



GROUND-SWELL OF OPPOSITION TO COVE WAVE PARK

The City of Melville's determination to proceed with a plan for a massive 4.4ha surf sports and retail facility to be constructed for private profit on the Swan River foreshore at Tompkins Park is disappointing.

Neither SERAG nor the newly formed Alfred Cove Action Group is opposed to wave parks *per se*. **It is the location that is of concern:** a Bush Forever Site immediately adjacent to the A-Class Nature Reserve and Marine Park at Alfred Cove, identified for the conservation of native flora and fauna.

At various events organized over the past few weeks to inform and to gauge community sentiment, passers-by have crowded to share their objections, grab a t-shirt and sign a petition (now with well over 1000 signatures) to protect one of the last remaining natural areas with public open space along the Swan River Estuary.

SERAG maintains that the wave park facility will compromise the superb natural values of Alfred Cove, including the rich diversity of birdlife it supports. Given the enormous popularity of Point Walter and Heathcote (where families can enjoy themselves free of charge) and a burgeoning eco-tourism industry, SERAG believes the site should be developed instead in a way that will not jeopardise but rather nurture and promote the ecological health and beauty of the River. Hence we have generated a far **smaller and less invasive Alternative Concept Plan** - one that celebrates and protects the area's outstanding natural heritage and visual landscape values for their intrinsic worth, for their cultural importance and for the benefit of the present and future generations of the Perth community.

Its main elements include:



Alternative Concept Plan for development at Tompkins Park



Large crowds gather to share their concerns.

Photographs courtesy M Matassa & C O'Neill

For Young Families: A nature play area to facilitate the physical, cognitive and emotional benefits of unstructured play, and picnic facilities to for both visitors and locals living in increasingly compact urban housing.

For Cyclists & Walkers: Realignment of the popular dual-use pathway to remove some *very* dangerous bends that have contributed to serious accidents resulting in spinal injuries, and a 'pit stop' where running repairs to bicycles can be effected.

For Nature: Re-vegetation of a ribbon of Crown Land along the foreshore as a riparian 'buffer' and corridor habitat, and the conversion of an existing drain into a living stream.

For Nature-Lovers: Discrete viewing platforms with interpretive signage overlooking the River from which local and international visitors can appreciate the unique landscape vistas and exquisite natural values of the Estuary, without compromising those values.

For all the Community: A café, and multi-use open spaces within and external to the current bowling club building.

SERAG will continue its efforts to protect and conserve this beautiful part of the Swan River Estuary from such an insensitive development as the proposed wave park, at the next level of decision-making.

RESEARCH PROJECT INTO BEACH-NESTING BIRDS

In a collaborative effort between BirdLife WA, the Swan River Trust and SERAG a very exciting research project to support BirdLife Australia's *Shorebirds 2020* program has commenced.

It aims to improve the currently limited breeding success rate of birds which nest in simple scrapes in the sand just above the high water mark - and are thereby critically exposed to trampling by beach users. As an experiment, over summer a number of 'shelters' were erected on the island that has recently formed at the end of the Point Walter Spit. Constructed by students from Scotch College their purpose is to provide a source of protection for chicks.

Research will be conducted into the threats facing beach-nesting birds and the effectiveness of shelters and other protective strategies. Public awareness campaigns will also be conducted to draw community attention to the plight of these wonderful birds and secure the public's cooperation and assistance.



Nesting Fairy Tern; Red-capped Plover chick; BirdLife/SERAG volunteers placing a shelter, and shelter.

Photographs courtesy F Webster Wilkinson

COURAGEOUS CALTROP-BUSTERS!

Dot and Keith joined our group some years ago after a phone call to SERAG to express concern about outbreaks of Caltrop on the Attadale foreshore. Very soon after they had signed up to become active members and regular volunteers!

Coming from a rural background where Caltrop (*Tribulus terrestris*) and its impacts are well-known and feared, the retirees were worried about its spread in the area.

This weed is a flat, sprawling, summer-growing, annual herb. Its fruit is a woody burr with sharp rigid spines to about 6 mm long. It is toxic to sheep and may present similar problems to native fauna. Spines can painfully penetrate the feet of animals (especially dogs in this area) and people - and will even puncture bike tyres. Up to 1,000 fruit can be produced on each plant, with upward of 20,000 seeds per plant!



Manually removing Caltrop, using foam to collect its burrs.

Photograph courtesy M Matassa

VOLUNTEERS ACKNOWLEDGED

The outstanding efforts of SERAG volunteers Margaret Matassa and Jane Leahy-Kane (dec.) were acknowledged at the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Annual Awards Ceremony, held at Kensington late last year.

While CEO Jim Sharp outlined the contributions of both recipients over many years, certificates of appreciation were presented by Hon. Albert Jacob Minister for Environment and Heritage.

Jane's award was accepted by her husband Tony Kane.

The demonstrated commitment of Margaret and Jane to protecting and conserving the natural values of the Swan River Estuary has been truly inspirational, both women contributing many hundreds of hours not only in hands-on bushcare, but also in generously providing hospitality and undertaking essential organizational tasks.

We thank DPaW for its kind recognition of these dedicated people.

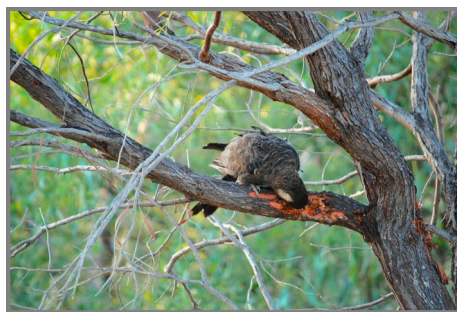


Photographs courtesy Guildford Photographics / DPaW

ACACIA SALIGNA & CARNABY'S BLACK COCKATOO

The beautiful golden wattle (*Acacia saligna*) that grows along our foreshore margins deserves more respect than it often receives!

