

Eastern Australia Sept 18th – Dec 14th 2006

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1) Introduction

Whilst this 3 month trip was primarily intended as a birdwatching trip and we wanted to see as many of the birds as possible, we also wanted to walk, photograph and explore, and to experience the varied scenery and habitats which this part of Australia offers. We therefore hired a 4WD campervan and took a leisurely circuit firstly around Queensland and then New South Wales, starting and finishing in Brisbane. We didn't tackle Cape York and we left Victoria and Tasmania for the next trip. We camped mostly in National Parks and Forests, only using commercial sites when we needed to charge batteries or do laundry!

Our total distance travelled was 15,000 kms and the trip cost just under £10,000 including everything – flights, travel to Heathrow, van hire, petrol, camp sites, food etc.

We saw 416 species of birds, a total which we were very happy with. We also saw several species of possums, a platypus, a spotted tailed quoll, an Echidna, and 2 wombats. Not to mention quite a few Red Bellied Black Snakes. Alas no koalas. We enjoyed almost all the places we went to, and looking back would hardly change the trip at all, apart from staying a bit longer in the Cairns area.

We used Pizzey and Knight and Slater as field guides – they complement each other well. We also used Thomas and Thomas "Finding the birds of Australia" which is out of date but still useful. Lonely Planet's "Watching wildlife - Australia" was also good. For finding camp sites, museums, libraries (for internet access) and other non-bird things, we found the Lonely Planet guides to Queensland and New South Wales were very useful. 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. We bought more detailed maps once in Australia, though they weren't always easy to find.

We also had David Stuart CDs of the Wet Tropics and Subtropical Rainforest. These were very useful, but we did not use them to tape in birds at all. We did try pishing, with very mixed effects (we were regularly attacked by female Leaden Flycatchers!)

We used guides only on the Daintree River cruise (Chris Dahlberg), Allan Gillanders for his spotlighting tour from Yungaburra, and a day with Phil Maher in Deniliquin for really difficult outback birds such as Plains Wanderer. 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.

During research we used trip reports on Birdtours.co.uk and travellingbirder.com (thank you Dianne Lucas for such entertaining reports!) We also used a large number of websites as follows:

www.au.yahoo.com for searches in Australia

<http://61.69.13.21/home/birding/> Birding Aus – this is essentially a mailing list with which you can register. You can also search the archives, which are a mine of information

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/index.html> Birds Australia

<http://www.ausbird.com/> Ausbird – links etc

<http://www.eremaea.com/BirdlineRecentSightings.aspx> Sightings data

<http://www.sossa-international.org/index.htm> SOSSA, who run Wollongong pelagics

<http://www.birdingnsw.org.au/> Birding New South Wales
<http://birdsqueensland.org.au/> Birds Queensland
<http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/paaustralia.htm> Site with many links
<http://www.abc.com.au/news/australia/weather/> Australian weather forecast
<http://www.eta.immi.gov.au/> Australian visa site
<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Home> NSW National Parks
http://www.wettropics.gov.au/vi/vi_default.html Wet Tropics
http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/ Queensland National Parks
<http://walkabout.com.au/index.shtml> An online Travel Guide
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/austmaps/puld_menu/ Climate records
<http://www.regent.org.au/> Regent Honeyeater information
<http://www.users.bigpond.com/bushbirds/> Manilla/Barraba bird routes
<http://www.fivebough.org.au/ramsar.html> Fivebough Swamp (Leeton)
<http://www.bmbirding.com.au/> Blue Mountains Birding
<http://www.philipmaher.com/main.htm> Phil Maher trips from Deniliquin
<http://www.alanswildlifetours.com.au/> Alan Gillanders spotlighting tours
<http://daintreerivertours.com.au/> Chris Dahlberg Daintree river tours

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

Visas 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 is easy at Libraries – even the smallest town has one. Either free or a few dollars per half hour.

Camper Van Hire can be very expensive especially for 4WD. We got a very good deal from Backpackers, who rent out older, but still very serviceable, vehicles:

<http://www.backpackercampervans.com.au/cheap-campervans/394/Australia+Home.aspx>

We actually booked through <http://www.australia-campervans.com/>

Bushflies can be a real problem in the Outback at anytime 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.

Coral Spawn – the area around Cape Hillsborough smelt awful when we were there (October). Apparently it was due to the coral spawning and you could see green and pink patches of it on the sea.

Weather – is very unpredictable in Oz these days. Most of the time we were in Queensland it was cold, wet and windy – we needed sleeping bags even at Daintree in the Northern Tropics. In Deniliquin we had extreme heat with wind and sandstorms. Only for the last two weeks did we have "typical" hot and sunny Oz weather.

Fruiting trees Due to the effects of Cyclone Larry (March 2006) and, presumably, the time of year, we found it very difficult to find any fruiting trees in NE Queensland, which made it very hard to find the fruiting tree specialists. We never found Double Eyed Fig Parrot, Superb Fruit Dove or Barred Cuckoo Shrike. Only at Mt Glorious on the last day did we find typical fruiting trees with attendant pigeons and doves.

Drought Inland NSW and SE Queensland are in the grip of an 8 year drought – birds have moved away and many have simply died off as they are not breeding. As I write this there have been good rains in the centre of Australia but the inland SE is still very dry.

