

Narputungup ews

November
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from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au



Next issue:
February 2014

ADVANCE NOTICE OF 2014 AGM.....see page 5

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Membership.

It's a long time since the Ongerup Conservation Organisation was formed in 1971 in response to the threat of mining in what was to become FRNP. That organisation became the Fitzgerald River National Park Association in 1980, and changed its name to Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park in 1999. The original threat may have passed, but we still need members who are aware that there is much more to this park than access to the coast and fishing spots. This is why we have an elected representative on the FRNP Advisory Committee. The delegate, elected from the committee at the AGM will be an effective advocate, and needs to represent a vibrant membership. Please speak to friends and colleagues about the park to encourage new members who will value the park for its biodiversity, and as our unique West Australian heritage. To paraphrase the words of the late President Kennedy, "Think not what the park can do for you, but what you can do for the park". We all have busy lives with other commitments; please do not let this diminish your support for the 'Friends' and FRNP.

Twertup.

This major task is going ahead under Ric Pepper and Gil Craig's leadership. Its completion depends on the team of volunteers who have supported us, but as soon as the roof is in place, there will be more for the unskilled (me included) to do on site. I'm looking forward to it, please join us.

Family activities.

Last year it was suggested that child-friendly activities would be a good way to attract family membership. This was a great idea. Geraldine and Steve held a very successful workshop at Quaalup. It was rewarding to see the look of delight on kids' faces when the miniature world of aquatic invertebrates was revealed by microscope. There once was a sign at Twertup attributed to Heather Pearce saying:- 'Don't suggest, volunteer!' Could we have a few ideas with appropriate planning from the members with children please? Members without children not excluded! It will be an agenda item at the AGM, so please come with your plans.

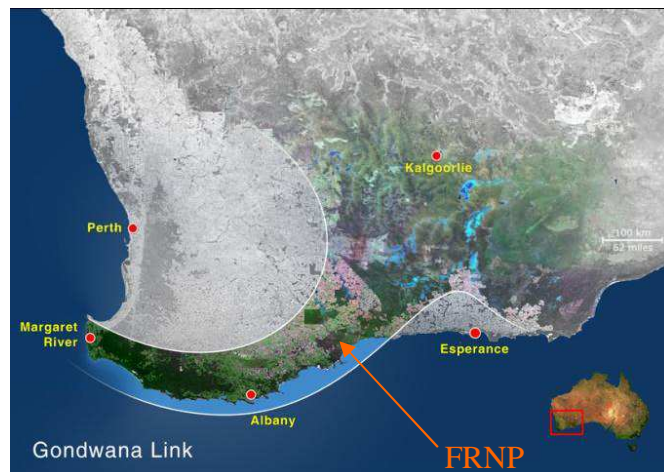
Have a safe and happy holiday season and please think about what we can all do for Fitzgerald River National Park.

Anne Gadsby, Bremer Bay, November 2013

GOOD NEWS ..CONGRATULATIONS TO GONDWANALINK



We are helping build
Gondwana Link, Winner of
the Banksia Foundation 2013
Land and Biodiversity Award



The winners of one of Australia's most prestigious environmental awards has been announced at a gala dinner in Melbourne's Convention Centre. WA based Gondwana Link is the 2013 winner of the 'Land and Biodiversity – preserving our ecosystems' award, given for 'its innovative approach, vision and partnerships formed to achieve substantial biodiversity outcomes.

In accepting the award, on behalf of the numerous donors, organisations, businesses and individuals involved, Gondwana Link Ltd CEO, Keith Bradby, highlighted the urgent nature of the work underway. "South-western Australia is already recognised internationally as an area 'where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exceptional loss of habitat.' Add to this the increasing impact of climate change, and we have very few years left to either safeguard our bushland, or face catastrophic loss."

