



INTRODUCTION TO BIRDWATCHING ON KANGAROO ISLAND

REGIONAL GUIDE



**KANGAROO
ISLAND**
TOURISM ALLIANCE



Kangaroo Island Regional Birdwatching Guide, produced by Craig Wickham and Jane Renwick, Aug 2022 for the Kangaroo Island Tourism Alliance

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Use all of your senses

With bright colours and fast movement, your sight is usually the first sense used in finding birds. Bird song is unique to each type of bird - although some trick us by mimicking the call of others! The scolding alarm call of the bush birds often alerts you to predators - tiger snakes, goannas or even raptors hunting overhead. Your sense of smell can also come in handy - smelling the perfume of blossoms might alert you to the chance of seeing spinebills or other honeyeaters. The unmistakable pong of cormorant roosts and little penguin burrows offer different clues. Touching plants and discovering they are sharp and thorny indicates they could be suitable for wrens and thornbills. Feeling the heat on a hot day reminds us that creatures like kangaroos with thick fur are likely to seek out deep shade or protected areas on a windy day.

What time is it?

The “early bird gets the worm” is not just a saying. Although many creatures are active throughout the day, early mornings are a time of increased activity for many. Others are nocturnal - owls, bats, and smaller mammals like wallabies and possums, and there are several reasons for this. They can avoid being lunch for a predator like a wedge-tailed eagle, they might increase their chance of finding food, and in warmer months, avoid the heat of the day. So think about what you want to see, when they are likely to be active, and plan around that.

A diversity of birdlife

By the numbers, it is pretty compelling: 263 species of birds representing 69 different bird families. 32% are found only in Australia. Many of them, having evolved in isolation, are classified as a Kangaroo Island subspecies. Some of these are grey currawong; superb fairy-wren; crimson rosella; glossy black-cockatoo; crescent honeyeater; New Holland honeyeater; purple-gaped honeyeater; red wattlebird, and; western whiplbird. There are sixteen local endemic species in total.

Kangaroo Island has many different birds, and there are many reasons for this. It has diverse geology and soils, leading to many kinds of vegetation growing. There is also enough change in topography to create varying rainfall. Many parks and reserves protect large areas of native vegetation, and agricultural development has kept a large amount of habitat as entire blocks or corridors. There are few introduced pests, predators and weeds - and the community is working hard on managing problems like feral pigs and cats.

Land development patterns and habitat diversity have caused a significant “edge effect” that gives plenty of foraging and shelter areas and, happily for birdwatchers, birds can be more accessible to see than if they were deep in the forest. Soils are low in nutrients, which drives plant diversity and short trees, which is also good news for birdwatching – less strain on the neck!

Habitats

Key habitat types across Kangaroo Island:

- Oceanic - open ocean over and beyond the continental shelf
- Coastal - beaches, cliffs, salt marsh and estuaries
- Inland waters - lagoons, rivers, swamps and dams
- Coastal mallee - coastal scrubs, heath and shrubland on limestone and calcareous dunes
- Stringybark /mallee open scrub - woodland on the acid soils of the central plateau
- Forest - river valleys and alluvial plains
- Cleared or largely cleared farmland
- Sheoak woodland

Key species

Typical targets for birdwatching on Kangaroo Island is dependent on seasonality and your level of birdwatching expertise. Local birders are likely to focus on endemic subspecies and try to understand how the Island birds are different. Those not familiar with Australian birds find the Island gives good access to some iconic species in a relatively compact space. A good target list for a visit of 3-4 days might (depending on the season) include the following:

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|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hooded Plover | Glossy Black-cockatoo | White-bellied Sea-eagle |
| Eastern Osprey | Superb Fairy-wren | Tawny-crowned honeyeater |
| Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo | Wedge-tailed Eagle | Western Whipbird |
| Spotted Pardalote | Golden Whistler | Southern Emu-wren |
| Striated Thornbill | Musk Duck | Crescent Honeyeater |
| Beautiful Firetail | Grey Currawong | Rock Parrot |
| Cape Barren Goose | Little Penguin | Crimson Rosella |
| Red Wattlebird | Scarlet Robin | Black-faced Cormorant |
| Black Swan | White-browed Scrubwren | Eastern Spinebill |
| Purple-crowned Lorikeet | Yellow-billed Spoonbill | Red-browed Finch |

This list includes some easier targets as well as a few challenges. The best way to find some of the more elusive species is to talk to the locals. Good luck finding plenty of feathered friends - the following regional guide will help you plan your exploration.



KANGAROO ISLAND REGIONAL BIRDWATCHING GUIDE

Kangaroo Island is fortunate to have many different types of habitat represented in our large estate of National and Conservation Parks, local reserves, along roadsides, fencelines and our creeks and rivers. Two-thirds of the Island is private property, so please seek permission before entering land unless it is obviously public access. Areas listed in this regional guide are public and easy to find and explore. If you need advice, reach out to the locals, who are usually happy to assist with directions. Be considerate of others and ensure you park well off roads when you stop to explore. The regional guides have been contributed by different authors and edited for consistency - they are acknowledged at the end of each section.

American River and Pelican Lagoon

American River and its surroundings have some excellent birding spots. 'The River is home to a flock of Glossy-black Cockatoos, boasts both resident and migratory shorebirds and has diverse bush in and around the town that abounds with smaller birds. On very high tides, Pied Oystercatchers are often pushed up onto pasture inland of the road as you approach the town, sometimes in large numbers. Cape Barren Geese and Australian White Ibis are common sightings here. Along the shores of Pelican Lagoon and the edge of Eastern Cove, ducks, swans, grebes, herons, egrets, spoonbills, pelicans and oystercatchers are prolific.

Watch for international migratory species such as Common Greenshank and the odd Whimbrel or Eastern Curlew in spring and summer. Pelicans hang around the boat ramp to greet returning fishermen, hoping for a free meal. The bird hide at the Country Fire Service station is an excellent

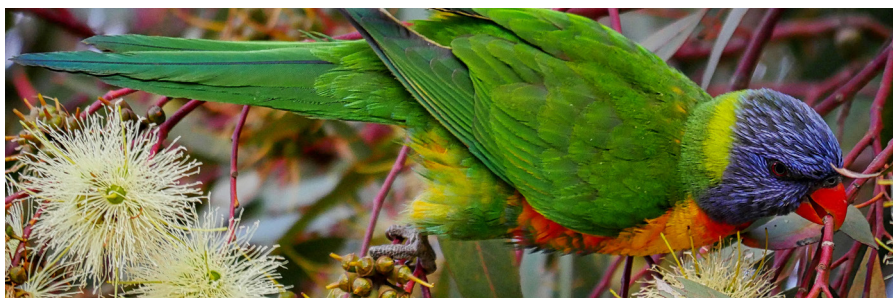
spot for shorebirds. Careful observers enjoy seeing secretive birds such as crakes and rails ducking in and out of the vegetation along the tidal creek just alongside. Inland directly across the road are several tall pines. Walk under these trees and look directly up into the tangle of branches. You can often find roosting Nankeen Night-Herons staring at you with piercing eyes. This can be like a “Where’s Wally” game, so you might have to be patient!

Early morning and late afternoon, Glossy-Black Cockatoos are often seen and heard uphill from the town hall. These are not typical rowdy cockatoos - you sometimes only discover their presence by hushed contact calls and a subtle clicking as they shred sheoak cones to extract nutritious seeds. During the day, they often feed in the sheoaks along the ‘Cannery Trail’, signposted on the northern end of town. Stay alert for a Wedge-tailed Eagle, White-bellied Sea-eagle or Eastern Osprey soaring overhead along this trail. Golden Whistlers, Scarlet Robins and White-browed Scrubwrens are amongst the bush birds which inhabit this area. The strident “ee-GYPT” call of the Crescent Honeyeater is a constant from the sugar gum forest through town – a big sound from a bird that weighs less than 20 grams.

Other common birdsongs are musical trills from Superb Fairy-wrens and the unusual clanging call of the Grey Currawong. After dark, the mournful “weer-loo” of the Bush Stone-curlew and “mopoke” song of Southern Boobook Owls blend with screeching possums foraging in the trees. Pennington Bay on the south coast is a favourite for fishermen, surfers and those who love an incredible seascape. The open beach is home to Hooded Plovers and dense coastal heath immediately inland supports populations of Southern Emu-wrens, Shy-Heathwrens and Purple-gaped Honeyeaters. During and after a blow, Australasian Gannets and albatross can sometimes be seen out at sea.

