



FRIENDS OF DEAL ISLAND



Greetings all,
We hope everyone has had a safe and happy Summer.

Over the last six months we held a November working bee (see report) and attended Wildcare expo's in Hobart and Penguin.

Our planned March working bee was postponed due to rising Covid numbers at the time and our mode of transport. We decided to err on the side of caution to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all concerned knowing that we had on-island caretakers.

We are very fortunate to have so many branch members as caretakers on Deal Island during the last couple of years and thank them for all their hard work during their placements.

Strong relationships continue to build with our partners at PWS and we thank Dominique and her team for their work over this time and her contribution to this newsletter.

FODI always has something on the go. Over the next nine months we plan to hold at least one on-island working bee, an AGM and conduct reviews of our weed strategy, merchandise plan and grant targeting. A Winter newsletter will keep you up to date.

We extend a big warm welcome to all our new branch members and encourage you to dip into our branch page in files where you can read more about us.

Keep safe, stay well
Jo, Stuart, Phillipa and Margot



Working Bee

We are very grateful to the Wildcare Board (BOM grant 2018) and the NRM weeds fund grant that funded this working bee. Our objectives for this trip were:

- trialing the use of Lontrel on ragwort
- revisiting existing mapped weed areas
- review spread of ragwort

A group of four volunteers - Shirley, Lee, Vaughan and Ian joined the island caretakers - Cathie and David, to seek out and spray ragwort rosettes with Lontrel in newly recorded areas as well as work on areas that have been established for a decade or more. Several populations of Sea Spurge seedlings were hand pulled and extensive searching carried out to find potential new populations.

Similarly recorded infestations of Horehound, Arum Lillies and Mullein were followed up on with the removal of seedlings.

Well done to all involved. It was another very productive working bee with everyone working harmoniously. We are very grateful to both Cathie and David for stepping in to lead this group due to a very last minute family emergency which meant two of our scheduled group had to pull out. As always on Deal weather is often challenging and this trip was no exception. Thanks to Vaughan for his great photos and Stuart, Georgie and Jo for pre and post planning, provisioning and meetings.

Working bee report:

10/11/21 – Weeded tussock area south of compound down to Little Squally and up to Lighthouse track. Found ragwort throughout the area from the vehicle track to Little Squally up to the compound and extending down towards Little Squally as far as the drainage line between the compound and Barn Hill. No flowering plants but heaps of seedlings. Spraying and hand weeding.

Afternoon at East Cove removing Sea Spurge seedlings and about 50 Horehound plants found at the southern end of the cove. Mostly seedlings with 7 flowering plants. All hand weeded.

11/11/21 – Weeded area from Telstra seat at East Cove up to the airstrip keeping to the northern side of the valley and then all of the tussock area on the northern side of the airstrip to the eastern end. One Arum lily found and later dug up about 30m from Telstra seat. Heaps of ragwort extending from about 150m before the airstrip right through to about 50m before the end of the airstrip and extending right up the hill and into the bracken but none found beyond the tree line. Plants were from seedlings to large rosettes and 2 flowering plants. Mostly spraying was used with some hand weeding.

We then checked the tussock area east of the end of the airstrip for about 100m but nothing found. We then went to Garden Cove. One flowering Twiggy Mullein and one Greater Mullein rose found near old garden.



Next we searched the dunes for Sea Spurge. About 50 plants removed from dunes north of the track and about another 50 from an area about 90m up the hill to the NW. Also a large area to the south of the track was checked but no weeds found.

12/11/21 – Started weeding along the Winter cove track from near the header tank and finished just past the top of the first hill. We worked the tussock area to the south of the track going out about 100m from the track. It was solid ragwort the whole way the thickest areas being nearer the road. Some ragwort was found in the trees but not very much.

A patch of about 15 Arum lilies were removed from an old site about 150m SE of the header tank.

Some Greater Mullein was found along the track and a patch of about 20 plants were removed from an old site about 200m out from the track at our finishing line.

13/11/21 – With weather looking a bit iffy we decided to weed a tussock area on the north side of the track just east of where we finished yesterday. We went in about 150m with a few ragwort found mostly near the road but they continued right in. When we got to the end of this tussock area we cut across to the valley that runs from the airstrip up to the Winter Cove track heading for some old ragwort sites. Nothing was found in the forest but as soon as we reached the tussocks ragwort was found. We went about 60m down from the old site but it was continuous ragwort from that site to the track and particularly bad in the creek line. A couple of Greater Mullein were also found just up in the she-oaks.



By lunchtime, with rain looking imminent, we did a small strip south of the track back to our starting point removing a few ragwort and also removed an Arum lily from an old site just east of the compound before finishing.

14/11/21 – A wet and windy day. Four of us went for a walk up Flag Hill then continued along the top of the range to the NW point. Along the way we revisited a couple of sites where I had found ragwort before and at the first site (DI RW 9) removed about another dozen rosettes and at the second site (DI RW 1) at the top of the tussocks leading down to Garden Cove, we removed about another two dozen plants.

15/11/21 – Went to Winter Cove to escape the SW winds. Firstly checked the beach for Sea Spurge and removed a couple of plants. Cathie and I had removed a couple of dozen or so plants on previous trips.

We then tackled ragwort from the bottom of the hill up the track to the lower car park as well as the big gully and about 15m to the S of the track. I also inspected a couple of old sites in the tussock area above the N end of the beach and found numerous ragwort extending right to the tree line at the east end of the tussocks, these were all sprayed. Several Greater Mullein were also removed from the track.

I later took a walk to the south above the creek line to a couple of old sites with a thin scattering of ragwort being found up to the first site. None were removed. I then walked up to the top of the hill and then in a line back to the vehicle with no plants found until halfway down the hill at site DI RW 21 where continual plants were found all the way back to the vehicle.

16/11/21 – Day off so four of us took a walk to the lighthouse. Along the way we found one ragwort seedling on the roadside just as you enter the bush. We checked the old halfway house site for arum lilies but nothing found. At the lighthouse we had a look for mullein as we had removed a cotyledon previously.

17/11/21 – Final day - Finished off area where we were working on the 12th. Lots of ragwort to start with but it lessened considerably after we crossed the distinct drainage line. We continued working a narrow strip around the side of the hill on the south side of the track and then worked the plain eastward for about 250m finding plenty of ragwort, stopping at site DI RW 5.

We then crossed to the north side of the track and started working the tussock area eastward from where we finished on the 13th. This was a strip only about 50m wide but it was solid ragwort. Once we got to the top of the ridge the number of ragwort lessened considerably and we finished there. Plants were mostly seedlings to large rosettes with a few plants nearly flowering.

PWS Update

Tucked away in its isolated Bass Strait environment, Deal Island did not fully escape some of the impacts and challenges faced over the past year because of COVID-19. Some of these impacts were a decline in visitor numbers, restricted numbers allowed in buildings, the cancellation of FoDI working bees and contractor works, closure of the Museum under the Departments COVID-19 Safe Planning (still closed), COVID testing of contractors, lots of additional paperwork and permits for PWS to work through to permit travel to and from the island and a continued review of future and available caretakers e.g. TAS based only.

But the good news is that the support and positivity of our Caretakers and FoDI during these challenges has not only been invaluable but also provided the opportunity to utilise individual skills and passions to assist the PWS with many tasks. Some of these have been image capturing for all signage on island, review of mowing techniques to protect the integrity of buildings and fence lines, upgrade of bathroom facilities in the Caretakers' House, review of communications and more recently, a review of the weed management plan including locations, successes and failures using mapping and information collated from both PWS and FoDI. All of the tasks/projects...big or small enhance both the environmental, cultural and heritage protection of Deal Island.

Ragwort. For those that are unfamiliar with the Island and the yellow heads that continually pop up to tease us despite huge efforts from FoDI volunteers over many years combined with Caretakers' efforts, it has been determined that Ragwort is now beyond human intervention and control. Winter Cove is one area on our hit list that is inundated and the site has a flourish of yellow amongst thick well-established island *Poa* pasture which is difficult and near-on impossible to access. Aside from some outlying Ragwort stragglers that can be pulled or sprayed PWS and FODI will now revisit the biological control options available that have been partially trialed in the past. Initial discussions include the re-introduction of more than one biological control and solid monitoring over the next few years in a final attempt to reduce this invasive weed.

Fire Management. Hot off the press...2021/22 summer caretaker and FoDI member, Jon Marsden-Smedley kindly assisted the PWS by completing a Fire Management Review of Deal Island during his stint in island paradise. For those who don't know Jon is a specialist in this field and is well regarded throughout Australia and Tasmania. As part of this process, Jon assessed the island's vegetation and fire management history along with wildfire modelling. This review was most welcome and is invaluable to the PWS to assist in future planning around the reduction of fire fuel loads for Deal Island.

