



# Inala's Kimberley Tour: Kununurra to Broome

**including excursion to Mitchell Plateau  
(Black Grasswren) and Gibb River Road**

**18-28 July 2022**

Prepared by Steve Davidson and Tonia Cochran, Inala Nature Tours 27 July 2020.

The Gibb River Road is an iconic Australian Outback experience that has gained popularity particularly with Australians who wish to adventure into more 'out of the way' Australian areas. We have run this tour as a private tour option over many years, but due to popular demand, are now offering a small group tour option on scheduled dates to make it more available to our guests. This tour visits areas that are only accessible by 4WD and provides a unique chance to stay in roadhouses and on vast cattle stations en route and we have also included a rarely-offered chance to stay for two nights and a full day on the Mitchell Plateau. Here we will have the chance to explore the spinifex-clad rocky escarpments and *Livistonia* palm monsoon thickets of the Mitchell Falls area, where we'll have our only chance of the rare and range-restricted Black Grasswren, as well as Kimberley Honeyeater, Partridge Pigeon, Rainbow Pitta and Green-backed Gerygone. Two overnight stays in this area also enable us to explore at night for a unique range of reptile and mammal species.

This small group tour has been designed to follow on from our popular [Top End to Eastern Kimberley tour](#) and precede our [Broome-Dampier Peninsula tour](#) which allows for maximum flexibility in exploring this remote and little-explored area of Outback north-western Australia.



Black Grasswren. A. Schulte

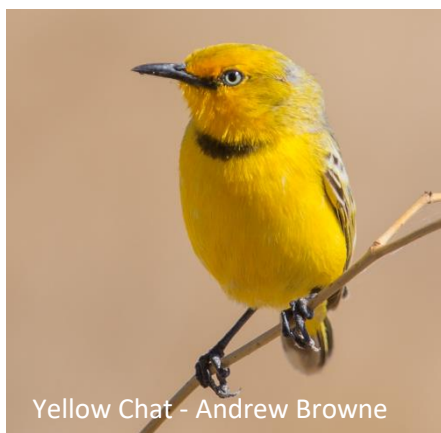
## **ITINERARY OUTLINE:**

Day 1. Mon 18 July 2022. Arrive Kununurra.  
Day 2. Tue 19 July 2022. Kununurra to Wyndham.  
Day 3. Wed 20 July 2022. Wyndham to Cattle Station, Gibb River Road.  
Day 4. Thu 21 July 2022. Gibb River Road to Drysdale River Station.  
Day 5. Fri 22 July 2022. Drysdale River Station to Mitchell Plateau  
Day 6. Sat 23 July 2022. Mitchell Plateau/ Mitchell Falls area  
Day 7. Sun 24 July 2022. Mitchell Plateau to Drysdale River Station.  
Day 8. Mon 25 July 2022. Gibb River Road: Drysdale River to Mt Hart Station.  
Day 9. Tue 26 July 2022. Mt Hart to Fitzroy Crossing.  
Day 10. Wed 27 July 2022. Fitzroy Crossing to Broome via Dangu Geikie Gorge and Derby.  
Day 11. Thu 28 July 2022. Depart Broome.

## **DETAILED ITINERARY:**

**B-breakfast, L-lunch and D-dinner**

**Day 1. Monday 18 July 2022. Arrive Kununurra.** Today has been set aside as an arrival day so you are free to arrive at any time that suits your travel plans. Please make your own way to the hotel. For those continuing from the Darwin to Kununurra tour you will also arrive in Kununurra this afternoon. The group will meet for a welcome dinner this evening. **Accommodation:** Kununurra (en suite rooms). Meals included: D.



Yellow Chat - Andrew Browne

**Day 2. Tuesday 19 July 2022. Kununurra to Wyndham.** After an early breakfast we will leave Kununurra and head north-west towards Wyndham, birding along the way at a lagoon for birds like Yellow Chat, Zitting Cisticola, Yellow-rumped Mannikin, Red-chested Buttonquail and Horsfield's Bushlark, plus hundreds of different waterbirds. We will stop at Wyndham for lunch and check out any leaky taps or sprinklers around town for a good chance of Gouldian Finch, as well as Pictorella Mannikin and Masked Finch. If time permits later in the day, we can check out the mangroves on the edge of town; we may see Saltwater Crocodile here, and at dusk we can look for Short-eared Rock Wallabies at a nearby lookout. **Accommodation:** Wyndham (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** BLD.

