



INALA

Cape York/Wet Tropics Queensland

Wet season specialties (Fly up, fly back)

7-14 February 2022

Itinerary prepared by Steve Davidson, Inala Nature Tours, 23 July 2021.



Black-winged Monarch. A. Schulte

OVERVIEW:

This eight-day tour is designed to target far North Queensland in the Wet Season where we have the best chance of a small number of very special migrants from Papua New Guinea, birds that have a short migration window and which visit our shores for a few months only.

We take in the lowland rainforests of the incomparable Kituni-Payamu (Iron Range National Park), followed by a couple of days in the Wet Tropics, just inland from Port Douglas.

The birds we will be seeking in Kituni-Payamu are the **Red-bellied Pitta**, **Black-winged Monarch** and **Buff-breasted Paradise-kingfisher**. The kingfisher can also be found in the Wet Tropics further south and we'll have a chance for them there too. Of course, there is a suite of additional amazing birds in this region that we'll also target, like **Palm Cockatoo**, **Eclectus Parrot**, **Magnificent Riflebird**, **Frill-necked Monarch**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Trumpet Manucode** and **Northern Scrub-robin**, to name a few. Several of the species at the tip of Cape York occur no further south, as well as in Papua New Guinea, and represent an ancient avifauna that harks back to the last Ice Age, when there was a land bridge between Australia and PNG.

Around the Wet Tropics area our main target is **Blue-faced Parrot-finch**, at that time of year found in the highland rainforests. Here we will also look for other high-altitude specialties like **Golden Bowerbird**, **Victoria's Riflebird**, **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**, **Bridled Honeyeater** and **Fernwren**, amongst others.

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ITINERARY OUTLINE:

Day 1. Mon 7 Feb 22. Arrive Cairns.

Day 2. Tue 8 Feb 22. Fly Cairns to Lockhart River, Iron Range NP.

Day 3. Wed 9 Feb 22. Iron Range NP.

Day 4. Thu 10 Feb 22. Iron Range NP.

Day 5 Fri 11 Feb 22. Iron Range NP. Fly Lockhart River to Cairns.

Day 6 Sat 12 Feb 22. Cairns to Atherton Tablelands

Day 7. Sun 13 Feb 22. Atherton and Windsor Tablelands.

Day 8. Mon 14 Feb 22. Atherton Tablelands to Cairns and depart.

DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1. Mon 7 Feb 22. Arrive Cairns.

We will meet in Cairns this afternoon and check in to our accommodation. If time allows, we can have a look along the Esplanade for shorebirds and other tropical species. In the evening we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant before retiring early in readiness for the flight to Lockhart River the next day. **Accommodation:** Cairns hotel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** D



Yellow-billed Kingfisher P. Kelly

Day 2. Tue 8 Feb 22. Fly Cairns to Lockhart River, Iron Range National Park (Kituni-Payamu).

This morning we will board a flight to Lockhart River on the boundary of one of Australia's most treasured, yet remote, birding destinations: Kituni-Payamu, which is home to a host of range restricted species found nowhere else in the country. On arrival we will collect our vehicle and settle into our accommodation. If time allows, we'll head off into the national park for a look around, hopefully picking up a few birds including **Black-winged Monarch, Trumpet Manucode, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Yellow-billed Kingfisher** and hopefully, hear a **Red-bellied Pitta** calling. **Accommodation:** Portland Roads House (shared toilet/bathroom). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 3 & 4. Wed 9 & Thur 10 Feb 22. Kituni-Payamu.

We have 2 full days to search the environs of the Iron Range NP, searching for the migrant **Red-bellied Pitta, Black-winged Monarch & Buff-breasted Paradise-kingfishers**. Other specialties of the area include **Magnificent Riflebird, Noisy Scrub-robin, Palm Cockatoo, Red-cheeked & Eclectus Parrots, Trumpet Manucode, Black-eared Catbird, Frill-necked Monarch, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Green-backed, Cryptic, Tawny-breasted & White-streaked Honeyeaters, White-faced Robin, Yellow-legged Flyrobin, Tropical Scrubwren, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Double-eyed Fig-parrot (race *marshalli*), Noisy Pitta,**



Eclectus Parrots in flight by Alfred Schulte

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Fairy Gerygone (race *personata*), **Spectacled Monarch** (race *albiventer*), **Shining Flycatcher**, **Pied Heron**, **Black-naped**, **Sooty & Lesser Crested Terns**, **Great & Lesser Frigatebird** and **Spotted Whistling-duck**.

