LAKE ROSS

The beautiful Lake Ross stores over 200,000 megalitres of water and supplies up to 80% of Townsville’s drinking water. The Ross River Dam wall stretches 8.3km across the Ross River floodplain, providing additional flood mitigation benefit to downstream communities.

The Dam’s extensive shallow margins and fringing woodlands provide habitat for over 200 species of birds. At times, the number of Australian Pelicans, Black Swans, Eurasian Coots and Hardhead ducks can run into the thousands – a magic sight to behold. The Dam is also the breeding area for the White-bellied Sea-Eagle and the Osprey. The park around the Dam and the base of the spillway are ideal habitat for bush birds. The borrow pits across the road from the dam also support a wide variety of water birds for some months after each wet season.

Lake Ross and the borrow pits are located at the end of Riverway Drive, about 14km past Thuringowa Central.

Birds likely to be seen include:

The Ross River winds its way through Townsville from Ross Dam to the mouth of the river near the Townsville Port. The river maintains a static level throughout the year as it is held back by Black Weir. It is utilised year-round for powerboating, water skiing, rowing, dragon boating and other water sports. The Ross River Parkway consists of continuous community open space along both banks of the picturesque Ross River, interspersed with high quality recreation facilities, all linked by over 30km of shared pathways.

For its entire length from the Ross River Dam to its mouth, the Ross River offers a number of excellent birdwatching spots, in particular around its various weirs, parks and walkways. Those areas, together with a healthy and well vegetated riparian zone along the riverbank, provide easily accessible birdwatching locations. Several species of Finches are often seen in the grassed areas along the bank. The observant birdwatcher can sometimes spot a Tawny Frogmouth or even a Southern Boobook or Barking Owl secreted amongst the dense foliage.

**Birds likely to be seen include:**

BIRDWATCHING IN TOWNSVILLE

There are numerous birdwatching locations in the Townsville region. This brochure details eleven of the most accessible and diverse of those locations, that will give residents and visitors a chance to see a good number of birds most common to the region. The locations range from easy short walks to whole day or overnight trips that take you from suburbia to the edge of the outback, through pristine rainforests to the sands and mangroves of the local beaches. There is even one that will take you across Cleveland Bay to Magnetic Island off the coast of Townsville.

Further bird watching information can be found on Council’s website or on BirdLife Townsville at birdlifetownsville.org.au

What to Bring

For satisfying birdwatching you will need a good field guide and a pair of binoculars with a magnification of approximately 7x50 or 8x40.

Birdwatchers are encouraged to wear suitable clothing and closed in shoes, a wide brimmed hat, apply sunscreen and insect repellent and take a water bottle.

Threatened, Endangered and Vulnerable Birds

Townsville is home to a number of Australia’s threatened, endangered and vulnerable birds including the Southern Cassowary, Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Australian Bustard, Bush Stone-curlew, Beach Stone-curlew, Rufous Owl, Masked Owl and Black-throated Finch. It is estimated that one in five of Australia’s bird species is threatened with extinction, so it is important that birds and their habitats are protected.

Please do not disturb birds, their nests or their habitats.
Located off the Bruce Highway north of Townsville, this area includes Bushland Beach, Saunders Beach, Toolakea, Toomulla and Balgal Beach. These popular birdwatching areas provide ideal habitats for seabirds and migratory waders. Birds of interest are the Beach Stone-curlew, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Red-capped Plover, and several species of terns. A large number of migrating waders are seen on beaches between September and April. Raptors are present overhead while a range of forest birds can be spotted in the vegetation behind the dunes.

The more elusive forest birds may be found by walking in the bush behind the dunes and along the edges of the mangroves.

Care must be taken on the beaches to ensure dogs do not disturb birds. Motorised transport is prohibited on the beaches and dunes. Always take note of warning signs regarding crocodiles.

Birds likely to be seen include:

Bluewater is a 30-minute drive north of Townsville, along the Bruce Highway. The Bluewater section of the Paluma State Forest lies at the southern end of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. It is the closest, most accessible rainforest to Townsville. This location is popular in summer however few facilities are provided so visitors must be self-sufficient. A designated camping area is located at Bluewater Park on Forestry Road as camping is not permitted in the forest. Good birdwatching is available in this parkland.

For further birdwatching experiences, turn left off the highway into Forestry Road at Bluewater and drive 18km west into the forest. The road is closed during the wet season but usually accessible by conventional vehicles in dry weather. Caution is advised when driving on the gravel road up the range.

