

Far North Queensland – July 2024

Friday 28th June

We got a taxi to LHR at 4pm. Nice easy journey to the airport, then checked in and into the lounge. Had dinner (Cheese tarts, the cold roast carrot salad and ginger cake were all excellent. The curry was terrible). Then onto the plane. First leg to Singapore went smoothly. The BA lounge was good (nice dumplings, satay and vegetable curry). Back onto the plane again for the flight to Sydney. However, there was a problem with the aircraft and we were stuck on the tarmac for an hour or so. They eventually got it sorted and we were on our way.

Sunday 30th June

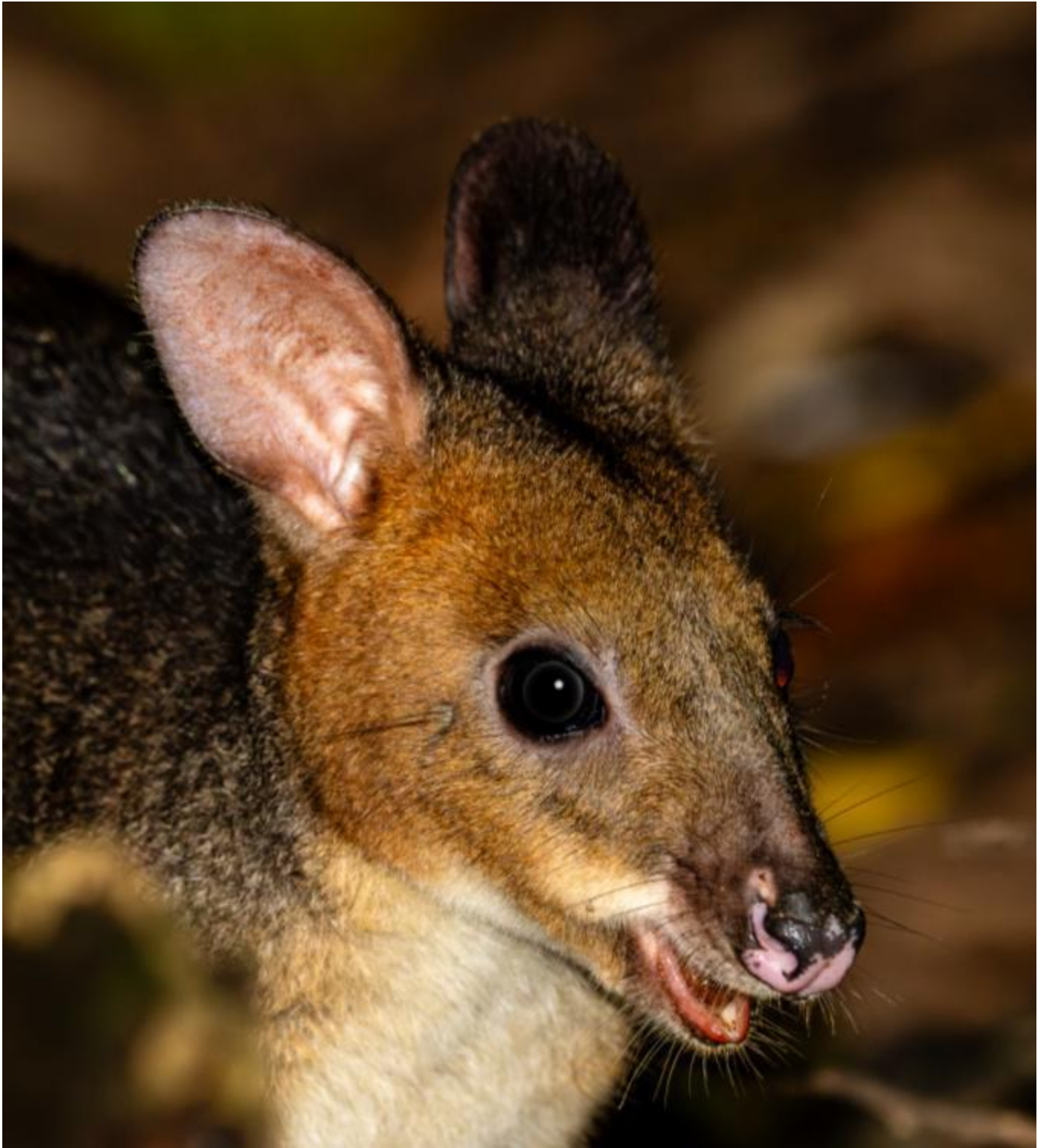
We landed in Sydney where we had a long wait for bags before transferring to the domestic terminal. After removing everything from my hand luggage to get it through security, we were eventually checked in for our flight to Cairns and bussed over to the domestic terminal. We headed to the Qantas lounge where we got an excellent breakfast.

We landed in Cairns after our 3 hour flight, collected our bags and got an Uber to the Sheridan hotel. We were able to check into our rooms, despite being a bit early. We then repacked our bags (we were leaving most of our luggage behind for our trip North to Lockhart River) before heading out to explore. We headed first to the Esplanade where we picked up a few local birds (highlights were a pair of thick-knees hanging out on a grassy patch by the side of the road). We then headed up to the botanic gardens. We did the Red arrows walk at Mt Whitfield conservation park, which was lovely, but felt very steep in our jetlagged condition. The forest was beautiful, there were lots of **brush turkeys** and **orange footed megapode**, however the highlight was our first mammal – a **Red-legged Pademelon**. He was very obliging – just sitting by the side of the path, and quite happy to have his photo taken! We carried on back through the botanic gardens via the rainforest boardwalk (lots of mosquitoes – by that stage it was dusk) and ended up at the Taste of Thai restaurant just as it was starting to rain. We had originally planned to go spotlighting, but since it started to rain again, and by now the jetlag and lack of sleep was definitely catching up with us, so we decided to walk back to the hotel and go to bed.



Bush Thick-knee, Red-legged Pademelon, Orange-footed Megapode, Australian Brushturkey

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Red-legged Pademelon

Monday 1st July

We woke up early so were back on the rainforest boardwalk in the botanic gardens at dawn. There wasn't much happening, so after wandering around for a bit we headed to the freshwater pond as we had read on one of the signs that it was the best place for birding in the gardens. This turned out to be a very good decision. There was definitely more life than yesterday – we quickly found an **Australasian Darter**, **Great White Egret** and a very beautiful **Little Kingfisher**. While we were admiring the kingfisher, a friendly guy with binoculars on a bike rode up and we started chatting. He proved to be a mine of information, and very helpfully told us the roosting place of a pair of **Paupuan Frogmouths**, as well as a pair of **Rufous Owls**. We were very grateful – thanks Brian (aka Bikepedia). So we headed off to the frogmouths, which we quickly found, before heading back to our hotel for a late breakfast. I

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quickly checked my email over breakfast to find out that our flight had been rescheduled and was now an hour later than planned. This meant we therefore had time to head to the rufous owl roosting tree. The owls were harder to spot, despite being huge! But eventually we spotted one of them. We then headed back to our hotel with enough time for a quick shower before heading to the airport in an uber.



Papuan Frogmouth, Little Kingfisher, Rufous Owl, Rainbow Lorikeets

We flew up to Lockart River, collected our hire car and drove to Greenhouse. On the way we saw our next mammal – an **Agile Wallaby** – but it bounded away too quickly for a photo. We checked in and then headed into town for supplies. Then we headed back out to scope out the campsites where we would go spotlighting that night. On the way we saw a **Palm Cockatoo** fly across the road, who then, very helpfully, landed in a tall tree in the afternoon sun, giving us excellent views. We carried on to the campsites. At Cook's there were a group of people clustered around a tree looking up, and there was a **Common Spotted Cuscus** out feeding in the late afternoon. We couldn't believe our luck! We had absolutely fabulous views of this amazing animal.



Common Spotted Cuscus

After dinner it was back out again for an evening of spotlighting, trying to fight off the jetlag. We didn't see a great deal – no mammals. But there were loads of frogs plus a **brown tree snake**. We received a tip from some other people about a **Green Python**, and we managed to spot it by the side of the road. This was a great way to round off what had been an excellent day.



