

A black swan enjoying the rapidly filling lake Photo : Nicky Armstrong

From the editor

May has been another very busy month for FOLC with a Busy Bee, Community Service Students' sessions and a visit by the Millenium Kids group.

Because of the Covid lockdown, our April Night Chat, scheduled for 27 April, was postponed until Tuesday, 4th May. Fortunately, our invited speaker Professor Hans Lambers was free to give his talk a week later, so all was well.

The only challenge is that this issue of the FOLC Newsletter contains reports of two different Night Chats - both equally stimulating and inspiring (see pages 9 and 10). For those who missed the talks, Naga Srivinas has filmed both sessions and they are available on the FOLC Facebook page.

Many thanks to Nicky Armstrong for all the work that she does in coordinating these sessions and making the events run so smoothly.

The 2021 Planting Season starts at our Busy Bee on June 11 and we are very fortunate that Heidi Hardisty is back in WA to lead the sessions. (See page 8)

This month sees the start of a new series called 'Volunteer Snapshot'. We will feature a different FOLC volunteer each month with the aim of learning more about them.

Fittingly the first volunteer to be featured is Nick Cook. Thank you to Rose Senior who will be coordinating this series. (See page 5)

MAY BUSY BEE

From : Nick Cook Photos : Timothy Cornish

Our Mother's Day Busy Bee on May 9 was a smashing success with 33 volunteers on deck at 8am!

We usually expect a smaller crowd and so it was a little bit of a scramble to keep the mulch up for them. It was great to have so many new volunteers and to welcome a number of families from Dalkeith Primary School.

The group did a fantastic job of mulching the path edges to minimise the use of chemical weed control at Lake Claremont. They also did some hand weeding and collected some rubbish nearby.

Big thanks to Francois and Leeuwin who manned the mulching forks to fill the gator, we shifted loads of mulch for 2 hours solid to keep up with the others.

Luckily we had Timothy Cornish a journalism student from ECU doing a media project. Thanks for the great photos, Timothy, and thanks to Soozie Ross for the delicious morning tea.



MILLENNIUM KIDS VISIT

From : Nick Cook



Millennium Kids Inc. is an organisation which encourages young people, regardless of race, religion or social capital to explore, identify and address environmental and sustainability issues in the local, regional and global communities.

We were excited to host a group of Millennium Kids on Sunday May 16 for a Green lab. It was wonderful to share our environment with so many kids and their families. We had fun learning from each other.

Thank you to our traditional custodian, Iva Hayward-Jackson, for sharing his knowledge and culture with us.

Thanks also to Brenton See and his family for talking to the kids about art, education and conservation.

Kirstie Pupazzoni with her minibeasts was a big hit with everyone!

The kids work-shopped the writing and illustrating of a book about native fauna at Lake Claremont.



Iva with volunteers.



Families enjoying the day

YEAR 10 COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMME

From : Nick Cook

Our Year 10 community service program runs every Friday afternoon during the school term.

We had a very productive session on Friday May 7.

We had about 20 boys from Scotch College and Christchurch. They worked really hard and got a huge amount of mulch spread along the path edges.

This is part of our strategy (working with ToC) to manually control weeds and minimise the use of herbicides at the Lake.

Great job guys!



Above : Mulching the verge Below : The shed set up ready for action



VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

FOLC Chairman Nick Cook

By Rose Senior

Who better to be the focus of our first Volunteer Snapshot than Nick Cook who joined FOLC in 2010. Chairman of the Board of the Friends of Lake Claremont since 2017. Nick is the embodiment of what a good volunteer should be: hardworking, dependable, outgoing, approachable, knowledgeable and, above all, friendly and inclusive.

I invited Nick to recall specific moments that stood out in his mind during his time as FOLC Coordinator and he said:-



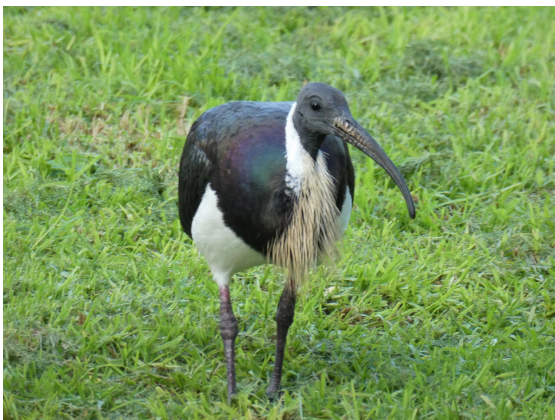
"I've got so many memorable moments to choose from. One of my first official duties was to meet the Traditional Custodians of the Lake and foster a meaningful relationship with them. Joan Tock's 100th Birthday was a highlight for me, and recently the installation of the Brenton See mural at the Lake was a new highpoint.

For me a particularly rewarding moment came when I witnessed a turtle laying her eggs and protecting the nest – coming back later to find two hatchlings at the nest, which I relocated to the water's edge.

