



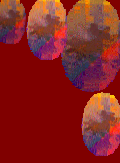
Bird-watching Tourists in Australia

Ronda J. Green and Darryl N. Jones

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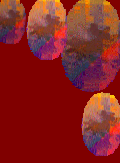


This project was funded by the
Sustainable Tourism CRC.

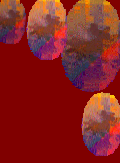


Many thanks also to all the bird-watchers,
tour operators and others who participated.

This was a nationwide survey ...



...on the practices, needs and
attitudes of bird-watching tourists
in Australia ...



...primarily by questionnaires ...

I particularly like to see birds that are:

	Little or no importance to me	Of some importance to me	Very important to me
unique to Australia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
unique to the part of Australia I'm visiting.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
rare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vulnerable or endangered species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
species I've never seen before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
species my friends/colleagues/family have never seen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
brightly-coloured, elegant or attractive in some other way.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
exhibiting unusual or intriguing behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
interacting with me (e.g. approaching for hand-feeding).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
readily photographed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
big (eagles, cockatoos, herons etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
predatory (eagles, owls etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
singing or giving strange, memorable calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
species I've read about or seen on documentaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

... to tourists, guides of bird
walks and eco-lodge owners.

256 bird-
watching
tourists
responded

Nationality	No.
Australian	164
Australian & other	17
New Zealand	4
British & Irish	28
European	9
North American	9
South African	3
South American	1
Asian	1
Unanswered	20
Total non-Australian	55

Completed forms were posted from:

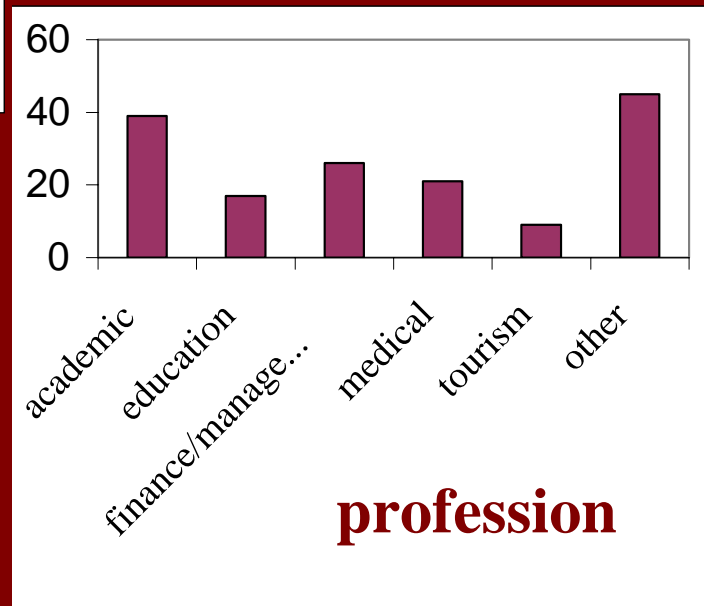
Southeast Queensland	72
Queensland - other	53
New South Wales	34
Victoria	5
South Australia	6
Western Australia	8
Northern Territory	14
New Zealand	1
Unknown	63

Covered (briefly) in this paper:

- Demographics
- Variation amongst bird-watchers
- Preferences
- Birdwatchers and the tourism industry
- Conservation aspects



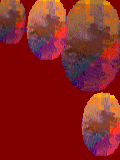
Most respondents were well-educated and middle-age to elderly



**> 95% were very
interested in seeing
other wildlife**



<u>Most commonly expressed views</u>	%
I [do not] enjoy <u>hunting</u> or wish to try it	96.68
I want to see <u>other wildlife</u> as well as birds	95.51
I [would not] rather <u>disturb</u> a bird from its nest than fail to identify it	94.17
I'll probably be bird-watching on my <u>next travel</u>	93.03
I can identify most birds around <u>home</u>	86.12
I would join a tour to <u>reach difficult places</u>	85.96
I plant bird-attracting species in my <u>garden</u>	81.85
I [do not] mainly join bird-walks because <u>family and friends</u> want me to	81.74



Slightly
less than
half kept
life-lists of
birds seen



Most variable views

	%
I like to see birds doing something interesting	48.37
I go bird-watching in places I like for other reasons	47.33
I read about birds of my destinations	56.33
Birds are my favourite animals	45.30
I would willingly go camping to see a new bird	54.20
I can identify females and juveniles of many	54.62

