

Earthcare St Kilda

We do what we can, where we are

Newsletter

March/April 2009



**Learn About
Northern Pacific Sea
Stars
and
Rakali**

**Sign up for Sea Star
Removal Days**

**Thursday March 26th
7.45pm**

**Port Phillip Ecocentre
Corner Blessington and
Herbert Sts.
St Kilda**

BOARDWALKERS

A big thankyou to all the boardwalkers who have been patrolling the boardwalk beyond the pier kiosk for the last two months.

You have really made a difference to flash photography and we have had many people really appreciating your presence and penguin knowledge.

The next Earthcare meeting will help you fill in the gaps about the Rakali population.

**Earthcare St Kilda Inc.
Annual General Meeting**

**Speaker will be
Sue Pennicuick**

**Thursday 30th April
7.45pm**

**Port Phillip Ecocentre
Corner Blessington and
Herbert Sts.
St Kilda**

March 28th - Northern Pacific Seastar Thinning Volunteers Required

Following recent sightings close to shore, we are starting the first of our regular winter thinnings of the Northern Pacific Seastar around the St Kilda pier area on Saturday March 28th, commencing at 9.30 till 12.00 pm at the St Kilda Pier.

The North Pacific Seastar is an exotic pest from the Pacific coast of the Northern Hemisphere, which arrived in Port Phillip Bay via shipping which use our waters. Each of these starfish has the ability to produce over 1 million offspring in a single year (19 million over a lifetime), and with no known predators, can have a significant impact on our local native wildlife.

During the summer months these starfish inhabit the cooler waters in the center of the Bay, but move closer to shore as the water temperature cools.

To assist in minimising the impact on the St Kilda pier region, home to rakali and our own native seastars, both of which are impacted by the arrival of the North Pacific Seastars, volunteers are sought to assist in the two teams required on the day.

Water Team

The Water Team consists of volunteer divers, snorklers and those who are happy to wade along the shoreline picking out and bagging any North Pacific Seastars sighted, Diving members of the Water Team must be licenced.

Both divers and snorklers should wear wetsuits, and booties or other suitable footwear for all Water Team members is highly recommended. Those without wetsuits may like to contact Diving HQ, our local dive shop in Prahan, on 9510 9081 or at info@divingheadquarters.com.au to arrange hire.

Land Team

The Land Team is made up of volunteers who will assist in the counting, weighing and measuring of the haul. The Land Team works on the pier, so do not get wet. However as the seastars can start to smell once taken out of the water, old clothing is recommended and gloves are optional.

Hot drinks and biscuits will be provided on the day to all volunteers.

Volunteers willing to assist in either the Water Team or the Land Team on March 28th should email kim.cowie@hotmail.com with your name, contact number and indicate which of the two teams you would like to volunteer for.

As previous thinnings have yielded a haul of more than 3,000 Starfish over a couple of hours, any friends and relatives of Earthcare members are also more than welcome to join in this activity.



Penguin feathers

The penguins are well into their moulting season. This is giving us an opportunity to collect feathers for toxic analysis. The end of the penguin year is approaching and we will be able to analyse the data, but from general observation we seem to have not had a good breeding season.

St Kilda's sister city Obu made donations to penguin research.

This money came from;
Obu Industry and Culture Festival

Obu Middle School
Obu Kita Middle School
Utsunomiya Hoshigaoka Middle School

Mr Hiroshi Tomati
And Miscellaneous donations
We thank them all for their generosity. The money will help us with the Feather analysis.

Northern Pacific Sea Star collection
from St Kilda Harbour

March 28
April 25
May 24
August 8
October 4

RAKALI

Over the past two years we have received many sightings of Rakali from around Victoria and other states. Just last week we were sent sightings from Geelong, Perth and Sydney. A big surprise has been the number of daylight sightings from several locations. Neil Blake managed to send us a photo of a Rakali in broad daylight carrying a large fish in its mouth - we will put that gem up onto the website soon.

We are still spotting good numbers of animals around the St Kilda breakwater and Elwood Canal. Little activity in Albert Park Lake over recent months - however it has been cold and windy every time we have been there.

www.rakali.com



Rakali with leather jacket

PLANTING DAYS

Put these dates in your diary now

Balaclava railway reserve and parkland
Sunday 17 May

West St Kilda Beach
Sunday 21 June

HR Johnson Reserve
Sunday 19 July

Elwood Foreshore near Café behind angling and sailing clubs **Sunday 2 August** (National Tree Day)

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are due if you have not already paid for 2009

Concession \$10, Individual \$20, Family \$30

Donation\$.....

Name.....

Address.....

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Post Code.....

Phone.....

Email.....

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Send to
PO Box 287 Elwood 3184

Pay in person at the Earthcare meeting

Pay into
Earthcare of St Kilda at the Bank of Bendigo
2239598/1201

