

Darwin and Darwin to Wyndham

Stage 2 of Graham and Chris' tour

Darwin has changed considerably since we left in January 1987 after 15 years.

People have now become actual residence instead of just 2 year transfers either with the government or national companies. Consequently residence are keeping beautiful tropical gardens and the whole city is a lot more attractive than it was 25 years ago.

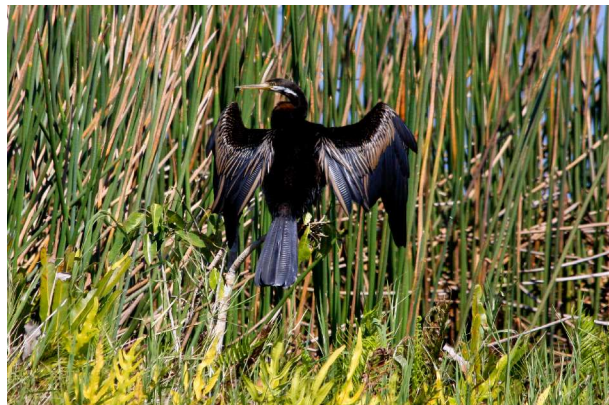
We did some site seeing around Darwin including Botanic Gardens, Litchfield, Fogg Dam, Adelaide River Flood Plains, Marrakai Plains, Dundee Beach and a few others.



Straw Necked Ibis – Darwin Botanic Gdns



Egret – Fogg Dam



Darter – Fogg Dam



Egret – Fogg Dam



Sea Eagle – Marrakai Plains



Fogg Dam Inhabitant



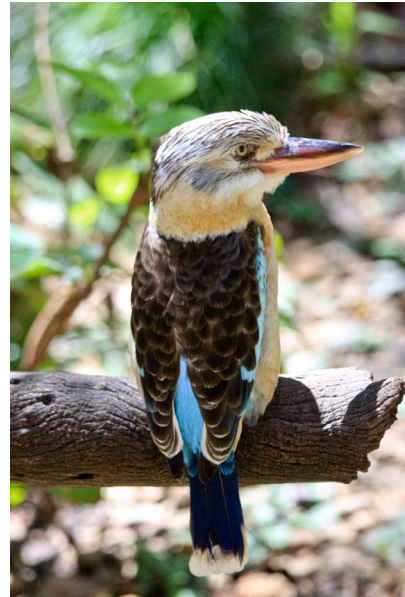
Paper Barks – Marrakai Plains



Water Lillies – Marrakai Plains

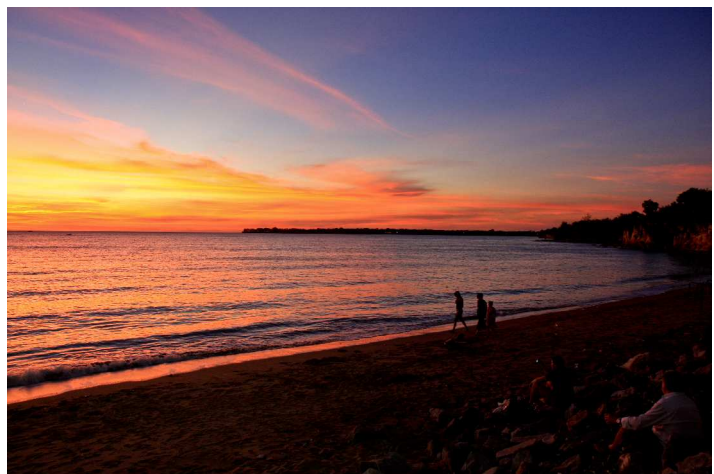


Barking Owl – You would swear that it was a dog barking during the night.



Blue Winged Kookaburra – Doesn't Laugh

Sunset at Fanny Bay from the Trailer Boat Club where we had Dinner on a number of occasions with old friends.



After 3 weeks in Darwin we set off for the West. Our first night was a bush camp about 40kms out of Pine Creek on a back road then we sailed through Katherine (Dump) and headed west on the Victoria Hwy.

