



An Australian shelduck landing at Lake Claremont Photo: Ian Stewart

From the editor : Hilary Heptinstall

Our main planting event this year was held on National Tree Day (See page 2). There were three planting projects, Infill planting in the remnant bushland, infill planting along Alfred Road sites and tree planting in the grassed areas on the eastern side of Lake Claremont (see page 4). Many thanks are due to all our volunteers and special thanks go to our planting co-ordinator, Heidi Hardisty, who has worked very hard in the planning and supervision of these events.

Thanks to Nick Cook and all his supporters on their great efforts in working with the Town of Claremont Claremont in updating the local animal laws. (See page 11)

We had a very inspiring Night Chat in June from thirteen year old Poppy Mahon. It is wonderful to see a young person making such an impression on the environment. (See page 8)

Photographer, Ian Stewart, has donated a book of his photographs of birds at our local lakes to Friends of Lake Claremont. It may be viewed in the FOLC shed. Thank you. Ian, we will enjoy reading it.

NATIONAL TREE DAY JUNE 2023

From : Heidi Hardisty (Planting Coordinator) Photos: Nicky Armstrong

FOLC celebrated National Tree Day early this year with a \$2000 grant won from Planet Ark's "The Seedling Bank". A total of 1000 native seedlings were planted in Ballaruk Bushland, on the west side of Lake Claremont. Most of the plants are shrubs and ground cover that will help to increase the health and biodiversity of the bushland adding habitat for the local wildlife including butterflies, reptiles, birds, as well as the recently reintroduced quenda (southern brown bandicoot). Banksias and hakeas were also planted as a food source for the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoos.

The plantings were done in two sessions. The first session was held on June 9th. Twenty Year 10 boys from Scotch College and Christ Church Grammar School planted 300 native seedlings and watered them all in. The Year 10 Community Service program, held weekly on Friday afternoons by FOLC, is in its 15th year. The students learn about the history of Lake Claremont and why the conservation work we do is so important.



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The second planting session was held on the morning of Sunday June 11th. It took just two hours for 35 volunteers to plant 800 seedlings, including watering them in. Members of the community, including 14 employees from BStore, joined FOLC's regular volunteers on the day. Many stayed for a lovely tea at the FOLC shed hosted by Soozie Ross following the planting activity.



Above: Alice Nelson ,

Heidi Hardisty

A young volunteer

Below : The group at the shed

Ballaruk Bushland, only 2.5 hectares in area, is the last original remnant bushland in Claremont. It is recognized as one of the few remaining Tuart Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain - now listed as critically endangered under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). Ballaruk Bushland was highly degraded and nearly lost post European settlement. There are encouraging signs that restoration efforts, which began over 30 years ago, are going well. Pink Fairy Orchids are now numbering in the hundreds since the flowers first re-appeared about a decade ago.



The Seedling Bank program was set up by Planet Ark in 2019 to supply native seedlings to schools and community groups around Australia, helping to restore Australia's unique landscape. The grant paid for 850 of the seedlings and FOLC purchased the additional 150. Thank you to all who have contributed to the planting project.

TREE PLANTING

From : Heidi Hardisty Photo : Nick Cook

FOLC led another project to plant 75 trees across 25 planting locations in the turfed area on the eastern side of Lake Claremont. The plants were purchased with a Community Grant from the Town of Claremont. Twenty-five Year-10 boys from Scotch College and Christ Church Grammar School planted 72 of the trees over two Friday afternoon planting sessions, July 16 and 23. Four FOLC volunteers led the planting sessions with the help of 2 teachers. The final 3 trees were planted on July 24th with the assistance of two Duke of Edinburgh volunteers. Tuarts, marris, jarrahs, flooded gums and swamp banksias will create shade for park users and habitat for the local wildlife, especially insects and birds.



CELEBRATING JOAN TOCOCK'S BIRTHDAY

From : Averi; Balfe

A group of FOLC members visited our oldest member, Joan Toccock, on the occasion of her 104th birthday. She was in good spirits and was very pleased to see us all and to talk about her favourite place, Lake Claremont. Happy birthday from all of us at FOLC, Joan!



