

coastline

autumn update 2010

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PHOTO: KRISTINE TAY

State Coordinator's Message

By Matthew Fox, Statewide Program Coordinator

Welcome back to Coastline. We hope you've enjoyed your summer. Our 16th Summer by the Sea was a great success. Thanks to all those who participated, especially to those who helped deliver the program.

This summer on the coast was one of the biggest on record. Just as the demand for sun, sand and surf continues to grow, so does the need for new volunteers. Now is a good time for volunteer groups to consider some local promotion in order to recruit new volunteers. Talk to your facilitator to find out how we can help.

This issue includes a wrap-up of successful projects funded through the Coastcare Victoria Community Grants program. Don't forget that you can apply for small grants and indigenous grants at any time.

We'll also delve into the brave new world of marine renewable energy, and hear from a range of volunteers including some dedicated surfers in Warrnambool, a British birder and the folks behind the Rickett's Point Marine Education Centre.

We hope you enjoy catching up on all things coastal volunteering. A big thanks to all volunteers who did their bit over summer so that everyone could enjoy their visit to the beach.

In this issue

State Coordinator's Message	1
do your bit for our coast	1
In memoriam: John Amor	2
First round of Coastcare Victoria grants announced	3
New marine education centre at Ricketts Point	3
Tree pruning in coastal reserves	4
Summer by the Sea 2010 wrap up	5
Engineers lend a hand in the sand	6
Seashell safaris show what makes your beach special	6
Controlling Spiny Rush in the Swan Bay catchment	7
Schools leading the community	8
A little shelter can make a big difference	8
Following the Hooded Plover	9
Marine energy in Victoria	9
The Great Ocean Road renewal program – we can do it!	10
Bilingual coast guides	11
Undaria discovered in western Victoria	11
Regional Updates	12-13
Upcoming Events	14
Coast Action/Coastcare Contacts	14

do your bit...



...for our coast

By taking the **coastcare pledge** and agreeing to adopt coast-friendly actions, you can start to make a difference today. **Sign up** and learn about some simple and practical ways you can help our coast. Then decide on what action you will take as an individual to help conserve our coastline. By doing this, you can actually **make a difference**.

Register your details and we'll be sure you get the latest information on how to care for our coast. In return for taking the pledge you'll receive a calico tote bag, which you can use for shopping, or as a beach bag.

www.coastcare.com.au



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In memoriam: John Amor

By Matthew Fox, State Program Coordinator



The Coastcare community lost one of its champions earlier this year with John Amor's passing. For the past 25 years, John had worked in various conservation roles in Victoria's southwest. The past decade saw John work tirelessly to support coastal volunteering on the southwest coast of Victoria in his role as the region's Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator.

Warrnambool Landcare/Coastcare member Don McTaggart saw John as a mentor, and described John's passing as 'the loss of a great environmentalist.' With John's guidance, the Warrnambool group recently won the Landcare Victoria Coastcare Award for their groundbreaking project, which places Maremma sheepdogs on the ground to protect penguin and gannet colonies from fox attack.

John was an ardent supporter of volunteerism. He volunteered annually with the Port Fairy Folk Festival, and was a guiding member of the Southwest Volunteering Initiative. He linked volunteers from Australia and abroad to become involved in Coastcare in the southwest. Over the years, John's efforts

have seen thousands of people volunteer and serve their communities across many sectors. He was also a strong believer in environmental education, and made many efforts to engage children in conservation. Recently, he'd recruited school children to raise leaf-hoppers for release as a biological control in bridal creeper infested areas.

In addition to being a passionate environmentalist, John was a defender of culture and human rights. The southwest area has a rich Indigenous culture and history. John was regarded as a good friend to local Indigenous People, and he was a passionate advocate for reconciliation. John had also been instrumental in involving the Warrnambool Sudanese community in Coastcare. This of course extended far beyond Coastcare's environmental aims – John also helped to integrate these new arrivals into the Warrnambool community.

John was a capable media operator, and did a great deal to lift the profile of Coastcare through his regular interviews, news stories and promotion. John enjoyed broadcasting his own radio

programs on local community radio, sharing the music he loved. When a colleague lost their home in the bushfires of February 2009, John was quick to respond by providing him with a replacement music collection.

John's successful career was driven by a genuine passion for the coast. John had a particularly inspiring 'office' – the southwest coast from Nelson in the west to Port Campbell. This 250 km of coastline contains some of Victoria's most iconic coastal sites, including the Twelve Apostles, Discovery Bay, the lower Glenelg River at Nelson, Cape Bridgewater Killarney, Middle Island; and locally cherished coastal reserves in and around Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland. John initially arrived in the area as a keen surfer in a panel van, and never left.

John Amor will be sorely missed but fondly remembered. He was the life of the party. Anybody who heard his whale stories will agree. John leaves behind a legacy of hundreds of committed coastal volunteers who will continue to realise his vision for a cleaner, greener coast in Southwest Victoria.





