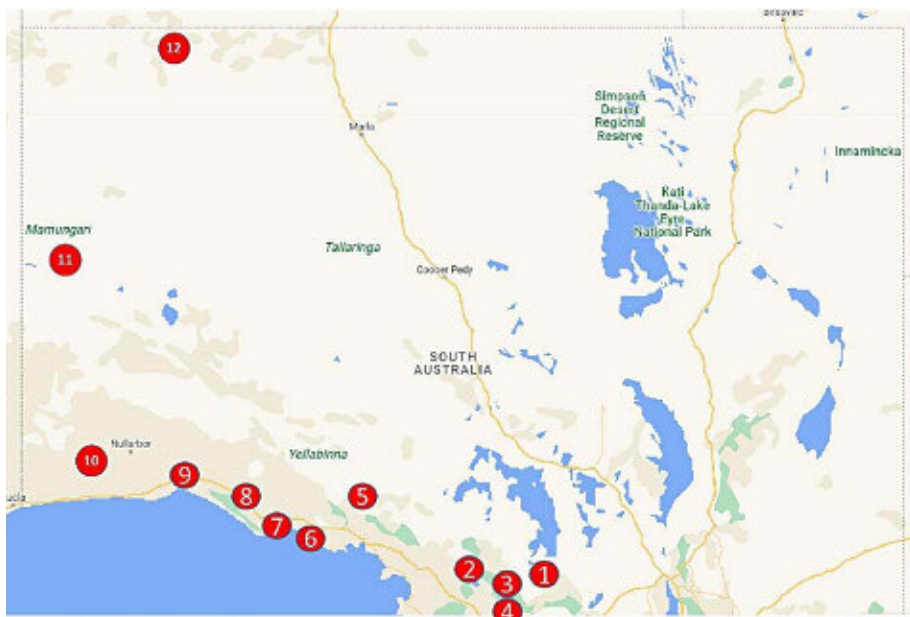


# Far South-West



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## Mount Ive Station

Mount Ive is a 90,000ha working sheep station situated at the heart of Gawler Ranges, 200km west of Port Augusta. The owners, Joy and Len Newton, welcome travellers to stay there to explore the unique landscape with the stunning views of Lake Gairdner on the northern border of the property. Its water is replenished approximately once in 10 years. The only access to the Lake Gairdner National Park is through this property.

The Station is good for the arid bird species, in particular for Short-tailed Grasswren and Western Grasswren.

For most of the year, this remote property is quiet and peaceful, with only a few visitors around. One week in every March, the place suddenly turns into hustle and bustle with people who come to race their cars on the glistening salt crust covering the dry bottom of Lake Gairdner.

There are a few access points to the Station from Eyre Hwy (A1) between Port Augusta and Ceduna:

- from Iron Knob via Nonning Rd (128km from the turnoff)
- from Kimba via Buckleboo Rd (99km from the turnoff)
- from Minnipa through Gawler Ranges (130km from the turnoff).

If coming from Stuart Hwy (A87), turn west at Glendambo towards Kingoonya. The distance to Mt Ive Station is 274km from the turnoff.

If you take the most popular access route via Iron Knob, you'll see the turnoff to Mt Ive Homestead after 124km. You won't miss it, just turn right at the submarine. 4km further on, you will pass the Homestead and arrive at the camping area. All access roads are unsealed so a 4WD vehicle is recommended.

Camping facilities include a large gazebo. You may choose alternative accommodation in a stone house and shearers' quarters. You can enjoy hot water but you'll have to produce it yourself by feeding wood to a donkey boiler. Other important facilities at Mt Ive include the bar and a fuel pump. However, be self-sufficient with food. Birding is conducted along 40kms of station tracks. You can book your accommodation by calling the owners on (08) 8648 1817. For further info, visit <https://mtive.com.au/>.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded at Mount Ive Station. **Key species** are Short-tailed Grasswren, Western Grasswren and Ground Cuckoo-shrike. Other birds of interest include Redthroat, Little Woodswallow, Black-eared Cuckoo, Pied Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Splendid Fairy-wren, Crested Bellbird, Little Button-quail, Slender-billed Thornbill, Hooded Robin, Gilbert's Whistler, Bourke's Parrot and Major Mitchell's Cockatoo. Rarities include Black Honeyeater, White-backed Swallow, Painted Finch and Peregrine Falcon.

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Short-tailed Grasswrens favour spinifex-cladded rocky hills. Good places to look for them include Mt Ive and Mt Scott, near the Homestead. On Mt Ive, you may get a sighting on the slopes below the main ridge, half-way up Mt Ive and on the summit. They may also be running between the spinifex on the summit of Mt Scott.

Western Grasswrens occur in the lowland areas of the Station and can be spotted in the bluebush shrubs. They can be relatively easily found near the campsite. Another possible place is east of shearers' quarters, just a few minutes' walk from the Homestead. Search also the area of old dams near the Homestead. Alternative locations for Western Grasswren include Wombat Holes Rd (around the third post) and Flight Path Tk (just past the tank gate).

Common birds around the Homestead include Emu, Southern Whiteface, White-winged Fairy-wren, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Splendid Fairy-wren and White-browed Babbler. Occasionally, you may see Crested Bellbird, Gilbert's Whistler, Crimson Chat, Rufous Songlark and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. On the Mt Ive summit walk, besides Short-tailed Grasswrens, look for Hooded Robin, Dusky Woodswallow, Orange Chat, Singing Honeyeater and Little Button-quail. Spotted Nightjars were recorded at the base of Mt Scott. Little Woodswallows regularly nest in the cervices of the Organ Pipe. Painted Finches come to the waterhole in the gully.



