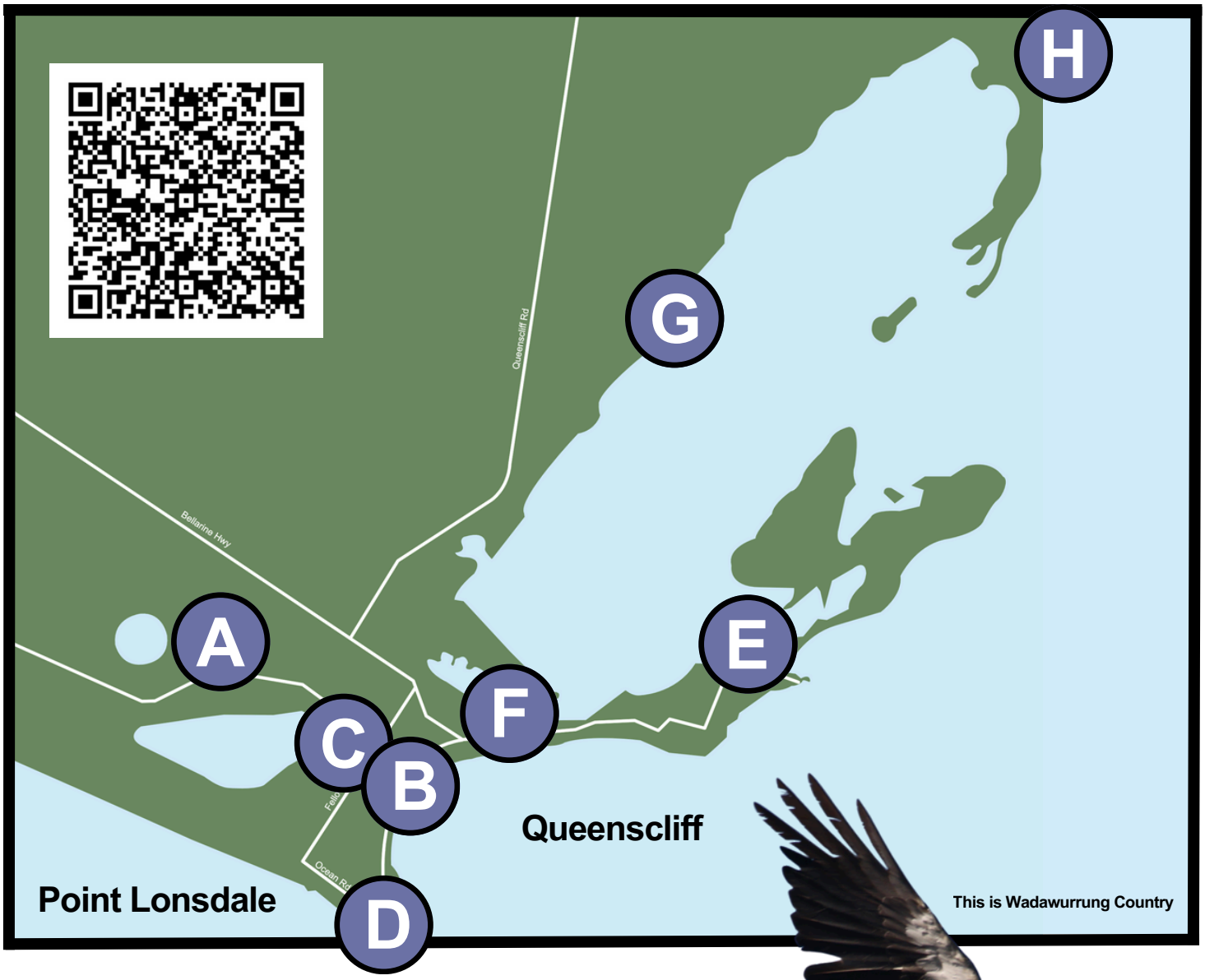
BIRDING TRAILS

Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff

Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff offer birdwatchers a range of birding habitats including ocean beaches, samphire ringed wetlands, remnant coastal woodland and the extensive mudflats of Swan Bay. All sites are open to the public and easily accessible.



Getting There

Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff are on the southern eastern end of the Bellarine Peninsula and are a 1.5 hour drive from Melbourne via Geelong. Buses from Geelong provide access via public transport.

Birdwatching Tips

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

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HOODED PLOVER

A Freshwater Lake

400 m, 1 hr, return P

Park in the small carpark on Clows Lane, Marcus Hill, 650m north of Shell Road. A short track through coastal woodland leads directly to the lake. Many bush birds such as Grey Fantail, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren and Red-browed Finch inhabit the woodland. Look for Mistletoebird feeding on Wire-leaved Mistletoe growing on acacias.
When full, the lake supports large numbers of waterfowl. including Australian Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Pink-eared Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Chestnut Teal, Hardhead, Black Swan, Eurasian Coot and Hoary-headed Grebe. Visit early in the day with the sun behind you for the best views across the lake. As the lake dries, mudflats are exposed and the salinity increases. In these conditions Red-capped Plover, Hooded Plover, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Pied Stilt, Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet may be seen.

