



Werribee Wag-Tales • Volume 18 No 1, 2012

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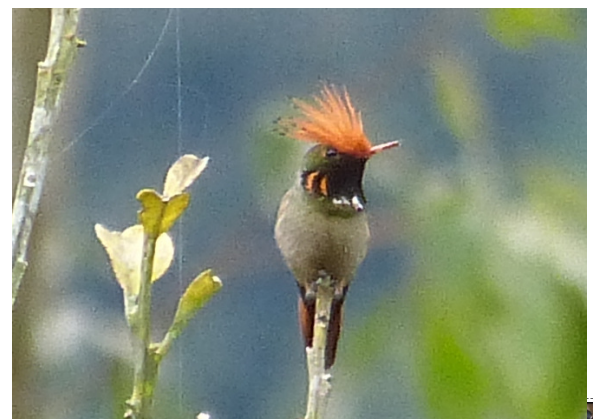
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In mid Oct Iian and I went to Peru for 18 days. After the long flight we spent the first couple of hours of our first day birding in a small park and on the cliffs near the hotel in Lima before heading off to a wetland 10km away. We saw 52 species for the day before meeting our fellow tour participants for dinner – 4 Americans, 2 Poms and an Ecuadorian guide. The 17-day tour started by flying to Cusco, birding a large lake there, heading over high Andean passes before spending 6 days in the Amazon basin – where every trip involved a boat! Then from the heat of the jungle in a few hours to a 3800m pass with cold rain – and higher still the next day. Then a visit by train to Machu Picchu and a final coastal boat trip looking for (and finding) the local penguin.

The birding was good, with a list of around 590, including more than 40 hummingbirds (my favourite being the Rufous-crested Coquette), the bizarre/punk Hoatzin, the stunning display of the Cock-of-the-rock, the supremely aquatic Torrent Duck, the magnificently moustached Inca Tern and lots of small brown birds whose name included the word “ant” and who skulked on the forest floor.

Iian now has a bigger list in Peru than Australia!

Mammals were not neglected with 7 species of monkey (including 2 species of Capuchins – neither of which made coffee) and a Tapir.



Sunday 14th - the 9 Wagtails, 2 spouses and friend of Ginny's who joined us for the day met at Glenrowan for lunch and then moved to the Warby Ranges where we walked a trail at Wenham Camp. The birding was excellent - Turquoise Parrot, both Western and White-throated Gerygones, Sacred Kingfisher, Red-capped and Scarlet Robins, Speckled Warbler and Varied Sittella. After that we drove to Chiltern for 3 nights.

On Monday we started our day at Mt Pleasant Rd, as there had been reports of Painted Honeyeater in the area - however whilst Christine had a glimpse of the bird it was driven off by Noisy Miners and the rest of us did not see it. After that we visited the Number 1 and Number 2 dams (such imaginative names!) where the bird life was fairly scarce - lots of water in other places reduces the attraction of such places. We did however see a snake swimming across the first of these. Lunch at Frogs Hollow - rumoured by Brian to be swarming with snakes, but we saw none - and then to the delightfully named Honeyeater Picnic Ground. I guess this is a triumph of marketing - most birders know it as Cyanide Dam (after the gold processing that was done here) and it is still on Cyanide Rd! No spectacular birds but we still saw nearly 90 species for the day, including such birds as Olive-backed Oriole, Sacred Kingfisher, White-breasted and White-browed Woodswallows and Peaceful Dove. And then in the late afternoon we returned to the Honeyeater Dam and at dusk - after seeing a few bats - we had good views of at least 2 White-throated Nightjars.

Tuesday dawned dull and grey, with rain forecast. We spent most of the day looking in vain for Regent and Painted Honeyeaters - although some areas of the forest were alive with birds, we failed to find either of our target birds. We did see good numbers of Mistletoebirds to brighten up the day and heard what might have been Painted Button-quail and a tantalising call like the Painted Honeyeater's.

We had heavy rain and thunder in the evening - good job we got the Nightjar last night.

