



# Inala's Red Centre

**Birds and wildlife at the  
heart of the red continent**

*14-19 June 2023*

Itinerary updated by Dr Tonia Cochran, by Inala Nature Tours 4 June 2022.

The 'Red Centre' is an extraordinary landscape of desert plains, ancient weathered mountain ranges, rocky gorges, and some of Aboriginal Australia's most sacred sites. This tour has been designed to maximise the chances of experiencing the birds and wildlife of the area around Alice Springs and the West Macdonnell Ranges to Ghan (which takes its name from the rail journey that operates between Adelaide-Alice Springs and Darwin, originally known as the Afghan Express after the 19<sup>th</sup> century camel drivers who helped to explore the country's remote interior). Iconic 'Outback' dry country bird species we will be searching for include Dusky Grasswren, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Inland Dotterel, and parrots such as Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Cockatiel and Budgerigar. These areas are also great places to find macropods such as Black-flanked Rock-wallaby and Euro as well as Dingo. [This tour has been designed to precede our popular Top End-Darwin-Kununurra tour](#), which in turn adjoins our Kimberley to Broome and Broome-Dampier Peninsula tours, which allows for maximum flexibility in exploring this remote and little-explored area of Outback Australia.



Major Mitchell Cockatoo - A. Browne

## **ITINERARY OUTLINE:**

**Day 1. Wed 14 June 23. Arrive Alice Springs.**

**Day 2. Thu 15 June 23. Alice Springs area-spinifex country.**

**Day 3. Fri 16 June 23. Alice Springs area- West MacDonnell Ranges.**

**Day 4. Sat 17 June 23. Alice Springs to Ghan.**

**Day 5. Sun 18 June 23. Ghan to Alice Springs.**

**Day 6. Mon 19 June 23. Depart Alice Springs (or fly Alice Springs to Darwin).**

## **DETAILED ITINERARY:**

**B- breakfast; L- lunch; D-dinner.**

**Day 1. Wednesday 14 June 2023. Arrive Alice Springs.**

Today is set aside as an arrival day (direct flights available from most capital cities including Sydney and Melbourne). Own transfers to hotel. Meet as a group in the foyer of the hotel at 18:00 for our welcome dinner where we will also discuss the tour details.

**Accommodation:** Alice Springs (en suite). **Meals included:** D.

**Day 2. Thursday 15 June 2023. Alice Springs- Spinifex country.**

Alice Springs is an excellent base from which to access a wonderful diversity of birds typical of Australia's dry country. There are a range of 'special' species to this area and in the days to come we will endeavour to track a good number of these down. We will have an early start and venture into spinifex country in search of the



Dusky Grasswren A. Browne

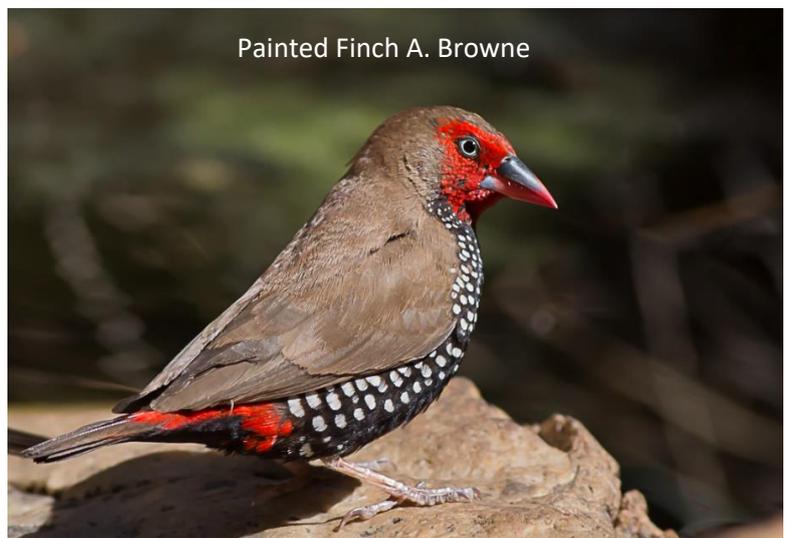
skulking Dusky Grasswren. This endemic Australian family is much sought after making this a fitting start to our exploration of the region. Spinifex is also home to the shy Rufous-crowned Emu-wren and dose of luck may be required if we are to get views of this lovely little bird. White-winged and Splendid Fairywrens may also be seen, as might Crimson Chat, Banded Whiteface and Red-backed Kingfisher. In the heat of the day, we will return to Alice to visit the famous Alice Springs Sewage Works, a veritable magnet for waterbirds in this thirsty landscape. Red-necked Avocet, Yellow-faced Spoonbills, and Pink-eared Duck

may be seen along with more retiring species like Baillon's Crake. In the afternoon we will bird woodland areas near Alice looking for species like Grey Honeyeater, Crested Bellbird and Hooded Robin, plus the chance of rarer nomads like Black & Pied Honeyeaters, Diamond Dove, Black Falcon or even Grey Falcon. We will finish the day in at a nearby waterhole where common, but no-less-lovely species, like Red-tailed Black-cockatoo, Red-capped Robin & Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Galah and Common Bronzewing come in to drink in addition to (hopefully!) Bourke's Parrot, Mulga Parrot and Australian Ringneck.

