

# *Bandicoot Tails*

## **Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park**

No. 151, July - August, 2013

### **President's Words:**

Two revegetation events have occurred recently. The first was a "biodiversity blitz" organized by DEWNR, in particular our new Volunteer Support Officer, Mel Pettigrew.

It was a great day with locals, DEWNR staff, and members from assorted environment groups bringing the numbers to over fifty. Around 1000 tube-stock, trees and mid storey, were planted before lunch. Unlike our working bees where it's fruit cake or starve, a gourmet lunch and real coffee was provided. Thanks go to Mel and Jen. The latter was also anointed Conservation Ranger of the year recently: well done Jen, you are going to have to extend your mantelpiece.

The planting is in the paddock east of Scott Creek and over time we plan to revegetate most of it, leaving some open areas in a random pattern throughout to encourage a wide variety of birds. We will also begin another long term bird banding study in this planting to see how our avian pals respond.

On the last day of the school term all the students (about 50) from the Scott Creek Primary School came out to an area near new Gate 19 to help plant the 200 *Hakea carinata* tubestock. These were grown from seed they collected next to the park and sown late last year. It was a very cold and windy day but being hardy hills kiddies, they all got into the swing very quickly and all the hakeas were in before lunch. An early minute for teachers, parents and sundry members was then approved. Thanks Don and Sue for helping out and Mel & Jason & Jeremy for the organisation and "hands on". Despite the chilliness it was a great morning.

A couple of 'Tails ago I was lamenting several new "initiatives" of the State Government and the seeming unending erosion of environmental protection for our flora and fauna. If you think it is bad here the latest news from other States makes for some chilling reading. Queensland intends to "allow the clearing of an estimated 700,000 hectares of Queensland's endangered and ecologically significant forests and woodlands". The announcement was cutely entitled "Taking the axe to Queensland's tree clearing laws" This from their Minister for? Environment, oh to be so witty. Similarly in New South Wales, shooters, logging in parks, development and other very unsustainable activities are being looked at fondly by the State Government

In a paper written in 1982 by W.E. Odum, entitled "Environmental Degradation and the Tyranny of Small Decisions", (can be found on the net) he argues the cumulative effect of independent decisions has led to many of the current extinction and habitat loss crises. For example-'No one purposely planned to destroy almost 50% of the existing marshland along the coasts of Connecticut and Massachusetts---- however,

through hundreds of little decisions and the conversion of hundreds of small tracts of marshland, a major decision in favour of extensive wetlands conversion was made without ever addressing the issue directly'. (Think of Australia's ongoing annihilation of coastal ecosystems & habitat).

Whilst this has undoubtedly been the case in many instances of habitat and species loss in the past, excuses of not knowing or understanding the implications of current destruction are null and void. Given recent history, I have little doubt many of the bad decisions currently being made interstate may well find favour with many Government agencies here. Our parks and reserves system remains vulnerable whilst conservation, preservation and restoration of the natural world, are not heading the priority list. To quote the author again- 'Sadly, prospects are not encouraging. Few politicians, planners, or scientists have been trained with, or have developed a truly holistic perspective. Considering all of the pressures and short-term rewards that guide society toward simple solutions, it seems safe to assume that the "tyranny of small decisions" will be an integral part of environmental policy for a long time to come'.

Thirty years since that was written and I'd have to say the tyranny abides. Thanks Tim Jury for recommending this paper to me.

The Working Bee Area map with this newsletter will hopefully be a quick reference for anyone wishing to actually know where we might be weeding on a given day. As it was my idea I take full responsibility for it, please remember it is a guide only and we may well stray over the boundaries. I would like to thank John Butler and Rick Williams for their suggestions and Rick for the final map and all the "tweaking".

**[See new WBee map in this Bandicoot Tails for WB area code.](#)**

### **Some photos of the planting day with Scott Creek Primary School**



**Join the group & you can wear camouflage trousers too**



**A few years planting ahead**



**Instruction in percussion tool usage**

**Bird Banding Notes:**

The report to ABBBS Canberra has been sent via snail mail. The banding data now has to be sent via the internet, but there appear to be teething problems. I am waiting for advice from Canberra about how to work around these.

In the 2012-13 year, we trapped 364 birds, which number included 80 retraps. A total of 24 species were caught. Our numbers were down on some previous years, as we had a run of cancellations due to inclement weather.

