

# Jan-Feb 2021

## Wetland Warbler



Number 170

### Inside this issue:

International Importance of Wetlands	2
The Snipe Project	3
Triglochlin striata	4
Juliette Interview	5



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

## Wetland Warbler

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rosalie Cooper.

Welcome to the New Year everyone.

We are pleased to report that your subscriptions and donations continue to come in even though the Hide and Education Centre are still closed.

Unfortunately, the Hide has been inundated with water this summer and we have a job ahead to clean it out. Hopefully the opening date will be advertised soon. Keep an eye on the website if there is nothing in this newsletter. We will be opening with suitable Covid-19 regulations as soon as we can. Volunteers to supervise visitors will receive training information. Masks should be worn according to announcements from the Victorian Health Authorities. Visits will be limited to 20-30 minutes depending on demand.

The Education Centre may be closed for much longer due to some damage to the structure we are waiting on information from Melbourne Water as to the future use of their building.

Outdoor school visits to the wetlands are also being started soon with FESWI members supporting those.

Our committee is meeting monthly and has been using Zoom online through 2020. Having an evening event for Christmas and now meeting at an indoor venue will be a pleasant change. The meetings are monthly on the third Wednesday evening at 7pm. Members are welcome to attend however the Secretary must be notified well beforehand, if anyone wishes to come, to be consistent with Covid regulations.

Thank you for your continuing support of FESWI.



#### FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

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Photos: Steve McDonald Left—Black-fronted Dotterel

Right—Little Grassbird

## THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EDITHVALE-SEAFORD WETLANDS

Clare Bracey



The 2nd of February was World Wetlands Day – a day to celebrate and recognise the vital role of wetlands for people and the planet. This date marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of

Ramsar. Wetlands include a range of land areas from inland and coastal wetlands, however wetlands are one of the most threatened habitats. The Ramsar Convention aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise management, those that remain. The convention encourages the designation of sites containing representative, rare or unique wetlands, or wetlands that are important for conserving biological diversity. Once designated, these sites are added to the Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance and become known as Ramsar sites. In designating a wetland as a Ramsar site, countries agree to manage and conserve the wetland and maintain the ecological character of a wetland. Wetlands can be included on the List of Wetlands of International Importance because of their ecological, botanical, zoological, limnological or hydrological importance.

Did you know that the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands is listed as a Ramsar site? Meaning our local wetland is also a Wetland of International Importance. Edithvale-Seaford Wetland was listed as a Ramsar site in 2001 as it supports important habitat for significant bird species. There are 12 Ramsar wetlands within Victoria, and Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands is the only Victorian Ramsar site located in an urban landscape. To be listed as a Ramsar site, wetlands have to meet certain criteria to be listed under the Ramsar convention. There are nine Ramsar

listing criteria, and Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands meets three of these criteria.

- Criteria 2: Supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
  - o The site regularly supports two wetland dependent fauna species listed under the EPBC Act and/or IUCN Red Listed. Australian Bittern (Endangered), Curlew Sandpiper (Critically Endangered).
- Criteria 4: Supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.
  - o The Edithvale-Seaford Ramsar Site regularly supports eight international migratory waterbirds. There are also records of over 20 species of waterbird breeding within the wetlands.
- Criteria 6: Regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.
  - o Counts above 1% of the estimated population of two species are regularly recorded within the site: Australian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*.

Being listed as a Ramsar site showcases just how special the Edithvale-Seaford Wetland is on a local and international scale. Through the continued management and protection of wetlands like the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, we can halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and conserve these important habitats.

For more information about Ramsar Wetlands and International Wetland Day, visit <https://www.ramsar.org>.



Image source: <https://www.ramsar.org>

# ANIMALS AUSTRALIA ON DUCK SHOOTING

The recreational slaughter of waterbirds is still on Dan Andrews' agenda, even considering waterbird populations plummeting towards catastrophic failure, and habitats that are struggling to recover from drought and bushfire. Worsening environmental conditions,

Apart from clear cruelty, the government's own survey has revealed that shockingly few shooters in Victoria understand the rules or can identify the defenceless native animals they're pointing guns at. Of all duck shooters surveyed:

- **Less than 4%** could answer all questions correctly when asked about animal welfare, waterbird identification and safety;
- out of 5 **don't know** how to shoot to minimise wounding;
- 4 out of 5 **couldn't identify species** they're permitted to kill and those who are 'protected';
- **84%** don't know how to kill **ducks they have shot and injured**;

- Only 15% of duck shooters understand the **safety risks** associated with firing at ducks at close-range.

Source:  
Animals Australia

Summary report of hunters' knowledge survey findings. Game Management Authority, December 2020.



A man walks up to a duck hunter with a duck under his arm. He says, "This is the pig I was talking about." Duck Hunter, "That's not a pig, it's a duck." Man, "I was talking to the duck."

## THE SNIPE PROJECT

On the morning of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January, Dr Birgita Hansen from the Federation University Australia, who is running an on-going Snipe Project Research Program, ran an on-site field demonstration at Seaford Wetlands on how the bird count is conducted for the purpose of training potential volunteers and other interested folk.