First round of Coastcare Victoria grants announced

By Matthew Fox, State Program Coordinator

The Coastcare Victoria Grants assessment panel recently selected small projects and medium-scale projects for funding. Successful projects address priority coastal issues including the protection of Ramsar wetlands, conservation of threatened species including the Hooded Plover, and the protection and restoration of threatened ecological communities by Victorian volunteers. Successful projects include:

Small grants

- Friends of Queens Park – Controlling Sweet Pittosporum at Queens Park, Lorne (\$5,000)
- Jan Juc Coast Action – Tackling Gazania on the Jan Juc cliffs (\$4,500)
- Friends of Edwards Point – Community protection of the Edwards Point Wildlife Reserve (\$790)
- Friends of Chinaman’s Creek Inc – The Skink Link Interpretive Trail (\$4,200)
- McCrae Homestead Coastal Group Inc – Restoring the McCrae Foreshore (\$4,545)
- Friends of the Hooded Plover – Protecting Hoodie Chicks in the Mornington Peninsula National Park (\$976)
- Phillip Island Nature Park – Coastal Ambassadors (\$3,400)

Medium scale grants

- Narrawong and District Primary School – Schools Leading the Community: Rehabilitating Narrawong dune vegetation and wetlands in Victoria’s southwest (\$25,000)
- Heytesbury and District Landcare Networks – Gellibrand to Curdies EstuaryCare Program (\$50,000)

- Otway Coast Committee (OCC) – Protecting the Hooded Plover and its Habitat from Wye River to Castles Beach (\$15,841)
- Surf Coast and Inland Plains – “Planet Days” on the Surf Coast (\$48,975)
- Friends of the Marine Discovery Centre – Dune Edu-action (\$19,160)
- Bellarine Landcare Group – Protection of Coastal Saltmarsh at the Lake Connewarre Ramsar site (\$25,610)
- Dromana Foreshore Committee of Management – Coastal banksia recovery and associated bridal creeper weed control program (\$27,000)
- Phillip Island Nature Park – Protection of Short-tailed Shearwaters and Hooded Plovers at Berry’s Beach, Phillip Island (\$10,000)
- Victorian National Parks Association Inc – Revealing Victoria’s hidden marine treasures (\$50,000)
- Conservation Volunteers for Coastal Protection – (\$44,060)
- Three Creeks Landcare – Protection and enhancement of the Kilcunda Coastal Reserve through coastal community engagement and pest and animal control (\$32, 100)
- Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group – Constructing the Coal Creek, Harmers Haven Broadwalk/ Bridge (\$26,900)

Remaining project applicants will receive notification and feedback on their application soon. Further information is also available to applicants by contacting the Grants Program Manager on (03) 9637 9742.

New marine education centre at Ricketts Point

By Joe Mumford, Parks Victoria

An exciting new marine education centre has opened at Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary. This centre will provide a much anticipated boost for school visits to the diverse inter-tidal rock platforms and coastal foreshore environment.

The centre is an initiative of Marine Care Ricketts Point, the Parks Victoria volunteer community group for the marine sanctuary. It features an audio-visual theatre and themed displays that focus on biodiversity, marine national parks and catchment management. The centre is located in the local Beaumaris lifesaving club, right on the edge of the rocky inter-tidal shoreline.

The centre will help meet the high demand for marine education programs at Ricketts Point. Sally Fierenzi, Education Officer with the Gould League, tells us “the Marine Education Centre is an ideal resource to relaunch Gould League’s very popular and well-respected marine education programs. Thousands of Victorian students have had their eyes opened to wonders of the marine environment through our programs at Ricketts Point over several years, and we are delighted to be back at the venue!”

Funded through the Commonwealth Caring for our Country and Parks Victoria grant programs, the centre will lead to a more sustainable level of use of the extensive inter-tidal areas with programs and activities based around minimal impact principles. Resources in the centre will be used by education and interpretation operators, community groups and schools.

The marine education centre at Ricketts Point is open for bookings. Visit the marine care website: www.marinecare.org.au and follow the links.



Tree pruning in coastal reserves

By Denis Cox, Box Hill Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator

Pruning is a critical activity for land managers, including many volunteer groups in coastal reserves where the inherent danger of falling branches or even trees can pose a safety risk.

Pruning work is most commonly needed in areas of frequent public use, such as picnic or camping grounds and near shelters, tracks, roadsides, car parks or adjacent to private property.

The main reasons to prune are to:

- remove dead or potentially dangerous branches
- repair damaged limbs
- thin out branches to allow more light through
- reduce wind resistance to minimise wind damage
- prevent contact with power lines or other service lines
- reinstate the natural form and balance after storm damage
- guide the growth of young trees
- gain better views where appropriate, such as for safe view lines

Sometimes root pruning may also be necessary to prevent damage to nearby structures.

Tree health

Branch death occurs naturally in all trees and is related to the age of the tree, genetic make up and various environmental stresses. Some trees have 'self-pruning' mechanisms which occur as trees grow and lower branches drop to the ground, leaving a clean trunk.

Storm damage, insect attack and other natural events may damage trees, but healthy plants normally recover unless they are under other stresses. Tree branches may take several years to die back, so keep major trees under observation for early signs of tip dieback or other indications of possible branch death. Where one side of a tree has been damaged, pruning back the opposite side helps restore balance as the damaged side recovers.

Severe pruning or lopping is similar to heavy insect attack or fire that strips leaves and weakens the tree. Trees are most vulnerable during hot weather or

when under other stresses. However, most tree species can safely have up to 20% of their foliage removed and will recover without noticeable damage. Response to greater foliage removal varies with species.

Tips for pruning

Pruning is best done during late winter, as summer pruning can put trees under water stress.

Avoid heavy lopping that will result in multiple new leafy shoots that grow fast but are weak at the join with the main branch, which makes them subject to wind breakage. Excessive pruning also removes foliage shade that can result in sunburn damage on the trunk of thin barked species.

Remove large dead branches promptly. Apart from being an obvious hazard, they are also a point for disease entry. Shorten dead stubs and if rotten, clean down to the fresh wood to allow new bark to grow and seal the scar. Large pruning wounds take longer to heal and are a point of entry for insect or disease attacks, so light pruning from an early age to shape trees minimizes these effects.

Small branches are usually easily removed by using quality secateurs, pruning saws or loppers. Large lever-action loppers, if sharp, can cut branches up to about 60mm. Large branches will need a pruning bow saw or perhaps a chainsaw used by a qualified and experienced operator. Cuts should be as clean and small as possible.

