

Assets with Eyes (and the green things they live in) June 2008

Mangrove Removal

Grey Mangrove *Avicennia marina* is a prolific coloniser of the Parramatta River estuary and its floating propagules can be carried where ever tides can reach. This can cause competition with other wetland communities such as Coastal Saltmarsh (an Endangered Ecological Community) and mudflats. Both these habitats provide important resources for a variety of fauna including protected migratory shorebirds. Both Coastal Saltmarsh and Mangroves are protected and a balance needs to be found by active management.

A large project of Mangrove removal is being undertaken within the Parks wetlands. Mangroves are being selectively removed from Haslams Creek Flats and Badu Mangroves under licence. This huge effort by contractors Total Earth Care And Toolijooa brings to an end the primary removal of large Mangroves and these areas will now be maintained as Mangrove free by periodic removal of seedlings.

Submarine invasion

Two submerged plant species have been recorded in the Northern Water Feature. Swapan Paul has found Potamogeton sp. and Aponogeton sp have colonised two out of three ponds within the wetland. These native plants are locally common but have not been able to find a foothold in recent years. The draining of the Northern Water Feature for infrastructure maintenance last year may have provided the appropriate stimulus for colonisation. Presence of these species will assist in maintaining good water quality in the wetland.

Psyllids and Lerps

The leaves of some Eucalypts around the Parklands are turning red, not as a response to Autumn, but to the invasion of a large population of Psyllids. These tiny insects suck sap out of the leaves, and as nymphs, build shelters (called lerps) for themselves with excess sugars and starch. The shape of the lerps differs from species to species. Birds such as the noisy miner also eat lerps and can form large territories around infected trees, banishing other birds from the area.



Adult psyllids with wings amongst nymphs covered by fan-shaped lerps



General Forest Tree Surgeons removing the lower leaves of Phoenix Palms

Palm Pruning

A grove of Phoenix Palms located on Bernie Avenue has become home to a small colony of Australian White Ibis. Ibis nesting can often be a smelly, unsightly affair and is best located away from roads and public spaces. Pruning the lower leaves of palms will remove nesting habitat and encourage the birds to relocate to more suitable areas. This species is protected, as are all native birds, and pruning is undertaken before the nesting season begins under a licence from DECC (Dept of Environment and Climate Change).

Sea-eagles return to breed

A pair of White-bellied Sea-eagles *Haliaeetus leucogastor* has been observed carrying sticks, calling and flying over Newington Nature Reserve woodland, leading us to hope that they may be nesting again. These birds are found in coastal and inland wetlands throughout Australia, India, south China and New Guinea. The breeding season is roughly from June to December with the nest being constructed or repaired up to a month before laying.

Sea-eagles have successfully produced a fledged young in the forest in the past but can be sensitive to disturbance near the nest. All staff and contractors are reminded that entry to the woodland is restricted and all activities within 50 metres of the nest have been suspended. Any reports of Sea-eagle activity around the Park would be appreciated.

Froggy rescue

Due to its inability to hold water, Pond H4 on Little Kronos Hill is being reconstructed by NatureWise. As part of the preparation works, a frog clearance was undertaken. During this process 26 young frogs were found and relocated to a nearby pond. This is a reminder to all staff and contractors that frogs are around even in winter and to take the appropriate care when working in frog habitat.



Striped Marsh Frog