

BIRDING AROUND BUSSELTON

The Busselton area is an excellent one for birding with its great range of habitats - forest, heath, wetlands and ocean - where over 200 species have been recorded. Nine of the eleven species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia can be found here - seven are common.

1 VASSE RIVER

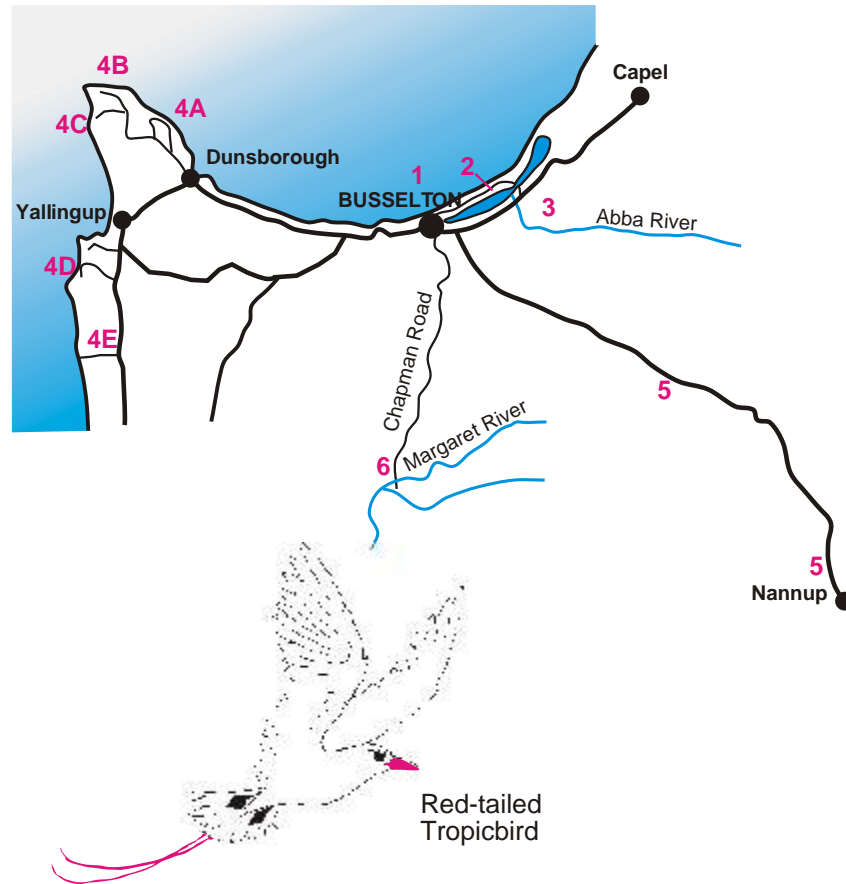
In the centre of Busselton near the shire and tourist offices can be seen many species of waterbirds including Blue-billed Duck, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Purple Swamphen. Herons, ibis, egrets and cormorants are all to be seen.

2 VASSE-WONNERUP ESTUARY

This estuary functions more as a freshwater to brackish lake than an estuary. Up to 33 000 birds and 60 species have been recorded at times. The number of JAMBA species stands at 21 and includes such interesting sightings as Black-tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper, Long-toed Stint and Pacific Golden Plover.

Low, dense, fringing vegetation provides a breeding refuge for many species of ducks. In the swamps nearby breed ibises, egrets and Yellow-billed Spoonbill. More than 100 pairs of Black Swan breed at the northern end of the Wonnerup Estuary. You should also see some of the following - Australian Pelican, Little Egret, Nankeen Night Heron, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Red-necked Avocet, Whiskered Tern and Little Grassbird.

From the Busselton Tourist Bureau, travel eastwards along Peel Terrace which soon becomes Layman Road so that the river and estuary are on your right all the way. After about 10.5 kilometres, you come to Wonnerup House (National Trust) on your left. About 100 metres further on, park your



Red-tailed Tropicbird

vehicle in the Layman picnic ground and walk across the road and through a small gate. Head straight towards the bush for about 50 metres and follow the limestone path to a board walk that leads up to an excellent bird hide. This overlooks the Malbup Creek where it joins the Abba River and Vasse Estuary for excellent viewing of birds.

Take mosquito repellent and beware of tiger snakes in the area and have a wonderful time.

3 LUDLOW STATE FOREST

From the Busselton Tourist Bureau, turn right over the Vasse River bridge along Causeway Road to

the roundabout. Turn left (which is now Bussell Highway) and travel for around six kilometres to Tuart Drive, which is well sign posted. Turn left into Tuart Drive. There are several tracks and roads off the bitumen road to explore to tuart forest. Or you can continue over the Abba River and take several other tracks to watch for birds.

Look for Whistling Kite, Splendid Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Western Gerygone, Inland Thornbill, Scarlet Robin and Grey Butcherbird.

4A LEEUWIN-NATURALISTE NATIONAL PARK

This park comprises sections of the 80 km coastal strip with Banksia-Jarrah-Marri woodlands and Rottnest Island Teatree common on coastal cliffs. The coast is noted for steep cliffs and rolling surf.

There are picnic grounds, roads and tracks off Cape Naturaliste Road. Along the Meelup Road (4A) you should see Western Rosella, Scarlet Robin, White-breasted Robin and Golden Whistler.

4B CAPE NATURALISTE

This area, 13 km north-west of Dunsborough, is a good place in winter to watch out for seabirds. Southern Giant-Petrel, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Little Shearwater and Australasian Gannet are a few of the species recorded.

4C SUGARLOAF ROCK

During summer, several pairs of Red-tailed Tropicbirds breed here. This is their most southerly breeding area in the world. They can be easily observed from the lookout on the mainland. In the winter look out for seabirds.

4D YALLINGUP, CANAL ROCKS AND WYADUP

This area is worth visiting to find three of the endemic species - Western Rosella, Red-winged Fairy-wren and Red-eared Firetail. In the sand-dune area watch out for Southern Emu-wren.

4E MOSES ROCK

Painted Button-quail have been seen here.

5 NANNUP

Look out for bush birds as you travel from Busselton to Nannup along the Vasse Highway. There are several forestry tracks off the highway worth exploring as you pass through the Whicher Ranges.

You may see Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Long-billed Black-Cockatoo, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Red-eared Firetail, Grey Currawong and many other species. In the Nannup townsite is Higgins Swamp, worth a visit for waterbirds. Also check with the Nannup Tourist Bureau as you cross the bridge into Nannup.

6 CANE BREAK POOL

A picnic and swimming area near the headwaters of the Margaret River. Follow Chapman Hills Road to Cane Break Road, then turn left for 200 metres at the picnic sign. The surrounding bush and tracks are worth exploring for Red-winged Fairy-wren and Red-eared Firetail and many species of birds.

LOCAL CONTACT

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NOTES

WHAT IS BIRDS AUSTRALIA?

Birds Australia is a non-profit national organisation working for the enjoyment, study and conservation of Australia's birds. The WA group of Birds Australia has members statewide and offers a variety of activities for members, including conservation and research projects.

Activities and services include excursions, camp-outs, bird surveys and social activities. We also have a library, books for sale and information about birds.

To view our full range of bird guides and bird lists, visit our web site.

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Splendid Fairy-wren



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