

## Australia – the West, the South and Tasmania Oct 5<sup>th</sup> – Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 2010

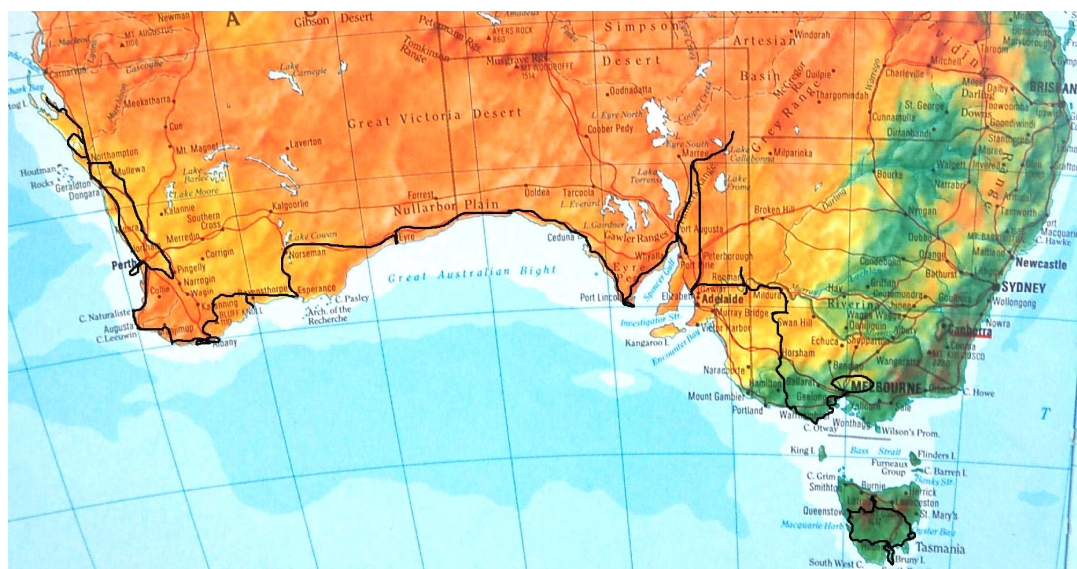
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### 1) Introduction

Whilst this 10 week trip was primarily intended as a birdwatching trip and we wanted to see as many of the possible birds as we could, we also wanted to walk, photograph and explore, and to experience the varied scenery and habitats, and especially the flowers which these parts of Australia offer. The trip was a great success – we love Australia and can't wait to get back!

Having made two previous trips to Australia, the first to the Kimberley with George Swann in 2000 and the second, a 12 week campervan trip to Queensland and NSW in 2006, we were keen to fill in the gaps in our Australian bird list. The itinerary therefore concentrated on Western Australia for the endemics and south coast specialists, northern South Australia for the dry country birds, the North Western Victoria Mallee for the Mallee specialists, the Great Ocean Road for scenery, koalas and the coastal species and Tasmania for the Tasmanian endemics. We also wanted to see Dugongs at Monkey Mia, flowers in the West and catch up on Rock Parrots, Hooded Plovers and our three bogey birds from 2006 – Rose Robin, Ground Parrot and Southern Emu-wren.



We hired a 4WD campervan in Perth and drove northwards as far as Monkey Mia taking in Kalbarri NP and various flower sites on the way. We returned on the inland route through Millewa and headed southwards to Dryandra for several days. We then spent a day on Rottnest before heading to the South West coast – Capes Naturaliste and Leeuwin, Walpole, Valley of the Giants, Cheyne Beach etc. We then headed inland for some splendid days at Stirling Range Retreat before heading east via Fitzgerald River and Esperance to the Nullarbor crossing (including a side trip to the Eyre Bird Observatory). Once in South Australia we travelled through the Eyre Peninsula and up through the Flinders Ranges to the Strezlecki Track. After a side trip to Port Gawler we went to Gluepot and the Murray River area, then across the border into Victoria and into the Mallee reserves. Then down to the Great Ocean Road, a visit to Werribee and a quick dash across to Bunyip to find Rose Robin. Finally a flight to Tasmania to pick up a different camper van where we spent 10 days on a clockwise

circuit including Bruny Island, Truganini Reserve, Mount Field, Lake St Clair, Strahan, Corinna, Cradle Mountain and Maria Island.

Our total distance travelled was 13,700 kms and the trip cost about £13,300 including everything – flights, travel to Heathrow, van hire, petrol, camp sites, food etc.

We saw 311 species of birds, including 71 lifers which brings our Australia list to 561. We also saw possums, koalas, a platypus, echidnas and wombats plus the inevitable kangaroos, wallabies and delightful pademelons. Not forgetting dugongs, breaching humpback whales and various interesting reptiles. We enjoyed almost all the places we went to, and looking back would hardly change the trip at all.

Our main dips were Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Western Whipbird, Eyrean Grasswren and Freckled Duck. Some of the “easier” WA endemics were harder than we expected – the two fairy-wrens, Western Yellow Robin and Red-eared Firetail took some tracking down and both Rock Parrot and Hooded Plover evaded us for weeks. However, we succeeded with Short-tailed and Striated Grasswrens, Mallee Emu-wren, both the Whiitefaces and Letter Winged Kites so I reckon we didn't do too badly!

We used Slater as our field guide having decided that Pizzey and Knight was just too heavy to take. We also used Thomas and Thomas “Finding the birds of Australia” which is out of date but still useful. In Western Australia we used Frank O'Connor's notes from his website (though some seemed a little out of date?). In South Australia, Peter Waanders' PDF document “A Birdwatching Guide to South Australia” was invaluable as was Tim Dolby's “Where to watch birds in Victoria”. In order to avoid taking too much paper we took a Netbook (small laptop) with us on to which I downloaded large quantities of other useful documents and information, especially trip reports and emails from Birding-Aus and scanned pages from Pizzey and Knight.

Lonely Planet's “Watching wildlife - Australia” was handy background reading. For finding camp sites and cafés and other “touristy” things, and for background information, we used the Lonely Planet guides.

Buying a road Atlas at the planning stage was most helpful – the AA do a good one, available from Amazon. We marked with a highlighter all the places we fancied going to, which made route planning much easier. Many campsites were also marked on this atlas which was handy. We had planned an outline itinerary which we more-or-less followed but we made a number of minor changes along the way.

We also had David Stewart's CDs of Western Australia, the Mallee and Tasmania which I had downloaded to an Olympus DS40 recorder/player. These were very useful and we did use the calls occasionally either to attract birds or to help confirm their ID. We did try pishing, with very mixed effects – quiet pishing sometimes worked very well.

We did not use any professional guides, though Gina Hopkins did a splendid tour around Werribee for us. On the whole, bird identification was not difficult (compared, say, to South America) as there are not many confusion species and you could usually get a decent view with sufficient time. However finding some of the birds was quite tricky and could take a good number of hours or days.

During research we used trip reports on birdtours.co.uk and travellingbirder.com. We also used a large number of websites as follows:

### **General**

[http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/quicklinks/northern\\_roads/northern.asp](http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/quicklinks/northern_roads/northern.asp) Outback roads

<http://www.bom.gov.au/> Weather and Drought maps

<http://au.yahoo.com/> Australian Yahoo

[http://www.street-directory.com.au/sd\\_new/home.cgi](http://www.street-directory.com.au/sd_new/home.cgi) Street maps

<http://www.immi.gov.au/> Electronic Travel Authorities

## Birding Web Sites

<http://www.ereamaea.com/>  
<http://groups.google.com/group/birding-aus> Birding Aus Google group  
<http://boca.org.au/>  
<http://aussiebirding.wildiaries.com/>  
<http://www.aviceda.org/abid/search.php?keyword=albatross>  
<http://www.birdata.com.au/maps.vm?lat=-27.1&lon=133.6&scale=4000000&spe>  
<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/>  
<http://bird-o.com/>  
<http://www.birdpedia.com/au/bi.dll/bipu01?m=002>  
<http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/birding-aus/> Birding Aus archives

## Western Australia

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/the-organisation/western-australia.html>  
<http://birdswa.org.au/sightings.htm>  
<http://members.iinet.net.au/~foconnor/> Frank O'Connor's website  
<http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/index.php> National Parks  
<http://www.rotnnestexpress.com.au/index.aspx> Rottnest Express  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/wa/> Weather  
<http://members.westnet.com.au/westernflora.tinker/WFCP.htm> Western Flora

## South Australia

<http://www.birdssa.asn.au/>  
<http://www.sabirding.com/> Peter Waanders' website  
<http://www.birding.com.au/site/company/> Jolly Goodfellows  
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/> National Parks  
<http://australian-4x4.com.au/strzelecki-track-sa-australia.html>

## Victoria

<http://tim-dolby.blogspot.com/> Tim Dolby's website  
<http://tim-dolby.blogspot.com/2007/08/where-to-see-birds-in-northern-victoria.html>  
<http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/> National Parks  
<http://www.ereamaea.com/BirdlineSpecies.aspx?Taxon=1244&Birdline=1>  
<http://www.ereamaea.com/MostRecentSightings.aspx?Taxon=6853>  
<http://www.ereamaea.com/>  
<http://www.firetailbirdwatchingtours.com/> Simon Starr  
<http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/plague-locusts/updates>  
<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/> Roads in Victoria

## Tasmania

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/> National Parks  
<http://www.brunycruises.com.au/tours/cruise.aspx>  
<http://www.inalabruny.com.au/>

## 2) Things to know about (in no particular order)

**Visas** (called Electronic Travel Authorisations) can be obtained over the Internet for a few dollars. The maximum time of stay in Australia for a standard tourist visa is 3 months.

