

# LANIOTURDUS

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## **About the Namibia Bird Club**

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. The club's mission is to contribute to Namibian ornithology by, amongst other things, arranging regular birding outings, conducting bird ringing and atlasing excursions and educating the public about the value of birds. To achieve this, we organise monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Water Care Works and occasional weekend trips further afield. Bird club members also participate in the African Waterbird Census twice a year.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we present occasional lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive the bird club's journal, *Lanioturdus* and outings and events are advertised on the club's website [www.namibiabirdclub.org](http://www.namibiabirdclub.org).

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organisation and relies entirely on members' subscriptions and donations to fund its activities.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club or its committee.



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Cover photo Bradfield's Hornbill © Holger Kolberg

### Hildegard Becker

It is with deep sorrow that we learned of the passing of bird club member Hildegard Becker.

She served on the Namibia Bird Club committee from 2005 until mid-2008, fulfilling the post of secretary. Her friendly and efficient manner was loved by everyone. She often helped with writing the *Bird Call* - an informal events calendar.

Hildegard was also a passionate botanist combining her enthusiasm for birdlife with Namibia's nature.

She had a good sense of humour and once told me that she employed a bunch of hornbills to dig up her garden - all was left was to sow the seeds.

## Birding northern Australia (part 2)

Franz Klein  
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### 9 September 2022

After landing in Cairns and picking up our luggage we went and waited in front of "Arrivals" while Vaughan and Neil got a taxi and went to pick up the two minibuses. After our delayed flight we were further delayed in that Vaughan and Neil somehow could not find the road into the airport for the pickups. Eventually they did and then we were on our way to our accommodation for the night which we reached close to midnight.

### 10 September 2022

After only going to sleep at around midnight we had to wake up at 05:15 for our boat cruise on the Daintree River. Fortunately, we had the boat to ourselves this time. The boat was small with only seats for ten people so Svetlana had to stay on shore and Vaughan had to stand next to the guide. Just after we left the dock a Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* landed on the bow of the boat. In a smallish tree on the bank opposite the dock was a Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*. Next bird seen was a Shining Flycatcher. We continued down the Daintree River until we got close to where the Barratt Creek flowed into the river. Here we managed to get a good view of the head, neck, and breast of a Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*. Then it was up the Barratt Creek to try to find one of the target birds, the Little Kingfisher *Ceyx pusillus*, but we never got to see. Our first birds along Barratt Creek were a pair of Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*. Then it was the turn of a female Pacific Koel *Eudynamis orientalis* a lifer for all including Vaughan I believe. This was followed by a Topknot Pigeon

*Lopholaimus antarcticus*. Another bird seen was the Little Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*. Once back on the Daintree River there were a large number of swifts flying about over the river. Unfortunately, the light, combined with low and fast flying, did not help with getting good views of the Australian Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae*. Another bird of which we had very distant views of was the Barred Cuckooshrike *Coracina lineata* but the views were not good enough for me to be able to tick it off on my list. As we were nearing the end of the boat trip we managed to see Wompoo Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*, Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* and Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*.



**Figure 1:** Closest we got to a Cassowary at Jindalba © 2022 Franz Klein

After a good breakfast at CrocXpress in Daintree Village we continued to our next birding spot at Jindalba boardwalk, Cape Tribulation. In the car park outside CrocXpress I had excellent views of another Brown-backed Honeyeater. Further east we crossed the Daintree River again on the way to Jindalba, this time using a ferry. There was a chance that we could find a Southern Cassowary

*Casuaris casuaris* in the car park but we did not have any luck. This was the first of three places on the trip where it could be possible to see the Cassowary.

We took the Jindalba Short Loop Walk. The first two birds seen were the Spectacled Monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*, and the Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*. Further along the walk we saw Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata*, and Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostra*. The call of a Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbis* was recognised by either Svetlana or Vaughan. It took us some time but we eventually found the bird. Then we were off to our accommodation for the next two nights: Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge. On arrival we were shown to our rooms. Each room had two entrances; one from what can be termed the car park side and one from the verandah side. The verandah faced a garden of bushes and trees with a number of bird-feeders and water basins. While some of us took an afternoon nap, others sat on the verandah and watched the birds feeding. The first bird everybody saw was the Australian Brushturkey *Alectura lathami* walking around on the lawn.



