

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Scientific name: *Acacia stricta*

Common name: Hop Wattle

Family: Fabaceae (syn. Mimosaceae)

Flowering Period: May-October

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

Open, upright, slender shrub, glabrous i.e., without hairs or bristles, 2-5m high x 1-3m wide, with prominent sticky yellowish ribs on branchlets.

Foliage consists of phyllodes. (A phyllode is the leaf stalk enlarged and commonly flattened, and performing the functions of a leaf, as in many wattle species). The phyllodes are 4-14 cm long x 3-10 mm wide, fairly straight and tending erect, narrow-elliptical, dull green and sticky, with a prominent midrib and many tiny lateral veins. Branchlets with longitudinal resinous ridges.

Flowers appear between May-October and consist of 2-4 short stalked, pale yellow, ball-shaped flowerheads at the axil i.e., the angle formed by a leaf in relation to the stem.

Grows in full sun to dappled shade and on a range of soils including stony slopes in open forests to clay soil in moist areas.

Found in a range of habitats from riparian forest, herb-rich foothill forest, gully woodland, box-stringybark woodland, box-ironbark woodland, grassy woodland, cliff/escarpment shrubland.

For photos of this species refer to the images link at [vicflora](#)

Cric Henry

Ross Henry (drawing)





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear BICA Member,

Here's wishing you a happy Winter Wonderland, especially after so much soaking rain that provided a gorgeous green carpet of moss, lichen and algae all around the bend, and of course weeding is a dream.

I know we've just survived some pretty intense weather and I trust you've come out the other side with minimal inconvenience or damage. It was our distant neighbours in the Dandenong's who really did cop the full force of these storms, with incredible destruction to their homes and the natural environment...

I'm grateful, that our Environmental Living Zone was mostly spared the full intensity.

And on the positive side of things, I love how the caring spirit amongst our Bend of Island community shines beautifully in difficult times, with some of our local Benders spending the nights Volunteering with the SES, or others removing fallen trees, or offering generators to those of us without power or even hot showers to those with no hot water.

We all help in our own way.

Onto the items at hand, and first up is, we have just released access to ALL of the BICA Newsletters ONLINE, including the early one's going back to 1979!

So, if you haven't already, (and if we get into another lockdown), take a peek and see what was happening and who was sharing, in the years gone bye.

These are a fascinating insight into the history of BICA and the BOI as well as the people who made it what it is today. Well worth the time to go through and read.

There are now over 90 BICA Newsletters available on the BICA Website.

From the celebration side of things, on behalf of all of us here at BICA, I would like to wish the Round the Bend Conservation Co-op a very happy 50th Birthday!

The speeches and celebrations were very well received. And there were super talented local musicians playing while the kids and other residents danced well into the evening. It is a proud

moment for all RTBCC Members having achieved this 50th milestone, and all the best for the next 50 years...

With regard to our regular activities, Landcare is once again a regular, along with our Bird Walks and Big Walk, plus the Australia Day Cleanup was very successful too, and we even had a Twilight Picnic recently, thanks to Carol Bonny for arranging it. Our favourite Cafe Benders still needs a creative solution, so stay tuned and check out the photos that are on the BICA Website.

The BICA Committee is still busy organising our activities, with most of our regular meetings on Zoom, or when restrictions allow, we catch up face to face. Thanks to Julie Martindale, Mike Pelling, Joy Flannagan, Phil Wierzbowski, Richard Laurie and Rudi Pauli for their ongoing work on the committee.

The Planning Sub-Committee has also been very active with our neighbours at Melbourne Water and Nillumbik Shire Council. Thanks to Janet Mattiske, Frank Pierce, Carol Bonny, Alan Bonny and Robyn Duff for their dedication and relentless push to protect our BOI. You can see the photos from a few of these meetings on the BICA Website.

And it is Membership time... So please renew your BICA Membership if you haven't already. It really does help us all have a huge impact on being able to best support and protect the integrity of our beautiful Environmental Living Zone.

For all membership enquiries, email Julie - BICA Secretary - bicacomm@gmail.com

Did I forgot to mention? You can see many of the recent activities on the BICA Website. Take a look and see for yourself; <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/>

All the best and see you somewhere in the Bend soon,

Michael

BICA President



FROM THE SECRETARY

Just when it seemed like we were able to start running events again after a very long hiatus indeed, the latest lockdown and possible ongoing restrictions might stall things again. However, we were able to hold a few events in April and May and it was really great to see some signs go up on the message tree again. Many thanks to Wolfgang for quietly going about the business of putting them up.

Unfortunately, Café Benders is unable to go ahead at the fire station, due to ongoing CFA restrictions on community use of facilities. This has been organised by Carol & Alan Bonny and Marie & Wolfgang Krause for many, many years and is both a fundraising event for our local fire brigade as well as a place to catch up with people.



Landcare and The Big Walk



April Landcare saw us in Neil Douglas Nature Reserve down the end of Gongflers Drive where we removed a number of weeds along the river bank, including thistles, bridal creeper, madeira winter-cherry and hemlock. May was in Jessie Bull Reserve in lower Catani Blvd where thistles were the weed of the day and Luke found some amazing varieties of fungi. It was

great to see one of our newer residents at this one.

Landcare is a great way to learn a bit about identifying and managing the weeds that crop up locally and work can be done on private as well as public land. So, if you've got a crop of weeds that you'd like help with let us know. It's amazing what a bunch of people can achieve together.

The Big Walk was a great day of walking cross country from the Bend to Sugarloaf Dam, then on to Watson's Creek and around about and up and down to our destination at Nillumbik Cellars, where great pizza was had on the deck while the sun slowly went down over the hills. Thanks to Peter Mildenhall for leading us.

Welcome to New Members

Since the last newsletter in November, we have 4 new members and BOI residents:

As well as 2 new members from further afield:

We look forward to your involvement in our community.

Julie Martindale

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Nilumbik Landcare Network Report

As many of you may know the NLN has a new Landcare facilitator: Ashley Densham. From my perspective (and other members) he's enthusiastic, competent, and a good fit for the role. There have been two meetings of the NLN this year, plus a "where to" meeting on the Forest Health Project and available to all, a suite of interesting webinars including deer control, carbon farming and platypus biology and ecology.

Here's a summary of the main items, and hopefully those most relevant to BICA:

Group Newsletter:

Ashley has established a new newsletter aimed at each Landcare group, to share information and ideas, collaborate etc. The aim is to publish this twice monthly, and requires our input on coming events to be included.

NLN Website:

Ashley is also building a new network website, which will cover a whole range of items including a gateway for new residents to join Landcare., managing membership payments, and hosting useful guides on flora and fauna etc.

Ashley can set up a Google Drive for our group so that documents are online.

Useful Purchases:

The NLN has purchased a projector, screen and a portable PA system, to help all groups, for meetings and/or organised activities

Forest Health Monitoring:

The funding for this very worthwhile but ambitious project finishes in June. The study has set up Song Meters and remote cameras at 30 selected locations across the shire and currently has three years of records (essentially, presence /absence data) The analysis is to target a suite of indicator species (nominated at a March 2020 workshop - attended by Gavin,



The Owlet Nightjar is a small night-bird, rarely heard or seen in the daytime, but active at night, when its calls are more often heard. It is surprisingly common in the Bol, but not often detected, even with a spotlight, due to its furtive nature.

The mating behaviour captured in the adjacent photo is an extremely rare record and a great example of the value of programs such as the **NLN Forest Health Monitoring**

Mal, Frank and myself), but finding local species representative of key habitat attributes and locating them with some regularity can be another matter.

There is still great deal of acoustic data to be sorted and analysed (Gavin and Frank have helped with this) Also, an assessment of the habitat at the 30 sites needs to be undertaken, so that the data can be meaningfully interpreted in the context of the actual habitat, and provide a basis for a management decision.

None the less agencies are crying-out for cost-effective monitoring programs- although ongoing funding is always an issue- so there is real potential here to contribute. The bottom line is that the program rests on on-going funds and the group is exploring all options. Any Suggestions!!

Grants:

The 2021 Victorian Landcare Grant applications are now open until 16th June. Project grants up to \$30,000 are available for on ground works, capacity building activities, community education and engagement.

We have been encouraged to apply for an extension to the Sugarloaf weed project, for which funding expires this financial year. There is a strong case for this program to continue, so myself, Tserin and Gavin will prepare the application.

Andrew McMahon





CARING FOR OUR LAND

For the Bend of Islands' Residents, the challenge to maintain and enhance the quality of our bushland continues and with climate change inevitable, may even get harder. However, we have been meeting these challenges over the years and a look back over the past, I hope will encourage all of us to continue to move forward.

In 2015 I wrote....

