



A wattle bird feeding its young *Photo: Ian Stewart*

FRIENDS OF LAKE CLAREMONT FREE GUIDED WALKS

From : Jenni Banister-Jones

The Friends group are trialling a short guided walk, for anyone who would like to find out more about Lake Claremont and its surrounds. A few members have offered to plan and guide the walks. A 'dummy run' was conducted on September 28.

Meeting on the lawn outside the Tee Box, the walk started at the statues, meandered along the eastern side and finished at the FOLC Shed. At this stage, the detailed content of the next walk is "under construction"!

It is planned that the walks will run on alternate Wednesdays in October (12 & 26 starting at 10.30am). The walks will be followed by a review of their success (or otherwise)! Assuming there is a demand, more walks will be planned in November.

Promotion of the walks will be via Facebook and the Post newspaper. FOLC members are welcome too! The attached link is to a photo of our previous walk.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/GSEnBo2NosvQAMqz9>

SEPTEMBER BUSY BEE

From : Nick Cook Photos : Nicky Armstrong

We had a very productive busy bee on Sunday September 11 with a wonderful dose of Spring weather!

We had nineteen volunteers and again split into two groups.

The first group worked on mulching the path edges, a part of our strategy to tackle weeds and minimise the use of chemical controls across the park.

The second group got busy hand weeding in the revegetated area around our shed and filled sixty bags!! A terrific effort!



COMMUNITY SERVICE

From : Nick Cook

On September 4, we worked on a small project with Scotch College Year 8 students, Charlie and Raffi.

The boys approached us for help with their community service project. Using a species list developed by Dr Kit Prendergast, the boys selected and purchased thirty native plants favoured by our native bees.

Well done lads!



ADOPT-A-SPOT REPORT

From : Graeme Paton

We had a pleasant time together at our recent morning tea on September 10.

Even though all our spots are looking very good, we decided to leave everyone with their current spots for the remainder of the year.

We will then look at where our work is needed most, and let everyone know what is happening.

Nick Cook also joined us for morning tea and gave us an outline of the latest news from FOLC.

OUR BIRDS

Text and photos by David Free

*Musk Duck, *Biziura lobata**

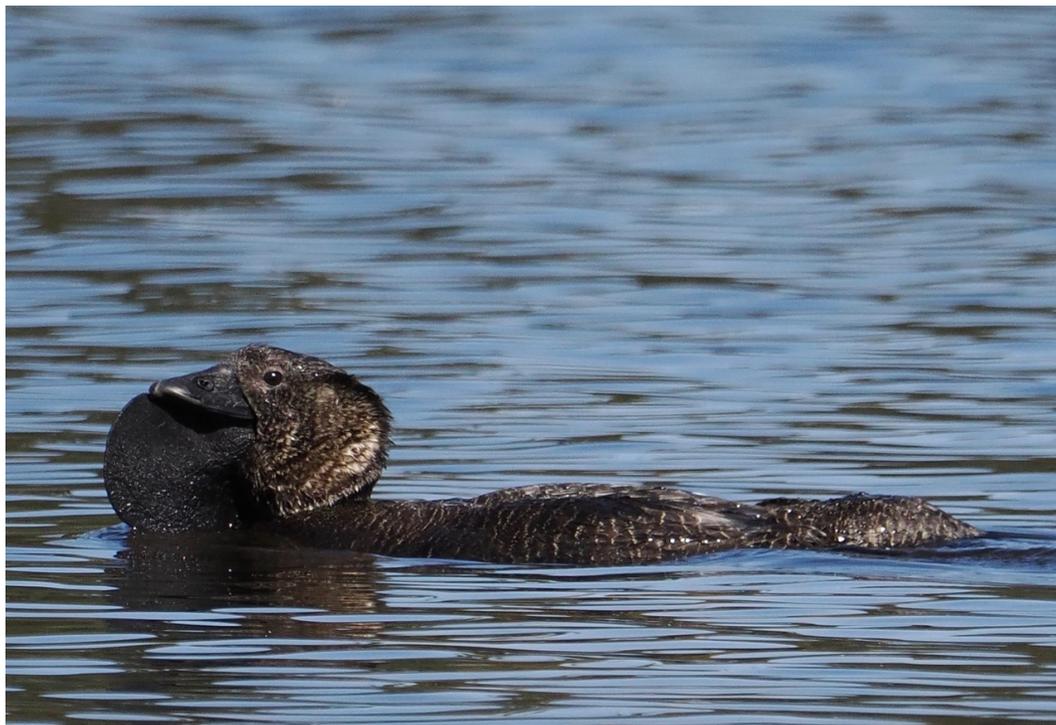
This largish duck is a very uncommon visitor to our lake. They are strong divers and prefer deeper water than we normally have. Musk duck mainly eat aquatic invertebrates. When feeding, they typically stay underwater for thirty seconds and surface only briefly between dives.

