

# WILDTIMES

Issue 31  
December 2007



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## Newsletter of WILDCARE Inc

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

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## Open Day at Coningham a success.

There was an enthusiastic response to the Friends of Coningham Nature Recreation Area's (FOCNRA) Open Day on October 7 with about 80 people attending.

Southern Region volunteer facilitator, Craig Saunders said the event was a definite success.

'It went really well and was a nice balance between the efforts of Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) staff, the volunteers and achieving a good outcome,' Craig said.

The Open Day was funded by grant money from the Australian Government Envirofund and the Australia Post Community Development Grant.

FOCNRA secretary Jean Taylor explained that the main aim of the day was to get the many neighbours living in the Coningham Area into the reserve to experience its natural values and see first-hand the recreation opportunities it provides.

As part of the day, the group was able to showcase its work in the reserve which has mainly focussed on control of environmental weeds, particularly Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*).

PWS staff also had special roles to play on the day. University of Tasmania masters student Geoffrey States, currently working part-time for the Southern Region office, presented his own plans for a Management Statement for Coningham NRA.

He also provided a Background Paper on reserve issues and an opportunity for visitors to complete an issues feedback form.



Familiar faces at the Coningham NRA Open Day – Penny Tyson (left) chats with retired PWS staff member Hans Wapstra and wife Annie.

Behind the scenes Southern Regional volunteer facilitator Craig Saunders cooked the sausages and retired PWS staff member Bob Tyson, now a full-time PWS volunteer, drove a shuttle bus.

Poster displays about the values, issues and opportunities of the reserve were produced by ranger Paul Dimmick with reference to the new style guide, presenting a professional image for the PWS.

Coningham Nature Recreation Area is about 500 hectares of coastal grassland and forest overlooking North West Bay and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel about 25 km south of Hobart.

The reserve is home to many species of threatened plants, especially many orchid species, and animals and provides a range of recreation opportunities.

## **WILDCARE Inc.'s Threatened Plant Action Group: Raising the Profile of Tasmania's Threatened Plants**

The newly formed Threatened Plant Action Group (TPAG) hosted its first events throughout September, celebrating National Threatened Species Day with talks and a display, and following it up with working bees in two nationally listed threatened ecological communities.

The first, held at Apsley River on Tasmania's east coast focused efforts on removing gorse from a stand of *Eucalyptus ovata* – *Callistris oblonga* forest.

As well as working hard, volunteers enjoyed beautiful weather for the day, and encountered numerous species coming into flower.

The following weekend saw TPAG volunteers removing gorse, briar rose and blackberry from a Themeda Grassland site, home to ten state listed threatened species, including *Cryptandra amara* and *Hibbertia basaltica* (see photographs).

TPAG has been established to encourage and facilitate state wide community involvement in threatened flora protection and recovery. Over 70% of species listed as threatened in Tasmania are actually plants.



Photo by Peter McGlone

Tasmania's threatened flora includes a diverse array of beautiful, rare and unique species, from grasses, ferns and orchids, through to large trees such as the Miene Cider Gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii* subsp. *divaricata*).

Many of our threatened plants are endemic to Tasmania, meaning they are not found anywhere else in the world.

For more information on Tasmania's threatened flora please visit: <http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/threatenedspecieslists>

Many things can cause a species to become threatened including land clearance, habitat degradation, grazing by both native and introduced animals, weed invasion, loss of pollinators, altered hydrology, Phytophthora, drought stress, and altered fire regimes.

Once threatened, species require appropriate management to ensure they can survive in the wild and do not go the way of the Thylacine.

With over 400 state listed threatened plant species in Tasmania and only a few paid staff to look after them, volunteer contributions are vital to the successful



Photo by Richard Schaeringer

implementation of threatened flora recovery actions.

TPAG volunteers will work closely with Threatened Species Section (DPIW) staff on current flora recovery programs, ensuring their efforts will be relevant, timely and worthwhile.

Volunteers may get involved in a wide array of threatened flora related activities including: surveying and monitoring of threatened populations, especially orchid populations; weed eradication at key sites; fencing populations to protect them from over grazing; research into threatened species ecology, seed germination, pollination and response to fire; conservation plantings; raising seedlings; organising awareness raising events; website development; community education activities; writing and updating threatened flora listing statements, data entry and so on!

As a WILDCARE Inc. member you can join the TPAG via the WILDCARE Inc. website.

By joining the TPAG you can contribute to the conservation of Tasmania's precious and unique threatened flora.

You might just help bring a species 'back from the brink'!

For more information please contact TPAG coordinator, Catriona Scott on 6233 6692 or [catriona.scott@dpiw.tas.gov.au](mailto:catriona.scott@dpiw.tas.gov.au)



Photo by Richard Schaeringer





## WILDCARE Conference postponed to 4-6 April 2008

### Volunteering ON THE EDGE

The *WILDCARE* National Conference has been moved to April 2008, so you still have an opportunity to come along and be part of the celebrations, and hear about, talk about and go and see some amazing examples of Volunteering on the Edge.

