



Inala Pilbara & Shark Bay, Western Australia Tour

Ancient Landscapes, birds and mammals

18th May – 2nd June 2023

Itinerary prepared by Steve Davidson and Frank O'Connor, Inala Nature Tours, June 2022.

Join us on an extensive and thorough tour of this vast region, taking in a wide variety of habitats such as spinifex-covered ranges, rocky gorges, mangroves, mulga and extensive mudflats. The scenery throughout the Pilbara and Shark Bay regions is incredible, and of course there is some unique wildlife. Targets include Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Western Grasswren, Striated (Pilbara) Grasswren, Western Bowerbird, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Black-chinned (Golden-backed) Honeyeater, Grey Honeyeater, Spinifexbird, Rufous Fieldwren, Dusky Gerygone, Spinifex Pigeon, Flock Bronzewing, Mangrove Robin, Mangrove Golden Whistler, White-breasted Whistler, Painted Finch and with a bit of luck – Grey Falcon. Mammals feature as well and we will be target Red Kangaroo, Common Wallaroo (Euro), Black-flanked Rock Wallaby, Rothschild's Rock Wallaby, Dugong, Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Finlayson's Cave Bat, Kaluta and Pilbara Pebble-mound Mouse. The Pilbara also contains some of the world's oldest surface rocks, including granites that are over three billion years old ancient fossilised remains of stromatolites (the earliest fossil evidence of life on earth), and aboriginal rock art. And we cannot forget the famous Red Dog, whose statue we will also visit on this tour.

We are also very excited to visit world-famous and spectacular Shark Bay region which includes a trip to Dirk Hartog Island (seldom offered on itineraries due to the difficulty of organising logistics) where we will search for specialities such as the black and white form of White-winged Fairywren and the isolated Dirk Hartog subspecies of Southern Emu-wren and Western Fieldwren. We also have the chance to see the range-restricted Western Grasswren.



Spinifex Pigeons. Photo: A Schulte

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

Day 1. Thu 18 May 23. Arrive Exmouth.
Day 2. Fri 19 May 23. Exmouth area.
Day 3. Sat 20 May 23. Exmouth to Onslow.
Day 4. Sun 21 May 23. Onslow to Karratha.
Day 5. Mon 22 May 23. Karratha area.
Day 6. Tue 23 May 23. Karratha to Port Hedland.
Day 7. Wed 24 May 23. Port Hedland to Tom Price.
Day 8. Thu 25 May 23. Tom Price area.
Day 9. Fri 26 May 23. Karinjini National Park, Tom Price.
Day 10. Sat 27 May 23. Tom Price to Carnarvon.
Day 11. Sun 28 May 23. Carnarvon to Denham.
Day 12. Mon 29 May 23. Dirk Hartog Island.
Day 13. Tue 30 May 23. Shark Bay area.
Day 14. Wed 31 May 23. Shark Bay to Carnarvon.
Day 15. Thu 1 June 23. Carnarvon to Exmouth.
Day 16. Fri 2 June 23. Optional extra Whale shark excursion or depart Exmouth.
Day 17. Sat 3 June 23. Depart Exmouth (for those joining Whale shark excursion).

DETAILED ITINERARY:

B- breakfast, L- lunch and D-dinner.

Day 1. Thursday 18 May 2023. Arrive Exmouth.

Make your own arrangements to arrive at Exmouth (Learmonth) airport today. [Most flights pass through Perth and the best flight based on the current 2022 Qantas timetable is QF1602 PER-LEA departing Perth at 07:00 and arriving Exmouth at 09:00-flight not included in price](#). After lunch and settling into our accommodation, there will be an opportunity for those who are keen for some birding around town. The most obvious birds will be species like White-plumed Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Miner, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Torresian Crow, Zebra Finch, Brahminy Kite and Rainbow Bee-eater. There should be Banded Lapwing on the main oval or golf course and possibly Emu. With some luck we'll be able to locate a small party of Rufous-crowned Emu-wrens at North West Cape. Upon our return this evening we will have a welcome dinner and chat about the tour.

Accommodation: Exmouth (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** L, D.



Grey Honeyeater.
Photo: A Schulte



Budgerigars. Photo: A Schulte

Day 2. Friday 19 May 2023. Exmouth area.

