Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:
1998

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DD MM YY

Designation date

Site Reference Number

2. Country:
Australia

3. Name of wetland:
Apsley Marshes, Tasmania

4. Geographical coordinates:
Latitude: 41^0 58'S; Longitude: 148^0 12'E

5. Altitude:
The whole area is less than 20 metres above sea level.

6. Area:
865ha

7. Overview:
Apsley Marshes are at the mouth of the Apsley River and adjacent to Moulting Lagoon. This area comprises mainly freshwater swamp with large areas of woody vegetation, and areas of saltmarsh in the southern section near the junction with Moulting Lagoon.

8. Wetland Type:

marine-coastal:	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**	**K**
inland:	**L**	**M**	**N**	**O**	**P**	**Q**	**R**	**Sp**	**Ss**	**Tp**	**Ts**
	U	**Va**	**Vt**	**W**	**Xf**	**Xp**	**Y**	**Zg**	**Zk**		
man-made:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**		

9. Ramsar Criteria:

1a	**1b**	**1c**	**1d**	**2a**	**2b**	**2c**	**2d**	**3a**	**3b**	**3c**	**4a**	**4b**

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site:

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* ☒ -or- *no.* ☐

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.

13. General location:
On the east coast of Tasmania between the towns of Cranbrook and Bicheno, north of the Freycinet Peninsula and adjacent to Moulting Lagoon.

14. Physical features:
The Apsley River rises at 500 metres elevation and drains a catchment of 228 square kilometres. At the mouth of this river is Apsley Marshes, an area comprising estuarine waters and coastal freshwater marsh and swamp. The waters of Aspley Marshes are continuous with Moulting Lagoon.

The geology of the area is diverse, dominated by Holocene alluvial sands and gravels with pockets of Triassic sandstone and Jurassic dolerite. The marshes contain a deep (>1.40 metres) uniform, very dark greyish brown clay.

Tasmania in general has a temperate maritime climate and temperatures in this area are among the warmest in the State. The average annual rainfall is 625 - 750mm.

15. Hydrological values:
The marsh filters and stores floodwaters for slow release into the adjacent Moulting Lagoon. The major route for water flow through the marsh has changed over the years and presently follows the Western side.

16. Ecological features:
This wetland of freshwater swamp and marsh is one of the most floristically rich in Tasmania. It includes large areas of woody vegetation with *Melaleuca* dominating. Parts of the area are important for swan nesting and can contain one thousand or more nests at a time.

17. Noteworthy flora:
This wetland contains three plant species considered to be at risk in Tasmania: *Lythrum salicaria*, which is vulnerable in the state and not found in any secure reserve, *Helichrysum bicolor*, which is rare in the state and *Polygonum strigosum*, rare in the state and unknown from any secure reserve.

18. Noteworthy fauna:
Frequently used by the Australasian shoveller (*Anas rhynchotis*).

The ground parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*) has also been observed in these marshes.

19. Social and cultural values:
Primarily used for duck hunting and livestock grazing at present.

20. Land tenure/ownership:
Private freehold land.

21. Current land use:
The area is very sparsely populated.

(a) the site: birdwatching, duck hunting, fishing.

(b) the surrounding area: livestock grazing, sport fishing.

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

(a) the site:

- Gorse is well established on northern side of marshes
- Continued livestock grazing particularly at northern end, causing damage to vegetation
- network of drains constructed throughout marsh, though these have not prevented the accumulation of standing water
- probable contamination of bottom sediment by lead shot pellets

(b) the surrounding area:

- livestock grazing
- continued land clearance for agriculture and the development of residential areas, resulting in siltation and eutrophication
- forestry operations in catchment area

23. Conservation measures taken:

No formal steps have been taken so far, but discussions of possible measures with the landowner have been initiated as part of the on-going off reserve conservation program.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

It is proposed to write a management plan for the area with the landowners consent and cooperation.

The south-east end of the site is adjacent to the section of Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve closed to hunting. A proposal has been made to negotiate witht the landowner to reserve this section of the marshes so as to provide a windbreak/buffer strip and exclude cattle from the woody vegeation during the nesting season. The possibility of entering into such agreements as a Private Wildlife Sanctuary or Game Reserve, a Conservation Covenant, or a combination of these has been discussed with the owner.

The relevant local governments will be made aware of the sites' values and as new planning schemes are prepared, Parks and Wildlife Service will recommend appropriate controls on land use in the sites' catchment.

25. Current scientific research and facilities:

This area is included in annual waterbird counts carried out on nearby Moulting Lagoon.

26. Current conservation education:

The area could be utilised as a waterbird interpretation area with the owner's consent.

27. Current recreation and tourism:

Approximately 30-50 duck hunters use the area during the open season.

28. Jurisdiction:

Territorial: Glamorgan/Spring Bay Municipal Council

Functional: Landowner

29. Management authority:

Privately owned.

30. Bibliographical references:

Blackhall, S.A. (1988). A survey to determine waterbird usage and conservation significance of selected Tasmanian wetlands Stage II. Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife Tasmania. Occasional Paper Number 16.