Established in 2002, the Gondwana Link program is halfway through an ambitious effort to reconnect habitats across south-western Australia, from the wet forests of the far south west to the woodland and mallee bordering the Nullarbor. The work is being achieved by a network of groups - local, national and international - who work cohesively across the 1000 kilometres of the Link. Gondwana Link was the first large connectivity program launched in Australia, but now has colleague organisations in all other states and is one of the foundation stones of Australia's National Wildlife Corridor Plan.

'Friends' congratulate Keith Bradby and Amanda Keesing for winning this award. 'Friends' are one of 22 Gondwanalink partnership groups; this in part recognises the pivotal role that FRNP has in the linkage as indicated below. Editor.

BUT BAD NEWS FOR SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATERS..

On 27 October a friend arrived with news that they had just been on several of the local Bremer beaches, and there were dead and dying birds everywhere, one every 10m in some places! We went to the nearest victims, which I collected.

Provisionally identifying them as Short-tailed Shearwaters, I weighed and measured 2 specimens, but had to wait for Monday morning before sending photos and measurements to Ron Johnstone at the museum. Ron confirmed my identification. They were frozen, and taken to Perth later that week. I had remarked on the very low weight of the two collected.

John Darnell's comment was particularly interesting. "This species breed in fair numbers on some of the Recherche Archipelago islands so to find one of them at Bremer Bay is probably not all that unexpected (although I cannot actually recall getting a specimen from there previously). What is most interesting about your birds - as far as I am concerned - is that for a period of weeks (recently) there has been a "higher than average" mortality along the (lower) NSW coast-Bass Strait area."

Fast forward two weeks, and there are even more casualties on the south coast, ranging from Kangaroo Island to west of Albany. The common finding in all these birds is that they are starving. Stomachs have been empty of food and plastic. There are thousands of casualties, and as they are

returning from migration to feed off the islands of the Recherche Archipelago, there will be little or no breeding this year.

Is there a shortage of food somewhere in the food chain? Has the harvesting of krill caused this? There are so many questions to be answered, we know relatively little about this interesting bird.

Many people at Birdlife, the WA Museum and DPAW are working to solve this mystery. The evidence they require is often provided by volunteers who collect birds from beaches, and notice unusual events.

In a recent development, news from New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania where 10,000s of Shearwaters have died is that toxicology tests have eliminated avian influenza, Newcastle disease and west mite virus as causes of deaths. Starvation has been implicated.

Dr Nic Dunlop, who is experienced in pelagic bird biology, has suggested that it will be imperative to assess the breeding success, or lack of it, when Shearwaters breed in the Recherche Archipelago in late November-mid December.

Contributed by Anne Gadsby.



Short-tailed Shearwater photographed at Triggelow Beach. Photo credits Harry Louw & Steve Elson.



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



SOUTHCOAST
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Project Dieback: Protecting Biodiversity Assets

The future of biodiversity in the south-west of the State is looking brighter thanks to the ongoing management of *Phytophthora dieback*. 'Project Dieback' will focus around improving hygiene and access infrastructure to priority areas of native vegetation and ensure the protection of some of the most iconic flora species from the deadly pathogen.

Over the next three years, Project Dieback's key project partners - South Coast NRM, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, the Centre for *Phytophthora* Science and Management, the Dieback Working Group and the Fitzgerald Biosphere Group will be installing hygiene infrastructure so people can clean dirty equipment before they enter areas with a priority protection status.

Fitzgerald Biosphere Group executive officer Anne Sparrow said Project Dieback aims to provide the community with the resources needed to improve hygiene practices and in doing so protect the amazing bushland in the region from dieback. "The Fitzgerald Biosphere is mostly free from dieback and these areas are easy enough to protect if people take a minute to make sure equipment is clean from dirt and mud before they head into these areas," Ms Sparrow said.

Work across the Fitzgerald River National Park includes an aerial survey, the upgrade of boggy sections of the Gordon Inlet and Doubtful Island Roads and the installation of boot cleaning stations. More work is to be planned for 2014.

