

A photograph of a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo perched on a thin, light-colored tree branch. The bird is dark brown with a prominent yellow patch on its forehead and a yellow band on its tail. It is facing left. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green foliage.

Victoria Australia

7<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

Yellow tailed Black Cockatoo photographed on the coast road

**Flights:** Booked with BA from the UK who subcontracted to Qantas for second half of journey out and first half of return journey. Flight out was from Heathrow to Hong Kong and onto Melbourne. Return flight was via Sydney where a change of terminal was required (by bus) for flight to Heathrow via a refuelling stop in Singapore. The flights were long but uneventful!

**Weather:** Mainly dry and very warm occasionally (two days) hot; at 45 degrees.

**On ground travel:** All courtesy of Tania who did a wonderful job of taking us anywhere and everywhere!

**Accommodation:** Point Cook Apartment Suites – excellent birding location with the entrance to Point Cook reserve directly opposite.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> January

Birding around the apartment complex was quite easy with breeding Australian Grebes on a small pond which also held visiting cormorants. The owners were at pains to signpost snakes which were supposedly frequent around the pond, but we didn't see any. The area had many breeding Superb Fairy Wrens and adjacent grassland held singing Skylarks.





Probably the most stunning small passerine we saw; Superb Fairy Wren





Australian Grebe – very like European Little Grebe

#### 8<sup>th</sup> January

It's a very short drive across the road and into Point Cook Coastal Park. Entry was via Main Drive and then Side Entrance Road to a large car parking and picnic area adjacent to the sea. Small ponds and scattered bushes held several Honeyeater species and open ground birds.



Crested Pigeon – Common in most areas visited but not difficult to find at Point Cook



White Plumed Honeyeater



## 9<sup>th</sup> January

A day in the city starting at Melbourne Botanical Gardens. The Lily Pond is a known stakeout for Rakali, although we didn't see any we did have a brief view of Nankeen Night Heron; the only one we saw. Good views of Red and Little Wattlebird. Moving onto Yarrow Bend not too far away a walk alongside the river gave us excellent views of Noisy Miners and a huge colony of Grey headed Flying Foxes. On the river was the only Australian Darter we came across. A drive back to the city and a walk along St Kilda Pier eventually gave us good views of Rakali as well as a few Little Penguins coming in to roost.

