

Australia – East Coast

9th – 29th November 2008

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Regent Bowerbird; O'Reilly's, South Queensland

Summary

Due to circumstances in the Sichuan region of China in the spring my birding plans had to be rearranged. I spent a couple of weeks looking into the logistics of the flights, the potential routes and overall costs involved. The negative sides for a trip to Australia were few, namely the very long flight and the increasing costs in Australia however the positives were that majority of species I would see would be new, superb photographic opportunities, the Great Barrier Reef, stunning scenery and Kangaroos. As it turned out the cost would be similar to what I had been paying for Sichuan. I decided on the east coast route with most of the time in Northern Queensland, a few days in Southern Queensland at the famous O'Reilly's and a week in New South Wales near Sydney. I had looked at the Darwin/Kakadu area and Queensland combo but I decided that would be for another trip. I booked my flight and a vehicle that would double as bed through Britz and set about refining my itinerary along with what I was likely to see and obtaining books and site directions.

This report details the species seen during the 3-week trip in daily dairy format and full listing at the end. There are a number of images here however visiting the above website more higher resolution images can be viewed.

Birding Areas:

I birded three main geographical areas in three weeks i) North Queensland ii) South Queensland iii) New South Wales.

i) In **North Queensland** I undertook a loop circuit commencing on the coast at Cairns, north to the humid rainforest of the Daintree and Cape Tribulation areas, southwest to the drier plains around Julatten and Mt. Molloy, the Atherton Tablelands, the Outback at Georgetown and then back to the coast. During this route the avifauna changed as I passed through each area and new habitats though there were some species that seemed to be universal being found, albeit in varying numbers, in all habitats. Birding was at its most entertaining in the Outback at Georgetown where the Green Hills track beyond Cumberland Dam being simply magic early morning. The dry Atherton Tablelands and Julatten areas were generally hard work with best overall birding being around the grounds of the Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge, the first few hundred metres of the trail at the top of Mt. Lewis and at the Picnic site car park at Lake Eacham. Good birds were seen at other locations in these areas there just wasn't the constant flow of good birds. Other excellent birding was at the Cairns Esplanade where a couple of afternoons when the tide was just right meant stacks of waders right up on the beach.

Day 1: arrival Cairns with birding at the Esplanade, Centenary Lakes and the Mangrove boardwalk.

Day 2: day trip out to Michaelmas Cay ended up being a 40minute late afternoon trip to the cay whilst rest of day was spent over a deep-water reef

Day 3: majority of day spent birding the rainforest around Cassowary House before heading north along the coast road to Daintree village

Day 4: morning birding cruise along the Daintree River following a few hours north of the river along the boardwalks on Cape Tribulation before heading south to Wonga Beach and then inland to Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge and Mary Farm

Day 5: morning birding the lodge grounds and up at Mt. Lewis followed by mid afternoon at Mt. Molloy

Day 6: early morning at Lake Mitchell and then majority of day at the Mareeba Wetlands before ending up in the evening on Mareeba Golf Course

Day 7: morning Lake Eacham then north to Granite Gorge returning to Atherton and evening visit to Hasties Swamp

Day 8: early at Hasties Swamp then drive south to Milla Milla Falls and then inland to Georgetown with early evening at Cumberland Dam

Day 9: morning around Cumberland Dam then drive back to the coast at Etty Bay

Day 10: day around the Etty Bay and Mission Beach areas

Day 11: morning Etty Bay then north to Cairns and afternoon at the Esplanade and the Mangrove Boardwalk

Day 12: morning Cairns esplanade

ii) Only a few days was spent in **South Queensland** where early birding was in dry Eucalypt forest followed by high elevation rainforest. Birding on the first morning at O'Reilly's was steady with many of the targets being seen by 10am. Birding in the afternoon along one of the forest trails was slower but again steady.

Day 12: afternoon just south of Brisbane at Daisy Hill Koala refuge followed by drive south to O'Reilly's

Day 13: day birding the rainforest of Lamington National Park

Day 14: morning birding the rainforest before heading to Brisbane with stop off at Daisy Hill

iii) A week was spent in **New South Wales** from the coastal forests and heath lands at Royal National Park to the drier interior forests and wetlands near Leeton returning to Sydney via the higher and cooler Blue Mountains at Capertee Valley finally ending back on the coast. Best birding by far was at the Binya State Forest where a waterhole was visited by numerous dry country species whilst the open forest held many more. Five Bough Swamp did have many birds but was difficult to view thus proved to be a frustrating place that didn't live up to expectation.

Day 15: mid morning flight to Sydney with late afternoon birding at Royal National Park

Day 16: morning at several areas within the Royal National Park cover several habitat types before a long seven-hour drive inland to the drier country at Leeton

Day 17: morning at Binya State Forest with afternoon at Five Bough Swamp

Day 18: morning at Five Bough Swamp and Binya State Forest before heading back east with a stop off for an hour or so at Blue Gum Swamp arriving Lithgow early evening

Day 19: morning spent along the Capertee Valley followed by much of the rest of the day at the Lithgow Sewage Works

Day 20: very brief visit to the Lithgow Sewage Works before heading to Sydney with a late afternoon few hours at Royal National Park.

Day 21: morning at Botany Bay and Royal National Park before return to UK flight

Resources:

I made reference to numerous trip reports readily found on the Internet, see www.travelingbirder.com. Many of these were helpful in planning basic routes and to what to expect bird wise at each location. I also joined AUSBirds, which is a birding chat forum though this didn't really give much more than what I had already found out though one person did give me some useful directions for the Wattle Dam at Binya State forest, which provided some of the best birding of the trip. A couple of field guides were used, Birds of Australia by Pizzey & Knight and The Slater Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. The former is the better of the two guides in terms of information and illustrations but is large and bulky to be used as a real field guide whereas the Simpson and Day guide was more pocket sized and illustrations were okay. Both these guides differ from each other in the species order; Pizzey&Knights for instance has Comb-crested Jacana smack in the middle of the waders. However the Slater guide proved repeatedly frustrating in trying to look anything up quickly and I had to refer to the index a number of times to locate species. This may be my error in not knowing where all the new to me bird families sat.

The best mammal guide is the Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia by Mekhorst and Knight, which I bought out there but even this book really didn't capture all of the animals quite right. I had a wallaby near Brisbane that really didn't fit anything in the book. I eventually identified it as a Black-striped Wallaby as there were a number of features that were consistent but one of the text indicated it was a nocturnal or crepuscular species where as mine, and there were several out and about, was mid afternoon. Still there is no better mammal book to Australia that I can find.

Regional road maps can be picked up locally and are better than the Hema fold away's that I bought in the UK and rarely used. I used an AA Roadmap, which covered all of Australia, when I was in New South Wales as it was best option that I found.

Information was also supplied on specific birding locations by Sue Gregory at Cassowary House, Andrew and Trish Forsyth at Red Mill www.redmillhouse.com.au and from contacts within some of the tour companies.

I used the Australia Bird Calls CD's for the Tropical North-east and Subtropical East by David Stewart, which I used occasionally when I was out there, useful for Paradise Riflebird, Green Catbird and several other tricky birds to great effect.

Travelling:

Before travelling it is important to get the entry Visa(s) that can easily be obtained from the Australia High Commission websites.

International flights were with Cathy Pacific, booked through Trailfinders www.trailfinders.com, which were okay, pretty much the same as most operators I have flown with around the world though there was the added bonus of being upgraded to Business Class from Economy Class between Hong Kong and Cairns. There was multiple choice in flight entertainment that was a little better than most of the other flights I've done elsewhere. The biggest problem with the flights were that they were just so damn long, London Heathrow to Hong Kong was 12hours and Hong Kong to Cairns was 9hours with a 6hour lay over in Hong Kong airport. If that wasn't bad enough it was even longer coming back with 12 hours Sydney to Hong Kong and 13 hours! From Hong Kong to London Heathrow. Due to a late departure from Sydney I basically had to get off one aircraft in Hong Kong and dash to other end of the airport and get straight on another with only about 20minutes respite between the two.

Internal flights were with Qantas and were okay though I had difficulty at Cairns when trying to get my camera kit on as hand luggage as it was too heavy. The girl on the desk seemed to have an IQ of around 10 points as she didn't seem to have the ability to work out that if I took the one item still in the camera bag out, i.e. the camera/lens, then there would be nothing left in the bag at all and would still be too heavy! I was told that I would still need to take something out, how can I take something else out of the bag when there would be nothing left in it.... I eventually got around the problem but it was aggro that I could have done with out. I half expected the Brisbane to Sydney flight to have the same issue but didn't weigh my bag there?

Driving was pretty easy, on the left with a right hand drive car. Away from the larger cities traffic lights didn't exist and I found junctions, for the majority, easy enough to get your head around after half a days driving. Road conditions were generally okay though there were plenty of road works that didn't seem to be making much progress in improvements. The road out to Georgetown got progressively narrower, down to one lane at one point, and at times also dirt track. At no point was there any problem of potholes or significant delays. It is important to keep to the speed limits as Aussie Police are hot on ticketing speeders though I rarely saw any police on the highways.

The hire vehicle was with Brits www.britz.com.au and was reliable throughout the trip. It didn't have much acceleration but once it got going it was fine. It also double as a bed with the



back folding down into a mattress. This sized vehicle was ideal as some of the birding was along tracks that would have been unsuitable for any bigger sleeper vans.

Don't under estimate the distances between sites as they can be deceptively long. Most are only a few hours but the longest was out to Georgetown from Atherton, which was 4hours, and Sydney to Leeton, which was 7hours. There are numerous petrol stations but if your running low fill up at the next opportunity.

Accommodation:

The vast majority of the time I was sleeping in the hire van which was easy enough to set up each evening and saved a lot of cash as motels and cabins at caravan parks were expensive. At the caravan parks all that I needed was an unpowered site though some parks only had powered. The cost for each site varied from the ultra cheap, AUS\$7 (£3.50) at Georgetown to more expensive at Sydney AUS\$40 (£19). In essence with this vehicle I was paying to simply park it and use the facilities on site, such as the showers, washing and cooking utilities. This was opposed to paying up to AUS\$80 (£40) at some caravan parks for a standard cabin. This method proved to be a considerable money saver. I spent only four nights in an actual bed during the whole trip, Cassowary House AUS\$65 B&B, Red Mill House AUS\$130, O'Reilly's AUS\$109 and Cairns Caravan Park cabin AUS\$60. Red Mill was by far and away the most expensive but it was worth it despite there not being any Little Kingfisher in the pond there. The owners are extremely helpful and friendly and can supply all sorts of birding tips.

Eating and Drinking:

Apart from the B&B breakfasts at Cassowary House and Red Mill I only had a few decent meals the whole trip. There is a decent restaurant just up the road from Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge, which is basically the only place you will get something to eat unless you take it with you. Note that the Australians drench their chips/fries in salt, they don't ask do you want salt you just get it, it seems to be a default setting for Aussies. Do you want chips with your salt. Always ask from outset that, if you don't want salt or if you want to put it on yourself so you have the right amount, that you say so when you order.

Apart from the odd meal I basically lived on fast food crap, McDonalds, KFC that sort of thing though I did live on packets of biscuits when out at Georgetown as I was out birding all day and there were limited open places to eat when I got back to town.

If staying at O'Reilly's make sure you make a note of the food times as they change depending on which day of the week it is and whether it will be in the bar upstairs or in the café. I missed an evening meal one night as the kitchen closed at 7.30pm and I arrived after a spotlighting session at 7.38pm. There is the main restaurant which is open later here but it is expensive.

So basically it was packets of crisps, lots and lots of soft drinks to keep the fluids up, biscuits and petrol station snacks for 3 weeks. There are plenty of places to get food but that would have interrupted birding time.

Annoyances:

Easy, flies. The Aussie flies were a bloody nightmare. These were not biting flies just more like small Flies that were just so persistent in wanting to land on your face, in your ears, up your nose that even when batted away they were back in less than a second trying to land on the exact same place time and time again. The worst places were the heath at Wattamolla in Royal National Park, where they were so bad they actually drove me away from the place, Five Bough Swamp and the lower end of Capertee Valley. Bug repellent just didn't work on these bastards.

There was actually little other insect problems apart from one tick that managed to find its way onto the top of my leg when I was at the caravan park near O'Reilly's one night. Dangerous animals were just not seen, no poisonous spiders that could kill you just by staring at you, not a single snake or crocodile. I did keep my distance from the mangrove edges when looking for Beach Stone Curlews as these are favoured areas for 'Salties' but none were ever seen.

Disappointments and frustrations:

The biggest was probably the boat trip out to Michaelmas Cay. The Cay itself and its tern colonies was amazing and was not the actual problem it was the operator, Passions. I had been booked onto this boat as it was one of only a handful that visited the Cay thus making it birder accessible. It wasn't until we were actually underway that we were informed that we would not be visiting the Cay first but would instead be visiting a deep-water reef instead. This meant that we would get limited time on the bird rich beach later in the afternoon when the light was not as good. At the deep water reef I attempted to snorkel, something that I've not done before but being as there was quite a swell this turned out to be a disaster I got out of the water after less than 10minutes of near drowning. Perhaps over exaggerated but the whole experience was supremely disappointing for me.

When we eventually visited the Cay, after lunch, the sun was too high which made getting correctly exposed photos against a glaring washed out sand was extremely difficult. It also didn't help that the sun had moved round since the morning. There were several other boats present that had been there all day and as such the people on the beach had pushed the roosting Crested and Lesser Crested Terns to the spit round the corner which was no visible. The bay here was shallow and calm and produced better snorkelling possibilities for those not too capable in the water. I, and some other birders, were extremely frustrated when after only 40 minutes or so we had to return to the main boat as it was time to leave. We had failed to locate any Bridled Terns or frigates as there simply wasn't enough time. We all looked at each other in bewilderment when we got called to leave.

Apart from the above the other disappointments were the amount of time it took to get Cassowary, nearly three days, I lost two days from other birding locations, such as Georgetown, in trying to get this bird. I wish I had really known about Etty Bay before I went out there in the first place as it is perhaps the most reliable place to get them, probably better than at Cassowary House, where I didn't get them.

Highlights:

Despite this trip not being one of my favourites, good things were seen but didn't ring my bell as it were, there were some stand out moments. The first wow bird was the simply stunning Lovely Fairy-wrens along the Cairns Airport Mangrove Boardwalk on the first day. The rescue Galah at Granite gorge that sat on my shoulder purring in my ear like a cat and the feeding of the amazingly cute Rock Wallabies also here, both these are probably the most resounding highs of the trip.

There are of course other individual birds that were amazing, such as the displaying Australian Bustard, both the frogmouths, the Beach Stone Curlew, the Spinifex Pigeons etc these were probably outdone by the mammals, such as the first Platypus that swam right past us in beam of the spotlight, so close we could see it feeding at the bottom



of the stream in crystal clear water, amazing and the various Kangaroos and wallabies and Koala that I found after some searching often out done the birding.

The most favourite birding were locations were in the drier 'interior' with Georgetown Cumberland Dam in North Queensland and Binya State Forest in New South Wales being head and shoulders above everything else. The wader experience along Cairns Esplanade was also high up on the entertainment value.

In reflection:

In review of the trip now I'm back how would I rate it compared with other birding destinations. Given the choice again I probably should have gone with one of my other options, such as South Africa or Argentina. Both of these are high on my want to visit destinations whereas Australia was more of a got to go there sometime but never enthusiastic about it. There 'are' better birding destinations out there. Hindsight is a beautiful thing. However that said there were some stunning birds, the Fairy-wrens being particularly noteworthy, and of course the classic animals that everyone should see in the wild, Kangaroos, Platypus and Koala.

It was a good trip but not one that makes me want to go back again soon whereas places such as Africa, Asia and both North and South America are all beckoning returns visits.

