



Little Tern



Australasian Darter



Black-necked Stork



Black-faced Monarch



Sooty Oystercatcher



White-throated Gerygone



Osprey

These habitat niches add up to satisfy food, shelter, roosting and breeding needs for a great variety of birds and provide a wonderful area for birdwatchers to explore.

This brochure provides information on 16 locations from coast to hinterland and a list of most bird species (nearly 330) which have been recorded in the Ballina Shire. Some vagrant and rare birds have been omitted from the list and only a small selection of birds sighted in each location has been provided, but many of the birds in the Ballina Shire sites and host the largest numbers of migratory shorebirds and terns in our Shire. Because the Richmond River flows into the ocean at Ballina, ocean birds are also often seen feeding between South Ballina and Lennox Head.

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Welcome to Birdwatching around Ballina Shire

Ballina Shire lies within the lands of the Bundjalung Nation who are the acknowledged traditional custodians of this land.

Ballina Shire covers an area of 485 square kilometres and, as part of the Northern Rivers, falls within what is known as the Macleay-McPherson overlap which incorporates sub-tropical and temperate climates creating wide biological diversity. The Shire has much to offer, from surf, sand and rock pools overlooked by broad jagged rock faces, steep hillsides covered with subtropical rainforest and remnants of the Big Scrub on the Alstonville Plateau; to wide areas of coastal heath, littoral rainforest and mangroves on the floodplains. Of particular significance is the imposing Richmond River with its beautiful tributaries, and Flat Rock at Lennox Head. These areas provide roosting and feeding sites and host the largest numbers of migratory shorebirds and terns in our Shire. Because the Richmond River flows into the ocean at Ballina, ocean birds are also often seen feeding between South Ballina and Lennox Head.



White-bellied Sea-eagle

Birds you may see in Ballina Shire

Key - Status relative to Ballina Shire;

Threatened Species - NSW

C = Common (should encounter)

U = Uncommon (reasonable chance of encountering)

