

# WESTERN AUSTRALIA

16 AUGUST - 7 SEPTEMBER 2003

## TOUR REPORT

**LEADER:** CHRIS DOUGHTY.

Seven years of drought in Australia has finally ended, unfortunately, the drought ended when the group arrived in Albany where we experienced heavy rain and gale force winds. Although we left the rain behind in Albany, the strong winds persisted throughout the whole tour, making the birding more difficult. After a leisurely first afternoon recovering from our long-haul flights, we began our birding the next morning at Lake Monger in the pleasant suburbs of Perth. The large concentrations of waterbirds included a few pairs of the uncommon Blue-billed Duck, several bizarre Musk Ducks, including a male bird, which put on an equally bizarre courtship display, and rather more surprisingly, a small party of Short-billed Black-Cockatoos, a south-western endemic which does not normally occur in downtown Perth. Here we also encountered our first honeyeaters, including the striking White-cheeked Honeyeater. As we drove on south towards Narrogin, we came across another of the south-western endemics, a splendid, full-plumaged, male Western Rosella, perched obligingly in a dead tree by the roadside. In the afternoon, a visit to Dryandra State Forest produced three more south-western endemics: Red-capped Parrot, Rufous Treecreeper and Western Yellow Robin. However, the afternoon's show was undoubtedly stolen by a couple of seriously endangered Numbats, which gave superb views as they foraged busily on the forest floor only metres from the bus. This once widespread marsupial 'ground squirrel' is now confined to Dryandra State Forest. We also enjoyed great looks at a couple of obliging Short-beaked Echidnas, with a supporting cast of several Western Grey Kangaroos. A return visit to the forest the next morning was equally successful, adding three more endemics to our tally, Blue-breasted Fairywren, Western Thornbill and Western Spinebill. We also observed a Painted Button-quail, a pair of Purple-crowned Lorikeets, the migratory Pallid Cuckoo and our only sightings of Brown-headed Honeyeaters and Dusky Woodswallows. We also observed

yet another seriously endangered marsupial, a Woylie, a very small species of kangaroo, which sadly, now only occurs in this small forest and nowhere else on earth. Later, as we drove south to Albany on the coast, we broke our journey to enjoy great views of Banded Lapwing, a large flock of colourful Regent Parrots, a small party of endemic Elegant Parrots and super looks at a Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo.

We spent the following day in Two Peoples Bay National Park, where unfortunately, the weather was very much against us. Gale-force winds and heavy rain-squalls made all the birds take shelter in the densest cover they could find. To make matters worse the two main target species this morning were two of the world's most notorious ultra skulkers, Western Whipbird and Western Bristlebird. Unfortunately, they were to live up to their reputation. A Western Bristlebird responded to the tape and called loudly from a thick bush just a few feet in front of us. This happened on two separate occasions, we were unable to even glimpse the bird and we never even heard a Western Whipbird. We walked towards the coast to look for the uncommon Rock Parrot, but were unable to locate them. As we walked back towards the bus Chris spotted a Rock Parrot fly behind the group and towards a fire-break. We walked slowly up the fire-break and managed to observe the bird feeding on the ground, before it took flight again. We also enjoyed good looks at Sooty Oystercatcher, Pacific Gull, Caspian and Crested Terns, Swamp Harrier, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and Grey Butcherbird. Around King George Sound in Albany we found a small flock of Yellow-billed Spoonbills, several Pied Oystercatchers, a pair of Black-fronted Plovers and a solitary Whistling Kite.

On last years tour Chris had located an immature male Noisy Scrub-bird not far from Albany. The bird called and called from almost impenetrable scrub, however, it did respond to 'pishing', even so, we had to crawl into the scrub on all fours in order to see the bird. We decided to try again this year; we soon located the same bird belting out its incredibly loud song in almost impenetrable undergrowth. This year the bird was a year older and a little more street-wise, it no longer responded to 'pishing'. However, it did not seem to mind the group crawling in on our hands and knees and getting as close to the bird as we could. Eventually, all but one member of the group was rewarded with great views of this notoriously difficult bird, some could even see the bird shaking with its head tossed backwards and tail spread as it sang. While searching for the scrub-bird we enjoyed great looks at a Square-tailed Kite, one of Australia's rarest birds of prey. Other birds we added here included Long-billed Black-Cockatoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Splendid and Red-winged Fairywrens and White-breasted Robin.

In the afternoon we had a boat trip on King George Sound, where we enjoyed close views of an immature Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, many Australasian Gannets, small flocks of Pied Cormorants, a solitary Brown Skua and large numbers of Caspian and Crested Terns. The boatman feeding a White-bellied Sea-Eagle with a small fish was a memorable part of the cruise. We also had brief looks at a Bottle-nosed Dolphin. As we drove from the harbour in the bus there was a Southern Brown Bandicoot feeding along the roadside, the bandicoot did not mind the bus stopping and we enjoyed very good looks at this mainly nocturnal marsupial. On the way back to our hotel we stopped at a garden in town, where we enjoyed close views of an Australian Owlet-Nightjar peering down at us from a nest-box.

Much of the next day was spent in the bus, on the long drive to Pemberton. This was probably just as well, throughout the whole day we experienced 110 kilometre gale-force winds and torrential rain, many trees were down and Chris had trouble keeping the bus on the right side of the road. However, we did find a small group of Emus, a large flock of Straw-necked Ibis and a rather bedraggled pair of Chestnut Teal, which are very uncommon in this area.

During breakfast the following morning large numbers of Common Bronzewing, Western Rosellas, White-browed Scrubwrens and best of all, endemic and uncommon Red-eared Firetails, came into feed at the bird tables. On the long drive back to Perth, we made a detour to Lake Muir, where we enjoyed a small flock of Western Corellas, in the trees overhead. As we neared Perth we enjoyed our only sighting of a superb, pale morph Little Eagle. This was followed by great looks at a pair of seldom seen Bush Rats, in downtown Perth, which rounded off our birding in the south-west.