**Figure 2:** Australian Brushturkey © 2022 Peter Maton

At the birdfeeders were a number of Red-browed Finches *Neochmia temporalis*. Throughout the afternoon a number of Honeyeaters came to visit the watering dishes. Four of them were lifers, namely Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata*, Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*, Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Caligavis chrysops* and the best looking of them all, a Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayanus*.



**Figure 3:** Macleay's Honeyeater © 2022 Birdfinders

Later in the afternoon we walked down towards the end of the Mount Kooyong Road in search of Frogmouths. The hostess of Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge had informed Vaughan that a Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis* had its regular roost somewhere near the Bushy Creek. After lots of searching we could not find any sign of the Frogmouth. We did however manage to see a male Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*, another bird I was really hoping to see in Australia, and a Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito*. Back at the lodge while sitting on the verandah hoping for a Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor*, which frequents the place, to make an appearance the hostess came by and asked if we had managed to see the Frogmouth. We had to answer in the negative. After viewing a map that the hostess had drawn for Vaughan

showing the location of the roost, I volunteered to go back and see if I could find the bird. I rushed down while the others followed more slowly. About ten seconds after arriving at the location I found a pair of the Frogmouths.



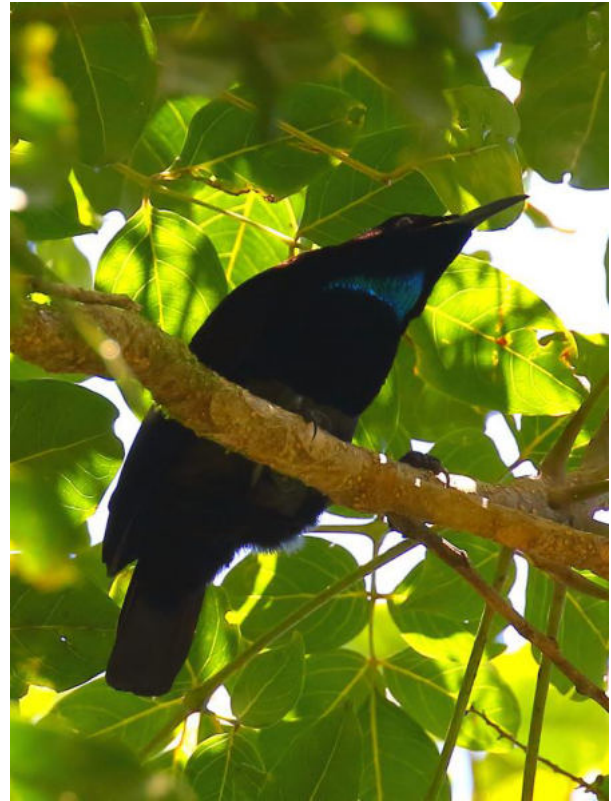
**Figure 4:** Papuan Frogmouth © 2022 Peter Maton

After getting our fill of viewing and photographing the Frogmouths we returned and, on the way, noticed a Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae* perched on the anchor line of a pole. We did not get to see the Red-necked Crake during the afternoon, but did get to see a Silvereeye *Zosterops lateralis*.

### 11 September 2022

The morning was spent birding at the Mount Lewis National Park. Along the way up to the park we saw a Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella* sitting on the road. Those in the first minibus got good views while those in the second did not. However, after parking and walking to the start of the trail another Brown Cuckoo-Dove was seen in a small tree in the nearby clearing allowing everybody to have a good view. At the entrance to the trail we saw Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Neosericornis citreogularis* and White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaea*. Further along the trail amongst the trees in the forest we saw another Honeyeater, a Bridled

Honeyeater *Bolemoreus frenatus*, and a few minutes later a Bower's Shrikethrush *Colluricincla boweri*. About 50 metres further along it was the turn of a Grey-headed Robin *Heteromyias cinereifrons* and then a male Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae* in all its glory.



**Figure 5:** Victoria's Riflebird © 2022 Merv de Winter

A bird that was difficult to see, and which only a few of us saw, was the Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis*. The difficulty in seeing the bird was due to its running along on the ground and it was often concealed by the undergrowth. Next was the turn of our second Bowerbird in the form of a Tooth-billed Bowerbird *Scenopoeetes dentirostris*. Svetlana walked ahead at pace and after some time radioed us that she had found some Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii*, one of the main target birds for the morning's outing. Eventually we caught up with her and there they were basically next to the pathway but downhill as the ground sloped steeply down on the

one side. According to Svetlana she was walking along the pathway looking for them when she heard a noise behind her and on turning around, she saw a flock of Chowchillas crossing the path behind her.