Today we will explore the peninsula around Exmouth and the Cape Range and start with a visit to the mangroves at Turquoise Bay and Yardie Creek. Birds include a chance of the mangrove species like Mangrove Golden Whistler, Mangrove Fantail and Dusky Gerygone. Nearby we'll look for Rufous Fieldwren, Western Bowerbird (Cape Range ssp), Grey-headed Honeyeater, etc. and we will try hard for Rufous-crowned Emu-

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wren in Cape Range NP. We should get good views of Black-footed Rock Wallaby, plus the very reddish-looking western morph of Euro. Red Kangaroo are also in the area. Perentie (*Varanus giganteus*) would be the main reptile target but quite a few other reptile species are possible. The afternoon can be spent closer to Exmouth at the harbour, sewage ponds, golf course, etc. We will have dinner in town and then check the roads again after dark for nocturnal critters.

Accommodation: Exmouth (en suite rooms) as for last night. **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Black-chinned Golden-backed) Honeyeater.

Photo: A. Schulte



Cockatiel.

Photo: A. Schulte

Day 3. Saturday 20 May 2023. Exmouth to Onslow (325kms).

We will head away from the North-west Cape region today and move north-east to Onslow. Near Onslow we will be looking for Flock Bronzewing, Painted Finch, possibly Pictorella Mannikin, Brolga, Black-necked Stork and a variety of water birds. En route we will look for Spotted Harrier, Australian Hobby, Budgerigar, Cockatiel, Rufous Songlark, Brown Songlark and Horsfield's Bushlark. If the *Grevillea wickhami* is in flower then Crimson Chat, Black Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater and Masked Woodswallow.

Accommodation: Onslow (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 4. Sunday 21 May 2023. Onslow to Karratha (260kms).

Near Karratha we will stop at a place on the Nullagine River hoping for Barking Owl, Brown Quail, Blue-winged kookaburra, Pictorella Mannikin and Pheasant Coucal. During the late afternoon we will check in to our accommodation in Karratha. **Accommodation:** Karratha. (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 5. Monday 22 May 2023. Karratha area.

Point Samson & Cossack areas north of Roebourne for mangrove species including Mangrove Robin, raptors, reptiles, etc. after which we'll head out to the Burrup Peninsula on dusk to look for Rothschild's Rock Wallaby, Spotted Nightjar and Finlayson's Cave Bat emerging from caves for their night. **Accommodation:** Karratha (en suite cabins) as for last night. **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 6. Tuesday 23 May 2023. Karratha to Port Hedland (300kms).

Before breakfast we'll check out the town oval and racecourse at dawn. At Six Mile Creek we'll look for shorebirds out on the mudflats and mangrove specialties such as Mangrove Golden Whistler, Canary White-eye, White-breasted Whistler, Dusky Gerygone and Bar-shouldered Dove. From outside the fence of the South Hedland Water Treatment Plant we will see a selection of waterbirds. In the afternoon we can check out the De Grey River area or a bit of woodland along Quartz Quarry Rd for woodland birds. If we're up for a bit of spotlighting after dinner we'll look for owls,



Grey-headed Honeyeater. Photo: A. Schulte

mammals and reptiles. We will also visit Back Beach to check for some shorebirds (including a chance of Beach Stone-curlew) and then the wastewater treatment plant (Painted Finch, some waterbirds, Horsfield's Bushlark, maybe Brown Quail) before travelling through Roebourne heading for Port Hedland. We will stop briefly en route to look for Painted Finch, Spinifex Pigeon and Grey-headed Honeyeater coming into some leaking water. We will also stop at the Sherlock River where we should find 40 or more species with good chances of Painted Finch, Black-tailed Native-hen, Red-kneed Dotterel, Brolga, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Red-browed Pardalote and Brolga. Our destination this evening is Port Hedland. **Accommodation:** Port Hedland (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Day 7. Wednesday 24 May 2023. Port Hedland to Tom Price via Munjina (410kms).

We'll leave Pt Hedland and head inland this morning. Along the way we will check any ephemeral pools, or pools in creeks to look for Painted Finch, Spinifex Pigeon, Red-browed Pardalote, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Diamond Dove, Crested Bellbird and nomadic species such as Budgerigar, Cockatiel, and Pied & Black Honeyeaters, etc. We will have lunch at Munjina before heading to some mulga country in search of Grey Honeyeater, Spinifexbird, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren and a chance of Striated (Pilbara) Grasswren. **Accommodation:** Tom Price (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 8. Thursday 25 May 2023. Tom Price area.

