



Outback Track Tours Newsletter

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A Message from Mark.....

March 2009

For anyone who saw Baz Luhrmanns spectacular "Australia", the movie and thought the scenery was wonderful, well I have something that can out-do that!



See it for real, we have an unforgettable 13day tour through the Kimberley departing Broome every 2 weeks in 2009. Called our **"Kimberley Camping Tours"** it is the most complete tour available including all the icons of the area. We start our adventure on the sandy tracks of Cape Leveque, visiting Derby and overnight at Windjana Gorge. Travel the Gibb River Road, explore Manning Gorge and see the Mitchell Falls. Overnight at El Questro, Kununurra, before taking the rough road into the Bungle Bungles. On our return to Broome, cruise Geikie Gorge and see the mighty Fitzroy River. If this sounds good then give us a call and we can send you a colour brochure with more information. Note that these tour are full camping tours, with the option of swags.

For those that would like an accommodated option, we have just put together a fully inclusive

Kimberley Accommodated tour. This includes flights from Sydney to Darwin, all accommodation, meals, sightseeing, cruises and return

flights from Broome to Sydney. Phone the office for more information or for a brochure.

We have a few interesting tours this year, with a number of special interest expeditions:

- Following Burke & Wills 2009
- Birding Simpson Desert 2009

"Following Burke & Wills" tour, coming up in May. Our beloved Phil and Klara will be our crew as they travel from Melbourne north through South Australia and Queensland up to Cairns. This tour will be especially exciting for those interested in the historic story of Burke and Wills and their expedition inland. With many books on the subject, Phil and Klara have a personal interest in the historic significance of this tour. This should make it a fantastic one and highlight for the season. Additionally, we have secured a fantastic article in the March edition of the Seniors Newspaper about this tour—look out for it!

Looking ahead to Feb 2010, we will be operating a special interest tour with a difference. In conjunction with FATS (Frog and Tadpole Study Group), a six day herpetological tour of the Dorrigo and Washpool rainforests of Northern NSW entitled: **"Frogs & Reptiles of the Northern NSW Rainforests"**. This is a wonderful oppor-

tunity to see some of our most inspiring frogs and reptiles in their natural habitat. The tour will be led by Dr Arthur White, whose research is widely published in scientific journals.

Over the last few months, **Bert Bolton**, whom many may remember as the original owner of the company, launched his autobiography. We now have limited copies available at the office, if you would like one.

"On the Outback Tracks" (\$30.00rrp) - The autobiography of Bert, has just been launched and is a fascinating story of his interesting life.

"Stories of the Outback" (\$25.00) - Bert's famous stories tell the magnificent history of our country from the Dreamtime to this day. This book highlights a life-time of stories and experiences that only the Outback could provide, complete with an introduction from Australian icon, Rolf Harris. This book details stories like Flynn of the Outback, Sidney Kidman, Daisy Bates, Burke & Wills. This is now in its second print run and will be available at the end of March.



2009 TOURS

- ✓ Easter with the Birds (April)
- ✓ Corner Country & Flinders Ranges (April)
- ✓ Following Burke & Wills (May)
- ✓ Trek to the Tip of Cape York (May/June)
- ✓ Birding Across the Gulf Country (June)
- ✓ Birding in the Kimberley (July)
- ✓ Birding East and West MacDonnell Ranges (August)
- ✓ WA Wildflower Tour (Sep)
- ✓ Birding Simpson Desert (Sep)
- ✓ Birding Eyre Peninsula (Oct)
- ✓ Birding South Coast (Nov)

WEBSITE UPGRADE

Unfortunately, our website may not be as up-to-date as we would prefer. However, we are undergoing an exciting NEW revamp of the site over the next month. We hope to get some much needed updates up and running with the new refurbishment. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused. Any brochure that you can't find on the website, just email or call us for current brochures. Thanks for your patience.

Sarah



Pictured above left: The Bungle Bungles. Pictured above right: The Cooper Creek, on the 'Following Burke & Wills' Tour



2009 Remote Desert Tours



16 days, Departure: May 11th 2009 \$3,800pp
Ex Melbourne—Cairns

Following Burke & Wills 2009

NEW

In 1860-61 Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills led an expedition of 19 men with the intention of crossing Australia from Melbourne in the south to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north, a distance of around 2,800 kilometres. At that time most of the inland of Australia had not been explored by white people and was completely unknown to the European settlers.

