

Mar_Apr 2020

Wetland Warbler



Number 167

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Clamorous Reed-Warbler

Wetland Warbler

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Appointment of FESWI President: At the February 2020 Committee Meeting there was discussion about the urgency to appoint a president. Dr Roosalie Cooper, current Treasurer, offered to take on the role if there was a committee member willing to become Assistant Treasurer, to which Colin Franklin agreed. Many thanks to Rosalie and Colin.



natures on our five-year licence document for the Hide. Melbourne Water will finalise that when they have a chance. They are currently working with most staff at home. After that is finalised we have to work on the future of Duck In. The recent inspection appears to be more positive than previous contacts.

Colin Franklin is doing the Treasurer's job with great enthusiasm allowing me to concentrate on the President's duties. I am in touch with Margaret Hunter and Robin Clarey regularly to check on care of the Hide and information for the web and newsletter. Inez van Polanen Petel is looking after the membership list.

Our future plans will be clearer when this crisis settles down a bit. In the meantime all of you stay well if possible. I am in physical isolation at home because of my age, 82, but feeling fine.

Warm regards,

Rosalie Cooper, FESWI President.

Email: rosalie.rmc74@gmail.com

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/edithvalseafordwetlands/>

President Rosalie Cooper

Vice President Robin Clarey
9786 2213

Secretary Margaret Hunter
9587 0786

Treasurer Rosalie Cooper
0409 388 066

Assistant Treasurer
Colin Franklin

Committee

Rex Chugg

Trevor Shewan

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Matthew Mitchell

Genevieve Pound

Seaford W/Bees

Rex Chugg 9766 6056

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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

Wetland Study Group

Jim Wilson 0408 975 410

Dear All,

We are all feeling frustration at the need to cease our usual activities.

Having to close the Bird Hide and Duck Inn is preventing our gathering and bird watching, our planting, water study and the conducting of walks and talks for schools and community groups. It also limits communication and sharing of ideas and activities. Hopefully the need for this will not last too long.

Please keep in touch by email. I am happy to receive any messages especially if I can help you.

Not much has changed since we closed down. We are waiting for the final sig-

BIRD WATCHERS' VISIT

Jacqui Sheppard

On Sunday the 16th of February, 16 bird watchers from Mornington Peninsula Birdlife Branch arrived at the bird hide. People were eager to see how much water was in the Wetlands by the hide which had been bone-dry less than 3 weeks ago. However, the rains of late had built up two decent-sized ponds but only a few Chestnut Teal remained and the odd Purple Swamphen skulking amongst the reeds. A Swamp Harrier cruising by and stirring the ducks up was, disappointingly, our only raptor for the day.

The view looked very pretty with the verdant green grass that had grown in front of the hide through to the ponds and is now laying flat in swirls. It is actually Sea Club-Rush (*Bolboschoenus caldwellii*).

I had very low expectations for the day after my reccy but with so many sharp eyes we managed to have a successful day. We walked on the northern's side long wide path beside an oval area and disturbed a large group of Red-rumped Parrots, then Eastern Rosellas, then further along Galahs, Straw-necked Ibis and Masked Lapwing and a small group of Little Corellas. It was enjoyable to be on such an easy track to walk on. Then we crossed over to follow the fence line someway looking for views onto the water until we reached the raised platform which also gave us the opportunity to peer across to the dam in the golf course, a popular resting place for Wood Ducks, Coots and two Magpie Geese.

The water on this side of Edithvale Rd is where there is permanent water which attracts a few special species – all of which we saw – Musk Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Shovelers, and many Freckled Duck as well as the more common Chestnut Teal.

About half the group continued the full circuit and some were lucky enough then to see a Latham's Snipe burst out of the grass for a short flight before again diving out of site into the reeds.

Thank you to all those who attended and helped to find a total of 43 birds. Well done as the day far exceeded my expectations.

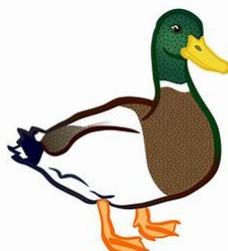


Red-rumped Parrot Photo: Steve McDonald

ON DUCK HUNTING

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews will decide on May 11 if the rest of the duck shooting season can go ahead.

Given the traumatic start to the year for both people and animals in Australia (prolonged drought, raging bushfires decimating native animals, and record-low waterbird populations), it's hard to believe that shooters may still be allowed to descend on regional communities to kill and maim native waterbirds – and all in the name of 'recreation'.



ANIMALS AUSTRALIA

We (*Animals Australia*) are hearing from our sources within the Victorian parliament that the consistent feedback to MPs about duck shooting is **having an impact** on internal debate about the future of this so called 'sport'. So we need to **keep the pressure up** – we want to end duck shooting for good but for now, we have a **real chance of making sure there won't be a season this year**.

Please take a minute to **Speak up for ducks** before a decision is made at:

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/contact-us>

SNIPE PROJECT

Latham's Snipe is a cryptic migratory shorebird that breeds in Japan during the Australian winter, and migrates to south-eastern Australia every spring. It is one of 37 migratory species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act 1999).

The species is declining on its breeding grounds in Japan, and is thought to be decreasing in Australia. In order to understand causes of population change and identify important sites for conservation of the species, the Latham's Snipe project was initiated to investigate the ecology, wetland use and migration strategies of the species.

