

Welcome to our eNews! Oyster Harbour Catchment Group's seasonal newsletter will keep you up-to-date with what we are up to, as well as what is going on in your catchment. Having difficulty viewing content? Click 'view this email in your browser'

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Summer South Coast Style

Albany Agricultural Show 2018

What's been happening at OHCG

Projects, Projects, Projects!

What's been done?

September– Porongorup Bio Blitz workshop and walk.

September– Emu Point information night.

October- [Smart Farm Trials expression of interest](#).

October-December- Weed

Creeper.

October- Bloom Festival
Guided Banksia Garden walk
and talk, Banksia's, Orchids
and birds.

October- Wonderful Flora
and Horrifying Weeds event in
Kendenup.

November- National
Waterbug Blitz Training
Workshop on the King River.

November- Porongorup
Spotlighting.

November- Albany
Agricultural sSow 2018 .

November- Pasture Trial
Field Walk.

November - AGM, attended
by 14 with new members.

What's coming up?

- Weed control and mapping will be continuing in the region over the next few months.
- More possum surveying ,including spotlighting, events and camera trapping will take place in Albany, Emu Point, Bayonet Head and Porongorup Ranges.
- Fencing remnant vegetation and revegetation, let us know if you require assistance.
- Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping-soil sampling in December.
- Ringtail Possum information nights in Napier and Bayonet Head in January, more information to come
-



All staff were on board and having a blast at this year's [Albany Agricultural Show](#) . We had a steady flow of at least 500+ people attending our display, many of these were kids eager to play our catchment model and other illustrating what the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group (OHCG) does in the region. It was very exciting to see many people bring back their friends and parents, especially to trick them into playing the "taste test" lolly game. I am not so sure the newbies liked it as much as we did though.....!

Jenni Loveland, Project Officer adapted a game to demonstrate the importance of having a wide [range of diverse native plants species](#) and the negative effect of weeds in our bushland. The participants, or as Jenni liked to call them "victims" were asked to imagine themselves as a native animal and to select something they would like to eat from the bowl labeled "Diverse vegetation", this contained a large range of yummy lollies, and they could usually find something they liked. Whilst holding on to the yummy lollies they were then asked to imagine that their bushland was taken over by weeds and choose from the bowl labeled "Single Species Weeds" and this was all they had to eat. This was a bowl of triple salt liquorish. The faces of the kids as they tried the salt liquorish was hilarious and they almost unanimously decided that weeds in our bushland were a bad thing (apart from those pesky Dutch people who seemed to thrive on the weeds!). This game was also used to explain the need for a variation of flora in our revegetation and weed control projects.

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Initiative ,Oyster Harbour
Community Update, Emu
Point Bowls club 5pm
**RSVP- [Bruce Radys -
bruce.radys@ohcg.org.au](mailto:Bruce.Radys@ohcg.org.au) ph.
0419 646 390**

Meet a Native

Chuditch/ Western quoll

[Dasyurus geoffroi](#)- The Latin genus name, *Dasyurus*, means 'hairy-tail'.

My absolute favorite native animal, with the most charismatic character. Don't let its cute face fool you, as it has a mouthful of menacing teeth and it is not afraid to use them, (believe me I have seen them in action).

The Western Quoll or Chuditch (Local Noongar name) is "Near Threatened" on the [ICUN Redlist](#) and was once found across 70% of Australia. Unfortunately, due to threats such as feral animals, land clearing and human inhabitation, it is now only found in a small area in southwest Australia. Quoll populations have been impacted directly through predation and by reduced availability of suitable habitat, prey species and hollow logs suitable for dens. We better hope and pray that the cane toads don't make it down here as there is potential for them to totally decimate the Quoll population.



The [Western Quoll](#) is the



Our Regional Estuaries Officer, Bruce Radys, brought along our catchment model to demonstrate to the public how a water body like the Oyster Harbour is related to the management within its catchment. It was a great way to show the importance of looking after the catchment, the effects of removing/ replacing vegetation and how pollutants get into our waterways. This display was very interactive and had litres of water being sprayed "upstream" from the hilly regions letting it flow down into the valleys ending up in the estuaries and finally in the ocean. This display demonstrated how our fencing, weed control and revegetation projects are protecting the catchment .

Kids loved this display, particularly the boys, with a couple staying for a good 20-30 minutes pouring water in different locations to see how the water and silt would flow and where it would stop. I think a few wet parents were the highlight of the children's day with a few "accidental" sprays off the display!

appearance to the Eastern Quoll the but has five toes on its hind feet whereas the Eastern Quoll has four. It's the largest native predator left in Western Australia apart from the Dingo. This den dwelling marsupial has a thick brown coat and has between 40-70 white spots on the body apart from on its tail. These spots look a little bit like dappled light as they move around at night.

