DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 00 - 0, Sept. 5 - 6: Travel
You will leave the US on September 5, losing a day as you travel across the international date line, arriving in Cairns on September 7.

Day 1, September 7: Arrival in Cairns
Arrive in Cairns, where you will be met at the airport and transported to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure, giving you a chance to rest after your long flights.

Overnight Bay Village Tropical Retreat, Cairns (no meals included)
Day 2, September 8: Cairns
The tour starts with a pre-breakfast stroll along the Cairns Esplanade and the adjacent mangroves. This famous birding location, only a few minutes’ walk from our hotel, is a hotspot for waders on their southerly migration and often includes unusual species for Australia, including Asian Dowitcher. Likely species include Red-capped Plover; Terek, Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers; Great Knot; Grey-tailed Tattler; Red-necked Stint; Lesser and Greater Sand Plover; Pacific Golden Plover; Beach Stone Curlew; Eastern Curlew; Whimbrel; Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits; Masked Lapwing; Australian Pelican; Royal Spoonbill; Eastern Great, Intermediate, Little, and Eastern Reef Egrets; Striated Heron; Australian Pied Oystercatcher; Gull-billed Tern; Silver Gull; Collared Kingfisher; Yellow Oriole; Rainbow Lorikeet; Double-eyed Fig Parrot; Peaceful Dove; Mangrove Robin; and Yellow and Varied Honeyeaters.

We will continue birding on the Esplanade after breakfast before going to the Centenary Lakes and the Botanic Gardens, which are both close to the centre of Cairns. Centenary Lakes contains rainforest, fresh water and salt water wetlands. Species seen may include Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Australian Brush-turkey, Pacific Black Duck, White-browed Crake, Peaceful Dove, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Papuan Frogmouth, Australian Swiftlet, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, Black Butcherbird, Yellow-spotted and Brown Honeyeaters, Helmeted Friarbird, Varied Triller, Australasian Figbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Spangled Drongo, Leaden Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Metallic Starling and Olive-backed Sunbird, to name but a few.

An after-dinner walk along the Esplanade is a good opportunity to see Bush Stone Curlews.

Overnight Bay Village Tropical Retreat, Cairns (BL)
Day 3, September 9: The Great Barrier Reef
Today we will take a Great Barrier Reef cruise. From Cairns we board our comfortable vessel, the Ocean Spirit, for a relaxing two hour cruise out to Michaelmas Cay, a true coral cay and bird sanctuary located 40km north-east of Cairns, and part of the 2000 km long Great Barrier Reef. Thousands of ground-nesting seabirds occur here: Sooty and Crested Terns, Brown Noddy, Silver Gull, Brown Booby, Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds, with a chance of rarer terns and boobies. There will be opportunities for a refreshing dip or snorkel in these beautiful waters, but if you prefer to stay out of the water and would still like to see life under water on the reef, you can enjoy taking a short tour inside a semi-submersible vessel.

If you prefer a land-based option, you can travel on the scenic railway to Kuranda, a delightful town set in rainforest in the mountains behind Cairns. You will return to the coast via the renowned Skyrail, a gondola ride over the canopy of the rainforest. Stations along the way allow you to go birding along boardwalks.

**Overnight Bay Village Tropical Retreat, Cairns (BL)**

Day 4, September 10: Daintree River Cruise and Julatten
Our destination today is the Daintree River, where we take a pleasant cruise through farmland and rainforest on the lookout for Great-billed Heron, Little Kingfisher, White-rumped Swiftlet, Cicadabird, Spectacled Monarch, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Black-necked Stork and Black Butcherbird, and possibly a saltwater crocodile. We then drive to Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, arriving in time to watch for Blue-faced and Graceful Honeyeaters and Red-browed Finch at the feeders. During the afternoon, we have a complete change of habitat by traveling a relatively short distance in to dry savannah country to see Australian Bustards, Great Bowerbird, Squatter Pigeon, Pale-headed Rosella, Galah, Black-throated Finch, Apostlebird, Pied Butcherbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-throated Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, Bower’s Shrike-thrush, White-throated Treecreeper, Black Kite, Little Eagle, Square-tailed Kite and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

**Overnight Kingfisher Lodge (BL)**

Day 5, September 11: Mount Lewis and Kingfisher Lodge
Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers’ Lodge, on the northern edge of the Tableland, caters exclusively to birders. Within the grounds are Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Emerald Dove, Noisy Pitta, Red-necked Crake, Buff-banded Rail, Sooty Owl, Black-faced Monarch and an array of honeyeaters. Nearby is Mount Lewis, covered in upland rainforest where we hope to find a range of species endemic to North Queensland including Mountain Thornbill, Golden Bowerbird, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Chowchilla, Spotted Catbird, Fernwren, Graceful and Bridled Honeyeater, Bassian Thrush and Pale-yellow Robin. Back down the mountain at Sides Road the targets are Blue-faced Parrot Finch, Lovely Fairy-wren and Grey-headed Robin.

