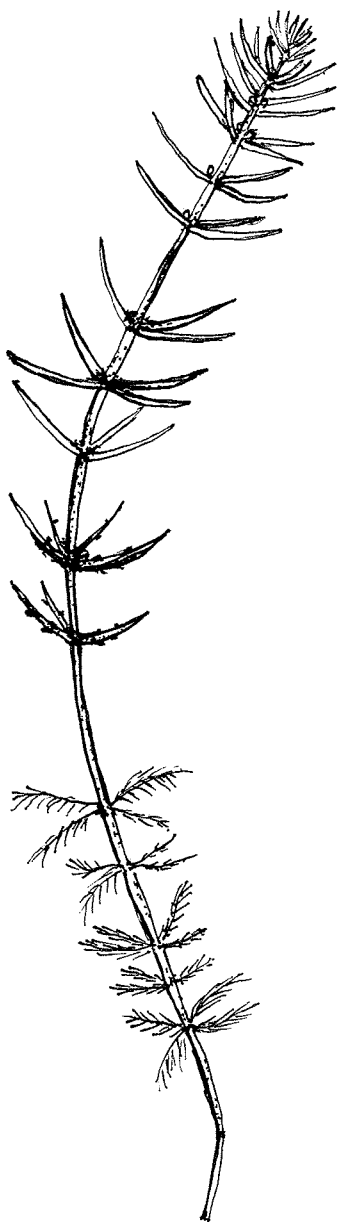


BICA NEWSLETTER

Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc., Bend of Islands, Victoria, 3097, Australia
C/- PO Kangaroo Ground, Vic 3097
President: Robyn Duff 9712 0507
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Number 81 April 2013



WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Myriophyllum variifolium*
Common name: Variable Water-milfoil
Family: Haloragaceae
Flowering Period: Spring to Summer

A perennial aquatic herb of permanent, slow flowing or still waters.

Found emerging from the water on the bank of Watson's Creek, just near the Watson's Creek bridge.

The stems are 0.3-0.5 m long, to 5 mm diameter, rooted in the mud, with different types of leaves above and below the water. All the leaves are whorled, i.e. an arrangement of three or more leaves at the same level around the axis of the stem. The leaves are dark green.

The submerged leaves are pinnate, (divided to the midrib of the leaf), to 25 mm long, with whorls of 4-5, close together and feathery.

The emergent leaves stand erect for 15 cm above the water surface, and consist of irregular whorls of 3-5 entire or smooth, narrow leaves to 15 mm long. The lower whorls may be toothed.

Separate male and female flowers appear on the same plant. The flowers are hardly visible and are sessile (stalkless) and solitary in the axils of the emergent leaves. All flowers on the same whorl are of the same sex. The male are above the female flowers, with the female appearing first. The male flowers are yellow to red and the female flowers are white.

The fruit is cylindrical and yellow-brown, about 1.4 mm long.

Previously included under *Myriophyllum propinquum*.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Autumn is a delightful time in the Bend of Islands. The bush-fire season is pretty much over, the weather is still warm and it feels like everyone can think about planting plants and getting out and about.

BICA is particularly pleased that April saw the launch of the Land Management Plan for the Bend of Islands. This is a project that has taken years of effort to get to this point and we now have a document that beautifully describes the rich diversity of the flora and fauna of the Bend of Islands; its significance and the importance of protecting them; how land management practices have impacted on them and the action that we should now take to continue to protect the area into the future. These actions include focussed weed eradication and other works as well as initiatives to protect and enhance declining populations of significant flora. The Land Management Plan also has identified further projects that BICA could undertake to explore and understand particular aspects of our area that are not well researched or understood. I hope you were able to join us in celebrating the launch at the General meeting in April.

Since the last Newsletter, BICA, together with the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Cultural Heritage Council, have worked on joint activities including an Indigenous Cultural Awareness day, Clean-Up Australia Day at the Wurundjeri Tribal Land Council Land and a visit with an archaeologist to some local archaeological and cultural sites of significance within the Bend of Islands. We look forward to continuing this partnership throughout this year.

Over the summer BICA arranged to use funding from the Communities for Nature project to eradicate mainly woody weeds from the escarpment around the river - places that are really difficult for landowners to reach and that have some lovely rare species of flora remaining on them. The work is almost completed and we hope will protect those species into the future. We will also participate in this project by conducting wildlife surveys by using camera traps (motion detecting cameras) set up for seven days. Participation was open to all members of BICA and we look forward to seeing some good snaps of local fauna and hopefully not too many of feral animals! Thanks to Deirdre Lucas and Jo Henry for managing this project.

As well as these special projects BICA has run the usual community involvement activities coordinated by Rudi Pauli - Graham Peterson led a wonderful Eucalypt walk and we had a busy Clean-Up Australia Day (thanks to Tom Fisher and all those who participated). BICA continues to liaise with local Real Estate Agents (Liz Mildenhall and her team), conduct Landcare working bees (Luke Doyle and his helpers), and liaise with power line companies about trimming under the powerlines (Frank Pierce) as well as a range of other activities. How do we have time to do all this? We have a great team working behind the scenes on making this a better place to live in. Thanks to all of you!

