



**BIRDING TOUR AUSTRALIA: NORTHERN TERRITORY -
TOP END BIRDING TOUR**

10–19 SEPTEMBER 2027

04–13 SEPTEMBER 2028

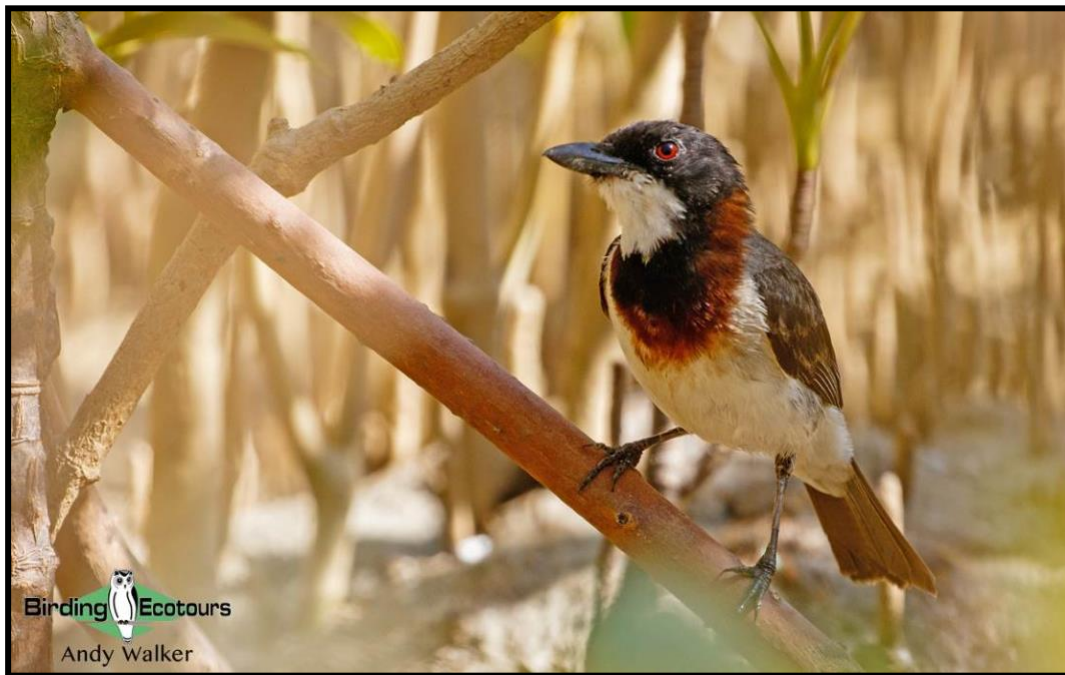


*The gorgeous **Purple-crowned Fairywren** is one of the top targets of the tour. With its localized distribution, this is usually the final Australian fairywren birders are missing from their lists.*

Overview

Our updated Northern Territory – Top End Birding tour travels along a well-trodden path around the Top End of the Northern Territory in a loop starting and ending in the coastal city of Darwin, then moving across to Kakadu National Park (via the excellent Adelaide River, Mary River, and Point Stuart areas), as well as visiting Katherine, Victoria River, and Timber Creek, before returning north to Darwin. The tour focuses on the special and endemic birds of the region and is ideal for anyone who has never birded Australia before, or anyone who has only birded the east or west of the country as lots of exciting new birds will be on offer in this fantastically bird-rich area in the north of Australia.

Darwin is one of the top birding cities in the world with numerous key species on offer right within the city and we will venture into botanic gardens, mangroves, beaches, and monsoon forest for a wide range of quality and specialist birds. Highlights possible around the city include **Rainbow Pitta**, **Chestnut Rail**, **Beach Stone-curlew**, **White-breasted Whistler**, **Red-headed Myzomela**, **Arafura Fantail**, **Arafura Shrikethrush**, **Northern Rosella**, **Red-collared Lorikeet**, **Varied Lorikeet**, **Paperbark Flycatcher**, **Canary White-eye**, **Green-backed Gerygone**, **Mangrove Robin**, **Mangrove Fantail**, **Torresian Kingfisher**, **Rufous Owl**, and **Barking Owl**.



