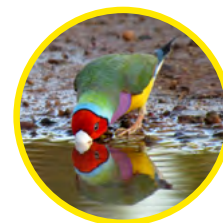


NT Bird Birding & Photography Tours Specialists



DARWIN-KAKADU
Northern Territory
AUSTRALIA
"We'll Scope It All"

Greetings to our valued guests, associates, family and friends,

2016 was another solid year for NT Bird Specialists, starting with a move to operating from both Darwin and our second base in Kakadu National Park. We created a wealth of great memories with many new and returning guests and had a few new species highlights along the way. Read on to find out more....

We aim to top it in 2017, with **Red Hot** group touring specials and new itineraries, plus we are already taking booking interest for 2018 birding, photography and natural highlight tours in the Top End.



2016 Northern Territory Tourism Brolga Awards

NT Bird Specialists were very happy to come away with a prestigious recognition amongst the Northern Territory tourism industry when receiving a 'First Time Entrants Award'. This added a second Brolga Award to the team, with Luke previously winning the 'Outstanding Interpretive Guide' Award in 2010. We would like to congratulate all other winners and everyone involved for making it such a special occasion.



SPREAD YOUR WINGS & BOOK WITH OUR AWARD-WINNING TEAM TODAY

2017 GROUP TOURS

RED HOT SPECIALS (min. 4 - max. 8)

- * 15-22 June '8 Day Finch Frenzy' \$3,950 AUD Pp
- * ~~14-23 July '10 Day Ultimate Top End Birding Adventure' \$5,080 AUD Pp~~ - SOLD OUT
- * 27-31 October '5 Day Kakadu Region Endemics' \$2,510 AUD Pp

KAKADU BIRD WEEK

1-7 October - See our [website](#) for tours and activities

TOURS TO BOOK WITH OUR PARTNERS: (Unique itineraries by NT Bird Specialists)

- **NatureTrek** - 1-10 July - 'Wildlife of Australia's Northern Territory' [BOOK HERE](#)
- **The Travelling Naturalist** - 29 August - 11 September 'Top End Birding' [BOOK HERE](#)
- **Ornitholidays** - 21 - 23 October - 'Australia - Eastern, Northern & Central' [BOOK HERE](#)

See our website for more partner tours...

OR Open your own group tour dates & private charters

See www.ntbirdspecialists.com.au for tours, prices and details

2018 TOURS (groups or private charters)

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST & BOOK DATES FOR:

- Birdwatching Tours
- Birding & Wildlife or Landscape Photography Tours
- Top End Natural & Cultural Highlights Tours

Quality experience and service with expert birding guide, Luke Paterson



www.ntbirdspecialists.com.au

PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS

2016
Highlights

14 Day Top End - East Kimberley Landscape & Wildlife Photography Expedition

In June, Luke and Sarah embarked on an epic itinerary, tailor-made for a fantastic group from Hong Kong and Australia. We ventured throughout Kakadu, Litchfield, Katherine, Victoria River, Timber Creek and Keep River in the Top End, along with Kununurra, Lake Argyle and Purnululu in the East-Kimberley region.

The many sunrises, sunsets, landscapes, birds, reptiles, macropods and invertebrates photographed on foot, on private cruises and by helicopter were enjoyed by all. However, the laughter and good company was the most contagious.



One guest jokingly (seriously) told us he had eaten more picnics during the first three days, than he ever had in his life! Some of the photography highlights included: Gouldian Finch, Spinifex Pigeon, White-quilled Rock-Pigeon, Great-crested Grebe and Great-billed Heron, Saltwater Crocodile, Brown Tree Snake, Long-tailed Rock Monitor and the 'Bee-Hive' Domes of Purnululu.

7 Day Finch Frenzy Bird Photography

Luke took out a very talented couple from Singapore on a dedicated birding photography tour in September. After 7 days, over 150 bird species were seen (and mostly photographed). The guests cleaned up on their species wish list and came back to Darwin with grins from ear to ear. One session included the largest gathering of Gouldian Finches that Luke had personally come across, estimating between 800-1,000 birds coming in to drink at once. It was an unbelievable experience, joined by three other finch species, mannikins, budgerigars and doves galore. The hardest part was trying to pick which bird to focus on first!



FILM CREWS & MEDIA

The Urban Birder and Our NT Getaway

In late April we excitedly hosted David Lindo, (aka *The Urban Birder*) and his marvellous film crew for 10 days around Kakadu National Park and Darwin. We spent some long, hot days filming in the Top End, resulting in a stunning wildlife documentary of Kakadu ([watch here](#)) for *Leica* stores to play, a *BirdWatch Magazine* and a *Sunday Territorian* article. We wait eagerly to share the Darwin documentary with you all. A big thanks goes to *Tourism NT*, *Leica Optics* and *Singapore Airlines* for supporting this project.



Kathy Lette and the fantastic 'Getaway' travel show crew joined us a few days later to film the scenic highlights and activities in the Top End. Both Luke (representing NT Bird Specialists) and Sarah (representing Kakadu National Park) made an appearance in the show.

