

BICA NEWSLETTER

Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc., Bend of Islands, Victoria, 3097, Australia

C/- PO Kangaroo Ground, Vic 3097

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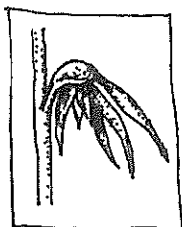
WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Corunastylis despectans*

Common name: Sharp Midge-orchid

Family: Orchidaceae

Flowering Period: January to June



A slender terrestrial orchid to 40 cm tall, with a very thin leaf and flower stem. The single erect 25 cm long leaf clasps the stem for most of its length, with the top 15 mm free.

The flower stem ends in a dense short spike of 5-40 crowded, upside-down, nodding flowers. Each flower is about 3 mm across, dark purplish-brown or green, with purplish markings and with pointed segments. All parts of the flower are hairless and the lip is sharply pointed.

Widespread throughout Victoria in a range of habitats, from dry and valley sclerophyll forest, grassy low open forest, heathy forest and heathland.

Previously known as *Genoplesium despectans*

Prefers well drained clay loam soils and is pollinated by tiny flies.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robyn Duff

A number of projects kept the BICA Committee busy last year. The biggest long-term project that we kicked off was the development of a Land Management Plan for the Bend of Islands. This project that is described by Gavin Masters later in this Newsletter will set out a blueprint for future conservation activity within the Bend of Islands. Last year we planned the project and successfully submitted for grants from Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (\$10,000), the Warrandyte Community Bank (\$5,000) and the Shire of Nillumbik (\$4,500). We are very grateful for this support.

The rabbit control program has been very effective over the past 12 months in humanely despatching rabbits (and at least one fox) within the area. Thanks to Peter Mildenhall who has ably led it with support from the Shire of Nillumbik and BICA.

The BICA archives are finally in a safe place! A small group, led by Meg McCallum, has sorted, arranged and transferred the BICA archives to a safe place in the State Library of Victoria. The archives will therefore be preserved but accessible – the best possible outcome for BICA.

An excellent pamphlet about the Bend of Islands has been developed by a group of Committee members. The pamphlet will ensure that people thinking of moving to the Bend of Islands understand the values of the area and the planning scheme regulations and will allow us to save our precious larger more detailed publication for actual new residents.

Throughout the year the Committee responded to a number of consultation papers including the Review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, the Shire of Nillumbik's Economic Development Strategy, the Easement Management Plan for High Voltage Power lines, the Pantom Hill Reserves and Trails Management Consultation, Unlocking Victorian Tourism, the Nillumbik Shire Council Recreational Trails Strategy and the Ministerial Advisory Committee Review of Victorian Planning Scheme. If you would like to see any of these, please ask a Committee member.

As well as these activities, BICA has maintained the regular community involvement activities that you all know about

such as Landcare, Clean Up Australia and Field Days. All of this, as well as liaison with various authorities such as those responsible for local and high voltage power lines, and the Shire of Nillumbik, have kept the Committee busy. It has been a very enjoyable and productive year.

The Committee is looking forward to a good year in 2012 with the commencement of the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan project which will be overseen by a local steering committee. We expect the project to be completed within two years, and we hope that it will help us all to care for this precious and beautiful area well into the future.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

A Management Plan for The Bend of Islands

We all know what ELZ (or SUZ2) means. It gives us the structure and rules that support the residential conservation zone that we live in and enjoy. It sets apart the Bend of Islands with a vision of what we want to achieve as we live here. What it does not do however is provide the action plan of things we need to do to preserve the area.

It gives no guidance on priorities. Should we worry about this weed or that? Should we be concerned that Red Stringybarks have failed to thrive over the last decade? Have there been any recent local extinctions of any plants or animals? What are the key zones in The Bend that require intervention to maintain or improve the quality of the bushland? What are our goals for the next five, ten or fifty years?

In order to get this sort of direction, we need a plan!

With some of these questions in mind and a few more besides, a small group of people has worked on a project to develop a brief. This will be further developed with an environmental consultant who can build up this plan. Our aim is to have an overarching document to give us direction. It will also be used as a basis for applying for funding for work in the area. The community can use the plan as a data point of the current biodiversity and compare it with historical records: Or as a historical record itself for use in the future.

If you have any ideas on key ecological or biodiversity issues that may need to be covered, we will be very keen to hear your thoughts. Please forward them through to the BICA Secretary who will pass them on to the working group.

Due to successful applications for funding from local and state governments and the Community (Bendigo) Bank in Warrandyte, we are in a position to employ someone to write a Management plan for our Bend.

GAVIN MASTERS, SECRETARY



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The form is available for download from the website at

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica>

New member (complete form) Renewing member (complete if details have changed)

Membership Rates

Based on the year starting from AGM.