We were very grateful to receive a bequest from the Estate of Charles Fodor to assist BICA in our conservation work. Charles was a long-time supporter of conservation and a real character in this area. We could always rely on Charles to ask a curly question at the General meetings. He will be missed.

ROBYN DUFF

NEW BENDERS

Welcome to new residents Felicity and Emma Rose at 750 Henley Road, Genevieve, Justin and baby Banjo Siow at 100 Catani Blvd and Daniela and Kwan, Tomas and Belinda at 236 Catani Blvd. It was a hot and at times testing summer to arrive at the Bend. Hopefully autumn will bring warmth, rain and lovely days. We wish you all much happiness living here.

A number of properties in the ELZ are on the market at the moment. Some are land only, others house and land and others shares on the Co-op.

For general enquires contact Liz Mildenhall 97120577 (mildenhall2@bigpond.com) and for Co-op sites contact Karyn Kamminga: 97120621

Let's know of any properties wanted or available for sale or rent.

Since the last newsletter Tobey and James have had a little boy Sunny. That makes Cric and Ross grannies again and breaks the boy drought. All well and ecstatic.

ALONG THE RIVER

Rosemary West

I see all sorts of things as I walk at sun up along the river. Most mornings at this time of the year I see a mother wombat with her offspring. Baby is still afraid of me and dashes off down a nearby burrow but mum just blinks. It won't be long before the young one realises this particular human will do him no harm. I used to see a White's thrush (sometimes a pair) regularly but I have only seen him once or twice this season. There are plenty of more common birds, both in the trees and on the water. Kangaroos have spread down to the river (they used to stay closer to the golf course), foxes I see occasionally but not as often as I once did so I hope my resident fox has gone. My wallaby hangs around.

Recently however I was surprised when I turned a corner along the track to see a 'roo only a few metres from me that showed no sign of bounding away. I treat 'roos with respect if they show any sign of challenging me though this one was young and female. As I approached she came up to me and appreciated having her ears scratched. I went on with my walk as I did not want to encourage her but she followed me for a while before finally bounding away. No doubt she had been fostered. I was a bit concerned as she was alone ('roos are rarely by themselves unlike wallabies and wombats) and I did wonder how well she had integrated with the mob. I hope she has and I hope she learns some road sense; the way she was behaving suggested she would not have much.

I guess it is a problem when a 'roo that needs help (from injury or with a dead mother) is found. There is certainly no shortage of 'roos here at present but this one at least suggested to me that it isn't always easy for them to learn the ways of the wild.

BICA WEBSITE UPDATE

For those who are interested and/or have some skills in such things, the BICA publications sub-committee would like to hear from you if you would like to comment or would be prepared to help with the review and modification of the website (<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica>).

If you are interested contact Phillip Wiersbowski at:

l_wierzbowski@hotmail.com

WYENONDABUL COLLABORATIVE PROJECT: FURTHER EVENTS

Tom Fisher

On Sunday 24 March, as part of the Wyenondabul Collaborative Project with the Wurundjeri, BICA hosted an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Program. Residents packed the CFA shed to hear a program presented by Wurundjeri Elder Dave Wandin, Indigenous Cultural Awareness Program Country Plan Project Manager Fiona McConnachie, and local resident and DSE Coastcare Victoria Facilitator Phil Wierzbowski. The program was structured around several main topics, but there were many questions and some informed input from the audience, making for a very lively day. In general, Fiona provided general information, while Dave filled in with his rich personal experiences spanning five decades. Phil helped keep the discussion moving and then summarised two projects in which he has been involved, showing some photos from the recent bark canoe project.

After a brief welcome from Dave, Fiona provided a brief history of Indigenous Australia, after which she and Dave introduced key Wurundjeri culture practices and protocols useful for white folks in dealing with Aboriginal peoples, such as terms of address and sensitivity to language. This was followed by a brief run-down of relevant legislation and organisations. After a shared lunch, some aspirational targets were suggested. Speaking as a Wurundjeri Elder whose family has never lost its ties with the Upper and Mid-Yarra Valley, Dave expressed the hope for shared care of the land between Wurundjeri and ELZ residents and for acknowledgement, without bitterness, of the wrongs done to the Aboriginal peoples. Local residents suggested specific targets such as acknowledging Wurundjeri history and custodianship of the area publicly, adding traditional botanical names to our flora list, incorporating the Wurundjeri seasonal cycle in the BICA calendar and ensuring the Aboriginal sites were known to the CFA.

The following Thursday Darren Griffin, archaeologist and Manager - Cultural Heritage, Wurundjeri Tribe Land Council, joined the Narrap Team and a few available and interested ELZ residents to visit local sites and to provide advice pertaining to landowner responsibilities and ongoing management.

