

PNHA NEWS

Autumn 2019 Issue 79

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association – thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA UPDATE:

GRANTS:

PNHA gets 5 years more funding for bush regeneration at the Baha'i Temple

The PNHA volunteers working at the Baha'i Temple, Ingleside have been given \$15,000 for this year and promised \$50,000 each year for a further four years to continue our bush regeneration work to protect the threatened *Grevillea caleyi*.

Grevillea caleyi occurs only on a few ridges within an eight square kilometre area around the Belrose, Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest and Ingleside area, including six hectares of habitat on the Baha'i Temple site.

The current project, funded by Greater Sydney Local Land Services and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, has been going for five years already and we are excited to be given the means to enable our work to continue. Over the life of the project so far, we have halted the decline of this species and witnessed the growth of many new seedlings.

Our bush regeneration mornings are enjoyable and very rewarding and we welcome new volunteers. Please come up and contribute to the project at our next bush regen morning on April 8 starting at 8.30 am. Volunteers must wear long trousers, a long sleeved shirt and boots or closed in shoes.

Completed: Our **Mona Vale Basin Stronger Communities** grant for \$12000 provided extra contract bush regeneration work to support the bushcare volunteers working with great persistence and success at the far northern end of Mona Vale beach, where dunes vegetation and littoral rainforest were infested with weeds. **Want to help?** The bushcare group meets 8.30 first Saturday morning of each month.

Continuing: our Sydney Freshwater Wetlands Careel Bay grant from GSLLS for \$3451. (right) This is an endangered > P.2



Protecting Pittwater's Environment



PNHA is on Facebook and now Instagram. Please Like and Follow us for the latest news

INSIDE : Plants of Themeda Grassland on Mona Vale Headland p.3; a Garden Pond on Bilgola Plateau p.4; Wildlife in the 'Burbs—Eastern Water Dragon and Crimson Rosella family p.6; Leopard Slugs Love Beer p.6; Safe Cats, Safe Wildlife p.6; Red-fruited Olive Plum p.6; News from the Nesting Box on the Western Shores - Feathertailed Gliders p.7

ecological community. In partnership with Northern Beaches Council the Careel Creek bushcare group is planting tubestock and helping with maintenance of contractor bush regenerator work. Additional Council funding is boosting the project. The site is between Barrenjoey Rd and the Hitchcock Park soccer field. **Want to help?** The bushcare group meets on the fourth Saturday morning of each month.

Biobanking proposal for Ingleside Chase Reserve

What is biobanking? BioBanking is a market-based offset scheme that allows developers to buy 'biodiversity credits' to counterbalance the loss of biodiversity resulting from their development.

'Biodiversity credits' are generated by landowners who commit to enhance and protect biodiversity values on their land through a biobanking agreement. These credits can be sold, generating funds to manage the site. Buyers include developers, conservation and philanthropic organisations and government. See more: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/questions/biodiversity-banking-and-offsets-scheme-biobanking>

Northern Beaches Council has prepared a Biobanking Application for Ingleside Chase Reserve. A biobanking site is an in-perpetuity agreement between a land manager (Council in this instance) and the State government – and provides funding for the ongoing management of the biobanking site for conservation purposes.

Such conservation purposes in Ingleside Chase Reserve include improving habitat value and conservation of threatened flora and fauna species, reducing the impact of weeds and feral animal pests, and reducing human impacts to improve water quality in the Narrabeen, Fern and Mullet Creek catchments. **PNHA is fully supportive of this proposal and we urge members to express support by April 21.** For more detail, and have your say, go to <https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/inglesidebiobank>

Mona Vale Road update

PNHA is continuing to advocate for better environmental outcomes for the upgrade of Mona Vale Road East and West.

We met with representatives of Georgiou Group, the contractor for Mona Vale Road East on February 22 to discuss the issues of roadkill, weed control and soil erosion during the construction phase.

We have also had meetings with the RMS staff in charge of the Mona Vale Road West upgrade where they intend to dump a large amount of excavation spoil to create a raised embankment for construction of the new road. As a consequence of our advocacy RMS have agreed to reduce the width of the embankment so as to create a wider fauna corridor. They will also take action to improve other environmental outcomes.



