



DISCOVER WALKA!
WHERE ANIMALS WALK, SWIM AND FLY

FACT SHEET

WHY IS PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT IMPORTANT?

Walka Water Works has one of the largest wetlands in the area.

The uneven shape of the shoreline is special as inlets support vegetation which give wildlife a variety of places to forage, find shelter and breed.

Vegetation, wetland and fauna are not just pretty things to look at. Each develops in ways that help support the great diversity of life on Earth. Sometimes environments are altered by humans, such as at Walka.

As Maitland suburbs have grown, Walka has remained protected and the environment here is a little like an island providing a stepping stone for animals and plants. This is becoming more important as more and more people move to live in the region.

WHEN THINGS CHANGED

The massive change to the lagoon when it was converted to a reservoir for the Water Works meant that it has a depth of 7.m at its centre making it an excellent home for birds that dive deeply to feed.

The water level of the reservoir changes by about one metre depending on rainfall and the amount of rain which flows in from surrounding land. Sometimes this exposes mud on the shoreline and birds like the Black Fronted Dotteral will forage for delicious mud invertebrates.



The Black Fronted Dotteral

SPECIAL AND RARE

Walka is one of only three places in the Hunter where you can find three very special birds – the Great Crested Grebe, the Hoary Headed Grebe and the Musk Duck.

Other very rare birds who have been seen at Walka are the Australasian Bittern, Black Bittern, Blue-billed Duck and the Freckled Duck.

WHERE DOES BIRD INFORMATION COME FROM?

The Walka Ecology Project and Walka Bird App includes lots of detail about different types of birds at Walka – which birds, how many, how often they are seen. This information needs to be collected and it takes a great deal of time. It took a team of three observers 110 months to complete a bird survey at Walka!

ANYTHING CREEPY IN THE WATER?

These tiny little creatures might look a bit creep, but they are important food for some birds and live in the lake at Walka.



*Calenoid copepods (on the left) can be used to find out about the health of the habitats they live in. The female copepod on the right is carrying a double bundle of eggs. (Reproduced with permission from *The Waterbug Book*, by John Gooderham and Edward Tsyrlin. Published by CSIRO Publishing 2002.)*