The south – north leg was successfully completed, but not without mystery, irony, torment, tragedy and back luck. The story of the expedition still fascinates today.

There are many theories and mysteries that surround the Burke & Wills Expedition. We will follow in the footsteps of the expedition to experience the scenery and imagine the hardships endured during their travels. Our expedition travels as close as possible to the trek of adventurers and explorers Burke & Wills. We travel north from Melbourne via Castlemaine to Green Lake, Mungo National Park. Kinchega, Milparinka, Fort Grey, Dig Tree, Innamincka, Birdsville, Dajarra, Burke & Wills Roadhouse, Normanton, finishing in Cairns.



12 days, Departure: May 30th 2009 \$2,600pp
Ex Cairns—Cairns

Trek to the Tip of Cape York

Our Cape York Trek starts in Cairns as we spend 12 days travelling up to the tip of Cape York.

We spend time exploring the track with its history, Aboriginal Art and swimming holes. We have time to enjoy the scenic trek to the top along the Bloomfield track, the Telegraph Track, entering the northern settlement of Bamaga on our way to Seisia, where we spend three nights relaxing at our beachside camp. Whilst at Seisia, take the ferry across to Thursday Island with a town tour. We will travel back down the main track to Cairns, joining the development road to Coen skirting the edge of the beautiful Lakefield National Park.

This tour will be operated by Crew Phil and Klara!

Birding Simpson Desert



16 days, Departure: September 21st 2009 \$3,750pp
ex Alice Springs - Sydney

The endless red sand dunes of the **Simpson Desert** attract many birds — honeyeaters feeding on flowering grevilleas and hakeas; Budgerigars and Zebra Finches feasting on seeding grasses; stately bustards striding through the spinifex. We will be on the look out for raptors overhead – Black and Grey Falcons, Letter-winged Kites, Black-breasted Buzzards are all possible. **Coongie Lakes** is listed as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance which recognises the true significance of these wetlands to Australia and internationally. The bird list for the park includes many waterbirds but also Flock Bronzewing, Banded Lapwings, Black-tailed Native-hens, and Crimson and Orange Chats. Little Corellas, Black and Whistling Kites and Barking Owls nest in the gums along the watercourses. Gibberbirds and Inland Dotterels like the gibber plains around **Innamincka** and the **Dig Tree**. We will search for Grey Grass-wrens in lignum on the flood plains of **Coopers Creek**. The mulga woodland on “**Kilcowera**” support many of the species of that habitat including Bourke's Parrot, White-browed Tree-creeper, Splendid and White-winged Fairy-wrens, Slaty-backed Thornbill, Hall's and Chestnut-crowned Babbler, Chirruping Wedgebill and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush.

Other birds that we may see as we are travelling are Spotted Harrier, Major Mitchell Cockatoos, Mulga Parrots, Budgerigars, Red-backed Kingfishers, Ground Cuckoo-shrikes, Crested Bell-birds, Red-browed Pardalote and White-backed Swallows. Red-tailed Black-cockatoos Spotted Bowerbirds It is possible that we will see all six species of woodswallow.

This tour will be operated by Crew Phil and Klara!



16 days, Departure: September 1st 2009 \$3,750pp
ex Alice Springs - Perth TAG ALONG OPTION POA

WA Wildflowers 2009

Be led by our expert Botanist on this unique Western Australia Wildflower tour!

Only operated once per year, this tour is different from others as we start our travels in Alice Springs. Some of the best 'wildflower carpets' are seen from the trek west from Uluru across the remote and amazing Gibson Desert. We travel through remote outback towns that provide the surrounding communities with a collective area to sell their art. We will see some excellent specimens and learn about their characteristics.

The Desert gradually changes into pastoral farming land and eventually the Indian Ocean. We visit the tranquil Monkey Mia, and take a Dugong Cruise. We then head south to Kalbarri and spend time at the Stromatolites at Hamelin Pool and Shell Beach. We will see many unusual plant species at Kalbarri National Park and Western Flora, a private property with a passionate cause for native wildflowers. You will also visit Perth, Albany and Margaret River. Our expert Botanist will be on hand to lead, identify and point out plant species and those of interest to the group. This tour is also available as a tagalong, contact the office for prices.

Don't miss out on this one!



