

Helpful Birdwatching Tips

- Take your time – don't rush. By walking slowly you will see more birds, especially the quiet or skulking ones.
- Make sure to listen for birds calling. These records are as valuable as those of birds seen. Take time to follow up unfamiliar calls (never ignore them!).
- Don't just record the obvious species (e.g. large birds or birds that are calling vociferously). You should be aware that there will also be less-obvious species present, so look and listen carefully, and make sure to check all likely areas.
- Listen for noises other than bird calls. For example, Crested Shrike-tits are often first detected by the sound of them tearing at bark with their stout beaks; and parrots quietly feeding in the treetops are often first detected by the sound of dropped seed-pods falling to the ground.
- Be quiet. It lets you hear more birds and disturbs them less. However, talk in your normal voice. Never shout, and try not to whisper, as sibilant noises may disturb birds; many species use similar sounds to indicate alarm or aggression.
- Avoid wearing bright clothing or clothing that rustles.
- Be aware that when birdwatching beside a busy road bird calls will be more difficult to hear, as they tend to be drowned out by traffic noise.
- Try to go birdwatching early in the morning. Birds are more active then, and tend to call more often.
- Try to avoid birdwatching on windy days. Wind makes it more difficult to hear birds calling, and they are also less active in these conditions.
- Try to avoid birdwatching on hot days. Birds are inactive during the heat of the day, and are difficult to find. If you must conduct surveys on hot days, do it early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when it is cooler and birds are likely to be more active.
- Try to go birdwatching in small groups; large groups can be divided up into smaller groups.
- Birds are more easily detected in open habitats than in more heavily wooded ones. However, don't be lulled into a false sense of security in open areas, as cryptic species can be easily missed. In all habitats, take your time and you will see more birds.

Some safety and logistical tips

Although birdwatching is a safe and enjoyable pastime, there are a few things to be mindful of when out in the field. We want to make sure that all of the community have an enjoyable and, most importantly, safe bird watching experience. Please take the following precautions next time you set out to conduct any surveys (including Atlas surveys):

- Please respect private property; always ask for permission before entering private property.
- When on private property, make sure you leave gates as you found them, and do not disturb stock. Do not camp, light fires or go fishing when on private property without the EXPRESS permission of the land-owner.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good working order.

- When birdwatching in regional areas ('the bush') it is easy to underestimate the distance between sites, so please make sure that you have ample fuel for your return journey.
- When surveying sites near roads, make sure you park well off the road, so that traffic is not disrupted. Make sure your vehicle is visible to other traffic when it is parked. Also make sure it is not parked across a driveway or other access point.
- When surveying sites along roadsides, walk along the boundary of the paddock, rather than along the edge of a busy road.
- Let someone reliable know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Carry appropriate maps with you and where possible a GPS unit as well.
- Do not wander too far from your car. It is easy to become disorientated in relatively featureless landscapes.
- Always carry plenty of water with you, especially during warm times of the year.
- Take precautions against the heat and sun by conducting your surveys in the morning or late afternoon, wearing a hat and sunscreen.
- Do not survey during days of Total Fire Ban (for your own safety), or on days when it is too hot (when birds are generally inactive and often more difficult to detect).
- Be mindful of snakes and carry a fully-equipped first aid kit.
- Always wear sturdy boots or shoes.

How to go birdwatching in an open forest or woodland

- Scan the ground for any birds
- Check out the shrubs in the undergrowth
- Check out the trunks of the larger trees, and the lower branches
- Check the canopy of the trees
- If there are any clearings, check the airspace above for aerial species like raptors, swallows or swifts

How to go birdwatching in a wetland

- Scan the nearest edges for any birds
- Check out the marginal vegetation
- Check areas of open water
- Scan the far banks
- Check the tops of trees for roosting or nesting waterbirds

How to go birdwatching on a beach

- Scan the water's edge for any birds; also check exposed rock platforms if present
- Check out the upper beach and foredunes and associated marginal vegetation
- Check areas of open beach, including among clumps of beachcast seaweed

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