*Linley Simmons, Soozie Ross, Averil Balfe, Dot Leeson (rear)
Norma Hay with Joan Toccock(front)*

VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT - Paul Reiffer

By : Rose Senior

Paul became a member of FOLC three years ago, after meeting Claire Brittain and being impressed by her enthusiastic description of our organization. He describes FOLC as 'top of the wozza', one of the best community groups in Perth.

Paul thoroughly enjoys the companionship of FOLC members. In 2022 he joined the camera group to record animal sightings around the lake, and the turtle tracking program – taking personal responsibility for data collection and documentation. On a practical level, he has helped construct quenda hotels and is now building prototype frames for the protection of turtle nesting sites.

Paul Reiffer with a frame



Paul grew up on a quarter-acre block in Subiaco, growing veggies and tending chooks. After studying agricultural science at UWA, he taught biology and environmental science at Governor Stirling Senior High School. After reading Rachel Carson's 1962 book, 'Silent Spring', which highlights the damaging effects of pesticides such as DDT on natural ecosystems, Paul became a committed environmentalist.

Over his working life Paul has played a range of organizational and coordinating roles, his aim being to encourage community groups to actively support the worldwide environmental movement. He has worked with the Education Department and environmentally focused government agencies and community groups, been a TEE biology examiner, run a TAFE Centre, attended interstate environmental conferences, liaised with fellow government departments, written speeches for politicians, developed action plans with community groups, and managed the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre.

In 1993, at a Canberra conference Paul helped develop the National Waterwatch Program and, as a member of the Steering Committee, developed procedures, manuals and strategies for community water monitoring throughout Australia. His environmental achievements are very extensive!

Paul loves physical activity, which over the years has helped him to cope with loss. He particularly enjoys long-distance running along bush trails and rowing on the Swan River in a St Ayles skiff (built with friends at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club) in the early morning, when dolphins, water birds and fish are most active. In 2019 he took part in the Great River Race, rowing a skiff 32 kms up the River Thames through the centre of London, along with 350 other craft. The afters party was huge.

SUPPORT OUR TURTLES

From : Paul Reiffer

Hello Friends of Lake Claremont. Last year we became aware that some of the ladies of the lake needed help. After two Night Chats by Dr Anthony Santoro on the Long-necked turtle (*Chelodina colliea*) population in the lake, it became obvious that the population was under threat. The data showed that the number of adult females and young turtles was very low compared to the number of adult males.

*Long-necked turtle
Photo : David Brauhart*



- Inference - the mortality of the females and young must be occurring when they are out of the lake, otherwise all parts of the population would be affected.
- Observation - the number of female shells found around the lake and observations of ravens attacking them, turning them over and plundering the eggs from their bodies.
- Deduction – if we don't do something to reduce this predation, the population will be under more of a threat.
- Action - the “larrikin” turtle tracking group was set up. (Larrikin, because we were not part of the official program).

However, we tracked female turtles coming out of the lake, waited for them to lay the eggs, then covered the nest with wire mesh and gallantly escorted the ladies back to the lake. The results were entered into an App Turtle Tracker.

Recently, we met with Dr Santoro to review the data. As a result we realised

1. We need to do more;
2. We needed more people to help;
3. We need better nest protection;
4. Dropping air pressure and temperatures over 17 degrees C are conditions which stimulate female turtles to leave the lake from September to December to lay their eggs.

How can you help? By joining our group and walking (when you can) around the lake when conditions are suitable (17 deg plus and drop in air pressure) to locate turtles leaving the lake, to follow them and cover the nest with wire mesh and escort them back to the lake.

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Turtle nets

This year we will officially be part of the program with increased support from the Town of Claremont and Murdoch University. We will provide training and a support network. If you can help please let Nick or myself know.

Thank you, the turtles will love you. And if you look at your black 'I love Lake Claremont' T shirt, you can see that it already features a turtle.