At night we'll try for a few night-birds like **Marbled Frogmouth**, **Large-tailed Nightjar** and **Rufous Owl**, as well as some mammals found nowhere else but here and PNG, such as **Common Cuscus** and **Spotted Cuscus**. The incredible **Green Tree Python** is also a possibility in the rainforest, as well as **Spotted Python**, **Amethystine Python**, **Brown-headed Snake** and **Orange-naped Snake**. **Accommodation:** Portland Roads House (shared toilet/bathroom) for 2 additional nights. **Meals included:** B, L, D each day.



Day 5 Fri 11 Feb 22. Kituni-Payamu. Fly Lockhart River to Cairns.

According to current flight schedules, we should have some more time in the morning to do a bit of catch up birding if we are still missing any of the targets before we catch our flight back to Cairns. We'll spend the night in a Cairns hotel. **Accommodation:** Cairns (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Days 6 & 7. Sat 12 & Sun 13 Feb 2022. Atherton and Windsor Tablelands.

Today we'll head up onto the Tablelands 'behind' Cairns. We'll look for birds en route and head up into some high altitude rainforest to target **Blue-faced Parrot-finch**, as well as **Victoria's Riflebird**, **Golden Bowerbird**, **Fernwren**, **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**, **Atherton Scrubwren**, **Bower's Shrike-thrush**, **Pied Monarch**, **Mountain Thornbill**, **Tooth-billed Bowerbird**, **Bridled Honeyeater**, **Spotted Catbird**, **Lovely Fairywren** and **Macleay's Honeyeater**. Other species in the area include **Pale-vented Bush-hen**, **Red-necked Crake**, **Double-eyed Fig-parrot** (race *macleayana*), **Barred Cuckoo-shrike**, **Cotton & Green Pygmy-goose**, **White-browed Crake**, **Great Bowerbird**, **Northern Fantail**, **Black Bittern**, **Grey Whistler**, **Black-faced**, **Spectacled & White-eared Monarchs** and **White-cheeked**, **Lewin's**, **Scarlet**, **White-throated & Brown-backed Honeyeaters**.



At night we can try for **Lesser Sooty Owl** and possibly the rainforest-inhabiting *lurida* race of Australian Boobook, known as Little Red Boobook. Nocturnal mammals include a range of different possums like **Green Ringtail**, **Striped**, **Lemuroid**, **Herbert River Ringtail Possums** and **Long-tailed Pygmy-possum**, and gliders

such as **Yellow-bellied** and **Sugar Glider**. **Accommodation:** Atherton Tablelands for 2 nights (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D each day.



Day 8. Sun 14 Feb 2022. Atherton Tablelands to Cairns and depart.

This morning we will have time for more early morning birding for any targets we may still need to chase down, before we head back to Cairns, arriving around midday where the tour will end. Flights may be booked from 13:00 today (not included in tour price). **Accommodation:** none. **Meals included:** B.

PRICING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Tour Price: AU\$ 6,100 per person for a group size of 4 participants with one specialist guide/driver in one 4WD vehicle.

Single supplement: AU\$470.



Palm Cockatoo A. Schulte

Price includes: All accommodation as per the itinerary, specialist guide and transport, return flight between Cairns to Lockhart River, all meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the above itinerary. Includes GST.

Price does not include: Airfares other than the Cairns - Lockhart River return flights, airport transfers, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, tips, laundry or other items of a personal nature.

Please note:

- **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. Most 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.

- [Click here for a separate online doc that answers many of the frequently asked questions about Small Group Tours.](#)