Black Swan	Spotless Crane	Eastern Spinebill	
Australian Shelduck	Dusky Moorhen	White-eared Honeyeater	
Australian Wood Duck	Eurasian Coot	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	
Grey Teal	Black-fronted dotterel	Fuscous Honeyeater	
Pacific Black Duck	Silver Gull	White plumed honeyeater	
Hardhead	Galah	Noisy miner	
Australasian Grebe	Little Corella	Red Wattle bird	
Hoary-headed Grebe	Sulphur-crested cockatoo	White-fronted Chat	
Spotted Dove	Rainbow lorikeet	Black-chinned honeyeater	
Crested pigeon	Little Lorikeet	Brown-headed honeyeater	
Common Bronze-wing	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Blue-faced Honeyeater	
Peaceful Dove	Australian King Parrot	Noisy Friarbird	
White-throated Nightjar	Crimson Rosella	Little Friarbird	
Australasian Darter	Eastern rosella	Painted Honeyeater	
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-rumped parrot	White-browed Babbler	
Great Cormorant	Turquoise Parrot	Varied Sittella	
Little Black Cormorant	Shining Bronze Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Australian Pelican	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-winged Triller	
White Necked Heron	Kookaburra	Grey Shrike Thrush	
Eastern Great Egret	Sacred Kingfisher	Olive-backed Oriole	
White Faced Heron	White-throated Treecreeper	White-breasted woodswallow	
Nankeen Night Heron	Brown Treecreeper	White-browed Woodswallow	
Australian white Ibis	Superb Fairywren	Dusky Woodswallow	
Straw-necked Ibis	Weebill	Australian Magpie	
Whistling kite	Western Gerygone	Pied Currawong	
Black Kite	White Throated Gerygone	Grey fantail	
Collared Sparrowhawk	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail	
Swamp Harrier	Yellow-rumped thornbill	Restless Flycatcher	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Magpie-lark	
Little Eagle	Brown thornbill	White-winged Chough	
Nankeen Kestrel	Spotted Pardalote	Jacky Winter	
Brown Falcon	Striated Pardalote		
Peregrine Falcon			
Purple Swamphen			
			Scarlet Robin
			Red-capped Robin
			Golden-headed Cisticola
			Australian Reed-Warbler
			Little Grassbird
			Silvereye
			Welcome Swallow
			Fairy Martin
			Tree martin
			Common Blackbird
			Common Starling
			Mistletoebird
			Red-browed Finch
			House Sparrow
			European Goldfinch
			Common Greenfinch



The White-throated Night-jar

"The plan for tonight... Iain paused and conversation died... *"Is to leave here at 6-30. We'll get to Cyanide dam easily by 7-0pm. I think we should re-name it Night-jar Dam!"*

Without any further instructions except to say we'd barbeque our dinner on return to the caravan park, he left us to ourselves. No *"bring a torch"*.

We drove there and walked a short distance to the dam, a relic from gold mining days, on a narrow track above the water. Having arrived just before us those in the know had arranged their armchair views; the four of us without chairs squeezed by and found our places; Flo on a small folding seat, Brian, Ingrid and I on a log and Elizabeth on the damp clay edge, her legs dangling down into the reeds. Too far from the others to chat, I noted Iain now wore a powerful -looking head torch. We peered into the bush surrounding us. Canopies of the Box-Iron bark trees towered over the elliptical dam, its deep water still and brown. Afternoon light had dimmed now, the water rippled when a yabby popped a bubble up and when a leaf fluttered onto the We peered into the bush surrounding us. Canopies of the Box-Iron bark trees towered over the elliptical dam, its deep water still and brown. Afternoon light had dimmed now, the bright

light at the horizon glowed eastward through the dense bush and was filtered to a sombre grey green.

The reflected shadows of the trees black in the water were edged by the shimmering evening sky.

Conversation became muted as each of us became lost in the drama of the quiet bush. "Gork, Gork, Gork" "Gork, Gork."

Frogs sounded like the introduction of 'Macca on a Sunday Morning'.

Gradually silence and shadow deepened. Was that a dark figure? Were the ancestors of the Dhudhuroa people here in the bush? There are rock paintings of a Thylacine, a goanna and a snake at Mt Pilot. Their spirits were here.

