



# *Newsletter*

## *No. 29 Autumn, 2015*

## **Arctic Jaeger**

The Arctic Jaeger (Jaeger is German for hunter) breeds on the northern most coasts of Eurasia and North America. It is a transequatorial migrant, spending the northern hemisphere winter in southern South America, Africa and Australia.

It is a medium size, graceful sea bird with long pointed wings, resembling a falcon in flight. There are three adult plumage forms: dark, pale and intermediate. Eighty per cent of birds in Australia are dark. The non-breeding adult, which we see in Port Phillip, have pale white panels or “flashes” near the end of their wings and short, worn tail streamers that only project a few centimetres past the tail. The bird is an opportunistic predator and scavenger that is aggressive in its pursuit of smaller terns and gulls until they disgorge their food which the Jaeger catches while it falls.

The bird hide at the Paisley/Challis wetlands a good place to see an Arctic Jaeger during the warmer months.



*Arctic Jaeger*



**Nomination forms  
on the back page**

# ACTIVITY DAYS 2015



<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1st March	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Cnr Maddox Road and Kororoit Creek Road , Williamstown Melways ref 55 F8	Clean up Australia Day
29 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Paisley Challis Wetland Cnr Maddox Rd and Grey Reserve Road Williamstown Melways ref 55 F8	Maintenance, Bird Walk, and Barbecue Lunch
26 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Jawbone Arboretum, Rifle Range Reserve, Williamstown Melways ref 55 J10	Watch Watch and Bugs Maintenance works
31st May	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Paisley Challis Wetland, Corner of Maddox Road and Grey Reserve Road Williamstown Melways ref 55 F8	Planting and Maintenance
28 <sup>th</sup> June	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Jawbone Arboretum, Rifle Range Reserve, Williamstown Melways ref 55 J10	Planting, Maintenance and Waterwatch
26 <sup>th</sup> July	10:00 am-1:00 pm	TBC	National Tree Day FOWW AGM at 11:30am
30 <sup>th</sup> August	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Paisley Challis Wetland, Corner of Maddox Road and Grey Reserve Road Williamstown Melways ref 55 F8	Planting and Maintenance
27 <sup>th</sup> September	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Paisley Challis Wetland, Corner of Maddox Road and Grey Reserve Road Williamstown Melways ref 55 F8	Maintenance
25 <sup>th</sup> October	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Jawbone Arboretum, Rifle Range Reserve Williamstown Melways ref 55 J10	OPEN DAY – Speaker, Displays, Water Watch and Bugs, Coastal Walk, Morning Tea
29th November	2:00 pm-4:00 pm	Jawbone Arboretum, Rifle Range Reserve Williamstown Melways ref 55 J10	Joint activity with the JMSCG, Maintenance and Barbecue Lunch

## Friends of Williamstown Wetlands Waterwatch program

In 2014 we continued to measure the physical and chemical parameters of water samples taken from the Jawbone lakes as part of our Waterwatch program. Results are similar to previous years, the water quality being good enough to support a range of birds, aquatic plants and invertebrates. We measured turbidity, dissolved oxygen, phosphates, ammonia, pH and temperature in accordance with Melbourne Water's Waterwatch program. Check it out at <http://www.waterwatchmelbourne.org.au>

This year we spent more time pond dipping for freshwater invertebrates. Not only does it give us a good indication of the water quality, it's lots of fun. The most common invertebrates we caught were waterboatmen, freshwater shrimps, mites and amphipods, tiny crustaceans often called sideswimmers. Click on this link for more information [amphipods](#).

This year's highlights included finding water boatmen of all sizes, from very tiny ones to the adult form. The young have only wing buds,

Adults swimming with patterned wings  
Wing buds  
(drawing by N Olliff)



It was good to see that the lake is still populated with flat-headed gudgeon *Philypnodon grandiceps*. These native fish were introduced into the lakes in 1997, and we always take care to put them back uninjured.