A flight along the west coast of Australia the following morning, brought us to Broome, on the north-west coast. The main target birds in the Broome area are half a dozen or so, mangrove specialities. We spent much of the afternoon birding in a large stand of mangroves, not far from our hotel. Here we enjoyed very good looks at four of the mangrove specialities; the very localised Dusky Gerygone, Mangrove Grey Fantail, the stunning Red-headed Honeyeater and a surprise find of a male White-breasted Whistler, which does not normally occur in this patch of mangroves. Other birds encountered in the mangroves and nearby mudflats included Striated Heron, Common Sandpiper, Greater Sand and Red-capped Plovers, White-headed Stilt and Sacred and Collared Kingfishers. Other species of note included a nesting pair of Ospreys, dozens of Black Kites, an unusually confiding Collared Sparrowhawk sat on telegraph wires, Peaceful Dove, superb Red-winged Parrots, beautiful Rainbow Bee-eaters, Little Friarbird and

Torresian Crow. A quick visit to the local liquor store produced a roosting Tawny Frogmouth!

Early the next morning we headed out to Crab Creek, to do some birding in a different patch of mangroves. We found two more mangrove specialities, Yellow White-eye and a surprise find of an adult Large-billed Gerygone, 300 kilometres further to the south-west than it has ever been recorded before. We also checked out the mudflats on the rising tide. Just about all the migratory waders from Asia had recently arrived and our scopes were running hot, as we checked through the flocks of waders. There were 50 Ruddy Turnstone, three Eastern Curlews, a solitary Whimbrel, 30 Grey-tailed Tattlers, 50 Greenshank, three Terek Sandpipers, ten Bar-tailed Godwit, a lone Red Knot amongst a flock of 50 or so Great Knots, up to 100 Red-necked Stints, a solitary Sanderling, 60 Curlew Sandpipers and a single Broad-billed Sandpiper, a very uncommon migrant to Australia. There was also a couple of Masked Lapwings, 10 Grey Plovers and a solitary Lesser Sand Plover amongst 40 or so Greater Sand Plovers. Other birds of interest included an Eastern Reef Egret, a few Royal Spoonbills, good close looks at a beautiful Black-necked Stork, 40 Gull-billed and 16 Lesser-crested Terns and a solitary Common Tern, we also observed Brahminy Kite and Bar-shouldered Dove.

After lunch we headed inland from Roebuck Bay to Kidney Bean Lake, where large numbers of the rare and very nomadic Yellow Chat had been reported. On our way to the lake, we came across four Yellow Chats in an area of grassland. All four birds were either female or immatures, no breeding males in this flock. Some members of the group walked around the whole of Kidney Bean Lake, but we were unable to locate any more Yellow Chats. However, we enjoyed nice looks at small flocks of Marsh and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, plus a single Whiskered Tern and great close looks at a Spotted Harrier. We also found a Ruff amongst the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers; the Ruff is a rare vagrant to Australia. The surrounding grasslands were also of interest, producing two splendid Australian Bustards, a family party of Red-backed Fairywrens, a pair of Grey-crowned Babblers and Pied Butcherbirds, Singing Bushlarks and Golden-headed Cisticolas.

On our last morning at Broome, we walked along an isolated beach where we found a large flock of Brolgas and a small group of migrating Tree Martins which flew in off the sea. We also did a short sea-watch from Gantheaume Point, where large numbers of Brown Boobies plunged for food close inshore.

A short mid-day flight took us to Kununurra, in extreme north-eastern Western Australia, which is one of the premier birding areas in the country. In the afternoon we went birding along the shore of Lake Kununurra, there were lots of birds about, including

White-browed Crake, Rufous Night Heron, Comb-crested Jacana, Red-tailed Black and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Blue-faced, White-gaped, Yellow-tinted, White-throated and Rufous-throated Honeyeaters, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and Double-barred and Crimson Finches.

We spent the whole of the next day birding around Lake Argyle. At first light we began a boat trip on the lake, which lasted for 8 hours. It was without doubt, one of the highlights of the trip. Birding highlights included large flocks of Magpie Geese, small flocks of Wandering Whistling-Ducks, a couple of plumed Whistling-Ducks, large numbers of Radjah Shelducks and flocks of Hardhead, which numbered over 1000 individuals. Small flocks of Green Pygmy-geese, a few Pied Herons, good numbers of Cattle Egrets, large numbers of Glossy Ibis, a solitary Wood Sandpiper, great looks at a number of Australian Pratincoles, good close looks at a Brown Goshawk and an immature Peregrine Falcon causing havoc amongst the flocks of waterbirds. A family party of White-quilled Rock Pigeons, flocks of Little Corellas, a pair of Cockatiels, a small flock of Silver-crowned Friarbirds, a couple of Yellow-throated Miners, great looks at three Sandstone Shrike-thrushes, a few Rufous Whistlers, a Northern Fantail, a female Leaden Flycatcher and a few Little Woodswallows. During the boat trip, we stopped at a small, shallow island in the lake to search for Yellow Chats, we were not to be disappointed. We found a small flock with two males in full breeding plumage, which were unusually confiding for this species. While on the island, we also observed a species of wallaby, which was a new mammal for Birdquest. We enjoyed good close looks at a family party of Northern Nailtail Wallabies, which had been marooned on the island when the water level of the lake had risen. We also observed three other species of kangaroo during the boat trip, Agile Wallaby, Euro and Short-eared Rock Wallaby. Following a late lunch of catfish and chips, very much enjoyed by all, the great birding continued. We enjoyed good looks at several very uncommon Northern Rosellas, a solitary Grey-fronted Honeyeater, a Rufous Songlark and best of all, small flocks of Long-tailed and Masked Finches, together with a large flock of predominantly immature Gouldian Finches. We were very pleased to find this critically endangered species and equally pleased to find that they had enjoyed a good breeding season. Two birds in adult plumage looked particularly smart.

We then enjoyed a full days birding in and around Kununurra, which included a visit to the spectacular sandstone canyons of Hidden Valley National Park, where we successfully searched for Variegated Fairywren. We also enjoyed a surprise find of a solitary Diamond Dove, amongst a small flock of Peaceful Doves. Along the banks of the Ord River, a delightful White-browed Robin, responded very well to tape and a Red-backed Kingfisher and a pair of Zebra Finches, sat obligingly on telegraph wires. Probably the highlight

of the day were small numbers of Star Finches and Yellow-rumped and Chestnut-breasted Manikins, which we found huddled inside large stands of sugarcane, in an attempt to shelter from strong winds. In the afternoon we enjoyed watching a large flock of delightful Spinifex Pigeons and Geoffrey enjoyed a brief look at a female Banded Honeyeater. After dark, as we were driving back towards Kununurra, we were very fortunate to observe a small mob of uncommon and nocturnal Antipoline Wallaroos and a Bush Stone-curlew, which flew up from the side of the road. The sight of tens of thousands of huge Black Flying-foxes leaving their day-time roosts, provided one of the mammalian highlights of the trip.

