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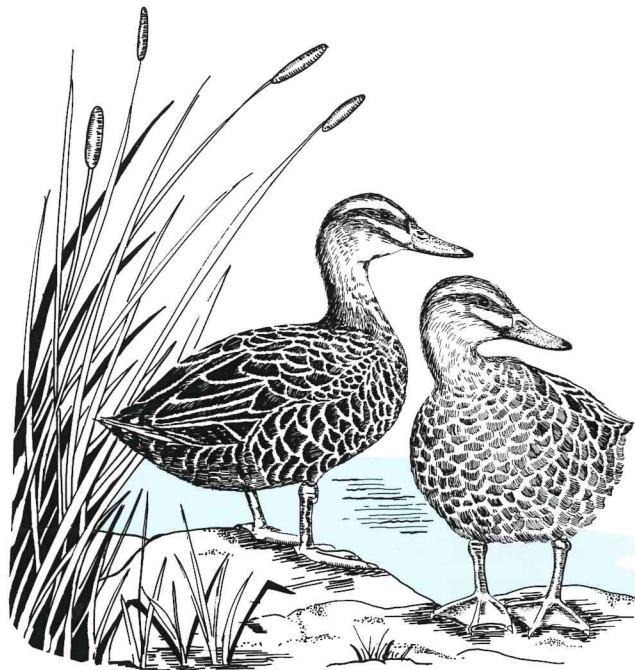
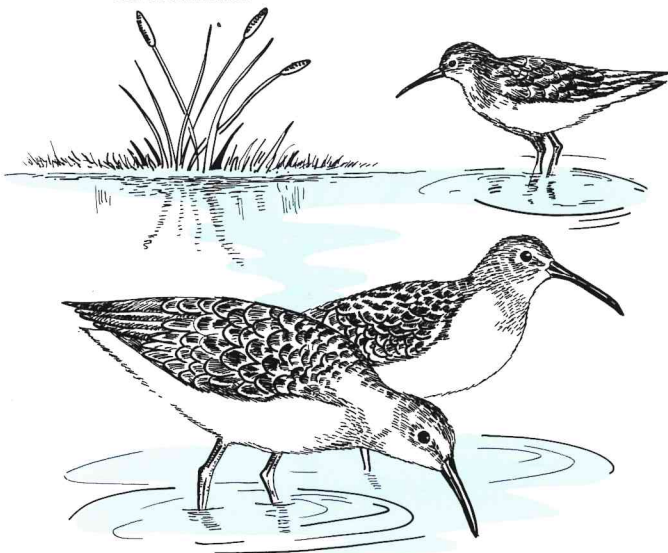
Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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## CARING FOR THE SWAN ESTUARY


- ❖ **BE CAREFUL:** Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.
- ❖ **BE RESPONSIBLE:** Barbecues and fires are not allowed on the foreshores or reserves.
- ❖ **BE CLEAN:** Please take your litter home with you when you leave.
- ❖ **BE CAUTIOUS:** Observe and conserve. Disturbing or feeding marine wildlife can alter their natural instincts and jeopardise their wellbeing.
- ❖ **BE CARING:** Please leave pets at home. They are not permitted on the Marine Park foreshores or adjacent nature reserves as they disturb the wildlife.
- ❖ **BE COURTEOUS:** Make sure your activities do not spoil someone else's enjoyment of the Park.
- ❖ **BE MODERATE:** Conserve fish numbers by taking only what you need. Remember, sea birds should be able to feed first.
- ❖ **COME BACK:** Come back with your children to enjoy and learn more about this magnificent environment.



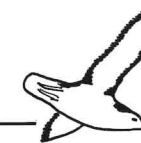
## FURTHER INFORMATION

CALM officers regularly patrol the reserves and waters of the Swan Estuary Marine Park. They will be pleased to answer any questions. For further information, contact:

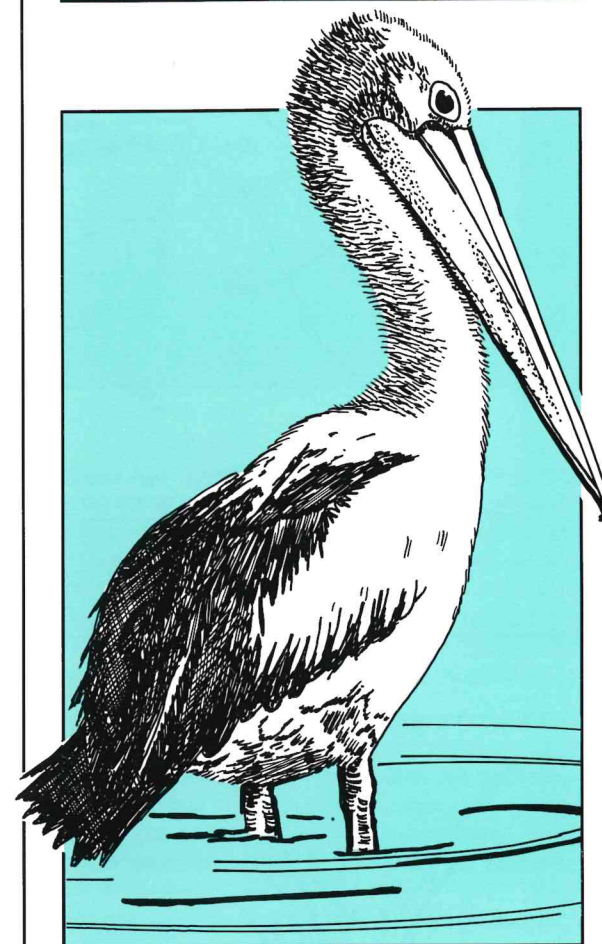
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## Swan Estuary Marine Park



Department of Conservation and Land Management





## THE SWAN ESTUARY

The Swan River and its tributaries are amongst the most prominent features of the Perth metropolitan area. Not only does the region provide some of the most attractive environments for recreational activities; the river and its foreshores also provide habitats for a large variety of terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals.

The river system serves as the major ocean outlet for surface and groundwater drainage of the Avon and Swan coastal plains. The flood plains and foreshores are important for the dissipation of peak winter water flow. These areas are enriched by top soil and nutrients deposited by this flow.

The development of the Swan River Colony since first settlement in 1829 has been strongly influenced by the river. In the early years, it served as an important transport and communications link between farming and business communities.

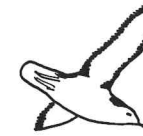
Today, the river still dominates the image of the city, and recreational activities are the major uses of river environment. Sailing, fishing, boating, parasailing, swimming, cycling, walking, birdwatching, and just relaxing and enjoying the peaceful surroundings, so close to a busy bustling city, are all favoured activities.



## WHY A MARINE PARK?

The System Six Report produced by the Environmental Protection Authority and endorsed by the State government in 1983, included recommendations for the reservation of three areas of the Swan Estuary. These areas encompass mudflats, seagrass beds, and intertidal vegetation (like sedges and saltmarsh) which provide many different habitats for a host of animals. The most important of these, due to their international significance, are the migratory wading birds.

Up to 10 000 waders visit these three areas every summer. They come from as far away as Asia, America, Mongolia and Siberia. About 30 of the species are protected under the Japan/Australia and China/Australia Migratory Bird Agreements. The estuarine mudflats contain high concentrations of food which replenish the energy of the exhausted birds after their long flight south. The most significant are located at Alfred Cove, Pelican Point and off Milyu Nature Reserve. The birds move between the intertidal flats of the three areas of the Marine Park according to where feeding and roosting sites are available.



## WHERE TO GO

### Alfred Cove

Located adjacent to the pretty suburbs of Attadale, Applecross and Alfred Cove, this Marine Park consists of 190 ha of semi-enclosed waters. The mudflats hide mussels dating back 6 000 years, as well as considerably younger, more juicy examples sought after by the 33 species of wading birds. The seagrass beds adjacent to the mudflats are a primary link in the food chain for the animals on which waders depend for food, as well as an important nursery area for fish and prawns.

An 'A' Class Nature Reserve adjoins the marine park where there are a number of vantage points for viewing the more than 140 species of flying visitors and residents.

### Pelican Point

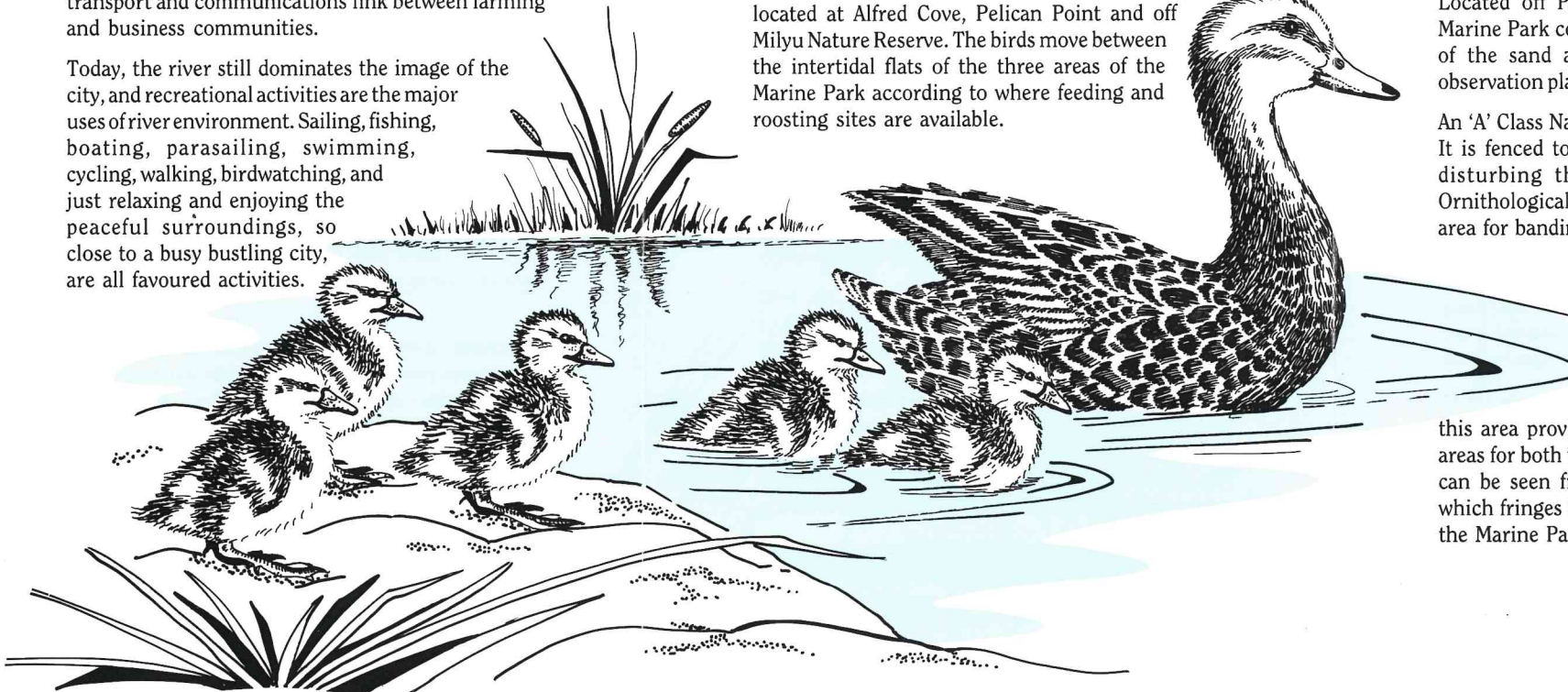
Located off Pelican Point in Crawley, this small Marine Park covers an area of 40 ha. Excellent views of the sand and mudflats are obtained from an observation platform reached from Australia II Drive.

An 'A' Class Nature Reserve adjoins the Marine Park. It is fenced to prevent cats and foxes entering and disturbing the wildlife. Two Royal Australian Ornithological Union sub-groups regularly use the area for banding and survey work.

### Milyu

This area consists of 95 ha and lies adjacent to the Como foreshore and the Kwinana Freeway.

Despite its rather noisy neighbour, this area provides equally good feeding and resting areas for both the waders and other water birds. They can be seen from the beach or from the cycleway which fringes the 'A' Class Nature Reserve adjoining the Marine Park.







## MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Swan Estuary Marine Park is vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). In consultation with CALM, the Fisheries Department is responsible for managing the small number of licensed commercial fishers who operate in the Swan Estuary - sometimes in the Marine Park.

The Department of Marine and Harbours is responsible for all boating and navigation; and local authorities, community associations, and clubs all have an important input into management. The 'A' Class Nature Reserve at Milyu has been 'adopted' by the South Perth Primary School, and their work is coordinated by CALM, the Perth Zoo, and South Perth City Council.



## MIGRATORY WADING BIRDS

The transitory waders are fascinating birds. Different species arrive at varying times between August and November. Because other wetlands are too full of water at this time of the year, the Swan Estuary (and the coast) are used as the first resting and feeding spots. Some of the birds will still be sporting their breeding plumage when they arrive. Others will moult to their breeding glory in February. Most birds will have left the Perth region by late March.

Of the 33 wader species recorded, only 15 can be classed as regular visitors. Notable amongst these is the tiny red-necked stint. Although only 30-40 g, these birds regularly fly thousands of miles from their breeding areas in Arctic Siberia to the warm mudflats of the Swan Estuary.



## WHAT ARE SEAGRASSES?

"Seagrasses are marine flowering plants that grow completely under water. Although submerged, they have all the characteristics of their dry land relatives - roots, rhizomes, leaves and flowers - and consequently are easily distinguished from the algae.

As the name suggests, many of these plants look like land grasses with long, strap-like leaves growing from horizontal rhizomes. Depending on the species, the length of these leaves can be anything from a few centimetres to more than a metre.

The most common seagrass in the Swan Estuary, *Halophila ovalis*, is somewhat different, however. It has leaves shaped like small paddles - hence its more common name, 'paddleweed'." \*

\* From "Seagrass Distribution in the Swan/Canning Estuary" by K. Hillman, Botany Department, UWA.

