

# SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

## NEWSLETTER

December 2022



### SUMMER AT SILVERLEAVES

After a long and very wet winter, Summer has finally arrived and so have the mosquitoes and sandflies! Phillip Island recorded its wettest October since records began nearly two decades ago. The Rhyll weather station showed 113mm of rain fell in October, including 30mm on October 14. The October median is 64mm. Our highest rainfall month this year was June with 134mm.

The hooded plovers have started their breeding season, and other migratory shorebirds such as eastern curlews, bar-tailed godwits and red-necked stints have arrived, having flown thousands of kilometres from their Arctic breeding grounds to Rhyll Inlet at the east end of Silverleaves beach.

It's time to get into the garden and get prepared for the bushfire season and review your fire plan. If you see a copperhead snake, which is the only kind of snake on the Island, keep calm and move away, keep your pets and children inside and allow time for it to move on, or if you are very concerned call the Phillip Island snake handler on 0476 877 769

When you walk along the beach you can help protect marine life and birds by collecting pieces of plastic, plastic bags, fishing line, bits of rope and many other careless discards. Take them home and dispose of in your rubbish bin. Every piece of rubbish picked up and removed from the environment helps.

### SCA COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

**Sunday 22 January 2023 11.00am-12.00pm  
Silverleaves Reserve**

Please feel welcome to come to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, put forward your ideas and meet other residents of Silverleaves.

### WORKING BEE 2023

Unfortunately, a couple of working bees had to be cancelled due to the weather this year, but the SCA are planning several working bees in 2023. Keep an eye on the new notice board in the reserve for dates for 2023.

### THE SCA MEMBERSHIP

Payment of SCA membership fees is changing from a bank transfer option (details available on the SCA website) to an online option, which will be available in March 2023. We will send out a reminder and more information in the next newsletter. If you have any queries about the SCA or membership, please contact the SCA secretary- [silverleavesconservation@outlook.com](mailto:silverleavesconservation@outlook.com)

### PLANT STALL

The plant stall at the Silverleaves Store in October was very successful, there was a great community spirit around the stall, and everyone enjoyed the beautiful sunshine and a chat. A big thank you to Don Cox who generously donated a variety of potted plants, and we sold a pleasing number of Banksia trees. Thanks go to Gillian Armstrong for "babysitting" these Banksias left over from the last plant stall.

### DISTINCTIVE AREA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The SCA submitted a detailed report to the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Program (DAL) which has significant implications for Silverleaves and Rhyll Inlet planning controls. In summary, the submission supported the proposed boundaries at the southern and eastern edge of Silverleaves as critical to protect the Rhyll Inlet and addressed the key objectives of the DAL such as Climate change mitigation and adaptation, Environment and biodiversity, Landscape, Strategic infrastructure, Settlements, Building height restrictions, Town character and Landscape. The SCA will present this submission at the final hearing which will begin in March 2023.

## MOSQUITOS AND SANDFLIES

Heavy rainfall across Victoria recently has created ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Scientists warn a booming mosquito population increases the threat of serious mosquito-borne diseases, such as Japanese encephalitis virus, Ross River virus and flesh-eating Buruli ulcer. Take extra precautions this year to protect yourself, your family and visitors.

Silverleaves is also known for the pesky sandflies/midges. They are so small (1.0mm – 3.0mm) that some people may not be aware that they have been bitten until the itching starts sometime later. Try hard not to scratch bites as this increases the chance of the wound becoming infected. Some people have a minor reaction to bites while others experience a severe local (allergic) reaction. Symptomatic treatment includes application of an ice pack or using antihistamine cream or tablets may offer relief from itchy and painful bites.

Sand flies are attracted to moving objects, warmth, and carbon dioxide, and always travel in groups, so if you have seen one sand fly, there will be others nearby. Sandflies and mosquitoes are more active at dawn and dusk, and on warm, cloudy days and when there is no wind, so these are times to take extra care. Wear long, loose-fitting light-coloured clothes if possible as mosquitoes can bite through tight clothing, and sandflies are attracted to darker clothing.

