

PNHA NEWS

Winter 2022 Issue 92

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA UPDATE:

Grants

Palmgrove Park Avalon

Site preparation has been started on the area to be planted, near Bellevue Avenue but the continual rain has waterlogged the ground so mulch delivery is impossible. Planting will be postponed until spring when Avalon Public School principal Andy Rankin is keen for students to take part in this project to restore endangered Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forests. This project is funded by a grant from Northern Beaches Council.

Spotted Gum bark after rain



PNHA Activities for 2022

Sunday Nature Walks on the third Sunday of the month, starting at 9am. Meeting place and details on booking. We welcome children with carers. Most of these walks are not suitable for strollers or wheelchairs.

July 17	Warriewood Wetland - birds
July 31	Crown of Newport circuit - landscape, bushland, views through several Newport reserves. (rescheduled from May)
August 21	Chiltern Track Ingleside- plants and birds, spring in the bush of Kuringgai Chase NP
September 18	Waratahs and Grevillea caleyi - Terrey Hills
October 16	Roadside trees in Waterview Street Mona Vale

Please book for these walks by emailing pnhainfo@gmail.com and add your phone number please.



Protecting Pittwater's Environment

PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?

pnhainfo@gmail.com Follow us on Instagram

INSIDE: 2. Narrabeen Headland Field Day, Mona Vale Dunes grant site anniversary, 3. Trad smut spreading, Vegetated overpass Mona Vale Rd East, Urban Bushland: biosecurity approach to widespread weeds, 4. Bush regeneration is about more than weeds, Weed Alert: Corky Passionflower, 5. Citizen Science in Careel Bay, 6. Keeping Cats Safe at Home, Rescuing Pouch Young.

Field Day North Narrabeen Headland May 29

Bush regeneration contract work on this Crown Land area is funded by a Crown Reserves Improvement Grant (CRIF). PNHA supported Council's successful grant application and is assisting with publicity for the project. This was the first of several community field days this year to help with weed control and raise awareness of this lovely area. Considerable clearing of lantana has been



completed in previous years. Now the follow up weeding will be done, and the contractors will expand the area of primary weeding. It is so important to maintain the progress made. PNHA has provided a letter of support for NBC's recent application for a second CRIF grant for this area.

Above: Morning tea. Left: view over Turrimetta Beach to north of the headland.



Careel Creek Crown Land project, downstream of north Avalon Rd.

We provided a letter of community support for NBC's application for a CRIF grant for the creek banks. Infested with weedy vines, one of the worst is Madeira Vine with heavy succulent foliage and brittle tubers along the stems. These fall to the ground and grow new plants.



Mona Vale Dunes

The rain we complained about was a huge boost to the tubestock planted here in June 17 2021. Weeds have sprung up too of course. The Mona Vale dunes bush-care group met on the anniversary of the planting to weed and check tubestock progress, right. They meet on the second Saturday and third Thursday of each month, at the end of Golf Ave at 8.30. For more information contact Michael Kneipp NBC Coordinator, Environmental Volunteers, mob 0417 688 492



Trad Smut spreading

We have planted Trad infected with the biocontrol leaf smut *Kordyana brasiliensis* several times in various locations since October 2020, with mixed success.

Good news: the smut has spread onto healthy Trad on Bangalley Head reserve, near the Whale Beach Rd entrance.

If you have a Trad problem at home or on your bushcare site, you can collect your own infected Trad and transplant stems amongst healthy Trad. You can collect infected Trad from:

- ◆ beside the boardwalk to the Irrawong waterfall in North Narrabeen—right: infected Trad there.
- ◆ McCarrs creek reserve. Go to the westernmost end of the car park and walk westwards under the She Oaks to find extensive areas of it.

Pull up stems, and plant amongst healthy Trad. We noticed warm damp weather last spring seemed to help it spread. **But patience is necessary.** Newly infected Trad looks pale with some yellowish spots, but the infection progresses. Expect to wait up to 18 months to see results. The smut won't completely kill Trad but seriously reduces its vigour and ability to smother other plants.



Artist's impression of the vegetated overpass to be built across the Mona Vale Road East. PNHA campaigned hard for this and though it's not as wide as we wanted, it will save lives. The road will be fenced to guide fauna towards it.

Image from: <https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/mona-vale-road/mvreast/index.html>

Biosecurity approach to urban bushland's environmental weeds

The NSW Noxious Weeds Act 1993 was replaced with the Biosecurity Act 2015. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/722897/Weeds.pdf

The strong focus of the new act is to control **new and emerging weeds**. That sounds like a sensible idea, as of course it's better to stop weeds becoming widespread and then out of control.

In practice, it's having the effect of authorities seeming to give up on weeds that are already **widespread**. It means that funds are less available for control of weeds that are continuing to damage bushland and biodiversity in our bushland. Weeds have few if any predators, such as leaf eating fauna including marsupials and insects, or fungal pathogens. But they have seed-spreading allies such as fruit-eating birds which then distribute the seeds of Privets, Asparagus and so on.

