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ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNERS

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Note to File

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Oakleigh Fauna Assessment

An assessment of the fauna of the proposed West Pit development as well as other parts of the Oakleigh mine have been assessed during periodic visits to the mine to undertake environmental monitoring as well as the survey of vegetation the West Pit. An early evening survey was conducted on 4 occasions.

The disturbance of the original vegetation in the area of the proposed West Pit development has had a significant impact upon the value of the area for fauna habitat. The original vegetation has been completely removed many years ago along with much of the surrounding areas. Almost the whole of the area has been developed as pastures with introduced grasses that have been kept short in recent years by heavy grazing pressure. The only trees on site are a few sparse eucalypts and wattles scattered across the paddocks.

There are no patches of remnant original vegetation on the site and the only areas of thicker vegetation to provide cover for fauna habitat are weedy areas along fencelines or in gullies. There are a few bird species such as wrens that are common in rural areas that use these for habitat.

The open grassy habitat that has resulted from the disturbance of the site has attracted a number of species that commonly frequent such sites. These species are favoured by open areas and are usually resilient to disturbance. Their abundance has increased in rural and suburban areas because of this.

Most of the fauna species that are found in such habitats are birds. Crows, magpies and crested pigeons are abundant. There is a noticeable absence of bushland birds, directly attributable to the complete lack of suitable habitat. Native mammals would be extremely rare in this environment because of the lack of suitable habitat and the predation of cats and foxes. Some bats may fly over the site but there are no suitable roost sites present for them. The frogs and reptiles seen are all common in farmland and around farm dams. The lack of bushland is a restriction on the diversity of these animals as well.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Identification of the vegetation types of the study area was made from site inspections and reference to aerial photography of the area. Fauna was determined using a combination of systematic and opportunistic survey methods over a number of days and nights.

Birds were observed at dusk and identified visually or from calls heard. Other bird observations in the study area were made throughout the day as other activities were carried out.

Searches were made for frogs during wet weather to detect frogs visually and by their calls. The only permanent aquatic habitats found in the study area were farm dams.

Animals were also searched for under bark, logs, rocks and leaf litter. Opportunistic observations were made of all animals at all times of the day while in the area.

NOMENCLATURE

The nomenclature used in this report follows that of:

Allen (1989)	Fish
Christidis and Boles (1994)	Birds
Cogger (1992)	Reptiles and Amphibians
Strahan (1995)	Mammals
Queensland Herbarium (1993)	Plants
Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994 and subsequent amendments	Conservation Status

The following list shows the species that have been observed during field work on the site. The rats and mice were not observed but it would be unusual if they were not present.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
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Frogs

<i>Bufo marinus</i> *	Cane toad
<i>Litoria caerulea</i>	Green tree frog
<i>Litoria fallax</i>	Eastern sedge frog
<i>Litoria rubella</i>	Desert tree frog

Reptiles

<i>Cryptoblepharus virgatus</i>	Fence skink
<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Bearded dragon
<i>Tiliqua scincoides</i>	Bluetongue skink
<i>Morelia spilota</i>	Carpet python
<i>Pseudonaja textilis</i>	Eastern brown snake

Mammals

<i>Rattus rattus</i> *	Black rat
<i>Mus musculus</i> *	House mouse
<i>Lepus capensis</i> *	European hare
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i> *	Fox
<i>Felis catus</i> *	Cat

* indicates introduced species

FAMILY	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Birds		
Anatidae	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Pacific black duck
	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Australian wood duck
Ardeidae	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	Cattle egret
	<i>Ardea novaehollandiae</i>	White-faced heron
Threskiornithidae	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	Straw-necked ibis
Accipitridae	<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Black-shouldered kite
Falconidae	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	Nankeen kestrel
Charadriidae	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Masked lapwing
Columbidae	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	Crested pigeon
Cacatuidae	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	Galah
Psittacidae	<i>Platycercus adscitus</i>	Pale-headed rosella
Halcyonidae	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing kookaburra
Maluridae	<i>Malurus melanocephalus</i>	Red-backed fairy wren
Meliphagidae	<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	Noisy miner
Dicruidae	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	Magpie-lark
	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie wagtail
Campephagidae	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced cuckoo-shrike
Artamidae	<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Pied butcherbird
	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	Australian magpie
Corvidae	<i>Corvus orru</i>	Torresian crow
Passeridae	<i>Taeniopygia bichenovii</i>	Double-barred finch
	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	Zebra finch
Dicaeidae	<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	Mistletoebird
Hirundinidae	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Welcome swallow
	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>	Tree martin
Sylviidae	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	Golden-headed cisticola
Sturnidae	<i>*Acridotheres tristis</i>	Common myna