

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Tricoryne elatior*

Common name: Yellow Rush-lily

Family: Liliaceae (Anthericaceae)

Flowering Period: September to April, but also sporadic

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

Widespread throughout Victoria & in every other state of Australia, in a range of habitats. Including box woodland, dry and valley sclerophyll forests, grassy low open forest, and tea-tree heath.

A much branched, large perennial rhizomatous herb, 30-50 cm high by 30-50 cm wide.

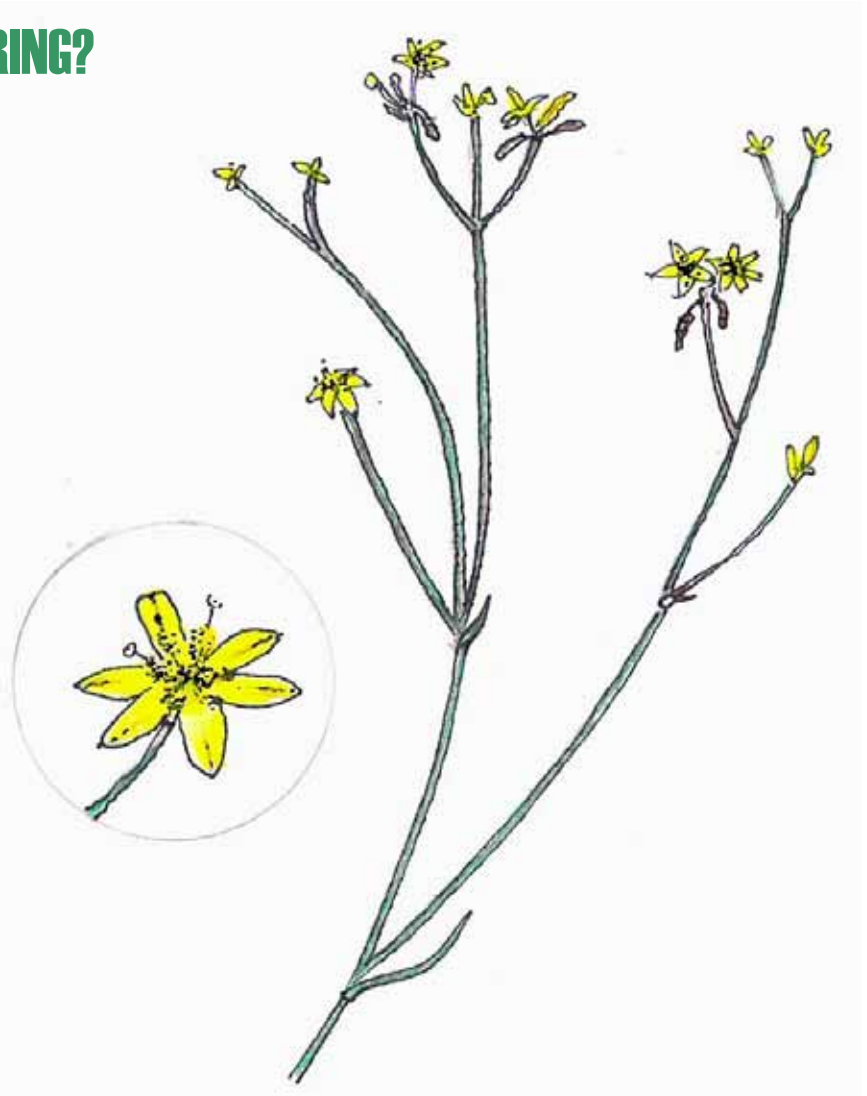
The erect wiry-branched slender stems extend from the base of the narrow grass-like leaves and hold terminal clusters of bright yellow star-flowers.

The few basal leaves are soft, linear & grey green, up to 90mm long, often withered before flowering. The stem leaves are shorter and often reduced to small brown scales or tufts of small bracts at joints.

The flowers are in open terminal clusters above the leaves, i.e. an umbel inflorescence of 2-6 flowers in which "all the stems arise at the same point and the flowers lie at the same level, more or less umbrella-shaped". The bright yellow 1-1.8 cm star-shaped flowers have six widely spreading segments with a conspicuous central cluster of stamens. The flowers open in mid-morning and close by late afternoon. Flower buds are brownish and the withered flowers twist in a spiral manner.

A hardy, sprawling, delicate plant which is not noticed unless flowering. It grows in moist or dry soils and prefers a sunny or lightly shaded situation.

Cric Henry





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It seems the hot summer period has ended and we can look forward to some cooler weather in the near future. The past few months have seen our bush become very dry, however the recent rains are encouraging providing respite for both the landscape and those living within it.

