



# Australia Raptor Tour



Australia is the sixth largest country on Earth. It is 11 times the size of Texas, and 31 times the UK, but it is sparsely populated by only 23 million people. Australia has been geographically isolated for so long (c. 80 million years) from other land masses that it has evolved a highly specialized, unique endemic fauna. This is also reflected in its bird life, and raptors are no exception.

## Many Endemic Raptors

Nineteen of the 24 diurnal raptor species that occur there are endemic or nearly so. Many of them are widespread and fairly common, so finding raptors in Australia is fairly easy, especially if one goes to the right

locations. We will try to see every one of the endemic raptors and will see most of the others as well. We will have several local expert co-leaders for a few days each and will see many other birds and members of the charismatic native fauna as well.

## A Relaxing Birding Vacation

This trip will not involve long walks or any other strenuous activities; we do have a few long-drive days, but always stopping to see most raptors. Most raptor and bird watching will be done from the vehicle or on short walks. The tour will be conducted at a leisurely pace, with lots of time to observe each raptor, and other birds and animals, too.



*Pacific Baza*  
© B. Clark

## *Make a difference!*

RAPTOURS®, L.L.C. will make a financial contribution to **Hawk Mountain Sanctuary** for every member that signs up for this tour. Join us on this tour and make a lasting contribution to raptor conservation.





## Day-by-Day Itinerary | Main Tour

*Dates apply to the 2016 edition*

### Day 1 | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2

Arrive in Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (IATA code: SYD). Meet with Raptours' staff and transfer to hotel near the airport. Personal introductions in the evening at dinner. Overnight in Sydney.

### Day 2 | MONDAY, OCTOBER 3

All-day excursion with stops and short walks in the Upper Hawkesbury River to target many common raptors, including **Black-shouldered Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Goshawk, Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, White-bellied Sea Eagle, and Brown Falcon**, with a chance for **Grey Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, and Australian Hobby**, and maybe **Square-tailed Kite, Pacific Baza, and Spotted Harrier**, among others. Dinner and overnight in Sydney.

### Day 3 | TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4

Visit different scenic areas west of Sydney to target a similar list as the day before. Dinner and overnight in Sydney.

### Day 4 | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5

Drive to Tamworth for most of the morning. Meet with Stephen Debus for lunch. Visit **Black Falcon** breeding territory in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Armidale.



### Day 5 | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

Visit several raptor breeding areas with Stephen. We will target **Black-shouldered Kite, Little Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Goshawk, Swamp Harrier, Spotted Harrier, Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, and Australian Hobby**. Dinner and overnight in Armidale.

### Day 6 | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

In the morning we will drive slowly toward Grafton stopping to look for duck-billed platypus on the way. Then drive to the coast to target **Osprey, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, and hopefully Pacific Baza**. Dinner and overnight in Grafton.

### Day 7 | SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

Another chance to target less common species such as **Square-tailed Kite, and Pacific Baza**. Dinner and overnight in Grafton.

### Day 8 | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

By now we have probably covered most or all of the raptor species in the wetter east coast. Time for us to head far west inland to target species that belong in drier parts. So today is mostly a driving day (380 mi, 8 h) but we are stopping for raptors we have not seen yet. Dinner and overnight in St. George.



*Wedge-tailed Eagles have bare facial skin — an adaptation to their scavenging habits.*  
© B. Clark

*Little Eagle (left) and Brown Falcon (right)*  
© B. Clark



**Day 9** | MONDAY, OCTOBER 10

Drive to Cunnamulla in the morning stopping to watch raptors on the way. Lunch upon arrival. Explore Bowra Wildlife Refuge in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Cunnamulla.

**Days 10–11** | TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11-12

Lots of raptors to be seen here. Best chance for **Black-breasted Buzzard**, and **Grey Falcon**. Dinner and overnight in Cunnamulla.

**Day 12** | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

Bowra in the morning. Lunch. Drive to Bourke in the afternoon stopping to watch raptors along the way. Dinner and overnight in Bourke.

**Day 13** | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

Drive to Dubbo stopping to watch raptors along the way. Lunch *en route*. Dinner and overnight in Dubbo.

**Day 14** | SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

Drive to Sydney stopping to watch raptors along the way. Dinner and overnight near the airport in Sydney.

**Day 15** | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

Catch flights home or continue on the **Top End Extension**.



Email Raptours, L.L.C. ([raptours@hotmail.com](mailto:raptours@hotmail.com)) to reserve your place in this tour, or book online at [www.raptoursllc.com](http://www.raptoursllc.com).

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## Day-by-Day Itinerary | Top End Extension

*Dates apply to the 2016 edition*

**Day 1** | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

Flight to Darwin in the morning. Local Darwin in the afternoon. **Grey Goshawk** likely in the city. We will check out a local park for roosting owls. Dinner and overnight in Darwin.

**Day 2** | MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

Drive to Kakadu Park. We will be stopping at several areas good for raptors. We should see **Australian Hobby**, **Osprey**, **Black Kite**, and others. Dinner and overnight in Kakadu Park.

**Day 3** | TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

Drive to Pine Creek targeting **Red Goshawk** and other raptors all day. Dinner and overnight in Pine Creek.

**Day 4** | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

Visit a breeding territory of **Red Goshawk**. This is an extremely rare raptor. Dinner and overnight in Pine Creek.

**Day 5** | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

Drive to Darwin in the morning. Fly to Sydney in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Sydney.

**Day 6** | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

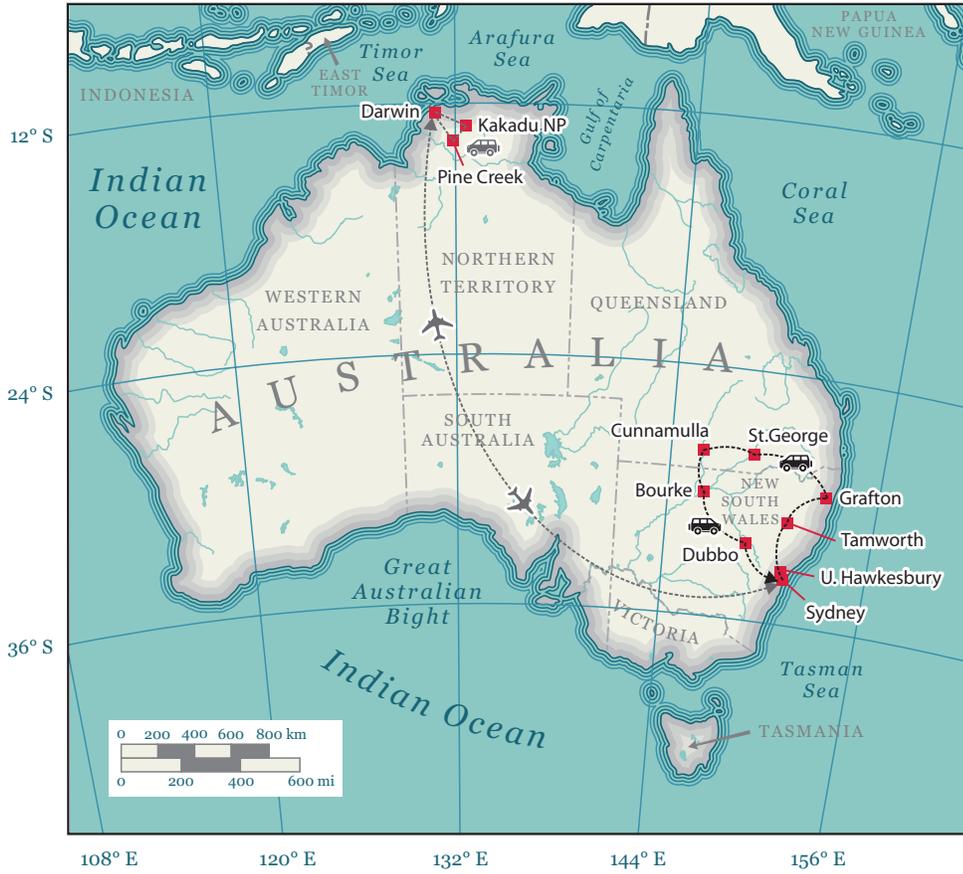
Catch flights back home. Extra nights in Sydney can be arranged upon request.



*Grey Goshawk, juvenile*  
© B. Clark



# Tour Map



## TARGET SPECIES

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. <b>Osprey</b><br><i>Pandion haliaetus</i>                        | 10. <b>Grey Goshawk</b><br><i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>         | 19. <b>Nankeen Kestrel</b><br><i>Falco cenchroides</i>  |
| 2. <b>Black-shouldered Kite</b><br><i>Elanus axillaris</i>          | 11. <b>Brown Goshawk</b><br><i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>              | 20. <b>Australian Hobby</b><br><i>Falco longipennis</i> |
| 3. <b>Letter-winged Kite</b><br><i>Elanus scriptus</i>              | 12. <b>Collared Sparrowhawk</b><br><i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>   | 21. <b>Brown Falcon</b><br><i>Falco berigora</i>        |
| 4. <b>Square-tailed Kite</b><br><i>Lophoictinia isura</i>           | 13. <b>Swamp Harrier</b><br><i>Circus approximans</i>               | 22. <b>Grey Falcon</b><br><i>Falco hypoleucos</i>       |
| 5. <b>Black-breasted Buzzard</b><br><i>Hamirostra melanosternon</i> | 14. <b>Spotted Harrier</b><br><i>Circus assimilis</i>               | 23. <b>Black Falcon</b><br><i>Falco subniger</i>        |
| 6. <b>Pacific Baza</b><br><i>Aviceda subcristata</i>                | 15. <b>Black Kite</b><br><i>Milvus migrans</i>                      | 24. <b>Peregrine Falcon</b><br><i>Falco peregrinus</i>  |
| 7. <b>Little Eagle</b><br><i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>             | 16. <b>Whistling Kite</b><br><i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>             |   |
| 8. <b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b><br><i>Aquila audax</i>                 | 17. <b>Brahminy Kite</b><br><i>Haliastur indus</i>                  |   |
| 9. <b>Red Goshawk</b><br><i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>           | 18. <b>White-bellied Sea Eagle</b><br><i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> |   |



## Tour Guides



Bill Clark is an experienced tour leader who specializes in birds of prey and has been observing, studying, and photographing raptors for over 50 years.

He coauthored *Hawks*, the raptor field guide in the Peterson series and the companion raptor photographic guide and has published numerous articles on ID, migration, and distribution of birds of prey.

Bill has led a Raptour to Australia in 2010 and is familiar with the raptors and other birds in the country.

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TOUR LEADER

Bill Clark



Sergio has observed and photographed raptors for the past 20 years. He was born in Argentina, and enjoys helping others to search for and identify raptors.

Sergio is currently working on *Raptors of South America*, to be published by Princeton University Press, and the first field guide to the raptors of the region.

Sergio is the owner of Raptours, L.L.C. and carries on Bill Clark's legacy of raptor touring.

Sergio speaks **English, Spanish and Portuguese.**

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TOUR CO-LEADER

Sergio Seipke



Stephen Debus has had a life-long interest in raptors, beginning with an honours thesis on **Little Eagle** and a Masters on owls.

He has authored over 120 papers on raptors and is editor for several bird and raptor journals.

He has been doing studies on Australian raptors for many years and follows the nesting of many species.

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LOCAL RAPTOR EXPERT

Stephen Debus

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### SUGGESTED FIELD GUIDES

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DEBUS, S. 1998. *The Birds of Prey of Australia*. Oxford University Press.

HOLLANDS, D. 1984. *Eagles, Hawks, and Falcons of Australia*. Thomas Nelson, Melbourne.

