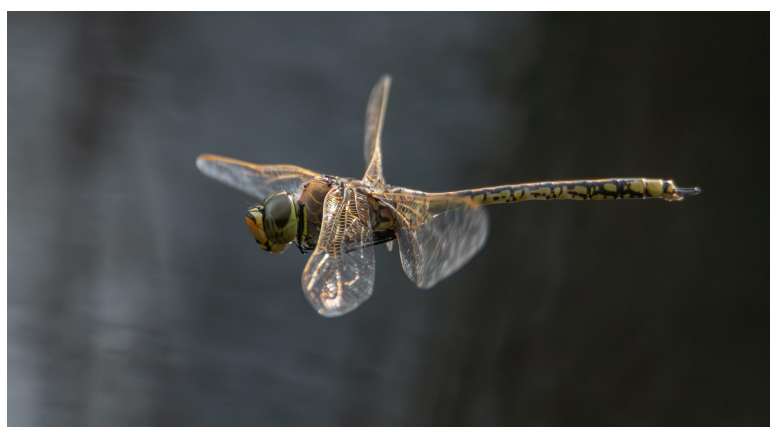
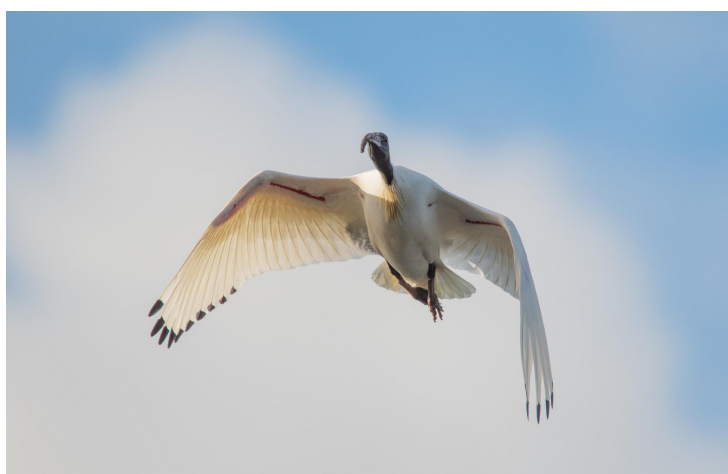


FRIENDS OF PERRY LAKES NEWSLETTER

January 2025



The beauty of Perry Lakes fauna stunningly captured by Ian Stewart

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Looking forward to the next year.

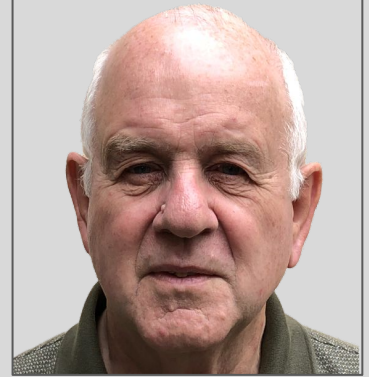
Following a series of successful and enjoyable activities in 2024, the Management Committee is looking forward to the next year and planning to focus on several specific areas of activity. We will continue our contributions to improving the natural environment in Perry Lakes Reserve through the weeding and planting programs that are supported by the Town of Cambridge (ToC) and expertly supervised by Tony Harding and Nolan Penning. We will also continue our efforts to recruit new members of Friends of Perry Lakes (FoPL) so that we have a larger pool of people to support our activities. If you have family members or friends who cherish Perry Lakes Reserve and want to protect and enhance this very special asset, please encourage them to become involved in our activities and take up membership.

In addition, we plan to widen opportunities for members to contribute to our activities by developing programs for monitoring lake water quality and for protecting and monitoring wildlife, which will hopefully include citizen science projects. Suboptimal amounts and quality of water in the lakes is currently a major concern for FoPL members, which the Committee is addressing with ToC under the leadership of Don McFarlane and Rod Banyard. We have also developed a protocol for improving the welfare of oblong (snake-necked) turtles in the Reserve, which will be trialled by FoPL members and ToC staff over the next year or two. In addition, several Committee members are currently developing a program to undertake formal bird surveillance in the Reserve, which we hope will be one means of assessing the effects of increasing native vegetation and enhancing water quantity in the lakes.

Finally, we are planning to establish a formal process for meeting with ToC Council members and staff of the Parks and Natural Environment section to report on issues relevant to Perry Lakes and the Reserve that are important to FoPL members and the local community, as well as to contribute to quality improvement activities where appropriate.