Paul Reiffer. 0421 956 992. reifp@upnaway.com

SPECIAL PLANTING SESSION

From : Nick Cook Photos : Nicky Armstrong

We put out a call for volunteers to do some infill planting on Sunday June 25. It was a beautiful sunny morning and nine volunteers planted 220 native herbs, including Swan River Daisy, Grey Cottonhead and native pellitory for butterflies and bloodroot, a bush tucker plant. Thanks to the Town of Claremont for providing the plants and to the volunteers who answered the last-minute call to action.



JUNE NIGHT CHAT

From : Hilary Heptinstall

Our speaker was an inspirational 13 year old PLC student, Poppy Mahon, who spoke on the subject of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) and their devastating effect on wildlife. Nick Cook introduced Poppy, saying that the effect of SGARS on wildlife is very relevant to Lake Claremont as we have populations of owls, quendas and possums which can be affected by rat baits.



Poppy Mahon with Nick Cook

Poppy joined the National Birdlife Australia Action Group last year and was then a co-founder of Youth Action for Wildlife (YAW), which was established at PLC. Poppy said that First Generation anticoagulant Rodenticides, FGARs, were introduced in 1948 and SGARs developed in 1975.

First generation rodenticides contain Warfarin. They work more slowly and break down more quickly. Other wildlife is unlikely to die from secondary exposure to FGARs as their concentration in dead rodents is fairly low. An owl is able to metabolise the poison with no harmful effects.

SGARs are slow to break down and if an owl eats an affected dead rodent it ingests high levels of poison.

Many people choose an SGAR because they are cheaper and only a single dose is needed. There are more SGARs than FGARs on the shop shelves, the labelling is not clear and the potential harm to non-target animals and birds is only mentioned in small print. Many people would not use SGARs if they knew of the potential dangers.

We should take rodent control measures to avoid the use of chemicals.

- Eliminate food sources such as wet compost, fallen bird seed, pet food outside and fruit fallen from trees
- Seal potential entry points to buildings and clear dense vegetation to remove potential shelter
- Use ultrasonic rodent repellents or rodenticides such as Ratsak Naturals or Yates Natural which contain corn gluten and salt and cause lethal flatulence

SGARs have a global impact and, in the USA, may only be used by licenced professionals.

YAW at PLC have been campaigning via letters, emails and meetings with local MPs, and have changed practices at PLC, Red Cross, RAC and Pet Barn.

There were many questions for Poppy after a very interesting evening. It was a pleasure to meet a young person who is making such a difference to the environment. Thank you for spending your time with us, Poppy.

If you would like to sign the YAW petition, the details are given below.

<https://www.youthactionforwildlife.com/petition>

OUR BIRDS

Text and Photos: David Free

Buff-banded Rail, *Gallirallus philippensis*

This beautifully marked bird is a Lake Claremont speciality. It is very secretive and prefers to stay in or close to the margins of the reed beds, so it is not easily seen. It can sometimes be seen on the shoreline of the western island, also on the eastern shore near the statue. Occasionally one ventures across the path onto the golf course practice area. Early in the day or in the evening is the best time to find it, as it forages for delicacies. Apparently it enjoys our lake, as we have breeding records.

Interestingly, this normally very shy species has a bold group on Penguin Island, where they scavenge around the picnic ground.



Buff-banded rail (left)

Buff-banded rail with young (right)



FUNGI AT LAKE CLAREMONT

Brick bats *Hypholoma australe*

This rather attractive group was found on a dead paper bark trunk near the FOLC shed. Brick bats often form large, spectacular groups at the base of living trees as well as dead. The gills are yellow/green when young but become darker as the spores mature.

