

Queensland's Rainforest & Great Barrier Reef

Naturetrek Tour Report

4 - 19 August 2007

Report compiled by Ellen Terrell



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Day 1

Saturday 4th August

Travel from the UK

Day 2

Sunday 5th August

Arrival in Cairns (via Brisbane)

Day 3

Monday 6th August

CAIRNS

Fine winter's day, clear blue skies, slightly windy

We arrived in Cairns at 1.00pm, transferred to Bay Village Resort for lunch and checked in. We settled in, and then walked along Cairns Esplanade. Rainbow Lorikeets were squabbling in flowering trees on the footpath, and there were also Welcome Swallows hawking for insects, a male Mistletoe Bird obligingly sitting on a power line, White-rumped Swiftlets overhead, Magpie Larks and Willy Wagtails in the park area. Also seen by the esplanade were Aust. Pelican, White-faced Heron, Little Egret, Great Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Osprey, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Gull-billed Tern, and Crested Tern.

We caught a taxi over to Centenary Lakes and walked through to the Botanic Gardens seeing Orange-footed Scrub-Fowl, Bush Stone-Curlew, Spotted Turtle-Dove, Peaceful Dove, Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Honeyeater, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Yellow Oriole, Figbird, and Black Butcherbird. We enjoyed an early dinner, and then retired to bed to sleep off the jet-lag.

Day 4

Tuesday 7th August

GREEN ISLAND

Fine winter's day, clear blue skies, hardly any wind ashore, but 20 knot winds out to sea

We had an early breakfast, and were onto a 7.30am bus to the Reef Centre boarding the Great Adventures Cat for the 45 minute trip to Green Island. There was an Osprey nest on top of a pylon coming into the Green

Island Wharf, with two adults tending two chicks. As we disembarked, a White-bellied Sea Eagle was being harassed in the air by one of the Osprey parents.

We spent the morning watching Eastern Reef Egrets, both gray and white forms, fishing along the water's edge and out along the exposed reef, with Common Terns and Silver Gulls wheeling over the water, Sacred Kingfisher swooping on small crabs, Buff-banded Rails running around the walkways and public areas, (even in the ladies showers and around the swimming pool), a few Silvereyes, Bar-shouldered Doves and a Spangled Drongo in the courtyard trees, but best of all, were excellent views of Rose-crowned Fruit Doves harvesting ripe fig fruit in trees along the walkway.

We took our turn on the glass-bottomed boat looking at the many coral forms, burrowing and giant clams, sea slugs and every size of fish - from large, one metre long Trevally to tiny fluorescent blue reef fish the size of a thumb. After lunch (in a human cage - designed to keep birds away from food tables), we enjoyed some snorkelling and a walk around the island.

Back into Cairns by 3.30 pm, we passed Darters and Little Pied Cormorants resting on pylons; had a quick cup of tea, and then went back to the esplanade. Unfortunately the tide was fully in, but we still saw Aust. Pelican, Straw-necked Ibis, Eastern Curlew, Bush Stone-Curlew, Red-capped Plover, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, Spotted Turtle-Dove, Peaceful Dove, Rainbow Lorikeet, Welcome Swallow, Helmeted Friarbird, Varied Honeyeater, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, White-breasted Woodswallow, and Mistletoebird.

We finished the night with great food at Donnini's Italian Restaurant and then walked back along the esplanade once more, passing micro bats hawking for insects in the air around the street lights and Bush Stone-Curlews doing the same on the ground below.

Day 5

Wednesday 8th August

MICHAELMAS CAY

Fine, sunny day, no wind, flat sea, 15 knots wind outward, 20knots on the return

We had another early breakfast and went off to the Reef Terminal again, this time to board 'Ocean Spirit' for the 2 hour trip to Michaelmas Cay. We spent the morning looking at approx 2,000 birds on the Cay, including Brown Booby, Great Frigatebird, Silver Gull, Crested Tern, Common Tern, Little Tern, Sooty Tern, and Common (Brown) Noddy. Many Sooty Tern chicks being fed regurgitated fish, and hundreds of adults took to the air each time the Frigatebird appeared, soaring high above the colony. We snorkelled off the island, had lunch on board, then enjoyed a magical trip in the semi-submersible, gliding through coral canyons and watching fish and turtles feeding on their home-grounds. There was enough wind on the way back to coast along with the main and foresail up, assisted only by the auxiliary engine – it was beautifully quiet as we passed small coral reefs, lagoons and other, smaller, sandy cays on the way home.

