

# Outback Queensland: Birds, Mammals & Ancient Creatures With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

**May 21 – 31, 2020**

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## Tour Summary

11-Day / 10-Night Australian Outback Nature Tour  
\$5490 from Mount Isa  
Airport is Mount Isa Regional (ISA)

## Tour Highlights

- Explore the Mount Isa area for birds like the fascinating Spinifex Pigeon, gaudy Painted Finch, the bold Black-necked Stork
- Witness gaudy Australian Ringneck and flocks of Budgerigar in Boulia—a real treat to see this common pet store bird in the wild
- See impressive marine and dinosaur fossil displays in Boulia and Winton
- Get the chance to fossick for opals, belemnite fossils, and other Cretaceous fossils—fun!
- Bird Hughenden looking for impressive Black-breasted Buzzard and beautiful Pale-headed Rosella
- Visit a local “bush-tucker” garden in Richmond to see native food plants and the fauna it attracts
- Join in a fossil dig with a paleontologist; search for bivalves, belemnites, fish, shark’s teeth, turtles, and more



We are very excited to offer this new 10-day adventure in an area of Outback Queensland that is internationally- significant for its rich Cretaceous marine and terrestrial dinosaur fossils, and home to a large variety of range-restricted extant bird and mammal specialties.

Join Naturalist Journeys, in partnership with Inala Nature Tours, as we visit collections housing huge, almost complete skeletons of ancient marine reptiles from the ancient Eromanga Sea that covered much of inland Australia around 110 million years ago and the fossilized remains of 95 million year old terrestrial dinosaurs (including some cool footprints!). We also try our luck at fossicking for our own Cretaceous fossils! During the tour we also search for mammal specialties like the Purple-necked Rock-wallaby and bird specialties including several species of range-restricted Grasswrens, Grey Falcon, Red Goshawk, Bourke’s Parrot, and hopefully huge flocks of Budgerigar and Plum-headed Finch if there is any water about.

Make the most of your trip! This itinerary has been designed to adjoin our Cape York Specials tour.

## Day-to-Day Itinerary

### Thurs., May 21 Arrive Mount Isa

Today is simply an arrival day. Please plan to make your own arrangements for your transfer to the hotel and any personal activities today. You have the day to relax, settle in, and get your bearings before we meet as a group at 7:00 PM for a welcome dinner where we meet our guides, get to know the group, and chat about the details for the tour.

*Accommodations in Mount Isa (D)*





### **Fri., May 22 & Sat., May 23    Mount Isa Area**

We spend two full days in the Mount Isa area searching for local specialties including Kalkadoon and Carpentarian Grasswrens, Pictorella Mannikin, Yellow Chat, Varied Lorikeet, Black-tailed Tree-creeper, Long-tailed Finch, Painted Finch, Spotted Bowerbird, Crested Bellbird, Singing and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters, and Spinifex Pigeon. Crimson Chat is also a possibility. We also visit a nearby lake for waterbirds such as Black-necked Stork. We also have a good chance of seeing the rare Purple-necked Rock-wallaby.

*Accommodations in Mount Isa (B,L,D)*

### **Sun., May 24    Mt Isa to Boulia**

Today we travel to Boulia (a four-hour drive), birding en route. Species we search for include Black and Grey Falcons, Red Goshawk, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, and Ground Cuckoo-shrike. We should also see Red-browed Pardalote, Budgerigar, and Wedge-tailed Eagle; Little Button-quail has also been seen on our past tours here. This afternoon we visit the Boulia Marine Fossil display. There is also a chance to bird in the area (Brolga, Rufous Songlark, Cloncurry form of Australian Ringneck and Mistletoe Bird).