*The tough-to-see **White-breasted Whistler** can be found in mangroves around Darwin.*

Kakadu is famous for its ancient rock art, but this area also has some of the most incredible wetlands in the whole country and vast mixed flocks of waterfowl can be seen – it really is an impressive sight watching flocks of hundreds of **Australasian Swamphens**, **Magpie Geese**, **Comb-crested Jacanas**, and **Pied Herons**, with **Sarus Crane**, **Brolga**, and **Black-necked Stork** dotted around among them. Raptors are abundant in the area with top targets including **Wedge-**

tailed Eagle, Red Goshawk, Pacific Baza, and Black-breasted Buzzard. A great deal of localized species can be found here too such as Black-banded Fruit Dove, Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, Partridge Pigeon, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Black-tailed Treecreeper, Sandstone Shrikethrush, Great Bowerbird, Cockatiel, and White-lined Honeyeater to name a few.

The final section of this tour will be the furthest south and west we venture as we cover the Katherine, Victoria River, and Timber Creek areas, where we will look for the spectacular Gouldian Finch, as well as a range of other equally impressive finches, likely to include Masked Finch, Long-tailed Finch, Star Finch, Yellow-rumped Mannikin, Pictorella Mannikin, Additional targets from this area include Hooded Parrot, Red-winged Parrot, Budgerigar, White-quilled Rock Pigeon, Red-backed Kingfisher, Purple-crowned Fairywren, Northern Shriketit, and Varied Sittella.



Gouldian Finch is arguably one of Australia's most sought-after (and well-known) specials. Although highly irruptive and notoriously unpredictable, we go to arguably the best areas for this amazing species in search of it.

For a complete desert adventure, consider combining this tour with our **Birding Tour Australia: Northern Territory – Alice Springs and Uluru Birding Tour** in the south of the territory, for a range of local desert specials such as Spinifexbird, Spinifex Pigeon, Banded Whiteface, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, and much more!

For those wishing to explore Australia even further, this tour (and the aforementioned **Northern Territory – Alice Springs and Uluru Birding Tour**) can be combined with our **Birding Western Australia: Southwest Australian Endemic Birds** tour that targets all of the endemics and specialties out of Perth.

Detailed Itinerary (10 days/9 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Darwin

After your late-morning arrival in Darwin you will make the short transfer to our city hotel. We will meet at the hotel for lunch prior to a late-afternoon birding session in the city. We are sure to get our lists off to a great start with a selection of common local birds and likely some of the regional specials such as **Orange-footed Scrubfowl**, **Red-headed Myzomela**, **Paperbark Flycatcher**, **Red-collared Lorikeet**, **White-gaped Honeyeater**, **Blue-faced** (“White-quilled”) **Honeyeater**, **Rufous-banded Honeyeater**, and **Rose-crowned Fruit Dove**. After our evening meal we will go through our checklist from the afternoon’s birding session (as we will do on every evening – as we do on all of our tours) and go through our plans for the next week or so of exciting birding, starting off with the plans for the following day’s city birding.

Overnight: Darwin

Day 2. Birding the Darwin environs

We will spend the full day birding around Darwin. Coastal habitats including tidal mudflats, mangroves, and coastal monsoon forest will be searched for the secretive **Chestnut Rail**. Further targets here will include **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Canary White-eye**, **Shining Flycatcher**, **Broad-billed Flycatcher**, **Mangrove Fantail**, **Mangrove Robin**, and **White-breasted Whistler**. Shorebirds here can include **Beach Stone-curlew** and **Grey-tailed Tattler**.



*We will hope to repeat the fantastic views of **Chestnut Rail**, as we have had on previous tours.*

Monsoon forest around the city offers a great many species, including one of the many standout targets of the trip, **Rainbow Pitta**. It is a magical sight to see this avian jewel hopping around on the forest floor. Here plenty of other birds are possible, such as **Canary White-eye**, **Arafura Shrikethrush**, and **Arafura Fantail**. We may even get lucky and find a roosting **Large-tailed Nightjar**. The **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** nest mounds here are breathtaking and certainly are impressive engineering feats to witness! We will look out for **Varied** and **Red-collared Lorikeets**, and **Northern Rosellas** here too, as well as an assortment of honeyeaters, and so much more.

Our lunch will be taken at one of the many delightful locally owned coffeeshops where we are sure of some great food and excellent service. Once we have finished our lunch, we will be sure to head out birding again to make the most of our time in the city. One site that we will fit into our day's birding is the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. Here we can find some great birds and marvel at the incredible plants growing here – it's hard to not dream of birding in Madagascar when walking through the baobab garden! Some of the species we hope to encounter during our time here include **Rose-crowned Fruit Dove**, **Australian Figbird**, **Bush Stone-curlew**, **Rufous Owl**, **Barking Owl**, **Tawny Frogmouth**, **Azure Kingfisher**, **Double-barred Finch**, **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Northern Fantail**, **Red-headed Myzomela**, and **Brahminy Kite**.

Overnight: Darwin



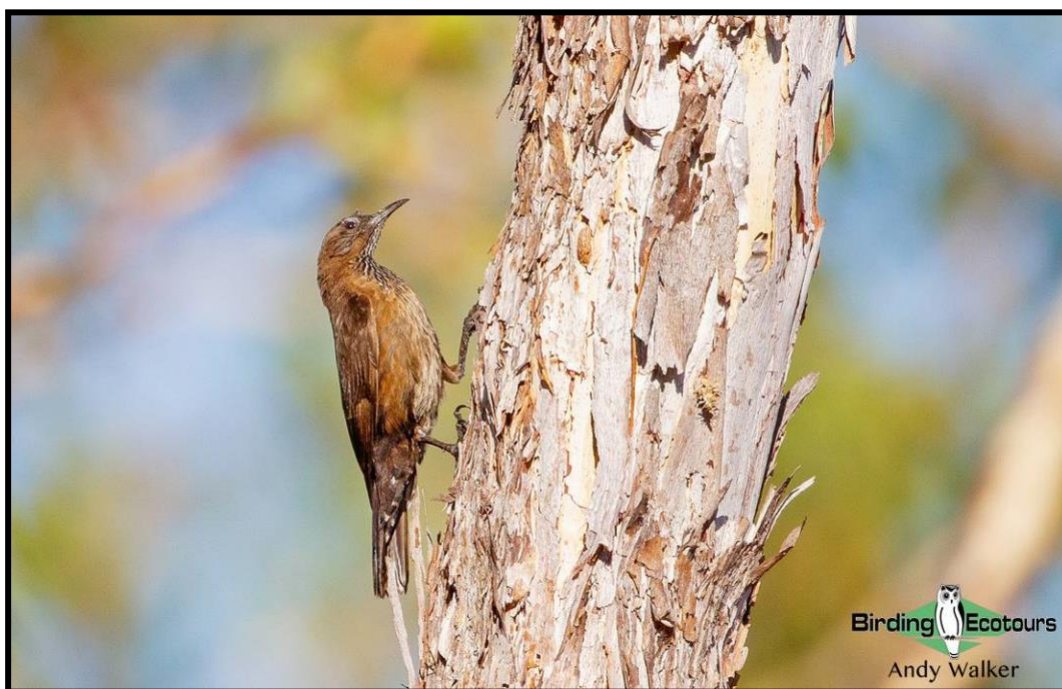
Rose-crowned Fruit Doves are spectacular – we have excellent chances around Darwin.

Day 3. Darwin to Mary River/Point Stuart Area

After a final early morning birding session around Darwin, we will commence our drive into the more remote areas in the east of our circuit. Along the way to the famed Kakadu National Park, there are several great birding areas and we will call in at some of these. One such spot is Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve.

The wetland landscape of the Adelaide River floodplain is stunning and usually packed full with an assortment of wetland birds such as **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Wandering Whistling Duck**, **Green Pygmy Goose**, **Pied Heron**, **Black-necked Stork**, **Brolga**, **Australasian Darter**, **White-necked Heron**, **Straw-necked Ibis**, **Royal Spoonbill**, and **Nankeen Night Heron** (along with many more widespread species). Smaller passerines around the floodplain include the globally widespread, but in Australia very localized (and potentially warranting specific species status with a couple of other subspecies) **Zitting Cisticola**, along with **Golden-headed Cisticola**, **Double-barred Finch**, and **Crimson Finch**.

