

ILLAWARRA BIRDS

A Photo Guide





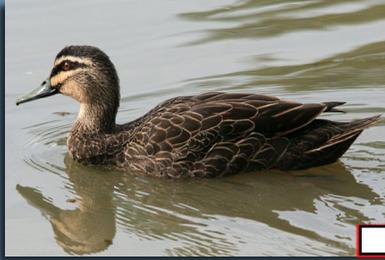
Black Swan
(120cm)

It's not all black - when it spreads its wings you will see its white flight feathers.



Wood Duck
(46cm)

Just as likely to be seen on land as on water, sometimes even perching in trees.



Pacific Black Duck
(54cm)

Also known as the Painted Duck because of its facial markings - it looks as though it's wearing makeup!



Wandering Albatross
(120cm)

This magnificent bird's 3.5m wingspan is the largest of any bird. A winter visitor to our shores, to get a good view you need to be on a boat.



Chestnut Teal
(43cm)

Only the male is chestnut. And his head is green. Or black - the colour is iridescent and depends on the light.



Wedge-tailed Shearwater
(42cm)

Shearwaters are better known as Muttonbirds. The waters off the Illawarra coast are a world hotspot for seabirds like this.



Pelican
(170cm)

It's bill really can hold more than it's belly can. And the Australian species has the biggest bill in the world.



Little Pied Cormorant
(60cm)

Like all cormorants it's not very waterproof, to make diving and catching fish easier. So it has to hang its wings out to dry!



Great Cormorant
(82cm)

The largest of our four local cormorants - black with a yellow face. (The Little Black Cormorant has an all-black face.)



White-faced Heron
(68cm)

A common sight near any body of water. Like all herons its neck has a 'hinge' - an adaptation for spearing its prey.



Great Egret
(90cm)

Its enormous neck is longer than its body. Other white Egrets you might see are the Little Egret (smaller, hyperactive when feeding) and the Cattle Egret (follows cows!)



White Ibis
(70cm)

Sometimes called the Sacred Ibis as it was worshipped by the ancient Egyptians. Look out also for the Straw-necked Ibis which has a black back.



Royal Spoonbill
(78cm)

The Spoonbill moves its bill from side to side in shallow water to catch fish and other prey. Our other, rarer Spoonbill is the Yellow-billed Spoonbill.



White-bellied Sea Eagle
(80cm)

Watch out for it majestically patrolling our coastline. With luck you might see it pluck a fish out of the ocean, hardly getting its feet wet.



Dusky Moorhen
(38cm)

One of our commonest water birds; in the breeding season its beak is red, with a yellow tip. The similar Coot has a white beak.



Purple Swamphen
(46cm)

Bigger and more colourful than the Moorhen. Both have a part of the beak that extends over the forehead - this is called its shield.



< Sooty / Pied > Oystercatcher
(46cm)

Their orange beak doesn't quite match their pink legs, but is perfect for prising open shellfish.



Black-winged Stilt
(35cm)

Stilts live up to their name by having the longest legs (relative to body length) of any bird. Often seen around Lake Illawarra.



Bar-tailed Godwit
(40cm)

Breeding in Siberia and Alaska, it holds the record for the longest known non-stop migration flight of over 11,000 kms.



Ruddy Turnstone
(23cm)

Its name tells you how it finds its food. Known to travel an incredible 27,000 km on its annual migration to the Arctic and back.



Red-capped Plover
(15cm)

A tiny shorebird, common on our beaches and estuaries. When it dashes across the sand it almost appears to be moving on wheels.



Masked Lapwing
(36cm)

This bird and its 'kek-kek-kek' alarm call are well-known. It is a brave defender of its young, swooping on predators and sometimes humans.



Crested Tern
(46cm)

If you see a seagull diving into the ocean and catching fish, then it's probably not a seagull! It is most likely to be a Crested Tern, our commonest Tern.



Silver Gull
(40cm)

Gulls are pirates, often taking food from other birds, so if one steals your chips it's only behaving naturally!



Brown Cuckoo-Dove
(40cm)

A long-tailed bronze-coloured pigeon often seen sitting amongst the foliage. Its loud 'wh-oo-rk' call is a familiar sound of the rainforest



Wonga Pigeon
(38cm)

Most often seen walking along paths in the rainforest. Its call is a continuous 'whoop-whoop-whoop' - a bit like a reversing truck!



Superb Lyrebird
(95cm)

A spectacular bird and one of the world's best mimics. As well as the calls of many other birds, it is said to copy the sounds of cars, phones, even chainsaws!



White-throated Treecreeper
(17cm)

Hunts insects by walking up tree trunks from bottom to top; it then flies down and starts again on the next tree. It's call is a piercing, repetitive whistle.



