



## AUSTRALIA: THE SOUTHWEST

29 NOVEMBER - 7 DECEMBER 2018



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**Blue-breasted Fairywren** (photo Andy Walker) is one of our targets on this trip.

Due to geographic isolation and diverse habitats, the south of Western Australia boasts several endemic species and subspecies. This nine-day tour will focus on finding as many of these endemics as possible, as well as on enjoying a wide range of other interesting flora and fauna.

Endemic species that we will be focusing our attention on during the tour include **Carnaby's** (Short-billed) and **Baudin's** (Long-billed) **Black Cockatoos**, **Western Corella**, **Red-capped Parrot**, **Noisy Scrubbird**, **Western Bristlebird**, **Red-winged Fairywren**, **Western Fieldwren**, **Western Thornbill**, **Western Wattlebird**, **Western Spinebill**, **Gilbert's** (formerly known as Western White-naped or Swan River) **Honeyeater**, **White-breasted Robin**, **Western Whistler**, and **Red-eared Firetail**. Other species that just about get out of Western Australia but are near-endemics to the region, Australian endemics, and also form targets of the trip include **Western Yellow Robin**, **Rufous Treecreeper**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, and **Western Whipbird**. Due to recent fires in its previous stronghold the likelihood of finding **Western Ground Parrot** is unfortunately very low, as this species, with a tiny remaining population, is pushed nearer to the brink of extinction.

Further species we will also be looking for include the Australian endemics **Malleefowl**, **Square-tailed Kite**, **Banded Stilt**, **Hooded Dotterel**, **Rock Parrot**, **Elegant Parrot**, **Purple-crowned Lorikeet**, and **Splendid Fairywren**, and the near-endemic **Fairy Tern**. The isolation of southwestern Australia has led to a high degree of endemism also at the subspecies level, and we will try to see as many of these as possible. This will prove interesting for those participants who have been birding on the Australian East Coast and/or in Tasmania and are interested in the possibility of some potential future armchair ticks!

This tour can be combined with our three preceding Australia tours **Birding Tour Australia: Tasmania and the Orange-bellied Parrot Pre-tour 2018** (22 – 27 October) followed by **Birding Tour Australia: From the Outback to the Wet Tropics 2018** (28 October – 12 November), followed by **Birding Tour Australia: Top End Birding Specialties 2018** (22 – 30 November).

*Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide to the one advertised due to tour scheduling.*

## Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

### Day 1: Arrival in Perth

After an afternoon arrival in Perth (for those coming from our East Coast and Tasmania tours) we transfer to our hotel adjacent to the famous grounds of the Kings Park and Botanic Gardens within the city. If we have time we will take a walk into the park, where we will hope to connect with the first of the southwestern endemics, **Western Spinebill** and **Western Wattlebird**, as well as the more widespread **White-cheeked**, **New Holland**, and **Singing Honeyeaters** and the huge and ever-vocal **Red Wattlebird**. **Carnaby's Black Cockatoo** could be present, feeding in the pine trees, and we will likely find **Little Corella**, **Australian Ringneck**, the introduced **Laughing Dove** (from Africa/India), **Rainbow Lorikeet**, and **Laughing Kookaburra**. Passerines may include Australia's smallest bird, the tiny **Weebill**,

**Australian Reed Warbler**, and **Little Grassbird**, and waterbirds may include the beautiful **Nankeen Night Heron** and the stately **Black Swan**.

Overnight: Sullivans Hotel, Perth

### Day 2: Perth to Dryandra Woodland via Serpentine National Park

We spend the early morning birding around Perth, seeing some of the above species and others. If tidal conditions allow we may find **Red-necked Stint**, **Sharp-tailed** and **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Great and Red Knots**, **Grey and Pacific Golden Plovers**, and **Lesser Sand Plover**, among others.