R = Rare

I = Introduced species

- Red-capped Plover U
- Double-banded Plover C
- Lesser Sand Plover U**
- Greater Sand Plover C
- Black-fronted Dotterel C
- Masked Lapwing C
- Red-kneed Dotterel C
- Comb-crested Jacana C**
- Whimbrel C
- Little Curlew R
- Eastern Curlew C**
- Bar-tailed Godwit C
- Black-tailed Godwit R
- Ruddy Turnstone C
- Red Knot C
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper C
- Latham's Snipe C
- Terek Sandpiper U**
- Common Sandpiper R
- Red-necked Stint C
- Sanderling U
- Pectoral Sandpiper R
- Common Greenshank C
- Wood Sandpiper U
- Marsh Sandpiper U
- Osprey C**
- Black-shouldered Kite C
- Square-tailed Kite R**
- Pacific Baza C
- Wedge-tailed Eagle C
- Little Egler U
- Swamp Harrier C
- Spotted Harrier U**
- Grey Goshawk C
- Brown Goshawk C
- Collared Sparrowhawk U
- White-bellied Sea-Eagle C
- Whistling Kite C
- Brahminy Kite C
- Black Kite C
- Nankeen Kestrel C
- Australian Hobby C
- Brown Falcon U**
- Black Falcon R
- Peregrine Falcon U
- Frogmouths, Nightjars & Owls
- Tawny Frogmouth C
- White-throated Nightjar U
- Australian Owlet-nightjar C
- Barn Owl C
- Eastern Grass Owl R**
- Southern Boobook C
- Shorebirds
- Bush Stone-curlew U**
- Australian Pied Oystercatcher C**
- Sooty Oystercatcher C**
- Red-necked Avocet U
- Black-winged Stilt C
- Greater Flamingo R
- Pacific Golden Plover C
- Mynas, Sparrows & Piets**
- Golden-headed Cisticola C
- Tawny Grassbird C
- Common Starling I, U
- Common Myna I, C
- House Sparrow I, C
- Australasian Pipit U
- Finches, Mannikins & Flowerpeckers**
- Chestnut-breasted Mannikin C
- Red-browed Finch C
- Double-barred Finch C
- Mistletoebird C
- Reed-warblers & Grassbirds**
- Rose Robin R
- Jacky Winter R
- Eastern Yellow Robin C
- Pale-yellow Robin U
- Russet-tailed Thrush R
- Robins & Thrushes**
- Scrubwrens, Thornbills & Pardalotes
- Variegated Fairy-wren C
- Superb Fairy-wren C
- Red-backed Fairy-wren C
- Southern Emu-wren R
- Fairy-Wrens**
- Spangled Drongo C
- Willie Wagtail C
- Rufous Fantail R
- Grey Fantail C
- Silveryeye C
- Flycatchers & Monarchs**
- Torresian Crow C
- Restless Flycatcher C
- Magpie-lark C
- Spectacled Monarch U
- White-eared Monarch U**
- Black-faced Monarch U
- Robins & Thrushes**
- Rose Robin R
- Jacky Winter R
- Eastern Yellow Robin C
- Pale-yellow Robin U
- Russet-tailed Thrush R
- Honeyeaters**
- Scarlet Honeyeater C
- Stripped Honeyeater C
- Noisy Friarbird C
- Little Friarbird U
- Brown Honeyeater C
- White-cheeked Honeyeater C
- Yellow-throated Honeyeater C
- Blue-faced Honeyeater C
- Eastern Spinebill C
- Lewin's Honeyeater C
- Little Wattlebird C
- Red Wattlebird R
- Mangrove Honeyeater R
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater C
- Noisy Miner C
- Kingfishers, Bee-eaters & Rollers**
- Rainbow Bee-eater C
- Dollartbird C
- Azura Kingfisher U
- Forest Kingfisher U
- Sacred Kingfisher C
- Laughing Kookaburra C
- Grey Teal C
- Greater Scaup C
- Chestnut Teal C
- Freckled Duck R
- Musk Duck R
- Australian Wood Duck C
- Hoary-headed Grebe U
- Australasian Grebe C
- Herons, Egrets & Bitterns**
- Australian Little Bittern R
- Black Bittern R
- Nankeen Night-Heron U
- Striated Heron C
- Cattle Egret C
- White-necked Heron C
- Great Egret C
- Intermediate Egret C
- White-faced Heron C
- Little Egret C
- Eastern Reef Egret U

Bird Watching in and around Ballina

produced by members of
BirdLife Northern NSW Group
& Byron Bird Buddies

To Download a PDF of the brochure:
www.bryonbirdbuddies.com.au or discover@ballina.nsw.gov.au
or www.birdlife.org.au

For further information about Ballina contact Ballina Visitors Centre: discover@ballina.nsw.gov.au or phone 1800 777 666

To protect wildlife please leave your dog at home.
Fines apply in National Parks.

We encourage you to submit your bird observations to BirdLife Australia's national database BirdData www.birddata.birdlife.org.au/
In BirdData, all birdwatching locations in this brochure have been defined as Shared Sites and under Program/details submit as a General BirdData Survey.

Contributions from:
Richmond/Brunswick Birdwatchers & Ballina 2020 Shorebird Group members



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www.bryonbirdbuddies.com.au

www.birdlife.org.au

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Acknowledgements:

This brochure is an update of the "Bird Watching in and around Ballina Shire" brochure produced in 1995 by Barry Rutledge and June Harris of BirdLife Northern NSW.

Sponsors:

BirdLife Northern Rivers & Ballina Shire Council

Special thanks to photographers:

Anne Jones, Bruce McNaughton, Rose Wiseman & Hans Wohlmuth, for their wonderful photographs

Contributions from:

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Ballina Shire Birding Sites

Coastal 1-11 Hinterland 12-16

Distances are approximate and start, in general, from the Ballina CBD.

Coastal – Unless stated, the sites described are serviced by good tarmaced & adequate parking space is available. For all coastal NPWS parks & reserves, toilets are available & day carpark fees or NPWS annual pass apply

1: **28-705716, 153-646366**

Broken Head Nature Reserve (NPWS)

- Three Sisters Track

The Nature Reserve encompasses 98 hectares & includes near-shore rocky islands, beaches, rocky coves, grassy headlands, woodlands, littoral rainforests, ridges & gullies. Birdwatching can occur along Seven Mile Road at suitable stopping spots. **Access:** From Ballina drive north on The Coast Rd. for approx. 24 km, turn R onto Broken Head Reserve Rd. then 1.7 km to Broken Head NR carpark (fees apply). A 1.6 km walking track starts at the top of the grassy hill. The Seven Mile Beach Rd. on the left as you enter the Reserve, is a windy dirt road & takes you along the edge of the Reserve to Seven Mile Beach. **Birds sighted include:** Australian Brush-turkey; Australasian Gannet, Eastern Reef Egret, Sooty & Pied Oystercatchers, Emerald Dove, Crested, Little & Common Terns, Tawny Frogmouth, Rose Robin, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Eastern Whiptail, Little Shrike-thrush.

2: **28-771559, 153-593177**

Lennox Head Heathland – Banksia Coastal Reserve

The specialised habitat of coastal heath, as well as Banksia & Melaleuca communities, provides good birding at any time, but in spring a vast carpet of wildflowers attracts great numbers of birds. No amenities. **Access:** From Ballina drive north to Lennox Head on the Coast Rd, turn R at the Ballina Street roundabout (3rd exit) & continue north on Pacific Pde, turn L into Camp Drew Rd. travel 1.7 km to the end & park. The road traverses the west side of Lake Ainsworth. The Reserve, is a windy dirt road & takes you along the edge of the Reserve to Seven Mile Beach. **Birds sighted include:** Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Rainbow Bee-eater, Superb, Variegated & Red-backed Fairy-wrens, Little Wattlebird, Brown Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Golden-headed Cisticola, Tawny Grassbird, Golden-headed Figbird.

3: **28-799274, 153-594938 (Sec 1)**

-28-834037, 153-604390 (Sec 2)

Coastal Beach & Headland Track

A shared cycle & walking path from Lennox Head to Ballina (12 km in total) but can be broken into sections. Good map from Ballina Visitor Information Centre. It takes in a rugged coastal landscape with spectacular views; crossing headlands, wetlands & sandy beaches broken by patches of remnant coastal vegetation. Amenities: Flat Rock carpark. **Access:** Section 1 – Park at end of Ruthford Street Lennox Head & walk to Pat Morton Lookout. **Section 2** – Sharpes Beach to Flat Rock; park at Sharpes Beach off the Coast Road. **Section 3** – Flat Rock to Angels Beach – (Aboriginal Cultural Ways signage tells the cultural story); park at Flat Rock carpark off the Coast Road. For details of Flat Rock see Site 4. **Birds sighted include:** Noisy Pitta, Eastern Yellow Robin, Little Wattlebird, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Superb, Red-backed & Variegated Fairy-wrens, Australasian Gannet, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Sacred & Azure Kingfishers.

4: **28-842016, 153-604212**

Flat Rock

The rock platform divides Sharpes & Angels surfing beaches. At low tide several hectares of flat basalt rock are exposed which provide a resting place for hundreds of seabirds & migratory shorebirds. After rough weather rarities may be seen on the rock. **Access:** From Ballina drive north on Angels Beach Drive or The Coast Rd for approx. 4.5 km then turn R into Flat Rock Rd off the Coast Rd & then 600 m to parking. **Birds sighted include:** Eastern Reef Egret, Whimbrel, Wandering Tattler, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Red-necked Stint, Sooty & Pied Oystercatchers, Crested, Common & Little Terns, Common Noddy (occasional). Also, Shearwater, frigatebird & jaeger.