The 2016 committee has started the year very actively and would like to see our general membership participation in our conservation activities increased. Land care is an important part of our conservation program and could use some more regular support. Most of the community activities seem to get good support which helps reinforce the notion that this is indeed a special area. We also ask that you renew your membership on time. This helps us organise and finance many of our local activities. It also shows that you care about BICA.

Some of the major activities planned for this year are:

- Deer survey – headed by Neil Taylor to get a quantifiable appraisal of the size of the problem in our area and its surrounds. Information will be shared with Melbourne Water and Nillumbik Shire Council so that a co-ordinated approach to the problem can be found.
- Landcare – work to be done at the Catherine Oxley Reserve
- The revised Resident Pack – to be released in the second half of this year .

Our greeting cards have received an enormous amount of praise both within Bend of Islands and outside as well. A pack of 10 cards showcasing the area are given to members on joining or renewing their membership. They are also available for sale (\$10 per pack of 5 cards) so you can share them with friends.

I was unable to attend the recent unveiling of the commemorative sign on the corner of Henley Rd and Catani Blvd which recognises both the indigenous and current heritage of Bend of Islands. A lot of work went into this collaboration and thanks to the many involved. BICA has actively supported this project since its inception and is proud to be a part of it. A special thanks are extended to Tom Fisher, Phil Wierzbowski, and Dave Wandin for their patience and persistence in making it all happen. Fortunately there was also one less speech to deal with one the day.

It has been 40 years since the Environmental Living Zone was voted for by the landowners and residents of Bend of Islands and the proposals for "Environmental Living" were incorporated into the Healesville Planning Scheme. These actions formed the basis of what is now SUZ2 – Environmental Living under the Nillumbik Planning Scheme – proof that the concept is both viable and sustainable. With continued diligence and a commitment to conservation we can look forward to celebrating further milestones.

The Committee and I would like to thanks you again for your support and look forward to seeing more of you during the year.

Neill Kamminga

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BICA MATTERS

Getting to know your BICA committee

The BICA Committee is a very active and dedicated group who meet monthly

Meet Jess Rae



I'm Jess Rae and I joined the BICA committee in 2014. I started as a general member then became the secretary in late 2014, this was an enjoyable experience, albeit a short one. I am now a general committee member, which suits me at the moment.

Being part of the BICA committee feels like an important contribution

to both the local community and environment. BICA is highly regarded by Nillumbik Shire Council, in surrounding landcare groups and regional catchment management authorities. Many of these interest groups and Council often request letters of support and advice, with this comes shared knowledge and close working relationships.

From BICA I have gained an appreciation of the work that went into establishing this area as an environmental living zone. I am also beginning to understand the consistent work involved to maintain this beautiful and unique area.

I have lived in the Bend of Islands with my partner Pete and our two boys Charlie and Asher for the past 8 years. I feel blessed to be part of this community and to be raising our gorgeous boys amongst the bush, river and local people and friendly wildlife.

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com

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

2015 BICA CALENDAR

April

16 Café Benders
17 Landcare
24 Bike Ride

May

7-8 Artist Open Studios
8 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
10 Committee Meeting
14 Firehouse Cinema
21 Café Benders
22 Landcare
29 The Big Walk

June

5 Flora Walk
12 Bird Walk (8.30 am)
14 Committee Meeting
18 Café Benders
19 Landcare
26 General Meeting

July

2 Trivia Night
10 Bird Walk (8.30am)
12 Committee Meeting
16 Café Benders
17 Landcare with Co-op

August

7 Flora Walk
9 Committee meeting
14 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
20 Café Benders
20 Firehouse Cinema
21 Landcare

September

4 BICA Art Event
11 Bird Walk (8:00 am)
13 Committee Meeting
17 Café Benders
18 Landcare



BICA MATTERS

Reports from BICA Committee

Landcare Involvement- Feb 2016

Landcare in December was disrupted by a Total Fire Ban on the planned day and had to be cancelled.

We had our first Landcare working party on the 21-02-2016. It was a follow up on the work that had been done the year before in removing a Bluebell Creeper invasion. We had a group of 9 people attend, and although we did find a bit of creeper re shooting it was well under control now. We also removed a lot of Honeysuckle, Cape Ivy and Thistles.

We noted that where this and adjoining properties abutted to the Heritage Golf Course, that in the Heritage property there was a large infestation of Blackberry's and Scotch Thistles, which had begun to invade into the Bend of Islands properties and some rectification works will be required to contain the spread. BICA intend to write to Heritage on behalf of the BOI property holders requesting some action.

Community Involvement - Feb 2016

This is the beginning of a new year, thank you to Liz Mildenhall who gave me a great handover. By now Luke will have had our first event the Canoe Drift followed by Clean up Australia Day and the Kids event in March.

