

May-Jun 2022

Wetland Warbler

Wetland Warbler



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

Partial Hide Closure over
Winter
See page 8



Number 178

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Dr Rosalie Cooper



As reported last issue the Hide is now being opened almost every weekend and there are lots of visiting birds and new humans enjoying the atmosphere. In spring we will be

enjoying the new chicks, ducklings and cygnets. There are already some nests and a lot of visiting local species. We hope the migratory birds will visit this year and find lots of muddy banks to feed on. The water levels are still a bit high but not as much as last year when most of the feeding areas were flooded.

Robin Clarey continues her amazing work finding volunteers to open and close the Hide on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. If anyone new to the roster, can spare a two-hour time slot during opening hours we would be most grateful to have new volunteers.

No need to be a bird expert as plenty of support is available to help you doing this useful service. We always have two volunteers on duty together and make sure they are with an expert experienced volunteer. There are bird pictures and books to browse at the Hide. Information is available from Robin.

I can do my bit even though my vision is limited and bird identification I leave to others who are often there with their long cameras. We have many experts about. The visitors often know little about our birds as they may be immigrants or school children. They are always delighted to be welcomed by a volunteer.

If you have never been to the Hide do come in and meet our folk. We have maps of the area showing paths and access points to Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands. Printed maps are available at the Hide, also a copy on the website.

Regards to all,

We hope to see you all in person sometime.



Swans at Edithvale



FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

Assoc No. A0017388A

ABN - 95 886 101 621

P O BOX 2031,
EDITHVALE VIC 3196

www.edithvale-seaford-wetlands.org

<https://>

www.facebook.com/

President Rosalie Cooper
0409 388 066

Vice President Robin Clarey
9786 2213 0405 466 651

Secretary Margaret Hunter
9587 0786

Treasurer Scott King
0404 045 898

Committee

Rex Chugg

Jim Wilson (Handy Man)

Paula McCarthy (Newsletter)

Ali Fulcher

Seaford W'Bees

Rex Chugg 9766 6056

Bird Hide Roster

Robin Clarey 0405 466 651

Guided Tours

Marg Hunter 9587 0786

Newsletter

Robin Clarey 9786 2213

Warbler Collator

Cheryl Meier 9772 4484

Membership Database

Inez van Polanen Petel

9774 2664

Website

Matthew Mitchell

Inez van Polanen Petel

Facebook

Alison Kuitert

Allan Broomhall

CONCERNS REGARDING THE FRANKSTON TO MORNINGTON PARKLANDS LINKAGE PLAN AND THE SEAFORD WETLANDS

Robin Clarey

Concerns regarding the Frankston to Mornington Parklands Future Directions Linkage Plan and the Seaford Wetlands Park Rejuvenation Project are still on FESWI's radar.

The Seaford Wetlands will already be under potential pressure when the Parks Rejuvenation Program is completed and now, they face further threat from the proposed Frankston to Mornington Parklands Plan – both designed to increase human presence in the buffer zones.

Why Seaford Wetlands were chosen for inclusion in these programs remains a mystery. If the people who made these decisions had taken the trouble to find out what the Seaford Wetlands were about, the basic mistake of confusing a buffer zone with a park could never have been made.

And, as is usually the case, once human usage in an area is increased, inevitably and incrementally there will be calls for more amenities to cater for that increase – seating, picnic tables, shelters, toilets etc which, in the case of Seaford Wetlands, will mean more human disturbance in the buffer zones.



Breeding Spoonbills in South Pond.
Photo: Alison Kuitert

In the early years the land which is now occupied by the Seaford Wetlands had been drained and used as farming land. In the 1980's reclamation works began to re-establish the wetlands and acquire buffer zones.



Plantings into the eastern buffer zones

In the early 1990's Friends of Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Inc initiated regular planting bees in the areas around the wetland proper to vegetate the buffer zones.

The sole purpose of planting thousands of trees and other flora into the buffer zones around the Seaford Wetland, which is a highly urbanised wetland, was to shield and protect it from the disturbances of human activity and to preserve its environmental integrity.

A buffer zone is not a park – it is a buffer zone!

This is a point that seems to have entirely escaped the attention of the proposers of both this Frankston to Mornington Parklands Future Directions Plan and the Seaford Wetlands Parks Rejuvenation Program and is inexcusable.

This proposal linking parklands from Frankston to Mornington, together with the Seaford Wetlands Parks Rejuvenation Project, is designed primarily to increase the recreational use of the buffer zones which makes for potential disturbance in the very thing created to prevent this.

The Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc has major concerns about the above mentioned plans and their potential damaging effects on the Seaford Wetlands, and ask that particular consideration be given to those concerns..

Seaford Wetlands should not be part of this program.

ALLAN BROOMHALL

Allan is one of FESWI's quiet achievers working to help FESWI – many of you will have met him at the bird hide where he helps out in many capacities, keeping it and the car park tidy, welcoming visitors, sharing information with them, and recording the bird sightings.