He recorded three new scatter sites first identified by Dylan Osler, photographing stone implements at them. We then visited the site of the scar tree and one burial mound, both of which had been registered earlier. Brad Taddy, a Shire Senior Environmental Works Officer, who currently is coordinating a project called 'Reconnecting the Song-lines - The rejuvenation of the Aboriginal Cultural Landscape of Nillumbik' at the Bunjil Reserve in Panton Hill, also took part. For a more detailed account of this informative event, please refer to the article by young and sharp-eyed participant Aeshna Henry and the accompanying photos.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2013

Tom Fisher

Twenty-five local residents, ranging in age from two to over 80, turned out to participate in a very special Clean Up Australia Day this year. Rosemary West continued her roadside rubbish collection, and Mal Chicksen and Gavin Masters joined new resident Ben Russell is de-fencing his property. Later Luke Doyle joined in to remove the fence at the Fodor place on Catani Blvd recently purchased by Tserin Wright and Jess Jarvie.

The rest of us journeyed to Healesville to work under the supervision of Wurundjeri Elder Dave Wandin, the on-site manager of the Narrap (Green) Team with which BICA has established strong relations over the past eight months. Dave welcomed us to the old hall set in an English-style garden on the edge of the 90 acre Wurundjeri property that used to house the School of Army Health but restored to the traditional owners in the 1990s. While wishing to preserve the non-native ornamental planting along the 200 metre drive from the entrance to the property, Dave and his helpers are beginning to restore the remainder of the land to a more natural state. We contributed to this endeavour by bringing our de-fencing skills to a 500 m length of fence that evidently is guarded by a resident copperhead that, nevertheless, declined to make an appearance. We were successful in untangling the fence from some dense undergrowth, cutting it into sections and rolling it up, and then, with the help of Peter Rae's stake-remover, a marvel of technology, eliminated all the star pickets as well as the wooden posts, thus allowing free passage of animal life across the road.

Dave then put on the mother of all barbeques, which featured emu burgers and kangaroo steaks, amongst the more traditional fare. A few other Wurundjeri popped over, and some new friendships were made and potential cooperative ventures raised. BICA participants included Marie & Wolfgang Krause, Caroline Kardachi and (official photographer) Pierre Noirjean, Cric and Ross Henry, Leanne and Phil Wierzbowski, Rudi, Ned and Jarrah Pauli, Kurt, Eraskus and Jardin Shean, Jess, Peter, Charlie and Asher Rae, Liz and Peter Mildenhall, and Tom Fisher.



Dave Wandin with Marie and Caroline Pierre Noirjean



Rudi and Kurt with helpers dealing with yet another steel stake. Pierre Noirjean

ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY

Aeshna Henry

Aeshna lives with her parents Jo and Dylan in the Bend of Islands. She is in Grade 5 at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School and has a lively interest in her environment.

On Thursday 28 March we met some Wurundjeri people to look at artefact scatters in the Bend of Islands. Their names were Darren, who was an archaeologist, Ash and Craig. Tom, Glenn, Frank, Rosemary and Dylan also came along.

Almost all of the artefacts we found were made of silcrete. Silcrete is a hard stone that could be worked to make a sharp edge. This type of stone isn't naturally found in the Bend of Islands and has to have been brought in from elsewhere. Darren showed us the difference between naturally formed rock and silcrete that has been worked on. You need to look for features like the bulb of percussion and the step plate on the rocks. Silcrete is used for making knives, scrapers and barbs for the tips of spears. These tools were kept sharp by scraping the edge with a kangaroo bone. The sites we looked at hadn't been recorded in previous archaeological surveys. They were near the C.F.A. Shed, Catani Boulevard and C track. We found roughly 20 flakes at each site.

These stone artefacts were mostly flakes that varied in size with some as small as baby teeth and some as big as a twenty cent piece, but most around the size of a five cent piece.

We also found a few core stones. Core stones are a big chunk of silcrete that is worked on to create tools such as scrapers.

We didn't find any greenstone axes but Darren showed us some and spoke about them. Greenstone from Mount William (near Lancefield) is very important to the Wurundjeri people. Greenstone is very hard and it was prized for making axes. To make the rock stick to the wooden handle they used sap from Grass-trees mixed with ash, blood and spit. This stone was traded throughout Australia and has been found in western Queensland.

Now that I have found some of these beautiful artefacts it has reminded me that people have been around this area for thousands and thousands of years. We should continue to keep our eyes peeled for more sites in the Bend as there are many, many more sites, "We wouldn't have even found half", according to Aeshna Henry.

Thanks again to Darren, Ash, Craig and Glenn for coming out and having a look at some of the sites here in the Bend of Islands.



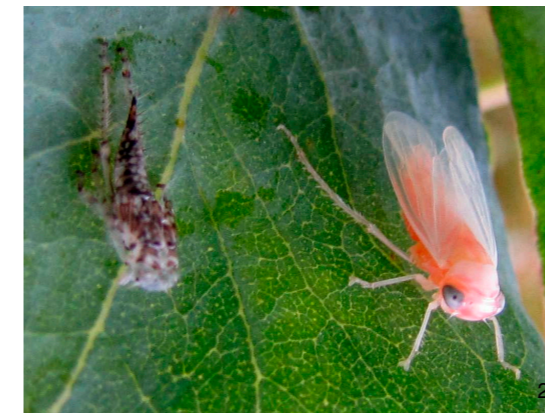
Silcrete fragments from the Catani Boulevard site

Frank Pierce



Burial Mound

Frank Pierce



LEAFHOPPERS IN THE ELZ

Frank Pierce

There are several families of Leafhoppers in Australia. Cicadelladae is the largest with over 700 species.

The Yellow-headed Leafhopper, *Brunotartessus fulvus*, is a species from this family found in the ELZ. It has a body length of about 8mm and an annual life cycle involving five nymphal stages, or instars, between the egg and the adult.

The emergence of an adult from the final nymphal stage was observed on fresh regrowth of a Long-leaf Box close to our house on the Co-op in January 2012.

I noticed the young adult sitting on a leaf, next to the shed nymph skin. It had transparent wings and pale pinkish colouring. Leafhoppers, like many freshly emerged insects, inflate their wings by pumping haemolymph (their watery blood) into

Emergence of a Yellow-headed Leafhopper

1 Final stage nymph.

2 Recently emerged adult next to shed nymph skin.

3 One day old adult next to shed nymph skin.

4 Mature adult



them. This is later withdrawn back into the body and the wings dry and strengthen.

The next day the adult, still standing on the same leaf, next to the shed nymph skin, showed much more colour, but was still pale compared with the mature adult.

Leafhopper nymphs and adults are sapsuckers feeding on the leaves, twigs and branches of the host tree. The nymphs are often 'farmed' by ants which collect honeydew from them and, in return, provide protection from predators.

They use only their two front pairs of legs for slow walking. Their back legs have many small spines, and are used only for jumping. They jump with incredible speed.

I have found several species in the ELZ including the Flat-headed Leafhopper *Ledromorpha planirostris* by the Yarra at the Neil Douglas Reserve.



Adult Flat-headed Leafhopper

EDNA WALLING GARDENS

Eleanor Fowler

I have been looking for inspiration about ways of developing the area around our house a bit more, into a garden of indigenous species, that 'blends in' to the bush. It seems like a good time to work on the garden a bit more now, since the rain seems to be coming back and I think it is good to get local plants in before the weather turns cold.

The gardens of Edna Walling came to mind. She was a well-known Melbourne based garden designer from the 1920s to the 1960s. Her gardens had organic shapes rather than rigid lines. Gardens had an 'air of wildness', with plants allowed to wander over the edges of walls and path edges. She had small rock walls and winding paths between large rocks, leading to a pond, a bird bath or a sculpture. She did not like too many species together, preferring perennials and a lot of greenery with not too many colours. I have enjoyed some gardens with this style and wondered if this approach to landscapes could be consistent with the use of indigenous species.

Older Melbourne people remember Edna Walling (from regular articles in the Women's Weekly and Australian Home Beautiful) as someone who believed that gardens should mirror nature and blend in with the surrounding area. I borrowed some of Edna Walling's books and found that by the 1950s she almost completely used native plants, preferably those of the local area, in her garden designs.

Edna Walling came from the countryside of Devonshire, which she loved. She trained at Burnley College in Horticulture in 1916. She loved camping and walking and fell in love with the Australian bush. She 'discovered' and bought some land in Mooroolbark with an ex-Burnley friend in the 1920s. By 1934, there were 16 cottages, which Edna built herself, with friends, describing them as 'adventures in amateur building'. She loved to use local stone for floors, walls and chimneys and preferred simplicity in design. She liked to extend the house into the garden, using pergolas, rock paving and low walls. 'Bickleigh Vale' became an experiment in environmental living.

Edna was an early advocate of native plants in gardens and parks. She observed, identified, collected and propagated native plants, which she sold at her plant nursery at Bickleigh Vale.

Edna Walling designed many gardens big and small in the east of Australia and influenced many people developing their own properties. Her focus was on creating places of 'repose for mind and body'. She was a keen photographer, taking black and white photos which captured the essence of her gardens.

In 1948 Edna bought 16 acres near Lorne, where she 'liked the blue gums marching down to the water's edge'. She enjoyed developing the garden on this steeply sloping property. She gave this property to the Bird Observer's Club when she moved to Queensland in 1967.

In 1952, Edna Walling wrote 'The Australian Roadside', where she described the roadside as 'the front garden of the nation'. She wrote: 'Seldom, if ever, do we achieve the quiet perfection of Nature's planting'. Chapters in the book outline the vegetation of different regions. She advocated not disturbing the landscape.

