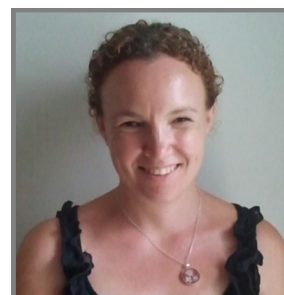




WELCOME JENNY SAFSTROM

We are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to Jenny Safstrom, who has joined the SERAG Inc. Committee this year. A number of you will already have met Jenny, her husband and their two delightful young daughters at some of our foreshore activity days.

Jenny brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in project management and environmental matters; and loads of energy and enthusiasm for rehabilitating the Swan Estuary Reserves.



WEEKENDERS PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

Over recent months, collaboration between The Regional Centre of Expertise Western Australia 'Sense of Place' Network (RCE WA), the Swan River Trust, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group Inc. has resulted in an exciting new enrichment program to be offered to interested students in years 9, 10 and 11.

Called the *Sense of Place Weekenders Project* it offers six practical and stimulating workshops focusing on the natural and cultural values of the Swan River. The workshops will take place at various locations along the river and will be delivered by expert presenters on selected Saturdays over a six-month period.

The Project aims to enhance the knowledge, skills and understandings of young people about our iconic Swan River and the issues pertaining to its care. Participants must apply for inclusion in the program and are selected on merit, with the number of participants limited to 18 students.

If you know a young person interested in environmental matters, please encourage them to apply. Applications close at 4.00pm on 9th March 2012.

Further information, including the Application Form can be downloaded from the RCE WA website: www.science.uwa.edu.au/community/regional-centre.

THE BIRD IN THE GREY FEATHER SUIT

We all love and admire charismatic birds such as the Black Swan and the Pied Oystercatcher, but perhaps even more deserving of our respect is the more conservatively attired Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), often seen foraging in the mudflats of the Swan River Estuary.

The Grey Plover is a medium-sized plover weighing around 250grams, with long legs and a short, stout bill. It is usually a solitary bird, occasionally occurring in small flocks. Its breeding grounds are the Arctic islands and coastal areas across the northern coasts of Alaska, Canada and Russia. They lay three or four eggs during early June in the dry open tundra, using shallow scrapings on the ground as nests. The eggs' incubation period is 26 or 27 days, with the chicks fledging when they are between 35 to 45 days old.

They migrate to winter in coastal areas throughout the world, those arriving in Australia and New Zealand having travelled non-stop transcontinental flights over Asia, only landing occasionally if forced down by severe weather.

The Grey Plover is listed for protection (including protection of their habitat) in the agreements that Australia has with China (CAMBA), Japan (JAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), regarding the well-being of migratory birds.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a wonderful bird visit our Estuary.



Grey Plover

(Photo courtesy Margaret Matassa)

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

As litter is one of the great spoilers of our natural environment, SERAG Inc. will again support *Clean Up Australia Day* this year. In 2011, over 16,000 tones of rubbish were removed from 7,400 sites across Australia by more than 500,00 volunteers on the Day. 80% of this was recyclable!

Not only is litter unsightly, but it can cause major problems for our wildlife. In the marine environment, discarded fishing lines and plastic ties and bags are of particular concern.

Over recent times, news stories have mentioned that a number of the bottlenose dolphins that grace our River have been found with fishing line wrapped around them, cutting into their flukes - and one had swallowed a fishing hook; that a cygnet which had swallowed a ball of fishing line had to be euthanized; that a darter, with fabric wrapped around its beak, had to be rescued, and that ducks and fish have died after being entangled in illegal fishing nets.

If you would like to help SERAG Inc. clean up our foreshore, we have organised two opportunities: one at Alfred Cove on Tuesday 28th February between 7.00am and 9.00am and the other at Pelican Point on Sunday 4th March between 8.00am and 10.00am.

GIANT REED REMOVAL AT PELICAN POINT

With the guidance of a newly completed and comprehensive Weed-Management Plan, generously funded through a State NRM grant, volunteers have commenced the removal of invasive weeds from the Pelican Point A-Class Reserve and the adjacent bushland.

The Plan clearly identifies what weeds species are present at Pelican Point, where exactly they are located, and when and how best to remove them.

So far, over the summer, large clumps of giant reed have been steadily targeted, with positive results.

Although the site is generally shady and the river has a cooling effect, work is scheduled in the mornings only, to avoid the extremely hot part of the day.

Nevertheless, a refreshing morning tea and lunch have provided welcome relief and reward for everyone's strenuous efforts.



Volunteers remove one of many clumps of giant reed.

(Photo courtesy: Margaret Matassa)

SUBMISSIONS

The SERAG Committee is submitting comments in relation to a new aquatic use and management plan proposed by the Department of Transport for the Swan Canning Riverpark. Proposed changes include speed restrictions, changes to water-ski and personal watercraft operations and closure of some areas to motorized vessels. Comments are due at the end of February.

The Committee will also be responding to the Swan River Trust's draft *River Protection Strategy*, which is a blueprint for managing the Swan Canning Riverpark over the next fifty years. Public responses are due at the end of March.

Our comments will focus on promoting the well-being of the three A-Class Reserves as sanctuaries for wildlife in the Riverpark.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

- 4 March: Keep Australia Beautiful Litter Collection - Pelican Point - 8am to 10am
- 30 April - 4 May: Planting at Milyu
- 7 May - 11 May: Planting at Milyu

Please refer to the calendar on our website for further information and contact us for details if you would like to participate.

TUESDAYS WITH MARGARET

At 7.00am each Tuesday morning, a small group of volunteers meets with Margaret at Alfred Cove for a couple of hours work tidying up in the Reserve. Please feel free to join in when you can. Margaret can be contacted on 0419 156 404 for details.



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