



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Australia & Tasmania

5th – 25th October 2006
(New Zealand extension below)



Southern Cassowary and Lighthouse on Bruny Island, Tasmania. All photos by David Shackelford

Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader David Shackelford

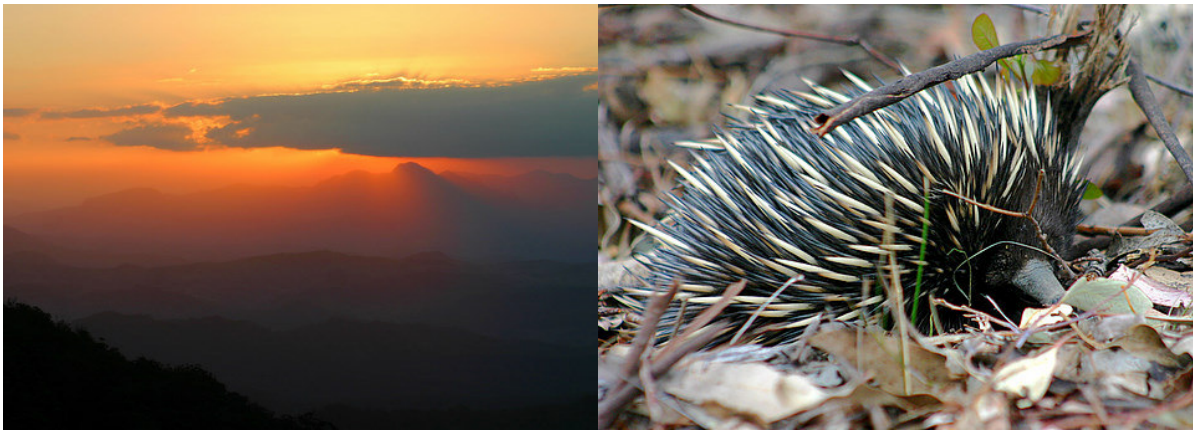
Top 10 birds as voted by participants:

- 1. Southern Cassowary**
- 2. Plains Wanderer**
- 3. Splendid Fairy-Wren**
- 4. Malleefowl**
- 5. Laughing Kookaburra**
- 6. Australian Owlet-Nightjar**
- 7. Ground Parrot**
- 8. Major Mitchell's Cockatoo**

- 9. Golden Bowerbird**
- 10. Albert's Lyrebird**

Top 5 mammals as voted by participants:

- 1. Short-beaked Echidna**
- 2. Duck-billed Platypus**
- 3. Koala**
- 4. Red Kangaroo**
- 5. Spectacled Flying Fox**



Sunset over Lamington National Park and Short-beaked Echidna.

Trip Summary

The picturesque Harbor Bridge and ashen Opera House glimmered in the rising sun as we flew over the waterfront departing from the heart of Sydney on the southeastern coast of Australia. Some of us were fortunate to enjoy a live performance in the opera house and cruise across the scenic harbor before meeting up for the flight north to Cairns and beginning our tour. The northern tropical city of Cairns is situated almost at the northeast tip of Queensland huddled along the shoreline of the Coral Sea. It is here we began in earnest at sea front along the Esplanade where the incoming tides allowed us scan the mudflats finding such avian gems as Black-necked Stork, a lone Bush Thick-knee and a host of eastern migrant waders including Great Knot, Gray-tailed Tattler, and Far Eastern Curlew.

Departing from the wharf early the following morning, we set out by luxuriant catamaran towards the Great Barrier Reef for a day of underwater adventure. We enjoyed smooth seas and were visited several times by playful Pantropical Spotted Dolphins that performed at the bow while Brown Boobies and Black-naped Terns wheeled past at close range. Upon anchoring off at the isolated coral reef of Michaelmas Cay, we adorned flippers and snorkel gear after a fascinating semi-submersible cruise through the

astonishing coral to further explore this world under the waves. Elongated batfish and a fantastic diversity of parrotfish and angelfish glimmered as we swam past giant clams and a diverse assortment of vivid corals and anemones. The white sand island itself serves as an important breeding site for birds and literally thousands upon thousands of Sooty Terns were nesting with smaller numbers of both Brown and Black Noddys while sleek Great Frigatebirds waited for the next meal to pirate. At one point a Hawksbill Turtle swam past adding to our excitement at experiencing the Great Barrier Reef!

Heading towards the interior tropical rainforest of Queensland, we first visited a small cottage bed and breakfast surrounded by lush woodland draped with epiphytes and aerial ferns. We awoke to the harsh screams of a displaying Victoria's Riflebird and in short time had found such specialties as the ridiculously vocal Spotted Catbird, remarkably tame Australian Brush Turkey, and small flocks of Double-eyed Fig Parrot. We continued our explorations finding the diurnal Musky Rat-Kangaroo as well as obtaining scope views of an unexpected Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo before we received an urgent phone call that one of our primary targets of the tour had been spotted nearby – the Southern Cassowary! In a mad dash of adrenaline we ran along a dirt track to the site and much to our delight after catching our breath we spent an unforgettable fifteen minutes with this extraordinary bird. The gigantic flightless Southern Cassowary is a rare solitary interior forest bird with red wattles and a bright blue and purple head, and it serves as a very important distributor of forest seeds; it was simply incredible to observe such a marvel of nature at such close range!

