

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Polystichum proliferum*

Common name: Mother Shield-fern

Family: Dryopteridaceae

Flowering Period: Ferns technically are not flowering plants as they do not produce flowers and seeds. Instead, they use spores to reproduce (We selected a fern as it was difficult to think of a flowering plant that hadn't been featured before, for this time of year.)

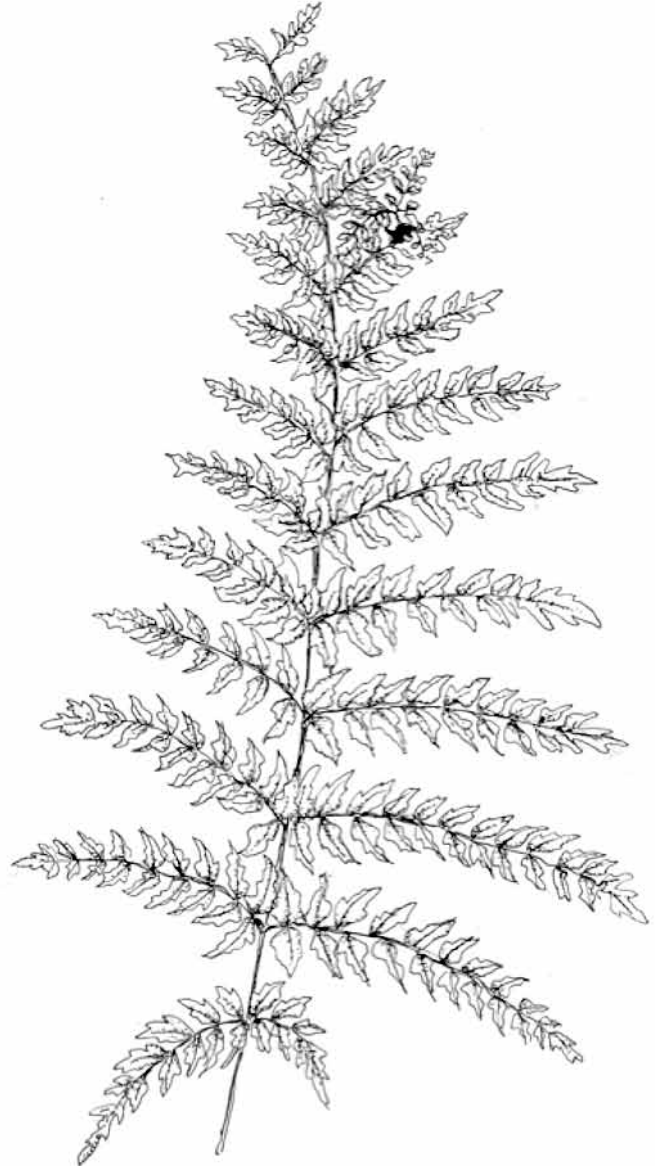
The Mother Shield-fern is a very attractive medium sized terrestrial fern growing up to 130cm high. An erect tufted fern often forming a thick underground stem (rhizome) and older plants sometimes develop a short trunk to 10cm in diameter.

The fronds are erect, dark green and leathery. They can be up to 100cm in length, 30cm wide. The older fronds are arching. The leaf tips have proliferous buds from which young plants, or bulbils, develop. The spores occur in a row on either side of the midrib and are covered by a prominent circular membrane with a dark central spot. It is from the tips that the common name, Mother Shield- fern is derived, as it 'mothers' offspring and 'shields' the 'fernlets' during development.

This is a hardy, cool climate fern that can grow in a wide range of conditions. Within the Bend of Islands, it is most often found growing in moist forest areas, such as along creeks and in gully lines in dappled shade.

This species is an attractive feature in a shady position in the garden or in an ornamental pot.

Jo & Tobey Henry





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The BICA committee has continued to work busily during the first part of the year. Our committee this year is almost at full capacity, which has been terrific. Our 2019 committee consists of Pam McMahon (Vice President & Community Involvement), Julie Martindale (Secretary), Rodrigo Castellanos (Treasurer), Mike Pelling (Memberships), Michael Dempsey (Facebook/Website), Kimberley Kifun (Community Involvement), Phillip Wierzbowski, AB Bishop, Deirdre Lucas and Jo Henry. We also continue to have the Planning sub-committee with Janet Mattiske, Frank Pierce, Robyn Duff, Carol Bonny and Alan Bonny.

A big project that BICA are involved with this year is the Sugarloaf Link Project, which will centre around Christmas Hills, Watsons Creek and Bend of Islands – an area which forms a vital habitat corridor connecting Kinglake National Park to the Yarra River. Many of you will have already received some information in the mail about this project from Nillumbik Council. BICA is one of the project partners in this 3-year Biodiversity Response Plan, which aims to protect natural habitats, native plant populations and waterways from the degradation caused by foxes, deer and weeds. The Council will work with other project partners to target fox and deer control programs. BICA is involved in the weed control component of the project, and this is a terrific opportunity to have your property assessed for suitability for woody and herbaceous weed control, at no cost. Remember to register your interest at environment@nillumbik.vic.gov.au and/or attend an information session. We thank Jo Henry, Deirdre Lucas, Dylan Osler, Gavin Masters and Tserin Wright for forming a sub-committee to assist with the smooth management of this project.

BICA has also been successful in obtaining a Volunteer Grant from the Australian Government, which will be used to buy some more weeding tools and equipment for use by our Landcare group. Thank-you to Pam McMahon for applying for the grant on BICA's behalf. The tools will certainly be put to good use!

By the time of publication, members of the committee and interested community amateur herpetologists will have attended an information session about the Southern Toadlet Census. This species is listed as vulnerable, and the census hopes to record males calling during the breeding season. Fingers crossed that the census is a success and some local Southern Toadlets are recorded.

