

## WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

**Botanical name:**

*Lobelia pedunculata* s.l.

**Common name:** Matted Pratia

**Family:** Campanulaceae

**Flowering Period:**

Most of the year, peaking December to February.

**Sector:**

Found in the Yarra Sector of the Bend of Islands

A dense ground covering perennial herb, up to 10 cm high,

2 metres wide, found growing in the damp and wet soils of swampy & riparian habitats.

The loose mat of slender slightly hairy stems has tiny, stalkless, oblong to oval, dark green leaves, 2-10 mm long, with minutely toothed margins.

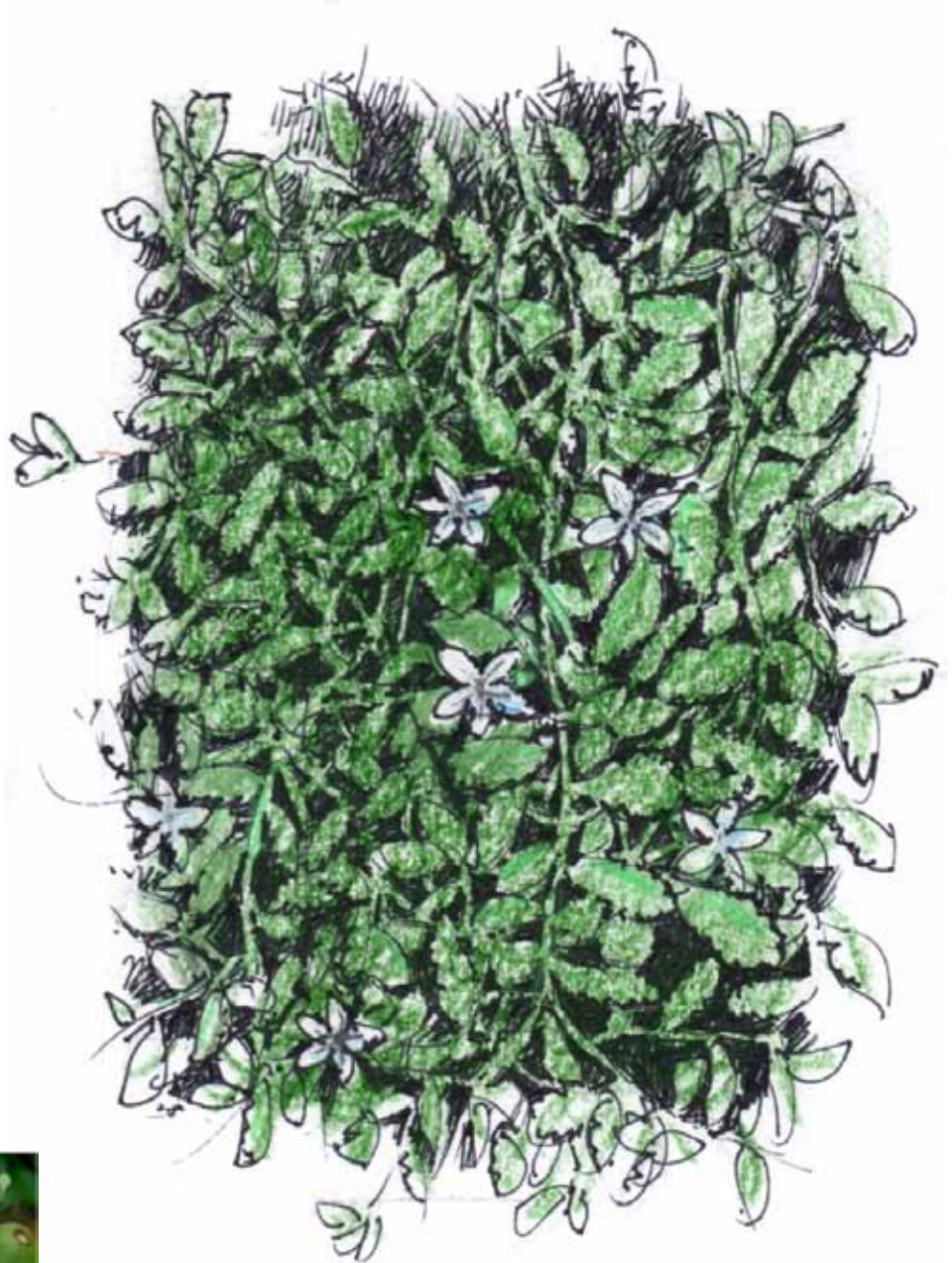
The prostrate stems creep or trail over the ground, taking root into the damp soil at the nodes, ("the place on the stem marked by a leaf or bract").

The single, small, pale blue, star-like flowers, are on the top of slender stalks, 3-100 mm long, arising from leaf axils.

Prefers very damp, poorly drained soils, accepts water up to 10 cm deep.

Provides food for insects.

**Cric Henry**





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have lived in the Bend of Islands for nearly 17 years now, with my partner Rudi, and more recently with our two children Jarrah and Ned. We love living in the Bend, watching the changes in season and enjoying its' peacefulness and beauty. We also love the sense of community, and living amongst "like-minded" people. It is a very special place which we should not take for granted!

This year, I have taken on the role of BICA President and have been on a steep learning curve! I have been truly impressed by the time, passion and energy of a committed group of community members, who work tirelessly to maintain our ELZ. People such as those on the planning sub-committee (Frank Pierce, Janet Mattiske, Carol and Alan Bonny, Deirdre Lucas and Robyn Duff) who keep an eye on a wide range of issues in our area, as well as a group of dedicated locals who become involved in small projects or volunteer to organise events. We all lead very busy lives and it would be terrific to see more people join in and participate.

The BICA Committee has some new (and returning) members this year. Including Pam McMahon (Vice President), Barb Whiter (Secretary), Rodrigo Castellanos (Treasurer), Glennis Bibra, Julie Martindale, Mike Pelling, Deirdre Lucas and Jo Henry. A great team, working quietly behind the scenes.

The committee has recently been delving into the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan, which is a large report that was developed by Dylan Osler and Karen Jolly, with the assistance of the Bend of Islands Conservation Steering Committee. This report is a detailed plan for maintaining biodiversity, informing vegetation management objectives and enhancing the ecological integrity of Bend of Islands. The current committee are intending to use the publication to develop some initiatives that we hope will provide some on-going educational opportunities for community members, as well as continue land management practises, such as planting, weeding and monitoring of flora and fauna.

Roadside vegetation management is an important ongoing task in the Bend, which identifies hazardous trees, maintains habitat and assists us all to move safely throughout the area by improving sight-lines around the bends of our roads. Some work will be done shortly by an environmental contractor to remove possible hazards in the tree canopy, as well as cut and paint re-growth of Burgan, which had been cleared previously. Two trial sites are also being planned, whereby appropriate vegetation will be planted to see if this helps to suppress Burgan re-growth in these areas. Thank-you to Liz Mildenhall for working with Nillumbik Council on this ongoing project.

