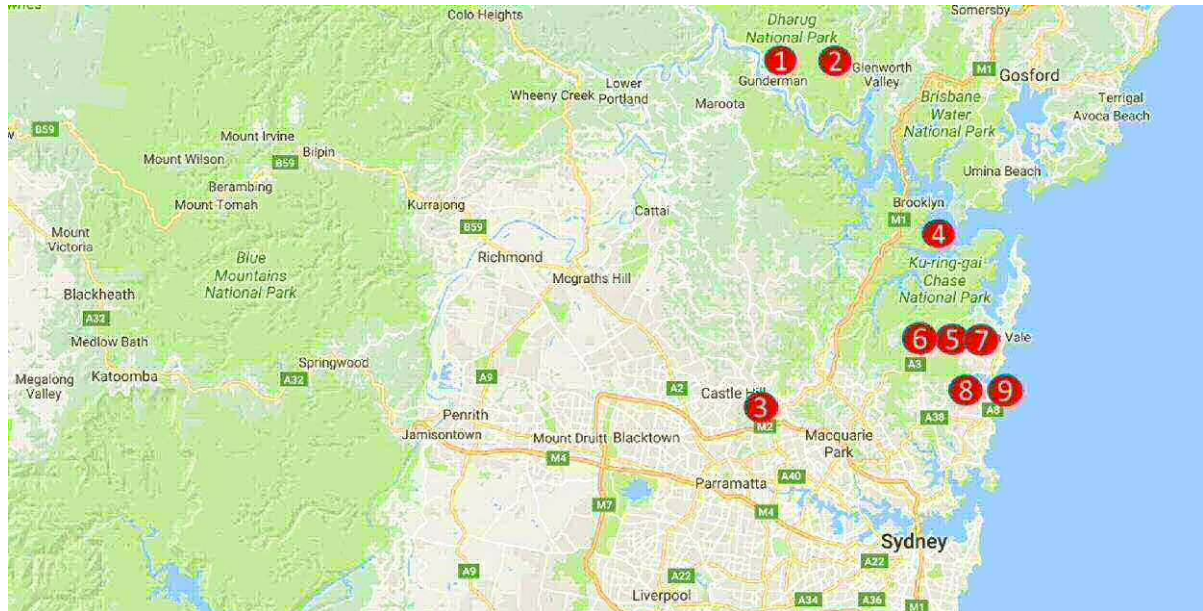


Northern Sydney

The locations in this Section are all within a day trip distance from Sydney.



- 1 [Dharug National Park](#)
- 2 [Mangrove Creek Water Catchment Reserve](#)
- 3 [Cumberland State Forest](#)
- 4 [Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park](#)
- 5 [Warriewood Wetlands](#)
- 6 [Irrawong Reserve](#)
- 7 [Narrabeen Lagoon](#)
- 8 [Dee Why Lagoon](#)
- 9 [Long Reef Aquatic Reserve](#)

Dharug National Park

The Park covers 15,000ha of rugged sandstone, with heathland on the plateau, wet sclerophyll forest on the slopes and rainforest in the gorges. The Park stretches north of Hawkesbury River along Wisemans Ferry Rd between the townships of Wisemans Ferry and Spencer. The farmland along the river is mostly excluded from the National Park. The plateau is accessible only on foot.

The site is located about 90km north of Sydney. To get there, get to Wisemans Ferry township via Old Northern Rd. You'll need to cross the river on a vehicular ferry. The ferry is free and runs on demand until 11pm. There are several access points to the National Park along Wisemans Ferry Rd. Picnic sites are located at Hazel Dell and Mill Creek. Camping is allowed at Mill Creek.

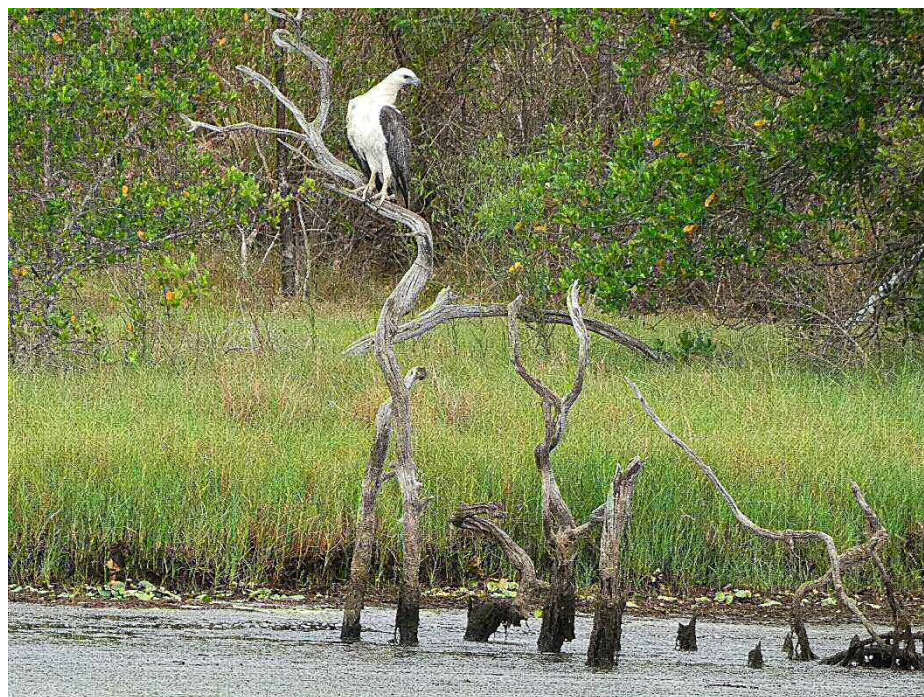
A map of Park's tracks and facilities can be downloaded from here:

http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/parks/cycleMaps/Dharug_NP_Mountain_Bike_Routes.pdf.

Over 150 bird species have been recorded in the Park. The key species include Spotted Quail-thrush, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Powerful Owl and White-throated Nightjar, Rockwarbler, Superb Lyrebird, Bassian Thrush, Lewin's Rail and a variety of fruit-eating pigeons.

