

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Diuris sulphurea*

Common name: Tiger Orchid

Family: Orchidaceae

Flowering Period: October to November

Sector: Found in the Yarra Sector and the Co-op Sector of the Bend of Islands.

Widespread throughout much of the Victoria in a wide variety of habitats & in particular the valley & dry sclerophyll forests of the Bend of Islands.

Occurs in loose colonies, spreading vegetatively from tuberoids (i.e. the swollen ends of their underground roots) as well as by seeds.

A medium herb with a flower stem to 40 cm tall with one to five bright yellow flowers,

30 mm across, with dark brown markings. The one to three channelled grass-like leaves,

35 cm long x 0.4 cm wide, in a basal clump encircling the flower stem.

The flower, typical of orchids, consists of the three petals and three sepals :-

- Two stalked erect "donkey-ear" lateral petals, yellow with brownish stalks, 30 mm long
- The labellum or tongue is the modified lowest petal in front of the column, which contains the male and female parts of the flower. The tongue is yellow with brown markings with one long ridge to the middle.
- The single, erect, ovate, dorsal sepal to back of flower, 20 mm long with 2 dark brown spots near the base
- The two lateral sepals are narrow and point downwards, 22 mm long.

Tolerates dry sites. Pollination by native bees.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is rapidly approaching and the end of the year is almost upon us again. I hope you will enjoy this second edition of the BICA Newsletter for 2015 as much as the first.

It has been a challenging year for the committee as a whole as about half the committee members have been on extended leave of absence at various times in the last 6 months. Despite this however we have managed to stay afloat and achieve some of our goals. Elections will be held at the AGM on 29th November and I would urge anyone interested in helping to maintain our lovely area to put their name forward to join the committee.

Participation in Landcare events continues to attract a small but dedicated band of workers. Their contributions are greatly appreciated. Of course it would be wonderful to have many more locals joining in. Landcare days are advertised each month in our various electronic communications as well as on the sign tree at the bridge.

We launched the BICA eNews earlier in the year. The intention is to let our members and other interested people know what the committee has been up to each month. It's a bit shaky at the moment but we hope it will settle down in the coming year. Feedback of any kind is always useful. Please feel free to contact the eNews editor (that's me at the moment) with any contributions, comments, critiques or kind words. If you are not receiving the eNews just let me know and I will add you to the distribution list.

Under the Conservation Corridors project we have completed more weeding and some plantings. Locally collected seed has been propagated at Edendale and FOWSP. About 600 seedlings, a mixture of Silver Banksia, Black Sheoak, Showy Podolepis, Hibbertia, Grey & Clustered Everlasting, and Large Bush Pea, were planted in various locations around The Bend. Recent monitoring has shown that a very high percentage of these plants are thriving. Hopefully they are now well enough established to survive the coming summer. We expect more seedlings will be made available to members.

I'd like to thank Janet Mattiske, our representative on the Environment Advisory Committee at Council. She has been a keen participant and excellent representative for BICA and the Bend of Islands. I also apologise that, in some cases, we have not been able to follow up on some of her reports and recommendations. We'll try and do better in the next year.

A lot of time and energy has been put into the next BICA Residents Pack. We have selected the printer and hope to have the pack available early in 2016. As voted on at the last General Meeting, all residents in the Bend of Islands will receive a hard copy.

The BICA calendar is still full of conservation activities and social events. We look forward, as always, to this year's Night Event and the Christmas market. These are important elements in being a part of the community at large and we will continue to foster these events for everyone – members and future members.

In closing I would like to thank all the members of our current committee and all the participating members for their work during the year. Enjoy this Newsletter and we'll see you at the AGM.

Neill Kamminga

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BICA MATTERS



WELCOME TO THE BEND

Welcome to NEW BICA MEMBERS, we hope you enjoy participating in our community.

Reynolds Family
Andrew and Yasmin Maxwell
Shane Kendall
Denis and Louise Ward
Vanessa Franz and Tristan Dewey
Vassi Bouzals
Jo and Ben Myers

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com

BICA Website: <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/>

2015 BICA CALENDAR

November

- 21 Nillumbik Artists Open Studios
10.30 am Café Benders
11 am Fire-ready Pre-Season Briefing at Fire Station
5.30 pm BICA Night Event
- 22 Nillumbik Artists Open Studios
9.30am Landcare
7.30pm Christmas Hills Poetry at CH Hall
- 28 Nillumbik Artists Open Studios
10 am - 4 pm Christmas Hills Fire Brigade Sausage sizzles at Yarra Glen Ritchies IGA
- 29 Nillumbik Artists Open Studios
11 am - 1 pm CFA Open Day at North Station
2.00pm BICA AGM (BICA Subs due)

December

- 13 7.30am BICA Bird Walk
- 19 Café Benders Christmas Evening
- 20 9.30am BICA Landcare

January 2016

- 10 7.30am BICA Bird Walk

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This is a good opportunity to say thanks to all the Bend of Islanders who've already hosted events, advertised, organised and led activities over the year and, to those who are still doing it. Thanks to all who've shared their talents and given their time to our community events calendar. Your efforts have made my job heaps less stressful.

