Department of Sustainability and Environment

Victorian Wetland Classification Overview

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Victorian wetland classification

- Classification system developed during wetland inventories conducted by Victorian Government from 1975-1982 (Corrick and Norman 1980, Corrick 1982)
- Inventory objective: to provide a distribution map of wetlands, categorise wetlands, examine utilisation by waterbirds and determine threats (Corrick and Norman 1980)
- Not a hierarchical classification system



Classification attributes

Category	Sub-category
Depth	Dominant wetland vegetation
Hydroperiod*	
Seasonality*	
Salinity (fresh or saline)	

* Not consistently applied



Category	Sub-category		Depth (metres)
Freshwater meadow These include shallow (up to 0.3 m) and temporary (less than four months duration) surface water, although soils are generally waterlogged throughout winter.	 Herb-dominated Sedge-dominated 	 Red gum-dominated Lignum dominated 	< 0.3
Shallow freshwater marsh Wetlands that are usually dry by mid-summer and fill again with the onset of winter rains. Soils are waterlogged throughout the year and surface water up to 0.5 m deep may be present for as long as eight months.	 Herb-dominated Sedge-dominated Cane grass- dominated 	 Lignum dominated Red gum-dominated 	< 0.5
Deep freshwater marsh Wetlands that generally remain inundated to a depth of 1 – 2 m throughout the year.	 Shrub-dominated Reed-dominated Sedge-dominated Rush-dominated 	 Open water Cane grass- dominated Lignum-dominated Red gum-dominated 	< 2
Permanent open freshwater Wetlands that are usually more than 1 m deep. They can be natural or artificial. Wetlands are described to be permanent if they retain water for longer than 12 months, however they can have periods of drying.	 Shallow Deep Impoundment Red gum Cane grass Dead timber 	 Dead timber Black box Rush Reed Sedge Shrub Lignum 	<2 >2
Semi-permanent saline These wetlands may be inundated to a depth of 2 m for as long as eight months each year. Saline wetlands are those in which salinity exceeds 3,000 mg/L throughout the whole year.	 Salt pan Salt meadow Salt flats Sea rush 	 Hypersaline lake Melaleuca Dead timber 	< 2
Permanent saline These wetlands include coastal wetlands and part of intertidal zones. Saline wetlands are those in which salinity exceeds 3,000 mg/L throughout the whole year.	 Shallow Deep Intertidal flats 		< 2 > 2
Salt evaporation basin			



Classification limitations

- Rationale poorly documented
- Not hierarchical
- Does not classify on some key wetland attributes:
 - Climate
 - Geomorphology
 - Water source



New wetland classification

- Developing new classification framework
- Reviewing and adopting Qld, NSW, SA methods
- Producing a new classification system
- Translating existing wetland classes into new types
- Developing conceptual models