*WILDCARE* Inc was launched in 1997, and then incorporated in 1998 so the 10th Anniversary celebrations extend into next year.

Volunteers challenge boundaries and barriers constantly, providing assistance and support to an ever widening range of conservation and land management projects in incredibly varied roles.

The conference program highlights volunteer programs and projects that will inspire and broaden your understanding of possibilities, shatter false limitations and clearly demonstrate the extraordinary ability and capacity of volunteers to make a difference.

The Case Study presentations provide exciting models of how volunteers are creating real outcomes in the areas of reserve management, wildlife conservation and cultural heritage conservation. They also provide guidance and inspiration about volunteer management and support processes and how to build effective and resilient partnerships between volunteers and management authorities.

We have some great registrations for the Conference, including from all States and overseas, employed staff from both community and government organisations, and of course volunteers.

We would really like to see you on the delegates list for Volunteering on the Edge – the 2008 National Volunteering Conference, hosted by *WILDCARE* Inc.

So, here's a Special Offer for 25 *WILDCARE* Inc members.

You will need to quote your membership numbers on the registration form to verify your eligibility for the above discounts. You can find these by going to [www.wildcaretas.org.au](http://www.wildcaretas.org.au), logging in as a member and going to your personal record.

If you have not visited the Members Only area before, your username will be either your email address or your surname (with a capital first letter) and your password will be your most recent membership number.

If you have trouble with this, contact phone 6233 2852 and leave your details or [office@wildcaretas.org.au](mailto:office@wildcaretas.org.au), before registering for the conference. The office volunteers will respond to you when they are next in the office (usually Tuesday and Thursday).

There are some great speakers and presentations already on the timetable for day one, and we are continuing to accept case study abstracts for inclusion in the program.

Day two is your chance to have your say, share ideas and concerns, and together with other volunteers, volunteer program managers, specialists and reserve managers build some new and strong ways of tackling this business of volunteering for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage. More information about the program and speakers can be found on [www.wildcaretas.org.au](http://www.wildcaretas.org.au) click on the links from the Latest News box on the front page.

Even if you are not able to get to the conference you are invited to come along to the Wild Party celebration barbeque. There is a \$30 per head charge for food and drink and great socializing. It would be great to spend some time with you celebrating what *WILDCARE* Inc has achieved over the years as a consequence of the efforts of its members.

Complete the form below, and return to *WILDCARE* Inc GPO 1751 Hobart 7001, to register as a *WILDCARE* delegate. This Special Offer applies only to the first 25 *WILDCARE* members to register. So be quick!

Discount Conditions (Membership numbers required on the registration form)	Rate per day (Days 1 and 2)
2008 member	\$155
2008 member with 2 - 4 years membership in total	\$140
2008 member with 5 - 9 years membership in total	\$105
2008 member with 10 years membership in total	\$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Quote membership numbers (or years if numbers unknown) in the table below

\$155 per day	1)	_____	_____	_____	_____
\$140 per day	2)	_____	3)	_____	4)
\$105 per day	5)	_____	6)	_____	7)
\$50 per day	8)	_____	9)	_____	10)

Office use only – Memberships confirmed by \_\_\_\_\_

Which day(s) would you like to register for?

Day one – Plenary Speakers, Case Study Presentations  Day two – Open Space discussion group

Total payment amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque/money order attached  Payment by Credit Card (details below)

VISA  Mastercard  American Express Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

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# Wellington Park Bushcare Group

Michael Bowden, Wellington Park CAREs Group

Gorse Removal Inglewood Fire Trail, 6 March 2007

Several large and thick patches of Gorse were removed by cut and paste. Two of these patches were deep within the bushland, some 50 metres in from the fire break. They looked quite daunting at first sight, but it is quite amazing how much a group of people can achieve and there were several murmurs of satisfaction after the work was completed. Originally it was planned to continue on the McRobies site for this working bee, but it is anticipated that most of the Broom there will be cleared by contractors. The work done by Tasflora as part of our Envirofund Fund No 2 was inspected; this is a substantial area of clearing of approximately 60x40 metres.

Elishas Tears removal Myrtle Forest, 3 April 2007

Work continued on infestations of Elishas Tears near the Myrtle Forest picnic hut. Additional bushes on both the northern and eastern slopes were removed and work started on an area beside the old Myrtle Forest. Generally the bushes appeared reasonably old in this latter site.