She wrote articles to newspapers and local councils promoting conservation issues, including arguing for indigenous plantings in the landscaping work for the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

My question about use of indigenous species in Walling style gardens was answered in the affirmative. Edna Walling was a conservationist with a combined ecological and visual base. Her work involved pleas for a more sensitive approach to landscape issues. She died in 1973.

These are some of the books about Edna Walling.

The Gardens of Edna Walling by Peter Watts.

Gardens in Time: In the Footsteps of Edna Walling. 1988. Trisha Dixon and Jennie Churchill.

The Vision of Edna Walling: Garden Plans 1920-1951 (1988). Trisha Dixon and Jennie Churchill. Blooming Books.

Gardens in Australia. Their Design and Care. E. Walling. Blooming 1997. (Murrumbidgee Library).

Country Roads. The Australian Roadside. First published in 1952. Oxford Univ Press. 1985.

A Gardener's Log. (1948).

The Garden Magic of Edna Walling. Margaret Barrett.

Garden of a Lifetime – Cruden Farm. Anne Latrielle. This is about Dame Elizabeth Murdoch's garden in Langwarren, for which Edna Walling did an early design.



Walling realised the importance of the place of local Australian plants in garden design. Top, Candlbark Gum, lower, Yellow Box.

Edna Walling



Chris and Peitra McNeill

Some Readers' Pictures



Russell Crosser



The Koala was initially mistaken for a wombat however being mid morning I thought it a little strange and then when he turned his head to check us out, I couldn't mistake the nose. This little guy was seen crossing Henley Road just on the west side of Oxley Bridge.

Chris and Peitra McNeill

BIRD NOTES

Frank Pierce

The following can be reported since November 2012.

Lyrebirds

10 new records in the ELZ have been reported from N Kamminga, P&L Mildenhall, C Bonny, D Osler and F Pierce. Refer to the website for details of all Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/ELZ/Lyrebird_Records

The list on the website has been upgraded to include some analysis of the 224 records that have been listed since 2000.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. These are all valuable records as they form concrete evidence of the importance of the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor.

Other Interesting Observations

Flocks of **Fork-tailed Swifts** have recently been seen in the ELZ by a number of observers.

A pair of **White-throated Nightjar** was seen and photographed by Russell Crosser on Skyline Rd, (literally sitting on the road) near Wendy Way in mid March. This species has been recorded each summer on the Co-op for many years. Most records are of their distinctive call at night (22 records on the Co-op this summer). They are very hard to find in the daytime, as they roost on the ground and are incredibly cryptic. This summer, as in some previous years, they were also recorded in the upper Catani area; presumably a different pair to that on the Co-op.

Nankeen Night-Heron has been photographed on a dam near lower Catani Boulevard.

The following species have been resident on the dam at Yanakie since December 2012: -

Hardhead, Black Duck, Wood Duck, Dusky Moorhen (breeding), **Purple Swamphen, Australasian Grebe** (breeding), **Eurasian Coot** (breeding), **Spotless Crake** and **Australian Reed-Warbler**.

Great Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant and **Darter** have also been present on occasions.

The last few months have been good for raptors, with the following species recorded: - **Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle, Brown Goshawk, Whistling Kite** and **Brown Goshawk** (breeding).

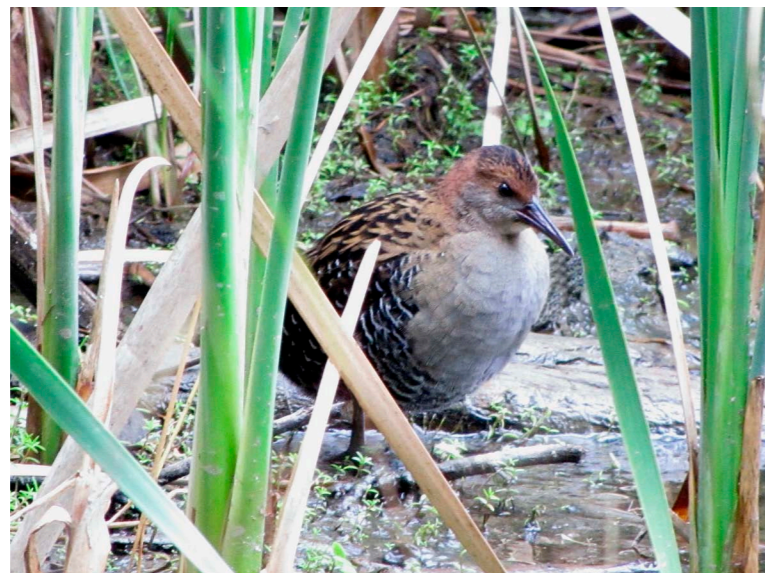
On a recent BICA Bird Survey Walk, **Lewin's Rail** was recorded and photographed. This species, which is listed by DSE as vulnerable, is a welcome new record for the ELZ.

The DSE have published a revised Advisory List for Threatened Vertebrate Fauna - 2013. The Bird List on the BICA website has been revised to indicate the status of the species listed as threatened. http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/BICA_bird_record.pdf

The Birds Section of the BICA Website has lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as an up to date summary of our on-going bird survey. Take a look at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/birds.html>.

