

PNHA NEWS

Autumn 2024 Issue 99

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA Update:

What has PNHA done lately:

1. **NSW Government Planning changes.** We attended community group meetings Pittwater Community Alliance with NBC staff and opposed "one size fits all" NSW Government planning changes to allow medium and high density housing in this area. We submitted an objection to these ill considered proposals.

2. PNHA met with Transport NSW for discussions about use of the **Fauna Bridge over Mona Vale Rd East** by bike riders. We have also met with Rory Amon and senior NBC staff about this, a serious potential problem, as the bridge is intended and designed solely as a means of enabling wildlife to move between areas of bushland. It will be planted with local bushland plant species. For such a bridge it is rather narrow at five metres, the only width possible at that location.

3. We have agreed to join a proposed **Northern Sydney Landcare Network**. We'll join a first Zoom get together on March 22, when we'll find out this involves.

4. PNHA attended the third **Weeds Round Table** organised by Conny Harris at the CEC on March 1.

The meeting was addressed by Jane Prior, a PNHA member, who spoke about her project which is aiming to produce "Welcome to Pittwater" kits containing information on local environment and sustainability. Biosecurity legislation and ways to educate residents on how to deal with problem plants on their land were also discussed. The group was advised that Northern Beaches Council will be reviewing its Local Priority Weeds Plan in 2026. The popular White Strelitzia *Strelitzia nicolai*, right, this one about 7metres tall, is spreading in the Pittwater area, an emerging weed we believe.



Protecting Pittwater's Environment

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INSIDE: What PNHA has done lately, Activities coming up, Fishfly on light sheet, Bushcare starts on Hillside Rd Newport, Common Crow butterfly, Triangular Spiders, St Anthony's Keirans Creek Landcare Group, About Feeding Wild Birds, Osprey Hunting on Narrabeen Lagoon, Lily Caterpillars

5. **Bangalley Head Landcare Group** has disbanded. In accordance with NSW Government rules about such a change, its funds have been given to PNHA, as a group with very similar aims. Members of that group have been given complimentary PNHA membership for a year.

6. **The presentation by PNHA on weeds at Harvest Seeds and Native Plants Nursery** at Terrey Hills, scheduled for February 29, has been postponed until June, date to be advised.

7. We were at NBCAN Soapbox March 17 at the Coastal Environment Centre. That's Northern Beaches Climate Action Network. We gave the regulation two minute talk about PNHA, had a weed display, and our famous cards. We gave out some Trad infected with Smut. Many other northern beaches environmental groups and climate change activists were there. There will be another such gathering later this year.

8. We have agreed to support the Operation Posidonia to relocate fragments of Posidonia seagrass to areas where it has been lost. This involves collecting stems of washed up seagrass on beaches for collection by the project organisers. It provides habitat for many marine species.

9. We made a submission to Transport for NSW on proposed **Wakehurst Parkway improvements**.

10. **Bush regeneration grants**

- ◆ Work on land at **59 Grandview Drive** is progressing, funded by the grant from Pittwater Environmental Foundation.
- ◆ Bush regeneration contractors and the **Palmgrove Park bushcare group** continue to maintain the planted area near Bellevue Avenue Avalon. Great to see turf turning into bushland beneath the Spotted Gums and Cabbage Palms.



Activities

Report:

Light sheet night at Katandra Bushland Sanctuary on February 17

Thanks very much to our host David Seymour, chairman of the Katandra Crown Land Reserve and to Gary Harris for organising the light sheet. Among several of the interesting bigger insects that arrived was a Fishfly. See article about this below. A Trapdoor Spider nearby remained out of sight until night fell then cautiously surveyed the scene. Image: David Seymour



Coming up:

Sunday March 24 Irrawong Waterfall guided walk . A

wonderful walk for birds, including Lyrebird and Powerful Owl if we are lucky. This walk passes through swamp forest of the Mullet Creek flood-plane, but also goes up into a quite different type of bushland—eucalypt forest with a heathy understorey. Meet at 8.30am at the western end of Irrawong Rd. Wear enclosed shoes, bring binoculars if possible. Ends 10am

Sunday April 28 Experience our Ku-Ring-Gai Georegion near West Head

Bob Conroy will show us some of the geomorphology, flora, fauna and landscapes and some aboriginal sites making up our remarkable geo-region. Other details to be confirmed.