5: **28-844962, 153-585737**

Lake Chickiba

A tidal lake with marshy margins, surrounded by a wide mown area. **Access:** From Ballina drive west on the resident pali. **Access:** From Ballina travel west on River St approx. 3.5 km, turn left onto the Burns Point Ferry Rd. Cross the river (\$6.00 one way) & turn L after 430 m into South Ballina Beach.

Best visited during summer, one hour before high tide when a surprising variety of migratory shorebirds leave the surrounding mudflats to congregate at the lake. Bush birds can be seen in the adjacent forest. **Access:** From Ballina drive north on Angels Beach Drive. The lake is 3.3 km on the right. Park on the grass. No facilities. **Birds sighted include:** Osprey, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Terek Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler, Great Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Pacific Golden Plover, Lesser & Greater Sand Plovers, Sacred Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater.

6: **28-847964, 153-549348**

Ballina Botanical/Bicentennial Gardens

A circular lagoon surrounds a small tree-covered island. Around the lagoon is a wide mown area with attractive shade trees. Behind this again are tracks leading in & out of the paperbark forest. From the west side of a shared walk/bike track leads to Ballina Heights/Cumbalum through open swampland & melaleuca forests. **Access:** From Ballina drive north approx 1.7 km on Tamarind Drive, go past the exit to the airport, the Gardens & carpark are next on the right. Amenities available. **Birds sighted include:** Plumbed & Wandering Whistling-Ducks, Grey Teal, Pacific Baza, Black-shouldered Kite, Dusky Moorhen, Superb Fairy-wren, Eastern Yellow Robin, Varied Triller, Olive-backed Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Red-browed Finch, A Little Bittern has been recorded.

7: **28-868117, 153-591035**

Shaws Bay Loop Walk, North Wall & beyond

This loop is part of the cycle track & shared paths of Ballina Shire with access to the North Wall & the entrance to the Richmond River. Good for viewing ocean birds. Mainly a modified landscape with fringing mangroves, scattered shrubs & trees around Shaws Bay, but has a surprising diversity of birds. Also connects to the path over the Missingham Bridge either to Meldrum Park or back to Ballina CBD. Meldrum Park is good for viewing shorebirds that use the mudflats for feeding & an island in North Creek for roosting; best viewed with a spotting scope. **Access:** Best access the north wall path from the Lighthouse Beach carpark then complete the walking circuit along the River & around the Bay returning to the car park along Compton Drive (3.4 km). **Birds sighted include:** Vagrant ocean birds, a variety of terns, Australasian Gannet, Little Black Cormorant, Eastern Rosella, Australasian Dartie, Superb Fairy-wren, Australasian Figbird.

8: **28-855555, 153-520907 (No1)**

-28-864574, 153-505465 (No2)

Tevan Road Swamp & Emigrant Creek

The wetlands were once grazing land – now managed as compensatory habitat from the upgrade of the Ballina Bypass (M1). Consists of brackish water bodies, grasses, sedges, mangroves & Coastal Swamp Oak. The site extends over approx. 198 ha & is fed by the tidal waters of Emigrant Creek which forms the western boundary. **Access:** Two viewing points – from Ballina travel west along River St to the Ballina Interchange (4 km) & take the 2nd exit onto the Bruxner H-way (B60) to Lismore. **No1, Teven Road Swamp** – travel 350 m, turn R into Teven Rd, park in the informal parking bay L side of road 750 m from turn-off. **No2, Emigrant Creek Swamp** – from the interchange, travel along B60 for 1.6 km, just before the Emigrant Creek bridge there is a small parking bay on the right. **Note:** it's a very busy road, if travelling west access is across double lines; best keep travelling another 1.4 km & turn back at Westbridge Ln. Travelling east the parking bay is now on the L 100 m past the Emigrant Creek bridge. **Birds sighted include:** Black-winged Stilt, Glossy Ibis, Black-necked Stork, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper & many other shorebirds, waterbirds & bushbirds.