Wisemans Ferry

Before crossing the river on a ferry, it is a good idea to explore the township of Wisemans Ferry. Blue-faced Honeyeaters breed there and can be found around the Bowling Club and the historical Inn Hotel. We sat in the hotel's beer garden and watched them feed on the flowering bottlebrush blossom. When fruiting, the fig trees near the hotel attract Australasian Figbirds, White-headed Pigeons, Bar-shouldered Doves and Brown Cuckoo-Doves. Another speciality of Wisemans Ferry is Pied Butcherbird, a rarity in Sydney. It is regularly found near the golf course or plundering leftovers from the picnic tables by the tennis court. In 2015, a pair of Regent Honeyeaters stayed in a picnic area near the ferry for a few weeks. This spot had become very popular with the Sydney birdwatchers at that time. Other birds to see at Wisemans Ferry include Golden Whistler, Satin Bowerbird, Peregrine Falcon, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Eastern Osprey.



Wetland habitat on the Hawkesbury River with White-bellied Sea-Eagle

Old Great North Road

After disembarking from the ferry turn left and drive approximately 1km to a sharp bend in the road. Park near the locked gate and take a steep walk along the convict-built sandstone road which is [World Heritage](#)-listed. This is a good place to find Spotted Quail-thrush. Also, Rockwarblers are very common here. Additionally, you may find Superb Lyrebird, Australian Brush-turkey, Large-billed Scrubwren, Little Lorikeet, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and, occasionally, Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

Roses Creek Wetland

Drive back, pass the ferry landing and continue towards Spencer. The wetlands are located 2.7km from the ferry landing point. On one side of the road you will see paperbark forest, mangroves will be on the other side. Stop there and look for crakes and rails including Lewin's Rail, Spotless Crake and Baillon's Crake. Moreover, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin can be found in the tall grasses. Sometimes, Azure Kingfishers are in the mangroves. White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Whistling Kites may be patrolling the river.

Hazel Dell Picnic Area

This is a charming rest site located at the foot of a cliff. Coordinates are 33.23.51 S; 151.01.18 E; the site is not well signposted. Take time here to observe the rainforest species. We found Brown Cuckoo-Dove on the nest near the toilet block. Other birds that can be encountered here include Variegated Fairy-wren (very common), Superb Lyrebird, Southern Boobook, Topknot Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Bell Miner, Eastern Spinebill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Brown Gerygone, Australian King-Parrot and Green Catbird.

Mills Creek Camping and Picnic Areas

Continue on from Hazel Dell until you reach a solid wooden bridge over the Mills Creek. Turn left on a dirt road signposted to the camping site. After driving through a paperbark swamp (keep your eyes peeled for Lewin's Rail) you will reach a fork in the road; turning right will get you to the camping grounds, turning left to the picnic site. Locate a helipad on your way to the picnic site. This is a good place for spotlighting.

The picnic site has a very attractive setting including dramatic, steep sandstone cliffs and a lively creek. Two walking tracks start here: Mills Creek Track, an 11km-long route that climbs up to the heath-covered plateau and a 1.5km Grasstree Track, winding along the creek in the tall rainforest.

It is worth to camp overnight here. We went to the helipad in the early evening and saw three White-throated Nightjars flying over. Wombats, wallabies and kangaroos came out of their daily slumber to munch on the lush grass. We also spotted yellow-bellied gliders, sugar gliders and a single long-nosed bandicoot. Powerful Owl perched on a tree by our tent. Throughout the night, we listened to the calls of Southern Boobook, Eastern Barn Owl, Tawny Frogmouth and Australian Owlet-nightjar. There are also records of Masked Owl from this site. Apart from the bird calls, other prominent sounds during the night were that of common brushtail possums growling at each other.

Plenty of quite tame birds hang around the picnic and camping areas. Among the picnic tables and tents, you will see Bassian Thrush, Wonga Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Satin Bowerbird, Australian King-Parrot, Brown Cuckoo-Dove and Australian Brush-turkey. Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are common in tall blue gums. Occasionally, you may catch a glimpse of a Gang-gang Cockatoo flock.

Other birds to look for here include Bell Miner, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Rose Robin (in winter), Crested Shrike-tit, Large-billed Scrubwren, Green Catbird, Leaden Flycatcher, Common Cicadabird.

The short Grasstree Track may yield, beside the ever present Australian Brush-turkey and Superb Lyrebird, also Green Catbird, Pacific Baza, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren and plenty of Rufous Fantails.

Mills Creek Track is challenging, long and steep, but in spring it puts on a beautiful show of flowering heath. The good news is that most of the interesting birds can be found already past the first 500m of the track if you take the anticlockwise route. Glossy Black-Cockatoos regularly frequent this area.

Spencer

The township of Spencer is located outside of the National Park, on its border along the Mangrove Creek. Go and just sit on one of the many boat ramps and look for Striated Heron, Eastern Reef Heron, Royal Spoonbill, Azure Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher and White-bellied Sea-Eagle. Brahminy Kite took residence here for a few seasons, causing a lot of interest, but seems to be gone now.

Australian Brush-turkeys are often seen strutting along the main street. Occasionally, Glossy Black-Cockatoos visit the slopes behind the town. Variegated Fairy-wren is very common in the vegetation near the creek. Other notable birds include Bell Miner, Scarlet Honeyeater, Wonga Pigeon, Little Lorikeet and Superb Lyrebird.

Oyster Shell Road

From Spencer, continue on Wisemans Ferry Rd north for about 6km then turn left onto Oyster Shell Rd before the bridge over the Mangrove Creek. The road is flanked by the creek on its east side and slopes of the National Park on the west side. Driving on this road, you will be entertained by the colourful names of several creeks you will be crossing (such as Sugee Bag, Birdseye or Screech Owl Creek).

The salt marshes along the creek may produce sightings of Southern Emu-wren, Buff-banded Rail, Lewin's Rail, Azure Kingfisher and Variegated Fairy-wren. In the creek, look for Striated Heron and Eastern Great Egret. On the opposite side of the road you have a chance to spot Glossy Black-Cockatoo and plenty of Superb Lyrebirds.