Day to Day account

Day 1: 9th November, Sunday

Well finally made it. Mostly passing through airport security and into Australia was pretty straightforward and easy enough and out into the humidity of Cairns. Grabbed a Taxi to the Britz vehicle hire depot where the temperature at 9am was already making me sweat through my clothes. There were numerous Rainbow Lorikeets, White-rumped Swiftlets and Magpie-larks outside whilst the first bird seen of the trip was the introduced Common Myna. After picking the vehicle up I negotiated the roads to the Esplanade where I soon found that the north end had free parking whilst that closer to Cairns was pay and display, I chose the former. The grass between the road and the foreshore held Masked Lapwings and Magpie-larks in numbers as well as several Willie Wagtails and a nearby garden had a Helmeted Friarbird and a Spotted Dove.

The tide was out quite a way but I was still able to pick out a few distant birds, namely Silver Gulls, Pied Oystercatcher, a Caspian Tern, a Royal Spoonbill, an Eastern Curlew, a Great Egret or two, a Striated Heron and several Gull-billed Terns as well as a few distant waders to far to ID. The grass by the car had many delightful and common Peaceful Doves.

So after a couple of hours here I then went to Centenary Lakes which was nice with a slow progression of species seen, most easy enough to identify, some requiring some checking of the field guide. I

initially drove on the south side before returning to walk in from the Botanical Garden side. Here there were boardwalks and trails through the rainforest and mangroves and around a large lake which produced four Torresian/Pied Imperial Pigeons, the already common Peaceful Doves, single Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, multiple Brush Turkeys and Orange-footed Scrubfowl, a Purple Swamphen, first decent look of a Rainbow Lorikeet, a nice and only one of the trip Nankeen Night Heron, five Brown-backed Honeyeaters including one bathing, a male Yellow-billed sunbird, a high circling Black-



necked Stork, Dusky Moorhens (very very similar to our Moorhens), a Spotted Dove, a Welcome Swallow, a Metallic Starling, a presumed (based on the upperpart tone and level of orange below) female Satin Flycatcher, a couple of Spangled Drongos, a couple of Helmeted Friarbirds, White-rumped Swiftlets, 4 Rainbow Bee-eaters, a flock of Pacific Ducks, a Black Butcherbird catching large bugs on the ground and a stunning large Blue butterfly species. Not a bad haul in a few hours but it was slow at times.

I went to the local caravan park and secured a site for the night and returned to the Esplanade where the tide was coming in but it was now mid afternoon and very hot and with an increase in people using the front. However there was an increase in waders and birds in general with a Greenshank or two, a Sacred Kingfisher showing well out on the mud, five Whimbrels which appeared to include both European and Hudsonian forms?, two Pied Oystercatchers, an Australian Pelican, a few Red-necked Stints, 3 Grey-tailed Tattlers, a Little Egret, a gathering of Royal Spoonbills, two White-faced Herons, a good showing of Red-capped Plovers, especially once the tide was right in, Great White Egrets, a couple of Eastern Curlews, four Bar-tailed Godwits and a Marsh Sandpiper.

Once the tide was up I went to the Mangrove Boardwalk along the airport drive and it was a stark contrast as birds suddenly became very difficult to find. There were some Hairstreak type butterflies which I spent some time trying to get shots of whilst birds were limited to a Yellow-bellied Sunbird, a Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, a Black Butcherbird and the first wow bird of the trip. Initially I heard some squeaking coming from some low Mangroves and on pishing out popped a truly stunning Lovely Fairy-wren. It and the female were rather elusive and were not ever going to be photographed but they were stunning to see.

So came the first night sleeping in the back of the van which proved to be better than expected.

Day 2: 10th November, Monday

Awoke early this morning to pack up the van before heading towards the cruise terminal and in the process added a few birds to the list with four Figbirds, several White Ibis, Willie Wagtails and Pied Imperial Pigeons, a Double-eyed Fig Parrot shot over, two Rainbow Bee-eaters, a Yellow-spotted Honeyeater and a White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike. However things began to go downhill when I couldn't get the car started, flat battery caused by the in-car cooler box which resulted me in calling out the RACQ who to their credit arrived quickly. This meant I was rushed to get to the terminal for the boat.

The boat was a large catamaran with many people, including a couple of birders. It was only after we had departed that we were informed that we would be doing Michaelmas Cay in the afternoon instead of the morning and would be spending much of the day at a deep-water reef. On the sailing out there were two large Pipefish in the harbour, 12+ Little Terns, 2 each of Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns, several Crested Terns and four Brown Boobies.

At the Reef I attempted snorkelling, something I've not done before as I'm not one for getting into the water and it turned out to be a disaster as it was too rough so I was wet for only a short time, a major disappointment but something that should have been attempted at the Cay for those beginners rather than deep water so a fault of the operator. After lunch we got to the Cay which was covered in thousands of Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies, at mere feet away, cracking. There were smaller numbers of Lesser and Greater Crested Terns and a couple of Brown Boobies but we only had about 40 minutes here maximum before we had to return to the boat which was far too short a time, we hadn't found Bridled Tern



yet and the photos of the crested terns were not as good as I would have liked as I had not concentrated on them. Another failing of the operator. We should have been here in the morning as expected as we would have had better light, not the harsh light of mid afternoon and it would have been in a better position. So in essence I would not recommend Passions for visiting Michaelmas Cay, should stay with Seastar.

On return to dry land at about 5pm I headed off to Cassowary House at Karunda which took about an hour and a half which was dark on arrival. After dinner I headed to the town to get Bush Thick-knee on the list with two seen under streetlights.

Day 3: 11th November, Tuesday

So the 'Big Bird Day'. Whilst waiting for the main event to wander into the grounds I went birding from dawn which was a slow affair with long gaps between birds. Highlights were a very fine Pied Monarch along the approach track mid afternoon, one of two today, a Rufous Fantail, 8+ fly over Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, 5+ Pale Yellow Robins, a Varied Triller, a Little Shrike Thrush which took honours of dullest bird of the trip, Yellow-spotted, Graceful and Macleay's Honeyeaters, male Yellow-bellied Sunbird, Silveryeyes, both male and female Victoria Riflebirds though the views of these weren't great, 2 good Red-necked Crakes, a Dusky Rat Kangaroo beneath the dining area, an Emerald Dove and a Black Butcherbird whilst there several Brush Turkeys and Orange-footed Scrubfowl. A Bird-wing Butterfly was a large and stunning butterfly. By 3.30pm the big fella had not made an appearance and it would seem that he had not appeared yesterday at all and that nearby works on a road may have disturbed the birds pattern. I had a to be at Red Mill Lodge at Daintree in the evening which was a 2 hour drive so I had left it as long as I could but I had to leave rather dejectedly.



I headed north picking up birds on the way a small flock of Magpie Geese over the road, Figbirds, Cattle Egrets in roadside fields and White-breasted Wood Swallows being quite numerous. I made a detour at Wonga Beach though with the tide right in there was no sign of any Beach Thick-knees though there were a number of Straw-necked Ibis and four Bush Thick-knees in nearby fields as well as Rainbow Bee-eaters and some Figbirds. Further north I passed a fish farm so I done a quick u-turn to have a quick look which turned into about 20 minutes as there was a fair amount of birds on one of the drained pools where there was nine Radjah Shelducks, two Common Sandpipers, 33 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, three Black-fronted Dotterels and a Brahminy Kite over the road nearby.

I eventually arrived at Red Mill in the dark. It was a pleasant place and located very close to the jetty for the river cruise the following day.

Day 4: 12th November, Wednesday

This was perhaps the best birding day so far, at least the morning was. I and only two others were the only passengers on the boat today where we were fortunate enough to pick up a number of the target species. There was a Bar-shouldered Dove in the town on the walk to the jetty and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were overhead along with many White-rumped Swiftlets.

The river trip was excellent birding either end of the river. An Azure Kingfisher shot past just be we set off and there were numerous commoner species present however during the trip the highlights were the black Bittern, two Great-billed Herons in one tree, three Yellow Orioles, three Bush-hens including a fighting duo, a Dollarbird, three Large-billed Gerydones (Jer-ridge-o-knee), a Cicadabird proving its name by sounding like its name sake, male and two female Shining Flycatchers and two Papuan Frogmouths on nests over the river, the second one a bit more visible than the first. An enjoyable river cruise with some quality birds seen.

Back on land I spent half an hour photographing Rainbow Lorikeets in a stunning red tree before heading back for breakfast. After getting some information on birds north of the river I set off with a side visit to look for Fairy-wrens but failed but did have a flock of 40+ White-rumped Swiftlets and a Black Kite.

I eventually reached the boardwalk at Jindalba where there had been a male Cassowary with two chicks on a regular basis but despite spending a good many hours here in the heat I failed to yet again see this species which was now beginning to piss me off. Of the other birds present, of which there were few, Buff-breasted Paradise kingfisher was by far and away the best.

Mid afternoon I called it a day and headed south to Wonga Beach to get there before the incoming tide. Following directions given at Red Mill I pulled up and looked out onto the beach and bingo, straight away a Beach Stone Curlew straight out. I dashed back to the car and grabbed the camera and set about getting photos of it.

This initially proved difficult as the only person on the beach for miles made a beeline for the only bird on the beach despite being able to see what I was trying to do. This resulted in pushing the bird further and further away until it had moved probably a mile with me still trying to play catch up. The beach walker was clearly oblivious to what she was doing and she could easily have moved away from the tide line for the sake of 20 yards but did she, did she f**k. still



eventually the bird had enough and flew back past her and I was now able to carefully approach the bird and I spent a good half hour with the cracker, my first real target bird nailed.

On the road again and a Laughing Kookaburra was on roadside wires as were three Forest Kingfishers and 12+ Black Kites were over fields a petrol station. I now had a long drive towards Julatten but as I reach Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge early I drove onto Mary Farms in search of bustards. The habitat quickly became drier and there were a couple of forest fires on the hills. On arrival at Mary Farms an Agile Wallaby was seen in the heat haze and female Australian Bustard crossed the track in front of me where it showed well for the next 30minutes. On the drive back along the road I found a displaying male in a roadside field which was absolutely stunning though a little distant for the camera. With some careful approach I reduced the distance to this corker to about 20-30metres and I was able to get some fantastic shots of the bird which attracted a female and another male came in further over. This was excellent. Further along the road back towards the main road was another displaying male and a Blue-faced honeyeater flew over.

Back along the road were four Dollarbirds, a couple of Whistling Kites and several Torresian Crows.

At Kingfisher Park I joined an evening spotlighting session which was very successful with two Masked Owls being noted, an Australian Owlet-nightjar, a Spectacled Fly-fox, Long-nosed Bandicoot, White-tailed Rat and a Green Ringtail Possum whilst the trip highlight so far came at the creek when a Platypus put on a show in the spotlight. This animal appeared from the right and swam right below us and was watched feeding in the crystal clear water, this really was a magic moment.

Day 5: 13th November, Thursday

Began the morning looking for the Owlet-nightjar at its hole but he wasn't showing so had an hour or so around the grounds of the lodge grounds. Honeyeaters were represented by Macleay's, Yellow-spotted, Graceful, Dusky, Brown, Yellow and Yellow-faced. Many of the now commoner and familiar birds were present but unusual birds included a fine Forest Kingfisher, three Dollarbirds, three Spectacled Monarchs, two responsive Noisy Pittas, a Little Shrike Thrush, Pale Yellow Robin, a Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, a Large-billed Gerygone, a Red-browed Finch, two Scaly-breasted Parakeets and a Papuan Frogmouth on a nest. Out the back and away from the forested area were a Whistling Kite, a brief Buff-breasted Rail, Little Black Cormorants, a couple of huge and very impressive Channel-billed Cuckoos, an Agile Wallaby and a couple of Golden-headed Cisticolas. By late morning it was heating up so a revisit to the Owlet-nightjar was worthwhile as he was sat at the entrance to his roost hole for about 5 minutes, excellent scope views.

Mt. Lewis was my next destination just a few miles up the road. The winding road lead up the hill to 'cooler' temperatures though this cool disappeared as the day wore on. The road up produced Pale-yellow Robins and three Bridled Honeyeaters whilst a White-headed Pigeon was at the parking area. Also right here were a pair of Golden Whistlers, a Mountain Thornbill and two Grey Fantails. Birding improved once I eventually got onto the birding track and it took sometime to go even 150 metres due

to the quality of birds present, Grey-headed Robins, three Bowers Shrike Thrush, a Spotted Catbird and six Chowchillas right besides the path. From there on though it became a little harder through the forest with six Topknot Pigeons, a Yellow-throated and a couple of Atherton Scrubwrens, another Golden Whistler and a Rufous Fantail. On the walk back to the car I came across a Tooth-billed Catbird lek though the bird was initially elusive it did show well whilst an Eastern Whipbird was very briefly seen.



It was now very hot back at the car and I was not in the mood to look for Blue-faced Parrotfinch so I headed back to the main road. Back on the highway there was a White-necked Heron, which was surprisingly the only one of three during the trip, a White-faced Heron, 20+ Pacific Ducks.

I continued through to Mt. Molloy and found the cycle track where there were two active bowers of Great Bowerbirds. This was entertaining watching for an hour the activities of these birds with lots of displaying when visiting bowerbirds inspected the bower. Also around here were Blue-faced Honeyeaters, several Figbirds and a pair of Sunbirds.



Back towards Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge there was a brief Laughing Kookaburra on wires whilst a Black-necked Stork circled overhead.

Back at the lodge I chilled out for half an hour or so photographing Red-browed Finches, Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, Emerald and Bar-shouldered Doves that were coming to the bird feed and the water put out for them. Opposite then entrance gates was a field with nine Cattle Egrets and a couple of Straw-necked Ibis.

An evening spotlighting session on my own produced the Flying Fox, a couple of White-tailed Rats and remarkably the Platypus again in the creek at virtually the same time only this time I had it to myself/

Day 6: 14th November, Friday

Early start at Mt. Molloy looking for Red-shouldered Parrots and only succeeded in finding one fly over bird. The Great Bowerbirds were seen again more distantly from the far end, an Agile Wallaby was nearby and there were 8+ Red-shouldered Doves. As time was getting on I headed south towards Lake Mitchell where birding stepped up a little despite the sun already being high in the sky by 8am. The causeway had three Agile Wallabies and numerous Red-backed Fairy-wrens which really did their best to avoid being photographed, as did a couple of Leaden Flycatchers in the open woodland, though a couple later along the causeway were a little easier. There were plenty of waterbirds present with several Australian Pelicans, Intermediate Egrets, up to about 25+ Magpie Geese, several Great Egrets but a pair of Brolga Cranes were very good to see close to the causeway, shame about the increased heat haze now though. Green Pygmy geese were present in numbers, three Black Swans, many Little Pied Cormorants, ten or so Comb-crested Jacanas, three Australian Grebes, three Australian Darters, Glossy Ibis, Willie Wagtails, five Hardheads and a fly over, scatter everything immature White-bellied

Sea Eagle, shame it wasn't a Wedge-tailed. Still a very productive stop but I wanted to be at Mareeba Wetlands for 9am, which was about half hour away.



I ended up spending most of the day here. This was dry country with some of the now commoner species being noted along the road plus three Dollarbirds and a Blue-faced Honeyeater. It was really hot on arrival at the visitor centre at 9.30am. I spoke to the staff here and decided to wait around for a while and see if I could get out with the local guide, Chook, to see if I could get Black-throated Finch. In the meantime the pair of Red-backed Fairy-wrens from the main porch were entertaining but three Emu's out front required the smaller lens to come out. Great birds that lingered for about 20 minutes at the birdbath before heading back out into the bush.

Chook agreed to go out for a couple of hours and we soon racked up a large number of birds as the temperature went up, a couple of Double-collared Finches and Lemon-bellied Flycatcher were by the centre but the bush produced Rufous Whistlers, White-bellied and black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a male White-winged Triller, a black-backed form of Brown Treecreeper, a Little Friarbirds, 5+ in flight only Brown Quails, a flock of Grey-crowned Babblers and a couple Forest Kingfishers. The wetlands had 20+ Brolgas shimmering in the distance, a White-faced Heron, Glossy Ibis, four Whiskered Terns, Black-winged Stilts, Dusky Moorhen, several duck species including whilst the edge of the forest here produced the wanted Black-throated Finch with at least 12 or more coming down to drink with Great Bowerbird, Black Kite and Brown Honeyeater in or around the bush.

