

# PNHA NEWS

Spring 2019 Issue 81

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association – thinking locally, acting locally

## PNHA AGM 2019 at Katandra, August 25

Jayden Walsh gave us a great presentation on local reptiles. The number and variety is enormous, including many species of skinks, snakes and goannas, but only the Broad-headed Snake is listed as endangered. His talk made us realise the losses that can ensue, unnoticed, when bushland and their habitats are lost. Thanks very much Jayden.

Right: Death Adder - Grey morph. Jayden Walsh



Left: Lunch near the Yurt. Ian Ralph

Katandra is a great location for our AGMs, which we follow with a splendid lunch. We always seem to be lucky with the weather!

The new PNHA Committee is Marita Macrae President, David Palmer Secretary, Mark Turner Treasurer, Robyn Hughes Membership Secretary, Committee Members: Jan Marshall, Edna Blanchard, Gary Harris and Julie Bennett.



*Protecting Pittwater's Environment*

**PNHA is on Facebook and Instagram**

Want to get in touch? [pnhainfo@gmail.com](mailto:pnhainfo@gmail.com)

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### PNHA's objectives and vision

The vision and objectives that guide us are: to protect and enhance Pittwater's natural environment and raise awareness of it and the threats it faces in the community.

We have had another busy year, with all on ground projects completed, ongoing campaigns from previous years on hold for a while, and some new ones this year.

### Ingleside Land Release/ Mona Vale Rd/ connectivity for fauna.

After several years of meetings about these issues, activity for us slowed down in 2019. The Ingleside land release is on hold pending decisions by the Dept of Planning and NB Council about bushfire safety issues, as regulations changed following the Tathra fires last summer. Also as you will have seen, Mona Vale Rd is in a horrendous state as it undergoes widening, long awaited by many, who probably had no idea, as did we, just how extensive would be the bushland destruction involved. We requested and understood the contractors Georgiou were to erect temporary fauna fences but this has been late and haphazard, it seems.

**Several bush regeneration projects** were completed: Careel Creek Vine Weed control, Mona Vale Basin Bushcare support, and Sydney Freshwater Wetlands near Careel Bay.

The **Grevillea caleyi** project at the Bahai Temple continued until recently, but is now on hold while we await our next instalment of grant funds.

Two items of very **good news** during the year were firstly that the Land and Environment Court refused the application by Bayview Golf Club for a big Seniors Living development.

And just this week the news that the Littoral Rainforest land at 62 Hillside Rd Newport will be bought for \$4.5million by the Department Planning (Green Space Program) and NBC. The formal announcement by Rob Stokes will be made early next week. We are enormously appreciative of the work of Rob Stokes and the Council in acquiring this land, to be regenerated and added to the neighbouring Attunga Reserve. Another bushcare group will be starting soon!

**Indian Mynas.** Our campaign to trap these pests met with limited success involving difficult work by only three of us. NB Council would not take part. One of the volunteers Nick Halkyard was determined to persist however, so PNHA handed over the project to him and we relieved ourselves of an impossible task. We hope to have the birds declared a pest species.

**Clean Up Australia** – the first weekend in March, this year we cleaned up in Careel Bay mangrove and salt-marsh at the end of William St. Avalon

**Birdwatching outings.** We've had two adventures this year, one to Warriewood Wetlands and last weekend to our beloved Chiltern Track in Ku-ring-gai NP to look at wildflowers and birds as well. Thanks very much to our guides, Kerry Smith, Jan Marshall and Russell Beardmore. We organised bookings through Eventbrite.

We recently gave a presentation on PNHA's history and work at a recent Landcare/Bushcare Forum hosted by Greater Sydney Local Land Services at Parramatta. Awards were given to many people in landcare/ bushcare groups for impressive achievements.

We had a stall at **Avalon Market Day** last November and have booked another for this year. You wouldn't think weeds could be popular but they are a great drawcard to our stall, where people have the chance to identify ones they know and chat to us about what to do about them.

We sell a lot of our **cards** at market days and at the annual bushcare Christmas party put on for bushcare people by NBC.

### Communications:

**1. PNHA Website social media.** Our website has been improved, but we are more active on Facebook. Our Facebook page needs all the *likes* it can get. We are doing Instagram as well in a bid to get the interest of younger people. We want to raise awareness of PNHA and also of the amazing natural world we live in.

**2. Email** We communicate by email to our members items of local interest, citizen science opportunities and wider environmental problems relevant to Pittwater.

**3. Newsletters.** We send out about 130, emailed to

members and also to non-members such as Council staff and Councillors. You can read the newsletter a couple of weeks later on our web page. Readers can click on the links within the articles to find more information. We welcome suggestions and contributions.

