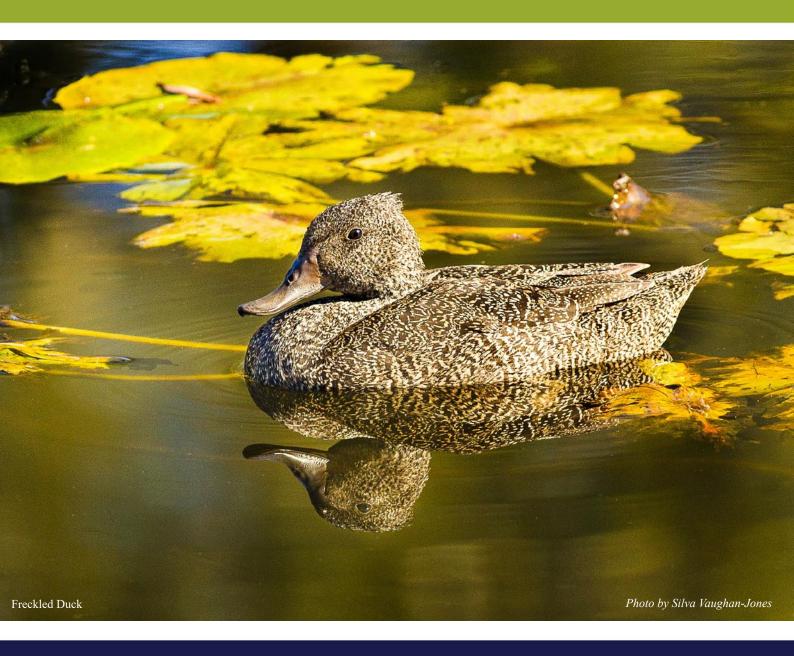
# Bird Watching guide to the Hastings Valley



# Self drive



Author: Peter West Produced by Hastings Birdwatchers Inc. www.hastingsbirdwatchers.org.au

# Welcome to Port Macquarie and the Hastings and Camden Haven Valleys

A wonderful place to go birdwatching, for beginners or the more experienced looking for those special rarities. The habitats ranging from the Beech forests of Werrikimbe National Park (NP) to the Pacific beaches and estuaries are stunning and well connected.

Consequently there are close to 300 species to search for.

There's plenty of accommodation, in the coastal towns, or for something quieter, remote camps in the mountain forests. Check out our bird list for what you might find.

# Our Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA's)

There are eleven thousand KBAs around the world; places of high biodiversity for birds and other biota; "nature's hot spots" Preserve these to preserve most of the world's biodiversity. Within the Hastings we have two KBAs, the Hastings Macleay between the Camden Haven and Grassy Head, east of the Pacific Highway and Werrikimbe NP.

# Around Port Macquarie

There are many excellent birding sites to keep you busy for at least a day. Many have Swamp Mahoganies and Forest Red Gums, favoured trees of the *Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot*, birds for which the KBA was proclaimed.

### 1 Kooloonbung Creek.

In the heart of the town, enjoy a walk through littoral rainforest and a boardwalk through mangroves and swamp. The large fruit bat colony is also of interest. **Access:** from the scout hall in Hollingsworth St. **PaPi T** at the cemetery

**Birds:** In winter Pitta and Bassian Thrush plus Barred Cuckoo-shrike, while summer is good for monarchs, Rufous Fantail, with Bowerbirds, Catbird and



other rainforest specials all year.

### 2. Googik Track

A lovely walk through a Melaleuca swamp forest in Innes NR. Take a half-hour stroll or walk or longer if you have time. The settling ponds at the northern entrance might be interesting.

Access: from Lake Rd opposite

Barton Cres near Ocean Drive. **Pa** on Lake Rd

**Birds:** Woodland birds, Forest Kingfisher, Sittella, crakes and rails and perhaps any of the Bitterns.

### 3. Sea Acres Nature Reserve

- entry fee applies

The largest patch of littoral rainforest on the north coast is well worth the fee for the rainforest experience on a raised boardwalk. Ask the guides where to find special birds and nests. **Access:** off Ocean Dr, **PaT** 

**Birds:** Rainforest specialists, in summer monarchs and Rufous Fantail, also Powerful Owl, Pale-yellow Robin, Brush-turkey, Logrunner plus both Wompoo and Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves.