We still await the Nillumbik Council response to the panel recommendations on the Green Wedge Management Plan Review, which is now expected to be released in June/July. The BICA Committee and the Planning Sub-Committee are poised to respond to the first stage of the consultation process.

The wildlife that abounds in Bend of Islands is partly due to our prohibition of domestic animals such as dogs and cats. Recently a cat has been sighted roaming throughout a number of properties in the Bend. BICA are currently investigating the purchase of a compliant cat trap which will be available for loan to all members, should the need arise. However, all residents are encouraged to contact Nillumbik Council immediately, if a cat is sighted, as a cat trap can be arranged, so that the Ranger can remove the cat from the area.

Please stay connected to our wonderful community - our BICA Website has been undergoing a re-vamp, (thanks to the talent of Michael Dempsey) so if you haven't visited it for a while, take another look. The address is <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/>. The website has an amazing amount of information relating to the Bend, fauna, flora and monthly community events – well worth a look on a regular basis. Remember too, the official BICA Facebook page, which is steadily growing in members - look up "Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA)" and request to join as a friend! An easy way to stay connected.

Enjoy Autumn in the Bend!

Sue Grad

BICA President

INDEX

Page

1. What local plant is flowering?
2. President's Message
3. Working with our Shire.
4. Sugarloaf Project
5. SUZ2 & You - Plants & Planting
6. BICA Community involvement report
BICA Calendar
The Canoe Run
- 7-9. On A Bender
10. Round The Bend Conservation
Co-operative.A History. Part one
11. Landcare Report
From The Fire Brigade
12. A Froggy Friends Night To
Remember
13. Sugarloaf Link Project
Water poem by Jared Pauli
14. Bird Notes
15. What Will Be The Bend's Next new
Bird?
16. Bathing Beauties
17. Recent Sigthings
18. Put The Date in your diary
- Family Fun Picnic May 11
Vegie Market
19. Where is this teenager's burrow?
BICA Contacts



BICA MATTERS

WORKING with OUR SHIRE

Meeting with the Council re Grading in Bend of Islands

The Bonny's, Deirdre Lucas and Liz Mildenhall met with Darryl Cullen, Team Leader – Unsealed Roads NSC, to discuss effective, sensitive grading of roads in Bend of Islands in March. We gave community feedback re last year's grading and learnt about how the Shire rolls out the Unsealed Roads Management Programs.

The concerns re Catani, Ironbark, Henley Extension and Gongflers were about overenthusiastic grading which seems to be widening the road, swales that were either ineffective in getting water away, or too big, and surplus mounting up of screenings and litter over significant roadside vegetation.

It was decided that the grading will be contained to existing roads. No embankments are to be touched. We had thought a smaller grader might be more appropriate for roads other than Skyline. However, the small grader does not have the necessary roller to compact the road. Therefore, to address our concerns a backhoe with a smaller bucket will be used to manage swales. Any surplus leaf litter, small branches and screenings material will be removed instead of being heaped up over roadside vegetation. Swales will be managed so that water runs off rather than pools.

We discussed grading the road so it's flatter versus grading to have a crown up the middle. It was noted that Henley Road Extension seems to work better when graded flat rather than with a crown.

In Skyline Road residents noted that grading happens very infrequently and less often than other roads in the Bend. That corrugations exist right along the most used stretch - the 2km to the end of the Co-op at C Track (199 Skyline Rd). The hill just past A Track (97 Skyline Road) becomes corrugated very quickly after grading. To avoid the deep corrugations on the left side, cars go up the hill in the middle of the road. This is a safety issue because of risk of collision with cars coming over the hill from the opposite direction.

Darryl is responding to the Skyline Road situation and is looking to address the situation.

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Nillumbik Shire has 350 kms. of unsealed roads. Each road is scheduled for an annual grade. This program takes



approximately 9 months to roll out. The graders start at one end of the shire and systematically proceed over the whole area. Generally, Bend of Islands would be graded around August.

If, however there is a concern, any resident can ring the Shire for a Service Request. The request will be assessed and if action is necessary the schedule will be interrupted to address the particular situation. (e.g. a small grader might come in to patch a pothole etc).

The Shire will aim to let us know a couple of weeks in advance of when the grader will be working in the area. If there are any special situations e.g. re: orchids, we can mark off those areas.

We discussed other ideas to keep the roads better for longer e.g.

- Rather than driving up the middle of the roads in the same wheel tracks, drivers should use the whole road and minimise the impact in just one area of the road.
- Obviously driving too fast along our roads is detrimental to them. We need to talk with each other about this. If you see Council vehicles e.g. Garbage collection trucks travelling too fast put in your complaint to the Council.
- Should we consider having the roads sealed or particular sections where the impact seems greatest e.g. between the co-op tracks on Skyline, the hill below the fire station on Catani?
- Potholes can have multiple causes – even a dripping tree. Residents could keep an eye on the potholes outside their residence.
- We talked about use of clean machinery and it is NSC's policy to clean down all machines before moving them to a new place.

We all thought this meeting was very worthwhile and maybe we should plan to catch up annually, or when necessary, to review how the unsealed road maintenance is going.

Liz Mildenhall
on behalf of BICA



BICA MATTERS

Sugarloaf Link Project



You may have received a letter from Nillumbik Shire Council about the Sugarloaf Link Project.

Nillumbik Shire Council has received a Biodiversity Response Plan grant from the State Government to work towards protecting biodiversity values within our local area through weed, fox and deer control. The project, called Sugarloaf Link, will run over three years. The Bend of Islands Conservation Association, is a project partner, along with the Wurundjeri Council, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Christmas Hills Landcare Group and DELWP.

BICA is pleased to be involved in the management and delivery of the weed control component of this project throughout the Bend of Islands over the next three years.

BICA encourages all locals to participate by registering your interest at environment@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



By registering your property, it will be assessed for its suitability for **free** woody and herbaceous weed control. Weed control work will be carried out by local contractor Tserin Wright and the Narrap Team, who have been involved in past weed control projects in the Bend of Islands. Non-invasive weed removal techniques will be used including hand weeding, and if necessary, cut and paint or drill and fill.

