This new Audubon Naturalist Society trip takes our travelers on a loop through diverse habitats in southern Australia, with a contrasting optional extension to Queensland to explore tropical rainforests and a day on the Great Barrier Reef. We start in Melbourne and travel along a loop that takes us through parts of the states of Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. Habitats we’ll explore include tall Eucalyptus forest, scrubby mallee, rivers, open plains, mountains of the Flinders Range, heathlands, and wetlands. While birds will be a major focus of the trip, we will also observe and identify many of the unique mammals, reptiles, and plants of Australia.

The following day-to-day itinerary represents an outline of our plans. While changes are not anticipated, please note that any part of the itinerary may be changed by the leaders for any reason that they deem to be in the best interest of the group.

The letters B, L, and D refer to included meals.

**Sunday, November 4: Arrival into Melbourne (D)**
Our trip begins with arrivals into Melbourne, capital of the state of Victoria and Australia’s second largest city. We will gather for dinner and an orientation to the trip. There are direct flights from several cities in the US to Melbourne. Because of travel time and the crossing of the international date line you’ll need to leave the US on a flight on Nov. 2 in order to arrive on Nov. 4. Melbourne is an interesting city, but we haven’t built urban explorations into our itinerary, so you might want to come a day or two early to enjoy the city and to acclimate to the dramatic change of time zones. Overnight: Melbourne Tullamarine Best Western.
Monday, Nov. 5: Melbourne to Healesville (B, L, D)
A walk around the local park will familiarize us with the sights and sounds of Australian birds, as well as the fresh scent of Eucalypt trees. We’ll get used to seeing Laughing Kookaburras, Rainbow Lorikeets, New-holland Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds, Magpie-larks and Willy Wagtails. We’ll check a roost for the impressive Powerful Owl and may be lucky enough to pick up a roosting Tawny Frogmouth in the same park. We’ll then take a scenic drive out of the city to the hill forests around Healesville. Here, some of Australia’s tallest trees – one of many species of Eucalypts – has formed dense forests which are home to Superb Lyrebird, Pilotbird, Red-browed Treecreeper, Rufous Fantail, Satin Flycatcher, Golden Whistler, Satin Bowerbird, and many more. Overnight: Healesville Sanctuary House.

Tuesday, Nov. 6: Healesville forests (B, L, D)
An early start from Healesville to be in the forest for the dawn chorus, which is the optimal time for hearing – and hopefully seeing! – the Superb Lyrebird’s incredible mimicry. We’ll marvel at the remote serenity of the forest here and watch for birds and other wildlife. Possibilities include Lewin’s Honeyeater, Pied & Grey Currawongs, Brush Cuckoo, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, White-browed Scrub-wren, and many others. It’s a really beautiful and birdy area. Overnight: Healesville Sanctuary House.

Wednesday, Nov. 7: Healesville to Chiltern (B, L, D)
We have time for another visit to the forest habitat at Healesville, and then we head northeast to the town of Chiltern. We plan to visit various woodland sites along the way, with further chances of birds like Eastern Spinebill, Diamond Firetail, Speckled Warbler, Black-chinned, Fuscous & Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Flame, Scarlet & Eastern Yellow Robins, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Pallid Cuckoo, Little & Musk Lorikeets, Dollarbird, Leaden Flycatcher, and many more. We’ll arrive late in the day at the woodlands of Chiltern, home to the endangered Regent Honeyeater. In the evening we’ll check a site for White-throated Nightjar. Overnight Chiltern Colonial Motor Inn.

Thursday, Nov. 8: Chiltern to Deniliquin (B, L, D)
We’ll spend most of the day exploring the woodlands around Chiltern, which not only contain the endangered Regent Honeyeater but also many other uncommon species such as Turquoise Parrot, Speckled Warbler, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin and many more. We’ll then cross into the state of New South Wales and head to the town of Deniliquin on the Murrumbidgee River where we’ll check into our accommodation, have a quick meal and then we’ll set off again for further birding after dark, spotlighting for the elusive, nocturnal Plains-Wanderer. The species is in a family of its own and is almost extinct. The birds are rarely seen during the day and therefore the evening will be spent searching for them using spotlights. During this evening session we may also see Inland Dotterel, Australian Bushlark, Little Buttonquail and Stubble Quail, along with nocturnal marsupials. Overnight Deniliquin Motel.
Friday, Nov. 9: Deniliquin area (B, L, D)
After our late-night adventures, we’ll start not too early in the morning, birding the riverine woodlands and waterways around Deniliquin. Species targeted during the day include Superb Parrot and Black Falcon; a raft of woodland species including chance of Western Gerygone, Crested Shrike-tit, Diamond Firetail and Dollarbird; waterbirds, which are subject to seasonal fluctuations, but which may include Painted Snipe, Australian Bittern and Australian Little Bittern, as well as Spotless Crake, Painted Buttonquail, and possibly one or more species of Honeyeater. Overnight Deniliquin Motel.