PWS Activities some of the activities and works completed by PWS over the past 12 months include:

- Full inspection and capture of assets/infrastructure e.g. buildings, tracks, tanks etc. by PWS staff including engineering inspections.
- Installation of signage and bollards advising closure of the East Cove Jetty and access track. This follows an engineering inspection detailing structural safety concerns. Walker's may still traverse the access the track, but not vehicles. It was a hard decision for PWS but safety is the number one priority.
- Winter Cove track – installation of water bars and brush-cutting natural water runoff. This saw some severe degradation of this track.
- Fire-hose reels - hose reels upgraded/replaced throughout the compound
- Gas appliance upgrade - the gas stoves/cooktops in both the Caretaker and Visitor houses replaced and the gas heater in the Caretakers house replaced and flued to meet current gas safety regulations.
- Heat pump – installation of a floor standing split cycle heat pump in the Caretakers house, finally possible due to the recent solar upgrade.
- Many other small maintenance tasks and upgrades to infrastructure, tools, and equipment.
- Full review of the Deal Island Caretaker Application process to bring it in line with PWS contemporary practices and other PWS island volunteer programs. Keep an eye out for the expression of interest

Dominique Couzens

Acting Ranger in Charge (Furneaux Islands/Scottsdale)

Who are the friends of Deal Island???

We thought it might be nice to find out a bit more about our branch members in our newsletters and who better to start with than our pocket rocket weeding wizz **Shirley Fish**. She may be one of our more senior members but most are hard pushed to keep up with her. Margot Foster interviewed Shirley Fish about her FODI involvement.

Meet Shirley Fish:

An overheard conversation at Buckland's Tasmanian Bushland Garden where Shirley helped out was the inspiration for her long volunteering contribution on Deal Island with FODI.

'I started in 2010 having met Penny and Bob there. They encouraged me to join the then quite informal band of weeders.

Deal is so beautiful. Since then I've been back on eleven working bees. I love the Flame Robins and Fire-Tail Finches around the houses and the funny Cape Barren geese ranging in the compound. Over the years I've watched our weeding progress with great satisfaction.'

Like me, Shirley's favourite weed is Sea Spurge. The vast meadows of it marching along the Flinders Island beach fringe provides a warning of what we aim to protect Deal Island from.

'Sea spurge is easy to pull once you have the feel', she explains. 'I loved that first trip with Bob and Penny, Christine and Dave, Ron and Glenda - such lovely people, so generous with information.

At East Cove we started above the road on that steep slope which was truly infested. Penny's method was to start from outside and work back into the thick areas until there was no more middle! We aimed for all the big old Sea Spurge and worked in from all sides determined to finish it...and we did.'

I have a huge sense of accomplishment that we achieved this at East, Garden and Winter Coves. Each time we return we go over what we've done and try to push out that bit further.'

Now it's a case of holding the line in subsequent visits. Sea Spurge seed keeps rolling in on tide and wind and follow-up maintenance is key. The Covid years have been a worrying interruption to our decade long Spring and Autumn control program.



Shirley expands on some great results she's seen over the years.

'I've seen a picture of Dave standing in a field of white Arum lilies back in 2011. Today those infestations are gone and our job is keeping on top of a few outliers that pop up around old settlement areas.'

Target weeds include sea spurge, arum, horehound, great mullein, thistle...

'And the most challenging?' I ask?

'Ragwort. We've tried digging it, cutting and bagging seed heads, spraying...and a few years ago beetles were released in the hope of biological control.'

That's still on the radar. Parks and FODI are joining forces for a concentrated on-ground program. The war room talks have begun, so stand by for the next call to action to halt the Ragwort invasion at Winter Cove that threatens our lovely Deal Island.

(Thanks to David Butler for the lovely pic of Shirley & Cathie.)

A new species of Spider!

No doubt there are many yet-to-be discovered species on Deal. The QVMAG have noted that the Island's invertebrates are poorly documented. We hope to collaborate with QVMAG and PWS to be able to collect samples on future working bees. There has also been a paper written by QVMAG's Simon Fearn on the islands Trilobite cockroach however we will save that for next time!

Last year a spider collected by Murphy Widdowson was written up by a Wolf Spider specialist in WA and named *Artoriopsis murphyi* which was a bit exciting. The scientific paper is available [here](#) should you wish to have a read!

The Museum posted this at the time:

Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery

November 25, 2021

Meet Tasmania's newest species, the wolf spider '*Artoriopsis murphyi*', and its namesake, 11-year-old Murphy Widdowson.

In 2020 Murphy discovered this spider on Deal Island, Bass Strait where his parents were working at the time. Murphy asked QVMAG for an identification, however, our resident spider expert – John Douglas – couldn't find a match.

The specimen was sent to spider taxonomist, Dr Volker Framenau in Western Australia to be described as a new species. Acknowledging Murphy's inquisitiveness and contribution to biodiversity science, he named it after Murphy, '*Artoriopsis murphyi*'.

Natural Sciences staff, QVMAG volunteers, Murphy's family, friends and his teacher, all celebrated Murphy's achievement yesterday with an '*Artoriopsis murphyi*' cake!

