



Golden Gate Audubon Top End Tour

**Birds and Wildlife of Kakadu
and the Kimberley**

31 August-9 September 2023

Itinerary. Final draft prepared by Dr Tonia Cochran Inala Nature Tours 20 April 2022



Purple-crowned Fairy-wren by Alfred Schulte

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

- Day 1. Thu 31 Aug 23. Arrive Darwin.**
- Day 2. Fri 1 Sept 23. Tour starts am today. Explore Darwin area**
- Day 3. Sat 2 Sept 23. Darwin to Jabiru. Kakadu**
- Day 4. Sun 3 Sept 23. Jabiru area. Kakadu**
- Day 5. Mon 4 Sept 23. Kakadu to Pine Creek with Yellow Waters cruise**
- Day 6. Tue 5 Sept 23. Pine Creek to Timber Creek**
- Day 7. Wed 6 Sept 23. Timber Creek**
- Day 8. Thu 7 Sept 23. Timber Creek to Kununurra**
- Day 9. Fri 8 Sept 23. Kununurra**
- Day 10. Sat 9 Sept 23. Kununurra and depart (probably fly back to Darwin)**

Overview:

This tour explores some of Australia's most iconic areas of Northern Australia, including Kakadu and the Kimberley. Some of our most sought-after birds, including Gouldian Finch and Hooded Parrot inhabit some of our most stunning landscapes. Join us for on our next journey across Australia's Top End!

Highlights:

Around 200 species of birds including range-restricted species like Hooded Parrot, Rainbow Pitta, Banded Fruit Dove, Sandstone Shrike-thrush, White-quilled and Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon, Gouldian Finch and Yellow Chat. Sought-after mammals include Short-eared and Wilkin's Rock-wallaby, Antilopine and Black Wallaroo, Black Flying-fox and Dingo. Enjoy Kakadu's vast wetlands, the Kimberley including Lake Argyle, as well as spectacular scenery, indigenous rock art and amazing boab trees (*Adansonia gregorii*).



Blue-faced Honeyeater – Bob Lewis

DETAILED ITINERARY:

B- breakfast; L- lunch; D-dinner

Day 1. Thursday 31 August 2023. Arrive Darwin. We will be met at the airport on our arrival by our specialist guide. Transfer to the hotel and free time to relax until we meet for a welcome dinner this evening where you will meet your guide who will give you an outline of the tour program.

Accommodation: Darwin (en suite hotel room). **Meals included:** D.

Day 2. Friday 1 September 2023. Darwin and surrounds.

The tour will start in Darwin this morning. Darwin is surrounded by a fantastic diversity of habitat types that we will spend the day exploring for a range of interesting birds and mammals. Mangrove and monsoon forests are especially rich, hosting an impressive range of possible highlights including the elusive Chestnut Rail, Rufous Owl, Orange-footed Scrub-fowl, Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, the striking Rainbow Pitta, Forest Kingfisher, Red-headed Myzomela, Mangrove Robin, Green Oriole, Blue-



Green Pygmy-goose by Bob Lewis

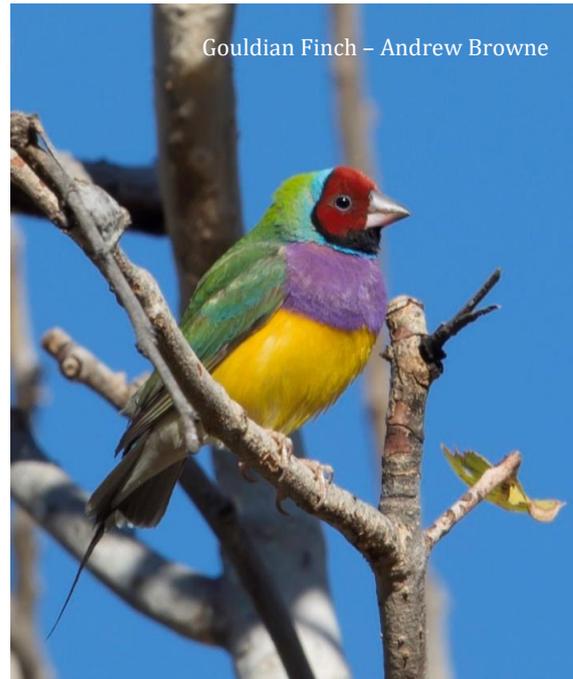
facd Honeyeater, Green-backed Gerygone, Spangled Drongo, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Great Bowerbird, Pheasant Coucal, Pied and Silver-backed Butcherbird and Red-collared Lorikeet. Little Red Flying-fox and Agile Wallaby are possible mammal highlights.

Accommodation: Darwin (en suite hotel room). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 3. Saturday 2 September 2023. Darwin to Jabiru (Kakadu).

This morning we start the day with a visit to Fogg Dam. This well-known site is an excellent area for waterbirds including Magpie Goose, Green Pygmy-goose, Pied Heron, Glossy Ibis, the stately Brolga,

White-browed Crake and the quirky Comb-crested Jacana. En route to Kakadu we will enjoy a stop at the Adelaide River crossing for lunch where we may see Mangrove Golden Whistler and a variety of flycatchers like Shining, Paperbark and Broad-billed Flycatchers. As we enter Kakadu we'll start seeing iconic waterbirds like Magpie Goose, Plumed and Wandering Whistling Ducks, Radjah Shelduck, Black-necked Stork, and Green Pygmy-goose. After dinner, if time permits, we may do some spotlighting for nocturnal species such as Southern Boobook, Tawny Frogmouth, Large-tailed Nightjar and Australian Owllet-nightjar. **Accommodation:** Jabiru Hotel (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Gouldian Finch – Andrew Browne

Day 4. Sunday 3 September 2023. Jabiru to Cooina (Kakadu).

This morning we will visit Ubirr, a site of typical Arnhemland Escarpment rock outcrops, that is home to some impressive aboriginal rock art. The art depicts creation ancestors and animals of the area, including several fish and turtle species, wallabies and possums. Hopefully Wilkin's Rock Wallabies may be present in the shade of the rocks, and birds we may see here include Sandstone Shrike-Thrush & Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon. Elsewhere throughout the park we'll hope to connect with tropical woodland species like Partridge Pigeon (red eyed form), Rainbow Bee-eater, Black Bittern, Long-tailed Finch and Rufous-throated Honeyeater.

In the afternoon we will visit a section of a nearby river which has become famous for the Estuarine Crocodile that lie in wait for fish to come over a vehicle crossing point through the river. We will also spend time in the township of Jabiru and the National Park visitors centre. We will return to our accommodation late afternoon and after dinner if we're feeling energetic, we can spotlight for mammals like Black-footed Tree-rat and Savannah (Sugar) Glider.

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

Day 5. Monday 4 September 2023. Cooina to Pine Creek.

This morning we will make an early visit to Nourlangie Rock where we have a reasonable chance of seeing the range-restricted Black Wallaroo, Banded Fruit-dove and White-lined Honeyeater. Also here are Little Woodswallow, Black-tailed-treecreeper and the sandstone form of Helmeted Friarbird. We will then enjoy a cruise on the Yellow Waters Billabong, Kakadu's best-known wetland. This impressive wetland of



Pheasant Coucal – Bob Lewis

channels, swamps and floodplains is a delight to explore and is home to crocodiles a-plenty and a variety of waterbirds including Nankeen Night-heron, Black-necked Stork, Little Kingfisher, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Pied Heron and Purple Swamphen. The stately Great-billed Heron and Black Bittern may also be seen. We then head south west towards the Pine Creek area. We will be sure to stop for any new birds and mammals on the way. After checking in to our accommodations we will have a look about town where the highly sought-after Hooded Parrot usually comes in to drink and roost for the night. Red-winged Parrot, Gouldian Finch, Northern Rosella, Red-backed Kingfisher, the delightful Red-backed Fairy-wren, Australian Figbird, Great Bowerbird and Masked, Long-tailed & Double-barred Finches are also possible here. **Accommodation:** Pine Creek (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 6. Tuesday 5 September 2023. Pine Creek to Timber Creek.

Today we begin our journey west across the Top End. En route we have additional chances for Hooded Parrot and with luck, we may see the uncommon northern race of Crested Shrike-tit. We will explore the cane-grass habitat on the fringes of the Victoria River for the lovely Purple-crowned Fairy-wren and Yellow-rumped Mannikin. Freshwater Crocodiles are common here and, unlike their saltwater cousins, subsist mostly on fish, and thus pose little threat to large mammals (humans included!). Other possible species today include Red-tailed Black-cockatoo, Cockatiel, Rufous-throated, Black-chinned and Banded Honeyeaters and Buff-sided Robin. **Accommodation:** Timber Creek (en suite hotel room). **Meals included:** B, L, D.



Day 7. Wednesday 6 September 2023. Timber Creek.

Today will be dedicated to continuing our search for the stunning Gouldian Finch. This area is also home to rich diversity of species and there will be plenty to keep us entertained while we search for our quarry. Highlights may include Spinifex Pigeon, Yellow-tinted & Grey-fronted Honeyeaters, Tawny Grassbird, Spotted Harrier, Star, Long-tailed & Masked Finches, and Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-rumped Mannikins. **Accommodation:** Timber Creek (en suite hotel room). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 8. Thursday 7 September 2023. Timber Creek to Kununurra.

This morning we continue our sojourn west and cross the Western Australia border. We will be on the lookout for the very rare Pictorella Mannikin, as well as Budgerigar, Australian Bustard, Diamond Dove and various raptors as we go, including Square-tailed Kite & Black-breasted Buzzard. While today is a travel day, we will be passing through spectacular countryside and making regular stops to stretch our legs and enjoy any birding highlights. In the late afternoon, we will arrive in Kununurra in the fabled Kimberley area. **Accommodation:** Kununurra (en suite hotel room). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 9. Friday 8 September 2023. Kununurra.

Today we have a full day to explore the riches of the Kimberley in the Kununurra area. A certain highlight is bound to be a boat trip on Lake Argyle, where we will enjoy a wonderful variety of waterbirds, as well as search for two very special birds, the highly sought-after Yellow Chat and White-quilled Rock Pigeon. Australian Reed-warbler may be seen in the lakeside



vegetation, as might White-browed & Baillon's Crakes, Crimson Finch and Pheasant Coucal. Local conditions will determine where we spend the rest of the day, with additional possible birding highlights such the localised Kimberley form of Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Northern Rosella, Silver-crowned Friarbird, White-gaped Honeyeater, Bar-breasted and Rufous-banded Honeyeaters, and Sandstone Shrike-thrush being possible. Mammals in the area include Short-eared Rock-Wallaby and Northern Nail-tail Wallaby.

Accommodation: Kununurra (en suite hotel room) **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 10. Saturday 9 September 2023. Kununurra and depart.

The tour ends after breakfast this morning. The guide will leave early this morning to travel back in the bus by road to Darwin (which is around 850km and an overnight stay en route). The best flight option for the participants is to Darwin which also may be the best option to overnight depending on the flight time from Kununurra (some days it is a morning flight while others it is an afternoon flight). For morning flights, the guide may be able to deliver people to the airport en route. For an afternoon flight the group may prefer to explore Kununurra and the nearby bird-filled lake before transferring to the airport after lunch (short taxi ride and no transfers have been included in cost). **Accommodation:** none. **Meals included:** B

Estimated nett tour price AUD\$ (per person twin sharing):

6 pax + Inala guide: \$6,995.

7 pax + Inala guide: \$6,475.

8 pax + Inala guide: \$6,125.

Single supplement: \$1,190.

Price includes: 9 nights' accommodation, specialist guide and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary, National Park entry fees and GST (=VAT).

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

Other notes:

- **Additional accommodation:** We would be pleased to arrange accommodation in Darwin on the last night of the tour and any additional nights between this tour and the Tasmanian tour.
- **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 TOUR AREA:

