

Australia, the Big Down Under.

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My first visit to Australia, this four-week trip in July-August 2018 focussed on the east coast, encompassing northern Queensland, south-east Queensland and New South Wales. With new birds at every turn, there were no particular avian targets, other than Southern Cassowary, a selection of the bowerbirds and the two lyrebirds. I also had great hopes to find a selection of the iconic Australian mammal fauna, top of the list Koala, Platypus, Echidna and Wombat.

Whilst visiting in the middle of the southern winter means a number of species are absent (such as Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher) and that Palearctic waders are also in much lower numbers, it does have the major advantage of being far better in terms of weather – near guaranteed sunshine on a daily basis and very agreeable temperatures for birding throughout the day (daytime temperatures around 25-30 C in the north, 20-25 C in the south). It does have to mentioned however that a number of inland sites in the south were cold at night – as low as minus 3 C in south-east Queensland). BASIC TRIP OUTLINE Flying into Australia via Japan, then several domestic flights within Australia, my trip can be broken down into four sections:

Part One. Unscheduled Japan. Thanks to flight cancellations, three days persuing butterflies in the Naita and Osaka areas, 21 species seen, including quite a number of swallowtail species and others, including Angled Sunbeam and Japanese Oakblue.

For full report, [CLICK HERE](#). Part Two. Northern Queensland. Lands of the Southern Cassowary, Golden Bowerbird and Platypus. Beginning and ending in Cairns and incorporating the Daintree River, Mount Lewis, the Atherton Highlands, Paluma National Park and a trip out to the Great Barrier Reef, this two-week loop of the classic birding localities of the Wet Tropics was simply superb – a fantastic array of birds seen, including many not possible elsewhere in Australia.

For full report, [CLICK HERE](#). Part Three. South-east Queensland. Primary reason to visit this area was to spent several days in Lamington National Park, home to species such as Albert's Lyrebirds, Regent Bowerbird and Logrunner, plus an impressive selection of nocturnal mammals. I also added short trips to arid inland sites, namely the excellent Girraween National Park and to Lake Perseverance (for Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies), as well as a day in the Brisbane area, primarily looking for Koala.

For full report, [CLICK HERE](#). Part Four. New South Wales. I incorporated the Sydney area into my itinerary primarily for a pelagic trip, which subsequently got cancelled the evening before! Regardless, a fantastic trip then followed, very much planned on a day-to-day basis, but including localities for Koala and Wombat, the Royal National Park for Superb Lyrebird, the Jervis Bay area for Ground Parrot and the Capertee Valley for a good range of inland species.

For full report, [CLICK HERE](#).

All in all, my itinerary worked very well – across the three legs, I saw a grand total of 305 species of bird, plus numerous species of mammal. In addition, quite a number of butterflies in northern Queensland, plus Saltwater Crocodiles, Eastern Water Dragons, etc. The only real negative was the cancellation of the pelagic, always something possible given the vagaries of the weather in the southern waters.