**4. PNHA Brochure** Our new brochure is here today. Please take some and encourage friends to join us.

#### **Northern Beaches Council**

PNHA is again represented on the Natural Environment Strategic Reference group, set up to develop priorities for management of our natural environment for the new Council. It meets quarterly.

#### **Submissions this year to Council:**

##### **Support:**

for proposal for Palm Beach to have a **Night Sky Park** and for **Ingleside Chase Reserve** to be a recipient of Bio-banking funds.

We alerted Council to the very neglected condition of **Warriewood Wetland** earlier this year. Weeds such as Ludwigia and Coral Tree were almost touching the boardwalk. We know the area is a sink for money but it must be maintained. Incidentally we are now in the process of arranging for Council to replace the bird signs funded by our grant in 2004 as they are now very shabby.

**Draft Urban Tree Canopy.** We submitted our ideas for this, but so many people have done so it's taking NBC a long time to sort out what to do. Planting thousands of extra trees in the suburbs is not as straightforward as you might think.

#### **Station Beach**

We objected to the use of Station Beach as a limited off leash dog swimming area on environmental grounds, that endangered seagrass would not be properly protected. We considered the latest Review of Environmental Factors (REF) should have been published before the proposed trial was offered for public submissions. We dispute the council's capacity to manage the use of the area according to the REF's requirements. This comes to Council this Tuesday.

#### **Public Art on Headlands**

Belatedly we became aware of the proposal for public art on headlands along the coastal walkway. We can't imagine how such art can enhance what are already stupendous views and wonderful locations. We requested interpretive signs instead. This dispute is still to be resolved.

#### **Narrabeen Lagoon Aquatic Walkway**

This is under construction currently and appears to be shorter, closer to the shore and less visually obtrusive that was planned.

A big thanks to our **management committee** and our allies in our activities. The committee meets every two months. David Palmer our secretary, Robyn Hughes is Membership Secretary, Mark Turner is Treasurer, Julie Bennett, Gary Harris and Edna Blanchard committee members. Jan Marshall joined us during the year. Thanks very much all for your wise suggestions and hard work.

PNHA Membership is now over 100, but it should be more. We do urge members to try to get a friend to join. Thank you to Robyn, who does a great job of managing the membership list and reminding us when membership renewal is due.

**Looking to the future**, we will continue to campaign for our local natural environment. We have generally kept our activities to the old Pittwater LGA, but bring to our members environmental news from further afield.

**We welcome ideas and contributions from members as to what we could do, how we do it and feedback on what we've done.**



#### **Spot the Difference?**

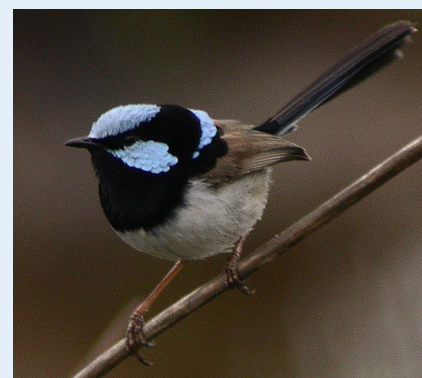
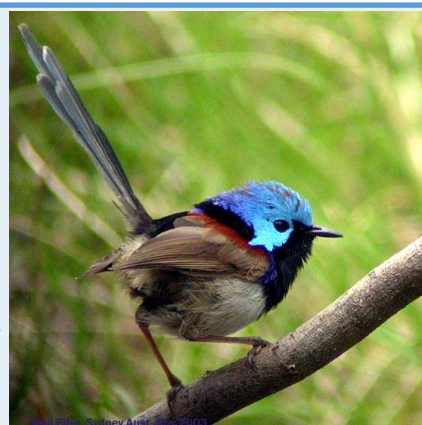
Top: Male **Variegated Wren**

Below: Male **Superb Wren**.

Images: N. Fifer

Females and juvenile males of both species are similar, mostly pale brown.

Both species can be seen in Warriewood Wetland, Chiltern Track bushland and other bushland, Superb Wren more likely to visit suburban gardens and parks.







## Newport Littoral Rainforest Saved

The land at 62 & 85 Hillside Rd Newport has been purchased for \$4.5 million by Northern Beaches Council and the Department of Planning. It will be added to the adjacent Attunga Reserve.

This land has had 10 years of threats of subdivision and destruction and was inappropriately approved for subdivision by Council early 2018.

Our petition to Rob Stokes and Mayor Regan to save it on behalf of the many who dreaded its loss was successful. We are extremely appreciative of this result.