Jenny

Feral Cats & Traps

Recently, at least one cat has been trapped by locals & then collected by the Nillumbik Ranger. There have been other sightings also in the Bend of Islands.

BICA has cat traps for anyone to borrow. Call Liz Mildenhall: 9712 0577 / 0428 971 205 if you need a trap. The Ranger's Number is: 9433 3352. He will collect cats and foxes once they are contained in a trap.

We also have some Elliot traps for humane trapping of smaller animals.

If you need help with identification of small animals contact Deirdre on 0412 999 224

Liz

Control of Deer in the Bend of Islands

BICA will be introducing two things in the remaining period of 2016:

1. An individual Deer sighting report sheet, where locals can log where, when, and numbers of Deer sighted.
2. A Deer Control Action Plan- 2016.

Neil Taylor

To renew your BICA membership:

Contact Leanne : I_wierzbowski@hotmail.com

Wired!

Clean Up Australia Day 2016

A hardy band of be-gloved volunteers gathered at Jenny and Neil Taylor's to dismantle part of a boundary fence to celebrate this year's Clean up Day. Fortified by sparkling water from a distant spring, Neil, Jenny, Mal Chicksen, Gavin Masters, Wolfgang and Marie Krause, and Tom Fisher spent a couple of hours removing almost two kilometres (well, 1915 metres) of fencing, including one strand of barbed wire, and placed it in a skip provided by the Nillumbik Council (see photo). Meanwhile Andrew and Molly Mackie scoured local roadsides and paths to the river, collecting three bags of rubbish.

With the exception of the youthful Molly (age 10), this year's demographics were decidedly skewed towards the other end of the scale, with two doddering 70+ year olds, three in their 60s, two in their 50s and the sprightly Gavin (see photo).

Jenny proved to be a wonderful site supervisor, worthy of wearing the ceremonial yellow vest (à la Tour de France) and contributed freshly baked scones for the well-earned morning tea.

Tom





BEND OF ISLANDS COMMUNITY

WURUNDJERI SIGN FOR THE BEND OF ISLANDS

A group of about 85 community members and guests attended a ceremony on 17 March to unveil an interpretative sign that acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Bend of Islands, some post-colonial history and collaboration between the Wurundjeri and the Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA). The sign is located opposite the CFA station at the intersection of Catani Blvd and Henley Road.

Traditional Ceremonies

Senior Elder Aunty Di Kerr provided a Welcome to Country that invited us on to the land and generously acknowledged the shared interest we have in caring for Country. She also reminded us we all have our own stories and encouraged us to share them with one another.

Self-described 'junior' Elder, Uncle Dave Wandin, then performed a Smoking Ceremony to cleanse the area and the individuals gathered there and handed out Manna Gum leaves to all participants. He also spoke briefly about the collaboration between the Wurundjeri Narrap land management team and BICA that reconnected him with this country and has been made concrete by the presence of the sign.



Background

Tom Fisher then spoke on behalf of BICA. After acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land, he summarised the project's background, which has its roots in 2012, when BICA partnered with the Wurundjeri in implementing a 'Communities for Nature' grant.

Planning for the project was guided by a consultative committee that consisted of representatives from the Wurundjeri, BICA and the Shire of Nillumbik and involved input from other Wurundjeri elders as well. Tom also acknowledged



assistance from a large number of individuals and organisations, chief of which were Nillumbik Shire for two Robert Bridgford Indigenous grants and the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation Cultural Heritage Council.



NOTE: for more details on the process of developing this project and the acknowledgement of all those involved please go to the BICA website <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/news/>

Place, Structure and Content of the Sign

The area surrounding the sign is an archeological scatter site on which we have found various artifacts. It seems to mark a junction where several minor ridgelines meet and could have been a node on a standard communication route. The structure of the sign consists of a rusted metal pole with two framed 'wings' suggesting a Wedgetail Eagle (Bunjil) in flight. On the slightly raised left wing, the images and text focus on the Traditional Custodians of the country. The emphasis on the other wing is on the post-colonial history of the Bend and collaboration between Wurundjeri and BICA. Each wing has its own watermark: on the first, the Wurundjeri logo depicts Bunjil, Waa (the crow), the Yarra River and the Merri Creek; the second depicts the white-winged choughs that figure prominently in the Bend and is used as the BICA letterhead.

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Each wing features four relevant graphics with accompanying text. The texts read as follows:

Wurundjeri and Bunjil:

Tribal name, dreaming history of the Yarra and importance of Bunjil. The Yarra Valley upstream of the Maribyrnong River and Gardiners Creek formed the clan estate of the Wurundjeri, a name combining wurun (Manna Gum) and djeri (a grub living in that tree). To the Wurundjeri, Bunjil the Eagle is the Creator of Country and ritual architect.

