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Niche Separation in Three Species of Waterbirds

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This study examines niche separation in three species of water birds, Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*, Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* and Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* and was carried out on Sullivan's Creek in the Australian National University, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Behavioural observations were carried out over two days; twelve hours from 06:00 to 18:00 hours on both days. Subsequent measurements of water depth, vegetation and other environmental and behavioural aspects in regard to feeding and breeding were noted and are presented in this report.

All three species under study had different living requirements within the study area. Moorhens fed in shallow water; coot, primarily a diving species, feed in deeper water whilst swamphens are a grazing species.

Breeding requirements for both swamphens and moorhens are discussed and future development and changes in species composition in the creek are considered.