

# 7. Horseshoe Lagoon Flora and Fauna Reserve



Horseshoe Lagoon is a large billabong adjacent to the Goulburn River running through the Trawool Valley. The Reserve includes both the lagoon and a large loop of the River. The lagoons, floodplain and levees of the river have large old Red Gums and a diversity of wildlife. The Reserve is at the south end of Greenslopes Road, Trawool. Traawool Walk-in Campsite is on grassy patches on the floodplain, and walking tracks follow levees along the river and billabongs.

*This reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People and the Goulburn River is an area of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#). We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.*

## Directions

Coming from Seymour, turn off the Goulburn Valley Highway into Greenslopes Road just before the Trawool Bridge over the Goulburn River. Greenslopes Road winds through river flats and slopes with many billabongs and large old redgums. The Reserve is at the south end of Greenslopes Road, 7.3 km from the Highway. The entry track ends in a carpark with short walking tracks into the camping area.

## Walking Tracks

The Reserve has short walking track from the carpark and camping area to the river. It has two longer tracks from the north end of the carpark:



**River Track (1.5 km one way):** this easy walk follows the higher ground and levees between the river and the lagoons. It passes through several gateways and ends at a gate near an orchard on private land.

**Lagoon Track (0.48 km off lagoon Track, one way):** a less distinct track branches from the river track 430m from the carpark (90m past the third gate) and runs along high ground on the inside of the loop of Horseshoe Lagoon.

	The road is narrow and winding and care is needed to avoid collisions with oncoming vehicles, livestock, deer, kangaroos and wombats. The road is closed during times of extreme fire danger.
	Greenslopes Road is through private property. Please stay on the road and do not walk across the private land.
	The track from Greenslopes Road into the Reserve may be impassable to vehicles especially in wet conditions. Vehicles are not permitted past the gate from the carpark.
	Greenslopes Road is unsuitable for caravans and can cause problems for local traffic.
	None of the tracks are designed for people of all-abilities but they are generally flat and sections may be accessible with assistance in dry conditions.
	Picnic tables are in the camp area.



The [Trawool walk-in camping area](#) is on the floodplains below the carpark. Check if bookings are required.



Toilet at the carpark.



Dogs are allowed on lead in this Reserve (they not allowed in other Parks Victoria reserves).

## Landform and Geology

Horseshoe Lagoon FFR is in the Trawool Valley where the Goulburn River has cut through the *Strathbogie Granites*. At Trawool Bridge, the Goulburn River, Goulburn Valley Highway and Greenslopes Road pass through the narrow exit from the Trawool Valley created by the hard aureole of rock around the granite. Greenslopes Road initially runs at the base of Cherry Tree Range which is also part of the aureole. The dark blocky rocks on the roadside are typical of hornfels. The track then runs across the river flats and low granite ridges, with the granites of the Strathbogie Ranges to the east and Tallarook Ranges to the west across the river.



The Goulburn River flows through the Reserve. Over millennia, the river has changed course and carried sediments to create the landscape we now see. Horseshoe Lagoon shows the confusing complexity of old river meanders and bilabongs within Trawool Valley. Old maps show that the river at Horseshoe Bend looped back on itself when the map was drawn by European surveyors. The river now cuts through this loop leaving another “horseshoe” lagoon upstream.

Flood sediments have created raised levees and mounds adjacent to the river and old river courses. Sediments have also built islands in the river, including one opposite the camping area with big flows on both sides.

This all demonstrates how rivers can change course – and will change in the future.

## Vegetation

The river flats and floodplains are dominated by Red Gums. Some are large with hollows but the Reserve also has many young trees particularly in copses around the lagoons. The understory includes Silver Wattles, Tree Violets, Ovens Wattle and scattered Burgan, and the ground cover includes Common Tussock Grass and Tall Sedge.





The higher levees and terraces were cleared for farming and is still grassland with scattered old trees and regenerating wattles. Tree Lucerne and Madeira Winter Cherry are among a wide range of introduced shrubs and ground cover typical of rich, disturbed river flats.

