

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name:

Amyema quandang var. *quandang*

Common name: Grey Mistletoe

Family: Loranthaceae

Flowering Period: Most of year, peaking
May to September

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

A woody epiphytic shrub, of Valley Sclerophyll Forests, found attached to the branches of host trees, exclusively on *Acacia* species especially ***Acacia dealbata***, (Silver Wattle). A plant of Grey Mistletoe was seen growing on the top of a Silver Wattle, overhanging the Yarra River.

Amyema quandang* var. *quandang (Grey Mistletoe) supplements their food supply by taking water & minerals from their host.

A grey pendulous plant, covered with soft grey hairs.

Leaves are lanceolate to elliptic, usually falcate (sickle-shaped), 3-12 cm long x 0.8-2 cm wide, paler greyish-green on both sides & arranged singly or in pairs. The leaves are shorter & blunter than those of the other three local mistletoe species of the Bend of Islands i.e. Box, Drooping & Creeping Mistletoe.

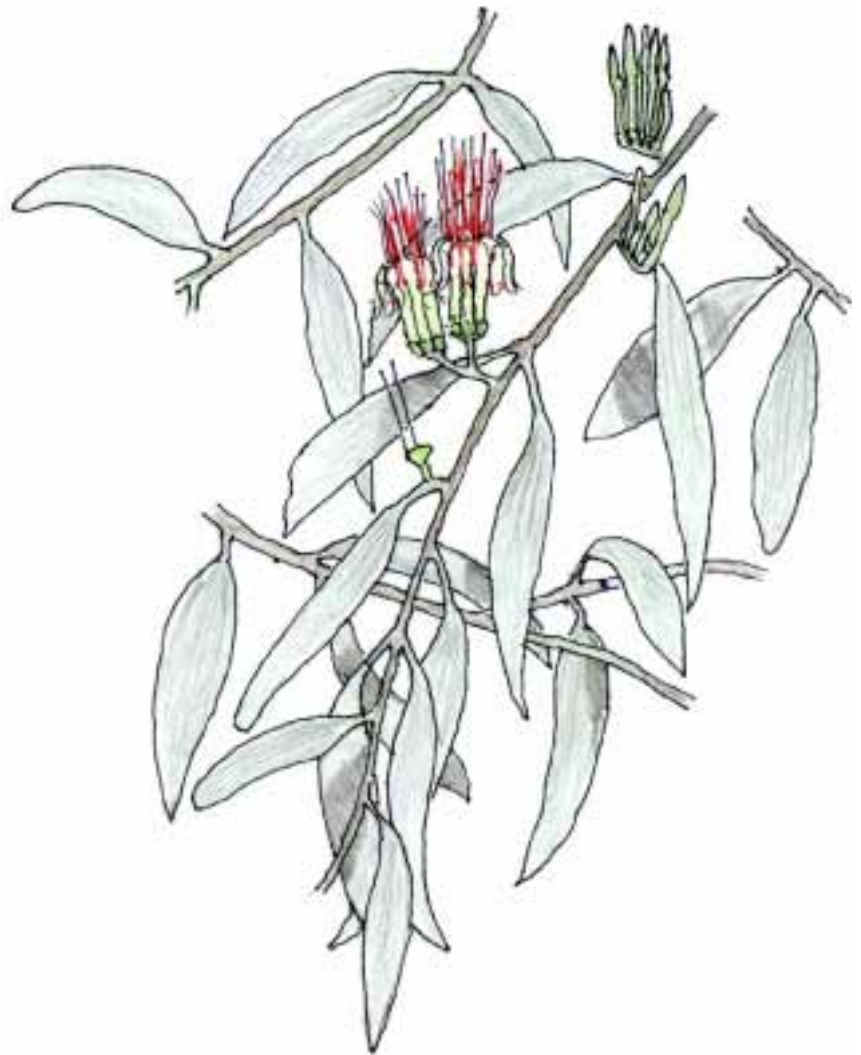
Flowers are red, 1.6-3 cm long, held upright in 2 groups of 3, instead of drooping as in the other three local species mentioned above. Mistletoe flowers are an important source of nectar for birds, especially the long billed honeyeaters.

After flowering Grey Mistletoe provide a crop of fruit; pear shaped berries, downy, greyish, to 1 cm long. The fruit and leaves are an important source of food for some larvae (caterpillars) of local butterflies & moths. The fruit is also food for fruit-eating birds. In particular the Mistletoe-birds eat the berries and deposit the sticky seeds on the bark of branches of the host tree.