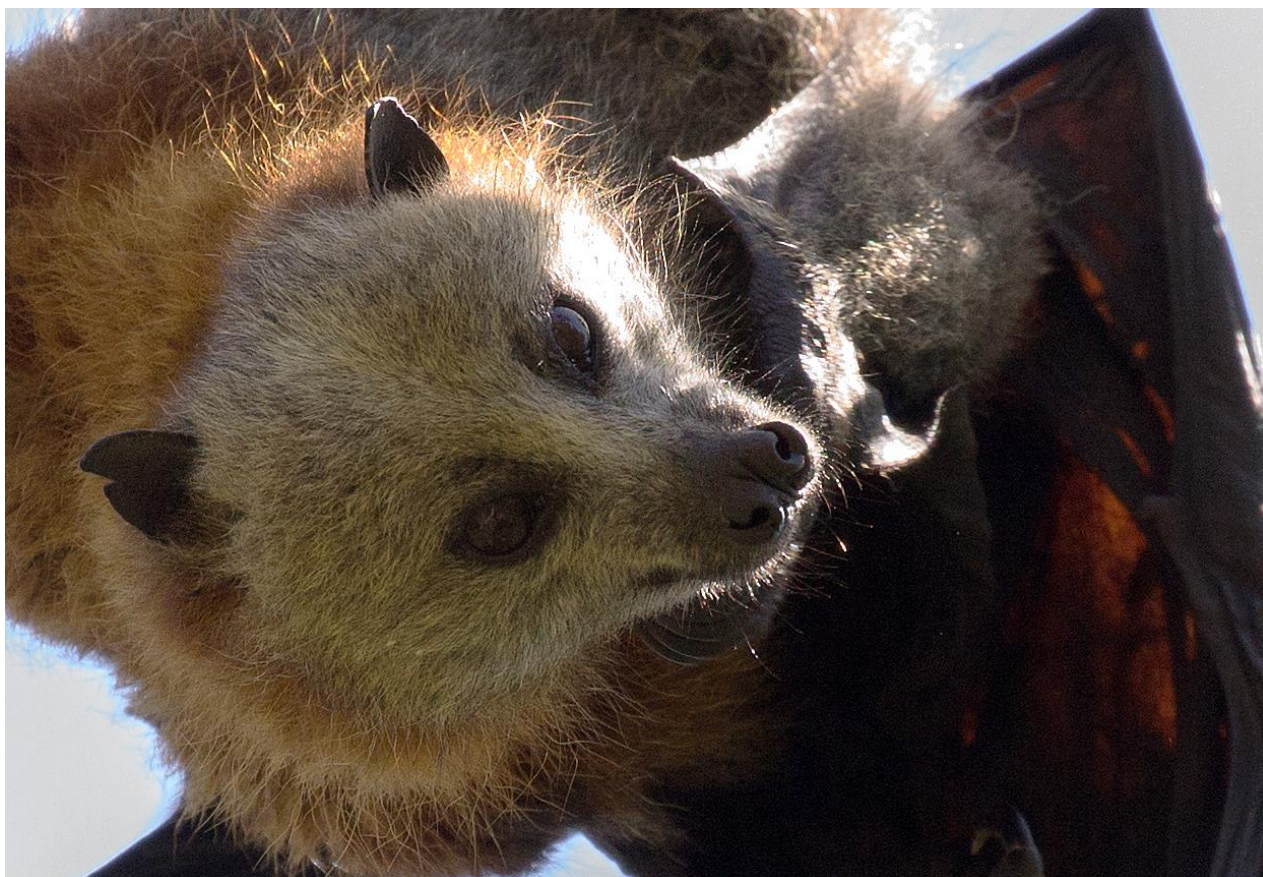


Little Wattlebird – a quite confiding individual within the Botanical Gardens





Noisy Miner



Grey headed Flying Fox at Yarra Bend.





Little Penguin – not many came in to the Pier, but they were very popular with the assembled crowd. Recently built railed boardwalks stopped interference from bystanders. The area was also warded.

## 10<sup>th</sup> January

A trip to Werribee Gorge State Park which is approached by a rough track – 4 wheel drive advisable – a walk up the gorge eventually became impassable without proper walking boots. The gorge is supposed to be good for Koala but we didn't find any. We did however find 2 distant Tawny Frogmouths. We then visited Daylesford with a walk around the botanical gardens on Wombat Hill before returning later to the Gorge at dusk when Eastern Grey Kangaroos were in fields opposite the approach road in fields with cattle.



Eastern Yellow Robin. Not uncommon in Werribee Gorge





Yellow faced Honeyeaters were quite common in the gorge



White Throated Needletail: A small flock were flying high around the tower on Wombat Hill in Daylesford. This is a long-distance migrant which has occurred in the UK on a few occasions so for me it has 'holy grail' status





A flock of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos were at the roadside in Daylesford



**11<sup>th</sup> January**

A walk around the grounds of Werribee Mansion was pleasant. Several birds of note were seen as well as a small Grey headed Flying Fox colony in the trees around the car park. On the journey past a small park in Hoppers Crossing a large flock of Cockatoos were seen and we stopped to photograph them.



This Australian Ibis was quite tame; although it may have had a damaged wing.



Red browed Finches were feeding on newly sown areas around the grounds of the mansion





Long billed Corella among many parrots at the roadside at Hoppers Crossing



**12<sup>th</sup> January**

A drive east of Melbourne to Cranbourne Botanical Gardens. The gardens are a known stakeout for Southern Brown Bandicoot. We saw just the single animal but if the weather had not been as bad we may have seen more. The Common Bronzewings and the New Holland Honeyeaters were the avian highlights.