The shallow areas of the lagoons have dense patches of Giant Rush. Small floating plants like Ferny Azolla are in sheltered corners of the lagoons.

The granite slopes of the Strathbogie Ranges are visible from the Reserve. They are dominated by Burgan regrowth. Until the 1950s, these hills were cleared paddocks with scattered Burgan. By the 1960s, Burgan had spread across the hills and is now restricting regrowth of trees and understorey species.

Plant lists are in preparation.

## Wildlife



Horseshoe Lagoon supports a range of native fish (including Golden Perch, Silver Perch, Murray Cod, Trout Cod, Macquarie Perch, Freshwater Catfish), crayfish, turtles, Platypus and Rakali (Water Rats), frogs and reptiles. Aquatic vegetation, scour holes and woody debris within the channel provide high-quality habitat for adult and juvenile fish. River Red Gums shade the river. Leaves that fall from the trees provide carbon that supports riverine food webs, and dead trees that fall into the river provide a surface for water bugs and habitat for fish.

The old riverbank trees also provide roosts, shelter and food for mammals such as possums and gliders and possibly Koalas. Wombats, Grey Kangaroos, Black Wallabies and Sambar Deer find harbour in the forest. Many birds also use the great habitat provided by the mix of waterways, riverbanks and riverbank trees, making the Reserve a good place for bird watching especially when migrants come over the warmer months.

Many of the species living along the Goulburn River are endangered in Victoria and Australia. For this reason, protection of all riverine habitat in these reserves is important for their survival.

Species lists are in preparation.

## Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People and is part of the area of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#) that extends along the River. The rivers, swamps and woodlands would have been a rich place for the people living along the river for thousands of generations, and still is a special part of their world.

## History after colonisation

By 1843, most of the land was taken over by squatters then settlers. The Reserve has many open grassy areas and large old tree stumps showing how the land has changed from the old forests of the past. The force of the river ensures that the Reserve is constantly changing but still retains many of its essential natural features.

## Management

The Reserve is Crown land managed by Parks Victoria. The waterway is managed by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

The Goulburn River is a Heritage River under the Heritage River Act 1992, as recommended by the Land Conservation Council in 1992. The Act provides for the protection of environmental, Traditional Owner, recreation, cultural and economic values, and prescribes how the river is to be managed.

The Reserve is included in the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#) that recognises the special association Taungurung people have with the Goulburn River. The [Land Use Activity Agreement](#) provides the Taungurung people with a say in its use and management.

## Further information

Parks Victoria can be contacted on 13 1963 or go to <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/contact-us>.

Website for Horseshoe Lagoon Flora and Fauna is at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/horseshoe-lagoon-bushland-reserve>. The website contains only general information on visiting reserves but links to maps for the *Traawool walk-in camping area* at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/sites/trawool-walk-in-camping-area>

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au> Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>

Land Conservation Council <https://www.veac.vic.gov.au/digital-archive/investigation/melbourne-area-district-2-review>

Victorian Environmental Water Holder. <https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/rivers-and-wetlands/northern-region/goulburn-river>. Information on the values of the river and on environmental flows.

Goulburn Broken CMA Waterways Management.  
<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/our-region/waterway-floodplain-management/waterways>

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at  
<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>