This is an exciting opportunity for residents to participate in a fully-funded project which seeks to reduce woody and herbaceous weeds in our local area. Species such as Brush-tailed Phascogales, Slender-tailed Dunnarts and various threatened flora species, including orchids, will benefit from these works.

As part of the Sugarloaf Link project, NSC will be managing a deer and fox control programme. Deer are a serious threat to biodiversity and a hazard on local roads. The deer control component of the project will be managed by NSC and carried out by accredited professional hunters. These works are designed to complement control measures undertaken by neighbouring councils and Melbourne Water.

Foxes prey upon small marsupials such as antechinus, dunnarts and phascogales. NSC will employ professional contractors to trap and remove foxes. Control works will be timed to coincide with the dispersal of young marsupials, a time when they are most vulnerable.



Further information on both deer and fox control can be found by visiting www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/sugarloaflinkregister

A drop-in information session will be held at the Christmas Hills Hall, 787 Ridge Road Christmas Hills, on Sunday 5 May 2-4pm. This is your chance to chat directly with the NSC Sugarloaf Link Project Manager, Michelle Hanslow and ask any questions you have.

Alternately, please feel free to email the BICA Secretary, or contact the NSC Sugarloaf Link Project Manager on 9433 3111 or email environment@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

BICA has invited Sugarloaf Link Project Manager, Michelle Hanslow, to attend Cafe Benders on Saturday 18 May. Cafe Benders is held at the Fire Shed in Catani Blvd from 10am. Do come along and find out more about the project.

Deidre Lucas



BICA MATTERS

SUZ2 & YOU – PLANTS AND PLANTING

Living in the Bend provides a unique residential national park experience and it is our responsibility to ensure that the experience will be available for others in the future.

Wherever you live there is planning scheme that defines what can, or cannot be done in that region. For the Bend of Islands, the planning schedule is **SPECIAL USE ZONE - SCHEDULE 2 - ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING – BEND OF ISLANDS**, usually referred to as SUZ2 (or ELZ).

The SUZ2 was created some 40 years ago by the residents of the day and is part of the State Planning Scheme with Nillumbik Shire as the relevant enforcement authority.

Sections of the SUZ2 address the requirements for plants and planting to reflect the 'residential national park' concept.

What we plant is critical to the environmental values and biodiversity of the area and we are required to **ONLY** plant vegetation indigenous to the area. The only exception to this is within a kitchen garden which is clearly defined.

Around the Bend of Islands I see many examples of illegal non-indigenous planting which could eventually destroy the uniqueness of our special area.

Some of the aims contained in the SUZ2 are:

- 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 systems

The provisions to support these aims are:

No vegetation, except vegetation indigenous to the area, is permitted to be planted.

This does not apply in kitchen garden areas. For the purpose of this clause, a kitchen garden means a garden area, adjoining or close to a house, for vegetables, flowers and fruit for the household. The area of the kitchen garden should not exceed 150 square metres and should not extend along access ways or boundaries. Plants on the Shire of Nillumbik Environmental Weed List 2009 as incorporated in this Scheme shall not be planted.

The Bend of Islands Conservation Association has over time compiled a comprehensive Plant List containing all known plants that occur in the Bend. To help residents, BICA has published on its website a list of plant species recommended for any revegetation or planting project.



Hibbertia porcata - The BoI has the larger of only 2 known Victorian populations

<https://bendofislands.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/indigenous-plants-of-bend-of-islands.pdf>

BICA urges residents to source plants from a responsible source and to look for local provenance.

If in doubt ask first. There is a wealth of experience and expertise in our Conservation Association.

What can I do?

- **DO NOT plant non indigenous plants. These will compromise the biodiversity of the area and may antagonise the neighbours or get you into trouble with the Council.**
- **DO replace non indigenous with local indigenous plants.**

Recommended plant providers: -

Edendale Farm Nursery: -

<http://www.edendale.vic.gov.au/Indigenous-nursery/About-the-nursery>

Friends of Warrandyte State Park Nursery: -

<http://fowsp.org.au/nursery.php>

If you want to have a look at the SUZ2 document

http://planning-schemes.delwp.vic.gov.au/schemes/nillumbik/ordinance/37_01s02_niill.pdf

Alan Bonny.



BICA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT REPORT 2018-2019

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

- **The annual Pub Walk.** This was a fun, shorter meander through the bush to Warrandyte arriving for rewarding drinks at the Warrandyte Pub. Well done to all the youngsters who joined in.
- **Art Event.** A wonderful time was had, enjoying our local artists' work, including painting, woodwork, textiles and sculpture. We were entertained by two local poets reciting their wonderful and often humorous work.

The amazing performing musicians rounded off a fun day.

- **Annual General Meeting.** A very informative talk was presented by Cecilla Imre from Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater. This was enjoyed with many questions being asked.
- **Night Event.** Another wonderful evening listening to our talented musicians showing their diverse skills.
- **Cafe Benders Christmas evening.** An enthusiastic and fun evening of food and singing, with a welcomed visit by Santa for our delighted youngsters.
- **Canoe Run.** A second attempt for the canoe - run (earlier date cancelled due to TFB) was a great success enjoyed by all (See Separate Article by Jarrah Pauli)

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

Pam McMahon

BICA CALENDAR

Please Note in your Diary these upcoming events and watch your emails for more details.

23rd June – BICA General Meeting

4th August - Wattle Walk

8th September - BICA Art Event

6th October - Orchid Walk

27th October - Pub Walk

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

Look for regular emails and our Facebook page for details of events.

The Canoe Run

By Jarrah Pauli



On Sunday 24/2/19, 18 people turned up at Rob's house (end of Henley Rd. extension) with 13 boats ready to row to Liz and Pete's house (Catani Blvd.). With Luke in the lead, we set off at about 1100.