### 4. Tacking Point and the coast

Strong onshore winds can give a great sea watch experience. Set yourself up in the lee of the bushes beside the lighthouse and enjoy. **Access:** via Lighthouse Rd off Ocean Drive. **P** 

Birds: Any time Sea-Eagle, Osprey, Brahminy Kite, Reef Egret, Sooty Oystercatcher, terns and Gannets. During a blow, anything from rare terns, prions, petrels, skuas, and shearwaters to albatross and boobies

# 5. Partridge Creek off Fernbank Creek Road

A top site for many swamp and grassland birds. Access: from Hastings River Drive, turn south just before Fernbank Creek Bridge. After 500m left to an unsealed track then park 200m further at the mown area. Please keep the access free. Bird all the tracks to the locked gates. No facilities

Birds: Red-backed Fairy-wren, Emu-wren, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and Double-barred Finch, Pallid and Little-bronze Cuckoos, Brown and King Quail, Lewin's and Buff-banded Rails, if the waters right crakes, Spotted and Swamp Harriers, Baza, both trillers and many more. An evening visit may produce Grass, Barking and Barn Owls and even Ground Parrot.

### 6. Settlement Point

The roost at the northern end of Pelican Island can be viewed as you take the ferry to the North shore at Settlement Point. See in the mangroves south of the carpark for specials. **Access:** go beyond the ferry loading ramp to the car park. **PaPiT** 





**Birds**: On the roost, terns, including Caspian, waders and cormorants. In the mangroves, Mangrove Gerygone is resident and Leaden Flycatcher in summer. Look for Osprey, Brahminy Kite, Sea-Eagle and Striated Heron.

# Across the Hastings River to The North Shore.

Take the ferry for the chance to see some fantastic birds in a key part of the KBA, including the Australasian Bittern - in part why the KBA was designated.

## 7. North Shore rainforest

A nice spot with the usual birds. Access: Right off the ferry, drive to the beach road, right to North Wall Rd, park on the right after 500m. Walk the footpath. P Birds: Rainforest birds including; Wompoo, Rose-crowned (and if you're lucky) Superb Fruit-Doves plus others, Monarchs, Rufous Fantail and Yellow-throated Scrubwren.

# 8. Maria River Road & Limeburners Creek NR

This good unsealed road offers many good birds, stopping as

below. Walk the various tracks into Limeburner's NR. Heathland, swamp, rainforest pockets, Swamp Mahogany woodlands. Access: Left off the ferry, after 3.5km right into Maria River Rd which goes 24km to Crescent Head Rd. Good areas in order heading north are, left at 9km Mundays Lane, right at 2km to the Quarry Track, left at 12km to the wetland and at 1.5km the rainforest pocket. No facilities; parking on the road

**Birds:** Heathland and Tea Tree areas have Tawny-crowned Honeveater, Lewin's Rail, Grass Owl



and Australasian Bittern. At dusk the Quarry Track could also yield Ground Parrot, White-throated Nightjar, Owlet Nightjar and in daytime Little Lorikeet. The Swamp Mahoganies are surveyed between May and August for Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater. Raptors could be anywhere, Brown Falcon, all accipters, Square-tailed Kite, Little Eagle and others. Finally the swamps for bitterns, Brolga, Black-necked Stork and Forest Kingfisher.



# South to The Camden Haven

Head south to the villages of the Camden Haven for a wonderful day's birding. Round trip 120kms.

