

## Ducks rarely encountered in coastal SEQ

**Cotton Pygmy-goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* with bright and greener male (left) and dull and browner female (right).



R Inglis



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**Pink-eared Duck** *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* (left) and **Freckled Duck** *Stictonetta naevosa* (right).



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W Jolly



W Jolly

Pink-eared Ducks at times show brilliant pink “ear”, which at other times is less apparent.

**Blue-billed Duck** *Oxyura australis* with breeding-plumaged male (left) and female/immature displaying 'stiff tail' (right).



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**Musk Duck** *Biziura lobata* with male displaying flap below bill (left) and female/immature (right).



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Male Musk Ducks have a most unusual half-submerged courtship display (left) during which they splash, grunt and whistle.

## Brolga

*Grus rubicunda*

Uncommon resident

77-134 cm



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Tall, graceful and unmistakable crane. Silvery-grey plumage. Bare head with pale grey crown and red across face from bill to nape. Dark flap of skin (dewlap) under chin, larger in males. Yellow eyes and straight horn-coloured bill. Long grey legs. Majestic flight reveals dark flight feathers. Dancing display and bugling call, often given in duets.



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## Purple Swamphen

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

Very common resident

44-48 cm



*W Jolly*

Blackish above with broad dark blue collar and dark blue to purple below. White under tail, which it flicks habitually. Robust scarlet bill and forehead shield and long reddish legs and feet. Laboured flight. Aggressive, with rasping and nasal calls. Young birds duller and blacker.



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## Buff-banded Rail

*Gallirallus philippensis*

Common resident

30-33 cm



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Colourful and elegant. Mottled black and brown above with white spots, and barred black and white below, extending under tail. Grey breast with buff-orange band. Rich chestnut streaks from bill through eyes to nape. White eyebrows, red eyes, red bill and pinkish legs.



N Bowman



W Jolly

Similar species: **Lewin's Rail** *Lewinia pectoralis* is smaller and darker, lacking white eyebrows and buff breastband. Barring extends on to wings. Proportionately longer pink bill (compare with crakes). Rare and secretive.

## Baillon's Crake

*Porzana pusilla*

Uncommon resident

15-18 cm



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Tiny. Tawny above with black streaks and fine white flecks. Pale grey face and breast with black and white barring on flanks and under tail. Red eyes, greenish bill and olive-green legs. Secretive but sometimes seen in open on edge of reedbeds or foraging on floating vegetation. Habitually flicks tail.



T Tarrant



C Barnes

Similar species: Larger and rarer **Australian Spotted Crake** *Porzana fluminea* is darker above and below, with white under tail. Green bill has red base. Similar habits to Baillon's Crake.

## Spotless Crake

*Porzana tabuensis*

Uncommon resident

17-20 cm



T Tarrant

Compact and dark. Plain olive-brown above and blackish below with distinctive black and white barring under tail. Red eyes, black bill and pinkish-red legs. Secretive and easily alarmed, but sometimes seen foraging in open on muddy margins of swamps and reedbeds. Flicks tail.



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Similar species: **Black-tailed Native-hen** *Tribonyx ventralis*

(left) and **Pale-vented Bush-hen** *Amauornis moluccana*

(right). Both of these rarely-seen species are larger than Spotless Crake.



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G Jones

## Dusky Moorhen

*Gallinula tenebrosa*

Very common resident  
35-40 cm



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Dusky-brown above and dark slaty-grey below with white under tail. Dark eyes, yellow-tipped bright red bill and red forehead shield. Reddish legs and feet. White patches each side of undertail help to distinguish from Eurasian Coot. Young birds duller and browner.