Cut large branches just above the bark ridges where branches diverge from the main trunk, as these grow to seal the scar. A cut flush with the trunk may lead to die-back in the trunk, weakening it and increasing the probability of disease. Trim damaged bark back to fresh tissue so new bark growth is not impeded.

Provide support to heavy branches during pruning to avoid extensive splitting or bark peeling and for safety purposes. Do not attempt large pruning jobs without sufficient equipment and assistance. Use a professional pruning company if necessary.

Pruning of young trees helps avoid later damage that can occur when secondary shoots grow to form narrow forks, which are subject to splitting as the tree ages. Choose the most dominant shoot and remove other shoots to restore the natural shape of the tree.

Thinning

Tree crowns are thinned to reduce weight and wind resistance to avoid damage in high winds, avoid contact with overhead lines or to increase light penetration to improve growth of grass and understorey plants. Trees left standing after the removal of surrounding shelter are subject to wind damage and will benefit from thinning. Thinning should remove dead wood and minor or crossed branches, leaving a well-balanced crown with little evidence of the thinning. Trees with damaged roots benefit from crown thinning to improve balance, as new roots restabilise the tree. Light thinning over several seasons minimizes detrimental effects on tree growth.

Bracing forked trunks is sometimes used on trees with heritage value, which pose a hazard. A steel cable with a turnbuckle is threaded through the branch wood for support or supported by cables with protection such as old carpet around the trunk to prevent bark damage. Thin the tree crown to reduce top weight while the roots recover. Support may be needed for several years depending on tree size and its recovery rate.

Pruning in the community

Get any necessary approvals before major pruning projects. Ensure that any pruning work is well signposted with warning signs or barriers, and make sure there are enough assistants to redirect visitors, hold ladders, and help in the clean up. Don't take on too much and get professional help when necessary.

Healthy vegetation plays a vital role in coastal stability, biodiversity and human shelter and safety. Good pruning practices are part of responsible coastal management.



Summer by the Sea 2010 wrap up

By Kristine Tay, Coast Action/Coastcare Summer Intern

Summer by the Sea 2010 was a resounding success, with over 12,000 people attending 400 activities at 80 locations along Victoria's coastline. The diversity of activities allowed people of every age, interest and ability to enjoy the program this year.

New to the 2010 program were the Coastcare for a Day activities. Visitors from Victoria and interstate tried their hand at coastal volunteering by saving native vegetation at Point Roadknight, conducting biodiversity studies at Barwon Heads, and monitoring the Bunurong shore. Afterwards, a friendly chat and morning tea were shared by all.

Coastcare State Coordinator Matthew Fox said that the Coastcare for a Day activities allow people to contribute to coastal care, no matter where they live.

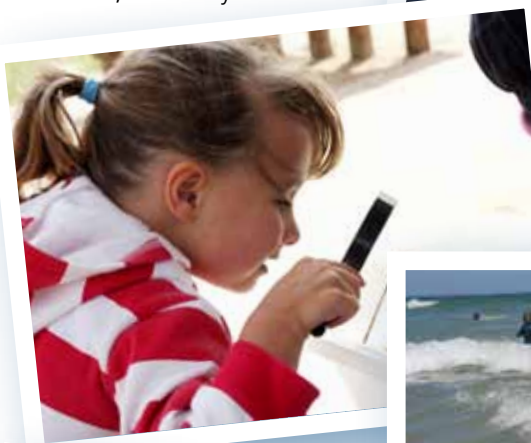
"Every contribution counts, no matter how small," Matthew said. "Holiday makers and residents can get involved through Summer by the Sea, and also by volunteering with a Coast Action/Coastcare group. People who live further from the coast can still help by taking the coastcare pledge on the Coastcare website."

Active participants enjoyed kayaking on the sunny waters of Lakes Entrance; seeing underwater wildlife while snorkeling in the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary; experiencing a rare sea view of the Twelve Apostles by boat; and learning how to surf at Ocean Grove.

People with a passion for coastal environments enjoyed meeting the endangered Hooded Plover in Anglesea; watching thousands of Shearwaters fly home in Port Campbell; and learning about how to create a beautiful but hardy coastal garden in Rosebud.

Young participants enjoyed hands-on reptile displays in Williamstown and a Minibeast Safari at Altona Bay. Vision Australia led a Heritage Tour of the Yarra River and the Melbourne Aquarium for the enjoyment of vision-impaired participants.

A big thank you to all contributors to Summer by the Sea 2010 who helped make the program such a success, and the most popular year yet. We hope to see you at 2011's program!



Engineers lend a hand in the sand

By Matthew Fox, State Program Coordinator

Fifteen eager engineers from GHD Marine recently volunteered their time to support conservation volunteers on the surf Coast.

Their morning was spent with Jan Juc Coast Action working on Jan Juc coastal reserves managed by the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee.

This group has been active for more than 15 years, and over this time has successfully restored much of the coastal heath previously degraded by unrestricted access, invasive species and erosion.

Volunteers were put to work hand-pulling weeds including *Gazania*, a common garden escapee.

An echidna wandered through the recently revegetated site – further evidence of the success of this community-led ecosystem restoration.

After lunch, the group moved to the nearby Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve, where a group of dedicated surfers support the Surf Coast Shire's management efforts. Surfers Appreciating the Natural Environment (or SANE as they are better known) has been actively volunteering on the

reserve for over a decade. Volunteers were able to support SANE's efforts by following up recent plantings with hand-weeding.

By hand-pulling squirrel grass just before seeding, the group's efforts stopped the transmission of millions of seeds into the reserve and adjacent areas.

For GHD Marine staff, the day provided an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the community and to the environment. For the coastal volunteer groups, it meant that 40 garbage bags full of weeds were carefully removed by hand, with minimal impact on native vegetation.

