

There are eight actively-managed public wetlands of international (Ramsar Convention) and/or of regional significance in the Kerang-Cohuna-Gunbower area: Lake Cullen, Hird Swamp, Johnson Swamp, Round Lake, McDonald Swamp, Lake Elizabeth, Lake Murphy, and Richardsons Lagoon. There are notes on Hird Swamp, Johnson Swamp and Richardsons Lagoon below. The others are covered in our Kerang guide.

### Johnson Swamp and Hird Swamp

Hird Swamp and Johnson Swamp are Ramsar-listed wetlands located on opposite sides of the Kerang-Leitchville Road (VicRoads Map 21 C7 and C6). Water authorities often alternate the flooding of Hird Swamp and Johnson Swamp. Painted Snipe and other endangered birds have sometimes been observed in these wetlands. If you intend to wade in the swamps to look for snipe or bitterns, gum boots' or 'waders' are recommended. These wetlands may be open to shooters during the duck-hunting season.

### Richardsons (Baillieus) Lagoon

Richardsons Lagoon is a regionally significant deep freshwater marsh that is located north of the Murray Valley Highway about half-way between Echuca and Gunbower. To reach the lagoon, turn north off the Murray Valley onto Baillieu Road (VicRoads Map 31 B2). The road travels through Baillieu Estate for about a kilometre before entering wetland. Keep veering left until you are alongside the Lagoon. If the lagoon contains water, the birding here may be excellent. Brolgas and White-bellied Sea-eagle have been observed here. Much of the lagoon is surrounded by bushland, some of which is on private property.

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This brochure is a guide to some birding close to Cohuna and Gunbower. There is a separate guide for Terrick Terrick National Park and another for the Kerang area.

This guide is one of a series produced by BirdLife Echuca District that can be downloaded from the branch's website, a link to which is on the BirdLife Australia web site [www.birdlife.org.au](http://www.birdlife.org.au)

Other local on-line birding guides:

Barmah Forest	Bendigo
Cohuna & Gunbower	Deniliquin
Gulpa Island, Mathoura	Kamarooka Forest
Kerang	Perricoota Road, Moama
Terrick Terrick National Park	Wyuna and Kanyapella

For more information, email [echuca@birdlife.org.au](mailto:echuca@birdlife.org.au) and/or visit the BirdLife Echuca District web site.

Cover photograph:

Male CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT by Marlene Lyell.

The Crested Shrike-tit is sometimes observed in local forests, such as those on Gunbower Island and in Terrick Terrick National Park. It's a species in decline.

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### Birding between Gunbower and Cohuna

#### Thompson Weir and surrounding bushland

Leave the B400 at Gunbower (there is a hotel on the corner) onto Gunbower Island Road. After about 2km there is a wetland to the left that serves as an Ibis rookery. At the rookery, veer left onto Thompson Bridge Road and follow it alongside a creek, and crossing the creek alongside small weir. Stop here (park by a pump station) and walk on the unsealed track through bushland between the creek and a wetland. This is a great birding spot! You might continue along Thompson Weir Road to the Murray Valley Highway and head toward Cohuna.

#### Cohuna Island Road

Island Road leaves the Murray Valley Highway at a roundabout in the centre of Cohuna. A good birding spot is bushland opposite the caravan park (north of the oval). The wetland north of the caravan park is worth checking out as well. There are several good birding spots along Island Road. For instance, tracks such as Mawson Road lead into GZunbower National Park. About 10km along Island Road from Cohuna, turn south onto Taylors Road and follow it until the start of a walking track is reached. The track leads to Gunbower Creek.

# Birding spots near Cohuna and Gunbower



## Birding spots between Echuca and Cohuna

Maps such as *Hayman's Cohuna-Echuca-Gunbower Forest Activities Map*, *Keely 1:50,000* and *Barham 1:50,000*, or *Region 20 CFA maps 192 and 193* will assist you to visit the birding spots outlined in this brochure.