Looking back over the years much has been done to retain and enhance the environmental integrity we find today.

Threats to the bush in this area in the sixties whether from fire, flooding or clearing led to the formation of a community organisation that passionately wanted to hold on to an environment which they loved and valued. This continues to be the primary objectives of BICA today.....

- "To preserve, nurture and encourage the diversity of the native flora and fauna of the area and its natural beauty, consistent with essential community needs, including fire precaution.
- To nurture and encourage the diversity of the local flora and fauna and to promote community understanding of the local ecology and how-to live-in harmony with it through sharing of knowledge and experiences."

Here is a history of our activities over the years, based on what has been reported in the Newsletters.

In the 1980's we worked in conjunction with the Shire of Healesville to avoid slashing and clearing of our precious roadside vegetation by doing the roadside trimming ourselves, often with the help of the Fire Brigade. Working Bees were held to clear blackberries in Catani Blvd. and willows along the river. We published information on our local plants and tips on how to propagate them. We were members Shire of Healesville's Noxious Weeds Committee. Weeds became a focus and to learn more we had Dr Bill Parsons inform us on soil disturbance minimisation, rabbit control, the importing of soils and the clearing for fire breaks.

In 1988 we commissioned a Weed Study based on earlier survey work done by the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Authority and soon had some hard data to assist us. **The Weed Flora of the ELZ-An Assessment of Effects and Management Strategies for Control: (Carr, McMahon & Todd, 1988).**

1989 was identified as having a very wet spring, mild weather and excessive WEED growth so we focussed on 3 areas. Private Property was a key area where BICA

advised on Identification and control methods. The second area was the Public Land where we made approaches to the relevant Authorities and thirdly it was the Roadsides where we focussed our Working Bees.

In the 1990's we continued to get support from the Shire. Our Pine Tree Eradication Project commenced in 1992. This was followed up in subsequent years with a Propagation Project including a Workshop, a concentrated effort on ID and removal of Environmental weeds, also thistles on Oxley Road. In 1994 the Shire of Healesville provided funding for a 15-litre knapsack spray. We focussed on the encroaching Patterson's Curse, St John's Wort, Ivy and Bluebell Creeper. In August 1995 Eastern Energy funded revegetation under the powerlines on Skyline Road.

Whilst the Landcare Organisation had begun in Victoria under Joan Kirner, BICA had continued working with assistance from our Shire (Healesville) until in 1994 when Jeff Kennett restructured Local Government boundaries and we were incorporated into the Nillumbik Shire which was initially run by Commissioners. In 1996 Councillors



Planting under powerlines

were elected. BICA soon realised that if we were to attract any funding to support our work, we needed to become members of Landcare. Thus, what had been the BICA Working Bee Sub-Committee officially became the BICA Landcare Group and members of Landcare Victoria. The aim of this new "sub-committee" was to provide an overall management plan for the ELZ with its long-term goal of conserving this local environment. They began to apply for grants, local seed was collected and propagated and there were new endeavours to get more volunteers to do replanting works. In 1997 The Landcare Network commenced its Annual Tour in the Bend of Islands. The late 1990's saw a concentrated effort on the Watson's Creek area. Angled Onion, Tutsan, Blackberries, Agapanthus and Watsonia were all targeted. Money



became available and even some assistance from Save the Bush Crew from the National Trust, the National Heritage Trust and Green Corps.

The 2000's brought the focus back onto the private properties within the Zone. The pine tree removal program stepped up pace with further grants from the Shire. In 2006 it was reported that since 1991, 1830 pine trees had been removed with 130 still remaining. Weeding works continued and in 2002 BICA offered property owners an indigenous plant to replace a removed non indigenous plant.

Good news and encouragement came from outside with some recognition of the work being done by the Community. In the 2000 Landcare Victoria Awards, BICA won the Community Bush Care Award and then in 2008 BICA was recognised in Port Philip & Westernport Landcare Awards in the "Caring for Nature" Category. In 2012 the BICA Committee commissioned a comprehensive study to recommend land management processes in the ELZ. This resulted in the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan (Osler and Jolly 2013), a very valuable document on which to base our land care activities

In 2014 a Sub- committee was formed to develop an Implementation Strategy for the Land Management Plan. The LMP has been instrumental in the Landcare sub-committee successfully applying for many funding grants from Nillumbik Shire under the Nillumbik Conservation Corridors scheme

A glance through the history of our activities indicates that we are now a little more educated in land management methods and probably a little more focussed but we still need the dedication and hard work of all the Community.

Working Bees still continue every month however the numbers attending have certainly decreased since the 1980's. We can all easily make excuses, but the environmental integrity of the area is being threatened by the relentless onslaught of invading weeds. If we don't effectively counteract this threat, we will lose the very qualities that set our area apart from the more degraded areas of the Shire.

So, what has happened since 2015?

The BICA Landcare group have continued to meet monthly, but with ever decreasing numbers. Not enough hands to make the impact that is required to keep the increasing numbers of grassy weeds at bay. Congratulations to everyone who attends! Woody weeds along with freesias have been attacked and some new owners have been given assistance. Landcare and the Green Army worked on a range of environmental weeds. In 2016 Council agreed to an annual works budget for



Pine tree Project Photo: Kay Hawkins

Oxley Reserve to enable grassy weed control. Planting was also provided. 2016 also saw Council recognising the Bend of Islands with an Award for 40 years of Conservation Management.

At the 2017 BICA AGM the Implementation Strategy for the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan was launched. This document aimed to inform residents how to best protect and improve the environmental qualities of both the public and private land in the area. It also offered assistance in applying for grants. This was quickly followed by an invitation from Council to landowners to apply for a land Management Incentive Program grant for the removal of exotic woody weeds. It was then in 2019 that Council received funding to deliver the Sugarloaf Link Project which has aimed at protecting biodiversity values in the corridor from Christmas Hills to the Yarra in the Bend of Islands. You will have read reports of this excellent project in all Newsletters to date

However, the challenge for all is still out there to continue the good work to improve our biodiversity.

Janet Mattiske





THE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN IN ACTION – revisited!

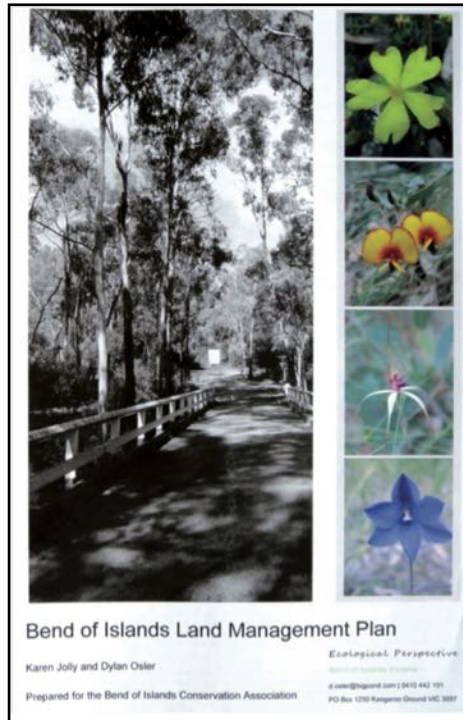
We have lived on the river in Lower Catani for nearly 30 years now and are still trying to get a grip on 'managing' the two hectares we look after. Very early on we got rid of the pines on the block thanks to the erstwhile intervention and support of Peter Gurney and the Landcare group. Previous owners had planted various trees and shrubs, both indigenous but not to the local area, and exotic and over the last few years we have been culling them.

We have kept a veggie garden and planted fruit trees within the house surrounds as well as spending time trying to rid ourselves of various bulbs ... snowdrops, belladonnas, watsonia and those dreaded agapanthus but still pop up from time to time, though are reducing in number! We have also waged a battle with the spread of young Burgan on one side of the house and have had some success with a concerted campaign over a number of years. We have seen the growth of Lomandra, young acacia, sedge, grasses and heath. In this section there has been a gradual decline of the young Burgan though it takes constant vigilance!

We had been selected as one of the sites for a visit from Dylan Osler as part of the development of a Land Management plan for the Bend and we welcomed his insights and advice. In fact, we have felt quite rejuvenated and excited about working on the block again.