Prefers partial sun & tolerates shade

Cric Henry

Photos by Frank Pierce





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BICA has a very active and energetic Committee this year who have hit the ground running with a number of issues. Liz Mildenhall is Vice President and has led the liaison with Nillumbik Shire Council about the hazardous tree removal, setting up a protocol for future works. Barb Whiter is the new Secretary, Rodrigo Castellanos is Treasurer, Glennis Bibra is Minute Secretary and the other members of the Committee include Sue Grad, Jo Henry, Jess Jarvie, Deirdre Lucas, and Pam McMahon. It's great to have a number of new members on the Committee for 2017 and next year we will be recruiting additional men!

This year has seen the publication of our beautiful new booklet that replaced our one page pamphlet to promote the Bend of Islands. We have designed the booklet to be distributed to real estate agents who will give it out to people who may be interested in moving to this area. It provides basic information about the natural beauty of this special place and describes the importance of conserving it and details of how residents do it.

Our major publication, which is currently at the printers, is a much more detailed book designed to educate new residents about the area. We intend to launch the New Resident's publication at a future BICA meeting. We are grateful to Nillumbik Shire Council who provided a grant for both publications.

The BICA Planning Subcommittee is working with the Nillumbik Council to ensure that the Non-Conforming Use Rights (NCUR) Register is up to date. This is the Register that was developed when the Environmental Living Zone was formed in the 1970's which specifies which particular properties are permitted to retain their rights to keep a cat or dog or grazing animals. These rights lapse after 2 years of non-use and we have seen the number of properties with NCUR dwindle over the past 20 years.

During 2017 we hope to involve some of the younger residents of the Bend of Islands through a number of activities, including a nest box survey – checking out what has taken up residence in some of the nest boxes that BICA has installed in previous years, so look out for them. The Committee members and I look forward to catching up with you at one of these future activities.

Robyn Duff

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WELCOME TO THE BEND

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

Michael Flynn
Isora Bambaravanage
Julie Martindale
Rowena Smith



BICA MATTERS

Getting to know your BICA committee

The BICA Committee is a very active and dedicated group who meet monthly and Rodrigo's role is the important one of managing BICA funds.

Meet Rodrigo



How long have you lived in the Bend of Islands?

Irena, Kami and I have been lucky enough to live in the Bend of Islands since July 2012 (wow! 4.5 years now!). We have lived somewhere in Nillumbik since our return from Mexico in early 2005. Kami was born in Christmas Hills and we have always had friends in the Bend, including the friend who introduced us to Peter Oysten's family. Together with Kurt and Sh'ana we were lucky enough to co-buy this property.

Irena and I lived in different type of communities over the years (all

with different levels of success both in Mexico and in Australia) including permaculture villages but never in an environmental living zone fully devoted to the conservation of the area. However, many of the broader rules, like for example the exclusion of dogs and cats, exist in many places like this.

What I find amazing from the Bend of Islands is how incredibly committed people in the area are, not only to the conservation and preservation of the environment, but also in the range of community activities that we are lucky to enjoy throughout the year.

I joined the committee in 2016 and I am the Treasurer in 2017. The reason I joined is because I felt inspired by the many people who for over 40 years have kept working to keep the original vision and mission of the Bend of Islands alive and growing. We are extremely lucky to have people with not only the level of environmental expertise to preserve this beautiful part of the world but also with an incredible community and even artistic talent that makes this place to feel even more special and I don't want to take that for granted.

Coming from one of the biggest cities in the world, I am very new in the understanding of land management but I enjoy every opportunity I have to learn about it and I am very happy to see my own daughter much more knowledgeable than I was at her age (and at my current age!) in the crucial topic of caring for the place where we live.

In Mexico we say "Mi casa es su casa" (My home is also your home), so you can find your home at 51 Ironbark Road.