As the day progresses we head south to Serpentine National Park, an area of the jarrah forest (a type of *Eucalyptus*) bioregion. Here we will look for **Baudin's Black Cockatoo**, **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Western Rosella**, **Red-capped Parrot**, **Red-winged Fairywren**, **Splendid Fairywren**, **Western Whistler**, **Western Spinebill**, **Gilbert's Honeyeater**, **Scarlet Robin**, and **Red-eared Firetail**.

After birding within the national park we continue south to the Dryandra Woodland area, where we will spend a couple of nights. This is one of the prime birding sites in the region, so we want to do it justice.

Overnight: Dryandra area

### Day 3: Full day at Dryandra Woodland

The woodland consists of an interesting mix of *Eucalyptus* (jarrah, wandoo, and marri), with a good native shrub layer. We will spend the full day in and around the woodland and will look for some of the area's specialties, such as **Western Yellow Robin**, **Rufous Treecreeper**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, **Western Thornbill**, and (Western) **Crested Shriketit**. We will also look for 'the' special mammal found at Dryandra - the rare numbat. Unusually for mammals in Australia the numbat is diurnal and can occasionally be found as it searches for termites.

There are plenty of birds to look for at the site, and we will focus on finding the above species and other exciting species such as **Malleefowl**, **Painted Buttonquail**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Carnaby's Black Cockatoo**, **Red-capped Parrot**, **Western Rosella**, **Regent Parrot**, **Elegant Parrot**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**, **Western Spinebill**, and **Tawny-crowned**, **Yellow-plumed**, **Brown**, **Brown-headed**, **White-cheeked**, **New Holland**, **White-eared**, and **Gilbert's Honeyeaters**.

After the sun goes down we will take a look around for some of the woodland's nocturnal creatures, such as **Bush Stone-curlew**, **Southern Boobook**, **Eastern Barn Owl**, **Australian Owlet-nightjar**, and **Tawny Frogmouth**. At this time we will also be looking out for some of the area's many mammals such as woylie, western brush wallaby, tammar wallaby, and western gray kangaroo.

Overnight: Dryandra area

### Day 4: Dryandra Woodland to Stirling Range National Park

We will spend the morning back in Dryandra Woodland, focusing on finding the aforementioned species and others.

As the day progresses we'll continue south to the Stirling Range National Park, an area renowned for its impressive flora and pretty landscape, as well as plenty of avian targets. While here we will search for **Western Whipbird**, **Southern Scrub Robin**, **Purple-gaped Honeyeater**, **Western Yellow Robin**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, and **Western Fieldwren**.

Overnight: Stirling Range Retreat, Amelup

### Day 5: Stirling Range National Park to Cheynes Beach

We will spend the morning birding at Sterling Range, seeking out those species referred to above but also many others, such as **Square-tailed Kite, Spotted Harrier, Little Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Elegant Parrot, Regent Parrot, Rufous Treecreeper, Southern Emu-wren, Red-winged Fairywren, White-breasted Robin, Scarlet Robin, Western Thornbill, (Western) Crested Shrike-tit, and Red-eared Firetail.**

After our birding session here we will travel down to the south coast township of Cheynes Beach, which is home to some great birds, and we'll start looking for these as soon as possible.

Overnight: Cheynes Beach Caravan Park

#### Day 6: Full day at Cheynes Beach

We will spend the full day birding the Cheynes Beach area for three of Australia's toughest, most skulking birds: **Noisy Scrubbird, Western Bristlebird, and Western Whipbird** (a different subspecies from that at Stirling Range). These birds are difficult to see, but we will put all of our effort into securing views of them all during the course of the day.

There are also plenty of other species to look for in the area, such as **Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Spotted Harrier, Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Brush Bronzewing, Southern Emu-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Inland Thornbill, White-cheeked Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, White-breasted Robin, Dusky Woodswallow, and Red-eared Firetail.**

At night we will look and listen for **Tawny Frogmouth, Southern Boobook, and Spotted Nightjar**, as well as the area's nocturnal creatures such as quokka, western ringtail possum, honey possum, western brush wallaby, and southern brown bandicoot.

