

3 GRASSLAND BIRDS

The grassy areas can at times seem void of birds but they are inhabited by a number of species which range in behaviour from slightly shy to downright cryptic. Variegated Fairy-wrens are relatively common; they resemble their relatives the Superb Fairy-wren, differences include that they have longer tails and the male has a red/brown wing patch. Small groups of Southern Emu-wrens are sometimes encountered, and the less common Red-backed Fairy-wren is also resident. The latter is at the southern limit of its range at Cattai. Golden-headed



Brown Quail

of encountering them is a noisy flurry of wingbeats as they take off in alarm from almost under one's feet. It is possible to watch them for prolonged periods, feeding alongside a track, if one approaches them cautiously from a distance. The highly cryptic King Quail has also been recorded in the grasslands of Cattai, and perhaps is resident.

Cisticolas and Tawny Grassbirds are more often heard than seen but sometimes pop up to the top of a small shrub to sing especially in the breeding season.

Quiet walkers may encounter a covey of Brown Quails although the usual means



Whistling Kite

4 BIRDS OF PREY

Many types of raptors (birds of prey) may be seen soaring over Cattai. White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Whistling Kites are very common, the former often roost in trees in the lagoon as well. Of the large raptors, the Square-tailed Kite is less common although a pair nest in the Coopernook State Forest and their hunting range includes Cattai.

Smaller raptors, more likely to be seen hunting in the woodlands or grasslands, include Black-shouldered Kite, Australian Hobby, Grey Goshawk, Brown Goshawk and Nankeen Kestrel.



Around 180 species of birds have been seen at Cattai Wetlands!

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Cattai Wetlands Birding Route



Factfile Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*)

A small insectivorous bird found in most parts of Australia. It is mid to dark grey above, lighter yellowish/orange below, with a white throat, white markings over the eye. It flits from perch to perch, sometimes on the ground but mostly on the twigs of a tree or any other convenient object, looking out for flying insects.

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Hunter Bird Observers Club

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Cattai Wetlands, Spring Hill Road, Coopernook



pairs of White-breasted Woodswallows. Tree Martins are sometimes present too. Several Comb-crested Jacanas are resident, seen walking busily around on the lily pads catching insects and they breed at the wetlands in summer. Patience can sometimes be required to spot them amongst the lily flowers which tower above them. Coopernook Creek usually has similar birds to the main wetlands but is always worth checking. Sometimes it can be easier to find jacanas here because the lilies are less prolific.

White-breasted Woodswallow

2 WOODLAND BIRDS

Amongst the more easily seen regulars of the woodlands around Cattai are lively and active under-storey birds such as Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Red-browed Finch, Brown Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Superb Fairy-wren, Silvereye and Eastern Whipbird. Binoculars are usually needed for spotting the many species in the higher canopy, where Scarlet, Brown, Striped and White-cheeked Honeyeaters are common, also Eastern Spinebill, Golden Whistler, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Noisy Miner, White-throated Treecreeper and Fan-tailed Cuckoo. In summer, they are joined by migrants from the north such as



Eastern Yellow Robin

Brush Cuckoo, Rufous Whistler, Dollarbird, Leaden Flycatcher, Sacred Kingfisher, Black-faced Monarch and Rufous Fantail.

Towards the top of the casuarinas, Yellow Thornbills are common. Be on the lookout too for the brilliant but shy Azure Kingfisher on the water-side of the casuarinas, and the more stationary Forest Kingfisher which sometimes roosts on branches over the water.

The nocturnal birds of Cattai include Owlet-nightjar and (in summer) White-throated Nightjar. These are cryptic species by day but occasionally they flush when someone comes too close to their day-time roost.

CATTAI WETLANDS

Cattai Wetlands is an outstanding sanctuary for birds, with around 180 species having been recorded here since 2010. This includes species at around the southern limit of their range in Australia, such as Forest Kingfisher, and species which are endangered in NSW, for example Black-necked Stork. It is located off the A1 at Coopernook, 1km north of the Harrington turn-off.

On any day, a stroll around the central wetlands will usually find 40-50 birds species, with another 20-30 species in the forested areas and the grassy paddocks. Birds of prey often soar overhead, whilst noisy groups of lorikeets and friarbirds whizz through frequently, and sometimes briefly stopping. An extensive bird list is available. This brochure does not try to list every species recorded on the property, but rather to indicate the more common and more interesting species and where they are more likely to be found.

While you enjoy your time spent birdwatching at Cattai, remember also that it is a shining example of successful environmental restoration.

Cattai Wetlands is now open 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 5pm on weekends.

1 WETLAND BIRDS

The best place to view waterbirds is from the hide off the causeway, as higher numbers of them more frequently are found on this side of the lagoon. Views of waterbirds are also possible from the platform on the opposite side, but it is more exposed so birds usually move away when people are present.

Many types of ducks are regularly found foraging on the lagoon, or else loafing at the bases of trees. Pacific Black Duck and Grey Teal are the main species but look for Hardheads, Australian Shovelers, Chestnut Teal and Wandering Whistling-ducks, all of which frequently visit. Eurasian Coots (with the white facial sheath) are very common, and some Purple Swamphens often are seen patrolling the margins. Darters, pelicans, cormorants, herons and egrets are often seen fishing in the shallow waters. If your luck is in, a pair of Black-necked Storks will be there too, and sometimes accompanied by their young.

Welcome Swallows hunt over the water all year around, joined in summer by Fairy Martins and a few

Black-necked Stork

To Taree & Newcastle

MAP NOT TO SCALE