Saturday, Nov. 10: Deniliquin to Ouyen (B, L, D)
In the morning we have a chance spend a bit more time at Deniliquin before we head off on a few hours’ drive. Our destination is the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, known for its vast expanses of ‘mallee’ Eucalypt scrubland with Spinifex (porcupine) grass. This is a totally different type of habitat with some very interesting birds, in particular the endangered Mallee Emuwren. These elusive yet beautiful birds will take some time to track down, but in the process we stand a good chance of coming across the stately Major Mitchell’s Cockatoo, the ground-dwelling Striated Grasswren, and other wildlife. We may also be lucky enough to come across the mound-building Malleefowl. Overnight Ouyen Hilltop Motel, back in the state of Victoria.

Sunday, Nov. 11: Ouyen to Berri (B, L, D)
The morning is spent in the Hatta-Kulkyne National Park, after which we follow Australia’s largest river, the Murray, westwards into the state of South Australia. A major goal will be to see the endangered Regent Parrot: we’ll visit a colony of these beautiful birds. There are plenty of other species we’ll try to find, including Yellow Rosella, woodswallows, Restless Flycatcher, and raptors such as Whistling Kite, Little Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Swamp Harrier, and Spotted Harrier. There are also many water birds to see, including 3 species of cormorant, Australian Darter, White-necked Heron, Nankeen Night-heron, and chances to spot secretive crakes and rails. Overnight Berri Hotel.

Monday, Nov. 12: Berri area (B, L, D)
We depart early in the morning for the drive of less than an hour to Birdlife Australia’s Gluepot reserve, home of the endangered Black-eared Miner. We arrive at Gluepot around sunrise. While the sun rises over centuries-old mallee eucalypts and sand dunes covered in spinifex grass, we look for Malleefowl, Red-lored Whistler, Gilbert’s Whistler, Hooded Robin, Southern Scrubrobin, Black-eared Miner, Striated Grasswren, Shy Heathwren, White-browed Treecreeper and Major Mitchell Cockatoo. As the bird activity slows down, so do we, though we’ll still hope to find Chestnut Quail-thrush, Crested Bellbird, Splendid Fairy-wren, Striped Honeyeater, and others. From one of the bird hides that overlook a watering trough, we have a chance of seeing Mulga Parrot and many of Gluepot’s 10 species of Honeyeater. Overnight Berri Hotel.
Tuesday, Nov. 13: Berri to Flinders Ranges (B, L, D)
After a few hours exploring the banks of the scenic Murray river around Berri, with its centuries-old gnarly Red Gum trees and ochre-colored cliffs, we drive up to the picturesque Flinders Ranges. Along the way we cross prairie-like Bluebush plains with birds such as Redthroat, Black-eared Cuckoo, Brown and Rufous Songlark. Rocky outcrops hold Southern Scrubrobin, White-eared Honeyeater, Ringneck Parrot and Inland Thornbill. We also stand a good chance of Orange and/or Crimson Chat (depending on preceding seasonal conditions) and White-winged Fairy-wren. Our base for the night is a comfortable lodge in the middle of the Flinders Ranges National Park. Overnight Wilpena Pound Resort.

Wednesday, Nov. 14: Flinders Ranges (B, L, D)
A full day in the Flinders Ranges: it’s a beautifully scenic area with great birding and wildlife. The Flinders Ranges are an impressive range of steep hills and soaring rock formations on the edge of Australia’s outback. Here we travel across stream beds and through narrow gorges cut deeply into geological layers that date back 800 million years, while searching for Elegant Parrot and Grey-fronted Honeyeater. We visit the fossil site of the Ediacaran fauna, which lived a little before the great explosion of multicellular life at the beginning of the Cambrian Period. We’re also likely to encounter the endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby. Later we search the spinifex-grass covered slopes for the elusive Short-tailed Grasswren. We will certainly see plenty of Red, Western Grey and Euro Kangaroos. We’ll retire to our luxurious base at the Wilpena Pound resort for dinner and an optional night spotlighting walk. Overnight Wilpena Pound Resort.