I decided to hang around for the 3pm boat trip around the main lake so I spent this time photographing Double-collared Finches, Yellow Honeyeater, a pair of Green Pygmy Geese and some dragonflies on the small pool nearby.

The boat ride was not species heavy but it did allow me to get some excellent images of Comb-crested Jacana and Green Pygmy Geese at point blank range whilst a dozen Wandering Whistling Ducks, a Hardhead, a Black Swan and some Magpie Geese were also present. An Australian Darter showed very well on a dead tree at close range allowing me to get some very good images. Pleasant relaxing hour-long cruise.

The reserve approach track on the way out had 10+ Grey Kangaroos, two Squatter Pigeons, a very good Pheasant Coucal, male Common Koel, an Olive-backed Oriole and some Scaly-breasted Parakeets.

At Mareeba I passed a lot of Kangaroos in a field whilst a flooded field had stacks of all three Ibis and Cattle Egrets. My target here was the Golf Course where I found a couple of Grey Kangaroos which I could approach to fairly closely. There were quite a few birds here to with a Channel-billed Cuckoo being mobbed, five Grey-crowned Babblers, 100+ Plumed Whistling Ducks, three Radjah Shelducks and four Australian Wood Ducks on the treatment lagoons on the outskirts of the far end of the greens. Australian Magpies were abundant as were Rainbow Lorikeets though two Crested Pigeons were new.

I then had to complete the drive to the caravan park at Lake Eacham in the dark which was a little tricky to find but was in a prime position for the following day.

Day 7: 15th November, Saturday

As was the norm by now it was an early rise and birding soon after first light and which was usually the case birding activity really didn't get going for a least another hour after it was light. I began birding this morning around the picnic area car park and really didn't get away from here for at least a few hours. On the drive here I passed two Red-legged Padamelons on the roadside and a Brush Turkey. On the lake there were 15 Great Crested Grebes, which proved to be the only ones of the trip. Around the car park for the next few hours it was busy with birds with three Mistletoebirds, three Brown Cuckoo-doves, Welcome Swallows, two Golden Whistlers, a Red-browed Finch, a Black-faced Monarch, a male Victoria's Riflebird on the high snag as well as two visiting females, a Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Silvereye, a Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, seven Topknot Pigeons and four smart looking Wompoo Fruit-pigeons, a Double-toothed Catbird, a pair of Forest Kingfishers, two Barred Cuckoo-shrikes, a lone Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, two heard Spotted Catbirds, a brief Eastern Spinebill, a lone King Parrot, a pale Accipiter that went over proved to be a Grey Goshawk and number of the commoner and widespread species were also present. Not bad at all. On the drive out I passed a field full of Straw-necked and White Ibis.

In the small town of Yungaburra I found a Laughing Kookaburra being mobbed by a Willie Wagtail on a telephone wire whilst another Grey Goshawk, or the same?, done a fly by. There was a White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, two Purple Gallinules and a Grey Kangaroo by the Cemetery. I had to do a little bit of the general touristy bit with a visit to the Curtain Fig Tree a short distance away which was actually rather impressive and there were still birds here with both Spectacled and Pied Monarchs, Large-billed and Brown Geryones.

I had the previous day at Mareeba Swamp been given gen on a trail in Yungaburra of a trail along the stream where Tree Kangaroos could be found so I set off along the Peterson Creek Track in this quest. It was now hot but a few birds were still active with a King Parrot near where I parked up, Brown Gerygone, a Pied Currawong, a Red-legged Padamelon and a Dollarbird. It was on the return walk that I found a curled up fast asleep Tree Kangaroo. It was situated high up in a large tree and in such a position that I would not have seen I from the other side. I lingered for half an hour in the hope it may wake up and have a stretch or something but no luck what so ever. I returned to the suspension bridge where there was a brief Platypus, Rufous Fantails, Atherton Scrubwren, Little Shrike Thrush, Red-browed Finch, 5+ Chestnut-breasted Mannikins and a White-rumped Swiftlet.

The previous evening I had picked up a leaflet about a place called Granite Gorge which was back along the road towards Mareeba where there are Rock Wallabies. I was interested in seeing these so I made the effort and I'm sure glad I did as it produced perhaps the highlight of the whole trip. The road



from the main highway had numerous birds with pick of the bunch being Laughing Kookaburra, Black and Whistling Kites, Pied Currawong, 15 Cranes which all seemed to be Sarus, Glossy and Straw-necked Ibis, White-faced Heron, a couple of Grey Kangaroos, Rainbow Bee-eater and a Pale-headed Rosella.

At the visitor centre it took some time before I even ventured down the where the Wallabies are as I got distracted by the female and three well grown chicks of Tawny Frogmouth which were nesting just about

the main approach track, kindly pointed out by the site owner. I spent sometime photographing these guys. I was then introduced to a very lovely female Galah who had been a rescue bird. She sat on my shoulder purring in my ear and nudging herself against me as she was pleased to meet someone new. It was remarkable and I wanted to take her home with me. She just loved to be stroked like a cat, fantastic. Anyway once I could drag myself away I grabbed a bag of feed and went to the rocks where it was by now very hot indeed and almost immediately I was joined by a female Rock Wallaby and her Joey peaking out of her pouch. She and soon others, were feeding from the hand, it was again a fantastic experience and I never really got to the water hole for any birding. There were however a scattering of birds around the parking area with Lemon-bellied Flycatchers and Brown and Yellow Honeyeaters being noted. The drive back to the main highway had a fly past Blue-winged Kookaburra which promptly disappeared which was a shame as it was the only one of the trip. There was also the first Nankeen Kestrel and a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike but best of all were the cranes again present in the well watered fields at the junction at Chewko Road. There were birds in the fields but a flock of five in flight proved to be two Sarus and three Brolgas and they came right overhead. This sight is well worth checking for Cranes at this time of year as they seemed to favour the area.

Back on the main highway there were a few roadside Currawongs and a fly over Collared Sparrowhawk whilst on the way to Hasties Swamp. This is not really a swamp but a lake with reedy fringes and the evening light was not in the best position, I suspected that the morning would be better. However from the hide there was a White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, Coots, Dusky Moorhens, many Grey Teals and Pacific Ducks, hundreds of Plumed and Wandering Whistling Ducks and Magpie Geese, probably five Australian Pelicans, several egret species, Australian Grebes, Swampheens, Willie Wagtails and Darters. An immature/sub-adult Fish Eagle panicked all the birds for a short time whilst the fields the other side of the approach track has two Nankeen Kestrels, 15+ Kites and a pair of Swamp Harriers plus 40 or more distant cranes. All in all a productive evening.

I secured a spot at the Atherton Caravan Park, where there was a Black Wallaby on the grass nearby as well as Willie Wagtails and Pale-yellow Robin but it was a short visit as I needed to be at Yungaburra for an evening spotlight session with a local guide. On the way House Sparrows were seen in Atherton and I ended up have a very pleasant beer at the pub in Yungaburra whilst waiting for it to get dark.

After meeting up with the guide and the others taking part we went to a private area of forest and then really struggled to get much to start with though we ended up with eight Coppery Brush-tail Possums, a Green Ringtail Possum and roosting group of four Brown Gerygones. We failed to find any Tree Kangaroos which was the whole reason I went on this trip so I tried spotlighting on Thomas Road, which is on the right when heading back towards Atherton. There is good forest edges here but I could not find the Kangaroos here either though they are present. Apart from a fair number of Coppery Brush-tail Possums it wasn't a wasted trip as I was able to call in a showing Lesser Sooty Owl which was worth the effort in it self. So failure and success in equal measure. It was now gone 10pm so it turned out to be a late one by recent standards. Back to the Caravan Park and sleep.

Day 8: 16th November, Sunday

Morning returned to Hasties Swamp proved that my assumption yesterday was correct and the light was much better. There were a lot of birds along the approach track to the hide with 70+ White-rumped Swiftlets, 500+ Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, two singing Golden-headed Cisticolas and a couple of White-breasted Wood-swallows. There was pretty much the same species from the hide as yesterday though in better light with hundreds of whistling ducks and Magpie Geese with several light flights arriving of the latter. In addition to yesterday's species there was an adult White-bellied Sea Eagle, which perched up in a tree on the far side of the lake, Royal spoonbill, six Black-necked Stilts, Grey Teals, five Little Black Cormorants (more than yesterday), two Red-kneed Dotterels on the far side whilst behind the hide was a Nankeen Kestrel hovering over the fields.

After a couple of hours and with an increase in people visiting I headed south towards Milla Milla Falls which produced numerous wildfowl in flooded areas, Whistling Ducks, Magpie Geese etc whilst 11 Cranes were also noted.

On the way I stopped off at Tizali Lakes as this was reportedly a great place for Platypus. The information I had been given was correct and for \$10AUS I was able to spend some time watching and photographing several Platypus as close range, superb. Birds here included a brief wedge-tailed Eagle, adult and juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagles, a couple of Currawongs, three Varied Trillers, three black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a female Sunbird, 50+ Chestnut-breasted Mannikins by the car park and several commoner species.

Milla Milla Falls itself was flowing but not a huge gushing cascade that would be expected in the wet season. There were few birds here though there were a few bright blue dragonflies.

After getting some supplies I was now on the road for the long drive west to the Outback at Georgetown. The habitat was noted to change significantly the further west I went until there was not much more than open scrubland. On the way there were a few commoner species noted with two Nankeen Kestrels and Torresian Crows seen. I was keeping an eye on the temperature gage in the car as I went and by mid afternoon when I reach Georgetown it was 39degrees Celsius, melting. The drive took about four hours.

I located the caravan park that had a lot of birds present with my first wild Galahs. There was a nesting pair of Tawny Frogmouths right next to the 'office' whilst the grounds had five Crested Pigeons, four Apostlebirds, five Pale-headed Lorikeets, a Great Bowerbird, several Blue-faced Honeyeaters, a couple of really showy Rainbow Bee-eaters on the roadside wires, Rainbow Lorikeets, a Bar-shouldered Dove and a Little Friarbird. Not a bad tally really.

After a stock up at the garage headed further west along the road towards Cumberland Dam picking up a Brown Falcon on wires, Whistling Kites, three Wedge-tailed Eagles, five Apostlebirds, a Squatter Pigeon and three Red-backed Kingfishers.

Cumberland Dam is easily found, just look for the obvious chimney on the left, where there are two waterholes, both of which had high birds numbers. I firstly looked at the on the right as you drive in before going over to the larger one past the Chimney.



As usual there were a lot of now common and familiar species present though perhaps more interesting were the Cotton Pygmy and Green Pygmy Geese, a Hardhead, a Masked Wood-swallow, a Little Friarbird, Plumed Whistling Ducks, a host of Rufous-throated Honeyeaters, Australian Grebes, a couple of Black-throated Finches, four Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Blue-faced Honeyeaters whilst the larger of the two waterholes had Fairy Martins, male White-winged Triller, Comb-crested Jacana, six Galahs, six Black-fronted Dotterels, Rainbow Bee-eaters, a very fine fly by male Spotted Harrier, eight Double-collared Finches, a single Zebra Finch and numerous tiny Diamond Doves. As the sun was now going down the flies came out to play and it soon became an ordeal coping with these persistent buggers so I headed back to town. Along the road were a couple of Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

Not a bad day

Day 9: 17th November, Monday

This morning was to prove to be one of the most rewarding of the entire trip, certainly it was one of my most enjoyable. Early start as usual saw two Red-winged Parrots over the highway on the way to the Dam. Also along this drive were three Grey Kangaroos, Squatter Pigeons, Diamond Doves, a Nankeen kestrel, Crows, Kites and five Pale-headed Rosella's.

The waterholes themselves had pretty much the same species as yesterday but included a fly over flock of 12 or more Budgerigars, a Dollarbird, White-faced Heron and four Red-backed Kingfishers. After half hour I drove the Green Hills dirt track sign posted just past the dam chimney and into the dry Outback and this birding was superb. It was a case of stop start for miles as there were so many birds to see. Five Black-faced Wood-swallows, a Little Friarbird, several Black-throated Finches, numerous Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a Brown Honeyeater, many many Apostlebirds, a lot of Yellow-throated Miners, two White-winged Trillers, a flock of Grey-crowned Babblers, a flock of several hundred Galahs which I have decided is bird of the trip. They are just fantastic, their slow lazy flight reminiscent of a



pratincole, excellent. Three Pied Butcherbirds, two Brown Falcons, six Banded Honeyeaters, four Singing Bushlarks, two Brown Treecreepers, three Weebills, a fine soaring overhead Wedge-tailed Eagle, a Nankeen Kestrel and two stunning Spinifex Pigeons. This last species appeared on the rights right next to the car shortly after I had finished photographing a White-winged Triller in the bush just beyond and they showed exceptionally well for over half an hour. Superb.

By 11am it was roasting hot with bird activity dropping off rapidly so I decided that with such a good morning under the belt I should return to the coast and try and get Cassowary before it was too late. This was a shame as I would have liked to have stayed longer in this area but as I had failed on two days for the big one I was slightly behind in my schedule. The road back to the caravan park produced a Ground cuckoo-shrike whilst the Tawny Frogmouth distracted me even further before I eventually dragged myself away and got back on the road for the long drive back to Karunda. There was little noted along the long drive apart from a Squatter Pigeon, perhaps Little Crows though likely to be Torresian Crows and an Australia Raven whilst at the Mareeba/Karunda road junction I found eight huge Red-tailed Black Cockatoos sat perched in a tree. A Brown Goshawk flew over the road near Karunda.

Back at Cassowary House I found that there had been no sign of any birds since the day I left but given new information on Etty Bay two hours to the south near Innisfail I decided to give it a go so even more time sat in the car.

I arrived just gone 7pm and just went to bed. Long driving day

Day 10: 18th November, Tuesday

Up early and searching for the big fellas but again no success though there was a new bird in the form of an Eastern Reef Egret whilst a Laughing Kookaburra showed well. The bay itself is picturesque. At 8am I had that sinking feeling so decided to go to the species stronghold of Mission Beach passing a Latham's Snipe on the Etty Bay road on the way out.

At Mission Beach there were plenty of signs warning of Cassowaries crossing and I walked some of the trails and tried many usual places without any luck, saw lots of droppings proving that they were around but it was now becoming very frustrating as I found I was spending far too much time on this one bird rather than doing the other things I wanted to. However from walking the trails an Azure Kingfisher was seen well whilst some Robber Flies along another were huge and looked very mean.



I stopped at the visitor centre in Mission Beach to learn that there had been one of the big fellas along the roadside a mere 15 minutes ago so given the directions I set off to look for it and again failed to find it. This bird was beginning to really annoy me.

I ended up returning to Etty Bay and spoke to the Caravan Park owner who told me that three birds walked along the beach just after 8am, just after I left, to say I was not happy would be an understatement. However now armed with local knowledge of the birds' activities, they had a routine of appearing between dawn and 8amish and again between 4 and 6am and again at dusk.

So I grabbed a drink and sat on the bench opposite and waited, and waited and waited and had that sinking feeling again. 3.30pmish and a male and chick finally appeared walking across the road and to say that I shifted faster than a moving bullet would be no lie. Finally after three days I was watching a Cassowary along with a stripy chick. This bird was quite approachable, though not too close, and wandered right along the beach for about 20 minutes. It was strange that I had finally seen the bird, which was a relief, but I was not ecstatic, perhaps as it had given me so much grief getting it. It's not that it was not a good bird, it was, it's more like 'finally' rather than 'wow'.



So with the bird not done and dusted I set about getting showered and rested and like buses another one appeared. This was an even bigger male than the first and walked right past the van just I came out from having a shower and walked up the private path at the end of the caravan park.