*Accommodations in Boulia (B,L,D)*

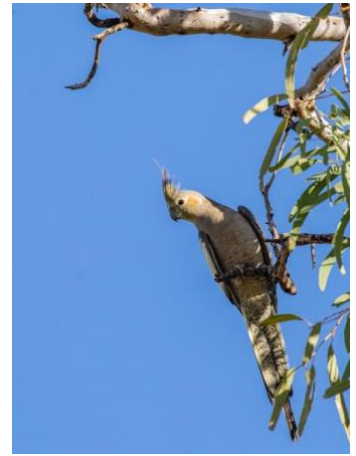
### **Mon., May 25    Boulia to Winton**

Our drive time today is around five hours and again we bird en route and on arrival. Birds include Hall's Babbler, Spinifexbird, Black, Pied, and Grey-headed Honeyeater, Spinifex Pigeon, Little Woodswallow, and Painted Finch. We also visit the sewerage ponds for chances of crakes (Australian Spotted, Spotless, and Baillon's) and Plum-headed Finch. The Corfield & Fitzmaurice Building in Winton, which houses one of the nation's most comprehensive displays of dinosaur fossils, is also worth a visit. This evening we search for nocturnal birds like Spotted Nightjar and Australian Owlet Nightjar.

*Accommodations in Winton (B,L,D)*

### **Tues., May 26    Winton Area**

We spend the full day today in the Winton area, a small town right in the middle of Queensland. We visit Lark Quarry Conservation Park for a tour of the facility to view the only known evidence of a dinosaur stampede: the footprints of a large carnivorous theropod (Australovenator) hunting a herd of small, two-legged coelurosaurs (Skartapus) and ornithopods (Wintonopsis) at the edge of an ancient lake around 95 million years ago! We also may get the chance to visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History, which houses the world's largest collection of Australian dinosaur fossils. During our tour here, we see the fossil preparation laboratory and collection room and take a tour of the area in an open shuttle-bus. We also take a walk in a canyon where we can see a range of plants, including 800-year-old live Cycads whose Cretaceous ancestors lived in the area; the interpretive display here includes life-size bronze sculptures of many of the creatures that lived here 95 million years ago. We keep our eyes peeled for Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Rusty Grasswren, and Grey Falcon, as well as the newly-split Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Horsfield's Bushlark, Rufous-throated Honeyeater, Varied Sitella, Australian Bustard, and Red-browed Pardalote. Black



Honeyeater and Bourke's Parrot have also been seen on our past tours, as have Red-chested Button-quail. There may also be a chance to fossick for opals—fun!

*Accommodations in Winton (B,L,D)*

### **Wed., May 27 Winton to Hughenden**

We depart early this morning to travel to Hughenden, a total drive time of three hours that includes stops for birding. The area may yield Spotted Harrier, Black-breasted Buzzard, White-throated Gerygone, Striated Pardalote (Black-capped race), and Pale-headed Rosella. There is also a chance to fossick for 100 – 110 belemnite fossils (an extinct order of squid-like cephalopods that existed in the late Triassic to late Cretaceous Period). We make time to visit the Flinders Discovery Centre fossil exhibition, which houses a large display of dinosaur fossils from the local area, including a life-size skeletal replica of a 7-metre long Muttaborrasaurus, which was cast from the original bones of a 110-million-year-old terrestrial dinosaur found in the area; it is an impressive display.

*Accommodations in Hughenden (B,L,D)*

### **Thurs., May 28 Hughenden to Richmond**

We take the relatively short drive to Richmond. Here we hope to see species like Restless Flycatcher and Painted Honeyeater, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, and Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Forest Kingfisher, Pale-headed Rosella, and Pheasant Coucal if the creek crossings have any water. Red-backed Kingfisher and Brown Songlark are also possibilities here. The local sewage works—of course—are also worth a visit with crakes, Little Grassbird, Plum-headed Finch, Pink-eared and Freckled Duck, and Australian Reed-Warbler possibilities. On our arrival in Richmond, we also visit a Cretaceous (110 million-year old) marine fossil collection from the local area that has yielded some of the richest vertebrate fossil-bearing deposits in Australia and provides a fascinating insight into the creatures that survived in the ancient Eromanga Sea. The display includes several almost complete skeletons of ancient marine reptiles (pliosaurs such as 10m long Kronosaurus queenslandicus, plesiosaurs, turtles, and ichthyosaurs), fish, and elasmosaurs.

