

Finding birds on King Island.

Driving around the island and walking any beach provides great opportunities to see birds. Forest Ravens, Australian Magpies (white-backed), Spur-winged

Plover, wild American Turkeys, wild Indian Peafowl and Common Pheasant are easy to spot. Sea Eagles can often be seen as they cruise the island as can Swamp Harrier and Nankeen Kestrel. Brush Bronzewing are frequently observed on well vegetated roads and have no fear of cars while small birds such as the KI Suburb Fairy-wren dash across in front of you -so take care when driving. Pacific and Silver Gull and Crested Tern are common along the coastlines. But there are also some Birding Hotspots its worth checking out...



The following list identifies some good birding sites and is best used in conjunction with a comprehensive map of King Island. The list starts in the north of the island and works roughly east, south, west and back to north.

NOTE: **Gold indicates best spots if you are short of time.**

Cape Wickham Lighthouse;

Especially when there is a good wind and sea running, this spot can be good for seabirds. Nankeen Kestrel breed in the Lighthouse each year and some grassland birds such as Richard's Pipit are usually around. Drive to Cape Wickham, park near Lighthouse and walk from there.

Disappointment Bay:

Shorebirds such as Hooded Plover are often present on this beach and the KI Black Currawong breed in the scrub. Also a good good in the autumn and spring with the arrival and departure of Bass Strait migrants such as Tasmanian Silvereye, Flame Robins and Grey Fantail. Park in the car park and walk from there.

Penny's Lagoon:

A deep hanging lake, there are often Musk Duck seen here. Also bush birds such as Dusky Robin, Grey Fantail etc. Gas BBQs are available and its a great spot for a picnic or a swim in the summer. A part of Lavinia State Reserve, follow the signs to the Lagoon.

Saltwater Creek Walk – Council Hill:

This area is regenerating from 2007 fire and is part of the Lavinia State Reserve. The track leads down into the Nook Swamp although it gets very rough so take care if you go this far and make sure you have water with you. However, much of the track is kept clear as a fire-break so is manageable.

Bush and grassland birds are seen along it such as Olive Whistler, New Holland Honeyeater, Flame and Dusky Robin, Dusky and White-browed Wood-swallow and many others. While in the area take a walk or drive up to Council Hill lookout where there is a good view of the mid-north of the island.

Drive from North Road along Reekara Rd to a sharp right turn. Salt-water track is unmarked but you will see a rough track heading east at this sharp corner. Walk along this as far as you want to go.

Bootlace Private Forest Reserve Walk:

A private walk of 2 km return, through a highly biodiverse pristine and covenanted forest. Several threatened species live or have been recorded here, plants, birds and other wildlife. Visits are by appointment only and guided by the owner. Mobile Kate 0417487263, E: kate.ravich@bigpond.com. Walks are undertaken at your own risk. A donation towards upkeep of the track is appreciated.

Sea Elephant Estuary:

This is a RAMSAR site. Waterbirds include various ducks, Black Swan, Pied Oystercatcher, White-faced Heron, Greenshank in the summer months and many others. A lovely and easy board walk leads down from the car park, along the edge of the estuary and includes a bird hide. Bush birds are also seen along this walk such as Grey Fantail, Silvereyes, King Island Tasmanian Thornbill etc. Past this walk there is salt marsh. You may need

gumboots depending on the tides and time of year. White-fronted chats are common and Orange Bellied Parrots use the area on their migrations.

Drive along Sea Elephant Road to car park. Walk from there.

Pegarah State Forest:

This forest has been closed to milling for some decades and includes some of the oldest remaining eucalypt forest on King island. Many bush birds can be seen here and it is home to both the King Island Brown Thornbill (KI subspecies - critically endangered), the King Island Scrubtit (KI subspecies - critically endangered) and the King Island Green Rosella (KI subspecies - Vulnerable). There are a number of tracks leading through the forest but some are impassable in a car. Entry from Pegarah Road. Drive and Walk.



Pegarah Private Nature Reserve:

Unique Bird, Fauna & Flora. 100 acres GPS mapped, signage, easy grade tracks. By appointment only. 03 6461 1201

Grassy Harbour:

One of the largest Little Blue Penguin colonies on King Island is found here. A walk along the breakwater just after dusk is very rewarding. No special lighting is available so you will need to take a torch. Please cover these with red cellophane (available from the Post Office in Currie) so the birds aren't blinded. If you don't feel like walking then just sit on the foreshore and some birds will come waddling past. Nearby, immediately behind Sandblow Beach is a large Short-tailed Shearwater colony. They also return to their burrows around dusk and the whole area can become very 'bird busy' for sometime. Be careful if driving as many birds cross the road and they have no vehicle sense. Why should they have?

Drive to the Grassy Port and follow signs.

