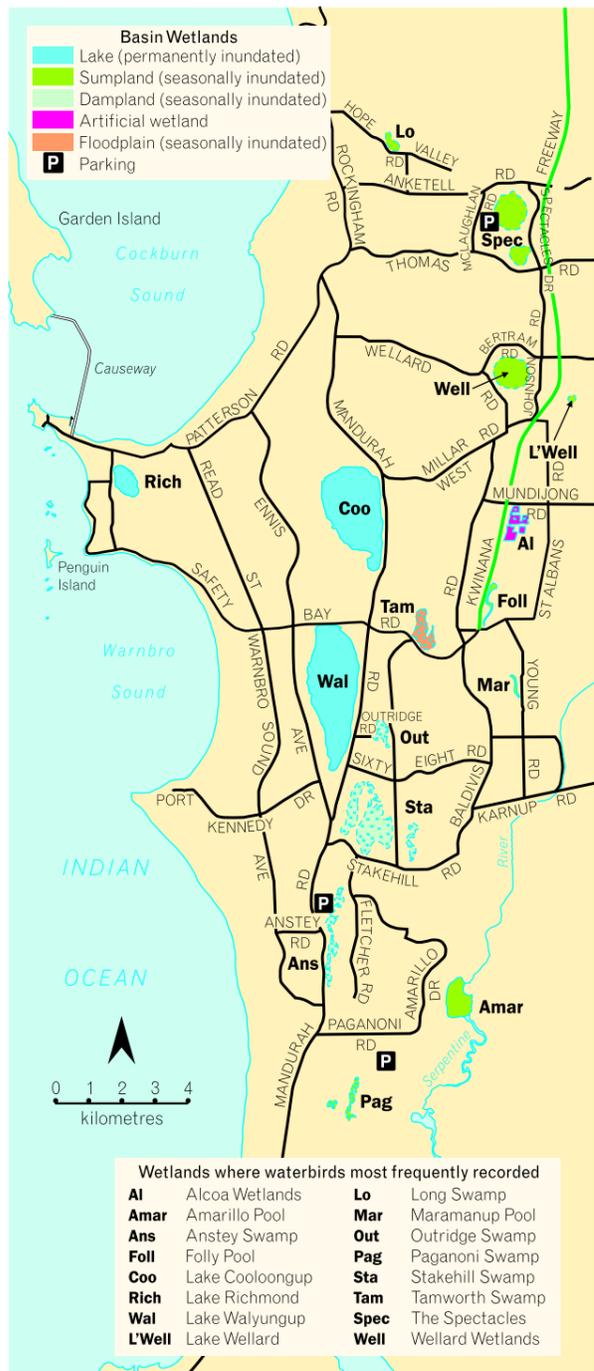


WATERBIRDS OF THE NORTHERN PEEL REGION



Thousands of years ago, the entire coastal plain, stretching from Geraldton south to Busselton, was a vast swampy area. Over the years climate and landforms changed. The swamp shrank in size, and wetlands appeared. Since the arrival of Europeans 177 years ago, the number of wetlands has become fewer as land has been drained and developed.

A wetland can be a lake, a swamp or a river. The land may be covered all the year or may dry up with the seasons. The water may be fresh or salty. These water qualities influence the plants and animals of all sizes that live there.



Black-winged Stilt

Prepared by:



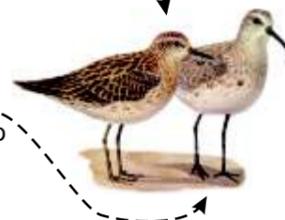
WOOD SANDPIPER is moderately common and widespread, usually on muddy margins of wetlands, mudflats. Migratory. (Amar)



RED-NECKED STINT is a tiny, common migrant. Widespread in parties or large flocks. (Rich, Coo, Wal, Coastal)

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER is a common, widespread migrant. Note its striped crown. Feed with other waders in shallow water such as (Rich, Coo) with Curlew S/piper

CURLEW SANDPIPER is a common migrant on fresh or salt water. Note down-curved bill. Wades to depth of legs, plunging head under water for food. Feeds in large flocks. (Rich, Coo, Amar, Coastal)



NODDY, TERN, GULL

Gulls are sturdy broad-winged, long-legged with mainly white bodies. Their young are usually brown and mottled. Terns generally have sharper finer bills than gulls and slender wings. They take food by plunging below or skimming the surface of water. their food includes a wide range of fish.

