

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Olearia lirata*

Common name: Snowy Daisy-bush

Family: Asteraceae

Flowering Period: August to December

Medium sized shrub, up to 3 metres tall and 1-2 metres wide, shrub size will vary depending on site conditions. Found in Riparian habitats, tolerates semi shade to full shade and prefers moist well drained soils.

An open shrub with soft grey-green foliage, greyish-white branchlets and undersides of leaves with fine, dense star-shaped hairs. Leaves are shiny dark green on top side, pointed lanceolate, i.e. lance-shaped, tapering at each end, up to 35mm long and 16mm wide. Leaves are smooth above with depressed mid and lateral veins, with downy white undersides. This shrub is a food plant for caterpillars.

Flowers consist of profuse clusters of white "daisy-like" flowers. Flowerheads are 12-25mm across in loose terminal panicles 10-16mm white ray florets, 9-14mm cream to yellow disc florets.

An attractive shrub for the garden suited to a shady moist position. It will tolerate drier conditions once established. Pruning after flowering will prevent "legginess" to encourage bushiness and profuse flowering.- **Jo & Tobey Henry**





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another year has whizzed past, and BICA has been working to help support, protect and promote our Bend.

You may have noticed the Weed Sign on the sign tree at Oxley Bridge. This was an initiative that the committee worked on to promote some of the information in the Bol Land Management Plan. The aim of the posters is to help educate us all

and increase awareness of weeds that may be prevalent at different times of the year in the Bend. Our first trial poster was a bit small and difficult to read, so you may have noticed that there is a new larger version currently on display. We plan to support the information on each poster with email/Facebook/website details, so you can study it at your own leisure. Thank-you to Pam McMahon for working on this project. Remember that if you need some help identifying weeds (and the "good" plants) on your property, just email the BICA Secretary and we can suggest some people who may be able to visit your property and offer advice.



The Roadside Vegetation work has continued throughout the year – thanks to Liz Mildenhall for overseeing this ongoing project, and for the Landcare group for helping put in plants to help limit the re-growth of Burgan. Whilst this work oversees all of the roadside areas in the Bend, if you notice anything that needs attention, you can make a service request to Council about potentially dangerous roadside trees, at any time.

A couple of funding grants have been applied for throughout the year. A grant was obtained, as part of the Land Management Incentive Program, and this entailed a contractor being hired to do some weeding of exotic shrub species on the escarpments (Thanks Jo Henry). We have also just had news of success in obtaining a large share of funds from the Biodiversity Response Planning Grant (thank-you Deirdre Lucas) – this will be used for pest control (deer/foxes) and weeding programs. More details to come!

The Green Wedge Management Plan Review has been a major focus throughout the year, and Janet Mattiske was fabulous at gathering initial information, networking, rallying the community and helping all of us in the Bend have some input via the community engagement sessions and surveys. I have been the only representative from the Bend to be involved in the Community Panel - it has certainly been an interesting and challenging process! The work of the Panel concludes on November 17th, with a set of recommendations presented to Council. These recommendations will then go through a community consultation process.

Thank-you to all who have been on the BICA Committee this year – it has been a very productive year. Thanks to Barb Whiter, Pam McMahon, Rodrigo Castellanos, Glennis Bibra, Jo Henry, Deirdre Lucas, Julie Martindale and Mike Pelling. Also thank-you for the time and commitment from the Planning Sub-Committee – Carol and Alan Bonny, Janet Mattiske, Frank Pierce and Robyn Duff.

The special thing about the Bend of Islands is our community – so make sure your BICA Membership is up to date (subscriptions for 2019 are due now), come to a community event, help out with Landcare and/or join the BICA Committee! Over the years, the Bend has been incredibly lucky to have a group of passionate, enthusiastic and energetic people who have worked tirelessly to protect it. We need to keep BICA relevant for the future - bring your new ideas, energy and enthusiasm - be involved!

Sue Grad

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BICA CALENDAR

Saturday 17 November – from 10am – Café Benders

Come to the fire station to meet your neighbours and enjoy coffee and cake. Just bring yourself and a little money to buy the coffee and cake – all funds raised go to the Fire Brigade. If you have the time, please bring a cake to assist with fund raising.

Sunday 18 November – 9.30am – Landcare

Meet at 9.30am at the corner of Catani Boulevard and Henley Road. Come dressed to work! Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and bring hats, water and gloves. Newcomers welcome - volunteer some time if you can.
Enquiries: Luke Doyle 9712 0902.

Sunday 25 November – AGM – 2pm

To be held at Pam and Andy McMahon's home, 95 Gongflers Drive, Bend of Islands. There is some onsite parking – please be considerate to neighbours and consider walking or car-pooling. Please bring a plate of afternoon tea to share.
What's BICA been doing? There are the usual end-of-year items – President's Report, Treasurer's Report, plus various Committee reports for the year.
After Committee business, we will be pleased to hear from Cecilia Imre, Environmental Coordinator for the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater in Yellingbo. They are celebrating their 30th anniversary in May 2019, when the group formed in response to the population of the Helmeted Honeyeaters reaching a critically low level of 50 birds.

Saturday 15 December – Café Benders Christmas Evening

Come to the fire station and get into the festive spirit with your neighbours. Christmas carols, music and food. Bring a plate to share. Meat and veggie burgers to buy. Annual wine raffle too!

There are some really great opportunities here to meet your neighbours, hear what's happening locally and enjoy being part of our community.

We will email any changes/updates or you can find out more on our website:

<https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/this-month-in-the-bend/>

And look for regular emails and our Facebook page for details of events.



BICA MATTERS

Invitation to the BICA Annual General Meeting



(Photo from Friends of Helmeted Honeyeater website - <https://www.helmetedhoneyeater.org.au/> .)

Spend an afternoon with your neighbours and find out about local issues and what BICA has been working on throughout the year. The afternoon will begin with the Annual General Meeting, hear a talk about the Helmeted Honeyeater, then stay for a chat and afternoon tea.

WHEN: Sunday November 25th 2018

TIME: 2pm onwards

WHERE: Pam and Andy's home, 95 Gongflers Drive, Bend of Islands

WHY: To be involved, find out what has been happening, help to elect a BICA committee for 2019, learn more about the Helmeted Honeyeater, and have a great community get-together.

ALL WELCOME

LIFE ON THE BICA COMMITTEE

I've just completed my first year on the BICA committee, so in the lead up to the AGM in November, it's timely to write a few thoughts about the experience so far. Firstly, it has been an eye-opening insight into just how much is done by a small number of people behind the scenes that many people wouldn't be aware of. Things like liaising with local council to ensure that dangerous trees over-hanging our roads are sensitively removed or pruned and arranging for removal of bushy Burgan on blind corners. Did you notice the removal of bushy growth down at the bridge which now makes it possible to see traffic coming down the hill well before you get to the give-way sign? Thanks, BICA!

And something that you probably haven't noticed is that parts of the Bend escarpment have significantly fewer woody weeds, thanks to a successful grant application by BICA. Not to forget the things that are more obvious, such as support for the Landcare group (you'll see them around the Bend each month) and organizing community events like the art event and pub walk.

When I joined the committee last year, I was still very new to the area and felt like I didn't know enough about anything to be on a committee. To a large extent that's still the case. But my original experience of just being welcomed into the community by BICA members made me think that at least I could take on a role like that. So, with the help and encouragement of Liz Mildenhall in particular, that's mainly what I've actively been doing. Not that I've been too busy – we've only had 3 new arrivals this year, but I've enjoyed

touching base with local real estate agents prior to a house sale to get them up to speed with the provisions of the ELZ, meeting the new owners and providing the information to help introduce them to life in the Bend. Another thing I've been involved with is Weed Busters – we've got a crew of knowledgeable people who are willing and able to visit your property and offer advice on weed identification and removal. Just get in touch if you'd like to arrange a visit.

I've attended nearly all the monthly meetings (even being counted in a quorum is a worthwhile thing) and mostly listened as the more experienced members get stuck into things. However, we haven't had a full committee this year and can't do everything that we might like to. People who've been around for a long time would love to see new people get involved and bring their ideas, expertise and enthusiasm to the table because ongoing regeneration is important in the natural world and just as important in the life of a committee.

The Bend is a beautiful place to live, in part because of the care and hard work of many people in many ways over the years. We shouldn't take it for granted. There's a poem, by I don't know who, that starts with the line "However small I may be, I too can plant a tree." With that in mind, please consider joining the committee this year and doing what you can do.

Julie Martindale



OUR BICA COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU

Hi everyone,

I am sure that, like me, you loving living in the Bend of Islands – enjoying the peacefulness, wildlife, birds, beautiful bush and community of like-minded people. It is very easy to take it for granted! But did you realise that maintaining our Bend, and ensuring that it's flora and fauna especially remains protected for generations to come, requires constant vigilance on all things that occur in the Green Wedge of Nillumbik and the surrounding areas?

The BICA committee works quietly behind the scenes to monitor and act on issues that could impact the Bend, as well as coordinating our local social and educational events and liaising with Council and other authorities on projects which affect the Bend, such as roadside vegetation management, local road grading, power-lines and weeding via the local Bend of Islands Landcare group.