\$10 concession per annum
\$20 single per annum
\$30 family per annum

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email _____

Methods of payment:

Cheque – made payable to BICA, Send PO Box 37 Kangaroo Ground 3097

EFT- Bendigo Bank – BSB 633 000 A/c no. 142450675
Please ensure your name is on the transfer record to the bank.
Receipts will be issued on request.

DELIGHTFUL DASYURIDS

Alan Bluhm

At 5.45am one crisp July morning last year, I was driving to work along Henley Road and was delighted to spot a tuan wandering about on the road ahead, just near Peter and Edda's. I slowed and prepared to wait for it to scarp to shelter in the roadside vegetation. However it stayed on the bitumen and nonchalantly zigzagged ahead of me down the road.

Whenever I see tuans in action I'm reminded of *Spy-vs-Spy* in Mad comics, partly because tuans have pointy faces like the spy characters, and partly because their short darting movements are a pretty good imitation of those furtive comic-strip spies.

So there we were: the tuan making good use of my headlights to do its own thing as it slowly headed down the road, and me following this entertaining floor show in first gear. Amazingly, the tuan continued on in this manner all the way to the Hatty's, where it turned in to inspect the property.

The tail on this particular tuan seemed relatively short, so I assumed it was youngish. Young tuans can be quite precocious. I remember some years ago when Todd Soderquist was researching tuans in the Bend of Islands, a very young male trekked across country from our backyard to proposition a female at Tim and Laura Ealey's in Skyline Road – a distance of maybe approaching a couple of kilometres up hill and down dale.

Anyway, later that morning last year, Barb rang me at work to say that my tuan had performed on the road for her an hour or so later in the same area.

I spent the following mornings hoping the tuan would brighten my day, but I didn't see it again.

Just after dark a few weeks later, Barb and I were heading out to a dinner date and had a less impressive experience on Henley Road. As we approached the roughly 484-488 Henley Road vicinity we could see two pairs of eyes reflecting back at us in the distance. When we drew closer we were surprised to see a fox and a tabby-like cat fraternising in the centre of the road. On our approach the fox headed off into the paddocks on the right, and the cat slunk away to the left. We are unsure if

the two species had just inadvertently bumped into each other and were trying to decide what to do next, or whether there was some sort of amicable arrangement happening. One thing we are sure of is that this was two lots of bad news for our tuan.

At 5.40am one damp morning in January *this* year I had the pleasure of catching a tuan in my headlights on our own property. This one was leaping up and down like a squirrel as it ran along, perhaps to avoid the wet ground cover. As always when I've watched tuans doing their own thing in the bush, I couldn't help thinking anthropomorphically that it looked like it was enjoying life.

Regardless of whether tuans enjoy life or not they are an enchanting feature of our area. It would be a tragedy for both them and us in our unique environmental living zone if cats and foxes were able to reduce their numbers or perhaps even wipe them out.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Rudi Pauli

BICA events for the next few months include the following. Watch the sign at Oxley Bridge for details closer to the date. Regular BICA events are listed in the BICA calendar. See the website for more information.

Eucalyptus Walk: Sunday 1st April

Canoe Run: Easter Sunday 8th April

Bike Ride: Sunday 29th April

Firehouse Cinema: Saturday 26th August

The Big Walk: Sunday 27th May

Moss Walk: Sunday 3rd June

Trivia Night: Saturday 7th August

Bica General Meeting: Sunday 29th July

Any enquiries to Rudi, rumetpa@yahoo.com or 97120470.

PROPERTY IN THE BEND

Welcome to new owners & BICA members Justin & Imelda, Nina, Callum & Flynn at 779 Henley Road.

As in most areas around Melbourne there have not been a lot of property transactions in the past months. There have been requests for rental in the area so please let members of the Property Committee know of anything available.

The committee has been working to build on relationships with the various real estate agents who work in the area so that prospective buyers have good information about living in the Bend of Islands. Our new pamphlet has been valuable.

On The Market:

226 Catani Blvd
Land only 7 acres \$200,000 - \$220,000. Philip Webb

285 Catani Blvd
Land only 3,351 sq m approx - \$200 -250,000. Fletchers

488 Henley Rd
House on 20 acres \$620,000 - \$680,000. Emerson Oliver

750 Henley Rd
House & land. Morrison Kleeman

Co-op Site 24 Share for sale includes leased house site
(Vacant-no house) \$30,000 - \$40,000

Co-op Site 13 Share for sale includes leased house site
(Vacant-no house)

Co-op B Track Share for sale includes house

For more on Co-op Sites contact Karyn Kamminga **97120621**

*Deirdre Lucas, Mike Pelling, Leanne Wierzbowski
& Liz Mildenhall 97120577 (mildenhall2@big-pond.com)*

JOURNEY TO A MUDDIE IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS

Liz Mildenhall and Deirdre Lucas

We asked the new residents in Henley Road what lead them to the Bend of Islands, how they found information about the area and how they are finding living here.