We hope that all community members now have their own copy of the beautiful "Environmental Living in Bend of Islands" booklet, which was launched last year. If not, please contact a committee member, and we will get one to you.

There are many ways to keep informed about BICA events, access information or learn about issues that are important for our local and surrounding areas. There are the regular emails from the BICA Secretary, the Bend of Islands website ([bendofislands.wordpress.com](http://bendofislands.wordpress.com)) which is a terrific resource containing a wealth of information, and also the community "Bend of Islands" Facebook page. BICA also now has its' own Facebook page - look up "Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA)" and request to join as a friend! An easy way to stay connected.

The year ahead promises to be busy (as always), but please get involved in our community! We are lucky to live in an amazing corner of the world. The committee members and I look forward to seeing you soon at one of the upcoming events throughout the year – celebrating and protecting the environment in the Bend of Islands.

Sue Grad

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# BICA MATTERS

## BICA Community Involvement Report

Since the last Newsletter in October 2017, many activities have taken place.

**Pub Walk** - Nearly 20 Benders and some hangers on attended a memorable Pub Walk last October 29 to the Pantan Hill Pub (and met a few more there at the Pub!). We ended up looking forward to the drink after a 15km ramble out of the Bend along the Aqueduct track, out to the KG cemetery for a welcome break and then along bush tracks thru KG and Pantan Hill. Great work from all involved especially the youngsters!!



**October**- Cafe Benders featured a special morning for seniors, with Cindy McLeish attending. Positive feedback for the Bend of Islands was received.. Thanks to all helpers who helped make it such a successful morning.

**AGM**- A very informative and enjoyable talk was given on the Grey-Headed Flying Fox by Stephen Bend from National Parks Victoria.

**Night Event** - Again a great success with the locals showing their Musical skills. *See photos to right of page*

**Christmas Cafe Benders** - Wonderful singing and a visit by Santa handing out homemade goodies to eager little ones.

The year finished with a breakup gathering at the Warrandyte Pub.

**The New Year** started with the great Canoe run on our magnificent river. What a turnout -approx 40 people. *See next page for photos*

**Clean up Australia Day**- well worth the effort, cleaning up rubbish from our local roadsides and reserve, to fill a skip.

Thanks to all who put in time, effort and talent to organise these events.

We are always looking for new ideas for our annual calendar, especially events to promote our wonderful bushland and protect the habitat for our wildlife.

Look for regular emails and our new Facebook page for upcoming information.

Pam McMahon

# 2018 BICA CALENDAR

## May - October

### MAY

5-6 Artist Open Studio

27 The Big Walk

### JUNE

24 BICA General Meeting

### AUGUST

5 Wattle Walk

### SEPTEMBER

9 Art Event

### OCTOBER

7 Orchid Walk  
28 Pub Walk





## BICA Community Involvement. CANOE RUN



Hi all, here are a few pics of the canoe run. What a perfect day it was, which is why quite a few turned up (27 craft 40 people ). We broke the previous record of 16 craft. We'd like to thank Rob for letting us use his access point, quite a bit of traffic in & out to offload all the boats and thanks everyone for their patience and consideration in waiting to get down without a major traffic jam at the river. I think we managed to get everyone together on the water by 11-30 ish. If you haven't been down our river recently, I would like to point out that it is quite a challenging process negotiating the rapids especially if you are a first timer. I strongly suggest that you have a suitable boat and have been practising a bit before undertaking the canoe run. Having said that, we managed to get everyone to the end without any injuries. Thanks to Pete & Liz for the get out point and a great BBQ.

**Luke Doyle**





## WORKING WITH OUR SHIRE

### Funding

BICA has recently been successful in securing funding to employ a weed contractor for one week (with two people), to undertake follow-up works carried out in previous years throughout the escarpment areas of the Bend of Islands. This funding will target specific environmental weeds such as Bridal Creeper (\*Asparagus asparagoides) Boneseed (\*Chrysanthemoides monilifera), Sweet Pittosporum (#Pittosporum undulatum) and Blackberry (\*Rubus anglocandicans). This funding is important to ensure these difficult to reach areas are not overlooked.

Council have also provided BICA with just under 100 plants of the Round-leaf Pomaderris (*Pomaderris vacciniifolia*) to plant throughout the Bend. This indigenous species is listed as critically endangered nationally and the aim will be to establish populations in the Bend.

Jo Henry



### Roadside Management

BICA representatives have met with Open Space Team team at Nillumbik Shire Council and we advise that, some roadside vegetation works have already started in a number of sites in Catani Boulevard and will be followed up with works in Henley Road Extension and at Oxley Bridge

In Henley Road previously identified hazardous trees will be further assessed and managed. Specialist environmental contractors have been engaged, to cut and paint some Burgan to allow for safe sight-lines around bends in Catani Blvde and at Oxley Bridge

In keeping with our agreement with Council, all works will aim for minimal interference and habitat maintenance. The Burgan removed will be piled up and later chipped. Other cut material will be left on the ground for habitat. Two trial sites are also being planned, whereby appropriate vegetation will be planted to see if this helps to suppress Burgan re-growth in these areas.

Some markers have been put on plants in preparation for this work - if you see these markers, **please leave them in place.**

Any enquiries can be directed to Liz Mildenhall on 9712 0577 or [mildenhall2@bigpond.com](mailto:mildenhall2@bigpond.com)

## Landcare

The Bend of Islands Landcare group have continued their valuable work throughout the area. Recent projects undertaken by Landcare have included working on various private properties along Upper Catani Blvd and removing weeds such as non-local wattles, Blue-bell Creeper (\*Billardiera fusiformis), English Ivy (\*Hedera helix) and various weedy bulb species. Other works have included hand weeding Thistles (\*Cirsium vulgare) along the central gully line between the upper and lower Catani Blvd.

Thank you to the dedicated team who meet every third Sunday every month to carry out bushland restoration works in our area.

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.

Jo Henry



# HOW BEST TO MANAGE OUR BEND OF ISLANDS BUSH

In 2013 the Bol Land Management Plan (LMP) was produced by local ecologist Dylan Osler. This is an in-depth study of the environmental aspects of the Bol bush.

It is a great record of the current status of the environment at that time, and makes practical recommendations on how the ecological integrity of the area can best be maintained and improved.

The LMP was distributed on CD to all members. If you don't have one, contact a member of the BICA Committee.

However the dark side is that the LMP identifies that the biodiversity of our bush is under attack and degradation will worsen unless active management is adopted to protect threatened species and halt the invasion of weeds.

