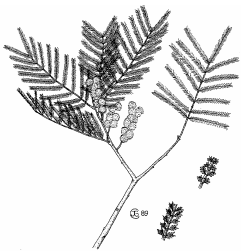




# Earthcare News

We do what we can, where we are

DEC 2003  
JAN 2004



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Zoe Hogg & Andrew McCutcheon from Earthcare

## Will talk about their trip to SHARK BAY



Shark Bay in Western Australia is listed as a World Heritage Area (1 of only 14 in the world) and provides outstanding examples of major stages in the Earth's evolution, ecological processes, unique natural phenomena and significant natural habitats.

**7 for 7.30pm Thursday 27 Nov**

### ECOCENTRE

55a Blessington St, St Kilda

**Bring friends and family and enjoy some early Christmas cheer  
 LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

## BIOSIS REPORT ON THE NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS OF PORT PHILLIP

The long awaited Biosis report on the Natural Heritage Areas of Port Phillip has been finished. It has received no fanfare from Council but is to be made available in the St Kilda Library and the Ecocentre. Ring the Port Phillip Council Assist Centre with any enquiries. Thanks to Zoe, Jo and Janet Bolitho amongst others, the final report contains much more information and recommendations than the first draft although the fauna information is still very light on. The next step in the process is for issues for

each site to be raised and management plans written. With the Natural Heritage areas going out to tender again next July for another 5 years, management plans are crucial. At present the council has not allocated money for management plans or fauna surveys or indeed implementing any of the recommendations of the report.

It looks like some lobbying needs to occur for our natural heritage to be properly managed.

## PLANTING CALENDAR

Look for the **2004 Planting Calendar** in the next newsletter

DATE	EVENT/TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION/COMMENTS
Sunday 30 Nov	9.30am – 12noon	Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore Janet Bolitho T: 9645 2269	Perce White Reserve – Melways 2JM
Sunday 21 Dec	10am – 4pm	Friends of Wesgate Park George Fotheringham T: 9428 4820	Groups should contact Naomi on 0415 941 629 Free vegie lunch

## PORT PHILLIP NATURE WATCH



Tawny Frogmouth

As I have spent most of the last two months having a great time in Western Australia I have not been around observing wildlife in City of Port Phillip. In the last two Newsletters I have written about bird species moving into City of Port Phillip, and calling it home. They included Tawny Frogmouths, Crested Pigeons, Long Billed Corellas, Chestnut Teal, Grey teal and White-Eyed Ducks. Due to recent winter and spring rains making more bodies of water available elsewhere in the state the three visiting duck species have now entirely left our area. They have left behind the resident Black Ducks, plus the various Mallards and farm breeds. We can look forward to these visitors returning in future periods of drought.

On 23 October Neil Blake reported the Tawny Frogmouths as having successfully reared two young birds in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. As I write they are all still there using the old near dead pine tree as a refuge during the day. The Tawny Frogmouths have been caught in the act hunting for food outside the gardens as observed by Jill So Sokol. She saw a Tawny Frogmouth

swooping low across Mitford St from Clarke Reserve in Elwood. The bird then returned to sit in one of the plane trees on the park side of the street.

Neil also reported seeing some micro bats zipping around the southwest section of the Gardens, but could not tell what species they were. He was also very pleased to hear 3 species of frogs calling from the small pond in the indigenous section of the Gardens. They were identified as Common Froglet, Striped marsh Frog and Verreaux's Tree Frog.

Two sightings of Sacred Kingfishers, one on the St Kilda Light Rail near Fraser St Station on Friday 31 October and another along the Port Light Rail the day before were reported by Patrick Deasey to Rob Scott. Earlier in the same month I saw large numbers of these kingfishers on Rottnest Island offshore from Perth. Of all of Australia's kingfishers the Sacred Kingfisher has the widest distribution (over the entire nation) and is the species most likely to be found in our cities.

Our editor, Amanda Richter has discovered a number of Eastern Rosellas at Gas Works Park in Albert Park. She has seen them regularly on her walks over the last couple of months, so we can assume the birds have taken up residence in the area possibly using hollows in some of the older trees. At least two pairs were seen eating native grass seeds as recently as Monday 17 November. In early November she also saw two Black faced-cuckoo shrikes being harassed by a pair of very alarmed and angry honeyeaters in a gum tree outside her house in Danks St.

And now some observations on the little creatures. Zoe Hogg has reported that there are lots of insects in her back garden with native plants and pond. The insects include two types of dragonfly (big and small) recently hatched from the pond, a black and white moth and three types of butterflies - Australian Painted Lady, a small skipper (Yellow-banded dart) and a small blue (Common Grass Blue). On a recent visit to Zoe's garden I saw the small dragonflies and the Yellow-banded darts.

It is great to see more reports coming in and I can now talk about other people's observations other than my own, particularly as I have not been around this time with anything to report. Keep those reported sightings coming in, I am sure there is plenty to see out there! If you see any wildlife no matter how insignificant they may seem to you, please let me know.

I can be contacted on 9531 2270, or email [amccutcheon@melb.globaldial.com](mailto:amccutcheon@melb.globaldial.com).

