

Birding Ecotours



AUSTRALIA

GENERAL INFORMATION



*Australia is paradise for those who like parrots. **Pink** (Major Mitchell's) **Cockatoo** is rather flashy and always a favorite.*

OUR AUSTRALIAN BIRDING TOURS

We have five exciting Australian birding tours, each of these are summarized below.

1. **Birding Tour Australia: Northern Territory – Top End Birding**. This short Australian bird tour, of nine days, covers the famed Top End birding circuit. It starts and ends in Darwin and includes a stay at the incredible Kakadu National Park, as well as birding in Katherine, Pine Creek, Mary River, Adelaide River, and Darwin itself. Some of the top targets on this Australian bird tour include **Gouldian Finch, Rainbow Pitta, Hooded Parrot, Black-banded Fruit Dove, Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, Partridge Pigeon, Black-tailed Treecreeper, and Sandstone Shrikethrush**. This Top End birdwatching tour also offers a huge number of more widespread Australian birds, including plenty of waterfowl.
2. **Birding Tour Australia: Northern Territory – Alice Springs Birding**. This short, one-week birding tour of the Alice Springs area (including Uluru/Ayres Rock) connects with a wide range of exciting desert birds. Some of the top targets include **Spinifex Pigeon, Spinifexbird, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Western Bowerbird, Banded Whiteface, Bourke’s Parrot, Red-browed Pardalote, and Painted Finch**. This relaxed-pace tour of the Australian Desert offers a great Australian birding experience.
3. **Birding Tour Australia: Western Australia – Southwest Specialties**. Another short (nine days) tour of Australia. This Australian bird tour covers the endemic-rich southwest Australia - a beautiful part of the country with some interesting coastal and inland heathland and incredible forests. Some of the targets for us on this Western Australian bird tour include **Carnaby’s Black Cockatoo, Baudin’s Black Cockatoo, Western Corella, Noisy Scrubbird, Western Shrike-tit, Western Bristlebird, and Black-throated Whipbird**. Plenty of other more widespread Australian birds (most of which are endemic to the country) will be found too.
4. **Birding Tour Australia: Tasmania – Tasmanian Endemics and the Orange-bellied Parrot**. A short tour of just under one week. This Tasmania birding tour is packed full of Tasmanian endemics as well as two breeding-endemic and Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) parrots – **Orange-bellied Parrot and Swift Parrot**. On this very easy-paced Tasmanian birding tour, we will be birding at Hobart, Bruny Island, and we will take a day trip flight to Melaleuca to look for the aforementioned **Orange-bellied Parrot**. Some of the Tasmanian endemics we will look for include **Scrubtit, Forty-spotted Pardalote, Yellow Wattlebird, Yellow-throated Honeyeater, Strong-billed Honeyeater, and Black Currawong**. A great selection of southeastern Australian specials can be found too, particularly shorebirds and waterfowl.
5. **Birding Tour Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics**. This long (almost three weeks) comprehensive eastern Australian bird tour is our most popular tour of Australia. This is no surprise, given how thorough and what great fun it is – as well as being stacked full of incredible birds. This eastern Australian bird tour covers Victoria and Queensland, as well as a brief trip into New South Wales for **Plains-wanderer**. The list of incredible birds on this tour is long, but some include **Southern Cassowary, Superb Lyrebird, Paradise Riflebird, Green Catbird, Regent Bowerbird, Rufous Bristlebird, Malee Emu-wren, Malleefowl, Pink Cockatoo, and many more!**

The information in this document is relevant to all of the above Australian bird tours and includes general information on visiting Australia. Each tour has tour-specific information too.

ITINERARY AND SPECIES RECORDING (BIRD LISTS AND ANIMAL LISTS)

In advance of our Australian birdwatching tours, we will email you a detailed daily itinerary (along with your arrival instructions). We will provide you with a printed version of your itinerary at the beginning of the tour. We will also provide you with a bird list and lists of other animals possible on the tour (or a blank sheet to write in any interesting wildlife sightings). At Birding Ecotours, we use the latest International Ornithological Congress (IOC) taxonomy for birds. For all other wildlife recorded, we follow the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) taxonomy, so all our itineraries and checklists follow these taxonomies.