Southern Brown Bandicoot among the flower beds within the garden complex. Normally nocturnal this population are known to be diurnal.



Never have Pigeons been so beautifully portrayed as they are with Common Bronzewings.





New Holland Honeyeaters were common in the gardens.





Black fronted Dotterel: A surprise bird obviously breeding around the decorative tanks of water within the gardens.

### **13<sup>th</sup> January**

A visit to Williamstown Botanical Gardens and the seafront gave very little of note on what was a windy day.

### **14<sup>th</sup> January**

A roadside stop to photograph Masked Lapwings. A further drive south west to Queenscliff. We parked and caught a ferry across the bay to the Mornington Peninsula as foot passengers. The ferry runs once every hour. A pre-booked Dolphin watching tour was joined on the same quay where the ferry docked with Moonraker Dolphin Swims. The trip was about three hours long boat trip into bay for \$65 each. Swimmers were present on the boat as well as observers. Educational value was poor but their respect for the dolphins was good. No sooner had we left the quay Dolphins showed; around 8 animals came around the boat. We further visited a Gannet breeding colony and Chinaman's hat, a structure in the bay used by Australian Sealions. After the return ferry to Queenscliffe we inspected the area around the quay and after a meal inspected the waders and Pelican around the entrance to Rabbit and Swan Island. This is a military base so the road is guarded and entry not allowed. The nearby boat ramp is a good place from where to view waders and terns.