**Figure 6:** Chowchilla Male © 2022 Birdfinders



**Figure 7:** Chowchilla Female © 2022 Birdfinders

Back in the clearing near to where the trail started some of us saw an Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* and a bit further along the road, which we had come up, was a Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina*. Back at the lodge we managed to continue to see new birds, namely Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris* and Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus moluccanus*. Before we left for our afternoon birding session, we also saw Scarlet Myzomela *Myzomela sanguinolenta*,

and Yellow Honeyeater *Stomiopera flava* in the lodge's garden. Our birding destination for the afternoon was the Abattoir Swamp Environmental Park. Near the parking area we managed to see a Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*. The Park has a hide that looks out onto what I believe is a swamp although it was covered with thick vegetation so one could not say if there was water there or not. From the boardwalk leading to the hide we had good views of a Rufous Shrikethrush *Colluricincla rufogaster* (which used to be a subspecies of the Little Shrikethrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha rufogaster*) and our target bird White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris niger* which was feeding in a small tree next to the entrance of the hide. This was the only time we saw the White-cheeked Honeyeater during the whole trip. Unfortunately, no birds were seen from inside the hide.



**Figure 8:** White-cheeked Honeyeater © 2022 Birdfinders

On the way back to the lodge we stopped at a woody area next to a sharp curve in the Mossman Mount Molloy Road where we hoped to find Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa*. Unfortunately, the grass was not in seed, so we did not see any. As a consolation prize we managed to see a Large-billed Scrubwren

*Sericornis magnirostra*. Back at the lodge everybody gathered once again on the verandah except for Neil who retired to his room. Very soon a Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor* appeared and bathed in a large water dish. Then a second one appeared. Both birds were skittish and would often run back into the bush but fortunately would soon reappear. Everybody was so preoccupied by the pair that nobody thought of going to call Neil.



**Figure 9:** Red-necked Crake © 2022 Birdfinders

Some of us then took a walk in another part of the garden hoping to see new birds but with no success. We did get to see a couple of Red-legged Pademelons *Thylogale stigmatica*. A Red-legged Pademelon is a rainforest kangaroo.

## 12 September 2022

Before we started our journey to the Kookaburra Lodge in Yungaburra we searched for a Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* in the Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge's garden. The hostess does not allow visitors to play bird calls but she allowed Vaughan to play this bird's call. Soon it made an appearance but high in the trees. After some time we managed to get good views of it. Many wished that they could have spent a third night at

the Kingfisher Park Birdwatching Lodge. Our first stop was at the Jack Bethel Park where we searched for the White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa*. Vaughan was in the lead, and I was following on his heels when, as we were getting to the top of some stairs, I saw the bird in a bush that arched over the walkway. Vaughan could not see it as it was directly above his head, so he had to come back a bit. Everybody fortunately managed to get good views of the bird. Then it was back in the minibuses for the next part of the journey with the destination being the Granite Gorge Nature Park.

At the Granite Gorge Nature Park our main target bird was the Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta* which after some walking about we eventually found. While searching for the Squatter Pigeon we came across Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*. On the large boulders and rocks below the level where we searched for the pigeon we saw a Mareeba Rock-wallaby *Petrogale mareeba*, another type of kangaroo. We were alerted by Svetlana to a number of Noisy Friarbirds *Philemon corniculatus* in a tree near to where we saw the pigeons. However, by the time we got there the birds had gone. There was an Olive-backed Sunbird in the tree. Some of us then went into the reception area where they also sold ice cream and where a tame Sulphur-crested Cockatoo would sit either on your shoulder or arm. I am not sure if somebody called those that were in the reception but we returned to the tree and were able to see the Noisy Friarbirds which had returned. On leaving we had close views of an Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*.

Our first afternoon stop was at Hasties Swamp National Park where we also had lunch in the double-



storey hide. To get to the Hasties Swamp National Park we had to travel along the Kennedy Highway where we had to stop due to some road works. Fortunately, this stop was next to a large ploughed field on the left. A Sarus Crane *Antigone antigone* was foraging in this field. From the hide at Hasties Swamp National Park we could see a large variety of water birds. Right in front of the hide were a couple of Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*, while further into the water there were a number of Hardheads *Aythya australis* (aka White-eyed Duck) in various groups. On the shore to the left were a number of Australian Pelicans *Pelecanus conspicillatus*. Amongst the birds on the shore were a couple of Little Black Cormorants *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* and on the far shore opposite the hide one or two Dusky Moorhens *Gallinula tenebrosa* were walking about.



