

Mr Andrew Smith
Chief Planner
National capital Authority
GPO Box 373
Canberra ACT 2601

Seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin

We refer to your call for comments concerning the discussion paper 'Seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin. May 2021'.

We wish to draw your attention to a colony of Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*) breeding on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin adjacent to the proposed seaplane take-off and landing pathways, see Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Silver Gulls have been breeding on Spinnaker Island since 2008-09 with the island occupied from late August to January each year. With approval from the National Capital Authority we have been surveying the island over the breeding season since 2010. In 2008-09 there were 74 adults using the island. Our counts for the 2019-20 season estimated 2029 adults and a minimum of 562 young on the island in October 2019. During 2020-21 the Silver Gulls bred on Springbank Island as well as Spinnaker Island (Davey and Fullagar *pers. obs.*).

Our observations indicate that breeding gulls fly from Spinnaker Island in an easterly direction towards the Mugga Lane Tip where they obtain food to feed their chicks. Observations in October 2013 from Blue Gum Point, Lake Burley Griffin indicate a passage of 65 birds between 10:20 and 10:40 and 36 birds between 12:00 and 12:20. At the time, the estimated number of gulls on the island was 600 and so the passage during the recent surveys would have been much greater. This passage is directly across the flight path suggested in Figure 6.

The gulls will readily take-off on-mass from the island at the sight of an avian predator and this will also occur at the sight of a descending seaplane.



An example of disturbed Silver Gulls on Spinnaker Island, LBG

We conclude that the noise and visual disturbance caused by the seaplane so close to the Silver Gull breeding site, in addition to the very likely interaction between Silver Gulls and seaplanes across the proposed landing path, is most likely to cause impacts that would not be conducive to the safety of the birds or to passengers on the seaplane.

For further information please refer to our publications listed below.

References: to be found on-line at [Canberra Bird Notes - Canberra Birds](#)

Davey, C. and Fullagar, P. (2011). Silver Gulls breeding on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin, Spring 2010. *Canberra Bird Notes* 36: 81-83.

Davey, C. and Fullagar, P. (2012). Silver Gulls breeding on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin, Spring 2011. *Canberra Bird Notes* 37: 180-184.

Davey, C. and Fullagar, P. (2013). Silver Gulls breeding on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin, Spring 2012. *Canberra Bird Notes* 38: 200-204.

Davey, C. and Fullagar, P. (2016). Silver Gulls breeding on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin, Spring 2013 and 2015. *Canberra Bird Notes* 41: 197-205.

Mr Chris Davey

[REDACTED]

Dr Peter Fullagar

[REDACTED]

7 June 2021