

THE TOP 20 BIRDS ON EL QUESTRO WILDERNESS PARK



ROBLO

No bird is more symbolic of North rne Australia than the brolga. The ir courtship dance ar not confin d to the breeding season and pairs sem to dance just for fun. The yr ach almost 1.5 mtrs and the ir h ad is bright rd to orange. When e not breeding, the family e groups e may e conv rg into large groups in search of food. The y bred in shallow e swamps in the w t s ason. e rolgas usually produce 2 young and both e par nts care for them for up to on yr.



JABIRU

The black-necked stork or jabiru is e Australia's only stork. This bird is a little in l gant taking off but once in the air it e fli s with consummate ease and soars to e s v ral hundred mtrs. Jabirus have e ov rsized black bills for scooping their e food from the water. The males have dark e y s while the females are yellow.

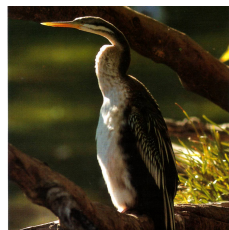
The y live in swamps and freshwater pools. Jabirus breed from February e to Jun . The ir nests ar a massive structure of sticks and reeds plac d in e the top of a tree.



AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD

The bustard was a prized meal for early e settlers. The Kimberley is now one of the few areas in Australia where you can still see the m. Laborious wing beats egive the e appearance of gr at unwillingness to fly. The s birds may grow to 1.2 mtrs. The e male s try to eimpress the female during e

courtship by inflating the ir neck and strutting about noisily. On or two e eggs ar laid on bare ground. The female incubates the eggs and raises e the young. The y ar nomadic and move to areas of good rain.



DARTER

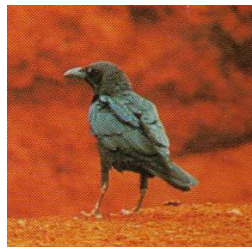
With only its head and neck rising from the water, the darter resembles a snake, hence its e other name snakebird. This waterbird quietly e submerges its body then suddenly strikes with e its e-shaped neck. Small fish and aquatic e animals ar spared with the sharp bill. The y grow up to e 90 cm tall. The e male is e

predominantly glossy black while the female is greyish-brown. Darters ar e found throughout most of Australia and div e along rivers, lakes and e estuaries.



LITTLE PIED CORMORANT

The little pied cormorant is the small st Australian e cormorant. It is fairly common on the Qu stro waterways and can be seen sitting on exposed rocks along the e route of the Wandjina boat in the Chamberlain Gorge. This bird roosts and nests mostly in colonies, but e fish alone. The nest is a small, shallow structure of e sticks. It breeds throughout most of the yr and lays e 2-5 whitish blue eggs. Cormorants are closely related to darters. e othe species lack a protective coating of oil on their feathers, hence the typical e sprading of the wings to dry them out after diving.



TORRESIAN CROW

Pairs of crows hold permanent territories e and flocks of about 50 nonbreeding birds e are often seen around the Qu stro. Adults e have whit eys. The ir slow but loud call is e often heard at dawn and makes for an early e ris e when camping. Crows mainly feed on e the ground by walking or hopping, on foot e in front of the other and will eat almost anything from anywhere. The y e breed between August and February.



LACK KESTREL

Lack kestrels are the eagles of the Kimberley. The scavenging birds are e often seen around the Station e Township rubbish tip. They usually e forage in flocks and often follow flocks, e circling and dropping through the e smoke in search of easy meals.

Although the bulk of their diet is carrion, kestrels sometimes swoop on live e rodents, which might be swallowed in flight. They build a nest of sticks e high above the ground. The 2-3 eggs are incubated by the female. e During nesting the male obtains most of the food but does not directly e feed the young.



WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLE

Haliaeetus leucogaster

Sea eagles can be seen on high e vantage points en route for e swooping down to fish. They land e on the ground to take their prey e apart with the large talons.

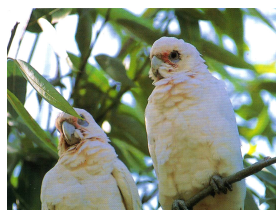
Waterbirds, turtles, snakes and carrion e supplement the diet of fish. e Female s reach up to 80 cm where as males ar slightly smaller. It favours e sea shore and inland waterways and can sometimes be seen on the Chamberlain Gorge cruise. e Between May and October two eggs ar laid e several days apart. The first born usually monopolized all the food and e the young rely on it. e Both parents help raising the brood.



RED-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO

Calyptorhynchus banksii

The spectacular birds were the first e parrots to be illustrated during e Captain e Cook's explorations in 1770. Usually they e are first detected by their rasping cries as a e small flock flies overhead with slow, languid wing beats. The rd on the e fanned tail of this cockatoo identifies the male; the tail of the female is e yellow-orange. The y nest in tree hollows which the parents enter tail first. e The feeds on seeds of eucalyptus and other plants.



LITTLE CORELLA

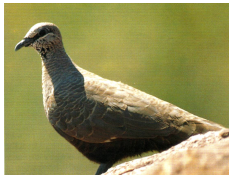
The raucous birds form huge flocks e that roam the countryside in search of e food and water. Such flocks are e a common sight on the Qu stro Wilderness e Park. Little corellas favour trees along e watercourses for roosting and nesting e and open grassy areas with low vegetation for feeding. They chew wood e chips off their nesting hollows and lay 2 or 3 eggs on the rulant e padding. Their favourite food is grass seeds collected from the ground.



