

6. Len Howard Conservation Park

The hide is adjacent to the entrance of a small cove and the protected waters provide refuge for a number of shore and water birds, plus the exquisite and endangered Fairy Tern, a summer visitor that comes here to breed. An Eastern Osprey nesting pole erected nearby has so far been ignored.

The carpark at the end of an unsealed road off Glendart Ct, Erskine, provides access to a short nature trail walk and a longer walk via Erskine walking track to a bird-hide (2km)



Eastern Osprey

7. Riverside Gardens and Reserve Goegrup Lake

The boardwalks to the North lead to the Serpentine River and the edge of Goegrup Lake, which hosts a number of waterbirds, mostly Ducks, Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills and Ibis. In addition there are often Red-necked Avocets and Black-winged Stilts. Nankeen Night-herons may be seen roosting in the trees on the river bank. The Reserve along the river is also host to a number of bush-birds and the walk South may yield many of these including the Sacred Kingfisher, another summer visitor that comes here to breed.

Access from the carpark off Wanda Rd, Greenfields

8. Greenfields Billabong

A 500 metre walk upstream brings you to a bird hide overlooking a billabong often frequented by Black-winged stilts, Ducks and Egrets. Continue following the trail upstream through Urban bushland for a pleasant nature walk.

Access from the end of Old Pinjarra Rd, Greenfields



Fairy Tern

9. Island Point

A walking trail along the southern shore meanders through the bush to a board walk and viewing platform, with an Osprey nesting pole nearby. There have been sightings of up to 2,000 Ducks on the water here, mostly Grey Teal, with a smattering of others. A range of other waterbirds frequent the area and Black-winged Stilts and Pied Oystercatchers nest on the small island just off-shore. A number of raptors are often seen particularly Whistling Kites, Eastern Osprey, Swamp Harrier, Little Eagle and White-bellied Sea-eagle, with Wedge-tails in the distance. These birds are very mobile and can be seen anywhere around the estuary.



Little Egret

End of Island Point Rd, Herron.

10. Herron Point

The water between Herron Point and Island Point is relatively shallow, and was frequently used as a ford to cross the estuary. With proper directions it is still crossable on foot at low tide, and at least one local bushwalking group make the crossing in summer most years. However for viewing shore and waterbirds, walk along the sandy shore to the south for a couple of kilometres. After that it can get a bit muddy. There are two small low off-shore islands that host a variety of birds including Red-necked Avocets from around November an throughout summer.

Turn west off Forrest Highway at Herron Point Rd and follow it to the estuary.

11. South Yunderup

A walk path around the embankment of the artificial lake or empoundment gives a good view of the water and the birds. To the south at low tide a variety of shorebirds can be seen feeding in the shallows or on the mats of algae in the estuary. In addition, over 3,000 Black Swans have been seen a bit further out in the estuary, and a number are frequently seen on the waters of the empoundment. It is a popular walk for the local residents.

Access from Wellya Crescent crn Tanderra Pl, South Yunderup.



This guide was compiled by the Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah and Pinjarra Inc. a non-profit organisation run by volunteers who advocate awareness of and protection for water and shorebirds of the Peel Estuary.

Other free publications are seven Canoe Guides and three canoe guide companions that promote the use of recreational canoe trails on local waterways.

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Peel Inlet & Harvey Estuary

Water & Shorebirds

Birdwatching Trail Guide



The waters of the Peel Inlet, Harvey Estuary and accompanying rivers and lakes, or for simplicity “the estuary” are world renowned. It’s not only people that think its wonderful, but a vast array of animals. To attract them there has to be an abundance of food, and the estuary excels in providing this. It’s a breeding ground and nursery, and large numbers of crabs, fish, prawns and birds thrive on the small shellfish, snails, worms and insects that inhabit and breed around the shoreline and throughout the estuary.



Black-winged Stilts

Locals love it for its recreational value, international visitors come for other not so obvious reasons, the bird life. You have probably seen a flock of a 500 or more Cormorants feeding voraciously often accompanied by dozens of Pelicans and even more Silver Gulls and Terns. While that is spectacular, there are even more marvellous occurrences.



Mixed Shorebirds

One of the most astounding aspects of the bird life here is the presence of migratory shorebirds (waders). It is these shorebirds that bird enthusiasts from all over Australia and the world come to see. Some of these birds are no bigger than a willie wagtail, and they fly up to 25,000 km each year to breed in the Northern Hemisphere, mostly in the Arctic Tundra. They fly here in their thousands in spring and leave again in autumn.

