

# PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC



## “The Penguin” Newsletter

Second Quarter: June 2012

Editors: Christine Grayden & John Eddy

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WEB SITE: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~piconsoc>

### Dates for Your Diary 2012

Fri 22 June: Community Forum, 7.30 Parish Hall. See below

Sat 7 July: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room. 7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sun 8 July: Red Rocks Coast Action. Planting morning. Meet at car park 10 a.m.

Wed 29 Aug: “Western Port” day: Parish Hall 10 – 3. m/t, lunch, all day tea and coffee provided. Donation welcome. Organised by PICS. Details of speakers TBA.

Sun 30 Sep: Red Rocks Coast Action. Weed control. Meet at car park 10 a.m.

Fri 5 Oct: “Meet the Candidates” forum Council Elections. Heritage Centre meeting room; 7.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Oct: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room. 7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013: AGM.

**Enquiries for all events:** Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

**Barb Martin Bush Bank:** Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month 10 – 1.  
Phone Anne Davie ph 5956 8216

**Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days:** First Sat of every month at 10 a.m. **Koala Count** at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

**Biosphere – Bass Coast Round Table** meets at San Remo on the third Friday of every month at 8 p.m.  
Contact Jane Jobe, convenor: 0409 530 898

**Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email:** [webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au](mailto:webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au)

**Groundswell** Bass Coast Climate Change action group: Neil Rankine 5672 1185 [neilnola@netspace.net.au](mailto:neilnola@netspace.net.au)

**Bird Life Bass Coast:** [spmaddigan@gmail.com](mailto:spmaddigan@gmail.com)

### GENERAL MEETING: SAT JULY 7, 2012 HERITAGE CENTRE MEETING ROOM COWES

Updates and Speaker

Meet & greet nibbles & drinks, 7.00 p.m. Meeting starts 7.30 p.m.

All are welcome!

### How can we achieve a balance between growth and environmental sustainability on the Island?

Forum, 7 speakers, ask questions, have your say: Parish Hall, Cowes,  
Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7.30 p.m. Enquiries: Anne Davie, ph 5956 8216

### PICS COMMITTEE 2012

President: Anne Davie (media contact 5956 8216) e: [bimbadeen@nex.net.au](mailto:bimbadeen@nex.net.au)

Vice President: Pauline Taylor ph 5952 5485

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 e: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

Minutes Secretary: Gaye Cleeland (Margaret Hancock in Gaye’s absence)

Treasurer: Danielle Angel

Committee: Terry Nott, Steven Angel, John Jansson, Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings), Margaret Hancock.

## President's Letter

Dear Members,

The Island is awash and winter has only just begun! Paddocks are covered in water, dams overflowing, roads awash and many trees uprooted. It does not seem that long ago we were watching the skies for some sign of a good drop of rain.

PICS has submitted its comments to the Phillip Island Nature Parks Draft Environment Plan and it is hoped some members have also contributed their comments.

Danielle Angel has taken over the reins of Treasurer and it is also great to have the creative skills of her partner Steve. Steve is working on a new web-site for PICS and is responsible for the handsome flyers for the upcoming Community Forum.

All praise to Christine Grayden and John Eddy for securing two considerable grants for the Society's ongoing projects at Red Rocks. [More details in this Newsletter]

FOCIS is delighted to announce that the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra will be performing on Churchill Island in February 2013. Also, the Barb Martin Bushbank is busy putting together orders for this year's planting. It was very pleasing that the Climate Change Forums in Wonthaggi, run by local climate group Groundswell last month were extremely well attended.

It is hoped that many PICS members can attend the Community Forum to be held at the Parish Hall, Thompson Avenue, Cowes on Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7.30 pm. There has been for some time, much community discussion about the growth on Phillip Island and its potential impact on the fragile natural environment. It is for this reason that PICS committee decided it was an opportunity to have a Forum to talk about: How can we achieve a balance between growth and environmental sustainability on the Island?

