



Lake Claremont in December

Photo : Naga Srinivas

From the editor : Hilary Heptinstall

Naga Srinivas took this beautiful photo in December, before the lake dried up. We are now experiencing summer conditions with very little water left in the lake.

We still, however, have plenty of birdlife at Lake Claremont, and David Free and Ian Stewart continue to take beautiful photos of our birds. (See pages 4-5)

Our volunteers have been very busy with several watering sessions being held in December and January. (See pages 2-3)

Groups like Friends of Lake Claremont only survive through the efforts of volunteers!

The news about the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer is very bad and will lead to the removal of many trees at Lake Claremont. FOLC Coordinator, Nick Cook writes about this. (See pages 9 -10.)

It is good to hear that the Town of Claremont are offering financial help to residents who wish to construct 'Catio's' to protect our wildlife.

I am pleased to welcome back our regular contributor, Rose Senior with 'Volunteer Snapshot' (See page 7)

VOLUNTEERING AT LAKE CLAREMONT

From : Nick Cook

CHRISTMAS EVE WATERING SESSION

We are very grateful to all our volunteers for their support throughout the year.

On Christmas Eve we had our last watering session for the year, followed by a great morning tea, put together by Cath McCauley.

Thanks to Miranda (?) for being official photographer for the morning.



Volunteers at work

JANUARY BUSY BEE

On Sunday January 14, we held our first Busy Bee for 2024

After some decent rain during the previous Friday night's storm, we decided to push on with some fuel load management work in the Strickland St woodland.

It was a very warm and humid morning but the volunteers pushed on and did a great job in removing fine fuels and working on canopy separation.

We downed tools at 9am and headed to Soozie Ross's house for a terrific (and air-conditioned) morning tea.

Alice Thomas in action.



JANUARY WATERING SESSION

On January 28 we held a watering session for our 2023 plantings. A nice cool morning, we had about 18 volunteers join us. It was all done by 8.45am and we headed to the shed for morning tea provided by Cath McAuley. Special thanks to Owen who volunteered to do some maintenance on our hand tools.



MILLENIUM KIDS 2024 LAUNCH

From : Nick Cook

On the afternoon of Sunday, January 21 we launched our Greenlab program for 2024.

We had a terrific turn out with 26 people attending, mostly young people aged 10 to 20 and a few parents.

We had a guided walk and did some planning for the next few events. Some terrific ideas were generated.



OUR BIRDS

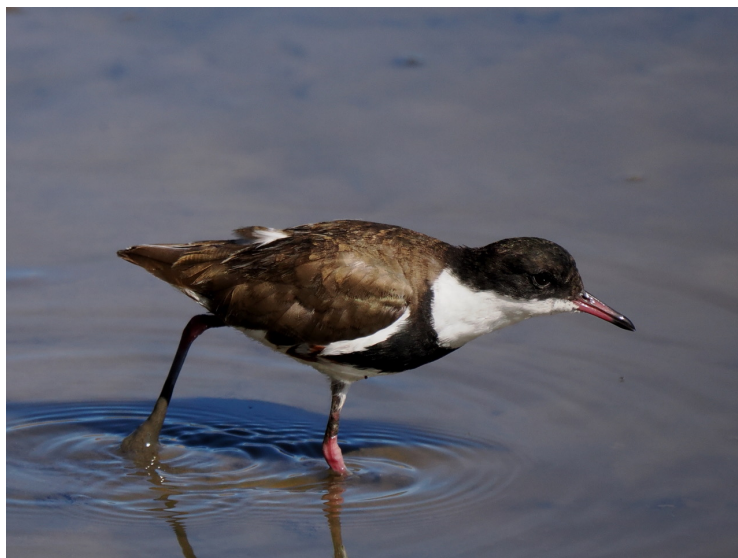
From : David Free

The last two summers were unusual in that the lake did not dry. As I write this, however, the remaining water is evaporating fast. The flooding and drying cycle provides opportunities for species with different lifestyles and we have been lucky enough to see some birds which only come to Lake Claremont when conditions are just right. In early January a small group of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers visited, staying for only a few days. This amazing little wader breeds in Siberia and spends the northern winter in New Guinea,



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Photo : Ian Stewart

Dotterels are small waders and are always to be seen as the lake dries. They feed on the soft mud and in very shallow water. Both Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterels were here in January.



