

News

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Time for a change!

MEET THE new name and logo!
After operating as Project Dolphin Safe for 12 years, the organisation has decided that it's outgrown that name . . . and it's been officially relaunched as Australian Marine Wildlife Research & Rescue Organisation Inc (AMWRRO).

PDS was set up in 1998 after the deliberate killing of six Port River dolphins by humans.

The organisation's initial objectives were to patrol the Port River estuary and associated waters, to act as a deterrent to those wanting to harm its resident animals and to remove any floating debris that could pose a risk to these creatures and their environment.

In the years to follow PDS incorporated several additional objectives considered extremely important for these animals and habitats which were not being carried out by the appropriate authorities. These included restoration of habitats, removal



of rubbish, education, revegetation, rescues and research.

Within the first five years, PDS officials were being asked to carry out pelican rescues. That led to Australian Seabird Rescue's (ASR) Lance Ferris holding an ASR workshop in Adelaide: several PDS officials attended and that, in turn, led to South Australian Seabird Rescue (SASR) being started as a sister initiative of PDS, using the same infrastructure and manpower.

Since then PDS had become South Australia's response to injured marine wildlife rescue situations and the only organisation licensed in South Australia to rescue and

rehabilitate seabirds, sea turtles and seal species by the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH).

Our ever-growing number of rescued animals led to PDS building the first facility of its kind in Australia – the Natural Wetland Rehabilitation Facility for injured marine wildlife - and hundreds of creatures have already passed through this amazing facility.

All these successes have made it clear that PDS had outgrown its name, and we will now continue the same work under the name of the Australian Marine Wildlife Research & Rescue Organisation.

As PDS, the organisation was well known across Australia for our ability to rescue, rehabilitate and release injured marine wildlife that would normally be euthanised due to lack of resources, facility and expertise.

As AMWRRO, we'll carry on the good work!



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Move to protect pelicans

AFTER several years of devastation, this year's pelican numbers are looking very promising.

In the past, foxes and humans who access Section Bank (Bird Island) at Outer Harbour have been causing harm to the state's largest breeding colony of pelicans, silver gulls and other seabirds. Foxes, in particular, have been killing off hundreds of young birds whilst parent birds sit back and watch.

Land ownership is the main problem with this area as the huge sand bank that has developed on the north point on the northern breakwater is technically owned by the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI). This area is of enormous ecological value to the state, which should make it a DEH issue but it's not owned by DEH to manage!

So what happens when two government departments play handball and our wildlife are left to pay the price? Alert the media and throw egg in one direction is one option; another might be to alert the media and throw eggs at both ministers responsible for these



DOING WELL: the pelican colony on Section Bank.
Photo: Jennifer Hayes.

issues (the Minister for the Department for Environment and Heritage and the Minister for the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, both of whom have been asked to deal with this issue but refuse to come to an agreement).

PDS will be pushing for this section of land to be handed over to DEH as soon as possible so that it can be incorporated into the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary management plan that incorporates pest control measures, weed control and revegetation.

PDS, DTEI and DEH have held several meetings already and hopefully 2010 will see some good news about this area.



FROM THE AIR: the red area shows the land in question.



Seabird stress: here's how to help

OVER THE years our weather patterns have turned from what's considered normal to extreme, and this is playing havoc with our seabirds.

PDS has been inundated with birds suffering from heat-related stress. When a seabird is found on the beach and you can get within touching distance, you can rest assured that something is very wrong. Here are some tips to use whilst help is on the way.

1. DON'T TOUCH THE BIRD! These animals are not normally handled and do not like to be patted – it only adds to their stress, even if they don't show it.

2. KEEP EVERYONE AWAY, ESPECIALLY DOGS! The more people that surround the bird the more the bird will stress: if you add a dog to the equation, the bird's stress levels will rise and might even kill it. Remember that seabirds are wild and consider anything with four legs to be a predator: even if the dog wouldn't hurt a fly, the bird doesn't know that!