At first light, we began a boat trip on Lake Kununurra, which produced stunning close looks at a couple of diminutive Baillon's Crakes, flight views of a single Channel-billed Cuckoo and a single Azure Kingfisher. Great looks at a solitary Bar-breasted Honeyeater, a lone Yellow Oriole and thousands of roosting Black Flying-foxes. Following a late breakfast we drove north to Wyndham, a predominantly aboriginal town on the north coast. On the way we made a stop at a superb sandstone gorge, with its own waterhole, where we enjoyed much better looks at Leaden Flycatcher and White-throated Honeyeater. As we neared Wyndham, we enjoyed good close views of a Black-breasted Buzzard, which put on an ariel display for us. In the mangroves at Wyndham we enjoyed good close looks at a Mangrove Gerygone, before having lunch at a typical Aussie pub. An afternoon visit to Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve produced our only sighting of a pair of Brown Songlarks and our first sighting of the highly nomadic White-necked Heron.

From Kununurra, we flew via Darwin to Alice Springs in the 'Red Centre' for the final leg of our journey. Unfortunately, the flight from Darwin to Alice Springs was delayed, so there was no time to go birding that day.

No visit to Australia's Red Centre would be complete without a visit to Ayers Rock, and so for the next three days of the tour, we joined the pilgrimage to this truly outstanding geological feature. Fortunately, Chris still had a few birds up his sleeve, and the long drives to and from the Rock were broken at regular intervals for great birds such as Mulga Parrot, Southern Whiteface, White-winged Fairywren, Spiny-cheeked and White-plumed Honeyeaters. A small flock of the highly nomadic White-fronted Honeyeater and a flight view of the equally nomadic Pied Honeyeater. We also saw Chiming Wedgebill, Hooded Robin, Crested Bellbird, Little Crow, White-backed Swallow and Ground Cuckoo-Shrike. We also observed two feral animals, One-humped Camel and Horse. While inspecting some Aboriginal rock art on the rock itself we enjoyed good looks at Grey-headed Honeyeater and a visit to the information centre produced super close looks at a pair of very attractive Major Mitchell Cockatoos. A visit to the Olgas

added further geological interest and great looks at up to three stunning Western Bowerbirds, at their bower and sunset at the Rock was enjoyed by all.

We rounded off the tour with three full days birding in the Alice Springs area. On the first day we headed out to Hamilton Downs for a spot of 'mulga bashing' and were quickly rewarded with great looks at a few of the uncommon Slaty-backed Thornbills and a small flock of more common Chestnut-rumped Thornbills. A visit to the Old Telegraph Station after lunch was relatively uneventful, but a return visit to Hamilton Downs in the late afternoon produced a large group of approximately 50 Common Bronzewing and up to 50 Bourke's Parrots coming down to drink at a small dam at dusk. A few Red Kangaroos, Australia's largest kangaroo, also came down to drink. Our second day in the Alice area produced a very obliging pair of Dusky Grasswrens and a Redthroat, along with a couple of Black-flanked Rock Wallabies, all at Simpson's Gap National Park. We also appreciated an unexpected bonus in the form of 101 Pink-eared Ducks at the sewage farm, this is yet another of Australia's elusive nomads. The Red-necked Avocets, a pair of Black Falcons, a Red-browed Pardalote and a couple of Little Grassbirds, were also greatly appreciated. On our last day around Alice we went 'spinifex bashing', where both Spinifexbird and Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, both spinifex specialities, responded very well to tape, giving perfect views. In nearby mulga country we enjoyed good looks at a pair of Banded Whiteface and a pair of Bourkes Parrots.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leaders are indicated by the symbol (NL).

### DROMAIIDAE

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* (NL): Two small flocks seen well during our time in south-western, Western Australia.

### PODICIPEDIDAE

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliocephalus poliocephalus*: Seen well on a number of occasions; Australia's commonest grebe.

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*: Small numbers scattered throughout the tour.

### DIOMEDEIDAE

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea (chlororhynchos) carteri*:  
One immature bird flew close by the boat during the boat  
trip on King George Sound.

#### PELECANIDAE

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*: Good numbers on many  
occasions throughout the tour.

#### SULIDAE

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*: Many close looks during the  
boat trip on King George Sound.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*: Good close views of up to 20 birds  
in the Broome area.

#### ANHINGIDAE

Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*: Fairly common in all  
wetland areas.

#### PHALACROCORACIDAE

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*: Small numbers in the south-  
west, and large numbers at Lake Argyle and Lake Kununurra.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*: Common in  
wetlands throughout.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Small numbers in most  
wetland areas.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*: Found in most  
wetland areas.

#### ARDEIDAE

White-necked Heron (Pacific Heron) *Ardea pacifica*: Several good  
sightings of this highly nomadic species, a couple of birds  
observed near Kununurra but the majority were observed  
around Alice Springs.

Pied Heron *Ardea picata*: A few at Lake Argyle and a few more in  
the Kununurra area.

White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*: Small numbers present in  
most wetland areas.

Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis*: A few around Kununurra and at Lake  
Argyle.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*: Small numbers present in most wetland  
areas.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia*: Fairly common in the  
Kununurra area.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Just a few sightings here and  
there.

Eastern Reef Egret (Pacific Reef Egret) *Egretta sacra*: Three dark  
morph birds present along the shore, in Roebuck Bay.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*: Fairly common on the shore and  
in the mangroves at Roebuck Bay.



Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous Night Heron) *Nycticorax caledonicus*: Good numbers observed during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

#### CICONIIDAE

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*: Seen extremely well in Roebuck Bay and during the boat trips on Lake Argyle and Lake Kununurra.

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: About 80 during the Lake Argyle boat trip, and a few others in the Kununurra area.

Australian White Ibis (Australian Ibis) *Threskiornis molucca*: Found in small numbers in most wetland areas.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*: Small flocks in the south-west and small numbers throughout most wetland areas.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*: Good close views of a few birds around Broome and much closer views of many birds during the Lake Argyle boat trip.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*: A total of 6 individuals observed, all in the Albany area.

#### ANATIDAE

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*: Large numbers present in the Kununurra area and at Lake Argyle.

Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*: Only observed at Lake Argyle, where up to 120 birds were present.

Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*: Once again this species was only observed at Lake Argyle, where 14 birds were recorded.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*: Common at wetlands in the south-west, one bird observed at Lake Argyle and four birds at Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*: A common bird in farmland in the south-west.

Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*: About 130 during the boat trip on Lake Argyle and approximately 30 birds during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*: Good numbers present in most wetland areas.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*: Small numbers in most wetland areas, but at least 150 at Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*: A pair of very bedraggled birds observed in a flooded paddock, during a torrential rainstorm, on the outskirts of Albany. This is a very uncommon bird in this area.

Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*: This highly nomadic species was only observed on one occasion, there was a flock of 101 birds at the Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Hardhead (White-eyed Duck) *Aythya australis*: At least 1,200 on Lake Argyle, 50 at Alice Springs Sewage Farm and smaller numbers at most other wetland areas.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*: A common farmland bird in the south-west.

Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus*: Great views of this attractive little duck during the boat trips on Lake Argyle and Lake Kununurra.

Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*: Close views of half a dozen at Lake Monger in Perth.

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*: Close views of half a dozen at Lake Monger.

#### PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: Two pairs breeding at Broome.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

Australian Kite *Elanus axillaris*: Scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*: Two very good sightings, both in the south-west, the stronghold of this very uncommon species.

Black-breasted Buzzard (Black-breasted Kite) *Hamirostra melanosternon*: We enjoyed superb flight views of this rare and very distinctive raptor, when a solitary bird was observed close to the road near Wyndham, in Northern Australia.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: Very common throughout northern Australia.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*: Observed in small numbers on a couple of occasions in the south-west, then on most days in the north and centre, commonly scavenging on roadside kills.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: Common in the Broome area.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*: Numerous sightings of this very impressive eagle. Best was the adult picking up fish thrown by the boatman on King George Sound.

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*: Many great sightings of this spectacular eagle, the largest of the *Aquila* eagles.

Little Eagle *Hieraetus morphnoides*: This uncommon raptor was only observed on one occasion, a solitary bird was observed very well during the drive from Pemberton to Perth.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*: Two sightings in the Kununurra area, one bird seen while searching for Purple-crowned Fairywrens on the Lake Argyle boat trip and the second bird was observed during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*: Scattered sightings throughout the tour, including superb looks at an sub-adult bird, perched on telegraph wires in Broome.

Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*: A few good sightings of this uncommon bird-of-prey.  
Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*: Several good sightings throughout the tour.

#### FALCONIDAE

Black Falcon *Falco subniger*: We enjoyed super looks at this very uncommon falcon, at Alice Springs Sewage Farm. A pair of birds, one perched and one flying overhead, performed very well for us.  
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: An immature bird was creating havoc amongst the flocks of waterbirds, during the Lake Argyle boat trip. A second bird was observed perched high on the top of the gorge at Simpson's Gap National Park, near Alice Springs.  
Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*: A few good sightings throughout the tour.  
Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: Common and conspicuous, especially in the fields around Kununurra.  
Nankeen Kestrel (Australian Kestrel) *Falco cenchroides*: Many sightings throughout the tour.

#### TURNICIDAE

Painted Buttonquail *Turnix varia*: A bird was flushed in Dryandra State Forest, in the south-west.

#### RALLIDAE

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*: Unbelievable, very close looks at two birds during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.  
White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea*: Remarkable close-up views of at least half a dozen birds at Lake Kununurra, mostly from the boat but also from the shore.  
Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*: Eight individuals seen well at Lake Monger.  
Purple Swamphen (Purple Gallinule) *Porphyrio porphyrio*: Small numbers at wetland areas throughout the tour.  
Eurasian Coot (Common Coot) *Fulica atra*: Small numbers throughout the tour, with a flock of approximately 1,000 birds on Lake Argyle.

#### OTIDIDAE

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis*: Excellent views of this stately bird, on three occasions in the north.

#### GRUIDAE

Brolga *Grus rubicundus*: A few nice flocks observed in the north.

#### JACANIDAE

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*: The lily-trotter, common in the north.

#### HAEMATOPODIDAE

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*: Many good looks along sandy beaches in the south-west, and also seen in Roebuck Bay near Broome.

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*: Several good sightings along rocky coastlines in both the south and the north.

#### RECURVIROSTRIDAE

White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*: Small numbers scattered throughout most wetland areas, plus a large flock of approximately 150 birds at Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*: Excellent views of 62 birds at Alice Springs Sewage Farm, it is a very reliable site for this species.

#### BURHINIDAE

Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius*: A solitary bird flushed off the roadside after dusk, near Kununurra.

#### GLAREOLIDAE

Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella*: Seen well during the Lake Argyle boat trip, and in the fields near Kununurra.

#### CHARADRIIDAE

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*: Fairly common in the north.

Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*: Good close views of a few birds in the south-west, the stronghold for this uncommon species of lapwing.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: A dozen birds observed on sandy beaches in Roebuck Bay, Broome.

Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian Plover) *Charadrius mongolus*: One bird observed amongst a large flock of waders in Roebuck Bay.

Greater Sand Plover (Large Sand Plover) *Charadrius leschenaultii*: About 60 observed in the Broome area.

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*: Fairly common in Roebuck Bay and on the adjacent plains.

Black-fronted Plover *Elsayornis melanops*: Great views on several occasions throughout the tour.

#### SCOLOPACIDAE

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: About 90 in Broome area.

Eastern Curlew (Far Eastern Curlew) *Numenius madagascariensis*: Three birds present in the Broome area, recent arrivals from northern Asia.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: A solitary bird observed amongst the waders in Roebuck Bay.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: A solitary bird observed during the boat trip on Lake Argyle and a second bird, at the Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*: At least 40 in Roebuck Bay.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Only a few.

Greenshank (Common Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia*: About 110 in the Broome area.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: About 10 at Kidney Bean Lake, on the plains near Roebuck Bay.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*: Three birds present on the mudflats in Roebuck Bay.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: Ten birds present on the mudflats in Roebuck Bay.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*: One bird observed amongst the waders at Roebuck Bay.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*: Up to 60 birds present on beaches in the Broome area.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*: Up to eleven birds present on the beaches in the Broome area.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*: Up to 40 birds at Kidney Bean Lake, six during the boat trip on lake Argyle and 11 birds at Alice Springs Sewage Farm.

