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Wetlands: WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

Wetlands are a distinctive part of Victoria. The Glenelg Hopkins region contains 22% of Victoria's wetlands by number, many of which are on private property and managed by private landholders.

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are areas where fresh or salt water gathers, either permanently or temporarily. They may be as small as a farm dam or as big as a lake, hold standing or very slow-moving water and can be wet or dry depending on seasonal conditions. They support a wide range of water-based plants and animals which change with slope and depth.

Wetland significance

Wetlands are significant for the benefits they provide in our natural environment. They also have profound cultural value as ceremonial sites, hunting and gathering grounds and as boundary markers. Almost all wetland plants and animals have a traditional use as food, fibre, containers, tools, weapons, transport, shelter and medicine.

FRESHWATER SEASONAL HERBACEOUS WETLANDS ARE LISTED AS **CRITICALLY ENDANGERED** AND ARE PROTECTED UNDER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S **ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999** DUE TO THEIR IMPORTANCE AND CURRENT RATE OF LOSS.

BENEFITS OF WETLANDS:

- ✓ PROVIDE HABITAT FOR NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS
- ✓ FILTER NUTRIENTS AND TRAP SEDIMENT
- ✓ IMPROVE WATER QUALITY
- ✓ REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING
- ✓ CAN BE FENCED AS PART OF FARM MANAGEMENT
- ✓ PROVIDE A RANGE OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- ✓ CAN STORE CARBON AND REDUCE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE
- ✓ ARE PROTECTED UNDER LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION

THREATS TO WETLANDS:

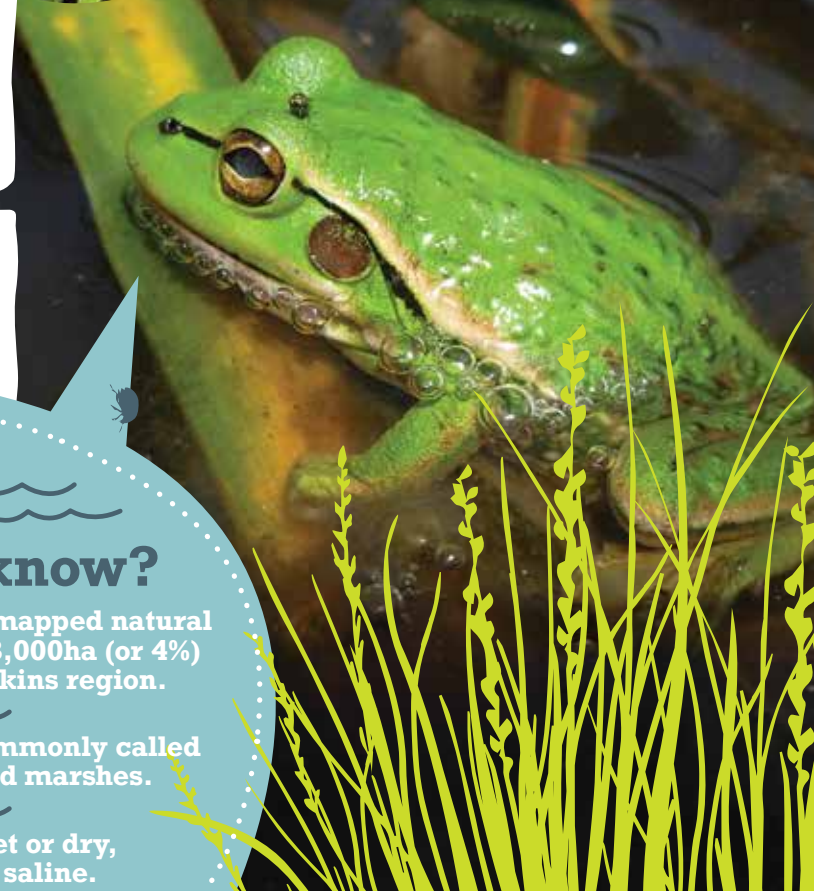
- ✗ RUNOFF AND DRIFT OF FERTILISERS, PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES
- ✗ FERTILISING AND NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT
- ✗ DRAINING AND/OR EXTRACTING WATER
- ✗ PEST PLANTS AND ANIMALS
- ✗ OVER-GRAZING BY STOCK
- ✗ CROPPING

Did you know?

There are over 7,600 mapped natural wetlands covering 73,000ha (or 4%) of the Glenelg Hopkins region.

Wetlands are also commonly called swamps, lakes and marshes.

They can be wet or dry, freshwater or saline.



Wetlands: THEIR ROLE IN OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Aboriginal people have used wetlands over tens of thousands of years - they are of profound cultural value

Wetlands reduce the impact of flooding by holding and slowing floodwater

Wetlands act as sediment traps and filter nutrients, helping improve the water quality of creeks and rivers

Wetlands provide habitat for native animals including Brolgas for nesting and rearing chicks and provide refuge during drought

Wetlands provide recreational opportunities such as boating, camping, walking, bird watching, fishing and photography

Glenelg Hopkins



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