



Southern Birding Services
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Five Grasswren 6-day birding tour – Information Sheet

This is one of Australia's epic birding adventures, during which we search for half of all of Australia's current Grasswren species. This fast-paced trip is not for the faint-hearted, with lots of walking in sometimes difficult terrain, early departures and late finishes each day, while covering around 3000 km in 6 days. We may encounter harsh outback conditions such as extreme heat, frosty mornings, torrential rain or dust-storms. However the rewards are some of Australia's hardest to find, yet most sought-after species:

- Striated Grasswren
- Short-tailed Grasswren
- Thick-billed Grasswren
- Eyrean Grasswren
- Grey Grasswren

We will travel through exceptionally remote country including the 2,000,000 acres of Bookmark Biosphere eucalypt mallee scrubland, spectacular rock formations on the edge of the outback in the Flinders Ranges, the vast Strzelecki desert and the Bulloo river overflow. In addition to the Grasswrens, time will also be spent searching for other good species such as Red-lored Whistler, Black-eared Miner, many Honeyeaters including Pied and Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, Chestnut and Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Crimson, Orange and Gibber Chat, Ground Cuckoo-shrike and many more.

Departs from and returns to: Adelaide, South Australia.

Scheduled departure dates for 2010:

- Thursday 12 August, returning 17 August
- Monday 11 October, returning 16 October
- Any other time as a private tour (subject to availability)

Leader: Peter Waanders

Costs: \$2995 AUD per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy attracts a surcharge of \$350. Not included: drinks and personal expenses.

Meeting Place: You will be picked up from your accommodation in the Adelaide CBD. If staying elsewhere, please contact us to arrange a meeting location and time.

What to bring: binoculars, telescope if you have one, insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, water bottle.

Clothing: Lightweight long pants, thin long-sleeved shirt, over the top of which you can wear various layers that can be taken off as necessary, including a thick jumper or reasonably wind proof jacket.

Group size: Maximum 5 participants.

Itinerary

Day 1. You will be picked up from your accommodation in Adelaide early in the morning. We will follow the coast north, where we look for the *rosinae* race of Slender-billed Thornbill and the *rosina* race of White-browed Scrubwren. At Port Augusta we visit the Arid Lands Botanical Gardens where we will encounter our first White-winged Fairy-wren, Chirruping Wedgebill, Rufous Fieldwren and Redthroat. A nearby coastal lake usually has Banded Stilt. After traveling some 400 km we arrive in the Flinders Ranges, an impressive range of steep hills and soaring rock formations on the edge of Australia's outback. Here we search the spinifex-grass covered slopes for the elusive Short-tailed Grasswren, a recent split from the Striated Grasswren and one of SA's endemic species. On some of our previous trips we have had views of this species too close for binocular focus! We will certainly see plenty of Red, Western Grey and Euro Kangaroos. Later in the afternoon we proceed along creekbeds and through narrow gorges cut deeply into geological layers that date back 800 million years. Here we search for Elegant Parrot and Grey-fronted Honeyeater. We visit the fossil site of the Ediacaran fauna, which lived a little before the great explosion of multicellular life at the beginning of the Cambrian Period. Here we're also likely to encounter the endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby. We will arrive at Mt Lyndhurst, on the edge of the Strzelecki desert, later in the day and will search for Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, another SA endemic, as well as Inland Dotterel, Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Chirruping Wedgebill and Rufous Fieldwren. We stand a good chance of finding our second species of Grasswren here, Thick-billed Grasswren. At sunset we proceed to the Lyndhurst Hotel, a typical outback pub with basic facilities but lots of character. Overnight **Lyndhurst Hotel**.