**Figure 10:** Hasties Swamp National Park © 2022 Franz Klein

We continued our journey to our next overnight accommodation at the Kookaburra Lodge Motel in Yungaburra where we spent two nights. But first we stopped at the Curtain Fig National Park.

After admiring the fig tree we did some birding and managed to see a Brown Gerygone *Gerygone mouki* and

a Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus maculosus* (our third Bowerbird of the trip) in the national park. On the outskirts of Yungaburra we stopped at the Platypus Viewing Platform next to Peterson Creek. No birding but as the name of the location suggests we tried to see a platypus which we fortunately did. I looked around for birds but found none that I could add to my list as lifers.



**Figure 11:** The Curtain Fig Tree © 2022 Franz Klein



**Figure 12:** Platypus © 2022 Peter Maton

In the evening as we were getting ready to leave for a local pub where

meals were served, we noticed the last members of a huge colony of flying foxes fly overhead. Unfortunately, it was already too dark to identify them; all we could make out were the shapes of the bats.

### 13 September 2022

Breakfast was a slow process with rooms being served one by one. Svetlana and Vaughan were served first while nearly an hour later Ann and Merv were the last to be served. Fortunately, the appearance of a Buff-banded Rail *Hypotaenidia philippensis* in the garden kept us occupied for a while while waiting for breakfast. After breakfast we headed off to the Mount Hypipamee National Park where we were hoping to see a Golden Bowerbird *Prionodura newtoniana* and a Southern Cassowary. This was the second place with the possibility of seeing Cassowary. After arriving Svetlana took us back up the road, we had come along on for about 300 metres and then up an embankment. We located a Golden Bowerbird's bower and then stood about 10 metres away and waited for the bird to appear. According to a post on social media a birder had been at the same location a few days earlier and had managed to see both Golden Bowerbird and Southern Cassowary at the same spot. After some time the Golden Bowerbird arrived but it took a while before we managed to get good views of it. Our fourth bowerbird was in the bag.

After the Golden Bowerbird left, we stood about hoping for a Cassowary to show itself but no luck. We returned to the car park and took a short walk along a trail that led to the Mount Hypipamee Crater. From a bridge over a small stream Vaughan pointed out to us a purple-coloured fruit that Cassowaries love to eat. I

continued to the 'crater' while the others returned to the car park. The crater seemed to be more of a sinkhole than an actual crater. We spent a lot of time in the picnic area next to the car park waiting for a Cassowary to show itself but again no luck.



**Figure 13:** Bower of Golden Bowerbird © 2022 Franz Klein



**Figure 14:** Golden Bowerbird © 2022 Birdfinders

After lunch I volunteered to go back to the spot where we had seen the Golden Bowerbird to see if there was a Cassowary walking about. Alas there was none. Depressed I went back to the car park. About 100 metres from the car park I heard a bird call, which I had not heard before on the tour, in the trees to the right of me. Fortunately, I had looked through David's bird book the previous evening and was able to

identify the two birds as being Pied Monarchs *Arses kaupi*. I had one of the two radios with me and so was able to notify the others who came rushing over.

Our destination for the afternoon's birding was the Crater Lakes National Park. On the way we managed to get good views of a Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris* (aka Australian Kite). Lake Eacham in the Crater Lakes National Park was very quiet in terms of birds and we did not see any birds on the water. However, we did manage to see an Australian Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis* and Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica*. Along a path in the surrounding forest we got better views of a Tooth-billed Bowerbird.

That evening we left earlier for the evening meal and were once again treated to the sight of a huge colony of flying foxes flying overhead. Even in the better light we were still unable to identify which species of flying fox they were.

### 14 September 2022

This day was the third and last opportunity for us to see a Southern Cassowary on our tour. Following yesterday's slow breakfast we decided to forgo having breakfast at the Kookaburra Lodge Motel and would have breakfast on the way. Our destination for trying to find a Cassowary was Etty Bay Beach. It would be a 2.5-hour trip. After about two hour's drive, as we were nearing a sharp bend in the road, we suddenly saw a Southern Cassowary on the right side feeding next to the road. Initially those in the second minibus did not get good views but this changed as the Cassowary continued walking. After a few minutes we drove a bit further and parked where after we walked back to where the Cassowary was and were

able to view and photograph it while maintaining a respectable distance from it.