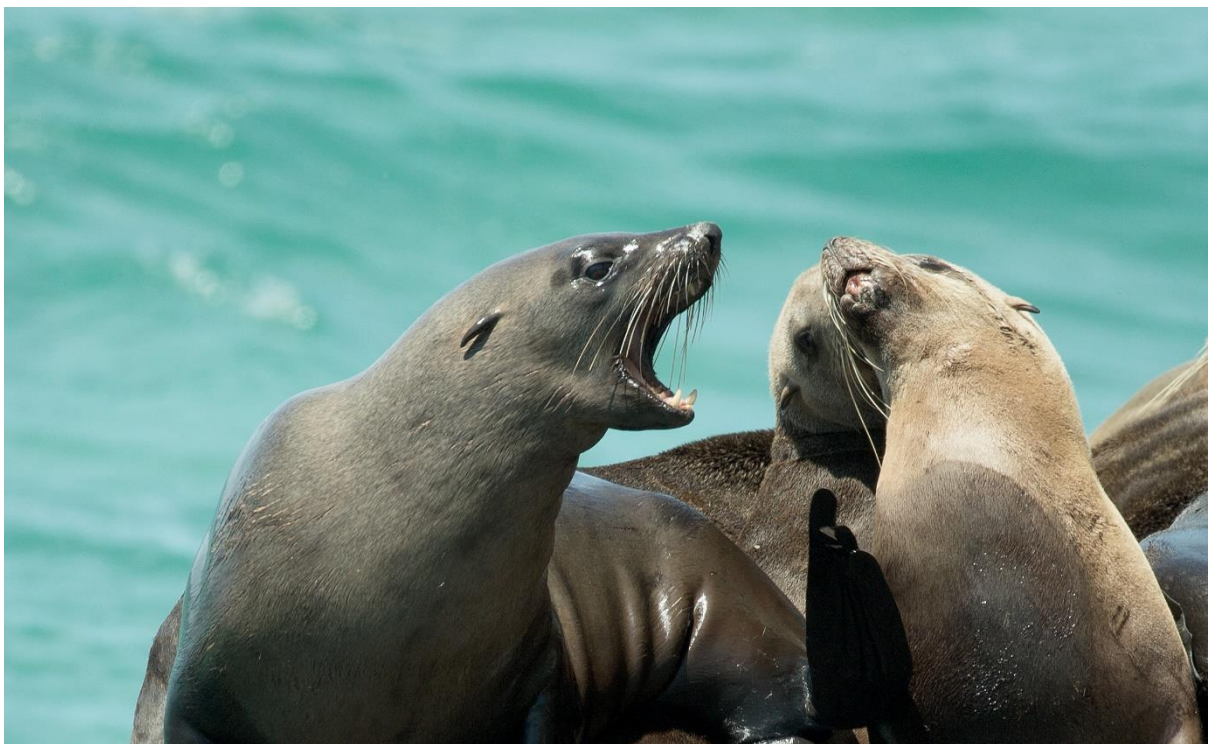


Masked Lapwings were on the road verges and had obviously bred in the area





Burrunan Dolphins were not identified as a separate species from Bottlenose Dolphin until around 2011. Their behaviour, dorsal fin shape and white blaze on the flank set them apart as a species.



Australian Sealsions at the Chinaman's Hat





Australasian Gannet out in the bay.



Australian Pelicans at the boat ramp at Queenscliff





Pacific Gull by the quay in Queenscliff





Whiskered Terns again viewable from the boat ramp.





Crested Tern viewed from the boat ramp at Queenscliff

### 15<sup>th</sup> January

A visit to the Brisbane Ranges, Mt Anike gave us our first and only Koala and several passerines we didn't see anywhere else. Ripley Road and Little River gave a good number of raptors.



Koala – the only one we saw. Surprising for something as big as a dog sat in a tree.



**16<sup>th</sup> January**

A visit to the You Yangs was productive. A walk up Flinders Peak didn't give the promised Koalas but we saw our first snake. Even the help of a park ranger didn't help. A drive around the Circuit Route with walks at various stopping places was interesting. Parking outside the park we walked back in during the evening and saw many Eastern Grey Kangaroos.



Eastern Brown Snake crossing the road in You Yangs



Eastern Grey Kangaroo – one of several seen that came from 'nowhere' after the crowds left

**17<sup>th</sup> January**

Keys to the Werribee Treatment Plant were picked up from Werribee Zoo after signing disclaimers. No charge for foreigners. We visited late afternoon and returned the keys the following day.

This is one of the best places we visited with many birds plus a pair of Foxes on the beach. Access is by locked gates and drives around various unmetalled tracks.



