



Newsletter
Moreton Island Protection
Committee Inc.

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Tens of Thousands of Shearwaters don't make it home



Anyone wandering along the beach in the last few months may come across a somber sight: hundreds of dead and dying shearwaters scattered across the sand. During October and November, tens of thousands (possibly hundreds of thousands) of short-tailed shearwaters have washed ashore, starving, along the Queensland and New South Wales coast lines during the return of their 30 000km migratory flight to their breeding grounds along the coastlines and islands of

southern Australia. Starvation has been the cause of death for most of these birds, though some among them have died from injuries relating to becoming hooked and entangled in recreational fishing gear. Most of these starving shearwaters have weighed less than 350 grams at their time of death, with some weighing less than 300 grams, much less than the healthy weight of 500-700 grams.

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Statement of Aims

1. To promote the preservation of Moreton Island as a natural area to be managed for public recreation and enjoyment provided always that the recreational uses are consistent with conservation aims.

2. To foster the conservation of the vegetation, fauna and natural features of Moreton.

3. To facilitate public awareness and appreciation of Moreton Island as a natural area and encourage support for its preservation and management in accordance with these objects.

4. To co-operate with, or promote co-operation by any means with and among persons, trusts, corporations, firms, associations, institutions, governments, instrumentalities or government, municipal authorities and other bodies in the Commonwealth or its Territories or elsewhere for the purpose of carrying out any object of the organisation.

5. To oppose any development or usage of Moreton Island which is contrary to the preservation and good management of the island in accordance with these objects.

6. Generally, to take such lawful action as it considers necessary or appropriate in the interests of promoting the preservation and good management of Moreton Island in accordance with these objects.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Moreton Island Protection Committee or its members.

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome, but the editors accept no responsibility for alterations made to articles.

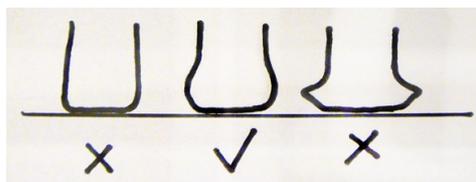
Edited by Alan Gennings, Lisa Dowall
(Alan is a commercial tour operator)

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Driving on Soft Sand



Optimum tyre pressure for soft sand depends on your load. Lower the tyre pressure on the deck of the ferry until the sidewall has a nicely rounded bulge. Remember to take account of the weight of your passengers if they are not in the car. If the bulge takes on a wedge shape you've gone too far. Typically pressures for soft sand range from 12 to 21 psi depending on the load.

As the rear tyres typically have more weight over them they are usually left a little higher to achieve a similar bulge. The idea of the bulge is give tyres greater surface areas when in soft sand. When you unload your camping gear you may need to let more air out for inland driving, especially in the rear tyres. If towing a trailer its really import to have a nice bulge in the trailer tyres as well.

Tyre pressure increases when driving on hot inland tracks so you may have to let more air out if you become bogged.

If bogged use your gauge to decrease the tyre pressure in each tyre by the same amount.

WARNING!!!! Having a nice bulge usually means the tyre pressure is below manufacturers specifications and so it is important to travel slowly at all times and do not turn sharply at speed as this can result in tyres coming off rims.

Donations to MIPC

MIPC welcomes tax deductible donations which can only be used for conservation activities e.g. funding transport for volunteers and public education programmes

Membership records

A lot of effort has been put into updating email addresses, mailing addresses and membership expiry dates.

If you are a member, have not received an emailed copy and would like to be on our email list please email your details to the address below.

Your membership expiry date is on your address label. Please email us your details if it seems our records are incomplete or wrong (or phone if email is unavailable to you).

mipc@moretonisland.org.au

MIPC (07) 33211463

Only messages can be left at the number above. Please start your message with your name and phone number. A member checks for messages daily.

Membership Due

Members can pay in advance for several years. If your due date seems incorrect then please let us know. Receipts are inserted in your newsletter.

EFT Details

BSB 633 000 Bendigo Bank

Account # 141368456

Acct Name Moreton Island Protection Committee.

Enter **your name** in the reference box otherwise we have no way of knowing who made the deposit.

Please always notify us by email, phone or mail of your payment.

Phone banking EFT transfers authorised by phone do not include any identification details so **please forward details of your payment** as above.

Tens of Thousands of Shearwaters don't make it home

The majority of these beached shearwaters are breeding aged adults, who show signs of having bred in the past, potentially affecting the number of the next generation of shearwaters fledglings, depending on the true magnitude of the deaths.

Short-tailed shearwaters mate for life, raising only a single chick annually and often do not breed and successfully raise young until they are at least 5 years old, a reproductive strategy that may result in populations being potentially slow to recover from large mortality events. Though short-tailed shearwaters are Australia's most abundant seabird, with an estimated population of 23 million individuals, and considered secure in all states, populations may have been much greater historically, with a single flock of an estimated 100 million birds observed by *Matthew Flinders in 1798*. Dr. Jennifer Lavers, who is a seabird ecologist from Monash was quoted in saying to the Sydney Morning Herald that a combination of storms and lack of food on arrival is causing such large beachings. She said that large beachings would be an event that used to once occur only about every decade, but recently the large beaching events are occurring every couple of years.

Upon necropsy of the beach-washed individuals that washed up on Fraser Island, North Stradbroke Island and beaches of the Gold Coast during October and November, approximately 95% of the shearwaters were found to have plastic in their proventriculus and gizzards, ranging up to 28 pieces of mostly hard plastic fragments and floating plastic pellets. Whether or not this large amount of plastic contributed to their starvation is presently unknown, but is currently being investigated. If you would like to volunteer to assist in the sorting and cataloging of plastic fragments that have been removed from beach-washed short-tailed shearwaters as part of a study on the extent and impact of plastic ingestion, please contact me at lauren.roman@uqconnect.edu.au.

Lauren Roman

Lauren has just completed 1st class honors at University of Queensland and intends to continue her research looking at plastic in sea birds.

Plastic in Pied Oyster Catcher

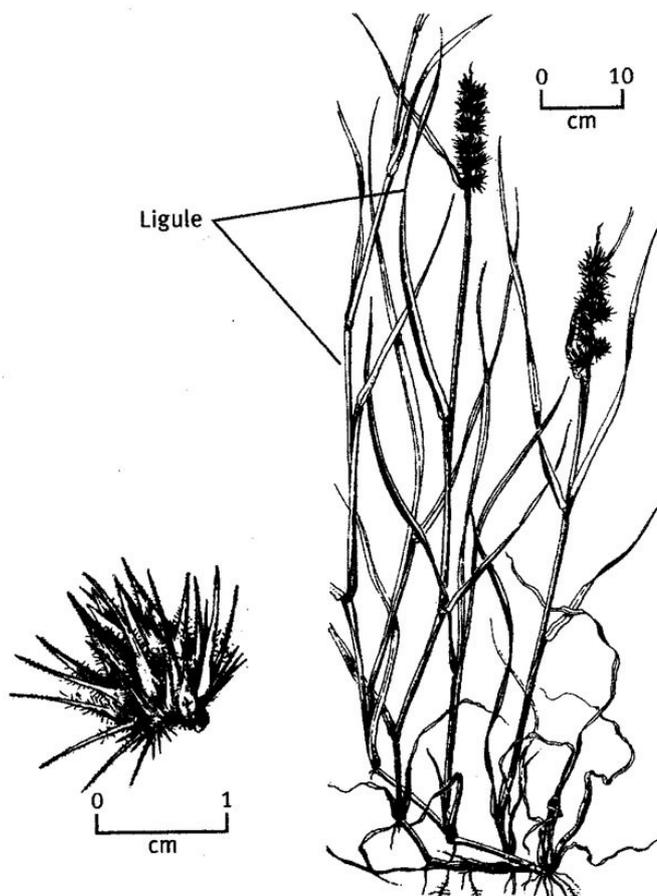
20 pieces of plastic have been found by Lauren Roman in a dead Pied Oyster Catcher. She would like to increase her sample size of one so if anyone finds a dead Pied Oyster refrigerator ASAP, record time and

place and contact Lauren. Pied Oyster Catchers when killed by 4WD's are quickly removed by raptors, so if you see one collect it. Notify rangers on 3408 2710

Mossman River Grass

Mossman River grass from the Americas can make your favourite campsite unusable.