As we move into Spring it is time for the current BICA Committee to start planning for next year. We currently have a number of vacancies on our committee and we need you! If you have ever thought about joining the BICA committee, please jump in and give it a go. No prior experience is necessary – just a keen interest in maintaining our precious Bend of Islands, a willingness to learn and be able to help out in whatever way you can.

The committee meets at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of every month, and after the meeting, there is always a bit of supper and a chat! Please consider joining us for 2019. If you are interested, contact me for a chat, email our BICA secretary (bicacomm@gmail.com) or contact one of the other committee members.

Thank-you,

Sue Grad..... BICA President

Ph: 0439 101 962

Email: suegrad@yahoo.com



B.I.C.A. Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.
C/O Post Office, Kangaroo Ground, Vic. 3097.

Inc. No. A11100

BICA COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM.

I hereby nominate

to be a BICA Committee Member in 2019.

Name:

Signature:

Seconded by:

Name.....

Signature:



SEASONAL OUTLOOK

The fire season will commence on 19/11/2018

The drier than average weather over recent months, combined with the forecasts for spring, suggests that the fire season is likely to be more active than normal in parts of the state.

Primary Key Messages

- On hot, dry, windy days, fires can start and spread quickly. If the Fire Danger Rating is Severe, Extreme or Code Red, leaving early before a fire has started is the safest option.
- If you wait and decide to leave after a fire has started, you risk driving your family through thick smoke, fallen trees and power lines, and face the danger of collisions, being trapped by fire, serious injury or death.
- Understand your risk and plan ahead. Know what to do on hot, dry, windy days and plan for all situations. Talk to your family and friends about how you'll know when to leave, where you'll go and how you will get there.
- Fire Danger Ratings tell you how dangerous a fire would be if one started. As the ratings increase, so does the risk of an uncontrollable and fast-moving fire. A severe fire danger rating or higher should be your trigger to leave. To find out more about fire danger ratings visit cfa.vic.gov.au/firedanger
- Never wait for an official warning before you leave, as you may not get one. Fires can start quickly and threaten homes and lives within minutes. Make sure you have a plan.
- If you can see smoke or fire driving is extremely dangerous. Thick smoke makes it hard to see, making traffic jams and collisions more likely. Keep roads clear for emergency services.
- If you're travelling through bush or grasslands this summer, check the conditions for your destination before you go, listen to local radio for warnings and advice while you're on the road, and check conditions regularly throughout your stay. Download the VicEmergency app, visit emergency.vic.gov.au, and save the VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226) into your mobile phone. Never travel into bush or grassland areas where a Code Red has been forecast
- Preparing your property means you can minimise the chance of property damage during a fire; even if you plan to leave early. Find more information about property preparation at cfa.vic.gov.au
- People have lost their homes due to simple things like embers landing on their doormat. Make sure before you leave, anything that can burn is moved away from your house.

Supporting messages

Warnings and information more info

emergency.vic.gov.au and cfa.vic.gov.au/firedanger

Planning and preparation more info cfa.vic.gov.au/prepare

Burning off more info cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff

Rural grassfires more info cfa.vic.gov.au/ruralgrassfire

Staying and defending more info cfa.vic.gov.au/defend

Travellers more info cfa.vic.gov.au/travel

Thanks to Jeff Walters, Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

WORKING WITH OUR SHIRE

Bend of Islands Roadside Management 2018/19 Works



In September BICA representatives, Cric Henry, Deirdre Lucas & I met with Andy Knight & Laura Mullan from Nillumbik Shire Council. Laura is replacing Andy as Team Leader of the Open Space Section while Andy is working on another Shire project.

The next lot of works are planned to be undertaken before June 2019 and will include the completion of Burgan management for safe sightings around corners in Catani Blvd and additional Burgan management in Oxley Rd, Ironbark Rd and Gongflers Drive. Residents will be informed when works will take place.

Of the 88 Shrubs and grasses planted by the Landcare group in autumn only 3 have failed & budget permitting the Shire hopes to be able to extend the planting trial to suppress Burgan in safe sighting areas to the other sites. A large dead tree assessed as hazardous was also dropped and retained on site for habitat outside 208 Catani.

We asked for the issue of appropriate road grading and hygiene of vehicles and gravel used in road works to be addressed and it is planned to have the road grader team leader at our next meeting.

We very much appreciate the time, thought and expertise that Andy has devoted to works in Bend of Islands and look forward to continued good working relationship with the Shire through Laura. Feedback is welcome.

Liz Mildenhall

On behalf of BICA



WORKING WITH OUR SHIRE

Land Management Incentive Program Grant

BICA has recently received a grant from Nillumbik Council's Land Management Incentive Program

The project aims to remove any exotic woody weed species (Wattle-Acacia longifolia, Acacia floribunda, Acacia decurrens, Acacia prominens), and to stop the spread of Burgan (Kunzea spp. agg. ericoides), for selected key areas of Grassy Dry Forest (EVC 22) and Box Ironbark Forest (EVC 61) within the Bend of Islands.