**Internet access** – we took our own Netbook expecting wi-fi access (called Wireless Internet) to be easily available but it wasn't. Some caravan parks had it for a fee, but the connection was not always good. Really trendy cafes had it but we didn't often go to places like that!

**Camper Van Hire** can be very expensive especially for 4WD. We got a decent deal from Cheapacampa, who rent out older Apollo vehicles. You can get a **really** cheap deal in Tasmania where our basic but serviceable small non-4wd van had done 300,000 kms! (TasmaniaCampervanRentals)

**Bushflies** can be a real problem in the dryer areas at any time other than winter. They are like small houseflies, and crawl all over you especially around your eyes and mouth. Head nets do work, but you can't really use them when eating or using binoculars, and they can feel hot. Some insect repellents – e.g. Aeroguard Roll-on – are quite effective, but most, including DEET based ones, are not. Luckily the flies do not come "inside" buildings or vehicles.

**Weather** – is very unpredictable in Oz these days. Most of the time we were in southern Australia it was very cold with strong southerly winds and showers and we had two pretty wet days. Many of the inland tracks were closed due to rain for some weeks in South Australia and we had to grab our opportunity once they had opened. We were rained out of Gluepot after only 24 hours followed by two wet days around Waikerie and had torrential rain around Melbourne. However in some ways we were lucky as there had been severe flooding in September (you could see all the resulting road washouts) and there was flooding again just as we left Melbourne and as I write this there is more flooding again.

**Drought and Floods** West Australia is still suffering from drought at present whilst eastern Australia is having the most rain they have ever had. Rain has been falling in the usually dry interior for about 12 months so we were keen to see the "greening of the desert". (It had been right at the end of a long drought when we visited in 2006 and everything was dry as a crisp). This is all due to an exceptional La Nina. It had an obvious effect on the birds – all the herons, ibises, wildfowl, pelicans etc had gone to the interior to breed and Werribee was virtually empty. Also the vegetation was very lush, including the spinifex which had tall flowering stems, making it more difficult to see small birds – on the other hand they were breeding so the numbers should be building up.

**National Parks** We spent quite a lot of our time in National Parks and the entry fees can mount up. We bought a \$40 Holiday Pass in WA and in Tasmania we bought a \$60 pass. Apart from making financial sense it was much more convenient than paying at each park and it meant that we could just spend a short time in a park and not feel bad about having to pay!

**National Park Information:** National Park office opening hours were completely out of sync with our requirements. We found that it was often impossible to get walk leaflets etc in advance or at any other location, but the offices closed at 5:00 pm (and not a second later) and opened at 9:00 or 10:00. They seemed to be oriented towards coach parties of day visitors. Sometimes the leaflets were available in a display unit outside – more of this would be very welcome. (The often quoted solution is that the information is available on the web – well it is, but with no web access and no printer this is not a lot of use)

**Time zones** Intriguing this – SA is half an hour behind Victoria and some Nullarbor roadhouses have their own time zones!

**Food** in shops seemed expensive though this was partly the result of the awful exchange rate - about \$1.55 to the pound compared to \$2.40 last time we were there. Meat was cheap and good. Good quality vegetables are hard to find in the Outback.

**State Borders and Fruit Fly Exclusion Zones** We kept crossing these and each time you have to get rid of, or eat, or cook, all your fresh veg and fruit. This took a bit of planning but the fact that cooked stuff was OK meant that I was often to be found cooking up some sort of ratatouille mixture just before crossing a border! We were only checked at Ceduna coming into SA where they looked in our fridge.

**Eating Out** seemed more expensive than last time we were there. A Flat White coffee was about \$3.80 (about £2.50) wherever you bought it. Note that Australians in the outback areas eat their evening meal early – food is often served from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

**Service** at many cafes was exceptionally slow. I think because each coffee is made from scratch and takes ages - they take the “Barista” thing very seriously. Coffee can be good, but if you have a mug they often only use the same amount of coffee as a cup and fill up with milk so it can be very weak.

**Locusts** We knew that locusts had been building up and could be a problem for us and indeed they were. Wyperfeld NP was closed for locust spraying so we had to change our plans. There were so many locusts underfoot at Pink Lakes that it made walking unpleasant.

**Tyre Inflation** We found that the tyres on our camper van were hugely over-inflated. This explained why the van seemed to be very difficult to stop. When we inflated them correctly the problem disappeared. It is also necessary to deflate tyres for sand driving (e.g. the track to the Eyre Bird Observatory) - however a tyre inflator is never supplied so it is necessary to buy one. (You may be able to manage without deflating the tyres but it is anti-social as it damages the tracks)

**Arriving and Leaving** The Comfort Inn in Perth was a good place to stay on our first night – near the airport and the Apollo office was just over the road. In Melbourne we stayed in the City Square Motel – right in the centre so handy for sightseeing but a bit hard to find (a very unobtrusive entrance) but very good value and a spacious room – good for repacking! The Melbourne airport bus service drops you off quite nearby.

**Wine Boxes** Wine seemed expensive compared with the UK so we experimented with Wine Boxes (or Casks as they are called). The Banrock Station boxes were not cheap but they were consistently good and far cheaper than bottles.

**Crossing the Nullarbor** This was a bit boring but not as bad as we expected. The scenery is by no means treeless all the way and there are some super skylines (we were probably quite lucky to have showery and thundery weather). We did a couple of side trips - the Eyre Bird Observatory and a quick jaunt up the road to Cook until the very sticky puddles got too large. Passing road trains are a hazard - they throw up gravel from the side of the road and the wind shock can be significant. Most Roadhouses have a bare and basic campsite and provide fuel, food and a few very basic foodstuffs such as milk and bread but no more, so eating healthily can be problematic as you have to get rid of fresh food at the border! (They all have a bar and restaurant of course – not necessarily to be recommended!)

**Fuel prices** can be quite variable even within the same town. Fill up whenever you see cheap fuel! Mundrabilla Roadhouse on the Nullarbor is renowned for cheap fuel, compared with other Nullarbor Roadhouses. There is also cheap fuel at Norseman and amazingly cheap fuel at the Lyndhurst Hotel. Prices ranged from \$1.23 to \$1.70 per litre for diesel.

**Driving and Kangaroos** Much has been written about the dangers of driving at night and running into a kangaroo and they are all true! In fact the kangaroos seemed to appear at about 4:30 pm wherever we were, but at least you can see them at that time of day. We made it a rule never to drive after 6:00 pm.

**Phones** When we arrived at Perth we bought a very cheap Vodaphone phone at the airport. This was a mistake. Although many of the areas we travelled in had no mobile phone coverage at all, we found a significant number of places where there was Telstra coverage but not Vodaphone. (e.g. Norseman, Parachilna, Wilpena, Leigh Creek) though apparently we

could still use the phone in emergencies by dialling 112. It is worth getting a cheap phonecard as phone boxes are plentiful and usually in working order but many do not take cash.

**Water Quality** In some outback areas the campsites actually had no water at all or more often, no drinking water. When drinking water was available it was often not very pleasant. So we filled up whenever we found good water and kept our drinking water separate from our other water e.g. for washing up. We sometimes resorted to bottled water – not something I like doing at all.

**Camp site hours** Commercial camp sites often close the office at 6:00pm and there may be no after-hours check in facilities and no alternatives. The bigger the operation the worse this problem is – we just squeezed into Wilpena Pound Resort and Cradle Mountain Village before curfew. We often needed to leave early in the morning before the office was open but there was usually some way of leaving a key (e.g. for the ablutions blocks or the gate boom) and getting the deposit back if you organised it the evening before.

**Campsite hosts** In some more remote National Park camp sites in Western Australia (e.g. Fitzgerald River) there was a Campsite Host – a permanent (volunteer) caravan resident who looked after the barbecues and toilets and dealt with any problems. They seemed to have satellite communications so were useful to have around in emergencies. We thought this was a very good idea.

