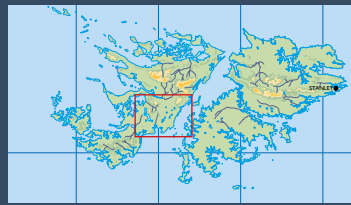


LYN BLAKE NATURE RESERVE

Information sheet



Falklands Conservation own and manage a number of offshore islands and mainland sites across the Falkland Islands. FC strive to manage these national assets to conserve and enhance them for future generation of Islanders.

Island Summary

The Lyn Blake Nature Reserve is centred on Hawk's Nest Pond South and was gifted to Falklands Conservation in 2011 by Tony Blake in memory of his late wife Lyn Blake. As an active conservationist and owner of Little Chartres, Lyn had a long-term association with Hawk's Nest Pond. Following gifting of the Reserve the site was fenced and grazing excluded. Habitat composition and structure is now in recovery and fence line effects are now apparent on the boundaries of the site.

Ecology

Physical

The reserve is 80.8 ha (200 acres) in extent with the main feature being Hawk's Nest Pond South. The pond with an area of 36.8 ha occupies 46% of the reserve area with a total shoreline perimeter of 3 km. The underlying geology is part of the Fox Bay Formation comprised of fine sandstones, siltstones and mudstones deposited and formed during the Devonian period, c. 400 million years ago.

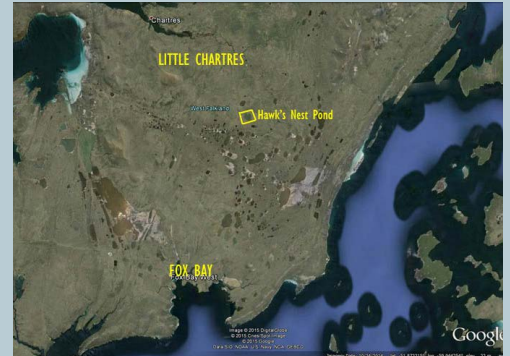
Habitat Value

Hawk's Nest Pond holds significant beds of Californian club-rush on its western and southern margins. Californian club-rush (*Near Threatened*, FI Red List) is a restricted habitat providing forage, shelter and nesting cover for a range of waterfowl and black-crowned night heron.

The site is of national importance due to recovering fachine scrub and fachine-whitegrass acid grassland habitats that extends across the reserve, with fachine coming through now that grazing has been excluded. This is recognised as a priority habitat in national strategies.

Despite past grazing the number of recorded non-native introduced plant species is relatively low, comprising of common bent, early hair-grass and Sheep's sorrel. However with the current drying of the pond the non-native grasses are now encroaching into the rush-beds and threatening the habitat.

As a mainland site mice and rats will be present along with feral cats. Survey would suggest this is at low numbers and predation level is probably not significant to avifauna.



The Lyn Blake Nature Reserve (51°48.895"S & 59°57.529"W) is located centrally on West Falkland just off the road between Little Chartres and Fox Bay. The site is signposted on the road approx. 7.2 km south of Little Chartres and 16 km north of Fox Bay airstrip. From the road the boundary gate is found 220m along a firm grass access track.

Relevant Legislation and Policy

Statutory

None

Non-statutory

None



IMAGES Hawk's Nest Pond north-east towards Mount Moody and Hornby Mountains; Gaudichaud's orchid (inset).



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Species Diversity

Twenty-four bird species have been recorded on the Reserve with 18 species recorded as breeding or probably breeding. Of these 8 species are considered to be a distinct Falkland Island island-race or sub-species.

The Reserve is most notable for the range of wildfowl on the pond with significant numbers of teal duck and up to 30 black-necked swans recorded on occasion. The developing sward of whitegrass,

fachine and cinnamon grass provide cover for a range of passerines and survey has shown a greater passerine bird diversity as sward height increases.

Forty native plant species have been recorded including; 1 endemic species, vanilla daisy; 3 legally protected species, Gaudichaud's orchid, adder's tongue and common violet; and 2 species which appear on the FI Red List, the *Vulnerable* adder's tongue and *Near-Threatened* Californian club-rush.

Key Threats and Management

The ongoing and potential future drying of the Falkland climate and soils due to climate change presents a risk to traditional wetland areas. The pond has been drying significantly during recent summers without fully recharging during winter. The water-level has dropped faster than the club-rush stands have been able expand into the deeper water pond-ward, leaving the stands separated from the waterline. As the rush-beds have dried, grass has encroached from the landward side up to and through the rush beds suggesting a successional change to grasses if drying continues. Receding water levels also potentially allow access into the rush-beds by rodents and cats that may impact waterfowl breeding.

Non-native plant species can impact native habitats. It is difficult as a mainland site to fully prevent seeding in of non-native species

from adjacent areas. A healthy habitat with full ground cover is often the best defence against other non-natives becoming established and trials with in-planting of native species could be conducted to obtain a more diverse native sward.

Recovering fachine scrub is susceptible to knock back from selective grazing by livestock. Annual checks of the boundary fence line and gates should be conducted with running maintenance conducted as and when required.

Fire is an ongoing extant risk especially as the climate dries. Smoking on the reserve is prohibited and extreme care should be taken in all activities where a spark or heat source could ignite (camping, vehicle exhausts, etc.) The pond completely dried out for the first time in 2023 and all waterfowl were absent. Seasonal dry-out occurred again in 2024 and may now be a recurrent issue. Significantly impacting waterfowl occurrence and distribution.

Notable birds, plants, marine mammals & habitats of Lyn Blake Nature Reserve

Black-necked swan		Vanilla Daisy	Endemic
White-tufted grebe	Falkland sub-species	Gaudichaud's orchid	Legally Protected
Silvery grebe		Adder's tongue	Legal Protected Nationally Vulnerable
Chiloe wigeon		Common violet	Legally Protected
Cinnamon teal		Californian club-rush	Nationally Near Threatened
Speckled teal		Fachine scrub	Priority habitat
Yellow-billed pintail		Californian club-rush	Scarce, limited to 8 ponds

Citations

Falklands Conservation (2022).
Lyn Blake Nature Reserve Hawk's Nest Pond (South) Management Plan Centre Island Management Plan. Falklands Conservation.

Contact

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IMAGES Californian Club-rush bed on the west-side of the pond;
Chiloe wigeon (inset).

