

AUSTRALIA & TASMANIA

7 September – 1 December 2006

Participants: Justin Jansen & Danitsja Stapel



This trip was organised to find the missing species I did not find on my previous three trips within Australia, and seeing as many different parts of Australia as my girlfriend never visited this country before. The birding was mostly done by Justin Jansen sometimes joined by Danitsja. To increase the chances to find the needed species and subspecies (I'm using the species concept progressive and included some birds as species that not yet deserved this status by scientist) the itinerary was carefully planned, to maximise my chances to lure my wanted species down. For most species it was straightforward to find spots, but White-throated Grasswren, Australian Painted Snipe and Australian Bittern got me worried much. The quest in this trip to find Scarlet-chested Parrot and Buff-breasted Button-quail where real long shots, as there where no recent sightings done of both species in the visited area. At the end of the trip I succeeded very well to find almost all my targets and I only missed White-throated Grasswren, Scarlet-chested Parrot and Buff-breasted Button-quail of the endemics on the trip. It leaves for me nine species to nail down in whole Australia in the near future. These species are except the three mentioned above; White-streaked Honeyeater, Western Grasswren, Black Grasswren, Dusky Gerygone, Halls' Babbler and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush. I found eventually no less then 88 new mainland species and an extra 17 seabirds. And I finished with 565 species for this 3 month trip.

NOMENCLATURE & TAXONOMY

Taxonomy is very confusing for Australia. Basically I used the taxonomy of James F. Clements (Birds of the World, A Check List, Fifth Edition 2000) but also the taxonomy used by Schodde & Mason (The Directory of Australian Birds 1999). But as taxonomy is almost based on BSC I also try to included some sure PSC splits in my trip preparation. These species are for example; Tasmanian Scrubwren, Tasman Masked Owl, Naretha Blue Bonnet, Nullarbor Quail-thrush, Western Fieldwren, Short-tailed Grasswren, Morepork, Western Shrike-tit, Northern Shrike-tit, Gould's Bronze-cuckoo, Chillagoe Swiftlet, Yellow-rumped Pardalote, Black-headed Pardalote, Eastern Pardalote and Relict Raven. I succeeded in finding all the future splits. As I heard much in the time in Australia: better safe then sorry.

Itinerary

September 7	Kuala Lumpur * Perth
September 8	Perth
September 9	Perth * Cape Naturalista * Augusta
September 10	Augusta * Valley of Giants * Albany
September 11	Albany * Two Peoples Bay * Albany
September 12	Albany * Stirling Ranges * Porongurup * Albany
September 13	Albany * Rocky Gully * Albany * Fitzgerald River * Esperance
September 14	Esperance * Nullarbor Road House
September 15	Nullarbor Road House * Port Augusta
September 16	Port Augusta * Adelaide

September 17 Adelaide
 September 18 Adelaide * Mt Compass * Coorong * Adelaide
 September 19 Adelaide
 September 20 Adelaide * Monarto NP * Salt Creek (Coorong) * Robe
 September 21 Robe * Port Fairy
 September 22 Port Fairy * Towerhill Reserve * Great Ocean Route * Aireys Inlet
 September 23 Aireys Inlet * Eltham
 September 24 Eltham
 September 25 Eltham * King Lake * Yellingbo * Eltham
 September 26 Eltham * Murray Sunset NP * Waikerie
 September 27 Waikerie (various locations around town)
 September 28 Waikerie * Gluepot * Waikerie
 September 29 Waikerie
 September 30 Waikerie * Flinders Ranges * Lyndhurst
 October 1 Lyndhurst * Strezlecki Track * Tibooburra
 October 2 Tibooburra * Adelaide Gate * Waikerie
 October 3 Waikerie
 October 4 Waikerie * Black Hill Reserve * Waikerie
 October 5 Waikerie * Banrock Station * Waikerie
 October 6 Waikerie * Coober Pedy
 October 7 Coober Pedy * Erldunda
 October 8 Erldunda * Ayers Rock * The Olga's * Alice Springs
 October 9 Alice Springs * Simpson's Gap * Kunoth Bore * Alice Springs
 October 10 Alice Springs * Ochre Pits * Orminston Gorge * Alice Springs
 October 11 Alice Springs * Tennant Creek
 October 12 Tennant Creek * Mataranka
 October 13 Mataranka
 October 14 Mataranka * Pine Creek * Buffalo Creek * Darwin
 October 15 Darwin (various locations around town visited)
 October 16 Darwin
 October 17 Darwin * Fogg Dam * Kakadu NP * Pine Creek
 October 18 Pine Creek * Coppperfield Dam * Edith Falls * Fergusson River * Kakadu NP * Pine Creek
 October 19 Pine Creek * Kakadu NP * Pine Creek
 October 20 Pine Creek * Daly Waters
 October 21 Daly Waters * Leica Creek * Barkly Tablelands * Mt Isa
 October 22 Mt Isa * Townsville
 October 23 Townsville
 October 24 Townsville * Mission Beach * Yungaburra
 October 25 Yungaburra * Mareeba * Yungaburra
 October 26 Yungaburra * Chillagoe * Julatten
 October 27 Julatten * Mt Lewis * Jullatten
 October 28 Julatten * Newell Beach
 October 29 Newell Beach * Cairns
 October 30 Cairns (various locations around the town)
 October 31 Cairns * Cardwell * Mt Spec * Hidden Valley
 November 1 Hidden Valley * Mackay
 November 2 MacKay * Rockhampton
 November 3 Rockhampton * Port Alma * Inskip Point * Cooloola NP * Rainbow Beach
 November 4 Rainbow Beach * Tin Can Bay * Dayboro * Brisbane
 November 5 Brisbane * Dayboro * Mt Glorious * Brisbane
 November 6 Brisbane * Sherwood * Nerang
 November 7 Nerang * Lamington NP * Nerang
 November 8 Nerang * Coffs Harbour
 November 9 Coffs Harbour * Dorrigo Np * Coffs Harbour
 November 10 Coffs Harbour * Hexham Swamp * Kurri Kurri * Maitland
 November 11 Maitland * Katoomba
 November 12 Katoomba * Jenolan Caves * Capertee Valley * Katoomba
 November 13 Katoomba * Canberra
 November 14 Canberra
 November 15 Canberra * Barren Grounds * Fairy Meadows (Wollongong)
 November 16 Fairy Meadows * Sydney
 November 17 Sydney
 November 18 Sydney
 November 19 Sydney
 November 20 Sydney * Hobart
 November 21 Hobart * Peter Murell Reserve * Mt Wellington * Melaleuca * waterworks Reserve * Snug
 November 22 Snug * Bruny Island
 November 23 Bruny island * Queenstown
 November 24 Queenstown * Strahan
 November 25 Strahan * Cradle Mountain * Bicheno
 November 26 Bicheno * Freycinet NP * Bicheno
 November 27 Bicheno * Freycinet NP * Bicheno
 November 28 Bicheno * Freycinet NP * Honart * Cambridge
 November 29 Cambridge * Sydney
 November 30 Sydney
 December 1 Sydney * Kuala Lumpur
 December 2 Kuala Lumpur * Amsterdam * Broekhuizenvorst

Daily Log

Thursday 7th September 2006 - After a five day period in Malaysia, with some birding done at Kuala Selangor and Fraser's Hill we stepped in the plane, towards Perth (first after sleeping through the alarm). After a relaxing flight with Malaysia Airlines (a complete positive difference with KLM where we did the first stretch with), we arrived in Perth after 4 hours and ten minutes. As the airport is a fair way to the city centre, so we stopped a taxi, to bring us to Perth. We checked in at the Aaron Hotel in Perth, but disaster struck as there turned out to be two hotels with the same name in Perth. Result was a walk with our heavy luggage for few hundred metres. We soon where on our way to the city centre. Soon we located an internet café and spent some time here. During the taxi ride and the walk from the one to the other hotel I located my first trip species. These species where; **Galah, Dusky Moorhen, Silver Gull, Willy Wagtail, Australian Magpie and Australian Magpie Lark**. At least the first touch of Australia was made this trip. We did not do much the rest of day, and went to bed early.

Friday 8th September 2006 - We woke up late and after a cup of tea we where on our way to the Museum of Western Australia. This museum is rather impressing and later we recognised it as best museum we visited in Australia (mainly due the impressive aboriginal exposition). I could study here some difficult bird species up close and prepared myself well, for the challenge of identifying the both Glossy Black-cockatoos. We then had lunch in the centre of Perth, a city that is rather small and not the large populated city we expected. We then headed via the Swan River, where a stunning pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphins could be seen up close, to the Kings Gardens (Botanical Gardens from Perth). Also many more common birds could be seen up close, and photographed. Species like **Australian Darter, Crested Tern, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant**, several ducks and **Black Swans** where all present on-route. It was especially nice to see Black Swans at the Swan River as where they where seen by Willem de Vlamingh at January 1697, the first European ever describing this odd bird. Within the Kings Gardens I found many more common birds, but also some real wanted species like (two lifers) **Western Rosella and Red-capped Parrot**. I also again caught up with the ever stunning **Variegated Fairy-wrens** and for me the unknown **Twenty-eight Parrots**. The later was very tame together with **Australian Magpie and Australian Raven**. Needless to say all these where new subspecies for me. We took the free bus into the city (the walk is not easy from the city to the Botanical Gardens, a bit too steep). We dropped down on bed after a meal and felt asleep soon enough.

Saturday 9th September 2006 - After waking up early we took well our time to get on time at the address where we could collect our car. But sadly a wrong address was given to us, so after one hour later then planned we arrived at the Apollo Car Rental. Here everything went smooth and they recharged our taxi money to us, and they upgraded our car (luckily for us) from a Hyundai Getz to a Toyota Camry. We put our large gear into the car, and soon we where on our way to the south. We stopped shortly at Bunburry to do some shopping. Just west of Busselton I spotted a flock of roadside feeding Black-cockatoos. So after an emergency stop, I was watching my first **Long-billed Black Cockatoos**. Luckily I could identify them better thanks to my digital camera, and I could zoom in on the upper mandible to confirm the ID. Nice was also a soaring **Black Kite**. After a short drive from here, we found ourselves at the parking spot at Cape Naturaliste. A walk on 15 minutes is needed to get to a vantage point over the sea. The walk to here was pleasant with loads of birds; in special many **New-Holland Honeyeaters** are present here. Other birds in the scrub where **White-browed Scrubwren, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Rosella, Twenty-eight Parrot and Red-capped Parrot**. Also during the walk to the vantage point I spotted at least one Humpback Whale, which we sadly later not could relocate. At the vantage point (end of the Whale Lookout track) I soon started with my Australian sea-watching adventure. And what a disappointing one, almost all birds where too distant to identify. Imagine when you are sitting on a spot and on the horizon there is a steady stream of shearwaters and albatrosses, that was happening to me, and I can tell you that is rather frustrating. Luckily after some time I was able to identify a few **Hutton's Shearwaters** and a single **Black-browed Albatross**. But anyway the Southern Right Whales where unbelievable and some even came full out of the water. Also the New Zealand Fur Seals on the rocks below the vantage point showed nicely. About 20+ where observed. A huge rewarded came in the form of a **Red-browed Firetail** that jumped on the stairs, when we left the vantage point. After few seconds the bird disappeared, but took away some worries I had to find this species (and later it turned out to be my only one). On the way to the parking spot a Spotted Brown Snake just crossed the path for me. And when Danitsja went to the toilet at the lighthouse, it turned out that the Heath Monitor that lives here was just awake. A quick look at Sugarloaf Rock produced two soaring **Red-tailed Tropicbirds!** On the way towards Augusta, just after driving away from Cape Naturaliste we found close to Dunsborough a large mixed flock of both **Long-billed as Short-billed Black Cockatoos**. Now I could really study them well, and now I could confirm the upper mandible was really different in both, although sometimes a second look is needed. Also at this spot Danitsja her first Western Grey Kangaroo (later in the evening followed by more). Within the forestry areas of the Leewin-Naturaliste NP we found several **Grey Currawongs** on the road and several other birds. We booked in advance a cabin for the night in Augusta, and after some searching. we soon where in a luxury cabin. Afterwards I went to the Bottle shop to get my Victorian Bitter for the next couple of nights. We made some noodles and killed the present mosquitoes, and went to bed early.