Bush Camping As far as we could tell this is illegal in Queensland. However in NSW it appears to be OK on any Government owned land such as TSRs

Camping in National Parks and Forests: Some sites have numbered bays and some are just a big free-for-all area. In Queensland they are trying to move to a pre-booking system with a single telephone number, but they are sort-of running this in parallel with self-registration. NSW is equally confusing – you book at the local office at least 24 hours in advance - sometimes. Basically for each campsite you have to find out a) whether you have to book b) whether you only need to book at busy times c) how you book. NSW Parks at least publish a booklet with details of all the campsites and what the booking procedures and fees are. At present there is no such document for Queensland – they tend to rely on people using the web – not handy when camping! In any case the mandatory pre-booking rules seem to be

widely broken, and many people camp without paying as rangers are very thin on the ground. (This is mean as the charges are not high) I would recommend booking major sites during the school holidays – sites were very busy during the end Sept/beginning Oct Spring break. Lots are drawn for sites at Jervis Bay at Christmas time!

Travelling Stock Routes/Reserves: These are areas of land used for the droving of cattle until quite recently. Many of the Routes run alongside roads which explains why the nearest private fenceline is often some way from the road. The Reserves are areas with water where stock could overnight. These areas are very good for birds.

Daylight saving: In the Summer there is an hour's time difference between Queensland and NSW. We spent a whole week running an hour late without realising!

Food in shops is cheaper than the UK especially meat. Good quality vegetable are hard to find in the Outback. Buy your Macadamia nuts in bulk in the supermarkets – they are much cheaper than in little “souvenir” packets, but still more expensive than steak!

Eating Out can be very cheap. Snack and lunch fodder (raisin toast, sandwiches, foccacias, pizzas, burgers, wedgies with chilli sauce and sour cream) were usually excellent, imaginatively served and cheap. On the other hand, an evening meal at a smart restaurant could be as expensive as the UK.

Service at many cafes was exceptionally slow. I think because each coffee is made from scratch and takes ages.

Coffee can be good, but if you have a mug (i.e. muggacino) I think they only use the same amount of coffee as a cup and fill up with milk so it can be very weak.

Clubs – Bowls, RSL, Golf – can be a good bet for cheap evening meal. Often a carvery but also often a Chinese franchise.

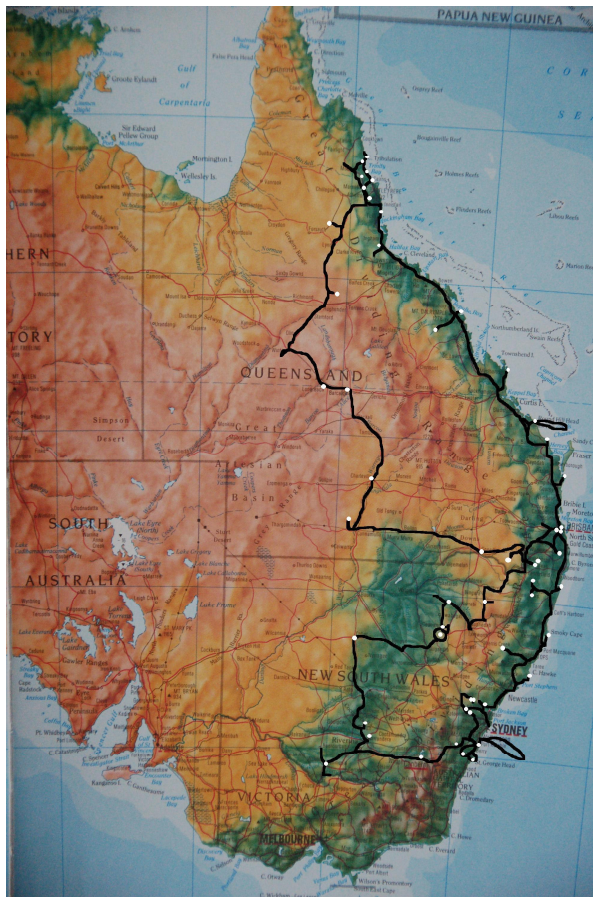
Albatrosses The Australians have been on a splitting spree with Albatrosses – now 23 or 24 species, but the field guides have not caught up.

3) Outline Itinerary

18th-20th Sept Travelling. Arrived late morning **Brisbane**

21st Sept Early morning walk in Roma St Parklands. Pick up campervan. **Brisbane**

22nd Sept Early walk along the creek by the camp. Drove to **Lamington, Green Mountain Camp Ground**



23rd Sept Rainforest loop. Box Tree loop. Evening stroll along the road.

Lamington

24th Sept Dawn walk along the Python Rock Trail. Moran's Falls walk. Duck Creek Road **Lamington**

25th Sept O'Reilly's bird feeding, Antarctic Beech Forest, rainforest loop, Botanical Gardens, aerial walkway.

Lamington

26th Sept Python Rock Track again. Drove to Girraween. Link Circuit to the picnic area **Bald Rock Campground, Girraween**

27th Sept Early walk along the Junction Track. Link Track. Pyramids. **Girraween**

28th Sept Dawn drive up road. Dr Robert's waterhole. Storm King Dam.

Then to **Sundown NP Burrows Waterhole campsite,**

29th Sept Burrows Waterhole area.