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce, (97120237), or email - jmandfp@bigpond.com - especially Lyrebirds.

All are welcome to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month. Times are as per the BICA Calendar.



BUTTERFLY NOTES

Frank Pierce

The Butterfly Checklist on the BICA Website has now been revised for the following 'new records' on the list of species that have been seen (and photographed) for the 1st time in recent years

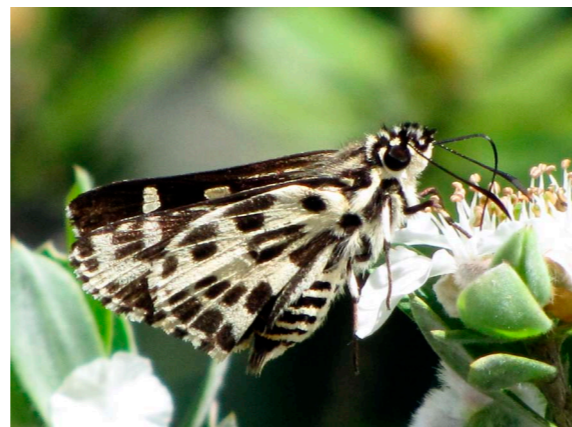
Long-tailed Pea-blue

14/03/12 on the Yarra at end of Gongflers

37 species have now been recorded in the ELZ since 2005.

The current season, was initially good for butterflies, but the brutally hot, dry January resulted in very low numbers for the species with flight periods from January to March.

There is a small group of butterfly enthusiasts in the community. If anyone has any queries, or sees an unusual butterfly, don't hesitate to contact Frank Pierce 97120237 or Gavin Masters 97120168.



Above: Spotted Sedge-skipper *Hesperilla ornata* was common in November 2012.

Left: Lewin's Rail

Frank Pierce

DRAGONFLY NOTES

Frank Pierce

New records for the ELZ

This summer season four additional species were recorded in the Bend of Islands bringing the total for recent records in the area to 29.

The new species were: - **Royal Tigertail** *Parasymphemis regina*, **Small Tigertail** *Eusymphemis brevistyla*, **Jade Hunter**, *Austrogomphus ochraceus* and **Scarlet Percher** *Diplacodes shaematodes*.

Royal Tigertail has only been recorded once before south of 'The Divide'. It was locally common here this year and was recorded at eight dams. It will be interesting to see if it is recorded next year.

Scarlet Percher was recorded at the east end of the Aqueduct where the backfilled surface permanently holds water. It is unusual to record this species so close to Melbourne. Wandering Percher and Black-faced Percher were also recorded at this spot and it is considered most unusual to have these 3 species occurring together.

The Dragonfly page on the website has been upgraded with a revised, more user-friendly list and revisions to update the references listed.

Go to <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/dragonflies.html> and click on the link to the list.



May 2013



Above: Royal Tigertail *Parasymphemis regina*

Below left: Scarlet Percher *Diplacodes haematodes*

Frank Pierce

RABBITS, A CONTINUING STORY

Peter Mildenhall

As we are all aware rabbits play a very destructive role in our environment and attack native grasses and small shrubs and help change the shape and nature of our environment.

As a result BICA and the Shire of Nillumbik have supported a Rabbit Trapping Project in the Bend over the last twelve months or so. After an initial onslaught..well sort of...it has been much more difficult for many of the group to catch rabbits. Gav and Mal on Gongflers have caught four so far this year and John Mac has continued to chase some hard to catch ones around upper Catani but there seems to have been little activity on other fronts.

The recent activity around the BICA Camera Trapping Project has shown some rabbit and fox activity on certain properties and the pesky critters are still around and quite smart 'bush bunnies' it seems.

As some funding is still left for the Rabbit Trapping Project, a follow up refresher session with Peter Voutier of Feralex has been organised for Sunday June 30, 9.30 am at Mildenhalls 209 Catani.

The purpose of this session will be to refresh our techniques, bring along the traps for any adjustment and tinkering and to introduce the process to any possible new members.

If you do have a rabbit problem and are interested in humane trapping and would like to participate in the program and receive some subsidised traps or you have any queries please contact me by phone or email.

Further detail of the session will be emailed around closer to the date.

SIGHTINGS

Russell Crosser

In December 2012 we had frogs calling loudly in the pond in front of our house. They were calling amongst the nardoo on the pond. We believe they may have been tadpoles in this pond, although there is no way to know. I wonder how far they roam? This year none of their tadpoles seemed to survive the predations of various nymphs also in the pond. From my internet search (on Frogs of Australia at <http://frogs.org.au/frogs/>) I think that they are spotted marsh frogs (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*).

The next was on March 20 on Skyline Road, around the junction of Wendy Way. It was not long after sunset, and two nightjars showed up in my headlights. They were sitting crouched on the road, and did not move when I slowed to a stop, went around to the back of the car, and fetched camera and binoculars. All four of us climbed out quietly, and they stayed for a few minutes before flying quietly off into the trees, one at a time. When they flew they looked much larger than they did on the ground.