We had a quick walk along the Esplanade again before dinner to find some Nankeen Night Herons in their favourite roost, and also saw hundreds of Rainbow Lorikeets settling down for the night in trees along the

esplande. Also saw Aust. Pelican, Welcome Swallow, Helmeted Friarbird, Varied Honeyeater Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, Spangled Drongo, White-breasted Woodswallow and Metallic Starling.

Day 6

Thursday 9th August

CAIRNS/ATHERTON TABLELANDS

Slightly overcast, no wind

We packed up, had breakfast, and went down to the Esplanade to catch the tide before it was too far out for a last look, seeing Little Egret, Eastern Reef Egret, Great Egret, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Beach Stone-Curlew, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Peaceful Dove, and Bar-shouldered Dove. We then drove the short distance into town to look for roosting Nankeen Night-Herons for those who hadn't seen them the evening before, and found them in a Mango tree almost in the centre of town.

We left Cairns, and headed south for the Tablelands, seeing Agile Wallabies in vacant paddocks on the outskirts, with small groups of Bush-Stone-Curlews resting in the shade of small trees and shrubs, also Helmeted Friarbird, Spangled Drongo and Brown Honeyeater in flowering Bottlebrush trees nearby. Continuing on, we stopped briefly to watch a small colony of Spectacled Flying Foxes as they hung, sleeping, in the morning sun, with Yellow Honeyeater nearby. At the lookout close to the top of the range, watched a Grey Goshawk (white morph) doing lazy circles in the valley below. We settled into Yungaburra Lodge, with Pied Butcherbird drinking from the birdbath and Silver-eyes keeping us company for lunch in the garden.

After lunch it started to rain. We decided to head for Hasties Swamp to enjoy the cover of the bird hide. On the way, we saw Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel, Spotted Turtle-dove, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow, Aust. Pipit, Cattle Egret, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, and White-breasted Woodswallow. From the bird hide, we saw Australasian Grebe, Magpie Goose, Plumed Whistling Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Aust. Pelican, and Purple Swamphen. Crested Pigeon were seen along the power lines, as well as Welcome Swallow, Laughing Kookaburra, and Forest Kingfisher.

We enjoyed a picnic dinner under shelter at Platypus Park just outside Atherton, accompanied by a platypus at dusk, foraging in the creek below! As the rain eased, we drove out to Hypipamee Crater for spotlighting, with the winding road taking us higher and higher until we reached 1,100m and into a lovely upland rainforest. We saw Brown Lemuroid Ringtail Possum, Herbert River Ringtail Possum, Common Brushtail Possum, and Long-nosed Bandicoot. We took the back roads home to Yungaburra unsuccessfully looking for Echidna; however we did have a good look at a Barn Owl hunting from a fence post and also saw more Bandicoots.

Day 7

Friday 10th August

ATHERTON TABLELANDS

Overcast, showers and drizzle

It was an early start for the dawn chorus at the Cathedral Fig Tree in a large block of untouched rainforest originally set aside as State Forest but which was covered by the World Heritage listing before logging started! We arrived in the dark, so there was time to pour a cup of tea before the first calls started. We stood under the fig tree, next to its massive root system and listened as the amazing avian orchestra tuned up in the grey dawn. Then we walked along the edge of the forest, saw Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pale-yellow Robin, Grey-headed Robin, Golden Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Bower's Shrike-thrush, White-throated Treecreeper, Red-backed Fairy Wren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Bridled Honeyeater, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong, Victoria's Riflebird, Spotted Carbird, Aust. Pipit, and Tawny Grassbird. We heard both Chowchillas and Whipbirds frequently, but despite much searching, could not see either.

Breakfast was on the verandah at Lake Barrine Teahouse, followed by a walk up to the giant Kauris and a little further around the lake. A large contingent of Great Crested Grebes was out in the middle of the lake, with Little Pied Cormorants drying their wings on logs on the edge, and Pacific Black Ducks were grooming in the morning sun. Also seen were Aust. Brush Turkey, White-headed Pigeon, Large-billed Scrub-wren, Brown Gerygone, and dramatically, we watched a White-bellied Sea Eagle taking a platypus in the shallows across the far side of the lake!