Justin and Mel had had a goal to live in a muddie. One evening Mel checked out the real estate websites and found three mud brick houses - two in Warrandyte and the other in Henley Road ... 'miles away in the conservation area - and no cat!' As soon as she and the kids pulled up they knew that this was the house for them. When Justin saw it, he agreed. He'd grown up in South Warrandyte, in a dead-end street, with plenty of bush and an appreciation of the wildlife ... 'I missed it,' he said.

The idea of living in the bush wasn't a problem for them. Keen bushwalkers, they wanted to live in more peaceful surroundings. They wanted 'out of the rat race, some space and freedom for the kids'. Justin and Mel looked forward to being more self-sufficient and weren't worried about water tanks after being on strict water restrictions in the 'burbs over the past years. Justin is a plumber and 'working in the building industry where there's always a jack hammer going, the last thing you want at the end of the day is noise.' This was the place for them. Even living on a dirt road wasn't a hassle as 'everyone is so considerate'.

The real estate agent told them the property had an SUZ2 overlay. They searched the BICA website - 'the quickest and easiest way to get information these days,' and found it useful. 'No pets... so many people are conditioned to pets,' but they were open to the idea - despite their family cat. They contacted Nillumbik Council and Alan Bonny for more information. 'If you're going to make the move you don't want a condo going up next door.' They also found information in the ELZ kit useful, though said, 'a simple list of expectations for living in the SUZ, such as 'Dos and Don'ts' would have been useful.

Eleven year old Callum loved his cat back in Warranwood. From talking with him we could see he loved animals. It was interesting to hear him say that he gave his cat to a new owner and said he 'found animals here that he liked more than cats'.

He'd researched a project on the hairy nose wombat at school, and so he and his brother, Flynn, were excited to find wombat burrows on their place and they like watching the water skink, bluetongue lizard and echidnas in their garden. Callum is presently looking into how to set up a wildlife refuge by becoming a wildlife carer. On Christmas Day after the storm, a young Rosella was stranded on their window ledge. Callum kept a watch over it until it flew off safely the next morning. The family is enjoying the Rosellas, King Parrots and Bronze-Wings and has seen a Sacred Kingfisher! Mel said she'd never been interested in birds until now.

She and Justin run their own businesses and work for both of them is full on, 'but to come back here and enjoy this place... well we really appreciate it'. In the evenings they watch the mob of roos on the 13th hole - 'there's a bit of a grunt and working out who's boss,' and then about seven of them hop over the fence where a tree's come down, and make their way slowly along the edge of the property. 'The children love to live outside,' Mel says, 'and so do we.'

Welcome to our new residents and BICA members, Justin, Mel, Nina, Callum and Flynn.



Nina, Mel, Flynn, Callum and Justin

GOANNA SIGHTINGS

Meg McCallum

The most controversial sighting occurred in the mid-1980s when a goanna was observed crossing Henley Road in front of John McCallum who was driving children home from school and had imbibed nothing stronger than a cup of tea. Despite his sobriety and the presence of reliable witnesses, many residents received his story with disbelief and ridicule. More recently Mía Stephens encountered a goanna near 770 Henley Road. Sadly it did not wait to be photographed.

On 6 December 2011 a sighting occurred near 100 Catani Boulevard. This time the skeptics have been silenced by photographic evidence! Late in the afternoon I was walking on the road verge when I was startled by a flurry of movement and saw a dark blurry shape hurtling into a tree. When I approached the tree I saw a large goanna. It growled at me and proceeded to climb up the tree. I observed its dark markings and large claws. It was a dead tree and the goanna was clearly visible as it climbed the trunk. It paused to flick its tongue from time to time. I rang John who arrived with his camera. Unfortunately the goanna was now at the top of the tree being harassed by a mob of choughs. However John was able to obtain a recognizable photo before the goanna, lashing its tail at the choughs, disappeared into a hollow in the tree.

Michael Scroggie comments ...

As Meg points out, sightings of Goannas in the ELZ are rare enough to provoke disbelief amongst residents! The Department of Sustainability and Environment's database of wildlife sightings includes only a single record from the ELZ, dated 1986. The reported latitude and longitude for this record places it on Catani Boulevard, very close to the location of Meg's recent sighting. There is a possibility that this record might actually be John's sighting from the 1980's, with the location inaccurately recorded in the database. A significant problem with wildlife atlas records from pre-GPS days is a lack of positional accuracy: the chance for errors when determining geographic locations from maps, or when transcribing locational data into a database is quite high. The location of Meg's recent sighting has now been recorded using GPS, and will form the basis of a new Atlas record. Further authenticated sightings would be very warmly welcomed.