His visit:

- reinforced our thoughts about the spread of Burgan and our efforts to control it especially on the drier slopes. The mature Burgan by the river now must be nearly 60 years old (following the 60's fires) and is well established and thinning out on the ground, however young Burgan is still seeding and spreading, colonising drier areas towards the road and we are attempting to cut and paint larger specimens, and hand pull younger ones in order to maintain diversity, especially grasses, orchids, herbs and shrubs
- encouraged us to work on more weed eradication, both small and large, starting from the good spots and working out has proved psychologically helpful.
- encouraged the planting of indigenous grasses and shrubs within the 'house block' and beyond into the bush and have found the FOWSP Nursery at Warrandyte State Park, Edendale Farm and at time Nillumbik Nursery in Wattle Glen really useful for the purchase of indigenous shrubs and grasses. Is always useful to take along the BoI Plant List.
- helped to identify reasonably rare and, for us, unidentified grasses and herbs, and trees like the mutton wood by the river and a tree fern in our creek-bed. We will encourage and support their growth and spread.
- A neighbouring property had a few rare black she-oaks and we have planted a few too after BICA provided seedlings through some grant funds
- While we seemed to have got rid of most of the rabbits as part of the Rabbit Control Program, they are making a bit of a comeback, including sightings of a black rabbit when



previously we only knew of black rabbit sightings in Gongflers, so we need to re-oil the traps and get them working again.

- We still have some fenced sections of bush that seem to encourage a wider diversity of plants ... perhaps the wallabies don't hassle them and visiting rabbits can't get in?

Dylan gave us further food for thought about our 'wetland' areas: an old dam that was used as a pool by the scouts many years ago that has become a haven for birds and frogs and a more degraded rectangular yabby dam that was excavated 25 years ago and still looks like it did then despite planting and some growth. We plan to look at possible redesign and site works to make it a more 'natural' wetland area and encourage a more diverse variety of flora and fauna around it. This is still a work in progress and needs a plan to move forward!

It has taken us some time to really get stuck into our block and try to manage it

for the future and restore it to a more natural state for the area. As many would be aware this raises the perennial arguments about what is the 'natural' state for our riverine, wooded area by the river?

Some of the questions we raised in 2015 remain the same and we still wonder:

- How prevalent was/is/should the Burgan be? We recognise it is the summer flower of the area and part of the ringtail possum/powerful owl food chain
- What is the best ratio of trees to grassland and shrubby area? What was it like in its pristine state before white settlement?
- What is the 'right' ratio of boxes to stringybarks to manna gums?
- We lost all of the wattles some time ago (and the sugar gliders) now they are coming back? Is that the effect of drought then a couple of good years? And we have spotted some sugar gliders as the wattles begin to mature!
- What is the right balance between active intervention, supervision of weeds and benign neglect?
- Over the last few years, we have also become more aware of fire management issues and the role of vegetation and what action we could take to mitigate fine fuels etc nearer the house without compromising the 'natural' state of the vegetation. What more do we need to learn about this?

Our involvement with the development of the Land Management Plan in the Bend has helped us to think through some of these issues and reinforced in us the need to actively manage our land, working on the 'baddies' and encouraging the spread of the 'goodies'. We would encourage Benders to learn from the Land Management Plan and its' Implementation Strategy and to work together to preserve this great environment.

We are happy to talk about and show some of our progress and new discoveries to those interested

Peter and Liz Mildenhall



50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

This year is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative in 1971.

The Co-operative was created to marry conservation with residential use – to enable Members to live in the bush whilst making every effort to minimise our impact and to protect and enhance the natural environment.

So, how have we done and what have we achieved?

The early years involved a lot of hard labour - we removed over two thousand pine trees, large groves of Boneseed and paved over 2km of tracks for erosion management. At the same time Members built houses, mainly using (and making) mudbricks, and always with the intent of minimising any impact on the surrounding bush, including visually.

Much environmental progress was achieved in the first 40 years, however, the principles of ecological management had developed significantly in this time, so in 2012 the Co-op engaged expert ecologist and local, Dylan Osler of Ecological Perspective, to assess the state of the flora on our property and make recommendations for a strategy to best protect and enhance the biodiversity.

From this first study we developed a Flora Management Strategy to guide our conservation work. The Strategy takes into account our available resources (budget, labour etc) so we can achieve the most effective outcomes for our efforts. The three areas covered by the Strategy are: environmental weed control, Burgan spread control and the protection and recruitment of threatened species.



Environmental weed control covers three areas: woody weeds, thistles and blackberries and perennial grasses.

The first two have successfully been controlled to minimal levels on the whole property, while perennial grasses have been controlled to minimal levels in targeted areas of high biodiversity.

A major threat identified in Dylan's report was the presence of the perennial *Ehrharta erecta* around house sites. *Ehrharta* (or Panic Veldt-grass) can displace a whole range of different species, like orchids, and overtake the ground cover. We undertook a five-year project to eradicate the weed and successfully completed this in 2020.

Burgan spread has been controlled to minimal levels, where Burgan was encroaching into targeted areas of high biodiversity.

For the protection and recruitment of threatened species we have erected exclusion plots to protect targeted species, guarded naturally occurring species and planted and guarded over 500 plants including Christmas Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia porcata*); Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Large-leaf Bush-pea (*Pultenaea daphnoides*) among others.

We have recorded 58 different orchids on the property, including rare species, and as a result we were selected to participate in Nillumbik Shire Council's Orchid Reintroduction Project where 80 plants of the Wine-lipped Spider Orchid, *Caladenia oenochila*, were planted in 2018. We manage this plot under the guidance of the Council experts and progress has been good: in 2020 we had 12 plants flower and 11 of these successfully pollinated to seed dispersal stage.

The protection and conservation of our bush increases biodiversity and this in turn supports an equally diverse range of fauna. Overall a total of 166 native and twelve introduced species have been recorded on or immediately adjacent to the Co-op. The native species include 126 species of birds (one Endangered, six Vulnerable and two Near Threatened), 20 species of mammals (three Vulnerable), 13 species of reptiles (one Vulnerable) and seven species of amphibians (one Vulnerable). Several native fish species are also likely to occur in the permanent waters of Stevenson Creek and we've seen the Lyrebird return after an absence of 38 years due to the bushfires in 1962.

Over 50 years of co-operative land management we have achieved the preservation of an area that is now considered of exceptional local and regional biodiversity.



Guarding threatened species



50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

This has benefitted both the animals that inhabit the forest and our residents that enjoy living close to nature and belonging to a community with strong conservation and environmental values.

Of course, the work is not finished – and never will be! But with 19 Australian eco-systems collapsing¹, and a million animal and plant species now threatened with extinction², it is more important than ever that we protect our bush and advocate for conservation.



In the words of one of our Members:

For the sake of the flora and fauna that abound here, and for people with a love of nature and a desire to contribute, I hope that the ideals of this bold experiment will continue for another 50 years!

Karyn Kamminga

(With thanks to Frank Pierce)

For more information:

www.roundthebend.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/roundthebendcoop>

https://www.instagram.com/round_the_bend_coop/

Footnotes

¹ See: <https://theconversation.com/existential-threat-to-our-survival-see-the-19-australian-ecosystems-already-collapsing-154077>

² The IPBES GI



Sugarloaf Link Project Update

Nilumbik
The Green Wedge Shire

The 3-year Sugarloaf link project is now nearing completion. This has been a fantastic opportunity for achieve extensive weed control works on private properties throughout the Bend of islands and control the increasing Deer population with the broader region. We would like to thank Michelle Hanslow from Nilumbik Council, for her management of this project. Thank you also to Tserin from Canopy Connections and the Narrap team for coordinating with landowners and arranging site access to carry out weed control. It is excellent that woody and herbaceous weed control works have been undertaken on more than 40 properties in the Bend of Islands.

BICA has also just been offered an additional \$10,000 for weed control. With this extra funding we seek to engage an Arborist (with a chipper) to remove the larger woody weeds, such as the Gosford Wattles (*Acacia prominens*) at the end of Ironbark Road and on a few other properties. It is hoped that all landowners will to continue to monitor and follow-up to prevent weeds from re-establishing. For example, Weedy wattle (*Acacia prominens*, *Acacia floribunda*, *Acacia howittii* etc), Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) and Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera fusiformis*) seedlings will likely need to be pulled up in areas previously worked on. Although the Sugarloaf links funded project will finish by the end of June, our local Landcare are there to assist landowners if they need help to manage weedy outbreaks. Please don't hesitate to get in contact.

Jo Henry



Lyrebird in Nest - Bol 2020



BICA and the ELZ – What's it all about and why do we need to care

The Bend of Islands Conservation Association

(BICA) Constitution clearly defines the purposes of the association as—

- (a) To preserve, nurture and encourage the diversity of the native flora and fauna of the area and its natural beauty, consistent with essential community needs, including fire precaution.
- (b) To nurture and encourage the diversity of the local flora and fauna and to promote community understanding of the local ecology and how-to live-in harmony with it through sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- (c) To associate and collaborate with other organizations whose aims are consistent with these objectives and to support, where appropriate, conservation activities in other areas.
- (d) To act for and on behalf of the membership individually or collectively in negotiations with public authorities, other organizations and individuals within the framework of these objectives.