In addition to the IOC checklists, we will complete eBird checklists for all birdwatching time during the tour. If you would like us to share eBird checklists with you, please provide your eBird user details to us at the beginning of the tour so we are able to do this.

Each evening, after we've finished our birding for the day, we will go through the daily bird and animal list, noting all the species recorded. The list session is totally optional. Not everyone is interested in the "bird listing" side of things, and that's fine, but we also know that many of you are very much interested in that aspect of the tour. The lists are usually completed once we've ordered our meal as we wait for our food to be prepared. Each evening, we will go through the plans for the following day by providing you with information on what clothes and equipment will be needed, when we will be having breakfast, departure time from the hotel, and key target species we will be looking for, among other points.

Once the tour is completed, we will email you a PDF copy of an illustrated trip report. This will include a complete checklist of all wildlife recorded during the tour, and if we are able to get any interesting bird, animal, or landscape photographs, these will be included in the trip report.

PASSPORT, VISA, AND LOCAL LAWS

A visa or Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) is required for everyone entering Australia, but different rules apply depending on your nationality, status, or personal history. Please check here and follow the instructions for "visit and tourism". You will also need a valid passport (with at least six months left before it expires for some visitors). For most people, after completing the questions in the online form, the ETA Subclass 601 will be the result. This ETA can be applied for by downloading the new Australian ETA app; see here for more information. Some people may, however, need to apply for a different visa. and we recommend you speak to someone at your local embassy to get the latest information on any specific requirements. Note that applying for the wrong visa could be a costly, time-consuming, and unnecessary exercise.

You will be required to fill in an Incoming Passenger Card (distributed to you during your flight to Australia) – see also the "Quarantine" section below.

Please familiarize yourself with any COVID-19 requirements. Currently (January 2024), there are no general restrictions in place (though some places might have their own rules, which should be followed). Please note that depending on your route into or out of Australia, other destinations/transit locations might require something. Please make sure that you bring a photocopy of your passport with you on the tour; this can be kept with other important documents

like vaccine certificates, emergency contact details, and insurance documents.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

As stated in our standard [Terms & Conditions](#), we strongly recommend that you purchase comprehensive trip cancellation insurance to protect against unexpected events that might cause delays and interruptions to travel. Your insurance should also cover illness, medical issues, accidents, repatriation, loss of luggage or valuable items, flight delays/cancellations, etc. Failure to purchase adequate insurance could be costly if something unexpected occurs.

CRIME AND SAFETY

Australia is generally a safe place to travel; however, as anywhere in the world, it is advisable to be cautious and observant for the unexpected, especially in public spaces and crowded places. Crime levels are similar to those in the United Kingdom and other developed areas. Extra care should be taken in Alice Springs, Darwin, and Cairns, particularly after sunset.

Your safety is our paramount concern during our Australian birding tours. We will be spending a lot of time away from towns and cities and we will often be in hot and inhospitable environments. Ensure you maintain hydration throughout the tour, even if you don't feel particularly hot.

On some of our tours, there will be opportunities for swimming in the sea (mainly on the Outback to Wet Tropics tour). Here, extreme care should be taken regarding crocodiles, sharks, and jellyfish. Refer also to the "Dangerous Animals and Plants" section of this information document. Rip currents should be considered, and any swimming should occur only when conditions are safe, e.g., swim between the red and yellow flags. More information can be found on [Surf Live Saving](#). Consideration of crocodiles is essential on our Top End bird tour.

Please see the [Outback to Wet Tropics](#) tour-specific information for further information on swimming and diving safety and [Top End](#) tour-specific information regarding crocodile safety.

HEALTH AND PESTS

Please consult your local travel clinic or doctor regarding vaccine requirements before your Australian bird tour. We recommend doing this around two months prior to the tour start date so that any vaccine courses can be completed in time.

