



Nicky Armstrong took this beautiful photo of pink-eared ducks while on the recent guided bird walk with David Free

From the editor

November has been another very busy month for Friends of Lake Claremont and our wonderful volunteers have made an important contribution to weed control and Bandicoot bungalow building. (See page 2)

The first session of an important turtle survey has been carried out by Anthony Santaro and his team from Murdoch University. A further session will be held in December. (see page 3)

We are very pleased that Lake Claremont has been approved as a Bandicoot release area. (see page 8)

This will be our last newsletter for 2021 so I should like to thank all our regular contributors : David Free, Karen Wood, Rose Senior, Nick Cook, Nicky Armstrong, Naga Srinivas Karsala, and all those who have sent material for the newsletter.

Very best wishes to all our members and readers for Christmas and the New Year.

VOLUNTEERING AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Nick Cook

On most Sundays, FOLC host youth volunteering sessions. These sessions are open to students from 14 to 17 years old. Our first session this month was held on November 7.

If you know any young people keen to volunteer for the environment, please email us at folc.wa@gmail.com and let us know.

Today we welcomed a Duke of Edinburgh volunteer, Scarlett, to her first session with us. Scarlett and Ella (*pictured right*) worked together building Bandicoot bungalows and installing them in anticipation of our Quenda relocation trial.



NOVEMBER BUSY BEES

We had a great Busy Bee on a warm day on December 14. Our volunteers went bush to round up some weeds in two locations.

I worked with Scarlett, and installed 3 more Bandicoot bungalows. An extra Busy Bee was held on Sunday November 21. There was a terrific turnout of over twenty volunteers. Two groups worked on the revegetated area and filled fifty bags with weeds. A great effort!

A smaller group of younger volunteers and parents worked on making and installing Bandicoot bungalows. A further three were installed.

We were pleased to welcome the Fowler family for their fourth volunteering session. They worked today in installing Bandicoot bungalows and as from today they are our newest members, having taken out a family membership via our website. Welcome aboard!



Successful weeders



Our new members

TURTLE SURVEY AT LAKE CLAREMONT. *From : Nick Cook*

A turtle population study has been commissioned by the Town of Claremont. This was conducted by , Dr Anthony Santoro and his team from Murdoch University. FOLC are very pleased that Anthony was available to undertake this very important survey. Oblong turtles are unique to the south-west of WA and as a species are under threat.

Nick Cook with Anthony Santoro (Photo: Western suburbs weekly)



The first day of the survey saw 75 turtles trapped!

The team pulled in the first few traps with a haul of around 20 turtles. The turtles were then weighed, measured, microchipped and released. Female turtles were kept aside to undergo ultrasound to determine if they were carrying eggs.

The second haul of nets came in with a bumper haul of turtles. It looked as though the team were in for a very busy day!



Nesting season is in full swing at Lake Claremont. Please let us know if you see a turtle on the move

OUR BIRDS

Text and photos by David Free

Musk Duck, *Biziura lobata*

This duck is endemic to South East and South West Australia.

These largish ducks are uncommon visitors to our lake. They are strong divers and prefer deeper water than we normally have. When feeding, they typically stay under water for thirty seconds and surface only briefly between dives. While on the surface, musk ducks float very low on the water; sometimes the tail is held erect, more often flat on the water surface. Musk ducks mainly eat aquatic invertebrates. The male has a large leathery appendage below the bill; this seems to have no purpose except, perhaps, to attract females. When conducting the survey at the end of October, Pam and I saw a solitary male displaying, swimming in circles and making his plonking call. We hope he managed to attract a mate. Nests are built in dense reed beds.



Female Musk Duck



Male Musk Duck

SPRING BIRD SURVEY

From : David Free

On October 31, my wife, Pam, and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The morning was warm and mostly clear.

In complete contrast to last spring, above average winter and spring rains have filled the lake to the highest level I recall seeing. The gauge at the jetty registered about 1.87m. We recorded 470 individuals of 39 species, somewhat fewer individuals but more species than the average for our spring surveys. Breeding activity was noted for Pink-eared and Pacific Black Ducks, Black Swan, Purple Swamphen, Coot, Willy Wagtail, Grey Fantail and Welcome Swallow. Most duck species were less abundant than normal. It appears that good rains inland have reduced the incentive for waterfowl to come to the metropolitan area.

IN BLOOM AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Karen Wood

Bottlebrush Red Callistemon, *Callistemon phoeniceus*,

Kallos means beauty and stemon refers to the stamens which are the colourful, showy part of the flower. The word Phoeniceus comes from a vivid dye made by the Phoenicians.

The Noongar name is Tubada or Toobada. Flowering is from late Kambarang to early Birak.

This species is found only in the South West of our state, though other species grow in all but the driest areas of Australia. The bottlebrush is long lived and almost impossible to kill.

The flower nectar is loved by many birds, insects and butterflies as well as honey and native bees.

The nectar rich flowers were soaked in water by indigenous people to make a sweet drink. The nectar could also be sucked directly from the flower.

Note: Karen spotted this plant in flower in October, close to Alfred Rd (opposite the letter box). It is not a common plant at the lake so we must look out for it next year!

Hop Bush *Dodonaea hackettiana*

Those of you who joined us on our tree and shrub identity course may recognise this plant, although it was not in seed at that time. In case you didn't know, the game is given away in the title. Isn't it magnificent with its red-winged seeds? We have planted quite a number of these near the Alfred Road entrance and there may still be some showing their colourful seeds when you read this newsletter. This shrub was once common throughout Perth but extensive clearing has led to it being listed as Conservation Code Priority 4: Rare,



Bottlebrush Red Callistemon



Hop Bush

VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

Hilary Heptinstall - FOLC Newsletter Editor

By : Rose Senior

Hilary is a vital member of the FOLC team, working tirelessly behind the scenes throughout the year to produce our fabulous monthly Newsletters. Little do people know the range of skills that Hilary uses to produce the Newsletter: liaising with contributors, organising and formatting text and pictures, downloading information from Facebook, proof-reading, sending and receiving endless emails, incorporating last-minute changes and generally keeping the show on the road – all the time ensuring that the Newsletter appears like clockwork at the start of each month for all FOLC members and people walking round the Lake to enjoy.



Hilary and her husband Terry migrated to Australia with their two little boys in 1970, living in Ballarat for four years before coming across to Perth in 1974. Although they both studied at Manchester University in the UK, they didn't meet until they found themselves teaching in the same school (Hilary Chemistry and Terry French). It was love at first sight: they were married within a year. On arriving in Perth Terry was immediately offered a job at Scotch College, while Hilary had her third baby and did part-time teaching until 1978, when she was offered a position at PLC. Hilary and Terry remained teaching at these schools, until they retired: a combined total of 51 years! Hilary travelled twice to Antarctica with students during her time at PLC.

Hilary and Terry became involved with Lake Claremont when they built a house in Strickland St in 1996. This was, at that time, opposite a golf course and close to a sandy path leading down to the lake. Hilary was, initially, involved in planting and organizing school sessions, but later was able to pursue her passion for writing. She has always been grateful for the many wonderful friends that she has made through her FOLC involvement, and for the great sense of connection to the community.

She confided in me that, following in the footsteps of her father (who continued to study for higher degrees in English into his 80s, despite having left school at 14), she would have preferred to study journalism at University. In her time Hilary has written columns and articles, edited newsletters and magazines, and put together a beautiful book of her father's reminiscences, poetry and wartime experiences.

An additional contribution that Hilary and Terry have made to our community is their involvement, from 1981 to 2001, in the riotous Music Hall productions put on by St Oswald's Church (now the Church of the Resurrection). The Hilary and Terry combo, capable of twisting the words of well-known songs into hilarious numbers and inspiring willing performers to sing, dance and participate in outlandish scenarios on stage, will not easily be forgotten.

Hilary, you are a valuable and valued member of FOLC. May you continue as Editor of our Newsletter for many years to come.

GUIDED BIRD WALK

From : Nicky Armstrong

On a beautiful sunny morning on Saturday November 20, a group of about 15 FOLC members joined David Free's guided bird walk to see and learn about the diverse range of birdlife present at Lake Claremont. It was good to have a number of young enthusiasts present. We saw a great number of species and a fair bit of nesting activity. Thank you, David, for a very interesting morning.



David Free spotting birds



Walk participants



White egret (left)



Pink eared ducks using a nesting box

Photos :Nicky Armstrong



Nankeen night heron (left)



Pied cormorants at rest

Photos : David Free

NOVEMBER NIGHT CHAT

Truth Telling and Culture by Iva Hayward Jackson

From : Hilary Heptinstall Photos : Nicky Armstrong, Terry Heptinstall

A large group assembled under the Melaleuca trees next to the FOLC Shed for our final Night Chat session of 2021. We enjoyed refreshments and looked at the looked at the Aboriginal artefacts on display.

