



Australia -- Main Tour

November 5-14, 2019

Tentative Trip Itinerary

Day 0 - Arrive in Brisbane International flights from North America typically arrive early in the morning. Everybody will then transfer to the hotel and we will meet in the evening to sync up.

Lodging: Brisbane

Day 1 – Brisbane and Lamington National Park We start birding with a visit to the Port of Brisbane for Mangrove Honeyeaters and Chestnut Teal and other water birds then to the Lytton Manly Mangrove boardwalk for Lead and Satin Flycatchers, Golden-headed Cisticola, Tawny Grassbird, Superb, Variegated and Red-backed Fairy-wrens. This is a rich area close to the airport and it is not uncommon to see 40 to 50 species in these two locations. At nearby locations migratory waders, Red-necked Avocets, Wandering Whistling- Duck and Comb-crested Jacanas are possibilities. Travel to Lamington NP and en route look for Little and Long-billed Corellas, Galah and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. Visit Sharp Park near Canungra to look for a range of bird species including Figbird, Oriole, Noisy Friarbird, Azure and Forest Kingfishers, Laughing Kookaburra, Pale-headed Rosella, Buff-banded Rail, Double-barred Finch, Wood Duck and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Lodging: O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat

Day 2 and 3 – Lamington National Park

Two full days birding around O'Reilly's targeting rainforest spp including Regent Bowerbird, Green Catbird, 3 spp of Scrub-wren, White-throated Treecreeper, Eastern and Pale-yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Fantail, Albert's Lyrebird, Noisy Pitta, Wonga, Wompoo, White-headed, Brown and Top-knot Pigeons, Paradise Riflebird, Logrunner, Bassian and Russet-tailed Thrush, Satin Bowerbird, Golden Whistler, Brown Gerygone, Spotted

Pardalote, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Red-browed Finch, King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, and Brown and Striated Thornbills. After dinner look for nocturnal animals including mammals (possums, bandicoots and pademelons) and Tawny and Marbled Frogmouths.

Lodging: O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat.

Day 4 – Lamington NP, Lockyer Valley and Brisbane

Early morning birding before departing O'Reilly's after breakfast for the trip back to Brisbane via birding locations in the Lockyer Valley that should add a few species including Grey Crowned Babbler, Magpie Goose, Plumed Whistling Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Marsh Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite and many more. We will then take an evening flight to Cairns.

Lodging: Bay Village Retreat, Cairns.

Day 5 - Michaelmas Cay – Great Barrier Reef.

We leave the hotel at 7.45am to drive to the wharf to board the Ocean Spirit for a relaxing cruise to Michaelmas Cay on the Barrier Reef. The cay is a breeding site for several seabirds including Common and Black Noddies, Crested, Lesser Crested, Black-naped, Little, Sooty and sometimes Bridled Terns, Greater Frigatebirds, Brown Boobies and Ruddy Turnstones. There will be the chance to snorkel on the reef. Snorkelling gear is supplied, including some masks with prescription lenses, and wetsuits are available. You can scuba dive if you are certified but this is an additional cost. There is also a semi-submersible for underwater viewing. This is an all-day cruise with a substantial lunch served on board.

Walk back to the hotel along the Esplanade, a location renowned as one of the best places in Australia to see shorebirds. Possible migrants include Terek, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpiper, Great Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits and Red-necked Stints. Resident species include Red-capped Plover, Masked Lapwing, Australian Pelican, Royal Spoonbill, Eastern Great, Intermediate, Little and Eastern Reef Egrets, Striated Heron, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Gull-billed Tern, Silver Gull, Torresian Kingfisher and Beach Stone Curlew. After a Balinese banquet dinner at our hotel walk along the Esplanade looking for Bush Stone Curlews.

Lodging: Bay Village Retreat, Cairns.

Day 6 - Kuranda, Davies Creek and the Atherton Tablelands.

Start the day on the Esplanade looking for more shore birds. In addition to the birds listed on Day 5 Yellow Oriole, Rainbow Lorikeet, Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Peaceful Dove, Mangrove Robin and Yellow and Varied Honeyeaters are possibilities in the adjacent parkland and mangroves.

Later we drive to the Atherton Tablelands today via Kuranda where we will have our first look for Cassowary in a tropical fruit orchard where they come to feed on the fallen fruit. Continuing we visit Davies Creek National Park to look for White-browed Robin and Rufous Owl in riparian woodland.