Red-necked Stint (Rufous-necked Stint) *Calidris ruficollis*: About 100 birds observed during the boat trip on Lake Argyle with up to 40 birds observed in Roebuck Bay.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*: About 60 birds observed during the boat trip on Lake Argyle with up to 40 birds observed in Roebuck Bay.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Linicola falcinellus*: This bird is a very uncommon migrant to Australia, a solitary bird was observed amongst a large flock of waders, in Roebuck Bay. The bird was still in partial breeding plumage.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: This species of wader is a rare vagrant to Australia. We found a solitary individual amongst the waders at Kidney Bean Lake, on the plains close to Roebuck Bay. Four days after our sighting, Kidney Bean Lake was completely dry. The Ruff has subsequently been observed by local birders, at the Sewage Farm in Broome.

#### STERCORARIIDAE

Brown Skua *Catharacta lonnbergi*: Superb views of an individual coming to bait during the boat trip on King George Sound.

#### LARIDAE

Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*: Australia's commonest gull.

Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*: Very close looks during the boat trip on King George Sound.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*: Fairly common in Roebuck Bay and at Lake Argyle.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*: Small numbers in several wetland areas.

- Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*: Fairly common in Roebuck Bay, and an unusual sighting of a solitary bird during the boat trip on Lake Argyle.
- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: A solitary individual observed in Roebuck Bay.
- Crested Tern (Greater Crested Tern) *Sterna bergii*: Common in the Albany area particularly good looks during the boat trip on King George Sound.
- Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*: Great views of about 20 in Roebuck Bay.

#### COLUMBIDAE

- Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove) *Columba livia*: Introduced
- Spotted Turtle-Dove (Spotted Dove) *Streptopelia chinensis*: Introduced.
- Laughing Turtle-Dove (Laughing Dove) *Streptopelia senegalensis*: Introduced in the south-west.
- Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*: Common in the north.
- Diamond Dove *Geopelia cuneata*: Great views of 20 or so, of this highly nomadic and uncommon species at Lake Argyle, plus a single bird near Kununurra and two birds close to Alice Springs.
- Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*: Common throughout northern Australia.
- Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*: Seen on several occasions in the south-west and also in the Alice Springs area. It was nice to see little flocks coming in to drink at Kunoth Bore in the late evening, as we waited for the Bourke's Parrot.
- Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans*: Several flight views of this species, in the south-west.
- Crested Pigeon *Geophaps lophotes*: Common and widespread, but none-the-less a very beautiful bird.
- White-quilled Rock-Pigeon *Petrophassa albipennis*: Superb views of at least 10 birds in Hidden Valley National Park and small numbers also seen during the boat trip on Lake Argyle and the Grotto, near Wyndham.
- Spinifex Pigeon *Geophaps plumifera*: Fleeting views of one by the roadside near Kununurra, followed by great looks at a flock of 10 birds near Lake Argyle, plus a solitary individual observed at the Finke River, not far from Alice Springs.

#### PSITTACIDAE

- Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii*: Many good sightings of small flocks in the north and centre.
- Short-billed Black-Cockatoo (White-tailed Black-Cockatoo) *Calyptorhynchus latirostris*: Superb views of a few flocks in the south-west.
- Long-billed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii*: Great close views of a small flock of 4 birds feeding along the roadside close to Albany.

Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla*: Only a few small groups in the south-west and north, but abundant in the centre. A very common but beautiful cockatoo.

Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*: Many large flocks in the Kununurra and Lake Argyle areas, and also seen in much smaller numbers in the Alice Springs area.

Western Corella (Bare-eyed Corella) *Cacatua pastinator*: Very close looks at a flock of approximately 10 birds sitting in trees just above our heads, near Lake Muir. If only all stake-outs were as reliable!

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (Pink Cockatoo) *Cacatua leadbeateri*: Superb looks at a pair of birds at the information centre at Ayres Rock, who said Ayres Rock does not have any birds!

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: Just a few pairs in the Kununurra area.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: Seen in the Perth area, where birds from the east coast have been introduced. Good numbers of the red-collared race in the north.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*: Good looks at a pair of birds feeding in a flowering eucalypt, in Dryandra State Forest.

Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*: A few great looks at this very attractive parrot in the north.

Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus*: 'Fly-by' views of a small flock in farmland close to Dryandra State Forest, then great looks at a flock of 15 birds, by the roadside on the drive south to Albany. This is another very attractive species of parrot.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*: There was an influx of Cockatiels in the Kununurra area during our time there, over 50 birds observed. This is yet another highly nomadic species.

Red-capped Parrot *Purpureicephalus spurius*: Great looks at this beautiful parrot on several occasions in the south-west.

Northern Rosella *Platycercus venustus*: This uncommon species of rosella was observed very well in the area of Lake Argyle.

Western Rosella *Platycercus icterotis*: Endemic to the south-west and seen well on several occasions.

Port Lincoln Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius*: Common in the south-west and centre.

Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius*: Many good sightings around the Alice.

Bourke's Parrot *Neophema bourkii*: 'Mulga bashing' by day proved fruitless, but a vigil at Kunoth bore at dusk was rewarded with close views of up to 50 individuals coming down to drink. We enjoyed even better sightings of a couple of birds along the roadside, near Alice Springs.

Elegant Parrot *Neophema elegans*: Good looks at three pairs feeding in a field near Narrogin, followed by a pair of birds in flight not far from Albany.

Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila*: On a very windy day at Two Peoples Bay National Park, we were very lucky to find a solitary individual, trying to hide from the wind on a partially sheltered fire break.

#### CUCULIDAE

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*: One bird observed near Dryandra State Forest, the Pallid Cuckoo is an uncommon summer visitor to this area.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*: Good views of a bird responding to the tape-recorder, close to Albany.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*: Singles on the drive from Narrogin to Albany and Alice Springs to Ayres Rock.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: A summer migrant from New Guinea, we had a distant fly-by during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

#### CENTROPODIDAE

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*: Great looks at a pair of these large cuckoos, close to our hotel in Broome.

#### PODARGIDAE

Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*: Brilliant views of a single bird at its most unusual day roost (the entrance to a liquor store) in Broome.

#### AEGOTHELIDAE

Australian Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*: We enjoyed great looks at this very special bird peering out of a nest box in Albany.

