

Save the Riverstone Wetlands



the Curlew Sandpiper. Listed as Critically Endangered due to an 82% decline in Australia over three generations.

The Riverstone Wetlands

The Riverstone Wetlands were created not long after World War II to help process wastewater from the nearby abattoir and tanning operations.

When the meat works closed in 1984 these fertile, shallow ponds created the perfect habitat for wetland birds.

Every year the wetlands are visited by waders, wetland-dependent birds that migrate from as far away as New Zealand, Korea, Japan and Russia.

During good seasons, over 400 individual birds from over 100 native species can be seen together in the ten hectares of wetland. Gatherings of wildlife this spectacular cannot be seen anywhere else in Western Sydney.

Riverstone Wetlands offer unique opportunities for people from the general, special interest and scientific communities to connect with nature.

A long-term investment

Members of the local community are working hard to protect these wetlands for the future.

We invite partners to invest in the long-term opportunities to develop and manage Riverstone Wetlands for natural, social, cultural, educational and economic benefit of Blacktown and the broader community.



Riverstone Wetlands offer unique opportunities for people from the general, special interest and scientific communities to connect with nature.



A vast flock of Pink-eared Duck and Teal take flight at Riverstone Wetlands

An International Treasure

The shallow, flood-free waters of the wetlands provide the ideal habitat for international migratory birds including Snipe, Plovers and Avocets.

During peak seasonal conditions the wetlands support vast numbers of birds. Over 190 international migratory shorebirds in addition to 400 or more nomadic waterfowl cram into this tiny ten hectares of habitat. It is truly a spectacular sight.

These birds need shallow, nutrient-rich wetlands where they feed on small invertebrates in the mud to fuel their international migrations. Nine species of international migratory shorebirds are present. Australia is legally bound to protect these species under International agreements with China (CAMBA), Japan (JAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA).

With most of the natural wetlands of the region destroyed these birds increasingly rely on man-made structures such as the Sydney Olympic Park and Riverstone Wetlands.



Black-winged Stilts (top), Australian Pratincoles (mid) and Plumed Whistling Duck (bottom) at Riverstone Wetlands

Many shorebirds feed in shallow water, the variation of water depths at Riverstone suit a variety of shorebirds. Length of bill and legs often dictate optimum conditions for each species.

Here we see the large Black-winged Stilt (a breeding resident) in the background, on the left is a rare Marsh Sandpiper, in the foreground is a smaller Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, another migratory species.







The Riverstone Wetlands are one of the most significant wetlands in Greater Sydney but are scheduled for destruction

Bird species of the Riverstone Wetlands

Stubble Quail	Peregrine Falcon	Eastern Rosella	Rufous Whistler
Brown Quail	Nankeen Kestrel	Red-rumped Parrot	Grey Shrike-thrush
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Buff-banded Rail	Pallid Cuckoo	Black-faced Monarch
Blue-billed Duck	Baillon's Crake	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Leaden Flycatcher
Black Swan	Australian Crake	Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	Restless Flycatcher
Australian Wood Duck	Spotless Crake	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	Magpie Lark
Pacific Black Duck	Purple Swampphen	Australian Koel	Grey Fantail
Australasian Shoveler	Dusky Moorhen	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Willy Wagtail
Grey Teal	Eurasian Coot	Australian Owlet-nightjar	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Chestnut Teal	Painted Button-quail	Tawny Frogmouth	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Hardhead	Latham's Snipe	Azure Kingfisher	White-winged Triller
Pink-eared Duck	Australian Painted Snipe	Laughing Kookaburra	Olive-backed Oriole
Australasian Grebe	Red-necked Stint	Sacred Kingfisher	White-browed Woodswallow
Hoary-headed Grebe	Pectoral Sandpiper	Dollarbird	Dusky Woodswallow
Australasian Darter	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Common Greenshank	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Curlew Sandpiper	Striated Pardalote	Pied Currawong
Great Cormorant	Marsh Sandpiper	White-browed Scrubwren	Australian Raven
Australian Pelican	Wood Sandpiper	Weebill	White-winged Chough
White-faced Heron	Ruddy Turnstone	White-throated Gerygone	Skylark
White-necked Heron	Black-winged Stilt	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Australian Pipit
Great Egret	Red-necked Avocet	Yellow Thornbill	House Sparrow
Intermediate Egret	Pacific Golden Plover	Striated Thornbill	Zebra Finch
Cattle Egret	Red-capped Plover	Red Wattlebird	Double-barred Finch
Nankeen Night Heron	Double-banded Plover	Noisy Friarbird	Red-browed Finch
Glossy Ibis	Oriental Plover	Bell Miner	Nutmeg Mannikin
Australian White Ibis	Red-kneed Dotterel	Noisy Miner	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Straw-necked Ibis	Black-fronted Dotterel	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	European Goldfinch
Royal Spoonbill	Banded Lapwing	Fuscous Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Masked Lapwing	White-plumed Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Black-shouldered Kite	Australian Pratincole	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Tree Martin
Whistling Kite	Feral (Rock) Pigeon	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Fairy Martin
Square-tailed Kite	Spotted Dove	White-naped Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Crested Pigeon	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Reed-Warbler
Swamp Harrier	Peaceful Dove	White-cheeked Honeyeater	Tawny Grassbird
Spotted Harrier	Bar-shouldered Dove	Eastern Spinebill	Little Grassbird
Brown Goshawk	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Scarlet Honeyeater	Brown Songlark
Grey Goshawk	Galah	Rose Robin	Golden-headed Cisticola
Collared Sparrowhawk	Long-billed Corella	Eastern Yellow Robin	Silvereye
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Little Corella	Eastern Whipbird	Common Blackbird
Brown Falcon	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Varied Sittella	Common Starling
Australian Hobby	Rainbow Lorikeet	Crested Shrike-tit	Common Myna
Black Falcon	Musk Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	

