

Parkland Birds

This fact sheet provides information on the various birds that have been sighted in the Parkland.

Many visitors enjoy feeding birds, especially those by the lake. However, feeding is not permitted as it may cause the birds to become dependant on an artificial food source which is not healthy for them.

If you find a sick or injured bird, please contact Parkland Security on 3006 4525 or 0417 609 992.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Australasian Grebe** is a small waterbird. When approached, Australasian Grebes usually dive under water. It feeds on small fish and water insects. The Australasian Grebe is often seen eating its own feathers and feeding them to its young. This behaviour is thought to help prevent injury from any sharp fish bones that are swallowed. Breeding season extends from January to April in the north. Up to three successive broods may be reared in a season. Four or five pale blue eggs are laid in each clutch.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Australian Magpies have adapted successfully to urban and agricultural areas. Magpies feed mainly on small insects and other animals that live in or just under the ground, such as worms, beetles, ants, spiders, frogs, lizards and even carrion. Magpies have a complex social structure. They form two main associations—tribes and flocks. Tribes consist of two to 10 birds of both sexes, which occupy a territory of up to eight hectares. They vigorously defend this breeding and feeding area against other magpies. Flocks consist of young adults and older birds unable to form a tribe or gain access to a territory. Magpies prefer to nest in tall trees. During the nesting season between August and October, after the chicks have hatched, both male and female magpies often vigorously defend the nest by swooping and diving at potential intruders.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** feed on insects and other invertebrates. These may be caught in the air, taken from foliage or caught on the ground. In addition to insects, some fruits and seeds are also eaten. The Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike breeds mainly from August to February each year. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes may re-pair with the same partner each year and may use the same territories year after year. Outside the breeding season, large family groups and flocks of up to a hundred birds form. These groups may be partially nomadic or may stay in the same area. The call most often heard is a soft chirring.

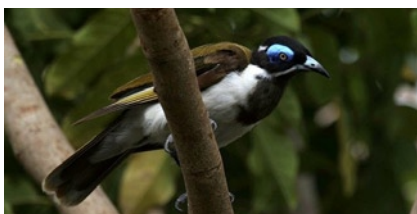


Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Blue-faced Honeyeater** is a large, active, noisy and aggressive honeyeater that feeds on Insects, nectar, pollen, berries, and cultivated crops, eg: bananas. It also raids other birds' nests for eggs and chicks. Breeding occurs June to January. The Blue-faced Honeyeater forages for food on sides of trees and on the ground, and will also catch prey on the wing. The early morning piping-like call is very different to the miner-like daytime chattering.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Brown Honeyeater** is one of the smallest and perhaps blandest of Australia's honeyeaters. The Brown Honeyeater is commonly seen with other honeyeater species such as the Singing Honeyeater and Red Wattlebird, which will 'mob' an intruder or predator, such as a cat or raven. The Brown honeyeater breeds between June to January and defends a small territory when breeding.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Buff-banded Rails feed on insects, seeds, freshwater molluscs & green shoots. Breeding occurs August to January, sometimes March to June in northern regions. Singly or in small groups, it can inhabit swamps or thick rank vegetation bordering a variety of wetland types ranging from rivers to man-made ponds, also being found on off-shore islands. It will run rather than fly, often uttering a call like 'krek' from thick cover.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Crested Pigeon** is native to Australia and is common in lightly wooded grasslands in both rural and urban areas throughout most of the mainland. It is usually found in the vicinity of water and is absent from the denser forests. Diet consists mostly of native seeds and seeds of introduced crops and weeds, as well as some leaves and insects. They feed in small to large groups, which also congregate to drink at waterholes. Crested Pigeons may breed at any time of the year, but mostly from September to March.



Photo © Queensland Museum

Dusky Moorhens feed by day in water and on land. When in water it resides and feeds in reed-margined areas. The name 'Moorhen' comes from 'Mere hen' meaning bird of the lakes. There is no connection with 'moors', however it is a close relative of the British Moorhen and not at all related to Ducks. When retired at night, they stand to sleep on grouped 'roosting platforms' amongst reeds and shrubs in the water. The female initiates courtship and mates with all males in the 'group'. During breeding, the group defends its territory by threat display. The Dusky Moorhen can be found quite frequently around the Lake Precinct and breeds quite successfully in the Parkland environment.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Eastern Reef Egret** (or Eastern Reef Heron) is one of three species of Egret. Normally, Egrets are found on coastal areas and islands of most of Australia and more common on the Queensland coast and Great Barrier Reef than anywhere else. This bird hunts by both day and night for small fish, crustaceans and insects. It also invade colonies of nesting terns and steals fish brought in to feed the young. The Eastern Reef Egret breeds throughout the year. The nests can be in trees in island woodlands or on the ground under shrubs or rock ledges.