Back in the Dreaming, the Yarra, unable to flow freely into the sea, formed a moorool (Great Water) in its floodplain, making hunting difficult. So the Wurundjeri called on the headman Bar-wool to cut a channel with his great stone-axe, thereby creating Port Phillip Bay.

Living on the Land: Cycle of Wurundjeri life in the area. In the warmer months the Wurundjeri worked the resource-rich country close to the Yarra and local streams. When it was cooler they moved into more sheltered hill country like Bend of Islands, where the men hunted larger game and the women and children gathered edible plants and pursued smaller game. In Bend of Islands archaeologists have identified many traditional tools as well as a scar-tree from which a five-metre long canoe has been carved.

Garrong: Black Wattle is one of the very common plants in the area and has various uses. For the Wurundjeri, Garrong or Black Wattle has many uses. Its seeds can be ground into a paste and baked as flatbread. Its wood can be used to create handles, spears and boomerangs as well as shelters. Its bark can be made into durable string and medicines, and its resin can serve as glue and to plug holes in carrying vessels and canoes. Garrong regenerates rapidly after fire, providing habitat for insects and birds; in spring its blossoms herald the return of wallabies, a source of meat, hide, bone and sinew.

Wyēnondabul: Around 1840 William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines, and Kurburra, an old Bunurong man, met at Yering outside today's Yarra Glen and produced a map of the surrounding country. Kurburra gave each hill its name, transcribed by Thomas, saying of many of them that their inhabitants had 'All gone dead' — proof of the rapid decline of the Wurundjeri in the wake of white settlement. The map shows Bend of Islands as 'Wyēnondabul'.

Bend of Islands: Recent history of the name of the area. The area's present-day name, bestowed by the Haughton family, derives from a group of small islands in a bend of the Yarra. Known earlier as either Kangaroo Ground South or Christmas Hills South, the region officially received its current name in 2000.



Early white settlement:

Bend of Islands originally came within the early Victorian lease-holding of James Murray who built its first homestead and bridge across Watsons Creek. Wording on the Kurburra-Thomas sketch map suggests that Murray enjoyed good relations with the surviving Wurundjeri. Between 1924 and the 1960s the Haughtons were the major landholders in the Bend. Family members and friends often spent their holidays horseback riding in the area.

Environmental Living: Bend of Islands is zoned SUZ2 — 'environmental living'. This zoning controls residential development to safeguard the natural bushland and keep most of its biodiversity intact. It prohibits non-indigenous planting and pets that might prey on native animals or damage the local ecology.

Collaboration between the Wurundjeri and the Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA). We began working together in 2012, acknowledging their mutual interest in caring for Country and building closer ties between traditional custodians and current residents. This commemorative sign, erected in 2015, recognises that collaboration.

Following the ceremonial aspects of the program, participants gathered in the fire shed for celebratory drinks and a meal. They then dispersed, leaving the sign itself bearing witness to the past and hope for the future.

*Tom Fisher
(Photos - Pierre Norjean & Frank Pierce)*





Sharing Stories



In her Welcome to Country that kicked off the unveiling of the Wurundjeri-BICA sign, Aunty Di pointed out that we all have our own stories. Two of these were shared as part of the event.

Margaret Houghton Doring provided a rare opportunity for current residents to learn more about what the Bend of Islands means to members of one of the prominent families to occupy much of the area in the mid-twentieth century. Margaret, who contributed the photo of her family's horseback outing to the sign's artwork, shared some memories of her holidays and weekends at the Bend. The Houghton family played a major role in the early development of the area, including the construction of the Three Bears cabin on Gongflers Peninsula in 1934, four years before Margaret's birth. Margaret spoke nostalgically about idyllic summertime swims and excursions on horseback in the area and talked about walking out from the Eltham train station to enjoy weekends in the bush.



Aunty Di, too, shared some of her family story, which has been imprinted by female members of her family and other Wurundjeri women onto her ceremonial possum cloak. Pointing to images seared into the leather side of the cloak, she pointed to the general Wurundjeri totems Bunjil and Waa, and then indicated animal symbols for her mother, children and grandchildren, as well representations of her Country.

WORKING with our SHIRE



Nillumbik Shire has recently established an annual works budget for Oxley Reserve at the lower corner of Henley Rd and Catani Blvd. BICA Landcare was approached to assist in determining a scope of works. This year the budget will be used for plants and guards. BICA Landcare will assist with planting these and also work on containing the spread of Burgan.

