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Twitchers Route



A Birdwatchers Guide to Kimberley National Parks and Reserves







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Twitchers Route



A Birdwatchers Guide to Kimberley National Parks and Reserves

Introduction

The Kimberley region offers birdwatchers a unique opportunity to spot over 300 bird species which is more than one third of all of Australia's bird species, located in some of the most beautiful and rugged landscapes in the country.

This guide has been designed by the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions; Parks and Wildlife Service (DBCA, the Department) to assist birdwatchers to find and identify key species to target in conservation reserves and National parks.

There is a summary of each park and a checklist at the back to help you record the bird species you encounter in each location.

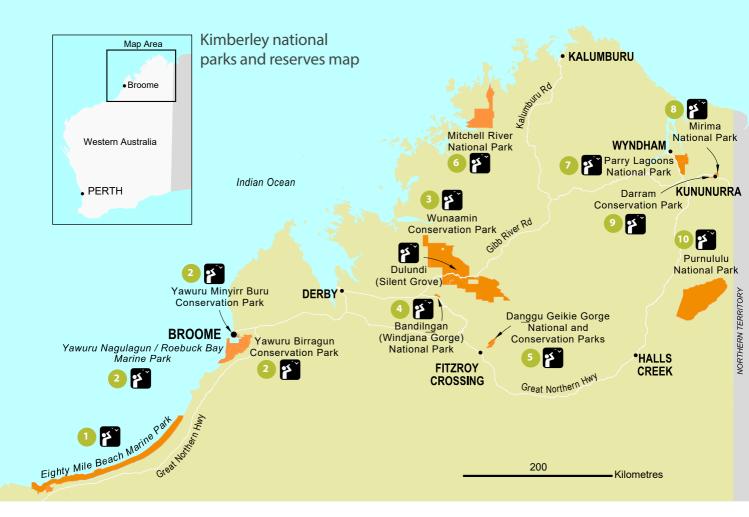
We acknowledge traditional owners across the Kimberley region including those who we jointly manage National parks and reserves with. We recognise that for thousands of years, birds hold cultural importance to traditional owners as a food source, as part of their spiritual history and dreamtime stories.

Please note: many of the parks are closed during the wet season (November to May), for up to date access information contact the Parks and Wildlife Service Office's in Broome (08) 9195 5500 or Kununurra (08) 9168 4200.

Birdwatching Tips

Bush birds are typically most active during dawn and evening and therefore these times represent your best opportunity to find these species. The time of day is less critical for waterbirds and tides are the major influence on coastal shorebirds, which forage at low tide and roost in communal flocks at high tide. A good set of binoculars will suffice for observing birds in most scenarios although a spotting scope is useful for shorebird identification or when looking at waterbirds from a distance.

To identify a bird species, a number of features should be observed, including but not limited to; size and shape of the bird, bill shape, size and colour, distinctive plumage marks and colours, tail shape and size plus behaviours such as tail flicks and flight pattern. Learning the calls of different species will significantly increase your ability to identify them.



If you hear an unfamiliar call attempt to track it down, seeing the species making the call will help engrain this call in your memory for next time. When moving, go slow and steady and practice focusing your binoculars on birds quickly as sometimes a brief opportunity is all that is presented.

Please be considerate of your impact on birds whilst birdwatching by limiting your disturbance as much as possible and leave no trace but your footsteps. It is advised to stay on walk paths and trails and always carry adequate water. For more information on ethical birdwatching standards please visit Birdlife Australia's website (http://www.birdlife.org.au/conservation/advocacy/policies).

Recommended additional resources

The Morcombe & Stewart Guide to Birds of Australia and Pizzey and Knight Birds of Australia phone app The Australian Bird Guide by Menkhorst, Rogers,

Clarke, Davies and Marsack,



Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

Key species

Large numbers of shorebirds, white-bellied sea-eagle

The Eighty Mile Beach marine Park and adjacent coastal reserves protect a remarkable 260 km of coastline, stretching from near Cape Keraudren in the south to Cape Missiessy in the north. The sand and mud flats support an incredible number of migratory shorebird species, along with resident shorebird species, terns and gulls. For migratory shorebirds, it is an internationally significant location, regularly supporting over 400,000 individuals during their non-breeding (summer) season in Australia. Public access to the park is restricted to Cape Keraudren and Eighty Mile Beach caravan park.

Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park, Yawuru Minyirr Buru Conservation Park and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park

Key species

Large numbers of shorebirds, Asian dowitcher, common redshank, mangrove specialists, oriental cuckoo

Deemed the shorebird capital of Australia, Broome and Roebuck Bay, which falls within Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park and adjacent Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park, is world famous for being easily accessible to view the vast numbers and diversity of migratory shorebirds that visit each year. Over the summer months when migratory shorebirds are at their peak, it is not uncommon to see flocks of several thousand birds, a truly remarkable experience. Join a Broome Bird Observatory shorebird tour to get expert guidance and tips for identification of these birds, which can be notoriously difficult to identify. Terns and other coastal species are abundant, as is other wildlife such as snubfin dolphins. The mudflats of Roebuck Bay contain more benthic invertebrate species than anywhere else in the world. Roebuck Bay is Australia's most reliable site for Asian dowitcher and common redshank, and the surrounding mangroves are also home to a number of mangrove specialist species such as broad-billed flycatcher, red-headed honeyeater, mangrove grey fantail, dusky gerygone, white-breasted whistler and mangrove golden whistler. Minyirr Park close to Broome has three walk trails providing excellent access through pindan woodland and patches of monsoon vine thicket. Typical bush birds will be seen







such as little friarbird and rufous-throated honeyeater but keep a keen eye out for oriental cuckoo, a regular but rare visitor over the summer months.

Wunaamin Conservation Park – Dulundi (Silent Grove)

Key species

Purple-crowned fairy-wren, northern rosella, black-tailed treecreeper, bush birds.

The campsite at Dulundi (Silent Grove) is an excellent base to explore the open woodlands and rocky hills of King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park. These areas offer excellent general bush birding and taking a walk in the early to mid-morning will be most productive. Various species can be encountered, which is likely to include northern rosella, black-tailed treecreeper, pied butcherbird and little friarbird. When the eucalypts and melaleuca are in flower, honeyeaters abound. Flocks of brolga are often seen in the open grasslands. Bell Creek supports a population of the threatened purple-crowned fairy-wren. The population within the conservation park appears to be stable thanks to management of feral herbivores and appropriate fire management within the streamside vegetation where this species is restricted to. Search the dense pandanus and listen for their distinctive call. The Bell Creek crossing near Dulundi (Silent Grove) and approximately 3 km upstream from Dalmanyi (Bell Gorge) are two reliable areas to find this enigmatic species. Listen for the distinctive high pitched piping call of the black-tailed treecreeper which can be heard and seen in the open woodland habitats between the campground and Dalmanyi (Bell Gorge).

4 Bandil<u>ng</u>an (Windjana Gorge) National Park

Key species

Sandstone shrike-thrush, Australasian figbird, azure kingfisher, green-backed gerygone

The Devonian Reef and Lennard River provide a dramatic landscape at Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) National Park, where over 100 bird species have been recorded. The dense woodland, shade and water within the gorge provide a refuge from the surrounding open grasslands, so bird species abundance and richness is high. Take a walk in the gorge early morning to maximise its birdwatching potential. Listen for the distinctive call of the sandstone shrike-thrush, which can often be seen jumping around on the gorge rocks and cliff face. The gorge is





Photo - Jordon Vos

home to Australasian figbird and green-backed gerygone, species which don't generally occur any further south or west of this location, listen for their distinctive calls and look in the dense canopy layer for them. Azure kingfisher can be seen perched on branches overlooking the pools of water. At certain times of the year, during the last twilight of sunset, watch for the breathtaking spectacle of thousands of flying foxes funnelling out through the gorge.

