



FRIENDS OF MALABAR HEADLAND (FoMH)

Member Newsletter 6

Winter 2003

FoMH is a community based group formed in April 2000 to help protect the natural and cultural heritage of Malabar Headland. The Headland contains the largest area of native bush left in the Eastern suburbs.

Our Visions & Goals

- A National park declared for the entire Headland
- Revegetation & preservation of native flora & fauna
- Aboriginal & World War II heritage sites protected, restored and maintained
- Build a strong & active community with access for recreation, cultural & education activities
- A safe clean site



photo : Alan Hall

Retaining Steps Collapse

The recent spell of heavy rains has caused the partial collapse of the "Mayan steps", the large rock-filled gabion spillway on the steep bank at the southern end of Maroubra Beach. Constructed in 2002, these works are the second failed attempt by the Commonwealth to halt downstream erosion of the old landfill and the subsequent pollution of Maroubra Bay with contaminated leachate. Commonwealth works are also damaging the wetland area nearby the spillway steps.

Bird Count Grows

Rod Gardner has advised that the count of bird species on the Headland is now up to 201 native species, including several sea birds species. The bushland areas and inshore waters provide excellent habitat for birds. The inshore waters off Malabar Headland are of international importance providing habitat for tropical, sub-Antarctic and Antarctic seabirds.

New Listing for Headland

Malabar Headland was recently listed on the Australian Heritage Commission's National Estate Register. The 20 May 2003 listing recognises the special natural and cultural values of the Headland. In particular it acknowledges the significance of the bushland. There are at least 300 plant and 200 animal species on the Headland, including the endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

The listing also recognises the geomorphic significance (remnants of dunes in the Western section are believed to have formed during the last major glacial period) as well as the historical and cultural significance of Aboriginal sites and the WWII heritage sites.

<http://www.ahc.gov.au/cgi-bin/register/fsearch.pl>

Grey Nurse Sharks on Video

Tim Anderson, a keen scuba diver who has been working with the Nature Conservation Council for 8 years, spoke to FoMH's May meeting about the future of the grey nurse shark which is listed as a critically endangered species in NSW. There are only about 300 left on the NSW East Coast. Ten key sites have been identified as critical habitats. Magic Point (adjoining Malabar Headland at South Maroubra Beach) is the only Sydney site. Tim donated a copy of an excellent short video about the sharks. Most of the footage was filmed in the waters off the Headland. The video (MPEG format) is available for viewing. [Contact Peter on 9311 2334.] The Fisheries Minister is currently reviewing the adequacy of grey nurse shark protection measures.

<http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/thr/species/gns/home-gns.htm>

Whale Watching Season

Humpback whales have been heading north to the warmer waters of The Great Barrier Reef. The Headland - particularly Boora Point - offers an excellent viewing location. If you missed the northerly migration, keep an eye out for their return trip to Antarctica. Hang onto the kids!

Bush Regeneration Continues

The Commonwealth Government is continuing with its 2 year weed control program on the rifle range area. There are still many tracts of bitou bush to eradicate. A number of FoMH members spend several hours each week undertaking weed (including bitou bush) removal and other bush regeneration activities. If you would like to get involved call Margaret 0412 047 259. Beginners are welcome.

Swim Day Stall

Don Kerr organised a FoMH community information stall at the Malabar Beach annual swim day in April. Ongoing positive interest shows how valuable these stalls are. Many residents and visitors took the opportunity to write to politicians and bought propagated headland native plants. A stall at Maroubra Beach is planned for spring.

Clean Up Australia 2003

In March, as part of this annual national campaign, FoMH organised a clean up site in the western bushland section of the Headland. A small group of locals and FoMH members collected some 500kg of miscellaneous rubbish. An excellent effort!!



photo: David Pyett

Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub Recovery Plan

The NPWS Draft Plan was released in March 2003. Public comment was invited and FoMH responded. The final plan may be finalised by August 2003.

http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/PDFs/recoveryplan_draft_esbanksia_scrub.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

Headland Art Prize

FoMH is sponsoring prizes in the annual Spring South Maroubra Art Competition. The \$50 awards will be for the best entries capturing some aspect—micro or macro—of the Headland. The judge of this inaugural award is yet to be announced! FoMH members are not eligible to enter ... sorry! Note that legal public access on the headland is currently not permitted by the Commonwealth government. For further information contact Margaret 0412 047 259.

Travelling Display

The photographic display about the Headland (compiled by Claire Bettington) is on the move. After the launch last year of FoMH's draft plan of management for the Headland, the display was at Bowen Library (in prime position near the circulation desk) for several months. It then went to Randwick Library. A "condensed version" is now set up at Matraville Branch Library, which is right next to the Headland. Keep an eye out for it. The display can also be used for future information stalls as well as for talks in schools.

Want to help save the Headland?

Write to Senator Eric Abetz, Special Minister of State, who is responsible for the management of Malabar Headland. Contact him at Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, or phone 02 6277 7600, fax 02 6273 4541. Let him know your views.

Annual membership: \$10
Donations always appreciated.

Join us at our monthly meetings held on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00pm at St Marks Church Hall on the corner of Franklin St and Victoria Lane, Malabar. ***** Next meeting: 4 September, 2003*****

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/malabar>
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