In future years the budget will be spent on contractors doing grassy weed control. This will free up Landcare workers to concentrate on other projects in The Bend

YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK WILL BE MUCH APPRECIATED. WATCH FOR NOTICE OF THIS SPECIAL WORKING BEE IN THE COMING MONTHS

Keep in touch with local Nillumbik Environmental activities

Join the Nillumbik Environmental Network to receive Fringe Focus

Joining the NEN is easy; call 9433 3316 or email: environmental.events@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Have you had a look at the Environment pages on the Nillumbik website lately? There is some fantastic information that you may not know about.

Information on the Rosella Spider Orchid, Climate Change, Pest Control, Grants and Rebates etc etc.

Nillumbik Shire Council website
www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/



MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS: THE CANOE RUN



A magnificent day - enjoying the Bend of Islands on the Yarra.

Ratty says to Mole in *Wind in the Willows*, 'There is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. In or out of 'em it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it.'

There was a bit of in 'em and out of 'em on the Yarra on Sunday February 7th for the first official BICA event of the year. Twenty-seven canoeists in fourteen crafts made the nearly three hour journey downstream from Rob Loughlin's to the Mildy's.

On a warm morning, all of the kids and some of the oldies swam and mud-fought before the paddle got underway. When we were all finally aboard and afloat Luke Doyle explained the simple rules, which were to give each other some space approaching the rapids and, if we did fall out, we were to aim to right the situation from upstream of our boat. All good advice! The more experienced paddlers were there to lend a hand in tricky situations and to share paddling hints.

In between the excitement and trepidation of the rapids, especially Bob's Rock we experienced the charm of it ... the



There were some stars on the day!

extreme beauty and peace of the Yarra. Someone commented that it was a great way to see "our suburb". And what a beautiful backyard it is. The tall escarpment, "Mutton Woods" dripping pearly pink, purple fruits into the water, the Azure Kingfisher, ducks including a brood of ducklings at the bottom of Gongflers and lots of darting, dancing flycatchers. We were lulled by the hush in the tall rushes, shivery shadows playing on the water and glimpses of houses camouflaged like nests in the trees ... all magic.

We saw relatively little rubbish, probably thanks to a number of locals who regularly gather it, and not so many weeds thanks to the weeding programs that BICA has organised. We saw quite a few day trippers picnicking on the Wonga Park side. They reminded us just how lucky we are to live here.

All survived the journey and we finished up at 209 Catani sharing lunch, a few drinks and stories. A good day was had by all.

Liz Mildenhall

DID YOU KNOW?

Later this year the Environmental Living Zone (now known as SUZ 2: Environmental Living) will have been established for **40 years!**

A small excerpt from our History which you can find on the BICA website says:

April 1974

MMBW published an Environmental Impact Study on the proposed Yarra Brae, Sugarloaf and Watsons Creek dams to which the public was invited to make submissions. BICA made a large input to this.

Later 1974

The proposed Yarra Brae dam was dropped.

October 1976

Public meeting held in Kangaroo Ground. Residents and landowners voted in favour of a new zoning to protect the Bend of Islands.

Late 1976

Zone Provisions for "Environmental Living" were incorporated into the Shire of Healesville's Planning Scheme and Interim Development Order (IDO).



From the FIRE BRIGADE



Our Fire Brigade Captain has this to say:

Well the 2015/16 fire season has certainly been a long one for the Fire Brigade and residents alike. The Brigade was active from early October at fires in Lancefield and since then has attended incidents locally as well as further afield in Epping, Scotsburn and northern Tasmania.

As forecast, the El Nino delivered substantially lower than average rainfall that has left our local bushland needing over a 100 mm of rainfall to re-establish typical soil moisture. Some soaking Autumn rain would be fantastic!

As always the Brigade has been supported by the lovely Café Benders crew whose monthly efforts raising funds for the Fire Brigade are greatly appreciated. It's just one of the ways so many members of the Bol community help out the Brigade.

As you may have recently seen on the 'sign tree', the Brigade is recruiting new members at the moment. This includes both fire fighters and non-operational members who can be involved in all sorts of activities such as station maintenance, fundraising etc.

I think we would all like know a fire truck is going to turn up and put a fire out or assist at a car accident should it happen locally – but we can't do it without locals like you volunteering their time and getting involved with the Brigade. Our current members are all busy folk who include artists, trades people, business managers, teachers, chefs, scientists, academics and retirees to name a few – we'd love to have you involved too!

I've personally found it a fantastic way to make new friends, learn some great new skills and contribute to both the local community and further afield. You can get in touch with myself on 0402 759 154 if you would like to chat about joining us.

Pete Rae
Captain
Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

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.

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





COMMON BIRDS of BEND of ISLANDS

Over the years about 165 birds have been recorded in The Bend. Some of these are vagrants and have only been seen once but I am sure we all have a sense of what are the common birds of The Bend. But if asked, do we really know what is common and what is not? Magpies would probably come to mind. Perhaps Sparrows and Mynas. Probably parrots like Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Crimson Rosellas. But what about Robins or Jacky Winters?



