



Outback Queensland

**Birds, mammals and Australia's
ancient creatures
21-31 May 2021**



Spinifex Pigeon A. Browne

Itinerary. Prepared by Tonia Cochran, Inala Nature Tours, 31 March 2020.

We are very excited to offer this new 10-day adventure in an area of Outback Queensland which is internationally- significant for its rich Cretaceous fossil marine and terrestrial dinosaur finds, and home to a large variety of range-restricted extant bird and mammal specialties. Join our specialist guides as we visit collections housing huge, almost complete skeletons of ancient marine reptiles that lived in the ancient Eromanga Sea that covered much of inland Australia around 110 million years ago and the fossilised remains of 95 million year old terrestrial dinosaurs (including some cool footprints!). We will also try our luck at fossicking for our own Cretaceous fossils! During the tour we will also be searching for mammal specialties like the Purple-necked Rock-wallaby and bird specialties including several species of range-restricted Grasswrens, Grey Falcon, Red Goshawk, Bourke's Parrot and hopefully huge flocks of Budgerigars and Plum-headed Finches if there is any water about.

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

Day 1. Fri 21 May 21. Arrive Mount Isa. Meet for group dinner. Accom: Mt Isa
Days 2 & 3. Sat 22 & Sun 23 May 21. Mount Isa area. Accom: Mt Isa.
Day 4. Mon 24 May 21. Mt Isa to Boulia. Accom: Boulia.
Day 5. Tue 25 May 21. Boulia to Winton. Accom: Winton.
Day 6. Wed 26 May 21. Winton area. Accom: Winton.
Day 7. Thu 27 May 21. Winton to Hughenden Accom: Hughenden.
Day 8. Fri 28 May 21. Hughenden to Richmond. Accom: Richmond.
Day 9. Sat 29 May 21. Richmond area. Accom: Richmond.
Day 10. Sun 30 May 21. Richmond to Mount Isa. Accom: Mt Isa.
Day 11. Mon 31 May 21. Depart Mt Isa.

DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1. Friday 21 May 2021.

Arrive Mount Isa. Today has been set aside as an arrival day. Own arrangements for your transfer to the hotel and any activities today. Meet at 19:00 for a group welcome dinner, meet your guides and chat about the details for the tour.

Accommodation: Mt Isa hotel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** D.

Days 2 & 3. Sat 22 & Sun 23 May 21. Mount Isa area.

We will spend two full days in the Mount Isa area searching for local specialties

including Kalkadoon and Carpentarian Grasswrens, Pictorella Mannikin, Yellow Chat, Varied Lorikeet, Black-tailed Tree-creeper, Long-tailed Finch, Painted Finch, Spotted Bowerbird, Crested Bellbird, Singing and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters and Spinifex Pigeon. Crimson Chat is also a possibility. We will also visit a nearby lake for waterbirds such as Black-necked Stork. We also have a good chance of seeing the rare Purple-necked Rock wallaby (*Petrogale purpureicollis*). **Accommodation:** Mt Isa as for last night. **Meals included:** B, L, D both days.



Budgerigars A. Schulte

Day 4 Monday 24 May 2021. Mt Isa to Boulia. Today we will travel to Boulia (a total of around 4 hours' drive), birding en route. Species we will be searching for include Black and Grey Falcon, Red Goshawk, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren and Ground Cuckoo-shrike. We should also see Red-browed Pardalote, Budgerigar and Wedge-tailed eagle and Little Button-quail has also been seen on our past tours there. This afternoon we will visit the Boulia Marine Fossil display. There will also be a chance to bird in the area (Brolga, Rufous Songlark, Cloncurry form of Australian Ringneck and Mistletoe Bird). **Accommodation:** Boulia motel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 5. Tuesday 25 May 2021. Boulia to Winton. Our drive time today is around 5 hours and again we will be birding en route and on arrival. Birds include Hall's Babbler, Spinifexbird, Black, Pied & Grey-headed Honeyeater, Spinifex Pigeon, Little Woodswallow & Painted Finch. We will also visit the sewerage ponds for chances of crakes (Australian Spotted, Spotless and Baillon's Crake) and Plum-headed Finch. The fossil display in Winton which houses one of the nation's most comprehensive dinosaur displays is also worth a visit. This evening we will also search for nocturnal birds like Spotted Nightjar & Australian Owlet Nightjar. **Accommodation:** Winton (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 6. Wednesday 26 May 2021.