The monsoon forest and forest edge along the floodplain here is also great for plenty of species as well, including **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Forest Kingfisher**, **Pheasant Coucal**, **Arafura Fantail**, **Rainbow Pitta**, **Paperbark Flycatcher**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Lemon-bellied Flyrobin**, **Hooded Robin**, **Jacky Winter**, **Green-backed Gerygone**, and **Mangrove Golden Whistler**.



*Another localized species that we will be looking for on this tour, **Black-tailed Treecreeper**.*

We will spend the night at Mary River. Here we will look for the regional special **Black-tailed Treecreeper**, but other targets will include **Bush Stone-curlew**, **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Mistletoebird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **White-throated Honeyeater**, **White-winged Triller**, **Torresian Crow**, **Red-collared Lorikeet**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Green Oriole**, and we might even find **Channel-billed Cuckoo** – this is one of *the* most impressive cuckoos in the world!

Overnight: Mary River/Point Stuart Area

Day 4. Mary River/Point Stuart to Kakadu National Park

We will spend the early morning enjoying birds around the Mary River area where we will also likely take a boat ride on one of the billabongs (known as waterholes here). This gets us close to some spectacular wildlife such as **Saltwater Crocodile**, **Freshwater Crocodile**, **White-bellied Sea Eagle**, and a whole host of waterbirds. There are several excellent billabongs here and we could find **Magpie Goose**, **Wandering Whistling Duck**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Hardhead**, **Australasian Swamphen**, **Brolga**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Australian Tern**, **Whiskered Tern**, **Australasian Darter**, **Australian Pelican**, **Pied Heron**, and **Black-necked Stork**. Some of the above are often present in flocks of several hundred and offer a spectacular sight (and sound).

Our accommodation is set in grounds that attract a range of birds (such as **Rainbow Pitta**) and we will likely explore areas from the previous afternoon for more of our targets such as **Black-tailed Treecreeper**, **Mangrove Golden Whistler**, **Rufous-banded Honeyeater**, and **Varied Lorikeet**.

Our route into Kakadu National Park takes us through great habitat and we will keep our eyes peeled for roadside **Silver-backed Butcherbird**, **Northern Rosella**, **Black-breasted Buzzard**, and **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. The afternoon will be spent birding within Kakadu National Park, making a start on the birds mentioned for Days 5 as we check-in for our two-night stay in the area.

Overnight: Kakadu National Park area



*The exquisite **Rainbow Pitta** is another one of our top targets on this trip, and we have several chances throughout the first half of this trip to see it.*

Day 5. Birding in Kakadu National Park

We will have the full day to explore this excellent, wildlife rich area, as well as the afternoon of Day 4 and morning of Day 6. There are several target birds on our radar here, many can be found among the impressive sandstone hills, either in the monsoon forest surrounding them in the case of **Northern Rosella, Black-banded Fruit Dove, Rainbow Pitta, Forest Kingfisher, Northern Fantail, White-lined Honeyeater, Helmeted (Sandstone) Friarbird, Green Oriole, and Olive-backed Oriole**, or actually in the hills themselves, such as **Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, Sandstone Shrikethrush, and Little Woodswallow**. These areas are often very busy with birds and we will likely see many other species as we explore our way around it.



*Incredibly well-camouflaged, we will certainly need to have our eyes peeled to locate the **Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon**.*

Dry woodland areas in the vicinity are also home to **Partridge Pigeon, Red-winged Parrot, Cockatiel, Galah, Great Bowerbird, Red-backed Fairywren, Buff-sided Robin, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Pied Butcherbird, and Blue-winged Kookaburra** among others.

While in the area we will also check out several waterholes and riverine systems that may offer us further chances of some of the waterbirds previously mentioned, or maybe something rare or different like a **Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher, or Azure Kingfisher**.

We will also make sure to visit some of the spectacular rock art, etched thousands of years ago by the indigenous people which offers a fantastic window into the human history of the region.

Overnights (two nights): Kakadu National Park area

Day 6. Kakadu National Park to Katherine

We will bid farewell to the Kakadu area after our final morning birding session. We will slowly drive southwest to the township of Pine Creek. Along the way we will look for **Black-breasted Buzzard** and other raptors, along with **Buff-sided Robin**, **Red-backed Kingfisher**, **Northern Rosella**, **Red-winged Parrot**, and **Silver-backed Butcherbird**.

