

Friends Of Deal Island

Working Bee Report 9 - 21 May 2021

By David Milne and Phillipa Foster.

Organization.

Funding: This working bee received funding from Tasmanian Weed Action Fund. Volunteer participants contributed to travel costs, paid for food for the twelve days. In kind support was provided by PWS Flinders Island with use of Visitor's house on Deal Island, transport of baggage, gas and power supply etc.

Objectives

- Check and conduct maintenance weeding of all known [approx. 50] weed sites on the island.
- Look for new weed infestations and map any found.
- We wanted to assess the known ragwort infestation sites for weed spread and signs of ragwort beetle activity.
- A record of weed work done and locations were added to the Wildcare I pad utilising the Fulcrum program.

Participants : David and Wendy Milne, Phillipa Foster, Lee and Don Cameron , Christine Bowman. David was Team Leader. Phillipa the Weeder leader in the field, the only member in the team with serious weeding experience at Deal Island.

Don assisted by Lee Carried out most of the data entry onto the Wildcare I Pad utilising the Fulcrum programme. Most of us met for the first time on this working bee. Regardless of the persistent, mostly gale force winds , the group cheerfully went about their tasks and quickly gelled as a team.

Catering: The bulk of food was purchased in Launceston by Wendy Milne who did the catering. Fresh food and Meat was purchased from Walkers Supermarket and the Flinders Island Butcher.

Christine Bowman collected and delivered to Whitemark airport ,the fresh food. All team members prepared and cooked an evening meal.

Thank you Wendy and Christine .

Transport:

Flinders Island Air Charter provided all the transport from Lost Farm airstrip at Barnbogle to Deal Island and return..

One load of packs and dry goods were delivered to Bridport and transported to Flinders Island several days before our first passenger flight.

Forecast deteriorating weather conditions brought forward the inward travelling date by one day to the 9th of May. Five team members departed Barnbogle at 8.45 am. We touched down briefly at Whitemark air port to lighten the passenger load ,and three of us resumed the journey to Deal Island.

The aircraft returned to Whitemark, picked up three other team members and landed at Deal Island at 11.30 am.

The Return Journey was planned for the 19th of May but deferred due to strong winds preventing aircraft landings at the Deal Island airstrip. The return Journey to Whitemark and onward to Barnbogle was the reverse of the inward journey and Five of us arrived back at Barnbogle at 11am Friday the 21st of May on a bright Sunny day.

Caretakers: Spud and Kim welcomed us at the airstrip and transported our gear to the Visitor's house. Spud was on duty between flights chasing resident Cape Barren Geese off the airstrip. Kim at the Visitors House provided scones and Jam. We enjoyed a couple of meals with them and many conversations. They both provided great support to the weeding bee team. Spud and Kim provided us with a guided tour along the length of Flag hill one morning pointing out various land marks, fungi and bird life.

Induction, Safety and Training.

Spud and Kim attended the first part of the Briefing and detailed no go areas etc. All of the team were provided with an orientation tour of the light Station compound, followed by a walk up Barn Hill. All of the JRA's were read and signed. DPIPWE Covid plans were read. Daily PWS Prestart Tool box meeting were included in each Weeding day briefing.

No Go Areas:

PWS closed the enclosed fenced off area above East Cove, due to unstable ground for weeding activities. This area is known site for Sea Spurge and other weeds. No weeding was attempted in this area.

First Impressions.

We arrived at Deal Island to find all the grassed areas a lush green. PWS and Caretakers have been busy during the last two years, it is encouraging to see the results of recent works. Restoration of Lighthouse, Building roof replacement in Caretakers house and Visitors house, Replacement of solar battery bank, Electric Fencing and improvements to Airstrip, Vehicle replacement and many others.

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and other issues this was the first Weeding Bee since November 2019. We were late in the season and keen to get into it !

Weeders Report By Phillipa Foster

Arrived Sunday morning, settled into the house and then took a walk up Barn Hill for orientation.

I took the opportunity later in the afternoon to walk down to East Cove and see how it looked.

There are numerous large sea spurge in flower within the enclosure. I picked a couple of examples from the saltbush in the dunes close to the water. Also collected horehound at the southern end of the beach.

No one else had any weed knowledge so it was good to offer real examples to demonstrate the nature of each species.

Mon 10th May

Garden Cove is always a good introduction and we had a cuppa and set to. All agreed we found great value in the orange safety vests to establish where people were at any given time.

Pulled 731 Spurge from the beach and surrounding area.

Removed 8 Great Mullein near the old garden.

Found 2 small infestations of Ragwort in the Poa nearby.

Some Marine Debris collected & removed

Left the house at 09:00

Return 15:30

Tues 11th May

Winter Cove is a challenge with the ever-spreading Ragwort.

We pretty much ignored the ragwort, although some of the group did a bit of removing before they realised how bad it is.

Found 25 Great Mullein in and around the erosion gully along the track.

Another 8 found along the track and the other side. The new stairs down the steep section of the track work very well

Found 2 Arum Lilies in the area between WC track and the Airport Road.

Some Marine Debris collected & removed

Left house at 09:00

Return 15:30

Wed 12th May

East Cove offers easier work after two biggish days.

Checked perimeter of fence and all looking weed free.

15 Sea Spurge found along beach, ranging from seedlings to a couple in full flower. All pulled and dropped.

120 Horehound found at southern end of beach, again ranging from seedlings to others with spent flower heads.

40+- Arum Lilies, some in small clumps, a couple in flower, and some quite large clumps, All found in gully behind Telstra chair and toward Flagstaff Hill

All recorded on Wildcare notebook.

Some Marine Debris collected & removed

Left around 09:00.

Return 13:30

Thurs 13th May

East Cove Arum Lilly Patrol

Combed large area between Airport Road and Lighthouse Avenue.
Rechecked many recorded sites using Wildcare notepad, no new findings
except for one very near the Telstra desk!

1 Arum Lilly

70 Great Mullein plants found throughout area between airstrip and
Lighthouse Avenue, and along to East Cove Road. 2 dead mother loads
found.

All recorded on Wildcare notepad

Left House 09:00

Return 13:30

Fri 14th May

Wild and woolly, big winds, Lighthouse Avenue today

Checked halfway house site for Arum lilies. Rechecked old sites and combed
area for any new ones.

1 small baby Arum found.

Checked Lighthouse site and found some thistles.

Returned via Squally track.

Left house 09:30

Return 16:00

Sat 15th May

Rest and Day off from serious weeding.

Found one near flowering clump of Arums in Poa below house compound,

Checked several other lily sites on notepad.

Sun 16th May

Wild, wet n windy day.

Stocktaking of FODI house items and food.

Stocktake of FODI tools, protective gear and equipment.

Afternoon at Garden Cove checking Creticum sites.

11 young Creticum found and recorded on Wildcare notepad.

Mon 17th May

Peg leg to check spread of Ragwort.

Returned through valley to Garden Cove track to check other Creticum site.

15 Creticum found and recorded.

5 Great Mullein found near airport and on airstrip.

Some Marine Debris collected & removed

Left house 09:00
Return 16:30

Tues 18th May

Rest and Recreation Day
Recreational walk to Big Squally, in by the new track and out via the old one.
No weeds today
Some Marine Debris collected & some removed.

Wed 19th May

Garden Cove via Flagstaff Hill.
1 Arum Lilly found between Telstra chair and Flagstaff Hill ascent.
3 thistles removed from hills east of GC.
300+- Sea Spurge on eastern side of Garden Cove.
3 Great mullein found near airstrip.

Left house 10:30
Return 16:00

Thurs 20th May

Clean and tidy house in preparation for leaving early Friday am.

Summary

Group of 6 works very well.
Great group of people, no slouches here.
The whole group worked well together, remaining enthusiastic and interested throughout.
We covered a large area and were very successful in our quest.
Quick return visits to sites are very valuable, as demonstrated in our return to Garden Cove . Everyone was amazed to see how much we had initially missed, and how much he or she had got his or her eyes "in" for certain plants.
It was very beneficial to get everyone familiar with the weedy plants and I made sure we had fresh samples as early as possible. Also clear explanation of distinctive features.
Protective gear was excellent, due to covid precautions we gave each person their protective glasses and gloves.
All Fluoro vests were washed and returned to the store. These were generally agreed to be terrific for keeping tabs on everyone as they moved about the hills.
There is a lot of protective PPE on the island that should last for some time. Tools were in good working order, the Burgon & Ball garden picks were widely used, although there was some concern at how they could be safely transported. (They are very sharp)

All in all a great success, thanks to everyone and their time and effort.

All Data and GPS Mapping of weed sites Entered on to Wildcare I pad with the Fulcrum program

Thank you Wildcare and Phil Wyatt for your assistance with Mapping and Data recording.

Sea Spurge.

Total Number of Plants Removed 1048

Arum Lilies

Total Number of Plants Removed 46

Horehound:

Total Number of Plants Removed 121

Great Mulein

Total Number of Plants Removed 122

Creticum

Total Number of Plants Removed 26

Ragwort Numbers not recorded

Thistles Numbers not recorded.

Weeding Hours in Field. 240

Data Entry Mapping on I pad Hours 30

Travel Time Hours 90

Tools and PPE Inventory Hours 12

Inventory of Visitors house Hours 12

Planning the working bee Hours 200