Coordinator’s Message

Matt Fox, State Program Coordinator, Melbourne

Already another summer has come to a close. Summer is always a busy time for us, with *Summer by the Sea* being our key focus in January. This year’s program, which had 300 activities across the state, was a great success. The program relies on the support of our many friends and partners, so a big thank you to all those who helped in some way. Be sure to contact your local facilitator to learn about more volunteering opportunities near you.

We hope that the 10000 people who participated learnt a little more about Victoria’s coastal environments. We are now busily finalising our program strategy for the next five years. Many of you have already commented on the program’s future direction.

A strong strategy will help us to deliver better results in the short term, and enable us to work towards more ambitious outcomes over the longer term. Sound strategy will also benefit your local groups.

Around the state some wonderful projects have been developed over a 10, even 20, year timeframe. We are currently working on some strategy tools and processes to help groups achieve their long-term ambitions. Talk to your facilitator to find out more.

So, in 2011 we encourage you to look to the future. Many challenges lie ahead, as do many fantastic opportunities. We are now seeing the next generation of coastal volunteers accepting the challenge, so the time is right to ensure that the enormous wealth of local knowledge held by our experienced volunteers is shared with Coastcare’s next generation. Hopefully, we can assist this process in 2011.

The Merricks Creek Coastal Banksia Project

Denis Cox, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Mornington Peninsula and Westernport

The Merricks Creek Coastal Banksia Project will be a joint effort by eight adjoining coastal community groups located along or near the Merricks Creek on the south coast of the Mornington Peninsula. The area is a mixture of old sandy dune soils, steep cliffs and damp riparian sections. This landscape scale Caring for our Country funded project will tackle the problems of weed spread and native vegetation loss of the creek environs and help with an extensive restoration to improve habitat and overall environmental quality for aquatic and land-based flora and fauna.

Banksia woodland is a major part of the local natural vegetation, but other associated plant communities will also benefit from the combined restoration works. The project will bring together a number of community groups working in a cooperative way to help restore, over time, an extensive area to near natural conditions. Overall community connectivity will also be reinforced as members of the various community groups involved, who may never have met before, will be able to share and learn from each other through discussions on a range management issues that they will all face as the project progresses to recover this important local natural asset.

In this issue

- Coordinator’s Message
- The Merricks Creek Coastal Banksia Project
- Another Year of Fun in the Sun
- Groppers, Devils and Dragons
- Stop press
- Fighting the Sushi Monster
- A Spine of the Times?
- Introducing the Coast Monkeys
- Weed Wandering on Griffins Island
- A Fresh Approach to Beach Litter
- Spreading the Word
- Seal the Loop
- Coastal Community Volunteers
- Improve the Bush by the Bay
- Oh, What a Night!
- Funding Boost for Anglesea’s Environment Volunteers
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- National Recognition for a Local Hero
- Regional Updates
- Southwest
- Otways and Surf Coast
- Gellong and Bellarine Peninsula
- Western Port and Mornington Peninsula
- South Gippsland
- East Gippsland
- Coming Events
- Coast Action/Coastcare Contacts

Published by the Victorian Government’s Department of Sustainability and Environment, March 2011

© The State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment 2011

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Disclaimer — This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne.

For more information contact DSE Customer Service Centre 13 61 86.

www.dse.vic.gov.au
For three weeks in January the Victorian coastline was buzzing with the frenzy of the Department of Sustainability and Environment's 2011 Summer by the Sea program. Over 300 free activities in 88 locations attracted thousands of enthusiastic locals and holiday makers. From the west to the east, Summer by the Sea had something for everyone. For the adventurous there were kayaking and snorkelling trips, for the inquisitive, Rockpool Rambles and Walks on the Wild Side, and for the kids, seaside games and crafts.

But Summer by the Sea is not just a program to entertain people over summer. Its primary goals are to promote respect and care for our coastal environment, to educate the public about the diversity and significance of Victoria's coastline and to encourage active participation in coastal conservation. Members of the public are put into contact with local Coastcare groups and volunteers, to discuss the actions, big and small, that can have a positive impact on the coasts. Summer by the Sea is key to Coast Action/Coastcare's engagement with the wider community.

Despite wet weather hampering several activities, attendance remained high and many activities were booked out. All participants learnt something new about the coastline; many expressed amazement at what they found. As hidden wonders were revealed, comments such as "I didn't realise there was so much to see!", and "I'm a local and I didn't know about half these things" were frequently heard. Summer by the Sea also provided an opportunity to show first hand some of the negative impacts we can have on our coast. Barwon Heads Rockpool Ramble participants were surprised by the negative effects of inland flooding on intertidal ecosystems, effects that are further compounded by the presence of pollution in our waterways. It showed that all our actions have consequences and it is our responsibility to protect the health of these beautiful places. What motivation to get us involved.