Mangrove Creek Water Catchment Reserve

The Reserve is located west of the Mangrove Mountain village. It protects drinking water catchment for Wyong and Gosford. The area is adjacent to the northern part of Dharug National Park. A network of walking tracks runs through the wet forest on the sandstone substrate in Dubbo Gully, through the wetlands along the Mangrove Creek and among the hills covered by a drier sclerophyll forest.

To receive a free copy of Mangrove Creek Walking Tracks with maps and notes on the history of the area please email enquiries@dlhs.org.au. These are not available online.

To get there, turn from Wisemans Ferry Rd at Mangrove Mountain onto Waratah Rd. Drive to the end of the road and then turn onto an unsealed Dubbo Gully Track. It will take you to the gate of the Reserve. Park in a bay located about 80m from the gate and explore the Reserve on foot. If you wish to drive inside, you need to arrange for the gate keys from Gosford City Council, tel. (02) 4325 8222, during office hours.

The Reserve is a rewarding birding site, with the key species of Red-browed Treecreeper, Varied Sittella, Golden Whistler, Brown Gerygone, Azure Kingfisher, Jacky Winter, Rockwarbler, Wonga Pigeon, Grey Goshawk and Powerful Owl.

You can start birding already on Waratah Rd which runs through the orchards and patches of bushland. We drove there before dawn and saw Tawny Frogmouth catch insects in the village (opposite the shops at the start of Waratah Rd). We went spotlighting along the road and found Eastern Barn Owl hunting mice near the chicken farm. Powerful Owl and Southern Boobook were calling. In the morning, still in Mangrove Mountain having breakfast, we observed a pair of Gang-gang Cockatoos feeding on the liquidambar seeds. There were also plenty of honeyeaters in the flowering gums in the street including Little Wattlebird, Lewin's Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill.

Birds to be found along Waratah Rd include Bar-shouldered Dove (very common), Satin Bowerbird, Golden Whistler, Yellow Thornbill, Common Cicadabird and Spangled Drongo (rare). Check the property fences along the road for Jacky Winter and Scarlet Robin; both species are regularly found in the area.

Dubbo Gully Track runs through a magnificent gully covered with tall gum trees and understory of casuarina bushes, Gynea lilies and ferns. On the rocky slopes and overhangs you are likely to find Rockwarblers. Birds common on the track include Superb Lyrebird, Bell Miner, Wonga Pigeon, Golden Whistler, Striated Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater and White-naped Honeyeater. There is also a good chance of getting Red-browed Treecreeper and Varied Sittella there.

At the end of Dubbo Track, you will get to the gate to the Mangrove Creek Reserve. The bird species within the first two kilometres in the Reserve are very similar to that of the Dubbo Track. After 2km you will reach a wooden bridge over the Mangrove Creek. The surroundings include grassy paddocks, a belt of wattle trees and the rocky hills. Look there for Azure Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Varied Sittella and Fan-tailed Cuckoo. We took a walk from the bridge towards the rocks. Wonga Pigeons were calling monotonously from the hills. An overgrown old lemon thicket, fruiting profusely at that time, was taken over by about 200 Australian King-Parrots that seemingly enjoyed the tart taste. They were joined by several Crimson Rosellas and Satin Bowerbirds, with everybody making big holes in the fruit with gusto. Other birds here included Bassian Thrush, Green Catbird, Variegated Fairy-wren and Jacky Winter (very common). Wedge-tailed Eagle kept circling over the rocks. White-bellied Sea-Eagle was roosting in a tree near the bridge.

About 1km further along this track you will get to an old cemetery. This is a good spot for Jacky Winter and Scarlet Robin, often found perching on the headstones. The area opposite the cemetery may produce a sighting of Speckled Warbler.

After continuing for another 400m along the track, you will reach a small swamp. Some waterbirds can always be found there, usually Black Swan (nesting site), White-necked Heron and Dusky Moorhen, but look also for Baillon's Crake, Australian Reed-Warbler and Variegated Fairy-wren. We observed a small flock of White-throated Needletails flying over the swamp.

Continue for further 1.5km to reach an intersection with Donny's Track. The most visible and noisy along this section of the road were Golden Whistler and Fan-tailed Cuckoo. The area also offered a good selection of other bird species including Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Brown Gerygone, Rose Robin, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Bassian Thrush and Olive-backed Oriole.

Cumberland State Forest

This is the only metropolitan State Forest in Australia. It is located in West Pennant Hills, about 1hr drive from Sydney CBD. This is a 40ha green oasis in Sydney's inner west suburbs. Originally, land was used for grazing and practically cleared. It was purchased by the NSW Forestry Commission which turned a third of the area into an arboretum and allowed the rest to re-vegetate naturally. It was declared as State Forest in 1939. Since then, it has regenerated into a tall blue gum-blackbutt forest which was once covering most of northern Sydney's fertile shale soils. Most of the trees are now past 70 years of age and hollows start to appear, attracting the hollow-nesting birds.

The forest is extensively used for educational purposes and is a very popular outdoor destination for local residents. The forest is open 7 days from 8:30 and until 5pm. Spotlighting tours are conducted regularly; book online here: <http://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/visit/activities/escape>.

The site has an Information Centre with shops and café and a nursery. A loop road through the forest provides an easy access to numerous picnic sites and to a network of walking tracks. The site map can be downloaded from here: http://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/440179/cumberland-sf-map.pdf.

The site address is 95 Castle Hill Rd, Pennant Hills. From Pennant Hills Rd, turn into Castle Hill Rd – the entrance is on your left 1.5km down this road (700m past the Koala Park).

The most notable species here is Powerful Owl, a frequent visitor to the forest thanks to the large numbers of ring-tailed possums and gliders. There is also a substantial Bell Miner colony near the site exit. Four lorikeet species (Rainbow, Scaly-breasted, Musk and Little Lorikeet) are resident here. With the exception of Little Lorikeet, they all also breed in the forest. Other residents include Grey Goshawk, Pacific Baza, Brown Gerygone, Crested Shrike-tit, Eastern Whipbird and Satin Bowerbird. Nocturnal birds include Southern Boobook and Tawny Frogmouth.



Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, otherwise uncommon in the Sydney area, breed in the Cumberland Forest

Rarities include Square-tailed Kite, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and Topknot Pigeon.

Birdwatching is easy, just follow the loop road, stopping at picnic sites and investigating the short walking tracks. Make a stop also near the pond, walk around the nursery, and reward yourself with a rest and a snack at the café.

Our first stop was in the picnic area near the entrance gate (Calgaroo). Crested Shrike-tit was very common here, we observed them collect insects in the dense understory. We also found Varied Sittella, Olive-backed Oriole, Common Bronzewing, Sacred Kingfisher and Grey Butcherbird. Strolling along the track leading to the Bell Miner colony near the site exit we stumbled upon a scene where a Grey Goshawk was harassing Bell Miners.

Another good stop was the next picnic site (Swains) where you can take the Forestry Trail through the arboretum. Satin Bowerbird lurked in a close vicinity of the picnic area. Hollows in a blue gum tree were investigated by Musk Lorikeets and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets. On the trail, we found Golden Whistler, Black-faced Monarch, Brown Gerygone, Rufous Fantail, Australian King-Parrot, Musk Lorikeet and Eastern Whipbird.

The site nursery is worth stopping by. It has plenty of flowering shrubs which attract the honeyeaters. We found Eastern Spinebill, Little Wattlebird, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater and Brown Honeyeater. Often seen near the nursery are Pacific Baza and Rose Robin (in winter).

The road runs past a small creek. The area near that creek is known as a good spot for Powerful Owls. We did not find them on the day but the consolation prize included Black-faced Monarch, Rufous Fantail, White-headed Pigeon and plenty of Pied Currawongs.

Another good stopping point is near the pond. Our findings there included Australian Shoveler, Hardhead, Azure Kingfisher and Dollarbird.



Dollarbird

We finished the day with a tasty lunch in the café, watching the lorikeets and honeyeaters on the surrounding trees and enjoying Topknot Pigeons flying over.

Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park

This large, 15,000ha national park, located on the fringe of suburban Sydney, is bordered by Hawkesbury River from the north, Pacific Hwy from the west, Mona Vale Rd from the south and the bay of Pittwater from the east. It is so close to the City and yet it has a feeling of a remote wilderness. The Park is established on a rugged sandstone plateau carved by deep gullies. Vegetation consists of extensive heath and mallee-type woodland on the plateau, with patches of rainforest in the sheltered gullies. The favourite Sydney tree, called smooth-bark apple or red gum, grows here on the sandstone slopes.

This is the place of rare beauty, rich in meandering pristine creeks, wide ocean vistas, breathtaking rocky cliffs and shadowy mangrove swamps. The lush green, rainforest-covered tentacles of narrow peninsulas reach deep into the azure waters.



Coastal heath habitat in the Sydney region

There are many ways to access the Park. Coming from Sydney by car, leave Pacific Mwy (M1) at the Mount Colah off-ramp. Turn right onto Ku-Ring-Gai Chase Rd which will take you to the Park entrance (fees apply). From North Turramurra, use Bobbin Head Rd and follow signs to the Park. From Mona Vale, McCarrs Creek Rd leads to Cottage Point and West Head.

Regular hourly ferry services are available from Palm Beach Wharf to The Basin and Bobbin Head. There are also numerous pedestrian access points from the surrounding suburbs.

The park is well equipped with a network of walking tracks and roads, marinas, cafés, picnic areas and information centres.

Over 170 bird species have been found in the Park. The key species include Rockwarbler, Regent Honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, White-throated Nightjar, Painted Button-quail, Superb Lyrebird and Powerful Owl.

The two most desirable key species, Glossy Black-Cockatoo and Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, can be best found in the following locations:

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren:

- Mt. Kuring-Gai Track, 1km from the west end;
- Chiltern Trail, 200m from the entrance to the track;
- Bobbin Head Precinct: Sphinx Walking Track;
- West Head Precinct: Salvation Loop Track, The Basin Track, Towlers Bay Track near West Head Rd entrance.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo:

- Chiltern Trail, Ingleside;
- along West Head Rd, particularly near West Head Lookout;

- West Head Precinct: Salvation Loop Track;
- Bobbin Head Precinct: near Bobbin Head Visitor Centre - a slope behind the café and stone staircase near the Mangrove Boardwalk;
- Bobbin Head Precinct: Gibberagong Walking Track;
- Ku-Ring-Gai Wildflower Garden: Caley Track and west end of Brown's Track.

Several of these locations are described in more detail below.

Chiltern Trail, Ingleside

Chiltern Trail in Ingleside is one of the best birding sites in the Park due to the presence of Regent Honeyeater in winter. To get there, turn into Chiltern Rd from Mona Vale Rd. Drive to the end of this road and stop near Patak Rd. The track entrance is not well marked or formed – it starts opposite to Patak Rd. The length is 2.5km, ending at McCarrs Creek Rd.

Birdwatching starts already in Chiltern Rd – you will hear the unmistakable “vote bob hawke” call of Bar-shouldered Dove. Also, Pheasant Coucal might be calling from the trees. A large flock of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos is often around, drinking water from the rock puddles at the entrance to the trail. We stopped in Chiltern Rd during the night and heard Powerful Owl calling from the gullies. Tawny Frogmouth was catching moths under the street lamps.

A good spot for Chestnut-rumped Heathwren is located approximately 200m into the track. We found four of them in dense bush by the path.

Sixteen honeyeater species are on the birdlist of this trail. Besides Regent Honeyeater, the coveted winter visitor, you can count on Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and of course the more common species.

Glossy Black-Cockatoos are often found feeding in pairs along the track. The end of the track near McCarrs Creek Rd is a regular spot for Brush Bronzewing.

As a curiosity we note, that a flock of Indian Peafowl wanders in this area. We observed six birds with young chicks. This is believed to be a feral population but it is also possible that they belong to a homeowner in the adjacent suburb.