Only one mosquito fish *Gambusia holbrooki* was caught this year, a good sign as hopefully the gudgeon are taking over. It was taken to a home aquarium to join the two mosquito fish caught in 2013. They seem to live for quite a long time!



Flat-headed gudgeon



## The Challis Wetland Project

A few years ago the Friends of Williamstown Wetlands (FoWW) group turned their attention to a little forgotten part of the Challis Wetlands, where the Kororoit Creek flows into Port Phillip Bay. The aim was to create a **Bird Watchers' Paradise**. The particular area in question can be found at the southern end of Maddox road in Newport, adjacent to a car park. (Melway ref. 55 F8).

The Challis Wetlands, adjacent to the old Williamstown Rifle Range, are a unique part of the foreshore and have been a central focus of the FoWW's conservative and protective attention. Over the years we have applied for, and received, grants that have allowed us to enhance the area and provide access to the wider community to watch and enjoy the many resident and migratory birds such as Red-necked Stints, Fluttering Shearwaters, Fairy Prion, and Australasian Gannets, and many more. These birds utilize the wetlands throughout the year for finding food and shelter. The tidal mud flats and shallow waters at the mouth of the Kororoit Creek form a wonderful habitat for many species.

We also showcase a variety of coastal native ground covers, grasses, trees and shrubs. Soon the shrubs will be tall enough to allow human visitors to approach the Bird Hide from the southern entry, without being seen by the birds. The bird hide, the centre of the area, has been upgraded recently and offers comfortable seating and allows excellent viewing over the coastal area, where the wetlands drain and the Kororoit Creek enters into Port Phillip Bay. At the hide a beautiful new panel depicts the more common seabirds, shorebirds and water fowls that frequent the area.

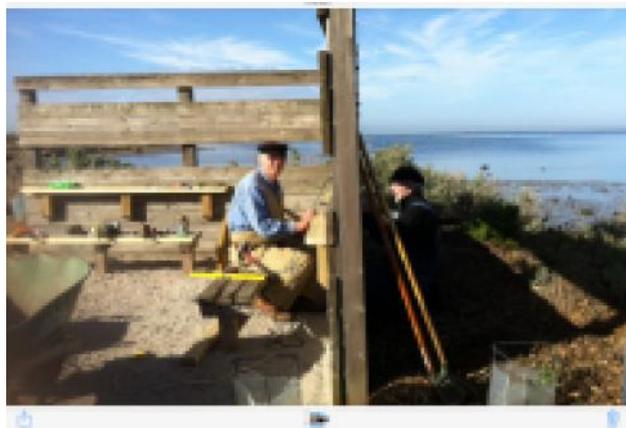
In addition to that, a new path has been made; and benches - constructed out of old second hand timber - blend nicely into the environment and make it easy for passers-by to drop in and enjoy the views over the bay and the wetlands to the north

Apart from lots more planting and mulching between now and the next summer, the FOWW will connect the bird hide path to the Hobsons Bay Coastal Bike Path. This bike path is 23km long, starting at the Westgate Bridge in Spotswood and ending at Skeleton Creek in Altona Meadows. The path brings many bike riders to the area. Once the bird hide path is connected to the bike path, signs will be erected that invite and direct bike riders and walkers to the bird hide.

So drop in, bring your binoculars and a warm coat during winter. The wind coming from the south over the bay can be rather chilly, although the bird hide provides good wind shelter.

See you there,

*(We gratefully acknowledge that the work has been carried out with the help and support of the Hobsons Bay City Council.)*



*A couple of old  
blokes put the  
finishing  
touches to the  
new bird-hide*

*Wader Beach litter.  
Article next page.*



## Litter hotspots program - Wader Beach for birds not litter

Update no 6

Date: 19 April 2015

- **Communications**

We are planning to make some school visits in the second half of 2015 and have purchased 8 copies of the Baykeeper DVD to show children the effects of litter on our bay and wildlife. Its well worth watching if you haven't already seen it. Sandra Thorn (FOWW) and Neil Blake (PPEC) will be visiting schools later this year.

