



FOFI News



The newsletter of the Friends of French Island National Park Inc.

June 2016

FRIENDS OF FRENCH ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

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PROJECT DAYS

The ferry leaves Stony Point at 10.00 am. If you plan to come on a project day, please contact the Secretary well in advance to give us time to organise any necessary transport on the island.

Saturday 25 June:

Rotunda Clean-Up and West Coast Walk

Parks Victoria have kindly allowed us to use the neglected rotunda in the Tankerton carpark to advertise our activities. We will start the day by giving the display boards a good clean and discussing the best way to use this facility. Cleaning stuff provided.

The walking trail from Tankerton Creek to Fairhaven was the vision of the late Mick Douglas and we are currently negotiating with Parks Victoria to have this officially named the Mick Douglas Walking Trail.

Our walk will take us as far as Chilcott Rocks (about 3 km), and we will be noting in particular any invasive weed species suitable for follow-up work. There will also be a mystery detour! A vehicle (or two) will take us back to Tankerton for the 4.00 pm ferry.

Saturday 23 July: Western Port Wader Survey

The Bird Observers Club, now Birdlife Australia, have been monitoring wader species at high tide roosts around Western Port since 1973. We are pleased to announce that Martin O'Brien will be the new co-ordinator for French Island, replacing outstanding birdwatcher and FOFI stalwart Murray Bouchier, whose sad passing earlier this year was noted in the last *FOFI News*.

The surveys are conducted three times a year. Allocation of teams to the different survey sites are decided on the day. Please book in with Martin on m.ob5@icloud.com.

Saturday 20 August: Landcare Planting Day

French Island Landcare's annual tree planting day continues the good work done last year along Tankerton Road between Clump Road and Ten Chain Road. Once again FOFI members are invited to join with Landcare, and will be rewarded with home-made bread and soup for lunch!

ACTIVITIES REPORTS

16 April: Visit to David Leslie and Janet Towns

Present: Andrew Browne, Chris Chandler, Christine Dineen, Gabi Eggers, Suzy Keppert, Geoff Lacey, Meg Macmillan, Terry Martin, Meredith Sherlock, Jarryn van Dyk

The weather was a little unkind for our visit to this private property at the foot of Mount Wellington, but we were warmed by welcoming cuppas and then set off to explore the extensive natural bushland.



There were some beautiful Messmate forest remnants, and Scarlet Robins hopping about, but a striking landscape of dead trees (dubbed "The Salvador Dali Forest" by Janet) at one location brought home how much damage koalas have wreaked on the island's eucalypts. David pointed out an extensive patch of blackberry growing in the Park on his western boundary and we reported this to the ranger, but unfortunately Scott Coutts told us he is already battling more than 1,000 hectares of blackberry in the Park!



The "Salvador Dali Forest"

We enjoyed our lunch back at the house, and then had time to walk north from the McLeod Road corner, where some wonderful fungi caught our attention.



Our thanks to David and Janet for facilitating a most enjoyable day, and especially for their very generous help with transport.

Saturday 14 May: Parks Victoria Volunteer Day

The towering Mount Ash and dank fern gullies of Sherbrooke Forest were a wonderful sight for visitors from the dry "lowlands" at the annual Melbourne Region Volunteer Day organised by Parks Victoria. Those lucky enough to have booked in on the early morning ranger-led lyrebird walk were rewarded by sightings of a female with large chick before they had even left the carpark! The day allowed us to meet new Friends and catch up with old ones over a BBQ lunch at the Kallista Mechanics' Hall, and concluded with a free ride on Puffing Billy from Menzies Creek to Lakeside and return. It was not possible to find out about all the other groups on the day, however, and perhaps some display boards so that different groups could advertise their activities would help at future events. Our thanks to Bernice Dowling, Volunteer Programs Coordinator, for organising the day.

FRENCH ISLAND TO BE FERAL-CAT FREE!

We are delighted that French Island has been declared one of five priority islands to be targeted for feral cat eradication by 2020 under the Federal Government's Threatened Species Strategy. (The other islands are Kangaroo Island, Bruny Island, Dirk Hartog Island and Christmas Island.)

Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment and Federal Member for Flinders, made the announcement at the Biosphere Forum on 6 May, and his office has now issued a formal press release.

Threatened Species Commissioner Gregory Andrews visited the island in April following a submission by local residents. He learned that Parks Victoria staff have trapped more than 1,300 feral cats on the island in the past five years, and that total eradication has overwhelming community support. Well done all!



FOFI members Meg Macmillan, Meredith Sherlock, Chris Chandler and Margaret Medley at Kallista

CAPE BARREN GEESE. The Westernport Biodiversity Forum in Cranbourne on 6 May was on the theme of "pest control", and reported on progress with the usual suspects: feral cats, foxes, rabbits, and Indian mynahs. Just to be different (of course!) Alison Pitt, President of French Island Landcare, spoke of some of the species threatening the island's biodiversity and farming: koalas, goats, peacocks and Cape Barren Geese. Although the latter are listed as vulnerable both in Victoria and nationally, and were recorded as "rare" in Des Quinn & Geoff Lacey, *Birds of French Island Wetlands* in 1999, it is now not uncommon to see up to 200 in a single paddock. They are nesting again now. Are there too many?



Who owns this island?

NEW MEMBERS. We extend a warm welcome to Ellen and Shane McNeice and Jarryn van Dyk.

