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Abundance	CODE	Breeding
	Status	
C Common	Res Resident	B Breeds in CRRP
M Moderately common	V Visitor	
U Uncommon	Mi Migrant	
Ra Rare	N Nomadic	

WATERFOWL

These are big-bodied waterbirds with dense, water-resistant feathers and bills adapted for filtering food from water. They may dive for food or graze on nearby grasslands.

BLACK SWAN »

Large birds which prefer open water for flight take-off and use their long necks to reach underwater plants. (U, Res, B)



« PACIFIC BLACK DUCK

Feeds by upending in shallow water for plant or animal food. Often nests in a tree hollow near water. (C, Res, B)



GREY TEAL »

More wary than Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal also feed by upending. They disperse widely after good rains. (M, Res/N, B)



« AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK

Large boldly marked duck, common on fresh or salt water. Feeds by sifting mud and water for food or by grazing on grasslands. (M, Res, B)



AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK »

Numbers have increased with the development of farm dams and pastures. Often seen feeding on grassy areas beside the river. (M, Res, B)



« MUSK DUCK

Stiff-tailed duck which prefers deep water. Dives for frogs, gillies and insect larvae. When courting, the male splashes and whistles, while inflating a leathery lobe beneath his bill. (U, V)



PINK-EARED DUCK »

Filter feeder of microscopic plants, animals and small seeds. Sometimes seen rotating in pairs on Wilson Lagoon. (U, V)



« HARDHEAD

Prefers deeper water where it dives for molluscs and seeds. The male has a white eye. Look for them on Wilson Lagoon or Liege Street Wetland. (U, V, B)



AUSTRALIAN SHOVELER »

Has a spoon-shaped bill fringed with lamellae for filtering small aquatic animals. Best spots: Wilson Lagoon or Nicholson Billabong. (U, Res/N, B)



« BLUE-BILLED DUCK

Another stiff-tailed duck, usually found in deeper fresh water. Dives for plants and insects. In breeding plumage, the male's bill is a striking blue. (U, Res/V)



GREBE

Grebes are tiny waterbirds, often mistaken for ducklings. They are sharp-billed, almost tailless with lobed rather than webbed feet. They dive for tadpoles, insect larvae and small fish.



« AUSTRALASIAN GREBE

Found in fresh or brackish water. Usually dives to escape danger. Their floating nests of water-weeds can be seen along the river in summer. (C, Res, B)

HOARY-HEADED GREBE »

Identified by its brushed back grey 'hair', dark nape stripe and silver eye. When disturbed, may fly rather than dive. Highly nomadic. (U, V/N)



CORMORANT

These are fishing birds with hooked bills, long flexible necks and all four toes webbed. They extend their wings to dry out feathers after fishing as they are not water-proofed like ducks' feathers. They roost and breed in colonies.

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT »

Common in both fresh and brackish water. Very active when fishing in flocks, though more likely to be seen in small numbers in the park. (C, Res)



« LITTLE PIED CORMORANT

Has a stubby yellow bill. Usually fishes alone. Often seen perched on dead trees near the islands at Riverton Bridge. (C, Res, B)



GREAT CORMORANT »

Occurs in small numbers, usually upstream from the weir or at Wilson Lagoon. Has a conspicuous yellow facial patch. (M, Res)



« AUSTRALASIAN DARTER

Specially jointed neck enables it to suddenly stab at prey (fish), or to submerge with barely a ripple. Darters have several small breeding sites within the park. (C, Res, B)

HERON, IBIS, ALLIES

These are medium to tall birds with long necks and legs and straight sharp bills for seizing slippery prey. They mostly nest in tree-top colonies.

WHITE-FACED HERON »

Feeds on frogs, insects, small fish and crustaceans found in shallow wetlands or in open grassy areas. Builds a nest of sticks in a tree. (C, Res, B)



« EASTERN GREAT EGRET

Stately bird, usually found singly. Waits, motionless, before making a lightning thrust at prey. (M, Res)



LITTLE EGRET

Similar but smaller. Much more active. (Ra, V)



WHITE-NECKED HERON »

Irruptions (sudden increase in numbers) occasionally occur, such as in 2002 when the herons were seen regularly. Seen only occasionally since. (Ra, N)



« NANKEEN NIGHT HERON

Feeds from dusk to dawn and shelters by day in trees. Sometimes seen standing statue-like in Melaleucas (paperbarks) but often goes unnoticed. (U, Res)

HERON, IBIS, ALLIES cont.

A small group of moderately large birds with short tail and long neck and legs. Ibises have a long down-curved bill and spoonbills have a straight bill with the end flat and broad.

AUSTRALIAN WHITE IBIS »

Gradual movement south from the Kimberley since 1952. Eats crustaceans and small aquatic animals. Locally, often seen probing water-logged areas or lawns and ovals. (C, V)



« GLOSSY IBIS

Small dark ibis. Found on shallow fresh water. (Ra, V)



YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL »

Sweeps its bill from side to side, in search of small aquatic animals. Best spots: Nicholson Billabong, Wilson Lagoon or Liege Street Wetland. (M, Res)



« ROYAL SPOONBILL

A very rare visitor, but possible as it has occasionally been recorded on other metropolitan wetlands in recent years. (Ra, N)



CRAKE, RAIL, ALLIES

These are very small to medium sized, slim and secretive birds with slender bills, longish necks and long toes for walking on floating vegetation. They flick their tails when walking.