*Black - fronted Dotterel (above)
Red-kneed Dotterel (right)
Photos : David Free*

A large number of Red-necked Avocets also spent time at our lake in January. They tend to stick together as a close-knit feeding group and will sometimes be accompanied by Pied Stilts. *(pictured right)*



We are lucky to have Black-tailed Native-hens currently visiting. These nomadic birds sometimes form huge flocks and were recorded seriously damaging the crops of the early European settlers. *(pictured left)*

When the northern end of the lake is dry, we often see a Black-shouldered Kite perched on one of the dead tree stumps. Pity any mouse which comes into their view! *(pictured right)*



QUARTERLY BIRD CENSUS

On 15th January, my wife, Pam, and I did the quarterly bird census. We observed 470 individuals of 36 species. The number of species recorded was higher than our summer average of 30 species.

DECEMBER NIGHT CHAT

From : Hilary Heptinstall

Our December Speaker was Dr Kit Prendergast, aka the Bee Babette. She is a native bee researcher who focusses on native bee biodiversity, ecology and conservation. Kit has been involved with Lake Claremont for 5 years and has carried out surveys on native bees and their flower association in 2019 and 2020.

Kit Prendergast with Nick Cook



There are more than 2000 species of native bee in Australia with an estimated 800 species in WA. Kit's PhD research has revealed that bushland remnant sites are indispensable for native bee conservation. All the sites that Kit has researched have species unique to that site and Lake Claremont has massive potential. She describes it as 'a precious gem of native bushland in a very urbanised built-up area. It is a Conservation Category Wetland known for its vertebrates (turtles and birds). Identifying native bee species and identifying the flowers they prefer can guide restoration of the wetland.

In order to learn more about the bees, it is important to be able to catch and monitor them in the most effective and efficient manner. Research concluded that sweep netting was the best method for collecting the greatest number and diversity of bees. Bees discovered at Lake Claremont have included "cuckoo bees" and "resin pot" bees. The best host plants are Myrtaceae, Eucalyptus and Melaleuca. The bees shift hosts throughout the months.

It is possible that the decrease in abundance of native bees may be linked to decreased rainfall, but ongoing surveys are needed to verify this.

Further surveys are needed to investigate the variation in populations from year to year and to find how bees respond to environmental changes like climate change, prescribed burns and restoration activities.

She spoke of European honeybees, *Apis mellifera*, which were introduced to Australia in the 1820's and to south west WA in the 1940's. They have had a negative impact on native bees, with competition for resources. She said that they are not the "honeys" of the bee world.

What should be done?

- Promote native bees over honey bees
- Limit backyard beekeeper densities
- Hold mandatory swarm prevention courses
- Plant more flowers that the native bees prefer so that there's enough for them to co-exist

Kit concluded that Lake Claremont is a high-quality habitat for native bees. It is important that we retain trees in the family Myrtaceae. Ongoing monitoring of bee populations is essential and she values researcher-community partnerships.

Thank you for speaking to us, Kit. It was a very interesting evening.

VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT – ZAC HARDISTY

By Rose Senior

The Friends of Lake Claremont have been in existence since the early 1990s.

Unsurprisingly, over the years the membership has aged. Many of us are now in our 70s or 80s, with our oldest member Joan Tocock still going strong at 104.

Fortunately, a wave of young volunteers are now members of FOLC, injecting our group with commitment, enthusiasm and creative ideas for the future. One such person is Zac Hardisty.



Zac Hardisty

Zac is a passionate environmentalist with a breadth of experience obtained from his extensive travels. Born in Canada, he lived in the UK as a small child before moving to Cyprus with his family, where he attended a French primary school and played soccer with local Greek boys. Zac is fluent in French and can hold his own in Greek, Spanish, and German.

He is proud to have visited many countries (including the US, where he spent one year on a college soccer scholarship). On arriving in Perth aged 11, Zac was surprised to find that many of his fellow pupils and friends at Scotch College and the Western Suburbs had a narrower and more parochial view of the world.