The 13 boats moved steadily through the rapids (including the dreaded Bob's Rock) and calmer stretches of water. There were a couple of capsize and multiple times a boat took on so much water that it sunk! (Though not to the bottom). Everyone got wet, in one way or another!

Everyone stopped for lunch at mid-way through. However, it was not long until we were back on track (or should I say river?!?!).

After a total of three hours, we pulled up to Liz and Pete's house, our destination. Apparently, our quick progress was due to a small group. There we chatted and (in my opinion the best bit) ate.

In the way of wildlife, there were plenty of birds including a Darter and many Pacific Black Ducks. But unfortunately no Platypi.

Thanks to Luke for leading us and Rob and Liz and Pete for letting us use their properties.

It was a fun event and I am sure that I will look forward to it next year.





ON A BENDER

Complete with party poppers and two candles forming a large number on his cake, Mick Woiwod celebrated his approaching 90th birthday at our Café Benders on 16 March. With the help of daughter Louise and sometimes others, Mick has continued to turn up regularly from Eltham North for his monthly coffee, cake and a chat.

In earlier days Mick and Marg were not only enthusiastic Benders attenders but also movers and shakers in our little community. They moved here in late 1979, began building their mud brick house in Gongflers Drive, and were soon getting to know their neighbours.

It's a wonder Mick ever gets to eat his cake at Café Benders because at any given moment one or more of us is keenly listening to his encyclopaedic knowledge about our area. To some of us it doesn't seem all that long ago that a sixty-one-year-old bare-chested Mick was featured in The Age newspaper's article about the unique elements of our Environmental Living Zone.

One of those unique elements is Café Benders itself. On the third Saturday of each month Wolfgang Krause sweeps and mops our fire station floor until you can see your face in it, then sets up the café tables with Marie. Meanwhile, with Carol's help, Alan Bonny is donning his apron, turning on the urn and preparing the kitchen to serve us our coffee or tea. Miraculously, without any kind of roster some people always turn up with cake to donate. Jenny Taylor's chocolate cake, Janet Mattiske's raspberry slice and Barb Snell's apple tea cake have regularly featured, with a variety of cakes and biscuits from others. Even some of the kids have been known to slave over a hot stove to bake goodies for us. The rest of us pop some coins in the tin to buy our coffee and cake, and in doing so we help raise money for our fire brigade to purchase equipment it needs.

Café Benders has not only been – and continues to be – an enjoyable way to get to know our neighbours, but has celebrated birthdays, circulated get well cards, farewelled people when they've moved on, helped local members and councillors get to know our area, launched at least one of Mick Woiwod's books, liaised with Wurundjeri elders, hosted fire ready sessions and has even been an occasional gig for our choir.

The evening Benders at Christmas attracts those amongst us with musical talent, and even wild elves wouldn't keep Santa away. Neill Kamminga or Peter Rae cooks burgers and snags to perfection on the barbeque to go with the salads we bring. *Continued next page*



Mick Woiwod replies to Neil Harvey's speech at his 90th birthday at Café Benders on 16 March 2019



Mick in an article about our Environmental Living Zone in The Age, Tuesday 20 November 1990

Mick has been a familiar face in the Bend of Islands for quite some time (with Wolfgang Krause and Carol Ann Fisher)



Tim and Laura Ealey selling paintings and honey at the 1994 Christmas market



Bruce Rodgers playing his didge at the 1994 Christmas market



ON A BENDER

After watching helpers struggle to synchronise the scrolling of butchers' paper lyrics for the carols each year, I'm tempted to suggest we divert some of the tea and coffee proceeds to buy a teleprompter!

Café Benders has been a part of our community for so long that newer residents might think it has always been there, but it hasn't. Many of you will remember that it once wasn't a café at all, but a market.

On Saturday 24 March 1990 the Friends of the Fire Brigade, including Marg Woiwod, Sheila Dixon and Pamela Gurney, held their inaugural market in our fire shed. Peter Gurney remembers that when nobody turned up in the first hour he suggested that stall holders all buy an item from each other to make it work. But then people began trickling in and soon there was quite a crowd.

Pamela Gurney saw the prospects for such a market to be a conduit for our community to socialise with each other in a less formal setting than some of the other local activities, and ran with the idea, arranging further markets.

There was some good stuff to be found on the various stalls spread around the fire shed. I bought two irrigation sprinklers from Steve Craig at one of those markets and they continue to be a vital part of our household bushfire defence. I sometimes wish we had bought Peter Gurney's fireplace mantelpiece – an impressive item on his stall. Norm Linton Smith baked bread, Carol and Alan Bonny made kaleidoscopes and arty things, there was bric-a-brac galore, Syd and Ona had a stall of their prints, Tim and Laura Ealey sold small paintings and honey, while others had a variety of produce for sale. Some of our neighbours from Christmas Hills north end even turned up to buy or sell.

But the effort people put into those markets was unsustainable in the long term, so as the number of stalls dwindled it evolved into a monthly cafe to allow us to continue to come together as a community. For quite a while we still referred to it fondly as the market, even though there was now only tea, coffee and cake for sale. Eventually some bright spark coined the name Café Benders, a sign was painted for above the kitchen door, and from those early market days a new era had begun.

The Warrandyte branch of the Bendigo Bank began taking a philanthropic interest in our fire brigade, so the latest Café Benders sign reflects that initiative. *Continued next page*



Café Benders, April 2009



Ellie & Jessie Parfitt,
Cara Gurney & Wendy
Bradley at the Market
circa 1995



Bill Forrest and Chris Tabecki perform at the 2008 Christmas Benders



Carol and Alan Bonny saying
"Let them eat cake."