Everyone visiting Australia should be up to date with routine vaccinations and boosters recommended in the UK and US, like Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) and Diphtheria-Tetanus-Polio. Most people should be vaccinated for COVID-19 and tetanus, and some people should be vaccinated for Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, and Rabies (Bat Lyssavirus). Yellow Fever is not present in Australia; however, a certificate is required for anyone arriving in the country from countries with a risk of Yellow Fever transmission (including layovers in these countries of over twelve hours). Please refer to the World Health Organization's list of countries where Yellow Fever transmission is possible, [here](#).

Please refer to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website [here](#), for further information on vaccines and how to stay healthy in Australia. Another great source of data is the

“[Travel Health Pro](#)” website, which provides information on Australia [here](#). Both these linked web pages are worth studying ahead of joining the tour.

Insect- (or tick-) borne bites can lead to Murray Valley virus, Ross River virus, West Nile virus, and Dengue. Prevention of insect bites is the best way to avoid these issues. Insect repellent with a high DEET content is highly recommended for most of the areas we visit in Australia (DEET works against both ticks and mosquitoes). Contaminated water can lead to Leptospirosis, so care should be taken to avoid any potentially contaminated water and adjacent areas (such as wading, swimming, bathing, or washing clothes in freshwater streams, rivers, or lakes). Airborne and droplet-transmitted diseases such as Hantavirus and Tuberculosis are present in the country.

We recommend that any scratches from plants (see the “Dangerous Animals and Plants” section below) or bites from insects should be cleaned, treated with antiseptic cream/wipes, and covered quickly to reduce the chance of any unpleasant infection. Sunscreen (rated SPF 30+) should be used frequently, and a sunhat should be worn to protect from the sun’s powerful rays, with sunglasses used to help prevent glare. A plentiful intake of water (please bring a reusable water bottle, which you can fill daily at many places – tap water is safe to drink in most places) is also essential to maintain hydration.

Bringing a supply of commonly required medicines, creams, etc., can be useful and efficient. The CDC website provides a list of suggested items to pack that may help on your trip to Australia, [here](#).

Unfortunately, Australia is prone to severe bushfires. We will monitor the situation on our tours daily to be aware of any such events and follow the advice of local authorities as needed. The emergency number in Australia is Triple Zero (000). Bushfires can start and change direction with little or no notice, and their unpredictability makes them particularly dangerous. Many areas will have fire bans in place, and as we enter habitations, we will see “Fire Risk” signs. Smoke generated by bushfires can result in terrible air quality. In the case of a bushfire on our tour route, we may need to alter plans. Any such situation is well out of our control, but we will try and work for the best (and safest) solution for everyone. If you are a smoker, you will need to dispose of your cigarettes in a safe manner; many bushfires are certainly caused by incorrect cigarette disposal. There are several [laws](#) to be aware of if you are a smoker when in Australia (note there are also strict rules that differ between states and territories, on e-cigarettes, so familiarize yourself with that if you need to).

Australia is the land of boom and bust, drought and flooding rains. Heavy rain and tropical cyclones can cause flooding, including flash floods and severe hailstorms, as well as other issues such as tree falls from wind damage. They can happen suddenly and without warning, so care should be taken when walking in dry riverbeds, spillways, flood plains, and drains, which can quickly become submerged. Conversely, dust storms occur regularly in Outback areas of Australia.

The Australian [Bureau of Meteorology](#) (BOM) website is a wonderful and useful resource for keeping track of the weather and associated potential issues. The cyclone season generally runs from November to April (mainly impacting Queensland and the Northern Territory), and the main bushfire season is from November to February.

Earthquakes are rare in Australia.

Please also be sure to check the “Dangerous Animals and Plants” section below.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please ensure you are suitably covered with comprehensive medical insurance in the instance of any emergency situation while on our Australian bird tours. Without insurance, the cost of medical care will likely be very high. As detailed in Birding Ecotours' general [Terms & Conditions](#), we require you to notify us of any medical conditions we should be aware of when signing up for this tour. The sort of things we should know about include, but are not limited to, any walking/mobility issues, diabetes, epilepsy, food and medicinal allergies, heart conditions, long-term illnesses, etc.

