



Friends of Lake Claremont NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

The soil is damp, the grass is green, and I'm noticing lots of slugs, snails, aphids and WEEDS! The plants are thriving - and so are the birds as you will hear from David Free and Peter Creighton in this issue. Enjoy watching the green things grow and get eaten, until next month...

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BIRD SURVEY

On May 1st morning my daughter Sacha and I conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The day was cool and overcast with a light breeze. Following good winter rains, the lake did not dry this summer and there was water over the entire surface. The gauge showed about 0.4 m AHD.

By David Free

41

species

579

individuals

We observed 579 individuals of 41 species.

These results are substantially higher than our average autumn census.

Notable sightings included Crested Pigeons and Glossy Ibis, both species having been seen in one survey before in the last twenty four years.

The Crested Pigeon was more a bird of northern and inland areas. Serventy reports that it was not until the 1950s that it was seen visiting the Perth area.



There were very large numbers of swans (eighty eight, compared to the autumn average of four) and swallows. Breeding activity was observed only for the Purple Swamphen.

OUR BIRDS

By David Free



SPECIES PROFILE

COMMON NAME

Glossy Ibis

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Plegadis falcinellus

NOONGAR NAME

Not recorded

The Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) is smaller than the White and Straw-necked Ibis, the other two species seen in Australia. It is also much less common, and rarely seen at our lake. Because of its nomadic habits, this bird is sometimes called the wandering ibis; it can be seen in parts of Asia, Africa and North America.

Unmistakable, their purple-brown greenish plumage is iridescent in sunlight.



Glossy Ibis probe the mud for aquatic invertebrates; they also feed on insects and seeds.



GUIDED WALKS

By Peter Creighton

The area is showing the benefits of 2025's relatively wet winter, when the rainfall expanded and restored the shallow lake margins and replenished the deeper open water areas.

Top-up rains in March and April have refreshed the native plants growing around the lake, including many recent plantings by the Friends of Lake Claremont (FOLC).

In addition, the availability of water in the lake throughout the summer has contributed to an increased presence of some familiar bird species, and the arrival of some less common visitors. David Free, who has conducted bird surveys at the lake for FOLC for 25 years, reported substantially higher numbers of birds than usual in his autumn census. 'The autumn average for Black Swans at the lake is four, but in May we counted 88', said David. He also noted sightings of Crested Pigeons and Glossy Ibis, species that have been seen only once before in his surveys. Their presence at the lake is further evidence of the positive impact of ongoing habitat restoration efforts.

To enjoy a relaxed stroll in the cooler weather and to learn more about the lake and its surrounds, you can join one of three walks offered in June by FOLC.

Shorter walks of about 45 minutes will take place on Thursday 4th and Monday 22nd June. A longer walk around the whole lake, lasting about 75 minutes, will be held on Saturday 13th June.

“June will be a wonderful time to visit Lake Claremont this year.”

All walks are free of charge and commence at 10am.

There is no need to book - just dress suitably for the weather and meet the FOLC guide at the Tree of Wonder sculpture, on the northern side of Tee Box Cafe, Lapsley Road, Claremont.

For more details, email FOLC at folc.wa@gmail.com.

TIGERS, CARPETS AND OTHER AMAZING SNAKE TALES

By Heidi Hardisty

Our May Night Chats guest was David Pearson, Principal Research Scientist of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) who shared some unusual facts about Tiger Snakes and Carpet Pythons.

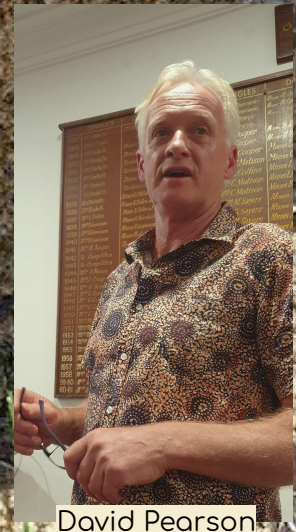
To aid in tracking down prey, snakes rely on the Jacobson's organ in their heads to detect odours. They have big hearts to pump their blood through their long bodies. Male snakes have paired reproductive organs called hemipenes that are located within their tails. David pointed out that a snake can be sexed by pushing on the tail to reveal the hemipenes. But best to leave this test to the experts!