We next followed the winding coastline northward where set out on a cruise along the charming Daintree River. Massive crocodiles locally called 'salties' basked in the sunlight as we entered a narrow corridor engulfed in riverine broadleaf forest where Azure and Little Kingfishers whizzed past us within arms length and we were pleased to have an encounter with an adult Great-billed Heron and sprightly Red-backed Fairy-Wren.

The raucous calls of Laughing Kookaburras and screams of Spectacled Flying-Foxes resounded across the forested grounds of our lodge serving as a terrific base in which to explore the diverse Atherton Tablelands. The surrounding grounds held a host of wildlife including nocturnal marsupials such as Long-tailed Bandicoot and Northern Striped Possum, the localised Bridled Honeyeater and Gray-headed Robin, and with persistence we all managed to find the secretive Noisy Pitta hopping furtively along the forest floor. Ascending the steep slope of Mount Lewis we tracked down the display site of a cooperative Tooth-billed Bowerbird and enjoyed following small family groups of unique Chowchillas foraging in the leaf litter followed by the shy Fernwren.

Striking out in to the drier west of scattered eucalypt forest and grassland we were fortunate to locate a stately Australian Bustard in full elaborate display. Venturing into the woodland we located the well-attended bower of a Great Bowerbird, gawked at a Tawny Frogmouth frozen at its eye-level daytime roost, and were mobbed by groups of the unique Apostlebird, so named for their habit of often being found in groups of twelve. Brushier areas produced the scarce but exquisite Squatter Pigeon, a surprisingly confiding

White-browed Robin, and a fantastic perched Channel-billed Cuckoo visiting a fruiting fig tree.

There exists a specialized order of mammals that actually lay eggs called monotremes, which contain only two living representatives on earth. We set out early towards an abandoned railway station in search of one of these unique animals called the Duck-billed Platypus, finding a flock of the beautiful Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo along the way. With persistence, the quiet backwaters at this site allowed us extended views of this shy semi aquatic species as it quietly fed along the surface of the water showing off its unique duck-like bill, sleek waterproof fur, and padded flattened tail. The surrounding plowed farm fields allowed us to attain scope views of the endemic gray and red Brolga and listen curiously to large numbers of vocal migratory Sarus Crane, the largest crane in the world. Further a field we visited the rainforest of Crater National Park where we stumbled across the graceful Red-bellied Black-Snake while waiting motionlessly at a carefully constructed tower bower for the rare Golden Bowerbird to return – which it ultimately did much to our delight!

The World Heritage Site of Lamington National Park hosts a multitude of unique flora and fauna, and after flying south to the city of Brisbane we were on our way to the tropical forest of world famous O'Riley's Guesthouse. Along the way we located a trio of feeding Glossy Black-Cockatoos, a species adversely affected by the extensive bush fires that had limited available food resources. Our arrival was overwhelming as we opened the vehicle doors and almost immediately found our first flock of Regent Bowerbirds in a vibrant flash of gold and black. Red-necked Pademelons bounded down the rainforest trails and Satin Bowerbirds were attending eye-catching bowers near our lodge that overlooked the lovely forested mountains of Lamington. In the evening we could hear the screams of a resident Greater Sooty Owl and Marbled Frogmouth while Mountain Brush-tailed Possums fed nearby carrying small babies clinging to their backs. Further explorations acquainted us with interior forest denizens such as confiding groups of captivating Logrunner, the brilliant Paradise Riflebird, shy Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves that called auspiciously from the rainforest canopy, and with considerable effort we all obtained amazingly close views of the exceptionally localised Albert's Lyrebird, one of the most fantastic vocal mimics on earth!

After an exciting final morning offering us prolonged views of the secretive Spotted Quail-Thrush we boarded another plane back to the cosmopolitan city of Sydney where we set out towards Royal National Park. The moist forest was littered with tree ferns and in short time we heard the explosive song of the Superb Lyrebird sending us deeper into the woodland until we had all managed outstanding views of this attractive species complete with elaborate tail plumes.

The following day we were standing on the dock at daybreak ready for our pelagic in the South Pacific aboard a multifaceted fishing vessel. The weather was incredibly cooperative and throughout the day we enjoyed an infusion of petrels, albatross, and shearwaters. A run of salmon brimming near the surface attracted an abundance of Fluttering Shearwaters and upon inspection we were able to pick out several localised

Hutton's Shearwaters while nearby a Humpback Whale spouted giving away its submerged position. We were fortunate to have several ornithologists aboard that were actively ringing seabirds during the pelagic allowing us incredibly close in-the-hand studies at tubenoses such as Short-tailed and Flesh-footed Shearwaters as well as four species of albatross. Near the drop-off of the continental shelf we began encountering larger varieties of seabirds and at one point we could count an unbelievable thirteen Wandering Albatross, the bird with the longest wingspan on earth. To see these graceful giants soaring sometimes within a few arms-lengths was truly a sight to behold!

The extensive stunted heathlands of Barren Grounds Nature Reserve enticed us out early the following morning and we were pleased to find the stunted heath in full flower dappled with whites, pinks, and yellows. We first managed to trace down the piercing call of the endangered Eastern Bristlebird and with concerted effort we all eventually achieved looks at the tiny charismatic Southern Emu-wren. With high hopes we later carefully pushed through the dense heath and incredibly, we flushed two separate Ground Parrots allowing extraordinary views of this rarely encountered species, one of only three very rare ground-dwelling parrots in the world!