Winton area. We will spend two full days in this area. One on of these days we will visit Lark Quarry Conservation Park for a tour of the facility to view the only known evidence of a dinosaur stampede: the footprints of a large carnivorous theropod (*Australovenator*) hunting a herd of small, two-legged coelurosaurs (*Skartapus*) and ornithopods (*Wintonopsis*) at the edge of an ancient lake around 95 million years ago. On the other day we will visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of



Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum T Cochran

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Natural History which houses the world's largest collection of Australian dinosaur fossils. During our tour here, we will see the fossil preparation laboratory, collection room and take a tour of the area in an open shuttle-bus. We will also take a walk in a canyon where we can see a range of plants including 800-year-old live Cycads (*Macrozamia moorei*) whose Cretaceous ancestors lived in the area; the interpretive display here includes life-size bronze sculptures of many of the creatures that lived here 95 million years ago. On both days we will be searching Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Rusty Grasswren and Grey Falcon as well as the newly-split Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Horsfield's Bushlark, Rufus-throated Honeyeater, Varied Sitella, Australian Bustard and Red-browed Pardalote. Black Honeyeater and Bourke's Parrot have also been seen on our past tours, as have Red-chested Button-quail. There may also be a chance to fossick for opals. We will stay in Winton both nights as there is no accommodation near Opalton (except camping). **Accommodation:** Winton as for last night. **Meals included:** B, L, D both days.



Fossilised fish head. T Cochran

Day 7. Thursday 27 May 2021. Winton to Hughenden. This morning we will travel to Hughenden (a total drive time of almost 3 hours). Birding in the area may yield Spotted Harrier, Black-breasted Buzzard, White-throated Gerygone, Striated Pardalote (Black-capped race) and Pale-headed Rosella. There will also be a chance to fossick for 100-110 belemnite fossils (an extinct order of squid-like cephalopods that existed in the late Triassic to late Cretaceous Period). We will also make time to visit the Flinders Discovery Centre fossil exhibition, which houses a large display of dinosaur fossils from the local area, including a life-size skeletal replica of a 7-metre-long *Muttaborrasaurus* which was cast from the original bones of a 110-million-year-old terrestrial dinosaur found in the area. **Accommodation:** Hughenden (en suite cabins). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Varied Lorikeet. A. Schulte

Day 8. Friday 28 May 2021. Hughenden to Richmond. We will take the relatively short (1.5-hour drive) distance to Richmond. We hope to see species like Restless Flycatcher and Painted Honeyeater, Purple-backed Fairy-wren and Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Forest Kingfisher, Pale-headed Rosella, Pheasant Coucal if the creek crossings have any water. Red-backed Kingfisher and Brown Songlark are also possibilities here. The local sewerage works are also worth a visit with crakes, Little Grassbird, Plum-headed Finch, Pink-eared and Freckled Duck and Australian Reed-warbler possibilities. On our



Spinifex Country near Winton. A Schulte

arrival in Richmond, we will also visit a Cretaceous (110 million-year old) marine fossil collection from the local area which has yielded some of the richest vertebrate fossil-bearing deposits in Australia and provides a fascinating insight into the creatures that survived in the ancient Eromanga Sea. The display includes several almost complete skeletons of ancient marine reptiles (pliosaurs such as 10m long *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, plesiosaurs, turtles and ichthyosaurs), fish, and elasmosaurs. **Accommodation:** Richmond (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Restless flycatcher A. Schulte

Day 9. Saturday 29 May 2021. Richmond. We will spend another day in the area today. This will include a visit to a 'bush-tucker' garden where we will view the plants and the birds attracted to the area. All plants are native to the region and are labelled with their traditional use in local indigenous culture. Moonrocks (limestone concretions) extracted from local properties are also found in the garden and around the town, showcasing the uniqueness of the region's landscape and prehistoric past. We will also participate in a fossil dig with a resident palaeontologist; fossils we may find here include bivalves (including *Aucellina* and *Inoceramus*), belemnites, fish, shark's teeth, turtles, ichthyosaurs (phalanges, vertebrae and teeth) as well as coprolites (fossil poo!). **Accommodation:** Richmond (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 10. Sunday 30 May 2021. Richmond to Mount Isa. Today will be mostly a travel day (around 4.5 hours' drive in total). We will of course stop at regular intervals to bird en route but there will also be another chance of species like Carpentarian and Kalkadoon Grasswren and Grey-fronted Honeyeater as well as Purple-necked Rock-Wallaby. We will have a farewell dinner tonight to reminisce. **Accommodation:** Mt Isa hotel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 11. Monday 31 May 2021. The tour will finish after breakfast. Depart Mt Isa for onward travels (own arrangements for airport transfers and activities today). [Participants continuing onto the Inala Cape York tour will fly Mt Isa to Cairns today.](#) **Accommodation:** none. **Meals included:** B.

Tour Price: AU\$6,995 per person sharing for a minimum group size of 6 people.
Single supplement: AU\$890

Price includes: 10 nights' accommodation, specialist guides and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary including fossicking licenses.

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



Grey Falcon A. Schulte

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.

MAP OF ROUTE ON TOUR:

