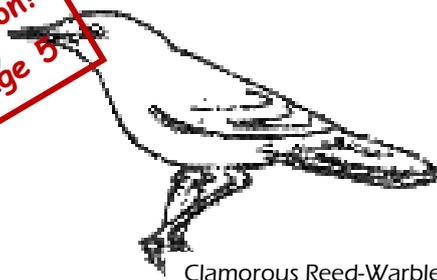


Aug-Oct 2020

Wetland Warbler

Have you renewed your subscription?
See Page 5



Clamorous Reed-Warbler



Number 168

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Wetland Warbler

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear FESWI Members,

Best wishes to you all and we hope you are surviving the Victorian lockdown!

The committee has continued to function, we are becoming very

familiar with discussions by Zoom meetings and telephone/email.

Margaret Hunter and Robin Clarey have done a sterling job keeping our issues before the public. The rail development in Edithvale, Chelsea and Bonbeach continues to concern us with possible implications for the health of the wetlands and groundwater flows. The new Mordialloc Freeway may affect migratory birds using the Ramsar declared areas.

We are keeping up with these issues as the work progresses.

Unfortunately, the Bird Hide is still closed pending the end of lockdown. However, the birds are there and some little ones are venturing out as the water fills the area around there and looking for food both outside and inside

the Melbourne Water fencing. People walking in that area may have seen them. They seem to understand the dangers and be well protected by their parents!

Melbourne Water rangers and many of our members are working from home so the wildlife may be taking advantage of some freedom to roam. Hopefully we will be able to observe them soon. The buffer and parkland areas seem to be full of walkers, bike riders and children at present. We are discussing some strategies to make FESWI more known to people who are accessing these areas.

Our history has recently been presented as a new book, Glimpses of Friends of Edithvale Seaford Wetlands. Copies will be distributed to local libraries and be available to members as soon as we can have meetings and can open the Hide.

We hope all our active volunteers will be able to take up their roles again when this time comes.

Good cheer and hopeful wishes to you all.

Please contact me or a committee member if you have any questions.

Rosalie Cooper

FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

Assoc No. A0017388A

ABN - 95 886 101 621

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EDITHVALE VIC 3196

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Guided Tours

Marg Hunter 9587 0786

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Inez van Polanen Petel

Facebook

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Allan Broomhall

Wetland Study Group

Jim Wilson 0408 975 410

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14th October 7:00pm by Zoom

See over for details

YOUR INVITATION

FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE



SEAFORD WETLANDS INC

The Committee

Has pleasure in inviting you

to the

31st Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14th October

7.00 p.m.

on Zoom



If you would like to attend, RSVP to Secretary, Margaret Hunter, at feswiwetlands@gmail.com by 10 October 2020, phone- 0417 323 460. She will then send you the *Join Zoom Meeting* details.

If you would like to nominate for the committee, email Margaret Hunter on feswiwetlands@gmail.com by 5 October 2020 at the latest. To vote by proxy, contact Margaret on feswiwetlands@gmail.com

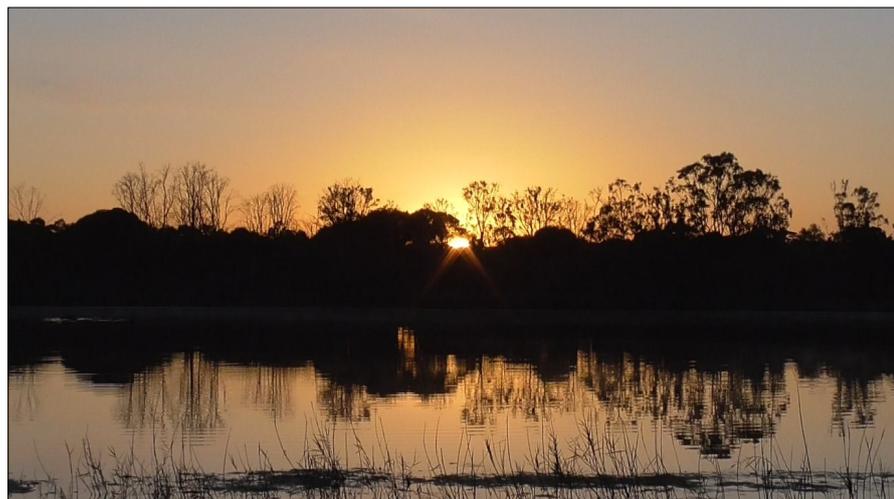
If you have a query or comment, contact President, Rosalie Cooper, at rosalie.rmc74@gmail.com, phone- 0409 388 066



