

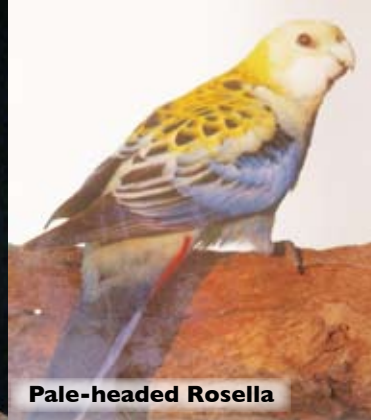
# Bird Sites of Lightning Ridge



Mulga Parrot



Zebra Finch



Pale-headed Rosella



Red-capped Robin



Red-winged Parrot



Variegated Fairy-wren

## Introduction

For bird watchers from the east coast and southern parts of Australia: you are entering the semi-arid climate zone (less than 500mm rainfall), which will allow you to observe many bird species for the first time. These birds are highlighted on the list in **green**.

This may be your first chance to see a Grey-crowned Babbler, a White-winged Fairy-wren, a Splendid Fairy-wren, a Brolga, a Spotted Bowerbird, a Major Mitchell Cockatoo or a Mulga Parrot.

Start at the Visitor Information Centre and IBC Gardens (territory of Grey-crowned Babblers) and enjoy finding your way around the eight sites in this guide. Site coordinates: use Zone 55, system GDA94.



Spotted Bowerbird



Splendid Fairy-wren



Major Mitchell Cockatoos

## Please note:

Take extreme care when entering and leaving highways and main roads. Bird sites shown on the map are on lands accessible to the public. Permission should be sought from the owners before entering any private lands.

Opal mines are located on private mineral titles and should not be interfered with.



# Lightning Ridge bird sites

**Site 1** - Old Dam, Castlereagh Highway  
(Grid ref. 592199mE, 6738598mN)

Pull in and rest under the Myall tree next to the shallow pond. Thirty metres to the south, colonies of White-winged Fairy-wrens and Variegated Fairy-wrens share the dense growth in the drain flowing under and west from the highway.



White-winged Fairy-wren



Black-winged Stilt (top) and Black-tailed Native Hen.

**Site 2** - Quandong Enclosure, Castlereagh Highway  
(Grid ref. 595094mE, 6736153mN)

This site gives you the opportunity to observe typical bird life in the Western Woodlands. Note all the Quandong saplings growing since the area has been fenced in.



Blue-faced Honeyeaters (above) and female Magpie-lark (right)



Willy Wagtails



Crested Pigeon



Emu



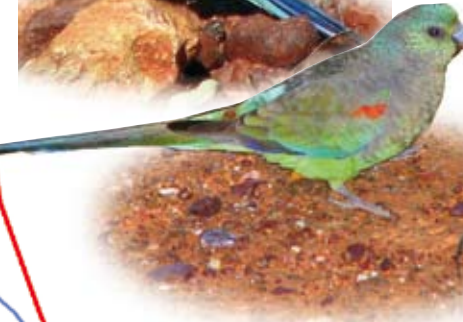
Yellow-billed Spoonbill



- 1 Old Dam
- 2 Quandong Enclosure
- 3 Parrot Ponds
- 4 Belah Scrub
- 5 Black Hand Flora Site
- 6 Bore Baths
- 7 Coocoran Lake
- 8 Weetalibah Waterholes
- 9 Lunatic Hill Lookout



Male Mulga Parrot



Female Mulga Parrot

**Site 3-** Parrot Ponds, 250m west of Castlereagh Highway (590356mE, 6740608mN)

From the 'T' intersection at the highway make sure you drive around the northern end of the first pond (this was a borrow pit for road construction) and travel west a further 200m crossing the basement of the old, gravelled Castlereagh Highway and then arrive at the Ponds. This site is a haven for local parrots

such as Blue Bonnets, Pale-headed Rosellas, Eastern Ringnecks and Grass Parrots. Travel up and over the dirt bank



Red-rumped Parrot (left), Mallee Ringneck (upper right) and Blue Bonnet (lower right)



another 100m west into the *Eucalyptus* woodland. Listen for the Crested Bellbird and look for Aboriginal scar trees.

**Site 4 -** Belah Scrub (*Casuarina cristata*) on gravel road to opal miners' washing tank (Grid ref. 592366mE, 6744280mN)

Turn north from Bill O'Brien Way at Benny Walford's Crossing, drive 1.1km and take the right-hand fork, continue for another 400m. Walk into the Belah Scrub on the left hand side and sit near the ponds. Walk back across the road to 592366, 6744280 and see if you can find the Spotted Bower Bird's bower. The male Bower Bird constructs the bower and plays in it

throughout summer to attract the female who will build the nest of sticks high up in a tree nearby. Grey-crowned Babblers also live in this area.



Budgerigars

**Site 5-** Black Hand flora site, Three Mile Road (Grid ref. 593403mE, 6740546mN)

Small birds are attracted to this area when the *Scaevola* are flowering.

**Site 6 -** Bore Baths, Sherman Way (Grid ref. 596788mE, 6744738mN)

Look for a mixed collection of local birds in the trees around the bore baths. Look for nesting



Red-capped Robin

activity in the trees. Have a nice soak in the warm water and a hot shower before you leave.

