



## Top End

21 - 29 August 2027

The Northern Territory's 'Top End' is one of Australia's top birding destinations and includes tantalizing destinations such as Kakadu National Park, Nitmiluk National Park, Pine Creek, Katherine and Jubara/Gregory National Park (Timber Creek Region). A raft of wonderful birds inhabit this scenic area, including the sought-after Gouldian Finch, the rare Hooded Parrot, the localized Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, the elusive Red Goshawk; the stunning Rainbow Pitta and many other specialties. In addition, we'll look for Saltwater Crocodile, the endemic Short-eared Rock-wallaby and other macropods.

During the tour we can expect up to ten finch species, including Gouldian, Masked and Star Finches and Yellow-rumped and Pictorella Mannikins; parrots such as the endemic Hooded Parrot, Northern Rosella, Red-winged Parrot, Cockatiel, Budgerigar, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo; pigeons including Chestnut-quilled and White-quilled Rock-pigeon, Partridge Pigeon; quails and button-quails; a variety of Honeyeaters; and a raft of waterfowl and good chance of Black Bittern and Great-billed Heron. This is also a very good time of the year to see raptors. Join us for this exciting tour in Australia's Top End!

## ITINERARY

### Day 0: 21 August 2027

#### Arrival in Darwin

After arriving in Darwin, please make your own way to our hotel, where we meet for introductions and dinner tonight.

Overnight: Club Tropical Resort, Lee Point, en-suite hotel room

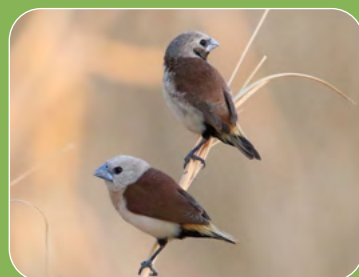
Meals included: D

### Day 1: 22 August 2027

#### Darwin to Kakadu National Park

Our guide will pick you up after an early breakfast. We'll visit Buffalo Creek, where, depending on the tide, we have a chance of glimpsing the elusive Chestnut Rail. Other mangrove species here include Black Butcherbird, Green-backed Gerygone, Yellow White-eye, Mangrove Whistler and Azure Kingfisher. On the nearby beach we may see the huge Beach Thick-knee. We'll visit one of the local reserves containing Monsoon Forest to search for Grey Whistler, Arafura Fantail, Little Shrike-thrush, Green-backed Gerygone, Rose-crowned Fruit-dove and our main target Rainbow Pitta. In the Darwin Botanic Gardens we will be looking for Rufous and Barking Owls on their day roosts and then we'll drive to the Fogg Dam wetlands, originally a rice-growing scheme, but thousands of Magpie Geese put an end to that and the area is now a nature reserve. The reedbeds and lily-covered ponds are home to birds like Brolga, Magpie Geese, Black-necked Stork, Royal Spoonbill, Comb-crested Jacana, White-browed and Baillon's Crake, Green Pygmy-goose, Broad-billed and Paperbark Flycatchers, Tawny Grassbird, and Golden-headed Cisticola. In the adjacent woodlands we have a chance of Rainbow Pitta and Lemon-bellied Flycatcher.

Towards the end of the day we arrive in Kakadu, Australia's largest terrestrial national park. Covering almost 20,000 sq. km, it is a place of great ecological and biological diversity. The rock escarpments are a treasure trove of Aboriginal rock paintings. And the birdlife and wildlife is spectacular! Along the way we visit one of Kakadu's finest wetlands, Mamukala, a large billabong that can hold thousands of waterbirds. From the bird hide we can see waterfowl such as Magpie Goose, Radjah Shelduck, Hardhead, Plumed and Wandering Whistling-Duck, Green Pygmy-Goose and egrets and herons include Little, Intermediate and Great Egret, Nankeen Night-Heron and White-necked and Pied Heron. After checking in at our hotel in Jabiru we will head South toward Nawurlandja to bird among the sandstone cliffs and watch the sunset. Targets here are Banded Fruit-dove, Partridge Pigeon, Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon, White-lined Honeyeater, Sandstone Shrike-



All photos by Peter Waanders.

thrush and the Sandstone race of Helmeted Friarbird.

