BIRDING TRAILS

Avalon and Hovells Creek

Hovells Creek rises in the You Yangs and meanders across the plain to Limeburners Lagoon at Avalon. This birding trail starts at Avalon and works its way upstream through Lara to the You Yangs passing through a diverse range of habitats, including coast, saltmarsh, lake, forest and rocky outcrops. All locations are open to the public and easily accessible.

Scan the QR code to view eBird Hotspot details.

Getting There

Avalon Beach is 20km north of Geelong and a one hour drive from Melbourne.

Birdwatching Tips

- bring binoculars and camera
- carry drinking water
- wear suitable waterproof footwear
- spray with insect repellent
- be sun safe
- watch out for snakes.

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL

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A

Avalon Beach

1.7km, 50 minutes, return walk

Park at the boat ramp carpark just off Avalon Foreshore Road. Head west to the small beach and then return east to walk along the main beach. Migratory shorebirds frequent these beaches from September to March with Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper being the most common. Waterbirds that may be found near the beach include Silver Gull, Black Swan, Crested Tern, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant while White-fronted Chat, Superb Fairy-wren, Welcome Swallow and Australian Magpie can be found in the low coastal vegetation. Plan your visit for low tide for the best views of shorebirds.

B

Avalon Salt Works – Pond A10

30 minutes

Park in the small pull off on the sweeping bend on Avalon Foreshore Road just before the road crosses Pond A10, the large pond immediately behind the houses at Avalon Beach.

Pond A10 is a decommissioned saltworks pond providing excellent habitat for migratory shorebirds (August to March) such as Red-necked stint, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank. A spotting scope is useful for finding less common species among the roosting and feeding flocks. Check the small terns carefully as both Fairy and Little Tern occur here. Other shorebirds include Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Banded Stilt, Masked Lapwing and Red-capped Plover.
White-fronted Chat, Superb Fairywren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill and House Sparrow are common in the bushes.

C

Limeburners Lagoon (Hovells Creek) Flora and Fauna Reserve and Lime Burners Bay Wildlife Reserve