But he is also a worker in the background - on FESWI's facebook, and making videos about the wetlands (can be sighted

by typing 'Videos of Allan Broomhall' into your search engine). More recently he has taken on the massive job of collating and regularly updating the information collected at the hide on bird sightings and visitor numbers.

Hugely helpful for research about the birds, their numbers, frequency and dates of sightings.

FESWI truly appreciates the time and work that has gone into this work. Many thanks Allan!

On the Hide

Some of the comments by visitors - "Fabulous Display" 2-2-2020; "Didn't know you were here, so cool" 2-2-2020; "Hidden Gem" 7-12-2021; "Best Bird Hide" 7-12-2021; "Love all the information" 2-2-2020; "Great place to visit very relaxing" 8-12-2021; "Fantastic thanks" 11-1-2020; "Cool!" 5-1-2020; "Love this... Very Informative... and amazing" 2-2-2020

EXTRAORDINARY EYNESBURY

Peter Murphy

In March this year I attended an interesting club walk with the Bayside Club. It was a horrific and truly terrifying drive across the Westgate Bridge. The new adjoining tunnel and its associated roadworks left you with split second decisions to be made with a pushy truck just metres away from your tailgate. All at breakneck speed. But it ended up being very worthwhile. Destination. Eynesbury. Near Melton and on the way to Ballarat. Nearby is the Werribee River.

It is a great dry forest with a lot of rocks scattered across the ground. What is special there is the abundance of Jacky Winters and Diamond Firetails. I actually witnessed a male Firetail presenting a piece of straw to a female. How cute. Even have a terrible photo of it. We also saw the light and dark morph Little Eagles flying overhead. We saw the Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Speckled Warbler and a female Rose Robin. 64 species in total. Not bad, eh!



Photo from <https://www.timeinthebush.com>



Jacky Winter Photo: BirdLife Australia



Diamond Firetail Photo: BirdLife Australia

Eynesbury Forest and the adjacent Eynesbury Township are surrounded by farmland to the south of Melton and west of Melbourne, Victoria. This remnant greybox forest provides important wildlife habitat.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MELBOURNE WATER EDUCATION TEAM

Margaret Hunter.

The Friends of Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Inc is working in collaboration with Jane Petch and the Melbourne Water Education Team to develop a learning unit focusing on the Edithvale Level Crossing Removal Project. There has so far, been two sessions, in person at the Education Centre on 4 May with VCE students studying Environmental Science from Caulfield Grammar, and on 27 May with students from the local Mentone Girls' Secondary College.

These sessions are a joint session, using the current curriculum requirements and in consultation with the need of the teachers and students, on the Edithvale -Seaford Wetlands, their Ramsar status, the role of Melbourne Water, and a formal presentation from FESWI on our role in the EES process and the outcomes.

The comments so far have been that the FESWI involvement is valued, as is the other information on the Edithvale -Seaford Wetlands as part of these presentations. A Power-Point presentation is currently being prepared for this work by Margaret.

It is planned to develop these programs as part of the collaboration and co-operative relationship that the FESWI has had with Melbourne Water and its previous agencies, since our formation in 1988. The Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc as a group has a 30 plus year's knowledge base in the wetlands, and presented to the EES Planning Panel in 2018,. Submission available from the Secretary,

It is also an opportunity to promote the work and commitment – as well as the knowledge base to the VCE students doing this Environmental Science Course and encourage current and future involvement in FESWI. We receive a large number of enquiries from university students, school students and members of the community on the wetlands and the topic of the LXRA is one of the most requested topics.

Involvement in these activities will require a Working with Children check .These are available free as a volunteer. If any readers are interested in this activity, please let the secretary know on edithvaleseafordwetlands-friend@gmail.com or on 0417 323 460.



WOODLEIGH STUDENTS VISIT AGAIN

After a long Covid break, Woodleigh School students, as part of the school's Community Partnerships Program, have returned to Seaford Wetlands to help out with the continued revegetation of the buffer zones. Shifting mulch and spreading it is not easy work, but the six students were not only hardworking but polite and friendly and very pleasant to work with.

Many thanks to Gabby, Lily, Nox, Cooper, Tom and Andy and their teachers.



BIRD REPORTS IN THE WETLANDS (CLC MEETING)

Andrew Silcock's Report for bird activity over the past 3 months at Edithvale to the CLC meeting.

The wetlands are in a pretty good condition with reasonably high water levels. The northern swamp has been filling slowly. Waterbird numbers have been increasing with several swans nest building. Up three Magpie Geese are in the area, but often seen outside the wetland on the nearby golf course.