It is suggested that information regarding accessibility and road conditions be obtained from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service – Jourama base (07) 4777 3112 or the Ingham base (07) 4777 2822 before venturing into the area.

**Birds likely to be seen include:**

This region is a birdwatcher’s paradise where rare and endangered species can be found. Paluma township is home to a wide range of rainforest bird species and beyond Paluma, opportunities exist to view birds of the dry tropical forests.

The turn-off to Paluma is located 60km north of Townsville off the Bruce Highway and is well signed. The 18km road up the range to Paluma is winding and narrow, and unsuitable for caravans. Little Crystal Creek picnic area is halfway up the range and Lake Paluma is approximately 16km past the Paluma township. The landscape changes from dense rainforest to open Eucalyptus grandis forest 4km past the turnoff to Lake Paluma. This road will take you to Hidden Valley.

The first birdwatching stop is at the Little Crystal Creek picnic area followed by stops at McClelland’s Lookout and Paluma village. Birthday Creek Bridge, and the walk to Birthday Creek Falls, gives you the chance to spot the elusive Golden Bowerbird. Lake Paluma, situated deep in the rainforest, offers excellent birdwatching and also camping facilities, barbeques and toilets. The Eucalyptus grandis forest approaching Hidden Valley is another great bird spotting location.

Birds likely to be seen include:

Whether you are a keen birdwatcher or just enjoy a long drive that shows you the diversity of Townsville’s environment, this is the trip to take. The 300km full day drive loops from the suburbs to the edge of the Outback then into lush rainforests and onto sandy beaches.

The drive from Townsville along Hervey Range Road to the summit shows the change of habitat and diversity of bird species. Heritage Tea Rooms are located on top of the range and provide a great stop for refreshments. From there, the Hervey Range Road continues for 63km to the Star River. This is a great spot for birdwatching. Take a right-hand turn, 1km past the Star River, which will take you to Hidden Valley. This drive provides good birdwatching too, but you cannot venture off the road as it runs through private property. From Hidden Valley, it is 23km to Paluma. Along this road, you enter the southernmost point of the Wet Tropics Rainforest. After birdwatching in Paluma, head down the range to the Bruce Highway and onto one or more of Townsville’s Northern Beaches. This long day trip is sure to please keen birdwatchers.

**Birds likely to be seen include:**

- Emu
- Australasian Darter
- Black Kite
- Whistling Kite
- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Brown Falcon
- Bustard
- Squatter Pigeon
- Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo
- Pale-headed Rosella
- Pheasant Coucal
- Rainbow Bee-eater
- Fairy Martin
- Lemon-bellied Flycatcher
- Grey-crowned Babbler
- Red-backed Fairy-wren
- Weebill
- White-throated Gerygone
- Brown Treecreeper
- Yellow-throated Miner
- Fuscous Honeyeater
- Brown Honeyeater
- Scarlet Honeyeater
- Zebra Finch
- Apostlebird
- Black-faced Woodswallow

*Red Tailed Black Cockatoo*
The open woodlands, wetlands, and swamps of Town Common offer a range of diverse habitats and birdlife. More than 300 species of birds have been recorded.

The ephemeral wetlands change dramatically from the wet to dry season and are often used by migratory waders (shorebirds). The forested gullies of the Many Peaks Range divides Town Common’s northern boundary from Halifax Bay. The forest walk, bird hides and observation points give the bird watcher many opportunities to quietly observe birds.

The Town Common has a long and interesting history, especially its role in World War II.

To visit the Town Common Conservation Park between 6:30am - 6:30pm, follow the road from Rowes Bay to Cape Pallarenda and turn left at the sign. It is approximately 10km from the city centre.

**Birds likely to be seen include:**

The Bowling Green Bay National Park covers 55,300ha of coastal and mountainous terrain including sections of Mt Elliot, Cape Cleveland and Cape Bowling Green. The importance of the park lies in its diversity of habitat, ranging from mangroves at sea level to mountain-top rainforests at 1200m altitude. The wetlands of Bowling Green Bay are classified under the Ramsar Convention.

Alligator Creek is the most accessible of the streams that flow off Mt Elliot and offers creek-based recreational activities, including swimming in the rock pools, bushwalking, picnic areas and overnight camping.

Birdwatching opportunities are best early in the morning and during non-holiday periods. The riparian woodlands along the creek hold a good selection of honeyeaters and flycatchers, while the whistlers prefer the drier bushlands on the slopes of Mt Elliot. White-browed Robins frequent the picnic area and Australian Swiftlets are often recorded flying high over the creek.

