

Friends of Lake Claremont NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

As the spring equinox approaches nature celebrates a time of renewal, so it makes sense that it's also an opportunity for us to start exciting new projects. Ideas that may have been brewing over the cooler months can burst forth into action, much like our beautiful orchids at this time of year. Maybe you have some ideas for FOLC to kick off in the year ahead - if so please come to the AGM on Sunday September 13th and let us know - details from Tony in our Activities and News (p9).

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OUR BIRDS

By David Free

The Brown Goshawk are fairly common but not often seen.

The smaller Collared Sparrowhawk has identical plumage and it can be difficult to differentiate between species. Goshawks have a rounded tail, whereas the sparrowhawk's tail is square.

Goshawks' stick nests are high up in a tree. Sometimes they will refurbish an old crow's nest. The nest is fiercely defended.

Goshawks will eat rabbits, lizards and birds; chickens are an easy meal.

They lurk on a concealed perch from where they can ambush their prey, which can be taken in flight or on the ground.



SPECIES PROFILE

COMMON NAME

Brown Goshawk

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Accipiter fasciatus

NOONGAR NAME

Karkany

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WINTER BIRD SURVEY

By Sacha and David Free

381
INDIVIDUALS

42
SPECIES

On August sixth, David and his daughter, Sacha, conducted a survey of the birds at Lake Claremont. The morning was cool, partly cloudy and still. Winter rainfall has been poor; the gauge by the jetty showed only approximately 0.65m Australian Height Datum.

Three hundred and Eighty-one individuals of 42 species were recorded. While the individual number is close to average, the number of species is well above the winter average of 34.9.

Black duck, Grey Teal and Coot numbers were below average. Brown and Singing Honeyeaters and Willie Wagtails were more abundant than normal.

Breeding activity was noted only for Black Swan and Coot. Three clutches of recently hatched swans were seen, and several more are being incubated.

A photograph of several black swans in a wetland environment. Two swans are in the foreground, one facing left and one facing right, both with their heads turned back. They are standing in shallow water with green reeds and pink wildflowers. Other swans are visible in the background.

PRESERVING THE WETLAND

AT LAKE CLAREMONT

By Peter Creighton

Lake Claremont is one of the most significant Conservation Category Wetlands in the greater Perth area. Photo: Nicky Armstrong

The wildflowers are in bloom, so September will be a beautiful time to discover Lake Claremont on a free walk offered by the Friends of Lake Claremont (FOLC).

The lake is a hidden gem, an urban oasis in the northern part of Claremont. After extensive land clearing and environmental degradation last century, the lake is now listed as a Conservation Category Wetland. As such, it has been given the highest priority in the State so it is managed to protect and preserve its conservation values. Any activity that may lead to further loss or degradation is deemed inappropriate.

As Heidi Hardisty, a passionate volunteer for FOLC, explains, "Wetlands are vital as habitat for our wildlife and for human survival. They purify our ground water, prevent floods, and beautify and cool our cities."

Yet, according to Heidi, wetlands remain at risk. "Locally and globally, wetlands are one of our most threatened ecosystems", says Heidi. "It is estimated that wetlands on the Swan Coastal Plain are still being cleared at a rate of two footy ovals per day, including some Conservation Category Wetlands. Collectively our attitudes must change if we are to protect our remaining wetlands into the future."

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GUIDED WALKS

Free walks with friendly volunteer guides showcase FOLC's efforts in the past 30 years to recognise, nurture, and restore this valuable wetland.

Shorter walks of about 45 minutes along the eastern side of the lake will take place on Thursday 3 September and Monday 21 September. A longer walk around the whole lake, lasting about 90 minutes, will be held on Saturday 12 September.

All walks commence at 10 am. There is no need to book - just meet the FOLC guide at the Tree of Wonder sculpture, on the northern side of Tee Box Cafe, Lapsley Road, Claremont.

For enquiries about FOLC or the free walks, please email folc.wa@gmail.com.

NIGHT CHATS

Why New Cat Laws Matter

Cats make wonderful pets, but if allowed to roam they take a huge toll on wildlife. Roaming cats kill over half a billion native animals in Australia every year. More than half those deaths are attributed to pet cats.

Very soon changes to the State Cat Act will allow Local Governments to introduce local laws promoting responsible cat ownership, including containment.

Dr Bruce Webber will explain how local cat laws can protect wildlife, public health, and cat wellbeing.

Hosted by

Friends of Lake Claremont

Tuesday September 15th

Claremont Lawn Tennis Club

Shenton Place, Claremont

Doors open 5:30 pm for refreshments

6pm start

All welcome - gold coin donation appreciated

With the arrival of the devastating bird flu in Australia, strategies for promoting responsible pet ownership and addressing community concerns are more important than ever.

Bruce is an Executive member of the WA Feral Cat Working Group. He is also the Executive Manager of Science and Conservation at Bush Heritage Australia and leading a national conservation program to help Australia achieve its 30 by 30 commitment.

Let's get ready and ensure local cat laws to manage roaming cats are implemented here soon!



