

## The Life of the Yarra Audio Tour: Grange Road Wetlands Transcript

**Narration - Carol:** At first when I walked through this area I was caught up in my own thoughts. But then I heard a strange bird call and tried to see who it belonged to. I then realised there were many more types bird calls all around me, some familiar some new. I started to 'tune in' to my surroundings. The sound of traffic on the freeway and Alexandra Avenue seemed to die down, and instead I paid attention to the wind blowing in the trees, birds chasing insects and each other, frogs croaking behind me somewhere, and the occasional rustle of something in the bush.

**Narration - Sarah:** Walk to the path that is closest to the road, looking into the swampy area towards the river as you do. There are a few weathered tree trunks in this section. Can you spot one that has a small round hollow in it? You might even be lucky enough to see something using it as a home.

**Narration - Sarah:** This hollow, and a few more like it in nearby Glen Eira wetlands, have been created to give animals a place to shelter and nest. Australian Wood ducks use tree hollows like these to nest, have you spotted any Australian Wood ducks? They have a greyish body and dark head, females also have a light stripe above their eye. They form monogamous pairs that stick together throughout the year and breed from September to November. When ducklings are ready to leave the nest, the mother duck jumps to the ground first with the ducklings jumping after her. Considering that sometimes their nesting hollows are a number of meters above the ground, this is an impressive feat for such a small animal. The baby ducklings are able to survive this fall as their bodies are still very light.

**Narration - Sarah:** Many different birds visit this wetland. You might see black ducks, white-faced herons, little cormorants, little grebes and swamp hens. Some birds make these wetlands their home year round, like the swamp hens. Other birds use patches of habitat like these for only part of the year. Latham's Snipes are a mostly brown wading bird with a long bill. It visits wetlands in Eastern Australia in warmer months, before making the long trip back to Japan to breed. As well as birds, there are a number of other species that make use of this wetland as Mark Schneider, gardener at Council describes:

**Mark Schneider:** *Things like water skinks, lizards, small mammals. We've got a lot of Rakali around at the moment, they might run around there in the dark. Provide habitat for water birds. Water hens! they can't fly very far can they, so they use these corridors as well. And turtles, I see a lot of turtles moving around in these spots.*