

7. Riverside Gardens Reserve and Goegrup Lake

The boardwalks to the North lead to the Serpentine River and the edge of Goegrup Lake, which hosts a number of waterbirds, mostly Ducks, Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills and Ibis. In addition there are often Red-necked Avocets and Blackwinged Stilts. Nankeen Nightheron may be seen roosting in the trees on the river bank. The Reserve along the river is also host to a number of bush-birds and the walk South may yield many of these including the Sacred Kingfisher, a summer visitor that breeds here. Goegrup Lake boardwalks due to be replaced in 2021.

Access from the carpark off Wanda Rd, Greenfields



Eastern Osprey

8. Greenfields Billabong

A 500 metre walk upstream brings you to a bird hide overlooking a billabong often frequented by Black-winged stilts, Ducks and Egrets. Continue following the trail upstream through Urban bushland for a pleasant nature walk.

Access from the end of Old Pinjarra Rd, Greenfields



Fairy Tern

9. Island Point

A walking trail along the southern shore meanders through the bush to a board walk and viewing platform, with an Osprey nesting pole nearby.

There have been sightings of up to 2,000 Ducks on the water here, mostly Grey Teal, with a smattering of others. A range of other waterbirds frequent the area and Black-winged Stilts and Pied Oystercatchers nest on the small island just off-shore.

A number of raptors are often seen particularly Whistling Kites, Eastern Osprey, Swamp Harrier, Little Eagle and White-bellied Sea-eagle, with Wedge-tails in the distance. These birds are very mobile and can be seen anywhere around the estuary.

End of Island Point Rd, Herron.

10. Herron Point

The water between Herron Point and Island Point is relatively shallow, and was frequently used as a ford to cross the estuary. With proper directions it is still crossable on foot at low tide, and at least one local bushwalking group make the crossing in summer most years.



Little Egret

However for viewing shore and waterbirds, walk along the sandy shore to the south for a couple of kilometres. After that it can get a bit muddy. There are two small low off-shore islands that host a variety of birds including Red-necked Avocets from around November and throughout summer.

Turn west off Forrest Highway at Herron Point Rd and follow it to the estuary.

11. South Yunderup

A walking path around the embankment of the artificial lake or Impoundment gives a good view of the water and the birds. To the south at low tide a variety of shorebirds can be seen feeding in the shallows or on the mats of algae in the estuary. In addition, over 3,000 Black Swans have been seen a bit further out in the estuary, and a number are frequently seen on the waters of the Impoundment. It is a popular walk for the local residents.

Access from Wellya Crescent, South Yunderup.



This guide was compiled as a community project by the Mandurah Environment and Heritage Group, and the Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah and Pinjarra a non-profit organisation run by volunteers who advocate awareness of and protection for water and shorebirds of the Peel Estuary.

We wish to acknowledge the sponsorship of the Peel Trails Group.



Other free publications are eight Canoe Guides and three canoe guide companions that promote the use of recreational canoe trails on local waterways.

The Mandurah Environment and Heritage Group does not accept any responsibility or liability for any loss, injury or death, damage, liability, cost or expense that may be suffered sustained or incurred by any person relying on any aspect of this guide or making use of any trail named or described herein.

Enquiries: Mandurah Environment and Heritage Group Inc.

W: MEHG.org.au **E:** info@mehg.org.au © January 2021 Edition

Peel Inlet & Harvey Estuary Water & Shorebirds Birdwatching Walking Trail Guide



The waters of the Peel Inlet, Harvey Estuary and accompanying rivers and lakes, or "the estuary" are world renowned.

It's not only people that think it's great here, but also the abundant wildlife. It is an important breeding ground and nursery, for fish, crabs and prawns and a haven for birds that thrive on the small fish, shellfish, snails, worms and insects that inhabit and breed around the shoreline and throughout the estuary.



Black-winged Stilts

One of the most astounding aspects of the bird life here is the presence of migratory shorebirds (waders). It is these shorebirds that bird enthusiasts from all over Australia and the world come to see. Some of these birds fly up to 25,000 km each year to breed in the Northern Hemisphere, mostly in the Arctic Tundra. They fly here in their thousands in spring and leave again in autumn.

The estuary is a vital site for them to rest and feed. Here they can recuperate from their long flight and replenish their reserves in readiness for the return trip. Without undisturbed rest and feeding time these birds would not be able to complete this arduous migration. Therefore it is imperative that there are areas in the estuary where birds are safe from disturbance.



Mixed Shorebirds

Every effort should be made by individuals, groups, commerce, Government and other organisations to protect these birds and the unique environment they share with us. In doing so it will benefit the local water birds that live here as they are just as reliant on the special attributes of the estuary, and are also very vulnerable at various times e.g. nesting and moulting.

This pamphlet will guide you around the estuary to the most easily accessed land based places where you may simply walk and view, from hides in some locations, local, nomadic and migratory birds or simply enjoy the natural environment.