Day 11: 19th November, Wednesday

I was up and out just as it was getting light and again like buses a Cassowary walked past the car and into the bushes before doing a U-turn and returned back the way it had come. Because of this I set myself up and the café and waited for it to reappear as it should do but then the heavens opened up and the rain came down, in torrents and continued for the next two hours which basically prevented the Cassowary from making its scheduled appearance. There were other birds to see in the rain, four Laughing Kookaburras on the wires, an Osprey at sea, two Whimbrels on the beach and a flyby Eastern Reef Egret, probably the same one from yesterday, and Pied imperial Pigeons. When the rain finally relented I decided to head back to Cairns but not before the Cassowary appeared in the caravan park again where it spent half an hour.

The road out of Etty Bay was damp as was were the four Bush Stone Curlews, eight Australian Pipits, a Pheasant Coucal, Spotted Doves, Cattle Egrets and Rainbow Bee-eaters.

It was a slow drive to Cairns in the drizzle but I arrived at the esplanade just as it stopping raining and with the tide just perfect. There were stacks of waders, far more than ten days ago. There was at least 500 Great Knots, many of which gathered right at the top of the tide line just feet away an hour or so later, five Red Knots, 200+ Red-necked Stints, three or more Grey-tailed Tattlers, five Terek Sandpipers, 20+ Bar-tailed and 10+ Black-tailed Godwits, 15+ Lesser and 10+ Greater Sandpipers, 2+ Red-capped Plovers, two Pied Oystercatchers, numerous Curlew Sandpipers and several Broad-billed Sandpipers. In addition to the waders there were Australian Pelicans, Royal Spoonbills, Lesser Crested and Little Terns and Striated Heron whilst on the inland side of the track were three Varied Honeyeaters and three Double-eyed Fig Parrots. The waders certainly kept me busy.



I ended back at the original campsite and decided on a cabin for the night to sort my kit out for the flight the next day. For what you get the price of the cabins are overpriced.

Day 12: 20th November, Thursday

Last morning in North Queensland so paid a visit to the Esplanade early before heading to the airport. The light isn't great here in the morning but I was still able to pick out a few bots and bobs, mostly the same species as yesterday, Great Knots, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Red-necked Stints etc but included new birds such as 30+ Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, a couple of Caspian Terns, a Gull-billed Tern, a showy Red-kneed Dotterel and a Beach Stone Curlew in the Mangroves. Not bad for an hour on the falling tide. Finally there was a Yellow Honeyeater at Britz office whilst I was waiting to return the car vehicle.

I had a little trouble with my hand luggage weight at the airport being too heavy and a check-in assistance with no IQ what so ever but eventually I got around the weight limit problem. The flight to Brisbane was a couple of hours which is a long time considering it was still in the same state.

After collecting my second Rookie van from Britz headed south to the Daisy Hill Koala refuge and added a couple of new species here, namely Square-tailed Kite and Noisy Miners whilst a Laughing Kookaburra showed well. It took a couple of hours to find a Koala but the one I did was doing what Koala's do, sleeping. There were also a couple of Kangaroos here. From here headed towards O'Reilly's passing some good-looking damp areas on the way. En-route there were many Wood Ducks, Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos whilst the last few K's passed through the forest where numerous Bassian Thrushes were on the road plus Satin Bowerbirds and Crimson Rosella's. I brief stop at the campground provided Red-necked Padamelons but with a major storm whipping up the area

I decided to stay at O'Reillys which was rather expensive but at least I didn't get soaked sorting the van out.

Day 13: 21st November, Friday

I nice clear and sunny morning now the storm had passed. Slow start as Crimson Rosella's, Red-necked Padamelons, female Satin Bowerbird and a Wonga Pigeon distracted me from getting to Duck Creek Road. There were at least ten Bassian Thrushes along the road, a couple of Northern Whipbirds, and a Grey Fantail on the way whilst the more open end of Duck Creek road produced Yellow-throated and White-browed Scrubwrens, a Black-faced Monarch, a Brush Cuckoo, 5+ Red-browed Finches, several Satin Bowerbirds and Yellow-spotted Honeyeater. Back along the track an Albert's Lyrebird went across the path and back towards the main road was a Brown Cuckoo-dove.

At 7am I walked the Border Track from O'Reilly's which had many inquisitive Yellow-browed Scrubwrens and a tame Yellow-spotted honeyeater. Both Grey and Rufous Fantails were seen well but pride of place goes to the Logrunner right by the path, which I unfortunately sodded up photographing. Other birds included a singing but not seen Lyrebird, a Golden Whistler, Eastern Yellow Robin, a Topknot Pigeon and a couple of White-headed Pigeons, a Brown Thornbill, Brown Gerygone and both Large-billed and White-browed Scrubwrens.

Back at O'Reilly's at around 10am the parrots were gathering with seven King Parrots and many Crimson Rosella's. Other birds were represented by at least five male and numerous female Regent Bowerbirds and fair few Satin Bowerbirds whilst stunning pair of Superb Fairy-wrens and a 1+ Eastern Spinebills put on a show.

After the parrot feeding, where you are used by the parrots as a convenient perch, even when you're nowhere near the feeding area I headed to Rock Python Track. Despite now being early afternoon and rather warm there was still a lot to find with a couple of Whipbirds seen being outnumbered by those being heard. There were also nine Logrunners, a cracking bird this one, a Bassian Thrush, Yellow-throated and White-browed Scrubwrens, a showy Fan-tailed Cuckoo, several Eastern Yellow Robins, responsive male and female Paradise Riflebirds which showed well, as did several Green Catbirds. There were also slightly commoner species present with Golden Whistler, Lewins Honeyeater, Rufous Fantail and Satin Bowerbird. This lot took some digging out but there are some quality birds in there.



I over-nighted at the Campground at only AUS\$5, a far cry from the expense of O'Reilly's plus there were Red-necked Padamelons and Wonga Pigeon.

Day 14: 22nd November, Saturday

Drove down Duck Creek Road again earlier this morning but there was less present than yesterday with three Brown Cuckoo-doves, only three Bassian Thrushes, two Wonga Pigeons and a Topknot Pigeon. Even the Border Track was quieter than yesterday, the same Lyrebird was heard but not seen but there was little found with three Green Catbirds, an Eastern Whipbird, a Wonga Pigeon and Eastern Yellow Robin. I was feeling somewhat unwell today with absolutely no energy so I returned to O'Reilly's for a little easy birding, photographing a Grey Shrike Thrush, the same Superb Fairy-wrens and Eastern Spinebills and King Parrots but decided that as I was getting worse I should head back to Brisbane sooner rather than later in case I couldn't manage it later. This involved several stops along the way for sleeping and a rest and the last of which was back at the Koala Centre. I didn't stray from the car birding but done some repacking before heading back to the city and to find a caravan park to over night at. This took a little while but by the time I found one I was actually feeling a lot better.

Day 15: 23rd November, Sunday

Had to hang around the caravan park for the office to open to return the gate key but in the meantime a family party of Wood Ducks passed the van, there were plenty of Noisy Miners and Rainbow Lorikeets, plus some smaller lorikeets which were to brief to ID, a single Common Koel and six Crested Pigeons.

At the airport there was no weighing of hand luggage this time round so I was straight through with the flight itself only an hour to Sydney. The drive from the Britz vehicle office to Royal National Park was busy despite being a Sunday and rather unpleasant through the city. On arrival at the park I booked a spot in the campsite and got some info and maps and headed off for the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive where I bumped into birders that had had a Lyrebird. I had no luck but there were still lots of birds present with Noisy Friarbirds, King Parrots, a Brush Wattlebird, Eastern Rosella's, three great Variegated Fairy-wrens, an Eastern Whipbird, an Eastern Yellow Robin, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, a Laughing Kookaburra, a male Satin Bowerbird and a Yellow-faced Honeyeater.

I then visited the coastal heath at Wattamolla where there were two White-bellied Sea Eagles, a Crested Pigeon, a Currawong, a Laughing Kookaburra and a Pale-headed Rosella. It was now getting a little late so I headed to the campsite at Bundeena where there were Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Little Corellas on the grass whilst the creek has Wood Ducks, Silver Gulls and White-faced Herons.

Day 16: 24th November, Monday

Didn't get away from the campsite as soon as I should have as I was distracted by photographing the cockatoos which were a few feet away. A number of Wood Ducks were also nearby. I was now more successful with a Superb Lyrebird back at Lady Carrington Drive where a singing male was seen very well. There were fewer birds in general this morning though with both Grey and Rufous Fantails and Eastern Yellow Robins pretty much the only other birds seen.

Return visit also to Wattamolla in improving weather where Variegated Fairy-wren showed well not far from the entrance to the coastal track from the top car park. Again numerous commoner species present but also a dozen or so New Holland Honeyeaters proved difficult to get close to, three Rock Warblers on the path were a bonus here, a Nankeen Kestrel and three Southern Emu Wrens were ultra skulkers.

There were a couple of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters and good Chestnut-rumped Heathwren briefly. The flies here made birding uncomfortable so not long after the heathwren I gave up and headed back to the car. The Bay car park had more Currawongs and a pair of Superb Fairy-wrens.



I spent an hour at the Wattle Track car parking area

photographing four Laughing Kookaburras, cockatoos and Corellas but I decided that as I had acquired the main target birds I would head off to Leeton, a long long drive west. This in fact took seven hours and the landscape changed considerably. On the drive west there was Collared Sparrowhawk over the road, my first European Starlings and a high over Little Eagle. As I passed through Yanco a Black-shouldered Kite was beside the road.

On arrival I gave Five Bough Swamp the briefest of visits, only walking to the first area of reeds as it was steadily getting dark. There were two Marsh Harriers, a Golden-headed Cisticola, four Australian Reed Warblers and many distant Marsh Terns. In the fields and gardens along the road were literally hundreds of Galahs which emphasised my favourite bird of the trip.

Stayed at a nearby Caravan Park where there were plenty of mosquitos early on but it was a good location.

Day 17: 25th November, Tuesday

Another day I was really looking forward to and the morning at least didn't disappoint. On the way to Binya State Forest I passed a Black-shouldered kite at Yenda and at least 20 White-winged Choughs. At the forest I located the Wattle Track Dam, which proved to be best area in the forest for birding that I found, and just settled down and watched as birds came and went. On arrival over the tricky cattle grid there was a flock of some 300 Wood-swallows with the vast majority being White-browed but there were at least a dozen Masked mixed in with them. These birds were feeding on the ground, in the trees and overhead. There were Apostlebirds, numerous White-winged Choughs, Noisy Friarbirds and a couple of Grey Kangaroos. Up till about 11am when I finally began to wander the forest visitors to the pool were at least half a dozen Red-rumped and two Mulga Parrots, five White-plumed, one or two Striped, two white-eared and 4+ Black Honeyeaters, three White-winged Trillers, 5 or more Spiny-cheeked Bristlebird, a minimum of three Diamond Finches, Tree Martins, two Common Bronzewing, five fly over Cockatiel, a couple each of Diamond and Peaceful Doves, a Jacky Winter, three Crimson Chats were crackers and a Black-eared cuckoo that came down to drink. In the trees there were numerous Yellow-rumped Thornbills.



There were still lots to see in the forest, birds that didn't come down to the waterhole with a family party of White-browed Babblers, males and females of the stunning but mobile Red-capped Robins, five Southern Whiteface, Silvereyes, a bunch of stunning Splendid Fairy-wrens, a couple of Brown Treecreepers, six Rufous Whistlers (majority of which were females) and many striated Pardalotes.

It had started cool in the morning, had to wear a fleece to start with but by midday it was up in the thirty's.

I dragged myself away to return to Five Bough Swamp at Leeton for the afternoon and had several Cockatiels, White-winged Choughs, Apostlebirds and three Laughing Kookaburras along the road en-route.

I set about getting something to eat and drink before heading out to the swamp which I arrived really to early for at 1.30pm. Unlikely yesterday I progressed further along the track and found a hide overlooking a pool which had a few birds on it but didn't host the huge numbers of Whiskered Terns which were flying around overhead. There were plenty of Grey Teals, a few Black-winged Stilts, a couple of Australian Reed Warblers, two Royal and one Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Dusky Moorhens and a couple of Black Swans.

I eventually headed further only the track to the next junction and here I could see, barely, the next wet area which was covered in birds. Viewing this excellent wetland was to prove very difficult. On the reserve map there are a couple of raised viewing mounds which I went to but they were crap as you couldn't actually see above the tops of the reeds, none of them. There was a low area towards the second hide that you could look back and get a reasonable view but you were then more than twice, almost three times, the distance from the birds than from the junction so nearly a 100metres range or more. This was okay for scoping but for general enjoyment of the place it was poor. There were a few 'slight' gaps in reeds elsewhere but were again poor and the second hide, well. This hide had a wall of reeds right in front of it with vegetation encroaching at the hide sides which meant that the only view you had of the water and wildfowl present were at the extreme end of the reeds and you had to wait for any duck present to swim past. Another example of poor visitor facilities. I had been really looking forward to this site, being touted as one of the best swamps in Australia but the whole experience was damn frustrating. There's no doubt that there is a bucket load of birds here but getting views of them is another thing.

However I persevered and did get a fair list of birds with another ten Yellow-billed Spoonbills, numerous Dusky Moorhens, a dozen Whistling Kites, many Purple Swamphens, Glossy Ibis, at least 40+ Red-necked Avocets, several Pelicans, Australian Little Grebes, at least 100+ distant Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, at least 400 Whiskered Terns hawking locusts overhead, five Marsh Sandpipers, a Red-capped Plover, 14 Red-kneed Dotterels (glad I photographed the one at Cairns as would have no chance with these), nine Australian Shelducks, a lone Black-tailed Godwit. The frustrating second hide produced several Australian Shovelers, Pacific Duck, a single Blue-billed Duck, 30+ Pink-eared Ducks, three Great Cormorants, a drake Chestnut Teal, three Hardheads, numerous Coots and a crane sp. Which was probably Australian Spotted. Passerines were represented by Australian Reed Warblers, several Variegated Fairy-wrens, Golden-headed Cisticolas, two Zebra Finches and a Little Grassbird.

Walking back to the path junction I passed a Black-tailed Native-hen and a nice showy Australian Spotted Crane which chased another crane which was too brief to ID though was probably a Baillon's. There were also numerous egrets and a single distant Black-shouldered Kite.

The above seems like a lot and it was but majority of it was distant and really had to be worked at, the site did not live up to expectations and the visitor viewing facilities really need to be improved upon, i.e. have viewing mounds you can view from, have hides that don't have a wall of reeds in the way and a good viewing area of the main wet swamp area, a screen would do wonders.

It was very hot, I was thirsty and exhausted so with the frustration of Five Bough Swamp I called it a day, perhaps to early in the day really but some down time really was needed. I drop to the nearby Caravan Park and chilled out under the



trees seeing what came and went which included a 'yellow' Crimson Rosella, a pair of Red-rumped Parrots, many White-winged Choughs and Galahs and a distant couple of White-backed Swallows. Sure glad I did Binya Forest this morning.

Day 18: 26th November, Wednesday

Decided to do Five Bough in the morning to see if any of the Red-necked Avocets could be found on the other side of the path where the morning light should be better for photography. They were and it wasn't. On the drive to entrance and car park passed yet again hundreds of Galahs in fields, these I don't get tired of.

I walked the other closer path which was more direct to the second hide but there was the grey sky threatening rain with no sun. There was a fly over flock of around 50 Straw-necked Ibis and a bush had a Yellow-rumped Thornbill whilst a Golden-headed Cisticola was belting it out from some nearby reeds. From the hide there were five Australian Pelicans, ten Pink-eared Ducks, six Hoary-headed Grebes, seven Australian Shovelers, several Hardheads and ten Great Cormorants.

