

We may lose a tourist attraction

Hi

Just wanted to let you know my concerns re-the proposed development in the Tallawarra ash pond area. our birding group have walked in this area for many years and it is the only place in the illawarra region where it is possible to view several species of rare ducks quite easily and regularly. our group is very concerned that if the lakeside precinct of the proposed development goes ahead a great potential tourist attraction may be lost to the area forever.

our sister city - newcastle has three wetland areas - hexham swamp, koorangang wetlands and shortland wetland centre all of these attract tourists to the area. wollongong stands to lose birding tourism and the potential for education for school groups etc if this area sees a housing development built in close proximity.

if this area was retained for tourism - wollongong wetland centre or wollongong waterbird refuge sound great to us- it would attract a variety of people and potentially make some money - shortland charge an entry fee.

at the moment this area is well protected as you require a key and to do an induction to enter the site but if development goes ahead many of the birds would not tolerate the continued disturbance - we have the only ever breeding of the blue-billed duck in the region recorded here for the first time in 2014 and again early in 2015. this duck is rare in nsw.

we have taken visiting groups of birders to this site many times in the past. In the last couple of years groups from canberra, birding nsw and several overseas visitors have been taken here and we often field enquiries from birders who have seen sightings posted online and want to visit. There have been many rare birds seen here and this year little bittern, australasian bittern, glossy ibis and emerald doves have been recorded.

we will write again to the council and may try to approach them at an upcoming council meeting re this issue. Someone mentioned it might be good to let you know.

Have a great week

michelle r