

TRIP REPORT GEORGETOWN

21st – 23rd October 2020



Great Bowerbird (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) with lilac crest. Photograph by Phil Gregory.

Guide: Phil Gregory

Clients: David and Karen Lie

Itinerary

Oct 21

Pick-up at *The Bailey* at 0730 and head to Les Davie Park for great views of a **Rufous Owl** as well as a **White-bellied Cuckooshrike**; Gillie's Range Road to Nerada Tea Estate near Malanda for **Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo**, then **Brolga** and **Sarus Crane** at Bromfield Swamp where the differences on the extent of red on the head and the grey vs pink legs were instructive. **White-necked Heron** is sparse in the north, and a big surprise was a juv. **Pied Heron**, the first I have seen up on the tablelands. Mt Hypipamee NP followed for a male **Golden Bowerbird** near the striking double maypole bower, and nice views of the large-headed and long-legged **Grey-headed Robin**, a responsive grey and rusty with black bill **Bower's Shrike-thrush**, and **Bridled Honeyeater**, also the elusive **Atherton Scrubwren**, five FNQ endemics in quick succession. Ravenshoe for lunch at the cantankerous Covid-free bakery, before Warruma Swamp near Mt Garnet for **Green Pygmy-Goose**, **Black**

Swan and the locally scarce **Noisy Miner**. Forty Mile Scrub in the heat was noteworthy for the aggressive bees in the toilets which necessitated a hasty retreat, then we stopped at Mt Surprise where a **Great Bowerbird** put on a fantastic show by his bower, coming in with lilac nuchal crest erect for lovely photos, they are seldom as obliging as this bird, also the first of many **Apostlebirds** appeared and there was a fine **Wedge-tailed Eagle** feeding on roadkill nearby.

Then it was on to Georgetown where a **Red-backed Kingfisher** was a nice find on wires not far out of town, and the racecourse and airport gave us an **Australian Pratincole** and **Australian Bustard** and quite a few **Agile Wallaby** plus **Galah** and **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo** feeding on a succulent green annual shrub.

Oct 22

Out to Cumberland Dam where water levels were quite high, and highlights included **Black-necked Stork**, **Royal Spoonbill**, **Green Pygmy-Goose**, **Maggie Goose**, a **Latham's Snipe**, 2 juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** and 11 **Black-fronted Dotterel**. **Blue-winged Kookaburra** was conspicuous, maybe too much so as it kept passerines very wary about coming to drink, **Dollarbird** was my first of the season, **Squatter Pigeon** showed briefly and honeyeaters included **Yellow**, **Rufous-throated**, **Yellow-tinted** and **Blue-faced** plus **Yellow-throated Miner**. The white-vented *normani* race of **Black-faced Woodswallow** was also here in small numbers. Finches were very sparse, with only **Double-barred** showing; there was no sign of Budgerigar and just a quick flyby of 2 **Cockatiel**, whilst **Galahs** were only in small numbers. **Paperbark Flycatcher** was vocal, with nice comparisons with the superficially similar **Willie-Wagtail**.

A foray then to Durham Dam gave **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, **Purple-backed Fairywren** and **Zebra Finch** as additions, then it was time for lunch and a break in the heat before heading out to Flat Creek Dam. This was instructive for **Yellow-tinted** vs **Grey-fronted honeyeaters**, as 2 birds came in promptly to the calls of the latter but had only quite sparse streaking below, so quite which one this is problematic. There were 13 **Plumed Whistling-Duck**, **Brown Goshawk** soared through and **Common Bronzewing** sat up nicely, but very few species came to drink today though a very dark almost purplish **Wallaroo** was nice.

Oct 23

We began at 0600 at the dam at the *Latara Motel*, which had a good range of species including **Brown Quail**, **Helmeted Guinea fowl**, **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Red-winged Parrot**, **Squatter Pigeon**, **Diamond Dove**, **Rufous-throated**, **Yellow**, **Brown** and **Yellow-tinted Honeyeater**, **Double-barred Finch** and both **Tree** and **Fairy Martin**.

Cumberland Dam was similar to the previous day, but a stop by the bridgeworks at Routh Creek unexpectedly gave us 3 of the uncommon **Black-chinned (Golden-backed) Honeyeater** coming in to drink, **Weebill** and then **Brown Falcon** and **Little Eagle** at a roadside about 10km further east. A diversion to Undarra Lava tubes was good for coffee and **Eastern Grey Kangaroo**, but the lovely confiding **Mareeba Rock Wallaby** had to wait until we called in at Granite Gorge en route back to Cairns. A small party of **Brolga** and 2 **Sarus Cranes** were also nearby, with most of the latter now departed for the breeding ground in north-western Queensland

My thanks to David and Karen for the chance to do the trip, nice to get out there in the late dry season, and it was fortunately not too hot. Thanks to Sue and Rowan at Sickbill Safaris for the logistics.



Red-tailed Black Cockatoo



Wallaroo at Flat Creek

Bird List

Australian Brushturkey	Little Black Cormorant	Weebill, Scarlet Honeyeater (heard)
Helmeted Guineafowl	Little Pied Cormorant	Bridled Honeyeater
Brown Quail	Australian Darter	Yellow Honeyeater
Black Swan	Black Kite	Lewin's Honeyeater
Magpie Goose	Whistling Kite	Yellow-tinted Honeyeater
Plumed Whistling Duck	Little Eagle	Rufous-throated Honeyeater
Green Pygmy-Goose	Brown Goshawk	Black-chinned Honeyeater
Pacific Black Duck	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Noisy Miner
Grey Teal	Rufous Owl (Cairns)	Yellow-throated Miner
Australasian Grebe	Crested Pigeon	Little Friarbird
Pied Stilt	Peaceful Dove	Noisy Friarbird
Masked Lapwing	Diamond Dove	Black-faced Woodswallow
Black-fronted Dotterel	Squatter Pigeon	Black-faced Cuckooshrike
Latham's Snipe	Common Bronzewing	Rufous Whistler
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Torresian Imperial Pigeon (Cairns)	Australian Golden Whistler (heard)
Comb-crested Jacana	Dollarbird	Bower's Shrike-thrush
Australian Pratincole	Rainbow Bee-eater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Black-necked Stork	Laughing Kookaburra	White-bellied Cuckooshrike
Australian Bustard	Blue-winged Kookaburra	Grey Fantail
Great Egret	Sacred Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail
Little Egret	Red-backed Kingfisher	Grey-headed Robin
Intermediate Egret	Brown Falcon	Pied Butcherbird
Eastern Cattle Egret	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Pied Currawong
Pied Heron	Red-tailed Black Cockatoo	Australian Magpie
White-necked Heron	Galah, Cockatiel	Torresian Crow,
Nankeen Night Heron	Rainbow Lorikeet	Victoria's Riflebird (heard)
Australian White Ibis	Red-winged Parrot	Magpie-lark
Straw-necked Ibis	Pale-headed Rosella	Paperbark Flycatcher
Royal Spoonbill	Golden Bowerbird	Welcome Swallow
Sarus Crane	Great Bowerbird	Tree Martin
Brolga	Purple-backed Fairywren	Fairy Martin
Australian Pelican	Apostlebird	Common Myna (Cairns)
Australasian Swamphen	Atherton Scrubwren	House Sparrow (Ravenshoe)
Channel-billed Cuckoo	Brown Gerygone	Double-barred Finch
	White-throated Gerygone	Zebra Finch.

Mammals

Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo	Wallaroo	Eastern Grey Kangaroo
Agile Wallaby		
Mareeba Rock wallaby		