B Emilys Pond

0.3 km, 0.5 hr, circuit walk

Park in Emily Street, Point Lonsdale, adjacent to Emily's Pond. A gate leads to a gravel path that encircles this small stormwater pond. This is a good spot for children as the waterfowl, often with young, allow very close approach. You are likely to see Eurasian Coot, Hoary-headed Grebe, Pacific Black Duck and Chestnut Teal. From the small bridge at the southern end, scan the edge of the Lake Victoria channel for Lewin's Rail.

C Lake Victoria

1.0 km, 1 hr, return P

Park at the small, informal car park at the far western end of Emily Street, Point Lonsdale. Walk through the kissing gate and follow the track, with the lake on your right and the golf course ponds, remnants of shell grit mining, on your left. Long trousers are recommended as some of the track-side vegetation is prickly. A spotting scope is useful for observing shorebirds and distant waterbirds. When full, the lake can hold large numbers of salt tolerant species such as Black Swan, Eurasian Coot, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, and Great Crested Grebe. In the warmer months the edges of the lake and the golf course ponds provide excellent habitat for migratory shorebirds such as Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank. Red-capped Plover may be seen year-round, and Hooded Plover in autumn. Little Egret, Fairy Tern and Little Tern feed here. Scan the edges adjacent to vegetation for Australian Spotted Crake and Lewin's Rail.

D Point Lonsdale Lighthouse

0.1 km, 0.5 to 1.0 hr, return P

Park near the lighthouse at the southern end of the Point Lonsdale Road, Point Lonsdale. Follow the steps up to the lighthouse and to a spectacular view of the sea cliffs overlooking The Rip. The wooden building at the base of the lighthouse provides a sheltered spot from which to observe seabirds on windy days. A spotting scope is useful for observing birds out to sea. Regularly seen species include Pacific Gull, Australasian Gannet, Crested Tern, Little Pied Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant and Black-faced Cormorant. Watch for Fluttering Shearwater year-round and Short-tailed Shearwater from October to May. In blustery winter weather you are likely to also see Shy Albatross and Black-browed Albatross.

E Queenscliff Mudflats

2.0 km, 1.0 hr, return P

Park at the Queenscliff Boat Ramp carpark, Hesse Street, Queenscliff. Walk east along the shoreline to the eastern side of the bridge, scanning the water and mudflats as you go. Plan your visit for low tide so that the mudflats are exposed. Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Caspian Tern, Crested Tern, Great Egret, Little Egret, Royal Spoonbill, White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Silver Gull and Pacific Gull can be seen year-round. Migratory shorebirds such as Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank can be seen on the mudflats between November and March.

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK

BIRDING TRAILS

Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff

F Lakers Cutting

0.2 km, 0.5 hr, return

Park in Ward Rd near Murray Rd, Point Lonsdale. A short board walk on the north side of Murray Rd leads across the salt marsh to a viewing platform. Watch for trains at the crossing. Shell grit mining at Lakers Cutting between 1955 and 1973 removed a large amount of material and allowed a seagrass meadow to develop. Many waterbirds feed here including Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Caspian Tern, Royal Spoonbill, Hoary-headed Grebe, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Pacific Gull and Little Pied Cormorant.

G Swan Bay Jetty

0.2 km, 0.5 hr, return P

Park at the Swan Bay Boat Ramp at the eastern end of Swan Bay Rd, Swan Bay. The long jetty and moored boats provide roosts for Crested Tern, Little Pied Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Pacific Gull and Crested Tern. Australian Pelican, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, White-faced Heron and Royal Spoonbill feed at the water's edge while Caspian Tern fly overhead searching for food. Scan the saltmarsh for White-fronted Chat, Superb Fairywren and Striated Fieldwren. In the winter be on the alert for Blue-winged Parrot.

H Edwards Point

5.6 km, 3.0 hr, circuit walk P

Park on the grass at the east end of Beach Rd, St Leonards. Sections of this walk can be wet and muddy. Take the well-formed gravel path to Two Bays Lookout that starts 100m from the eastern end of Beach Rd. As you pass through the coastal woodland watch for bush birds such as Mistletoebird, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Red-browed Finch, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Little Wattlebird and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.
As the woodland gives way to saltmarsh you might see Common Greenshank and White-fronted Chat. When you reach a boardwalk that crosses saltmarsh listen for Striated Fieldwren singing from a prominent perch. Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Brown Falcon fly overhead. At the fork where the Coastal Walk returns to the car park, continue to Two Bays Lookout. After enjoying the view from the lookout return along the beach, joining the Coastal Walk at about the half-way point. Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Stint feed along the shoreline year-round, joined in the warmer months by Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone. Fairy Tern, Crested Tern and Caspian Tern dive in the shallows close by the shore.

Information

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

MISTLETOEBIRD – KARYN BROWN

CRESTED TERN

RED-NECKED STINT

BLACK SWAN