The only regular raptor in the area is Little Eagle. Occasionally, Grey Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon or Wedge-tailed Eagle may be found.

Other birds recorded from this site include Rockwarbler, Rose Robin, Leaden Flycatcher and Spangled Drongo.

Ku-Ring-Gai Wildflower Garden

Access is from Mona Vale Rd near the suburb of St. Ives. The site is not part of the National Park, just adjacent to it and several park tracks run near the garden. The Wildflower Garden covers over 120ha and offers several picnic areas and a range of public access walking tracks.

It is worth stopping there to look for Glossy Black-Cockatoo. We found three birds calmly minding their own business while cracking casuarina cones on Caley Track near the Garden.

Other birds here include Rockwarbler, Scarlet Honeyeater and Olive-backed Oriole. There are plenty of Eastern Whipbirds around.

West Head Precinct

Access to the West Head precinct of the Park is via McCarrs Creek Rd (accessed for example from Mona Vale Rd at Terrey Hills). From McCarrs Creek Rd turn left into West Head Rd and proceed through the Park for about 10km through the expanse of heathland, some woodland and rainforest in the gullies on the Lambert Peninsula to West Head.

The section of the route just past the Park gate on West Head Rd offers excellent birdwatching. Several walking tracks run on both sides of the road and are worth checking out.

Painted Button-quails can be often seen feeding at the road verge. West Head precinct is also the best Sydney spot for Glossy Black-Cockatoos. They are often seen in the casuarina bushes along the road.

Our first recommended stop is Salvation Loop Track, starting on the left just past the Salvation Picnic Area. Vegetation around the track is mostly a dense knee-high heath. This habitat is good for Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. In patches of higher heath look for Southern Emu-wren, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Variegated Fairy-wren and Brown Thornbill.

We observed crowds of honeyeaters feeding on the flowering banksia. Among them were Noisy Friarbirds, White-cheeked Honeyeaters, White-eared Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebill and both species of Wattlebird. Even Crescent Honeyeater can be occasionally found here.

Rose Robins and Yellow Robins were inspecting the picnic site.

A few kilometres further down West Head Rd, you will find the America Bay Track. The track follows a sandstone ridge line down to America Bay and is short and steep. You will descend through the scribbly gum and bloodwood woodland. The bay is a lovely spot for a secluded picnic.

America Bay Track should deliver an abundance of honeyeaters such as Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater (very common), White-naped Honeyeater. Look also for Golden Whistler, Variegated Fairy-wren, Eastern Whipbird and Collared Sparrowhawk.

When you get to the bay, you may be rewarded with the views of White-bellied Sea-Eagle in flight. Look closely into the bay and try to find heads of Little Penguins bobbing in the water.

Next, explore the Challenger Track. This time, you'll be walking in the rainforest. At the beginning of the track you may get Brush Bronzewing as it is regularly recorded here. In winter, Swift Parrot visits this site. Species to look for at the bottom of the track include Green Catbird, Topknot Pigeon, Leaden Flycatcher and Black-faced Monarch. Our highlight on the track was Little Eagle (pale morphology) perched high in a dead tree.

Resolute Picnic Area is located about 900m before the end of the road. It is equipped with barbecues and sheltered picnic tables. Australian Brush-turkeys and Superb Lyrebirds often walk among the tables. There are plenty of Noisy Friarbirds in the trees. Once we observed a flock of Indian Peafowl visiting the picnic site. A short walk on the Resolute Track among the beautiful Sydney red gums (Angophora) may yield Rose Robin, Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistler, Painted Button-quail, Crimson Rosella, Olive-backed Oriole and scores of honeyeaters.

The road ends with an impressive lookout situated in the beautifully landscaped grounds. Breath-taking views of Broken Bay, Lion Island and Patonga on the other side of the bay cannot be compared with anything else. White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Whistling Kites are often flying over the bay. Look for Little Penguins, they breed on Lion Island and can often be seen in the water. The lookout area has plenty of mature casuarina trees so look for Glossy Black-Cockatoos. We found five birds near the lookout; they did not seem to mind the human disturbance and mingling crowds. Check the sandstone area to right of the lookout; Rockwarblers are usually there.

The Basin Precinct

This delightful picnic and camping area is located in the bush on the eastern shores of Pittwater, opposite Palm Beach. Access is mostly by ferry, departing hourly from Palm Beach Wharf between 9am and 5pm. You can also use a long and steep Basin Track (8km return) off West Head Rd.

Winter brings in plenty of nectar-eating birds here. Rockwarblers can be found on the sandstone walls near the picnic area. Overnight visitors, listen to the calls of Australian Owlet-nightjars.

Whistling Kites often use yachts as their roosting perches. With good binoculars, you will see an old nest of White-bellied Sea-Eagle at the Pittwater's far north-west.

If you are hiking on The Basin Track, you'll get plenty of Superb Lyrebirds on the steep slopes. In the heath, look for Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater.

Bobbin Head Precinct

Sphinx War Memorial

Take Bobbin Head Rd to North Turramurra, pass the Park gate and turn right into the Sphinx War Memorial Carpark. Sphinx Walking Track starts there. The area around the War Memorial is ideal for spotlighting at night. You are nearly guaranteed to get White-throated Nightjar. We visited the site several times and found it every time, either hawking for insects in the carpark or flying over the Park entrance gate. We also heard Powerful Owl calling from the gullies and Australian Owlet-nightjar near the Park gate. There were plenty of Southern Boobook's calls. Tawny Frogmouths were busy hunting in the glow of the street lamps.

During daylight hours, look in the carpark for Rockwarbler, Australian Brush-turkey, Brown Cuckoo-Dove and Wonga Pigeon. There are plenty of birds on the Sphinx Track. We got a Scarlet Honeyeater and two Common Cicadabirds just at the start of the path. The most common on the track were White-eared Honeyeater and Brown Gerygone. One of the Gerygones was feeding a large Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo chick, sitting on a branch a mere metre off the ground. Further along the path, there was a nest of Black-faced Monarch with chicks. Other birds on the track included Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Variegated Fairy-wren, Golden Whistler, Rufous Fantail, Crested Shrike-tit, Australian King-Parrot, Superb Lyrebird and Channel-billed Cuckoo.

