

Central Queensland



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Myall Park Botanic Garden

Myall Park, established by David Gordon, is the place where the famous grevillea hybrids such as Robyn Gordon, Sandra Gordon, etc. were created and now being planted all over Australia and the world. This 35ha private property is located 7km from Glenmorgan and approximately 400km west of Brisbane in the Brigalow region.

The park features an extensive collection of plants from arid and semi-arid Australia. There are two large lagoons here and a network of easy walks. A vehicular loop provides access to a bird hide and to the end of the property. The park can be an ideal base to explore birding sites of the Brigalow area.

To get there, if coming from Brisbane take Moonie Hwy (49) past Dalby. After 48km turn right onto Surat Developmental Rd (87). After another 84km you'll reach Glenmorgan where you turn right onto Riverglen Rd. Drive 4km and turn onto Myall Park Rd that will take you to the park. Day-visitors are charged a small entrance fee. There is also a variety of accommodations available. A gift shop is located onsite. Book online at <https://myallparkbotanicgarden.com/visit/stay-in-the-garden/> or call (07) 4665 6705.



Apostlebirds huddled together as they do

Over 160 species are on the Myall Park's birdlist. **Key species** are Plum-headed Finch, Painted Button-quail, Striped Honeyeater, Cockatiel, Blue Bonnet, Spotted Bowerbird and White-browed Babbler. Other birds of interest include Apostlebird, Western Gerygone, Singing Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Mallee Ringneck, Red-capped Robin, White-winged Triller and Grey-crowned Babbler. Rarities include Glossy

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Black-Cockatoo, Brolga, Diamond Dove, Comb-crested Jacana, Latham's Snipe and White-winged Fairy-wren.

Best birding occurs here in winter and spring when gum trees and grevilleas are in full bloom. Honeyeaters come in droves including Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater and Blue-faced Honeyeater. In the flowering wattles, look for Weebill, Inland Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Western Gerygone.

Myall Park is a good place for parrots. You should see Red-winged Parrot, Red-rumped Parrot, Cockatiel and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Even a small flock of Long-billed Corellas can be found here.

Australasian Grebes often concentrate in large numbers on the lagoons. Other waterbirds at this site include Hoary-headed Grebe, Black-fronted Dotterel, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, White-necked Heron, Nankeen Night-Heron and occasionally Glossy Ibis, Black-tailed Native-hen or Pink-eared Duck. Finches regularly come to drink from the lagoons; look for Zebra Finch, Plum-headed Finch and Double-barred Finch.

Other birds at Myall Park include Rufous Songlark, Jacky Winter, White-winged Chough, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Banded Lapwing, Common Bronzewing, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite and Whistling Kite. At night, Spotted Nightjars may be calling near the Avochia Cottage.

Erringibba National Park

This tiny, 877ha National Park is located near Glenmorgan 330km west of Brisbane. Myall Park Botanic Garden is just north of this site. It is a pancake-flat area covered by open forest dominated by brigalow, belah, bimbale box and yapunyah.

To get there, if coming from Brisbane take Moonie Hwy (49) past Dalby. After 48km turn right onto Surat Developmental Rd (87). Just before Glenmorgan turn south into Windemere Rd which will take you to the National Park. The site is on your left and is not signposted. It is a lonely patch of bushland surrounded by farmland. GPS coordinates are 27.17.16S and 149.42.30E. There are no facilities.

This is the place to look for Ground Cuckoo-shrikes; they occur on the forest margin. A pair of Black Falcons has been living here for many years.

Other birds in the Erringibba National Park include Plum-headed Finch, Jacky Winter, White-winged Triller, Red-winged Parrot, Restless Flycatcher, Weebill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater and Australian Raven.

Southwood National Park

This small National Park is located in the Brigalow region along Moonie Hwy (49) approximately 350km west of Brisbane. The Park was set aside to protect remnants of brigalow-belah forest that once dominated the area but was eradicated for grazing. There are also areas of cypress pine and bimble box forest. In the understory, you'll see wilga, false sandalwood and black tea-trees. The Park also protects a significant variety of brigalow specialists.



Brigalow habitat

To get there, if coming from Brisbane take Moonie Hwy (49) to Dalby. From Dalby, you have another 130 km on Moonie Hwy. The Park is about 26km past Moonie. The Park is not well signposted. A small camping area is located off Fabians Rd. GPS coordinates for the turnoff to Fabians Rd are 27.50.02S and 150.06.30E. You'll need a 4WD vehicle to explore the Park.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded in the Southwood National Park. **Key species** are Painted Honeyeater, Cockatiel, Blue Bonnet, Spotted Bowerbird and Square-tailed Kite. Other birds of interest include Emu, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Apostlebird, Red-capped Robin, Grey-crowned Babbler, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Glossy Black-Cockatoo (very rare).

The best place to find Painted Honeyeater is at the eastern end of the Park where they are breeding. Look there also for Weebill, Varied Sittella, Yellow Thornbill, Speckled Warbler and Purple-backed Fairy-wren there.

When birding along Fabians Rd, look for the honeyeaters in the flowering gum trees such as Striped Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and White-eared Honeyeater. There will be plenty of Apostlebirds along the road. Square-tailed Kites nest along the road. Emus often visit the camping area.

At the southwestern corner of the Park near Moonie Hwy, you may come across Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-capped Robin, Varied Sittella, Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Whistler, Jacky Winter and Spotted Bowerbird.