Fairy Martins prefer open areas away from the coast and can be found often around water systems. They catch flying insects that are found hovering over swamps. It breeds from August through to January. During daylight hours, there is continuous activity in fairy martin breeding colonies. From before dawn, an incessant twittering can be heard until the birds leave their nests at daybreak.

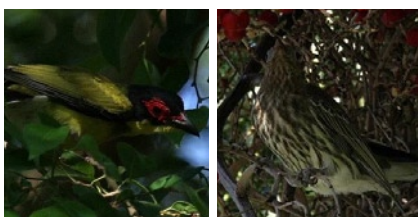


Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Fig Birds inhabit edges of rainforest, eucalyptus forest and woodlands, mangroves, watercourses, parks, gardens and orchards. The male and female look quite different from each other. They are both pictured on the left, the male is on the far left with the red eye patch. Fig Birds eat all types of fruit, including figs, native berries and cultivated fruit such as bananas and pawpaws also chillies. Breeding occurs October to February in pairs locally nomadic. When not breeding, they move around in flocks of mostly immature birds, foraging for food in tree foliage.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Galah** forms huge noisy flocks and congregates and roosts together at night. The Galah is one of the most abundant and familiar of the Australian parrots, found in a variety of timbered habitats, usually near water. Galahs feed on seeds, mostly from the ground. They are considered agricultural pests in some areas where they feed on cultivated crops. Birds may travel large distances in search of favourable feeding grounds. Galahs form permanent pair bonds, although a bird will take a new partner if the other one dies. The breeding season is variable, but mainly from February to July in the north. Galahs have been recorded breeding with other members of the cockatoo family, both in the wild and captivity.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Grey Fantail** is an extraordinarily active and restless bird. When perched, it will move its tail and body sideways. Grey Fantails breed from August through to January. They build their nests in the forks of small trees from grass and spider web. It is often seen darting out conspicuously off a perch after flying insects. Found in rainforest, open forest and other well shaded regions.

The **Hardhead** is a very athletic duck and noted for its fast and noisy flight. It dives deeper than most other ducks and may swim underwater rapidly for up to 40 metres and submerging for up to 1 minute. It seldom goes on land, preferring to stay in deeper waters, swimming swiftly and low in the water. This duck feeds only in the water and can feed on aquatic life that is inaccessible to other ducks because of its diving abilities. Breeding cycle is spring-based and is influenced by the rain. Numbers on the east coast have declined but still common inland.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Magpie-larks (Peewees) are found in almost any habitat except rainforests and the driest deserts and are familiar urban birds. While they are sometimes confused with the larger Australian Magpie, the species are not linked. Magpie-larks are mostly ground-dwelling and are usually seen slowly searching on the ground for a variety of insects and their larvae, as well as earthworms and freshwater invertebrates. They build mud nests lined with feathers and grasses on tree branches high above the ground.



Maned Ducks are a 'perching duck' and are more adapted to walking rather than swimming. They are often seen grazing near open water and in the Parkland can be located on grass around the BBQ areas and under trees along the Lake Precinct. Ducks generally eat small water creatures and plants; however the Wood Duck mainly feeds on dry land insects and herbage. Wood Ducks mate for life so courtship and mating is very rarely seen. These ducks are independent of one another and flocking is not constant. They wander about at night.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Masked Lapwings are large, ground-dwelling birds that are closely related to the waders. They are unmistakable in both appearance and voice, which is a loud 'kekekekekekeke'. Common throughout northern, central and eastern Australia, it inhabits marshes, mudflats, beaches and grasslands. It is often seen in urban areas. Where this bird is used to human presence, it may tolerate close proximity; otherwise it is very wary of people, and seldom allows close approach. Masked Lapwings feed on insects, insect larvae and earthworms. Most food is obtained from just below the surface of the ground, but some may also be taken above the surface. Birds are normally seen feeding alone, in pairs or in small groups. Masked Lapwings may breed at any time when conditions are suitable.



Noisy Miners are a bold and curious bird. Despite their moderate size, Noisy Miners aggressively attack larger birds such as hawks and kookaburras. These attacks may be so vigorous that most other birds are excluded from an area occupied by Noisy Miners. The Noisy Miner feeds on nectar, fruits and insects. Very occasionally they will eat small reptiles and amphibians. Food is either taken from trees or on the ground. In keeping with its highly social nature, the Noisy Miner usually feeds in large groups. Noisy Miners breed in small to large colonies. The season extends from July to December and several broods may be reared in this time.