I soon got bored here so headed along the path the swamp and had a fly by Marsh Harrier. As yesterday the views were frustrating which were compounded by the rain that was now coming down. There were three Marsh Sandpipers, many Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, three Yellow-billed Spoonbills, 50+ Red-necked Avocets, many Whiskered Terns still, a single Australian Shelduck, eight Black-tailed Native-hens, a Baillon's Crane, three Australian Spotted Crakes, Aussie Reed Warblers, 10+ Whistling Kites, a male Chestnut Teal, a zebra Finch, a Black-shouldered Kite, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and two 1st year Silver Gulls were far from the coast. After a few hours I decided enough was enough and headed to Binya Forest. The rain had created small puddles in the main dirt track which was attracting numerous birds down to drink including six Cockatiels, eight Mulga Parrots, an Australian Ring-necked Parakeet, Spiny-cheeked Bristlebirds and ten or so Crimson Chats.

I eventually reach the Wattle Dam and birded the area, not really lingering on the waterhole. In the forest here were still lots of wood-swallows, five Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a dozen or so Crimson Chats, a White-plumed Honeyeater, a Common Bronzewing, a Striped and a Black Honeyeater, several Red-rumped Parrots, 20+ Striated Pardalotes, Rufous Whistlers, several Jacky Winters, White-winged Trillers, a couple of male Red-capped Robins, two Brown Treecreepers and White-winged Choughs. It was chilly and damp this morning with clearly less birds so I headed out and back to the highway but not before stopping to try and photograph some of the 50 or so Crimson Chats that were along a sidetrack which had a female White-fronted Chat mixed in. I could have found a male if I persevered but the weather was not helping.



From here now headed back towards Sydney and although the weather improved there wasn't a great deal seen along the road apart from the Galahs, Cockatoos, Apostlebirds, Choughs, Red-rumped Parrots and a Pied Butcherbird,

By the time I reach Blue Gum Swamp, early afternoon, it was blue skies and hot. On several occasions during the drive I passed through huge, massive swarms of Locusts stretched out across the road that numbers in their millions. The several hundred that caked my windscreen had little impact on the numbers involved. Blue Gum Swamp had plenty of duck present but again the hide here was useless, not even worth going into as it was clearly visible that there was a wall of reeds right in front of it. Better viewing was possible by walking along the path either side. Duck were represented by 70+ Pink-eareds, two Blue-billed, many Grey Teals and nine target Freckleds. Other birds here included a nesting pair of White-necked Herons, an Australian Spotted Crane, both Spoonbills, many Hoary-headed Grebes outnumbered Australian Little Grebes and an Eastern Rosella whilst there were numerous commoner species present making it a productive stop.

I still had a long drive ahead of me so had to make tracks and reached Lithgow at 5.30pm where a flock of 11 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flew over the highway. Found the nearest Camp ground, got a pitch and crashed out completely knackered but not before adding a Red Wattlebird to the list.

Day 19: 27th November, Thursday

Began at Capertee Valley not really knowing where to search for Regent Honeyeaters for which I ultimately did not see. I made several stops along the forested road with one being rather productive. Apart from the now familiar species highlights were a Striated Pardalote, Grey Kangaroos, a Red-necked Wallaby, three Eastern Spinebills, a Common Bronzewing, five Red Wattlebirds, three White-eared and four Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, 15 Crimson Rosella's, a Grey Shrike Thrush, Eastern Yellow Robins, five King Parrots, a lone Gang Gang Cockatoo, a Speckled Warbler which was quite neat and five Fuscous Honeyeaters.

I ended up reaching Glen Davis late morning. The road turned from tarmac to a dusty dirt track which the local drivers seem to insist on tearing along to create as much dust as possible. The habitat opened out in pasture and species changed to more open country forms. There were Australian Pipits, Superb Fairy-wrens, Zebra Finches, Rufous Songlarks, Singing Bushlarks.

Glen Davis itself is a small very crap hamlet with a poor campground near the centre. Despite searching for the Regent Honeyeater for several hours the flies eventually got beyond a joke and I gave up and headed



back to Lithgow. Of the few decent birds seen at Glen Davis Brown Treecreeper, two or three Dusky Wood-swallows, a Brown Falcon, a couple of Nankeen Kestrels and a Peregrine were the pick of the bunch.

Back in town I located the sewage works where a pair of Regent Honeyeaters had been nesting a month ago but again I had no luck here. However the three large lagoons held multiple duck species with many Pink-eared Ducks, Grey Teals, Australian Shovelers and Wood Ducks present as well as few Blue-billed Ducks. Hoary-headed Grebes were particularly common here whilst a trip tick came in the form of a couple of European Goldfinch.

Day 20: 28th November, Friday

Penultimate day was spent mostly travelling. I tried again at the Lithgow Sewage works for Regent Honeyeater and only succeeded in the same species as yesterday so after an hour or so undertook the long drive to Sydney. I negotiated the Great Western Highway to avoid the electronic only toll highway



and eventually reached my target caravan park early afternoon. Once I had a spot sorted out I drove to Royal National Park and to the Wattle Track car park where it began to rain. Both Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Little Corellas were showing well for the camera but eventually the light rain turned into a down pour and I was stuck in the car for an hour or so.

Eventually when the rain stopped I ventured a short walk where Eastern Spinebill, a Golden Whistler were out done by a pair of white-throated Treecreepers. The damp conditions didn't really help birding and food calling I called it a day.

Day 21: 29th November, Saturday

Was picked up by my friend Tim who is now resident in Sydney and we went birding at Botany Bay, stopping firstly a small wetland area where a Peregrine was seen harassing the cormorants just for fun. Also here was a Royal Spoonbill, a White-faced Heron and a couple of Pied Oystercatchers and a couple of Sacred Kingfishers along the roadside. From here we visited the coastal cliffs where the rain came down again. It was clear that the weather had brought a lot of shearwaters in close to shore and after I picked out an albatross we returned to the car to get the scope out. We stood under a convenient shelter where the shearwaters were identified as Wedge-tailed and the albatross was picked out again and proved to be an immature Yellow-nosed. I picked out a few smaller shearwaters with far more rapid wing beats, which were Fluttering Shearwaters. Other seabirds included 30+ Australian Gannets, a couple of Pomarine Skuas, a Crested Tern and Silver Gulls. There was also a fine pod of Bottlenose Dolphins. Once the weather improved and the shearwater numbers began to tail off we went to Royal National Park where we walked the north end of Lady Carrington Drive for an hour and a half.

Here it was a little quiet but there were several Lewins Honeyeaters, a heard only Lyrebird, a White-throated Treecreeper, a Sacred Kingfisher, a Rufous Fantail and a final lifer, an Eastern Shrike Tit which was a bonus.

It was then however time to leave and head to the airport for the long long flight home which is best forgotten.

So there you have it, a snap shot of the three weeks I had in eastern Australia. There were highs and lows, long drives and missed birds, great forests and frustrating wetlands. Overall not the most favourite of my birding trips but there were certainly some things I would swap for anything.

Species lists:

1. Emu

Only seen at Mareeba wetlands when a family party of three appear in front of the visitor centre for half an hour on 14th Nov before they moved off into the bush

2. Southern Cassowary

A primary target species proved difficult to connect with missing it at both Cassowary House and at Jindalba boardwalk north of the Daintree River. A male and chick were watched for around 40minutes late afternoon at Etty Bay on 18th Nov with a further larger male in the nearby caravan park in the evening same day. This same larger male was then seen several times the following morning in and around the caravan park.

3. Great Crested Grebe

15 were on Lake Eacham on 15th Nov were the only birds seen during the trip.

4. Australian Grebe

Seen on most areas of significant open water such as Lake Mitchell, Mareeba Wetlands, Hasties Swamp, Cumberland Dam, Five bough Swamp, blue Gum Swamp and Lithgow Sewage Works.

5. Hoary-headed Grebe

Not encountered in Queensland but was common at Five Bough Swamp, Blue Gum Swamp and Lithgow Sewage Works though was especially numerous at the latter two locations, i.e. 50+ on 27th Nov.

6. Yellow-nosed Albatross

An immature was seen from the coastal cliffs at Botany Bay on the last morning of the trip, 29th Nov, Poor weather appeared to have driven a large numbers of shearwaters and gannets inshore and this bird was amongst them.

7. Wedge-tailed Shearwater

Large numbers, many thousands, of dark shearwaters seen from the coastal cliffs of Botany Bay on 29th Nov were judged to have been this species.

8. Fluttering Shearwater

Amongst the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters above at least five smaller birds were noted on 29th Nov which were considered to be Fluttering's.

9. Australian Gannet

As with the other seabirds seen was only noted on the last day of the trip, 29th Nov, from the cliffs at Botany Bay where at least 30 were feeding offshore.

10. Brown Booby

Four were seen during the trip out to Michaelmas Cay with a further individual actually at the Cay on 10th Nov.

11. Little Pied Cormorant

Mostly small numbers noted from most of the larger areas of fresh water though Mareeba Wetlands had the largest numbers with 40+ on 14th Nov.

12. Little Black Cormorant

Noted widely but not overly common, mostly singletons though five were at Hasties Swamp on 16th Nov.

13. Pied Cormorant

Two at Botany Bay on 29th Nov were harassed by a Peregrine

14. Great Cormorant

Only seen at Five Bough Swamp where there were three on 25th Nov and ten the next morning.

15. Australian Darter

The first was along the Daintree River on 12th Nov whilst three were at Lake Mitchell and 1+ was at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov. Following these two were at Hasties Swamp 15th Nov and the trips last was at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov.

16. Australian Pelican

Widespread but not overly common, mostly one's and two's at numerous wetland areas visited however 4+ were at Hasties Swamp on 15th Nov and 5+ were at Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov.

17. Royal Spoonbill

Widespread though not overly common occurring in several different habitat types, such as coastal mudflats and inland wetlands. Was present along the Cairns Esplanade on every visit with 10+ being apparently resident. At inland wetlands several were noted though the largest count in excess of ten was at Blue Gum Swamp in New South Wales.

18 Yellow-billed Spoonbill

Not seen in Queensland and in New South Wales only at Five Bough and Blue Gum Swamps. At Five Bough Swamp up to 11 were present on 25th Nov whilst 5+ were at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov.

19. Black-necked Stork

Uncommon being seen a mere three times during the three week trip and all in Queensland: the first was circling over the Cairns Centenary Lakes on 9th Nov, one over the road between Mt. Molloy and Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov and one in a field along the road to ETTY Bay on 18th Nov.

20. Australian White Ibis

Common and widespread with several sizeable gatherings, in excess of 100, in well watered fields around Lake Eacham and Mareeba. Elsewhere abundant from variety of habitats.

21. Straw-necked Ibis

The first were six in a field near Wonga Beach on 11th Nov. These were followed by a scattering of birds with no large flocks apart from a good gathering in a watered field near Mareeba Golf Course on 14th Nov. Most encounters were of mainly singletons however there was a flock of 50+ early morning at Five Bough Swamp, New South Wales on 26th Nov.

22. Glossy Ibis

Fairly common at the larger wetlands, such as Mareeba Wetland and Five Bough Swamp, with scattering of birds elsewhere however well water fields often had fairly high concentrations.

23. Great White Egret

Common at Cairns Esplanade and larger wetlands of Mareeba, Lake Mitchell, Hasties Swamp, Five Bough Swamp and Blue Gum Swamp

24. Intermediate Egret

Only found at the larger wetlands of Lake Mitchell, Hasties Swamp and Five Bough Swamp though was not overly common with less than double figures noted at each location.

25. Little Egret

I was surprised to only see two birds during the whole trip though this may have something to do with the fact that I was largely ignoring the egrets as I've seen all the species countless times before on trips elsewhere. The two singletons on this trip were at Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov and at Hasties Swamp on 16th Nov.

26. Cattle Egret

Fairly common with large numbers often being seen in roadside fields, especially where cattle were present, i.e. 40+ in fields between Mossman and Daintree on 11th Nov. Smaller numbers were present at the larger wetlands.

27. Great-billed Heron

A primary target species along the Daintree River on 12th Nov. The cruise out with Chris Dhalberg produced two in one tree with several sightings of either one of these further along the river.

28. White-necked Heron

Another heron species that was surprisingly uncommon White-necked Heron was only seen on two occasions. One was at a small fish farm ponds along the main road near Julatten on 13th Nov and a nesting pair were at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov.

29. White-faced Heron

Common and widespread and seen most days though not recorded in my notebook as such. Most sightings related to 1-2 birds.

30. Pacific Reef Heron

Only seen at ETTY Bay where one, and presumably the same bird, was seen on the mornings of 18th and 19th Nov.

31. Nankeen Night Heron

One was close to the path around the large lake at Cairns Centenary Lakes on my first day, 9th Nov. This lone bird proved to be the only one of the trip.

32. Striated Heron

Only seen along the Cairns Esplanade where one was present on 9th Nov and 2+ on 19th Nov.

33. Black Bittern

Despite two being flushed from the riverbank along the Daintree River on 12th Nov only one was seen by myself as it flew into the reeds nearby.

34. Black Swan

Uncommon. Three at Lake Mitchell on 14th Nov were the first of the trip were followed by 4+ at Mareeba Wetlands later the same day. Five were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov and 2+ were at Blue Gum Swamp the following day.

35. Magpie Goose

The first were a fly over flock seen from the car whilst driving toward Daintree on 11th Nov. The next birds were at Lake Mitchell where 25+ were noted on 14th Nov. Hasties Swamp had the largest flock with at least 350+ being present on 15th & 16th Nov.

36. Australian Shelduck

Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales was the only location where this species was encountered with nine there on 25th Nov though only one there the following day.

37. Radjah Shelduck

Nine were at the fish farm midway between Mossman and Daintree on 11th Nov and one was on the treatment beds at the back of the Mareeba Golf Course on 14th Nov.

38. Green Pygmy Goose

30+ were seen from the causeway at Lake Mitchell on 14th Nov whilst at least three pairs were seen at Mareeba Wetlands later the same day. A pair here were very photogenic during the afternoon boat trip. 15+ were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov.

39. Wandering Whistling Duck

At Mareeba Wetlands 10+ were present on the main lake in front of the visitor centre on 14th Nov however Hasties Swamp had the largest numbers on 15th & 16th Nov where it was common.

40. Plumed Whistling Duck

100+ were seen on the treatment pools at the far end of the Mareeba Golf course on 14th Nov whilst Hasties Swamp had the greatest numbers with some hundreds there on 15th & 16th Nov. Small numbers were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov.

41. Pacific Duck

A common and widespread species found at many wetland areas such as Centenary Park in Cairns, Mareeba Wetlands, Hasties Swamp, Five Bough Swamp, Cumberland Dam and numerous small damp areas.

42. Grey Teal

Common around larger areas of water, such as Hasties Swamp, Five Bough Swamp, Blue Gum Swamp and Lithgow Sewage Works.

43. Chestnut Teal

A pair were in a flooded roadside pool on the outskirts of Brisbane on 21st Nov whilst lone drakes were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th & 26th Nov.

44. Australian Shoveler

From seven at Five Bough Swamp on 26th Nov over 50 were at Lithgow Sewage works on 27th Nov.

45. Pink-eared Duck

Five Bough Swamp had 30+ on 25th Nov on the main pool from the second hide whilst ten were there the following morning. Blue Gum Swamp had at least 70 on 26th Nov and the Lithgow Sewage works weighed in with 100+ on 27th Nov.

46. Freckled Duck

The only birds of the trip were at Blue Gum Swamp where there were nine on 26th Nov.

47. Australian Wood Duck

First seen at Mareeba Golf Course on 14th Nov where there were four. This species became a lot commoner further south where 'many' were noted whilst driving through the valley towards Lamington National Park. Many were then noted at various locations around Brisbane and in the Royal National Park however perhaps the most entertaining birds were a pair that brought their brood into the caravan park at Brisbane and right besides the car on 23rd Nov.

48. Hardhead

Five were at Lake Mitchell 14th Nov with one at Mareeba Wetlands same day. Three were at Hasties Swamp on 16th Nov and one at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown same day. Five Bough Swamp had three on 25th Nov and 5+ next day.

49. Blue-billed Duck

Only encountered in New South Wales at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov where one was noted from the second hide; at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov where there were two and at the Lithgow Sewage Works on 27th Nov where there was at least eight.

50. Osprey

The only one of the trip was off Etty Bay on 19th Nov.

