

Endemics of Western Australia

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart UK
Day 2	Arrive Perth
Day 3	Perth
Day 4	Dryandra State Forest
Day 5/6	Stirling Ranges
Day 7/8	Albany
Day 9	Pemberton
Day 10	Cape Naturaliste
Day 11	Depart Perth
Day 12	Arrive London

Departs

September (see website)

Focus

Birds and general natural history

Grading

A/B. We will be taking many birding walks on this holiday, none of them especially hard and all of them optional

Dates & Prices

See website (tour code AUS04)



Images (from top to bottom)
Western Yellow Robin, Red-capped Parrot
& Red-eared Firetail



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NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

In Flight

Depart in the early afternoon on a scheduled flight from London's Heathrow Airport to Perth, via Dubai or Singapore. (Please contact the Naturetrek office should be interested in the options for departure from regional airports).

Day 2

Perth

We will arrive Perth early this evening, where we will be met by our naturalist guide and transfer to our nearby city hotel. Perth is the sparkling capital of Western Australia, beautifully situated beside the broad blue waters of the Swan River and backed by the rolling hills of the Darling Range. Rising up above the wide expanse of the river, King's Park, a 1,000-hectare reserve of native bushland, enjoys commanding views. Gazetted as public open space in 1872, it was one of the first areas of natural bushland to be protected in the world. This outstanding flora reserve with its rich associated birdlife is a wonderful tribute to the sensibilities of Western Australia's administrative forbear.

On arrival at our hotel, some members of our group may be ready for an early night's sleep, others may prefer dinner or a brief stroll near the hotel. Whatever you choose there will be an opportunity to meet with our leader, prior to dinner and to confirm arrangements for the following day. Those travelling "Land Only", will meet with the group in the hotel early this evening.

(Tonight's meal will be at your own expense).

Day 3

Perth

We will also look for Splendid Fairy-wren, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Scarlet Robin, plus a number of honeyeaters which may include New Holland, Brown and Gilbert's. Less likely, but possible, are Western Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Spotted Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, Western Gerygone and Silvereye. Many of these species will be seen further south during the course of our tour, but by ensuring sightings early on in the holiday it will enable time later to concentrate on some of the more elusive species.

Bungendore is a woodland area which offers the opportunity to locate a decent number of species within a relatively small area. It is an 'A class' reserve, covering 500 hectares, not far from the Wungong Dam. Most of the reserve is sited on a lateritic plateau, some 280 metres high, and where the reserve drops away to the Wungong Valley on its western borders, and on the Darling Scarp, large areas of granite bedrock are often exposed. Bungendore is covered by an open forest, a mixture of Marri and Jarrah trees with stands of banksias, Dryandra and some Wandoo trees. The low



Splendid Fairy-Wren

ground cover here enables easy walking and birdwatching. Amongst the key species to look out for are Western Spinebill, Western Thornbill, Inland Thornbill, Western Yellow Robin, Red-capped Parrot and Western Rosella. Other species that can sometimes be found are Western Wattlebird, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Rufous Treecreeper, Dusky Woodswallow and Varied Sittella. Also possible are Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Western Thornbill, Weebill, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Gerygone and both Striated and Spotted Pardalote.



Crested Pigeon

We will enjoy a picnic lunch during our day out, and in the afternoon we will look for a few specific species such as Yellow-throated Miner, Grey Butcherbird, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Tawny Frogmouth, Southern Boobook and spend time at one or two wetlands. We will return to our hotel in Perth in the late afternoon. Depending on the light remaining, and on the weather, we may have the time and inclination for a visit to King's Park.

Day 4

Narrogin

An early start this morning enables us to move on to the largest area of natural bushland remaining in 'the Wheatbelt'. This is the Dryandra State Forest, a series of blocks of natural woodland comprised of the tree species Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and Powderbark (*Eucalyptus accedens*), plus stands of Brown Mallet (*Eucalyptus astringens*). Wandoo, and much of its associated flora, is endemic to the area, which is a strong contributing factor in the movement to ensure the conservation of this unique habitat.

European settlement in this area brought land clearance for agriculture, the felling of the forests on account of the exceptionally strong and tough hardwood timber, and the introduction of exotic plants, diseases and predators (such as foxes and feral cats), all of which severely reduced the natural flora and fauna in this area. The Dryandra State Forest is what remains today of this fine habitat. It is a prime example of the Australian 'bush' in its untouched state, and has provided a sanctuary to many endangered animals from the onslaught of white settlement. Although it is unlikely that we will see many of the 22 species of native mammals that live here, we will nonetheless keep a look out for the region's nine species of bats, Echidnas, Brush-tailed Bettongs and Tammar Wallabies. The most famous mammal of all though, and an endemic of the area, is that unique marsupial, the striped Numbat, the faunal emblem of Western Australia. This region also has great significance for the Nyungar tribe (the Aboriginal people who once inhabited the area). In the centuries before European settlement the Nyungar people quarried ochre for body decoration and rock art. There is a trail within the reserve called "the Ochre Trail" which passes right through one of the quarries once used by the indigenous people.

Dryandra's woodland is very open and is a most enjoyable place to walk and watch birds and other wildlife. With a low and open understorey, the walker is able to stroll amongst the beautiful silvery-white or orange barked Wandoo's and Powderbarks. Within these 27,000 hectares of State Forest around 800 species of plants may be found, amongst them several species of eucalypts, including Wandoo, Powderbark, Marri,

Brown Mallet, and the Shrubby Mottlecah which has the largest flowers and broadest leaves of all the eucalypts. The understorey of the Wandoo woodland is particularly low and open, and holds many members of the Proteaceae family including Hakea, Grevillea, Petrophile, Isopogon and Dryandra, the latter a genus which is entirely confined to Western Australia.



Bush Stone Curlew

Amongst the many bird species that we may see here are Collared Sparrowhawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Painted Button-quail, Bush Stone-curlew, Brush Bronzewing, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Red-capped Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Tawny Frogmouth, Rufous Treecreeper, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Western Thornbill, Western Wattlebird, White-eared Honeyeater, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Gilbert's Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater,

Western Spinebill, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin,

Western Yellow Robin, White-browed Babbler, Varied Sittella and Dusky Woodswallow.

After dinner we will have the option of returning to the forest with our guide, to do some spotlighting.

Day 5

Stirling Ranges

We will enjoy a little early morning birding if time allows, then, after breakfast, travel south to the Stirling Ranges. We may revisit Dryandra State Forest and 12 Mile Reserve to look for the parrots – Red-capped Parrot, Regent Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Short-billed Black-Cockatoo. Near Wagin we will stop at Lake Parkeyerring to check for waterbirds and look for Mistletoebird, Pallid Cuckoo, Black-faced Woodswallow and Red-capped Robin.

We will have a picnic lunch and continue on to the Stirling Range. On the way we will look for White-fronted Chat, Emu, Rufous Fieldwren, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, and Short-billed Black-Cockatoo. The Stirling Range is famous for its diversity of wildflowers. It has an excellent range of orchids.

We will be staying in individual chalets at the Stirling Range Retreat. We will look here for Western Yellow Robin, Regent Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Western Rosella, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Crested Shrike-tit, Rufous Songlark and some of the orchids and wildflowers.

We will have dinner at a café across the road where we might be fortunate to see the diminutive Honey Possum.

Day 6

Albany

Today we will enjoy a pre-breakfast walk around the retreat, and then spend time in the area looking for birds we have missed and at many of the wildflowers. In the afternoon we will continue on to Albany where

we will look for Red-eared Firetail, a few seabirds such as Yellow-nosed Albatross and Flesh-footed Shearwater, Rock Parrot and some waterbirds. Our accommodation will be in chalets at the attractive site of Cheyne Beach about 60km east of Albany for three nights.