The LMP is a formidable document (309 pages). A subcommittee of those involved in the production of the LMP was formed and produced the Bol LMP Implementation Strategy. This was launched at the 2017 AGM and is available on the BICA website [HERE](#)



## Bend of Islands Land Management Plan

Karin Jolly and Dylan Osler

Ecological Perspectives

Prepared for the Bend of Islands Conservation Association

PO Box 1212 Kangaroo Ground VIC 3897



**B.I.C.A.** Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.  
GPO Post Office, Kangaroo Ground, Vic. 3897.

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### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

FOR

### BEND OF ISLANDS

### LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

#### CONTENTS

1. Strategy Summary
2. Background
3. Analysis of Issues Effecting

Strategy

- A. Landcare Annual Program
- B. Perimeter Issues\* for ELZ
- C. Authorities liaison
- D. Flora Management
- E. Fauna Management
- F. Resource Issues
- G. Publicity/Use
- H. Future Grants
4. Terms of Reference

*Inactivity, or passive management, is unlikely to arrest further population decline, and will fall short of securing the high quality and diversity of vegetation communities and taxa that persist.* & 1 Bend of Islands Land Management Plan

The aim of this document is to analyse the recommendations of the LMP and to highlight the key areas for active management by the community to best protect and improve the special environmental qualities of the Bol bush.

Much of this is guided by the BICA Committee and the Landcare group, including applying for grants for targeted actions. However, as residents of the Bol, we all have a responsibility for the management of our individual properties.

So How Can I Best Manage My Property?

We all lead busy lives and have limited resources. The array of issues to be tackled can be overwhelming, if they are not prioritised. The most effective way for residents to manage their property is to have a site specific Site Management Plan.

This can be achieved by applying to the Shire for a grant, under its Land Management Incentive Program, to engage Dylan Osler, (or another ecologist), to assess the particular issues on the property and to produce a practical targeted management plan that highlights the best areas for action consistent with the resources available. This gives positive direction for action and also the confidence that the time and effort spent will be as effective as possible.

If you need assistance to make an application, contact a member of the BICA Committee.

**Frank Pierce**



## Nillumbik Landcare Network Report

The Nillumbik Landcare Network (NLN) is made up of representatives from Nillumbik Landcare and local Friends groups. The NLN facilitator is Colin Broughton who is hosted by Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC). The group aims to advocate as a representative voice on behalf of local Landcare groups and manage/oversee the delivery of Shire-wide projects.

The NLN is overseeing a few projects at the moment –

- Finding and Saving Southern Toadlets and Other Frogs in Nillumbik,
- Recovery and Conservation of the Charming Spider Orchid
- Forest Health Monitoring project.

The NLN is also a delivery partner in NSC's Conservation Futures project, which aims to protect a number of threatened species on both public and private land in Nillumbik. Bol was fortunate to recently receive further funding from this grant (following on from funding received last year) which will allow local contractors to continue to tackle any recurring populations of environmental weeds along the river escarpment.

A series of local workshops have been held as part of the 'Finding and Saving Southern Toadlets and Other Frogs in Nillumbik' project. The most recent, held at Panton Hill, provided hands on activities for children to learn about frogs, their adaptations and habitat, with a particular focus on the Southern Toadlet. Try looking in your favourite app store for the Melbourne Water Frog Census app and give it a go!

As part of the Forest Health Monitoring project, a Bird Call Trivia Day was held in late March and encouraged local twitchers (including 4 from Bol) to put their bird call knowledge to work and identify sound files of bird calls collected during the project – including some collected from the two project sites in Bol.

As always, details of activities and workshops related to these projects will be sent to your inbox by the BICA Secretary.

The NLN is continuing its relationship with local Councillors. Two positive meetings last year allowed the NLN to present to Sugarloaf, Bunjil and Blue Lake ward Councillors regarding the environmental issues local Landcare groups had identified across the Shire.

These included roadside vegetation management, pest plant local law education and compliance program, review of the Green Wedge Management Plan plus the extension of existing support. A meeting scheduled for mid-April will allow Councillors to report back to the NLN about progress made towards realisation of the opportunities for collaboration and support relating to the above issues.

And finally, watch this space – who knows what exciting projects may pop up in the coming months!

If you have any questions, or would like further information, please contact Deirdre through the BICA Secretary – [bicacomm@gmail.com](mailto:bicacomm@gmail.com)

- Deirdre Lucas

## Green Wedge Management Plan [GWMP] Review process

The Nillumbik Shire Council has outlined the process for their Review of the GWMP process as seen below. More information can be obtained by checking the [Nillumbik Shire website](#) or Contact a member of the BICA Committee or Planning Sub Committee

### [Stages 1 & 2] Designing (Apr-May18) and Implementing (May-Jul18) the broader Community Engagement Plan.

During Apr-Jul 2018 [Stages 1 & 2], Council officers and an internal "design team" (consisting of selected members of various Council Advisory Groups, such as from 'Economic Development', 'Environment') as well as stakeholders have started 'designing a community engagement plan and process' to capture in a report 'what we heard' (community concerns and aspirations).

### [Stage 3] Community Panel (Aug-Oct18).

During Aug-Oct18 [Stage 3] members of a "Community Panel" (consisting of 40 residents/ratepayers randomly selected from a database) will be presented with the wider community engagement ('what we heard') report and attend 4 or 5 workshops from mid-August to mid-October to make recommendations to Councillors relating to their vision, objectives and key actions for managing the green wedge.

### [Stage 4] Preparing the new Green Wedge Management Plan (Oct-Apr2019).

At the October Ordinary Council Meeting, the Panel report detailing the vision, objectives and key actions will be presented to and accepted by Council. At the November Ordinary Council Meeting, Council will consider and respond to the Panel recommendations, and consider the draft Green Wedge Management Plan for final community consultation.

Dec18-Feb19: 3 months community consultation.

Mar19: At the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting, Council will consider community submissions.

Apr19: Council considers and adopts The Green Wedge Management Plan.

### BICA Planning Sub- Committee



## Weed Busters

At our February Committee meeting we were looking at ways to assist and inspire people living in the Bend to take an interest in the subject of weeds, in particular those that may be growing under our noses without us even recognising that they are weeds.

When I first moved to the Bend in late 2016 I asked Marie if she could come over one day and walk through my place with me to point out what was not necessarily meant to be there. An hour or so later we'd covered it and I had a list of weeds as well as a better idea of what they looked like in real life (as opposed to what they look like in a book). Many thanks go to Marie. It was a very useful introduction to the local flora and it got me thinking.

The committee (well, me, as I offered to do it and I have been a bit slow getting going on it) is now working on compiling a list of local Weed Busters, people with plenty of local knowledge and experience, who would be willing to visit properties on request and assist people to identify weeds and give some advice on effective ways to tackle them.

So stay tuned. If you think you'd like to be a Weed Buster or make use of a Weed Buster once we're up and running, please be in touch. You can call me direct on 0403 184 153 for more information.

