Yorkeys Knob Golf Course Lagoon Bird Species

Birdlife of the Lagoon

Wattle Street was once the access road for the local rubbish dump, which has now been landscaped as part of the Half Moon Bay Golf Course. When pollution from the dump ended, life including birds quickly returned to the lagoon. Now a small colony of Australasian Darters nest every year on the small island in the middle of the lagoon, which also provides a night time roost for many birds including Magpie Geese, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, several egret species and both Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis.

During the day it is often possible to find Nankeen Night Herons on the island amongst the Melaleucas. A pair of Whistling Kites has nested here, as have Brown-backed Honeyeaters. The most common duck is the Pacific Black Duck, with other species such as the Plumed and Wandering Whistling-Ducks, Australian Wood Duck, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead appearing irregularly. Green Pygmy-goose and Australasian Grebes have been seen in all months but are more likely between June-November. The White-browed Crake is often heard, with its “squeaky toy” call, along the edge in the dense grass but occasionally ventures out into the open.

On the western side of Wattle Street is a patch of mangroves and a tidal mudflat, only covered by extremely high tides over 3m. The wader (shorebird) species on the bird list are found here, and unusual sightings include Great-billed Heron. Look for roosting Bush Stone-curlews along the edge of the mangroves and mudflat - up to 46 birds have been seen here at one time.

There is a good variety of bush birds. Look for Barn Swallows (occasional summer visitors) on powerlines by the road.

The lagoon offers good opportunities for photography as the birds are within reach of a 400 mm lens. As with all golf-course birdwatching, please observe the course rules and safety procedures.

A visit to the nearby Cattana Wetlands is also worthwhile. The Cattana Wetlands is around 80 hectares of degraded land which the Cairns Regional Council have rehabilitated into a nature conservation park. Access is from Dunne Road which is off Yorkeys Knob Road.

Names and taxonomic order used for the list follow Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds by L Christidis and W E Boles (CSIRO, Melbourne, 2008)

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WHO ARE WE?

BirdLife Northern Queensland is a branch of the national organisation BirdLife Australia, formed in 2012 by the merger of Birds Australia and BOCA.

BirdLife Northern Queensland organizes both scientific and social activities. These include bird surveys, outings, workshops and presentations with guest speakers. The regular field trips and campouts cater for all levels of expertise from beginner to professional and emphasise fun as well as worthwhile conservation projects.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter Contact Call detailing local activities and also enjoy BirdLife Australia magazine dealing with national bird issues.

You can join BirdLife Australia and help the conservation of Australian birds at www.birdlife.org.au

INFORMATION

Location and Facilities

16°48’35” S 145°42’51”E (GDA94)
14 km NW of Cairns

From the Captain Cook Highway turn right into Yorkeys Knob Road /Varley Street and continue 5km to Wattle Street. Turn left past the shops and follow the signs 500m to the Half Moon Bay Golf Course. Just past the entrance, the lagoon is on your right. Visitors are welcome at the Course which has a restaurant and other facilities. Detailed location and course maps are available on their website

www.halfmoonbaygolf.com.au

New or unusual sightings?
Register with Eremaea Birds

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YORKEYS KNOB
Golf Course Lagoon

Bird Checklist No 8

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