The fourth sighting was on March 31, mid morning, I looked out the bedroom window and saw a group of Painted Button-quails (I mean real birds, not a painting), walking past. Problem was, the camera and binoculars were in the car, so I sprinted out and then back with the instruments. The button-quails were gone, but looking out the other window I found them under the large Cherry Ballarts on our north side. They stayed there for a few minutes, quietly foraging, before leaving while I was briefly out of the room.

THE BICA BIKE RIDE

Kay Hawkins

Who knew that the BICA bike ride would reveal an historic tunnel to explore!

Well actually Tom, Wolfgang, Marie and Pierre probably already did but for Lynne, Neill, Quentin and me it was a great new experience. Lined with lovely red hand made bricks and creating the perfect frame for a group photo, the Cheviot Tunnel was roughly a third of the distance between Yea and Yarck. This made for a convenient starting point for those who wanted a challenge, greater than riding from Moleworth to Yarck and back, but couldn't face the full return trip of 28 kilometres. Cycling through the Victorian countryside on relatively flat trail, sans traffic, on a beautiful autumn day, was simply wonderful. Add to that The Giddy Goat in Yarck providing ample sustenance and Yowie Lager from the King Valley quenching the thirsts of some, this ride was a fabulous experience.



Marie and Quentin on the Great BICA Bke Ride
Kay Hawkins

See page 13 for another picture

FROGS OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS: PART 5 VICTORIAN SMOOTH FROGLET

Michael Scroggie

Not all frogs conform to the familiar pattern of land-dwelling or semi-aquatic adults, with eggs deposited in water, and free-swimming aquatic tadpoles. Amongst the several thousand species of frogs and toads in the world today, many diverge from this typical life history, and have evolved alternative reproductive strategies. A good example, commonly found in the Bend of Islands, is the Victorian Smooth Froglet, *Geocrinia victoriana*. Unlike most frogs, Victorian Smooth Froglets don't deposit their eggs in water, but instead place them on land.

Breeding occurs during Autumn. Males select damp locations for breeding: along drainage lines, in depressions, or close to permanent water. The male calls to attract females (often more than one!) to his territory, and actively defends the territory against other males. The advertisement call consists of two distinct components. The first 2-5 notes are a series of slow, drawn out croaks, which are territorial in function. These are followed by a long sequence of rapidly repeated "pips", which are the call component that serves to attract females to the male's territory.

Having attracted a female to his territory, the eggs are deposited on the ground and fertilised. The eggs (up to 300 in a single clutch) are each enclosed in a thick capsule of transparent jelly-like material. The egg-capsule absorbs water from the environment, and acts as a buffer against the embryo being dried out during periods of dry weather. The embryos develop within the egg capsules for a few weeks, nourished by large reserves of yolk. Embryonic development is then suspended at an advanced developmental stage. The embryos then await the arrival of heavy rainfall in the late Autumn or early Winter, which floods the nest site, stimulating the embryos to swim free from their egg-capsules. Development of the hatchling tadpoles continues in the water over winter. The tadpoles finally metamorphose in late Spring, with the metamorphing froglets being about 10 mm in length.

Adults vary in colour, and can have grey, brown or brick-red backs, occasionally with yellow or cream spots. The belly is

pale coloured, and is always smooth in texture. The groin and thighs have a distinctive pink, black and white marbled pattern. During the breeding season, males can be distinguished from females by their dark-coloured throats. Adults can be up to 45mm in length, with females being slightly larger than males.

Victorian Smooth Froglets are widespread and common throughout most of eastern Victoria. In western Victoria, they occur in the Otway ranges, along the Great Dividing Range, and a small, isolated population is found in the northern Grampians. The closely-related Southern Smooth Froglet (*G. laevis*) occurs in Tasmania, coastal western Victoria, the south-east of South Australia, and in the southern Grampians.

Within the Bend of Islands, Victorian Smooth Froglets can be commonly found along the gully lines that cross the lower part of Catani Boulevard. Damp periods during March - May are the best time to hear males calling- the call is distinctive and cannot easily be confused with any other frog occurring in the area. The audio recording on the website listed below can be used as a reference for confirming identifications.

Further information:

<http://frogs.org.au/frogs/species/Geocrinia/victoriana/>



Victorian Smooth Froglet *Geocrinia victoriana*
Nick Clemann

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BEND OF ISLANDS WILDLIFE SURVEY, APRIL 2013

Jo Henry and Deirdre Lucas

As part of BICA's involvement in Nillumbik's Conservation Corridors project (outlined in the last BICA newsletter) which is funded by a Communities for Nature grant, the Bend of Islands community has been able to take part in the first Bend-wide camera trapping survey to find out which animals also call this special place home.