Green and Golden Bell Frog

The wetlands are home to a population of the endangered Green and Golden Bell-frog. This is one of the last three populations of this species remaining in Western Sydney.



The Green & Golden Bell Frog was once the most common frog in Western Sydney. However a combination of disease and predation by the introduced fish *Gambusia* have pushed this beautiful frog to the brink of extinction.

Green & Golden Bell Frogs persist at Riverstone Wetlands thanks to the absence of predatory *Gambusia* fish. The isolated Riverstone Wetlands are above flood level and beyond the reach of *Gambusia*, providing one of the last safe havens for Green & Golden Bell Frogs

The unique flood-free location of Riverstone Wetlands is the reason that Green & Golden Bell Frogs are present here, and why they are absent in Pitt Town Lagoon and all other Western Sydney wetlands. When other wetlands flood they receive the introduced fish *Gambusia* which eats Green & Golden Bell Frog tadpoles and is one of the key threats to the species.

The proposal to destroy the wetlands and create 'replacement' habitat in the nearby floodplain would result in the extinction of Green & Golden Bell Frogs in the region. It is not possible to maintain a wetland free of *Gambusia* without isolating the site from flood, which is one of the main methods of dispersal for *Gambusia* fish

Destroying the last flood-free refuge

The Riverstone Wetlands are the only flood-free refuge for waterbirds in our region.

They are proposed to be bulldozed for the Marsden Park North precinct of the Northwest Growth Center.

The Department of Planning initially supported protection of the wetlands but reversed their position following intervention by an MP and a developer.

The government now proposes to bulldoze the wetlands and replace them with new wetlands to be constructed in the nearby floodplain.

Riverstone Wetlands are the only flood-free haven for migratory waterbirds in Western Sydney and are simply irreplaceable.

Migratory waterbirds require shallow water to feed. During wet seasons every other key wetland in western Sydney floods – including the Pitt Town Lagoon Nature Reserve. As a result migratory waders abandon these wetlands and seek refuge at Riverstone.

The unique flood-free location of the wetlands is also the reason that Green & Golden Bell Frogs are present – while other wetlands have flooded and now host the introduced fish *Gambusia* which devastates Green & Golden Bell Frog colonies.



Riverstone Wetlands value is in being fertile, flat and flood-free.

A 'replacement' wetland in the floodplain will be of little value to our precious wildlife.

The Riverstone Wetlands highlight the failures of biodiversity protection in NSW. The Growth Centers were approved without government even noticing these wetlands existed. Thanks to community intervention these treasures are now recognised, however the Department of Planning consider the interests of corporate profit override any international obligations to biodiversity. As one senior officer stated: *'the State Government owes it to the proponents to allow them to make a profit on their investment.'*

How you can help...

The Riverstone Wetlands highlight a broken and corrupted planning process in NSW.

The wildlife of this irreplaceable habitat needs your help.

The Riverstone Wetlands are essential as the only flood-free refuge for local and international wildlife in the region.

Please make a submission calling for the protection of the exceptional biodiversity of the Riverstone Wetlands and against their 'replacement' in the floodplain.

The Growth Centres Commission is over 300 hectares short of their internal land conservation target. Further clearing of critical biodiversity cannot be justified.

Make a submission:
www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-our-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Prezincincts/Marsden-Park-North

Submissions are due 19th October



The fate of the wetlands will soon be determined. Will we do what is right?

Please also contact the decision makers directly:

Riverstone State MP Mr Kevin Conolly
(Riverstone@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Chifley Federal MP Ed Husic
(Ed.Husic.MP@aph.gov.au)

NSW Minister for the Environment
Ms Gabrielle Upton MP
(vaucluse@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Federal Minister for the Environment
Ms Melissa Price MP
(Melissa.Price.MP@aph.gov.au)

Shadow Minister for the Environment Ms
Penny Sharpe MLC
(penny.sharpe@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



Australian Painted Snipe, listed as Endangered. Sometimes seen in ones and twos, the presence of four birds at Riverstone in 2012 is one of the highest number of individuals recorded in the Sydney region.