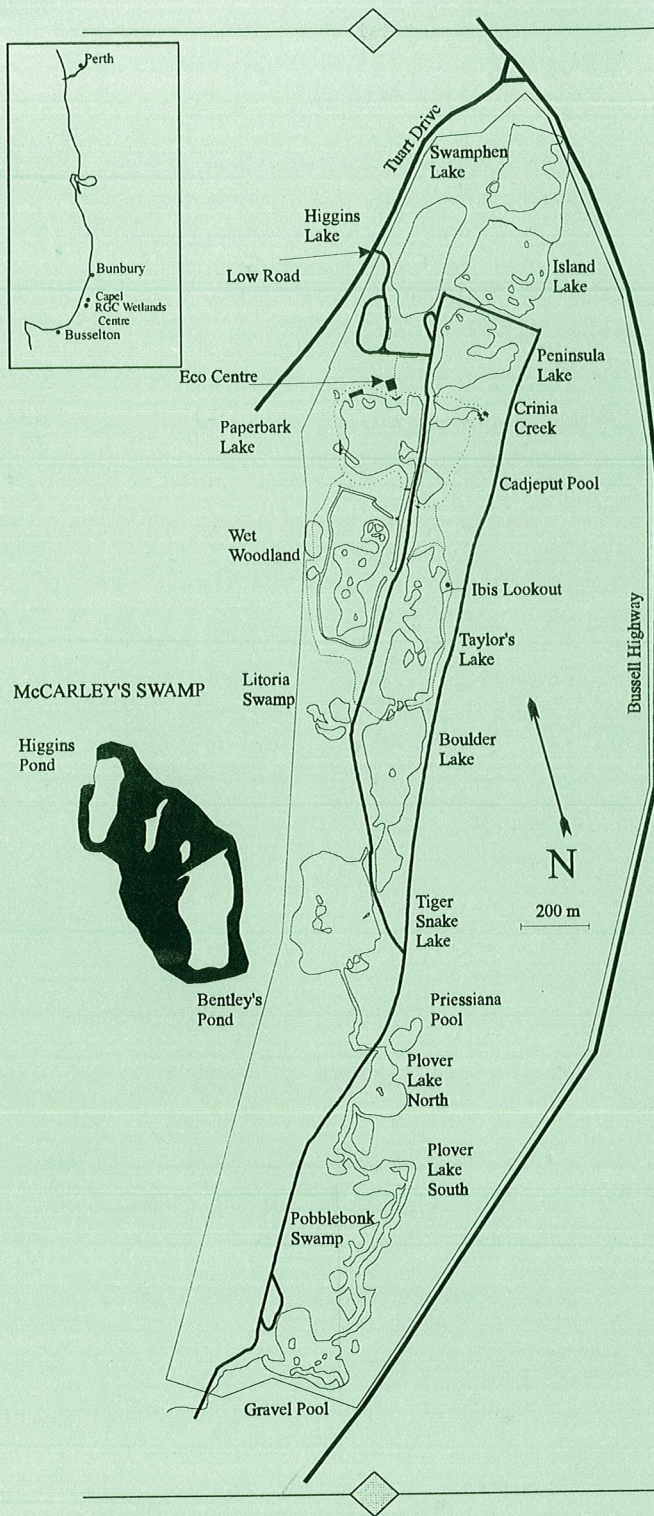


LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Regional Involvement

In 1994 the RGC Wetlands Centre became a module of the SouthWest Ecomuseum, with the inclusion of the Capel Eco-Discovery Centre into the project. The Centre is now one of nineteen "living museums" spread around the southwest of Western Australia, covering many of the unique social and natural environments found here. The Dolphin Discovery Centre in Bunbury, the Karri Forest Discovery Centre in Pemberton and the Tuart Forest Centre at Ludlow are just a few of the modules already linked to the RGC Wetlands Centre by the SouthWest Ecomuseum.

For more information contact the following:

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Capel WA 6271
Telephone 08 97803665
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Science Teachers' Association of WA
PO Box 1099
Osborne Park WA 6916
Telephone 08 92441987
Fax 08 92442601

Birds Australia
ACN 004 076 475
417 Riversdale Road
Hawthorn East VIC 3123
Telephone 039 882 2622
Fax 039 882 2677

For school excursions and group bookings contact RGC
on 08 97803665

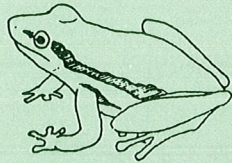


RGC Wetlands Centre

Capel,
Western Australia

Objectives

1. To develop a self-sustaining ecosystem enhancing the conservation value of the wetlands created after mining at Capel.
2. To facilitate research into wetlands ecosystems, including their development and management.
3. To provide resources for the community, including education and recreation, at the RGC Wetlands Centre.
4. To develop and demonstrate rehabilitation technology for wetlands created by human activities
5. To develop appropriate activities which will provide financial viability for the RGC Wetlands Centre.

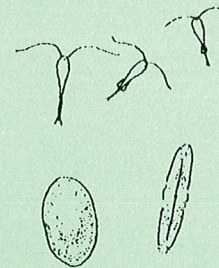


Wetlands ecosystems are a valuable but diminishing resource on which much of our wildlife depends. All too often these areas are degraded or destroyed in the name of progress. RGC Mineral

Sands Limited (RGCMS) has set about reversing that trend by undertaking a project to create a Wetlands Centre of international standing on land that was once a pine plantation. RGCMS has turned 52 hectares of lakes, created from its mining operations, into valuable habitats for waterbirds. After rehabilitation, these will be returned to the community. In 1985 the company commissioned a study of the man-made lakes at its Capel site 200 kilometres south of Perth, to assess the area's potential for supporting waterbirds.

Research Programme

Results from baseline studies, completed in 1987, are being used in a multi-disciplinary research programme which focuses on the food chain. Scientists are studying water quality, algae, fringing plants, aquatic invertebrates, fish, frogs, reptiles and birds at the site. This information will provide valuable information on individual species, their interactions with one another and on ecosystem processes. It will provide government and industry with techniques to establish or rehabilitate wetlands.



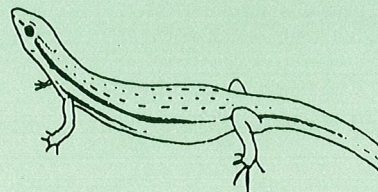
Development Programme

Mining took place between 1976 and 1981, during which some rehabilitation work was carried out on the area, mostly to stabilise the sand. From 1981 to 1986 the pasture around the lakes was grazed by cattle while the planning of the new wetlands was undertaken.

The current development plan, which goes until the year 2000, incorporates creating a wide range of habitats to encourage numerous species of animals, facilities for visitors such as paths and hides, and educational curriculum support materials. There are at present fifteen lakes in the wetlands system. Development is planned so that each lake retains much of its own character and landscape. Tree species selection, island and spit construction, hay and branch additions are techniques used to attract waterbirds and give the lakes a different look.

Education Programme

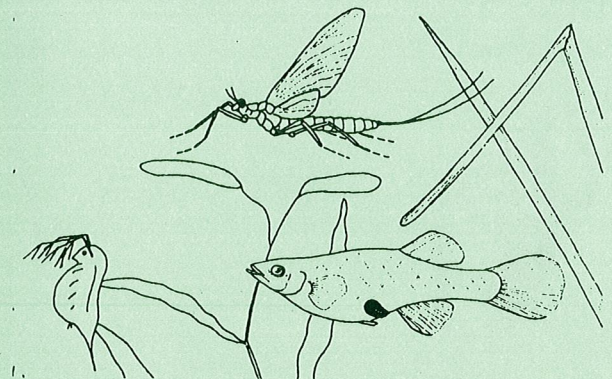
Part of the role of the RGC Wetlands Centre is to provide the community with the opportunity to study and learn about wetlands. The Science Teachers' Association of WA has assisted the management of the Centre by developing the curriculum support material for primary and secondary schools "From Sand to Ducks" which details a variety of activities that can be carried out at the Centre. STAWA also runs teacher development courses and school excursions on the Wetlands Centre.



Management

A management committee was formed in 1985 with representatives from RGC, Birds Australia (BA), the University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, Curtin University of Technology, the WA department of Conservation and Land Management and, later, the Science Teachers' Association of WA.

The committee's role is to guide the research and development programmes being undertaken at the RGC Wetlands Centre. BA, Australia's national bird organisation, is the project manager and has an officer working at the wetlands.



International Effort

The RGC Wetlands Centre is a member of the Wetlands Link International (WLI) which is based at Slimbridge in England. WLI coordinates wetland conservation efforts throughout the world, fostering public awareness through education, of wildlife values and to develop and demonstrate rehabilitation techniques for wetlands.