Warriewood Wetland weed control. We have a long-standing interest in the conservation of the Warriewood Wetland. In 2003-4 in partnership with the then Pittwater Council we managed a \$26687 Envirofund community grant project to fund on-ground works (\$22000) and to raise community awareness of the area. Our *Introductory Fieldguide to the Birds of Warriewood Wetland and Irrawong Reserve* was published during this project and we instituted *Breakfast with Birds* events which ran for several years. This area is of great importance in the natural environment of our area and indeed all of Sydney.

Now the Wetland appears to have been abandoned as weeds are flourishing. We sent a strong letter to Northern Beaches Council urging more weed control and await a reply. Left: *Ludwigia peruviana*, serious weed of wet areas.

Clean Up Australia Day. This year our site was next to mangroves and saltmarsh at Careel Bay at the end of William St Avalon. Thanks to Julie Bennett who was Cleaner-Upper-In-Chief on the day and to our helpers who found quite a bit of rubbish.

First Prize for the biggest item of rubbish went to : Gillian May of Avalon.



PNHA is represented on Northern Beaches Council Environmental Strategic Reference Group (SRG). On the Agenda for next meeting 30 May 2019 is discussion of Development of a Draft Northern Beaches Council Bushland and Biodiversity Policy. **Please contact us before that date if you would like to add your ideas to our contribution to this vital**



topic of such importance to our area.

Themeda Grassland on Mona Vale Headland Reserve

Themeda Grassland on coastal headlands is an endangered ecological community. It occurs on 4.54ha of North Mona Vale Headland. It's also found on the slope south of Bilgola Beach and around the edges of Avalon Golf Course. It's endangered because much has been lost to development, mowing and rabbits.

More: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/ThemedaGrasslandSeacliffsEndSpListing.htm>

Themeda triandra, Kangaroo Grass, left, is the dominant species but Petra Holland in her bush regeneration work on north Mona Vale headland has found and photographed many small native plants, easily overlooked, that are benefitting from conservation. She has found all these on only 0.45ha of the headland area. They mostly flow-



Above: *Astroloma humifusum*
Below: *Chorizema parviflorum*



Boronia polygalifolia
Goodenia hederaceae



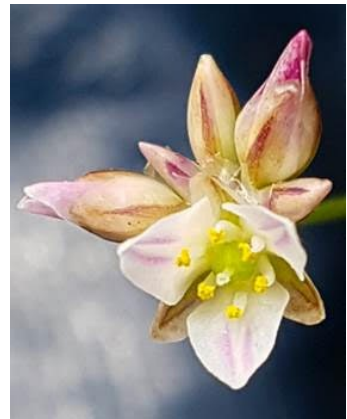
Bossiaea prostrata
Hypericum gramineum



Caesia parviflora
Laxmannia gracilis



er
in



Polymeria calicina

The flowers here are shown about twice life size.

The native species list for the whole headland area includes 17 other native grasses in addition to Themeda. Vegetation on the headland includes two other Ecologically Endangered Communities: Coastal Headland Clay Heath—with *Allocasuarina distyla*, and without *A. distyla*, and Coastal Headland Littoral Thicket. See: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10867>

To get to Mona Vale Headland Reserve, drive east to ends of Hillcrest Ave, Grandview Pde or Bassett St. A cleared grassed slope enables walking between these roads.