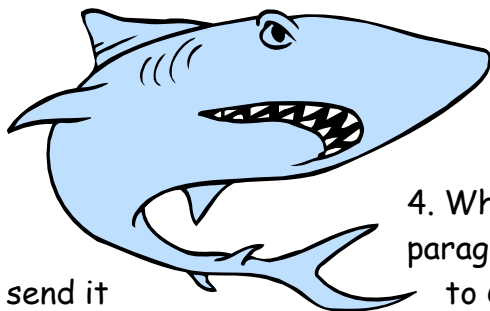
There will be 7 speakers followed by Question Time. The speakers will represent the Bass Coast Shire, Phillip Island Conservation Society, Phillip Island Business and Tourism, Phillip Island Farmers, Phillip Island Nature Parks, South Coast Community Group and Westernport Water.

Come along and be a part of the conversation!

*Anne Davie*

## STUDENTS' CORNER

1. How many claws does a koala have on each foot?
2. What is the name of the endangered bird that nests on some Phillip Island beaches?



3. Name three types of sharks that live in the sea around Phillip Island...

4. What is your favorite **BEACH** on Phillip Island? You can write a paragraph or do a drawing or take a photo for your answer and send it to Christine at [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) and we'll publish it in the September newsletter and on the website!

## FOUR CURRENT PLANNING ISSUES

### 1. *Proposed hotel development Lock Rd, Rhyll:*

These two developments, on the old caravan park site, have a multiplicity of titles and a multiplicity of owners! The owners of the titles fronting Lock Rd have withdrawn the hotel permit proposal, and are considering their options.

### 2. *Unit development in Jansson Rd:*

The owners of the titles fronting Jansson Rd Rhyll are preparing a new proposal for units. As this will be the “third time around” we can but hope that the previous problems have been removed and that this third proposal will meet the expectations of the Rhyll community and the whole community of Phillip Island – including PICS!

### 3. *Woolamai House, 7 Cleeland Rd Newhaven:*

PICS has supported this proposal for housing subdivision as it fits within the Phillip Island & San Remo Design Framework. We are working towards a proper plan for foreshore protection, as the opening of this area to housing will put great ‘people pressure’ on a relatively lightly used part of the foreshore, and towards baffled street lighting to protect night flying birds, especially shearwaters.

PICS has taken part in the Practice Day Hearing in January, a VCAT Mediation in May, and will be at the Hearing on Thursday and Friday, Aug 8 & 9. If you are able, come along to VCAT and sit in the gallery. The Hearings run from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and you can come and go as you wish – and there’s always something interesting happening!

### 4. *Proposed Housing Subdivision at Newhaven:*

This proposal is not yet available for public comment, but we are watching for it. The land under consideration lies between the Tourist Rd and Western Port, so it is adjacent to valuable saltmarshes and near a Marine Park.

*Margaret Hancock.*

## WHALE WATCHING

Message from avid whale watcher PICS member Lisa Schonberg: Wildlife Coast Cruises will be doing their whale watching cruises from 10<sup>th</sup> June til 5<sup>th</sup> August. Contact them at Phone: 1300 763 739; 5952 3501 [info@wildlifecoastcruises.com.au](mailto:info@wildlifecoastcruises.com.au) [www.wildlifecoastcruises.com.au](http://www.wildlifecoastcruises.com.au)

***Phone number to advise all Bass Coast Shire whale sightings: 0498 271 371***



"Humpback watching us" Photo: Lisa Schonberg

## RED ROCKS COAST CARE

Red Rocks Coast Care operates under the auspices of PICS and in conjunction with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Sustainability and Environment. All enquiries to John Eddy, Red Rocks Coast Action Co-ordinator, ph 5956 8501.

PICS has been fortunate to secure two grants for Red Rocks in the last few months. Firstly a Communities for Nature grant of \$13,000 to erect a beach access staircase and path at the end of the Appley Ave access track, and to plant indigenous species to stabilize the drifting sand. Secondly, a Coastcare grant of \$5660 for weed spraying by a qualified contractor of blue periwinkle, blackberry and bridal creeper, to be followed up by planting of indigenous species next year.