# 9. Lake Cathie & Perch Hole

The waterways and heathlands hold the range of birds one would expect plus the KBA species, Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot if you are lucky. Try the sand spit roost at the estuary of Cathie Creek for terns and waders. Access: head 7km south from Port's boundary along Ocean Drive. The Perch Hole, to the right 1km before entering the village, drive to the end of the track and the



lake shores. In Lake Cathie; first right is Dirah St; search the trees here, the playing fields and Cathie Village track to the lake. Further south, over the bridge, turn left to view the roost on the sand. Also right into Tallong Dr and right to Kenwood Dr and right to Lake-side estate and beyond. Winter can be great for honeyeaters in the flowering Swamp Mahoganies. **PaPiT** 

**Birds:** April to August the rarities such as Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot in the gums; heathland birds, White-cheeked and Brown Honeyeaters, White-

bellied Cuckoo-shrike and lorikeets. Around the lake, Osprey, Brahminy & Whistling Kite and Sea-Eagle, Striated and Nankeen-Night Herons. On the sandbar, terns including Caspian, Whitefronted, Common and Little plus Double-banded and Red-capped Plovers.

# 10. Henry Kendall Reserve, Queens Lake and Dooragan NP

At Laurieton, to the west is good for a range of water, forest and rainforest birds. Dooragan, at 476m has a different range of birds. **Access:** Laurieton is 16km south of Lake Cathie. Right at



Bold St and Ocean Drive, then right after 400m to Henry Kendall and then 2km to Queens Lake sailing club on the right. These sites are connected by a good track to see the birds. Dooragan is to the left between these, 5km drive up the forested mountain. There are several tracks on the way and a magnificent view from the top. **PaPiT** 

Birds: In the woodlands along Queens Lake, birds include thousands of Black Swan at times plus Glossy-black Cockatoo, Azure Kingfisher, Varied Sittella, Cicadabird and White-naped Honeyeaters. Nesting Osprey, plus Brahminy & Whistling Kite on the lake side. On Dooragan Red-browed Treecreepers, Wonga Pigeon, Yellow-throated Scrubwren and Boobook and perhaps Masked and Powerful Owls.

# 11. Kattang NR and Googleys Lagoon

Find 50 species in an hour walking the shores of Googleys Lagoon and heathland birds in Kattang NR. Access: go south on Bold Street through Laurieton towards Dunbogan. Left after you cross the river then 5km on The Boulevard / Camden Head Rd. Down the hill is the beach and then left along the southern break- wall to views over the lagoon. Or enter Kattang and walk to the Headland and round the flower Bowl. PaPiT Birds: Along the river, raptors, Reef Egret & Striated Heron, Beach Stone-curlew is possible plus terns, herons and bush birds; the mangroves have Mangrove Gerygone and Azure Kingfisher. Kattang is heath and some rainforest with fruit pigeons, Regent and Satin Bowerbird, plus heathland birds including Glossy Black-Cockatoo, many honeyeaters, plus raptors includ-

ing Peregrine at Camden Head,



Oystercatcher and Herons from the cliffs. With onshore winds, at Perpendicular Point, one can see pelagic birds, though Tacking Point is better.

# 12. Sunnyvale Road at Kew

There are dry forest, wet forest and open wet grasslands along this rural road beside the Camden Haven River, with the normal suite of birds. Access: South of Port turn off the highway at Kew, head south on Nancy Bird Walton Dr and right to Sunnyvale Rd at the roundabout. After 1 km the dry forest drops to the flood plain. Further under the freeway and along the river is a wet forest. T at Kew **Birds:** Honeyeaters, Sittellas and bush birds in the forests. Raptors include, harriers, Wedge-tailed Eagle. Blacknecked Stork, Latham's Snipe, both rails and wetland birds when the area is wet.

# 13. Crowdy Bay NP – Diamond and Indian Heads

Huge and scenic dominated by heathland on the headlands and behind the wooded dunes. **Access:** South from Laurieton on Bold Street, cross the bridge and keep right, the park is 2.5km with many walking and dirt driving tracks. The circular walk from Diamond Head to Kylies Beach has wonderful coastal scenery and good birds. **PaPiT** 

Birds: Several raptors including Square-tailed Kite. Many honeyeaters especially in winter and spring including Tawny-crowned, Brown & Blue-faced, also Glossy Black-Cockatoos, four lorikeets including Little & Musk, Dusky Woodswallow and other migrants. Ground Parrot and Grass Owl are recorded but hard to find.