Palm Cockatoo, Southern Green Python, Australian Wood Frogs

Tuesday 2nd July

We drove slowly back to the campgrounds this morning, stopping whenever we heard or saw anything interesting. We parked at the rainforest campgrounds and walked to Gordon Creek and back, however it was all fairly slow, so we headed back to Greenhouse for a late breakfast. We went back out again in the late afternoon, this time for a walk on the Greenhouse trail across the road from the accommodation. Again, it was very slow, so we gave up and returned to the lodge. After dinner we went out spotlighting and managed a **crocodile**, a **green tree frog** and had a nice sighting of a **Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat** that was feeding on some fruit.



Forest Kingfisher, Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat, Wompoo Fruit-Dove



Frill-necked Monarch, Australian Green Tree Frog

Wednesday 3rd July

We returned back to the campgrounds. The bird life seemed even quieter than yesterday, however, the **Common Spotted Cuscus** was back at Cook's campground (we were there around 8am). She was higher up this time, but we still got a good view before she disappeared back into the trees. We headed to the Old Coen walking track where we heard a few more birds and had a nice sighting of a pair of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. We carried on to the Tozer lookout before turning around and returning to Lockart River. We then headed to Mango Farm Dam which we had been told was a good spot for birds (beware the crocodile) – there were a few flitting around, then headed to the Sewage ponds (nothing there but a bit late in the day by then) and then finally to the beach, which was pretty. Then it was back to the lodge for lunch.



Common Spotted Cuscus, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos

After lunch we walked some of the lodge trails but saw nothing so drove back to the Old Coen walking track. We saw a few birds on the drive, but again it was quiet. After dinner we went spotlighting across the road from the lodge which we were told was a good area for bandicoots. We didn't find any, but we did spot an enormous White-lipped Tree Frog and a small group of roosting insectivorous bats (thanks to the thermal for that one! – if anyone can help us ID them we'd love to know). We returned to the lodge to check for cuscus, which are occasionally seen there, and found a **Spectacled Flying Fox** instead (again, the work of the thermal). We then drove out to the close bridge for better sightings of the **crocodile**, and continued up to the campgrounds, where we saw another **White-lipped Tree**. All images copyright Andy Goldby Freelance

Frog. On our way back from the turning to the lodge we saw a very large **Australian Scrub Python** on the road, then an owl (unidentified as it flew away before we could get a photo), and then finally a **Papuan Frogmouth**.



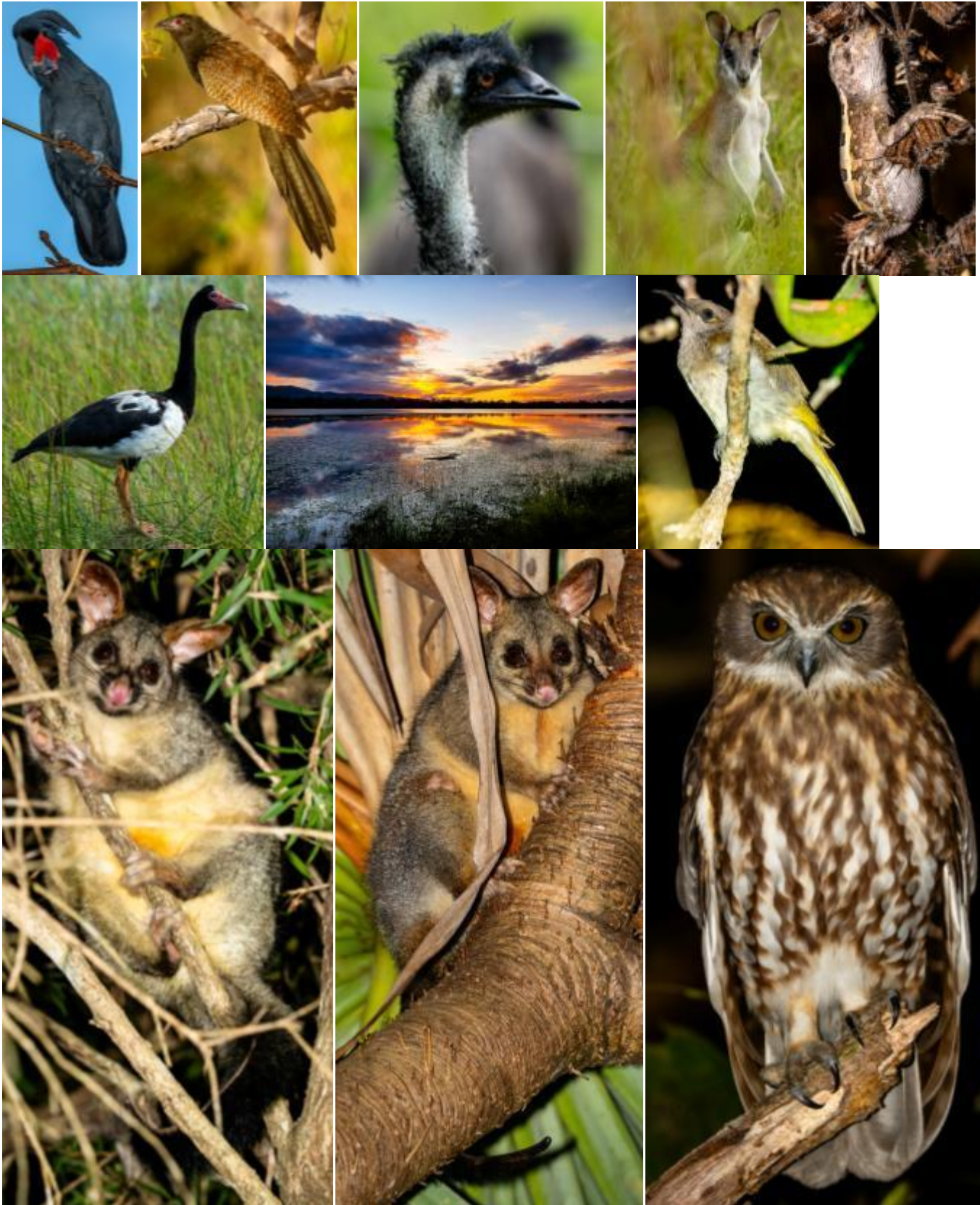
*Vesper Bats***, Spectacled Flying-Fox, Australian Scrub Python, Papuan Frogmouth, Saltwater Crocodile, White-lipped Tree Frog*
***Larger photo at the end of this report

Thursday 4th July

We headed to the beach early to look for palm cockatoos. We had just given up and were driving back down the road when we saw a large bird flying back down to the beach. So we turned around and went back. It turned out to be a **Brahminy Kite**, who didn't hang around for long. We were just turning the car around when another large bird flew in. This time it was a **palm cockatoo**! It checked out each of the large trees, spending a minute or two in each one and then flew off, but it was more than enough to get some photos. It was now 7:15am.

We carried on to the sewer ponds, but not a lot was happening there, before filling up the car with fuel and then returning to mango farm dam. It was very quiet, so we returning to Greenhoose for breakfast and then to pack up and head to the airport. We only just got there in time – despite the airport being tiny they still close the flights 45 minutes before departure.

We arrived in Cairns and collected our hire car. We then returned to the Sheridan hotel to collect our main bags and had another look for the rufous owls, but we couldn't find either of them this time. So we headed to Smithfield shopping centre on the way out of town to pick up supplies for the next few days. We carried on to the Wild Nature Lodge in Mareeba wetlands. On our way in we saw some **emus**, **Agile Wallabies** and some nice birds. We also made a stop at the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary in Kuranda on the way. The lodge is in a lovely setting overlooking a large lake with lots of birds, and it is a self catering glamping place. The tents are reminiscent of African safari tented camps and are very comfortable. We made ourselves a nice salad and made good use of the BBQ (it was nice to be eating proper food again!). We then headed out spotlighting around the grounds. We managed about 6 **common brushtail possums**, a tiny lizard, some Agile Wallabies and an owl.



