

Woodland to Wetland Walk Trail, Bibra Lake

Background information

The Bibra Lake Reserve covers an area of approximately 400 hectares and it contains one of the largest lakes within the Beeliar Regional Park. It is named after an early European settler, Benedict von Bibra. However, long before that it was a significant meeting place and cultural site for the Whadjuk group of the Noongar nation. They called it Walliabup.

The Bibra Lake reserve is dominated by the lake itself, but it also contains a large area of banksia woodland to the north east and several small swamps to the east of the Lake.

Bibra Lake is an important recreational area. Much of the Lake's foreshore has been disturbed by human activity and part of it has been converted into a picnic area and regional playground. The eastern shore of the Lake is less disturbed and it provides a habitat for many bushbirds and other wildlife.

The City of Cockburn manages Bibra Lake and they have carried out extensive improvements to the environment to restore some of the natural vegetation that was destroyed by past farming activities. The Wetlands Centre was established on the eastern side of the Lake in 1993 and it is run by a consortium of voluntary groups. The Centre is devoted to wetland education and landcare and the staff and volunteers from the Centre have assisted the City with its restoration efforts in the Bibra Lake reserve.

The Woodland to Wetland Walk Trail starts at the Wetlands Centre and passes through several ecological communities, including jarrah-banksia woodland, flooded gum fringing vegetation and the riparian zone of the Lake. The trail includes visits to the jetty and the floating boardwalk and bird hide on the eastern shore of Bibra Lake. The trail forms a closed loop and returns you to your starting point at the Wetlands Centre.

Trail Guide

The Woodland to Wetland Walk Trail is well-marked with arrows to indicate the direction you should walk. The following notes outline the main features.

Distance: 2.5 kilometres

Time required: approximately 1 hour

Starting Point: The Wetlands Centre, 184 Hope Road, Bibra Lake

1. **The Wetlands Centre (TWC).** The trail begins at the southern end of the parking lot at TWC. The Centre was established in 1993 to provide educational and land care services to the City of Cockburn. It has become a regional hub for landcare, conferences, environmental education, meetings and scouting activities. The Centre sits in landscaped grounds surrounded by local native flora. Information about Bibra Lake and the Beeliar Regional Park is available from TWC.
2. **Jarrah/banksia woodland:** as you walk along the trail you will initially pass through a section of jarrah/banksia woodland in which jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and three species of banksia (*Banksia attenuata*, *B menziesii*, *B ilicifolia*) are dominant. Most of the understorey in this area has been disturbed by past grazing activities when this site was a dairy farm. However, since the farming activities ceased in 1985 considerable regeneration has occurred

with species such as jarrah, banksia, sheoak (*Casuarina fraseriana*), marri (*Corymbia calophylla*), balga (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) and spearwood (*Kunzea ericifolia*).

3. **Balga (Grasstree) Grove:** approximately 200 metres down the trail you will come to a magnificent grove of balgas or grass trees. These grow very slowly and some of these specimens are thought to be more than 300 years old.
4. **Moodjar (Christmas Tree) Corner:** another 100 metres down the trail you will arrive at a small stand of the spectacular WA Christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) or Moodjar. These trees are covered in brilliant orange blossoms in December. They are parasitic and belong to the mistletoe family and they often attach their roots to those of the biara or candlestick banksia (*B attenuata*). Jarrah is also common in this area.
5. **Kondil (Marri) Place:** another 50 metres down the trail you will arrive at a small grove of ancient marris or Kondil (*Corymbia calophylla*). There is a bench here where you can rest and contemplate the tranquil scene. Many bush birds can be seen in this locality, including parrots, honeyeaters, fantails and ravens. One of the marris has a nesting box for bats, high up on its trunk. The holly leaf banksia (*B ilicifolia*) is also prominent in this area.
6. **Transitional Zone:** leaving Marri Place you soon reach a junction where you turn right to descend to the Lake. This area was cleared by the farmers many years ago and is now undergoing assisted regeneration. You will see some different species here, including tuarts (*E gomphocephala*), coastal blackbutt (*E todtiana*), dwarf sheoak (*C humilis*) and several kunzeas. Look for the explanatory signs.
7. **Old Boardwalk and Bird Hide:** another 100 metres down the trail you will reach the cycleway. Here you should turn right and proceed along the cycleway for 50 metres until you reach the pathway on the left that takes you through the fringing zone of the Lake to the jetty. This pathway passes through a thick forest of flooded gums (*E rudis*), swamp paperbarks (*Melaleuca rhapsiophylla*), and the swamp banksia (*B littoralis*). This area was also cleared in the past by the dairy farmers and it has been revegetated by volunteers and the City of Cockburn. There are many introduced species in this area, including tuarts, river red gums and Tasmanian blue gums. There are also many attractive shrubs, such as *Melaleuca lateritia* which flower profusely in the Spring. As you approach the jetty you will see extensive reed beds of *Juncus pallidus* and *Baumea articulata* and the swamp paperbark (*M teretifolia*). Water birds (such as black swans, black ducks, coots and shelducks) are also often seen in this area. You may wish to walk to the end of the jetty and observe the abundant wildlife on the Lake from the bird hide.
8. **The Narma Kullarck Boardwalk:** when you return to the cycleway you should turn left and head north for about 200 metres until you reach the path that leads to the floating boardwalk. Turn left and walk along the boardwalk to the bird hide. Along the way you will pass through a dense area of revegetated fringing vegetation. You may see many birds including willie wagtails, grey fantails, and purple swamphens. Dragonflies are also often seen in this area. The bird hide provides a place to rest and observe the waterbirds on the Lake. There is a display of paintings of waterbirds in the bird hide.

After leaving the boardwalk you should walk a short distance along the cycle way until you reach the limestone track that leads through a revegetation area to TWC. This area is used to produce seeds for revegetation projects. As you approach the Wetlands Centre you will see the Native Animal Rehabilitation Centre on the left.

When you reach The Wetlands Centre you are welcome to rest and refresh yourself in the shade or in the waterwise garden. Public toilets are also available and the Centre has pictorial displays of its work. If you have any questions about the Centre or the trail you are welcome to discuss them with the staff. Comments and suggestions about your experiences on the trail are welcome.

Further Information: <https://www.thewetlandscentre.org.au/trails/woodland-to-wetland-trail/>