Gorse and other weed eradication Lenah Valley Sites, 1 May 2007

Work was done at two sites at the Lenah valley entrance to the park. A small creek was cleared of Hemlock, Teasel, Euphorbia and Fuchsia regrowth. One Vinca plant was also found and removed. The other area worked on was the northern end of the 2006 Envirofund site where Gorse was removed. The Gorse had remained there because there were insufficient funds from the project to clear it all. Morning tea was provided by the Hobart City Council.

Erica check New Town Rivulet, 29 May 2007

The weather forecast led to an initial postponement but the rain stopped and two of us went ahead with the work. Numerous Broom seedlings and small bushes were removed from near the start of the park entrance, and then New Town Rivulet was followed upstream for approximately 600 metres. One patch of Erica was found and removed. We also discovered a rough hut probably made by kids and a wooden gazebo tucked away in the trees at the edge of the creek on a private section of land.

Weed removal Goat Hills, 5 June 2007

We met Christine Corbett from Greening Australia for an explanation and inspection of the trials being undertaken on Erica removal methods. We also assisted in scoring the success of some of the plots.

The remainder of the time was used in removing Erica seedlings from one of the Goat Hills (Chapel Site - fire compartment 4). Since our last visit to the site in Dec 2006 there seem to be many seedlings, which would have been very small at that time, that are now quite noticeable and have survived the dry seasons. The profusion since the prescribed burn in 2003/04 may be best addressed by spot spraying.

Check on status of weeds at Glen Dhu site, 10 June 2007

The sites where Gorse and Erica were originally tackled in 2002 were checked. Both Gorse sites had no seedlings at all; however, the Erica sites tackled first in 2003 had some seedlings as expected. At the lower site quite a number of seedlings were present and many of them looked to have been browsed. Two additional small Erica sites were located. The Erica plants pulled out easily and most were removed, although it was clear that some of the minute seedlings would have been overlooked. This was the third follow up for the sites

Elishas Tears removal Gumtop Ridge, 19 June 2007

Walked along Ringwood Trail on Gumtop Ridge and removed the Elishas Tears growing in a small wet area below Mt Marian. Quite heavy snow had fallen overnight so conditions were not ideal for the job, but it was beautiful and fascinating to be there. Although only one plant was thought to remain at the site, we found several and had to clear snow away in order to get at the multi-trunk bushes.

Gorse removal Inglewood Site, 3 July 2007

A large area of old Gorse was removed that was growing well into the bush near the Inglewood Trail. This was a continuation from where we had left off previously and was also close to an area that was part of a Greencorps project. Much Gorse remains at this site, including patches further into the bush.

Gorse eradication Lenah Valley site, 7 August 2007

Gorse was removed from the northern end of the 2006 Envirofund site. We did not quite complete this section. Still to be tackled is a bigger area of gorse at the southern end of the Envirofund site, most of which is on the old four-wheel-drive track or below. There are also a few gorse bushes scattered about uphill from the track.

Broom eradication Upper McRobies site, 4 September 2007

Cleared a few overlooked and seedling Erica and Gorse, plus a NSW Pittosporum. Most of the work was concentrated on clearing Broom that had been left from previous work, including that of a contractor. Three pockets of Broom were removed and another was nearly completed. At the area of heavy infestation that had been treated by the contractor, it was noticed that a very large number of seedlings had sprouted and will need some form of follow up treatment, possibly spraying.

Erica survey Goat Hills and Mt Hull area, 25 September 2007

Various sites in the Goat Hills and along the fire trail to the dam just south of Mt Hull were checked. Where Erica was not too dense it was pulled out and other locations marked for follow up. Several spots in the Burn Area 4 were surveyed with one being marked as best for spraying. Two locations in the adjacent Montrose FT area near the junction with the Zig Zag FT (W6) were also marked for spraying, whilst less dense spots were marked for a future working bee. All Erica found along the East West FT were removed, apart from a thick patch at the dam site (12345456). The old farm site off the Montrose FT showed seedling growth after the earlier spraying, but part of it looked like it had been recently follow-up sprayed.

Elishas Tears eradication Myrtle Forest, 2 October 2007

The Elishas Tears furthest into the park near the old Myrtle fire trail were removed, although some still exist closer to the boundary. Those remaining from the last working bee beside the old road into the park were also cleared. The property owners on the northern edge (Gary Parker & Denise Gardner) joined in the work and cleared on their land.

# Penguins at Lillico

Peter Britton, Friends of Lillico Penguins

Another summer and members of Friends of Lillico Penguins CAREs group are again providing education for visitors and care for Little Penguins at the Bass Highway viewing platform west of Devonport.

This is a great voluntary activity, with assistance from Discovery Rangers during the busy December-February period. We are pleased to welcome John and Shirley Tongue as newcomers this season, although our membership is still very low and barely sufficient for daily coverage.

If you like the idea of showing people something special that they might not otherwise see, or you like the idea of meeting people from interstate and all over the world, with Little Penguins and Short-tailed Shearwaters as support players, please consider this September-April commitment of one evening a week or one evening a fortnight.

