



Eastern Australia Trip Report (Oct 9 - 25, 2023)

[Link: Eastern Australia Trip Report \(Oct 9 - 25, 2023\)](#)

Day 1: Arrival

Tonight was all about the food, breaking ice, building of comradeship and laughter. A great start to another adventure with Eagle-Eye Tours.

Day 2: Cattana Wetlands, Botanic Gardens and the Esplanade

A pre-dawn trip to the Esplanade set the scene for the tour. Everyone was up for 5.30 am and by breakfast our species list had already reached 25. Cattana Wetlands, the Botanic Gardens and the Mangrove Boardwalk sent the list to 70 by the end of the day.



Cattana Wetlands © Scott Roberts



Watching an Australian Brushturkey © Scott Roberts



Mangrove Boardwalk © Scott Roberts

Day 3: Pelagic to Michaelmas Cays

"So amazing", "So lucky with such great weather", "Such an amazing experience" and "I love these moments watching the behaviour of animals". Quotes by guests as we left Michaelmas Cays. Sooty Terns and Bridled Terns nesting with Brown Boobies, a random Ruddy Turnstone walking amongst them and Crested Terns performing courtship displays above, but the bonus was a visit from a Greater Frigatebird.



Brown Boobies nesting on Michaelmas Cays © Scott Roberts

Day 4: Barren Gorge, Davies Creek, Mareeba, Julatten and Port Douglas

The group visited 5 locations today: Wetlands, rainforest, sclerophyll forests, farmlands and a Swamp. Together, we saw 75 species, but the highlight of the day for the guests was seeing a flock of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** feeding on grass roots in a park in Port Douglas a far flung scene from a Captive cockatoo.

Day 5: Daintree River Cruise, Upper Daintree and Stewart Valley

The Daintree. An iconic Australian River. One of the world's oldest rainforests. The region with the highest biodiversity on the continent. Part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage site. Absolutely gorgeous and teeming with life. It left us with another 70 species of birds, 1 butterfly, 1 reptile and 2 mammals. Thankfully we've got a morning within this rainforest tomorrow, to add to the list.



Daintree Cruise © Scott Roberts



Daintree Landscape © Scott Roberts

Day 6: Port Douglas to Lake Eacham, via Mount Lewis and Mareeba

After an early breakfast at an amazing Cafe in Port Douglas, we headed out to Mount Lewis, where, as well as a wide range of bird species, we were lucky enough to come across a pair of green ringtail possums high in the canopy. The mammals kept coming alongside the birds, with an evening with striped possums, squirrel gliders, northern brown bandicoots and red-legged pademelons.



Green ring-tailed possum



Striped Possum © Scott Roberts



Sugar glider © Scott Roberts



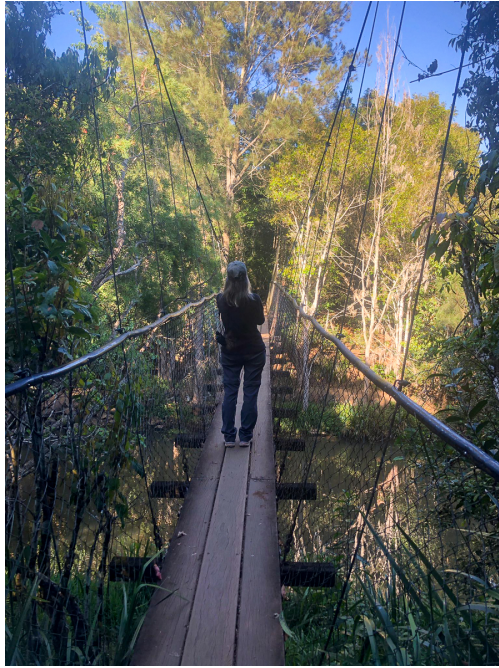
Night spotting, Curtain Fig Tree © Scott Roberts

Day 7: Hasties Lagoon, Lake Hypipamee and Malanda

Our first stop was an unplanned one. The guides found a couple of agile wallabies down a farm road and we returned to have a look at them. Within minutes we were all on the verge of whiplash from the sheer number of species that flew past us. Dozens of Brolga, Fairy Wrens, King Parrots, cuckoos, coucals and much much more. 24 species in total. Hastie's Swamp also added another 15 to the day, most of which were new to the group. The day ended with a couple of Platypus and a few Coppery Brush Tailed possums and a Giant White Tailed Rat (native to the region).