Sundown NP

30th Sept Drove Sundown to **Goondawindi** camp site

1st Oct Drove to **Bowra**. Birdwatched at waterhole.

2nd Oct Early morning at the pool 15km circuit track. Lunch at the pool. A late drive along the ditch. **Bowra**

3rd Oct Drove to the Stony Ridge. Short evening drive. **Bowra**

4th Oct Long morning doing the 15km circuit. Stony Ridge in the evening. **Bowra**

5th Oct Set off early **Charleville**. Walked tree trail and went to Cosmos show.

6th Oct To Blackall, the Black Stump and the Jacky Howe statue, then to **Barcaldine**

7th Oct To **Longreach** for Qantas museum, then Stockman's Hall of fame.

8th Oct Early to Winton and Bladenburg NP, then to **Porcupine Gorge**

9th Oct Walk at Porcupine Gorge. Drove to **Undara**.

10th Oct Lava Tube excursion, Swamp Track. Short evening walk **Undara**

11th Oct Drove eastwards via the Crater Rim Walk, Forty Mile Scrub NP and Millstream Falls to Millaa Millaa. Then on to **Malanda Falls** nature trail. Caravan site right next to the forest.

12th Oct Malanda Falls Rainforest circuit then trail across the road. Then to Bromfield Swamp, then on to **Cairns**. Boardwalk at Centenary Lakes.

13th Oct Cairns Esplanade. Centenary Boardwalk and lakes. **Cairns**

14th Oct Early visit to Centenary Lakes. Mangrove Boardwalk. Mount Whitfield. Drove north to **Wonga Beach**.

15th Oct Mossman Gorge trail. Then to **Daintree**. Walked Stuart Creek road.

16th Oct. Boat trip with Chris Dahlberg. Then northwards over the ferry to the Jinjalba boardwalk **Noah Beach** campsite.

17th Oct Maadje boardwalk, Big Fig, Emmagen Beach, Emmagen Creek, Cape Tribulation **Noah Beach**

18th Oct Daintree and Stewart Creek road. Yule Point beach then drove to Kingfisher Park. KFP grounds and crane watch. **Kingfisher Park**

19th Oct Early morning around KFP. Mt Carbine Dam. **Kingfisher Park**

20th Oct Morning Mount Lewis. Abattoir Swamp till sunset. KFP for the Masked Owl stake out. **Kingfisher Park**

21st Oct Abattoir Swamp at dawn, Mt Molloy, East and West Mary Roads, then south to Mitchell Lakes Then south to **Atherton** Woodlands campsite

22nd Oct Hasties Swamp at dawn. "The Crater" NP, Golden Bowerbird site – bowers but no birds Curtain Fig. Allan Gillanders spotlighting tour. **Atherton** Woodlands campsite

23rd Oct Cathedral Fig, Lake Barrine. Rainforest trail and Lake circuit. Drove to **Bingil Bay** campsite north of Mission Beach.

24th Oct Lacey Creek and Licuala Forest walks at Mission Beach. Then south to the Paluma Range. Witts Lookout, Birthday Creek Falls. **Jourama Falls** campground

25th Oct Around Jourama Falls then to Platypus Bush Camp, **Finch Hatton Gorge**.

26th Oct Eungella Honeyeater trail. Then Broken River to the platypus site. Platypus Bush Camp, **Finch Hatton**

27th Oct Drove south to Cape Hillsborough and explored area. Hidden Valley trail. **Smalleys Beach camp site**

28th Oct Beach Stone Curlew hunt – success. **Smalleys Beach** camp site

29th Oct To Yeppoon, Waterpark Creek trail Red Rocks campsite, **Byfield SF**

30th Oct Stony Creek picnic ground. Sandy Point. **Town of 1770**, Captain Cooks camp site

31st Oct Boat trip to Lady Musgrave Island. **Town of 1770**

1st Nov Walked to beach. Bustard Point. To Bundaberg and Rum Distillery tour. To **Burnett Heads** to the Lighthouse Caravan Park

2nd Nov Burnett Heads, then Tin Can Bay. **Inskip Point** to camp. Black Breasted Button Quail hunt

3rd Nov BBQ site before breakfast. Cooloola Way. Bymien Picnic Site **Inskip Point**

4th Nov Cooloola Way, Cooroy "wetlands". **Brisbane**

5th Nov Daisy Hill Koala Centre. **Brisbane**

6th Nov Drove out of Brisbane westwards. Cunningham Gap for the Bell Miners. To **Girraween**.

7th Nov Junction Track, Link Track, around campsite. **Girraween**

8th Nov Dr Robert's Waterhole, drove to **Barraba**, explored Regent Honeyeater site past Woods Reef.

9th Nov Regent HE site again. Split Rock Dam. **Borah Stock Reserve**.