This event was organised by Coast Action/Coastcare as part of national Coastcare Week celebrations.



GHD Volunteers get their hands dirty at Jan Juc

Seashell safaris show what makes your beach special

By Neil Blake, Coordinator Port Phillip EcoCentre

The Port Phillip Baykeeper shoreline shell surveys gain important insight into the rich diversity of our coastal ecology. The survey technique has been tried at 32 locations around Port Phillip Bay over the past two Summer by the Sea programs and has been successful with young families.

The survey comes with a simple step-by-step guide. The only equipment required is a digital camera, pen, and clipboard. The activity involves searching the strandline of a 100m stretch of beach to photograph, measure, and estimate the number of each shell type found. Participants also note other aspects such as litter, seaweeds and anything unusual.

Survey photos are loaded onto a CD and mailed to the Baykeeper to enable species to be identified and included on a poster for each beach. Posters will be sent to local schools to provide a basis for ongoing learning on the beach. It is hoped that this fun activity will stimulate young minds to begin a lifelong journey of learning and caring for our coasts.

The surveys provide a basis for early learning 'maths out of the classroom', and an introduction to the different shell families and their lifestyles (from vegetarians to predatory carnivores). This leads to discussion of the role of molluscs in the food chain, and questions about why some species are more common than others.

Anyone interested in assisting the Baykeeper shoreline seashell and litter surveys can contact Neil Blake at Port Phillip

EcoCentre on 0409 138 565 or visit www.bay-keeper.com to download a copy of the survey sheet.

Port Phillip Baykeeper Neil Blake will present a summary of the findings so far to the March 15 2010 meeting of the Malacological Society of Victoria. The meeting will be held at the Melbourne Camera Club, corner of Dorcas and Ferrars Streets in South Melbourne, commencing at 7:45pm.



Controlling Spiny Rush in the Swan Bay catchment

Spiny rush competing amongst remnant salt marsh sp

By Stephen W Tuohy, Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Project Officer, Parks Victoria

Works are underway to remove Spiny Rush from the Swan Bay shoreline. The works are part of the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Project, which is an initiative to protect significant Ramsar values in the Port Phillip Bay Ramsar site.

Spiny Rush (*Juncus acutus*) is an introduced species, native to the Mediterranean region, Western Europe, South Africa, USA and South America. It occurs along waterways and other low lying areas, particularly in saline areas. Spiny Rush can also spread to higher ground and colonise areas of low fertility. The plant is a major threat to rare and sensitive coastal saltmarsh vegetation, a prime habitat for a critically endangered species, the Orange-bellied Parrot.

Spiny Rush forms dense tussocks that can grow to more than 2m high and 1.5m wide, providing harbour for pest animals such as rabbits and foxes. Once established it can compete with native vegetation, with thick stands that are impenetrable to livestock and humans.

The program commenced by treating known infestations around the Swan Bay shoreline. However, it was soon discovered that there was significantly more of this pest than expected. The program has now expanded to targeting small tributaries that feed into Swan Bay.

The basic control method being used is herbicide treatment and removal of viable seed heads, although mechanical removal has been engaged when ground conditions such as slope, access and soil substrate are suitable for this treatment method. Controlling Spiny Rush is a long-term process, with large seed bank reserves remaining in the ground requiring follow up treatment of new seedlings.

The project is gaining momentum through promotion in local print media, the good work of the Bellarine Landcare group, and word of mouth. Interest in the project recently received a boost following the advertising of 'Environmental On-ground Works and Financial Grants Incentives' opportunities available on the Bellarine Peninsula.

The success of the project so far is due to active involvement by participating landholders. The initial work has broken the back of the major infestations. However, stored seed and individual plants missed in the initial treatment will require participants to monitor and treat emergent regrowth in the future. The project is due to finish on 30 June 2010.

The project complements other environmental works currently being undertaken by the Bellarine Landcare Group, Bellarine Catchment Network and local landholders around the Swan Bay catchment including fox, rabbit and pest plant control programs.

Parks Victoria is working with other agencies and land managers to implement these works. An integrated approach reduces cost and enables greater environmental outcomes across the different land tenures. Other works being undertaken on the Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites include fencing of significant saltmarsh communities, *Spartina* control in Lake Connewarre, and predator control programs across the Bellarine Peninsula.

Parks Victoria is carrying out the work under the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site project, with funding made available through the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

For further information contact Parks Victoria Information Centre on 131963 or via www.parkweb.vic.gov.au



▲ Spiny rush (Swan Bay)



▲ Spiny rush in Swan Bay tributary



▲ Spiny rush providing



▲ Mechanical treatment of Spiny rush.

Schools leading the community

By Rebecca Phyland, Thornbill Eco Education

In a new project for 2010 Narrawong District Primary School students, with the help of community volunteers, are undertaking rehabilitation works on the Narrawong dune vegetation and adjacent wetland. This project is part of the Schools Leading the Community program. Conveniently, the project site is located less than 500m from the school's back gate.

With thanks to funding from Coastcare Victoria Community Grants, students from the winning School of Coastal Excellence in the 2008 Coastcare Awards are learning how to collect, propagate, and plant out local seed and cuttings, as well as understand why there is a need to protect and enhance their local coastal area.



Weekly immersion activities led by the internationally recognised eco educator and climate activist Rebecca Phyland (Thornbill Eco Education) began with the start of the 2010 school year. Students of all year levels are already beginning to develop an understanding of the ecological processes associated with dune communities.

Through exploratory walks the students are learning to identify indigenous plant species of the dune shrubland. They have enjoyed learning about the

traditional uses of many of these plants, with one

student commenting that 'there should be Karkalla in our fruit bowl at home.'