51. Black Kite

This species was noted at various locations, mostly ones and two's, but a flock of 12+ was by a petrol station near Mossman on 12th Nov.

52. Square-tailed Kite

One, possibly a second bird, were at Daisy Hill Koala Refuge south of Brisbane on 20th Nov.

53. Whistling Kite

Many kites were seen during the trip though not all were specifically identified though most seem to be this species. Those that were positively identified were noted throughout the trip from Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge in Queensland to Five Bough Swamp in New South Wales

54. Brahminy Kite

Surprisingly only one was seen, an adult at the Fish Farm midway between Mossman and Daintree on 11th Nov.

Kite sp.

Various unidentified kites were noted during the trip, they were either seen from car whilst driving, to distant or I couldn't be bothered to look at them. Largest concentrations were of 15+ over fields by Hasties Swamp on 15th Nov.

55. Black-shouldered Kite

All birds seen were singles and in the dry Leeton area: Yanco 24th Nov, Yenda 25th Nov, Five Bough Swamp 25th & 26th Nov and whilst travelling from Leeton to Binya State Forest on 26th Nov.

56. Spotted Harrier

A cracking male was at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown briefly on 16th Nov.

57. Swamp Harrier

Male and female were over the fields at Hasties Swamp in the evening of 15th Nov whilst all other seen were at Five Bough Swamp with two on 24th Nov and a female on 25th Nov.

58. Little Eagle

One was seen along the main highway whilst driving out towards Leeton on 24th Nov.

59. Wedge-tailed Eagle

One over Tizali Lakes on 16th Nov had a damaged tail and as was pretty distant and brief and was not appreciated as much as those seen at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown. Three were flushed from the roadside near Cumberland Dam on 16th Nov where they appeared to have been scavenging a road kill kangaroo. After perching briefly in trees nearby they flew off in a northerly direction. A cracking bird was then over the Outback, seen from the Green Hills track beyond Cumberland, on 17th Nov where there was also a couple of kite species, a Brown Falcon and a Nankeen Kestrel. The final bird was all to brief near Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov

60. White-bellied Sea Eagle

A juvenile at Lake Mitchell on 14th Nov circled low over the causeway flushing much of the birdlife present. A sub-adult was at Hasties Swamp from the hide on 15th Nov was replaced by an adult the following morning. An adult and a juvenile was at Tizali Lakes, midway between Atherton and Milla Milla Falls on 16th Nov whilst the last of the trip were two adults over Wattamolla car park, Royal National Park on 23rd Nov.

61. Collared Sparrowhawk

One was over the road to Granite Gorge on 15th Nov and another was seen whilst driving to Leeton on 24th Nov.

62. Brown Goshawk

One flew over the road near Karunda on 17th Nov.

63. Grey Goshawk

Two brief singles were seen, both on 15th Nov, at Lake Eacham and at Yungaburra.

64. Brown Falcon

The first was found perched on a roadside wire near Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov with two in the Outback near the dam the following day. One was in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

65. Peregrine

One was at the bottom of Capertee Valley on 27th Nov and one was at Botany Bay on 29th Nov where it harassed Cormorants for the apparent shear fun of it.

66. Nankeen Kestrel

Widespread but not overly common. The first was near Granite Gorge on 15th Nov which was then followed by birds at Hasties Swamp, Georgetown, Cumberland Dam, Royal National Park, Leeton and Capertee Valley.

67. Australian Brush Turkey

Common in Queensland where numerous birds were noted easily at many of the sites visited.

68. Orange-footed Scrubfowl

Fairly numerous in northern Queensland where most birds were seen at Centenary Park in Cairns, Cassowary House and Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge.

69. Australian Bustard

The reliable site of Mary Farm not far from Julatten produced three displaying males late afternoon of the 12th Nov as well as two single females, one attracted to a displayed male. Superb stuff.

70. Brown Quail

At least five were flushed from the bush at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov.

71. Comb-crested Jacana

Lake Mitchell had the largest count with 12+ on 14th Nov whilst stunningly close views were had from the late afternoon boat ride at Mareeba Wetlands same day. 5+ were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov.

72. Australian Spotted Crake

One was seen very well at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov when it chased out of the reeds a smaller crake species. It then stood there looking at me for a couple of minutes before disappearing back into the reeds. The following morning three were seen

73. Baillon's Crake

Several small crakes gave fleeting glimpses at Five Bough Swamp on both 25th and 26th Nov were probably this species whilst one on the latter date was seen well and long enough to identify it as Baillon's.

74. Red-necked Crake

Two showed well in a damp area at the far end of the balcony at Cassowary House on 11th Nov.

75. Buff-banded Rail

One was flushed from rank vegetation near the stream at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

76. Coot

Hasties Swamp had the largest numbers on 15th & 16th Nov whilst Five Bough Swamp had 5+ on 25th Nov. It was also common at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov.

77. Purple Swamphen

Individuals were noted from numerous scattered locations however counts of 10 or more came from Hasties Swamp 15th & 16th Nov, the Wattle Track at Royal National Park 24th Nov, Five Bough Swamp 25th Nov and Blue Gum Swamp 26th Nov.

78. Black-tailed Native-hen

Only seen at Five Bough Swamp where there was one on 25th Nov and eight the following morning.

79. Dusky Moorhen

Several were at Centenary Lakes, Cairns on 9th Nov whilst surprisingly only one was at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov. Several were noted at Hasties Swamp and 10+ were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th. Several were at Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov.

80. Common Bush-hen

Three were seen along the Daintree River on 12th Nov including a couple fighting.

81. Brolga

A pair were seen well from the causeway at Lake Mitchell on 14th whilst 20+ were at Mareeba Wetlands later the same day. Several were then identified the numerous cranes along the road out to and from Granite Gorge on 15th Nov.

82. Sarus Crane

15 were positively identified amongst the numerous cranes there were near the Chewko Road junction when travelling out to and returning from Granite Gorge on 15th Nov.

Crane sp.

40+ distant cranes in fields near Hasties Swamp on 15th Nov were not assigned to species whilst 11+ flew over the road whilst driving south towards Milla Milla Falls on 16th Nov.

83. Beach Stone Curlew

An absolute cracker was at Wonga Beach on 12th Nov whilst another less 'showy' individual stayed close in to the mangroves at the north end of the Cairns' Esplanade on 20th Nov.

84. Bush Stone Curlew

The first were seen in Karunda well after darkness had fallen, two along the roadside, on 10th Nov. Four were then in fields at Wonga Beach on 11th Nov. The final four of the trip were at ETTY Bay on 19th Nov, along the approach track where heavy rain had completely soaked them through.

85. Pied Oystercatcher

Cairns Esplanade had two on 9th & 19th Nov whilst two were at Botany Bay on 29th Nov.

86. Black-winged Stilt

Three were at the fish farm north of Mossman on 11th Nov. 5+ were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov whilst Hasties Swamp had 5-6 on 16th & 17th Nov. Five Bough Swamp had the largest numbers with up to 25 there on 25th & 26th Nov.

87. Red-necked Avocet

One of the main reasons for visiting Five Bough Swamp was for this species with 40-50 seen on the main floods on 25th & 26th Nov.

88. Masked Lapwing

A common and widespread species was particularly abundant around Cairns, i.e. adults with very young chicks on the Esplanade on 9th Nov. The northern birds differ from those around Sydney in the lack of black shoulder patches.

89. Black-fronted Dotterel

The first and best was along Cairns Esplanade in the evening of the 9th Nov where it showed very well. All subsequent birds were distant scope views: three at the fish farm between Mossman and Daintree on 10th Nov and five at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov.

90. Red-kneed Dotterel

Two distant birds were seen from the hide at Hasties Swamp on 16th Nov. This was followed by one on the Cairns Esplanade which showed very well and proved to be closest of the trip. Five Bough Swamp had 14 in the afternoon of the 25th Nov with 5+ noted the following morning.

91. Red-capped Plover

Cairns Esplanade was the place to see this species with 10+ there on the rising afternoon tide of 9th Nov with 2+ on 19th Nov. A distant bird was seen at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov.

92 Greater Sandplover

At least ten were seen along Cairns Esplanade on the afternoon rising tide of the 19th Nov.

93. Lesser Sandplover

Following a lone bird in the Red-necked Stint flock on Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov 15+ were amongst the gather waders on 19th Nov, again these birds showed well on the incoming tide in the afternoon.

94. Red-necked Stint

40+ on Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov gather feet from the cycle path where they showed well. On the return visit on 19th Nov this flock had increased to 200+, again on the afternoon incoming tide. 20+ were on the falling tide next morning.

95. Great Knot

A large flock was seen very well on the rising tide at Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov where none had been present on the 9th. By contrast only one was seen distantly in the morning the next day due to the tide going out. This emphasises the need to be here in the afternoon on a rising tide.

96. Red Knot

Five were amongst the Great Knot flock at Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov

97 Broad-billed Sandpiper

One or two were noted in the wader flocks at Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov.

98. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

33 were on the only drained pool at the fish farm located between Wonga Beach and Daintree on 11th Nov. 30+ were then at Cairns Esplanade on 20th Nov though these were generally distant on the falling morning tide. 100+ were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th & 26th Nov though they also were distant.

99. Terek Sandpiper

Two were on the mudflats of Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov and five there on 19th Nov. On both occasions all birds were on the afternoon rising tide

100. Common Sandpiper

The trips one and only was at the fish farm ponds south of Daintree on 11th Nov.

101. Greenshank

One along the Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov was the only one noted during the trip

102. Marsh Sandpiper

Following one on Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov six were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov and three there next day.

103. Eastern Curlew

Only seen along Cairns Esplanade where there were several on 9th Nov and three on 20th Nov.

104. Whimbrel

Five were at Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov and two were at Etty Bay on 19th Nov.

105. Bar-tailed Godwit

Seen on each visit to the Cairns Esplanade with four on 9th Nov, 20 on the 19th Nov and 5+ on 20th Nov.

106. Black-tailed Godwit

Cairns Esplanade had 10+ on 19th Nov whilst Five Bough Swamp had one on 25th Nov.

107. Turnstone

Two on Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov proved to be the only ones of the trip.

108. Latham's Snipe

One was on the roadside along the road down to Etty Bay on 18th Nov

109. Pomerine Skua

Two were seen chasing gulls off of the coastal cliffs at Botany Bay south of Sydney on 29th Nov.

110. Silver Gull

Several were along Cairns Esplanade on 9th & 19th Nov. 5+ were in the creek by the Bundeena Camp site in Royal National Park on 23rd Nov. Two first-year birds were well inland at Five Bough Swamp on 26th Nov. Numerous birds were noted flying past the cliffs at Botany Bay on 29th Nov.

111. Crested Tern

Following the first from the boat out to Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov at least 30+ were on the Cay on arrival. Several were seen off the cliffs at Botany Bay on 29th Nov.

112. Lesser Crested Tern

Michaelmas Cay provided the best views with 15+ there on 10th Nov though due to people being on the beach roosting birds were outside of the viewing area thus all birds seen were in flight only. Several were noted off the Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov.

113. Caspian Tern

Only seen along Cairns Esplanade where there was one on 9th Nov and two on the 20th.

114. Gull-billed Tern

2+ were along Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov with one there on 20th Nov.

115. Little Tern

12+ were seen from the boat out to Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov and two were along Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov.

116. Sooty Tern

Michaelmas Cay had a large colony of many hundreds of birds which was visited on 10th Nov.

117. White-winged Black Tern

Two were seen from the boat out to Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov.

118. Whiskered Tern

Two were seen from the boat out to Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov and four were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov. The largest flock however was at Five Bough Swamp where 500+ were present on the main flood 24th-26th Nov. There was a major emergence of locusts in the area and many hundreds were seen hawking all over the swamp.

119. Brown Noddy

Common on and around Michaelmas Cay on 10th Nov.

120. Squatter Pigeon

Two were seen along the Mareeba Wetlands access track in the evening of the 14th Nov whilst the area around Cumberland Dam, Georgetown produced all remaining sightings on 16th & 17th Nov.

121. Crested Pigeon

The trips first was not until 14th Nov at Mareeba Golf Course however it became a lot commoner from there on and was one of the most numerous and widespread pigeons encountered, i.e. 6+ at the Brisbane Caravan Park 23rd Nov.

122. Spinifex Pigeon

A pair of absolute crackers were photographed right besides the car in the Outback beyond Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov. A definite trip highlight.

123. Common Bronzewing

5+ were at Binya State Forest on 25th Nov with a couple down at Wattle Dam showed very well. 1+ were here the next day whilst the final bird of the trip was at Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

124. Wonga Pigeon

One was in the day visitor car park at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov with another in the nearby Campsite nearby in the evening.. Two were along Duck Creek Road near O'Reilly's on 22nd Nov and one was seen along the Border Track later the same morning.

125. Peaceful Dove

Common and Widespread, most abundant on the coast of north Queensland.

126. Diamond Dove

This diminutive species favoured drier interior habitats with 5+ at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th & 17th Nov and two were at the Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest on 25th Nov.

127. Bar-shouldered Dove

Not overly common with mostly singles noted at various sites though 8+ was at Mt. Molloy on 14th Nov.

128. Spotted Dove

Singles were in a garden along Cairns Esplanade and at nearby Centenary Lakes on 9th Nov. Several were at Etty Bay on 19th Nov and two were at Sydney Caravan Park 29th Nov.

129. Emerald Dove

Singles were at Cassowary House on 11th Nov and by the Jindalba boardwalk north of the Daintree River on 12th Nov. Two were at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

130. Brown Cuckoo-dove

Three were besides the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov whilst one along Duck Creek Road, Lamington National Park on 21st Nov increased to three at the exact same spot the following morning.

131. Wompoo Pigeon

Four visited a fruiting tree at the Lake Eacham car park on 15th Nov

132. White-headed Pigeon

One was by the car park at Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov whilst two were along the Border Track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

133. Pied Imperial Pigeons

Common on the north Queensland coast with four at Centenary Lakes, Cairns on 9th Nov, 8+ were in the Cairns Caravan park on 10th and 19th Nov, noted as common along the Daintree River on 12th Nov and 15+ at Etty Bay on 19th Nov. Further scatterings of birds were noted but not recorded.

134. Topknot Pigeon

Six were in treetops along the Mt. Lewis Trail on 13th Nov whilst seven were at the Lake Eacham car park early morning on 15th Nov. One was along the Border Track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov and several were along Duck Creek Road nearby the following day.

135. Gang Gang

Only one bird was noted, a brief flying away bird along the Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

136. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

This widespread species would often be seen in sizeable flocks. It was most numerous in Royal National Park where there were several flocks over 30 with a count of 59 at the Wattle Track car park on 28th Nov. 30+ were seen in a field when driving up to O'Reilly's on 20th Nov.

137. Little Corella

Only seen in Royal National Park where 5+ were at the camp site at Bundeena on 23rd Nov with 5+ at the Wattle Track car park on 24th & 28th Nov.

138. Galah

Some large flocks were encountered in some of the drier inland locations such as at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov where there 'some' hundreds whilst gardens and fields in Leeton near Five Bough Swamp had even larger flocks 24th-26th Nov.

139. Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

The only ones of the trip were 8+ of these vastly impressive cockatoos in trees next to a junction in Mareeba on 17th Nov.

140. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

11 were seen at dusk flying high over Lithgow on 26th Nov with a flock of 19 over the Lithgow Sewage Works the following day.

141. Rainbow Lorikeet

Common and widespread. After the first few days was not recorded though was seen virtually daily in varying numbers.

142. Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

Two were seen high up in trees at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov and several were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov.

143. Double-eyed Fig Parrot

Two, perhaps three, flew around the Cairns Caravan Park in the morning of 10th Nov whilst Cairns Esplanade provided the best views when three were in trees at the north end on 19th Nov.

144. Australian King Parrot

One was seen at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov with another the same day at the Peterson Creek Track in Yungaburra. 10+ were then at O'Reilly's on 21st and 22nd Nov. three were at the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park on 23rd Nov whilst Capertee Valley had the last birds of the trip with five on 27th Nov.

