

LAKE ILLAWARRA AREA

11 walks

[regional Satellite map](#)

A large coastal lake south of Wollongong with a rich bird fauna.

Note: The two local Councils (Wollongong and Shellharbour) have constructed an extensive bicycle track system around much of Lake Illawarra and adjacent coastal area. The Lake Illawarra Authority has constructed a number of viewing platforms and two artificial wetlands around the lake. Most of the walks described below can be reached and extended on this bicycle track network.

Use 1:25,000 topographic maps, Wollongong 9029-2-S and Albion Park 9028-1-N

1. Red Point, 8km return, easy grade with small hill climb. Proceed to the eastern end of Military Rd., Port Kembla, drive up the hill ([Hill 60](#)) and park your car in one of the car park. Sweeping 360 degree views of the Illawarra coast, Lake Illawarra and the Illawarra Range, while just offshore are the Five Islands Nature Reserve. Heading north walk down the track leading towards North Beach and walk along the beach to the next headland where there is a small museum, nautical and military relicts. Follow the bike track west towards the harbour and walk out along the one kilometre long breakwater wall (weather conditions permitting). Return the same way, or alternatively walk along Fishermen's Beach and explore Red Point around the sewerage treatment plant. For the birdwatcher there is plenty to see. Sooty Oystercatcher and Kelp Gull are regular and breed on the islands, and Ruddy Turnstone can often be found in summer. Little Penguin also breeds on the islands and can occasionally be observed fishing in the waters between the islands and the mainland. From Hill 60 you can see the only offshore Pelican rookery in Australia on Big Island. From Red Point or the headland between the two beaches, watch for Pomarine and Arctic Jaegers attacking Silver Gulls as they return to their nests on the island in summer. Wedge-tailed and Short-tailed Shearwaters breed on the islands and can be observed in summer, while in winter albatross, prions, gannets and other seabirds are often present. Common Tern visit the area in summer and White-fronted Tern in winter. Crested Tern are resident. Along the breakwater watch for

Eastern Reef Heron and Striated Heron. White-bellied Sea-Eagle is often found fishing in the area.

2. Coomaditchy Lagoon, 1 km loop. A short easy stroll around a small perched [lagoon](#) which is home to the endangered Green and Golden Bellfrog. Access is off Cowper St. Port Kembla. A local aboriginal display is in the south west corner of the lagoon periphery. Birds include Purple Swamphen, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced heron, New Holland Honeyeater and Little Wattlebird.

3. Griffins Bay, 5km return, easy grade. Follow [Northcliffe Drive](#) west from Warrawong and park in a car parking bay approximately 700m west of the traffic lights. Walk to the lake shore and commence the walk next to a small creek that flows into the lake. Walk east along the bike / walking track passing by an artificial freshwater wetland in the north east corner, then south along a promenade to a small wetland in Joes Bay. Return the way you came. Plenty of waterbird can be found, with some interesting species along the way. The channel on the northern side of the track where it passes the freshwater wetland is good for Latham's Snipe in summer, while the wetland at Joes Bay occasionally has Australian Spotted Crake (late afternoon). Other species you might observe include Black-winged Stilt, Great Egret, Darter, Red-kneed Dotterel, Chesnut Teal, Hoary-headed Grebe, Little Grassbird, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Golden-headed Cisticola. A pair of Australian Hobby have a territory nearby and are regularly observed overhead.

4. Hooka Point. 7km return, easy grade. Park your car at Berkeley Boat Harbour. Walk west around the artificial freshwater wetland and keep following the bike / walking track for a kilometre until you come to the entrance of Hooka Point reserve, walk around the loop track making sure to climb the lookout tower, overlooking the rainforest-clad islands of [Berkeley Nature Reserve](#). Continue around the loop until you approach where you entered and veer to the north crossing a wooden bridge over Hooka Creek. Head west paralleling the playing fields and eventually you will see a steel gate on the south side of the track. Walk around this and follow a rough loop track through regenerating casuarinas forest and along the northern shore of Hooka Creek. Keep heading west along the shore until you meet Mullet Creek. Head back towards the steel gate and then retrace your route back to your car. For the birdwatcher there is plenty of variety. Waterbirds abound on the

artificial wetland while plenty of shorebirds are found along the lake edge, especially at Hooka Point, including Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover, Eastern Curlew, Caspian Tern, Striated Heron and Royal Spoonbill. In the casuarina forest Yellow Thornbill and Superb Fairy Wren are common and the Point is a good place to find European Goldfinch and Eastern Rosella. Occasionally Black Bittern and Nankeen Night Heron are found roosting in casuarina along the creek.