3. PROVIDE THE BIRD WITH SHADE! Heat-related stress is only worsened by direct sunlight. If possible, and without standing directly over the bird, provide it with some shade (your shadow is good enough), and remember the bird is extremely sick at this point – the less movement the better.

4. REMAIN CALM AND QUIET! Excess noise, laughing, talking and the natural inquisitiveness of children and adults do not mix with sick seabirds - any of these factors can actually kill them. Remain calm and call 8262 5452 as soon as possible. If you haven't got a phone, stay close to the bird (within line of sight) and ask other walkers if they have a phone you can borrow - 99 per cent of walkers will be happy to help.

5. GIVE CLEAR DETAILS. Rescuers need lots of information in order to get to you as quickly as possible e.g. local land marks like jetties, large buildings, road names, number of people on the beach, and your contact details. All this information will help the rescuer or operator in allocating the equipment and personnel needed. The animal's condition is of the utmost importance and with an accurate description of what the bird is doing means we can give the bird the very best chance of surviving. Remember, you're our eyes and ears out there and you can make all the difference.

For any additional advice relating to marine wildlife rescues feel free to contact PDS on 8262 5452 (24/7). And if you're a beach walker, please store this Marine Wildlife Rescue number in your phone - 8262 5452. It will save you time, money and frustration when you need to speak to the right person at the right time.

Don't forget our fund-raiser!

DON'T MISS OUT! The next PDS major fundraiser is now booked in and ready to start raising funds!

Last year PDS Secretary and Events Manager Tiffany Cowling managed to raise a whopping \$25,000 in a single night, and this year we are hoping for more of the same.

February 6 is Race Day at Morphett Ville Racecourse, and it's expected to be a fun day out for all. Come along to find out about our future while celebrating 12 years of successful work by Project Dolphin Safe!

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Caring copy team signs up to support

PDS would like to welcome aboard and thank Tony and his staff at The Copier Shop on Prospect Road for a fantastic photocopier that has been donated.

This machine has been used on a daily basis for general copying, booklets and all printing since it was donated in early January and will save PDS thousands of dollars each year in printing costs alone.



Tony and his staff are the latest local business to join the long list of firms supporting our charity, and their help means more of our funds can go to helping the creatures in our care.

Thank you to everyone who offers us support in this way, and a huge welcome to the caring folk at The Copier Shop: we look forward to working with you for many years to come.



DIRTY WORK: volunteers on Torrens Island during last year's Clean-Up Australia Day.

Join the Clean-Up crew

PDS and DEH-Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary staff will again host Clean Up Australia Day on Torrens Island, and this year we need additional help.

Several section of Torrens Island will be targeted this year and that means the more the merrier.

PDS has held several clean-up days on Torrens Island over the years, all of which have been a great success, but this year we're hoping to include several additional areas that can only be accessed through the main gates of AGL.

Anyone wanting to attend must register before 5 March to be included on the list of people who can gain access to Torrens Island, and to help with catering needs.

The event starts at 10am and will finish around 2pm.

Participants are asked to bring a pair of gardening gloves, a hat, gardening shoes (no thongs please), sun glasses, a friend, a water bottle or drink, and lots of enthusiasm.

PDS will be providing a free

BBQ for those helping out so please be sure to let us know if you have any specific dietary requirements e.g. vegetarian, vegan etc.

Keen to come along? Then contact PDS on 8262 5452 to register your interest.



THIS PHOTO of volunteers and staff dates from summer 2006 when they turned out for a clean-up day on Torrens Island. And the work goes on! Sign up now on 8262 5452 to join the team for this year's projects.



Save the seals . . . by staying away

EACH month we receive hundreds of calls concerning seals and seal pups on beaches across the state. Most turn out to be completely fine. But if people ignore our advice and take matters into their own hands, the result can be catastrophic.

Over Christmas and on New Year's Day, PDS received phone calls regarding a seal pup on Middleton Beach. Each time the advice (to stay at least 10m away) was

given, and DEH also attended several times, only to find the animal had been moved. There was even one report that two surfers had put the pup on a surf board and taken it to the ocean!

On January 2, PDS answered another call to attend but found the pup dead on arrival: sadly those who wouldn't stay away contributed to this death.

Mother seals often move their pups away from the

breeding colonies, and it's completely normal for a mother to leave her pup on a beach while she spends several days away feeding. She'll come back to where she left the pup, so if it's been moved by someone wanting to help that person could be responsible for its death.

Bottom line...if it doesn't belong to you – don't interfere with it! Just call your local authority or PDS 24-7 on 8262 5452 for advice.

Sign up for seabirds!

It's that time of year again when PDS-SASR members are invited to participate in the Seabird Rescue workshop on February 27 and 28.

If you're over 16, a member of PDS and want to be a part of a specialist group - people trained in seabird rescue methods, identifying injured seabirds from a distance, and getting up close and hands-on with these amazing creatures - then be quick to register (by February 19 please) for the SASR workshop.

The workshop - at PDS Torrens Island via Grand Trunk Way, Gillman - runs for two days. Day one covers theory and day two covers hands-on rescue work: once trained you're more then welcome to come and assist with

the rehabilitation of creatures in care.

Our rescued seabirds are extremely high maintenance when in care and require lots of assistance to help them back on their feet. But what a great feeling it is to release a bird that was once knocking on death's door back into the wild!

Be sure to book sooner rather than later as spaces are limited. This is in-house training for PDS members only but anyone who's interested can join in by becoming a member (just log onto www.projectdolphinsafe.com to download our membership application form).

Contact Aaron Machado on 8262 5452 or email aaron@projectdolphinsafe.com to register.

Come and join the rescue work

PDS is always looking for new members to train as rescue officers and to become hands-on in the rehabilitation of animals in care.

Recently PDS has trained an additional 15 members in seabird rescue techniques and rehabilitation methods, and we are always looking for more people to become active. So, if you have any spare time on your hands and want to help these animals, please get in touch.

Please note: all members must be over the age of 16 for insurance reasons and it would be preferable if a current driver's licence was held by all applicants.

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MANGROVE MATTERS: the area to be protected is outlined in green, above. And right, the destructive practice of bait-digging.



Mangrove mission

PDS is hoping to start a new project that will incorporate a large section of the Port River estuary banks which have, for years, been stripped of life by uneducated fishermen.

This section of river bank is on the South side of the causeway that leads to Torrens Island. For years it's been subject to bait digging and environmental vandalism, with grey mangrove trees pulled out of the ground or pushed into the mud in order to protect known bait-digging grounds.

Now PDS has dealt with the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) and negotiated a license to take control of this area to conduct important revegetation and restoration efforts.

PDS will be working closely with Greening Australia: together we hope to revegetate this important section of the Port River estuary banks with an important tree.

PDS would like to point out to anyone with concerns about this restricted access that AGL Torrens Island Power Station has not supported the fencing off of this area and is in no way responsible for the work that will be conducted here, or for the fencing of this area over the next few years. AGL does

not support the restrictions due to possible backlash relating to recreational fishermen, and PDS takes full responsibility for this project and would like to highlight the complete independence of AGL Torrens Island Power Station in relation to this project.

Bait digging is known to be an extremely destructive way in which to collect bait alongside river banks across Australia, and has been outlawed in eastern states. PDS intends to fence off the area outlined in green, and conduct weed control days, hold a general clean-up day and then source and grow grey mangrove trees in this area to help stabilise the ground, introduce additional habitats for fish, birds and dolphins and help sustain the greater population of these federally-protected trees.

South Australia's Barker Inlet has the largest and southern-most colony of grey mangroves on the planet. These trees are protected by the Commonwealth government as well as the states, and PDS will make every effort to successfully revegetate this important area.

For any concerns or queries relating to this project please contact Aaron Machado on 8262 5452 in business hours.