Bobbin Head Visitor Centre

The Centre is located in the historic Bobbin Inn and has a good café. To get there from the previous place, follow Bobbin Head Rd and look for the road signs to the Centre.

It is a perfect waterfront picnic site. It has a boardwalk into the mangroves. There are plenty of Rockwarblers around. They are very tame and come close to people to forage between the picnic tables. Check the area around the staircase on the sandstone escarpment; we spotted six Glossy Black-Cockatoos there. Later, we saw the same flock on the Mangrove Boardwalk; finally the birds flew over the café and disappeared.

A tree with some hollows is standing near the stone staircase; Australian Owlet-nightjar was roosting there. If you climb up the stairs, you may get Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill.

There were plenty of Brown Gerygones and Striated Thornbills on the boardwalk. We also got Yellow Thornbill, Azure Kingfisher, Lewin's Honeyeater, Rose Robin and Black-faced Monarch. Nankeen Night-Herons were roosting in the mangroves as was a large, fat diamond python, hanging from a tree

over the boardwalk. Grey Goshawk was gliding over the track. At low tide, look for Striated Heron on the exposed mud.

Pilotbirds were recorded in this area.

From the café patio, you can watch Superb Lyrebirds and Australian Brush-turkeys while enjoying your delicious meal. Wedge-tailed Eagle or Square-tailed Kite may be flying over the Park.

Gibberagong Walking Track

Mangrove Boardwalk ends at a junction with Gibberagong Walking Track which follows Cocle Creek up to the suburb of Bobbin Head.

Birdwatching on Gibberagong Track should produce sightings of Scarlet Honeyeater and Yellow-tufted Honeyeater; both are numerous in the grey gum forest. Summer migrants found there include Common Cicadabird, Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Whistler, Black-faced Monarch, Sacred Kingfisher and Channel-billed Cuckoo. Other notable birds include Australian King-Parrot, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Rockwarbler, Superb Lyrebird and Variegated Fairy-wren.



Rockwarbler, the sole NSW endemic species, is moderately common on sandstone escarpment around Sydney

Apple Tree Bay

Soon past the Bobbin Inn, turn right from Bobbin Head Rd to a road leading to Apple Tree Bay (signposted).

Apple Tree Bay is the place to look for White-bellied Sea-Eagle which is often observed flying along Cowan Creek. Check the mangroves for Azure Kingfisher and Nankeen Night-Heron. A footbridge is located near the boat ramp. It is an entrance to Berowra Walking Track which later joins Mt. Ku-Ring-Gai Track (see section below). The track leads through a dense casuarina woodland, an excellent spot for Glossy Black-Cockatoo. We also found Common Cicadabird, Leaden Flycatcher and Black-faced Monarch there.

The Bay is a popular spotlighting site. Powerful Owls can be heard from the steep, rocky gullies. Other nocturnal birds include Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Owlet-nightjar, White-throated Nightjar and Southern Boobook.

Mt. Kuring-Gai Track

The Track begins near Pacific Hwy (A83) in the suburb of Mt. Kuring-Gai at the east end of Harwood Av. The track runs steeply down near rock overhangs through a dense woodland along the creeklines to end in the Apple Tree Bay. The best part of the track is the first 2km at top end, near the suburb.

Look for a large patch of heath about 1km from the Mt. Kuring-Gai entrance. Chestnut-rumped Heath-wrens are very common there. They are easy to find in early spring when they perch on bush tops, singing.

In the rainforest near the creeks, look for Bassian Thrush. At the rock overhangs you will find Rockwarblers; these are particularly plentiful at the Apple Tree Bay end of the track.

Other birds on the track include Leaden Flycatcher, Eastern Whipbird, White-naped Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Rose Robin and Collared Sparrowhawk.

Kalkari Visitor Centre

If you continue from the previous site, follow Bobbin Head Rd which later changes name to Ku-Ring-Gai Chase Rd. You may also take a turn-off to the Ku-Ring-Gai Chase Rd from the Pacific Hwy (M1) if coming from the City.

The Centre has a small zoo, there is also a Kalkari Discovery Walking Track. Spotted Quail-thrush is often found there. Wonga Pigeon and Australian Brush-turkey are common and tame. Other common birds include White-eared Honeyeater, Sacred Kingfisher and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

Warriewood Wetlands

From Mona Vale Rd (A3), turn right at Ingleside into Powder Works Rd. Drive up to a Garden St T-junction and turn left. Access from Garden St is via Katoa Cl. You can also walk to the site from the adjacent shopping centre in Jackson Rd.

Helpful with orientation around this site is the map that can be downloaded here:

http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environment/bushland/maps/bushland_reserve_walking_track_maps/warriewood_wetlands_walking_track.

This 26ha area surrounded by the residential suburbs and commercial precincts protects a patch of rare Sydney coastal estuary swamp. The vegetation consists of a swamp mahogany forest and swamp she-oak forest with an understory of reeds, ferns and cabbage palms. Mullet Creek is flowing through the Reserve. A long (nearly 2km), fantastic boardwalk called Warriewood Wetland Trail leads from Katoa Cl to the shopping centre. This is a very popular birding site and more than 170 species were recorded thanks to the birdwatchers' scrutiny. The area is reliable for crakes and rails, particularly Lewin's Rail and Spotless Crake.

Key species include Australian Brush-turkey, Brown Gerygone, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Bassian Thrush, Variegated Fairy-wren, Latham's Snipe, Grey Goshawk and Eastern Osprey. Through the years, the site has seen many birdwatchers' frenzies, following an appearance of a rare species in the Wetlands. These include Noisy Pitta, Australian Painted Snipe, Black Bittern, Swift Parrot, Barking Owl and Powerful Owl.

The area near Katoa Cl is the best place for Spotless Crake and Lewin's Rail. We saw six Spotless Crakes at the edge of the swamp and heard many more calling from the reeds. Check under the elevated boardwalk – crakes and rails often hide under it. Apart from the two species mentioned above, you may also encounter Australian Spotted Crake, Baillon's Crake and Buff-banded Rail. Black Bittern and Australian Little Bittern were also recorded near the Katoa Cl entrance to the wetlands.