Peregrine Falcon

Photo Silva Vaughan-Jones

# West up the Oxley Highway

It's a long day's birding through Wauchope to Ellenborough and beyond, but there is whole new suite of birds to discover. The forests of the mountains are stunning and the rainforest at Boorganna NR not to be missed.

### 14. King Creek dam & Common

Suburban encroachment has detracted from the birding experience at the dam but good birds are still to be found that are hard to find elsewhere. Access: head towards Wauchope and 6km from the highway turn left into King Creek Rd. You reach the dam after 1.2km. The common is down Narran Close on the right a further 500m. Pa beside the road Birds: Whistling Duck and Magpie Goose,. Jacana, Azure Kingfisher and Latham's Snipe plus other ducks, herons and waterbirds. Thornbills, various wrens and honeyeaters can be found at the Common

# 15. Ellenborough Reserve and beyond

The reserve is a paradise for

weeds but birds are good and

it's a nice spot to stop. Going further west to Forbs River Rd on teh right at Yarras Keep your eyes open for Spotted Harrier, Brown Falcon and try Costigans Rd for Stubble Quail, Triller and others. Access: 35km along the Oxley Highway from Wauchope is the village of Ellenborough. Take the signposted right turn to the reserve, 500m. PaPiT Birds: An anticlockwise circular walk from the end of the reserve, down to the river should give you a good range of small birds: thornbills, wrens, Redbrowed Finches. bowerbirds. White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. Brown Quail and others. In spring and summer cuckoos including Brush are found. Going further west to Forbes River Rd on the right at Yarras keep your eyes open for Spotted Harrier, Brown Falcon and try Costigans Road for Stubble Quail, Triller and others.

# 16. Boorganna NR & Comboyne

Boorganna is a top spot for rainforest specials and holds birds not seen on the coast. A walk down to the waterfall lookout should yield most of these. Access: from Wauchope turn left after 10km to Comboyne Rd. At Comboyne, continue through the village a further 2.7km and turn right down Innes View Rd. After a further 3.7km you reach the reserve entrance. PaPiT

Birds: In Comboyne, Crimson Rosellas & bowerbirds. In spring and summer the paddocks along the road may hold Songlarks, Tawny Grassbirds and Cisticolas. At the NR check out the carpark for common birds, a Satin Bowerbird's bower, and if you're lucky, Noisy Pitta, Catbird, Paleyellow Robin, Yellow-throated Scrubwren and fruit doves. On the forest trail you could add Crested Shrike-tit, both thrushes, monarchs, Rufous Fantail, Logrunner and if you're very lucky Paradise Riflebird. There may be

a Peregrine at the Waterfall and

Bell Miners are also here.



# The Western Forests and Ranges

This is a long drive on dirt roads and you need to beware the logging trucks. You could camp at Brushy Mountain to break the trip and there are owls and mammals to spotlight if you're so inclined. There are special birds here in the mountain forests.

### 17. Bellangry

The forest around the #1 watchtower has been logged but close to the tower there are still good birds. The lookout is stupendous, with views 50km to the coast. **Access:** from Wauchope take the road to Beechwood to the right west of the town centre. At Beechwood follow the signs and turn right on to Bellangry. Follow this for 19km to the dirt and a further 8km on Hastings Forest Way to the sign for the look out. PaPiT Birds: Many small birds in the shrubbery and forest, thornbills, wrens and honeyeaters. Summer migrants, monarchs, Rufous

Fantail, cuckoos and perhaps Lyrebird.

### 18. Wilson River NR

You continue to climb but then drop down to the subtropical rainforest of this NR on the Wilson River. It's a delightful spot and another chance for rainforest specials. There are a couple of tracks and walking the road can be good as well. Access: Continue another 14km on Hastings Forest Way and take the signed right turn to the reserve and drive a further 6km. PaPiT **Birds:** *Good for rainforest birds,* Pitta, monarchs, Pale-yellow Robin, Rufous Fantail, scrubwrens, thornbills, and others. Keep an eye open along the forest roads for Painted Buttonquail.

19. Werrikimbe NP – Brushy Mountain and Plateau Beech You'll be going in to the heart of the Werrikimbe KBA, home to several rare and threatened



birds including the Rufous Scrubbird for which the KBA was recognised. You could drive the roads and stop at likely spots; the smaller tracks can be rough and only for 4WD or walk the several trails in the area through Antarctic Beech and wet forests.

Access: return to Hastings Forest Way, turn right and after 14km keep right at the intersection with Cockerawombeeba Rd, to Brushy Mountain. A further 2km and you will see the camping area sign-posted. PaPiTC

You could also visit Mt Banda Banda, signed to the right before Brushy Mt. Or Plateau Beech, take the left fork onto Cockerawombeeba Rd and after 7km follow the sign to the right.

### **PaPiTC**

Birds: The Rufous Scrub bird is more often heard than seen. Its loud reverberating call is heard from time to time. The habitat is dense and the birds very shy but you may be lucky. Olive Whistler, Red-browed Treecreeper, Striated Thornbill, Bassian Thrush, New Holland Honeyeater, Rose, Scarlet & Flame Robins, Green Catbird, Crimson Rosella and King-Parrot. Greater Sooty Owl at night.



## Further afield

As well as these wonderful sites there are still more if you are prepared to travel a little further. Going **West**, there are some great places for birds. At 11km beyond Forbes River Rd (see site 15) is the turn off to Mt Seaview Resort. From here for a further 51 kms, there are many places to stop, particularly Knodingbul Rd and Stockyard Creek rest area. There are Scrub-bird, Riflebird, Olive Whistler, Spotted Quail-thrush and many others to find.

Kangaroo flat Rd to Mooraback camp site in Werrikimbe NP can also be very productive.

**North** the Macleay Valley hosts many of the same birds plus further upstream from Kempsey there are birds normally seen over the mountains. See the **Bird Watching Guide to the Macleay Valley**.

South is the Manning Valley where similar species can be found. Farquhar Inlet at Old Bar is excellent for waders and Terns and is the site of the discovery of the Aleutian Tern in 2017. See Birding Locations of the Lower Mid North Coast for other sites.



For both guides see www.hastingsbirdwatchers.org. au

# How to get the best from this guide

- These sites have public access, please don't trespass.
- Directions: in general these are from Port Macquarie and distances are additional to those already covered.
- Binoculars and a field guide will help you get the most out of your experience.
- Go quietly in search of birds; you will see more.
- The bird list gives information

- on which birds are migrants and when they may be here.
- Remember water levels of wetlands and the state of the tide can impact when best to see birds.
- Early morning particularly and late afternoon are the best times to look for birds.
- Keep the birds' well-being in mind at all times. If you're disturbing them then leave them in peace.



This brochure is produced by **Hastings Birdwatchers** based in Port Macquarie. They hold regular field trips and other activities. For details see

www.hastingsbirdwatchers.org.au

For birding **South** of the Hastings go to the **Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers** - www.nabiac.com Then go to clubs.

For national Parks brochures and Apps see www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au



Birdwatching Field Guides: Field Guide to Australian Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight.

**Birds** Michael Morcombe. Available as books or apps, which include bird calls.

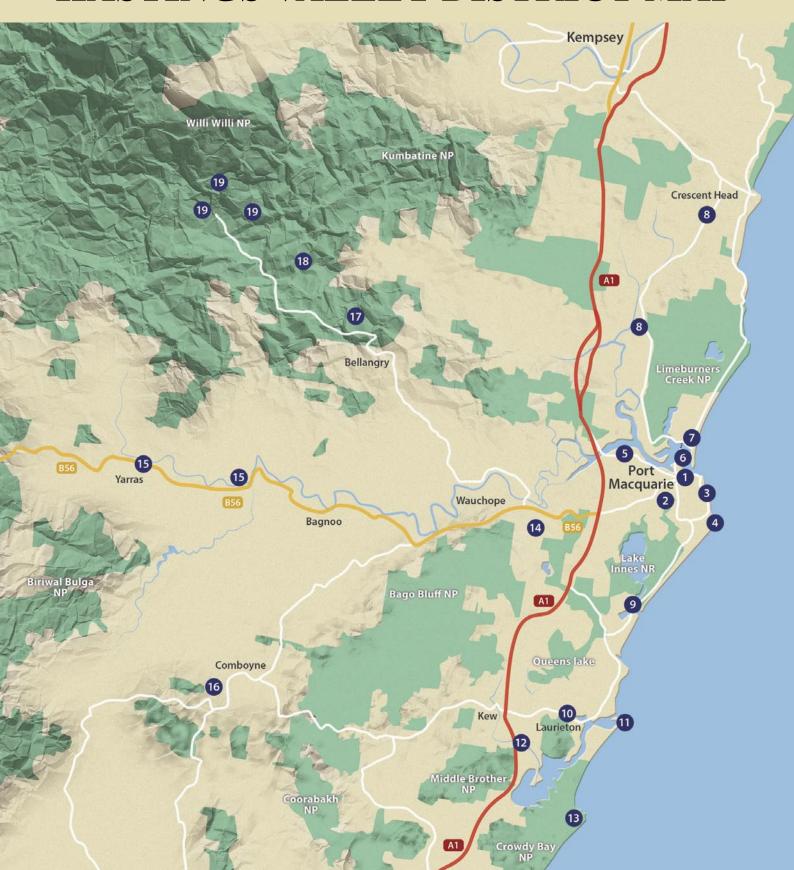
LEGEND • Pa Parking

Picnic table Pi

T Toilet

• C Camping

# HASTINGS VALLEY DISTRICT MAP



# Birds of the Hastings & Camden Haven Valleys

Summer migrants seen between September and April

Winter migrants seen between March and October

Rare vagrants and sea birds that are truly pelagic such as, albatross and petrels etc, are not listed

Magpie Goose

Plumed Whistling-Duck Wandering Whistling-duck

Pink-eared Duck Black Swan Hardhead

Pacific Black Duck

Grey Teal Chestnut Teal Freckled Duck Musk Duck

Australian Wood Duck Australian Brush-turkey

Stubble Quail Brown Quail King Quail

Australasian Grebe Hoary-headed Grebe Great Crested Grebe

Rock Dove

White-headed Pigeon

Spotted Dove

Brown Cuckoo-Dove

Wonga Pigeon

Common Bronzewing Brush Bronzewing Crested Pigeon Peaceful Dove Bar-shouldered Dove

Brown-capped Emerald-Dove

Wompoo Fruit-Dove Superb Fruit-Dove

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove

Topknot Pigeon Pheasant Coucal Eastern Koel

Channel-billed Cuckoo
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
Little Bronze-Cuckoo
Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Brush Cuckoo
Pallid Cuckoo
Tawny Frogmouth

White-throated Nightjar

Australian Owlet-nightjar White-throated Needletail

Fork-tailed Swift Lewin's Rail Buff-banded Rail

Australian Spotted Crake

Baillon's Crake Spotless Crake Purple Swamphen Dusky Moorhen Eurasian Coot

Brolga

Beach Stone-curlew

Australian Pied Oystercatcher

Sooty Oystercatcher

Pied Stilt

Pacific Golden Plover
Red-capped Plover
Double-banded Plover
Black-fronted Dotterel
Masked Lapwing
Red-kneed Dotterel
Comb-crested Jacana

Whimbrel
Eastern Curlew
Bar-tailed Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Great Knot
Red Knot
Latham's Snipe
Grey-tailed Tattler
Wandering Tattler

Painted Button-quail

Arctic Jaeger
Pomarine Jaeger
Brown Skua
Silver Gull
Little Tern

Australian Gull-billed Tern

Caspian Tern
Whiskered Tern
White-fronted Tern
Common Tern
Crested Tern

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross

**Black-browed Albatross** 

Shy Albatross
Fairy Prion
Providence Petrel
Grey-faced Petrel

Wedge-tailed Shearwater Short-tailed Shearwater

Sooty Shearwater

Flesh-footed Shearwater Fluttering Shearwater Black-necked Stork Australian Pelican Australasian Bittern Australian Little Bittern