To run such a program requires the coordination and involvement of many people. From DSE staff and Coast Action/Coastcare facilitators to our numerous partners, local volunteers and activity providers, Summer by the Sea is in good hands. Our sincerest thanks go to everyone involved in running another successful Summer by the Sea.

Summing it up in the words of one participant from Peterborough: "That was great. When's the next one?" It's next January – see you there!

To see more photos from 2011 Summer by the Sea activities, check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/summerbythesea.
Gropers, Devils and Dragons – characters in the Great Victorian Fish Count 2010

Wendy Roberts, Reef Watch Coordinator

A territorial creature, the blue devil fish hovering under the ledge at Castle Rock at the southern end of Port Phillip had no intention of budging from the safety of its lair for the diver from Bay City Scuba club, who marked her slate to record the fish in the Great Victorian Fish Count. Very little is known of its biology, though it's thought that the males guard the eggs on hatching, and that they are generalist carnivores that feed on crustaceans and small fish. Blue devil fish were found at two sites during the count; it was also spotted for the first time in the west, by divers at South Beach, Port Fairy.

Many of the species encountered during the annual census are found only in southern Australian waters. The common seadragon was again found in its preferred habitat among the seagrass meadows at Flinders and Portsea, although divers reported numbers were slightly down on past years. From October to December each year, male seadragons can be seen carrying eggs along their tail.

Further to the east, divers from the Friends of Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary were lucky to encounter an eastern blue groper near the shipwreck of the SS Auckland.

A charismatic and inquisitive fish, the blue groper is a favourite among divers, and often allows them to approach quite near. Further west at another marine sanctuary, the Friends of Barwon Bluff also recorded a groper, but were unable to determine if it was the western or eastern variety. Historically, Port Phillip was the most easterly distribution point of the western blue groper. The eastern blue groper was found from southern Queensland to Wilsons Promontory, but unfortunately, their numbers have declined over the years to the point where they are now rarely seen.

As well as monitoring marine species, the count aims to raise community awareness of the ecological role of reef fish within reef ecosystems and the need to protect them and the habitats in which they live. Around 400 fish counters from dive clubs, friends groups and schools participated in the event. Although it coincided with a period of heavy rainfall, most groups were still able to get out and get under.

The greatest diversity and abundance of the 25 selected species – 17 species – was once again recorded at Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary, closely followed by Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary with 14 species (it was noted that many species were in large numbers, the best year ever at the sanctuary). At the other end of the scale, the lowest reef fish diversity was found in the northern section of Port Phillip, with two species (a zebra fish and an ornate cowfish) being recorded at South Beach, Brighton.

The Great Victorian Fish Count will occur again in December 2011.

Stop press

A recent report to Reef Watch of a small population of juvenile blue gropers (species to be determined) in the southern part of Port Phillip has excited the scientific community and management agencies. This species of conservation concern was reported to Reef Watch as a result of the new Feral or InPeril program.

For more information see www.reefwatchvic.asn.au.
Fighting the Sushi Monster
– Apollo Bay Japanese kelp volunteer removal days

Luke Hynes, Southern Otways Landcare Network

The battle against Japanese kelp, Undaria pinnatifida, continues in Apollo Bay harbour. Last year, after a call was put out through dive groups, websites, forums, radio and print media, the diving community responded and made a couple of direct action forays. Two volunteer dive days were run, one in November and one in December, in which over 60 volunteers took part, including a group from Reefwatch South Australia. Over 3 tonnes of kelp were removed over the two days. The Victorian government is now looking at potential future management activities.

Mark Rodrigue, program leader of Marine and Coasts, Parks Victoria, explained.

The two dive days were a great example of the community taking positive action against marine pests. Marine pests are a challenging area of marine conservation and the volunteer efforts were a fantastic example of what people power can do to reduce marine pest impacts and generate awareness.

The removal days were an integrated community effort. Numerous agencies and groups came together, including DSE, DPI, Parks Victoria, the Colac Otway Shire, Southern Otway Landcare Network, Otway Coast Committee (which offered free camping for divers), Field Naturalists of Victoria Marine Research Group (who study critters brought up through the dives), Apollo Bay Sailing Club and the Apollo Bay Country Women’s Association (who else do you turn to for hot soup and food?).

For more information contact DSE on 136 186. To keep informed of any new Japanese kelp updates on our coast, contact Luke Hynes at solnluke@vicnet.net.au to subscribe to the Japanese kelp mailing list.

A Spine of the Times?
Monitoring Urchin Populations at Beware Reef Sanctuary

Jemma Crawford, DSE; Don Love, Friends of Beware Reef

Friends of Beware Reef have been diving at the Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary since the 1960s. The group has been associated with Coast Care for the past five years. For the past three years monitoring the underwater life at the reef on behalf of Reef Life Survey has been the group’s priority. Over 50 surveys have been completed within the sanctuary and 12 in nearby locations for comparison purposes. The sanctuary is a diverse place: it is home to over 80 species of fish, 48 sponges, 27 seaweeds, four mammals and 150 invertebrates.