That afternoon through the misty Blue Mountains we climbed to our lofty abode passing by flocks of screeching Crimson Rosellas and effervescently colored Australian King Parrots. The following morning we managed to call into view the secretive Pilotbird before making our way into the eucalyptus laden valley of Capertee. From the rocky limestone hillsides Common Wallaroos and Eastern Gray Kangaroos sprung in impressive leaps and bounds while overhead we were overwhelmed by an invasion of elegant White-browed and Masked Woodswallows migrating away from the dry interior of Australia adversely affected by a severe drought. The birding was spectacular and while sorting through a host of active treecreepers, pardolotes, robins, and fairy-wrens we managed to pick out local specialties such as the radiant Turquoise Parrot and a cooperative Regent Honeyeater, an endangered and highly nomadic species.

Beginning our journey into the outback, we first stopped at series of wetlands adding such species as the intricately patterned Pink-eared and bizarre Musk Ducks before hiking through a dry eucalypt woodland where we finally caught up with an obliging Rock-Warbler and noisy Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos. It seemed that the further a field we traveled, the friendlier the people became in the little towns bursting with local Australian atmosphere. Just before settling into our guesthouse for the evening we enjoyed one final stop where we were entertained by specialties including the lively Inland Thornbill, a gorgeous male Red-capped Robin, and close views of a graceful Spotted Harrier.

We continued further westward towards the town of Deniliquin passing endless farmlands and increasingly arid landscape. Investigating a wetland near Leeton we were pleased to find Brolga cranes circling over the wetlands where throngs of waders and waterbirds fed including the elegant Red-necked Avocet and Red-kneed Dotterel. Patience and a bit of luck allowed for incredible views of both Australian Spotted and

Baillon's Crakes and later we were fortunate to enjoy extended views of an accommodating Australasian Bittern.

While travelling across the open plains to Gulpa Island State Forest we found good numbers of dignified Emu, a large flightless species endemic to Australia, and a variety of parrots including the handsome Bluebonnet. Attractive Superb Parrots streaked past overhead following watercourses that meandered through the forest of Red Eucalyptus while we fruitfully searched for the localized Gilbert's Whistler and with substantial organized walking managed incredible views of a female Painted Buttonquail huddled motionless in the undergrowth.

The dense stunted growth on the open plains offered a new environment to explore and after being overwhelmed by the glowing White-winged Fairy-wren and scoping the highly nomadic and unpredictable Orange Chat we headed to a nearby wetland where we found a pair of Brolga were protecting a newborn chick before flushing several Stubble Quail from the surrounding overgrown fields. Of course the primary reason for us travelling to this remote region was a chance to venture out at night in search of the little-known Plains Wanderer, a monotypic family of unknown biological affinities thought by ornithologists to be most closely related to the seedsnipes of South America. With our local guides we were quick to spotlight a very close Australian Owlet-Nightjar perched motionlessly on a broken snag before driving in 4x4s into the fields. We scoured the surroundings with spotlights and first managed to find a single elegant Australian Pratincole that we approached to within a few meters followed by a fine-looking Inland Dotterel that had obviously extended its range from the interior drought. We continued searching for our primary target but were pleased to be distracted by a small mob of Red Kangaroos, the largest kangaroo in the world and a signature mammal of the Australian outback. With the night wearing on I was beginning to get apprehensive when the second vehicle radioed that they had located the bird! We cut the vehicle back sharply and within moments were all watching a glorious male Plains Wanderer in the spotlight, an imposingly petite but indisputably unique bird that completed a perfect excursion into the outback!

With a day to spare we decided to make the most of it by drive southwest into pristine mallee, a term used to describe a unique biome of small sclerophyll multi-trunked trees and scrub. The decision proved rewarding and along the way we found a noisy flock of Chestnut-crowned Babblers and a magnificent trio of Major Mitchell's Cockatoo that we watched both in flight and at length through the telescope! The dry mallee habitat was certainly inviting and almost immediately we heard the shrill call of a Crested Bellbird near an active Malleefowl mound. A species of megapode, the Malleefowl builds a sizable nest mound using a complicated system of decomposing vegetation to incubate eggs at a precise temperature. Continuing our search for this difficult species, we located the agile Western Gray Kangaroo near several pairs of splendid Regent Parrots and later we very fortunate to stumble across a rarely encountered Chestnut Quail-Thrush. With the day fading and our confidence beginning to abate I was flabbergasted to look out my window and see a splendid Malleefowl standing motionless not but ten meters from the roadside once again offering us a grandiose finish to a great day!

South of the city of Melbourne we ventured to the renowned Phillip Island after the long journey south returning to coastal elevations. Along the roadside paddocks we found feeding Cape Barren Geese with tiny striped chicks before arriving at a scenic boardwalk that skirted the edge of a rocky cliffside. Nesting Silver Gulls called nervously as we scanned below the cliffs across hundreds upon hundreds of basking Australian Fur Seals along with a single Little Penguin that was almost dwarfed by nearby Sooty Oystercatchers. Inside the eucalypt forest in the center of the island we found lively Swamp Wallabies hopping through the undergrowth as we searched for our primary target, the delightful Koala. With a little active searching we were able to discover this adorable native marsupial and eventually we all obtained excellent views of several individuals including a tiny Joey clinging tightly around the neck of an adult! We concluded the day at sundown walking along the white sandy beach finding the localized Hooded Plover.

