



We acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar People as the Traditional Owners of the Derbal Yerrigan and surrounding country in which we are privileged to work. We pay our respects to their Elders who have handed down and continue to hand down their deep connection to country to future generations.

## Undaunted and Undeterred

Fourteen willing UWA students joined SERAG volunteers to plant nearly 200 understorey native seedlings in pouring rain one Saturday morning recently. As one student wrote:

*"(we) have been volunteering with SERAG since 2023, and this was definitely our first time volunteering in such crazy rainy conditions. Despite the rain, (we) hope (everyone) had fun, it was definitely an unforgettable experience and a "new experience unlocked" kind of day!"*



Even though thoroughly drenched, the morning tea made it worthwhile to stay around a bit longer.



Thank you everyone!

# Environmental Concerns re Matilda Bay Ferry Terminal

SERAG has attended the presentations and consultations offered by the Government regarding this High Speed Ferry Proposal that has decided a Ferry Terminal and Charging Station will be constructed at Matilda Bay.

This is not the first time that direct ferries to UWA have been introduced. In the 1990's, a service from the Point Walter Jetty to UWA was trialled but failed to attract enough passengers to be viable.

Will this very elaborate proposal suffer the same fate and take with it much irreversible environmental damage?

SERAG has been working for 15 years to restore the Saltmarsh community of plants in the Pelican Point Marine Park, including trying to stem the erosion of the north-eastern side of the Point caused by summer's easterly winds and boat wakes, and exacerbated by three built groynes preventing the return of sand in winter.

In our last newsletter, we looked at the likely ferry route superimposed on a nautical chart of the estuary, assuming that it would follow the deeper channels – dredged or natural - used by the boating community.

We have several serious environmental concerns about frequent ferries moving in and out to the centre of Matilda Bay, passing so close to Pelican Point.

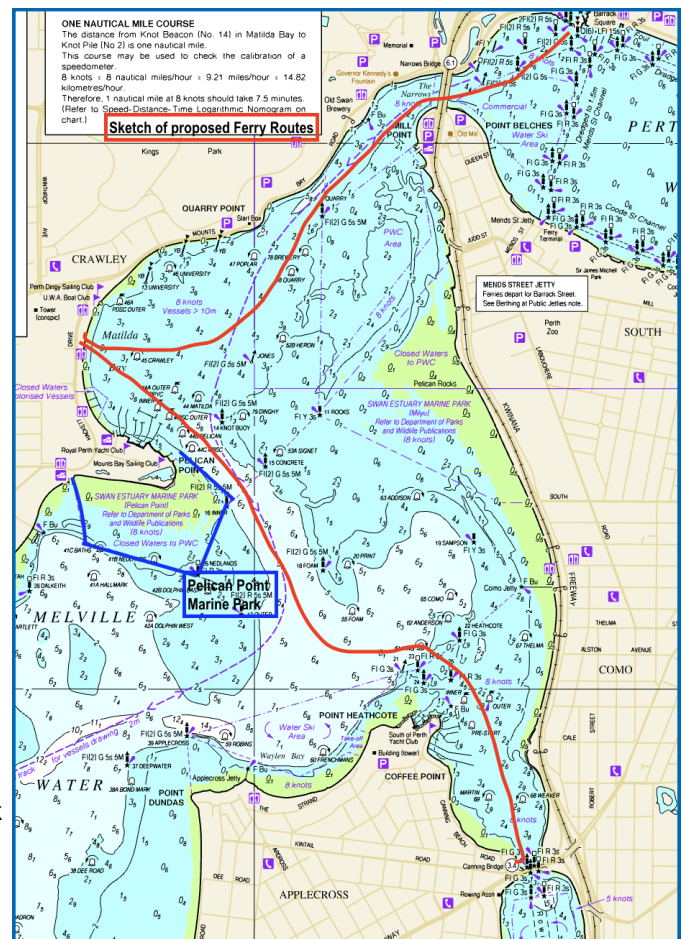
The new terminal will likely require dredging operations as well as major construction efforts – if the silt that is stirred up drifts across the shallows, this could seriously affect the growth of the seagrass meadows in the Pelican Point Marine Park, which lie so close to the proposed site, unlike the open water that surrounded Elizabeth Quay.

