



Earthcare News

September
October
2007

We do what we can, where we are

**Weed
Busters**
6th October
West St Kilda
Beach
10am - noon

**Jumpers for
penguins**
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Rakali
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**Galapagos
Islands**
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Earthcare Meeting and Supper

Thursday September 27
7.45pm Port Phillip Ecocentre
Corner Blessington and Herbert Sts. St Kilda

This is an open discussion evening where you can come along and talk about things that interest you within the environment of the City of Port Phillip.

Notes from the International Penguin Conference will also be presented.



Grey Headed Flying Fox

Port Phillip
Nature Watch
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Eastern Spinebill

**WEED
BUSTERS
WEEK**

Come and dig up the dreaded
Juncus acutus
on West St Kilda Beach
Saturday 6th October 10am-noon
(mark this in your diary now)

Port Phillip Nature Watch June - Sept 2007

As there was no PPNW article in the last Earthcare News I am covering the last four months. That is I am reporting sightings from June to mid September. Paul's Arctic story and Sue's report on whales in Port Phillip Bay more than compensated for the missing PPNW article.

There have been very few sightings reported over the winter months.

· Paul Rees and others saw an owl on the foreshore parkland opposite St Kilda Pier while waiting for everyone to arrive for the penguin survey on 22 July. It was later identified as a Southern Boobook. Earlier on the same day Paul saw some small parrots that were almost certainly Red-rumped Parrots at Albert Park.

· Julian Ambrose spotted a Kookaburra perched upon his neighbour's fence in East St Kilda on his way to work in the morning (approx 8:15am) on 9 August. He was so surprised by the sighting that he googled "kookaburra" and "st kilda" as soon as he got to work to see if this was indeed an unusual sighting. This led him to Earthcare and PPNW after reading the newsletter of August - September 2006 containing a photo of a Kookaburra taken in St Kilda Botanical Gardens.

· Clare McCutcheon saw a single Royal Spoonbill feeding at Westbeach in low tide conditions on 14 August at 8.30am. She also observed a Nankeen Kestrel in late July at the corner of Byron Street and Brighton Rd, Elwood.

· Zoe Hogg heard a kookaburra calling in Fraser St, Middle Park on 22 August.

After receiving the two kookaburra reports I referred to past reports on kookaburras since we started Port Phillip Nature Watch in 2003, and have noticed we have recorded a single sighting of these birds each year since 2004. That is four sightings in total so far in CoPP. Three of them were in either St Kilda or East St Kilda and another was at the Gas Works site in Albert Park, and three out of four were in August (the other was Oct 2004).

From these reports we can so far conclude that the birds do not live in the St Kilda area, but rather visit in their seasonal movements. I saw and photographed a kookaburra in the Royal Botanic Gardens in October last year, and again this sighting supports the theory that they visit areas near the city in late winter/spring and then move on elsewhere.

And now to my interesting sightings, again not too many over the last four months:

- Single Eastern Spinebill in my back garden in Elwood on 4 June.
- Single Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike in my back garden in Elwood 2 July.
- Pair of Striated Pardalotes in my back garden in Elwood 21 July.
- Single Grey-headed Flying-fox roosting in the big olive tree on the north east corner of St Kilda Botanic Gardens



Black Faced Cookoo Shrike

Since about mid August the pair of Tawny Frogmouths roosting over the frog pond in St Kilda Botanic Gardens have disappeared, presumably to a nesting site. At this stage we think they have moved outside the botanic gardens. I would be interested to hear about any sightings, which may lead us to the location of their nesting site.

If you see any interesting wildlife please send me a report. I can be contacted on 9531 2270, or email awmccutcheon@optusnet.com.au

Andrew McCutcheon



Rakali Watch

Over the past few weeks we have seen Rakali in several locations. In particular the St Kilda Breakwater is a wonderful place right now if you want to observe them feeding and swimming. The photo below is from Andrew taken a week or so ago at the Breakwater.

We were amazed to see a Rakali 'running' under water in Elwood Canal. The water was particularly clear and several of us saw this behaviour. I was reminded of some underwater film I once saw of hippos running along under the surface - now I am not suggesting that hippos and Rakali can be compared but the running action just reminded me of that particular documentary.

The October 2007 Rakali Symposium has been postponed until May 2008.

Darwin in the Galapagos Islands has been postponed until
November 29th 7.45pm - 9.00pm
Phillip Wierbowski will talk about Darwin
and the voyage of the Beagle.
He will also present images and video
from his recent visit to the Galapagos Islands

KNIT A PENGUIN JUMPER

Just incase we ever have an oil spill in the North end of the bay.

The jumpers are put onto the penguins immediately they are caught.
The jumper stops the penguin preening and ingesting contaminants.

How to Knit a Penguin Jumper

You will need:

- 8 ply wool
- 1 pair No 9 needles (3.75)
- 1 pair No 11 Needles (3.00)

Method:

- Cast on 36 Stitches
- K1 P1 to the end of row
- Repeat for 7 rows
- Change to K2 P2 and increase on stitch at each end of every row 4 times (44 Stitches)
- Continue until work measures 10 CM
- Decrease 1 stitch at each end of every row until 28 stitches remain
- Decrease 1 stitch in the middle of the next row
- Leave on needle or stitch holder
- Make second side the same as the first
- Using the No 11 needles knit both sides onto these needles and K1 P1 for 22 rows. Cast off.
- Stitch up the sides to the beginning on the decreasing to 27 stitches, this is to be left open for each flipper. Stitch up the neck.
 - The finished jumper should measure 4.5" (115mm) wide and 7.5" (190mm) long



If you are a loose knitter, use smaller needles.

**And remember, the knitting must be firm
to prevent the penguins from getting out of them.**

(If you would like the penguin pattern email Zoe on earthcareskilda@gmail.com)

CHANNEL DEEPENING

Many people have been asking about an opportunity to voice their protest in a public way. You will have this chance very soon, in a rally currently being planned. Here are the latest details:

.....An Event not to be missed.....

Your say on the Bay

@ the

Cavalcade and Carnival

Sunday 7th October 2007

10am til 3pm

Location on the banks of the Yarra River (site to be confirmed)

Put it in your diaries and start spreading the word. More details will be available soon, so stay tuned to www.bluewedges.org