## Wills Bend

Wills Bend is a popular camping and boating spot about 17km north-west from Echuca, via the B400 and O'Dwyer Road. Outside of holiday times and weekends, when boaters and campers are absent, the birding in this section of Echuca Regional Park can be very rewarding, up to 50 species being observed over a few hours. There are picnic tables and toilets at Wills Bend.

## Murphy Swamp

That part of Murphy Swamp located on the northern side of the B400 (Murray Valley Highway) 18.7km from Echuca is a remnant of a once larger swamp<sup>1</sup>. Entry to Murphy Swamp is via a gate alongside the B400 a few hundred metres north-west of Fraser Road. The number of species on the northern part of Murphy Swamp depends greatly upon the water level.

*A short distance along the highway is a turnoff (Baillieu Road) to Richardsons Lagoon, a Ramsar-listed wetland.*

## Western end of National Channel Road

About 6km north-west of Torrumbarry, turn north onto Torrumbarry Weir Road. Prior to crossing the National Channel, turn left (west) onto an unsealed section of National Channel Road. Park near an old gate at the confluence of the National Channel and Gunbower Creek.

## Torrumbarry Weir

Follow Torrumbarry Weir Road to a car park alongside a visitor information centre. Birds often found in the gardens at Torrumbarry Weir include Blue-faced Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Grey Shrike Thrush and Brown Tree-creeper. The lawns provide a pleasant spot for morning tea, lunch or afternoon tea. It is a short walk to the dam wall and spillway. Birds such as cormorants and Darter are nearly always observed here, fishing.

## Kow Swamp

Kow Swamp is a large water storage west of Gunbower. One of the best birding spots is where the Leitchville-Pyramid Road (B267) crosses Box Creek. Look for Nankeen Night Herons in the willows here. Kow Swamp Road and a number of minor roads circle the lake.

<sup>1</sup> There is another section of Murphy Swamp to the south (which can be accessed via Hatwell Road). In summer, Budgerigar and Cockatiel are sometimes observed near the edge of this section of the swamp.