*A pair of Painted Finches, female on left*

It is also worth checking the intersection of Nonning Rd and Thurlga Rd, about 3km west of Yardea Dam. GPS coordinates are 32°24'52''S and 135°57'07''E. Short-tailed Grasswrens can be found at this spot. Other birds in the area include Red-capped Robin, Inland Thornbill, Little Button-quail, Crested Bellbird, Crimson Chat and White-fronted Chat. When shrubland is flowering after the rains, nomadic honeyeaters such as White-

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fronted Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater and Black Honeyeater arrive. Even Grey-fronted Honeyeater may appear.

Parrots come to drink to the Yardea Dam nearby. Look for Bluebonnet, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Mulga Parrot and Elegant Parrot. Very occasionally, Scarlet-chested Parrot is sighted.

## Hiltaba Nature Reserve

This private 78,000ha private reserve borders the Gawler Ranges National Park at the north of Eyre Peninsula. A former sheep station, the reserve features magnificent granite hills overlooking the surrounding plains. The site is open to visitors from 1 April until 31 October.

To get there, from Eyre Hwy (A1) at Kimba go into Railway Tce, then turn west into North Tce. It will change name to Buckleboo Rd. Turn left into Hiltaba Rd at the GPS coordinates of 32°20'52"S and 135°42'05"E and drive to the Pretty Point Campground at Hiltaba. The distance from Kimba to Hiltaba Station is 117km.

Site facilities include two bush campgrounds and several accommodation buildings. Multiple nature drive loops facilitate exploring the Station, best with a 4WD vehicle. There are also several walking tracks to choose from. For further information and booking visit <https://www.naturefoundation.org.au/what-we-do/nature-based-tourism/visit-hiltaba>.

The main attraction here is Short-tailed Grasswren which live in the spinifex near the lookout.

Birds around the Hiltaba Homestead include Emu, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, White-fronted Chat, Mulga Parrot, White-winged Fairy-wren, White-browed Babbler, Varied Sittella, Gilbert's Whistler and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. Near the shearers' quarters, look for Mulga Parrot, Port Lincoln Ringneck, Crested Bellbird, Dusky Woodswallow, Jacky Winter and Australian Owlet-nightjar.

Pretty Point Campground is also a good place for birding, particularly for honeyeaters. You may come across White-eared Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater and plenty of Yellow-throated Miners. Look also for Australian Bustard, Restless Flycatcher, Western Whistler, Southern Whiteface, Splendid Fairy-wren and Chestnut-rumped Thornbill.

Raptors in the reserve include Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel and Brown Goshawk. Occasionally, Grey Goshawk has been recorded.

## Gawler Ranges National Park

Gawler Ranges National Park (163,300ha) is located 550km northwest of Adelaide. To the west, the Ranges extend to the edge of Nullarbor Plain. At the north, the Park borders the Mt Ive Station. The Park is famous for its stunning rocky outcrops at the Yandinga Falls and Kolay Mirica Falls.

The breathtaking Gawler Ranges are the middle ground between the mallee country in the south and arid zone in the north. This created diverse and plentiful habitats for the birdlife so birdwatching in this area can be really rewarding. However, the terrain may be challenging, especially if you are searching for Short-tailed Grasswren and Western Grasswren. It is much easier to get a sighting at the Mt Ive Station nearby.

The Park is located 40km off Eyre Hwy (A1). There are several entry routes, with turnoffs at Iron Knob and Kimba in the southeast, Wudinna in the south or Minnipa in the southwest. Fuel and other supplies can be found in Iron Knob, Wudinna and Minnipa. Some limited supplies are available at Mt Ive Station. Most roads along this route are unsealed so to enjoy the Park bring a good 4WD with you.

Park facilities include 7 camping grounds, with all but one quipped with toilets. Every camping site has a few fire pits. The Park's map can be downloaded here:

[https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/gawler-ranges-national-park/gawler\\_ranges\\_np.pdf?mtime=20210115092303&focal=none](https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/gawler-ranges-national-park/gawler_ranges_np.pdf?mtime=20210115092303&focal=none)



*Grey Butcherbird*

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About 100 bird species have been recorded in Gawler Ranges National Park. **Key species** are Rufous Treecreeper, Western Yellow Robin, Elegant Parrot, Gilbert's Whistler and Pied Honeyeater. Other birds of interest include Southern Scrub-robin, Slender-billed Thornbill, Dusky Woodswallow, Little Woodswallow, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, White-eared Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Splendid Fairy-wren, Grey Butcherbird and Australian Owlet-nightjar. Rarities include Short-tailed Grasswren, Western Grasswren, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Malleefowl and Scarlet-chested Parrot.

In very dry years, Emu flock to the National Park from the surrounding areas, forming large groups. Up to 70 birds have been counted roaming through the Park. A pair of Banded Lapwings regularly breeds in the grassland near an information stand on Barns Rd. White-fronted Honeyeaters are common in most of the Park, as are Rufous Treecreepers and Splendid Fairy-wrens.

Southern Scrub-robins seem to be very inquisitive in this Park. Birdwatchers stopping on the road near the right habitat have often reported that the birds were coming out of the bushes to check them out.