In April-May we had three working bees concentrating on controlling Sea Spurge from the Red Rocks beach before it set seed. Thanks to Sue, Bruno, Ross, Daryl, Maria, Mark, Caitlin, Chloe, Patsy and Maurice for all their hard work.

BCSC's Diana Whittington has been working on the signage to go at Red Rocks. We hope to see it in place soon. The design was funded from proceeds from the *Come for a Walk* book.

Our next working bee will be on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July, which will be our major planting day. Meet at the car park at 10 a.m. The following Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> is set aside for additional planting if needed.

*John Eddy.*

***Volunteers fighting sea spurge scourge: From World Environment Day supplement, Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser, Wed May 30, 2012. By John Eddy***



Volunteers with Red Rocks Coast Care have recently been battling to control an invasive weed along one of our most popular beaches. Sea spurge, a member of the Euphorbia family, is now quite common on the sandy beaches of Phillip Island after being introduced into Australia from the Mediterranean many years ago. A perennial weed, growing to usually less than one metre in height, it establishes itself on fore-dunes, replacing valuable indigenous species. Large numbers of rounded seeds are produced in autumn and are carried away by wind and waves to colonies new areas.

Control is best achieved by pulling up the whole plant, roots and all, and this is what Red Rocks volunteers have been spending hours of back-breaking work doing. The aim is to remove the plants before the seeds are shed, and mature plants already carrying seeds need to be bagged up and disposed of away from the beach to prevent further spread.

Like many Euphorbia species, sea spurge produces a white latex sap which can be irritating to the skin and can damage eyes. The sap oozes from any damaged part of the plant so gloves and care are essential when handling the pest. Control of sea spurge in the Red Rocks area has become more urgent since Hooded Plovers successfully bred in the fore-dunes this year. Volunteers and the Phillip Island Nature Parks (which coordinates the Hooded Plover Watch) are keen to maintain the area in as natural a state as possible to encourage these exquisite little shorebirds.



Sea spurge being collected and bagged.  
Photo: Maurice Schenkel.

MINUTES OF THE PICS GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE PARISH HALL, COWES ON SATURDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2012 AT 7.30 p.m.

WELCOME: President Anne Davie welcomed members and visitors

PRESENT: as per attendance book

APOLOGIES: As per attendance book

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING 14.1.12 Motion: That the Minutes be accepted

Moved: Patsy Hunt Seconded D Baird Carried

BUSINESS ARISING :

1. A meeting re: Coal Seam Gas exploration and fracking in Bass Coast Shire will be held next Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 9-11 a.m.
2. "Living with Wildlife" morning to be held at KCC, 10-12, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April.
3. "How big is big enough for Phillip Island?" Need for dialogue on this. Anne is organising a forum.
4. Race track noise monitoring: Have had dialogue with EPA for some months. Almost a social justice issue. 18 noise-free weekends at present. Race track had an article in the paper announcing new arrangements for operating hours without consulting with public. The issue is still a work in progress.
5. John Eddy reported on the launch of Bird Life Bass Coast (formerly WESBOC) at the KCC on 31<sup>st</sup> March.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Outwards:

15.1.12 To Roz Jessop, Environment Mngr, PINP, Re: cheque for \$1000 from Public Fund for payment towards a universal microchip reader.

27.1.12 To Hon Ryan Smith, Min for Env't and Climate Ch re: thanks for Summerlands Buy-Back completion.

6.2.12: To Joan Kirner re: thanks for initiating Summerlands Buy-Back in 1985.

21.2.12: To Alison Creighton, Env't mngr, BCSC re: North Arm, Saltwater Creek

21.1.12 To Melbourne Water re: North Arm, Saltwater Creek.

Inwards:

6.2.12: BCSC Planning Dept re: rationalization of planning offices

25.3.12: Joan Kirner re: Summerlands Buy-Back

2.4.12: Sally O'Neill, PINP, thanks to us for participating in Open Day

4.4.12: Environment Vic subs renewal

10.4.12: BCSC re: replace retirement village and aged care facility with further residential lots, Whitesands.