145. Red-winged Parrot

One was seen in flight only at Mt. Molloy on 14th Nov and two in flight only birds were near Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov.

146. Cockatiel

Five flew over the Wattle dam at Binya State Forest in the morning of 25th Nov whilst one was along the main road to Leeton later in the afternoon. Six were then found coming down to puddles along the main Binya State Forest track after overnight rain on 26th Nov.

147. Australian Ring-necked Parakeet

The only one of the trip was seen along the main dirt track through Binya State Forest on 26th Nov.

148. Eastern Rosella

4+ were along Lady Carrington's Drive in Royal National Park on 23rd Nov whilst one was at Blue Gum Swamp on the 26th Nov.

149. Pale-headed Rosella

Two were along the approach track to Granite Gorge on 15th Nov whilst six were in the caravan park at Georgetown on 16th Nov where they visited several dripping taps. Five were at Cumberland Dam on 17th Nov and the last was a single at Royal National Park on 23rd Nov.

150. Crimson Rosella

At least five were noted on the road up to O'Reilly's late on 20th Nov were outnumbered by the 30+ at O'Reilly's the following day. Many birds here use birders and available camera equipment as convenient perches. Further birds were noted near O'Reilly's at Duck Creek Road. Elsewhere two 'yellow' birds were at Leeton Caravan Park on 25th Nov and 15 were in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

151. Mulga Parrot

Two were at the Wattle Dam in Binya State Forest on 25th Nov with eight along the main Binya Forest track on 26th Nov.

152. Red-rumped Parrot

Binya State Forest had 10+ at the Wattle Dame on 25th Nov with 2 there next morning. A pair lingered in the Leeton Caravan Park on 25th Nov. Several were then seen from the car when driving to Forbes on 26th Nov and several were present in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

153. Budgerigar

Common at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown, where flocks of between 20 and several hundred were encountered on 17th Nov.

154. Fan-tailed Cuckoo

A singing bird was finally tracked down in the open areas of Duck Creek Road, Lamington National Park on 21st Nov.

155. Brush Cuckoo

A singing bird was location along Duck Creek Road, Lamington National Park on 21st Nov.

156. Black-eared Cuckoo

One came down to the waters edge at the Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest on 25th Nov.

157. Australian Koel

Two were along the Daintree River on 12th Nov whilst lone singing males were at Mareeba Wetlands, along the approach track in the evening, and at the caravan park in Brisbane early morning on 23rd Nov.

158. Pheasant Coucal

This impressive species was noted at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov and along the road to Etty Bay on 19th Nov.

159. Channel-billed Cuckoo

This hugely impressive cuckoo was first seen out the back of Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov where two were noted. One flew over Mareeba Golf Course being mobbed by the far smaller Australian Magpies on 13th Nov. Similarly one over the caravan park in Sydney on 29th Nov attracted the same treatment.

160. Laughing Kookaburra

Pretty common and widespread being noted in many places throughout the trip, mostly between 1-3 birds however occasionally in small groups, i.e. four at Etty Bay 19th Nov and five at Wattle Track car park in Royal National Park on 24th Nov.

161. Blue-winged Kookaburra

Only one was seen and even that was the briefest of flight views when one shot across the road when driving out from Granite Gorge on 15th Nov.

162. Sacred Kingfisher

Two were along the road to Botany Bay and one was along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park on 29th Nov.

163. Forest Kingfisher

The commonest small kingfisher. One was on the mudflats along the Cairns Esplanade on 9th Nov whilst three were on roadside wires near Julatten. Singles were at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov and Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov whilst two's were at Mt. Molloy and at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov and a pair at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov.

164. Red-backed Kingfisher

Three were on roadside wires at Georgetown on 16th Nov whilst Cumberland Dam nearby had four the next day.

165. Azure Kingfisher

Only two seen; one shot past along the Daintree River whilst waiting for the boat on 12th Nov whilst the other was a little more obliging along a forest stream at Mission Beach on 18th Nov.

166. Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher

A singing male was located along the Jindalba boardwalk north of the Daintree River on 12th Nov. Another was then seen at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge. This species was very difficult to get close to and was never going to be photographable during this trip. Probably best option would be a few weeks later once they are nesting in the termite mounds, I was too early in the season for that. The termite mounds are small and inconspicuous being only football sized.

167. Rainbow Bee-eater

Fairly common and widespread and not always noted in my records. Most were of pairs from around the north Queensland coast and inland to Georgetown. Became scarcer further south.

168. Dollarbird

Noted only in north Queensland where 1-3 were seen at various locations between 12th-17th Nov.

169. Masked Owl

Two birds were seen at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge where they emerged from their roost holes on 12th Nov.

170. Lesser Sooty Owl

One of the trip highlights was a responsive bird that came in whilst looking for Tree Kangaroos near Yungaburra at about 10pm along Thomas Road on 15th Nov. It was initially heard calling in the distance but with a little persuasion it soon showed very well in the spotlight.

171. Australian Owlet-nightjar

One was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th Nov, seen during the spotlighting session. The same bird was then seen the following day at its roosting hole.

172. Tawny Frogmouth

A female was on a nest with one chick with a further two chicks on nearby branches at the car park of Granite Gorge on 15th Nov whilst a pair at the caravan park at Georgetown had two chicks on 16th & 17th Nov. Both of these birds were extremely visible, once you knew where they were and were not to be missed. Stunners

173. Papuan Frogmouth

Two females on nests were at either end of the Daintree River on 12th Nov where they showed well. Another nesting bird was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

174. White-rumped Swiftlet

Widely scattered with many single figure counts however 40+ were over Stuart Road on the outskirts of the Daintree Village on 12th Nov and 70+ were over the Hasties Swamp approach track on 16th Nov.

175. Welcome Swallow

Common and widespread, often encountered in small numbers most places visited

176. Fairy Martin

Pretty common and widespread with small flocks noted at some locations; i.e. 10+ at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown 16th Nov

177. Tree Martin

Only seen at Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest where there were four on 25th Nov.

178. White-backed Swallow

Two seen fairly distantly out of the back of the caravan park at Leeton on 25th Nov were the only ones of the trip.

179. Noisy Pitta

Only seen at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov where two showed well early morning on the paths.

180. Bassian Thrush

All birds seen were in the Lamington National Park where 12+ were along the upper end of the approach road to O'Reilly's on 20th Nov with 10+ along there the following morning. One was along the Python Rock Track in the afternoon of the 21st Nov and three were along Duck Creek Road early the next morning. Best times to see this species were shortly after dawn or in the evening when good views could be obtained along the main approach road.

181. Singing Bushlark

Four were found in an open stony area in the Outback at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov. 10+ were in the lower far end of Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

182. Rufous Songlark

Only found at the lower end of Capertee Valley where at least 15 singing birds were found on 27th Nov.

183 Australian Pipits

Eight were along the road to Etty Bay on 19th Nov with several there the following morning. Four, perhaps more, were along the lower stretch of the Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

184. Barred Cuckoo-shrike

One was at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov

185. Ground Cuckoo-shrike

One was seen briefly when it flew up from beside the main 'highway' between Cumberland Dam and Georgetown and into trees on 17th Nov.

186. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

The commonest cuckoo-shrike encountered, was especially numerous in the drier country locations visited with Cumberland Dam and Binya State Forests having the highest counts.

187. White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike

Singles were seen by the Cairns Caravan Park on 10th Nov, in Yungaburra on 15th Nov, at Hasties Swamp also 15th Nov whilst two were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov

188. White-winged Triller

Lone males were seen at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov and at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov. Two were in the Outback of Cumberland Dam on 17th Nov. Three visited Wattle Dam at Binya State Forest on 25th Nov though only one was there the next morning.

189. Varied Triller

Singles were at Cassowary House on 11th Nov and Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov whilst three were at Tizali Lakes on 16th Nov. The final bird of the trip was a female at Binya State Forest on 25th Nov.

190. Cicadabird

One along the Daintree River on 12th Nov was the only one of the trip.

191. Red-capped Robin

Binya State Forest was the only location where this species was found with two males and 5+ females on 25th Nov and three males and several females on 26th Nov

192. Hooded Robin

Only recorded at Binya State Forest where there were two males on 26th Nov.

193. Grey-headed Robin

4+ were along the Mt. Lewis trail 13th Nov

194. Eastern Yellow Robin

Birds were noted along the tracks around O'Reilly's on 21st & 22nd Nov where they were both fairly common and rather tame. 1+ were also noted in Royal National Park along Lady Carrington Drive on 23rd & 24th Nov whilst one was in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

195. Pale Yellow Robin

Four were at Cassowary House on 11th Nov where they often showed very well. There were singles at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge and up Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov and at the Atherton Caravan Park on 15th Nov.

196. Jacky Winter

Only recorded at Binya State Forest where there were three on 25th Nov and 2+ the next day.

197. Lemon-bellied Flycatcher

Three were at Mareeba Wetlands, including a showy bird by the visitor centre, on 14th Nov and one was at Granite Gorge the next day.

198. Eastern Shrike-tit

One was along the northern end of Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park on 29th Nov and proved to be the last lifer of the trip.

199. Golden Whistler

A pair were by the parking area at Mt. Lewis with an additional two males towards the end of the trail there on 13th Nov. Singles were then noted at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov, along the trails at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov and at the Wattle Track in Royal National Park on 28th Nov.

200. Rufous Whistler

Males and females were noted at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov, one was along Peterson Creek Trail in Yungaburra on 15th Nov whilst 5+ in Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov were predominantly females and one was at Lithgow Sewage Works on 27th Nov.

201. Bowers Shrike Thrush

At least three were along the first hundred metres or so along the trail at the top of Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov.

202. Grey Shrike-thrush

1+ was at O'Reilly's on 22nd Nov whilst one was in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

203. Little Shrike Thrush

All birds seen were singletons at Cassowary House 11th Nov, the Daintree River 12th Nov, Jindalba Boardwalk on 12th Nov, Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge 13th Nov and Peterson Creek Track in Yungaburra on 15th Nov. One of the dullest birds of the trip.

204. Shining Flycatcher

Male and two females were seen during the cruise along the Daintree River on 12th Nov.

205. Spectacled Monarch

This smart flycatcher was noted at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov where three were seen. The only other seen was one at the Curtain Fig Tree on 15th Nov.

206. Black-faced Monarch

Only two singletons were seen; one at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov and one along Duck Creek Road in Lamington National Park 21st Nov.

207. Pied Monarch

Two were at Cassowary House on 11th Nov including a very showing bird by the start of the entrance track. The only other seen was along the Curtain Fig Tree boardwalk on 15th Nov.

208. Satin Flycatcher

A female was tentatively identified at Centenary Lakes, Cairns on 9th Nov

209. Leaden Flycatcher

Three males plus a pair were along the causeway at Lake Mitchell on 14th Nov and one was along the Wattle Track, Royal National Park on 24th Nov.

210. Grey Fantail

Common and widespread, seen far more often than recorded in my note book.

211. Rufous Fantail

Commonly encountered. Singles were at Cassowary House 11th Nov, Mt. Lewis 13th Nov whilst 2+ were along the Peterson Creek Track in Yungaburra on 15th Nov, four along the Rock Python Track and 3+ along the Border Tracks near O'Reilly's on 21st Nov and 3+ were along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park on 24th Nov with one at the northern end on 29th Nov.

212. Willy Wagtail

Common and widespread, cannot be missed

213. Eastern Whipbird

More commonly heard than seen however those noted here are 'seen' birds: One along the trail at Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov was followed by several along both the Border and Rock Python Tracks near O'Reilly's on 21st & 22nd Nov whilst one was along the Wattle Track, Royal National Park on 23rd Nov.

214. Chowchilla

At least six were feeding in the leaf litter right besides the path near the stat of the Mt. Lewis trail on 13th Nov.

215. Logrunner

The first was a cracking bird was right next to the edge of the Border Track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov. 10+ were then seen along the Python Rock Track later the same afternoon. A real cracking little bird.

216. White-browed Babbler

A family party of six were in Binya State Forest on 25th Nov

217. Grey-crowned Babbler

A family party of five were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov whilst a similarly sized group were at Mareeba Golf Course in the evening of the same day. Cumberland Dam, Georgetown had numerous family parties on 17th Nov.

218. Australian Reed Warbler

Only seen at Five Bough Swamp on 24th, 25th & 26th Nov and Blue Gum Swamp on 26th Nov, both in New South Wales. The extensive reedbeds of Five Bough Swamp meant that many more were heard than actually seen but at least one could be found singing from the tops of reeds every hundred yards or so.

219. Little Grassbird

One showed well though briefly in the reeds next to path at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov with another seen further along being even briefer.

220. Golden-headed Cisticola

Two were in fields out the back of Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov and two were at Hasties Swamp on 15th Nov. Singles were seen, with several others heard, at Five Bough Swamp on 24th, 25th and 26th Nov.

221. Southern Emu-wren

At least three of these cracking but ultra skulking birds were found in the heath land along the cliff top path at Wattamolla, Royal National Park on 24th Nov.

222. Superb Fairy-wren

A very showy pair were found by the car park at O'Reilly's on 21st & 22nd Nov. Three were also at the bay car park at Wattamolla in Royal National Park on 24th Nov. A family party, 5+, were at the lower end of the Capertee Valley where they showed very well on roadside wires and posts.

223. Splendid Fairy-wren

A family party was found in the forest around the Wattle Dam in Binya State Forest on 25th Nov, absolute crackers.

224. Variegated Fairy-wren

Three of these crackers were at the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park on 23rd Nov with a stunning male at the southern end on 29th Nov. There was a further males were at Wattamolla in Royal National Park on 24th Nov and at Five Bough Swamp on 25th Nov.

225. Lovely Fairy-wren

A pair were along the Mangrove boardwalk near Cairns Airport in the evening of 9th Nov were the only ones of the trip.

226. Red-backed Fairy-wren

The causeway at Lake Mitchell had 10+ on 14th Nov whilst a pair showed well from the balcony of the Mareeba Wetlands visitor centre later the same morning.

227. White-browed Scrubwren

Another under-recorded species being seen more often than my records would suggest. It was fairly common along the trails around O'Reilly's and Royal National Park

228. Yellow-throated Scrubwren

Following the first three at Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov the species was abundant along the trails at O'Reilly's 21st & 22nd Nov. Several were at Royal National Park on 23rd Nov. The birds at O'Reilly's were particularly tame, often approaching very close.

229. Atherton Scrubwren

At least one was at the top of Mt. Lewis along the track at the dam on 13th Nov whilst 2+ were at Peterson Creek in Yungaburra on 15th Nov. Not a particularly inspiring species.

230. Large-billed Scrubwren

One was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov and one was at the Curtain Fig Tree at Yungaburra on 15th Nov. The last were three along the Border Track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

231. Rock Warbler

Three were along the early part of the coastal cliff path at Wattamolla in Royal National Park on 24th Nov.

232. Speckled Warbler

One was near a clearing midway along Capertee Valley on 27th Nov was actually better looking bird than the field guide indicates.

233. Chestnut-rumped Heathwren

One was seen on the coastal heaths at Wattamolla in Royal National Park on 24th Nov before the flies became just too much to cope with any longer.

234. Brown Gerygone (*pronounced Ger-ridge-O-knee*)

Three were by the Curtain Tree Fig near Yungaburra on 15th Nov with several noted along the Peterson Creek trail nearby same day. Three were seen roosting during the night spotlighting walk near Yungaburra, also on the 15th. One was along the border track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

235. Large-billed Gerygone (*pronounced Ger-ridge-O-knee*)

Three, including a nesting pair were along the Daintree River on 12th Nov and one was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

236. Weebill

Three were in the Outback by Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov.

237. Southern Whiteface

Five were found in the forest surrounding the Wattle Dam at Binya State Forest on 25th Nov.

238. Yellow-rumped Thornbill

An under-recorded species, it's a thornbill after all, with several at Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov.