Brown Thornbill



Australian Magpie

After BICA had completed the first 200 monthly BICA Bird Surveys, Frank P. prepared a list of the most frequently sighted birds on the walks. Refer link. The top 10 were:

Grey Shrike-Thrush	178 times
Australian Magpie	176 times
Grey Fantail	174 times
Red Wattlebird	170 times
Laughing Kookaburra	169 times
White-Eared Honeyeater	167 times
Crimson Rosella	161 times
Brown Thornbill	160 times
Superb Fairy-wren	157 times
White-Throated Treecreeper	153 times

In this list there are no very rare birds they are obvious, non-migratory and generally loud, however there are interesting points that can be observed.

Of these birds, four could be described as large, ubiquitous species that are found in almost all habitats in their range and which are common across the Melbourne suburbs and other modified habitats. Included in this group are: -

Red Wattlebird
Laughing Kookaburra
Crimson Rosella and
Australian Magpie.

Perhaps more interesting though are the birds that are common in our area but which are true "bush birds". They tend to be smaller and insectivorous and many of them have disappeared from or are much reduced in the suburbs. Even from suburbs that are leafy and green. Included in this group are:

Grey Shrike-Thrush Grey Fantail
White-Eared Honeyeater and Superb Fairywren.

What does not show up in our top ten is also interesting.

There are no introduced birds with

30th Blackbird	68 times
42nd Common Starling,	42 times
54th Spotted Turtle-Dove,	25 times
61st Common Myna,	20 times
118th House Sparrow	1 time (equal with 11 other species)

Also missing is: 40th Noisy Miner 44 times



Superb Fairywren

While incursion by introduced species is a problem, it is the native Noisy Miner that are listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 as a key threatening process through, "Aggressive exclusion of birds from potential woodland and forest habitat by over-abundant Noisy Miners (*Manorina melanocephala*)"

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Common birds of the Bend of Islands continued



White throated tree creeper

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/key-threatening-processes/overabundant-noisy-miners>

So unlike in Eltham or Warrandyte we are not seeing this bird here, so some of our small birds are likely to persist.

Approximately ten years later, and as we approach another milestone number for this regular survey, with this store of data we can once again compare and see if there have been further changes. These might be in either common or rare birds. Some of which might have disappeared from our area all together.

The process of structured monitoring is important to establish if changes occur. So, on the second Sunday of each month, the birdos will be out there continuing this enjoyable work.

Gavin Masters

Mal Chicksen: Photographs

BICA LANDCARE FEBRUARY 2016

Creepers and climbers are problematic weeds as they smother the plants they climb across. As they scramble on the ground, this reduces and often eliminates the original flora as it is crowded out.

February saw BICA Landcare following up along Henley Road extension with a focus

on 3 climbers that are identified as a problem in the BICA land Management Report. These included-

- Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera heterophylla*)
- Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*) and
- Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*).

These are all ornamental garden plants that have gone wild and are now invading our bushland.



The site focussed on had been visited a year ago with large amounts of Bluebell Creeper being removed (see Newsletter no 84). It was very encouraging to see that there has been little regeneration and that the

residents had followed up through the year to eliminate any seedlings. So with this task completed the focus moved to Cape Ivy and Honeysuckle. Both of these climbers have the potential to spread easily in The Bend with their seeds being spread respectively by wind and animals as well as both being able to grow from very small fragments of broken-off stems or roots.

While the piles were perhaps not as impressive as last year, everyone who was there felt the satisfaction that some progress had been made.

If you have any concerns about weeds on your property and would perhaps like some assessment or assistance, please feel free to contact your committee and engage our Landcare group.

Gavin Masters





BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since October 2015.

Lyrebird Records

9 new records in our area have been reported by Gavin Masters, Colin Devenish and Frank Pierce. 7 of these were on Stevenson Creek near the Co-op and 1 was on the Co-op (Colin found a feather on his driveway) and one was on Skyline Rd north of the Co-op. So, all records were in the northeast corner of The Bend. There were no further records from south of the River.

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.

Bird Survey Highlights

In November the 12 attendees (the highest number for many years) went to Yanakie and saw a couple of **Peregrine Falcons**. We recorded 57 species for the day.

In January **Musk Lorikeets** and a rather late **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** were seen on Skyline Rd.

Collared Sparrowhawk was the highlight for the February walk at Yanakie.



Other Interesting Observations

Gavin Masters saw a Square-tailed Kite near the River at Gongflers Drive on 3/11/15. Only fleeting glimpses were achieved over the next few weeks and it eluded the photographers.

Powerful Owls have been observed regularly over the period in a variety of locations. Some were juvenile birds.