A Garden Pond on Bilgola Plateau

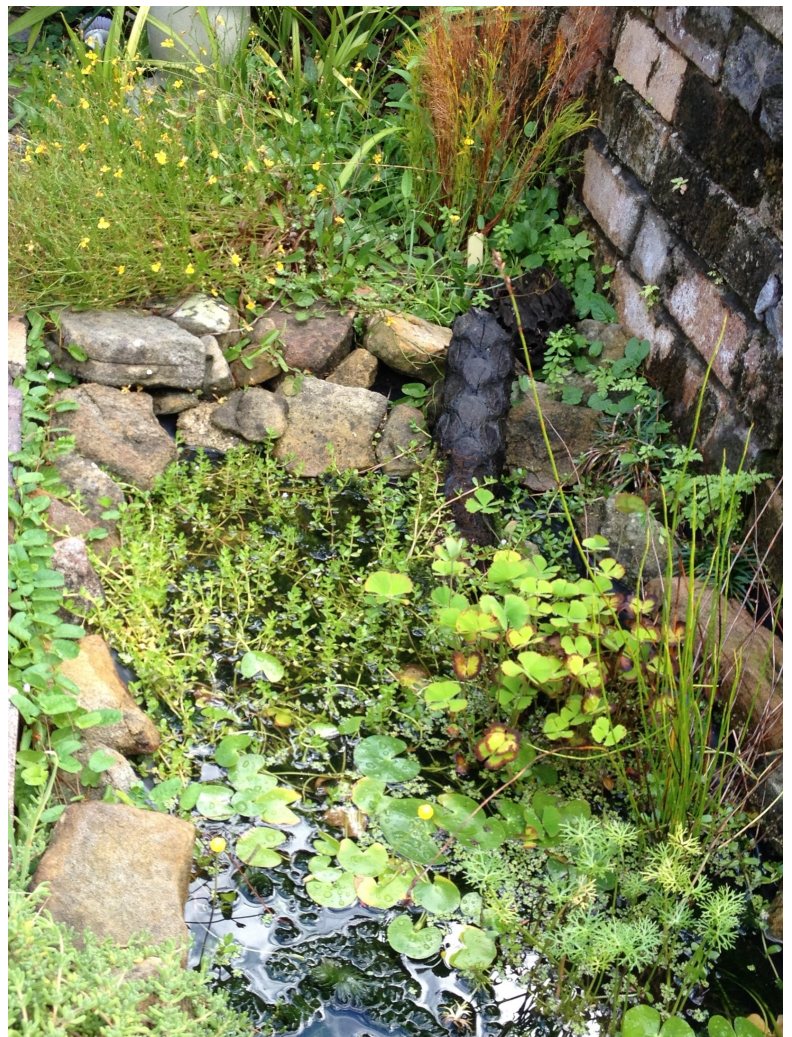
There are two small ponds in our back garden which we refurbished three years ago. Since then there has been an increase in wildlife in and around the ponds. We planted the ponds with native aquatic plants: Yellow Marshwort (*Nymphoides geminata*), River Buttercup (*Ranunculus inundatus*), Water Hyssop (*Bacopa monnieri*), Native rush (*Baloskion pallens*) plus some water weeds that were in the original ponds.

The first thing we noticed was an increase in noise from the frogs, the Striped Marsh Frog with its distinctive knocking call and the cackle of Peron's Tree Frog *Litoria peronii* (left).



Soon there was frog spawn. Some was eaten by the skinks, water dragons and ants but a lot survived and we were able to watch the tiny tadpoles grow and turn into froglets. At this stage they would climb on to the leaves

of the marshwort and sit in the sun. Hear the call at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqchli4KzF4>



Yellow Marshwort

We began finding the mature frogs in the garden at the sides of the pond, on the deck, in a hollow metal post by the fence and even inside the garden umbrella. Well, it is a tree frog!

Dragonflies, Fiery Skimmers and Damselflies, Common Bluetails and Aurora Bluetails are frequent visitors. These we observed laying eggs as they have aquatic larvae.



Damselfly: Common Bluetail *Ischnura heterostrica*



Damselfly: Aurora Bluetail *Ischnura aurora*

On doing some pond dipping I found Dragonfly larvae, Spider Mud Eye and Cotta Mud Eye (*Aeshnidae*), Leaf-tailed Damselfly nymph (*Coenagrionidae*), and tiny Water Treaders (*Veliidae*)



Leaf-tailed Damselfly nymph



Dragonfly larva: Cotta Mud Eye



Dragonfly larva: Spider Mud Eye

The latest visitor to our ponds is a Fishing Spider (*Dolomedes* sp) These spiders will dive to catch and eat

small fish and tadpoles but also insects, either on the surface or swimming below. They sense vibrations through the water, which is why the



Fishing Spider, *Dolomedes* species

spider hunts with legs spread to sense move-

ment. They escape predators by going under the water. Hairs on their bodies trap air so they can stay submerged for some time.



Dragonfly: Fiery Skimmer

Thank you Helen Smith Arachnologist at Australian Museum for your information and ID on the spider.

Jan Marshall is a PNHA committee member and experienced Streamwatch volunteer.

