

BIRDING AROUND BUSSELTON

The Busselton area is an excellent one for birding with its great range of habitats - forest, heath, wetlands and ocean - where over 200 species have been recorded. Eleven of the thirteen species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia can be found here - seven are common or moderately common.

1 VASSE RIVER

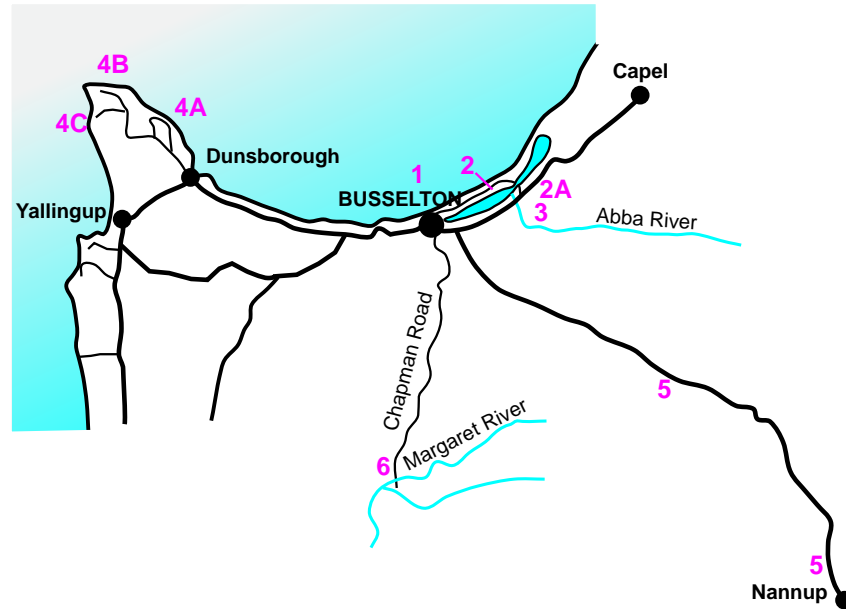
In the centre of Busselton near the shire and tourist offices can be seen many species of waterbirds including Blue-billed and Musk Duck, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Purple Swamphen. Herons, ibis, egrets and cormorants are all to be seen, including the shy Nankeen Night-Heron.

2 VASSE-WONNERUP ESTUARY

This estuary varies from fresh to brackish water and is a RAMSAR listed site. Up to 33 000 birds and 60 species have been recorded at times. The number of JAMBA species stands at 21 and includes such interesting sightings as Black-tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper and Pacific Golden Plover.

Low, dense, fringing vegetation provides a breeding refuge for many species of waterfowl. In the swamps nearby ibises, egrets and Yellow-billed Spoonbill breed while Black Swan breeds at the northern end of the Wonnerup Estuary. You should also see some of the following - Australian Pelican, Little Egret, Nankeen Night-Heron, Eastern Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Red-necked Avocet and Whiskered Tern. Little Grassbird, though elusive, will often be heard calling from dense shrubs and reeds.

From the Busselton Tourist Bureau, travel eastwards along Peel Terrace which soon becomes Layman Road so that the river and estuary are on your right all the way.



2A LAYMAN PICNIC AREA - MALBUP CREEK

By continuing along Layman Road and crossing the estuary near Lockville House, you will reach Wonnerup House (National Trust) on the left. Approximately 100 m beyond this is Layman Picnic Area car park. The picnic area is among Tuarts, which shelter many species of bushbirds.

Across the road from the picnic area car park a small gate provides access to a path which leads to an excellent bird hide. This overlooks Malbup Creek where it joins the Abba River and the Vasse Estuary.

Take mosquito repellent and beware of Tiger Snakes in the area.

3 LUDLOW TUART FOREST

This can be reached by continuing south along Layman Road and turning left into Tuart Drive. Alternatively, from the Busselton Tourist Bureau, turn right over the Vasse River Bridge and drive

along Causeway Road to the roundabout. Turn left onto Bussell Highway. Approximately 6 km from Busselton turn left into Tuart Drive. There are several roads and tracks off the bitumen which provide access to the forest.