Buff-banded Rails can be found with the relative ease in the Warriewood Wetlands, often foraging under the boardwalks

Check Mullet Creek when walking on the boardwalk that runs parallel to it. Latham's Snipe can be found here. In the water, there will be at least a few ducks including Chestnut Teal, Hardhead and Mallard (if you want to tick it). It is hybridizing heavily with Pacific Black Ducks. Check the branches overhanging the water – Striated Herons or Nankeen Night-Herons may be roosting there.

Reeds are home to Australian Reed-Warbler, Tawny Grassbird and Red-browed Finch. Azure Kingfisher is often seen flying over the boardwalk.

The dominant sound on the trail is a whip crack-like call of Eastern Whipbird.

Lewin's Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and Little Wattlebird are common year round. When swamp mahogany is flowering, many other nectar-eaters arrive including Swift Parrot, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Scarlet Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill. This is one of the rare place in Sydney where Variegated Fairy-wren and Superb Fairy-wren appear side-by-side.

The site is good for wet forest species; some of them, such as Brown Gerygone, are present all year. In summer, look for Black-faced Monarch, Satin Flycatcher, Leaden Flycatcher and Rufous Fantail while in winter Bassian Thrush, Superb Lyrebird, Rose Robin, Australian King-Parrot and Brown Cuckoo-Dove can be found. When figs or lilly-pillies are fruiting, small flocks of Topknot Pigeons may appear.

In the west, the track enters Water Gum Dr – there are three stormwater ponds in this area. In 2012, two Australian Painted Snipes stopped there for a few weeks. Check the ponds for Musk Duck, Hardhead, Black-

fronted Dotterel, Royal Spoonbill, Eastern Great Egret and Spotless Crake. Masses of cormorants often roost on the barrier between the ponds.

A long list of raptors is associated with this wetland. Seen most often is a pair of Grey Goshawks. In 2014, the male was of grey, and the female of white morphology. Other frequent visitors are a pair of Eastern Ospreys. Sporadically, Pacific Baza, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Little Eagle and Collared Sparrowhawk are being recorded.

The birdlist is constantly growing. Recent additions include Large-billed Scrubwren, Brush Cuckoo, Western Gerygone, Cattle Egret, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and Long-billed Corella.

Irrawong Reserve

This 4.5ha Reserve is located to the west of Warriewood Wetlands, on the opposite side of Garden St. You can get to the Irrawong Reserve Walking Track straight from the boardwalk when it reaches Garden St – just cross the road and there you are. Mullet Creek runs through the Reserve and the track follows the creek.

The site map can be downloaded from here:

http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environment/bushland/maps/bushland_reserve_walking_track_maps/irrawong_reserve_walking_track.

The Reserve protects the most significant remaining patch of swamp mahogany forest in Sydney. The understory comprises wet sclerophyll plants in the higher areas and reeds near the creek. There are also a few patches of lilly-pilly forest and wetlands along the creek. The birdlife is very similar to that of Warriewood Wetlands, with the dominance of wet forest species. In particular, fruit-eating pigeons can be expected in the lilly-pilly bushes.

When we walked the track, Australian Brush-turkey was following us and Superb Lyrebird crossed the path in front of us.

There are regular records of Noisy Pitta found here in the winter months (June-August). Powerful Owl and Barking Owl were also recorded.

Rainforest birds found in the Reserve include Brown Gerygone, Golden Whistler, Bassian Thrush, Rufous Fantail, Black-faced Monarch, Australasian Figbird, Lewin's Honeyeater and Rose Robin. When lilly-pillies are fruiting, look for Topknot Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Wonga Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove. Small flocks of Topknot Pigeons may be found roosting in the lilly-pillies near the waterfall.

In the wetland area, look for Buff-banded Rail, Lewin's Rail, Nankeen Night-Heron, Eastern Great Egret, Intermediate Egret. When swamp mahogany is in bloom, you can expect noisy crowds of lorikeets including Musk, Rainbow and even Scaly-breasted and Little Lorikeet.

Other species recorded in the Reserve include Varied Sittella, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Sacred Kingfisher, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, Leaden Flycatcher, Spangled Drongo, Grey Goshawk and Pacific Baza.

Narrabeen Lagoon

Narrabeen Lagoon and its foreshore is a wildlife corridor, part of North Sydney's green corridor which extends from Long Reef Headland through Dee Why Lagoon to Warriewood Wetlands. Vegetation comprises reeds, coastal swamp forest, heath, bangalay sand forest and stands of cabbage palm trees with the fern understory.

Access is from Pittwater Rd in Narrabeen.

The site is very popular with birdwatchers thanks to the presence of Barking Owl, Black Bittern and Glossy Black-Cockatoo. In total, over 100 species were recorded here including rarities such as Noisy Pitta, Rose Robin and Eastern Osprey.

You will find a network of walking tracks near the lagoon and the surrounding wetlands. The site map can be downloaded from here:

http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/44824/lagoon_new.pdf.

Jamieson Park

From Pittwater Rd in Narrabeen, turn west into Mactier Rd and then to The Esplanade which will take you to the Park.

This is the main site for Barking Owl. Explore a 7km track that runs along the southern side of the foreshore - Barking Owls can often be found about 1km down this track, when starting from The Esplanade entry (the entry on the other side of the track is from James Wheeler Pl). We found one Barking Owl roosting in a cabbage palm tree near the bridge. We also heard them call when passing the Retirement Village.

We found five Glossy Black-Cockatoos unassumingly cracking casuarina cones near the track half way along its length. White-bellied Sea-Eagle was roosting in a tree while Eastern Osprey flew over the water.

In the Lagoon, look for Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Eastern Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill, Striated Heron, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern, Bar-tailed Godwit and a selection of common ducks and cormorants. Sadly, there is also a good population of Mallard there.