Bob has more than 40 years of experience in protected area management in both operational and executive roles with NPWS and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. He is a member of the NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council, the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action and a recent member of the NPWS Greater Sydney Advisory Committee. Bob is a member of the Ku-ring-gai Georegion Steering Committee. (And that's just some of his career and achievements)

The Fishfly on the Light Sheet

We're unsure why it is called a Fishfly, as in other countries it is called an Alderfly. This adult was about 3cm long. Its juvenile stage is aquatic, maybe in Katandra's creeks, where it is a predator of other aquatic insect larvae. It's in the Order Megaloptera, sub family Chauliiodinae, occurring worldwide. The earliest records of what are probably primitive Megaloptera are from the Permian period fossils. The adults emerge from late spring to autumn, are short-lived and take little, if any, food. During the day they are usually found resting on vegetation on the margins of larval habitats. Some species fly in bright sunlight, others when the light intensity is low. All Australian species are probably to some extent crepuscular or nocturnal and are **attracted to lights**. More details [here](#).



Complicated? Yes — that's our natural world for you! But for that light sheet we would never have known about this insect.



Littoral Rainforest at 85-62 Hillside Rd Newport

The new bushcare group started here on Saturday March 7 after first, many years of community battles to protect it from residential development, then, a long wait while NBC took ownership of the site and then eventually fenced off two old asbestos sheds .

It's not all hard labour! Most of the bushcare group at morning tea. Delighted to welcome two new bushcarer neighbours from Hillside Rd. NBC bush regeneration contractors also work here, so the group can do the easier work.

Common Crow Butterfly *Euploea core* Also called Oleander Butterfly.



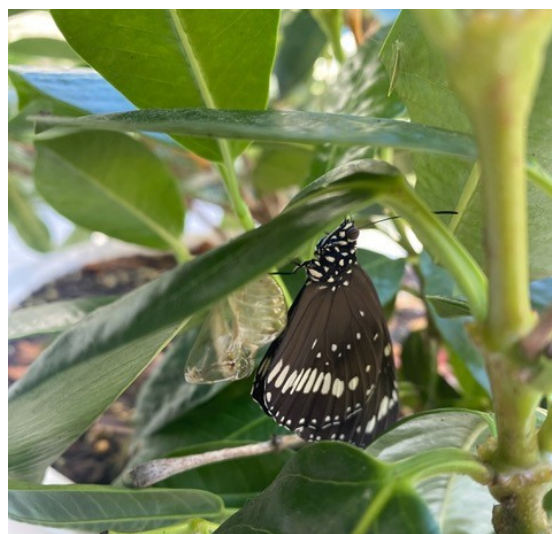
A butterfly caterpillar knows what's good for it. For this one, nothing will do but a foodplant in the plant family Apocynaceae. A local native favourite in this family is the woody climber Common Silkpod *Parsonsia straminea*, but also the shrub Oleander introduced from the Mediterranean. The food plant in these images is the popular Mandevilla, from the Americas. A feature of this plant family is milky latex or clear sap which contains alkaloids and cardiac glycosides, poisonous to us but not to the butterfly. It can sequester the toxins in its body as larva and adult, making it unpalatable to predators who quickly learn it has a horrible taste.

More about the Common Crow here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euploea_core

Janene Luff took these butterfly images on some Mandevilla climber on a balcony, so was able to see the all stages of the butterfly's life.



Left: Caterpillar. Below: Jewel-like pupa. Right: butterfly has emerged, empty pupal case to its left.