Kids queuing to see Santa at the 2009 Christmas Benders



ON A BENDER

Not every place in which we live during our lifetime can be called a community, but that's what we have in the Bend of Islands. I'm reminded of it every month at Café Benders, as I natter with my neighbours. Someday if and when I move on I'm going to miss it. There must be something magic about it, because people like Mick Woiwod, Barb Snell and Peter Gurney who have left the area all keep trekking back over here for their Café Benders top-up.

Sometimes Benders even provide slapstick comedy. Not too many Benders ago Janet Mattiske was just about to step inside when the new roller door suddenly seemed to object to her entry and unceremoniously closed, leaving a mystified Janet standing outside. Amidst our amusement Marie Krause discovered that she had inadvertently leaned on the button on the wall near the kitchen!

For my 90th at Café Benders I'd like some of those party horns that uncoil as you blow. But that's quite a few Benders away yet. When the time comes, I hope I'll be able to make sagely contributions to our community café like Mick Woiwod does. But don't count on it.

Alan Blum



Claire Watson also celebrated her 90th at Café Benders, on 15 May 2010



A Café Benders-style farewell for Barb Snell in 2012



The Bend of Islands Choir singing at Benders for Claire's 90th



Mick launching The Christmas Hills Story at Benders, 19 June 2010



Official opening of the new roller door at Café Benders on 19 May 2018



Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

A history – part one.



construct a house and ancillary facilities, such as small kitchen gardens and storage sheds. The rest of the land is common land managed by the Co-operative in accordance with conservation principles. Thus far, 24 houses have been constructed providing a unique living environment and achieving the goal of ensuring conservation of important bushland.

The diversity of the flora and fauna provides members a lifestyle akin to living in a national park. The Co-op land is rich in natural values and supports a range of vegetation communities including vulnerable Box Ironbark Forest, Creek-line herb-rich Woodland and Valley Grassy Forest.

This diversity of habitats supports an equally diverse range of fauna. This includes 127 species of birds (one of State significance, nine of regional significance), 24 species of mammals (three of State significance), ten species of reptiles and nine species of amphibians. Of particular note is the presence of the endangered Brush-tailed

Phascogale and the Powerful Owl. Both species are of State significance and listed under Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

So, how does it work?

There are clearly defined rules that govern the use of the land and the relationship between each member and the Co-operative. Members need to subscribe to the over-riding principles of bushland conservation and operating within the co-operative structure, which includes being active participants in the management of the bushland and the running of the Co-operative's day to day operations.

Conservation principles (no domestic pets, use of indigenous planting, control of weeds, minimising the impact on the bush, control burning for ecological purposes, etc.) are central to the operation of the Co-operative. The siting of housing, design and materials, waste treatment, etc. have to

meet all current statutory requirements, as well as satisfy the Co-operative's goal of minimising physical and visual impact. Being in an area of a high bush-fire risk, buildings must meet increasingly stringent construction standards and residents are encouraged to adopt bushfire management contingency plans.

These principles are incorporated into unique local Planning Scheme provisions that apply to the whole of the Bend of Islands, of which the Co-op forms an integral part.

At that time of the development of this model of residential conservation, communal living was a growing movement and a reflection of a youthful society's exploration of alternatives

At the end of the 1960's Australia was still embroiled in the Vietnam War and Melbourne was convulsing with anti-war moratoriums, Gough Whitlam was on the cusp of becoming PM, Dylan was still relevant and social values and establishment institutions were "a'changin". But while man had walked on the moon, we still had not worked out how to save precious bushland habitat. Fraser Island and Lake Pedder were the national conservation battles, and in Victoria, the Little Desert.

Closer to Melbourne, the Victorian Government, in response to water shortages associated with an extended drought, planned to dam the Yarra River and inundate a precious parcel of bushland and unique river system in the Bend of Islands less than 40km from the CBD. A group of conservationists had different ideas and their concerted campaign saved the Bend of Islands and the surrounding bushland (Sugarloaf Reservoir was the compromise). During this period a group of these conservation activists purchased 326 acres (132 ha) of high-quality remnant bushland (now recognised as a biodiversity hotspot) and proceeded to establish a Residential Conservation Co-operative.



The concept of Residential Conservation emerged as an innovative response to twin social and environmental problems; protecting precious bushland habitat and offering alternative housing options. The Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative is a working example. Formally incorporated in 1971, the 32-member Co-operative continues to operate successfully. Each member has an entitlement to lease a 1500m2 area to

Continued over page



Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

A history – part one. Continued



to the prevailing conservative social and economic norms. From its inception the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative was regarded, somewhat pejoratively, as being at the bourgeois-end of the very popular commune movement because of the very clearly defined rules governing conservation and planning objectives.

In retrospect, these rules have proven instrumental in ensuring that the Co-operative has survived and succeeded in achieving its objectives. In an era of a thriving anti-establishment counter-culture movement, the Co-op was more counter-counter culture. Foundation members of the Co-op came from a wide variety of backgrounds, university academics, young and enthusiastic engineers, chemists, school teachers, a town planner and even an accountant, suitably balanced by artists and builders. All were active conservationists and shared the dream of “residential conservation”. While such varied backgrounds inevitably brought equally varied opinions, what all members agreed on was the need to clearly define the rules at the outset.

In addition to the conservation principles the original constitution covered a range of other social and economic principles. The price of a share is set at the original purchase price, adjusted only for CPI and the value of infrastructure added. And instead of a freehold title, Members have a long-term (100 year) lease on their site. The Co-operative also determines who becomes a member with the emphasis on ensuring prospective members make fully informed decisions and willingly commit to the Co-operative’s values and objectives

- This array of skills and demonstrable commitment to conservation was to prove crucial in convincing State Planning authorities of the Co-operative’s bona fides, and to facilitate the negotiation of a unique Planning Permit.)

This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in Arena Magazine, Feb-Mar 2019 edition.

John Roberts

Landcare Report

Hi Everyone,

Due to the lack of rain recently the weeds have been less than normal. We spent September & October trying to make a dent in the roadside freesias between Catani & Skyline on Henley.