And thanks to all the artists, walkers, botanists, kayakers, birdwatchers, cinema goers, coffee lovers, weeders, cleaner-upperers and general revellers, adults and kids, who've participated in an impressive array of happenings in 2015. Whether it's a handful of people, half a class or a paddock full, the activity is worthwhile if those who come along enjoy themselves and are inspired.

If you're reading this and thinking you'd like to have a go at some activities next year please do. Watch out for event ads

in the Bica e-news, on the website (bendofislands.wordpress.com) and on the sign. Also if you have ideas for different types of events in the future let a BICA committee member know about it.

We still have the Night Event in November and Christmas Benders as well as Landcare, bird walks and the AGM to keep us occupied for the rest of the year so watch out for more news about these.

Finally if you are reading this and realise you are not receiving the Bica e-news send your contact details to Neill Kamminga neill469@gmail.com .

Liz Mildenhall



BEND OF ISLANDS COMMUNITY



Pub Walk 2015

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, in October, 13 of us set off on a somewhat different Pub Walk. Thanks to Marie Krause for her suggestion of a scenic 'skyline' walk to the Grand Hotel in Yarra Glen via Skyline North Road, Tuan's Track and Steels Creek Road.

Starting from the corner of Mt Wise and Skyline North roads we enjoyed great views of the Yarra valley from up on Skyline Road and appreciated nature's and the human capacity to renew after the devastation of Black Saturday. An interesting, if somewhat precipitous descent, down the Track to Valley Rd led us to a bike/horse/foot track along Steels Creek Road back into Yarra Glen.

As the afternoon warmed up it was a quite open walk and a thirst was developed. It was great to catch up with community members both on the walk and at the pub, especially those recently returned from overseas excursions to the continent and to Madagascar.

The youngest walker, Charlie Rae was entertained and did entertain with some silly 'grandpa' jokes ... his were better than mine!

Each year we have a 'long walk' usually all day and about 20ks on the last day of May and a 'pub walk', generally the last Sunday in October and of a lesser distance. Look out for the e-news and the signs and see you on the next one.

Peter Mildenhall

Visitor to the Bend of Islands

Rob Mitchell the Federal member for McEwen joined some of the locals to enjoy a "cuppa" and a chat at the July Cafe benders.





BEND OF ISLANDS COMMUNITY

BICA Art Event:

Sunday September 13th 2.00pm – 4.00pm at the Reads'

Following last year's successful Bica Art Event at **Robina & Tony Summer's** home, which concentrated on the history of art in the Bend of Islands, we were invited to another art event. A sunny spring Sunday provided the opportunity for the community to spend the afternoon wandering through **Tim and Karen Read's** piece of riverside bushland on Catani Blvd.



Photo Kay Hawkins

Following a pathway through the bush and down to the riverside we were able to view sculpture, pottery, painting and other works from a variety of our talented Bend of Islands artists and talk to them about their work, their goals, their experiences and their inspiration.



Photo: Kay Hawkins. Painting by Emma Rose

Tim Read, whose variety of metal sculptures provided an amazing blend of a hard rustic material contrasting with the softness of the riverine bushland. Looking up, across or around the next bend in the pathway there was something intricately sculpted to catch your eye. Tim, a reasonably newcomer to this area says that he really loves what the ELZ has to offer such as the bush, the birds and the animals. He went on to say that for some, the environment is quality space, for others it is inspiration and sometimes it is subject matter. However for him it provides the ideal Place in which to work.



Tim Read sculpture (left) and Syd & Ona (right)

Syd Tunne and Ona Henderson are long term residents of the area and believe strongly that for them it is the place that draws nature and art together and provides a huge part of their inspiration. They have participated in and opened their studio over many years for the Nillumbik Open Studios annual events.

Emma Rose had a novel location to hang her paintings on the interior concrete walls of a collapsed water tank. Her interest in painting started a number of years ago but was interrupted by teaching, family etc. Now that she has come to live in the area she finds it an ideal environment in which to work. Her interest has been revived and local subject matter has been revealed in some of her paintings.



Photograph: Kay Hawkins

Robina Summers

"My current arts practice is divided between public/community art and in complete contrast creating utilitarian domestic work like cushions, throws and scarves, along with the occasional art quilt.

The work I have here today is a new series I'm developing. The materials are all second-hand - doilies and blankets from op shops and fabric scraps, lace and yarn given by friends. It's about connection - my connection to the Bend, to Eltham and to family, and about mark making and decoration. The mark making comes from imprints from the dye leached from eucalypt leaves, stalks and flower buds and dye created from the forest floor. Each leaf leaves a different stain, a mark, its own story; it's a beautiful memory of a living thing. It's a permanent connection to the trees, the land where I live."

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The connection with decoration comes from childhood holiday memories of Eltham. There were doilies on the sideboards and hankies were trimmed with lace. My great grandmother changed the lace insert in the front of her black dress every day. Thrift was a way of life. There were eucalypts in the paddock next to the house and it was a short walk to the creek. Domestic comfort and the air of Eltham are a deep emotional connection.



