

Submission to BODC Draft Revised Dog Management Policy from Seymour Community Action Group Inc

We acknowledge the need for places for dogs to be able to access the beach, and accept the Policy regarding the southern side of Long Point on Seymour Beach, where allowance has been made for an on-lead area at the northern end of Seymour Beach. This facilitates access for dog owners to the beach. With this, comes the proviso that signage is provided and the Policy is enforced to ensure compliance.

We do not support the proposal in Section 3.3.3 Dog Swims in Dog On Lead areas anywhere in the Municipality. To allow dogs off lead where there are bird breeding areas extending back from the tide lines is a great risk to the shore birds. All too often, dogs can run away when off lead, to the detriment of the endangered shore birds.

We submit that the area allocated to dogs off-lead and on-lead on Seymour Beach is adequate in the Seymour area.

Dogs should be prohibited completely on the northern side of Long Point on Templestowe Beach, the small Island at the eastern end of Templestowe Beach and the Wetland Conservation Area.

We have worked for seven year to restore the Seymour Wetlands. It is habitat for native fauna and flora and has been reclassified to be part of the Seymour Conservation Area. It is habitat for the endangered Green and Gold Frog, healthy Tasmanian Devils, mange free Wombats, Raptors, Swans, Ducks, Sea Eagles, Masked Owls and many other birds frequent the area. Due to the continued contravention of the regulations and difficulties with compliance, the Parks and Wildlife Services have now fenced and put a locked boom gate on the access track. Allowing dogs on lead into this area is contrary to our and the PWS efforts to protect the area. We are opposed to allowing dogs on lead in this area. We have seen people continually disregard the regulations knowing there is no chance of the BODC enforcing the regulations.

The section of beach from Templestowe Lagoon to the Eastern end of Templestowe Beach has a high concentration of migratory, threatened and endangered shorebirds and seabirds and as such should be protected to ensure their survival.

The small Island serves as refuge to Red-necked Stints, and many other birds and is presently zoned as a Dogs Prohibited area. It is sharp, rough igneous rock not suitable for walking a dog and is often covered in birds that use the area as a roost at high tides and as a refuge when disturbed.

The area in the eastern corner of the Templestowe Beach is frequently covered in thick kelp, which provides a source of food in the form of high densities of invertebrates for the birds, with more than 100 Red-necked Stints, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers and many varieties of gulls and other birds feeding there regularly. The area's importance as a feeding site cannot be underestimated and must also be a Dog Prohibited Area.

The area around the mouth of Templestowe Lagoon is critical habitat as breeding area for threatened Hooded Plovers, threatened Fairy Terns, and Critically Endangered Little Terns, and many other birds and is rightfully a dog prohibited area.

The problem is that dogs are frequently being walked off lead in this area, with people either not seeing or deliberately ignoring the dog restriction signs. With an increased number of dog owners

in the area, the pressure on these birds has escalated significantly. With its relatively remote location from authorities, it has proved difficult to patrol and enforce the present regulations, which are regularly flaunted, essentially on a daily basis. Allowing dogs on lead in the Seymour Wetlands will compound this problem and must not be allowed.

For these reasons, we request that:

- (a) dogs are prohibited from the Seymour end of Templestowe Beach, as they are at the Piccaninny end,
- (b) dogs are prohibited from the whole of the Seymour Conservation Area including the Restored Seymour Wetlands,
- (c) that the Regulations are enforced by the Council to ensure compliance.

We further request that “Dogs’ Breakfasts” events are held for dog owners to educate them of the adverse effects dogs have on the birds, and that there be a concerted effort to ensure compliance with the prohibition, especially from 1 October to 31 March during the shorebird and tern breeding seasons, and while the migratory shorebirds are present.

We draw the attention of the Councillors to the attached report by Dr. Eric Woehler about the importance of protecting this area year-round for the survival of the endangered birds.

We also attach the Survey carried out by Dr. Eric Woehler of Templestowe Beach on the 23 of December 2017, showing clearly the population of birds to the east of Templestowe Lagoon contrary to statements in the petition.

Dogs are regularly walked off lead in the Dog Prohibited area and all the way to the eastern end of the beach highlighting the need for more enforcement and not a relaxation of the current restrictions.

We have seen a dog chase a wombat off the beach in the dog prohibited area near Templestowe Lagoon, evidencing that it is not only the endangered birds at risk. Other residents in the area have video of an Echidna at the mouth of Templestowe Lagoon and have seen evidence of wallabies and Tasmanian devils in the area.

It is imperative that Council is guided by the expertise of Dr Eric J Woehler and his scientific surveys and reports in the decision-making process to protect our threatened species for future generations to enjoy, as we have done.