Shorebird or Waterbird

Waterbirds are basically birds that are mostly seen feeding, breeding or resting in or around water. The shorebirds are a specific genetic grouping of waterbirds, comprising of the Sandpipers and Plovers, within which there are sub-groups such as the Stilts, Avocets, Stints, Godwits, Curlews, Dotterels and Lapwings. The Egrets, Herons, Ibises, Spoonbills, Ducks, Cormorants, Terns, Grebes, Pelicans, Swans and a few others are not shorebirds but simply waterbirds.



Bar-tailed Godwit

Birdwatching Trails

What you see in any of these areas will vary depending on season, weather, time of day and the tides. High tides can make spotting wading birds difficult as they generally roost in protected places until low tide when they will commence feeding on exposed areas. The most frequently encountered birds are mentioned, but there are often surprises that make a visit to any or all the sites even more special.



Red-necked Avocet

1. Soldiers Cove

This is a good walk to orientate yourself because you can see other birding areas upstream, and you can gauge the height of the tide. The tides will be similar in the Creery wetlands, Samphire Cove and Len Howard Conservation Park. However other areas around the estuary will have different water levels.

Egrets, Pelicans, Ducks, Black Swans, Terns and Silver Gulls often rest here. With low tides exposing expanses of mud or sand shorebirds such as Stilts, Godwits, and Greenshanks can be attracted to the area. Whimbrels and Eastern Curlews are frequently seen here between October and March.

Access from the Mandurah foreshore, or Soldiers Cove Terrace Dudley Park.



Eastern Great Egret

2. Creery Wetlands

This can be a prime shorebird observation area, with larger birds such as the Eastern Curlew and Whimbrel often seen, plus Bar-tailed Godwits, Greenshanks, Black-winged Stilts, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, and numerous Black Swans along with large numbers and varieties of Ducks. Other birds can include Eastern Great and Little Egrets, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Australian White Ibis and White-faced Herons.

Access from Darwin Tce cnr of Mariners Cove Dr, Dudley Park.

3. John Street Reserve

This is often the first port of call for visitors wishing to see a good number and variety of shorebirds, as well as Pelicans, Egrets, Terns and a variety of Ducks that breed in adjacent lakes. Dogs are excluded from the area as they are extremely disruptive to the birds.

Located at the end of John Street, Coodanup.



Eastern Curlew

4. Samphire Cove Nature Reserve

From either of the two hides (around 0.5km apart) you may see a variety of shore and waterbirds amongst the exposed rocks and on the opposite bank.

Most commonly seen are: the critically endangered Eastern Curlews, Grey Plovers, Whimbrels, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Greenshanks.

Signage is a feature in the hides and on the 1.5 Km All-Abilities Interpretive Trail.

Access gate cnr of Egret Pt and Wedgetail Rt, Halls Head.

5. (a) Mandurah Quay

There is frequently a range of shore and waterbirds here including the endangered Fairy Tern. The Len Howard bird-hide can be accessed on foot from here, it's about one km south along the edge of the estuary.

Access from the carpark at the end of Marina Quay Dr, Erskine.

5. (b). Osprey Waters

One of the major features in the area is the two Eastern Osprey Nesting poles. A nest was successfully relocated to the southern pole at the Mandurah Quay end of the area with a breeding pair regularly successfully raising between one to three chicks.

Eastern Ospreys built a nest in the second pole which is close to the Osprey Waters non-powered launch site and chicks have been raised here as well.

Access from Vixen Cl. or Breakwater Bvd. or Egret Point, Erskine.

6. Len Howard Conservation Park

The hide is adjacent to the entrance of a small cove and the protected waters provide refuge for a number of shore and water birds, plus the exquisite and endangered Fairy Tern, a summer visitor that comes here to breed.

There is also an Eastern Osprey nesting pole nearby.

The carpark at the end of an unsealed road off Glendart Ct, Erskine, provides access to a short nature trail walk and a longer walk via Erskine walking track to a bird-hide (2km) return.

It is possible to walk along virtually continuous tracks from Len Howard to Samphire Cove, taking in Mandurah Quay and Osprey Waters on the way. Total distance from Len Howard Carpark to first Bird hide at Samphire Cove - one way approx 5.5 km.



Red-necked Stint



Whimbrel

Legend

1. Soldiers Cove
2. Creery Wetlands
3. John Street Reserve
4. Samphire Cove
5. Mandurah Quay
6. Len Howard Conservation Park
7. Riverside Gardens Reserve and Goegrup Lake
8. Greenfields Billabong
9. I Island Point
10. Herron Point
11. South Yunderup



Early morning on the Peel Inlet



Wetlands walk



Shorebird count in progress



Common Sandpiper



Serpentine River



Grey-tailed Tattler



Grey Plover



White-faced heron



Purple Swamphen



Wood Sandpiper



Black-winged Stilt



Pacific Black Duck



Australasian Darter



Pied Oystercatcher



Curlew Sandpipers



Sacred Kingfisher



Eastern Great Egret