### *Mattera Camping Area*

Mattera's GPS location is 32°34'05"S and 135°28'08"E. This is a good place for Little Button-quail. Dusky Woodswallows come here to roost in trees, clustering together near the tree trunks. A good variety of small bush birds includes Mistletoebird, Weebill, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Splendid Fairy-wren. You may also come across White-browed Babblers, Brown-headed Honeyeaters, White-eared Honeyeaters, Crested Bellbirds, Wedge-tailed Eagles and Australian Owlet-nightjars.

### *Scrubby Peak Camping Area*

Scrubby Peak's GPS location is 32°31'43"S and 135°20'00"E, not far from the Organ Pipes. It is a good spot for Rufous Treecreeper and Varied Sittella. Look also for Crested Bellbird, Restless Flycatcher, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Mulga Parrot, White-fronted Honeyeater and Splendid Fairy-wren.

### *Waganny Camping Area*

GPS location of Waganny is 32°40'47"S and 135°31'04"E. Honeyeaters are abundant here, including Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater and Yellow-plumed Honeyeater. Gilbert's Whistlers are calling around the campsite. Other birds in the area include Australian Ringneck, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Red-capped Robin and Emu.

## *Yandinga Camping Area*

Yandinga's GPS location is 32°34'05"S and 135°19'26"E. Here, look for Southern Whiteface, Southern Scrub-robin and Gilbert's Whistler. You may also get White-fronted Chat, Crimson Chat, White-fronted Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dusky Woodswallow and Australian Owlet-nightjar.

## *Organ Pipes*

A 1.5km walk leads to the location of Organ Pipes. Little Woodswallows nest on the rocky cliffs here. Look also for Redthroat, Red-capped Robin, Black-faced Woodswallow, Orange Chat, Yellow-throated Miner, Grey Butcherbird, Inland Thornbill and White-browed Babbler.

## Pinkawillinie Conservation Park

Pinkawillinie Conservation Park (132,000ha) is situated 60km north of Kimba on the inland side of Eyre Peninsula, adjacent to the Gawler Ranges National Park. The biggest attraction here is Corrobinnie Hill, a small conservation park located inside of the larger Pinkawillinie Conservation Park. This large granite outcrop provides excellent views of the park and far beyond. The place is very popular with the locals who frequent its nice picnic area near the hill. White sandhills, covered with spinifex and dotted with eucalypt trees, and a variety of shrubs such as grevilleas and hakeas, is the predominant landform of the Park. In the northern section, you'll find areas covered with casuarinas, myalls and beautiful seasonal wildflowers.

The Park can be accessed via three routes, with only one, Stringer Rd, suitable for conventional vehicles. Stringer Rd starts from Eyre Hwy (A1) 55km west of Kimba at the Buckleboo signpost. Just north of the park, Stringer Rd meets Pinkawillinie Rd. The historical Number 17 Stock Route bisects the Park from Corrobinnie Hill to Woolfall Tk (should be attempted only in the summer months). The Corrobinnie Hill Conservation Park can be accessed only by 4WD vehicles from Kyancutta.

There are no facilities, you need to be self-sufficient with everything.

About 60 bird species have been recorded in the Pinkawillinie Conservation Park. **Key species** are Copper-backed Quail-thrush, Western Yellow Robin, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and White-eared Honeyeater. Other birds of interest include Shy Heathwren, White-fronted Honeyeater, Southern Scrub-robin, Gilbert's Whistler, Mulga Parrot, Weebill, Inland Thornbill and Brown Falcon. Rarities include Scarlet-chested Parrot and White-backed Swallow.



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Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens are quite common in the park. Look also for White-fronted Chat, Brush Bronzewing, Dusky Woodswallow, Red-capped Robin, Crested Bellbird and Elegant Parrot.

On your way to the park, look for honeyeaters on Stringer Rd near Eyre Hwy when bushes and trees are flowering. You may find Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Miner. Check the sky for raptors; Black Falcon and Little Eagle were recorded a few times near the highway.



*Yellow-throated Miner*

## Yumbarra Conservation Park

This pristine 324,400ha mallee reserve is located 55km northwest of Ceduna and is surrounded by other conservation areas. The Park forms a woodland corridor that links Great Victoria Desert with the northern part of Eyre Peninsula. The name comes from the Yumbarra Rockhole, one of many rockholes that fill with water and provide water for wildlife. Birds congregate around them, so these are ideal for birding. The rest of park are sand dunes covered mostly by the mallee.

Many rare species, including Scarlet-chested Parrot, Malleefowl, Rufous Grasswren and southern hairy-nosed wombat, can be found in this park.

Birding is conducted mostly around the Yumbarra and Inila Rockholes. To get to them, drive on Eyre Hwy (A1) for 20km in westerly direction from Ceduna, then turn north into Foggos Rd. After 17km, you'll reach the Dingo Fence. Pass through the gate and turn



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west. Drive for about 2km until you reach a track leading north. Follow this track for 3km. When you see the sign marking the 'Inila Rock Waters', you'll still have 6.5km to Yumbarra Rockhole.

To get to Goog's Lake in the northeast corner of the Park, drive along Goog's Tk. You will get to this track from Kalanbi Rd when you reach the Dingo Fence. The track traverses the whole park and exits into the Yellabinna Regional Reserve. The 300km-long route is not maintained so it is severely corrugated with many sections of soft, deep sand, similarly to all other tracks in park. A good 4WD is a must. There are 4 camping sites near the Goog's Lake but no other facilities are provided. Download the site map here: <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/docs/yumbarra-conservation-park/yumbarra-conservation-park-map.pdf>.