Day 2. We depart around sunrise for another visit to Mt Lyndhurst where we search for any species still needed. The endless open stony plains of the Strzelecki desert are traversed by mostly dry watercourses. We will follow the Strzelecki Track across the desert, looking for species such as Budgerigar, Red-backed Kingfisher, Crimson, Orange and Gibber Chat. Around lunchtime we arrive in the white sand dunes of the Strzelecki Regional Reserve, where we search for Eyrean Grasswren. We have lunch at a waterhole fed by an artesian bore, where there are usually flocks of Zebra Finches, chats and White-backed Swallows. A few hours up the road, once we enter the red sand dunes of Merty Merty, we have another chance of Eyrean Grasswren. Here we might also come across, depending on seasonal conditions, Letter-winged Kite and Banded Whiteface. We will arrive after sunset at Cameron Corner, the point where South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales meet. Overnight **Cameron Corner Store Cabins**.

Day 3. Another early start for another visit to the red sand dunes to pick up any species we may have missed yesterday afternoon. We have lunch at Cameron Corner and then proceed eastwards into New South Wales, where we drive through Sturt National Park, a known site for Ground Cuckoo-shrike and Red-browed Pardalote. Approaching Tibooburra towards dark, we may encounter Bourke's Parrot and Inland Dotterel. Overnight **Tibooburra Granites Motel**.

Day 4. The vast swampy plains of the Bulloo River overflow are home to the Grey Grasswren. This species usually requires most effort of all Grasswrens but we have the entire day to find it. In the same area we may also come across Black Falcon and Gibber Chat. We have the option of driving around on the gibber plains surrounding Tibooburra at nightfall looking for Bourke's Parrot and Inland Dotterel. Overnight **Tibooburra Granites Motel**.

Day 5. As usual, we depart around sunrise to commence the long drive to Wentworth. Along the way we stop in at the eccentric Paddisackle Plains roadhouse and visit a known site for Hall's Babbler nearby. We take lunch in the mining town of Broken Hill and further south we are likely to see Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and Blue Bonnet. We arrive in Wentworth, on the Darling River, after sunset but there may be sufficient light left to see some of the riverine species including Yellow Rosella. Overnight **Wentworth Central Motel**.

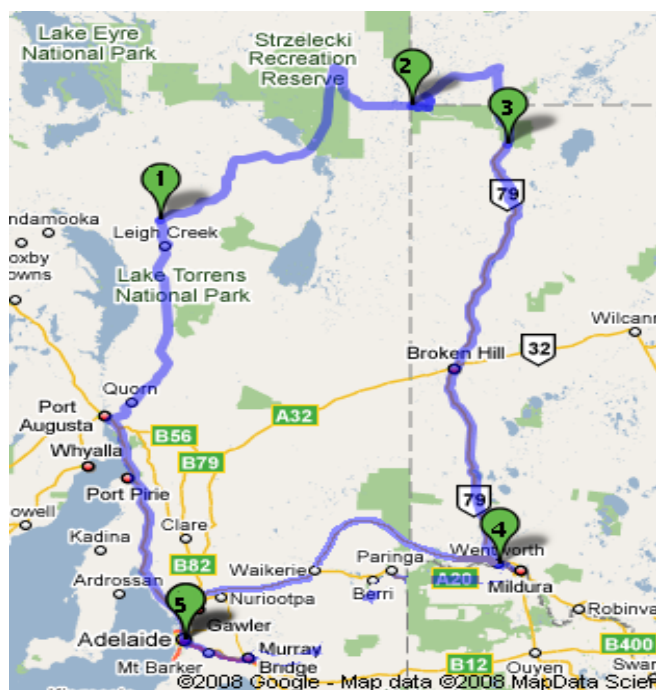
Day 6. This morning we depart even earlier, well before sunrise, for a drive to the 2,000,000 acres Bookmark Biosphere mallee region. Along the way we stop at Lake Victoria, a large dam on the Murray River, for water dependent species and soon afterwards we venture off the beaten track in search of our last Grasswren species: Striated Grasswren. In this area we also target Red-tailed Whistler, of which we have had excellent close-up views on previous trips, and the endemic and endangered Black-eared Miner. We stop in at Birds Australia's Gluepot Reserve to look for Southern Scrubrobin, Shy Heathwren, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Gilbert's Whistler, Striped, Yellow-plumed and White-eared Honeyeater, White-browed Treecreeper and with luck Malleefowl. Our tour finishes with a drive to Adelaide, picking up Brown Songlark and Redthroat on the way.

