

Inala Nature Tours

TRIP REPORT

South-western Australia Endemics

Guide Name Angus McNab | October 2024



Numbat - Angus McNab

Day 1

20 October 2024 Perth

Our tour began off the end of another tour, with a large dinner of 14 people in Perth. There were people finishing, people starting, and people continuing on, which made for lively discussions on our first night. With everyone present, we discussed plans for the week and readied ourselves for the wildlife to come.

Day 2

21 October 2024 Perth - Cheynes Beach

Heading out early we moved up into the Perth hills. There were plenty of trees, bushes, and shrubs in flower and the New Holland Honeyeaters knew about it. They were present and abundant, along with the Red and Western Wattlebirds, they bullied anything near 'their' flowers. It was a noisy morning, and it took us a while to get down the trail as the Striated Pardalotes, Weebills, Gilbert's Whistler, Grey Shrikethrush, Red-capped Parrots, Australian Ringnecks, and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos were all at the start of the walk. Moving along we found Splendid and Purple-backed Fairywrens, Silvereyes, and had a fly by from a mystery black Cockatoo. The birds were quite well behaved with Western Whistler, Spinebill, and Thornbill all making an appearance.

There was a lot of driving to get done and we headed off, stopping briefly at a river where we saw a Musk Duck, Rufous Whistler, Grey Teal, Eurasian Coot, and a pair of Australian Shelducks.

We made a roadside stop for Australian Ringnecks and we had two flybys from Regent Parrots. Additional roadside stops through the afternoon had us looking at Yellow Spoonbills, Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, Elegant Parrot, Crested Pigeon, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, and Australian Pipit.

We made one final planned stop for Baudin's Black Cockatoo. We pulled up, got out of the car, and almost instantly could hear a bird calling. There were a few birds calling in the local area and given the similarities between the call with this and Carnaby's, we investigated further to make sure we could see the bird, and its bill tip.

There were two individuals high in a eucalyptus, feeding on gumnuts. After a little watching and patience, we could see the elongated upper mandible.



Image: Striated Pardalote - Angus McNab

Day 3

22 October 2024 Cheynes Beach - Waychinicup Inlet

We were out early chasing the three skulkers – always a challenge. Walking the heath, it took no time at all to hear two of them, seeing them was a different story. There was the distraction of large numbers of the very active New Holland and White-cheeked Honeyeater that constantly caught your eye. Stopping each time we were near a skulker we would wait and listen, they always seem so close but so far. Eventually we had a Western Bristlebird show its head and back as it crept over a shrub for all of half a second. It then raced across the track unseen, stopping in vegetation between the two tracks, where it was again glimpsed going out the other side. We returned to the accommodation for breakfast but were interrupted by a mother and calf Southern Right Whale floating in the bay. Going down for a closer look, we passed Red-capped Parrots, Grey Fantails, and the calls of Fairywrens. The whales stayed in the bay all day and we ended up seeing them multiple times. Returning for breakfast again, we were stopped by Red-winged Fairywrens, and again by Grey Currawong, then we watched Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows, and eventually got to eat.

After breakfast we headed back into the heath, the wind picked up and really reduced the bird activity... to almost zero. Fortunately, the Common Bronzewing, Brush Bronzewing, Willie Wagtail, and Red Wattlebirds are always active around the accommodation. We headed up the hill for some scenery and a chance at seabirds, using our '4-wheel drive' bus we took the path to the lookout. The wind was picking up and we could see the Whale again, a few young Australasian Gannets, Greater Crested Terns, Silver Gulls, and the approaching storm. Heading back down the trail we lunched at a more scenic view but upon arrival the rain kicked in, so it was time for a short break.

The afternoon was spent at Waychinicup National Park. We had a great few minutes watching some territorial battles between Red-winged Fairywrens, there were also Silveryeyes, Gilbert's Honeyeater, and Australian Raven eating what appeared to be a fish carcass, White-bellied Sea-eagles over the water, and a female Australasian Darter on the rocks. We searched and searched for a White-breasted Robin and did get a few fleeting glimpses but not the view we were hoping for.

The late afternoon had us walking again and Robert had found a Red-eared Firetail that stayed in the open foraging for much longer than expected before we moved down the Noisy Scrub Bird road. Aligning our chairs across the road we sat and waited for the bird to run across. In just a few minutes the bird was seen as a blur crossing the road, then another, and another! It was hard to see more than blue but John had filmed the event and you could see the birds in the (potentially questionable quality) footage. It was very exciting to watch it back and laugh about what was described as potentially one of the weirdest birding experiences.

After dinner we had a short walk, finding lots of Western Grey Kangaroos and more importantly the Australian Boobook!



Image: Red-winged Fairywren - Angus McNab

Day 4

23 October 2024 Cheynes Beach - Stirling Range - Albany

We got back into the heath early in the morning, exploring the same area as we had the day before, and it was much the same experience as the day before, we could hear the skulkers but they're always difficult to see. The Western Grey Kangaroos were well behaved as were both Bronzewing species.

We headed for the Stirling Ranges, making a stop just before the range for a flock of Carnaby's Black Cockatoo. These flew off before we could get out of the car, but a pair of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos were feeding nearby, whilst a Brown Honeyeater chirped and chirped. Back on to our destination, the Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters were present, and it turned out would be present the entire morning. Wandering along we saw good numbers of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, but little else. Eventually other birds started to call, Inland Thornbill, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Splendid Fairywren, and Grey Butcherbird, but it was a bit of work getting onto them.

We arrived at our next destination and as soon as we got there we had Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Purple-crowned Lorikeets feeding in the eucalyptus. Dusky Woodswallows sallied next to us and our first Restless Flycatcher called from above us. There was a lot of quick activity, so we walked the campground finding more of

the above, with an extremely friendly Grey Shrikethrush, Australian Ravens, and finishing with a pair of Regent Parrots sitting in the shade and Elegant Parrots feeding in the grass. During lunch a pair of Sacred Kingfisher came by and perched in the trees. We walked a lap of the property enjoying the Gilbert's Honeyeaters, interesting signage, and a number of baby birds that had recently fledged, and ice-cream.

Heading south we moved towards Albany. The tide was low and extensive sand and mudflats were visible in front of us. Caspian Tern, Silver Gull, Great Crested Tern, and Australian Pied Cormorant flew by and fed in the shallows, whilst a flock of Pelicans did the same. Distantly we could see large groups of birds on the small island in front of us and Sooty Oystercatchers, Australian White Ibis, and Straw-necked Ibis were all present. Lacking any waders we moved on and John was straight onto scanning for birds. He picked out Red-capped Plover, Terek Sandpiper, and Common Greenshank before the group arrived! Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants sat on the piers and Welcome Swallows flew by in the lovely afternoon sun.

Day 5

24 October 2024 Cheynes Beach - Jerramungup

We started out walking down to the beach in search of rock parrots. There was our usual Red-eared Firetail, Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins, Brush Bronzewing and Grey Fantails. The Osprey was flying from the nest and Silver Gulls were flying about. A pair of Common Sandpiper walked the shoreline but flew as we approached. There wasn't much to be seen on the Parrot front so we got back into the heath early in the morning, exploring the same area as we had the days before. Bob and Enid had gone out early and got onto the Western Bristlebirds on the track and we hoped they would still be around. We walked and it was quiet, White-cheeked and New Holland Honeyeaters with all three skulkers calling but not visible. Then two birds appeared on the track! At first we thought it was the Bristlebirds, but it ended up being a pair of Black-throated Whipbirds. We lost them but after a few minutes they popped up again behind us moving through the scrub. Not far up the track we totally lucked out and had a single Black-throated Whipbird out in the open, calling from on top of a dead branch. We watched for a few minutes as it moved and began feeding in a tree and another individual appeared with it!

We packed and headed north, making our first stop for a Tiger Snake. It was getting pretty warm, and we made a quick roadside stop as Black-faced Woodswallows flew over the road. Having a quick poke around we came across a small group of Blue-breasted Fairywrens which was new for us. Continuing to the reserve we came across a number of Shinglebacks as we drove. Walking the reserve, we were quickly onto a pair of Southern Scrubrobins that were foraging on the edge of the track, and then it was very quiet, another pair of Blue-breasted Fairywrens showed well, but there was little calling due to the heat in the middle of the day. Both Rosenberg's Monitor and Purple-gaped Honeyeater were stopped for on our way out.