About 100 bird species have been recorded in Yumbarra Conservation Park. **Key species** are Scarlet-chested Parrot, Copper-backed Quail-thrush and Western Yellow Robin. Other birds of interest include Mulga Parrot, Shy Heathwren, White-fronted Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Gilbert's Whistler, Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird, Western Gerygone, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Little Eagle. Rarities include Malleefowl and Rufous Treecreeper.

Scarlet-chested Parrots can be found here in summer and autumn. They arrive in small flocks to drink at the Yumbarra and Inila Rockholes. They like to feed on the olearia and saltbush seeds and have been seen on the track between both rockholes. Look for them also about 1km east of the Inila Rockhole or check Foggos Rd near the highway.

The bright-coloured Copper-backed Quail-thrushes may be spotted along the track leading to the rockholes. In the vicinity of the Inila Rockhole, you also have a chance to get Masked Woodswallow, Varied Sittella, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Port Lincoln Ringneck, Mulga Parrot, Inland Thornbill and Emu.

On a track between the two rockholes, you will encounter masses of honeyeaters when the mallee is in bloom. The dominant species are Yellow-plumed Honeyeater and White-fronted Honeyeater. You may also get Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater and occasionally Pied Honeyeater. The honeyeaters are often joined by Masked Woodswallows and White-browed Woodswallows. Other birds on this track include Red-backed Kingfisher, Weebill, Western Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter, Rainbow Bee-eater and Spotted Pardalote.

Goog's Tk may yield Copper-backed Quail-thrush, Shy Heathwren, Splendid Fairy-wren, Budgerigar, Cockatiel, Pied Honeyeater, Red-capped Robin and occasionally Scarlet-chested Parrot.

## Yellabinna Regional Reserve

This 500,700ha site is located north of Yumbarra CP, approximately 100km north of Ceduna. Goog's Tk is the only route through the reserve. It is not maintained so it is severely corrugated with many sections of soft, deep sand. A good 4WD is a must. A section of Goog's Tk between Goog's Lake and Mt Finke is particularly good for birding. In mallee with spinifex, look for Rufous Grasswren, the recent split from Striated Grasswren that is here at its southernmost range limit.

Honeyeater selection in the Yellabinna Regional Reserve includes Pied Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Miner. Other species here include Copper-backed Quail-thrush, Shy Heathwren, Port Lincoln Ringneck, Bluebonnet, Mulga Parrot, Crested Bellbird, Varied Sittella, White-winged Triller, Masked Woodswallow and White-backed Swallow. Occasionally, Scarlet-chested Parrots are seen in the reserve.

## Cactus Beach



*A group of Terek Sandpipers, rare in SA, snoozing on the beach*

This is the world-famous remote Australian surfing beach. In the 1970-80' it put Australia on the international surfing scene. The site is located at the edge of Nullarbor Plain, 75km west of Ceduna and 620km northwest of Adelaide. To get there, from Penong on Eyre Hwy (A1) drive 20km along Point Sinclair Rd in the southerly direction. The road is unsealed but manageable. On its way to the beach, it runs through the saline Lake MacDonnell, the largest Australian gypsum mine.

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The Point Sinclair Campground is situated at the end of the road near the beach. It features the 'historical' shower block, open from all sides. Oh, those naughty eighties... GPS coordinates for the campground are 32°04'01"S and 132°58'08"E.

This site is good for waders, in particular Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Occasionally, Terek Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper and Red-necked Avocet have been recorded. Other birds in the area include Pacific Gull, Caspian Tern, Musk Duck, Singing Honeyeater, Dusky Woodswallow, Osprey and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

On your way to the beach, it is a good idea to stop along the pink waters of Lake MacDonnell and Point Sinclair Pink Lake. There are usually masses of Grey Teals and Hoary-headed Grebes there. There will also be some waders such as Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-kneed Dotterel, Common Greenshank and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

While driving through Penong, check the gum trees lining the street. If they are in bloom, look for White-fronted Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Miner.

## Fowlers Bay



*Fowlers Bay village is sparsely populated*

Fowlers Bay is a tiny coastal hamlet, located 140km west of Ceduna and 660km northwest of Adelaide. It lies on the shores of Fowlers Bay, at the edge of Nullarbor Plain. Once a whaling station, bringing cruel death to countless whales, now the waters

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of the bay are teeming again with southern right whales that migrate here between July and September. The area is also a good wader site; observe them on the beaches, check the nearby salt pans or visit mudflats and beaches of Fowlers Bay Conservation Park to the north.

To get there, take Fowlers Bay Rd from Eyre Hwy (A1), 119km west of Ceduna. The drive is 23km long, with the last 11km unsealed.

Facilities in the area include a caravan park in town and three campgrounds in the conservation park. You'll find public toilets in the township and in the Mexican Hat camping area. Basic daily necessities can be purchased in town.

About 70 bird species have been recorded in Fowlers Bay. **Key species** are Hooded Plover and Fairy Tern. Other birds of interest include waders, seabirds, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Port Lincoln Ringneck and Yellow-plumed Honeyeater. Rarities include Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and Great Crested Grebe.

This is a good place for Sanderling; they are regularly reported in summer. Other waders around the bay include Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Sooty Oystercatcher, Australian Pied Oystercatcher and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Waders like to roost behind the seagrass piled on the beach, 300-500m north of the north end of the township.