FAIRY TERN is moderately common on saline or brackish lakes. (Wal, Coastal, Islands)



AUSTRALIAN PIED OYSTERCATCHER is uncommon, singly on sandy shores (Rich, Coastal, Islands) remain in Australia



Sooty Oystercatcher (Coastal)

Stilt and Avocet have fine, straight (stilts) or upturned (avocets) bills. Long thin legs. They feed in fresh or salty water for insects, molluscs, worms etc.

BLACK-WINGED STILT is moderately common. In small numbers on lakes, swamps, mudflats. Nomadic. (Rich, Coo, Well). See bird on cover.

RED-NECKED AVOCET is common in small to large numbers. Widespread and nomadic. They wade sweeping with their bill for food. (Rich)



Plover and dotterel have short bills, rounded heads and short necks. When feeding they typically run a short distance, then jab at their prey of insects, marine worms, vegetable matter etc. 12 species are migrants and 7 residents of Australia.



GREY PLOVER is moderately common in groups or singles. At rest often has hunched appearance. Usually aloof from other waders far out on mudflats. Migratory. (Rich, Coastal, Islands)

RED-CAPPED PLOVER is very common at most wetlands, single to large numbers. Nest is a scrape in sand or on bare ground. (Rich, Coo, Wal, Coastal)



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Bird guide 44a
Sept 2006 revised Jul 2009

Lesser Sand Plover (Foll)
Greater Sand Plover (Well, Coo, Foll)



HOODED PLOVER is more common further south e.g. Martins Tank. Broad sandy beaches, salt lakes. Sedentary or dispersive. Nest a cup of twigs, leaves, near water. (Coo)



BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL is moderately common at freshwater wetlands. (Well, Foll)



BAR-TAILED GODWIT Found in singles, parties, flocks - feed on mudflats or wades knee-deep, ramming its bill in to the hilt in mud to locate prey. Migratory. (Coastal, Islands)



WHISKERED TERN is moderately common on brackish saline wetlands. In breeding plumage, bill and legs red and black cap. Swoops and dips over shallow wetlands.

SILVER GULL has profited from human settlement as scavengers in cities, rubbish tips and beaches. (Widespread).



OLD WORLD WARBLER

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



AUSTRALIAN REED-WARBLER is moderately common in freshwater reeds and rushes of the plain. More often heard than seen. Clings to stems of reeds.

LITTLE GRASSBIRD is moderately common in dense wetland vegetation. Sneaks to tops of bushes to view intruder. Sedentary, and dispersive.



WATERFOWL

These are big-bodied waterbirds with dense, water-resistant feathers and bills adapted for filtering food from water, for grazing or pulling up water-plants. Some Australian species are highly nomadic because of large areas of WA with unreliable rainfall.



MUSK DUCK is moderately common in fresh or brackish water. It dives for food such as ducklings, frogs or gilgies. The male has an interesting courting display. (Rich)

BLACK SWAN is moderately common on most lakes preferring open water for take-off. It uses its long neck to reach underwater plants. (Rich,Well,Coo,Wal)



AUSTRALIAN SHELLDUCK is very common on most lakes, salt or fresh water. Feed by upending or suzzling or feeding on pastures. Large, boldly marked, showy duck. (Rich,Coo,Wal,Well,Foll)

AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK numbers are increasing with new farm dams and pastures. It is usually seen feeding on pastures. (Rich,Wal,Well,Foll)



Pink-eared Duck (Well)
Australian Shoveler (Well)

GREY TEAL is distributed over plain. It feeds by upending for animal and plant food. Widespread dispersal after good rains.(Coo,Wal,Well)



Chestnut Teal (Well)



PACIFIC BLACK DUCK is very common, sedentary or nomadic. It feeds by upending in shallow water for a wide variety of animal or plant food. Nests often in tree-stump or tree hollow near water. (most lakes inc. Rich,Coo,Foll)

Hardhead (Well,Coo)
Blue-billed Duck (Well)

GREBE

Grebes are sharp-billed, almost tailless, with lobed not webbed feet. They dive for tadpoles, insect larvae and small fish. They dive to escape danger rather than fly.