CUPPER, J., and L. CUPPER. 1981. *Hawks in Focus*. Jaclin Enterprises, Mildura, Australia.



# Tour Details

## TOUR PRICE

Tour price will **include** hotels (double occupancy), soft drinks, entry fees, ground transportation, and guide fees.

Extra nights in Sydney, meals other than breakfast, drinks, items of personal nature, tips, and insurance of any kind are **not included**.

## SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Single supplement will be announced soon.

Single rooms will be subject to availability.

Roommates will be assigned to those participants willing to share a room. If a roommate is not available, you will be required to **pay the single supplement**.

## COUNTRY ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A valid passport is required for all non-Australian nationals visiting Australia. Learn more about how to apply for your Australian visa [here](#).

## DIFFICULTY

No strenuous walks or hikes are involved. Some long drives.

## WEATHER & CLOTHING

Nice weather overall. September average lows in Sydney are around 55 °F (12 °C). Average highs reach the upper 60s (20 °C).

Average lows and highs around Cunnamulla are 50 °F (10 °C) and 75 °F (25 °C) respectively. Weather is wetter near the coast and drier in interior New South Wales. Light spring showers are to be expected, especially in the east.

Bring sunglasses, a hat, sunscreen, and a light rain jacket or folding umbrella, and of course don't forget your binoculars and camera.

## HEALTH

There is no risk of yellow fever in Australia. The government of Australia requires proof of yellow fever vaccination **only** if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever. This does not include the U.S.

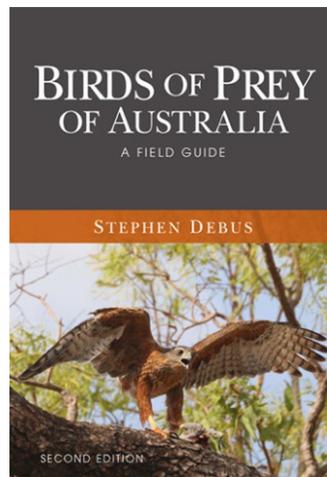
Travel medical insurance is **strongly recommended**.

For more information visit [CDC's website](#).

## LOCAL CURRENCY

Local currency is the **Australian dollar**, and exchange rate is **roughly 1.35 Australian dollar for U.S. dollar**. ATMs are readily available throughout the tour.

It is recommended to **start the trip with local currency cash** for expenses such as souvenirs, drinks, or phone calls.



*In 2012, the second edition of Stephen Debus' thoroughly revised, and radically re-organized **Birds of Prey of Australia** was published.*

*Stephen will have copies for sale (and sign!) for those participants interested.*

## NEED TO KNOW

### TOUR DATES & AVAILABILITY

**2016 Main Tour, 2–16 Oct.**  
**2016 Extension, 16–21 Oct.**

**2017 Main Tour, 6–19 Sept.**  
**2017 Extension, 19–26 Sept.**

### BOOKING CLOSES ON

**1 July**

### GROUP SIZE LIMIT

**2016: 18 participants**  
**2017: 12 participants**

### TOUR PRICE

**To be announced**

### SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

**To be announced**

### RAPTOR SPECIES EXPECTED

**22**

### COUNTRY ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Visa required unless you hold an Australian or New Zealand passport**

### DIFFICULTY

**Easy**

### COMFORT

**Good to Excellent**

### WEATHER & CLOTHING

**Nice | Bring sunglasses, a hat, and sunscreen**

### HEALTH

**Travel medical insurance is recommended**

### LOCAL CURRENCY

**Australian dollar**



# Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk

I understand that the tour to which I am a party demands that I be in good health and physical condition. I acknowledge the risk and hazards of travel in remote areas where injury, delay or unanticipated events may occur. I understand that such risks simply cannot be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity. I may be subjecting myself to dangers and hazards which could result in illness, injury, or death. I recognize that such risks, dangers, and hazards may be present at any time during the trip. I also realize that medical services or facilities may not be readily available or accessible during some or all of the time in which I am participating in the tour. I realize that I will be traveling in remote areas with poor or no access to emergency and/or medical services. I understand that there is a risk that accidents or illness can occur in remote places where medical facilities, emergency treatment or other services cannot be rendered. I understand that there is a risk involved in the consumption of food or drink.

