



## fact file

# Birds Of Fraser

QUEENSLAND: Fraser Island provides a diverse range of habitats and it is only through the conservation of these habitats that the island can retain its rich abundance of bird life.

The best times to observe birds are early mornings after sunrise and mid to late afternoons. More than 354 recorded bird species visit its shores annually - a number of which are considered rare or vulnerable and others which are subject to international bird migratory treaties.

The Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*) is one of the rarest and least commonly sighted birds on the island. This green and yellow ground-dwelling bird lives among coastal heath sedges. It constructs a nest at or near ground level from surrounding vegetation and usually lays 3-4 eggs.

Red and green King parrots (*Alisterus scapularis*) can be seen eating nuts, berries and fruits. Other brightly coloured Parrots and Lorikeets commonly observed flying high amongst the tree tops or feeding on nectar or blossoms are the gregarious Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) and the Scaly-breasted Lorikeets (*T.chlorolepidotus*).

Nectar-feeding birds include the Honeyeater species are identifiable by their long thin, curved beaks. White-cheeked Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris nigra*), Lewin's Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga lewinii*) and the smallest of the Honeyeaters, the richly-coloured Scarlet Honeyeaters (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) are common all year.

The male Grey Shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*) develops a beautiful song voice during the breeding season from August to December.

Male Mistletoe Birds (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) also have a distinctive, clear song and can be identified by their glossy, blue-black and scarlet plumage amongst mistletoe plants.

Tiny Red-backed Fairy-wrens (*Malurus melanocephalus*) can be spotted moving quickly through the dense tea tree shrubs and surrounding bush. During the breeding season from August to February, the male red-backed fairy-wren develops prominent red and black plumage to attract his mate who retains a plainer brown plumage all year.

Kingfisher Bay Resort is named after the migratory Kingfishers that visit the area in summer to nest (often in termite mounds in the trees) and breed. The Kookaburra, the largest kingfisher, does not have the brilliant blues of the smaller Forest



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Kingfisher (*Halcyon macleayi*) or the green of the Sacred Kingfisher (*H. sancta*).

The Azure Kingfisher (*Ceyx azurea*) has a rich, glossy blue plumage on its back and sides and an orange or buff-coloured chest. This small bird appears full of character as it sits on low hanging branches or roots, frequently giving out a shrill squeak before darting off to catch fish.

The Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) - whose colours become iridescent as the sun catches them - can sometimes be mistaken for a Kingfisher. Rainbow Bee-eaters make their nests by tunnelling into sand dunes and creek banks and catch insects - including bees and wasps - on the wing before returning to their perch to remove the sting from their prey before swallowing them.

The whip-like call of the aptly named Eastern Whipbird (*Psophodes olivaceus*) is often the only sign of this secretive bird, as it spends most of its time camouflaged among fallen logs and leaves foraging for insects. Also notoriously difficult to spot is the Brown Quail (*Coturnix australis*) as it tends to blend in with the wet swampy areas and banksia thickets where it traditionally searches for food.

Nocturnal birds - such as Tawny Frogmouths (*Podargus strigoides*) and Owls (*Tyto sp.*) - can sometimes be observed at night, swooping silently down from the trees to catch prey. During the day, the Tawny Frogmouth roosts on branches - its mottled grey and brown plumage helping it to perfectly resemble a dead branch or stump.

Eighteen birds of prey species have been observed on Fraser Island. One of the largest of these raptors is the White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) which has a wing span of two metres or more. Brahminy Kites (*Haliastur indus*) with their distinctive and contrasting chestnut brown and white feathers are also common. The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus* - commonly known as the Fish Hawk) uses its talons to snatch prey from the water. Because of river pollution by toxic pesticides, Osprey numbers in some areas are declining on the mainland, but they are still quite common on Fraser Island.

Many wading birds are seen on the island and some migrate from as far away as Siberia. The largest migratory wader, the Eastern Curlew, (*Numenius madagascariensis*) can be seen from August to March and Whimbrels (*N. phaeopus*) from September to April. A resident wader, the Pied Oyster Catcher (*Haematopus longirostris*); can often be seen at low tide looking for bivalve molluscs.

Sea birds are often seen diving into the ocean after fish. Brown Boobies (*Sula dactylatra*) and Australasian Gannets (*Morus serrator*) often catch fish from around the jetty at Kingfisher Bay. Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax spp.*) and darters (*Anhinga melanogaster*) can also be spotted on yacht masts and branches drying their wings.



Kingfisher Bay Resort  
Fraser Island

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### Bird Sightings Include (but are not limited to):

#### Mound-builders

Australian Brush-turkey

#### Quails and Pheasants

Brown Quail  
King Quail

#### Geese, Swans and Ducks

Slack Swan  
Green Pygmy-goose  
Australian Wood Duck  
Musk Duck  
Pacific Black Duck  
Wandering Whistling-Duck  
\*Mallard  
Chestnut t Teal  
Gray Teal  
Hardhead