#### ALCEDINIDAE

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*: A quick look at a flying bird during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*: Seen on several occasions in the south-west, where it has been introduced.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*: Fairly common and seen fairly well on a few occasions in the north.

Red-backed Kingfisher *Todirhamphus pyrrhopygia*: Great views of a solitary individual at the agricultural fields near Kununurra and several observed well, on telegraph wires near Alice Springs.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*: A summer visitor, seen well on a few occasions.

Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris*: Seen well on a few occasions in mangroves at Broome.

#### MEROPIDAE



Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: Common and conspicuous in the north.

#### ATRICHORNITHIDAE

Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus*: Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip. Last year Chris located a young male who just sang and sang from near impenetrable bushland, in the hope that he would attract a female. Fortunately, this young bird was very curious and came in to 'pishing'. This year, we located the same individual, once again calling endlessly from near impenetrable bushland. However, he was a year older and a little more streetwise, he no longer responded to 'pishing'. Undaunted, we pushed through the near impenetrable scrub, on nearing the bird, we crawled towards him on all fours. One at a time, almost everyone, was rewarded with good and in some cases, 'stunning' views of this ultra skulker, who's whole body shook, as he sang.

#### ALAUDIDAE

Singing Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*: Many good sightings in the Broome and Kununura areas.

#### HIRUNDINIDAE

White-backed Swallow *Cheramoeca leucosternus*: Several good sightings between Alice and Ayers Rock.  
Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*: Common in the south-west.  
Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*: Much the most widely encountered hirundine.  
Fairy Martin *Hirundo ariel*: Large numbers in the Kununurra area, and also a few at Alice Springs.

#### MOTACILLIDAE

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*: Fairly common and widespread.

#### CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*: Recorded on almost every day of the tour.  
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*: Small numbers in northern Australia.  
Ground Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina maxima*: Our first sighting of this uncommon cuckoo-shrike was of a bird in flight, close to Lake Argyle. A much better sighting, on the drive from Ayres Rock to Alice Springs followed this. Chris spotted a bird flying close to the road, we followed it in the bus and fortunately it flew to the ground. Where we were able to obtain good views of it as it walked around.  
White-winged Triller *Lalage sueurii*: Fairly common in the north, especially around Kununurra.

#### EOPSALTRIIDAE

- Scarlet Robin *Petroica multicolor*: This stunning little robin was observed on a number of occasions in the south-west.
- Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*: This equally stunning robin was seen on a couple of occasions in the south-west and also near Alice Springs.
- Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata*: Several nice looks in central Australia.
- Western Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria griseogularis*: Our first sighting was a brief look at a bird in Dryandra State Forest. We enjoyed a much better sighting of a bird by the roadside near Pemberton. Great spotting from the bus by our leader.
- White-breasted Robin *Eopsaltria georgiana*: We enjoyed a few very good sightings of this south-western endemic, in the Pemberton area.
- Jacky Winter *Microeca fascinans*: Good looks at a pair of birds in Dryandra State Forest and a second pair near Lake Argyle.
- White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa*: Great views of a very responsive bird at a stake-out on the Ord River near Kununurra. Now if we could just train all the other birds to respond in this manner!

#### PACHYCEPHALIDAE

- Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis*: Several great looks between Alice Springs and Ayers Rock.
- Sandstone Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla woodwardi*: We enjoyed great views of this uncommon species during the boat trip on Lake Argyle. Up to three birds were seen well on a steep cliff face, on one of the islands in the lake.
- Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*: We enjoyed a few good sightings in the south-west.
- Golden Whistler (Common Golden Whistler) *Pachycephala pectoralis*: Great looks at both male and female birds in the forests of the south-west.
- Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*: Common and widespread.
- White-breasted Whistler *Pachycephala lanioides*: Several very good sightings of both male and female birds, who responded well to tape in the mangroves at Broome and Crab Creek. They were very easy this year, some years they are very hard to find!

#### MONARCHIDAE

- Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*: We enjoyed three sightings of this uncommon species; the first close to Lake Argyle, the second during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra and the third at the Grotto, near Wyndham.
- Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*: Common in the south-west.
- Mangrove Grey Fantail *Rhipidura phasiana*: Common in the mangroves at Roebuck Bay.

- Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*: Friendly and conspicuous, we recorded it on every single day of the tour.
- Broad-billed Flycatcher *Myiagra ruficollis*(H): One bird calling from mangroves in Broome, unfortunately, it did not respond to tape of its call.
- Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*: A female bird was observed by some members of the group, while searching for Purple-crowned Fairywren during the Lake Argyle boat trip. Everyone enjoyed good views of a pair of birds at the Grotto, near Wyndham.
- Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*: Common and widespread.

#### CINCLOSOMATIDAE

- Chiming Wedgebill *Psophodes occidentalis*: Great views of a party of four birds, in an area of open woodland on the drive from Alice Springs to Ayers Rock.

#### POMATOSTOMIDAE

- Grey-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis*: Encountered on many occasions in the north and centre.
- White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*: A party of six birds observed very well along the roadside during the drive from Narrogin to Albany, in the south-west. Followed by several parties observed very well in central Australia.

#### SYLVIIDAE

- Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*: A couple of individuals were observed fairly well in a large reed-bed, close to Alice Springs Sewage Farm.
- Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi*: This uncommon species was observed very well on three separate occasions; twice in the Lake Argyle area and once close to Alice Springs.
- Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*: Good close looks at a pair of birds in grassland at the Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve, near Wyndham.
- Spinifexbird *Eremiornis carteri*: Almost impossible to see without using tape, a single bird responded very well to tape, in an area of spinifex, close to Alice Springs.
- Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*: Observed very well in reed-beds at Lake Munga and Lake Kununurra.
- Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*: Seen well in rank grassland during the boat trip on Lake Argyle and on the plains surrounding Kidney Bean Lake.

#### MALURIDAE

- Splendid Fairy-wren *Malurus splendens*: Seen well on several occasions in the south-west, followed by more sightings throughout central Australia. Unfortunately, all but one of the males were in non-breeding plumage.

Variegated Fairy-wren *Malurus lamberti*: A young male was seen very well in Hidden Valley National Park, at Kununurra. A pair of birds, with the male in full breeding plumage, was seen well during our walk in the Olgas, in central Australia.

Blue-breasted Fairy-wren *Malurus pulcherrimus*(NL): We spent many hours in Dryandra State Forest searching for this species, while Chris was walking back to the bus, some group members obtained brief views of a pair of birds in breeding plumage, which were skulking in thick bushes.

