



**WESTERN AUSTRALIA:
SOUTHWEST SPECIALTIES**

**12 – 20 OCTOBER 2023
02 – 10 OCTOBER 2024**



Blue-breasted Fairywren is one of our targets on this trip.

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

Local endemic bird 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**, **Western Rosella**, **Noisy Scrubbird**, **Western Bristlebird**, **Red-winged Fairywren**, **Western Fieldwren**, **Western Thornbill**, **Western Wattlebird**, **Western Spinebill**, **Gilbert's Honeyeater** (formerly known as Western White-naped or Swan River Honeyeater), **White-breasted Robin**, **Red-eared Firetail**, and the newest addition to the southwest Australia endemic list, **Black-throated Whipbird** (described as a new species in 2018 as a result of the split of Western Whipbird into two species – the other half of the split occurring in South Australia and now called White-bellied Whipbird). Other species that just about get out of Western Australia and are near-endemics to the state (and still Australian endemics) also form targets as they are unlikely to be found on other eastern tours, these include **Western Yellow Robin**, **Rufous Treecreeper**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, **Western Whistler**, and **Spotted Scrubwren** (a 2019 split from the White-browed Scrubwren complex). 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.



*One of the toughest birds to see in all of Australia; we will hope to see **Noisy Scrubbird** well again, this is one seriously tough bird, but we have a great record of seeing them on our tours.*

Additional 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**, **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 in case of potential future splits, such as (Western) **Scarlet Robin** and (Western) **Crested Shriketit**. This tour 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!



*A much-hyped potential split into its own species the (Western) **Crested Shriketit** is a stunning bird and worth seeing regardless what happens to its taxonomy.*

For those wishing to explore Australia further, this tour can be combined with our other Australian tours: **Tasmania – Endemics and the Orange-bellied Parrot**, **Eastern Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics**, and **Northern Territory – Top End Birding**. From 2022 our new **Northern Territory – Alice Springs Birding** tour will precede this Western Australia tour and is a perfect combination. All five of our Australian birdwatching tours could be combined into one long tour, or you could just do one or two (or more!), whatever suits your time. We can also arrange further extensions (e.g., sightseeing trips to Sydney, Uluru, etc., and pelagic trips) if you wish.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Perth

Morning arrival into Perth, if not arrived ahead of the tour starting. We will meet in the afternoon and spend the late afternoon birding around Perth, including near to our hotel, adjacent to the

famous grounds of the Kings Park and Botanical 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 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**, **Laughing Dove** (introduced from Africa/India), and **Rainbow Lorikeet** and **Laughing Kookaburra** (both introduced from eastern Australia). Passerines here may include Australia's smallest bird, the tiny **Weebill**, **Australian Reed Warbler**, and **Little Grassbird**, while waterbirds may include the beautiful **Nankeen Night Heron** and the stately **Black Swan**. We may also visit other sites within the city depending on local flowering conditions.

Overnight: Perth

Day 2. Perth to Dryandra Woodland

We will likely 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**, and **Pacific Golden** and **Grey Plovers**, among others. We will also check out some of the lakes in and around the city before we head south. The waterbodies here may harbor a late **Freckled Duck** if we are very lucky but other species likely include **Hardhead**, **Blue-billed Duck**, and **Hoary-headed Grebe**. Lakeside vegetation may hold **Little Grassbird**, **Australian Reed Warbler**, **Grey Fantail** and **Spotless Crake**. We will also keep our eyes peeled skywards for any raptors that may be overhead.



Spotless Crakes are often shy and retiring, but occasionally, with patience, they can show well.

After a late breakfast we will leave Perth and head south towards the Dryandra Woodland area, keeping a look out for **Baudin's Black** and **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos** along the way. After lunch we will check in to our accommodation for the next couple of nights and then head out for an afternoon birding in the local vicinity. This is one of the prime birding sites in the region, so we want to do it justice over the next couple of days.

Overnight: Narrogin

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**, **Western Whistler**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, **Western Thornbill**, **Spotted Scrubwren**, and (Western) **Crested Shriketit**. We will also look for 'the' special mammal found at Dryandra - the rare **Numbat**.



*An exceptionally rare and range-restricted endemic mammal – **Numbat**. Unusually for an Australian mammal, this species is diurnal, spending its days hunting for termites.*

There are plenty of birds to look for around the huge woodland, and we will focus on finding the above birds and other exciting species such as **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, Restless Flycatcher, and Splendid Fairywren.**



*The open woodland of Dryandra is great for finding **Rufous Treecreeper**, a species that actually spends a great deal of time on the ground!*



***Rainbow Bee-eaters** also hunt with some regularity in the woodland clearings. Spectacular!*

After the sun goes down, we will take a look around for some of the woodland's nocturnal creatures, such as **Bush Stone-curlew**, **Australian Boobook** (formerly called 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 **Short-beaked Echidna** (sometimes also seen during the daytime too), **Woylie**, **Western Brush Wallaby**, **Tammar Wallaby**, and **Western Grey Kangaroo**.

Overnight: Narrogin

Day 4. Dryandra Woodland to Stirling Range National Park

We will spend the morning back in Dryandra Woodland or another nearby interesting site, focusing on finding the aforementioned species and others that we may still be looking for, or want to see again after our last couple of days.