**Site 7-** Coocoran Lake shoreline, Castlereagh Highway (584167mE, 6747675mN)

This is the nearest point where the highway approaches the Coocoran Lake. Park in amongst the Coolibah Trees and listen for the Crested Bellbird.



Crested Bellbird

**Site 8 -** Weetalibah Waterholes, Castlereagh Highway

(Grid ref. 582164mE, 6756028mN)

Follow the track 150m west from the highway, crossing the old Castlereagh Highway. The billabong and waterhole were once the centre of aboriginal and early European habitation. A pair of Brolga nest here each year in early summer after rains fill the waterholes and creekbed. Are the resident White-necked Herons around?

**Site 9 -** Lunatic Hill Lookout

(Grid ref. 593940mE, 6740354mN)

Listen for the Nankeen Kestrel and look for the White-winged Fairy-wren in the saltbush.



White-winged Fairy-wren



# Lightning Ridge bird list

Observer: .....

Date: .....

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emu                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Galah                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Jacky Winter (D)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Wood Duck     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pink Cockatoo (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-capped Robin (D)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Black Duck       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sulphur-crested Cockatoo     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grey-crowned Babbler (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Teal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Cockatiel                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-crowned Babbler            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut Teal            | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Parrot            | <input type="checkbox"/> Crested Bellbird                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pink-eared Duck          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pale-headed Rosella          | <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Shrike-thrush                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardhead                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mallee Ringneck              | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless Flycatcher                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plumed Whistling Duck    | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bonnet                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Magpie-lark                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Grebe       | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-rumped Parrot            | <input type="checkbox"/> Willie Wagtail                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hoary-headed Grebe       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulga Parrot                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australasian Darter      | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-eared Cuckoo           | <input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Triller                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Black Cormorant   | <input type="checkbox"/> Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo   | <input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Woodswallow          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Cormorant          | <input type="checkbox"/> Tawney Frogmouth             | <input type="checkbox"/> Masked Woodswallow                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Pelican       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Nightjar             | <input type="checkbox"/> White-browed Woodswallow            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-faced Heron        | <input type="checkbox"/> Owllet Nightjar              | <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Butcherbird                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-necked Heron       | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing Kookaburra          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Butcherbird                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Great Egret      | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-backed Kingfisher        | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-backed Magpie                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate Egret       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacred Kingfisher            | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Raven                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian White Ibis    | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainbow Bee-eater            | <input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Chough                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Straw-necked Ibis        | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Treecreeper            | <input type="checkbox"/> Apostlebird                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Spoonbill  | <input type="checkbox"/> Splendid Fairy-wren          | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Bowerbird                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-shouldered Kite    | <input type="checkbox"/> Variegated Fairy-wren        | <input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Kite               | <input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Fairy-wren      | <input type="checkbox"/> Zebra Finch                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Eagle             | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Pardalote            | <input type="checkbox"/> Double-barred Finch                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nankeen Kestrel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Striated Pardalote           | <input type="checkbox"/> Plum-headed Finch                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brolga (V)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Weebill                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mistletoe Bird                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Spotted Crake | <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-rumped Thornbill    | <input type="checkbox"/> White-backed Swallow                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purple Swamphen          | <input type="checkbox"/> Buff-rumped Thornbill        | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Swallow                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dusky Moorhen            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Thornbill      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Martin                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-tailed Native Hen  | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Whiteface (D)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairy Martin                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Coot            | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater     | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Reed Warbler             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-fronted Dotterel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Striped Honeyeater           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Songlark                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masked Lapwing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Noisy Friarbird              | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Songlark                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bush Stone-curlew (E)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Friarbird             | <input type="checkbox"/> Crimson Chat                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-winged Stilt       | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue-faced Honeyeater        | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Starling                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Bronzewing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Miner        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crested Pigeon           | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing Honeyeater           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Dove             | <input type="checkbox"/> White-plumed Honeyeater      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful Dove            | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Honeyeater             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bar-shouldered Dove      |   |  |

## Threatened Species

Many birds in NSW are threatened by land clearing, fragmentation of habitat, changes to wetlands or predation by feral animals.

A number of birds seen at Lightning Ridge are classified under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995 as either **Vulnerable (V)** or **Endangered (E)**.

Some birds are recognised as **Declining (D)** throughout the western woodlands.

Birds highlighted in **green** inhabit semi-arid environments.



Brolga (Vulnerable)



Grey-crowned Babbler (Vulnerable)

## Contacts

Lightning Ridge Visitors' Information Centre

Phone: 02 6829 1670

For rare and unusual sightings:

Andrew Ley - Birds Australia, Northern NSW Group, Armidale, NSW.

Phone: 02 6722 5358

For **AUSTRALIAN BIRD ATLAS** information, field guide books and bird books, and for more details about Lightning Ridge, enquire at the 'Opal Books etc' shop at Bluey Motel, 32 Morilla St, Lightning Ridge.

Phone: 02 6829 0380

Produced by:

Warwick & Margaret Schofield ©

Assisted by:

Tamworth Birdwatchers Inc., Russ & Jenny Watts and Kay Wotherspoon, and with the support of the Australian Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge, NSW Ministry for the Arts and Lightning Ridge Tourism Association



Yellow-billed Spoonbill



Mallee Ringneck



AUSTRALIAN  
**OPAL**  
CENTRE  
LIGHTNING RIDGE • NSW



**Bluey**  
**MOTEL**



**Lightning Ridge**  
Black opal country