

The Bushland Whistler

Friends of Forrestdale Newsletter ◆ 8th Edition ◆ July 2014

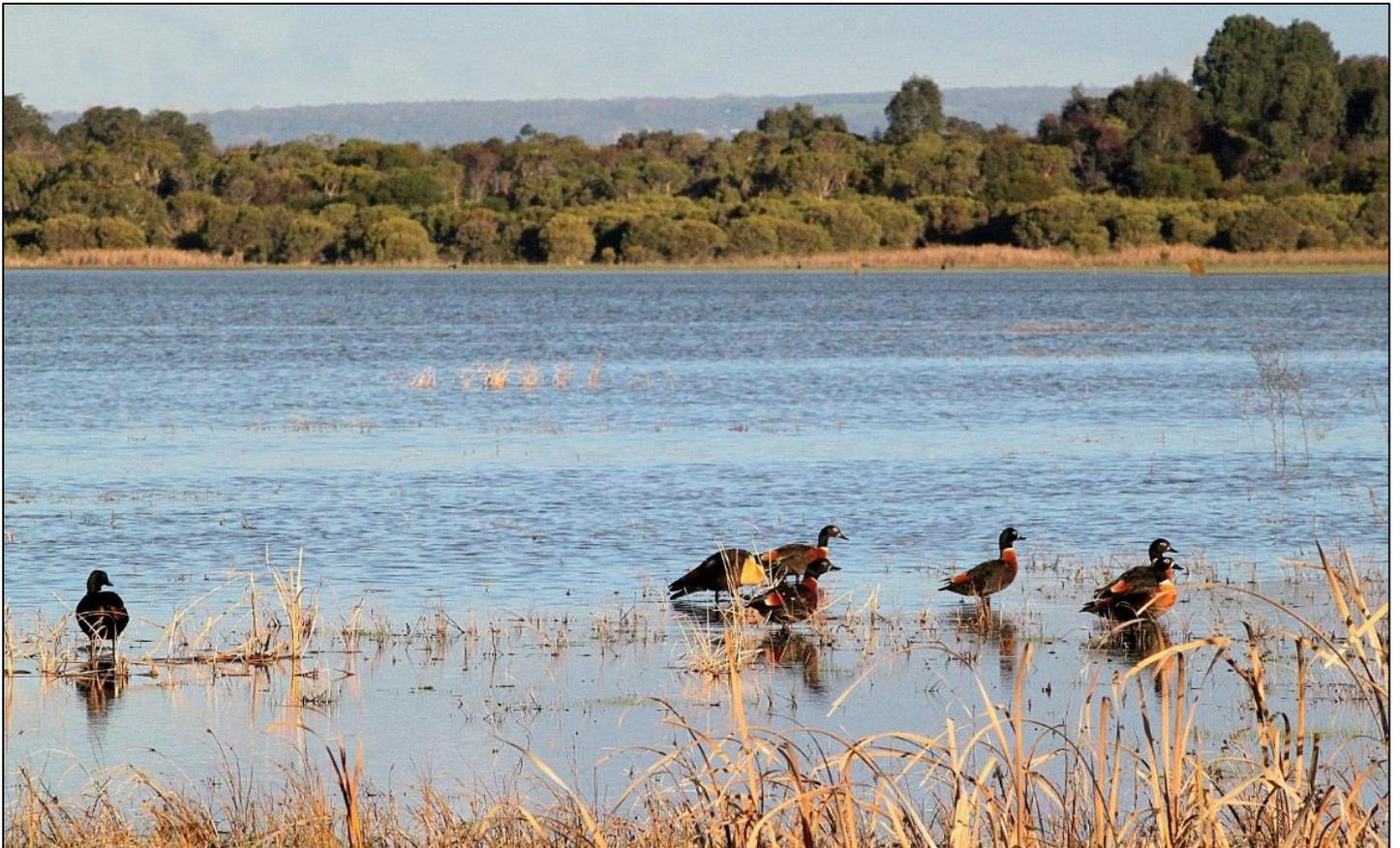
LAKE FORRESTDALÉ HAS WATER AGAIN

FOLLOWING THE 100 mm or so of rain that's fallen in the district over the past fortnight, Lake Forrestdale, having been dry since late December, is once again holding water. And although the lake is still shallow, the waterbirds are steadily returning. Grey teal, Pacific black ducks and Australian shelducks are some of the first to appear, and black swans are arriving in moderate numbers too, along with a few black-winged stilts. (But the little flock of red-capped plovers that has lived on the dry lake bed all summer will leave once the deepening water spreads across the lake and covers all of the mud.)

Once the water reaches the rushes fringing the lake, birds such as purple swamphens and spotless crakes start to arrive. These birds need the rushes for cover and will stay until the water recedes later in the year.

Birds of prey such as marsh harriers and whistling kites soon return when the lake has water, and once in a while at this time of year a white-bellied sea eagle (a juvenile usually) will pay the lake a visit—but as there is nothing in the lake for a large fish-eating raptor to catch, it doesn't stay for long.