This morning we will explore the Mt Nameless area, where a very early start is required to find the target - Striated (Pilbara) Grasswren in the extensive stands of Spinifex of this area. Also here are Spinifexbird, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Black-chinned (Golden-backed) Honeyeater, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Western Bowerbird, Spinifex Pigeon, Australian Ringneck (smaller form in the Pilbara) and Little Woodswallow plus others such as Brown Quail, Common Bronzewing, Hooded Robin, Purple-backed Fairywren and Western Gerygone. At some point we will visit Kings Lake to look for a variety of species including Star Finch, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Mistletoebird, Crimson Chat, Black-tailed Native-hen, etc. We will also check the Tom Price Water Treatment Plant. In the afternoon we have the option to visit scenically beautiful Hamersley Gorge and nearby woodland and creek-lines, where we will try for all the key targets. We will spotlight in the evening (or one of the evenings) for Spotted Nightjar. **Accommodation:** Tom Price (en suite cabins) as for last night. **Meals included:** B, L, D.

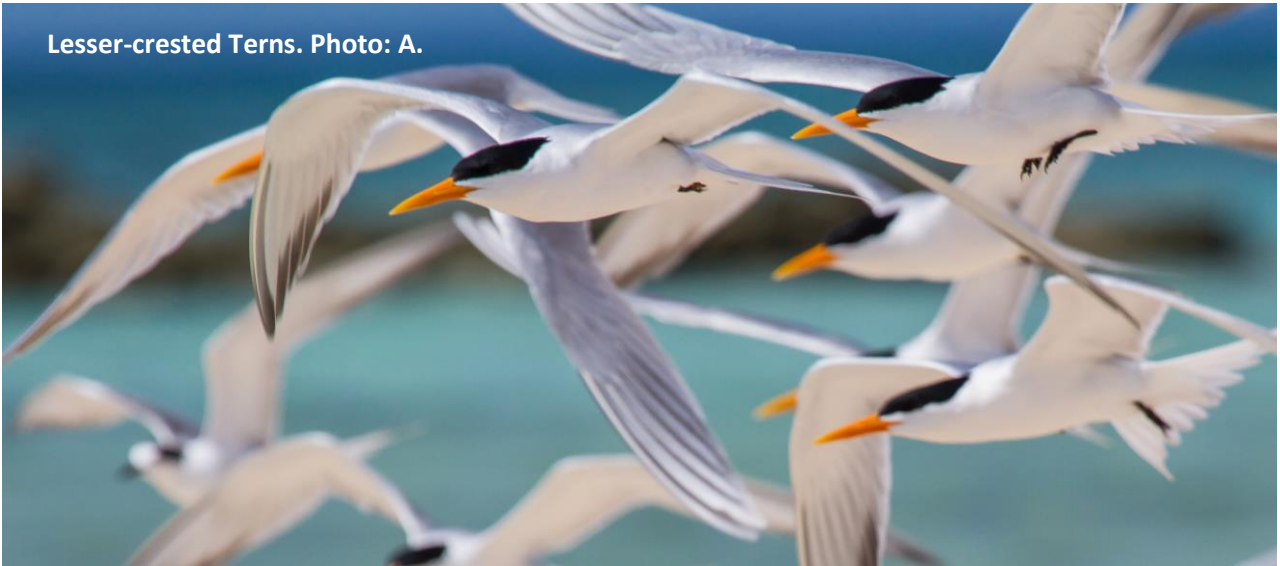
Day 9. Friday 26 May 2023. Karinjini National Park. Tom Price.

We will spend a full day visiting most of the gorges in Karajini NP which contains but some habitat for birds such as Grey Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Black-tailed Treecreeper, White-winged Fairywren and Redthroat, **Accommodation:** Tom Price (en suite cabins) as for last two nights. **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Black-breasted Buzzard. Photo: A. Schulte



Lesser-crested Terns. Photo: A.



Day 10. Saturday 27 May 2023. Tom Price to Carnarvon (660km).

Today is mostly a travel day, as we have a long drive to return to Carnarvon, but there will be opportunities for birding along the way. Raptors are always possible, and we'll keep an eye out for species like Australian Bustard, Spotted Harrier, Australian Hobby, Square-tailed Kite, Black-breasted Buzzard and the exceedingly scarce Grey Falcon. In the afternoon we'll arrive in Carnarvon.

Accommodation: Carnarvon (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 11. Sunday 28 May 2023. Carnarvon to Denham (330kms).

We will bird around the Carnarvon area this morning where our main target will be Slender-billed Thornbill. We will also visit the mangroves and mudflats near town to look for Dusky Gerygone, White-breasted Whistler, Mangrove Fantail and shorebirds such as Lesser Sand Plover, Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, and maybe Broad-billed Sandpiper. Common Redshank and Asian Dowitcher have been occasionally recorded here. Wetlands and the sewage treatment plant in town may yield birds like Musk Duck, Red-kneed Dotterel, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Hoary-headed Grebe. After lunch we'll hit the road again, making our way to Denham and our accommodation for the next three nights.

Accommodation: Denham (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 12. Monday 29 May 2023. Dirk Hartog Island.

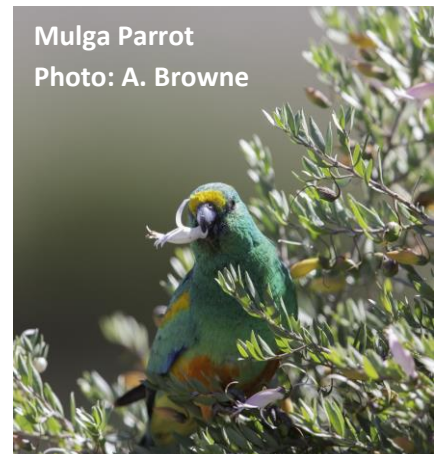
Today we are booked on a boat trip out to the remote Dirk Hartog Island, where we will take part in a guided tour for the morning exploring the southern part of the island. In the sand dunes and coastal scrub, we'll look for the range-restricted Black & White form of White-winged Fairy-wren (ssp. *leucopterus*), the Dirk Hartog Southern Emu-wren, (ssp. *hartogi*) and the Dirk Hartog Rufous Fieldwren (ssp. *hartogi*). Whilst on the boat we will also have our best chance to see Dugong in the sea-grass meadows of the sheltered waters around the island, as well as Green & Loggerhead Turtles, Eastern Osprey, White-bellied Sea-eagle and a number of terns and shorebirds hopefully. Lunch will be included on the tour, after which we'll head back ashore and bird the area again for the remainder of the day.

Accommodation: Denham (en suite cabins) as for last two nights. **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 13. Tuesday 30 May 2023. Shark Bay area.

Today we'll explore the fascinating Shark Bay region, including the coastal town of Denham, Peron Peninsula and the famous Monkey Mia. Here we'll have a great chance of seeing the range restricted Western Grasswren, as well as getting up close and personal with Inshore Bottlenose Dolphins. Other birds here in the coastal shrublands and shoreline include Emu, Rufous Fieldwren, Southern Scrub-robin, White-browed Babbler, Crested Bellbird, Pallid Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Black-eared Cuckoo, White-backed Swallow, Pacific Gull, Eastern Reef Egret, Fairy Tern

Mulga Parrot
Photo: A. Browne



and Eastern Curlew. Malleefowl has been re-introduced into the area as well. Terrestrial mammals feature well in the region, with several successful re-introduction programs having taken place. Species such as the Greater Bilby, Brush-tailed Bettong (Woylie), Rufous Hare-Wallaby (Mala) and Banded Hare-Wallaby have been re-wilded in the Francois Peron National Park but we are unlikely to see them as access is not possible after dark.

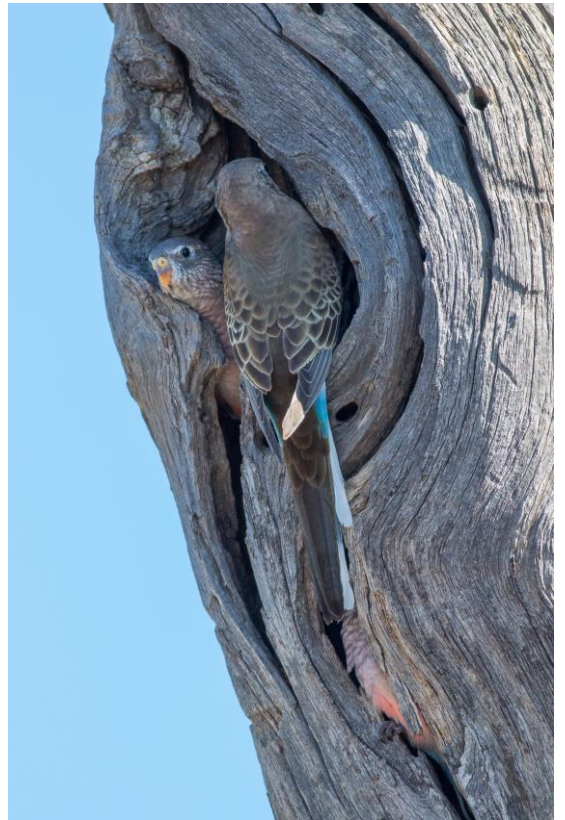
Accommodation: Denham (en suite cabins) as for last night.