We had lunch and enjoyed a woodturning demonstration at Tolga Woodworks, before going through the small town of Atherton up to Halloran's Hill on the rim of the crater for a panoramic view of the tablelands. En route, were Black-shouldered Kite, Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Sarus Crane, Bush Stone-Curlew, Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Spotted Turtle-dove Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, and Aust. Magpie

We then went back to Yungaburra for a quick look along the edge of Tinaroo Dam where a flock of at least 600 Little Black Cormorants were gathered in a small bay. We also saw Australasian Grebe, Australian Wood Duck, Hardhead, Aust. Pelican, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, and Gull-billed Tern.

Just before dusk, we did a short walk around the edge of Lake Eacham, a second volcanic lake, watching Saw-shelled Terrapins in the clear water. Also glimpsed a Water Rat swimming sinuously, propelled by his webbed hind feet and an Azure Kingfisher speeding out of sight around the corner, with Welcome Swallows hawking insects above the lake. On the way home we were lucky enough to catch sight of a Grey Goshawk, tearing chunks from a dead Bandicoot close by on the edge of the road, and then flying up to a perch to eat.

We walked down to Nick's Restaurant for dinner, followed by another brief spotlighting session at the Curtain Fig. We saw a Green Ringtail Possum and Common Brushtail Possum, and also half a dozen Barn Owls en route to Tolga where a dozen or so Red-legged Pademelons were grazing in the moonlight on the edge of the forest.

Day 8

Saturday 11th August

ATHERTON TABLELANDS – JULATTEN

Overcast, slight drizzle, enticing some people to sleep in

Some of us drove the short distance around to the Curtain Fig for some early morning birds and were rewarded by a good view of a pair of Eastern Whip-birds calling back and forth as they foraged in the roots of the fig. Also seen were Little Shrike-Thrush, Grey Fantail, Pied Currawong, and Tooth-billed Bowerbird. We walked a little way further down the road to check on a vine where a sleeping Tree Kangaroo had been seen recently and there she was again, sitting quietly, her long tail hanging down, having breakfast on leaves. A movement nearby showed us a juvenile, now fully out of the pouch, but most likely still suckling... Together they moved off, no doubt to find a good spot to sleep for the day. We went back to breakfast happy we had made the effort to get up in the drizzle.

We then set off for Granite Gorge, collecting our picnic lunch from Tolga en route. Driving out of the rainforest, through open bushland, we saw Cattle Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Black Shouldered Kite, Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Sarus Crane, Purple Swamphen, Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Aust. Pipit, Double-barred Finch, Nutmeg Mannikin, and Chestnut-breasted Mannikin.

We stopped at Rocky Creek where flowering Eucalyptus trees were attracting a noisy bunch of Rainbow Lorikeets, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Noisy Friarbirds, and Olive-backed Orioles; also a Fan-tailed Cuckoo was quietly hunting caterpillars in the small bushes below.

The day continued to be cloudy, but the drizzle abated, becoming much warmer in the dry country around Granite Gorge. En route we saw Pale-headed Rosellas, had a good view of a pair of Squatter Pigeons on the edge of the road, and saw Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Pheasant Coucal, White-rumped Swiftlet, Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Friarbird, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Spangled Drongo, Pied Butcherbird, Aust. Magpie, and Torresian Crow. We had lunch, and then went for a short walk to see Mareeba Rock Wallabies amongst the granite boulders along the creek. We stopped a short way out of the gorge to watch a good flock of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos harvesting seeds from native Grevillea trees along the road. We also stopped briefly at Mareeba Golf Course for a look at some of the mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos that make the course their home - lounging around in the shade between driving ranges by day, eating the grass and drinking from the sprinkler system by night.

We continued on, with a late afternoon stop at Lake Mitchell for Black Swan, Green Pygmy Goose, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant Aust. Pelican, Great Egret, Osprey, Comb-crested Jacana, Gull-billed Tern, Welcome Swallow, Red-backed Fairy Wren, and Rufous Whistler. Before we got to Kingfisher Park, in Julatten, we saw Red-winged Parrot, Blue-faced Honeyeater, and White-breasted Woodswallow, along the way. One last stop was at Mt Molloy looking for a Great Bowerbird and his bower. We had a brief glimpse of the birds, but could find only an undecorated bower along the way. We arrived at Kingfisher Park just before dusk where Keith took some of us down to the orchard to catch a pair of Papuan Frogmouths roosting with their chick. We had views of Orange-footed Scrub-Fowl, Aust. Brush Turkey, Large-billed Scrubwren, Pale-yellow Robin, and Spectacled Monarch on the way down to the orchard, with Macleay's Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Emerald Dove, and Victoria's Riflebird around the feeders in the garden.