10th Nov Around Borah. Through Manila to Gunnedah - Little Porcupine Hill Then via Narrabi and Wee Waa to Burren Junction. Back to **Wee Waa**

11th Nov Heading through the Pillaga to **Barradine** Showground camp site

12th Nov Back roads to the **Warrumbungles** Pincham trail, Bribie Canyon.
 13th Nov Nature Trail from the campsite , Woolshed area **Warrumbungles**
 14th Nov High Tops and the Breadknife, Storeys Lookout Then to **Nyngan**
 15th Nov Drove to **Cobar** and had historical mining day.
 16th Nov South to Mt Hope and on south to **Nombinnie NR** (Round Hill NR)
 17th Nov At Nombinnie NR. Then on to Lake Cargelligo to **Cocoparra NP**
 18th Nov Drove south to Griffith then on to **Leeton**. Evening at Fivebough Swamp
 19th Nov Early morning Fivebough Swamp Then to **Deniliquin**
 20th Nov Urban birding in Deniliquin then Gulpa State Forest. **Deniliquin**
 21st Nov Phil Maher Day. **Deniliquin**
 22nd Nov Set off eastwards. Backroads to **Wee Jasper**
 23rd Nov Birded around the camp, Drove to Canberra Botanic Gardens and Telstra Tower.
 North out of the city and on to another T&T detour to Lake George – the instructions were
 wrong and the lake was as dry as a bone. To **Goulbourn**
 24th Nov Drove to Fitzroy Falls. Then to **Windang** camp site.
 25th Nov Wollongong Pelagic. **Windang** camp site
 26th Nov Barren Grounds. Minnemura Rainforest. Then to **Jervis Bay/Booderoo NP**
 27th Nov Explored the Jervis Bay heathland . Lake Wollumbulla Then to the hills to Blue Pool
 camp site at **Carrington Falls**. Evening at Barren Grounds.
 28th Nov. Early walk along the track from the camp site to Warris's Seat and to Nellies Glen.
 Carrington Falls. Then drove north to **Katoomba**
 29th Nov Blue Mountains Rock Warbler sites. Echo Point, Hargraves Lookout, Jenolan
 Caves. Overnight **Blackheath**
 30th Nov Hargraves Lookout. Then to **Glen Davis** and the Capertee Valley
 1st Dec Regent Honeyeater hunt Capertee Valley. Bush camped in the **Wollemi NP**
 2nd Dec TSR 8 – found Regent Honeyeater. To **Dharug NP** via Bells Line of Road.
 3rd Dec Quick visit to Sydney. Then explored the Old Great North Road. **Dharug NP**
 4th Dec Mill Creek trail , then 11km circuit walk . Then drove to Tea Gardens and **Hawks Nest**
 at Myall Lakes
 5th Dec To Mungo Brush camp site. Walked the Tamboi track. Drove to Bombal Point
 Camped at "The Wells" camp site, **Myall Lakes**.
 6th Dec Drove to Beulahdulah and to "grandis" tree. Then on back roads to **Gloucester Tops**
 area. Late afternoon to Gloucester Tops Antarctic Beech walk
 7th Dec Gloucester Tops again. Gloucester Falls walk. Then drove to **Hat Head**
 8th Dec Smoky Cape Lighthouse. Coffs Harbour. To the **Gibraltar Range** Mulligans Hut camp
 site
 9th Dec At the camp then to the Anvil Rock walk. To the **Washpool** campsite . Various walks.
 10th Dec Short walk. Then to **Iluka**
 11th Dec Iluka Rainforest Trail. To **Brisbane**
 12th Dec All day at Mt Glorious. **Brisbane**
 13th Dec Clean and clear up and return van **Brisbane**
 14th Dec Left Brisbane

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, and the book was written after a period of good
 rains – the situation in Australia at the moment is very different. Lakes mentioned in T&T have
 been dry for years, and many dry country birds have become rare in areas where they were
 previously common. Roadside stops are no longer possible in many locations (e.g. Illawara
 Escarpment) as the traffic has increased substantially.

Be prepared for tracks and boardwalks to be closed for maintenance, storm damage, fires or
 whatever. We had to change plans several times for this.

QUEENSLAND **SOUTH EAST**

Lamington NP: A very good place to start a trip. Some of the trails mentioned in T&T are no
 longer open. We saw all the key species on the rainforest loop near O'Reillys, around the

campground or the Python Rock track. The T&T description of the locations on Duck Creek Road bear no relation to reality! We did not try to find Rufous Scrubbird here.

Girraween NP: Excellent place with good trails but extremely busy during the Spring holidays. We returned later and had the place almost to ourselves. Note that we did not find Turquoise Parrot or Spotted Quailthrush here as some people do. The Junction Track, the various parts of the Link Track, plus the picnic area, the bathing pool and Bald Rock camp site were all good. The track to Dr Roberts Pool was good for Red Browed Treecreeper.

Sundown NP: We went to the northern area along a very rough track but were rewarded with Turquoise Parrots and many other species. Not to mention fighting kangaroos. A super place.

Mount Glorious: A really excellent spot. We went there on our last day and saw a good range of excellent birds and our only sighting of Russet Tailed Thrush. The circuit trail from the car park, the trail to Greene's Falls and Brown's Road were all good.

OUTBACK

Bowra Station: Despite the heat, flies and burrs this was spectacular birding, providing a range of difficult species: Hall's Babbler, Chestnut Crowned Babbler, Bourke's Parrot, Mulga Parrot, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Spotted Nightjar, Splendid Fairy Wren, Southern Whiteface, Orange and Crimson Chat, Banded Lapwing, Australian Pratincole, Painted Honeyeater, Diamond Dove, Spotted Bowerbird, Little Woodswallow etc etc (But we dipped on the Chestnut Breasted Quailthrush)

Porcupine Gorge: and the road north to the Lynd was very good for Squatter Pigeon as was Undara

Bladenburg NP (near Winton) Interesting mix of habitat. We found Spinifex Pigeon here.