The turn-off to the Cape Bowling Green National Park and Alligator Creek is located approximately 20km south of Townsville off the Bruce Highway, and is well sign-posted.

Birds likely to be seen include:

Just a 20 minute ferry ride from Townsville is the beautiful Magnetic Island. Maggie, as it’s affectionately referred to by locals, features huge granite boulders covered in hoop pines, eucalypts, wattles and kapok trees. There are also mangrove swamps and tea tree swamps on the island. Two thirds of the island is National Park and there are 25km of walking trails linking to the Island’s main bays. Koalas can usually be seen on the walking track to The Forts, which were built to defend Townsville in World War II.

The Bush Stone-curlew is the iconic bird of Magnetic Island. Its eerie cry can be heard echoing across the bays at night. They are accustomed to people and wander around the roadside edges and gardens, day and night. Magnetic Island is also home to a few families of Orange-footed Scrubfowl. A careful search will disclose the mounds of these small megapodes. Brahminy Kites can usually be seen at the Nelly Bay Marina where they scavenge bait from fishers. White-bellied Sea Eagles can often be seen soaring over the hills between Nelly and Picnic Bays. Easter Reef Egrets and Striated Herons usually patrol Geoffrey Bay at low tide.

In the wet season, Magpie Geese, Brolgas and other water birds may inhabit the swampland at the back of the beach in Horseshoe Bay.

Magnetic Island is easily accessible from Townsville by both passenger ferry from the Breakwater Terminal on Sir Leslie Theiss Drive and by car ferry at the terminal on Ross Street.

**Birds likely to be seen include:**

Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Brahminy Kite, Helmeted Friarbird, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Eastern Reef Egret, Striated Heron, Pied Currawong, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Laughing Kookaburra, Figbird, Nankeen Kestrel, Whistling Kite, Masked Lapwing, Red-capped Plover, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Silver Gull, Australian White Ibis, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Torresian Crow, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, and Welcome Swallow. In the wet season Magpie Geese and Brolgas, among other water birds, may inhabit the swampland at the back of the beach in Horseshoe Bay.
OAK VALLEY

Oak Valley is a rural residential suburb of Townsville located south of the CBD and adjacent to the Ross Dam. The Oak Valley Reserve is a 75ha nature reserve and a favourite area for birdwatchers. The Reserve has a bird viewing platform and an all-weather gravel Wildlife Trail. Not far from the reserve is the Chisholm Trail, one of the few remaining habitats in Townsville for the critically endangered Black-throated Finch.

The Oak Valley turn is located 11km south of Townsville off the Flinders Highway and is well signed. To access birdwatching areas cross the railway line and then turn right onto Valley Drive. After a short distance, turn left onto Greta Road. To reach Chisholm Trail, turn right onto Thunderbolt Drive and then turn left after 500m.

To get to the reserve, turn left at the end of Thunderbolt Drive and continue until reaching the picnic area alongside Sach’s Creek.

Birds likely to be seen include:


WOODSTOCK

Follow the Flinders Highway towards Charters Towers, after 34km turn right at Gunadoo Road. This leads to a section of the old Flinders Highway where it is possible to observe Squatter Pigeons, Apostlebirds, Rufous Songlarks, Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Plum-headed Finches, Double-barred Finches and the endangered Black-throated Finches.
BIRD SIGHTING CHECKLIST

