshawk, both Eclectus and Red-cheeked Parrots, Brush Cuckoo, the very uncommon Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Channel-billed Cuckoo, some members of the group saw Pacific Swifts, and we also observed Azure and Forest Kingfishers, Dollarbird and Noisy Pitta, as well as an Agile Wallaby, in a patch of tall grassland. We then drove to Chillie Beach, where we spent a couple of productive hours walking along the beach, which produced Eastern Reef-Egret, Whistling Kite, Pacific Golden-Plover, both Lesser and Greater Sandplovers, a single Red-capped Plover, a few Grey-tailed Tattlers, Several Red-necked Stints, half a dozen or so of the *sinensis* race of Little Tern, which breed in eastern Asia, and a couple of Crested Terns. Late afternoon birding along the mangroves at Portland Roads, added White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Whimbrel, a stunning Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Shining Flycatcher, Large-billed Gerygone and Varied Honeyeater. We then enjoyed dinner with Greg and Sheree, before driving back through the national park after dark, which produced great looks in the spot-light of a very fine Papuan Frogmouth.

We spent all of the following day, birding in the rainforest of the park, and we were rewarded with great looks at a pair of beautiful Yellow-breasted Boatbills, the uncommon White-eared Monarch, a solitary Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, a nesting Black Butcherbird and female plumaged Magnificent Riflebirds. A surprise find, which was greatly appreciated by everyone, was a Common Spotted Cuscus, cat-napping, high in one of the towering trees, in the rainforest.

The following morning we visited a farm dam at Lochart River, where we saw a Great Egret and an adult Rufous Night-Heron. We then spent the rest of the morning birding in rainforest inside the park, where we found a Southern Cassowary, a particularly rare and seldom seen bird at Iron Range, and we also enjoyed good looks at a Brown Cuckoo-Dove. It also rained quite heavily for an hour or so in the morning. In the afternoon we drove to Tozer's Gap and did some birding in a more open forested area of the park. Our main target bird here was the only endemic bird of Cape York, the beautiful White-streaked Honeyeater, in no time at all, it truly obliged, and we all enjoyed good looks at this very special and highly localised bird. While driving back to our lodge, a Blue-winged Kookaburra, flew across the road in front of us.

The following morning was spent birding in a rainforested section of the park, and as soon as we entered the rainforest we heard what we had been waiting for, the calls of one of the key birds of Iron Range, the migratory Red-bellied Pitta. This uncommon species migrates to Rainforest areas of northern Cape York, with the first heavy rains of the wet season, from non-breeding grounds in New Guinea. The Red-bellied Pitta usually arrives on Cape York, between the 8th to the 23rd December. However, this year, was a particularly late year, and birds only arrived with the rains of the morning of 12th January, on the morning of 13th January, good numbers were in full song. In no time at all, we enjoyed very good looks at a fairly responsive individual. We also observed a solitary White-faced Heron, foraging alongside Gordon's Creek. Later in the morning we visited a patch of scrub, where we heard a distant Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, we walked down a dry creek-bed, and discovered a pair of birds attending a bower, this was one of the great highlights of the tour. In the afternoon we visited Quintell Beach, at Lockhart River. The tide was out and the mudflats were partly exposed, providing good feeding opportunities for a handful of waders which were present. The only new bird for our ever-growing trip list, was a flock of half a dozen or so, Silver Gulls. Just prior to dusk, while enjoying dinner at our lodge that evening, a solitary Oriental Plover flew directly above us, calling loudly, as it did so. Following dinner we returned to Iron Range National Park and did a little spotlighting, which produced great looks at a splendid Marbled Frogmouth.

Our last day in Iron Range National Park produced no less than four new birds. A solitary Eastern Cattle Egret in full breeding plumage, was observed on the Lochart River airstrip, and following a great deal of effort, a Trumpet Manucode reluctantly showed itself, furtively moving around in the canopy of the rainforest. In the afternoon, we returned to a different patch of rainforest, and following a great deal of searching a Yellow-legged Flycatcher suddenly popped into view, and showed particularly well, for all to see. We then had a tip-off regarding the presence of three Spotted Whistling-Ducks, a rare vagrant from New Guinea, and we were able to enjoy great close looks at them. This was a fitting climax, to a very enjoyable and highly successful and memorable tour.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

CASSOWARIES *CASUARIIDAE*

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius* An adult bird was observed briefly, by some members of the group, on two consecutive days, it could well have been the same bird. This is a decidedly rare and seldom seen species, in the Iron Range National Park.