We were pleased to be finalists in the recent Australian Government Community Coastcare Award, and it is noteworthy that we have been selected by PWS as their third 'Great Wildlife Site', with major improvements to the entrance and infrastructure at Lillico planned for winter 2008.

Three members were sponsored by Cradle Coast NRM to attend the Little Penguin workshop at the 6th International Penguin Conference in Hobart on 5 September, which was very interesting and provided an opportunity to broaden our horizons on shared concerns and issues.

With an estimated 1600 breeding pairs, our January 2005 census revealed a pleasing 29% population increase since 1996, which was unexpected in a Conservation Area bounded by the Bass Highway and sandwiched between Ulverstone and Devonport.

We of course hope that this positive trend has continued, and the Penguin Monitoring Group has a comprehensive census planned for Saturday 12 January 2008.

More counters are needed for the more than 1.5 km of beach involved, and we would welcome any offer of assistance for this 9pm to midnight count, please contact 03 6425 2785 or hazpet@keypoint.com.au.




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## Wildcare Inc. Strikes Envirofund Gold!!

On Tuesday 2 October 2007 and Saturday 13 October 2007 respectively the Australian Government announced successful applicants under Round 9 and Round 10 of the popular Envirofund program.

WILDCARE Inc., Tasmania's largest incorporated environmental volunteer organisation, and partner with the Parks and Wildlife Service in many of our volunteer programs and community partnerships, was fortunate in having no less than four individual projects funded, receiving a total of \$105,766.

WILDCARE Inc. treasurer (and PWS Southern Region Volunteer Facilitator) Craig Saunders was overjoyed at the news.

"The extra resources available are much more than the cash provided by the Australian Government", Craig explained. "Each project offers at least a matching contribution from the respective volunteer groups, generally as the in-kind value of volunteer labour, suggesting that the total worth of these projects is around \$250,000."

Interestingly, each of the projects involves the control of environmental weeds, proving how serious this threat to our reserved lands is taken by both the local community and the Australian Government.

The group Spurge Remote Area Teams (SPRATS) received \$49,800 to establish a community partnership to implement the South West Coast component of the Tasmanian Beach Weed Strategy.

The project will control Sea Spurge and Marram Grass in remote areas of the coast from Cape Sorell to Port Davey. The specific purpose of the project is the protection of the World Heritage Area coastal values including undisturbed temperate

dune systems, undisturbed naturally functioning catchments, unique coastal marsupial lawns, aboriginal heritage sites and the habitat of endangered birds.

Friends of Maatsuyker Island received \$24,566 to prevent the loss of burrowing seabird habitat by control of the highly invasive shrubby weed *Hebe elliptica* on Maatsuyker Island.

Friends of Tasman Island received \$17,400 to prepare and implement a weed management plan for Tasman Island to protect its biodiversity and to ensure that the continuing natural regeneration of native vegetation maintains the highest possible ecological integrity.

Friends of Maria Island received \$14,000 to rehabilitate priority vegetation communities and threatened species habitat over 150 hectares of the 11,000 hectare Maria Island National Park.

Activities to be undertaken include 100 metre grid-square presence/absence mapping of the infestation by volunteers and rehabilitating up

to 150 hectares of predominantly forest vegetation by controlling invasive weeds.

The Australian Government Envirofund is a funding program that helps local communities undertake important on-ground environmental activities.

It is available to incorporated community groups (but not state government agencies). More information on the program is available at <http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund>.

*(Note: While WILDCARE Inc. was not the applicant, Envirofund has also funded projects initiated by the Wellington Park Bushcare Group, Fortescue Bay Coastcare Group, Port Esperence Coastcare Group, Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania, North West Coastcare Association, Mortimer Bay Coastcare Group and Southern Beaches Landcare and Coastcare Group. Each of these projects will bring added resources to community partnerships involving the Parks and Wildlife Service to some extent.)*

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## News from Parks and Wildlife Service

### Hastings Caves celebrates 90th anniversary

One of southern Tasmania's top natural visitor destinations is celebrated its 90th anniversary in November.

Timber workers in the Hartz Valley discovered Hastings Caves and its thermal springs when they were working in the valleys of the Hartz Mountains in 1917.

Hastings Caves and the Thermal Springs were opened to the public in 1939.

It was declared a State Reserve in 1919 and is now managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Newdegate Caves is one of only two dolomite caves in Australia open for public viewing and one of the oldest show caves in the Southern Hemisphere. The formation of the caves started tens of millions of years ago.

Newdegate Cave, like most of Tasmania's caves, is home to a number of strange and fascinating animals. Over 40 species have been discovered within the cave, many of which occur nowhere else.

Hastings is also one of southern Tasmania's biggest visitor drawcards, with approximately 30,000 visitors per year and has provided guided tours from 1939 to the present.

It was declared a state reserve in 1919.

The thermal springs, which are naturally heated to 28 degrees celsius, are beside the visitor centre and have long been an attraction in their own right, providing swimming facilities for local residents, interstate and international visitors.

In 2000 a new visitor centre was built opposite the historic chalet to provide centralised ticketing for the whole site, as well as a gift shop and the café.

### Rangers and track workers hit the track for summer

The summer season is in full swing on the Overland Track, with seasonal track workers and rangers in the park talking with bushwalkers, checking passes and maintaining huts, toilets and the track.

Bookings for the peak summer season are flowing in, with most days heavily booked from December 9.

The holiday season is fully booked out from December 22 to January 21, repeating the pattern of bookings from previous seasons.

A full complement of track rangers will be on deck, with experienced rangers Cameron Brooks, Paul Challen, Darren Emmett and Ann Gray passing on their considerable knowledge to new recruits Nick Tyson and Jenny Calder.

Nick Tyson is no stranger to the Overland Track, having been a guide with Cradle Huts for a number of seasons.

Lake St Clair ranger Trevor Norris said that Cameron, Nick and Ann will cover the northern section of the track, while Paul, Darren and Jenny will patrol the southern section.

"The track rangers are responsible for maintaining the huts and toilets and are the public face of the Parks and Wildlife Service on the Overland Track," Trevor said.

"They have a valuable role in answering questions from walkers and also checking Overland Track passes."

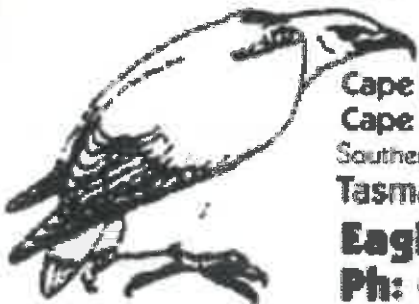
The track rangers complement the walker assistance and advice service provided by WILDCARE volunteers at Waterfall Valley through the Overland Track Hut Wardens Program, which also runs over the summer period.

Track workers including Klaus Leitges, Cody Breward, and Simon Wyatt started in mid-October and will soon be joined by David Mason.

They have been working north and south of Kia Ora maintaining drainage and replacing culverts and old timber bridges.

Their work will later shift further north to Windermere and Waterfall Valley where they will concentrate on replacing old timber planks with parallel planking.

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## Past and present Parks staff celebrate 25 years of the TWWHA

Parks staff past and present joined a range of other stakeholders at Strahan on Saturday night to celebrate 25 years of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

More than 100 parks staff, scientists, business operators, foresters, conservationists, committee and community members as well as Aboriginal community representatives joined host and National Parks and Wildlife Director Scott Gadd on a warm and tranquil West Coast evening for the event.

"I'd like you to make the most of this opportunity to connect with each other and share what you have in common in terms of the TWWHA and even what you may not have in common," said Scott.

Aboriginal elder Aunty Pat Green performed an emotional welcome to country before TALSC manager Hank Horton spoke of the spiritual significance of the TWWHA.

Minister Paula Wriedt noted the success of staff from Parks and other agencies in managing the area over 25 years as well as the important role it plays for communities such as Strahan.

She said the 25 years celebrations provided an opportunity for all Tasmanians to connect with the World Heritage Area.

"Governments can only carry out the wishes of the Tasmanian community – so to some degree the future of the World Heritage Area is in your hands as much as mine," Ms Wriedt said.

The Minister paid special tribute to the work of West Coast staff – many of whom had just finished fighting bushfires outside Strahan.

## Water world on show for Maria visitors

Visitors to Maria Island National Park will soon be able to view the rich marine life of the Maria Island Marine Reserve as part of a project to improve wildlife viewing opportunities around Tasmania.

PWS education officer Ingrid Albion said that when complete, island visitors can view a multi-media presentation about the marine reserve habitat at the historic Commissariat Store, which is often the first port of call on a visit to Maria.

Filming for the project and preparation of the multi-media presentation is a joint project with Lexi Clark, multimedia designer with the Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment.

Poor weather hampered filming attempts in October, however the underwater filming began last week, with maritime heritage officer Mike Nash assisting diver Mick Barron from Eaglehawk Neck, with more scheduled for the coming weeks.

"The presentation will include footage of six dives around Tasmania, with most of the dives in the waters surrounding Maria, information about what's special about Maria Island, a look at Tasmania's other marine reserves such as the Kent island group, Nine Pin Point and Port Davey. We're also hoping to present live footage from under the Maria jetty," Ingrid said.

"We're really excited about the project because it will add a totally new dimension to the Maria experience while also raising awareness about the richness and value of marine reserves.

"Tasmania's marine environment is recognised as one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world due to its location, climate and influences of ocean currents.