Sunday 10th September 2006 - Frustrated after the poor views yesterday off sea-birds at Cape Naturaliste, I was up very early. My hopes for a successful day where raised by the presence of a nice flock of 20+ **Rock Parrots** on the lawn to the lighthouse. As the gate was closed I had to improvise, but soon enough I was staring at a sea teamed with birdlife. I was already warned by Chris Winter (a visiting birder from The Netherlands) that a Grey-headed Albatross might hang around. And soon enough I was watching a superb adult **Grey-headed Albatross** as one of the first birds that came past. The next hour was filled with observing and studying the many albatrosses that came past. The challenge to identify the albatrosses was great as birds came sometimes close so that I could study the bill and the underwing patron well. Most albatrosses that could be identified where **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses** and only very few where **Black-browed Albatrosses**. I expected the opposite however. One off the birds I was eager to see again was the *georgi* race of **Pacific Gull**. Most probably this bird is different taxa, mainly because of the rather strange breeding behaviour (breeds in singles on off-shore island ore in very small colonies) and the birds have a larger bill then nominate Pacific Gulls. The subspecies differ mostly in tail pattern and colour-pattern of the bill. The northern populations on the w coast of WA differ from other populations of *georgii* in having an increasing amount of melanin in the eyes of adults, northwards (i.e. they have darker eyes in the north on average) and also in the shape of the loreal point (the feathering that reaches on to the base of the upper mandible). There where several birds present on the offshore islands, and later around the lighthouse some birds where sighted. Off course more sea-birds where passing by, one off the species I was hoping for here was the *baroli* race of Little Shearwater that supposedly is breeding here. At the first light when I was sitting few birds flew probably away from one of the island, an no less then



three **Little Shearwaters** were seen flying off to the open sea. A few **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** were also passing past and some **Black-faced Cormorants** were present, as mentioned in several other reports. At the lawn the **Rock Parrots** were still feeding when I returned, and I was able to take some nice photographs from them. In the scrub around the lighthouse and before the gate I could locate some birds of the beautiful *westernensis* race of the **Southern Emu-wren**. Also here some **Silvereys** from the *chloronotus* race, **Australian Pipit**, **White-browed Scrubwren** and the common **New-Holland Honeyeater**. Completely happy I went back to the cabin and woke up Danitsja. I took a shower and some breakfast and we were on our way to Albany. Just south of Darradup we found a flock of 40 **Short-billed Black Cockatoos** and an **Emu** with some youngsters. The scenery along the road to Albany was dominated by beautiful large Karri trees and slash and burned pasturages for the vineyards. During driving we also noted some **White-fronted Chats**, **Square-tailed Kite** and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. A stop at the Valley of Giant tree top walk (not my cup of tea, but I did it anyway) produced nothing unusual. Later I learned

from Chris Winter that on the parking a male Western Shrike-tit is acting strongly on tape. We also had a short look at the Gloucester tree (but as always money is asked to see the tree), so we decided to move on, not after seen a few tame **Western Rosella's**. We arrived well on time in Albany and after a short search we arrived at our location Havanas Village at the suburb Emu-point. Soon after we checked in I put a text message to Chris and Nicole Winter, and within an hour they arrived, and decided to stay in our little house. We did some spotlighting around the place and only found two frogs including one name Motorbike Frog. We had excellent dinner, beer and did the washing. So after few hours of chatting and drinking we went exhausted to bed. At night the temperature dropped to almost below zero.

Monday 11th September 2006 – We hoped yester night when we were outside that the wind would be gone and that it would be nicely and warm. Indeed the morning was cloudless and wind was gone (later in the day the winds picked up and at the end of the day it was even raining). Chris and I woke up even before it was light and after a quick breakfast we were on our way. In the car we studied the sounds of the 3 most wanted species; Noisy Scrubbird, Western Whipbird and Western Bristlebird. So after hearing all the sounds over and over it was no surprise once we got out of the car, that we easily could tell where all the birds were singing. We did indeed so, and the first we heard was a **Noisy Scrubbird** followed by **Western Bristlebird** and the gap was closed by **Western Whipbird**. Amazing in less than 1 minute we heard all three. We put in a little effort to find the Western Bristlebird but even as this was the easiest of these three mega-skulkers we failed at all points. Still dazzling after this success and still not recovered from the unexpected Quokka that hopped before our car just before we arrived at the parking, we sat down and enjoyed the moment. The area is just stunning at Two Peoples Bay; the turquoise sea, with hills and scrub is just simply magic. After a moment of relief, we decided to walk around to find more species that we were lacking (mainly on my list as Chris was already for several days in Australia). We heard more birds of the big three on this simply superb morning, the tally of **Noisy Scrubbird** was approximate fifteen birds, about thirty **Western Bristlebirds** and four or five **Western Whipbirds**. None were seen or even glimpsed however, but also not much effort was put in to find them. A Western Grey Kangaroo was standing in the low scrub when we started our trail and soon we were watching a dazzling male **Western Spinebill**. Few **Western Heathwrens** a potential split from Rufous Heathwren (already dealt with in Schodde & Mason) were recorded. Other birds included on our way to the visitors centre **Western Thornbill**, **Inland Thornbill** and **Elegant Parrot**. We walked to the picnic spot from the visitors centre and recorded here **Red-winged Fairy-wren**. We then headed back to our car and drove back to Albany after meeting up with the girls at the visitors centre. A stop to Albany produced a large flock of **Short-billed Black Cockatoos**. We headed to Lake Seppings as the signs along the road indicate that there would be a slight chance to find Long-necked Turtles. It was still raining when we got to the spot. A walk around produced the wanted *thomasi* race of the **Little Grassbird**, the *australis* race of the **Australian Reed Warbler** and several **Purple Gallinules** of the race *bellus*. All were new subspecies to me and the later was surprisingly different then I imagined. The odd **Musk Duck** was present including several displaying males and many odd females. Also here a small flock of **Short-billed Black-Cockatoos**, **Hoary-headed Grebe**, **Golden Whistler** and a supposed hybrid between a **Red-capped Parrot** and a **Ring-neck Parrot**. Chris also located a Red-eared Firetail but I was not able to find it here. After this not so successful adventure to find the turtles that were signposted, we decided to head for the sea. We headed for the location The Gap a bit south-west of Albany. It was hard to find a spot to shelter for the winds that were strong. After first sitting on the Natural Bridge (much to the anger of our girlfriends) we removed to the footpath and sat down here. Once we sat down and installed our stuff we were stunned by the amount of sea-birds. Large groups of **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses** were seen, either swimming or passing by. Also regularly some **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** were seen. Highlight where however two fly-by **Brown Skua's**, these were unexpected and greatly appreciated. On the way back we found some **Short-billed Black Cockatoo's** along the road! That night a barbeque was lighted and the beers went to down to celebrate this perfect day!

Tuesday 12th September 2006 – As rain and wind was forecasted for the coast we decided to head inland for some bird watching. After kissing the girls' goodbye Chris and I headed towards the Stirling Ranges, and the girls went later on the day on a whaling trip. Along the road to Stirling ranges many roadside **Elegant Parrots** could be observed. We started first birding at the turn-off and the first kilometre of the road towards Bluff's Knoll. Soon I found my first new species in the form of the **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater**, a bird that eluded me in the past. At the information stand many birds could be found around and **Purple-crowned Lorikeet**, **Scarlet Robin** and **Striated Pardalote** were greatly appreciated, also many more common birds were present here. We then headed towards the Stirling Ranges Retreat that was recommended as birding location by Frank O'Connor on his excellent website. When we asked permission to do some bird watching, we received a bird list and the comments that a Western Shrike-tit daily was present in the tree in front of the reception. We walked around here and I logged my first **Western Yellow Robin** and **Western Gerygone** here. When I returned to the reception the woman here gave me the tip of an owl that was present at a tree at the Kitchen area. Soon enough Chris and I were staring at a roosting **Australian Owllet-nightjar**. After I took some photographs of this amazing bird, we walked around one more time. Also a **Regent Parrot** was flying around. When we almost decided to give up, I once again checked the small tree in front of the reception and here it was a superb **Western Shrike Tit**. We observe this bird for 10 minutes, and then we went for a short break to the Bluffs Knoll Café. Some roadside birding at Stirling Ranges on our way to Albany brought some more males **Western Spinebills**, **Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters** and an **Emu**. At a camping area we found both **Long-billed** and **Short-billed Black Cockatoo's** in some trees. As Chris and Nicole wanted to leave today we made in advance and appointment to meet at the entrance of Porongurup National park. Chris and Nicole were well in time but it took a while before the ladies arrived. We headed towards the café here and had a small lunch, here Chris and Nicole decided to stay one more day, as the ladies were offered a other whaling trip. This was result of some well taken photographs by Nicole from Southern Right Whales. Together we went up to the parking spot at the Tree in the Rock. Here we located two mega-tame **Rufous Treecreepers**, they even walked over my shoes! Needles to say it was a very welcome new species for me. Also here my first **White-breasted Robin** and plenty of tame **Red-winged Fairy-wrens**. We then went into Albany and try to find an internet-café. Sadly Nicole couldn't burn the CD here, but luckily a fine **Southern Boobook** appeared in some scrub opposite the café! We did some shopping and returned to our cabin. Next day we should leave Albany, but a other

check in my birdbooks showed I was still lacking Western Corella. And even most worst I was already out of its distribution range. So I quickly made plans to return back to its distribution area, to find this species.