Palm Cockatoo, Pheasant Coucal, Emu, Agile Wallaby, Eastern Two-lined Dragon, Magpie Goose, Brown Honeyeater, Common Brushtail Possums, Australian Boobook

Friday 5th July

We spent the early morning watching the birds on the lake before heading to Davies creek. The walk down to Davies Creek falls was short and beautiful. We then did the harder walk up to Turtle Head Rock – it got very steep at the top and involved some scrambling, but the views were nice and there were lots of birds on the way. It took us a bit less

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than 3 hours for the circuit. We returned to the lodge via Golden Drop winery, who make wines and liqueurs from tropical fruit. We made our way slowly back to the lodge, stopping for lots of birds on the way, in time for a late lunch.



Australasian Darter, Black Swan, Agile Wallaby, Scarlet Myzomela, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Black Kite, Australian Bustard, Royal Spoonbill, Straw-necked Ibis, Brown Falcon

We spent the rest of the day at the lodge, again making excellent use of the BBQ (plus a salad), before meeting Patrick from Eyes on Wildlife for a guided night spotting trip into Davies Creek National Park. We managed a **House Mouse**, **Giant White-tailed Rat**, **Northern Brown Bandicoot**, **Common Rock Rat** (too fast for a photo), **Northern Bettong** and **Common Ring-tailed Possum**. We had some light drizzle that got slowly worse, and the mammal activity seemed to have quietened down by 10pm, potentially due to the weather.



White-tailed Giant Rat, House Mouse, Common Ring-tailed Possum, Northern Bettong, Northern Brown Bandicoot

By this stage we had given up hope of finding a Northern Quoll, and we were shattered, but still with enough energy left to spotlight on the way back to the lodge. We were about half way between the locked entry gate to the lodge and the main lodge building when all of a sudden Andy stopped the car – there was a **Northern Quoll** snuffling along in the road. We couldn't believe it! It was a beautiful animal and gave us an excellent look at it. We also picked up another **brushtail possum** back at the lodge, where we had a celebratory glass of Aussie port.



Northern Quoll



Northern Quoll

Saturday 6th July

We had an easy morning around the lodge, enjoying the birds, and trying (and failing) to catch up with the photo processing. We then headed back to Cairns, stopping at Baron Creek Falls lookout in Kuranda on the way. Then we headed to the airport to collect my Mum, before heading to our AirBnB in Trinity Beach where we were joined by my Brother and his family (including two young kids). This was the start of a week or so of family friendly activities. We spent the rest of the day doing practical things like food shopping and cooking dinner while the kids splashed in the pool.

Sunday 7th July

We went to Hartley's Crocodile Adventure which we thought was a decent family experience.

Monday 8th July

We spent the day in Kuranda. We caught the train up to Kuranda, which was ok – the best bit was the viewpoint over Baron Falls, but you can walk to that from Kuranda anyway, however, it is a bit overhyped. After much faffing by the family we eventually made it to Birdworld. Me, Andy and Mum really enjoyed it, and so did Ollie (one of the kids – aged 8), once he had gotten over his initial fear and seen that the birds wouldn't hurt him. While I don't really like captive birds, at least they have lots of space to fly around, and it is a great way of getting kids interested in wildlife.

We caught the skyrail back down, and this I really did enjoy. The views are fabulous! It's a great way of seeing the rainforest from above. The first stop back at Baron Falls gives another good view, however the second stop is a bit mediocre. We had a long wait for the bus back to Cairns. If I was doing this again I would go from Freshwater (we had assumed that getting on at Cairns would get us better seats on the train, but since they allocate seats in advance this isn't necessary), or skip the train altogether and just do the skyrail up and back so you didn't need to wait for a bus.

Tuesday 9th July

Today we did a trip to Green Island. Unfortunately the weather was not kind and it was windy with some rain. The boat trip over was a bit lumpy – I was glad of the seasickness tablets! We tried to teach the kids to snorkel, but were defeated by the cold water and the weather. There were lots of birds and we wished we had our big camera rather than just the phones. However, the snorkelling off the island was pretty poor, the visibility was only about 3 metres and there was no coral – just seagrass. If you want to snorkel I think you need to pay extra for a snorkel tour, although I suspect it still isn't great.

Wednesday 10th July

We were up very early today to drive up to the Daintree river for a boat trip with Murry from Daintree River Boatman. This was fabulous – I would definitely recommend this. We had great views of a pair of courting **Thick-billed Herons**, lots of **Azure Kingfishers**, several **Saltwater Crocodiles**, a **Common Tree Snake**, an **Australian Scrub Python** and a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**.



Sacred Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Common Tree Snake, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Saltwater Crocodile

We then headed back to Cairns to meet up with the family at the botanic gardens. From there, we headed to Crystal cascades, which were quite pretty. We then went to Cattana Wetlands before heading back to the AirBnb. There weren't many birds, but plenty of mosquitoes, so after a quick wander around we headed off.

Thursday 11th July

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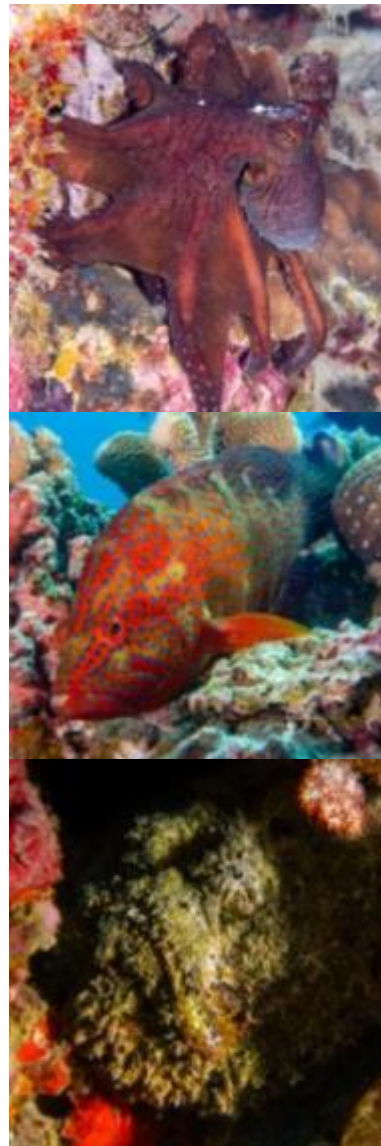
We packed our bags ready for the liveaboard before heading into Cairns. We headed to the aquarium, and also visited the turtle hospital. The whole family loved this, particularly the kids. We also did the Esplanade, ferris wheel and had a quick look at the cathedral – I was a bit sceptical about this, but Mum really wanted to see the stained glass – but actually she was right – it was spectacular. It's very modern, and not really religious, with lots of Australian animals.

We said goodbye to the family and headed to the dive shop to drop our bags and hire car before boarding our dive boat.

Friday 12th July

Our first diving day. We started off with a check dive at Summer Reef (2 large barracuda and a masked ray), followed by a great dive at Steve Bommie (2 **Day Octopus**, a **Green Turtle**, 2 **Reef Stonefish**, a **Leaf Scorpionfish**, lionfish and a very small flatworm). We were heading to the next dive site when **Dwarf Minke Whales** were spotted from the boat. The snorkelling lines were deployed and we all got into the water. This was a fabulous experience! The whales kept swimming around us, checking us all out. We were in the water for a couple of hours and the whales just kept coming back.

Our final dive was a night dive on Clam Sands. There was a **White-tip Reef Shark**, **Giant Moray**, sleeping parrotfish and lots of prawns.



