



## DISTINGUISHING *CASUARINA OBESA* FROM *GLAUCA*

It is very difficult to tell the local form of Swamp Sheoak from the weed variety.

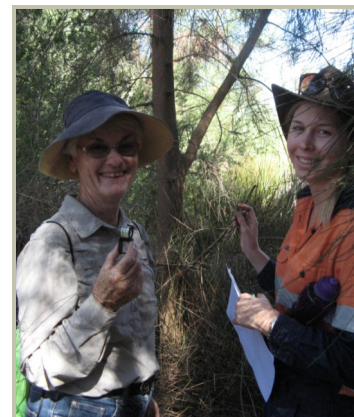
At one stage it was thought that there was only one form - that the *Casuarina* found locally was the same as the Eastern Swamp Sheoak. Consequently, in some revegetation projects of the 1970s, *Casuarina glauca* were inadvertently planted instead of the indigenous Swamp Sheoak (*Casuarina obesa*).

These introduced species have suckered vigorously, in certain areas overpowering other native vegetation and becoming a problem weed. *Casuarina glauca* is not only difficult to tell apart from *Casuarina obesa*, but it has the ability to hybridize with it and produce intermediate progeny.

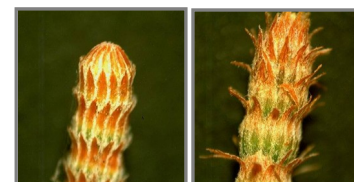
Guided by Greg Keighery and Julia Cullity from the Department of Parks and Wildlife, a few SERAG volunteers have learned to distinguish the two, with a view to steadily replacing *C. glauca* with appropriate native vegetation at Pelican Point.

Replacement must be a careful process, ensuring that any ecological values provided by the weed species are fully compensated before the trees are removed.

The growing shoots of *C. obesa* (left) and *C. glauca* (right) provide one indicator.



Julie Ginbey and Lauren Gleeson examine *Casuarina*  
Photograph courtesy: Julia Cullity



## THE HAPPY COUPLE CLAIM NEW RESIDENCE

Comparatively little is known about the lifecycles of many of the local, nomadic and migratory birds we see on the Swan River Estuary.

What we do know is that the few remaining areas of relatively undisturbed natural aquatic and riparian vegetation on the Estuary are *vital* to their futures.

This has been clearly evidenced by the almost immediate claim by a pair of local Eastern Osprey to a new artificial nesting platform, erected at Pelican Point in Crawley in a community effort towards compensating for the steady loss to urban pressures of tall trees along the foreshore.

Within a couple of weeks, Osprey had commenced the process of interior decoration, carefully adding selected sticks and branches to the tower. It has quite a pile now, so we are hopeful of a successful breeding season.

Tim Graham-Taylor recently captured these terrific shots. Look carefully at the first picture to see the happy couple.

We have registered the site on the *OspreyWatch* website.





# OPENING OF OSPREY NESTING PLATFORM

A community celebration to officially open our new artificial Osprey nesting platform at Pelican Point was well-attended, taking place on a balmy afternoon in March under beautiful casuarina trees on the Crawley foreshore.

Guests included sculptor Tony Jones, former Chief Scientist Prof. Lyn Beazley, writer and SERAG Patron Robert Drewe and the Hon. Bill Marmion MLA (Member for Nedlands), who unveiled a fish-shaped commemorative plaque.





# LITTER COLLECTION AT PELICAN POINT & MILYU

Thirty-two people between the ages of nine and seventy-two (including twenty-three students from the University of Western Australia) participated in SERAG's *Clean up Australia Day* event at Pelican Point on 1st March.

Thirteen large bags of litter were collected, filled not only with the usual glass and plastic bottles, packaging, aluminium cans, rubber thongs and cigarette butts, but also a partial set of acrylic nails!

This semester, on the second Monday of each month, students from Curtin University have assisted us at Milyu, which suffers greatly from litter blown in from both Melville Water and the Kwinana Freeway. A combined group of SERAG and Curtin volunteers - about fifteen people in all - can usually expect to collect six or seven full bags of small litter, as well as removing larger items such as plastic chairs, buckets and pieces of *Styrofoam* that have drifted into the Reserve.

A refreshing home-made morning tea has been provided by SERAG after each event, to show our appreciation of participants' efforts.