Overnight: Crocodile Hotel Jabiru, en-suite hotel rooms

Meals included: B, L, D

**Day 2: 23 August 2027**

**Kakadu National Park**

We have an early morning and head north to Bardedjilidji for an early walk. Here we will be looking for Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and maybe a Rainbow Pitta or Rose-crowned Fruit-dove. After the walk our next spot for the rest of the morning is Ubirr. This spectacular viewpoint over the floodplain can also be a great place for Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon and Sandstone Shrike-thrush. Rocky escarpments such as Ubirr not only have Aboriginal rock art paintings but are also a good place to see White-lined Honeyeater, Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon and Sandstone Shrike-thrush, along with the newly split Wilkin's (Eastern) Short-eared Rock Wallaby. If the tide is right we will check out Cahill crossing to see its famous crocodiles feeding together then it will be time to head back for lunch. After a break in the middle of the day we will head to Nourlangie to clean up any of the endemics we have missed. This is also a great spot to see some Aboriginal artwork. There are also Black and Little Red Flying-Foxes here, as well as many exotic lizards, colourful turtles, and unusual butterflies. We spend the night again in the township of Jabiru, in the heart of Kakadu.

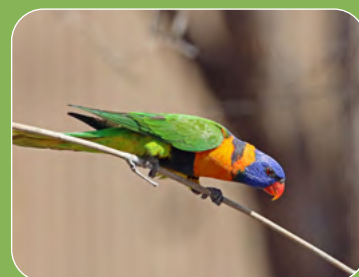
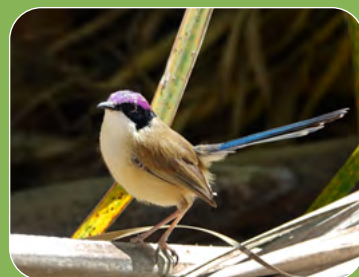
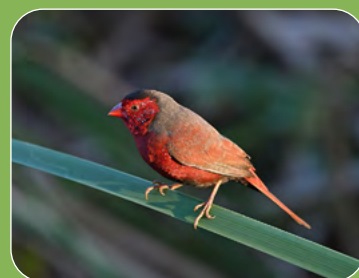
Overnight: Crocodile Hotel Jabiru, en-suite hotel rooms

Meals included: B, L, D

**Day 3: 24 August 2027**

**Kakadu to Pine Creek**

We start the day early with a cruise on the Yellow Waters, one of Australia's important areas for waterfowl. Watch the sunrise over the water teeming with up to 70 species, including Plumed and Wandering Whistling-ducks, Pacific Black Duck, White-necked and White-faced Herons, Rufous Night-heron, Australasian Grebe, Australasian Darter, Glossy Ibis, Arafura Fantail, Buff-sided Robin and Paperbark Flycatcher. Azure Kingfisher can be found along the river and we should see Forest and Sacred Kingfishers. Some of the rarer birds we may encounter include Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher and Black Bittern. After the cruise we will head back to the lodge to check out and have lunch before heading south to Pine Creek and our accommodation for the night. Along the way we have a chance for Australia's rarest bird of prey: the Red Goshawk, which nests in the area. The afternoon is spent around Pine Creek, tracking down the endemic Hooded Parrot, along with Red-winged Parrot, Northern Rosella, Varied and Red-collared



All photos by Peter Waanders.

