

HHCC Half Day - Birding Excursion to Windsor Area Wetlands

Date: Sunday 10th March - 7:00 AM – early afternoon.

Leader: Marion Anstis, assisted by Bruce Williams.

If you want to come, please email Marion by the 6th on frogpole@tpg.com.au and provide full name and mobile number.

Meeting Place: Junction of Bathurst St and Lagoon Rd, Pitt Town. Park in Lagoon Rd and look for Marion's bright blue RAV 4!!

Possible Sightings, weather/season dependent:

- Pelicans, egrets, spoonbills, dotterels, grebes, possible shore birds, wrens, reed warblers
- Darter, cormorants, ducks, finches
- Black Shouldered Kite, swamp harrier, whistling kite (raptors)

Venues include:

- Pitt Town Lagoon
- Bushell's Lagoon
- Windsor Markets (optional)

Note: Windsor markets are held on Sundays for anyone who wants to visit them for some candid shots after birding.

Equipment to bring:-

1: Camera Gear

- Telephoto lens (300mm min up to 600mm if possible), extender if desired.
- If lens is longer, tripods may be necessary.
- Landscape/portrait lens, if desired for markets, or scenery (we may get time to visit the old Ebenezer Church)
- Polarising filter may be useful for landscape.
- Sorry, drones should not be used around wildlife, especially birds.

2: Personal items

- Sunscreen
- Water Bottle
- Hat
- Snacks
- Binoculars
- Sturdy walking shoes

Lunch: We are planning to have lunch together at a local venue, yet to be decided on.

Note: If weather is raining, we will need to cancel. Hence we need your mobile numbers!!

SETTINGS for Bird Photography

1. SHUTTER SPEED: Birds move unpredictably! So in good light we need to be prepared with a **minimum** of **1/1000 sec** shutter speed (if they are quietly standing, grooming, feeding etc. and occupied) and up to 1/2500+ if they look about to take off. Smaller birds generally move faster and have faster wing flaps so go for the higher end with them at most times.

If they are perched, settled and quite still, you can opt for 1/400 or so, but if their behaviour becomes more alert, up the shutter quickly! Thus, using **Shutter Priority (or TV)**, can be a useful option, although you will need to be prepared to adjust the EV +/- exposure compensation by + 1–2 stops for birds with a bright background such as the sky, as the meter will expose for the sky too easily and your bird will be underexposed. Because it has control over your aperture, you may find your exposure varies a little through a flight sequence series of shots when the bird moves through different background or light situations.

2. APERTURE: The closer the bird is to you, the more depth of field you would need if you want to get the whole bird in focus. Often it may be fine to just get the head and eye in focus though, so you need to decide what you want first. Generally an aperture of f4, 5.6 or 6.3 is appropriate, because it is not too often you can get very close to birds and wider apertures will produce nicer blurred backgrounds. With larger birds in flight, f4 will be less suitable as it won't give you enough depth of field, so f5.6, 6.3 or 7.1 will be better options. If two bigger birds are interacting, even f8 or f9 will help with depth of field.

Using **Aperture Priority or AV** is also an option, but because this mode gives priority to the aperture and alters the shutter, you may find you sometimes don't get a fast enough shutter for action, especially in lower light, if the bird moves quickly and suddenly. As with Shutter Priority, you may need to adjust the EV +/- if the light on your bird is not the same as the background.

3. ISO: Auto ISO (with +/- EV on Nikon bodies) will help you in generally good light situations. In the earlier morning, we may have lower or softer light on some subjects, but mostly the light will be kinder to the subjects, unless it is very heavy cloud. Watch out for blown highlights with white birds (you will need to underexpose a bit for them).

4. MANUAL EXPOSURE: using this with or without Auto ISO allows you to take control of both the shutter and aperture, and the ISO if you wish and are confident of a suitable choice for the situation. However, birds in trees can move quickly from shade to bright or patchy light, so it can often mean you miss a good shot if you have to adjust the ISO or shutter manually to suit the light change. In a situation where light is stable and generally good, Auto ISO can also save you time and the camera will opt for the lowest possible ISO. The advantage of using fully manual exposure is that your general exposure on the subject will remain more constant through a series of action shots despite background or light changes.

This mode takes more practice but is certainly worth the effort, and practising with or without Auto ISO in different situations is the best way to learn.