Australia

South Australia Outback



Splendid Fairywren by Dennis Braddy

Nowhere is Australia's vast Outback country more varied, prolific and accessible than in the south of the country. Beginning and ending in Adelaide, we'll traverse the region's superb network of national parks and reserves before venturing along the remote, endemic-rich and legendary Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks in search of a wealth of Australia's most spectacular, specialised and enigmatic endemics such as Grey and Black Falcons, Letter-winged Kite, Black-breasted Buzzard, Chestnut-breasted and Banded Whiteface, Gibberbird, Yellow, Crimson and Orange Chats, Inland Dotterel, Flock Bronzewing, spectacular Scarlet-chested and Regent Parrots, Copperback and Cinnamon Quail-thrushes, Banded Stilt, White-browed Treecreeper, Red-lored and Gilbert's Whistlers, an incredible array of range-restricted Grasswrens, the rare and nomadic Black and Pied Honeyeaters, Black-eared Cuckoo and the incredible Major Mitchell's Cockatoo.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Adelaide**
Day 2	**Adelaide to Berri**
Days 3 & 4	**Glue Pot Reserve & Calperum Station**
Day 5	**Berri to Wilpena Pound & Flinders Ranges National Park**
Day 6	**Wilpena Pound to Lyndhurst**
Day 7	**Strzelecki Track**
Day 8	**Lyndhurst to Mungerranie via Marree & Birdsville Track**
Day 9	**Mungerranie & Birdsville Track area**
Day 10	**Mungerranie to Port Augusta**
Day 11	**Port Augusta area**
Day 12	**Port Augusta to Adelaide**
Day 13	**Final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Adelaide to Berri. While most of South Australia's landscapes are arid, the Adelaide Hills are an exception. Tall, dense eucalypt forests provide habitat for many species otherwise only found in Australia's eastern states. We will look for Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, the *adelaideae* subspecies of Crimson Rosella (often regarded as a full species: Adelaide Rosella), Yellow-faced, White-naped and Crescent Honeyeater, Tawny-crowned and Purple-gaped Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreeper, Scarlet Robin, and the localised *maculatus* subspecies of White-browed Scrubwren. We also have a good chance of seeing a Koala.



Koala by Glen Valentine

After we leave the hills for the plains through which flows Australia's largest river, the Murray, we should start seeing raptors like Spotted Harrier, Australian Kite and Brown Falcon. We'll bird around the estuary of the Murray River, with Cape Barren Goose, Blue-billed Duck, Golden-headed Cisticola and a chance of Black Falcon. We'll follow the Murray upstream, marvelling at its ochre-coloured cliffs. Wetlands flanking the river are home to a huge variety of water birds including such specialties as Freckled Duck, Australian and Spotless Crake, Red-necked Avocet, herons, ibises, cormorants and reed-dwelling skulkers such as Little Grassbird. At the end of the day, we'll arrive at Berri on the banks of the Murray in the Riverland wine-region, surrounded by areas of dense eucalypt-scrub known as "mallee", where many rare and specialised bird species await us.

Glue Pot Reserve & Calperum Station. We have time to explore and enjoy the rich and varied birdlife in the 1 000 000 hectare-large-wilderness of 'mallee' eucalypt scrubland that dominates this wonderful area. Several reserves have been established here to protect this unique, declining and threatened habitat, including Birdlife Australia's Gluepot Reserve and Calperum Station Scientific Reserve and these will be our focal points for the next two days.



Echidna by Glen Valentine

These fabulous reserves host many of Australia's most sought-after, yet tough-to-find bird species. While the sun rises over centuries-old mallee eucalypts and sand dunes covered in spinifex grass we'll soon find ourselves off the beaten track in search of the range-restricted and often-elusive Red-lored Whistler, the endemic and endangered Black-eared Miner, the subtly beautiful Chestnut Quail-thrush, elusive Striated Grasswren and the roadrunner-like Southern Scrub Robin. As the bird activity slows

down, we'll focus on species such as Crested Bellbird, the dazzling Splendid Fairywren and Striped Honeyeater. Depending on preceding seasonal conditions, we may also encounter White-winged Triller, the rare and nomadic Pied and Black Honeyeaters and spectacular Major Mitchell's Cockatoo. From one of the bird hides that overlook a watering trough, we have a chance of observing Mulga Parrot and many of Gluepot's ten species of Honeyeater. With luck, we may also come across the vibrantly coloured Scarlet-chested Parrot, an amazingly vivid but incredibly erratic and unpredictable species. Other noteworthy species we'll be looking out for include Gilbert's and Rufous Whistlers, Pallid Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, the rare Black-eared Cuckoo, Yellow-plumed, White-fronted and White-eared Honeyeaters, the brilliant Purple-backed and White-winged Fairywrens, Brown and scarce White-browed Treecreepers, White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, Southern Whiteface, Redthroat and Shy Heathwren.



