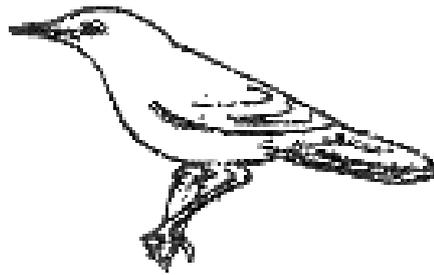


Jan-Feb 2014

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.



Number 135



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

Wetland Warbler

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Celebrating 43 years of wetland conservation

Each year on the 2nd February, land managers, community groups and the general public celebrate 'World Wetlands Day' to recognise the importance and values of wetlands around the world.

The date marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, known as the Ramsar Convention, in 1971.

The Port Phillip and Western Port Bay catchment area is home to three Ramsar wetlands:

- Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) - including Point Cook Coastal Park, Cheetham Wetlands, Truganina Wetlands and Altona Coastal Park.
 - Western Port Bay – including Phillip Island, Hastings Foreshore Reserve, Yaringa, French Island and Churchill Island.
 - Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.
- These wetlands are internationally recognised for their diverse flora and

fauna values. They are amongst the most important sites in Victoria supporting tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds, which come to feed on the rich coastal mudflats. Shorebird species from as far as China, Japan and Russia make an annual migration. The long-term survival of these shorebird species is reliant on the environmental condition of the wetland ecosystems they utilise along their journeys.

(Source: Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Newsletter)

The celebration of Edithval-Seaford Wetlands was postponed because of inclement weather until 16th February.



On that day Melbourne Water and FESWI combined to open the Discovery Centre to the public with interesting displays and demonstrations. FESWI's Marg Hunter conducted a number of walks around the wetlands, and other members (Philippa, Les and Robin) manned our table displaying information about Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands and FESWI.

Inside this issue:

The TTP and the Environment	2
Snippets	3
Birds on the Rise	4
Work of the Friends	5

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Kangaroo Walk Coming Up—See Page 3 for details

THE TPP AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Matthew Mitchell

The Trans-pacific partnership (TPP) is a secret “trade” agreement being negotiated by the USA with nations around the pacific rim. Described as a “corporate coup” it is not a normal trade agreements, with 29 chapters effecting every aspect of our lives. One of these aspects is our environment. Like some other recent trade agreements (eg: the Aust-Korea FTA), the TPP includes an Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS). ISDS’s have been roundly criticised by legal practitioners, academics and our very own conservative Productive Commission. Under the ISDS investors can sue the Australian government for losses of profit due to new regulations/laws. The cases are heard by three corporate lawyers, usually in secret hearings, and there is no appeal. The decisions will take precedence over any decisions by a domestic court.

Why is this bad for the environment? Well in the past ISDS has been used to sue governments and the very threat of an ISDS case can have a “chilling” effect on legislators, at either the local, state or federal levels (as all these governments may be sued). Following are some examples.

In 2011 the province of Quebec called a moratorium on the controversial gas extraction method called fracking (hydraulic fracturing) while it undertook an evaluation of the possible resulting environmental damage. A United States company, Lone Pine Resources, which operates out of Calgary but is incorporated in the US tax-haven state of Delaware, decided to take action under the ISDS provisions of the North American Free

Trade Agreement, (NAFTA), to which Canada, the US and Mexico, are signatories. It sued Quebec for C\$250 million.

A second example is from Ecuador. Ecuador’s highest court found the U.S. oil giant Chevron was responsible for dumping billions of gallons of toxic water and dug hundreds of open-air oil sludge pits in Ecuador’s Amazon, poisoning the communities of some 30,000 Amazon residents, including the entire populations of six indigenous groups (one of which is now extinct). They were ordered to pay \$9.5 billion in damages. Instead of paying Chevron has turned to an ISDS tribunal. Chevron asked the three-person extrajudicial tribunal to order the Ecuadorian government to suspend enforcement of the multi-billion dollar domestic court ruling. The tribunal granted that wish, ordering the government of Ecuador to violate its own Constitution, and interfere with the independent judiciary to stop the ruling. Now Chevron is asking the same extrajudicial tribunal to order Ecuador’s taxpayers to hand over to the corporation any of the billions in damages it might be required to pay to clean up the still-devastated Amazon, plus all the legal fees incurred by the corporation in its efforts to evade justice.