Many of the places we go to during our Australian birding tours are very remote and without many medical facilities. If medical treatment is required, this might necessitate flying to a different part of the country with suitable medical facilities. The costs of this sort of situation can be extremely expensive (requiring extra flights, etc.) and so you must be suitably covered for any eventuality.

QUARANTINE

Australia (along with [New Zealand](#)) has some of the strictest quarantine rules in the world to help keep out pests and diseases. All luggage is x-rayed on arrival. Any items of concern are further inspected by quarantine personnel. Items may be treated or confiscated and destroyed.

Breaches of quarantine regulations can result in hefty fines and lengthy delays at the airport. There are also rules for travel between states (whether crossing by air or land).

On your arrival into Australia, you will be required to fill out an incoming passenger card. You must declare any food or goods of plant or animal origin and sporting/birding/camping equipment – e.g., these may be muddy and thus contain plant or animal matter. You will also be asked if you've been in rural areas or in contact with farm animals in the last 30 days.

If you are uncertain of anything, we recommend declaring your goods, rather than getting caught and fined.

Note that one area where bird watchers are likely to be in breach of the regulations is by having dirty footwear. We strongly recommend thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting your footwear (and any other outdoor gear) prior to coming to Australia, but still declare it and show it to the quarantine personnel. If personnel consider the boots, etc., to not be clean enough, they will take them to the side and disinfect them for you, which will take just a couple of minutes.

If there are outbreaks of foot and mouth disease, or other potentially contagious diseases that could be damaging to Australia in any way (e.g., to plant, animal, or human health) extra precautions may be put in place at ports of entry (e.g., in 2022 anyone arriving in Australia from Indonesia/Bali was required to disinfect all footwear due to a foot and mouth outbreak on Bali island).

WEATHER/CLIMATE

The climate in Australia varies throughout and across the states and territories. Across more southerly parts of Australia, like northern latitude regions, there are four seasons (spring, summer, fall (autumn), and winter). Still, they are at the opposite time of year to those in northern latitudes, but the same as in South America and southern Africa. The four seasons are also known as Austral spring, Austral summer, Austral fall (autumn), and Austral winter. Our Australian birding tours occur in the Austral spring period (September to November). The tropical north of Australia (e.g.,

the north of Western Australia, Northern Territory, and Queensland) experiences a wet and dry season.

Please see tour-specific information for weather expectations on each individual tour.

The sun will be intense on all of our Australian birding tours, and care should be taken to remain hydrated and use sun protection to protect against sunburn and dehydration.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS

There are a great many venomous and poisonous creatures – particularly snakes (and plants) in Australia, and extreme caution should be taken while out and about. Check your boots each time before you put them on, watch where you put your hands and feet, and do not touch or approach any wildlife, especially snakes, spiders, etc. It is advisable to familiarize yourself with these venomous/poisonous species prior to your tour (there is a range of data online, but see [here](#)). Sturdy walking boots are essential to give feet and ankles added protection. It is essential that you follow your guide/leader’s advice. If you see any snakes/crocodiles, etc., the information should be passed on as quickly as possible so that everyone is aware of the potential danger.

There are many dangerous creatures in the oceans of the region, including the (Great) **White Shark**, **Saltwater Crocodile**, **Red Lionfish**, **Australian Box Jellyfish** (Sea Wasp), and “**Blue-ringed Octopus**” (its venom is 1,000 times more potent than cyanide!), and plenty more. If you go snorkeling in Australia (such as at the incredible Great Barrier Reef), make sure not to touch anything, keep your wits about you, and listen to any advice given by our local experts – the team on our Great Barrier Reef cruise will give you a health and safety briefing.

In the Top End of the Northern Territory, particular attention should be given to the potential for **Saltwater Crocodiles**, which can occur in and around and even quite far from water. See the [Top End](#) tour-specific information for more details.

