

Wildlife of Western Australia

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Outbound flights
Day 2	Arrive Perth
Day 3	Rottnest Island
Day 4	Perth to Narrogin
Day 5	Dryandra Woodlands
Day 6	Narrogin to Stirling Range
Day 7	Stirling Range
Day 8	Stirling Range to Cheynes Beach
Day 9	Cheyne Beach
Day 10	Cheyne Beach to Margaret River via Pemberton & Lake Muir
Day 11	Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park & Whale-watching Cruise
Day 12	Margaret River to Perth via Vasse Felix Winery
Day 13 – 14	Inbound flights

Departs

September

Focus

Birds and other wildlife

Grading

Day walks only. Grade A

Dates & Prices

See website (tour code AUS06) or brochure



Elegant Parrots, Humpback Whale, Stirling Range



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Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & 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

Depart London

Depart London Heathrow on your flight to Perth. Carriers will vary, but usually Emirates, Qantas and Singapore Airlines offer convenient timings. Flights from Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Glasgow are also usually available, although it will depend on availability and an extra cost may be required. Please enquire with the Naturetrek office for further details.

Day 2

Arrive in Perth

On arrival in Perth, you will be met for transfer to your hotel, where the remainder of the afternoon will be free for you to rest and recover from your long flights.

Your guide will meet you for a welcome dinner this evening.

Day 3

Rottnest Island

This morning we leave our hotel and drive for around 30 minutes to the port of Fremantle, where we will catch the ferry to Rottnest Island.

Situated 18 km off the mainland, Rottnest Island is composed largely of limestone and characterised by low-lying coastal scrub. On the ferry across, we may be lucky enough to spot our first seabirds and possibly Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins. The island is perhaps best known as a stronghold for the threatened Quokka – a small, well-loved macropod. Given Rottnest's popularity as a tourist destination, the Quokkas here are well accustomed to human presence, often offering excellent photographic opportunities.



Quokka

Aside from these charismatic mammals, we may encounter a variety of shore and bush birds, including Golden Whistler, White-fronted Chat, Red-capped Robin, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Pied and Banded Stilts, and Banded Lapwing. Osprey may also be nesting. Rock Parrot occurs on the island but can be difficult to find.

We return to Perth for the evening.

Day 4

Perth to Narrogin

We may like to begin today with a quick visit to one of Perth's magnificent wetlands, where we can see Blue-billed and Musk Ducks along with many other waterbirds and quite possibly coiled Tiger Snakes sunning themselves in the grassy margins.

From there we will begin to head south-east, breaking the journey around Bungendore and the Wungong Gorge – a good spot to seek out Western Australian endemics including Red-capped Parrot, Western Rosella, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. We may also come across marsupials, with the most likely being the large Western Grey Kangaroo or possibly the diminutive Western Brush Wallaby.



Numbat

Later today, we arrive at the Dryandra Woodlands – our base for the next two nights. Here we will search for a suite of south-west specialities, including the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, Western Yellow Robin, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Western Thornbill, and Purple-crowned Lorikeet. Over 100 bird species have been recorded in these woodlands. We will also keep an eye out for iconic mammals such as the termite-eating Numbat – Western Australia's faunal

emblem – and the hedgehog-like Short-beaked Echidna, both of which are unusual among Australian mammals for being primarily diurnal.

In the evening, we will visit the Barna Mia Nocturnal Animal Sanctuary, a native animal sanctuary where threatened animals can be seen in their natural habitat. Using red-filtered spotlights we will see marsupials such as Bilby, Boodie (Burrowing Bettong), Rufous Hare-wallaby, Woylie (Brush-tailed Bettong), Western Barred Bandicoot, and Common Brushtail Possum.

We stay in motel accommodation in nearby Narrogin.

Day 5

Dryandra Woodlands

Back to Dryandra Woodlands today to continue birding in various habitats, comprising wandoo, mallee, sheoak thickets, and brown mallet, as well as heath and shrublands. We will look for Malleefowl, Painted Button-quail, Red-capped and Elegant Parrots, the western race of Regent Parrot, Gilbert's Honeyeater, Red-capped, Hooded and Western Yellow Robins, Crested (Western) Shrike-tit and Rufous Treecreeper.

Reptiles may include Sand Goanna, Shingleback, Western Bearded Dragon, South-west Carpet Python, and if we are incredibly fortuitous, the rare and iconic Thorny Devil, which has been recorded here on a handful of occasions.



Thorny Devil

This evening we will try our luck with the spotlight, hoping to see mammals such as Tammar Wallaby, Woylie (Brush-tailed Bettong), possums, Red-tailed Phascogale, and nocturnal birds such as Bush Stone-curlew and Tawny Frogmouth.

Day 6

Narrogin to Stirling Range

Today, we will travel south to Stirling Range National Park, stopping to bird along the way. We will be keeping a special eye out for Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Western Corella and Australian Ringneck 'Twenty-eight Parrot'. We may also be lucky enough to find the recently split Western Fieldwren.

In late December 2019, a major bushfire swept through much of Stirling Range National Park. Since then, the area has shown impressive signs of recovery, with many native species beginning to regenerate. As you drive along Chester Pass Road towards Stirling Range Retreat, you'll get a real sense of the landscape's resilience – from scorched tree trunks now sprouting new growth to wildflowers pushing up through the ash. It's a powerful reminder of how nature bounces back, even after the toughest of setbacks.

The accommodation at Stirling Range is simple, but excellently located in what is otherwise a remote and beautiful area.

Day 7

Stirling Range

We have a full day to explore Stirling Range National Park – one of the state's most biodiverse and geologically striking landscapes. It's home to the only major mountain range in the southern half of WA, with peaks rising abruptly from the surrounding plains – most notably Bluff Knoll, the highest point in southern WA at 1,095 metres.

The park is internationally recognised for its botanical richness, with over 1,500 plant species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. Visiting at this time of year places us right near the height of the wildflower season, when the heathlands and lower slopes are alive with colour. Expect a profusion of flowering peas, coneflowers, smokebushes, banksias, and late-emerging orchids, along with spectacular displays of everlastings depending on recent rainfall.

Bird species within Stirling Range may include Crested (Western) Shrike-tit, Regent Parrot, Australian Ringneck 'Twenty-eight Parrot', Western Rosella, Elegant Parrot, Western Yellow Robin, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Western Wattlebird, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Western Thornbill, Western Fieldwren, and Southern Scrub-robin.

Time and energy dependent, we may also like to check a nearby reserve for the elusive Malleefowl. We may also see Heath Monitors, Shinglebacks, Western Grey Kangaroos, and Western Brush Wallabies.

Day 8

Stirling Range to Cheynes Beach

Departing Stirling Range Retreat this morning, we travel south-west to Cheynes Beach, stopping for birding opportunities along the way. We will search for Southern Emu-wren, Spotted Scrubwren, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill, Brush Bronzewing, Red-eared Firetail, Osprey, and Sooty and Australian Pied Oystercatchers.



Red-eared Firetail

We will be staying for two nights in comfortable cabins at Cheynes Beach Caravan Park.

Day 9

Cheynes Beach

Today, we will search for the 'Big Three' rare and secretive birds of south-western Australia – Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird and Noisy Scrub-bird, all while wandering through the colourful coastal heathland. These birds are highly elusive, and finding them requires patience.

In addition, the surrounding areas may produce Red-capped Parrot, Rock Parrot, Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Brush Bronzewing, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Spotted Scrubwren, Southern Emu-wren, Western Spinebill, White-breasted Robin, Golden Whistler and Brown Quail.

Birds aren't the only endemic treasures here – this unique ecosystem is also home to the adorable Honey Possum, a tiny marsupial that feeds exclusively on nectar and pollen. With a bit of luck, we may even catch a glimpse of one of Australia's most sought-after mammals by day, delicately feeding among the banksia flowers.

Just offshore, there's a chance of spotting Humpback and Southern Right Whales, often visible from the coastline during their southbound migration.



Southern Right Whale

Day 10 Cheynes Beach to Margaret River via Pemberton & Lake Muir

From Stirling Range, we make our way west towards the towering karri forests surrounding Pemberton and Manjimup. En route, we will stop at Lake Muir, a Ramsar-listed wetland, to search for the range-restricted Western Corella, along with waterbirds such as Yellow-billed Spoonbill, White-faced Heron, Banded Stilt, and, with luck, the elusive Australian Bittern and Australian Spotted Crake (success at this location often depends on the water levels).

