

# **A survey of waterbirds on the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute demonstration site, Menangle, New South Wales**

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The management of wetlands in Australia has environmental and socio-economic implications, especially with respect to their status as foraging and breeding sites for waterbirds. A broad range of waterbirds have increasingly adjusted to modified and artificial wetlands as natural wetlands decline, including wetlands on agricultural land. This paper reports on a three-year study of waterbird assemblages on the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute demonstration farm site, southwest of Sydney, New South Wales. Fortnightly surveys recorded the presence of 28 species, with more than 90% of them being recorded by the tenth month of the study. The species recorded were members of 10 families (Anatidae, Podicipedidae, Rallidae, Recurvirostridae, Charadriidae, Ardeidae, Threskiornithidae, Pelicanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Anhingidae). Most species were recorded in more than 90% of surveys and considered to be resident. Waterbird occupation of farm dams and riverine habitats was less variable than that of floodplains. Waterbird assemblages on floodplains were highly variable, with the largest species array and highest overall abundance occurring in periods after rainfall when waters were receding, leaving shallow sections of ephemeral wetland. Observations of a rare visitor, the Great Crested Grebe, using the site for breeding particularly highlighted the conservation value of the site.