



Southern Birding Services

Southern Birding Services
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Six Grasswren 6-day birding tour – Birdsville Track itinerary

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. The accommodation is in basic rooms often with no private facilities. However the rewards are some of Australia's hardest to find, yet most sought-after species:

- Striated Grasswren
- Short-tailed Grasswren
- Thick-billed Grasswren
- Western 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 Warburton river overflows. 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 and Banded Whiteface, Chestnut and Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Crimson, Orange and Yellow Chat, Gibberbird, Ground Cuckoo-shrike and more.

Departs from and returns to: Adelaide, South Australia.

Scheduled departure dates for 2012:

- Monday 25 June 2012 (Birdsville track)
- Friday 12 October 2012 (Strzelecki track)
- Any other time as a private tour (subject to availability)

Leader: Peter Waanders

Costs: \$3295 per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy attracts a surcharge of \$350. Not included: drinks, tips & personal expenses. Earlybird discount of \$195 applies for bookings received up to 6 months before departure date.



Meeting Place: The day before departure so **Sunday, 24 June 2012**, 3:30pm outside Adelaide Central Railway Station or 4pm outside domestic arrivals at Adelaide airport.

What to bring: Please travel light. Binoculars, camera, insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, water bottle.

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

Group size: Maximum 8 participants. **Bookings:** Please complete the enclosed booking form.

Itinerary:

Sunday 24 June 2012. You will be picked up at 3:30pm from outside the Adelaide Central Railway Station or 4pm from outside the domestic arrivals terminal at Adelaide airport. We will travel to Waikerie (2 hrs) for dinner and accommodation. Overnight **Waikerie Hotel-Motel**.

Monday 25 June 2012. This morning we depart well before sunrise, for a 1-hr drive to Birds Australia's Gluepot Reserve, contained within a 1,000,000 ha large 'mallee' eucalypt scrubland. We'll soon find ourselves off the beaten track in search of our first Grasswren species: Striated Grasswren. In this area we also target Red-lored Whistler, of which we have had excellent close-up views on previous trips, and the endemic and endangered Black-eared Miner. Other species we look for include Southern Scrubrobin, Shy Heathwren, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Gilbert's Whistler, Striped, Yellow-plumed and White-eared Honeyeater, White-browed Treecreeper and with luck Malleefowl. We depart mid-afternoon and, checking the Murray river for Regent Parrots, head north, through the historic mining township of Burra. We travel through seemingly endless shrubby plains with stands of Black Oak trees (Redthroat, Black-eared Cuckoo) until we finally reach the base of the Flinders Ranges, an impressive range of steep hills and soaring rock formations on the edge of Australia's outback. Overnight **Hawker Outback Motel**.

Tuesday 26 June 2012. We commence the day searching the spinifex-grass covered slopes in the Flinders Ranges 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**.

Wednesday 27 June 2012. We depart around sunrise for another visit to Mt Lyndhurst to 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. After returning to Lyndhurst we



Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, Australian Pratincole, Birding, Black-breasted Buzzard, Wet conditions in the outback

continue up the Birdsville track. From the wide open gibber-strewn plains near Marree, with chance of Inland Dotterel and Gibberbird, through long, white sand dunes (with chance of Eyrean Grasswren) we end up near Mungerranie. The artesian bore overflow here has created a nice wetland which usually holds Brolga and a raft of waterbirds, including a chance of crakes – in amidst desert-like scenery. Near Mungerranie we have a good chance of finding Eyrean Grasswren, Banded Whiteface and on some of our tours here we've even seen Grey Falcon! Overnight **Mungerranie Roadhouse**.

Thursday 28 June 2012. We'll set off early to arrive at a magical swamp not long after sunrise. Here, the constant chatter of bird calls provides a background chorus to our search for Grey Grasswren which prefers the dense lignum bushes in the foreground. Other species we've encountered here are Australian Pratincole and Flock Bronzewing. Later that day we move on to another bore drain where the target species is the very rare and localised Yellow Chat. On the way back to Mungerranie we check for Grey Falcon and have another chance of Eyrean Grasswren if needed. Overnight **Mungerranie Roadhouse**.

Friday 29 June 2012. We bird around the bore drain wetland and surrounding sand dunes before breakfast, then pack up and head south. The main aim of today is to mop up any species missed during the previous days. Overnight **Port Augusta Standpipe Motel**.