**Figure 15:** Southern Cassowary © 2022 Peter Maton

The Cassowary then unfortunately disappeared into the forest. According to Svetlana the field to the left of us was the exact location where one of the previous tours had also seen a Cassowary.

Elated, we all got back into the minibuses and started on the longish journey to the Cairns Esplanade. There one of the target birds was the Varied Honeyeater, a bird that was supposed to be difficult to find and see. After parking in the car park we walked across to a bunch of trees which surrounded a few picnic tables. Svetlana walked to the ablution facilities and came back to say she had seen some Varied Honeyeaters there. By the time I got to the ablution facilities the birds had disappeared. Disappointed we walked back to the sidewalk next to the ocean where Neil, Simon, and Vaughan had their scopes out looking for waders. Fortunately, it was low tide. They kindly allowed the rest of us to view some of the waders through their scopes. Vaughan was standing about a metre away from a drinking fountain. He had his back to it and while looking through his scope two Varied Honeyeaters came down and started drinking water that

had collected in a bowl at the bottom of the fountain.



**Figure 16:** Varied Honeyeater © 2022 Birdfinders

There was an area covered in mangroves to the left of us from which a lot of noise was coming. Several First Nations people (indigenous Australians) had gone in there to consume alcohol. Fortunately, the couple of Buff-banded Rails walking along the edge did not seem to be bothered. There was another rail which looked possibly like a Lewin's Rail *Lewinia pectoralis* but nobody was fast enough to view it through a scope to confirm identification. A bit further along the shoreline there were a number of different waders. One of the first was a Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*, then a Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*. These were later joined by Sharp-tailed Sandpipers *Calidris acuminata*. We had lunch at the picnic spot after which we walked along the esplanade hoping to see more waders. We managed to see a wader that Neil was very keen on seeing, namely a Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*. Unfortunately, it was a female and was not that colourful. We were only able to view it for a minute or so before it flew off further down the esplanade. We continued after it but could not find it again.

Our last birding spot for the afternoon was the Cairns Botanic Gardens. It was a nice walk around the Gardens but we unfortunately did not add any birds to our lists. Our hotel for the next two nights was the Palm Royale Hotel.

### 15 September 2022

I did not read the itinerary before the trip so was unaware that we would be going on what I, after getting an email from Birdfinders stating that we would be using a different boat, thought was a pelagic. Today was the day that we went on that boat trip. After an early start we travelled to Port Douglas where we would be boarding our boat. Once at the harbour the true size of the boat we were going on and the large number of non-birders that got on told us that we would not be going on a pelagic. I think everybody was disappointed; I know I was.



**Figure 17:** Our boat *Wave Dancer* © 2022 Franz Klein

We had been told by, I believe, Vaughan that we would be able to swim and view part of the Great Barrier Reef, which I was not intending to do thinking of being in the wide-open ocean with lots of Great White Sharks *Carcharodon carcharias* about. Once on the boat, the crew made announcements concerning safety and the trip. The

trip would last about an hour and we would be going to an island. A very small island it turned out.

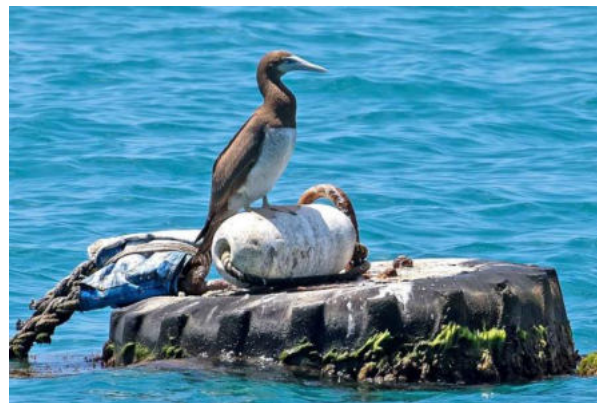


**Figure 18:** The Low Isles © 2022 Franz Klein

On the way to the island there were no seabirds flying over the boat or following it. The only birds we saw were Torresian Imperial Pigeons, not a bird one would expect to see flying over the sea. As we got closer to the island we could see other tour operator boats already anchored there. My hopes of seeing any birds on the island disappeared. However, not all was lost as on the right side of the island on a tiny peninsula a few Australian Pelicans were perched. There were a number of large buoys situated about with small boats attached. These small boats would act as ferries transferring people from the larger boats to the island and back again. Several Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* were perched on some of the buoys.