Rodrigo

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com

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

2017 BICA CALENDAR

April

- 9 Bird Walk (7.30am)
- 12 Committee Meeting
- 15 Cafe Benders
- 16 Landcare
- 23 Bike Ride

May

- 6-7 Artist Open Studios
- 10 Committee Meeting
- 13 Firehouse Cinema
- 14 Bird Walk (8.30am)
- 20 Cafe Benders
- 21 Landcare
- 28 The Big Walk

June

- 4 Flora Walk
- 11 Bird Walk (8.30am)
- 14 Committee Meeting
- 17 Cafe Benders
- 18 Landcare
- 25 General Meeting

July

- 1 Trivia Night
- 9 Bird Walk (8.30am)
- 12 Committee Meeting
- 15 Cafe Benders
- 16 Landcare with Co-op

August

- 6 Flora Walk
- 9 Committee Meeting
- 13 Bird Walk (8.30am)
- 19 Cafe Benders
- 19 Firehouse Cinema
- 20 Landcare



40 Years of Environmental Living

In October 2016 BICA celebrated a milestone in the history of the Bend of Islands – 40 years since the introduction of the Shire of Healesville’s Interim Development Order putting in place an Environmental Living Zone (now SUZ2) for the area. This has set the framework for us as residents to live in this special piece of bushland whilst at the same time conserving its biodiversity for the future.



Dorothy Weigall spoke of the Weigall family property on Catani Blvde that was nestled happily on the banks of the Yarra River for many years until the bush fires of 1962. After rebuilding they received a Direction from the S of H Proper Officer to clear the land. This started the first fight to save the area. Then in 1966 the threat of being flooded by the Yarra Brae Dam motivated more community action

Bob English became involved in the area in the early seventies and built a home in Skyline Road, living there for many years. He told of his involvement in developing the paper “Residential Conservation” with Neil Douglas, Tim Ealey, Gary Jungwirth & John Lawson. This was the subject of an ACF Symposium in 1974 which convinced the politicians and really formulated the objectives and basis of the zoning provisions for the Bend of Islands



Old and new residents and friends gathered on a very wet afternoon to celebrate with champagne and fine food at the Fire Station.

The occasion was formally introduced jointly by our Local Member Cindy Mc Leish and Wurundjeri Elder, Dave Wandin and followed by our local choir, Both Sides of the River.

Our Guest Speaker, George Wright, former Director of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority and long time supporter of the ELZ concept, spoke of the dedication and commitment of residents in working to achieve the outcome we have today.

It was most enjoyable to hear from the panel of four of our early key activists who gave us insights into the work of writing submissions, lobbying politicians, and bringing the community together to form a residential conservation community.



Felicity Faris came to live in the Bend of Islands in 1976 just as the IDO was being amended to include the ELZ. She talked of “millions” of submissions, meetings with politicians etc. but really had the audience in peals of laughter with her stories of early community characters and their escapades. She mentioned the beginnings of the Fire Brigade, the Women’s Auxiliary, the play group, the bush dances and many more community activities.

John McCallum built his family home here in the Bend of Islands in the 60’s. A keen naturalist; his role over the years included BICA committee member & President, a Fire Brigade member & Captain and he spoke of his observations on how the zone has developed over the years.

Thanks to all who contributed to such a successful Celebration!





BICA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Landcare



Green mounds of Bluebell Creeper before removal

The Bend of Islands Landcare group have continued their valuable work throughout the area.

This dedicated group of 6 to 8 people meet once a month and carry out a variety of activities associated with bushland restoration works. They meet on the third Sunday of each month at the corner of upper Catani (watch for the Sign Tree at the Bridge for details). They are always happy to see some new faces coming along to help out and learn about both the exotic and indigenous flora that grows in our area.

Recent working bees have included

- Woody weed control of Sweet Pittosporum (#Pittosporum undulatum) and a variety of non-local wattles on a private property on Henley Road.
- Assistance was also given to new owners on Catani in getting on top of some of the priority environmental weeds of the Bend of Islands. The debris was cleaned up in a bonfire at the end of the working bee.
- The control of St. Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum), Angled Onion (*Allium triquetrum) and a range of other small herbs along Henley Road between Oxley Bridge and Catherine Oxley Reserve.
- Follow up weed control work within the Catherine Oxley Reserve after recent planting works, which were funded by Council and implemented by Landcare and the Green Army.

Landcare Projects within Bend of Islands have aimed to control a range of invasive environmental weeds which have the potential to establish into significant management issues. Past projects have included the control of Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata) and targeting of small infestations of species such as Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides), Blue-bell Creeper (*Billardiera fusiformis), Sweet Pittosporum (#Pittosporum undulatum) and Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera).

If you have a particular weed issue on your property please contact BICA to find out if a Landcare working bee is able to help.

