



Writing in Role

LESSON PLAN

What Can Be Learned?

Students are required to show their understanding of the diversity of the many users of the wetland by completing a written exercise where they take on the persona of an identified user group.

Materials Required

paper
pencil
extracts from a Management Plan (see following)

The Activity

Sections of a management plan that illustrate user groups are read to the students. In this lesson plan the included sections are of the Moulting Lagoon Management Plan (DTPHA 2003). Teachers may wish to source a more relevant management plan for a local reserved wetland (see map).

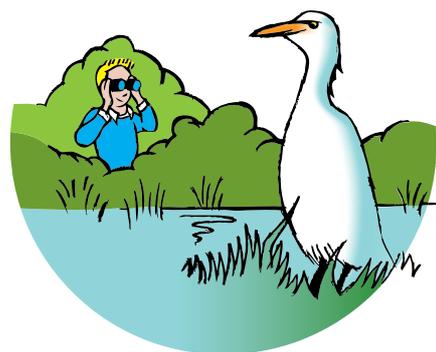
User groups included here are:

- Game hunter
- Water birds
- Aboriginal person
- Bird watcher

User Groups

Game hunter

Though seasonal, duck hunting is probably the most intensive use of the lagoon, and easily the most controversial. There are few historical records available on duck hunting on the lagoon, but it has probably been practised in some form since European settlement. The settlers readily adapted to the taking of black swan and their eggs, and waterfowl hunting in general was a sport familiar to most. Today it is believed that up to 150 hunters, many of whom are local residents, shoot wild duck on the lagoon throughout the season. Permanent hides have been constructed on the lagoon, some of which have been subject to family use for many years.



Wetlands E-Set suited to upper primary students.

Duck hunting and the traditions that go with it are often the basis for controversies surrounding the lagoon. Fathers and sons have hunted the lagoon for several generations, and anecdotal accounts suggest the swans and other waterfowl have often been a source of food to many local residents particularly during economic hard times. Thus, restrictions on swan shooting, lower bag limits on ducks, introduction of the 'Sanctuary' are all seen as encroachments on the traditional practices of these residents and can become grounds for considerable resentment.

Aboriginal person

Appropriate management and protection of Aboriginal cultural resources requires the full recognition of values held by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community concerning the Moulting Lagoon area.

At the time of European settlement Moulting Lagoon was part of the territory occupied by the Oyster Bay Tribe. The territory encompassed much of the Tasmanian east coast and extended north from the Derwent estuary to the Fingal Valley and west to the Midlands. The tribe was comprised of at least 15 bands with a total population of 600-800 people .

Wildlife around Moulting Lagoon, particularly black swan eggs, were an important food source to Aborigines of the Oyster Bay tribal group. Of this tribe, perhaps as many as 10 bands of up to 70 or 80 people each used the lagoon during the swan breeding season, while one band, the Linetemairrener, apparently lived primarily at Moulting Lagoon.

Eight sites have been registered on the Tasmanian Aboriginal Site Index and vary from isolated artefact scatter to middens and quarry sites.

Water birds

The area has long been regarded as an important area for waterbirds. Blackhall (1985)

recorded 60 species of birds in the immediate area of the lagoon. Black swans are the most obvious and numerous birds on the lagoon. Historically, as much as 80% of swan breeding in Tasmania occurred there.

Unfortunately, swans are also the subject of much management controversy, primarily due to their current numbers. Post breeding populations vary somewhat according to breeding conditions, but over the last 30 years they have often approached 15,000 birds.

Some local residents consider that the current numbers of swans are unnaturally high causing degradation to the values of the lagoon. It is claimed that the feeding and nesting of such large numbers of birds are destroying the aquatic vegetation, causing excessive sedimentation and nutrient loading to the lagoon and outcompeting other waterbirds on the lagoon. These residents believe that in order to lower the overall swan population, the species should be placed back onto the list of game birds and that the legal taking of swan eggs should be reintroduced. However, it is considered that the current population levels are natural and any periods of high mortality are part of the natural population cycle.

Other common waterbirds include nine species of ducks (most numerous being Australian shelduck and chestnut teal), white-faced herons, silver and pacific gulls, masked lapwings and great and little pied cormorants. As well as the resident population of waterbirds, nine species of migrating waders use the area. All but one of these, the double-banded plover, breed in the Arctic region during the northern hemisphere summer and migrate south for the southern hemisphere summer. The double-banded plover overwinters (Feb - Aug) in south east Australia and then migrates to New Zealand to breed. The species is common around Moulting Lagoon during this period.

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Most of the other migratory species use the area only briefly as a stop over during the summer but small numbers of eastern curlews have been recorded during winter (Blackhall 1985). These migratory waders are listed on the Japan/Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and the China/Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) which are treaties signed by the governments of Australia and Japan/China to protect migratory birds and their environments.

Bird watcher

Bird watching in the reserves is primarily pursued by bird observers' groups, however anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the 200,000 or so visitors to Freycinet stop to bird watch as they get close to Moulting Lagoon on the Coles Bay Road. The number of migratory and resident bird species which inhabit the reserve, however, make this a potentially popular activity.

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After listening to and/or reading the above user group descriptions, the students then identify the values and needs of each user group and write from the perspective of one of the user groups.

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