Acknowledgements: Birdlife Australia





Flinders Chase and the West End

Despite Flinders Chase National Park covering the entire west end, most visitors only explore the southwest portion. The former farm around May's Homestead on the Rocky River floodplain is on the main road, and almost everyone enters the park here. This is the most reliable place to see Cape Barren Geese, especially in winter and spring when they have young. It is an excellent location to see Crimson Rosellas and Grey Currawongs.

Usually found searching through leaves of the Eucalypts are the tiny Spotted and Striated Pardalotes. A walk down towards the platypus pools delivers encounters with Brown and Striated Thornbills, Crescent Honeyeaters and Golden Whistlers. Red Wattlebirds are common, and Little Wattlebirds are more likely in stringybark forest - especially in low-lying areas with Crimson Bottlebrush understorey. Eastern Spinebills are common here. The granite outcrops of Remarkable Rocks provide elevated vantage points for Australian Ravens and Nankeen Kestrels. The melodious call of Tawny-crowned Honeyeater usually offers a soundtrack to exploring these fantastic natural sculptures. The dense heath and bonsai forest of coastal mallee is home to the furtive trio of Southern Emu-wrens, Shy Heathwren and Western Whipbird. More readily seen are Purple-gaped Honeyeaters.

The cliffs of Cape du Couedic and the southwest offer lookouts and nest sites for Peregrine Falcons, Eastern Osprey and White-bellied Sea-eagles. Protected from bushfires for many years, the low bush surrounding the lighthouse keepers' cottages often delivers Silvereyes, White-browed Scrubwren, Superb Fairy-wrens and for lucky observers, Southern Emu-wrens. The long-nosed fur-seal colony and grotto known as Admirals Arch are the main attractions for the extreme southwest tip of the Island. It is worth watching out for Pacific Gulls plucking massive sea snails off the rocks. Then, they fly high enough to drop and smash the hard shells on the rocks, releasing a delicious snack. In September and October, enormous flocks of Short-tailed Shearwaters pass in an endless stream headed



west to breed in the Bight and further west, only to return in April and May. Estimates of the abundance of these birds are more than 20,000 per hour, making this one of the world's most significant wildlife migrations. The islets off Cape du Couedic are the nesting place of thousands of Crested Terns. They often roost near the fur seals, making close inspection for occasional interlopers of other terns possible.

There are many other birdwatching opportunities in Flinders Chase with such a vast wilderness. A few additional highlights are Beautiful Firetails in the mature she-oak woodlands - especially near Cape Borda. The large trees in the Ravine des Casoars are good spots for Yellow-tailed Black- and Sulphur-crested cockatoos. The damp gullies in the high rainfall western plateau shelter Bassian Thrush and the low open woodland in the northwest hosts annual visits by Elegant Parrots.

D'Estrees Bay, Murray Lagoon and the Macgillivray wetlands

Murray Lagoon is best for birds in winter and spring when water levels are typically higher. At this time, look out for stilts, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and other waders on the mudflats around Timber Creek bird walk and countless swans, ducks, ibis, grebe, and coots from the Bald Hill Lookout. Early morning or evening will usually give the most sightings. Rarely seen but often heard is the constant three-note whistle of the Little Grassbird. More visible - especially perched on fences adjacent to samphire marsh, are White-fronted Chats with their unusual metallic zinging call.

Look for solitary Musk or Blue-billed Ducks from the bridge over the Timber Creek and Superb Fairy-wrens hopping confidently around the car park at the Timber Creek trailhead. Adjacent pastures are foraged by large flocks of ibis and, seasonally, Cape Barren Geese. Murray Lagoon is an excellent spot for birds of prey. Overhead, Nankeen Kestrels and Black-shouldered Kites hover. Brown Falcons perch on bare limbs scouting for prey. The broad rocking wings of hunting Swamp Harriers are a constant - a white-rump patch is a good field mark for adult birds. Peregrine Falcons hunt across the lagoon and surrounding pastures, as do much larger Wedge-tailed and White-bellied Sea Eagles.

