



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

**TOUR-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**



*The shy and secretive **White-breasted Whistler** can, with luck, be found in the mangroves on our Northern Territory birding tour. This is a localized Australian endemic bird.*

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT AUSTRALIA CAN BE READ [HERE](#)

### TOUR OUTLINE

This exciting [Northern Territory, Top End birding tour](#) starts and ends in Darwin city. Darwin itself offers some excellent birding right within and around the city – such as at Lee Point, George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, and Holmes Jungle Nature Reserve. After birding in Darwin, this Top End bird tour makes a circuit of this part of the Northern Territory and takes in Adelaide River, Mary River, Kakadu National Park, Pine Creek, Katherine, Victoria River, and Timber Creek.

There are so many high-quality birds on this Top End birdwatching tour, and it is difficult to summarize them, so please take a look at the detailed itinerary [here](#). A few of the highlights include **Red Goshawk, Rainbow Pitta, White-breasted Whistler, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Hooded Parrot, Northern Rosella, Mangrove Fantail, Northern Shrike, Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, White-quilled Rock Pigeon, Partridge Pigeon, Sandstone Shrike, Black-tailed Treecreeper**, and one of the stars of the show – **Gouldian Finch**. In addition to the special birds mentioned, we will also likely be impressed by huge numbers of waterfowl at desert billabongs (wetlands). The sight of wetlands here teeming with birds is seriously impressive.

This Top End birding tour combines perfectly with our other Northern Territory birding tour, which takes us birding around [Alice Springs](#).

While the birds on our Top End birding tour are the main reason for our trip, we will also pass through some beautiful and unique landscapes that have been home to native people for thousands of years, and we will be sure to soak in these sights, too.

### DAILY ACTIVITIES, PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND TOUR PACE

This Top End birding tour moves at a relaxed pace yet still targets all of the readily accessible regional specials, of which there are many.

The city of Darwin offers wonderful birds, with numerous great birdwatching sites within and very close to the city. We will start our tour by visiting some of these places, such as Lee Point, George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, and Holmes Jungle Nature Reserve. Our accommodation in Darwin is situated an easy short walk from one of these sites, so if you arrive ahead of the tour (always recommended), you can get your Australia birding trip off to a good start as you get acclimatized to the time zone, the weather, and the birds!

After a stint of birding in Darwin, we will start our loop of the Northern Territory's Top End. We will visit Adelaide River, Mary River, Kakadu National Park, Pine Creek, Katherine, Victoria River, and Timber Creek and each of these areas will give us different target birds. We will situate ourselves in accommodation that offers a great base to explore the surrounding areas. As we don't spend every night of this tour in a different hotel, the tour shouldn't feel as rushed as other tours where we cover further distances and require different hotels most nights. Most drives between different accommodations/bases will take 1 – 2.5 hours; however, we will often break up drives for birding stops or bathroom breaks, so the journey times are likely to take longer than this. The longest drives are from Jabiru to Katherine and Katherine to Darwin; both are around 3 – 4 hours of driving time. We may make trips of around one hour from our accommodation to get to certain

birding areas (potentially more as we explore around the remote Timber Creek and Victoria Falls area for key target birds.

The tour is generally considered easy in terms of physical exertion. However, the temperatures during the day could get high (see the “Weather” section below), so dehydration needs to always be considered a possibility, as does heat stroke and sunburn.

We will make quite a few short and productive walks from our vehicle at different sites in a loop of up to 0.6 – 1.2 miles (1 – 2 kilometers/km), and we may make several of these a day. We are also likely to make some slightly longer walks of 2.5 miles (4 km), and we may make a couple of these a day. Walking is mainly on flat or occasionally undulating ground. In some areas, we will be walking on maintained trails, but at other times, we will be walking on sandy or rough ground, which may have loose rocks or holes, so care should always be taken.

At some waterhole locations, we might make use of viewing blinds (bird hides) to observe the site and attending birds.

## TRANSPORTATION

We will use a 12-seater minibus on this Top End birding tour. There will be limited baggage space, so please pack as lightly as possible for the tour (including within the seating area).

## DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

There are no domestic flights on this Top End birdwatching tour.

## LUGGAGE

Please pack as lightly as possible for this Top End bird tour due to the limited space inside vehicles. A medium, soft-sided, and robust duffle bag is likely to work best for packing in the tour vehicles. You will be expected to load and unload your own bags into and out of vehicles.

We recommend that a daypack is used to keep items that you wish to use daily when in the vehicle or when birding in the field (such as binoculars, camera, notebook, field guide, personal supply of water, snacks, umbrella, rain jacket, extra layers of clothing, etc.).

## ACCOMMODATION

This birding tour of the Top End of the Northern Territory stays in comfortable accommodation throughout (possibly with the exception of when we are in the more remote Timber Creek and Victoria River areas). All accommodation has private bathrooms. Once we leave Darwin, we will be staying in remote areas and we will eat most of our meals (particularly breakfasts and dinners) at our accommodations, which have restaurants.

