

April 2000

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

'Flora of Warrandyte' Finished

By Pat Coupar

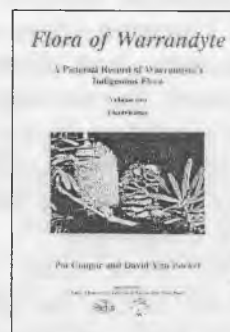
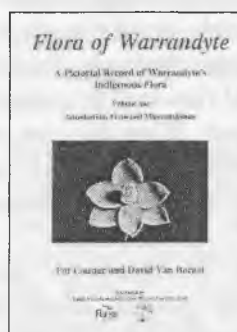
The 'Flora of Warrandyte' is finally finished. Nearly ten years in the making - on and off - this two volume pictorial record of Warrandyte's indigenous flora has been completed.

It all began back in the early 1990's with a survey of Warrandyte State Park's orchids and developed from there into a study of all the Park's indigenous flora. The aim at that early stage was to collect, photograph, and lodge at the Melbourne Herbarium, previously unconfirmed species and new records for the Park. It seemed a logical step then to photograph all of the indigenous species in the Park, including some regionally significant species occurring in the local district.

The decision to show the distribution of each species within the Warrandyte State Park and local district made the task that much harder. To do this the area was divided into seven sections. In addition, the status and abundance of each species was assessed and documented.

Valuable help was received along the way from botanists including Cam Beardsell, David Cameron, Graeme Lorimer, Jeff Jeanes and Geoff Carr, and from previous rangers, local residents and naturalists.

One of the reasons the book took so long to complete was that the information was continually being updated as new species and distributions were found. Many photographs were improved and updated. In addition, time spent on the 'flora' had to be fitted in between work and family commitments.



As the 'Flora of Warrandyte' progressed the question arose what to do with the finished product. With well over a thousand colour photos, printing was out of the question due to the enormous cost for a book with such a limited market.

Various options were investigated including scanning the images and colour printing or making a CD Rom. In the end the choice was made to go with colour photocopying which had already given good results.

It has not been a cheap project, but Parks Victoria and Friends of Warrandyte State Park have given encouragement and provided generous financial support throughout and agreed to fund one copy each of the two volume book.

The double-sided, colour-photocopied 'flora' has been stitched and bound into hardback books and will be kept in the joint FOWSP/Park library at the Park depot. One copy will remain in the library as a reference and the other will be available for borrowing for a limited time.

All Fowspian's are invited to an informal launch which will be held to celebrate the completion of this unique project (see advertisement in this newsletter for details).

On Friendly Roads

By Peggy Safstrom

It was right at the end of July last year. We hadn't long been home from our long drive up the busy - and at times nerve racking - New South Wales and Queensland roads to Cooktown, and were asking ourselves "Is it only our love for South Australia (where my earliest years were spent) which makes us feel that its roads are more friendly?" We aimed to find out.

No. It wasn't our imagination. The wide roads with no deep jagged edges, the minuscule number of transports was bliss, all the way to our destination. A friend gave me back the letter I'd sent her, written out of a heart glowing with peace and happiness. This is what I had written to her:

"We are at Arkaroola in the Gammon Range, up above the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, 600 kilometres above Adelaide, having made our way here from Warrandyte through Sealake, Renmark, Peterborough and Hawker. It is lovely. It is rugged, rocky and russet. When the sun sets on the huge rock peaks they turn a flame red. Once it has set they become deep and mysterious, dark, brown-red."

We drove today from breakfast to early teatime in and out of rocky gorges, along dry creek beds, on roads carved out of ancient seabeds, the hillsides shining dark red, for they are hillsides of stones, stones, and more stones. Small grey bushes and shrubs dot the hillsides here and there, and rounded clumps of spinnifex grass suddenly surprise us as they cover the hillsides, hiding the stones, looking like a flock of sheep, grey, cuddled-up-asleep sheep waiting for dawn. Then around a bend and there are the stones again. In the creek beds its a different story. In the long, dry creek beds is another world. And that world is one of my favourite places.

Down a steep grade and you're in the creek bed. Driving along it, in and out between huge granite boulders and River Red Gums (Eucalyptus camaldulensis). And what trees they are! Grandfathers, huge bases, splayed out to withstand the onrush of floods which come

roaring down upon them, bashing them with rocks, fallen branches, whole uprooted trees, everything the raging waters can unleash onto the



upstream sides of the gums. Even the unwary and unhappy motorists who think they can get across, or the campers who consider the creek bed a suitable camp site have to abandon their vehicle and gear and get out of there fast when the water comes racing. The ancient gums are battered over and over, year after year, and they survive - or most do. Young gums, their roots not yet woven around massive boulders, are easily uprooted and pile up against the old fellows, forming an ever growing barrier against the next raging floodwaters. It is fantastic to stand beside some of these old gnarled eucalypt masterpieces see the gashed sides, the bulbous roots twisted around this boulder and that, and up there, a beautiful white trunk, branches turning all the one way, away from the rushing river and its debris.

The debris is all that is left to remind us of what has occurred. The creek beds now are dry sand, warm, inviting. Inviting us to stop a while, scoop up a sandy pillow, lay on our backs with our arms folded beneath our heads, and look up at the bluest of skies through the dull, greyish green canopy and ponder the wonder that is a tree. And not mind at all if the spell cast on us by South Australia's northern ranges (and its outback areas), draws us back time and again through its blissfully friendly roads".



Coming Soon

A Fungi Walk at Jumping Creek Reserve led by renowned expert Bruce Fuhrer.

Details in next newsletter

What's On?

By Ranger, David Farrar

Fire Management

With the tail end of summer upon us we are in slow transition into autumn weather. The mornings are becoming crisper and I needed the heater on, on the way to work the other morning. However, the days are still warm and some times hot and I have been waiting for the weather to drop in temperature so we can implement Ecological and Fuel Reduction burn operations in the park.

We have four burns to conduct this autumn two 10 hectare burns in Whipstick Gully and Fourth Hill would have been completed by the time you read this article hopefully. One fuel reduction burns is at Whipstick Gully which is a zone 1 site and is fuel reduced to protect life and assets, this site is above the disused quarry. The other burn is in a zone 3, which is fuel reduced as part of a broad area mosaic program; this site is between Brackenbury Track and School Track at Fourth Hill.

Another 15 hectare burn is scheduled in the Common and this burn is to fuel reduce the area as well as add to ecological benefits of the site. The site is frequented by various fauna and certainly Brush-tailed Phascogales would use the site for feeding and as possible roosting and nesting site. This area has been walked through backwards and forwards by our Project Fire Fighters (PFFs) Justin and Rebecca and all hollow bearing trees and hollow logs on ground that would provide habitat for Phascogale have been raked around to stop them burning.

On the subject of Brush-tailed Phascogales, I am waiting on the start of a project to map and locate the best viable vegetation for the Phascogale species in the Warrandyte State Park and reserves system. This will give Parks Victoria the best information on the species habitat, and will direct future management to benefit Brush-tailed Phascogale in following years.

Interested in Wildlife?

Someone with an interest in wildlife may like to be involved in helping with Koala Management in Warrandyte State Park.



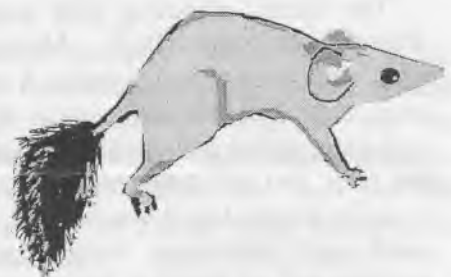
Question *To do what?*

Answer. Attend Koala Management Meetings with a Ranger every six months representing the Friends of Warrandyte State Park and help in

the management of koalas in the State Park. Other management activities including helping a Ranger coordinate koala surveys in November and monitoring trees in Pound Bend Reserve. If you are interested contact David Farrar (Frankie) on 9844 2659.

Brush-tailed Phascogale

There is also the opportunity in the next 6 months for someone to have involvement in learning about and monitoring Brush-tailed Phascogales in the Park. For friends that are interested in this majestic species please contact Frankie on 9844 2659.



Happy Days!
Frankie

Consider the Environment

Dispose of chemicals, paints, oils, detergents and plastics through your special local council services, not through the stormwater or sewerage system which will pollute your waterways

Arbor Week Plantings



FOWSP will be involved in two planting mornings during 'arbor week'. After all those busy Thursday mornings in the nursery propagating a wide range of indigenous species the time has now come to plant some of them.

Planting 1

Date & Time: Thursday May 18th at 10.00 am

Place: Taroona Reserve, Everard Drive, Warrandyte (Melway ref. 23 C12).

A mornings planting just down the road from the nursery. Morning tea provided.

Planting 2

Date & Time: Sunday May 21st at 10.30 am

Place: Mount Lofty wetlands, Lower Homestead Rd, Wonga Park (Melways ref. 279 B4).

Come and do some planting and see the new boardwalk in Warrandyte State Park's newest reserve.

BBQ lunch provided.

Friends of the Island

The Island is one of those places that we drive past regularly, glancing perhaps through the magnificent Manna Gums for a glimpse of the river, but rarely stopping for a visit. It has not always looked inviting. But things are changing.

