

# Mar-Apr 2024

Wetland Warbler

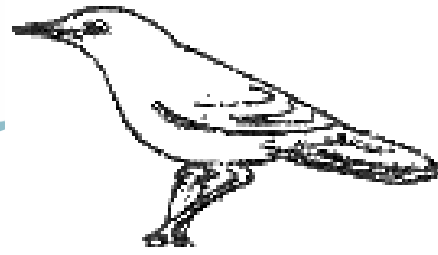


Number 189

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## Wetland Warbler



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

## FAREWELL ROSS

Linda Meadows

Lifetime member of FESWI, Ross Nelson has sadly passed away. As a result of a bad accident whilst holidaying in Vietnam, he spent two weeks in ICU in two different hospitals in Hanoi. Then, when well enough, he was airlifted back to Melbourne and again placed in ICU in the Alfred Hospital. After a further six weeks there he lost his battle to live and died on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024.

Ross was born in Cornwell, England on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1948. At the age of four years, he and his parents migrated to Melbourne.. He completed a carpentry apprenticeship and eventually set up his own carpentry/building business in which he continued to work until retirement only a few years ago.

However, his other interest was the environment and after joining FESWI in 1989, he soon became a very active member so much so that after decades of work he was awarded lifetime membership for his total commitment to the wetlands.



His most prominent undertaking was to totally renovate 'Duck In' when it was handed over to FESWI by the CSIRO which had used the building for launching balloons.

Ross's donation of time, effort and expertise on this project resulted in a much-needed building for meetings, storage, and information dissemination by FESWI for decades.

He also built the little bridge on the path leading into the hide.

Ross attended many environmental meetings representing FESWI where he met Christine Cama, who was then President of the Friends of Braeside Park. Their common interest in the environment resulted in a 28year partnership.

His commitment to his family, the environment, FESWI and the community will be truly missed.

Rest in Peace.



Ross installing nest boxes

### FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

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# FROM THE CLC MEETING

Client Liaison Committee—Melbourne Water meets regularly with wetland stake holders.

## Kingston Council –

### Edithvale Rd Boardwalk Update

Kingston Council is proposing to upgrade the walking path on the southern side of Edithvale Road with 300 metres of raised boardwalk due to issues with the current path being inundated during wet periods. Because there is a gas mains pipeline running under the existing path, the alignment need to change with the new path proposed to be closer to the wetland boundary. The raised boardwalk would be 3.5 metres wide, would utilise screw pile footings, and is proposed to include bollard lighting (solar) to highlight the boardwalk at night.

Plans are at the early concept stage. More consultation will come as the plans are refined.

### Frankston Council

Several snakes have been observed in the Seaford buffer area and the Downs Estate recently.

Spiny Rush control will progress over the next few weeks, concentrating on the Downs Estate area.

The Seaford eastern buffer will host a National Tree Day site on Sunday 28th July. All welcome.

## BirdLife Reports: Sean Dooley

Water levels are still reasonably high at both wetlands, which has been good for water fowl diversity.

### Edithvale

100 Sharp-tailed Sand Pipers recorded at Edithvale on the February survey

Latham’s Snipe at Edithvale North – 42 recorded in November and 35 in January.

16 Plumed egret – first record of this species at Edithvale since the official census began

Peregrine Falcon noted in January

### Seaford

Good numbers of Crakes and Rails recorded, likely as a result of good breeding conditions inland.

Conditions were looking good for shorebirds, but water levels increased in January.

Latham’s Snipe – 18 individuals recorded in January, this number is down on recent years, likely due to the wetlands being so full.

Sean noted that rabbit numbers have increased at Seaford.

Downs Estate – no water is being pumped from Wadsleys Drain—MW is aware of this. There is an issue with the electrical connection to the pump.