Lavish Morning Tea: Clean Up Australia Day 2017 (5 March)



Led by the two 'Wolfies' (grandfather and grandson), a contingent of 14 Benders continued BICA's assault on wire boundary fences and added furniture removal to its list of activities. Starting at the crack of dawn (well, 8:30), Captain Koala Mildenhall joined with neighbours Robina and Tony Summers, as well as Mal Chicksen, Gavin Masters and Justin Cullinan (substituting for his temporarily incapacitated sister Liz Mildenhall) to remove wire fencing between the Mildenhall and Summers' property.

Starting somewhat later, the not-so-big-bad wolfies (Wolfgang Krause and 'Wolfie') formed part of a team to clean out abandoned furniture from the Three Bears structure in the Neil Douglas Reserve (to conflate two separate fairy tales). Alan Bluhm, Pierre Noirjean, and Jenny and Neil Taylor also contributed. While Grandpa Wolf used his carpentry skills and tools to dismantle the discarded sofa (probably sat on too heavily by Goldilocks), Grandson Wolf took out the award for the cleanest Clean Up, drawing on his elbow grease and a bit of metal polish to restore to its original shine the Neil Douglas plaque commemorating the Reserve (see photo). Meanwhile Tom Fisher and Tserin Wright, ably assisted by daughters Kaia and Arla, cleaned up rubbish dumped near the intersection of Skyline and Ashmore Roads.

Highlight of the Day was a sumptuous morning tea, hosted by the Summers, with contributions from several of the workers who doubled as bakers and barista.

As usual, the demographics, collected for the benefit of the Clean Up Day bureaucracy, were heavily skewed towards the community elders, with three participants in their 70's, four in their 60's, three in their 50's, a solitary representative in his 30's, and hope for the future residing in the three contributors between the ages of three and twelve.

Tom Fisher





WORKING WITH OUR SHIRE

Protocol for Assessment & Management of Hazardous Trees in Bend of Islands: Feb 2017



BICA has been working with our Shire in relation to the **Nillumbik Tree Management Policy 2015** and **Tree Management Guidelines 2015** (refer Nillumbik Shire Website) The Shire policy is based on commitment to managing and caring for roadside trees in line with public safety, conservation and tree health.

All work is done with community consultation and in line with government policy, best practice management and compliance with all legal requirements.

Recently BICA Committee members met with Shire representatives, Neil Horden, Environment and Open Space Coordinator and Andy Knight, Open Space Team Leader to discuss proposed works to be carried out on roadside vegetation in the Bend of Islands. (Priority having been given to Henley Road as a "High Use Area").

This consultation recognised the special significance of the area and the important part played by roadside vegetation for fauna habitat and flora diversity. This resulted in the development and agreement to a **Protocol for Assessment & Management of Hazardous Trees in Bend of Islands: Feb 2017**.

The Protocol highlights the following matters :

- Protection of roadside vegetation whilst ensuring emergency access/egress.
- Zoologists advice on habitat trees
- Arborists advice re safety risks
- Avoidance of cuts that encourage heavy epicormic growth
- Retaining larger limbs and logs on the ground as habitat (NOT FOR FIREWOOD COLLECTION as this NOT ALLOWED in our ZONE)
- No mulch will be left in the area during the fire restriction period
- Ongoing consultation.

If you wish to read the Protocol in detail, please contact the BICA Secretary for a copy.

Congratulations to BICA Committee Members and to the Shire for developing this Initiative.

NOTE: This new initiative does not replace or contradict the existing Protocols that have been developed with the Power Authorities (Select Solutions) for vegetation control under powerlines.



BICA members attended the Annual Nillumbik Shire's "Thank you to Environmental Volunteers Night " on 7th December 2016 and were delighted to receive a Special Award presented by the Mayor, Councillor Peter Clarke, recognising 40 years of Conservation Management of the Environmental Living Zone by the Bend of Islands Conservation Association.



Getting to Know the Bend of Islands

The Bend has now been my home for the past 5 months. Each day I walk around in the bush and realise how lucky I am to have discovered this little piece of paradise. Such a blessing to discover a patch of land (relatively) weed free, fence free and development free so close to town! For many years prior to returning to Melbourne, I'd lived on a community in northern NSW where the vegetation would engulf you as soon as you took your eyes off it and it was a constant battle against introduced weeds.