Instead of seeing simply 'sand and bushes' the students are beginning to understand the complex relationships between humans, flora and fauna that have developed in Australia over many thousands of years.

The benefits of the Schools Leading the Community project are wide-ranging, and include:

- Plants planted and weeds removed in the project area, which in conjunction with the existing coastal dune ecosystem, will enhance the ability of the area to provide habitat for birds, small mammals and amphibians, and will enable the vegetation communities to become more resilient to edge invasion
- Coastcare education curriculum will be developed for primary schools and will be available for use by schools across the state
- Public awareness will be raised with regard to the fragility and importance of coastal ecosystems
- Community members will work together to engage in practical, local environmental works
- The students involved in the project will develop a deeper connection with the land and sea and be more willing to protect this and other ecosystems into the future

Narrawong District Primary School Principal, Carolyn Silva, comments that 'the students are lucky to live in such a unique environment and it is important that they learn to care for that environment. Our school is committed to building on our sustainability outcomes year after year.'

A little shelter can make a big difference

By Bruce Atkin, Yarram Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator

Endangered Hooded Plover chicks may be safer this year thanks to the efforts of South Gippsland 'i sea, i care' marine ambassadors. A few months ago, 14 ambassadors from South Gippsland joined Woodside Primary School students to learn more about the local marine environment. The main focus for the day was learning about difficulties faced by Hooded Plovers trying to breed on our ocean beaches in spring and summer, just when humans are also going to the beach more often.

Birds Australia's Meg Cullen told the ambassadors that the Hooded Plover chicks have a very poor chance of surviving to be adults. Nests and eggs are easily damaged, and if the eggs do hatch chicks can die from the effects of very hot or cold weather, get trodden on, chased by dogs, or eaten by foxes and other birds.

Ambassadors also learnt that providing chicks with a small shelter can make a big difference. The whole team then set

about constructing some chick shelters. In no time at all 13 shelters had been nailed together, and camouflaged with sand glued to the outside. The students also wrote messages inside, asking for anybody who finds them on the beach to please leave them in place for the chicks to use.

At the same time that the students were working on the shelters, Parks Victoria rangers discovered that two pairs of Hooded Plovers had just laid eggs on the beach at Venus Bay. Although these initial breeding attempts were unsuccessful, some of the shelters were finally placed on the beach in mid-February after local volunteer monitors found a total of four newly hatched juvenile birds.

The Woodside workshop was organised by the Dolphin Research Institute's Ben Camm as part of their 'i sea, i care' program, and supported by Coast Action/Coastcare and Birds Australia.

More on the Hooded Plover page 9



Following the Hooded Plover

By Laura Glenister, Birds Australia

Some people might think me mad for journeying 17000 km from the UK to the coast of Victoria to assist Birds Australia with the protection of the Hooded Plover. But I think a lot can be gained from travelling to different countries to learn about conservation measures for different bird species around the world.

For four months of the year I am contracted to monitor and research seabirds on a tiny uninhabited lighthouse island off the east coast of the Republic of Ireland. When I am not getting paid to work with birds, I spend my time volunteering on projects helping threatened bird species around the world.

Through my work here in Victoria I have been involved with local volunteers raising awareness about the Hooded Plover through public events, media and chatting to people on beaches. I heard about the plight of Hooded Plovers which have one of the lowest breeding success rates of any bird in the world, and I was keen to find out about the techniques and efforts that were being employed to help this bird. I have travelled from Warrnambool to Venus Bay meeting people who believe that this bird has a right to a share of the coastline. Some have been volunteering for years, others have just become involved. It is easy to see that the network of dedicated volunteers and community support is vital to the success of the project. I have been taken aback by the kind

hospitality of individuals who have welcomed me in to their homes and shown me their local Hoodies.

Before coming to Australia I spent five weeks in Hawaii working with the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, capturing, banding and taking blood samples from native rainforest birds. I stayed in basic camps at 1800m and 2300m up a volcanic mountainside, which we accessed by helicopter. Our efforts were focused on the endemic Maui Parrotbill, of which there are only about 450 left in the world. One main threat to the rainforest birds is malaria, which is spreading up the mountainside via mosquitoes. The birds, which have low resistance to malaria, are being forced to move higher to sub-optimal habitat. Our research helped to understand how malaria was affecting the population.

The variations in breeding biology, feeding ecology and behavioural aspects of birds in different countries and habitats interest me greatly. Although there are vast dissimilarities between species, there are often conservation methods and techniques that I can take away and apply to other situations.

I came across the opportunity to work on the Hooded Plover project through searching the internet and sending off an 'on spec' application. So if you've always fancied working on a particular project, bite the bullet and contact them – you never know where you may end up!

Marine energy in Victoria

By Nicola Waldron and Madeliene Wilson, Coastal Policy and Planning, Department of Sustainability and Environment

Australia has committed to reduce national greenhouse emissions through the Renewable Energy Target (RET), which sets a target of 20% renewable energy for Australia by 2020. Marine energy has the potential to make a contribution to meeting this target.

Marine energy is any form of renewable energy that is generated through use of the marine environment. Types of marine energy include

- Wave energy from the motion of surface ocean waves or below-surface pressure
- Tidal energy from naturally occurring tidal currents
- Offshore wind from turbines in coastal areas
- Ocean thermal from the temperature difference between deep and shallow water

While marine energy is more established internationally, there has been less progress in Australia. The possible impacts of the industry are not yet fully understood, and marine energy companies in Australia are at various stages of development.

