

West Lake Macquarie Birding Route



5 WATAGAN MOUNTAINS

Note that many roads are unsealed, and accessible by 2WD in dry conditions only. Roads may be temporarily closed to prevent damage when wet. It is important to get current information (visit <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au> or contact the NPWS Lake Munmorah office on 02 4972 9000). There are toilet facilities at the various picnic areas.

The Watagans offer a variety of wet forest birds, including Black-faced Monarch, Green Catbird, Bassian Thrush, Glossy Black-Cockatoo and Topknot Pigeon. Some specific sites are mentioned below but a stop at any interesting habitat should prove rewarding.

The Gap Creek Falls walking trail is at the end of Bangalow Road, accessed via Mount Faulk Road (visit <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/camping-and-accommodation/campgrounds/gap-creek-campground>). The track to the base of the falls is steep in places. There is an option to take the Gap Creek Forest walk above the falls, where Noisy Pitta, Regent Bowerbird and Brush-turkey may be encountered.

Monkey Face Lookout is accessed by Monkey Face Road, off Mount Faulk Road (visit <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/lookouts/monkey-face-lookout>). As well as stunning views you may be rewarded with sightings of Peregrine Falcons or Wedge-tailed Eagles, and the rocky cliff faces are good for Rockwarbler.

Boarding House Dam Picnic Area is accessed via Watagan Forest Road (visit <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/picnic-areas/boarding-house-dam-picnic-area>). This site is good for Superb Lyrebird and Red-browed Treecreeper, while Bassian Thrush have been seen at the picnic area. There is also the possibility of an Australian Logrunner, and Sooty Owls at night.



Scarlet Robin

The Pines Picnic Area is accessed from Watagan Forest Road via Martinsville (visit <https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/visit/forests/olney>). This site is a set-off point for a number of walks. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and a wide variety of honeyeaters occur in open forest areas (the Abbotts Falls Walking Track is particularly good). Scarlet Robins and Gang-Gang Cockatoos are possibilities around the picnic area.

Mount Sugarloaf is at the northern end of the Watagan ranges, and is accessed via Mount Sugarloaf Road, off George Booth Drive (visit <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/sugarloaf-state-conservation-area>). The rocky hillsides and ridge-top forest along the Summit Trail provide good habitat for Spotted Quail-thrush, while the loop trail offers Rockwarblers around the cliffs as well as great panoramic views. There are picnic, BBQ and toilet facilities at the end of Mount Sugarloaf Road.

The road up to Mount Sugarloaf offers a good spot to view the autumn migration passage of southern birds. Park at the second easement approximately 500m along the road. On fine days flocks of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters can pass overhead in large numbers, as well as Scarlet and White-naped Honeyeaters, Silvereyes etc.

Factfile Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*)



Silvereye are a small omnivorous bird that feed mainly on insect prey, fruit and nectar. They can be found in vegetated areas including gardens, forests and scrub and it is a common bird throughout the region. The local cornwalli sub species is supplemented by the seasonal migration of westernensis and lateralis birds and there are subtle plumage differences between each.

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Birding Routes are available to download from the HBOC website

www.hboc.org.au

HBOC meets at 7:00pm on the second Wednesday of each month (except January) at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, off the roundabout at Sandgate Road, Shortland. Also, monthly outings on the first Tuesday and third Sunday of each month – check our website for details.

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Hunter Bird Observers Club

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This map is not to scale and is for illustrative purposes only



1 STOCKTON BOREHOLE, THE WEIR ROAD, TERALBA

This large waterbody can be viewed from The Weir Road, approximately 300m west from Griffen Road. It is on private land but many of the birds are easily seen from the road edge (a telescope is helpful for viewing the various ducks and grebes further out). It is on a busy road and there is limited parking nearby, so be prepared for a short walk. At the site there is a guard rail that you can stand behind. There are no toilet facilities.

Birds regularly sighted include Pied Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel and Red-kneed Dotterel. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers sometimes gather in large flocks in spring and summer; patient birdwatchers may spot the occasional Pectoral or Curlew Sandpiper amongst them. A variety of raptors

can be seen – if you are lucky, they may flush some Latham’s Snipe. The site is also a reliable spot seasonally for White-breasted Woodswallows.

2 MYUNA BAY FORESHORE RESERVE

This reserve is located on Wangi Road, 1km south of the Summerhill Drive turn-off (see <https://www.lakemac.com.au/Venues/Myuna-Bay-Rest-Area>). Expect a broad range of birds as the habitat is varied. The options for access are to park at a) the picnic area, b) on the dirt track alongside the abandoned Recreation Centre, c) along Rocky Point Road. There are toilet facilities at the picnic area and power station outlet.

Follow the shoreline or track south to the footbridge over the inlet to the lagoon and on to the Eraring Power Station outfall taking trails either side of the Scout camp. Formed tracks continue past the outfall toilet block and lesser tracks

bend back around to the outfall alongside Whiteheads Lagoon. From the outfall there is a track at the end of Rocky Point Road which follows the shoreline all the way to Lake Eraring.

3 WOODS POINT TRAIL, MORISSET

This is a pleasant track through the Lake Macquarie State Conservation Area (see <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/lake-macquarie-state-conservation-area>). There are no toilet facilities. The track starts at Silky Oak Drive in front of the Morisset Hospital gates and takes in the habitat of Pourmalong Creek, before continuing through eucalypt forest to a foreshore loop around Bird Cage Point. Regular species present include Golden Whistler, Variegated Fairywren and Satin Bowerbird, while Striated Heron and Lewin’s Rail are possible along the creek. In the warmer months, there are breeding Sacred Kingfishers.



Striated Heron

4 BOYS AND GIRLS WALK – FREEMANS DRIVE, COORANBONG

These walks take in a mixture of habitats within Avondale University (see <http://ashton-scape.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>). Note this is private property and entry is at your own risk. There are no toilet facilities.

One way to access the site is to park at Cooranbong Park and walk along Freemans Drive to the bridge over Dora Creek. Walks start from here either side, with the short Felled Timber Creek Walk to the west and longer walks to the east accessible from the path under the road. Follow the creek to Boys Walk and the Swinging Bridge then on to the Sandy Creek Loop or the Girls Walk. The tracks are well formed, with benches and town water near the factory.

Expect a wide range of species including Azure Kingfisher, Brown Cuckoo-Dove and Crested Shrike-tit. Black Bittern and Regent Bowerbird are sometimes observed.



Brown Cuckoo-Dove



Superb Lyrebird