Attitudes of “life-listers”

	R ²
Bird-watching is my <u>favorite activity</u>	0.403
I can identify many <u>females and juveniles</u>	0.338
I'd like to <u>identify</u> all Australian birds	0.312
I <u>read</u> about birds before visiting	0.301
Birds are my <u>favorite animal</u>	0.293
I often carry <u>binoculars</u>	0.268
I'm interested in bird <u>behavior</u>	0.252
I'm interested in bird <u>ecology</u>	0.248
I often visit <u>national parks</u> for bird- watching	0.247
I often take <u>notes</u> on birds seen	0.243

Group 1: keen birders

	R ²
Bird-watching is my favourite activity	0.772
I can identify females and juveniles of many Australia birds	0.700
I often record birds I see	0.674
I'd like to be able to identify all Australian birds	0.668
I generally carry binoculars	0.649
I read about birds of my destination	0.627
I'm very interested in bird ecology	0.614
I would willingly camp to see a new bird	0.610
I keep a life-list of all birds seen	0.556
I'm very interested in bird behaviour	0.512
I like to see rare birds	0.501
I'll probably do some bird-watching on my next travels	0.455
I like to see birds unique to the part of Australia visited	0.431
[I mainly go birding because of family or friends]	-0.420

Cumulative
variance
18.9

Group 2: 'thrill-seekers'

Statement	R ²
I like to see big birds	0.780
I like to see predatory birds	0.704
I like to see brightly-coloured birds	0.701
I like to see birds interacting with me	0.672
I like to see birds I've read about	0.655
I like to see birds doing something interesting	0.649
I like to see birds that are singing	0.630
I like to see birds my friends have never seen	0.531
I like to see birds that are readily photographed	0.466
I like to see vulnerable birds	0.440
I like to see rare birds	0.429
I like to see birds I've never seen before	0.401