A number of highly significant and threatened fauna species, such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Spotted Quail-thrush and White-throated Nightjar, rely on this open woodland vegetation on ridgelines and drier north-north western facing slopes.

The concern is that the woody weeds, and the upslope encroachment of Burgan, are steadily changing the habitat characteristics and making these areas unsuitable for the special fauna species.

As the Bend of Islands forms a critical link in the Kinglake National Park-Warrandyte State Park Habitat Corridor, it is important to ensure that a range of habitat requirements are being met within the area.

Burgan is an indigenous species and there are large dense areas of it in the Bend of Islands that play a valuable ecological role in providing important habitat to an array of other species. Our aim is to limit the further encroachment of Burgan into the target areas without removing Burgan from any areas where it is clearly established.

The project will be targeting key areas which are known to be used by the significant fauna species. These are typically the seldom frequented areas, away from houses. The control works will focus on the outlier plants, both suckering patches and seedlings, which are beyond the existing main Burgan front. A local contractor (Tserin Wright) will be engaged to undertake most of these works. Our local Landcare will also carry out a small component of the works.

Thank you to Council for the grant and to the local landowners who have agreed to allow these works to be undertaken on their land.

Jo Henry & Dylan Osler



Isolated weedy wattle, Acacia prominens (Gosford Wattle)



White-throated Nightjar juvenile & female

White -throated Nightjar nests on ridges of dry open woodlands



Spread of Burgan into an area of Grassy Dry Forest



REPORTS

BICA Community Involvement Report

Apart from the regular monthly activities, including Bird Watching, Cafe Benders and Landcare, extra events included:

The Big Walk, through the beautiful Christmas Hills area, finishing for pizza and beer at Nillumbik Cellars.

Wattle Walk was well supported, and very informative, identifying exotic, weedy and indigenous species.

Orchid Walk- due to an extremely dry winter, there were very few orchids flowering, so a visit to the Council's threatened orchid reintroduction project on the Co-op took place. This featured the Wine-lipped Spider Orchid with 2 plants in flower. Details of this exciting project were outlined.

Art Event- a wonderful time was had, enjoying the work of our local artists, including painting, woodwork, textiles and sculpture. This year saw two local talented poets reciting their wonderful work. The amazing performing musicians rounded off a fun day.

Thank you to all the people who give their time and talents into making these events happen.

Pam McMahon



Nillumbik Shire Green Wedge Management Plan

(GWMP) Review Process Update

In our April Newsletter we outlined the Shire's Timetable and process for this Review.

Over the last 6 months the process has continued with considerable involvement by members of our community who have had input into the formal process through a Stakeholders Forum, a community survey as well as engaging in workshops, sharing stories and attending coffee and chat sessions.

Everything heard through this community engagement process, from across the Shire, has been summarised and was published in August. It is still available to read at: https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/gwmp?tool=news_feed

The process of establishing a representative Community Panel culminated in a first meeting of some 40 diverse community members on Saturday 18 August.

The Bend of Islands community were delighted to have our President of BICA, Sue Grad, selected as a member of the Panel. We sincerely thank her for taking on what we understand has been a difficult and very time-consuming task.

The group has continued the very challenging process of meeting together to come up with recommendations that best reflect a community view for the future management of Nillumbik's Green Wedge.

The Panel will meet for a final session on the 17th November with final recommendations to be officially received at the Council meeting on 27th November. Council's response will be presented at its December 18th meeting. It is anticipated that a GWMP will be prepared by Council over summer with a Draft being released for community feedback starting in March 2019.

The aim is to adopt a final plan in June 2019.

BICA Planning Sub-Committee





REPORTS

Landcare Report



Hi All,

It's been a bit hit and miss with the Landcare working bee's this year. An entry in the diary for February but no reference to what was done, then no entry for March or April which probably means that it coincided with inclement weather.

May however saw a good turnout (20) for planting of tube stock (provided by council) in areas cleared for better traffic visibility on some corners in lower Catani, the project went well & the plants have survived the winter. Fingers crossed that they will survive this summer. I am planning to do some watering of these over the dry months to ensure that they get well established & survive. June was cancelled due to rain.

July saw another good turn out to the BICA / Co-op combined day. The group walked into the planting area on Yanakie (done years ago with Melbourne Water) and cleaned up excess plastic guards & stakes that were left behind.

August was also cancelled because of rain.

September and October only saw a small group and we worked on digging out Freesias on the roadside on the upper Catani /Henley rd. / Skyline rd. Corner.