Plumed Egret Photo: [eBird](#)  
[S39576092Macaulay Library ML 71016611](#)



Buff-banded Rail Photo Steve McDonald

# S&C ELECTRIC ASIA PACIFIC—GREAT WORK!

FESWI has had a second visit from 19 employees of S&C Electric Asia Pacific to Seaford Wetlands to do environmental work there.

This company has strong environmental credentials.

It seeks to reduce its carbon footprint which is evidenced in many ways, including donations to environmental groups and allowing its staff time from normal employment to do voluntary work in environmental areas.

On this occasion (14<sup>th</sup> March) 19 employees of S&C Electric Asia Pacific completed some fantastic voluntary work in the eastern buffer zones of the Seaford Wetlands.

They were supported by two FCC employees and three FESWI members (Julie, Cathy and Robin) to spread a huge amount of mulch (and everyone who has done this type of work knows how tiring it can be) in preparation for in-planting. They did an amazing job, thickly covering about 140 meters x 6-7 meters.

The same company has also made a very generous donation to FESWI.

Many, many thanks to S&C Electric Asia Pacific and its friendly hard working workers.



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## SOMETIMES IT'S ALL ABOUT SYNCHRONICITY!

A new member, Barbara Macauly, has very kindly offered to do some weeding and planting in the bird hide car park. Although FESWI has no control over this area, we try to look after it, by removing fast food packaging and other minor rubbish; and by trying to keep the plant beds in and around the park looking good. So, this offer was a godsend and very gratefully received. Thanks so much, Barbara.

At about the same time an organisation called *Threatened Species Conservancy* got in touch with FESWI and offered us plants. How's that for synchronicity! Of course, we gratefully accepted the offer, and all will get underway shortly. Thanks heaps Molly and the Conservancy.



Rex and Barbara at the Hide



Pale Flax-lily



Twiggy Daisy-bush



Bare Twig-sedge

# CARRUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marcus Mulcahy

Remarkable things are happening at Carrum Primary School, among which is a project titled *Wetlands Matter*.

Teacher and Learning Specialist, Tony Mulcahy has given FESWI the following information about this impressive project.

A team of eight students from Carrum Primary have researched and developed a website about frogs and wetlands. The *Wetlands Matter* project is a partnership between *Carrum Primary School*, the *Monash University Virtual School*, and *Koorie Engagement Support Officer* for the Northern Peninsula Network, *Alan Johnson*.

The project first started with a visit to Monash University where the students created "frogs" with Little Bits electronics and designed and printed 3D models of frogs.

The next research stop was the Edithvale Wetlands Bird Hide where we met Robin Clarey from the *Friends of Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands Inc.* Robin showed us around the Bird Hide and we explored the beauty and wonder of our local Wetlands.

We also gained insight from Alan Johnson about the history of this region and how the Bunurong people lived and flourished in this environment. The *Wetlands Matter* website features podcast Interviews, puzzles and information about frogs in



Jude and Clementine, who interviewed FESWI, with teacher Marcus in front of the school's wetland.

our local area. <https://sites.google.com/carrumps.vic.edu.au/wetlandsmatter>

Our project is laying the foundation and helping our school and the students to understand how we can look at this project through an Aboriginal lens. The next stage of our project will be to look for and engage with the traditional owners or another Aboriginal person who can take that knowledge and learning to the next level of cultural understanding.

**Ed Note** -What a truly great learning experience this school is affording its students!

## WALKERS VISIT BIRD HIDE

Marg Hunter

On 14<sup>th</sup> March the Walking Group from the Chelsea Heights Community Centre, paid a visit to the bird hide. The water levels were very low, making it a unique experience for many of them as they were not aware of the ephemeral nature of the wetlands and the mud. With the high water levels in the past twelve months, it highlighted the changing seasons at Edithvale.

There were many questions, and it was a welcome opportunity to view the wetlands in a different environmental condition.

**Ed Note** – Contrary to what some people may think, it is a good thing that the wetlands do dry up because it gives the Sea Club-rush ( *Bolboschoenus caldwellii* ) a chance to grow and provide food for the following spring.



# BONBEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL

On 21<sup>st</sup> March approximately 85 Bonbeach Primary School pupils (Grade 1 and 2), in two groups, visited Seaford Wetlands to learn about why they are important and about the animals that live there.

There were various displays – some interactive – on hand for the children to look at after listening to a talk from FESWI members.

The kids were great – they were interested and engaged and asked lots of questions.

Three FESWI members – Ali, Cathy and Robin hosted the visit.



The group settles for a talk.



A Southern Brown Tree Frog generates interest.

## ODD AND ENDS

### 20 April Photo Shoot

Donna Carton (Media & Communications Advisor COK) arranged for photo shoot at the bird hide on Saturday 20 April with councillor camera man, Frank and councillor Cr Hill. It will be featured in the Kingston Spring Edition Newspaper to all ratepayers—good publicity for FESWI. Thanks to FESWI volunteers who gave up their time to attend – Cathy, Ali, Helen, Nola, Marg, Simon, Rohan & Jaye.



### Newspaper Clippings

Hide volunteer, Russell Myers, has completed the massive job of filing and archiving old newspaper cuttings which are about the wetlands and FESWI. Thank you so much Russell.

# FROM LONG BEACH TO THE WATERLINE: MAKING A MOVE ON BOONWURRUNG COUNTRY

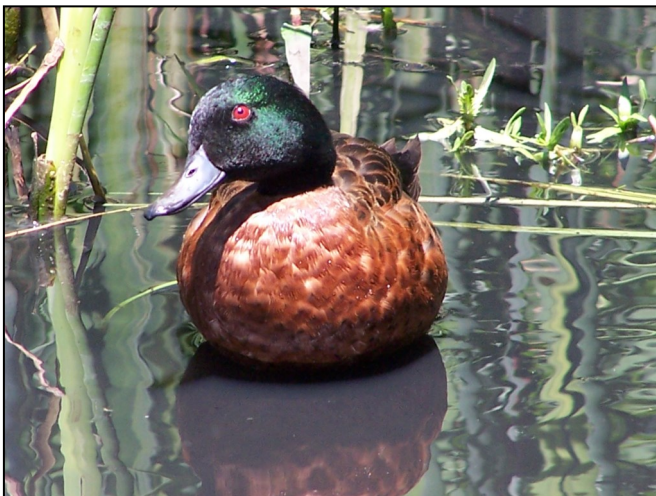
Les Sutherland

**Editor's Note:** Les is a member of FESWI and has recently moved away from the area to Corinella – a seaside town In Victoria's Gippsland region. She has made available to the Warbler beautifully written Nature Notes on each of these places which clearly reveals a perceptive and profound appreciation of nature. Warbler will publish it in two parts. **First part -**

## *Nature notes, Chelsea*

(15/11/23) I receive many reminders about life only being available in the present moment. Right now it is the tiny mustard-yellow ladybird on the pink table cloth. Its minute shell is shiny. A bird "chips" repeatedly nearby. The air in the shade is pleasant and cool, even a little cold. A yellow and red insect is hovering.

(20/11/23) Waking up, I heard chirping, and found three young wattlebirds (no longer fledglings but not yet adult) in the yard, making short inexpert flights up to the fence, the cat enclosure, the shed roof and into the pittosporum. I carefully excluded the cats. There was a sudden confident creaking call and an adult bird swept in to land beside the younger ones in that tree with the tubular dark purple flowers, and just as quickly flew on away somewhere else, and they instantly followed. I have seen an adult wattlebird park juveniles in that tree before, perhaps the first spring I was here in 2020.



(27/11/23) I saw the grebe and the ducks up close, and signed up to go to the bird hide again as a volunteer, because I want a reason to go and be there



for two hours on weekends and see the birds. I saw pink-eared ducks, and swans in flight. The honesty of what you see right in front of you can't be denied. Today I heard frogs, and birds singing from within the thick long grasses that cover much of the wetland.

