



Pied stilts at Lake Claremont Photo : Ian Stewart

From the editor

We had a fascinating Night Chat Session this month about the relocation of quendas to Lake Claremont (see page 9). Quendas are hard to spot but the best times to see them are early morning or late evening. Volunteers are needed to help with quenda monitoring (see page 11).

Lake Claremont has officially joined the parkrun network and will now be running every Saturday morning. The 5km course begins at the goal posts off Elliot Road at 8am. Whether it's to be healthier, make some new friends or just a chance to explore the beautiful lake, come along and enjoy at your own pace. For more information or to see the route please follow the link below. <https://www.parkrun.com.au/lakeclaremont/>

We look forward to seeing many of our members at our Volunteer Sundowner on Sunday May 22 (See page 11).

VOLUNTEERING AT LAKE CLAREMONT *From : Nick Cook* **APRIL BUSY BEE.** *Photos : Nicky Armstrong*

We had a terrific Busy Bee on Sunday April 10. We had a good turnout with ages ranging from 16 to 102 and it was a very productive session. We split into three groups as we had a range of tasks on our agenda.

The gentleman set to work on excavations around the shed in preparation for a retaining wall that will (hopefully) reduce the incidence of rust on the shed walls. A big job was very well done.

Norma led a weeding group out on the lakebed. Weeds and rubbish were collected.

I worked with Eva and Amy from Shenton College on our yam project. Councillor Shelley Hatton and Miranda also helped by putting together wire frames for our yams to climb.

We all enjoyed a lovely morning tea, organised by Cath Macaulay after our efforts. It was great to have both Heidi Hardisty and Joan Tock with us today. Many thanks to all our volunteers! You are wonderful people!



The men working at the shed



Shelley Hatton and Miranda Fontaine

More photos on page 3



FOLC WEB PAGE

Volunteering with FOLC can take many forms. We all have our various skill sets!

What is yours? We truly appreciate all our generous volunteers!

I should like to pay special tribute and give my heartfelt thanks to our Web Master, Annabelle Walsh, for her significant contribution to FOLC.

We have recently been having some 'issues' with the website which did not affect its functionality but were stubbornly annoying!!!

I am happy to report that Annabelle has resolved these issues and that, now, all is running smoothly.

NEW SPECIES AT LAKE CLAREMONT

This is the latest addition to biodiversity at Lake Claremont. It appeared on April 1!

I've taken a look at the management plan but this species is not covered!

Touché to whoever is our prankster!

Photo by Tanya Petersen



OUR BIRDS

Text and photo : David Free

Baillon's Crake, *Porzana pusilla*

This species is slightly smaller than the other two crakes found at the lake (Spotted and Spotless) and its distinctive markings ensure that it will not be confused with the others. Like all crakes, it is nervous and secretive, tending to stay in the reed beds and moving very quickly when relocating from one patch of cover to the next. I haven't seen them at the lake for some time but the water level is now suitable, so they may be present. I would like to be informed if anybody sees them.

In Western Australia Baillon's Crake is found in the Kimberley and south-west, where suitable habitat occurs. Their diet comprises seeds and insects.



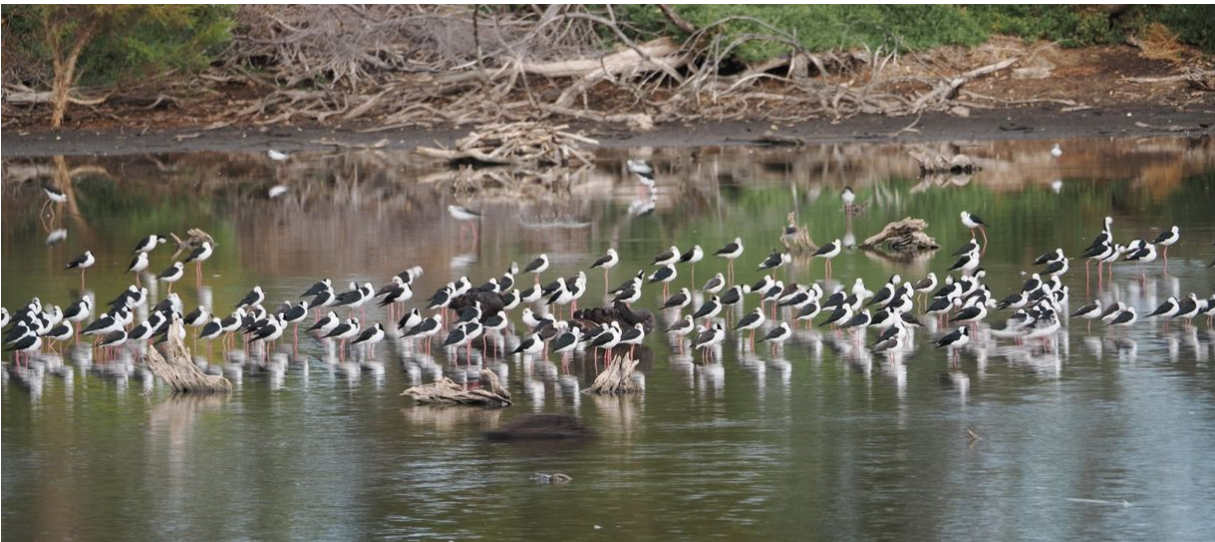
APRIL BIRD COUNT

From : David Free

On May 16th my wife Pam and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The day was cool, becoming mild, clear with a very light breeze.