Thursday, Nov. 15: Flinders Ranges to Port Augusta (B, L, D)
From our rooms we’ll offer an optional, short pre-breakfast stroll, watching the sun rising over the orange, ochre and red rocks. Then it’s time to pack up and head south again. We’ll stop at a lookout point along the flanks of the Flinders Ranges with an optional hour-long walk to an Aboriginal sacred site with rock paintings. Birds we might find along this walk include Redthroat, Inland Thornbill and Rufous Fieldwren. At the bustling coastal town of Port Augusta we will visit the beautiful Arid Lands Botanical Gardens. Here, an array of native flowers and shrubs attract such species as Chirruping Wedgebill, Redthroat, White-winged Fairy-wren and many species of Honeyeater. The trees around the golf course usually have Purple-crowned Lorikeets. We will check the prairie-like Bluebush plains near Port Augusta for the elusive Western Grasswren. Other birds we are likely to come across here are the turquoise race of Splendid Fairy-wren, Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird, and Blue Bonnet. In the afternoon we’ll follow the coast south, where we look for Banded Stilt, Elegant Parrot, the diminutive Slender-billed Thornbill and the cheeky White-browed Scrubwren, arriving in Adelaide early in the evening. Overnight Mercure Grosvenor Hotel, Adelaide.

Friday, Nov. 16: Adelaide area (B, L, D)
We’ll spend the last day birding the variety of habitats around Adelaide. Hill forests, lowland heath, wetlands, the river Murray’s estuary, and agricultural areas contain a number of good birding sites with birds such as Shy Heathwren, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Adelaide Rosella, Cape Barren Goose, a wide variety of Honeyeater species,
White-throated Treecreeper, Scarlet Robin, crakes and rails, raptors and more. We’ll even have a look for a Koala for you here! Over our last meal together we’ll prepare the final bird list and reminisce about the many great birds we’ve seen and experiences we’ve had! Overnight Mercure Grosvenor Hotel, Adelaide.

**Saturday, Nov. 17: End of tour (B)**
Departures from Adelaide, or continue on extension to Queensland

**QUEENSLAND EXTENSION**

**Saturday, Nov. 17: Adelaide to Cairns (B, L, D)**
We fly from Adelaide to Cairns, and visit mangrove habitat along the Jack Barnes Mangrove Boardwalk on the way to the hotel. After we check in we will walk the Cairns Esplanade searching for shorebirds and other coastal birds. Large numbers of waders include Beach Thick-knee, Gray-tailed Tattler, Greater Sand-plovers and others. At the mangroves at the north end of the walk we look for Shining Flycatcher, Mangrove Robin, Collared Kingfisher, Striated Heron, Varied Honeyeater and Olive-backed Sunbird. We should also see Rainbow Lorikeet, Pied Imperial-pigeon, White-breasted Woodswallow and Australasian Figbird. We’ll visit Centenary Lakes and Cairns Botanical Gardens for Black Butcherbird, Hornbill Friarbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, Green Oriole, waterbirds, a wide range of honeyeaters and Papuan Frogmouth. Freshwater Lake supports a range of interesting species, including Little Kingfisher (check low hanging twigs and branches in more shaded area of the lake), Nankeen Night-Heron, Radjah Shelduck, Comb-crested Jacana and Australasian Darter. Other birds in the gardens include Blue-winged Kookaburra, Bush Stone-curlew, Metallic Starling, Cicadabird and Varied Triller. Overnight Cairns Plaza Foreshore Hotel, Cairns.

**Sunday, Nov. 18: Great Barrier Reef (B, L, D)**
We head to sea on a large catamaran visit to the seabird colony on Michaelmas Cay on the world renowned Great Barrier Reef. Michaelmas Cay is one of the most important seabird nesting islands in the northern Great Barrier Reef. Located 43 km north-east of Cairns on the western tip of Michaelmas Reef, 38 species of bird have been recorded, with nine of those using the island for nesting purposes. More than 20,000 birds use the island at the peak of the breeding season. We look for Common and Black Noddy, Sooty Tern, Bridled Tern, Lesser Crested Tern, Black-naped Tern, Roseate Tern, Lesser Frigatebird, Great Frigatebird, White-tailed Tropicbird, Red-footed Booby, and Wandering Tattler. Magnificent coral reefs also surround Michaelmas Cay, and we will devote some time to snorkeling. Full Day Cruise (approx. 8.30am -5pm) includes snorkeling gear, morning and afternoon tea, lunch. Overnight Cairns Plaza Foreshore Hotel, Cairns.

**Monday, Nov. 19: North of Cairns to Yungaburra (B, L, D)**
This morning we have time to revisit natural areas in Cairns, if we wish, before heading to Newell Beach, one of the best sites in Australia to see swallows and swifts. On the beach near the mouth of the Mossman River, we will look for shorebirds; possibilities include Greater and Lesser Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Sandpiper, Great
Knot, Eastern Curlew, and Australian Pied Oystercatcher, plus a variety of terns. Beach Stone-curlew are occasionally seen here. We’ll visit one of Tropical North Queensland’s best sites for Cassowary: Etty Bay. Southern Cassowaries are often seen emerging from the forest onto the beach here. We’ll then head to the Nerada Teahouse, a tea plantation surrounded by lush trees in which lives the unique Lumholtz Tree Kangaroo. Having spotted these amazing creatures we’ll head to nearby Yungaburra where further interesting mammals await us in the form of Striped Possum and the Duck-billed Platypus. In the evening, we will visit the Mt Hypipamee Crater National Park, an ancient volcano crater filled with water and surrounded by rainforest. There are chances of seeing Golden Bowerbird, Australian Brush-turkey, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Spotted Catbird, Victoria’s Riflebird, Lewin’s Honeyeater and others. We finish the day standing on the ridge of the crater to watch the Brolga and Sarus Cranes come in to roost – one spectacular sight! Overnight Chambers Wildlife Lodge, Yungaburra.

Tuesday, Nov. 20: Atherton Tablelands (B, L, D)
Today we’ll explore the Atherton Tablelands, starting with a visit to the spectacular Curtain Fig Tree. Walking slowly around this famous tree, or simply sit on one of the seats surrounding the tree, and look up. Around the tree there are regular sightings of Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Spotted Catbird, Metallic Starling, and many other birds. We visit the Lake Mitchell causeway and the Mareeba Wetlands, good places to find a wide variety of waterbirds. Possibilities include Sarus Crane, Brogla, Green Pygmy-Goose, Wandering Whistling-Duck, Black-necked Stork, Comb-crested Jacana Marsh Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, and Latham’s Snipe. Around Atherton Township we visit Wongabel State Forest for Painted Button-quail, Superb Fruit-dove, Eastern Yellow Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Olive-backed Oriole and raptors. Later we head up the mountain to Julatten and Kingfisher Park. Kingfisher Park caters exclusively for naturalists and birdwatchers. A tremendous birding area, it is also the perfect exploring this region. Overnight Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, Julatten.

Wednesday, Nov. 21: Kingfisher Park (B, L, D)
Today we some free time for enjoying Kingfisher Park. Tour participants can photograph the birds at the park. Rainbow Pitta have territory in the grounds, and the creek attracts a wide selection of birds during the day. Birds include Spectacled and Black-faced Monarchs, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Grey Whistler, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Topknot Pigeon, Emerald Dove, and many others. We can also choose visit to other natural areas around Kingfisher Park, such as Mt. Lewis, where abundant birdlife includes Red-necked Crane, Noisy Pitta, Victoria’s Riflebird, Pacific Emerald Dove, Wompoo Fruit-dove, and Pied Monarch. After dark we will try some spotlighting for Lesser Sooty Owl, Barking Owl, and nightjars. An early evening vigil at the lodge’s water features may reveal Red-necked Crane. Overnight Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, Julatten.

Thursday, Nov. 22: Daintree River Cruise and Back to Cairns (B, L, D)
Early morning departure for the drive to the Daintree River, where we’ll board a small boat for a cruise to see Estuarine Crocodile and birds, with likely finds including Little Kingfisher, Great-billed Heron, Radjah Shelduck and Double-eyed Fig-parrot.
We will stop along Stewart Creek Rd where there is a chance for Blue-winged Kookaburra, Macleay’s Honeyeater, Black Butcherbird, Victoria’s Riflebird, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, and many more. Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher nest in termite mounds near the Daintree Water Tower, and Lovely Fairy-wren occur along the track that leads up the hill behind the tower. Other birds found around the Daintree Village include cuckoos such as Channel-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Koel, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Brush Cuckoo, and Pheasant Coucal. In the afternoon we drive back to Cairns. Overnight Cairns Plaza Foreshore Hotel, Cairns.

**Friday, Nov. 23: End of tour (B)**
Our journey comes to a close with departures from Cairns

**Leadership**

**Steve Potter** was born and raised in South Australia, and always had a passion for the outdoors with a keen interest in wildlife. His first introduction to birding, however, was during a three-year stint as a teenager, while his parents worked in Malawi, Central Africa. He started guiding with small groups around the Zomba Plateau, and the Liwonde National Park. Here Steve honed his identification skills and understanding of birdlife in general, also travelling to Zimbabwe, Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa and Madagascar. Since his return he has travelled extensively around Australia adding over 620 species from the mainland. Steve is also a keen surfer, photographer and traveller. He also regularly visits some of Australia's neighbors, birding in Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia.

**Mark Garland** is a naturalist based in Cape May, New Jersey, with over 30 years of experience leading birding and nature tours to various parts of the world, mostly for the Audubon Naturalist Society. This will be Mark’s second trip to Australia.