November, we had a session at Catherine Oxley Reserve & I am glad to report that most of the planting done last year is still alive and growing.

December, Henley road-side weed run.

January, we don’t do.

February, I couldn’t be there but I appreciate that Dylan Osler guided the crew to a session on Burgan control & thinning.

March- with Dylan again, a good session near Neil & Jenny Taylor’s, trying out removal of some Burgan (suckers) & woody weeds to promote more diversity in the gully area

Be sure to check out the bridge sign for future Landcare work bee’s & come learn more about the weeds in your area & the Bend in general, 3rd Sunday of the month, the weeds will be coming once we get a little more rain!!

Cheers Luke Doyle (0409610934)



News from the Fire Brigade

Autumn Greetings from your local fire brigade! The brigade has had a pretty busy fire season to date with members responding to several local events including several lightning strikes, shed/house fires, car accidents and numerous alarms at Winneke Water Treatment Plant. Firefighters have also worked day and night on several larger fires across the state this summer as well as assisting at planned burns. A fantastic effort by our local team, supported as ever by a host of non-operation members and the Café Benders crew.

The state has stayed very dry over summer and into autumn. Our patch is particularly dry with our local drought index still extremely elevated in late April. Fire restrictions will most likely be removed in early May, whether we have significant rainfall or not. Similar conditions in previous years have seen the brigade respond to several burns that have escaped into the surrounding area.

I know many residents will be looking to burn off fallen vegetation that has accumulated over summer. If doing so, please ensure you have clear area around your burn and an adequate supply of water on hand as the surrounding bush may still be very dry. Burning off on days of medium or strong winds is also best avoided. Checking on your burn pile over the following couple of days to ensure it is well and truly extinguished will also help. Of course, if your burn does get out of hand, CALL 000 immediately and we will be there to help!

Every two years the brigade elects a new management team and recent elections in April have resulted in several new and returning members. Locals James Armstrong and Julie Martindale will be joining fellow Bend of Islands residents Deirdre Lucas, Mandy Walters, Michael Scroggie, Peter Mildenhall, Rowena Jonas, Paul Jonas and myself in the management of the brigade from 1st July. Christmas Hills residents Robyn Adams and Dianne Simmons are also returning to leadership roles within the brigade with Dianne returning to don the red helmet as Captain. A gracious thanks to this team for their on-going commitment to service in our community.

Cheers,
Pete



A FROGGY-FRIENDS NIGHT TO REMEMBER



It's not often one gets to wander around the bush in the black of night without concerned locals calling the cops, but on Saturday, April 13th that's exactly what 25 intrepid Benders (and nearby locals) were doing. All in the name of science, of course. We were on the hunt for an elusive amphibian - the Southern Toadlet (*Pseudophryne semimarmorata*) - as there is a record of its presence in The Bend.

The hunt was part of a training session initiated and run by Melbourne Water, who is keen to determine if the species still exists in the Greater Melbourne area.

The evening began when our bunch of enthusiastic amateur herpetologists crammed into the Fire Station meeting room and James Frazer from MW explained the purpose of the training - to learn about the ST and its preferred habitat.

James then expressed his astonishment that so many had forgone their Saturday nightclubbing to attend a froggy training session. We assured him that this was not unusual behaviour for Benders.

James introduced ST expert, Craig Cleeland, who's managing a Nillumbik-wide program to try and determine exactly where the Southern Toadlet is and isn't living these days. (They're endemic to southern Vic, Tas and just into s/e South Australia.) Amazingly, in 2018, Craig searched for and found the ST at Sugarloaf Reservoir. Hurrah!

Craig explained that Southern Toadlet breed during autumn, when it's ostensibly the ideal time to listen for males calling for females. However, like ducks, they have a preference for rainy days and, as we know, this autumn Victoria has experienced some of the hottest days on record and well below average rainfall. Not good news for Southern Toadlets...or

those attempting to find them.

We also learned that Southern Toadlet males live in burrows under or near grasses and other strappy-leaved plants in clear or lightly forested areas. When a female is lured by the male's irresistible 'cre-erk...cre-erk', the loved-up couple enjoy a bit of nooky before the female spawns her eggs under leaf-litter in or near seasonally-flooded depressions that hold water for about six months, giving tadpoles enough time to undergo their metamorphosis.

STs are about 2-3cm in size and have an attractively patterned underbelly that's orange with black and white splotches.

After an hour or so learning about the intricacies of the ST it was time for some hard yakka! The now-expert herpetologists checked their EPIRBS, made last minute

calls to loved ones, and headed off into the wilderness. After a wearisome one-and-a-half-minute drive, we arrived at the Jessie Cameron Bull Reserve - i.e. the gully near Peter Rae's place. (Yes, Pete knew we were coming!)

Craig then announced that we were his 'guinea-pigs' for determining whether or not we could, from his training, work out if we thought the area held potential as a breeding site for Southern Toadlets. He foisted a couple of survey sheets upon us all, and sent us off to wander through the bush, determining things like the percentage of tree cover, the amount and type of bush, and whether or not we thought there were Southern Toadlet-suitable depressions. Oh, and keep an ear out for its distinctive 'cre-erk...cre-erk' and an eye out for a 2cm brown-olive, splotchy critter amongst the brown-olive leaf litter...at night by torchlight. A successful siting was surely but minutes away.

Alas, it wasn't to be. So we regrouped and followed a wombat path to the small dam on the northern side of Catani Blvd, along the way discovering a cool millipede and a fearless spider. Most of us gathered to chat, mildly

interested in the head-torch bobbing around in the bush on the other side of the dam. Was it a lost child? It turned out to be the hero of the night, Michael Scroggie who returned

to base camp with a little amphibious friend. Excitement abounded, even though the friend wasn't (somewhat unbelievably) the rare and endangered Southern Toadlet, but a mere commoner - the Victorian Smooth Toadlet (*Geocrinia victoriana*). It quickly became apparent



Southern Toadlet
Pseudophryne semimarmorata



Southern Toadlet
Pseudophryne semimarmorata

Continued over page



A FROGGY- FRIENDS NIGHT TO REMEMBER



Victorian Smooth Toadlet
Geocrinia victoriana

that this little guy was already an InstaStar as he pouted and posed for the paparazzi, before Michael once again trekked the long trek to return him to his rightful home.