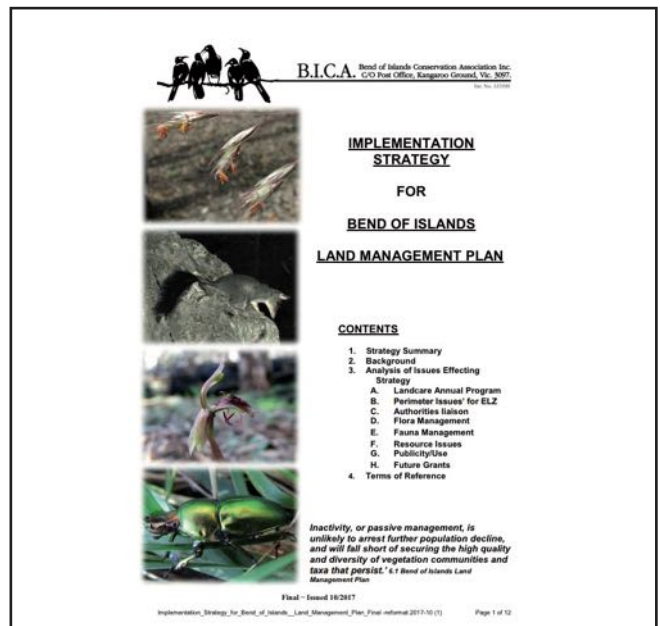
Nillumbik Planning Scheme - SUZ2 - ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING - BEND OF ISLANDS clearly defines the purposes of the Environmental Living Zone (ELZ) as: -

- To provide for residential use of the land consistent with the need for protection of the native bushland environment.
- To maintain and enhance the positive environmental qualities of the landscape, native flora, native fauna and to protect and thus prevent damage to natural systems.
- To limit the site coverage of the development or use, (including kitchen gardens) to a single envelope so that the landscape and environmental qualities of the area are maintained and enhanced.
- To prevent threats to flora and fauna and to the amenity of the zone which might be caused by domestic pets, feral animals or by the grazing of livestock.
- To ensure that the density, design, appearance and impact of the use or development reflects the native bushland qualities of the area.
- To conserve the quality of soil resources, water, watercourse capacity, so as not to prejudice the natural eco-system.
- To maintain acceptable air quality and noise levels in the zone.
- To maintain the high landscape quality in the zone.

- To restrict and limit the removal of natural vegetation, fallen logs and dead trees.
- To prevent subdivision and/or development of land which is flood prone or is subject to subsidence or landslip.

We care because we know that this is a very special place to live and, as a community, we have worked for some fifty-five years, in collaboration with the authorities, to ensure its ongoing existence and environmental integrity.

The **Bend of Islands Land Management Plan** highlights the area's environmental values and threats. It gives guidance on the best way to preserve the good and tackle the bad. BICA has analysed these recommendations and produced a simplified **Implementation Strategy** that can be accessed [HERE](#) .



Living in The Bend is a privilege but this also brings responsibility. The exceptional biodiversity of the area is under constant threat of weed invasion and many of the rarer plants are seriously struggling to survive.

If we don't take effective action to reverse this trend, degradation will persist and the special character of the area will be lost. It's up to us residents to prevent this from happening - we have the guidelines on what needs to be done – we just have to make it happen.

Frank Pierce



Fellowship of the Bend - The Big Walk



Instead of being quiet and moving stealthily towards Mount Doom and the Estate of Nillumbik Shire, there was a heap of chatting and catching up on the goings on nonstop between us...

I was even warned about the bright red magic looking mushrooms, and that you should not eat them, but they did look really tasty...

Our first rest break was near the raging cascading rivers of the Elf home at Rivendell. The river was pretty silent and very lake like that day...

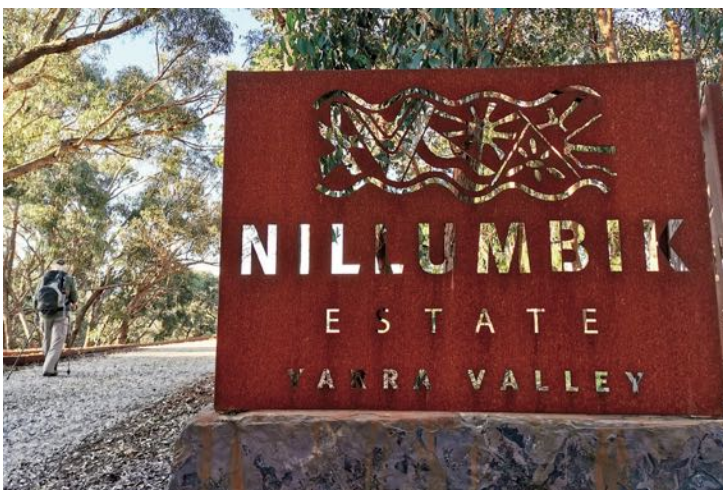
Some of our merry band left while others joined us we ate and chatted some more, before forging off again...

Early morning a few Sundays ago I joined a very merry band of local Hobbits aka Benders. We all met at a special meeting rock on the edge of our bendy shire, commonly known as the Telstra Box.

After we had a quick chat and packing of essentials, we headed off into the frosty valley, led by Gandalf the Grey, who preferred to be called Peter.

We trekked on through the gorgeous green scenery and cloudless skies, stepping gently and slightly, as our large hobbit feet massaged the ground beneath our feet...

Actually, most of our feet were covered by a comfy pair of Scarpa's...



We entered a valley and suddenly we were surrounded by a band of Boneseed Weeds, or were they Orcs in disguise?

We fought them valiantly by uprooting them and left them scattered along the track...

The Gold mine of the Dwarves appeared silently on our upward trek towards Mordor, and we passed

We finally overcame the shadows of one tree hill and arrived at Mount Doom and ate pizzas and drank wine, joined by others from the shire to celebrate while watching the sun set...

It just seemed like the right thing to do...

I look forward to my next Fellowship of the Bend Big Walk and I promise to not eat any of those bright red mushrooms next time...

Michael also known as Legolas...



Early Creek House Days



Looking for a property as a single gal for years in the Bend, two years of searching, 20+ properties in the area from 1977, given her area familiarity and connectedness, Ona finally found The Creek House in 1979.

The early owners toughed out frosts and the kids slept through -5 degree celcius nights in a sleepout with flywire windows!

Built in 1920, with fibro, on stumps made of 2 bits of nailed wood, this cottage was basic. We still only have an outdoor loo.

Snakes aplenty ... several close shaves ... the most memorable being Ona sitting on some bark by the dam. As she got more comfortable the coiled large red bellied black under the bark got less comfortable. Ona got up very slowly, as it started to move but Syd chased it away with gingerly determination.

The day the echidna ate our skirting board was one to remember. One hot summer's day in 1994, Syd was in Fitzroy and had borrowed a "brick" mobile phone, very cool at that time. He rang Ona at The Creek House and as she was talking on the landline a young echidna strutted through the open doors. It started eating the skirting board at Ona's feet... Fresh termites on the menu! It then waddled out through another open door with a tummy full of gourmet grub!!

Ona & Syd

"I Grew That!"

Our little plot of paradise was pretty sparse in its selection of species when we moved here in the ninety's. Eucalypts and Acacias were the predominant upper storey and the middle and lower storey were almost non-existent with the exception of Kunzea in the gully and along the river.

When our neighbour Felicity told us of the abundance of orchids that used to cover the hillsides before the rabbit invasion,

I became inspired to help our little plot and started putting tin cans with the bottom cut out, around anything green that popped up. The first species to benefit from this were the pea plant (*Dillwynia phyllicoides*) and the wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*).

Not much else seemed to be appearing so I decided to try propagating my own plants. I obtained a licence from the relevant authority of the time to collect seeds from our local indigenous plants. I read up on when, where and how to collect and grow them. Harvesting of seed was always a wonderful exploration of the Bend of Islands landscapes. I got to see all the various vegetation communities that make up the amazing diversity of our region.

I loved all the different processes of preparing the seeds before planting such as covering them in boiling water or scouring them with sandpaper. Popping those tiny seeds into pots and then waiting to see the first little shoots emerge, was so satisfying. Eventually I could identify seedlings at their first stage of growth, both in pots and if the field.

As well as propagating from seed, I also did it from cuttings as this is an easier method for some species. For example, Heath, Correa and Goodenia. I watched my plants grow with great anticipation until they could be planted on our block and around the Bend.

The range of species around our home today is much more diverse and the plants are doing their own thing by self-propagating. These days as I venture along Henley Road, I marvel at the maturity of my little plants that were used to revegetate properties where hundreds of pine trees were removed by our fantastic Landcare group.