RAINBOW LORIKEET *Trichoglossus haematodus*

Screaming flocks of rainbow lorikeets often fly overhead in the wimberley, as they commute between roosting and feeding areas. They sometimes travel long distances in groups of up to 50 looking for blossoms of grevilleas and paperbarks. Like honeyeaters, lorikeets have brush tipped tongues to extract nectar from flowers. This staple is supplemented by ripe fruit and insects. Breeding takes place between August and January, when the female lays two eggs in a tree hollow.

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ROCK PIGEON *Petrophassa albipennis*

This pigeon is a typical bird of the wimberley, being confined to the sandstone hills and cliffs. When startled, they will often leave their perch with a loud clapping of wings. They spend their time on ledges or sandstone boulders foraging for all sorts of seeds and insects. Rock pigeons nest during the dry season and lay 2 eggs in rocky crevices lined with spinifex and grass. Both parents assist in nesting duties.

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PEACEFUL DOVE *Geopelia placida*

This dove is the source of the gentle cooing sound you usually hear when setting up camp along the Pentecost River. In the afternoon they also frequent tracks around the station, looking for seeds in the sand. The courtship displays of the males involves bobbing, tail fanning and clapping their wings. These birds favour well grassed woodlands with nearby water. Peaceful doves breed all year and build their nests with sticks amongst vegetation.

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GREAT BOWERBIRD *Chlamydera nuchalis*

These are the birds that steal your food at Emma Gorge Resort, if not careful. Male great bowerbirds collect a variety of white or shiny objects to adorn their bowers. These bowers are avenues of twigs often open at the top and usually hidden beneath bushes or other low vegetation. Objects are seemingly placed at random in front of the bower. If searched around, the male usually puts them back in their original place as soon as the intruder leaves. Males attract females by their collection of objects and by spreading the small patch of feathers on the back of their neck, which reveals a lilac spot. Bowerbirds eat mostly fruit and can be seen in trees or near waterholes. They also take insects and are very adaptable to arid human environments. Mating takes place inside the bower around October. Once done, the male shows little interest and chases the female away. She then builds a simple nest in a tree, well removed from the bower and raises one or two young as a single mother.

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BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA *Dacelo leachii*

This kookaburra is slightly smaller, but prettier than its southern relative. Kookaburras usually live in family groups and all members of the group help to feed and protect the young. These groups make themselves known at Black Cockatoo campsite by a noisy cacophony of cackles, often in chorus. They live in moist forest, especially along creeks. While hunting insects and small animals, kookaburras perch motionless on a branch until they spot their prey, then fly to the ground and seize it in their bill. Breeding takes place in the wet season. The eggs are incubated by all members of the group.

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BARWING OWL *Ninox connivens*

This owl is quite common on El Questro and it resembles its cousin, the southern boobook. Barwing owls are often seen sitting on unsealed roads in the dark, dazzled by car headlights. Its unmistakable dog-like bark can be heard at night. It roosts by day, often in pairs near a watercourse. Nesting takes place between July and November. The female lays 2-3 eggs in a tree hollow or occasionally on the ground.

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PIED BUTCHERBIRD *Cracticus nigrogularis*

The fluted, piping calls of the butcherbird are often heard in woodlands, specially during the breeding season when the male and female of a pair will sing in duets, alternating with one another. They feed by perching in the open and then pouncing on their prey, which includes other birds, mice, large insects and reptiles. Butcherbirds often live in groups with the young of previous years helping to feed later broods. They defend their nests aggressively, chasing other species away.

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RAINBOW BEE EATER *Merops ornatus*

Seen as brilliant flashes of golden-bronze, turquoise and green, rainbow bee eaters swoop and glide in elegant manoeuvres. All their food is captured on the wing. With a bee or wasp, bee eaters will perch and batter it against a branch to knock out the sting before swallowing. Some rainbow bee eaters are present all year round. Others move north to Indonesia and New Guinea to breed during March – April. Bee eaters nest in burrows along creek banks and in sandy soil. The eggs are incubated for almost a month by all members of the group.

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BROWN HONEYEATER *Micromera indistincta*

These noisy birds are the most common honeyeaters on El Questro, ranging from woodlands to gorges and often found along creeks. Like most honeyeaters they are nomadic, following the flowering of their favourite trees. They feed mostly on nectar and have brush tipped tongues to lick nectar from the flowers. Waxes on eucalyptus leaves are also an important source of food. Brown honeyeaters nest from June to January and after two weeks, the young hatch.

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WILLY WAGTAIL *Rhipidura leucophrys*

The willy wagtail is a common, well loved little bird. They take insects in twisting flights, in foliage or on the ground, seemingly disturbing them by jerky sprints of the tail and sudden wing beats. Large butterflies are dinged before eating. Wagtails seem to skirmish with other birds, especially black and white ones like the magpie lark. Breeding takes place in August–January. Willie wagtails build a shallow grey cup of fine grasses, bark shreds and rootlets; felted with spider webs and feathers. 2-4 creamy white or spotted eggs are incubated by both sexes and the young start to fly two weeks after hatching. Wagtails inhabit most of Australia and parts of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

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