Lorikeet. We'll also encounter Little Corella, Sulphur-crested and Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Overnight: Pine Creek Railway Resort, en-suite hotel rooms  
Meals included: B, L, D

#### **Day 4: 25 August 2027** **Pine Creek to Victoria River**

After some early morning birding around Pine Creek to pick up any parrots we may still need, we head south for our first chance to see the spectacular Gouldian Finch. Other birds in the area include Hooded Parrots, Long-Tailed Finch, Masked Finch, Double-barred Finch, Banded Honeyeater, Great Bowerbird and Brown Quail. Along the way we'll witness the amazing magnetic termite mounds. These tall mounds (over 3m/10ft!) are dotted throughout the savannah-like landscape. We will also be on the lookout for Dollarbird and Silver-crowned Friarbird and further chances of the rare Red Goshawk. After a morning around the beautiful Edith Falls on the Katherine River in Nitmiluk National Park (Gouldian Finch, Hooded Parrot, Northern Rosella and a nice selection of honeyeaters) we head south to Katherine for lunch before heading west to the Victoria River Region. Along the way we will stop at a few waterholes to see what we can find: Gouldian Finch is high on the target list. The afternoon at Victoria River can be spent searching for Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens along the banks of the Victoria River or go looking for White-quilled Rock-pigeons which are found up on the escarpments.

Overnight: Victoria River Roadhouse, en-suite hotel rooms  
Meals included: B, L, D

#### **Day 5: 26 August 2027** **Victoria River to Katherine**

The morning will be spent around the roadhouse at Victoria River looking for Purple-crowned Fairy-wren, birds of prey and finches. Alternatively we may explore the escarpments of the Victoria River National Park, which means a moderate hike with some steep sections. The rewards will (hopefully) be: White-quilled Rock Pigeon, Sandstone Shrikethrush, Little Woodswallow, Yellow-tinted and Black-chinned Honeyeater. We'll be back around lunchtime and after a short break we'll head further west. The savannah-like landscape here is reminiscent of Africa, dotted with the odd-looking Boab trees. Arriving at Timber Creek we start looking for the various finches that live in this habitat, such as Star, Double-barred, Zebra and Gouldian Finch, as well as Pictorella and Yellow-rumped Mannikin and with luck, Chestnut-backed Buttonquail.



*All photos by Peter Waanders.*

Overnight: Timber Creek Hotel, en-suite cabins  
Meals included: B, L, D

## Day 6: 27 August 2027 Timber Creek to Pine Creek

This morning we will be up early again to bird another great area, where our targets will be Pictorella Mannikin, Budgerigar, Cockatiel and maybe another Gouldian Finch or two. We're sure to add more species to the list here, including Grey-headed and Grey-fronted Honeyeater. After a morning in the area, we start heading back east and to our accommodation in Katherine for the night. After checking in we will bird one of the many sites around Katherine either looking for Chestnut-backed Button-quail or head south to look for the rare Northern Crested Shrike-tit. There is also a nice selection of honeyeaters including Banded and Rufous-throated Honeyeaters.

Overnight: Pine Tree Motel Katherine, en-suite motel rooms  
Meals included: B, L, D

## Day 7: 28 August 2027 Pine Creek to Darwin

Depending on what we are still missing, we will determine where to go this morning. Possibilities around Pine Creek include wetlands where Partridge Pigeon may come in to drink, while Olive-backed Orioles frequent the trees, Red-backed Kingfishers sit on the wires and various waterfowl forage on the wetlands although we should have picked up all waterbirds by now. Heading north we have further chances of birding rainforest patches looking for Buff-sided Robin, various honeyeaters, Silver-backed Butcherbird, Arafura Fantail and Varied Lorikeet. We'll bird our way back to picking up any birds that we may still need. Arriving back in Darwin by late-afternoon.

Overnight: Club Tropical Resort Lee Point, en-suite hotel rooms  
Meals included: B, L, D

## Day 8: 29 August 2027 Departure from Darwin

This morning we'll spend a few hours birding to pick up any species we still need. We'll finalise the bird list, and then it's time for goodbyes and drop everyone off at their respective hotels (own arrangements) in Darwin or the airport. Please don't book flights departing before noon today.

Meals included: B



All photos by Peter Waanders.

## QUICK OVERVIEW

### SCHEDULED DATES

Top End: 21 - 29 August 2027

Preceding connecting tour: [Comfortable 9 Grasswrens](#): 4-20 August 2027

### STARTING IN

Darwin, Northern Territory

### FINISHING IN

Darwin, Northern Territory

### GROUP SIZE

Minimum 4, maximum 8 participants.

