



Coogee Beach Festival

Coastcare and the City of Cockburn joined forces on 20 March for the Coogee Beach Festival to celebrate all things coastal.

The Coastcare display, supported by the Kwinana Industries Council, included a display of coastal plants that are used in coastal rehabilitation projects and winning entries from the KIC Coastal Photo Competition. The City of Cockburn promoted the coastal rehabilitation work it has carried out at Coogee Beach over the past eight years.

The festival, held each summer, attracts many thousands of visitors and provided an opportunity to inform the public on the importance of coastal conservation and how the community can contribute to preserving coastal environments. Questions on climate change and associated sea level rise dominated much of the discussion with members of the public genuinely concerned that low lying sections of the coastline in the Perth metro region may be severely affected in the years to come.

A new addition to this years display attracted the attention of the brave and the curious. Vanessa Pagets's Snake Awareness presentation included live snakes for the public to hold and handle. Three different types of pythons, Stimpsons, South West and Carpet that are captive bred and conditioned to being handled, were on display and drew a substantial crowd.



above: Coogee Beach Festival display
right: Coogee Beach Festival snake



Coastal Plants Book Launch

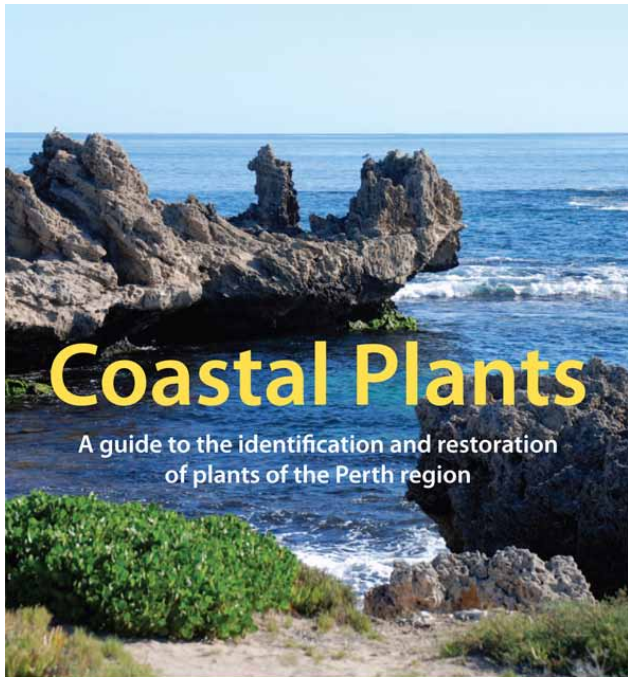
On Thursday 31st of March Cambridge Coastcare launched **Coastal Plants: A Guide to the Identification and Restoration of Plants of the Perth Region** – a recently published book authored by Kingsley Dixon, Director of Science at Kings Park and Botanic Gardens in Perth, and a founding member of Cambridge Coastcare.

Coastal Plants is a fantastic resource for community groups and individuals interested or involved in coastal natural history/restoration activities. The book provides a definitive guide to the 100 most common plants of the Perth coastal region and includes the key species used in coastal restoration. Each species is presented with its Latin name, common name and family, together with its distribution, key diagnostic features, natural history, pollination, uses in restoration and propagation. The description for each species is accompanied by a distribution map and diagnostic photographs of the whole plant, flowers, seeds and fruits.

Coastal Plants also contains introductory chapters on the biology and ecology of the coastal plants, their biogeography, and practical approaches to the restoration of coastal dune vegetation.

Copies are available via the CSIRO

Publishing website: www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6560.htm or at Boffins Bookstore: www.boffinsbookshop.com.au



Winner of the My Cockburn Sound Competition

A Twilight Sail in Cockburn Sound

Written by Jane Laws

It is 6pm on a warm January evening. The sea breeze has died away and only a zephyr remains, just enough to fill our sails for a relaxing twilight sail in Mangles Bay.

The Rockingham foreshore is a hive of activity. Young children paddle in the shallow, calm waters. Fishermen struggle for position on Palm Beach jetty. Family groups are gathering in Bell Park. The cafes and restaurants are starting to buzz with the sound of patrons celebrating the end of another working week.

As we sail along, eating our chicken sandwiches, I call out "there's a fairy penguin." The skipper catches a glimpse before the shy little creature disappears below the surface. We have been sailing in these waters for over 30 years and it is only in recent times we have seen so many fairy penguins, wonderful!

The evening breeze fills in a little so we turn and head seaward, towards Blinking Billy. Out of the depths a pod of dolphins appear on our bow. I scramble to the front of our boat and sit quietly, peering over the side, while each dolphin tries to catch a ride on our lazy bow wave. The head of the pack rolls onto his side and looks up at me as if to say "hello, and welcome to my world." I call out, "Come and take a look at this." We trade places, but it is too late. The dolphins have disappeared without a trace! As another yacht approaches we raise our glasses and say to each other "I wonder what the rich people are doing?"

With the setting sun we reluctantly turn and head for home. The colours in the night sky are so breath taking I feel like I am seeing them for the first time. I look towards the silhouettes along the shoreline, and I say, in a quiet voice, "I am lucky I call The Sound home."