The Island, adjoining land and water is managed by Warrandyte State Park, Manningham Council and Melbourne Water, in that order. A combined effort has seen some dramatic improvements to this area. For years this backwater of the river, artificially created in 1860 to expose the river bed for gold extraction, was neglected - weed invasion was so bad it was beyond control. However, a few years ago Melbourne Water started a willow control program and so began a new lease of life for The Island. Other weed control has been carried out and much planting as well as natural regeneration. A 'Friends' group was formed and at last this remarkable piece of land with some of the oldest Manna Gums in the district had some one to care for it.

The 'Friends' group meets on the second Sunday of the month at 1.30pm. Worrell's Country Store provide a well deserved hot drink after the activities.

If you would like more information or wish to join 'Friends' contact Glenn Henke on 9844 2239 or Gay Harris on 9844 1448.



Book Review

By Cathy Willis

The Spice Islands Voyage – In Search of Wallace

By Tim Severin

Little, Brown & Co. 1997

Had Alfred Russel Wallace been a rich, ambitious and confident man, we may well all know his name better than Charles Darwin's. However Wallace (born in England in the 1830s) was of a genteel but impoverished family, and was painfully shy. In "The Spice Islands Voyage", Tim Severin retraces Wallace's journey through the Moluccas (at the eastern end of the now Republic of Indonesia). He also provides a fascinating account of how Darwin became so famous for the "Origin of the Species" theory that the two men probably evolved almost simultaneously.

I'll admit to being a fan of travel writing, sailing, and natural history. This book brings these three together into an extremely readable account of both Wallace's and Severin's journeys.

Wallace's interest in the natural world developed as a teenager. Finding a fossil prompted him to read about geology. After overhearing a Latin name for a wildflower he bought a book on botany. Severin doesn't spell out how Wallace came to be a "naturalist collector" but it is obvious that for a young man in his position there weren't many paths open to him to pursue his passion. In 1856 he sailed to the Far East, to an area about as remote and unexplored a place as any on earth.

In his six years in the Moluccas Wallace suffered enormously. He came close to starvation several times, had endless bad luck with the weather and boats, and was very ill with boils, ulcers and malaria. Despite this he collected hundreds of new species of insects, birds and animals, painstaking preserving and documenting specimens, and kept a detailed journal.

The concept of conservation was foreign to the

Victorian English mind. Wallace is now regarded as a "pioneer of environmental awareness". To me this seems bizarre seeing he lived by killing animals to ship back to collectors. Yet his mind made a leap that few of his contemporaries did. After shooting a King Bird of Paradise he wrote:-
"It seems sad that on the one hand such exquisite creatures should live out their lives and exhibit their charms only in these wild inhospitable regions, doomed for ages yet to come to hopeless barbarism: while on the other hand, should civilised men ever reach these distant lands, and bring moral, intellectual and physical light into these recesses of these virgin forests, we may be sure he will so disturb the nicely-balanced relation of organic and inorganic nature as to cause the disappearance, and finally the extinction, of these very beings whose wonderful structure and beauty he alone is fitted to appreciate and enjoy."

Wallace's description of Ambon harbour compared to Severin's description of it 150 years later is heartbreaking. Likewise his descriptions of the desecration of the "protected" turtle beach on Enue Island, the fate of the Bird of Paradise named for Wallace, and the morning spent at Langowen market (specialising in the meat of rare and endangered species). The tale isn't all bleak. Severin finds some places still intact, and some where the people are enjoying a better quality of life. Part of his team visits local schools and disseminate environmental education. However in the few years since his visit the political situation in the area has so deteriorated you wonder what priority environmental concerns can have for the locals.

The book contains great photos and illustrations, fascinating snippets of history and insights into the culture. Wallace was an intriguing man and Severin's painstaking research and obvious interest both in the man and the places and people he visited make this a book well worth reading.

(Available from Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library)



Botanical Meanings

Callistemon

Beautiful stamens (*Greek*)

Worth Repeating

More animals on danger list

Global standards redefine creatures facing extinction.

by Claire Miller

Environment Reporter

The number of Victorian animals threatened with extinction has almost doubled under international standards.

About a quarter of the state's threatened creatures have also been classified as critically endangered under new standards applied by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Overall, the number of creatures threatened with extinction leapt from 77 in 1995 to 153 in the review late last year.

A number of species such as the blue-billed duck have been listed for the first time.

Under the new standards, the term "threatened" encompasses three categories: vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered. Under the old standards there were only two categories.

The state's birds are faring particularly badly with the number threatened surging from 26 to 75. Many have been upgraded such as the powerful owl which went from rare to endangered.

Thirty-seven creatures have been reclassified as critically endangered; six mammals, fourteen birds, seven reptiles, six frogs and four freshwater fish. Species in this category are considered to be at extremely high risk in the wild.

The fauna list was reviewed according to World Conservation Union criteria in a national move to adopt a global standard for all state and federal protection laws.

The 1999 review puts the spotlight on the State Government's election promise to bolster the 1988 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. Delays under the previous Government left many threatened plants and animals exposed to urban and rural development.

The department's principal flora and fauna policy analyst, Mr Gary Backhouse, said the major change was in the classification system. He said there was no room for complacency, but many endangered species were not necessarily in a more precarious situation.

Numbers of the critically endangered eastern barred bandicoot, for example, had stabilised in recent years and were slowly recovering.

"The list is an indication of 150 years of European alterations to the landscape" Mr Backhouse said. "We are well aware of the problems but we can't turn them around over night, only through prolonged local, regional and state efforts over many years."

World Wide Fund for Nature threatened species program manager, Amanda Nickson, said the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act had been starved of funding, "This enormous leap in the number of critically endangered Victorian species must be taken as a warning bell."

- Australian researchers have won a \$400,000 grant from the United States to examine the dramatic drop in the world population of frogs and other amphibians. The research will look at viruses and fungi believed to be responsible for killing them off.

Source: *The Age* 7/1/00

Did You See?

Carrots enlisted in possum wars

Christchurch: Researchers have genetically engineered carrots in Australia and the United States as a means of sterilising New Zealand's feral possums. Scientists say they are seeking permission from the Environmental Risk Management Authority to use the carrots in laboratory tests on live possums. The carrots contain a vaccine that sterilises the marsupials.

Answers to last months crossword

Across	Down
2. yabbies	1. pardalote
4. flat	3. australis
6. silurian	4. festival
8. flora	5. vanbockel
10. antechinus	7. aurora
11. mulch	9. jupiter
12. star	11. moon
13. rapids	12. soil
14. canoe	



Faraway Farrar

Ranger David Farrar has returned from trekking in Nepal.

Thursday Throng

Thursday 30th March there were so many 'Friends' helping at the morning plant propagation group that there were not enough cups to go round for morning tea.

Box Bounty

After last months appeal for polystyrene boxes we obtained an interim supply thanks to the North Ringwood Fruit Market.

Ed's Note: Thanks to B.G for organising the above.

Stall Stalwarts

Rostered to help on the March market stall were: Neal Tessier, Lee and Geoff Speedy, Cathy Papalia, Joan MacMahon, Antj Bauer and Peter Sharp. Thanks to all.

Ranging Ranger

Ranger Glen Jameson is spending several weeks at Yarra Bend (Studley Park) as acting Ranger-in-Charge.

Plant Program Proceeding - Rain Required

According to the nursery manager we have about 5,500 plants ready for planting.

N.M says "Whenever we get rain (April, early May) till the rain stops (early spring) there will be

planting at: Taroona Reserve; Mt Lofty (wetland area); Pound Bend (upper slopes); Pound Bend Reserve picnic area; Pound Bend firebreak; Everard Drive; Eltham Copper Butterfly Reserve; Jumping Creek Road/Stane Brae Court; Jumping Creek Road bridge; Witton's Reserve and various wetland areas.

Folly Fridge Defrosted

Thanks to Margaret Gotlib for her efforts in cleaning the 'folly'.

Forests Forever

The 17th annual 'Forests Forever' camp will be held this Easter at Goongerah, between the Errinundra and Snowy River National Parks in East Gippsland.

One of the tour leaders is botanist David Cameron. Others include Dr Kevin Thiele and Jill Redwood. Interested? Phone Kay 5154 0146, Jill 5154 0145

or e-mail <croeg @ big pond.com>

Anderson Again

Flora Anderson is the new conservation officer for the Australian Plant Society - Victoria.

Grapevine Orchid

Heard on the grapevine that a new pocket version of 'Orchids of Victoria' by Gary Backhouse and Jeff Jeanes is currently being produced.

Source: *Australian Plant Society newsletter, March 2000.*

Further Follies

This years 'Follies of the world from the year dot.com' by the Warrandyte theatre company was one of the best ever. My personal opinion (B.G).



Invitation to all Fowspians

to the launch of

'Flora of Warrandyte'

Date & Time: Friday May 5th 7.00 pm

**Place: The 'Folly', Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road,
Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10)**

For drinks and finger food

If you would like to attend the launch please ring either the Park office on 9844 2659 or Pat Coupar on 9844 1650 so that we can have a rough idea of numbers for the catering.



Surface
Mail
only

Postage
Paid

REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST

PP 346802 / 0005

If undeliverable please return to
Friends of Warrandyte State Park Inc.
P.O. Box 220
Warrandyte, 3113

Red-back Spider (Latrodectus hasseltii)

Derivation: *Latrodectus* = adorned bandit



The natural environment for this shy, highly venomous spider is under logs rocks and bark. However it is commonly found around human habitation amongst rubbish, old tins etc - the spider has been spotted in empty pots at the State Park nursery.

The male is less than half the size of the female and usually lacks the characteristic red markings.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10