



Australian Wet Tropics Nature & Wildlife Photography Tour

Eyes on Wildlife

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The **Wet Tropics Bioregion of Queensland** in Australia is an area with an enormous diversity in fauna and flora. The larger part of this Bioregion was listed as World Heritage Area in 1988. There are more than 300 bird species that call the Wet Tropics home at least some time of the year. More than 150 species of reptiles, 40+ species of marsupials, 2 monotremes and more than 30 species of bats can be found in this relatively small area. Twenty-one species of frog are endemic to this area. The bioregion is also home to almost 60% of all butterflies that can be found in Australia. Imagine spending 7 days in this special part of the world and getting the chance to grow and upskill as a wildlife photographer!

Eyes on Wildlife Birding & Wildlife Tours Australia's Patrick De Geest and Jay Collier from the Photography Workshop Co are partnering up to offer you this 7 days/6 nights tour in what is the most densely-packed wildlife area of Australia. While Patrick will find you the wildlife, show you how to approach it and tell you about the nature of these creatures, Jay will be there for you to learn new techniques, settings for certain environments and behaviours, and heaps more to get that perfect shot.

This tour is your chance to improve your photography skills, enjoy the stunningly beautiful Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef and go home with some fantastic images. We will focus on macro-photography, birds in flight, portraits, improving your settings in relation to different environments like dark rainforest, and open bushland or shore. Nocturnal wildlife will require a different approach again and wildlife is often unpredictable and challenges the photographer to get that best image. Patrick and Jay will make this an unforgettable experience and you will have the proof to take home.



Patrick De Geest

Birding & wildlife guide and naturalist Patrick De Geest started birding and wildlife watching when he was around 9 years of age in Belgium. Since starting his business Eyes on Wildlife he has guided many Australian and international guests through this beautiful part of the world, either on general wildlife tours, or specific target tours. www.eyesonwildlife.com.au

Jay Collier

Jay is a renowned wildlife photographer and photographic guide/educator from Melbourne Australia. He is best known for his work in Africa, having hosted countless guests throughout Africa over the past 17 years, as well as his work hosting guests across Australia's wild locations with his dedicated photographic tour business.



www.thephotographyworkshopco.com

Jay has worked for many of the major companies including 14 years at Canon Australia, 5 years with Nikon as well as time working for Olympus and Kodak. He is highly regarded as a leading expert in photographic education and holds extensive experience in training photographers from all levels of experience from beginners to high-end professionals.

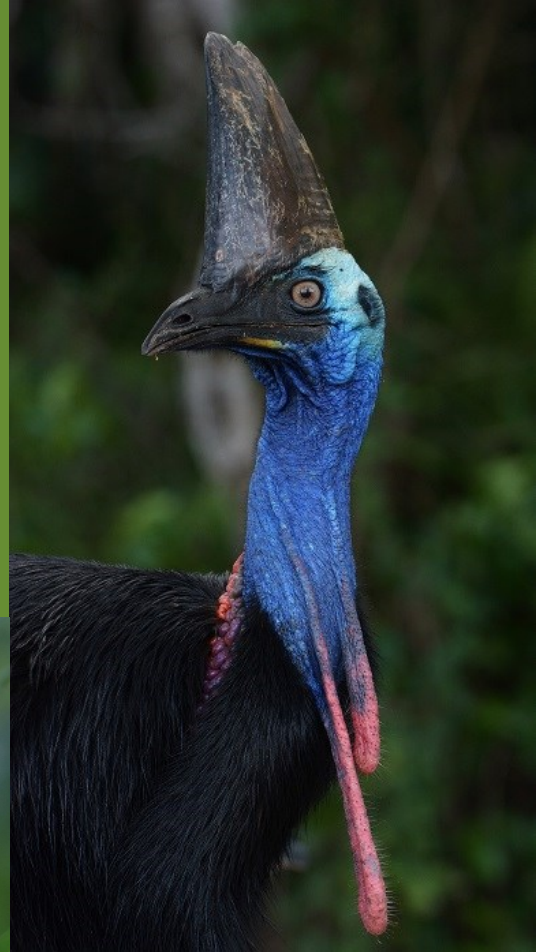


Day 1 – Cairns - Atherton Tablelands

Pick up from your accommodation for a 7am start of our photography tour. We'll visit shore, mangroves, paperbark swamp and other coastal habitat. We'll look for the very colourful and photogenic Double-eyed Fig-parrot, Olive-backed Sunbird, Beach Stone-Curlew, Bush Stone-Curlew, Rose-crowned Fruit-dove, Torresian Kingfisher and Papuan Frogmouth. We might even get Rufous Owl roosting during the day.

