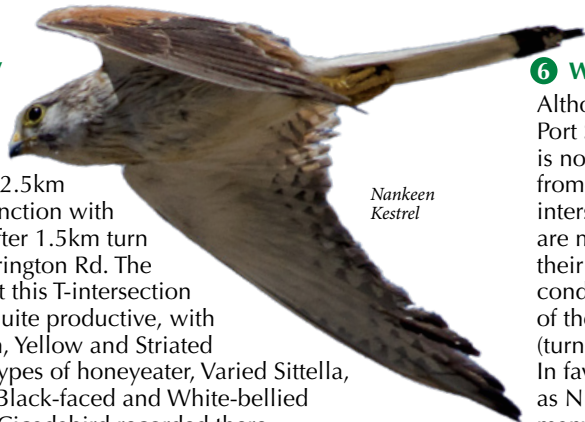


**5 CARRINGTON / TAHLEE**

From the Pacific Highway turn right into Gooreengi Rd (2.5km past the northern junction with Tarean Road) and after 1.5km 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 Sittella, 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 Tahlee (a privately owned religious retreat).

Birds seen regularly within the Carrington/Tahlee 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 Tahlee 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.**



Nankeen Kestrel

**6 WALLAROO NATIONAL PARK**

Although Wallaroo NP is not in any way connected with Port Stephens, it provides another birdwatching option that is not far out of the way. The National Park can be accessed from either Italia Rd or the Bucketts Way, both of which intersect with the Pacific Highway south of Karuah. There are many tracks leading into it from either of these options; their suitability for vehicles varies depending on the recent conditions but they can be tackled on foot if necessary. One of the more productive birding areas runs off Lone Pine Rd (turn right off Italia Rd about 3km from the Pacific Highway). In favourable conditions, Lone Pine Rd can be driven as far as Nine Mile Forest Rd from where it is possible to access many other forest tracks. Unfortunately, trail bike riders use this area on weekends. The first few hundred metres after turning off Italia Rd offer a combination of wet and dry forest birds plus there is a creek that is often worth checking out. Birds which have been recorded in this area near Italia Rd include Brown Cuckoo-dove, Painted Button-quail, White-browed and Large-billed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Golden Whistler, Grey and Rufous Fantail, Rose and Eastern Yellow Robin and Red-browed Finch. **There are no facilities.**



Grey Fantail

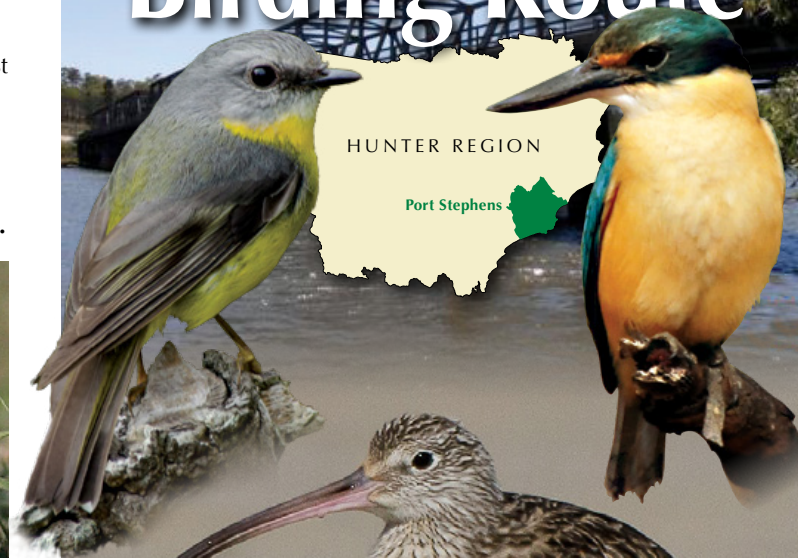
Prepared (March 2015) by Alan Stuart, Lois Wooding, Lorna Mee for:  
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[www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)  
 HBOC meets at 7:00pm on the second Wednesday of each month (except January) at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, off the roundabout at Sandgate Road, Shortland. Also, monthly outings on first Tuesday and third Sunday of each month – check our website for details.  
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**Factfile** Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)



These large waders are sexual size dimorphic with the females larger than males. They have mottled brown upper parts and lighter buff below with a long slightly upturned bill. Adult Bar-tailed Godwits arrive in Australia around August from their breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere (some juvenile birds can be seen all winter).

# Western Port Stephens Birding Route



HUNTER REGION



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

# Western Port Stephens Birding Route

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



## 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 Stilts, 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-fronted Chats reliably. Bush birds regularly seen include Yellow and Brown Thornbill, Superb Fairy-wren, Mangrove Gerygone, Scarlet and Blue-faced Honeyeater, Golden Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

To get there, take the Karuah/Swan Bay turn-off from the Pacific Highway and head towards Swan Bay. The road is sealed until the final 2km. Drive all the way in, to Waterfront Rd, and turn left. It is best to park almost immediately and walk. Do not take the obvious 4WD track (which goes to the

Point). Rather, walk along a small track which starts about 20m back along Swan Bay Rd. It is difficult to find the start of the track as it is hidden behind young casuarinas fringing a small clearing. Gum boots are recommended as the tracks quickly become minimal and you will have to walk at times through mud or shallow water in order to reach the main roosting area. **There are no facilities.**

## 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.**



Pacific Golden Plover



Scaly-breasted Lorikeet