Winners of the My Cockburn Sound Competition: Mitchell Carter, Haydn Mills, Elaine Christy and Jane Laws.



Sandwatch at Coogee Beach

South Coogee Primary School has signed up to participate in Sandwatch, a UNESCO project that encourages local communities to work together on addressing coastal issues.

Through the Adopt a Beach project, students will collect data at Coogee Beach that will be added to a global database of information used to assess potential climate change impacts. Students will learn how to record changes in beach erosion and accretion rates, monitor marine debris, analyse information and identify coastal plants and animals.

Through Sandwatch, South Coogee students will link with schools in the Pacific Island country of Kiribati, a low lying coral atoll country that is facing potential sea level rise issues related to climate change. Exposure to some of the issues faced by

students in Kiribati may strengthen the South Coogee students understanding of how to adapt to climate change here in Australia.

On their first excursion to Coogee Beach, students measured beach widths at a series of sites and participated in a 'Creature Feature' beachwalk where coastal plants and animals were photographed and identified. The next activity in June will see students planting coastal species to strengthen the dune system from storm damage and to improve habitat for animals including birds and reptiles.



Save the Weedy Seadragon

Two species of seadragon are found in Australian waters, the 'common' or weedy seadragon (*Pyllopteryx taeniolatus*) and the leafy seadragon (*Phycodurus eques*). Seadragons belong to the family Syngnathidae, which also includes seahorses and pipefish. Seadragons live only around the southern coast of the continent as they need temperate waters. Leafy seadragons are already fully protected under Federal law.

The 1999 Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act lists all Syngnathids (seahorses, sea dragons, pipefish and pipehorses) in Australia as nationally threatened species.

The world's main authority on the conservation status of plants and animals, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), lists seadragons as a 'near threatened species' because of human impacts on their habitat.

Cottesloe Reef is a home to these beautiful animals, and many a snorkeller has experienced the wonder of seeing them in their natural habitat. Cottesloe Coastcare is leading the call for full protection of the weedy seadragon, and in April 2010 wrote to the West Australian Fisheries Minister, Norman Moore, citing in detail the following reasons why their protection is important:

1. They are unique to Australia and protected everywhere else but in WA.
2. Status of their stocks is unknown and no

monitoring is done.

3. Marine Aquarium Fisheries licensees are able to collect sea dragons, some of which may be males carrying eggs.

4. Demand for WA weedy sea dragons is high - with no protection in WA waters, no one can possibly know how many weedy sea dragons are collected by amateurs for fish tanks in addition to the numbers quoted for the aquarium trade.

5. Sustainability of this fish species is under question.

6. Other fish are better suited to aquaculture than weedy sea dragons – they have extremely poor survival rates in captivity as they succumb to multiple infections, require live prey (sea-lice) only and need deep, temperature controlled tanks.

7. Genetic research suggests that WA sea dragons are a different species to those found in Eastern Australian waters.

Minister Moore replied to this letter stating that the Department does not believe there is a threat to the sustainability of weedy seadragons in Western Australia. In order to make a further push for protection of these animals, Cottesloe Coastcare has initiated a parliamentary petition, which must be heard in parliament and will hopefully lead to an eventual positive decision to give these precious creatures the protection they need to survive in our marine environment.

You can help by getting as many signatures on the petition as possible!

For more information on the Weedy Seadragon campaign or to download and sign the parliamentary petition to protect these animals, please go to: www.cottesloecoastcare.org/Seadragons.html or visit the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/weedyseadragons



photographer: Mark Binns

Rehabilitation at Mettams Pool

Mettams Pool is an iconic location for people of all ages and one of the City of Stirling's most popular beach destinations. West Coastcare (Inc) a coastal environmental group, have been working with the Marmion Primary School Nursery and the community for the past three years to develop a partnership which will ensure an ongoing supply of coastal plants to rejuvenate the dunes at Mettams Pool for years to come.

West Coastcare (Inc) have established an educational sponsorship program with Marmion Primary School where students have propagated plants from seed, cultivated, re-potted and monitored the progress of 600 plants on a yearly basis. This activity has been tied into the successful Coastwest funding application which will see the community invited to participate in an "Adopt a Plant Program" which will see another 1600 indigenous species planted on the coastal dune system. This will compliment the 3500 plants which have already been planted to rehabilitate the dune system.

Well known and respected Aboriginal elder Neville Collard has given his advice to the preparation and planting of indigenous species. Members of

the community will be invited to "Adopt a Plant" and in recognition of their efforts will be given a special Coastcare water bottle so that each time they come to the beach they can water their plant. Community groups will be encouraged to "Adopt a Patch" where members can look after their own section of coast, plant native species and maintain over the summer months.

As part of the funded project, a community education program will be undertaken whereby a number of indigenous species will be planted close to the gazebo at Mettams Pool and small signs constructed which title the plants and their special coastal qualities. Members of the public will be invited to participate in the traditional "West Coastcare Annual Plant" day on August 8, 2011.

West Coastcare (Inc) works on a monthly roster to clear the area of weeds so that matting can be placed prior to planting. For further details of our voluntary program contact Penny Stewart on Phone: 9448 6080 or by email: penelopejstewart@bigpond.com



Can you name the reptile and coastal plant?



Can you name this plant?