AUSTRALIA:
TOP END BIRDING

29 NOVEMBER – 07 DECEMBER 2019
16 - 24 NOVEMBER 2020
16 - 24 NOVEMBER 2021

The exquisite Gouldian Finch is one of our targets on this trip.
The ‘Top End Birding’ tour provides fantastic chances of viewing many of the Northern Territory's specialty bird species during November and December, including **Rainbow Pitta, Banded Fruit Dove, Hooded Parrot, Gouldian Finch**, and migratory shorebirds. We also seek reptiles and mammals and visit two Aboriginal rock art and occupation sites, which are home to regional and endemic species. Three boat cruises on protected waterways (one private) give us great chances to see rare and elusive freshwater, riverine, and floodplain bird species, such as **Little Kingfisher, Black Bittern**, and **Great-billed Heron**.

*Our boat cruises will give us a chance of waterbirds such as Black Bittern.*

We undertake several short walks in various tropical and World-Heritage-listed habitats in the huge and diverse Kakadu National Park as well as in surrounding nature reserves and great urban birding sites along this 1300-kilometers/807-miles circuit of the Top End region. The brilliant photographic opportunities of birds, wildlife, and scenery are many and varied. We hope to accumulate over 160 bird species on this tour, which explores the region from Darwin - Fogg Dam - Mary River - World Heritage Kakadu National Park - Pine Creek – Katherine - Adelaide River and back to Darwin over nine bird-filled days.

For those wishing to explore Australia further, this tour can be combined with our set of Australian tours: **Australia: Tasmania and the Orange-bellied Parrot**, **Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics**, and **Australia: Southwest Specialties**. All four Australia tours could be combined. We can also arrange other extensions (e.g., sightseeing trips to Sydney, Uluru, etc., and pelagic trips).
Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Darwin
Arrival in Darwin. We will meet in Darwin in the evening, where we will also meet up with Luke, our expert local guide.
Overnight: Darwin

Day 2. Birding the Darwin environs
We will spend the full day birding around Darwin. We’ll be visiting monsoon forest, where we will search for one of our first targets of the trip, Rainbow Pitta. We will also bird coastal habitats including tidal mudflats, mangroves, and coastal monsoon vine thickets for shorebirds, Red-headed Honeyeater, and other mangrove specialists. After a picnic lunch we will drop into several other habitats, including the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens and the Darwin Esplanade. Species we hope to encounter during our first day birding in the region include Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Australian Figbird, Bush Stone-curlew, Rufous Owl, Barking Owl, Tawny Frogmouth, Azure Kingfisher, Double-barred Finch, Red-collared Lorikeet, Blue-winged Kookaburra, and Brahminy Kite.
Overnight: Darwin

![Double-barred Finch](image)

*The cute Double-barred Finch can be seen around Darwin.*

Day 3. Darwin to the Mary River
A pre-dawn start sees us leaving Darwin for morning birding at Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve. The wetland landscape here is stunning, and we will enjoy a picnic breakfast on the Adelaide River floodplain. Then we will spend time birding on the boardwalks, viewing platforms, and monsoon forest walks. Our next birding location is the Mary River region, where
we will check into our accommodation in the late afternoon. Here we will enjoy birding within
the tropical gardens and bush surrounding the grounds.
Species of interest during the day are likely to include **Comb-crested Jacana, Green Pygmy
Goose, Crimson Finch, Forest Kingfisher, Rainbow Pitta, Whistling Kite, Paperbark
Flycatcher, Rufous-banded Honeyeater, Arafura Fantail, Pied Heron, and Broad-billed
Flycatcher.**
Overnight: Mary River

**Day 4. Mary River to Kakadu National Park (South Alligator and Jabiru regions)**

We will take a pre-breakfast boat ride along the Mary River at dawn. This rather unique riverine
habitat will allow us a good opportunity to view some of the more elusive bird species in the Top
End and possibly **Saltwater Crocodile**. After breakfast we will travel to the World Heritage
Kakadu National Park, passing first through tropical savanna woodlands and then through a more
open habitat in the South Alligator region of the park, where we will visit the Ramsar-listed
Mamukala Wetlands bird hide. After arrival at our accommodation there will be time to relax or
take a walk around Jabiru Lake, looking out for bush birds, waterfowl, and raptors soaring
overhead.

During the course of the day we’ll look for **White-bellied Sea Eagle, Glossy Ibis, Brolga,
Comb-crested Jacana, Azure Kingfisher, Australasian Swamphen, Partridge Pigeon, Bar-
breasted Honeyeater, Black Bittern, Great-billed Heron, and White-gaped Honeyeater.**
Overnight: Kakadu National Park

