

Guide to finding Birds in Kakadu National Park, NT

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(Photo left to right - Blue-winged Kookaburra, Partridge Pigeon, Red Goshawk & Varied Sittella)

ABOUT KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

Kakadu National Park is a protected area about 170 km East of Darwin in the Northern Territory. The park covers an area of 19,804 km², extending nearly 200 kilometres from north to south and over 100 kilometres from east to west. It is about one-third the size of Tasmania, or nearly half the size of Switzerland. Kakadu National Park's many habitats support more than 280 species of birds, 74 Mammals, 117 Reptiles, 25 Frogs and 1700 Plant species making it an amazing place to visit as if you are a wildlife enthusiast like myself.

Entry fee into the park for a non-resident of the Northern Territory is \$25.00 for a 14 day park pass.



SOUTH ALLIGATOR FLOODPLAINS (Photo Above - Black-breasted Buzzard)

[GPS -12.661290, 132.502511](#)

This large floodplain about 40 km west of Jabiru is a fantastic spot to stop and have a look around. The floodplain itself can hold Swamp Harrier, Spotted Harrier, Australian Hobby, Black-shouldered Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black-breasted Buzzard, Australian Pratincole, Zitting and Golden-headed Cisticolas. The boat ramp area is also worth a look with the possibility of seeing Paperbark Flycatcher, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Mangrove Fantail, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher and maybe even a Great-billed Heron on the river bank.



MAMUKALA BILLABONG (Photo Above - Purple Swamphen)

[GPS -12.649342, 132.572609](#)

Mamukala Billabong is a massive billabong around 36 km west of Jabiru and has a fantastic bird hide set up on the edge of the water, this makes it a great place to sit and see the birds go about their day. From September to November there can be tens of thousands of birds that congregate in the shrinking pond. These include Magpie Geese, Comb-crested Jakana, Plumed Whistling-duck, Purple Swamphen, Australian Pelican, Green Pygmy-goose, Black-fronted Dotterel, Gull-billed Tern, Red-kneed Dotterel, Australian Pratincole, Radjah Shelduck, Grey Teal and Pacific Black Duck. Before you get to the bird hide look out for Arafura Fantail, Shining Flycatcher, Banded, Brown, Rufous-throated and Brown Honeyeaters, Varied Lorikeets and Red-collared Lorikeets.



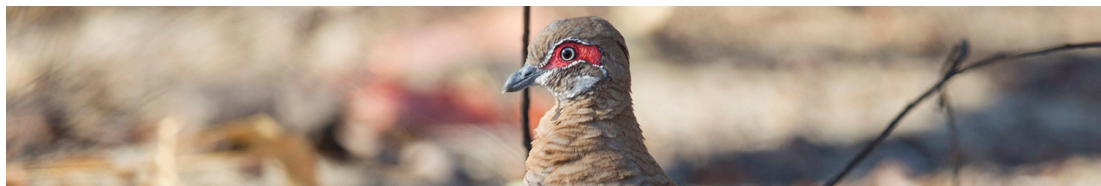
UBIRR & CAHILLS CROSSING (Photo Above - Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon)

[GPS -12.426052, 132.965736](#)

Ubirr lookout is by far the best place to watch the sunset in Kakadu National Park, it also has some of the most amazing Aboriginal rock art sites in Australia. While you're visiting keep an eye out for Sandstone Shrike-thrush and Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon, which are both reasonably common in the area.

Nearby is the 1.5 km Mangaree Monsoon Forest walk, this follows the East Alligator River along a nice shaded track coming out at Cahills Crossing, the gateway to Arnhem Land. The Mangaree walk has some great monsoon forest habitat making it perfect for birds such as Rainbow Pitta, Shinning & Broad-billed Flycatchers and Arafura Fantails. At the start of the walk there is a massive colony of Little-red Flying Foxes which make a hell of a racket but are very entertaining to watch, just don't stand underneath them.

Cahills Crossing is great for spotting the Northern Territory's famous Saltwater Crocodile. If you can make it here on a spring tide between August and October you could find a large number of Saltwater Crocodiles lining up at the spillway waiting for the Mullet that swim upstream with the tide, very cool to see.



JABIRU TOWNSHIP (Photo Above - Partridge Pigeon)

[GPS -12.670594, 132.834602](#)

Jabiru is the only town in Kakadu and is a great place to get all your basics; I recommend a visit to the famous Jabiru Bakery which makes some awesome food! Its also one of the best places to see Partridge Pigeon, I have the best luck around the Airport Terminal (**[-12.659789, 132.891853](#)**) but they can be found throughout the town.