Rufous Fantail was seen on Stevenson Creek in January and March; a welcome return after some years.

White-throated Nightjars have been unusually vocal all over the Co-op and beyond, this season. They were 1st heard on 28/9/15. This is the earliest date on which they have been recorded in the last 9 years of recording.

2 birds were flushed from the ground on 4/11/15.

Birds were seen at night several times, both perched high on exposed branches or hawking over the treetops.

Courtship behavior of chasing flight about 1m apart whilst chirring, and bill-snapping, was seen 3 times near C Track, twice about 9pm and once at about 5am.

Unfortunately the roosting birds have eluded us despite many hours searching. However, from the pattern of the calling records, we are confident that they have mated, that a chick fledged about 20/2/16 and we expect it departed for New Guinea on about 21/3/16, a couple of nights before the full moon.

Thanks to all those that supplied records to help us keep track of these amazing birds.

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 to the end of 2015.

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, we meet at the top corner of Henley and Catani.

Frank Pierce





DEER IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS



We have become aware of multiple tracks appearing on our property made by the evening transit of Deer, we assume foraging and looking for water.

We have followed some of the tracks back up the gullies and discovered trees with the bark rubbed off, undergrowth completely removed from beneath Burgan where the Deer have obviously grazed and around the small water holes (currently dry) was, evidence of where the Deer have wallowed in the winter churning up the surrounding area.

We have had a couple of near misses on our drive when a huge Deer suddenly appeared, and several near misses on Henley Road when leaving in the early mornings or returning after dark.

Our experiences got me wondering.....how many others have had the same contacts with Deer and if we all just keep these incidences in isolation, we won't really ever have any idea of either the distribution or the numbers of Deer in The Bend.

BICA will be introducing two things for the remaining period of 2016:

1. An individual Deer sighting report sheet, where locals can log where, when, and numbers of Deer sighted.
2. A Deer Control Action Plan- 2016.

The objective is to collate the number of individual sightings and merge them into a master sheet. This master should then give us a better idea of concentrations of Deer and enable BICA to zero in and set up some infrared camera spots, which should give us some idea of the extent of the Deer population in the Bend.

Once the extent of the Deer problem can be identified we can then move to the next stage of control with assistance from relevant authorities and partnership organisations. This will be a long term program requiring ongoing endeavours and constant modification to our Deer Control Action Plan.

As a footnote, the Deer problems are not just isolated to our area. Deer have become both an Australian and worldwide problem, as Deer appear to breed up in large numbers.

Our research has shown that America, Britain and New Zealand have experimented with birth control measures with very limited success as the Deer have to first be captured or darted. This requires annual boosters which is not really practical and very expensive. There are no known Biological measures for deer control at present.

Culls in National and State parks have been undertaken by registered Wildlife Control Companies adhering to strict guidelines and supervised by Parks personnel, with varying results. However there is conflicting evidence where sporting shooter groups have been asked to undertake this work, as they tend to be selective, seeking only trophy animals and leaving the breeding ones untouched, probably to ensure the continuation of Deer stocks.

It is a very vexed situation with lots of conflicting interests all championing their own agenda.

Please use your recording sheet and keep BICA posted with your Observations.

Neil Taylor

Bend of Islands Kids' Event

Hi, my name is Kami and I took part in the kid's event.

The kid's event was very fun and about 10 kids came along to 51 Ironbark Road.

We started off by doing songs with Kurt where we stomped our feet and clapped our hands and learned the aboriginal names for different parts of the body. Then we went to do games with Rodrigo and play "The Bend of Islands Rangers" game where we looked around with pretend binoculars and froze when we saw a pretend snake.

But I though the best part was the treasure hunt. We started of by getting a clue and on each clue we had a challenge. Kurt told a story in a few of the stations but then to get to the treasure we had to cross the river into an island! It was very cold and very fun.

When we got to the island we got spades and we had to dig the treasure. And the treasure was.....lots of chocolates! So we made the kids event motto – "half fun, half scary, lots of chocolate".

Then we all went back and the adults had some tea and coffee. I personally think the kid's event was really fun and hope lots of kids come next time.

Lots of Love and thanks BICA!

Kami Deva





INVERTEBRATES IN THE BEND – Out of Sight and Out of Mind

Here in the Bend we are to some degree familiar with most of our species of vertebrates – mammals, birds, reptiles, & amphibians. We have lists of the recorded species for each group on our website.

But the vertebrates are only a small part of the Animal Kingdom.

Over 95% of all animals on the earth are invertebrates of one form or another. Invertebrates are found just about everywhere in both terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and include animals ranging from sponges, to insects, spiders, worms and many more.

Invertebrates include worms, snails, leeches and the like but over 80% of all invertebrates are Arthropods.