13.4.12 Email from Neil Rankine re: Coal Seam Gas exploration

Coastell BCSC Autumn 12; Smiths Beachcomber Assocn newsletter Autumn 12; Green Action News

Autumn 12; Nepean Conservn News, March 12; Habitat, April 12.

Statutory Rule No. 7/2012: Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Regulations 2012.

Correspondence accepted moved Olga Bolitho/Alison Oates carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Treasurer absent.


REPORTS:

Planning Issues:



1. "That PICS requests the Council to include in the permit conditions for the amended Whytesands development, a condition requiring an appropriately sized and fenced off-leash area for dogs"

Margaret Hancock/Pauline Taylor carried.

2.  PICS is going to mediation at VCAT re: Grollo Woolamai House on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Reports:

Friends of Koalas: Still waiting on decision from Minister re: status of koalas – threatened or not. Concern over future of koalas at KCC – if reach the maximum population, where do they go? Some males are getting out and in. Island-wide koala count in December = 10

outside of KCC. Problem with DSE and VCAT, not regarding planted vegetation as important. Only indigenous vegetation counted. FOK has fewer participants – need more helpers.

Bushbank: 16 university students recently helping with propagation.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Phone number to advise sightings of whales for all of Bass Coast Shire: 0498 271 371.
2. Saltwater Creek Next year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Saltwater Creek campaign. Could PICS make a celebration of it? It was an enormous achievement. Could have a weekend – e.g. open the pathway &/or footbridge. Put on agenda for Committee meeting.
3. Red Rocks working bee tomorrow. Sea Spurge control. Re: Red Rocks Hooded Plovers, one of the chicks banded in Feb has been identified at Sorrento beach recently, where it joined a group of several other Hooded Plovers.

GUEST SPEAKER : Christine Grayden had prepared a Power Point talk on “Mary Potter’s Nature Notes” from 1918. Mary had been an Anderson and lived in the Bass district most of her life. John Eddy showed the presentation in Christine’s absence due to illness. The presentation was enjoyed very much by those present.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.30

### *Letter from Joan Kirner*

In response to our letter of thanks to Joan for her initiating the buy-back of Summerlands Estate in 1985, Joan sent the following letter:

*March 25, 2012*

*Dear Christine, Thank you and the Phillip Island Conservation Society for your heartwarming letter of appreciation of our decision to purchase the housing on Summerlands and restore the habitat to its natural state. I responded to the excellently researched advice of Conservation, Forests and Lands staff and to the advocacy and knowledge of conservation groups like your own. Like you I am delighted that there has been ongoing bi-partisan support and community commitment. Best wishes for a Future in which the Summerland action is the norm. Joan Kirner.*

### **PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARK ENVIRONMENT PLAN PICS RESPONSES:**

- General comment: There are lots of ‘warm and fuzzy’ ideas in the report – but will it have teeth?
- Is PINP bowing to too much community pressure with some of the statements – e.g. how far along Silverleaves Beach the public should be allowed to walk, and where on PINP beaches dogs should be allowed off leash.
- PICS believes that there should be no “off leash” areas for dogs on PINP beaches.
- PICS believes that there should be no pedestrian access to the Rhyll Inlet/Observation Point area
- Abalone divers should not be permitted to cross penguin habitat to reach the shore. They should approach by boat if necessary.
- PICS is not in favour of large-scale building development on Churchill Island. New facilities should be near the entrance from the Tourist Rd.
- There is mention early on in the document of the need to find maximum levels of human attendance at the various PINP venues. This is not followed up in the individual area sections. Churchill Island is a good example of the need for a cap on attendance in order to

maintain the grounds in good condition and also maintain the peaceful ambience visitors seek.