Anne Sparrow will be developing a Local Area Dieback Reference Group for the Fitzgerald Biosphere region to guide the delivery of the project over the next few months. We encourage local people to become involved in this group.

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program with technical support from all project partners.

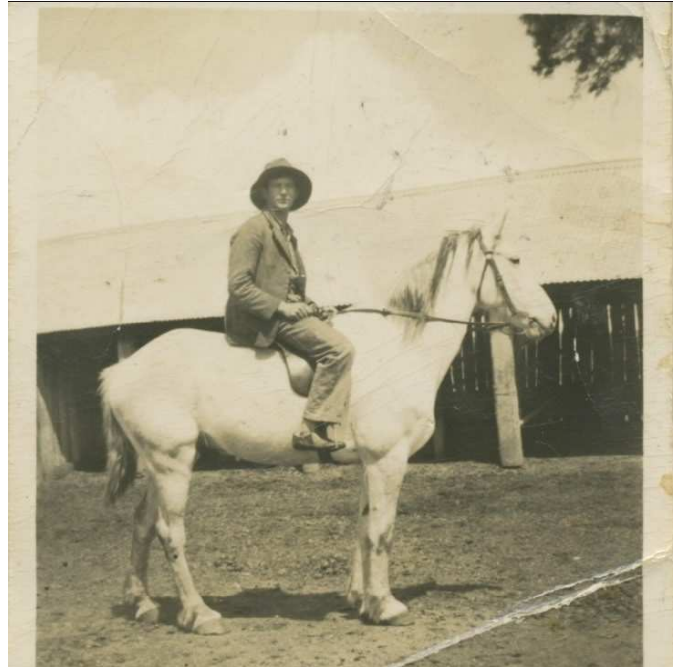
MYLIES BEACH or MILEYS-BEACH....WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Quite a bit as it turns out. Rod Daw, Ravensthorpe farmer and Chair of the FRNP Advisory Committee has long held the view that any FRNP history or interpretive material should acknowledge the role played by early settlers in what is now the national park. An example of this is the origin of the name 'Mylies Beach'. 'Mylies' is the incorrect spelling of the abbreviated surname, used as a nickname, for Robert Mildwaters who had a fishing camp and small sheep run close to the current Mylies Beach recreation site. The mistake was first made in 1977 in an early FRNP pamphlet produced by the then National Parks Authority. It is a good example of how an error is perpetuated once it is in print.

The advent of the parks improvement project, particularly the requirement for new interpretive material, provided the opportunity to rectify the mistake. Senior Interpretation Officer Lorna Charlton of DPAW took up the task to do the historical research to present to Landgate which is the official custodian and authority for geographical nomenclature in WA to change the name back to 'Mileys'. The research involved use of Ravensthorpe Historical Society and Daw family records as well as the National Library of Australia 'Trove' website to show that 'Mildwaters' was a prominent early Ravensthorpe family name but there were no 'Mylewaters'. A formal submission was submitted to Landgate to effect the change which has been approved. Some road signage will require changing.

Robert Mildwaters (1893-1927) was one of 12 children of John Walter Mildwaters (1843-1936) and Mary Jane Mildwaters (*nee* Hill) (1847-1930) who came to Ravensthorpe from South Australia in the early 1900s. John Mildwaters operated a blacksmith shop in Ravensthorpe and was involved in the construction of the overland telegraph. Mary was active as a local midwife.

Robert Mildwaters had a small farm just north of Cocanarup Timber reserve. He is listed on the Ravensthorpe Methodist Church World War I honour board. Robert died prematurely at age 34 at Pingelly WA.



Robert Mildwaters. Photo courtesy of Judy Charlton (nee Mildwaters).



John Mildwaters' Ravensthorpe blacksmith shop in 1906. Photo courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society.