**Accommodation:** Alice Springs (en suite). **Meals included:** B,L,D.

**Day 3. Friday 16 June 2023. Alice Springs area: West MacDonnell Ranges.**

This morning we will venture west of Alice into the West MacDonnell Range. This ancient landscape of rugged mountains and cool scenic gorges is a wonder to explore. Notable bird species we will seek this morning include Spinifexbird and another chance at Rufous-crowned Emu-wren. This afternoon we will visit Ormiston Gorge in search of Western Bowerbird, Painted Finch, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Spinifex Pigeon and Little Woodswallow. Other species that we are likely to see around Alice springs include Australia's smallest bird the Weebill, Western Gerygone and magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagles. We will return to our base in Alice Springs in the early evening.



Painted Finch A. Browne

**Accommodation:** Alice Springs (en suite). **Meals included:** B,L,D.

#### Day 4. Saturday 17 July 2023. Alice Springs to Ghan.



This morning we will make an early start, leaving Alice Springs and heading southwards towards Eraldunda. White-browed Treecreeper, Grey Honeyeater and a variety of thornbills (Slaty-backed, Inland & Chestnut-rumped Thornbill) are all possible in the mulga en route. This afternoon we will bird in the stony plains in the area (known as gibber plains after the Aboriginal word for stone). These sparse and barren plains might look 'empty' but they are home to some very interesting bird species including Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Chiming Wedgebill and the amazing Inland Dotterel.

**Accommodation:** Eraldunda Roadhouse, Ghan (en suite). **Meals included:** B,L,D.

#### Day 5. Sunday 18 June 2023. Ghan to Alice Springs.

This morning we will take a pre-dawn drive out to the gibber plains in search of species we may have missed yesterday. After breakfast, we will then journey northwards, likely stopping at an area of waterholes off the Stuart Highway. This fruitful area is usually home to a few patches of water and these, along with the fabled red river gums, attract a range of species. This is an excellent area for Cockatoos and parrots, and we may well see Major Mitchell's (Pink) Cockatoo, Little Corella, Budgerigar, Galah and Cockatiel! We will return to Alice Springs late afternoon.



**Accommodation:** Alice Springs (en suite). **Meals included:** B,L,D.

#### Day 6. Monday 19 July 2023. Fly Alice Springs to Darwin.

There are no formal tour arrangements today and the tour will finish after breakfast this morning. Own arrangements for any activities today and own arrangements to the airport for your departure flights. **For those participants continuing onto the Top End Darwin-Kununurra tour:** Based on 2022 flights Qantas now has two flights available from Alice Springs to Darwin (ASP-DRW): [QF1959 09:30-11:30](#) and [QF1961 18:45-20:45](#). (Flight not included in tour price). You are welcome to book either one of those, as the Top End tour doesn't start until tomorrow. But your accommodation in Darwin tonight and breakfast tomorrow morning will be covered within your join tour package cost (lunch and dinner arrangements today as per your own arrangements).

**Accommodation:** none ([Hotel in Darwin -those continuing onto Top End tour](#)). **Meals included:** B.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Group size:** 6-8 people + 1 specialist Inala guide

**Tour Price:** AU\$3,700 per person sharing for a minimum group size of 6 people

**Single supplement:** AU\$520

\*These prices are based on the current rate of GST and may need to be adjusted if there are significant changes.

**Price includes:** 5 nights' accommodation, specialist guide and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary. Also includes goods and services tax (=VAT) based on current rate of 10%.

**Price does not include:** International and domestic airfares, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, laundry or other items of a personal nature.

This small group tour has been designed to adjoin our [Top End-Darwin- East Kimberley tour \(20-28 June 2023\)](#). If taking both sections, we will organise accommodation in Darwin on 19 June for no additional cost plus offer a \$200 discount, which represents a saving of almost \$500.

### **Please note:**

- **Meals and drinks:** Breakfast generally consists of a continental style breakfast with cereal, fruit and yoghurt and tea/coffee. Full cooked breakfast is not generally offered at most locations. Lunch will generally consist of a packed lunch style meal eaten in the field, with sandwich/filled roll, fruit, and a drink. Dinner usually consists of several options for main with the choice of either an appetiser or dessert. Drinks (soft and alcoholic) are generally not included but at lunches and breakfasts juice may be made available.
- **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.

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

## **MAP OF TOUR AREA:**