Photograph courtesy: Sophie Greer



Photograph courtesy: Naomi Dang

## MILYU PLANTING PROJECT

The Two Rivers Community has generously allocated two-thousand dollars to SERAG, to be used for re-vegetation work along the margin of Marine Park just south of Milyu A-Class Nature Reserve.

The narrow strip of Swan River foreshore along Melville Water is exposed to the force of winter storms. To protect freeway infrastructure, the foreshore north and south of the Marine Park is walled, limiting its value to water-birds, including internationally protected migratory birds which have relied on mudflats and shallows there for millennia.

Fortunately the section that we are tackling remains natural and has a healthy upper-storey of *Casuarina obesa*, so we are currently discussing suitable under-storey species with the environment team from the City of South Perth.

It is hoped that the additional vegetation will provide a buffer to the Reserve, strengthening its resilience and increasing habitat available to native fauna, as well as filtering some of the storm water run-off into the Marine Park.

## TACKLING DUNE ONION WEED

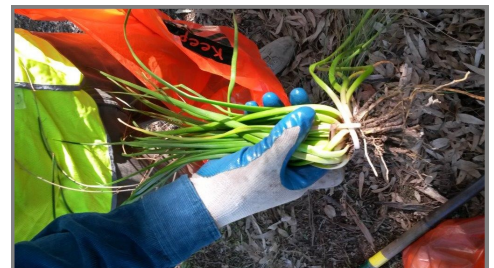
Dune onion weed (*Trachyandra divaricata*) is native to South Africa and is now widespread in dunes and coastal heath along the south west coast. Unfortunately, it is very common in and around the Estuary foreshore.

The perennial herb's fleshy, ribbon-like leaves are able to spread over the sand surface and may grow up to 1 m long, blending in with native sedges and making older plants competitive for space. Contrary to what its common name may suggest, the leaves do not have an onion smell.

In Spring the flower stalk is branched with white flowers, while its many seeds are dispersed by wind and water.

Dune onion weed is poisonous to mammals.

Our volunteers regularly tackle this major weed manually, carefully removing the whole plant to ensure none of its tuberous roots remain to re-grow. It is an on-going challenge, each effort resulting in many sacks full!



*Trachyandra divaricata* being removed at Alfred Cove

# WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2015

World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

With the theme “Energy – make it bird-friendly!”, World Migratory Bird Day 2015 highlighted the importance of deploying energy technologies in a way that prevents, minimizes and mitigates impacts on migratory birds.

In times of ever-increasing global demand for energy, developing new and expanding existing renewable energy technologies are key when striving towards a low carbon future. Energy cannot be truly sustainable and nature-friendly unless it fully takes biodiversity and, more specifically, migratory birds into consideration.

SERAG celebrated World Migratory Bird Day at Pelican Point, engaging volunteers from the University and the general community in a range of bushcare activities. Three mature saplings kindly donated by Jane Leahy-Kane and some sedges and shrubs were planted, while *Casuarina glauca* felled as part of a weed-management strategy were removed to allow native vegetation to flourish.

It proved to be a very fitting event for *Eco Action May*!

Volunteers strengthen habitat at Pelican Point on *World Migratory Bird Day*.

Photograph courtesy: Ada Wong



## GREEN ARMY TEAM FOR SWAN ESTUARY

The Green Army is a hands-on, practical environmental action program that supports local environment and heritage conservation projects across Australia.

SERAG is sponsoring a Green Army team for a twenty-week project which aims to protect and conserve the ecological and natural heritage values of the Swan River Estuary, including species diversity.

Conservation Volunteers Australia will be our Service Provider, forming a team of nine young people who will develop a range of environmental management skills during the course of the project.

Work will take place over the winter months and into spring in a number of important areas in and around the Swan Estuary. Weed-management at Pelican Point, erosion mitigation at Alfred Cove, strengthening the resilience of Milyu, and Tompkins Park Project Stage 2 will be among the principal areas of focus.



### FOR YOUR JUNE CALENDAR

- TREEmendous Tuesdays: Alfred Cove 7.00am - 9.00am
- 05 World Environment Day Planting at Pelican Point 9.00am - 11.00am
- 08 Monthly Monday at Milyu 8.30am - 10.30am
- 27 Saturday Morning at the Cove 8.30am - 10.30am

**Please refer to our website calendar for further information and register your interest with us if you would like to participate in any event.**

As well, general bushcare activities such as a hand-weeding, planting, litter-collections and various environmental surveys in the three Reserves will be incorporated into their challenging schedule.



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