Alton National Park

This 558ha National Park, adjacent to Moonie Hwy (49), is located 370km west of Brisbane and 75km east of St George. The Park is divided by Moonie Hwy and surrounded by grazing properties. Vegetation in the Park is a mosaic of spinifex and woodland dominated by brigalow, belah, cypress pine and bumble box.

To get there, if coming from Brisbane take Moonie Hwy (49) to Dalby. Continue west on Moonie Hwy. The Park is located about 100km west of Moonie. The site is not well signposted. GPS coordinates are 27.59.21S and 149.20.37E. Except for a chaotic mess of unformed cattle and 4WD tracks, there are no facilities here. Birding is best conducted along the highway.

About 80 bird species have been recorded in the Alton National Park. **Key species** are Square-tailed Kite, Spotted Bowerbird, Red-capped Robin, Striped Honeyeater, Cockatiel and Chestnut-rumped Thornbill. Other birds of interest include Emu, Red-winged Parrot, Weebill, Spotted Pardalote, Blue Bonnet, Mallee Ringneck, Rainbow Bee-eater and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. Rarities include Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Hooded Robin, Diamond Dove and Diamond Firetail.

Several bird species are here at or close to their western distribution limit. These include Spotted Pardalote, White-eared Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Common Cicadabird, Bar-shouldered Dove, Silvereye and White-throated Nightjar.

On the northern side of the highway, check the bush for the presence of Spotted Bowerbird, Singing Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, Mallee Ringneck, Sacred Kingfisher, Weebill and Leaden Flycatcher.

On the southern side at its eastern end, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills are very common. Look also for Spotted Pardalote, Varied Sittella, Weebill and Yellow-faced Honeyeater. The western end is favourite of the parrots. You may also come across Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Brown-headed Honeyeater and Grey Butcherbird.



Female Hooded Robin with chick

St George

St George is a quintessential Queensland rural town. It is located in the middle of vast floodplains on the banks of Balonne River 550km west of Brisbane at the crossroads of Carnarvon Hwy (A55) and Balonne Hwy (49). Thanks to a wide range of habitats such as the river, wetlands, woodland and farmland, there are several birding opportunities in town and in the 30km-radius around it.

EJ Beardmore Dam

This large dam, also known as Lake Kajarabie, built on the Balonne River, is used for irrigation and as the main water supply for St George. A good parkland has been established on its banks. Channels and drains run from the lake.

The dam is situated 20km northeast of St George. To get there, from Carnarvon Hwy (A55) 14km north of St George turn west into Thungaby Rd and drive 8km to the water. You'll find here a nice day-use area with sheltered picnic tables and toilets. No camping is allowed; look for the accommodation in St George. An unsealed road runs north near the lake, allowing birding opportunities in the bushland.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded around the EJ Beardmore Dam. **Key species** are Grey-crowned Babbler, Weebill, Apostlebird, Cockatiel and Striped Honeyeater. Other birds of interest include Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Nankeen Night-Heron, Spotted

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Bowerbird, Red-rumped Parrot and Restless Flycatcher. Rarities include Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Black-tailed Native-hen and White-winged Black Tern.

Bushland along Thungaby Rd on your way to the dam may yield Speckled Warbler, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Treecreeper, Mallee Ringneck, Cockatiel, Red-winged Parrot, Red-backed Kingfisher, Inland Thornbill and Apostlebird. Grey-crowned Babblers nest there.



Red-backed Kingfisher

In the parkland by the lake, we observed nesting Pied Butcherbirds, Grey Butcherbirds, Weebills and Pale-headed Rosellas. There were also Apostlebirds, Black Kites, Superb Fairy-wrens and Purple-backed Fairy-wrens.

Regularly found around the dam are Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Royal Spoonbill, Black-fronted Dotterel, Pied Stilt and Hardhead.

A pair of Barking Owls likes roosting in the youth camp in Thungaby Rd. You may also find White-winged Fairy-wren, Cockatiel and Striped Honeyeater there.

Whyenbah Road

Dry woodland surrounding this road is fantastic for the bush birds. To get there, turn south of Balonne Hwy (49) into Whyenbah Rd just west of the Balonne River bridge (Jack Taylor Weir). Drive south for 20km with frequent birding stops.

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A rich variety of small bush birds will await you including Weebill, Western Gerygone, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and four fairy-wren species (Purple-backed, Splendid, White-winged and Superb Fairy-wren). Also, you may see Singing Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Spotted Bowerbird, Brown Treecreeper, Red-rumped Parrot, Red-winged Parrot, Cockatiel and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Balonne River Foreshore

You'll find a nice parkland in the middle of St George on the riverbank along St Georges Tce. Drive along the Terrace with frequent stops. There are two viewing platforms to facilitate birding. The best birding site is the section between Scott St and Balonne St.

On the river, you may find common waterbirds as well as Magpie Geese, White-necked Herons and Eastern Great Egrets. Occasionally, a small flock of Black-tailed Native-hens is found on the banks.

Large, noisy flocks of parrots are a common sight around the river. Look for Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Red-rumped Parrot and Cockatiel. Tree Martins are nesting in a large dead tree.

Bush birds around the river include Grey-crowned Babbler, Olive-backed Oriole, Spotted Bowerbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, White-breasted Woodswallow, Restless Flycatcher, Pacific Baza and Australian Hobby.

Telecommunication Tower

This is a popular stop for the birdwatchers heading west along Balonne Hwy (49). It is a good patch of dry woodland, dominated by mulga, cypress pine, bumble box and casuarina.