Our Australia birdwatching tours take place during the dry season or Austral spring period, and therefore, the chance of coming across leeches should be lower than at other times of the year. They are an annoyance rather than a real health issue, though we acknowledge they can cause angst for many of you! Insect repellent sprayed on shoes and ankles can help to keep them at bay (as well as being great for reducing issues with other annoying creatures such as ticks, mosquitoes, sand flies, and chiggers).

Many tropical plants are protected by rather ghastly spikes, needles, or sharp thorns so that they don’t become food to a wide range of animals. Some, such as the **Stinging Tree** (*Dendrocnide moroides*) in the nettle family, have a notorious and long-lasting excruciating sting. Sometimes, plant appendages are used to help pull themselves through other plants to reach the canopy and the sunlight required for their continued existence. These projections can be rather painful if they pierce the skin and can catch and rip clothing. Please do not just grab plants without checking for any potentially sharp or painful spikes, etc.; this is also a good way to reduce the chance of getting ant, spider, and snake bites. Spinifex, found in the arid areas of Australia, has sharp needles that can easily pierce skin.

FOOD AND DRINK, INCLUDING WATER

Water is safe to drink in most places we go on our Australian birding tours. If the water is not safe to drink (e.g., if it is untreated and/or rainfall collected – which is often used in remote washrooms), it will likely have a sign stating as such. Please bring a refillable water bottle on this tour to reduce plastic waste. We will have a supply of drinking water with us in our tour vehicle for extra water top-ups when required. Furthermore, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, beer, cider, spirits, and wine (lots of locally sourced drinks) are readily available in most places we visit on our Australian birding tours.

Mealtimes are likely to be somewhat flexible depending on our birding or travel plans for the day. So, if you need to eat food at a specific time of day (e.g., to accompany any medication you are on), we recommend that you bring snacks to supplement the meals, such as cereal bars/protein bars, dried fruit, etc. It is important to note quarantine rules and potentially purchase snacks on arrival into the country. Meats, fish, vegetables, and tropical fruits are served Australian style. In some areas (e.g., in the remote Outback), it may be difficult to provide for vegan or other restrictive diets. Please consult us if you have a certain or restrictive diet or food allergies and we will let you know if the tour will be suitable for you.

Australia is a big place, and we will often have long drives as we move between different areas. We usually time our long drives so that we have a break for lunch within the driving time. We will usually take breakfast early before birding, or sometimes a bit later after a pre-breakfast birding session. Breakfasts in hotels and motels in Australia tend to be quite basic, but not quite as basic as American motels. In some places, we will have wonderful breakfasts (e.g., at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, in Queensland). Lunches often entail a visit to a bakery or café, where food choices are usually sandwiches, salads, and meat pies - which Australia excels in! Dinners are often taken in pubs in rural areas or restaurants where typical pub-type meals are possible. Portion sizes of meals are considered large, similar to American serving sizes.

CURRENCY AND MONEY

The Australian Dollar (\$, A\$, AU\$, AUD\$, AUD, or Aussie Dollar to distinguish it from other countries using a dollar currency) with subunits called cents (c) is used. Banknotes frequently used include \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. Coins frequently used include 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1, and \$2. Australia is a country where card payments are possible for almost everything, and cash payments are less frequently made, unlike in other countries like Indonesia, Thailand, and The Philippines, where cash culture is still very much in evidence.

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted forms of payment, including for drawing cash from ATMs (as everywhere, bank charges may apply). Note that US\$/GBP£ or other currencies cannot be used for purchases. You may need to notify your card supplier about your trip so you do not find a block on your card preventing its use.

You will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon your arrival in Australia, as well as in the various towns and cities we pass through.

ELECTRICITY

The power plug sockets in Australia are of Type I, also used in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea,

China, the South Pacific, and Argentina. This socket only works with plug I. The standard voltage is 230 volts (V), and the standard frequency is 50 hertz (Hz). Further details (and photos) can be found [here](#).

