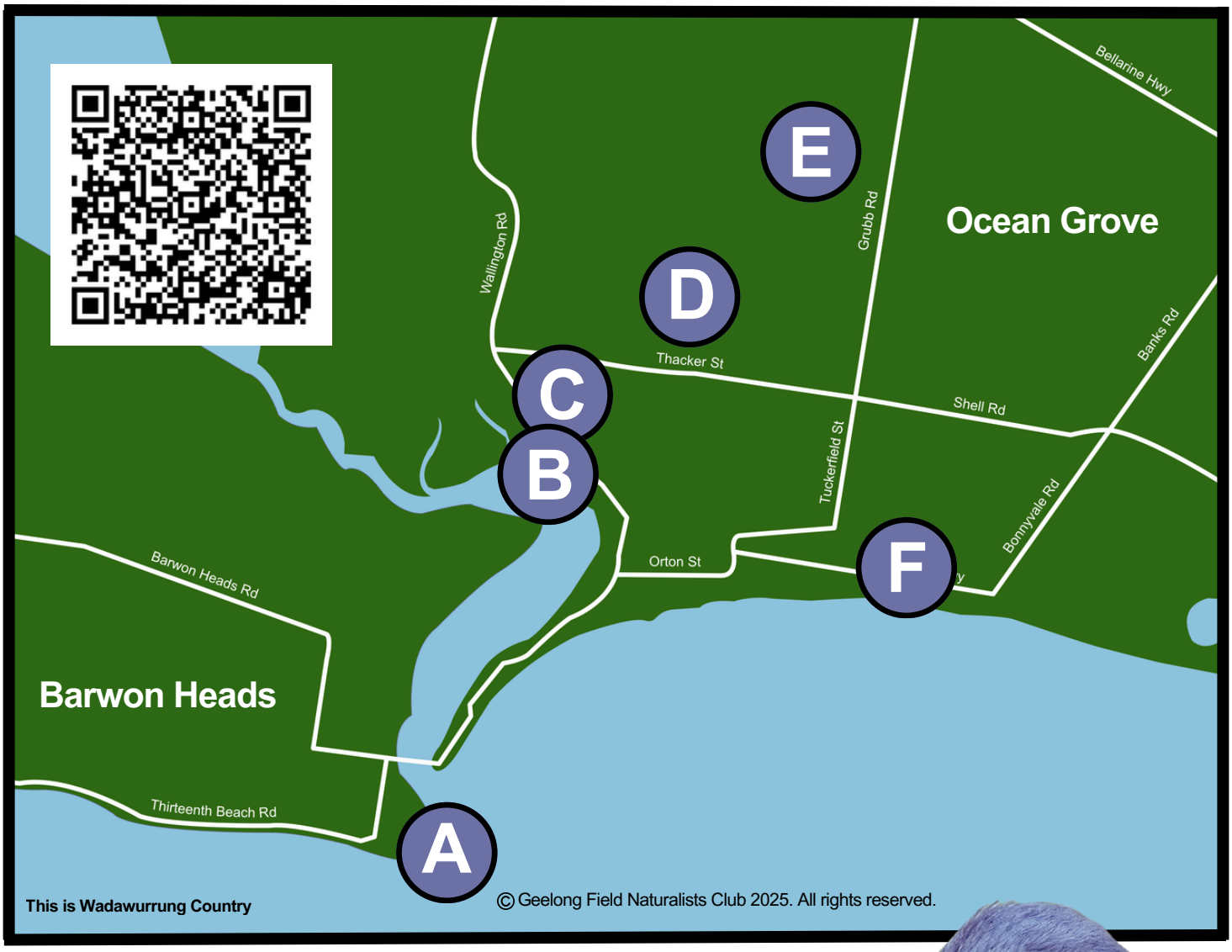
BIRDING TRAILS

Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove

Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads offer birdwatchers a range of birding habitats including ocean beaches, the Barwon River Estuary and coastal wetlands and a significant stand of native bushland at Ocean Grove Nature Reserve. All sites are open to the public and easily accessible.



Getting There

Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads are on the southern coast of the Bellarine Peninsula, a 1.5 hour drive from Melbourne via Geelong. Buses from Geelong provide access via public transport.