Wednesday 13th September 2006 – So in the early morning I left towards Lake Muir and Chris went to the Gap for some sea-birds. After about 1, 5 hours drive I came into the paddock area and soon when I entered this area I found large flocks of **Western Corellas** (just west of the village of Rocky Gully) and a single **Red-tailed Black-cockatoo** (*naso* race). After observing the birds and making photographs I decided to leave (not before however seeing my first **Little Wattlebird** in the roadside vegetation) to Albany. When driving back to Albany still many **Elegant Parrots** (like on the way to Rocky Gully) were present alongside the roads. I went straight towards the Gap where I



should meet up with Chris. After installing me (I arrived before Chris) soon it was clear that the conditions were superb and many sea-birds passed by on close range. Amongst hundreds of Albatrosses we could identify a single **Gibson's Albatross** was recorded, and no less than five *cauta* **White-capped Albatrosses**, two *melanophris* **Black-browed Albatrosses**, two **Grey-headed Albatrosses** and all the rest were hundreds of **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**. And in between them hundreds of **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** were cruising around. We then headed back towards our cabin, stopping on our way back on a bay where we saw some Southern Right Whales enjoying themselves. After packing up and waving goodbyes Danitsja and I headed towards Esperance. We stopped at a spot 35 kilometers east of Jerramungup at the Fitzgerald River. Despite it was the middle of day, birds were active as temperatures were reasonable cool. I found quickly my wanted **Mallee Whipbird** (responded on call) and **Blue-breasted Fairy-wren** and a bogey bird of mine the **Purple-gaped Honeyeater**. A walk around produced a very close Tiger Snake and a wonderful group of **Varied Sitella's**. Also

the more common species were present here. The biggest surprise of the day was however an **Australian Bittern** that flew above the road about 30 kilometers west of Esperance. Also here again a flock of **Short-billed Black Cockatoos**. We found a good motel to stay, and after a good meal we went quickly to bed.

Thursday 14th September 2006 – In my expectations sea-watching off Esperance would be good, as on the Recherché Islands many sea-birds breed. Despite my high hopes a sea-watch off the Rotary Walk produced only some distant **Australian Gannets**, **Pacific Gulls** and a group of four fly-by **Cape Barren Geese**. Within the small park here many **Little Wattlebirds** and **Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens** were found. I went soon back and after a short while we were on the long way towards Nullarbor Roadhouse (1106 kilometre). After a short stop at Norseman, we headed onto the long Eyre Highway. In the first stretch we found some **Short-billed Black Cockatoo's** and some road edged **Rufous Treecreepers**. The drive was long but was enlightened when a **Whiskered Tern** was feeding above the road, possibly thinking that the road was a river. When in the last 200 kilometers before Nullarbor Roadhouse twice a small flock of **Naretha Blue Bonnets** was seen on the roadside as where two **Ground Cuckoo-shrikes**. We just arrived when dusk was setting in at Nullarbor Roadhouse and as our expectations about the location were not high. The rooms and food were simply magnificent and unexpected here and we enjoyed a quiet superb evening.

Friday 15th September 2006 – I was awake early and directly got up to finish my quest at this special place. My quest was off course the highly localised Nullarbor Quail-thrush. I walked towards the Thomas & Thomas spot, and where I should turn left following the book, there where the Quail-thrushes. On the bitumen a male **Nullarbor Quail-thrush** was walking full of grace to the other side, joined by some other quail-thrushes. Birding between here and the roadhouse (less than a kilometre) was well worth the time and a good amount of birds have been located by me like; **Rufous Heathwren**, **Southern Whiteface**, **White-winged Fairy-wren**, **Spotted Harrier**, **Australian Pipit**, **Brown Songlark**, **Australian Magpie** and **Slender-billed Thornbill**. Filled with joy about the early morning success, I went back to Danitsja, and had a small breakfast, and after some chatting with some people we were on our way towards Ceduna (later we decided to head for Port Augusta). That means another day of driving a large distance. Just after hitting the roads there was the turn-off towards the Head of the Bight Marine Park. We headed towards it, and soon enough we were watching no less than 20+ breeding Southern Right Whales at very close distance. Few birds were present at this location including a small flock of 20+ **Budgerigar** and **Purple-gaped Honeyeaters**. Above the sea the only species **Whiskered Terns** where well out on sea, not a single albatross or shearwater could be localised. After a quick stop at Ceduna we head on our way towards Port Augusta, just after Port Augusta I was forced to stop by a Police Officer for speeding. After dealing with these matters we saw before Iron Knob we saw two **Chestnut Quail-thrushes**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **White-winged Chough** and **Silvereyes**. And just after dusk we arrived at Port Augusta, and checked in at the Best Western Hotel, with a superb restaurant on the terrain.



Saturday 16th September 2006 – I woke again early and went to the Arid Botanical Gardens to find some birds. Soon after arriving I found my target species, a flock of five **Chirruping Wedgebills**. So birding in the area produced some new trip species but no exiting species.

After getting back to the motel, we soon were on our way to some friends of Danitsja in Adelaide (Ferry and Anita) and few hours later we arrived here.

Monday 18th September 2006 – Today we were on our way to Hindmarsh Island as we were invited by a brother in law from Ferry. We made a stop at a place called Mt Compass, Ferry and Danitsja took a coffee, and I was heading for the boardwalk near the school. Soon after approaching the boardwalk I found my target the beautiful **Mt Lofty Southern Emu-wren**. This highly threatened bird showed very well, and few birds were seen at this spot. When we drove towards Hindmarsh Island we also recorded **Peregrine, Goldfinch, Silveryeye** and some **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**. At the Coorong and Hindmarsh Island we recorded during the day 100-s of **Cape Barren Geese, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, Red-capped Plover, Whiskered Terns, Red Wattlebirds, Great Crested Grebe, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint** and many more commoner species. A Blue-tongue Lizard was a nice reptile to find while here. In the afternoon we returned back to Adelaide.

Wednesday 20th September 2006 – After leaving Adelaide, we had a stop at Monarto National park. After a short search we arrived, and I went off to find my target here. Soon enough I found two “lifers” here; **Southern Scrub-robin** and **Yellow-rumped Pardalote**. Both showed well here. Further my stroll from less than an hour produced; **Shy Heathwrens, Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, Hooded Robins, Silveryeye** and **White-browed Babbler**. We then stopped at a recommended site at Salt Creek crossing (edge of the Coorong National Park). Quickly I located my target a fine **Rufous Bristlebird** (one of the two recorded here) and as unexpected bonus a fine **Beautiful Firetail**. Other birds here were a unexpected tame **Spotless Crake** in the scrub around the petrol station and **Buff-rumped Thornbill, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Splendid Fairy-wren, White-browed Babbler, Superb Fairy-wren, Collared Sparrowhawk** and **Black-fronted Plover**. We stopped in Robe, and soon enough I went off to the sea. I watched for a long time, and later I searched the scrub around the lighthouse. I added the following species; **Little Shearwater (1), Antarctic Giant Petrel (1), Short-tailed Shearwater, White-capped Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Rufous Bristlebird (10+), Australian Gannet, Black-faced Cormorant** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. So not a bad afternoon after all and after a swim and a beer we went to bed.

Thursday 21st September 2006 – Early morning found me at the lighthouse at Robe again. The only close albatross was a **Gibson's**



Albatross. Large numbers of albatrosses were flying out of range for a positive identification. Also few close **Fluttering Shearwaters** were seen as a young **White-bellied Sea-eagle**. Again a walk around the lighthouse and bushes here brought some nice **Rufous Bristlebirds** as some more common scrub species. We drove off early in the morning to Port Fairy. We noticed several **Crimson Rosellas** near Mt Gambier and some large flocks of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**. In Victoria we saw a small flock of *graptogyne* **Red-tailed Black-cockatoos** flying from the roadside at Glenelg NP. At Port Fairy we went off to have a walk at Griffiths Island, here I was stunned to find albatrosses flying just above the surf. I sat down for a sea watch, and soon I was welcomed in the wonderful world of albatrosses. Many albatrosses passed on short distance and both **Campbell Island Albatross** and **Black-browed Albatross** could be studied (even photographed) at close range. Most stunning however where the large numbers of **Shy Albatrosses** passing by, some at very close range. Various stages were recorded of the later. Also highly appreciated where three **Antarctic Giant**

Petrel. Also plenty of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** and some **Fluttering Shearwaters** where recorded. Other birds present on the island were at the parking included; **Ruddy Turnstone, Pied and Variable Oystercatcher, White-fronted Chat, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** and **Pacific Gull**. At the camping in Port Fairy there was an **Australian Hobby, Goldfinch** and **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo**.

Friday 22nd September 2006 – I went away in the very early morning and walked towards the spot where I did the sea-watching yesterday on Griffith Island. It was again magic and birds passed by on close distance, I could study every detail of the albatrosses just beyond the surf. **Shy Albatrosses** passed by with more than 50 during the morning, also both **Black-browed Albatrosses** and **Campbell Albatrosses** were seen of the later only two where positive identified. Many shearwaters where to distance to identify only a **Fluttering Shearwater** was close enough. Also no less than five including a complete white morph **Antarctic Giant Petrel** where seen as two local **Pacific Gulls**. At the entrance of Griffith Island like yesterday some shorebirds like **Red-necked Stints** and **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** where present at close range. After checking out we went on the road again, and stopped before Warrambool at a reserve called Tower Hill (a not active volcanic area), here we found after some trouble the wanted Koala's for Danitsja. No less than 20 of this bear like creature's where around here. Birds recorded here included; **Red-browed Firetail, Golden Whistler** and **Brown Falcon**. We then headed onto the much talked about Great Ocean Route. Indeed a spectacular scenery, but winds and rain when we visited it, spoiled a bit of fun. The Bay of Island produced two **Shy Albatrosses**; a **Striated Heathwren** gave away a short show at The Grotto, at the former London Bridge we recorded a **Black-browed Albatross** lingering and at Lorch Arch the expected tame **Rufous Bristlebirds** (a new subspecies for me) and some nice **Superb Fairy-wrens**. During driving we recorded **Cattle Egret, Bell Miner, Glossy Ibis** and **Peregrine**.

Saturday 23rd September 2006 – We went to the sea (lighthouse) before we went towards Melbourne. The light house has been used in a serie named “Round the Twist” so Danitsja wanted to see it. I quickly located some **Rufous Bristlebirds** here and overseas some **Black-browed Albatrosses** where lingering. When we went onto the highway I quickly located two **Blue-winged Parrots** on the roadside, and after returning to the spot, I could study them up close with some **Galah's**. After arriving at Albert and Anke Vrieling's house in Eltham, we went off to a spot in the area (along the Yarra River) where we found two Koala's and several **Red-rumped Parrots** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. At night we found some Brush-tailed Possums around Albert's house.

Monday 25th September 2006 – Albert and I left the place early and we went on our way towards King Lake West. We birded here a bit around and found here some **Superb Lyrebirds, King Parrot, Eastern Shrike Tit, Scarlet Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Fantail, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote** and **Grey Butcherbird**. Also stunning was a Short-beaked Echidna. We then tried hard at several spots around Yellingbo to find the Helmeted Honeyeater. We tried the Healesville Koo Wee Rup road (where we heard one, but not seen it), Giles Road and Macclesfield Road. At the last spot I found it in October 2002 but now no avail. Despite the miss we recorded a good variety on other birds like **Rufous** and **Golden Whistler, White-faced Heron, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Yellow-**

headed **Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Grey and Pied Butcherbird and Grey Currawong**. Stunning was the second Short-beaked Echidna for the day at Giles Road.

Tuesday 26th September – A day with a lot of kilometres on the road. On the program was the drive from Melbourne to Waikerie. Special attention was paid on groups of corellas and this resulted in several groups of **Long-billed Corellas** around Carlton. Also occasionally some **Blue Bonnets** were sighted. We had a stop for an hour at Murray Sunset national Park but this brought not the earlier (October 2002) seen Mallee Emu-wrens. We could only find here **Major Mitchell Cockatoo, Black Falcon, Blue Bonnet, Crested Bellbird** and several **Emu's**. In the afternoon we arrived at Waikerie at the house of Peter and Natasha Waanders.