WET TROPICS

Cairns Botanic Gardens: Seemed to have very few birds, but **Centennial Park** is good (though the boardwalk crakes did not appear for us). Look out for very small sand flies which bite.

Cairns Esplanade: is being extensively refurbished but now has an area specifically designed for wader-watching in just the right spot. John Crowhurst has retired but is still regularly in attendance. Note that the best time to view waders is a couple of hours before high tide – at high tide the foreshore is covered and the birds fly off. There was no sign of Double Eyed Fig Parrots in the Esplanade area.

Cairns Crocodile Farm: is no longer open for casual visitors such as bird watchers. You can only do an expensive organised trip by boat.

Mission Beach area: Has suffered badly from Cyclone Larry and seemed to be almost completely birdless (no fruit or flowers and the trees look like lollipops – all the branches are on the ground). I guess it will eventually recover. There are still cassowaries around.

Mt Whitfield in Cairns: was full of joggers on a Saturday – maybe a weekday would be better

Daintree: The Chris Dahlberg boat trip was expensive but worth it. However when the water level is high (as it was) there is no real chance of Little Kingfisher or Mangrove Robin.

Mossman Gorge: Very good trail with interesting forest

ATHERTON TABLELANDS

Kingfisher Park: was slightly disappointing. The birds were good but the huge number of species sometimes recorded did not seem to materialise. It now has new owners for the second time in the recent past. They provided a good map with birding locations on it.

Mt Lewis: was excellent though the weather was very wet. The road is now closed after the clearing but you can see all the good birds from the road and the path leading north from the clearing. The Highland Restaurant at the bottom of the Mt Lewis Rd is excellent.

Mt Carbine Dam: Good for waterbirds and dry country birds. Good in wet weather as it is in the rain shadow.

Mitchell Lakes: A big dam south of Mt Molloy with a causeway across the middle, which you can drive on to. Good for water birds and again in the rain shadow.

Mount Molloy: A small village with a cake shop and a Great Bowerbird nest in the school yard – ask for directions at the cake shop. Probably only accessible when the school is closed.

Abattoir Swamp: Very good for honeyeaters and the only place we saw White Browed Crane.

Malanda Falls: An excellent campsite right next to the rainforest. Good trails at the falls and good birds (Bower's Shrike Thrush hopping around on the grass)

Hasties Swamp: Fantastic at dawn with swirling flocks of Magpie Geese and Cranes with various crakes and rails by the side of the road

Bromfield Swamp: Need a scope as everything is a long way off. Too windy for a scope when we were there!

Lake Barrine: A good short "Rainforest" trail which had Chowchilla and Tooth Billed Catbird despite Cyclone Larry damage. The trail round the lake was also good.

Millaa Millaa: The Falls Teahouse does fantastic food.

MID COASTAL AREAS

Inskip and Cooloola: Inskip Point campsite was very busy but despite that we saw the Black Breasted Button Quail, Beach Stone Curlew and a baby Brush Turkey. The Cooloola Way was very attractive – Christmas Bells in flower – but we couldn't find Southern Emu Wren.

Burnett Heads (near Bundaberg) The mangrove and park area near the boat ramp had many species of birds – some may have been on passage. Also a Tawny Frogmouth in the camp site.

Lady Musgrave Island: Boat trips now go only from Town of 1770, and take about 1¾ hours. Black Noddies and Bridled terns and a good day out. Take seasickness pills if it is even slightly windy.

Byfield SF: We got stuck in the sand here but it was one of the few places we had views of Rose Crowned Fruit Dove

Paluma Range NP: (Called Mt Spec in T&T) The famous Ivy Cottage Tea Rooms was closed and For Sale. The Birthday Creek Falls track has a Golden Bowerbird Bower. Jourama Falls campsite further north along the main coast road was extremely pleasant and has Large Tailed Nightjars in attendance.

Eungella: The track for the Honeyeater was more-or-less as described in T&T, except that you go further than you expect down Chelman's Rd – about 3km. The area outside the gate has been recently cleared. It helps to know the call – a bit like an enthusiastic Corn Bunting. Further on, Broken River was good for birds and we also saw platypus during the day.

Cape Hillsborough: The road ends at a "resort camp site", but there are also trails such as Hidden Valley (accessed from the car park) which was good. Smalleys Beach is the best place to camp and had Beach Stone Curlew.

Cooroy Lake and wetlands: An interesting area but it was pouring with rain

NEW SOUTH WALES

NORTH

Washpool NP: Good rainforest birds. Fantastic fireflies.

Gibraltair NP: Wet eucalyptus forest, good trails

Coffs Harbour: No Pacific Bazas in the Botanic Gardens – haven't nested there for a while.

Hat Head: Nice place to camp and lots of birds passing the headland.

OUTBACK

Barraba/Manilla bird routes: (see web site) An interesting concept and we had the place to ourselves. We camped at Borah Stock Reserve which was idyllic and had good dry country birds. We tried to find Regent Honeyeater at the area beyond Woods Reef, but no luck. Apparently they were breeding further towards Bingara.

