AUDITORS from the Fair Work Ombudsman will spot-check 50 randomly selected Darwin businesses this week as part of a blitz to ensure workers are being paid correctly.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James said it received a “persistent” number of calls for help from Darwin workers.

Ms James said the campaign would educate employers on their responsibilities as well as crack down on those who weren’t doing the right thing.

“It’s important we check that workers are being paid correctly, but we also want to be proactive about ensuring employers understand their obligations,” she said.

Inspectors will visit most businesses involved in the campaign so they can offer employers tailored assistance to rectify any noncompliance issues and put processes in place to ensure they get it right in the future.

Auditors will check employers are paying correct minimum hourly rates, penalty rates, allowances, loadings and enforcing appropriate meal breaks for staff. The campaign will also examine if businesses are keeping proper records and issuing pay slips to staff.

The Ombudsman has taken multiple local employers to court over pay issues this year.

A May audit of 67 Alice Springs businesses revealed that 70 employers had been short-changed a total of more than $200,000. In April an audit of Darwin massage parlours and nail salons revealed that only one in 10 massage parlours were paying their employees correctly.

In some instances, individuals were owed thousands of dollars in unpaid wages.

Recent audits have also revealed systematic underpayment of workers in a number of Darwin cleaning companies.

Ms James said the Ombudsman had several online tools to help employers pay their workers correctly, including a comprehensive database of award rates, penalty rates, shift conditions and redundancy entitlements.

The Ombudsman also operates a helpline that offers advice to employees and employers, on 13 13 94.

Taking a walk on the wild side and looking up in the tree tops or down in the shrubs is one way to look for yourself a feathered friend.

This week people are encouraged to dust off their binoculars and get outdoors to count birds for 20 minutes as part of National Bird Week.

Participants can then log what they see into a database that will form part of a national bird survey.

With the Territory home to more than 400 species of birds, including the stone curlew pictured, there is a high chance you will find a beautiful bird in your backyard.

Territory Wildlife Park’s Jasmine Jan said Top End residents were lucky there was a wide range of birds in the city’s suburban areas.

Last year the citizen science program logged 672 individual species with 852,318 birds sighted. In the NT there were 103 participants in the count.

Land for Wildlife Top End co-ordinator Emma Lupin said people could do their backyard bird count any time this week.

“You just count them for 20 minutes and try and identify them,” she said. Participate by jumping online to aussiebirdcount.org.au.

The all-new Escape Virtual Travel Expo arrives online on October 18 with exclusive deals from over 55 of Australia’s top exhibitors, advice from destination experts plus much more. With everything you need to plan your next trip all in one handy place over four massive weeks, the FREE online Escape Virtual Travel Expo is not to be missed.