While on the surface, musk ducks sit very low on the water; sometimes the tail is held erect, more often flat on the water. The male has a large leathery appendage below the bill; this seems to have no purpose except, perhaps, to attract females. This duck is endemic to south east and south west Australia. In September I had several sightings of a male and heard the plonking call.



Above : Female Musk Duck

Below : Male Musk duck



CELEBRATE LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Hilary Heptinstall

The annual 'Celebrate Lake Claremont' event was held on Sunday, September 18 in beautiful sunny weather. There were many stalls and activities to interest people of all ages. After a great performance from the Scotch College Pipe Band, Councillor Annette Suann welcomed everyone and thanked the Friends of Lake Claremont for all that they have done in turning the lake area into the beautiful location that it is today. Nick Cook then welcomed visitors on behalf of FOLC before Noongar singer songwriter, Phil Walleystack, took to the stage to entertain us.



Nick Cook welcomes visitors



The FOLC stall

WILDLIFE RESCUE *From : Nick Cook*

I started the day on September 17 with a little wildlife rescue! I received a call from a resident in Davies Rd. This beautiful Tawny Frogmouth was being hassled by a Raven and was found on the ground.

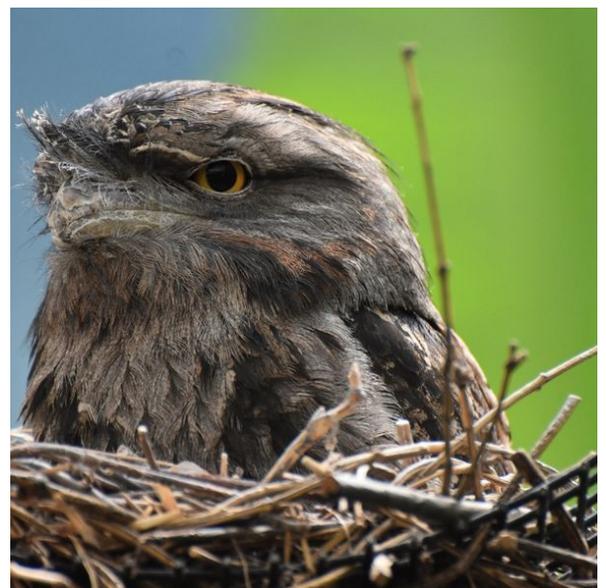
He was happy for me to pick him up and put him safely into my bucket. I took him to the WA Wildlife hospital in Bibra Lake where he will be well looked after.

We are also receiving reports of our turtles on the move.

Please keep an eye out on the roads.

If you find a turtle crossing the road, please assist it in the direction in which it was travelling.

Thank you.



Tawny Frogmouth

GARDENING AUSTRALIA

From : Nick Cook

It was a great pleasure to host Josh Byrne and the production team from Gardening Australia on September 15.

Heidi and I spent the day filming with the crew for a story about our wetland and we had a lot of fun! We will let you know when the story goes to air.