Photograph: Kay Hawkins



Jeff Drummond has been living here for a number of years and the place and space that he found here in the Bend of Islands really encouraged his confidence and the creativity he had always harboured. He has had a number of exhibitions and the content continues to develop and grow. This time in addition to his painting, posters, sculpture and metalwork he was showing a range of leatherwork.

Photo: Jeff Drummond

Jess Rae leads a busy life here in the Bend of Islands. She previously worked for the Shire of Nillumbik but as well as being a mother, she has been juggling study at Holmesglen, assisting Mike Skewes with his Ceramic business and being the BICA Secretary She is now keenly following her passion for Ceramics and taking advantage of the stimulating environment of the ELZ to provide her inspiration.



Photo: photography@linseyrendell



Photo by Q Mattiske

BICA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

You are warmly invited to attend the BICA AGM at 2pm on 29th November 2015 at the south end fire station, 4 Catani Blvd. Bend of Islands.

As well as the usual business of the AGM that is listed below, we will have Frank Pierce, local resident and member of the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative, giving a short presentation on the Flora and Fauna of the ELZ.

The ordinary business of the meeting will be:

1. To confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting and other general meetings held since that meeting.
2. To receive the Committee reports about the activities of BICA during the preceding year.
3. To receive the financial statement.
4. To elect the officers of the Association and the ordinary members of the Committee.
5. To set the membership fees for the coming year.

President: Neill Kamminga



LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

New Orchids for the ELZ

Two more orchid species have been recorded in the ELZ for the first time in recent years.



Dainty Bird Orchid *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* was found by Tserin Wright, on a small level area not far down the steep escarpment between his house and the river. This species normally flowers between August and November but Tserin found the 1st flower of the small population on 26/7/15. Since then at least 2 more plants have flowered.



Large-spotted (or Rush-leaf) Sun Orchid *Thelymitra juncifolia* was found at several locations on the Co-op on 2015-10-19. This was a warm and sunny day and many species of Sun Orchid were flowering. This species has been split from the Spotted Sun Orchid *Thelymitra ioxoides* which is common in the ELZ. This species has no doubt been growing here for years but the subtle differences would have gone undetected.

Refer to the BICA website for a complete list of the Orchids that have been recorded in the ELZ.

Kunzea (Burgan) Management Workshop



The August Flora Walk took the form of a workshop about the indigenous shrub Kunzea, which is also known as Burgan and is a widespread species in Bend of Islands. Many local landowners have issues about the Kunzea around their homes in relation to bushfires. Now is an excellent time to think about that fuel. Many landowners also have issues about the ecological effects of removing the Kunzea and the problems this can cause.

Presently, Kunzea is described by Nillumbik Shire as a species 'for which no permit is required to remove, destroy or lop' (Schedule to Clause 52.17, Nillumbik Planning Scheme). However due to the problems now associated with the inappropriate removal of this species, including the subsequent loss of orchids and ground storey species and associated weed regeneration, the status of Kunzea is under review by the Nillumbik Council.

The Kunzea Management Workshop offered ecologically sensitive concepts and practical advice about managing this species and was run by locals Graham Petersen & Gavin Masters both of whom have extensive experience with this species and land management.

Thank you to all who contributed to this Newsletter. Keep writing and sending me your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands.

The Editor
jmandfp@bigpond.com



The Cleaners

I have a friend who refers to them as being “The Cleaners”. You can be sitting quietly and there will be barely a bird around, then quite suddenly, they are everywhere. These birdwaves are mixed feeding flocks where each member has an area of special interest. By working together, they ensure that they find insects hidden in all levels of the bush and any that are flushed are picked off, cleaning the vegetation. They also allow for many eyes to look out for predators such as the Collared Sparrowhawk that feed on the flocks rather than in them!

In the Bend, mixed feeding flocks usually have about 5-10 different species, this does not quite compare with tropical rainforests where the number of species can be as many as 30, but they still hold good representations of our local birds. There are regular members that are in almost every flock but there are also seasonal migrant members as well as vagrant species that turn up unexpectedly.

There is usually one or two of three species of Thornbills in these woodland flocks. These birds are very small and non-descript and somewhat difficult to tell apart however the way they feed and their calls can help. Striated Thornbills (high-pitched simple repeated calls) tend to focus on the higher levels of the trees sometimes hovering to pick insects from leaves. Brown Thornbills (Deeper more melodic calls) on the other hand tend to focus more along the small branches of trees and shrubs and don't tend to feed as high in the outer edges of the trees. Buff-Rumped Thornbills (Tinkling bell-like calls) are the third of the common thornbills and they often feed on the ground, bouncing along from fallen log to log looking for insects under loose pieces of dead bark.

Another group of very small birds that are more colourful than the thornbills is the pardalotes. These birds mostly feed on

the scale insects that suck the sap from leaves. The Spotted Pardalote calls “Sweet Baby” or “Kiss Me” while the Striated Pardalote calls “Wheat Wheat”. Both are regularly in mixed flocks although the former usually joins in small groups while the latter tends to come alone.

