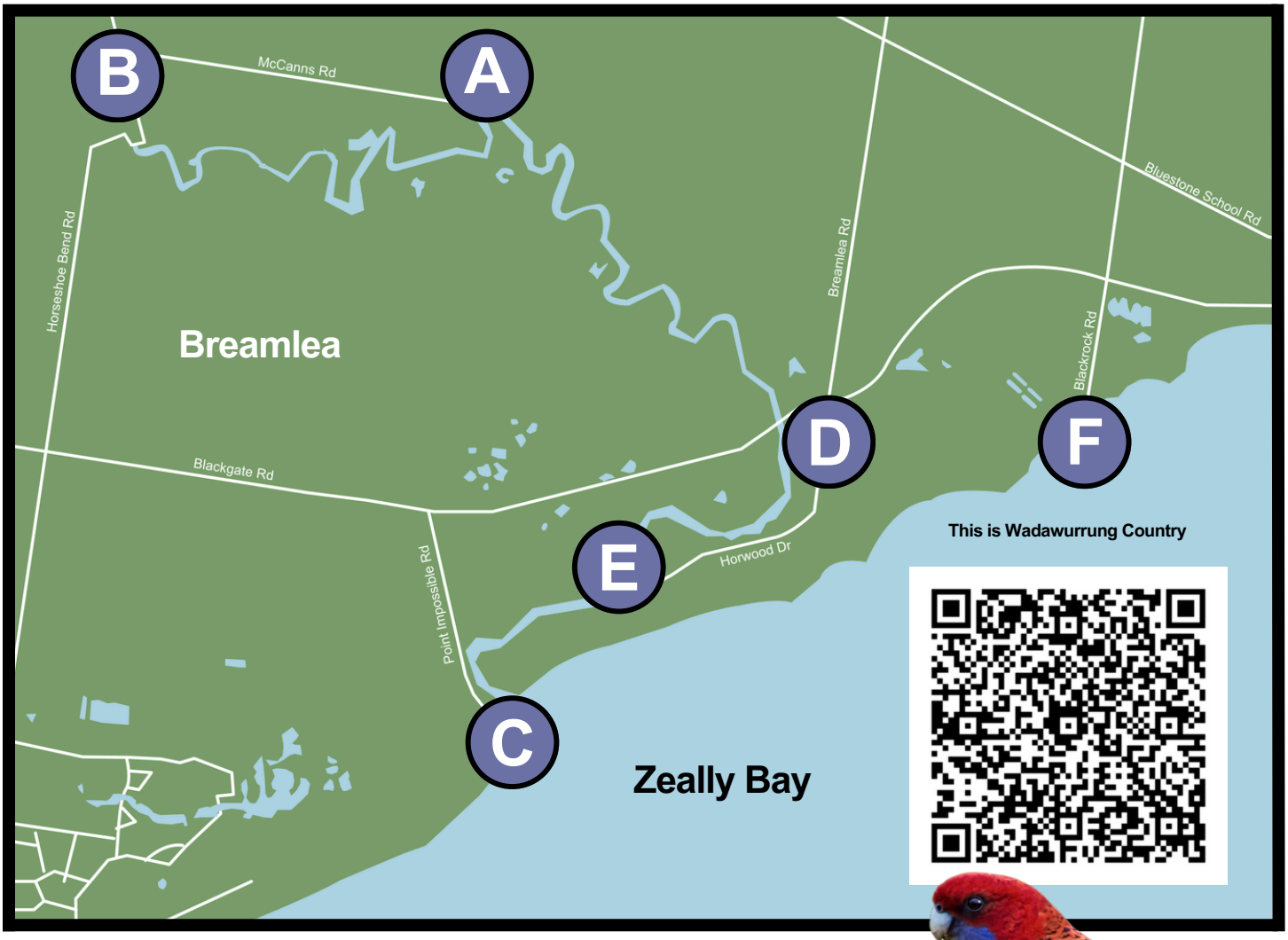
BIRDING TRAILS

Thompson Creek and Adjacent Coast

Thompson Creek originates in the Gherang region southwest of Geelong. The creek flows in an easterly direction to Connewarre where it turns south to enter the sea at Breamlea. This trail visits riverine vegetation, swamps and salt marshes on the lower reaches of Thompson Creek and the adjacent coastline.

