
# DO YOU HAVE AN UPLAND WETLAND ON YOUR PROPERTY?

If so, Namoi CMA would like to work with you to conserve and manage it better.

## What are upland wetlands?

The upland wetlands within the Namoi Catchment are a unique type of wetland that are found primarily above elevations of 700m; mostly on private land around Nundle, Walcha, Bendemeer and towards Kingstown & Retreat. They are normally groundwater fed and can drain into rivers and streams. They occur either as areas of open “grassy” or “heathy” vegetation and can range from temporary bogs and waterbodies to relatively permanent lagoons occupying small areas (0.25ha to 10ha).

## Why are they important?

The variable wetting and drying of these wetlands combined with their shallowness creates a mosaic of habitats which supports a wide variety of native plants and animals. The chain of upland wetlands found on the Tablelands is used by rare bird species including the Blue Billed duck and Magpie Geese. They are even used by internationally protected migratory birds like Latham’s Snipe. These wetlands also provide habitat for frogs, turtles and eels.

Many of the upland wetlands no longer exist due to past landuses and continuing ongoing threats. We need to address these threats to ensure their long term survival.

## What are the threats facing these wetlands?

A recent study commissioned by Namoi CMA revealed that there are at least 131 upland wetlands within the Namoi Catchment. In the past they have been used for grazing and for farm water supply.

Some of the main threats that affect upland wetlands are:

- clearing and draining: Many of these wetlands have been lost due to drainage and sedimentation resulting from erosion from the surrounding sub-catchments.
- grazing by domestic livesock can result in the loss of more palatable plants with consequent changes in species composition of the wetland community. Trampling by heavy hoofed animals also causes soil compaction and increased drainage via stock tracks
- feral animals such as pigs, deer and goats damage vegetation by digging, grazing and trampling while foxes prey on native fauna.

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- pollution: Reduced water quality occurs as a result of pollution from stock waste as well as agricultural chemicals and fertilizers. Increased nutrient loads also promote weed growth.
- hydrological changes: These wetlands are naturally subject to wetting and drying cycles, and the plants and animals that depend on them have evolved to take advantage of these conditions. Changes in hydrological cycles will therefore disrupt the specialised ecology of the wetlands.

## How can they best be looked after?

Some of the management strategies that will help protect these wetlands include:

- reinstating natural stream flows and preventing further draining or damming of these wetlands
- protecting them from unrestricted livestock access by fencing and providing off stream watering points e.g.troughs
- implementing feral animal control programs and weed control programs
- revegetating buffer zones around the wetland to help protect it against nutrient and sediment run off.

## What benefits will there be for the landholder?

Improved management of upland wetlands can produce:

- ✓ longer periods of flow in attached streams for dry times;
- ✓ filter sediment and nutrients for improved water quality; and
- ✓ protect stock from hazardous bog areas.

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## What help can I get from Namoi CMA?

Namoi CMA is able to provide advice and assistance to better conserve and manage upland wetlands.

We also have a small incentive funding program targeted at improving the condition of upland wetlands. If you are interested in receiving advice and accessing some incentive funding, please contact Namoi CMA before 31 August 2009.

If you would like to know more about protecting upland wetlands and working with Namoi CMA call Nathan Penny on 6764 5910 or Adam Downey on 6764 5916.