

Langmans Sandhill, Gulpa Island

A good birding spot north of Mathoura area is Langmans Sandhill, Langmans Road, but the site is only accessible in dry weather and when the forest is not in flood.

It might be wise to obtain a forest map (e.g. Haymans Barmah-Shepparton-Deniliquin Forest Activities Map) from the Mathoura Visitor Information Centre, Cobb Highway, before doing this full-day or half-day outing.

From Mathoura, drive north along the Cobb Highway (B75) for about 12 km. Watch for the Walliston Road intersection. Continue on for about a kilometre, ignoring a minor track on the right. About a kilometre north of Walliston Road, turn east onto a track alongside an arboretum. There are sometimes many birds in the arboretum, at a dam to the east or in the adjoining paddock. In particular, look for thornbills, Red-capped Robin, Varied Sittella, thornbills, pardalotes, Diamond Firetail and Emu.

Return to the highway, drive south back to Walliston Road and turn east into the forest. Stop after 100 metres (GPS 35° 43 00S; 144° 56 07E). The box forest here is always a good birding spot. Hooded Robin, Red-capped Robin, Southern Whiteface, Red-rumped Parrot, Brown Quail and Jacky Winter are often seen here.

Continue on into the forest, crossing The Edward (Barkers Bridge GPS 35° 42, 25S; 144° 54 50E), and then turn east onto Junction Road. Follow this road to its intersection with Langmans Road (the sign to which may be missing). Once you see a fenced enclosure, follow the track on your left down to the Edward River. (GPS 35° 48 20S; 144° 56 05E). This is a good spot for lunch or morning tea. It is worth spending a few hours birding here. Birds to look for here include Superb Parrot, Azure Kingfisher (pictured below), Varied Sittella, thornbills, White-browed Babbler, Gilberts Whistler, Western Gerygone, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, and Red-browed Finch. Retrace your route to Barkers Bridge but then follow Gulpa Creek Road back to Mathoura.



AZURE KINGFISHER
Photo: Albert Wright

This is one of a series of bird guides 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

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



Above: HOODED ROBIN (Photo: Murray Chambers)
Front panel: RED-CAPPED ROBIN (Murray Chambers)

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Birding Guide to Gulpa Island, Mathoura



A birding tour of Gulpa Island

When taking this tour for the first time, use a map such as Hayman's Barmah-Shepparton-Deniliquin Forest Adventure Map (obtainable from the Mathoura Visitor Information Centre) or NSW maps Mathoura 1:50,000 and Deniliquin 1:50,000. 4WD is recommended.

It is possible to visit sites numbered 1 to 5 on the map (below right) during wet weather or in a 2WD vehicle.

Leave the Cobb Highway at the southern end of Mathoura, turn east onto the Picnic Point Road, drive for about a kilometre and park your vehicle near Poley's Bridge (35° 49' 07S; 144° 54' 40E). Walk around Poley's Circuit (Walking Track One). Birds often observed alongside Gulpa Creek include the yellow form of Crimson Rosella, Azure kingfisher, Brown Tree-creeper, Golden Whistler, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote and Red-browed Finch. Look for waterbirds on the creek.

Drive across Poley's Bridge and turn left onto Gulpa Creek Road. There are several minor tracks to the left that lead to Gulpa Creek. One track leads to Cranes Bridge (35° 48' 16S; 144 54' 08E) (1 on map).

This area is always a good birding spot.

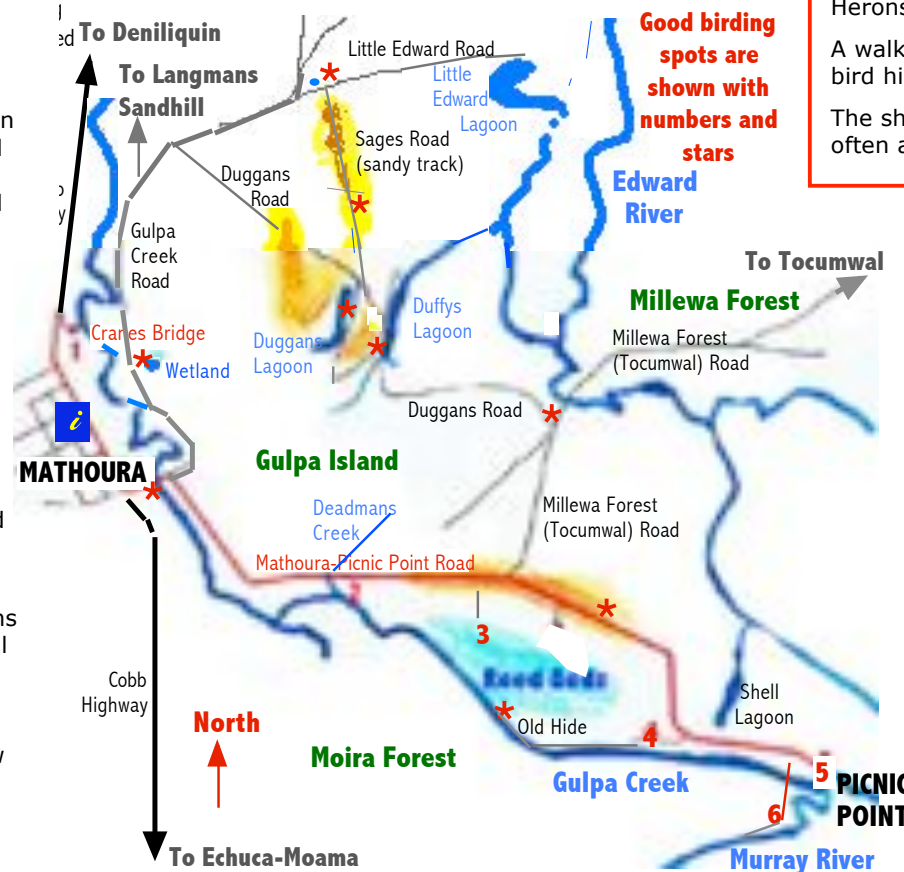
If you have a high-clearance or 4WD vehicle, continue along Gulpa Creek Road for several kilometres and turn left onto Little Edwards Road. Continue along this road and past a small wetland. Turn left onto Sages Road. Stop alongside this sandy track (e.g. near Sandalwood Exclosure ~ a fenced area to the right).

Birds often observed along this sandy track include Emu, Brown Tree-creeper, various thornbill species, robins, Southern Whiteface, pardalotes and Common Bronzewing. Look for such raptors as Hobby, Nankeen Kestrel, Wedgetailed Eagle and Brown Falcon.

Stop when you come to Duffy's Lagoon. If there is water in the lagoon, a wide range of waterbird species can usually be observed. Bush birds to look for here include Emu, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Flame Robin, Red-rumped Parrot, Eastern Rosella and yellow form of Crimson Rosella.

From Duffy's lagoon, head south, then east on Duggans Road. Continue past Lousy Road and Toorak Road until you reach a picnic ground with toilets alongside a bridge over The Edward. Birds often observed here include White-browed Babbler, White-browed Scrubwren and Dusky Woodswallow. From here, follow the Tocumwal Road south back to the Mathoura-Picnic Point Road. You may wish to stop at Reed Beds.

WHITE-BROWED BABBLERS
Photo: Murray Chambers



The Reed Beds

Located roughly half-way between Mathoura and Picnic Point, and a few hundred metres west of the Tocumwal (Millewa forest) Road intersection, is a waterbird hide (35° 48' 16S; 144° 54' 08E ~ labelled 3 on map). There is a short sealed road from the Picnic Point Road to a car park alongside which is a toilet. An elevated Red Gum walkway leads to a hide overlooking The Reed Beds.

Birds almost always observed from the hide include Little Grassbird, Reed Warbler, Marsh Harrier, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and White Ibis. But patience is needed!

When the water level is low, look for Red-kneed Dotterel, Spotted Crake, Spotless Crake and Buff-banded Rail. When the Reed Beds are full, you might see Australasian Grebe, Great-crested Grebe and Hoary-headed Grebe as well as Black Swan, Pelican, Eurasian Coot, Musk Duck, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Grassbird, Reed Warbler, Welcome Swallow and Marsh Harrier.

Picnic Point (5) is a good place to look for Nankeen Night Herons in willows.

A walk alongside Gulpa Creek on a track leading to an old bird hide (4) is sometimes rewarding.

The short track west of Deadmans Creek bridge (2) is often a good spot to see Tree Martins.

Gulpa Creek and Liston Bridge

It is possible to walk from the Mathoura Visitor Information Centre to Liston Bridge and Gulpa Creek. Located at the end of a short road that leaves the Cobb Highway opposite the Visitor Information Centre, Liston Bridge (35° 48' 37S; 144° 54' 18E) gives foot access to a walking track alongside Gulpa Creek. Gulpa Creek flows at the base of the Cadell Tilt Black, an area of uplifted land to the west of the forest.

About 40 bird species ~ a mixture of bush birds and water birds ~ can usually be observed over the course of about an hour. Apart from the screeching Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Long-billed Corellas, look for robins, Purple Swamp Hen, Dusky Moorhen, Azure Kingfisher, thornbills, pardalotes, tree-creepers, Grey Fantail, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush.