



Earthcare News

March
April
2008

we do what we can where we are

Dolphins in Port Phillip Bay

Did you know that 80-100 genetically unique dolphins reside in southern Port Phillip?

Sue Mason, research officer from the Dolphin Research Institute, will share with you the current research of the Institute and her experiences of the dolphins and other wonderful marine mammal species that utilise our beautiful bay.

After the Earthcare AGM, Thursday April 10th
about 8.15pm at the Port Phillip Ecocentre.



Earthcare AGM April 10th 7.45pm

Join the committee,
nominate for president, secretary, treasurer
or become a co-president, secretary or treasurer

Meeting 5 times a year

Have your say in the running of this
important inner city environmental group.

Port Phillip Nature Watch
March 2008

This is the first report since late November last year, and over these three months I have had no reports by members of their sightings of wildlife. I know the drought has not been good for birds and other animals, but despite this I hope members are still keeping their eyes open as from now on to early winter interesting birds may come through our area in their seasonal migration movements.

One strange occurrence I witnessed and caught on camera along Elwood Canal was a young Silver Gull attempting to catch fish for a meal. These birds are typically scavengers and not very well adapted to do this. With its head under water it managed to catch a small fish, but it became clear why the fish was easily caught as it was a slow swimming and poisonous toady or Puffer fish; not a nutritious baby bream or mullet which are common in the canal. The toady swelled to a ball making it impossible to swallow, so the gull would lift it up to the path beside the canal and bounce it around to try and make it deflate which it would not. The fish would then bounce back into the water and the gull would quickly retrieve it. After repeating this process several times and without successfully eating the fish for 15 minutes I left the gull to it. If eaten, I would imagine that the gull would not have survived as these fish are highly toxic.



And here are my other sightings:

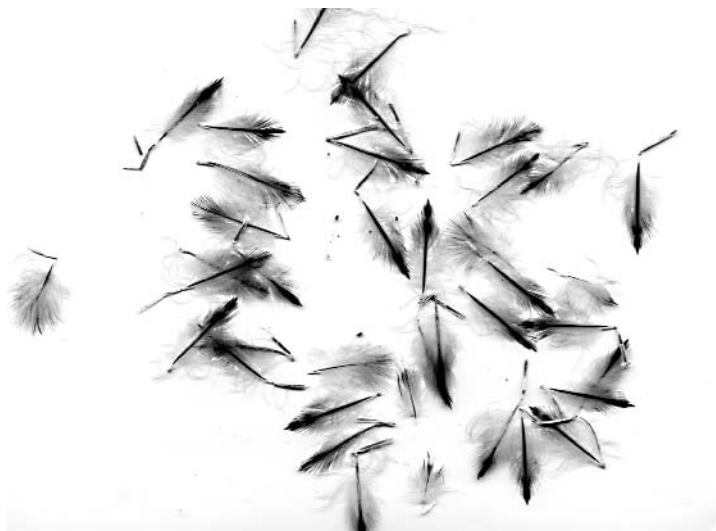
- Three Royal Spoonbills flew over Zoe's backyard during the penguin survey group's end of the year get-together on 16 December.
- A single Australian Hobby flying south over Point Ormond at dusk on two consecutive evenings on 15-16 February.
- Two Little Corellas feeding on nuts in a row of Roman Cypress trees in Elwood on 1 March. The larger Long-billed Corella is the species more frequently seen in our general area.
- Eastern Spinebills and Grey Fantails in the St Kilda Botanic Gardens on 12-13 March. This is the first sign of autumn seasonal bird movements.
- A single Wood White Butterfly in the St Kilda Botanic Gardens on 12 March. A truly beautiful insect (see photo).
- A single New Holland Honeyeater in the St Kilda Botanic Gardens on 12-13 March. This is the first sighting of this species in St Kilda.

Please let me know if you see any interesting wildlife. I can be contacted on email awmccutcheon@optusnet.com.au or phone 9531 2270.

Andrew McCutcheon

Penguins

Its moulting time on the breakwater and there are feathers everywhere. The penguins generally do not look happy during moult, they have to double their weight then sit on a hot windy breakwater for two weeks while they gradually replace their old feathers with new ones. They lose weight, get the occasional tick and flea and are unable to jump in the water to cool off, but when they have their new plumage they look fabulous, with bright blue feathers on their back and flippers and glowing white chests. They also have a clean white line of short tough feathers on the trailing edge of the flipper. Very smart and definitely the new black.



The penguin team has been collecting feathers as a record of any toxins or heavy metals the penguins may be carrying.



Wood White Butterfly

NOMINATION FOR EARTHCARE COMMITTEE

**I wish to nominate, myself or another
person for membership of the
Committee**

Name.....

**President /
co-President.....**

Vice President.....

**Treasurer /
co-Treasurer.....**

**Secretary/
co-Secretary.....**

General Committee Member

.....

**PLANTING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
MAY 18 JOHNSON RESERVE
JUNE 15 BALACLAVA RAIL
JULY 27 POINT ORMOND
AUGUST 31 WEST BEACH
ALL SESSIONS 10-12AM**

MEMBERSHIP OF EARTHCARE

Earthcare insurance is due. You need to have provided membership details and paid your fees in order for Earthcare to update the insurance.

Fees can be paid into the Bank of Bendigo, just make sure you put your name in the box that says 'reference' so that we know who has paid.

The account is in the name of
Earthcare **of** St Kilda 101369809.

To pay in money use the number 2239598/1201

Please note the '**of**' in the middle of Earthcare name.

or

just send a cheque or postal order to PO Box 287, Elwood 3184
or better still come and listen to Sue Mason and her Dolphin research
on 10th April 7.45pm and pay in cash.

I wish to join/renew my membership of Earthcare St Kilda

Name.....

Address.....

email.....

phone.....

Students/Concession \$10. Individual \$20. Family \$30

Donation.....

Sea Grass / Sea Stars

Earthcare will be taking another look at the seagrass beds in St Kilda Harbour and removing Northern Pacific Seastars in the coming months. If you are interested in joining these sessions either as a diver or as land crew please tell us at the AGM or send an email to earthcareskilda@gmail.com