



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2016

Fifty-five people, ranging in age from ten to eighty years, took part in our *Clean Up Australia Day* event at Pelican Point on a beautiful warm morning in early March.

In a short time the volunteers had collected in excess of twenty full bags of litter, comprising the usual cans, bottles, fast-food containers and cigarette butts. However, among the more interesting items discovered were a plastic pterosaur and a plait of real hair, both found by our youngest participant, Rose.

Organized by SERAG with assistance from UWA Guild Volunteering, over the years this event has become so well attended that we will consider adding other nearby heavily-littered sites to our focus areas for 2017.



Some of the many participants at this year's *Clean Up Australia Day* at Pelican Point, including Rose with an interesting find.

Photographs courtesy: Cathie O'Neill

A TINY BUNDLE OF FEATHERS

This tiny bundle of feathers, supported by almost impossibly thin legs, is a Variegated Fairy-wren (*Malurus lamberti*). It belongs to the population at Pelican Point, which is the southern most record of this species on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Variegated Fairy-wrens live in the shelter of scrubby vegetation across diverse habitats. They forage for insects and seeds in and around under-storey shrubs and grasses and seldom stray into the open. Like other fairy-wrens, this is a cooperative breeding species, with small groups of birds maintaining and defending their territories year-round. Groups consist of a socially monogamous pair with several helper birds.



Variegated Fairy-wren

Photograph courtesy: Tim Graham-Taylor

Apparently, during courtship, male wrens pluck yellow petals and display them to females. The female alone constructs the nest and incubates her three or four eggs; however, other group members assist in feeding the chicks.

Breeding males are brightly coloured with a vibrant blue crown and sides of the head and rich chestnut shoulder patches. Females and young birds (and non-breeding males) are less showy and often difficult to tell apart - so we don't know whether to call this little one 'beautiful' or 'handsome'!

MATILDA BAY NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE EVENT

Discovery and Rediscoveries was the theme for the 2016 National Trust Heritage Festival, so the iconic place of eucalypts in our natural heritage provided an apt focus for an informative guided walk, organized for members of the wider community along a section of the Swan River foreshore from Matilda Bay to Pelican Point.

A large and enthusiastic group braved a wet and blustery morning to enjoy *The Eucalypts of Matilda Bay* - an experience of discovering something new about eucalypts and being reminded about something forgotten. Professor Stephen Hopper (AC FLS FTSE) proved an inspiring speaker, generously sharing some of his knowledge and love of our natural environment. A sapling Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) was planted to commemorate the event, its 'honkey-nuts' a favourite food of endangered black-cockatoos, and the morning concluded with welcome refreshments.

Feedback has been extremely positive, with comments such as *'Thank you for such a rich morning of learning and the wonderful social finish'*, *'The walk along Matilda Bay on Saturday was great!'* and *'What a magnificent event!'*

Sincere thanks are extended to all who ensured its success, especially the Dahl Trust, Professor Hopper, the National Trust, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, the City of South Perth and SERAG volunteers.



Photographs courtesy:
Jane Leahy-Kane,
Tony Kane and
Tim Graham-Taylor

QUENDA NEST DISCOVERED

The importance of conserving and restoring even the smallest pockets of bush land was highlighted by the recent discovery of a quenda nest in a native verge garden in Hackett Drive. The garden had been lawn until three years ago.

City of Subiaco Environment staff found the nest while working nearby at JH Abrahams Reserve - a section of Bush Forever Site 402 that they and the wider community have been carefully transforming over the last few years.

The discovery is particularly significant as it has been long thought that quenda had disappeared from the Pelican Point area.



Quenda nest
Photograph courtesy: Giles Pickard

THE GREEN GROWTH PLAN

The State Government's draft *Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million (Green Growth Plan)*, developed to meet the challenge of a projected regional population growth to 3.5 million by 2050, was recently released for public consideration. A challenging and difficult document to interpret, SERAG nevertheless took the opportunity to provide comment and suggest improvements.

Among the problems we noted for authorities' reconsideration was the lack of sufficient native riparian vegetation being retained as wildlife corridors along the margins of the Swan Estuary. As well, the Plan's lack of protection for Bush Forever Area Sites, remnant Banksia Woodland and other significant habitat for endangered species (including black-cockatoos) requires urgent attention.



Nesting Carnaby's Black-cockatoo
Photograph courtesy: Margaret Matassa

'... AND WHEN THE SKIES FALL SILENT?'