To get there, 35km west of St George turn into Mundalee Rd. The telecommunication tower is visible about 500m from the road. GPS coordinates are 27.57.55S and 148.14.12E.

About 60 species have been recorded in this spot. **Key species** are Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Little Woodswallow, Painted Button-quail, Striped Honeyeater and Splendid Fairy-wren. Other birds of interest include Weebill, Inland Thornbill, Mallee Ringneck and Australian Hobby. The latter often perches on the tower. You can observe Painted Button-quail on the ground under the tower when it ventures from the bushes into the open.

Common birds in the area include Rainbow Bee-eater, Jacky Winter, Rufous Whistler, Sacred Kingfisher, White-plumed Honeyeater and Brown-headed Honeyeater. Look also for Red-capped Robin, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Crested Bellbird, Singing Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Thrushton National Park

This 25,650ha National Park is located in the heart of mulga land approximately 100km west of St George and 530km west of Brisbane. It consists of two square sections connected only by Homeboin-St George Rd and Rutherglen Rd. The Park protects remnants of the original flora, now surrounded by the endless sea of farmland. Vegetation comprises dense mulga and areas of spinifex with sparse ironbarks, cypress pine, bimble box and brigalow. Patches of heathland are scattered through the Park.



Mulga habitat, Thrushton National Park

There are three possible access routes but we only recommend the approach from the west. From Balonne Hwy (49) 105km west of St George, turn north onto Balonne-Mitchell Rd. After 51km, turn east into Homeboin-St George Rd. The road changes name to Rutherglen Rd after 14km. The north block of Thrushton National Park borders with Homeboin-St George Rd and the south block borders with Rutherglen Rd. The rest of the landscape is agricultural land. The Park is very poorly signposted; we noticed only a few signs obscured by vegetation.

This is a very remote Park, with few visitors, so be well prepared and completely self-sufficient. There are two campsites, Thrushton Homestead Ruin and Thrushton Woolshed, both located close to each other in the south block. To find them, turn from Rutherglen Rd onto an overgrown track at 27.43.09S and 147.44.17E (there is a small sign there but overgrown and easy to miss). At the fork after a few kilometres turn right

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for Woolshed or go straight to Homestead Ruin. The Park is accessible in dry weather only and a good 4WD is a must.

There are no tracks in the Parks apart those leading to the camping sites. There are no facilities. Mourilyan Rd, running along the west boundary of the Park, can be used for birding instead. See also the Park map, downloadable here:

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/thruston/pdf/thrushton-np-map.pdf>.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded in Thrushton National Park. **Key species** are White-browed Treecreeper, Hooded Robin and Red-backed Kingfisher. Other birds of interest include Grey-crowned Babbler, Striped Honeyeater, Varied Sittella, Spotted Bowerbird, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Spotted Nightjar. Rarities include Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Square-tailed Kite and Peregrine Falcon. Look also for koalas which occur here on their western limit of the range.

We were amazed by the numbers and variety of bird species in this Park. We stayed at the Homestead Ruins, watching White-browed Treecreepers, common here, climbing mulga trunks. When we were sitting down to breakfast, a large bird party was moving unhurriedly through the mulga, completely ignoring us as we watched them sipping out first coffee of the day. Species in the group included Varied Sittella, Inland Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Jacky Winter, Rufous Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher and Grey Fantail.

Hooded Robins were common in the campground and very inquisitive. Brush Cuckoos were calling loudly. We found Striped Honeyeater, Pale-headed Rosella, Grey Butcherbird and Pied Currawong near the homestead.

We found a Spotted Bowerbird's bower near the Woolshed camping area. Other birds there included Speckled Warbler, Little Woodswallow, Common Bronzewing, Red-winged Parrot, Red-rumped Parrot and Red-capped Robin.

Parks margins along Rutherglen Rd and Mourilyan Rd yielded Red-backed Kingfisher, Brown Treecreeper, White-winged Triller, Black-faced Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Little Eagle.

Roma

Roma is an important regional town located in Central Queensland about 500km west of Brisbane. Some birding opportunities can be found around the town and in the vicinity.

Railway Dam

The picturesque Railway Dam, also known as Roma Environmental Park, is lined with bulrushes and reeds and surrounded by coolibah, mulga and brigalow bushland. Duke St encircles the dam. To get there, from Warrego Hwy (A2) in the centre of town continue

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straight onto Bowen St while the main thoroughfare turns left. Turn left into Cottell St and left again in Foott St which will lead you to Duke St. Site coordinates are 26.34.34S and 148.46.55E.

This site is a reliable for Plum-headed Finches. They often roost in the bulrushes at the edges of the dam. Waterbirds here include Glossy Ibis (regular visitor), Nankeen Night-Heron, Eastern Great Egret, Australasian Grebe and Hardhead. There is plenty of Australian Reed-Warblers in the reeds and Tawny Grassbirds in the long grass.

Bush birds include White-winged Triller, Weebill, Rufous Songlark, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Striped Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Miner and Pale-headed Rosella.

Peregrine Falcon was reported from this area several times.

Roma-Taroom Road

This 160km stretch of the road between Roma and Taroom offers multiple birding opportunities thanks to its extensive wetlands and bushland as well as good grassland.

To get there, from Roma drive north on Carnarvon Hwy (55) and then turn right into Roma-Taroom Rd. We found a good Australian Bustard place about 40km from Roma, there were 14 birds in that spot. GPS coordinates are 26.16.44S and 148.53.54E.



