



Hello Landcarers,

SOLN has undergone a lot of changes in the last few months, as you may have noticed, and with the new financial year we've got new staff, new projects in the works and lots of Webinars! Read on to see what we've been up to and what to look forward to.

MEET OUR NEW LANDCARE FACILITATOR AND PROJECT COORDINATOR

Hi I'm Sophie,

Originally from Geelong I have spent the last couple of years working in the Top End of the Northern Territory predominantly working with the Wardman Traditional Owners to help coordinate their Indigenous Protected Area through the Northern Land Council. I have a background in Environmental Science, where I have gone on to specialise in the effects of prescribed burning on the vegetation structure of the Anglesea Heathland. I am no stranger to the Otway's area, not only for regular holiday and surf visits over the years but also working on track maintenance of the Great Ocean Walk from time to time. I look forward to working with the SOLN community and learning more from all of you about the area.



G'Day I'm Olly,

Having grown up in Adelaide, where I completed my bachelor of agricultural science, I have spent the last couple of years working in crop research, agronomy and conservation in Mildura. I have always been interested in sustainable agriculture and the environment and during my university studies I travelled extensively which has allowed me to develop my knowledge of horticulture, sustainable farming practices and ecology across many different cultures and climates. As the son of an ecologist, I have grown up with a passion for the environment which I have built upon by developing my knowledge of Australian flora and fauna and their conservation. Having lived in drier areas I am excited about the amazing greenery and abundant native vegetation of the southern Otways and look forward to learning more about rainforests and high rainfall agriculture while helping to improve biodiversity conservation.



WHAT'S ON

COMBATING THE AFRICAN WEED ORCHID IN MARENGO

The African weed orchid (*Disa bracteata*) is a South African species that has been introduced to Victoria and has become a significant environmental weed. First detected at Marengo Airfield in 2015, it is the only known case in the Otway area. Adjacent to the Airfield is the ecologically significant Marengo Conservation Reserve. Like COVID, if we can hit it hard and eliminate it before it becomes established, we will save money in the long term and avoid another nail in our ecological coffin. Over the last few years SOLN has been working with our project partners; Parks Victoria and the Colac Otway Shire, with funding from the

DELWP to help protect the Marengo Nature CR from the threat of African Weed Orchid. This has involved annual monitoring, control, and education in the local area. Due to the ecology of the plant (thankfully unlike COVID) it is likely to take several years to completely eradicate. Because of COVID, this year we will be undertaking monitoring and eradication without volunteers, using paid contractors. However, we will instead be running a webinar to help raise awareness and understanding of the weed to try and get a few more eyes and ears out for unknown outbreaks (community transmission). The Flyer for the Webinar is below, all welcome, hope to see you there.

COMBATING THE AFRICAN WEED ORCHID IN MARENGO

Webinar Presented by **Dr Robin Adair**
from Australis Biological

Date: 1pm 1st September 2020

RSVP: sophie.landcare@soln.org for Zoom link





APOLLO BAY OCEAN CARE

SOLN have also been working with the Apollo Bay Fishing Co-op and the Victorian Fisheries Authority to develop a new branch focused on community education, conservation, and monitoring of our marine world. The Fishing Co-op have, for almost 30 years, been monitoring the recruitment of late larval-stage lobsters (puerulus) in the Apollo Bay harbour, as an indicator for population health.

The southern rock lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*) have an interesting and complicated life cycle. After mating, female lobsters carry thousands of fertilised eggs under their tails for 3-4 months. In spring, these eggs hatch as tiny larvae that are carried by currents out to sea where they will float, wherever the currents take them, for the next 1-2 years, drifting up to 1000km offshore. After developing into puerulus (the larval stage, about the size of a small shrimp and transparent in appearance) they begin to swim back to shore. How the puerulus navigate their way back to shore is actually unknown, but when they get to the coast, puerulus settle into cracks and crevices in shallow water, where they moult and begin to develop into juvenile crayfish.

Environmental factors such as the strength of different ocean currents, wind and water temperature, as well as the health of the rock lobster breeding population, determines the survival and settlement rate of these larval lobster. The number of individuals that survive the journey and grow into legal sized crayfish will determine the size of the fishery in years to come.



