



Tropical Australia Trip Report 2023

[Link: Tropical Australia Trip Report 2023](#)

Day 1: Darwin arrival and meet and greet

There is nothing better than seeing happy people at the start of a tour. Most had been out and about already, whether it be on a day tour, or just to areas around the city to get their eyes and ears adjusted to the new environment and to make sure they maximised their opportunities in the amazing place.



Sunset at Darwin Sailing Club © Scott Roberts

Day 2: Darwin and surrounds

Today, was a day of hit and misses, but the hits definitely made up for the misses. Buffalo Creek was quiet and so, too was Knuckey's Lagoon, but Lee Point! Wow. Within 20 metres we'd seen at least 10 species all in one small grove of bushes. A short trail took us further south revealing a number of new species, the highlight being a pair of **Little Bronze-Cuckoos**. It was a great start to the trip, with 81 species found over the day.



Looking at Beach Thick-knees © Scott Roberts

Day 3: Darwin to Jabiru

Straight after breakfast, we beelined it to Fogg Dam, one of the best birding sites in Australia, where you feel like you're going to get whiplash having to look everywhere for different birds. The perfect start was due to the kindness of one of the guests, who had been on a tour there the day before and located a **Rose-crowned Fruit Dove** nest. The scope picked it up perfectly. With that, and a walk to Bird Billabong, we saw plenty of agile wallabies, a colony of black flying foxes and 68 species.

Day 4: Nourlangie and Yellow Water Billabong

77 species located on day 3. Not bad. Not bad at all. A dawn boat cruise on a Billabong and river followed by a stop at Anbangbang Billabong and a late afternoon and evening at Nourlangie Rock Art site allowed us to cover plenty of habitats to make the most of our chance to see more and more. It was also a day full of Indigenous culture, stories and learnings from the oldest continuing culture on earth.

Day 5: Ubirr and Mamukala Wetlands

This morning was something quite special. To see a **Rainbow Pitta** is something special, but to see four Rainbow Pitta, two of which we watched fighting for at least 10 minutes on the trail, a pair of **Spangled Drongos** even joining the foray at one stage, is something you don't see every day. Then, later that morning, a **Wilkins Rock Wallaby** sat 10 metres from the group, almost ignoring us completely, and to top of the morning, a flock of **Long-tailed Finches** were spotted by an Eagle-Eyed guest from on top of the Ubirr Sandstone outlier.



Birders watching Rainbow Pittas, Bardedjilidji, Kakadu © Scott Roberts



Lake Jabiru © Scott Roberts



Bardedjilidji Circuit Walk - a reprieve from the tropical heat © Scott Roberts

Day 6: Jabiru to Pine Creek

Up and at 'em early again. This time to Nanguluwur as we thought it best to find some species that

we hadn't found yet. Plus, there's some amazing rock art at the end of the trail depicting Indigenous contact with European arrival. We were lucky enough to hear the **Banded Fruit Doves** and to see three **black wallaroos**, amongst a myriad of other species. The afternoon was spent at sites around the town of Pine Creek, where we quickly found the endemic **Hooded Parrot** in town and a few waders at the water treatment plant.



Copperfield Dam, Pine Creek © Scott Roberts

Day 7: Edith Falls and Pine Creek

An early start to Edith Falls this morning in the hope of seeing the Gouldian Finches. We tried three Creek beds that are well known for them, only to find that we had just missed them at the last one and no matter how long we stayed, they weren't coming back. Thankfully, the **Sandstone Shrikethrush** wasn't as elusive. Pine Creek also decided to show up in style this afternoon, with a great bowerbird displaying at its bower for a young lady and great views of a flock of **Masked Finches**.



Watching Banded Honeyeaters (amongst another 12 species) at Ferguson River © Scott Roberts



Edith Falls © Scott Roberts



View from Upper Edith Falls © Scott Roberts

Day 8: Pine Creek to Darwin, via Litchfield National Park

Back to the Ferguson River where yesterday we lucked out on the Finches. This morning was quite different and in truth was a five finch fiesta! **Masked, Crimson, Double Barred, Long Tailed and Gouldian Finches!**. The morning only got better with four **Varied Lorikeets** joining the foray and then to end our morning, a farewell from the **Hooded Parrots** at Pine Creek.



Catherdral Termite Mound © Scott Roberts

Day 9: Farewells

With Farewells having been done at dinner the night before, the guide and the guests, continuing on to the Eastern Australia Tour, boarded a flight to Cairns, where another adventure awaits....



Our group