



BIRDS OF CUSSEN PARK

A comprehensive guide to the birds of Cussen Park water reserve

By Jacob Dedman

Cussen Park is a bushland style park comprising 33 hectares of wetlands, woodlands and open area located on the northern outskirts of Tatura in northern Victoria. The land in which Cussen Park is situated, is surrounded by industrial, residential and irrigated farm land.

The information in this booklet provides the perfect opportunity to explore our local wetlands. Discover for yourself the many birds on offer to view from our well developed paths, bird hides and observation decks.

By using the checklist in the back of the booklet, you can regularly tick off sightings. Use our references and helpful resources also to assist with identification and other bird information.

Enjoy!

References

Birds Of Australia, A Photographic Guide, Iain Campbell, Sam Woods, Nick Leseberg, Princeton University Press, 2015

The Australian Bird Guide, Menkhorst, Rogers, Clarke, Davies, Marsack, Franklin, CSIRO Publishing, 2017

eBird Australia <https://ebird.org/australia>

Cussen Park <https://cussenpark.wordpress.com>

Acknowledgments

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CUSSEN PARK MAP



Photography
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Text
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Helpful Resources
Birdlife Australia www.birdlife.org.au
Birds In Backyards www.birdsinbackyards.net
National Field Guide Apps
<https://museums victoria.com.au/apps/national-field-guide-apps>



JACOB DEDMAN

Jacob is a 13 year old Tatura resident who loves photography and has a passion for photographing birds. Visiting Cussen Park has been a constant part of his life and regularly included in his home education as a part of environmental studies. This booklet has brought together his love of bird photography and studies of the environment. It is a showcase of the beauty of our local wetlands and highlights the importance that Cussen Park has in our region as a haven for our birdlife.



COMMON NAME:

Black Swan

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Cygnus atratus* (size 110-140cm)

GENUS: *Anatidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is the only swan species in the world that is mostly black. It has a graceful neck, with a bold reddish bill and broad white fringes on the wings, which can be seen when in flight. It is common on larger wetlands throughout Australia.



COMMON NAME:

Little Pied Cormorant

SCIENTIFIC NAME:

Microcarbo melanoleucos (size 55-61cm)

GENUS: *Microcarbo*

DESCRIPTION: This is a small black and white cormorant that is very abundant in Australia. It has a yellow bill, white above the eye and on its thigh. It is found on small and large bodies of water, both coastal and freshwater environments.



COMMON NAME:

Australian Pelican

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Pelecanus conspicillatus* (size 160-180cm)

GENUS: *Pelecanus*

DESCRIPTION: The Australian Pelican is Australia's only pelican and its largest waterbird. It is mostly white, with black markings on the wings. It has an easily recognised large pink bill and a huge throat pouch for catching fish. The Australian Pelican is a nomadic bird and can travel large distances in search of water. Mostly found in coastal areas, it moves inland in search of water to breed.



COMMON NAME:

White-Faced Heron

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Egretta novaehollandiae* (size 66-67cm)

GENUS: *Ardeidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a common and familiar heron, that is ashy-grey, has a bold white face, piercing pale eye and yellow legs. It is found in many wetland habitats.



COMMON NAME:

White-headed Stilt

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Himantopus leucocephalus* (33-37cm)

GENUS: *Haematopus*

DESCRIPTION: Has a long white neck with a bold black patch on the nape, an all blackish back and very long, bright bubblegum pink legs that are the common feature of stilts. Is most often found in flocks.



COMMON NAME:

Purple Swamphen

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Porphyrio melanotus* (36-39cm)

GENUS: *Rallidae*

DESCRIPTION: The Purple Swamphen has a purple colouration along with a bright red bill. It is found in wetlands all over Australia.



COMMON NAME:

Eurasian Coot

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Fulica atra* (size 36-39cm)

GENUS: *Rallidae*

DESCRIPTION: The Eurasian Coot is a slate-grey colour with an obvious ivory-white bill. It can be seen most often on the water where it often dives for food. It occurs in many wetlands that have abundant aquatic vegetation.



COMMON NAME:

Silver Gull

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* (size 43-44cm)

GENUS: *Laridae*

DESCRIPTION: This is the smallest of the regular Australian gulls. It is slim and has a bright red bill, with pale, silvery-grey upperparts. It is not only found on the coasts but occurs in a variety of habitats including tidal flats, city dumps and lakes.



COMMON NAME:

Black Shouldered Kite (Australian Kite)

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Elanus axillaris* (size 34cm)

GENUS: *Elanus*

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, black and white, slender-winged kite. It hunts by hovering for prey such as rodents and grasshoppers. It is mostly white, with pale ashy-grey upperparts and has a bold black shoulder patch. It is found mostly in open woodlands, farmlands and grasslands.