Kakadu Bird Week – 1-9 October 2016

NT Bird Specialists featured in Kakadu's fourth Bird Week, delivering free guided walks, evening lectures, half and full day birding tours and also hosting three sunrise birding cruises on the famous Yellow Water billabong with Kakadu Tourism (a special 3 hour cruise).

With great pleasure, Luke guided (and converted) an *Australian Geographic* journalist and photographer during the week and introducing them to Kakadu's amazing bird life. Some birds of note included: Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon; White-lined Honeyeater; Banded Fruit Dove; Little Kingfisher; Red Goshawk; Little Curlew; Black Bittern; and Rainbow Pitta.

We look forward to participating from 1-7 October 2017 when Kakadu Bird Week returns. Keep an eye out for upcoming news about Kakadu Bird Week and see [Australian Geographic photos](#) and [article](#) (January edition) on our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.



A WILD-LIFE AWAY FROM HOME

Flamingoes, Badgers and the British Birdfair 2016

It was a great honour to once again represent NT Bird Specialists at the British Birdfair in Rutland, accompanied by great fellow birders, Mick Jerram and Mark Carter, at the *Australia's Outback Northern Territory stand (Marquee 3)*. With over 21,000 people attending the fair, we were reunited with many familiar faces and past and future guests. *The Urban Birder's* Kakadu Documentary was aired at our stall at the same time *Leica Optics* unveiled their new Noctivid binoculars. Seeing all the optics on display was a birder's dream, testing the different scopes and binoculars along with many other different products was a must. Luke's lecture titled '*Kakadu National Park, A Biodiversity Hotspot and birder's Paradise*', was to a near full house.



The team managed a short stopover in Dubai, where even by our standards it was hot! A 4am arrival time, brought temperatures of 36°C with high humidity, however that was all forgotten about we saw our very first Eurasian Hoopoe. A bird Luke and Sarah have both been fascinated with and on the wish list to see!

Other fascinating birds included Greater Flamingo and Arabian Green Bee-eater in the heat of the day (48°C +)

Directly after the British Birdfair, Luke and Sarah were whisked away by award-winning wildlife photography and travel writing duo, Luke Massey and Katie Stacey. They treated us to another highlight of the trip; a viewing of several wild Badgers in the woods, cautiously leaving their sett (burrow) for the evening (super special moment!). The following morning consisted of exploring meadows and urban streets, producing woodpeckers, wagtails, various ducks and Great-crested Newts before a hearty lunch at a local pub.

South Aussie Birding

A short break to visit family allowed for some memorable South Australian birding, only a few minutes drive away. Highlights included: Freckled Duck, Elegant Parrot, Latham's Snipe, Black-faced Cormorant, Blue-billed Duck and Australian Spotted Crake.



*"We hope to travel
with you soon &
happy birding."
Luke and Sarah"*

**NT Bird
Specialists
Birding &
Photography Tours**



TOP END RARITIES, REGIONAL SPECIALITIES & UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS



White-throated Grasswrens and friends

Both Sarah and Luke had the privilege to be part of the endemic White-throated Grasswren Surveys undertaken by Kakadu National Park, traditional owners and the Threatened Species Commissioner. Helicopters took us to remote parts of the Arnhem Land

Escarpment. Sarah was luckless on these surveys (previously having seen four individuals), and she can no longer remind Luke that she has a 'tick' that he hasn't, as Luke's survey team came across four individuals. Luke was so satisfied he could have retired that day, but luckily it has only encouraged him more.

Other rare bird sightings in 2016 didn't disappoint either. You'll be pleased to hear last year's nesting Red Goshawks managed to successfully rear not one, but two chicks in 2016! Watching them grow into strong fledglings over consecutive tours, before departing the nest, was a real pleasure.



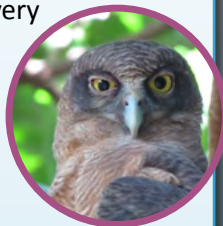
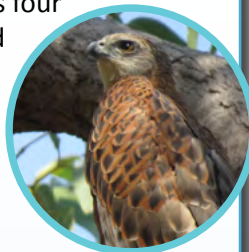
One of the bigger rarities was a Franklin's Gull, spotted by David Lindo, *The Urban Birder*, on the very last day of filming his documentary at Buffalo Creek. As per his reputation, he was able

to pull out an unexpected bird right at the very end of his time in the Top End. It was great to see this bird in breeding plumage and it hung around long enough for quite a few people to see it.

A pair of Rufous Owls, regularly seen in the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, delighted so many guests by seeing such an amazing owl from fantastic vantage points. It was also great to see that a Rainbow Pitta also took up residence there.

Gouldian Finches and Rainbow Pitta were seen on almost every extended tour this year, much to the delight of many guests particularly wishing to see these beautifully coloured birds. The Kakadu endemics and regional specialities became a little harder towards the end of the dry season, but relaxed again once the rains came, which provided some great photographic opportunities.

White-breasted Whistler, Chestnut Rail, Little Kingfisher, Mangrove Golden Whistler and Mangrove Grey Fantail were also highlights around the mangroves around Darwin's coastal areas.



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