The arrival of water also means that frogs are once again making their presence heard, and squelching froglets (*Crinia insignifera*) are currently the most vocal—for their size, these tiny frogs can deliver a shrill chorus. Western banjo frogs (*Limnodynastes dorsalis*), having concealed themselves in nooks and crannies all summer, have emerged anew and are delivering their resonating calls, which reach a crescendo after dark. Motorbike frogs (*Litoria moorei*)—their calls sounding like distant motorbikes changing gears—can be heard regularly at Lake Forrestdale, and the harsh shriek of the less common slender tree frogs (*Litoria adelaidensis*), can also be heard from time to time. ✧



Lake Forrestdale (22.6.2014) has water again, and some of the first waterbirds to arrive are Australian shelducks.



Lake Forrestdale at the beginning of June before it began to fill with water. While the lake is dry, plants such as this samphire colonise the exposed soil. These plants provide habitat for birds such as white-fronted chats, red-capped plovers and Australasian pipits.



Australian white ibises and rainclouds over Lake Forrestdale.

RUBBISH PICK-UP - PIARA NATURE RESERVE

FRIENDS OF FORRESTDALÉ were back at Piara nature reserve on June 25 to continue picking up the rubbish—originating mainly from the adjacent new housing estate—along the northwest boundary of the reserve. Ian, Debbie, David and Bryony spent three hours on that glorious sunny morning filling two dozen bags along an approximately 150-metre stretch.

We had morning tea in a sunny patch on the firebreak next to the bushland, and while we were drinking tea and chatting, a young bandicoot came out of the nearby bushes, sniffing the air as she cautiously approached us—she could smell our pikelets and curried-egg sandwiches.

While the feeding of wild animals is not advisable, and we certainly wouldn't recommend it, it nevertheless requires steely determination to resist spoiling an animal so cute. So she got a few titbits which she gobbled down hungrily, and she stayed around long enough to have her picture taken. We nicknamed her "Pia". ✧



NATURE'S BUSHLAND WONDERS - FUNGI

THE FUNGI SEASON is upon us again and what a magical time it is. These mysterious organisms—neither plant nor animal—usually begin to appear in the Forrestdale area (and elsewhere in the southwest) in April or May, or when the rains have begun and there is still some warmth in the air.

Many varieties of fungi—in a surprising range of colours, sizes and forms—can be found locally. And when armed with the various field guides available on the subject, it is possible to identify the species or genus of many of them.

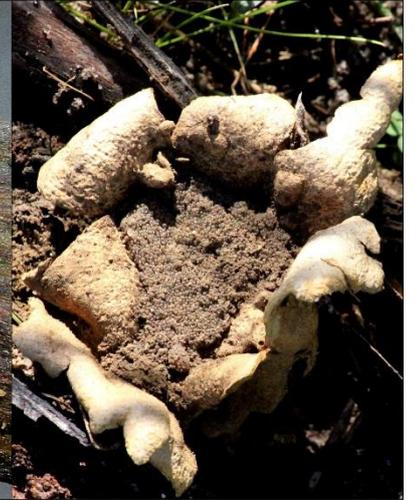
Illustrated below are just some of the numerous species that we have found this season in Forrestdale. ✧



Clockwise from top left: egg yolk fungus (*Bolbitius vitellinus*) is found most often in disturbed, weedy areas; red woodchips fungus (*Leratiomyces ceres*) typically grows in leaf litter—and wood chips, as its name suggests; golden wood fungus (*Gymnopilus allantopus*) grows in dead wood and is one of the more common species of fungus to be found in the Forrestdale area.



Shaggy parasol (*Chlorophyllum brunneum*), the caps of this large conspicuous fungus can reach over 200 mm in diameter.



Clockwise from top left: scarlet bracket fungus (*Pycnoporus coccineus*); split-gill fungus (*Schizophyllum commune*); earthball (*Scleroderma* sp.); Scotman's beard (*Calocera* sp.).



Jelly fungi (*Tremella mesenterica*); the one on the right is older and starting to deteriorate.



Left: (*Gymnopilus* sp.) an eye-catching, medium-size fungus that—in this locality at least—typically grows on the dead wood of freshwater paperbark trees. **Right:** this tiny blue-grey species of banksia cup fungus (*Banksiomyces* sp.) is growing on the fruiting cone of *Banksia telmatiaea*; the *Banksiomyces* genus is associated solely with banksia cones and is generally species specific.



Three of the larger species of fungus found locally. **Left:** the ghost fungus (*Omphalotus nidiformis*) grows at the base of trees and emits a ghostlike glow at night; **top right:** white punk (*Laetiporus portentosus*) grows on living eucalypt trees, this particular specimen is growing high up on the trunk of a *Eucalyptus rudis* tree; **bottom right:** oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus australis*) grows on living or dead native or exotic trees.