



# FOFI News



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

September 2016

## FRIENDS OF FRENCH ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

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## PROJECT DAYS

The ferry leaves Stony Point at 10.00 am on Saturdays and Sundays. Our website has important information about purchasing ferry tickets.

If you plan to come on a project day, please contact the Secretary well in advance to give us time to organise transport on the island. **Note:** We now also ask for a \$2 donation per person when the ranger is unavailable and we need to use private vehicles.

### Saturday 17 September:

Sea-eagle monitoring, wetlands, coastal walks.

### Sunday 18 September:

Additional project day: removal of Sallow Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*) at The Pinnacles. NB. The return ferry for Stony Point departs at 4.30 pm.

### Saturday 1 October:

Another handweeding day for the strong and fit! Blackberries near Freeman Point and Sea-Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) at Blue Gum Point. This is an opportunity to visit a wonderfully remote part of the island. Numbers limited.

### Saturday 15 October:

Activity to be advised.

### Saturday 19 November:

A walk to Tortoise Head via The Anchorage. We will check on the progress of African Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) control by Parks Victoria (see below) and look for signs of Fairy Tern breeding.

### Saturday 3 December:

Western Port Wader Survey.

## ACTIVITIES REPORTS

### 25 June: Ranger's station clean-up and coast walk

Present: Chris Chandler, Calum McConville, Meg Macmillan, Meredith Sherlock, Emily Thomson, Jarryn Van Dyk

The ranger's station in the Tankerton carpark has been sadly neglected for many years, and we are delighted to have been given access to this useful building. Many hands made light work of cleaning the exterior display boards, removing rubbish and sweeping out the surprisingly spacious interior. We then enjoyed a cuppa in our new "home" before setting out on a coast walk, noting where it may be possible to reduce infestations of Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) and Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) by handweeding on a future project day.



### 23 July: Western Port Wader Survey

Present: Chris Chandler, Martin O'Brien, Dom D'Argenio, Des Palmer, Meg Pawlik, Jethro Sallmann

Sleet, squalls, hail, wet feet ... but also sunshine were on offer for the intrepid surveyors who turned up for this annual mid-year event. There were no waders at Fairhaven and Chilcott Rocks apart from Pied Oystercatchers, and no migratory waders at Tortoise Head, but a Hobby rewarded this first group of observers with a magnificent display in the up-drafts, and 32 Australian Pelican, 40 White-faced Heron, and 30 Masked Lapwing were counted. A second group decided to visit Jam Jerrup and Stockyard Point instead of risking an uncertain ferry, and seemed to confirm that the strong westerlies had driven small birds to the more sheltered eastern side of the bay. A tight flock of 5 Bar-tailed Godwits, described by the day's coordinator Martin O'Brien as "lined up like school kids and keeping low out of the strong wind"; close to 200 Double-banded Plover, almost all completely in breeding plumage; 50 Red-necked Stints; 1 Curlew Sandpiper in brilliant breed-

ing rust-coloured plumage; 2 Red-capped Plover; and 3 Gull-billed Terns were the main sightings. As usual a full report was sent to BirdLife Australia for its records.

### 20 August: Combined Planting Day

Present: Anna Amiet, Jim Anderson, Jo Bowen, Andrew Browne, Chris Chandler, Scott Coutts, Jamie Edgerton, Julie Edgerton, Marnie Fitzsimons, Michael Howes, Dorothy Howes, Rob Knottenbelt, Sarah Patterson, Jethro Sallmann, Meredith Sherlock

A record number of FOFI members and visitors turned out to help French Island Landcare with its annual planting day. 450 wattles, bursaria and melaleuca went in to the soft damp soil along Tankerton Road east of Ten Chain Road,\* and everyone agreed that the cardboard tree guards were a big improvement over the old plastic ones. A success rate of about 80 per cent for last year's planting was also very encouraging.

We then enjoyed homemade soup, cake and coffee at the home of Alison Pitt and Jane Unwin, although our happy day was tinged with sadness that Alison and Jane will soon be leaving the island and moving to Tasmania.



Our wonderful hosts Jane Unwin and Alison Pitt

After lunch we waited for a light shower to pass by before heading up to The Pinnacles for a wildflower walk. Our SPIFFA visitors were not disappointed, describing it as "a feast for heathland fanciers". The highlight for many was a gorgeous Bluebeard Caladenia (*Pheladenia deformis*) growing right in the middle of the track. (See French Island Ecology's Facebook page for photos.)

We were also pleased to introduce members of Friends of Daangean (Devilbend) to French Island on the day. This group undertakes handweeding on the last Sunday of the month from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. Contact Marnie ([marnie\\_fitzsimons@yahoo.com.au](mailto:marnie_fitzsimons@yahoo.com.au)).

*This issue of FOFI News was compiled by Meredith Sherlock with help from Chris Chandler and Martin O'Brien. Front page photo by Walter Mitchell.*

\* Terri and Nola later planted another 150 seedlings, taken the revegetation project right up to The Centreway. Well done!

**NEW MEMBER.** We extend a warm welcome to Sarah Patterson.



Terri Coulson and Nola White from French Island Landcare stand proudly in front of the morning's work

### DRAFT ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR FRENCH ISLAND

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has released for comment a draft management plan for the French Island Rural Road Network, following the controversial road widening and removal of vegetation that occurred in 2015. FOFI is preparing a written response to the draft.

### BOXTHORN CONTROL AT TORTOISE HEAD

We have been forwarded this email from Sam Graham, ranger, South East Melbourne District, to David Nicholls of Chisholm TAFE. David removed boxthorn from the site with teams of his students from 1997 until 2009 and continues to monitor the health and population of Short-tailed Shearwater.

*Parks Victoria currently have funding to tackle Boxthorn and other emergent weeds on Tortoise Head funded through Westernport Biosphere. The work aims to protect and restore valuable waterbird habitat significant to Tortoise Head, in particular the breeding habitat for Short Tailed Shearwaters.*

*The works are aimed to be conducted in mid to late spring 2016 before the Boxthorn fruits and sets seed. There may be the option for Friends of French Island and/or Chisholm students to help out doing some follow up work around this in the future.*

### EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOTS

For the latest news on EBBs in Victoria, including on Churchill Island and as part of ongoing discussions on French Island, see the August 2016 issue of *Warron: The Eastern Barred Bandicoot Newsletter*, at <http://bit.ly/2bsCdJ>.