Magpie Goose Photo: Robin Clarey

An Australasian Bittern was reported on the April survey but not in May, despite favourable conditions. Aus Bitterns are winter visitors to the Melbourne area but numbers at Edithvale have been dropping in recent years. We're not sure why, but it may be related to factors away from the site, such as higher rainfall inland or a general species decline. More research into the drop in numbers at Edithvale is required.

The wetland grooming of invasive Phragmites & Cumbungi has been completed. On the southern wetland only small areas have been cut owing to the high water levels. The northern swamp was dry through the autumn and some grooming has been done there, but much less than planned. For some reason, the Cumbungi within the wetland were left uncut, which was disappointing.

Through the autumn, there have been an influx of bush birds moving through the site. Good numbers of Grey Fantails and Pardalotes have been recorded, including three subspecies of Striated Pardalote – the local

ornatus, striatus from Tasmania and substriatus from inland Australia.



Pardalote Photo: Robin Clarey

Flame Robins are one of the most spectacular winter visitors to the area, but numbers have been falling dramatically over the past five years. At Edithvale you're lucky to pick up one bird on a survey now, whereas formally you'd expect to see around ten. The reason for the decline isn't fully understood, whether it is due to habitat changes at the local wetlands or a change in their winter dispersal away from the high country of across Bass Strait from Tasmania.



Flame Robin (young female) Photo: Allan Broomhall

Sean Dooley Reports on Seaford:

Water levels continued to stay relatively high throughout late summer and autumn so the expected bonanza of shorebird species was not quite as high as anticipated numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers peaking at 650 in February (in some years the numbers can be 1500 plus). The flock at Seaford seemed to be the only substantial numbers in the entire Carrum Wetlands as

BIRD REPORTS IN THE WETLANDS (CONT)

other sites such as ETP and Edithvale had water levels too high to suit this wader.



Sharp-tailed Sandpipers Photo: Robin Clarey

Latham's Snipe continued to be seen in good numbers again with a maximum count of 61 in February. Rare waders included a Wood Sandpiper that was resident all summer and a Long-toed Stint in February. Once again the majority of birds were counted roosting in the wetland in the south-west corner of the wetland (to the left of the observation deck at Austin Road.)



Latham's Snipe Photo: Allan Broomhall

Like at Edithvale, Flame Robin numbers at Seaford in March and April were comparatively low compared to 10 years ago with a maximum of 7 seen in April. In the 2000s we were sometimes getting as many as 40 birds mainly centred on Downs Estate. The birds that visit here may have been impacted by factors such as bushfires in their summer homes, but I suspect that Downs in particular is not as suitable for these birds as the grass is much higher and denser than it used to be. these birds like more open ground with shorter grass.

There were not high numbers of other water birds but a good variety. One highlight was Spotless Crakes in at least 4 separate locations. While only a single bird was seen or heard at each spot, these birds often gather in small groups so there may have been many more that went undetected.



Spotless Crake Photo: Steve McDonald

The phragmites grooming that was able to be done looks good, especially on the eastern side in areas overlapping with the previous year's grooming.



It was reasonably quiet in the bushland of the buffer zones though some highlights were the continued presence of at least one pair of Crested Shrike-tits and gatherings of Common Bronzewing and Eastern Rosellas feeding on the dropped seeds of local wattle species planted as part of previous revegetation in both Zone 5 (north west near the



Crested Shrike-tit Photo: BirdLife Australia



PROJECT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The young learners at Edithvale have recently started a community engagement project! This month we explored bird wildlife at our local wetlands! Before embarking on our adventure to the wetlands, the children were first involved in what we might see/find at the wetlands.



We explored what we might see at the wetlands-
L- 'An Eagle'
M- 'Cockatoo's'
N- 'Ducks'
A- 'Swans'
P- 'Pelicans'



We explored what might birds use to build their nests-
B- 'Eggs'
L- 'Twigs'
M- 'Leaves'
A- 'Feathers'
S- 'Branches'
P- 'Hay'



WOW!



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EDITHVALE FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The children engaged in exploring using clay to create 'birds' nests' and 'birds' using clay and other natural materials available to us- this included gumnuts, leaves, native flowers and sticks.

This was inspired through the book 'Bundjil, creation story' by Carolyn Briggs.



VISIT US AT:



kingston.vic.gov.au

Corporate Members

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

Peninsula Pedallers,
Sonya Kilkenny
Ray White, Chelsea

Patterson River Golf Club
Edithvale Family And Children's
Centre

Longbeach RSL
Tania Ireton
Viridans Pty Ltd

The hide will be closed on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays over Winter (July, August and September).

CLOSED

Saturday 2nd July, Saturday 16th July, Saturday 30th July, Saturday 30th July, Saturday 6th August
Saturday 20th August, Saturday 3rd September, Saturday 17th September

The Hide will be open every Sunday as usual.

Opening hours 1:00pm–5:00pm

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**Friends of
Edithvale – Seaford
Wetlands Inc.**

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EDITHVALE 3196



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