The lake still has standing water in the southern half and patches of very shallow water in some of the northern part. The water gauge is muddy and difficult to read but shows about 1m. The bushland is very dry.

We observed 493 individuals of 35 species. These results are much higher than our average autumn census. Black Swans and coot were present in greater than average numbers. We counted 47 Pied Stilts, (*photo next page*), more than is usual in autumn but well below the 200+ seen earlier in the month. Welcome Swallows were nest building at the bird observation platform; we would not normally expect to see breeding activity at this time of the year.



Pied Stilts

Photo : David Free

CRUSADER BEETLE AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Karen Wood

Crusader Beetle *Mictis profana*

I found this beetle on a bush next to a path at the lake.

It is sometimes! called a “Stink Bug” because it can squirt out a strongly smelling substance which is a deterrent to predators. However, they have no mouth parts for biting so humans and pets are quite safe.

The beetles suck on a wide variety of plants including wattles, eucalypts, sennas citrus and roses but are seldom a serious problem in our state and in fact are considered to provide biological control of some noxious weeds. (Australian Museum web site).

A complete lifecycle takes from 8 to 12 weeks during summer. Crusader Beetles are found throughout Australia, Indonesia and the Indo Pacific.



QUENDA UPDATE

From : Nick Cook

We are seeing a lot of quenda activity across the release site!

I had my first sighting today in the Eastern Buffer area.

Another sighting was reported by David Free as he and Pam did the quarterly bird survey. This quenda was seen out on the wetland. Our trail camera caught this picture.



Our Quenda relocation program is finished for now but an unexpected bonus is that Scott and Graham Thompson from Terrestrial Ecosystems are now able to use Lake Claremont as a relocation site for other species like bobtails.

They have been doing another fauna clearance job north of Perth and have brought us 7 beautiful, healthy fat bobtails this week.

Their habitat is due to be destroyed for yet more housing!

Graham and Scott Thompson have been extremely generous with their time and expertise and we are very grateful to be working with this terrific local team of professionals.

I had planned to set up a camera to observe potential fox activity. Graham generously volunteered to lend us a bait station (non rewarding) and show me how to set it up and position our camera

I learn something new every time I work with these gentlemen!



VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

Graeme and Grace Paton

By Rose Senior

The Friends of Lake Claremont is an organisation that prides itself on its flexibility and willingness to accept new members into the group.

The FOLC gives the opportunity for keen members to take up new roles – a situation that occurred when Lance and Jenni Banister-Jones were looking for someone to take over coordination of the Adopt-a-Spot program.

Who should step forward but Graeme and Grace Paton, who live in Mount Claremont within walking distance of the Lake and were only too happy to step into their shoes!

Graeme, a newly-qualified surveyor from Edinburgh University, came to Sydney in 1980 on a working holiday. Delighted to be able to extend his visa, Graeme soon met Grace, a nurse with a Scottish mother who was from Sydney's northern beaches.



You guessed it! Three months later they were engaged. After marrying the following year and having had two children, they came over to Perth when Graeme was offered a good job here.

Graeme and Grace, an enthusiastic and cheerful pair, have been based in Perth since 1989, and haven't wasted a moment doing all the things that they love. Keen kayakers, they go out paddling twice a week with a kayaking group, always making sure they stop off at the Zephyr Café in East Freo or the Walters Café at Point Walter. "Coffee stops are essential", says Graeme, who does a range of additional activities with Grace: walking round the Lake (and checking up on their Spot), visiting Perry Lakes, swimming at North Cottesloe, cycling, and birdwatching (Grace using her keen eyesight to spot the birds and Graeme photographing them).

Grace also volunteers at Ronald McDonald House, is a consultant for fine china at Myer, and does Zumba. Graeme loves classical music, meaning that they go regularly to WASO concerts. They travelled extensively on accumulated holiday leave during their working years, driving across America in a Ford Mustang, doing a variety of cruises, including Grace's favourite, cruising round the Mediterranean.

An outgoing, active and lively couple, Graeme and Grace are valued Friends of Lake Claremont.

CITY CATS

From : Heidi Hardisty

Cats make great pets. They provide companionship, are magnificent animals to watch and are relatively easy to care for. However, as our cities grow and people live closer together, cats that roam freely can be a menace. They can transmit potentially serious diseases like toxoplasmosis to people, kill others' pets, defecate and urinate in playgrounds and private gardens, and be very noisy when they fight or are in heat – often interrupting a peaceful night's sleep.

The Hardisty's cat, Amanda



It is difficult to pinpoint numbers, but density estimates of pet cats in urban areas (globally) range from 100-2000 cats/square kilometre. A recent estimate puts the number of domestic cats in Australia at 3.7 million. That's a lot of cats and the number is growing.

Unfortunately, cats also take a huge toll on our wildlife. High density living means urban cats typically kill over 30 times more creatures per square kilometre than feral cats in the bush. Although some of the animals killed are introduced, a recent study on the impacts of pet cats on wildlife has estimated a total of 241 million native animals are killed each year by pet cats, including 79 million birds.

Although many people think that their cat doesn't kill, it is in their nature and it is impossible to monitor your pet 24/7. Scientists estimate about 80% of pet cats roam and hunt, yet they only bring back about 15 percent of what they kill.

So, what can you do to look after your cat and make your neighbourhood better?

Keep your cats indoors. It's safer for the cats and safer for our wildlife.

On average, indoor-only cats live ten to fifteen years longer than those that go outside. They have better health, no-fleas, suffer fewer illnesses, infections and injuries. Indoor cats also avoid the risk of predators, poisons, or becoming lost or stolen. You'll save money with less visits to the vet and your neighbours will be happier.

And with recent release of quendas at Lake Claremont, keeping your cats indoors is more important than ever!

APRIL NIGHT CHAT

From : Hilary Heptinstall

We had a full house for our April Night Chat session. Everyone was keen to hear from our speakers, environmental consultant, Scott Thompson and wildlife ecologist, Georgia Ford. They spoke about quenda relocations from an ecologist's perspective.



Nick Cook, Georgia Ford and Scott Thompson

Quendas are small ground dwelling marsupials with a long pointed nose and short ears. They have coarse fur and, often, shortened or missing tails and a rear facing pouch. They are omnivorous and eat insects, fungi and plant roots. They breed up to 3 times a year, producing about 12 young. Their lifespan is 3-4 years and they have a home range 0.5 – 5 hectares.

Quendas are endemic to southwest WA. They prefer dense vegetation near swamps but also live in urban parks, backyards, bush fragments, reserves and open forests.

Quendas are 'Ecosystem Engineers' and create disturbance in the landscape by nose pokes, scratchings and shallow to deep diggings. They turn over substantial volumes of soil, up to 10kg per quenda per night.

They are a Priority 4 threatened species, they meet the criteria for 'near threatened' and require regular monitoring.

The main threats to their survival are habitat loss and fragmentation, fires, vehicle strikes and predation by foxes, cats and dogs.

Quendas have been relocated at Lake Claremont because FOLC members approached the TOC advisory committee and Claremont Council approached the WA government Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). It has become an approved site for relocating quendas that have been impacted by development. As of April 20, 28 quendas have been released, 11 males and 17 females, 5 with young in their pouch. These came from areas ranging from Mandurah to Mindarie. 10 more were released through DBCA relocation.

Scott spoke about quendas at Golden Bay which has been a monitoring site and has been subject to heavy development. It was found that predator activity increased as habitat was cleared.

He talked about predation by cats, both domestic and feral. There is a need for cat containment laws and cat free urban reserves. Cats should be kept in at night and dogs should be kept on leash. Foxes are also predators of many species, including quendas but are rarely seen at Lake Claremont.

Monitoring and data collection is important for relocated animals using traps and cameras. Cameras are currently being used at Lake Claremont.

We can encourage the presence of quendas in our yards by planting dense plants, providing water in shallow dishes and creating refuges such as pipes or hollow logs.

There were many questions at the end of the talk and I think we all found this to be a fascinating and very informative evening.

Thank you, Scott and Georgia!

LAKE CLAREMONT IN APRIL

From : Nick Cook

I had a lovely walk around the lake on a beautiful autumn day in early April.

I stopped at the waters edge and spotted these seeds from the Zamia palm which had rolled down the slope to the waters edge. I will see if I can get them to germinate and then find a spot at the Lake to plant them.



It is good to see that signs have now been placed along Alfred Rd warning of wildlife crossing.

NEW FOLC TEE SHIRTS

We received a special delivery in April! These great T shirts were designed by local artist Anne Gee. Contact FOLC if you would like to purchase one.

folc.wa@gmail.com



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED FOR QUENDA MONITORING

We require 5-6 volunteers to assist with camera monitoring of our quenda population. Scott Thompson will provide training on camera operation and placement for our volunteers who will be required to set up cameras and monitor footage on a weekly basis.

This will involve retrieving the memory card from the camera and viewing footage and taking notes of sightings. You will need to have a device (computer) that can take/read a SD memory card. Approximate commitment of 2-3 hours per week.

FOLC VOLUNTEER SUNDOWNER



All of our volunteers are invited to join us on Sunday 22 May at the FOLC shed at 3pm for a Sundowner to celebrate National Volunteer Week. The FOLC Board wish to thank and acknowledge the generous support of all our volunteers. This event has been made possible by a grant from Lotteries West and Volunteering WA. An invitation will be sent to members via email.

DATES FOR MAY

Yr 10 Community Service Session Friday May 6, 13, 20 ,27

FOLC Busy Bee Sunday May 8

Volunteer Sundowner Sunday May 22 3.00pm

May Night Chat Tuesday May 24 5.30pm



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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