### BRIEF ITINERARY

Day 0: 21 August 2027: Arrival in Darwin

Day 1: 22 August 2027: Darwin to Kakadu National Park

Day 2: 23 August 2027: Kakadu National Park

Day 3: 24 August 2027: Kakadu to Pine Creek

Day 4: 25 August 2027: Pine Creek to Victoria River

Day 5: 26 August 2027: Victoria River to Timber Creek

Day 6: 27 August 2027: Timber Creek to Pine Creek

Day 7: 28 August 2027: Pine Creek to Darwin

Day 8: 29 August 2027: Departure from Darwin

### BOOKING

Please book at: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings/>.



## COST

### COST

AU\$6,499 per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy surcharge of AU\$990.

Earlybird discount of AU\$99 for bookings received up to 12 months before departure date. Return client discount may apply.

### INCLUDED

All meals commencing with dinner on Day 0 and finishing with breakfast on Day 8, cold water, tea and/or coffee. Accommodation in private rooms, some with en-suites, although on some nights only basic rooms with shared facilities are available; upgrades to rooms with en-suites may be possible subject to availability. Transport using comfortable and reliable 4WD vehicle, expert guiding, any entry fees, taxes.

### EXCLUDED

Travel to & from departure and finish points, pre- & post trip accommodation, any meals before dinner on Day 0 and after breakfast on Day 8, drinks except where provided, personal expenses, tips, insurance.

### PRE & POST TOUR OPTIONS

If you would like us to arrange your stay in Darwin for one or more days before and/or after the tour, please tick the relevant box on the booking form. We can book this for you and add the cost to your tour price. We will be in contact to discuss options.

This tour links seamlessly with our preceding Comfortable 9 Grasswrens Tour (4-20 August 2027). Receive an instant discount if you book both tours. More details: <https://bellbirdtours.com/nine-grasswren-tour-comfortable/>

### DISCLAIMERS

(1) itinerary may be modified slightly due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors; (2) until we've received your final payment, tour price may be subject to adjustment in the event of significant cost increases in ground arrangements. See our Terms and Conditions: <https://bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions/>.

### BOOKING

Please book at: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings/>.

## PRACTICAL DETAILS

### LEADERS

Bellbird tour leader

### DIFFICULTY

Low to medium level of fitness required. The tour has a relaxed pace and walks are on varying surfaces, from paved forest roads to uneven, slippery trails with some short climbs. We generally walk slowly, with lots of stops. You can opt out of any challenging walks.

### ACCOMMODATION

Private en-suite rooms in hotels or lodges. Standards of the lodgings are generally very comfortable. Expect slow, if any, wi-fi access.

### CLOTHING

Lightweight long pants, t-shirt and long-sleeved shirt, over the top of which you can wear layers that can be taken off as necessary, including a rain-proof jacket. Neat casual attire for dinners. Shorts and sandals or thongs (flip-flops) are acceptable for non-birding time.

### WHAT TO BRING

Please travel light. Binoculars, camera, mobile phone, chargers, power adaptors (if you're an international guest), strong insect repellent, sunscreen, personal medications, travel umbrella, hat, water bottle, hand sanitizer. Sturdy footwear recommended. Scopes, super-telephoto lenses with tripods, and heavy suitcases are discouraged.

### RECOMMENDED READING

The comprehensive (but large and heavy) *Australian Bird Guide* by Danny Rogers, Peter Menkhorst, and Rohan Clarke, or the (smaller and lighter) *Compact Australian Bird Guide* (2022) by the same authors.

## HOW TO BOOK THIS TOUR?

### Step 1: Essential reading

- Download, save and read the itinerary (this document);
- Read our terms and conditions and the release of liability waiver (both can be found on <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions>);
- Read our health & safety information page (<https://bellbirdtours.com/health-and-safety/>).

### Step 2: Online booking

Head over to our secure online booking page: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings> (should you prefer a paper booking form, this can be downloaded from there).