Straw necked Ibis at Werribee Water Treatment Works

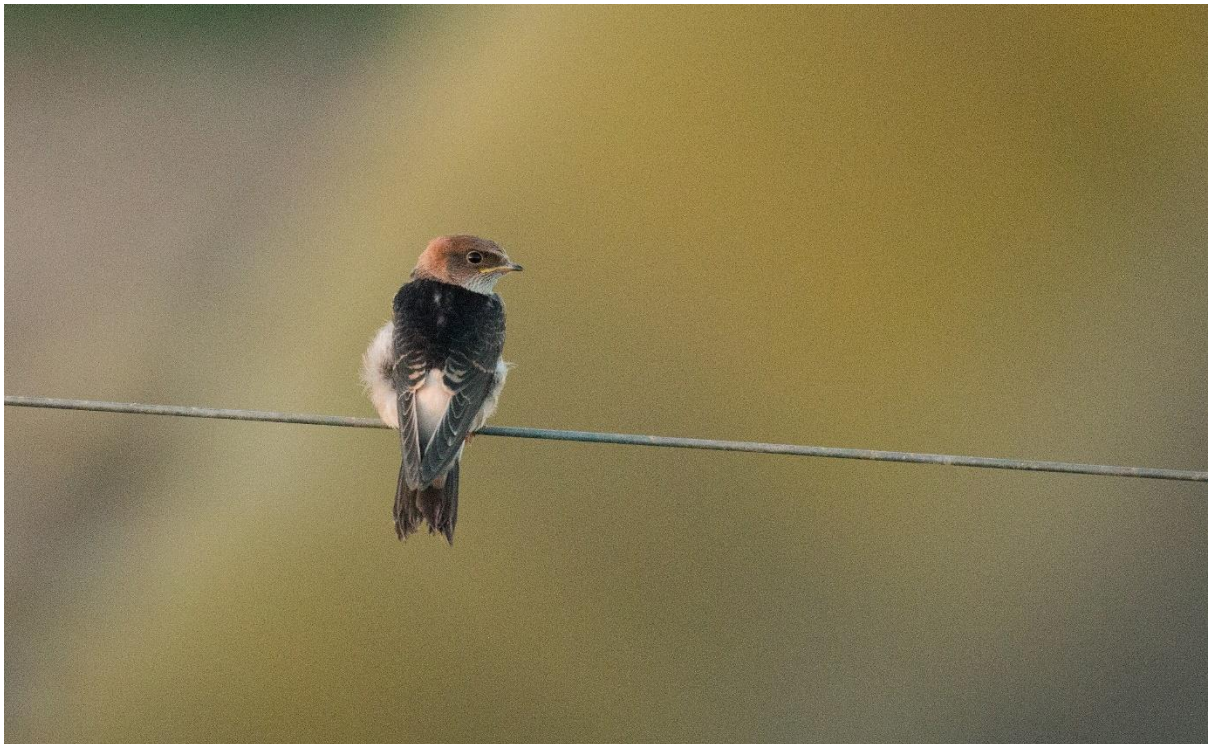


Brown Falcon – one of many seen





Black Kite at Werribee



Fairy Martin – a large nesting colony exists here





Black shouldered Kite – several birds offered good photographic opportunities



**18<sup>th</sup> January**

A drive to Serendip Sanctuary on a hot day was disappointing. The reserve has several captive species but also has areas of natural environment for viewing.



Magpie Geese – there were several on the reserve



Purple crowned Lorikeet – there is a large breeding colony at Serendip



**19<sup>th</sup> January**

Grants Picnic Site in the Dandynong Ranges is a wonderful place even on a very hot day. We heard Lyrebirds but didn't see them. Wallaby made an appearance and the feeding area for the parrots was worth visiting.