These weeds reduce the biodiversity of our area by depriving native fauna of habitat. PNHA is investigating what can be done to have weed authorities recognise the damage widespread weeds are doing to our bushland.

Bush Regeneration – not just about weeds. Native plants are hosts for native fauna, large and small.

Lava of **Speckled Line Blue Butterfly**, on *Trema aspera* near the Bangalley Head track, Whale Beach Rd.



Left: Male, Right: Female. From <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/lyca/florinda.html>



A **Leaf Hopper**, also near the Bangalley Track. Like a miniature cicada. It has sucking mouthparts as it's in the bug family, Hemiptera



Nearby a beetle, a **Weevil**, as you can see from its long snout. A snack for the small birds that like dense bush. Buds of spring flowers already on Coastal Wattle.

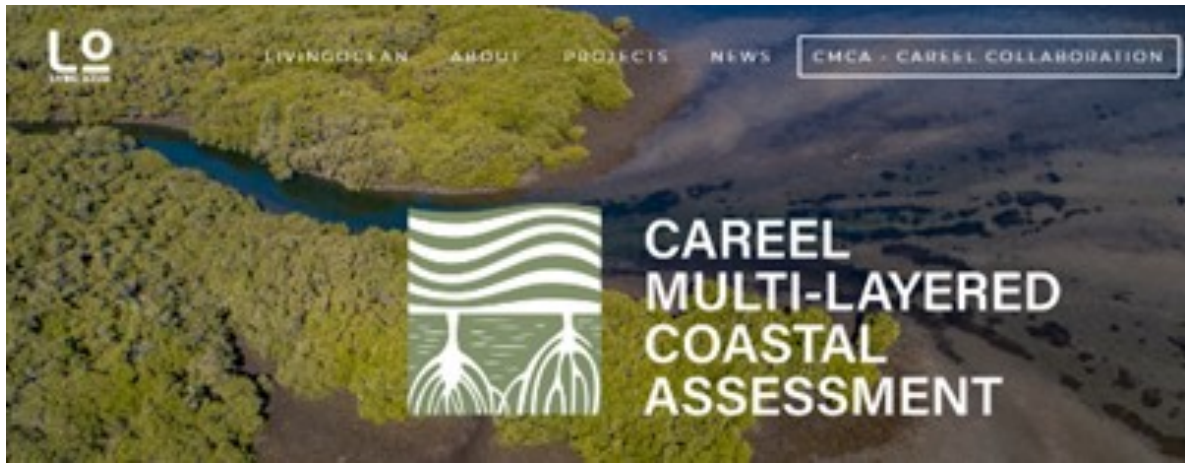
While looking for tubers of Madeira Vine behind the clubhouse in Hitchcock Park Avalon, in leaf litter, we found this **Earth Star fungus, Geastrum tenuipes**. This species has a stalked spherical capsule about one centimetre in diameter. Spores will be ejected from the central point.



WEED ALERT

Corky Passionflower *Passiflora suberosa*, native to South America, is becoming common around Mona Vale and along Narrabeen Creek. Corky bark on lower stems, leaves rather like Ivy, clusters of flowers and berries. We think it should be recognised by NBC as an emerging weed to be controlled. Please report to NBC if you see it, with a photo.





Be a Citizen scientist – Careel Bay

On Saturday 28 May, PNHA attended the public meeting at Avalon Recreation Centre, for the launch of the citizen science project the **Careel Multi-Layered Coastal Assessment [CMCA]**. The CMCA is an initiative of the Careel Collaborative – our own local *Living Oceans* environment association, and a group of science researchers from a range of institutions.

As described by Living Oceans: *“The CMCA is a detailed study of the Careel marine environment, which is the most significant area of estuarine wetlands on the Northern Beaches.”*

Conducted over 12 months by the Careel Collaborative, the project will assess Careel on multiple layers: from the state of Pittwater’s largest stand of mangroves and endangered seagrass beds to the levels of macro and micro plastics in the environment and the impact of Careel Creek and stormwater outflows.”

The Careel Collaborative is calling on locals to volunteer their time to get involved in the project. Tasks will be varied, and full training will be provided. The essential tasks will be photographing and/or recording information related to a range of research priorities, together with supporting tasks:

- ◆ Micro and macro plastics
- ◆ Mangroves assessment
- ◆ Ocean-bound litter along Careel Creek
- ◆ Posidonia – endangered seagrass
- ◆ Flora and fauna
- ◆ Photography – media
- ◆ Data analysis

As Robbie Newman, founder of Living Oceans, explained – there’s a job for everyone, no matter how small it might seem; this is also an opportunity to get involved in your community, and learn fascinating science first-hand from the experts, have some fun and know that you are contributing to a hugely significant project.

To volunteer, contact Living Ocean by sending your details to info@livingocean.org.au or phone Robbi directly on 0410 374 333. You can follow the [CMCA](#) on Facebook too. You can learn more about Living Ocean on their Facebook page [here](#).

