



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc  
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18 November 2013

The General Manager,  
Newcastle City Council  
Newcastle NSW 2300

Attn. Strategic Planning Office

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Re: Market Swamp Newcastle Wetland Reserve, Sandgate/Shortland**

In July 2010 Ann Lindsey attended a workshop on behalf of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc (HBOC) to further discuss the “Wetland Action Plan” for the SEPP 14 wetlands, Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve at Sandgate/Shortland. In July 2010 HBOC provided a letter and a list of bird species present from 1993 to 2010 comprising 109 native species. This high number indicates the importance of Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve for Australian bird species in the lower Hunter Estuary.

HBOC received a draft “Wetland Action Plan” February 2011 prepared by BMT WBM. The synopsis is as follows:

*“This report outlines a Wetland Action Plan (WAP) for Council owned land situated within Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve at Shortland. The Plan documents previous investigations / background information, site investigations, survey investigations and outcomes of stakeholder consultation. Legislative considerations for future management of the SEPP-14 wetlands are discussed and a number of management actions are proposed based on environmental values and overarching objectives identified for the site. The consultants provided a list of priorities for work on these wetlands which have become degraded over the years through neglect.”*

So far as HBOC is aware no works have commenced and these wetlands remain in a state of neglect. HBOC reported that both wetlands are habitat for the migratory species, Latham’s Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*, listed as migratory under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and international conservation agreements on migratory shorebirds. Newcastle Wetland Reserve continues to be an important site for water birds and several species nest on the site:

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata* Vulnerable under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.  
Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*  
Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*  
Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*  
Grey & Chestnut Teal *Anas gracilis* and *Anas castanea*  
Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*  
Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*  
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos*  
Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*  
White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*  
Aust. White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*  
Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris*  
Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*  
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

So far as we are aware it is the only site in the Hunter Estuary where Great Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant and Pied Cormorants breed successfully.

Newcastle Wetland Reserve serves as a drought refuge for the several species of waterfowl including Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* listed as Vulnerable under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

Newcastle Wetland Reserve is zoned 7(b) Environmental Protection and 7(a) Conservation which acknowledges its importance to the environment. Market Swamp's zoning is not appropriate in view of its considerable biodiversity and requires changing. HBOC has long awaited actions which will improve the state of these wetlands and we request an update on the implementation of the recommendations made in the "Wetland Action Plan" for both wetlands.

We look forward to a reply from you as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

M. Roderick – President of the Hunter Bird Observers Club