On the way to our accommodation in Katherine, we will stop in the township of Pine Creek to find one of the area's special birds, **Hooded Parrot**, and we will also look out for the gorgeous **Gouldian Finch** along with **Masked Finch**, **Long-tailed Finch**, **Crimson Finch**, **Double-barred Finch**, and **Australian Zebra Finch**.

Overnight: Katherine



*The shy **Buff-sided Robin** can be found in wooded river valleys in the area.*

Day 7. Birding the Katherine area and travel to, and birding at Victoria River

We will spend some time in the morning birding in the bush in the vicinity of Katherine, looking for several tough species, including **Northern Shrike-tit**, **Northern Rosella**, and **Chestnut-backed Buttonquail**. We may also find **Apostlebird** and **Cockatiel** here. After our early morning birding we will leave town and head west to Victoria River. We will have several key targets over the next couple of days so will start looking for those as soon as it cools down in the late afternoon.

Overnight: Victoria River



*The tough **Northern Shrike-tit**, a recent split, will be a target during this tour.*



*We will look for **Cockatiel** as we traverse through the drier woodlands of this part of the Northern Territory. These highly popular cage birds, native and wild to Australia, are an important target for many visiting birders.*

Day 8. Birding Victoria River and Timber Creek

We will have numerous important targets during the day (as well as opportunities to look for them during the afternoon of Day 7 and the morning of Day 9). We will check rocky escarpments for the habitat-reliant **White-quilled Rock Pigeon** and keep our eyes peeled along riparian corridors for the spectacular **Purple-crowned Fairywren** (see cover image) This is Australia's largest fairywren and arguably the best-looking of them all...! Plenty of other quality birds will no doubt feature here, such as **Spinifex Pigeon**, **Diamond Dove**, **Red-winged Parrot**, **Cockatiel**, **Budgerigar**, **Red-backed Kingfisher**, **Great Bowerbird**, and **Buff-sided Robin**.

As we change locations, we will focus on some finches, and we will hope to find **Star Finch**, **Gouldian Finch**, **Australian Zebra Finch**, **Long-tailed Finch**, **Masked Finch**, **Double-barred Finch**, **Crimson Finch**, **Yellow-rumped Mannikin**, **Pictorella Mannikin**, and **Chestnut-breasted Mannikin**. There are lots of exciting possibilities in this remote part of the Northern Territory and there could be some great surprises in store.

Overnight: Timber Creek



Star Finch is another difficult species to connect with. This, along with the highly sought-after Gouldian Finch and the Purple-crowned Fairywren make the journey to Victoria River and Timber Creek well worth it.

Day 9. Timber Creek to Katherine

We will have a final morning birding the Timber Creek area looking for the birds mentioned above, and more, before we retrace our steps to Katherine where we will spend the night. We will of course be looking out for any good birds along the way!

Overnight: Katherine

Day 10. Katherine to Darwin, where the tour concludes

We will spend a final morning birding in the Katherine vicinity where we will have the flexibility to target anything we may still be “needing” from the area, such as the three difficult species of the area: **Northern Shrike-tit**, **Northern Rosella**, and **Chestnut-backed Buttonquail**. In the mid-morning we will commence our journey north back to Darwin, possibly stopping off along the way for a final look for the gorgeous **Hooded Parrot** if time permits. The tour will conclude in the late afternoon in time for your evening flight home or onto one of our other Australian tours (our exciting **Birding Tour Australia: Northern Territory – Alice Springs and Uluru Birding Tour** starts tomorrow and combines excellently with this tour to give you an extremely comprehensive birding trip in the Northern Territory).

Overnight: Not included



*The gorgeous **Hooded Parrot** is a target during the second half of this tour.*

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.

Tour Details

Duration:	10 days
Group Size:	6–8
Dates:	10–19 September 2027 04–13 September 2028
Start:	Darwin, Northern Territory
End:	Darwin, Northern Territory
Prices:	AU\$ 11,500 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2027) AU\$ 12,250 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2028)
Single Supplements:	AU\$ 1,980 (2027) AU\$ 2,150 (2028)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described above from Day 1 through Day 9)
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until lunch on Day 10)
Expert tour leader
National park/birdwatching reserve/protected areas entrance fees
Private transportation during the tour

Price excludes:

International or domestic flights to get to/from Darwin
Airport transfers
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](#))