

NATIONAL LANDCARE PROJECTS

The National Landcare Program provides funds to community groups who carry out projects for the management and conservation of land, vegetation, water and biodiversity in their location.

BIRDWATCHING AROUND ESPERANCE

Esperance is building up an excellent record of achievements in conservation and rehabilitation of the land. There have been one million trees planted annually since 1989 in the Esperance Agricultural District, mostly along drainage lines and watercourses and on wind erodible sands. Some 40% of farmers have farm plans, and 20% are involved in catchment planning, so plantings are often in corridors, linking plantings to remnant vegetation. Thousands of hectares of fodder shrubs have been planted, mostly tagasaste and saltbush.

Achievements include:

Gary and Jan English - inaugural winner of the WA and National Land Manager of the year award (1989/90)

Neridup Soil Conservation Group - finalists, WA Landcare Awards 1991

JA & A Middleton - finalists, WA Landcare Awards 1992

Esperance Shire Council - John Tonkin Award, Local Government Prize

The Esperance Landcare Development Corporation, Landcare Groups and the Esperance Shire are currently working on a number of projects to protect and enhance various wetlands in the district, such as the Lake Monjingup development project.

Lake Warden, Lake Wheatfield and Mullet Lake are internationally recognised.

1. COASTAL WALK

Walk along any beach and look out for Sooty Oystercatcher, Silver and Pacific Gull, Crested Tern and Rock Parrot. If near Castletown Quays you will see Black-faced Cormorant flying along the coast or perched on pylons. You may also be rewarded with a sighting of Southern Right Whale, dolphins, sea-lions and seals, the latter two regularly seen from Tanker Jetty.

2. ISLAND TOURS

Island tours begin from the Taylor Street jetty. Besides the sure sighting of Cape Barren Goose and White-bellied Sea-Eagle you can hope to see Flesh-footed Shearwater and, following the wake of the boat, Australasian Gannet and Arctic Jaeger. Mammals commonly seen include goats, dolphins, sea-lions, fur seal and, if lucky, whales.

An overnight stay at Woody Island in the right season could have Flesh-footed Shearwater land at your feet as they come in to roost. Also on the island are Peregrine Falcon, Brown Quail, Brush Bronzewing, Golden Whistler, New Holland Honeyeater and Red-eared Firetail.

