

Birding Sherwood Arboretum

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This guide provides information about the birds of, and how to bird at, Sherwood Arboretum, Brisbane.

The primary purpose of the Arboretum is to display a wide variety of native trees and shrubs suitable for Brisbane gardens. As such, much of the Arboretum is "park-like", with scattered labelled trees over short grass. Despite this, many interesting species turn up, and revegetation by the Friends of Sherwood Arboretum (FOSA) is improving the available habitat.

Amenities

There are toilets, barbeques and playgrounds. The park can be very busy on weekends – get there as early as possible in the morning, especially if you wish to find those elusive crakes.

A bird walk at Sherwood Arboretum

This map shows a series of numbered localities at Sherwood Arboretum. A slow "birders" walk that covers them all will take about an hour and a half. During that time you should expect to find 40-50 species depending on the weather, time of day and time of year.



162 species have been recorded in Sherwood Arboretum over the past decade. It can be an excellent place to take visitors on their first outing in Brisbane or Australia – providing good views of a wide variety of birds. The arboretum is famous for sometimes providing good views of several local rarities: Spotless Crake, Baillon's Crake, Bush-hen and Little Bittern – but none are reliable.

How to get there

The Arboretum is in Sherwood, Brisbane, and is bounded to the west by the Brisbane River. It is well signposted from the western end of Sherwood Rd, at Dewar Tce, Sherwood. From here travel south along Dewar Tce, then take the first right onto Jolimont Tce which leads you to the car park. From the north, come down Honour Ave, turn right onto Sherwood Road at the end of Honour Ave, and then left onto Dewar as above.

A full annotated list of the species can be found at: <http://www.ecology.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=74058&pid=0>.

1 Car Park

The car park is not that interesting. Walk to the lake and turn right to go around the southern tip of the lakes.

2 Small Channel

The southern island is dominated by exotic woody vegetation and frequented by Brown Honeyeaters, Silvereyes and nesting White Ibis. It is worth scanning the island just in case there is a Bush Hen. The White Ibis, while always common, started their large breeding colony in 2007 - since then numbers have exploded. Both Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants like the company of Ibis and have also started to breed in the channel between the southern two islands. At **2** search the channel between the island carefully and the reeds near **2**. A Darter, Dollarbird, Bee-eater, Australian Reed-warbler, Leaden Flycatcher or Little Friarbird might turn up.



Silvereye



Little Black Cormorant



Azure Kingfisher



Welcome Swallow



Australian Reed-warbler

3 Causeway (East End)

The causeway between the islands is "the hotspot". Stand at the eastern end of the causeway and scan your surroundings carefully. Crakes are often seen from here when it is dry elsewhere, while during winter one or two species of kingfisher may be present.

Australia Reed-warblers are noisy in warmer months. Check any movement in the reeds, it could be a Tawny Grassbird or Red-backed Fairy-wren.

At times both Fairy and Tree Martins will be mixed amongst the Welcome Swallows. Walk slowly down the causeway. Egrets, kingfishers and various waterfowl are all best seen from the causeway. Brown Honeyeaters will dominate in the bird-scape in the winter months.

4 Causeway (West End)

A family of Little Friarbirds lives on the islands and can be seen anywhere along the causeway. Red-backed Fairy-wrens have recently moved onto the islands. Pheasant Coucals have bred here.

Scan the mud, water and reeds, especially on the north island - crakes and Little Bitterns have been seen from here. The large melaleucas and casuarinas on the central island just to your south are a favoured winter haunt of Grey Fantail and both species of whistler. Other less common small passerines turn up here. This is a good spot to see an Olive-backed Oriole amongst the numerous Figbirds.



Royal Spoonbill



Magpie Goose



Intermediate Egret

Royal Spoonbill, Great and Intermediate Egrets can all be found along the edges of the lagoon and they are often quite tame, allowing for close up photos.

Magpie Geese bred here 2006-2008, although they are not always present. Waterbirds at the arboretum are at their best when the rest of southern Queensland is in drought as the arboretum is a reliable spot for fresh water.

Coots and Australasian Grebes are often on the lakes, but both vary in numbers more than one might expect for species that do not fly well. Coot can be missing for months, then twenty might appear.

Royal Spoonbills are here about 30% of the time, White-faced Herons less often.

4-5-6 North End

As you move north along the lake, continue to scan the reeds. Australasian Grebe and Grey Teal may be along here – although waterbird numbers fluctuate a lot depending on recent regional rainfall. As you leave the lake and head north, watch carefully for White-headed Pigeon which has bred along the small creek.

Walk fairly quickly west across the open lawns to the river, there is little of interest in this area of short grass and scattered trees, except maybe a flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos or Little Corellas (also check for Long-billed Corellas).