After lunch, we headed to the coast at Bremer Bay.

Pulling up onto the headland two Rock Parrots were spotted from the car so we knew we were a chance to see them in the low heath. We walked and could hear the Silvereyes, Spotted Scrubwrens, and New Holland Honeyeaters moving about, but it was Southern Emu-wrens that got us excited. A pair were super close, only a few metres away, and they were very cooperative for Emu-wrens. The male perched in the open on a number of branches and shrubs, it was amazing, the female hid a bit more but it was a real buzz. Rock Parrots were heard and seen fleetingly as they zipped by, and then two distant parrots were spotted through the vegetation, these ended up being Red-capped Parrots, but we kept walking trying to get closer to them. As we did more Rock Parrots flew by and over our heads, but then we spotted two in the grass metres away! They foraged and perched and put on a real show, with a third joining nearby which was fantastic for photos of these little Parrots up close.

At our final stop, we took a short walk in the late afternoon through the heath in search of Wrens, and we heard Southern Emu-wren but no Fieldwren. The Black-throated Whipbirds were calling well, and the temperature was very nice, but the birds were a little quiet to end the day. We had a little excitement as a dugite crossed the road on the way home, which was a nice ending to the day.



Image: Rock Parrot - Angus McNab

Day 6

25 October 2024 Jerramungup - Narrogin

Today we had our earliest start and the road had a strange fog as we arrived, and it cleared quickly but the birds were quiet. Two Western Brush Wallabies were spotted along the road, one sat for long enough to get a good look, the other bounded away quickly. Walking the road at our first stop there was very little activity, Black-throated Whipbirds, Weebill, and Red Wattlebirds were about all we could hear. Some very distant bird calls were almost imperceptible, and it wasn't inspiring. Our second stop was slightly better, but still quiet. We did hear the Shy Heathwren, but a fleeting glimpse was the best we could manage as it stayed in the vegetation. Purple-crowned Lorikeets foraged in the newly blooming flowers, but there were very few flowers, another week and the place would be alive! With little activity we headed back to town for breakfast, to pack, and on to more birdy places.

At least that's what we hoped, we visited a reserve and there was no water to be seen in any of the lakes, so we left for another reserve and it was full of water but not birds. Scanning the water a handful of Australian Shelducks floated on one side, and hundreds huddled on the other, both a long way from us. Walking back to the car we had a little more luck with Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Rufous Whistler, Weebills, and a flock of Brown-headed Honeyeaters that flew in and were very active in a large

gum for a few minutes. They flew with young chicks that were fed a lot quickly before they flew into trees further away.

We made a late afternoon stop, a short walk through the dry woodlands wasn't all that birdy, which was a theme for the day, but we listened to the afternoon sounds, saw some Australian ringnecks.

Day 7

26 October 2024 Narrogin

Heading out for the day in Dryandra National Park, we began with a morning walk. Unlike yesterday there were plenty of birds calling, and we saw lots of birds! There were Brown Treecreepers everywhere, they were piping and flying between trees in every direction, it took some time to nail them down, but it was worth it. Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters were new for us and quickly became old, as every second bird was one of these. They moved a lot and were distracting, but lovely little Honeyeaters. It was then that Bob said, "There's an animal" and we all looked as a Numbat poked its head up from behind a log. We froze and went quiet as it moved around the logs and into and out of the low shrubs. I don't know how long we were there, but it felt like 10 minutes as it came and went, standing beautifully in the open and giving us more photographic opportunities than we could have imagined. It was completely unfazed, at times sitting and looking at us before wandering around some more. Bird of the trip was wrapped up with this little mammal. We did eventually continue along the path with Georgia pointing out birds everywhere, and then Rob spotted a pair of Western Yellow Robins just as we were about to turn back. The Numbat was where we left it on the return trail and as we reached the car a Western Rosella flew into a tree. We watched, and Enid spotted a Short-beaked Echidna 80m up the road, so once we had seen the Rosella well enough we followed the ball of spikes. It was very friendly, though a little nervous to start, but had no issues waddling around and next to us!