5. Kanahooka, 5km return, easy grade. Proceed along [Lakeside Drive](#), [Koonawarra](#) and park next to the entrance to Brooks Creek. Walk in a northerly direction along the lake shore walking track for 1.5km emerging in a park next to a boat launching ramp. Head up the rise through the park and down Drive to Kanahooka Point. A small play ground mark the start of a walk out to Jerretts Point on the mouth of Mullet Creek. Follow the 1 km loop back to the play ground, and return to your car the way you came. Some good birding here, with the bay to the south of [Brooks Creek](#) being the only area on Lake Illawarra where Great Crested Grebe regularly visits in winter. Egrets, spoonbills, shorebirds and ducks are often found roosting on the small islets off Brooks Creek mouth. When water levels in the Lake are low, large flocks of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper can be found in summer. Welcome Swallow regularly nest under the wharf and Striated Heron is a regular visitor to the Bay shore. On the Jerrets Point section of the walk, Tawny Grassbird, Southern Emu-wren, Common Greenshank, Golden-headed Cisticola, Black Swan, Black-fronted Dotterel and Chestnut Teal are some of the species that may be encountered.

6. Macquarie Rivulet, 2km return, easy grade. Cross the railway at the shops in AlbionPark, and head west by Koona St., then [Shearwater Drive](#) to a small carpark. The track parallels Macquarie Rivulet west under the Princes Highway to Darcy Dunster Reserve and return the same way. Good general birding walk with a surprising diversity of reasonably common species, with highlights including Darter, Striated Heron and Brown Quail.

7. Horsley Inlet, 1km return, easy grade. Cross the railway at the shops in Albion Park Rail and head east to the end of [Koono St](#). Walk over the wooden bridge and keep an eye out for Azure and Sacred Kingfishers. Turn north and follow the lake shore to Kurrura Point. Always Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills in the casuarinas while the small islet offshore here often has Pied Oystercatchers, Pacific Golden Plover and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers.

8. Karoo Bay to Why Juck Bay, 10km return, easy grade. In the suburb of Oak Flats on the south side of the Lake, follow [Central Avenue](#) north to its end and park in the picnic area by the lake. Walk out to Yangar Point and view the distant entrance to Macquarie Rivulet. From here follow the bike / walking track east then north, then east again for 5km along the lake shore end this walk when you reach the football field next to the [Police Boys Club](#). Return to your car the same way. Along the way you will pass a boat launching ramp in Dovies Bay, a wharf at Boonerah Point and a saltmarsh in Why Juck Bay. There is always plenty of waterbird activity to distract you along the way, with the best spots being Karoo Bay east of the picnic ground, the shore south of Boonerah Point and in Why Juck Bay, where at certain times of the year up to 1,000 Black Swans can congregate to moult their flight feathers. Other species found in Why Juck Bay include Buff-banded Rail in the saltmarsh, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers and Australasian Shoveler, while in the whole area you can find Pied, Little Pied, Little Black and Great Cormorants, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Little Egret, White-faced Heron, Ruddy Turnstone (Boonerah Point), Royal Spoonbill, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

9. Windang estuary, 6km return, easy grade. Park in [parking bay](#) opposite the public school along Reddall Parade, which is west of the southern end of Windang Bridge. Walk east, taking the track through the casuarina woodland which starts after crossing a drain at the eastern end of the parking bay. A viewing platform provides a vantage for the old southern estuary channel, a favoured haunt for many waterbirds. Continue east along the track watching for Southern Emu-wren in the sedgeland around a drainage depression where the track to the viewing platform meets the main track. Eventually emerge from the casuarina woodland onto the bike track and then veer to the north following the lake shore, cross a small bridge onto Picnic Island and walk around the loop through banksia woodland. Crossing back over

