



Bellbird

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Six Grasswren tour report 2016

Dates of tour: 12-17 September 2016

Leaders: Peter Waanders and Helga Kieskamp



*next Six Grasswren tour:
10 October 2017*

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[download 2017 tour brochure](#)

[Photo gallery of this tour](#)

Eyrean Grasswren, © P Waanders

Tour overview

The September 2017 Six Grasswren tour was already the 11th year that we these tours. The aim was to see Striated, Short-tailed, Western, Thick-billed, Eyrean and Grey Grasswren and other wonderful outback bird species. The 6.5 day tour took us along the Strzelecki track through the outback of South Australia. It had been a wet winter and spring which means that the conditions were great for birding – probably the best I'd seen it in 5 years. There were plenty of wildflowers and birds breeding wherever we went. As a result of widespread rainfall deeper into the outback, many waterfowl had deserted their traditional wetlands to go breeding in those flooded areas, which were beyond the reach of this tour. Nevertheless, a grand total of 152 quality outback species were recorded during the tour. Read on for the daily summary and bird checklist.

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Daily account

Day 1: After a transfer from Adelaide to Berri the previous afternoon, followed by a nice meal and night in the Berri Hotel the group departed early this morning for a visit to Hattah NP (Vic) where a pair of Striated Grasswrens were located as well as Crested Bellbird, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Regent Parrot and other goodies. Highlight of the morning were cracking views of a pair of Mallee Emu-wrens. The afternoon was spent travelling to Broken Hill but not after observing 9 Major Mitchell's Cockatoos along the way.

Day 2: Good rainfall had created great conditions in the outback. Wildflowers and birds are prolific. Unfortunately some roads were under water (and hence closed) today so the Grey Grasswren site was inaccessible. We drove from Broken Hill to Tibooburra in far north-west NSW. There were plenty of good birds around including Pied Honeyeater, Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Budgerigar, Redthroat, Hobby and the highlight was no doubt an Australian Bustard showing well at close range.

Day 3: Was spent exploring Sturt National Park between Tibooburra and Cameron Corner. Small flocks of Budgerigars were prolific, as were Black-faced Woodswallow. Near Cameron Corner we had good views of Banded Whiteface and further Cinnamon Quail-thrushes. The incessant song of Chirruping Wedgebills and Rufous Songlarks provided a backdrop to swathes of wildflowers, the extent of which we'd not seen for 5 years. To top off day we had great views of at least 4 Eyrean Grasswrens!

Day 4: A full day on the Strzelecki track. Due to rain and muddy roads it was looking unlikely that we could do this most interesting part of the tour, but the all-clear was given mid-morning so off we went. We saw small groups of Crimson Chats and many Cinnamon Quail-thrushes. More small flocks of budgies, a Red-browed Pardalote and migrating White-winged Trillers. Absolute highlight of the day were 4 Letter-winged Kites on 2 nests. Close to the Lyndhurst end of the track, we had cracking views of a pair of Thick-billed Grasswren. An elated group of birders rolled into the Lyndhurst Pub that evening!

Day 5: A beautiful morning around Lyndhurst yielded Orange Chat and Rufous Fieldwren, before we entered the scenic Flinders Ranges. An adventurous trip through the Brachina Gorge with lots of water on the track but good views of Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby and Grey-fronted Honeyeater. Our lunch stop was enlivened by a Little Eagle and one of the first Rainbow Bee-eaters for the season. It didn't take us long to track down a pair of elusive Short-tailed Grasswrens in the spinifex-covered hills while a final woodland walk yielded Red-capped Robin, Southern Scrubrobin, Crested Bellbird, Black-eared Cuckoo, Redthroat and Inland Thornbill.

Day 6: After an early departure from Hawker we found ourselves birding the bluebush plains near Whyalla, resulting in multiple views of at least 4 parties of Western Grasswrens. We had a sumptuous lunch at the Arid Lands botanical gardens but not after great views of a pair of Mulga Parrots and many different honeyeaters. As we commenced the final drive towards Adelaide it started raining but during a break in the weather we added Elegant Parrot, Adelaide Rosella, White-browed Scrubwren and some coastal birds before arriving back in Adelaide in the pouring rain.

For 2017, we're offering a 7.5 day tour that takes us up the Strzelecki track and departs in the afternoon from Adelaide, giving you time to travel to Adelaide that same day and we'll travel a few hours that same afternoon allowing us to start birding straightaway the next morning.

