

**Beach - Bush - Birds**

**Biodiversity**

**We believe native bird numbers are a good environmental indicator in analysing Biodiversity priorities.**

In evaluating Long Reef's native grasslands you will find only one pair of nesting Kestrels living on the headland - an indication to the loss of grassland habitat over the past twenty years. The major cause of biodiversity loss is destruction of habitat, mostly through land clearing for agriculture and urban development.



**Long Reef Kestrel**

On Long Reef it has been noxious weed infestation and land disturbance. This leads to the loss of native birds, other animals and remnant plant life. The good news is more community Landcare groups around Australia, are working to protect and restore wildlife habitats. The grasslands on Long Reef are being restored and we are hopeful of seeing more Kestrels. Already a pair of Black-shouldered Kites has moved into the area.

**Long Reef's native grasslands**

More than just grass - native temperate grassland are a key habitat for grassland birds - especially birds of prey.

Grasslands are more than just grass - much more! Grasslands are the ecosystem made up of plants and animals that form around the dominant vegetation type - grass. Just as an eucalypt forest is much more than gum trees, a native grassland is much more than just native grass.

Think of grasslands as forests with the grass plants as trees. In a healthy native grassland you'll find a rich profusion of other plants and animals. Animals range from an almost endless variety of insects, through to reptiles, insects, amphibians and small mammals. A common misconception held by many people is that a natural landscape requires a good covering of trees, but for large areas of Australia, the original cover was grassland! Grasslands form an important part of Australia's natural heritage and as an ecosystem, provide us with possibly our strongest cultural link to the traditional Aboriginal lifestyles before European settlement.



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See Wandering wildlife website: [www.wwildlife.com](http://www.wwildlife.com)