Easter Birding 2009



Lake Cargelligo

Our annual Easter birding tour to Lake Cargelligo in Western NSW. The lake is home to many birding species. A camping tour, with an accommodated option.

5 Days, Departure: 9th—13th April, 2009 Ex Sydney

Birding East & West MacDonnell Ranges 2009

Includes Newhaven, Redbank Gorge, Ormiston Gorge, Kings Canyon, Mereenie Loop, Uluru, Trepkina Gorge, Arltunga Reserve.

On **Newhaven Reserve** some of the species that we hope to find include Bustards, Major Mitchell Cockatoos, Budgerigars, Pied, Black and Grey-headed Honeyeaters, Banded Whiteface, Crimson Chat and Slaty-backed Thornbill. Rufous-crowned Emu-wrens, Grey Honeyeaters and Orange Chats are occasionally recorded. Black-breasted Buzzards and Wedge-tailed Eagles are often seen on the way to Newhaven.

In the gorges of the **MacDonnell Ranges**, we will be looking for Spinifex Pigeon, Dusky Grasswren, Little Woodswallow, Spinifex-bird, Western Bowerbird and Painted Firetail.

16 Days, Departure: 22nd August, 2009 ex Alice—Alice

Birding Eyre Peninsula 2009

Willandra NP, Menindee Lakes, Port Augusta, Gawler Ranges, Streaky Bay, Pt Lincoln and Mt Remarkable, Hattah and Darlington Point.

When full of water, **Menindee Lakes** provide an important breeding ground for a wide variety of waterbirds including cormorants, herons and spoonbills.

The birdlist at **Gawler Ranges** is extensive but special birds include Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird, Rufous Treecreeper and Gilberts Whistler. Along the coast, we will find Osprey, Black-faced Cormorants, Fairy Tern and Pacific Gulls. Maybe Banded Stilt in roadside lagoons but we will have search along the beaches for Hooded Plovers. In Coffin Bay and Lincoln National, we will be searching for some of the western specialties such as Rock Parrot, Western Whipbird, Western Yellow Robin and Blue-breasted Fairy-wren but Brush Bronzewing, Purple-gaped Honeyeaters and Southern Scrub-robin are also there. We will stop to search for the Thick-billed Grass-Wren at a reserve near Whyalla.

The bird list for **Mt Remarkable NP** includes Purple-crowned Lorikeets and the exquisite Elegant Parrot but the Adelaide form of the Crimson Rosella can also be seen there. We will be on the lookout for Major Mitchell Cockatoos and Regent Parrots in the red Gums around the lakes at **Hattah-Kulkyne NP** but in the mallee woodland, Malleefowl, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Mallee Emu-wren, Shy Heathwren and Splendid Fairy-wren will not be as easy to find.

16 Days, Departure: 3rd October 2009 Ex Sydney—Sydney

Birding Across the Gulf Country

We will visit the Atherton Tablelands, Karumba, Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, Kingfisher Camp on a private property - Bowthorn Station, Cape Crawford, Mataranka, Pine Creek and Kakadu.

Towards the Gulf, we start to see species of the savannah woodland including Australian Bustard, Squatter Pigeons, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Varied Lorikeet, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Northern Fantail and Great Bowerbirds, Brolgas, Sarus Cranes. In the mangroves at Karumba, we hope to find Great-billed Heron, Beach Stone-Curlew, Mangrove Robin, Mangrove Golden and White-breasted Whistlers and Red-headed Honeyeaters.

Flocks of finches may include Double-Barred, Long-tailed, Masked, Black-Throated, Star, Pictorella or the endangered Gouldian. Black Bitterns are often along many of the rivers and Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens and Crimson Finch can be found in the riverine vegetation.

The spectacular **Lawn Hill Gorge** is a paradise for birdwatching – Spinifex Pigeon, Red-Winged Parrot, Buff-Sided Robin, Sandstone Shrike-thrush, Purple-crowned Fairy-wren, White-gaped and Banded Honeyeater and Great Bowerbird are a few which we are likely to see.

We hope Australia's rarest raptor, the Red Goshawk, which has nested at **Mataranka** for the past three years. As move north through **Katherine** and Pine creek, we will search for Chestnut-backed Button-Quail, Partridge Pigeon, Hooded Parrot, Northern Rosella and Black-tailed Treecreeper. Some of the birds that are in **Kakadu** include Chestnut-Quilled Rock-Pigeon, Banded Fruit-Dove, Rufous Owl and the recently split Arafura Fantail.