We settled in, and then walked over to some nearby Eucalyptus trees for some pre-dinner spotlighting for the northern form of Masked Owl, and Barn Owl, with both emerging from large holes in these tall elegant trees. Our delicious dinner was from Lindsay's kitchen, finished with coffee whilst we completed the species list.

Day 9

Sunday 12th August

KINGFISHER PARK, JULATTEN

Overcast, slight drizzle

We had a quick walk around Kingfisher Park for Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Aust. Brush Turkey, Cattle Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Noisy Pitta, Macleay's Honeyeater, Spectacled Monarch, Red-browed Finch, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, and then had an early breakfast before heading off for Mt Lewis. Cattle Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Magpie-Lark, and Willie Wagtail were in the open paddocks before we turned up the hill. Brown Cuckoo-dove, Emerald Dove, White-throated Treecreeper, Mountain Thornbill, and White-cheeked Honeyeater were seen, and an Eastern Spinebill was in the clearing at the beginning of the walk. Along the track out to the tin miners' pond were Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Pale-yellow Robin, Grey-headed Robin, Grey Fantail, and Victoria's Riflebird. Enormous tadpoles of the Northern Barred Frog were also seen in the pond. We walked to the site of a Golden Bower-bird's bower, but unfortunately the bower was in disrepair and not yet decorated.

Back to Kingfisher for lunch, and then we headed off into the dry country to the west. We called in to Abattoir Swamp en route – the swamp becoming very overgrown with grass, but still afforded good views of White-necked (Pacific) Heron and Sacred Kingfisher from the hide, with Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Yellow Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Dusky Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, and Spangled Drongo in grevilleas and open bushland near the car parking area.

On to Maryfarms for Aust. Bustard, with Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Brown Falcon, and Nankeen Kestrel along the way. We enjoyed a walk through Mt Carbine Caravan Park for Laughing Kookaburra, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Pied Butcherbird, Aust. Magpie, Torresian Crow, Apostlebird and Bar-shouldered Dove. We looked in vain for Tawny Frogmouth in woodland trees known to have been daytime roosts. Galahs were crowding the power lines near the Roadhouse not far from the Caravan Park; Little Black Cormorant and Aust. Pelican, Eurasian Coot on the tailings dam, with Peaceful Dove, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Forest Kingfisher, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Double-barred Finch seen on the road home. We had a brief stop at Mt Molloy for the Great Bowerbird's bower, seeing Bush Stone-Curlew, Masked Lapwing, Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella and Figbird before heading back to Kingfisher for the night.

Day 10

Monday 13th August

JULATTEN TO DAINTREE

Fine sunny morning, becoming humid on the coast

We had an early morning walk around Kingfisher before breakfast – luckily one Papuan Frogmouth was still roosting in the orchard for those who missed it the day before. We also saw Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Aust. Brush-Turkey, Emerald Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Large-billed Scrubwren, Blue-faced Honeywater, Macleay's Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow Spotted Honeyeater, Graceful Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Pale-yellow Robin, Grey Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Spectacled Monarch, Grey Fantail, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Figbird, and Spotted Catbird.

We then packed up and headed off down to the coast, with a brief stop at a Barramundi farm along the way towards the Daintree River, seeing Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea-Eagle overhead, and Sacred Kingfisher and Rainbow Bee-eater on the fence. We continued on with another stop at the swamp along the road to the ferry for Magpie Goose, Little Pied Cormorant, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, and Royal Spoonbill. We saw Black Kite and Whistling Kite, White-rumped Swiftlet circling over areas where sugar cane was being harvested, Aust. Pipit in the stubble, and White-faced Heron in the deep gutters alongside the paddocks. Sharing the paddocks with grazing cattle were Cattle Egret, Aust. White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Masked Lapwing and Brown Falcon, Laughing Kookaburra, and Forest Kingfisher, with White-breasted Woodswallow on power lines overhead.

We crossed the Daintree River with Welcome Swallow keeping us company on the ferry, hawking out across the water for insects and returning to the ferry railings. We had our picnic lunch in the Jindalba section of the Daintree National Park before spending the afternoon at the Daintree Discovery Centre. We had good views of Wompoo Fruit Dove harvesting fruit above one of the walkways at the centre.

Then we settled in to Heritage Lodge, with an afternoon walk along the edge of the rainforest, where Helmeted Friarbirds were calling, a Pied Monarch was hunting up and down a tree trunk, a Rufus Fantail was nearby, and saw also Black Butcherbird, Victoria's Riflebird, and Yellow-bellied Sunbird, with swooping flocks of Metallic Starlings in the late afternoon light.

Day 11

Tuesday 14th August

DAINTREE/CAPE TRIBULATION

Overcast, occasional showers, Laughing Kookaburra starting the dawn chorus

We had an early rise, taking breakfast with us to eat after the morning cruise on the Daintree River. It was a strange, quiet morning on the river, probably due to the overcast weather. Initially we headed downstream, looking for Mangrove Robin and Collared Kingfisher, both found only in the mangroves towards the mouth. We heard the Robin many times, but couldn't entice him to show, but had good views of the Kingfisher. A Whistling Kite was doing lazy circles overhead, and there were also White-rumped Swiftlets. Helmeted Friarbirds were sipping nectar from mangrove flowers, before we headed upstream passing a pair of Sacred Kingfishers and a Darter drying its wings on logs. A Striated Heron was lurking in the gloom of mangrove roots, with Black Kites using the trees along the river as hunting perches from the harvested cane paddocks along the river, and there were also Aust. White and Straw-necked Ibis, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle above, large flocks of Cattle Egrets heading from their river roosts to fan out into the cattle pastures in the valleys beyond, an unexpected sight of a Collared Sparrowhawk hunting along the river's edge.

Great Egret and Masked Lapwings were on sandy banks exposed by the tide, and we saw Azure Kingfisher, Forest Kingfisher, Leaden Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher, Spangled Drongo, Varied Triller, Yellow Oriole, Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, and large flocks of Metallic Starlings. Our boatman also found us a Green Tree Snake in the Hibiscus trees overhanging the river and a couple of Estuarine Crocodiles were sunning themselves on the banks. Picnic breakfast was taken at Jindalba. Here were Topknot Pigeons feeding high in the canopy, Rainbow Lorikeet, Noisy Pitta, Large-billed Scrubwren, Fairy Gerygone, Yellow-spotted and Graceful Honeyeater, Pale-yellow Robin, Little Shrike-thrush very vocal, and Spectacled Monarch, but unfortunately, no Cassowary.

We continued on towards Cape Tribulation for late lunch, stopping at Maardja Board walk en route, looking for Little Kingfisher in the mangrove section. Unfortunately we had no luck, but did see Brown Cuckoo-dove, Emerald Dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Dusky Honeyeater, Pied Monarch, and Mistletoebird. We had one last try for Little Kingfisher in the mangrove section of Dubuji, this time getting a brief glimpse of the bird having a late bath in the fading light of evening. Here we also saw Shining Flycatcher in the mangroves, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Aust. Brush Turkey, more Wompoo Fruit Doves, Helmeted Friarbird, and Black Butcherbird.

We returned back to Heritage Lodge after a long but enjoyable day, seeing Rainbow Bee-eaters, Willy Wagtail and Welcome Swallows on fence lines en route. We could hear Red-necked Crakes calling in the dusk as we arrived, as well as a Musky Rat-kangaroo which was out on its last forage for the day.

Day 12

Wednesday 15th August

DAINTREE, CAIRNS, BRISBANE, LAMINGTON

Fine weather

We had an early breakfast, and then headed off to Cairns Airport for the flight to Brisbane. We saw Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Aust. Brush-Turkey, Wompoo Fruit-dove, Topknot Pigeons overhead, Helmeted Friarbird, and Spotted Catbird in the grounds of Heritage Lodge while having breakfast over looking the creek. Magpie Geese, and Great Egrets were seen in swampy areas along the way from the ferry, and Cattle Egret, Aust. White and Staw-necked Ibis, and Masked Lapwings were in the paddocks, as well as Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Brahminy Kite, also Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, White-rumped Swiftlet, Laughing Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Welcome Swallow, Willie Wagtail, White-breasted Woodswallow, and Torresian Crow. A toilet stop along the way turned up Bush Stone-Curlew, Figbird, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, and White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike. All the usuals were at the Airport – Spotted Turtle-dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, House Sparrow, and Common Myna.

We arrived at O'Reilly's in the late evening, after a 1.5 hr drive out of Brisbane. We had good views of Whiptail (Pretty-faced) Wallabies and a lucky, brief glimpse of a Koala going up a tree on the last section going up the mountain.