With what might be a dry summer coming up (hope not too dry) weeds will be hiding, so if anyone has any ideas for what to do, or you could need a hand or advice on a private property around weed issues, please contact me on 0409610934.

Looking at the Landcare diary I realized that this is my 10th year as coordinator, that's a fair haul. If anyone wants to step up and take on the job or thinks that they could do a better job than me (I do doubt myself sometimes as to my suitability for this roll) please let me or BICA know.

Otherwise I'll just keep on with the job as best I can!

Regards Luke Doyle

BICA TOOLS/TRAPS/TEXTS FOR LOAN

Did you know that as a BICA member you are able to borrow a variety of items that BICA owns?

We have things such as:

- A weed burner
- Weeding tools
- A camera trap
- Texts – “Weeds in Victoria” (Environment and Natural Resources Committee), “Coranderrk Database” (Woiwod) “Bend of Islands Land Management Plan” (Jolly & Osler) – and more.....
- A cat trap etc.

So if you have a particular need, please ask (or send an email to BICA Secretary), and we can either lend it to you, or suggest someone who might be able to help.

The Birrarung Council members have been appointed.

The government has recently announced the appointments to the Council. The Council is a new statutory body to provide advice to Government to ensure the ongoing protection of the river and deliver on key priorities under the Water for Victoria plan and the Yarra River Protection Act 2017. The Council was created by this Act.



We are pleased that Warwick Leeson, a long-time member of BICA, has been appointed as a member of the Birrarung Council. Congratulations Warwick!

The board is led by chair Chris Chesterfield and other members are Allan Wandin, Ronald Jones, Margaret Gardiner, Andrew Kelly (Yarra Riverkeeper), Bronwyn South, Prue Digby, Kirsten Bauer, Erin O'Donnell, and Alexandra Lee.

One of the innovative and important components of the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act is that it gives Traditional Owners a permanent voice in the planning and management of the Yarra river. It is also the first act in Victorian history to be co-titled in Woi-wurrung.

The board chair, Chris Chesterfield said 'The Council offers an important voice to deliver better protection and management of the river to protect the river into the future'.

We wish the Council the best in all its efforts, and look forward to its assistance in protecting and preserving our special stretch of the Yarra in the Bol.



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Change in the Bend of Islands – A Trilogy Part 1 - Unprecedented Dry in the Bol – an Obvious Change from 2017 to 2018

2018 has had the driest January to September period on record. Refer to the BOM data [HERE](#) The stark changes from this time in 2017 to now are obvious, as the dryness takes its toll on the vegetation and wildlife.

Vegetation: -Generally the vegetation is much reduced, similar to during the millennium drought. The canopy foliage is extremely sparse, the mid-storey is reduced and a huge proportion of the ground level plants have died or succumbed to grazing pressure. The litter layer is bone dry.

Orchids: –This year there has been an unprecedented poor showing of the ‘Spring-flowering’ species, to the extent that the scheduled ‘show and tell’ type orchid walk was not feasible in early October.



Green Lacewing, *Plesiochrysa ramburi*, the only visitor in Sept/Oct '18

Insects: The Bol is a biodiversity hotspot for invertebrates and I have been checking and photographing these at my windows on most nights. **Moths** are the most numerous, but they are obviously in lower numbers in 2018, compared with the previous 2 years at this time.

However, I have a special interest in **Lacewings** and have been recording the number of each species seen each night for a couple of years. If each species that is recorded on a night is treated as a ‘Species night’, the number of ‘September/ October Species Nights’ recorded in recent years are: -

- 8 for 2016 a very wet year and so a good season
 - 19 for 2017 a very wet year on top of the previous one made for a ‘bumper year’
 - 1 for 2018 the driest year on record and a massive crash
- This result is probably typical for most insects in the area.

Wildlife: The likely consequence for most species that rely on the plants or insects, or both, for food, is that this will be a lean, survival focused year, with a much-reduced scope for successful breeding.

Take for example, the White-throated Nightjar. It has just arrived on its annual migration from New Guinea and will probably have to work overtime, just to catch sufficient insect food to feed itself, with not much surplus for the feeding of hungry young.

Current lack of knowledge:

The complexity of the natural ecosystem, and our lack of understanding of it, are staggering. Two examples of this are: -

- Insects play a major role in driving the environment, yet we know precious little detail about their ecology or their interaction and effects on the other elements of the ecosystem
- Fungi is also fundamental to the survival and resilience of the ecosystem.

We are just starting to get an understanding of its role, how it links different plants, is vital to germination and provides a massive extension to actual plant root systems. See <https://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/mycorrhiza.html> for a good explanation of this.