Honeyeaters are also common members of these flocks. High in the trees White-Naped Honeyeaters join mixed flocks usually as a small flock of their own. They tend to feed among the leaves and in flowers, if they are present, keeping in contact with each other with a kind of “slurping” call. They are white underneath with a black head and a small red wattle over their eye. The slightly larger White-eared Honeyeater is also regular in these groups. They focus on the stems and branches of trees, usually quite high up. They normally come in pairs in the flock and have a black head with a prominent white patch on the side. In the summer, a third honeyeater is ubiquitous in the flocks, the Yellow-Faced Honeyeater. They feed in pairs in the mixed flock mostly in the leaves and flowers of the trees. These are the most common honeyeaters to frequent these “waves” but there are a number of other honeyeaters that turn up including the Brown-Headed Honeyeater, the Eastern Spinebill and in winter the Crescent Honeyeater which comes down from the hills in small numbers

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Striated Thornbill



Brown Thornbill



White-Naped Honeyeater



Varied Sitella



The Cleaners continued

White-Throated Treecreepers and Varied Sitellas search for the insects that hide under the bark of trunks and branches. Both birds are noisy with the treecreeper giving long series of loud piping calls while the Sitellas make loud continuous chipping calls to each other. These birds are easy to tell apart as Treecreepers start at the bottom of trees and work their way up to higher levels, while Sitellas start in the tops of trees and work their way downwards, often hanging upside down looking under branches to search for food. Grey Fantails commonly follow treecreepers to pick up any insects that fly to escape the probing and hammering of the bark. They also use their large tails to startle and flush insects. The Crested Shrike-tit is also a bird that feeds on insects under the bark, found by loudly ripping at the bark with its strong beak. This smart bird is very uncommon in The Bend but someone usually sees one at least once or twice a year.

In open forest areas, the red, black and white, Scarlet Robin, perches on low sticks, dropping to the ground to collect insects. However, in the more dense shrubby areas, Eastern Yellow Robin look for food low down, often perching sideways in tree trunks in a very distinctive way. Also low down or on the ground, White-Browed Scrub-Wrens and Superb Fairy-Wrens join the flocks as they pass through their territories. These birds don't normally travel with the flock, but rather, join them as they pass through, using the extra help while it is available.

Golden Whistlers and Grey Shrike-Thrushes search high and low for food among leaves and small branches. Both sing loudly, as does the Rufous Whistler that joins in the summer. The Olive Backed Oriole is another noisy summer member of the mixed flocks. This green streaked bird with a pink beak loudly calls its own name "Olly Olly Ole" when it arrives back from the north to breed.

The vagrants that join these flocks are varied and many. They include other members of the honeyeater group as well as other robins, flycatchers in the summer and other small brown birds like the Weebill. Some are extremely irregular, having been seen in The Bend only once or twice!

With such teamwork hiding insects have much less chance. The general flurry and activity causes them to run, hop or fly, often into a waiting beak. If you want to get to know our local birds, these flocks while confusing at first are a way to see many of our birds in a single place and so to compare and learn differences. You can sit and relax and let them come to you rather than chasing about. It is also a way of perhaps seeing something unusual. If that is the case, there are always locals who are interested and can help you identify any strangers or vagrants.

Gavin Masters (Photos Mal Chicksen)



Scarlet Robin



Superb Fairy-Wren



Golden Whistler



Peacock and related Jumping Spiders in the ELZ

Peacock Spiders shot to recent fame a few years ago when Jurgen Otto's YouTube clip of the 'Flying Peacock Spider went viral. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GgAbyYDFeg .

I had previously photographed 2 species of Peacock Spider on the Co-op but phone calls from Tserin on 31/10/15 and 1/11/15 gave me the opportunity to gain better shots of both these species. The males are so tiny, at 4 to 5 mm long, they are difficult to photograph and their spectacular colouring is not obvious until their images are expanded.

'Flying' Peacock Spider *Maratus volans*.



Male *Maratus volans* (about 5mm long) showing colour changes from differing aspects



Male *Maratus volans* in display posture



Female *Maratus volans* (about 9mm long)

The 2nd species is *Maratus pavonis*. The male is again beautifully coloured and has a similar display posture



Male *Maratus pavonis* (about 5mm long)





Peacock and related Jumping Spiders in the ELZ continued

Another Jumping Spider with a colourful display is *Jotus auripes*. It does not have flaps on its abdomen which are raised and spread during display as do the Peacock Spiders in the *Maratus* genus. It does however have iridescent green hairs on its palps and bright orange hairs on the underside of the femurs of legs 1 & 2. Legs 1 have white tips which are waved up and down for added effect. This species has been very common this spring.



Male *Jotus auripes* (about 5mm long)



Female *Jotus auripes* (about 9mm long)



Male *Jotus auripes* in colourful display mode



There are many other species of Jumping Spiders in the ELZ. Most are a little larger than the tiny species shown here. Their small size and quick movements make them very challenging to photograph. A good reference is at http://www.arachne.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=1096 . This site has fantastic detailed photos that truly do these little beauties justice.