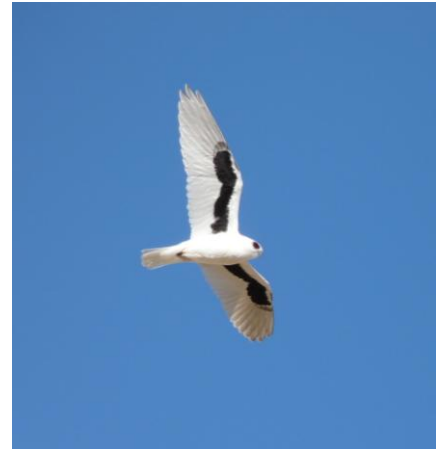
Saturday 30 June 2012. As usual, we depart around sunrise to search Bluebush plains between Port Augusta and Whyalla for the soon-to-be-split Western Grasswren (currently *myall* race of Thick-billed Grasswren). Other birds we are likely to come across here are the turquoise race of Splendid Fairy-wren, Black-eared Cuckoo and Redthroat. We will then follow the coast south, where we look for Banded Stilt, Elegant Parrot, the *rosinae* race of Slender-billed Thornbill and the *rosina* race of White-browed Scrubwren, to arrive in Adelaide early in the evening. You will be dropped off at the airport or at your hotel in the city centre. It is advisable not to book flights for this evening as we can't guarantee a return time.

Included: All meals commencing with Dinner on Day 0, Accommodation, Transport using comfortable and reliable 4WD vehicle, Guiding, Entry fees.

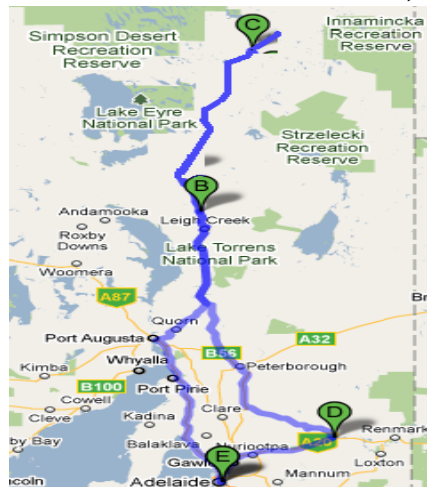
Excluded: Pre- & post trip accommodation, Dinner on Day 6, drinks, personal expenses, tips.

Trip reports... of our previous tours are available from www.sabirding.com

Contact: Southern Birding Services, PO Box 420, Waikerie SA 5330, www.sabirding.com phone +61409 763172 email sbs@sabirding.com



Letter-winged Kite, Flock Bronzewing, Gibberbird





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

Booking Form

Please print out and complete. Sign the last page. Scan and email, or send by postal 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 60 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). For payment options see next page.

Payment options:

Money order, Australian cheques, bank drafts/cheques: made out in Australian Dollars to Southern Birding Services. Please enclose with this form.

Electronic funds transfer: please send funds in Australian Dollars (+ AU\$30 bank transaction fee for international transactions) to the following bank account:

- international swift code: anzbau3m
- bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 5 McCoy St, Waikerie, 5330 South Australia
- account name: Southern Birding Services
- Branch No. (BSB) 015-448
- Account No. 4942-77316

Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

Credit card: attract a 3% service fee. Please use PayPal to send funds +3% to waanders.peter@gmail.com . Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

PayPal: attract a 3% service fee. Please use PayPal to send funds +3% to waanders.peter@gmail.com . Please print out a transaction receipt and enclose with this booking form.

Terms & Conditions 2012 – please read, then sign the last page of this form**Reservations:**

To make a reservation on a tour, complete and sign the booking form and the terms & conditions pages and return it to Southern Birding Services with your deposit. Provisional bookings are accepted via telephone or email and must be followed up with a completed, signed registration form and deposit payment within 7 days.

Payment:

Full payment of the tour cost is due 60 days prior to departure. Payment details are outlined on the booking form. Payments are to be made in Australian Dollars only. Payment may be made by bank cheque, money order or cheque by prior arrangement. Payment may also be made by bank transfer, PayPal or credit card (using PayPal). Clients are responsible for any fees incurred at both ends: PayPal and credit card (using PayPal) payments attract a 2-4% surcharge (depending on the amount) and international bank transfers attract a AU\$30 surcharge. Domestic bank transfers are free.

Cancellation:

All cancellations must be made in writing and signed by whoever signed the booking form and submitted to PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services. Refunds are made at our discretion as there may be deposits or payments made to ground agents that are non-refundable. No refunds will be made after 60 days prior to the commencement of a tour. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features should you decide not to participate fully or should it be necessary to make changes during the tour.

PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to cancel any trip due to weather or other unsuitable conditions. In such a case full refund of the tour price paid to date will constitute full settlement to the passenger.