Burren Junction: we went to see the vagrant Grey Headed Lapwing but it had gone. Good area for parrots though.

Wee Waa to Barradine: Good dry country birds

Warrumbungles NP: Excellent eucalyptus forest and associated birds. Also grassy clearings with e.g. Turquoise Parrot. The area just to the west is true dry country with Apostlebirds and Bluebonnets.

Nombinnie NR: (Round Hill NR in T&T – but Round Hill is actually across the road. Directions otherwise as in the T&T map) We saw about 5 new species as we approached the reserve as it was a whole new habitat! The "field" is now almost grown over. No sign here of Gilbert's Whistler here, never mind Red Lored, but good otherwise – Shy Heathwren, Southern Scrub Robin etc.

Lake Cargelligo: Worth a look – the only water for miles around.

Cocoparra NP: Good eucalyptus woodland but extremely dry when we were there.

Fivebough Swamp: (Leeton Swamp in T&T – ignore the T&T directions – get a map from the web site) Really excellent – worth 2 days.

Deniliquin: Phil Maher runs his trips from here but in November 2006 it was very dry and many birds were hard to find. The pools by the Rice Mill and Truck Wash, and the sewage farm were very good for ducks.

Gulpa SF: So dry that many of the trees appeared to be dying.

SOUTH

Lakes Bathurst and George: Completely dry and have been for years

Wollongong Pelagic: Booked in advance by email, not the best time of year to do it but worth it to see plenty of Shearwaters and a Wandering Albatross in the hand!

Fitzroy Falls, Carrington Falls, Budderoo NP, Barren Grounds: All on the edge of a sandstone escarpment and very pleasant scenery. Also lots of flowering shrubs and therefore birds especially Eastern Bristlebird and Pilotbird. .

Blue Mountains: Not really mountains, just a high plateau with horrible built up sprawl along the top. The area north of the main road was completely shut due to fires when we were there. Carol Proberts has a web site covering the area. We failed to find Rock Warbler here.

Capertee Valley: A dry valley west of the Blue Mountains which for some reason has a large number of desirable birds. Even in drought conditions with bad smoke haze we found good things including Regent Honeyeater.

Dharug NP: A relief after all the drought – a flowering oasis complete with Wombats and Glossy Black Cockatoos! A good short trail plus the Great North Road nearby.

Gloucester Tops (Barrington Tops NP) A scary road to the top but excellent Antarctic Beech forest complete with Rufous Scrubbirds, Olive Whistlers and a Spotted Tailed Quoll. Scenic too.

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)

Emu: Seen in small numbers anywhere west of the Dividing Range: Also at Byfield SF. Large flock near the campsite at the Warrumbungles.

Southern Cassowary: Seen on the beach at Cape Tribulation and at The Crater NP. Just missed one with young at the Jinjalba boardwalk in the Daintree. Heard at Mission Beach.

Hoary Headed Grebe: Only seen at Lake Cargelligo

Wandering (Gibson's) Albatross: Wollongong Pelagic – several seen

Black Browed and Campbell's Albatross: One of each seen on the Wollongong Pelagic.

Shy Albatross: One seen on the Wollongong Pelagic.

Great Winged Petrel: Several seen on the Wollongong Pelagic.

Wedge Tailed, Short Tailed and Flesh Footed Shearwaters: Wollongong Pelagic

Fluttering Shearwater: Wollongong Pelagic

Brown Booby: Seen only offshore at 1770

Magpie Goose: Abattoir Swamp and huge flocks at Hasties Swamp at dawn

Plumed Whistling Duck: Mt Carbine Dam

Wandering Whistling Duck: Several localities in the Atherton Tablelands

Musk Duck: Only seen at the Deniliquin sewage farm

Green Pygmy Goose: Mitchell Lakes north of Mareeba and "Wild Wings and Swampy Things" near Daintree

Pink Eared Duck: Only found in pools around Deniliquin

Black Bittern: On Chris Dahlberg Daintree river cruise

Black Necked Stork: Mitchell Lakes north of Mareeba

Little Eagle: Seen only once near Sundown NP

Brown Quail: By the road near Hasties Swamp at dawn

Red Backed Buttonquail: Prolonged close views of a male bird on the "Eungella Honeyeater" track

Black Breasted Buttonquail: Seen well on only one of four visits (the first!) to the well known location at Inskip Point.

Red Necked Rail: The pool at Kingfisher Park but it did not appear till it was nearly dark

Bush Hen: Brief views by the side of the road near Bromfield Swamp and Hasties Swamp

Baillon's Crake: Surprisingly easy to see at Fivebough Swamp in the late afternoon

Australian Crake: As above

White Browed Crake: Only seen at Abbatoir Swamp

Black Tailed Native Hen: Bowra, Deniliquin and Fivebough

Sarus Crane: Large flock roosting at Hasties Swamp

Brolga: A pair seen at Bromfield Swamp, a marsh near Sandy Point (Yeppoon) and near Deniliquin

Australian Bustard: A few seen on outback roads, displaying males at East and West Mary Roads near Mt Molloy

Bush Thick Knee: Only seen in Centennial Park, Cairns at dusk

Beach Thick Knee: Searched for at many locations and eventually found at Smalleys Beach (Cape Hillsborough) and at Inskip Point

Red Necked Avocet: Good numbers at Fivebough Swamp

Australian Pratincole: On the roads (just arrived?) near Bowra and seen on the Phil Maher night drive

Inland Dotterel: Phil Maher night drive

Banded Lapwing: Bowra and Phil Maher night drive

Black Naped Tern: We almost missed this bird by not doing a Barrier Reef trip in the north. We saw one bird only near Lady Musgrave island.