I love all my babies that I have nurtured but I think the ones that I am most proud of are the Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea Minor*). As they are so slow growing, I will probably not see them reach maturity, but I am going to enjoy every minute of them on that journey.

Carol Bonny



Dillwynia phyllicoides

Living in the Bend – a Personal Perspective

Recently we received an enquiry from a prospective buyer of a house in the BOI, who wanted to clarify the situation around keeping a domestic animal (a beloved indoor cat). It seems they had been given some misleading information somewhere along the way. The issue of domestic animals is a vexed one due to the anomalies of historic Non-Conforming Use Rights attached to certain properties. In this case we were able to clarify that the prospective property does not have such a right. We also sent them a copy of the SUZ2 planning scheme and suggested that, if they were to buy the property, the cat be rehomed. They were grateful for the information and supportive of what BICA tries to achieve.

The Environmental Living Zone is undoubtedly a beautiful place to live, with high biodiversity and conservation values which residents have actively sought to protect for over 50 years – that's precisely why the place is so beautiful and why people are drawn to it. My personal view is that the Bend of Islands depends on residents supporting not just the spirit and purpose of the ELZ and SUZ2 in principle, but also being proactive in whatever small way we can. **Julie Martindale**





Window into Our World - BICA Photo Competition 2020



Social Distance Walking - Barb Whiter (Winner of both categories)

Thank you to those creative locals who submitted their works into the BICA Photo & Video Competition 2020 - Window into Our World.

The judging panel assessed all submissions based on factors such as Impact, Creativity & Style, Composition, Lighting & Technical Excellence.

Submissions highlighted the vision and outlook under this year's four themes.

And the Winners judged by our panel are..... drum roll.....

- Bend of Inspiration - Barb Whiter (Tie Photo 1 & 2)
- Colour my World - Barb Whiter (Photo 2)
- Magic Moments - Barb Whiter (Photo 3)
- Up Close & Personal - Jarrah Pauli (Photo 1)
- Video Compilation - Alan Bluhm & Barb Whiter

Highly Commended: in categories 1-3 is Jarrah Pauli

Highly Commended: in category 4 is Barb Whiter

We've also received public feedback via a Facebook poll, and have included a new People's Choice Award.

The People's Choice Award for each category goes to;

- Bend of Inspiration - Barb Whiter (Photo 1)
- Colour my World - Jarrah Pauli & Barb Whiter (Tie Photo 2 & 3)
- Magic Moments - Jarrah Pauli (Photo 2)
- Up Close & Personal - Barb Whiter (Photo 2)

Each of our winners receive a gift voucher which will be coming to the them shortly

The winning photo for both categories is below, and all entries can be viewed here;

<https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/window-into-our-world/>

Thanks to all who participated, voted and judged

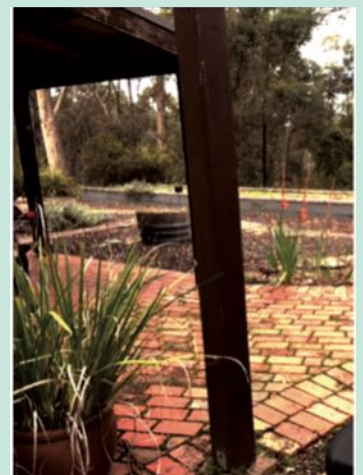
Phil Wierzbowski

Colours of Autumn

Autumn in the Bend is when the bright colours appear around the house and the garden and into the bush. The flame pink/red buds appear on the green stems near the mud bricks astride the porch, the wattles and nettles bloom at first unnoticed and, half hidden behind the gum trees, take me by surprise each year. Finally, this year the lemon tree fruited plentifully for the first time since my arrival in the bend. The moss grows a very dark green on the bricks and this year the regular rain finally coaxed a few of the many varieties of mushrooms to appear again. Meanwhile the giant ghost gum sways and showers the veggie garden with reddish twigs and army green leaves as usual. I miss the massive twin gums that towered over the east side of the main house and had to be arbores; but gain warm comfort from using every twig, leave, bark and branch for mulch and firewood. And I finally cleaned the earth stairs that descend and curve their way down the hill and into the quiet bushland.

Magnus. Morris

586 Henley Rd





LIVING IN THE BEND



Living in our residential National Park provides lots of enjoyment but it also carries a responsibility to environmentally manage our properties.

A Property Management Plan may be the way to help keep your lot healthy. The plan may be formal or informal but it should address issues including:

- Monitoring the health of our native flora and fauna.
- Monitoring weeds and addressing invasions.
- Limiting activities and impacts.

There are plenty of resources to help and they can be found in:

Bend of Islands

Join Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA). There is a lot of expertise in our local community. Just ask. Join in the BICA Landcare activities to get experience.

The Bend of Islands web page is a great resource including a comprehensive Plant List.

Nillumbik Shire

Visit the web page Environment section which includes Information and booklets about weed and pest animal information. Grants and rebates are available from time to time.

Land for Wildlife

A free and voluntary State government program supporting landholders or managers who provide habitat for native wildlife on their land. Membership provides an on-site visit about how you can contribute to biodiversity conservation with ongoing support including a regular Land for Wildlife newsletter

Trust for Nature Conservation Covenant

A conservation covenant (deed of covenant) is a voluntary, legal agreement made between a landowner and Trust for Nature. Its purpose is to permanently conserve and protect the natural, cultural or scientific values of the land.

The Trust's conservation covenants are registered on Title and are legally binding forever.

The trust provides ongoing advice and information regarding the management of your property.

A bonus is that Nillumbik Shire provides an annual rate rebate for covenanted properties. Landowners currently receive \$50 per hectare placed under covenant, with a minimum of \$200 and maximum of \$500.

If you want to landscape around the house or need to add plants to your block you should only use local provenance plants so as to not corrupt the integrity of our Flora by cross pollination and hybridisation.

When you buy plants ask for Bend of Islands provenance. You WILL NOT get local provenance from commercial nursery outlets. Go to Edendale Farm or Friends of Warrandyte State Park Nursery

Enjoy the Bend
Alan Bonny

Resource references

- <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/157412771573945>
- <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Environment>
- <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/protecting-wildlife/land-for-wildlife>
- https://trustfornature.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TFN3736-ConservationCovenantBrochure_web.pdf
- <https://www.edendale.vic.gov.au/Indigenous-nursery>
- <http://fowsp.org.au/nursery.php>



Yarra Strategic Plan endorsed by BICA



The Yarra Strategic Plan (YSP) has been developed as a result of the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017 and is a momentous leap forward in river protection.

The Act calls for the Yarra River to be viewed as an entire entity, from its source near Mt Baw Baw to its mouth at Port Phillip Bay. It required the following process: -

- the development of a 50-year Vision for the River, via a Community Assembly made up of 24 randomly selected citizens
- Implementation of the aspirations of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung traditional owners for the Yarra, incorporating their knowledge and care of the river
- Development of a Yarra Strategic Plan to achieve these 2 key objectives and to ensure a coordinated approach from all the public entities that control various sections or aspects of the river
- Establishment of a Birrarung Council to monitor the implementation of the YSP to ensure that the key objectives will be achieved and that all public entities are acting in conformance with the YSP.

The YSP has now been developed, with ample opportunities for public input, to cover the first 10-year-stage of achieving the 50-year Vision. This is a very comprehensive document with the river considered as a whole, but also divided into 4 sections, to enable detailed analysis of the differing circumstances as the river makes its way from the mountains to the bay.

The **Lower Rural Reach** is the section that stretches from Healesville to Warrandyte and includes the Bend of Islands.

The 50-year Vision for this section includes: -

From Yering Gorge, our Yarra River, Birrarung is continuously replenished by plants and animals from Kinglake and beyond, joining the river on its journey to the city.

This clause highlights the importance of the high biodiversity of the Bend of Islands, Warrandyte State Park and adjacent areas, that give the river a 'biodiversity recharge', after it has made its way through the Yarra Valley and before it enters the suburbs on its way to the city.

The YSP highlights this by specifically nominating the following **'New Areas for Protection'**: -

- Yering – Warrandyte landscape protection
- Kinglake–Yarra biodiversity corridor

As required by the Act, a final draft of the YSP has now been issued for endorsement to all relevant public entities (Councils, and other Authorities etc.) and also to the Committees of Management for the various reserves within the River Zone.

BICA is responsible for the Committee of Management of the Neil Douglas Nature Reserve, located at the end of the Gongflers peninsula. As such, we have reviewed the 'draft for endorsement', negotiated the inclusion of some final clarifications, and issued our endorsement of the Draft YSP – Version 12.

Nillumbik Council unanimously endorsed the Draft YSP – Version 12 at its May 15 Council Meeting.