On the way back I met a woman who volunteers to clean the beach of small pellets of plastic, released deliberately into the environment by a manufacturer as a way of getting rid of them, she says. This harms and kills the animals that consume them, including fish and birds. I picked up a twig with seed pods that had fallen from a she oak to add to my collection. The day is softly, lovingly cool and damp.

There's a faint calling of a raven in the far distance, sundry cheeps and comments. Tiny, misting rain drifts to the wet driveway. A butcherbird calls.

(28/11/23) Silvery-bright days continue. The sky is covered with shimmering grey-white clouds. I feel the coolness and damp air and hope for more rain. There is the sound of feathers beating against the air. The wet fence palings are glowing silver, grey, brown and gold, and I see the trees that they were. The air darkens a little.

Continued on Page 7

# FROM LONG BEACH TO THE WATERLINE: MAKING A MOVE ON BOONWURRUNG COUNTRY

The temperature is falling and I become cold. The pleasure of distant sounds amid quiet.

(4/12/23) A big possum is perched high in the pittosporum, mostly motionless. The black cat has climbed out of the yard and is lurking somewhere. I don't know where he is but the possum is surely aware of him. I hope and have faith at least that the possum can out-climb the cat if it came to a pursuit along the slender boughs and stems of the pittosporum.



The delicate transparent white husk of moon recedes west across cool morning sky, though west means nothing to the moon. The pale green fruits of the pittosporum echo the shape of the moon. The cat has returned and is confined inside the house; the possum remains motionless in its perch. Soft breezes wash my skin; each fence board prints a neat dark shadow strip on its neighbour. The possum has creamy yellow fur on its belly. The speckled cat, at rest on the tower in the enclosure, looks up in a dream at the young wattlebirds in the overhanging tree with purple flowers.

(5/12/23) Each day has its own feeling: a combination of light, temperature, pressure, stillness or movement of air, presence or absence of clouds, their stillness or movement. The rind of moon is

there, slightly shimmering, faithful. It is an unending miracle, although one day it will end. Cool air falls deliciously on me like water. As sunlight pours freely the wattlebirds begin to chatter. The leaves of the baby plants are turned up showing their delicate, varied faces. The potted lemon has produced a large, beautiful fruit, still lime-yellow.

(6/12/23) In the freshness of the morning, I can't feel it enough. I love to stay in this zone. I suddenly see more fully the blessing of this grove, overhung by leaves and fronds, while the house shields the yard from easterly sun. A quivering reflected mosaic of leaves and sky lies on the coffee's glossy pale brown surface. Delightful shade falls on me. The buzz of a small plane rises, fades. The tasks of the day call me, but I want to take this shady garden with me.

(12/12/23) Space and silence, with bird calls. Humid stillness, with hovering insects and a quivering white sky reflection on a bowl of water. When a faint breeze comes for a moment it is delicious and refreshing as an ocean wave. Yesterday I stood on the beach halfway between Chelsea and Edithvale, and looked north to where the city is (although it was invisible, hidden in clouds) and south to Frankston, and from this could extrapolate some sense of far greater space.



### Corporate Members

Following is a list of our corporate members. Please give them your support.

Patterson River Golf Club

Ray White, Chelsea

Longbeach RSL

Peninsula Pedallers,

Peter Murphy

Tania Ireton

Sonya Kilkenny

Corporate Edithvale Family And Children's Centre

Viridans Pty Ltd

Annual Subscription  
\$15.00

Account name:  
Society Cheque Account  
BSB: 063-118

Committee Meetings are held 3rd  
Wednesday of each month generally at the  
Education Centre or RSL. Observers welcome.

#### Committee 2024

President: Cathy Smith

Secretary Margaret Hunter

Vice President; Robin Clarey

Treasurer Rosalie Cooper

#### Committee Members

Peter Murphy Hilary Bray Rex Chugg

Nola Pitman Julie Stephens Jaye Williams



Ducksedo



Quackpack



Nut Quacker



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