Along Coorabie Rd about 1.5km before the bay, you'll find Fowlers Salt pans. GPS coordinates are 31°58'47"S and 132°25'01"E. Substantial flocks of Banded Stilts are often found there. Look also for Curlew Sandpiper, Red-capped Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red Knot. However, when we were there, the salt pans were bone dry and there were no birds.

Fowlers Bay Conservation Park (8,700ha), with tracks made of very deep sand, surrounds the Fowlers Bay township. Hooded Plovers breed on the beaches there. White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Ospreys also nest in the park. From the shoreline, you can observe seabirds that come close to the land in bad weather, such as flocks of Short-tailed Shearwaters. Other birds in the park include Fairy Tern, Pacific Gull, White-browed Scrubwren, Singing Honeyeater, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Port Lincoln Ringneck and Yellow-plumed Honeyeater.

## Eyre Highway

About 30km-long section of Eyre Hwy (1) east of the closed roadhouse at Yalata, about 200km west of Ceduna, has several spots where the rare Rufous Treecreeper can be found. In particular, check the mallee with an abundance of fallen and standing dead trees around the rest areas.

## *Ambrosia Rest Area*

Ambrosia Rest Area, also called Colona Rest Area, is located 25km east of Yalata and 165km west of Ceduna. GPS coordinates are 31°36'21''S and 132°02'14''E. Apart from the Rufous Treecreeper, look also for Western Yellow Robin, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Port Lincoln Ringneck, Redthroat, Dusky Woodswallow, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and Grey Currawong.

## *Yalata East Rest Area*

GPS coordinates are 31°31'47''S and 131°53'39''E. Look for Rufous Treecreeper here. There will be abundance of Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeaters and Dusky Woodswallows.

Stop again 2km west of this spot at 31°29'44''S and 131°48'47''E to search for the species as above plus Western Yellow Robin.

## Nullarbor Roadhouse

This iconic destination, well-frequented by the birders, is located in the middle of nowhere at the eastern edge of the Nullarbor National Park. It is famous for the resident Nullarbor Quail-thrush that can be relatively easily found on a track not far from the Roadhouse.

Nullarbor Roadhouse is located on Eyre Hwy (A1), 180km east of the border with Western Australia and nearly 1,100km west of Adelaide. A small airstrip is located by the Roadhouse. A golf hole named 'Dingo Den' of the famed longest golf course in the world (1,365km from Kalgoorlie to Ceduna, each of the 18 holes played in a different place), is located behind the Roadhouse. To book accommodation, call (08) 8625 6271. For further details go to <https://www.nullarborroadhouse.com.au/>.

About 70 bird species have been recorded around the Nullarbor Roadhouse. **Key species** is Nullarbor Quail-thrush. Other birds of interest include Slender-billed Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, White-winged Fairy-wren, Rufous Fieldwren, Little Button-quail and Australian Hobby. Rarities include Pectoral Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Australian Spotted Crake and Scarlet-chested Parrot.

The communication tower near the Roadhouse harbours a large raptor nest. Its occupants have changed over time; it was Brown Falcon's residence in 2015 while in 2020 it was taken over by Australian Hobby.

Nullarbor Quail-thrushes are often flushed on a track along the airstrip, coming out of the bluebushes. Another good place to look for them is about 1.5km west of the Roadhouse, where the north-south track crosses the highway, at the GPS coordinates of



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31°27'14"S and 130°52'37"E. The first few kilometres of the track south of the highway and up to 8km north of the highway are the best. In particular, the birds can be spotted along the dilapidated fence bordering the National Park.

Rufous Fieldwrens are often calling from clumps of bluebushes south of the Roadhouse and highway. In the saltbushes adjacent to the Roadhouse, look for Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Redthroat and White-winged Fairy-wren. On the track running directly north from the Roadhouse, you may get Red-capped Robin, Slender-billed Thornbill, Australian Bustard and Little Button-quail.

Check out the wetland behind the Roadhouse, a shallow pool created by the overflow from the desalination plant, with its tanks visible behind the Roadhouse. This wetland is permanent and you may get some nice surprises, for example an eBird report from June 2017 listed four Australian Spotted Crakes, two Black-tailed Native-hens and a single Pectoral Sandpiper.



*Wetland behind the desalination plant*

Other birds reported from around the Roadhouse include Orange Chat, Brown Songlark, Banded Lapwing, Singing Honeyeater, Black-faced Woodswallow and Spotted Harrier.

## Nullarbor National Park

Nullarbor National Park (2,847,000ha) is a practically treeless, semi-arid country, located on the Great Australia Bight's coast in the southwestern corner of South Australia, about 1,000km west of Australia. "Null-arbor" means in Latin "no trees". Vegetation is low, mostly bluebushes and saltbushes.



*The treeless plain of Nullarbor*

The Park is regarded to be the largest slab of limestone bedrock on Earth. Nullarbor National Park features one of the world-largest cave systems, but it is not open to public except for the Murrawijinie Caves located 10km north of the Nullarbor Roadhouse.

At the southern edge of this endless flat plateau are the majestic Bunda Cliffs, plunging to the Great Australia Bight along an uninterrupted distance of 200km. The never-turning Eyre Hwy runs along the cliffs. Southern right whales arrive in June for calving along the shore. Several lookouts on Bunda Cliffs allow to enjoy watching them frolic in the water. Sometimes up to 70 whales with calves may be observed in a single location. One good although not signposted lookout is located 61km west of the Roadhouse at 31°34'12"S and 130°16'38"E. A short, 200m unsealed but firm track allows access to the cliff. The whales departure south in October. The National Park has also established the Head of Bight Centre with a boardwalk, stairs and whale-watching information, located east of the Roadhouse.