Whilst their flat design and planing motion will reduce wake, the need for ferries to decelerate and accelerate at the marker buoy situated at the tip of the shallows out from Pelican Point will produce deep bow waves every 7 minutes and these will very likely add to the erosion stress on the shoreline of the Point.

The beach area at the eastern tip of the Point is *the last resting area left* along the whole of the north side of the estuary from Perth to Fremantle, and is extensively used by water bird-life, particularly those birds that rely on aggregation as a means of protection, such as the Little Black Cormorants and Crested Terns. But with large ferries frequently passing by, the disturbance to these iconic birds could lead to their disappearance from our Swan River altogether.

Ospreys, Fairy Terns, Caspian Terns and Crested Terns use the shallows of Pelican Point as a major fishing area – will they be able to dive and catch their prey with ferries passing so frequently?

As seems so often the case, the environmental impacts of a project like this are given little consideration until the end of the process when government has effectively already made its decision. SERAG hopes that the EPA will be given the opportunity to robustly and independently assess this project. If it does so, there may be only a very short period for public comment. We will aim to let you know if there is an opportunity for sending comments to the EPA, and give you guidance on the process involved. Your input would reinforce these concerns.





# Collared for Success!

Some may wonder what the hessian collars that have appeared along the Attadale Alfred Cove foreshore have got to do with the revegetation of the foreshore. A good question.

It's because over the last two planting seasons SERAG has refined the use of rolled hessian to create collars to place around new plantings to assist the watering during the summer. The collars help make the watering more efficient by ensuring that the water gets to the plant's roots where it is needed. They are of course natural fibres so as they degrade they just become part of the soil.

The process involves a 'production line' of volunteers.



The hessian is rolled and tied with 3 strings also of natural fibre.



The rolls are then distributed to the volunteers digging the holes for the plantings. They place the collars and in-bed them in the soil on the river side of the hole and secure them with 3 bamboo stakes through the three string ties the rollers have used.



The holes are now ready for their new occupants – the seedlings.

Holes with their plants already planted.

The hessian collars are most useful on slopes as they create a barrier that holds the water in the holes during the summer watering, preventing the water running down the slope.

In the 2025 winter planting season SERAG has installed more than 400 hessian collars around plants. The summer waterers will be pleased to see the water land and stay where it is most needed – at the base of each of the new plantings.

The success of these collars is evident along the Tompkins Park foreshore, where a thriving ecosystem of foreshore vegetation has replaced the monoculture of Typha that existed beforehand.



# Breeding Season for Foxes

Fox control featured in a recent article in a local WA newspaper, outlining the citywide problem of roaming foxes killing our wildlife across our wetlands. August and September are the common months when cubs are born and mothers roam widely to feed them.

The Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance which includes the cities of Rockingham, Cockburn, Kwinana, Fremantle, Melville and the Town of East Fremantle had commissioned GPS trackers on foxes in 2020 which showed foxes travelling from Kwinana to Applecross in one night and another travelling a 23 kilometre round trip in a night.



A fox captured on camera at Kenwick's Brixton Street wetlands.  
Photograph - Trish Fleming

"Predation on our wildlife occurs constantly," said Adin Lang, the South West Councils Environmental Forum chair. "A coordinated response of multiple local governments must occur if we're serious about protecting urban wildlife."

The recent death of a swan and the loss of a second swan to its injuries at Alfred Cove, as well as a dead cormorant found at Attadale foreshore were considered to have been caused by a fox, from the look of the dead birds' injuries.

The 2020 report prepared by the South West group recommended DBCA develop and implement a comprehensive fox reduction management strategy.