There were a number of activities that one could participate in on and around the island. One was snorkelling while viewing a coral reef which formed part of the Great Barrier Reef. All the tourists that wanted to do the snorkelling had to gather on the bow deck for a safety talk and were given strict instructions to not stand on any of the corals. Of us ten birders only Dawn and Simon

were brave enough to don their costumes and partake in the snorkelling. Another activity was the viewing of the coral reef by means of glass-bottomed boats. The other activities involved lying and walking on the beach.



**Figure 19:** Brown Booby © 2002 Peter Maton

The small boats first ferried all of those interested in snorkelling to the island. Then after about an hour's wait the same boats had some alterations done and large pieces of glass were inserted in the bottoms. Then it was the turn for those that wanted to view the coral reef from the boats. I got onto the first boat and enjoyed viewing the coral reef and some of its inhabitants. The viewing only lasted about 30 minutes. I then decided to go to the island and go to where I had seen the Australian Pelicans earlier. As I got closer a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers *Haematopus fuliginosus* flew past me in the direction of the boat from which I had just come. Disappointed I continued and stopped a suitable distance from the pelicans. Apart from the pelicans there were several terns, such as Greater Crested Tern, Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* and Australian Tern and one or two Ruddy Turnstones. While watching the terns the two Sooty Oystercatchers returned and I was able to get very good views of them. Vaughan and the others had also

come over to the island and were able to see the birds. Some had seen the Oystercatchers from the boat as they had flown past. This was the only time we got to see Sooty Oystercatchers. Back at the boat we had a buffet lunch.

In the afternoon David and I partook in the guided tour of the island which was very interesting. After the tour we tried to walk around the island in search of birds. As it was getting closer to the time for our return to the mainland I decided to return to our boat while David went back to where the birds were and managed to see a Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*. Those that were already on the boat also got to see Black-naped Tern and I was the only one to dip.

What started out as a disappointing day for me, as there was to be no pelagic cruise, in fact turned out to be a very enjoyable day. The two lifers in the form of the Brown Booby and Sooty Oystercatcher helped greatly. Once everybody was back on the boat we were given a glass of bad-tasting champagne. Once back on the mainland we returned to Cairns Esplanade as there was still an hour or two of daylight left. There we managed to get good views of Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*. A bird we were trying to find along the esplanade was the Double-eyed Fig Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*, which Svetlana said she saw and tried to get us on to it but it had already disappeared and had been replaced by a large flock of Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets. While looking for the parrot we managed to get good views of a Hornbill Friarbird *Philemon yorki* which used to be a subspecies of the Helmeted Friarbird.

## 16 September 2022

It was a very early start for all of us with David and I waking up at 02:30. We had to catch an early morning flight to Brisbane, which was our second internal flight of the tour. We had breakfast at the airport and fortunately this flight was not delayed. After we had landed in Brisbane and had retrieved our luggage, we had quite a walk to where we would catch a bus which would take us to the car rental place. After quite a long wait a minibus arrived but the driver did not want to take us all to the car rental place so Vaughan, Neil and I got in. While Vaughan and Neil were sorting out the details and filling out forms the same driver returned with the rest of the tour group. Then it was off again in two minibuses to our next birding destination where we would overnight for the next three nights. Our destination was O' Reilly's Rainforest Retreat which was located in the Lamington National Park. On the way we stopped at a shopping mall in Beenleigh to allow Svetlana and Vaughan to buy the necessities required for our lunches over the next couple of days. While driving in the town we saw one or two Noisy Miners *Manorina melanocephala* next to the road. At the shopping centre I stayed outside at the minibuses while the others went in and did some shopping. I was rewarded with a very good view of a Noisy Miner that had landed in a Eucalyptus tree just in front of the minibuses. Disappointingly there were no other birds that I could see or hear in the green space (Hugh Muntz Park) next to the car park.

As we continued our journey, we started seeing pairs of Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata* next to the road. We eventually stopped again on the outskirts of a village called Canungra

where we viewed some kangaroos lying around on the grass in front of one of the houses. Here we managed to get good views of the Maned Duck. In front of a neighbouring house we saw a couple of Pied Currawongs *Strepera graculina*. While we were looking around David alerted us to the presence of a Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus* which was clambering about on a fence. Then it was back into the minibuses and a very long and winding climb until we reached O'Reilly's. The sight that greeted us as we pulled in front of O'Reilly's was of a group of adults and children next to a tallish bush covered in parrots. Some of the parrots were even perched on the heads, shoulders and arms of some of the people who were feeding the birds. These were wild parrots that had become habituated from all the feeding. An Australian Brushturkey was walking on the ground amongst the people.