The undersigned, being of lawful age, in consideration, and as part payment for the right to participate in the trip/tour, and associated activities, services, and food arranged for me by Raptours, L.L.C., and its agents, employees, affiliates or associates, I have and do hereby fully assume all risk of illness, injury or death, and hereby release, hold harmless, and discharge Raptours, L.L.C. and its agents, employees, affiliates or associates from all actions, claims, demands, or lawsuits for any accident, injury, property damage or personal loss to me or to those traveling with me in connection with any accommodation, transportation or other travel service, resulting from, related to, or arising in any manner out of my participation in the tour, as well as from any act of terrorism, defect in vehicle, break down in equipment, strike, theft, delay, or cancellation of or changes in itinerary or schedule, whether foreseen or unforeseen.

The undersigned understands that Raptours, L.L.C., its owners, operators, or agents have booked transportation, made reservations for lodging, made land arrangements for local transportation and is conducting the above prearranged tour; that the undersigned assumes the risk that the owners, operators and agents of the transport companies, hotels, and resorts may cancel or change the times, types or method of transportation or accommodations; that the undersigned understands that Raptours, L.L.C., its owners, operators or agents does not have control or responsibility for any such cancellations or changes in times, types, or methods of transportation or accommodations; that the undersigned may incur additional charges and expenses because of the cancellations and changes to the times, type or method of transportation or accommodations; and the undersigned hereby releases and discharges Raptours, L.L.C., its owners, operators or agents from any additional charges or expenses incurred by the undersigned. The undersigned agrees to promptly pay the additional charges and expenses because the owners, operators and agents of the transport companies, hotels, and resorts have cancelled or changed the times, type or method of transportation or accommodations.

I agree that I will not sue Raptours, L.L.C. and its agents, employees, affiliates or associates for damages incurred as a consequence of my participation in tour caused by the negligence or other acts of Raptours, L.L.C. and its agents, employees, affiliates or associates or any employee, agent or contractor thereof. Should Raptours, L.L.C. or anyone acting on their behalf, be required to incur attorney's fees and costs to enforce this Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk, I agree to indemnify and hold them harmless for all such fees and costs.

I agree that if I suffer injury or illness, Raptours, L.L.C. and its agents, employees, affiliates, or associates can, at my cost, arrange medical treatment and emergency evacuation service, as Raptours, L.L.C. and its agents, employees, affiliates or associates deem necessary for my safety.

I agree that the foregoing obligation, release and assumption of risk shall be binding upon me personally, as well as upon my spouse, heirs, executors, assigns, and administrators, and for all members of my family, including any minor accompanying me. I have carefully read this Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk and fully understand its contents, terms, and conditions. I am aware that this is a release of liability and contract between me and Raptours, L.L.C. and/or its affiliated organizations or representatives, and I sign it of my own free will.

I state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this affirmation and Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk; that I understand the terms herein are contractual and not a mere recital; and that I have signed this Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk as my own free act.



*You will be required to sign this form upon meeting with your tour leader at the tour starting point. **Please read carefully before booking.***

## TOUR TERMS

*Raptours, L.L.C. reserves the right to alter this itinerary as necessary, or to cancel the tour prior to departure, with full refund to participants.*

*Raptours, L.L.C. or its agents may decline to accept or retain any person as a member of this tour at any time.*

*No smoking will be permitted while with the group, either when indoors or in the field.*

*Travel medical insurance is strongly recommended.*

*All passengers will be required to sign a hard copy of the **Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk** form (at left) upon meeting with the tour leader in Sydney.*

*No participants will be allowed in the group without a signed copy of the **Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk** form.*