NOURLANGIE ROCK (Photo Above - Leichhardt's Grasshopper)

[GPS -12.866936, 132.811006](#)

Nourlangie Rock is one of the best places to see three of the local endemic birds, White-lined Honeyeater, Banded Fruit-Dove and Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon. Have a look near the Anbangbang Gallery or Main Gallery Overhang for both White-lined Honeyeater & Banded Fruit-Dove, search for any fruiting or flowering trees as this is where you're likely to find them. Nourlangie Rock is also a good spot for Rainbow Pitta, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Barking Owl, Helmeted (Sandstone) Friarbird and Sandstone Shrike-thrush. While you're there also look out for the endemic Black Wallaroo, which I have seen regularly here.

During the wet season also keep an eye out for the very special Leichhardt's grasshopper, the Nourlangie area is one of the only places in the world you can see this very special & brightly coloured Grasshopper.



NAWURLANDJA (Photo Above - Sandstone Shrike-thrush)

[GPS -12.861374, 132.794678](#)

Nawurlandja is one of the best places in Kakadu National Park to watch the Sunrise or Sunset; it has a beautiful view over Nourlangie Rock and Kakadu. It is also a great spot to find Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon, Large-tailed Nightjar, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and if you can locate a fruiting fig tree then maybe even a Banded Fruit-dove.



GUBARA (Photo Above - Banded Fruit-Dove)

[GPS -12.836990, 132.858447](#)

Gubara is an 8 km return walking track which leads you through some beautiful open habitat then right along side a beautiful escarpment leading you to an area of monsoon forest, the track leading to the escarpment is good for Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon, Weebill, Northern Rosella, Red-backed Kingfisher, Helmeted Friarbird and maybe even Partridge Pigeon. Once you get closer to the escarpment and the monsoon forest look for Banded Fruit-dove, Rainbow Pitta, Little Shrike-thrush, Buff-sided Robin, Shining Flycatcher and White-lined Honeyeater.



ANBANGBANG BILLABONG (Photo Above - Great Egret)

[GPS -12.866885, 132.794234](#)

Anbangbang Billabong is a great place to visit any time of day with nice shaded picnic tables and a beautiful 2.5 km walk around the Billabong. The best time of year to visit is at the end of the dry season (September - November) when the water levels are low and there are usually huge numbers of water birds feeding in and around the billabong. Look out for Lemon-bellied Flycatchers, Little Shrike-thrush, Little Corellas, Brown Quail, Black-necked Storks, Paperbark & Shining Flycatchers and also keep an eye out for Partridge Pigeon sometimes found here.



YELLOW WATERS BOAT CRUISE (Photo Above - Azure Kingfisher)

[GPS -12.902670, 132.523005](#)

Yellow Waters Boat Cruise is a must do when you visit Kakadu, the first boat cruise leaves at 6.45 am and this is the one to get on if you can. You can book here to secure your spot (**[YELLOW WATER BOAT CRUISE BOOKINGS](#)**). Yellow Waters is a great place to see White-bellied Sea Eagles, Comb-crested Jakana, Black-necked Storks and also Little, Azure, Forest and Sacred Kingfishers. You will find the birds are used to the boats and usually allow a very close approach making it a fantastic spot to get some memorable photos.



GUNLOM (WATERFALL CREEK) (Photo Above - Red Goshawk with Baby)

[GPS -13.433994, 132.416792](#)

My favourite place in Kakadu National Park, a great place for birding, camping and swimming which should keep everyone happy. From the Kakadu Highway the 40 km gravel road is usually in reasonable condition and suitable for a 2wd vehicle if you take it slow. The campground at the base of the falls and has excellent facilities including hot showers and a well maintained toilet block, if you get there early you should get one of the nice shaded camping spots. Camping fees are \$10.00 per person per night.

Gunlom has a couple of areas to explore; first is the monsoon forest at the base of the falls with a large pool plunge pool, this area is great for Banded, White-gaped, Dusky, Brown and White-throated Honeyeaters, Buff-sided Robin, Dollarbird (Wet Season), Northern Fantail, Rufous Whistler and Spangled Drongo. Secondly; behind the camp there is a short walk to Murrill Billabong, depending on the time of year you have a chance to see Glossy & Straw-necked Ibis, Plumed Whistling Duck, Radjah Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Azure & Forest Kingfishers, Intermediate & Great Egrets. Check the surrounding areas for Partridge Pigeon, Striated Pardalote, Great Bowerbird, Northern Rosella, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Crimson, Double-barred, Long-tail and Masked Finches. A rarity to keep an eye out for is the Red Goshawk, which has been seen in the area.

At night make sure you go out spot lighting with a chance for Barking Owl, Southern Boobook, Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Owlet-Nightjar and maybe even a Rufous Owl.

The top of the falls is a fantastic place for a swim and this whole area can be great for most of the endemics, Banded Fruit-Dove, Variegated Fairy-wren (Dulcis), White-lined Honeyeater, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon. Be sure you get away from the crowds and explore the areas each side of the creek as this is your best chance to see them.

This used to be a reliable place to see White-throated Grasswren until a fire came through and burnt the entire old growth spinifex habitat. I've looked countless times for them with no luck but you never know, they may return to the area one day and you might be the lucky person to rediscover them here.