Meals included: B, L, D.

Day 14. Wednesday 31 May 2023. Denham to Carnarvon (330kms).

Today we will bird our way back to Carnarvon. We will visit the stromatolites at Hamelin Pool. Orange Chat has been seen in the samphire near the caravan park and there is an excellent area of mulga at the turnoff where we will look for Crested Bellbird, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Inland Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Slaty-backed Thornbill, Mulga Parrot, Bourke's Parrot, Chiming Wedgebill. This is the northern limit of Dusky Woodswallow, Australian Raven and Western Yellow Robin and we will look for Little Buttonquail. Closer to Carnarvon we will search for nomadic birds such as Orange Chat, Pied Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater and Masked Woodswallow.

Accommodation: Carnarvon (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Day 15. Thursday 1 June 2023. Carnarvon to Exmouth (365kms).

This morning we will get an early start looking for woodland birds east of town with the possibility of Bourke's Parrot, Black-tailed Treecreeper, Black-eared Cuckoo, White-plumed Honeyeater, Hooded Robin or Spinifex Pigeon there in eucalypt woodland and adjacent shrublands. We can look for birds at their northern limit such as Silveryeye and Dusky Moorhen. We will then head north, returning to Exmouth for our last night.

Accommodation: Exmouth (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 16. Friday 2 June 2023. Optional extra Whale shark excursion or depart Exmouth.

Tour ends after breakfast today. For those on the main tour only, own arrangements for today, a chance for some final self-guided birding around Exmouth this morning before heading to the airport to meet your flight ([current Qantas schedule \(subject to change\) QF1601 Exmouth to Perth 12:50-14:35](#)).

We are excited to offer the option of including a Whale shark swim today (full day tour with lunch and transfers from the hotel). An extra night in Exmouth is included in the package and you can book your return flight 3 June.

Accommodation: none or Exmouth (en suite rooms) if joining the Whale shark excursion. **Meals included:** B, (L for those on Whale shark excursion).

Day 17. Saturday 3 June 2023. Exmouth and depart (for those joining the Whale shark excursion).

Own arrangements for meals, activities and transfer to airport today. ([Current Qantas schedule \(subject to change\) QF1603 Exmouth to Perth 15:15-17:05](#)).

Accommodation: None. **Meals included:** None.

NOTES:

Group size: 3-4 people with one specialist Inala driver guide or 6- 8 people with 2 driver/guides.

Tour Price 3 participants per vehicle: AU\$13,000 twin share. **Single Supplement:** AU\$1,630

Tour Price 4 participants per vehicle: AU\$11,725 twin share. **Single Supplement:** AU\$1,630

Price includes: 15 nights' accommodation, specialist guide and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary and GST (based on current rate of 10%). Also includes ferry fare, local guides,

transport, and lunch on Dirk Hartog.

Price does not include: Airfares, Whale shark swim, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

Optional Whale shark excursion and accommodation package: AU\$645 twin share. **Single supplement:** AU\$75.

Price includes: Whale shark swim full day trip, lunch, hotel transfers and accommodation for 2 June.

Price does not include: dinner 2 June or breakfast 3 June.

OTHER NOTES:

- **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. Some 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. This doesn't necessarily preclude you. We just need to be well-informed.
- **Luggage:** We won't have a huge amount of room for lots of luggage on the trip and will need to **restrict the luggage to one soft sided duffle bag 2-3 ft long or similar per person plus a day pack/camera/binoculars** etc that can be carried in the vehicle with you. We are trying to avoid hard sided suitcases which don't pack well in the back of 4WDS. We'll need to carry other stuff like water which I think is more important than too many clothes.
- **Additional accommodation in Perth:** We can also organise accommodation in Perth at the start and finish of each section of the tour as required. Please enquire about pricing.

[Click here to view an online doc with answers to all the most frequently asked questions about Inala Small Group Tours](#)



MAP OF ROUTE:

Map with overview of area in North-Western Australia and detailed route:

