



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

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Newsletter No 9 -October 2012

What's happening recently

Three hazard reduction burns were done recently-

1. North Fort (south east of building 205, the Memorial walk & picnic area (approx. 1.5 ha)
2. Bluefish Drive / Gunner Road – south east of the metal boardwalk between Bluefish Drive & the School of Artillery (approx. 2 ha).
3. Beside the Third Quarantine Cemetery – Scenic Drive (approx. 0.5 ha).

Work has begun on the North Fort car park. This will formalise the existing parking area which should be completed sometime in December. For more information see <http://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/visit-our-sites/north-head-sanctuary/plan-your-visit/>
The North Fort toilets have been painted...

Education Centre – Bandicoot Heaven

Our Education room is open every weekend, from 10am to 4pm in Building 20. Call in and see us for a chat or information. The short video, Creatures of the Night, which includes footage of Bandicoots is very popular and worth a look.

Ocean Care Day 2 December 2012

Jenny Wilson has a family commitment on this day, so we'll need plenty of volunteers, each willing to staff our display stall for a couple of hours. If you're able to help, please contact Judy Lambert by emailing: tswombat@optusnet.com.au

Native Plant Nursery

We now have a 12 month plan and we will be very busy. If you would like to help, especially with the planting, please contact Sue Halmagyi at shalmagyi@gmail.com or just turn up any Tuesday or Friday morning 8.30am to noon. We usually have morning tea about 10.30am, so please join us.



Hi there Groovers and Black Cockie Fans! My best photo, I like the gleam in its eye!
Geoff Lambert.

My North Head

Annie Skarratt



In recent years I developed a passion for Whales, and spend as much time as I can viewing them. The lookouts at North Head are outstanding for this. Over 14,000 Humpback Whales pass Sydney on their annual migration.

The Humpbacks spend their summer in the chilly waters of the Southern Ocean, eating their favourite food, Krill, which is abundant there. They also eat small fish such as Sardines and Pilchards. They can't eat anything larger as they don't have teeth! As summer draws to a close the Humpbacks start their 5,000 km journey north. The pregnant Humpbacks need to get to the warm tropical waters off Queensland to give birth to their calves, which don't have enough blubber to survive in cold water. This is also where mating occurs. Winter in the tropics is a busy time for the Humpbacks! Their Northern migration occurs from May to August, and the Humpbacks pass quite close to shore. They are easily visible with the naked eye, and binoculars will show you even more. The main lookout on the Fairfax Walking Track is a great place to spot the Humpbacks, and many keen whale watchers are regulars. On more than one occasion I've seen the Humpbacks approach the cliff and then veer out to sea at the last minute, thrilling the crowd above.

To find the Humpbacks, look for the water vapour "blow" that occurs when they surface to breathe. It can be up to three metres high. Also look for their "footprints", which are left when they submerge. The footprint is a shiny, slick patch of water. The Humpbacks will stay on the surface for several minutes, and then they will have a period of downtime, usually five to ten minutes.

Their Southern migration occurs from August to November, and most of the Humpbacks travel in the East Australian Current, which runs from Queensland past Sydney and further South. It is

usually at least eight nautical miles out to sea and the Humpbacks are not easily viewed there. In October the mothers and calves pass by very close to the coast, and the calves often put on quite a show as they are learning from their mothers. Both the lookouts facing the sea on the Fairfax Walking Trail are great for watching them. If I see whales along the Northern Beaches I let people know on my blog at <https://www.facebook.com/Annies.whale.watching?ref=hl>. The Wild About Whales website is a great resource <http://www.wildaboutwhales.com.au/> Hope to see you at North Head soon.

Hibbertia diffusa



Is a small shrub that often forms a mat to 50cm in diameter. Out now

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson



Francis Jackson, of Glebe, was removed to Quarantine Station, suffering from the bubonic plague, on 29 March 1900 and died that night. He left behind a wife and six children.

The Sydney Morning Herald Friday 29 March 1901
In Memoriam

“JACKSON.-In sad but loving memory of my dear husband, Francis Jackson, who departed this life March 29 1900 at Quarantine Station.

Had he asked us, well we know
We should cry, Oh spare this blow,
Yes with streaming eyes should say,
Lord we love him: let him stay.

Inserted by his loving wife, Margaret Jackson”

Burns at North Head help safety and the bush

Judy Lambert

On Tuesday 4 September weather conditions, ground-level moisture and availability of fire crews and equipment came together and all three long-awaited hazard reduction burns finally got to happen.

Heavy fuel loads that have built up after decades without fire, and proximity to heritage buildings make any controlled burn at North Head a challenge, but good planning and a big presence of equipment and staff from National Parks & Wildlife Service, the Rural Fire Service and Fire & Rescue NSW saw a great result.

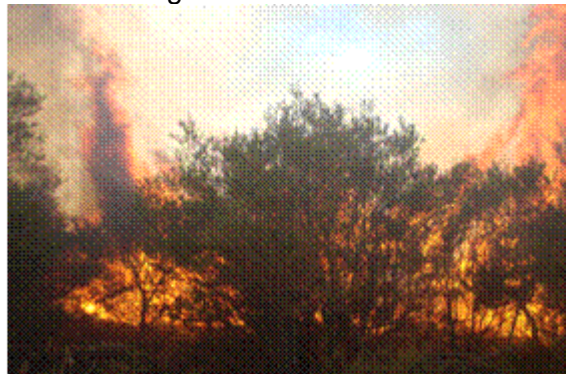


Photo by Cam Radford, AWC

There were some tense moments as flames leapt high above the tree-line near the Bluefish track, but at the end of the day patchy burns of variable intensity both at Bluefish and at North Fort and near the Third Cemetery on the Trust’s land produced what should be ideal conditions for bushland regeneration.

Thanks to a grant from the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, ecological follow-up on the effects of the burn now begins in earnest for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy’s Cam Radford and intern John and the Sanctuary Foundation.

Five solid days of rather dirty work have seen rabbit-exclusion fences installed around 11 research plots at North Fort and near the Third Cemetery. Now we begin at least 12 months monitoring of the responses to the fire by senescent Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, the soil invertebrates that provide bandicoot food and the ‘coots use of the area.



We know that fire is important to the regeneration of many of the plant species in our bush and by excluding rabbits we can more accurately determine the benefits of fire, both to the bushland & to bandicoot habitat.