

May-Jul 2015

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.



Number 141

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Wetland Warbler



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

BITTERNS AT EDITHVALE

Kate Spillane

It was the Friend's turn to be rostered on at the Edithvale Seaford Wetland Education Centre this Mothers Day.

It was a very cold and wet day and the 3 - 5pm shift was particularly quiet. Helen Corcoran and I did not mind as we always find lots to chat about.

Then at about 4.30pm with a bunch of new visitors arriving, Helen noticed a very large bird just out ahead of her through the glass window.

She exclaimed, "Oh look at that bird, it looks prehistoric!" For the first few seconds in all the excitement I ran around exclaiming that it is a very special endangered bird, which can sometimes be found in the area. Once I had calmed down, I explained to our visitors that it was an Australasian Bittern and I had just enough time to refer to the identification cards prior to it taking flight.

The rain then came down hard and it was time to close the centre. We all took shelter in the centre a little longer to

keep dry but also in the hope that it appeared again.

No such luck again that day however I am told that Melbourne Water Staff were lucky enough to catch a sight of the bittern the following Sunday 17 May 2015.



Photo Richard Hall

© Richard Hall

The sighting was passed onto *Birdlife Australia*, and to the *Bitterns in Rice Project*, which sent the following response back – "Edithvale is a place we suspect some bitterns from the NSW Riverina might use during winter (because there seems to be an influx then), so who knows, maybe your bird is a bird from the rice crops. Thanks for taking the time to report your sighting."

For more information about the *Bitterns in Rice Project* see Page 2.

If you would like to volunteer at Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Education Centre give Kate a ring.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It is time to renew your FESWI membership.

The committee intends to rationalize the FESWI database so if you wish to remain a member (and we hope you do!) it is important that you remember to renew.

FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

Assoc No. A0017388A

ABN - 95 886 101 621

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Not Applicable

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Newsletter Robin Clarey
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Membership Database
Chris Spencer 9786 1591

EGRETS AND EELS

Alison Kuitert

Alison has sent us photos of an egret catching eels at Seaford Wetlands in the South Pond on Austin Road.

Alison writes, "I saw it catch three and by the look of its belly it already had a few inside. These were taken late in the afternoon and not in a very photographic position, but they show the bird clearly tangling with the eels."

It caught an eel in the water and then raced to the bank to make sure it didn't get away as it was writhing around and quite slippery. Then it proceeded to pick it up, mash it a bit, drop it again several times before getting the eel's head in the right position and swallowing it, still wriggling. It stretched its neck out a couple of times to get it down and then went off in search of another.



Pictures by Alison

BITTERNs IN RICE PROJECT

Since 2012, the project has been uncovering the well-guarded secrets of Australia's Budy Bird – the globally endangered Australasian Bittern – and raising awareness of its plight. We now know there is a breeding population that descends on the rice crops of the NSW Riverina each year, and in most years it numbers between 500 and 1000. This is remarkable, as there are only 1500-4000 individuals remaining in the world; Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia.

Our vision is to see bitterns and other significant wildlife prosper alongside rice-growing in the Riverina. We want to demonstrate that food production and wildlife conservation can work

together, building on the existing habitat values of rice crops. As global demand for food continues to grow, the need to better incorporate biodiversity into agriculture also grows. Dedicated conservation areas, such as fenced-off wetlands or national parks, are central yet inadequate in conserving biodiversity.

Crucially, we have the support of hundreds of rice farmers, many of whom feel the habitat values of rice-growing have been overlooked and are delighted to be able to produce a high quality food, supporting threatened species at the same time.

See <http://www.bitternsinrice.com.au>

Don't Forget Membership Renewal

See Page 5

Kangaroo Walk

Horrible weather led up to Sunday, May 17th but on the day it was great, and a good number of people attended the Kangaroo Walk around Edithvale South.

We had to negotiate some wet patches, particularly on the tracks through the phragmite but it was all part of the fun.

One kangaroo was obliging enough to allow close-up photos, however the others could only be seen at a distance.

We walked through grassed areas, through the phragmite and then onto open areas of bulboschoenus, some parts of which were very boggy.

On the way back we took in the kangaroo shelter, the roof of which provides water to a tank, and from there to a nearby trough.

We also saw pelicans in flight (magnificent birds!) and other bush birds.

All in all a good day.



Up-coming Dates

Working Bee: - 1st Sunday of every month, in the south-east corner of the buffer zone of Seaford Wetlands (Corner Austin Road and Francis Street) 10am – 12 noon.

Wetlands Education Centre, Edithvale Road: – 2nd and 4th Sundays, 1:00 – 5:00pm

FESWI Stalls: - Frankston Council Mayor’s Picnic at Cruden Farm, Langwarrin, 13th September.

- Bushcare’s Major Day Out: - Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Education Centre, 20th September.

- School Fetes, no dates yet

AGM – Early November

WORKING BEES

Seaford working bees over the last few months have been well attended and lots of plants (understorey) have been put in on the south-eastern corner of the buffer zone of the Seaford Wetlands. Mulch has been supplied and delivered by Frankston Council; this has been spread by Green Corps, and the plants have been put in by FESWI – great cooperation among diverse groups!

In May we thank Colin, Rex, Lorraine, and family members, Madison and Blake Cook together with their grandparents Ian and Rhonda.

In June, thanks to Jacqui, Lorraine, Dawn, Rex and Mike (new member – thanks Mike) and family Sharelle and Nick and kids Olivia and Ella (also new members – thanks).

In July, thanks to Rex, Mike, Greg, Lorraine, Dawn and Barb (new member – thanks Barb).

More new members would be very welcome. Working bees are on the first Sunday of every month, 10 – 12 noon.



May—Madison and Blake



June—The Whole Team

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Robin Clarey

If you live near a wetland (and even if you don't) get yourself out for a walk around one this winter. If you go when the air is still, the sky pale blue, and the sun is westering – you're in a magical place.

You can see the angled sun highlighting the plummy tops of the phragmite and the river reds with golden light. The eye gets the long view, as from distinct from the short view it generally gets in our cluttered urban environment, and you can see the suggestion of a mist forming in the distance, and above, the soaring and circling of the Swamp Harrier. The warm, pearly luminescence of the western skies starkly contrasts with the cold and steely light of an occasional intrusive street lamp.

The air is still and crisp. You can hear small birds settling into their roosts for the night with sleepy talk (except, of course, the black bird, which scolds

until the sun sets) and the Common Froglets calling from the reed beds.

On the calm wetland waters, reflecting a myriad of colours from the sky and surroundings, a small fleet of swans may sail by.



I used to run around the wetlands until the old knees sent up such a stream of complaint and invective to GHQ that I had to stop. Now I find it is more rewarding to walk - more time to imbibe and appreciate the ambience. **Try it.**



June 2015

Not applicable if you have joined in the last four months.

**Friends of
Edithvale-Seafood
Wetlands Inc.**

Assoc No. A0017388 ABN - 95 886 101 621

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code _____

Email: _____

Annual Subscription

- \$15.00 Individual
- \$20.00 Family
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Your Wetland Interests?

Bird Watching Plants Nature Study Education

Can You Help Us?

Tree Planting Publicity Hide Duty Other

Details (Other)

Please send your payment, together with this account, to our Treasurer at:

PO Box 2031
EDITHVALE 3196

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

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Seaford North Primary School

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Treeplanters Nursery

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Melbourne Water

Production of this newsletter funded through

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



**Friends of
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Time to renew your membership. See page 5