

2. Barberspan

Geographical Coordinates 26°33'S 25°35'E

Area 3,118ha

Location About 17km north-east of the town of Delareyville, in the south-west of the province of Transvaal, central-north Republic of South Africa.

Date of Ramsar Designation 13 March 1975.

Other International Designations None.

National Designations Provincial Nature Reserve (Barberspan, 3,118ha).

Principal Features A permanent, alkaline (mean pH 9.4), freshwater lake, surrounded by grassland. The lake is 5km long, 2.5km wide at its widest point, and averages 2,000ha of open water area (maximum depth 9.5m). It is one of the few permanent, natural water bodies in the western highveld and is the largest of a series of pans along the fossil course of the river Harts. The lake is supplied with water from the south via a channel connecting it with the river Harts, and is located in a region of high summer rainfall with cool dry winters. The littoral vegetation includes dense beds of *Panicum repens* and scattered stands of *Juncus* sp., *Cyperus* sp. and *Eleocharis* spp. The submergent flora is dominated by *Potamogeton pectinatus*, with other species including *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Lagarosiphon* sp. and *Ludwigia* sp. The lake supports a rich plankton community. The site is seasonally important for locally migrant water birds, including *Mycteria ibis*, *Phoenicopterus ruber roseus*, *P. minor*, *Plectropterus gambensis*, *Alopechen aegyptiacus*, *Tadorna cana*, *Anas undulata*, *Netta erythrophthalma brunnea*, *Anthropoides paradisea*, *Fulica cristata*, *Vanellus armatus* and *Larus cirrocephalus*. Staging birds include *Chlidonias leucoptera*, while *Phalacrocorax africanus*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Threskiornis aethiopicus* and *Anas erythroryncha* are some of the more notable breeding birds. Ten fish species have been recorded and mammals include *Erinaceus frontalis* and *Poecilogale albinucha*. (1a,2a,2b,2c,3b,3c)

Conservation Issues State owned and managed according to a provisional management plan. A research station is located at the site, and there are recreational facilities such as camp sites, a hotel, bird observation hides and nature trails. Nutrient and pesticide input from the surrounding agricultural land is a potential threat.