



Black Swan with Cygnets at Lake Claremont Photo : David Free

From the editor : Hilary Heptinstall

August has been another very busy month for Friends of Lake Claremont. There have been extra Busy Bees and much time devoted to weeding. It has been good to welcome new young volunteers to the group. We also appreciate the efforts made by local school groups.

The local community and walkers around the lake are very appreciative of our efforts and I hear many comments about the beauty of Lake Claremont and what a pleasure it is to walk there. We hope that many will join us on our guided walks. (See page 10).

Bird life is thriving at the Lake and David and Pam Free have recorded more than the average number of species in the bird count this month. (See page 3)

Our turtle tracking programme will soon be underway and we look forward to hearing about it.

We look forward to the Town of Claremont's 'Celebrate Lake Claremont Day' on September 17 and hope to see many of you there. (See page 11)

AUGUST BUSY BEES

We held an extra busy bee on Saturday August 11 as well as our regular session on Sunday August 12. It has been a very bad weed season this year and we are fortunate to have volunteers who are genuinely dedicated to caring for our wetland. They have put in a huge effort to overcome the weeds and we filled 86 bags in August.

It was wonderful to be joined by eight volunteers under the age of fifteen. They really enjoyed being out in the bush on a spring-like morning.

We finished the morning with a great morning tea organised by Soozie Ross.

We began our hand weeding sessions on 6 July and in the last 6 weeks we have filled about



Craig and Olivia Fowler



Charlie Townsend and Norma Hay.



Alice Thomas



Young volunteers



Morning tea at the shed

JULY BIRD SURVEY

Text and photo : David Free

On 31st July my wife Pam and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont.

The morning was cool, becoming mild, partly cloudy and still.

There was water in all parts of the lake. The gauge by the jetty showed approximately 1.65m.

We recorded 550 individuals of 37 species, somewhat above the average for our winter surveys. Breeding activity was noted only for Black Swan.

Grey Teal and Pacific Black Duck numbers were below average. Pink-eared Duck, Coot, Black Swan, Brown Honeyeaters and Welcome Swallows were more abundant than normal.

Every spring the Australian Shelducks and Black Swans (*See page 1*) are the first of our waterfowl to produce young. They have not disappointed this year. By mid - August pairs of both species had young birds in attendance.



Australian Shelduck with young

OUR BIRDS

Text and photos by David Free

The White-browed Scrubwren, *Sericornis frontalis*, race *maculatus*, is found in Southern parts of South Australia and WA. It has now been designated a separate species and named the Spotted Scrubwren, *Sericornis maculatus*.

The Spotted Scrubwren is a small insectivore which has taken up residence as the replanted bush has matured and its insect population increased. Scrubwrens feed in the lower levels of bush and on the ground. This cross looking little bird is shy and secretive but, at the same time, curious. It can sometimes be persuaded to hop into view. Although I have not seen them breeding at the lake, I suspect that they do so. The nest is dome shaped with a side entrance and the clutch is 2-3 eggs.



YEAR 10 COMMUNITY SERVICE *From : Nick Cook*

It is now Term 3 and our Scotch College and Christ Church Year 10 students have put in a huge hand weeding effort. In just three sessions the lads have filled over 210 bags with weeds. Well done gentlemen!

A successful weeding session



IN BLOOM IN AUGUST

Hardenbergia *Hardenbergia Comptoniana*

(Also known as Native Wisteria or Wild Sarsaparilla)

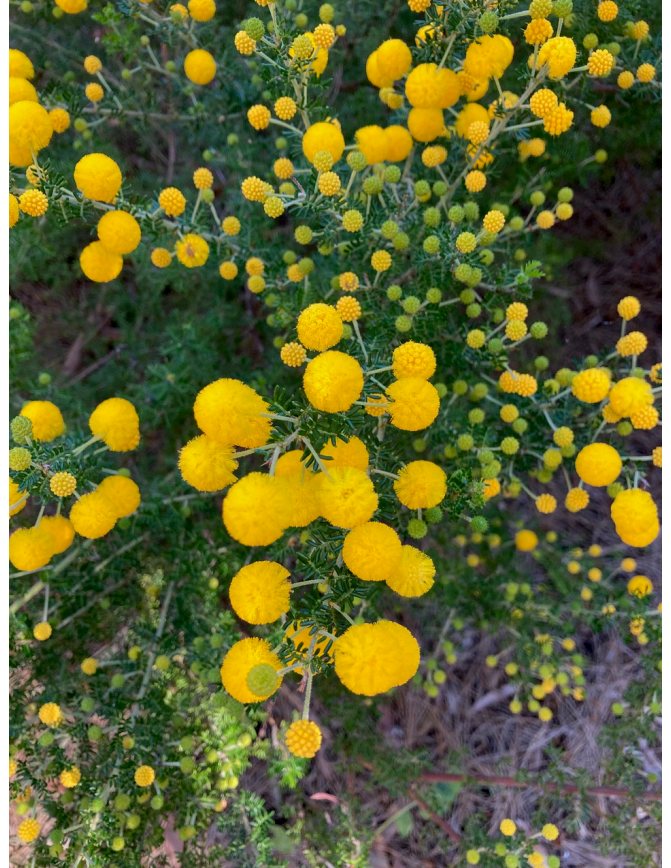
This plant is endemic to the south west of Western Australia. It is found from Dongara to Albany along a narrow coastal strip, as it prefers sandy soils and our coastal limestone. It is bird, butterfly and bee attracting. The seeds are dispersed by ants which find the elaiosomes or fat bodies above the seed delicious.