The project focuses on population monitoring across their eastern Australian range during the non-breeding season. This is to establish population sizes and identify characteristics that define important habitats. The project has also been tracking snipe using satellite transmitters and geolocators.

The population monitoring is conducted primarily by volunteers and has been collecting detailed information about the distribution and abundance of the species since 2015.

You can also read about the satellite tracking and other project news at:
<https://lathamssnipeproject.wordpress.com/news/>



Latham's Snipe Photo: Allan Broomhall



Volunteers Sue and Denise on the hunt.

WORKSHOPS IN FEBRUARY

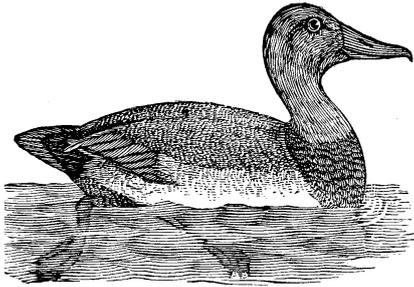
On 29th February, three FESWI members Jim, Robin and Pamela, attended a *Water Quality Testing Workshop* in Doncaster run by *Melbourne Water*. Many techniques were presented, and participants got to engage in lots of practical work.



On 16th February a number of FESWI members attended a workshop (MW) at the Education Centre, one of whom was Allan Broomhall who wrote, "We had an awesome presentation of the Latham's Snipe Project from Dr Birgita Hansen."



PUZZLES—DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIRDS?



MATCH THE BILL DESCRIPTION TO A WATER BIRD you can see at Edithvale Wetlands

- 1. Red bill right up to its eye with the tip of the bill white.
- 2. Bright blue bill that doesn't go as far as the eye.
- 3. Long grey bill with side flaps.
- 4. A rather small stout pointed bill.

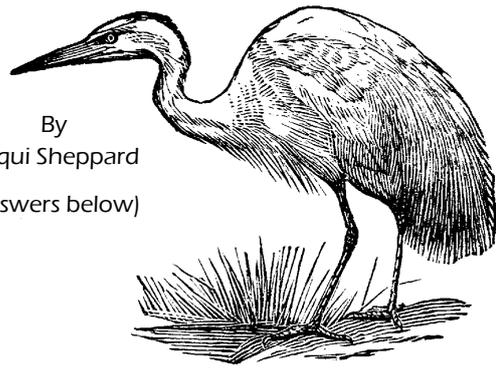
.....
WHICH FACT IS WRONG ABOUT THE SWAMP HARRIER?

The Swamp Harrier can often be seen from the hide flying slowly. When it flies over, the ducks

usually scatter and panic. It holds its wings pointing down as it flies. At the end of its wings it spreads its 'fingers'. Most have a white rump just above the tail.

.....
WHAT DUCK AM I?

I have a yellow eye. I am male. I have a long broad bill. I have a curved white line from my eye to my chin. I have a white patch by my rump?



By Jacqui Sheppard
(Answers below)

BE PART OF OUR NEWSLETTER
Send us a drawing of your favourite bird and tell us why.



INTERESTING

[The global problem of thirsty cities | Pursuit by The University of Melbourne](#)



Urban populations have quadrupled since 1960, and just over half of the current global population now lives in cities. By 2050, two out of every three people will live in cities. At the same time, our urban water needs are projected to rise 50-to-80 per cent. Read more....

<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/the-global-problem-of-thirsty-cities>



ANSWERS

TO BILL MATCHING
Black Swan 2. Male Blue-billed Duck 3. Australasian Shoveller 4. Either of the Grebe species
WHICH FACT IS WRONG ABOUT THE SWAMP HARRIER
It holds its wings pointing down as it flies. IS WRONG AS THE Swamp Harrier flies with its wings upswapt.
WHAT DUCK AM I?
Australasian Shoveller

BOLBOSCHOENUS CALDWELLII

Clare Bracey

Common name: Marsh club-rush

Plant type: Sedge, grass or rush

Description: Pale to mid green foliage with grass like leaves. The flowers are red-brown and they occur as groups of 1-3 spikelets. The fruit is a lens-shaped straw-coloured shiny nut which is 3.5-4mm long and 2.5-3mm in diameter. This species can grow up to 120cm tall.

Flowering season: October to April

Similar species: *Bolboschoenus medianus* grows in a similar range and habitat but has a dark-brown to black nut.

Bolboschoenus caldwellii is a hardy wetland plant that grows in permanent to semi-permanent water. This species is currently abundant in our wetlands (Edithvale) but it dies back during the



Photo: Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository

winter months. *Bolboschoenus caldwellii* is important in our wetlands because it provides habitat for birds and frogs, and provides abundant food for the following breeding season. The roots are also essential to prevent erosion as they help to stabilise the banks and soils in wetlands.



DUMPERS

You litterers and dumpers,
With secluded places in your sight,
And cars and trailers in the night,
You dump as if it is your right.

Is your moral compass on the blink?
How low can people like you sink?
You might clean your house and achieve
your goal,
But you'll never get rid of the trash in
your soul.

RC

On Old Wells Road on the eastern boundary of Seaford Wetlands (in 1.5 kilometres), there were 29 separate dumpings of rubbish counted in the last week of April.

The bird hide car park is also a regular dumping ground.



Corporate Members

6

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

Edithvale Family And Children's
Centre
Peninsula Pedallers,
Sonya Kilkenny

Viridans Pty Ltd
Patterson River Golf Club

beach RSL
Tania Ireton

Long-

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