16 Days, Departure: 13th June 2009 ex Cairns — Darwin

Birding in the Kimberley

A stay at the **Broome Bird Observatory** will be a great start for our birding with the chance to participate in field trips. We will have the chance to see migratory shorebirds that are overwintering. We also visit **Windjana Gorge, Mornington Station** (owned and managed by Australian Wildlife Conservancy). The endangered Gouldian finch is regularly seen at the Station. Of special interest will be the **Mitchell Plateau** where we will be after the elusive Black Grasswren. Other species of the escarpment are White-quilled Rock-pigeon and Sandstone Shrike-thrush. Around **Kununurra** different species will be found in the lush irrigation areas such as Yellow-rumped Mannikins. We will have the opportunity to add many waterbirds on a relaxing cruise on Lake Argyle where Yellow Chats are often recorded. We also visit **Purnululu National Park** to see the Bungles, and take a scenic cruise along the gorge at **Geikie Gorge**.

Be Quick for this one! This tour has limited seats left.

18 Days, Departure: 18th July, 2009 Ex Broome - Broome.

Birding South Coast

One of our favourites! - fully accommodated for 9 days, we will be running this tour again in 2009!

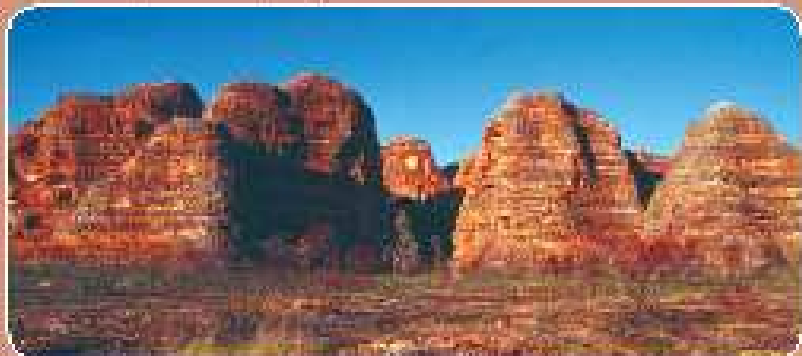
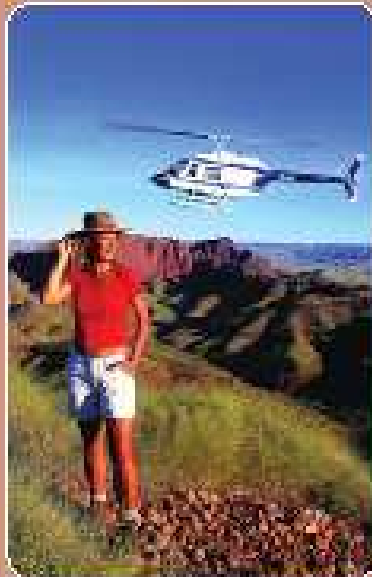
Jindabyne, Mallecoota, Gipsy Point, Narooma, Montague Island.

9 days, Departure: November 7th 2009 ex Sydney—Sydney

2009 Kimberley Camping Tours



KIMBERLEY CAMPING



Kimberley Camping Tours 4WD Camping Safaris



This tour incorporates all of the major icons of the Kimberley that are the real pearls.

Starting in Broome we traverse the sandy track to the stunning and remote Cape Leveque. On arrival we will have the opportunity to take a walk along the beach, swim or relax by the ocean.

Watch the sandstone cliffs change as the sun sets over the ocean. We make our way across the mighty Fitzroy River, visit the Prison Tree then on to the Gibb River Road. We will explore the magnificent gorges of this area, including a visit to Windjana Gorge, Tunnel Creek, Manning Gorge and Gawkins Gorge. We also visit Drysdale Station and experience a real working cattle property. Experience the spectacular Mitchell Falls, before arriving at El Quetro. Spending two nights at El Quetro, with time to explore some gorges and relax in thermal hot springs.

Onto Kunurunga, with a free day to explore the town, take a cruise or enjoy an optional flight. Travel to the world-renowned Purnukulu National Park, where we will enjoy short walks while camping inside the National Park. Some may choose to take an optional helicopter flight over this natural wonder.