Red-winged Fairy-wren *Malurus elegans*: Seen well close to Albany and again at Pemberton.

White-winged Fairy-wren *Malurus leucopterus*: Good looks at several parties in central Australia, including one or two nice males, in full breeding plumage.

Red-backed Fairy-wren *Malurus melanocephalus*: Seen well on several occasions, including males in full breeding plumage.

Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus*(H): During gale-force winds at Two Peoples Bay National Park, a small party was heard calling from dense coastal heathland, due to the appalling weather they kept very low in the heathland, failing to show themselves.

Rufous-crowned Emu-wren *Stipiturus ruficeps*: An adult female responded very well to tape in a large area of spinifex, close to Alice Springs.

Dusky Grasswren *Amytornis purnelli*: An extremely obliging pair hopping about on the track in Simpson's Gap National Park. Why is this grasswren so easy, while all the others are so hard?

#### PARDALOTIDAE

Red-browed Pardalote *Pardalotus rubricatus*: On completion of our birding at Alice Springs Sewage Farm, we returned to the bus to find a Red-browed Pardalote calling from a single eucalypt next to the bus. We were able to enjoy very good close looks at this uncommon species.

Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*: Seen well on several occasions in the south-west and the centre.

Western Bristlebird *Dasyornis longirostris*(H): During gale-force winds at Two Peoples Bay National Park, a solitary bird responded to tape by crawling into a bush a few feet away from the group and singing his heart out. This happened on two occasions and lasted for several minutes each time. No one even glimpsed the bird throughout the whole time!

White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*: Fairly common in the south-west.

Redthroat *Sericornis brunneus*: On playing tape on a bushy hillside near Alice Springs, an immature male sprang into view and showed well for a brief period.

Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*: A common and cheerful little bird, seen well on a number of occasions.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*: A surprising find, a single bird was observed well at Crab Creek in Roebuck Bay, near Broome. This is 100 kilometres south-west of its normal range.

Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca*: Seen well in roadside forests on the outskirts of Perth and again in Dryandra State Forest.

Mangrove Gerygone *Gerygone levigaster*: One bird seen very well in the mangroves at Wyndham.

Dusky Gerygone *Gerygone tenebrosa*: Great views, eventually, of this very localized species in the mangroves near Broome. The pale iris takes some seeing!

Slaty-backed Thornbill *Acanthiza robustirostris*: Good looks at this uncommon species while 'mulga bashing' at Hamilton Downs, in the Alice Springs area.

Inland Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*: Good looks in the south-west in Dryandra State Forest and again at Lake Muir. The cocked tail is very distinctive.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis*: A small party of six birds was observed well at Hamilton Downs, near Alice Springs.

Western Thornbill *Acanthiza inornata*: Many great looks in Dryandra State Forest.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*: Seen on several occasions in the south-west and in central Australia.

Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*: Fairly common in central Australia.

Banded Whiteface *Aphelocephala nigricincta*: We enjoyed great views of a pair of these uncommon birds along the roadside, close to Alice Springs.

#### NEOSITTIDAE

Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*: Good looks at a party of eight in Dryandra State Forest, a pair close to Lake Argyle and a small party of six while 'mulga-bashing' close to Ayres Rock.

#### CLIMACTERIDAE

Rufous Treecreeper *Climacteris rufa*: Several great views in Dryandra State Forest.

#### MELIPHAGIDAE

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*: Very common in the south-west.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*: Very common throughout central Australia.

Silver-crowned Friarbird *Philemon argenticeps*: A small party of five birds was observed on one of the islands in Lake Argyle, during the boat trip.

Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis*: Common around Broome and Kununurra.

Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*: Several good sightings around Kununurra.

Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula*: Common in the north and abundant in the centre.

Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*: Common and widespread.

White-gaped Honeyeater *Lichenostomus unicolor*: Common around Kununurra.

Grey-headed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus keartlandi*: One of the commoner birds around Ayers Rock and the Olgas, and also seen near Alice Springs.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavescens*: Common in the north.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus ornatus*: Common in Dryandra State Forest.

Grey-fronted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus plumulus*: Superb views of a single bird in open woodland close to Lake Argyle. This is a very uncommon and unpredictable species, it is easily missed as it is now extirpated over much of its former range.

White-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillatus*: Common in central Australia.

Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris*: This species always occurs in flocks; a small flock of six birds was observed well along the roadside, not far from Narrogin, in the south-west.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*: One bird observed briefly in parkland at Kununurra, followed by a second much better sighting or a solitary bird at the Grotto, near Wyndham.

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*: Common in the south-west.

White-fronted Honeyeater *Phylidonyris albifrons*: A small party of this uncommon and highly nomadic species, was seen very well in open forest on the drive from Alice Springs to Ayres Rock.

White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris nigra*: Seen well on several occasions in the south-west, starting at Lake Monger in Perth.

New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*: One of the commonest birds in the south-west.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Phylidonyris melanops*: Brief looks in gale-force winds at several individuals in heathland in Two Peoples Bay National Park.

Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*: Common and widespread in the south-west and north.

Bar-breasted Honeyeater *Ramsayornis fasciatus*: This uncommon species was seen very well on one occasion, during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Rufous-throated Honeyeater *Conopophila rufogularis*: This species as abundant in and around Kununurra

Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*: This very attractive honeyeater was reasonably common in the south-west.

Red-headed Honeyeater *Myzomela erythrocephala*: Good views of half a dozen or so birds in and around the mangroves at Broome.

Banded Honeyeater *Certhionyx pectoralis* (NL): One seen by Geoffrey, near Lake Argyle.

Pied Honeyeater *Certhionyx variegatus*: A male bird flew across the road in front of the bus on the long drive from Ayres Rock to Alice Springs. Unfortunately, we were not able to relocate the bird in the surrounding mulga. This is yet another uncommon and highly nomadic species that is easily missed.

#### EPHIANURIDAE

Yellow Chat *Epthianura crocea*: Fairly good views of a small flock of four female and immature birds in grassland surrounding Kidney Bean Lake on the plains near Roebuck Bay. We enjoyed a second, much better sighting of a small party of three birds, on a small island in Lake Argyle. A superb male in full breeding plumage came to within a few metres of the group. This is one of Australia's least common birds, prone, like many others, to nomadic wanderings.