**Campsites for sale/closed.** Many of the camp sites we stayed in, and country cafes, roadhouses and shops we used, were, sadly, for sale. At least two of the campsites we intended to use had disappeared under housing or holiday developments. We were using up-to-date atlases and guide books so the speed of this happening is worrying – soon there will be no camp sites left for mobile travellers, as even the ones that were still there were converting many of their touring sites to cabins.

**Outback tracks in a camper van** If you hire a conventional (non 4WD) camper van then you are usually not allowed to travel on dirt roads at all, apart from tracks leading to camp sites. This is obviously extremely restrictive. So you can get round this by hiring a 4WD camper van (ours was based on a Toyota Hilux pickup) – you can then travel on any dirt road provided it is shown on a road atlas, and is not just a track. It was sometimes difficult to tell which category a track in a National Park fell into, and we certainly bent the rules a few times. And if you want to travel on a number of specifically named roads such as the Birdsville Track and Strzelecki Track you have to ring up and ask permission the day before – the hire company then checks the road conditions and either gives or denies permission. This is all a bit ridiculous – tracks such as the above are actually closed if the conditions are bad and you can't go along them anyway. And some areas, such as Cape York, are completely forbidden. However these are the rules which I suspect are widely broken but you could find yourself in serious trouble with the insurance if you broke down in a forbidden place.

**Quandong Pies** One of the pleasures of travel around northern South Australia was the Quandong Pie – a pie with Quandong filling and a crumble topping.. Available in most cafes (many of which were called the Quandong Café) and always good especially with ice cream. Quandong jam is good too. (The Quandong is a wild bush fruit which is now also cultivated)

**Saturday afternoon closing** in the Outback - We were caught out at Leigh Creek by Saturday afternoon closing. **Everything** was closed – we could not even buy a phone card.

**Flavoured milk** The Australians seem to have a love affair with flavoured milk. Every café, bakery or roadhouse had one, or maybe two, complete cabinets containing flavoured milk in cartons, often two competing brands. The favoured tippie of truck drivers I think! Coffee flavour was good but if you want to taste the coffee go for Extra Strong!

**Flowering Gums** We came across very few of these but there were a few exceptions. The very tall trees at the Porungorups were flowering en masse, which did attract a good number of birds, and also some of the Stringybarks at Little Desert, which didn't. Otherwise it was just the odd flowering trees at camp sites (perhaps not a local variety?) and the Blue Gums on

Maria Island. It is possible that the wet weather meant that trees were concentrating on producing new leaves rather than flowering.

**New building** We found the amount of new building, new estates, land sales, "Land just released" etc in WA to be extremely depressing. West Australia seems determined to build all over its bushland, especially near the coast, just like Queensland.

### 3) Itinerary

**5<sup>th</sup> Oct** – train from Pembrokeshire to Heathrow and took the BA flight to Singapore, changing to a Qantas flight to Perth. Overnight Perth on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**7<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Picked up campervan and drove north out of Perth through endless suburbs and many more being built. Big shopping session at Jondalup. Got a bit lost and finished up at Regan's Ford for the night. Good birds at the ford.

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct** – North to Badgingarra (for flowers) via pleasant Scenic Drive then to Western Flora near Eneabba. Guided Wildflower walk.

**9<sup>th</sup> Oct** – self guided Wildflower Walk then drive north to Hamelin Pools Station Camp site.

**10<sup>th</sup> Oct** – birdwatch around the site then to Eagle Bluff and Hamelin Bay for Stromalites and cream tea, then on to Monkey Mia. Walked the Nature Walk.

**11<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Nature Walk again then watched dolphin feeding then catamaran trip for Dugongs. Overnight at free site at Murchison River

**12<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Kalbarri NP – various walks and lookouts – overnight Kalbarri.

**13<sup>th</sup> Oct** - Kalbarri area then cross country to Millewa for Wreath Flowers. Overnight Perenjori.

**14<sup>th</sup> Oct** – south to Northam and then to Lazy Days Holiday Park near Dryandra.

**15<sup>th</sup> Oct** – at Dryandra – Old Mill Dam, Woylie Walk, "Barna Mia" evening tour, overnight Congelin Campground, Dryandra.

**16<sup>th</sup> Oct** – at Dryandra – driving the tracks, Lol Grey Loop walk, shopping at Narrogin, sunset at Congelin Dam. overnight Congelin Campground, Dryandra.

**17<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Ochre Trail at Dryandra then drove to Fremantle.

**18<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Rottnest trip. Overnight Fremantle.

**19<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Drove south and eventually found the Old Bunbury Road and Lake McLarty. Walk at Sugarloaf Rock and Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse Loop. Black Cockatoo roost. Overnight Yangalup.

**20<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Sugarloaf Rock again, "Mountains of the Moon", lighthouse area, Bunker Bay, Boranorup Forest, Hamelin Bay, Cape Leeuwin. Overnight Boranorup Forest camp site.

**21<sup>st</sup> Oct** – Cape Leeuwin, Beedalup Falls, Heartbreak Loop, Centennial Tree. Overnight Coalmine Beach campsite Denmark.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Oct** – Valley of the Giants walkway, William Bay and Cheynes Beach. Birdwatched around the camp site.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Oct** – around Cheynes Beach.

**24<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Two People's Bay, Sinkers Reef walk, Porungorups, Stirling Range Retreat. Evening birdwatch at the camp site.

**25<sup>th</sup> Oct** – at Stirling Range Retreat – birdwatch around the camp. Also the Kanga trail and Bluff Knoll.

**26<sup>th</sup> Oct** – guided wild flower walk (R), climb Mt Trio (P). Then to Point Ann campsite in the Fitzgerald River NP.

**27<sup>th</sup> Oct** – St Mary's Inlet, Pt Ann lookout, Fitzgerald River bridge, Esperance esplanade. Overnight Esperance.

**28<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Esperance Esplanade, Norseman, Cocklebidy Roadhouse.

**29<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Eyre Bird Observatory, then on to Mundrabilla Roadhouse.

**30<sup>th</sup> Oct** – short drive up the road to Cook, then on to Ceduna.

**31<sup>st</sup> Oct** – admin morning, then Coffin Bay NP.

**1<sup>st</sup> Nov** – Point Avoid and Golden Island lookouts, Big Swamp lake, Taylor's Landing Campsite at Lincoln NP. Explored around and walked part of Investigator's Track.

**Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Western Whipbird search, Arno Bay boardwalk, Outback Centre at Port Augusta, Mount Remarkable NP – walked the short loop track and overnight camp.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Nov** – short walk then into Port Augusta via Stilt Pools (none), Arid Lands Botanical Gardens, then to the Flinders Ranges and Wilpena Pound Resort.

**4<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Stokes Hill Lookout, Wilpena Pound Lookout walk. Overnight Willow Springs.

**5<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Appealina Ruins, Blinman, Parachilna Gorge, Blinman Pools walk ( part of), Brachina Gorge, Willow Springs

**6<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Stokes Hill Lookout, Bunyeroo Gorge, Copley

**7<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Strzelecki Track, Mt Lyndhurst sites, overnight Lyndhurst Motel campsite.

**8<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Strzelecki Track, Mt Lyndhurst, Montecollina Bore

**9<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Letter Winged Kite site then back down the Strzelecki to Copley.

**10<sup>th</sup> Nov** – a long and interesting drive south stopping at Quorn, Clare Valley then to Port Gawler and on to the Barossa Valley, overnight Tanundra.

**11<sup>th</sup> Nov** – to Waikerie then Gluepot. Explored Track 8. Camped at the Bellbird campsite.

**12<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Track 8 again then left at lunchtime as it started to rain. Explored the Morgan area. Overnight Waikerie.

**13<sup>th</sup> Nov** – admin day (rain) and local walk – Hart Lagoon. Overnight Waikerie.

**14<sup>th</sup> Nov** – local walking then Ramco Lagoon then to Eremophila Park for the afternoon and night.

**15<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Banrock Station wetlands walk and lunch, then overnight Renmark.

**16<sup>th</sup> Nov** – into Victoria to Hattah-Kulkyne, Lake Mournpall camp site.

**17<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Nowingi Track, Konardin Track, path to the Warepil Lookout.

**18<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Konardin Track, then various areas, Nature Discovery Drive then to Ouyen (for a Vanilla Slice) and to Pink Lakes campsite in Murray-Sunset NP. Kline Nature Walk.

**19<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Honeymoon Hut Track and Wymlet Tank. Then towards Wyperfeld but shut due to locusts so on to Little Desert Lodge.

**20<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Guided Aviary Walk then the Stringybark Walk. On to the Grampians – Smith Mill campsite.

**21<sup>st</sup> Nov** – walk to Mackenzie Falls, then explored various tracks around the Grampians, overnight Jimmy Creek campsite.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Nov** – Wanlon River Road, Bryan Swamp, then south to the Great Ocean Road. Overnight Port Campbell.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Nov** – Great Ocean Road, Cape Otway, Blanket Bay campsite.