### Step 3: Pay the deposit

To secure your seat, a deposit of 20% of the tour price is required at the time of booking. Full payment is due 90 days prior to the departure date. Until full payment has been received, Bellbird Tours reserves the right to change the tour price (e.g. due to changing fuel prices).

Payment options:

Domestic electronic funds transfer: please send funds to the following bank account:

- bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
- account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
- branch no. (BSB) 015-140 and account no. 206136528
  - Please use your surname as the booking reference.

Visa, Mastercard & Google / Apple Pay: Please contact us to use this option, and we'll email you a secure payment link.

International electronic funds transfer: please send funds in Australian Dollars (+ bank charges) to the following bank account:

- international swift code: anzbau3m (no IBAN codes are used in Australia)
- bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
- account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
- branch no. (BSB) 015-140 and account no. 206136528
  - If possible, please use your surname as the booking reference.
  - If you are asked to provide our physical address, this is: 30 Roberts Avenue, Balaklava, SA 5461, Australia.
  - Please specify AU\$ as the recipient's currency, and the correct amount. Select the option for you to incur any charges at both ends.

Any discrepancy between the amount payable and amount received will be added to the final balance, or payable in cash at the start of the tour. Prices and fees are not negotiable.

### Step 4: You're done!

Sit back and wait for your booking confirmation to arrive (24-48 hrs). Meanwhile, should you have any questions, please contact us via: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/about-us/>.

## POSSIBLE SPECIES LIST (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

Emu	Great Frigatebird	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Banded Fruit-Dove	Spotted Harrier	Black-fronted Dotterel
Straw-necked Ibis	Pied Oystercatcher	Common Bronzewing
Chestnut Rail	Pacific Black Duck	Eastern Reef Egret
Orange-footed Scrubfowl	Masked Booby	Brown Falcon
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	Black Kite	Red-kneed Dotterel
Australian White Ibis	Sooty Oystercatcher	Flock Bronzewing
Buff-banded Rail	Grey Teal	Little Egret
Brown Quail	Brown Booby	Black Falcon
Pied Imperial-Pigeon	Square-tailed Kite	Masked Lapwing
Glossy Ibis	Black-winged Stilt	Crested Pigeon
Baillon's Crake	Chestnut Teal	Intermediate Egret
King Quail	Australian Darter	Australian Hobby
Tawny Frogmouth	Whistling Kite	Comb-crested Jacana
Royal Spoonbill	Red-necked Avocet	Spinifex Pigeon
Spotless Crake	Garganey	Great Egret
Magpie Goose	Little Pied Cormorant	Nankeen Kestrel
Spotted Nightjar	Black-breasted Buzzard	Snipe Sp.
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Pacific Golden Plover	Partridge Pigeon
White-browed Crake	Green Pygmy-goose	White-faced Heron
Radjah Shelduck	Little Black Cormorant	Grey Falcon
Large-tailed Nightjar	Brahminy Kite	Black-tailed Godwit
Collared Sparrowhawk	Grey Plover	White-quilled Rock-Pigeon
Pale-vented Bush-hen	Pink-eared Duck	White-necked Heron
Black Swan	Great Cormorant	Peregrine Falcon
Australian Owlet-nightjar	Eastern Osprey	Bar-tailed Godwit
Brown Goshawk	Little Ringed Plover	Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon
Black-tailed Native-hen	Hoary-headed Grebe	Pied Heron
Plumed Whistling-duck	Pied Cormorant	Brolga
Fork-tailed Swift	Black-shouldered Kite	Little Curlew
Grey Goshawk	Red-capped Plover	Diamond Dove
Eurasian Coot	Australasian Grebe	Nankeen Night Heron
Wandering Whistling-duck	Australian Pelican	Sarus Crane
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	Letter-winged Kite	Whimbrel
Red Goshawk	Lesser Sand Plover	Peaceful Dove
Australian Bustard	Great Crested Grebe	Striated Heron
Freckled Duck	Black-necked Stork (Jabiru)	Dusky Moorhen
Streaked Shearwater	Little Eagle	Eastern Curlew
Pacific Baza	Greater Sand Plover	Bar-shouldered Dove
Bush Stone-curlew	Rock Dove	Black Bittern
Australian Wood Duck	Great-billed Heron	Purple Swamphen
Lesser Frigatebird	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Terek Sandpiper
Swamp Harrier	Oriental Plover	Silver Gull
Beach Stone-curlew	Emerald Dove	Blue-winged Kookaburra
Hardhead	Cattle Egret	Helmeted Friarbird



