

SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL

SUBMISSION CONCERNING

SHOALHAVEN DREDGING PROJECT REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS [REF]



From:

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1.0 Introduction

1.10 This submission is specifically concerned with the Currambene Creek Dredging Project and the Myola sand spit at the southern extremity of Callala Beach, adjacent to the Creek entrance.

1.20 BLS has been concerned with the risk and likely impact of the dredging operation on waterbirds / shorebirds, which inhabit the site for roosting-resting. This matter was not addressed in the Dredging Feasibility Study but was raised at both of the Huskisson Community Consultation Meetings and should appear in Council's consultation notes from those meetings.

1.30 The issue of the importance of the site and inhabiting birds and the risk-impact on these birds has now received some mention in the REF.

1.40 The recommendation in the REF and associated Ecological Report that the sand spit must be avoided in all work is welcome.



Myola sand spit accommodates Threatened, Migratory and resident species.

2.00 Concerns

2.10 BLS contends that the REF and Ecological Report have not properly established the credentials and conditions at the site concerning birdlife.

2.11 The Myola sand spit needs be acknowledged as the most important waterbird /shorebird sand roosting-resting site in Jervis Bay for 'Threatened Species Shorebirds', important migratory species and resident waterbirds / shorebirds.

2.12 That the REF observations reported of birdlife on the Myola sand spit are inadequate. The report notes two days of observation. viz January 12 at 12.05pm and 1.10pm and Jan.13 at 1.44 pm. It would be the contention of BLS that two days around midday in summer with similar tides would represent an inadequate observation and cataloguing of birdlife.

2.13 Consequently the list of birds associated with the Myola spit is incomplete with seven species listed and there is no tide association or seasonal details [see Table A].

2.14 The Myola sand spit has important interaction for birds found there with other Jervis Bay sites. For example, the Pied Oystercatchers have been identified from the Becroft Peninsula and the Eastern Curlews also use the Moonah Creek sands for resting and feeding.

2.15 Thus, on this basis, the importance of the Myola sand spit as a bird roosting-resting site has been significantly understated.

2.20 The clear implication is that, whilst it is advised in the REF that the Myola sand spit is to be avoided in all dredging operations, the importance of the site and associated birdlife and thus the level of risk and possible impact has also been understated. This needs to be corrected.

Table A Myola Sand Spit Bird Comparative Species Observation Listing

	REF Consultant	BLS Listing
Masked Lapwing [<i>Vanellus miles</i>]	/	/
Pied Oystercatcher [<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>]	/	/
Sooty Oystercatcher [<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>]	/	/
Silver Gull [<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>]	/	/
Australian Pelican [<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>]	/	/
Pied Cormorant [<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>]	/	/
Crested Tern [<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>]	/	/
Eastern Curlew [<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>]	-	/
Bar-tailed Godwit [<i>Limosa lapponica</i>]	-	/
Chestnut Teal [<i>Anas castanea</i>]	-	/
Mangrove Heron [<i>Butorides striata</i>]	-	/
Great Cormorant [<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>]	-	/
Little Black Cormorant [<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>]	-	/
White-bellied Sea Eagle [<i>Haliaeetus leucogastu</i>]	-	/
White-faced Heron [<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>]	-	/



3.00 REF Report Concerns

3.10 It is of some particular concern to BLS that the REF-Ecological Report comments that:

P19 During site inspections, shorebirds . . . [and fish] were observed to be carrying on with feeding, roosting and breeding activities within a few tens of metres of off-leash dogs, playing children, swimmers, sunbathers, boaters, fishers, and large commercial vessels passing closeby.

3.20 Long-term, continuing observations of BLS members at the Myola sand spit do not support this conclusion at all and the comment above, as it involves birds, is simply in error and this is concerning in such a document. [refer photos below]



3.30 Off-leash dogs are known to be a high impact intrusion for birds on the sand spit and have been consistently observed to be so. The North Jervis Bay Volunteer Shorebird co-ordinator with the National Parks Shorebird Program totally supports this comment. The Myola spit, including the sand spit portion, is a “Dog Prohibited” area and is signposted as such. The Myola Spit itself has the highest Environmental zoning [E1] in the Shoalhaven Local Environment Plan usually associated with National Park.

3.31 The response from Council Ranger Leader, Michael Jarman, [April 2015] to the BLS January 2015 submission on Myola sand spit and the issue of dog intrusion and disturbance also acknowledges that this is an issue.

3.32 It is just as much BLS observation over the longer term that people moving out on to the sand spit will and regularly do disturb birds resting.

3.40 BLS would add that had consultation with BirdLife Shoalhaven and the National Parks Shorebird Program occurred the veracity of material dealing with birdlife on the Myola san spit could have been greatly improved.

3.50 This corroborates BLS contention that the importance and character of the birdlife associated with the Myola sand spit has been significantly underestimated and thus the potential risk and impact has been underestimated.

3.60 This needs to be recognized in the review of the REF and further documentation and recommendations.

4.00 Note

4.10 The focus of this submission on the Currumbene Creek Dredging Project does not preclude an interest in other dredging sites nor does this represent any approval of impact on birdlife at those sites.

4.20 BirdLife Shoalhaven has acted with a particular interest and concerns in the Myola sand spit birdlife, previously established with Shoalhaven City Council and National Parks and Wildlife and within our capacity as a voluntary community based organization in a national network of BirdLife Australia.