



Photo by Nature Focus

Latham's Snipe

4 INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

The wetlands provide a warm summer home for the Latham's Snipe, a migratory wader that breeds in Japan and China. These shy birds are usually only seen when 'flushed' from reeds or grass adjacent to the mudflats and shallow margins where they feed. This species is protected by an international agreement, which provides for the reciprocal protection of migratory species and their habitat.

Latham's Snipes can be found in the wetlands from about August to February when they return to Asia to breed. Their diet is mainly composed of insects and seeds of aquatic plants. The Latham's Snipe uses the mudflat areas of the wetlands for feeding, by jabbing its long beak deeply into the mud.

5 AQUATIC LIFE

Stop on the bridge here for a great view of the aquatic life in the waterway. The wetlands and Lake Burley Griffin provide habitat for 11 fish species, as well as the Eastern Water Rat, Platypus and Eastern Snake-necked Tortoise.

6 A THREAT TO THE WETLANDS

Jerrabomberra Wetlands receives run-off from a large area of land, known as the Jerrabomberra Creek Catchment. Jerrabomberra Creek runs adjacent to Narrabundah and Fyshwick, and then empties into the large siltation pond at the headwaters of the wetlands.

Monitoring has shown that much of the water and riparian quality of Jerrabomberra Creek is degraded. This may be related to a range of land management practices in the Jerrabomberra Creek catchment and from the effects of urban stormwater runoff. The siltation pond and the wetlands themselves, slow the flow of water, and much of the sediments and associated pollutants fall out of the water column here.

Head back across the trestle bridge and onto the main path. After visiting the bird hide go to the wooden seat at Stop 7.

7 TERRESTRIAL LIFE TOO

Stop here for a rest, and watch and listen for some of the smaller terrestrial birds that inhabit the area. Common species include Wrens, Fantails and Silvereyes. Red-browed Firetails can be seen in small flocks. The Firetails eat a variety of half-ripe and ripe grass seeds, supplemented with herbs, berries and insects.

8 INVASIVE WEEDS

Looking to the south from the footbridge, you can see an area heavily infested with weeds, and part of the rail yards in the distance. One of the dominant weeds in this area is Fennel, which forms very dense infestations, crowding out other vegetation. A large stand of poplars and thick growth of the pasture grass Phalaris, is also present just north of the bridge.



Eastern Snake-necked Tortoise

9 QUIET BACKWATERS

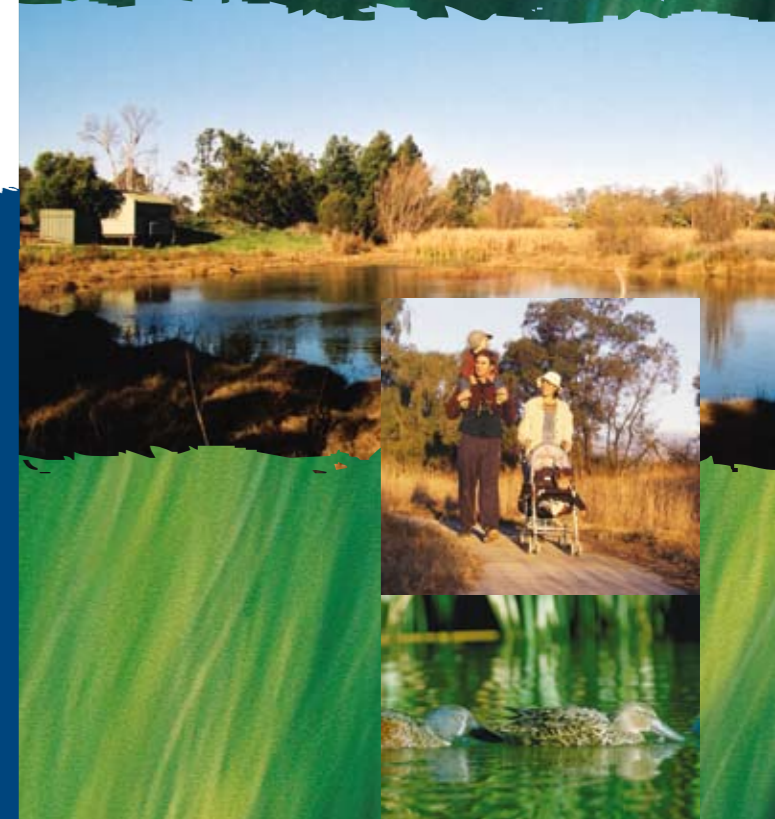
From here you can enjoy the views over the water and the activities of the different birds. The area to the north of this bird hide includes the 'fingers' of the Jerrabomberra Backwaters. These fingers are old flood channels or palaeochannels of the Molonglo River. Access to this area is strictly prohibited in order to protect it as an important refuge for the many shy and elusive waterbirds that use the wetlands.