Surveys have shown areas of the reef that the native long-spined urchin, Centrostephanus rodgersii, has significantly affected. As urchin numbers increase they form barrens, which can denude areas of up to 75 per cent of a reef’s biomass. All that is left is a bare rockface and a few shell species. The black-lipped abalone, a similar grazing species, can be out-competed by the long-spined urchin.

This increase in urchin numbers, which has been recorded from down the New South Wales coast to Tasmania, is thought to be associated with climate change. Warmer water temperatures lead to better breeding success and the removal of key urchin predators such as southern rock lobster.

The group has made it its focus to monitor the extent of the long-spined urchins and the associated barrens over the reef. Friends of Beware Reef will also conduct other surveys, which are invaluable in the early detection of introduced marine pests and the detection of other processes that can threaten the reef. If you are interested in joining this group and contributing to marine monitoring contact Jeremy Neilson at jeremy.neilson@dse.vic.gov.au.
Introducing the Coast Monkeys –
“Clean up Australia Day should be every day”

Mitchell Buritch, Coast Monkey

Coast Monkeys is all about – you guessed it – the coast. Our group consists of athletes, environmental advocates and the local community, all wanting to make a difference to the coast between Port Melbourne and St Kilda. Anybody and everybody is welcome to join our group in making our beaches a cleaner more enjoyable place to be.

We plan to change the common misconception that picking up rubbish off our streets and beaches and putting rubbish in the bin is uncool.

This year the Coast Monkeys will coordinate with many other organisations, and we have big plans. Clean Up Australia Day, on 6 March, will be a massive event. Our main focus will be on running many more programs with school children in local areas with the aim of changing their attitude towards waste. Also in the works is a coastal run from Melbourne to Sydney. Stay tuned for more information.

So come on down and start to make your move on the world. Be part of the Coast Monkey Foundation: it can help maintain your fitness while it restores the quality of your local environment.

Visit www.coastmonkeys.org, contact Mitchell on 0449 969 893 or mitchell@coastmonkeys.org for more information.

Weed Wandering on Griffiths Island

Marty Gent, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Warrnambool

Geoff Carr, principal botanist from the consulting firm Ecology Australia, recently paid Port Fairy and the Friends of Griffiths Island (FOGI) a visit. Geoff is an unassuming man, a person whom you can listen to and learn from.

With four FOGI and two DSE representatives in attendance, it promised to be an entertaining session and it certainly was. Geoff told us that he knew “90 per cent of the plants here … if you disagree, then tell me your version and we will thrash it out as I am still learning too”. As he was citing the botanical names and we were using local or family names it turned out to be a very enlightening day.

Amid the giggles of “Where in blazes did that name come from?”, and “You cannot wipe that weed out as it’s in purple and gold [local football colours]!”, Geoff did find two weeds never before seen in Australia; he was quite excited about doing more research when he returned to Melbourne.

Because Geoff really knows what he is talking about it was a joy to listen to him relay his knowledge. Overall, the island is in good shape, but we still have lots of work to do to get rid of the boxthorn. And now we have the two new weed species to deal with, the cobra lily and a type of sea lavender. In the next few weeks, Geoff will be doing a survey along the coast back towards Warrnambool to look for more new weeds, so he has quite a bit more walking and weeding ahead of him. Geoff will be walking around Victoria’s most beautiful coastline, doing a job he loves. I feel better for meeting him and wish him well with the rest of the survey.

The Friends of Griffiths Island are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural environment of Griffiths Island, Port Fairy. Members have regular working bees to which everybody is welcome – the more the merrier. So come and join up. Contact the Southwest facilitator for more details.
Despite decades of great work by local councils and communities, and campaigns such as Clean Up Australia Day and Keep Australia Beautiful, the problem of litter in waterways, bays and oceans is still huge. Too many people are still unaware that their careless approach to waste disposal is the basis of an environmental curse on a global scale. In Port Phillip Bay, this is especially evident on beaches from Sandridge to Elwood, which are degraded annually by millions of litter items that are carried into the bay from metropolitan stormwater catchments via the Yarra and Elwood Canal.

But the past year has seen unprecedented community action to eliminate litter from these beaches. Several new and innovative groups have emerged, each with a focus on ongoing action as opposed to the one big clean up of the year.

In February Port Phillip EcoCentre invited all of these groups to a local litter forum with a view to identifying opportunities for collaboration on Clean Up Australia Day (March 6). The general idea was that working together would achieve greater and longer lasting results.

