

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE PLACES INVENTORY

([New Search](#))

Pitt Water (Part)

Source : Go to the [Register of the National Estate](#) for more information.

Identifier : 11493

Location : Tasman Hwy, Sorell

Local Government : Sorell Municipality

State : TAS

Country : Australia

Statement of Significance : Pittwater, a Ramsar site, is of significance as the major (northern winter) feeding ground for migratory, palaeartic wading bird species. It has particular importance because it is at the southern limit of the migration route. The avifauna is both abundant and species-rich with at least 21 species occurring. The rocky shores of Pittwater are the major habitat of the small, endemic sea-star PATIRIELLA VIVIPARA. This species is of particular interest as one of the few viviparous sea stars known. Pittwater is the type locality of PATIRIELLA VIVIPARA. The saltmarsh communities present contain species with a restricted distribution in Tasmania: LAWRENCIA SPICATA, LIMONIUM AUSTRALE and WILSONIA HUMILIS. Pittwater is an important ongoing research site because of the problems of eutrophication and pollution, particularly in Orielton Lagoon associated with adjacent urban and agricultural landuse. A saltmarsh research site is found at Railway Point in the west of the area.

Description : Pittwater-Orielton Lagoon, a Ramsar site, comprises an estuarine system with a large area of saltmarsh. Pittwater is an almost landlocked body of tidal salt water with a narrow entrance to Fredrick Henry Bay. The whole area is protected by the large adjacent sand bar of Seven Mile beach. Most of the area is open water fringed by saltmarsh communities and rocky shores. The area includes a number of small islands upon which sea birds nest.

Orielton Lagoon has been separated from Pittwater since 1868, when a causeway was constructed, restricting tidal flushing and creating a shallow lagoon. In 1995 additional culverts were created under the causeway allowing increased water exchange. Prior to this, seawater replenishment was only possible during high tides, and evaporation in the shallow (1.25 m) lagoon resulted in large changes in salinity. (Average annual rainfall in the area is 500-625 mm). Altered salinity combined with nutrient input from adjacent land uses led to eutrophication, and a series of algal blooms in the lagoon.

The geology of the area is complex, dominated by Holocene river alluvium, silt, fine sand, dune and windblown sand with pockets of Triassic sandstone and shale.

The extensive saltmarshes often support large populations of waterfowl, including numerous wading and migratory bird species. Pittwater is the major summer (northern winter) feeding ground in Tasmania for Palaeartic migratory wading birds. The saltmarsh, at the northern end of the lagoon, is dominated by SCLEROSTEGIA ARBUSCULA and SARCOCORNIA QUINQUEFLORA and contain three plant species which have a restricted

distribution in Tasmania: LAWRENCIA SPICATA, LIMONIUM AUSTRALE which is only reserved in one location in Tasmania and WILSONIA HUMILIS, which is unreserved in Tasmania. These three species are considered rare and at risk in Tasmania.

The rocky shores of Pittwater are the major habitat of the small endemic sea-star PATIRIELLA VIVIPARA. This species is of particular interest as one of the few viviparous sea stars known.

This place has been identified and assessed in the context of the Tasmanian Comprehensive Regional Assessment/Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process. The national estate values identified in this RFA region are described in the Tasmanian national estate report (PLUC 1997) and its accompanying maps. Information from existing national estate listings has also been included.

This place has been defined by a 'best fit' boundary which has been drawn to include areas which have sufficient national estate significance to warrant listing, taking into account appropriate management considerations.

This information has been generated by the Commonwealth from data produced during the CRA process in Tasmania. It has not yet been verified by the State.

Report produced : 26/5/2009

AHPI URL : <http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/search.html>