



# *WILD TIMES*

Edition 52 May 2015



**'GET OUTSIDE' LEADERSHIP TRAINING IS UP AND RUNNING!!**



**FRIENDS OF MOUNT FIELD GET DOWN AND DIRTY**



**ISLAND ARC SYMPOSIUM ON NORFOLK ISLAND - INTERESTED?**

# EDITORIAL



to him. It made me realize what a truly special organization Wildcare is and how much of what we do and how we do it is so very unique in the world. While he was left challenged and bemused, for me, it strengthened my resolve and commitment to the work that we do. (And, by the way, he also taught me a new technique in making red tea!)

In this 52nd edition of Wildtimes we feature a lot of snippets from groups around the state as well as highlights from the recent Annual General Meeting (page 5) held in Cambelltown. I am also pleased to include a couple of stories from around the country and some unique travel opportunities for our Wildcare members (page 8)

Finally, I can announce the 2nd Annual Craig Saunders photographic competition. Craig Saunders was a previous Wildcare member, Board of Management Member and mentor, someone who's passion, commitment and vitality was an inspiration to us all.

The winning photograph will receive a prize of \$1000 to be allocated to a Wildcare Branch of their choice. This prize money can then put towards an on ground project – please find further details on page 19. The legacy of his influence on volunteering and nature conservation will not be forgotten.

Cheers  
Jodie Epper  
Editor

Well I am enjoying these glorious autumn days and I feel like I am getting mentally prepared for the long winter ahead. Recently, I had a Chinese family in my home. They came to Tasmania as a direct result of the Chinese Presidential visit earlier this year. I was explaining to them about Wildcare and what we do and that we have an enormous volunteer team around this state all working for nature conservation outcomes. The Chinese businessman (he traded coffee beans and I'm a tea drinker) was very curious. As I explained more to him (through the interpretation of his Sydney raised nephew) he become perplexed at what we were doing. I think for someone from a big city in a crowded busy country focused on running a business to make money there was much about what we do – volunteering, taking time out, enjoying nature, maybe even just having easy access to nature, that was foreign

## WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

*The following generous donations to the WILDCARE Gift Fund have been received since our last edition:*

Alexander McCall, Andrea & Ross Baguley, Andrew Smith, Craig Parsey, Denise Hilton, Dick & Pip Smith Foundation, Jennifer Cappy, John Lim, LC & GB Spinaze, Madeline Holmes, Mark Baldwin, Nicole Lowrey, Philip Wyatt, Robert Brooke, Stephen Crump, Tracey Simpson

## Wildtimes Publication Schedule

EDITION #	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION
53	1 August 2015	1 September 2015
54	1 December 2015	1 January 2016
55	1 April 2016	1 May 2016

*Submissions to Wildtimes Editor at [wildtimes@wildcaretas.org.au](mailto:wildtimes@wildcaretas.org.au)*

### ON THE FRONT COVER:

*Ian Ross putting his training into practise at the working bee at Melaleuca. Photo by Janet Fenton.*

by Janet Fenton



# Well Trained

Friends of Melaleuca

**Certified** — in the best sense of the word. A grant from Wildcare assisted Friends of Melaleuca to put three members through Work Safely at Heights training and to organise a brush-cutter assessment day in February.

Some of the jobs at our March working bee at Melaleuca this year required work at heights. Last year, not only rain interrupted a job painting heritage sheds, but the PWS staff who were working with us had to leave. Alas, they were the ones with the heights certificates. And so the paint job had to be left incomplete. This was clearly unsatisfactory, so three of our members volunteered for the heights training and the working bee this year. They attended a 'Work Safely at Heights' one day course run by HANDA Training Solutions at Moonah.

Peter, Ian and Mark had all clambered about on roofs before, but were rather shocked to learn how much damage you can do to yourself even falling from a low height. Because they were all familiar with the site at Melaleuca, they found it useful to be doing the course together as they were able to discuss how they could apply what they were being taught, anchor points and so on, to the up-coming job.

Just as well we had those three trained! With a window of two fine days during the working bee, and our over-worked PWS staff engaged in helicopter wrangling and other duties, the heights work depended on our volunteers. At last those sheds are resplendent in their new coats of paint.

With thick sedge to be cut on the firebreaks at Melaleuca this year, brush-cutter certificates were also in order. Pip Gowen helped to organise an assessment day with Gary Owens from TAFE on 25 February. The



Gary Owens talking to the group, brush-cutter assessment day. Photo by Janet Fenton.

venue was at our place at Longley, where we didn't have to go far to find a patch of bracken to slash. We had no trouble rustling up the minimum number for the day. Twelve volunteers enrolled, seven from FoM, three from FOTI and one each from FOMI and FOBSI. However most volunteers belong to a number of Wildcare groups, so the benefit of the day will be well distributed around the state. This was an assessment only, for those already experienced in brush-cutting, but Gary ran us through techniques and safety procedures and answered many questions before putting us through our paces. The buzz of a number of brush-cutters at work simultaneously soon rang around the valley.

With machines all put away, those who did not have to scuttle back to work stayed on for a pleasant lunch on our verandah.



Chris Creese and Min Campbell ready for action. Photo by Janet Fenton.



Ian Ross going through his paces. Photo Geoff Fenton.

# Wildcare - your organisation



Wildcare was incorporated on 25 August 1998. It is not a government department, but a community organisation that supports volunteers. Its constitution is based on a strong partnership with a number of government agencies.

As with any incorporated organisation, Wildcare has a Constitution and is managed by a Board of Management that oversees its strategic operations and dispersal of monies from the Wildcare Fund.

The Board of Management consists of –

- Appointed Co-Chair – Manager, Community Partnerships Section, DPIWE – who chairs the Annual General Meeting
- Elected Co-Chair\* – who chairs Board Meetings and Special General Meetings
- Secretary\*
- Treasurer\*
- Presidents of the CAREs (“Friends of”) groups\*
- Representative from Nature Conservation Branch
- Representative from Tasmanian Heritage Office
- Representative from Parks & Wildlife Service
- Up to 3 expert based positions for Marketing and promotions, Legal matters and Financial management

\*Denotes positions are wholly elected by WILDCARE membership.

**We will feature some board members in every edition of Wildtimes. Please meet our secretary and one of our presidents.**

**SHERYL HAMILTON - Secretary**

Sheryl studied zoology, wildlife management and seabird ecology. She has more than 25 years’ experience working in New Zealand, Queensland and Tasmania as a wildlife ecologist and is currently employed as an Environmental Consultant.



Sheryl has a primary-school aged daughter, Evie, and a secondary-school aged son, Jonah.

For four months in 2010, along with her family, Sheryl was a Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer caretaker on Maatsuyker Island. Since then she has been actively involved with Wildcare – Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI) and has been the FOMI secretary since 2011 and manager of FOMI’s shearwater monitoring program since 2013.

From mid-2012 to late 2014, Sheryl was the Orange-bellied parrot (OBP) National Recovery Program Coordinator and, for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 seasons, coordinated the volunteer program at Melaleuca through Wildcare – Friends of the OBP.

Sheryl enjoys camping, bushwalking, kayaking, swimming, volunteering on Wildcare projects and being on wild, isolated islands.

Sheryl was elected as Secretary of the Wildcare Board in 2015 and has a keen interest in further improving communication within Wildcare.



**MARK HOLDSWORTH - Board Member**

Mark joins the Wildcare Board of Management after a distinguished 37-year career in the State’s conservation agency (now DPIIWE).

He is regarded as one of Australia’s leading threatened bird experts, and his life-long commitment to the Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Program is testament to his passion for cooperative approaches to conservation.

In recognition of this commitment, Mark was one of four Tasmanian finalists for the 2014 Australian of the Year.

Mark has coordinated and been involved in numerous volunteer conservation projects, including Orange-bellied Parrot summer and winter surveys, Friends of Fisher Island shearwater monitoring, Friends of Melaleuca working bees, invasive species projects and raptor population monitoring.

Mark is keen to ensure that volunteers are valued and have a better recognition within the Tasmanian community, with a strong emphasis on mutual obligation.



*A moment of silliness at the Wildcare AGM.*

by Malcolm McDonald



## From the CEO's desk

Major activities undertaken since the last issue of Wildtimes have all had communication at their heart, consistent with the key focus in our strategic plan.

### Annual Report for 2014

Until last year, Wildcare had not produced an Annual Report.

We have built on last year's effort, the goal being to showcase the activities and projects of as many Branches as possible. Thank you to the 10 who were featured in the 2014 Report. Was yours amongst them?

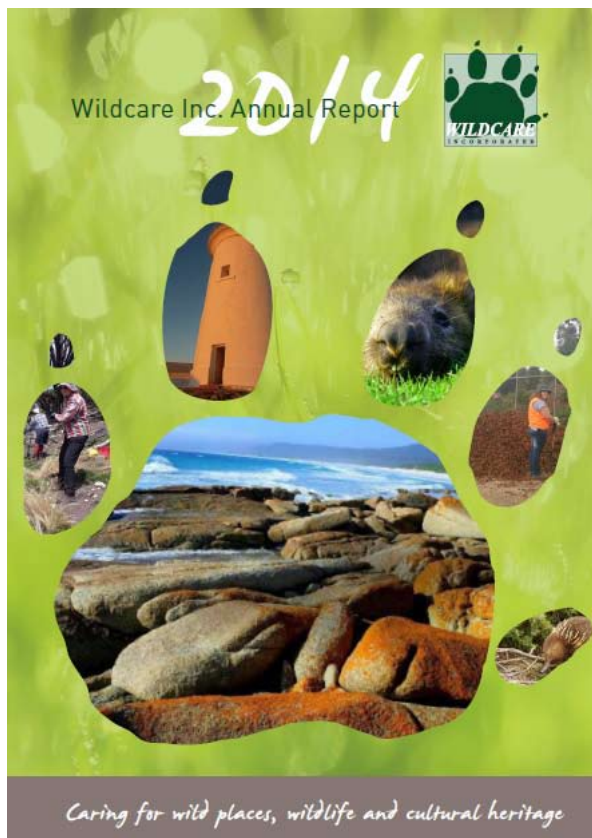
What we are ultimately seeking is a contribution from every Branch. It may be just a few lines, a paragraph or something more significant. For 2015, what would other Wildcare Branches be interested to know that your Branch is doing?

What do you consider the highlight of your year?

Submission to the office of CEO in Microsoft WORD format with some high resolution photos by, say, 15 September 2015 would be great.

The 2014 Annual Report is now on the website. Please contact the office of CEO if you require hard copies.

Increasingly, the Annual Report is being used as a tool in fundraising.



### Treasurer

At the AGM, there were no nominations for the position of Treasurer, so the position is being advertised in the wider market.

Could you be interested or know of someone who may be? The position is ably supported by a Finance Officer and an Accounts and Branch Liaison Officer who prepare financial reports and therefore is not an onerous role. Perhaps you have a financial background or enjoy working with figures? Your enquiry is most welcome.



An information pack is available by contacting the office of CEO. Applications close on 22 May 2015.

### Sponsorship workshop

In recognition that more and more Branches are seeking sponsorship to fund their projects and activities, a one-day workshop titled How to Attract the Sponsor's Dollar is scheduled for delivery in Hobart on Saturday, 4 July 2015.

In addition to representatives from Wildcare Branches who are able to participate without charge, an invitation is being extended to kindred organisations who can participate at a cost of \$200 per person, plus GST. Please spread the word!

To register, please email the CEO by 19 June 2015.

The workshop offers a step-by-step guide for attracting sponsorship in today's competitive marketplace and an opportunity for hands-on work on a "real life" project for which you require sponsorship.

### Presidents' Forum

The second annual Presidents' Forum was held immediately after the AGM on Saturday, 28 March 2015. Guest speakers were featured on social media, fundraising and Wildcare's new website.

Your comments are invited on what topics you would like to see included in the Forum next year. It is open to Presidents or their nominees and is likely to be scheduled around the AGM. Is there a topic or a guest speaker you would like to see featured? If so, please email the CEO with your ideas and thoughts.

### Contact me

Please contact me at any time to discuss an issue, seek guidance or pass on information. To be effective, communication needs to be two-way.

Your contribution is very much valued.

Malcolm MacDonald  
CEO, Wildcare Inc  
CEO@wildcaretas.org.au  
(03) 6334 3990

## A story from Victoria - about dog and penguins and movie stars



Thanks to Marine Life for this story

Allan Warrnambool egg farmer who is no stranger to being constantly up all night with a rifle battling feral foxes. A neighbour had a maremma dog and said they were good with chooks. One night he noticed the dog barking "and the light went on in my head". Maremmas are bred to look after sheep in the Italian Alps and protect them from wolves. Marsh got himself a maremma dog named Oddball, and after six months of training and bonding with the chickens, he had no need to shoot foxes.

Described as aloof but highly intelligent. Maremmas are a dog that is usually too noisy for a pet, but it was just right for this job.

Dave Williams, an environmental science student was working part-time on Swampy's organic egg farm. He wondered what else the Maremmas could do. Williams wrote an essay for one of his science subjects about the plausibility of Marsh's idea.

Middle Island, just beyond the Warrnambool breakwater in Stingray Bay, and is part of the Merri Marine Protected Area. Its is a small clump of limestone only 1.5 hectares (3.7 acres). Its south face backs onto the wild Southern Ocean and it shelters Stingray Bay, making it a popular swimming and snorkelling spot.

Little Penguins were known to be raising chicks in burrows near the island's sandy summit. In the 1990s, when volunteers began record keeping, 700 penguins lived there. 'The old fishers used to tell me when they were going out and loading up their boats early in the morning they couldn't hear themselves think for all the penguins squawking,' says Marsh.

At low tide, when the channel separating it from land is less than six inches deep, Middle Island then becomes accessible to foxes, with disastrous consequences. At the same time, human use of the fragile island increased, and burrows were trampled, crushing penguin eggs and chicks.

In response, the Warrnambool City Council tried various unsuccessful predator-control methods and built a 280-meter (919-foot) boardwalk to keep people off the rookery area. Even so, from 2000 to 2005, penguin numbers plummeted to fewer than 10 birds.

In 2005, Williams approached the Warrnambool City Council, asking to test the idea of using Maremmas. Marsh says it wasn't the easiest of things to achieve.

'The problem was I was an amateur and not involved in the bureaucracy, and here I was telling bureaucracy how to suck eggs and the bureaucracy quite frankly didn't like it.' Allan has also been described as a person who uses colourful language, has strong opinions and thinks if he can inspire just one person to challenge a bureaucrat, then he's lived a good life.

The council decided to give the dogs a four-week trial. Oddball, an experienced chicken guardian, was the first chosen for penguin duty. Initially, Williams camped on the island and supervised Oddball. On the first night 'A couple of penguins came up and saw the dog and just snuck back down again but then one confident one just strolled straight up and old Oddball went to give it a sneaky sniff on the backside and the penguin gave it a squawk and went for her nose.' He left the dog alone at night to do her work after a week.

Instead of living a life of isolation on Middle Island, 'Oddball' preferred the company of the people she could see on the beach just 150 meters away. Then an older bitch called 'Missy' was put out on the island. She was not happy living alone there either. However, the presence of



these two initial dogs proved that foxes reacted by abandoning Middle Island. The Little Penguin colony began to increase.

Realizing that one dog was not happy to live alone on the island, two puppies were purchased especially for the project. They were not correctly 'bonded' with the Island and played too roughly with the penguins "causing some damage". A new pair of pure-breed Maremma puppies and were introduced to the wildlife as their 'flock' from a very young age under volunteer supervision.

As 'Eudy' and 'Tula' matured, they were happy to stay alone, even overnight. Now they spend a few days at a time on the island. Every day someone comes to feed them and make certain all is well. They are given 'respite' every few days when they are taken to the mainland and given a larger area on which to relax and roam with some chickens.

Today there is no fox predation on Middle Island. Unauthorized human presence has also decreased. But the most pleasing aspect of all is that the Little Penguin population over the last five breeding seasons since the Maremma's were first introduced, has increased from less than 10 to over 180.

OK, so we have cute dogs, cute wildlife and it all feels good (except for the odd bit of penguin mauling which we can politely not mention), what happens next? You make a movie.

Actor Shane Jacobson his brother/director Clayton (of "Kenny" fame), got on to it and have just finished filming a family comedy about it. It is called "Oddball" but it should be called "Red Dog on Water".

Intricate filming of interaction between penguins and dogs were shot in a Docklands film studio, where a set will resemble sections of Middle Island, which is too environmentally sensitive for the crew to be tramping on. A Dandenongs set was created resembling the property of Marsh's Warrnambool chook farm.

The 70-plus crew then travelled to Warrnambool for a fortnight of filming on location. Little blue penguins were recruited from Sea World for the Docklands studio scenes.

If the movie takes off, the suburbs and the pound are bound to fill up with maremmas. Don't even think about it, THEY JUST AREN'T SUITED TO URBAN AREAS.

by Jodie Epper



## Island Arks Symposium IV

### Island Arks Symposium IV to be held on Norfolk Island 20-27th February 2016

– Wildcare is offering a trip of a lifetime!!!

Expressions of interest to be emailed to [jodie@wildcaretas.org.au](mailto:jodie@wildcaretas.org.au) no later than June 30 2015 to be assessed at the next Wildcare Board of Management meeting and successful applicants to be notified by email 5 days after that meeting.

All interested applicants will be assessed by the Wildcare Board 11 June and the winner will be notified by email by 15 June 2015.

Norfolk Island (3655ha) lies in the south-west Pacific 1400km east of mainland Australia and 1500km south-west of Fiji. An external, self-governing territory of Australia, Norfolk has strong ecological affinities with New Zealand, but is also unique as it is one of the few islands founded on a seamount in the warm temperate zone.

The Norfolk Island Group is a globally important biodiversity hotspot and has been designated as an 'Important Bird Area' by Birdlife International.

The group is a breeding site for several 100,000 seabirds including the masked booby, grey ternlet, white tern, sooty tern, & wedge-tailed shearwater.

Phillip Island supports one of the largest breeding populations of red-tailed tropic birds in Australia. Norfolk is also home to the endemic & endangered Norfolk Island Green Parakeet, & other endemic birds such as the Norfolk Island golden whistler & Norfolk Island scarlet robin.

The main Symposium sessions will be held from 23rd to 25th February 2016. Field trips will be available pre and post the main sessions.

These are currently under development but will include trekking on Phillip Island and pelagic sea bird viewing excursions. Please check the web site for more information - <http://islandarks.com.au>



# Leadership training - Get Outside



Shuang Shuang providing a safety message for her group.

As part of the leadership training for the Get Outside Program, young leaders are encouraged and supported to lead trips with their communities to local reserves and National Parks.