- The KCC breeding program is creating problems which need hard decisions. What happens to the excess koalas? Do they go to Oswin Roberts Reserve, where much planting has been done to accommodate them? Would they stay there if placed there, and if not, is there an ethical question of letting them wander the island and be subjected to road trauma/death, dog attack, etc.? It seems to PICS to be time that the hard questions are tackled about this situation within this five year period.
- The Ventnor Koala Reserve would be best not open to the general public, as it is a relatively undisturbed area and home to many bird species.
- The possible reintroduction of other indigenous animal species onto Phillip Island should be treated with great caution, given the hazards such animals would face. Some limited introductions could be made on Churchill Island, which is isolated from foxes, off-leash dogs, traffic in habitat zones, etc.

### **Summary of Treasurer's report, April 2012**

Public Fund Bank Balance @ 30/4/12 \$ 13,249.66

General A/c Bank Balance @ 30/4/12 \$ 4,478.58

TERM DEPOSIT Reinvested 26/4/12 \$ 5,168.82

\* Number of current memberships 68

### **Answers to Students' Corner questions:**

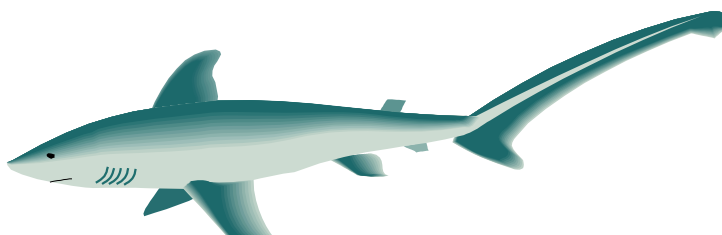
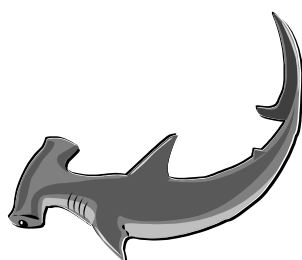
1. The Koala's paws are especially adapted for gripping and climbing with rough pads on the palms and soles helping it to grip tree trunks and branches. Both front and hind paws have long sharp claws and each paw has five digits. On the front paw, two fingers are opposed to the other three, rather like a human's thumb, so they are able to be moved in opposition to the fingers. This allows the koala to grip more securely. On the hind paw, there is no claw on the big toe, and the second and third toes are fused together to form a 'grooming claw'. <http://www.thekoala.com/koala/> And did you know that koalas have fingerprints?

2. The Hooded Plover



HeraldSun.com

3. Some of the sharks that make their home in our waters include: elephant, blue pointer (Mako), Great white (white pointer), thrasher, gummy, school, hammerhead, Port Jackson, bronze whaler...



Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

# The Penguin Newsletter

Fourth Quarter: Dec 2011  
If undeliverable, return to:  
PICS Inc.  
PO Box 548  
COWES, 3922

A RED DOT INDICATES YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION IS OVERDUE: WE VALUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

### PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC Membership Renewal/Application

**Membership Subscriptions:**

- Single membership \$15
  - Family membership \$25
  - Concession: \$10
  - Supporting membership \$30
- I/We \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ P/code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Wish to renew/apply for PICS membership  \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Make a donation to general fund  \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Enclose an overdue subscription  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send cheque/money order made out to *Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc*, and mail to:  
The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, 3922

**Please indicate how you are able to assist with the work of PICS:**

- |                                     |                                |                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Committee member                    | Preparing submissions          | Letter writing |
| Treasurer                           | Photocopying                   | Publicity      |
| Minutes Secretary                   | Attending Shire meetings       | Filing         |
| Red Rocks Coast Action Co-ordinator | Children's Environment Morning |                |
| Other _____                         |                                |                |

### PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC PUBLIC FUND

YES! I want to support the PICS Public Fund with a tax deductible donation

- \$50
- \$100
- \$150
- \$200
- My Choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque/money order payable to *Phillip Island Conservation Society Public Fund* and mail to: The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, Vic. 3922.

All donations to the Public Fund over \$2 are tax deductible ABN 48 392 256 921