Wine-lipped Spider Orchid needs a specific fungus to germinate



25mm long caterpillar of the Four-spotted Cup Moth that caused massive defoliation in the Bol in 2015

We have little understanding of how our actions effect these two vital elements of the ecosystem or what is needed to ensure their continued role in maintaining a healthy environment.

The Future: Some will say that the increasing dryness is just part of Climate change and there is nothing we can do about it. I certainly don't have a crystal ball, but I think the best way to manage our area into the future is to maintain the highest possible Biodiversity. In this way the local environment will have the maximum flexibility and resilience to best cope with the rigors of Climate Change.

Frank Pierce



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Change in the Bend of Islands – A Trilogy Part 2 - Changes in the Bol that are 'Not Immediately Obvious'

The Bend of Islands is recognised as a special place because of its outstanding biodiversity. But it is under constant attack from invasive weeds that are increasing at a subtle pace and so generally the incremental degradation goes undetected by residents.

This is especially the case for those who weren't here and so didn't observe what it was like 40+ years ago. That is, almost all of us that now live here!

When one moves into an area, there is a tendency to accept the prevailing conditions as what the place is, and has always been, like. So incremental changes that have occurred prior to arrival are not recognised.

At the BICA 40th celebration, John McCallum, a keen observer who lived here from the early 70s, was asked to nominate the biggest change that had occurred since the early days. His response was **'In the early 70's there were no weeds here, now there are numerous weeds that are taking over, particularly in the gullies'**.

The rationale for the Bol, as defined in our unique Planning Scheme - SUZ2 -Environmental Living Zone, is: -

- To provide for residential use of the land consistent with the need for protection of the native bushland environment
- To maintain and enhance the positive environmental qualities of the landscape, native flora, native fauna and to protect and thus prevent damage to natural systems



The weed problems in the area are now significant and, because we have limited resources, we can't tackle everything. A strategic approach is required, so that our efforts achieve the best possible environmental outcomes.

Woody weeds, exotic trees and shrubs, are the easiest to be managed and can be effectively controlled with a big initial removal effort and then much less onerous follow-ups, to control any new recruits while they are small and don't produce seeds.

These weeds are environmentally problematic in a number of ways: -

- Displacement of the local species
- Changes to the 'structure' of the vegetation
- Accumulated seed banks can cause massive germination after a fire

It is feasible, with an area-wide coordinated approach, to effectively eradicate these weeds from the Bol within a few years.

Grassy weeds have a big environmental impact, but control of these can be problematic, especially in badly infested areas where control is now well beyond our limited resources.



In other areas effective control is still feasible but requires focused commitment with consistent control effort and follow-up.

Scramblers and Creepers have widespread small infestations throughout the Bol. The worst infestations in the Bol, especially along the river, have had serious control measures over the last few years, by contractors and the Landcare Group. Control is now generally at the 'annual follow-up' stage. The contract works have been financed by a number of annual grants from Nillumbik Shire.

The Bol Land Management Plan (LMP) Section 5.2 covers these weed issues in much more detail. It identifies and locates all major weeds species and outlines a prioritised strategic approach to their control.

This incremental creep is universal and all reserves and parks in the region are being affected. The Bol's biodiversity is still outstanding relative to other nature reserves in the area, but the standard is being eroded everywhere.

The biodiversity of our Bol is special. Active management is needed to counter the incremental degradation by exotic weeds. The LMP gives a strategic approach so that our limited resources can be expended as efficiently as possible. It is up to us residents of the Bol, with government assistance when available, to take action to protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area.

Frank Pierce



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Change in the Bend of Islands – A Trilogy Part 3 - An Unprecedented Opportunity to Manage the Biodiversity of the Bol

Good News for a change - The Sugarloaf Link Project

BICA is fortunate to be one of the project partners to gain a very substantial DELWP Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP) Grant. The following extracts from the Council's Media Release gives a general outline of the project.

Nillumbik Shire Council will roll out an extensive program aimed at protecting natural values by reducing the impact of weeds, fox and deer on private and public land in the south-eastern part of the Shire.

The \$450,000 Sugarloaf Link project will centre around Bend of Islands, Watsons Creek and Christmas Hills. This area forms a vital link in the major habitat corridor connecting Kinglake National Park to the Yarra River.



The focus is to be on protecting the natural landscape from the increasing degradation caused by deer and weeds.

Small native animals should also flourish by reducing fox predation. Species such as Bush-tailed Phascogales, Slender Dunnarts and threatened orchids should all benefit from these works.

Project partners include: Nillumbik Shire Council, Christmas Hills Landcare Group, Bend of Islands Conservation Association, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and the Wurundjeri Council's Narrap team.