**Julie Martindale**  
BICA Committee member

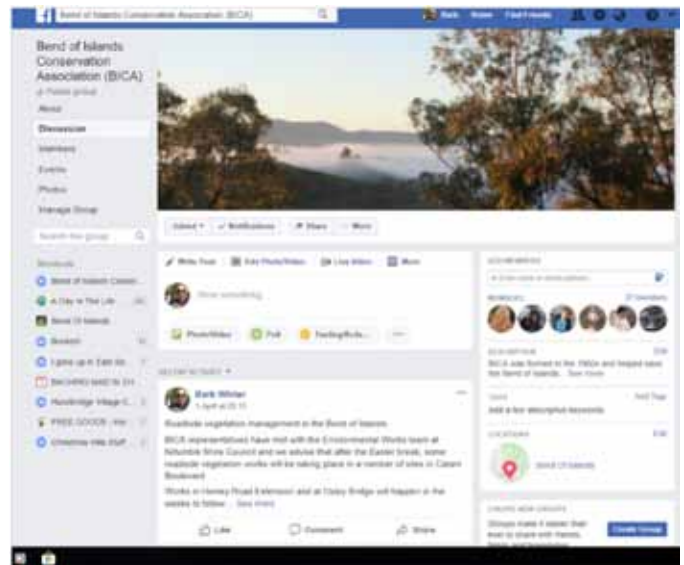
## We're on Facebook!

by Barb Whiter

We email you, and there's our web page too ...

We upload BICA events to the Bend of Islands Facebook community page – now there's another way to hear about what your BICA Committee is doing ... join Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA) on their own Facebook page!

Underneath the page photo when you find it the first word will be "Join" and that's the click we'd like you to make.



Nillumbik Shire Council, at its last Ordinary Council Meeting, endorsed the details about how it planned to go about its review of the Green Wedge Management Plan. And waiting in the wings is also the Melbourne Water review of its land holdings in Christmas Hills.

These are two local and important reviews – we all need to know what's being planned on our behalf. Want to be involved? Do we want to be part of the planning and reviewing to ensure the result embodies our values?

We want to be able to keep you up-to-date with what BICA is dealing with on your behalf and we want you to be taking part too.

Join up and we'll keep the information coming!

The Committee would like to share with you all the local news that comes to hand.

## Some local humour







## Records of Locally Rare Native Vertebrate Fauna



We have comprehensive records of the Birds in the Bol, and good records of many of the invertebrates. The recent spate of Goanna sightings in the Bol highlights that we don't have a system for recording the Locally Rare Native Vertebrate Fauna. So I thought I might get the ball rolling, so that we can at least document what we have in living memory.

As a starting point, I took the list of Native Vertebrate Fauna in the BICA brochure. From this I eliminated the species that I have recorded more than 3 times in the last 20 years. I then filled in all the sighting details that I know of the remaining species.

This list, which should be treated as the initial attempt at an on-going 'living document', is now on the [website](#). If anyone has any further records of these species or thinks that other species should be included, please email me the details, including an 'ID photo' or two if possible, at [jmandfp@bigpond.com](mailto:jmandfp@bigpond.com).

Here are a few general points relating to the list and records: -

- Those who live by the river will probably have many records of Platypus etc. so these will probably go off the list pretty quickly, unless we decide to retain some species that are recorded more regularly.
- Photos are a bonus to any record, usually making it instantly verifiable. So it would be good to have an 'ID photo' attached to the record. I've started a "Bol Rare Fauna Record Pics" folder that can go on the BICA website as we progress.
- Records without photos are also certainly worth recording.
- Photos of the recent 4 Goanna sightings show that it is the same beast rather than 4 different individuals. This is a good example of the benefits of getting a photo if at all possible. Photos only need to be good enough to aid in the species ID, i.e. 'record quality', not 'publish quality'
- I have no knowledge or experience of our native fish, (except the Short-finned Eel); our native bats (except Grey Headed Flying-fox and Lesser Long-eared Bat) so input from anyone with knowledge/records of the local species would be very welcome.
- It is quite hard to distinguish between a Platypus and a Water Rat when they are seen swimming in the river, refer to [THIS LINK](#) for more info.
- The Goanna records are developing into a significant example of the use of the WSP-KLNP Habitat Link. Who knows what changes due to climate change will be revealed if good future records are established.
- All significant records should ultimately go to ALA (the Atlas of Living Australia).

The Table below is a reduced version of the one on the BICA website which should be referred to for the additional 5 Frog, 6 Fish and 9 Bat Species.

Comments and suggestions on this proposal are welcome. **Frank Pierce**

### Bend of Islands Rare Native Fauna Records

SPECIES	DATE	LOCATION	PHOTO	COMMENTS
<b>Snakes</b>				
Lowland Copperhead Eastern Brown Snake	2016	Yanakie	N	FP-Juvenile
<b>Lizards</b>				
Bougainville's Skink				
Lace Monitor (Goanna)	2018-3-6	796 Henley Rd (Bonny's)	Y	Same individual as 2017 -12-17
	2018-2-18	800 Henley Rd (Osler's)	Y	Same individual as 2017 -12-17
	2018-2-12	21 Gongflers (Pauli's)	Y	Same individual as 2017 -12-17
	2017-12-17	777 Henley Rd (Flavia's)	Y	
	2011-12-6	97 Catani Blvd	Y	Meg & John McCallum
	2009	777 Henley Rd	N	Mia Stevens
	1985	Near 571 Henley Rd	N	John McCallum
	1970s	On Co-op	N	Dean Rouse on Co-op
<b>Turtles</b>				
Macquarie Turtle	2015-12-17	Yarra at ND NR	Y	FP
	1018-2-26	Yarra at ND NR	Y	FP - a pair
<b>Monotremes</b>				
Platypus				
<b>Marsupials</b>				
Common Dunnart				Old VBA records
Feathertail Glider	1990's 1980's	275 Catani Blvd (Rae's) Aqueduct nth of B track		Dead specimen found Cam Beardsell- NEROC
<b>Placental Mammals</b>				
Water rat	2013-2-10	Yarra near 414 henley Rd	Y	FP- Dead specimen found
Bush rat				
Swamp rat				

**NOTE:** Refer to website for full list that includes 5 frog, 6 fish and 9 bat species



## Jarrah's Lace Monitor Sighting

It all started when I was sitting on the couch reading a book; I heard a noise outside on the stones. I looked there, unaware that I was just about to see one of the Bend of Islands most beautiful, fastest tree-climbing, most fascinating and rarest seen reptiles.

The shock sent me in to a long train of thought. At first I thought it was the Blue Tongued Lizard that lives near our house (aka "Bernie"), but it was too big. Then I thought that it could have been a Komodo dragon but it was too small and they don't live in this area. I ended up shouting out, "Big lizard!" to Dad and Ned (who were doing a jigsaw puzzle in the same room). As they came over, Dad immediately identified it as a Lace Monitor!



The Lace Monitor jumped through a hole in the wire fence and speedily climbed up a tree. After a while it climbed down and up another one.

We took a few photos of it and Dad put it on the Bend of Islands Facebook page. I am glad that the Lace Monitor chose our place on 12TH February, and I hope others see it and I see some more.

