

Jan-Feb

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.

2016

Wetland Warbler



Clamorous Reed-Warbler



Number 144

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WATERBIRD NUMBERS IN DECLINE

The most recent annual aerial survey of eastern Australia's waterways and wetlands has painted a truly depressing picture. Rainfall in eastern Australia has been well below average for the preceding 3 years (since the last La Niña in 2012) and the wetland area index was at the lowest level on record (33 years).

There were continued long term (33 years) declines in total waterbird abundance, wetland area, breeding abundance and breeding species richness (Figs 2,3 & 6).

These major indices all declined considerably in 2015, compared to the previous 3-5 year period and all were well below long term averages.

Total breeding index (all species combined) was the lowest on record and well below the long-term average (Fig. 5). Breeding was recorded only in a single location.

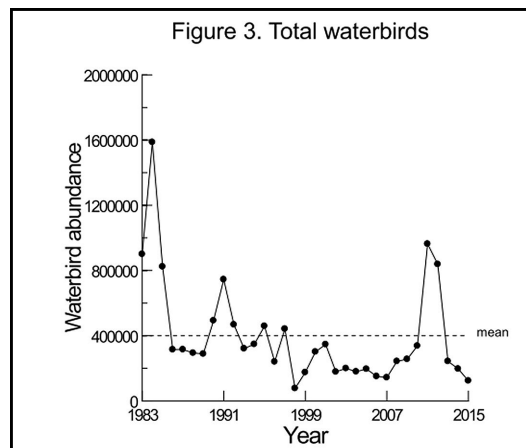
Breeding species richness was also very low, with only black swans breeding in very low numbers (Figs 6 to 8).

According to Richard Kingsford, project leader and director of the Centre for Ecosystem Science, waterbirds are the canary in the coalmine for the ecosystem because they track all processes and organisms within. He said that the low numbers were due to drought conditions which meant that the birds were dying or failing to breed and because the breeding

rates have been down for a number of years the existing population is not as resilient. He also said that given these results, the duck-shooting season should have serious restrictions.

Sources: Aerial Survey of Wetland Birds in Eastern Australia - October 2015
Centre for Ecosystem Science University of New South Wales.

The Age December 27 2015 Page 15



Take Action

Given that game species abundances were all well below long term averages, in many cases by an order of magnitude, why not write or email the Premier of Victoria requesting that the duck hunting season be abandoned altogether this year.

The Hon. Daniel Andrews
Premier of Victoria Use contact form at
<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/contact-us/>
Or email direct to
daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au
Or Mail

Office of the Premier
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia, 3002

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BIRDS AT SEAFORD WETLANDS

Robin Clarey

During December a veritable smorgasbord of different birds was to be seen on the drying banks of the main lagoon at Seaford. A large flock of migratory waders, mainly Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, but also Stints and Marsh Sandpipers; a number of Red-necked Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, a Black-fronted Dotterel, Marsh Terns, Grey Teal and the ubiquitous Seagulls were all hanging out together.

For someone who is not really a birdo and not used to seeing so many birds on the lagoon it was, as the travelling salesman said in an episode of *Fawlty Towers*, quite a “.... visual treat!”



SNIPPETS SNIPPETS SNIPPETS

Grants

FESWI has received a grant of \$550 from Melbourne Water to help with the ever-increasing cost of posting out our newsletter. Thanks Melbourne Water!

FESWI has also received extra money from Frankston City Council (Education & Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie Coffey) to help run *The Seaford Wetlands Awareness Day* in March (see Page 5). Thankyou Frankston City Council.

End of Year ESUC

Volunteers who open the Edithvale Seaford Education Centre on Sunday afternoons celebrated another year at a Christmas party at the Centre on 9th December. A nice relaxing get-together!

If you would like to volunteer in the new year Give Kate a ring on 9773022



Climate March



From left Susan, Philippa and Sue

FESWI was represented at the *People's Climate March* on Friday November 27 by four intrepid Friends marching behind the FESWI banner.

Across the globe, 785,000 people hit the streets at more than 2,300 People's Climate March events. And in Melbourne, organiser, Victoria McKenzie-McHarg estimated the crowd was approximately 60,000 strong.

(Poor quality photo was taken on a \$29 mobile phone. Apologies. Ed.)



World Wetlands Day



World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2nd February. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar. This Convention on wetlands is an inter-governmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of the world's wetlands. Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands are Ramsar Convention protected wetlands, which is one of the highest levels of protection a wetland can have.

To celebrate FESWI will conduct a walk through the Edithvale South (usually closed to the public) to view the kangaroos there, and any birds that might still be found - most will be gone because most of the water will be gone. We will also open the Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Education Centre following the walk.

Note: If the Tuesday is declared a total fire ban day, the walk will be cancelled.

Meet in the Bird Hide car park (Edithvale Road, north-west corner of the south wetlands - near the pedestrian lights) at 10am on Tuesday 2nd February)



NURDLES NURDLES??



At the November FEFN meeting, students from the Frankston High School Eco Team gave a presentation on “What are Nurdles”.

Nurdles are small plastic pellets used to make a wide range of plastic items; so small and light-weight that when dropped on industrial loading bays and/or factory floors they can soon escape to stormwater drains that lead to the Bay.

As they are very small (2-3 mm wide) and light-weight, they are easily transported by wind and water and are found in oceans and streams around the world. They are oil-based, so absorb other oil-based, toxic pollutants in waterways. Like other plastic debris they are ingested by wildlife such as fish, birds and mammals. Apart from plastic being indigestible, the toxins cause illness. Impacts on the whole food chain are not yet known.

