



Community Safety Advice

Birdwatching

How to stay safe when birdwatching



Disclaimer

The Bellarine Catchment Network (BCN) are not accountable for the accuracy, reliability or completeness of any material contained within these documents. They are merely advice and do not encompass all hazards or risks.

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Definitions

Hazard: A hazard is a source or a situation with the potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these.

Risk: A risk is the chance of something happening that will have a negative effect.

PPE: PPE refers to anything used or worn to minimise risk to workers' health and safety. This may include, but is not limited to: gloves, glasses, ear plugs, etc.

Should you be conducting these activities?

Before entering a natural area to perform any activities, research if you need a permit or written/verbal approval to do so. Consider joining a local environment group to participate under their approvals and insurance. For local groups on the Bellarine, head here:

www.environmentbellarine.org.au/cb_pages/groups_and_organisations.php



Emergency Contacts

Police, ambulance, fire – **000**
Poisons Information Centre – **13 11 26**

General tips

Birdwatching is an enjoyable activity to do if you want to learn more about birds, bird behaviour and their population status. However, there are always safety concerns when you are entering a natural area. Below are some general tips to ensure your ongoing safety, and the following pages describe some of the more common hazards and how you can act to avoid them.

This list is not exhaustive and acts as a guide only. You are liable for any injury, damage or loss caused as a result of any birdwatching or related activities.

- Respect all wildlife and reduce disturbance as much as possible
- Abide by all laws regulations that relate to you or the area that you are visiting
- Bring a friend or family member with you or let somebody know where you will be and for how long
- Make sure you have a fully charged phone in the event of an emergency
- Pack food, water and/or medicine if you intend to be outdoors for multiple hours
- Monitor the weather forecast before and during your activity and consider rescheduling if extreme (high heat, cold, storm, etc).
Monitor weather here: <http://www.bom.gov.au/>



How you can avoid general hazards

Please note: This list is not comprehensive and Bellarine Catchment Network are not liable for any injury, damage or loss as a result of the participant encountering any of these hazards or any other hazards not listed whilst undertaking the described activities.

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be careful walking around sharp inclines or declines;• Identify and avoid holes in groups such as rabbit holes;• Identify and avoid loose, uneven ground or surfaces;• Identify and avoid trip hazards such as branches; and• Consider wearing appropriate footwear.
SNAKE BITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and avoid high risk areas – tall grass, etc;• Avoid walking in a circle;• Learn how to treat a snake bite in an emergency;• Avoid approaching snakes and advise other people around you if one is seen; and• Consider wearing long pants and enclosed shoes.
INSECT BITES & STINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid putting hands in dark areas, near rubbish or in holes;• Identify and avoid ant nests, bee's nests or other;• Advise others in vicinity.
COLD WEATHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear warm clothing and have extra layers available;• Have warm drinks frequently;• Avoid long periods in exposed weather or when wet, windy and cold;• Consider postponing activities in favour of better conditions.
HOT WEATHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear light clothing and a broad brimmed hat;• Apply reef safe sunscreen at regular intervals;• Drink cool water regularly;• Avoid being out for long periods in exposed sun, wind etc;• Consider postponing activities in favour of better conditions.

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SHARP OBJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider wearing safety glasses if walking in dense bushland;• Be alert of branches and spikes at head and eye level.
REPETITIVE STRAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotate tasks and avoid doing one activity for more than 1 hour;• Conduct warm up stretches and movement activity to reduce chance of strain injury;• Have straight back and bent knees when performing tasks that require lifting and lowering;• Maintain regular rest breaks, rotate tasks alleviate strain to muscle groups.
TRAFFIC (ROAD AND FOOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considering wearing high visibility clothing;• Avoid walking unnecessarily close near roads or paths.