**Day 3. Wednesday 20 July 2022. Wyndham to Cattle Station on the Gibb River Road.** Today we will have a look in the extensive mangroves along the Wyndham wharf area for birds like Broad-billed Flycatcher, Yellow White-eye, White-breasted & Mangrove Golden Whistlers, Red-headed Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Flyrobin (endemic Kimberley ssp *tormenti*), Black Butcherbird (western edge of range here) and Mangrove Grey Fantail. Great-billed Heron and Chestnut Rail are sometimes recorded on the muddy banks at low tide.

We'll bird en route as we start to head west, stopping at a rocky gorge just south of Wyndham, which may hold White-quilled Rock Pigeon (Kimberley ssp *albipennis*), Spinifex Pigeon (ssp *plumifera*), Sandstone Shrike-thrush, Black-chinned Honeyeater (Golden-backed ssp *laetior*), and Varied Sittella. Our accommodation this evening will be based on a 1,400,000 hectare (3,459,475 acre) pastoral lease on the Gibb River Road, owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC).

**Accommodation:** ILC Pastoral Lease (eco-tents or guestrooms - TBA) . **Meals included:** BLD.

**Day 4. Thursday 21 July 2022. Gibb River Road to Drysdale River Station.** We will have a look around pre-breakfast here for tropical woodland birds like Square-tailed Kite, Silver-crowned Friarbird, Varied Lorikeet, Buff-sided Robin, Paperbark Flycatcher and Bar-breasted Honeyeater, before we travel west along the Gibb River Road, crossing the Durack River and the Gibb Range; this route requires a 4WD. We'll be on the lookout for various raptors including Black-breasted Buzzard,

Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted Harrier and Australian Hobby, as well as iconic outback species like Budgerigar, Cockatiel and Australian Bustard. Mammal possibilities include Antilopine Wallaroo and Northern Nailtail Wallaby. Our accommodation tonight is based on a 1,000,000 acre (404,686 ha) Pastoral lease that runs about 7,000 head of cattle.

**Accommodation:** Drysdale River Station (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B (continental) LD

**Days 5 & 6. Friday 22 & Saturday 23 July 2022. Drysdale River Station to Mitchell Plateau.** This morning we will leave straight after breakfast for the long drive up onto the spectacular Mitchell Plateau, where we will stay two nights. Here we will look for the highly range-restricted Black Grasswren, as well as Kimberley Honeyeater, Purple-backed Fairywren (Lavender-flanked ssp *rogersi*), the “Yellow eyed” Partridge Pigeon (Kimberley ssp *blaauwi*), White-quilled Rock Pigeon and Sandstone Shrike-thrush. Also here in the monsoon thickets, are Rainbow Pitta, Green-backed Gerygone, Little Woodswallow, Silver-backed Butcherbird (Kimberley ssp *colletti*) and Rufous Owl, as well as a chance of Red Goshawk overhead. Like the other grasswrens, the Black Grasswren can be elusive at times and may take a bit of searching for although we have also visited when they have been quite obliging. The additional time we have allowed in this area will certainly be a huge benefit. After dark we will explore the area again in search of the unique range of mammals and reptiles that occur on the plateau. These include Scaly-tailed Possum, Rock Ringtail Possum, Monjon, Golden Bandicoot, Northern Quoll, Golden-backed Tree Rat, Black-footed Tree Rat, Brush-tailed Rabbit Rat, Ghost Bat, Gracile Velvet Gecko, Superb Dragon and Rough-scaled Python.

**Accommodation:** Lodge on Mitchell Plateau (tented cabins) for 2 nights. **Meals included:** B (continental) LD each day.



Kimberley landscape with Boabs  
(*Adansonia gregorii*) A. Schulte

**Day 7. Sunday 24 July 2022. Mitchell Plateau to Drysdale River Station.** After a final look around the area we will begin the journey back to Drysdale River, and despite the relatively short distance, today will be a bit of a travel day. However, we will stop en route as always for birds and rest stops, returning to Drysdale Station sometime in the afternoon.

**Accommodation:** Drysdale River Station as for night 4. **Meals included:** B (continental) BLD

**Day 8. Monday 25 July 2022. Gibb River Road: Drysdale River to Mt Hart Station.**



Black-tailed Treecreeper K. Dick

Around Drysdale Station we will look for the star attractions of the area - Purple-crowned Fairywren and Crested (Northern) Shrike-tit (*ssp whitei*). The fairywrens live in the pandanus-lined waterways where we can also see Azure Kingfisher, Buff-sided Robin, Crimson Finch, White-gaped & Rufous-throated Honeyeaters and Black Bittern. The shrike-tit is a likely future taxonomic split and is found in the tropical eucalypt woodlands on the station.