Australian Bustard

Further north, about 110km from Roma, a good large wetland is located. Site coordinates are 25.55.46S and 149.25.30E. Black-necked Storks regularly visit the place. Other waterbirds here include Magpie Goose, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe, White-

necked Heron, Intermediate Egret, Eastern Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Buff-banded Rail and Spotless Crake. Look for Australian Bustard also in this area.

The area near Dawson River in the Taroom township is worth checking. At the end of Roma-Taroom Rd turn right into Leichhardt Hwy (A5) and leave the car in the truck parking area at Lion's Park. Find the southern end of Taroom River Walk. Birds to watch along the walk include Azure Kingfisher, Striped Honeyeater, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Rainbow Bee-eater, Restless Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Miner, Weebill and Plum-headed Finch.

Lake Murphy Conservation Park

The site located about 30km north of Taroom and 500km northwest of Brisbane. The site is known for camping of Leichhardt and his party in 1844. The lake fills only when the nearby Robinsons Creek overflows. When full, it provides seasonal refuge for the waterbirds. Vegetation around the lakes features huge mature river red gums with grassy understory. When dry, the lake is a lush pasture speckled with grazing wallabies and emus.

To get there, from Leichhardt Hwy (A5) 19km north of Taroom turn west into Taroom-Bauhinia Downs Rd (7) (signposted in the field as Fitzroy Development Rd). After 2km, turn into an unsealed Glenhaughton Rd which will get you to the camping area 13km down the road. Site facilities include a shelter, picnic tables and toilets. A 300m-long track runs from the back of the campsite to the lake. There is also a longer track along Robinsons Creek looping back to the camping area. See also the site map downloadable here: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/lake-murphy/pdf/lake-murphy-cp-map.pdf>.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded at Lake Murphy. **Key species** are Powerful Owl, Australian Bustard, Brolga and, when there is water in the lake, waders and waterbirds. Other birds of interest include Grey-crowned Babbler, Apostlebird, Emu, Pale-headed Rosella and Restless Flycatcher.

We visited this place in January 2018 when the lake when completely dry and covered by pasture grazed by Emus and Australian Bustards. Flocks of Red-browed Finches and Double-barred Finches were feeding in tall weeds and grasses. Many birds were still nesting in the camping site, that late in the season. We observed Grey-crowned Babblers making efforts to build a nest. These efforts were hampered by a mob of Apostlebirds that vigorously destroyed the partial construction. When Apostlebirds finally left, the babblers started to repair the damage.

Pied Butcherbirds and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes were feeding their voracious young perched on the branches. A pair of Pale-headed Rosellas took their chicks for their first flight.

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In the evening, five groups of Laughing Kookaburras gave a surround-sound concert for us. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos tried to outdo them, and the cacophony lasted until dark. At night, Powerful Owl was calling. We also heard Australian Owlet-nightjar.

We were awakened by the morning chorus initiated by 50+ screeching Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, followed by Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Noisy Miners, Channel-billed Cuckoos and Pheasant Coucals.

Robinsons Creek Circuit yielded Dollarbird, Brown Treecreeper, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Red-kneed Dotterel, Pacific Baza, Cockatiel and Red-winged Parrot.

Carnarvon National Park

This large, 290,000ha National Park is located in Central Queensland about 600km northwest of Brisbane. It is a place of outstanding beauty and one of QLD's prime natural attractions. The Park features spectacular sandstone gorges, cliffs, plateaus, pillars, arches, etc. There are also scenic waterfalls, fern-filled gullies and Aboriginal rock art. The Park consists of four sections: Carnarvon Gorge, Mount Moffatt, Ka Ka Mundi and Salvator Rosa.



Carnarvon Creek, Carnarvon Gorge section

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Due to high elevations and high annual rainfall, a variety of habitats developed in the Park, in contrast to the monotony of the surrounding farmland. The sandstone slopes and ridges are covered with mixed woodland with eucalyptus, wattle, white cypress pine and turpentine. Rainforest with the understory of ferns and mosses grows in the gorges. The alluvial plains are covered with brigalow, belah and bimble box.

Getting there:

- **Carnarvon Gorge:** from Carnarvon Hwy (55) 250km north of Roma or 20km south of Rollerston turn west into Rewan Rd. The turnoff is clearly signposted. Next, turn left at the T-junction into Obriens Rd. It will change name to Carnarvon Gorge Rd towards the end of the route. Most of this route is sealed and can be accessed with conventional vehicles. A large Visitor Centre, several carparks and picnic areas are provided at the end of the road. A variety of accommodation is offered at the Park boundary. Several walking tracks start from this busy tourist centre.
- **Mount Moffatt:** this section is located 170km north of Injune and 220km north of Mitchell. Access is signposted from Carnarvon Hwy (55) 70km north of Injune. Follow the signage to the National Park for 144km to get to the Park's information board. Access roads are bitumen and dirt; a 4WD vehicle is recommended.
- **Ka Ka Mundi:** This site is located northwest of the Mount Moffatt section. Access is signposted from Dawson Hwy (60). From Springsure take Dawson Developmental Rd until you reach Buckland Rd. Follow Buckland Rd for 41km to a T-junction. The road south is signposted to the Park, the distance is another 22km. No facilities are available in this section. A 4WD vehicle is recommended.
- **Salvator Rosa:** This section is strictly dry weather and a 4WD vehicle. From Dawson Hwy (60) at Springsure take Dawson Developmental Rd and drive 114km. Next, veer left onto Cungelella Rd. After 24km veer left again to continue on the same road for another 14km. Turn right onto Salvator Rosa Rd and travel 16km to the Nogo River camping area.