This project is Nillumbik's first cross tenure program to control and reduce the impact of Deer in the local area. Deer are a serious pest in Nillumbik, with numbers on the rise. Impacts of deer include:

- *Destroying native vegetation and reducing biodiversity*
- *Reducing productivity of farms, causing financial hardship for local agricultural producers*
- *Posing a serious hazard on roads, risking the lives of road users*

The project partners will also use learnings to develop future deer control programs across the Shire.



The focus for the Bol will be: -

- **Deer and Fox Control** – details are yet to be developed
- **Weed Control** –very significant funds will be available annually over a 3-year period for the implementation of the weed control recommendations of the Bol Land Management Plan (LMP)



The opportunity exists for this project to be coordinated with similar deer control projects in adjacent shires, so it will be great to be part of a regional effort to control deer.

With regard to the weed control component: **-This is our big opportunity to reverse the incremental degradation of the area's biodiversity**, by taking effective control of the ever-encroaching weeds.

We have been waiting for this opportunity since the LMP was produced in 2013.

To maximise the effectiveness of the weed control, we are hoping that all landowners will partake by agreeing to the removal the target weeds from their properties by contractors.

This project will also be a great opportunity for all landowners to become involved in the environmental enhancement of their properties, especially in the less arduous 'follow-up' stages, once the bulk of the weeds have been controlled.

BICA will keep all landowners posted, as the details unfold for this landmark project.

Frank Pierce



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Sharing Our Homes

In the last week of October, Birdlife Australia, has their Aussie Backyard Bird Count. This aims to “find out about the common species that live where people live.” In Bend of Islands not only do we have birds live in our backyards but due to relatively unmodified habitats we also have birds breeding in our backyards and not just visiting. Of the 160+ species recorded in the area, about 40% have local breeding records and at this time of year, birds are nesting all over The Bend.

Not only do they nest in our backyards but a number nest around and even ‘in’ our houses, well at least on and under decks and eaves. As an example, Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) regularly nest under eaves and verandahs perhaps as often now as they nest in natural surrounds. They are not always very welcome though due to the mess they can make.

As I write this, there is a Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus striatus*) calling constantly as it considers nesting under the eaves of our verandah. This bird naturally nests in small hollows in trees and our eaves are a near enough approximation. Whether or not they are successful we will have to wait and see. These pardalotes also like to nest in the new hollow metal arms of the local powerlines. In Gongflers Drive almost every pole has a nesting pair.



On a small shelf near our laundry, a pair of Grey Shrike-Thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*) are trying for the second year to build a nest. They tried last year and did not successfully raise their young as perhaps the nest was raided. This may have been Currawongs, Ravens or even Phascogales or possums. Birds sometimes seek to nest where large animals or birds may act as a deterrent to nest-raiders but it seems that if that was the case here, we were not up to that task. Carol and Alan were much better guards than us a few years ago when Shrike-thrushes chose to nest close to them.



Other birds nesting nearby so not actually ‘in’ our house but viewable from within, include Grey Fantails (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) -3 babies, White-winged Choughs (*Corcorax melanorhamphos*) - 2 babies and perhaps an Owlet Nightjar (*Aegotheles cristatus*) although this may just be a day roost.

Birds are usually very secretive about their nests due to the inherent danger of the young not being able to escape if attacked, so if you do see a nest around your house, be careful as you watch. If you are too close or obvious you may guide nest predators or parasites or the parents may simply abandon the nest and young.

Gavin Masters



BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since April 2018.

Lyrebird Records

12 new Lyrebird records have been reported. 9 in the gully north of Henley Rd from Taylor's to Yanakie; 2 on Stevenson Creek north of C Track on the Co-op and 1 near the MW pumping Station.

We now have 318 Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. Details and analysis, updated at the end of each year, 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

The outstanding sightings for the period, occurred on Yanakie; a **Lyrebird** was seen, singing from up a tree, in August. In September we added another new species to our list, a **Red-rumped Parrot**. This species is common in Eltham and often seen in Kangaroo Ground, so it was not a big surprise for one to finally turn up in the Bol.



Other Interesting Observations

A male **Red-capped Robin** was seen on the Co-op near A track in May. The other 3 observations in recent years have been female or juvenile birds.

Eastern Rosellas have again been sitting on eggs since late October, next to Frank & Janet's house at C Track of the Co-op, for the third consecutive year.

Pied Cormorant has been seen near the river, by Gavin and Mal in August, and by Rudi last year. This species has been on and off the list over the years, but will now be reinstated. The more common Little Pied Cormorant can easily be misidentified as the Pied in some circumstances.

Australian Shelduck was seen, near the river, by Gavin and Mal in September. This species was occasionally seen, about this time of year, in a dead tree near the Co-op. The tree fell in 2000 and they haven't been seen since.

The **Spring Arrivals** have generally played out as expected, and most will be in shock at the dryness of the Bol.