Legs cramping, I scrambled to my feet. Elizabeth turned and whispered, "I have to stand up!" Brian and Ingrid continued to balance on their log. I took Elizabeth's place precariously; it was a long way down. We waited and waited like Mick Jagger might appear or we'd hear the opening bars of the prelude to Wagner's Ring Cycle. We all wished this was over and we'd go home to our dinner. This is a fizzer!

Then, at last, a very quick glimpse of a magpie sized bird reflected in the silvery shadowy water. **"There it is!"** a muffled shout Iain's head torch was a spotlight, his binoculars followed the pale underside of the little owl as it flew across the dark tree canopy. **"There's another one!"** **"Oh! Oh! There they are again"**

Two pale birds flew above us along the length of the water turned, twice more. Magic.

Then it was over. Subdued, hungry and cold we walked out by torchlight back to the hubbub of a barbeque dinner. For me the highlight was those mysterious birds that evening.

Ginny **October 2012**



November Outing....Western Treatment Plant

The Melbourne Cup Day bus trip to the Treatment Plant has become part of the Wagtails ritual, so there was some concern when our application to go in was initially turned down. However, thankfully Shirley managed to negotiate her way round the hurdles and so we were able to go, on what proved to be a pretty perfect day weather-wise, despite the forecasts. First stop was the Western Lagoons where we found a few waders as well as Great and Little Egrets and a Yellow-billed Spoonbill. Then down to the Explosives Depot gate, where Iain spotted a pair of very distant Brolgas - which turned into a pair plus their nearly grown up offspring. Attempts to get into the T-Section were foiled by a "difficult" lock so off to the Beach Rd gate and then meandered our way along for morning tea - with Ceri's pumpkin scones - at the Bird Hide, where we saw the elusive Little Grassbird. Suitably refreshed we continued on our way across the Little River ford towards the Borrow Pits, stopping briefly at Paradise Rd to see Banded Stilts amongst a flock of Red-necked Avocet. On the way we saw a magnificent White-bellied Sea-eagle on a post, and watched a Fairy Martins building their mud nests under a culvert. After a quick diversion to "Cormorant Jetty" (which did not live up to its name) we arrived at the Borrow Pits in time for lunch, seeing a small flock of Native Hens as we arrived. After lunch it was back to the Beach Rd gate, stopping for birds such as Striated Fieldwren as we went. It was a pity that there were a number of people digging for bait and walking on rocks, which may well have reduced the number of birds we saw. We heard several Spotted Crakes but could not persuade them to show themselves. We finished up with bird call at the Paradise Rd gate after the running of the Cup - 83 species was a good number for a bus trip! Chris - a guest of Flo's - came closest to this total, but of our regulars Gwen was closest, so hopefully one of them will bring chocolates next month!



Musk Duck
Cape Barren Goose
Black Swan
Australian Shelduck
Pink-eared Duck
Australasian Shoveler
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
Pacific Black Duck
Hardhead
Blue-billed duck
Hoary-headed Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Crested pigeon
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant
Australian Pelican
White Necked Heron
Eastern Great Egret
White Faced Heron
Little Egret
Glossy Ibis
Australian white Ibis
Royal spoonbill
Yellow-billed spoonbill
Straw-necked Ibis
Black-shouldered kite
White-bellied Sea Eagle
Whistling kite
Black Kite
Brown Goshawk
Swamp Harrier
Little Eagle
Brown Falcon
Brolga
Purple Swamphe
Black-tailed Native hen
Eurasian Coot
Australian Pied Oystercatcher
Black-winged stilt
Red-necked avocet
Banded stilt
Red-capped Plover
Black-fronted dotterel
Red-kneed dotterel
Masked Lapwing
Common Greenshank
Red-necked Stint
Sharp-tailed sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Little Tern
Whiskered Tern
Crested Tern
Silver Gull
Galah
Superb Fairywren
White-browed Scrubwren
Striated Fieldwren
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Brown thornbill
Red Wattle bird
White-fronted Chat
Australian Magpie
Willie Wagtail
Little Raven
Magpie-lark
Eurasian Skylark
Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian Reed-Warbler
Little Grassbird
Brown Songlark
Silvereye
Welcome Swallow
Fairy Martin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
Common Myna
Zebra Finch
House Sparrow
Australasian Pipit
European Goldfinch
Common Greenfinch