**24<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Cape Otway lighthouse, Otway ridge road, Erskine Falls, walk to Lemonade Creek, Lake Lorne at Drysdale, overnight at the Eldorado Holiday Village in Geelong.

**25<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Werribee trip with Gina Hopkins (whom we had met on our previous trip to Oz) Overnight Anglesea.

**26<sup>th</sup> Nov** – walk around campsite, then explored Anglesea Heath then drove across Melbourne and eventually found a campsite at Pakenham.

**27<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Bunyip – various sites and walks then drove north to Healesville and camped at the Badger’s Brook campsite.

**28<sup>th</sup> Nov** – birdwatch around the site, then wi-fi admin in the Innocent Bystander in Healesville then drive around the north of Melbourne to the campsite at Craigieburn. Watched the exciting cricket (1st Test at Brisbane) on the TV in the rain! Cleaned out the van and packed.

**29<sup>th</sup> Nov** – returned the van and flew to Tasmania and picked up the new van. Camped at Snug.

**30<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Bruny Island, north for pardalotes then south and Grass Point walk. Overnight Captain Cook campsite at Adventure Bay.

**1<sup>st</sup> Dec** – Rainforest areas, Mangana Summit walk, South Bruny, evening at The Neck.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dec** – Peter Murrell reserve, Truganini Reserve, Mount Field NP.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Dec** – Russell Falls, Lady Barron Falls and Tall Trees walks. “Wild Things” rescue centre, then Lake St Clair.

**4<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Watersmeet/Platypus walk. Then drive westward stopping at the Franklin River Nature Trail and Donaghy’s Lookout. Evening heathland exploration. Overnight at Strahan Holiday Park.

**5<sup>th</sup> Dec** – early morning on the heathland then drove north to Corinna. Walked the Huon Pine trail and the river walk.

**6<sup>th</sup> Dec** – river walk for platypus, boat trip down the Pieman River, then drove north to Cradle Mountain camp site. Evening walk at Pencil Pine/Knyvet Falls.

**7<sup>th</sup> Dec** – raining so Cradle Mountain was cancelled. Drove instead across Tasmania to Triabunna. Booked the Maria Island ferry for the next day. The drove to the Three Thumbs picnic area in a gale.

**8<sup>th</sup> Dec** - day trip to Maria Island. Overnight Big 4 Barilla Holiday park near Cambridge.

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec** – pack up and clean van, morning in Hobart, return van and fly to Melbourne.

**10<sup>th</sup> Dec** - day in Melbourne then fly home in the evening.



#### 4) Notes On Locations

It should be noted that site details in Thomas and Thomas should be taken as guidelines only. Much of the information is very out of date, but some is still absolutely spot on – the trick is to know which is which! Birding-aus, especially the archives, is invaluable for helping with this.

##### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Regan's Ford** The ford in the evening was very good for birds – Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, Western Corellas, Western Spinebill, Scarlet Robin etc

**Badgingarra/Eneabba/Mullewa** – the flowers here were pretty spectacular even though it was considered a poor year, being very dry. We were too late for the “everlastings” but the shrubs were putting on a good show as were the Wreath Flowers. At Badgingarra Flower Walk we had good views of Rufous Fieldwrens and Tawny Crowned Honeyeater.

**Western Flora** (north of Eneabba) This camp site runs daily Wildflower walks at 4:00 pm and has self guided trails too. The site was full of wildlife having a tame Bobtail and a nesting Tawny Frogmouth only just above eye height.

**Monkey Mia resort** We did not like the resort – very cramped and few touring sites all booked months ahead. We had to park in the tent camping car parking area. We only managed brief views of the Thick Billed Grasswren in the car park – they slid under a bush near the entrance booth and did not come out, but we then had amazing views on the Nature Walk just where it joins a red stony track before heading uphill to the reservoir. Later we had amazing views of Crested Bellbird hopping round the car park. Strangely we found no Chiming Wedgebills here but did see a huge cat on the Nature Walk. We also had excellent views of Dugongs on the catamaran trip (**not** the Shotover but the much larger more comfortable Aristocat)

**Hamelin Pools Station camp site** This camp site may be new – it is not the one down by the Stromalites but closer to the main road and well signposted. It was simply amazing for birds with Chiming Wedgebills and both Variegated and White Winged Fairy Wrens all around the van sites (which were in a rather bare stony habitat with isolated bushes). There was also a large freshwater pool which had a really good range of water birds and waders.

**Kalbarri NP** – we saw some good birds here – our first Redthroat (a family), White Fronted Honeyeater, Peregrine, Red-capped Robin and a Malleefowl crossing the main road (just after a “Beware Malleefowl” sign)!

**Dryandra** Before we arrived we were not aware that there were camping facilities here but the Congelin Campground was just fine, and next door to a dam which was good in the evening for parrots. (Note that there is no camping at the “Lions Village”.) The driveable trails and walking trails were all good – the areas where forest met paddock were particularly good for parrots It was extremely dry here which may have been affecting the birds – we were unable to find Western Yellow Robin and only found one pair of Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens which should be much easier. However we had excellent views of nesting Carnaby's Black Cockatoos and there were plenty of Rufous Treecreepers. Note that we did not see Numbats – sightings had been very scarce recently.

**“Barna Mia”** This is a facility at Dryandra where you are taken on a guided night walk to view nocturnal marsupials. They are actually captive animals in a large fenced enclosure and the guide attracts them with food while the spectators sit on logs and watch quietly. The experience and the interpretation were very good – you got quite close to the animals, which seemed very relaxed, and it was much better than looking into a cage. We saw Burrowing Bettongs, Rufous Hare Wallabies and Bilbies. We viewed the animals with red light so the photos looked odd (no flash allowed) but when converted to greyscale they look good. Barna Mia has to be booked in advance – you can phone from the box at the Lions Village. (Where there are nesting Bush Stone Curlews). Although we were not staying there, the caretaker at the Lions Village was very helpful with suggestions for birding locations.

**Rottnest** For our Rottnest trip we camped at Coogee Beach camp site, south of Fremantle and caught the bus into Fremantle for the ferry. This worked well. Taking the ferry from “C Shed” gives you the maximum time on the island. Rottnest was much more commercialised than I expected but the beaches were still beautiful. This was the only place we found Banded Stilts but we failed to find Rock Parrot despite extensive searching. The Quokkas were mostly snoozing under bushes during the day but they started to wake up just as we left.

**Lake McLarty area** We struggled with the directions for this now there is a new road. When we eventually got there we couldn't see how to get to the lake as there seemed to be fences in the way. However it was very full and we couldn't see any birds on it!

**Cape Naturaliste** The “garden” where you can find Red Eared Firetails at the bird bath (but not when it is raining!) seemed to be being dug up. The Lighthouse Loop walk was very birdy and flowery – unfortunately not the species we were looking for. We had good views of passing Humpback Whales, some breaching. There were no Tropicbirds at Sugarloaf Rock – we tried both afternoon and morning.

**Boranup Forest Drive and campsite** Karri trees with a flowering understorey – masses of common honeyeaters. Also our first White Breasted Robins.

**Cape Leeuwin** We searched for an hour and a half here but found no Rock Parrots or Firetails. However a large Dugite snake crawled across the lawn while we were having a coffee – it came out of the long grass just where we had been walking!

**Valley of the Giants aerial walkway** I was impressed with this – it does not wave around and I even felt almost relaxed! Unfortunately it rained while we were up there but it must be stunning when the Tingle trees are flowering.

**William Bay (near Denmark)** Looked like a good place for Rock Parrots (islands off shore) but we did not see them. Nice heath too. This was the only place we found Red Winged Fairy Wren.

**Cheynes Beach** Much has been written about this spot so I won't repeat it. The Noisy Scrub-bird near the campsite sang for us in the evenings and I waited as it sang ever closer to the small track down to the beach. Sure enough it eventually strolled across the track giving stunning views. We also saw a bird flying on two occasions – well sort of gliding – it presumably climbs up a bush and glides down, Maybe they were feeding young and needed to get back to the nest site quickly. We heard but did not see Western Bristlebird – I think we may not have been out early enough. Of Western Whipbird there was no sign. Other highlights were nest-building Red Eared Firetails, nesting Brush and Common Bronzewing, tame Bandicoots and Kangaroos and masses of birds on the flowering heath though mostly they were Silvereyes and New Holland Honeyeaters.

**Two Peoples Bay** was very scenic but completely quiet bird-wise when we were there (early-ish morning). We didn't like to walk the firebreaks as they had “Dieback No Entry” notices on them. We walked to Sinker Reef, a boring walk through wide firebreaks, but did not see any Rock Parrots.