Cumulative variance explained 35.283

**The most commonly-preferred
bird features:**

**endemism to
Australia**

and

**endemism to the
part of Australia
being visited...**

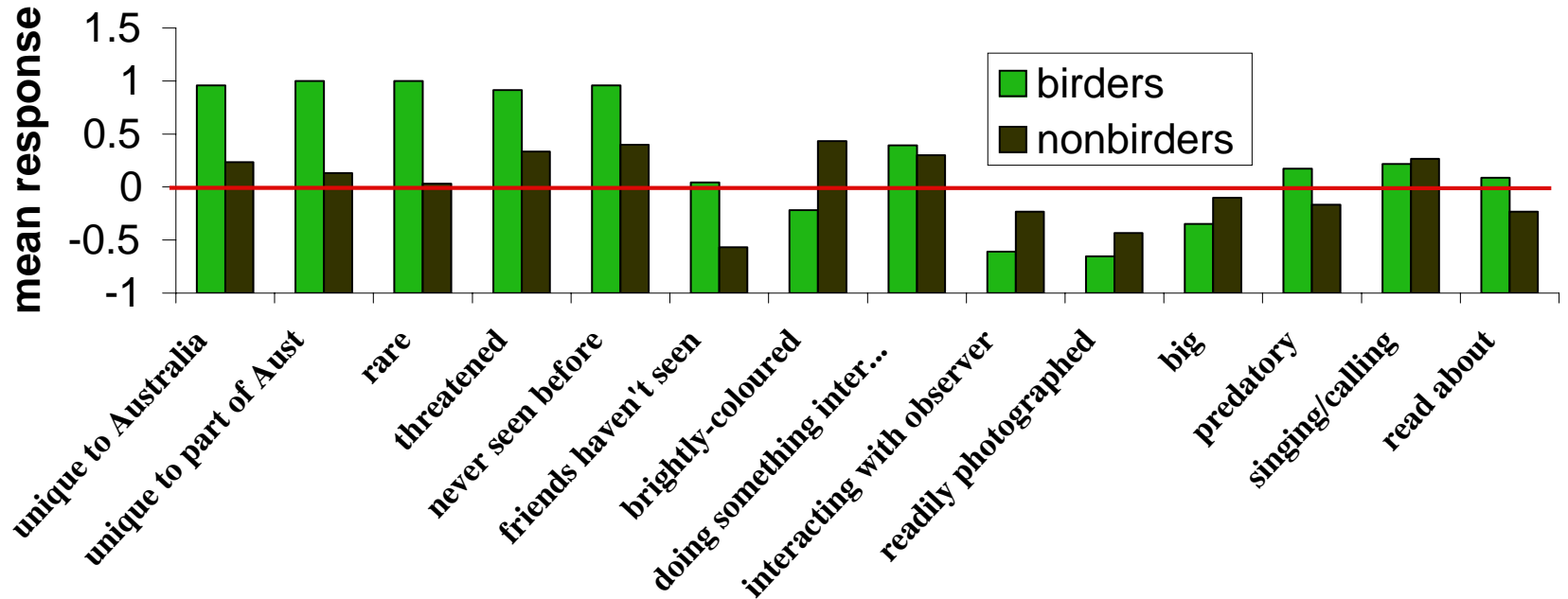


Aussies and others

	Number of respondents in group	% responding 'very important' to see birds unique to Australia
Lived only in Australia	104	76.34
Lived in Australia & elsewhere	102	66.15
Never lived in Australia	35	71.42
<hr/>		
Watched birds only in Australia	43	79.06
Watched birds in Australia & elsewhere	207	69.56
Never watched birds in Australia	5	80.00

No apparent difference between Australian and visiting bird-watchers in desire to see birds endemic to Australia

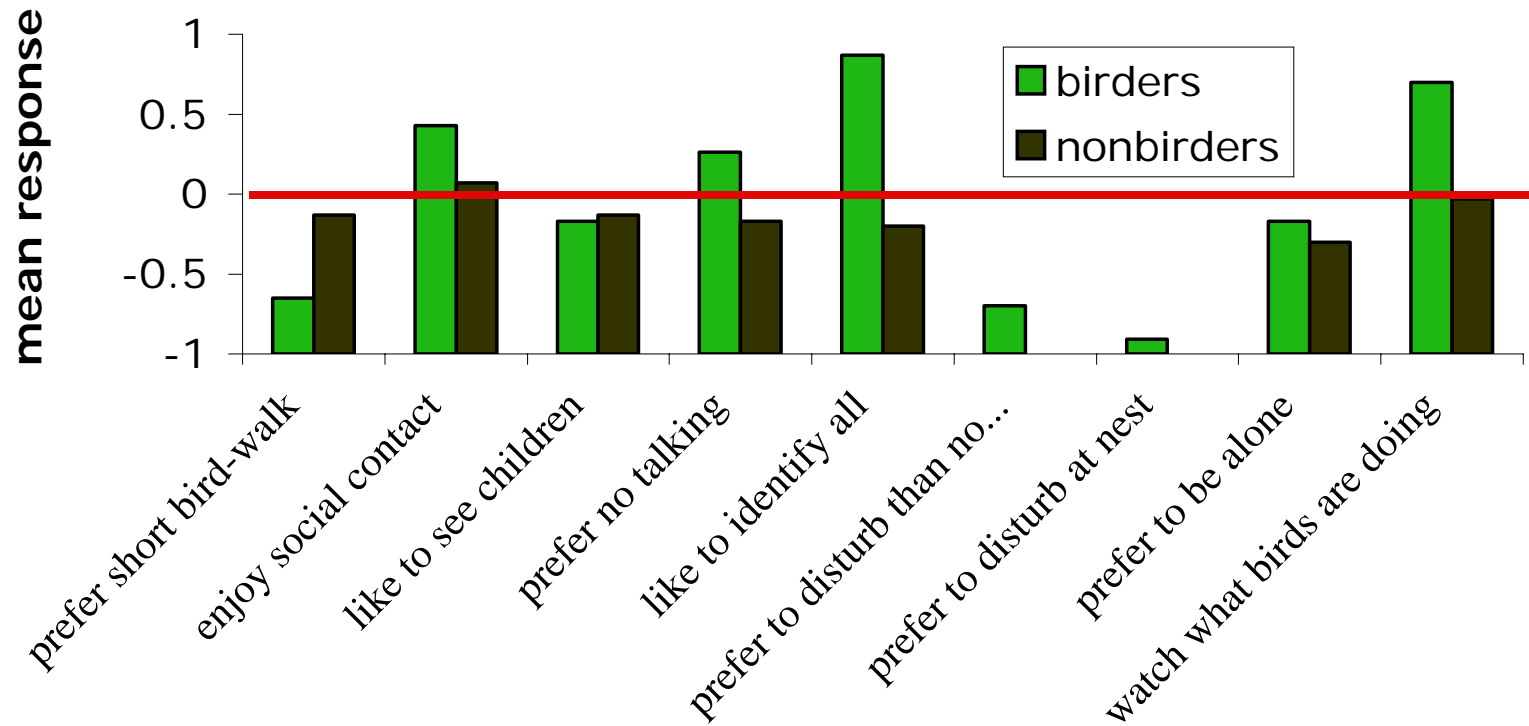
“I like to see birds that are....”