*Accommodations in Richmond (B,L,D)*

### **Fri., May 29 Richmond**

We spend another day in the Richmond area. Today includes a visit to a "bush-tucker" garden (food native to Australia) where we view the plants and the birds attracted to the area. All plants are native to the region and are labelled with their traditional use in local indigenous culture. Moonrocks (limestone concretions) extracted from local properties are also found in the garden and around the town, showcasing the uniqueness of the region's landscape and prehistoric past. We participate in a fossil dig with a resident paleontologist; fossils we may find here include bivalves (including Aucellina and Inoceramus), belemnites, fish, shark's teeth, turtles, ichthyosaurs (phalanges, vertebrae and teeth) as well as coprolites (fossil poo!).





*Accommodations in Richmond (B,L,D)*

### **Sat., May 30 Richmond to Mount Isa**

Today is mostly a travel day, around 4.5 drive hours in total. We, of course, stop at regular intervals to bird en route; there are chances of species like Carpentarian and Kalkadoon Grasswrens and Grey-fronted Honeyeater, as well as Purple-necked Rock-Wallaby. We have a celebratory farewell dinner tonight to reminisce.

*Accommodations in Mount Isa (B,L,D)*

### **Sun., May 31 Departures or Flight to Cairns for our Cape York Tour**

The tour finishes today after breakfast. Please plan to take a taxi or Uber to the airport for departures home, or for those continuing on to the Cape York tour, please plan to take a taxi or Uber to the airport for flights to Cairns. Participants continuing onto the Cape York tour will fly with your guides, arriving after dinner this evening. (B)



## Cost of the Journey

### Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Please note, as of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

### Travel Information

Arrive in Mount Isa at Mount Isa Regional Airport (ISA) in time for a 7:00 PM meeting and dinner on May 21. Please plan your departures at a time convenient for you on May 31. If you plan to extend your time on our Cape York trip, please let us know and wait to book your flights to Cairns so that we can coordinate flying as a group.

### Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is **\$5490 DBL / \$6110 SGL** per person, based on double occupancy, from Mount Isa, Queensland.

Cost includes Cost includes 10 nights' accommodations, specialist guides and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary including fossicking licenses.

Cost does not include international and domestic airfares, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

*\*Price is based on exchange rate from July 2019. Subject to change if there is more than a 5% increase.*

### Please Note

**Meals and drinks:** Breakfast generally consists of a continental style breakfast with cereal, fruit and yogurt and tea/coffee. Full cooked breakfast is not generally offered at most locations. Lunch generally consists of a packed lunch style meal eaten in the field, with sandwich/filled roll, fruit, and a drink. Dinner usually consists of several options for main with the choice of either an appetizer or dessert. Drinks (soft and alcoholic) are generally not included but at lunches and breakfasts juice may be made available.

**The itinerary:** While we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather, and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit.

### Photo Credits

Budgerigars, Alfred Schult (AS); Blue-faced Honeyeater, Peg Abbott (PA); Cloncurry Ringneck, AS; Eastern Gray Kangaroo, Cindy Marple; Kookaburra, Greg Smith (GS); Brolga, GS; Restless Flycatcher, AS; Splendid Fairy-Wren, GS; Eastern Gray Kangaroo, Alex Vargo; Purple-necked Rock-Wallaby, AS; Australian Magpie, GS; Mistletoe Bird, AS; Dinosaur Tracks, Tonia Cochran (TC); Grasswren Country, AS; Cockatiel, AS; Australian Bustard, AS; Echidna, AS; Varied Lorikeet, AS; Naturalist Journeys Group, PA; Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Naturalist Journeys Stock.