



BAT AND BIRD BOXES FOR ALFRED COVE

With a growing population and increasing affluence we are rapidly losing large, old trees and pockets of remnant natural vegetation from our residential areas—particularly from river-side suburbs.

Increasingly, the more modest family home and garden is being bull-dosed to make way for bigger houses with swimming pools; the larger block is now subdivided to make way for greater housing density; paving and plastic grass are replacing the front and back lawns, and air-conditioning is replacing shade trees as a cooling strategy.

Vegetation vital as habitat to a rich diversity of wildlife (birds, lizards, frogs and insects etc) is being quietly lost. There are now very few old trees with hollows that can be used for nests left in our suburbs; and bushes, shrubs and grasses which offer nectar, seeds and insect-life for birds and other fauna to feed on, are becoming scarce.

Consequently, it is very important that any remaining natural areas are healthy, well-protected and strengthened. So, as part of our commitment to a Swan River Trust Alcoa Landcare Program Grant received to support some of our on-going bush-care activities, SERAG has donated three nesting boxes (artificial nesting hollows), which have been installed in various locations along the foreshore. Each box has been specially designed: one for a little bird with a beautiful soft song of double- or triple-note trills, called the Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus striatus*); one for our smallest owl, the shy Southern Boobook (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*), and one for tiny micro-bats, which are each about the size of a large moth, and play a very important role in the ecosystem by both consuming almost half their body weight in insect prey each night and by pollinating of a range of tree species.



We hope the boxes are quickly appropriated by the various species, and prove popular residences!

Joe Tonga installs owl, pardalote and micro-bat nesting boxes in suitable places along the Alfred Cove foreshore.

Photos courtesy : Anthony Kane

SERAG PLANS HERITAGE EVENT AT TOMPKINS PARK

Few of us today would dispute the central place the beautiful Swan River Estuary holds in our natural and cultural heritage, and the need and our responsibility to provide for its on-going care.

However, as a community we haven't always appreciated the importance of a healthy river system to our own well-being, nor its ecological sensitivity, and have assumed that we can do what we like to it without consequence. For example, during the 1950s and 60s we used many wetland areas as unsealed rubbish tips! Back in those days there was very little care about what we threw into them either, thus potentially producing a long-lasting cocktail of nasty pollutants in sites along the foreshore.

What is now Tompkins Park was once one of 23 rubbish tips situated on the banks of the Swan and Canning Rivers. The tip closed in January 1964—fifty years ago—and to mark the occasion SERAG will be holding a special event during the National Trust's *Heritage Festival* in May. The event will include short presentations and a display of material illustrating how the area has changed over time, a guided walk to view the natural landscape and current efforts to restore degraded areas along the foreshore, and a planting ceremony. It will conclude with morning tea.

If you have any early photographs and other historic material (including reminiscences) relating to the Alfred Cove foreshore, particularly around the Tompkins Park area in the 1950s and 60s, that could be included in the display, we would love to hear from you.

Please email Jane at swanestuaryreserves@gmail.com or telephone Cathie on 93392439 if you can help.



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY – SUNDAY 2 MARCH

SERAG Inc. will be again hosting a *Clean Up Australia Day* litter collection at Pelican Point in Crawley on Sunday 2 March 2014 .

Although the area forms part of Bush Forever Site 402 and includes a bird sanctuary, it is unfortunately a litter “hot-spot”!

The meeting place will be the limestone car park on Australia II Drive, opposite the DPaW offices. We will work from 9.00am to 10.00am, with morning tea to follow. Volunteers are asked to wear protective clothing (enclosed shoes, loose fitting pants and long sleeve shirts, a hat) and use an insect repellent. Rubbish collection bags, gloves and other equipment will be provided.

Please register your interest in assisting by contacting Cathie on 93392439 or emailing oneillc@westnet.com.au.

You may also register on the Clean Up Australia website: <http://www.cleanupaustriaday.org.au/Pelican+Point+Reserve> .

ENTRY TO TROY PARK

Where once vehicles did wheelies in the mud, building rubble and lawn-clippings were illegally dumped, weeds and litter proliferated, and rather suspect behaviours took place in parked cars at night, natural bushland is steadily re-emerging—with a little help from teams of community volunteers!

A section of the entry to Troy Park is steadily being transformed into healthy habitat, with the sedges we have planted being supplemented with natural re-growth of melaleucas and eucalypts. SERAG and *Conservation Volunteers Australia* volunteers have recently installed pine bollards along its margins to protect the area from over-flow parking and to better integrate it into the rest of the parkland.

The project has been supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program and from the City of Melville.



Photos courtesy: Margaret Matassa & Jane Leahy-Kane

GENEROUS GIFT OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR WEBSITE

Photo artist John Vogel has very generously donated to SERAG Inc. the use of his wonderful photographs of bird species which frequent the areas of the Swan River Estuary in and around Milyu, Alfred Cove and Pelican Point A-Class Nature Reserves.

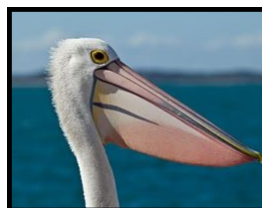
Originally reproduced in his stunning publication *Birds of South Western Australia*, the selection will eventually form a gallery of images on our website, illustrating the magnificent diversity of birdlife supported within the Estuary, and hopefully inspiring the community to better care for these important remaining pockets of original vegetation.



FOR YOUR MARCH CALENDAR:

- TREEmendous Tuesdays: Alfred Cove 7.00am - 9.00am
- 02 March: Clean Up Australia Day - Pelican Point 9.00am - 10.00am
- 14 March: Bushcare activities - Pelican Point 9.00am - 11.00am
- 22 March: Saturday at the Cove - Alfred Cove 8.30am - 10.30am
- 23 March: Leighton Family Morning - Alfred Cove
- 28 March: Leighton bushcare activities - Alfred Cove

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



The cover photograph from John Vogel's publication: *Birds of South Western Australia*.



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