

Brian Everingham

Trip Report

August 2024
Volume 3

Carnarvon



Sunday 11th August 2024

We left Kalbarri right on 8.00am. The entire team was most efficient but the first 90 minutes was in rain. The entire stretch through Kalbarri National Park was a deep, cloudy wet, almost Scottish drive.

The rain eased off once we turned left onto the main highway north but it was still too wet to explore the Galena Nature Reserve or the Eurady Nature Reserve.

But as we drove on, as the rain eased, the vegetation also changed and kept changing, going through mallee, then carpets of ephemeral flowers of yellow, white, pink and purple. Of course we stopped. And took photos.







We also stopped for a morning coffee break at Billabong. There were two potential places. We went to the quiet one. No-one came to serve. But when I emerged from the toilet someone came to tell me off for using it without buying. We went to the other one!





Apart from the flower stops we drive through to Carnarvon without a stop and arrived at our accommodation at Pelican Point at 2.15pm. Suk Kwan has her own apartment. Faye

and I have our own (two bedroom) and the other three are sharing. It looks like a complex you'd expect in a village in Andra Pradesh.

We then all drove the 7km back into Carnarvon, walked the Main Street and the walkway along the waterfront and ended up at Woolworths.





While the women went shopping, I sat down next to a young man who happened to be a male presence to guide young people if antisocial behaviour develops. He had a second person too. It's the community's way of self-regulation and much better than heavy policing. His name is Cory and he and his fiancée have three boys. Cory also coaches kids in Aussie Rules football.

As the women staggered out under loads of shopping it was time for me to kill that chat, though I had also learned about the local burrowing bee in the process, and we all headed back to our respective buildings for our own private dinner.

We have no internet here but somehow, I have managed to tether my phone as a hotspot. I amaze myself.

Monday 12th August 2024

After breakfast and before we even got into the car, Faye and I spotted a Striated Heron right along the rocky foreshore beside the cottages. We showed it to Joanne and we were all pleased by one additional bird on the trip list.



Joanne and I then started our birding adventure at the Carnarvon Sewage Treatment Works. Well, where else? Lots of Great Cormorants, several Pacific Black Ducks, some Black-winged Stilts, several Great Egrets and Eurasian Coot.



I loved seeing the Lesser Wanderer. Unfortunately, it is resting on Buffel Grass, a major weed!



And some of the plants along the route we then followed beside the Gascoyne River.



Ruby Saltbush





A fanflower (probably a Scaevola)



White-plumed Honeyeater keeping an eye on the Australian Ringneck

The river was itself a series of pools amidst large swathes of sandbanks.



By then we had been notified by the others that they had found Dawsons Burrowing Bee (*Amegilla dawsoni*) so we tracked across to the remains of the old tramline and followed the track and, hey presto, there were heaps present. I saw both the dominant male and the lesser one and had two views of females in flight. There was no chance of getting a good image of the female with her white patch.



It's the female that builds the burrows and she stays in them at night. The males grip onto stalks to rest, which's what I have observed with Blue-banded Bees.



So, we were witnessing males sniffing out holes to find virginal females and sometimes several males descended onto the one hole. No doubt that explains the occasional dead male.

We alerted Faye and as she walked towards us, we found another cluster of holes and more keen male bees so her walk was considerably less. And so was mine to return to the cabin. I was exhausted.

After an afternoon nap, Faye and I then headed back onto the sand bars and I finally got good views of quite a flock of Common Sandpipers. Apparently, they have only been returning a few days ago. There was also a reasonable flock of Red-necked Stint and four Bar-tailed Godwits along with several Caspian Tern.



Caspian Tern



Common Sandpipers



As we were having our afternoon tea, we were able to enjoy watching tentative kayakers in operation; Lydia, Suk Kwan and Winnie!



Tuesday 13th August 2024

Before we left Carnarvon I had to do a little more bird photography. These are for Joanne:



And we collectively stopped at the end of the now-closed Carnarvon finger wharf to check it and some of the external exhibits at the museum.



After that it was a slow exit from town. At first the supermarket and then several of the local fruit and vegetable producers. There is quite an agricultural sector north of town, dependent on irrigation from the Gascoyne. Thankfully that river runs mostly underground but I still worry about irrigation quotas.



Certainly, it did not take long to escape irrigated pastures and return to scrubby desert.

After a brief stop at the Tropic of Capricorn we then drove in to Coral Bay. It sits at the southern end of the Ningaloo Reef, has a huge lagoon behind the reef and is a crowded caravan parking lot with a few backpacking hostels. It would be a great place for families to have a seaside holiday. For us it was a lunch stop.

As we entered the peninsula on which Exmouth sits, the scrub got lower and the number of termite mounds increased.

We also stopped near RAAF Learmonth where nearby there is a memorial to a variety of military engagements that emanated from Exmouth. One was when the Krait made its amazing saboteur attack on the Japanese fleet in Singapore. That story I knew. The other engagements were new to me.



And that site also had some fascinating plants too!



Green Birdflower: *Crotalaria cunninghamii* (or Mulham in Baiyungu language)

We have now arrived in our house, have found space for all bodies to sleep (three bedrooms) and have unpacked, partially! There is enough food in that car to supply us in Denham too.