Dr Bruce Webber

THE ENERGY-WATER NEXUS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

By Josh Plummer

Where does Perth's water actually come from, how much energy does it take to produce, and what happens when a drying climate forces us to find new sources? These were some of the questions explored at this month's night chat, where Cilla de Lacy spoke on the Energy-Water Nexus and Climate Change.

Cilla opened by describing the nexus as one of the most important areas of public policy — the often overlooked relationship between the water we use and the energy required to supply it. She also introduced the Jevons effect: as we become more efficient at using a resource, we can paradoxically end up using more of it.

The conversation initially centred on Perth, which Cilla described as the “canary in the coal mine”. As one of the first major cities to experience declining rainfall, Perth could no longer depend on its dams in the way it once had. This prompted a major rethink of our water supply and the introduction of public measures, from greater water efficiency and recycling to desalination and groundwater replenishment.

While at Water Corporation, Cilla was involved in establishing its Water Cycle Project and Energy Unit and in a two-day workshop with CSIRO examined future water options — including drinking recycled water which was an unfathomable idea of the time. The CSIRO was brought into the conversation as it was an institution the community trusted. It was an early recognition that finding the technical solution was only half the job; people had to trust it too.

Seeking new water sources, the repeatedly revisited question was “how much energy does it use?”. Unlike water from a dam, “manufactured water” requires a substantial amount more energy. Reverse osmosis used in groundwater replenishment, for example, requires extensive treatment, while desalination comes at a greater energy cost than traditional sources. Perth's first desalination plant sought to address this relationship zeroing out its power consumption through supplying renewable energy into the South-western (continued on next page)

Interconnected System (SWIS).

The Millennium Drought pushed this issue beyond WA. Restrictions in Melbourne affected gardens, community sport and lifestyles, while debates over recycled drinking water showed how quickly water could become political. As Cilla put it, the engineering of drinking reclaimed water is relatively simple: “the main game is the social licence and community acceptance.”

From there, Cilla turned to what may come next: renewable hydrogen, offshore wind, pumped hydro, batteries and potentially wave power. Hydrogen has faced considerable cost challenges, although Cilla noted the strength it has in export markets for industrial feedstocks such as ammonia. Offshore wind offers another opportunity, with strong ocean winds allowing the size of the Eiffel Tower to be deployed!



Cilla de Lacy and Heidi Hardisty

Cilla finished by clearly stating the huge knowledge gap that exists in society today. There remains a “large disconnect from where our water is coming from”. We turn on a tap and expect water to keep coming, but behind it sits an increasingly complex system of water and energy infrastructure.

ACTIVITIES AND NEWS

By Tony Barr

🌈 We enjoyed warm weather for our busy bee in August after a cold start. Some participants did some additional planting at Alfred Road/Davies road intersection and others did some planting and mulching at the Cresswell Oval triangle. The majority of us reduced the weeds between the golf course and the nature playground, filling 91 bags. In total that week (Adopt-a-spotters, Monday weeders and school programs 240 bags of weeds were collected. Well done everyone.

🐝 We will be weeding again at the Busy Bee on Sunday September 13 (8 am at the shed) with the weeds unfortunately enjoying the rain and periods of sunshine. All are welcome. As usual, the Busy Bee will be followed by a morning tea and (unusually) by the AGM. More details on the AGM below.

🐦 Bird Flu (H5N1) affects both birds and mammals and is highly contagious. Symptoms in birds may include: can't stand, walk, or fly properly; droopy or puffed-up appearance; breathing problems (panting or sneezing); unusual head or neck posture; and sudden death (especially in large numbers). Symptoms in mammals (seals, cows, cats, etc.) include: weakness or tiredness; trouble walking or breathing; seizures, tremors or walking in circles; drooling or runny nose; sudden illness or death.

In Western Australia (as of 28 August) there have been 10 positive cases in marine seabirds with 47 negative tests over the previous week. If you observe anything unusual DPIRD advises the following:

- Avoid contact and keep your distance.
- Record the date, time, location and take photos.
- Report it to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Likely vectors for the transmission are initially via carrion (seagulls, foxes etc) and then transmission by direct contact, bodily secretions (saliva, mucous, faeces, and respiratory droplets). For Lake Claremont it is likely to be either infected seagulls or waterbirds from a nearby infected lake/wetland.

📱 FOLC has recently acquired a SIM card for the coordinator. The phone number to contact the coordinator (currently me) is 0403 845 527. Nick Cook (0401 376 085) has agreed to be contactable for immediate local issues as I may not always be able to respond immediately when at work.

📅 The FOLC Annual General Meeting is taking place on Sunday 13 September 2026 at 10 am (after the Busy Bee). A link to the AGM Documents has been sent out to the FOLC members via email. If you are a member and wish to attend please let us know by 6th September so we can cater, or if you have any issues you would like to raise, please also contact us by 6th September. You can contact us by email folc.wa@gmail.com or me via the FOLC phone 0403 845 527. If you aren't a member, you can still join via our web site (free for Under 25's, \$20 annually for individuals and \$40 annually for families)



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