The map of the Park's regional location can be downloaded from here:

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/carnarvon-gorge/pdf/central-qld-sandstone-map.pdf>.

Over 210 species have been recorded in the Carnarvon National Park. **Key species** are Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Squatter Pigeon, Australian King-Parrot, Azure Kingfisher and Peregrine Falcon. Other birds of interest include Australian Bustard, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Wonga Pigeon, Satin Bowerbird, Rose Robin, Apostlebird, White-winged Chough, Pacific Baza and Wedge-tailed Eagle. Rarities include Black-breasted Buzzard, Black Falcon, Painted Honeyeater, Spotted Quail-thrush and Australian Brush-turkey.

Many species reach their western distribution limit in Queensland in this Park including Emerald Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Powerful Owl, White-throated Treecreeper, Striated Thornbill, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Golden Whistler, Varied Triller, Rufous Fantail and Red-browed Finch.

Carnarvon Gorge Section

Carnarvon Creek has been quietly carving its path through the stone of central Queensland for the past 27 million years. The result is a spectacular, deep and narrow Carnarvon Gorge, boasting 200m cliffs and deep caverns in the sandstone formation. Fertile soil at the bottom of the gorge together with its microclimate allowed tropical plants to thrive, many of them unique and rare.

When driving along the access road, check several wetlands on your way. Look for Brolga, White-necked Heron, Comb-crested Jacana and common waterbirds. Along the road you may encounter Australian Bustards, Emus (often in large flocks), Australasian Pipits, Purple-backed Fairy-wrens and Black-faced Woodswallows. There will be plenty of parrots along the road such as Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

When you reach the junction with Wyseby Rd, turn into it to visit a large lagoon nearby at 24.58.38S and 148.24.11E. Expect to find Cotton Pygmy-goose, Comb-crested Jacana, Brolga, Australasian Shoveler, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe and Intermediate Egret. Bushland near the dam may produce Grey-crowned Babbler, Restless Flycatcher, Jacky Winter and Weebill.

The area around the Visitor Centre may yield White-winged Chough, Apostlebird, Emerald Dove, Rose Robin, Olive-backed Oriole, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Varied Sittella, White-throated Treecreeper and three lorikeet species (Little, Scaly-breasted and Rainbow Lorikeet).

If you take a 1.5km return nature trail along the shady Carnarvon Creek, you may come across Golden Whistler, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Lewin's Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren, Pied Currawong and Pacific Baza.

The enthusiasts of long walks will be fully satisfied if they take a 13km walk through the gorge to the Art Gallery. The scenery is breathtaking. Moreover, you'll have a chance to see Peregrine Falcon; they nest in the cliffs. Other birds along the walk include Western Gerygone, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Dollarbird, Leaden Flycatcher, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, Scarlet Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Around the grounds of Carnarvon Gorge Wilderness Lodge, a family of Bush Stone-curlews makes a regular appearance. Look also for Wonga Pigeon, Yellow Thornbill, Noisy Friarbird, White-eared Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater and Pale-headed Rosella.



Lewin's Honeyeater

Mount Moffatt Section

The Mount Moffatt section rises about 1,000m above sea level and is also called “the roof of Queensland” or “the home of the rivers”. Several major rivers start here but they will only flow after heavy rains. However, there are several permanent waterholes in the riverbeds. This site is located on the basalt plateau with fantastic views.

Drive about 30km from the entrance to the Consuelo Creek crossing; this is a good birding site. Look for Azure Kingfisher, Brush Cuckoo, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Spotted Quail-thrush, Plum-headed Finch, Black-faced Woodswallow and Barking Owl.

Salvator Rosa Section

After a long drive largely across the grazing land, the Salvator Rosa section's spring-fed creek looks like an oasis. Birding is good along the Louisa Creek Junction day-use area. Look for Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter, White-eared Honeyeater (very common), Black-chinned Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Little Woodswallow, Red-browed Pardalote, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Inland Thornbill, Restless Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Miner and Apostlebird. Three fairy-wren species can be found here: Purple-backed, Red-backed and Splendid Fairy-wren. Black-breasted Buzzard was recorded several times.

Nuga Nuga National Park

This small, 28,600ha National Park is located in Central Queensland 700km northwest of Brisbane. The main feature of the Park is the dome-shaped Mount Warrnilla which is adjacent to the large and beautiful Lake Nuga Nuga. The Park protects remnants of bonewood and ooline scrub, unique to Queensland and endangered.

Lake Nuga Nuga is the largest natural lake in the region. It dries out completely at times. The lake offers fantastic habitat to the waterbirds in this otherwise dry country.

To get there:

- Approaching from the south, take Carnarvon Hwy (55) from Roma and travel north. 37km past Injune turn right into Arcadia Valley Rd. Drive 83km on this mostly gravel road to the Lake Nuga Nuga turnoff.
- Approaching from the north, drive on Dawson Hwy (60) and before reaching Rollerston turn left into Arcadia Valley North Rd. Travel 58km on gravel surface to the Lake Nuga Nuga turnoff.

The last 7km of your route, the section inside the National Park, requires a 4WD vehicle. Bush camping area with no facilities is available on the lake shore. See also the Park map downloadable here: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/nuga-nuga/pdf/nuga-nuga-np-map.pdf>.