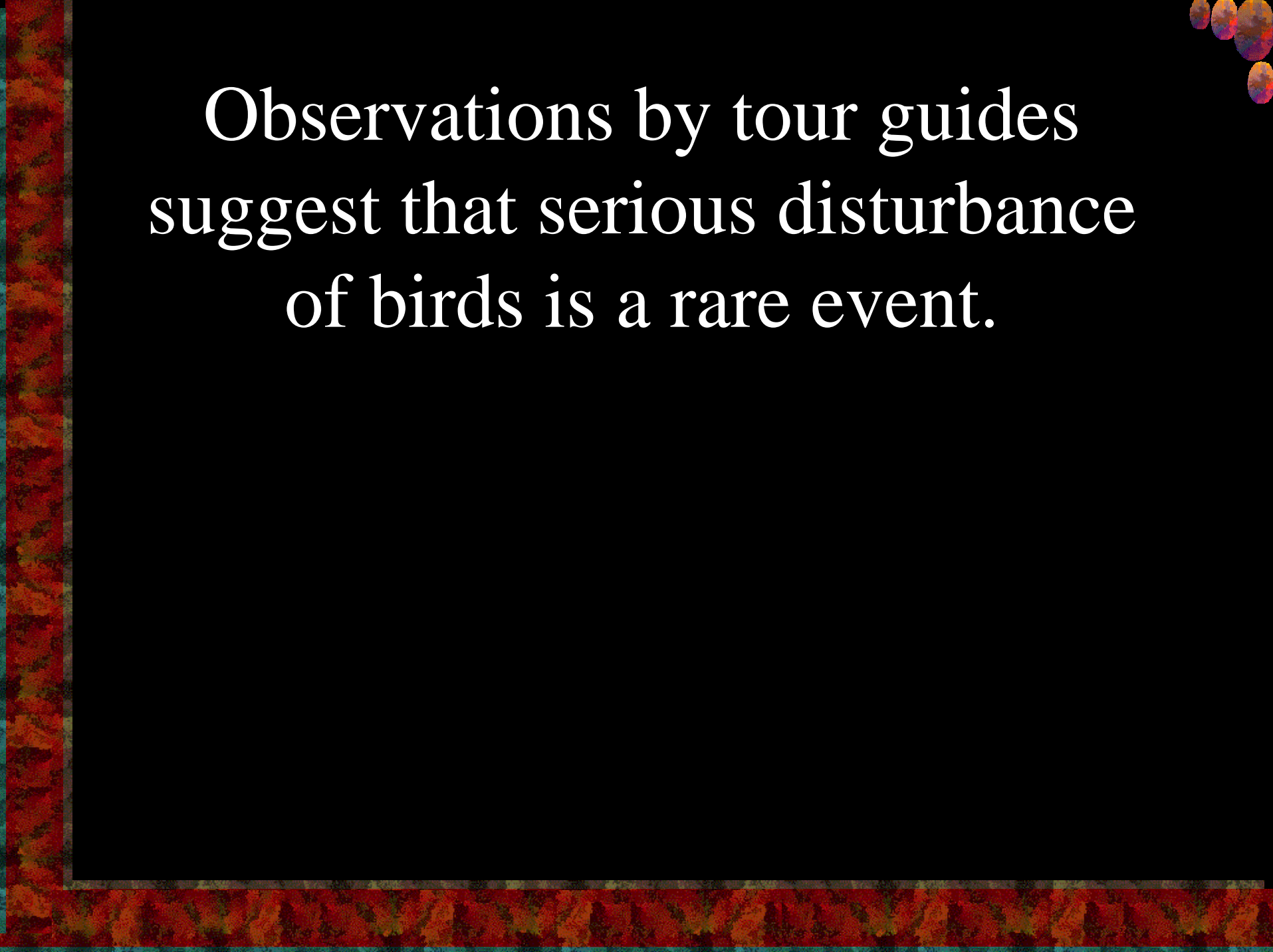


The most
common
preferences
on bird-walks
were
identifying
birds and
social
contact.