Some of the individual statistics for the most common species caught are as follows:

| SPECIES                | New<br>2012-13 | Retraps<br>2012-13 | Project Totals<br>New | Project Totals<br>Retraps |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Superb Fairy Wren      | 51             | 29                 | 1142                  | 798                       |
| New Holland Honeyeater | 42             | 4                  | 1045                  | 199                       |
| Striated Thornbill     | 29             | 19                 | 535                   | 225                       |
| Whitebrowed Scrubwren  | 17             | 8                  | 430                   | 195                       |
| Silvereye              | 38             | 1                  | 531                   | 17                        |

In May and June we worked at Kangaroo Gully and Gate 7 sites, with the following results:

Kangaroo Gully: 42 birds trapped including 11 retraps  
10 species caught  
Gate 7 site: 30 birds trapped including 10 retraps.  
9 species caught, including our first ever White-winged Chough

Notable retraps were a 14+ Striated Thornbill at Kangaroo Gully, and an 11+ at Gate 7. Some Striated Thornbills seem to be able to survive to a healthy old age, more so than most of the other small bird species we have data for.

We also caught a 4+ male Scarlet Robin at Gate 7, which is at the upper end of our retraps for this species.

### **Excursion To Little Desert N.P., Victoria:**

Your Committee agreed that we should organise a visit to the Little Desert National Park, near Nhill, Victoria, between the 5<sup>th</sup>. and 10<sup>th</sup>. September. Any members interested in this trip, which should appeal to botanical and ornithological interests should contact Jenny Dawes, as per the attached information sheet.

There are other parks in the region which could also be visited, depending on how much time anyone wishes to spend in the area.

### **Programme August 2013– October 2013**

#### **All working bees meet at 9.00am at Gate 16-Almunda Car Park**

#### **WBC=Working Bee Area Code**

|                 |    |                         |   |
|-----------------|----|-------------------------|---|
| August          | 6  | Tuesday Working Bee     | WBC-ET-Echidna Tr, Erica at top of Gully. |
|                 | 11 | Sunday Working Bee      | WBC-BRn+s-Upper Bushrat Ck, Broom         |
| <b>NB Thurs</b> | 15 | <b>Social Committee</b> | The Essence, Stirling. 12.00              |
|                 | 17 | Bird banding            | Gate 7, Mt. Bold Road, 7.00 am.           |
|                 | 18 | Bird banding            | Gate 7, Mt. Bold Road, 7.00am.            |

|                 |             |                              |  |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|
|                 | 24          | Saturday Working Bee         | <b>WBC-BRn</b> -Erica-Mid Bushrat-Nth side-backpack  |
| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>25</b>   | <b>Waterhouse Exhibition</b> | <b>Meet at Museum Café-10.30</b>   |
|                 | 31          | Bird banding                 | Gate 3 crossroads, 7.00 am.  |
| September       | 1           | Bird banding                 | Gate 3 crossroads, 7.00am.   |
|                 | 3           | Tuesday Working Bee          | TBA  |
|                 | <b>5-10</b> | <b>Thurs-Tues</b>            | <b>Visit to Little Desert Park</b>   |
|                 | 8           | Sunday Working Bee           | TBA  |
|                 | 12          | Business Meeting             | TBA  |
|                 | 14          | Bird banding                 | Gate 9, Mt. Bold Road, 7.00 am.  |
|                 | 15          | Bird banding                 | Gate 9, Mt. Bold Road, 7.00am.   |
|                 | <b>22</b>   | <b>Spring Walk</b>           | <b>9.30 Gate 3 Morning tea on walk, lunch at G3 approx 1.00pm. Bring a Friend</b>                        |
| September       | 28          | Saturday W.Bee               | <b>WBC-NRn</b> -Watsonia-East of Neville Rd, Nth of Batwatch Dam –bring tongs of death if you have them. |
| October         | 1           | Tuesday Working Bee          | TBA  |
|                 | 5           | Bird banding                 | Gate15 (old G 19), Dorset Vale, 7.00 am.   |
|                 | 6           | Bird banding                 | Gate15 (old G 19), Dorset Vale, 7.00 am.   |
|                 | 13          | Sunday Working Bee           | TBA  |
| <b>NB Thurs</b> | <b>17</b>   | <b>Social Committee</b>      | The Essence-12.00pm  |
|                 | 26          | Saturday Working Bee         | TBA  |

### Officebearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact your office bearers.

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**Friends Website:** <http://friendsofscottcreek.org>