Black-eared Cuckoo by Dennis Braddy

Wilpena Pound & Flinders Ranges National Park. We depart from Berri around sunrise and will make a stop-in at a Regent Parrot breeding site on the banks of the Murray River, where we may also come across the fish-eating Whistling Kite and the noisy Little Friarbird.

We will then travel a few hours north, to the Flinders Ranges, an impressive range of steep hills and soaring rock formations on the edge of Australia's outback. We pass through the historic copper mining township of Burra, and search nearby Bluebush plains for semi-open country specialists such as White-fronted, Crimson and Orange Chats, Eastern Bluebonnet, Redthroat, Brown and Rufous Songlarks and Australian Pipit. Once we arrive in the Flinders Ranges, we will search the spinifex-grass covered slopes for the incredibly localised and sometimes elusive Short-tailed Grasswren. We may also be lucky enough to observe a few Elegant Parrots as they feed inconspicuously on the ground. We'll also certainly see plenty of Red and Western Grey Kangaroos in this interesting and scenic area.



Regent Parrot by Glen Valentine

After dinner tonight there will be an optional, short spot-lighting night walk, with chances of Tawny Frogmouth, Southern Boobook and Australian Owlet-nightjar.

Wilpena Pound to Lyndhurst. Sunrise over the jagged cliffs of the Flinders Ranges is a sight not to be missed. We bird our way across streambeds and through narrow gorges cut deeply into geological layers that date back 800 million years and contain fossils of the oldest multicellular life on earth, the Ediacaran flora,

which lived shortly before the great explosion of multicellular life at the beginning of the Cambrian Period. Here we'll search for Elegant Parrot and the nomadic Grey-fronted Honeyeater. With luck and perseverance, we're also likely to encounter the endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby. Majestic Wedge-tailed Eagles are likely to entertain us overhead as they soar past at eye-level, while we descend from the hills to the Outback plains.



Major Mitchell's Cockatoo by Glen Valentine

Leaving the Flinders Ranges on unsealed backroads we enter a little-visited part of Australia's outback. Here, vast stony plains are interspersed with sand dunes and infrequently inundated salt lakes. This unforgiving landscape is home to several highly specialised bird species, notably Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Rufous Fieldwren and Inland Dotterel.

At the end of the day, we arrive in the tiny hamlet of Lyndhurst where our comfortable accommodation is associated with an outback pub full of character.

Strzelecki Track. Early mornings in the outback can get quite chilly as we commence a big day's birding along the Strzelecki track, one of Australia's famous outback gravel roads but the cold, early morning start will be worth it as we venture into little-explored countryside in search of several of the continent's least-known and simply mouth-watering Outback specialties. At Mt. Lyndhurst, on the edge of the Strzelecki desert, we'll search for Thick-billed Grasswren, Chirruping Wedgebill, Rufous Fieldwren, Budgerigar and if we are lucky, one of the last remaining Chestnut-breasted Whitefaces, which have become extremely rare and elusive in the last few years. We continue our journey across the outback where, depending on seasonal conditions, we may come across flocks of Orange and Crimson Chats. Resident birds we'll be targeting include the rare, Black-breasted Buzzard and the rare, elusive and crepuscular Letter-winged Kite. In the white sand dunes of the Strzelecki desert, we will look for the incredibly localised Eyrean Grasswren. During the midday heat we can enjoy a picnic lunch at a waterhole fed by an artesian bore, with flocks of Zebra Finches, chats, Red-browed Pardalote, Diamond Dove and White-backed Swallows entertaining us and coming into drink. This will be our point of return along the Strzelecki Track, and we'll begin the drive back to Lyndhurst across the endless open stony ("gibber") plains of the Strzelecki desert, which are mostly traversed by dry watercourses. Other special and noteworthy



Southern Scrub Robin by Glen Valentine

birds we'll be looking for today include Cockatiel, the scarce and partially migratory Red-backed Kingfisher, the unique, chat-like Gibberbird, Little Crow, Cinnamon Quail-thrush and Rufous Songlark.

After sunset there will be an option to go looking for Inland Dotterels should we still be missing this Outback specialty.



Orange Chat by Jonathan Rossouw

Lyndhurst to Mungerranie via Marree and Birdsville Track. This morning we'll depart around sunrise for another visit to Mt. Lyndhurst to search for any species we might still need. We'll then return to Lyndhurst and continue up the Birdsville track. From the wide-open gibber-strewn plains near Marree, with further chances of Inland Dotterel and Gibberbird, through long, white sand dunes (with further chances of Eyrean Grasswren) we end up near Mungerranie. The artesian bore overflow here has created a lovely wetland, which usually holds Brolga and rafts of waterbirds such as Australasian Shoveler, Chestnut and Grey Teals, Blue-billed Duck, Hardhead, Red-necked Avocet and if conditions are right, the attractive and nomadic Banded Stilt. We'll even have a chance here of several species of crake (Australian, Spotless and Baillon's) – in amidst desert-like scenery! If we are extremely fortunate, we may even encounter he extremely scarce and elusive Australian Painted-snipe. Near Mungerranie we'll have another search for Eyrean Grasswren should we still be missing this species and we also stand a good chance of finding the scarce and range-restricted Banded Whiteface and one of Australia's rarest raptors: Grey Falcon!

