

# Jul-Aug

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.

# 2017

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Clamorous Reed-Warbler



Number 153

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## Wetland Warbler

# ANNIVERSARY PARTY

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August more than 30 bird hide volunteers celebrated the first-year anniversary of the re-opening of the hide. It was very pleasant – getting together with the group as a whole and having a chat, some tucker and enjoying the view from the windows.

President Kate spoke, “We are here to celebrate the first-year anniversary of the re-opening of the hide, and it is so nice that Philippa and Alison are present to celebrate with us, for if not their dedication and hard work we would not be here today. And thanks, too, to Brian and Tim Lowe who carried out the restoration.

The hide was closed for five years and its official re-opening was a very special occasion attended by volunteers, politicians, councillors, Melbourne Water, and Sean Dooley (*Bird Life*) who gave a passionate speech about his love for the wetlands and the hide.

Many thanks also go to all our volunteers who ensure that the hide remains open to the public on week-



ends and to groups on other days. Lastly thanks to Alison for posting a chronology of the restoration of the hide on our website.”

Thanks to all who attended – your on-going support is truly appreciated!

Statistics: Currently there are 41 volunteers (youngest 11 years old and oldest 79) who open the hide on week-ends and over the year there have been in excess of 2050 visitors (including 14 groups.).



From left, Rosalie and Jim (79) and Finnegan (11)

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# FACEBOOK MEETING



**K**irsty, Ian and Alison met early in July at a Seaford café to review how FESWI Facebook is performing, to get team feed-back and to plan for future direction and posts.

Ideas for posts:

- \* History of Downs Estate and wetlands
- \* What is RAMSAR?
- \* Seaford Wetlands has a series of levy banks to control flooding
- \* First year of bird hide in August - highlight this
- \* What you can do in your backyard to help your local wetlands/flora/fauna
- \* Plants of the wetlands
- \* Possums and other animals of the wetlands

Other ideas canvassed: Interviews; "What's going on in the wetlands at the moment"? - post every Tuesday (or every 2nd Tuesday); calendar of events; other Facebook pages we can connect with.

Ed Note: Facebook is looking really great—well done to you three—our Facebook team!

## DONATION BOX DONATED



**A** new donation box has been donated to the hide by FESWI member Beiha Yanez, replacing our previous more make-shift one (courtesy of Alison).

Thanks Beiha.

# AT THE HIDE

**V**isitors to the hide have noticed some of the swans have neck bands with numbers on them. These are fly-ins from Albert Park Lake which supports a permanent population of around 150 swans. The *Myswan* organisation has tagged around half of the birds with numbered neck collars, which allow it to recognise individuals and track their movements and fate over time.

Some people are concerned that the collars are too tight and are choking the birds. This is not the case. In winter, or during displays, the birds fluff out their neck feathers, which can give the collar the appearance of being 'tight'. The neck collars are actually quite a loose fit on the swan's neck and are free to slip up and down during normal activities.

For more information go to <http://www.myswan.org.au>



**A**t the Edithvale wetland bird hide on Sunday 9 July 2017 we observe that the water birds are once again disturbed and assume the disturbance has been caused by a Swamp Harrier doing a regular flyover.

Then with eyes glued to the left hand side of the hide we watch an Australian Hobby quickly and sharply descend and pull out of the descent before hitting the water, then fly up and repeat the dive and pull out. On the third attempt it picks up a Hoary-headed Grebe and flies off with grebe in its talons. At one stage when it was at the top of its dive cycle it appears to be hovering like a kestrel when getting itself ready for another dive.

When I volunteered for bird hide duty at Edithvale wetlands I hadn't realised that I would be getting the best seats to the greatest shows in town!

Val Ford

# SNIPPETS SNIPPETS SNIPPETS

## Working Bees

For the August working bee, FESWI participated in the National Tree Day planting at Seaford.



Rex (second from right) works with community volunteers.

## Group Visits to Hide

In July, a small group of Field Naturalist visited, and later in the month a larger group of Bird Life Photographers made a good use of the photo opportunities from the hide windows.

## Railway Crossings

We are looking to gain representation on the *Community Reference Groups* re Seaford and Edithvale railway crossing removal projects.