The Park provides good opportunities for birding right outside your cabin, or a short walk along the roadside.

Day 7

Albany

Cheyne Beach is home to the 'big three' – Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird and Noisy Scrub-bird. We have good chances of seeing all three. We will also visit the nearby Waychinicup National Park.

The Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird are all quite common in their respective suitable habitats. You may hear them, but they are all notoriously difficult to see in the dense heath in which they live. All three species spend most of their time on the ground and very seldom fly. The Noisy Scrub-bird lives in the densest habitat, especially along the watercourses. The Western Bristlebird lives in the very low heath with possibly a few scattered low bushes such as Mallee. The Western Whipbird usually prefers Mallee heath, but at Waychinicup there is not much Mallee and so they are most often in the Hakea thickets. The Western Whipbird commonly calls from two or three metres above ground, while you may be fortunate to see the Western Bristlebird in the top of a very low bush or in the base of a Mallee tree. They tend to call in bursts about 10 minutes or so apart so you need to be very patient!

As well as looking for the 'big three', we will also look for the Brush Bronzewing, Long-billed Black-Cockatoo, Red-capped Parrot, Spotted Nightjar, Red-eared Firetail, Red-winged Fairy-wren, White-breasted Robin, Western Wattlebird, Western Spinebill, Brown Quail, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Southern Emu-wren, Pacific Gull and a few seabirds.



Southern Right Whale Calf breaching at Cheyne Beach

Early this afternoon we will join a cruise out of Albany into King George Sound where we will hope to see Humpback and the inquisitive Southern Right Whales, possibly with calves, feeding in the bay.

Remaining in the Albany area this afternoon, we will visit Two People's Bay Nature Reserve. The picturesque Two People's Bay is a nature reserve of exceptionally high conservation value, located 20 kilometres east of Albany and holding 188 bird species. It covers 26,000 hectares of forest, heathland, beaches and lakes, and the area was made a

reserve to protect endangered species such as the Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Whipbird and Western Bristlebird. The Noisy Scrub-bird was believed to be extinct until it was rediscovered at Two People's Bay in 1961. Recently, Gilbert's Potoroo was also rediscovered while Quokkas (small wallaby) were being studied in the area. The conservation of the Noisy Scrub-bird has been highly successful, and they have now been re-introduced to Mount Many Peaks, Waychinicup, and recently the Darling Range near Harvey.

During one of our nights in Albany we will spotlight for Spotted Nightjar, Tawny Frogmouth, Southern Boobook, Southern Brown Bandicoot (Quenda), Quokka and possibly Carpet Python and a few frogs.

Day 8

Albany



Spotted Pardalote

We will be up early this morning for another guided walk in search of the “big three” and any other key species that may have eluded us so far.

After breakfast, we will travel to Bremer Bay to look for birds such as Hooded Plover, Chestnut Teal and a variety of raptors. We will then visit some areas of mallee to search for Western (Mallee) Whipbird, Shy Heathwren, possible Malleefowl, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-eared

Honeyeater, Spotted (Yellow-rumped) Pardalote, Southern

Emu-wren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Southern Scrub-robin and Crested Bellbird before returning to our chalets for a final night in Albany.

Day 9

Pemberton

We will continue our journey this morning, passing through Mount Barker and will stop at Rocky Gully for Western Corella. We will continue through to Pemberton, where we enter the magnificent Karri forest, one of the tallest trees in the world. We will stay near the quiet little town of Pemberton, nestled amongst the rolling hills in the heart of Karri country. Our walks here will take us through some of the most spectacular stands of Karri trees, and a dense understorey comprised of Sheoak, Waterbush, Karri Wattle and many grass species.