This story highlights the success of a young Chinese woman called Shuang Shuang who successfully took 30 Chinese people to explore the Tasman National Park. Trip planning was undertaken with the support of Jodie Epper the Get Outside Coordinator over numerous cups of tea and white board sessions with many visits to google maps and researching the information that we found on the PWS web site.

The destination was chosen and a careful itinerary was prepared. Information sheets were prepared and Shuang Shuang and Jodie prepared Bush Safety and Leave no trace messages to be delivered on the day.

Shuang Shuang organised all the walkers and lead the day like a pro. Ranger Fiona came along for the day and added some local information about bird migration between China and Tasmania that occurs every year.

It was a fantastic day and a nice way to end with simple conservation messages which allowed people from two different countries to be connected. At the closing circle here are some of the words that people used to describe the day. "Awesome" , "beautiful" , "very pretty" , "clean" , "lots of fun".

The Get Outside will extend its leadership program this Easter in partnership with Tas Tafe - we will keep you posted.



At the end of a great day.



by Jodie Epper



## Prams at Mount Field - Get Outside



*Raincoats, warm clothes and a gorgeous waterfall.*

### Prams at Mount Field Get Outside

Saturday the 8th March was cool and a bit rainy but it didn't stop 45 people turning up for a journey to the beautiful Mount Field National Park.

The waterfall at Russell Falls put on an awesome display on the day and the tall trees walk was worth all the steps.

"This is one of our biggest trips so far" said Jodie Epper, the Get Outside Co-ordinator. "We had people from Sudan, Japan, Nepal, Burma and Iran, and of course lunch was fantastic" she said.

"Volunteers assisted with playing frisbee, helping out at lunch time and generally being friendly on the walk and on the bus trip - we could not do this project with out them".

Thanks to Ranger John who came along on the day and provide interpretation.

Can't wait for the next trip - keep an eye on the Wildcare website for more information.



*New Tasmanians and Old Tasmanians Get Outside at Mount Field National Park.*

# A Bushcare Event



by Friends of Wellington Park

Although we have done quite a number of track work sessions with PWS this is probably the first time that our normal working bee has been used for that purpose. One of our biggest turnouts resulted, so track work was not an unpopular change.

Three PWS staff worked with us in clearing the 90 metres of new track to bypass a boggy section. In addition the old track still to be used was trimmed. A few short sections had some rock hardening and where it went over some rocky spots some work was done to make crossing easier.

Poles were installed to mark the track and also some in other locations where confusion could arise. Pointing markers will be added shortly.

A very satisfying day's work and the new track looks good.



# Protecting a rare community



by Friends of Wellington Park

Below the foothills of Wellington Park in the Tolosa area there is a community of *Epacris virgata*, a rare plant threatened by the invasive Spanish Heath (*Erica lusitanica*) scourge. The Wellington Park Bushcare Group has been removing the weed for 10 years.

Two areas were targeted on this latest event, which for one spot was our 9th follow-up, with the previous two visits in Feb and August 2014. It was most surprising the number of small plants discovered today, but it seems that there is a big seedbank there.

The other location was close to Humphrey Rivulet and the last time the site was looked at only a few small plants were noticed and gave the impression that we were well on top of it. However quite a large number of plants discovered to have grown but none had yet flowered.

At both sites most of the Spanish Heath was removed but a follow up will be required within 12 months to pounce on what inevitably were missed or that sprout in the meantime.



Ted, Greg G and Greg B pulling out small seedlings



Sabine and John clearing small Erica plants that have grown since last follow up.



## Office Extraordinaires



Nanette Jaksic our data entry manager.

Our office volunteers are a bunch of ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. We have recently doubled our numbers and have set up our office volunteering so that we can choose where we work, when we work and for how often we work - that in itself is pretty exciting.

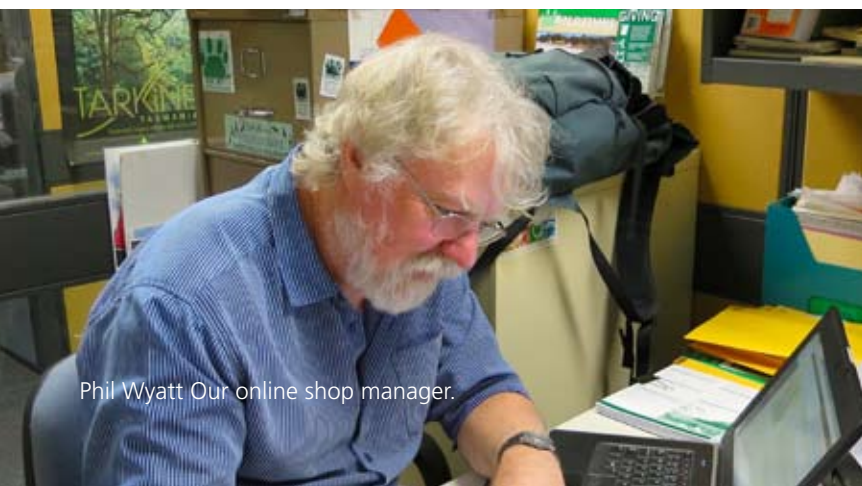
Wildcare launched its new look website earlier this year, and the Parks and Wildlife Service launched a new online parks pass system. The two systems have also been interlinked to streamline our membership process. Change can often cause problems whilst people get used to the new systems.