After lunch, we'll try to get close-up with **Southern Cassowary** in the Innisfail area. Late afternoon, we'll drive to the Atherton Tablelands. Stopping along the way a few times to get our first glimpses and opportunity to photograph our Wet Tropics endemic **Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo** before checking in at our accommodation.

During our first nocturnal tour starting just after dinner, we'll target our Wet Tropics endemic **Lesser Sooty Owl**, and find a few possum species, among which the endemic Green Ring-tailed Possum. A part of our nocturnal session will be enjoyed on the accommodation grounds to photograph the endearing **Striped Possum** and Krefft's Glider.



Day 2 – Atherton Tablelands

Early morning, we'll visit a local swamp to get waterfowl in flight, or get some great images of them foraging and preening. This time of the year, both Sarus Crane and Brolga often roost at the swamp at night.

Later in the morning we'll focus on photographing birds and other wildlife in the rainforest. Rainforests are challenging environments for photography. The Wet Tropics endemic Tooth-billed Bowerbirds should be singing above their courts and are obliging targets. We'll also focus on the more energetic honeyeaters. They are fast and hardly ever sit still. We might encounter our very colour fruit-doves, special ground-dwelling Chowchilla, or the never tiring and stunning Pied Monarch.

After lunch, we'll aim to get great images of Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo, Red-legged Pademelon and Platypus. Of course, there will be other wildlife and we will not shy away from any great opportunity for photography.



Day 3 – Atherton Tablelands

This morning the group will be split up in two groups to minimise the impact on the wildlife subjects we'll focus on. Having large groups of guests around the Wet Tropics Golden Bowerbird's bower is not ethical, but also wouldn't allow everybody to get a chance for great images. Likewise, for other critters that will be in focus this morning: Victoria's Riflebird, Spotted Catbird, possible Yellow-faced Whipsnake and the endemic Musky Rat-kangaroo.

After lunch, we'll have a short rest since we will have a fairly long nocturnal session. After having had a bit of downtime, or time to study camera settings, take notes, etc. the whole group will have its first proper search and photography session for Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo, and/or better images of Platypus.

After dinner, we will have a long night out looking for all kinds of endemic nocturnal wildlife. We'll get possums, gliders (gliding possums), endemic geckos and frogs and even spiders and insects. We might also get the opportunity to photograph the Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo at night. This comes with its challenges for which we will be guided by Jay. This will also be a great opportunity to test your macro photography skills and get away with some amazing pictures.



Day 5 – Carbine Tablelands— Cairns

In the morning, we will focus on the birds and other wildlife in the accommodation grounds and the wider surrounds (Julatten/Mount Molloy area). Squatter Pigeon, Blue-faced Honeyeater, other honeyeaters, Great Bowerbird and finches should make in on to your SD cards.

Late afternoon, Red-winged Parrot, Red-tailed Black-cockatoo and the magnificent Australian Bustard are our main photography targets.

After dinner we'll have our 5th spotlighting session. This time, we will head to Mt Lewis to try and get the Daintree River Ring-tailed Possum, but also Giant White-tailed Rat, Tree Mouse and possibly the ever so cute carnivorous Long-tailed Pygmy Possum. We might also get the Wet Tropics subspecies of the Australian Boobook, the Little Red Boobook.

Day 6 – Julatten- Daintree

This morning, we will be out of bed very early for our private dawn cruise on the Daintree River. The guide will get you close-up with some of our kingfishers. Little Kingfisher and Azure Kingfisher perched above the river's edge, but possibly also better opportunities for Papuan Frogmouth. The impressive Great-billed Heron might make an appearance as well as Black Bittern. Common Tree Snake is another star of the river, apart from the river's apex predator Saltwater Crocodile which might be sunbathing on the river bank. We will have a well-deserved breakfast after this boat cruise.