Andrew McCutcheon

## ELWOOD CANAL



The Elwood Canal Management Plan is available on the City of Port Phillip website – to find it, just type Elwood Canal Management Plan into the

search facility and it takes you straight to it.

The executive summary says that the Management Plan:

- addresses the public landscape amenity of the open space associated with the Elwood Canal ... with the intent of providing an integrated approach to issues and proposed improvements
- seeks to recognise the importance of the Elwood Canal as a local open space linkage, in addition to its primary function as a drainage channel and flood mitigation device for the local area ... and
- proposes a range of improvements that are aimed at improving amenity, maintenance service delivery and efficiency for residents of the City of Port Phillip.

Earthcare will be monitoring the implementation of the Management Plan. If you are interested, please contact Sue Pennicuik on 9531 3807

## DOLPHIN RESEARCH INSTITUTE



Bent Fin with Calf

At our last Earthcare meeting, 25th of September, the Ecohouse was once again host to an evening of fascinating facts. Last month Susan Parry, a Research and Education Officer with the Dolphin Research Institute (DRI), was our speaker. Susan spoke about Port Phillip's wonderful dolphins and the development of Victoria in becoming a world leader in the protection of marine mammals.

Some of the many living marine treasures include seagrass (crucial for fish nurseries, supporting hundreds of other species), corals, bryozoans, sponges, giant kelp forests and of course dolphins! Last November, Victoria received an early Christmas present - 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries. Along with these, we also now have our very own marine emblem, the weedy seadragon. Related to seahorses, seadragons are found only along the southern coast of Australia and are one of the most prized exhibits in aquaria across the world.

Some of the dolphins are easy to spot in the field, like Bent Fin whose fin is bent to the right (when looked at from behind). Being made of cartilage (not bone), they are born with a bend, but usually straighten up a few hours after birth. Another one who is easy to pick is Samboy who looks like he has been painted with a huge W on his side because he never lost his foetal folds (folds in the skin which disappear after about 8

weeks following birth). Samboy is now about 4.

Since 1994, the Institute have received sightings from all around the Bay, including the occasional one up the Yarra River. There have also been reports of sightings in Westernport Bay. Through photo-identification, it has been observed that the dolphins probably move between both of the Bays. Although the dolphin population seems to be healthy, it is important to monitor potential impacts on them and other marine life. Threats include pollution, introduced species, coastal development, overfishing, aquaculture and growing tourism. Sightings are a key means to keeping track of these impacts. Current modelling for the Bay suggests that, at any one time, there could be between 80-100 resident individuals. In addition to this, there are other dolphins (known as transients), who come in through the Heads from Bass Strait regularly, bringing the population up to 120 dolphins. The dolphins have been seen all the way from Werribee through to St Kilda (including near the Port of Melbourne), as well as Black Rock, Beaumaris and Frankston.

Dolphin sightings can be phoned into the Institute (1300 130 949), emailed at this address [mail@dolphinresearch.org.au](mailto:mail@dolphinresearch.org.au), lodged via the website (following the links to dolphin sightings) and now SMS'd (0417 369 656). It's too easy.

The Dolphin Research Institute is a not-for-profit organisation, which works with stakeholders to try and find solutions. Working with government, universities, private business and members of the community. They do their own research, which is focussed at providing answers to the government's questions. The DRI have a great website if you would like to find out more, or if you would like to "adopt a dolphin". ([www.dolphinresearch.org.au](http://www.dolphinresearch.org.au))

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**FOR ANYONE INTERESTED ... Australasian Shorebird Conference**

"Status and Conservation of shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway".

**Saturday 13 December**

**"Birds of the Arctic Tundra – a link with Australia"**

at Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University

At 6:30 pm (for 7:00pm start) on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December a special presentation "Birds of the Arctic Tundra – a link with Australia" has been organised as a lead up to the Australasian Shorebird Conference. Featuring well known scientists Dr Bob Gill from the US National Parks Service, Alaska and Dr Evgeny Syroechkovski from the Russian Academy of Science. They will give us an insight into the birds of the Arctic tundra with some spectacular images of the Arctic and its birds. The high Arctic regions of Siberia and Alaska is where birds arrive, nest and rear their young, then fly south again, all within two months in which the area is free from snow.

Admission is free to delegates of the Australian Shorebird Conference and \$5 per person for members of birds clubs and the public.

As seats are limited you are invited to register ASAP by contacting Barbara Allan 02 6254 6520 or email:

[allanbm@ozemail.com.au](mailto:allanbm@ozemail.com.au)



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0500 832 784

## MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FORM

Membership of Earthcare St. Kilda Inc. is per calendar year, February to January.

Membership helps to support Earthcare projects and includes a bi-monthly newsletter and information about coming events.

I wish to join Earthcare St. Kilda Inc.

\$10 Student/Concession

\$20 individual

\$30 family

I wish to make a donation \$.....

Please return completed form to PO Box 287 Elwood 3184

Name.....New Renewal

Address.....

Suburb/City.....P/Code.....

Phone Number.....email.....

I would like to receive my newsletter by email YES / NO

My special interest is.....

How did you hear about us?.....

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***We're on the Web - See us at:***

***[www.vicnet.net.au/~earthcare](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~earthcare)***

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