We continue to promote our litter hotspots project with other groups. Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek are interested in our project and we plan to have a bit of fun in June photographing litter that gets stuck in the reeds along the Creek. While the reeds act as a filter to prevent litter reaching Wader Beach, it all ends up there eventually following a big storm.

We also share our information with Western Melbourne Catchments Network. WMCN coordinator, Colleen Miller, sent me this photo of Kororoit Creek from a few years ago when there was a big storm surge that pushed lots of litter along the creek banks.

### Ñ **Health Safety and the Environment**

We continue to record and sign off on our JSA at every monitoring event.

April's monitors, Peter, Nick, Marilyn and Karen at a wet and windy Wader Beach.

- **Monitoring site update**

***See table next page***

### **ACTIONS:**

There is only one more formal monitoring event at Wader Beach and at Greenwich Bay to complete our 6 month collection of data.

More work is underway for monitoring at Kororoit Creek, Paisley Drain and Challis Drain, these will be weather dependent so please contact Peter at [h.p.smithnz@gmail.com](mailto:h.p.smithnz@gmail.com) or Marilyn (after 31<sup>st</sup> May) at [mpolliff@gmail.com](mailto:mpolliff@gmail.com) if you would like to help.

- **Waterway monitoring:**

We have learnt a lot about trapping litter in the waterways from experimenting with our large net and the PPEC manta net.

The manta net worked better in Paisley drain as it is quite deep at high tide. Challis drain was too shallow even at high tide preventing the net from streaming out with the flow.

We will continue to make observations of litter in the drains following heavy rainfall. Our main event will be checking out litter in Kororoit Creek upstream from the ford in June.

We have a lot of canoeing enthusiasts keen to brave the weather and the water to paddle in the creek and come up with ideas for future work in this area.

- **Next steps**

We have committed grant money for an interpretive sign and a community event at the end of the project. As with the school visits, these items will be undertaken in the second half of the year to allow our volunteers time to complete the tasks.

Peter Smith is preparing all the data for submission to Port Phillip Eco centre in June. They will prepare our report for presentation to Hobsons Bay City Council and include recommendations for future actions to minimise litter in our area. Peter has also started writing up our methodology and findings as PPEC is keen for us to share our experiences.

If anyone reading this who has not yet volunteered to join the project and would like to help, please contact the project team. Even if you don't have time to volunteer on the ground, your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

- **Monitoring site update**

FoWW and JMSCG have been monitoring at Wader Beach. We now have five months worth of data. FOGB continue their monitoring at Greenwich Bay, thanks to Maria and her friends.

<b>Site</b>	<b>Mark out</b>	<b>clean</b>	<b>monitors</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Wader Beach 1 (PV land)	FOWW Completed 28 Nov	Scab Duty Completed 30 Nov	Peter Smith, Karen Manly, Ian Rae, Marilyn Olliff, Dave Speller, Nick Olliff	Monitored 21 December, 19 Jan, 22 Feb, 22 March, 19 April Next monitoring ~ 17 May
Wader Beach 2 (PV land)	FOWW Completed 28 Nov	Scab Duty Completed 7 Dec	Peter Smith, Karen Manly, Ian Rae, Marilyn Olliff, Dave Speller, Nick Olliff	Monitored 21 December, 19 Jan, 22 Feb, 22 March, 19 April Next monitoring ~ 17 May
Lawbone Marine Sanctuary (PV land)	FOWW Completed 28 Nov	Scab Duty Completed 7 Dec	Peter Smith, Karen Manly, Ian Rae, Marilyn Olliff, Dave Speller, Nick Olliff	Monitored 21 December, 19 Jan, 22 Feb, 22 March, 19 April Next monitoring ~ 17 May
Greenwich Bay (HBCC land)	FOGB/FO WW completed 14 Dec	FOGB/FP WW Completed 14 Dec	FOGB	Monitored 14 Dec, 18 Jan, 22 Feb, 22 March, 19 April Next monitoring scheduled for 17 May
Challis drain(MW or HBCC)		Not required	Not required	

# Friends of Williamstown Wetlands

Nomination Form  
Committee of Management 2015-2016

I hereby nominate (Name).....