From Daintree Village, we will make our way back to Cairns stopping at several locations to photograph the striking Comb-crested Jacana, Crimson Finch, beautiful Lovely Fairy-wren, Orange-footed Scrub-fowl, and shorebirds.



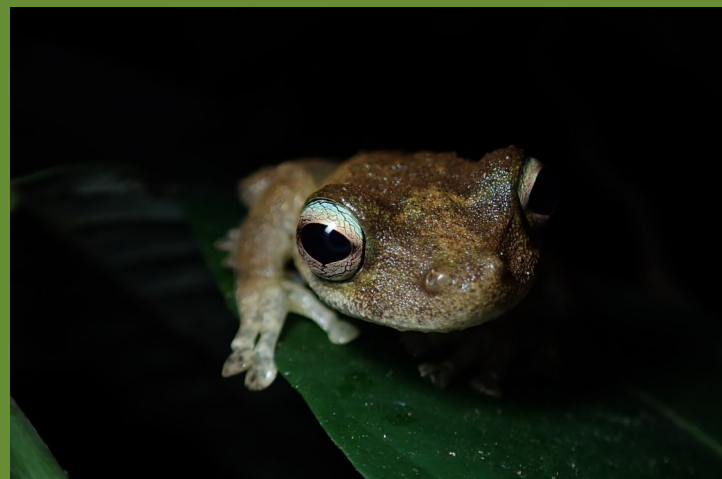
Day 4 – Atherton Tablelands to Julatten

For the morning, we will have the same group split and respective focus as on day 3. Each group focusing on what the other group did the day before.

Moving to drier country in the Mareeba area after lunch will get us close-up with Mareeba Rock-wallaby, Grey Crowned Babbalers, and possibly Frilled Lizard. Capturing the 'blue' in the Blue-winged Kookaburras will be a photographic challenge.

After having checked in at our accommodation, we'll be aiming our lenses at the birds and other wildlife around our accommodation and the immediate surrounds.

This tour is a constant stream of wildlife encounters and this night also we will be out looking for wildlife. We will have a spotlighting session on the grounds and around Julatten looking for owls and nightjars.



Day 7 – Great Barrier Reef– Michaelmas Cay

Our final day is a day out on the reef. We will spend 2-3 hours on Michaelmas Cay. This cay is a large and stable coral sand island with a grassy area over 200 metres long. It is a popular breeding site while also one of the most important breeding locations on the Great Barrier Reef. Birds that are regulars are: Common Noddy, Black Noddy, Brown Booby, Sooty Tern, Black-naped Tern, Little Tern, Bridled Tern and occasionally, White-tailed Tropicbird, Roseate Tern, Masked Booby or Red-footed Booby show up. You can really get close-up with the birds and the background is absolutely stunning. It will be a new environment that will allow you to upgrade your photography skills again. It's also a great opportunity to practise birds-in-flight shots, even from the boat.

After lunch, the tour takes us out to Hastings Reef for a couple of hours. The focus will be more on underwater photography, but birds in flight photography could be an alternative for guests who'd like to stay dry. We will finish our 7 day tour with a farewell dinner.



Important info

◆ Accommodation:

Guests book their own accommodation in **Cairns CBD (!)** for the night before the first day of the tour and for the night of day 7 of the tour. The morning of day 1, guests need to arrange their own breakfast. It is best to book a hotel that provides breakfast at a time that allows for a 7 am start of the tour.

Tour accommodation — Twin-share (single room fee AU\$700)

Day 1-3	Chambers Wildlife Lodges — https://chamberslodges.com.au/
Day 4-5	Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge — https://www.birdwatchers.com.au/
Day 6	Pacific Hotel Cairns

◆ Meals:

Breakfast is included and offered at your accommodation. Lunch and dinner is had in group at a lunch café or restaurant, but is not included in the tour price. Snacks and refreshments at own expense. Please, forward your dietary restrictions to Patrick.

As part of the tour, you are invited to join a free welcome dinner in Cairns at 7.00pm the night before day 1 of the tour. It is a good opportunity to meet and greet your guides and other guests. A farewell dinner is also included in the tour price.

For **dates** and current **pricing**, please check www.eyesonwildlife.com.au

For all enquiries or bookings, please email patrick@eyesonwildlife.com.au