Campers can assist with controlling this invasive weed by removing Mossman River Grass from around campsites and disposing of it with their rubbish. **Spines from the prickly seeds break off when handled so using gloves is recommended.** Tweezers are effective at removing the small spines.



Chris, Titus, Jade and Lisa weeding Mossman River Grass, 19th October. Titus, from the Netherlands and studying at University of Queensland, found us on the web and enjoyed his volunteer experience.

Resort at the Cape? Minister refuses to comment

MIPC is concerned that the Cape Area is at high risk of being given over to private ownership.

On the 27th September Expressions of Interest closed to private operators interested in acquiring 30 year leases (with options of a further 30 years) in any National Park in Queensland to build eco-tourism facilities (resorts).

MIPC was aware that the department had received an application before the Expressions of Interest were released.

“Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service spokesman said the department had also received an application for a Cape Moreton Tourist operation.”

P31 Courier Mail 23 March 2013.

We wrote to the Minister requesting information about any EOI that he had received for Moreton Island.

In the Ministers reply we were told

"A key factor that is holding back a thriving Queensland ecotourism industry is that private investment in ecotourism facilities (resorts ed note) has not been possible. In April 2013, Parliament passed amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 allowing the development of privately owned permanent ecotourism facilities on national parks in Queensland."

Most importantly the Minister stated that *"Specific details relating to the proposals (received as Expressions of Interest) will not be released until negotiation has occurred with applicants."*

As this process is a commercial arrangement we understand details will not be released and most of the processes we expect will not be accessible by Freedom of Information. By the time the public is informed it will be too late as commercial agreements will already have been made. Queenslanders are being asked to trust in the Minister's judgment without any public input, required by legislation when granting leases for private resorts in National Parks.

Concerned? you can join MIPC or any other conservation group.

Hopefully if a significant concern is expressed by the electorate the Minister will proceed with a reduced enthusiasm in granting leases for resorts in National Parks. It is important to let politicians know how important you believe it is to keep the Cape and other National Park areas in public ownership.

Electorate misled by the LNP

During the lead up to the State Election MIPC wrote to the LNP asking for details of policy. MIPC asked *“ (The Party), in the next term of government, will not alter the below section of the Nature Conservation Act 1992. (1) A national park is to be managed to (a) provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition ... “*

We also sought a commitment that *“ (The Party), in the next term of government, will not revoke or exercise from any National Park for the purpose of the private development of accommodation”*

We also stated *“We urge a simple response, without resorting to non-committal language, such as 'we have no intention of' etc., which does not provide the electorate with any certainty of policy when in Government”*

The LNP's reply in early 2012 included :

“As you would appreciate, safeguarding our National Parks is important matter that shouldn't be condensed to simple answers...”

The LNP currently has no plans to change this section of the Nature conservation Act 1992 pertaining to the management principles of National Parks, nor do we currently have any plans to revoke or excise from any National Park for the purpose of private development of accommodation”

Yet at a Moreton Island Commercial Tour Operators meeting in November 2011, a speaker assured operators that the LNP in government, **would** change the Act so that the Cardinal Principal of this Act would no longer prevent private tourist developments in National Parks. The current plans to provide private leases of land which is now national park are not technically excisions, but leases for 60 years effectively are.

Green zones to stay on Moreton.