The YSP, to be released by the Government later this year, should achieve much improved Whole of River Management and will hopefully provide opportunities on-going environmental enhancement and protection of our area.

Frank Pierce



Café Benders



Covid 2020-21 has unfortunately meant cancelation of our monthly, Saturday Community Morning teas. Restrictions have also meant that we are unable to use CFA facilities.

Earlier in the year I organized a community gathering to compensate for the lack of availability of the Fire Station for our monthly Cafe Benders.

I obtained permission from Jo and Gerrard to hold the event on their special plot. My concept was a Twilight Picnic that was a BYO everything as we were still under the cloud of Covid. The old familiar faces turned up along with a host of new ones including several lovely new residents. Picnic rugs were laid out, corks were popped and the chatter of Benders voices filled the air while the kids ran and laughed and got muddy by the dam. This is what our community has missed. Such a great evening.

As I write, we are in Lockdown again, but I am proposing another event as soon as it is safe to do so.

Dig out your hats, dust them off, we are going to have...
A Mad Hatters Morning Tea Party.
Date, time and venue to be advised.

Carol Bonny.



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, 5 Calani
 Bv, Bend of Islands
POSTPONED
 All proceeds go to the
 Christmas Hills
 Fire Brigade






News from the Fire Brigade

While we have had a pretty quiet fire season thankfully there have been a number of incidents to keep us busy over the last few months including alarm activations at Winneke Treatment Plant, Motor Vehicle accidents and some lost children along the Yarra back in early May.

New Recruits: It has been great to welcome new recruits into the brigade and see them start training in a hectic schedule to become qualified. Jayden and Zarina from the North End and James and Sid from the South End. We have also had strong interest expressed from some other members of the community and hopefully they will join us in the future. They will help to bring our average age down considerably!!

New Brigade Management Team: It has also been great to see some newer faces in our management team recently elected for the next two years beginning in July 2021. Special thanks to Cric Henry and Rowena and Paul Jonas who served on the last BMT.

Captain Dianne Simmons

1st Lieutenant James Armstrong

2nd Lieutenant Michael Scroggie

3rd Lieutenant Pete Rae

4th Lieutenant Stu Lawson

5th Lieutenant Tristan Dewey

Community Safety Peter Mildenhall

Secretary Deirdre Lucas

Training Officer Mandy Walters

Health & Safety Officer Robyn Adams

Treasurer Julie Martindale

Communications Mat Pollock-Jones

Assets (Equipment) Stu Lawson

Bushfire Resilience:

We are supporting this great series of Webinars coming up in July 2021 and they are recommended viewing! You will see more advertising closer to the time. Meanwhile if you missed them, the Webinars from 2020 are a valuable resource and can be viewed again via YouTube (see links below) and transcripts and relevant Q and As and other info will soon be available on the BRI website.

Recordings of 2020 Webinars:

W1: How houses are destroyed by bushfire
<https://youtu.be/Uyob1lqsBfs>

W2: How to harden an existing house
<https://youtu.be/FtU4spSnVrQ>

W3: Getting your insurance right
<https://youtu.be/pbIEUCfuyrQ>

W4: Understanding rebuilding
<https://youtu.be/CMZz8K27rR8>

W5: Make better decisions about bushfire risk in our changing climate
<https://youtu.be/0lq7LSSRynw>



UPCOMING WEBINARS in 2021:

WEBINAR 1

Reduce your house and property risk

7.30pm Wednesday 21 July

- Justin Leonard, CSIRO

WEBINAR 2

Get water ready: tanks, pumps and sprinklers

7.30pm Wednesday 4 August

- Justin Leonard, CSIRO

WEBINAR 3

Your physical and emotional preparation

7.30pm Thursday 19 August

- Danielle Clode, Flinders University
- Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist
- Jim McLennan, La Trobe University

WEBINAR 4

Triggers to take action

7.30pm Wednesday 1 September

- Kevin Tolhurst AM, University of Melbourne
- Katharine Haynes, University of Wollongong
- Danielle Clode, resident, Smiths Gully, Black Saturday 2009 and Adelaide Hills 2021
- Raphaelae Blanchi, CSIRO

WEBINAR 5

Your sheltering options

7.30pm Wednesday 15 September

- Raphaelae Blanchi, CSIRO
- Katharine Haynes, University of Wollongong
- Chloe Begg, CFA

Brigade donations?

It is that time near the end of financial year where individuals and businesses consider tax deductible donations to charities and volunteer organisation. We rely on support from our local community specially to replace equipment and infrastructure and our Ultralight Tanker is getting close to renewal. If you are considering donations, please contact our secretary or Treasurer or myself and we can provide details.

Always happy to answer questions or follow up

Peter Mildenhall

Community Safety

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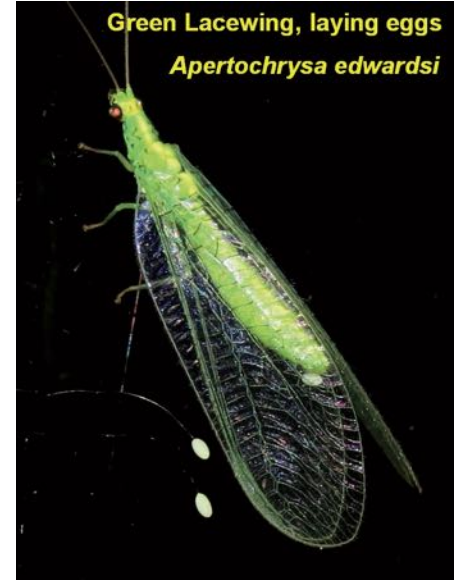
Lacewings in the Bend



Mantis Fly, *Campion rubellus*



Mantis Fly, *Calomantispa venusta*



Green Lacewing, laying eggs
Apertochrysa edwardsi



Antlion Lacewing, *Periclystus circuter*



Brown Lacewing, *Megalomima berothoides*

40 species of lacewing have been recorded on the Co-op since 2015. Some of these species have also been recorded in other areas of the ELZ, but there are no known records of species that are not on the list.

The majority of these species have come to the lights on the west side of my house that faces a downward slope to a gully below. This is an ideal position for attracting moths and the lacewing sightings were initially a by-product of efforts to record the moths of the area.

Generally, the internal house lights are left on, with reasonable numbers of insects coming to the windows. Occasionally, mostly on warm nights, a light sheet and a 250-Watt Mercury Vapour globe are used; this attracts a much larger variety of species.

A list of the lacewing records is at [HERE](#). In this list, there is a link to the iNaturalist record for each species. Once this is opened, more general data for the species is available by clicking on the species thumbnail icon.

Lacewings are invertebrates that are classified in their own Order – the **Neuroptera**. They are characterised with wings that have both longitudinal and transverse veins. They are a varied lot with 14 families in Australia, each with at least one representative in Victoria. There are over 600 species in Australia and about 120 of these have been recorded in

Victoria, many of them only once, or a few times.

Local records cover the following 8 families: -

- **Mantis Flies** – these have raptorial forelegs. The clear membranous wings differentiate these from the separate order of Praying Mantids
- **Antlions** – most larvae make the classic inverted conical pits in sandy soil to trap ants and other insects.
- **Owlfly** – have clubbed antennae and an unusual stance with downward hanging wings. Larvae have very large jaws.
- **Green Lacewings** – perhaps the most commonly seen, generally with green bodies and long, slender filiform antennae. They lay small white eggs on the tips of hairlike stalks.
- **Osmylids** – another varied group, some with spectacular coloured wing patterns.
- **Brown Lacewings** – a number of small species often with brown, oddly shaped wings. Some larvae are sold commercially for biological control of aphids etc.
- **Split-footed Lacewings** – a varied group, with some easily mistaken for green lacewings.
- **Beaded Lacewings** – have hairy bodies and wings - very uncommon in Victoria, but 2 of 3 records of an as yet unnamed species have been recorded here.



Lacewings in the Bend



Antlion Larva



Brown Lacewing Larva

Most lacewings are active predators, with sucking mouthparts, both in the larval and adult stages.

Victorian species have wingspans varying from about 100mm down to a tiny 5mm.

Lacewings are preyed upon by birds, bats and arthropods. Some adults have foul defensive odours, some larvae use a covering of debris or prey bodies for camouflage.

Identification can be very tricky. There is a good series of 8 articles, by Ken Harris, published in the Victorian Entomologist between 2015 and 2017, covering the known Victorian species. A book is now under preparation by the Victorian Entomological Society. Body markings, wing shape & venation, facial pattern etc. can be important ID features.