#### Grebes

Australasian Grebe  
Great Crested Grebe  
Hoary-headed Grebe

#### Penguins

Little Penguin

#### Petrels and Shearwaters

Black-winged Petrel  
Blue Petrel  
Cape Petrel  
Gould's Petrel  
Great-winged Petrel  
Kerguelen Petrel  
Mottled Petrel  
Northern Giant-Petrel  
Providence Petrel  
Southern Fulmar Petrel  
Southern Giant-Petrel  
Tahiti Petrel  
White-headed Petrel  
Antarctic Prion  
Broad-billed Prion  
Fairy Prion  
Salvin's Prion  
Slender-billed Prion  
Black Petrel  
Westland Petrel  
Buller's Shearwater  
Flesh-footed Shearwater  
Fluttering Shearwater  
Hutton's Shearwater  
Little Shearwater  
Short-tailed Shearwater  
Sooty Shearwater  
Wedge-tailed Shearwater

#### Albatrosses

Black-browed Albatross  
Buller's Albatross  
Grey-headed Albatross  
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross

#### Shy Albatross

Sooty Albatross  
Wandering Albatross

White-bellied Storm-Petrel

#### Tropicbirds

Red-tailed Tropicbird  
White-tailed Tropicbird

#### Gannets and Boobies

Australasian Gannet  
Masked Booby  
Brown Booby

#### Darters

Darter

#### Cormorants

Little Pied cormorant  
Pied Cormorant  
Little Black Cormorant  
Great Cormorant

#### Pelicans

Australian Pelican

#### Frigatebirds

Great Frigatebird  
Lesser Frigatebird

#### Herons, Egrets and Bitterns

White-faced Heron  
Little Egret  
Eastern Reef Egret  
White-necked Heron  
Great-billed Heron  
Great Egret  
Intermediate Egret  
Cattle Egret  
Striated Heron  
Nankeen Night Heron  
Black Bittern

#### Ibises and Spoonbills

Australian White Ibis  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Royal Spoonbill

#### Storks

Black-necked Stork

#### Osprey

Osprey

#### Kites, Goshawks, Eagles and Harriers

Pacific Baza  
Black-shouldered Kite  
Black-breasted Buzzard  
Black Kite  
Whistling Kite  
Brahiminy Kite  
White-bellied Sea-eagle  
Swamp Harrier

#### Brown Goshawk

Grey Goshawk  
Collared Sparrowhawk  
Red Goshawk

#### Falcons

Brown Falcon  
Australian Hobby  
Peregrine Falcon  
Nankeen Kestrel

#### Cranes

Brolga

#### Rails, Crakes, Swamphens and Coots

Buff-banded Rail  
Lewin's Rail  
Bailion's Crake  
Spotless Crake  
Purple Swamphen  
Dusky Moorhen  
Eurasian Coot

#### Button-quails

Red-backed Button-quail  
Little Button-quail  
Painted Button-quail  
Black-breasted Button-quail

#### Curlews, Sandpipers, Snipes and Godwits

Latham's Snipe  
Black-tailed Godwit  
Bar-tailed Godwit  
Little Curlew  
Whimbrel  
Eastern Curlew  
Marsh Sandpiper  
Common Greenshank  
Terek Sandpiper  
Common Sandpiper  
Grey-tailed Tattler  
Wandering Tattler  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Great Knot  
Red Knot  
Sanderling  
Red-necked Stint  
Broad-billed Sandpiper  
Curlew Sandpiper  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

#### Stone-curlews

Bush Stone-curlew  
Beach Stone-curlew

#### Oystercatchers

Pled Oystercatcher  
Sooty Oystercatcher

#### Stilts and Avocets

Black-winged Stilt  
Red-necked Avocet

#### Lapwings, Plovers and

#### Dotterels

Double-banded Plover  
Greater Sand Plover  
Grey Plover  
Srey Plover

Pacific Golden Plover

Red-capped Plover  
Ringed Plover  
Black-fronted Dotterel  
Masked Lapwing

#### Pratincoles

Oriental Pratincole

#### Gulls and Terns

Great Skua  
Pomarine Jaeger  
Long-tailed Jaeger  
Pacific Gull  
Kelp Gull  
Silver Gull  
Arctic Tern  
Black-naped Tern  
Bridled Tern  
Caspian Tern  
Common Tern  
Crested Tern  
Gull-billed Tern  
Lesser Crested Tern  
Little Tern  
Roseate Tern  
Sooty Tern  
Whiskered Tern  
White-fronted Tern  
White-winged Black Tern  
Common Noddy  
Black Noddy  
Grey Ternlet  
White Tern

#### Pigeons and Doves

\*Rock Dove  
White-headed Pigeon  
\*Spotted Turtledove  
Brown Cuckoo-Dove  
Emerald Dove  
Common Bronzewing  
Brush Bronzewing  
Crested Pigeon  
Bar-shouldered Dove  
Peaceful Dove  
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove  
Superb Fruit-Dove  
Wompoo Fruit-Dove  
Topknot Pigeon

#### Cockatoos and Parrots

Galah  
Glossy Black-Cockatoo  
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo  
Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo  
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo  
Cockatiel  
Rainbow Lorikeet  
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet  
Little lorikeet  
Australian King-Parrot

#### Red-winged Parrot

Pale-headed Rosella  
Budgerigar  
Turquoise Parrot





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*Fraser Island*

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### **Storm Petrels**

Wilson's Storm-Petrel

### **Wedge-tailed Eagle**

Little Eagle

### **Lesser Sand Plover**

Oriental Plover

### **Ground Parrot**

Ends .

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