



Bellbird

BIRDING, WILDLIFE & PHOTO TOURS

Unique and unforgettable nature experiences!



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Papuan Pitta tour *Iron Range, Far North Qld* *4n/5d birding tour*

• *31 Dec 2026 – 4 January 2027 (5d)*



Join us for our annual Cape York Fly In/Fly Out Pitta tour! During the "Wet Season" when there is a chance that the main roads up the Cape will be closed it is the best way to visit Iron Range for the migratory New Guinea birding specials such as Red-bellied Pitta, Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher and Black-winged Monarch which migrate south at this time of year and then return north when the rains stop. While the Kingfisher heads down as far as Cairns and the Cassowary Coast, the pitta and the monarch tend to stay in the Iron Range area. Of course, the other New Guinea specials which mostly cannot be seen anywhere else in Australia such as Eclectus Parrot, Red-cheeked

Parrot, Palm Cockatoo, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Black-eared Catbird, Magnificent Riflebird, Trumpet Manucode, Tropical Scrubwren, Green-backed Honeyeater and Tawny-breasted Honeyeater are there as well. Some Cape York endemics also occur, with Northern Scrub-Robin, Frill-necked Monarch and White-streaked Honeyeater all to be expected. The Iron Range area has a good variety of habitats including mangroves, heathland, vine forest and the coast so there is lots on offer to look at. It has the largest area of lowland rainforest in Australia.

Read on below for the full itinerary and checklist!

Tour starts and ends: Cairns Qld

Scheduled departure date(s):

- 31 Dec 2026 - 4 January 2027 (4n/5d)

Price: AU\$4,799 all-inclusive , discounts available

Leader: Jun Matsui or Phil Gregory

Also available any time as a **private tour**

Further info & tour photo gallery: bellbirdtours.com

Questions? Contact BELLBIRD BIRDING TOURS :

- Freecall 1800-BIRDING
- email birds@bellbirdtours.com

READ ON FOR:

- Further tour details
- Daily itinerary
- Booking information

Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour

Tour details

Tour starts & finishes: Cairns, Qld.

Scheduled departure and return dates:

Tour commences with your flight from Cairns to Lockhart River on Day 1: 31 Dec 2026. Please arrive in Cairns the day before. Tour finishes with a flight back to Cairns on Day 5: 4 January 2027. Please depart Cairns the following day.

Please note, the flights from Cairns to Lockhart River and return are not included in the tour price, but will cost approximately AU\$660 return. We will book these for you at group rates and add to your bill.

See itinerary below containing further details.

Leader: Jun Matsui or Phil Gregory

Difficulty: Low/Medium/High/Excellent level of fitness required. This tour is suitable for most people with just a reasonable standard of fitness. There is some driving on dirt roads but distances are not great and there are no long hikes. We hire a vehicle while there and they can vary from utes to landcruisers depending on what is available and the number of people on the tour. Days can be hot and humid but at night the accommodation is air conditioned. Rain is likely so it is a good idea to bring lightweight rain gear and covered shoes.

What to bring: Please travel light. Binoculars, camera, mobile phone, chargers, power converter if you're an international guest, insect repellent, sunscreen, personal medications, sun hat, water bottle, hand sanitizer. Lightweight rain gear and camera protection. Sturdy, covered footwear recommended. Rubber boots are handy but not essential. Scopes, super-telephoto lenses with tripods, and heavy suitcases discouraged.

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 jumper/sweater and a rain-proof jacket. Neat casual attire for dinners.

Group size: Minimum 3, maximum 8 participants.

Cost: AU\$4,799 per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy surcharge of AU\$590. Not included: drinks, tips, personal expenses. Early-bird discount of AU\$99 for bookings received up to 12 months before departure date. Return-client discount may apply. Check our website for discounts T&C's.

Bookings: Online at <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings/> - see the last page of this brochure.



ITINERARY

Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour

Day 1: Fly to Lockhart River

Meet your guide at Cairns airport prior to taking the flight from Cairns to Lockhart River (*this flight is not included in the tour price but we'll book for you at group rates*). The plane is usually a Dash 8 seating about 80 people and if the weather is good and you have a window seat you can stare down at the emptiness of the Cape York peninsula. After leaving the Wet Tropics around Cairns we fly over dry savanna. The direct flight takes about 1.5 hours. On arrival the guide will pick up the vehicle and after checking into your accommodation you can start the exploration of the Iron Range area. Often the first birds we see are Palm Cockatoos sitting on the telegraph poles along the road to Lockhart River. Accommodation: **Iron Range Cabins, Lockhart River** (air conditioned, en-suite cabins; meals: D).

Day 2: Iron Range National Park.

We have an early start and will spend the day birding Iron Range National Park. We will be looking for the local endemics in particular, Northern Scrub-robin, White-streaked Honeyeater and Frill-necked Monarch as well as the special birds which Cape York shares with New Guinea including the Eclectus Parrot, Magnificent Riflebird, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher (Wet season only), Black-eared Catbird, Trumpet Manucode, Palm Cockatoo, Tropical Scrubwren, Black-winged Monarch (wet season only), Yellow-legged Flycatcher, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Green-backed Honeyeater, White-faced Robin and the specialty of this time of year, the Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta. We have a good chance of all these birds during our stay here, but do not expect to get them all at once. Accommodation: **Iron Range Cabins, Lockhart River** (air conditioned, en-suite cabins; meals: B, L, D).