Overnight: Cheynes Beach Caravan Park

#### Day 7: Cheynes Beach to Augusta

We will spend the early morning birding around Cheynes Beach again, enjoying views of some of the above species and mopping up any others we may still want to try and see. We'll then make our way west along the spectacularly forested coast with giant red tingle and karri trees towards Augusta. We'll stop at Lake Muir Nature Reserve along the way for some birding. Depending on water levels we may find a selection of interesting wildfowl and waders here, such as **Banded Stilt, Eurasian Coot, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, White-faced Heron, Blue-billed Duck, Freckled Duck, and Chestnut Teal.** More secretive species around the lakeshore include **Spotless Crake, Black-backed Bittern, and Australasian Bittern.**

Regardless of water levels, the woodland surrounding the lake is home to a population of **Western Corella**, known as 'Muir's Corella', which is an endemic and isolated subspecies and worth looking for. Other birds possible here include **Emu, Carnaby's, Baudin's, and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, Western Rosella, Australian Ringneck, Brown Quail, Square-tailed Kite, Western Spinebill, Gilbert's Honeyeater, Southern Emu-wren, White-winged Triller, Restless Flycatcher, Western Yellow Robin, Scarlet Robin, and Spotted Pardalote.**

We'll get to Augusta late in the afternoon, and if time allows we'll get some birding in around the local area.

Overnight: Augusta

#### Day 8: Augusta to Busselton

We'll spend the morning birding around the rugged coastline of the Cape Leeuwin area, pretty much the most southwesterly point of this huge country, where the Indian Ocean meets the Southern Ocean. We will look for seabirds here, such as **Bridled Tern, Fairy Tern,**



**Flesh-footed, Hutton's, and Little Shearwaters, Southern Giant and Northern Giant Petrels, and Indian Yellow-nosed, Black-browed, and Shy Albatrosses.** Along the coast we will look for **Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers, Pacific Reef Heron, Rock Parrot, Southern Emu-wren, and Splendid Fairywren.**

We'll spend the day slowly winding our way up the coast, checking out areas of *Banksia*, jarrah, and marri woodland, and we'll arrive in the Busselton area for the final night of the tour and some evening birding around Cape Naturaliste.

Overnight: Busselton

### **Day 9: Busselton to Perth, departure**

Morning birding will take place in the beautiful Cape Naturaliste area with stunning views of Geographe Bay and the Indian Ocean. We will look out to sea for many of the species mentioned above for Cape Leeuwin, along with **Australasian Gannet, Soft-plumaged and Great-winged Petrels, Pomarine Skua, and Parasitic Jaeger** (Arctic Skua). We'll also scan for humpback whale!

Other birds we will look for include **Brush Bronzewing, Carnaby's and Baudin's Black Cockatoos, Western Rosella, White-breasted and Scarlet Robins, Western Whistler, Red-eared Firetail, Splendid Fairywren, White-browed Scrubwren, and Southern Emu-wren.** We will check suitable beach habitat for the beautiful Australian-endemic shorebird - **Hooded Dotterel**, and various other shorebirds such as **Grey-tailed Tattler and Far Eastern Curlew.**

Reluctantly we'll leave the area and commence our drive back to Perth, arriving there mid-afternoon, where the tour will end.

**Duration:** 9 days  
**Group Size:** 3 – 8  
**Date:** 29 November - 7 December 2018  
**Start:** Perth  
**End:** Perth

**Price:** AU\$ 2,110 per person sharing (7-8 participants)  
 AU\$ 3,164 per person sharing (5-6 participants)  
 AU\$ 4,218 per person sharing (3-4 participants)

**Single supplement:** AU\$885

### **Price includes:**

Lodging in comfortable hotels/lodges

All meals

All transportation during tour

Entrance fees

Expert birding guide

### **Price excludes:**

Flights

Alcoholic drinks

Travel insurance

Gratuities

Expenses of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, internet access, extra drinks and snacks, etc.)