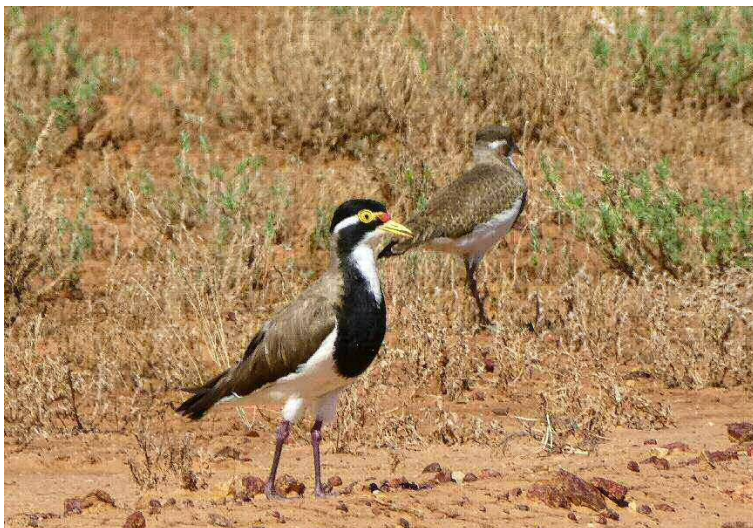
Over 150 bird species have been recorded in the Nuga Nuga National Park. **Key species** are Brolga, Magpie Goose, Emerald Dove, Speckled Warbler and Australian Bustard. Other birds of interest include Australasian Shoveler, Striped Honeyeater, Red-capped Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Grey-crowned Babbler and Western Gerygone. Rarities here include Musk Duck, Freckled Duck and Great Crested Grebe.

The lake is known for its huge congregations of waterfowl comprising mostly Australian Pelicans, Black Swans, Grey Teals, Pink-eared Ducks, Pacific Black Ducks, Hardheads, Little Black Cormorants, Magpie Geese and Australasian Grebes. Other birds at this site include Pied Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Caspian Tern and Eastern Great Egret.

Brolgas can often be observed feeding peacefully at the edge of the lake. In the grassy areas around the lake, look for Banded Lapwing, Australian Bustard, Plum-headed Finch, Zebra Finch, Australasian Pipit and Horsfield's Bushlark.

Birds in the camping area include Emerald Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Apostlebird, Red-capped Robin, Emu and Restless Flycatcher (these are everywhere).

On your way to the mountain, you may come across Speckled Warbler, Weebill, Tree Martin, Little Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Yellow-throated Miner and Weebill.



Banded Lapwing with a juvenile

Cania Gorge National Park

Cania Gorge National Park is located 220km west of Bundaberg and 500km northwest of Brisbane. The Park is the place of colour and tranquillity. Dramatic brown-orange sandstone cliffs with caves and hidden gullies rise above the grey-green eucalypt woodland. In the gullies and along the creeks, rich green rainforest is established, with a dense canopy entangled in vines and thorny shrubs in the understory. On top of the cliffs, you'll find grey eucalypt woodland with the understory of grass trees and native grasses. Riparian forest dominated by forest red gum and river casuarina grows along the Three Moon Creek. At the northern boundary of the Park, Cania Dam is located.

To get there:

- Approaching from the south, drive on Bruce Hwy (A1) to Gin Gin where you turn left onto Gin Gin-Mount Perry Rd (12). When in Mount Perry, turn west into Monto-Mount Perry Rd (12). It will lead you to Burnett Hwy (A3). Turn right at a T-junction and drive to Monto. After about 10km past Monto turn right into Cania Rd which after 11km get you to the Park entrance.
- Approaching from the north, drive on Bruce Hwy (A1) to Calliope where you turn right onto Dawson Hwy (60). Drive 100km to Biloela where you turn left into Burnett Hwy (A3). Drive south for 80km until you reach the junction with Cania Rd. Turn left and follow Cania Rd for 11km to get to the Park entrance.

A fantastic picnic area with good facilities is situated on the banks of Three Moon Creek just 1km from the entrance. Another picnic area is located on the shores of Cania Dam. No camping is allowed in the Park. The closest accommodation is a caravan park near

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Cania Dam. Eight good tracks run through the Park, see Cania Gorge map downloadable here: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/cania-gorge/pdf/cania-gorge-np-map.pdf>.

Over 140 species are on the Cania Gorge National Park's birdlist. **Key species** are Azure Kingfisher, Grey-crowned Babbler, Satin Bowerbird, Rose Robin, Common Cicadabird and Pacific Baza. Other birds of interest include Apostlebird, Varied Triller, Golden Whistler, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater and Australian Owlet-nightjar. Rarities include Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Spotted Quail-thrush, Speckled Warbler, Spectacled Monarch, Emerald Dove and Large-tailed Nightjar.

When travelling to the Park, it may be a good idea to stop and check two swampy areas located along Burnett Hwy (A3) near Roth Rd, not far south of the junction with Cania Rd. GPS coordinates are 24.50.16S and 151.03.47E. We stopped there once in winter when the shallow pool was filled with the waterbirds. We ticked off Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Royal Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, White-necked Heron, Intermediate Egret, Eastern Great Egret, Pied Stilt, Red-kneed Dotterel, Chestnut Teal and Australasian Shoveler. There were also a couple of Brolgas among them. An unusual sight was an enormous number of Magpie-larks, we counted over 200 birds. Swamp Harrier and Whistling Kite were flying over the swamp. On a stubble field nearby, large numbers of Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, Double-barred Finches and Cockatiels were feeding on the weeds.