The office volunteers have been working hard to iron out some hiccups in our new e-environment for Wildcare members.

We have decided to do whatever it takes to leap with grace over these obstacles and get us back on track. Our Wildcare members are truly magnificent and anything we can do to enable them to easily volunteer is worth it!!

Amongst the many jobs our office volunteers do are data entry, website management, email responders, phone call responders, physical mail out stuffers, researchers and odd completing jobs.

It demonstrates the true volunteer spirit of Wildcare when we have people who clearly love and support Tasmania's parks and reserves, but choose to spend their time in a city office backing up the many field volunteers.



Phil Wyatt Our online shop manager.

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

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# Friends of Tasman Island



by Erica Shankley



*Friends of Tasman Island Shane Pinner plaque Tasman Island Lighthouse-April-2015*

Volunteers of the Wildcare group Friends of Tasman Island & Wildcare Board member, Shane Pinner, attended the unveiling of a plaque on Tasman Island recently.

In conjunction with a visit to the island by Rotary visitors, the plaque, dedicated to lighthouse keepers and their families was installed at the Tasman Island lighthouse.

There were over 80 visitors to the island that day, with tours of the lighthouse arranged in co-operation with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Great-great-granddaughter of first Superintendent of Tasman Island Lighthouse in 1906, Elaine Bell and lighthouse kid, Carol Jackson, daughter of lightkeeper Jack Jackson unveil the plaque. Both are members of FoTI Photo Erika Shankley



*Friends of Tasman Island Unveiling plaque at Tasman Island Lighthouse April 2015*





## Volunteer Caretakers on Cape Bruny

Cape Bruny Light station Volunteer Caretakers Tim and Caroline Bell from Queensland, said to Volunteer Coordinator Pip Gowen, when she called to check in, “it’s wall to wall cars here at the Cape. On average we have had 120 cars a day. People say to us they really enjoy how wild Cape Bruny feels and that they love taking a walk up the hill to the Light or having a picnic. Most people seem to stay about 1 hour”, Tim and Caroline said.

“We are glad that it goes quiet in the evening. That’s when we get to take a walk after our daily duties to enjoy the magnificent views.”

Pip Gowen said, “All Volunteer Caretaker sites operate between November and end of April to help meet and greet our PWS visitors over the summer months. The Volunteer Caretakers are passionate and assist us a great deal at a really busy time of the year for Rangers and Field officers. The efforts of our volunteers are very much appreciated.”

If you are interested in any of the care taking positions that are regularly available around the state then please check out the Wildcare Website.



# The 11th Wooden Boat Festival



by Bob Tyson & Erica Shankley



*Bob Tyson mans the shopfront at the wooden boat festival.*

Wildcare groups, the Friends of Deal, Maatsuyker and Tasman Islands, were on the Hobart waterfront for the three days of this spectacular gathering of all things nautical.

They had displays of the history of these remote islands as well as the work of their dedicated volunteers, preserving our maritime heritage.

Just imagine life on these islands set in the Roaring Forties - gale force winds and raging seas battering precipitous cliffs.

Nineteenth century light keepers and their families lived for long periods in isolation and showed incredible fortitude and resilience.

Modern-day occupational health and safety legislators would, no doubt, cringe at some of the conditions they endured.

Indeed, one newspaper correspondent wrote in 1891 that "the person who had suggested the construction of a light on the top [of Tasman Island was not altogether compos mentis..."

Supplies came irregularly. "We get things we do not require and those most required we do not get" wrote Superintendent William Baudinet in 1848 at the new Deal Island lighthouse in Bass Strait.

To supplement their stores they kept sheep and cattle and grew their own vegetables.

One keeper even made his own shoes using the hides of both native and domestic animals – including a dog identified as Rover!

There was a flurry of lighthouse building towards the end of the 19th century with Australia's most southerly lighthouse on Maatsuyker Island built in 1891.

Here, keepers of the historic light had to regularly clean the magnificent 1st Order Chance Brothers lens assembly, more than three metres high, made from 540 pieces of precisely cut glass.

The iconic lighthouse on Tasman Island is well known to sailors as the final turning point in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

At 276 metres above sea level it is the highest operational lighthouse in Australia. Erected in 1906, it was the last of the manned lights to be built before the Commonwealth took over administration from the States in 1915.

However, light keeping as a way of life is now a thing of the past. The historic lights on Deal and Maatsuyker Islands have been replaced by automatic fibreglass beacons while Tasman Island lighthouse now operates, automatically, in its original tower.