**By Jarrah Pauli (age 10)**



## BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since November 2017.

### Lyrebird Records

12 new Lyrebird records have been reported. 5 in the gully north of Henley Rd near Taylor's/Hatty's; 1 east of Krause's and 6 on Stevenson Creek north of C Track on the Co-op.

We now have 306 Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. Details and analysis (including a map locating each record) can be found on the BICA Website.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. Our records 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, November and December we saw **Scarlet Honeyeaters** as part of their 'southern irruption'. A flock of 30+ Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos was another highlight in October at Yanakie. In February a **Black-eared Cuckoo** was a new Bol record (see Gavin's article for more details). This is another example of northern birds moving south, probably due to climate change.

### Other Interesting Observations

**Eastern Rosellas** bred next to Frank & Janet's house last season, but most chicks were killed by a Sugar Glider (full story in the 4-17 Newsletter). This season they bred again in the same tree hollow, laying 6 eggs, 3 of which hatched. There was no sign of interference by Sugar Gliders, and the 3 chicks that were raised all fledged successfully.



The **White-throated Nightjar** was very active on the Co-op this season and was heard calling on many occasions. Its nest site was not found despite considerable searching.

The **big dam on Yanakie** usually has a good variety of waterbirds, but this season there were almost none. This can be explained by the very wet Spring providing lots of breeding opportunities elsewhere. It demonstrates that this dam is used as a refuge in dry times and the birds like to vary their locations if possible, maybe to keep the predators guessing.

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 2017.

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](mailto:jmandfp@bigpond.com) - especially Lyrebirds.

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

## BICA had a very exciting bird survey in February of this year!

Placed in the north of Melbourne, Bend of Islands is part of the Highlands-Southern Fall biogeographic region (bioregion). Victorian Bioregion and EVC Benchmarks

This links us to a suite of flora and fauna that extends along the southern edge of the Divide into Gippsland. So, we tend to have lots species in common with the Dandenong Ranges and the wet forests further to the East. However, we are close to a junction of two other of the 21 Victorian bioregions: the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Central Victorian Uplands. This means that some of our local plants and animals are linked to species more widely across southern Victoria to the South Australian border and north into the centre of the state. This puts us in a location with a wide diversity of species.

Our irregularly recorded birds tend to be those that move down from the Hills in the winter such as **Pink** (*Petroica rodinogaster*) and **Rose Robins** (*Petroica rosea*) and **Olive Whistler** (*Pachycephala olivacea*) or those that come down the east coast such as the **Common Cicadabird** (*Coracina tenuirostris*) **White-throated Gerygone** (*Gerygone olivacea*) or **Red-browed Treecreeper** (*Climacteris erythroptis*). The recent irruption of **Scarlet Honeyeaters** (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) in spring was another example of this with the birds turning up like this approximately every 10-20 years. But, we also get birds from the dry inland.

Many years in spring, we have visits from **White-Browed** (*Artamus superciliosus*) and **Masked Woodswallows** (*Artamus personatus*). These birds are common in northern and western Victoria and throughout the inland. In summer, we have occasional visits from migratory **Fork-tailed Swifts** (*Apus pacificus*), often with unusual weather events, such as the late hot spell in the middle of March 2018 when a large flock of 100 birds was recorded. But, to the point!

Cuckoos are a common and, in spring, vocal part of our local bird community. Until this year there have been seven species recorded locally. They fall into three groups, two of which contain commonly recorded locally breeding birds:

Bronze- cuckoos	
Shining Bronze-cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx lucidus</i>
Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	( <i>Chrysococcyx basalis</i> )

Cacomantis Cuckoos	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	( <i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i> )
Pallid Cuckoo	( <i>Cacomantis pallidus</i> )
Brush Cuckoo	( <i>Cacomantis variolosus</i> )

Then there are two large fruit-eating cuckoos the **Australian Koel** (*Eudynamis orientalis*) which has become a regular Melbourne bird over the past 5 years and the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*). a nest parasite on magpies and currawongs that was recorded for the first time locally last year. All of these birds are either present throughout Australia or are mostly birds of the wet eastern forests.

In February, for the first time, the bird survey recorded a **Black-eared Cuckoo** (*Chrysococcyx osculans*), a bird from the dry inland. This is an easterly record for the species. It was a young bird but was probably not hatched locally. While plain in colour, it is a member of the Bronze-cuckoos. This now means that we have recorded every Victorian cuckoo in The Bend.



This was a surprise and may be a once off event however, it reminds us to be alert for unusual species. The bird survey happens every month on the second Sunday with all BICA members welcome to join in.

Gavin Masters



# KOALA(S) GALORE

My very first koala encounter was with a cute little fellow who sat on our dining table. He was a knitted tea cosy. There were slits for the teapot handle and spout, and he had four little paws attached directly to his grey furry body.

But every 1950s Melbourne kid knew that the place to see real koalas was on the way to Phillip Island. Koalas seemed to favour the forks in trees beside the sharpest bends in the road, and we always added to the hazard by getting out of the car and following the gaze of other families already assembled. After we'd had our fill of fascination we'd drive on to our destination with potentially award-winning photos on the film in our cameras, which somehow always turned out later to be shots of disappointingly small distant dots.

Soon after I first moved to the ELZ in the late eighties there was a ring-around to come and look at a koala in a tree somewhere along Skyline Road. A koala in my own neighbourhood! I was very impressed. I heard of no further sightings for several years and assumed that koala presence in the ELZ was rare and fleeting.

On Melbourne Cup Day 2007 Barb and I were at the kitchen sink washing up after breakfast when we saw a large koala getting along our driveway on all fours in front of the kitchen window. We rushed outside with our cameras which elicited a predictable response from our *Phascolarctos cinereus* – he took to the nearest tree. His rather hasty choice was a fairly puny eucalypt with no great height, which provided us with a good photo opportunity. A koala on our very own property – we hadn't expected that in our wildest dreams.



Cup Day Koala 2007 photo: Barb Whiter

Nearly nine years later on Tuesday 8 March 2016 we were driving home along Henley Road at 11.30pm after a night out when we spotted a koala sitting on the road in front of us, about midway between Andrew and Yasemin Maxwells' and the Telstra multiplexer. With our headlights on him/her and the engine running he/she was probably a little confused, but casually alternated between sitting and moving about as we took very poor low-light videos through a dirty windscreen with our mobile phones. After quite some deliberation it took off in the direction of the trees on the Maxwells' side of the road, towards the Yarra.



Photo: Barb Whiter.

[CLICK HERE](#) for some phone video of this koala

We thought we had probably seen our share of koalas for another ten years or so when, on 11 December the same year around 8pm we heard that ominous koala mating call, which reminded me to put my chainsaw in for service because the carburettor was flooding during starting attempts. We found our man just beyond the veggie garden and he posed for photos. We rang Keith Atwood next door, but by the time Keith arrived at the spot halfway between our place and his the koala was already searching somewhere else for a lady. He taunted us with a call from across the road in Jo and Gerard's place.

