

Lakes to be revitalised - but smell could stay

Once known for its distinct smell, both Bird and Pink Lake at the entrance of Port Augusta are well on the way to being revitalised.

In just five months there has been a 55mm reduction in the salt levels across the southeast lake, on the same side of the road as the BP Roadhouse, with a slight change in levels on the Hungry Jacks side of the Highway.

Work on a salt reduction project got into full swing in August last year, with a trench allowing the water to flow north of the railway line now operational.

A tunnel has also been established under National Highway One to ensure both lakes are kept at an even level.

Roger Christopherson, who is involved with monitoring salinity levels as part of the project said the amount of water put into Pink Lake is controlled by the salinity level required by Bird Lake.

He described the difficult process as a balancing act.

The process also has added environmental and tourism benefits, which environmental services manager at the council, Scott Parsons, said makes it a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Pink Lake accepts a high percentage of wastewater from the Power Station; meaning that water from the station is no longer makes its way up Hospital Creek and the upper Spencer Gulf area.

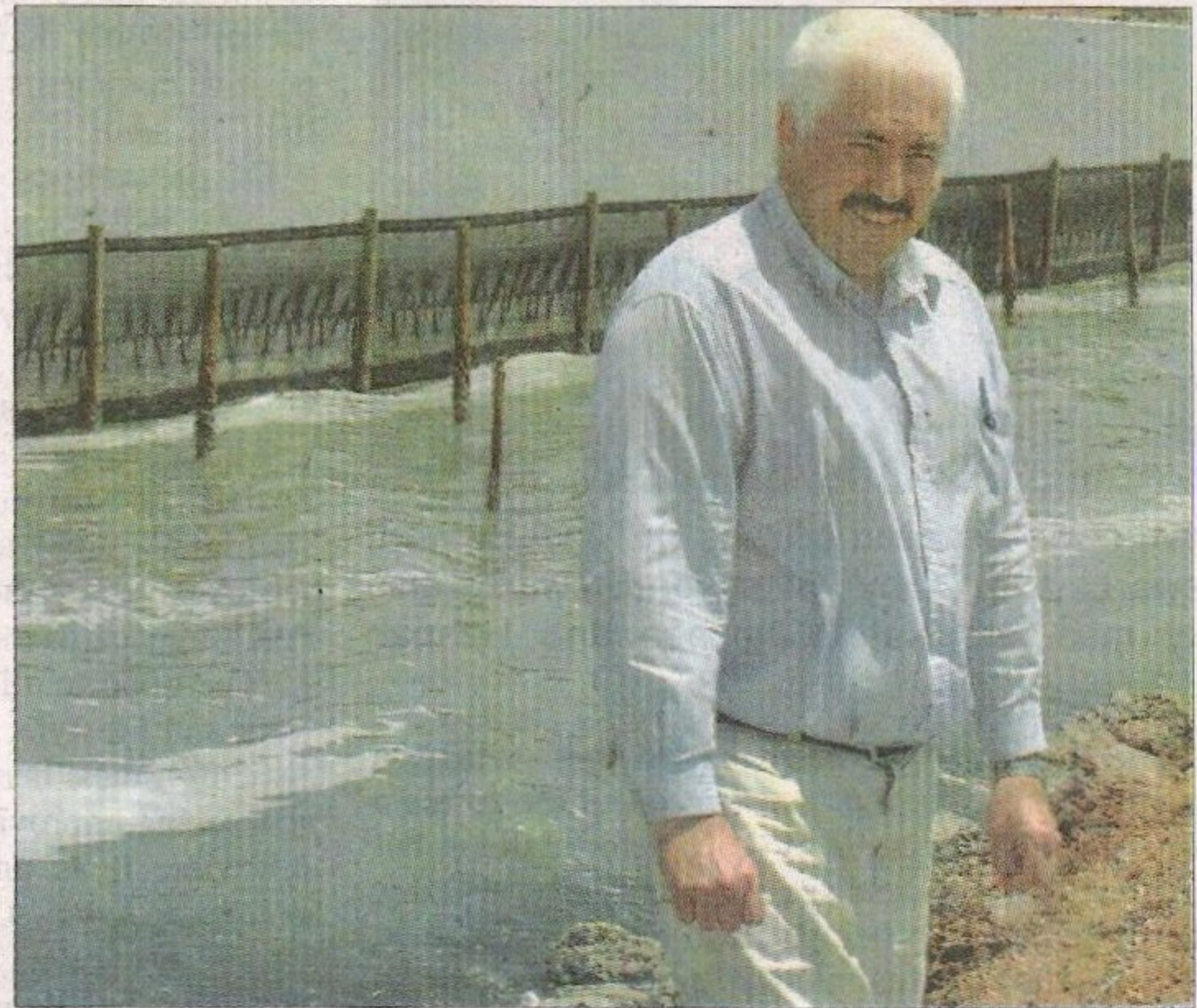
Constant monitoring to keep the water levels even and the reduction in salinity levels has meant that the problem of midgeflies, which wreaked havoc in Port Augusta only a few years ago when they spread into the town, is kept under control.

Seagulls are also a thing of the past in the Bird Lake and Pink Lake area, after the introduction of bird expeller units, which keep the nuisance birds away by sending out distress calls to deter the seagulls from returning to the area.

The units were only introduced in November last year.

"To have almost all seagulls in the area gone in such a short period is a great achievement," Mr Parsons said.

It is also believed that the Port Augusta City Council's Tip is the only one in Australia which is seagull free, an achievement in itself, meaning that workers at the tip now have the added advantage of working in a seagull-free environment.



Environment services manager at the council, Scott Parsons stands in front of the newly rejuvenated Bird Lake.

Mr Parsons reminded residents not to feed any seagulls they come across, to ensure the birds numbers are kept to a minimum.

Instead of seagulls, banded stilts can now be spotted on the lakes, as they live off the shrimp that can be found in the waters.

Mr Parsons said the birds give a good display and that they are

well worth going down to have a look at.

City manager John Stephens said the reduction of salinity levels at the lake helps prove that improvements being made to the entrance of Port Augusta from the Adelaide end is gaining momentum and an added bonus for tourists travelling to the city.