

This guide to good bird-watching spots east of Echuca includes notes on Kanyapella Basin and the Wyuna River Reserve (part of the proposed Murray River Park).

Kanyapella Basin

Covering an area of about 2,950 hectares, Kanyapella Basin is located 11km east of Echuca (36° 09'S, 144° 54'E) on the floodplain of the lower Goulburn River. The basin formed when land to the west of the Cadell Fault Line rose, blocking the Goulburn River. When the Goulburn River found an escape, the lake drained. Aeolian sandhills mark the edge of the old lake. Much of the basin is still subject to flooding.

The reserve includes grassy Box woodland (Grey Box on higher ground, Black Box on areas that flood for short periods and Yellow Box), River Red Gum wetland and marsh areas.

For many years, the basin was abused. Much of the under-storey plants were badly impacted upon over the years. However, fencing work, rubbish removal and habitat restoration has taken place over recent years.

Because of past forestry and clearing, many of the trees in the basin are relatively small. The largest trees are often alongside roads.

Key stakeholders have prepared a brochure. Copies are stocked by Echuca-Moama Visitor Information Centre.

Wyuna River Reserve

Located alongside the Goulburn River at the northern end of Waradgery Road, Wyuna Bushland Reserve covers 170 hectares. An area of pre-European vegetation dominated by River Red Gum and Box forest, the reserve still has an in-tact middle layer. The ground layer includes Leafy Templetonia (*Templetonia stenophylla*), Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*) and Dwarf Native Cherry (*Exocarpus stricta*). In fact, more than 110 plant species have been identified in the reserve. Squirrel Gliders are amongst the native animals that live in the reserve.

Part of the proposed Murray River Park, the reserve is popular with campers, anglers and canoeists.

More than 50 bird species have been observed in the reserve, including Whistling Kite (nesting), Bush Stone Curlew, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Brown Tree-creeper, White-throated Tree-creeper, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, Azure Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher (summer migrant), White-plumed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Grey Shrike Thrush, Rufous Whistler, Western Gerygone, Diamond Firetail, Grey-crowned Babbler and Welcome Swallow.

This guide outlines some of the birding spots east of Echuca. This guide is one of a series produced by BirdLife Echuca District that can be downloaded from the branch's website, a link to which is on the BirdLife Australia web site www.birdlife.org.au

Other local on-line birding guides:

Barmah Forest	Bendigo
Cohuna & Gunbower Island	Deniliquin
Echuca-Moama	Gulpa Island, Mathoura
Kamarooka Forest	Kerang
Perricoota Road, Moama	Terrick Terrick National Park

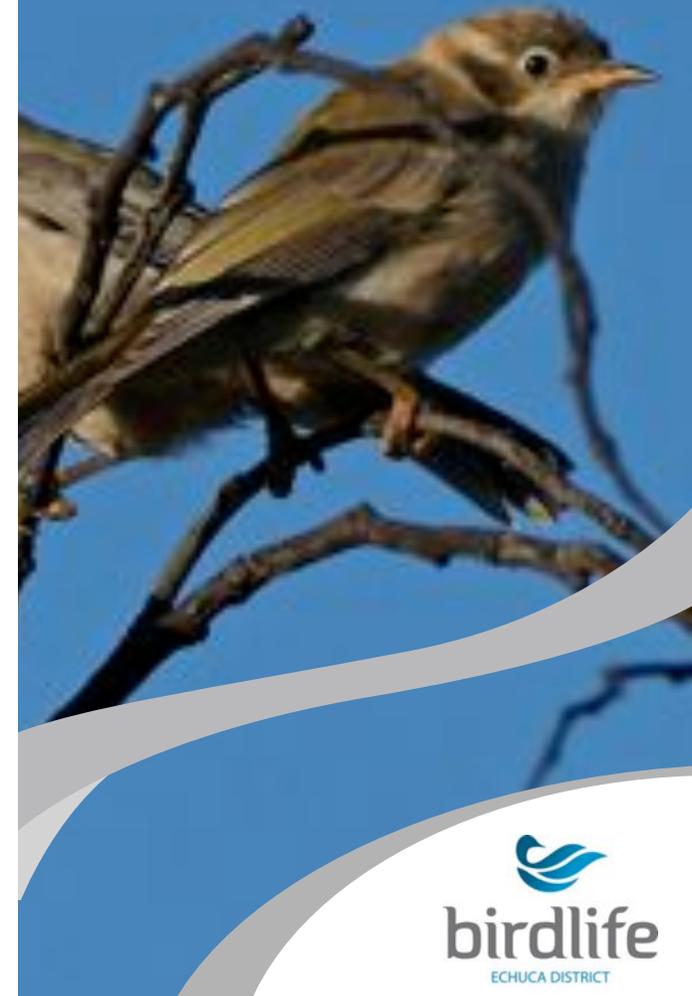
For more information, email echuca@birdlife.org.au

Cover photograph:
BROWN-HEADED HONEYEATER by Murray Chambers.

Second edition: June 2013.



Wyuna and Kanyapella birding guide



A day birding in forests east of Echuca

Tour designed by Dallas Wyatt

This 125km tour of Kanyapella Basin and Wyuna should only be attempted in dry weather. Odometer (trip meter) readings are distances from the new Echuca Post Office, Pakenham Street. A good map (e.g. Hayman's Barmah-Shepparton-Deniliquin Adventure Map) is needed to help with navigation.