Arafura Fantail  
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo  
Rainbow Bee-eater  
Silver-crowned Friarbird  
Grey Fantail  
Galah  
Dollarbird  
Little Friarbird  
Mangrove Grey Fantail  
Little Corella  
Rainbow Pitta  
Yellow-throated Miner  
Northern Fantail  
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
Black-tailed Treecreeper  
Grey-crowned Babbler  
Willie Wagtail  
Cockatiel  
Great Bowerbird  
Varied Sittella  
Torresian Crow  
Rainbow Lorikeet  
Purple-crowned Fairy-wren  
Ground Cuckoo-shrike  
Broad-billed Flycatcher  
Varied Lorikeet  
Red-backed Fairy-wren  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
Leaden Flycatcher  
Red-winged Parrot  
Variegated Fairy-wren  
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike  
Shining Flycatcher  
Northern Rosella  
White-throated Grasswren  
Cicadabird  
Restless Flycatcher  
Hooded Parrot  
Weebill  
White-winged Triller  
Magpie-lark  
Budgerigar  
Mangrove Gerygone  
Varied Triller

Apostlebird  
Pheasant Coucal  
Large-billed Gerygone  
Crested Shrike-tit  
Jacky Winter  
Eastern Koel  
Green-backed Gerygone  
Mangrove Golden Whistler  
Lemon-bellied Flycatcher  
Channel-billed Cuckoo  
White-throated Gerygone  
Grey Whistler  
Red-capped Robin  
Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo  
Red-browed Pardalote  
Rufous Whistler  
Hooded Robin  
Black-eared Cuckoo  
Striated Pardalote  
White-breasted Whistler  
Mangrove Robin  
Little Bronze-Cuckoo  
White-lined Honeyeater  
Little Shrike-thrush  
Buff-sided Robin  
Pallid Cuckoo  
Singing Honeyeater  
Sandstone Shrike-thrush  
Horsfield's Bushlark  
Brush Cuckoo  
White-gaped Honeyeater  
Grey Shrike-thrush  
Zitting Cisticola  
Oriental Cuckoo  
Yellow-tinted Honeyeater  
Australasian Figbird  
Golden-headed Cisticola  
Rufous Owl  
Bar-breasted Honeyeater  
Yellow Oriole  
Australian Reed Warbler  
Barking Owl  
Rufous-banded Honeyeater  
Olive-backed Oriole

Tawny Grassbird  
Southern Boobook  
Rufous-throated Honeyeater  
White-breasted Woodswallow  
Brown Songlark  
Masked Owl  
Crimson Chat  
Masked Woodswallow  
Rufous Songlark  
Eastern Barn Owl  
Yellow Chat  
White-browed Woodswallow  
Yellow White-eye  
Eastern Grass Owl  
Dusky Honeyeater  
Black-faced Woodswallow  
Barn Swallow  
Little Kingfisher  
Red-headed Honeyeater  
Little Woodswallow  
Red-rumped Swallow  
Azure Kingfisher  
Banded Honeyeater  
Black Butcherbird  
Welcome Swallow  
Forest Kingfisher  
Brown Honeyeater  
Grey Butcherbird  
Fairy Martin  
Red-backed Kingfisher  
Black-chinned Honeyeater  
Pied Butcherbird  
Tree Martin  
Sacred Kingfisher  
White-throated Honeyeater  
Australian Magpie  
Mistletoebird  
Collared Kingfisher  
Blue-faced Honeyeater  
Spangled Drongo  
Double-barred Finch