Superficially similar looking beasts found in our area are

Dobsonflies – order Megaloptera (larvae have chewing mouth parts);

Stoneflies – order Plecoptera (2 filaments at tip of abdomen); and

Caddisflies – order Trichoptera (hairy wings with few vertical veins).

For 1/3 of the known Victorian Species to have been recorded in our local area is a testament to the exceptional quality and biodiversity of our environment. It is yet another strong justification for the special environmentally focused planning provisions, and the significant effort expended, through our strategic Flora Management Program, to minimise weeds and to enhance the diversity of the indigenous plants.

Further Reference

A Field Guide to INSECTS in Australia by Paul Zborowski and Ross Storey

Victorian Entomologist Vol. 45 No.6; Vol. 46 Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6; Vol. 47 Nos. 2, 3, 5 Vol. 50 No. 3

Feedback: If anyone finds an unusual Lacewing, or needs some identification assistance, [email](mailto:frank.pierce@vicent.org.au) Frank Pierce as a first step. Referral to others with better knowledge may be required!

A little bird told me (the time)

Every so often a gang of little bird come flitting my way. The gang comprises about 10 or 15 individuals and is made up of pardalotes, tree creepers, robins, flycatchers and thornbills amongst others. I watch one of them flit (there's no other word for it, flitting is what they do) from branch to branch and I find it hard to keep up. In the second it takes me to blink it has 'flitted' again, performed a 180-degree turn, landed perfectly and is now casting around for some tasty morsel.

It lands with such dexterity, it never misses, it's never off-balance, - and it's all done incredibly fast. How do they have time?

I guess there's two ways of measuring time. 'Clock time and 'Experienced time'. Experienced time is much more elastic. It can stretch out or shrink back.

Remember your last holiday? How long, and rich, and memorable. Compare that to the third, fourth or fifth weeks back at work. Which is easier to bring to mind? Which takes up more 'memory time'?

When I was stung by a bee I started to vomit and feel generally unwell. The doctor administered an EpiPen (full of adrenaline). As a result, I got very anxious and was breathing too rapidly. Thinking I was having trouble breathing because of the sting he gave me another jab! The general sense of anxiety was far worse than the original symptoms. But the point is that it seemed to last for ages. In any emergency, time seems to slow right down as our senses heighten and we process information faster.

Perhaps adrenaline puts the brakes on time! If so our little bird must have plenty of it. Always on the lookout against attack from bigger birds (not to mention cats and foxes), not to mention the endless drive to find enough food to sustain it another day. Contrary to our romantic notions, perhaps our little bird spends its life in an adrenalin-induced emergency ward!

Samuel Johnson wrote: "When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight it concentrates his mind wonderfully." Is it surprising therefore that our little bird has a different sense of time from us? Perhaps to this adrenaline-fueled bundle of feathers a second is more like a minute. Plenty of time now to decide to flit to that twig, prepare to fly, get the wings going, choose where to land and then grasp the branch with just enough momentum to not topple over or fall short.

In clock time our little bird may only live for a couple of years. But does it experience only a couple of years? An 80-year-old person will have lived 2.5 billion seconds. (Hang in with me here.) There are 31.5 million seconds in a year and our little bird only has two years! That's 63 million seconds. Total!

But if our little bird (I feel I should have given it a name, but too late now), perceives a second as we perceive a minute, then it actually perceives 119 anxious years' worth of time! Not bad for our tiny bundle of feathers!

Maybe if it could just chill a bit it'd live longer (or is that shorter?), I'm confused!

Richard Laurie



Buff-rumped Thornbill



Spotted Pardalote



Bird Notes



Male Lyrebird displaying on its mound



Eastern Whipbird
Watsons Creek
2021-01-28

The following can be reported since November 2020.

Lyrebird Records

With a bit of luck, the local lyrebirds will be getting ready for the 2021 breeding season. (See below re fox control)

There have been 22 records since 11/2021 and we now have 415+ Lyrebird records reported since July 2000. Details and analysis 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 -

- December: Martins (both species), Coot (3 juveniles) and Spotless Crake, at Yanakie
- February: Eastern Whipbird, at Yanakie
- April: Tree Martin, at eastern end of Henley Rd.
- May: Lyrebird on Stevenson Ck, was heard calling Skyline Rd near C Track

New Birds for the BICA List.

Eastern Whipbird, A young male was recorded on Watsons Ck, upstream of the bridge, 5 times between 2020-12-20 and 2021-02-14, from just upstream of the bridge to upstream of the Oak Tree.

As with the Lyrebird, Whipbirds were present in the Bol prior to the 1962 fires. **These recent records on Watsons Creek are well away from the Yarra River and represent probable use to the Warrandyte-King Lake Habitat Link, perhaps the first since 1962?**

Little Friarbird was seen by Mike Skewes, near his house on 29/5/21. This brings the Bol Bird List Total to **178** species

Fox predation and control measures

Breeding **White-throated Nightjars** were being monitored west of the Sugarloaf Dam wall in 11/20. Tragically the chick was predated, very soon after hatching, most probably by a fox. Due to the predation of this chick, and the Lyrebird chick in 9/20, some fox control is being undertaken, as part of the Sugarloaf Link Project.

7 foxes were trapped in 10 days on the 1st round of control, in the Stevenson Ck/MW Aqueduct area. This is a staggering figure, indicating an abundance of foxes in the area. This control will improve the future chances of breeding success for these iconic species. (Long term fox control in Sherbrook has significantly reduced fox predation of lyrebirds, not because of reduced numbers, but because of experienced foxes being replaced with naïve ones.)

Other Interesting Observations

Brown Songlark has been reported at HGC. Keep a lookout for one of these in the Bend.

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.

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, subject to Covid restrictions. See the BICA Calendar for start times; we meet at the upper corner of Henley and Catani.

Frank Pierce



Regents and Swifties and What You Can Do to Help!

During late autumn and winter, the Mugga Ironbarks in the northern part of The Bend are in flower. The intensity of the event varies from year to year based on the timing and amount of rainfall. As we all know this annual flowering attracts many Red Wattlebirds (*Anthochaera carunculata*) but there is also the chance of the spectacular Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*) showing up. Unfortunately, the chances are very low as this is a critically endangered bird. Its neck and head are glossy black, and its breast is covered with pale-yellow speckling. The tail and wings are black and bright yellow. This leads to its specific name *Phrygia* for the people of Phrygia who were skilled in gold embroidery. *Anthochaera*, its generic name is from the Ancient Greeks word for 'flower' and to 'enjoy'. The Regent Honeyeater used to be common along the Eastern Australian coast to Adelaide but now, despite a major breeding program, there are thought to be as few as 250 birds in the wild. There are no modern records of the Regent Honeyeater in The Bend, but a bird was seen at Watsons Creek in the Gawa Reserve in October 2019.



Regent Honeyeater – Chiltern VIC

Another critically endangered bird that may be spotted in the flowering Ironbarks is the Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Swift Parrots breed in Tasmania but migrate to box-ironbark forests on the mainland during winter. Here they are nomadic, following the nectar supply. Swift Parrots have been sighted in The Bend more recently than the Regents however they are still very uncommon with sightings only once or twice every few years or so. They are medium-sized, about the size of a Musk Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta concinna*), but with a more streamlined shape, and a long, pointed purple-red tail. Their body is bright green, with a dark blue crown patch and a crimson face. There is also a crimson patch at the bend of the wing.

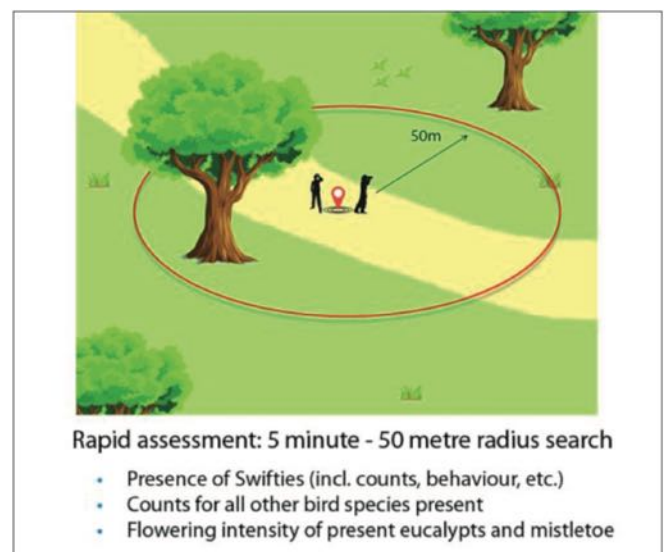
So, What Can I Do?

Subject to COVID restrictions of course, Birdlife Australia is running the biannual Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater surveys. Full details are available at - <https://birdlife.org.au/swift-parrot> .