*Dwarf Minke
Whale, Day
Octopus, Red Coral
Grouper, Reef
Stonefish*





Green Turtle, Redbreast Maori Wrasse, Double-tooth Soldierfish, Blackback Anemonefish, Blacktip Grouper, Darkspotted Flatworm, Slingjaw Wrasse, Barrier Reef Anemonefish, Harlequin Sweetlips, Painted Spiny Lobster
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Yellowtail Fusilier, Redfin Bream, Paletail Unicornfish, Marbled Shrimp

Saturday 13th July

We did 4 dives today. The first was on Lighthouse Bommie. This one featured a **White-tip Reef Shark**, a **Giant Moray** hiding in a hole, a few **Spot-fin Lionfish** and lots of **Long-nosed Hawkfish**. There was also a very friendly wrasse at the top of the reef that has a fascination with my GoPro – I'm not sure if it was trying to clean it or fight with it! The second dive was at Two Towers which had loads of barracuda, a **Bumphead Parrotfish** and a cluster of **Giant Clams**. Our last two dives were at Challenger Bay. The first one had lots of shrimp gobies in the sand, a couple of **Orange-spotted Pipefish**, a large and very friendly **Day Octopus**, **White-tip Reef Sharks**, a very large **White-spotted Puffer** and a **Humphead Wrasse**. The final dive was a night dive which was action packed with lots of **Giant Trevally**, **White-tip Reef Sharks** and **Grey Reef Sharks** all out hunting. We had to be careful not to illuminate small fish with our torches as they would have instantly been dinner!

More minke whales were sighted by the boat today, but each time we were in the water diving and so managed to just miss them. However, no-one had any good snorkelling encounters with them.



Wire Coral Goby, Longnose Hawkfish



Barrier Reef Anemonefish, Bluestriped Fangblenny, Freckled Hawkfish, Arc-eye Hawkfish, Spine-cheek Anemonefish, Day Octopus, Orange-spotted Pipefish, Grey Reef Shark

Sunday 14th July

Today was another diving day. We started at cod hole which gets its name from a very friendly **Potato Cod** (grouper) who hangs around. He was, indeed, very friendly and took a particular liking to the dome port on Andy's camera! The reef here is beautiful and we also saw a cuttlefish. Next was Dynamite Pass – another very pretty reef that also featured a **White-tip Reef Shark** and a smallish **Yellow Boxfish**. The last dive of the day was Snake Pit. This one was less good than the other two, but did produce an Octopus, **Giant Moray** and **White-tip Reef Shark**.



Potato Rockcod, Lei Triggerfish, Broadclub Cuttlefish

Monday 15th July

Today was changeover day on the boat, with almost all of the guests departing and new ones arriving. While this was happening we went onto Lizard Island for a wander around. Then we were back in the water for some more diving. The first dive was back at Snake Pit which was considerably better than yesterday, with views of a **White-spotted Eagle Ray**, a **Green Turtle** and an **Orange-spotted Pipefish**. After that we did a night dive at Gotham City. Once again, the **White-tip Reef Sharks**, **Giant Trevally** and **Red Snapper** were all out hunting.



Sahul Sunbird, Closed-litter Rainbow Skink, White-faced Heron, Tyrannodoris luteolineata, White-spotted Eagle Ray, Giant Trevally

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Two-spot Red Snapper Whitetip, Reef Shark, Dardanus sanguinolentus, Silver Conch, White-spotted Hermit Crab

Tuesday 16th July

There was a brief sighting of a **minke whale** from the boat, but it didn't want to come and investigate snorkelers unfortunately. So we went diving instead. For the first dive we were back at Cod Hole – this really is a stunning dive site with fabulous coral. The **potato cod** was, once again, super friendly. The next dive was at Two Towers, which we nicknamed “Anemonefish City”. The final dive of the day was at Pixie Gardens with lots of small critters including **squat shrimp, garden eels, shrimp gobies** and **orange spotted pipefish**.



Potato Rockcod, Whitetip Reef Shark, Oblique-banded Sweetlips



Spine-cheek Anemonefish, Blackback Anemonefish, Dusky Batfish, Red-spotted Guard Crab, Leopard Blenny, Varicose Wart Slug, Squat Anemone Shrimp, Magnificent Chromodoris, Yellow-edged Lyretail, Steephead Parrotfish, Loch's Chromodoris

Wednesday 17th July

Everyone was hoping for a minke whale encounter today, but unfortunately it didn't happen. So, once again, it was more diving. We started the day at Crack-a-Jack which gave us some nice photo opportunities. Then it was back to Steve's Bommie before our final dive at Flare Point (this one featured a pair of egg laying cuttlefish which was lovely to watch).



Kunie's Goniobranchus, Longnose Hawkfish, Red Coral Grouper, Oblique-banded Sweetlips, Longfin Batfish, Common Lionfish, Yellow Boxfish, Camouflage Grouper, Redfin Bream, Reef Stonefish, Arc-eye Hawkfish, Pixie Hawkfish, Giant Moray

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Two-lined Monocle Bream, Coral Sea Mask-Ray, Broadclub Cuttlefish, Saddle Butterflyfish, Divided Flatworm, Barrier Reef Anemonefish

Thursday 18th July

It was time to say goodbye to Spoilsport and disembark at Cairns. We were dropped at the airport where we collected a hire car. Our first stop was the supermarket on the way out of town to pick up some groceries for the next few days. We headed to the Cathedral Fig, and then carried on to some of the other short walks in the same area. From there we headed to the Nerada Tea plantation. The visitor centre is now closed, so we just had a look from the road at the trees between the two driveways. We were delighted to spot two **tree kangaroos** in a nice open position where we could get a good look at them. From there we headed to the Atherton Tablelands Birdwatching Cabin. This is a really lovely place to stay, with lots of birds flitting about and some very tame **red-legged pademelons**. It's also very close to Mt Hypipamee, where we went spotlighting. We lost count of the number of **Lemuroid possums** we found, plus a **common brushtail**! There was also what I think may be a **Coppery Brushtail possum** feeding from the seed tray as we left – the colour is not very coppery, but the ears look too small to be a common brushtail. However, I'm really not sure about this one – it may just be wishful thinking! On inaturalist there is also one record of an out-of-range small-eared brushtail possum, which I guess might also be a vague possibility.



Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo, Lemuroid Ringtail Possums



Coppery Brushtail Possum, Red-legged Pademelon, Coppery Brushtail Possum (maybe), Macleay's Honeyeater, Victoria's Riflebirds (Male & Female)



Red-browed Firetail, Australian King-Parrot

Friday 19th July

We headed to Mt Hypipamee early in the morning and spotted two kinds of impressive birds – some **Topknot pigeons** in the tall open trees near the parking lot, and a **cassowary** (honourary mammal) slightly further down the path near the far side of the bridge. The crater itself was rather spectacular. We then headed back to the Birdwatchers cabin for a late breakfast – the birds were also very pleased to receive their breakfast bananas! We had a wander around some of the trails, but didn't see anything of note.

In the afternoon we headed to the Tolga Bat hospital for an afternoon tour. They showed us some of their microbats, as well as the four species of Australian flying foxes. It was very interesting and I would highly recommend a visit here – both for a chance to see some interesting bats, but also the tour fee goes to support the bat rescue, rehabilitation and release work that they carry out. Next we headed to the nearby Hastie's Swamp for a bit of easy birding. In the evening we joined Patrick from Eyes on Wildlife for some spotlighting. We managed **Greater Glider**, plus multiple sightings of **Brushtail Possum**, **Green Ringtail**, **Herbert River Ringtail** and **Lemuroid Ringtail**, as well as a single **owlet nightjar**.



Victoria's Riflebird, Bridled Honeyeater, Magpie Goose, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Greater Glider, Herbert River Ring-tailed Possum, Diadem Roundleaf Bat (in Tolga Bat Hospital)



Queensland Tube-nosed Bat, Black Flying-Fox, Grey-headed Flying-Fox, Little Red Flying-Fox (all in Tolga Bat Hospital), Southern Red-throated Rainbow Skink, Green Ringtail, Lemuroid Ring-tailed Possum



Coppery Brushtail Possum, Green Ringtail

Saturday 20th July

We had an easy morning around the birdwatchers cabin before heading back to Hastie's Swamp. Again, there were loads of birds around that were easy for not very competent birders (ie us) to spot. From there we headed up north to Kingfisher Park in Julatten, with stops in Atherton and Mareeba for groceries and fuel. We arrived at Kingfisher park and explored the grounds so that we knew where we were going for a our night spotlighting later. There were a good number of birds on the bird feeders and also some **Papuan frogmouths** by the stream. We had an early dinner and were ready to head out once the sun went down. We headed first to the orchard where we picked up a **Sooty Owl**, plus a distant **long-nosed bandicoot** that didn't stick around. On our way back towards the lodge we saw an unidentified small mammal mouse/rat sized with a long nose that hopped instead of running – it moved too quickly for an ID. In the bananas near the bins we had an excellent view of a **striped possum**, who posed beautifully for the camera. From there we headed to the park where we picked up another distant **long-nosed bandicoot** and a **barn owl**. We returned to the lodge to find lots of **Northern Brown Bandicoots** and some unidentified rodent-sized mammals. An excellent night!