Day 3: Iron Range National Park.

We'll further explore the Iron Range area visiting Portland Roads and Chilli Beach for shore and sea birds. In this area we have a good chance of Torresian Imperial Pigeon, Striated Heron, Little Egret and Eastern Reef Egrets, Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Mongolian Sand Plover and Greater Sand Plover, Eurasian Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler, Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Silver Gull, Greater Crested Tern, Lesser Crested Tern, Bridled Tern, Little Tern, Black-naped Tern and Brown (or Common) Noddy. In the evening flocks of Metallic



Olive-backed Sunbird, White-faced Robin © P Waanders, Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher © Geoff Jones. Black-necked Stork © P Waanders

Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour

Starlings swirl along the beach like noisy clouds as they come in to roost for the night. Fawn-breasted Bowerbird is also amongst the birds we will look for today if we haven't already seen it near the airport. There is a great fish restaurant at Portland Roads and we will hope to be able to eat there. For people on special diets, we can arrange a different menu in advance. Accommodation: **Iron Range Cabins, Lockhart River** (air conditioned, en-suite cabins; meals: B, L, D).

Day 4: Iron Range National Park.

As well as the Iron Range specials there are a number of more widespread birds we can hope to see including the Australian Brush Turkey which here has a light purple collar instead of the yellow collar found on the birds further to the south. Other birds we may hope to see include Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Little Bronze Cuckoo, Oriental and Brush Cuckoos, Azure Kingfisher, Collared Kingfishers, Noisy Pitta, Spotted Catbird, Lovely Fairy-wren, Large-billed Gerygone, Fairy Gerygones, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Graceful Honeyeater, Varied Honeyeater, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Hornbill Friarbird, Cicadabird, Varied Triller, Grey Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Yellow Oriole, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Butcherbird, Pied Currawong, Rufous Fantail, Shining Flycatcher, White-eared Monarch, Spectacled Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, White-browed Robin, Mangrove Robin, Silvereye, Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch and whole lot more .

Spotlighting at night we may be lucky enough to find Marbled Frogmouth, Large-tailed Nightjar or Rufous Owl. We may also hope for Southern Spotted Cuscus and Agile Wallaby. Accommodation: **Iron Range Cabins, Lockhart River** (en-suite cabins; meals included: B, L, D.)

Day 5: Local area birding & fly back to Cairns.

Today we will bird the local area in the early morning in search of some of the more difficult species that may have eluded us earlier or just to get better views or photographs of birds we have seen already, before returning to the airport after lunch for our flight back to Cairns. (accommodation – own arrangements; meals included: B, L.). End of tour.

Note – because of the unpredictable weather this time of year, the flight back to Cairns could depart any time of the day, so it's not recommended to book onward flights from Cairns until the following day.



Papuan Pitta, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Eclectus Parrot © Geoff Jones; MacLeay's Honeyeater © P Waanders.

Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour

Price inclusions and exclusions:

Included:

All meals (except Dinner on last day) commencing with dinner on Day 1 and finishing with Lunch on last day, some snacks, unlimited drinking water refills. Accommodation in private en-suite cabins, transport using comfortable and reliable 4WD vehicle, expert guiding, any entry fees, taxes.

Excluded:

Flights to & from Lockhart River, travel to and from Cairns, pre- & post trip accommodation, Dinner & accommodation on last day, drinks except where provided, personal expenses, minibar purchases, tips, insurance, anything not specifically included.

Bookings:

Please book online: <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings/> - see the last page of this brochure.

Pre- and post-tour options:

If you wish to stay in Cairns for one or more days before or after the tour, we can arrange these for you - please tick the relevant box on the booking form – we can then add the cost to your tour price. We can also provide you with tips and hints for pre- and post tour birding or tourist attractions.