HERONS, EGRETS and BITTERNES *ARDEIDAE*

Pied Heron *Egretta picata* A single bird was present at the Lockhart River Sewage Farm, on each of our three visits there.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* A solitary bird was observed foraging along the Gordon Creek, in Iron Range National Park.

Great Egret *Egretta alba* A solitary bird was observed at a farm dam, at Lochart River Mission.

Eastern Reef-Egret *Egretta sacra* A dark colour morph bird was observed very well at Chilli Beach, and I observed one of each colour morph, flying together, just off the jetty, at Portland Roads.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A rare visitor to this part of the Cape; a single bird, in full breeding plumage, was present at the Lockhart River airstrip.

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus* An adult bird was observed very well, perched in a tall tree above a farm Dam, at Lochart River.

SWANS, GEESE and DUCKS *ANATIDAE*

Spotted Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna guttata* A small flock of three birds was observed at close quarters, on a farm dam, at Lochart River Mission. This species was thought to be endemic to New Guinea; however, it is now breeding in significant numbers at the sewage farm at Weipa, on Cape York Peninsula, and small numbers are now annual visitors, to the north coast of Australia.

Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus* Up to a dozen birds were present at the Lockhart River Sewage Farm.

KITES, HAWKS and EAGLES *ACCIPITRIDAE*

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata* We observed a solitary bird in flight in dry country, a little south of the West Claudie River. Later in the tour, we saw a second bird, perched in a roadside tree, once again, in open forest, not far from our lodge.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* Small numbers observed throughout the tour.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* We enjoyed three separate sightings of this attractive species, throughout the tour.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* A single adult, was observed flying along the coast, at Portland Roads.

Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* We enjoyed good close looks at two splendid white colour morph birds and one grey morph bird, while birding in rainforest areas of the park.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* Single birds observed well, soaring overhead, on two separate occasions, while birding in Iron Range National Park.

MEGAPODES *MEGAPODIIDAE*

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt* Smaller numbers of this species were observed on most days of the tour.

Australian Brush-Turkey *Alectura lathami* A common bird, which we observed on every day of the tour.

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS *CHARADRIIDAE*

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* Good numbers present around in the Lochart River Mission.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Small numbers present at both Quintell and Chili Beaches

and on the Lockhart River Airstrip.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* A single bird was observed amongst the Greater Sandplovers, on Chilli Beach, close to Portland Roads.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii* Small numbers present at both Chilli and Quintell Beaches.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* Two birds were flushed from alongside the Lochart River Airstrip, by Kevin and Warren, and then we all saw a single bird which flew over our heads, while we were having dinner one evening, at our lodge.

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus* A single, adult bird, was observed very well, on Chilli Beach.

WADERS *SCOLOPACIDAE*

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A single bird was observed briefly, as it flew off, close to the jetty, at Portland roads.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* Small numbers observed at both Chilli and Quintell Beaches.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Two birds were observed on one occasion, at the Lochart River sewage farm, and small numbers were present at both Chilli and Quintell Beaches.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Several birds were present at Chilli Beach.

GULLS *LARIDAE*

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* Half a dozen or so birds were present at Quintell Beach.

TERNs *STERNIDAE*

Little Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Half a dozen or so birds of the *sinensis* race of Little Tern, which breed in eastern Asia, were observed very well, at Chilli Beach.

Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* A pair of birds were observed sitting and flying around a large rock, just offshore from Chilli Beach.

PIGEONS AND DOVES *COLUMBIDAE*

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis* Seen well on a few occasions, in the rainforest, of Iron Range National Park.

Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus* Seen well on a couple of occasions, in the rainforest areas of the park.

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina* Observed briefly, at Iron Range, we then enjoyed super close looks at a single bird in the mangroves at Portland Roads.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus* `Magnificus` it certainly is, we saw it well on a few occasions in Iron Range National Park.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhhoa* We enjoyed daily sightings of this attractive species, which nests on offshore islands and makes daily flights to and from the mainland, to feed in fruiting trees.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida* Scattered sightings of birds, in areas of dry forest that we visited.

Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis* Small numbers observed on every day of the tour.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris* The Emerald Dove has recently been split into two species; birds from mainland Australia are now Pacific Emerald Doves, birds from Asia, including Cocos Keeling and Christmas Island, are now known as Common Emerald Doves, *Chalcophaps indica*. We commonly observed birds in flight, in the rainforested areas we visited.

COCKATOOS *CACATUIDAE*

Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus* A New Guinea species, which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range. Fortunately, we saw them well, both in flight and perched.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* Small numbers observed on a daily basis, throughout the tour.

PARROTS *PSITTACIDAE*

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus* Another New Guinea species, which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range. We saw this species very well, on almost a daily basis.

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* Yet another New Guinea species, which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range. We saw birds both in flight, and perched.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* Small flocks observed flying overhead, on every day of the tour.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Only observed on one occasion, when a pair buzzed past us, in a rainforested section of the park.

CUCKOOS *CUCULIDAE*

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus* A couple of birds were observed briefly, in dry country, in the Lochart River area.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris* Widespread on mainland New Guinea; in Australia it only occurs on Cape York, where the bird is thought to be resident. However, there is an increase in birds during the summer months, which is most likely attributable to migrants arriving from New Guinea. It is one of the more difficult birds to see well at Iron Range, therefore, we were very pleased to observe a single bird, at very close quarters, in the rainforest, along the old Coen Track.

Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus* Only observed on one occasion; when Carol pointed out a bird, which was particularly tame, in one of the rainforested areas of the park.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae* This huge species of cuckoo, is an uncommon summer breeding migrant, from wintering grounds in Indonesia and New Guinea. We saw a single bird flying above open grassland, close to the West Claudie River.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* Observed on almost a daily basis in grassland, in Iron Range National Park.

FROGMOUTHS *PODARGIDAE*

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis* A single bird was observed very well in the spot-light, after dark, inside the park boundaries, while driving back from Portland Roads.

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus* We enjoyed great looks at an individual in the spotlight one evening after dinner, in rainforest, in Iron Range National Park.

SWIFTS *APODIDAE*

Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae* Small flocks observed flying overhead on a few occasions.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* The Fork-tailed Swift, has recently been split into four separate species, the sub-species that occurs in Australia, has been elevated to full species status, and is now known as the Pacific Swift, it retains the same scientific name, as the old Fork-tailed Swift. Two separate sightings of this species, were observed by some members of the group, during the tour. Fork-tailed Swifts are an uncommon summer visitor from breeding grounds in Asia. The birds observed were on passage, on their way to wintering grounds further south in Australia.

KINGFISHERS *ALCEDINIDAE*

Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus* Glimpsed in flight, on one occasion, along the Claudie River, in Iron Range National Park.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii* Small numbers present in dry forest close to the Iron Range Cabins.

Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii* Seen on almost a daily basis throughout dry forest areas of Iron Range National Park.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Syma torotoro* Another New Guinea species which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range, where it is an uncommon bird. We were very fortunate to enjoy three prolonged looks at perched birds, during our time in Iron Range National Park.

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera sylvia* This incredibly beautiful species of kingfisher, breeds in low termite mounds, usually on the ground. They nest along the northeast Queensland coast and winter in New Guinea. We enjoyed very good looks at a pair of birds and also observed several birds flying across the road in front of our bus. All the sightings occurred in rainforest, in Iron Range National Park.

BEE-EATERS *MEROPIDAE*

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* This attractive species of bee-eater breeds mainly in Australia, but also breeds in two small regions of eastern Papua New Guinea. It winters in Indonesia, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. We observed small flocks, in dry country, around Lochart River, all the birds appeared to be in juvenile plumage, the overall plumage was very dull and they lacked the tail streamers and black patch across the foreneck, of adult birds. They were almost certainly, birds that had bred in southern Australia and were moving north towards their wintering grounds in New Guinea and Indonesia.

ROLLERS *CORACIIDAE*

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Another attractive species; the Dollarbird breeds mainly along the east coast of Australia, and winters in New Guinea and Asia, as far west as the southwest coast of India and as far northeast as North Korea and Japan. We observed a couple of birds in open country, south of the West Claudie River.