Josh Byrne with Nick Cook



Heidi Hardisty and the camera crew



IN FLOWER IN SEPTEMBER

From : Karen Wood

There are at least 900 species of acacia throughout Australia, several of which are endemic to our South West. All are used for food and foraging by native birds, insects, moths, butterflies and bees as well as small lizards and geckos. They are a vital part of our ecosystem. Pictured here are just three of the several species found in the bushland surrounding Lake Claremont. These photos were all taken during September, some earlier than others as the flowering periods vary from mid winter to early spring. The seeds of some acacias were pounded by the Indigenous people to make a flour for roasting. Some also provided a gum for chewing or used for medicinal purposes. Narrow winged wattle *Acacia stenoptera* (pictured right) is one of the prickliest wattles. It is found from Dongara to Mount Barker.



Panjang *Acacia lasiocarpa*
This is found in coastal areas
from Kalbarri to Bunbury



Gal yang *Acacia cochlearis*

SEPTEMBER NIGHT CHAT

From : Hilary Heptinstall

Heidi Hardisty introduced Rochelle Steven, our speaker this month. Rochelle is a conservation scientist and lecturer at Murdoch University. She is also the convenor of Birdlife Western Australia. Rochelle spoke on the topic of 'Birdwatching and nature based tourism'. Originally, interest in birdlife was related to egg and feather collection, but it was realised that this was harmful to birds. With the development of binoculars and SLR cameras, an interest in birdwatching (birding) developed.



Heidi Hardisty, Rochelle Steven and Nick Cook

Originally most birding tourists in Australia were from the US, UK and Europe but, later, interest developed in China, Singapore and India.

Bird tourism has economic benefits. Tourists spend money on accommodation, food and beverages. Bird watching day trips in 2019/20 generated \$283 million in income.

On a local level, birders at Lake Claremont will probably have a coffee or possibly lunch at Tee Box or Aspire Cafe!

Birding also has benefits for conservation. Most birders, especially Australian and European participants express an interest in learning more about the conservation of birds that they watch. Attractions of Australia for birding include high levels of diversity in habitats and species. Many of our birds are endemic to Australia and not seen elsewhere. Other key tourism industries, which benefit from nature based tourism include culture, food and wine businesses.

Birdlife Australia conducts ongoing campaigns advocating for careful management and conservation of several key biodiversity areas (KDAs) identified as in danger. These include Bruny Island, Moreton Bay and Christmas Island along with many others. Some KDAs are threatened by forestry, mining and coastal development.

Australia's KDA network plays a critical role in the bird watching tourism sector in Australia and it is important that they are protected. Most tourists are willing to contribute to conservation in the form of a modest entry fee to nature reserves.

To enhance local bird and nature tourism, Birdlife WA has produced brochures about community walks. She suggested that we engage with local businesses, tourist information groups and guides to discuss what we have to offer at Lake Claremont.

There were many questions from the audience at the end of this very interesting talk. Thank you for spending your time with us, Rochelle.

SAVING OUR SNAKE-NECKED TURTLES

From : Heidi Hardisty

Dr. Anthony Santoro spoke to a large group of interested people at Claremont Tennis Club on Thursday September 15.

Anthony has been studying snake-necked turtles for the past 6 years. He has surveyed over 70 wetlands, caught 4000 turtles, and tagged and tracked hundreds. But he is concerned - as turtle numbers continue to decline. Their official conservation status is near-threatened, but Anthony thinks it's much worse and needs more information to prove it.



So, he is on a mission to collect more data and teach people how they can help. In his recent talk, Anthony revealed his latest research on turtle nesting and appealed to the packed room to sign up to the new Turtle Tracker program.

The snake-necked or oblong turtle (*Chelodina oblonga*) is endemic to the southwest of WA, living anywhere near water including lakes, rivers and swamps. Males have long tails and are smaller than the short-tailed females. They are important predators in wetlands, helping to keep mosquito and midge larvae in check. But they are being impacted by climate change, urbanisation and predation – especially by foxes and ravens.