I had walked around the property here with the previous owners one sunny afternoon last September. The ground was a mass of bush flowers, green grasses and tiny orchids, the trees a wonderful mix of grey-green gnarly bent-ness, open enough to see through and walk through. So beautiful. I dusted off my old Simpson and Day bird book and bought a new plant ID book.

The day I moved in I was deeply touched when my neighbour Genevieve and her children Banjo and Jet, came over to say hello bearing a basket of fresh herbs, eggs and a newly baked cake. My brother John was already hard at it removing a clump of agapanthus and Gen said jokingly "You'll be popular". Then Liz called in to introduce me to BICA and promptly signed me up on the spot. Another day Marie was kind enough to spend a few hours at my place identifying plants and pointing out a few weeds. "You mean that pretty orange flower [chickweed] is a weed?" The Landcare crew came over one Sunday morning and removed a whole heap of introduced woody plants in just two hours. It's amazing what people can do when they get together and work hard.

Over the past few months I've been exploring the bush, the hills and gullies, and that special river. One afternoon I followed a wombat ambling along the river bank, then laughed at how neatly its rear end plugged up its burrow; and it was exciting for me to see a dusky wood-swallow and peregrine falcon for the first time on a bird walk in December. So far over summer I've seen forty different birds with a constant line up at the birdbath every morning and afternoon.

I've also been slowly meeting more and more people here and there and experiencing the warmth and diversity of the human environment. Happily conversations are not all about weeds! It seems I have landed in the most wonderful place. Thanks to everyone.

Julie Martindale
94 Catani Blvd



Vale Mal McClure

McClure, Malcolm John: 22/8/1929 - 12/2/2017 in Kobble Creek, QLD.

Mal McClure was a very active resident in the Bend of Islands in the 1970s when he led the Yarra Brae Action Group and successfully lobbied against a proposal to dam the Yarra River in the Bend of Islands.

In 1974, together with others, he assisted in developing a paper on Residential Conservation which led to the formation of the Environmental Living Zone (now SUZ2).

He became a Co-op member in 1982 and lived between the Bend of Islands and Bellingen before moving there permanently about 15 years ago

DID YOU KNOW?

All vegetation on the roadside verge in the Bend of Islands is protected.

If you notice any willful damage, unauthorized tree removals or wood collection, please notify the Shire of Nillumbik immediately it is observed to allow the Shire to investigate and take action if necessary. The Shire can be contacted on 9433 3111 or After Hours on 9433 3334 (24 hours pager)



A Good Lunch in the Bend

At about midday in early March, I called in to one of the local dams to check on the many dragonflies that come and go throughout the season. I quietly approached the top of the dam wall and was surprised to find a **White-necked Heron**, *Ardea pacifica*, working the shallows around the perimeter. It was only a few days since Gavin had remarked that there seemed to be a bit of a local influx of this species recently.

It was a beautiful sunny day and I took a few photos of the bird, which seemed unaware of me. The problem was that I was south of the bird and the sun was in the north, so my photos had the dark shadowed side of the bird with a very bright background.

The bird actually moved along the edge until it was quite close to me. I watched in awe as, with lightning speed, it speared its bill into the water and came out with a very big yabby. The yabby seemed far too big for this thin-necked predator to swallow, but with a flick of the head, down it went, followed by a quick gulp of water to help wash it down. My camera was snapping throughout this display but the light situation still prevented the shots I was hoping for.

I then embarked on what I expected would be mission impossible, to creep half way around the dam, on the opposite side to the bird, so that I would have the sun behind me. To my surprise I achieved my aim, probably only because the bird was so intently stalking the shallows almost constantly.

By the time I got to the north end of the dam the bird had moved up and down the east side and was now moving across the south end. I watched it take another similarly sized yabby with the same 'flick of the head swallow' and the finishing gulp of water.

My prey proceeded to come up the west side, giving me the photo opportunities I was after. Fortunately for me, when it was just a good distance away, it caught a 3rd yabby and I managed to quickly capture the 'yabby in the bill' shot before it was disposed of.

This cat and mouse game went for about an hour and a half. In that time I had taken more than 220 photos and the heron had consumed 3 big yabbies and quite a variety of smaller prey. Not a bad lunch!

Frank Pierce



A New Resident in Bend of Islands?



There is often comment in “The Media” about how people today are too far removed from the natural world. One aspect of living in The Bend and being close to nature is the opportunity to observe changes. This might be in the weather, the vegetation, the height of the Yarra or the flora and fauna that live around us. While changes in the flora are slow and often difficult to discern, changes in fauna can be more obvious and rapid.