9: **28-879950, 153-573932**

Mobb's Bay/Richmond River Nature Reserve (NPWS)

Mobb's Bay is a deep indentation in the south bank of the lower Richmond River & is protected by the South Ballina wall. The Richmond River NR surrounds Mobb's Bay including the intertidal zone south of the southern break-wall. The reserve contains significant wetlands & coastal vegetation communities. A good spot for shorebirds feeding at low tide or roosting at high tide; Littoral Rainforest & Banksia woodland provide habitat for a wide variety of bush birds. An Osprey nest on the pole is used regularly by the resident pair. **Access:** From Ballina travel west on River St approx. 3.5 km, turn left onto the Burns Point Ferry Rd. Cross the river (\$6.00 one way) & turn L after 430 m into South Ballina Beach.

10: **28-875875, 153-584888**

South Ballina Beach

The long & open white sandy beach meets the South Ballina wall which forms a sheltered angle providing a haven for sea & shorebirds, including some rarities in rough weather. **Access:** From Mobbs Bay continue for 1 km along South Beach Rd to the end. A parking area is provided. No amenities. Birds can be roosting along the beach for a kilometre or more. Please do not walk through the flocks. **Birds sighted include:** Short-tailed & Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Pied Cormorant, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Red-necked Stint, Pied & Sooty Oystercatchers, Gull-billed, Caspian & Little Terns. Grey Ternlet has been recorded during rough weather.

11: **-29-026555, 153-438084**

Broadwater National Park (NPWS)

Situated between the villages of Broadwater & Evans Head, the park supports a variety of vegetation landscapes including coastal heathland, coastal swamp, open eucalypt forest, wetlands and littoral rainforest. Banksia is particularly prevalent. **Access:** from Ballina travel west along River St to the Ballina Interchange (4 km), take the 1st exit (Pacific H-way - M1) travel 24 km & exit at Broadwater onto the Broadwater-Evans Head Rd. There are 2 survey areas – **Fins Fire Trail (1)** from Broadwater travel 2 km & turn L onto Broadwater Beach Rd & drive to the end, turning into Fins Fire Trail picnic area & beach access (3 km). The walking trail is about 2 km long & 5 km south along STW (2) from Broadwater travel 10 km to Sewage Rd & park on either side of the road. No vehicle access into the ponds but good birding on the roadside. **Birds sighted include:** Brown Quail, Black-shouldered Kite, Swamp Harrier, Dollahawk, Superb, Variegated & Red-backed Fairy-wrens, White-cheeked & sometimes Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, Tawny Grassbird.

12: **-28-882832, 153-464799**

Uralba Nature Reserve - NS Trail (NPWS)

The Nature Reserve protects a small area of remnant native vegetation of the Blackwall Range & is surrounded by a variety of agricultural land uses. There is Blackbutt forest on the ridge lines & remnant subtropical & warm temperate rainforest in the gullies & lower elevations. **Access:** From Ballina travel west along River St to the Ballina Interchange (4 km), take the 2nd exit Bruxner H-way (B60) to Lismore. Travel approx 3 km, turn L into Uralba Rd, travel 4.2 km then L into Forest Road & drive another 1.6 km to the gate. A fire trail then traverses the reserve (no through road & no amenities). Walk from the gate along the fire trail to the southern boundary of the reserve (2 km return).

13: **-28-902366, 153-410488**

Victoria Park Nature Reserve (NPWS)

Victoria Park NR is one of six reserves that protect the remnants of the original Big Scrub. They are the surviving stands of what was once the largest area of sub-tropical rainforest in Australia, with over 150 plant species including White Booyong, Red Bean, Moreton Bay Fig & the extremely rare Jointed Baloghia.

