



Friends of Lake Claremont



Motorbike Frog – by Heidi Hardisty

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A MORNING WITH MOERLINA

Text by Amina Syed

I watched a lot of environmental documentaries as a volunteer at WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature). And one thought kept coming back to me every time: *before attitudes can be changed one has to be well-informed.* This same phrase rang in my mind, as I tagged along on a guided tour led by Heidi Hardisty one morning with a class of young students and teachers from Moerlina Primary School.

We assembled on the edge of the bushland as Heidi spoke of the Whadjuk Noongar people who had inhabited the area for over 40,000 years. Only around 40 people had lived and managed the area north of the Swan River to the Swan Valley. The children listened carefully and as we began the grand tour one said out aloud to his peers, *"this is gonna be fun."*

And it was. Interesting information was given in a simple and interactive way, Heidi put effort into not overloading the young minds. The tour bought home the fact that we must look into the original custodians of this land - to learn and to manage our natural heritage for our own needs and survival.

The world has enough for our needs but not for our greed. Unlike the modern consumer-minded society, the Noongar people worked on this formula, cherishing the tender ecosystems that sustained them. Heidi showed us pictures of how the original swamp would have looked, populated by Paperbark trees. It had never occurred to me that the natural drying up of the wetland in summer create more biodiversity.



Lake Claremont was once a paperbark swamp. The bark from the Freshwater Paperbark would have been used as cover for shelters by the Noongar people.

Photo by Heidi Hardisty

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In an age where electronic games and media has usurped the natural playground, it was important to show the kids how the tree barks were used for shelter, how the fruits and flowers of Banksias were natural sweets, and how birds were hunted and their eggs were collected for food. I had picked up a banksia cone and a bright red leaf as a souvenir, but Heidi reminded us that we must not take anything for these insignificant tokens were home and food for others. I then dropped them on the ground. Heidi had a surprise exhibit - a dead oblong turtle. The children crowded around her to get a closer look. As we looked over the swamp, Heidi repeated the warning of not treading on the dry lakebed for it was home to plants and animals and we must respect their privacy.

At the close of the tour, we left the kids to enjoy their snacks under the shade of old trees and the luring playground. As we walked back, we began to dwell on the merits on having regular guided walks. I had learnt a lot that day and for me Lake Claremont had taken on hallowed connotations. I wondered if the young minds had felt the same.

OUR BIRDS

Text and Photo by: David Free

This is our largest member of the group comprising crakes, rails and swamphens. The Purple Swamphen has a wide distribution. They can also be found in Africa, South and Southeast Asia. They are common in South-west WA, where there is suitable habitat.

The Swamphen seems less water-dependent than our other members of this group; some can still be found after the lake is dried in the summer.

Although they mostly feed on vegetation, they often eat eggs, ducklings and very young birds of other species, especially when they are feeding their off springs.



Juvenile Purple Swamphen



Adult Purple Swamphen

IN BLOOM THIS MONTH

Photos by Heidi Hardisty

The Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) is one of the two 'bloodwoods' (exuding dark red gum) that can be found in Perth. This magnificent tree is an important food source to the Carnaby's and Baudin's Black-Cockatoos. It can reach a height of 30 meters.



► *White flowers of the Marri tree bloom all autumn*



► *Honkey Nuts developing on the Marri tree*

TED'S CORNER - ANDREW HEAD

Photo and text by Andrew Head

My name is Andrew Head and I am the Manager of Parks and Environment for the Town of Claremont. I have worked in the Horticultural Industry all my working life, I started my career working at Wildflower Nursery in Melville (It's now a car yard). I also worked at the WACA ground as technical officer and head gardener among a number of other places. As a young lad I had an aviary filled with numerous local bird species including Finches, Quails and Budgies. At one stage I wanted to have a pet Pelican (just like Storm Boy) but I soon realized that wasn't going to be permitted by the Department of Agriculture or my MUM.



► *Story continued on following page.*

I have three sons who love to help planting trees on National Tree Day down here each July. I have worked at the Town for over eight years and I love seeing the transformation achieved at Lake Claremont by the Friends Group. I have a passion for sustainable development and the environment; I love being immersed in nature. Lake Claremont helps recharge me after a hard day and reminds me of why I am here: for the long haul, to make a difference.

BUSY BEE

Clean Up Australia Day at Lake Claremont on Sunday March 8

Text by Hilary Heptinstall

Our 'Clean up Australia Day' was held a week later than that in the Eastern States so as to avoid the clash with the long weekend.

It was a very successful event with 29 volunteers turning up including a contingent from Scotch College with Head of Anderson House, Lisa Evans.

In one and a half hours the whole of the Lake area including the remnant bushland and the Scotch Playing fields had been cleaned up.

16 bags of rubbish, weighing about 60 kg, were collected. The weight was low because there was a preponderance of lightweight plastic in the bags.

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► *Scotch volunteers with Claire Brittain*



► *Scotch volunteers with Nick, Kevin and Arnout*

There were fewer soft drink cans and beer bottles this year but a few cigarette butts were found. This raises concern for bush fires after the recent bush fire outbreaks across the state.

Several interesting items were found on the lake bed. These included an old handbag containing a purse, which obviously had been there for some time. Because the credit cards in the purse had an expiry date of 2009!

The lake bed also revealed a drone without an engine and the usual collection of golf balls.

Apart from helping with the clean up, a group of Scotch boys also worked with Nick Cook and Kevin McAlpine to install 2 'Duck Boxes' for breeding.

Volunteers were invited to morning tea with Soozie and Geoff Ross after the work was completed. And once again, Geoff produced the excellent scones for which he is famous for!



► *Volunteers sorting through the rubbish*



Geoff serving his famous scones



Duck boxes being wheeled into position

NOTICES APRIL 2015

Next Sunday Busy Bee 10th May 9-11am

We will be organizing hand weeding. Please stay for tea at the end of the session.

Like us on facebook!

Had a great moment at Lake Claremont? Why not like us on facebook and post your picture and story?

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Lake-Claremont/159586380873009?ref=hl>

The Friends of Lake Claremont Ltd. (FOLC) is a community organization established and run by local residents all of whom are volunteers.

Our mission is to assist in the conservation and enhancement of Lake Claremont, a Conservation Category Wetland and Bush Forever Site

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