Protect yourself in the home with fine mesh door and window screens, sandflies are very small and can fit through standard fly screens. Ceiling and pedestal fans can help indoors as mosquitoes and sandflies don't like air currents. Don't forget to protect your pets as well.

Insect repellents containing either DEET (15-20%) (diethyltoluamide) or picaridin are effective. Always read and follow the label instructions. An alternative home-remedy sandfly repellent is baby oil, Dettol and eucalyptus oil or citronella oil mix. The smell combined with the physical barrier created by the baby oil is supposed to help prevent the bites.

## SILVERLEAVES BEACH

There are two low tides and two high tides every lunar day or 24 hours and 50 minutes, which explains why the tide changes roughly one hour later each day.

At Silverleaves beach over summer you might find sausage jellies and squid eggs. The clear kidney shaped jellies on the beach are the egg mass from the moon snail.

### Sausage Jellies



Photo Myra Holmes

### Squid eggs



Image <https://www.jellywatch.org>

The slimy white finger like clusters are Southern calamari (squid) eggs. When you look at the lumpy bits along the slimy white fingers you can sometimes see the little squids inside if they are developed enough.

## HOODED PLOVERS



Image source <https://www.penguins.org.au>

The endangered Hooded Plover have now begun their breeding season which is from late spring until early autumn. They typically nest on the sand on the edge of the waterline, leaving them very vulnerable. The nests and chicks are difficult to see and prone to being crushed underfoot, destroyed by uncontrolled dogs or disturbed by human activity, which can inadvertently scare the parents away from their babies.

Please maintain a distance from fenced off areas and observe the hours dogs are allowed on the beach and always walk your dog on a leash and never take dogs past the signs on the eastern end of the beach, which is a nature sanctuary. Sign up to become a 'Hooded Plover Watch' volunteer by contacting Phillip Island Nature Parks [volunteers@penguins.org.au](mailto:volunteers@penguins.org.au)

## PIED OYSTER CATCHER



Image source: [Pied Oystercatcher - The Australian Museum](#)

The Pied Oystercatcher is black with a white breast and belly, a bright orange-red bill, eye-rings and legs and a red eye. They breed in pairs and have a breeding territory of some 200 m which is defended by both birds. Nesting takes place on sand just above high-water mark on the beach. The eggs are well-camouflaged, being pale brown with darker brown and black blotches and streaks. They are shy of humans and seldom allow close approach.

## RE-SILVERING SILVERLEAVES

Silverleaves is named after the beautiful *Banksia integrifolia* trees that give the area much of its distinctive character. Their numbers are declining, and few new seedlings are growing. Older trees have become more prone to wind damage and borer attack. The SCA encourage you to plant a *Banksia* tree on your property. If you are concerned about height, you can prune to keep the trees smaller in size.

## RABBITS

There are increasing numbers of rabbits around Silverleaves, and they can have a drastic impact on the environment. As well as digging holes and eating everything in the garden, they reduce the regeneration of native plants through grazing and ringbarking saplings and compete with native animals for food and shelter.

A new program to reduce the impacts of rabbits on Phillip Island has begun this year. Landcare, landholders, community groups, Phillip Island Nature Parks, and Bass Coast Shire Council are teaming up to tackle rabbits. If you have a problem with rabbits on your property, contact Bass Coast Landcare Network's Rabbit Project Officer on 0456 390 423 or email [jack.harriss@basscoastlandcare.org.au](mailto:jack.harriss@basscoastlandcare.org.au) to discuss options available to you. The program also has an interactive website <https://www.feralscan.org.au> and the FeralScan App. Download free from the [AppStore](#) or [Google Playstore](#). Instructions are available on each species homepage e.g., [rabbitscan](#)), and are contained within the App.

## CATS

Cats do untold damage to our native fauna and birdlife and can become feral. Bass Coast Shire Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 will see the implementation of a 24-hour cat containment order from 1 July 2023. This will mean cats must be kept on their owners' property at all times. For more information [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au)

## FIRE PREPARATION AT SILVERLEAVES FOR THIS SUMMER – ARE YOU READY?

Silverleaves is rated as an EXTREME bushfire risk area. Bushfire activity can also occur outside the Silverleaves area and can move quickly. Fire can come from many directions and be unpredictable.

**Be prepared.** Reduce your bushfire risk and prepare your house and property for the impact of burning embers and radiant heat. (But please be aware of the regulations about removing vegetation without a permit.). If you see a fire in the area, call 000.

**You need to know ahead of time:**

**When you will leave**

**Where you will go**

**How you will get there**

**What you will take with you.**

## **Beach Fires**

Campfires on the beach are against the law. They are of great concern as embers travel and can start a fire in the foreshore and spread to properties. If you see a fire on the beach ring 000, or the Cowes Police 5952 2037.

## PLANT SUGGESTION FOR YOUR GARDEN



Image source [Solanum aviculare - Wikipedia](#)

Commonly known as the Kangaroo Apple, it has dark green, lobed leaves, purple flowers and distinctive yellow or orange fruits and grows up to 2m tall. The leaves of the plant resemble the paw print of the kangaroo hence its name, but the great news is the wallabies don't eat it. It may come up in your garden all by itself because local birds like to eat the fruits.

## MILLOWL

Millowl is the Bunurong name for Phillip Island. It is part of the Country recognised as being the Traditional Land and Waters of the Bunurong People and is steeped in cultural history dating back tens of thousands of years. The Bunurong Aboriginal Land Council Corporation is the Recognised Aboriginal Party for this area. Phillip Island was part of the homelands of the Yalluk Bulluk clan of the Bunurong people for many thousands of years before European exploration of the area began. The Bunurong were members of the Kulin nation of Aboriginal people. The Bunurong people called the island "Millowl".

The Yalluk Bulluk came to Millowl in the summer months to feast on shellfish, fish, small marsupials and mutton birds. Ochre was available at several locations on Millowl and Churchill Island and would have been used as body decoration during ceremonies. The first European explorers saw evidence of the existence of the First Nations people in the area but did not often record coming into contact with them. However, sealers, who were in the area simultaneously to early exploration, did abduct women and girls from Western Port to the Bass Strait islands, and caused havoc amongst the Bunurong people.

A midden at Point Grant dated at approximately 2,000 years contained various shells including limpets (85%) and abalone (5%). The bones of penguin, wallaby, possum and small amounts of seal and fish were also present. Stone tools, mainly flint flakes, were found as well as charcoal and ochre.

This information is cited from the [Phillip Island and District Historical Society website](#).

## SICK OR INJURED WILDLIFE

If you see sick or injured wildlife, you can contact Phillip Island Nature Parks on 0409 558 482 between 7.30am – 4pm daily or after hours contact Wildlife Victoria on 03 8400 7300,

Large animals (wallabies) that need to be euthanised call the Cowes police on 5952 2037 (they can't attend if there is a human emergency and the person must wait with the injured animal), or the Cowes vet 5952 2936, Newhaven vet: 5956 7262, or Wildlife rescuer Colleen: 0409 428 162.

## WEED OF THE MONTH



Image source: [Allium triquetrum - Wikipedia](#)

Commonly known as onion weed it appears in spring and spreads easily by seed, as well as the formation of small bulblets attached to the parent bulb. It quickly chokes the ground impacting other plant growth. One positive is that it is an edible weed. The stems and leaves have a mild spring onion or leek flavour, and the bulb has a mild garlic flavour. Each of these parts can be used in cooking such as stir fries, soups and salads.

To really eliminate onion weed, you will have to dig the whole plant out of the ground, bulb and all. You can also try smothering onion weed under black plastic or cardboard and leave it for several weeks. By cutting off light that the plants need to survive, this method will eventually kill the weeds.

Environmental weeds can invade and out-compete our native plant communities, and result in loss of habitat for native animals. Please help to reduce and control the impact of weeds in our environment.

The Bass Coast Shire have a great Common Weeds of Gippsland identification brochure which you can pick up at their office or download [Common Weeds of Gippsland Brochure \(PDF 1.9MB\)](#)

## SEASONS GREETINGS



Photo Gillian Armstrong

The SCA committee members and friends would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year and thank you for your ongoing support protecting this unique and special place at Silverleaves for future generations to enjoy as we do.