To monitor this, the Fishing Co-op run a monthly sampling program that looks at the abundance of (puerulus) settling on inshore reefs along the coast between August and January each year. This puerulus settlement index has always shown a strong correlation with catches of lobsters three to four years later. The puerulus settles naturally into areas with both reef platforms and attached algae during the dark phase of the moon (new moon period). Artificial collectors mimic the algal habitat and thus provide a mechanism that allows relative settlement rates of puerulus throughout the fishery to be measured.

SOLN is looking to set up a new group to be known as Apollo Bay Ocean Care who would assist in monitoring the puerulus and go on to expand into more marine conservation, monitoring and educational projects. If this sounds like you, find out more on their Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/Apollo-Bay-Ocean-Care-221219235967799>) or contact Oliver at oliver.landcare@soln.org.au.



greatocean
photography

Birds on Farms

Join our webinar workshop for the Otway Community and learn to identify and survey the Birds on your farm or in your backyard. Also covering topics from citizen science, bird photography and habitat revegetation to promote bird-life biodiversity on our properties.

Guest Speakers

Ian Davies

Author of Colac Otway Birds

Chris Timewell

Woodland Bird Project Co-Ordinator, Birdlife Australia

Chris Purnell

Program Leader for Wetland Birds, Birdlife Australia

Amber Nosedá

Great Ocean Photography

Richard Stone

Local bird enthusiast (esp. Hooded Plovers)

This is a **FREE** event open to all community members.

Date: Tuesday 25th August 1-3pm

RSVP: sophie.landcare@soln.org for the Zoom link



This project is funded by Corangamite Catchment Management Authority through the Victorian Landcare Grants Program.

GET INVOLVED

Over the next year, depending on how COVID plays out, SOLN has an open book and we'd like you to be involved. We have developed some ideas working with the different Landcare groups but would love input from individual members on projects and ideas to try for in the future. When the time is right we are hoping to organise monthly working bees; weeding, collecting seed, propagating, planting trees, learning and getting to know everyone. These will hopefully include a barbecue and a beer and if you have an area that needs weeding or revegetation we'd love to hear from you. Other potential projects on the cards include bee keeping workshops, working with the CFA and Traditional Owners to conduct cool, ecological burns, establishing a SOLN fruit, herb and vegetable seedbank and running reptile, amphibian and small

mammal trapping surveys, if any of these prick your interest we'd love your input and assistance. Until restrictions relax we have also got some exciting webinars happening, learning about birds on farms and the African Weed Orchid. We still have time for some more though, so if you have anything you'd like to learn more about, or have a topic you know well and would like to share on, please let us know.



VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS EXPRESSIONS OF INTERESTS WANTED

While we are in lockdown and social distancing from one another our community can still live on through other platforms, such as Webinars. SOLN are seeking members of Landcare or the community who would be interested in conducting a Webinar through us. It would be fantastic to have a number of Webinars during the next few months to keep the community occupied, engaged and spirits high during such strange times. We are looking for speakers who wish to speak on topics in Landcare, sustainable living, community development and similar fields. This could be conducted in a presentation, a video workshop form, a small video, or however else you can innovate! For example:

- A presentation on Otway seaweeds
- A video workshop on bee keeping
- A video workshop on making bug hotels in your backyard
- A recorded video on how you have incorporated Landcare and sustainable living on your property
- A talk on edible weeds

Hopefully, these brief ideas can get some creativity flowing and help us to share our different specialties throughout the community. We will assist you in providing the SOLN Zoom account, advertising the event, coordinating the participants and guidance where it is required. If you are interested in conducting a Webinar or virtual workshop through SOLN please do get in touch sophie.landcare@soln.org.



EXPRESSION OF INTERESTS FOR ON-GROUND PROPERTY WORKS

We are looking for Landholders who are interested in developing Landcare projects on their properties, from revegetation, weed removal to fencing. If this sounds like something your property needs please fill out an expression of interest form via this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf3Dt-DwJwKiX94EbByM4jK8t7CusdiVeAeydWX6NQ-N1-h1eA/viewform>