Danggu Geikie Gorge National Park

Key species

Fairy martin, river birds, birds of prey

Jump on the department boat tour to fully appreciate the spectacular vista of the Fitzroy River amongst the towering cliffs of Danggu Geikie Gorge National Park. Look under the over hangs and in the sky to see hundreds of fairy martins gracefully soaring, along with black and whistling kites, nankeen kestrels, black-breasted buzzards and other bird of prey species. Along the river you may spot birds such as azure kingfisher, Australasian darter, little pied cormorant and other heron and egret species. Keep an eye out for basking freshwater crocodiles. The walk trails that start at the gazebo and main car park traverse various woodland and rocky habitats and provide a good opportunity to see typical woodland species such as rufous whistler, rainbow bee-eater and white-bellied cuckoo-shrike

Mitchell River National Park

Key species

Orange-footed scrubfowl, rainbow pitta, partridge pigeon, emerald dove, rose-crowned fruit-dove, black grasswren, Kimberley honeyeater, torresian imperial pigeon

The Mitchell River National Park contains the unique landforms of the rocky and rugged Mitchell Plateau along with remnant rainforest patches. These restricted habitats support a unique bird assemblage and consequently high species richness with over 170 species recorded in the park, including two endemic species (black grasswren and Kimberley honeyeater) which are restricted to the north Kimberley region. The partridge pigeon is the easiest of the key species and can be seen foraging in the campground. The other species require more effort. Take the walk trail to Little Merten's Falls and continue towards Big Merten's Falls. The rugged sandstone country is habitat for Kimberley honeyeater and the highly prized black grasswren, which can be cryptic and difficult to see. Listen for their metallic and squeaky







calls amongst large spinifex, with mornings and afternoons your best chance. As you traverse past Little Merten's Falls a rainforest patch offers an opportunity to look for orange-footed scrubfowl, rainbow pitta, emerald dove, Torresian imperial pigeon and rose-crowned fruit-dove. A number of swimming spots along the walk allow an opportunity to cool off and the spectacular Mitchell Falls at the end of the four kilometre walk provides a stunning and rewarding view.

Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve

Key species

Large numbers of waterbirds, Gouldian finch and other finches

A waterbird lovers paradise, Marglu Billabong (a Ramsar-listed wetland of international significance) provides significant habitat to waterbird species. Over 220 bird species have been recorded from the reserve. The number of species and abundance will be determined by seasonal conditions and water levels. During the wet season, flooding creeks inundate the flat, low-lying plain and bring abundant food to Marglu Billabong; food which attracts an incredible number and variety of waterbirds. Egrets, spoonbills, herons, ibises, many species of waterfowl, magpie geese and stilts can often be counted in their thousands. The bird hide at the main car park offers an excellent viewing platform. The surrounding grasslands support numerous quail and nine of the ten mannikin and finch species of the Kimberley have been recorded here. Look for Gouldian finches flying up off the road and coming in to drink at Marglu Billabong, particularly early morning and late afternoon. The waterhole at Parry Creek Farm is another reliable spot for Gouldian finches to drink at.

8 Mirima National Park

Key species

White-quilled rock-pigeon, dusky honeyeater

Located just out of Kununurra, Mirima National Park offers a good opportunity to look for a range of woodland and bush birds close to town amongst spectacular geology. Four separate walk trails offer good access to the park, listen for the distinctive wing claps of white-quilled rock-pigeon as they make short flights amongst the rocks. The park offers one of the best opportunities to spot a dusky honeyeater in Western Australia, which typically occurs further north and east, a sought after species for the Western Australian lister. You are also likely to see species such as northern rosella, great bowerbird and a







range of bird of prey species. Also keep a look out for shorteared rock-wallaby, which are most typically seen in the early morning or late afternoon.

Darram Conservation Park

Key species

Finches, yellow oriole, white-browed crake, comb-crested jacana

Located on the banks of the Ord River just out of Kununurra, Darram Conservation Park offers excellent birdwatching for a range of waterbird and grassland species close to town. Packsaddle road borders the Park and provides access to a number of walking tracks which lead in to the park. Follow these through the various habitats and you should encounter a range of egret, heron, ibis, cormorant and other waterbird species. Look carefully for white-browed crake and comb-crested jacana walking on floating vegetation and amongst reed beds. Look for yellow oriole and honeyeater species in the canopy of trees. A variety of finch species occur here, including yellow-rumped mannikin, search for them feeding amongst spear grass and other seeding grasses.