## Planting at Seaford

Melbourne Water has put in 100's of plants at Seaford which is great. What is not great, however is the fact that to date more than 220 of them have been stolen! These people not only steal from tax payers who ultimately pay for these plants but they also steal from the environment, which for many of us is the greater sin. Hopefully, for them, what goes around comes around.



## Bird Hide

We have been working with the *Lowe Construction* to get the modifications completed that will get us the Certificate of Final Inspection for the hide.

We've been in touch with Phillip Walter (Melbourne Water) regarding the licence for operating the hide.

## Grants

FESWI has received a grant of \$700 for the purchase of binoculars for the hide from Kingston City Council. Thanks Kingston!



## Frankston Indigenous Nursery

Lorraine continues to represent FESWI volunteering at the nursery every Wednesday morning. Pictured here (centre ) with two other volunteers, Mary and Manu.

Good on you, Lorraine!



## History

Some of our members, led by Dorothy Meadows OAM, are compiling a history of FESWI—which is great! And a DVD is being put together based on an old cassette tape that was made many years ago by Ross Nelson (15 minutes – all about the wetlands) which will be made available to the public and to schools.

## Annual General Meeting

Note this date for the 2017 AGM. It will be on the afternoon of 12<sup>th</sup> November at the Education Centre. More details later.



# COUNTRY LIFE IN KAWARREN

Philippa Bailey

With great excitement, I spotted two Flame Robins sitting on the fruit tree watering system, right outside the kitchen window. They were gone before I could access my camera, but were only a metre away from me through the window, so I could observe them in full glory.

In a past copy of the *Wetland Warbler* I wrote a piece about observing the Flame Robins at Seaford Wetlands. I went on a stalking mission one day and was about to abandon my quest, when a group flew in, alighting on the fence rail and I spent some time enjoying their antics. I grew up with the Robin Redbreast in England and the sight of Flame Robins touches those memories for me.



Kawarren is on the edge of the Otway ranges and only 30 kilometres from Weeaprounah, which has the highest rain fall in Victoria, so our property is wet to say the least. We have two dams, one particularly favoured by a White-faced Heron and sometimes a cormorant, and the other home to a group of wood ducks. There are four at the moment, but their numbers were as high as sixteen in the summer. They usually wander around the grass areas near the dams, but one day ventured into the veggie garden, lured by fresh lettuce seedlings. I spotted them before too much damage was done. Since I have netted the veg, the ducks and I live harmoniously together!

The White-faced Heron comes and goes and we have seen two birds on rare occasions. It seems that it also visited the neighbours up the road and was quite taken with their pond. The couple were enjoying seeing the heron up close in their garden, until they conducted a goldfish count and came up with nought. The pond has been replenished and now sports a netting cover. The heron was observed circling the pond with a puzzled look on its face!

We have been noticing frog sounds at night and are looking forward to hearing the Pobblebonk frogs in coming weeks.

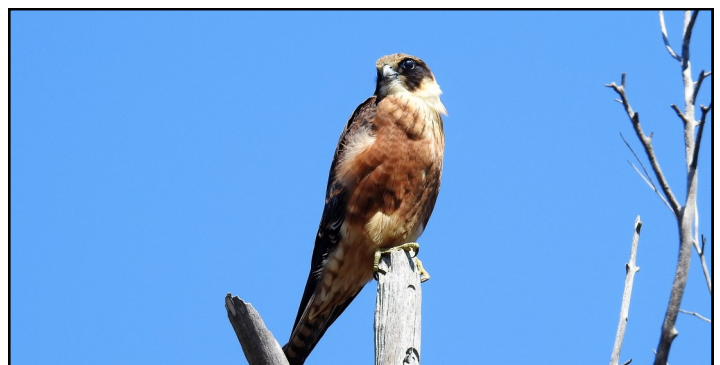
When we arrived here last August, the Pobblebonks provided a nightly chorus.

Other birds that frequent our property are parrots and rosellas, swallows, honeyeaters, wattlebirds, wagtails, magpies, kookaburras and the dreaded bower birds. I had heard about the bower birds, but did not realise how destructive they are until confronted with them swooping right up to our front door. We have had laden fruit trees over summer and autumn and have invested heavily in bird netting, which has been successful for the most part.

There is much work to be done to maintain our eight acres, but I love to spend a few moments of contemplation now and then watching the birdlife around us!



Black-shouldered Kite Photo: Steve McDonald



Australian Little Falcon Photo: Steve McDonald



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