Cygnets at Edithvale



All manner of ducks at Seaford



Sunrise at Seaford

CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS

Clare Bracey

I am very lucky to enjoy the wetlands in my local area, but I do miss exploring other natural areas and seeing different plants and wildlife. Something that has kept me entertained throughout this lockdown is getting involved in citizen science projects. Whilst many projects such as bird and frog monitoring are still possible within your local area, there are other online projects where you can participate from your couch. I have put together a list of some of my favourite citizen science projects.

Australian Citizen Science Association

The Australian Citizen Science Project Finder is an easy way to discover and connect with citizen science projects in Australia. You can search for projects in your local area, projects for children, or projects that require minimal experience. <https://citizenscience.org.au>

The Frog Census App

The Frog Census program collates data gathered by community volunteers by recording frog calls at their local waterway. The data gathered is used to provide further information on frog's species distribution across the Melbourne region. The Frog Census App provides a description of the 16 species of frogs commonly found in the Melbourne Region. To get involved simply search Frog Census in your app store, or search Melbourne Water Frog Census online for more information.



Aussie Backyard Bird Count

The Aussie Backyard Bird Count is an annual event, running from the 19th to 25th of October. It's a great way to connect with the birds in your backyard, which can be a suburban backyard, a local park, a patch of forests or the beach. The data is collected to assist BirdLife Australia in understanding more about the birds that live where people live. You can

download the Aussie Backyard Bird Count App, or visit their website <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>.

Wildlife Spotter

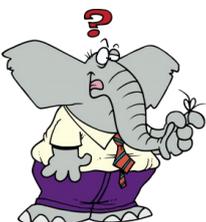
It's never been easier to help threatened species across Australia. Wildlife spotter provides volunteers with images taken by field cameras, and it's up to you to help identify the species in the photos. Each project has a comprehensive field guide to help you with identification, so it's a great way to learn about new animals across Australia. My favourite project has been the Kangaroo Durnart Survey. Some cameras are even set up in fire affected areas, so getting involved is a great way to help bushfire recovery. Check out <https://volunteer.ala.org.au/wildlife-spotter> for more information.

Zooniverse

If you feel like travelling to another country, or visiting a museum or art gallery, then I've got the next best thing. Zooniverse is an online program which enables everyone to take part in real research in many fields across science, humanities and more. The research

projects range from classifying galaxies, to counting penguins to transcribing manuscripts. My favourite projects so far has been counting Marine Iguanas in the Galapagos and counting penguins in remote regions. It's the closer thing to travelling right now! Check out <https://www.zooniverse.org> for available projects.

There are plenty of citizen science projects available around the world, and there's sure to be something to interest everyone. Enjoy contributing to the wonderful world of science!



Have you remembered to renew your membership?

Details on Page 5

THE CALL OF THE WILD

THE COMPLEX LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

Birds' alarm calls aren't simply shrieks but a sophisticated language. By Jennifer Ackerman

The Australian National Botanic Gardens is where Jennifer Hackman did much of her study.

When a harsh, high-pitched, rattling alarm call erupts from the eucalypts, loud and sudden, and ricochets around the gardens to the birds, it's the sound of danger. The strident alarm call belongs to the New Holland honeyeater. Its call is a kind of early-warning system of impending danger. The alarm spreads from honey eater to honeyeater across the gardens in a fast-travelling wave of raucous real-time alerts that tracks the progress of a sparrowhawk. The instant a honeyeater spots the sleek profile of a sparrowhawk flying in low and fast over the gum trees, it unleashes a torrent of warning calls, alerting other birds. They in turn issue their own alarm calls until the woods and shrubs are ringing with alarm.