Just a fortnight or so later, in January 2017, a koala – it's tempting to think it would be the same one – took up temporary residence in our Henley Road backyard not far from the house. On most evenings we found him there in different trees but around the same spot, although some days he played dirty little stop-out and must have been shackled up somewhere else.



Photo: Barb Whiter. Our backyard koala in Henley Rd, Jan 2017

[CLICK HERE](#) for phone video of this koala on flimsy branch in the wind

So regular was our guest during January 2017 that we started referring to him as our koala, but then we found other ELZers who insisted he was their koala! So, are we all sharing the same koala or



## KOALA(S) GALORE continued



On the way to breakfast in the gully, 21 Nov 2017 Photo: Barb Whiter

are there several? Do they live in the ELZ or are they just moving along their designated wildlife corridor? If there is at least one male here during the summer mating season does that infer there should be at least one female? I'm sure our big fella would like to think so.

Our latest sighting was on Tuesday 21 November last year, on the ground behind our house at 08.40 in the morning, heading off to breakfast towards our south gully.

One would expect that an environmental living zone in a dry sclerophyll forest with a variety of tasty eucalypts and a low-density spread of humans who aim to encourage the natural flora and fauna would be an attractive proposition to any smart koala, so it's tempting to think there might be several home ranges here in our collective backyard.

I asked residents around our ELZ if they'd seen or heard a koala recently. The mating season from October to March seems to be the most likely time to come across one. Norm Parris spotted one on the south side of A Track in the Round the Bend Conservation Co-op last October. It was there for a few hours one afternoon and gone by the next morning.



Photo: Norm Parris

January this year was a popular month, with a sighting by Alwyn Hanson on Henley Road extension, and calling heard by Shayne Parris on the Co-op's A Track, two calling each other at Neil and Jenny Taylor's and a male/female duet at the Bonnys' on Henley Road extension.

Tom Fisher reported having seen a koala in a tree behind neighbours Nathan White and Sally Dinan's house in Upper Catani Boulevard about a year ago, but not since. He told me this at 6.35 last Friday evening. Forty minutes later Tom rang back to say that Carol Ann had just heard one bellowing at their place at that very minute. Suddenly the theme from The Twilight Zone started playing in my head!

But most people I asked haven't seen or heard one for three to ten years. Syd Tunn and Ona Henderson saw a very old grumpy male koala along Watson's Creek three years ago. There are very large, old manna gums near their house, along with swamp gums and small leaf peppermints. If I was a koala, that's where I'd hang out.

In the May 2013 BICA Newsletter Chris and Petra O'Neill contributed a photo of a koala crossing Henley Road on the west side of Oxley Bridge, perhaps heading to the smorgasbord at Syd and Ona's.

Up the road in Lower Catani Boulevard Tony and Robina Summers have only heard one once in the last five years. Some years ago there was often one – and sometimes two – koalas near their house. Robina wonders if the drought-affected trees have lost their gourmet rating for discerning koalas.



'Possessed' Koala on A track  
Photo: Alan Bartram

And who could ever forget the Bartrams' "possessed" koala on A Track, in December 2015, in Alan Bartram's Bend of Islands Facebook post?

Sue Grad and Rudi Pauli had one visiting them regularly in Gongflers Drive about five years ago. It harvested a particular tree so thoroughly that the tree eventually died, which seems a bit counter-productive.

Also about five years ago Mike Pelling saw one outside his house in Ironbark Road. Mike wonders if the Yarra cuts off movement between the Warrandyte State Park koala population and ours. A YouTube search quickly demonstrates that koalas can swim, but I'm left with the impression that they would rather not.

In the April 2010 BICA Newsletter Deidre Lucas and Michael Scroggie wrote about a koala who returned to their Upper Catani Boulevard woodshed daily for nearly two weeks in early February of that year.

One of the challenges for us novices trying to make meaningful observations about our sightings is figuring out what gender a koala is. Male koalas have a scent gland on their chests which starts as a subtle brown mark when



## KOALA(S) GALORE continued

they're young and becomes a big brown stain as they age. To confuse the issue, females also have a fold in their chest fur, but without a brown mark. Males also have visible testicles. Trouble is, these features are often obscured by tree branches and foliage. Knowing the difference between male and female koala calls can be helpful, but unless you hear both together this too can be confusing. The male emits a series of baritone grunts, whereas the female expresses her opinion with a contralto growl. And, to the uninitiated, the call of a male brushtail possum might easily be mistaken for a koala. ([Click for male koala mating call](#))

Michael Scroggie has charted koala records in our local wildlife corridor over the last six decades, using data from the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) project. The data is dependent on the number of people who report their sightings, which is where you and I can play a role. The decline in numbers in the last two decades might simply be due to less records submitted. Michael points out that the 2010s panel aligns more or less with the post-Black Saturday period, and thinks that the fact that there are still koala records throughout the Kinglake-Warrandyte corridor is encouraging for the future.

To record your next koala sighting with the Atlas of Living Australia project, go to [www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au), scroll down to Participate, then Record a Sighting.

After signing in or creating an account you will be able to record your sighting. Zoom in on the map to pinpoint the location of your sighting. Click the Draw a marker button on the left and then click your sighting spot to mark it. The latitude and longitude will then automatically be entered. Add any relevant information and/or a photo, select the date and time (it allows backdated events to be entered) and click Submit. Easy! And helpful.

I wonder how often we all walk around our beautiful bush and just don't notice a koala quietly snoozing high above us?

Anyway, I'm glad we only spot these marvellous marsupials once in a blue moon, because that makes their sightings a special treat. How lucky we are to live in a bit of bush that is largely free of introduced predators, allowing wombats, echidnas, phascogales, possums, koalas, kangaroos and even the occasional lyrebird, to stroll/hop/dart past our back doors.

In addition to the Atlas of Living Australia website, there are some handy books and websites with koala information, including:

Koala – Origins of an Icon, by biologist Dr Stephen Jackson, first published 2007, Allen & Unwin (available at Eltham library). A book detailing the history, ecology, behaviour, and ongoing threats to the existence of koalas.

DELWP,

<https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/koalas>

This includes The Victorian Koala management strategy.