PITTAS *PITTIDAE*

Red-bellied Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster* A wet season, summer breeding species, from wintering grounds in New Guinea. The birds arrive in North Queensland, where they only breed at the far north of Cape York and at Iron Range, at the outset of the first heavy rains, usually between the 8th to the 23rd December. However, this year, was a particularly late year, and birds only arrived with the rains of the morning of 12th January, on the morning of 13th January, we found good numbers in full song. In no time at all, we enjoyed very good looks at a fairly responsive individual.

Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor* Birds of this species which breed on Cape York, are of the race *similima*, which winter in New Guinea. We enjoyed two good sightings of this very attractive species during our time in Iron Range National Park.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES *CAMPEPHAGIDAE*

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis* Seen well on a few occasions in the drier sections of Iron Range National Park.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela* We enjoyed regular encounters with this attractive species in the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES *CISTICOLIDAE*

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* We regularly encountered the same pair on a daily basis, sat on overhead power lines, above rank grassland, inside the park.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS *MONARCHIDAE*

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula* Frequently encountered in the dry forest areas of Iron Range National Park.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto* First observed in the mangroves at Portland Roads and then regularly encountered along the banks of the rivers, in Iron Range National Park.

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* A pair of this very attractive species, was observed at close quarters, in rainforest, along the Old Coen Track, in Iron Range National Park.

Black-winged Monarch *Monarcha frater* Another New Guinea species, which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range. We saw this species very well on two separate occasions, in rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

Spectacled Monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus* Proved to be not uncommon in the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

Frill-necked Monarch *Arses lorealis* Another New Guinea species; in Australia it only occurs in rainforest in the northern half of Cape York Peninsula. We saw it very well on several occasions, in Iron Range National Park.

White-eared Monarch *Carterornis leucotis* One of Australia's least common birds; on two separate occasions we enjoyed super, prolonged looks at birds perched no more than a few metres away from us, in rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS *PETROICIDAE*

Yellow-legged Flycatcher *Microeca griseocephala* Another New Guinea species; in Australia it only occurs in rainforest, in the northern half of Cape York Peninsula. We saw this uncommon, highly localised and little known species, incredibly well, on the last afternoon of the tour, along the Old Coen Track, in a rainforested area of the park.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster* Observed well on one occasion, in dry woodland, in Iron Range National Park.

Northern Scrub-robin *Drymodes superciliaris* Another New Guinea species, which just has a toehold in Australia, at Iron Range. We were very fortunate to observe this bird on no less than three separate occasions. During one sighting, a bird perched out in the open, on a fallen branch, along the side of a track. This was truly remarkable, as this species can often be difficult to find.

White-faced Robin *Tregellasia leucops* Another New Guinea species; in Australia it only occurs in rainforest, in the northern half of Cape York Peninsula. We glimpsed it on three separate occasions, but unfortunately, never saw it really well.

White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa* We enjoyed great looks at a family party of this very striking species, in an area of dry forest, close to our lodge.

WHISTLERS AND ALLIES *PACHYCEPHALIDAE*

Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex* Not uncommon in the rainforested sections of Iron Range National Park.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris* A male and a female, observed on two separate occasions, in dry forest, within the park.

Little Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarrhyncha* A common and conspicuous bird throughout all rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

FAIRYWRENS *MALURIDAE*

Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus* A pair of birds including a male in stunning breeding plumage, was observed by some members of the group, in dry forest, close to the

Iron Range Cabins.

AUSTRALIAN WARBLERS *ACANTHIZIDAE*

Tropical Scrubwren *Sericornis beccarii* Pairs of this species, were observed very well, on two separate occasions, in rainforest, close to Gordon's Creek.

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa* A small family party was seen well, in a rainforested area of Iron Range National Park.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris* A single bird was seen very well in the mangroves, at Portland Roads.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS *NECTARINIIDAE*

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* Regularly encountered in the drier areas of Iron Range National Park.