We will then travel from Drysdale River to Mt Hart Station, heading further west along the Gibb River Road. Along the way

we will have lunch at a Roadhouse, visit a nearby Gorge and traverse the King Leopold Range. Along the way we'll have further chances of Kimberley Honeyeater and White-quilled Rock-Pigeon, as well as woodland species like Black-tailed Treecreeper, Red-browed Pardalote, Northern Rosella and Purple-backed Fairywren. Reptiles include the possibility of the localised Storr's Monitor, Kimberley Rock Monitor and Black-headed Python. Our accommodation for this evening is based on a former pastoral lease that once operated as a cattle station. The lands are now part of a large conservation area.

**Accommodation:** Mt Hart Wilderness Lodge (en suite rooms or tented camps TBA). **Meals included:** B (continental) LD (3 course)

**Day 9. Tuesday 26 July 2022. Mt Hart to Fitzroy Crossing.**

Today we will leave the Gibb River Road and cut back to the main sealed road. We will visit Winjana Gorge, and the Tunnel Creek National Park. Birds here include more chances of Gouldian Finch and Crested (Northern) Shrike Tit, as well as Diamond Dove, Pictorella Mannikin, Star Finch and Red-winged Parrot. We will stay overnight tonight at the township of Fitzroy Crossing. **Accommodation:** Fitzroy Crossing (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B (cooked) LD



Gouldian Finch A. Schulte

**Day 10. Wednesday 27 July 2022. Fitzroy Crossing to Broome via Dangu Geikie Gorge and Derby.**

This morning we will take a one-hour cultural boat tour in Dangu Geikie Gorge with a Bunuba Indigenous guide whose connection to this land goes back to the Dreamtime. The gorge has been carved by the Fitzroy River through part of an ancient limestone barrier reef which snakes across the west Kimberley. It was laid down in an ancient sea that covered a large part of the Kimberley in Devonian times, some 350 million years ago. We will also do some exploring and birding around the general area in the morning around the general area before we travel to Broome today with a side trip to Derby. In Derby we can look for shorebirds if the tide is in our favour, or more mangrove species like Torresian Kingfisher, Mangrove Robin, White-breasted Whistler and Mangrove Gerygone. We will arrive in Broome in time for a quick town tour and view the sunset over the ocean and meet with any new participants who are joining the group for the Broome-Dampier Peninsula tour.

**Accommodation:** Broome (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B (continental) L, D.

**Day 11. Thursday 28 July 2022. Depart Broome or continue to the Broome-Dampier Peninsula tour.**

Those participants who are not continuing onto the Inala Broome-Dampier Peninsula tour will make their own arrangements to depart from Broome airport. Please see separate Broome-Dampier Peninsula Tour itinerary for those who are continuing to explore with us.

**We can organise an optional extra two-hour scenic flight over the Bungle Bungle Range, Carr Boyd and Osmand Range and Ord River on day 1 or 2 (depending on your other tour arrangements-current flight departure times are 06:00, 09:00 and 14:30 each day). To be advised but price around AU\$450 per person based on current rates.**

**Group size: 4 people with one specialist Inala driver guide or 8 people with 2 driver/guides.**

**Tour Price:** AU\$8,800 per person sharing for a minimum group size of 3 people  
**Single supplement:** AU\$1,630.

**Price includes:** 10 nights' accommodation, specialist guide and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary and GST.

**Price does not include:** Airfares, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

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[Please contact us for discounts applicable for combining adjoining tours.](#)

## **OTHER NOTES:**

- **The itinerary:** Whilst we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather, and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit.
- **Remoteness:** Please note that for much of this tour we will be birding in a wonderful yet remote part of Australia. Some of the roads are unsealed and rough and travel will be in 4WD vehicles. If you have medical conditions or health concerns, it is important you make us aware of these in advance of this tour. This doesn't necessarily preclude you. We just need to be well-informed.
- **Luggage:** We won't have a huge amount of room for lots of luggage on the trip and will need to **restrict the luggage to one soft sided duffle bag 2-3 ft long or similar per person plus a day pack/camera/binoculars** etc that can be carried in the vehicle with you. We are trying to avoid hard sided suitcases which don't pack well in the back of 4WDS. We'll need to carry other stuff like water which I think is more important than too many clothes.

[\*\*Click here to view an online doc with answers to all the most frequently asked questions about Inala Small Group Tours\*\*](#)

## MAP OF TOUR AREA:

