



Coates Wildlife Tours
Specialist in nature tours since 1986

Trip Dossier

11 Day Christmas & Cocos Island Tour



Accommodated Small Group Tour - Max 12 passengers
Perth - Perth 09 November - 19 November 2021

Itinerary Highlights:

- The phenomenal Red Crab migration
- A boat trip along the coast, great for spotting birds and marine life
- Enjoy a relaxing cool off at 'The Grotto'
- White sands of Greta and Dolly beaches
- Spectacular views from Margaret knoll lookout
- Take a revitalising shower under a waterfall
- Blowholes on the southern coast
- Unique wildlife including Robber Crabs and endemic birdlife
- Motorised outrigger canoe trip touring the Southern Islands

The naturalists paradise of Christmas Island is located 360 km south of Java. It is the tip of an Everest-sized undersea mountain; a limestone capped extinct volcano that first emerged from the sea about 60 million years ago. The perimeter of the island is rocky and steep and formed in a series of steps and terraces created by sequential uplifts off the island from the ocean floor. This surrounds a flatter central plateau. Its rugged shoreline and mountainous character combined to prevent colonisation by humans until the late 1800s.

The discovery of commercially viable quantities of phosphate led to exploitation of this resource which continues to this day. However, 63% of the island is designated as National Park and this is dominated by rainforest which itself is substantially modified by the presence of millions of land crabs. The most prolific of these is the endemic Red Crab (*Geocarcoidea Natalis*). It is estimated that 100 million Red Crabs inhabit the island and these still require the ocean as an integral part of their breeding cycle. The crabs migrate from the central plateau to the shoreline and pay no heed to any obstacle, be it natural or man made.

The tour has been scheduled to coincide with this unique natural phenomenon. David Attenborough, the renowned Naturalist, is recorded as saying 'the migration was the most amazing sight I have seen'.

The island is also home to much more endemic flora and fauna; nine species of birds including the Christmas Island Frigate bird and the rare Abbott's Booby; reptiles and bats and many species of plants including palms, ferns, vines and pandanus.

We conclude this Indian Ocean experience by spending time on some of the various islands that make up the Cocos group. These islands offer a great mixture of birding, marine life and the absorbing history that makes up the colourful past of the islands.



Itinerary

Day 1 Tuesday 09 November Perth - Christmas Island

Meet group at Perth International Airport at 12.30 am for your early afternoon flight to Christmas Island. We arrive on Christmas Island in the late afternoon where we will transfer to the lodge and settle in. This evening we will have a welcome to Christmas Island BBQ.

Accommodation: Lodge

D

Day 2 Wednesday 10 November Christmas Island

Today is an introduction to the wildlife, history and culture of Christmas Island. A morning visit to the settlement will include Flying Fish Cove, Smith Point and the cliff tops where Red-tailed Tropic Birds and Brown Boobies breed. The Red Crab migration should be underway so there will be crabs everywhere. An afternoon walk at the National Park Headquarters along a rainforest trail will reveal such species as true endemic Arenga Palm, Strangler Fig, epiphytic ferns and Tahitian Chestnut. The endemic Golden Bosun Bird, a highlight of the Christmas Island avifauna, can be seen from the lookout here.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 3 Thursday 11 November Christmas Island

A full days outing will take us to Greta and Dolly beaches via shaded forest walk trails. Enjoy lunch and a swim on palm fringed Dolly beach. The impressive Robber Crabs can be seen here as well as Blue crabs, Nippers and the ubiquitous Red crab. Returning via Margaret knoll lookout will give us superb views of the rainforest on the coastal terraces as well as some of the old phosphate mines.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 4 Friday 12 November Christmas Island

Weather permitting, we will undertake a boat trip leaving from Flying Fish Cove and traveling along the coast. During the trip we should see a diverse array of birdlife and there will be time to look for marine life and have a swim off the back of the boat. In the afternoon, a visit to 'The Grotto', a natural limestone feature connected to the ocean is good for a swim followed by a visit to a small wetland that has a population of White-breasted water hens, a recent colonist from Indonesia.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 5 Saturday 13 November Christmas Island

This morning's highlights will commence with a swim at Flying Fish cove or a look around the settlement. After lunch we will visit the southern part of the island where much of the islands phosphate mining did, and still does take place. This is followed by a walk on a forest trail on the central plateau where large emergent trees such as Syzigium, Pisonia and Planchonella occur. Their associated epiphytes and vines include an endemic Hoya.

Another endemic, Pandanus pelatus with stilt like roots, also grows here.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 6 Sunday 14 November Christmas Island

Another full day out takes us to the western side of the island, firstly to Murray Hill, the highest point at 361m and then on to the Dales. Here the Non-porous volcanic basalt meets the porous limestone on the surface, and streams flow all year round. This provides good habitat for the blue and robber crabs and also offers the rare opportunity on Christmas Island for a shower under a waterfall. We return to the settlement via a breeding area of the rare and endemic Abbots Booby which nests in the canopy of the emergent forest.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 7 Monday 15 November Christmas Island

The morning will be spent visiting several beach areas and their distinctive vegetation- coastal pandanus, coconut palms, Hibiscus, Scaevola and the Helicopter Tree, Gyrocarpus. Frigate birds, including the endemic Christmas Island Frigate bird and Red-footed Boobies are ever present. An afternoon visit to the blowholes on the southern coast will allow us to witness the extent of the Red Crab migration from the central plateau to the coastal terraces and shoreline and perhaps see some Spinner Dolphins. Bird highlights will include the endemic Goshawk, Christmas Island Thrush and Emerald Dove.