Access: From Ballina travel west along River St to the Ballina Interchange (4 km), take the 2nd exit Bruxner H-way (B60) to Lismore. Travel approx. 3 km, turn L into Uralba Rd, after another 5.7 km, turn R onto Marom Creek Rd, drive 7.5 km, then turn L onto Tuckean Island Rd. Note – a narrow dirt road, advisable not to travel during flood periods & only stop on the roadside where it is safe to do so. Tuckean Island is visible on the right as a hill which was once surrounded by swamp. After 5 km the Reserve is on the L, travel another 2.5 km, turn L into Hoare Lane, travel another 4.7 km, turn L onto the Broadwater Rd & back to Ballina either via Bagotville Rd or the Pacific H-way (M1) via Wardell Rd. **Birds sighted include:** Brown Quail, Black Swan, Whistling Kite, Dollarbird, Tawny Goshawk, White-throated Gerygone, Spangled Drongo, Spangled Drongo, Leaden Flycatcher, Spangled Drongo, Dollarbird, Rufous Songlark, Forest Kingfisher.

14: **-28-951695, 153-368291**

Tuckean Nature Reserve & Canals (NPWS)

The Reserve vegetation is dominated by large paperbarks & swamp oaks which become inundated in wet weather, otherwise surrounded by grazing properties, cane farms & melaleuca farms with scattered paddock trees.

Access: Wandering Duck, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Pelican, Great & Little Egrets, Eurasian Coot, Crested Jacana, Black-fronted Dotterel, Rainbow Bee-eater, Superb & Red-backed Fairy-wrens, Scarlet Honeyeater.

15: **-28-830078, 153-447633**

Tosha Falls – Alstonville

A small area, just five minutes from the town centre, with a short walk from the carpark leading to the waterfalls. On the way, the mowed informal path passes the fenced Alstonville Sewage Treatment Ponds on the R. A small vegetated creek on the R was once part of the Big Scrub rainforest, now mostly secondary growth forest with grasses, sedges & exotic weeds alongside the creek. There are also ponds on the R of the carpark. Council is planning to upgrade facilities to include toilets.

Access: From Ballina travel 17 km to Alstonville on the Bruxner Hwy, then next R onto Teven Rd travel 2 km, go L into Johnston Rd then about 800 m to the end & park. There is a small picnic area on the R along Johnston Rd. **Birds sighted include:** Red-backed & Superb Fairy-wrens, Green Catbird, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Teal, Black-fronted Dotterel.

16: **-28-830078, 153-447633**

Bagotville Barrage

The Barrage is a barrier limiting the mixing of seawater with the freshwater of the Tuckean Swamp. Hectares of water



1: **28-705716, 153-646366**

Australasian Gannet

Drive, then 5.2 km to the Bay & Reserve. Several short tracks provide access from the road to the Bay. Facilities at Sth. Ballina Beach Caravan Park. **Birds sighted include:** Australasian Darter, Striated Heron, Osprey, Whistling Kite, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Mangrove Gerygone, Eastern Whiptail.

2: **28-847964, 153-584888**

South Ballina Beach

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Broadwater National Park (NPWS)

Several short tracks provide access from the road to the Bay. Facilities at Sth. Ballina Beach Caravan Park. **Birds sighted include:** Australasian Darter, Striated Heron, Osprey, Whistling Kite, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Mangrove Gerygone, Eastern Whiptail.

4: **-28-844962, 153-585737**

Lake Chickiba

A tidal lake with marshy margins, surrounded by a wide mown area. **Access:** From Ballina drive west on the Burns Point Ferry Rd. Cross the river (\$6.00 one way) & turn L after 430 m into South Ballina Beach.

5: **28-844962, 153-585737**

Black-necked Stork

The resident pair is used regularly by the local community. **Access:** From Ballina travel west on River St approx. 3.5 km, turn