Red-legged Pademelon



Red-legged Pademelon, Azure Kingfisher, Sooty Owl, Eastern Barn Owl, Striped Possum

Sunday 21st July

We were up early to head down to the bridge over the stream where a **platypus** frequently shows up around 6:30am. He was running slightly late – it was actually around 6:50 – but we had a decent view of him. A nice way to start the day. Then, after some more ambling we headed to the lodge for a late breakfast. We spent most of the rest of the day alternating between sitting on the verandah watching the bird feeders and wandering around the grounds.

After dark we spent the first hour or so staking out the feeders near reception. Here we got excellent views of **Northern Brown Bandicoot** and also **Bush Rat**. A **white-tailed giant rat** also put in a fleeting appearance. We headed to the park again to try to find the long nosed bandicoot – no luck, but the **barn owl** made a repeat visit. From there, we headed back to the orchard. On the way we did find a **long-nosed bandicoot**, but once again it was too quick for a photo. There weren't any mammals in the orchard, but I did spot the faint eye shine of a **leaf tailed gecko**. Then we headed back to our verandah where we were treated to a large assortment of small mammals including **giant white-tailed rat** who came to drink from the bird baths. Another excellent spotlighting session!



Papuan Frogmouth, Platypus, Northern Leaf-tailed Gecko, Australian Bush Rat, White-tailed Giant Rat, Northern Brown Bandicoot

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Fawn-footed Melomys

Monday 22nd July

We left Kingfisher Park this morning and headed first to Abbaoitair Swamp. The birding was a bit slow, possible because we were a bit too late, so we headed off quickly to the Mareeba Golf Course for **Eastern Grey Kangaroo**, which were easy to spot from Moody Street. From there we headed into town to pick up supplies for the next couple of days, before continuing on to Granite Gorge. We really loved the **Mareeba rock wallabies** – they were just so cute, especially a Mum with a Joey in her pouch! We headed to Yungaburra to try to see the platypus. We went first to the viewing platform on the bridge on Gillies Range Road. The view over the water here wasn't very good, so we quickly went to try to find the walk to the second viewing platform, however this footpath is now closed. So we drove to Allumbah Pocket at the end of Penda Street. This was much more promising and a **platypus** showed up shortly after we arrived at 4pm, giving us near constant views for an hour or so before we decided we really had to leave to get to Chambers lodge in time to have dinner before heading to the night time viewing area. We arrived at the viewing area at around 6:45 and saw plenty of **long-nosed bandicoots**, including very small one. As soon as the honey was smeared on the trees the first **sugar glider** appeared. They were feeding nearly constantly, and a bit later were joined, once again, by **long nosed bandicoots**. About 45 minutes later a **striped possum** showed up, as well as a single **Northern Brown Bandicoot**. After a while, we headed out spotlighting on foot, but only found a **leaf tailed gecko** and a few **red-legged pademelons** around the lodge. We returned shortly before 10pm to find more **sugar gliders** and then 2 **striped possums** who both tried to feed from the same tree and scared each other off.



Striped Possum, Sugar Glider



Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Mareeba Rock Wallaby, Platypus



Striped Possum, Sugar Gliders

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Queensland Barred Bandicoot (Long-nosed), Mareeba Rock Wallabies

Tuesday 23rd July

We were up early and were at Lake Barrine by 7am. We walked around the edge of the lake to try to find the **Musky Rat-Kangaroo**. We had a fleeting glimpse of one close to the junction with the Rainforest track, but apart from that we only saw a few birds. We then walked around Lake Eacham, again looking for the **Musky Rat Kangaroos**. We walked almost the whole way round the lake (clockwise) without seeing anything and were almost back at the car
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park when we spotted one. This time it stuck around long enough for us to get a slightly better look, but was always either moving really quickly or behind leaves, so impossible to photograph.

We headed back to Chambers for lunch before heading out again to the Curtain Fig tree, and then back to Yungaburra for another look at the platypus. This time we walked further along the river and saw a couple of **platypus** as well as the colony of **spectacled flying fox**. There were a lot more people around today, including a couple of large groups, which had a definite negative impact on the atmosphere as they were not quiet, and the platypus was scared off a few times. However, someone did spot a **tree kangaroo**, so we got a fleeting glimpse as it headed up a tree into a tangle in the canopy.

We headed back to Lake Eacham to have another try for the **Musky Rat Kangaroo**. We walked back to where we had seen the one in the morning but found nothing. We were on our way back to the car when I spotted a tiny movement by the side of the path and there it was. Again, we got enough of a view to work out what it was, but it was quick or hiding, so only got a photo of its bottom!

We then headed back to Chambers and went down to the night viewing area with our picnic dinner. Ten minutes later a juvenile **Queensland Barred (Long-nosed) Bandicoot** appeared, and was busy snuffling around the base of the feeding tree for around 20 minutes before wandering off. It was very relaxed and gave us great views. By this stage it was started to rain a bit, but undeterred, we headed out for an evening of spotlighting. We started at the Curtain Fig Tree, but saw nothing except a few large spiders. We then headed up Thomas Road and saw what we think may have been a **Coppery Brushtail Possum**, before heading to the platypus area in Yungaburra. Here we found a **leaf-tailed gecko**, a **Green Ringtail**, and another possible **Coppery Brushtail**, however, by this stage the rain was coming down hard and we lost the brushtail in the rain. Defeated, we gave up and headed back to the night viewing area at Chambers. Once again, there was the odd **Long-nosed Bandicoot** hopping about, but the stars of the show were the **Striped Possums** and the **Sugar Gliders**. We saw some great behaviour tonight including a sugar glider falling out of a tree after an altercation with another glider (he picked himself up and headed back up the tree, a little more cautiously than before), and an altercation between two striped possums. Eventually the victor came down and went into the hole at the bottom of the tree to feed. They both were completely relaxed and allowed really close approaches to we could see what was going on. Eventually we tore ourselves away to download the day's photos and go to bed, but we could have watched them for much longer.



Platypus, Musky Rat Kangaroo,



Green Ringtail, Spectacled Flying-fox, Striped Possum



Striped Possum, Queensland Barred Bandicoot

Wednesday 24th July

We were up early and packed and ready to go. We had just finished loading the car when the guide who was with a group of birders came up to us and told us there was a **superb fruit dove** perched in a tree on the other side of the car park. So we went over and had a look. Andy managed to get some photos of this very pretty bird.

Our first planned stop of the day was another quick look at Lake Eacham for one last try for a photo of the **Musky Rat-Kangaroo**. Again, we were just about to give up on our search when Andy spotted one. Andy managed to get a photo of its bottom before it disappeared into the undergrowth.

Next we headed to Milla Milla Falls – it was still early and we were the only ones there, which was nice. Our next stop was Nandroya Falls (accessible from Henrietta Creek campground, which we have on good authority is excellent for frogs at night). It was about a 45 minute walk each way, through nice forest, and the falls were lovely. Our intention was to go to Mamu Tropical Skywalk next, but by this stage the inclement weather had turned into frequent downpours so we decided to skip it and head to Etty Bay to look for **cassowaries**. We saw one by the road on our drive in and managed to grab some photos before it disappeared into the forest. We had our lunch down by the beach, and waited for the rain to pass before heading along the beach to explore. There were no signs of cassowaries by the beach, so we drove slowly away from the beach. On our way back there was another cassowary disappearing back into the forest. It had clearly been walking along the road for a while as a number of people were watching it. We carried on, then turned around and drove slowly back towards Etty Bay, hoping to see another one. Our luck was in because that is exactly what happened. We spotted a large cassowary by the side of the road who walked along the road for quite a way. It then hung around by the edge of the forest for a long while before we gave up as once again the heavens opened. So our conclusion is that if you want to see cassowaries just keep slowly driving the stretch of road between the edge of the town and the beach. They aren't in any way shy and will happily walk along the middle of the road.