At the river search the mangroves and scrub carefully. White-browed Scrubwren and Eastern Whipbird are regular along the river. Listen for Pheasant Coucal and Sacred Kingfisher. Walk down to the small bridge over the creek at 7. Buff-banded Rail are regular here and have bred in the long weedy grass along the creek.



Australasian Grebe



Figbird



Pheasant Coucal

8 River Boardwalk

Walk north from the small bridge at 7 along a path through lush plantings (which so far attract few birds). Listen for Striated Pardalote and check branches for a family of Tawny Frogmouth that have bred here.

In the late winter and spring all three lorikeet species – Rainbow, Scaly-breasted and Little – may be here in large numbers feeding on flowering gums or Blue Quandong trees.

Take your time along the river board walk. While Brisbane River itself has few birds, use your binoculars to scan up and down the river looking for terns, Striated Heron, Martins and birds of prey.

Sacred Kingfisher, Striated Heron, Grey Shrike-thrush and Mangrove Gerygone frequent the mangroves.

Across the river are more large gums that may have a Dollarbird or Pied Currawongs. Brush Turkeys are moving into the new revegetation along this section of the river.



Dollarbird



Koel

9 Big Figs

Continue to walk south but leave the cement path and head under the figs staying close to the Brisbane River.

This area is the “other hotspot” in the arboretum. In the summer the figs are awash with feasting Figbirds, Orioles, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Pale-headed Rosella and Channel-billed Cuckoos.

Look carefully amongst the figs and nearby as other frugivores – like rainforest pigeons or a Barred Cuckoo-shrike could turn up.

Also search the strip of riverbank vegetation – casuarinas and mangroves. There will be a party of Red-backed Fairy-wrens,



Channel-billed Cuckoo



Barred Cuckoo-shrike



possibly accompanied by a pair of White-browed Scrubwren, or a Grey Fantail (winter). This is the best spot for small passerines like whistlers – but other odd things, like Spectacled Monarchs and Rufous Fantails, have turned up. Mistletoebird are most frequently found in the mistletoes on the casuarinas. Check the river again for terns or a Brahminy Kite.

Return to the car park by walking east through the figs and over the ridge. Galahs nest in eucalypts here on the ridge and when the eucalypts are flowering you might find all three lorikeet species. It can be worth one last check of the ponds and causeway.

Sherwood Arboretum Tick List:

% is percentage of records over one hundred 1 hour visits

Australian Brush Turkey	20%		Channel-billed Cuckoo	44%	
Magpie Goose	7%		Pheasant Coucal	37%	
Australian Wood Duck	90%		Azure Kingfisher	10%	
Pacific Black Duck	100%		Laughing Kookaburra	75%	
Grey Teal	22%		Sacred Kingfisher	38%	
Hardhead	53%		Superb Fairy-wren	13%	
Australasian Grebe	66%		Red-backed Fairy-wren	68%	
Darter	25%		Striated Pardalote	82%	
Little Pied Cormorant	79%		White-browed Scrubwren	41%	
Little Black Cormorant	81%		Noisy Friarbird	16%	
Australian Pelican	15%		Little Friarbird	62%	
White-faced Heron	8%		Blue-faced Honeyeater	73%	
Little Egret	4%		Noisy Miner	100%	
Great Egret	25%		Brown Honeyeater	89%	
Intermediate Egret	44%		Eastern Whipbird	45%	
Cattle Egret	25%		Golden Whistler	11%	
Striated Heron	17%		Rufous Whistler	13%	
Australian White Ibis	100%		Grey Shrike-thrush	11%	
Straw-necked Ibis	15%		Magpie-lark	94%	
Royal Spoonbill	19%		Grey Fantail	35%	
Brown Goshawk	9%		Willie Wagtail	100%	
Collared Sparrowhawk	4%		Spangled Drongo	25%	
Buff-banded Rail	11%		Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	58%	
Purple Swamphen	99%		Olive-backed Oriole	61%	
Dusky Moorhen	100%		Figbird	100%	
Eurasian Coot	28%		White-breasted Woodswallow	45%	
Masked Lapwing	54%		Grey Butcherbird	94%	
Rock Dove	13%		Pied Butcherbird	90%	
White-headed Pigeon	29%		Australian Magpie	94%	
Spotted Turtle-Dove	99%		Pied Currawong	72%	
Crested Pigeon	96%		Torresian Crow	92%	
Bar-shouldered Dove	37%		Mistletoebird	25%	
Galah	60%		Welcome Swallow	96%	
Little Corella	66%		Tree Martin	22%	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	86%		Fairy Martin	13%	
Rainbow Lorikeet	94%		Aust. Reed-Warbler	54%	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	90%		Silvereve	42%	
Little Lorikeet	27%		Common Myna	85%	
Australian King-Parrot	44%		Mallard	10%	
Pale-headed Rosella	68%		Domestic Duck	20%	
Eastern Koel	31%		Total expected:43		