**Porungorups** The picnic area was busy when we arrived but there was still a tame Rufous Treecreeper around the picnic tables as per Thomas and Thomas! The Kauri trees were flowering and there were birds up there very high – we just managed to distinguish some lorikeets which had to be Purple Crowned.

**Stirling Range Retreat** One of the birding and floral high spots of the trip. We saw 8 species of parrot here, most of them nesting. There were Elegant Parrots nesting in the tree by our van – we had up till that point only had poor flying views of this bird. The same was true of Regent Parrots – but we had good views of birds nesting in the trees close to the camp site. In the morning and the evening the parrots fed on the ground near the dam and we had splendid views of Red Capped Parrot, Western Rosella and Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

Purple Crowned Lorikeets fed in the few flowering gum trees at the site, and the inevitable Ringnecks and Galahs made up the 8.

Volunteers from Birds Australia give talks in the evening and lead bird walks during the day – these are popular with non-birdwatchers as you are shown birds on the nest such as Black faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Willie Wagtail and Tawny Frogmouth and you can borrow binoculars. We made use of this local knowledge to locate our only Western Yellow Robins of the trip. There are also half day guided flower excursions – very good for orchids.

As well as the excellent birding around the camp site there are also trails you can walk, and within just a short drive there are mountains that can be climbed which have fantastic flowers on top

**Fitzgerald River NP** The information centre was run down, everywhere had fairly recently been burnt but the road had just been re-gravelled making it very slippery. It was a long drive to the (very nice) Point Ann campsite. At St Mary's Inlet, close to the camp site we found our only Hooded Plovers of the trip.

**Esperance** We were really relying on the Esplanade to supply our much wanted Rock parrots, and it did. In the little picnic area just by the entrance to the port, early in the morning.

**Eyre Bird Observatory** It was showery and very windy when we visited – not good for birds. An interesting place but we did not see many birds of interest except Blue Breasted Fairy-wrens. As there had been so much rain recently nothing was coming to the bird baths. The 4WD track was deep sand but we managed OK after letting the tyres down.

**Esperance to the Nullarbor** There is an attractive looking 4WD shortcut from Esperance along the coast and then up to Balladonia. We asked at Esperance and were told it was currently completely impassable.

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**Cook Road** We took a diversion along the Cook Road off the Nullarbor Highway and despite the very windy conditions managed to see our first Southern Whitefaces and Brown Songlarks plus a Rufous Fieldwren.

**Coffin Bay NP** We combed the Point Avoid and Golden Island Lookouts for more Rock Parrots and eventually saw two fly over just as we drove off!

**Big Swamp** This is a large lake which straddles the main road on the Eyre Peninsula just north of Coffin Bay. It was extremely full of water when we were there but still held a good collection of ducks and also Cape Barren Geese.

**Lincoln NP** The Taylor's Landing campsite was splendid – lots of birds including our only Southern Scrub Robin. However we failed to find Western Whipbird here or at the T&T sites.

**Port Augusta** The Bird Lakes were completely empty

**Arid Lands Botanical Gardens** We found a very distant Chirruping Wedgebill here but no Redthroats or Fieldwrens.

**Mount Remarkable** We camped at Mambray Creek and it was lovely and very birdy. The short loop track was excellent with Adelaide Rosellas.

**Flinders Ranges** - we loved it here – helped no doubt by the improving weather. Wilpena Pound resort was busy and crowded but we enjoyed camping at Willow Springs, a working sheep station.

The Wilpena Pound Lookout Walk was very birdy – you walk alongside a stream with big gum trees and there were excellent views of various Whistlers, Cuckoos and Robins. At the upper

lookout we had first class views of a male Redthroat as it fed on the ground singing to itself softly.

The flat areas to the West of the mountains were full of birds – Crimson Chats, both Songlarks, Chirruping Wedgebills (usually in large bushes in gullies), various Fairy Wrens and Woodswallows, Pipits, Diamond Doves and best of all – Budgies. Little Squadrons of Budgies were flying around everywhere at high speed.

Stokes Hill Lookout – our first attempt for the Grasswren, in fine but extremely cold conditions was unsuccessful. Two days later we succeeded – see below for more details.

Brachina Gorge – we had excellent views of Yellow Footed Rock Wallabies in the road.

Parachilna Gorge – we walked a few hundred metres of the Blinman Pools walk, which starts at Angorichina Village, and found nesting Red Backed Kingfisher and Bee-eaters.

**Strzelecki Track** The area just outside Lyndhurst, and indeed the Mount Lyndhurst area, was ridiculously lush and green, and full of birds, much the same as in the Flinders Ranges but with the addition of huge numbers of Australian Pratincoles on the road plus Orange Chats.

**Mount Lyndhurst Station** Our first visit to the “rusty car” (or “mine”) site yielded terrific views of Cinnamon Quail-thrush but no Chestnut-breasted Whitefaces. However they gave themselves up on the second visit. We could not get good views of the Thick-billed Grasswren – possibly not surprising as the vegetation in the gullies was extremely lush and there were huge numbers of brown fairy wrens around. We tried the “Two Gates” site and did have brief views of a Grasswren as it flew along the last gully we searched. We did not see any Fieldwrens or Redthroats during the 8 hours we were there.

**Montecollina Bore** We camped at this super spot and there were lots of birds, especially birds of prey (attracted by all the cute little rabbits?) but regrettably no Eyrean Grasswrens on the dunes (which were covered with flowers and vegetation)

**Port Gawler** We found Slender-billed Thornbills here with ridiculous ease though the ID was tricky as there were also Inland Thornbills in the flock! They were feeding in the dead-looking bushes alongside the road.

**Gluepot** A very hot day here (39 degrees and the sun wasn't even out!) and we had to rush around birding as we knew it would rain the next day and we would have to leave. We could easily have spent 3 days here as there are loads of walks and tracks to explore.

**Morgan Conservation Park** – many of the tracks were under water and it was raining but it looked very birdy. The only place we saw Chestnut Crowned Babbler and Little Friarbird (at the edge of its range) and there were two kinds of Ringneck plus Regent Parrots and Musk Ducks.

**Waikerie area** We combed the lakes around this area looking for Freckled Ducks but no luck.

**Eremophila Park** This is a really splendid place to camp with running water, flush loos and indoor cooking facilities if required. Also a campfire with seats made out of tractor seats on posts! However, we did not see any Malleefowl. Apparently they still sometimes visit the camp area in the evening, but not when we were there. (They are no longer fed now that Stella Mack has died). A good site for other Mallee birds though. Note that the owner, Jo Mack, works during the week so you really need to contact him in the evening or at the weekend if you want to stay there as you need to arrange access (see Peter Waanders' notes for details)

**Banrock Station** There is a big wetland conservation area here and we did the long walk round the lakes followed by an excellent lunch.

## VICTORIA

**Hattah-Kulkyne** A surprise – a surfaced road and a visitor centre! The lakes were all full to overflowing with water and many of the walking tracks were shut. However the campsites were very nice (good for parrots) and we managed to find Striated Grasswren on the Nowingi Track and Mallee Emu-wren on the Konardin track.

**Pink Lakes (Murray Sunset NP)** Lots of locusts here but notable as the only place we saw Cockatiels. Found an interesting singing whistler on the Honeymoon Hut track - probably an immature Red Lored.

**Little Desert Lodge** The Malleefowl aviary tour was very interesting and the campsite was good for parrots.

**Mackenzie Falls (Grampians)** We walked to the falls early in the morning from the Smiths Mill campground and enjoyed stunning views of Gang Gang Cockatoos in the car park, plus our first Eastern Yellow Robins, Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos and Striated Thornbills of the trip.

**Grampians Camp sites** Smith's Mill Camp was particularly nice but you have to pay at Halls Gap which is not at all convenient if you are coming from the north as it is about 30 minutes away on a winding road. You can also pay by mobile phone but of course there is no signal!

**Great Ocean Road** Our first evening visit to the Arch was birdless but we managed a brief Rufous Bristlebird view at London Bridge near the most easterly viewpoint (by a little stream and not much visited). There was also one singing near the parked coaches but we couldn't see it and song was very sporadic – every 20 minutes or so. The next morning we tried the Arch again – nothing, but we were successful at London Bridge at the easterly viewpoint – after a bit of a wait we had excellent views of two birds singing a duet. We then moved on to Loch Ard Gorge and the Twelve Apostles where we did not hear any more RBs.

**Cape Otway** Huge numbers of Koalas in one woodland area both sides of the road where they seem to be eating themselves out of house and home.

**Blanket Bay campsite** A splendid spot but not very large and quite popular – first come first served. A large male Koala in the trees next to our site and a pair of Rufous Bristlebirds in the scrub and on the tracks – even feeding under the van at one point! (Sites 10 and 11) We also saw Satin Bowerbirds and King Parrots here plus fly-by Blue-winged Parrots.