In the Park near the day-use area, look for Blue-winged Kookaburra, Australian King-Parrot, Grey Butcherbird, Satin Bowerbird, Brown Gerygone, Leaden Flycatcher and Olive-backed Oriole. The track by the creek may yield Azure Kingfisher.

Along the road leading to the dam, you may spot Peregrine Falcon flying against the backdrop of orange cliffs. Other birds here include Fuscous Honeyeater, Little Lorikeet, Rainbow Bee-eater, Red-winged Parrot and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

The Three Moon Creek crossing may be your next stop. Here in the vine scrub along the creek you may find Rufous Fantail, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, White-naped Honeyeater, Rose Robin, Varied Triller, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Gerygone and Large-billed Scrubwren. Azure Kingfishers are also frequently recorded.

The picnic area around Cania Dam is good for Grey-crowned Babbler (nesting there), Blue-faced Honeyeater, Restless Flycatcher, Forest Kingfisher, Tawny Frogmouth and Collared Sparrowhawk. On the dam, you will find a variety of common waterbirds including Intermediate Egret, Hardhead and Great Crested Grebe (occasionally). Several Whistling Kite nests are scattered along the dam.



Grey-crowned Babbler

Guests of the Cania Gorge Holiday Park, where the wild birds are regularly fed, can observe parrots everywhere. We got ten parrot species coming for a meal there including Pale-headed Rosella, Australian King-Parrot, Red-winged Parrot and Cockatiel, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were watching from the trees. Other birds at this site included Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Noisy Friarbird, Eastern Whipbird, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Apostlebird, Rufous Whistler and Pacific Baza.

During the night, you may hear Southern Boobook, Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Owlet-nightjar and occasionally Large-tailed Nightjar.

Callide Dam

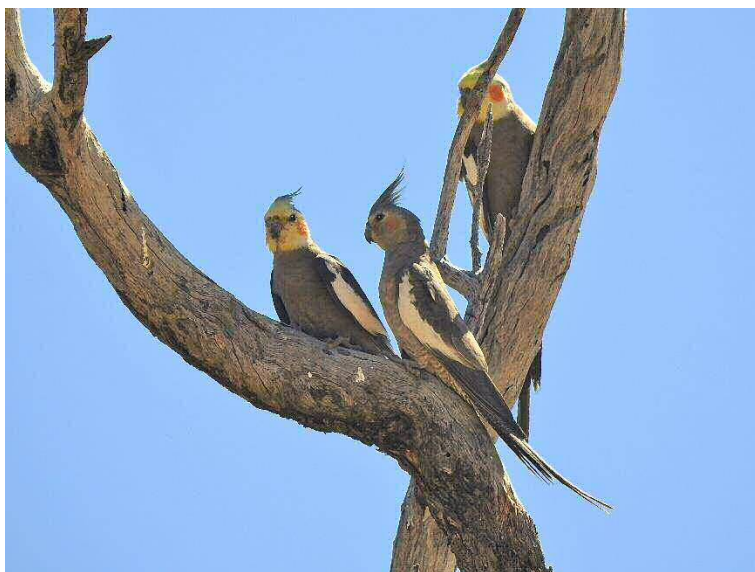
Callide Dam, also referred to as the Lake Callide, is a fisherman's paradise. The site is located 12km east of Biloela and 90km southwest of Gladstone.

To get there, from Bruce Hwy (A1) at Calliope take Dawson Hwy (60) to Biloela. At the outskirts of this town turn east into Calvale Rd and follow the signs towards Lake Callide Retreat. Do not be tempted to follow the signs to the Callide Power Station, access to public on this route is restricted further on. Past the Retreat, Lake Callide Dr runs along the foreshore, with several turnoffs leading to the water edge. The affordable Lake Callide Retreat offers several accommodation options, for bookings see their website at <https://www.lakecallideretreat.com/>.

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About 70 species are on the Callide Dam's birdlist. **Key species** are Little Black Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Cockatiel and Red-backed Kingfisher. Other birds of interest include Caspian Tern, Pied Stilt, Apostlebird, Little Corella, Grey-crowned Babbler, Nankeen Kestrel and Brown Falcon. Among the rarities are Australian Bustard and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

When we visited this site in winter, a stretch of Calvale Rd about 2km before the lake produced some interesting birds. A large flock of Cockatiels was perching on dead trees and a power line where we also spotted Black-faced Woodswallows, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Red-backed Kingfisher, Nankeen Kestrel and Brown Falcon. On farmland along the road we got Australian Bustards, Apostlebirds, Grey-crowned Babblers, Australasian Pipits and Double-barred Finches.



Cockatiel family

On the lake, we noticed a large, black-dotted-with-white mobile island. It was a raft of 2000+ Little Black Cormorants. Among them, in much smaller numbers, were Pied Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants and Australian Pelicans. With military precision, the cormorants were pushing a shoal of fish towards the shallows at the water edge. It looked like boiling water full of jumping fish and bird heads. We observed this magical spectacle for over an hour.

Other birds around the lake included Hardhead, Red-kneed Dotterel, White-necked Heron, Little Egret, Gull-billed Tern and Caspian Tern. A huge mixed flock of Little Corellas and Galahs was roosting in trees near the Retreat.

Blackdown Tableland National Park

This 32,000ha National Park is located in Central Queensland 180km west of Rockhampton. Here, the Tableland rises abruptly above the surrounding dry plains and is cooler and moister than the lowlands. Deep gorges, scenic waterfalls, cold creeks and pools await you. The Park protects diverse habitats including heathland, dry eucalypt forest with the understory of grass trees and moist pockets of ferns and mosses in the gullies.