- Southern Cassowary
- Emu
- Magpie Goose
- Spotted Whistling-Duck
- Plumed Whistling-Duck
- Wandering Whistling-Duck
- Pink-eared Duck
- Black Swan
- Hardhead
- Australasian Shoveler
- Pacific Black Duck
- Grey Teal
- Australian Wood Duck
- Cotton Pygmy-goose
- Green Pygmy-goose
- Australian Brush-turkey
- Orange-footed Scrubfowl
- Brown Quail
- Australasian Grebe
- Great Crested Grebe
- Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)
- White-headed Pigeon
- Spotted Dove
- Brown Cuckoo-Dove
- Squatter Pigeon
- Crested Pigeon
- Diamond Dove
- Peaceful Dove
- Bar-shouldered Dove
- Brown-capped Emerald-Dove
- Torresian Imperial-Pigeon
- Wompoo Fruit-Dove
- Superb Fruit-Dove
- Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove
- Topknot Pigeon
- Pheasant Coucal
- Eastern Koel
- Channel-billed Cuckoo
- Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo
- Black-eared Cuckoo
- Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
- Little Bronze-Cuckoo
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo
- Brush Cuckoo
- Pallid Cuckoo
- Oriental Cuckoo
- Australian Bustard
- Papuan Frogmouth
- Tawny Frogmouth
- Spotted Nightjar
- White-throated Nightjar
- Large-tailed Nightjar
- Australian Owlet-nightjar
- White-throated Needletail
- Australian Swiftlet
- Fork-tailed Swift
- Red-necked Crane
- Buff-banded Rail
- White-browed Crane
- Purple Swamphen
- Dusky Moorhen
- Black-tailed Native-hen
- Eurasian Coot
- Brolga
- Bush Stone-curlew
- Beach Stone-curlew
- Australian Pied Oystercatcher
- Sooty Oystercatcher
- Pied Stilt
- Grey Plover
- Pacific Golden Plover
- Red-capped Plover
- Lesser Sand Plover
- Greater Sand Plover
- Black-fronted Dotterel
- Banded Lapwing
- Masked Lapwing
- Red-kneed Dotterel
- Comb-crested Jacana
- Whimbrel
- Little Curlew
- Eastern Curlew
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Great Knot
- Red Knot
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
- Red-necked Stint
- Latham’s Snipe
- Terek Sandpiper
- Common Sandpiper
- Grey-tailed Tattler
- Wandering Tattler
- Common Greenshank
- Marsh Sandpiper
- Red-backed Button-quail
- Red-chested Button-quail
- Little Button-quail
- Australian Pratincole
- Silver Gull
- Little Tern
- Australian Gull-billed Tern
- Caspian Tern
- Whiskered Tern
- White-winged Black Tern
- Lesser Crested Tern
- Crested Tern
- Black-necked Stork
- Australian Pelican
- Black Bittern
- Nankeen Night-Heron
- Striated Heron
- Cattle Egret
- White-necked Heron
- Great Egret
- Intermediate Egret
- White-faced Heron
Little Egret
Eastern Reef Egret
Australian White Ibis
Straw-necked Ibis
Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Royal Spoonbill
Glossy Ibis
Brown Booby
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant
Australasian Darter
Osprey
Black-shouldered Kite
Square-tailed Kite
Pacific Baza
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Little Eagle
Swamp Harrier
Spotted Harrier
Grey Goshawk
Collared Sparrowhawk
White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Whistling Kite
Brahminy Kite
Black Kite
Eastern Grass Owl
Lesser Sooty Owl
Masked Owl
Barn Owl
Rufous Owl
Barking Owl
Southern Boobook
Rainbow Bee-eater
Dollarbird
Little Kingfisher
Azure Kingfisher
Forest Kingfisher
Collared Kingfisher
Sacred Kingfisher
Red-backed Kingfisher
Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher
Laughing Kookaburra
Blue-winged Kookaburra
Nankeen Kestrel
Australian Hobby
Brown Falcon
Black Falcon
Peregrine Falcon
Cockatiel
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo
Glossy Black-Cockatoo
Galah
Little Corella
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Australian King-Parrot
Red-winged Parrot
Crimson Rosella
Pale-headed Rosella
Little Lorikeet
Rainbow Lorikeet
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
Budgerigar
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot
Noisy Pitta
Spotted Catbird
Tooth-billed Bowerbird
Golden Bowerbird
Satin Bowerbird
Great Bowerbird
White-throated Treecreeper
Brown Treecreeper
Lovely Fairy-wren
Red-backed Fairy-wren
Dusky Honeyeater
Scarlet Honeyeater
Striped Honeyeater
Macleay's Honeyeater
Helmeted Friarbird
Noisy Friarbird
Little Friarbird
Brown Honeyeater
White-cheeked Honeyeater
Blue-faced Honeyeater
Black-chinned Honeyeater
White-throated Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater
Eastern Spinebill
Rufous-throated Honeyeater
Brown-backed Honeyeater
White-gaped Honeyeater
Lewin's Honeyeater
Yellow Honeyeater
Noisy Miner
Yellow-throated Miner
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Fernwren
Brown Gerygone
Fairy Gerygone
White-throated Gerygone
Large-billed Gerygone
Weebill
Yellow-throated Scrubwren
White-browed Scrubwren
Large-billed Scrubwren
Mountain Thornbill
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Chowchilla
This bird list was created from sightings recorded by members of BirdLife Townsville. Other birds may be seen that are not listed in this brochure.

A copy of your bird sightings with dates, locations and contact details would be appreciated. Please send all information to BirdLife Townsville.

Taxonomical order and birds names are in accordance with Birdlife Australia Working List of Australian Birds v3 August 2019.