Groups and organisations attending included 3184 Beach Patrol, 3206 Beach Patrol, 3207 Beach Patrol, Port Phillip EcoCentre, Tangaroa Blue, City of Port Phillip, Earthcare St Kilda, SurfRider Foundation Melbourne, 2 Hands, Coast Monkeys, Friends of Port Melbourne’s Foreshore, Friends of Webb Dock Walking Trail, Sea Shepherd Melbourne, Zoos Victoria, EPA Victoria, Healthy Waterways Program (Melbourne Water), Coast Action Coast Care and Metropolitan Waste Management Group.

Keynote speaker, Heidi Taylor from the Tangaroa Blue Ocean Care Society, highlighted the need to consolidate the national anti-litter campaign though local partnerships and to standardised data collection. Heidi’s presentation was followed by a facilitated workshop that identified the following practical initiatives as priorities for Clean Up Australia Day:

- collection of data on all items collected, including brand audits that can be fed into the National Marine Debris Initiative
- continuous networking and a post clean up debrief
- all groups collaborating to coordinate clean up of the 11 km City of Port Phillip foreshore.

With the emergence of the Port Phillip Clean Beaches Coalition and a commitment to ongoing collaboration, it is hoped that an effective model, which could be adopted by other local regions, will be identified.

A Fresh Approach to Beach Litter

Neil Blake, Baykeeper, Port Phillip EcoCentre

The Port Phillip Clean Beaches Coalition needs you...

Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday March 6th 2011

Let’s all work together to keep Port Phillip Bay beautiful!

The consolidated effort for Clean Up Australia Day will also seek volunteers from the broader community, not just from among members of the groups in the coalition. Apart from cleaning up the litter, help is needed to record data on the types of litter collected. Volunteers are encouraged to register to work on local beaches listed on the Clean Up Australia website at www.cleanup.org.au

Heidi Taylor 0410 166 684 www.oceancare.org.au
Guy Boston 0438 003 195 www.3206beachpatrol.com.au
Mitchell Burich 0449 969 893 www.coastmonkeys.org
Neil Blake 0409 138 565 www.bay-keeper.com
Spreading the Word – South Gippsland Environmental Education and Interpretation

For over 10 years now, an unusual training organisation has been quietly going about the business of educating people of all ages on the significance of our environment, with a particular emphasis on the amazing Bunurong coast. Inverloch-based South Gippsland Environmental Education and Interpretation (SGEEI) is a subsidiary of the South Gippsland Conservation Society. Since 2000 SGEEI has provided marine and coastal environmental education to Gippsland schools on a fee for service basis – typically, $3 per head – which makes the program affordable to small groups. To date over 12,000 students have participated.

The SGEEI program aims to spark enthusiasm for the environment in students of all ages, and to provide specialist knowledge for school groups about their local environment. Frequently, this is an area of knowledge that regular teachers lack.

To assist with improving teachers’ knowledge, SGEEI can provide additional information and resources to teachers through, for example, the production of CDs and other educational materials.

Rosemary Swart has been a SGEEI education officer for over seven years. In all the sessions she has conducted, Rosemary has worked hard to develop educational materials and instil a sense of environmental responsibility in participants. Rosemary has also presented many activities – principally, Rockpool Rambles – for Coast Action/Coastcare’s Summer by the Sea program. Another part timer, Pam Mathieson, joined the program in 2010.

During school term SGEEI’s main clients are primary and secondary colleges, many of which return year after year to take advantage of this education opportunity. Activities are often delivered in the meeting room of the Bunurong Environment Centre, where many class groups also take time to wander through the spectacular dinosaur and shell displays.

SGEEI is managed by a committee that includes representatives from South Gippsland Water, the Department of Education, South Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group, South Gippsland Conservation Society and DSE’s Coastcare program. The committee is very grateful for ongoing annual financial assistance provided by South Gippsland Water; local Coastcare funding has been made available for a number of projects.

Seal the Loop – Keeping fishing line out of our oceans to protect local wildlife

Ben Sanders, Melbourne Zoo

Twenty years ago Silva, the Australian Fur Seal, was rescued from near death in Victorian waters after being entangled in a fishing net. She was cut so deeply that it took her months to recover and she was unable to be re-released. Today she still bears a deep scar around her neck, and is cared for by staff of Melbourne Zoo, where she is an important conservation ambassador and the face of Melbourne Zoo’s Seal the Loop initiative.

Seal the Loop provides coastal communities with specially designed bins made from recycled plastics collected at Melbourne Zoo. The bins are installed on coasts and inland waterways around Victoria to help keep fishing line out of our oceans and protect wildlife from becoming entangled.

A recent five month trial of Seal the Loop involved bins being installed in twenty locations around Port Phillip Bay assisted by local councils and community groups. Locations included Queenscliff, Newport, Brighton, Mornington and St Kilda Pier - close to the local Little Penguin colony who, like thousands of other birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, are faced with ongoing threat of entanglements. Animals such as Silva are the lucky ones, as most are never found in time to receive adequate treatment.

The great news is that Melbourne Zoo will be extending the reach of the Seal the Loop in 2011 by creating more bins for distribution in Victoria. They are now accepting requests for bins and the offer of groups willing to take part in monitoring the bins in their local area.

Contact Ben Sanders at Melbourne Zoo; Ph: (03) 8925 9482 E: bsanders@zoo.org.au

For a full list of current bin sites and for more information visit www.zoo.org.au/sealtheloop
Coastal Community Volunteers
Improve the Bush by the Bay

Julie Miller and Phillip Wierzbowski, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitators, Port Phillip Bay

Within the coastal fringe of Port Phillip, the importance, value and effort of volunteers, as conducted by individuals or through a team effort, have grown over the last few years, as demonstrated by the 200 students who spent a day at six sites as Coastal Community Volunteers on 23 January.

Phillip Wierzbowski, from the Coast Action/Coastcare program, assisted volunteer organiser Julie Miller to engage with key people in and around coastal areas of Port Phillip, including Williamstown (Jawbone Flora and Flora Reserve), Brighton–Beaumaris foreshore, Frankston foreshore, Sweetwater Creek, Sunshine Reserve, Mt Martha and Capel Sound foreshores.

The participants, aged 12 to 16, were part of the Maccabi Junior Sports Carnival in Melbourne, which is hosted by Maccabi Victoria. Teams came from Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland, Hong Kong and New Zealand. This week of sporting competition and social activity included an inaugural Community Day, at which participants were given an opportunity to volunteer in an area of their community. Their choices included:
1. Coastcare
2. Fire affected King Lake and Marysville
3. Jewish Care
4. Victoria Relief Food Bank.

The weather was near perfect for a day of activities that included weed removal, watering, mulching and pruning.

The Maccabi Junior Carnival Management Committee is extremely grateful to the coastal land managers, Coastcare and Friends groups who welcomed the kids, gave their time and shared their knowledge, hopefully, to inspire others to become Coastal Community Volunteers.

Oh, What a Night!

Marg O’Toole, Habitat Connection

January 13 – a hot, wet, windy day with humidity of 98 per cent. Tropical north Queensland? No. Port Campbell in southwest Victoria. (Climate change in action?)

A perfect setting for ‘Our Yo-yo Coast’, a Summer by the Sea talk presented by Associate Professor John Sherwood of Deakin University – getting wet, then getting dry, and then wet again in Port Campbell.

For 1½ hours an audience of more than 35 sat in the great venue of Port Campbell SLSC, overlooking the bay, enthralled by Dr Sherwood’s wonderful talk on how our coastline as we know it today was formed, how it has changed over millions of years and what may happen to it in the future.

With many locals in the audience, it was a treat to be able to relate to examples of areas we know and have always wondered why this or that had happened to it.. For locals and visitors alike, it was also fascinating to learn how the southwest coastline fits into the larger picture of Victoria and Australia’s geology.

Included in the audience, whose ages ranged from 9 to 60+, were holiday makers, DSE staff, locals, school teachers, some of John’s former students, teenagers, children, and for all of them, this was a fantastic evening of enjoyable learning. We continued to receive much positive feedback for weeks afterwards. I have had many requests for another similar evening from those who attended, and especially from locals who missed out.

John, thanks again for such a memorable, interesting and entertaining talk – please come back again.
National Recognition for a Local Hero

Andy Gray, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Anglesea

It’s been a busy three years for Margaret MacDonald of Moggs Creek. In 2008 Margaret’s gallant conservation efforts where acknowledged by the Victorian Coastal Council by way of presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award. Only three years later, at this year’s Australia Day celebrations, Margaret was called to the podium once again. This time recognition was in the form of an Order of Australia medal.

To celebrate the occasion there was a gathering near the ANGAIR headquarters (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna). Local resident Frances North-East (DSE) took the opportunity to say a few words.

There is nothing better than the opportunity to be in the bush with Marg and her crew, particularly at orchid time to observe and learn and learn and learn. The machinations of government do not daunt Margaret MacDonald (I am not sure if there is anything that daunts Margaret). She has been able to connect agency priorities with her own action orientated agenda to achieve conservation outcomes. No mean feat.

Frances North-East, 2011

Since 1989 Margaret has been heavily involved in many groups, committees, submissions, projects and publications to list. ANGAIR sums up her achievements with the following:

There is little doubt that her efforts and contributions to the wellbeing of the local environment and its biodiversity are exceptional and their value inestimable.

ANGAIR Website, 2011

Congratulations Margaret!

