

Gulf Plains

Arid | Savannah | Woodlands | Coast

The Gulf Plains region is internationally recognised as a Key Biodiversity Area by Birdlife International. It sustains global populations of migratory waders, as well as many other birds on its vast mosaic of alluvial lowlands habitats. These include tropical savannah woodlands, coastal vegetation, extensive mangroves, mudflats, wetlands, and grasslands, all extending from the eastern corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria, inland into the headwaters of several rivers – the majestic Mitchell, Gilbert, Norman, and Flinders.

About 330 bird species are known in this region including several species found nowhere else in Queensland, especially a number of mangrove specialists. There are especially good opportunities for birding from August onwards as the migratory waders fly in from the north for a stop-over before continuing further south.

Another time for spectacular birding is the mid to late dry season when the landscape inland dries out and large concentrations of birds arrive to take refuge and enjoy the abundance of the Plains' wetlands. These areas are also crucial breeding areas for Brolgas and Sarus Cranes.

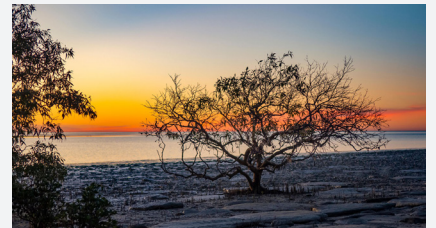
The region is definitely a must-do for bird enthusiasts, but it has many other drawcards as well. The unique fishing spots, quiet camps, remoteness, large distances, historic towns, and vast vistas will also make your visit to the Gulf Plains enjoyable and memorable. Be croc-safe and follow warning signs.

When to go

Birding early in the year and into the dry season can be rewarding. To see migratory waders, the best time for birding is around August when they return from overseas. October through to December is also good as water birds arrive in huge numbers with the progression of the dry season and loss of suitable habitat elsewhere.

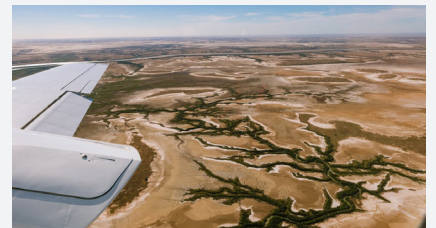
Getting there

The region has several main sealed roads that are passable most of the year. The unpaved roads are often closed during the wet season, but there is still good birding then around Georgetown, Normanton and Karumba. Boat cruises are available at Karumba.



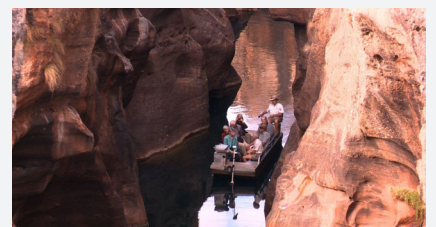
Karumba to Normanton

A premier area for viewing shore and wetland birds



Burketown

An interesting outback town close to mangroves, wetlands and Mitchell Grass plains



Georgetown

Where the Gulf Plains begin – river floodplains and dams teeming with waterfowl

Spot these locals when you visit

Community

There are only a few small but welcoming towns in this region – Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton, Karumba and Burketown. Karumba has nature-based tours with river cruises.

Conservation

The data for this area is sparse. Make your birding count by doing a bird survey in the Gulf Plains Key Biodiversity Area and entering it into Birddata. Every time you share your bird surveys, our collective knowledge of birds grows. For more information visit birddata.birdlife.org.au. Find out more about Key Biodiversity Areas by visiting keybiodiversityareas.org.

BirdLife Australia's Migratory Shorebird Program monitors shorebird populations on the Gulf coast. Volunteers can find out how to assist at birdlife.org.au/projects/shorebirds/volunteering-sb.

Get involved!

Visit birdlifeng.org to find out more about what we do and subscribe to our newsletter to get notified about our events.



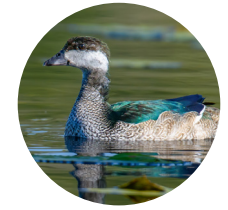
Brolga



Chestnut Rail



Flock Bronzewing



Green Pygmy-goose



Ground Cuckoo-shrike



Mangrove Grey Fantail



Mangrove Robin



Orange Chat



Paperbark Flycatcher



Pictorella Mannikin



Sarus Crane



Star Finch



White-winged Black Tern



Wood Sandpiper



Zitting Cisticola



Buff-sided Robin



Arafura Fantail



Broad-billed Flycatcher



Mangrove Golden Whistler



White-breasted Whistler



Yellow White-eye