Jessica McLachlan, who studied birds for her PhD thesis, has found that the honeyeater's alarm calls are not in fact simple cries of warning, but a complex language rich with meaning. "These birds really go extreme, with up to 96 elements in a single call," she says. "That's the most we've heard; the median is much less than that. But these birds are saying a lot more than we ever suspected." McLachlan has discovered that the honeyeater's calls encode highly specific information. Moreover, the birds that are listening are capable of decoding and understanding these complex messages. It's a super-sophisticated signalling system.

It's generally thought that birds have two kinds of alarm calls: "mobbing" calls and "flee alarm" calls. Mobbing calls are abrupt, short, loud and repetitive; they're made in response to predators that are not moving at high speed and are not an immediate or intense threat and signals them to fly toward the source of the call and join in with their own mobbing calls to drive the predator away.

Flee alarm calls (also known as "aerial alarm calls"), on the other hand, usually mean there's a predator in flight, which is a lot more dangerous for a bird. These calls are typically



Noisy Miner (en Wikipedia)

high-pitched, in a narrow bandwidth with a lot of up-and-down amplitude, making the sounds harder to locate, especially for raptors with relatively poor hearing in that frequency range. Given that birds need to respond to different threats in different ways, mobbing or fleeing, it makes sense that they would evolve different types of alarm calls. But communicating in this way – describing the specifics of a predator, whether it's arriving by air or by ground – is called "functionally referential signalling", and it was considered a big deal when it was first discovered in birds.

The specificity goes even further – for some birds the number of notes encodes information about how far away a predator is. And for others, for example, the mobbing calls of North America's black-capped chickadees contain messages – coded in the number of dees at the end of the call. – about the size of a predator.

Ackerman is now taking a closer look at the elements of the alarm calls. "The acoustic structure of the first note may tell the birds whether or not to flee, and the number of elements in the call as a whole may tell them for how long they should stay in hiding.

But do other species grasp the detailed information encoded in one bird's call? One of the early things discovered is that flee alarm calls and mobbing calls are in fact hugely diverse, and they're not necessarily automatically recognised by other species."

This led to the idea that cognition might be involved, that birds might have to learn the alarm calls of other species. Experimenting with Noisy Miner warning calls to Fairy Wrens located in a different area they found that the fair-Wrens didn't react at all. It means the Fairy Wrens do not respond to unfamiliar alarm calls until they learn that they mean danger – in effect, until they learn the new language.

That birds can pack so much information into their calls – type of predator, perched or in flight, near or far, how fast approaching, how dangerous – perhaps should not be so surprising.

From *The Weekend Australian Magazine* July 4, 2020



New Holland Honeyeater (fr Wikipedia)

Acacia longifolia subsp. sophorae

Clare Bracey

Common name: Coast Wattle

Plant type: Shrub/small tree

Description: *Acacia sophorae* is a low-growing, spreading shrub when growing in exposed areas. In more sheltered locations, it can grow as a large shrub to 2-3 metres in height (sometimes taller). Like most acacias, the leaves are not true leaves. Mature plants have leaf-like flattened stems called phyllodes. The phyllodes are oval shaped between 5 and 10 cm long. The flowers are bright yellow and arranged in cylinder shaped spikes about 3 cm long.

Flowering season: July - October

The Coast Wattle is commonly used in revegetation to prevent soil erosion and to stabilise sand dunes. The Coast Wattle also makes great bush

tucker and when roasted, the seed has a nutty flavour and is known to have been used by Aborigines. Like most wattles, they have a strong smell that attracts birds and bees and also provide food and habitat for many birds.



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See *Join Us* page on website <https://www.edithvale-seaford-wetlands.org/join-us.html>

Corporate Members

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

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Patterson River Golf Club

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Centre
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