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE is moderately common in fresh or salt water. This is our smallest grebe. (Well,Wal,Coo)



HOARY-HEADED GREBE is moderately common on salt lakes and estuaries, perhaps becoming rarer. (Wal,Coo,Rich,Well)

GREAT CRESTED GREBE is moderately common in singles up to 8 birds. Largest grebe, on larger lakes. Nest is a mass of waterplants and mud. (Well,Rich,Coo,Wal)



GANNET, BOOBY



AUSTRALASIAN GANNET is a large seabird, high-diving for fish, squid, molluscs. (Coastal)

CORMORANT

Cormorants are fishing birds with hooked bills, long flexible neck and all four toes webbed. They hang their sparse feathers out to dry after fishing. They roost and breed in colonies.



AUSTRALASIAN DARTER is moderately common. It dives to spear fish with its bill and long specially jointed neck. All four toes are webbed. (Well)

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT is moderately common. It has a stubby, yellow bill. Lone fisher, usually single or in small groups. (Rich,Coo,Wal,Foll,Well)



GREAT CORMORANT is uncommon. Singly to large flocks which form frenzied flocks when feeding. (Well,Wal,Coastal)

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT is moderately common in fresh and brackish water. It is very active when fishing in flocks. (Rich,Coo,Wal,Foll,Well)



Pied Cormorant (mainly coastal waters)

HERON, IBIS, ALLIES

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



White-necked Heron is rare.

EASTERN GREAT EGRET is common and are found singly or up to eight. Feeds in deeper water, often waits motionless before making a lightning thrust. (Well,Coo,Wal)



Cattle Egret is uncommon.



WHITE-FACED HERON is very common over coastal plain. Feeds on shallow wetlands, meadows. Nest of sticks in tree. (Foll,Rich,Coo,Wal)

Little Egret is rare.
Eastern Reef Egret is uncommon. (mainly coastal)

NANKEEN NIGHT-HERON is moderately common. Singly or up to eight. Feed mainly at night in shallow water. Shelters by day in trees. (Coo,Wal,Foll,Well)



Glossy Ibis



STRAW-NECKED IBIS is moderately common and widespread. Small numbers to flocks at swamps and lakes. (L'Well)

Royal Spoonbill is rare.

YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL is common and generally widespread. (Amar,Rich,Well)



RAPTOR



EASTERN OSPREY is a fish-eating raptor with long legs and strongly curved talons with spicules on the soles of it's feet for gripping the fish head first. (Rich,Coastal,Islands)

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE soars in circles. It power dives from height to seize fish or offal but seldom enters the water. (Well, Amar, Coastal, Islands)



MARSH HARRIER is moderately common in singles or pairs. Nest is a heap of grass and sticks in dense vegetation. (Rich)

CRAKE, RAIL, ALLIES

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



PURPLE SWAMP-HEN is uncommon on the plain. In small numbers. Found on margins of swamps, lakes with dense rushes, reeds. Voice is sometimes a rasping screech. (Coo,Wal,Well,Foll)

BUFF-BANDED RAIL is moderately common, often singly in rank vegetation in swamps, marshes, creeks, home gardens. Sedentary or dispersive. (Rich,Penguin Is.)



Australian Spotted Crake is very rare



SPOTLESS CRAKE is moderately common, widespread, single or small numbers. Well vegetated fresh-water wetlands. (Coo,Well)

Black-tailed Native Hen is irruptive.

DUSKY MOORHEN is moderately common in well-vegetated wetlands. Has a yellow-tipped, scarlet bill and shield. (Rich,Well,Wal)



EURASIAN COOT Small to large numbers on fresh to brackish water in lakes, swamps. Dives for plant food. Voice a noisy, sharp 'kyik' (Coo,Well,L'Well,Wal)

SHOREBIRD

Most shorebird breed in northern Asia/Alaska and fly to Australia for our winter to feed on coastal mudflats or inland wetlands.

Many come to the wetlands in this region.

Wetlands Restoration and Action Project

Sponsored by:



The Peel Main Drain, Serpentine River and associated coastal and inland wetlands are highly valued assets that flow into the internationally-recognised Ramsar listed Peel Yalgorup System. Many of these wetlands are under

threat from current and land use changes. The main aim of the Wetlands Restoration and Action Project is to contribute to effective management, preservation and sustainable use of

wetland ecosystems in the northern section of Peel through:

- education
- monitoring
- conservation
- on ground action.