Wednesday 27th September 2006 – In the early morning I went to a private sanctuary that I visited already many times in the past. Main goal here was to find the **Malleefowl**, as Peter Waanders (our guide for the next days) knows the location we soon located the male at the mount. So general birding produced a **Barn Owl** (flushed from it's nest), some displaying **Varied Sitella's** and several more common species like **Rainbow Bee-eater, Hooded Robin, Grey Fantail, Weebill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Inland Thornbill** and **White-fronted Honeyeater**. Afterwards we headed towards Hart's Lagoon in the outskirts of Waikerie and the Ramco Lagoon. The search for the elusive Freckled Duck sadly failed, although they should be around here. Also we missed out on Banded Stilt that I recorded on several previous visits. But despite that the birding was successful and brought us nice birds like **Hoary-headed Grebe, White-faced Heron, Purple Gallinule, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern**, both **Royal & Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Wood Sandpiper, Swamp Harrier, Zebra Finch, Australian Shelduck, Grey Teal, Australian Shoveler, Hardhead, Red-necked Avocet, Red-rumped Parrot, Australian Reed-warbler, Variegated Fairy-wren, Southern Whiteface** and **White-fronted Chat**. At dusk we went out spotlighting and soon we found a unexpected Short-beaked Echidna, a species now high on the wish list of Danitsja. Also at the bridge of Blacetown where we saw this nice mammal we recorded loads of water birds, like **Australian Pelicans** and various cormorants. We also saw here **Whistling Kites** and **Black Kites**. On a spot nearby we quickly located the severe suffered Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats, as the most where wiped out by diseases. We recorded in total five wombats, and several had symptoms of the disease (mange). Also we recorded some Western Grey Kangaroo's and Red Kangaroo's (including young ones). Around Waikerie during the day we recorded **Grey Shrike-thrush, Collared Sparrowhawk, Crimson Rosella** and **Spotted Turtle Dove**.



Thursday 28 September 2006 – We headed off when it was still dark to get to Gluepot. Gluepot an area that I visited already several times before was high on my list of location to visit as the mythical Scarlet-chested Parrot was present here in the previous months. We stopped first somewhere in the area to try for Red-lored Whistler, but sadly we couldn't tape a bird in. Peter decided we should try on some other spots, but as I was eager to search for the Scarlet-chested Parrot we decided to call it a day here (seen already Red-lored Whistler here in January 2000). We then headed for the water bore in front of the information centre to have a look over here. We couldn't find a parrot here, so we went of to the regular spot where they have been sighted (Whistler Tank) but we failed again. We found however two **Southern Scrub Robins** here. We searched many other spots and at the end we had a full list with some excellent birds like at least 20+ **Striated Grasswrens** (seems like every suitable patch of Spinifex holds some birds), two pure **Black-eared Miners** and several hybrids, **Shy Heathwren** (1), **Chestnut Quail-Thrush** (5) and many more common birds like **Hooded Robin, Mulga Parrot, Crested Bellbird, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, White-fronted Honeyeater, Mallee Ringneck, Chestnut-crowned & White-browed Babbler, Brown Treecreeper, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Apostlebird** and **Australian Raven**. As mammals we recorded Euro, Red Kangaroo and Western Grey Kangaroo. An excellent morning, that despite the miss of the Scarlet-chested Parrot brought in a lot of new trip species.

Friday 29 September 2006 – Again a lazy day, with only some short birding around Peter his block. We succeeded quickly in locating a stunning male **Gilbert's Whistler** and some **Purple-crowned Lorikeets**.

Saturday 30th September 2006 – We went of early from Waikerie, but not before we noticed the singing male **Gilbert's Whistler** again. After a long drive we arrived at the Flinders Range, and we directly headed towards Stokes Lookout and located in less then five minutes two groups of **Short-tailed Grasswrens**, including one that was standing on a rock for a minute. At this spot also few **Adelaide Rosellas** and **Elegant Parrots**, but as we too quickly succeeded with the grasswrens nothing more was added here. As we expected to search for hours and hours for these grasswrens, we had plenty of time to kill. We headed back to Wilpena (several **Emus** along the road) and we had some coffee over here. Then we searched for the *flindersi* race of White-browed Scrubwren around the camping and stream, but failed to connect with one. Many normal birds where found here, as a real smelly death kangaroo. We took a slow tour though the Flinders Range, and succeeded highly when I saw a small group of Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies climbing on some rocks, also some Euros here. We then proceeded towards Lyndhurst, and we arrived well on time in the stunning outback pub, where we watched the Australian Rules final from 2006.

Sunday 1st October 2006 – In the early morning we directly headed for the famous Chestnut-breasted Whiteface site few kilometres up the Strzelecki Track. After arrival at the site we directly went searching and in few minutes I located a fine pair of **Thick-billed Grasswrens**. I called in for Peter and we both watched these nice birds. We then made a full circle finding several fairy-wrens and **Australian Pipit** but not our targets. Peter and I decided to head back to our car and searched the area where he saw the Whitefaces few weeks earlier. When we approached this bit we found directly a flock of ten **Chestnut-breasted White-faces**. They showed extremely well, as also a **White-winged Triller**. We then headed to the rusty car wreck spot, and in few minutes we found our prime target **Cinnamon Quail-thrush**. The thrush was feeding accompanied by four **Chestnut-breasted Whitefaces** and some more **Thick-billed Grasswrens**. In the area we also recorded few **Rufous Heathwrens** and some **Chirruping Wedgebills**. After this successful 45 minutes we headed to Lyndhurst to pay the check of the hotel and fill up the car. We stopped in one of the first creeks to have a cup of coffee, and soon enough a male **Pied Honeyeater** flew off, to be never located anymore. Once we departed here, and we came in the area of the dog fence crossing we searched real hard for road sided **Gibberbirds**. We probably saw few flying from the road but a large portion where **Australian Pipits**. When we finally stopped for a **Gibberbird** we found no less then four birds feeding. We then stopped after hours at the picturesque Monte Collina Bore, here large flocks



of Noisy **Little Corellas** where flying around and large flocks Zebra Finches. Our main target was however Eyrean Grasswren. The first bit where Peter and I started was unsuccessful, however this was mainly probably due the large numbers of Bush Flies, which completely take away you're hearing (and temperatures around 35° C). When Peter and Danitsja tried to get their lunch (flies where irritating), I tried some sand dunes nearby, and soon I was watching a stunning **Eyrean Grasswren!** I could observe this bird for nearly ten minutes, and then I went back to tell Peter about this huge success! As he saw already a bird few weeks ago, he was not very eager to try for it. And he was right, after leaving this spot we found an **Eyrean Grasswren** running along the Strzelecki Track, and even later we found a bird crossing the track. We tried at one more spot for Banded Whiteface (we where looking for these birds the whole trip) but sadly failed. The lagoon before Cameron's Corner was no lagoon. And we stopped at a water bore but failed to find anything nice, except for two **Banded Lapwings** seeking shelter under a traffic sign. We would spend the night at Cameron's Corner, but as we saw this

spot, we decided to head for Tibooburra. On the way to Tibooburra we found a stunning flock of 22 **Inland Dotterels**, and we saw some small flocks of **Bourke's Parrots** passing by. We soon found accommodation in Tibooburra, and soon felt a sleep.

Monday 2nd October 2006 – We went away in the early morning to the Adelaide gate (a gate within the Dog Fence). During driving we recorded a small flock of **Orange Chats**, stunning birds to see and still the first for this trip! We also found several **Bourke's Parrots** and **Red-backed Kingfishers** while searching for Letter-winged Kites. The later however was not found. When we came in suitable habitat, within seconds some stunning **Grey Grasswrens** where seen, and they gave awesome views. Now that our quest was successful, we decided to head back a day before schedule. We stopped for a short visit to a water bore near Tibooburra, and here we recorded also **Red-backed Kingfisher**, **Orange Chat** and some incredible stunning **Crimson's Chats**. We then had breakfast at Tibooburra, and headed of to Broken Hill. Here we had a lunch stop, and just after dusk we arrived in Waikerie.

Wednesday 4th October 2006 – After a day of relaxing today we headed for Adelaide, to spend some time in the Cleland Zoo to watch some mammals. Before the zoo visit we stopped at Black Hill reserve and here a singing *parkeri* race of the **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** was present. At the drive back several **Regent Parrots** could be found.

Thursday 5th October 2006 – Again a leisure day before the big trip into the outback in the next weeks. We spent some time at Banrock Station, did some wine-tasting and some walking on the boardwalks here. We recorded here few **Regent Parrots** and a single **Musk Duck** at one of the hides. At night we met Rob and Evelien Golbach who just arrived from Western Australia and we exchanged some information.

Friday 6th October 2006 – We left Waikerie in the early morning after saying goodbye to both Rob and Evelien and to the whole Waanders family. The whole trip worked out perfectly and real early we arrived at Port Augusta for a short stop at the Arid Botanical gardens. The **Chirruping Wedgebills** where on the same spot as few weeks before and easy to locate. We soon set out for the long stretch to Coober Pedy. Along the road we stopped once in a while in attempts to find any of the dessert dwellers. I found several **Cinnamon Quail Thrushes** at various places. We arrived late at Coober Pedy and explored the city.

Saturday 7th October 2006 – I woke up early again and went straight to the place where we tried yesterday for the whitefaces. In less then one minute after arrival a small flock of **Chestnut-breasted White-faces** turned up and showed extremely well. A stroll in the area produced several **Cinnamon Quail-thrushes**. We proceed on the way towards Eralunda where we booked for the night! We stopped on several places along the road including the Thomas & Thomas site north of the South Australian border and on some other spots. At one of the spots a stunning **Banded Whiteface** was hiding in a flock of **Southern Whitefaces**, and brought me some joy! When we checked in at Eralunda I went to the spot also described by Thomas & Thomas north of Eralunda and again two **Banded Whitefaces** where my share. When driving back several stunning **Major Mitchell Cockatoo's** where seen by me. Any off the searches today to find a Chiming Wedgebill sadly produced nothing. We had a swim and perfect meal at the roadhouse today!

Sunday 8th October 2006 – We left in the early morning towards Uluru (Ayers Rock), along the road I stopped several times to find **Chiming Wedgebill** and indeed I succeeded. Two obscure parrots turned out to be **Mulga Parrots** and not the Princess Parrot I recorded along this stretch in February 1998. We paid the expensive entrance fee (ridiculous) and went on our way to the sunset parking. Scanning around here didn't produce Striated Grasswrens that supposedly belonged to the *whitei* race. We then did the full circle around Uluru and did some birding around here, and watched the paintings on the rock. We then headed towards Kata Kjuta (The Olga's), along the road is prohibited to stop, but the habitat was extremely suitable for Striated Grasswrens. I stopped some-where and soon enough I found the **Striated Grasswren**. But to my opinion these birds are not *whitei* birds at all but just nominate birds (also see Schodde & Mason 1999). At the start of the walk at Kata Kjuta a male **Black Honeyeater** flew past, and some more common birds where lingering here. We then decided to head back, and after five hours we arrived at Alice Springs. We safely checked in a cabin here, and we stopped doing anything.