"The Tasmanian marine environment has fewer cosmopolitan species than the tropical north. For example,

about 80-90 per cent of Tasmanian marine species are found only in Tasmania, in contrast to the tropical north where only about 10 per cent of species are endemic or found only in that location."

The project also involves the installation of power to the Commissariat Store on Maria, which will be a major advance for the island.

Senior ranger Richard Koch said that having power and a phone line to the historic Commissariat Store will also help to improve the visitor experience.

"Instead of a bright and welcoming introduction to the island, the lack of power means that visitors enter what is quite a dim building. With power and a phone line, we can have offer booking facilities for the island's accommodation, have a cash register and EFTPOS facilities" Richard said.



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# Full speed ahead on Macquarie Island pest eradication



Planning for a seven year program to eradicate rabbits and rodents from the World Heritage listed Macquarie Island has started following the appointment of a project manager, Keith Springer, in August.

Keith, who has been working with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service on the Macquarie Island project as a pest project officer, said the project is proceeding on a number of fronts.

"Following the announcement

that the Tasmanian and Australian Government would jointly fund the \$24.6 million project, we've been flat out with project planning and recruiting the additional staff required for the project," Keith said.

Macquarie Island, located 1500 kilometres south-east of Tasmania, is one of the most valuable reserves in Australia and the world.

Many types of feral animals were introduced to the island in the 19th

century and while certain species have been eradicated, including weka (a New Zealand bird) and cats, rabbits and rodents remain and are having major impacts on the island.

The 'Plan for the Eradication of Rabbits and Rodents on Sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island' will involve helicopters dropping pellet baits targeting rabbits, rats and mice. Field teams will then follow up on the ground to eliminate individual rabbits that have survived the bait drop.

"The seven-year project will be the largest island eradication for any of these species ever attempted in the world, and at this stage, we're striving for a bait drop in 2009," Keith said.

Preliminary work is under way, both on the island and in planning for the project.

On the island, construction of a rabbit-proof fence to isolate North Head has been completed. This area has not been as severely impacted by rabbit grazing as other areas of the island and with the fence complete; rabbits can be removed with little threat of reintroduction.

Construction is moving forward on about 16 enclosure plots around the island in a bid to protect specific locations of plant species that are under severe grazing pressure. Most of the plots are five by five metres and will complement other existing scientific enclosure plots on the island.

Other actions include over-flight trials of helicopters and test baiting around penguin colonies to determine the response of the penguins to these activities.

Discussions have also been held with skilled dog trainers. Dogs will have a crucial role in the success of the project, following up the major baiting phase with on-ground hunting of surviving rabbits. The dogs will assist hunters and must be trained to focus on rabbits while avoiding non-target species, in particular native animals.

More information about the eradication program can be found on the Parks and Wildlife Service website at [www.parks.tas.gov.au](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au).



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# Keeping wild places wild and healthy

Andrew Smith

*WILDCARE* Inc volunteers and many other community groups are now operating almost everywhere in Tasmania, often working hard to correct past mistakes like weeds and feral pests.

This work is extremely important if we are to maintain the integrity of Tasmania's biodiversity.

How much easier it would be though if we could make sure that introduction of pests and weeds, and even environmental pathogens like *Phytophthora*, didn't occur in the first place.

Just consider the \$24.6 million that has been allocated to the eradication of rabbits, rats and mice from Macquarie Island.

This is of course why we have a bio-security or quarantine program in Tasmania.

Our Island status makes us quite different to other States – the Bass Strait provides us with a natural barrier for unassisted transfer, but now-days

it is such a busy route on sea and air that it is also a potential pathway into our island.

Hence we have quarantine checks at points of entry to the State.

Within Tasmania we have islands of natural areas that also are vulnerable to unwelcome introductions.

The big feral animals like cats and dogs, goats and pigs are obvious, as are the sweeping vistas of weeds like gorse, boxthorn and sea spurge.

It takes a more practiced eye to spot the impoverished vegetation communities that are the result of the movement of *Phytophthora* through a landscape killing vulnerable heathland species like grasstrees.

As we volunteer in areas, to what extent are we potentially adding to the bio-security risk?

Our boots are just as likely as any bushwalker's to carry pathogens into unaffected areas.

Mice are just as capable of hiding in our gear and equipment before we head off to one of the many islands

that we operate on.

Dirty equipment like secateurs and loppers can spread plant diseases in the wild just as easily as they do in nurseries.

Movement of untreated soils and other organic matter can transfer pathogens.

Weed seeds can travel unnoticed on boots, clothing and equipment.

We need to be alert to the possibilities and minimize the risks where we can.

At the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) Conference recently the General Manager Peter Mooney identified the management of feral animals, weeds and other bio-security issues as an important and increased focus of operations for the PWS from now on.

