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Wetlands: SALINE AND FRESHWATER

Wetlands range from permanent lakes to swamps, marshes, billabongs, estuaries, saltmarshes and springs. They can be saline or freshwater. All wetlands are unique in the landscape and support a wide range of plants and animals.

Why are wetlands important?

Whether saline or freshwater, wetlands play an important role in the regulation of water flow and water quality to catchments. They provide key habitat for fauna (including migratory birds) and provide refuge for wildlife.

Wetland types

While all wetlands are unique, they can be grouped according to their water regime and characteristics. This includes their permanency, depth of water, if they are saline or freshwater, and the type of plants that grow in and around them. Wetlands can be isolated in the landscape or linked to rivers, estuaries or the coast.

FRESHWATER WETLANDS:

Freshwater wetlands are low-lying areas where runoff from rainfall gathers, either permanently or temporarily. They rely on annual rainfall, can vary significantly in size and depth and hold standing or slow-moving water. They can be linked to waterways like billabongs, be chains of wetlands, or be isolated terminal systems.

SALINE WETLANDS:

Saline wetlands contain salty or brackish water and are generally formed naturally from groundwater coming to the surface through salty soil. The water is influenced by a combination of groundwater and runoff from rainfall. Saline wetlands can also be influenced by estuaries and tidal water along the coast.

Did you know?

In Victoria, wetlands are classified by Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs). EVCs are used to identify wetlands based on plant species, structure and ecological features. They establish benchmarks for healthy condition and assessment of all wetland types, whether saline or freshwater.

Wetlands can cross local, state, national and international boundaries

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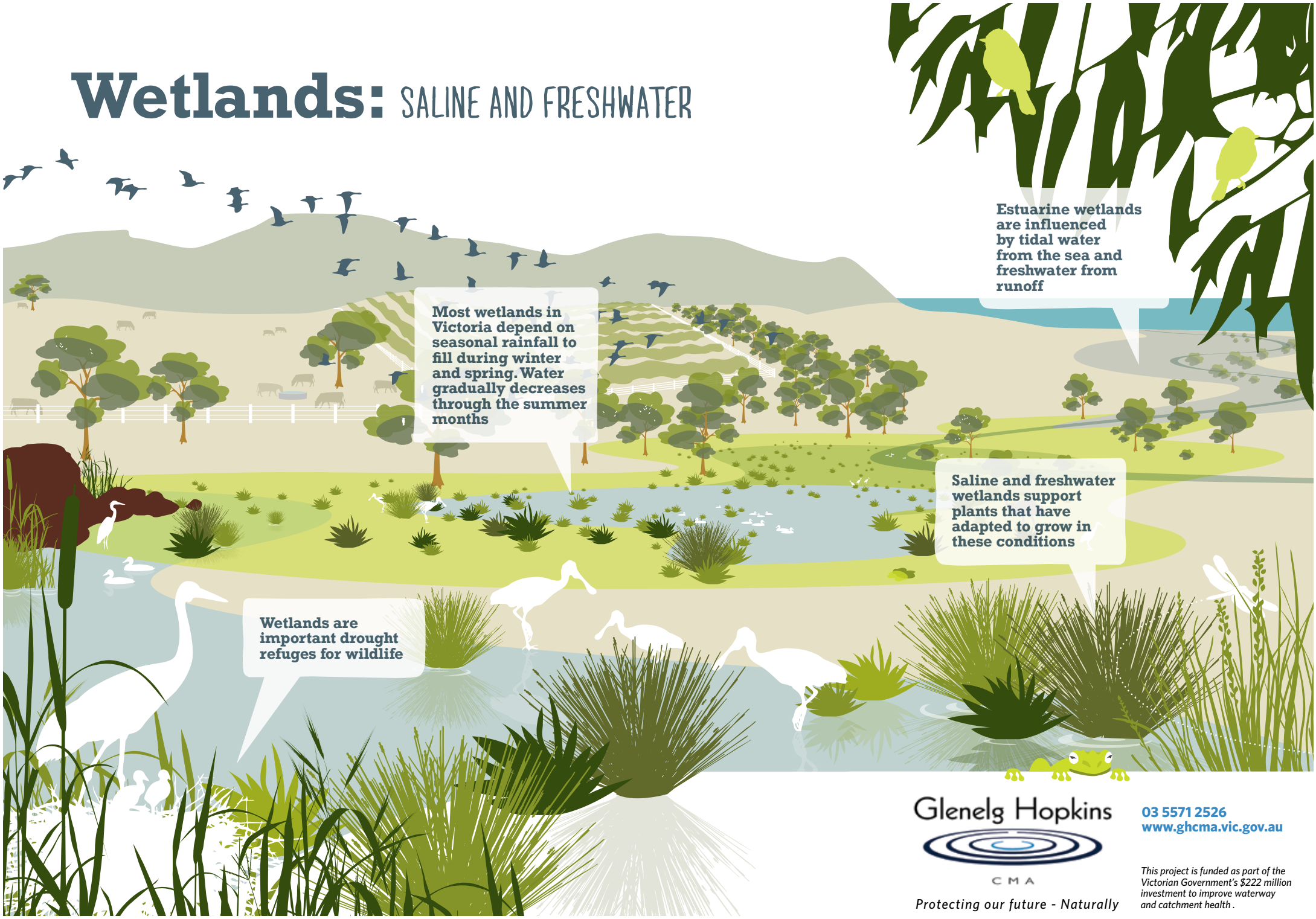

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