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## Eurasian Coot

*Fulica atra*

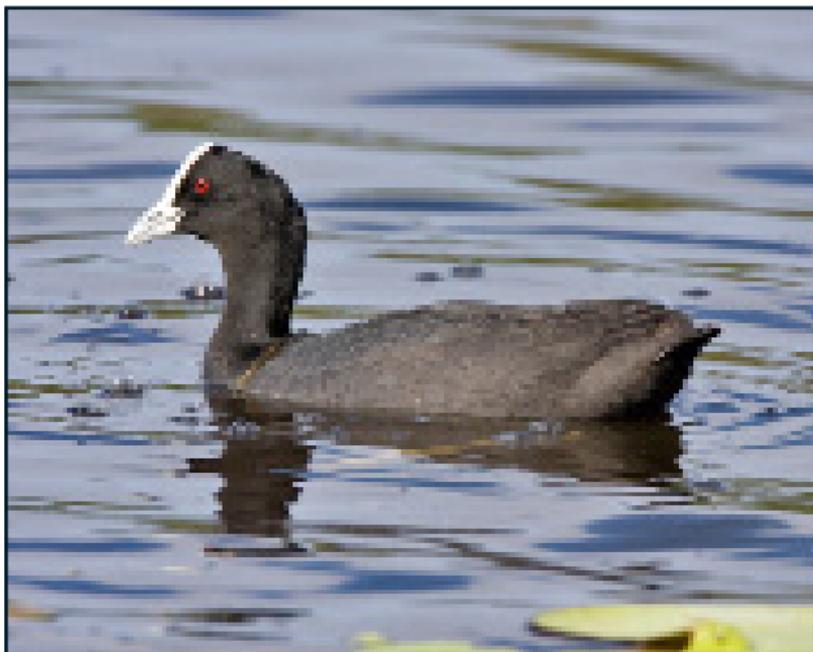
Common resident

35-39 cm



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Plain sooty-grey with darker head. Conspicuous snowy-white bill and forehead shield. Red eye, silvery-grey legs and feet. Lobed toes. Lack of white patches on undertail help to distinguish from Dusky Moorhen. Young birds paler. Habitually dives for plant material.



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## Eastern Osprey

*Pandion cristatus*

Very common resident  
50-66 cm



*T Siggs*

Fish-eating hawk. Dark brown above and white below. Black band through eye continues to neck and separates pale crown from white throat. Female has obvious brown-streaked 'necklace'. Eyes pale yellow, bill and legs greyish. In flight, underwings white with barred flight feathers and black carpal patches. Wings long and kinked.



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## Black-shouldered Kite

*Elanus axillaris*

Fairly common resident

33-37 cm



*W Jolly*

Pale grey above with pure white head, body and tail and black shoulders. Red eyes with black patches in front and thin black lines above and behind. Blackish-horn bill and yellow legs. In flight, underwings white with blackish wing tips. Habitually hovers. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



*C Barnes*

## Pacific Baza

*Aviceda subcristata*

Fairly common resident  
35-46 cm



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Slate-grey above with brown wash on wings and back. Small dark crest on plain grey head. Pale grey breast and white belly barred with dark brown bands. Rufous-buff thighs and undertail. Yellow eyes, greyish bill and legs. In flight, underwings white with rufous-buff leading edges, black-barred wing tips and black trailing edges. Descending double-whistle call.



*W Jolly*

## White-bellied Sea-Eagle

*Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Common resident

75-85 cm



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Majestic, powerful and adult unmistakable. Grey above and white below, with white head and short wedge-shaped white tail, black at base. Heavy grey bill and unfeathered cream legs. Male smaller than female. In flight, broad wings conspicuous and underwings show distinctive black and white triangular patterns. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



*W Jolly*



*W Jolly*

Soars with curved upswept wings, a distinctive feature. When soaring together, size difference between male and female is very apparent.

## Wedge-tailed Eagle

*Aquila audax*

Uncommon resident

85-104 cm



*C Barnes*

Magnificent and huge. Blackish plumage with distinctive long wedge-shaped tail and large bill. Bill and feet creamy white, with heavily-feathered legs. Hackles on nape and band on upperwing tawny. Male smaller and darker than female. In flight, underwings show pale bases of flight feathers as wingbars. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



*W Jolly*



*N Bowman*

Soars with upswept wings, a distinctive feature. Becomes blacker with age.

## Whistling Kite

*Haliastur sphenurus*

Very common resident

51-59 cm



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Sandy-brown to gingery-brown plumage with brown wings and black outer flight feathers. Pale streaks on body and pale rounded tail. Greyish bill and unfeathered pale legs. In flight, shows pale 'M' pattern on underwings, with pale leading edges, and dark trailing edges separated from dark wingtips by pale patches. Glides with bowed wings. Piercing whistled calls.



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Similar species: **Little Eagle** *Hieraaetus morphnoides* is larger, has broad wings with chestnut leading edge and



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cleaner 'M' pattern on underwings. Legs feathered. Two colour morphs. Rare winter visitor.

## Brahminy Kite

*Haliastur indus*

Very common resident  
45-51 cm



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Handsome and unmistakable. Rich chestnut-brown plumage with white head, neck and breast and black outer flight feathers. Eyes brown, bill and short unfeathered legs cream. In flight, underwings show pale and rich chestnut-brown triangular patterns with black wingtips, and short dark tail is pale-tipped. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



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## Square-tailed Kite

*Lophoictinia isura* is a rarely-seen breeding resident.