**We are planning a celebration on Sunday September 15 on the site at Mick Glasheen's house. Contact us at [pnhainfo@gmail.com](mailto:pnhainfo@gmail.com) if you would like to come.**

## PNHA Activities:

### Spring flower walk on the Chiltern Track, Ku-ring-gai NP

Sunday August 18<sup>th</sup> was a lovely day for the Spring Flower walk along the Chiltern Track. The flowers put on a brilliant display, reds, pinks, yellows, whites and even a few blue specimens. There were yellow *Acacias* and Pink *Boronias* including the fairly rare *Boronia serrulata*, three species of spider flowers *Grevillea buxifolia*, *G. sericea* and *G. speciosa*. Hand lenses were provided so that the flowers could be examined in detail, especially the hairy petals on *Actinotus minor*, the small flannel flower, and the even smaller *Leucopogon microphyllus*. Two carnivorous plants were discovered: *Drosera spatulata* and *Dro-*



*Patersonia sericea* Margaret Woods

*sera peltata*, sundews, their pretty leaves covered in drops of sticky liquid, topped with a tiny white flower. There were two unusual finds, a stem of very unseasonal Christmas Bells *Blandfordia nobilis*, and *Hybanthus vernonii* with its tiny blue-mauve spade shaped flowers.

An amazing 46 species in flower were recorded. No wonder the walk that was scheduled to last a couple of hours went on for longer, there was so much to see. Some people had to leave but those who carried on to the swampy area were rewarded by a good display of *Aotus ericoides*, *Sprengelia incarnata* and although it was not in flower, a number of *Banksia robur*.



Although the birds were calling and flitting around they were difficult to see. However most people did get a very good look at the tiny Spotted Pardalote and a few lucky people saw the variegated fairy wren.

**Jan Marshall**



above: *Hybanthus vernonii* right: *Drosera spatulata*  
Peter Marshall



*Darwinia fascicularis* Margaret Woods

Example of Male Spotted Pardalote. This tiny bird gleans insects from eucalypt treetops, but nests in a burrow in the ground. Rod Warnock.





## Station Beach

The proposed trial for unleashed dogs to swim at Station Beach on the Pittwater side of Palm Beach will go ahead following a 13:2 decision in favour at the August 27 Council meeting, Councillors Warren and Heins opposing.

PNHA spoke at the meeting and opposed the trial on environmental grounds, as we consider the endangered seagrass may be damaged despite restrictions on dog activity there, to be limited by time of day and tides. We believed the proposal should not have been put forward until after the latest Review of Environmental Factors (REF) had been published. The REF sets up 31 mitigating factors that must be observed. The Department of Fisheries does not favour dogs on estuary beaches. At the end of the trial, another beach may have to be considered.

## Forum on Regional Bushcare/Landcare, August 2

PNHA presented an overview of PNHA and our activities at a recent Regional Land Bushcare Forum, held by Greater Sydney Local Land Services at Parramatta. PNHA is a Landcare group with an unusual history and activities, as we are not focused on caring for any one patch of land, but on the wider Pittwater area, and also have a focus on awareness raising. We were impressed by the many achievements of other groups in the wider Sydney area. Thanks to the GSLLS folks for an enjoyable day.

## Vertebrate Survey of Bangalley Head Reserve, Avalon

PNHA has commissioned Jayden Walsh to undertake a professional survey of this wonderful Wildlife Protection Area. Starting in September 2019, he will be looking for reptiles, birds, microbats and feral animals over the course of a year. We plan to produce a booklet about the reserve, using his findings and photographs, as well as information about the vegetation and geology.

Right: Bangalley Head's summit is the highest point on the coast between Broken Bay and North Head.



## Biobanking To Go Ahead: Great News For Ingleside Chase Reserve

In March 2019 an announcement that Council had prepared a Biobanking Application for Ingleside Chase Reserve was welcomed and supported by Pittwater bushcare groups and local environment groups, including PNHA.

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.

The biobanking agreement would hugely supplement the funds Council needs to spend in the reserve to > p.4

< p.3 achieve proper conservation.

### 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>



Mullet Creek South Arm, Elanora. M.Macrae

In June, Council announced it had entered into a biobanking agreement with the State Government to help fund the ongoing conservation of the ecologically-important Ingleside Chase Reserve.

The biobanking agreement is the first of its type for Council.

Negotiated with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, the agreement means a biobank site is established at Ingleside to help manage the land for conservation.

Ingleside Chase Reserve is a 70-hectare bushland reserve owned and managed by Council and is located on the Warriewood Escarpment between the

suburbs of Warriewood, Ingleside and Elanora Heights.

Mayor Michael Regan

said the arrangement will enable Council to continue its important work conserving the Reserve.

"Ingleside is home to many endangered species of threatened plants and animals. The Reserve is critical to the region's biodiversity and it is vital it be maintained, but this does require significant ongoing funding.



The Endangered Giant Burrowing Frog lives in the reserve. Chris Jolly



Coachwood flowers in summer along Mullet Creek. M.Macrae

"The biobanking agreement provides an opportunity to secure a substantially larger budget to continue to manage the Reserve.