In Darwin, we will stay at a comfortable resort on the edge of the city in the northern suburbs, just a short drive from Darwin International Airport and close to some great birding areas and beaches. The resort has stylish accommodations with air conditioning, a private bathroom, free Wi-Fi, two saltwater swimming pools, and an on-site restaurant and bar. We will stay here for the first two

nights of the tour, and if you plan to arrive ahead of the tour (or need to stay after your tour has finished due to flight schedules, etc.), we recommend staying here and can help make bookings subject to availability.

As we commence our loop around the Top End birdwatching circuit, we will first stop in the Adelaide River and Mary River areas. We will spend one night in a wilderness lodge with great birdwatching on our doorstep. Our rooms here will be typical Australian motel-style rooms with air conditioning and private bathrooms, set in a wonderfully birdy area. There is a restaurant on site where we will eat our meals. There is no Wi-Fi available here.

Our base in Kakadu National Park will be on the edge of the town called Jabiru (the local name for **Black-necked Stork**, rather than the similarly named bird of South America!). Our accommodation is nestled amongst tropical landscaped gardens in the heart of Kakadu National Park, and we will spend two nights here. The lodge has a lagoon-style swimming pool, a spa pool, and an on-site bar and restaurant. We will stay in bungalows, each with air conditioning and a private bathroom. There is laundry facilities but there is no Wi-Fi available here.

In Katherine, we will stay at a resort (with motel-style rooms) just out of town either side of our trip into more remote areas. Our rooms will have air conditioning and private bathrooms. The resort has an outdoor swimming pool, restaurant, and bar. The hotel has laundry facilities, and Wi-Fi is available.

Our accommodations at Timber Creek and Victoria River consists of a more basic motel-style rooms in remote areas. At Timber Creek, rooms have air conditioning, there are laundry facilities, and there is Wi-Fi. The accommodation at Victoria River is more basic with no phone signal or Wi-Fi (though Wi-Fi might be coming soon), the rooms have air conditioning.

## WEATHER

Darwin has a similar temperature range year-round, and we can expect lows of around 70 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) (21 degrees Centigrade/°C) at night and highs of around 95 °F (35 °C) during the day. It is often humid in Darwin, but at this time of year, it should be less humid than other times, 45 – 50% humidity in September/October versus 70%+ in the November-March period. Rain is considered unlikely during the time our Top End bird tour visits the area, as we are traveling outside of the rainy season. Still, rain is always possible in tropical regions.

## SAFETY

We do not recommend walking around Darwin or Katherine at night for personal safety reasons. Please do not leave valuables (or anything at any time) inside the vehicle when it is parked to help reduce the risk of anyone breaking into the vehicle. Please keep a close watch on your possessions (e.g., bags, wallet, optics, etc.) when we are out and about in the city, such as during lunch and city birding stops. Keep a careful watch on your possessions in busy areas for pickpockets. Make sure the doors and windows are always closed and locked in your hotel rooms (when you are in the room and when you are out of it).

We need to take extreme care on this Top End birding tour due to the presence of **Saltwater Crocodiles** that can occur in or near the smallest waterbodies; they can also be found up to 0.6 miles (1 km) from water. We will be birding and staying overnight within habitats that

crocodiles inhabit, such as rivers (including inland rivers – “salties” can occur over 124 miles (200 km) from the coast), coastal mangroves, and wetlands. Please do not stand close to the water’s edge or go anywhere near water at night. Crocodile warning signs are often in place and should always be adhered to. Do not swim in any rivers, creeks, or anywhere else that is not a swimming pool in a hotel (and check the pool first before jumping in!). Please refer to the [Be Crocwise website](#) for more information. As referred to in the Australia general information document, other general safety information should be considered, e.g., regarding snakes, etc.

## WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING AND OTHER ITEMS

The following is a list of useful items to bring on this Northern Territory birding tour and should be read in conjunction with the Australia general information document.

1. A field guide to the birds of the region. See the general information for our recommendations for this tour.
2. Hiking pole or walking stick to help on the tracks and trails. While probably not necessary for everyone, **a walking stick is compulsory for anyone who is unsteady walking**, as we feel this is a safety issue. We do not want anyone slipping while walking around. Please discuss with us if you are unsure whether you will need one or not.
3. Torch (flashlight) and/or headlamp (headtorch), and spare batteries.
4. High-concentration DEET insect repellent or similar.
5. A flynet for your face is very useful in some years.
6. A small personal first aid kit. See the suggested items from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [here](#).
7. Lightweight hiking boots are likely the best footwear for this tour. A set of sandals (flip-flops) and/or trainers would be useful for walking around some of the accommodations but are not suitable for birding time (consider snake bites, mud, slips, trips, falls, etc.).
8. Quick-drying birding clothes (in suitable colors) are the best for this tour.
9. Swimwear. All of the accommodations we stay at have swimming pools.
10. A small hand towel or washcloth can be handy for cleaning sand and dust off cameras and yourself. Not essential, but people do find these useful.
11. A dry bag to keep valuable documents in, such as passports, cell phones, wallets, etc., as well as cameras, if it rains or is particularly dusty.