[Read the 2017 Six Grasswren brochure here.](#)

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Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby, Australian Raven, Gibberbird, Mulga Parrot, Australian Pratincole, Mallee Emu-wren, Eyrean Grasswren, Thick-billed Grasswren, Rufous Fieldwren, © 2016 Peter Waanders, Bellbird Tours



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next Six Grasswren tour: 12 Oct 2017 [tour program](#)

Six Grasswren tour list of birds seen 12-17 September 2016

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|----|-------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|---|
| 1 | Emu | 31 | Little Eagle | 61 | Nankeen Kestrel |
| 2 | Musk Duck | 32 | Australian Bustard | 62 | Brown Falcon |
| 3 | Blue-billed Duck | 33 | Purple Swamphen | 63 | Australian Hobby |
| 4 | Black Swan | 34 | Eurasian Coot | 64 | Galah |
| 5 | Australian Shelduck | 35 | Little Button-quail | 65 | Major Mitchell's Cockatoo |
| 6 | Australian Wood Duck | 36 | Painted Button-quail | 66 | Little Corella |
| 7 | Pink-eared Duck | 37 | Black-winged Stilt | 67 | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| 8 | Grey Teal | 38 | Red-necked Avocet | 68 | Rainbow Lorikeet |
| 9 | Hardhead | 39 | Red-capped Plover | 69 | Crimson (Adelaide) Rosella |
| 10 | Australasian Grebe | 40 | Banded Lapwing | 70 | Crimson (Yellow) Rosella
Australian (Pt Lincoln) |
| 11 | Hoary-headed Grebe | 41 | Masked Lapwing | 71 | Ringneck |
| 12 | Great Crested Grebe | 42 | Red-necked Stint | 72 | Australian (Mallee) Ringneck |
| 13 | Australian White Ibis | 43 | Eastern Curlew | 73 | Blue Bonnet (yellow-vented) |
| 14 | Straw-necked Ibis | 44 | Australian Pratincole | 74 | Red-rumped Parrot |
| 15 | Yellow-billed Spoonbill | 45 | Crested Tern | 75 | Mulga Parrot |
| 16 | Eastern Great Egret | 46 | Gull-billed Tern | 76 | Budgerigar |
| 17 | White-necked Heron | 47 | Caspian Tern | 77 | Elegant Parrot |
| 18 | White-faced Heron | 48 | Whiskered Tern | 78 | Brown Treecreeper |
| 19 | Little Egret | 49 | Silver Gull | 79 | Mallee Emu-wren |
| 20 | Australian Pelican | 50 | Pacific Gull | 80 | Superb Fairy-wren |
| 21 | Little Pied Cormorant | 51 | Rock Dove ¹ | 81 | White-winged Fairy-wren |
| 22 | Great Cormorant | 52 | Spotted Dove ¹ | 82 | Variiegated Fairy-wren |
| 23 | Little Black Cormorant | 53 | Crested Pigeon | 83 | Striated Grasswren |
| 24 | Pied Cormorant | 54 | Peaceful Dove | 84 | Short-tailed Grasswren |
| 25 | Australasian Darter | 55 | Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo | 85 | Thick-billed Grasswren |
| 26 | Black-shouldered Kite | 56 | Black-eared Cuckoo | 86 | Western Grasswren |
| 27 | Letter-winged Kite | 57 | Pallid Cuckoo | 87 | Eyrean Grasswren |
| 28 | Whistling Kite | 58 | Red-backed Kingfisher | 88 | Pied Honeyeater |
| 29 | Black Kite | 59 | Sacred Kingfisher | 89 | Singing Honeyeater |
| 30 | Wedge-tailed Eagle | 60 | Rainbow Bee-eater | | |

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90	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	112	Inland Thornbill	134	White-winged Chough
91	Grey-fronted Honeyeater	113	Southern Whiteface	135	Apostlebird
92	White-plumed Honeyeater	114	Banded Whiteface	136	Jacky Winter
93	White-fronted Honeyeater	115	White-browed Babbler	137	Red-capped Robin
94	Blue-faced Honeyeater	116	Chestnut-crowned Babbler	138	Southern Scrub-robin
95	Noisy Miner	117	Cinnamon Quail-thrush	139	White-backed Swallow
96	Yellow-throated Miner	118	Chirruping Wedgebill	140	Welcome Swallow
97	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	119	Grey Butcherbird	141	Fairy Martin
98	Red Wattlebird	120	Australian Magpie	142	Tree Martin
99	Crimson Chat		White-breasted	143	Australian Reed-Warbler
100	Orange Chat	121	Woodswallow	144	Rufous Songlark
101	White-fronted Chat	122	Masked Woodswallow	145	Brown Songlark
102	Gibberbird	123	Black-faced Woodswallow	146	Silvereye
103	Brown-headed Honeyeater	124	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	147	Common Starling ¹
104	Red-browed Pardalote	125	White-winged Triller	148	Common Blackbird ¹
105	Striated Pardalote	126	Rufous Whistler	149	Mistletoebird
106	White-browed Scrubwren	127	Grey Shrike-thrush	150	House Sparrow ¹
107	Rufous Fieldwren	128	Crested Bellbird	151	Zebra Finch
108	Redthroat	129	Willie Wagtail	152	Australasian Pipit
109	Weebill	130	Magpie-lark		
110	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	131	Australian Raven		
111	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	132	Little Raven		
		133	Little Crow		