As volunteers we need to cooperate closely with PWS staff to build good practice into how we operate; it will become increasingly obvious as a way of operating for staff, commercial operators and visitors to natural areas managed by the PWS.

## 24 HOUR FOX SIGHTING HOTLINE

**1300 FOXOUT**

**1300 369688**

**More information**  
**[www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/fox](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/fox)**

## Call for Deal Island Photos

Following on from the Friends of Tasman Island's successful Tasman Island Calendar 2007, and the just released Maatsuyker Island Calendar 2008 (a collaboration between FOTI and Friends of Maatsuyker Island) it's time to start the process for 2009.

FOTI have joined forces with Friends of Deal Island to produce the Deal Island Calendar 2009.

If you have some good photos – prints/negatives, slides, or digital images of at least 6 mega-pixels, showing some aspect of the heritage and scenery of Deal, particularly featuring the lighthouse, and would like to have them considered for inclusion in the calendar, please post them suitably packaged with your details and details of the picture, (digitals on disc please), to Alison Moore, 298 Patersonia Road, Nunamara 7259, by no later than 12 December 2007. Alison can be contacted on 6399 3420.

A selection panel will choose the photos suitable for inclusion in the calendar, and all photos will then be returned by February 2008.

The calendar will be available by mail order by October 2008.

# FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

Erika Johnson

The cost of getting on and off Tasman Island by helicopter is a big expense for a small group like the Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI).

The 2007 Tasman Island Calendar played a big part in this year's fund-raising thanks to the sponsorship of the Cascade Brewery and Pure Tasmania.

The calendar was a sell-out success! This enabled us to have two, week-long, working bees during the year.

Working in partnership with the Rotary Club of the Tasman Peninsula the first working bee held late in March culminated in an Open Day celebrating the Centenary of the Tasman Island Light. The Club had had to postpone this event from the previous year because of bad weather.

During the year we were successful in getting a Volunteer Small Equipment Grant through the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs so we can buy brush cutters and safety equipment for use on the island.



Oil store re-roofed. Tasman Island Light & Quarters 3 behind.



FoTI in action above the Haulage

Additional sponsorship from Australian Geographic, subsidising transport to the island, gave us the opportunity to have a second working bee in September.

Weather-proofing the light station buildings has been a priority. Following on the work done during the March working bee, some of the group had done working at heights training.

This enabled the re-roofing of the oil store to be completed during the September working bee. The old roofing iron was immediately re-used to cover gaps in the back walls of




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The garden at Quarters 1 had a bit clean-up, including the removal of Hebe Quarters 1 and Quarters 2.

Quarters 3 was further weather-proofed with the addition of a door at the entrance to the front verandah and reglazing the broken windows on the back verandah.

Together with the painting done at an earlier working bee, Quarters 3 now looks in good shape.

It is this house which is used for accommodation when we are on the island.

Further work on Quarters 1, the childhood home of FoTI President, Carol Jackson and her sister Dee Webb, is slowly returning this magnificent house to its former glory.

On this occasion the header tank was recommissioned so that fresh water will soon be on tap and huge invasive Hebe bushes were removed from the front and back garden.

The Tasmanian Herbarium's collection of plants from Tasman Island numbers only 20.

Penny Tyson took the opportunity while on the island to add to that number. She returned with about 180 specimens representing some 150 species.

One of these seemed to be a kind of greenhood orchid but with unusual leaves.

Tasmanian orchid experts, Hans and Annie Wapstra, are very excited as it may be a new species.

However, this can't be confirmed yet. Flowers are needed to confirm the diagnosis and second-guessing when flowering will occur is very difficult!

In the meantime, work has been on-going, in collaboration with the Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FoMI), on the second in a series of calendars on lighthouses of Tasmania, this year featuring Maatsuyker Island.

Once again, Cascade Brewery and Pure Tasmania have kindly agreed to be sponsors.



Photo by FoTI member Erika Johnson:

Thanks also to publishers Tasmania 40 South for their continued support in getting the calendars into shape ready for printing.

Funds raised will be shared between the two groups.

A promotional talk by FoTI member, Fabian Dixon, on Chris Wisby's programme on the ABC has produced a flood of orders.

We have also just received a Envirofund Grant for work on weed management so things are looking good for next year's funding of work on the island.


Thanks must also go to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) who opened up the lighthouse for the open day on March 24 and to Luke Gadd & Phil Wicks from the Seven Mile Beach office of Parks & Wildlife for their continuing help and support.

Without everyone's help, Tasman Island would be much the poorer.

Photographer FoTI member Chris Creese.


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## Taking Care of Tasmania's Threatened Orchids



*Petalochilus tonellii*. Photo Matt Larcombe

Of Tasmania's 195 native orchids, 68 species are listed as threatened at the state level, with 32 listed on the Commonwealth EPBC act.

Almost half of all state listed species are endemic to Tasmania, meaning they are found nowhere else in the world.