Eastern Spinetail on the walks under the trees

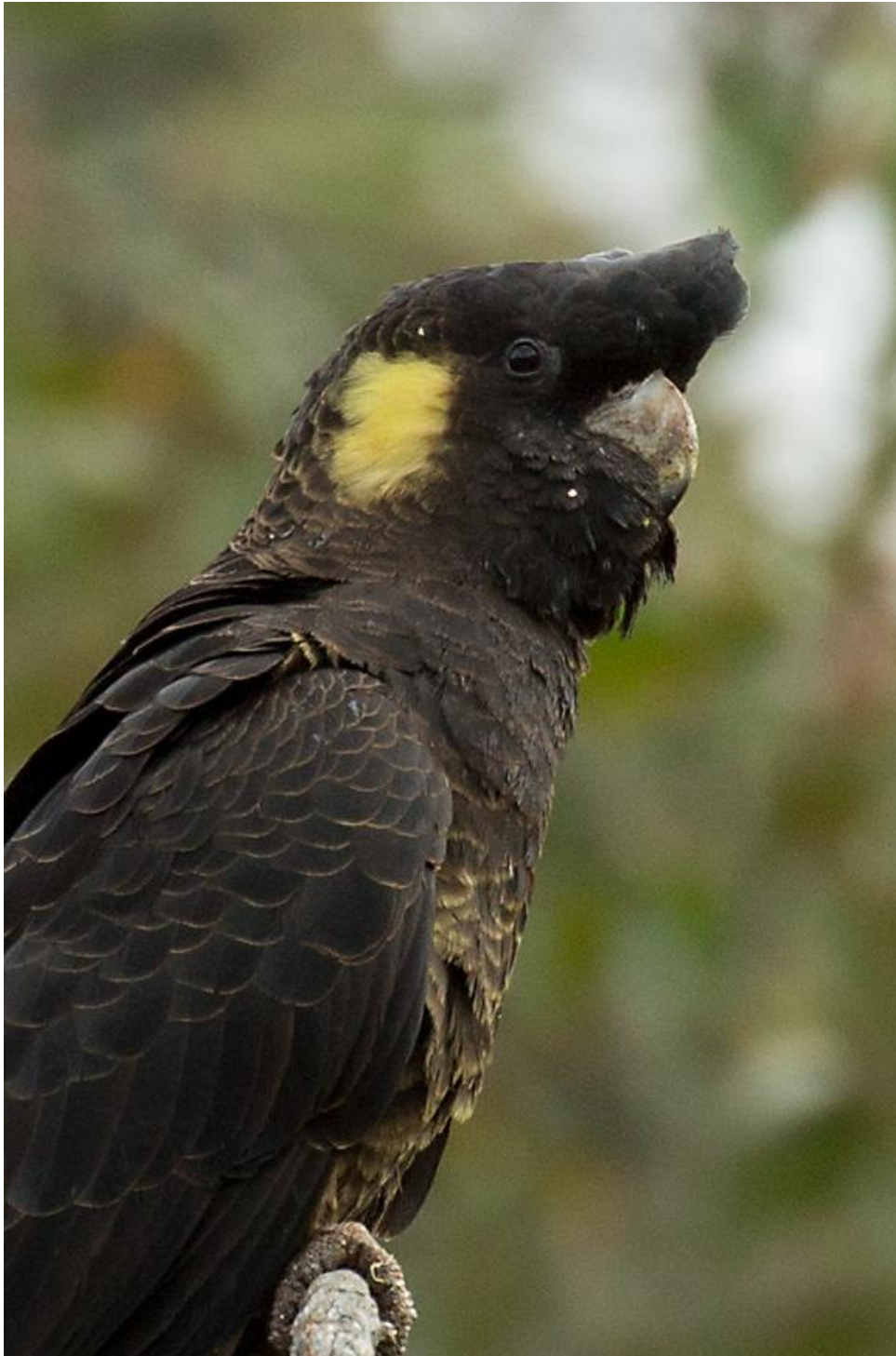


Crimson Rosellas were common in the area



**20<sup>th</sup> January**

A drive along the Great Ocean Road. This could have been better with an overnight stop. A forest walk inland of Aireys was excellent and although again no Koala there was our only Sacred Kingfisher, Cuckoo and Wedge tailed Eagle. Moving on to the Otway National Park we had little time in deteriorating conditions but managed to find a posing Kookaburra and a Swamp Wallaby with Joey.



Yellow tailed Black Cuckoo. A flock of several were very obliging





The only Cuckoo we saw – A fan tailed!



A Sacred Kingfisher sat on the wires along the forest track





Wedge tailed Eagle – the only one we saw, floated over us several times as we walked through the forest.



Laughing Kookaburra complete with dew drop on the bill!





Swamp Wallaby with Joey. Grazing at the field edge with Eastern Grey Kangaroos.



**21<sup>st</sup> January**

A local visit to Point Cook Reserve after the long journey the day before was warranted. A similar short drive in with a very short walk. Australian Hobbies were the best birds seen.



A pair of Australian Hobbies were flying around but both eventually perched and were quite approachable.



**22<sup>nd</sup> January**

A return visit to Melbourne Botanical Gardens gave us extensive views of Bellbirds, A journey across town to Westerfolds Park was well worthwhile. A herd of Easter Grey's are apparently always around in the daytime. Plus Tawny Frogmouths, a Lowland Copperhead Snake, Blue-tongued Lizard and a whole flock of Rainbow Parakeets plus our only Grey Butcherbird.



Eastern Grey Kangaroos at Westerfolds Park





One of three Tawny Frogmouths Tania found





Lowland Copperhead Snake – it's always a little disconcerting when a snake disappears to nowhere –  
All Victoria's snakes are poisonous, bar one.



This Blue Tongued Lizard disappeared into a small culvert under the path; an ideal hiding place for reptiles





Rainbow Lorikeet – a large flock were feeding on seed-heads in the park

**23<sup>rd</sup> January**

A (very sad) journey to the airport for a long journey back to the UK

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