Accommodation: Lodge

B

Day 8 Tuesday 16 November Christmas Island - Cocos Islands

Free time this morning before we check in for our afternoon flight to Cocos. After checking in we will visit one of the local restaurants for dinner.

Accommodation: Motel

B

Day 9 Wednesday 17 November Cocos Islands

Today we will explore the historic West Island including the Big Barge Art Centre, a Clam Farm, birding around a small swampy lagoon and a visit to the far side of the airport runway, also a great spot for birding. Mid Afternoon we will take the ferry to Home island and spend time exploring the community and wildlife. We return to West Island on the 6.00pm ferry.

Accommodation: Motel

B

Day 10 Thursday 18 November Cocos Islands

An early start this morning with a 6.00 am transfer to Canoe Beach where we will jump onto motorised outrigger canoes and take a tour of the Southern Islands. We will have breakfast on an isolated island. The rest of the morning will be spent exploring the wildlife, historic sites and swimming. Late morning we return to West Island for lunch and a rest. Mid afternoon we will undertake birding and botanising the remote parts of West Island. Tonight we will have a farewell beach BBQ.

Accommodation: Motel

BD

Day 11 Friday 19 November Cocos Islands - Christmas Island - Perth

An early start this morning as we check in for our flight to Perth at 8.45am for our 11.50am flight. After check in there will be time to have breakfast at the Early Morning Bakery. Our flight should be back in Perth around 7.15pm.

B

Note: The above itinerary should only be used as a guide. Day to day activities may be varied according to conditions and advice.

Tour Information

Naturalist Guide: Jolanda Keeble

Tour Leader : Tom Grove

Driver Guide: Alan Brumley

Vehicle: 4WDs

Accommodation:

Christmas Island: CI Apartments, twin/double share only; 2 bedroom apartments with one bathroom.

Cocos Island: Cocos Beach Motel, twin/double share with own facilities.

(N/B Due to limited accommodation on the islands there are no single rooms available, if you are travelling alone we will match you up with a suitable roommate)

Meals:

Cocos Islands - Meals as per the itinerary.

Christmas Island - Breakfast is included on all days.

Meals not included on the itinerary are at passenger's own expense and are available at the islands diverse range of restaurants, coffee shops and taverns depending on the group's preferences on the day.

Trek Grading:

Medium grade bushwalking on most days. All treks are optional and will be as strenuous as you wish to make them. A few involve some rock scrambling.

Weather:

Tropical climate. Wet season occurs between November and May. The monthly average temperature is 27 degrees celsius and a range of 21 - 32 degrees Celsius. Humidity is high and is generally over 80% during the wet season.

Clothing:

A suggested list of items to bring on tour will be included with our pre-departure information sent to you about one month prior to departure.

Comfortable casual clothing is recommended. Light shirts and T-shirts. Light trousers and shorts.

Don't forget your bathers. Snorkelling gear can be hired on the island, if you don't wish to bring your own.

Sturdy and comfortable walking shoes are essential.

Traveling to Christmas and Cocos Islands:

Both Christmas and Cocos Islands are Australian territories and a passport is not required to visit. However all flights to and from the airport use the international terminal at Perth Airport and you will pass through immigration. Photo id is required to clear immigration and board your flight. We do however recommend that if you do have a passport you bring it in the event that the flight is diverted from Christmas Island (ie due to poor weather), as it is likely to be sent to Jakarta, Indonesia and a passport will be needed to clear immigration if the flight is significantly delayed

Tour Costs

Cost: \$6,185.00 Per Person Twin Share

Starts: Perth Airport: 09 November 2021

Ends: Perth Airport: 19 December 2021

Tour Payments

Deposit: At time of booking \$1,000.00 per person

Final Payment: On or before 01 September 2021

Note: The \$1,000.00 deposit is non refundable.

The final payment is non refundable after 01 September 2021

Travel insurance covering all payments is available, and strongly recommended.

Special Offers

Book Multiple Tours

Save 5% per person on the second and subsequent tours if more than one tour is booked in the same year. Applies to the cheaper tours.

Please note: Above discounts cannot be combined.

Loyalty Program

Save \$100 per person on your second, third and fourth tour. **Save \$150 per person** when you have travelled on 5 or more tours. Tours must be operated by Coates Wildlife Tours.

Please note: Loyalty discount can be combined with other offers. Discounts are only available on bookings made directly with Coates.

Included

- Return Airfare from Perth;
- Twin share accommodation
- Welcome to Christmas Island BBQ dinner and farewell BBQ dinner on Cocos.
- Meals as per itinerary (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner);
- All national park entrance fees;
- Christmas Island coastal boat trip;
- Cocos motorised outrigger canoe trip.

Not Included

- Travel expenses to and from Perth;
- Pre and post tour accommodation;
- Lunches & Dinners (see itinerary for exceptions);
- Entrance Fees or activity costs other than those included above;
- Snorkeling Equipment (Can be hired);
- Travel Insurance (Very Strongly Recommended);
- All other private expense (e.g. laundry, telephone calls, camera batteries);
- Entrance fees or activity costs other than those included in the itinerary.



To make a booking or further information please contact

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