They have introduced a new methodology where birdwatchers conduct a 5 minute/50 metre radius search for Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters at fixed locations. Birdwatchers are also asked to count all other bird species, and to estimate the availability of nectar and water. Although the survey can be done at any time of year, volunteers are particularly encouraged to visit as many sites as feasible during the biannual 6-week count periods.

The survey windows are:

Round 1 - Sat 24 April to Sun 6 June 2021 and, round 2 - Sat 17 July to Sun 29 August 2021



(Picture from Birdlife Australia)

You can submit your observations using the Swift Parrot Search portal on the Birddata mobile app, see (<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au>).

The chances of either of these very rare birds turning up in our backyards are small but you never know...

OTHER LINKS:

SURVEY

<https://birdlife.org.au/projects/woodland-birds-for-biodiversity/latest-news-wl>

SWIFT PARROT

<https://birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/swift-parrot>

https://www.birdlife.org.au/documents/WL-A_Guide_to_Identifying_the_Critically_Endangered_Swift_Parrot.pdf

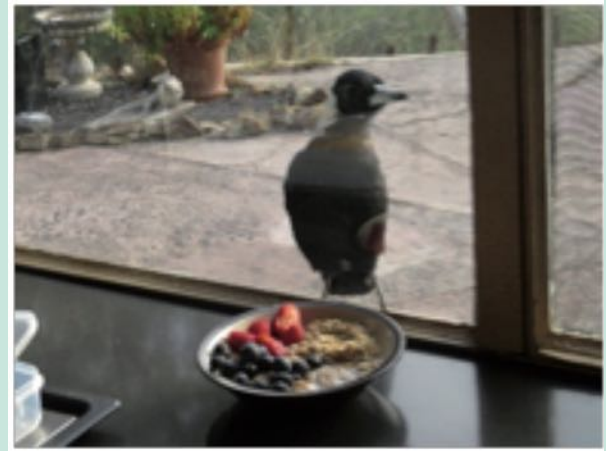
REGENT HONEYEATER

<https://birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/regent-honeyeater>

https://birdlife.org.au/documents/WL-Regent_Honeyeater-identification-brochure.pdf



What makes Birdwatching so enjoyable and why we need to continue it.



Birdwatching is an activity that contains great benefits, it holds vast amounts of enjoyment, is very advantageous to one's health (both mentally and physically) and the environment at large.

Just noticing and being around birds in general can benefit one greatly. In a 2017 study conducted by various universities in Queensland, Exeter and the British Trust for Ornithology found that people living closer and more in tune with birds were less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and stress. The act of birdwatching or becoming immersed in the world of birds can distract you from day-to-day difficulties and the stress of the modern world; like a meditation. It is like an escape from reality into a completely different world; the world of birds.

Birdwatching is very good for us physically. While often not very easy to track how far you have walked while birdwatching, it is often further than you may think. The first act of exercise is getting to the spot where you will be birdwatching. This can often be in the form of a car or other transportation but the best birding spots are away from bus, roads, housing and so forth so walking is often the best method of arrival. Then following birds and moving around to different spots takes effort as well; especially if you have supplies with you.

Birdwatching is also a very pleasant and stimulating experience. When we are around birds or tracking down a rare bird, it triggers the release of dopamine (A chemical released by neurons in our brain after we receive a reward) making us extremely happy. This reward system is similar to winning the

lottery or a raffle; we are immediately filled with joy and the effort becomes worth it.

Finally, birdwatching and bird surveys are beneficial to the natural environment. Online, there are many forums where you can submit bird sightings and scientists can see what you have observed which may assist them in the conservation of species. For example, the decline of a bird being sighted overtime can hint that conservation action is necessary for the survival of the species. Birds are crucial to the eco-system, and in their various ways help to maintain the balance of nature. An environment without birds, is a lifeless, barren plain. We enjoy nature and being in it makes us happy and content. We preserve birds and other animals so that future generations can enjoy them. The ecosystem is a fragile thing, so we must protect it. Keeping track of the birds we see and submitting surveys is one important aspect that we can contribute to this.

Birdwatching is a glorious activity with many physical and mental benefits that can aid the environment in its quest to provide all of us with happy and healthy lives. I would strongly recommend birdwatching as a hobby to try out. You will love it.

Jarrah Pauli (13)



Welcome to the Bend

New BICA Members include

- Warwick Page and Delsha Rees
- May Jameson & James Unthank
- Sean Hutton & Finn (7-year-old son)
- Christine Cummings & Tim Heath
- Ann Williamson
- Matt Green

Messages from New Members

CHRISTINE CUMMINGS

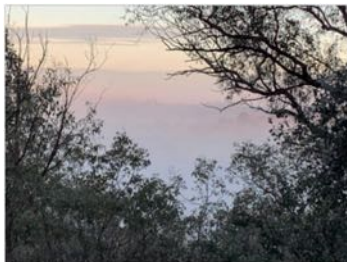
Having crossed the border in a nick of time, I am writing from Canberra where I am looking after my injured mother and Tim is in Sydney looking after his.

We have just moved into our home on Henley Rd, madly unpacked boxes of too much stuff, planted 100 plants, (indigenous to the northern side of the hill, I hope) and begun weeding the world of the glass house.

At this distance, the very thought of being there brings the deepest joy to our hearts. We have so very much to learn, so many explorations to follow. You would hardly believe that we are "a mature couple" not a couple of excited kids.

I guess you have all felt this many times, in both small and large moments, in this very special part of the land that owns us.

We both look forward to the time we can get together and hope that it is soon.



ANN WILLIAMSON

I look forward to reading the newsletters and getting involved in person when I move to the area mid-June. :)

SEAN HUTTON

My son Finn and I are settling in quite well and are enjoying the beautiful environment here at the Bend of Islands. We have made some new friends here already and met quite bit of the local wildlife. I am currently trying to renovate the house to make life a bit more comfortable here. This includes restoring the second bedroom in house (nearly finished), upgrading the kitchen garden (I have some wicking beds on order and will fence them off from the animals), and installing a shed with solar panels at the end of the driveway (the only spot that receives reliable sun) so that we can become more self-sufficient and ecofriendly. I am happy to contribute something for the local newsletter once we are out of lockdown and I have something to show for my efforts.

MATT GREEN

Originally from Birmingham in the UK, I arrived in Melbourne in 2014 after living and working in Copenhagen for 3 years. After

a year of renting in Elwood and unsuccessfully trying to find somewhere affordable to live near the city, we started looking further out.

We were fortunate to discover Eltham and ended up buying a modest house on a half-acre block. I was blown away by the thought of being a custodian of such a piece of native Australian bush. Previous owners had treated it more like parkland, with excessive mowing... so I undertook activities to identify and protect the native flora and hand weed the invasive stuff.

Remember I grew up a bit of a townie Englishman, so this was an exercise with a big learning curve! For pretty much every new plant I found I had to use Facebook groups to help me identify them (Wildflowers of Melbourne, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria) before amassing a good collection of books to help with identification and to distinguish between friend and foe.

Through one of these groups, I discovered a local reserve and soon became a member of the Friends of St Helena Bush Reserve, meeting once a month to help with conservation of the site. [This is a clip of a recording I made](#) of Garry French taking us on a wildflower walk on the reserve. Working with these incredible volunteers grew my passion for the conservation of native flora and I implemented similar strategies on my own bush block.

I am delighted to say that after 5 or so years the bush block transformed from a nice enough park feel to a real native bush setting, rich and wild, with many great discoveries. The block was filled with wildflowers: early Nancy, milkmaids, blue pincushion, chocolate lilies, rush lilies, running postman. I fell in love with orchids - there were large patches of blunt greenhood, a small patch of trim greenhoods, some Maroonhoods, two to three specimens of small snake/golden moth orchids and a beautiful, single spider orchid that was found and loved one day and decapitated the next by an unknown creature. I nearly cried.

I am currently looking for the next home for me and my two boys: 8 and 5 years old. Ideally a modest residence with the intention of reducing costs for a less hectic lifestyle, maximising sustainable values whilst being immersed in native Australian bush... which led me to discover the Bend of Islands as a potential perfect future home.

I look forward to meeting you soon on a walk, hand weeding, or other event!





From the Editor:

Thank you to all who have contributed to this Newsletter
Keep sending in your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands
jmandfp@bigpond.com

Editor: Janet Mattiske Design and Layout; Greg Phillips

On behalf of our Community, I would like to express grateful thanks to Greg Phillips for producing some 14 Newsletters for BICA.

We wish Greg and his family all the best in their future endeavours

Editor: Janet Mattiske

BICA Facebook Page

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

Join up and we'll keep the information coming!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/157412771573945/>

CONTACT BICA:

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BICA Website: www.bendofislands.wordpress.com