**Overnight Kingfisher Lodge (BL)**
Day 6, September 12: Atherton Tablelands
The Atherton Tablelands is a region of beautiful scenery with lakes and waterfalls, green pastures, savanna, open
woodlands and scattered wetlands nestled in national parks and state forests, as well as Queensland’s highest mountains
rising to over 1600m. Birding can be superb: Sarus Crane, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Pied Monarch,
Chowchilla, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Golden Bowerbird, Tooth-billed and Spotted Catbirds
and Victoria’s Riflebird. On our drive, we look in dry eucalyptus country for Australian Bustards, we visit wetlands for
Green and Cotton Pygmy-Geese and Brogla, and woodlands support Squatter Pigeon, Apostlebird, Great Bowerbird,
Black-throated Finch, and the distinctive local race of Brown Treecreeper. In late afternoon we reach Yungaburra, a
National Trust village that has a platypus viewing platform.

Overnight Chambers Wildlife Lodges (BLD)

Day 7, September 13: Atherton Tablelands
We continue our exploration of the Atherton tablelands including a visit to Lakes Eacham and Barrine, Mt Hypipimee NP,
Wongabel State Forest and Hasties Swamp. We walk trails in these areas looking for Large-billed Scrub-wren, Atherton
Fantail, Golden Whistler, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Brush Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, White-eared Monarch, Fig
Parrot, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Topknot Pigeon, Golden Bowerbird, Bower’s Shrike-thrush, Varied Triller and, with
luck, we’ll spot a male Cassowary with chicks in tow.

Overnight Chambers Wildlife Lodges (BLD)

Day 8, September 14: Back to Cairns and Cairns Esplanade
We head back to Cairns via Davies Creek National Park to look for Rufous Owl and White-browed Robin and Kuranda
for another chance to see Cassowary. In Cairns we will check the Esplanade for any new arrivals and other locations for
any species we missed on the first day.

Overnight Bay Village Tropical Retreat, Cairns (BL)
Day 9, Sept 15: Transfer to Brisbane and cross the Great Dividing Range.
We catch an early morning flight to Brisbane and drive to the Port of Brisbane for Mangrove Honeyeater, Mangrove Gerygone, Chestnut Teal and Red-necked Avocet before we head west across the Great Dividing Range that separates the watersheds of the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. As we go further west the species become more typical of those of the outback with many species reaching their eastern most range in this area. Our first key birding stop is at Durikai State Forest, a dry Eucalyptus forest with a surprising diversity of species including Yellow-tufted, White-eared, Fuscous, Brown-headed, White-naped, and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Little Lorikeet, White-browed Babbler, Brown Treecreeper, Striated and Spotted Pardalote, Dusky Woodswallow, Speckled Warbler, Weebill and Striated Thornbill. Later in the day we visit Lake Coolmunda, a shallow irrigation dam with an abundance of waterfowl including Black and Hardhead Ducks, Grey Teal, Great Crested Grebes, Pelicans, Black Swans, Whiskered Terns, Cormorants and Coots as well as terrestrial species including Red-rumped and Red-winged Parrots, Cockatiel, Galah, Superb Fairywren, Zebra Finch, Tawny Grassbird and Ground Cuckoo-shrike. 

Overnight at Lake Coolmunda Cabins with dinner at nearby Inglewood. (B, L)

Day 10, Sept 16: Lake Coolmunda, Mosquito Creek Road and woodland birding to Girraween National Park.
Have an early breakfast then go to Mosquito Creek Road for White-winged Fairy-wren, Spinycheeked Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, White-winged Chough, Apostlebird, Spotted Bowerbird, Greycrowned Babbler, Emu, Squatter Pigeon and Blue-bonnnet Parrot. Go back to Coolmunda Dam to find birds we missed the day before. Take a back road to Stanthorpe via Springdale Road which is a good location for Turquoise Parrot, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Brown Treecreeper, Restless Flycatcher, Bushlark, Rufous and Brown Song Lark, Mistletoebird, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle, Brown Falcon and Nankeen Kestrel. We will stay for 2 nights at the Girraween Environmental Lodge, a beautiful location surrounded by Girraween National Park.

