A place to preserve

This 18 hectare wetland fills initially with run off from the Belmont Escarpment, a limestone ridge which was once the eastern shoreline of an ancient sea. It is topped up and cleansed by floodwaters from the Barwon.

Jerringot is a Waduwurrung word meaning ‘water all around” or “a place of billabongs’. It was a camping ground and meeting place of local Waduwurrung tribes, as the Belmont Escarpment sheltered the Common area from the cold westerly winds.

There was abundant food available, including crustaceans such as yabbies and crabs, many varieties of eggs, black fish and eels, birds, fungi, leafy vegetables such as bracken shoots, sow thistles, lignum buds, root vegetables such as yam daisies (Murnong), lily bulbs, water ribbons, seeds and grains of wattles and grasses, possum and wallaby meat, lizards and snakes, plus shellfish such as cockles, mussels, oysters and limpets.

Large areas of wetland and floodplain have been drained, cleared and modified to a point where many species which rely on them are now endangered. Wetlands are living filters which help purify water and support wildlife which help control insect pests.

Growling Grass Frog **Photo: Trevor Pescott**

Wetlands are complex ecosystems. The plants are adapted to constant changes in surface water, soil type, water table and the weather. The animals are reliant on the plants for food and shelter. Careful management is required to maintain this diversity and complexity. Run-off water can pollute the wetland with various contaminants that harm the microscopic invertebrates, animal life, plants and birds.

Jerringot is a wetland that requires regular flooding and dry periods to allow the ecosystem to function.

Rakali (Water Rat) **Photo: Trevor Pescott**

A place for… ….special plants

Before European settlement, Jerringot would have been an open grassy Red Gum woodland. Tangled Lignum and some aquatic plants such as reeds and rushes, remain today from the original vegetation. There are numerous species of plants which are considered regionally significant.

A summer destination for Latham’s Snipe

One of the most important birds of this wetland is Latham's Snipe. The snipe breed in Japan’s northern summer and then fly 9000 km to south eastern Australia, arriving in early spring and staying till late summer. Jerringot is one of Victoria's most important sites for the Latham's Snipe. Degradation of habitat and other factors across the international range has led to a marked decline in this species and any wetland that supports over 18 Latham’s Snipe is considered Nationally significant. Jerringot’s snipe population is surveyed three times per year. The Reserve regularly supports 40-50 Latham’s Snipe. In years gone by up to 1000 snipe were known to use this wetland.

These birds feed with their long beaks by probing the grass covered mudflats with a ‘sewing machine action’ in and around shallow swamps, searching for seeds, worms and larvae of aquatic insects.

The adjacent roughs and water hazards of the golf course also provide the ideal habitat.

Latham’s Snipe **Photo: David Tytherleigh**

Spotless Crake Photo: David Tytherleigh

A place for breeding crakes

There are many bird species that breed here—a very high number for a suburban parkland.

Crakes and rails are shy secretive birds. More often seen when the water level is low, they use the exposed mud banks, and edges of the reed beds. Spotless Crakes have been seen with young in recent years and Baillon's Crake has been recorded as breeding here. Buff-banded Rails dash across the bird hide pathway regularly and emerge to feed in the wet grass.

AustralianSpotted Crake
Photo: David Tytherleigh

Waterbirds…

…a place to live

Many Australasian (Purple) Swamphens are resident here, seen walking through the water ribbons searching for food of seeds, plants, frogs, and eggs of other birds.

Australasian Grebes, Eurasian Coots, and Dusky Moorhens all breed here. In spring, the Chestnut Teal can be seen with large families of fluffy ducklings.

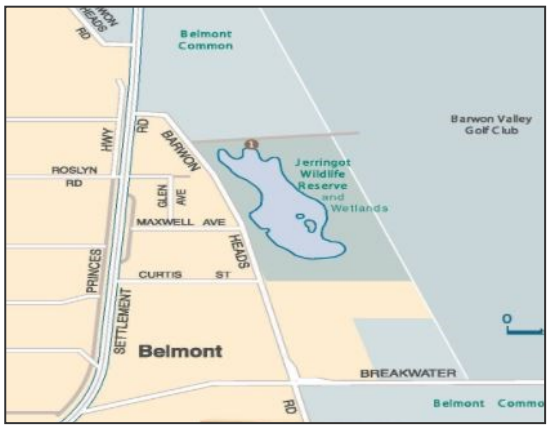
Spoonbills, egrets, herons and Pied Stilts visit Jerringot throughout the year to feed and rest. Large stately white spoonbills are seen feeding voraciously with side-to-side sweeping movements while egrets and herons freeze perfectly still waiting to spear a frog or fish. The smaller Pied Stilts flourish in the shallows calling to each other with a 'yapping dog' call. Black Swans breed here every year with grey cygnets being raised and Pelicans use the nest boxes as perches.

Visit the Jerringot Wildlife Reserve!

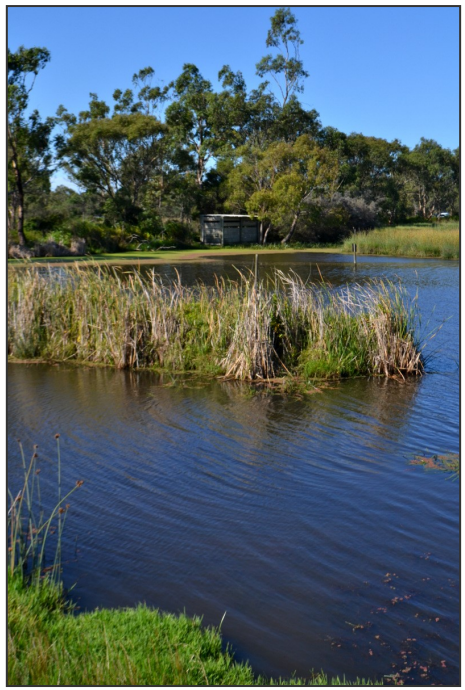
Enjoy a stroll around the wetland or simply peer through the bird hide and take in the magic surroundings of Jerringot and its inhabitants.

Getting there

From Princes Hwy exit right onto Barwon Heads Rd before turning immediately left onto the road leading to the Barwon Valley Golf Club. Parking is available near the bird hide.



JERRINGOT WILDLIFE RESERVE



A Special Place

Geelong Field Naturalists Club