



East Ballina North Creek Wetland

A Valuable Wetland on Your Doorstep

East Ballina North Creek Wetland is a diverse and beautiful environment located in the heart of East Ballina, northern NSW. This 22 hectare parcel of Crown Land is nestled between North Creek, East Ballina residential development and the Ballina Golf course (see map below). The south eastern corner of the site borders a parcel of Council Reserve.



Map: East Ballina North Creek Wetland, located in the heart of East Ballina

WetlandCare Australia currently assists in the environmental management of East Ballina North Creek Wetland in conjunction with the Department of Lands.

This wetland area has significant environmental and cultural value. WetlandCare Australia will be carrying out works to both improve these values and promote them to the community during 2009, and into the future.



East Ballina North Creek Wetland on North Creek
(Photo: Kate Heyward)

Environmental Values

- **Healthy vegetation communities and flora** - the vegetation within this wetland ranges from mangrove swamps, saltmarsh, paperbark swamp forest and swamp oak forest to littoral rainforest and seagrass in the adjoining waters. Many of these are listed as endangered ecological communities.



Sarcocornia with Grey Mangrove Seedling (Photo: Adam Gosling)

- **Habitat for birds and other animals** - North Creek and the associated mudflats provide a rich food source particularly for migratory birds which visit the site, important bird habitat and a breeding ground for many species.



The Eastern Curlew (Numenius madagascariensis) feeds on the mud flats of North Creek Wetlands (Photo: Adam Gosling)

Cultural Values

- The wetlands have significant Aboriginal cultural value. The Bundjalung people are the traditional owners of the wetlands and lived on a seafood rich diet. The Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council bush regeneration team will be involved in the rehabilitation works at the wetland.

Recreational Values

- Aesthetic value – East Ballina North Creek Wetland is a beautiful natural environment, perfect for birdwatching.
- North Creek is a valuable local recreational fishing spot. The seagrass within North Creek provides breeding grounds for a number of important recreational and commercial fish species.



Brahminy Kite – a local resident of East Ballina North Creek Wetland (Photo: Adam Gosling)

Environmental Issues

East Ballina North Creek Wetland has a number of environmental issues which WetlandCare Australia plan to manage through strategic rehabilitation works. These issues include:

- **Weeds** – the wetlands have a variety of weeds, including garden escapees, especially adjoining the residential area (notably Ground Asparagus and Winter Senna). Weeds have an impact on the ecological health of the wetlands, smothering and outcompeting native vegetation.
- **Pollution, rubbish and dumping** – garden waste dumping, litter and stormwater pollution decrease the aesthetic value of East Ballina North Creek Wetland and can affect animals, plants and water quality.
- **Unmanaged access** – walking tracks throughout the wetland for access to North Creek. Tracks open up native vegetation and cause ground compacting. Soil and weed seeds can also be brought in on the soles of shoes.
- **Mosquitoes, snakes, tick and the risk of fire** – these are all valid concerns of the local residents who live close to these wetlands. Diligent management of the wetlands can help alleviate these risks.
- **Climate change** – most of East Ballina North Creek Wetland is at a low elevation and will be significantly impacted by sea level rise. WetlandCare Australia will be monitoring the threats and impacts of climate change on the wetland into the future.



WetlandCare Australia is proud to be assisting with the management of North Creek Wetlands (Photo: Adam Gosling)

What is WetlandCare Australia doing for North Creek Wetland?

During 2009 WetlandCare Australia will be enhancing the values of East Ballina North Creek Wetland by:

1. Writing a **Vegetation Management Plan** for the wetland – bringing together studies WetlandCare Australia have already conducted at the site, local knowledge and best management practice to plan how the wetlands will be managed into the future
2. Conducting **Rehabilitation Works** – WetlandCare Australia will be engaging the Jali workcrew to conduct weed control works and rubbish removal in accordance with the Vegetation Management Plan
3. Providing an **Education Program** for the local residents - **Starting in your Backyard** which will assist in raising the awareness of the community about the values of the neighbouring wetlands.



Join WetlandCare Australia in exploring North Creek Wetlands during 2009 (Photo: Adam Gosling)

How You Can Help

You can help WetlandCare Australia improve East Ballina North Creek Wetland. There are several things local residents can do:

- Be aware of the wetland rehabilitation works – WetlandCare Australia and the workcrews will be working to improve these beautiful wetlands into the future
- Be aware of your impact on the wetlands – compost your garden waste, think carefully about the plants you cultivate, the substances you use in your garden and keep pets restrained
- Participate – when you are invited to join **Starting in Your Backyard** come along to the workshop and learn more about the values of your local wetlands

For further information please contact:

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