Information

- **Geelong Field Naturalists Club** www.gfnc.org.au
- **eBird Australia** www.ebird.org/australia
- **Friends of OGNR** www.fognr.wordpress.com
- **Barwon Bluff** www.barwonbluff.com.au

Birdwatching Tips

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

EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN

BIRDING TRAILS

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SPOTTED PARDALOTE

A Barwon Bluff and River Mouth

2.0 km, 1 hr, return

Park at the eastern end of Bluff Road in Barwon Heads. Follow the trail around the Bluff, checking the rocks at the river mouth for Pacific Golden-Plover and Red-necked Stint (summer), the rock platforms below the Bluff for Sooty Oystercatcher and the eastern end of Thirteenth Beach for Hooded Plover. Out to sea you may spot Shy and Black-browed Albatross (winter), Australasian Gannet and shearwaters (summer). Nankeen Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon can be seen hunting for prey above the cliff tops.

B Barwon River Estuary

3.0 km, 1.5 hr, return

Park at the Ocean Grove Boat Ramp car park at the end of Guthridge Street. Proceed south along the riverbank path towards the river mouth. After passing the viewing platform with interpretive signs, continue for 1 km to the wooden steps leading to the beach at Emergency Marker BUK305. Return the way you came. At low tide in the warmer months check the river mudflats for migratory shorebirds such as Red-necked Stint and Common Greenshank. Pacific Gull, Caspian Tern, ducks, cormorants, Royal Spoonbill and Pied Oystercatcher are present all year round. Check the riverside vegetation for honeyeaters and other bush birds.

C Blue Waters Lake Reserve

1.4 km, 1 hr, circuit walk

Park on the vacant block at the intersection of Blue Waters Drive and Riviera Crescent, Ocean Grove. Follow the short entry path and then continue the walk around the lake. Abundant waterfowl are found here including ducks, grebes, spoonbills, herons and cormorants. The lakeside vegetation provides habitat for smaller birds such as honeyeaters, Australian Reed Warbler (warmer months) and Little Grassbird. Search the reedbeds for crakes and rails and the willows for Nankeen Night-Heron. There are excellent opportunities for bird photography.

D Yellow Gums Nature Reserve

1.0 km, 1 hr, circuit walk

Park at the reserve entrance gate in Yellow Gum Drive, Ocean Grove. Follow the trail to the western end of the reserve and take the Conran Drive exit. Walk back along Goandra Drive checking the taller gums for nectar feeders. This is an excellent area for cockatoos and parrots such as Eastern Rosella. Swift Parrot feed here on their migration from Tasmania in the autumn and on the return trip in spring. Watch out for Rainbow, Musk, Purple-crowned, Scaly-breasted and Little Lorikeet. You may also see hybrid lorikeets. The alarm calls of the Noisy Miner will alert you to one of the many raptors often seen flying overhead. Several waterbirds nest in the larger trees. Straw-necked Ibis can be seen flying overhead in spring as they fly to and from their breeding colony on Mud Islands.

E Ocean Grove Nature Reserve

Buluk Lake Track 1.0 km, 40 min, circuit walk
North and West Track Walk 4.0 km, 2 hr, circuit walk

Enter from Grubb Rd, Ocean Grove, pass through the first carpark, and continue to the central carpark located at the end of the road. For a short walk, take the all-abilities Buluk Lake Track. For a longer option, start on Banksia Trail and after 100m go through the gate. Head west on North Track to the reserve's northwest corner, then follow West Track south for 500m, then turn east on the unsigned Cuthbertson Track until it intersects the unsigned Wurack/Banksia Trail. Turn left along Wurack/Banksia Trail and return to the carpark.

Bush birds such as Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Shrikethrush, Brown Thornbill and Yellow-rumped Thornbill are present all year. Raptors including Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Brown Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black Kite and Whistling Kite may also be seen. Watch for migrating flocks of Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeater in autumn. Flame and Pink Robin overwinter here. Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistler, Dusky Woodswallow and Tree Martin are present in the warmer months.

F Begola Wetlands

1.0 km, 30 min, circuit walk

Park in Emperor Drive, Ocean Grove near Roditis Drive. The walk around the lake is partly on a track but mostly on mown grass. Many ducks and water birds can be seen here including Hardhead and Freckled Duck. Check for crakes and rails such as Spotless Crake along the muddy edges near the reeds.

The flowering Banksias attract many honeyeaters so watch out for Little Wattlebird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and New Holland Honeyeater. Up to 100 Latham's Snipe are recorded annually here between September and February. Look for them along the muddy edges or in the well grassed area at the western end of the wetlands.

ROYAL SPOONBILL