Insurance:

The purchase of travel insurance, including cancellation insurance, is strongly recommended. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services cannot accept liability for insurance costs, airline cancellations or delays or penalties incurred by the purchase of non-refundable airline tickets or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for this tour.

PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services cannot accept liability for any insurance costs if a tour is cancelled.

Tour Prices:

The price of the tour is based on local prices in effect when the tour is designed and is subject to adjustment in the event of a large change therein.

What is included in the tour price:

Specifics about what is included in each tour are described in the tour itinerary and normally consists of all travel as noted in the itinerary, lodging in hotels/motels or their equivalent unless otherwise indicated, all meals unless otherwise noted, tour materials and the tour guide services of the leader(s).

What is not included in the tour price:

The tour price excludes all expenses incurred before the first official group assembly at the start of any tour and after the official end of the tour, travel insurance, passport charges, vaccination charges, visa charges, excess baggage charges, airport taxes, and meals and drinks en route to the tour. The tour price also excludes drinks (other than those provided), à la carte dishes on those occasions where the included meal is fixed-menu, breakfast upgrades from continental, snacks, laundry, telephone calls, private excursions, and anything else of a purely personal nature, including taxes, portage, service charges and tips relating to such items.

In addition, should you decide not to accompany the group on a planned activity for any reason, you are responsible for the extra cost of any accommodation or meals while the rest of the group is involved in the planned activity.

Should you arrive or depart at other than the official times of the tour, any additional expenses you incur are not included.

Surcharges:

Unfortunately, the travel industry is suffering with uncontrollable and escalating costs relating to fuel, flights, and an erratic world economy. We would like to offer complete price stability and will make every effort to do this, but because of the possibility of substantial transportation/fuel price increases, changes in ground agent prices, tax increases or negative exchange rate changes, we cannot guarantee prices. While we will make every effort to avoid or absorb surcharges, PI &

NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to increase the price of a tour in the event of cost increases incurred by us that stem directly from increases in transportation costs (by air, land or water, and including increases in fuel costs), increases in government taxes, fees, dues or levies, or exchange rates.

Modification:

PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services reserves the right to modify the itinerary, number of participants, tour vehicle or any other aspect of the tour prior to and during any tour. While on tour if weather or other conditions require a change to the itinerary such a change will be discussed, as much as reasonably possible, with the clients but the final decision is made by the tour leader. If as a result of a change in the itinerary clients forgo an opportunity to see any particular bird species this does not entitle these clients to a refund. If as a result of a change in itinerary the total duration of the tour is shorter than that of the advertised itinerary by more than one (1) day this will entitle clients to a reasonable refund to be calculated by PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services. If due to local road, weather or other conditions the duration of the tour needs to be extended clients will not be charged commercial tour rates for the extension by PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services but clients will be required to pay for their own accommodation, food and all other expenses for the duration of the extension. PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services will not be liable for any costs incurred by clients due to a tour returning to its final destination later than scheduled.

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 of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary.

Restrictions on Participation:

Birding tours involve a variety of activities and can entail varying degrees of strenuous activity. Some destinations will require early morning starts and/or late returns as this maximizes our opportunities to find and see certain species. In preparation for each day, the activities will be described as accurately as possible. It may be necessary for participants to be able to complete walks of up to several kilometres over a wide variety of terrain, not necessarily on walking trails. While out in the field we may also encounter variable weather conditions including, but not limited to, heat, cold, wind, rain, and strong, bright sunshine. 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. It must be emphasized that if you do have a health problem or physical limitation, we need to know so we can be prepared in the case of an emergency. Further, we cannot provide any assurances with respect to safety, quality or other issues with respect to excursions not within the direct control or supervision of PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services. The participant assumes all risks and liabilities of his or her own activities not under the direct supervision of PI & NL Waanders trading as Southern Birding Services.

There will be the opportunity for those of you who wish, to opt out of any particular excursion and do your own thing at your own expense. Anyone wishing to partake of an activity not within our bird watching program may only do this at their own expense and if it does not in any way interfere with the group's schedule.

Small groups call for consideration from all participants so that all may enjoy the experience. Any antisocial behaviour (swearing, smoking in non-smoking areas, alcohol abuse etc) that could be detrimental to the enjoyment of a tour by the other group members, shall be deemed to be unacceptable. If there are complaints from other tour members and the leader finds any person unable to conduct themselves in a manner seen fit, the leader reserves the right to send them home at their own expense.

Smoking is prohibited in tour vehicles, many public places and certain conservation reserves.

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 for any reason.

Other:

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 agree to book this tour. I have read and understood, and accept the Terms and Conditions.

Signature:
Print Name
Date :