There is a basic group of animals that live in the area and have been recorded regularly if sometimes rarely. However new species can show up at any time. Some are regular visitors that move with the change of seasons. If they are passage migrants such as Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea*, they may move through in a few days and so not be seen every year. Some species have irruptions where due to a longer-term change in weather patterns they stay around for a while after not being seen for many years if at all. This includes birds such as the Scarlet Honeyeater *Myzomela sanguinolenta*. This is largely a wet forest bird of the East coast but they regularly (every decade or so) turn up in Melbourne, where they may be recorded for a few months before they disappear again. Other visitors may be vagrants, which are animals that have lost their way. Perhaps this is due to extreme weather and once this has passed, the animal disappears.

One bird that has recently become quite regular in The Bend is the Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*. This is a long-winged, medium large, rusty-brown raptor with a white face. It flies very distinctively, just above the treetops on upswept, narrow wings. It glides along rarely flapping. It preys on other birds, particularly nestlings. It may be

confused with the other soaring kites that are local; Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* (moderately common) and Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (very infrequent) but as the name suggests, the shape of its tail is quite distinctive. It is long and squared-off at the end. Whistling Kite has a paddle-shaped tail and is dingy brown, while the Black Kite has a very distinctive forked tail, although it is not black.

Square-tailed Kite: Note that while perching the wings are much longer than the tail.

Square-tailed Kite was first recorded locally in June 2013 on a monthly bird walk along Watsons Creek in Yanakie. Subsequently, birds have been seen on The Coop and along the Yarra River between the top of Catani and along Gongflers Drive. After first being seen only three and a half years ago, birds have been seen every summer since, sometimes on a daily basis. This species does tend to move south for the summer, however it was rarely recorded this far west and south of the Great Dividing Range. While only one bird has been observed at a time, there is a chance that this bird may now be a breeding visitor to The Bend. Therefore, eyes are peeled to see if two birds can be spotted at the same time. Equally, it may be a longer-term, single visitor that may once again disappear when conditions change.

Keep a lookout and, as with any interesting or unusual bird record, try and take some pictures or make a recording if the call is distinctive and send them to one of our local birdos for a second opinion.

Gavin Masters

Mal Chicksen: Photographs





A Harsh Reality of Nature – Predation of Eastern Rosella Nest by Sugar Glider in the Bend

In October 2016 Eastern Rosellas *Platycerus eximius* nested in the hollow top of the trunk of a dead Long-leaf Box, about 2 metres from our house on C Track of the Co-op, at the north end of the Bend of Islands.

They laid 7 eggs, 6 of which hatched between 24/10 and 27/10/16. The development of the chicks was monitored with daily photos and videos. The rate of growth was astounding; with both parents flat-out feeding all day from when the chicks were 9 days old.

On the morning of 16/11/16, 3 chicks were found dead in the nest; one was substantially eaten but the bodies of the others were generally intact. There had obviously been an overnight predator. The bodies were removed and the BICA Camera Trap was set up to hopefully capture any future activities at the top of the nest. At this stage the parents were not staying on the nest at night.

The next morning two more chicks were dead, one again substantially eaten but the other intact. The camera trap had recorded one photo of a Sugar Glider *Petaurus Breviceps* at the top of the nest at 5.16am.

A wire cage was made and installed to cover the top of the nest from dusk till dawn, to protect the last remaining chick. Due to this protection, the chick developed well and fledged on 26/11/17. The camera trap recorded the Sugar Glider on the top of the cage for prolonged periods on 24/11/16, so without the cage the chick would almost certainly have been killed.

Most people would rate Sugar Gliders very close to the top of the 'Mammal Cuteness Scale'. All the mammal books indicate that they are only insectivorous. In 2014, researchers found Sugar Gliders were predated the nests of Swift Parrots in Tasmania and there have been a couple more instances recorded by camera traps monitoring other threatened birds since then.

This is a record of the brutal reality that is part of nature. We tend to forget that nature is so harsh, particularly with the sugar-coated versions presented in the media. The reality is that it is a very hostile world for most creatures, with an enormous amount of energy and skill required to be able to survive and to successfully reproduce.