GET INVOLVED IN WATERWATCH

Waterwatch is a community water quality monitoring program that enables local communities to understand their waterways and catchments, and to contribute to their management and protection. If you are interested in becoming involved, contact the ACT Waterwatch Facilitator on 6207 2246.

For other enquiries, contact: Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 or visit the website www.tams.act.gov.au

JERRABOMBERRA WETLANDS



Printed on recycled paper. Designed by Levitate Graphic Design.

Canberra's Haven of Biodiversity



Jerrabomberra Wetlands

Welcome to Jerrabomberra Wetlands, one of the most valuable wetland habitat areas in the ACT. The wetlands are of national and international importance, and are visited by over 170 bird species, including most of the wetland species occurring in southern Australia.

Take a stroll through the wetlands, to discover a unique array of wetland and terrestrial habitats, remnants of the wetland's agricultural origins, and learn about the ecology of this precious place.



1 AN AGRICULTURAL LEGACY

The wetlands area was originally part of the flood plain of the Molonglo River. In 1964, the river was dammed to create Lake Burley Griffin, expanding the area of existing natural wetlands. Prior to the creation of these backwaters, the highly fertile flood plain was used for cropping and dairy farming for over a century.



Phalaris grass

From here you can see a line of submerged fence posts still standing, as testimony to this agricultural past. Thick stands of the dairy pasture grass Phalaris, can also be found along the edge of Kelly's Swamp.

2 SPLENDID SNAGS

Here you can see some dead logs or snags submerged in the water. Snags provide habitat for many plants and animals, from microscopic bacteria, fungi and algae, through to large native fish and platypus. They also provide roosting places for birds and other animals such as turtles.

Snags are fundamental to the wetland food web. Bacteria, algae and fungi form a slimy coating over the snag, called a biofilm. The biofilm provides a rich food source for invertebrates while the snag itself is a source of food for wood boring beetles and some fungi and bacteria. In turn, these organisms provide food for other creatures in the food web.

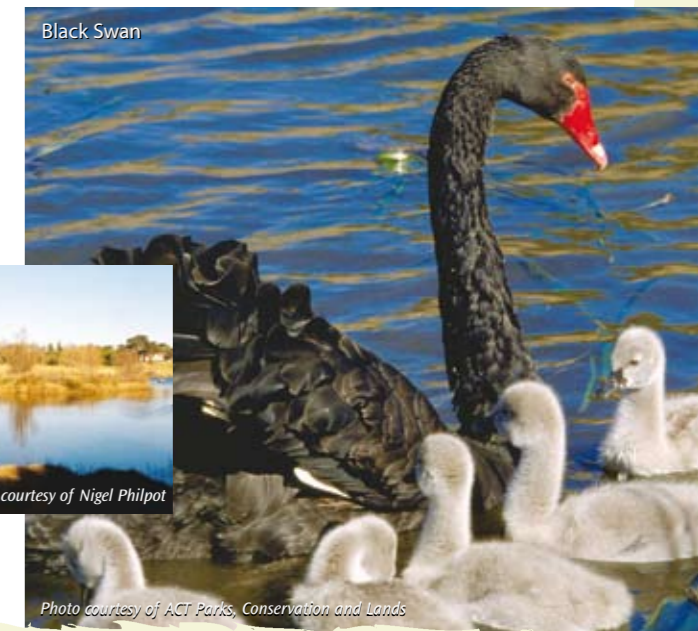


Hide at Stop 3 overlooking Kelly's Swamp

3 WONDERFUL WATERBIRDS

Spy on the wonderful variety of wetland birds in Kelly's Swamp. Interpretive diagrams in the hide show some of the 77 species of waterbirds that have been recorded at the wetlands.

Many wetland birds depend on a variety of habitats for their survival. Within the wetlands, there are areas of mudflats, reed beds, drowned grasslands, dense riparian vegetation, short grassy banks, deep river pools and many other ecological niches. Some birds require dense riparian vegetation for roosting as well as wide open mudflats for feeding. Without a variety of habitats available, many of these birds would not exist in the wetlands.



Black Swan

Photo courtesy of ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands