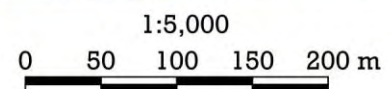


## Site 65a. Bankside Wetlands

Waterbodies and their banks in a residential redevelopment site, recently a golf course.

Summary of significant features:

- Regionally significant: good-quality habitat for the Blue-billed Duck, a species listed as Vulnerable under Victorian law and seen in the site;
- Regionally significant: apparently good-quality habitat for the Growling Grass Frog, which was recorded in 2012 further north within the golf course (as it then was);
- Locally significant: habitat of locally-threatened species of birds and plants.



### Note

This site is not expected to remain significant once its imminent redevelopment is complete. It is documented here for the sake of chronicling this aspect of the trajectory of biodiversity in Knox.

## Boundaries

This site is outlined with mid-blue dashes above, circumscribing four waterbodies, their banks and some interconnecting land. Cadastral boundaries have been followed around part of the western waterbody.

**Land use & tenure:** Residential development site.

## Site description

This 5.3-hectare site was part of the Kingston Links Golf Course until 2018, when it became part of the Bankside residential development. At the time of writing (March 2025), development activity has not begun within the site delineated here.

The four waterbodies within the site are not natural wetlands; they were water traps and reservoirs for the golf course. Nevertheless, their bottoms and margins have become dominated by indigenous plants that have arrived by wind or on waterbirds, and they provide good habitat for a range of native fauna. The waterbodies' bottoms have largely become covered with the indigenous aquatic plant, Eel Grass (*Vallisneria australis*), which provides a strong base for the aquatic food chain and good habitat for the vulnerable Blue-billed Duck. The water surface is seasonally covered with indigenous duckweed and azolla (a genus of floating fern allies). The margins of the waterbodies are dominated by indigenous rushes, reeds and sedges, particularly Broom Rush (*Juncus sarophorus*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acuta*).

Given that the Growling Grass Frog (a species listed as Vulnerable under federal legislation) was detected beside Corhanwarrabul Creek within the Bankside development site in 2012, there is a real chance that the species is also present within the wetlands in Site 65a.

## Relationship to other land

The western waterbody is 380 m southeast of the Corhanwarrabul Creek habitat corridor – part of Site 65. Waterbirds that use the habitat in either of these sites are very likely to also use habitat in the other, as well as in Site 58 on the western side of EastLink and Site 74 on the floodplain immediately south of Wellington Rd. The same can be said about flying insects with aquatic larvae (e.g. dragonflies) and birds that feed on them (e.g. Fairy Martins and swallows).

**Bioregion:** Gippsland Plain

## Plant species

The following indigenous plant species were recorded in September 2024. (*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* is also present and is sometimes mistaken for an indigenous species.) Additional species would be found in other seasons. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of dying out in Knox as follows: 'E'=Endangered; 'V'=Vulnerable; and 'N'=Near threatened.

Risk	Wild indigenous species	Risk	Wild indigenous species
V	<i>Azolla pinnata</i> , Ferny Azolla		<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i> , Common Blown-grass
N	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i> , Water Plantain		<i>Lemna disperma</i> , Common Duckweed
V	<i>Alternanthera denticulata</i> , Lesser Joyweed	E	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> , Swamp Paperbark
E	<i>Carex fascicularis</i> , Tassel Sedge		<i>Persicaria decipiens</i> , Slender Knotweed
V	<i>Crassula helmsii</i> , Swamp Crassula	E	<i>Phragmites australis</i> , Common Reed
V	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i> , Common Spike-rush		<i>Schoenus apogon</i> , Common Bog-rush
	<i>Epilobium hirtigerum</i> , Hairy Willow-herb		<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i> , Cotton Fireweed
E	<i>Euchiton ?involucratus</i> , Common Cudweed		<i>Typha domingensis</i> , Cumbungi
	<i>Juncus amabilis</i> , Hollow Rush		<i>Typha orientalis</i> , Cumbungi
	<i>Juncus pallidus</i> , Pale Rush		<i>Vallisneria australis</i> , Eel Grass
	<i>Juncus sarophorus</i> , Broom Rush		

## Fauna of special significance

### Listed as Vulnerable under Victorian law

Blue-billed Duck: Recorded in 2012 during the only thorough fauna survey conducted in the site. The abundance of Eel Grass represents good foraging habitat for the species and the presence of extensive beds of cumbungi represents good nesting habitat. While the site awaits redevelopment, its seclusion is an additional positive factor for the Blue-billed Duck, including for its breeding.

### Uncommon in metro Melbourne

Black-fronted Dotterel, Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola were recorded in the abovementioned fauna survey.

## Fauna habitat features

The waterbodies provide good habitat for frogs, waterbirds, snakes and aquatic invertebrates.

## Significance ratings

The following is an assessment of the site's biological significance against the Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action's standard criteria (Amos 2004).

### *Endangered Vegetation Types*

While wetlands are an endangered habitat type, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action treats artificial wetlands as not being significant, even if they are naturally vegetated and provide similar habitat to a natural wetland, as in this case.

### *Threatened Plants*

All the locally-threatened plant species listed above other than *Carex fascicularis* have viable populations (if not for impending redevelopment), thereby meeting criterion 3.1.5 for **Local** significance.

### *Threatened Fauna*

The site was known to provide habitat for the Blue-billed Duck in 2012 and it is expected to still do so. As the species is listed as Vulnerable under Victorian law and it also occurs interstate, its habitat in the site is of **Regional** significance under criterion 3.1.1.

The Growling Grass Frog is listed as Vulnerable under state and federal legislation. At least one individual was observed at the northern end of the former golf course in 2012 and the species is known to occur in artificial wetlands similar to the ones in Site 65a, e.g. at Braeside Park. These characteristics meet the description in criterion 3.1.3, 'Apparently high-quality habitat'... 'though taxon has not been recorded from the site which is'...'adjacent to or in proximity to known habitat of vulnerable taxon'. **Regional** significance applies to this description.

The three bird species mentioned above in the section headed 'Uncommon in metro Melbourne' are likely to have viable populations in the site and be threatened in the local area. Criterion 3.1.5 treats the habitat of such species as **Locally** significant.

## Threats

The site's biological significance is expected to be completely lost during the imminent residential development.

## Strategic planning

The author understands that planning approvals already given for the Bankside development make any planning protection for biodiversity pointless.

## Information sources used in this assessment

- A master plan drawing for the Bankside redevelopment;
- A botanical survey 10th September 2024;
- Flora and fauna observations stored in the Atlas of Living Australia;
- Aerial and satellite imagery from between 1946 and 2025;
- The Victorian Government's 'NatureKit' website;

- Maps of geology, topography and strategic planning information produced by agencies of the Victorian Government.