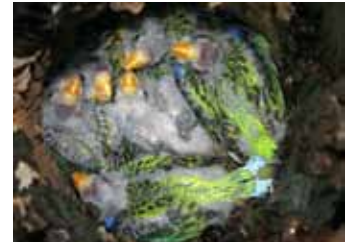
Living in the Bend gives us a rare opportunity to observe nature 'close-up and real'.

This is a brief outline of the events. A more detailed report, with many photos, can be found on the BICA website at <http://bit.ly/2nXIQYk>

Frank Pierce



24/10/16 - 1ST EGG HATCHED



14/11/16 - SIX HEALTHY CHICKS



16/11/16 – SUGAR GLIDER AT NEST



16/11/16 – 3 DEAD CHICKS



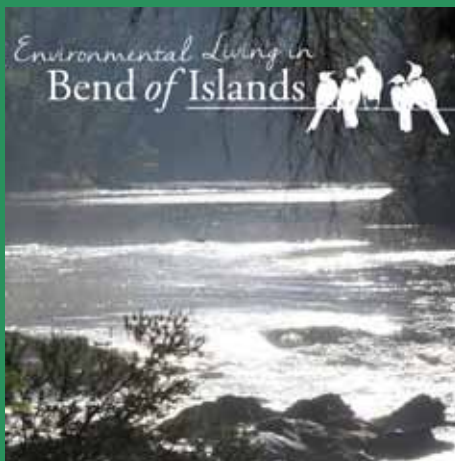
16/11/16 – NEST TOP CAGE



24/11/16 – SUGAR GLIDER ON CAGE



26/11/16 – CHICK READY TO FLEDGE



A new BICA publication

Information on the Bend of Islands bush & living in the ELZ (Suz2)

Watch for the Launch Date



BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since October 2016.

Lyrebird Records

6 new records have been reported by Chris Pierce (saw bird near house); Karyn Kamminga and Frank Pierce heard a bird calling on Stevensons Creek north of the Co-op.

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 October 2016, **Peregrine Falcon** was seen on Yanakie. These birds bred on the Transmission Towers near Henley Rd. They raised one chick which fledged on 20/11/16.

In January 2017 a **Square-tailed Kite** was seen on the Co-op. There have been several sightings of this bird in the Bend (see separate article for great photos)

Other Interesting Observations

Little Button-quail (pictured right) was seen by Robyn & Noel in their garden on 17/10/16. This is the 1st confirmed sighting of this species in the Bend since we began recording in 1989. Luckily Robyn managed to get a good 'record shot' which allowed her to clinch the ID of this cryptic skulker. This is a rare record and was referred to in the Twitchers' Corner in BirdLife Australia Magazine.

Square-tailed Kite decided to be photogenic at Gavin & Mal's on 28/10/16 (see their article for great photos).

Eastern Rosellas bred next to Frank & Janet's house but most chicks were killed by a Sugar Glider (see separate article for details).



Rufous Fantail (Pictured left) is an uncommon summer visitor to the Bend. Wolfgang Krause took this beautiful photo near his house, where it stayed for more than 3 weeks over the Christmas period.

Cicadabird was heard by Gavin on the Co-op 9/11/16

White-bellied Sea-eagle was seen by Frank flying over the Co-op on 13/11/16

White-faced Heron has been unusually common in the Bend this summer (see separate article for a snapshot).

White-throated Nightjars have been heard on and near the Co-op from October to March, so hopefully they have successfully bred again. These masters of cryptic disguise were not located in daylight hours despite many searches.

Tserin saw two **White-plumed Honeyeaters** near his house in Catani Blvde on 4/3/17. This is the 1st record in the Bend since 2011. This species was a reasonably common visitor in the 90's.

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 2016.

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

All are welcome on the bird survey walks on the 2nd Sunday of each month. See the BICA Calendar for start times; we meet at the top corner of Henley and Catani.

Frank Pierce



Invertebrates in the Bend

Gavin Masters saw a **Small Grass-yellow *Eurema similax*** in Henley Rd on 2/3/17. The last record in the Bend was in 3/2012. Here are some new species that I've found in the Bend and loaded onto Bowerbird since October 2016. Frank Pierce



Clear-winged Snout Moth, *Gendua subnotata*; its larval food plant is Cherry Ballart.



Black Ground Mantid, *Bolbe nigra* This beast (adult male) is only 17mm long.



Water Scorpion, *Laccotrephes tristis* in the wetland on the backfilled section of the Aqueduct.