**Figure 20:** Friendly parrots © 2022 Merv de Winter

The parrots were Australian King Parrot *Alisterus scapularis* and Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*. To the left of the walkway to the

entrance to reception was another lovely bird, namely a Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*. Our fifth bowerbird.



**Figure 21:** Regent Bowerbird © 2022 Franz Klein

To the right and down from the bush where all the parrots had gathered was a shop which everybody visited mainly to purchase an ice cream. It was close to the start of the steps down to the shop that we saw our second fairywren of the trip. A Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus*.

On a roof of one of the cottages in from of our rooms our sixth Bowerbird, a Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* was perched. After taking our luggage to our rooms and a bit of a rest we went for a walk along the Booyong Walk. While waiting for the others I saw an Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus* in the bush where all the parrots had been. Along the walk we managed to see White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis* and

Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis*.



**Figure 22:** Superb Fairywren © 2022 Birdfinders

Back in the room I fortunately saw a piece of paper stating that if one stayed for three nights and did not request the room to be cleaned then two vouchers for drinks could be obtained from reception. On the way to supper I made sure to stop at reception and received my two vouchers. I alerted the others to the fact and soon everybody had their vouchers. Upstairs from the dining area was a smaller bar area where I exchanged one voucher for a pint of craft beer which did not taste too bad.

### 17 September 2022

Our early morning pre-breakfast walk was not very successful in terms of seeing birds as the whole place was covered in mist. We did manage to see a Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla* in the O'Reilly's car park. An after-breakfast walk along the Border track was much more successful. The walk produced good views of Australian Logrunners *Orthonyx temmincki*, which, like the Chowchilla, were scratching amongst the leaves on the forest floor and a bit further along it was the turn of an Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea*. Those that had not seen the Eastern Whipbird the day before now managed to see it. There were quite a

few around and we watched as it made its very distinct call.



**Figure 23:** Female Logrunner © 2022 Birdfinders



**Figure 24:** Male Logrunner © 2022 Birdfinders

On returning to the Retreat we saw a couple of Wonga Pigeons *Leucosarcia melanoleuca* walking about on the lawn. We then went along a road to a place where a few days earlier a film crew from the BBC had cordoned off an area to film a Shining Bowerbird. Fortunately, there was nobody to stop us and we eventually found the bower of the Shining Bowerbird. This bower did not have a pile of sticks like the bowers of the other bowerbirds had. It did, however, have various tiny pieces of blue plastic or paper lying about on the ground. While we were watching the Shining Bowerbird our seventh bowerbird in the form of a Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris* made an appearance.





**Figure 25:** Green Catbird © 2002 Peter Maton

David and I were sitting on the verandah drinking tea over lunch when Merv came walking by. He had just seen the Albert's Lyrebird *Menura alberti*. Downing our tea we rushed to follow him as he went back to the place where he had seen it. We knocked on the doors of the rooms of those whose room numbers we could remember and soon there were seven of us following Merv back to the Border Track along which we had walked that morning. The bird was no longer at the spot where he had seen it, but I found it again after a few minutes a bit nearer to the Retreat. The rest of the group managed to see the bird later in the afternoon.

For our late afternoon walk we went along the Wishing Tree Trail. Unfortunately, we did not pick up any new birds. One of our targets was the Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor*. Vaughan played the call and a Noisy Pitta responded, at one time being very close to where we stood. We spent quite some time trying to see the bird but unfortunately it was

never viewed. As the others started walking back some of us continued along the trail we had been standing on and reached a viewing tower. I climbed up but could not see any birds although from one side of the tower I had a good view of the valley. Then it was time to return to the Retreat for supper for some and for others, like me, a free beer.



**Figure 26:** Albert's Lyrebird © 2022 Merv de Winter

### 18 September 2022

There was no mist to disrupt the pre-breakfast morning walk. We again went on the Wishing Tree Trail hoping to see the Noisy Pitta but once again we did not have any luck. After some time we started walking back and near the start of the trail we managed to get good views of a Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*.



