

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.**

**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, 17 February 2022

Zoom meeting at 19:30

**1. Welcome**

President Esther Gallant welcomed about 35 attendees to the meeting, with a special welcome to participating life members and guests. She paid respects to the traditional custodians of the land we meet on and their elders past, present and future.

**2. Announcements**

Esther reminded everyone that the issue of feral horses in Kosciuszko NP is still ongoing. She then handed over to Rosemary Hollow to introduce the evening's speaker.

**3. Presentation**

**Alison Russell-French, Chair of the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust**

The theme of Alison's talk was:

***Why the Jerrabomberra Wetlands are important to Latham's Snipe***

The Woodlands and Wetlands Trust manages Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary and Jerrabomberra Wetlands to ensure rich and diverse environments for current and future generations. The Trust is a joint initiative of the ACT Government, Australian National University, sponsors, and the greater Canberra community. Together the sanctuary and nature reserve protect over 1800 hectares of the ACT's most significant landscapes. These sites support the Territory's most diverse bird habitats and the nation's most important protected area of Yellow Box woodland, which is listed nationally as a critically endangered ecological community. They are protected as Public Land Nature Reserves under the Territory Plan, yet there is still much work to do to understand, rebuild, and showcase their biodiversity and natural and cultural values.

Alison Russell-French is also the Chair of the Australasian Wader Studies Group and she began her talk by informing the audience that Latham's Snipe is a water bird that uses international flyways for its yearly migration from northern hemisphere breeding areas to the southern hemisphere to escape the harsh northern winter and return. These flyways are the Central Pacific, East Asian-Australasian and Central Asian flyways. Migrating birds often use many countries within the flyways on their migration path, and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands are an important stopover site.

There are more than 30 years of data about shorebird movements, and from more than 700 sites. Data collected comes from reports of leg flags and bands, as well as from satellite tracking that started in 2007. The aim is to collect information on bird movement, abundance and distribution at non-breeding and staging sites. Many populations of shorebirds are in decline, 13 are listed as threatened, but 45 per cent of the world human population live in the flyways. Mechanisms to address threats to flyways in Australia are the EPBC Act 1999; the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Shorebirds; Bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements; and the East Asia-Australia Flyway partnership.

Latham's Snipe breed in Japan and far-east Russia, they migrate to Australia in July-October and return in March-May. The Jerrabomberra Latham's Snipe project to understand their ecology and migration started in south-west Victoria in 2014-2015. There are now > 300 survey sites in all eastern states and territories. Jerrabomberra Wetlands, West Belconnen and Horse Park Drive Wetlands are the three prime ACT sites from which the birds are tracked. Two birds from here have provided regular tracking records. Currently PhD student Lori Gould from ANU has a 3-year scholarship to study movement and migration of Latham's Snipe around Jerrabomberra with help from a large volunteer support group for monitoring and observing Latham's Snipe in the ACT.

After a short question and answer session the meeting closed at about 20:15.

*Next general meeting: Thursday, 17 March 2022 at 19:30.*

Chair: ..... Date: .....