Monday 9th October 2006 - In the early morning I left for the MacDonnell's ranges to find some missing species for me. The first stop was a Simson's Gap as according to various reports Dusky Grasswren would be easy to find. I tried for hours but couldn't hear a single Grasswren here. In the waterholes several more common species can in for drink, and I enjoyed very much the beautiful **Grey Shrike-thrushes** and **Grey-headed Honeyeaters** that came to a close distant from me. On the rocks several Black-footed Rock-wallaby's where leaping from rock to rock. Also two fly by birds might be Painted Finches, but I was not confident about the identification. I shortly went to Standleys Chasm, but as I have to pay here, I only checked the entrance spinifex covered hills for Dusky Grasswren, but failed again. After few relaxing hours at our cabin in Alice Springs, we went towards Kunoth Well to search for Slaty-backed Thornbill as I failed in previous visits to find one. After some struggle to find the spot, we finally found the location and soon the search began. Quickly I located some thornbills and here I found my first **Slaty-backed Thornbill** and some **Chestnut-rumped Thornbills**. Stunned by this quick success I walked around in the hope to find some more interesting birds like Grey Honeyeater (seen them in the past north of Tennant Creek). Soon enough there was indeed a brief **Grey Honeyeater** perched in the top of a tree. Also here some more birds like; **Ground Cuckoo Shrike**, **Hooded Robin** and some more species.

Tuesday 10th October 2006 – In the early morning I went away and headed to the Ochre Pits. Here I found opposite the viewing platform a calling **Rufous-crowned Emu-wren**, but no visual was obtained. I then proceeded towards Ormiston Gorge, over here I tried at first the Blue Gum Track. Here I found a single **Dusky Grasswren** and no less than 60+ **Painted Finches**. This was a rather easy walk and I decided afterwards finishing this walk to check out the camping grounds. At the camping at Ormiston I quickly found two **Western Bowerbirds** (my last Australian bowerbird) and few **Red-browed Pardalotes** and **Ring-necked Parrots**. So after this huge success I decided to try to do the Ormiston Pound Walk to get decent views of Dusky Grasswrens, as the sighting earlier was not too satisfying and distant. After about 3 kilometers up the trail I discovered I didn't take that second bottle of water so I decided to finish the walk as quick as possible. Despite a quick circle I succeeded in finding; **Red-backed Kingfisher**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Diamond Dove**, **Pied Honeyeater** and Black-footed Rock Wallaby. But despite some efforts at the Thomas & Thomas site for the Dusky Grasswrens could not hear or find anything. When I drove back to Alice Springs I stopped at several spots along the road, and at one of the spots at Pioneer Creek I located a single **Rufous-crowned Emu-wren**. In the afternoon Danitsja and I went to the Pink Botanical gardens and saw no less than five **Western Bowerbirds** in full view. Some with their bower where still collecting gear for the mating season.

Wednesday 11th October 2006 – A day spent mainly in the car. A stop on route at some Spinifex spots produced few **Spinifexbirds**. In the evening we visited Mary Ann Dam and surroundings and again a **Spinifexbird** was found as some water birds at the dam.

Thursday 12th October 2006 – We left early from Tennant Creek to make the stroll into Mataranka. We stopped at the Daly water's pub, and put our fine received on the 15th of September on the wall. We then headed for Mataranka and after installation in our cabin; we searched and found the nest **Red Goshawks** with two chicks. At first the female was present but later the male returned to bring in a snack for the young. I decided to head south of Mataranka to try for the Northern Shrike Tit. A long search started but after 1.5 hours I finally located a fine **Northern Shrike Tit**. The Northern Shrike Tit is a real distinct and collared bird, much smaller and yellowish than the Eastern Shrike Tit. I really hoped to find this real rare bird, and luckily several people replied to my request and thanks to them I was able to find it! At this spot many more birds of several species were found, but no real odd one. We drove back and visited the hot springs and cooked and went to bed.

Friday 13th October 2006 – A lazy day today with the only notable sighting of a soaring **Red Goshawk** while snorkelling at the Bitter Springs Pool. And at the nesting site there was the whole family still present.

Saturday 14th October 2006 – In the morning the family **Red Goshawks** were still complete. We then head off towards Darwin. A stop at the Pine Creek Cemetery gave away a **Tawny Frogmouth**, a flock of ten **Varied Sitella's** and many more other species. When we checked in at a cabin, I want to get out and look for some birds. So together with Danitsja we went to Buffalo Creek. At Lee Point Road a flock of 41 **Little Curlews** was present and much appreciated. At Buffalo Creek many new additions for the trip list were made, like; **Green-backed Gerygone**, **Mangrove Grey Fantail**, **Black Butcherbird**, **Yellow White-eye**, **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** and many more. The star birds were however two **Chestnut Rails** that gave away a stunning show. Also many shorebirds were present and a great sight to see **Great** and **Red Knot** mixed together with **Curlew Sandpipers** and **Red-necked Stints**. At the bungalow we found at night Little Red Flying Fox and Common Brush-tailed Possum.

Sunday 15th October 2006 – In the morning Danitsja and I visited the Botanical Gardens to find a **Rufous Owl**. And after some trying we located a bird at the rainforest patch of the gardens. Also **Grey Goshawk** and **Red-tailed Cockatoo** were seen. In the afternoon I went to Knuckey's lagoon and found large numbers of waterfowl in the remaining ponds. Birds like **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Maggie Goose**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Jabiru**, **Collared Kingfisher** and many more birds could be seen here. I then went off to the Darwin Sewage works where I had an appointment with Arthur and Sheryl Keates for some bird watching here. The trip was highly successful and we found **Little Ringed Plover**, one or two birds with features of the *nigripes* race of **Little Egret**, **Little Curlew**, **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Intermediate Egret** and many more species. I tried afterwards for a short while at the Snipe Lagoon but could find nothing unusual.



Monday 16th October 2006 – A lazy day with only some birding at the end of the day at East Point. I recorded here **Rainbow Pitta**, **Scarlet Honeyeater**, **Bush Thick-knee**, **Grey-tailed Tattler**, **Osprey** and many more shorebirds. A very low number of Tamar Wallabies was found here compared with eight years ago, when I visited the site almost daily. At the Esplanade in Darwin we recorded several **White-winged Black Terns** at the sea.

Tuesday 17th October 2006 – Today was the long awaited day for us to get to Kakadu National Park. We stopped shortly at Fogg Dam locating **Broad-billed Flycatcher** and **White-browed Crane**, but we were soon away due to the many buses that were also present here. We stopped for a short while at the Jumping Crocodile parking spot where I quickly located a fine male **Mangrove Golden Whistler**. We then drove straight towards Ubirr. We walked past all the galleries and enjoyed the stunning landscape; also we heard and saw **White-lined Honeyeater** and **Sandstone Shrike-thrush** here. When we drove back towards Jabiru it came to our minds that we forgot our travel papers in Darwin, so we have to return. A quick tour was made at Nourlangie Rock where also some **White-lined Honeyeaters** were seen, but no Banded Fruit-doves. We stopped at the floodplain before the Alligator River crossing and I saw a male **Yellow Chat** flying off from the road edge not to be seen again as it dropped down. At the bridge of the Alligator River we noticed a **Jabiru** and few Saltwater Crocodiles. At the windows of the wetlands several **Jabirus** were seen. After picking up the papers in Darwin we headed south again. We stopped at Howard

Springs, and a quick look around produced several White-faced Turtles, **Rose-crowned Fruit-doves** and some Barramundi. At some tall grasses north of Pine Creek I located some **Pictorella Mannakins**. In Pine Creek a flock of 20 **Hooded Parrots** was present in the water gardens.

Wednesday 18th October 2006 – I left early to get to the Copperfield dam to try for Gouldian Finch. As I drive thru Pine Creek I found my first **Hooded Parrots** for the day. At Copperfield dam again some **Hooded Parrots** were found, as **Black-tailed Tree-creeper**, **Brown Quail** and a single **Star Finch**. As only few finches came in I decided to get to the Fergusson River to give it a try for Gouldian Finch over here. Again **Hooded Parrots** were found and birds like **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Varied Sitella** but only few finches. I then headed to the Edith Falls to try here for the Gouldian, but again **Hooded Parrots** and some dark morph **Brown Falcons** but again no Gouldians. Disappointed I drove back to Pine Creek and I went with Danitsja towards Gumlom in Kadadu National Park. When entering the dust road, I stopped several times on our way to Gumlom to search the spinifex covered rocks in order to find White-throated Grasswrens. But I sadly failed, only locating; **Lavender-flanked Fairy-wren**, **Chestnut-quelled Rock-pigeons**, **Sandstone Shrike Thrushes** and **Partridge Pigeon**. We tried after these failures at Gumlom, Danitsja went for a swim and I went for a scramble up the hills. Sadly everything was burned and in no time I was as black as a monkey. I located a fine group of at least ten feeding **Black-banded Fruit-doves**, **Sandstone Shrike-thrush** and some **White-lined Honeyeaters**. On the way back I tried again some other spots, but after hours of climbing in up to 35° C we went back home. A single Euro was seen on the hills to Gumlom as mammal highlight.

Thursday 19th October 2006 – I went up early on quickly went to Plum Tree Creek to search there for the rest of the morning. I climbed I guess all visible rocks/hills here with available spinifex but I completely failed to find a White-throated Grasswren. More successful was I in finding all the other needed birds. Along the creek I flushed a nice **Chestnut-backed Button Quail**, and a **Banded Fruit Dove** was quietly feeding in a tree on the rocks at several spots I found **Chestnut-quelled Rock-pigeons**, **Sandstone Shrike Thrushes**, **Helmeted Friarbird**, **Lavender-flanked Fairy-wren** and **White-lined Honeyeaters** but the best sighting was however a pair of **Spotted Nightjars** I found roosting under some rocks! The Northern subspecies of Euro was also present on the rocks, but no Black Wallaroo I found here in 2002. I drove disappointed and dehydrated back to Pine Creek, and noticed again several **Hooded Parrots** in the village.



Friday 20th October 2006 – Today I was up early and tried the Pine Creek cemetery and sewage ponds once again. Still in Pine Creek two **Hooded Parrots** were in the Water gardens once more. At the sewage ponds the best sighting was a flying **Australian Bustard**, and no less than 15+ **Brown Quails**. Many finches were present like **Masked-**, **Long-tailed-** and **Crimson Finch**. I then returned and went with Danitsja in the direction of Daly Waters. We stopped for a while at the Edith Falls where I tried hard to find Gouldian Finch but again I failed. Notable species I recorded here were **Black-tailed Tree-creeper** and **Varied Sitella**. The rest of the day was spent in the car and around Katherine I finally added a **Black Falcon** after many dark morph **Brown Falcons**. A brief stop in Mataranka showed us again the pair and the young **Red Goshawks** on their nest.

Saturday 21st October 2006 – We left at first light Daly Waters, and we were soon on the way towards Cape Crawford. During driving we noticed a Dingo along the road. When we arrived at Cape Crawford Danitsja stayed at the roadhouse and I went slightly to the north to find at some creeks my targets. At the Leica Creek crossing I found plenty of **Red-winged Fairy-wrens** but no **Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens**, but at Paddy Springs creek I found a single male **Purple-crowned Fairy-wren** but many more **Red-winged Fairy-wrens**. At the Little River crossing I flushed finally a **Gouldian Finch**. After filling the car up we went south to our end destination (wish I know what going to happen) Barkly Homestead. We stopped at several water bore's along the highway, and found at one bore a adult female and a juvenile **Yellow Chat** and found loads of **Australian Pratincoles** and other inland species. At Barkly Homestead we could not get money (and the credit card was not working) so we headed for Mt Isa. On this too long stretch we saw however a lone **Flock Pigeon**, **Australian Bustard**, **Cloncurry Ringneck**, **Great Bowerbird**, a flock of 10 **Brown Quails** (one collided with the car of ours) and several **Budgerigars** and **Cockatiels** (most of them were seen from Camoonweal to Mt Isa). And the last part in the dark brought many not so smart kangaroos along the road, jumping up and down.



Sunday 22nd October 2006 – I woke up early as my quest today was to find the in 2002 not found Kalkadoon Grasswren. I started off at a place well south of Mica Creek. At this spot (Sybella Creek) I could find a nice flock of five **Spinifex Pigeons** but no grasswrens. Once getting to Mica Creek in few minutes I found a **Kalkadoon Grasswren**. The bird showed very well for at least a minute before vanishing in the spinifex. I stopped shortly at the Link Street crossing with the rail road as I recorded here in 2002 both Spinifexbird and Spotted Bowerbird. Quickly I located the **Spinifexbird** but sadly I could not locate a single Bowerbird. As I drove back towards the motel I found along the highway a fine **Spotted Bowerbird** (Eastern Mt Isa). During driving we found several **Australian Pratincoles** along the road, a **Black Falcon** at Richmond, at Woodstock a male **Australian Bustard** was seen as a **Brown Treecreeper** and a **Topknot Pigeon**. We stopped finally at Townsville for the night.

Monday 23rd October 2006 – The whole day was spent in Townsville and only **Yellow Honeyeater** and **Yellow-bellied Sunbird** were recorded that were new for the trip list.

Tuesday 24th October 2006 – We drove away early from Townsville in the direction of Mission Beach. We stopped first at the new developed Tyto-wetlands at Ingham. After getting to the large ponds we were lucky to see a nice **Black-backed Bittern** flying above the reeds, an unexpected species to see, and after hearing them only at Deniliquin (NSW) in October 2002 I was happy to see one. As Danitsja



never saw a Southern Cassowary we decided to try around Mission Beach to find one. The first thing that was extremely shocking that almost the complete area has been destroyed by the hurricane "Larry" in the spring. The landscape was completely redone from my memory from four years ago, the rainforest where open in many trees have been broken. Despite that we did the Lacey Creek walk in the Licuala State Forest and hoped to find a Cassowary. After half-way we found a **Southern Cassowary** sitting on the path. It allowed getting extremely close, and once we got passed it stood up. Also a **White-eared Monarch** was seen briefly. We did while travelling towards Lake Eacham a tour via some falls and at the Millaa Millaa Falls Danitsja located the rare and localised Lumpholtz Tree Kangaroo sleeping in a tree! After observing this beautiful mammal and making some photographs we went towards the caravan park at Lake Eacham. Here we checked in, and after installing ourselves we headed for Yungabarra. Here we found soon the Duck-billed Platypus at the viewing platform, and we met Allan Gillanders here. We went with him spotlighting and this was highly

successful with a **Barking Owl**, **Bush Thick-knee**, Leaf-tailed Gecko, Green Ring-tailed Possum, Common and Copper brush-tailed Possum and on the way back a Northern Brown Bandicoot was crossing the road.

Wednesday 25th October 2006 – I got up in the early morning and due a vague map it took me nearly 1, 5 hours in driving around to finally finding the Gourka Road that I would like to visit. I birded the last kilometre of this road and quickly succeeding in finding a **Blue-faced Finch**. As the birdlife was wonderful here I spent some time here also locating a fine male **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** and tens of other species. When driving around to get to Gourka Road I had several flocks of Broilgas flying around. Later on we left for Nardellos Lagoon as this was the location of a pair of Cotton Pygmy-geese, a species I missed in all the previous visits. Soon as we got at the spot we found a nice pair of **Cotton Pygmy-geese** in one view with **Green Pygmy-geese**. A **Black Bittern** was a welcome sight when it dropped in quickly in front of us. At Granite Gorge we fed the tame Mareeba Rock Wallaby's and afterwards we went to the Curtin Fig Tree to have a look at the regular pair of **Pied Monarchs**. During driving we found a nice soaring **Pacific Baza** above Atherton.

Thursday 26th October 2006 – We started off with a short stroll at the edges of Lake Eacham. We found quickly the Musky rat-kangaroo the species where we where after, also here some **Atherton Scrub-wrens** and a **Spotted Catbird**. We then headed the long stretch towards Chillagoe. Here we took a cave tour, and as only visitor it was delightful to be here. When outside the **Chillagoe Swiftlets** where regularly flying past, and some around hanging rock showed very well. In the whole area we found these swifts and we located some **Great Bowerbirds** and Eastern Grey Kangaroos at the Royal Arch Cave. On the way to Kingfisher Park we found three **Sarus** standing on a ploughed field. We then stopped at Sides Road between the Mexican weed *Cuphea pinetorum* already the whole winter a group of up to 10 Blue-faced Finches was present. At this time I only could find a single **Blue-faced Finch**, but the stars where a flock of **Australian Swiftlets** overhead that gave good compensation with the Chillagoe Swiftlets I just saw. At Kingfisher Park we quickly located after checking in no less then two **Red-necked Crakes**. At night we intensively spotlighted the property and found a fine pale **Masked Owl** as a few **Barn Owls**. The highlight was however an Amnestyne Python from 3.5 meter where I was shortly standing on... Other mammals we recorded where Long-nosed & Northern Brown Bandicoot, Agile Wallaby and there where many fruit picking Spectacled Flying Foxes around.

Friday 27th October 2006 – I went in the early morning up to Mt Lewis to search for *cuneata* race of the Bassian Thrush and to see once again the Mountain Fantail. In both I succeeded quickly a **Bassian (Mountain) Thrush** was along the road edge and the **Mountain Fantail** was simply almost everywhere. Few hours birding in together brought a good score and nice birds seen where; **Fernwren** (a pair was feeding nicely and quietly in front of me), **Topknot Pigeon** (10+), **Chowchilla**, **Noisy Pitta** and many more species. Also nice was a red-legged Pademelon. The rest of the day was spent in Kingfisher Park with a small detour towards Sides Road again. We located finally in the creek behind Kingfisher Park a Duck-billed Platypus (after attempts in 1999 and 2002); it gave away a great show. Also like yesterday a fine **Red-necked Crake** was seen, this time preening for a long time. Very much appreciated was a fine male **Yellow-breasted Boatbill** in the canopy near the office. At Sides Road a nominate **Grey Fantail** could be found (not a Mountain Fantail) and some **White-headed Pigeons** but no Blue-faced Parrot Finches. Spotlighting produced a large gathering of species; **Masked Owl**, **Barn Owl**, Striped Possum, Green Ring-tailed Possum, Long-nosed & Northern Brown Bandicoot and Prehensile-tailed Rat.

Saturday 28th October 2006 – I made a pre breakfast circle around Kingfisher Park and found all more common species and again the crippling male **Yellow-breasted Boatbill**. Also an **Azure Kingfisher** and a **Cicadebird**. A short stop at Sides Road produced a flock of five **Blue-faced Finches** and a single **Black-throated Finch** between the large numbers of **Red-browed Finches** present here. More **Black-throated Finches** (10+) where found at Big Mitchell Creek where I tried to find some button-quail but failed sadly. Within the creek no less then three **White-browed Robins** without much effort where seen. We then drove towards Newell Beach and spent our afternoon with relaxing. Just before dark I went to the Water tower and found large groups of swallows including 100+ **Australian Swiftlets**, 20+ **Pacific Swallows** and some **Welcome Swallows**, **Tree Martin** and as best species one ore two **Barn Swallows**. Also few **Oriental Cuckoo's** where within the town centre, and where one of the first sightings for the season. Also at the boat ramp I found some **Pacific Swallows**, a species not yet recognised on the Australian list. Bird showed a perfect tail patron as the under tail coloration was ideal for Pacific Swallow.



Sunday 29th October 2006 – We went early morning to the boat ramp at Newell Beach and both Peter Cooper (Mangrove Man) as the **Pacific Swallows** where still present, the later was breeding. At the boat trip we recorded one Saltwater Crocodile, **Gould's Bronze Cuckoo** (new species for me), **Little Kingfisher**, **Azure** and **Collared Kingfisher**, **Mangrove Robin** and more common species of both mangrove and rainforest. Funny was also the migration of **White-throated Needle-tails** with several hundreds passing by to the south. When we returned I spent some time making photographs of the **Pacific Swallows** and try to find the Papuan Frogmouth here, the first was ok the later a disaster. We then went towards Cairns and found an excellent place to stay, and did some leisure things the rest of the day.

Monday 30th October 2006 – As Danitsja was on the reef today, I had time to re-visit some spots around Cairns. I started off at the Flecker's Botanical Gardens. One of the first birds I had a good view of was a new species for me **Shining Bronze Cuckoo**, also some **Gould's Bronze Cuckoos** where seen here. Sadly no trace of Noisy Pitta, Red-necked Crake and Little Kingfisher I've seen here in the past. The botanical gardens where also hit by "Larry". I then went to the boardwalk near the airport. I did the full walk and found a nice **Little Kingfisher** here and saw a single **Mangrove Robin** here. I had a quick look at the esplanade but the water was out, so I went gone quickly. I tried my luck in finding some turf fields south of Cairns. I couldn't find anything interesting except for three **Bush Thick-knees** at Yarramah Road. At Thomson's Road two **Mangrove Robins** showed perfectly at the boat ramp. In the afternoon I spent many hours at the Esplanade and saw all the commoner species like **Great Knot**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Sharp-tailed** and **Red-necked Stint**, and **Grey-tailed Tattler** and so on.

Tuesday 31st October 2006 – After leaving Cairns we had a brief stop at the boat ramp in Cardwell, off course the **Mangrove Robin** was waiting for us as the many mosquitoes that are always present here. We then went up the hill of the Paluma Range National Park and soon we where looking at the **Golden Bowerbird** at is usual spot (at least it was here also in October 2002), also here a bower of a **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**. We then went towards Hidden Valley, and we birded here and around the Taravale road. We found a fine Duck-billed Platypus, two Northern Long-necked Turtles, Sugar Gilder and at least five Brush-tailed Possums. At birds we found some **Red-tailed Black-cockatoos**, **White-throated Nightjar** and **Large-tailed Nightjar** around here.

Wednesday 1st November 2006 – Early morning was again spent at the Taravale road to find the recent found Glossy Black-cockatoo's again (*erebus* subspecies same as in Lamington on a later date seen by me). Despite a lot of trouble could not find these birds despite this I located a **Noisy Pitta**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Squatter Pigeon** and many more species here. The rest of the day was spent driving towards MacKay.