Filled Monarch, Bar-breasted
Honeyeater, Southern Cassowary
© P Waanders

Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour



Papuan Pittas – 4n/5d Iron Range wet season tour

Possible species list

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Magpie-goose | Masked Lapwing | White-bellied Sea-Eagle |
| Plumed Whistling-Duck | Pacific Golden Plover | Whistling Kite Black Kite |
| Wandering Whistling Duck | Red-capped Plover | Brahminy Kite |
| Black Swan | Mongolian Sandplover | Brown Goshawk |
| Radjah Shelduck | Greater Sandplover | Collared Sparrowhawk |
| Green Pygmy-goose | Black-fronted Dotterel | Grey Goshawk |
| Grey Teal | Comb-crested Jacana | Black-breasted Buzzard |
| Pacific Black Duck | Latham's Snipe | Eastern Barn Owl |
| Hardhead | Eurasian Whimbrel | Barking Owl |
| Australian Brush-Turkey | Far Eastern Curlew | Rufous Owl |
| Orange-footed Scrubfowl | Grey-tailed Tattler | Southern Boobook |
| Brown Quail | Common Sandpiper | Rainbow Bee-eater |
| Australian Little Grebe | Ruddy Turnstone | Dollarbird |
| Feral Pigeon | Red-necked Stint | Buff-breasted Paradise-K |
| Brown Cuckoo-Dove | Australian Pratincole | Laughing Kookaburra |
| Pacific Emerald Dove | Brown Noddy | Blue-winged Kookaburra |
| Peaceful Dove | Australian (Gull-billed) Tern | Yellow-billed Kingfisher |
| Bar-shouldered Dove | Lesser Crested Tern | Forest Kingfisher |
| Wompoo Fruit Dove | Crested Tern | Sacred Kingfisher |
| Superb Fruit Dove | Roseate Tern | Torresian Kingfisher |
| Rose-crowned Fruit Dove | Little Tern | Azure Kingfisher |
| Torresian Imperial Pigeon | Black-naped Tern | Nankeen Kestrel |
| Pheasant Coucal | Silver Gull | Australian Hobby |
| Little Bronze-Cuckoo | Lesser Frigatebird | Palm Cockatoo |
| Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo | Great Frigatebird | Red-tailed Black Cockatoo |
| Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo | Brown Booby | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| Fan-tailed Cuckoo | Australian Darter | Rainbow Lorikeet |
| Brush Cuckoo | Little Pied Cormorant | Scaly-breasted Lorikeet |
| Marbled Frogmouth | Little Black Cormorant | Double-eyed Fig-Parrot |
| Papuan Frogmouth | Australian White Ibis | Eclectus Parrot |
| Tawny Frogmouth | Straw-necked Ibis | Red-cheeked Parrot |
| Large-tailed Nightjar | White-necked Heron | Papuan Pitta* |
| Spotted Nightjar | (Eastern) Great Egret | Noisy Pitta |
| Australian Swiftlet | Intermediate Egret | Great Bowerbird |
| Pacific Swift * | Eastern Cattle Egret | Fawn-breasted Bowerbird |
| White-throated Needletail * | Striated Heron | Brown Treecreeper |
| Pacific Purple Swamphen | White-faced Heron | Red-backed Fairywren |
| Buff-banded Rail | Little Egret | Lovely Fairywren |
| Common Coot | Eastern Reef Egret | Yellow-spotted Honeyeater |
| Bush Stone-curlew | Nankeen Night Heron | Graceful (Cryptic) Honeyeater |
| Beach Stone-curlew | Australian Pelican | Varied Honeyeater |
| Pied (White-headed) Stilt | Eastern Osprey | Brown-backed Honeyeater |
| Pied Oystercatcher | Pacific Baza | Rufous-banded Honeyeater |

Green-backed Honeyeater
Dusky Honeyeater
Scarlet Honeyeater
Brown Honeyeater
White-throated Honeyeater
White-streaked Honeyeater
Blue-faced Honeyeater
Hornbill (New Guinea) Friarbird
Silver-crowned Friarbird
Noisy Friarbird
Little Friarbird
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater
Tropical Scrubwren
Weebill
Mangrove Gerygone
Large-billed Gerygone
Fairy Gerygone
Grey-crowned Babbler
Yellow-breasted Boatbill
Black Butcherbird
White-breasted Woodswallow
Black-faced Woodswallow
Black-faced Cuckooshrike
White-bellied Cuckooshrike
Barred Cuckooshrike
Cicadabird
Varied Triller
Varied Sittella
Grey Whistler
Rufous Whistler
Rufous (Little) Shrike-thrush
Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Figbird
Green (Yellow) Oriole
Olive-backed Oriole
Spangled Drongo
Rufous Fantail
Grey Fantail
Willy Wagtail

Broad-billed Flycatcher
Leaden Flycatcher
Shining Flycatcher
"Black-winged" Monarch
Black-faced Monarch
Spectacled Monarch
Magpie-lark
Frill-necked Monarch
Torresian Crow
Trumpet Manucode
Magnificent Riflebird
Lemon-bellied Flyrobin
Yellow-legged Flyrobin
White-faced Robin
Mangrove Robin
Northern Scrub-Robin
Welcome Swallow
Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian Reed Warbler
Silvereye
Metallic Starling
Common Myna
Striated Pardalote
Mistletoebird
Olive-backed Sunbird
Double-barred Finch
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Australian Pipit

Mammals

Agile Wallaby
Eastern Grey Kangaroo
Spotted Cuscus
Northern Brown Bandicoot
Bare-backed Flying-fox
Spectacled Flying-fox
Dingo
Feral Pig
Saltwater Crocodile

Steps to book this tour:

Step 1: Essential reading

- Download, save and read the itinerary (this document)
- Read our [terms and conditions](https://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions) and the [release of liability waiver](https://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions) (both can be found on <https://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions>).
- Read our [health & safety information](https://bellbirdtours.com/health-and-safety/) 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 (eg 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 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 or AU\$20 bank transaction fee, see notes below) 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 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; if no such option exists, please add AU\$20 to cover the bank fee at the recipient's end.

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/>.