The **Birds Section of the BICA Website** has lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as a summary of our on-going bird survey which is updated at the end of each year.

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

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

Frank Pierce



The Bend of Islands By Jarrah Pauli (age 11)

We live in the Bend,
Something we must defend,
This can't be the end,
We've green all around.

A wallaby jumps between the trees,
A platypus swims through the streams,
A koala chews on the leaves,
We've animals all around.

A Sugar Glider leaps from gum to gum,
A little fledgling falls on his bum,
A wombat nestles close to mum,
We've beauty all around.

A Lace Monitor climbs up the trunk,
A little coot has a dunk,
Some peregrine falcons nest near a bunk,
We've rare sights all around.

More trees than one could know,
With birds at every bough,
Some fly high and some low,
We've frequent flyers all around.

Our owls? They're great!
From Boobooks to Powerfuls, they're not to hate,
Nightjars, Frogmouths and that's just the gate
We've owls all around.

Out comes the night,
Moon and stars – the only light,
A Phascogale – what a sight,
We've beauty 24/7 all year around.

How should we behave?
Don't listen to politicians' rave,
The world is what we must save,
We've paradise all around.





RECENT SIGHTINGS

Lace Monitor on Skyline Rd – A report from Mike Pelling - At 10am on 6/10/2018 a Goanna, very dark and about 600 long, was on Skyline Rd about 1 km north-east of Ashmore Rd. It scuttled across the road and climbed an Ironbark. This record has been added to the **Bol Locally Rare Native Vertebrate Fauna RECORDS**. It is consistent with our belief that the monitors and lyrebirds are using the escarpment to the east of Sugarloaf Reservoir as the habitat link from Kinglake NP to our area.



Koala – A report from Lynne Johnstone

The Co-op was fortunate to be visited by a male Koala on the afternoon of the 24th August this year. He was quite a large healthy-looking animal and was seen climbing up and down 3 trees, including a Stringybark and an Ironbark. The koala ate leaves from high in the canopy. Ewen was lucky enough to film him exploring (See https://youtu.be/5PsWy_o), until the koala found one tree to settle in adjacent to 'B' track.

Later that evening, he could be heard grunting approx. 250m from where he'd spent the day"

Please send details and photos of any interesting sightings to the Newsletter Editor at fpandjm@netspace.net.au

Monster Cranefly makes 'annual appearances'

Leptotarsus Leptotarsus imperatorius, one of Australia's largest Craneflies, was attracted to light, at the kitchen window of our house on C Track at the Co-op, on 2017-10-17 and again on 2018-10-14. The approximate size of the beast was:

- Wing Length – 36mm
- Body Length – 32mm
- Leg length 64 to 90 mm

Peacock Spider, *Maratus volans* - Co-op 2018-10-29



Katydid at the Fire Station: At Café Benders on 20/10/2018 a Katydid was found patrolling the new door frame at the Fire Station. It was later identified as *Zaprochilus australis*, an **Australian Pollen-feeding Katydid**





BICA Membership Application/Renewal

I wish to join / renew my membership to BICA for the current financial year.

Please tick appropriate boxes:

New Member (complete form)

Renewing member (complete if any changed details)

Owner

Tenant

Non-Resident

Membership Rates: (based on the year starting from the AGM)

Individual - \$20 per annum

Concession - \$10 per annum

Family - \$30 per annum

Name:

For Family membership, please list the names of the other members below.
Note that only family members over the age of 18 can vote.

Name (2):

Name (3):

Name (4):

Address:

Phone: _____

Phone (2): _____

Mobile: _____

Mobile (2): _____

Email: _____

Email (2): _____

Method of Payment:

Cash

Cheque

(made payable to Bend of Islands Conservation Association –
mail completed form and cheque to BICA at address above)

Electronic Funds Transfer – please pay into the Bendigo Bank Account as follows:

Name: Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.

BSB: 633-000 Account: 142450675

Reference: Please add your name as the reference so we know who joined.

Receipts will be issued on request.



WELCOME TO THE BEND

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

Michael Sleeth.....Catani Bve.

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

Editor: Janet Mattiske
Design and Layout; Greg Phillips

BICA Facebook Page

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!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/157412771573945/>

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com

BICA Website: www.bendofislands.wordpress.com

Our Bush Christmas present



This large male roo spent Christmas & New Year with us while
healing from a wound on the RHS of his neck & a chomped tail.

He had been in a fight & came off second best.

He spent a month healing by our front verandah, drinking from the
bird bath & eating grass whilst lying under a tree.

He grunted to us every so often and tolerated our presence
photographing him. We hoped for a happy ending & his energy
finally returned and we haven't seen him since.

Ona & Syd

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