All locations are open to the public and easily accessible. Scan the QR code to view eBird Hotspot details.



Getting There

These locations are a short drive from Geelong.

Birdwatching Tips

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

CRIMSON ROSELLA

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BIRDING TRAILS

Thompson Creek and Adjacent Coast

A

Dans Nature Reserve

500m, 30 minutes

Park in the carpark in the reserve at the eastern end of McCanns Road. This one-hectare reserve is predominantly grassland with remnant riparian woodland along Thompson Creek and plantations of sheoak, wattle and paperbark. With its location on the creek line, it has an impressive diversity of birds.

Stroll around the perimeter of the open area. Look in the open grassy areas for Superb Fairywren, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Red-browed Finch and in the bushes and trees for White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Grey Shrikethrush. Grey Fantail, New Holland Honeyeater and Little and Red Wattlebird.

Sit at the picnic table or walk down to the jetty to look for birds swimming in the water or flying along the creek. You may see Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe, Pacific Black Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Australian White and Straw-necked Ibis, cormorants and other waterbirds. Listen for Australian Reed Warbler (warmer months), Golden-headed Cisticola and Little Grassbird calling from the reeds. Scan the tops of the tall trees on the southern side of Thompson Creek for Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Crimson and Eastern Rosella, Spotted Pardalote, Crested Pigeon, Spotted Dove and White-plumed Honeyeater. Check the fence lines of the adjacent paddocks in winter for Flame Robin.

B

Rice Nature Reserve

800m, 40 minutes, return

Park in the carpark off Horseshoe Bend Road.
This small but well vegetated reserve is a delight to visit at any time of the year. Walk south-west across the grassed area to the top of the rise where you will find a walking track leading down the slope to the billabong and Thompson Creek. In the wetlands you can find Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Black Swan, Great Egret, White-faced Heron, ibises, spoonbills, Australasian Grebe, Black-fronted Dotterel and Latham's Snipe (warmer months). In the reed beds you may hear Spotless Crake and Australian Reed Warbler (warmer months), Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola. Numerous honeyeaters and parrots feed in the flowers of gums and banksias. Watch for cockatoos and raptors flying overhead, Superb Fairywren, Brown Thornbill, Red-browed Finch and White-browed Scrubwren hopping on the ground and through the dense shrubs, and Eastern Shrike-tit and Spotted and Striated Pardalote calling from the trees.

C

Point Impossible

500m, 1 hr, return

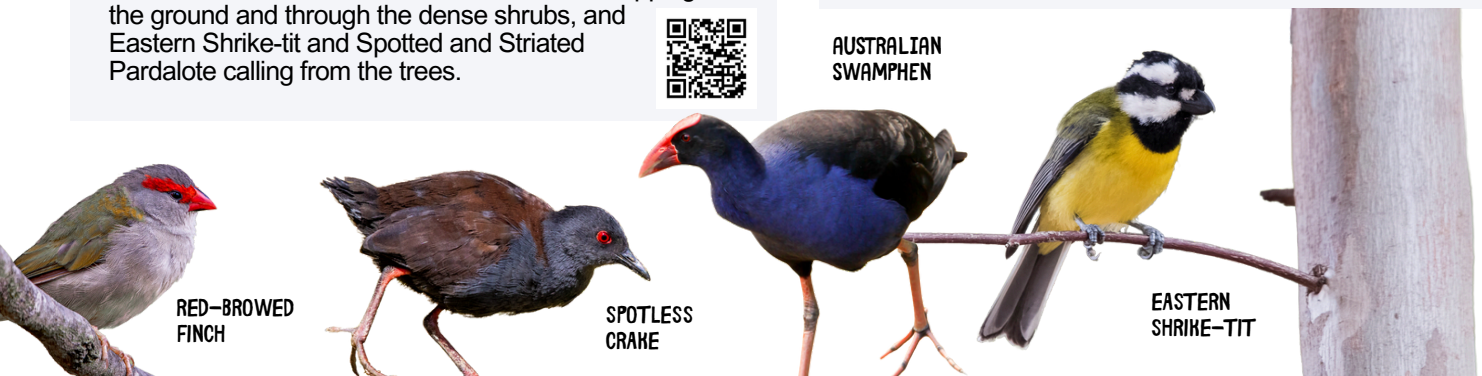
Park in the carpark at the end of Point Impossible Rd. From the carpark scan the shoreline and sea for Australasian Gannet, Crested and Caspian Tern and Silver and Pacific Gull. On a windy winter's day check just above the waves for Shy and Black-browed Albatross. In the nearby coastal scrub you may see or hear Singing Honeyeater, Superb Fairywren, Silvereye and Striated Fieldwren. Walk down the short flight of steps that lead to the mouth of the Thompson Creek. The sandy beach provides good habitat for Hooded Plover, Red-capped Plover, Red-necked Stint and Double-banded Plover (February-September). Walk back up the creek until you obtain a good view of the Thompson Creek Estuary from where you can usually find White-faced Heron and several species of waterfowl.

