



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

ABN 97093480659 P.O. Box 896, Balgowlah, NSW 2093

northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au

email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Newsletter No 131 September 2019

Thank you

Carole Rollings, a coordinator for the Manly Little Penguin Watch, for your very interesting talk last month. We can all help the Little Penguins and native wildlife by keeping our cats and dogs inside at night. The last penguin killed was not by a fox but a cat.

Native Plant Nursery

You are welcome to join us on any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12noon to help with the planting, weed removal or maintenance.

For more details email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Or just turn up and ask for Jenny, phone 0414735350.

Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

Our community education room is open 10am to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays in Building 20. Call in and say hello and have a look at our displays.

Maybe you would like to learn about volunteering in our education room. Ask one of volunteers or contact Judy Lambert at twswombat@inet.net.au

Q Station - Open Day- Life in Quarantine

10am – 2pm, Sunday 15th September

Discover the stories of everyday life in quarantine; staff, passengers and now their descendants. Engage in authentic experiences as we reinterpret the history of quarantine through art, tours, open buildings and kids' activities.

More details www.qstation.com.au/community-open-day

North Head Bird Photos by Robyn Missen



Female wren enjoying the nectar on Xanthorrhoea flowers.



Lorikeet eating the immature Xanthorrhoea seed

Join a Guided Wildflower Walk in Spring

Although rainfall at North Head has been very erratic this year, the June rains have seen our rich diversity of plants rejuvenated. Come and enjoy the splendour of the bushland on one of our guided walks. These easy, on-track walks will each be of 2 ½ to 3 hours duration.

This year's walks will be held on:

Sunday 8 Sept, commencing at 10am

Saturday 21 Sept, commencing at 2pm

Wednesday 25 Sept, commencing at 10am

Monday 7 Oct (public holiday), commencing at 2pm.

Our easy on-track walks are free, but bookings are necessary (limit 20 people on each walk).

You should wear comfortable shoes, bring a hat, insect repellent and a water bottle.

To register, please email twswombat@inet.net.au or call in to Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20 at North Head's former School of Artillery) between 10am and 4pm on a Saturday or Sunday. When registering, please give us your email address and a phone number where you can be contacted on the walk day.

Back in Time

Peter Macinnis

"Houses on the first establishment are either formed of wattle and plaster, or of split timber and plaster—the roof being composed of sheets of bark, or thatched with blady grass which proves by far the coolest roof in hot weather and the warmest in cold weather, thatch being such a bad

conductor of heat. The great objection to its use arises from its susceptibility to take fire."

—Peter Cunningham, *Two Years In New South Wales*, vol. 2, 1827, 161.

Peter Miller Cunningham did the England-Sydney run four or five times as a surgeon-superintendent of convicts, and was one of the best. He also farmed here for a while, and he was an excellent observer of minutiae.

Editors note - If you worked on North Head in the past/ or have a connection with the site and have a story to tell, please email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Imperata cylindrica or blady grass



An erect grass to one metre high, has broad erect leaves. A hardy species with fibrous tough leaves.

Why North Head is a Botanist's Heaven

Geoff Lambert

North Head is a small place and only 275 hectares of it could be called "native bushland". Yet that 275 hectares is home to some 500 species of native plants. That's a very high density of about 1.8 species per hectare. Large NSW National Parks such Royal and Kuringai, each about 15,000 hectares, can only manage 0.07 species per hectare [but that still comes to heaps of species – about 1,000!]. The NSW Royal Botanic Gardens is the only place in NSW that does better – 8,900 species in 30 hectares or about 300 species per hectare. That's the point, really ... North Head is a naturally-created Botanic Garden. There are two factors that contribute to this statistic –

- (1) a large number of habitat types from rainforest to sand dunes and
- (2) the occurrence of some inherently rich habitat types such as Coastal Heath and Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

This richness was first brought to the attention of Europeans by the brilliant arrays of flowers at Manly's

Spring Wildflower Shows in the late nineteenth century. In 1933, when Manly Council was granted "Permissive Occupancy" of North Head an SMH journalist by the name of Gilmour reported gushingly that "Nature has clothed it with many shrubs and decked it with many a wild flower, which one tremulously hopes, will be allowed to bloom for years to come". He named 20 species which he thought were especially noteworthy, including Blandfordia which added "radiance to the scene".

Over the 45 years from 1967, some 20 further full or partial species surveys were carried out. The most important of these was the 1986 survey by Stephanie Horton and Doug Benson who found 367 species in the National Park land alone, about 291 of which were native plants. Extensive additions to the listings were made by Skelton and Lanham in their 2003 report to the Harbour Trust. These 20 reports brought the total number of known native species to about 430. NHSF has contributed no fewer than 70 "extras", bringing the current total to nearly 500.

The map below is from the 2003 SHFT report by Nicholas Skelton *et al.* and shows some 18 habitat types, only one of which is "exotic" - i.e. non-native. A large poster of this map is on the wall of Bandicoot Heaven. Electronic copies of nearly all these surveys are available on the new Bandicoot Heaven computer.

