

SEASONAL AND DIURNAL PATTERNS IN ABUNDANCE OF WATERBIRDS AT A WASTE STABILIZATION POND, VICTORIA

ANDREW J. HAMILTON^{1,2}, IAIN R. TAYLOR¹ and PAMELA ROGERS³

¹Applied Ornithology Group, Johnstone Centre, School of Environmental and Information Sciences, Charles Sturt University, PO Box 789, Albury, New South Wales 2640

²Current address: Primary Industries Research Victoria — Knoxfield, Private Bag 15, Ferntree Gully Delivery Centre, Victoria 3156

³Corresponding author: P Rogers, Primary Industries Research Victoria — Knoxfield, Private Bag 15, Ferntree Gully Delivery Centre, Victoria 3156

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Seasonal and diurnal patterns in abundance of waterbirds (excluding waterfowl: Anatidae) on a waste-stabilization pond (Pond Nine) within the Lake Borrie System at the Western Treatment Plant, Werribee, Victoria were determined. The Western Treatment Plant is an important Ramsar site, mainly for the waterbird populations that occur there. Pond Nine often supports large numbers of waterbirds. However, seasonal and diurnal use of the site has received little attention to date.

The pond was used as a non-breeding site by large numbers of Straw-necked Ibises and also by more variable numbers of Australian White Ibises, Pied Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, Australian Pelicans, Silver Gulls, Eurasian Coots and Hoary-headed Grebes.

Straw-necked Ibises, Australian White Ibises, Pied Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, Silver Gulls and Australian Pelicans demonstrated crepuscular peaks of abundance. None of these species feed regularly at Pond Nine. In contrast, species that fed at or near Pond Nine, such as Eurasian Coot, Hoary-headed Grebe and consistent numbers of Black-winged Stilts were observed throughout the day.