D'Estrees is home to a variety of shorebirds. Point Tinline offers roosts for large numbers of Crested Terns and several types of cormorants. Australasian Gannets often fly just offshore or occasionally spear into the sea from a great height, smashing into bait balls brought to the surface by dolphins and predatory fish. An osprey nest, first sketched by a shipwrecked artist in the 1850s, is still in use on the tip of Point Tinline. A pair of Eastern Osprey are usually perched on the nest, fishing for rock cod or leatherjackets in the shallows or looking out from the adjacent cliffs. Hooded and Red-capped Plovers forage on Wreckers and Wheaton's Beach and Sanderlings, Red-necked Stints, and Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. There is always a White-faced Heron or Eastern Reef Egret somewhere. Look for Ruddy Turnstones fossicking in the seaweed that lines the shore. Driving south, keep an eye out for Rock Parrots - often only seen flying away from the low plants they forage - eating fruit and seeds. These small olive-green parrots are regular visitors in the year's first half. Coastal heath grading into mallee at the more exposed cove south of Wheaton's Beach provides excellent cover for hard-to-find Southern Emu-wrens, Western Whipbirds and Shy Heathwrens.

At Macgillivray Wetlands, Winter and Spring visitors will enjoy a drive down through Wattle Grange to Lade's Road - through pastures seasonally flooded and exploited by many ducks and other waterfowl. Nearby, very salty tea-tree ringed lagoons are home to large numbers of Australian Shelduck and occasional large flocks of White-headed and Banded Stilts and Red-necked Avocets.

Acknowledgements: Pat Brooksby, Ruth de la Lande and Birdlife Australia



Penneshaw and the Dudley Peninsula

This region is a microcosm of the larger portion of the Island. Calcareous sediments dominate the south coast; mallee-covered dunes, limestone cliffs, and exposed beaches. Narrow-leaf mallee corridors along roadsides and fence lines border productive pastures through the central plateau. A more protected north coast has bold headlands protecting sheltered beaches. Near the ferry terminal in Penneshaw, you often find Pied and Black-faced cormorants and large numbers of Crested Terns. The beach nearby usually has Pied Oystercatchers, Masked Lapwings and occasional Hooded Plovers.

Starting at the ferry car park is a walk that takes you through the Penguin Centre reserve, where there is still a small colony of Little Penguins. You cannot see the penguins during the day, but you can take a tour from the centre at night with an experienced guide. Nankeen Night-Herons occasionally reward careful observers at night on the beach. If you want to explore on foot, continue eastwards along the coast and up to Baudin Conservation Park, where Glossy-black Cockatoos often feed in the she-oaks. In winter, look out for Southern Right Whales; year-round, you often see dolphins off the coast. Tammar Wallabies are plentiful in the denser scrub and only move out into the open after dark. Albatrosses sometimes fly close to the land in stormy weather, and White-bellied Sea Eagles and Eastern Ospreys often soar overhead. Driving west out of Penneshaw, you drop off the higher plateau at American Beach. You can park and take a walk seeking out Hooded Plovers on the protected shoreline.

Island Beach is excellent for water birds, especially at low tide. Look out for Pelicans, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Red-capped Plovers, Hooded Plovers, Red-necked Stints, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Bar-tailed Godwits and sometimes Whimbrels. Again, look for ospreys and White-bellied Sea Eagles high overhead. On Cape Willoughby Road, about 15km from Penneshaw, is Lashmar Lagoon. It is a great place to spot ducks, swans and other water birds and waders.

Nearby is Antechamber Bay's white sand beach, with breeding pairs of Hooded Plovers. The tall gums and tea-tree thickets along Chapman River are always worth checking for bush birds, and keen eyes might spot a Nankeen Night-Heron at its day roost. Right out at the exposed promontory of Cape Willoughby, panoramic sea views often provide sightings of Australasian Gannets and a variety of other oceanic birds. Approaching the lighthouse, open grasslands are perfect for Nankeen Kestrels and Black-shouldered Kites hovering overhead and Australian Pipits running along roadsides before flitting off.

Acknowledgements: Nick Pike and Birdlife Australia



NORTH COAST

It is better to explore the north coast from west to east from a visual perspective. The beaches provide essential habitat for endangered Hooded Plovers. At Western River Cove, a pair often feeds on the shoreline, resting amongst the beach-washed seaweed where they are impossibly well camouflaged. In summer, they nest in a simple shallow dish of sand. Always give them plenty of room as they are vulnerable to disturbance that can result in them losing their chicks. Often perched near the river, Little Pied Cormorants frequent streams and farm dams across the Island. The rocks at the river mouth usually have a flock of Crested Terns, and White-bellied Sea-eagles are regular visitors. Check the sheoak woodland on the valley slopes above the beach as Glossy-black Cockatoos sometimes feed here. Stands of sheoaks along the north coast offer a chance to see the well-named Beautiful Firetail - one of our most elegant finches, and occasionally, European Goldfinches. Deep valleys and high ridges combine to deliver thermals, which Wedge-tailed Eagles use to effortlessly survey vast areas as they hunt for unwary small mammals. Tall stands of Sugar Gums are essential nesting areas for parrots - Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Crimson Rosellas, and Galahs are regular encounters.