BIRD NOTES

Frank Pierce

The following can be reported since April 2011.

Lyrebirds

22 new records have been reported from J&M McCallum, M Scida, F Pierce, R&C Henry, T Moore, G Masters, M Stephens, N&J Taylor and N&K Kamminga. Refer to the website for details of these and all Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/lyrebird.html>

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. These are all valuable records.

Other Interesting Observations

Brown Quail and **European Goldfinch** were seen for the 1st time on our bird survey walk on 12/2/2012. Both had been recorded in the area previously, but not on a bird walk.

Painted Button-Quail have been wide spread throughout the area recently.

Little Eagle has been recorded on 2 bird survey walks in the last year, both near Watsons Creek..

Crested Shrike-Tit was recently recorded on the Co-op after an absence of over 2 years.

56 species were recorded on our 11/2011 bird walk. This is the highest total since the survey began in 5/1989.

The Birds Section of the BICA Website has lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as an up to date summary of our on-going bird survey. Take a look at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/birds.html> .

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 to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month.

Times are as per the BICA Calendar.

March 2012

BUTTERFLY NOTES

Frank Pierce

The Butterfly Checklist on the BICA Website has now been revised for the following 'new records' of species on the list that have been seen (and photographed) for the first time in recent years.

- Heath Ochre 16/11/11 at Skyline Rd/Wendy Way corner
- Spotted Sedge-skipper 12/11/11 at C Track on Co-op

36 species have now been recorded in the ELZ since 2005.

The current season, with abundant rain, has been particularly good for butterflies, with amazing numbers of Common Browns throughout our bush.

There is a small group of butterfly enthusiasts in the community.

If anyone has any queries, or sees an unusual butterfly, don't hesitate to contact Frank Pierce 9712 0237 or Gavin Masters 9712 0168.



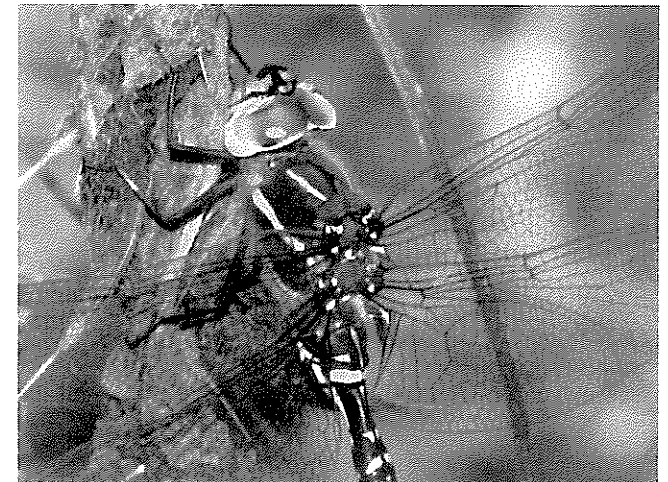
Spotted Sedge-skipper *Hesperilla ornata*.

BICA NEWS ON-LINE

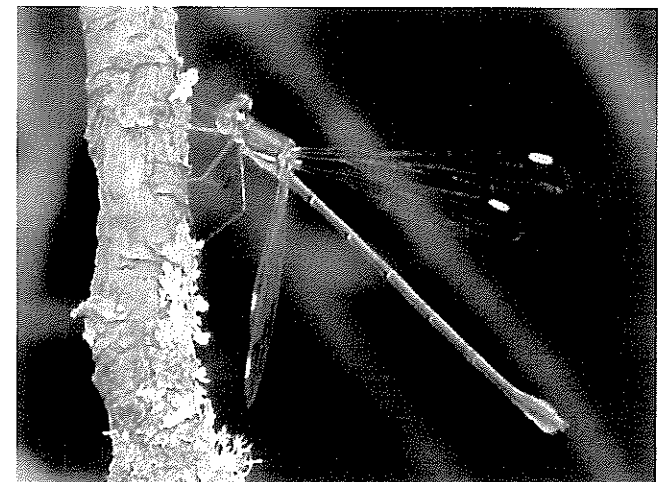
Don't forget that you can download the BICA Newsletter from the website.

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/BICA%20News.html>

These photos of Insects, taken by Frank Pierce in the Bend of Islands, look even better there.



Blue-spotted Hawker, *Adversaeschna brevistyla*



Bronze Needle *Synlestes weyersii*

FROGS OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS PART 3.

Michael Scroggie

Eastern Banjo Frog, *Limnodynastes dumerili*

The Eastern Banjo Frog is a widespread and common species in many parts of south-eastern Australia, including Tasmania. The common name refers to the call made by males when trying to attract mates. The sound, best written as “bonk” resembles the reverberating tone of the lower-pitched string of a banjo. The alternative name “Pobblebonk” describes the sound of two or more Banjo Frogs calling in quick succession – duelling banjos indeed!

A medium to large species, Eastern Banjo Frogs measure up to 80 mm from snout to vent, with females often being somewhat larger than males. Eastern Banjo Frogs have a prominent gland on the lower part of the hindleg, which amongst the frog species found in the Bend of Islands is a unique, distinguishing feature. During dry weather, the adult frogs will bury themselves under soft sand or soil, and are often uncovered when digging in gardens.

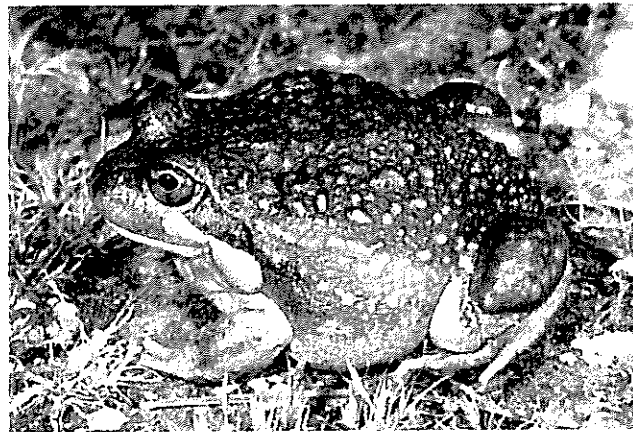
Eastern Banjo Frogs breed mainly during Spring, and are often stimulated to breed by heavy rain. Calling males attract females, who deposit their eggs (1000 or more at a time) into the water. The female whips the eggs and associated jelly-coat into a lather using her hind-legs eggbeater-style. The white, foamy masses of eggs can be readily observed floating in ponds and dams during the breeding season, often amongst vegetation. Most members of the genus *Limnodynastes* produces foamy eggs masses, resembling those of the Eastern Banjo Frog. In the Bend of Islands, the smaller Spotted Marsh Frog, *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis* is another species that produced foamy egg masses, albeit somewhat smaller than those of the Eastern Banjo Frog.

The larval (tadpole) period can be of very long duration (greater than a year under some conditions), and the tadpoles can often reach a surprisingly large size (75 mm or more) before metamorphosing.

Eastern Banjo Frogs are most likely to be found during their spring breeding season, when they will be heard calling from dams, swamps and other permanent waterbodies. The dam between the Fisher and MacCallum properties on Catani Boulevard supports a large population – if you’d like to hear them calling, stop your car and have a listen out the window on a wet spring night. The banjo-like call is unmistakable, and quite musical to the ear.

Further information:

<http://frogs.org.au/frogs/species/Limnodynastes/dumerili/>



Both Photos: Nick Clemann.

THE RABBIT CONTROL STORY

Peter Mildenhall

A number of residents have been discussing the problem of bunnies in our area for some time. They breed prolifically and dramatically change the landscape by nibbling native grasses, spreading weeds, damaging shrubs and competing with our indigenous crew!

Following some ferreting around (sorry about that!) and some discussion in 2010, BICA and the Shire of Nillumbik decided to support a rabbit control program in the Bend. In late 2010 maps were sent to 33 interested landholders. We had 15 returned which was a little disappointing however it is deemed a good return for this sort of project. It was agreed in principle that BICA, the Shire and the landholders would contribute one third each to the cost of the program. This innovative approach certainly helped defray costs for individuals and helped promote a community partnership in confronting the pest.

The Shire officers put together a district map of those who returned individual property maps and a contractor, Peter Voutier of Feralex, was engaged and is providing invaluable support. The properties are somewhat scattered and the Bend seems to have relatively few rabbits in comparison to other nearby farmland. This relatively low population density lead Peter to suggest a soft jaw trapping program.

Peter held a demonstration/workshop on these traps in June 2011 and as a result we had about 13 properties involved as well as the Co-op. A budget was put together and both BICA and the Shire of Nillumbik contributed a one third share of the costs with the remaining \$73 coming from each property owner. Each property received five traps. The budget covered the cost of Feralex expertise, purchase and modifications to the traps to meet Australian standards as well as other equipment needed to maintain an effective trapping program.

Workshops were held in August to modify and prepare the traps and to ensure we had the right techniques! Rabbit recipes began to circulate and inroads began to be made into the Bend’s rabbit population.

We had some immediate success with 11 rabbits caught on five properties and a fox at the Krause property after only a couple of weeks trapping. By late 2011 over 20 rabbits had

been caught although the silly ones seem to have been the first to go and the crafty and clever ones are proving more difficult to catch. John Mac reckons they're nearly all males in the first batch so that may mean something!