Nick Cook started by thanking all those who have made our Night chat sessions so successful this year, particularly Soozie Ross and her team for the catering, Nicky Armstrong for coordinating the sessions and Naga Srinivas Karsala for his video recordings for Face Book.



He then introduced our speaker, Iva Hayward Jackson, a Nyungar land and culture protector. Nick first met Iva four years ago at a smoking ceremony and a good friendship has developed since then. Iva is a Nyungar man who spent much of his youth in the Lake Claremont area and attended Swanbourne High School. He feels a strong connection to other Aboriginal groups across the country. Iva addressed us in the Nyungar language and carried out a smoking ceremony as a welcome. He described how a smoking ceremony (sterilising with smoke) is a spiritual and ancient part of Nyungar culture. He spoke of the 'Light and Dark' and the many Seasons.



*The interested audience (above)
Aboriginal artefacts (left)*



Continued on page 10

The Aboriginal people lived in harmony with their environment for 40,000 years on the Swan plain. They knew where yams grew and obtained sugar from the banksia fruits. Aboriginal people were experts of the spear and ate only the fat emus and kangaroos allowing others of the species to survive. Emu oil and ochre were used as a protective covering. They did not over-populate or over harvest and did not produce substances which poisoned the earth. They used natural medicine, eating animals which used medicinal plants. Family traditions were important, and their knowledge was shared with future generations. They believed in a spiritual afterlife. They were the apex mammal on the landscape.

This all changed after British Settlement of WA in 1829, when the Aboriginal inhabitants were recognised as British subjects. Governor Stirling described them as 'magnificent specimens of human beings'. They struggled to conform to British culture, and many were imprisoned.

That has continued to this day and Iva would like to see them receive a 'hand up' not a 'hand-out'.

Iva concluded by applauding the Friends of Lake Claremont for their restoration of this area which is very special to the Nyungar people.

Nick presented Iva with some beautiful framed photos of Lake Claremont from 1917.



THE LAKE IN NOVEMBER

From : Nick Cook

We are feeling very excited about recent developments at Lake Claremont!!!

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has approved Lake Claremont as a Quenda (Bandicoot) relocation site

The Town of Claremont has agreed to conduct a trial relocation program. We are now just waiting for a release date.

Quenda Photo : Simon Cherriman



The Friends group will be involved in monitoring of the population post release. More on this later.

Quenda are amazing "ecosystem engineers" and will be very beneficial to the health of our bushland.

Did you know each individual animal can turn over about 4 tonnes of soil annually? This has major benefits for our poor soils and also reduces fire fuel loads.

As we get closer to the release, we will have plenty more info to share.

Quenda are still common in Perth and can be found in many urban settings. They would have been present at Lake Claremont in the past as wetlands are a preferred habitat of the Quenda.

FROG RELEASE

Whilst waiting for the turtle team from Murdoch at the Stirling Rd jetty, I bumped into Andrew Reed and his mum. Andrew was awarded the Town of Claremont youth volunteer of the year recently and his family has just joined FOLC.

Andrew had found a tiny slender tree frog on the Scotch playing fields and had brought it down to release it at the Lake edge.

We released the frog and had a lovely chat!



KIDS' NATURE CLUB

I also dropped in on the Kids Nature Club to say hello and check out the cool reptiles they had on display. Thanks to Kirstie Pupazzoni for the invitation to visit the group. I got to hold this beautiful Stimpson's python (*right*) and check out the frill necked lizard before finally heading off to work.



CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF WA HONOURS LIST

We are pleased to announce that Nick Cook has been selected as a finalist for the Conservation Council of WA Honours List 2021.

The winners will be announced on December 10th at a ceremony at Kidogo Arthouse in Fremantle from 5.00 to 8.00 pm to celebrate the achievements of our sector and to congratulate the award finalists and winners. If you are interested in attending please register here by December 1 for the 'End of Year Gathering and Community Conservation Awards'.

https://apac01.safelinks.protection.outlook/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ccwa.org.au%2Fawards_2021&data=04%7C01%7C%7Ce2a0cdd0c6c84dbde2c808d9afb13aca%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637733998032355954%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6

SEED COLLECTION

Florabank offers free course on seed collection. Are you interested in seed collection? Check out the new and free best practice guidelines for native seed collection and use in Australia: <https://www.florabank.com.au/>

DATES FOR DECEMBER

Sunday December 5	Youth volunteering
Sunday December 12	FOLC Busy Bee
Monday December 13	FOLC Board
meeting	
Sunday December 19	Youth volunteering

*A juvenile Nankeen night heron
Photo : David Free*





natural resource
management program



Had a great moment at Lake Claremont?

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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