



WATCH OUT FOR THE BIRDS

You can show *Respect for Country* and help protect the birds of Tallow Beach, estuary and creek by:

- Not disturbing resting birds; undisturbed areas are important for feeding and migrating birds. Birds need to rest and conserve energy after feeding and after the southern migration from the breeding grounds of Japan, Subarctic and Arctic regions. They need to re-build body fat supplies that will provide the energy "or fuel" to fly the long journey back to these distant breeding grounds.
- Some birds nest in the dunes; do not walk on the upper beach or dunes.
- Not allowing dogs to access this area. Dogs are prohibited in all National Parks in NSW.
- Reporting large parties and night-time gatherings to police and National Parks and Wildlife Service; parties displace resting and breeding birds and trample nests. Some birds feed by the tide, noise and night-time activity scare them away from the rich food supply of the estuary.
- Take all your rubbish home with you; plastic rubbish poses a risk to all wildlife.



Beach Stone-curlew



Little Tern

DID YOU KNOW?

- Cape Byron Conservation Area and Arakwal National Park have recorded over 120 species of migratory and resident birds. Populations of Beach Stone-curlews are so low in NSW that there are only an estimated 13 breeding pairs.
- Pied is an old English word meaning black and white. It is used in the name of several birds such as Magpie-lark, Pied Cormorant, Australian Magpie, Pied Oystercatcher and Little Pied Cormorant.
- There is a Cape Byron App which you can download from your Apps folder. Type in NPWS self-guided tours, download the App and click on Cape Byron. Learn some amazing facts during your walks around the Cape. www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/self-guided-tours-app

This brochure was produced by



www.byronbirdbuddies.com.au

And is supported by Friends of Tallow Creek, & NSW Local Land Services



Local Land Services
North Coast

www.northcoast.ils.nsw.gov.au

For more information on the birds of the Byron Shire, visit the Byron Bird Buddies website or facebook page and download a free guide "Birds of Byron Shire – a bird watchers guide, from coast to hinterland."

www.facebook.com/byronbirdbuddies
www.byronbirdbuddies.com.au

Special thanks to Photographers:

Gerhard Veit, Sylvain Maury, Reid Waters, Ross Hollands, Sharon McGrigor, Anthony Woodbine

Graphic Design: Ivonne Rother mail@i-rother.com

WILD ABOUT BIRDS

OF TALLOW BEACH & ESTUARY BYRON BAY



Brahminy Kite

Pied Oystercatcher



Rainbow Bee-eater

Striated Pardalote

TALLOW BEACH AND ESTUARY - BYRON BAY



THE ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF TALLOW CREEK AND ESTUARY

Estuaries and the lands surrounding them are places of transition, where water from the land meets and mixes with the open sea. Estuaries are neither marine nor terrestrial environments and are generally found in the lower reaches of rivers or creeks. They may be large systems like the Coorong in South Australia or small like the Belongil in Byron Bay or much smaller estuaries as is Tallow Creek, part of the Arakwal National Park.

Tallow Creek is situated on the southern outskirts of Byron Bay. The catchment stretches from the steep escarpment to the west which drains, via three creeks, through the suburbs of Suffolk Park into Tallow Lake and then drains into the ocean at Tallow Beach. The lower catchment is characteristic of ancient dune systems, with drainage lines running parallel to the coastline.

Tallow Creek is what is known as an Intermittently Closed and Open Lakes and Lagoons (ICOLL) system i.e. it opens to the sea irregularly. ICOLL are separated from the ocean by a sand beach barrier. This entrance barrier forms and breaks down depending on the movement and redistribution of sand and sediments by waves, tides, flood flows and winds. ICOLL are biologically distinct and diverse systems, with species representative of freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats occurring concurrently. They are highly productive, are important fish nurseries and maintain the hydrology of adjoining wetlands"

Tallow Beach, estuary and creek provide a diversity of habitat for more than 120 bird species that have been recorded here. The beach area is a resting place for the endangered Pied Oystercatchers that feed on molluscs at the water's edge, and gulls and terns that rest after feeding off-shore. Brahminy Kites and the White-bellied Sea-Eagles also scavenge along the waters edge. The creek edges are important for stone-curlews, plovers, dotterels, egrets and herons that feed on the nutrient-rich invertebrates. Cormorants, ducks, kingfishers and raptors, such as ospreys, depend on the water body to prey for fish, frogs, insects as well as invertebrates. The bush surrounding Tallow Creek provides food, such as nectar, berries, seeds, insects, and

small reptiles, as well as nesting sites and shelter from natural and introduced predators for a variety of birds including a small population of Bush Stone-curlews, Whipbirds, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, and a variety of honeyeaters to name a few. On occasions, birds that feed over the oceans, such as shearwaters, or migratory shorebirds that travel from their breeding grounds near the Arctic Circle, such as the Bar-tailed Godwit, may roost at the estuary, especially during and after adverse weather. Conservation efforts at Tallow Creek are aimed at protecting the area to provide habitat for both birds and fauna such as echidnas and wallabies.

NESTING BIRDS OF TALLOW ESTUARY

Beaches and Estuaries are the only nesting sites used by Pied Oystercatchers, Beach Stone-curlews and Little Terns in our area of the NSW North Coast and, due to human activities, these sites are becoming very scarce. They lay eggs in small sand scrapes on the ground just above the high tide mark. There are only about 200 pairs of Pied Oystercatchers and 13 pairs of Beach Stone-curlews that nest in NSW, so if left undisturbed they may even nest in the Tallow Estuary. The migratory Rainbow Bee-eater and resident Striated Pardalote already nest in the surrounding sand dunes and creek banks. Both birds build a nest chamber where they raise their young after tunnelling half to one meter into the dunes or creek banks. Not jumping on sand dunes is very important for their survival.



Scarlet Honeyeater

Sooty Oystercatcher

Eastern Osprey

Little Egret

Bar-tailed Godwit

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo



HUMAN ACTIVITY IN AND AROUND TALLOW ESTUARY

The traditional Country of the Arakwal Bumberlin people stretches from Brunswick Heads south to Jews Point in Broken Head Nature Reserve. Tallow Creek, the estuary and the lands adjacent to Tallow Beach, are important places for the Arakwal because it is their homelands where their ancestors lived. The Arakwal continue their connection with this part of Country by enjoying social gatherings, harvesting bush tucker and other wild resources, and repairing damage caused by past land uses, such as sand mining. Birds of Tallow Creek, estuary, beach, ocean, swamps and the 'honeysuckle country' of Arakwal National Park continue to inspire Arakwal dances, stories, songs and totems.

Birds, like other animals, have incredible memories, remembering which places along their migration routes are favourable for feeding, resting or breeding and passing this on from one generation to another. For all birds it's about location, location, location. In this way, populations of birds fluctuate widely, depending on whether conditions are favourable or not. Environmental conditions often take years to evolve and birds either adapt or their numbers change slowly. On the other hand, human negative impacts have immediate and often irreversible consequences. Given the increased population of Byron Bay, the large number of annual visitors, the addition of non-stop modern human activity and introduced predators means the odds are heavily stacked against recurrent successful breeding periods for most birds. Nature helps by using camouflage to maximise the survival of eggs and chicks against natural predators but it doesn't stand much chance against dogs, cats, foxes, large-scale congregations of people or walkers stepping on nests or disturbing birds in protected areas.

WATCH OUT FOR THE BIRDS

Resting birds usually rest after feeding and every time they need to fly to move away from humans it takes a great deal of energy, so **Keep Your Distance** and give the birds a wide berth rather than expecting them to move for you.