



**BIRDING TOURS AUSTRALIA:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid for a period of at least six months after the date of your arrival in Australia. Please make sure that there is at least one completely empty page available in your passport. Please also bring a photocopy of your passport, to be kept in a different location from your passport in case of loss/damage.

VISA

Visa are required, but different rules apply depending on your nationality. Please check <http://www.australia.gov.au/help-and-contact/faqs/visas-and-immigration>.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you purchase medical and trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against accidents, medical issues, illness, loss of valuables or luggage, etc., and travel interruptions or delays of all kinds.

HEALTH

Please consult your doctor regarding any vaccination requirements. All travelers should be up to date with routine vaccination and boosters (e.g. tetanus). There is no risk of yellow fever in Australia; however, there is a certificate requirement if travelers have visited/come from the following countries: <http://www.who.int/ith/2015-ith-annex1.pdf?ua=1>. Some travelers may require Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, and Rabies certification.

Sunscreen should be carried, and a hat should be worn to protect from the powerful rays of the sun, with sunglasses to help prevent glare. A plentiful supply of water should be carried at all times to maintain hydration.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered with medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this trip. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high. Please notify us at the time of registering for this tour of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs and facilitate emergency services if required.

CURRENCY

The currency is the Australian Dollar, AUD (currently weak against the GBP and USD). Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted, including for drawing cash from ATMs (as everywhere, bank charges may apply). Note: USD/GBP cannot be used for purchases. We will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon our arrival and in the various cities we pass through.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

Australian seasons are the reverse of the European/North American seasons, but the same of South America/Southern Africa. The summer months in Australia are from December to February, the fall months are from March till May, winter is from June to August, and spring is from September till November.

North Queensland and the Northern Territory are located closer to the tropics and generally have warm and humid weather all year round. New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, South Australia, and Perth all experience the four seasons during the year. In Tasmania the weather

is colder than on the Australia mainland because it is closer to Antarctica (this can often be a result of the wind chilling the actual temperature).

During this tour a wide variety of weather (particularly temperatures) is to be expected. It may feel cool at night in Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales, with night-time temperatures dropping to around 8°C/46°F. Day-time temperatures during the tour can range from 15°C/59°F in Tasmania to 30°C/86°F in northern Victoria, with similar temperatures in Northern Queensland; however, Queensland is much more humid and rainfall is likely at some point.

ELECTRICITY

240V, three-pronged plugs used, [ITA Type I](#). Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances.

LENGTH OF DRIVES

There are a couple of days on which there are long drives; unfortunately this is a standard feature in this huge continent-country. Drives are broken up where possible with birding stops, stops for refreshments, etc.

WHAT TO BRING

Clothing

This is not a fashion statement trip! Casual and informal dress is fine in the hotels/motels. Loose, lightweight field clothing works best, with a warm fleece or jacket for cooler weather. Shorts and T-shirts are fine – it's what the locals wear! You will also need to bring some warmer clothing, certainly a minimum of a warm fleece and a rain jacket. Rain is always a possibility in October/November, so an umbrella and/or rain gear is always useful to have. Early mornings can feel a bit chilly in some areas, so come prepared, especially in the south (Tasmania/Victoria), which can have the wind coming straight from Antarctica.

Sunglasses, sunhat, and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are essential. A pair of trousers or a long skirt and a long-sleeved shirt should be included to help protect against forest vegetation and the sun. Swimwear can be brought as there are swimming pools at some of the hotels/motels, and we will have time at the Great Barrier Reef, where optional swimming is possible.

We would recommend lightweight walking boots when out on foot. You might like to consider sandals/trainers (tennis shoes) for use in the vehicles and for walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels and lodges.

Do not forget – Binoculars, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names for these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses, camera, flashlight, batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for re-chargeable batteries if required), converter plug set if needed and plug adaptors, alarm clock, money pouch, field guide(s), daypacks. Your guide will have a Swarovski telescope; however, if you have your own scope it is recommended that you bring it too.

Key documents and cash – Passport, your travel or health insurance card – photocopies of which can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency, credit cards - see info above, USD, EUR, or GBP can be exchanged into Australian Dollars if you prefer not to simply draw from ATM's.

You will need cash for drinks, gifts, tips, items of a personal nature, etc., which are not included in the tour cost.

LUGGAGE

Due to restricted space in the vehicles please pack as lightly as possible. A medium soft-sided duffel bag (not the hard-sided cases) works best for packing in the vehicles. This allows us to better fit the bags. Please bring a daypack for items that you wish to use or need on a daily basis.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

There are a great many poisonous creatures (and plants) in Australia, and extreme caution should be taken while out and about (e.g. check your boots each time before you put them on, watch where you put your hands and feet, do not touch or approach any wildlife, specifically snakes, spiders, etc.). It is advisable to familiarize yourself with these poisonous species prior to your tour (there is a range of data online, but see [here](#) for example). Sturdy walking boots are essential to give feet and ankles added protection. It is important that you follow your guide/leader's advice, and if you see any snakes, etc., the information has to be passed on as quickly as possible so that everyone is aware of the potential danger.

CRIME

Australia is generally a safe place to travel. However, as anywhere in the world at this time, it is advisable to take care and remain cautious and observant for the unexpected.

LANGUAGE

Australia is part of the British Commonwealth, and English is widely spoken. Local Aboriginal peoples have a huge number of languages; however, it is unlikely that we will need to speak these on this tour.

BOOKS

Birds

The Australian Bird Guide – Peter Menkhorst et al. (2017). Bloomsbury Publishing.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (Eighth Edition) – Ken Simpson and Nicolas Day (2010). Viking (NB Helm have now published an undated version of this book).

Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations – Tim Dolby and Rohan Clarke (2014). CSIRO Publishing.

A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (Ninth Edition) – Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight (2012). Harper Collins.

The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds (Second Edition) – Slater et al. (2012). New Holland.

Birds of Australia: A Photographic Guide – Campbell et al. (2014). Princeton University Press.

Several of the above publications are available to download as Apps for mobile phones. These apps also include bird sounds to complement the illustrations.

Mammals

A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia (Third Edition) – Peter Menkhorst and Frank Knight (2011). Oxford University Press.

Reptiles

A Complete Guide to Reptiles of Australia (Fourth Edition) – Steve Wilson and Gerry Swan (2013). New Holland.

SOUND RECORDINGS

A wide-range of CDs with bird songs are available online or as Apps and are a recommended tool for learning bird calls. In addition it is possible to download bird calls from the excellent Xeno Canto website <http://www.xeno-canto.org/>.