10 Purnululu National Park

Key species

Painted finch, spinifex pigeon, crimson chat, black-tailed treecreeper, Australian bustard

The World Heritage listed Purnululu National Park contains spectacular banded sandstone domes and is located in a transition zone of arid environments to the south and monsoonal areas to the north. Consequently, a diverse range of bird species occur here and is your best chance at picking up a number of arid zone species. A four-wheel drive vehicle is required to access the park from the Great Northern Highway. A number of camp sites are provided allowing you to base yourself here and explore the numerous walk trails throughout the park, drop in to the visitor centre to pick up a map. Amongst the rocky areas look for small flocks of spinifex pigeon and listen for their distinctive wing-clap as they make short bursting flights. Depending on seasonal conditions, you may encounter crimson chat foraging in the open spinifex grasslands along with other grassland species such as Australian bustard and emu. Look and listen for black-tailed treecreeper amongst open eucalyptus woodland. Budgerigars can occur in large numbers during suitable conditions whilst painted finch can be seen in rocky areas and drinking from waterholes in the gorges.





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Species	Ducks, geese and grebes	Magpie goose	Plumed whistling-duck	Wandering whistling-duck	Pink-eared duck	Black swan	Radjah shelduck	Hardhead	Australasian shoveler	Pacific black duck	Grey teal		Northern pintail	Freckled duck	Australian wood duck	Green pygmy-goose	Australasian grebe	Hoary-headed grebe	Great crested grebe	Storks, pelicans, bitterns, hero	Brolga	Black-necked stork	Australian pelican	Australian little bittern	Black bittern	Nankeen night-heron	Striated heron	Cattle egret	White-necked heron
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Eastern great egret										
Intermediate egret										
Pied heron										
White-faced heron										
Little egret										
Eastern reef egret										
Australian white ibis										
Straw-necked ibis										
Glossy ibis										
Yellow-billed spoonbill										
Royal spoonbill										
Cormorants and darter										
Little pied cormorant										
Great cormorant										
Little black cormorant										
Pied cormorant										
Australasian darter										
Rails, crakes, scrubfowl and pi	pitta									
Buff-banded rail										
Australian spotted crake										
Baillon's crake										
Spotless crake										
Pale-vented bush-hen										
White-browed crake										
Purple swamphen										
Dusky moorhen										
Black-tailed native-hen										
Eurasian coot										

Ruddy turnstone* Great knot*

				20																21						
•	Species	Orange-footed scrubfowl	Rainbow pitta*	Oystercatchers, stilts and avo	Australian pied oyster- catcher	Sooty oystercatcher	Banded stilt	Red-necked avocet	Black-winged stilt	Plovers and dotterels	Grey plover*	Pacific golden plover*	Little ringed plover*	Red-capped plover	Lesser sand plover*	Greater sand plover*	Oriental plover*	Black-fronted dotterel	Masked lapwing	Red-kneed dotterel	Curlews, godwits, stints, sand	Whimbrel*	Little curlew*	Eastern curlew*	Bar-tailed godwit*	Black-tailed godwit*
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Red knot*										
Ruff*										
ರಿ Broad-billed sandpiper*										
Sharp-tailed sandpiper*										
Curlew sandpiper*										
Long-toed stint*										
Red-necked stint*										
Sanderling*										
Asian dowitcher*										
Terek sandpiper*										
Common sandpiper*										
Grey-tailed tattler*										
Common greenshank*										
Common redshank*										
Wood sandpiper*										
Marsh sandpiper*										
Red-necked phalarope*										
Pratincoles										
Australian pratincole										
Oriental pratincole*										
Snipe and jacana										
Swinhoe's snipe*										
Australian painted snipe										
Comb-crested jacana										
Jaeger, gull, terns, frigatebird	and booby									
Pomarine jaeger										
Silver gull										
Sooty tern										

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	i tern	billed t	ian terr	kered t	e-wing	ate terr	mon te	er crest	ted tern	er frigat	Brown booby
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Emu, bustards and stone-curlews					
Emu					
Australian bustard					
Bush stone-curlew					
Beach stone-curlew					
Quails and button-quails					
Brown quail					
Red-backed button-quail					
Chestnut-backed button-quail					
Red-chested button-quail					
Little button-quail					
Doves and pigeons					
Rock dove					
White-quilled rock-pigeon					
Spinifex pigeon					
Partridge pigeon					

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	Species	Common bronzewing	Flock bronzewing	Crested pigeon	Diamond dove	Peaceful dove	Bar-shouldered dove	Emerald-dove	Torresian imperial-pigeon	Rose-crowned fruit-dove	Cuoucals and cuckoos	Pheasant coucal	Eastern koel*	Channel-billed cuckoo*	Horsfield's bronze-cuckoo	Black-eared cuckoo	Shining bronze-cuckoo	Little bronze-cuckoo	Brush cuckoo	Pallid cuckoo	Oriental cuckoo*	Frogmouth, nightjars and ow	Tawny frogmouth	Spotted nightjar	Australian owlet-nightjar	Eastern grass owl	Masked ow l	Eastern barn owl	Barking owl
8	Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park																												
2	Yawuru Birragun CP, Yawuru Minyirr Buru CP and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park																												
E	Wunaamin Conservation Park – Dulundi (Silent Grove)																												
4	Bandil <u>ng</u> an (Windjana Gorge) National Park																												
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9	Mitchell River National Park																												
6	Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve																												
©	Mirima National Park																												
6	Darram Conservation Park																												
8	Purnululu National Park																												

Species	Southern boobook	Kites, eagl	82 Eastern osprey	Black-shor	Letter-winged kite	Black-brea	Square-tailed kite	Pacific baza	Wedge-tailed eagle	Little eagle	Swamp harrier	Spotted harrier	Grey goshawk	Brown goshawk	Collared s ₁	Red goshawk	White-bell	Whistling kite	Brahminy kite	Black kite	Falcons	Nankeen kestrel	Australian hobby	Brown falcon	Grey falcon	Black falcon	Peregrine falcon
cies	boobook	Kites, eagles and goshawks	prey	Black-shouldered kite	iged kite	Black-breasted buzzard	iled kite	za	iled eagle	Ф	arrier	arrier	lawk	shawk	Collared sparrowhawk	awk	White-bellied sea-eagle	kite	kite			kestrel	hobby	con	Ē	วก	falcon
Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park																											
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Darram Conservation Park Mirima National Park Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve
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	Eighty M	Yawuru Bi Yawuru Minyi and Yawuru Na Roebuck Bay M		Bandil <u>ng</u> an Gorge) Nat	Da <u>ng</u> gu Ge Nat		Parı Natu	o Mirima Nat	6	Darram Co
Species	Mile Beach Iarine Park	irragun CP, irr Buru CP agulagun / Aarine Park	onservation c – Dulundi lent Grove)	(Windjana tional Park	eikie Gorge tional Park	tchell River tional Park	ry Lagoons ure Reserve	tional Park		onservation Park
Silver-crowned friarbird										
Little friarbird										
ವಿ Banded honeyeater										
Brown honeyeater										
Blue-faced honeyeater										
Black-chinned honeyeater										
White-throated honeyeater										
Pied honeyeater										
Rufous-throated honeyeater										
Bar-breasted honeyeater										
White-gaped honeyeater										
Kimberley honeyeater										
Spiny-cheeked honeyeater										
Singing honeyeater										
Grey-headed honeyeater										
Grey-fronted honeyeater										
Yellow-tinted honeyeater										
White-plumed honeyeater										
White-fronted honeyeater										
್ಲ Yellow-throated miner										
Crimson chat										
Yellow chat										
Pardalotes, gerygones and we	weebill									
Red-browed pardalote										
Striated pardalote										
Green-backed gerygone										
White-throated gerygone										
Dusky gerygone										