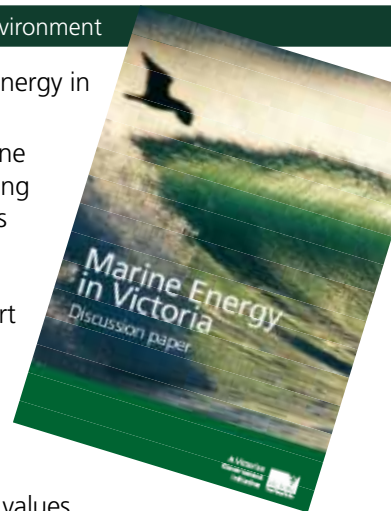
Given the fledgling nature of marine energy in Australia, there is limited policy to guide decision-making about the industry's future. To address this, the Victorian government has embarked on a consultative process to develop a 'whole

of government' policy for marine energy in Victoria.

While Victoria's high energy coastline has great potential for the harnessing of marine energy, the state also has highly valued coastal and marine environments that provide for a diversity of human uses and support a range of species found nowhere else on earth. A precautionary approach is required to ensure new marine energy industries are encouraged in a sustainable manner that minimises risks to the values and services provided by the natural environment.

The release of a marine energy discussion paper is a key step in the development of a comprehensive, transparent and adaptable policy. The discussion paper will be released in late March 2010 and will be followed by a consultation period.

For further information or to download a copy of the discussion paper once released visit www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/marineenergy or email marineenergy@dse.vic.gov.au



The Great Ocean Road renewal program – we can do it!

In 2007 the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) released its *Environment and Land Management Plan*. The plan is a blueprint for the strategic management of the 37 kilometres of coastline along the Great Ocean Road between Torquay and Lorne. The plan highlights the challenges of managing a variety of natural areas and public facilities along a busy and dynamic coasts with a healthy but limited budget derived almost entirely from caravan park revenues.

Fortunately, four of the biggest issues identified in the plan; the threat posed by environmental weeds, the conservation and celebration of Aboriginal cultural heritage, the impacts of climate change and the need to keep up with demand for recreation opportunities on the coast, are about to be tackled head-on through the newly-initiated *Great Ocean Road Renewal Program*. The three year, \$1.35 million program, which is supported by funding from the Australian Government, will deliver four projects:

The **Natural Values Project** has local volunteer and community groups excited as it promises a three year blitz on weeds and a boost to native vegetation communities along the coast.

An experienced conservation team will be established and provided with the necessary equipment and the strategic guidance afforded by our 2009 *Native Vegetation and Weed Action Plan*. We hope we can improve native vegetation communities over the next three years to the point where they're naturally resilient and can then be looked after using our normal operational resources.

The **Cultural Values Project** will develop a cultural heritage management plan to provide the foundation for a better understanding of the coast's Aboriginal heritage and sites, and an ongoing partnership with local Aboriginal groups.

The project will gather information on existing registered sites, look for new sites and fill in other gaps in our knowledge. This will provide management guidance for sites and help us to fulfil our coastal management obligations without jeopardising cultural materials or sites. It will also allow us to work with

traditional owners to bring cultural heritage to life through interpretation and cultural activities.

We know that locals and visitors are hungry for insights into Aboriginal life, past and present. We know the coast is full of fascinating sites and we know traditional owners are keen to share some of their stories. We look forward to seeing where this combination can lead us.

The **Surf Coast Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Project** will undertake an assessment of the vulnerability of the coast to climate change in terms of potential impacts on coastal assets and values. It will also provide a basis to commence work on adaptation strategies.

The *Victorian Coastal Strategy* (2008) states that we must plan for sea level rises of not less than 0.8 metres by 2100 and this project will build on work completed and underway at national and state levels, including the Department of Sustainability and Environment's (DSE's) Future Coasts initiative.

The **Community and Tourism Facilities Project** will deliver new public facilities at Torquay's main surf beach, including a new a new shelter with picnic tables and interpretative material, and a new visitor amenity incorporating public toilets and a small kiosk. An existing public toilet facility will also be upgraded.

The new and improved facilities will enhance beachgoers' enjoyment and experiences of Torquay's most popular beach, which has a tourism history spanning more than 100 years and ever-increasing recreational pressures.

These projects, along with many others on our 'to do list', mean that 2010 is going to be a massive year on the coast along the Great Ocean Road. Check out our website – www.gorcc.com.au – for more details. (By the way, we'll be launching a new website very soon that will tell you a lot more about the issues affecting the coast and what we are doing to manage them.)



Bilingual coast guides

By Phillip Wierzbowski and Angeline Tew, Port Phillip Coast Action/Coastcare

Coast Action/Coastcare helped facilitate an Australia Day event for 33 new citizens from 17 countries to sail around Port Phillip. This event was incorporated into the 20-day expedition around the Port Phillip and Western Port bays aboard the catamaran called Pelican 1, which was a highlight and culmination of the 2010 Summer by the Sea program in this region.

Newly arrived Australians can find living in a new country stressful due to limited resources, language barriers, and lack of transport. This can prevent them from engaging with their community and new surroundings. The tour was designed to establish and strengthen partnerships between government land management agencies, and organisations working with refugees, asylum seekers, new migrant communities, and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities which comprise almost 25% of Victoria's population. The tour

was also a prelude to the Bilingual Coast Guides, which is an accredited course that will run for ten weeks from March to May 2010, with 17 placements offered.

The course aims to raise awareness of Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Victoria's marine and coastal environments are places where newly arrived Australians and communities from non-English speaking communities can engage with their new surrounds.

The course curriculum and delivery will be refined and delivered collaboratively by the Bilingual Park Tour Guides, Parks Victoria, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT), and Coast Action/Coastcare in consultation with the Marine Discovery Centre with Parks Victoria (the project sponsor).

The course is also supported by Adult Multicultural Education Services and the Ethnic Communities Council Victoria and the Federation of Ethnic



Communities Councils of Australia.

Support is provided through promotion of the course within their networks and communities, encouragement/nomination of participants for the course, and assistance in the facilitation of guided tours.