## Brown Goshawk

*Accipiter fasciatus*

Fairly common resident  
40-55 cm



*W Jolly*

Slate-grey to brown above with rufous half-collar and finely barred rufous and white below. Yellow eyes, greyish bill and yellow legs. Heavy hooded brows (beetle-brows) give fierce and menacing expression. In flight, shows long barred rounded tail. Thick stocky legs and toes with central toe longer. Acquires adult plumage after two years. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



*C Barnes*

## Collared Sparrowhawk

*Accipiter cirrocephalus*

Uncommon resident  
29-38 cm



*T Tarrant*

Slate-grey to brown above with rufous half-collar and finely barred rufous and white below. Yellow eyes, greyish bill and yellow legs. Staring wide-eyed expression. Lacks hooded brows of Brown Goshawk. In flight, shows long barred square-tipped tail. Thin fine legs and toes with central toe much longer. Acquires adult plumage after one year. Refer to page 61 for photograph of immature bird.



*W Jolly*

## Grey Goshawk

*Accipiter novaehollandiae*

Uncommon resident

38-55 cm



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Two colour morphs, one pure white, the other grey above and whitish below, with finely-barred grey breast and underwings. Both morphs have red eyes, blackish bill with yellow base and yellow legs. In flight, shows broader wings and shorter squarer tail than Brown Goshawk. More often seen perched in open than Brown Goshawk or Collared Sparrowhawk.



T Tarrant



P Walbridge

Grey morph birds appear to outnumber white morph birds in the region.

## A selection of immature raptors

White-bellied Sea-Eagle (left) and Brahminy Kite (right).



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Wedge-tailed Eagle (left) and Black-shouldered Kite (right).



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*R Inglis*

Brown Goshawk (left) and Collared Sparrowhawk (right).



*W Jolly*



*W Jolly*

## Swamp Harrier

*Circus approximans*

Uncommon winter visitor

50-61 cm



T Tarrant

Dark brown plumage with buff-streaked breast and prominent white rump. Distinctive facial disk. Yellow eyes, greyish bill and yellow legs. Male paler and greyer than female. In flight, underwings show brown on leading edges with rest of wings lightly barred. Tail rounded and barred. Buoyant flight, glides on long upswept wings.



D Davies

Similar species: **Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis* (left and centre) and **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* (right). Both are rare.



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## Nankeen Kestrel

*Falco cenchroides*

Uncommon resident  
30-35 cm



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Pale rufous-brown above and whitish-buff below. Black flight feathers and dark 'teardrop' below each eye. Yellow eye-ring, greyish bill and yellow legs. Male has pale grey crown and tail (both rufous-brown in female). In flight, shows pale underwings with black wingtips and black band on white-tipped tail. Habitually hovers.



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Similar species: **Brown Falcon** *Falco berigora* is larger with various different colour morphs. Rare visitor, mostly in winter.



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## Australian Hobby

*Falco longipennis*

Fairly common resident

30-35 cm



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Dark slate-grey above and rufous-buff below with dark rufous streaks. Black crown and cheeks give helmet-like appearance. Pale forehead, throat and half-collar and darker flight feathers. Bluish eye-ring, greyish bill and yellow legs. In flight, shows curved scythe-shaped wings and barred rufous underwings with contrasting white throat.



T Tarrant



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**Black Falcon** *Falco subniger*  
is a rarely-seen visitor.

## Peregrine Falcon

*Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident

36-50 cm



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Stocky and powerful. Slate-blue above and whitish below with breast to tail finely-barred black. Black crown and cheeks together with white 'bib' give helmet-like appearance. Yellow eye-ring, yellowish black-tipped bill and yellow legs. In flight, shows buffy-white underwings barred black with contrasting white throat and 'bib'. Rapid flight, stoops with wings closed.



*C Barnes*

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## Identification tips - confusion species

Northern Mallards have been introduced into Australia and their ability to hybridise with Pacific Black Ducks has caused concern. They also hybridise with domestic ducks and their offspring can display a wide range of plumage variations.

Although Northern Mallards may now be extinct in the region, birdwatchers should be aware of the plumage of their pure form. Illustrated below are the male (left) and the female (right).



*N Bowman*



*N Bowman*

Grey Falcon (left) and Red Goshawk (centre) are extremely rare in coastal SEQ and some reports may be cases of mistaken identity. Grey Goshawk is often misidentified as Grey Falcon. Square-tailed Kite and immature Little Eagle, both of which have rufous underparts, are often misidentified as Red Goshawk.

Australasian Bittern (right) is also rare in coastal SEQ, so be aware of potential confusion with both immature Striated Heron and immature Nankeen Night-Heron.



*R Inglis*



*T Siggs*



*W Jolly*