Marree & Birdsville Track. We'll set off early to arrive at a magical swamp not long after sunrise. Here, the constant chatter of bird calls provides a background chorus to our search for Grey Grasswren, which prefers the dense lignum bushes in the foreground. Other species we'll be looking out for include Australian Pratincole, Red-kneed Dotterel and the good-looking but nomadic Flock Bronzewing. Later today we'll move onto another spring where our main target species is the very rare and localised Yellow Chat. On the way back to Mungerranie we'll keep watching for Grey Falcon and have further chances of Eyrean Grasswren, Orange and Crimson Chats, and if we are very fortunate perhaps even the rare and elusive Ground Cuckooshrike.



Cinnamon Quail-thrush by Jonathan Rossouw

Mungerranie to Port Augusta. This morning we'll visit a nearby spring and surrounding sand dunes, which we'll explore before breakfast, in search of any species we may still require in this area. Thereafter we'll begin making our way back south along the Birdsville Track, via the remote township of Marree, back to Lyndhurst from where sealed roads along the western flanks of the Flinders Ranges will take us to the bustling (especially in comparison to the remote and



Banded Stilt by Glen Valentine

under-populated Australian Outback that we would have become quite accustomed to by now) town of Port Augusta.

Port Augusta area. Just west of Port Augusta, a small population of several Western Australian bird specialties persists. These include Rufous Treecreeper, Western Yellow Robin and Blue-breasted Fairywren. We start today with an early visit to the bush surrounding Lake Gilles where we'll have a very good chance of these species and more: Copperback Quail-thrush (recently split from Chestnut) inhabits this area, as well as other goodies like Crested Bellbird, the western race of Gilbert's Whistler, and various species of Honeyeater. We'll spend most of the day here, before returning to Port Augusta where we will visit the beautiful Arid Lands Botanical Gardens. Here, an array of native flowers and shrubs attract such sought-after species as Chirruping Wedgebill, Redthroat, White-winged Fairywren and many species of Honeyeater including White-fronted Honeyeater and a chance of the rare and nomadic Pied and Black Honeyeaters. We'll also take some time out to inspect the trees around the nearby golf course that usually harbour Purple-crowned Lorikeets.

Port Augusta to Adelaide. This morning we'll depart our accommodations around sunrise to search the prairie-like Bluebush plains between Port Augusta and Whyalla for the recently-split Western Grasswren (former myall race of Thick-billed Grasswren). Other birds we are likely to come across here are the turquoise race of Splendid Fairywren, the scarce Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird and Redthroat. We may return to the bird-rich Arid Lands Botanical Gardens (with Pied & Black Honeyeaters if we're lucky!), and will then follow the coast south, where we'll look for the beautiful but highly nomadic Banded Stilt, Elegant Parrot, the rosinae race of Slender-billed Thornbill and the rosinae race of White-browed Scrubwren, to arrive in Adelaide early in the evening.



Australian (Mallee) Ringneck by Glen Valentine

Over our last meal together we'll prepare the final bird list and reminisce about the many great birds we've seen and memorable experiences we've had.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Endemic and target focussed trip. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Most species provide decent visuals in open conditions. But some skulkers and low-density targets.
Accommodation		Mostly comfortable, some lodges are basic but comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Easy to moderate walking. A few longer walks possible.
Vehicles / Roads		Several drives, some long. Comfortable vehicle. Roads vary, from sealed to dirt, but are mostly good and well maintained.
Photography		Good to good+. Some species distant, and bright light can be challenging. No dedicated hides.
Annoyances		Hot to very hot, very bright. Nights and early mornings can be cool to cold.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

This tour is made available through our Tailor-made tours department. To explore this offering further for pricing, precise day to day itinerary, inclusions & exclusions, or to tailor the tour to your personal requirements, please contact our Tailor-made team on tailormade@rockjumper.com

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- This tour involves a lot of driving on unsealed Outback roads; hence we use 4x4 vehicles the entire trip.
- The gravel roads in the Outback, especially along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks can be quite bumpy and dusty, but our comfortable 4x4 vehicles should provide an enjoyable and relaxed experience. Please bring a dust mask or bandana along if you are sensitive to dust.
- Several of the accommodations we use, especially in the heart of the outback at Mungerranie for example, are fairly basic but adequate, clean and comfortable. Please note though that at Mungerranie there is only shared facilities for the two nights that we'll be there. All other accommodations will have en suite facilities.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins with a dinner on the evening of day 1 in Adelaide and will conclude here after breakfast on day 13.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Sydney International Airport, Sydney (IATA: SYD) is the main port of entry for international flights in Australia and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. Regular flights linking Australia's major cities are also available.

Adelaide Airport (IATA: ADL) is well connected via Sydney International Airport (IATA: SYD).

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.