	Species	Mangrove gerygone	Weebill	Bowerbird, treecreeper, babbl	Great bowerbird	Black-tailed treecreeper	Grey-crowned babbler	Varied sittella	Cuckoo-shrikes, cicadabird, tr	Ground cuckoo-shrike	Black-faced cuckoo-shrike	White-bellied cuckoo-shrike	Cicadabird	White-winged triller	Varied triller	Rufous whistler	White-breasted whistler	Mangrove golden whistler	Shrike-thrush, figbird and oric	Little shrike-thrush	Grey shrike-thrush	Sandstone shrike-thrush	Australasian figbird	Olive-backed oriole	Yellow oriole	Woodswallows	Masked woodswallow	White-browed woodswallow	Black-faced woodswallow
-	Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park			bbler and sitella					trillers and whistlers										orioles										
N a	Yawuru Birragun CP, Yawuru Minyirr Buru CP and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park								stlers																				
m	Wunaamin Conservation Park – Dulundi (Silent Grove)																												
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6	Darram Conservation Park																												
9	Purnululu National Park																												

Buff-sided robin Hooded robin

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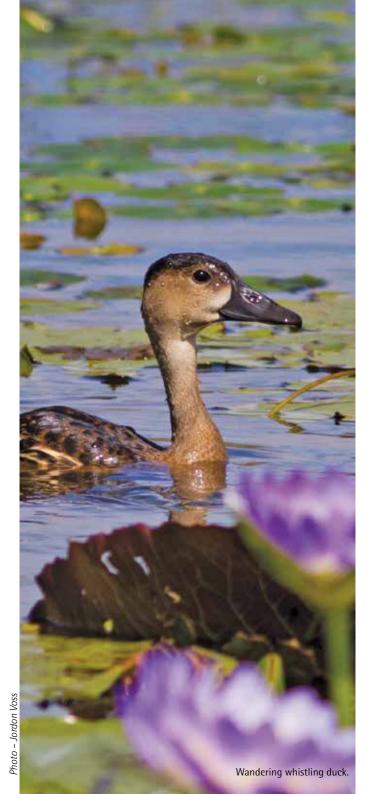
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	Species	Little woodswallow	White-breasted woodswallow	Magpie, butcherbirds and dro	Australian magpie	Pied butcherbird	Silver-backed butcherbird	Spangled drongo	Fantails	Northern fantail	Willie wagtail	Mangrove grey fantail	Grey fantail	Crows	Torresian crow	Little crow	Flycatchers and magpie-lark	Leaden flycatcher	Broad-billed flycatcher	Shining flycatcher	Paperbark flycatcher	Magpie-lark	Robins and mistletoebird	Red-capped robin	Lemon-bellied flycatcher
•	Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park			rongo																					
G	Yawuru Birragun CP, Yawuru Minyirr Buru CP and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park																								
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	Species	Mistletoebird	Mannikins and finches	Yellow-rumped mannikin	Chestnut-breasted mannikin	Pictorella mannikin	Painted finch	Crimson finch	Star finch	Masked finch	Long-tailed finch	
9	Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park											
	Yawuru Birragun CP, Yawuru Minyirr Buru CP and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park											
m	Wunaamin Conservation Park – Dulundi (Silent Grove)											
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6	Darram Conservation Park											
9	Purnululu National Park											

Zebra finch						
Double-barred finch						
Gouldian finch						
Pipits, wagtails, bushlark and o	cisticola					
Australasian pipit						
Eastern yellow wagtail*						
Horsfield's bushlark						
Zitting cisticola						
Golden-headed cisticola						
Songlarks, grassbirds, reed-warbler and white-eye	ırbler and whi	te-eye				
Brown songlark						
Rufous songlark						
Tawny grassbird						
Little grassbird						
Australian reed-warbler						
Yellow white-eye						

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Department of **Biodiversity**, **Conservation and Attractions**