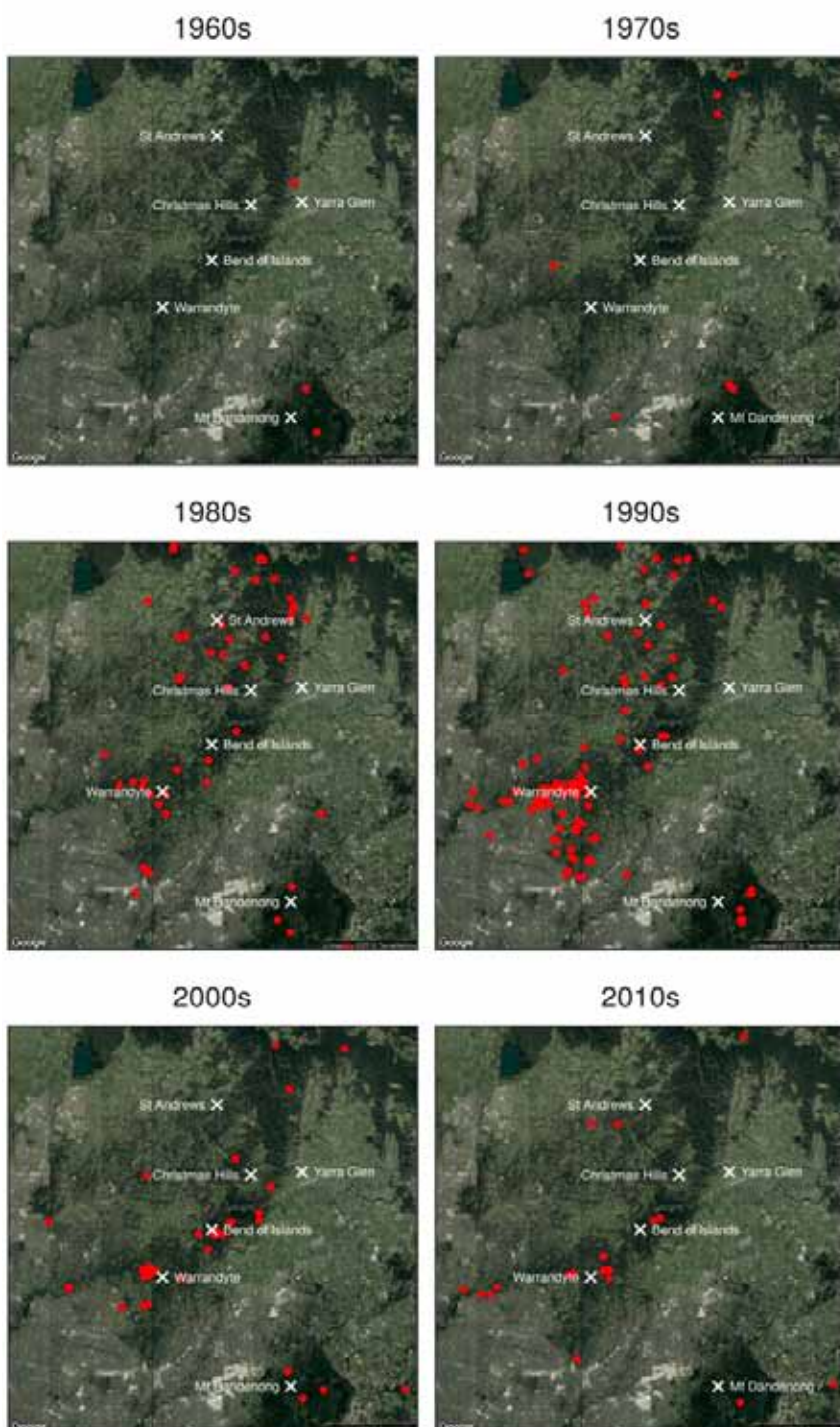
Australian Koala Foundation, [www.savethekoala.com](http://www.savethekoala.com)  
A Koala facts and conservation site.

Koala Clancy Foundation,

<https://koalacancyfoundation.org.au>

A koala information site that might appeal to younger naturalists. Koala Clancy also has his own Facebook page.

**Alan Bluhm**





## These elusive Djeri Grubs



Australia has long promoted itself by way of the Flying Kangaroo. Why then had the Wurundjeri been content in defining themselves by way of a Grub which turns into a beetle?

Known to present day entomologists as *Omates erosicollis*, the local longhorn beetle [pictured] had long been held in high regard by the *Wurundjeri* of the Yarra Valley. The first syllable of the name "*Wurundjeri*" derives from the Manna Gum, (known to them as the *Urun* tree). Its second syllable derives from the pupae of the pictured beetle known to them as the "*Djeri grub*", hence the name "*Wurundjeri*".

For more years than I can remember, I had searched for resolution of this weird association between an insignificant -grub and a proud people and had eventually found them in December 2000 whilst preparing the Gawa Aboriginal Trail on Watson's Creek for its formal opening the following January. A wind-storm some weeks earlier had uprooted a number of Manna saplings which we'd then decided to cut into two metre lengths for re-erection as totem poles for walkers to imprint with their paint-dipped palms.

Whilst stripping away the bark, I'd spotted a series of decorative patterns etched into the underlying sapwood which to me appeared to resemble motifs occasionally seen carved into surviving *Wurundjeri* weaponry. At the time I'd been too busy to collect a djeri specimen which had been a mere 15 mm long and, as such, too small to be assessed as a food resource, which seems to leave only the intricate etchings which the *Wurundjeri* may well have believed to be messages dispatched to them from Bunjil.

Some months ago I arranged for Brad Tadday, Nillumbik's head ecologist, to locate a specimen which he had then forwarded on to Ken Walker, Melbourne Museum's lead Entomologist who has since identified it as the pupae of the above *Omates erosicollis*, Longhorn Beetle belonging to the Genus *Cerambycidae* which appear to occur only in south-central Victoria (in *Wurundjeri* country?).

There remain then the questions:

1. Are Djeri grubs unique to *Wurundjeri* Country?
2. Had the *Djeri* beetles two antenna perhaps been understood by the *Wurundjeri* to be spears?
3. Had the grub's carvings been understood to be messages from *Bunjil*?
4. Do these designs bear any relationship to the emblem/motifs appearing on *Wurundjeri* spears, boomerang, etc?
5. Do *Djeri* grubs appear only in *Eucalyptus viminalis cygnetensis* gums?

Mick Woiod, March 2018

## The eagle has landed

It is not often that your attention is diverted from the usual worries about potholes in Henley road, how it seems to be getting too narrow or whether a kangaroo or even a wombat will be in the wrong place. But recently on the 21st, late morning, as I headed back into the "Bend", I was admiring the structure of the new building being built on a pole like structure, complete with blue treated frame timbers. It had emerged from the side of a steep hill to the north of Henley road very quickly, and probably almost completed the occupation of that large sub divided area that was open pasture land. It is hard to believe that some two properties once existed, from the Henley road entry to Calwell road, and that the aqueduct, more or less splitting this area was once full of water that supplied Melbourne.



It was a calm day, sunny and my senses and responses had been optimised by a mandatory hot latte made by a real barista. I was out of the morning SUV car races as it was later in the day, and I was going in the opposite direction anyway, so I had time to gain a holistic view at the time.

Suddenly I glanced across the road, nearly opposite that new building and was amazed to see a rare sight I believe. There it was, fully grown, drawn to full height on two tree-like legs enjoying, I think, the results of a road kill. Not a wombat or kangaroo but something smaller, perhaps a rabbit and it seemed to be behind the road fence, but I could not stop to photograph the event as there was traffic behind me and I do not trust my ancient i-phone to take photos. It would have made a fantastic photo being a blend of shimmering bronze-like and black plumage. Yes, it was a Wedge-tailed Eagle, but on the ground and almost in the Bend! Maybe you saw it too?