COMMON NAME:

Australian Hobby

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Falco longipennis* (30-36cm)

GENUS: *Falconidae*

DESCRIPTION: This falcon is narrow-winged, long-tailed and hunts at high speed. It has a typical falcon shape, with narrow, sharply pointed wings and a dark grey upperpart colouration. It is usually observed in flight, when hunting on the wing over open areas. They are widespread in open wooded habitats and scrubby areas.



COMMON NAME:

Eastern Rosella

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Platycercus eximius*

GENUS: *Platycercus*

DESCRIPTION: A medium sized parrot: Mostly bright red, yellow and blue with conspicuous white cheeks. More finely built than the Crimson Rosella which it often co-occurs with. It feeds on the ground, in trees and shrubs.



COMMON NAME:

Crimson Rosella

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Platycercus elegans* (size 30-36cm)

GENUS: *Psittacidae*

DESCRIPTION: This beautifully coloured bird likes to inhabit rainforests, woodlands, eucalypt forests and gardens. This picture of Crimson Rosellas are sub adult birds or immatures and with age will change to full crimson colour. It has a royal blue cheek patch, blue tail and blue flashes on its wings. It likes to feed on the ground in groups.



COMMON NAME:

Red Rumped Parrot (Grass Parrot)

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Psephotus haematonotus* (size 24-29cm)

GENUS: *Psittacidae*

DESCRIPTION: The male is bright green with a red rump, yellow belly and vent and a slight blue wash on the shoulder and forehead. The female is a dull brownish-green, with very little colour apart from some green on the rump. They are usually found in pairs or small flocks. It occurs in farmlands with scattered trees, grassy and open woodlands.



COMMON NAME:

Galah

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Eolophys roseicapilla* (size 36cm)

GENUS: *Cacatuidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a fuchsia-pink cockatoo, that has a powdery grey back and upperwings and pink underwings. It also has a solid creamy-white cap. The Galah can be found throughout mainland Australia in open country, feeding in flocks on the ground.



COMMON NAME:

Crested Pigeon

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Ocyphaps lophotes* (size 30-36cm)

GENUS: *Columbidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a mostly grey-coloured pigeon with pink hues on its underparts, red skin around the eye and a thick black topknot. It is found in open habitats such as farmlands, gardens and golf courses.



COMMON NAME:

Weebill

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Smicrornis brevirostris* (7.5-9cm)

GENUS: *Acanthizidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is the smallest Australian bird. The Weebill has a creamy iris, a pale supercilium and a white tip to the tail. It occurs in drier woodlands.



COMMON NAME:

Striated Pardalote

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Pardalotus striatus* (9-11.5cm)

GENUS: *Pardalotidae*

DESCRIPTION: The wings are black with long flashes of white and a small red mark near the shoulder. It has a broad white eyebrow that meets a warm yellow mark over the bill. It is mostly found feeding in the crowns of eucalypt trees in groups.



COMMON NAME:

Superb Fairywren

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Malurus cyaneus* (size 11.5-14cm)

GENUS: *Maluridae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a common eastern fairywren. The male has two well-separated blue areas on each side of its head and has a broad black eye line. The females can be challenging if encountered with no males. It inhabits thickets in a wide variety of habitats that include eucalypts, salt marsh, heathlands, scrubby areas and woodland edges.

This is a non-breeding plumaged male Superb Fairywren.



COMMON NAME:

Noisy Miner

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Manorina melanocephala* (24-28cm)

GENUS: *Manorina*

DESCRIPTION: A grey Honeyeater (Thrush sized) with a black face and crown. It is grey down the back, including the rump, unlike the Yellow Throated Miner. The Noisy Miner is found in a variety of habitats, (eg, open woodlands, eucalypt forests, gardens and parks).



COMMON NAME:

New Holland Honeyeater

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* (16-20cm)

GENUS: *Meliphreptus*

DESCRIPTION: The New Holland Honeyeater has a piercing whitish eye, a small patch of white on its face and white markings on the tip of its tail. It is found widely in eucalypt forests, particularly where there is understorey shrubbery such as banksias and grevilleas.



COMMON NAME:

White-Plumed Honeyeater

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lichenostomus penicillatus* (size 15-17cm)

GENUS: *Meliphagidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, plain olive honeyeater, that has bold white plumes on its neck and a distinctive yellow cast on its head. It will often fight larger honeyeaters around nectar sources. It can be found in dry open and arid woodland habitats and is mostly found close to water.



COMMON NAME:

Brown Treecreeper

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Climacteris affinis* (size 15cm)

GENUS: *Climacteridae*

DESCRIPTION: The Brown Treecreeper has several shades of brown over its body, ranging from dark brown to pale brown on its underparts. It has quite a prominent pale eyebrow. Its favourite habitats are arid open woodlands and shrublands.