Jan found her pond plants at the native plant nursery, now at Kuring-gai Council Wildflower Gardens, Mona Vale Rd St Ives.

All photos by Jan except Nymphoides image, from <https://austplants.com.au/Nymphoides-geminata-Entire-Marshwort>

Mosquitoes? Are you wondering? Jan: I haven't seen any mosquito larvae in the ponds for ages but we do occasionally get them in water that might accumulate in pots, so I think the answer is yes, the wildlife reduces the mozzie larvae.

What's the difference between Damselflies and Dragonflies? One quick difference is that at rest, Dragonflies hold their wings sideways at right angles to the body, Damselflies' wings lie along the abdomen. For more, go to: <https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/animals/insects/dragonflies-and-damselflies-order-odonata/>



Wildlife in the 'Burbs



This Eastern Water Dragon and Crimson Rosella family know who their friends are in Rockbath Rd, Palm Beach.

The latest in gourmet dining? Leopard Slugs in Beer?

They love beer, but it kills them. This is a safe way to get rid of them in the garden. Other wildlife or pets cannot be poisoned, as can happen with commercial snail bait.



The **Leopard Slug** *Lima maximus* is native to Europe and devours green plants.

Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife

We love our cats and we love our wildlife.

The fact is, the more time a pet cat spends safe at home, the less risk of injury or death from road accidents, fighting, and disease. A pet cat kept safe at home can live up to four times longer than a cat left to roam. With the help of Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife, providing a safe space at home for a cat to thrive can be simple, fun and rewarding.

Here are some tips about how to get it right:

<http://www.safecat.org.au/about-us.html>

This is a joint initiative between Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria.



A small local tree for your garden?

**Red-fruited Olive Plum ,
Elaeodendron australe, formerly called
*Cassine australe***

Suitable for a moist protected position. It grows in Spotted Gum forest, but also in littoral rainforest on Avalon Dunes. Grows to about 8m.

Its autumn berries are actually orange, smaller than a marble. Dense dark foliage. This one in Grandview Drive, Newport.



News from the Nesting Box March 2019

Nestboxes on the Western Shores of Pittwater are providing homes for Feathertailed Gliders and Eastern Pygmy Possums.

Camera traps are set up by local residents to find out what these little marsupials are up to in the dark.

Click here to read the latest news:

<http://www.westpittwater.com.au/projects/news-from-the-nesting-box-march-2019>

The Feathertail Glider is named for its remarkable tail which is flat with stiff fringed hair growing horizontally either side all the way to the tip. The tail is used to steer and brake as they glide through the trees.

Feathertail gliders are from the Burramyidae family and are related to the Pygmy possum. A fascinating feature of these tiny mammals is that because they are so small they have trouble staying warm when it is cold or when there is a shortage of food. Like the Sugar glider they enter a state known as torpor.

This means that for short periods, their breathing slows down and the animal becomes unresponsive, the body temperature drops almost to that of its surroundings. This state is not to be mistaken for hibernation which is for much longer periods and is not known to occur in other marsupials.

The feet resemble that of a frog except with fur, and the large pads on the toes which have serrated groves underneath allow them to climb just about anything. In fact many sweat glands creating moisture on the foot pads allow this tiny glider the surface tension like mini suction cups to climb even vertical panes of glass.

Image: Lesley Stevens

More Info: <https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-info/wildlife-education/feathertail-gliders>



Membership Application

I would like to join Pittwater Natural Heritage Association. I agree with the PNHA's aims: raising awareness of and preserving our unique Pittwater natural environment.

Name:.....

Signed:.....

Address:.....P/Code

Email:.....

Ph:.....

Date:.....

Newsletters are emailed to members and posted on our webpage. Membership fee: \$20 or \$10 pensioner/student. To pay your membership, you can deposit electronically into our account at the Commonwealth Bank: BSB 062 208, account no.10168467. **Type your surname in the reference box so we know who the membership is for.** Alternatively make cheque payable to: **Pittwater Natural Heritage Association** or **PNHA**. Post cheque payable to **Pittwater Natural Heritage Association** to PNHA, PO Box 187, Avalon Beach NSW 2107.

Contact Details: 0439 409 202 or 0404 171 940