Mike Pelling



## Invertebrate Sightings

### Could this be the YEAR OF THE ANTLION LACEWING?

I have had 6 new records of Antlion Lacewings species for the Bol, since the start of the year. *Myrmeleon pictifrons* was a new species record for Victoria.

Each record has been uploaded to **BowerBird** and from there it goes to **ALA**, the Atlas of Living Australia, where it is preserved with all other records known to science.



1. *Myrmeleon pictifrons*



2. *Periclystus circuter*



3. *Bandidus canifrons*



4. *Heoclisis fundata*



5. *Bandidus brevisculus*



6. *Dendroleon longipennis*

I have also made a few other interesting sightings



7. *Chloroclystis catastreptes*



8. *Isodontia* Grass-carrying Wasp



9. *Campion rubellus*

More photos and details can be viewed on the BowerBird reports via the links below: -

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | <i>Myrmeleon pictifrons</i>              | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/104026">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/104026</a> |
| 2. | <i>Periclystus circuter</i>              | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/104022">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/104022</a> |
| 3. | <i>Bandidus canifrons</i>                | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105004">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105004</a> |
| 4. | <i>Heoclisis fundata</i>                 | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105537">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105537</a> |
| 5. | <i>Bandidus brevisculus</i>              | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105600">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105600</a> |
| 6. | <i>Dendroleon longipennis</i>            | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105697">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105697</a> |
| 7. | <i>Chloroclystis catastreptes</i> - Moth | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/103213">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/103213</a> |
| 8. | <i>Isodontia</i> Grass-carrying Wasp     | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/103896">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/103896</a> |
| 9. | <i>Campion rubellus</i> -Mantid lacewing | <a href="http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105027">http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/105027</a> |

Frank Pierce





## What the frass?

The week before the predicted Total Fire Ban day on Saturday 17 March, Alan and I were outside raking, clearing gutters and natural drainage slopes of the build-up of what seemed like tons of leaves and branches.

I was beavering away in the mess of shrubs which protect direct sight into our house from the driveway when I came across this:



Then further up the branch with a smaller branch obviously dead.



First seen at the base of a straggly Prickly Moses acacia

My first thought, after a little investigation, was that I should just pull it out as it was obvious whatever that brown goo was; it wasn't good for the acacia. But, my second thought was, I'll ask Frank! He knows about stuff like this!

So a couple of photos attached to a quick email query and I waited confidently for my answer. But, the impossible happened ... Frank didn't know! So, Frank sent another email to a wider brains trust in the Bend.

And Tserin came back with the answer:  
"It's frass from a borer, the acacia's days are numbered I'm afraid ..."

Well, being a person who loves a dictionary I decided to find out what I could about this new word Tserin had introduced me to.

**British Dictionary definition – frass /fræs/**  
noun

1. excrement or other refuse left by insects and insect larvae

**Word origin**  
noun

1. insect excrement, 1854, from German frasz, from root of fressen "to devour, to eat as a beast does"

This brought about another query from me with the mention of "borer" – should I leave the straggly acacia in the ground till it dies or pull it out now? "Nah, just leave it, it's part of the way of nature" – was the consensus from the brains trust.

Thanks everyone - it's wonderful what you can learn about here in the Bend!

**Barb Whiter**



## Emergency +

Driving home on a beautiful autumnal evening, stunning colours in the sky to the west, with glimpses of fabulous shapes silhouetted against this backdrop. I thought "WOW that is a photo asking to be taken." So I parked my car at the nearest convenient spot and walked back down the side of this country road looking for the optimal spot to capture what I'd glimpsed. The bitumen edge of the road dropped about 10 cm to the dirt drain which then dropped away as well. Suddenly I found myself flat on my face. I had rolled an ankle off the edge of the bitumen with no hope of recovering my balance because of the drop and the shape of the land.

Luckily I wasn't badly injured but it did remind me about the issue of calling ambulances and accurately being able to direct one to the point of an accident or incident. Many of us go bush walking, travelling and perhaps could become flustered if a loved one is injured or suffering. Would we be able to accurately explain where we were if we weren't at home?

**Emergency+** is an app that enables anyone to give accurate information to emergency services. It also provides direct numbers for Poisons, crime stoppers etc. If everyone downloaded this app it could save lives.

**Kay Hawkins**



## WELCOME TO THE BEND

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

Carmel & David Macdonald-Grahame  
Nicole Gatzoubarios  
Karen Throssell

### CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: [bicacomm@gmail.com](mailto:bicacomm@gmail.com)

BICA Website: [www.bendofislands.wordpress.com](http://www.bendofislands.wordpress.com)

Keep in touch with local Nillumbik environmental activities

Subscribe to FRINGE FOCUS

Complete an online registration from [Environmentalevents@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Environmentalevents@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

Or call 9433 3316

Thank you to all who have contributed to this Newsletter

Keep sending in your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands  
[jmandfp@bigpond.com](mailto:jmandfp@bigpond.com)

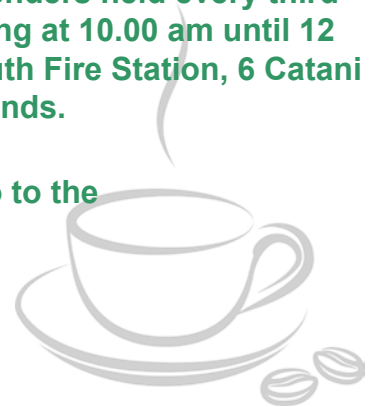
Editor: Janet Mattiske  
Design and Layout; Greg Phillips

Renew Your BICA Membership  
CONTACT: RODRIGO:  
[rodrigoecv@hotmail.com](mailto:rodrigoecv@hotmail.com)

## CAFE BENDERS

Come and join us for Coffee and Cake at Café Benders held every third Saturday, starting at 10.00 am until 12 noon at the South Fire Station, 6 Catani Bv, Bend of Islands.

All proceeds go to the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade



CHRISTMAS HILLS FIRE BRIGADE

## FIREY'S BALL



### BUSH DANCE

Saturday April 21st 6-11 pm

at The Hall  
787 Ridge Rd Christmas Hills

\$25 entry (12 & under free)  
Bring a plate to share please  
Bar drinks only  
Auction of Goodies!

GYPSY BAND WITH DANCE CALLER

Tickets at the door or from  
Veronica 9730 1823  
[veronicaholland@netspace.net.au](mailto:veronicaholland@netspace.net.au)  
Ross 9712 0547  
[rosscric@gmail.com](mailto:rosscric@gmail.com)

The Firey's Ball is a fundraiser towards a new ultralight vehicle and a fundraiser for the community to show its support