The estuary is a vital site for them to rest and feed, here they can recuperate from their long flight and replenish their reserves in readiness for the return trip. Without undisturbed rest and feeding time it is not possible for these birds to complete this arduous migration. Therefore it is imperative that there are areas in the estuary where birds are safe from disturbance. Every effort should be made by individuals, groups, commerce, Government and other organisations to protect these birds and the unique environment they share with us. In doing so it will benefit the local water birds that live here as they are just as reliant on the special attributes of the estuary, and are also very vulnerable at various times e.g. nesting and moulting.



Bar-tailed Godwit

This pamphlet will guide you around the estuary to the most easily accessed land based places where you may simply walk and view, from hides in some locations, local, nomadic and migratory birds or simply enjoy the natural environment.

Shorebird or Waterbird

There is a world-wide convention used to divide birds into groups based on appearance, behaviour or habitat selection and most importantly genetics. Although these birds utilise similar habitats they belong to different groups. Waterbirds are different genetically and in appearance from shorebirds, and are comprised of the Egrets, Herons, Ibises, Spoonbills, Ducks and Swans plus a few others. The shorebirds on the other-hand are the Sandpipers and Plovers within which there are sub-groups like Stilts, Stints, Godwits, Curlews, Dotterels and Lapwings. The photos in this pamphlet may help you understand the difference.

Birdwatching Trails

What you see in any of these areas will vary depending on season, weather, time of day and the tides. High tides can make spotting wading birds difficult as they generally roost in protected places until low tide when they will commence feeding on exposed areas. The most frequently encountered birds are mentioned, but there are often surprises that make a visit to any or all the sites even more special.

1. Soldiers Cove

This is a good walk to orientate yourself because you can see other birding areas upstream, and you can gauge the height of the tide. The tides will be similar in the Creery wetlands, Samphire Cove and Len Howard Conservation Park. However other areas around the estuary will have different water levels.

Egrets, Pelicans, Ducks, Black Swans, Terns and Silver Gulls often rest here. With low tides exposing expanses of mud or sand shorebirds such as Stilts, Godwits, and Greenshanks can be attracted to the area. Whimbrels and Eastern Curlews are frequently seen here between October and March. **Access from the Mandurah foreshore, or Soldiers Cove Tce Dudley Park.**



Red-necked Avocet



Eastern Great Egret



Eastern Curlew

2. Creery Wetlands

This can be a prime shorebird observation area, with larger birds such as the Eastern Curlew and Whimbrel often seen, plus Bar-tailed Godwits, Greenshanks, Black-winged Stilts, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, and numerous Black Swans along with large numbers and varieties of Ducks. Other birds can include Eastern Great and Little Egrets, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Australian White Ibis and White-faced Herons. **Access from Darwin Tce crn of Mariners Cove Dr, Dudley Park.**



Red-necked Stint

3. Samphire Cove

From either of the two hides here you may see a variety of shore and waterbirds amongst the adjacent exposed rocks, and across on the other bank. Most commonly seen are: Grey Plovers, Whimbrels, Eastern Curlews, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Greenshanks. Large numbers of Pied Cormorants often rest on the rock walls at the entrance of the nearby canals. **Access gate at the corner of Leisure Way and Egret Pnt, Halls Head.**



White-bellied Sea-Eagle

4. Johns St Reserve

This is often the first port of call for visitors wishing to see a good number and variety of shorebirds, as well as Pelicans, Egrets, Terns and a variety of Ducks that breed in adjacent lakes. Dogs are excluded from the area as they are extremely disruptive to the birds. **Located at the end of Johns St, Coodanup.**

5. Mandurah Quays

There is frequently a range of shore and waterbirds here, and it is one of the few places around the estuary where the Marsh Sandpiper can sometimes be seen. The Len Howard bird-hide can be accessed on foot from here, its about one km south along the edge of the estuary. **Access from the carpark at the end of Mandurah Quays Drive.**



Whimbrel

One of the major features in the area is an Eastern Osprey nest, which was successfully relocated to a pole and platform, with a breeding pair raising between one to three chicks each year. **Access from carpark opposite Vixen Cl, Erskine.**

Legend

1. Soldiers Cove
2. Creery Wetlands
3. Samphire Cove
4. Johns St Reserve
5. Mandurah Quays
6. Len Howard Conservation Park
7. Riverside Gardens Reserve and Goegrup Lake
8. Greenfields Billabong
9. Island Point
10. Herron Point
11. South Yunderup



Early morning on the Peel Inlet



Wetlands walk



Serpentine River



Grey-tailed Tattler



Grey Plover



White-faced heron





Pied Oystercatcher



Curlew Sandpipers



Sacred Kingfisher



Eastern Great Egret



Purple Swamphen



Wood Sandpiper



Black-winged Stilt



Pacific Black Duck



Australasian Darter



Shorebird count in progress



Common Sandpiper