We headed to Ingham, stopping at Murdering Point winery on the way for a tasting. It was ok, but Golden Drop by Mareeba was better. We did our supermarket shopping in Ingham and had dinner before heading to Jourama Falls to go spotlighting for the Mahogany Glider. We had a really good look but it was all pretty quiet. We saw an owl of some kind at the start, a couple of geckos, some **Agile Wallabies** (including a large male) and a **Giant White-tailed rat**, but no gliders.



Superb Fruit Dove, Southern Cassowary, Agile Wallaby

Thursday 25th July

We were up early to go to TYTO wetlands. It is a beautiful place – nice for a walk with some casual birding thrown in. There were lots of **Crimson finches**, and a decent number of water birds too. We headed back for a late breakfast before we continued on to Jourama Falls. This is a lovely set of cascading waterfalls. I wish we had our swimming costumes, as the weather was lovely and warm, but they were buried deep in our bags and we were too lazy to unpack the boot of the car to get to them.



Forest Kingfisher, Yellow Honeyeater, Crimson Finch, Red-backed Fairywren

We carried on up the winding mountain road through Paluma to Hidden Valley Cabins. We had lunch when we arrived, then went for a walk up to a viewpoint, startling a couple of wallabies on the way. In the late afternoon we drove down the road (away from Paluma) for a few minutes to the clearing which doubles as a campground and cricket pitch. On the way we stopped at the bridge and had a brief look at a **platypus**. There were lots of **Agile Wallabies** coming out to graze. We also wanted to scope out the area as we would be returning later to go spotlighting.

After dark, while we were eating dinner on the verandah or our room, some **Red-legged Pademelons** appeared, coming out of the bush to graze on the short grass around the lodge. We headed out spotlighting, which started slowly (we might have been a bit early), but then found one **common brushtail possum**. This quickly turned out to be one of so many that we lost count – we probably saw around 20 in total. We also saw another wallaby. We had just given up on seeing anything else, and had started driving back along the road to the lodge, spotlighting out the car window as we went, when Andy spotted some more eye shine. This turned out to be a very beautiful **squirrel glider** who was relatively low down in the tree and gave us a great look at him. I then spotted some more eye shine at the top of a tree which was a **greater glider**. We returned to the lodge and headed to the swimming pool as we had been told that the **Mount Claro Rock Wallabies** come in at night to feed there. And as predicted, there were two wallabies with dark tails eating the short grass by the pool. A great end to a good evening of spotlighting.



Agile Wallaby, Red-legged Pademelon, Common Brushtail Possum



Squatter Pigeon, Greater Glider, Squirrel Glider, Mount Claro Rock Wallaby

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Common Brushtail Possum

Friday 26th July

We had a lazy day today – Andy had been complaining for the last couple of days of feeling drained and run-down, and now had a cold. We were both pretty knackered after an intense few weeks so we had an easy day pottering around the cabins and catching up on some photos. We went spotlighting again in the evening – this time as a guided excursion (\$30 per person – ok, but a bit short, and we found well over half the stuff ourselves – we had missed the rufous bettong the previous night, otherwise we would have just done it ourselves again). Once again, there were loads of **Common Brushtail Possums**, but the highlight was two **Greater Gliders** in a single tree, one of who was very low down, so we got a really good look at it, which was fabulous. At the end we also saw a **Rufous Bettong**, however it escaped before we could get a decent photo. We also saw some **Agile Wallabies**. We had also seen some **Red-legged Pademelons** by our room before we went out. Once again, after the lodge was completely dark and everyone had gone to bed we went looking for the **Mount Claro (Sharman's) Rock Wallaby**, which we found up by the main area of the lodge.



Rufous Bettong, Greater Glider



Mount Claro Rock Wallaby

Saturday 27th July

We left Hidden Valley and drove back to Paluma. We went to Ivy Cottage Café and Restaurant. This is a great place – they put fruit out and an assortment of birds come in to feed – in an hour or so we saw **Victoria's Riflebird**, **Satin Bowerbird** and **Green Catbird** as well as an assortment of Honeyeaters – not bad for the price of a coffee. We stopped briefly at Little Crystal Creek (we wished we'd stopped on the way up as there was lots of information on things to do around the Paluma area that would have been good to know). We headed on to Townsville and went to the TapHouse for lunch before heading to Townsville Conservation Common to see what was around. The best areas were around the tower and Melaleuca viewing areas, which had loads of magpie geese, plus an assortment of other water birds, and even some distant **Brolgas**. Everything else was pretty quiet. We then headed down to Alva Beach (we were staying in an ensuite cabin in the caravan park) ready to dive the Yongala Wreck tomorrow.



Spotted Catbird, Satin Bowerbird, Victoria's Riflebird



Satin Bowerbird , Lewin's Honeyeater, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Peaceful Dove, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Ibis, Magpie Goose, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Sunday 28th July

Today we did 2 dives on the Yongala wreck with Yongala Dive. The wreck itself is on its side in about 30 metres of water and is a magnet for marine life. The coral is regrowing, and you wouldn't know that a lot of it was removed in the big cyclone in December 2023. There were loads of sea snakes and big schools of snappers and jacks. There was also a very friendly **hawksbill turtle** on the wreck and a few **Eagle Rays** out in the blue. Throughout both dives we heard **Humpback whales** but didn't see them underwater. However, we did get distant views on our boat journey back to Alva Beach. We enjoyed the diving, even though the water was a chilly 22 degrees. We were asked to get to the dive centre for 7:30, but there was a LOT of waiting around before we got going.



Hawksbill Turtle, Olive Sea Snake



Dusky Batfish, Spanish Flag Snapper, Napoleon Wrasse, Rainford's Butterflyfish

We headed back to Townsville via Alligator Creek day use area to look for Agile and Allied Rock Wallabies. We were there at around 5pm, but didn't see any. We were going to Magnetic Island the following day, where the rock wallabies were pretty reliable, and we had already seen plenty of Agile Wallabies, so we gave it 10 minutes and headed to Townsville as we hadn't received any instructions on how to get the keys to our apartment and I was a bit nervous about checking in. This turned out to be a well-founded issue. We arrived, and there was a lock box, but we hadn't received a code to be able to unlock it. We tried the emergency phone number multiple times, but it always went straight to voicemail. Then I spent most of the next 2 hours on the phone to booking.com trying to get things sorted. Eventually they agreed to cancel our booking at Dalgety Apartments and we rebooked at the Grand Hotel Apartments and Suites, which was great. We then headed to our dinner booking at A Touch of Salt. This was a fabulous meal and we were very well looked after by the team, despite being late for our booking. I would really recommend this restaurant if you want a nice meal. We had originally intended to go out spotlight back along the road into Alligator Creek Campground after dinner to look for Rufous Bettong and try to get a photo of them, but after the stress of the hotel issue, we both wanted to have a few glasses of wine with dinner and go to bed, so we knocked that on the head.

Monday 29th July

We were up early and on the 7:45 sealink ferry to Magnetic Island. We walked first to Arcadia/Geoffrey Bay to look for **Allied Rock Wallabies**. There was one sitting on top of the rocks near the start of the rock wallaby area. We walked through and didn't see any others. So we walked back to the first one, but it had been chased off by a tourist who was trying to hand feed it and who had climbed onto the rocks. We were unimpressed. We went back into the wallaby viewing area, and this time two wallabies had come down with the inducement of some pieces of carrot left on the rocks by another pair of tourists (these ones were much more respectful and just broke off small pieces of carrots and left them on the rocks for the wallabies to come and take).