Look for Whistling Kite, Splendid Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Western Gerygone, Inland Thornbill, Scarlet Robin and Grey Butcherbird.

4 LEEUWIN-NATURALISTE NATIONAL PARK

This park comprises sections of the 80 km coastal strip between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin. The coast is noted for steep cliffs and rolling surf. Banksia - Jarrah - Marri woodlands dominate with Rottneest Island Teetree common on the coastal cliffs.

4A MEELUP - CASTLE ROCK - EAGLE BAY

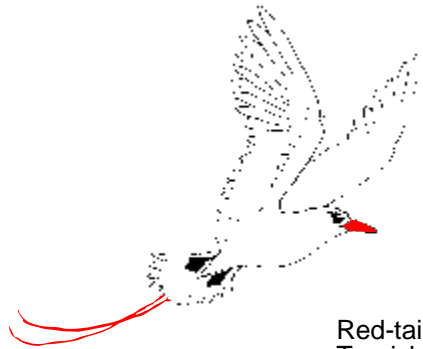
Along the access road to Cape Naturaliste there are picnic areas, roads and tracks to explore. One of these, Meelup Road, should provide sightings of Western Rosella, Scarlet and White-breasted Robin, Golden Whistler and Splendid Fairy-wren. This stretch of coast is also good for seabirds, especially after winter storms.

4B CAPE NATURALISTE

This area, 13 km north-west of Dunsborough, is a good place in winter to watch out for seabirds. Southern Giant-Petrel, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Little Shearwater and Australasian Gannet are a few of the species recorded.

4C SUGARLOAF ROCK

During summer, several pairs of Red-tailed Tropicbird breed here. This is its most southerly breeding area in the world. It can be observed from the lookout on the mainland. In the winter look out for seabirds.



Red-tailed
Tropicbird

5 NANNUP

Look out for bush birds as you travel from Busselton to Nannup along the Vasse Highway. There are several forestry tracks off the highway worth exploring as you pass through the Whicher Ranges.

You may see Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Baudin's Black-Cockatoo, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Red-eared Firetail, Grey Currawong and many other species. In the Nannup townsite is Higgins Swamp, worth a visit for waterbirds.

Check with the Nannup Tourist Bureau as you cross the bridge into Nannup for directions to Barrabup Pool, where Splendid and Red-winged Fairy-wren should be seen. Black Bittern is also a possibility.

6 CANE BREAK POOL

A picnic and swimming area near the headwaters of the Margaret River. Follow Chapman Hills Road to Cane Break Road (gravel), then turn left for 200 metres at the sign. The surrounding bush and tracks are worth exploring for Red-winged Fairy-wren, Red-eared Firetail and many other species of birds.

LOCAL CONTACT

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WHAT IS BIRDS AUSTRALIA?

Birds Australia is a non-profit organisation working for the enjoyment, study and conservation of Australia's birds.

The Western Australian members of Birds Australia are state-wide and are offered a variety of activities and services including conservation and research projects, excursions, camp-outs, bird surveys and social activities.

We also have a library, books for sale and information about birds.

To view our full range of bird guides and bird lists, visit our web site.

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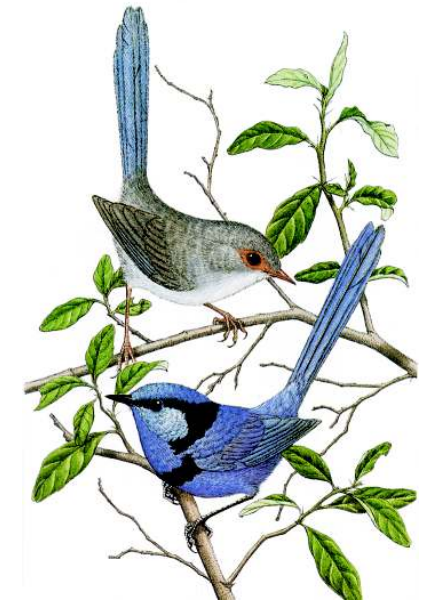
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Splendid Fairy-wren



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