



Birds

Pelicans, egrets, ibis, spoonbills, herons, cormorants, darters, ducks and grebes are some of the waterbirds found at this wetland during a “wetting” cycle.

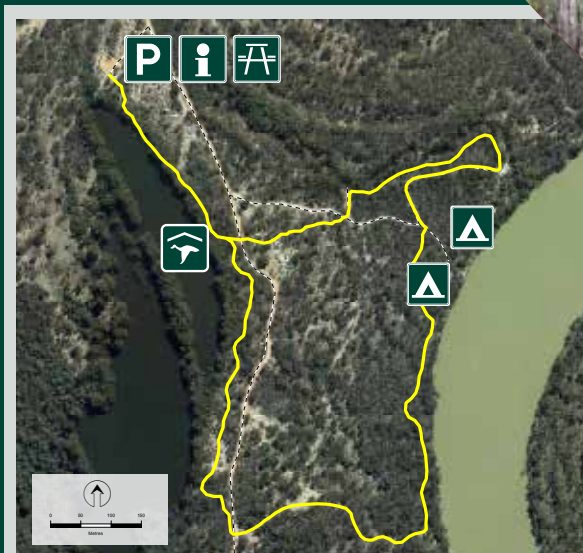
A range of bush birds such as magpies, ravens, butcherbirds, parrots, honeyeaters, treecreepers, wrens, babbler, robins, pigeons, swallows and birds of prey are commonly observed.

Native vegetation

The major plants found in a typical floodplain area are described on the information signs located at points along the Ngak Indau Wetland Trail.

- red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)
- river coobas (*Acacia stenophylla*)
- black box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*)
- inland teatrees (*Melaleuca lanceolata*)

A variety of shrubs and herbaceous plants can be seen growing beneath these trees, including eremophilas, saltbush (several types) and pigface.



- Wetland trail (3.2km)
- Information sign
- Parking area
- Picnic table
- Bird hide
- Camp ground
- Vehicle track

Ngak Indau Wetland Trail Katarapko

Access via Lock 4 entrance, Draper Road Berri, then onto Lock 4 road Murray River National Park

For more information please visit www.parks.sa.gov.au





History of the wetland

Pre European settlement

Normally water flowed along the river channel but in times of high water flow the water would rise and spill out of the channel. When this occurred, water would move out through creeks and wetlands. This occurred on average every 2-3 years.

1930's river regulation

When weir and Lock 4 were built to hold water at a constant level in the river, a clay bank was built at the entrance to the Ngak Indau creek and wetland complex. It was only in times of flood that water flowed over this clay bank.

1990's

The clay bank was removed and structures built at either end of the creek to control water flow and prevent large European carp from entering the creek.

Water can now be held within the wetland for a period of time before being released back into the river.

This wetting and drying action is vital for wetland health.



Ephemeral wetlands

Wetlands that only receive water during times of high river levels are referred to as ephemeral wetlands.

Whilst the water is in the wetland, small microscopic plant cells (phytoplankton) emerge providing food for a variety of small microscopic animals (zooplankton), insect larvae, shrimps, yabbies and small fish.

A frenzied breeding event occurs producing a "soup" of organisms that provides food for frogs, waterbirds and larger fish, and they too breed.

As the river level falls water from the wetland drains back into the river replenishing and revitalizing the health of the river.



Microscopic diatoms (x1000)



Microscopic algae (x100)

In And Around the Wetland

The calls of six species of frogs have been recorded in this wetland

Peron's tree frog

eastern banjo frog

southern bell-frog

eastern sign-bearing froglet



Insect larvae (x10)

Illustrations drawn by students from Glossop High school

spotted grass frog

long-thumbed frog

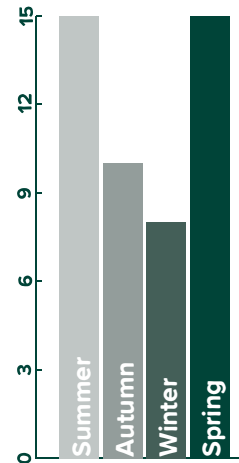


Photo by Tony Robinson

In the trees

Brush-tail possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) were surveyed using special spotlights so as to not damage the animal's eyes. The graph below shows the average numbers of possums seen in 1km walking surveys around the edge of the wetland over a 3 year survey.

Number of possum sightings per season



Brush-tail possums are domestic cat-sized furry mammals that seek shelter in hollows in trees or logs during the day but can be observed in trees or on the ground after dark.

They mostly eat the leaves of a wide variety of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, but also the flowers and fruit.

The presence of possums can be detected by looking for their "scats" (poo).