To reach Stop One, cross the railway line and follow Pakenham Street to Goulburn Road. Goulburn Road becomes Bangerang Road.

Stop One: Simmie Road wetlands

Turn left (north) onto Simmie Road. Drive until you come to a lagoon (36° 06' 40S; 144° 48' 50E) and park off the road. It is possible to do a circuit walk here. The Murray River is a short distance to the north. This area is good for both bush birds and water birds. It is easy to spend an hour or two birding here.

Return to Bangerang Road and continue driving to the north-east.

If you turn left (north) onto Boileau Road you will see another wetland that is sometimes good for waterbirds.

Ignore the turnoff to Stewarts Bridge and Barmah (10.3km from the post office plus the Simmie Road detour). Continue along Bangerang Road.

Stop Two: Warrigul Creek

It is usually worth a short stop at bushland alongside the Warrigul Creek bridge (11.3km from the post office). Look for Azure Kingfisher and, in summer, Sacred Kingfisher.

Stop Three: northern boundary of Kanyapella

Continue along Bangerang Road for another 7km and turn right onto Watson Road (18.5km from P.O.). Follow Watson Road for 3km and turn right (west) onto Mitchell Road (21.4). If the road sign and/or information board are missing, look for the name "Hobbs" on a post. If the track is dry¹, drive west ~ through a gate, over a grid and alongside a drain ~ for about 5 kilometres. Note that most large old trees are alongside the road for much of the remaining area was cleared. Stop where Mitchell Road crosses Warrigul Creek (36° 08' 25S; 144° 53' 14E) and bird along the levee track that runs alongside the creek. In particular, keep an eye out for Peregrine Falcon, Purple Swamphen and Black-tailed Native Hen.

¹ Mitchell Road is a dry-weather only road. If Mitchell Road is wet, return to Watson Road and go to Stop 5.

Stop Four: grassy Black Box woodland

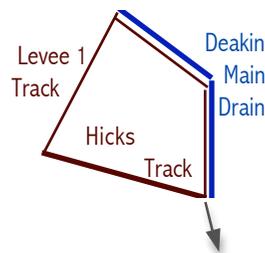
Continue along Mitchell Road and turn left at Tehan Road (27.2km from the post office). Stop near the intersection and walk south through grassy Black Box woodland. Many birds that rely on a grassy woodland feed here, including Common Bronzewing, Brown Tree-creeper, Restless Flycatcher, Varied Sittella, Diamond Firetail, Red-capped Robin and, in winter, Flame Robin.

Look for Wedge-tailed Eagles soaring overhead.

Stop Five: southern end of Kanyapella

After birding on the grassy Black Box woodland, drive south along Tehan Road to the Murray Valley Highway (B400).

Turn left and drive east along the highway for 3.5 kilometres to Castles Road (at a bend). Turn left into Castle Road and drive north for 2.8km. Once through the gate, park and walk through a stand of Box trees and alongside the Tongala Outfall Drain. Bush Stone Curlews live on private property nearby. Keen walkers can do an hour-long walk through a variety of plant associations. Follow the drain and return via Levee Track & Hicks Track.



Return to your vehicle and drive back to the B400. Turn left onto the highway.

Stop Six: O'Dea Road

Drive south-east for 2.4 kilometres to a road junction. Turn left onto O'Dea Road, drive for about 100 metres and stop. Look for Singing Honeyeater in the planted eucalypts. In spring, when it is in bloom, the indigenous grassland, including Drumsticks and Peas, is very colourful.²

² The planner of this drive, Dallas Wyatt, advocated for protected roadside vegetation signs to be erected here. For several years, he lobbied for improved management of the Kanyapella Basin and sat on the Stakeholders Committee for several years until he left the district.

One day may prove insufficient for birding stops at all of the suggested spots. A whole day could be spent, for instance, in the Wyuna River Reserve.

Stop Seven: Yambuna Bridge

Continue along O'Dea Road until it ends at Curr Road. Veer left onto the sealed road and travel north for 4 km. Half a kilometre beyond the end of the bitumen, turn right onto Yambuna Bridge Road and cross the Goulburn River. There are lots of side tracks and the birding here is often good. This area is part of the Lower Goulburn National Park.

Stop Eight: Wakiti Church

Continue on past Wakiti Resort until you see a church on your left (36° 07' 05S; 145° 02' 40E). Stop here to look for Grey-crowned Babblers. Unfortunately many of the trees in which the Babblers lived were recently poisoned.

Stop Nine: Wyuna River Reserve

Continue driving along Yambuna Bridge Road and turn right onto the Barmah-Kotupna Road. At Kotupna, the road joins the B400. Follow the highway south over McCoy's Bridge and turn right (north) at Waradgery Road.

Follow this road for 3.2km to Wyuna River Reserve³ (GPS 36 09 40S; 145 05 25E). Many of the trees are very old, with lots of nesting hollows. Man-made nesting boxes augment the number of natural holes.

There are good camping sites alongside the Goulburn River, but no toilets.

It is about 35km back to Echuca via the Murray Valley Highway.

³ Wyuna River Reserve is part of the proposed Murray River Park. It said that "Wyuna" is derived from a koori word, "Waioona", which means clear water.

Australia's voice for birds since 1901

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats.

With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

Add your voice

join us

volunteer

donate

birdlife.org.au