While trapping turtles in various wetlands, Santoro saw that, overall, southwest turtle populations are not healthy - lacking juveniles and females - meaning there is a big problem with recruitment. At Lake Claremont he caught 389 beasts in a 2-week period. 91% were adults and 60% males.

In his new research, Anthony has discovered that turtles have their own personality and travel habits. Some nest at different places from year to year, others not. Most turtles exhibit one of three movement strategies: about 35% are sedentary, not straying far from one area; 60% are 'shifters' moving to a new home range 2-5 times every 2 months; about 5% were nomadic.

He noticed that eggs hatched asynchronously (randomly), as did hatchlings - emerging randomly from their nests between March and September. Some stay in the nest for months. Although the hatchlings had an 80% emergence success, few survive the perilous journey to adulthood.

Climate change is hindering the breeding success of turtles. Decreasing rainfall translates into longer periods when seasonal wetlands are dry. Turtles must aestivate to survive these dry periods. Their metabolism slows and they live off their body fat while burrowed in the mud; they can only feed in water. Short periods of aestivation are normal, but extended periods are not. In one study, an animal aestivated for 581 days at North Lake – which Anthony believes is a world record. A turtle can miss an entire nesting season, and possibly the next. As the climate changes, there is also a decrease in the frequency of cold fronts which normally trigger nesting. Ideal conditions occur as the barometric pressure and temperature drops, and humidity and rainfall rise.

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Rain makes it easier for females to dig holes and helps to prevent both dehydration and predation of nests (by masking the scent of the nest from foxes). It is concerning that in recent years rain did not occur in approximately half of the days turtle were observed nesting.

Increasing air temperatures have caused incubation times to be reduced from 230 to 200 days. Turtles can hatch as early as March, when temperatures are high and wetlands are low in water. Eggs can die or juveniles can dehydrate.

Urbanisation is posing a huge threat. While most turtles nest within 300 meters of a wetland, some can travel 500-900 meters. The journey to and from the wetland for the adult and juvenile is perilous. Loss of native vegetation and sandy areas mean females must travel further to find a suitable nesting site. Very often they give up, encountering roads or other obstacles such as fences and end up laying their eggs in sub-optimal places. One female laid her eggs in several nests along a wall. A fox dug up the nests and ate all the eggs.

How can we help to save the snake-necked Turtles?

There are many ways to help, including wetland restoration, removal of foxes and installing nesting refuges.

Anthony is encouraging people to join The Turtle Tracker Program this summer at Lake Claremont (see below).

TURTLE PROTECTION PROGRAMME

FOLC and TOC have teamed up with Dr Anthony Santoro and Murdoch Uni to help protect our nesting turtles.

Turtle nesting season runs from Sept to January.

We are seeking volunteers to participate in this program. All ages and abilities are welcome.

The program involves committing to as little as 2 hours per week, observing turtle movement and following the turtle to its nesting location. The nest can then be covered/protected and the turtle returned to the wetland.

We are holding a Turtle Tracker training session this Sunday 2nd Oct at the FOLC shed at 8.30am to 9.30am. Please bring something to take notes with.

Register your interest by email. folc.wa@gmail.com

A fox at Lake Claremont



THE LAKE IN SEPTEMBER

PINK FAIRIES IN OUR GARDEN

From : Heidi Hardisty

Hundreds of Pink Fairy Orchids (*Caladendia latifolia*) have popped up in the remnant bushland this spring. The annual flowers have come back in droves all on their own - an indication that the bush is starting to regenerate naturally. Very exciting!

BIRDLIFE *Photos: Ian Stewart*



White browed scrub bird (above)

A rainbow lorikeet has taken over the nesting box!



DATES FOR OCTOBER

Sunday October 2
 Sunday October 9
 Wed October 12 and 26
 Tuesday October 25

Turtle tracking training session
 October Busy Bee
 Guided Walks
 October Nightchat

FOLC Shed 8.30 - 9.30 am
 FOLC Shed 8.00 am
 TeeBox 10.30am
 Claremont Tennis Club 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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