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Trip Report - Warrumbungles & Pilliga Scrub NSW

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To: <birding-aus@vicnet.net.au>

Subject: Trip Report - Warrumbungles & Pilliga Scrub NSW

From: "Allan Morris" <amorris@turboweb.net.au>

Date: Sun, 15 Oct 2000 18:28:16 +1000

Hi Birders,

During the period 8-12 October 2000 Australian Special Interest Tours took a group of 18 birdwatchers to Coonabarabran for a 5 day visit to the Warrumbungle Mountains and to the Pilliga Scrub. On the Saturday enroute to Coonabarabran, we stopped at Broke Common for morning tea where we had a pair of **White-throated Gerygones** building a nest and close by, and about 100m apart where two separate nests of **Olive-backed Orioles**. **Bee-eaters** were hawking above us and the air was loud with the calls of **Dollarbirds**, **Sacred Kingfishers**, **Shining Bronze-cuckoos**, Orioles & Gerygones! Our lunch stop was Battery Rocks near Merriwa where **Reedwarblers** were abundant and **Dusky Woodswallows** hawked overhead. At Ulinda Creek, Binnaway **Rufous Songlarks** were in full cry and a **Brown Goshawk** circled overhead. At Coonabarabran Weir there were **Common Blackbirds**, **Coots** and 2 **Little Friarbirds** and at nearby Rotary Park **Fantailed Cuckoos** and **Eastern Spinebills** were added to our list.

Birdwatching around our motel on Sunday morning found **Brown-headed**, **White-eared** & **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** and a Koala! Then off to the Warrumbungles NP and while some of the party walked to the Breadknife, the rest of us birdwatched around the area. Highlights were **Black-chinned Honeyeaters**, **White-browed Babblers**, **Turquoise Parrots** & a **Restless Flycatcher** on the nest at at Camp Pincham; **Striped Honeyeaters** at Wambelong, **Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Speckled Warbler** & **Red-capped Robin** at the Woolshed; and **Brush Cuckoo** & Immature **Nankeen Night-heron** at Canyon Camp.

After we collected the walkers we left the park and drove westward to Gummin Gummin & Warrumbungle Village, where we good views of **Red-winged Parrots**, **Yellow-throated Miners** and **Bluebonnet Parrots**.

On Monday, following visits to the Mineral Museum (where there was a **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** nest with 2 young), and Siding Spring Observatory, we stopped first at Timor Rock where a **Rufous Whistler** was found nesting in a sapling and Sacred Kingfishers and Shining Bronze-cuckoos were calling loudly; then we went onto White Gum Lookout and adjacent areas and found Brush Cuckoos, Speckled Warblers, Black-chinned Honeyayers and the first **Cicadabird** for the season was heard calling! We lunched at Canyon Camp in the rain and on leaving near Elongery, we saw another two Turquoise Parrots!. We then left the western side of the Park and circumnavigated the Park, returning to Coonabarabran via Goorianawaa & Bugaldie. Passing through the woodlands on the plains were saw **White-winged Trillers**, **Chestnut-rumped** & **Inland Thornbills**, **Double-banded Finches**, **Little Ravens** and **Weebills**.

On Tuesday we went to the Pilliga Scrub, birdwatching first at Wittenbra SF here we saw nesting Jacky Winters, **Grey-crowned Babblers**, **Sittella**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, & **Buff-rumped Thornbills**. At Terridgerie Lagoon we saw 2 **Plum-headed Finches**, nesting **Whistling Kites**, **Little Eagle**, **Cockatiel**, **Peregrine**, **White-browed Woodswallows** and another Koala! In Carmel Lane en route to the dry Carmel Lagoon we had fleeting views of a **Spotted Bowerbird**, and at Trapyard Dam & Sandy Creek Road in Pilliga West SF we finally caught up with a **Western Gerygone** and had great views of Bee-eaters and many Double-barred Finches. Our last stop for the

day was on the Gulargumbone Road where we visited an extraordinary bower of the Spotted Bowerbird, decorated with many bolts & nuts, sheep bones, ring-pulls, red & silver items etc, but alas the owner rarely showed himself!

On Wednesday on the way home we spent some time at Beni Crossing of the Castlereagh River near Mendooran where we had great views of **Diamond Firetails**, a **Sparrowhawk** and a dark phase **Little Eagle**. We stopped at the lagoon outside of Dunedoo and had good views of **Shoveller**, nesting Coots and **Australasian Grebes**, 3 **Wedgetail Eagles** being buzzed by 2 **Brown Falcons**, **Royal & Yellow-billed Spoonbills**, In Dunedoo we saw some **Musk Lorikeets** and just east of the town we turned up a **Spotted Harrier**. It was a good trip and 154 species of birds were seen.

Alan Morris

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