



INALA

Cape York/Wet Tropics Queensland

Summer migrants and specialties (Fly up, fly back)

24 January-1 February 2024

Itinerary updated by Dr Tonia Cochran, Inala Nature Tours, 4 February 2023.



Black-winged Monarch (A. Schulte)

OVERVIEW:

This nine-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 **Papuan Pitta (*Erythropitta macklotii*)**, **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.

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

Day 1. Wed 24 Jan 24. Arrive Cairns.

Day 2. Thu 25 Jan 24. Fly Cairns to Lockhart River, Iron Range NP.

Day 3. Fri 26 Jan 24. Iron Range NP.

Day 4. Sat 27 Jan 24. Iron Range NP.

Day 5. Sun 28 Jan 24. Iron Range NP.

Day 6. Mon 29 Jan 24. Fly Lockhart River to Cairns.

Day 7. Tue 30 Jan 24. Cairns to Atherton Tablelands

Day 8. Wed 31 Jan 24. Atherton and Windsor Tablelands.

Day 9. Thu 1 Feb 24. Atherton Tablelands to Cairns and depart.

DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1. Wednesday 24 January 2024. 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 start of the tour tomorrow. **Accommodation:** Cairns hotel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** D



Yellow-billed Kingfisher P. Kelly

toilet/bathroom). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 2. Thursday 25 January 24. Fly Cairns to Lockhart River, Iron Range National Park (Kituni-Payamu).

This morning we will spend exploring the Cairns region. Early afternoon 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. **Current flight schedule is CNS-IRG 14:00-15:30.** 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 **Papuan Pitta** calling.

Accommodation: Portland Roads House (shared

Day 3 -5. Friday 26, Saturday 27, Sunday 28 January 2024. Kituni-Payamu.

We have 3 full days to search the environs of the Iron Range NP, searching for the migrant **Papuan 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**



Eclectus Parrots in flight by Alfred Schulte

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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, 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 3 additional nights. **Meals included:** B, L, D each day.



Day 6. Monday 29 January 2024. 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. [Current flight schedule is IRG-CNS 13:35-16:20](#). We'll spend the night in a Cairns hotel. **Accommodation:** Cairns (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Days 7 & 8. Tuesday 30 & Wednesday 31 January 2024. 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 9. Thursday 1 February 2023. Atherton Tablelands to Cairns and depart.

This morning we will transfer back to Cairns airport, arriving by late morning 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\$6,830 per person for a group size of 4 participants with one specialist guide/driver in one 4WD vehicle.

Single supplement: AU\$590.

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.](#)