The student team received a scholarship for their work from the St. Kilda Eco Centre. It is their intention to extend information about nurdles to local primary schools. The students had earlier found 300 nurdles in 15 minutes in a meter square of sand at Frankston beach. They invited the meeting to go out to check out the sand – and sure enough dozens of them!



Nurdle Hunting

About 95% of litter in Port Phillip Bay comes from the stormwater drains across metropolitan Melbourne. Litter is washed from streets into stormwater drains, to creeks and rivers and wetlands, and eventually to Port Phillip Bay. Approximately 4,600,000 of the items that enter Melbourne waterways are floatable.

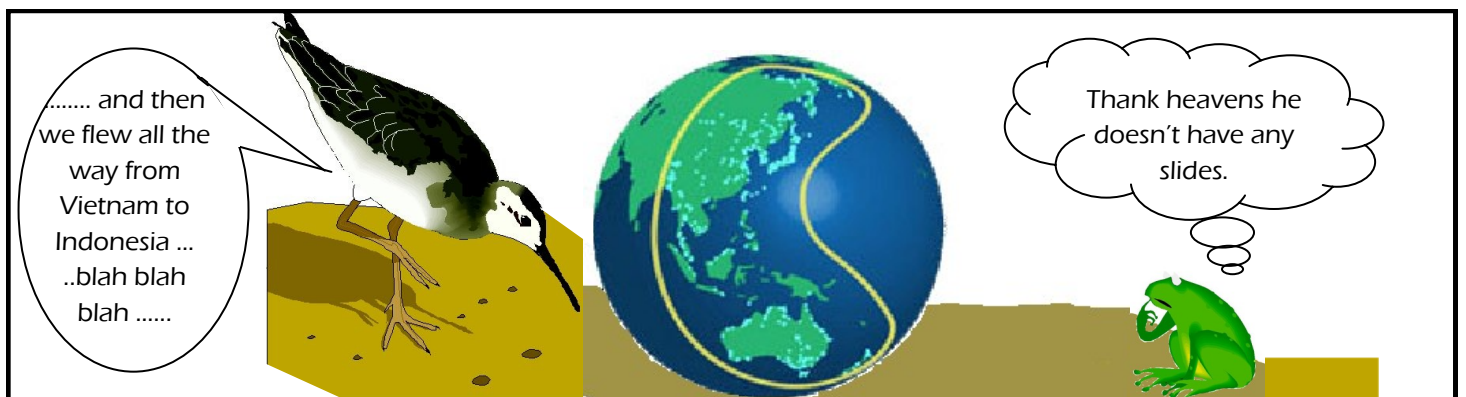
Given nurdles documented capacity for serious ecological harm, immediate attention needs to be given to track down the sources and prevent their ongoing influx to waterways.

Source: Port Phillip Baykeeper.com

On a Related Note

Microbeads, tiny plastic beads common in personal care, cosmetic and cleaning products are a major pollutant of water systems. They are ingested by filter feeders and from there up the food chain into the human food cycle. Luckily Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, and his state and territory counterparts have agreed to phase out these pollutants by July, 2018.

Great! If something can be done about microbeads, then something ought to be able to be done about nurdles. Source: Herald Sun Wednesday 16/12/2015 Page 11



SEAFORD WETLANDS AWARENESS DAY

On Sunday March 6th FESWI will be running a *Wetlands Awareness Day* at the Seaford North Primary School. We have many displays planned as well as activities, mainly for children but also for adults. We expect to have other environmental groups to have a presence there and the school to provide drinks and a sausage sizzle.

Though still in the planning stage, it is envisaged that activities will include many of the following: music; fact finding treasure hunt; migratory bird

colouring and route flying activity; frog activity; wetland express (trackless train); wetland walk (and maybe bike ride); Clean Up Australia; and tree planting including maybe novelty planting .

As you can imagine we will need some help in running the day, if you can manage a couple of hours on the day we would be very grateful.

Ring Robin on 9786 2213 or 0405 466 651

And of course we would love to see you there as visitors if you are not in a position to help.



WORKS AT SEAFORD



Piles of earth are being levelled in the buffer zone at Seaford to make the path more or less level with the land on each side, thereby making it safer for users.

WORKS AT EDITHVALE

Melbourne Water will be undertaking grooming/slashing works on the North side of Edithvale in late January/early February and then the plan is to undertake grooming/slashing works in the Southern side from about mid Feb to mid-March. During this period the wetlands will need to be closed to access mainly for safety concerns while the machinery is working.

Temporary fencing around the bird hide has also been complet-



Corporate Members

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

Aspendale Primary School
 Aspendale Gardens Primary School
 Frank and Isobel Baguley's Nursery
 Bird Life Australia
 Bonbeach Primary School
 Chelsea Heights Community Centre
 Longbeach RSL
 Edithvale Primary School
 Frankston Primary School
 Gales Marine Centre
 Instant Garden Nurseries at Gardenworld Keysborough
 Good Shepherd Aged Services – Mary Ville Hostel

Audrey Harding
 Hasuval Engineering Service Pty Ltd
 Tania Ireton
 McDonald's Family Restaurant, Chelsea Heights
 Melbourne Water, Waterways & Drainage
 Mordialloc College
 Mordialloc Primary School
 April Nutter
 Parkdale Secondary School
 Peninsula Pedallers Inc
 Presbyterian Ladies College

Ray White, Chelsea
 Rotary Club of Aspendale
 Seaford North Primary School
 Seaford Park Primary School
 Seaford Primary School
 Soroptimist International of Brighton
 St Anne's Primary School
 St Joseph's School
 St Louis de Montfort's
 Treeplanters Nursery
 Veitch & Co Pty Ltd



**Melbourne
Water**

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**Friends of
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