Please contact me if you believe that there are other issues that the Committee should be considering.

Martyn French - chair@friendsofperrylakes.org



Martyn French
Chair

STRATEGIC PLAN

As we enter our fourth year, we will continue benchmarking our performance working towards our 2030 Vision statement. To find out more, please visit our website [here](#).

GET IN TOUCH

As we build our social media presence we are asking for your help. If you haven't done so, please follow or join on all our sites and share posts when we make them. As always your questions and comments on any post are welcome.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A TROVE OF INFORMATION

Our website is a valuable resource for information on events, membership, our vision, flora and fauna around the lakes as well as educational videos.

www.friendsofperrylakes.org



By Dr Don McFarlane

MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICER



The lakes are in poor condition at the end of 2024. Levels are 90cm lower than at the same time last year. The large outbreak of *Azolla pinnata* (water fern) in West Lake has prevented sunlight from reaching algae and its associated macroinvertebrates which support bird life and turtles. *Azolla* turns red on exposure to sunlight and can double in size every week under the right conditions. It has an association with a cyanobacteria which fixes nitrogen.

Nitrogen and another nutrient, phosphorus has been added with the diverted water from the Herdsman Main Drain. The extra nutrients may be the cause of the large growth of *Azolla*, *Typha orientalis* (bulrush) and *Machaerina articulata* (jointed rush). The area of open water has decreased in both lakes in the latter half of 2024 and especially since the levels have dropped. These are the areas most used by waterbirds (although swamp hens like jointed rush).

In addition, carp have been seen in West Lake and they may have reached East Lake when the connecting pipe flowed water for four months in 2023. This would have also carried nutrients from West Lake. The carp may increase turbidity, further reducing light penetration and algal growth. They also mobilise nutrients stored in the sediments making nuisance and toxic (cyanobacteria) algal growth worse.

Pumping of Herdsman Main Drain water ceased in recent weeks and during long periods in October and November. The issue pumping “may be related to the configuration of the pump's communication platform” according to the Town. A contractor was engaged by ToC and a temporary solution was initiated on 16 January to allow inflow. A permanent solution is being investigated.

In conjunction with the Town of Cambridge, the Friends of Perry Lakes will continue to monitor water conditions in 2025. We need a clear procedure for dealing with nutrient enrichment and feral fish in the lakes, as well as for periods when pumping fails to raise levels to desirable levels.

SUPPORT OUR WORK - BECOME A MEMBER

Our precious Perry Lakes is at risk, now more than ever and we need your help. As a volunteer group, we rely on annual memberships to fund our efforts in conserving Perry Lakes. By becoming a member, you will directly support that effort and enjoy other benefits such as access to free or subsidised educational events and social activities. Membership is from \$30.

2025 is our most important year yet, so please support us via [this link](#).

MESSAGE FROM THE WORKS COORDINATOR

After the break over the summer holiday period we plan to restart our monthly weeding session on 16th February 2025 from 8am and thereafter on the third Sunday of each month. We meet at the FoPL Shed (south of West Lake near the Kids Playground), go and sort out some weeds, review how the revegetation is progressing, then finish with a morning-tea social. All welcome (even if you can only get to the morning tea!).

Allied to the monthly weeding session a band of dedicated “Weed Warriors” has been tackling weeds (plus some mulching and watering) on a weekly basis during the last 3 months. The impact of this more frequent Volunteer get-together has been fantastic with weeds in re-vegetated areas now much better controlled.

Into 2025 it is planned, in conjunction with the Town of Cambridge, to develop an agreed Weed Management Plan for the Perry Lakes Reserve. This Plan is aimed at assessing the extent and status of weeds across the Reserve and to develop weed-control actions for both FoPL and ToC.

Planning for 2025 planting is already underway with an area on the west side of West Lake already being prepared – you may have seen, it's where ToC have delivered several piles of mulch. 5,000 plants (about 20% wetland and 80% dryland) are already ordered through the ToC with wetland plants to go in the ground April/May and dryland species around early June. Look out for updates on these planting sessions – there's lots of plants to go in and lots of fun & enjoyment to be had if you join in!