About 100k's from Katherine we rescued a couple of female backpackers, one from Scotland and one from Germany. They had bought a beat up old Magna in Melbourne and set off around

Australia. To our amazement that had gotten to the Northern territory without incident but now they could not get their car started after changing drivers. Checking under the bonnet revealed a battery that was floating around loose without any clamps. Either their battery or alternator was stuffed. We jump started their car to there amazement and delight with clear instructions to not stop the engine before they found an Auto Elect in Katherine.

Our stop for the night was Flora River NP. The Flora river is a spring fed river high in calcium and the result is extensive Tufa falls. Tufa being calcium deposits on fallen trees etc over hundreds and even thousands of years, forming rapids and water falls. Quite remarkable! Unfortunately the best way to experience this was by boat or canoe. We had sold ours in Darwin.



Tufa Falls at Flora River
Nature Park

After Flora River we headed for Victoria River and after a couple of small walks we turned off the



Victoria River



Nice Spot For lunch on the Old Victoria
River Crossing

Victoria Hwy and headed down the Buchanan Hwy (to call this a hwy is a bit of a stretch as it is a corrugated dirt road). We camped in the Jasper Gorge which was a taste of the Kimberley geology this was still to come. From Jasper Gorge we headed south until the Humbert Station turn off and



Creek Crossing Approach on the
Humbert Track



Jasper Gorge

then headed west through an Aboriginal Community and then Humbert Station and entered the Gregory National Park via "The Humbert Track". This is a 4WD only track that was quite arduous with the camper trailer. Very very remote. Found an unofficial camp site that was fantastic but we were invaded by flies so we set out the next morning to find something a little better. That days travel was a whole 12 Km, mind you it took us 2 hours to do the 12 km at an average of 6km per hour. Was very hard low range driving. We later found that trailers are actually band on the 4wd tracks in Gregory NP. At the next camp site there was a lovely old German Couple (Aussies for 50 years). They had a few years on us but they were great company and she was a dead ringer for Ingrid Bergman both in appearance and mannerisms. She would have been an absolute stunner when she was young. They left the camp the next day and we stayed an extra night as it was so delightful and remote. Then we stayed at Limestone Gorge (more Tufa) and then headed out the Tuwakam Track back to the Buchanan Hwy. This was a seriously difficult drive, 1st gear low range for much of the 40k.



Tuwakam Track

After a night just off the highway with bloody caravans and generators (I didn't like generators before but now it has become an obsession – ignorant bloody pricks) we headed for Keep River NP. A small NP that we were going to bypass, but boy, are we glad we didn't. A gem of a park. Has 2 camping areas. One generators allowed and one not. Not hard to guess where we stayed. Fantastic stunning walks through country that is supposedly similar to the Bungle Bungles. Boy what a find.



View from our camp at Keep River NP



Typical Keep River Vista

On one of the nights of our stay the head ranger gave a presentation around a camp fire which was very informative. After 2 nights we set off for Kununurra. Stayed and at the Hidden Valley Caravan Park for 2 nights and restocked our supplies. Whilst in Kununurra we visited the Mirima NP.



Mirima NP

We then set off for Parry Creek farm that is owned by a close friend of my good mate Tony Nicholson. Spent 2 nights there and did some bird watching, particularly finches but were unable to sight the rare Gouldian Finch that is native to this area.



Egret – Parry's Creek



Double Bar Finch – Parry's Creek

During our stay here we visited the sphincter muscle of Australia. It was only 20km away and goes by the name of Wyndham. This town has to be seen to be believed. Why on earth anybody lives there I will never know but there is good fishing (apparently).

The next stage of our tour is the Kimberly region including the Mitchell Plateau and at the time of writing is now 80% complete with only Geikie Gorge and the Bungle Bungles remaining. Currently sitting at the Winjana Gorge NP Camp Ground writing this in 41 Degrees. We will be glad when we are heading south down the Tanami to Alice Springs to Get some cool weather. It's only about 32 Degrees in Alice at the moment with cool nights. Today's date is the 13 September.