

Why Save Wetlands?

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- Wetlands were once abundant in WA
- In 1829 nearly 50% of the Swan Coastal Plain was covered by wetlands
- The Swan Coastal Plain is a biodiversity hotspot and wetlands are amongst the most diverse and productive of biological systems
- There are many different types of wetlands

North Lake



Seasonal Wetland



Dampland - Jandakot



- The early European settlers did not appreciate the wetlands
- They set about clearing, draining and filling them
- A few of them were beautified and turned into European style parks

Lake Monger in 1914



- The first significant public protest against wetland destruction occurred in 1964
- Although it failed, it became a symbol of public concern about the degradation of our environment

Bessie Rischbieth at Mounts Bay

21 April 1964



- Other protests followed as wetland destruction continued

Farrington Road Blockade September 1984



Destruction of Watts Road Lake

September 1985



Roe Highway Protest January 2017



Why are so many people concerned
about wetlands?

Values of Wetlands

- **Environmental:** biodiversity, habitat, wildlife migration, carbon sinks
- **Social:** recreation, research, education
- **Cultural:** heritage, sense of place, aesthetic, spiritual
- **Economic:** summer pasture, water supplies, tourism, fisheries, landscape enhancement, social amenity, UHI reduction

Sunrise at North Lake



School Group at Bibra Lake



The State of Our Wetlands

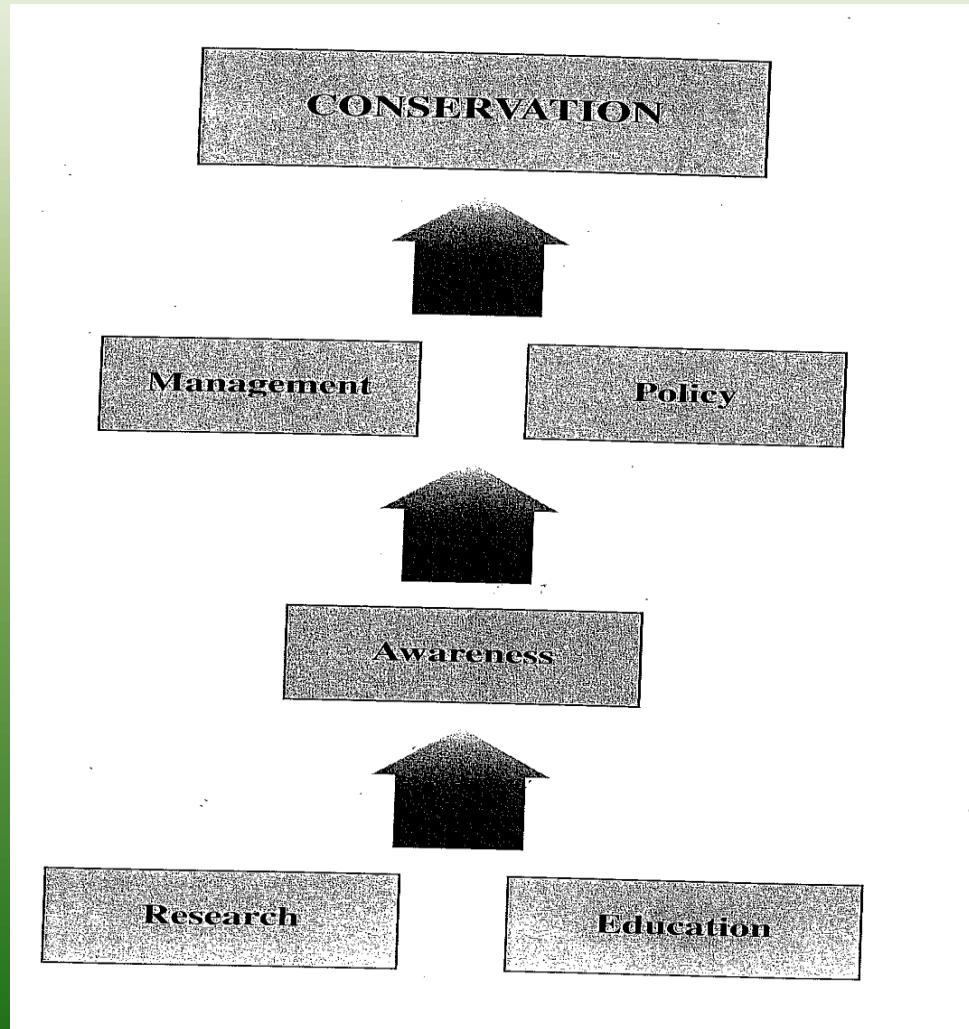
- Wetland vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain is still being lost or degraded at a rate equivalent to two football ovals (4ha) per day
- About 6% of wetlands of high conservation value on the Swan Coastal Plain were lost or degraded between 1994 and 2004
- 26% of important South West wetlands are degrading
- 70%-80% of the original wetlands on the SCP have been cleared, drained or filled since European settlement

(Source: WA State of the Environment Report 2007, section 4.3)

Threats to Wetlands

- Climate Change – acidification, weed invasion
- Urban Development – loss of buffers
- Land Clearing – salinity, drainage
- Pollution – nutrient runoff, road spills
- Groundwater extraction – public and private
- Fires
- Weeds - typha
- Feral animals – foxes, cats

The process of conservation



What Have We Achieved?

- Ramsar, JAMBA, CAMBA and ROKAMBA
- Swan Coastal Plain Lakes EPP (1992) (repealed 2015)
- Ban on recreational duck shooting (1992)
- Regional Parks system (1997)
- Ramsar listings : 9 (1990) + 3 (2000)
- State Wetlands Conservation Policy (1997)
- Regional Parks legislation (2016)
- Wetland Education Centres – Herdsman, Cockburn, Rockingham, Canning River
- Increased public awareness and restoration work

Unfinished Business

- More Ramsar Nominations – at least 40 more
- Expansion of the Regional Parks System to Peel, Vasse-Wonnerup, Lower Serpentine, Gngangara and South Bunbury (perhaps via the GGP)
- Wetland Buffer Guidelines (draft 2006)
- Wetland Banking for offsets (proposed 2001)
- Reinstatement of the Swan Coastal Plain Lakes EPP
- Updates of existing policies especially the Wetlands Conservation Policy for WA
- Increased funding for wetlands research and monitoring and adaptation to climate change
- Funding for restoration projects (discontinued in 2013)