Preferences on a bird-walk



Conservation-related responses	%
I want to see vulnerable or endangered species	61.7
<u>During the past 10 years I have</u>	54.8
belonged to a conservation organization	
attended a meeting related to bird conservation	51.6
attended a meeting related to conservation generally	50.0
Feeding wild birds gives good opportunities for photography	40.7
I have tended injured or orphaned wildlife	37.5
Feeding wild birds is usually okay if the right foods are used	29.0
Feeding wild birds gives a feeling of interaction with nature	28.2
Feeding wild birds is okay in cleared or non-natural areas	18.1
It's okay to flush birds from grass or wetlands for sighting	16.5
Feeding wild birds should be allowed in some national parks	9.3
I would rather disturb a bird than fail to identify it	7.7
I enjoy hunting for sport or would like to try it	1.61
I would rather disturb it from a nest than fail to identify it	1.6

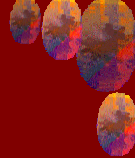


Observations by tour guides
suggest that serious disturbance
of birds is a rare event.



Question	No. of responses			
	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often
<u>How often do your guests:</u>				
Talk loudly enough to disturb birds?	1	4	4	0
Disturb birds while trying to identify them?	3	4	3	1
[Behave as though they] would have disturbed birds if guide hadn't stopped them?	3	3	4	1

Feeding birds



NP

cleared

photo

interact

diet

Comment by a respondent

From an ex-pat Brit's point of view, the opportunities for bird-watching are amazing. Also totally untapped as far as tourism goes. My local catchment area contains >190 spp. Why doesn't Brisbane market itself as the 'city of birds' (rather than 'most liveable', whatever that means!)

Travel agents and travel books were the least-used sources of information on where to go bird-watching.

How I decide where to watch birds	%
I visit places I like for other reasons	47.33
books (not travel)	44.31
I do it at places I'm going to anyway	42.21
national parks info	38.11
friends/family	37.86
natural history organizations	30.99
internet	19.57
documentaries	16.12
travel book	7.98
travel agent	2.11

Most likely to join commercial tours:

‘Keen birders’

(bird-watching named as favourite activity, often record what is seen etc)

and

‘Thrill-seekers’

(wanting to see big and colourful birds etc)

Respondents who do by self for small group in

no.

Australia only	22
all regions	40
most regions (including Australia)	26
Australia (whether or not elsewhere)	136
western countries & Asia, not Africa or Latin America	62