Included: *All meals, Accommodation, Transport using comfortable and reliable 4WD vehicle, Guiding, Entry fees.*

Excluded: *Pre- & post trip accommodation, Breakfast on Day 1, Dinner on Day 6, drinks, personal expenses, tips.*

Contact: *Peter Waanders, Southern Birding Services, PO Box 420, Waikerie SA 5330, web www.sabirding.com email sbs@sabirding.com phone 0424 212889*

Trip reports: *Trip reports of our previous Five Grasswren tours are available on request or download from www.sabirding.com*





Striated Grasswren, Short-tailed Grasswren, Gibber Chat
 Strzelecki Track, Mertys Merts, Cameron Corner
 Eyrean Grasswren, Thick-billed Grasswren, Grey Grasswren
 Budgerigar, Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, Cinnamon Quail-thrush

Booking Form

Please print out and complete. Mail with payment to the address below.

Tour details

Name of tour _____

Starting and Ending dates _____

Your details

Name and address of the registrant(s) (only one form is needed for couples)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone (Home) _____

(Work) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email _____

Emergency Contact Name, relationship and telephone number

Accommodation requirements

Single Room / Double Room / Twin Share (please circle)

(a single occupancy will attract a surcharge)

Medical conditions and dietary requirements

Do you have any medical conditions (eg. disabilities, illnesses or allergies) that might restrict your full involvement in any aspect of the tour?

No / Yes

If Yes, please provide details: _____

If you have other special requirements (eg dietary requirements) please advise. While we cannot guarantee to accommodate them, we will make every attempt to do so.

Payment

To secure a seat, a deposit of 20% of the tour price is required at the time of booking. Full payment is due 30 days prior to the departure date. Until full payment has been received, PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to change the tour price (eg due to changing fuel prices) .

Payment options:

Money order, Australian cheques, bank drafts/cheques: please enclose with this form.

Electronic funds transfer: please contact us for bank account details. Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

Credit card: attract a 2% service fee. Please go to our on-line payments page:

<http://www.sabirding.com/tours09cc.htm> and follow the prompts. Credit card payments will be handled by the secure on-line servers of PayPal. Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

PayPal: If you are a PayPal member, please go to our on-line payments page: <http://www.sabirding.com/tours09pp.htm> and follow the prompts. Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

Terms & Conditions 2010

Cancellation:

PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to cancel any trip due to weather or other unsuitable conditions. Travel insurance, including cancellation insurance, is strongly recommended. In the event of a trip being cancelled, 90% of any deposits received will be refunded should you need to cancel 30 days or more before departure. All money received within 30 days of departure is forfeited should you need to cancel unless the vacancy can be filled by PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services or the person canceling, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger.

Modification:

PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to modify the itinerary while on tour if weather or other conditions require so.

Bird species:

Birds are wild animals and no sightings of any species can be guaranteed. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services will not be held responsible for clients not seeing any particular species.

Liability:

The tour participant agrees that PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services is not liable for injury, death, damage, monetary loss or loss of property as a result of participating in any tour. Participants should make their own health and travel insurance arrangements. Travel insurance should cover unplanned costs, e.g., a plane not arriving due to inclement weather.

For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, solicitors and contractors as set forth herewith. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by bus, boat, airplane, or by other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in the carrying out the arrangements of the tour. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or charges in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to substitute hotels or similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. Participants should be in good health and if in doubt should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the itinerary, and other pertinent matter recommended by PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended.

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I have read and understood, and accept the Terms and Conditions.

Signature:
Print Name
Date :