Frank Pierce

WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS IN THE BEND 1



Leek-green Flower Spider on Co-op 2015-10-19 - fp



Koala sighting in Taylor's Gully 14 June 2015



HOUSE SITTERS

While we were away in Queensland this year some very welcome guests took up residence in our Henley Rd property - a male and female Powerful Owl. The Powerful Owls are huge with a wingspan of nearly 1.3m, and endangered in Victoria. The pair started roosting together near our home. Powerful Owls mate for life and these two have been seen canoodling (reinforcing the pair bond if you want to be scientific) together many times since the beginning of winter. The male prepares the nest in a suitably large hollow (in this case in a Candlebark tree) and then the female moves into the nesting hollow and lays eggs. This female probably laid her eggs on about July 4, and they hatched around 10 August, according to observations by Frank Pierce, who was observing the birds while we were away.

The female owl stops brooding the young hatchlings when they are about 4 weeks old (around September 7) and then leaves the nest and joins the male. On October 3rd the first juvenile Powerful Owl (creatively called J1 by Frank) was seen sitting out above nest hollow with the adult female keeping close watch about 15 metres away. The next day J1 was back in the hollow, peeping over the top, and probably fledged that night. Three days later the second juvenile (you guessed it - J2) was seen peeping over the edge of the nest hollow tentatively looking out. J2 fledged that night and on October 8, J1 and J2 were out and roosting together about 25m from the nesting hollow.

Since then the family have been consistently around our house – viewed every day for the last 3 and a half weeks except for only a couple of days when they could not be found. Sometimes they all roost together in the one tree. Sometimes the juveniles are together and the parents are sitting in a different tree, at some distance. Occasionally an adult is alone apart from the rest of the family. They have ‘favourite’ trees which seem to be those with good cover which protect them from the marauding currawongs which give them a hard time by swooping and at times hitting them. They seem to get their own back though; one day the male Powerful Owl was seen clutching a dead currawong – holding it for breakfast. Over a 4 week period, on 5 occasions the male has been seen clutching a dead brush-tailed possum and on 4 other occasions dead ravens. One night at about 4am we heard blood-curdling screams and, sure enough, the next morning the male had a brush-tailed possum in his talons.

We feel privileged to be able to live so close to an endangered species and watch intimate moments in their lives. Large Candlebarks with good nesting hollows among a forest full of marsupials and birds are not common in Victoria any more. It's one of the many good reasons to continue to protect the Bend of Islands.

Robyn Duff (Photos: Frank Pierce)



J1 Above the nest hollow 3/10/15



J2 - Surveying the world 7/10/15



Adult Male with Brushtail



J1 & J2 - Roosting together 8/10/15



The Family roosting together



BIRD NOTES



Bird Survey Highlights

A few of the recent Bird Surveys have been at Yanakie and there have been some good sightings including **Flame Robin** in April, **Crested Shrike-tit** in August and a **Brown Falcon** in September.

In October, while most of the regulars were off travelling, our depleted group observed a pair of **Powerful Owls** with their 2 offspring (see separate article regarding these) and 2 **Peregrine Falcons** (an adult and an immature) were seen on and flying between the Transmission Line towers.

Other Interesting Observations

Further monitoring of the Peregrines has revealed that, although there was an old raven's nest on one tower, the falcons are not nesting on the towers but seem to be using them as excellent vantage points from which to hunt prey.

The **Lewin's Rail** has been recorded on Stevenson Creek for the 3rd consecutive year.

This species is rated as vulnerable and is listed under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

'Duggo's Dam' on Yanakie provides habitat for a number of waterbirds with the following being seen fairly regularly: - **Black Duck, Wood Duck, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Coot, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen** and **Spotless Crake**. Many of these breed in the dam surrounds.

The **Birds Section of the BICA Website** has now been updated. It has lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as an up to date summary of our on-going bird survey.

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 on the bird survey walks on the 2nd Sunday of each month. See BICA Calendar for start times.

Frank Pierce

The following can be reported since April 2015.

Lyrebird Records

11 new records in our area have been reported by Ona & Syd, Ross & Cric, Dylan Osler, Gavin Masters and Frank Pierce. Seven of these were from Stevenson Creek and 2 were from Gongflers Peninsula.

There have been no reported records since the end of May. This is unusual, so if you have seen or heard a Lyrebird since then could you please let us know.

The details of all Lyrebird records reported since July 2000 can be found on the BICA Website.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. The records are valuable as they form concrete evidence that the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor is working and that Stevenson Creek is an important part of this link.

Lyrebird Crosses the River

We have been recording Lyrebirds in the Bend of Islands since 2000. In 2000 it was established that there had been no Lyrebird records in our area, or Warrandyte State Park (WSP), since before the 1962 bushfires.

On 22/5/15 Gavin Masters heard a Lyrebird from his house near the river opposite the Mt Lofty section of WSP. He went down to the River and confirmed that the bird was calling from the WSP side of the river.

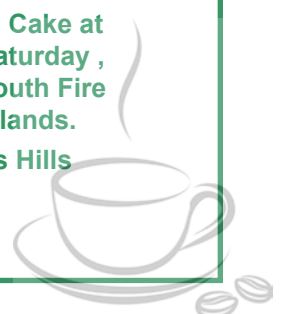
This is the first record we have received of a bird actually in the WSP. Although we have been expecting this to happen for years, it is exciting that we now have proof that the Lyrebirds have completed the journey from Kinglake NP to Warrandyte SP.