Bridled Tern: Lady Musgrave Island

Sooty Tern: Wollongong Pelagic

Black Noddy: Lady Musgrave Island

Brown Skua: An un-seasonable bird on the Wollongong Pelagic

Pomarine Skua: Wollongong Pelagic

White Headed Pigeon: Atherton Tablelands, Paluma Range and Mt Glorious

Spinifex Pigeon: Two birds seen in Bladenburg NP near Winton

Squatter Pigeon: Easy to see around Undara and Porcupine Gorge

Wonga Pigeon: Lamington, Mt Glorious and Girraween

Wompoo Fruit Dove: Stewart Creek Rd, Daintree, Mt Glorious, Paluma Range, heard elsewhere

Rose-Crowned Fruit Dove: Mt Glorious, Waterpark Creek at Byfield, heard elsewhere

Pied Imperial Pigeon: Cairns and Daintree areas

Topknot Pigeon: Lamington and Mt Glorious

Superb Parrot: By the side of the road feeding on acacias north of Gulpa SF

Red Winged Parrot: Bowra and water holes in other outback areas

Bluebonnet: Pillaga area, Deniliquin area and west of the Warrumbungles

Mulga Parrot: Bowra and Cocoparra NP

Bourke's Parrot: Bowra

Turquoise Parrot: Burrows Waterhole campsite at Sundown NP; also one bird near the campsite at the Warrumbungles

Budgerigar: Only seen once at Bowra

Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo: Cooloola NP, coastal NSW

Red Tailed Black Cockatoo: Outback, Paluma Range and Queensland coast

Gang Gang Cockatoo: Canberra Botanic Gardens, also Fitzroy Falls and Jervis bay

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo: Bowra and near Deniliquin

Long Billed Corella: The common Corella at Deniliquin

Cockatiel: Goondawindi camp site, Burren Junction, Bowra

Scaly Breasted Lorikeet: Eucalyptus woodland on East Mary Road, nr Mt Molloy, Paluma Range, Gibraltar/Washpool Range

Musk Lorikeet: On flowering Mugga Ironbarks in Capertee Valley and near Barraba

Little Lorikeet: Sundown NP, Warrumbungles, Capertee Valley

Lesser Sooty Owl: Only heard in one location – Malanda Falls campsite

Masked Owl: Breeding pair at Kingfisher Park

Rufous Owl: One seen on spotlighting trip with Alan Gillanders (made up for not seeing any tree roos!)

Tawny Frogmouth: Nesting bird at Mungo Brush campsite at Myall Lakes, calling bird over our campervan at Burnett Heads campsite near Bundaberg, roosting bird on Island Sanctuary in Deniliquin

Papuan Frogmouth: Bird on nest seen from Chris Dahlberg Daintree river trip

Australian Owlet Nightjar: Only seen when Phil Maher tapped a known roost tree

Spotted Nightjar: Bird flushed at Bowra when looking for quail thrushes on the stony ridge

Large Tailed Nightjar: Two calling birds and a family with young seen at the Jourama Falls camp site at the Paluma Range NP

White Throated Needletail: Groups seen on several occasions especially around coastal headlands in NSW

Azure Kingfisher: Sundown NP, Broken River platypus viewing point, Fivebough Swamp, Myall Lakes

Little Kingfisher: Only one seen, on the Maadje boardwalk in the Daintree NP

Red Backed Kingfisher: One seen at Bowra

Collared Kingfisher: One seen in the Centennial Park, Cairns

Noisy Pitta: Kingfisher Park and Jinjalba boardwalk in Daintree NP. Not seen at Lamington - only calling infrequently at the time we were there (late Sept).

Red Browed Treecreeper: Only seen at Girraween

Albert's Lyrebird: Python Rock Track at Lamington – one seen well and another heard.

Rufous Scrub Bird: Two birds seen, though not well, on the Beech Forest walk at Gloucester Tops. Also one bird calling on the Falls track.

Tooth Billed Catbird: Mt Lewis, Paluma Range (Birthday Creek Falls), Lake Barrine especially the Rainforest Walk.

Golden Bowerbird: The bowers near The Crater NP are currently deserted though there may be young males around. Good views at Birthday Creek Falls in the Paluma Range.

Regent Bowerbird: Lamington, Eungella Honeyeater track, Browns Rd at Mt Glorious

Spotted Bowerbird: Bowra

Great Bowerbird: Mt Molloy

Red Backed Fairy Wren: Car park at Millstream Falls and near the Paluma Range

White Winged Fairy Wren: Open roadside area in the Pillaga and near Deniliquin

Splendid Fairy Wren: Bowra, on the stony ridge, and Nombinnie NR

Lovely Fairy Wren: Only seen on Stewart Creek Rd in Daintree

Eastern Bristlebird: Seen without too much difficulty from the wide grassy track at Barren Grounds – one bird seen, 5 calling. Also a pair seen well on the track from Blue Pool campsite near Carrington Falls to Warris's seat.