FLOWERPECKERS *DICAEIDAE*

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* This attractive species was observed on almost a daily basis in both the dry and rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

WHITE-EYES *ZOSTEROPIDAE*

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis* Small numbers were observed in rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

HONEYEATERS *MELIPHAGIDAE*

Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides* Frequently recorded throughout both the dry and rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer* Another New Guinea species, in Australia it only occurs in the northern half of Cape York, it proved to be common throughout the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata* Perhaps the commonest bird at Iron Range National Park, it was present in all the rainforested areas.

Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis* Almost as common as the above species; this species also ventured into the dry eucalypt woodlands of the cape.

Varied Honeyeater *Lichenostomus versicolor* A couple of birds were seen very well in the mangroves at Portland Roads.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis* Seen well on a number of occasions in dry forest areas at Portland Roads and in Iron Range National Park.

Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax* Another New Guinea species, which has just a foothold in Australia, at Iron Range. We had two sightings of this elusive species, but neither were seen very well, both sightings took place in the same rainforested area in Iron Range National Park, this species can be a very hard bird to locate.

White-streaked Honeyeater *Trichodere cockerelli* Endemic to the northern half of Cape York Peninsula, found nowhere else in the world. We saw it very well on one occasion, in heath-like woodland at Tozer's Gap, in Iron Range National Park.

Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus* Frequently encountered in the dry forest areas of Iron Range National Park.

Dusky Honeyeater *Myzomela obscura* Encountered on a daily basis in the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES *ORIOLIDAE*

Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis* This species was seen on a daily basis throughout all the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park and in the mangroves at Portland Roads.

Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti* Recorded on a daily basis, throughout both dry and rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

DRONGOS *DICRURIDAE*

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* This species was also recorded on a daily basis, throughout both dry and rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

MUDNEST BUILDERS *GRALLINIDAE*

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca* A single bird was observed on one occasion by Rob, along the edge of the Lochart River airstrip.

WOODSWALLOWS *ARTAMIDAE*

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Proved to be common in the actual township of Lockhart River.

BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES *CRACTICIDAE*

Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi* Frequently encountered throughout the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE *PARADISAEIDAE*

Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus* Another New Guinea bird-of-paradise, which just makes it to Australia, occurring in the rainforests in the northern section of Cape York Peninsula. We saw both male and female birds very well, in the rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

Trumpet Manucode *Phonygammus keraudrenii* This New Guinea bird-of-paradise, just makes it to Australia, occurring in the rainforests along the northeastern coast of Cape York Peninsula. We observed a single bird in dense rainforest at Gordon's Creek, on the last day of the tour. It was a particularly shy individual and only reluctantly showed itself.

BOWERBIRDS *PTILONORHYNCHIDAE*

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Another New Guinea species, which just makes it to Australia, occurring in open areas along the northeast coast of Cape York. We were taken to a dry creek bed, in an area of dry scrub, by one of the local people, and told that a Fawn-breasted Bowerbird is occasionally observed flying across the track at this spot. So we mounted a vigil in the area, and some time later we heard a distant bird calling from down in the creek bed. So we walked down the creek bed for some distance, and located a pair of birds attending a bower, where we were able to watch them for some time. This can be a very difficult bird to find in Australia, and it is possible that in the near future, this species may become extinct in Australia.

STARLINGS *STURNIDAE*

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica* Flocks of this species were recorded on a daily basis throughout all rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES *ESTRILDIDAE*

Red-browed Finch *Neochmia temporalis* We often encountered small flocks along the roadside in rainforested areas of Iron Range National Park.

MAMMALS

- Common Spotted Cuscus** *Spilogiscus maculatus* Observed on two consecutive days, in broad daylight, clambering around in the rainforest, at Gordon's Creek. This nocturnal species of possum, is a New Guinea species, which only occurs in Australia, in the northern half of Cape York Peninsula.
- Agile Wallaby** *Macropus agilis* Observed on two separate occasions, along the roadside, in the drier areas of Iron Range National Park.
- Spectacled Flying-fox** *Pteropus conspicillatus* This very large species of bat, only occurs in the Moluccas, a couple of areas in New Guinea and along the east coast of Cape York Peninsula. A solitary individual flew past the group, in broad daylight, while we were birding in the rainforest.

REPTILES

- Amethyst Python** *Morelia amethystina* Australia's largest snake, we saw a two and a half metres long example of this species, along the side of the road, in rainforest, while driving back to Lochart River, after dark, one evening.