Carpet pythons were once widespread on the Swan Coastal Plain, but not many remain here now. They are quite susceptible to dogs, cats and getting run over by cars. Carpet pythons are gape restricted, which means they can only swallow prey (mainly small mammals, birds and reptiles) as big as their jaws allow. The snake strikes its prey with its mouth then quickly coils around the body, using its tongue to find the head. The carpets exhibit extreme sexual size dimorphism – the females can grow up to 10 times larger than the males. On Garden Island there are many carpet pythons up to one meter in length. Once they reach 1-meter in length they can eat Tammar Wallabies and then quickly reach a length of 2.5 meters. Females lay clutches of eggs up to 25% of their weight, and coils around the eggs to incubate them for 4-5 months. When the eggs hatch, she will have lost 50% of her weight.

Tiger snakes are common in Perth and highly venomous. Luckily, they are generally not aggressive, despite their reputation. Females give birth to live young which makes it much easier for her to incubate the eggs, as she is able to slither into the warmth. For this reason, as you move south in WA into the colder climate, there are more species of snakes that give birth to live young.

The male snakes in WA are unique in that they don't fight females during the mating season. Instead, they have evolved to politely wait their turn for a female. There are probably 300-400 Tiger Snakes that live on Carnac Island, sun-basking happily on top of the shrubs in a predator free environment. There are numerous blind snakes on the island who easily survive because of the abundance of Silver Gulls. The snake's injuries result from the parents of the chicks defending their young. David Attenborough visited the island and featured the snakes in his series – Life in Cold Blood. The existence of Tiger Snakes on Carnac Island has always been a mystery. The most likely reason is that 'Rocky' Vane, a snake handler with a checkered past, released 40 of his snakes on the island when the WA government banned snake showings in 1929 following the death of his wife from a snake bite on her thumb.

We thank David for his most fascinating and entertaining talk.



David Pearson

NIGHT CHATS

POWERING PEOPLE FOR NATURE WITH MARNIE GIROUD

Guest Speaker: Marnie Giroud- Education Program Manager for Parks and Wildlife at DBCA, a television presenter, conservation leader, and artist.

In a world of complex challenges, meaningful change for nature happens when projects are thoughtfully co-designed to engage people and empower them to take action. Citizen science has the potential to deliver incredible outcomes. Come and hear more about what citizen science is and why it matters. And celebrate the success stories.

Hosted by

Friends of Lake Claremont

Tuesday June 16th

Claremont Lawn Tennis Club
Shenton Place, Claremont

Doors open 5:30 pm for refreshments

6pm start

All welcome - gold coin
donation appreciated



Marnie Giroud with a honey possum

Please come along to the next FOLC Busy Bee Sunday 14th June 8-10am

We will be planting on the north side of the lake – creating more habitat for our quendas, bobtails and birds.

Please meet at 8:00am at the FOLC shed on the northeast side of Lake Claremont.

5-6 helpers are needed at 7:30 to lay out plants.

Thanks for your help!

PLANTING FOR WILDLIFE

JUNE 2026 FOLC NEWSLETTER

ACTIVITIES AND NEWS

By Tony Barr

🌈 So much for my prediction of a good year for rainfall, only 5 mm since last month although there are a couple of good rain days forecast as I write this, with one event mid week and another for the long weekend.

📍 There were a number of successful events in May: the Town of Claremont's 'An Afternoon at Lake Claremont' (Saturday 9 May) and the 'Young Locals Nature Sundowner' a week later. The afternoon event included a walk around the lake led by Peter Creighton and a stall where we displayed our activities and distributed two trays of flowering shrubs (courtesy of the Town of Claremont) and packets of seeds of everlastings (courtesy of Fran).

👥 The Lake Claremont Advisory Committee met during the month with the key items being installation of safety rails on the jetty and expansion of the dog off-lead area to the east of the lake. No decision has been reached on either yet.

🌱 May's Busy Bee was attended by around 30 people and removed the cardboard protectors from around last year's plantings on the eastern buffer and removal of some of the weeds, including marshmallow around the plants. The next Busy Bee will be on June 14 when we will be planting along part of the closed limestone path to the north of the lake. Please come along and meet other members of the Friends.

📧 The board has decided to relinquish our PO Box in Claremont as it was getting only commercial mail (bank statements). One of our members has agreed to allow post to their address. Our new address is FOLC, c/- 79 Strickland St, Mount Claremont WA 6010.

👤 We are also after volunteer(s) who can act as a membership officer, greeting new members and volunteer(s) to assist organising Night Chats. We are also interested in volunteers to join the Turtle Tracking program and to assist with the camera wildlife spotting around the lake. There have been reports from around the metropolitan area of turtles nesting (or migrating) over the summer and autumn so please take care when driving in the vicinity of all lakes and wetlands. Please contact me via email (folc.wa@gmail.com) if interested in the roles or activities.

CONTACT DETAILS & OUR SPONSORS



natural resource
management program



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