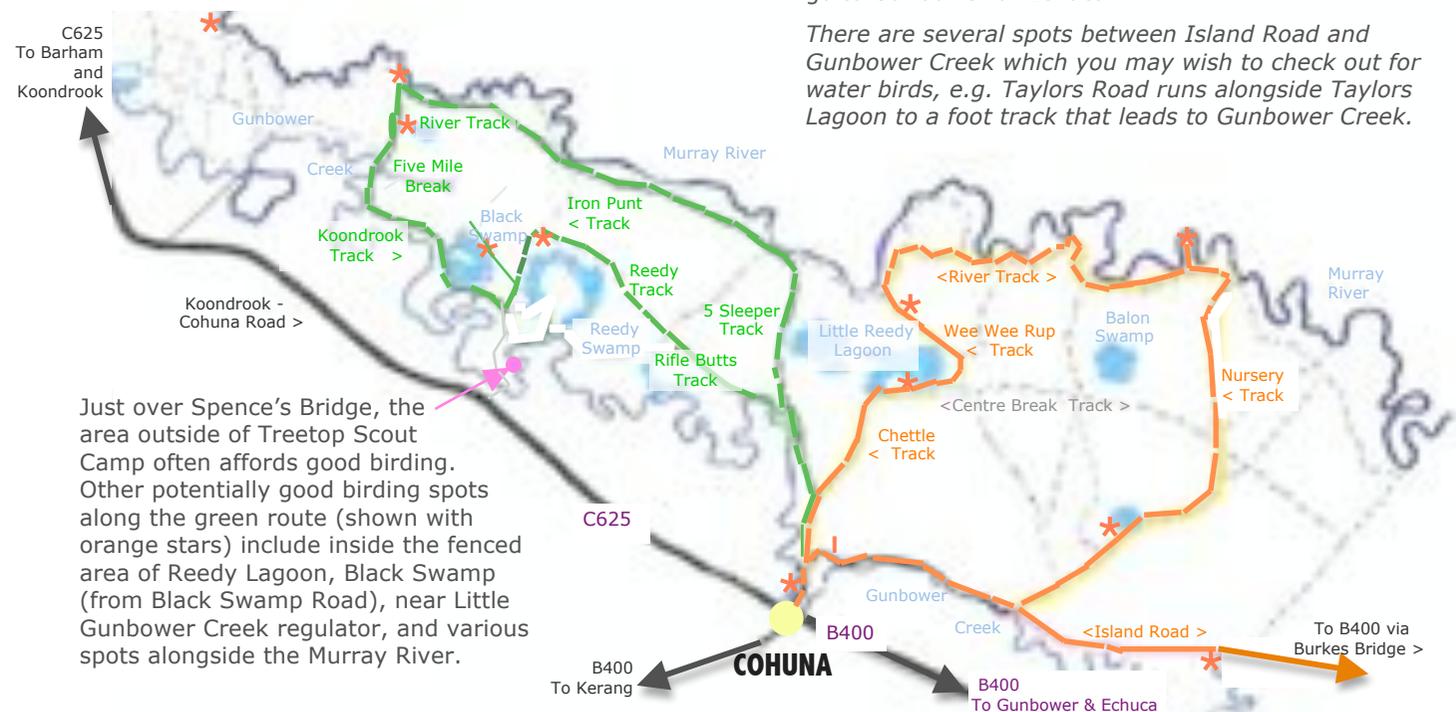
## Gunbower National Park

Gunbower Island is a 26,400 ha flood plain located between the Murray River and Gunbower Creek. It is an Ramsar wetland of international significance for its importance to birdlife, native mammals and amphibians. It's the traditional land of the Barababaraba tribe of eight clans. They called the area Kanbowro. Part of Gunbower Island is farmed. Most of the remainder is either State Forest or National Park.

The sketch map below should be used in conjunction with a Parks Victoria brochure and a more-detailed map. It shows two potential tours. One suggested route is coloured orange; the other is coloured green. These routes should only be attempted when the forest is not in flood and when forest roads are dry.

## Green Birding Route

The green route may be started at Spences Bridge or from Island Road. If you enter the forest from Spence's Bridge, it is worth stopping just beyond the Treetops Scout Camp (pink spot, arrowed) as this area always offers good birding ~ navigation may be easier if the tour is done in a clockwise direction. From Island Road, follow Rifle Butts Track, Reedy Track, Iron Punt Track (south) and Koondrook Track. From Koondrook Track, turn north onto Five Mile Break and turn south-east onto River Track. Follow the riverside track to 5 Sleeper Track and complete the circuit.



Just over Spence's Bridge, the area outside of Treetop Scout Camp often affords good birding. Other potentially good birding spots along the green route (shown with orange stars) include inside the fenced area of Reedy Lagoon, Black Swamp (from Black Swamp Road), near Little Gunbower Creek regulator, and various spots alongside the Murray River.

## Orange Birding Route

1.8 km from the roundabout in Cohuna, turn sharply left onto a marked forest drive (Rifle Butts Track). Continue along the main track for about 0.7km until you reach a map sign. Turn right on to Chettle Track and stop in box forest for bush birds.

A track on your right leads to Little Reedy Lagoon (35°46S; 144°16E). At times, ibis roost here.

After a few kilometres, turn left on to Wee Wee Rup Track (which parallels Charcoal Swamp). There is a good birding spot on your right just before Wee Wee Rup Track reaches the Murray River. Potentially good birding spots are shown by orange stars.

Turn right onto River Track, part of the Forest Drive. The area you are in is part of Wattle Creek Special Protection Zone, a rainforest-like area.

1.1km along River Track is a turn off to Graham's Hut. There are several other tracks running from River Track to the Murray. One leads to the site of Robson's Timber Mill. Nursery Bend #3 Track often affords good birding.

After travelling for 9.4km along River Track, turn right onto Nursery Track. After about 4km, it may be worth stopping near 86 Track to look for bush birds in Box country. Continue along Nursery Track and turn left at Island Road to return to Cohuna or right if you wish to go to Gunbower or Echuca.

*There are several spots between Island Road and Gunbower Creek which you may wish to check out for water birds, e.g. Taylors Road runs alongside Taylors Lagoon to a foot track that leads to Gunbower Creek.*