In response, a department spokesperson said it employed contractors to control foxes across the metropolitan area, particularly within Perth's regional parks.

"DBCA is liaising with the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance on fox control and is facilitating a new fox monitoring site at The Spectacles with the City of Kwinana."

SERAG is aware that fox trapping by a registered trapper has taken place along Melville foreshores and we are glad to know that neighbours such as the Town of East Fremantle and the City of Cockburn will also implement Fox control programs.

SERAG hopes that a timely round of trapping by the Alliance will find and destroy fox dens at the start of the breeding season and help prevent the terrible predation on breeding colonies of our wildlife, such as happened to the Fairy Tern colony at Point Walter.

Article - M Matassa

**Season of Djilba-Kambarang - September-November (1st and 2nd Spring)**

**These Noongar Seasons are represented by the colour yellow. They symbolise the seasons of conception and birth and the beginning of the hot weather.**

# Quiet Dedication Supporting our River Life

Every month at daybreak for 15 years, a dedicated group of SERAG members has set out from either end of the Milyu Reserve bordering the Swan Estuary Marine Park in South Perth, armed with bags and gloves, to collect the rubbish littering the shoreline.

The amount of rubbish always tallies to many, many kilos, especially during the summer season and with particular onshore winds. Sometimes a whole area is littered with campsite detritus and other times a washed-up kayak or dingy is found - these are reported to DBCA Rangers.

At the end of the 3 kilometre clean-up, a much welcome cuppa and morning tea is waiting, thanks to other members of the SERAG team who have all the necessities waiting for the team at the end meeting point.



This reduction of plastics and fishing litter is making a significant difference to the ongoing health of the river and foreshore fauna that live and breed in the reeds and shallows and seagrasses of the Milyu waters. We and the river creatures owe our thanks to the team for this unwavering service.

Article - M Matassa   Photographs - G Webster

## Overwintering at a Friend's Place

This trans-equatorial Grey Plover / Black-bellied Plover (left) would have flown in to the Swan Estuary Marine Park around October 2024 from 12,000 km away. If it is a breeding female (females being the most likely to fly this far) it would still have had some of its dark breeding feathers when it flew in – hence its common name has now been changed to the internationally accepted Black-bellied Plover.

During its summer stay it would have met up with the local Pied Stilts (centre) which roost and nest in the Samphire foreshores of the Marine Park, along with Welcome Swallows (shown flying to the right), which no doubt lived up to their name.

Perhaps this Plover sensed it was not strong enough for the return journey and to lay its eggs successfully, so stayed behind when the rest of them left for the Lower Arctic in February / March. The locals seem happy to extend hospitality and share their site with overwintering migratory birds, such as this Plover pictured in May 2025 at Pelican Point.



Article - M Matassa   Photograph - T Graham-Taylor



# Get to know our plants, and weeds!

## *Atriplex cinerea* vs *\*Atriplex prostrata*

***Atriplex cinerea***, or grey saltbush, occurs naturally in saline areas in Western Australia. It helps to stabilise soils, prevent erosion and rehabilitate degraded areas by changing water table and surface soil characteristics, allowing other plants to then colonise.

It is a prostrate to erect leafy shrub growing to 1.8metres high. The leaves are elliptical to oblong, are hairy or downy, silver or grey-green in colour, and are not paired.



Photograph - Natalie Tapson - Flickr



*Atriplex cinerea*

Photograph - Geographe Community  
Landcare Nursery WA

***\*Atriplex prostrata*** is a spear-leaved plant of this saltbush genus that is an introduced species in WA. We remove it from our revegetation areas as it over-runs *Juncus kraussii*, an essential element of saltmarsh that we want on the frontline to dampen wave action and “hold the fort”. *\*Atriplex prostrata* proliferates very quickly if not weeded out consistently, preferably before seeding.

It is an annual herb growing to 50cm high, with triangular green leaves, mealy grey on the back, that are free from hair or down.

