

3. LakeHamilton

Location: This impoundment on the Grange Burn in Hamilton is adjacent to the Hamilton-Dunkeld railway line just east of the town. From the town centre, drive northeast along Gray St to access the west side, or along the Glenelg Highway (Ballarat Rd) and turning left at Riley St (to park at the spillway), or Rippon Rd to access the south side swimming beach and playground area. A walking/cycling path 4.2 km in length runs through the parkland surrounding the Lake. The lake was created in the 1970s for recreational (swimming, fishing, rowing and speed boats) and scenic purposes.

Landform and geology: The lake is shallow and formed on the Grange Burn floodplain. The landscape is basaltic plains. The eastern end with the large island is pictured below (DL).

Flora: Little original native vegetation can be seen on the bank of this lake but there has been considerable planting of trees native to the area. The aquatic vegetation has regenerated and is representative of other district wetlands, the major large species being Bulrush, Common Reed and Water Ribbons. This fringing vegetation provides habitat for waterbirds, frogs, fish, Platypus and Water Rats.

Fauna: Breeding resident water birds include Musk Duck (pictured below, DL), Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot and Pacific Black Duck. Blue-billed Duck are occasional visitors. Spotted, Spotless and Baillon's Crakes, Buff-banded and Lewin's Rails may be seen in the summer months, especially between the beach and the footbridge at the eastern end of the lake.

An Australian Little Bittern was heard in the reeds near the island early in 2009. Spoonbills, herons and egrets may occur in the reed beds all around the lake along with Australian Reed-warblers and Little Grassbirds. The common honeyeaters are White-plumed, New Holland and Red Wattlebirds. The lake has permanent water and may serve as an important refuge for water birds during droughts when large numbers of birds may be present.

The lake is occasionally drained in an effort to control water-plant growth. That event is followed by a spectacular influx of wading birds to exploit the mudflats. Water Rats may be seen cruising along the edge of the reeds and Platypus are sometimes seen here.



5. Grange Burn Wetlands

Location: The wetlands, consisting of two stormwater retarding ponds and a remnant freshwater meadow, are located on the corner of Mt Baimbridge Road and Digby Road. A short walking track runs around the south pond (pictured right, DL), then uphill beside the road to the north pond.

History: The Grange Burn Wetland was constructed in 2004-5 to treat Hamilton's storm water before it flowed into the Grange Burn. Work on the two treatment ponds was completed by mid-2005 with indigenous flora planted around the margins. Good regeneration of indigenous species occurred, such as: Marsh Club-rush, River Club-rush, Water Ribbons, Mud Dock and Large Bindweed.

Grazing of stock in the remnant meadow wetland between the two treatment ponds ceased in 2008. There has been some natural regeneration in this area and it is hoped that the land managers will exclude stock permanently, fill in the drains and allow the area to flood. This would provide an invaluable avian refuge/breeding area as well as habitat for such species as the near-threatened Latham's Snipe listed by JAMBA (Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement) and the endangered Australasian Bittern. It would also help to protect the rare Diminutive Buttercup that grows there.

Fauna: In March 2006, HFNC commenced monthly bird surveys at the wetland. Eighty-nine species of birds have been recorded here. Common water birds seen are swans, moorhens, swamphens, coots, lapwings, ducks, cormorants, spoonbills, herons and egrets. The ponds are deep and attract diving species such as Musk



Duck, Hardhead, Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebes. Migrants such as Latham's Snipe (pictured right, RB), Baillon's Crake and bronze-cuckoos may be seen in the summer months (see **Table 2**, pp. 69-70).

Breeding has also been observed: Silver Gull in 2005; Grey Teal and Purple Swamphen in 2006; Australasian Shoveler, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and Dusky Moorhen in 2007; Black Swan in 2006 and 2008 and Musk Duck in 2009. A Black-fronted Dotterel nesting attempt failed in November 2006; Australasian Grebe nest-building late in 2006 was later abandoned; and a Eurasian Coot was seen on nest in December 2007.

Water rats live in the wetland, and platypus live in the adjacent Grange Burn.

