

FRIENDS OF FREYCINET WORKING BEE 11-18 DECEMBER 2023

GORSE BUSTING ON SCHOUTEN ISLAND

Prior to the Friends of Freycinet (FOF) volunteers arriving Monday afternoon, 11 December, for their briefing, a small group of us spent the weekend packing the Schouten Island caretaker and FOF gear. Thanks Ros, John and Ralph for your assistance.



Early Tuesday morning Parks started the transfer to the Island of gear and volunteers. With great boating conditions, and after three trips, we were all on the island by lunchtime. The rest of Tuesday was spent establishing the caretaker camp, plus our own camp, followed by a brief reconnoitre from the main weeding site to Crocketts Beach for the newcomers. It was then time to settle in and prepare ourselves for a week of gorse busting.



rounding Sandspit Point enroute to the western side of the island



back on Moreys Beach, nearly home

Due to changing weather conditions later in the week, the group was extracted from the island on Monday 18th. This meant we only had five days weeding, not enough time to cover all areas, but we did tackle the worst areas, and even managed a trip to the western side of the island weeding as we went.

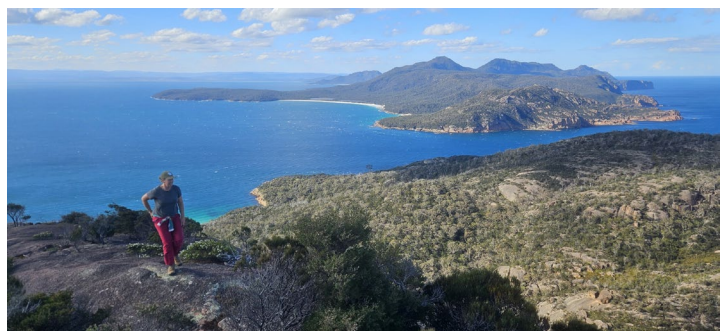
Three new sites were found through the week, plus another site was discovered on the last day (something to look forward to for the 2024 working bee!). Due to a drier Spring, we did notice that the germination of the gorse seed wasn't as prolific as the past couple of years. Unfortunately, still plenty of mature plants, and some rather large 'trees' were found. Overall, 8489 gorse plants were removed which consisted of 7569 juveniles and 920 mature plants. A great effort by all considering the density of the vegetation in a lot of the areas.

Our other blight on the island is blue periwinkle (*Vinca major*) which does seem to increase in area each year. We did manage to spray it again this working bee, but it does seem to be a losing battle.

Downtime saw plenty of swimming, strolling along the beach, and a trip up Bear Hill for some.



sometimes it's hard work getting to the gorse



the view from Bear Hill across to the peninsula

Many thanks to Marilyn, Catherine, Ralph, Tamara, Jennifer and Tim for their efforts and their good company.



Still smiling at the end of the week!

Jenny
Co-ordinator FOF