Entirely self-funded, Friends of Deal Island, Friends of Maatsuyker Island and Friends of Tasman Island need to continually raise funds to continue their work and have merchandise on sale through the Wildcare website, including the ever popular Lighthouses of Tasmania calendar, gift cards, beanies and cook books etc.

Lighthouses will always play a key role for mariners.

The islands, and their caretaker programmes, are administered by the Parks and Wildlife Service, but Tasmania's unique lighthouse heritage is now actively protected by Wildcare volunteers from the Friends of Tasman, Deal and Maatsuyker Islands through fundraising and working bees.

by Dave Harris



# Schouten Island Shenanigans



*Schouten Island - a treasure worth protecting.*

From the north and the south they travelled to this iconic, much visited National Park. But they did not come to gaze in awe at the granite mountains, nor the white sands, blue waters or eagles soaring effortlessly overhead. No, they came to work. Well, every now and again one or two could be seen straightening their backs and looking at the water or up to Bear Hill.

I suspect that knowing they were in paradise meant that they renewed their efforts to keep it beautiful.

How else could they have searched for, pulled or cut and pasted 11,879 gorse plants, stopped the march of the sea spurge by pulling out all 4 plants on the island, attacked blackberries around the historic sheep dip, sprayed 200 litres of herbicide on the periwinkle as well as moving the solarisation plot and hand digging out other pesky patches of periwinkle, and combing the beaches clearing up rubbish.

If that does not impress you, it should, after all there were only 8 of them and they did have to knock off sometime to go for a swim, or climb a mountain or check for insect bites.

They took their new solar powered kit down with them (thanks to Wildcare Inc.). I'm told that it works a treat seeing as how the sun always shines over there.

I suspect that there were tears shed as they left the island and traversed the calm blue waters of Schouten Passage. I understand that many of them want to come back (of course), so if you, dear reader, want to kick them off the next trip and do as well as they did, keep looking on the Wildcare website for details of the next trip. I met someone at the pub who knew a friend of one of them who overheard that there was going to be another trip in December.

They were; Ian and Joan Fitzallen, Sally Salier, Nigel Ricketts, David and Trauti Reynolds and Dave and Christine Harris.

P.S. I have just learnt that they walked up and down the Wineglass Bay Lookout track picking up rubbish whilst they waited for the boat to the island. Talk about committed.

From a roving correspondent



## Parks Shop

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- Range of pre-visit information relating to Tasmania's National Parks & Reserves
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to WILDCARE members**

## Friends of GIS

by Phil Wyatt

The last 3 months have seen some changes in the availability of data for those of us that like mapping and other geeky things.

In December, the Tasmanian government started releasing some spatial data via an "Open Data Portal" where its possible to download GIS vector data such as the road network, rivers, streams, lakes, contours and even property parcels.

All this data can be used with the QGIS software we are using. Just about every state is now starting to make data available which is great for volunteer organisations working with lean budgets.

The data is being released with Creative Commons licencing so be sure to attribute your maps appropriately.

There has also been a change to the supply of TASMMap digital raster maps. These can now be downloaded (but not for free!) from the TASMMap eshop.

Each 1:25,000 map can be purchased in a couple of formats that suits both QGIS and Garmin GPS's. If you have a recent Garmin GPS, such as a 62 model or Etrex then each map can be loaded as a background image.

There are some limitations but these can be very handy in some instances and at just \$2 a map sheet its not a huge investment.



Of course if you only need an overview map then you can download the whole of Australia as a raster map from Geoscience Australia but be warned, its a huge 3Gb download and that definitely wont fit on your Garmin in its current format.

Lastly, remember that Wildcare have the full set of digital maps for use with Wildcare mapping projects.

## Monitoring of the Orange-bellied Parrot breeding population at Melaleuca

by NRM South

On the brink of extinction, the Orange-bellied Parrot (OBP) has been ranked one of the world's rarest and most endangered species, with fewer than 200 individuals remaining.

This small green 'grass parrot' with its distinctive orange belly is endemic to Southern Australia and is one of just two species of migratory parrots. It breeds only in suitable habitat in the far southwest coast of Tasmania, where they nest in eucalypts bordering button grass moors.



First observed fledgling for the 2014 breeding season. Photo by Marina Campbell.

Volunteers from the Friends of the Orange-bellied Parrot Wildcare group make an annual journey to Melaleuca in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, to monitor known breeding populations.

Last year, NRM South's Naturally Inspired Grants supported 12 volunteers to visit Melaleuca from October-December 2014, making an invaluable contribution to the monitoring program during the critical breeding season. Volunteers took daily observations, maintained the supplementary feeding program, and provided information and advocacy to public visitors to the area.

At the start of the 2014/15 Orange-bellied Parrot breeding season, 35 adult birds from the previous season had returned to Melaleuca following their winter migration to Victoria and South Australia.

Four captive-bred adults that were released in 2013 returned to Melaleuca at the beginning of the season, encouraging signs that captive bred birds can integrate into a wild population.

A further 27 captive-bred, banded adults were released at Melaleuca in October 2014, and the Friends of the OBP volunteers undertook daily monitoring of these birds which revealed that 18 (67%) survived the season in the wild, which is a great result.

This was a particularly important period of the monitoring program as volunteers monitored released captive-bred birds along with other OBPs in the wild population.

The DPIPW Orange-bellied Parrot team recently announced preliminary results of breeding productivity at Melaleuca in the 2014-15 season. Based on chicks banded, a minimum of 28 fledglings were observed from at least 13 nests – very exciting news for the recovery of this critically endangered species which calls Tasmania home.



By Peter Franklin



# Friends of Mount Field



The Humboldt River. photo by Peter Franklin

A Friends of Mount Field project on the Lakes Belton and Belcher Track

A 400 metre section of track down to the Humboldt River remained to be done and we managed to complete the clearing back of vegetation along 320 metres, including segments on the buttongrass flat prior to the river crossing. Although there are a few protruding bushes along the remaining 80 metres they are not enough to worry about at this stage.

Our initial work on the track on this lower section was back in 2006 as the track above was still in reasonable condition at that time. In the intervening 9 years the vegetation had grown into the track but

did not impede access, but nevertheless was in need of clearing and also to bring it to match the work done above. These latter sections gradually grew over the track and by 2011 signs of needing work were evident.

In all we have worked on the 2140 metre section of track five times now. The upper sections were done in three sessions starting in Dec 2011 then Feb and March 2014.

The day was very pleasant with little wind and clear skies. The walk in entailed crossing a very wet Wombat Moor and took us what was a bit over 1:30 to get to the work site.



Gums near the saddle leaning with the prevailing winds but its calm today. - Photo by Peter Franklin.

## Protecting the Bush - Goat Hills Erica



by Peter Franklin

It had been over 10 years since the group first cleared Erica from this 4.6 hectares of bushland in Goat Hills.

Greg, one of our members, arranged for transport to the work site and that made the effort of getting there a lot easier as it usually takes 45 minutes to walk.

The bush was subjected to a management burn about a year after our initial foray.

The flora is now in a quite healthy state, but unfortunately Erica has also grown up and is dispersed over the site.

Partly because other nearby areas has taken up our time, we have not been back since 2008 to follow up until this month.

Originally a thickly infested spot of about half hectare, had been left hoping that contractors might spray it, but that hasn't eventuated yet.

Our work this time cleared a fair proportion of the regrowth and we were able to both push back the weed free line and also scout over a large part of the bushland to remove stray Erica.



Bush scene at work site in Goat Hills



Clearing away erica

## Collins Bonnet Track - Less Scrub Now



by Wellington Park Bushcare Group

Getting to Collins Bonnet from Myrtle Forest has been a scrubby affair for a number of years, but it has suddenly become a much clearer track.

Along with Parks staff, the Wellington Park Bushcare Group cut back the heavy overgrowth for quite a length of the track.

It was a pleasant temperature and a fine day. After walking to the junction of the Collins Cap and Collins Bonnet tracks we did some light pruning to the creek crossing 170 metres up the track where the more significant work began.

From there 420 metres was cut back. A further 540 metres remains to the old hut site.

We were surprised to find that someone had quite recently done quite a bit of work trimming the vegetation, but it was just long tip pruning so unfortunately, for those who did it, the effort put in was effectively wasted.



Clearing the track

# The Craig Saunders Annual Photo Competition

*Wildcare will again this year be sponsoring a photo competition open to all members.*

*The subject this year will be:*

**"Volunteers do it because they love it!"**

*The prize will be \$1,000 paid to a Wildcare Branch (nominated by the winning photographer) to assist with that group's work.*

Any member may submit a maximum of three digital photographs, to be emailed to the Wildtimes editor at [wildtimes@wildcaredtas.org.au](mailto:wildtimes@wildcaredtas.org.au) no later than Friday 1 August 2015.

Photographs should be in JPEG format with file size around 1-3 MB each.

Photographs must have been taken over the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and not previously published.

The winning entry will be published on the cover of Wildtimes Issue 53 due 1 September 2015.

Entrants must make all entries available to Wildcare for publication in future issues of Wildtimes or other publications as required by Wildcare Inc.

So get those digital cameras clicking or search through those photos already in the can from this summer's work in the field. I'm sure your group could use the prize!

Jodie Epper





Photo by Geoff Fenton.



Photo by Jodie Epper.



Photo by Gwen Egg.



**WILDCARE Inc**

Tasmania's largest incorporated volunteer organisation, caring for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage.

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