---

*We hope to encounter Brolga in Kakadu National Park.*

---

**www.birdingecotours.com**  
**info@birdingecotours.com**
Day 5. Kakadu National Park (East Alligator and Yellow Water regions)
After an early breakfast we head to the East Alligator region to explore the northern reaches of the Arnhem Land Escarpment for a few short walks in monsoon forest pockets and sandstone outcrops bordering Arnhem Land. Then we’ll move on to the nearby Ubirr rock art site, where we will see fascinating x-ray-style paintings, some thousands of years old and portraying extinct species. There is a short but slightly challenging walk to the famous Nadab Lookout, which provides stunning views over the Nadab floodplain and escarpment and into Arnhem Land, where the most iconic lookout photos in Kakadu are taken. This area is great for sandstone and monsoon forest specialists such as Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, Sandstone Shrikethrush, Rainbow Pitta, and Arafura Fantail. We will enjoy a picnic lunch in the region before traveling to our accommodation for the next two nights.
Then we will take an afternoon boat cruise on the famous Yellow Water Billabong and South Alligator River (the first of two such boat trips), where waterbirds will be incredibly plentiful and set in some stunning floodplains glowing in the afternoon sunlight.
Target birds during the day will also include Little Woodswallow, Rainbow Bee-eater, Magpie Goose, Brolga, Black-necked Stork, Whiskered Tern, Raja Shelduck, Great-billed Heron, and Wandering Whistling Duck.
Overnight: Kakadu National Park

Raja Shelduck can be seen in wetlands in Kakadu National Park.

Day 6. Kakadu National Park (Burrungkuy [Nourlangie] and Yellow Water regions)
There will be a pre-breakfast birding session in the dramatic stone country and woodlands of the Burrungkuy (Nourlangie) region, and the monsoon forest pools of Gubara will focus on endemic birds and other exciting animals. After breakfast we will visit another rock art site, which is also home to the endemic White-lined Honeyeater and Banded Fruit Dove, and later in the day we
will take a picnic lunch at the Anbangbang Billabong, with a choice of relaxing or a short birding walk around the hotel grounds during the late afternoon. Some highlight during the day are likely to include Spangled Drongo, Australian Figbird, Bush Stone-curlew, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Emu, Willie Wagtail, Sacred Kingfisher, Helmeted Friarbird, Common Cicadabird, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, and Bar-shouldered Dove.

Overnight: Kakadu National Park

Day 7. Kakadu National Park (Yellow Water region) to Pine Creek

We take a pre-breakfast boat cruise to see the Yellow Water in a different light and a dawn frenzy, where we will search for elusive birds such as Little Kingfisher, Black Bittern, and Buff-sided Robin, as well as ‘Golden Tree Snake’ (a striking color form of the Common Tree Snake) and Australian Freshwater Crocodile. After breakfast at the lodge we will travel to the historic gold-rush-and-railway township of Pine Creek, where we will check into our accommodation for the next two nights.

Pine Creek is considered the ‘Top End’s home of parrots’ with ten species present, including the highly sought endemic Hooded Parrot, but finches also feature highly with five species of these colorful gems present, including the stunning Gouldian Finch. It’s no wonder that this is a popular place for birding!

Through the course of the day we will hope for views of Azure Kingfisher, Great Egret, Nankeen Night Heron, Pied Heron, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brolga, Australasian Darter, Australian Pratincole, Striated Heron, Magpie Goose, Little Pied Cormorant, Red-backed Kingfisher, Australasian Grebe, Glossy Ibis, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Red Goshawk, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Red-winged Parrot, and Northern Rosella.

Overnight: Pine Creek Township

*The woodlands around Kakadu National Park hold Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.*
Day 8. Edith Falls and Katherine
We leave our hotel early in the morning and travel to the Leliyn/Edith Falls waterfalls in Nitmiluk National Park in search of the famous and colorful Gouldian Finch before a bush breakfast. Later we travel to the town of Katherine, where we will have a picnic lunch for birdwatching in the drier inland regions. Here we will search for Apostlebird, Magpie-lark, Great Bowerbird, Banded Honeyeater, Yellow-tinted Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Cockatiel, Galah, Fairy Martin, Pink-eared Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel, Little Corella, White-throated Gerygone, Jacky Winter, and Common Bronzewing.
Overnight: Pine Creek Township

![Little Corella](image)

*Little Corella* is another parrot species we hope to find on this tour.

Day 9. Pine Creek to Darwin, where the tour concludes
We enjoy our final bush breakfast in Pine Creek before commencing our journey back to Darwin. We will drop in to the Adelaide River War Cemetery gardens and monsoon forest along the way, time permitting, with birds on offer likely to include Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Varied Lorikeet, Red-backed Fairywren, Weebill, Little Friarbird, Northern Fantail, Mistletoebird, Pied Butcherbird, Rufous Whistler, Olive-backed Oriole, Buff-sided Robin, Brown Falcon, Green-backed Gerygone, Silver-crowned Friarbird, and Pied Stilt.
On reaching Darwin the tour will conclude.

*Please note that the itinerary 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 from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 9 days (8 nights)

Group Size: 4 – 8

Dates: 29 November – 07 December 2019
       16 - 24 November 2020
       16 - 24 November 2021

Start: Darwin, Northern Territory

End: Darwin, Northern Territory

Prices: AU$10,820 per person sharing (4-8 people) 2019
        AU$11,900 per person sharing (4-8 people) 2020
        TBA 2021

Single Supplement: AU$1,170 per person 2019
      AU$1,285 per person 2020
      TBA 2021

Price includes:
Lodging in comfortable hotels/lodges
All meals
All transportation during tour
Entrance fees
Expert birding guide

Price excludes:
International and domestic flights
Alcoholic drinks and drinks with evening meal
Travel insurance
Gratuities
Expenses of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, internet, extra drinks and snacks, etc.)