**total who would go by
self but never on a tour** **51**

**total who would tour
but never go by self** **24**

Most common attitudes of bird-watchers who would join tours

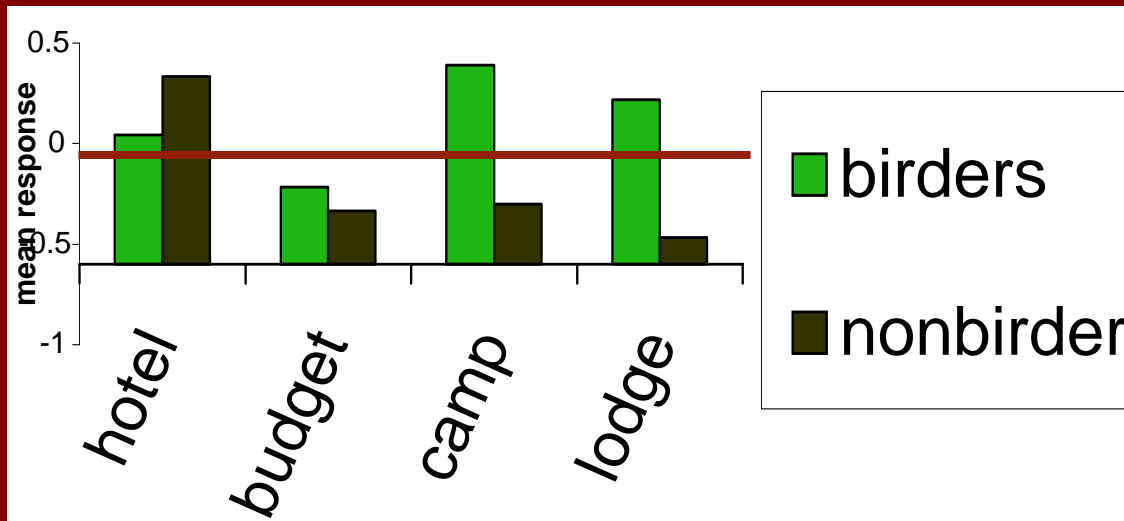
I like to see birds I've
read about

I get information bird-
watching localities from
natural history
organization

I enjoy social contact
while birding

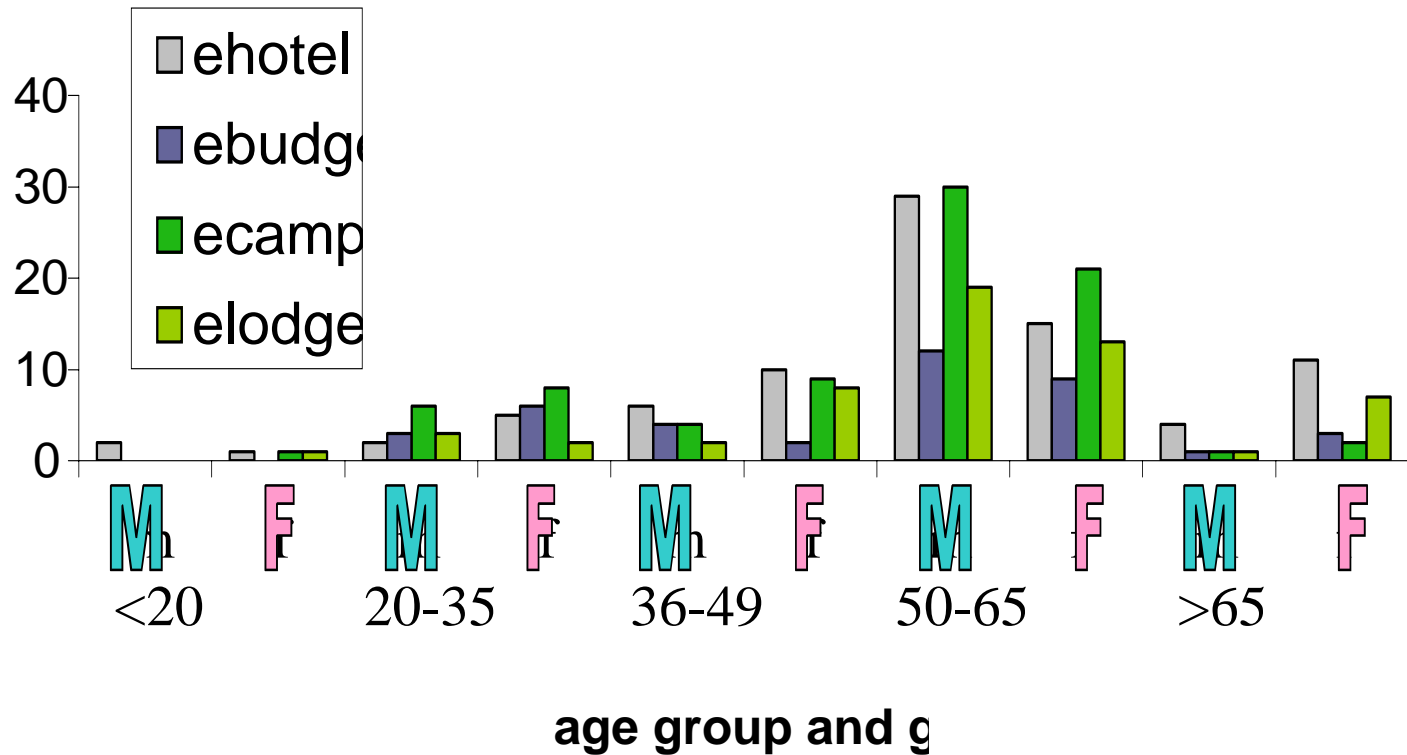
Bird-watching is my
favourite activity

[I don't often photograph
birds]



‘Keen birders’
were more
likely than
others to
choose
camping or
lodges over
hotels...

...but frequency of camping declined after the age of 65





The most
common
suggestions for
improving the
enjoyment of
bird-watching in
Australia were :

...provide better information on
where to see birds...

... and conserve bird habitat