I could find no reference to the use of this plant to Indigenous people, either for food or medicine. However, its brilliant purple flower clusters must have been, if nothing else, a welcome sight in a cold, wet June. Hardenbergia flowers from June until late August/September. *(Pictured left)*

Acacia lasiocarpa *Panjang*

The flowering of this low, mounded wattle is surely a sign of the coming of spring. No wonder it is sometimes called Glow Wattle as its burst of brilliant yellow pom-poms truly glow on even the dullest days.

Panjang is relatively easy to identify as it is one of the few acacia species to have true leaves, rather than phyllodes. Although it looks very like its cousin, Prickly Moses, Panjang is soft to the touch and certainly won't take the skin off your hand. Much friendlier! The seeds of this Acacia, like so many others of the species, were pounded to a flour and used to make damper which could be baked in ashes. *(Pictured right)*



AUGUST NIGHT CHAT

From : Carol Bolton

Our speaker was Dr Don McFarlane, Adjunct Professor School of Agriculture and Environment U.W.A and Education Officer Friends of Perry Lakes.

He presented a very interesting and detailed commentary on the question of the drying of urban wetlands, particularly Perry Lakes, accompanied by some helpful maps and graphs as well as some evocative photographs of the landscape. In addition to asking why the lakes are drying he addressed the question of what options have been considered for reversing the situation.



Don McFarlane with Nick Cook

Perry Lakes are drying partly because of climate change. There has been a decline in annual rainfall of 150mm over a 40-year period. Since the 1960s we have had the lowest rainfall in the last 800 years. Meanwhile temperature rises have occurred between 1980 and 2019. The reasons for this include the cutting back of vegetation and the heat reflected from rooftops and roads. This has led to a rise in evaporation of 5% between 1981 and 2018. There has also been reduced wetting under tree canopies and very dry topsoil in the summer.

The question that follows from this is what options have been assessed, to deal with the situation? One option might be pumping groundwater from nearby. The negative aspect of this is that pumping lowers groundwater levels around the lakes. It might also be possible to pump water from elsewhere.

Another option is to divert water from the Subiaco main drain using additionally treated waste water. It would be possible to use an infiltration galley to do this. The water from the Main Drain discharges at Swanbourne beach and some could be diverted to the lakes.

Some of the problems about this solution are connected to the possibility of contamination in the water in the Main Drain. Pathogens such as E. coli are found in waste water as also are nitrogen and phosphorus and these would need to be efficiently removed.

Options which have been assessed involve a big pumping system from the main drain, from which filtered water might be transferred to Perry Lakes. There is also the suggestion that plantings of bauhinia would assist with filtering the water. What is wanted is enough water to fill both East Lake and West Lake and to replace evaporative loss. There is still the problem of how to keep the levels up, how to monitor the system and whether water quality is a problem. The impact of increasing building density may affect the quality of the run off from roads. In addition there is the possibility of carp eggs or other animal or vegetable products which do not belong in the lakes entering and affecting the environment.

(continued on page 7)

Current approaches which are being explored are :

- Diversion of water from Herdsman Lake to Floreat main drain.
- Producing a vegetation buffer linking the lakes to the understorey so that turtles and other species can move around and approach the lakes more easily.

One potential problem is that pumping may affect the species which breed there. It might also be possible to make a corridor link to Bold Park. In addition bentonite might be added to Lake Jualbup to slow leakage.

There is growing evidence that people are increasingly aware of the importance of the lakes and that increasing pressure is being put on local government to protect these areas. They have important functions in contributing to the wellbeing of those who use them and there is also evidence of the increasing value of real estate in areas close to such lakes. Ongoing monitoring of vegetation and water continues. Monitoring of change is necessary to anticipate future conditions.

Thank you, Dr McFarlane for a very interesting Night Chat session. There were many questions from the audience and it has given us a lot to think about!

MILLENIUM KIDS GREENLAB

From : Nick Cook

On Sunday August 20, we hosted another Millenium Kids Inc Greenlab. We had a terrific day with guided walks, a bird survey, and lots of discussion about some of the challenges which face our wildlife. Most importantly we discussed potential solutions to these issues. Many thanks to David Free and Graham Thompson for sharing their knowledge with us all.



ANIMAL RESCUES AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Nick Cook



This Barn owl was spotted by members of the public. It was being attacked by Ravens and was seemingly unable to fly.