Thus we can see just one of the dangers of the TPP in relation to the environment. Each case in a tribunal costs around \$8 million. Just the threat of a case may prevent governments passing laws to preserve the environment. This is one reason why we should not sign the secret TPP agreement. For more information see: tppaustralia.org.

Seaford Working Bee Dates

(First Sunday of the month)
6th April 2014
4th May 2014
1st June 2014

10:00am – 12 noon

Ring Rex (9766 6056)

Where We Are

Duck In - Melways map 93 C 7/8. About 100 metres after pedestrian lights near bird hide on Edithvale Rd, turn right down the dirt entrance way to football oval, follow dirt track through reserve. Duck In on left.

Discovery Centre (*Melbourne Water*)- Melways map 93 D 8. On south side of Edithvale Rd, north-east corner of Edithvale Wetlands South.

Open Sunday afternoons (1:00pm – 5:00pm).

SNIPPETS SNIPPETS SNIPPETS

Walk Brochure

A self-guided walk brochure is being developed by FESWI covering Edithvale Wetlands and environs. More details next issue.

Past Events

On December 7th Robin and Margaret represented FESWI at an event celebrating the birthday celebrations of *Gus the Bus* at Seaford North Primary School. Different activities were provided for the children.



On the weekend of January 18/19th, Rex and Margaret represented FESWI at the Frankston Waterfront Festival providing information about the wetlands and The Friends' work.

FESWI Up-coming Events

A Kangaroo Walk is planned for Sunday 30th March at 1:00 pm. It is a good chance to walk

FESWI Up-coming Events Cont

inside Edithvale South to get a different perspective on the wetland and to see the kangaroos close up. Can include a visit to the Discovery Centre. See advertisement below.

An Open Day is envisioned at Edithvale in early October 2014.

On-going Concerns

Bird Hide – meetings have been taking place, the most recent last December. Progress is slow but hopefully in the right direction

Downs Farm – consultation with stake holders on how best utilise the site is continuing, the latest being a meeting on Friday 21st February at the property. FESWI was represented by Matt and Les FESWI's position on its utilisation is one that focuses on wetland values.

70 Armstrongs Road – Frankston Council is considering this on 3rd March.

Grants

FESWI has received a grant of \$990 to cover the cost of postage for this newsletter. Thanks Melbourne Water.

FESWi also received a grant from Kingston City Council of \$880 to purchase a Tablet.

Thanks Kingston City Council.



Come on a Kangaroo Walk

Sunday 30th March

1:00 pm Edithvale South

Meet in the car park at the old bird hide on Edithvale Road.

BIRDS ON THE RISE

An abundance of birdlife has taken up residence at the Edithvale Seaford Wetlands, including some endangered birds rarely seen in the area, according to recent surveys by Birdlife Australia.

Andrew Silcocks, Atlas Project Manager, Birdlife Australia, said their surveys show more than double the average August number of black swans are inhabiting the wetlands, the highest number since surveys began in 1990.

“The recent work to cut back phragmites (a native reed found around wetlands), remove weeds and good rainfall, is providing more open water and additional food for the birds, making viewing extra special for enthusiasts,” Mr Silcocks said. “Over the past month, we have seen good numbers of Purple Swamphens, Black-winged Stilts and up to six species of ducks. “Most excitingly, are the two endan-

gered species, Australasian Bittern and Magpie Goose, seen regularly in the area,” he said.

Melbourne Water’s Acting Manager Waterways South East, David Leggo, said this year it’s been possible to cut back phragmites to increase habitat and diversity for plants and animals, especially birds.



Swans at Edithvale

“Over the past few years, it’s been too wet to access the phragmites. However, this year we were able to gain access and have seen the benefits,” Mr Leggo said.