Quolls eat a range of animals, including insects, worms, lizards and rabbits. As they are quite adept at climbing trees, they can easily climb up high, snatching sleeping birds at night. Quolls will also feed on carrion and are sometimes seen scavenging around campsites, rubbish bins and roadsides. Unfortunately, this increases their risk of being hit by cars.

Males are 1.3-2 kg, females 0.9 kg. The body length is around 26-40cm and the tail, which has a black brush on it, extending from half-way down their tail to the tip is around 21-35cm long.

After a 16-day gestation they give birth to 2-6 young "pups" which they carry in their pouches until about eight 8 weeks of age at which point, they leave them in a "den" or carry them on mums back which they grip on by their sharp teeth until about 5 months of age.

If you see any sightings or know of anyone who may have seen these adorable little munchkins, please contact Jenni on 9851 2703 or email admin@ohcg.org.au

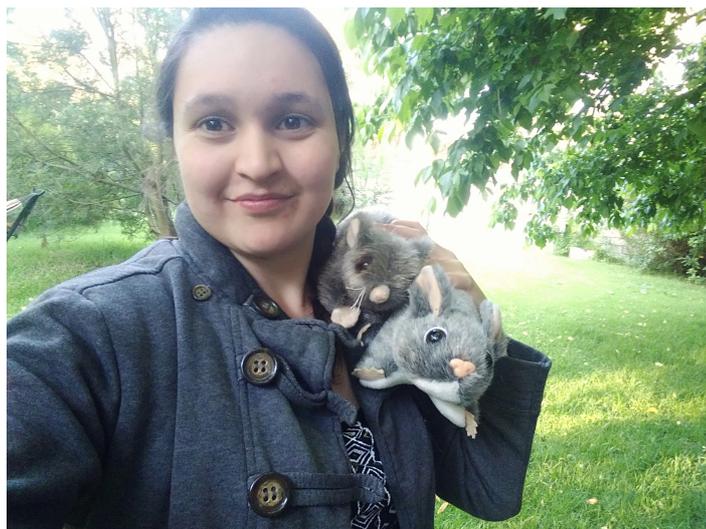
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Communications Officer Sayah Drummond, our who has taken on our Ring Tail Possum research projects for the Porongorup Ranges and Albany region, made a cool game of pin the tail on the possum with the Brushtail Possum and the critically endangered Ringtail possum demonstrating the differences between them. The kids and adults alike enjoyed playing the game which was quite tricky due to some craftiness from Sayah with colour and size changes. The little tackers especially liked looking at the possum and camera displayed in amongst the trees overhead. This gave Sayah a great opportunity to gather community sightings and promote the use of iNaturalist to report sightings.

After 2 exhausting days, [Sayah, Bruce and Jenni](#) fell happily into bed to ready themselves for the next week of work.

Please Welcome our new Staff members



Meet our two newest staff members, Kal, (Kalgan river) the Brushtail Possum and "Kinky" (King River), the Western Ringtail Possum. They really are the best kind, quiet, calm, adorable colleagues and attend all the events around town. Although I must admit they are not very helpful and a tiny bit boring. I mean often I ask them a question and I am met just with silence.... "Sigh" maybe they are not the best colleagues after all.

The Team

[Jenni Loveland](#)

Project Officer: Community Capacity

Jenni is our workshop coordinator working part time on our State NRM Community Capacity Project which aims to increase awareness of our natural environment, the challenges faced in its conservation and management, as well as increase involvement in managing threats (e.g. by undertaking weed control, and invasive fauna management).

Contact:

admin@ohcg.org.au

0409 572 240 | 9851 2703

[Bruce Radys](#)

Project Officer: Regional Estuaries Initiative

Bruce works part time a week on the Regional Estuaries Initiative, funded by Royalties for Regions. He aims to improve the quality of water entering the Oyster Harbour through the implementation of fencing and revegetation of riparian vegetation, and working with farmers to implement best practice management, including soil testing in high rainfall areas.

Contact:

bruce.radys@ohcg.org.au

0428 994 408 | 9851 2703

[Sayah Drummond](#) Communications Officer

Sayah has the role of

Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping

This year we have another 19 farmers participating in the soil testing program. Surveys and fertiliser audits are currently being carried out and soil sampling should begin mid-December.

In early November we held a field walk to view DPIRDs fertiliser demonstration trial at Willyung. This gave a practical demonstration showing how soil testing can be used to determine optimum phosphorous applications. Results of the pasture cuts will be distributed when available.