White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*: A nice male by the roadside near Dryandra State Forest, followed by a pair of birds, during the drive to Albany.

#### DICAEIDAE

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*: Odd ones here and there, including some nice males.

#### ZOSTEROPIDAE

Yellow White-eye *Zosterops luteus*: Seen well in the mangroves around Broome, where it is quite common.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*: Common in the south-west.

#### ESTRILDIDAE

Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii*: Several small parties around Kununurra.

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*: One small group near Kununurra, then common in the centre.

Long-tailed Finch *Poephila acuticauda*: Fairly common around Kununurra and seen well on several occasions.

Masked Finch *Poephila personata*: Fairly common around Kununurra.

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*: Common in the marshes in the Kununurra area, and seen exceptionally well from the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Star Finch *Neochmia ruficauda*: Strong winds kept this species hidden in the middle of fields of sugarcane at Kununurra, however one brave soul did venture onto a telegraph wire for some time, proving super looks.

Red-eared Firetail *Stagonopleura oculata*: One of the least common of the south-west endemics, we enjoyed superb views of several birds at the feeders at our hotel in Pemberton.

Yellow-rumped Mannikin *Lonchura flaviprymna*: Good looks at several birds huddled together deep in sugarcane, sheltering from the wind, at Kununurra. A small flock flew past the boat, during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax*: A couple of small groups in the Kununurra area.

Gouldian Finch *Chloebia gouldiae*: Not far from Lake Argyle we were delighted with great views of a couple of adult birds in full breeding plumage, amongst a flock of approximately 20 immature birds. It is great to know that this flock appears to have had a good breeding season. This seriously endangered species, is getting harder to find as each year passes.

#### ORIOLIDAE

Yellow Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus*: Great views of a single bird during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*: One seen on telegraph wires in Broome, followed by a second sighting near Wyndham.

#### PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

Western Bowerbird *Chlamydera guttata*: Superb views of up to three birds attending a bower at the Olgas, followed by a brief flight view of a bird at Ellery Big Hole Creek National Park, near Alice Springs.

Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis*: Very common in the north, and seen especially well at the bower at Lake Argyle township.

#### GRALLINIDAE

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*: Common and widespread throughout the tour.

#### ARTAMIDAE

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*: Common in the north.

Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus*: Seen once in the south-west, then on most days in the north and centre.



Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*: A summer visitor to the south-west, small numbers were present in the Dryandra State Forest.

Little Woodswallow *Artamus minor*: Seen well around Lake Argyle, Kununurra, the Olgas and Alice Springs.

#### CRACTICIDAE

Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*: An immature bird observed in Two Peoples Bay National Park, followed by a couple of sightings during the drive from Ayres Rock to Alice Springs.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*: Common in the north and the centre, it is one of Australia's most accomplished songsters.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*: Very common in the south-west and centre, but scarce in the north.

Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor*: Fairly common in the south-west.

#### CORVIDAE

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*: Common in the south-west.

Little Crow *Corvus bennetti*: Common in the centre.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*: Common in the north.

#### MAMMALS

Short-beaked Echidna (S-nosed E) *Tachyglossus aculeatus*: We enjoyed two sightings of this egg-laying mammal, both sightings were in Dryandra State Forest. The first was of an animal that had dug into the ground with its head tucked underneath, followed by a much better sighting of one wandering around on the floor of the forest.

Numbat *Myrmecobius fasciatus*: Superb views of two individuals in broad daylight, this very attractive but extremely local and seldom encountered marsupial, which only occurs in Dryandra State Forest and nowhere else on earth.

Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon obesulus*: We were very fortunate to enjoy very close looks at this normally nocturnal marsupial, in broad daylight at Albany.

Woylie (Brush-tailed Bettong) *ettongia penicillata*: A solitary animal was flushed from cover during a walk in Dryandra State Forest. Once widespread, this seriously endangered small species of kangaroo now only occurs in Dryandra State Forest and nowhere else on earth. It is a fungivore, during darkness it digs underground to find fungi, which forms 90% of its diet. We were very fortunate to see one.

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*: Several sightings at dusk and dawn near Broome and in the Kununurra area.

Antilopine Wallaroo *Macropus antilopinus*: The northern counterpart of the Southern Grey Kangaroos, we observed two individuals at dusk not far from Lake Argyle.

Western Grey Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus*: Seen well on many occasions in the south-west.

Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus*: Australia's largest species of kangaroo, two individuals were observed at a waterhole near Alice Springs, followed by great looks at a small party drinking at a waterhole on Hamilton Downs, which arrived as we were waiting for Bourke's Parrots to come in to drink

Euro (Common Wallaroo) *Macropus robustus*: Australia's hill kangaroo, one was observed on an island in Lake Argyle, a pair was observed in Simpson's Gap National Park and two were seen from the grounds of our hotel in Alice Springs.

Northern Nailtail Wallaby *Orychogolea unguifera*: A first for Birdquest, three individuals of this very uncommon species of kangaroo were seen very well on a small island in Lake Argyle, while we were searching for Yellow Chats.

Short-eared Rock Wallaby *Petrogale brachyotis*: Good looks at this uncommon species during the boat trips on Lakes Argyle and Kununurra.

Black-flanked Rock Wallaby (Black-footed R W) *Petrogale lateralis*: Splendid looks at this attractive little wallaby on a rocky slope in Simpson's Gap National Park, near Alice Springs

Black Flying-fox (Central Flying-fox) *Pteropus alecto*: The sight of tens of thousands of these huge bats streaming out of their roost near Kununurra at sunset was surely one of the most memorable moments of the trip. We also observed many thousands at their daytime roost, during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.

Bush Rat *Rattus fuscipes*: A wrong turn in the suburbs of Perth, forced Chris to make a U-turn in the bus, as he was doing so he noticed a couple of this species in an ornamental garden. Although a common species, they are mainly nocturnal and seldom seen.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*: A few in the south-west and one or two observations in central Australia.

Horse *Equus caballus*: Feral horse were observed between Alice Springs and Ayres Rock.

One-humped Camel *Camelus dromedarius*: Feral camels were also observed between Alice Springs and Ayres Rock.

Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*: Brief views of four individuals, two were observed in a small bay near Albany, one during the boat trip on King George Sound and one offshore close to Broome.

## REPTILES

Freshwater Crocodile *Crocodylus johnstoni*: Great looks at a few quite large individuals during the boat trip on Lake Kununurra.