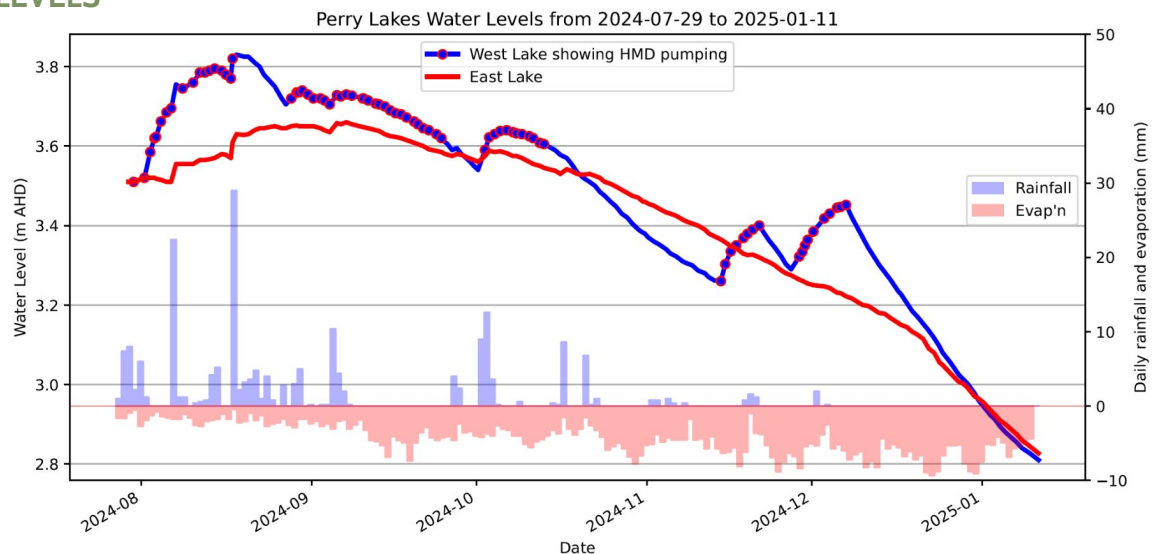
By Tony Harding



CAN'T MAKE SUNDAYS?

If you are not able to join us for the Sunday weeding sessions, there is a group that meets Tuesday mornings, the 'Weed Warriors'. This group is run via Whatsapp and starting time is typically 8am. After weeding, the group heads to Cup & Co. for a catchup. For more information contact Tony our works coordinator at works@friendsofperrylakes.org.

WATER LEVELS



The above graph, prepared by Rod Banyard, confirms what we see in the lakes - they are nearly dry. After FOPL and nearby residents contacted the Town of Cambridge with their concerns, ToC responded they were aware of the issue which may be related to “the configuration of the pump’s communication platform” and that a contractor has been engaged to rectify the situation as early as possible this year. We will actively monitor the situation until the issue is rectified.



END OF YEAR EVENT

Our end of year event for 2024 was well attended with more than 40 people joining the walk and talk around the lakes. Tony and Don conducted the walks providing an update on the work we have done to date and future plans.



After, all returned to the workshed for a sausage sizzle which was accompanied by the dulcet sounds of Ron and Wayne. Thanks to the support of our community, this event was free for members. Consider becoming a member.



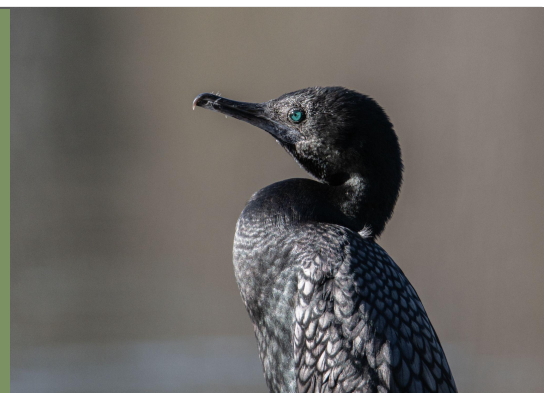
Perfect for any rugged outdoor activity, we have new stock of our high-quality and rather stylish work shirts, available in mens and womens sizes. Order via our website or the form on this [link](#).

Did you know there have been 83 species of birds recorded at Perry Lakes Reserve during surveys undertaken since 2000 and reported in Birdata (BirdLife Australia’s long-term database)? The area of survey includes the two lakes and adjoining parkland but not Bold Park, recreational or residential areas.

Our website contains information on many of these species as well as other fauna and flora in the area.

Find out more at:

<https://friendsofperrylakes.org/waterbirds>



A Little Black Cormorant at Perry Lakes. Photo: Ian Stewart