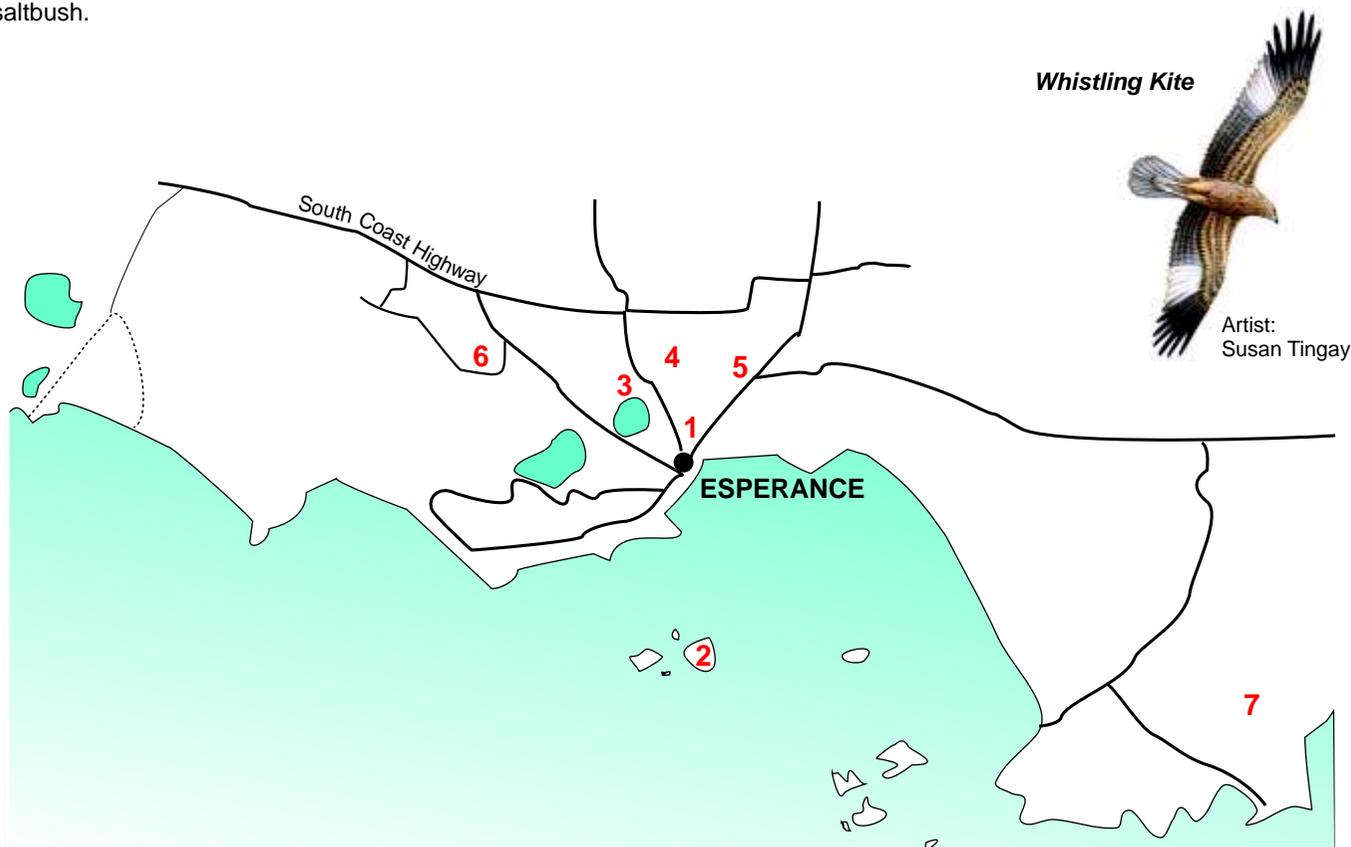
3. LAKE WARDEN

A stroll along the edge of the lake can be quite pleasant in nice weather. Take Stearne Road and stop where the road takes its first bend to the right, or drive up the South Coast Highway to 3.4 km out of town; there is a track on the right that leads to the lake. Recently up to 2000 Black Swan and a similar number of Banded Stilt were sighted on the lake. Rufous Fieldwren are often seen here.

Keep an eye out for nesting Red-capped Plover, Hooded Plover, Red-necked Avocet, Red-necked Stint and Fairy Tern. If on Stearne Road, drive further on and keep a lookout for Cape Barren Goose feeding in the grassy paddock. Whistling Kite nest in this area.

4. LAKE WINDABOUT

Drive into Woody Lake Reserve along Lake Road (3.4 km out of town along Norseman Road) for 2.7 km and follow the well-marked walking trail to Lake Windabout, or drive to the lake through the Lake Windabout



development and take any of the tracks. Here, Black Swan, Australasian Shoveler, Pink-eared and Musk Duck, Hooded Plover, Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Red-capped Parrot and Southern Emu-wren are a possibility.

5. LAKE WHEATFIELD

Along Fisheries Road, about 100 metres before Quarry Road, there is a track that leads to Woody Bay Reserve. The track takes you to a car park just in front of Lake Wheatfield.

Walk along the shore and follow tracks around the lake. Keep a sharp eye open for waterbirds which include White-faced Heron, Eastern Great Egret, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Hooded Plover, Banded Stilt and Red-necked Stint. Watch out for Swamp Harrier and other raptors. Follow walk tracks to two bird hides.

6. LAKE MONJINGUP

Lake Monjilup is a great site for bush and waterbirds. The area has good picnic and BBQ facilities and includes a walkway into the swamps. Bush birds include Sacred Kingfisher, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Golden Whistler, White-browed Scrubwren, Shy Heathwren and Red-eared Firetail.

7. CAPE LE GRANDE NATIONAL PARK

Snow white beaches, serene blue water and vegetation typical of the Esperance area give rise to the 101 bird species recorded for Cape Le Grande National Park. The ubiquitous New Holland Honeyeater and Western Wattlebird are two common birds seen, while the shy and rare Red-eared Firetail inhabits thick vegetated areas.

Rock Parrot and White-bellied Sea-Eagle may be seen at beaches and headlands. In winter look for albatross. Brown Falcon and Australian Kestrel hover above the vegetation, while Swamp Harrier fly low in search of prey.

The 16 km coastal trail, which can be undertaken in shorter sections, is an excellent way of seeing birds and the picturesque scenery of the park.

NOTES

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.

INTERESTED?

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Rock Parrot



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