The Owl ended up in the water and was rescued by Marlees who had stayed with the bird whilst waiting for help.

The bird was caught by Marlees and taken to Claremont vets then transferred to the WA wildlife hospital.

At this time of year we are still seeing turtle hatchlings emerge from their nests.

Today FOLC member Caitlin observed a tiny hatchling as it emerged from its nest. But wait. There were more! Caitlin successfully escorted 3 hatchlings to the safety of the wetland!

Photo : Naga Srinivas



ADOPT-A-SPOT UPDATE

From : Heidi Hardisty

FOLC welcomes Linley Simmons as the new coordinator of the Adopt a Spot program, where individuals or families take on a small patch of the park and keep it hand weeded year-round.

We have recently re-adopted our old spot just outside the remnant bushland along the footpath between Strickland and Myera St. “What a great feeling!” I said after my husband Paul and I filled nine bags with weeds. This will help stop the spread of Annual Veldt Grass and white flower fumitory. Hand weeding along the footpath next to the bushland is very important. It helps stop the spread of weeds around the park and into the bushland itself, as well as reducing the use of herbicide. “It’s great exercise and you get to meet people – who often appreciate your work”.

Please consider joining the FOLC Adopt-a-spot program and caring for a small patch of the park. To join or for more info please email folc.wa@gmail.com



Before (above) After (below)



TURTLE TRACKING

From : Nick Cook. Photos: ?

We are preparing for our Turtle Tracker season. On Sunday August 27, our volunteers met at the FOLC shed to start putting together our nest protection kits. It was very productive session, and was a great chance for some of the new recruits to meet our seasoned volunteers.

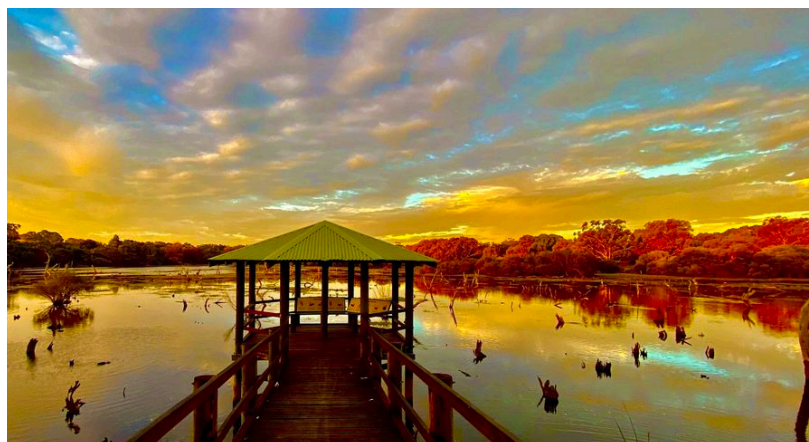


GUIDED WALKS

From : Nick Cook Photo : Naga Srinivas

Step into SPRING at Lake Claremont!

It is a wonderful time to see Lake Claremont, and the Friends of Lake Claremont will showcase it on our free guided walks. They're open to anyone who'd like to find out more about Lake Claremont and its surrounds. The first walk will be on Monday 4 September, with a second on Thursday 21 September, both starting at 10 am. Each walk takes about 45 minutes. Meet at the end of Lapsley Road on the lawn outside the Tee Box. For more details, email the Friends' group folc.wa@gmail.com



BIRDLIFE AT LAKE CLAREMONT IN JULY Photos : Nicky Armstrong

Nicki is a regular visitor to the Lake and has taken these lovely photos this month.



Western Swamp Hen

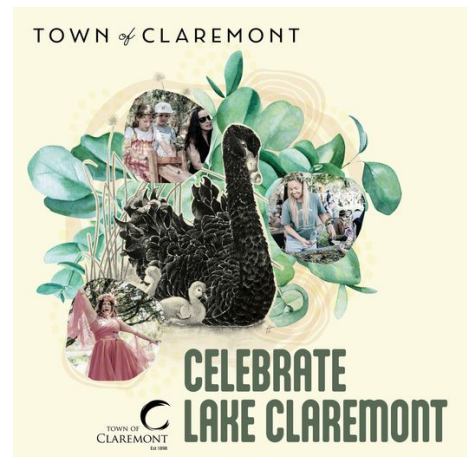


White Ibis

CELEBRATE LAKE CLAREMONT

On Sunday 17 September from 11am-2pm. The Town of Claremont will be presenting a day of fun celebrating the beauty that is Lake Claremont. There will be exciting and sustainable activities for the whole family and we hope to see many of you there.

Drawing : Pam Free



DATES FOR SEPTEMBER

September 1, 8, 15, 22. Year 10 Community Service

September 10. FOLC Busy Bee 07.30 - 09.30 am

September 17 Celebrate Lake Claremont

Our Coordinator is sorry to inform us that there will be no Night Chats Session in September but we hope to see you all in October.



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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