For a more detailed account of Margaret’s achievements go to www.angair.org.au

Funding Boost for Anglesea’s Environment Volunteers

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

Anglesea conservation groups will have help in their war against weeds in the Fairylands Nature Reserve after the Surf Coast Shire received a five year environment grant. This funding boost will help Anglesea volunteers, who have battling alone, to improve a nature reserve in the town.

The grant, which is part of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority’s Coastal Tender initiative, provides funding for groups to protect native vegetation. The money will help transform the reserve next to Anglesea’s caravan park from a weed-infested swampland into an attractive area for the community.

As part of the Coastal Tender scheme, the Surf Coast Shire has also received money for weed removal and revegetation at the Painkalac Creek Nature Reserve at Aireys Inlet.

The shire’s environment officer, Leanne Rolfe, said the rehabilitation work would improve habitat for native animals at both reserves and create more appealing community attractions.

Leanne said the funding was welcome news for the region’s tireless environmental volunteers.

“A lot of volunteer groups, such as ANGAIR, do working bees to try to control the weeds but they find it hard to keep up.

“Through this coastal grant we’ll be able to get contractors in to do the heavy weed removal and spray work, which will make such a difference … the volunteers are over the moon,” she said.

“Both these reserves are big so it’s just going to be incredible what the two sites will look like at the end of the five-year cycle.”

The Coastal Tender scheme is in its second round and is open to everyone along the Corangamite coastline. Corangamite CMA Coastal Tender coordinator, Polly Matthews, said the funding presented a great opportunity to make a difference to the coastal landscape.

“Coastal conservation projects can enhance the environmental values along the coast, and make our region even more beautiful,” she said.

For further information or to express an interest in participating in Coastal Tender contact Polly Matthews on 0417 511 999 or email polly.matthews@ccma.vic.gov.au.

Marg Macdonald in the field
Regional Updates

Southwest – Nelson to Princetown

Marty Gent, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Warrnambool

Although many of us were frustrated with the lack of beach days during summer, the wet weather didn’t stop the Middle Island penguins from having another very successful breeding season. Kristie King, who runs the penguin monitoring program for Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group, says that it looks as if the penguins have had two breeding peaks this season. This is a very rare occurrence about which we are looking forward to finding out more as the last of the data are collected and analysed.

Now that summer is over the Coastcare groups of the far southwest are busy preparing for the autumn planting season. The plants have been ordered and preparation has begun. Planting activities will be happening right along our coast, so why not join in and lend a hand?

I’d like to finish up by congratulating Nelson Coastcare on its recent incorporation. The group is doing an amazing job and has plans for an exciting series of activities for the rest of the year.

To find out more about getting involved in your local Coastcare group, give me a call on 5561 9955.

Otways and Surf Coast

Andy Gray, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Anglesea

Thank you to Tracey Pennington and Jess Brown for assisting me with a smooth transition into the role of Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator for this region.

Congratulations to Margaret MacDonald for being awarded an Order of Australia at recent Australia Day celebrations. Well done Margaret. Your knowledge, passion and leadership inspire all who are lucky enough to work with you.

Once again more than 40 Year 5/6 students from Lorne–Aireys P12 took part in the Great Victoria Fish Count at Lorne Pier in late December. For results see www.reefwatchvic.asn.au. This year they are planning to compare the Lorne Pier site with Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary in Aireys Inlet. A Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary (FERMS) group is already in the pipeline and local students are showing great potential as the future of the group.

Thank you to Suzie Reeves, teacher at Aireys Inlet, for the update.

Well done to Anglesea YMCA Recreation Camp and Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna (ANGAIR) for securing Coastcare Victoria grants funding for projects in the Anglesea area. ANGAIR is continuing its contribution to dune restoration and protection by linking with land managers and visiting school groups.

The YMCA’s exciting project, funded jointly by CCMA and Coast Action, is to create a self-guided indigenous focused interpretive trail on its property. It will be working with indigenous youth from the Wathaurong Cooperative in Geelong and the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative.

Great underwater footage of a Snorkel Safari at Point Addis as part of the Summer by the Sea 2011 program can be seen on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWb5Y8I0mKM.

A Wye River Coast Action group may not be fully fledged but it already has one working bee under its belt and now has a second day of coastal dune works scheduled with a visiting Geelong school. The students aim to remove invasive weeds, to plant, and to participate in an interpretive walk looking at coastal processes and the importance of environmental stewardship.

Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula

Jo Ludbrook, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Geelong

As always, the coastline is full of dedicated community action across the Bellarine and Surf Coast. I am constantly overwhelmed by the generosity and commitment of each volunteer, all of whom have valuable and various skills and knowledge that they bring to a range of projects.

In December, once again, Friends of Point Addis, together with Coast Action and Reefwatch Victoria, joined in the Great Victorian Fish Count. Several members of the group also attended two activities as part of the DSE Summer by the Sea program to gain further understanding of their local coastal and marine environment.

