



**P**ort Warrender is one of the most remote places in Australia, on the coast right at the top of the Kimberley. It's a 30k and three-hour drive from the Mitchell Falls track, with the last eight kilometres taking over an hour. Fortunately it's a great place, because the track is so bad that, when you get there, you want to spend a few days just to get your money's worth.

That's good, because it took me that long to get a good photo of this bower bird.

On the first day I heard him calling in the bushes, that strange screech that is presumably attractive to the girl bower birds. I located him on a few occasions, and eventually followed his flight path and found his bower. That was the easy part.

As the bird spent large amounts of time off foraging somewhere, and I'm not overly endowed with patience, I couldn't just sit near the bower all day waiting for him to return. So I would rush down from my camp when I heard his screeching, or saw him flying in the area.

I would lie down with my camera held pointing at the bower. However he would often still take ten minutes or so to approach, and I found that I couldn't maintain the position for that long. Also, if I relaxed I would either miss an opportunity or scare the bird when I moved to take a shot.

Eventually however I realised that he would approach through the dense bushes and invariably make a small noise as he brushed the foliage. This gave me a few seconds to assume the position before he reached the nest, and allowed me to relax in the long periods between visits.

The ground was covered with sharp broken shells so I wore long pants and a jumper to protect my elbows and knees. This made for a very uncomfortable time in the hot sun. But I felt it would be worth it to get a good photo of the bird in its nest.

Despite all this it still took a couple of days to get the shots. The bird was quite wary at first, and even though I was perfectly still he would not fully enter the bower.



**FIG 1: THE BOWER BIRD IS VERY WARY AND WILL NOT ENTER THE BOWER.**

Slowly however he got used to me being there; he would enter the bower but still keep a keen eye on me lying just a couple of metres away.



**FIG 2: HE'S STILL A BIT ANXIOUS BUT GETTING MORE USED TO ME.**

Eventually, after maybe five or six sessions, he became confident that I meant no harm and carried on with the business of titivating the bower, rearranging the pieces of shiny green beer bottles, and adjusting the twigs in the bower wall.

Now I could get the kind of photos I wanted.

**TECHNICAL DETAILS**

Image #29641

Great bower bird housekeeping in bower

Walsh Point, Port Warrender, Kimberley, WA

Canon EOS 10D, 1/30<sup>th</sup> @ f9.5, EF 70-200 f2.8 @ 200 (320mm equivalent), on-camera flash, Better Beamer flash extender[Open this image's gallery page](#)

**FIG 3: NOW HE HAS ACCEPTED ME AND IS GETTING ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF PREPARING HIS BOWER TO ATTRACT A FEMALE.**

After a couple of sessions I decided I had enough photos and that I should leave him be. I felt privileged that this bird had accepted me, but didn't want to cramp his style with the girls, and decided it was time to back off.

The next day we left Port Warrender, but not before I gave him a gift of a green peg, and saw that he had indeed attracted a lady friend. Have a nice life little bird, and thanks for the photos.