3.5km, 1.5hour, return

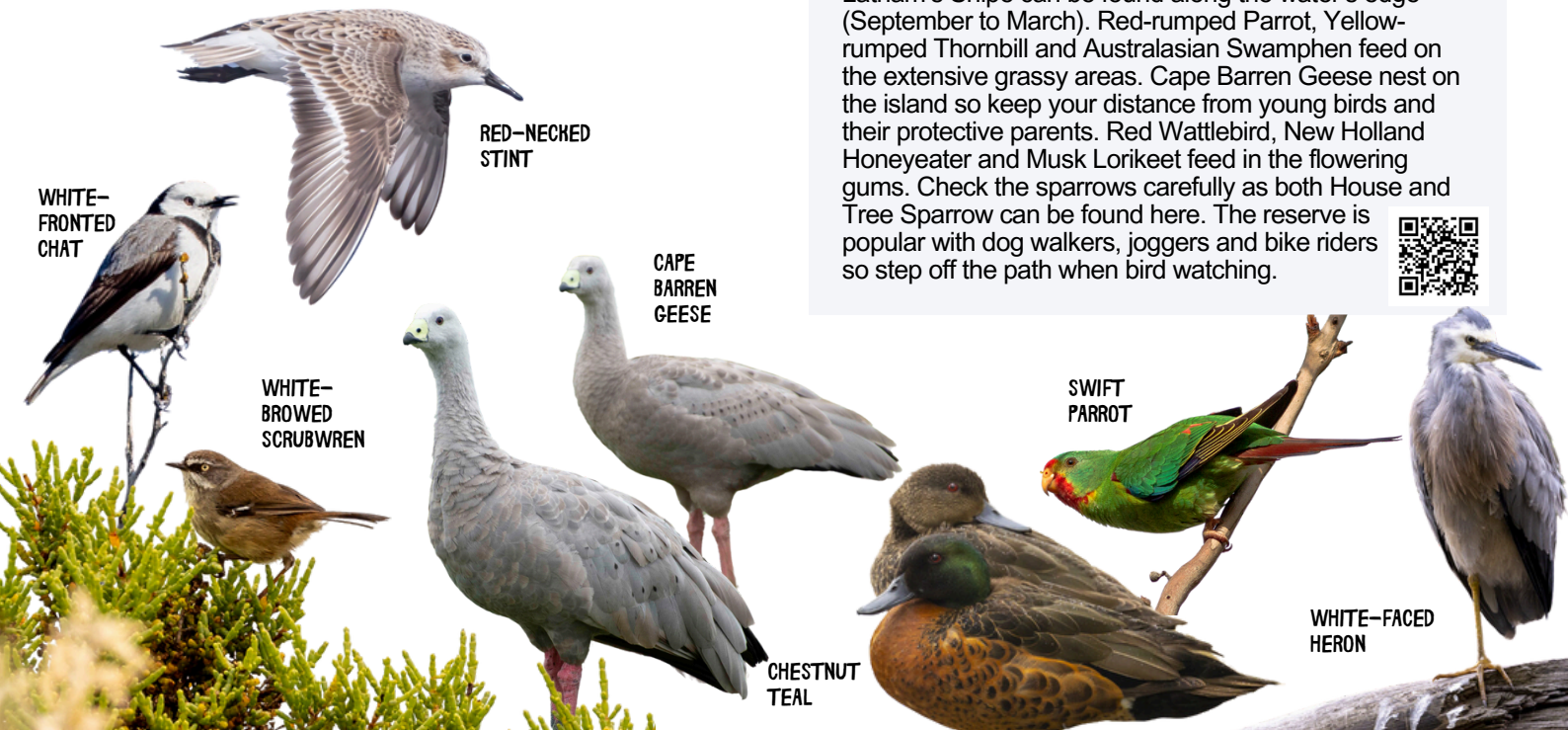
Park in the carpark at the end of Foreshore Rd, Corio. From the carpark check the structures and boats for cormorants and the sandspit for terns. Walk north along Hovells Creek Trail checking for waterbirds. Superb Fairywren and Common Starling are very common along the trail and Red-browed Finch and raptors are often found in the paddocks. Black Swan, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant and White-faced Heron can be found along the creek. Large numbers of Black Swan have been counted in this reserve. Traverse the boardwalk which crosses the saltmarsh and then passes through the Grey Mangroves to the creek bank. Return the way you came. Look for Willie Wagtail, Superb Fairywren, Striated Fieldwren and White-fronted Chat in the mangroves. This path is popular with dog walkers, joggers and bike riders so step off the path when you stop to birdwatch.

D

Lara Lake Reserve

2km, 1hr, circuit

Park at the Lara Swimming Pool car park on Forest Road. The reserve is on a creek line with a large lake and smaller wetlands. Follow the path east along the creek, past the playground until you reach the lake. Circumnavigate the large lake and return along the other side of the creek. Eurasian Coot, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck and Chestnut Teal are common here. Latham's Snipe can be found along the water's edge (September to March). Red-rumped Parrot, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Australasian Swamphen feed on the extensive grassy areas. Cape Barren Geese nest on the island so keep your distance from young birds and their protective parents. Red Wattlebird, New Holland Honeyeater and Musk Lorikeet feed in the flowering gums. Check the sparrows carefully as both House and Tree Sparrow can be found here. The reserve is popular with dog walkers, joggers and bike riders so step off the path when bird watching.



