

Nature reserve news



FRIENDS OF OCEAN GROVE NATURE RESERVE • JUNE 2023



Superb Fairy Wren, OGNR, 12 June 2023. Photo: Gary Stephens

Editor's note

In this issue you can see more of Jen Carr's beautiful bird photography – this month she tells us about the White-plumed Honeyeater, a bird that seems to have a preference for our Reserve over other parts of the Bellarine. For those who have been wondering what is going on with the Information Centre, we can't tell you much unfortunately - not for want of trying to get some answers from Parks Victoria - but see inside for FOGNR's plan of action. And Beth Ross reports on the plants that are shooting in the area control burned in autumn. Also, some advance notice that our AGM will be held on Sunday 13 August in the Reserve this year. Further details to come but we often combine it with a breakfast at 9am.

Barbara Spiller

Birds of the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve

White-plumed Honeyeater

By Jennifer Carr



White-plumed Honeyeater. Photo: Jen Carr

I haven't had a chance to walk around the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve lately, so I thought I'd write about a bird that is commonly seen at the Reserve and not widely seen in other areas of the Bellarine Peninsula, namely the White-plumed Honeyeater [*Lichenostomus penicillatus*](#). This bird can also be seen at Blue Waters Lake in Ocean Grove (where I have seen a few nests), and also at Rice Reserve near Connewarre, but I haven't seen it in many other local areas.

Having said that, this bird is seen in many habitats throughout the Australian continent. I was amazed to see many of them in Broken Hill, and they were commonly seen when I was traveling up the west coast of Western Australia, especially around Carnarvon. These birds prefer habitats such as forests and woodlands, situated near waterways, and also in bushlands located in urban areas, as well as parks and gardens. These honeyeaters have also been recorded to seasonally migrate from mountainous regions to lower altitudes in the colder months of the year.

White-plumed Honeyeaters are small to medium birds (around 17 cms in length) that are yellowish-olive on the upperparts and have greyish lower parts. As the name implies there is a white neck-plume, and this species is the only honeyeater with this distinguishing feature.

In the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, I usually come across White-plumed Honeyeaters foraging in the manna gums at the northwest corner of the Reserve, and also around the west track bird hide

(the Gordon McCarthy bird hide). On a warm day it is possible to sit in Gordon's bird hide and watch these birds cool themselves down by diving into the water, along with Red Wattlebirds and New Holland Honeyeaters.

White-plumed Honeyeaters have several distinctive calls, and the most commonly heard call sounds like they are saying 'chick- o- wee'.



White-plumed Honeyeater. Photo: Jen Carr

Networking and connections

[Geelong Sustainability newsletter – June 2023](#)

[Bellarine Landcare Group winter newsletter 2023](#)

[Friends of the Barwon news May 2023](#)

[Bellarine Catchment Network Facebook page](#)

Life after burning

By Beth Ross

At the last working bee we inspected the burn site. It was great to see very few weeds and some healthy regrowth.

Please note that walking off the tracks is generally not acceptable. We only go off track to inspect the Reserve in special circumstances such as post-burn checks. And in this case we identified that the burn area will need treatment for spear/scotch thistle and ink weed soon!

Pictured below are some of the plants we encountered coming through after the burn. Photos by Beth Ross.



A native Fireweed or Senecio



Hibbertia sericia or silky guinea-flower



Native mosses with wallaby footprints. We wouldn't want to cause this kind of compaction but wallabies rule!



Wandering Postman or Kennedia prostrata



Running Marsh flower



Shining Hydrocotyle



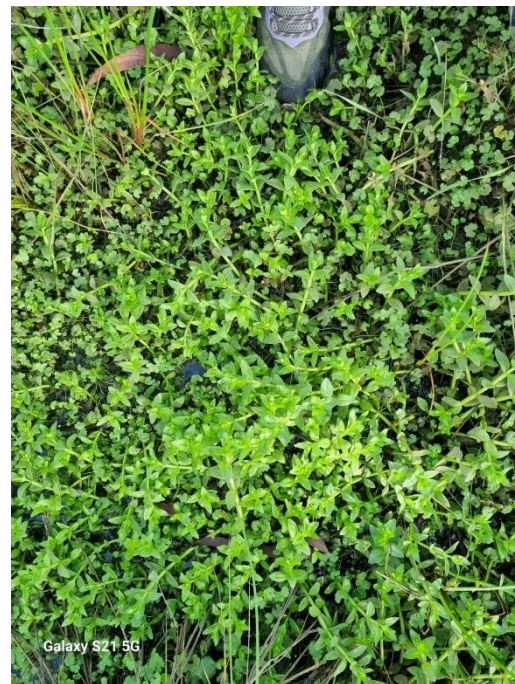
Drosera aberrans or Scented sundew, with several types of lilies.
Notice that wallabies and possums have been grazing.



Chocolate lilies or *Arthropodium strictum*



We guarded some less common plants with sticks to protect them from too much grazing



Gratiola peruviana or Australian Brooklime

What's happening with the Information Centre?

The Friends Group is frustrated with the inaction and lack of communication from Parks Victoria regarding the future of the Information Centre but as we don't want to divert all our resources into this issue at the expense of vegetation management, we have established a sub-committee (SC) to pursue the goal of the FOGNR to have a functional information centre/ meeting shelter at the OGNR, following the decommissioning of the previous Info Centre.

