



*Rainbow Bee-eater, Merops ornatus. Photo : David Free (See page 3)*

*From the editor, Hilary Heptinstall*

In our first newsletter for 2023, I am happy to welcome back all our regular contributors including bird man, David Free and plant lover Karen Wood.

Karen held a competition asking people to name three seed pods in our December issue. For those interested they were from Mouse Ears (*Calothamnus quadrifidus*), Prickly Moses (*Acacia pulchella*) and Cockies Tongues (*Templetonia retusa*). There were no winners so she kept the prize plant for herself!

Rose Senior has written our 'Volunteer Snapshot' series for the last few years and we all love to read about our fellow FOLC members. To start the year, I have persuaded Rose to write an article about herself. (See page 5)

Heidi Hardisty is seeking help to restore Hip and Hop, the FOLC frog mascots, before they are moved to the FOLC Shed. (See page 7)

FOLC have been advocating with the Town of Claremont to introduce Cat Laws. This is particularly important now that we have quendas at the lake. (See page 8)

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## FEBRUARY BUSY BEE

*From : Nick Cook. Photos : Nicky Armstrong*

On Sunday, January 8, we held our monthly busy bee. We are starting at 7am at this time of the year to try and beat the heat. We had a terrific turn out of 20 volunteers and set to work hand watering our 2022 plantings.

Many thanks to Myera St residents for supporting our work by giving us access to their garden taps!

After a solid two hours of work, all our plants had a drink and we set off for morning tea at the FOLC shed. Many thanks to Soozie Ross, Cath McCauley and Shelley Hatton for a delicious morning tea. This is always a great opportunity for our volunteers to socialise and discuss issues relating to the lake.



## OUR BIRDS

*Text and Photos : David Free*

**Rainbow Bee-eater, *Merops ornatus*.** (See cover photo)

This beautiful bird is a summer visitor to the south-west. There have been a few sightings at Lake Claremont in recent years. Bruce Haynes tells me he may have seen them breeding in the slope beneath the Lakeway site in the 1990s. The area is certainly suitable for their tunnel nests.

Bee-eaters feed on insects, mainly bees, flies and dragonflies. They swoop on their prey from an exposed branch, often returning to the same perch to devour the meal. The soft purring call is normally heard when the birds are in flight.

**Western Wattlebird  
*Anthochaera lunulata***

On January 9th my wife, Pam, and I heard a Western Wattlebird calling in the bush near Strickland Street.

Until recently this bird was regarded as a subspecies of the Little Wattlebird, found in Eastern Australia. It is now recognised as a distinct species, endemic to the South West. They are nectar feeding nomads, and never venture very far inland.

Far less common than the ubiquitous Red Wattlebird, this beautifully marked species is a rare visitor to our lake.



Somewhat smaller than the Red Wattlebird, it can easily be distinguished from its larger cousin by the presence of a silvery white patch on the cheek and throat, and the absence of yellow on the belly. Its chuckling song is much more melodic than the Red Wattlebird's harsh cackle.

## TOWN OF CLAREMONT VOLUNTEER FUNCTION

*Photos: Kelly Pilgrim-Byrne*

FOLC members enjoyed the Town of Claremont volunteer function on December 5. Thank you to the TOC for holding this event to show their appreciation for the work of volunteers.



*FOLC volunteers*



*Soozie Ross with Dot and David Leeson*



*Anusree and Naga Karzlala*

## VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

*From : Rose Senior*

My life changed way back in 1969 when I studied for a postgraduate teaching diploma at London University and went to a building across the road where I could hear foul language and sweaty smells coming from the basement. What was going on? It turned out to be my future husband Clive playing a noisy game of squash with a Queenslander called Brian, who settled in Perth after returning to Oz. A group of us went to the pub afterwards – and the rest is history!

Clive and I came to Oz in 1981 with our two small children, just missing out on being ten-pound poms. Although I had many family members in both Sydney and Melbourne, we decided that Perth was the place for us (even after being admonished by my London-based mother, who said “Don’t **WHATEVER** you do go to Perth – it’s so **PROVINCIAL!**”)

Well, we’ve been here ever since - and very happily too.

With a language teaching background I taught English for four years at St Hilda’s, before transferring to teaching migrants at the Graylands Migrant Hostel. After finding how much I loved teaching students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, I moved to Curtin University, where I spent 20 years teaching international students on a variety of programs and courses. I then got hooked on research, and landed up writing an award-winning PhD, followed by an award-winning academic book. This led to me receiving invitations to be keynote speaker at various international conferences. The last one was in Vladivostok in the Russian Far East. Once I’d done that, I decided that enough was enough!

Now that I’m retired I’ve finally realized what my life’s passions are: swimming or aqua aerobics at the beach or the HBF Stadium, walking round the Lake, interviewing members of FOLC (everyone has an interesting story to tell), being friendly to everyone as I go about my daily life and, above all, **DANCING!** Yes, I’ve finally realised that one of my greatest pleasures (apart from riding behind Clive on our motor scooter going to the beach) is dancing. So although I’ve done ballet, Caribbean-style cumbia and flamenco, I’ve now transferred my passion to Zumba. I hope that this passion for dancing – even if I’m simply sitting on a seat waving a stick - will stay with me for the remainder of my life!



## CAN YOU HELP HIP AND HOP?

*From : Heidi Hardisty*



### *Hip and Hop on the Hardisty's front porch*

Hip and Hop, the FOLC frog mascots, are finally being moved to the FOLC shed where they can welcome and inspire volunteers who care for Lake Claremont. However, after years of service, the frogs need some tender loving care.

Can you help? We need a volunteer (or two) who has the skills to touch-up and repair this lovely artwork.

Hip and Hop were created in 1997 by high school students Gemma Carroll and Hannah James for a Christmas window competition and donated to FOLC in 2012. Each frog has an internal metal frame covered in plaster of Paris. This sits on a custom-made stand of recycled iron from the old Australian Boiler Company, which was located at the Claremont railway station goods shed, on Shenton Road.

If you can help, please contact: Heidi Hardisty [folc.wa@gmail.com](mailto:folc.wa@gmail.com)

## CATS OF LAKE CLAREMONT

*From : Nick Cook. Photos : Caitlin Dowse*

Our precious native fauna are faced with various threats to their survival. This is particularly evident in our urban natural areas such as Lake Claremont. Our native birds and possums face increasing pressure for nesting hollows as they are driven out by pest species such as Rainbow Lorikeets and feral European honey bees. Our lizard and turtle populations face predation from ravens and kookaburras. Foxes are also a top predator of all native species.

Surrounded by roads and housing, our fauna face the additional threats associated with urbanisation including loss of habitat, threats of car strike, unintended poisoning by rodenticides and predation by domestic cats allowed to roam unchecked.

In 2021, FOLC began advocating for the Town of Claremont to create local cat laws that would offer some form of protection for the native fauna that calls Lake Claremont home. The reintroduction of Quenda to lake Claremont in 2022 was a driving catalyst for change. The push for cat containment laws is supported by the Lake Claremont Management Plan (2017 and 2022) and is unanimously supported by members of the Lake Claremont Advisory Committee. FOLC have also undertaken community consultation which demonstrated majority support from the local community.

In February, draft Local Cat Laws will be open to the public for community consultation before a final decision by Claremont Council. The Town's local laws are only reviewed every 8 or so years so this represents a once in a decade opportunity to have protections put in place. I urge you all to please make a submission in favour of the draft laws.

The following images are just a small selection of cats captured on our equipment while monitoring quendas.





## CYCLING AT LAKE CLAREMONT

*From : The Town of Claremont*

Enjoy a ride around Lake Claremont between 9.30am - 11.30am on the 2nd Friday of each month. This is a FREE service piloted by volunteer cyclists.

[Cycling Without Age - Perth](#) is a not-for-profit charity that provides a community service, connecting those no longer able to ride for themselves with their community and the outdoors.

It's advisable to book ahead at [bookings@cyclingwithoutage-perth.org.au](mailto:bookings@cyclingwithoutage-perth.org.au)



## LAKE CLAREMONT IN JANUARY

### BIRD SURVEY *From David Free*

On 18th January Pam and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The day was mild and sunny with a cool easterly breeze. For the second year running the lake, normally dry in the summer, still has a good depth of standing water, except in the north east sector. The water gauge is muddy and difficult to read but shows about 1.5m. The bushland is very dry. We observed 935 individuals of 31 species. The number of waterfowl was very much higher than our average summer census, and counting was particularly challenging. Breeding activity, not usually seen at this time of the year, was noted for Swan, Australasian Grebe, Swamphen, Coot, Singing Honeyeater, Magpie and Raven.



The male and female Rufous Whistler, *Pachycephala rufiventris* (pictured above) were spotted at Lake Claremont in January.



## IN FLOWER IN JANUARY

From : Karen Wood

### Ruby Saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa*

This plant is found throughout Australia in either a prostrate or upright form. A healthy specimen will survive saline, sandy soil and long droughts. The flowers are insignificant but the berries that follow are like small bright red or orange buttons. The berries are edible when ripe as are the leaves and stems, but these must be boiled or steamed. Ruby saltbush was used as a nutritious food source by our Noongar people and no doubt by many mobs across the continent. The berries could be crushed and soaked in water to make a sweet drink.



### Rigid Wattle *Acacia cochlearis*

It was a surprise to find this Wattle still blooming along the path round the lake in January since most of our wattles are winter/spring flowering. Sources do vary as to Wattle flowering times. This is understandable since there are more than 950 different species throughout Australia. There is agreement though, on the incredible usefulness of all acacias both to our ecosystem and to First Nations people, who used the differing species for food, medicine, tool making and firewood.

### Berry Saltbush *Rhagodia baccata*.

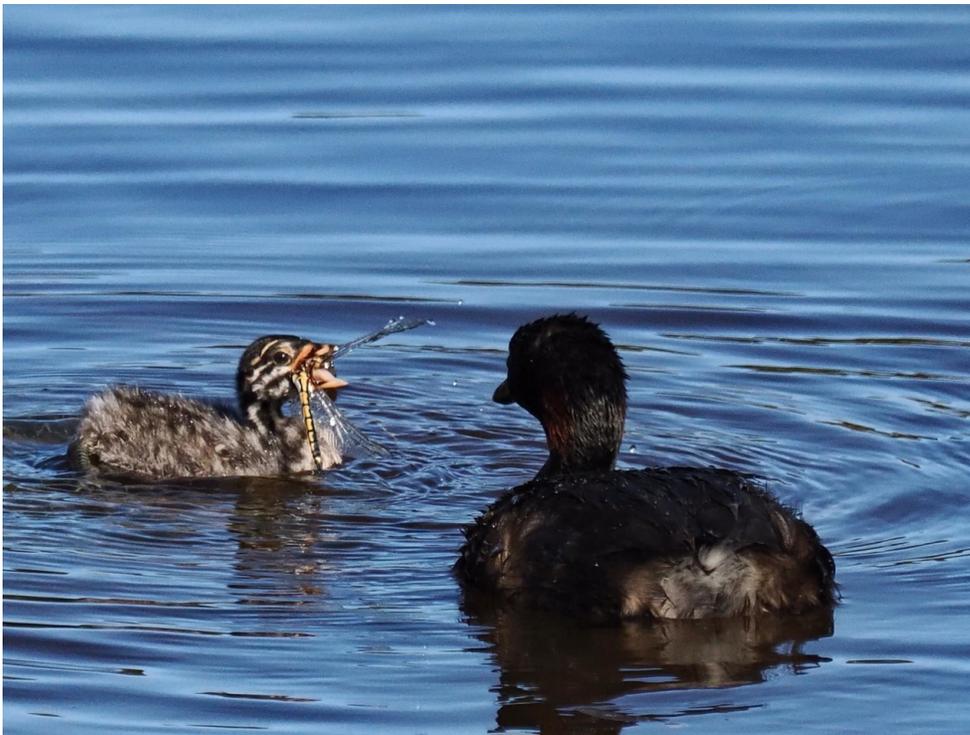
The photo shows exuberant Berry Saltbush claiming another victim. This sedge was lucky as it was easy to free it from the Rhagodia grip. Unfortunately other healthy local plants are not so lucky! Where there is high impact by salty winds and sand drift, Berry Saltbush is confined to a smallish rounded bush. The nurseries warn that this plant requires regular pruning and shaping if grown away from the coastal dunes. It is a very successful hedging species in gardens in the Cottesloe, area where it is regularly shaped. However, it is becoming a nuisance to the planted areas round Lake Claremont.



## DATES FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday February 5	7.00 am Extra hand watering session - Myera St
Sunday February 12	7.00am Busy Bee - Myera St
Friday February 3, 10, 17 and 24	Year 10 Community service program
Thursday February 9	Perth NRM Feral Cat and Fox management forum at 1.30pm
Sunday February 19	Millenium Kids Green Lab at 9.00am

Our next Night Chat session will be held on Tuesday March 28. Details will be given in the March newsletter.



David Free managed to capture this special moment in late January when an adult grebe presented a dragonfly to its young!



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](http://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](mailto:heptins@bigpond.net.au) 0411 052 329

## CONTACT

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