Zac has been closely involved with the Friends of Lake Claremont since 2009, when revegetating the degraded areas around the Lake was the number one priority. Zac soon learnt the importance of laying out seedlings in each location to ensure an appropriate spread of species – paying particular attention to the location of trees. He soon assumed the role of planting team leader in subsequent massive planting years, not only showing volunteers how to plant, but also outlining the overall goals of the revegetation process. With an environmental science degree from UWA, Zac is well placed to explain the challenges of restoration. Once something is gone it is close to impossible to get it back. However, as demonstrated by all our amazing volunteers, if you give nature the best chance of re-establishing itself, it will do just that.

In life outside volunteering Zac trains and teaches martial arts. He is keen on encouraging people to better understand their bodies and maintain athletic ability as they age. He currently works for an Environmental, Social and Governance consulting company, Adaptus, whose goal is to help businesses and society tackle the generational step changes needed to solve the sustainability challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you, Zac, for your wholehearted commitment to Lake Claremont. We are delighted to have you on the FOLC Board.

FOLC VOLUNTEERING

From Nick Cook and Heidi Hardisty

We are really pleased to welcome Joshua Plummer to our FOLC Facebook administration team.

Josh has been volunteering with FOLC for a few years now and is part of our newly formed youth leadership group as part of our collaboration with Millennium Kids Inc .

Thanks Josh.

Joshua Plummer



FOLC VOLUNTEER POSITIONS VACANT

We are recruiting for the following FOLC volunteer positions commencing in March 2024.

FOLC Membership Secretary

Gina Shirley will be retiring this February as the FOLC Membership Secretary. We thank Gina for her hard work and commitment over the past 4 years.

The Membership Secretary's key role is to keep up to date records on membership numbers and details. Ideally, the role will include aiding in membership recruitment and retainment - but the role could be shared with another person. Members will be welcomed and encouraged to become involved in volunteering, events and activities.

Are you friendly, good with computer spreadsheets and keeping records (or willing to learn)?

FOLC Grants Officer

Commencing April- May 2024

Jenni Bannister-Jones will be retiring soon as the FOLC Grants Officer. We thank Jenny for her hard work and many successes over the past 5 years.

The main role of the Grants Officer is to research grant opportunities, apply for grants, track and assist in acquitting the grants, and write reports on grant outcomes and budgets.

POLYPHAGOUS SHOT HOLE BORER UPDATE

From : Nick Cook

At the end of January, I was briefed by Town of Claremont on the latest updates on the PSHB infestation at Lake Claremont.

The news is very dire and distressing!

There will be a second round of tree removals with a large number of significant trees identified as badly infested. Another 77 trees have been identified for removal.

These include Moreton Bay Figs, London planes, Eucalyptus sp. and Melaleuca (paper barks).



Ancient paper bark tree



Most devastating of all is an ancient (pre-colonisation) Melaleuca (*pictured above*) located out on the northern section of the wetland.

This tree is about 300 years old, and an amazing specimen. It has both ecological and cultural significance! This individual tree was discussed extensively at the above-mentioned meeting with Town of Claremont. DPIRD has agreed to review their decision and consult with Traditional Owners. Hopefully we can prevent the removal of this particular tree

The photograph on page 10 shows the site on the east side of the lake where seven Moreton Bay fig trees were removed.



Cleared site

GREEN LAB EVENT

This event supported by FOLC and greenLAB will be held at the FOLC shed from 9.00am to 1.00 pm on Sunday February 18. There is no need to stay for the whole morning. RSVP cathy@milleniumkids.com.au

HELP BUILD

SUN FEB 18, 9AM - 1PM

Lake Claremont

Buzzing with excitement?
Inviting young eco-architects and their families for a buzzing morning with the bees!

Learn (w Dr Kit)	9am
Build it	10am
Install it!	11am

BEE HOTELS!

Millennium Kids
greenLAB

Friends of Lake Claremont

PHOTO GALLERY



Four- legged Avocet Photo : Ian Stewart.



Our oldest member 104 year old Joan Tocock at Christmas



Heidi Hardisty with surprise visitor Costa Georgiadis

DATES FOR FEBRUARY

Friday February 2, 9, 16, 23
Saturday 10th
Sunday 11th
Monday 12th
Sunday 18th
Sunday 25th

Yr 10 Community service program
Duke of Edinburgh
Busy bee 7.30 am
FOLC Board meeting
FOLC/Millennium kids Greenlab
Busy bee - hand watering 7.30am



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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