Overnight at Girraween Environmental Lodge (B, L)

Superb Fairy-Wren
Day 11, Sept 17: Girraween area.
We spend the full day in Girraween National Park and on the Old Wallangarra Rd. This attractive area with spectacular granite rock formations in Girraween NP gives us another chance to see Musk Lorikeets, Striped and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, and Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Red-browed Treecreeper, Turquoise and Red-winged Parrots, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Rufous Songlark, Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail, Double-barred Finch, Plumheaded Finch, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Common Bronzewing, Glossy Black Cockatoo and Australasian Shoveler. Spotted Quail-Thrush and Chestnut-rumped Heathwren are possible but very difficult. Please note much of Girraween NP has recently been burnt in a wild fire but rain since then should generate rapid regrowth.
Overnight at Girraween Environmental Lodge (B, L)

Day 12, Sept 18: Girraween and Lamington National Park
We start the day at Girraween but travel back across the Great Divide to Lamington National Park (about 4 hours). Lamington National Park is 55,000 acres of a volcanic plateau with deep gorges and ridges formed by a 22-million-year-old extinct shield volcano, Mt Warning. Most of it is covered with sub-tropical rainforest. A feature attraction is the amazing Albert’s Lyrebird, and we make a special attempt to find this incredible mimic. Other goodies include Logrunner, Regent and Satin Bowerbird, Green Catbird, Paradise Riflebird, Marbled Frogmouth, Eastern Whipbird and many more. At the end of the day we will arrive at O’Reilly’s Guesthouse for a three-night stay.
Overnight O’Reilly’s Rainforest Retreat. (B, L, D)

Day 13 and 14, September 19-20: Lamington National Park
We will have two full days of birding in the area surrounding O'Reilly's in Lamington National Park.
Overnight O'Reilly's (BLD)

Day 15, Sept 21: Lamington NP and transfer to Brisbane Airport and fly to Sydney.
After some early birding around our accommodation we drive to Brisbane to catch an afternoon flight to Sydney. In Sydney, we will either stay the night near Sydney airport or drive south on the spectacular coastal route to Kiama.
Accommodation to be advised. (B, L)

Day 16, Sept 22: Barren Grounds and the Blue Mountains
We will visit the coastal heathlands of Barren Grounds Nature Reserve for a chance at the critically endangered Eastern Bristlebird, as well as Powerful Owl, Superb Lyrebird, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Southern Emu-wren, Rockwarbler, Brush Wattlebird, Pilotbird and Ground Parrot. We will then head inland to the famous Blue Mountains, another good location for Superb Lyrebird, Rockwarbler and Pilotbird as well as Gang Gang Cockatoos, Eastern Rosella, Beautiful Firetail and many more.
Overnight High Mountains Inn in the Blue Mountains (B,L)
Day 17, Sept. 23: Blue Mountains and Capertee Valley
Overnight Black Gold Motel in Wallerawang (B,L)

Day 18, Sept. 24: Capertee Valley
A full day in the Capertee Valley which the locals describe as the ‘world’s widest canyon. It is a renowned birding area with a completely different suite of birds from the eastern side of the Blue Mountains. If we are very lucky we will see the Regent Honeyeater, one of Australia’s rarest birds.
Overnight Black Gold Motel in Wallerawang (B,L)

Day 19, Sept. 25: Transfer to Sydney
Today we spend our time looking for species missed up to now, perhaps Gang Gang Cockatoos, Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Swamphen, Wandering and Plumed Whistling-Ducks, or Fuscous, White-plumed and White-naped Honeyeaters.
Overnight Ibis Hotel near Sydney Airport (B,L)

Day 20, Sept. 26: Departure
Our tour ends after breakfast, as we travel to Sydney’s Kingsford Smith airport for our flights home.
**Price Includes:**

- Lodging in comfortable hotel/lodges
- Meals as indicated (most dinners are self-pay)
- All ground transportation, entrance fees
- Services of an expert birding guide and 2 *Cheepers!* Tour Leaders (Jim & Cindy Beckman)
- Pre-trip gift package, including customized checklist
- Post-trip digital photo collection
- Post-trip electronic copy of final checklist

**Price does not Include:**

- International airfare to Cairns
- Domestic airfare: Cairns/Brisbane (9/15), Brisbane/Sydney (9/21)
- Airport transfers
- Alcoholic drinks, extra snacks, etc.
- Travel insurance (highly recommended)
- Gratuities
- Expenses of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, extra drinks and snacks, etc.)

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**Cancellation policy:**

Cancellation must be made in writing (email or snail mail)
- More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit
- Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit
- Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit
- If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

**Trip insurance is highly recommended.**

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:
- http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056
- www.incuremytrip.com

*Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC* reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.