D

Bancoora and Breamlea Saltmarsh

1km, 30 minutes

Park on the eastern side of Breamlea Rd about 200m south of Blackgate Rd. The swampy area to the east is Bancoora Saltmarsh and to the west Breamlea Saltmarsh. Be alert for passing motor vehicles and cyclists. Using your car as a bird hide or walking quietly on foot, scan the muddy edges of Bancoora Saltmarsh for Black-fronted Dotterel, Buff-banded Rail and Australian Spotted, Spotless and Baillon's Crake. Enjoy the antics of the Australasian Swamphen as they feed on the vegetation. Scan above the reedbeds for Swamp Harrier and in the sky for Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel. In the reedbeds you may see or hear Australian Reed Warbler (warmer months), Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola. Keep your ears tuned for the high buzzing call of small flocks of Blue-winged Parrot as they speed overhead. Cross to the west side of Breamlea Rd to Breamlea Saltmarsh where the backwaters of Thompson Creek create a small area of open water. White-fronted Chat can be found feeding in the low saltmarsh. Masked Lapwing, Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Australian White and Straw-necked Ibis, White-faced Heron, Great Egret and Royal Spoonbill may all be found at the pool.



BIRDING TRAILS

Thompson Creek and Adjacent Coast

E

Thompson Creek, Breamlea

20 minutes

Park at the carpark at the western end of Horwood Drive, Breamlea. Thompson Creek widens here into an estuary flanked by saltmarsh. This is a wonderful location to sit on a seat and wait and see what birds pass by. Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant dry their wings while perched on logs. Caspian Tern patrol the creek line, White-necked Heron and Great Egret feed in the shallows and Masked Lapwing noisily warn of intruders. In the house gardens behind you New Holland, Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeater, Red and Little Wattlebird and Crimson Rosella frequent the flowering banksias and gums. Superb Fairywren, Brown Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren and Silvereye can be found in the shrubbery.

F

Black Rocks, Blue Rocks and Thirteenth Beach

3.6 km, 1.5 hr, return

Park at the end of Black Rock Rd. Black Rocks and Blue Rocks are basaltic lava flows originating from Mt Duneed. Follow the short track south to the rocky shoreline. This area is known as Black Rocks. Turn east and follow the indistinct track above the rocks for 200m to a small sandy cove. Listen for Striated Fieldwren calling from atop low bushes. From September to March, search the rock platforms for Pacific Golden Plover, Common Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone. The rocky point beyond the cove is known as Blue Rocks. Continue along the shoreline above Blue Rocks and onto Thirteenth Beach. Check the rocks and beach year-round for Hooded Plover, Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Stint. Seasonal visitors include Double-banded Plover (February-September) and Sanderling (September-June). Australasian Gannet can be seen close to shore. Search the distant waves for albatrosses and shearwaters. Walk about 1km along Thirteenth Beach, then retrace your steps back to your car.

Information

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