In Pemberton, we will stop at the iconic Gloucester Tree, where we will hope to encounter species such as Western Rosella, White-breasted Robin, Red-winged Fairy-wren, and Common Bronzewing – often offering excellent photographic opportunities.

We then continue to the Margaret River region, where the towering forests give way to undulating vineyards and coastal heath. Our boutique accommodation here is tucked away in the Keenan State Forest – a peaceful setting that offers rewarding birding right on the doorstep.

Day 11 Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park & Whale-watching Cruise

Early this morning we will head to the rugged coastline of Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, which stretches for 120 kilometres between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin. The elevated limestone headland at Cape Naturaliste, overlooking Geographe Bay and the open Indian Ocean, provides one of the best vantage points in Western Australia for land-based seabird-watching. In favourable



Splendid Fairy-wren

onshore winds, species such as Flesh-footed and Short-tailed Shearwaters, Australasian Gannet, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, and Arctic or Pomarine Jaegers may be seen passing offshore. Nearby inlets and beaches can support Hooded Plover, Pied Oystercatcher, and Eastern Reef Egret, while the surrounding coastal heathland holds local specialities including Southern Emu-wren, Splendid Fairy-wren, and Brush Bronzewing.

This afternoon, we will venture into the sheltered waters of Geographe Bay – one of the best places in Australia to observe Humpback Whales on their southbound migration. At this time of year, there's an excellent chance of seeing mothers and calves resting and nursing before they continue their journey to the icy waters of Antarctica. With luck, we may even witness a calf approach the vessel out of curiosity, offering a memorably close encounter.

As we cruise past the stunning coastline – Meelup Beach, Eagle Bay, and Bunker Bay – we will also be on the lookout for other marine-life. Alongside Humpbacks, we may also spot Southern Right Whales, and with luck on our side, even the rare and majestic Blue Whale, the largest animal to have ever lived. Pods of Common and Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins often surf the bow wave, while Long-nosed Fur Seals can occasionally be seen hauled out on rocky outcrops between fishing forays. Overhead, we will keep watch for seabirds such as Australasian Gannet, Great Crested Tern, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Osprey, Australian Pelican, and Flesh-footed Shearwater, among others.

Our vessel is operated by the region's most experienced whale-watching operator. With marine biologists on board, the experience combines close wildlife encounters with expert interpretation. The cruise will last for around two and a half hours, with a maximum of 90 passengers on board.

Day 12

Margaret River to Perth via Vasse Felix Winery

Optional early morning birding in the karri forests close to our accommodation this morning.

Later in the morning, we turn our attention to the celebrated Margaret River wine region. Though relatively young by global standards, Margaret River has rapidly earned a reputation as one of the world's great fine wine regions. With its Mediterranean climate, cooling maritime influence, and ancient gravel-loam soils, the area is ideally suited to varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay – both of which now rank among Australia's most acclaimed.



Margaret River wine region

Our visit today is to Vasse Felix, the region's founding wine estate, established in 1967. Here, we will explore the vineyard where the first Cabernet vines were planted with our host, and learn about the unique environmental influences that give Margaret River wines their distinctive structure and elegance. We will then enjoy a private tasting of the Vasse Felix collection before settling in for a three-course dinner at the estate restaurant, with each course thoughtfully paired with wines from the Vasse Felix range – a fitting and flavourful way to reflect on the tour.

From there, we begin our journey north back to Perth, arriving back at our hotel in the early evening.

Day 13 – 14

Depart Perth/Arrive London

Today we depart Perth and fly back to London.

Tour Grading

This is a birdwatching and wildlife tour that covers the very best of Western Australia's fine selection of habitats, producing a diverse range of habitats and a high number of the bird species occurring in the country. Western Australia's vast size will inevitably lead to some long drives. However, we will mainly be travelling on good, metalled roads with plenty to view during our drives. Equally, however, there will be ample opportunities for walking through the great variety of habitats at a gentle pace. This itinerary is therefore suitable for those who are comfortable with walking several miles in a day at a relaxed pace.

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.

Food & Accommodation

Accommodation will be in a variety of comfortable hotels, lodges and chalets, all rooms with private facilities. All meals are included in the cost, starting with dinner on Day 2 and ending with breakfast on Day 13, as is drinking water.

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.

If you would like to spend longer in Australia and extend your holiday in any way, please let us know and we will be happy to help.