**Lake Lorne at Drysdale** Absolutely full of birds including Blue-billed Duck and Royal Spoonbill, but not our much-wanted Freckled Ducks. (We found our only Greenfinch here!)

**Werribee** We managed to find (well Gina found) 75 species here which is pretty impressive since at first sight there weren't any birds at all! The lagoons were pretty empty apart from returning Shelducks, but we managed to find small numbers of most things in the end. Only one single heron – a solitary White Faced – and no Spoonbills, Moorhens or Coots!.

**Anglesea Heath** White-eared Honeyeater and Olive-Backed Orioles were new here, plus a brief fly-over of a B.W Parrot. We were attempting a circular route but Coalmine Road had barriers across it just south of the coal mine. There seemed to be a lot of "works" going on and I think they may be changing the road layout..

**Bunyip** We were prepared for noisy weekenders, but we were pleasantly surprised. The forest was really excellent and provided a number of new trip birds and lifers such as Superb Lyrebird, Rose Robin and Crested Shrike Tit. Later at post 15 on the Buttongrass Trail we had good views of Southern Emu-wren, a bird that has been eluding us for a long time.

## TASMANIA

**Bruny Island** We did find most of the endemics here but not easily. We looked for 40-spotted Pardalotes in the north of the island but found the notes in T&T to bear no resemblance to actuality. In the end we just looked for nice stands of eucalypts and listened for pardalotes, of which there were many Striated and some Spotted around. We had poor views of the underside (mostly) of several 40-spots, one located by call. We also found Black Headed Honeyeater and our only Dusky Robins (a pair). Echidnas (rather furry and not so spiny) seemed very tame here.

The rainforest areas up on the hill in South Bruny provided us with the Pink Robin, Scrubtit, Tasmanian Thornbill, Strong Billed Honeyeaters, Black Currawong and Scrubwrens.

There was a Native Hen at the campsite, plus Yellow Wattlebirds and Green Rosellas.

**Peter Murrell Reserve** We could not find 40-spots here but we had excellent views of Yellow Throated Honeyeater.

**Truganini Reserve** A splendid birdy spot – Olive Whistlers, Crescent Honeyeaters etc

**Mount Field NP** Flame Robin at the camp site in the pouring rain! Russell Falls/Lady Barron Falls/Tall Trees walks – lovely ferny rainforest with Olive Whistlers and Pink Robins.

**Lake St Clair** - not much in the bird line but lovely little Pademelons

**Strahan** We had two key species to find at Strahan (Ground Parrot and Beautiful Firetail) and luckily we found them both quite easily in the area out near the airport. We also had cracking views of Striated Fieldwren here.

**Corinna** Not special for birds but the Pademelons were plentiful and tame and we managed to see a Platypus in the river and a White Lipped Snake. One of the other guests had an intriguing report of a possible Orange Bellied Parrot at nearby Mt Donaldson. Beautiful Firetails near the shacks at the Pieman Heads. There are lots of tracks to walk and boat trips along the river. A lovely quiet spot for a chill-out!

**Three Thumbs Lookout** (on the forest drive south of Orford) Excellent mature eucalyptus forest – Flame Robin feeding young, Collared Sparrowhawk, pardalotes, various honeyeaters and a Black Currawong roost – there must have been 30 making a terrific din. Also a possible fly-by Swift Parrot – they are supposed to breed here.

**Maria Island** Our last possible site for Swift Parrot and there they were in the first Blue Gum we came to! Poor views of 40-spotted Pardalote again on the Reservoir Walk – the trees were VERY tall. Good views of tame-ish Wombats in daylight.

**Forest Glen Tea Gardens** (T&T's guaranteed site for Swift Parrots) no longer exists.

## 5) Birds And Where Seen

Birds are only included on this list where the information is useful. Birds which were common, or easy to see in their normal habitat and range, or, say, were seen once flying over, are not included. Also not included are birds with a predominantly eastern distribution whose range we just ventured into in the latter few days in Victoria.

**Emu:** Seen in small numbers pretty well anywhere.

**Brown Quail:** Calling along the road to Appealina Ruins in the Flinders Ranges and flushed from the roads here

**Mute Swan** We passed through Northam to tick the birds on the river there

**Musk Duck:** Several really good views of this curious duck - Big Swamp on the Eyre Peninsula, Banrock Station (where one was trying to eat a large crustacean with lots of legs), Morgan Conservation Park and at Werribee.

**Cape Barren Goose** About 27 birds seen at Big Swamp on the Eyre Peninsula plus the introduced birds on Maria Island

**Pink Eared Duck:** Only seen once in a pool by the Strzelecki Track

**Blue Billed Duck** Lake Lorne at Drysdale and Werribee

**Hoary Headed Grebe:** Seen at Hamelin Pool Station lake and St Mary Inlet, Fitzgerald River NP

**Brush Bronzewing** Seen commonly in the South Western and Southern coastal heath and also in Tasmania.

**Flock Bronzewing** A distant view of a small flock of chunky pigeons at dusk at Montecollina Bore were probably this species

**Diamond Doves** These were locally common in shrubby gullies in northern South Australia.

**Owlet-nightjar** Seen at Eremophila Park and Stirling Range Retreat

**Short-tailed Shearwater** Amazing views and near collisions with birds returning to their next sites on Bruny Island.

**Little Penguin** Also on Bruny Island but only a small number of birds were coming ashore though more were waiting near their holes to go out.

**Black-faced Cormorant** Birds which were probably this species were seen offshore around Esperance but they were never came close inshore for a decent view. The only good close view was at Kettering in Tasmania from the Bruny Island ferry. A small group was also seen from the Maria Island ferry.

**Nankeen Night-heron** We flushed a bird from the flooded trees at the edge of the lake at Hattah-Kulkynne

**Letter-winged Kite** Amazing views of four birds at a site near the Strzelecki track

**Black Breasted Buzzard** A distant view of a flying bird north of Eneabba in WA

**Buff-banded Rail** An unexpected sighting of a family party at Werribee

**Black-tailed Native-hen** Common and breeding at Hattah-Kulkynne and other wetlands in the outback

**Tasmanian Native-hen** Not as common as expected – seemed somewhat crepuscular

**Red-necked Avocet** Only seen in a pool near the Strzelecki track

**Banded Stilt** There were good numbers of this species at Rottnest, both adults and juveniles. There were none present on the pools at Port Augusta.

**Hooded Plover** We searched many beaches in the SW for this bird without success. We eventually found a party of 10 including 2 juveniles loafing on the rocks in St Mary's Inlet in Fitzgerald River NP. We subsequently found a pair apparently attempting to nest on the sandbar at the mouth of the river at Anglesea in Victoria, next to the campsite and in a spot busy with people and dogs!. Note that we saw no sign of this species at Darlington on Maria Island, supposedly a reliable spot.

**Brolga:** A pair with young seen at Werribee

**Painted Buttonquail** Heard calling on the Cape Naturaliste loop walk and seen later near the "Mountains of the Moon" car park

**Little Buttonquail:** Flushed regularly when walking in the northern part of SA.

**Australian Pratincole:** Many on the roads (just arrived?) near Lyndhurst

**Banded Lapwing:** Quite common – even on the Oval at Rottnest!

**Pacific Gull** what an amazing bird! Seen in very small numbers all the way from Monkey Mia to Tasmania, though here they were outnumbered by Kelp Gulls.

**Carnaby's Black Cockatoo** We saw pairs and family groups of this bird in several locations – Dryandra, Stirling Ranges, Regans Ford, Cheynes Beach etc Also a big loafing flock of non-breeders at Stirling Range Retreat.

**Baudin's Black Cockatoo** A splendid view of two birds demolishing Banksia flowers at Cape Leeuwin and a flock of about 20 going to roost (they flew along the road over our heads) on the approach road to Cape Naturaliste.

**Gang Gang Cockatoo:** Excellent views in the Grampians in the Mackenzie Falls car park and Wanlon Road.

**Major Mitchell's Cockatoo:** Unfortunately only one brief view of a flying bird at Hattah-Kulkyne

**Western Corella** Birds presumably of this species were seen in several locations north of Perth – e.g. at Regans Ford and on the backroads in the wheatbelt.

**Cockatiel** Strangely we only saw this bird at Pink Lakes, Murray-Sunset NP

**Musk Lorikeet:** On flowering trees in Tanundra campsite and Little Desert campsite

**Purple Crowned Lorikeet** At the Porungorups, Stirling Ranges and Tanundra campsite

**Regent Parrot** We saw this parrot, in the form of fast fly-bys, in a number of locations but the only good perched views we had were at Stirling Range Retreat and Hattah-Kulkyne campground.

**Green Rosella** Not difficult to see in Tasmania

**Western Rosella** We saw this bird well at Dryandra at the Congelin dam at dusk and at Stirling Range Retreat. Also at Beedalup Falls and Cape Naturaliste.