Thursday 2nd November 2006 – A long day of driving from MacKay to Rockhampton. Needless to say very few birds where sighted. As highlights where an awfully lot of aquatic birds at Horseshoe Lagoon including many **Pied Herons** and **Cotton Pygmy Goose**. Further a lone **Jabiru** and **Pacific Swift** on-route.

Friday 3rd November 2006 – I woke up early and went straight to a spot to find Yellow Chats. I arrived at the spot and directly after stepping out, I heard the odd singing **Capricorn Yellow Chats**. I found in total about 6 males and 2 females at this spot. At the nearby 8 Mile Creek few **Cotton Pygmy Geese** where present as an array on known birds from these ponds. In the area I also recorded large flocks of **Cockatiels** and a few **Brolga's**. I went back to the motel, woke up Danitsja and soon we where driving towards our next destination Rainbow Beach. During driving around Gladstone we saw a nice **Pacific Baza** flying above the road. After finding accommodation we went off towards Inskip Point. We searched from the end of the bitumen to the boat jetty but failed in finding any birds. So after a drink we decided to walk to the camping and soon enough Danitsja located two males **Black-breasted Button-quails** here. The previous visit in October 2002 I failed to find them, so I was very happy with this sighting. But it was not over yet! At the end of the afternoon I went towards Cooloola National Park. Before I stopped at the **Ground Parrot** site, there where already two flying in front of my car, so I was stunned to find them this time so easy. Earlier visits in December 1999 and October 2002 brought me no luck here. Some birding in the Ground Parrot spot brought me also a pair of **King Quails**, many **White-cheeked Honeyeaters**, **Southern Emu-wren** and a lone **Brush Bronzewing**. A perfect night was followed after this incredible day out!



Saturday 4th November 2006 – We drove from Rainbow Beach straight to Tin Can Bay in the early morning as Indo-pacific Dolphin come in at the jetty regularly. As luck was with us, Danitsja was soon feeding a dolphin a fish. We then head towards Brisbane. We spent lots of time to find accommodation within the city, but finally succeeding. I phoned after arriving and checking our stuff in to Tom Tarrant. An soon I made my way to them, and Danitsja stayed at Brisbane. It started to rain real badly, and weather was still worst when I got to Tom and Marie Tarrant their home. After a pleasant chat we went to several spots in the area, and found many interesting species like **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**, **White-throated Needle-tail**, **Leaden Flycatchers** and many more. Also Tom gave me some directions to the JC Slaughter Falls. So when I returned to Brisbane Danitsja jumped in the car and soon we where staring at a singing male **Powerful Owl**. We spotlighted close by a different Powerful Owl (probably a young), but our light was too weak to make a positive age and sex identification. Nice was a **White-throated Nightjar** that came overhead.

Sunday 5th November 2006 – Early morning was the time I was heading for Tom and Marie Tarrant to give some birds a try. The rain was gone and the weather was just fine. We went to our first spot, the same as we went too yesterday and today in a short time Marie found a single **Spotted Quail-thrush**, this bird flew off, and after a short chase I found an obliging pair feeding just in front of me. Both birds gave a good show, and made me very happy. It went even better as we soon found at a different spot two **Painted Button-quails**, a species I was lacking before today. One bird was flushed three times and at the end the observation was good enough to make a sensible identification. We tried after this huge success at several spots for **White-eared Monarch**, but only we heard a few birds non came into view. Also we found here several **Shining Bronze-cuckoos** and **Brush Cuckoo's**. Late in the afternoon Danitsja and I went up to Mt Glorious and after a good cup of tea, in a nearby restaurant we went out in search for the owl. Soon after arriving we found the **Sooty Owl**, due to excellent weather conditions every night bird was active and soon enough we where treated by singing **Marbled Frogmouths** and **Southern Boobooks**. After a short while we found our first possums and we where well into a night of spotlighting. And then the rain started to come in, soon it was raining that hard that we decided to leave the place. Satisfied but it could be even better, as Greater Glider was high on our wish list!

Monday 6th November 2006 – Today we stopped only for a short time at Sherwood Arboretum over here I saw the same birds as yesterday only today a **Bush-hen** was calling, but didn't show. I tried at several spots at the Gold coast for Australian Painted Snipe but failed to find any. Most former sites where destroyed thru construction.

Tuesday 7th November 2006 – Today was spent in Lamington National park. I wanted to show Danitsja the stunning Antarctic Beach forest,



so we went directly on the track towards here. Leaches where numerous at the Border Track, Danitsja found 20 ore so attached to her on this stretch. We found here on the Border Track a lone **Glossy Black Cockatoo** and two **Albert's Lyrebirds**, **Olive Whistler**, both **Bassian** and **Russet-tailed Thrush** and more common species. We tried brief for the Rufous Scrub-bird but no reply, but there was no need to push it as I've seen it in December 1999 and October 2002 already over here. We enjoyed the parrot feeding and we stunned once again by the most beautiful Australian bird (from my perspective) **Regent Bowerbird**! We then visited the Natural Bridge and enjoyed the glow worms here.

Wednesday 8th November 2006 – We drove from Nerang to Coff's Harbour. Rather frustrating Justin spent some time in the harbour hope that it would become dry outside, but it didn't and only the

short time spent outside gave away a promising sight of 100's passing **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**. This was going to be a frustrating night.

Thursday 9th November 2006 – Today was going to be the day to look for corvids. And so I kicked off at Dorringo State Forest in the rain to search here for the canopy feeding (according to the books) Relict Raven. But despite some searching I failed to find any over here, but a **Superb Lyrebird** (new subspecies for me), **Satin Bowerbird** and a Red-necked Wallaby where good compensation. I then drove from Dorringo towards Ebor, and searched all the agriculture grounds here, and after seen many **Little** and **Torresian Crows** I finally found some **Relict Ravens**. Interesting where several **Topknot Pigeons** feeding along the side of the road. I then returned to Coff's Harbour and went with Danitsja to Muttonbird Island from where we saw five Southern Right Whales, many **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**, few **Fluttering Shearwaters** and the same **Peregrine** as in the morning when Justin already visited this spot after coming back from the mountains.

Friday 10th November 2006 – Early morning found me on the tip of Mutton bird Island. An estimated 10,000 **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** where flying at the coast in between them a 10+ **Fluttering Shearwaters**. We then moved on to the south, as I seen a posting on birding Aus of a set of Australian Painted Snipes that was present at the Hexham Swamps I was looking forward to get to this spot, as I failed to find regular spots for this species on the internet. The route description was perfect to the swamps and with some help of some local birders I was soon looking to a stunning male and female **Australian Painted Snipe**. As an extra bonus also few **Latham's Snipe's** where present as a many more birds. I got a spot to find **Turquoise Parrot** nearby from a local birder, and after checking in at a hotel in Maitland, I went of to Kurri Kurri. Behind the hospital I indeed found a nice **Turquoise Parrot**, also here a **Speckled Warbler** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, both very welcome new trip species.

Saturday 11th November 2006 – We drove up from Maitland to the Blue Mountains, a long drive but very nice scenery once in the Blue Mountains. We checked in at a motel in Katoomba, and went for the 3 Sisters. Once I went down the stairs to get to the 3 Sisters two confident **Rock Warblers** where crawling around me, this was the last real species I could find this trip on mainland Australia. Further only the more common species could be found around.

Sunday 12th November 2006 – We woke up early and went straight to the Jenolan Caves. After leaving Katoomba I spotted a roadside **Diamond Firetail**, a welcome trip species. Directly after arriving here I checked for the Sooty Owl spot here. The bird was present here but only to see in the early morning and evening. I checked its roost and sadly no trace of a bird. We did a tour in the caves, and it was extremely busy with people here, but despite that the caves looked stunning anyway. We went from here towards the Capertee Valley. While driving on the dust road to the Glen Alice/Glen Davis turn-off I saw several **Plum-headed Finches** at a creek. I stopped also here at a spot where I saw **Regent Honeyeater** four years ago, but despite a good search I failed to find them, but I was compensated with two **Turquoise Parrots**. From here we went searching in both the vicinities of Glen Davis and Glen Alice. We found a large numbers **Mulga Parrots** spread through the whole valley, and **Fuscous**, **Striped** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters** and **Diamond Firetails**. The numbers of birds where low despite many flowering trees in the valley. On the way back we saw two **Glossy Black-cockatoo's** flying in the centre of Blackheath and at Evan's Lookout a **Rock Warbler** was feeding at the lookout.

Tuesday 14th November 2006 – Today we did not much then behaving like a tourist, with as birding highlight a trip towards the Botanical Gardens in Canberra. Here was from avian perspective a **Rufous Fantail** the only notable species.

Wednesday 15th November 2006 – We drove from Canberra towards Wollongong today. We had a single stop on our way to Wollongong and that was at Barren Grounds. Four years ago I only heard **Pilotbird** so I was desperate to see them, and the pair didn't let me down, and I had extreme close views. A walk around Barren Grounds yielded a few **Eastern Bristlebirds**, **Southern Emu-wren** and many more commoner species. We then headed to Wollongong, to find finally a horrible location at Fairy Meadows where we stayed for the night....

Sunday 19th November 2006 – Only notable sighting today was a **Tawny Frogmouth** and a Common Ringtail Possum at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney.

Monday 20th November 2006 – We flew in the afternoon to Hobart and we had a very boring day with a lot of waiting. The only notable species we saw in Hobart was a **Brush Wattlebird**, the first of many to be seen in the next week.

Tuesday 21st November 2006 – Morning in Tasmania, an island I never visited so it means get up when it is still dark and try to find the birds. I went straight for Peter Murell Reserve just outside Hobart. I soon found my first new species here; **Tasmanian Native Hen**, **Green Rosella**, **Tasmanian Thornbill**, **Yellow Wattlebird**, **Yellow-throated Honeyeater** and after some searching between the **Spotted Pardalote's** some **Forty-spotted Pardalotes** were added. From here I went up to Mt Wellington, prime targets for me where two mainland species I still missed. Both **Crescent Honeyeater** and **Flame Robin** were easily found once up to the mountain and where the trees becoming smaller. During the drive to the summit I found several **Black Currawongs**. At a parking spot in between I found quickly a **Scrubtit** in a flock of **White-browed Scrubwrens**. At the top also some **Striated Heathwrens** were found, and in the suburban area of Hobart I found some **Clinking Currawongs**. I went back to our motel, and we packed everything and went to a caravan park at Snug. I went back to Cambridge Airport after unloading our bags at Snug, as I had a plane to catch. The plane departed from Cambridge Airport towards Melaleuca in the far South-west of Tasmania. The prime target was Orange-bellied Parrot, and the reason to take this flight. After a scenic flight thru the inland, we soon went after arriving at Melaleuca to the observatory where a nice male **Orange-bellied Parrot** was perched on a branch. During the four hour watch I localised no less than 15 birds here, some times mixed on the feeding table with **Green Rosella** and **Beautiful Firetail**. Due to increasing winds it was hard to find other species around but I could find **Southern Emu-wren**, **Olive Whistler**, **Crescent Honeyeater** and **Black Currawong**. We flew back via the south coast, and after landing I went back directly to Snug. Here I picked up Danitsja as the waterworks reserve was next on the list of locations to be visited, as our main goals was Tasman Masked Owl. We found all the more common endemics and species here but no owl despite much trouble from us. With spotlighting we found Common Ringtail Possum, Eastern Barred Bandicoot and Rufous-bellied Pademelon.