After so much excitement, it was time for us too, to return to our homes and we said our goodbyes to new friends and old, vowing

to meet again...hopefully before next frog breeding season.

Bend of Islands residents and committee would like to extend thanks to James Frazer, Andrew Mellor and Warren Tomlinson from Melbourne Water for organising this important session, and to Southern Toadlet expert Craig Cleeland for sharing his knowledge in a fun and informative manner.

By AB Bishop



Victorian Smooth Toadlet *Geocrinia victoriana*

WATER

by Jarrah Pauli



Water; a necessity for all life,
Water; sharper than a knife.

Water; makes plants thrive,
Water; it makes you feel alive.

Water; fills our lakes, rivers, oceans and seas,
Water; when all seems lost it makes you believe.

Water; don't get dehydrated,
Water; that note should not be debated.

Water; we catch it from precipitation,
Water; in our tanks, for your Information.

Water; whether it is waves, rapids or rain,
Water; of all life's necessities, it is main.

SUGARLOAF LINK PROJECT

This is our big opportunity to reverse the incremental degradation of the area's biodiversity, by implementing the weed control recommendations of the BoI Land Management Plan (LMP)

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 of the target weeds from their properties by contractors.

See page 4 for more information.

BICA has invited Sugarloaf Link Project Manager, Michelle Hanslow, to attend Cafe Benders

10.00 am Saturday 18 May 2019.

Cafe Benders is held at the Fire Shed in Catani Blvd .

Do come along and find out more about the project.



BIRD NOTES



Wonga Pigeon

Photo - Mal Chickean

Wonga Pigeon was seen and photographed at Yanakie by Gavin and Mal on 16/3/19 – yet another new bird for the Bol List. Val also photo'd one on the Co-op on 26/4/19.

Eastern Rosellas attempted to breed, next to Frank & Janet's house at C Track of the Co-op, for the third consecutive year. They laid 4 eggs but these were all taken by a sugar Glider over 2 nights. An updated report with full details is on the Birds Page of the BICA website.

White-throated Nightjar has been found breeding on the Co-op this year. This follows on from the 2014 breeding event observed on an adjacent property (reported in Newsletter No 82, April 2014). Birdlife Australia has WtNj breeding records at Brisbane Ranges NP, Lerderberg Gorge NP and Bunyip SP. Our records fill in the gap and are the closest known records to Melbourne.

This bird winters in New Guinea. It arrives here in October and departs in April. Its presence here has been consistently documented since 1995.

It is extremely difficult to detect during the daytime due to its highly effective camouflage as it roosts in leaf litter on the ground. Its distinctive calls can be heard anytime from dusk till dawn.

Once found the bird was monitored regularly. It was last seen on 11/4/19 and it probably migrated shortly after.

This breeding record is significant for the Bol and the Co-op, proving the success of our 'residential conservation' and the benefits of our area of high biodiversity.

New Birds for the BICA List. See Gavin's article on what new species we've predicted as likely to turn up in the Bol.

Bird Survey turns 30

The BICA Bird Survey started on 21 May 1989 so we have turned 30. Any bird survey that has been continuously on-going for 30 years is significant. Birds Australia recognise this and are very pleased that we provide an annual update for the Atlas Project.

Our list for the area currently stands at 173. This includes quite a few recent additions, some of which are clearly a result of climate change.

The Birds Page of the BICA Website has lots of links to information about the birds of our area, as well as a summary of our on-going bird survey. All sections have recently been updated. See

<https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/flora-and-fauna/birds/>

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.

Frank Pierce

The following can be reported since October 2018.

Lyrebird Records

18 new Lyrebird records have been reported. 9 in the gully north of Henley Rd from Taylor's to Yanakie; 7 from Stevenson Creek north of the Co-op to Gate 3 to Sugarloaf Dam on Skyline Rd.

We now have 336 Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. Details and analysis, updated at the end of each year, can be found on the Birds Page of 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/Skyline escarpment' is an important part of this link.

Bird Survey Highlights

The outstanding sightings for the period were -

Latham's Snipe was seen at Yanakie in February – a new bird for the Bol List.

White-throated Nightjar was seen on the Co-op in March – this is a '1st survey record'



Juvenile White-throated Nightjar

Other Interesting Observations

Swamp Harrier was seen flying over the river by Gavin and Mal on 23/2/19 – a new bird for the Bol List.



WHAT WILL BE THE BEND'S NEXT NEW BIRD?

As Frank's bird notes will mention, there has been a small flurry of new birds being added to the Bend of Islands bird list in early 2019. This got the regulars on the monthly bird survey thinking, "What would be the next new bird spotted in the Bend?"

At the start of the year approximately 170 bird species had been recorded over the last 30 years or so. While some have only been seen once or have not been seen for many years, they were out of scope. So with "No Pressure!" eight of The Regulars set about making their lists. The idea was that we had to name the 15 next most likely for the area in order of likelihood. The question of course is how do you decide what is likely? After all, there have been a lot of people birdwatching in The Bend for many years. So people looked at online resources to determine what birds had been seen in Nillumbik but not Bol. They also considered what birds were migrants or highly mobile (waterbirds or blossom migrants) or perhaps ones that were likely to be around but are cryptic (Owls or Crakes). But in the end even a seabird like an albatross is possible as a blow-in after a severe storm

The most popular choices were:

The Next Bird	Frequency of Selection
Barn Owl	7
Pink-eared Duck	5
Australasian Shoveler	4
Australian Spotted Crake	4
Hooded Robin	4
Noisy Friarbird	4
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	4
Stubble Quail	4
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	4
Australasian Pipit	3
Baillon's Crake	3
Blue-faced Honeyeater	3
Hoary-headed Grebe	3
Rufous Songlark	3
Spotted Harrier	3



While no one had Barn Owl as their first choice, seven of the eight had it somewhere on the list.