Flying over the Bass Strait to the mountainous island of Tasmania, it was a pleasure to view towering snow-capped peaks and picturesque inland lakes surrounded by lush green valleys from above. Landing in the historically preserved city of Hobart, we first settled into our quaint cottage before setting out onto the slopes of Mount Wellington. The luxuriant forested trail was a labyrinth of tree ferns and moss-laden vegetation giving the feeling an outdoor wonderland. We first productively called in a vocal Scrubtit that performed cooperatively in a stream gully grasping tree trunks similar to a nuthatch's behavior before we carried on to a more open section of forest locating the endemic Black Currawong and several beautiful Yellow-throated Honeyeaters. We were very fortunate to enjoy clear skies as we approached the upper end of Mount Wellington rising almost 1,300 meters above sea level. An unsurpassed panoramic view of Tasmania invited us to the summit and the surrounding glacial rock formations and stunted sub-alpine vegetation provided views of the stunning Flame Robin and noisy Crescent Honeyeaters.

Our final day of the tour we boarded a ferry to Bruny Island, finding the localised Black-faced Cormorant along the ferry trip. Beautiful weather allowed us to scan the canopy of eucalypts in a steep gully without disturbance by the wind so we promptly found the rare Forty-spotted Pardalote and with persistence had excellent views of the aptly named Swift Parrot. The scenery along the coastline was just awesome with the waves of the Tasman Sea crashing against the rocky cliffs as we hiked up the hillside to the lighthouse at the southern tip of the island. We managed to clean up all the remaining Tasmanian endemics that afternoon and on the way back had a close encounter with a pair of uncommon Beautiful Firetail finches. We bid each other farewell while celebrating the excellent success of our tour over a pleasant seafood dinner looking over the wharf and reminiscing over our many great adventures through the marvelous continent of Australia!

List of BIRDS

STRUTHIONIFORMES: Casuariidae

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*

STRUTHIONIFORMES: Dromaiidae

Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae*

SPHENISCIFORMES: Spheniscidae

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*

PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Diomedeidae

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*

Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae

Antarctic (Southern)Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*

Cape Petrel *Daption capense*

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*

Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni*

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Hydrobatidae

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

PELECANIFORMES: Pelecanidae

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

PELECANIFORMES: Sulidae

Australian Gannet *Morus serrator*

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

PELECANIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

PELECANIFORMES: Anhingidae

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

PELECANIFORMES: Fregatidae

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

CICONIIFORMES: Ardeidae

Pacific (White-necked) Heron *Ardea pacifica*

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Striated Heron *Butorides striata*
Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*

CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*

CICONIIFORMES: Threskiornithidae

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*
Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*
Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*
Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*
Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*
Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*
Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*
Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*
Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*
Green Pygmy-goose *Nettapus pulchellus*
Maned (Australian Wood) Duck *Chenonetta jubata*
Gray Teal *Anas gracilis*
Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*
Australian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis*
Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*
White-eyed Duck (Hardhead) *Aythya australis*
Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*
Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*

FALCONIFORMES: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

FALCONIFORMES: Accipitridae

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*
Australian (Blk-shouldered) Kite *Elanus axillaris*
Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*
White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*
Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*
Gray Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*
Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*
Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*

Little Eagle *Aquila morphnoides*

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

Australian (Nankeen) Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

GALLIFORMES: Megapodiidae

Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami*

Malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata*

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis*

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora*

GRUIFORMES: Turnicidae

Painted Buttonquail *Turnix varia*

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae

Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*

Brolga *Grus rubicunda*

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor*

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Australian Spotted Crake *Porzana fluminea*

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Black-tailed Native-hen *Gallinula ventralis*

Tasmanian Native-hen *Gallinula mortierii*

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

GRUIFORMES: Otididae

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Jacanidae

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae

White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*

Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Burhinidae

Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus grallarius*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Glareolidae

Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*
Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythrogonys cinctus*
Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
Black-bellied (Gray) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*
Lesser (Mongolian) Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*
Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*
Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyaornis melanops*
Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

Latham's (Japanese) Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Gray-tailed Tattler *Heterosceles brevipes*
Wandering Tattler *Heterosceles incanus*
Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
Red Knot *Calidris canutus*
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*
Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Pedionomidae

Plains-wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*
Parasitic (Arctic) Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*
Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*
Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Sternidae

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*
Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*
Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*
Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*
Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*
White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*
Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*
Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*
White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
Black Noddy *Anous minutus*
Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Rock (Feral) Pigeon *Columba livia*
White-headed Pigeon *Columba leucomela*
Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia phasianella*
Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*
Brush Bronzewing *Phaps elegans*
Crested Pigeon *Geophaps lophotes*
Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*
Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*
Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*
Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*
Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*
Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus regina*
Pied Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula bicolor*
Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus*

PSITTACIFORMES: Cacatuidae

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii*
Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus*
Galah *Eolophus roseicapillus*
Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris*
Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*
Pink (Major Mitchell's) Cockatoo *Cacatua leadbeateri*
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*
Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*
Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*
Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*
Mallee Ringneck *Barnardius barnardi*
Green Rosella *Platycercus caledonicus*
Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*
Yellow Rosella *Platycercus flaveolus*
Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus*
Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius*
Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus*
Bluebonnet *Northiella haematogaster*
Turquoise Parrot *Neophema pulchella*
Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*
Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulates* (Feral)
Ground Parrot *Pezoporus wallicus*
Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*
Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*
Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus*
Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii*