As Birgita reported, "It was very successful with a minimum of 85 snipe being counted during the demonstration. There were also sharp-tailed in the area at the time, which gave people the opportunity to compare the two species and work out how to differentiate between them."



Many thanks to Birgita; and to Inez, Sue, Juliette, Denise, Roger, Robin, John and Matt (Seaford Ranger) for your interest.



## *Triglochin striata*

**Common name:** Streaked arrow grass

**Plant type:** Herb

**Description:** *Triglochin striata* is slender herb with stems that can grow up to 35cm in height. The plant has flat strap-like leaves which are long and thin (35cm tall, 1-3mm wide). The leaves grow in distinct tufts which grow along their extensive rhizome system (underground stems). The narrow leaves have parallel lines, which gives it the name streaked arrow grass. The flowers head is a long spike that grows to about 18cm long. The spike contains 20-200 tiny flowers along the erect stem. The flowers are a greenish-yellow colour.

Clare Bracey



Image source:  
<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/>

**Flowering season:** August to May

**Habitat:** Frequently found in salt marshes and coastal areas. Prefers swamp, water-logged areas, often in the margins of ponds and lagoons.

*Phragmites australis* is native to most parts of Australia, and also New Zealand, the Americas and South Africa. This plant is great at helping to stabilise the soil through their network of underground stems (rhizome system). This stabilisation is essential to protect the wetlands from erosion. The streaked arrow grass also creates quality habitat for frogs that inhabit the wetlands. Many people use this plant when creating their own frog ponds on their gardens.

## THE OVERWINTERING PROJECT

*The Overwintering Project* is a long-term environmental art project that unites artists around Australia to raise awareness for our most endangered group of birds, migratory shorebirds, and their habitat. Australia's 36 species of migratory shorebirds spend the summer on our shores, migrating north to breed during the brief arctic summer before returning in October.

You are warmly invited to the upcoming duo of Overwintering Project exhibitions, *The Overwintering Project: Westernport* and the *Wall of Wings*.

The exhibitions will run concurrently at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery and Oak Hill Gallery respectively, both on Melbourne's beautiful Mornington Peninsula.

Both exhibitions begin on Saturday **March 6 2021**, with *The Overwintering Project: Westernport's* official opening from 12-3pm on the same day, and the official opening for the *Wall of Wings* the next day between 2-4 pm with official proceedings at 3 pm.

## THIS TIME 32 YEARS AGO

### Edithvale North Development

I hope members have taken the time to visit and explore the Edithvale North Wetland development during recent weeks.

The six lagoons are taking shape and their potential to store large volumes of water is becoming evident. Already seagulls are using the lagoons for shelter and the recently disturbed soils are providing a food source for a variety of birdlife.

The excavation has uncovered many "fossil" shells thought to be around 6,000 years old. Could someone please prepare an article on these interesting relics? Better still if we could produce a brochure for people and schools visiting the Wetlands.

# RUBBISH AROUND THE WETLANDS AND JULIETTE

The newsletter group is now managed by three of us (forming the Newsletter Subcommittee) including Clare, Paula and myself (Robin). At our first face-to-face meeting we invited Juliette for an interview. Juliette got in touch with me in December 2020 saying that she was anxious to do something about the rubbish around the hide area.

Us: What prompted you to embark upon a solo clean up?

Juliette: Seeing all the rubbish when I was walking around the wetlands and along Edithvale Road.

Us: Where exactly do you walk?

Juliette: I park my car in the bird hide car park, and I started cleaning up the car park and then walking along Edithvale Road on the south side up to the Education Centre. There were some council guys working there, so I thought I would just leave that area for another day. I got four bags on that collection (see photo below). I was surprised at how much there was – much hidden in the grass.

Us: How often will you be doing it, Juliette?

Juliette: I'm not sure – the other day I drove past, and I could see more rubbish starting again since my last clean-up and I thought maybe I could do it once a month.

Us: It may have been worse during the lockdown with more people walking out and about, but it is probably being thrown out of car windows along Edithvale Road.

Juliette: I've only just started so it's hard to judge if it's getting worse or better since the easing of lockdown.

Us: We're interested in rubbish types or items. Is there any type occurring more frequently than other types? What have you noticed in the rubbish?

Juliette: The number of items that struck me was those really large drink cups from 7/11 and



McDonald's with the plastic lids and the straws - basically fast-food containers. (*Ed: Surprise! Surprise!*) And in the car park there were an extraordinary number of cigarette butts, so I'm wondering if there is an option to have a cigarette butt collection stand there.

Us: These types of people would probably be too lazy to get out of their cars to do that. Easier to chuck them out the window, and they probably empty their car ash trays out there as well.

Us: Have you found anything really odd or unusual?

Juliette: Not really. But I have noticed up near the Education Centre someone has dumped three large paint tins – I'm thinking, "Seriously ..... what *are* you doing?" People just don't care.

I will probably do it once a month and if anybody would like to join me on the next one – that would be good.

Great work Juliette – we need more folk like you!

Juliette's mobile number is 0425 760 526 if you would like to contact her for the next collection date and time.



## Corporate Members

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

Peninsula Pedallers,  
Sonya Kilkenny  
Ray White, Chelsea

Patterson River Golf Club  
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