The Bilingual Coast Guides course presents both an opportunity and a challenge for those involved. It also promotes enjoyment and respect, and ensures the natural values of Victoria's coasts are restored and protected for future generations. For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or email info@parks.vic.gov.au.

Undaria discovered in western Victoria

The first recorded infestation of the marine pest plant Japanese Sea Kelp has been confirmed west of Port Phillip Bay.

A series of clean-up attempts to eradicate the kelp *Undaria pinnatifida* from the Apollo Bay Boat Harbour on Victoria's south west coast earlier this year were unsuccessful. As a result, plans to deal with the marine pest quickly shifted from eradication to containment within the harbour precinct.

A declared Noxious Marine Pest under the Fisheries Act 1995, the species can rapidly colonise rocky reefs and have significant impacts on natural ecosystems and biodiversity.

DSE and the Colac-Otway Shire are working to establish new protocols for harbour boat users to reduce further spread of the pest seaweed. Boat users are being asked to ensure that anti-fouling paint is well-maintained, hulls are free of marine growth and all ballast water is drained prior to leaving the harbour.

DSE and the Colac Otway Shire will install a boat wash-down facility at the harbour boat ramp to assist boat owners with vitally important hull cleaning procedures.

Supported by DPI and Parks Victoria, the multi-agency alliance are now working with local boat owners and the Apollo Bay community to raise awareness of the issue and help prevent further spread of the kelp.

For more information about Japanese Sea Kelp or the outbreak at Apollo Bay, please contact John Barker, DSE Marine Policy Officer on 9637 9336.



Regional Updates

East Gippsland Update

By Jeremy Neilson

Another summer is almost over, and as usual it has been a very hectic time for all. This summer has seen a large number of fires in the area, the majority concentrated around the Cann River. The main positive to this situation was that the fires were managed without loss of life or property.

This summer has also seen the most successful Summer By The Sea program I have been involved in. Participation was well up in all activities across East Gippsland. New activities such as kayak tours on the Gippsland Lakes proved very popular, with some participants already interested in making bookings for next year.

Old favourites such as the presentations on the marine life of Beware Reef also continued to be very popular – presentations ran much longer than the advertised times due to the large public interest.

For those that have an interest in the welfare of our local seabirds, there will be an opportunity to see what Seabird Rescue East Gippsland is all about during the month of March. A training weekend will be provided by the group for all potential new members or just those who wish to find out more. If you are interested, please contact me for further information.

Corangamite

CoastalTender:

CoastalTender, funded by the Federal Government Caring for Our Country funding initiative and the State Government, and managed by Corangamite CMA, is a new approach to delivering coastal biodiversity and water quality outcomes in the Corangamite region. Land managers will establish their own price for the management services they are prepared to offer to improve their native coastal vegetation. This price forms the basis of their bid which is compared with the bids from all other land managers participating. Successful bids will be those that offer the best value

for money. Projects along the entire coast are eligible for funding; however projects focussing on Australian Government priorities will be viewed more favourably. Once the expression of interest period is open, scheduled for late March/early April 2010, land managers on the Corangamite coast can register a formal expression of interest through Coastal Tender by telephoning the Corangamite CMA.

EstuaryWatch and 'Coastcare for a Day':

By Matthew Khoury, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority EstuaryWatch Coordinator

This year EstuaryWatch and a variety of other programs and organisations were involved in the Coast Action/Coastcare Summer by the Sea program. On 15 January Coast Action, Coastcare and EstuaryWatch hosted a Coastcare for a Day activity in Princetown at Camp Kangarooobie and the Gellibrand River mouth.

On the day Joanne Ludbrook (Coast Action/Coastcare) and I presented on each program, focusing on our current or potential involvement in the Princetown area.

After the presentations we ventured out to the Gellibrand River, where Judy Spafford from the Gellibrand River EstuaryWatch Group provided a fantastic EstuaryWatch monitoring demonstration and a detailed tour of the Gellibrand River Estuary mouth. Both Joanne and I also covered a variety of other coastal and estuarine related topics during this tour.

I would like to thank those who attended on the day, in particular Judy Spafford. I would also like to thank the Bowkers for providing the fantastic venue, and of course Joanne Ludbrook and Coast Action/Coastcare for organising such a great day!





World Wetlands Day 2010:

On January 31 a series of events were run across the Western Shoreline of Port Phillip Bay. The day was a successful partnership between a whole swag of agencies, educators, indigenous community groups and community volunteers. Western treatment plant tours, cultural walks, Breakfast with the Birds, and Estuary/Waterwatch Mini Beast Safaris were just a few of the activities on the day.

Chris Walsh, a participant, said "37 degrees with searing northerly winds! It was hot, yet those of us who ventured outside to learn about our Ramsar wetlands and their inhabitants were not disappointed.

"We discovered that these bodies of water – varying in depth, size and water quality – mitigated some of the effects of a hot day in the Australian summer. Invertebrates, birds, animals and humans alike all find some relief from the heat while in, on or beside these natural assets."

World Wetlands Day celebrates these amazing places and should cause us to pause and consider their contribution to the health of the environment and the long term survival of the magnificent flora, fauna and ourselves.

Diversity and youth embraced in the Warrnambool waves

Diversity, a sense of community and support for young surfers are the driving motivation for the new Warrnambool Boardriders club.

"More than 80 people have expressed an interest in becoming actively involved in future events," said club president Paul Clancey.

"In getting established we have asked every one of the 40 people who attended our last meeting what they want from the new club. Responses from everybody in the room were both enthusiastic and clear," he added.

Other than the administrative tasks associated with starting a new club, the newly elected committee are already organising its first environmental/social surfing event for early autumn. More information about the group can be obtained by contacting the Warrnambool Coastcare Facilitator.