Traps are constantly monitored and landholders have been covering the traps during the day to avoid any bycatch. Two birds that have been inadvertently captured have been released, ruffled but seemingly unharmed.

Another positive has been the exchange of some wonderful rabbit recipes...some like Mum used to make and some more 'new age' like Rabbit and Rosemary Risotto! Many a feast has been enjoyed and rabbits caught in the Bend have been very tasty indeed!

After the initial flush of enthusiasm it is getting harder to find the right spot to set the traps; there seem to be fewer around although a young rabbit was recently caught in Lower Catani. There are signs of a recent increase in activity in February so maybe it is time to get the traps out and about!

There has been a lot of positive feedback in regards to the process we used, the involvement and advice of Peter Voutier and hopefully the positive effects on the environment.

Let us know if you are interested in joining the group and/or discussing the use of some traps on your property (with our help of course). Phone Peter Mildenhall (Coordinator) on 9712 0577

WILDLIFE IN OXLEY ROAD

Rod Roscholler

We have lived in Oxley Rd Kangaroo Ground for over twenty years and are covered by the Environmental Living Zone. We live adjacent to pasture, bush and the mighty Yarra. As a consequence we have a truly wonderful variety and abundance of local wildlife. I just want to make some observations and hopefully get some discussion happening.

My particular interest is the way birds in particular come, stay for perhaps many years, and go.

We lived with a wonderful family of White winged Choughs for close to ten years. Every year they nested on or adjacent to our property.

March 2012

We saw them raise their babies, most years successfully. Numbers varied from four to eight. They would come when we called them. We fed them a small amount of seed!!!! They were the most wonderful company; their games were a sight to behold. Their parenting would leave most human efforts in the dust. Kids were continuously demanding.

About two years ago they departed. At the same time most of the Choughs we used to see elsewhere also departed. Where did they go, why did they go, will they return? In terms of bird hierarchy, they were at or near the top, because they would defend or attack as a family. On a number of occasions we saw "our" Choughs protect their turf from "invasion" by a group of Choughs numbering over twenty birds. The fight was much more show than go and the smaller group would normally see them off. The subsequent celebration with much tail wagging and dancing was a sight to behold. I really hope someday that they will return.

Up until a year ago we had the mixed blessing of many Wood Ducks. The upside was the cutesy ducklings you ever saw, the down side was duck poop all around the house. As Andy Avard said, they quack once and poop twice. A year ago they left. In some ways a mixed blessing but the questions remain.

Other birds that stayed with us for a while then moved on include the Red-browed Firetail, Bellbird, Superb Fairy-wren and Willy Wagtail.

We still have lots of wonderful birds so the departures seem to be selective.

On a similar but slightly different issue we do have a very mobile frog population. A couple of years ago Wendy and I decided we should build a frog pond relatively close to the house. Once completed I let it settle in and let nature do its thing. I got somewhat impatient and decided to help the frogs move in. Using mostly local species I placed eggs, tadpoles and even small frogs grown from eggs into the pond. Outcome: zero frog uptake! So I decided to leave it to nature. It took a while but eventually the frogs came. Three different species, not super special or endangered but just great frogs. Most nights we would have a frog symphony right near our bedroom, including the Common Froglet and Peron's Tree Frog.

On occasions the music was so loud we could not sleep and had to close the windows. Often it was silent and we have had

everything in between. I would be very interested to know why they behave that way. It is clear that the number and volume goes up after good rain, but I am at a loss to understand why it varies so much otherwise. Nature is interesting. Maybe that's just the way it is and there is no clear explanation.

I would be very pleased to be enlightened by knowledgeable locals.

Michael Scroggie comments

It's not surprising that frogs take a while to colonize a newly-constructed pond. This is particularly true in drought years, when frogs tend to stay put unless compelled to move.

Particular species might also have preferences for different types of ponds, and might avoid or move on from a pond that doesn't suit their requirements. A newly constructed pond might well be less suitable than one that has been established for a while. I'd also add that collecting and moving eggs, tadpoles or frogs around is not advisable.