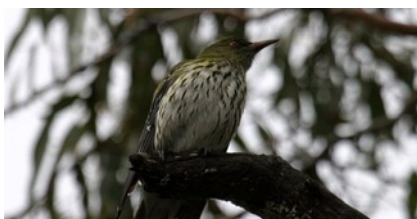


Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Olive-backed Oriole** is among our best mimics and is one of the few birds whose call actually resembles its given name. They feed on native and cultivated fruits, berries and insects. Breeding occurs in August to January. They are often found with Fig Birds and Cuckoo-shrikes and inhabit open forests and heavier timber along watercourses, often straying into urban areas.



The **Pacific Black Duck** is widely distributed throughout Australia as a breeding species and can be found in any habitat. For more than a quarter of the day, this duck can be found feeding on both plant and animal food in the water. Pair-forming displays of courtship come before breeding in April to May with the ducks in tropical areas breeding soon after. Where rainfall is uniform, this duck breeds all year round. Found in the Parkland in the lake and on the rocky headland around the lake.



The **Pheasant Coucal** is a large ground dwelling cuckoo, but unlike other Australian cuckoos they build their own nests and raise their young themselves. Due to their short rounded wings, if disturbed they will run for cover rather than fly. They can be found in dense understorey vegetation, in open forests and woodlands and around wetlands. Pheasant Coucals feed on large insects, frogs, lizards, eggs and young of birds and sometimes small mammals. Pheasant Coucals form lasting pairs and when breeding their feathers change colour to black on the head, neck and underbody with the upperparts and wings reddish-brown with black and cream barring and the black tail is barred orange. Out of breeding, the head and back return to a reddish chestnut colour and the underparts are cinnamon brown, with all streaked boldly white.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Pied Butcherbird** is more often heard than seen as its voice is a beautiful, melodious fluting, sometimes given in turn by several individuals. Many people consider this the best singer of Australia's birds. Butcherbirds inhabit drier forests and woodlands and often approach parks and houses. Butcherbirds are aggressive feeders, preying on small reptiles, mammals, frogs and birds, as well as large insects. Most food is caught on the ground. The birds sit on an exposed perch and swoop down on their prey. Butcherbirds get their name from their habit of hanging captured prey on a hook or in a tree fork, or crevice. Their breeding season varies throughout its large range. In the north, the usual season is May to November. More than one female may lay eggs in the same nest.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Pied Currawongs prefer forests and woodlands and has become well adapted to suburban areas. The main call is a loud 'currawong', which gives the bird its name. Pied Currawongs breed from July to January. Outside of the breeding season they form large flocks, but at most other times these birds are seen alone, in pairs or in family groups. Pied Currawongs feed on a variety of foods including small lizards, insects, caterpillars and berries. They also take a large number of small and young birds, especially around urban areas where suitable cover is scarce. The growing numbers of Currawongs in these areas have been implicated in the fall in numbers of the smaller bird species. Larger prey up to the size of a young possum is also taken and birds will occasionally hunt as a group.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Purple Swamphen** is found around freshwater swamps, streams and marshes. It feeds on soft shoots of reeds and rushes and small animals, such as frogs and snails. However, it is a reputed egg stealer and will also eat ducklings when it can catch them. The Purple Swamphen uses its long toes to grasp food while eating. Purple Swamphens are generally found in small groups and studies have shown that these consist of more males than females. More than one male will mate with a single female.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Rainbow Lorikeets are strongly outgoing and although tens of thousands of birds may gather overnight in a roost, during the day they tend to move in smaller groups. Much larger flocks congregate where there is plenty of food. They have a brush tipped tongue which is adaptation for feeding on pollen and nectar. They also feed on fruits, berries, seeds and occasionally insects and larvae. Rainbow Lorikeets can be found in the rainforest, open forest, woodland, mangroves, along watercourses, in gardens, parks and orchards. Rainbow Lorikeets are thought to mate for life (like most parrots) and nesting can continue for 8 months annually beginning around March.