**Ringneck** A common bird in WA. We saw many forms of this parrot as we travelled, sometimes together. The “28” was by far the most impressive – the Mallee form was very washed-out in comparison.

**Red-capped Parrot** The “paint by numbers” parrot – seen at the forest/paddock edges in Dryandra, and at the Congelin dam at dusk. Also at the roadside and at Stirling Range Retreat.

**Swift Parrot** We were completely unable to find this parrot on Bruny Island or anywhere in Tasmania despite searching hard. However they were (thankfully) easy to see on Maria Island on our last day, feeding in the Blue Gum trees.

**Mulga Parrot:** Seen by the roadside near Geraldton in WA and at Gluepot and Eremophila Park

**Budgerigar** Small flocks were common in the Flinders Ranges and on the Strzelecki Track.

**Blue-winged Parrot** We never had good views of this bird despite searching on the Otway Ranges – we had to be content with decent flying views on Anglesea Heath and near the Blanket Bay camp site at Cape Otway

**Elegant Parrot** We had poor and fleeting views of this bird until Stirling Range Retreat where they were nesting in a tree by our van and we could watch them resting, preening, feeding on the ground and at a water drip. We also had a number of fly-past views in the Flinders Ranges.

**Rock Parrot** We really thought we were going to dip on this. We searched all the well-known spots to no avail including Rottneest, Capes Naturaliste and Leeuwin, Sinker Reef at Two Peoples Bay, William Bay near Denmark, Fitzgerald River NP etc. We eventually found 4 birds at the small picnic area near the port entrance at Esperance where we had excellent views of one bird which did not fly off with the other three. We then had two birds flying over near Point Avoid on the Eyre Peninsula.

**Ground Parrot** we had failed to find this bird in Queensland or NSW on our previous trip so the heat was on at Strahan in Tasmania! We found the birds quite easily here in the evening. We parked by the left hand turning beyond the airport on the road to Macquarie Heads (the turning mentioned in T&T) We walked through the low heath on the western side of the main road and flushed two birds in two different places. This was the only area of heath we found that was walkable through – the rest was either too high or too wet, and one area was recently burnt. In both cases the flushed parrot flew over the road on to much lower and wetter heath where they would have been hard to find. Note that they were not calling at all except one flushed bird called once as it landed briefly quite close to us.

**Black-eared Cuckoo** We looked for this everywhere and eventually found one calling from the top of a tree at Little Desert Lodge.

**Fan-tailed Cuckoo** Only mentioned here as it was so common and calling everywhere.

**Southern Boobook** We heard this bird everywhere but only managed to see it once perched over the road at Dryandra when returning in the dark from the Barna Mia tour.



**Red Backed Kingfisher:** One seen on the Blinman Pools walk in the Flinders Ranges (at Angorichina Village) where it was probably nesting in the sandy bank

**Dollarbird** We were surprised to find one of these cackling from the treetops at Hattah-Kulkyne – somewhat out of range but no doubt attracted by the water and the dragonflies.

**White Browed Treecreeper:** Only seen once at Gluepot (where there were far more Brown Treecreepers)

**Rufous Treecreeper** Easy to see at Dryandra ( the Ochre trail was particularly good) and the Porungorups.

**Noisy Scrub Bird** Seen well at Cheynes beach – the bird close to the campsite was quite obliging – we saw it cross the track and also flying back towards the presumed nest area. We also heard another bird singing in dense bushes on the far side of the headland.

**Splendid Fairy-wren** What a bird! Common in the scrub and heath in WA – the males were in full breeding plumage and looked as though they had been painted with acrylics!

**White-winged Fairy-wren** Common on the saltbush and gullies in northern SA though we did not see many males. Also in northern WA.

**Superb Fairy-wren** We were surprised to find this bird singing around our van at Coffin Bay which is out of range according to our books

**Blue-breasted Fairy-wren** We searched hard for this bird at Dryandra and eventually found just one pair though they were pretty hard to see at the bottom of a bush. Despite the pictures in the books they are actually quite distinctive as the blue breast really looks blue. The cap is a beautiful shade of deep blue. We also saw a pair at Eyre Bird Observatory on the Horse Paddock walk and at Fitzgerald River bridge. Just pairs though – no family groups.

**Red-winged Fairy Wren** We failed to find this bird around the south western lighthouses but eventually caught up with it at William Bay near Denmark. This was the only time we saw it – it was much harder than we expected though distinctive when seen as it was noticeably bigger and the cap was a pale silvery blue. Also noisy – two males and one female chasing around!.

**Southern Emu-wren** Hurray! We caught up with this bird at last though it certainly made us wait. We had failed to find it in 2006 (despite Barren Grounds being a dead cert) and had not found it at all in WA apart from a 2 sec fly-across-the-road-with-nest-material at Cheynes Beach. Having tracked down every squeak and it always turning out to be a fairy-wren we really thought we would never see it. Eventually we followed the source of some squeaks and had terrific views of a pair perched up on a bush at Bunyip on the Buttongrass Trail at post 15. Gentle pishing brought them right up to our feet. (I think these birds must be harder to find when they are actually breeding, hence our difficulties. There were no noisy family parties around as there were with many (but not all) of the fairy-wrens)

**Mallee Emu-wren** By tracking down some infrequent faint squeaks we had prolonged views of a pair as they fed on dead wood on the southern side of the Konardin Track at Hattah-Kulkyne about 1–2 km from the kangaroo fence. The spinifex here looked fairly scruffy but there was much more healthy looking stuff further in.

**Striated Grasswren** More in hope than expectation we started walking up the Nowingi track in the early morning and within half an hour we were chasing round after some squeaks which eventually popped up on to a bush and gave a first class photographable views of a pair..

**Short-tailed Grasswren** Our first attempt at Stokes Hill Lookout failed. It was dry and sunny but exceptionally cold and windy which probably did not help. We were armed with lots of information from Birding-aus and from the Willow Springs mud map, some of it conflicting, so Peter set off in a south westerly direction to the fence line and small hills described in many reports while I concentrated on the “blue triangle post” area just down the hill. Nothing. We then tried along the Appealina ruins road – the vegetation here was extremely lush and we did not find anything. Back at Stokes Hill lookout two days later, in fine sunny weather which was much warmer and less windy, we hit the jackpot. Peter found a pair in an area not mentioned in any reports. I found a splendid male, alarmed at my presence, just downhill from the “blue triangle post” – it was obviously his territory.(I had actually spent nearly an hour there previously and seen nothing) When Peter returned we went back down the hill and managed to get super photographs of this male bird, squeaking and turning from side to side on top of a rock. He was obviously distressed so we soon left him alone. Note that the “blue triangle post” is short post with a blue triangle on the flat top - you cannot see the triangle until you are on top of it – and it now has a blue topped taller metal post next it to help you see it. Neither post can quite be seen from the car park – head down hill 218° from the plinth with

the contoured map. The grasswren territory was just downhill of the post in a slightly more rocky area.

**Thick-billed Grasswren** We found this as expected at Monkey Mia but not quite as easily as expected. In the evening when we arrived we just had very brief views of a bird as it ran, Roadrunner style, across the Nature Walk track. Next morning we caught the back-end of two birds in the car park as they disappeared under a bush and would not re-appear. Then we eventually had first class views of a pair of birds on the Nature Walk where it joins a wide stony track – two birds fed by the road under the bushes looking beautiful in the early morning sun.

We struggled to find the eastern subspecies (species?) of this bird at Mount Lyndhurst – the vegetation was very lush and there were huge numbers of fairy wrens about. We did eventually have poor views of a bird flying down a gully which then completely disappeared.

**Eyrean Grasswren** We had two sessions looking for this bird on the dunes at Montecollina Bore but did not see or hear any hint of it. As the vegetation was so lush I expect they had spread out into the surrounding area.

**Western Bristlebird** We are pretty sure we heard this bird singing on several occasions at Cheynes Beach but never saw it. I think we may not have been out early enough.

**Rufous Bristlebird** The song is loud but there can be long gaps between songs so patience is needed. In the afternoon when the car parks were busy we heard two birds singing in different locations at London Bridge. The next day early in the morning we returned and had excellent views of a pair which sang together for us. We then had a pair of birds singing and feeding around our camp site at Blanket Bay.

**White-browed Scrubwren** Mentioned here because the common WA form is so distinctive, with striated underparts.

**Tasmanian Scrubwren** I think the old name of Brown Scrubwren is very apt for this bird! Common in Tasmania.

**Scrubtit** We wondered how easy it would be to tell this bird apart from the Scrubwren but actually it was easy as it is much smaller, more dapper, and behaves more like a tit than a scrubwren. We found the white throat and upper breast easy to pick out. Our best views of this bird were in Bruny Island on the road up near Mount Mangana and on the Mount Mangana walking track where we had singing birds.

