

# Mar-Apr 2015

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.



Number 140



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

## Wetland Warbler

# WETLANDS AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

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A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water, either permanently or seasonally, such that it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem. Most of us are aware of the 'traditional' roles that wetlands play in the environment.

### Biologically Diverse

They are considered to be the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, providing essential habitat for many different birds, fish, frogs and macro-invertebrates. Many other animals that live in other habitats also use wetlands, particularly for migration or reproduction. For example they provide an important stopover or final destination for many migratory birds.

### Flood Retarders

Wetlands can be thought of as nature's shock absorbers by accepting high volumes of water during storms and heavy rains to be later released more slowly into rivers and lakes thus countering the erosive forces of fast moving water.

### Purifiers

Water, flowing through the catchments, gathers contaminants – fertilisers, pesticides, industrial chemicals etc – which end up in wetlands. These have a remarkable capacity to break down these contaminants before they enter the sea. They improve water quality by trapping sediments, filtering out pollutants and absorbing nutrients that would otherwise result in poor water quality for

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## Kangaroo Walk



Sunday May 17th at 1:00 pm

Come along for a different experience.

Walk along the narrow passages through the tall phragmite.

Trek the kangaroo paths through the thick, surprisingly tall grasses.

View the kangaroos viewing the walkers.

Meet in the bird hide car park (not the Discovery Centre)



# WETLANDS AND CARBON CONT.

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downstream users. For example wetlands collect, clean and then release some vegetative matter into rivers, which helps feed the fish there.

### Kidneys of the Earth

Because of their many cleansing benefits, wetlands have traditionally known as the 'kidneys of the earth' as compared with the rain forests as being the 'lungs of the earth'.

However recent research into wetlands may be throwing out a challenge to the rain forests' sobriquet.

### Carbon Sequestration

In an Australian first, a study by Deakin University is being undertaken to discover the part wetlands play in counteracting climate change.

Initial studies suggest that wetlands have the potential to capture and store up to 50 times as much carbon as high carbon sequestration ecosystems such as tropical rain forests; and they can bank up to 33% of the carbon found in terrestrial soils yet they only make up 4% of the world's surface.

Wetlands stock up carbon by trapping organic materials, from other locations, under sediment and water, thus preventing it from being released.

Over the next two years scientists from Victoria and NSW will participate in an international project to determine exact numbers and the impact of wetland restoration.

Sources:

John Elder Sunday Age Feb 2015

Don Conifer ABC Feb 2015



## A Tragic Tale of a Tawny Frogmouth

Roger Francey

On 19 October 2014, my daughter mentioned a possible 'owl' nest on the bike track around 100m NNE of the Duck-Inn in the Edithvale Wetlands reserve. I hopped on the bike with binoculars and soon located it, a nest in a tall eucalypt, occupied by what looked like a Tawny Frogmouth. Later in the afternoon, when heavy clouds had cleared, I returned with a tripod and camera (compact Canon SX50 with zoom lens) I set up on the opposite side of the bike track and managed to get this photo.

Yes, a Tawny Frogmouth, but also a small chick with closed eyes. It is the male Tawny Frogmouths that usually attend the nest during the day, so I will call the adult 'he'. His left eye (on our right) has a huge pupil, and the pupil in his right eye (lit by the sun low in the west) is small – creating an impression of mixed alarm and menace.

Four days later, the scene had changed for the worse, dramatically. In the interim, contractors with a large excavator had swept along the east side of the bike track 'cleaning up'. Large trees had

been removed, their remnant trunks now around the small dam 50m to the east, and lesser vegetation, melaleucas and casuarinas etc., removed; the latter included shrubbery immediately under the nest. As well, the wind was gusting strongly and the branch with the nest whipping around. A small lifeless wing, flapping to-and-fro with the wind was all that indicated the previous occupants.



# SNIPPETS SNIPPETS SNIPPETS

## Seaford Working Bees

Rex, co-ordinator, has reported that Melb Water has taken ownership of land at Seaford formally controlled by Frankston Council. Rex is now working with the MW Seaford ranger, Alan Clements, to arrange planting sites for 2015, possibly on the eastern side of the wetlands. A scout group will be helping with the planting next month.

## Clean Up Australia Day

FESWI inaugurated its first Clean Up Australia Day at Seaford this year on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Although we didn't get a huge turn out those who were there did a fantastic job. At first it did not look like there was much rubbish around the southern pond (where efforts were concentrated) but once we got started in and around its environs it was surprising just how much there was – bottles, cans, other receptacles, cloth material, toys, bits of timber and metal, and – surprisingly – a pair of men's jocks!

Thanks to Sharelle and Nick and their two kids and to Sally – great job.

Altogether we collected 10 large bags of rubbish.



## Bird Hide

Things are moving slowly but surely on the bird hide restoration More details next issue.



## A Bit of a Worry then Great News

Les has come through a first-ever operation at Jessie McPherson Hospital with flying colours. A problem, which began 15 years ago, with the pituitary gland started causing more problems recently. It has been hopefully fixed for good with an operation on 16th April. Les was out of hospital on the following Saturday and marched in Chelsea on Anzac Day.

Good on you Les!

## Green Army Corps

On behalf of FESWI, Philippa, President, has been attending focus groups run by Green Army Corps. FESWI may look into working with the Green Army Corps on a project that will benefit both groups.



# SUMMER BY THE SEA

Philippa Bailey



FESWI was pleased to organise an event for the 2015 DEWLP Coast Care Summer by the Sea program.