As the day progresses, we will 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 **Black-throated Whipbird**, **Southern Scrub Robin**, **Western Spinebill**, **Gilbert's** and **Purple-gaped Honeyeaters**, **Western Yellow Robin**, **Blue-breasted Fairywren**, and **Western Fieldwren**.

Overnight: Amelup



Western Spinebill is one seriously beautiful honeyeater.

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**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Elegant Parrot**, **Regent Parrot**, **Rufous Treecreeper**, **Southern Emu-wren**, **Red-winged Fairywren**, **White-breasted Robin**, (Western) **Scarlet Robin**, **Western Thornbill**, (Western) **Crested Shriketit**, and **Red-eared Firetail**.

After our birding session here, we will travel down to the south coast township of Cheynes Beach, along the way looking out for interesting species such as **White-necked Heron**, **Banded Stilt** and other interesting shorebirds/waders. Cheynes Beach is home to some great (and very difficult) birds, and we will start looking for these as soon as possible after our arrival and check in for our two night stay here.

Overnight: Cheynes Beach

Day 6. Full day at Cheynes Beach

A full day birding the Cheynes Beach area for three of Australia's toughest, most skulking birds: **Noisy Scrubbird**, **Western Bristlebird**, and **Black-throated Whipbird** (a different subspecies from that at Stirling Ranges and a much talked-about potential further future split). 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.



*The heathland at Cheynes Beach is beautiful and occasionally one of the major skulkers shows well, such as this **Western Bristlebird**.*



***Black-throated Whipbird** is another of the tough ones, but occasionally they come to the tops of the **Banksia** shrubs to announce their presence.*

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**, **Red-winged Fairywren**, **Spotted Scrubwren**, **Inland Thornbill**, **White-cheeked Honeyeater**, **New Holland Honeyeater**, **White-breasted Robin**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, and **Red-eared Firetail**.

Weather permitting, at night we will look and listen for **Tawny Frogmouth**, **Australian Boobook**, and **Spotted Nightjar**, as well as the area's nocturnal creatures such as **Quokka**, **Western Ringtail Possum**, the tiny **Honey Possum** (sometimes possible during the day too – they are tiny!), **Western Brush Wallaby**, and **Southern Brown Bandicoot**.

Overnight: Cheynes Beach

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 will then make our way west along the spectacularly forested coast with giant red tingle and karri trees towards Augusta. With a stop at Lake Muir Nature Reserve along the way we may find a selection of interesting wildfowl and waders (very much depending on water levels), 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 lake shore 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**, (Western) **Scarlet Robin**, and **Spotted Pardalote**. We will arrive in Augusta in time to freshen up before visiting the local award-winning fish restaurant.

Overnight: Augusta



Carnaby’s Black Cockatoos can sometimes be found feeding on spilt grain on the side of the remote roads.

Day 8. Augusta to Busselton

The morning will be spent birding around the rugged coastline of the Cape Leeuwin area, pretty much the most southwesterly point of this huge continent-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**. Much depends on what the weather is doing as to what is possible here over the water on any given day.

Along the coast we will look for **Sooty** and **Pied Oystercatchers**, **Hooded Dotterel**, **Grey-tailed Tattler**, **Far Eastern Curlew**, **Pacific Reef Heron**, **Rock Parrot**, **Southern Emu-wren**, and **Splendid Fairywren**.

After birding here, we will slowly wind our way up the coast, checking our areas of *Banksia*, jarrah, and marri woodland, with the hopes of seeing more black cockatoos, and (Western) **Crested Shrike-tit**. We will stop in the picturesque Margaret River for lunch and will arrive in the Busselton area in the afternoon for the final night of the tour.

Overnight: Busselton



Hooded Dotterel is considered Vulnerable (BirdLife International), which is not surprising, it has a lot of recreational pressure on its breeding grounds (sandy beaches) but we will hope to find this beautiful shorebird during the tour.

Day 9. Busselton to Perth, departure

Our final morning will be spent checking out some areas around Busselton where we often find interesting shorebirds and waterfowl. We will then commence the return journey back to Perth keeping our eyes peeled for anything interesting we may still want to see.

We will arrive in Perth mid-afternoon where the tour will conclude.

Overnight: Not included

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.

Duration: 9 days
Group Size: 6 - 8
Dates: 12 - 20 October 2023
02 - 10 October 2024
Start: Perth, Western Australia
End: Perth, Western Australia
Prices: AU\$5,390 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2023)
AU\$TBC per person sharing (we expect 2024 prices to be 5-10% higher than 2023 prices) – based on 6 - 8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements: AU\$1007 (2023)
AU\$TBC (2024)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described above from day 1 through day 8, note accommodation at Amelup might include shared bathrooms, we usually stay in small cottages that have a couple of private bedrooms and a communal dining room and bathroom)
Meals (from dinner on day 1 until breakfast on day 9)
Expert tour leader
National park/birdwatching reserve/protected areas entrance fees
Private transportation during the tour and transfers (possibly shared) to and from the airports

Price excludes:

International or domestic flights to get to/from Darwin
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/etc. excursions
Visa if required
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks (drinking water is safe from the taps, please bring a refillable water bottle)
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))