

Northern Territory, Alice Springs and Singapore

Birdwatching Breaks are pleased to offer you this unique opportunity to visit the tropical habitats around Darwin in the Northern Territory, Alice Springs in the red centre of Australia and finally the amazing habitats in and around Singapore. Our tours starts in Darwin, the city having several interesting areas for birds, and then visits the world famous Kakadu National Park before moving to Alice Springs for some hard-to-see Australian birds including the scarce Grey Honeyeater. Our final birding stop is in Singapore where we have three days in this extraordinary area for birds in SE Asia.

Days 1-3: Fly to Darwin the largest town in the sparsely populated Northern Territory, arrival is on Day 3.

Day 4: We start by visiting East Point for returning shorebirds. A walk through monsoon forest may reveal Rainbow Pitta, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Varied Triller and Brown Whistler. A boardwalk through the mangroves often has Red-headed Honeyeater, Broad-billed Flycatcher and Collared Kingfisher. Savannah woodland habitat holds Forest Kingfisher, Double-barred and Long-tailed Finches and Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Later we drive out to Fogg Dam for Blue-winged Kookaburra. The dam has Magpie Geese, egrets, Pied Heron, Royal Spoonbill, White-browed Crake and Black-necked Stork. On the forest edge we look for Crimson Finch, Rufous-banded Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Robin, Sacred Kingfisher and Paperbark Flycatcher. Another area of fringe wetlands is attractive to Arafura Fantail and Shining Flycatcher. We stop at Adelaide River Bridge and search for Mangrove Golden Whistler then continue to the Mary River Wilderness Retreat, our base for the night. In the evening we may see and hear Bush Thick-knee, Tawny Frogmouth and Barking Owl.

Day 5: We leave early for Kakadu National Park searching out some Kakadu escarpment endemics - Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon and White-lined Honeyeater. Other species today include Partridge Pigeon and Northern Fantail. We head to our accommodation at Jabiru.

Dates

Wednesday August 26th - Sunday September 13th 2020

Leader: Mike Jarvis, Mark Finn and local guides

Group Size: 8

Birds: 250-300

Day 6: We start the day at Burrunggui Rock where we should find Banded Fruit-dove, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and Sandstone Helmeted Friarbird. Other species include Emerald Dove, Northern Rosella and Spangled Drongo. Later we embark on a river cruise for sightings of Brolga, Radjah Shelduck, Wandering and Plumed Whistling-ducks, Green Pygmy-goose, Rufous-crowned Night Heron, Comb-crested Jacana, Royal Spoonbill, Azure and Little Kingfishers, and Buff-sided Robin. Night at Cooida

Day 7: We leave Jabiru via the Kakadu Highway with Australian Bustard on flat open plains. We visit Gunlom and search for more endemic species and explore an area where a pair of Red Goshawks have recently bred, and another location for Silver-backed Butcherbirds. Continue to Pine Creek which has Hooded and Red-winged Parrots, Grey-crowned Babbler and Great Bowerbird. Night at Pine Creek.

Day 8: We check out early from our accommodation at Pine Creek and head down to a waterhole on the Fergusson



Red-collared Lorikeet Photo: Rob Gully

River a reliable area for Gouldian Finch. Other target species here are Banded, Bar-breasted and Rufous-throated Honeyeaters, Cockatiel, Varied Lorikeet, and sometimes Budgerigar. We then head south to bird around Katherine township. Near the Victoria River Roadhouse we explore the river's edge for Yellow-rumped Mannikin and Purple-crowned Fairy-wren. Night at Victoria River Roadhouse.

Day 9: We continue west where the habitat changes dramatically as we travel through magnificent escarpment country where raptors include Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black-breasted Buzzard, Spotted Harrier and Square-tailed Kite, there are recent records of the rare Grey Falcon in the area too. There are many waterholes attracting Star, Zebra and Crimson Finches, Crimson Chat and Red-browed Pardalote. Timber Creek has Purple-crowned Fairywren, Pictorella and Yellow-rumped Mannikins, Yellow-tinted and Black-chinned Honeyeaters. The airfield sometimes has Crimson Chat and Inland Dotterel.

Day 10: We check out early and have a bush breakfast at old Victoria River crossing. We continue west along Victoria Highway through magnificent ranges and sandstone outcrops. This is great raptor country and we search the skies for Black-breasted Buzzards and Wedge-tailed Eagles. On the Western Australian border is our westernmost park - Keep River National Park. Here we search for Spinifex Pigeon, White-quilled Rock-Pigeon and Sandstone Shrike-thrush, before continuing on across the border into WA. Night at Lake Argyle.