"Apart from protecting threatened plants and animals, Council's work at Ingleside includes reducing the impact of weeds and feral animals, and minimising the human impact to improve water quality in the Narrabeen, Fern and Mullet Creek catchments," Mayor Regan said.



## Scale Insects

Scale insects suck sap from leaves and stems of many plants, native and introduced, in gardens, bushland and on crops. Belonging to the insect order Hemiptera, there are about 8000 species worldwide. They are related to true bugs and cicadas; sucking mouthparts distinguish them. They don't actually need to suck, just plumb their mouthparts into the rising sap.

Two species of soft scale we've noticed recently are **Black Scale** *Parasaissetia nigra* on Native Frangipani in Avalon (tree not local to the Northern Beaches) and

**Wattle Tick Scale** *Cryptes baccatus* on Coastal Wattle in Mona Vale Dunes.

Do we need to worry about these, despite heavy infestations?

The good news is no – both have parasitoids—parasite-like predators which can keep them in check.

**Black Scale** individuals are all females. The mature ones are black, the younger ones brown. They don't need males to reproduce. Parthenogenesis is the term given when female organisms do this. (from Greek:



partheno - virgin, geneo - birth) Parasitoids include Chalcid and Coccophagus wasps.

**Wattle Tick scale:** the wax-covered females on maturity start sucking sap, head down, losing their legs, wings and antennae and hence the capacity to move. Their waxy upturned tick-like bottoms you see (right) secrete honeydew to attract ants and allow mating by wandering tiny males. The presence of ants can deter some predators, but not all.



**Wattle Tick Scale** on Coastal Wattle *Acacia sophorae*, Mona Vale Dunes.

Wattle tick scale predators include caterpillars of the tiny moth *Stathmopoda melanochra* which feed on the scale; see photos at <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/stat/melanochra.html>

Also (above) the larvae of a small brown beetle *Cychramptodes murrayi* prey on female Wattle tick scale insects and their brood, eating the scale from the inside out. The adult beetles feed on honeydew excreted by the same scale insect. Their shape protects them, in turn, from being predated by ants, which are also usually present at honeydew. More photos at this link: <https://canberra.naturemapr.org/Community/Sightings/Details/3395071>

Even more information:

[https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_softbugs/WattleTickScale.htm](https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_softbugs/WattleTickScale.htm)

[https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_softbugs/BlackScale.htm](https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_softbugs/BlackScale.htm)

## Hoverflies

You might have seen these around garden plants. You might wonder if they are bees, or flies? No, Hoverflies.

They can hover in the one place, then suddenly change direction, zooming off to a different flower. The maggot offspring of some feed on aphids, so they are good to have around the garden.

Gary took these photos in Avalon. He reports: Hoverflies are certainly an interesting group. I was amazed when I found aquatic hoverfly larvae in our

frog pond. (I didn't know what they were at the time)

I really enjoy watching hoverflies but it'd be good to have a field guide to help with identification of them.

More information here: <https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/animals/insects/hover-flies/>



## Poison Peach, Butterflies and Cockies

Of late there have been many media reports of declining insect numbers in many countries around the world, and in the book *The Moth Snowstorm, Nature & Joy* (2015) by Michael McCarthy, he cites a continuous study of moths in one area in England taken between 1968 and 2002 which "showed that Britain's moth fauna to be in freefall". It went on to report that 80 species of the 337 examined had declined by 70% or more and some had declined by 90%. Worrying statistics.

On a more positive note though, replanting local plant species may bring rewards and in late April 2018 I noticed (and later



photographed) a new (to our garden) species of Lycaenid butterfly. Identified as *Catopyrops florinda halys* or Speckled Line-Blue, they would probably have been attracted to the maturing small tree, *Trema tomentosa* or Poison Peach (Ulmaceae) we planted several years ago. Although several other species are listed as larval foodplants for this butterfly, Trema is the only one that occurs in the Sydney region.

This year in late April we again observed Speckled-Line Blues flying around the Trema, often resting high up on sunlit foliage and frustratingly out of camera range. Some consolation though was gained in early May when a small green





caterpillar was found underneath the Trema, which I collected believing it likely to be the larva of a Speckled Line-Blue butterfly. It pupated within a day and emerged three and a half weeks later as the adult of *Catopyrops florinda halys*. It was quickly photographed and released.



So perhaps when thinking about food and habitat for insects, if you grow the right plants they will come.

**Gary Harris, Avalon**



**Why Poison Peach?** This large sprawling shrub is poisonous to livestock if eaten in large quantities. At first glance it could be mistaken for Lantana. Its berries feed birds including Cockatoos and Brown Cuckoo Doves (right, Neil Fifer) which can sometimes be seen in Ingleside Chase Reserve near the Irrawong waterfall.



## 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.

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