A sad moment, though, was when I waded through the south end of the lake collecting dozens and dozens of dead and dying birds during the outbreak of Avian Botulism. I was also, however, able to save a handful of birds. A frustrating moment came when I watched the 'eco-mulcher' destroyed our volunteers' hard work!

I've met so many wonderful and passionate people while volunteering for the FOLC. The relationships and the connections that I've made have been the biggest highlight of all."

Our regular volunteer and photographic contributor Nicky Armstrong visited the wetland on Tuesday May 4 (just before the rain) and sent in these great pics of some of our birdlife returning after the long dry Summer. Thanks for sharing Nicky



Straw necked ibis and shell ducks at Lake Claremont. Photos : Nicky Armstrong

OUR BIRDS

Text and photo : David Free

Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*

This striking looking bird, perhaps our most beautiful honeyeater, is endemic to the south-west of WA. Their long curved bill is useful in getting nectar from kangaroo paws. Banksias are also a favourite and insects form an important part of their diet.

They build a small cup nest and lay one or two eggs.

Spinebills are a rare visitor to the lake but it is always a joy to see them.



A male Western Spinebill

MAY BIRD SURVEY

From : David Free

On May 16th my wife, Pam, and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The morning was mild, partly cloudy and still, with a slight breeze developing later. There was shallow water in some of the southern part of the lake and a few patches in the lower lying sections of the western area. The water level was below the gauge by the jetty.

We recorded 269 individuals (slightly below the autumn average) of 31 species, slightly above the average,

Waterfowl numbers were below average. No breeding activity was observed

FUNGI AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Karen Wood

May/June when the first rains come, but the soil is still warm, is a great time to look for fungi. These are just a few that I found around the park.

Pictured right is the fairly common Scarlet Bracket Fungus, *Pycnoporus coccineus*, called Botting by the Noongar people who used it as a lip salve especially for babies and children who had an oral thrush.

Botting is found throughout the year on the dead wood of a variety of trees. Older specimens often sport a greenish algal growth as this one from the remnant bush does.



This Tennis Ball Puffball, *Mycenastrum corium*, (pictured left) was found near a large pile of mulch. This is a large tough skinned puffball that splits into a star shaped structure exposing the brown spore mass to the elements. The spore may still be in that mass and will be released into the mulch or soil when the body breaks down.

Lepiota rhacodes (pictured right) has a distinctly scaly cap. This easy to recognise fungus pops up in many spots in our park, this one of several near the drain bed along a limestone path where it is visible to all. There seem to be many varieties of Parasols, so it has not been easy to give this one the absolutely correct name. Any comments or corrections are welcome!



2021 PLANTING SEASON

From : Heidi Hardisty

Last year the Friends of Lake Claremont achieved a milestone by completing the planting areas which were identified in the Lake Claremont Park Concept Plan in 2010. Over 10 hectares of native vegetation has been added to the park, enhancing its beauty and the habitat for our wildlife! Now the focus is on infill projects. Native shrubs and groundcover will be planted where five Tamarisks, trees that are weeds of national significance, have recently been removed on the north side of the wetland. Additional planting in the remnant bushland will also help restore its diversity and health.

There is also a project to plant some shade trees in 8 small patches in the grassed areas on the north part of the park, including the dog off-lead area near the corner of Alfred and Davies Road. You may have noticed these patches where the grass had been removed and replaced with mulch. The tree will include tuarts, marris and jarrahs.

This year the cost of 4000 seedlings will be shared between the Friends of Lake Claremont and the Town of Claremont. Planting will take place over 3 weekends. The 3 main public planting days are Sunday June 13th, July 11th and August 1st (National Tree Day – [register here](#)).

Help is also needed for teas (feel free to donate baked goods), setting up and supervising the sessions. Five people are needed to help plant alongside a small group Saturday morning June 12th. Help is also needed to set up for a planting day with the Shah Satnam Ji Group on Saturday July 31st. Start times for set up is 8am all days. Please respond to folc.wa@gmail.com if you can help.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK May 17-23

From : Nick Cook

The Town of Claremont Volunteer Week function was postponed due to forecast heavy rains. We hope all those invited can attend the event in June.

FOLC have been volunteering at Lake Claremont since the early 1990's when a small group of residents began performing ecological restoration works at the Lake and in the remnant bush. Many of those original volunteers are still making a contribution today, nearly 30 years later.

We are so very fortunate to have so many dedicated and passionate volunteers without whom we would not be where we are today.

As FOLC Coordinator it is an absolute privilege to be able to lead such a wonderful group. Thank you to all our members and volunteers.

POSTPONED APRIL NIGHT CHAT

Text : Rose Senior. Photo : Hilary Heptinstall

The Unique Plants of the Swan Coastal Plain

Some years ago, Professor Hans Lambers (*on the left of Nick Cook in the photo*) joined the University of Western Australia as senior Professor in plant biology and ecology, resolving to make our isolated corner of the world the focus of his research. He wanted to understand above all how a wide variety of native plants can survive in such nutrient-poor soils. In his talk Hans shared with us a range of understandings that make our corner of the world so fascinating:



- South Western Australia is one of only 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world.
- Perth is located on the Swan Coastal Plain - specifically on the Spearwood Dunes, one of three dune systems whose soils are so severely leached that they contain virtually no nutrients.
- Ironically plant diversity increases as soils get poorer: the more depleted the soils, the greater the variety of native plants.
- Over hundreds of millions of years our native species have evolved in distinctive ways in order to thrive in harsh environments.
- The majority of plant species around the world have a symbiotic relationship with other living organisms such as mycorrhizal fungi: fungi that help the plant roots to absorb nutrients.
- Species endemic to the Swan Coastal Plain, such as members of the proteaceae family (including banksias and grevilleas), have developed extensively branched root systems covered with long, densely grouped absorption hairs. These complex root systems enable native plants to absorb sufficient nutrients to survive.

Thank you, Hans, for your rapid-fire talk, your dazzling display of some 50 slides showing maps, graphs, statistics, close-ups of plants and root systems - and for your overall energy, humour and enthusiasm. I for one am intensely proud to know that I live in a world biodiversity hotspot. I will now strive to perpetuate this biodiversity, starting off by pulling out my roses and replacing them with banksias.

MAY NIGHT CHAT

Text: Hilary Heptinstall Photo : Rose Senior

Our speaker was Dr Natasha Pauli from UWA School of Agriculture and Environment (*pictured right with Nick Cook*) who spoke on the topic of 'Shaping the living architecture of the street : Understanding Perth's verge garden revolution'.

The aim of her talk tonight was to share the results on verge gardens and urban greening, to recommend resources and to hear from people interested in volunteering their verges for future research.



Street verges can be very wide as in Cottesloe or very narrow in inner suburban areas and infill developments. Outer suburbs tend to have fewer street verges than older suburbs. Areas with higher vegetation tend to be cooler.

Their research aimed to find out

- why people establish verge gardens
- what are the main challenges and benefits
- what are the habitat values for plants , birds and insects
- which stakeholders are involved in verge gardens
- what are the differences and similarities in their views

Most people established verge gardens to reduce the expense of maintenance, to reduce water use and to improve visual appeal. People were often inspired by seeing other verges. Some felt that it improved connection with neighbours and they often chatted while working on the verge.

There is a wide range in the number of plants used in verge gardens (from 7-97!)

The main requirements for plants are that they should be hardy, native Australian, bird attracting, colourful and attractive.

Eight different species of native bees were found to visit verge gardens.

Out of 31 Local Government Authorities in Perth, only one (Peppermint Grove) does not permit verge gardens.

Natasha left us with the message that almost half of Perth's forest canopy is on private land and that Perth is an international leader in accepting verge gardening. Community groups have been vocal and instrumental in the acceptance of verge gardening. The importance of trees for shade and amenity is widely agreed upon as critical.

Thank you for this very interesting talk, Natasha, we hope to see an increase in verge gardens in the Lake Claremont area in the future.

JUNE NIGHT CHAT

Food, Fire and Biodiversity

Our speaker will be Professor Kingsley Dixon ATSE FLS, John Curtin Distinguished Professor, Curtin University, Western Australia. *Pictured right*

Kingsley is a keen botanist who has devoted his research career to unlocking and unravelling the ecology of Australian plants who is well known for his discovery of smoke germination and the chemical signals that germinate Australian plants. As the foundation Director of Science at Kings Park for 32 years he built a program of conservation and restoration science professionals. In 2016 he was made the WA scientist of the year and in 2015 was awarded a personal Professorship in botany at Curtin University.



This presentation will look at how we have changed our landscapes and continue to impact all ecosystems and species. Change is needed now as climate change decays what remains of our biodiversity that includes our urban communities through what you plant in your gardens.

June 22 at Claremont Tennis Club

JUNE CALENDAR

Date	Activity
Friday 11	Year 10 Community Service
Saturday 12	AIMS corporate planting
Sunday 13	Busy bee planting
Monday 14	FOLC Board meeting
Friday 18	Year 10 Community Service
Sunday 20	Duke of Edinburg Award
Tuesday 22	Night Chats Kingsley
Friday 25	Year 10 Community Service
Sunday 27	Duke of Edinburg Award



natural resource
management program



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Why not like us on facebook and post your picture and story?

Friends of Lake Claremont facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Lake-Claremont/159586380873009?ref=hl>

The Friends of Lake Claremont Ltd. (FOLC) is a community organisation established and run by local residents all of whom are volunteers.

Website www.friendsoflakeclaremont.org

Newsletter articles and photos from members are most welcome and should be sent to the editor, Hilary Heptinstall - heptins@bigpond.net.au 0411 052 329

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