



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING INVITATION

Once again this year, the practical and moral support of our members and friends has enabled our Group make a significant and beneficial contribution to promoting the well-being of the Estuary's three A-Class nature reserves as well as adjacent parks.

The Committee warmly invites you to come along to our **Annual General Meeting - scheduled for 6.00pm on Wednesday 30th October 2013 at Atwell House** - to hear about the wonderful things that have been achieved, our plans for the future and the challenges that face us. Our meeting will conclude at around 7.30pm with a delicious light supper!

Please let us know if you can attend, for catering purposes.

## UWA STUDENTS AT PELICAN POINT



Keep Australia Beautiful volunteers at Pelican Point  
(Photo courtesy: Maureen Maher)

Denisse Fierro (bottom right), an environmental studies student at the University of Western Australia, has become SERAG Inc's liaison person with the UWA Guild Volunteering Hub, generously contributing her energy and enthusiasm towards mobilizing teams of students to assist in our monthly bush-care activities at Pelican Point.

As Pelican Point is immediately next door to UWA, many students are happy to include a couple of hours planting or weeding into their busy programs—and we are delighted to have their help!

The terrific attendance at our recent *Keep Australia Beautiful* litter collection is testament to her effectiveness.

## MUCH-LOVED MUSK DUCKS

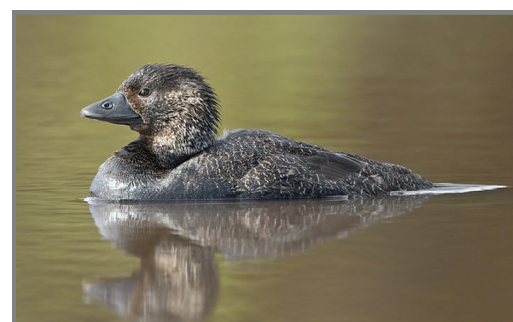
Over recent weeks the large group of Musk Ducks (*Biziura lobata*) - which gathers in the protected waters of Alfred Cove to spend the winter - has steadily begun to disperse. It is expected that the remaining few will leave in coming days, where after they will generally be seen in other places in the south-west alone or in pairs, for the breeding season. Flight usually takes place at night.

Musk Ducks are found only in Australia; and the species is the only living member of its genus. Pre-historic subfossil evidence indicates New Zealand was once home to a now extinct relative (*B. delautouri*), which was about 8% longer with a particularly large head.

They are rather bulky birds, floating low in the water. Their legs are placed far back on their body to help them swim and dive, making them very much at home below the surface - slipping under head-first with barely a ripple to feed or to escape predators - but rather awkward walkers. Hence, they are very rarely seen on land, preferring to stay in the water even to sleep.

While there is still much to be learned about their breeding habits, the breeding season is generally from September to December. Their nest is a large cup of trampled vegetation, loosely lined with fine grasses and feathers, and is hidden in dense reeds. Male Musk Ducks engage in energetic courtship displays: he raises and fans the tail over his back; he inflates the leathery lobe on his throat; he splashes water with vigorous kicks of his feet, and throws his head back while uttering a loud whistle. This display is performed for long periods at a time, both night and day.

Wholesale clearing and draining of wetlands and increasing salinity have impacted on their numbers, which are unfortunately declining.



Female Musk Duck

# BUSH-MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PELICAN POINT

We are delighted to have now received a completed *Bushland Management Plan* for Pelican Point, which will guide our restoration efforts there for a number of years to come. Prepared by Dave Bright from Regen4 through NRM funding, the Plan addresses the needs of both Pelican Point A-Class Reserve and an adjacent area to the west, towards JH Abrahams Reserve.

Covering 11.5 ha, it forms part of Bush Forever Site 402. It is of regional significance as one of a very limited number of bushland areas that contains vegetation from the Vasse Vegetation Complex, comprising a mixture of a closed scrub of *Melaleuca* species, fringing woodland of *Eucalyptus rudis* and *Melaleuca*, and open forest of *E. gomphocephala*, *E. marginata* and *E. calophylla*.

Recent mapping for the Swan Region indicates that only 1 per cent of the vegetation complexes associated with estuaries, rivers and creeks remains as native vegetation, making this a very special place indeed!

## REMOVING BRAZILIAN PEPPER FROM THE RESERVES

One of the most invasive and difficult to control woody weeds found at both Alfred Cove and Pelican Point is Brazilian (or *Japanese*) pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*).

It forms dense thickets which shade out and smother native vegetation, and reproduces from both seeds (which are dispersed by birds and small mammals) and suckers. The inappropriate dumping of garden waste is also a source of the problem.

Unripe fruit can be fatal to horses, while crushed ripe fruit causes respiratory difficulties in humans, and contact with sap or resin can cause skin irritation.

We are steadily removing these trees, replacing them with more appropriate species.



Removing Brazilian pepper from Alfred Cove  
(Photo courtesy Jane Leahy-Kane)

## NATIONAL TREE DAY PLANTING AT PELICAN POINT

SERAG Inc. celebrated National Tree Day on 27th July with the planting of over a dozen young canopy and middle-storey trees in a heavily degraded section of Pelican Point.

Braving rather wild and wintry weather, volunteers carefully planted advanced *Melaleuca raphiophylla* and *Eucalyptus rudis*, then enjoyed a hot “cupppa” and home-made cake.

It is hoped that the trees will establish themselves strongly over the next twelve months, enabling us to eventually remove some weed species that are currently providing habitat for a range of bush birds including the Variegated Fairy-wren.



Some of those who attended: Tim & Sue Graham-Taylor, Julie Ginbey, Matt Dulaney and Margaret Matassa  
(Photos courtesy: Jane Leahy-Kane)



## SEPTEMBER CALENDAR:

- TREEmendous Tuesdays: Alfred Cove 7.00am - 9.00am
- 04 Chevron bush-care day: Tompkins Park Foreshore
- 07 Threatened Species Day
- 11 Chevron bush-care afternoon: Tompkins Park Foreshore
- 13 Friday Morning at Pelican Point 9.00am—11.00am
- 14 Saturday Morning at the Cove 9.00am—11.00am
- 18 Chevron bush-care day: Tompkins Park Foreshore

Please refer to the calendar on our website for further information and contact us for details if you would like to participate in any event.

Just a reminder that “Weeding Wednesdays” have change to “TREEmendous Tuesdays”; and that from September there will be an earlier start of 7.00am.



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