Arthropods are invertebrates with jointed legs. They make up about 75% of all animals on Earth and have a major role in maintaining ecosystems as pollinators, recyclers of nutrients, scavengers and food for other animals.

Arthropods are divided into four major groups:

- insects;
- myriapods (including centipedes and millipedes);
- arachnids (including spiders, mites and scorpions);
- crustaceans (including slaters, prawn and crabs);

The percentages quoted above are mind boggling. To put these into perspective, here are a few numbers from an article by Ken Walker from Museum Victoria: -

In Australia, there are ONLY 379 species of mammals and 828 species birds. We know these vertebrate species well and it is extremely rare to find a new Australian species in these groups.

Plant wise, Australia has about 28,000 species.

For invertebrates, Australia has over 300,000 described species and estimates say that may be only one third of the actual number of species

There are more species of Beetles in Australia than there are species of plants.

The invertebrates are the real drivers of our ecosystem yet we know precious little about them, what their needs are, how environmental changes affect them, and how any changes to them will affect the environment.

It has been estimated that that one-fifth of invertebrates are at risk of extinction, a similar ratio as for the vertebrates.

Our paucity of knowledge should be a sobering influence, to keep our egos in check when we try to fool ourselves that we understand and can control the natural systems.

Here in The Bend, the provisions of the Planning Scheme are an attempt to try to preserve the natural systems as well as we can, consistent with our residential occupation. One example of this is the restriction on the removal of fallen timber. When left in place this forms habitat for a whole range of insects and other invertebrates, which in turn break this down as part of the continuous cycle of the natural system.

The more one delves into the insect world the better one appreciates the incredible complexity of the web of life.

- Many butterflies only lay their eggs on specific plants because when the eggs hatch the caterpillars can only survive by eating the leaves of that one particular species of plant
- Certain orchid species can only be pollinated by one particular species of wasp or fly. If all the environmental requirements are not met for the survival of the insect, the orchid will also not survive.
- Rain moths fly for one night only; they have no ability to feed. They mate and the female distributes 1000's of eggs during flight. The rest of their 7 year life cycle is spent underground as a caterpillar.
- The Southern Riffle Darner dragonfly attaches its eggs to rocks under the fast flowing water in rapids

With the natural environment of the Bend relatively intact, compared with most occupied areas, we have the chance to enjoy the increased diversity that this brings and also the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with some of the complexities of the natural system

Go to <https://theconversation.com/ignoring-invertebrate-conservation-is-simply-spineless-10900> for a good start on further information regarding invertebrates.

Ken Walker sums up the importance of insects nicely with this quote: -

If you took all the insects from the planet humans would last about a week

If you took all the humans from the planet insects would be fine and would probably be better off

Frank Pierce



Botany Bay Weevil



ladybird



Assassin Bug



RECENT SIGHTINGS IN THE BEND



Gold-fronted Riverdamselfly, *Pseudagrion aureofrons* on Yarra at Neil Douglas NR. 1st recent record for ELZ. Photo fp. 2016-03-07.



Fox Scat (with Echidna spines) found on the Co-op. Mick Gibbs found this and noted the Echidna spines in the Scat. The chewed Golf ball was next to the scat. Photo by Anthony Long 2016-02-28



Crane Fly, *Leptotarsus Leptotarsus clavatus* at B Track on Co-op
Photo Lynne Johnstone 2016-02-18



Owfly at C Track on Co-op - 1st known record for ELZ. Photo fp. 2016-01-31



Long-legged Fly, at A Track on Co-op.
Photo fp. 2016-02-24



KOOKABURRA AND THE WOODCHOPPER

The whack and shatter of splitting wood
Attacking from the correct angle
Getting the wrist action right
The timing of the blow

Bending to gather wood
I find a fat kookaburra
Standing by my foot waiting
For lizards freed from shattered logs

He dives on one I thought
I'd delivered to safety
Dashes it on the chopping block
Swallows it and disappears

Lifting another log I spy a witchetty
Thwack with a mighty blow
The wood shatters I stand back
He's watching He glides down

No lizards this time
So he waits Expecting
I explain that he's out of luck
So he sits in wait

Fetching the grub
I place it on the block
Now I wait not for long
He makes his move

Takes it in his beak then
Whack wack that's it
He swallows it and goes
I haul another log

Instantly he's back
I hack the log Chips fly
He doesn't flinch He's cool
He's patient They miss by inches

I suggest he check out the wood pile
He just sits Ignores my advice
Hunter gatherer Forget it
This bird demands service

Peter Dougherty

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Green Lacewing



ichneumon Wasp



Shield Bug



Thank you to all who contributed to this Newsletter.

Keep writing and sending your articles, observations and photos of the Bend of Islands to jmandfp@bigpond.com

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