Many species are known from only a few sites, or are known from only very small populations, making them highly susceptible to localised environmental fluctuations, altered fire regimes, and soil disturbance.

Our knowledge of threatened orchid populations is

limited, due to a lack of formal monitoring of orchid populations to date.

Until recently observations and records of orchid populations and species distributions have largely been provided by orchid enthusiasts.

Earlier this year a Threatened Orchid Project Officer was appointed to provide baseline data surveys on Tasmania's threatened orchids.

We are looking for a few very interested volunteers to assist Threatened Orchid Project Officer, Matt Larcombe, with field surveying and monitoring of threatened orchid populations throughout the state, over the summer field season.

Matt can only take one or two volunteers out at a time, and preferably volunteers with a strong interest in orchids, and a keen eye!

Volunteers will be assisting with threatened orchid surveying and monitoring of known threatened orchid populations.

Contact Threatened Plant Action Group Coordinator, Catriona on 6233 6692 or [catriona.scott@dpiw.tas.gov.au](mailto:catriona.scott@dpiw.tas.gov.au) if you are interested, or to find out more.

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## Clarification on WILDCARE Nature Writers Award article last edition.

The runner up essay was written as an adolescent by Ann Butler in the 1940's and submitted posthumously by her daughter Karen Barry.

Ann (later known as Ann Jennings) passed away in 2002 leaving diaries which span the years 1940-1950.

Her daughter is currently compiling her writings for publication with assistance from Arts Tasmania under the title "Inside the Ottoman"





# Volunteers needed to assist in the "The Great Poo Hunt", March-June 2008

Next year the Fox Eradication Branch Strategic Monitoring Project Officer will be running the first of 3 statewide "Great Poo Hunts", in north-east Tasmania. The aim is to scour the landscape in at least 300 randomly selected areas, within the northeast, looking primarily for Fox scats but also collecting any other carnivore scats that are detected.

Volunteers will be paired up with a staff member/experienced person and taken to one of these sites where the two will undertake a sweep of the particular landscape and its unique features with the aim of trying to find Fox scats.

There are two different sets of opportunities available at this stage:

1- day trips for local volunteers from major centres, such as L'ton, St Helens, Scottsdale & Bicheno;

2 - volunteers can travel to these centres for elsewhere in Tasmania to participate in the day trips. In these instances volunteers will be provided with accomodation and all meals.

Transport to and from the sites, lunch, snacks and water will be provided daily. All that volunteers will need to provide is their own walking gear and maybe a coat if the weather looks bad, or a hat if it is sunny.

Training in the use of GPS can be provided, as there use is a necessity. A pre-start induction kit will be provided to all volunteers who register to participate and a daily on site up-date induction will be given.

## HOW TO REGISTER:

Information will go out to all Tasmains who want to register to be part of this scientific research in early February 2008. It will be sent out via volunteer providers (such as WILDCARE Inc.), the DPIW web site, Volunteering Tasmania and local newspapers

## IF A FOX IS SIGHTED

- Take notes on what you observed, such as colour of coat, tail, muzzle and leg bottoms, gait, direction animal was moving and distance you were from animal.
- Record details to identify exact location of your sighting eg road and nearest intersection, distance from landmarks or features.
- Immediately call 1300 369 688 and report your sighting (any time of the day or night).

## IF A ROAD-KILLED FOX IS FOUND

- If driving, pull off the road and turn on your hazard lights. Ensure that you and any other passengers are watchful for traffic.
- Do not touch animal unless you need to move it off the road. Immediately call 1300 369 688 and report your find (any time of the day or night).
- If you have a camera, photograph the animal in situ, particularly if the animal needed to be moved from its original location. Try to include features in the photo that may help identify the location.
- Take notes including the time of discovery, actions taken and appearance of the animal.
- If possible, wait for Fox Eradication Program staff to arrive.

## IF A FOX IS FOUND DEAD IN BUSH

- Do not touch animal. Immediately call 1300 369 688 and report your find (any time of the day or night).
- If you have a camera, photograph the animal in situ, particularly in its original location if moving was necessary. Try to include features that may help identify the location.
- Take notes including the time of discovery, actions taken, and appearance of the animal.
- If possible, wait for Fox Eradication Program staff to arrive.

## IDENTIFYING FOX EYESHINE

- 24 hour sightings hotline:

1300 FOX OUT (1300 369 688)

For more information visit: [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/fox](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/fox)

- Fox eyeshine is very distinctive. It is very bright and a pale to golden yellow colour. Separation (of the eyes) is obvious.



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(To claim your discount, simply present your *WILDCARE* member card.)

We are looking for other sponsors, both for our operating costs and as discounters. Know someone who you think might be interested? Why not have a chat to them and suggest they contact **Andrew Smith on 03 6233 2836.**