A patch work of farmland, rainforest, Eucalyptus forest, woodlands, grasslands, creeks and lagoons the Atherton Tablelands is a relatively recent volcanic plateau and a hot spot for birds. Red-tailed Black Cockatoos are conspicuous along the roadsides near Mareeba and at Hastie's Swamp a range of wetland species are found including Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen, Little Egret, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Freckled Duck, Wandering and Plumed Whistling Ducks, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Australasian Darter, Australasian Grebe and Buff-banded Rail.

In the rainforests at Wongabel State Forest, Hypipamee National Park, and Malanda there is a chance to see Victoria's Riflebird, Golden Bowerbird, Chowchilla, Eastern Whipbird, Large-billed Scrubwren, Atherton Scrubwren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Whipbird, Fairy Gerygone, Rufous Fantail, Golden Whistler, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Brush Cuckoo, and Yellow-breasted Boatbill.

In the evening, we will watch a very special event, the arrival of Sarus Cranes and Brolgas at their roost in Bromfield Crater and look for Sooty Owl, Striped Possums, Sugar Gliders and Red-legged Pademelons around the Lodge.

Lodging: Chambers Wildlife Lodge.

Day 7 – Atherton Tablelands and Julatten

Birding on the Atherton Tablelands including early morning at the Lodge and later at nearby Lakes Eacham and Barrine should allow us to see lots of rainforest specialists including Victoria's Riflebird, Superb Fruit Dove, White-headed and Brown Pigeons, Grey Goshawk, King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Lewin's Honeyeater, Barred Cuckoo-shrike, Eastern Yellow Robin and Satin and Tooth-billed Bowerbirds. In open country, we will look for Eastern Koel, Dollarbird, Australasian Pipit, Cicadabird, Spotted Pardalote, Grey Shrike-thrush, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Noisy Friarbird, Tawny Grassbird, Red-browed Firetail, Australian Magpie. Great-crested Grebes live on Lake Barrine. Tree Kangaroos and Cassowary are possibilities.

In the afternoon, we drive back across the Tablelands to Mareeba then north to the Mt Carbine area into tropical savannah woodland to look for Australian Bustards, Great Bowerbird, Squatter Pigeon, Pale-headed Rosella, Galah, Black-throated Finch, Apostlebird, Pied Butcherbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-throated Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, White-throated Treecreeper, Tawny Frogmouth, Black Kite, Little Eagle, Square-tailed Kite and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

We visit Sides Road to look for Blue-faced Parrot Finch, Lovely Fairy-wren and Grey-headed Robin. A host of rainforest species will greet us at Kingfisher Park Lodge including Noisy Pitta, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Pied Monarch, Spectacled Monarch, Pale Yellow Robin, Grey-headed Robin, Little Shrike-thrush, Yellow-spotted, Graceful, McLeay's and Scarlet Honeyeaters. By the time we visit the beautiful Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, a migrant from Papua New Guinea, should have arrived to breed in termite mounds in the lodge grounds. Before dinner we will look for Barn Owls in a nearby park.

Lodging: Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge.

Day 8 – Julatten and Mt Lewis

As early as the light and cloud allows we drive up to the high mountain rainforest of Mt Lewis which is home to a range of species endemic to North Queensland including Mountain Thornbill, Golden Bowerbird, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Chowchilla, Spotted Catbird, Bridled Honeyeater, Atherton Scrubwren, Bower's Shrike-thrush and Fernwren as well as Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Graceful Honeyeater, Bassian Thrush and Pale-yellow Robin. We come back down for lunch followed by a drive around the Julatten area looking for a range of open country species including Red-backed Fairy-wren, White-naped Honeyeater, Golden-headed Cisticola, Tawny Grassbird, Brush and Pallid Cuckoo and species we may have missed the day before in the savannah. Late in the afternoon we look for Platypus.

Lodging: Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge.

Day 9 - Daintree River and Cape Tribulation

After breakfast drive, down to the coast to Daintree where we join a local guide for a cruise on the Daintree River looking for local specialties including Mangrove and Large-billed Gerygone, Shining Flycatcher, Dusky Honeyeater, Macleay's Honeyeater, Spectacled Monarch, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Little Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Papuan Frogmouth and Great-billed Heron. Drive to Cairns for an afternoon flight to Melbourne.

Lodging: Melbourne

Day 10 - Optional Extension Begins, or international flights home

Trip Leaders

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