**Figure 27:** Bassian Thrush © 2022 Birdfinders

Our post-breakfast morning walk was out along the Booyong Walk and back along the Border Track. Along the Border Track we had good views of a Rose Robin *Petroica rosea*. I did not get any more lifers for the rest of the day. Neil and I at one time also borrowed Vaughan's iPod and went down the Wishing Tree Trail again to try to find the Noisy Pitta. A bird which we assume was the Noisy Pitta streaked past us and went to settle in another part of the forest from where it then called confirming that was indeed a Noisy Pitta.

We had lunch at one of the picnic tables near the National Parks & Wildlife Office. Some metres behind us was the bower of a Satin Bowerbird. At least this bower had the sticks like all the other bowers we had seen. A Treecreeper landed on the trunk of a tree next to us but flew off again before anybody had any chance to get binoculars on it.

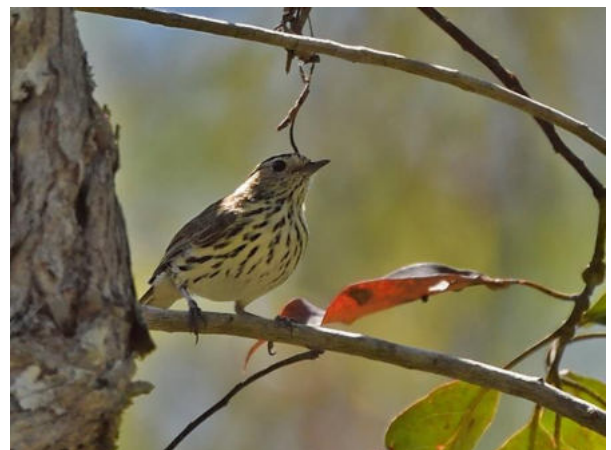
For our afternoon walk we drove a bit down the road until we got to the start of the Python Rock Trail. As we walked along the trail we heard a number of birds calling but none reacted or came closer when Vaughan played their calls. Eventually we reached the Python Rock Lookout. No new birds were seen from the lookout.



**Figure 28:** Python Rock Lookout © 2022 Franz Klein

## 19 September 2022

The group was divided into two with some following Svetlana and some following Vaughan for the pre-breakfast morning walk. Those that went with Svetlana tried unsuccessfully to find a male Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus*. Dawn and Simon were the only two who went with Vaughan to try to see the Noisy Pitta again. This time they were lucky and had good views of it. After breakfast we packed up and started the long journey back to Brisbane. Fortunately, we stopped and did some birding along the way. After driving for a short time we stopped at a clearing which lay to the right side of the road. This was supposed to be the spot for seeing Bell Miners *Manorina melanophrys*. Vaughan played the call a number of times. There was some response but none where one could actually see the birds. I believe Simon was the only one who had a reasonable view of a Bell Miner. A Noisy Pitta called and most of the group rushed to try to find it. While they were searching unsuccessfully for the Noisy Pitta a White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus* made an appearance.



**Figure 29:** Speckled Warbler © 2022 Birdfinders

After quite a drive we were eventually down the mountain. Our next stop was at the Plunkett Conservation

Park where our target bird was the Speckled Warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*. Fortunately, it reacted to Vaughan's playing of its call but it was some time before it settled down enough for us to get a good view of it.

As we drove away from the park along Flesser Road those of us in the second minibus noticed some large kangaroos to the left of the road and alerted those in the first minibus. These were Eastern Grey Kangaroos *Macropus giganteus*. For lunch we stopped at the Brisbane Koala Bushlands. We did not see any Koalas with David especially spending a lot of time searching for them. We added another bird in the form of a Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* to our list.

The first of our two afternoon stops was at the Wynnum Wetlands. After a short walk up a tiny hill we reached a

circular walk around an island of long grass. Here we got good views of a number of Tawny Grassbirds *Cincloramphus timoriensis*. From the top of the hill we could see down into what could be described as a shallow lake where among a number of birds, which we had seen before, were a couple of Chestnut Teals *Anas castanea*. Our second stop for the afternoon was at the Fort Lytton National Park where our only target bird was the Mangrove Honeyeater *Gavicalis fasciogularis*. We did not see any and it was most likely due to the fact that most of the mangrove forest had been removed as there was only a short small strip of mangroves along the road. Disappointed we travelled to our overnight stay at the Ibis Budget Hotel located at Brisbane Airport. The next day Bill, Dave, and Peter would be returning to the UK while the rest of us would continue on to Alice Springs.