The stated tasks to be addressed by the SC are:

1. Recording the historical users and usage of the Info Centre
2. Noting the detailed requirements of all potential users
3. Options for an information centre/shelter based on other facilities in Australian parks.
4. Follow up on obtaining a copy of the building report done last year and the standards required for PV buildings.
5. Investigate the hiring of a structural engineer to give a full report on state of the building and repairs needed to take it up to standard. It was agreed that up to \$800 be reserved to allow this

Addressing the Tasks

1. Recording the historical users and usage of the Info Centre

The following user groups were identified as users of the OGNR and facilities

- Ocean Grove Scouts plus other Scout groups
- Local Primary Schools
- Local Secondary Schools
- Cottage by the Sea
- Wyuna Camp
- The Wild Arts Forest School (art and nature for younger kids)
- Visiting Walking Groups
- Visiting Community Groups (Probus, Senior Citizens, etc)
- Geelong Field Naturalists Club (Bird Group, Fauna Group, Plant Group)

Action: The above user groups to be contacted to identify their usage

2. Noting the detailed requirements of all potential users

- Discussion noted that scouts regularly use the BBQ facilities and also used the Info Centre for gathering in the evenings prior to spotlighting or other activities.
- Most groups require an undercover seating area.
- School groups and others would make use of a white board for display.
- Accessible Park Information (displays, maps, recently observed animals and birds) within the undercover area is useful.
- Access to clean water is useful.

Action: The above user groups to be contacted to survey their opinions about the types of facilities they wish to see available at the OGNR

3. Options for an information centre/shelter based on other facilities in Australian parks

The FOGNR committee has identified options for the site of the current Information Centre:

- A. Retain current building but repair and renovate to meet our requirements
 - B. Retain part of the current building (kitchen/store rooms that are asbestos free) and remove all external walls (keeping current roof) to create an open space
 - C. Demolish all the current building and build a new purpose built facility
 - D. Demolish the current building and just have a few new information boards for visitors. (this seems to be the PV preferred option)
- FOGNR committee members have passed on some photos of other information buildings/shelters at other parks.
 - Any additional photos will be helpful in showing possible optional ideas for a future structure at the OGNR
 - A folder of these is being kept for reference.

4. Follow up on obtaining a copy of the building report done last year and the standards required for PV buildings.

The initial closure of the Info Centre was due to asbestos concern. An engineers report identified other structural problems. The FOGNR have not received a copy of the engineers report despite earlier assurances that it would be passed on to the committee. Some comments within the report note that the building is not up to standards required as a "retail site" where visitors might congregate.

Action: Write to Stuart Lardner & Lachlan Cohen (Parks Vic) asking for:

A copy of the engineers report so that we can analyse what has been stated

A request to determine what standards apply to buildings within PV managed land. This includes:

- enclosed visitor centre or
- an open sided, covered area with some information displays
- smaller information displays without a gathering area for visitors.

We understand that building regulations within fire zones may add extra complexity.

5. Investigate the hiring of a structural engineer to give a full report on the state of the building and repairs needed to take it up to standard

Once we have clarification from PV about the engineer's report the FOGNR can then pay an engineering consultant to give us a detailed analysis of the current structural state of the Info Centre and options to make it habitable or alter it to comply with required standards.

Update as of 21 June

SC to formulate a standard letter of support to send out to all known historical users for them to sign and return, outlining their past usage of the Info Centre. A similar letter can be sent to potential users seeking their feedback.

SC has written to Stuart Lardner who advised he has just taken up a new job as acting Regional Chief Ranger. He will pass on the requests detailed in the letter to his successor (yet to be appointed). SC will follow up with this new person.

SC has made contact with an experienced structural engineer who is prepared to write a report on behalf of FOGNR, detailing the current structural integrity of the Info Centre building and our options to bring it up to required standards. The structural engineer has previous experience working with community groups. On one occasion this involved the salvaging of an existing historic building (Marshall Bluestone Cottage) located on land controlled by a government authority, resulting in a positive outcome for the community <https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/geelongtimes/news/old-cottage-has-new-hope/>

Once a response is received from PV the SC will discuss whether we need to engage the services of a structural engineer to assess the current building and what our options are for a more accessible Information Centre/shelter based on other facilities currently in Australian parks.

Working bees

By Pete Sullivan

The Friends Group generally hold a scheduled monthly working bee on the third Friday of every month in the Reserve, meeting at 9am at the Information Centre/picnic area car park then heading out into the Reserve. These sessions usually run for between 2 and 3 hours with a morning tea break in the middle. They are a great opportunity to learn about the Reserve's flora and fauna and to meet a group of friendly enthusiastic people who love the Reserve. Everyone is welcome to come along – you just need to have a Working With Childrens Check.

The tasks we focus on at our working bees are many and varied, ranging from hand weeding, tree guard maintenance, making wire tree guards, plant rescues and tree planting.

At this time of year Committee members who lead the working bees can be away so please check on [Parkconnect](#) beforehand to make sure the working bee will be held that month and if so, which tasks are planned for the day.

FOGNR Activities 2023

June

Friday 16 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

July

Friday 21 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

August

Sunday 13 **9am AGM / breakfast**

Friday 18 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

September

Friday 15 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

October

Friday 20 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

November

Friday 17 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

December

Friday 15 **9am Weeding/Working Bee**

TBA **end-of-year get-together**

Contact details

Email: friends.oceangrove.naturereserve@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/34794023030/>

Web: <https://fognr.wordpress.com/friends/>

Mail: Friends of Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, PO Box 313, OCEAN GROVE 3226

We acknowledge the traditional owners of Wadawurrung Country and pay our respects to their elders and people, past and present, as we do to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people everywhere.