Green Catbird
(40cm)

Named for it's extraordinary call which sounds like a cat miaowing – or even a baby crying!



Lewin's Honeyeater
(20cm)

One of many Australian honeyeaters (nectar-feeders), this one has a yellow ear-patch. Its call has been compared to the sound of a machine gun.



Eastern Yellow Robin
(16cm)

Yes we do have robins with red breasts in Australia, but they are uncommon here. This is the robin you are most likely to see, often perching on the side of a tree trunk.



Whipbird
(28cm)

Often heard but rarely seen. The 'whipcrack' is the male's call; a 'cheep cheep' afterwards is the reply of an interested female.



Golden Whistler
(18cm)

This is a classic example of how in many birds the male is very brightly coloured, but the female is a dull brown!



Grey Fantail
(16cm)

A lively, inquisitive bird that lives up to its name. Its call is very high-pitched - beyond the hearing of some people.



Crested Pigeon
(42cm)

Not to be confused with the Topknot Pigeon (which appears to be wearing a wig). Makes a distinctive whistling sound when it flies.



Kestrel (32cm)

This falcon is the smallest of our 24 birds of prey. It's one of the few birds that can hover, whilst looking for prey on the ground. (Another is the mainly white Black-shouldered Kite.)



Peregrine Falcon
(42cm)

OK, this awesome bird isn't common, but can be seen in our area. When it swoops on its prey from a great height, it is the fastest creature on earth.



Koel (42cm)

A member of the cuckoo family. It's distinctive, rising 'cooo-ee, cooo-ee' call is a well-known sound in the area in the warmer months.



Satin Bowerbird
(25cm)

The male builds his famous bower solely for the purpose of seduction – it's not a nest. He decorates it with treasures of blue in the hope of impressing the greenish-brown female



Superb Fairy-wren
(14cm)

Our familiar 'Blue Wren'. Females and young are brown. Most males lose their bright blue colouring in autumn and winter.



Eastern Spinebill
(16cm)

A beautiful little bird with a long beak specially designed for probing deep inside flowers to extract their nectar.



Noisy Miner
(26cm)

Has a large repertoire of different calls as its name suggests. It is aggressive towards other birds, but at least it's a native!



Red Wattlebird
(35cm)

So named because of the red 'wattles' or skin-flaps on its neck. Its call sounds like a barking dog with a bad cough.



Little Wattlebird
(28cm)

A Wattlebird with no wattles. Smaller and plainer than the Red. Common in gardens and heathland around banksias, grevilleas etc.



New Holland Honeyeater
(18cm)

Not a shy bird, it likes to sit on top of bushes and advertise its presence. Shares the same habitat as the Little Wattlebird, and sounds like a squeaky toy.



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
(33cm)

Not a cuckoo or a shrike, an older (better!) name is the Shuffling – which is what it does every time it lands.



Grey Butcherbird
(28cm)

So-called as it stores prey in a tree fork, using its hooked beak to tear it up into bite-sized chunks. But it's a handsome bird and sings beautifully!



Willy Wagtail (21cm)

A feisty little bird, ready to take on others many times its size. As well as its rattling alarm call it has one which some say sounds like 'sweet pretty creature'.



Magpie Lark (28cm)

A.K.A. the Peewee. One of the few birds that sings a duet – when you hear their metallic chiming calls it's usually both the male and female singing together.



Red-browed Finch
(12cm)

Also known as the Red-browed Firetail, this is the commonest local finch. Firetails are so-called because of their bright red rumps.



Welcome Swallow
(15cm)

A master of flight, especially low level, high-speed aerobatics that it uses to vacuum up flying insects.



Australian Raven
(50cm)

Often called a crow, the Raven is the biggest member of the crow family in Australia (and the only one you're likely to find around here).

Birds of paddocks, parks and gardens

Birds From Overseas

These are some of the birds found locally that have been introduced to Australia by man.



Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)



Spotted Dove



Goldfinch



Starling



Common (Indian) Myna



House Sparrow

Over 350 different kinds of bird have been recorded in the Illawarra. These are some of the ones you're most likely to come across. – how many have you seen???



Crimson Rosella



King Parrot



Little Corella



Australian Magpie



Pied Currawong



Laughing Kookaburra

Birds on Front Page (from top):

1. Galah
2. Rainbow Lorikeet
3. Eastern Rosella
4. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo
5. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

- Numbers in red = Approx length of bird in cm from tip of bill to end of tail.
- To get a close view of the birds (and other wildlife), a good pair of binoculars makes a huge difference. 8x40 is a popular size.
- For a full description of all Australian birds, see the books (Field Guides) by Slater, Morcombe, Pizzey & Knight or Simpson & Day.
- For more information on where to see these birds, visit www.illawarrabirders.org



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