BUFF-BANDED RAIL »

Usually seen singly in vegetation along the water's edge; sometimes in open grassland. Try Adenia Lagoon, Nicholson Billabong, Wilson Lagoon. (U, Res)



« SPOTLESS CRAKE

In fringing vegetation near Riverton Bridge; also occurs upstream. Reminiscent of a dark bantam hen as it dashes between rushes. Distinctive loud rattling call. (U, Res, B)



PURPLE SWAMPHEN »

Feeds on tender reed stems but will also graze some distance from water. Within the park, often seen clambering noisily through Melaleucas. (C, Res, B)



« DUSKY MOORHEN

Found in the fresh water section of the park, grazing aquatic vegetation by upending like a duck. Also feeds on land plants, insects and frogs. (C, Res, B)



EURASIAN COOT »

Has flattened lobed toes and feeds in water or on land. Their call is a sharp loud "kyik". (C, Res, B)



WATERBIRDS OF THE CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK



Eastern Great Egret

Prepared by Birds Australia
Western Australia

Funded by South East Regional Centre
for Urban Landcare Inc.

No. 66a in a series of bird guides

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The Canning River Regional Park lies along the Canning River between Shelley Bridge and Nicholson Road Bridge, within the City of Canning. It comprises both freshwater and estuarine sections of river, two tidal lagoons and a constructed wetland, as well as extensive areas of parkland and bushland remnants. Within this wide variety of habitats over 100 species of birds have been recorded, including several species which migrate annually.

Please refer to the map for access, parking, walk trails and suggested vantage points for bird-watching.

Note - a second guide is available, detailing bush birds found within the Canning River Regional Park.

BIRD-WATCHING in the CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK

- Birds are usually more active early in the morning.
- Stay on pathways so birds feeding or nesting on the ground are not disturbed.
- Be wary of disturbing waterbirds when canoeing.
- Keep dogs on leads.
- Be tolerant of dead trees in the park - they are useful as perches, and often have vital hollows.
- Resist feeding birds.
- Be aware that mosquitoes may be present.
- Injured birds - Wildcare Helpline 9474-9055

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This brochure is dedicated to the late Allan Jones who, as a Birds Australia WA volunteer, worked tirelessly over many years to produce numerous guides to promote birds and birding.

SHOREBIRD

Waders are shorebirds many of which breed in the Northern Asian/Alaskan summer. Some fly to the west coast of Australia then disperse to coastal mudflats or inland wetlands. Many waders which once came to the Canning wetlands no longer appear. It may be that they have found new feeding grounds, or simply that their numbers have diminished.

COMMON GREENSHANK »

Found solitarily along the water's edge, searching for insects and molluscs. More likely at Riverton Bridge or Adenia Lagoon. Call is a haunting "tew-tew-tew". (U, V/Mi)



« COMMON SANDPIPER

Occasionally seen wandering solitarily along river margins in the downstream sections of the park. Bobs nervously. Note white of breast forms a slight 'hook' round bend of wing. (Ra, V/Mi)



BLACK-WINGED STILT »

Feeds on aquatic plants, insects and shrimps. Breeds in Australia. Often seen around Riverton Bridge in the summer. (U, V/N)



« RED-NECKED AVOCET

Wades through shallow water, sweeping its upturned bill in search of food. Look for them near Riverton Bridge or Fern Park in the summer. (Ra, V/N)



RED-CAPPED PLOVER »

Plump lively little wader with short black bill. When feeding runs a short distance then jabs at prey. A very rare visitor but possible. (Ra, V/N)



BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL »

Prefers shallow margins or mudflats. Bobs its head, tips and runs. Nests on ground, relying on cryptic colouring and distraction displays to protect its nest and young. (U, Res, B)



NODDY, TERN, GULL

Gulls are broad-winged, with mainly white bodies and are longer-legged than terns. Terns generally have sharper, finer bills and slender wings. They take food by plunging below or skimming the surface of water for fish.



« SILVER GULL

Has benefited from white settlement. Under natural conditions, feeds on plankton, small crustaceans and invertebrates. (C, Res)

CASPIAN TERN »

Largest of our terns. Heavy red bill is diagnostic. Patrols downstream areas of the park, plunging for prey. More common in summer. (U, V)



« CRESTED TERN

Note yellow bill and shaggy black fringe on the back of its head. Also plunges spectacularly. More likely around Riverton Bridge in summer. (U, V)



OLD WORLD WARBLER

Australian forms are medium to small birds with streaked or unstreaked brownish plumage. They favour grassy, swampy habitats and are usually secretive.

AUSTRALIAN REED-WARBLER »

Lives among Typha (bulrushes). In spring its rich, loud call is conspicuous at Adenia Lagoon, Nicholson Billabong, Liege Street Wetland. (M, Res, B)



« LITTLE GRASSBIRD

Secretive little bird. Sneaks to top of dense vegetation to view intruders. Presence indicated by a melancholy, three-note call. Try Adenia Lagoon or Liege Street Wetland. (U, Res)

SERCUL

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) was formed in 2003 as an independent Natural Resource Management body. SERCUL brings together community, business and government to develop and implement projects that improve the health of our waterways and other ecosystems. SERCUL covers Dyarguu (the Canning River), the Southern and Wungong Rivers and their tributaries, and parts of Derbal Yaragan (the Swan River).

For more information, visit SERCUL at 69 Horley Road (off Kenwick Link), Beckenham or their website at www.sercul.org.au
Ph: (08) 9458-5664 Fax: (08) 9458-5661

BIRDS AUSTRALIA

Birds Australia is a non-profit organisation working for the study, conservation, and enjoyment of birds. Birds Australia WA has members state-wide and offers a variety of activities for members - conservation, research, surveys, excursions, camp-outs, monthly meetings and social activities. They have a library and books for sale.

INTERESTED?

Visit BIRDS AUSTRALIA WA at:
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