Day 13

Thursday 16th August

O'REILLY'S/LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK

Cold morning, some mist, fining up during the day

We were up early to watch birds coming into the garden feeding station at O'Reilly's, which was dominated by Satin and Regent Bowerbirds. We had breakfast, and then spent the rest of the morning walking along paths and boardwalks with Glen Threlfo. Brush Turkeys followed us along the paths; Brown Quail seemed out of place in the garden outside reception, attracted by the grain put out for King Parrots and Crimson Rosellas; Wonga Pigeons waddled along the track, and Yellow-throated and White-browed Scrub-wrens were darting about in the undergrowth like feathered mice. Large-billed Scrub-wren, Brown Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird and Red-browed Finches were in the small trees and shrubs around the guest house; with Eastern Spinebills sipping nectar from Grevillea flowers; Logrunners feeding young in the forest below the guest house; also Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, and Green Catbird. We finished the morning off with a small family of Superb Fairy-wrens gleaning insects on the edge of the garden on the way back to lunch.

We spent the afternoon with Glen again, this time in a vehicle visiting various lookouts and birding spots within O'Reilly's property. Collared Sparrowhawk was briefly seen while looking for Peregrine Falcon along a towering cliff face; also a Wedge-tailed Eagle was floating high; and Masked Lapwing, Aust. Magpie, and Pied Currawong were along the open paddocks; with Paradise Riflebird in Eucalypts on the rainforest edge; and Grey Butcherbird, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Welcome Swallow, Red-browed Treecreeper, Spotted Pardalote, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Bell Miner, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Golden Whistler, and Torresian Crow were in the open bushland on the rough track leading down to the Kerry Valley. We returned to the lodge for evening drinks before dinner and some views of Red-necked Pademelons and Mountain Brushtail Possums feeding just outside the restaurant.

Day 14

Friday 17th August

O'REILLY'S/BEAUDESERT VALLEY

Fine, sunny day

We enjoyed an early morning walk looking for Albert's Lyrebird, and found him scratching away in the undergrowth along a pathway not far from the Swing Bridge. We returned back to the dining room for breakfast, passing Aust. Brush-Turkey, Grey Goshawk, Aust. King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Yellow-throated and White-browed Scrubwren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Logrunner, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Fantail, Satin Bowerbird, Regent Bowerbird, and Bassian Thrush. Red-necked Pademelons were still feeding on the lawns around the resort.

After breakfast, we went out for a full day with Glen, starting at the rainforest at the top of the mountain, down through tall Eucalypts on the edge of the forest, into open bushland, and then through the Beaudesert Valley, ending up at a large water storage area before heading back up to the mountain at dusk. We had good views of Whiptail (Pretty-faced) and Red-necked Wallabies and Eastern Grey Kangaroos on the way home. We had many stops on our way down the mountain through open bushland, seeing Spotted Pardalote, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Helmeted Friarbird, Bell Miner, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Restless Flycatcher, Magpie Lark, Willie Wagtail, and Silvereeye. We searched in vain for Spotted Quail-thrush and Tawny Frogmouth in bushland.

We continued on down through the valley areas which were extremely dry due to increasing drought conditions for the last three years. Despite this we saw Black Kite and Whistling Kite, Collared Sparrowhawk, Brown Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Masked Lapwing, Common Bronzewing, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Pale-headed Rosella, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, and Rainbow Bee-eater.

We called into a variety of wetlands and lagoons along the way for Australasian Grebe, Plumed Whistling Duck, Wandering Whistling-Duck, Aust. Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Aust. Pelican, White-faced Heron, Great and Intermediate Egret, Aust. White Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Comb-crested Jacana, Black-winged Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel, Azure Kingfisher, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow, House Sparrow, Double-barred Finch, and Red-browed Finch

Lunch was by a local river under the shade of a huge spreading fig tree full of fruit, attracting Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Blue-faced Honeyeater, and Figbird, with a family of Kookaburras joining us, hoping for lunch handouts. Brown Quail were on the walkway to the dam, with Welcome Swallow, Superb Fairywren, Freckled Warbler, and Double-barred Finch along the edge.

Our last dinner for the trip was accompanied by Mountain Brushtail Possum also having dinner – feeding on fruit in the glass-fronted enclosures in the dining room.

Day 15

Saturday 18th August

Depart Australia

Day 16

Sunday 19th August

Arrival in the UK

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