Stokes Point:

The southern most point of King Island, where Bass Strait meets the Southern Ocean, is a barren, wind-swept and beautiful place that is a bit of an adventure to reach - but worth the trip. In a good wind, it is a

good place for seabirds such as Australian Gannett, albatross and Short-tailed Shearwater. Double-banded Plover overwinter on King Island, and can often be seen here during the winter months, while during the summer Ruddy Turnstone work the kelp on the beaches. White-fronted Chats are usually present in good numbers.. Drive to end of South Road.

Calcified Forest Walk:

Mainly a board-walk leading to the Calcified Forest, the heathland and scrub along this often has good numbers of small birds such as Olive Whistler, Silvereye, King Island Tasmanian Scrubwren and Thornbills, all the Honeyeaters and Painted Button-quail have been recorded. Park at the Calcified Forest car park and follow signs.

Copperhead Walk:

Leaving from Seal Rocks car park this walk wanders along the cliffs and is a great spot for seabirds such as Australian Gannet, Short-tailed Shearwater and albatross when there is a good wind and scrubland birds such as Olive Whistler, Silvereyes, King Island Tasmanian Scrubwren (KI species), Dusky (KI subspecies) and Flame Robins, when the wind is still.

Pearshape Lagoon:

This is a closed Nature Reserve but there is a good viewing spot from South Road. Waterbirds including a variety of ducks including, although rarely, Blue-billed and Pink Eared Duck have been recorded here. Others include Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe, Black Swan, Eurasian Coot and Purple Swamphen. Cape Barren Geese are sometimes present grazing along the northern bank although there are also a significant number of domestic geese present.

Burgess Bay and Netherby Point:

The rocky foreshore that runs south from the Currie Harbour to British Admiral Beach is a good spot for Ruddy Turnstone, White-fronted chat, Black and Pied Oystercatchers, Crested Turn and other shore birds. There is a road that leads along much of this coast so it is almost all drivable. Access is by driving to the Currie Museum, continuing past it down to the shoreline and turning south.

Little Porky Beach and Porky Creek Estuary:

The mix of fresh and salt water supports many shorebirds and some waterbirds. Drive down Barnes Road (just beside the Cheese

Factory at Loranna), turning south at the beach and parking on the headland. Walk south from there into Little Porky. This is a great beach walk and you can keep going if you wish into Whalebone and further south. Shorebirds and beach-nesting birds such as Hooded and Red-capped Plover, Black-fronted Dotterel, Red-necked Stints, Pacific Golden Plover, Pacific Gull and many others have been recorded here.

Shag Lagoon Bird Hide:

This small lagoon is very susceptible to water level variation, but can be a great spot for waterbirds including Latham's Snipe, and various visitors passing through as well as some locals. Always worth checking it is found on the Northern side of Heddles Road.

Yellow Rock Bush and Beach Walk to Coopers Bluff:

This is a gorgeous walk and includes opportunities to see bush, water and shorebirds. Sea Eagles are often observed here and it is home to a good number of King Island Black Currawong (KI subspecies - vulnerable). A short walk through the bush along the side of the Yellow Rock River provides opportunities to see small bushbirds such as KI Superb Fairy Wren (KI subspecies) KI Tasmanian Thornbill (KI subspecies) and waterbirds such as Black Swan and Musk Duck. The track leads over sand dunes and heathland onto a long Sandy Beach. Fairy Terns quite often set up a breeding colony on the edge of the Dunes near here, so be aware and keep well clear of any colony. If you are swooped you know they are nesting or have young, so take great care and move away. Fairy Terns are listed as Vulnerable and ideally you should keep at least 50 yards away from any nesting colony. Heading south along the beach, - you may have a shallow wade across the river at this point especially in the winter/spring when water levels are higher - walk, past the wreck of the Shannon to Coopers Bluff. This area is now changing as a result of Sea Level Rise. It used to be a perfect beach-nesting bird site in the higher dry sand, however while this is not always so these days, it is still worth checking for birds such as Hooded and Red-capped Plover, Black and Pied Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwits, Sanderlings, Red-necked Stints, Pacific Golden Plover and other birds of the shore. Park in the car park at the end of North Yellow Rock Road and walk from there. It's about 2 km each way to the Bluff.

NOTE as at Feb 2020: There is considerable erosion now occurring along this beach as a result of Sea Level rise. This will impact on the birdlife present on the beach. Advise only visiting at low tides.

The Springs and Lake Flannigan:

We are now back at the northern end of the island. The Springs Road heads to the west from Cape Wickham Road. Travelling over farmland you arrive at the southern end of Lake Flannigan. Just as the road heads up another hill you will see a short track to the right where you can park and take a walk along the Lake edge. A great spot for observing lots of waterbirds as well as bushbirds in the mature *Leptospermum* and *Melaleuca* forest that runs along its edge. Further along the road there is an interesting historical memorial to early settlers on the left and more open but unfarmed land and sand dune scrub. Many bush and scrubland birds can be seen here. Finally you come to a roundabout that looks out into the Southern Ocean and has the northern end of Phoques Bay - a very long sandy and good surfing beach - on the southern side and rocky foreshore on the northern. Birds found here include beach-nesting birds as well as your migratory waders, seabirds and Sea Eagles.