Bee Fly, *Eusurbus glossus* This needed the top experts to identify it – see <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/81691>



False Garden Mantid, *Pseudomantis albofimbriata* - Brown form on Co-op.



Feather-legged Assassin Bug *Ptilocnemus femoralis*
For more info on this amazing genus see <https://myrmecian.wordpress.com/2009/12/06/ptilocnemus-lemur-the-ant-assassin/>



Recent Sightings



Wood Scorpion, *Cercophonius squama* on the kitchen floor! These turn up every couple of years. - FP



Peron's Tree Frog, *Litoria peroni* has come to the lights on the verandah in March. Not recorded by me before. - FP



On my wanders through the bush I noticed a reddish tinge of blossom on the ground and looked up to see a splendid specimen of **Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendulum*)**. My next thought was that maybe if I was really lucky I would see a Mistletoebird. Next day while sitting near the bird bath I heard a rare but familiar call and there he was, the magnificent tiny **Mistletoebird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*)**. How special.
Carol Bonny

Barry

We have had whistlers at our place for a long time. In the past Golden Whistlers were often seen and heard. The Rufous Whistler was a more occasional visitor until recently. For the last 6 months or so a Rufous has adopted our block and his song can be heard most of the day. An early riser his calls are a wake-up call. At any time during the day as he does his rounds he visits and sings his little heart out. Nice you say? Well yes, the songs are delightful, but the visits are a bit more than a song fest. Any reflection gets him into action. Lots of vocalisation combined with pecking and generous deposits of excrement. The fly screens were off the windows for a few days for a splash of paint and the whistler was at the windows constantly complete with pecking and the poo splatter.

We have named our visitor 'Barry' after crooner Barry White and Barry is a bit of a terror. Any car mirror cannot be resisted and his vocal visit is accompanied by pecking and pooping. All mirrors must be wrapped in plastic bags as soon as you park. If you do not cover the mirrors Barry is right on it! I think he waits for us to drive in. Barry is a bastard! But we like him.

Alan Bonny





From the FIRE BRIGADE



Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

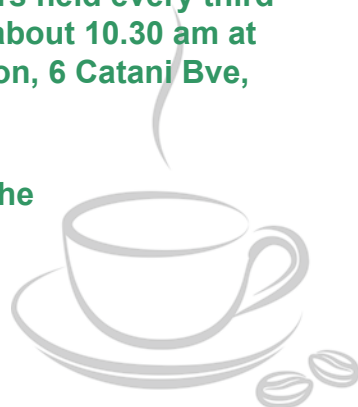
RECRUITING NOW!

Contact Captain Peter Rae on 0402 759 154

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



COMMENT

Belonging to BICA – it’s a bargain!

Being close to the BICA committee over the last few years (I sleep with one of the members!) I have become aware of the constant difficulties in trying to get members to renew or pay the paltry \$20 or \$30 or so a year? Why is it so?

By any account belonging is a bargain both in terms of services and activities provided but also in the advocacy and support the association brings to this community. I immediately think of the:

- monthly Landcare support that is provided free of charge to landowners and reserves in our area
- host of regular activities like the Bird Walks and Big Walks and Pub Walks and Flora walks and kids activities and Film nights and Night events which all add to the community well being
- special events like Clean up Australia day which over the years has had a great impact on the fencing and rubbish removal in the Bend
- campaigns like the eradication of many of the pine trees and other non-endemic species to try and preserve our zone as well as the work that went into the Land Management Plan
- constant monitoring and discussion with authorities like the Shire and road clearing, SP AusNet and power line clearing, Melbourne Water and appropriate weed control and a host of other meetings, communications and support behind the scenes which helps preserve what we have ... and don't we sometimes take it for granted?

Given all that it seems a small price to pay?

I know members struggle to remember to pay but how far do we have to go ... should there be daily email reminders? someone knocking on your door? A regular deduction of say 50c a week? Let the committee know if you have a solution to the vexed issue.

The money collected is put to good use with organising and supporting all of the above and all the admin costs needed but more importantly paid up members equals influence and the power of a strong association speaking on behalf of the community and trying to protect this great piece of the Green Wedge. Given the recent changes to the Council and the threats of over development that seem to hover over us or even creep down Henley Road, it is critical that we remain financial members.

Peter Mildenhall

Renew Your BICA Membership

CONTACT: RODRIGO:

rodrigoecv@hotmail.com



BICA 40th anniversary celebration. Pics by Barb Whiter



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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