Climbing Clematis and Coral Vine provide colourful displays, along with the purple flowers of the Hovea. Delicate mosses and ferns cover the tree trunks in this moist environment, and tiny Droseras (insect-eating plants) and Trigger Plants can be easily missed unless you look carefully amongst the dense undergrowth.

Flowering eucalypts and acacias attract the birds which may include Western Rosellas, Common Bronzewing, Brown and Gilbert’s Honeyeaters, White-breasted Robins, Western and Rufous Whistlers, Red-winged and Splendid Fairy-wrens, Grey Fantails, Western and Red Wattlebirds. Less common species include Red-eared Firetail, Purple-crowned Lorikeet and the migrant Shining and Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoos.

Day 10

Busselton

This morning's drive to Cape Naturaliste takes us through the heart of Western Australia's thriving wine-making area. Attractive vineyards set amongst towering Karri forests and Peppermint woodlands provide a very enjoyable drive. During the afternoon we will explore the region around Cape Naturaliste, visiting Sugarloaf Rock, formerly the southern-most breeding colony of the Red-tailed Tropicbird. The Cape juts

right into the migration route of the Humpback, Long-finned Pilot Whale and Southern Right Whale and during our visit there is a chance we might spot a whale or two from the coast.

Cape Naturaliste is one of the best sites from which to watch for seabirds in Western Australia. Species we will look for include Southern Giant-Petrel, Cape Petrel, Great-winged Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Little Shearwater, Black-browed Albatross, Shy Albatross, Yellow-nosed Albatross and Red-tailed Tropicbird.

We will look for Western Ringtail Possum in the evening, after dinner at our hotel.

Day 11

Perth



White-bellied Sea-eagle

After breakfast it is time to pack up and head back to Perth, with stops on the way including Mandurah, where there is a large estuary. Species in and around the Mandurah area include Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Australasian Gannet, Flesh-footed Shearwater (chance), Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Australian Spotted Crake, Eastern Curlew, Banded Stilt, Greater Sand Plover, Hooded Plover and Fairy Tern. We will also visit the Tuart Forest National Park. This is only a small park, but it protects the largest and tallest Tuart trees in the south-west of the state.

Then, it is time to say farewell to our Australian guide before our late evening departure from Perth International Airport.

Day 12

Heathrow

Our arrival at Heathrow Airport is scheduled for late morning.

Extensions

This tour can easily be combined with a private birding or wildlife extension to eastern, southern or northern Australia. Alternatively, we would be happy to help with any other extensions, be it to visit family and friends elsewhere in Australia, a break in tropical Northern Queensland or down south in one of Australia's hidden gems – Tasmania, or simply a few extra days in Perth. Please contact us and we'd be happy to look into a Tailormade extension for you.

Trek grading

We will be taking many birding walks on this holiday, none of them especially hard and all of them optional. Grade A/B.

Weather

Warm, dry and mostly sunny weather is expected near Perth, with daytime temperatures around 20°C. South of Perth, in common with many other parts of the world at present, we dare not predict the weather! It should be mild, mostly sunny, dry and spring-like at this time, but there is a possibility of rain and it can be windy along the south coast. Temperatures will likely vary between 17° and 23°C.

Clothing

Please read our separate clothing list included in the pre-departure information sent to you after booking.

A couple of sets of smart casual clothes will be useful for hotel wear. Long cotton trousers and sweatshirts will be useful near Perth, whilst warm sweaters and waterproof clothing will be essential for the south. You will also need to bring a pair of lightweight walking boots.

Accommodation & food

All meals are included in the tour cost, apart from the first and last evening meal in Perth. Accommodation will be in hotels and chalets. The chalets have two separate bedrooms, but share ensuite facilities. Those paying single room supplements will have their own rooms in the chalets, but will share the bathroom facilities. We use chalets for four nights of the accommodation.

Extra expenses

The two evening meals as mentioned above, along with any additional snacks and drinks and items of a personal nature (eg laundry etc) and any souvenirs.

How to book your place!

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.