

BELMONT WETLANDS STATE PARK BIRD REPORT **AUGUST 2024**

The Bureau's weather forecast for spring-summer indicates rainfall is likely to be within the typical seasonal range for much of eastern and southern Australia, and that warmer than average days and nights are very likely across most of Australia¹. Here we go again!

NINE-MILE BEACH. Shorebird sightings by Park Rangers in June/July were typically large groups of Silver Gull and small groups of Crested Tern congregating near 3rd Creek. This month Eastern Osprey and White-bellied Sea Eagle are being reported more often. Smaller migratory shorebirds (plover, oystercatcher, sandpiper, stint, avocet, dotterel, godwit) are expected, based on previous annual records. Excessive stormwater in 3rd Creek this winter has forged a new exit along the fore dune and into the ocean about 100m further south.

AT BELMONT LAGOON last weekend (11/8/24) a new bridge, boardwalk and viewing platform were officially opened along its western side². This facility enables birdwatching over a previously inaccessible area with dense reed marshes and bullrushes.

Besides the panoramic view this may also facilitate research on shy and nomadic wetlands species like bitterns³. New signage here highlights five other native bird species seen or heard calling around the Lagoon: Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Little Black Cormorant, Brown Honeyeater and White-bellied Sea Eagle⁴.

Visitors wishing to walk or cycle along this extended track can enter via the boardwalk in Alick Street or from Capri Close beside Cold Tea Creek.



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo have also been seen and heard here lately. For a list of other native species seen around the Park this month see⁵. Surveys over March-July recorded a stable number of coastal woodland species (21-24) compared with more sporadic tallies of wetland species (8-14). The latter may be more affected by climatic effects or diet factors.

Our next few reports will introduce some checks and tips to help improve your birdwatching. Let's start with a bird ID check. For this, you might want to download and/or print out a (free) copy of the Belmont Lagoon Bird Guide⁶.

Six common species called *honeyeater* (Striped, Brown, Lewin's, White-cheeked, Yellow-faced, and Blue-faced) inhabit this local area. Can you identify or describe each by visual feature recognition? OK, now what about by their call?

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¹ <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary>

² FAST extension <https://newy.com.au/2024/08/11/awabakal-fernleigh-track-a-new-chapter-in-hunter-regions-active-transport-legacy/>

³ Wetland bird species observed in this area include black swan, cormorant, bittern, ibis, heron and egret.

⁴ Google each species common name to select a weblink that provides further information of interest.

⁵ Birddata survey Belmont Lagoon 9/8/2024: <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10047988&h=ad24922e>

⁶ Belmont Lagoon Bird Guide. See the Belmont Wetlands State Park website www.belmontwetlands.com.au