Constitution Hill above Snellings Beach puts you at eye level with Nankeen Kestrels and Wedge-tails. The beach below is a favourite for Hooded Plovers, Crested Terns, and an occasional solitary Caspian Tern or Pacific Gulls. The meandering lower reaches of the Middle River are just east of the beach where Little Pied Cormorants are a chance. This area is also a regular haunt for Australasian Darters not often observed on the Island. The patch of redgums right where the river goes under the road is worth

looking for Crescent, Brown-headed and White-naped Honeyeaters. It is a reliable place to spot koalas. Stokes Bay has a rocky cobble beach and a beautiful sandy beach with an exciting access route.

The small basin at the west end of the rocky beach has a boat ramp where Australian Pelicans wait expectantly for fishermen to return. Often perched nearby are cormorants, gulls and terns, and Eastern Reef Egrets and White-faced Heron often stalk crabs and small fish in the rockpools. The tunnel to the beach provides sheltered nesting sites for Striated Pardalotes, Welcome Swallows and occasionally Little Penguins. Nankeen Kestrels nest in the limestone cliffs above and Hooded Plovers on the sandy beach. Again it is an opportunity for White-bellied Sea-Eagles overhead.

Set aside to protect the habitat of Glossy-black Cockatoos, artificial nesting hollows on tall sugar gums have increased nesting opportunities in the deep gullies of Latham Conservation Park. These can be seen from the roadside if you look carefully into the valley. Emu Bay has a similar range of birds to Stokes Bay. It shares the same characteristics - the cobble beach near the jetty, a pelican-attracting boat ramp and an endless sand beach frequented by Hooded Plovers. Being popular with visitors and locals alike - and a beach you can drive on means these birds are under pressure - people are encouraged not to drive right to the end to leave some room for nature.





SOUTH COAST

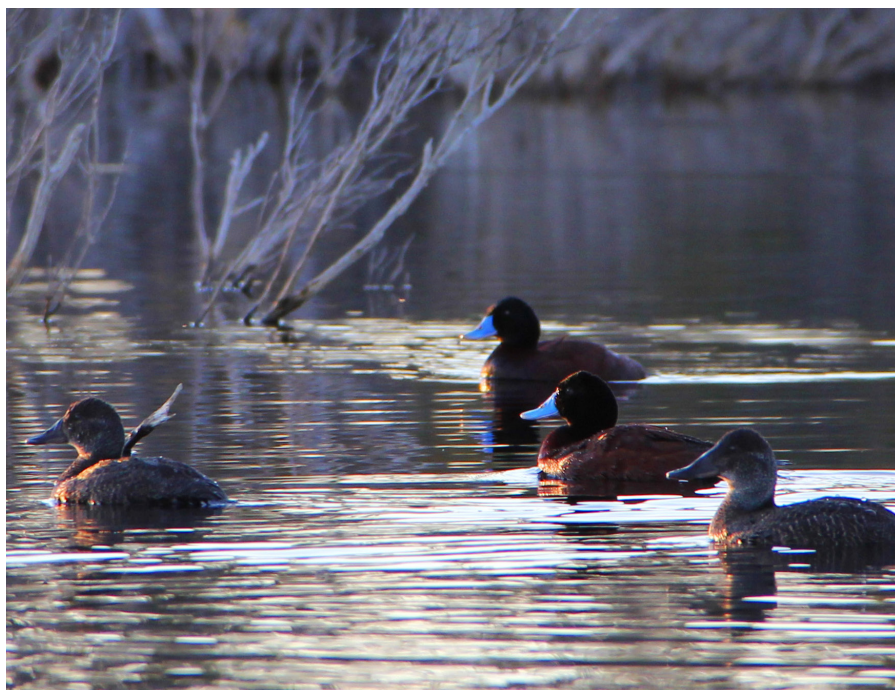
This section focuses on Seal Bay, Bales Bay, Point Ellen and Hanson Bay, as large sections of the South Coast (Pennington Bay, D'Estrees Bay and the southwest portion of Flinders Chase National Park) are covered elsewhere in this guide. The wildlife experience at Seal Bay starts in the car park where confident Superb Fairy-wrens hop - or, in the breeding season, attack their "competition" in the mirrors of parked cars. White-browed Scrubwrens, Brown and Striated Thornbills often explore dryland tea-tree and coastal mallee thickets. Honeyeaters (mainly New Holland and Purple-gaped) often queue to drink from the sprinklers installed for bushfire protection in front of the visitor centre. The beach at Seal Bay - and the iconic Australian Sea-lions can be accessed by the self-guided boardwalk or with a guide who takes you right onto the beach. The beach regularly delivers Crested Terns, Sooty Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers. Great Cormorants often fly past from their roost on Danger Point shared with Pied and Black-faced Cormorants. Eastern Ospreys and White-bellied Sea-eagles nest nearby and often hunt inside the reefs that protect the bay.

Bales Bay, only a few kilometres east of Seal Bay, is often overlooked by visitors. It offers protected shallows to the west - frequently visited by solitary White-faced Herons or Eastern Reef Egrets, and a long and exposed wild surf beach to the east. Sooty Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers regularly patrol the beach. The coastal heath grading into mallee provides habitat for a range of honeyeaters, Southern Emu-wrens, Western Whipbirds and pardalotes. The picnic area offers easy access and good BBQ facilities - this is a favourite haunt of Purple-gaped honeyeaters.

Vivonne Bay to the west has a mix of habitat types. The seasonally flooded sedges west of where Point Ellen Road intersects South Coast Road offers cover for feeding crakes and rails. Dense tea-tree along the Harriet River has day roosts for nocturnal Boobook owls and Nankeen Night-Herons, perches for Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, and plenty of shelter for smaller bush birds. The open beach hosts Hooded Plovers and Sooty Oystercatchers. The rocky headland at Point Ellen provides opportunities for Little Penguins to nest in burrows excavated below the calcrete cap on low limestone cliffs. The low heath and mallee are reliable locations for Rock Parrots, Southern Emu-wrens, and a wide range of smaller bush birds. The beacon on Point Ellen is a good vantage point for oceanic species blown in by strong southerlies - Short-tailed Shearwaters and Australasian Gannets being most likely sightings during a storm.

The last accessible beach on the South Coast is Hanson Bay. Like Vivonne Bay, it has a freshwater estuary that seasonally drains into the ocean. Habitat opportunities and the resultant birdwatching opportunities here are very similar. There is a very protected cove closest to the car park. A path over the low rocky headland at the end of the first cove takes you to a high-energy surf beach.





Cygnnet River, Shoal Bay and Kingscote

Kingscote sits between two bays - the protected Bay of Shoals to the north and, separated by Reeves Point Heritage Park, the more open Nepean Bay. The extensive estuary of Cygnnet River, the Island's largest drainage basin, is south of the township. One of the first things often seen on the drive into Kingscote is a massive flock of Little Corellas. Sometimes considered a pest, these birds provide a spectacle only beaten in size by the giant kangaroo and Glossy-black cockatoos beautifully painted on the silos on the edge of town. The wharf precinct often has long-nosed fur-seals lolling in the water or hauled out near the old slipway. The jetty pylons and various posts provide excellent perches for gulls and cormorants. For a novice birdwatcher, it is helpful to see a few species side by side. Black-faced Cormorant can be contrasted with the yellow face of Pied Cormorants at close range - giving an excellent chance to tune up your observation skills. Little Black Cormorants are indeed little compared to the Great Cormorant, also uniformly black.

Turning right away from the jetty takes you over the hill to Reeves Point, where Black Swans feed on shallow seagrass meadows. Numbers vary seasonally as winter rains fill inland ponds with fresh water and entice the swans to breed, only to return in early summer as the water evaporates. Drive past the old mulberry tree you can park opposite the picnic ground. A short walk takes you to an excellent bird hide at its best at high tide. During low tide, the birds disperse, but the rising tide will concentrate them closer to the hide. This location often delivers large numbers and good diversity: Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers; Pacific and Silver Gulls, Masked Lapwings, Crested and Caspian Terns; Black-faced, Pied, Little Black and Great Cormorants; international migratory waders like the occasional Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Red Knots or Sharp-tailed Sandpiper; Australian Pelicans; Chestnut and Grey Teal; all of these packed into a relatively compact space.