Deep Creek Reserve

Access is from Wakehurst Pky. Park the car on the foreshore at the point when the road goes over Deep Creek and take a walkway under the bridge. Deep Creek Trail starts there, leading through extensive reed beds, casuarina forest and open woodland. A section of the track is covered by a boardwalk.

This site is good for Black Bittern; we flushed one from the casuarinas near the bridge over the creek on the track. Look also for Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Striated Heron, Azure Kingfisher, Nankeen Night-Heron, Black-faced Monarch, Restless Flycatcher (common), Eastern Osprey (breeding here) and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

Summer visitors include Spangled Drongo, Dollarbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Channel-billed Cuckoo and Sacred Kingfisher. In winter, you may be lucky to encounter Noisy Pitta, Scarlet Robin, Rockwarbler and Bassian Thrush.

A good selection of rainforest species can be found in the Reserve, such as Brown Gerygone, Australian King-Parrot, Superb Lyrebird, White-headed Pigeon, Topknot Pigeon and Brown Cuckoo-Dove.

Rarer species reported from this site include Powerful Owl, Grey Goshawk, Rose Robin, White-throated Needletail and Painted Button-quail. We saw one Painted Button-quail foraging in the undergrowth at the western end of the trail.

Middle Creek

Access is from Wakehurst Pky. Stop at the foreshore reserve near the creek and check the casuarina trees along the creek; Striated Heron, Nankeen Night-Heron and Azure Kingfisher can often be seen there. There are also records of Black Bittern.

The site is good for Buff-banded Rail. There are also plenty of Mallards and Mallard hybrids.

On the sandspit in the lagoon look Caspian Tern, Eastern reef-Heron (rare here), Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Egret, Chestnut Teal.

Other birds in the area include Dollarbird, Sacred Kingfisher, Olive-backed Oriole, Swamp Harrier and Eastern Osprey.

Dee Why Lagoon

This small brackish lagoon surrounded by bushland is located just south of Long Reef Reserve and Narrabeen Lagoon in the suburb of Dee Why. Situated in the middle of the metropolitan area, this site provides habitat to a wide range of birdlife including both local and migratory waders. A nature trail runs around the lagoon at the back of sand dunes.

Access is from Pittwater Rd in Dee Why, turn east into Hawkesbury Av and leave the car at the carpark (very pricey).

The site is good for Buff-banded Rail, often seen foraging along the shoreline. Look for them on a patch of mud near the carpark.

Waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover stay mostly around the neighbouring Long Reef Reserve but also utilise this site for foraging and resting. Red-necked Avocet and Black-fronted Dotterel are frequently found here as well.

On the lake, expect a good selection of common waterbirds including Hoary-headed Grebe, Hardhead, Royal Spoonbill, Little Egret and Nankeen Night-Heron. Peregrine Falcon can often be seen flying over the lagoon and the adjacent Long Reef Point. We observed Collared Sparrowhawk being chased by Australian Magpies and Magpie-larks.



Little Egret

The area around the lagoon has been re-vegetated and the growing trees provide suitable habitat to the bush birds. Look for New Holland Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-browed Finch, Eastern Whipbird, Leaden Flycatcher and Yellow Thornbill.

Rarities recorded here include Pheasant Coucal, Spangled Drongo and White-throated Needletail. In 2008, a House Crow, probably a vagrant from Asia transferred here on a boat, was causing a birdwatcher frenzy for a few good months.

Long Reef Aquatic Reserve

Long Reef Aquatic Reserve in Collaroy is one of the most popular birdwatching destinations in the whole Sydney area. It is located on the Northern Beaches some 20km north from Sydney CBD. The site provides an unending supply of seabird species. It is also an excellent wader spot.

The Reserve covers 76ha of marine environment from the shore of Collaroy Beach in the north to the Dee Why Beach and Long Reef Beach in the south, separated by the headland. Around the headland, an extensive tidal platform is located, used as a resting spot by seabirds and waders at high tide. You will need a scope.

Access is from Pittwater Rd. Turn east into Anzac Av and then right into an unnamed road running behind the golf clubhouse. After 600m you'll get to the carpark (fees payable).

A walking track runs from the carpark along the golf course to the Long Reef Point Lookout. At low tide it is possible to go down to get close to the waders on the platform. Otherwise use a telescope. The best time is usually in the afternoon if the tide is receding. The sun will be behind you.

Waders common here include Sooty Oystercatcher, Red-necked Stint, Pacific Golden Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler and Ruddy Turnstone. In winter, New Zealand visitors, Double-banded Plover and White-fronted Tern, appear here in good numbers.

A site list of rarer wader species is long. It includes Wandering Tattler, Whimbrel, Sanderling, Curlew Sandpiper, Red Knot, Lesser Sand Plover, Beach Stone-curlew, Australian Pratincole and Banded Lapwing.

The lookout is useful for seabird watching. During one of our winter visits, there was a continuing southerly stream of shearwaters (mostly Short-tailed, Wedge-tailed and Fluttering Shearwater). A few Pomarine and Arctic Jaegers followed the shearwater close to the shoreline. There Little Penguins splashed in the waves by the rock. There was also a good selection of albatrosses including Black-browed Albatross, White-capped Albatross, Yellow-nosed Albatross and a few Snowy Albatrosses.

A site list of rarer seabird species is impressive and constantly growing. With luck, you can potentially get here Streaked Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Buller's Shearwater, White-necked Petrel, Gould's Petrel, Common Diving-Petrel, Northern Giant-Petrel, Brown Skua, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Brown Booby, Sooty Tern, Common Noddy, Black Noddy or Grey Ternlet.

While on the lookout, don't forget to examine the outer rocks where the gulls, terns and cormorants often rest. Among the common species, you may find Kelp Gull, Common Tern, Caspian Tern or even Little Tern.

The walk from the carpark to the lookout along the golf course is rather uninteresting. Mostly, you will see the common species such as Australasian Pipit, New Holland Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren and Little Wattlebird. However occasionally you may be surprised by Spangled Drongo, Banded Lapwing, Spotted Harrier, Channel-billed Cuckoo or a flock of Fork-tailed Swifts flying over your head. Peregrine Falcon can be often observed over the headland.