



BIRDING COCOS KEELING ISLANDS INFO SHEET

Are you interested in conducting a birding tour to the Christmas or Cocos Keeling Islands?

Island Explorer Holidays are just the company to assist you. Specialising in travel to the Christmas and Cocos Islands, we have been in operation for over 15 years and have offices both on Christmas Island and in Perth, Western Australia. With knowledgeable staff that has either lived or extensively travelled throughout the islands, we can assist you to get you and your clients to the islands with as little fuss as possible.

Quick Facts about Cocos Keeling Islands

Location: 2750 km West North West from Perth, Western Australia. Flights to the island are serviced by National Jet Systems from Perth. Connections can also be facilitated from Kuala Lumpur via Christmas Island.

Currency: Australian Dollars

Passport/Visa Requirements: Passports are the preferred form of photographic identification. If travelling from Perth, photo identification is required, if travelling from Kuala Lumpur, passport and Australian Entry Visa is required.

Time Difference: Cocos Island is GMT +6.5 hours

Language: English is the official language although the traditional Cocos Islanders speak a derivative of Malay.

Health: There are no poisonous plants, insects or animals, however reef shoes are highly recommended as Stone Fish are common in certain swimming areas. Cocos Island is free of all tropical borne diseases.

Climate: Considered a tropical humid climate with daily maximum temperatures generally 27-30 degrees Celsius. The Cocos Islands seasons can vary and move from year to year. On average the South East trade winds are from April to November and are heaviest from the end of July to September. The cyclone season can start from November to April, with February and March being the higher risk months.

Food: As all fresh food is brought to the islands via air freight, the cost to purchase food from island supermarkets and convenience stores is higher than mainland Australia. West Island, where accommodation properties are situated, has a restaurant open most nights for meals, the Cocos Club offers food nights on occasion and a café is available for breakfast and lunch. Home Island offers local Malay cuisine on a Wednesday night, pre- booking is recommended. Business hours of operation are limited and some close during specific holiday periods. Island Explorer Holidays can tailor packages to include all or some meals and will try to facilitate a variety of islands' cuisines.

Accommodation: Almost all accommodation on the island has air-conditioning and/or can be fan cooled. Some places provide mini-fridges with tea and coffee making facilities. Due to the restricted selection of eating places on Cocos, much of the accommodation properties provide self-contained options. There is a range of good budget style accommodation at the Cocos Beach Motel. The self-contained options are generally of a higher standard.

Cocos Island currently has no large resort style accommodation, so accommodation can be limited and we highly recommend pre-booking rooms to ensure capacity for your groups.

Birds to See on Cocos Island:

Endemics – Gold Morph White tailed Tropic bird, Christmas Island Frigate Birds, Christmas Island White Eye, Christmas Island Imperial Pigeon, Christmas Island Thrush, Christmas Island Goshawk, Christmas Island Hawk Owl, CI Glossy Swiftlet.

Supplementary Species – Abbotts Booby, Red-footed Booby, Brown Booby, Greater and Lesser Frigate Birds, Java Sparrow, Common Eurasian Sparrow, White-breasted Waterhen, White Faced Heron, Pacific Reef Egret, Nankeen Kestrel, Nankeen Night Heron and various vagrants during the wet season.

Birding on Cocos Island

Cocos Island is a string of islands and the ease of birding depends on species and location. West Island, where the accommodation properties are located, is flat terrain that can be easily traversed on foot. Direction Island and Home Island are regularly serviced by ferry. A small fee is payable for this service. Some of the outer lying islands are more difficult to get to, some via foot through the lagoon at low tide. There is a glass bottom boat available for hire with experienced driver and a new company has started canoe tours to the Southern Islands. We recommend that you pre-book both of these prior to arrival on the island. There are limited places and times of operation.

Island Explorer Holidays can help with putting together an itinerary to ensure your guests get the most out of their visit to the islands.

Transport on Cocos Island

Cocos Island has a public bus that runs from the main settled area on West Island to the jetty where you can catch the ferry. It only runs on a schedule to coincide with the ferry service. We recommend that you pre-book car hire for your guests.

West Island is very flat and can either be cycled or we recommend to hire a vehicle. Our suppliers have older style vehicles, but very well maintained. These will comfortably fit 4 adults and the driving is rarely challenging. We can reserve these for you as part of your packages.

Field Guide to the Birds of Christmas and Cocos Islands

Island Explorer Holidays has published its own field guide to birding the islands. With input from various regular birding guides to the island and some of their spectacular photos, we include a copy of this guide with all the birding packages to the island.

With Island Explorer Holidays in depth knowledge of the islands and great relationships with all of our suppliers, we can help with suggestions and put together a package and itinerary which will ensure that your tours reflect our high standards and you and your clients get the best out of your visit to the islands.

Other Options Available

Island Explorer Holidays can include in your packages:

- Cultural tours of Home Island
- Canoe tour to the Southern Islands
- Glass Bottom Boat tour of the lagoon
- Island Introduction Tour
- Small bus hire for groups

Contact Us:



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We look forward to welcoming you to the Christmas & Cocos Islands!