If you lift your gaze (binoculars are necessary for this next bit), you can see Busby Islet. This low, vegetated outpost is a Prohibited Area - protecting a critical breeding area for many of the birds listed above and is visited by Rock Parrots, Little Grassbirds, and Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. To the left (west), you often see Black Swans and Musk Ducks in the shallows. Be sure to walk through the trees in the park as if they are flowering, they often host Rainbow and Purple-crowned Lorikeets. Other regular encounters are pardalotes, wood swallows, Superb Fairy-wrens, Grey Fantail, thornbills and Willie Wagtails. A suite of salt lakes at the back of the Bay of Shoals is a remnant of higher sea levels in the distant past. These are best accessed on a drive out towards Emu Bay and are visible on the left. If there is water in these extremely salty lakes, they can contain Australian Shelduck, Red-necked Avocets and White-headed or Banded Stilts. It is an “all or nothing” chance - and always worth a look.





The last location described in this part of the Island is Duck Lagoon - an almost permanent freshwater wetland on the Cygnet River. Signposted from Playford Highway, it is located down Duck Lagoon Road. Tall trees ring the lagoon - the main species are red, blue, sugar, and rough-barked manna gum. There are also drooping she-oaks and crimson bottlebrush and a beautiful covered avenue of narrow-leaved mallee on approach. This diversity, combined with extensive pastures, means this location delivers a range of bird, plant and animal encounters. Koalas usually snooze in the trees. Brown-headed Honeyeaters sometimes pester sleepy koalas by plucking great beakfuls of fur to make a warm and luxurious nest lining. Other honeyeaters regularly seen are Crescent, New Holland, White-naped and White-eared, and Red Wattlebirds. A familiar sound is the grating rhythmic call of the Restless Flycatcher, as is the gentle chat of Glossy-black Cockatoos feeding nearby. Typical waterbird encounters include Little Pied Cormorant; Australian White Ibis; Straw-necked Ibis; Chestnut Teal; Grey Teal; Hoary-headed Grebe; Pacific Black Duck; Australasian Shoveler; Australian Shelduck; Eurasian Coot; Black Swans. If outback waterways are dry, species such as Pink-eared Duck and even rare Freckled Duck use this as a critical drought refuge.

Parndana and Central Plateau

A stop in the tiny settlement of Parndana will often turn up a variety of birds. Many residents have planted their gardens with plenty of flowers - natives and exotics alike. These attract many nectar feeders and insectivores like cheeky Superb Fairy-wrens. If flowering gums near the hotel are blooming, look out for bossy Red Wattlebirds and New Holland Honeyeaters, rowdy Rainbow Lorikeets and fast-moving smaller Purple-crowned Lorikeets. Long-flowering bottlebrush flowers also attract honeyeaters and lorikeets. The hotel car park has large banksias, an essential winter nectar source. Purple-crowned Lorikeets are hard to see out in the bush if the trees they visit are tall and dense, so seeing them in lower trees in a setting where they are accustomed to people is a treat. They have adapted to urban living here and in Kingscote by sometimes nesting in the open ends of the metal cross-bars on the power poles.

The waste-water oxidation ponds on the main highway at the end of the main street are worth a quick look - mainly for ducks. Possibilities include Pink-eared Duck, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Hardheads and Pacific Black Duck, and Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes. Planted as windbreaks, lumber plantations and feature trees on farm driveways, tall stands of pine trees are always worth checking for feeding Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Having sentries posted on prominent points makes them easy to spot, as does the constant chatter between feeding birds. Winding your windows down to listen is a good tip.

Members of the golf club have generously invited visitors onto their course, looking for birds and other wildlife. Please be careful and respect any players out there by giving them plenty of room but enjoy the opportunity for a walk in an open and well-maintained landscape.

Seddon Conservation Park, only a few kilometres south of Parndana, has no facilities but offers a peaceful stop to explore the flowers and birdlife. The deeper gullies in the creeks are suitable for White-eared and White-naped honeyeaters and Little Wattlebirds. The mix of open pasture through the farmland and broad corridors of bush on roadside, fencelines and creeks is tailor-made for Australian Magpies, Masked Lapwings, Australian Pipits and larger flocks of Little Ravens. On the wetter pastures west of Parndana, there is always a chance of the less common Banded Lapwing. The broad horizons and big skies through the central plateau make it pretty easy to spot Wedge-tailed Eagles circling high above - often in pairs.