Arkys curtulus

In the Undergrowth:

Triangular Spiders in the genus *Arkys*

Gary Harris found these little characters in the Pittwater area. They are often brightly coloured with distinctive shapes, but some are well camouflaged.

Triangular spiders ambush their prey. They wait motionless on the underside of leaves with their front two pairs of legs widely separated, ready to pounce on their prey, mainly flies or other insects. More Information from The Australian Museum.



Arkys alatus



Arkys bulburinensis

St Anthony's Keirans Creek Landcare Group

Noelene Uren, St Anthony in the Fields Community member tells us about this group's work:

Kierans Creek, at the headwaters of the Hawkesbury River system, runs through part of the land on which St Anthony's in the Fields Catholic Church is built on Mona Vale Rd.

Back in June 2016 some bush lovers, protectors and restorers volunteered for a project of cleaning up the creek and the area around it. This included removing invasive species, planting for bank stabilisation, erosion control, weed suppression and revegetation. The group was made up largely by the St Anthony's Kierans Creek Landcare Group.

The group works monthly in five different zones. Professional contractors occasionally need to be engaged to work in the creek and help with primary weeding. The group also consults with other individuals in the community when advice and help is needed, especially with the Gaimariagal knowledge holder, Dennis Foley, the Northern Beaches AECG and the MWP Aboriginal Support Group. Marita Macrae has helped out with planting Trad infected with Smut.

Right: Georgia and Anne planting tubestock

Over the years awareness of the work has spread and the Landcare Group has been able to successfully involve youth from the surrounding high schools, the parish and the wider community. It is hoped that the youth and others involved in the weeding and planting will be encouraged by the visible signs of positive change to continue in caring for and healing Country. Their enthusiasm and delight in their achievement is always a joy to watch and an encouragement to the older volunteers to continue the work. Perhaps even more delightful are the little ones who join in the digging and pulling out of weeds.

As anyone who has a garden of their own will know, the work is constant in preventing reinfestation, especially of the vines such as Morning Glory and Honeysuckle. The group however wants to continue to contribute to the health of their own bit of the creek and the Cowan-Hawkesbury catchment. They wish also to extend the area of safe flora and fauna habitat in the midst of the surrounding development. Yabbies, dragonfly, frogs, inhabit the creek and water dragons are regularly seen sunning themselves on its banks. Buff banded Rail and chicks, once common have been spotted along with quail, red-brown finches and blue wrens and of course there are our wonderful blue tongue lizards.

Once a year Singing Up Country is held in the grounds. The event showcases First Nations musicians. It now includes story telling about Kierans Creek and a guided walk around the bush restoration and creek bank. It is sacred country and the St Anthony's Kierans Creek Landcare Group is humbled and proud to be part of its regeneration and restoration.



Kookaburra cooling off - Marg Woods

About feeding wild birds in Australia

As a bird conservation charity **Birdlife Australia** does not encourage wild bird feeding. However, millions of well-meaning Australians enjoy feeding the birds in their backyard. Many don't realise that feeding wild birds can do more harm than good – and if done incorrectly, can lead to serious problems including **malnutrition, disease and unbalanced populations**. More information [here](#). Dr Daryl Jones, emeritus professor of urban ecology at Griffith University, has written two books about feeding birds: ***The Birds at Your Table***, (Cornell University Press 2018) and ***Feeding the Birds at Your Table*** (New South 2019) These are worth reading to understand why people like to feed birds, and how to ensure birds do not suffer from well intentioned human kindness.



Osprey Fishing on Narrabeen Lagoon

Ospreys catch fish by plunging into the water, grasping the fish and become airborne with mighty flaps of their wings.

Their talons hold the fish parallel with the bird's body, aiding the aerodynamics of flight.

Neil Fifer took these recent shots at Narrabeen Lagoon. Ospreys have made a comeback in the northern beaches since the early 2000s, several pairs now nesting in the area.



Lily Caterpillar: *Spodoptera picta* L-R: caterpillars, pupa, adult moth. A native moth, ruination of Swamp Lily and Cliveas.



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.