Jan Juc Coast Action’s Luke Hynes, SANE member Graeme Stockton and indigenous guide David Tournier ran a well-received Coastal Cultural Connections Walk and Talk in January as part of Summer by the Sea. The activity was well attended and enjoyed by all. In February Jan Juc Coast Action, for its work to protect rufous bristlebird habitat, invited Ballarat College students to lend a helping hand at the Birdrock Native Grassland site.

SANE is currently busy working with Coast Action/Coastcare, Parks Victoria, Surfworld and the Melbourne Museum to develop a permanent display that will focus on the natural environment of the Bells Beach area.

Torquay Coast Action, Breamlea Coast Action and Shorebirds Group have been keeping a keen eye on the hooded plover nests around Point Impossible and Bancoora Beach, as has Point Lonsdale local John Murry, with two fledglings successfully raised by the pair near Collendina.

The recently established Ocean Grove Coastcare group has had a roaring start with the support of Barwon Coast Committee of Management: it has already run sessions with the Ocean Grove nippers over January, a logo competition throughout summer and is in planning its first onground activity for March. Keep an eye out for other new groups in the Clifton Springs area.

Swan Bay Environment Association used its AGM as an opportunity to invite Beth Ross from Gordon TAFE to present a talk on the value of local flora and fauna, Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management invited local residents to attend evening walks with its community and Friends of Point Richards will be tackling Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) throughout the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve.
It is worth mentioning that the work of all coastal community groups wouldn’t be manageable without the ongoing support of their land managers and our community networks in the region: Bellarine Catchment Network, and Surf Coast and Inland Plains Network. Well done to all.

**Western Port and Mornington Peninsula**  
**Denis Cox, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Mornington Peninsula and Western Port**

Barb Martin Bushbank on Phillip Island provides indigenous plants for a number of local community groups in the Bass Coast Shire but has been experiencing problems with raising their seed due to the dampness of the season. Coast Action/Coastcare was able to provide some assistance by means of a problem solving discussion and general overview of their nursery operations.

At the recent Southern Peninsula Flora and Fauna Association (SPFFA) AGM, there was a change of committee. Gidja Walker, the long-standing president, who has generously shared her knowledge and personal time, resigned from her position though she will continue her educational roles. The new chairperson is Estelle Kefford, a most effective events organiser who has been involved in revegetation and restoration of bushland.

A Coastal Information Day was held at Grantville on Western Port. Local residents were provided with information that ranged from its history and ecology, current projects and issues, likely impacts of climate change and the importance of mangroves and artificial offshore reefs in the protection of the coastline.

Coast Action/Coastcare was involved in the ‘Treating New and Emerging Weed Threats’ workshop that discussed the development of ways to enable public land managers to better define, locate, report and respond to new and emerging weeds across a range of landscapes. Ideas and knowledge, gathered from the experiences of a diverse group of people, will be used to develop effective processes to tackle these new and emerging weeds.

The Balnarring Foreshore Committee has provided space and assistance for a local group, Wildlife Help on the Mornington Peninsula (WHOMP), to cage and protect found hurt or disabled wildlife before it is rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

On a hot Sunday in January, Sunshine Reserve hosted 31 young children, who came from as far away as Hong Kong and Sydney, Armed with bottles of frozen water, bananas and nut bars, they thumped on the pink berry heath in the reserve. Many of the children, who came from as far away as Hong Kong and Sydney, found the possibility of sighting snakes and other wildlife a bit challenging, but once they got into the work they did a great weed pull. By the end of the day, not one snake had been sighted. Hot, tired and very pleased with their efforts, they applauded themselves, and then went off to the beach for a cool down swim. We greatly look forward to working with them again next year.

**South Gippsland**  
**Bruce Atkin, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, South Gippsland**

A third Coastal Ecology and Management weekend workshop for volunteers is to be held on 9 and 10 April at Sandy Point. Among the guest presenters secured so far are coastal geomorphologist Neville Rosengren, wetlands and saltmarsh expert Paul Boon, Coastcare’s own Denis Cox and Parks Victoria’s Mark Rodrigue.

Volunteers have come away from previous workshops inspired, and with increased knowledge of and enthusiasm for the environment they work in. Anyone wishing to attend should contact CA/CC facilitator Bruce Atkin (details elsewhere in this issue).

The Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association has been working with the Bass Coast Shire Council to remove pine trees and other woody weeds on the foreshore and to revegetate the area with native tubestock. A notable feature of this activity is the huge turnout of volunteers to help with the physical work.

The latest stage of this ongoing project has been funded by a Coastcare Victoria Medium Grant. Already, changes to the landscape are striking.

A project driven by Young Landcare award winner Kayla Groombridge of Tarraville has been granted a Coastcare Victoria Community Small Grant. The Tarraville and Robertsons Beach Community Consultative Group applied for funding for a revegetation project on the east side of the Tarra River to help address degradation of the river banks.