From there we walked up to the Forts Junction to have a look for **koalas**. We saw two, both of whom were at eye level close to the path. They were asleep, with just the odd ear-twitch. The walk is a bit steep, but there is a clear gravel path and steps so easy for anyone who is moderately fit. There are nice views at the top. In the abandoned

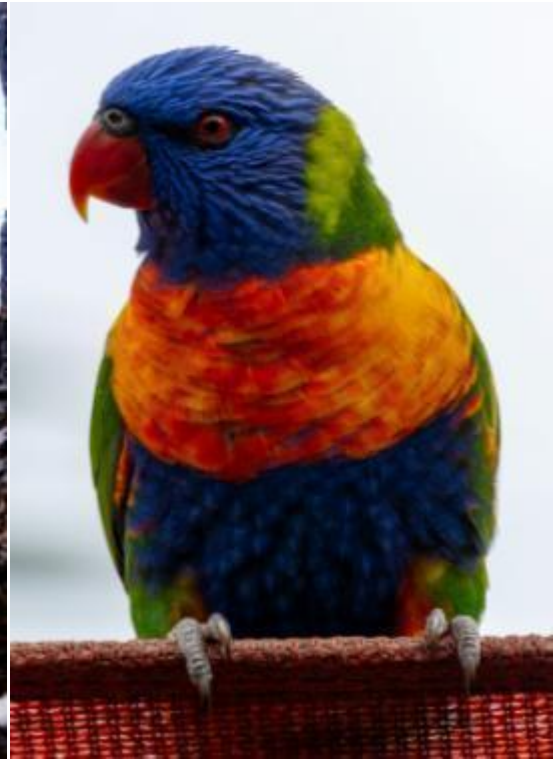
buildings there were an assortment of tiny microbats – any help with identification would be much appreciated. Larger photos are at the end of this report.

We headed back down to the Forts Junction – luckily we were 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled bus time, as a bus arrived just as we got there to take us back to the ferry terminal – clearly here the timetable is a suggestion rather than a fact! We caught the 12:15 ferry back to Townsville and drove to the airport where we returned the hire car and boarded our flight to Sydney. We caught an uber to my Aunt's house where my cousins joined us later in the evening for a family catchup. It was lovely to see them all.



*Allied Rock Wallabies, Little Broad-nosed Bat (maybe)***, Koala*

****Larger photo at the end of this report*



Koala, Rainbow Lorikeet

Tuesday 30th July

We packed up all of our things and my Aunt took us for a bit of a drive around the local area and the Bondi beach before heading to Centennial Park. Here we visited the memorial bench for my Dad who passed away a few years ago. It is in a nice spot overlooking a small lake with lots of birds – he would have liked it. We had a bit of a wander around the park and went to a colony of flying foxes. According to the sign there were Grey-headed and Black in the colony. The weather was very overcast so the light wasn't great, and all the cameras and binoculars were packed in the car. We definitely saw **Grey-headed flying fox** there, but in the poor light conditions, I couldn't tell if there were also Black Flying fox in the colony too. From there, we headed to the airport ready to board the long flight back home to London.

For those who are interested, there is a YouTube video here, which includes some nice Minke Whale footage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayfY82RtzwM> (You may need to copy and paste this rather than clicking straight onto it)

The best of the full resolution photos are available here: <https://andygoldby.myportfolio.com/australia-jul24>

The map of our entire trip is here: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=11vg1J4Wo-RJ4Ily35b5zSsuP5BQq5xc&usp=sharing>

Logistics

Cairns – stayed in Sheridan hotel. Location was handy for the botanic gardens and surrounding area, which were just a short walk away. Rooms were quiet, clean and comfortable. Excellent shower. We were able to leave 2 bags with them while we went to Lockhart River. We were also able to check out an hour later when our flight was delayed. Breakfast was a bit mediocre. We ate dinner at the Taste of Thai restaurant near the botanic gardens. We had salt and pepper squid (squid nicely cooked, but a bit bland and not quite crispy enough), A som tam papaya salad with crispy pork (lovely) and a massaman curry (meat nicely cooked, but the curry wasn't rich or punchy enough and it was too sweet and tasted a bit like there was something random in there like pineapple juice). By UK standards it

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was cheap though. We got to and from the airport using Uber. Note that the bat colonies that used to be in central Cairns were decimated by a number of recent heat stress events and unfortunately no longer exist.

Lockart River – stayed at Greenhouse. Rooms are small but practical with all the essentials, including a mini fridge. Owners very friendly. We self catered our own breakfasts and lunches, and got them to cook us dinner (6:30pm). Dinners were a bit mediocre, not enough veg and made with a too many ultra-processed ingredients for my taste, but portions were large. There is only one store in town, which has very limited stock and is expensive. If you are a picky eater you may wish to bring supplies with you. Greenhouse have a microwave, toaster and kettle you can use, as well as plates and cutlery. I was able to buy Greek yoghurt, museli, some fruit etc but the selection of bread and cheese left a lot to be desired. Flights were booked using the Skytrans website. Car organised by emailing Lockart River Car Hire. We booked a 4x4, but in the dry season I don't think this was necessary – a normal car with decent ground clearance would have been fine if you only want to drive between Lockart River, Greenhouse and the three campgrounds.

Mareeba – Wild Nature Lodge booked through booking.com completely self catering, but a kitchen and BBQ area on site. Lovely location and experience. I booked it because it is supposed to have resident Northern Quoll (which we saw on the drive, about half way between the kitchen building and the locked gate at 11:45pm one night). Lots of brushtail possums plus agile wallabies. Lovely experience. Highly recommended.

Mike Ball Minke Whale Boat – I booked this directly with the boat. The boat takes both scuba divers and snorkelers and (when not looking for Minke whales) chooses sites that are good for both diving and snorkelling. This trip would definitely be suitable for snorkelers as well as divers, and if you aren't a strong swimmer they supply life vests for snorkelers. However, I would recommend that you have snorkelled before to check you like it. Do note that in the winter months the water is cold (25 degrees) and can be choppy. The diving and snorkelling on the boat is very well organised and the crew were very professional and did a great job. All the boats that do minke whale snorkelling have a researcher on board from the Minke whale project, and we were lucky to have the founder of the project Dr Alastair Birtles aka Dr Minke. He gave a talk each evening on the minke whales. We also had a great videographer/photographer/onboard naturalist Jack Breedon who not only was an amazing photographer, but was also incredibly knowledgeable about the natural world and gave us lots of tips for the rest of our trip. I would have no hesitation in recommending the Mike Ball minke whale liveaboard, and based on our experience would recommend a 7 day trip. I believe there are also a number of other boats that do Minke Whale snorkelling, all of which are very strictly regulated and have a minke whale researcher onboard. The Minke whale snorkelling is very strictly controlled (in general, in-water experiences with cetaceans are not allowed in Australian waters – special permits are required by the boat for this experience). The boats must not chase the whales – it is up to the whales to approach the boat and investigate snorkelers if they wish to. Similarly, for the snorkelling you are just hanging off a line attached to the boat (if you have a big camera take a buddy line to attach yourself onto it so you have both hands free to use the camera). You absolutely are not allowed to leave the line and it is up to the whales whether or not they choose to approach you.

Atherton Tablelands Birdwatchers Cabin – A lovely place, loads of birds flitting around the feeders just outside the verandah. Very tame red legged pademelons. Location handy for Mt Hypipamee. There are supposed to be some yellow-bellied gliders in the grounds, but we didn't see them – we went spotlighting at Mt Hypipamee the first night and were out with Patrick the second night, it would have been good to have a third night here to look for them properly. There is also the chance of tree kangaroo and cassowary here too. Note there is only one room and it books up very early – we booked around a year in advance in peak season and were already restricted on dates

Tolga Bat Hospital – Visits must be booked in advance via their website. Highly recommended. Ticket prices support their bat rescue, rehabilitation and release project.

Kingfisher Park in Julaten – I booked this a year or so in advance and struggled with availability. Spotlighting was fantastic. The owners were lovely – quite idiosyncratic, but very knowledgeable and helpful. Birding was maybe a little slower than I expected, but we don't really know what we are doing when it comes to birds, so this could have been due to our skill level. It was really quite cold when we visited in July – I was very glad of my thermals and hot water bottle after a night of spotlighting. I would definitely recommend a visit here.

