

Bringing life back to the Lakes

Peel Ramsar Lakes Project

CASE STUDY

PEEL RAMSAR
LAKES
PROJECT



TOP: Lake Mealup aerial view (photo: R. Rose)

ABOVE: *Typha orientalis* (photo: Jane O'Malley)

PROJECT TITLE

Peel Ramsar Lakes Project

PROJECT LEADERS

Johanne Garvey and
Colleen Archibald

PROJECT MANAGER

Kim Wilson

PROJECT DURATION

January 2012 - June 2013

PROJECT AREA

Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar Site
482, Lake Mealup, Lake McLarty,
Herron Point and surrounding areas

PARTNERSHIPS

Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative, Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC), Shire of Murray, Lake Mealup Preservation Society, Water Corporation, local landholders, community members and South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council

BENEFICIARIES

Ecological values of Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar System, local landholders and general public



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This Project is a SWCC and Peel-Harvey Catchment Council (PHCC) partnership funded through the Australian Governments Caring for our Country Program



Department of
Environment and Conservation
Our environment, our future



Wetlands of International Importance

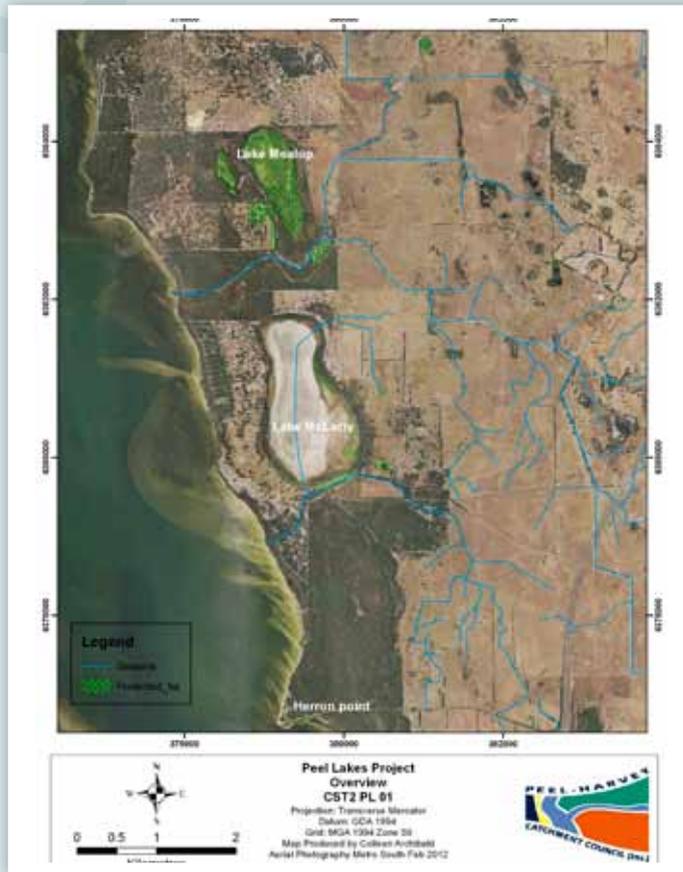
The Ramsar-listed Peel-Yalgorup System (Ramsar site 482) is recognised under the International Convention on Wetlands. As a wetland of international importance the Site meets 7 of the 9 criteria for Ramsar listing.

Against Ramsar Criterion 1, it is considered internationally important as the System includes the largest and most diverse estuarine complex in south-western Australia and is also a particularly good example of coastal saline lakes and freshwater marshes.

The Peel Ramsar Lakes Project focused on the freshwater lakes.

The Peel Ramsar Lakes Project originated through the commitment of local volunteers and stakeholders to protect the values identified in the Ecological Character Description (Hale and Butcher, 2007) and to implement high priority actions from the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site Management Plan (Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, 2009).

The project aimed to address some of the key threats to the Peel-Yalgorup System's Ramsar-listed Lake Mealup, Lake McLarty, Herron Point and surrounding areas, to improve connectivity of native vegetation and habitats through wetland corridors, and contribute to water quality improvement through strategic weed control, revegetation, habitat rehabilitation and stakeholder/community engagement.



Since the *Typha* control at Lake Mealup, bird numbers have increased dramatically



TOP: Peel Lakes Project activity locations

ABOVE: Birds at Mealup (photo: LMPS)

RIGHT: Aerial view of Lake Mealup Weir/Inlet Site (photo: Ross Rose)

Collaborative Approach

The Peel Ramsar Lakes Project involved collaborative partnerships between agencies, local community groups, farmers and the wider community.

Together groups participated in planting activities, after contractors and local landholders had undertaken weed control and fencing of revegetation sites.

The local community group and landholders, the Lake Mealup Preservation Society (LMPS), assisted with revegetation activities at Lake Mealup, and importantly provided additional support in the control of the environmental weed, *Typha orientalis*.

“The February 2012 Shorebirds count for Lake Mealup only recorded 99 birds of 5 species, compared to the February 2013 count of 729 birds of 22 species, numbers well above what have been seen in the last 18 years when the lake was substantially covered in Typha”

Peter Wilmot, LMPS member

The project has resulted in over 26 ha of land being re-vegetated and protected

TOP: Team members from The WA Finance Department, Lake Mealup Nature Reserve (photo: C. Archibald)

ABOVE RIGHT: Installed fencing at private landholders property adjacent to Lake McLarty (photo: C. Archibald)

RIGHT: *Typha* control, Lake Mealup (photo : Heidi Bucktin)



Community Involvement

Three community planting days saw more than 75 volunteers contribute over 800 hours of their time, to plant more than 4,000 seedlings. Ngulla Community Nursery's social enterprise project 'Bridging the Gap' were contracted to plant and guard over 8000 seedlings within Nature Reserves and adjacent private properties.



A field day was held at Lake Mealup to showcase some of the project's activities. There was a high level of interest with over 30 people attending and participating in events such as bushwalks to restoration sites, macro-invertebrate talks and bird-watching from the LMPS bird hide.

“Engaging the community in these type of events not only increases awareness, it gives the people an understanding of how important our wetlands are,” says Johanne Garvey (Project Leader).



Outcomes and Future Challenges

The project contributed towards Caring for our Country targets:

- Protecting Ramsar Wetlands;
- Improving coastal hotspots; and
- Increasing coastal community engagement.

"More importantly, the work will help maintain the wetland's ecological health", says Ms Garvey.

Ensuring all the project sites are monitored and maintained into the future is a challenge.

All revegetation sites have been fenced and seedlings guarded to exclude kangaroos from grazing them. Ms Garvey said: *"This combination of 'securities' at the restoration sites will better protect the seedlings in their infancy and help the project achieve better longer term outcomes."*



ABOVE: Lake Mealup after *Typha* crushing/spraying. Note the dead (sprayed) *Typha* in background. (photo: Heidi Bucktin)

References

- Hale, J. and Butcher, R., 2007, Ecological Character Description of the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site, Report to the Department of Environment and Conservation and the PHCC. Perth, Western Australia.
- Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, 2010, Lake Mealup Recovery Program: Adaptive Management Plan; a report prepared by Juan Luis Montoya for the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, Mandurah, Western Australia.
- Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, 2009, Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site Management Plan. Mandurah, Peel-Harvey Catchment Council.



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ABOVE: Jo Garvey at the Lake McLarty DEC Reserve revegetation site beside an *Eucalyptus rudis* (10months). (photo: C. Archibald)

Achievements

Typha Controlled	50.7 ha
Weed Control	17.5 ha
Seedlings planted	13,420
Fencing sites for protection	4.4 km
Total areas protected	26.3ha



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