



PO Box 295 Vincentia NSW 2540 | www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org | shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au
BirdLife Shoalhaven is a branch of BirdLife Australia Limited ABN 75 149 124 774

Mayor Amanda Findley
Shoalhaven City Council
City Administration Centre
36 Bridge Rd
Nowra 2541

20 August 2018

Dear Mayor

Request for Council's support for an upgraded bird viewing platform at Lake Wollumboola

In 2005 Council established a bird viewing platform on the northern dune of Lake Wollumboola in the Lakeside Park reserve at East Crescent, Culburra Beach. The structure has fallen into disrepair and presents potential safety issues. The platform is overgrown by vegetation and is not even visible from the reserve. We recently met with Council staff on site and discussed options to have the platform upgraded for the benefit of both local and visiting birdwatchers.

Lake Wollumboola is one of our most popular places for birdwatchers to visit. It is a major local bird tourism destination and attracts visitors from across Australia and overseas. BirdLife Shoalhaven and other bird observer groups arrange frequent birdwatching trips to the Lake and we often meet groups of birdwatchers who have made their own way there.

There are several reasons why the Lake is such a drawcard for birdwatchers:

- The Lake has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) under criteria set by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature for its critical habitat and reliable feeding grounds for Black Swan and Chestnut Teal. There are only 300 KBAs in Australia, which are all important destinations for birdwatchers. However, many of these are in remote areas, while Lake Wollumboola is one of the most accessible.
- It is also recognised as part of the East Asian Australasian Flyway and so provides vital habitat for a number of internationally significant migratory shorebirds.
- The Lake supports at least 106 bird species, of which at least 23 are listed as threatened under either NSW or Australian Government legislation.
- Threatened species include nesting Little Terns and Pied Oystercatchers, as well as migratory Curlew Sandpipers and Bar-tailed Godwits. Other migratory species include Red Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints and there have been rare sightings of a White-rumped Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit and Paradise Shelduck. Other interesting waterbirds may include

Royal Spoonbills, Red-necked Avocets and egrets. These are just some of the species of major interest for birdwatchers at the Lake.

Last year BirdLife Shoalhaven worked with Council's Tourism staff to produce a Bird Walks brochure, which was fully funded by Council. Lake Wollumboola is one of the 12 featured walks. The first print run of the brochure ran out within six months and Council has recently reprinted the brochure to meet the on-going demand. This proves that the local community and visitors want to know where the best places to see birds are and proves the potential of bird tourism in the Shoalhaven.

To have an upgraded bird viewing platform, that will provide excellent viewing at one of the Shoalhaven's best bird observing sites, as well as being well-designed and informative, would be the ideal next step to promote bird tourism and respond to the increasing number of birdwatchers attracted to the Lake. To this end we are now seeking Council's support for an upgrade to the existing dilapidated bird viewing platform.

If we gain Council's support, BirdLife Shoalhaven would fundraise to meet the costs of interpretative signage at the platform, featuring the species that can be seen at the Lake. In addition, our members would volunteer to support the initial restoration of the surrounding vegetation and its on-going maintenance.

If you would like to discuss this request further, please get in contact with me.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Dunn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rob Dunn
President BirdLife Shoalhaven
president@birdlifeshoalhaven.org
0438 250 600