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual, global awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. With the slogan '... and when the skies fall silent?', this year's event focused on the shocking numbers of migratory wading birds lost each year through illegal hunting and trade. Together with other human impacts, these pressures have resulted in once common species being now threatened with extinction.

In response, students from the University of Western Australia and Curtin University joined SERAG volunteers at Pelican Point for a morning's planting. Our aim is to improve the ecological health and resilience of the bushland that forms an important protective buffer to this sensitive Marine Park habitat.



Waders at Pelican Point Lagoon
Photograph courtesy: Tim Graham-Taylor

VANDALISED VEGETATION WILL BE STEADILY REPLACED

Replacement of the sedges, shrubs and trees poisoned at Alfred Cove over the past year has commenced with a large group of concerned residents assisting City of Melville and Department of Parks and Wildlife staff at a community planting morning in early May. Further restoration will be steadily carried out over forthcoming months.

IMPACTING ON PROTECTED HABITAT

The negative impacts of recreational activities in the Marine Parks and A-Class Nature Reserves at Alfred Cove, Milyu and Pelican Point are growing, as greater numbers of people seek steadily fewer natural areas for outdoor experiences. Disturbance of birdlife and the trampling of sensitive riparian and aquatic vegetation is occurring on a daily basis at these small but vitally important places specifically set aside for the protection of native flora and fauna.

Reliance on public information, requests for cooperation and simple good sense are obviously insufficient to protect these fragile sites, as these representative photographs indicate.



At Pelican Point Marine Park, fishermen ignore a nesting season sign and a kite surfer puts to flight birds resting on the beach and foraging in the shallows. At Alfred Cove A-Class Nature Reserve, a photographer tramples fragile shore-rush and samphire beds to get the 'best shot'.

Photographs courtesy: Cathie O'Neill, Tim Graham-Taylor and Margaret Matassa

ROTARY COMMUNITY AWARD

As part of their community service, the Rotary Club of Applecross presents awards to 'individuals and organizations that have provided exceptional service in the local community or local business environment'.

This year SERAG received a Rotary Community Award for special service to the community, presented on the Club's behalf by the Hon. Dean Nalder MLA at a Rotary function at Fremantle Sailing Club.

We greatly appreciate this expression of local support and encouragement for the efforts of our many volunteers engaged in river-care at Alfred Cove.

ECO MAY DISPLAY

ECO MAY is a month-long celebration during which community groups, schools, organisations, and councils all over WA host eco-themed activities, encouraging people to enjoy nature, build their awareness of special places and become involved in their care. The Conservation Council of Western Australia coordinates the festivities, and this year included our display at AH Bracks Library in over a hundred listed initiatives.

The display illustrated the intrinsic worth of associated Marine Parks, A-Class Nature Reserves and Bush Forever Sites, as well as the many ways such unique natural areas enrich community life. Photographs and other material focused on the ecological values of the natural areas remaining in the lower Estuary, highlighting the diversity of flora and fauna to be found at Alfred Cove, Milyu and Pelican Point.



Display at AH Bracks Library
Photograph courtesy: Cathie O'Neill

NATIONAL EUCALYPT DAY PLANTING

In late March a small group of Conservation Volunteers joined SERAG volunteers to celebrate National Eucalypt Day at Pelican Point.

Along with other restoration activities, a number of healthy eucalypts were planted to take advantage of the remaining warm weather and autumn rains. Additional *Eucalyptus rudis*, *Eucalyptus gomphocephala*, *Corymbia calophylla* (previously known as *Eucalyptus calophylla*) and *Eucalyptus marginata* will be planted later in the season.

The saplings were provided by the Dahl Trust, which promotes community understanding and appreciation of the important place eucalypts hold in Australia's natural environment and biodiversity.



Volunteers plant a sapling *Eucalyptus rudis*
Photograph courtesy: Cathie O'Neill



FOR YOUR JUNE CALENDAR

- TREEmendous Tuesdays Alfred Cove 7.30am - 9.30am
- 04 (Sat) UWA@PP World Environment Day Planting Pelican Point 9.00am - 11.00am
- 05 World Environment Day
- 05 (Sun) UBC Guided Walk Pelican Point 9.00am - 11.00am
- 20 Monthly Monday at Milyu 8.00am - 10.00am
- 25 Saturday Morning at the Cove 8.30 am - 10.30am

Please register your interest if you would like to participate in any event.

People with smartphone or tablet devices can now download an app called **MyWeedWatcher**. It enables users to identify weeds, conduct surveys on weeds of interest and report on the presence of declared weeds. The Android, iPhone and on-line versions are available at: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/weed-surveillance>



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