For the position of .....

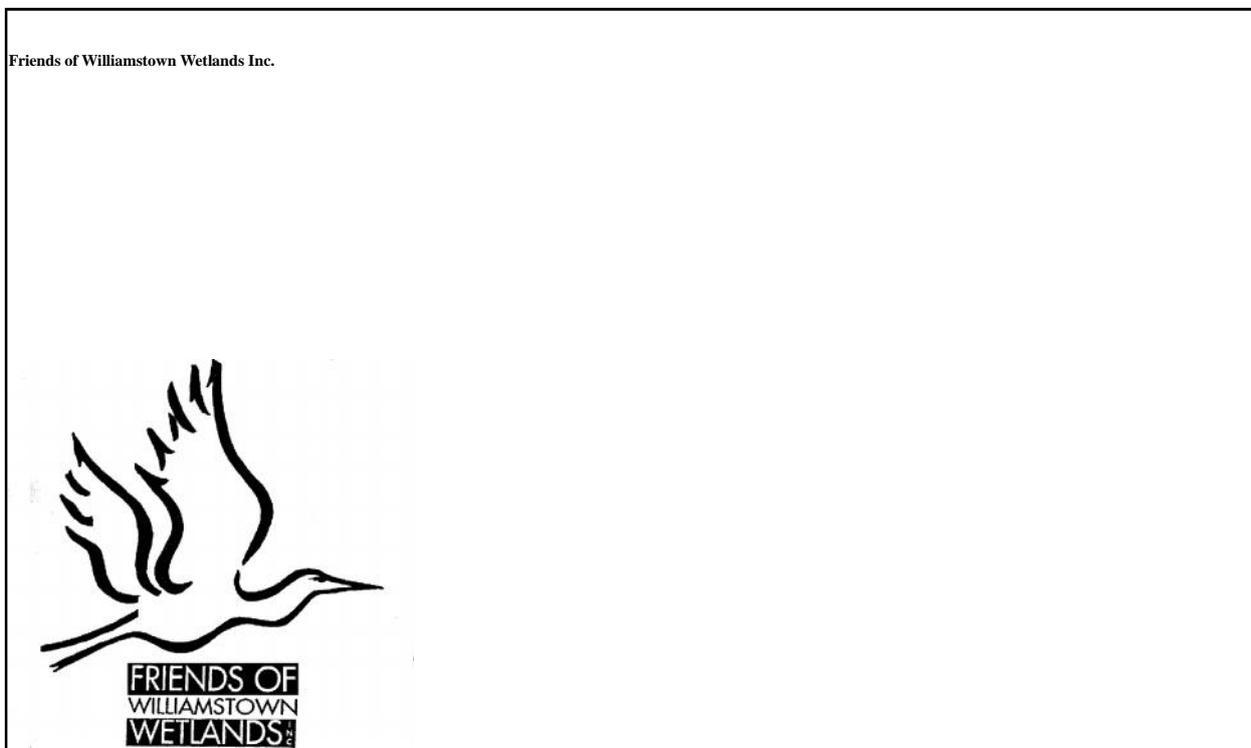
Proposed by: .....

Seconded by:.....

I accept this nomination for the above position

(Signature of nominee).....Date.....

(Return to Secretary



**SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE FOR THE YEAR 2015 -16**

**FRIENDS OF WILLIAMSTOWN WETLANDS -- ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**POSTCODE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TELEPHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Receipt Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Send your \$15(fam), \$10.00(sing.) or \$5(con.) subscription to Treasurer or Membership Secretary. Ph. 9397 2358