

# Mount Isa Region

## Arid | Savannah | Lakes

The Mount Isa birding region is an ancient semi-arid landscape dominated by spinifex hills and plains interspersed with rugged escarpments and gorges. Grasslands and open woodlands extend over black clay plains, and ephemeral and perennial rivers drain summer rains into the Gulf country, forming waterholes that persist year-round. Over 270 bird species utilise the region's diverse habitats. The spinifex ranges here and throughout the region are home to grasswrens and other specialities.

Almost 200 species can be found at iconic Boodjamulla National Park alone. Here, Lawn Hill Gorge, formed by the spring-fed Lawn Hill Creek features emerald-coloured waters that meander through red sandstone cliffs into the perennial Gregory River. Lush vegetation adjacent to the waters supports cabbage palms, paper-barks and pandanus which abruptly transitions into spinifex country. The stunning Purple-crowned Fairy-wren can be found in vegetation fringing permanent river systems.

Along with the naturally occurring waterholes, several large dam-created lakes provide significant refuges for bird life including waterbirds and waders. These include Lake Corella near Cloncurry, Lake Julius and Lake Moondarra near Mount Isa. The lakes are stocked to provide great fishing.

## When to go

The best time to visit, for ease of access and cooler weather, is just after the end of the wet season from April through to May when the bloodwoods flower. Dry and hot conditions make birding more challenging from October through until the summer rains begin.

## Getting there

There are limited sealed roads in this region, other than the main highways so a four-wheel drive is beneficial. Interesting routes include the Savannah Way and roads through some of the small historical and mining towns. Regular flights are available to Mount Isa with car hire an option. Or take the track less travelled onboard the relaxing Inlander, the Townsville to Mount Isa train.



### Lake Moondarra

An excellent site for uncommon species such as Yellow Chat, Painted Finch, snipe, and migratory waders



### Boodjamulla National Park

A popular destination for canoeing and walking. Look for Purple-crowned Fairy-wren and Sandstone Shrike-thrush



### Clem Walton Reserve

A popular camping site alongside Lake Corella and spinifex hills with easy access to Cloncurry