**Striated Fieldwren** We had good views of this bird at Werribee and then stunning views at the Ground Parrot site at Strahan.

**Rufous Fieldwren** In WA we found this bird easy to see, often coming across it when walking through flowering heathland, though it is barely rufous at all. In SA we saw it at Point AVOID on the Eyre Peninsula but we hardly saw it at all at any inland sites despite being in suitable habitat most of the time.

**Redthroat** We saw this bird twice – once a family party at Kalbarri in quite tall scrub, then a singing male at the Wilpena Pound lookout feeding under tall scrub.

**Weebill** We saw this bird more often once we had learnt the call – a useful tip from the BA volunteer at Stirling Range Retreat.

**Western Thornbill** Not particularly common – best views at Dryandra. Distinctive by being so plain.

**Slender-billed Thornbill** Excellent views at Port Gawler just by the side of the track in a mixed flock with Inland Thornbills.

**Tasmanian Thornbill** Not often seen, or rather identified – we found it hard to separate from Brown Thornbill

**Chestnut-breasted Whiteface** Found after searching for about 6 hours on two occasions at the mine site at Mount Lyndhurst. It is simply a matter of walking around till you bump into them. We had good views of a family party which, when they eventually flew off, landed a long distance away. We found them in the area to the east between the car park and the mine entrances in a flattish bowl which was quite stony and open. They were very well camouflaged against the multicoloured stones.

**Banded Whiteface** We ran into a small flock of these birds whilst walking cross-country to the Letter Winged Kite site.

**Forty-spotted Pardalote** We are confident we saw this bird on Bruny Island and Maria Island – we heard the call and they seem smaller and slighter than the common confusion pardalote, the Striated. (Especially immature Striated which are very dull. It is amazing how plain the face can look on a Striated Pardalote when viewing from underneath. The Spotted is

distinctive underneath with its bright yellow bib and also darker face) However we never had a good view of the upperparts so it was a bit unsatisfactory

**Western Spinebill** We ran across this bird in a number of odd locations but hardly ever with other honeyeaters. Not as easy to see as you would expect.

**Yellow-throated Honeyeater** A very spectacular bird when the sun catches the yellow throat. A very distinctive call too. Not hard to see in Tasmania.

**Purple-gaped Honeyeater** I only mention this because we failed to see it despite constantly looking and frequently being in suitable habitat, though there was not much eucalypt flowering going on.

**Black-eared Miner** An unsatisfactory sighting really – we saw two groups of hybrid miners at Gluepot – in one group the birds all looked very poor for Black-eared but in the second group there were some birds which had features very close to all the guidelines. However I felt that in truth they are probably all hybrids with a complete range of plumage types.

**Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** Common in the mallee

**Striped Honeyeater** Only seen on the Honeymoon Hut Track.

**Yellow Wattlebird** These birds are enormous! Easy to see (and hear) in Tasmania.

**Crescent Honeyeater** Common and conspicuous in Tasmania, the only place we saw it.

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** Easily seen on flowering heath in WA.

**Strong-billed Honeyeater** Only seen well on the Mount Mangana road on Bruny Island where it was common

**Black-headed Honeyeater** Common in eucalypt woodlands in Tasmania

**Crimson Chat** Quite common around the Flinders Ranges and Strzelecki track

**Orange Chat** Seen once or twice on the Strzelecki Track and at Willow Springs

**Gibberbird** Not seen on the Strzelecki Track – we did not look too hard as there was an awful lot of vegetation and not many bare areas!

**Cinnamon Quail-thrush** Seen only once at the mine site at Mt Lyndhurst where we had excellent views of a family party which we flushed from the entrance track.

**Chestnut Quail-thrush** Seen several times – Gluepot, Honeymoon Hut Track, Eremophila Park

**Western Whipbird** We do not think we heard this bird at all, let alone see it. The calls on the David Stewart CD are not very distinctive whereas other sources describe it as harsh or creaking or very distinctive. Well we didn't hear anything like that! Perhaps we were not early enough In the morning – does it actually need to be at dawn?. We tried for it at Cheynes Beach, Two People's Bay, Fitzgerald River NP and Fitzgerald River crossing and Lincoln NP.

**Chirruping Wedgebill** Seen distantly at the Arid Lands Botanical Gardens then easily all over the Flinders Ranges and Strzelecki track wherever there were well vegetated gullies in the saltbush plains. Getting a good photo was hard though – they fed in the bottom of bushes and did not always sing from an exposed perch.

**Chiming Wedgebill** Singing and displaying pairs all round the campsite at Hamelin Pools Station. Not seen at Monkey Mia for some reason though they should have been there.

**Varied Sitella** I mention this species because on the last trip in 2006 we only saw these once (at Cocoparra) and it was the same this time - only at Gluepot.

**Crested Shrike-tit** We did not see the Western sub-species but saw the Eastern sub-species at Anglesea Heath and Bunyip

**Olive Whistler** Quite common in wetter forest in Tasmania but they were not really singing so they were a bit hard to pick up. At Truganini Reserve we thought there was a family party up in the tree tops so we tried a bit of taped song with spectacular effect – the male ignored the first type of song then as soon as the second song started he was there, answering with an identical song which he kept up for ages afterwards and made us feel guilty! We also had one come in close when we were taping in a Pink Robin – maybe there was some Olive Whistler in the background?

**Gilbert's Whistler** Good views of this bird at Gluepot and Hattah-Kulkyne. The song is completely distinctive when you know it. One bird at Gluepot had a very rufous belly – much more than shown in the books.

**Mystery Whistler** When searching for Red Lored Whistler on the Honeymoon Hut Track we found a bird which was all plain grey except for faint rufous shading on the vent. When we first saw it, it was singing pure Red Lored Whistler exactly like the David Stewart recording but then it changed to “ chop chop chop chop” which I associated with Gilbert's Whistler. Having asked for assistance on Birding-Aus I am now pretty convinced this bird was an immature Red Lored Whistler.

**Crested Bellbird** After only very poor views of this bird on previous trips we had grandstand views of a bird hopping around our van in the car park at Monkey Mia. We also had good views at Gluepot where the bird was singing

**Black Currawong** Easy to see in Tasmania but the picture in Slater is wrong – the white on the wings is at the wing-tips.

**Grey Currawong** Seen in dry woodlands in WA, SA., Tasmania and Victoria – their call gives them away but they are quite flighty and flush at a long distance.

**Flame Robin** We found this bird in two places in Tasmania – the camp site at Mt Field and the road to Three Thumbs Lookout south of Orford.

**Rose Robin** A much-wanted species having missed it in 2006. A singing male was found at Bunyip near the junction of the Link Track and Camp Road as per directions gleaned from Birding-aus!

**Pink Robin** Brief views on the Mt Mangana road on Bruny Island then much better views at Mount Field on the Russell Falls/Lady Barron Falls Walks. They responded very rapidly to a tape even though you couldn't see any around.

**Dusky Robin** We only saw two of these birds – a pair at a nest in a small quarry in North Bruny on our first day in Tasmania. They are supposed to be common!

**Western Yellow Robin** These were really tricky. We only saw them at Stirling Range Retreat and only after a tip-off from the BA volunteer. In fact there were two territories each with a nest and we eventually had really good views of the birds. But they were far from easy to see even though the nesting territories were close to the campsite. According to the book they are common!

**White-breasted Robin** Seen well at Boranorup Forest and Cheynes Beach and other similar habitat where they were common though possibly crepuscular?.

**Southern Scrub-robin** Despite being in suitable habitat much of the time we only saw this bird at one location - it crossed the track several times carrying food at Taylor's Landing camp site, Lincoln NP

**Golden Headed Cisticola** Stunning views of this little charmer at Werribee

**Little Grassbird** Seen well at Werribee and also heard at Banrock Station

**Rufous Songlark** Quite common in inland WA and SA

**Brown Songlark** Another bird we had missed on previous trips. It was really common in the Flinders Ranges and Strzelecki Track, often walking on the road pretending to be a Gibberbird. A splendid song!

**Silvereye** I mention this ubiquitous species (probably the bird we saw most of in terms of numbers) because on this trip the changes in plumage as we moved east were very interesting and obvious.

**White-backed Swallow** A bird we only saw once on our last trip, and sadly this was true again – just a brief fly-by at Montecollina Bore.

**Beautiful Firetail** We set out one morning to find this bird at Strahan in Tasmania and actually found it easily. We saw several individuals, one of which was singing from the telephone wires, others had been bathing, near the junction where the Ocean Beach road goes straight on and the Macquarie Heads road turns left. We also saw birds at Pieman Heads on the boat trip from Corinna.

**Red-eared Firetail** We only saw this bird at Cheynes Beach where a nest-building pair near the road gave splendid views. We looked for it at Cape Naturaliste and at Cape Leeuwin, but did not find it.

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