On a global scale we have a major problem with frogs declining and going extinct due to Amphibian Chytrid Fungus (see link below) and moving frogs from one place to another might inadvertently cause the disease to be spread into locations where it is currently absent. Much better to let the frogs find their own way to your pond when they are ready, even if it takes a few years. Common Froglet and Peron's Tree Frog are both common species and are very likely to colonize ponds and dams in the ELZ given sufficient time and the right (wet) conditions.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chytridiomycosis>

John McCallum comments

Animals, such as birds, move from place to place as resources become more or less readily available. The good rains have meant that food is wider spread and more abundant than in some years and ducks, for example may no longer depend so much on retreats such as the billabongs on our river. We also note that the Choughs come and go and they have recently returned after a time away. Wherever they have been they are still just as demanding; someone is still free-feeding them out there! In BICA Newsletter No. 35 There was an article on this topic. See also BICA website

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/freefeed.html>

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

4 MARCH 2012

Tom Fisher

With the help of Father Nature, who called a halt to the rain in our neck of the woods at least, and despite the absence of some notable regular contributors, at least 19 Benders participated in the annual Clean Up Australia Day. Two road crews (Barb and Natasha Snell to the west and Meg McCallum and Rosemary West to the east) patrolled Henley and Skyline Roads, trailing the white and yellow bags supplied by the sponsors. Meanwhile, three teams went on the de-fence and plunged deep into the bush to emerge with barbed and fencing wire, as well seriously imposing metal stakes: Luke Doyle, Neil Harvey and Jenny & Neil Taylor worked their way from behind Luke and Mia's in Gongflers Drive towards the River (with the help of a cameo appearance from Tserin Wright, while Pierre Noirjean, Marie & Wolfgang Krause and newcomer Justin Rolfe finished the job started last year below the Wierzbowskis' in Ironbark Rd, and Gavin Masters, Mal Chicksen and John McCallum removed barbed wire between Graham & Mia's and Tom & Carol Ann's properties below the Paris end of Catani Blvd, though they required the services of local guides. At the same time, Our Lady of the River, A.B., braved high water levels and swift currents to surface from her kayak with two full bags of rubbish plus an extra bucket. Morning tea enticed Karyn and Neill Kamminga to appear with additional offerings for the skip supplied, as usual, by Nillumbik Shire.

Once again, the demographics revealed a preponderance of elder statespeople, with one 81-year old, two in their seventies, eight between 62 and 69, two in their fifties and five in their 40s. Barb Snell's granddaughter Natasha, aged 12, reduced the average age significantly. She also produced the find of the day: a packet of pasta ready for a pot of boiling water!

Thanks to Tobey Henry, our home-grown Waste Education Project Officer for the Shire, who organised the skip and the banner, and Wolfgang, for putting up and taking down the sign at the bridge.

DRAGONFLIES IN THE ELZ

Frank Pierce

2012 is the Chinese Year of the Dragon. For me it's been the year of the Dragonfly.

Dragonflies and Damselflies are the two suborders of the Order Odonata in Australia. The listed references provide ample information for the keen amateur observer. The Field Guide¹ gives an excellent overview of their biology and ecology. The websites² have lots of photos and easy to follow identification information.

Their fantastic array of colours, and their wonderful symmetrical patterns, can be readily appreciated with the help of a long-zoom digital camera. Their spectacular flying ability makes it easy to while away many an hour of quiet observation at the water's edge. Quite a few species can also be found while roaming throughout the general area.

Some basic points are as follows:-

- Damselflies are generally slender, weak fliers with similar forewings and hindwings
- Dragonflies are generally stouter, faster fliers with dissimilar forewings and hindwings
- 3 life cycle stages
 1. Eggs are laid (oviposited) in water, some species into mud or soft plant material, others species directly in the water. In some species the male links in tandem with the female during oviposition to ensure 'his' fertilized eggs are laid without interference from other males.
 2. Larvae are aquatic and gradually grow through 9 to 15 stages The final instar moves out of the water for the final stage of metamorphosis
 3. Adults emerge from the final larval instars and move away from the water for 1 to 4 weeks until they reach maturity. Males then establish territories near water and await the arrival of a female mate. There can be serious territorial competition between males and they are seldom still for long. Adults have almost 360° vision. They are predators, usually catching moths etc. on the wing.

- Flight periods vary for most species but the best months are from November to March. Some species have very limited flight periods. Ideal observation weather is full sun and above 26°C.

There are 75 species recorded in Victoria. About 40 of these could be expected to be found in the ELZ – 16 damselflies and 24 dragonflies.

Armed with information from the Australian Field Guide¹ and a few websites with excellent details of Victorian species², I have been combing the banks of the Yarra and the local creeks and dams for the last couple of months. I have had reasonable success and have photographed 25 of the estimated 40 species that can be expected to occur in the ELZ.

This article and a list of the likely ELZ species has been placed on the BICA Website at <http://http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/dragonflies.html>

This version should be treated as a working document. It is based on my inexperienced interpretation of the distribution data from the various references listed below.

References

1. The Complete Field Guide to Dragonflies of Australia, Theischinger, Gunner and John Hawking.
2. <http://photos.rnr.id.au/dragonflies.html>
http://au.dragonflies.wilddiaries.com/species_groups
http://www.ecology-solutions.com.au/vic_dragonflies/left_contents_common.html
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/09730AustOdonata.pdf>

The next edition of BICA Newsletter will be in November 2012. all copy needs to be in our hands by October 31. Start work now on your contributions!

