Rainfall run-off and creek inflow are the major sources of water input. River inflow brings flushes of nutrients, sediments, and biota into the lake.

Basins are generally lined with heavy cracking clays. They are large and shallow, and as a result, evaporation levels are high. Lunette dunes may be present around edges of basins created through deflation.

Cycles of filling and drying lead to highly variable water quality, and boom and bust cycles of algae, fish, and invertebrates.

When full, lakes may provide important habitat and food sources for waterbirds.

Seed and egg banks of plants and invertebrates persist in the soil during dry phases. They begin to grow when flooding occurs.

Dense stands of emergent macrophytes are common, with fringing woodland, forests, shrublands or grasslands.

As lakes dry out, edges become swampy and terrestrial plants colonise.

Inland freshwater lakes usually overflow and flush with flooding, which keeps salinity levels low.