This vast, barren-looking land hides plenty of amazing wildlife including many birds.



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A variety of accommodation is offered at the Nullarbor Roadhouse. There are no official camping areas in the Park but camping is allowed in the romantic Koonalda Homestead ruins. There is a network of dirt roads and tracks in the Park, but most are not sign-posted. Most interesting from a birder's point of view are Old Eyre Hwy, Koonalda Tk and Cook Rd. A 4WD vehicle is a must. For further details see the Park map, downloadable here: [https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/docs/nullarbor-national-park/nullarbor\\_wpa\\_optimised.pdf](https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/docs/nullarbor-national-park/nullarbor_wpa_optimised.pdf).

About 80 bird species have been recorded in the Nullarbor National Park. **Key species** are Nullarbor Quail-thrush and Naretha Bluebonnet. Other birds of interest include Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Slender-billed Thornbill, White-winged Fairy-wren, Rufous Fieldwren, Inland Dotterel, Little Button-quail, Redthroat, Mulga Parrot, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and Australian Bustard. Rarities include Scarlet-chested Parrot.

### *Head of Bight Centre*

This site is one of the most spectacular whale watching places in Australia. To get there, 16km east of Nullarbor Roadhouse turn from Eyre Hwy towards the coast and drive for 12km on the access road to the Head of Bight Visitor Centre. The access road is gated at the turnoff from the highway and open only from 8:30am until 4pm. A small fee applies to enter the coast-viewing boardwalk.



*Bunda Cliffs*

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Even when the whales are absent in the Head of Bight, the views of Bunda Cliffs are incomparable, definitely worth a visit. Occasionally, in a bad weather, a large variety of seabirds come close to the shore. Other birds at the seashore include Pacific Gull, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Great Pied Cormorant and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

Check the bushes at the Centre for the presence of Rufous Fieldwren, White-winged Fairy-wren, Brown Songlark, Singing Honeyeater, Red-capped Robin and Emu.

### *Murrawijinie Caves Track*

The track starts at the west end of Nullarbor Roadhouse at GPS coordinates of 31°27'02''S and 130°53'41''E and runs for 200m parallel to Eyre Hwy. Then it turns north at a large signboard and runs for 10km to the caves, signposted along the way. Along this track, Nullarbor Quail-thrushes can be found. Raptors are conspicuous including Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted Harrier, Brown Falcon and Nankeen Kestrel. An Australian Raven's nest is located in a tree near the caves.

### *Old Eyre Highway*

This long track runs from the Roadhouse nearly to the WA border, generally parallel to the Eyre Hwy (A1). There are several access tracks from the main road including Koonalda Rd. Old Eyre Hwy is often rough, so a 4WD vehicle is recommended.



*Nullarbor Quail-thrush habitat*

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Nullarbor Quail-thrushes can be found along this route, sometimes reported in good numbers. Listed below are the stops where this species was sighted. The route starts from the Nullarbor Roadhouse and heads west.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°27'26"S and 130°51'18"E***

This spot is not far from the Roadhouse. Apart from Nullarbor Quail-thrush, look also for Rufous Fieldwren, Orange Chat, White-fronted Chat and White-winged Fairy-wren.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°27'32"S and 130°50'46"E***

Here, look also for White-winged Fairy-wren.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°27'50"S and 130°48'59"E***

Other birds at this spot include Rufous Fieldwren, Australasian Pipit and Nankeen Kestrel.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°28'08"S and 130°44'16"E***

Other birds that you may see at this spot include Southern Whiteface and Australian Raven.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°28'08"S and 130°42'52"E***

Rufous Fieldwren, Brown Songlark, Singing Honeyeater, Crested Bellbird, White-winged Fairy-wren, Southern Whiteface and Black-faced Woodswallow have also been recorded here.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°28'06"S and 130°37'53"E***

Look also for Inland Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Crested Bellbird, Grey Butcherbird and White-browed Babbler.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 32°28'04"S and 130°30'51"E***

This site is located about 2.5km east of the junction with Cook Rd. Apart from Nullarbor Quail-thrush, other species here include Brown Songlark and White-browed Babbler.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°28'07"S and 130°24'25"E***

This is a good spot for Nullarbor Quail-thrush.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°28'08"S and 130°10'04"E***

This site is located 25km east of an intersection with Koonalda Rd.

### ***Old Eyre Hwy at 31°30'01"S and 129°26'01"E***

This spot is situated 40km east of WA border. Apart from Nullarbor Quail-thrush, look for Mulga Parrot, Rufous Fieldwren, Hooded Robin, Red-capped Robin, White-winged Fairy-wren, Crested Bellbird, Singing Honeyeater and Australasian Pipit.

## ***Cook Road***

Good numbers of Inland Dotterels have been occasionally observed along this road, particularly along the section between 40km and 80km north of Eyre Hwy. Other birds here include Australian Bustard, Ground Cuckoo-shrike and Spotted Harrier.

