



Wetland Birds



More than 170 bird species have been recorded in the City of Salisbury’s constructed wetlands since 1990.

Of these, more than 40 native species are known to breed in various wetlands across the City, making the wetlands a favourite haunt for birdwatchers as well.



Top The Australian White Ibis has become an increasingly common sight in urban areas.
Photo: City of Salisbury

Above Perhaps the most readily recognised wetland bird, the Australian Pelican is far from fussy; when fish cannot be found, they have even been known to eat other birds.
Photo: City of Salisbury

The birds recorded visiting the City’s wetlands can be divided into three main groups: endemic waterbirds, endemic shorebirds and migratory shorebirds.

Endemic waterbirds are those that breed in Australia. They include swans, ducks, grebes, cormorants, pelicans, darters, herons, bitterns, ibises, spoonbills, crakes and rails.

Ducks and swans require islands or stands of reeds or other emergent vegetation (water plants that, in growing, emerge from the water to stand above its surface) on which to breed. Most are vegetarian.

Grebes also require emergent vegetation for nesting, but feed mainly on small fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates caught while diving underwater.

The Australasian Bittern requires dense reed beds for nesting and shallow reedfilled waters for feeding. It preys mainly on fish, frogs, yabbies and aquatic invertebrates. This bird is classified by IUCN (the World Conservation Union) as globally endangered.

The Little Pied Cormorant breeds in tall trees on the banks of the wetlands and feeds mainly on fish and yabbies.



Endemic shorebirds are those that breed in Australia. They include Painted-snipe, avocets, stilts, plovers, gulls and terns. All require open, shallow expanses of water with mudflats for breeding and feeding. Most feed on insects, aquatic invertebrates and molluscs, though gulls are more scavengers than they are predators. All breed on the ground, sometimes among vegetation and usually on low-lying islands.

Migratory shorebirds breed in overseas countries and travel to Australia on a seasonal basis. Eighteen species of snipe, sandpipers and plovers breed in Asia during the northern summer and then migrate to Australia for the southern summer. They require shallow wetlands, usually with extensive mudflats, for feeding on molluscs, crustacea and other invertebrates.

The remaining species consist of passerines (perching birds), raptors, parrots and pigeons that use wetland trees and shrubs for feeding and breeding. Of these, however, Australian Reed-warblers and Little Grassbirds are exclusively wetlands birds and breed in reeds or dense waterside vegetation. Both eat only insects.

Learn more

For more information on related topics, see the other fact sheets in the Wetlands series. You may also like to visit the following websites for more information:

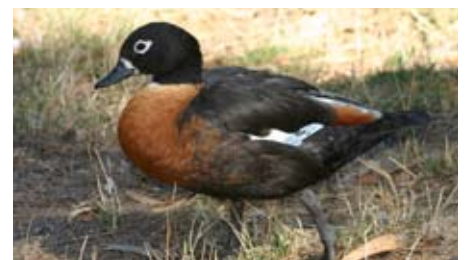
Australian birds

www.birdsaustralia.com.au

www.abc.net.au/science/birds

www.abc.net.au/archives

www.wetlandsandwaders.com



Top The Sacred Kingfisher is rarely seen amidst Salisbury's wetlands, though a sighting is worth the wait.

Photo: David Cook

Above The goose-like Australian Shelduck prefers holes in tree trunks or wetland banks for nesting.

Photo: City of Salisbury

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