The list of first choices is:

People's First Choices
Silver Gull
Peaceful Dove
Australian Pipit
Australian Spotted Crake
Purple-crowned Lorikeet
Eastern Whipbird
Baillon's Crake
Spotted Harrier



Another complication was that a Swamp Harrier was spotted for the first time in Bol while people were in the process of compiling their lists so a highly popular choice was removed from scope mid process. In the end no one correctly guessed the next new bird which was a Wonga Pigeon (see Bird Notes). However it did give us all the chance to think about the changing face of The Bend and to consider how we might identify new birds that we see and where this might happen.

www.e-bird.org has 212 birds recorded in Nillumbik, albeit back to 1941 and with the changing landscape since then, there are certainly some local extinctions but keep an eye open as you never know what might turn up.

Gavin Masters



BATHING BEAUTIES



Afternoon drinkies sitting near our birdbath is such a delight.

Watching the different antics of the diverse species is really fascinating. Each one has a unique bathing method. The Grey Fantail always seems to be the first in attendance, his bossy chirping letting everyone know that he is here and is going to have this bath all to himself. That assumption is short lived as he is quickly joined by another six or more with their tails fanning every which way as they spray water liberally. Sneaking in next is the tiny Spotted Pardalote, always extremely cautious, taking a quick drink before a very brief dip and then exiting stage left. Striated and Brown Thornbills take to the water as if they were born to be ducks. Next, they spend quite a bit of time preening on the nearby branches before a last brief dip. Yellow Honeyeaters come to quench their thirst and dunk their feet, but the White-eared Honeyeater is so nervous he hardly ever gets to even have a drink.

My favourite though, is the White-throated Treecreeper as he has this totally unique method of entering the water. Jumping across to the rim of the bath from a branch, he then turns his back to the water, head held high he then backs down into his bath! After much splish- splashing, he then heads off up the trunk of the Stringy bark, checking all the while for a juicy insect. The stunning Crimson Rosellas visit as well, but it's those littlies that bring the biggest smile to my face.

Carol Bonny





RECENT SIGHTINGS



Fox killing Lowland Copperhead -
Austrelaps superbus
Yanakie 2019-02-13
A video of this event can be seen at
<https://youtu.be/9zBhW45dygc>
This was taken just upstream of the big
dam on Yanakie.
The voice-over is a bit rough, but
unfortunately
David Attenborough wasn't available. :-)
Thanks to Michael Dempsey for
application of his production skills



This tree-hugger paid a
Christmas Day visit Michael and
Zainil on the Co-op.





Put the date in your diary for our Family Fun picnic on Saturday May 11

Learn about Bats, Frogs and Earth Hour!

When: Saturday 11th May, 4.30 - 7pm

Location: Bend of Islands – Fire Station, Cnr. Henley Road and Catani Blvd.

Activities: We will have 3 stations - one for Frogs, where you will find out what frogs we have here in the Bend, where to find them and how you can help if you do spot one, especially one very special frog that we will be tracking! There will be colouring in, sounds and information on how to spot them. Frog croaking contest with frog cookies for the winners and runners up!



Another station will be for Bats - Here you can get your face painted, learn about all the bats in the area and have story time under the trees! There will be bat cookies!

The third station will be for making lanterns - This will be a place to learn all about Earth hour and why it is important! We will decorate our lanterns and each take one home!

What to bring: Any drinks or snacks to enjoy the evening. An empty clean jar to make a lantern. An inquisitive mind!

Please contact Kimberley Kifun for more information on 0457 359571 or Kimmi@thekindnessofstrangers.net



Vegie Market

Hi All,

In case you were not aware I just wanted to let you know that every Monday night at about 7pm, we have a delivery of 'straight from market' organic fruit and vegetables, bio dynamic milk and available also are organic eggs!

The cost of a box of vegies is \$40 & the more people that order the more produce you get. At the moment we are 13 families, but a couple are away for a while. 15 -18 families would be a good number as this would allow for people who want to do every 2nd week or when folks are away.

Please contact me or come to the fire station next Monday to see how it works. Look forward to seeing you.!!

Cheers Luke (0409610934)



Where is this teenager's burrow?

This youngster wombat looks like a juvenile, perhaps just about on the cusp of independence. Maybe 18 months or thereabouts? Should be OK if there are no territorial adults around.

This youngish one is often on our verandah at night, & sunning on warm afternoons by our back garden. We're not worried, just curious ... its coat is healthy & it seems like it is happily dreaming in the sun. Having

lived here for 40 years, we have only ever seen them sunning right by a burrow... not out in the open like this.

The family burrow could be near the creek or river, Junior was told to get out into the world and dig its own home perhaps? It looks like this one is couch-surfing and why dig when you can sleep in our garden, & feel safe!

Generally, the youngsters are chased away from the mother by the new male mate. They are usually not even a year old. Often not prepared for a solo life. Nature can be very harsh, quite often. They could use a helping hand as the chance of survival if the skills are not learned are tough. They are not mature until they are close to two years old. They get chased

young wombat sleeping by our back door out in the open for last couple of days
11 April 2019



and beat up by the adults, so it is a bit hard for them to find their own territory.

The young males get beaten and will often have a lot of wounds on the back. Sometimes it is so bad that the infection will ultimately kill them. The young females are not usually beaten up.... so, I'm guessing our little friend is a female.

Would love feedback from anyone who knows what happens at this cusp age...?

Ona & Syd, The Creek House

DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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/>

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

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Design and Layout; Greg Phillips

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BICA Website: www.bendofislands.wordpress.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