## ***Koonalda Homestead***

This bush camp is located 100km west of the Nullarbor Roadhouse. It is a great spot for camping under the stars, among the ruins of an old train station. The Homestead served as a train station and a stop for food and fuel for the people making the journey across the Nullarbor before Eyre Hwy was re-routed closer to the coast, leaving behind a graveyard of quickly dilapidating buildings and cars. The site is situated 16km off Eyre Hwy and about 100km east of Western Australia border. Turn north into Koonalda Rd from Eyre Hwy. Be cautious, there are no signs to guide you to this place. GPS coordinates to the turnoff from the highway are 31°34'32"S and 129°54'33"E. Koonalda Homestead is located about 1km past the crossing with Old Eyre Hwy. GPS coordinates at the ruins are 31°27'21"S and 129°51'30"E. Further 15km into the Park past the Homestead, you will find a series of caves and sinkholes. Do not explore this area alone, there is danger of falling into a hole that may be obscured by vegetation.

The ruins are a good spot to look for Naretha Bluebonnet. Check out a stand of mulga nearby. Also, Ground Cuckoo-shrikes visit the area and can be found along the track.

The area may also yield Little Button-quail, White-fronted Chat, White-browed Babbler, Yellow-throated Miner, Singing Honeyeater, Crested Bellbird and Grey Butcherbird. Small flocks of Major Mitchell's Cockatoos may be flying over the site. Barn Owls roost in the ruins and are often reported by the campers.



*Singing Honeyeater*

When the mallee is blooming near the ruins, honeyeaters appear including Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater and Singing Honeyeater.

The area around Koonalda Rd between Eyre Hwy and the Homestead supports a good population of Naretha Bluebonnets. They are spread along the distance and are particularly visible along the first 2.5km and in the wooded area 9km from the highway. The section at 5km-6km from the highway may yield Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Redthroat, Rufous Fieldwren, Southern Whiteface, Mulga Parrot, Red-backed Kingfisher, Pied Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater and Singing Honeyeater.

Along the 15km route to the caves, look for both Nullarbor Quail-thrush and Naretha Bluebonnet. Banded Lapwings are common. Other birds here include Rufous Fieldwren, Crimson Chat, Black-faced Woodswallow, Masked Woodswallow, Blue-breasted Fairywren, Slender-billed Thornbill, Australasian Pipit and Brown Falcon. Nanking Kestrels breed at the caves.

## **Border Village**

Border Village is situated at the western border of Nullarbor National Park and near the Western Australia border. This is the place where the giant red kangaroo statue is still standing. Naretha Bluebonnet is common in the village. Other birds here include White-browed Scrubwren, White-browed Babbler, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Rufous Songlark and Weebill.

## Mamungari Conservation Park

This large (2,128,900ha), remote park, formerly known as Unnamed National Park (truly!) stretches along the western border of South Australia. It is contiguous with the Nullarbor Plain and Great Victoria Desert. The main feature of the park are red dunes, sparsely covered with desert kurrajong, wattles and desert gums. Large salt lakes sit in between the dunes. This is a true remote wilderness where flora and fauna have remained untouched. Several rare species, such as Scarlet-chested Parrot and Princess Parrot, can be found here.

The park is located approximately 450km northwest of Ceduna via Eyre Hwy (A1). To get there, from the Nullarbor Roadhouse drive 42km on Eyre Hwy in the westerly direction. Turn north into Cook Rd and drive 105km to Cook. Cook is a large ghost town, although there is also a live presence here of up to 4 people, which is the rotating crew of the train between Melbourne and Perth. The outgoing shifts stop here for an overnight rest.

Cook is a good place for a stopover, you can camp among the abandoned buildings.

From Cook, drive 255km north to Vokes Hill Corner at the junction with Anne Beadell Hwy that bisects the National Park, turn left and drive through the park. Alternatively, you can reach the park from Coober Pedy on Stuart Hwy (A87). Turn off Stuart Hwy into Anne Beadell Hwy and drive west to the park.

To travel to and within Mamungari Conservation Park, you'll need a sturdy 4WD vehicle and experience with driving and navigating in difficult terrain. Only first 100km of Cook Rd are sealed. Anne Beadell Hwy is rough all the way, especially in the western section of the route. There are no facilities in the park and no road marking whatsoever. Sufficient water, fuel, food and spare parts are a must. Carry an emergency beacon with you as well as a satellite phone. You'll be travelling through several Traditional Owners areas. You will need several permits; some take up to 6 weeks to obtain. Plan your passage well in advance. Check the Mamungari Conservation Park's website for permit requirements: <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/mamungari-conservation-park#fees>.

About 60 bird species have been recorded in the Mamungari Conservation Park. **Key species** are Scarlet-chested Parrot and Princess Parrot. Other birds of interest include Inland Dotterel, Australian Bustard, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Malleefowl, Cinnamon Quail-thrush and White-browed Treecreeper.

The Park is a stronghold of Scarlet-chested Parrot. Sightings of this species are widely scattered in the Park along Anne Beadell Hwy. The parrots are usually foraging by the roadside in small family groups (2-4 birds). Their preferred habitat are patches of desert gum woodland, usually intermixed with black and desert oaks. Look for them along the section starting 50km before the eastern park border and ending at the Western Australia border. In particular, check the areas 5km, 50km and 100km west of Vokes Hill Corner and the area near the Western Australia border.



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There are also records of this species outside the park. Sites to check along Cook Rd include a stretch of Cook Rd 140km-170km north of Cook and 10km before Vokes Hill Corner (245km from Cook). Along Anne Beadell Hwy outside the park, Scarlet-chested Parrots were sighted in the following locations:

- Tallaringa Conservation Park, 100km west of Coober Pedy
- At the GPS position of 28°33'12"S and 131°53'01"E
- At the GPS position of 28°32'21"S and 131°44'15"E (in the Woomera Prohibition Area, 3km west of Anne's Corner which is 1km west from the intersection of Anne Beadell Hwy with Mount Davies Tk).