Using funds from the grant, Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC) purchased 10 camera traps and bait stations, which will be used on a roster basis by the communities that are part of the Kinglake-Warrandyte Wildlife Corridor. The camera traps (ScoutGuard DTC-560K) work through the use of a passive infra-red sensor, which triggers the camera to take a photo in response to the detection of movement within the field of view. The cameras operate continuously, taking colour photos during the day and, assisted by an infra-red flash, black and white photos at night. Digital images are stored on an SD card (just like a digital camera). The camera traps are secured to a tree, 30 - 50cm above the ground, with a lockable cable. The bait station, a small animal-proof cage containing fish oil, truffle oil and an oat mix in individual holders, is positioned 2 - 5m from the trap.

Thirty-six residents volunteered to have a camera trap set on their property, each for a period of one week. To accommodate all properties, Jo Henry was able to source some extra cameras.

After an initial community information session held by Julia Franco from NSC, the set-up team (Tserin Wright, Pierre Noirjean and Frank Pierce) placed the first group of cameras out for the week. Suitable vegetation and habitat structure for each camera trap site was selected using information supplied by Dylan Osler from the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan.

A week later, the cameras and bait stations were collected, the SD cards changed over, and then the whole set-up moved to the next property. A week later and it was time to do it all again. The collection and set-up is a time-consuming process that took a whole day on both occasions!

The three week survey has been completed and we have captured some excellent images of the many animal species that

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we live amongst. The most exciting results have been a number of images of tuans at a couple of different properties, and a koala wandering along the ground on the Co-op. There were lots and lots of wombats and wallabies, and a few we don't want to see - foxes and rabbits. As with most animal species, unless there are distinguishing individual marks or features, or distinct differences in size, it is difficult to tell whether we are repeatedly photographing the same, or multiple individuals. Therefore all counts given here are of the number of images of each species, which does not necessarily reflect the number of individual animals.

At the conclusion of the project, all participating residents will receive a CD containing all the images recorded on their property, as well as a selection of images of other critters from around the Bend. A brief report summarising our findings will also be included. The report and photos will be lodged with Julia Franco at NSC who will add records of significant species, such as tuans, to DSE's Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. Photos will also be placed on the NSC website. It is hoped that wildlife surveys, like ours, will help develop a better understanding of fauna within both the Bend of Islands and Nillumbik, thereby guiding future management and conservation practices.

Thank you to Dylan Osler, Michael Scroggie, Andrew McMahon and Frank Pierce who provided input and survey design ideas in the planning stages. A very big thank you to Tserin Wright, for managing the weekly collection and set-up, and to Frank Pierce and Pierre Noirjean for giving their time to assist with set-up, collection and data recording - very much appreciated.

Image Counts

The figures represent totals from 40 camera traps, each operating for six days with a total of 2117 images 533 of which were of animals. The remainder with a total of 2117 images 533 of which were of animals. The remainder were false activations caused by shadows, wind, moving vegetation or an over-sensitive sensor.

Species	No. of Images	No. of Sites Recorded At
Antechinus	9	1
Brushtail Possum	98	9
Crimson Rosella	3	1
Echidna	1	1
Fox	18	9
Grey Shrike-Thrush	7	3
Kangaroo	31	3
Koala	1	1
Magpie	5	3
Quail	1	1
Rabbit	42	12
Ringtail Possum	12	3
Swamp Wallaby	129	20
Treecreeper	1	1
Tuan	46	8
White-winged Chough	2	2
Wombat	111	17
Unidentified*	17	13

*An unidentified image is one where the identity of an animal species is not certain due to factors including poor image quality, animal obscured by vegetation, only eye shine visible and so on.



Typical camera set up with the camera attached to the tree in the foreground and the baits in the wire box on top of the post. The animals don't eat the baits but are attracted to them and their movement sets off the camera



Julia and Jo briefing some of the people who volunteered to have traps placed on their properties



ScoutGuard 04.11.2013 07:00:03

Three different kinds of bait were used and were selected to attract a variety of species. Not only indigenous species were caught on camera. Here is a fine specimen of a Red Fox.



ScoutGuard 04.21.2013 01:49:24

A curious koala comes down to ground level for a look and a sniff.



ScoutGuard 04.16.2013 04:46:10

Wombat



The Cheviot Tunnel frames a few of the intrepid riders

Kay Hawkins



ScoutGuard 04.20.2013 17:18:34

Three in one! Eastern Grey Kangaroo.



ScoutGuard 04.14.2013 13:40:24

Another Eastern Grey hops in to see what is cooking.



ScoutGuard 04.19.2013 02:28:48

Night shots are taken by infra-red flash, not light, so the animal doesn't know that anything has happened. Ring-tailed Possum.

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ScoutGuard 01.04.2009 07:47:09

Brush-tailed Phascogales (Tuans) were recorded 46 times from eight different sites. Good news!

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ScoutGuard 01.13.2009 05:04:27

Swamp Wallaby



Victorian Smooth Froglet showing the distinctive colour patch in the groin area

Nick Clemann

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