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*
Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*
Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*
Little (Gould's) Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*
Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*
Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*
Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*

STRIGIFORMES: Tytonidae

Greater Sooty-Owl *Tyto tenebricosa*
Lesser Sooty-Owl *Tyto multipunctata* (H)
Australian Masked-Owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*
Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Southern Boobook *Ninox boobook*

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Aegothelidae

Australian Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Podargidae

Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*
Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*
Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis* (H)

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* (H)

APODIFORMES: Apodidae

Australian (White-rumped) Swiftlet *Aerodramus terraereginae*
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*
Little Kingfisher *Alcedo pusilla*
Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*
Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*

Forest Kingfisher *Todirhamphus macleayii*

Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris*

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*

CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

PASSERIFORMES: Pittidae

Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor*

PASSERIFORMES: Atrichornithidae

Rufous Scrub-bird *Atrichornis rufescens* (local guide only)

PASSERIFORMES: Menuridae

Albert's Lyrebird *Menura alberti*

Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae*

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

Australasian (Singing) Bushlark *Mirafrja javanica*

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae

White-backed Swallow *Cheramoeca leucosternus*

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*

Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel*

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Yellow-eyed (Barred) C-shrike *Coracina lineata*

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

White-winged Triller *Lalage tricolor*

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

Olive-tailed (Bassian) Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*

Russet-tailed Thrush *Zoothera heinei*

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae

Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*

Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis*

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*

Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi*

PASSERIFORMES: Rhipiduridae

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Gray Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*

PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*

White-eared Monarch *Monarcha leucotis*

Spectacled Monarch *Monarcha trivirgatus*

Pied Monarch *Arses kaupi*

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*

Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*

Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

PASSERIFORMES: Petroicidae

Jacky-winter *Microeca fascinans*

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

Scarlet Robin *Petroica multicolor*

Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*

Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea*

Rose Robin *Petroica rosea*

Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster*

Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata*

Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata*

Pale-yellow Robin *Tregellasia capito*

Yellow (Eastern) Robin *Eopsaltria australis*

White-browed Robin *Poecilodryas superciliosa*

Gray-headed Robin *Heteromyias albispecularis*

PASSERIFORMES: Pachycephalidae

Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus*

Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis*

Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea*

Gilbert's Whistler *Pachycephala inornata*

Gray Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*

Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*

Bower's Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla boweri*

Gray Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

PASSERIFORMES: Pomatostomidae

Gray-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis*

White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*

Chestnut-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus ruficeps*

PASSERIFORMES: Orthonychidae

Southern Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii*

Chowchilla *Orthonyx spaldingii*

PASSERIFORMES: Eupetidae

Eastern Whipbird *Psophodes olivaceus*
 Spotted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma punctatum*
 Chestnut Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma castanotus*

PASSERIFORMES: Maluridae

Red-backed Fairywren *Malurus melanocephalus*
 White-winged Fairywren *Malurus leucopterus*
 Superb Fairywren *Malurus cyaneus*
 Splendid Fairywren *Malurus splendens*
 Variegated Fairywren *Malurus lamberti*
 Lovely Fairywren *Malurus amabilis*
 Southern Emuwren *Stipiturus malachurus*

PASSERIFORMES: Acanthizidae

Eastern Bristlebird *Dasyornis brachypterus*
 Pilotbird *Pycnoptilus floccosus*
 Rock Warbler *Origma solitaria*
 Fernwren *Oreoscopus gutturalis*
 Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis*
 White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*
 Tasmanian Scrubwren *Sericornis humilis*
 Atherton Scrubwren *Sericornis kerri*
 Large-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis magnirostris*
 Scrubtit *Acanthornis magnus*
 Chestnut-rumped Hylacola *Hylacola pyrrhopygia*
 Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides*
 Mountain Thornbill *Acanthiza katherina*
 Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla*
 Tasmanian Thornbill *Acanthiza ewingii*
 Inland (Broad-tailed) Thornbill *Acanthiza apicalis*
 Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*
 Chestnut-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis*
 Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana*
 Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata*
 Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*
 Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*
 White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea*
 Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*
 Brown Gerygone *Gerygone mouki*
 Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca*
 Mangrove Gerygone *Gerygone levigaster*
 Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*

PASSERIFORMES: Epthianuridae

Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons*
 White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*

PASSERIFORMES: Neosittidae

Varied Sittella *Neositta chrysoptera*

PASSERIFORMES: ClimacteridaeWhite-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaeus*Red-browed Treecreeper *Climacteris erythroptera*Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus***PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae**Olive-backed (Y-bellied) Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis***PASSERIFORMES: Dicaeidae**Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum***PASSERIFORMES: Pardalotidae**Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*Forty-spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus quadragintus*Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus***PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae**Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis***PASSERIFORMES: Meliphagidae**Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta*Dusky Myzomela (Honeyeater) *Myzomela obscura*Scarlet Myzomela (Honeyeater) *Myzomela sanguinolenta*Black Honeyeater *Certhionyx niger*Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis*Yellow-spotted Honeyeater *Meliphaga notata*Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*Bridled Honeyeater *Lichenostomus frenatus*Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops*Varied Honeyeater *Lichenostomus versicolor*Mangrove Honeyeater *Lichenostomus fasciogularis* (H)Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*Yellow Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavus*White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis*Yellow-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavicollis*Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops*Fuscous Honeyeater *Lichenostomus fuscus*Yellow-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus ornatus*White-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillatus*Macleay's Honeyeater *Xanthotis macleayana*White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*Black-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus affinis*White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*Strong-billed Honeyeater *Melithreptus validirostris*Brown-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus brevirostris*Little Friarbird *Philemon citreogularis*Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus*Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*White-fronted Honeyeater *Phylidonyris albifrons*

White-cheeked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris nigra*
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *Phylidonyris melanops*
Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*
Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*
Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia*
Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*
Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*
Bell Miner *Manorina melanophrys*
Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala*
Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula*
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*
Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*
Brush Wattlebird *Anthochaera chrysoptera*
Yellow Wattlebird *Anthochaera paradoxa*

PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus*
Green (Yellow) Oriole *Oriolus flavocinctus*
Green Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*

PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*

PASSERIFORMES: Grallinidae

Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*

PASSERIFORMES: Corcoracidae

White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos*
Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea*

PASSERIFORMES: Artamidae

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*
Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*
White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus*
Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*

PASSERIFORMES: Cracticidae

Gray Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*
Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*
Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*
Australasian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*
Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*
Black Currawong *Strepera fuliginosa*
Gray Currawong *Strepera versicolor*

PASSERIFORMES: Paradisaeidae

Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus*
Victoria's Riflebird *Ptiloris victoriae*

PASSERIFORMES: Ptilonorhynchidae

Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus melanotis*
Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris*
Tooth-billed Catbird *Ailuroedus dentirostris*
Golden Bowerbird *Prionodura newtoniana*

Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*

Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*

Great Bowerbird *Chlamydera nuchalis*

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*

Little Raven *Corvus mellori*

Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus*

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

Metallic (Shining) Starling *Aplonis metallica*

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae

Beautiful Firetail *Stagonopleura bella*

Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*

Red-browed Firetail (Finch) *Neochmia temporalis*

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*

Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii*

Black-throated Finch *Poephila cincta*

Nutmeg Mannikin *Lonchura punctulata*

Chestnut-breasted Munia *Lonchura castaneothorax*

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

List of MAMMALS

Platypus (Duck-billed) *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

Northern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon macrourus*

Long-nosed Bandicoot *Perameles nasuta*

Mountain Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus caninus*

Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*

Northern Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata*

Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*

Fat-tailed Dunnart *Sminthopsis crassicaudata*

Musky Rat-Kangaroo *Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*

Red-legged Pademelon *Thyogale stigmatica*

Red-necked Pademelon *Thylogale thetis*

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*

Red-necked Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus*

Bennet's Wallaby *Macaropus rufogriseus*

Common Wallaroo *Macropus robustus*

Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*

Western Gray Kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosis*

Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus*
Black (Swamp) Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*
Grey-headed Flying Fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*
Black Flying-Fox *Pteropus alecto*
Spectacled Flying Fox *Pteropus conspicillatus*
Bush Rat *Rattus fuscipes*
House Mouse *Mus musculus*
White-tailed Rat *Mystromys albicaudatus*
European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*
New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*
Australian Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus*
Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*
Pantropical Spotted Dolphin *Stenella attenuata*
Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaengliae*

List of REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS

Hawkbill Sea Turtle
Eastern Water Dragon
Bearded Dragaon
Green Tre Snake
Keelback
Red-bellied Black Snake
Lesuer's Frog
Eastern Brown Snake
Land Mullet
Eastern Banjo Frog (H)
Sand Goanna

New Zealand extension

25th – 30th October 2006



Little Spotted Kiwi and Kokako. All photos by David Shackelford

Some of us continued our journey onwards flying from Tasmania to Auckland, the effervescent gateway New Zealand. Below us the mainland stretched forth in a sea of luxuriant green rolling hillsides and pastures. Driving towards the coastline, we reached the small coastal settlement of Miranda where the distant mountain cliffs appeared to protrude insidiously from the sea, adding a majestic backdrop to the adjacent ribbon of exposed coastline where endemic Variable Oystercatchers excavated in the moist sand for crustaceans and we found the subtly beautiful New Zealand Dotterel and the unique Wrybill, a tiny but boldly patterned shorebird with a distinctive bill bizarrely kinked to one side for specialized feeding!

Winding along the countryside roads at twilight towards the inland Podocarpus forest of Pureora, we took time to gaze heavenwards to pick out constellations including Scorpio and the Southern Cross shining boldly in the absence of modern artificial lighting. We woke the following morning in our traditional wooden cabins nestled in the heart of the forest, enjoying the furnace heaters combating the sharp chill of the morning air. Outside a morning chorus like nothing we have ever heard beckoned us to get on the move, and in short time we were stalking along a narrow trail following the haunting calls of a male Kokako while weaving through enormous mature stands of Podocarpus trees towering above us like ancient giants. The Kokako is one of only two remaining representatives of the wattlebird family, and with persistent scanning into the canopy we eventually managed scope views of this African turaco-like species with a peculiar circular blue wattle of skin hanging from the base of the bill. The secretive Fernbird eventually gave its position away from dense scrub and parasitic Long-tailed Cuckoos called raucously from the forest interior. From the pinnacle of a stilted tower in the heart of the tropical forest canopy we watched spectacular large parrots locally called the Kaka feeding from the moss-laden branches and bromeliads while below us the almost imperceptible calls of the diminutive Rifleman were drowned into the orchestra of forest sounds. Later we found a pair of this tiny charismatic bird rapidly flicking over dead leaves from the imperial trunks of fern trees scattered through the understory of the forest.

The far northeast of New Zealand offers access to an extraordinary island off the coastline called Tiritiri Matangi, where time has stood still against the depredation of modern man and nature has been allowed to repossess the island. Our excitement

mounted as we approached the island by speedboat, and even from the pier we could hear the animated calls of a male Saddleback, one of several bird species literally saved from the brink of extinction by intense recent conservation efforts. The overwhelming native assortment of vegetation including Pohutukawu trees more than 1,000 years in age abounded along the narrow trails and boardwalks encouraging an infusion of birdlife including the rare nectivorous Stichbird and massive Takahe, literally a primal giant among New Zealand's flightless birds. Amusingly, our sleeping quarter was the historical flag station converted from generations past and we slept literally in the shadow of the operational lighthouse that adorned a spiraling light throughout the night as a warning to passing seagoing vessels.

Venturing out at twilight onto the surrounding gravel beaches, we excitedly spotlit a parade of Little Penguins perfunctorily returning to their underground nesting burrows following the same route every night allowing us to wait motionlessly as they approached to within only a few feet of where we crouched! Returning to the forest, we could hear the haunting calls of the Little Spotted Kiwi echoing through the forest. Kiwis are a family of primitive flightless birds endemic to New Zealand that feed secretively through the undergrowth probing into the moist soil for invertebrates with long specialized bills. After more than an hour of diligently searching, we could hear the rustling of leaves in the distance slowly approaching our position. It seemed like an eternity as we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the kiwi to approach close enough to be seen, and using a red-filtered light we shone into the undergrowth to find ourselves astonishingly staring down at an adult Little Spotted Kiwi not more than a few feet away! We left the island by boat with soaring spirits as below us in the transparent turquoise water we found massive Eagle Rays swimmingly effortlessly above beds of oysters and mollusks.

Many consider New Zealand to be the 'seabird capital of the world' as it provides an essential breeding base for literally millions of seabirds on a series of land predator-free island reserves. Little did we know what we were getting into when we set out into the Hauraki Gulf into gale force winds gusting at up to fifty knots causing massive ocean swells compounded by the driving rain; in fact later the captain told us it was the worst weather he had ever taken people out in! We first laboriously motored through the torrent into the wind shadow of Little Barrier Island, temporarily escaping the continuous pounding of the waves. Here we were encountered our first Cook's Petrels rocketing past our vessel, a species of Pterodroma petrel known for their localized movements, incredibly rapid flight, and difficulty to identify at sea. Streams of Common Diving-Petrels and the odd White-faced Storm-Petrel fluttered by as a massive pod of Common Dolphins escorted our vessel into deeper waters.

The wind and rain were relentless, but we boldly continued until we were in ideal depth and territory to encounter the widest variety of pelagic seabirds possible. Here we sent the anchor to the depths over ninety meters below and proceeded to 'chum,' throwing off offal into the water to attract seabirds for miles around aided by their incredible sense of smell. Within moments our first endemic Black Petrels and a flurry Little Shearwaters fed nearby and in time we were watching Fairy Prions and the rare Pycroft's Petrel aerodynamically gliding past at ease in the raging weather as we sometimes struggled just

to stay aboard the boat! Almost at wits-end, we were about to haul in our anchor when a minute dark bird dabbled delicately across the waves to our starboard side. We could barely believe our eyes, but to our delight we had just found the only recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm-Petrel, an almost unknown species thought to be long-since extinct, known to science only from three nineteenth century specimens, and which for which absolutely no breeding data or population census is known! With spirits soaring we rode the wind and waves back in towards harbor, stopping only once to tie up on a small island while we located a captivating flightless rail locally known as the Weka.

Winding our way northward, we drove to a quaint bed and breakfast near the northeast tip of coastal New Zealand where we had big plans for the evening! We set out late in the night to a remote patch of remnant coastal forest, and walking with torches in hand we scoured the steep ravines and thorny scrub searching for another quintessential bird of the New Zealand nation – the secretive nocturnal Brown Kiwi. We found a lively introduced European Hedgehog and managed to hear a pair of kiwis calling far in the distance adding to our excitement, but after several intense hours of searching our hopes were beginning to fade. We unanimously decided to give it one more go, and within moments of that fateful decision we heard rustling leaves on the slope to my right. I quickly spotlight the site and to our immense happiness we were staring face to face with a stunning Brown Kiwi!

Needless to say our return journey the following day towards the Auckland airport was a celebratory one, and while resting along the journey we scanned a well-known estuary finding the endemic New Zealand Grebe and a petite Fairy Tern, perhaps New Zealand's rarest breeding endemic! We said our goodbyes recalling the countless adventures of the month past, and with a last look at the remarkable scenery of this island nation we bid a fond farewell until we meet again.



Pycroft's Petrel and Tiritiri Matingi Island sunset.