Princess Parrot, the other key species, is more mobile and more difficult to encounter. It needs a lot of time and luck. The birds were reported in the Park randomly along Anne Beadell Hwy. Several birds were also sighted in the vicinity of mid-point of the park, 525km west of Coober Pedy, and 8 individuals were counted on the WA border.



*Princess Parrot*

At the entry to the park, check the stands of black oak woodland, where White-browed Treecreepers can be found. Search also for Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Mulga Parrot, Budgerigar and Rufous Treecreeper.

Other birds in the Park include Gilbert's Whistler, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Hooded Robin, Ground Cuckoo-shrike and Crested Bellbird.

You may experience good birding along Cook Rd. When travelling from Eyre Hwy, look for Australian Bustard. A stretch of Cook Rd between 60km and 90km from the highway is good for Inland Dotterel. Groups of up to 40 birds were reported from this area.



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You will definitely not miss an old trig point, carrying a giant, multistorey nest. In this treeless land, this structure is a jackpot for many birds; the crows, ravens and raptors contributed to the construction of the nest. Birders' reports from 2018 indicate that the nest was used by Australian Hobby, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcon and Little Raven.

Cook township has a resident population of Spotted Harriers; they like to gather in the car graveyard. At night, look for Barn Owls; they utilise the abandoned buildings. Tawny Frogmouths can also be found. Check the Cook Airfield along Trans Access Rd – you may encounter Inland Dotterel, Orange Chat, Crimson Chat and White-winged Fairy-wren there. The first 60km of the road north of Cook run through a treeless country, with only scattered bluebushes. In this area, look for Nullarbor Quail-thrush, Rufous Fieldwren, Singing Honeyeater, Redthroat, Brown Songlark, White-winged Fairy-wren, Orange Chat and Spotted Harrier. Travelling further north, you'll leave Nullarbor Plain and enter Great Victoria Desert. Shrubs and even trees start to appear, growing between the dunes. Here, look for Naretha Bluebonnet, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and a variety of honeyeaters.

## Amata Wastewater Treatment Plant

Amata is an extremely remote community of Anangu Pitjantjatjara (APY) people in South Australia. It is located 40km south of Northern Territory border, 115km south of Uluru and 250km west of Stuart Hwy (A87). Access to Amata and other communities of APY Lands requires a permit, issued in advance, otherwise you will be fined \$2,000 on arrival.

The place appeared on the SA hotspot list when a rare vagrant, Grey-headed Lapwing, was recorded here in March 2000. The bird spent a couple of months there and is still the one and only record of this species in SA.

To get there, from Alice Springs drive south 200km on Stuart Hwy (A87), then turn west at the Eridunda Roadhouse onto the fully sealed Lasseter Hwy (4), still in NT. After 151km turn south into Mulga Park Rd (Victory Downs turnoff). After 10km, you'll pass Mount Conner viewing area. Continue 60km southwest to Mulga Park Station (on the left). Just past the Station turn right into Amata Rd. Drive about 50km to the township. Supplies are limited there, although there is a fuel station and a general store in town, but rather be self-sufficient. Two large sewage ponds are visible off Purara St, take a track leading south.

About 80 bird species have been recorded around the Amata wastewater ponds. **Key species** are Australian Spotted Crane, Painted Finch, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper and Spotted Harrier. Other species include White-necked Heron, Cockatiel, Budgerigar, Mulga Parrot, Black-tailed Native-hen, Hoary-headed Grebe, White-backed Swallow, Zebra Finch and Peregrine Falcon. Rarities include Western Bowerbird, Brown Honeyeater, Grey-headed Lapwing, Freckled Duck and Glossy Ibis.



*Western Bowerbird*

Good numbers of Australian Spotted Crakes are resident at this site, often coming in the open to a shallow overflow from the trickling pump. Spotless Crakes can also be found. Painted Finches appear nearly every day, coming in small flock to drink from the ponds.

A wide selection of waders can be sighted on the ponds. The migratory Common Sandpiper and Wood Sandpiper are there nearly every summer. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Common Greenshank and Red-necked Stint also arrive. Small flock of native waders such as Red-necked Avocets, Pied Stilts, Red-kneed Dotterels and Black-fronted Dotterels are present all year round. The selection of waterbirds on the ponds includes Hardhead, Hoary-headed Grebe and Grey Teal. Black-tailed Native-hens and White-necked Herons like to visit the watered grass on the oval.

A long-lasting bower of Western Bowerbird is located in the school grounds in Amata. This species has its southernmost range limit here. Other birds in the area include Crimson Chat, Red-capped Robin, Rainbow Bee-eater, Masked Woodswallow, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Diamond Dove and Brown Songlark.

Other records from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands include:

- Dusky Grasswren that was found at Umuwa, Murputja Airfield and Victory Well,
- Dusky Grasswren and Spinifexbird in Deering Hills, 100km west of Amata. GPS coordinates here are 26°15'20"S and 130°06'54"E,
- Rufous Grasswren, found on the Umuwa APY Lands.

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In Umuwa, the following birds have also been recorded: Banded Whiteface, Western Bowerbird, Black Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Red-browed Pardalote and Crimson Chat.



*Dusky Grasswren*