There is surprising end to this story. In one of life's extraordinary coincidences, after she had completed her research into the Mildwaters family Lorna Charlton found she was a relative by marriage. Her brother Michael is married to Judy (*nee* Mildwaters) one of Robert's grand daughters. Michael and Judy reside in Coolgardie where Michael is a prospector, thus continuing the family bush tradition.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF 2014 AGM

Next year the AGM and activities weekend will be held in Hopetoun. The meeting and guest speaker events will be on Saturday 5 April at Mary Anne Haven, otherwise known as the Senior Citizens Centre in the main street. Dr Liz Fox of Birdlife Australia will be our guest speaker. On Sunday we will have excursions to some of the newly developed recreation sites, Culham Inlet-bird hide and walk trails at the eastern end of the park. Further details will be in the February edition of Narpulungup News.



PREVIOUS EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS

Tracey Ross at the 'Friends' stall.

On Saturday 14 September 'Friends' had a stall at the market day in F.E. Daw & Sons IGA store in Ravensthorpe. Tracey Ross, Elisa Spengler and Andy Chapman ran the stall. The best selling item was Ron & Sue Wooller's honey possum book 'Sugar and Sand'.



Elisa Spengler of RAIN helped too.

On Sunday 15 September there was a guided walk through the Ravensthorpe Range attended by 14 people including visitors from Albany and McClaren Vale in South Australia. In spite of it being a dull and rainy day, the heavy rain left us alone until the walk was almost completed. Highlights included venturing into the manganese adits at Mt Chester where we saw a colony of chocolate wattled bats and experienced the strange phenomenon of complete and utter darkness. After lunch we returned along the railway heritage walk trail to where we started on Mt Desmond.




Chocolate wattled bats on manganese deposit in Mt Chester adit.

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION INVITATION....

Basil Schur of Greenskills (Inc.) has invited readers with landscape photography of FRNP and the Ravensthorpe Range to submit images for consideration for an exhibition in February 2014. The exhibition will be part of the Gondwana Panorama Project. See the flyer on page 6. Note that although the field excursions were in November past, the workshop on curating and installing digital media at the Vancouver Art Centre in Albany on 21 January 2014 and the exhibition also at the Art Centre and the Residency Museum, Albany in February 2014 may be of interest to some of you. Contact Basil Schur (see flyer) for further information.

GONDWANA PANORAMA

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM & CURATING WORKSHOPS



Photography by Dan Paris


PARTICIPATE IN A PROJECT THAT SUPPORTS THE GONDWANA LINK LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION VISION; JOIN PHOTOGRAPHER IAN BRADSHAW AND FILM MAKER GRAHAM BISHOP TO EXTEND YOUR DIGITAL SKILLS, EXPLORE LANDSCAPE AS SUBJECT & THE HUMAN CONNECTION TO THIS UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT.

DENMARK (LITTLE MT LINDESEY EXCURSION) - SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 9.15-4.30PM
MEET AT GREEN SKILLS DENMARK OFFICE

PORONGURUPS EXCURSION: SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER 9.15-4.30PM
MEET AT PORONGURUP SHOP & CAFE

SELECTED FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS CREATED DURING THESE WORKSHOPS WILL FORM PART OF AN EXHIBITION PLANNED DURING FEBRUARY 2014 AT THE VANCOUVER ARTS CENTRE AND THE WA MUSEUM ALBANY. PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT CAN JOIN ARTIST NIKKI GREEN IN A FREE WORKSHOP; 'CURATING & INSTALLING AN INNOVATIVE DIGITAL MEDIA EXHIBITION' WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE VANCOUVER ARTS CENTRE ON FRIDAY 31ST JANUARY 2014 FROM 9-4PM

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE BUT REGISTRATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL - CONTACT BASIL SCHUR FROM GREENSKILLS ON 98483310 OR 0429481019 BSCHUR@GREENSKILLS.ORG.AU



AND THE FINAL WORD IS.....

To wish all readers a safe and restful holiday season and a smooth transition from 2013 to 2014.
 See you all at the AGM. *Editor*

Photo left: Thumb Peak and Mid Mt Barren from Hamersley Drive in spring.



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