To get there, turn west into Capricorn Hwy (A4) in Rockhampton. About 11km past Dingo and 35km before Blackwater turn south into Charlevue Rd, as signposted. Follow this road to the top of the Tableland, the last 6km of the route are very steep and winding. Roads in the Park are unsealed and some only accessible by the 4WD vehicles. Munall camping area is situated 8km from the Park entrance. Park facilities include a shelter, toilets and several walking tracks. See the Park's map downloadable here: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/blackdown-tableland/pdf/blackdown-map.pdf>.

Over 150 species are on the Blackdown Tableland's birdlist. **Key species** are Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Spotted Quail-thrush, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill. Other birds of interest include Australian King-Parrot, Common Cicadabird, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Grey-crowned Babbler, Eastern Whipbird, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Buff-rumped Thornbill and Striated Thornbill. Among the rarities are Painted Button-quail, Red-backed Kingfisher, Cockatiel, Plum-headed Finch and White-winged Triller.

On the access road to the Park, look for Australian Bustard and Squatter Pigeon. Spotted Nightjars are often flushed from the roadside after dark. When climbing up to the Tableland on this steep road, watch for Painted Button-quails.

Good birding can be enjoyed in and around the Munall camping area. Glossy Black-Cockatoos visit the casuarinas there. The favourite place for Spotted Quail-thrushes is near the Mimosa Creek. In the campsite, plenty of small birds are usually present such as Varied Sittella, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill and Spotted Pardalote. Tame and pesky Pied Currawongs pester the holidaymakers. Other birds here include Little Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Rufous Whistler, Grey-shrike-thrush, Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and Singing Honeyeater. Two pairs of Tawny Frogmouths nest in the campgrounds. Southern Boobook can be heard at night.

Nature Circuit Walk can be a rewarding experience, particularly for the honeyeaters such as White-eared Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill.

Mook Mook Walk is good for Spotted Quail-thrush and Glossy Black-Cockatoo. When the gum trees are in bloom, plenty of honeyeaters can be found here including Scarlet Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird and Yellow-throated Miner.

If you take a stroll down to the Rainbow Falls, expect to find good numbers of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters. Along this track you may also see Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo and Varied Sittella.

In heathland near the Horseshoe Lookout, Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters dominate, especially when the mallee are flowering. Look also for Buff-rumped Thornbill and Red-backed Fairy-wren there.

Another reliable place to look for Spotted Quail-thrush is Goodella Tk.

Emerald Botanic Gardens

Emerald is a large, vibrant regional town on Capricorn Hwy (A4), about 270km west of Rockhampton. The Botanic Gardens offer 42ha of green paradise in the otherwise dry country. The site is situated on the banks of Nogoa River. Several plant themes feature across the grounds, including stands of mature original vegetation. The main feature is a gorgeous rainforest.

There are two entrances to the facility, one from the large roundabout on Capricorn Hwy (A4) at the eastern entrance to town, the other from Opal St. The site address is 100 Capricorn Hwy, Emerald. Picnic facilities are provided; there is also a network of concrete pathways plus a 6km-long track on both sides of the Nogoa River.

Over 100 species are on the Emerald Botanic Gardens' birdlist. **Key species** are Magpie Goose, Grey-crowned Babbler, White-winged Triller, Plum-headed Finch, Pacific Baza and Barking Owl. Other birds of interest include Forest Kingfisher, Apostlebird, Dollarbird, Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, Common Cicadabird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Little Friarbird and Yellow-throated Miner. Rarities include Azure Kingfisher, Diamond Dove and Pallid Cuckoo.

Magpie Geese seem to really like this site and gather here in numbers of around 300-400 birds. Little Friarbirds and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike descend on this area during their annual migrations.

Other birds in the gardens include Nankeen Night-Heron, Weebill, Purple-backed Fairy-wren, Olive-backed Oriole, Sacred Kingfisher, Spangled Drongo, Pheasant Coucal, Zebra Finch, Tree Martin, Australian Hobby and Nankeen Kestrel.



Dollarbird

Lake Maraboon

Lake Maraboon, also known as Fairbairn Dam, was built on the Nogoa River 25km southwest of Emerald. This largest irrigation dam in Queensland is vast but shallow.

To get there, head west from Emerald on Capricorn Hwy (A4) for 1km, then turn south onto Selma Rd. Follow this road for 18km until you reach the dam. Site facilities include picnic tables, barbecues and toilets. Camping is not permitted. Accommodation can be found in the Lake Maraboon Holiday Village next door or in Emerald.

Over 120 bird species have been recorded at Lake Maraboon. **Key species** are Brolga, Great Crested Grebe and Caspian Tern. Other birds of interest include Apostlebird, Red-capped Robin, Grey-crowned Babbler, Gull-billed Tern, White-necked Heron, Pallid Cuckoo and Emu. Among the rarities are Spotted Bowerbird, Glossy Ibis, Ground Cuckoo-shrike and Red-backed Kingfisher.



Willie Wagtail feeding a huge Pallid Cuckoo foster child

This site is known for large concentrations of Brolgas (up to 200 birds) and Great Crested Grebes in winter. Red-capped Robins and Apostlebirds are regularly found around the picnic site.

Other birds at Lake Maraboon include White-winged Chough, Olive-backed Oriole, Rufous Whistler, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Royal Spoonbill, Whiskered Tern, Pale-headed Rosella, Singing Honeyeater and Striped Honeyeater.