This constitutes a fantastic concrete example of the effectiveness of the Kinglake/Warrandyte Habitat Link, something easily understood by everyone, including the politicians.

CAFE BENDERS

Come and join us for Coffee and Cake at Café Benders held every third Saturday, starting about 10.30 am at the South Fire Station, 6 Catani Bve, Bend of Islands.

All proceeds go to the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade





SPOT THE WOMBAT



Can you spot 'OUR BICA' wombat? Two pointy ears... I was hiding behind the tree early October when I took this picture. He & his burrow are now on the WomSAT map of Australia on the river reserve at Weigall & Mildenhall. Wombats have lived here for many, many years. There was one who we called Rustle but when she had a baby we had to call her Jane Russell. This one looks very large & healthy.

The earliest wombat we can remember (1970s?) was a young abandoned one that Margaret Jones /Dhillon was raising in her house next door - now the Reads place. She called it Phyllis & it would follow at her heels. But it had a habit of burrowing under her bookshelves in the middle of the night & knocking them over. I don't know what happened to it - maybe it is part of the extended family of OUR wombat?

Dorothy Weigall

If you want to know more about WomSAT
[WomSAT Community Program > Home](http://www.womsat.org.au/)
www.womsat.org.au/

WomSAT is a new resource for communities to record sightings of wombats across the country.

Record your observations

Record your observations

About this project

About this project ... We want your help to collect information

Map

Welcome to WomSAT. To create a new WomSAT sighting

Contact the team

We will direct your enquiry to one of the members of the project

Registering

Insert a page on registering and why we need you to register

Wonderful wombats

Wild and wonderful wombats.

WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS IN THE BEND 2



Yabby spotted by Sue At the river below the Pauli house.



Striated Thornbill - Breeding on Co-op 2015-10-28



3 chicks in nest



ELZ ISSUES

Caring for our Land

For the Bend of Islands the challenge continues but looking back over the years much has been done to retain the environmental integrity we find today.

Threats to the bush in this area in the sixties whether from fire, flooding or clearing led to the formation of a community organisation that passionately wanted to hold on to an environment which they loved and valued. This continues to be the primary objectives of BICA today.....

- **“To preserve, nurture and encourage the diversity of the native flora and fauna of the area and its natural beauty, consistent with essential community needs, including fire precaution.**
- **To nurture and encourage the diversity of the local flora and fauna and to promote community understanding of the local ecology and how to live in harmony with it through sharing of knowledge and experiences.”**



Planting under powerlines

Here is a history of our activities over the years, based on what has been reported in the Newsletters.

In the 1980's we worked in conjunction with the Shire of Healesville to avoid slashing and clearing of our precious roadside vegetation by doing the roadside trimming ourselves often with the help of the Fire Brigade. Working Bees were held to clear blackberries in Catani Blvd. and willows along the River. We published information on our local plants and tips on how to propagate them. We were members Shire of Healesville's Noxious Weeds Committee. Weeds became a focus and to learn more we had Dr Bill Parsons inform us on soil disturbance minimisation, rabbit control, the importing of soils and the clearing for fire breaks.

In 1988 we commissioned a Weed Study based on earlier survey work done by the regional authority and soon had some hard data to assist us. **The Weed Flora of the ELZ-An Assessment of Effects and Management Strategies for Control: (Carr, McMahon & Todd, 1988).**

1989 was identified with a very wet spring, mild weather and WEED growth and we focussed on 3 areas. Private Property was a key area where BICA advised on ID and control methods. The second area was the Public Land where we made approaches to the relevant Authorities and thirdly it was the Roadsides where we focussed our Working Bees.

In the 1990's we continued to get support from the Shire. Our Pine Tree Eradication Project commenced in 1992. This was followed up in subsequent years with a Propagation Project including a Workshop, a concentrated effort on ID and removal of Environmental weeds, also thistles on Oxley Road. In 1994 the Shire of Healesville provided funding for a 15 litre knapsack spray. We focussed on encroaching Patterson's Curse, St John's Wort, Ivy and Bluebell Creeper. In August 1995 Eastern Energy funded revegetation under the powerlines on Skyline Road.

Whilst the Landcare Organisation had begun in Victoria under Joan Kirner BICA had continued working with assistance from our Shire (Healesville) until in 1994 Jeff Kennett restructured Local Government boundaries and we were incorporated into the Nillumbik Shire which was initially run by Commissioners. In 1996 Councillors were elected. BICA soon realised that if we were to attract any funding to support our work we needed to become members of Landcare. Thus what had been the BICA Working Bee Sub-Committee officially became the BICA Landcare Group and members of Landcare Victoria

The aim of this new "sub- committee" was to provide an overall management plan for the ELZ with its long term goal of conserving this local environment. They began to apply for grants, local seed was collected and propagated and there were new endeavours to get more volunteers to do replanting works. In 1997 The Landcare Network commenced its Annual Tour in the Bend of Islands. The late 1990's saw a concentrated effort on the Watson's Creek area. Angled Onion, Tutsan, Blackberries, Agapanthus and Watsonia were all targeted. Money became available and even some assistance from Save the Bush Crew from the National Trust, the National Heritage Trust and Green Corps.