239. Brown Thornbill

One was along the Border Track at O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

240. Buff-rumped Thornbill

Five were along Lady Carrington's Drive, Royal National Park on 17th Nov.

241. Mountain Thornbill

Two were besides the car park at the top of Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov.

242. White-throated Treecreeper

A pair were along the Wattle Track, Royal National Park on 28th Nov with a single at the nearby Lady Carrington Drive the next day.

243. Brown Treecreeper

The first birds encountered were of the dark-backed race at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov. Nominated birds were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown where there were two on 17th Nov, two at Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov and one at the camp site at Glen Davis on 27th Nov.

244. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

Binya State Forest had 3+ at the Wattle Dam on both 25th & 26th Nov.

245. Red Wattlebird

One was in the Lithgow Caravan Park on 26th Nov and five were in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

246. Brush Wattlebird

At least three were along Lady Carrington's Drive in Royal National Park on 23rd Nov.

247. Little Friarbird

Small numbers noted in the drier areas of north Queensland, mostly single birds but 2+ were at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov and several were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov.

248. Helmeted Friarbird

Singles were seen at Cairns Esplanade 9th Nov and at Cairns Centenary Park same day. One was along the Daintree River 12th Nov and I rescued one from the middle of the main highway near Mossman later the same morning. More birds were seen than the few that I recorded.

249. Noisy Friarbird

5+ were along Lady Carrington's Drive in Royal National Park on 23rd Nov with several at Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov and at Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

250. Blue-faced Honeyeater

Seen more often than actually noted down. Was found in the drier areas of Queensland around Mareeba, Mt. Molloy and Georgetown etc.

251. Yellow-throated Miner

The only birds seen were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov where there were 5+ in the Outback along the Green Hills track.

252. Noisy Miner

The first were at the Daisy Hill Koala Refuge south of Brisbane on 20th Nov where there were at least 12. There were then 5+ at the Brisbane Caravan Park on 23rd Nov and the last were in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov where it was common at the lower end.

253. Lewins Honeyeater

More commonly widely seen than what I ended up recording. There were several very tame and inquisitive birds along the forest tracks near O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

254. Yellow-spotted Honeyeater

One was along the Cairns airport mangrove boardwalk on 9th Nov. Two were at the Caravan Park in Cairns on 10th Nov. Cassowary House had 1+ on 11th Nov whilst Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge had several on 13th Nov. Further singles were at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov and along Duck Creek Road near O'Reilly's on 21st Nov

255. Graceful Honeyeater

Two were along the Daintree River on 12th Nov and one was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

256. Bridled Honeyeater

Only noted on Mt. Lewis where there were three on 13th Nov.

257. Yellow Honeyeater

One at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov was followed by three at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov. One was at Granite Gorge on 15th Nov and the last was at the Britz vehicle office in Cairns on 20th Nov.

258. Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge had 2+ on 13th Nov, one was in Royal National Park on 23rd Nov and four were in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov

259. White-eared Honeyeater

Two were at the Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest on 25th Nov whilst a further three were in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

260. Varied Honeyeater

Three were at the north end of Cairns Esplanade on 19th Nov.

261. White-plumed Honeyeater

2+ were at the Wattle Dam in Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov whilst 3+ were along Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

262. Fuscous Honeyeater

The only birds of the trip came during a short roadside stop midway down Capertee Valley on 27th Nov where five were seen.

263. New Holland Honeyeater

Only seen at Wattamolla in Royal National Park on 24th Nov where it was fairly common

264. Brown-backed Honeyeater

Five were at Centenary Lakes in Cairns on 9th Nov and one was along the Daintree River on 12th Nov.

265. Rufous-throated Honeyeater

Only seen at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov where 8+ were found around the water holes.

266. Tawny-crowned Honeyeater

Two were on the coastal heaths at Wattamolla, Royal National Park on 24th Nov.

267. Dusky Honeyeater

The only one of the trip was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

268. Eastern Spinebill

This cracking species was fairly common and widespread being noted at numerous locations. Following one at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov, three were at O'Reilly's on 21st & 22nd Nov, three in Royal National Park on 24th Nov with one there on the 28th and three along Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

269. Black Honeyeater

The Wattle Dam at Binya State Forest was the place to see this species with 3+ there in the morning of 25th & 26th Nov.

270. Banded Honeyeater

Six in the Outback at Cumberland Dam out at Georgetown on 17th Nov were the only ones of the trip.

271. Macleay's Honeyeater

Five or more were at Cassowary House on 11th Nov and several were with other honeyeater species at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov.

272. Brown Honeyeater

All birds seen were of singletons at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov, Mareeba Wetlands 14th Nov, Granite Gorge on 15th Nov and at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov.

273. Striped Honeyeater

1+ were seen briefly at the Wattle Dam in Binya State Forest on 25th & 26th Nov. None of these birds lingered.

274. Yellow-bellied Sunbird

Males were at Centenary Lakes, Cairns on 9th Nov, the Cairns Airport mangrove boardwalk 9th Nov and Cassowary House on 11th Nov. A pair were along the cycle track at Mt. Molloy on 13th Nov and a lone female was at Tizali Lakes on 16th Nov.

275. Silvereye

Several were noted from several locations such as Cassowary House on 11th Nov, Lake Eacham 15th Nov, Binya State Forest on 25th Nov and Lithgow Sewage Works 27th Nov.

276. Mistletoebird

Three were at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov were the only birds of the trip.

277. White-fronted Chat

A solitary female was found amongst the large numbers of Crimson Chats at Binya State Forest on 26th Nov.

278. Crimson Chat

Three at the Wattle Dam at Binya State Farm on 25th Nov were the precursor to the 70+ around the forest the following morning. 10+ were on the main Binya track coming down to puddles following the overnight rain. There were then scattered individuals around Wattle Dam however there was a large gathering in a grassy field on the way back out of the forest.

279. Striated Pardalote

At Binya State Forest 10+ were found around the Wattle Dam on 25th & 26th Nov whilst a single bird was seen in Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

280. Red-browed Finch

Apart from numerous scattered singletons Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge had 30+ on 13th Nov whilst Duck Creek Road in Lamington National Park had five on 21st Nov and 10+ were along Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park on 29th Nov.

281. Diamond Finch

The Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest was the only location where this attractive species was seen with 5+ on 25th Nov.

282. Double-barred Finch

At least four were at Mareeba Wetlands, besides the visitor centre, on 14th Nov and 8+ were at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov.

283. Zebra Finch

Surprisingly one was seen out at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 16th Nov. 1-2 were at Five Bough Swamp on 25th & 26th Nov but was particularly numerous along the lower stretch of the Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

284. Black-throated Finch

Mareeba Wetland had 12+ on 14th Nov whilst Cumberland Dam at Georgetown had 2+ on 16th Nov.

285. Chestnut-breasted Mannikin

Following the first two at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 13th Nov sizable flocks were noted at Hasties Swamp, 500+ on 16th Nov and 50+ at Tizali Lakes later the same day.

286. European Goldfinch

Two were at Lithgow Sewage Works on 27th Nov.

287. House Sparrow

Was noted around some of the larger towns, such as Atherton, though no numbers were recorded.

288. European Starling

Noted whilst driving inland towards Leeton on 24th Nov where it became increasingly abundant.

289. Metallic Starling

A species that I probably overlooked; birds were noted at Centenary Lakes at Cairns on 9th Nov, several along the Daintree River on 12th Nov and a nesting colony at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th and 13th Nov.

290. Yellow Oriole

Three were along the Daintree River on 12th Nov and one was at Cairns Esplanade 20th Nov.

291. Olive-backed Oriole

One was at Mary Farms briefly on 12th Nov whilst the only other one seen was at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov.

292. Figbird

Common and widespread in north Queensland with multiple birds in some locations

293. Common Myna

Common and widespread

294. Spangled Drongo

Two were at Centenary Lakes, Cairns on 9th Nov whilst the only other was one along the Daintree River on 12th Nov.

295. Magpie-lark

Common and widespread, especially north Queensland, seen virtually daily where they could often be seen along roadsides.

296. White-winged Chough

20+ at Yenda near Leeton on 25th Nov were followed by many in Binya State forest, i.e. 70+. This species was numerous in the Leeton area being noted along the main roads and in the caravan park

297. Apostlebird

Common in the drier inland areas of Queensland and New South Wales. Was particularly abundant at Cumberland Dam at Georgetown where numerous flocks accounted for the 100 or so seen whilst many were at Binya State Forest.

298. Black-faced Wood-swallow

Only found at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown where the first was seen at one of the water holes in the evening of the 16th Nov and five along the track beyond the dam the following morning.

299. Dusky Wood-swallow

Three were at Glen Davis, Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

300. White-breasted Wood-swallow

Under-recorded but was noted around Cairns, Daintree and Hasties Swamp

301. White-browed Wood-swallow

A large flock of around 250+ were in Binya State Forest at the Wattle Dam on 25th and 26th Nov with a flock of around 70+ at another location within the forest on the latter date.

302. Masked Wood-swallow

Only seen at Binya State Forest where they associated with the much commoner White-browed Wood-swallow; 10+ were there on 25th Nov and 5+ on 26th Nov.

303. Black Butcherbird

The first was seen catching Cicada's at Centenary Park at Cairns on 9th Nov. One at the Mangrove Boardwalk near Cairns same day was far briefer. Another visited the balcony at Cassowary House on 11th Nov.

304. Pied Butcherbird

One was in the 'Outback' at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov and one was along the road from Leeton towards Forbes on 26th Nov.

305. Grey Butcherbird

Two were at the Daisy Hill Koala Refuge south of Brisbane on 20th Nov and one was along Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

306. Pied Currawong

Fairly widespread and common, seen more often than I actually noted down.

307. Australian Magpie

Fairly widespread but not seen in high numbers.

308. Green Catbird

Two showed well along the Python Rock Track near O'Reilly's on 21st Nov whilst three were along nearby Border Track on 22nd Nov

309. Spotted Catbird

One was seen with another heard at Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov whilst two were heard only at the car park at Lake Eacham on 15th Nov.

310. Tooth-billed Catbird

One was at a 'lek' a few hundred metres along the trail at Mt. Lewis on 13th Nov whilst one was at the car park at Lake Eacham early morning of the 15th Nov.

311. Great Bowerbird

Between 3-5 were at two active bowers along the cycle track at Mt. Molloy on 13th Nov with two seen there, though from the school side, the next day. Singles were then at Mareeba Wetlands on 14th Nov and at Georgetown Caravan Park on 16th Nov. The Mt. Molloy birds were amongst the highlights of the trip. I stayed here watching the goings on of these birds for nearly two hours. It was fascinating to watching the behaviours of the male when the females came in to inspect the bower as well as the tidying up of the bower and the 'present' giving attempts. Recommended.

312. Regent Bowerbird

At O'Reilly's on 21st Nov there were at least five males and three females. These often showed well around the lodge and would often perch on your hand if you stuck it out.

313. Satin Bowerbird

Between 6-10 were at and around O'Reilly's on 20th & 21st Nov whilst single males were along Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park on 23rd & 29th Nov.

314. Victoria's Riflebird

Male and females were seen at Cassowary House on 11th Nov though the male was unfortunately not displaying. A male and 2 females were on high tree top snags at the Lake Eacham car park early morning of 15th Nov.

315. Paradise Riflebird

Several males and females were 'responsive' along the Python Rock Track near O'Reilly's on 21st Nov.

316. Albert's Lyrebird

Lamington National Park at O'Reilly's was the only place this bird was encountered with a singing bird with it or another seen later crossing the road at Duck Creek Road early morning on the 21st Nov. There was another unseen singing bird along the Border Track on both mornings.

317. Superb Lyrebird

A singing male was seen very well along the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park on 24th Nov whilst another was heard only at the north end on 29th Nov.

318. Torresian Crow

Numerous corvids were encountered during the trip with most not being looked at to closely however those that were identified as this species. Most were either one's or two's however there were 8+ at Cumberland Dam, Georgetown on 17th Nov and 5+ were at Daisy Hill Koala refuge on 20th Nov.

319. Australian Raven

Numerous corvids were encountered during the trip with most not being looked at to closely however this species was positively identified in Royal National Park.

MAMMALS

Platypus

The first was at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th Nov where it was seen mere feet away in the creek during a spotlighting session. It was seen feeding at the bottom of the creek, beneath the crystal clear water for some time. This individual remarkably done a repeat show at almost the exact same time the following evening.

One was then seen briefly by the suspension bridge at the Peterson Creek Track in Yungaburra on 15th Nov whilst 3+ were at Tizali Lakes, mid way between Atherton and Milla Milla Falls (look for the giant fish besides the road) on 16th Nov.

Long-nosed Bandicoot

Only seen during the night spotlighting session at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th Nov

Koala

One sleeping individual was eventually located at the Daisy Hill Koala Refuge south of Brisbane on 20th Nov.

Common Possum

One was noted during the night spotlighting walk at Yungaburra on 15th Nov.

Coppery-tailed Possum

At least eight were seen during the night spotlighting walk at Yungaburra on 15th Nov with a further 4+ later on at nearby Thomas Road.

Green Ringtail Possum

Singles were seen well during spotlighting sessions at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th Nov and near Yungaburra on 15th Nov.

Dusky Rat Kangaroo

One of this primitive kangaroo was outside Cassowary House on 11th Nov where it showed well for a prolonged period.

Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo

Following a sleeping, curled up in a ball single along the Peterson Creek Trail at Yungaburra on 15th Nov I went on Alans Tours that evening to try and get a proper look at the species however we failed to find any in the three hours of searching.

Agile Wallaby

This mid sized wallaby was first seen at Mary Farms on 12th Nov when one was seen in the heat haze in a roadside field. Further singles were then noted in the fields out the back of Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge 13th Nov, at Mt. Molloy on 14th Nov and three were on the causeway at Lake Mitchell also on 14th Nov.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo

10+ were along the main Mareeba wetlands access track late afternoon of the 14th Nov whilst a female, Joey and still in the pouch Joey were on Mareeba Golf Course in the evening. A field just north of the golf course had a large number present but the busy road prevented me from stopping and having a look. One was along the road near the Yungaburra cemetery on 15th Nov and two were disturbed from the 'roadside' whilst driving out to Granite Gorge on 15th Nov. Two were in Binya State Forest on 25th Nov whilst seven, including a very cute Joey, were at Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

Red Kangaroo

A pair were besides the road between Cumberland Dam and Georgetown on 16th Nov whilst three were along the same stretch the following morning.

Red-necked Wallaby

A large individual was seen very well in a clearing mid way along Capertee Valley on 27th Nov.

Black-striped Wallaby

Three or more were seen at Daisy Hill south of Brisbane on 20th Nov whilst searching for Koala

Black Wallaby

An approachable singleton was in the caravan park at Atherton on 15th Nov.

Mareeba Rock Wallaby

One of, if not the overall, highlight of the trip was hand feeding these guys at Granite Gorge on 15th Nov. This I can heartily recommend for a half-day visit, superb.

Red-legged Padamelon

Five were at the Padamelon protection area near Julatten on 13th Nov, take the first turning on the left 'after' the obvious restaurant when travelling back towards Julatten/Mossman.

Two were on roadsides at Lake Eacham early morning on 15th Nov and one was along the Peterson Creek trail at Yungaburra on 15th Nov.

Red-necked Padamelon

At least 8+ were noted in the camp ground next to O'Reilly's on 20th Nov with at least 4+ there on 21st Nov. Several were seen on roadside verges early morning of 21st Nov.

White-tailed Rat

Spotlighted at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge on 12th & 13th Nov.

Spectacled Flying Fox

One, possibly, two were seen at Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge during night spotlighting on 12th & 13th Nov with another at Lake Eacham on 14th Nov.

Little Red Flying Fox

One, presumably this species, was spot lit near the Georgetown Caravan Park on 16th Nov.

Porpoise

A pod of around 10 or so were noted off of the coastal cliffs at Botany Bay south of Sydney on 29th Nov.