A new Coast Action/ Coastcare Facilitator

By Jess Brown, Anglesea Coast Action/ Coastcare Facilitator

What better way to introduce oneself to the Coast Action/Coastcare team than through the wonderful medium of the Coastline Newsletter...

After completing a BA in Nature Education/Tourism, spending several years working as an Education Officer at the Melbourne Aquarium, putting my skills to the test with the Environmental Education Company Eco-Logic and working in the Dolomite and Pyrenees Mountains as a hiking guide, I am thrilled to 'nestle' down in Anglesea and begin this position with CACC.

I am job-sharing the position of CACC Facilitator in Anglesea with Tracey Pennington, and am available from Wed-Fri. I can be contacted on jessica.brown@dse.vic.gov.au

I thoroughly look forward to meeting with the different community and management groups in my area!

Mornington Western Port snippets

Dromana Foreshore Committee, McCrae Homestead Group, Friends of Chinaman's Creek, Phillip Island Nature Park and Birds Australia at St. Andrews Beach have all been successful in gaining Caring for our Country grants and soon will begin their projects.

A coastal processes workshop will be held at Cowes for Bass Coast and Phillip Island groups next month, with presentations from coastal engineers outlining what is needed to protect coastal structures against the power of the sea.

South Gippsland snippets

The long-awaited completion of a boardwalk and viewing platform to help protect saltmarsh at Venus Bay is imminent. This is a project of the very active Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula and was one of the last projects to be funded by Envirofund. On completion vehicle access will be blocked, and revegetation will commence this autumn.

A weekend course for volunteers is to be run at Port Welshpool Ferry Terminal on 13 to 14 March. This follows the popular weekend course held in April last year, and will have similar content. Topics covered will include the marine environment, saltmarsh, shorebirds, coastal weeds, geology of the South Gippsland coast and much more. Keynote speakers are geologist Neville Rosengren, and Associate Professor Paul Boon presenting on saltmarshes. Enquiries can be directed to Bruce Atkin on (03) 5183 9116 or bruce.atkin@dse.vic.gov.au.



Upcoming Events

5 March–May	Bilingual Coast Guides training course, Melbourne Multicultural Hub 2010 (over 10 weeks)
March 10–16	National Volunteer Week celebrations. Contact Jeremy Neilson for information 03 5152 0431
March 11	Volunteer Action Training. Contact Phil Wierzbowski for information 03 9296 4525
March 11	Coastal Network of Young People forum facilitated by Coast Action/Coastcare, Melbourne Aquarium. Contact Phil Wierzbowski for information 03 9296 4525
March 12–21	Festival of the Sea, Barwon Heads. For information visit www.barwonheads.net/
March 13–14	Weekend course for Volunteers at Port Welshpool Ferry Terminal. Contact Bruce Atkin for more information 03 5183 9116
March 16	Mangroves, Mud and Moonsnails. A unique opportunity to discover the diversity of the life on the Barwon Heads mudflats by canoe or by foot 6–8pm. Free but bookings are essential. 03 52541118
March 17	10th Connections with the Sea Seminar 9am–3pm Barwon Heads Hall – free but bookings essential. 03 52541118 . Lunch is provided and numbers are limited.
March 17	Land Sea Sky Slide Night 7:30pm. Barwon Heads Hall – free and supper provided.
March 18	Greening Australia is partnering with Sustainability Victoria and Melbourne Museum to deliver the 10th annual Toolbox for Environmental Change forum – held at Melbourne Museum. Contact Phil Wierzbowski for information 03 9296 4525
March 20	9:30–11:30am Friends of the Bluff will launch the latest of its booklets on life on the bluff with a Bluff to Bridge bird walk followed by the official launch at the Lobster Pot, Jetty rd. Barwon Heads. Meet at the Bluff car park at 9:30am or at the Lobster Pot at 10:30am. All welcome.
March 21	Enviro Expo. Displays from local environmental agencies and group with talks, giveaways and plenty of information on how you can become involved in protection our remarkable coast. Market stalls, live bands, arts displays and the duck race. For information contact Jon on 03 52542626
March 21	Middle Island working bee to install wire netting under railing of boardwalk 9.00–12.00. Many hands needed to carry and assemble. This job will enable Maremmas to stay on Island for longer periods. Bring dry clothes and water. Afterwards a BBQ at Lake Pertobe with monitoring team.
March 25	Basalt to Bay Landcare Forum for Landcare Groups to network and learn of opportunities to keep them viable. Contact Don McTaggart 03 5562 3371 or Richard Hudson 03 5564 2607 for information.
March 27	Earth Hour
April 13	Best Practice Vermin Control Field Day, Moolap. Contact Rod White, GAV, for information 0447 585 574
April 28	Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence. Contact Steve Blackley for information. Steve.blackley@dse.vic.gov.au
June 5	World Environment Day
July 7	Care Groups Day. Contact Jeremy Neilson for information 03 5152 0431

Regular Group Working Bees

Monday mornings 9.30–11am	ANGAIR Inc., contact angair@pipeline.com.au , or 5263 1085
1st Saturday of the month,	Anglesea Coast Action contact crayner3@gmail.com
Monthly	Apollo Landcare townies group, contact Southern Otway Landcare Network, 5237 6904
1st Sunday/month, 10am–12noon	Jan Juc Coast Action contact hynesluke@hotmail.com
3rd Sunday of the month	Lornecare, contact alainpurnell@bigpond.com
2nd Sunday/month, 10am–12noon	SANE, contact Graeme Stockton 0425 752 648
Monthly	Torquay Coast Action, contact gshomaly@gmail.com

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To receive Coastline in the future contact your local Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator or phone (03) 9637 9742.