Hasties Lagoon © Scott Roberts



Looking for platypus at Yungburra © Scott Roberts

Day 8: ETTY Bay

It's a 1.5 hour drive beside and over the pass of a mountain range covered in rainforest, but well worth it to see an adult Southern Cassowary walk across an open area in clear view of everyone in the group. This could only be rewarded with a icecream beside the beach. Definitely the highlight of the day, which ended with sunset over the Esplanade in Cairns.



Sunset at Cairns Esplanade © Scott Roberts

Day 9: Cairns to Lamington

Today was mostly a travel day, an early flight to Brisbane and then a drive to Lamington National Park, where the guests were drawn to King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Red-browed Finches and Pied Currawongs as soon as they stepped foot out of the door. The remaining day was filled with at least 10 more species.



Afternoon on Duck Creek road, Lamington © Scott Roberts

Day 10: Lamington

Woke to the dawn chorus surrounded by rainforest and gorgeous views. A few walks through which allowed us to see Noisy Pittas, Paradise Riflebirds and Regent Bowerbirds. The rain only came when we headed back to the cafe for lunch. The day ended with about 10 minutes of the Albert's Lyrebird calling and a magnificent sunset over the Scenic Rim.



Crimson Rosellas in Lamington © Scott Roberts



Birding at O'Reilly's © Scott Roberts

Day 11: Lamington to Sydney

A transfer day today from Lamington National Park, to Sydney, ready for the next stage of the tour. Once in Sydney, we headed off to the Royal Botanical Gardens where we watched the sun go down over the Opera House and Harbour Bridge and located the resident powerful owl, our first owl sighting of the trip.



Sunset at Sydney Harbour Opera House © Scott Roberts

Day 12: Sydney Pelagic

The Sydney Pelagic trip started super calm and seas were reasonably calm all day, increasing slightly to allow the albatross to soar. Four species of albatross, a **Parasitic Jaeger**, **Wilson's Storm Petrel**, **Grey-faced Petrel**, **Providence Petrel** and about 2,000 shearwaters, made up of four different species.

Day 13: Sydney to Blackheath via Blue Mountains

The group headed out for the dawn chorus at Maroubra Headland, where we picked up the New Holland Honeyeater and Black-shouldered Kite before heading out to the Penrith weir on the Nepean River which had Satin Flycatchers, Bell Miners, Red Wattlebirds, Red-browed Finches, Great and Little Pied Cormorants, Spotted Pardalotes, Red-rumped Parrots, Superb Fairy Wrens, Galahs and Corellas. We then drove up to Blackheath for the afternoon to wander around Echo Point where we bagged a Superb Lyrebird and watched some cockatoo acrobatics as they flew from high on the cliffs to the valley below.

14: Blackheath to Capertee Valley

The day started with a 15 minute viewing of a male Superb Lyrebird and a Scarlet Robin at Evans Lookout and ended with Blue-billed Ducks, Australian and Spotless Crakes, plenty of Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Musk Ducks and Eastern Rosellas at Lake Wallace. The list continues to grow.



Birding at Lake Wallace © Scott Roberts



View of Gross Valley from Govett's Leap © Scott Roberts

Day 15: Capertee Valley

The dawn departure into the Capertee Valley was brisk. We were all rugged up for the predicted 2°C, but it ended up only at 7°C, so the layers quickly came off. We visited several sites in the Valley

spotting Red-capped Robins, Brown Treecreepers, White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, Yellow Spoonbills and White-browed Babblers. The valley itself was stunning! Walls of iron rich mountains, cliffs and escarpments surrounding a huge fertile plain with creeks criss-crossing the landscape. A return to Lake Wallace was a must and five Australian Pelicans and a White-bellied Sea Eagle scaring a hundred coots to the reeds made it worthwhile.



Capertee Valley © Scott Roberts

Day 16: Capertee to Sydney, via Blue Mountains

The long and winding road back to Sydney, started at 2°C, but by the first stop was 15°C. A Rock Warbler at a picnic ground, a White-eared Honeyeater at some mountain heath and both a little wattlebird and great views of a Superb Lyrebird vocalizing in clear view made for a perfect morning. After a delicious lunch at Windsor, we went to Longneck Lagoon where we found a Scarlet Myzomela before heading back to Sydney to celebrate an amazing tour along Eastern Australia.



Maroubra Headlands © Scott Roberts

Day 17: Sydney to Hobart

It was farewell to a few from the group, but 6 remained to see what Tasmania has to offer.



Group at Mount Banks © Scott Robert