22 participants joined discovery walks around Edithvale North and South wetlands. It was an opportunity for FESWI to hand out the new walks brochures and follow the routes around the perimeters of Edithvale North and South wetlands.

It was a warm day and the birds were out in numbers. A group of 20 + Ibis were foraging on the grass in one spot, highlighting the gregarious nature of the birds. It is vitally important that dogs are kept on leashes in the wetlands area, as birds such as these ibises would be frightened and

would take flight if a dog chased them.

Hérons were also sighted at the northern end of the ponds. These birds tend to be solitary. Swamp hens were wading in the shallows, and we watched the ducks, swimming with their new babies paddling hard to stay close to Mother.

Some of the younger children took delight in the dog pond area and were fascinated by the shells near the water's edge.

The Edithvale North walk took just over an hour, and we ended up at the viewing platform. The North walk participants left FESWI volunteers Philippa & Margaret there, and 2 fresh participants arrived for the Edithvale South perimeter walk.

We set off hoping to see kangaroos, but were unlucky due to the heat of the day. A wetlands neighbour called out to us to say a large kangaroo had been hovering near his back fence earlier that morning.

Both circuit walks are interesting and a manageable distance 2.5 – 3.0 kilometres for young and old. The walks brochure is available from the Education Centre on Sunday afternoons, or the City of Kingston office.

FESWI plan to offer the walk again next Summer by the Sea season, adding a visit to the Education Centre on to the end of the walk.

## HOMO MORONICUS



Just as you can tell which animal has passed through by the spoor it leaves behind, so you can tell which human being has passed through, as in the case of the photos taken in the bird hide car park - Homo Moronicus.

# CAT CURFEWS

Robin Clarey

There is growing pressure for more local councils to impose night and even 24-hour curfews on roaming cats. More than 25 councils now have some kind of cat curfew in place including Frankston and Kingston.

This is a somewhat vexed issue. Curfews cause division among residents, and make it hard for cat owners because cats are difficult to confine to their properties and they are well loved companion animals. Some claim that it is cruel to keep a cat confined.

RSPCA Victoria animal services executive manager Helen Cocks said it is possible for cats to live happily within property boundaries. "RSPCA's policy goes beyond curfews and instead focuses on keeping cats within a boundary at all times," she said.

According to various studies which have placed tracking devices on cats, there is no doubt that cats

roam quite long distances from home when given the opportunity, which has apparently surprised their owners.

South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter manager Michele Phillips is lobbying the Monash City Council to implement a 24-hour curfew. Ms Phillips said she treated up to 3000 animals each year, mostly birds and possums. At least 1800 of them had been harmed by cats.

So on which side of the fence do you jump? Allow cats the enjoyment they get from wandering? Or keep wildlife safe from their predations?

Hmmm? I know which side I would jump. Keep other animals safe. Sorry, moggies!

Sources: The Age April 21, 2015.  
2015 Discovery Communications  
National Geographic Aug 2014

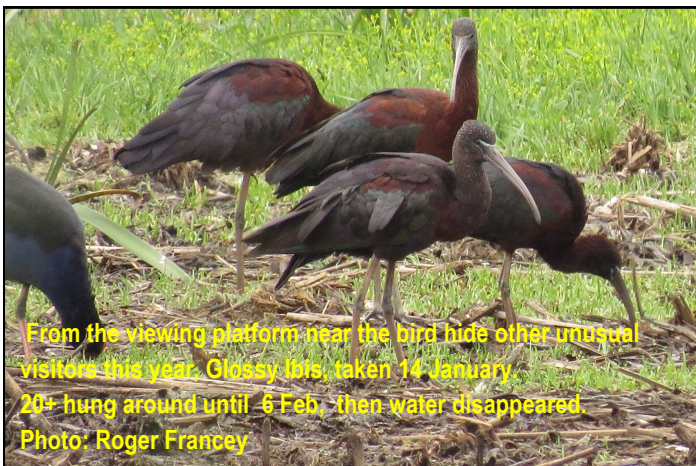


## AT EDITHVALE



Freckled ducks seen close to 38° 1'50.74"S, 145° 7'18.83"E. First seen 14 Feb 2015 (12), then 15 Feb (15+), 26 Feb (14), 7 Mar (1), 22 Mar (9+) . Photo: Roger Francey

Thanks Roger for the photos.



From the viewing platform near the bird hide other unusual visitors this year. Glossy ibis, taken 14 January. 20+ hung around until 6 Feb, then water disappeared. Photo: Roger Francey

## ALSO AT EDITHVALE

The new building on Edithvale Road, *The Family and Children Centre* has had landscaping done around the front of it which looks really good. However ... we notice that part of the planting comprises Coastal gazania (*Gazania rigens*) which is regarded as an environmental weed in Victoria. It can severely alter the vegetation structure in plant communities by suppressing native plants. It is also difficult to permanently eradicate from coastal environments, because it is often reintroduced into managed areas from nearby residential gardens. In 2005, the weedy gazanias were listed in one research publication as among the ten most serious invasive plants currently being sold by Australian nurseries. (Fact Sheet: Weeds of Australia Old Gov't.) So Kingston Council, we are hoping that you have used one of the new sterile forms. Have you?



## 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

Chelsea 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

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## Melbourne Water

**Production of this newsletter funded through**

**PRINTED BY THE OFFICE OF  
MARK DREYFUS, MHR FOR ISAACS**



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Edithvale – Seaford  
Wetlands Inc.**

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