The 2000's seemed to bring the focus back onto the private properties within the Zone. The pine tree removal program stepped up pace with further grants from the Shire. In 2006 it was reported that since 1991, 1830 pine trees had been removed with 130 still remaining. Weeding works continued and in 2002 BICA offered property owners an indigenous plant to replace a removed non indigenous plant.



Caring for our Land continued

Good news and encouragement came from outside with some recognition of the work being done by the Community. In the 2000 Landcare Victoria Awards, BICA won the Community Bush Care Award and then in 2008 BICA was recognised in Port Philip & Westernport Landcare Awards in the "Caring for Nature" Category.

In 2012 the BICA Committee commissioned a comprehensive study to recommend land management processes in the ELZ. This resulted in the **Bend of Islands Land Management Plan (Osler and Jolly 2013)**, a very valuable document on which to base our land care activities

In 2014 a Sub- committee was formed to develop an **Implementation Strategy for the Land Management Plan.**

The LMP has been instrumental in the Landcare sub-committee successfully applying for many funding grants from Nillumbik Shire under the Nillumbik Conservation Corridors scheme

A glance through the history of our activities indicates that we are now a little more educated in land management methods and probably a little more focussed but we still need the dedication and hard work of all the Community.

Working Bees still continue every month however the numbers attending have certainly decreased since the 1980's. We can all easily make excuses, but the environmental integrity of the area is being threatened by the relentless onslaught of invading weeds. If we don't effectively counteract this threat, we will lose the very qualities that set our area apart from the more degraded areas of the Shire.

Janet Mattiske



Pine tree project. Photo by Kay Hawkins

Are you needing some assistance with the management of your property?

Grants from the Nillumbik Shire are available to assist property owners in the ELZ.

The Council offer a Land Management Incentive Program

Nillumbik Council offer a Land Management Incentive Program (LMIP), to assist residents, improve their properties and protect and enhance biodiversity.

Projects relating to land within the green wedge and Rural Conservation Zone or areas in or adjoining land with an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) will be given priority over others.

Council has developed guidelines, which contain the specific details for eligibility of projects for their assessment and funding through the LMIP.

For further information, contact:

Land Management Officer Tim O'Donnell on 9433 3207 or Tim.ODonnell@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

THURSDAY MORNING IN BEND OF ISLANDS

It is Thursday morning in Bend of Islands
 full of gentle rain & wattle & my daughter's story
 over coffee at KG store

In the troupie, still wrapped in her hug
 I realise there is still another day
 of this heady delicious week

They are talking about Holding the Man on the radio
 and Cleo Centrefolds

And they laugh in the studio and I in the car along Henley Road's
 arches of wet gums framing the distant silver slash of the dam

I turn the radio off in Catani Boulevarde
 Silence the tragic admissions of rape, the parents
 "no comments" outside the court

The "who invited who" to escalate commitment in Syria.
 This morning the yellow green moss & spikes of hedge wattle
 on each misty corner

The familiar, comforting whines & churns of the diesel engine
 and the solid fit of the tyres on the wet clay cannot be ignored

I will go home, stoke the fire, write up last night's minutes,
 eat some soup
 and maybe even write a poem
 for it is the fourth Thursday of the second month
 and tonight is Chrissy Hills Poets
 and there is hope

Liz August 2015



FROM THE BRIGADE

FROM THE FIRE BRIGADE CAPTAIN:

As many residents may know, I recently took over the Captain's role following on from an outstanding tenure of 6 years from Dianne Simmons. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Bend of Islands community for their ongoing support of the fire brigade both through volunteer members (we have a few!) and activities such as Café Benders and Firehouse Cinema.

The time given and funds raised help to ensure that we can continue to provide this great area with an effective, locally based emergency service.

Once again your local fire brigade is busy preparing for the upcoming summer and fire season. A reminder to all residents that the Fire Danger Period in Nillumbik Shire comes into effect on the 9th November and that after this date fires cannot be lit in the open without a permit. For further information as to what you can and can't do during this period the following link provides some very clear guidance

http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/fm_files/attachments/warnings_and_restrictions/cfa_can_i_cant_i_brochure.pdf

As you will have seen in media reports, we are experiencing a strong El Nino event at the moment which is likely to persist through into late summer.

This generally means drier and warmer conditions that can promote more extreme fire behaviour and the high potential for loss of lives and houses.

If you would like to know how you can best prepare your property and family to survive a bushfire, CFA has many resources available to assist you.

On Saturday 21st November, a Fire Ready Safety Information Session will be held at Café Benders (6 Catani Blvd) from 11am -12pm. This is a great opportunity to get the latest information from CFA regarding the up-coming fire season and actions you can take to ensure you and your property are prepared.

CFA now also has many resources available online that are there to help you. Hardcopies of these resources will be available on the 21st.