Earlier this year Minister Dickson, in a speech to parliament, supported the retention of all Green Zones by stating that adequate science and consultation had underpinned the 2009 rezoning of Moreton Bay Marine Park (including Green Zones). Fishing and bait collecting are not allowed in Green Zones. There are 4 places where Green Zones overlap beaches on Moreton. One extends from just south of Spitfire Creek to just south of the Cape. These Green Zones will only be effective in enhancing fish stocks if they are complied with. If you see someone fishing or collecting pipis in a Green Zone you might save them a fine by letting them know politely. There is a zoning map outside the Cape information centre.

Friends of Parks Grant for MIPC

MIPC has been awarded a Friends of Parks Grant by the Queensland Government Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sporting and Racing. The grant provides \$10,189.30. MIPC undertook to contribute \$3,087 towards projects being funded by the grant. Projects are to be completed by 31st December 2014. MIPC was granted (\$9,263)

The grant will fund transport for volunteers undertaking the following tasks.

🕒 **Propagation and planting.** 1,000 plants will be propagated at the North Point nursery from Moreton Island stock. 2,000 Casuarina Equistifolia already in tube stock will be repotted, grown and when ready, planted out at Cape Moreton in areas still bare from overgrazing by goats (goats were removed in late 1990's)

🕒 **Weeding campsites.** More than 99 camp sites along the ocean beach will be weeded. Focus will be on hand-pulling Mossman River Grass, which makes camps unusable due to their burr.

🕒 **Rubbish removal from ocean beaches**

🕒 **Interpretative signs:**

🕒 highlighting the Pied Oyster Catcher and their chicks' vulnerability, asking drivers to be especially mindful of the erratic behaviour of parent birds when protecting their chicks;

🕒 A4 size plant identification signs for plantings at North Point camp ground to inform campers and residents of suitable plants for township gardens.

Assistance in delivering these projects by:

🕒 MICat - providing discounted volunteer fares

🕒 Moreton Experience - providing camp accommodation for volunteers at Blue Lagoon at no cost.

Friends of Parks Grant

Thirty-two projects will receive \$503,350 in funding to support existing and encourage new volunteering efforts in parks and other areas managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS).

The program received 95 applications requesting a total budget of \$1.8million.

Projects funded included 4WD tracks, mountain bike and walking tracks works including weeding and revegetation of unnecessary tracks; marine animal rescue groups, feral animal and weed control, fauna surveys and public education. Groups carrying out these works included 4WD clubs, sporting clubs and conservation groups.

A list of grants can be found at <http://www.nrsr.qld.gov.au/> > "Friends of Parks Small Grants Program" > "read more"

Volunteer Report

MIPC funded \$1282 of MICat fares, and \$2175 for vehicle hire to transfer and support volunteers based at Cape Moreton and Blue Lagoon.

Table showing volunteers hours spent weeding, rubbish collecting and propagating plants:

	No Vol	Weed-ing	Rub-bish	Propag-ation	Total hours
9-12 Aug	5	63			63
23-25 Aug	5	43	6	21	70
27-29 Sept	9	58.5	1.5	37	97
5-7 Oct	5	35.5		13	48.5
18-20 Oct	5	37.5		11.25	48.75
8-10 Nov	5	33	0.5	10	43.5
15-18 Nov	5	81			81
TOTALS	39	351.5	8	92.5	451.75

At North Point and Cape Moreton weeders targeted Lantana, Fleabane, Groundsel, Mossman River Grass, Prickly Pear, Cobbler's Pegs, Cassia, Flatweed, Asparagus Fern, Wandering Jew, Nightshade, Vinca, Dandelion, Khaki Grass, Passionfruit Vine, Vetch.

By the end of the season Blue Lagoon-based weeders had weeded Mossman River Grass from all sites in the BLN, BL, BLS, BRS and WB. After spending over 9 volunteer hours at BLN 18 we gave up on the remaining smaller MRG at that site. We made a start on the EB campsites but ran out of time and had to leave some heavily infested sites unfinished eg. EB7. The hours spent weeding for each site have been recorded over the last 18 months.