Wednesday 22nd November 2006 – We left around ten our superb cabin in Snug. A short drive brought us at the pier, and after 45 minutes we could leave to Bruny Island. I was really looking forward as I heard many stories about its landscape and its birds, and indeed it is all true, what a beauty. First we tried the Northern part to search for Swift Parrots, but sadly no luck. Then we stopped a little past the Penguin look-out and soon a **Swift Parrot** was flying by followed by three more, an unexpected bonus as I expected to struggle real hard for this species. We then headed towards the bungalow park at Adventure Bay where we spent the night. Before the village we stopped at the national coastal park here and soon I was photographing a **Hooded Plover** on the beach. Dreaming away on this stunning bay is easily possible with **Swift Parrots** in the trees along to the beach and soaring **Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle's** above the hills and **White-bellied Sea-eagles** above the sea. Also much appreciated was

a **Flame Robin** and some **Musk Lorikeets** here. While loading our stuff into our bungalow for the night a **Dusky Robin** came in closely to inspect us, also not a species I expected to find easily. We then headed via Mt Mangala to the south tip, despite the wind I lured out a **Scrubtit** and saw few more common species. At Cloudy Bay as at Cape Bruny Point many **Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters** were present. At Cape Bruny point a sea-watch produced a few good birds like a **White-chinned Petrel**, **Buller's Albatross**, **Salvin's** and **Shy Albatross**. Other species found here was my first Australian **Arctic Skua**, and thousands of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** and **Black-faced Cormorants**. A **Peregrine** was soaring above the lighthouse. We returned via Lunawanna where I found south of the town the wanted **Strong-billed Honeyeater** and **Black-headed Honeyeater**, both I had to tape in. In Lunawanna two **Swamp Quails** were walking on the road. When back in Adventure Bay we stopped at a memorial for James Cook as some nice flocks of **Swift Parrots** dropped in, and **Pacific Gulls** showed their enormous bills on the beach. Back at the bungalow park, a flock of no less than 100+ **Swift Parrots** was flicking thru the trees and gave me large excitement. Also at the Caravan Park few **Tasmanian Native-hens**, **Green Rosella**, **Black-headed Honeyeater**, **Striated Pardalote** and some odd white Wallabies. We soon went off towards the Neck for the Penguins and the incoming Muttonbirds (Short-tailed Shearwaters). A sea-watch here produced a group of three **Long-tailed Skuas'** and few **Shy Albatrosses**. When dark thousand's of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** came in, as large numbers off **Little Penguins**. On the way back we tried to move a penguin from the road, but the bird did not agree, and bit me! On the way back several Common Brush-tailed Possums where along the road and in about 2 kilometer before Adventure Bay a **Tasman Masked Owl** flew across the road.



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Thursday 23rd November 2006 – I went up early and set foot for thirty minutes to Grass Point to have a search for a suitable point for a sea-watch. Sadly the sea-watch is rather high here, and only very few birds could be identified. No less the three **Salvin's Albatrosses** and two

Buller's Albatrosses were seen. Also good numbers of **Shy Albatrosses** came past, one where swimming on the ocean. Other nice species included a **Pomarine Skua**, **Sooty Shearwater** and ten thousand's of **Short-tailed Shearwaters**. On mammals I saw a nice Southern Right Whale and a pod of 30+ Bottle-nosed Dolphins. After the sun became too bright I walked back and recorded here and at the Bungalow Park no less than five **Dusky Robins**, 50+ **Swift Parrots**, **Yellow-throated**, **Black-headed** and **Strong-billed Honeyeater** and **Scarlet Robin**. We then left the island to move on towards Bronte Park. After hours we arrived at Bronte Park but decided to move on as our target species was already seen unexpected yesterday night (Tasman Masked Owl). So we moved towards Queenstown, what regarding our knowledge in Australia was the worst place we stayed at!

Friday 24th November 2006 – We set off after a worst night here towards Strahan. After less than an hour later we arrived in this stunning town. We found a perfect cabin, but as it was not ready we went towards the Ocean Beach. Off course a sea-watch was on the program, but as most birds were rather distant and the well known species like **Shy Albatross**, **Sooty Shearwater** and **Short-tailed Shearwater** were in the skies I decided to come back later. Next I went to a place where in the past regularly Ground Parrots were seen, and I tried hard to find one, but sadly I failed. Despite that I recorded here **Striated Heathwren**, **Beautiful Firetail**, **Southern Emu-wren** and **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater**. The wind packed up and rains started too sweet thru the skies, so the chance to go out for bird watching was rather limited. At the caravan park however a **Black-headed Honeyeater** and **Scarlet Robin** and several more commoner birds were good entertainers. I tried several times during the day to start a sea-watch but every time rain came in. One time I returned there was this odd **Latham's Snipe** that was sitting on the bitumen. Just before dusk I went to the Ground Parrot site, and after some effort I located on several places from the airport to the private road **Ground Parrots**. All of them were singing. At Ocean Beach several thousands of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** a single one was even walking over my shoes. But nice was a unexpected **Morepork** that was hunting between the shearwaters.



Saturday 25th November 2006 – When we left Strahan some **Brush Bronzewing** (like yesterday at the airport) were flying around as where two brave **Swamp Quails** that were crossing the tarmac. We went away early and went via Cradle Mountain and Launceston to Bicheno. We arrived well in time here to start a sea-watch. Again I was found on sea near the blowhole here. Two wanted species came past here in the two hours I was seated here. These where a nice **White-fronted Tern** (maybe more than one) that came in close and later a **White-faced Storm Petrel** flew low and quick past me. Large numbers of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** came past, and I estimated the number around 40.000 each hour. Same was for Albatrosses where no less than 100 birds passed by each hour. I only could identify some closer **Shy Albatrosses**. A bonus was a stunning pale young **Long-tailed Skua** that was mobbing the **Crested Terns**, and some **Little Penguins** where swimming past. Around Bicheno also I found two **Swamp Quails** and **Eastern Spinebills** and a nice Southern Brown Bandicoot. At night a good salad was very much appreciated. The penguins where just simple everywhere in this town, you could hear them from bed.

Sunday 26th November 2006 – I went up early to try for some sea-watching in Bicheno, but as the birds were rather distant I decide to get to Cape Tourinet at Freycinet Peninsula as a remark in Thomas & Thomas gave that it was a good sea-watch point. The cape turned up to be extremely high, and was terrible as sea watching point as no real focus could be made. I could however identify some birds like **White-capped Albatrosses** (50+), a Giant Petrel ssp and several thousands of **Short-tailed Shearwaters**. But the highlights where however three Killer Whales seen and photographed here as was a small pod of False Killer Whales here (15+). Around the parking spot I found both **Pink** and **Scarlet Robin**, **Bassian Thrush** and **Tasmanian Thornbill**. At Sandy Beach I tried also little while for a sea-watch but also the same species like at Cape Tourinet passed by, with the exception of an **Arctic Skua** that was present here. An afternoon sea-watch at the Blowhole produced two stunning **Black-browed Albatrosses** and a **Campbell Albatross** in close. **Shy Albatross** was just amazing as numbers raised up to 200 each hour passing by. Skua's where present during the whole sea-watch and few birds flew past, several where identified as three **Pomarine Skua** and an **Arctic Skua**. Also a **Sooty Shearwater** was found in the large rafts of thousands of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** that came past (my estimated numbers was 40.000 in an hour today). A pod of Common Dolphins where seen as where several swimming **Little Penguins**. At night a whole lot of **Little Penguins** where heard and seen by us.

Monday 27th November 2006 – Danitsja and I went towards Freycinet and tried hard at Cape Tourinet to find the Killer Whales from yesterday. Despite hard searching I could not find them, but some other whales kept me busy for a while as there was at long distance a mixed group of at least two Pygmy Mink Whales and two Humpback Whales. Also many **Shy Albatrosses** where swimming and extreme large rafts of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** where patrolling the waters. Mid afternoon I seated myself for a five hour sea-watch. The sea-watch paid of every single moment, as very large numbers of passing birds where seen, due to winds. Best birds where a close **Hall's Giant Petrel**, one or two short time present **Cape Petrel**, at least one passing **Common Diving Petrel**. A few Giant Petrel ssp where passing by, as where an estimated 160.000 **Short-tailed Shearwaters** this sea-watch. The numbers of **Shy Albatrosses** reached up to 300 this watch, and two **Campbell's Albatrosses** where noted as three **Black-browed Albatrosses**. Other highlights included two **Long-tailed Skuas** and one **Arctic Skua**, and a single **Fairy Tern**. Further 5+ unspecified Skua's and some **Little Penguins** as either a Hutton's or a Fluttering Shearwater on large distance. In the night many **Little Penguins** where roaming the streets.

Tuesday 28th November 2006 – My last subspecies I could see new was at Freycinet, and this was the morning I decided that I could nail it down. I went up early and soon enough I was at the right spot near Cape Tourinet and soon I found a small group (4) of **Spotted Quail-thrushes**. This rare subspecies *dovei* is rarely observed and very obscure. Over sea (due the height I was sitting on) birds where hard to identify only **Shy Albatross** and **Short-tailed Shearwaters** could be noted. While driving towards Hobart I noticed a single **Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle** soaring above the road, makes my trip total to 3 birds of this rare subspecies *leayi*. After we found our caravan park for the night at Cambridge we went soon on our way to Truganini reserve to see the Tasman Masked Owl that was present here now for a few days. Indeed after a short search we found this real stunner, and we couldn't believe that we where staring on less than 10 metres from an uncovered **Tasman Masked Owl**. Also at this spot **Dusky Robin**, **Black-headed Honeyeater** and some other nice birds showed well. At the caravan park at Cambridge we noticed some **Musk Lorikeets**.



29th November to 1st December 2006 – We moved from Hobart towards Sydney, visited the zoo on the 30th and then flew out of Australia the next day. Total score was 565 species this trip in Australia, and 639 species now in Australia (Clements taxonomy). An additional 38 new species were seen on a short stop in Malaysia.

Acknowledgments

Many people helped both of us in recent years to find the species presented in this report. We were helped either we were guided around or provided with usefully information in the field or via the birding.aus website.

I wish to thank and recommend Peter Waanders to all!

I would like to thank the following people; Ron Stannard, Sheryl and Arthur Keates, Tom and Marie Tarrant, Peter Maaskant, Bert Pieterse, Rob and Evelien Goldbach, Chris and Nicole Winter, Bob Forsyth, Albert and Anke Vrielink, Peter Cooper, Peter Fuller and all the people I met or spoken to but forgot to mention.

Also many thanks to the Allan Morris for putting up birding.aus, Frank O'Connor for his excellent website and Richard and Sarah Thomas for publishing the excellent where to find guide of Australia.

Justin JFJ Jansen & Danitsja Stapel, Blitterswijkseweg 3, 5871 CD Broekhuizen, The Netherlands. justinDBA@cs.com