



# Media release

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## Day highlighted value of wetlands

Around 20 people joined a bus tour of the St Lawrence wetlands to celebrate World Wetlands Day on Saturday 2 February, 2008.

The Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) together with Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc. (FRCC) organised the day to raise awareness of the importance of wetland ecosystems.

Coastal and Marine Coordinator for the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA), Shane Westley, said wetlands provided essential habitats for many birds, fish and plants.

“The St Lawrence wetland forms part of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway, an essential migratory pathway for birds. Several thousands of birds may be present in the wet and dry season, with many of these birds likely to use the wetlands for breeding.

“It’s also a significant nursery habitat for key recreational and commercial fish species such as Barramundi and Mangrove Jack.”

World Wetlands Day marks the date the Ramsar Convention was signed in 1971 to coordinate international wetland conservation efforts.

The day included an inspection of rehabilitation work completed at the wetlands under the Queensland Wetlands Programme.

“FBA received funding to coordinate the construction of walkways and fishways, erect fencing to control stock access, undertake weed control, and install interpretive signage,” he said.

“The project is being supported by FRCC, the Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F).”

He said the DPI&F recently installed two fishways at the site to improve upstream movement of migratory fish that move between freshwater and marine environments to breed.

“The DPI&F identified 39 fish species that could use the St Lawrence wetlands via the new fishways, which will greatly improve local fish habitat values,” Mr Westley said.

Allan Briggs from Birds Australia Capricornia was on hand on the day to talk about and identify bird life supported by the wetlands, including the rare Cotton Pygmy-goose.

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