Campers can help with this weeding by removing any MRG at their campsite and disposing with your rubbish. Be careful with the seed heads as they can leave irritating spines in unprotected fingers. Tweezers are effective at removing these spines.

Blue Lagoon volunteers also starting re-potting into larger pots the 2,000 Casuarinas Equistifolia potted earlier this year.

The volunteers thank Parks for providing accommodation for North Point weeders, Moreton Experience for free use of the Blue Lagoon campsite and MICat for providing discounted fares for the volunteers.

Please contact MIPC if you'd like to join one of our volunteer weekends.

Whats on ... !!

Feb 21 - 22 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Apr 4 - 6 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon
(option to extend)

May 2 - 4 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

May 16 - 18 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Sat 8.30 departure is available for all volunteer weekends – **min 3 required for Sat departure**.
NB. MICAT charges \$12 per day for parking.
Car pooling is arranged where possible.

Bookings 0428783781(Alan) -text only please *or* email mipc@moretonisland.org.au *or* 33211463 (MIPC's phone answering service)

****Please book at least 1 week in advance****

Depart 8.30 am 14 Howard Smith Drive, Port of Bris.
arrive by 8am for orderly loading of luggage on vehicle.

Return departure at The Wrecks 4.30pm Sunday.
BYO sleeping bag, food, plates, cutlery and esky. A camp kitchen and tents with stretchers are provided.

Volunteers staff Cape Info Centre

This summer Parks volunteers will be staffing the Cape Moreton Information Centre. For at least 34 days of the school holidays the centre will be staffed from 10am till 2pm. Volunteers anticipate being available before and after these core times for most days.

Volunteers will have on-hand field books etc to fill in gaps in their knowledge of fauna and flora on Moreton Island to help you with your queries. If you have a special interest they may be able to find extra information not on public display. Have a chat!

MIPC strongly supports this initiative by Parks. The volunteers thank Parks for providing this opportunity to provide face-to-face interaction with visitors. Many studies have shown that personal delivery of low-impact camping information is the best way to improve visitor behaviour in parks. Studies have also shown that talking with Parks staff significantly enhances a park visitor's experience.

And a big thank-you to Tangalooma for providing ferry transfer from Brisbane for the Cape Info Centre volunteers.

The Cape Information Centre is open during daylight hours.

Recreational Weekends at Blue Lag

Prefer not to or are unable to volunteer? You are welcome to come on any of the volunteer weekends. An excursion to the Cape is included.
Cost \$160 payable to MIPC.

Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

This season work will include; planting out at the Cape, propagation at the North Point nursery, weeding Mossman River Grass and collecting rubbish.

The Friends of Parks grant and MIPC funds will be used to fund volunteer workers' transportation costs.

Volunteers coming for 3 days free do 9 hrs work. Volunteers coming for 2 days do 6 hrs work and pay \$30. Volunteers staying more than 3 days are required to do at least 2 hrs work each extra day. MIPC requires volunteers to pay \$15 for every hour not worked. Children are welcome however parents must cover their transport costs when they are too young to contribute effectively.

Membership form

Name	Annual fee \$10 Household \$15 Pens./Conc. \$5
Address.....	\$..... for years membership.
..... Post code	\$..... as a tax deductible donation;
Email	Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.
Phone..... Mob	The MIPC Public Fund is a public fund listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997</i>
<i>I consent my photo, taken during MIPC activities, and my name being published in the public domain</i>	Pay by cheque, money order or EFT transfer:
Signed _____ Date ____/____/____	BSB 633 000 Bendigo Bank Acct # 141368456
Newsletters printed on recycled paper are mailed to members. If you prefer not to receive a newsletter in the mail <u>please circle</u> ~ DO NOT SEND NEWSLETTERS.	Acct Name Moreton Island Protection Committee. PLEASE enter your name in the EFT reference box. PLEASE report EFT payment by mail, email or phone.
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