<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/prepare-and-maintain-your-property/>

<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/>

I know that many residents are active members of Community Fire Guard groups - these are a great way to catch up with your neighbours, share ideas and work through your plan during summer. If you are new resident, or know someone who is, please let them know about your Fire Guard group and get them involved.

Remember, if you need to report an emergency DIAL 000.

As an organisation, CFA is now very focussed on getting out community warnings and information to enable you to make informed decisions. Some of the best sources of information during an emergency continue to be the CFA Fire ready App (for smart phones and devices) and the CFA Warnings website <http://warnings.cfa.vic.gov.au/>

On a topic other than fire, one key focus of the Brigade's attention throughout the year is the safety of the Winneke Water Treatment Plant located adjacent to the Sugarloaf Reservoir to the north of the Bend of Islands. The plant processes a large proportion of Melbourne's water supply and is classified as a Major Hazards Facility due to chemicals such as chlorine stored on-site. In the unlikely event of a chemical release from the facility, CFA may issue warnings to residents in the Bend of Islands such as those you would receive for a fire. Would you know what to do? The instruction to 'shelter in place' during such an event would mean staying indoors, closing all doors and window including air conditioner vents.

The Brigade has also recently applied for a Federal Government Stronger Communities Grant to help upgrade facilities at our station on Catani Blvd. If successful, this will see the station furnished with new seating, improved storage facilities, an oven for the kitchen, a relocated laundry, a new work bench for the engine room and painting throughout. Labour will be donated by Brigade members for what would be a great outcome for the community

As always, if you need some advice regarding your preparedness for fire or information regarding burning off, feel free to contact myself (0402 759154) or our Community Safety Co-ordinator Peter Mildenhall (0400 120 577) for advice.

Peter Rae

FIRE BRIGADE CONTACTS

To keep up with what's happening with your local Fire brigade:

Summer News is the Christmas Hills Brigade's email newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletters regularly, and occasional email information, send your email address to: robyn.adams@members.cfa.vic.gov.au

Find us on Facebook

In addition to the Brigade's email newsletter summer news, and our website <http://www.chfb.info/>, we are also now on facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/ChristmasHillsFireBrigade>

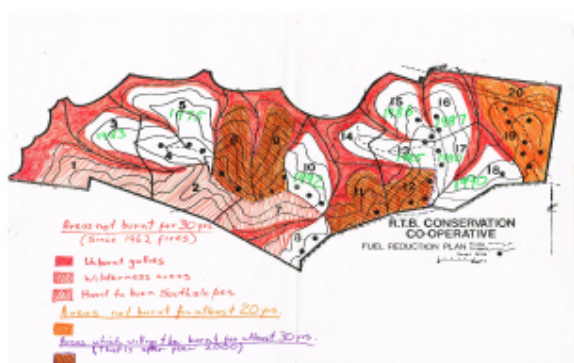
If Facebook is your social medium of choice, then find us on Facebook and like our page. We aim to just keep you in touch with Brigade activity, but the page isn't monitored 24/7. For warnings and advice you still need to visit the CFA website or their facebook page.



NILLUMBIK'S BEST KEPT SECRET EXPOSED

Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

A Nillumbik Arts and Culture Grant assisted the Co-op to organize 44 years of records



The recent research and development of the *Bend of Islands Land Management Plan* (Osler and Jolly 2013) and subsequent *Weed Mapping and Management Strategy, Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative* (Osler and Jolly 2013) prompted interest in the Co-op's records. When did the Co-op start? What do we know of past management practices?

Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative (RTBCC) is the largest bush property in the "ELZ" and its ownership and management as a Co-operative predates the establishment of the Environmental Living Zone (SUZ2). The search for past documents proved to be a challenge as files, photos, minutes, maps and reports et al were in dusty filing cabinets, boxes and in some member's homes. We realised it was time to organise potentially very valuable information.

A Place in History

After many hours over three years and help from , a Nillumbik Arts and Culture Grant, Public Records of Victoria, the State Library, Yarra Plenty Regional Library, Andrew Ross museum, Museum Victoria, Archiva Luciva, Archival Survival, Terry Lane, RMIT, Eltham History Society, Mick Woiwood and 33 Co-op members past and present, we now have the beginnings of a searchable archive. Commitment from the members to continue this project, which still has a long way to go, means we

are proud of the Co-op's achievements and recognize the importance of recording events as they happen. As a result of this project, our book of the achievements of Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative will be held by the National, State and local libraries (as soon as we organize an ISBN). RTBCC is no longer 'secret'.

Now RTBCC has:



An archiving policy

RMIT information management students assisted us with information and time to audit our archive and advised us to write a policy



An Archive system

A manageable system (not complete and as yet untested) involving spreadsheets linked to the archive catalogue, 598 photos catalogued and 272 slides digitised, & originals in appropriate storage boxes, folders, 2 external backup drives and a Fort Knox storage commitment.



A Blog & an E-book

As some documents were discovered initially they were placed on the blog. The e-book illustrates the achievements of the Co-op .

Included in Victorian Collections



A condition of the grant was that some of the archival information about the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative became more accessible to the public

<http://www.roundthebendccblog.org>

<http://victoriancollections.net.au/?q=round+the+bend+conservation+cooperative>