Smart Farm Trials

Oyster Harbour Catchment Group is pleased to be involved in the delivery of the newly funded Smart Farms trials. This project will see up to six local trials to confirm pasture response to different phosphorous levels, as well as the use of some new technologies (X ray Fluorescence and Infa Red) to give readings on pasture nutrient status.

If you are interested in the current condition of the Oyster Harbour and the projects and activities being undertaken by the REI in order to protect this wonderful asset, come along to the Oyster Harbour REI Community Update at 5pm on the 5th December at the Emu Point Sporting Club.

If you would like to know more about the REI or would like to be involved in soil testing or waterway protection, please contact me, [Bruce Radys](#), your REI project Officer for Oyster Harbour Catchment (0428994408 or bruce.radys@ohcg.org.au)

Communications update

Sayah has been on the search for local community groups that would like to have a greater relationship or could use help and advice from OHCG. She most recently sat in on an Albany Herbarium meeting learning a lot and is looking into finding a project that we could work together on. She is an open and friendly project officer that is willing to chat with catchment resident, organisations and businesses on any potential projects. With an interest in encouraging citizen scientist for example the use of the [iNaturalist](#) app and [QuestaGame](#) to report species of interest. Please contact Sayah 9851 2703 or communications@ohcg.org.au if you are interested in finding out more.

Membership

We are currently renewing our memberships and are keen to get new members, for those that sign up now or even renew your previous membership you will not only receive a membership pack but you will go into the draw to receive a Webber BBQ, now wouldn't that be an awesome Christmas present, drawn December the 23rd. And how can you go wrong with membership fee being only \$11 for individuals or \$22 for multiple contact properties.

[Western Ringtail Possum Update](#)

One of the Possum projects is finished! Shows Albany to be a rare possum stronghold.

While many Albany residents see Western Ringtail Possums (WRP) regularly in their gardens and sadly on the sides of our road, there was very little known about this population before the OHCG started doing possum surveys on the Albany Mounts and surrounding areas.

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to ensure landholders and the wider community are aware of, and can be involved in, the many exciting projects that the OHCG is up to. Sayah is also running three possum projects in Albany, Bayonet Head, emu Point and Porongorup Ranges.

Contact:

communications@ohcg.org.au

0467 955 317 | 9851 2703



This information and awareness is particularly important for the WRP as this nocturnal marsupial was once widespread from Perth to Albany. They are unfortunately now only found in South Western Australia. Sadly, the WRP is now listed as Critically Endangered under State legislation (Wildlife Conservation Act 1950). Luckily for the species Albany has become a stronghold with a healthy, breeding population has been discovered both on the backyard cameras and during the spotlighting walks with an average of 5 each night. One Winters night a whopping 15 possums were found.

This project has helped kick start research into this population, however there is still much to do. If you think you have a possum in your backyard or if see them on a walk, please take a photo and upload it to the iNaturalist app(.www.inaturalist.org) It will even identify the species if you're not sure. Even dead possum need reporting to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions and remember to check the pouches checked for young.

"Supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program, supported by Royalties for Regions"

Workshops update

As we are a not for profit organisation, we rely on grant funding to keep our group running. Each project has different goals and aims. Jenni's current project, which ends December has a focus on delivering workshops to increase the knowledge in the community on

- "Native flora" - how to protect locally native plants and how important they are for our biodiversity.
- "Invasive flora"- how to differentiate between weeds and native flora and the best methods for control.
- "Invasive animals"- which animals are the threats in our region, and what can we do about them.

With the weather warming up and plants coming into bloom, what better time to get out and about exploring the native and non-native

celebrating our native flora and learning of the damage that our weeds our doing to the delicate ecosystem.



November brought us a bit of drizzle, but that did not deter us from wading into the King River to study the critters that live there at the National Waterbug Blitz presented by John Gooderham . This really made us all realize how important it is to reduce the weed species and to keep native vegetation on the banks of rivers and creeks. Which also acts to slow excess nutrients entering out waters making the system healthier. Thanks to Environmental Assessments and Investigations and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for making this event come together.

Happening's from partners, members and community

OHCG recently supported an event where the King River came under the magnifying glass as part of the [National Waterbug Blitz](#). Community members learnt how to collect and identify waterbugs, and how use the Waterbug App in Australia's first citizen science based national river health monitoring system. Freshwater ecologists will include data from the King River in a report and map of river health across the nation, which Oyster Harbour Catchment Group can use to better maintain or improve the condition of our river. The event was well attended.



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