



Media Release

Wednesday, 20th May, 2009

CALL FOR INFORMATION ON WETLAND VALUES OF MACQUARIE ISLAND

NRM North is preparing an ecological character description (ECD) of Macquarie Island's wetland values and is inviting input from the public.

Macquarie Island Nature Reserve is one of the two main groups of Australia's sub-antarctic islands and is located approximately 1500 kilometres south east of Tasmania. The island is both a World Heritage Area and a Biosphere Reserve.

NRM North's ECD project aims to contribute to the understanding and best-practise management of Tasmania's significant wetlands.

NRM North Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said in recent years, Macquarie Island had been the focus of concern due to widespread damage from introduced rabbits.

"The preparation of the ECD will be used to collect baseline information on the condition of the island's wetlands prior to the implementation of a 24 million dollar rabbit and rodent control program, which is scheduled to start in winter 2010.

"We will be able to use this information to gauge what impact the control program is having on the island's natural resources." Mr McKee said.

Dr Jenny Scott, a scientist from the University of Tasmania, is working on the wetlands project with NRM North. Dr Scott is keen to hear from anyone who may have information on Macquarie Island's wetlands, either through research which has been undertaken or other sources.

Dr Scott said Macquarie Island for most people conjured up instant visions of spectacular wildlife, millions of penguins and huge elephant seals on the beaches.

"The island also has unique geology and fascinating landscape patterns and wetlands. It has dozens of lakes and tarns on the plateau and along the west coast and in many places, underground drainage feeds into enormous mires and bogs rich in plant life.

"Another interesting and possibly unique feature is a small lake with two floating islands which move around it.

"I was on Macquarie Island several months ago and saw the islands moving slowly across the lake. Usually the islands move around with the wind and several people in the past have been temporarily stranded on them until the wind changes.

"I saw the islands moving without any wind at all – it could have been due to a current set up from the underground drainage out of the lake."

Anyone who has seen similar floating islands on lakes on the Tasmanian mainland or has any other information on Macquarie Island's wetlands which may be helpful to the project is asked to contact Jenny Scott on 6226 2205 before June 30th.



As a guide to what is required in the ecological character description, see
<http://www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/wetlands>.

Ends

For more information contact:
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