The **Sacred Kingfisher** forages mainly on the land, only occasionally capturing prey in the water. They feed on crustaceans, reptiles, insects and their larvae and, infrequently, fish. The birds perch on low exposed branch on the lookout for prey. The Sacred Kingfisher inhabits woodlands, mangroves and paperbark forests, tall open eucalypt forest and melaleuca forest. In Australia, Sacred Kingfishers spend the winter in the north of their range and return south in the spring to breed. Sacred Kingfishers breed mainly from September to December. Occasionally the season is extended to March, if conditions are favourable.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Scaly-breasted Lorikeets are usually seen in small flocks, flying overhead, or feeding among the outermost branches of flowering trees. They frequent most timbered areas and are often seen in gardens and parklands—even in large cities. Scaly-breasted lorikeets are extremely noisy birds and attract attention by their screeching and chattering. Scaly-breasted lorikeets have similar habits to the Rainbow lorikeet, and the two species often group together in mixed flocks. They feed mainly on nectar and pollen, but they also eat blossoms, berries, other fruit, seeds and insects and larvae. The term ‘scaly-breasted’ aptly describes this bird, which has yellow breast feathers broadly edged with green that look like scales. The Scaly-breasted Lorikeet breeds in all months except March and April.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Stone Curlews (Bush Stone-curlew or Bush Thick-knee) were formerly quite common, but numbers have declined through loss of habitat and predation by foxes and feral cats. The range of this bird extends throughout Australia and today, is more abundant in the north, but can be found in open wooded country, scrubs, golf courses, and even cemeteries. When sighted, a bird will normally crouch down or stand perfectly still and rely on the plumage pattern to disguise it. If approached, it will tend to walk away rather than fly (especially during the day) and it is a mainly nocturnal, ground-dwelling bird. Stone Curlews have a wide-ranging diet, but prefer to feed on insects, molluscs, small lizards, seeds and occasionally small mammals. Feeding takes place at night. The Stone Curlew’s breeding season is from August to January.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Superb Fairy-wren** is found in most habitat types where suitable dense cover and low shrubs occur. They are common in urban parks and gardens, and can be seen in small social groups. These groups normally consist of one male and several females and young birds. Superb Fairy-wrens feed on insects and other small arthropods. These are caught mostly on the ground, but may also be taken from low bushes. The breeding season of the Superb Fairy-wren is quite long, July to March, but most activity takes place around September to January.

The **Torresian Crow’s** habit of shuffling its wings on landing and its short staccato call helps to identify it from other crows. Immature crows form nomadic flocks whereas adults are occupy permanent territories where suitable trees and water is available. Torresian Crows eat grain, fruit, insects and other invertebrates, eggs, garbage and carrion (dead animals). Torresian Crows form monogamous breeding pairs, building their nests high in tall trees. Breeding occurs from September through to February.

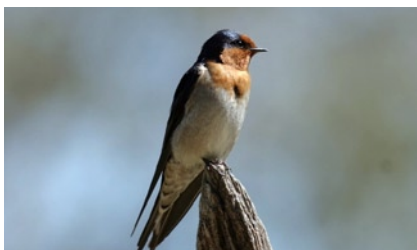


Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

Welcome Swallows are widespread in Australia, but are less common in the far north than in the south. They visit a wide variety of habitats with the exception of the more heavily forested regions and drier inland areas. These birds are partially migratory, moving around in response to food availability. Welcome Swallows feed on a wide variety on insects. They catch prey in flight, using their acrobatic flying skills. The prey is guided into the bird’s wide, open mouth with the help of short rictal bristles bordering the bill. These bristles also help protect the bird’s eye. Where insects are in large supply, Welcome Swallows feed in large flocks. Welcome Swallows readily breed close to human habitation between August and February.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

White Faced Herons are the most commonly seen herons in Australia. They are found throughout the mainland and Tasmania, and most coastal islands. White-faced Herons can be found anywhere where there is water, from tidal mudflats and coastal reefs to moist grasslands and gardens. The White-faced Heron feeds on a wide variety of prey, including fish, insects and amphibians. Food is obtained in a variety of ways, such as walking and disturbing prey, searching among damp crevices or simply standing in the water and watching for movement. White-faced Herons breed mainly between October and December, but may breed at other times in response to rainfall.



White Ibis can be found in all but the driest habitats including swamps, lagoons, floodplains and grasslands and has become a successful inhabitant of urban parks and gardens. They typically feed in wetlands as a wader and eat insects in lawns. In urban areas Ibis scavenge for food scraps and handouts from people. Ibis' movements appear to be in a north-south direction rather than an east-west direction with the longest journey recorded being more than 3000km. The male Ibis is the one who selects the breeding ground for nesting.



Photo © K Vang, W Dabrowka/Bird Explorers

The **Willie Wagtail** is the largest, and possibly most well-known, of the Australian fantails. Their call is also well-known, often being uttered constantly throughout the night, and is interpreted as 'sweet-pretty-creature', though other calls involve more scolding and chattering notes. Although it is active in defending its territory, the Willie Wagtail is very tolerant and tame around humans, often feeding and nesting in close proximity of houses and human activity. They tend to prefer the wetter areas, with lots of leaf-litter, for feeding, and available mud for nest building. Willie Wagtails are found throughout most of eastern and south-eastern mainland Australia, but are absent from northern Queensland. They are active feeders. Birds can be seen darting around lawns as they hunt for insects on the ground. As they do so, the tail is wagged from side to side. Insects are also captured in the air, in active chases. While the Willie Wagtail can be found nesting at any time of the year, the breeding season is concentrated from August to February.