We took a slow drive in search of more Numbats and Robins and found some great birds but neither of the targets. Getting out of the car we had Western Whistler, White-winged Triller, Varied Sittella, Western Gerygone, Striated Pardalote, and Jacky Winter, essentially all at the same time. Which was great and horrible as no one knew where to look.

We had lunch in the park which was lovely and shaded before we went down to a dam and had more of a walk around. We watched as a pair of Red-capped Robins fed their chick before taking an afternoon break.

Post break we headed back into the park for some spotlighting, entering the reserve it took no time at all to see Greater Bilby, Mala, Quenda, and Woylies. Our first stop on the walk had lots of small-medium mammals and we learnt a lot about them as they ate just metres in front of us. We made a few more similar stops and were able to add Boodie to the list of mammals, with Brush-tailed Possum rounding out the night inside the predator proof enclosure. Outside the fence we spotted Western Grey Kangaroo, Woylie, and a Brush-tailed Possum with a baby on its back on the drive home.



Image: Western Shriketit - Angus McNab

Day 8

27 October 2024 Narrogin - Perth

Having had such a spectacular day the day before, we revisited Dryandra early in the morning after we ticked off the Rock Doves whilst getting breakfast. We only had a few targets left and started with the hardest. It took some time but as the sun warmed the landscape the birds began to call more and more. Towards the end of our loop, after seeing and hearing many of the same birds as yesterday, we finally heard the soft calls of the Western Shriketit. Moving through the scrub we followed

the sound and there it was in all its glory, in the open, and visible! It flew between trees a few times but remained in the open for the most part. Day done! Well not quite.

We headed to where we'd had lunch the day before and birded properly, not just stopping for food. Almost straight away we were onto Varied Sittellas, a family of Scarlet Robins with very recently fledged young, Australian Ringnecks, and Treecreepers. We wandered and found a number of nesting Striated Pardalotes, watching them come and go from the nest, or work on excavating the nesting hollow. Jacky Winters were common and also had recently fledged young. Ravi came very close to stepping on a Sand Goanna which remained calm and let us get close as it warmed up in the sun. Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrikethrush, and Galah were spotted before we finished the walk. We did one last slow drive through the back roads of the park before heading towards Perth.

We stopped for lunch and had a little walk through the middle of the day which meant birds were quiet. We did get a Rufous Songlark, Western Rosella, and a group of White-browed Babblers.

After lunch we finished up visiting two wetlands in Perth. We initially searched for the Tawny Frogmouth family and found 6 individuals in a single tree! The young were doing their best to be invisible but they were in great spots for photographs. The small lake was full of nesting birds with Dusky Moorhen, Willie Wagtail, Eurasian Coot, and Australasian Grebe all on eggs or chicks. The Maned Ducks had recently fledged chicks and a young Nankeen Night-heron was on the pond edge. The larger main lake similarly had cygnets following their parents, and we had a number of birds flying by, Swamp Harrier, Australasian Darter, Silver Gulls. Buff-banded Rails and a breeding plumed Great Egret finished our loop.

Our final stop was at the bird sanctuary and the Australian White Ibis had already had chicks which were almost fledged, and we saw a number of full nests. The Spotted Doves were displaying, and the Australian Reed Warbler was singing its little heart out. The main target was a Blue-billed Ducks, and we found a number of them, including a displaying male! It was a nice way to finish the trip.



Image: Tawny Frogmouth - Angus McNab

Day 9

28 October 2024 Perth

Having finished as a group last night – we all went our separate ways, some to Melbourne, others Tasmania and Brisbane, whilst some had much longer trips back home. Some were able to say another goodbye at breakfast before departing.

It was a wonderful trip for me, and I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did! I really appreciated everyone's help in looking for birds and helping each other see the birds. We did quite well to get all the southwest endemics, plus some fantastic mammal and reptile sightings. Best of luck with your future birding, I'd happily bird with you all again!



On behalf of Inala - thanks for touring with us.