Day 11: We meet the boat at 5.30am for the five-hour birdwatching cruise on Lake Argyle. Unique birds we hope to see on this cruise include Yellow Chat, Australian Pratincole and a great variety of waterbirds and shorebirds. We explore areas between Lake Argyle and Kununurra looking for Gouldian and, Star Finches, Yellow-rumped, Chestnut-breasted and Pictorella Mannikins. Overnight at Kununurra.

Day 12: We explore areas around



Australian Painted Snipe Photo: Rob Gully

Kununurra where Australian Reed Warbler, various finches, honeyeaters and waterbirds are found. Later in the day we fly back to Darwin for an overnight stay.

Day 13: Morning flight to Alice Springs in the red centre of Australia where we have a three-night stay. On arrival we make an initial exploration of Simpson's Gap National Park, an interesting mix of red rocks, scrub and desert habitats with sparse vegetation. Central Australian birds using the area include Pied Butcherbird, Western Gerygone, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Zebra Finch, Black-faced and Little Woodswallows and Dusky Grasswren. If it has rained recently we may find nomadic species in Budgerigar, Diamond Dove, Rufous Songlark and Painted Firetail.

Days 14-15: These two days will be spent searching for the specialties that occur around Alice Springs. The local sewage works often have the only water for miles around and attract rare migrants or nomadic Australian birds. Of particular interest are Bourke's Parrot, White-browed

Treecreeper, Rufous-crowned Emuwren, Slaty-backed Thornbill, Banded Whiteface and three very localised honeyeaters - Black, Pied and Grey. In addition to these we should also locate Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Little Buttonquail, Australian Crake, Black-tailed Native-hen, Spinifex Pigeon, Mallee Ringneck, White-winged and Splendid Fairywrens, Redthroat, Inland Thornbill, Singing, White-plumed and Yellow-throated Honeyeaters, Red-capped and Hooded Robins and Little Crow.

Day 16: Fly to Singapore via Darwin with arrival later the same day.

Day 17: Today we head to Changi village where on recent visits Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Yellow-crested Cockatoo and Tanimbar Corella may be found with Red-breasted Parakeets. Pulau Ubin is an island which has so far avoided the modernisation of Singapore. The coast here attracts Collared Kingfisher, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Olive-backed Sunbird and Asian Glossy Starlings. At the eastern end a



Azure Kingfisher
Photo:
Rob Kelly

boardwalk allows us to walk around pristine habitats for White-rumped Sharma, Straw-headed Bulbul and Ashy Tailorbird. The many palms attract Laced Woodpecker. In the afternoon we visit Pasir Ris Park, which can be good for Spotted Wood and Buffy Fish Owls. Other species may include Common Flameback, Pied Triller, Golden-bellied Gerygone and Asian Koel. We end the day at Lorong Halus which may have Long-tailed Shrike, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Daurian and White-shouldered Starlings, Lesser Coucal and Sooty-headed Bulbul.

Day 18: An early departure to the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, home to Oriental Scops Owl and Brown Hawk Owl, whilst Large-tailed Nightjars roost on the golf course. The tower hide allows views over the forest with Long-tailed Parakeet, Olive-winged and Red-eyed Bulbuls, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Malkoha, Greater Green Leafbird and Orange-bellied Flowerpecker all being possible. Sungei Buloh is an important area for birds with its mudflats attracting migrant waders and the mangroves holding kingfishers - Common, Stork-billed and White-throated. Kranji Marsh is our final destination where Malaysian Hawk Cuckoo, Pied Triller, Yellow-rumped Flycatcher and Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker reside.

Day 19: A morning visit to Bukit Batok, the

only area of primary lowland forest in Singapore. Several interesting species occur including Black Baza, Blue-rumped Parrot, Blue-winged Pitta, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Buff-vented Bulbul, Short-tailed Babbler, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker and Crimson Sunbird. The main aim is to find a fruiting tree which may attract Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Black-naped Oriole and Lineated Barbet. A walk through the forest may be productive for Pin-striped Tit-babblers, Yellow-vented Bulbul and Dark-necked Tailorbird. Later in the day, we fly from Singapore back to Europe with arrival on the next morning.

Prices

Ground Price: £6,495
Single room: £600
Deposit: £600
*Air Fare: £1,215

This holiday is fully inclusive of flights, accommodation and meals, transport, boat trips, permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, items of a personal nature. A visa to enter Australia.

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