BIRDING TRAILS

Avalon and Hovells Creek

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATER

E

Serendip Sanctuary

2.0km, 1.5hr, return

Park in the sanctuary car park at 100 Windermere Rd, Lara. Open hours are 8am to 4pm. The sanctuary has several lakes and wetlands in a grassy woodland representative of the Western Volcanic Plains. There are four interconnecting, well-signed walks that pass through the enclosures and on to the wilder areas. For a first visit, walk through the enclosures then take the main track north to cross the lake at the dam wall and continue to the bird hide. Serendip Lake supports high numbers of waterfowl including at times thousands of Magpie Geese; other ducks include Pacific Black Duck and Grey and Chestnut Teal. Black-fronted Dotterel, Pied Stilt, Australian White ibis and Yellow-billed Spoonbill feed along the water's edge. Watch out for both Whistling and Black Kite and check carefully for Little Eagle. The flowering trees attract Rainbow, Musk, Purple-crowned and Little Lorikeet. In the bushland listen for the calls of Weebill, White-browed Scrubwren and Yellow, Yellow-Rumped and Brown Thornbill. This is a reliable place to find Eastern Shrike-tit, Dusky Woodswallow, Restless Flycatcher and White-winged Chough.
For more information on the sanctuary see: https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/serendip-sanctuary.

F

You Yangs Regional Park – Big Rock

2.9km, 1hr 20m, return

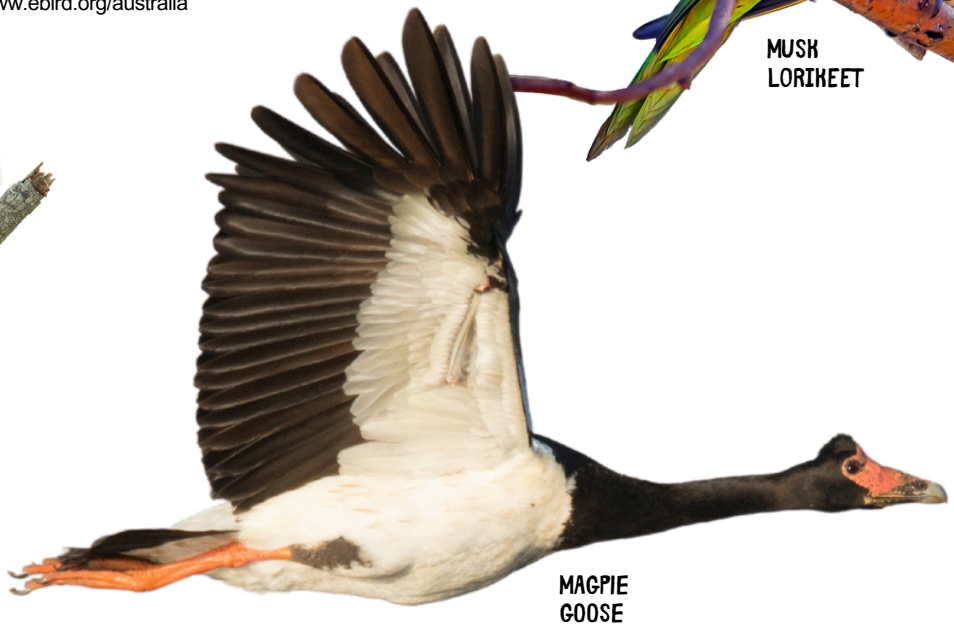
Park at the main visitor centre carpark on Turntable Drive. Take the Big Rock Track north from the carpark, follow the 900m circuit around the base of Big Rock and then return to the carpark. In cooler months watch out for Swift Parrot in the flowering trees around the carpark. Common Honeyeaters include Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-faced, White-plumed and Brown Headed Honeyeater; you might also hear the strident call of the Black-chinned Honeyeater. Weebill, Scarlet Robin, Spotted and Striated Pardalote and Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Striated, Brown and Buff-rumped Thornbill are present all year.

MUSK LORIKEET

Information

- **Geelong Field Naturalists Club** www.gfnc.org.au
- **eBird Australia** www.ebird.org/australia

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO



MAGPIE GOOSE

STRIATED PARDALOTE

FAIRY TERN

COMMON GREENSHANK