Black Bittern

Nankeen Night-Heron

Striated Heron Cattle Egret

White-necked Heron

**Great Egret** 

Intermediate Egret White-faced Heron

Little Egret

Eastern Reef Egret
Australian White Ibis
Straw-necked Ibis
Royal Spoonbill
Australasian Gannet
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant

Australasian Darter Osprey

Black-shouldered Kite Square-tailed Kite

Pacific Baza

Wedge-tailed Eagle

Little Eagle
Swamp Harrier
Spotted Harrier
Grey Goshawk
Brown Goshawk
Collared Sparrowhawk

White-bellied Sea-Eagle

Whistling Kite Brahminy Kite Black Kite

Eastern Grass Owl Greater Sooty Owl

Masked Owl
Barn Owl
Powerful Owl
Barking Owl
Southern Boobook
Rainbow Bee-eater

Dollarbird

Azure Kingfisher
Forest Kingfisher
Sacred Kingfisher
Laughing Kookaburra
Nankeen Kestrel
Australian Hobby
Brown Falcon
Peregrine Falcon

Glossy Black-Cockatoo Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

Galah

Long-billed Corella Little Corella

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo Australian King-Parrot

Crimson Rosella Eastern Rosella Swift Parrot

**Ground Parrot** 

Musk Lorikeet Little Lorikeet Rainbow Lorikeet Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

Noisy Pitta
Superb Lyrebird
Rufous Scrub-bird
Green Catbird
Regent Bowerbird
Satin Bowerbird

White-throated Treecreeper Red-browed Treecreeper Variegated Fairy-wren Superb Fairy-wren Red-backed Fairy-wren Southern Emu-wren Scarlet Honeyeater Striped Honeyeater Noisy Friarbird Little Friarbird Brown Honeyeater

New Holland Honeyeater White-cheeked Honeyeater Blue-faced Honeyeater

Brown-headed Honeyeater White-naped Honeyeater Tawny-crowned Honeyeater

Eastern Spinebill
Lewin's Honeyeater
Little Wattlebird
Regent Honeyeater
Red Wattlebird
Fuscous Honeyeater

Yellow-faced Honeyeater Bell Miner Noisy Miner Spotted Pardalote Striated Pardalote Brown Gerygone

White-throated Gerygone

Mangrove Gerygone Yellow-throated Scrubwren

White-browed Scrubwren Large-billed Scrubwren Yellow-rumped Thornbill

Yellow Thornbill Striated Thornbill Brown Thornbill Australian Logrunner

Varied Sittella

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike

Cicadabird

White-winged Triller

Varied Triller

Spotted Quail-thrush

Olive Whistler
Rufous Whistler
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Crested Shrike-tit
Eastern Whipbird
Australasian Figbird
Olive-backed Oriole
Pied Currawong

Australian Magpie

Pied Butcherbird Grey Butcherbird Masked Woodswallow

White-browed Woodswallow

**Dusky Woodswallow** 

White-breasted Woodswallow

Spangled Drongo
Willie Wagtail
Rufous Fantail
Grey Fantail
Torresian Crow
Forest Raven
Australian Raven
Leaden Flycatcher
Satin Flycatcher

Magpie-lark

Spectacled Monarch Black-faced Monarch Paradise Riflebird

Restless Flycatcher

Rose Robin Flame Robin Scarlet Robin Jacky Winter

Eastern Yellow Robin
Pale-yellow Robin
Mistletoebird

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin

Red-browed Finch Double-barred Finch House Sparrow Australasian Pipit European Goldfinch Golden-headed Cisticola

Brown Songlark Rufous Songlark Tawny Grassbird Little Grassbird

Australian Reed-Warbler

Fairy Martin
Tree Martin
Welcome Swallow

welcome Swame

Silvereye

Common Starling
Common Myna
Bassian Thrush
Russet-tailed Thrush