Pilotbird: One pair seen well at the above location near to Warris's seat.

Rock Warbler: Many well known spots were searched in vain. Eventually had poor views on the Mill Creek Trail at Dharug NP

Fernwren: One bird seen on the road up to Mt Lewis

Atherton Scrubwren: Several locations on the Atherton Tablelands but beware confusion with the Large Billed Scrubwren

Speckled Warbler: Sundown NP, Warrumbungles NP, Pillaga

Chestnut Rumped Heathwren: Excellent photographable views in two locations at Girraween on our second visit. Not seen on the first visit.

Shy Heathwren: Nombinnie NR

Slaty Backed Thornbill: Bowra

Western Gerygone: Nombinnie NR, Gulpa SF

Southern Whiteface: Bowra, Gulpa SF

Black Honeyeater: only seen once near Deniliquin (Phil Maher)

Graceful/Yellow Spotted Honeyeaters: Atherton Tablelands (KP), Daintree and Paluma. Not too difficult to distinguish - Graceful seemed much smaller and agile and Yellow Spotted was very vocal with loud descending call.

Eungella Honeyeater: Track at Eungella described by T&T

Varied Honeyeater: Cairns Esplanade, Daintree

Mangrove Honeyeater: Burnett Heads (Bundaberg), Sandy Point north of Yeppoon

Fuscous Honeyeater: only found on flowering ironbarks when searching for Regent Honeyeater

Grey fronted Honeyeater: A few birds seen at Nombinnie NR

Tawny Crowned Honeyeater: Only one seen, near Carrington Falls

Striped Honeyeater: Warrumbungles, Myall Lakes and others

Painted Honeyeater: One at Bowra

Regent Honeyeater: One bird seen at TSR 8 in the Capertee Valley

Spiny Cheeked Honeyeater: Warrumbungles, Cocoparra NP and others

Crimson Chat: Bowra

Orange Chat: Bowra, Deniliquin (Phil Maher)
White Fronted Chat: Fivebough Swamp, Deniliquin (Phil Maher)
Scarlet Robin: Only seen at Girraween and Sundown, right at north of range
Red Capped Robin: Sundown, Bowra, Pillaga, Gulpa SF
Hooded Robin: Sundown, Bowra, Pillaga, Gulpa SF
Pale Yellow Robin: Mt Glorious, Atherton Tablelands
Grey Headed Robin: Atherton Tablelands
Southern Scrub Robin: Nombinnie NR
Varied Sitella: Only seen at Warrumbungles NP and Cocoparra NP
Crested Shrike Tit: Only seen at Warrumbungles NP
Crested Bellbird: Only seen once (!) at Bowra
Olive Whistler: Only found at Gloucester Tops where quite common
Gilbert's Whistler: Gulpa SF taped in by Phil Maher. Not found at Nombinnie NR
Grey Whistler: Seen once or twice in the Daintree area – a distinctive song, slow with no whipcrack. Easily overlooked.
Bowers Shrike Thrush: Mt Lewis, Malanda Falls, Paluma Range
Logrunner: Lamington, Washpool NP
Chowchilla: Only at Lake Barrine.
Grey Crowned Babbler: Sundown, Mt Carbine Dam
White Browed Babbler: Warrumbungles, Capertee Valley
Hall's Babbler: Bowra
Chestnut Crowned Babbler: Bowra and near Deniliquin
Spotted Quailthrush: Pair seen close to the path on the Pincham Trail at Warrumbungles
Chestnut Quailthrush: Seen by the roadside near Nombinnie NR
Pied Monarch: Only seen twice - Mossman Gorge and at the Cathedral Fig
Satin Flycatcher: Strangely common – probably on passage
Shining Flycatcher: Only seen on the Chris Dahlberg Daintree river trip
Yellow Breasted Boatbill: A nesting pair at Kingfisher Park, also at the Curtain Fig
Little Raven: Only seen around Deniliquin
Victoria's Riflebird: Heard in several locations in Atherton Tablelands and Paluma Range. Seen well at Malanda Falls
Paradise Riflebird: Python Rock Trail at Lamington
Black Faced Woodswallow: Warrumbungles
Little Woodswallow: Bowra
Ground Cuckoo Shrike: Only two pairs seen, both by the road in the vicinity of Charleville
Cicadabird: Often heard, and seen fleetingly, only seen well at Platypus Bush Camp near Finch Hatton Gorge and Myall Lakes. Call not very cicada-like.
Bassian Thrush: Lamington, Gloucester Tops, Washpool, Atherton Tablelands
Russet Tailed Thrush: Mt Glorious
White Backed Swallow: Only seen at the Borah Stock Reserve near Manila
Golden Headed Cisticola: Only seen well at Fivebough Swamp
Tawny Grassbird: By the road near Bromfield Swamp, Cooloolo NP
Little Grassbird: Fivebough Swamp
Crimson Finch: Canefield edge near Paluma Range
Diamond Firetail: Gulpa SF, Capertee Valley
Plum Headed Finch: Only one bird seen, in roadside grass near Split Rock Dam in northern NSW
Chestnut Breasted Mannikin: near Wonga Beach, near Burnett Heads (Bundaberg) and elsewhere
Diamond Firetail: Gulpa SF, Capertee Valley

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