**East Gippsland**  
**Jeremy Neilson, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator, Bairnsdale**

During early December approximately 1000 primary school students from 16 schools across East Gippsland, from Bairnsdale to Mallacoota, took part in Environmental Fun Days that were run by Coast Action/Coastcare in partnership with Water Watch East Gippsland, Fish Care and East Gippsland Water. The days were designed for students to learn about our aquatic and marine environments in a fun and interactive way. Students learnt the important links that occur from catchment to coast. The feedback from teachers and students was very positive; many are looking forward to the program being held again.

December also saw the unveiling of the Coast Action/Coast Care East Gippsland Educational and Information trailer. The trailer is designed to be a fully independent mobile classroom and information stand, although when travelling down the road it more closely resembles a mobile aquarium. Once it is set up it has everything a good classroom needs, including televisions, microscopes, whiteboards, and yes, even a kitchen sink.

This year’s Summer by the Sea program has proved to be as popular as ever — many activities were booked out well ahead of time and other activities bursting at the seams as participants filed into venues to take part. Once again old favourites such as Friends of Beware Reef slide show presentations and fish dissections were popular, while new favourites, in the form of kayaking tours of the beautiful Gippsland Lakes, are starting to emerge.
Coming Events

6 March  
**Clean Up Australia Day** – events include
- Friends of Mud Island cleanup – contact Jo Ludbrook.
- Ocean Grove Coastcare; meet at 10am at Ocean Grove SLSC.
- Port Phillip Clean Beach Coalition – email info@3206beachpatrol.com.au.

7–13 March  
**Seaweek**
The Marine Education Society of Australia’s Seaweek will sail the Pelican onto Port Phillip Bay with marine educators, marine scientists and school teachers for a workshop on water.

13 March  
**Venus Bay Planting Day** – Beach 1 carpark, Sun 1.30pm–4.30pm. New volunteers welcome. Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula, contact Mae: 5663 7525

19 March  
**Paterson Weeding** – from 9.30am Sat at the Wonthaggi SLSC carpark BBQ lunch provided, more fun then planting! All welcome. Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association, contact Cathy: 0425 762350, or see website capepaterson.asn.au

14–20 March  
**Festival of the Sea**
This Barwon Heads event will be as huge as ever, with three evening sessions, two seminars and the main Festival Day on Sunday

25 March  
**Southwest Coastal Volunteers Forum**
(10 am–4 pm) Port Fairy Yacht Club. RSVP by Friday, 19 March, to Marty Gent on 5561 9955 or marty.gent@dse.vic.gov.au.

28–30 March  
**Australian Coastal Council Conference**
Torquay
Major themes include the implications of population growth for Australia’s coastal regions and coastal risk management, including legal and insurance risks.

29–30 April  
**East Gippsland Field Days**
Contact Jeremy Neilson on 5152 0431 or at jeremy.neilson@dse.vic.gov.au for details

April (date to be confirmed)  
**Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2011**

9–15 May  
**National Volunteer Week** celebrations, East Gippsland.
Contact Jeremy Neilson on 5152 0431 or at jeremy.neilson@dse.vic.gov.au for details


COAST ACTION/COASTCARE

**Coast Action/Coastcare Contacts**

**Warrnambool and Southwest**
Marty Gent
Tel: 03 5561 9955
Mob: 0428 141 599
Email: marty.gent@dse.vic.gov.au

**Otways and Surfcoast**
Andrew Gray
Tel: 03 5220 2008
Mob: 0409 332 197
Email: andrew.gray@dse.vic.gov.au

**Geelong and Bellarine**
Joanne Ludbrook
Tel: 03 5226 4669
Email: joanne.ludbrook@dse.vic.gov.au

**Port Phillip Bay**
Phillip Wierzbowski
Tel: 03 9296 4525
Mob: 0411 409 815
Email: phillip.wierzbowski@dse.vic.gov.au

**Westernport and Mornington Peninsula**
Denis Cox
Tel: 03 5183 9116
Mob: 0429 842 142
Email: denis.cox@dse.vic.gov.au

**South Gippsland**
Bruce Atkin
Tel: 03 5183 9116
Mob: 0429 842 142
Email: bruce.atkin@dse.vic.gov.au

**East Gippsland**
Jeremy Neilson
Tel: 03 5152 0431
Mob: 0408 357 343
Email: jeremy.neilson@dse.vic.gov.au

**Statewide Coordinator, Melbourne**
Matthew Fox
Tel: 03 9637 9742
Email: matthew.fox@dse.vic.gov.au

Coastcare’s national website: www.coastcare.com.au

Coastline Editor: Matthew Fox

To receive Coastline in the future contact your local Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator or phone (03) 9637 9742.