## Acknowledgements

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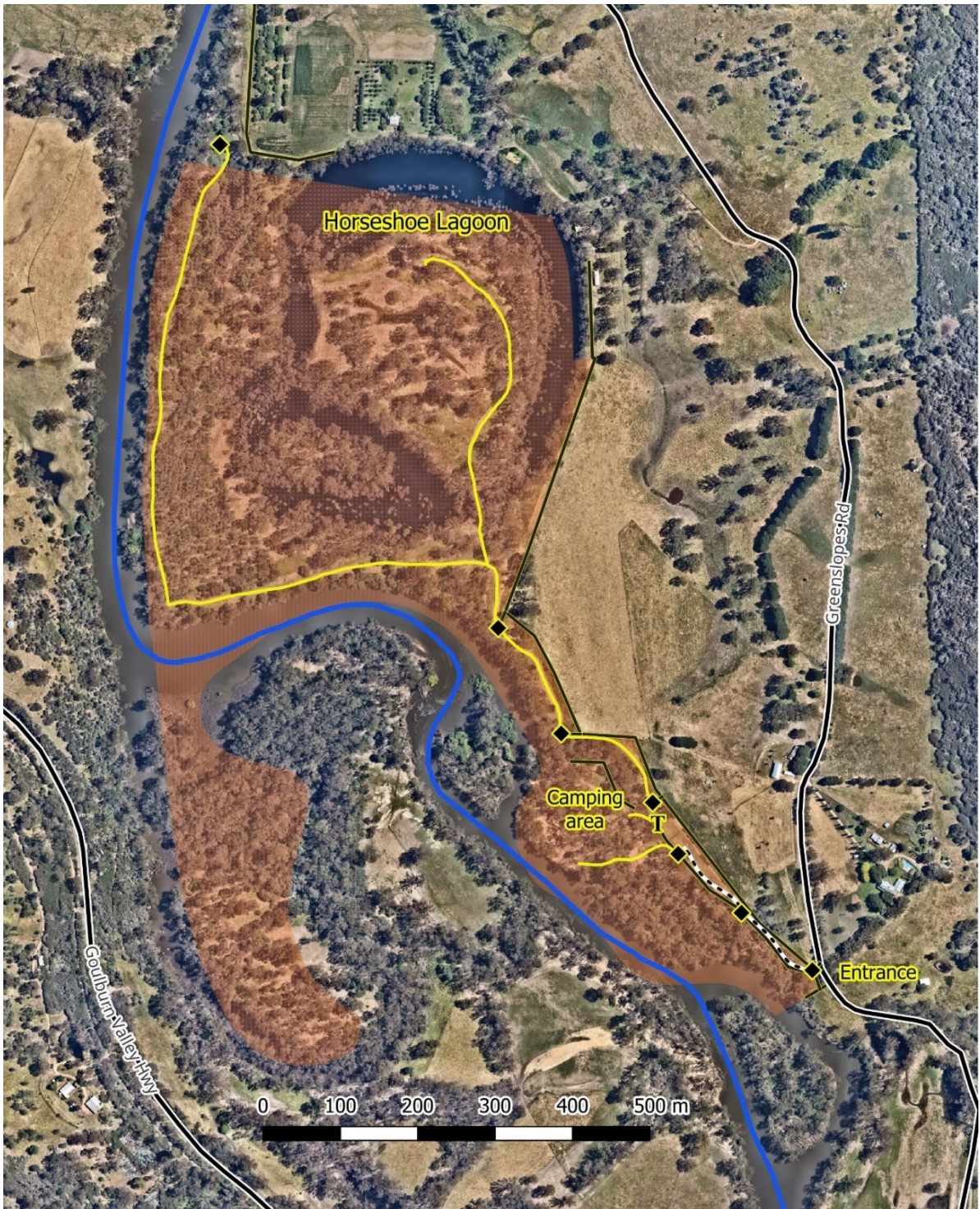
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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of Horseshoe Lagoon FFR on the Goulburn River, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>,





# Horseshoe Lagoon Flora and Fauna Reserve



Horseshoe Lagoon FFR	Roads	Walking tracks	Gates
Goulburn River	Entrance track	Fences	Toilet

**Map notes:** The exact boundaries of the Reserve are uncertain due to:

- changes in the course of the river from the multiple lines on maps that defined the old crown frontages and river channels. [MapshareVic](#) marks just the one title as “Reserve”. The map above includes the line of crown frontage on land adjacent to the Reserve title. The Reserve and frontage titles include the southwest extension that is now on the other side of the river. The fences and management of that land are only accessible by boat and have not been explored.
- fences along the edge of farmlands. Old title maps show some private land on the Reserve side of the fences and vice versa. The fenceline marks a line of agreement between government and landholders that makes more environmental and agricultural sense than the old title boundaries.