“While the natural wetlands are in good condition, native phragmites can encroach on bird

habitat. Recently it’s been dry enough for us to access and cut them back.

“The slashed phragmites have been left onsite and heaped into mounds to create nesting habitat, which have been very successful,” he said.

Continued on Page 5



BREAK IN AT DUCK IN

Duck In has been broken into again, and, ironically shortly after Margaret (Secretary) spent a couple of hours there with Senior Constable Dawn Eddington inspecting the building for a Security Audit Report.

Four youths (two under 18) were caught breaking into the old RSL building and they had in their possession FESWI binoculars which alerted police, and subsequently us, that Duck In had been broken into. They used bolt cutters to cut through the fence chains and through the grill over the kitchen window, which they then smashed. They also senselessly broke the glass Kiwi case. The window and case are now fixed. Graffiti will be removed within the next week or so.

This appears to be their first offence and police are going for a diversionary order, possibly along the lines whereby each pays \$100 to FESWI together with a letter of apology.

In reference to the Security Audit Report, a number of recommendations have been made which the committee will endeavour to follow.



DISCOVERY CENTRE

FESWI continues to open *Melbourne Water's* Discovery Centre on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Melbourne Water opens it on the other Sundays. Many thanks to the FESWI volunteers – Jacqui, Maureen, Clare, Inez, Irma, Helen, Margaret, Faye, Sandy, Rosemary and Mary – you do a great job!

Kate coordinates the volunteers and would welcome a couple of extra names on the list. It is not arduous, it is a peaceful way to spend a couple of hours meeting interesting people and viewing the wetlands and their denizens.

Also, at the end of the year, as happened on * (see photo) there is a Christmas function for all the volunteers to say thankyou for their commitment to this important role.

Kate can be contacted on 9773 0224.



WORKING BEES

FESWI is continuing with its Working Bees this year, mainly in the buffer zones at Seaford under the able stewardship of Coordinator Rex. Thanks to FESWI volunteers—Greg, Dawn, Lorraine, Jacqui, Margaret and Lionel—great work! Working Bees are on the first Sunday of each month from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

In autumn and winter it involves mainly tree planting and there is nothing more satisfying to oneself, and useful to the environment than creating vast swathes of trees and other plants for the future.

You can watch them grow and enhance their surroundings; and note the increasing bush bird populations – and all this with the warming knowledge that you helped create it.

Get involved. Come along to one of these sessions.

Ring Rex on 9766 6056.



BIRDS ON THE RISE CONT.

“We encourage all residents to come down and use the viewing platform to view the birds,” he added.

One of only 11 sites in Victoria nominated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands are an important environmental feature of the local area.

(Source: Melbourne Water Website September 2013)

Note: Long time member and regular walker around the Seaford Wetlands, Carl Jorgensen, has spotted Latham’s Snipe at the southern pond a couple of times over the past few weeks.



Purple Swamphen at Seaford

Corporate Members

Following is a list of our corporate members. Please give them your support.

Aspendale Primary School

Aspendale Gardens Primary School

Frank and Isobel Baguley's Nursery

Bird Life Australia

Bonbeach Primary School

Chelsea Heights Community Centre

Chelsea RSL

Edithvale Primary School

Frankston Primary School

Gales Marine Centre

Instant Garden Nurseries at Gardenworld Keysborough

Good Shepherd Aged Services – Mary Ville Hostel

Audrey Harding

Hasuval Engineering Service Pty Ltd

Tania Ireton

McDonald's Family Restaurant, Chelsea Heights

Melbourne Water, Waterways & Drainage

Mordialloc College

Mordialloc Primary School

April Nutter

Parkdale Secondary School

Peninsula Pedallers Inc

Presbyterian Ladies College

Ray White, Chelsea

Rotary Club of Aspendale

Seaford North Primary School

Seaford Park Primary School

Seaford Primary School

Soroptimist International of Brighton

St Anne's Primary School

St Joseph's School

St Louis de Montfort's

Treeplanters Nursery

Veitch & Co Pty Ltd



Melbourne Water

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**Friends of
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