the small bridge, continue along the lake shore and under [Windang Bridge](#). Continue east along the shore, diverting to the breakwall for a short distance. On the north side of the breakwall are extensive shoals that (at low tide) provide habitat for numerous shorebirds including Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Red-capped Plover, Double-banded Plover (winter), Red Knot, Great Knot, Sanderling, Pied Oystercatcher, Little Tern, White-winged Black Tern (rare), herons egrets, cormorants and many others. Continue east along the beach and if the tide permits, onto Windang Island, examining the rusting rail carriage wheels. During the late 1800s an attempt was made to open the Lake to shipping and rock was cut from the island to construct a breakwater. Mother nature had other ideas, the plan was eventually abandoned due to continuous shoaling of the entrance. The walk continues to the eastern end of [Windang Island](#) and a trig point and great views west over the estuary. A few short-tailed Shearwater breed in burrows on the island and Sooty Oystercatcher and Kelp Gull are often found on the surrounding rock platform. If your keen to get better views of the shorebirds on the sandflat, drive north over Windang Bridge and turn right at the second set of traffic lights, then second right again and follow the signs to the [Windang Tourist Park](#). At the junction inside the entrance, follow the sign to the surf club, straight ahead takes you into the caravan park. Follow the road and park under the large pine trees. There is a figtree amongst the pines and a resident pair of Figbirds are often present. Walk toward the children's playground and around the short board walk before following a track at the eastern end of the picnic ground to the south through the reedland and onto the sandflats.

Another fun activity is to hire a boat from the boatshed next to the north eastern side of Windang Bridge and head west around the mudflats that can be found around Cudgere Is. And Bevans Is. This is great for watching shorebirds roosting and feeding on the sandbars and mudflats.

10. Windang Peninsula, 6km return, easy grade. Park in the Heritage Park next to [Oasis Caravan Park](#) on the western side of Windang Rd., about 1.5km north of Windang Bridge. From the car park a trail leads south through casuarina woodland to several viewing platforms that overlook the lake. If water levels are low, the area here is packed with hundreds to thousands of waterbirds. Recent species have included Ruff, Banded Stilt, Buff-banded Rail and White-winged Black Tern, though these are rare. Usual species include Chestnut and Grey Teal,

Pacific Black Duck, Black-winged Stilt, Common Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Egret, Little Egret and Pied Cormorant. When finished here carefully cross Windang Rd. and look for a grassed laneway between the fenced golf driving range and the fenced radio towers and head east. Keep following this until you come out on top of a small dune and a track intersection. Straight ahead leads to the beach. Turn north and follow the track on top of the dune for about 1.5km. Turn left and down into the hind-dune woodland. You should now be at the north eastern end of the golf course near the road. Turn left (south) and walk for a kilometre through dune woodland. This is excellent for birds year-round. Species encountered may include Bar-shouldered Dove, Spangled Drongo, New Holland, Fuscous, White-naped and Scarlet Honeyeater, Superb Fairy-wren, Striated and Brown Thornbill, Brown and Grey Goshawk. Eventually you come to the southern end of the golf course fence and a sealed laneway with a steel gate. Walk around the gate and head west along the lane way. The eucalypts along here are a regular location for Swift Parrot in winter when they are flowering (not every year). When you rejoin Windang Rd., cross over and head south back to your car.

11. Primbee, 4km return, easy grade. Heading north along Windang Rd. from Windang turn left into Lakeview Parade at Primbee. At Nicolle Rd. turn left and park at the gate where round turns to the north. Walk west to the lake, then follow the boardwalk north, then along the shore to a wharf at [Purry Burry Point](#). A small marshy wetland is opposite the wharf and sometime has Red-kneed Dotterels and other common waterbirds. Nearby are a couple of large figtrees that often have Figbirds present and in summer Olive-backed Oriole, Channel-billed Cuckoo and Common Koel. Head back to the car and then walk east along Nicolle Rd. past the playing field toward a fence with a gate. This is the entrance to Korrongulla Swamp, an annex of Wollongong Botanical Gardens. Walk through the gate and follow the loop track around the swamp taking in reedland, teetree wetland, dune woodland and open water. Darter, Little Pied, Pied, Little Back and Great Cormorants all breed in casuarinas on the waters edge and there are a couple of vantage points where you can view the rookery. Other birds here include Golden-headed Cisticola, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Hardhead, Musk Duck, Azure Kingfisher, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Red-browed Finch and Little Wattlebird. Return to your car the way you came.