Fungi can form a major component of the diets of some of our native animals - bandicoots, wallabies, potoroos, quendas and wombats. Some fly and beetle species deposit their eggs on fungi and the resulting larvae are predated by animals and birds. *(pictured left)*

An Australian Web-cap Fungi *Dermocybe splendida*

These rather splendidly coloured fungi are found widespread in Eucalypt forests. Further into the bush some of these had bites taken out. Maybe by a hungry quenda? They look a little like some of our bracket fungus but these ones are stalked unlike the brackets. *Pictured right*



FUNGI FOR LAND - A free guided walk by Roz Hart *From : Heidi Hardisty*



Back by popular demand, this walk will be held on Saturday July 22 from 10.00am - 12.00 pm.

Please join us for a special walk discovering the fungi around Lake Claremont. Fungi come in all colours, shapes and sizes and are essential components of healthy bushlands. Roles fungi play are as either decomposers, mycorrhizal partners or disease causers. Fungi provide vital nutrients to plants, food and habitat for wildlife and connect ecosystems.

Our guide, Roz Hart, is a microbiologist who has been interested in fungi for over 3 decades. She will show you how to look at fungi with mirrors so less disturbance is needed and how to share your observations and learn from fellow naturalists on the international platform <https://www.inaturalist.org/> via the Australian Fungimap platform.

Roz is collaborating on a soon to be released book “[Fungi for Land](#)”, a key missing element for land managers involved in conservation and restoration work.

- Please meet just before 10:00 am at the FOLC Shed on the northeast side of Lake Claremont.
- Wear sturdy shoes and dress warmly. Tea will be served at the end of the event.
- Mirrors will be available for purchase on the day for \$5 (optional).
- Bring your cameras, especially phone cameras.

You must register here to join:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/fungi-for-land-tickets-666670668917> Group size is strictly limited to 30 people.

UPDATE ON LOCAL ANIMAL LAW

From : Nick Cook

On Tuesday 27 July, I attended the Town of Claremont Council meeting to make my final pitch in support of provisions to declare Lake Claremont and surrounds a 'cat prohibited area'. This has been a nearly two year long campaign!

The Town received 122 submissions with only one submission opposed to the new law. Many of those submissions called for even stronger measures to contain cats to their owners' property.

I was struck, when reading the submissions, by how much the community values Lake Claremont and the work that we have done to create this oasis in the suburbia. I am very pleased to report that the Council passed the law after some debate. The new local law now goes to the Joint Standing Committee at State Parliament for ratification (we hope).

This is a very positive step forward for protection of our precious native wildlife. I should like to offer my sincere thanks to all our FOLC members, and to members of the wider community for their support along the way. We simply could not have done it without you. Also, many thanks to the FOLC members, who attended the meeting on Tuesday, for providing moral support. It was much appreciated.



A cat caught on camera at Lake Claremont

JULY NIGHT CHAT – Turtle Tracking with Dr Anthony Santoro

This will be held on Tuesday, July 18 at Claremont Tennis Club .

Friends of Lake Claremont (FOLC) and the Town of Claremont (TOC) are pleased to be partnering with Murdoch University and the turtle tracker program.

Lake Claremont has a large population of the, threatened, Snake-necked turtle. In the urban environment our turtles face a number of significant threats. TOC has committed to a funding partnership with Murdoch to provide opportunities for our community to help save our local turtle population.

Participants will learn about turtles and hear the latest research, contribute to crucial citizen science using the TurtleSAT app, and get the chance to become a ‘Turtle Tracker’, protecting nesting females and their nests. All of this will help inform future management actions for snake-necked turtles.

Come along to this information night to find out more about turtles, the project and how you can help just by using your smartphone! You will have the opportunity afterwards to register your interest in joining our turtle-y cool group and becoming a ‘Turtle Tracker’ volunteer to help save turtles at a wetland near you.



*A juvenile turtle
Photo : Anthony Santoro*

DATES FOR JULY

Sunday	July 2	Smoking Ceremony
Sunday	July 9	FOLC Sunday Busy Bee
Monday	July 10	FOLC Board meeting
Tuesday	July 18	July Night Chat 5.30pm
Saturday	July 22	Fungi walk with Ros Hart. 10.00am
Friday	July 21 & 28	Year 10 Community Service Project



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

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