BEND OF ISLANDS LANDCARE

Luke Doyle

Hi All, not quite sure how far back this report should go, so I thought I would start from September when we went to the Taylors' property. There was a surprising number of orchids under the power lines and we got a lot of weeds. October saw us back at the Oxley Reserve where we chipped out more than 500 thistles not yet going to seed, a great result. Several different orchids were spotted. In November we were going to do a roadside follow up but Wolfgang noticed the St Johns Wort was getting away on J & G's block, so we got nearly all of it but it took the whole morning. Moist ground conditions meant they could be pulled quite easily. In December a small but keen crew got amongst the thistles and blackberries at Tarq & Dan's where things have got a bit much for them to keep up with since the twins, though Dan managed somehow to bake us fresh cake for smoko. Thanks again.

We noticed many small blackberries and urge people to have a look around their own blocks for similar sprouting of blackberries. They are easy to recognize and easy to pull if you get them small. We all had a month off then in February, because of the amount of blackberries and thistles we got in December, we went to help Tserin and Jess whose problem was huge as well. We got hundreds of small plants.

I have had a look around my slopes to the river and glad to say I didn't find too much bad stuff. However weeds are still on the rampage in the Bend, so if you need a hand (everybody does) let me know and we can have a session at your place.

I am forever looking for new or old participants for Landcare, and it is a great disappointment to me that in a place like the Bend of Islands I can only attract 6-12 people per month. Weeding can be fun, bring your kids, learn to ID weeds, find orchids & eat leftover cake from Café Benders! Maybe this year you can join our little weed army. Give me a call almost any time (except late or early) on 9712 0902 Happy weeding in 2012!

March 2012

ORCHIDS IN THE ELZ

Frank Pierce

Our native orchids are truly fascinating. They are so easily overlooked yet when noticed, and closely inspected, their delicacy, structure and colours are astonishingly beautiful. They are a great gateway to the world of 'macro-nature'. They get us on our knees and into the world of the spiders, insects and other plants that live close to the earth, 'below knee-height'.

The ELZ is 'orchid rich', although it takes a lot of searching to appreciate the full extent of this richness. Most species only appear for a fleeting few weeks a year. Many reappear in the same location each year, others are much more elusive.

We are indeed lucky that Dean Rouse spent a considerable time, in his youth, combing the Co-op and surrounding area with his grandmother, Hazel Rich, who was a member of the Co-op for many years. Dean photographed 50+ species and later donated the photos to the Co-op to form the basis of the 'Field Guide to the Orchids of Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative' which has been available since 1999.

Over the last few years a small group of local enthusiasts have been searching the area, trying to find the species listed. In doing this we have found a few other species to add to the list.

In 2007 Dean produced a regional orchid guide (pdf) dedicated to his grandmother Hazel Rich who passed away in 2006. The **Hazel Easter Rich Orchid Guide** is based primarily on the orchid lists for Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative compiled by Hazel and Dean, and the list for One Tree Hill Reserve compiled by Cam Beardsell. Other orchid species with highly restricted distributions within the Christmas Hills region are also listed in the guide. This guide is now accessible on the Co-op website at <http://www.roundthebend.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/hazel-easter-orchid-guide.pdf>.

BICA and the Co-op thank Dean Rouse for his generous gift of this pdf and for sharing his knowledge of our local orchids. All material remains the copyright of Dean Rouse.

Using this guide as a basis, and adding the other species found since 2007, an Orchid List for the ELZ has been compiled and will be placed on the BICA website. This list is based on the

taxonomy used in Jones, D.L. 2006 'A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia, Including the Island Territories'.

There are a number of other good references in addition to Jones 2006, such as:-

'Wild Orchids of Victoria' - J Jeanes & G Backhouse - 2006

'Spider orchids - the Genus Caladenia and its Relatives in Australia' - 2011. A DVD by Gary Backhouse (Available from Gary at GaryNelsonBackhouse@gmail.com)

There are a number of websites with lots of photos that are very useful to aid identification. Some of these are:-

<http://www.retiredaussies.com/>

<http://www.retiredaussies.com/>

<http://www.banjarah.com/>

Searching for orchids is a great excuse to explore the wonders of our beautiful area. Any time you go out, if you don't find an orchid, you are sure to find something else to fascinate, like a wildflower, an insect that may be acting unusually, some strange fungus or whatever.

If anyone finds an unusual orchid, or needs some identification assistance, contact Frank Pierce at jmandfp@bigpond.com as a first step. Referral to others with better knowledge may be required!



If undelivered please return to:
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C/- PO Kangaroo Ground. Vic. 3097

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