*\*Atriplex prostrata* leaves grow opposite each other (lower on the stem) or alternate.



Photograph - NatureMapr

*\*Atriplex prostrata*



Photograph - Trevor James - Weeds of Australia

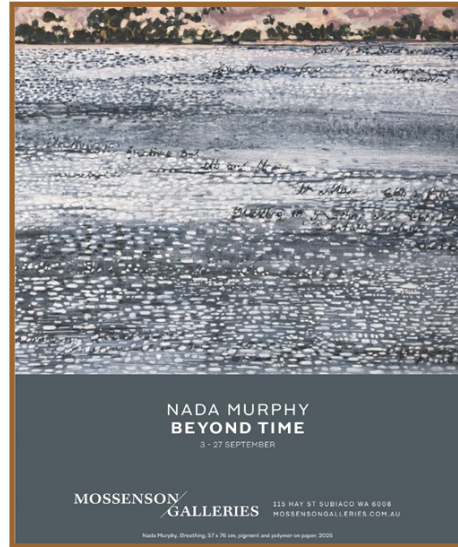
These plants mostly present differently but can have confusing similarities, especially in younger plants. So if in doubt, look for a hairy covering which determines it as the local plant, *Atriplex cinerea*.

# Art and the Environment

Artist and SERAG member, Nada Murphy, has focussed her upcoming exhibition

## **‘Beyond Time’**

on Saltmarshes, these being such a vital element of our estuary’s life forces. All are welcome.



As the artist states in the invitation:

“The works draw upon exploration of Saltmarsh in the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River) Saltmarsh and at Pipeclay Lagoon in Tasmania and ask you to imagine what might be yet to come beyond our times.

Visiting Pipeclay Lagoon in early 2025 meant marking time with a different beat to that of contemporary life. My exploration of the Saltmarsh in the Derbarl Yerrigan found only three remnant ecologies in Doontanboro (Melville Waters).

Our consciousness can also lay beyond the time bound between the establishment of the Swan River Settlement and our present.

Ultimately, questions emerge asking us: What sits at the edges of time and beyond?”

## **Opening Event: Beyond Time (Mossenson Galleries - 115 Hay Street, Subiaco)**

**6-8 pm Wednesday September 3rd**

**With Guest: Margaret Matassa, Chairperson Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group Inc**

**2-4 pm Saturday September 6th**

**Artist’s Talk: Nada Murphy: *Time***

Nada will share both the inspiration behind this collection of works and stories embedded in the works.

**2-4pm Saturday September 27th**

**“Beyond Conversation”, celebrating World Rivers Day.**

**Nada with guest (speaker TBA)**

An afternoon for you to join in the discussion of some key questions.

# Mark these Dates!

## World Migratory Bird Day

Come to welcome home our world travellers to Attadale Foreshore on  
World Migratory Bird Day

**Saturday October 11th, 8am - 11am**

You will have the opportunity:

- to register for one of several bird walks with experienced bird watchers (binoculars provided) or
- perhaps register for a session with an experienced bird photography leader.

There will also be informative displays by SERAG and Friends of Melville Bird Sanctuary, and family friendly activities organised by City of Melville and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

Registration online will be available in our next Calendar so for now, **Mark The Date!**

*Image - Pixabay*



## SERAG AGM - 15th October 2025

**Members and friends are warmly invited to our Annual General Meeting on  
Wednesday 16th October 6:00pm at Bracks Library, Melville.**

We will announce our guest Speaker in our next Calendar,  
who will give a talk that relates particularly to SERAG's endeavours.

Following the usual brief reports and election of office bearers,  
we trust you will enjoy the delicious supper and chance to mingle and catch up.

**All welcome!**

We encourage you to take a look at our *Facebook* page as well as our *LinkedIn* page -

<https://www.facebook.com/swanestuaryreservesactiongroupserag/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/swanestuaryreservesactiongroupserag/> and follow them if you are active on  
either platform. You may need an account to view *LinkedIn*.

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