COMMON NAME:

Grey Butcherbird

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Cracticus torquatus* (28-32cm)

GENUS: *Cracticus*

DESCRIPTION: The Grey Butcherbird has a black hood, grey back and black wings. Its throat is white and it has a light grey wash on the breast. Its habitats include sclerophyll forests, monsoon forests, open woodlands, farmlands, parks and gardens.



COMMON NAME:

Pied Butcherbird

SCIENTIFIC NAME:

Cracticus nigrogularis (size 32-34cm)

GENUS: *Cracticidae*

DESCRIPTION: The Pied Butcherbird has a complete black hood and solid black back. It has a white collar around the neck and extensive white wing markings. It likes to inhabit open country, such as farmlands, open woodlands, scrubby areas and grasslands.



COMMON NAME:

Australian Magpie

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Gymnorhina tibicen* (size 36-44cm)

GENUS: *Cracticidae*

DESCRIPTION: This is a very familiar Australian bird. The magpie always has a solid black underside, with a large pale to white patch on the back of its neck. Its habitats will be where there are trees; often found in parks and gardens.



COMMON NAME:

Magpie-Lark (Mud-lark)

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Grallina cyanoleuca* (size 27cm)

GENUS: *Grallina*

DESCRIPTION: This is an oversized long-legged monarch species, which is usually seen on the ground. Its upperparts are black, with the underparts mostly white except for a black-bordered white throat in females and a solid black throat patch in males. It is very vocal. They are extremely common where there are trees.



COMMON NAME:

Grey Shrikethrush

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Colluricincla harmonica* (size 24cm)

GENUS: *Pachycephalidae*

DESCRIPTION: This shrikethrush is mostly plain grey with pale off-white underparts. It can have a rufous colour on its back. Its habitats are mostly wooded areas.



COMMON NAME:

Australian Pipit (Richard's Pipit)

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (size 17-18cm)

GENUS: *Anthus*

DESCRIPTION: This is a songbird that walks on the ground with a distinctive bobby gait, wagging its tail up and down. It is long-tailed with brown streaks and white outer tail feathers. It likes open habitats.



COMMON NAME:

Zebra Finch

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Taeniopygia guttata* (size 10cm)

GENUS: *Estrildidae*

DESCRIPTION: The male is beautifully patterned with a bright red bill, bold chestnut ear patches, finely barred black and white breast and rufous flanks dotted with white spots. The females are dull grey, but still display the distinctive tail pattern. Zebra finches' habitats include grasslands, croplands and saltbush scrub.



COMMON NAME:

Laughing Kookaburra

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Dacelo novaeguineae* (size 39-48cm)

GENUS: *Alcedinidae*

DESCRIPTION: The Laughing Kookaburra is one of Australia's most familiar and famous birds. It is famous for its extraordinary "laugh". It has a dark eye with a dark brownish mask around the eye and a brown barred tail. It is abundant in the eastern areas of Australia.

YOUR CHECKLIST FOR THE BIRDS OF CUSSEN PARK

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magpie Goose | <input type="checkbox"/> Glossy Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Avocet | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Hobby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freckled Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian White Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> Masked Lapwing | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Falcon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Swan | <input type="checkbox"/> Straw-necked Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-kneed Dotterel | <input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine Falcon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Shelduck | <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Spoonbill | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-fronted Dotterel | <input type="checkbox"/> Galah |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Wood Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Spoonbill | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-tailed Godwit | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Corella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Shoveler | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-shouldered Kite (Australian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Corella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Black Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> Latham's Snipe | <input type="checkbox"/> Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Teal | <input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Harrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Sandpiper | <input type="checkbox"/> Cockatiel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut Teal | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Harrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Greenshank | <input type="checkbox"/> Swift Parrot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pink-eared Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Goshawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Sandpiper | <input type="checkbox"/> Crimson Rosella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardhead | <input type="checkbox"/> Collared Sparrowhawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Sandpiper | <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Rosella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Grebe | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Kite | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Gull | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-rumped Parrot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Pied Cormorant | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistling Kite | <input type="checkbox"/> Whiskered Tern | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgerigar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Cormorant | <input type="checkbox"/> Buff-banded Rail | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Musk Lorikeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Black Cormorant | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Spotted Crake | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Bronzewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Lorikeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Darter | <input type="checkbox"/> Baillon's Crake | <input type="checkbox"/> Crested Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> Purple-crowned Lorikeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Pelican | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotless Crake | <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainbow Lorikeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-necked Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Swamphen | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Parrot sp. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusky Moorhen | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Boobook | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Treecreeper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-faced Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-tailed Nativehen | <input type="checkbox"/> Tawny Frogmouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Superb Fairywren |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cattle Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Coot | <input type="checkbox"/> Azure Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Honeyeater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nankeen Night-Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Stilt | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing Kookaburra | <input type="checkbox"/> Noisy Miner |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacred Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> White-plumed Honeyeater |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainbow Bee-eater | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuscous Honeyeater |



Cussen Park

A Park for People