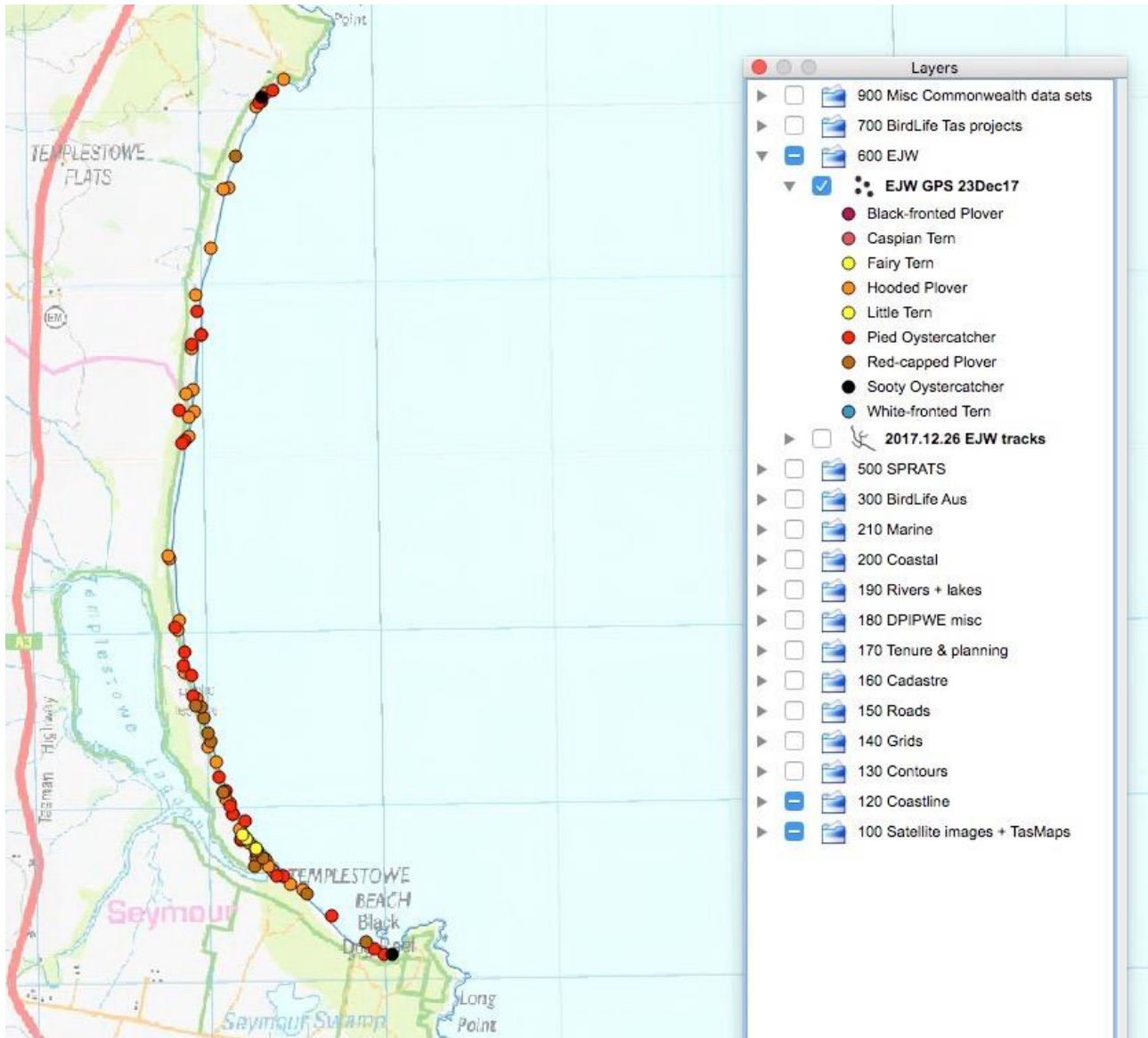
We draw the Councillors attention to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy Final Report GET Pilot Project in which it is stated:

“Hooded Plovers are listed as a Threatened Species under the Federal EPBC Act, and Fairy and Little Terns are both listed under Tasmanian legislation, with Little Terns listed as Endangered. Such listings explicitly indicate the decline of these species and the reality that their extinction is possible, or even likely, unless existing threats are recognised and removed. Any additional human presence on the beaches in this area will put further pressure on these shorebirds.

The TLC is of the opinion that the pilot project cannot be progressed sustainably.”

We would also like to remind Council that its “Environmental Goal” stated in the BODC Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027 is: “To balance our use of the natural environment to ensure that it is available for future generations to enjoy as we do.”

Let's work together to ensure the survival of the birds and an end to species' extinctions.



Please see attached

1. "Coastal bird values, Chain of Lagoons to Bicheno; An assessment of the distribution and abundance of resident and migratory shorebirds and terns". By Dr Eric J Woehler Birdlife Tasmania August 2016 that provides additional details of the shorebird and tern values present, and the threats they face.
2. Tasmanian Land Conservancy Final Report GET Pilot Project

Thank you for the opportunity to make a Submission and for considering our views.

Yours Sincerely,

Quentin Smith

President
Seymour Community Action Group Inc.