Chambers – The nocturnal feeding area is simply brilliant. Having wild striped possums, sugar gliders, and long-nosed bandicoot so close was simply an amazing experience. However, I thought they could have done more in terms of the accommodation. The selection of pots, pans and utensils was extremely limited and no salt/pepper/oil/condiments etc were supplied. They gave you washing detergent in individual sachets and toiletries in tiny bottles – it is a shame for a wildlife lodge to have so much single use plastic. There was also no recycling or composting. However, I would definitely recommend a one night stay here in order to experience the nocturnal feeding area. However, we thought the general spotlighting was better around Mt Hypipamee.

Ingham – We stayed at Ingham Tourist Park. We had one of the slightly larger rooms, which was ok. But the kitchen facilities left a lot to be desired – I decided cooking a meal wasn't really going to be an option. We got a selection of things from Wild and Local. The Grilled Barramundi was really dry and overcooked and had probably been frozen. The bugs were also really dry and overcooked. The tiger prawns were nice.

Hidden Valley – We stayed in a deluxe cabin which was lovely – way nicer than I expected. There is no fridge – they give you a cool box and can supply ice, which will keep things chilled for at least 48 hours. There was a BBQ and a single gas ring hob to cook with on our balcony, so we self-catered all our own food. This is a great location for the Mount Claro rock wallaby, and also spotlighting for gliders. I feel like they could have provided better information on things to do in the surrounding area. In hindsight I should have done a bit more research on this before we went, as it probably would have made sense for us to drive a bit further west to try and pick up a few dry country macropods. However, we were both pretty exhausted by this stage of the trip, so an easy day was fairly welcome. I would definitely recommend a stop at Ivy Cottage in Paluma on the way too. It took ages to get Hidden Valley booked – they take school and university groups periodically, and they don't release availability until they have the dates for those trips locked down. I just kept emailing them and eventually I got a booking. Probably useful to have a backup plan though!

Alva Beach – the caravan park is perfectly adequate and you would be able to self cater here fine if you bought all the ingredients with you. It would only be worth coming here if you want to dive the Yongala.

Townsville – Whatever you do, don't stay at Dalgety Apartments! However, we had a great experience at the Grand Hotel and Apartments. I would also really highly recommend A Touch of Salt if you want a nice meal. Our favourites were the Ocotpus, the Duck and the Chocolate Crème Brulee. The only thing we didn't enjoy as much was the pumpkin dessert. The service was fabulous throughout and they were very accommodating when we were late due to our hotel nightmare.

Magnetic Island – We used Sealink ferries – we booked in advance online. Buses or walking are a good way to get around – if you only need to get a bus one way, it would be more reliable to get a bus from the ferry terminal and walk back. I would recommend walking between the rock wallabies and the ferry terminal – it is flat and the views over the sea are lovely. Take a torch or use the light on your phone to look for microbats in the abandoned buildings on the Forts walk. We loved the island and I would really recommend a trip. I definitely could have spent a full day here and explored further

Suggestions and Improvements:

- I would have done an extra night at Atherton Tablelands Birdwatchers Cabin and spent it spotlighting in the grounds of the cabin

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- I would have explored the Jourama falls area during the day before setting out spotlighting at night so I had a better idea of where I was going to focus the spotlighting
- I would have got more of an idea about what to do around Hidden Valley in advance. I also would have stopped at Little Crystal Creek on the way up
- I would have added a night or two in the village of Paluma – this looked like a really interesting place to stay with lots of wildlife watching potential and there are a few AirBnBs available
- In an ideal world I would have changed the order a bit – we ended up driving back on ourselves quite a lot – however, I was restricted by the availability of the boat, school holiday dates so we could meet my family and availability of accommodation

Some tips we got along the way that we didn't have time to investigate:

- Frogs at Henrietta Creek Campground (wear wet shoes)
- Curtain Tree Fig for Northern Leaf tailed geckos and tree kangaroos at night look on the outside surface of the poles
- Swim in Lake Eacham with the underwater camera
- Birthday Creek Falls track Golden Bowerbird bower – just off the path slightly – walk down the track on the right hand side 5m off the track – the path is curving to the left at this point
- Big Crystal creek at the bottom of the road – snorkelling with the camera – fresh water stonefish
- From Ingham towards Jurama – Sign on the side of the road of a child's drawing of a mahogany glider – A stand of trees on the side of the road – Try this if you don't find them at the picnic area. At the picnic area after the first water crossing and before the second. We couldn't find this stand of trees in the dark, it would have been good to look for it in the light first!
- Magnetic Island – if it's high tide stand in the mangroves near the wallabies for blacktip reef sharks

Final Species List (excludes Tolga Bat Hospital)

- Australian Bush Rat
- Common Rock Rat
- Fawn-footed Melomys
- House Mouse
- White-tailed Giant Rat
- Bent-winged bats (possibly) – larger photos at the end of this report
- Grey-headed Flying Fox (Centennial Park, Sydney)
- Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat
- Spectacled Flying-fox
- Vesper Bats (possibly) – larger photos at the end of this report
- Greater Broad-nosed Bat (possibly) – larger photos at the end of this report
- Little Broad-nosed Bat (possibly) – larger photos at the end of this report
- Dwarf Minke Whale (potential subspecies of Common, still undescribed)
- Humpback whale (no photos)
- Common Brush-tailed Possum
- Coppery Brush-tailed Possum
- Common Spotted Cuscus
- Common Ring-tailed Possum
- Green Ringtail
- Herbert River Ring-tailed Possum
- Lemuroid Ring-tailed Possum

- Greater Glider
- Striped Possum
- Squirrel Glider
- Sugar Glider
- Northern Quoll
- Koala
- Northern Brown Bandicoot
- Queensland Barred Bandicoot
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo
- Agile Wallaby
- Red-legged Pademelon
- Allied Rock Wallaby
- Mareeba Rock Wallaby
- Mount Claro Rock Wallaby
- Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo
- Musky Rat-Kangaroo
- Northern Bettong
- Rufous Bettong
- Platypus

The full list of all the observations where we have photos has been uploaded onto inaturalist and can be found here:

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?d1=2024-06-29&d2=2024-08-01&order=asc&order_by=observed_on&subview=table&user_id=jane_tours

See the next pages for photos of the unidentified species – any ID help greatly appreciated!

Here are the photos where we are still trying to get an ID:



Brush-tail possum of some sort. To me the ears look far too small to be a common brushtail possum. However, colouration not really in line with coppery brushtail possum either. On inaturalist there is one observation of a small-eared brushtail possum in the area, however, this is a long way out of the normal range for this animal. The photo was taken at the Atherton Tablelands Birdwatching Cabin near Mt Hypipamee. The next photo shows the head of the same animal.



These bats were roosting in an abandoned building at the top of the Forts Walk on Magnetic Island. On inaturalist it has been suggested they are Vesper bats. If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.

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This bat was roosting in an abandoned building at the top of the Forts Walk on Magnetic Island. On inaturalist it has been suggested it is a Bent-winged Bat (Genus *Miniopterus*). If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know. I think the next photo may be of the same bat.



This bat was roosting in an abandoned building at the top of the Forts Walk on Magnetic Island. On inaturalist it has been suggested it is a Bent-winged Bat (Genus *Miniopterus*). If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.



These bats were roosting in an abandoned building at the top of the Forts Walk on Magnetic Island. These might possibly be Greater Broad-nosed Bat (*Scoteanax rueppellii*). If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.



These bats were roosting in an abandoned building at the top of the Forts Walk on Magnetic Island. These might possibly be Greater Broad-nosed Bat (*Scoteanax rueppellii*) or Little Broad-nosed Bat (*Scotorepens greyii*). If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.



These bats were roosting in a tree hollow in the area across the road from Greenhouse near Lockart River. It has been suggested they are Vesper bats. If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.

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This was taken at Mt Hypipamee. Opinions on iNaturalist are mixed as to whether it is a common or coppery brush-tail possum. Ears look a bit on the smaller side for common, colouration not massively coppery either. . If anyone can help nail this down further I'd love to know.