BIRDS

Apterygiformes KiwisNorth Island Brown Kiwi (E) *Apteryx mantelli*Little Spotted Kiwi (E) *A. owenii***Podicipediformes Grebes**New Zealand Dabchick (E) *Poliiocephalus rufopectus*Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae***Diomedeidae Albatrosses**Black-browed Albatross *T. (m.) melanophrys*White-capped Albatross (E) *T. (cauta) steadi***Procellariidae Shearwaters**Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*Buller's Shearwater (E) *P. bulleri*Little Shearwater *P. assimilis elegans*Sooty Shearwater *P. griseus*Fluttering Shearwater (E) *P. gavia***Procellariidae Petrels**Common Diving-Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*Cook's Petrel (E) *Pterodroma macroptera*Pycroft's Petrel (E) *P. pycrofti*Grey-faced Petrel *P. macroptera*Black Petrel (E) *P. parkinsoni*Northern Giant-Petrel *M. halli*White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*New Zealand Storm-Petrel (E) *Pealeaornis maoriana***Procellariidae Prions**Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur***Sphenisciformes Penguins**Blue Penguin *Eudyptula minor***Pelecaniformes Pelecan, Gannets, Cormorants**Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*Pied Shag *P. varius varius*Little Black Shag *P. sulcirostris*Little Shag *P. melanoleucos brevirostris***Ciconiiformes Herons, Egrets and Bitterns**White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*Reef Heron *E. sacra sacra***Anseriformes Duck-like birds**Black Swan (i) *Cygnus atratus*Canada Goose (i) *Branta canadensis maxima*Paradise Shelduck (E) *Tadorna variegata*Mallard (i) *Anas platyrhynchos*Grey (Pacific Black) Duck *A. superciliosa*Grey Teal *A. gracilis*Brown Teal (E) *A. aucklandica chlorotis*Australasian Shoveler *A. rhynchotis variegata*New Zealand Scaup (E) *A. novaeseelandiae*

Falcoformes Diurnal birds of preyAustralasian Harrier *Circus approximans***Galliformes Game birds**Brown Quail *Synoicus ypsilophorus*Ring-necked Pheasant (i) *Phasianus colchicus***Gruiformes Rails and cranes**Buff-banded Rail *Rallus philipensis assimilis*Weka (E) *Gallirallus australis*Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis*Pukeko *Porphyrio porphyrio*Takahe (E) *P. mantelli*Australian Coot *Fulica atra australis***Charadriiformes Waders**South Island Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*Variable Oystercatcher (E) *H. unicolor*Australasian Pied Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*New Zealand Dotterel (E) *Charadrius obscurus*Wrybill Plover (E) *Anarhynchus frontalis*Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*Spur-winged Plover *Vanellus miles*Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*Lesser Knot *Calidris canutus*Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata*Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*Terek Sandpiper *T. terek***Laridae Gulls and Terns**Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*Silver Gull (E) *L. scopulinus*Black-billed Gull (E) *L. bulleri*Caspian Tern *S. caspia*White-fronted Tern *S. striata*Fairy Tern *S. nereis***Columbidae Pigeons and Doves**New Zealand Pigeon (E) *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*Rock Pigeon (i) *Columba livia*Barbary Dove (i) *Streptopelia roseogrisea*Spotted Dove (i) *S. chinensis***Psittaciformes Parrots**[North Island] Kaka (E) *Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis*Eastern Rosella (i) *Platycercus eximius*Red-crowned Parakeet (E) *Cyanoramphus novaezealandiae*Yellow-crowned Parakeet (E) *C. auriceps***Cuculiformes Cuckoos**Shinging Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*Long-tailed Cuckoo (E) *Eudynamys taitensis*

Strigiformes OwlsMorepork *Ninox novaeseelandiae*Coraciiformes KingfishersSacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*Acanthisittidae New Zealand wrens[North Island] Rifleman (E) *Acanthisitta chloris granti*Hirundinidae SwallowsWelcome Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*Alaudidae LarksSkylark (i) *Alauda arvensis*Motacillidae PipitsNew Zealand (Richard's) Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*Muscicapidae ThrushesBlackbird (i) *Turdus merula*Song Thrush (i) *T. philomelos*Sylviidae Old World Warblers[North Island] Fernbird (E) *Bowdleria punctata vealeae*Pachycephalidae Whistlers and alliesWhitehead (E) *Mohoua albicilla*Acanthizidae Australasian WarblersGray Warbler (E) *Gerygone igata*Monarchidae FlycatchersNorth Island Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis*Eopsaltriidae Australasian Robins[North Island] Tomtit (E) *Petroica macrocephala toitoi*New Zealand Robin (E) *P. australis longipes*Zosteropidae White-eyesSouth Islandlvereye (White-eye) *Zosterops lateralis*Meliphagidae HoneyeatersStitchbird Honeyeater (E) *Notiomystis cincta*Bellbird Honeyeater (E) *Anthornis melanura*Tui Honeyeater (E) *Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*Emberizidae BuntingsYellowhammer (i) *Emberiza citrinella*Fringillidae FinchesChaffinch (i) *Fringilla coelebs*Greenfinch (i) *Carduelis chloris*Goldfinch (i) *Carduelis carduelis*Ploceidae SparrowsHouse Sparrow (i) *Passer domesticus*Sturnidae Starlings & mynasStarling (i) *Sternus vulgaris*Myna (i) *Acridotheres tristis*Callaeidae NZ wattlebirdsKokako (E) *Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*[North Island] Saddleback (E) *Philisternus carunculatus rufusater*

Cracticidae Magpies

Australian Magpie (i) *Gymnorhina tibicen*

**Rockjumper Birding Tours
Worldwide Birding Adventures
PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa
Tel: +27 33 394 0225
Fax: +27 88 033 394 0225
Email: info@rockjumper.co.za
Alternative Email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumper.co.za**