Adaptors are likely to be needed for some visitors from overseas; you may also need a voltage converter and should be careful with certain appliances that utilize different frequencies. You can use your electric devices in Australia if the standard voltage in your country is between 220 – 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, and most of Asia and Africa). These small deviations are considered by manufacturers. If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 – 127 V (as is in the US, Canada, and most South American countries), you will need a voltage converter in Australia. You could also consider a combined power plug adapter/voltage converter to save space.

DOMESTIC/INTERNAL FLIGHTS

Domestic air travel in Australia is a necessity to get around; the country is huge, about the same size as Europe or the United States, for an idea of scale. So, you will likely take domestic flights either during your tour or before/after it.

We tend to use [Virgin Australia](#) or [Qantas](#) for our domestic flights while on our Australian birdwatching tours. Please note that Australian domestic airlines are often very hot on weight allowances on flights, particularly hold luggage, but especially so on hand luggage. If your bags are overweight at check-in, this will likely cause delays and added stress to you, your tour leader, and the rest of the group, so please ensure you stick to the allowances. A number of the airports we go through use automated bag drop counters, and if your baggage is overweight, it simply won't go through the machine until you have reduced it and repeated the process; this can be extremely time-consuming.

We will let you know the baggage allowance when we book the domestic tickets (we prefer to book these to ensure everyone is on the same flight). You should expect a baggage allowance on domestic scheduled flights of 50 pounds (lbs) / 23 kilograms (kgs) with hand luggage of 15 lbs (7kgs). You will be responsible for loading your own bags onto and off baggage carousels and into and out of vehicles.

Our [Tasmania birding tour](#) has a chartered flight; please see the tour-specific details for more information.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING

Loose, lightweight field clothing with green, brown, or dark colors works best while we are birding in the forest. Sand and khaki-type colors are fine for birding in coastal and desert areas. Please avoid bright colors for birding time; for example, no pale colors in forests and no white, red, orange, etc. anywhere during birding time.

Given the potential insect issues in the forest (and the intense tropical sun), we suggest trousers/long pants and long-sleeved shirts (these can be rolled up should you get too hot) for all birding activities. Some people may be more comfortable wearing shorts at the coastal sites, though again, please be aware of biting insects, spiky plants, and the sun, which can all result in lots of discomfort.

We will be birding in spring on our Western Australia, Victoria section of our Outback birding tour, and our Tasmania tour, which means temperatures, particularly overnight and in the early morning, could be cool or cold. See tour-specific information for weather expectations. So suitable clothes (e.g., a warm sweater/jumper/fleece) would be recommended.

Rain is considered unlikely, though not impossible, so light rain gear (and a small umbrella) is always worth having as a backup.

Casual and informal dress is appropriate for the hotels/accommodation we use on these tours. Sunglasses, sunhat, and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are essential.

Lightweight walking boots are recommended for all our Australian tours as they give extra ankle support while walking (necessary given some of the trails we will be birding on) and added protection against animal stings/bites (e.g., potential snake issues). A pair of sandals (flip-flops) or trainers (tennis shoes) can be useful when in vehicles and walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels/towns.

Several of the accommodations we will stay in across Australia offer laundry services; these are most often coin-operated self-service washing machines and clothes dryers (e.g., tumble dryers).

Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further important information on clothing.

WHAT TO BRING: OTHER ITEMS

Do not forget: Binoculars, camera, field guide (see “Books” section below), flashlight (torch – e.g., headtorch), spare batteries, power bank, converter plugs, plug adaptors, chargers, prescription drugs (please bring the generic names for these drugs with you), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses, alarm clock, money pouch, personal medical kit, and daypacks.

Our tour leader will have a communal telescope for use during the tour. The communal scope will allow everyone opportunities to look at birds briefly on a rotation basis. If you like to take “digiscope/phone-scope” photographs through a scope, or you would like to take prolonged scope views of the birds, please bring your own scope to do so. The communal scope will be for everyone to look at the birds but not for photography.

Some additional items to remember to bring include important travel documents, passport, cash (or ATM/credit cards to draw money), proof of vaccinations, and your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of all can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency.

Bringing a couple of different colored pens along with a 12-inch (30-centimeter) ruler can make the checklist session easier to follow on the longer tours.

Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further information on items to bring on the individual tours (where relevant). Additional, very general details on what to bring on a birding tour can be seen on the blog post [here](#).

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Australia is part of the British Commonwealth, and English is widely spoken.

The cell phone network in Australia is great in cities and major towns, but coverage away from

these areas can be very limited and poor (or non-existent). Foreign SIM cards will work in Australia if you have a roaming package, but are likely to be costly. Local SIM cards are available in most airports; Telstra is probably the best option, followed by Optus, then Vodafone. Many of the places we stay on our tours will have Wi-Fi, but somewhat surprisingly for a developed country, finding Wi-Fi can sometimes be strangely difficult. Do not therefore expect to have phone signal every day during our tours.

BOOKS

Australia is blessed by having several excellent field guides for bird identification. You can read about some of them in our recommended field guides for Australasia blog [here](#). We recommend the newest book on the market as it is taxonomically up to date, excellently illustrated, and packed full of helpful identification information. It is now also available in a compact version (details below), which is fantastic for anyone on a bird tour with limited weight and space!

The Compact Australian Bird Guide – Jeff Davies, Peter Menkhorst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Peter Marsack, and Kim Franklin (2022), CSIRO Publishing.

Other specific interest books include:

Finches of Australia – Col Roberts (2018), Kimberley Images. Take a sneak peek and review of this one on our blog, [here](#).

A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia – Peter Menkhorst and Frank Knight (2010), Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand.

A Naturalist's Guide to the Mammals of Australia (2nd Edition) – Peter Rowland and Chris Farrel (2022), John Beaufoy Publishing.

A Complete Guide to Reptiles of Australia (6th Edition) – Steve K Wilson and Gerry Swan (2021), New Holland Publishers.

A Naturalist's Guide to the Snakes of Australia (2nd Edition) – Scott Eipper and Tyese Eipper (2022), John Beaufoy Publishing.

A Naturalist's Guide to the Frogs of Australia (2nd Edition) – Scott Eipper and Peter Rowland (2023), John Beaufoy Publishing.

A Naturalist's Guide to the Dangerous Creatures of Australia – Peter Rowland and Scott Eipper (2018), John Beaufoy Publishing.

The Complete Field Guide to Dragonflies of Australia – Günther Theischinger and John Hawking (2021), CSIRO Publishing.

A Field Guide to Spiders of Australia – Robert Whyte and Greg Anderson (2017), CSIRO Publishing.

The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia (2nd Edition) – Michael F Braby and Paul R Ehrlich (2016), CSIRO Publishing.

A Field Guide to Tropical Reef Fishes of the Indo-Pacific: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam – Gerald R Allen (2020), Tuttle Publishing, 5th Edition.

SOUND RECORDINGS

A wide range of bird songs and calls from Australia can be downloaded from the excellent [xeno-canto](#) website. Many species recordings can now also be found on [eBird](#) species pages, where video clips can also be viewed.

USEFUL WEBSITE RESOURCES AND APPS

There are several field guide apps for Australia, but not for the recommended field guide, though, yet. We wouldn't currently specifically recommend any of the apps that are on the market.

[Aves Vox](#) – an app enabling you to download bird songs from the great [xeno-canto](#) website onto your cell phone.

[eBird](#) and [Merlin](#) – loads of information that is easy to gather on your cell phone or other devices such as tablet and computer. Sound, photo, and video galleries exist for almost every species found in Australia via the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [Macaulay Library](#) with offline access.

[IOC World Bird List](#) – the website gives all the latest information on world bird taxonomy according to the scientific body that we at Birding Ecotours follow. You can learn about species that have been newly described, any recent and past splits (creation of a new species) and lumps (deletion of a species) of existing species, and plenty of additional useful information.



*The Crested Shriketit complex was split into three geographically isolated species in late 2022; this is **Eastern Shriketit**, found on our [Outback and Wet Tropics](#) tour. We look for **Western Shriketit** on our [Western Australia](#) tour and **Northern Shriketit** on our [Northern Territory Top End](#) tour.*