The abundance of birdlife in inland Australia is highly variable. It is principally dependant on rainfall which then effects availability of food such as insects, flowering plants, seeding grasses etc. Despite this variation it is still possible to help visitors by indicating their chances of recording the species that regularly occur.

Some species are regular summer visitors from countries to the North. Other species are opportunistic seasonal visitors from other parts of Australia which may move to the area to exploit suitable food sources or to escape drier conditions elsewhere.

At the time of writing, Mount Isa has been blessed by a few years of good rainfall. This information reflects these conditions. Perhaps it will change if drier times return.

This list of 224 species was prepared with kind assistance from Bob Forsyth and a study of 1500 Birds Australia Atlas surveys in the area.
Mount Isa, in NW Queensland on the Leichardt River, is surrounded by rugged Spinifex covered hills and open snappy gum woodland. This list gives visitors an indication of species they might record within about 70 km of the city.

Specialties include Spinifexbird, Painted Finch and Black-tailed Tree Creeper. But most visitors come to try their luck looking for the two local grasswren species. The Kalkadoon Grasswren is common on spinifex covered hillsides. The Carpentaria Grasswren is perhaps harder to find. Recent surveys by BirdLife indicate its range is diminishing and its conservation status is being upgraded. The CGW may still be found at few localities. We hope that recent years of good rainfall will help increase numbers of its insect food source and help the numbers bounce back.

Kalkadoon Grasswren—Try Mica Creek and area. Drive 6km South from the CBD on the Djarra Road. Walk up the hills. Also try Sybella Ck, a few km further South.

Carpentaria Grasswren—Try McNamara’s Rd. Drive 61km West from Mount Isa towards Camouflage, then 8km North along McNamara’s Road. Stop at the cairn. Make sure you record your findings in the visitor book.

Lake Moondarra, the Mount Isa sewage works (now closed to birders) and surrounding horse paddocks are always worth checking.

Other common fauna include Purple-necked Rock wallaby, Agile Wallaby, Euro and Freshwater Crocodile.

New or unusual sightings? Register with Eremaea Birds www.eremaea.com