

Lord Howe Island, Norfolk Island double!

Jannette and Peter Manins, 2 April 2020

We return to Cairns on 2 April from Melbourne, missing the Wave the Waders Goodbye ☹️ but thought we would share a fantastic experience we have just had with 8 days on Lord Howe Island followed by a planned 8 days on Norfolk Island but extended by 2 days because of Cyclone Gretel and then Corona Virus closure of Norfolk to tourists!

Lord Howe Island. We've been there before (2003 – pre-birding) but this time the focus was BIRDS! Following last year's rat extermination program, the Lord Howe Woodhen is really feeling settled at last, and is breeding.



The *contempta* sub-species of Golden Whistler is well dispersed. Here are the male and female:



The sub-species of Silvereye on Lord Howe is *tephropleurus*. It looks little different to those we are more familiar with. As is the Pied Currawong *crissalis* but with a longer bill and a beautiful song.



Lord Howe has White Terns in abundance, with chicks at this time of the year.



There are, of course, other birds on the Island, such as Pacific Emerald-Dove but a major focus for us were the sea birds. A trip to Ball's Pyramid was productive, with new bird sightings for us that included: Black-winged Petrel, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Grey Ternlet, Kermadec Petrel, Masked Booby and White-bellied Storm-Petrel. While on the Island we also had better views of Providence Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Red-tailed Tropicbird and Common Noddy.

Norfolk Island is quite different to Lord Howe. Although we only heard the Morepork Owl, all other endemics were sighted, despite rain on several days and Cyclone Gretel's intervention. Interestingly, the Golden Whistler sub-species *xanthoprocta* is ~monomorphic, as is the Slender-billed White-eye:



The lovely dimorphic Pacific Robin found us in the forests, as robins are wont to do!



We found the Norfolk Island Green Parrot near Mount Bates. Jannette mimicked their call and that really got a couple curious! The Norfolk Island Gerygone was in many places; its call stood out.



The much loved 'nufka', aka Sacred Kingfisher, sub-species *norfolkensis*, and Grey Fantail, sub-species *penzelnii*, are easy enough to locate:



We've been looking for the Song Thrush for quite a while without success. That and the California Quail, also new to us, were outside our accommodation on Norfolk Island!



We wanted to take a boat trip to Phillip Island, looking for sea birds, but sea-state and weather were against us, so nothing new on that front for us.