From the Pacific Highway turn right into Goorengi Rd (2.5km past the northern junction with Tarean Road) and after 1.3km turn right again into Carrington Rd. The bush immediately at this T-intersection can sometimes be quite productive, with birds such as Brown, Yellow and Striated Thornbills, several types of honeyeater, Varied Sitta, Leaden Flycatcher, Black-faced and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and Cicadabird recorded there.

The road onwards is sealed to within 1km of Carrington village, which lies directly on Port Stephens. Most of the area is privately owned but there are views of the water from Pier Street where you first arrive. It is also possible to access the water on foot from a few places along the dirt road that leads towards Tahllee (a privately owned religious retreat).

Birds seen regularly within the Carrington/Tahllee environs include Grey-tailed Tattler, Pied Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit and Black Swan, Crested Pigeon and Bar-shouldered Dove, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner and Little Wattlebird. Black-shouldered Kites and Nankeen Kestrels often hunt over the paddocks on the right heading towards Tahllee while Ospreys, White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Whistling Kites patrol the waters. The small creek at Carrington hosts breeding Sacred Kingfishers and White-breasted Woodswallows in summer, while Chestnut Teal and Australian Wood Duck shelter at it all year around. There are no facilities.
1 GIR-UM-BIT NATIONAL PARK
This National Park includes bushland; however its core ecological value is an area extensively utilised by shorebirds. Accessing the area is tricky but the effort is usually well worth it. It is an important summer roosting site for hundreds of Eastern Curlews along with Red-necked Stints, Pacific Golden Plovers and other small to medium sized shorebirds. Year round, good numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits, Pied Oystercatchers and Sooty Oystercatchers use the Reserve and the nearby emergent poles. In winter, it is a reliable spot to find 20 or more Double-banded Plovers. It is also one of the few remaining places in the Hunter Region to find White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike.

2 SWAN BAY
It is worth checking out the Swan Bay shoreline as part of a visit to Gir-um-bit NP. Grey-tailed Tattlers often roost there at high tide or may be seen foraging when the tide drops, and it is a regular haunt for Bar-tailed Godwits, Eastern Curlews and Pied Oystercatchers. Pacific Golden Plovers sometimes roost in the grassy areas or at vacant blocks. Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets fly by regularly and the trees host honeyeaters such as Striped, Blue-faced, Yellow-faced and Scarlet, and usually Noisy Friarbirds too. Australasian Figbirds and Olive-backed Orioles are present when the trees are fruiting. There are picnic tables but no other facilities.

3 KARUAH FORESHORE
If northbound on the Pacific Highway, take the Karuah/Swan Bay turn-off, then turn left on Tarean Rd. towards Karuah. If you are coming back from Swan Bay / Gir-um-bit NP, the turn-off is just before the Highway re-entrance. Shortly before the bridge in Karuah, turn right into Bundabah St then left into Barclay St; alternatively turn left into Memorial Drive from Tarean Rd about 100m beyond Bundabah St. Either option soon brings you to pleasant parks alongside the Karuah River (and an underpass footpath connects the two). Bush Stone-curlews sometimes roost around here, although they are more often encountered at the park off Alice St (across the bridge and turn right) where they have previously attempted to breed. Waterbirds such as pelicans, cormorants and Australian Darter are plentiful around the river, while at low tide shorebirds such as Bar-tailed Godwits and Eastern Curlews may be foraging. Yellow-rumped Thornbills are regulars and various other bush birds can be found there. Regularly recorded birds of prey include Whistling Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Osprey (which sometimes are attending a nest in a Norfolk Pine across the river from Longworth Park, just to the right of the Boat club). Toilets and picnic facilities are available at both parks.

4 KARUAH WETLANDS
These wetlands are smallish and sometimes covered in vegetation, and it is unpredictable as to what waterbird species may be found there. However, they are also good for a variety of bushbirds. The wetlands are a roost site for Nankeen Night-Herons, with several birds usually present there. When approaching Karuah from the south, turn left into Mustons Rd. The road currently is not signposted – the turn is immediately past the sports oval. After turning, there is a clearing on the left about 100m along Mustons Rd. Two short walking tracks around the wetlands start from the far side of the clearing. There is also a short walk through more wetlands along a dilapidated boardwalk that starts from Franklin St, near its intersection with Mustons Rd. There are no facilities.