The importance of *Acacia saligna* lies not only in its colonizing values and soil-improving effects in the restoration of degraded natural areas but also in the numerous habitat opportunities it provides birdlife and other native fauna.



The photographs left show Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos foraging on the galls and bark of *Acacia saligna*, uncovering tasty and highly nutritious grubs.

Given the cockatoo's *Threatened* status, every care should be taken to protect this special native plant.

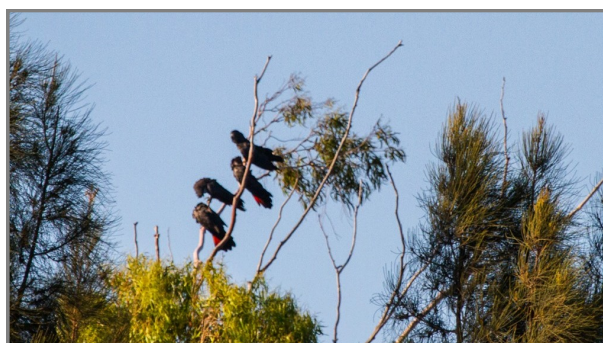
Photographs courtesy M Owen

RED-TAILS AT PELICAN POINT

The Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*) is listed as *Vulnerable*.

It was formerly common across the south-west, but is now rare to uncommon and patchily distributed over a range which has become markedly reduced. Usually seen in pairs or small flocks, it has declined due to the destruction of forests and woodlands; competition for nesting hollows with other native and exotic bird species and feral bees, and the impact of fire.

Loss of natural habitat has seen it more frequently venture into Perth urban areas, where surviving pockets of native vegetation - indeed individual trees! - provide *vital* food sources.



Red-tails adorn Pelican Point trees just before Christmas
Photograph courtesy T Graham Taylor

JUNCUS ACUTUS FOUND AT ATTADALE

Thanks to the vigilance of one of our members, large clumps of *Juncus acutus* have been identified and tagged and are steadily being removed from the Attadale Bush Conservation Reserve and foreshore.

An introduced weed commonly known as 'Spiny Rush', this sedge establishes in disturbed natural ecosystems, including riparian and wetland vegetation. It may also hybridise with the native *Juncus kraussii*. Once established it spreads to eliminate other vegetation, making sites impenetrable because of its strong sharp spines.



Photograph courtesy C O'Neill

FORESHORE CLEAN-UPS

Once again SERAG participated in the Swan River Trust's *Clean Our Rivers Week*, held between January 30th and February 5th.

Don't worry if you missed out!

You can always become part of our monthly team at Milyu - or perhaps join us at Pelican Point on **Clean Up Australia Day, 8.30am Sunday 5th March 2017**.

Please contact SERAG if you are interested in our *Monthly Monday at Milyu* events or register your interest in participating at Pelican Point on the Clean Up Australia Day website: www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/

We look forward to you joining us.



Hundreds of plastic wrappers such as this are collected from the foreshore each year!
Photograph courtesy C O'Neill



TACKLING WOODY WEEDS AT POINT WALTER

Thanks to the contribution of *many* hours of voluntary work along the Attadale and Alfred Cove foreshores, SERAG was able to fund contractors to continue the removal of large stands of woody weeds from the eastern section of Point Walter Reserve - a challenging task commenced by our Green Army team in 2015 to support the work being done by the City of Melville.

The grants we receive for projects such as this require us to contribute an equivalent value in volunteer time (at a basic rate) so the grant's worth is effectively doubled.

Together with the City's seasonal weed-management efforts, the removal of Brazilian Pepper and feral Olive trees paves the way for careful restoration of this beautiful bushland over the winter months, using seedlings grown from local indigenous species.



Stands of feral Olive and Brazilian Pepper being removed.
Photograph courtesy C O'Neill

WEEDING ATTADALE FORESHORE

In January and February various teams of volunteers focused their efforts on the manual removal of enormous outbreaks of weeds from the Attadale foreshore section of Alfred Cove A-Class Nature Reserve.

Among the weeds targeted were the 'usual suspects' for this time of the year: Prickly Lettuce, Nut Grass, Onion Weed, Wild Radish, Fleabane and Woody Starwort.

With very little shade due to a lack of canopy vegetation along this rather barren part of the foreshore, it proved tough work in hot conditions - but the results were positive with dozens of bags of weeds being removed.

Following the heavy rains in early February, however, we expect to be back again soon to take out the next crop!



Weeding the Attadale Foreshore
Photographs courtesy C O'Neill



FOR YOUR MARCH CALENDAR

- TREEmendous Tuesdays: Alfred Cove 7.00am - 9.00am
- 03 (Fri) *World Wildlife Day*
- 05 (Sun) *Clean Up Australia Day* Pelican Point 8.30am - 10.30am
- 08 (Wed) Bushcare Alfred Cove 8.30am - 2.30pm
- 13 Monthly Monday at Milyu
- 14 (Tues) *International Day of Action for Rivers*
- 23 (Thurs) *National Eucalypt Day*
- 23 (Thurs) Bushcare Pelican Point 8.30am - 2.30pm
- 25 Saturday Morning at the Cove 8.30 am - 10.30am
- Watering at Alfred Cove and Pelican Point

Please contact SERAG to register your interest and for further information.

The party which forms government after the State Election will make decisions affecting our environment, wildlife, and communities. SERAG urges the next State Government to take positive action to strengthen protections for our treasured but threatened bushlands and wetlands, with immediate attention to the Swan Canning river system.



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