Leigh McGaghey

[photo credit: Living Oceans <https://www.livingocean.org.au/cmca---careel-collaboration.html>]



Cats



The NSW Government has awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the NSW Environmental Trust to RSPCA NSW to deliver the **Keeping Cats Safe at Home project**.

Northern Beaches Council is one of 11 partner councils involved in the program, with each council to receive a tailored program to address specific needs and challenges within their area, such as improved access to free desexing and micro-chipping for cat owners.

The project will see Council work with local veterinarians, companion animal groups, cat owners, wildlife groups and the community to change attitudes and behaviours towards responsible cat ownership.

For more information on the program and how to look after your cat, visit the [RSPCA website](#)

Pouch Young

Everyone knows that mother kangaroos have baby joeys that hang out in their pouches. But not everyone knows that bandicoots, wombats, gliders, possums (including pygmy possums), koalas and antechinus are also marsupials! Marsupials are mammals that have pouches in which their offspring suckle and develop. All marsupial babies are referred to as 'joeys'. Ringtail possums will often have twin joeys and bandicoots, gliders and antechinus can have multiple joeys in their pouches all at once! In fact, antechinus can have up to 12!

Another thing that people don't always know is that if a marsupial mum is hit and killed by a car or beheaded by a predator, their pouch-young can still survive - often for days!

Wildlife carers can raise these orphaned joeys and they can be released back to the wild after being in care for many months.

At this time of year, there are many marsupials with pouch-young. Also at this time of year, dusk and dawn coincide with peak-hour traffic, resulting in many wildlife casualties on our roads. It's really important for people to know that a deceased wallaby/possum/koala/bandicoot could mean that there are orphaned babies waiting to be rescued!



Brushtail possum in his deceased mother's pouch.

What should you do if you find a deceased marsupial?

If you are not comfortable undertaking a pouch-check, please ring your local wildlife rescue organisation and give them the location details of the deceased animal. They can then send a rescuer to do it.

Sydney Wildlife Rescue 9413 4300, WIRES 1300 094 737

If you are willing to give it a go, you may find these steps useful:

1. Make sure it is safe to do the pouch-check. If you have stopped on the side of a road, be sure that you are not impeding traffic and that you and your passengers are stopped in a safe spot. Switch on your hazard lights.

2. Put on something hi-vis (vest, hat, jacket) so that other vehicles can see you. Pop on some disposable gloves. If the animal is on the road or close to the road, move it to a safer spot to undertake the check.
3. Check to see if the animal is male or female. It may not be as obvious as it sounds! Sometimes the only visible 'boy bit' is the scrotum (which can be furred in some species). If there are testes, you obviously don't need to check for offspring... If there is a pouch, however, there may be a little one or many little ones deep down inside the pouch. The first time I saw a marsupial pouch, it was nothing like I had imagined it. I had thought it would be like a fur-lined pocket! Instead, it's kind of oily in there and the opening to the pouch can be oval-shaped rather than just slit-shaped.
4. If there is a pouch, you will need to open it up very wide and check really deep into the bottom section of the pouch. The pouch can be quite difficult to open – especially if the mum has been dead for a while. If a joey is present, it may still be attached to a teat. **DO NOT PULL THE JOEY OFF THE TEAT** - this can damage their delicate jaws. At this stage, you may wish to transport the whole animal to a vet or wait for a wildlife rescuer to arrive. Alternatively, you can place a safety pin through the teat at a perpendicular angle and then cut the teat away from the mother. Some people may find this confronting so having a rescuer do it may be preferable.
5. If the joey has let go of the teat, you can gently remove them from the pouch and place them into a towel/ knitted pouch/woollen beanie, then place that down your shirt for warmth. **Joeys will often put up quite a fight about being removed!** The gentlest way to coax them out is to find the base of their tail and gently (but firmly) extract them bottom-first.
6. Never offer food, water, milk to a cold joey. They need to be warmed up first. They also only drink a specialised marsupial milk as they cannot tolerate lactose. Your local wildlife rescue organisation can organise for a rescuer to collect the joey from you.

Some important equipment to have on hand for pouch-checks:

1. Hi-vis gear
2. Disposable gloves
3. Head torch for night checks
4. Scissors, safety pins
5. Towel, woollen beanie, artificial pouch
6. "Hot hands" to assist with warming a cold joey
7. Basket or box to contain the animal

NEVER attempt to raise a joey if you are not a registered and licensed wildlife rescuer with the appropriate training for the species in question.

Lynleigh Greig OAM, volunteer rescuer,

Sydney Wildlife

Membership of **Pittwater Natural Heritage Association Landcare Group** is open to all who share our aims of caring for the natural environment of the Pittwater area and working to enhance and protect it. You can find a Membership Application form on our website <http://pnha.org.au/join/> or contact us on pnhainfo@gmail.com for one to be sent to you.

Cost \$20 per year, \$10 unwaged.