



## Society of Wetlands Scientists Oceania Chapter

### April 2020 Newsletter

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#### Special General Meeting (SGM)

On Monday 4 May we will be holding a SGM to elect a new SWS-O President. Phil Papas has been acting President since Sam Capon stepped down, and Phil has been nominated to fill the position. You are welcome to join the teleconference at 1pm AEDT (please email for phone-in details) or cast your vote via email ([jayne.hanford@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jayne.hanford@sydney.edu.au)) any time before this date.

#### SGM Special Resolution

Agenda: appointment of Phil Papas as President of the SWS-O Executive Committee.

Background: Vice-president Phil Papas has been acting President since Sam Capon resigned. If Phil is elected to President role another meeting to appoint a new VP will be held at a later date.

Voting: Yes/No

#### New Zealand Representative

We're very happy to share that Philippe Gerbeaux has joined the executive committee as representative for New Zealand. Welcome Philippe!

#### Upcoming wetlands webinar:

Sydney Olympic Park and SWS-O will be hosting the next wetlands webinar on 30 April at 2:00PM AEST. Previous webinars have covered topics such as mangrove response to sea level rise, and the role of the Ramsar Convention in wetland conservation. To register, visit:

<https://www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/education/professional-development>

#### Wetland Conferences

Given the spread of COVID-19 the **Quebec RE<sup>3</sup> Conference** has been postponed to 19-24 June 2021. More details to come. <http://www.re3-quebec2020.org>

The **11<sup>th</sup> INTECOL International Wetlands Conference** to be held in Christchurch is also postponed. A new date in 2021 will be announced on the conference website soon. Abstract submission has also re-opened if you missed the previous deadline. See <http://clpinz.org.nz/intecol20>

#### Notes from the field

The Oceania chapter covers a very large region with an amazing diversity of wetlands and wetland projects. To capture this diversity, we'd like to showcase a wetland project or two from around our region in each newsletter. If you have an interesting project on the go or just a great wetland experience that would make others smile, please share it with us!

**Using the Environmental Water Reserve to support wetland biodiversity and adaptive management of wetlands in Victoria, South-East Australia  
– Phil Papas and Jacqui Brooks**

Many wetlands in south-east Australia have severely altered water regimes, mostly because of waterway regulation and more recently, a drying climate. Many seasonal wetlands – those that typically wet and dry annually – have undergone prolonged periods of permanent inundation from irrigation inflows, whilst others have experienced significant drying, filling rarely and for shorter durations. In Victoria, south-east Australia, legislated 'environmental entitlements', which form part of the 'Environmental Water Reserve' have provided a relatively recent management tool to reinstate more natural water regimes to achieve improved biodiversity outcomes. To assess the effectiveness of this approach, in 2017 the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning initiated "WetMAP - the Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program for environmental flows".

This program has monitored frogs, birds, fish and wetland vegetation communities and their responses to environmental water events in over 60 wetlands across several bioregions. Targeted evaluation questions were developed, and an experimental design was tailored for the specific biota and questions. These collectively assess the effectiveness of delivering environmental water for achieving target ecological outcomes in watered wetlands. To date, our results indicate that environmental water events have supported the growth and condition of wetland plants and ecological processes such as migration/immigration, breeding and recruitment. An in-depth analysis and evaluation of monitoring questions is underway, and this will be completed by September 2020.

WetMAP is part of an adaptive management framework for water management. The close and regular liaison with wetland managers and practitioners, regarding findings, has helped identify priority watering locations and inform improvements to water regimes to support wetland biodiversity.

For more information on the Program and outputs, including methods and results visit

<https://www.ari.vic.gov.au/research/wetlands-and-floodplains/assessing-wetland-response-to-water-for-the-environment>



Frank Amtstaetter checks a fyke net in Margooya Lagoon on the Murray River near Robinvale, to provide data of fish movement. Photo: Gabriel Cornell.



Dylan Osler assesses herbaceous wetland vegetation at a wetland on the Vinifera floodplain, near Vinifera, following draw-down of an environmental water event. Photo: Phil Papas.

### **Bring a friend**

Do you have a friend with a watery-bent? Do you have colleagues in the wetlands space? Please share this newsletter with them! We'd love to bring more people together who are working, studying or just interested in the wonderful world of wetlands.

If they'd like to know more about the benefits of being an SWS member, visit [www.sws.org](http://www.sws.org)

**Questions? Comments? Reply to this email, we'd love to hear from you!**