

# FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE

STATE PARK Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Editorial. MARCH 1994



There are many activities in a modern complex society that completely escape the consciousness of the average citizen. One of these is the existence of volunteers. They are indeed numerous and work in a variety of occupations. Bus and car drivers, firefighters, Red Cross workers, fund raisers, newspaper operators, Friends groups, school and hospital workers, crisis centre personnel - the list is endless. They are people who enter into any service of their own free will and offer themselves in many roles and undertakings. Their time and expertise is given to provide to the community. They do not receive payment yet are happy to work alongside paid staff of many organizations. Their working time is often fragmented involving weekends and holiday periods.

Most volunteer groups are known as "volunteers". The exceptions seem to be people who are associated with caring for the environment. A host of strange names have appeared in the media, literature, the press and then filtered through to general conservation. Most are associated with the word ecology (literally meaning "the study of household or home"). So we have the term "Econut" that appears in the dictionary as "a person deeply concerned with ecology and environmental issues". Recently Eco-tourist has appeared - literally someone who travels around his household [perhaps the nut is in the wrong word]. But things are not getting any better with the advent of "Ecoflake" and "Ecofreak". In Nth. America many people have been deterred from joining conservation groups for fear of having to wear such labels. The oldest tag is "green" or "greenie" rather beloved of politicians and economists. Originally green was applied to young people with little worldly experience, but since then as anything from a vegetarian to someone who talks to trees.

One may wonder why conservation workers have been singled out in so many demeaning terms. Globally there has been a growing awareness of the damage we have inflicted on a fragile planet. People are prepared to challenge the wisdom of ever increasing consumption and depletion of natural resources. When powerful groups feel threatened they often resort to name calling that suggests their opponents are not quite right in the head. It can only be hoped that these opposing groups will one day unite for the common good. Even volunteers might be able to regain their sanity.

"The Divine Economy is very simple: we receive only that which we give."

"It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires great strength to decide what to do."

"There are two kinds of literature: one the literature of power; and the other the literature of explanation and apology."

Elbert Hubbard [1856 -1915]

Footnote: Elbert has returned from vacation.....

## WILLOWS AND WATERY THINGS.

The final Sunday activity day looked like being another year of wash out. Despite the rain a highly motivated team congregated and looked pretty impressive carrying hatchets, axes, and brace & bits. Kym Docwra, our organiser, and Ranger Colin..... met us and the rain drizzled down - not possible to use herbicide was the pronouncement. After a deep groan (remember last year was wet and the river very high!) we changed tools for the shovels, spades and rakes which Col had brought along and we dug out and rerouted the ditches along the tracks. After completing the job we inspected the old Skip Moyle Hut which has some new vandal damage, and put on the billy THEN THE RAIN STOPPED!! Colin was only too aware of the level of motivation to get at those willows and offered us the opportunity to have a quick 'drill and frill'. Tea cups down, we all set to work on a large grove of willows near the Mullins Orchard site. Pat, very happily explained the danger they presented to the future of our precious Tree Violets, and the next two hours saw all drilled or frilled and given a dose of poison. Col tells us it will be up to 4 months before the trees begin to die - so we will let you know of events. Finishing up we had a second cuppa and the team set off for home, tied, wet and muddy, and very pleased with themselves.

Warrandyte Festival...Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th March.



## PARKCARE

### MARCH IS NATIONAL LANDCARE

**MONTH.** The theme for this year is WEEDS. For most of us involved in restoring bushland areas the term Environmental Weed has become a familiar part of our vocabulary (as familiar as cornflakes is for breakfast!) However Environmental Weeds still remain a major threat to the conservation status of our bushland areas, be they in our backyards or in our parks and reserves.

Awareness is slowly increasing, action takes longer to achieve! The Environmental Weed Kit has been a valuable tool in identifying the major garden plants that are Environmental weeds in Warrandyte and within the Middle Yarra Region. We must now take the next step. Does your garden still contain some of these plants? If so join in with this year's theme and start planning your weed removal strategy.

**Contact:**  
Warrandyte State Park - Ph 844 2659

Shire of Eltham-Ph 439 9352

CODAT- Ph 840 9300

Yarra Valley Park- 846 4499

### GRANTS

Groups interested in applying for grants should do so soon! There are two main funding sources for application:

#### 1. National Landcare Program

**Closing Date: March 25th '94**

**Contact:**

Bill Thomas (for forms and guidelines)

Ph-785 0111

Gavin Mathieson (general queries)

Ph- 651 3420

City Landcare grants will only be issued for projects that show a link between the rural community and the urban community.

Also available under this scheme are the One Billion Trees/Tree Victoria and Save the Bush grants.

Gavin Mathieson will be running workshops on how to successfully apply for grants and will outline procedures and options for community groups. These are being planned for March 10th & 15th.

#### 2. Melbourne Parks & Waterways Community Grants

**Closing Date: April 8th '94**

**Contact:** Andrew Shannon Ph-816 6877

The theme for this years grants is " Projects that will shape Melbourne".

Sweet Pittosporum

Cherry Plum



Cotoneasters

Cape Broom



Japanese Honeysuckle

Pampas Grass



Sallow Wattle



Cootamundra Wattle

## HOTHOUSE GOSSIP

The building works will be able to proceed with an increase in pace as our workers arrive back from holidays, trips and visits to their holiday(?) homes. The Nursery works will pick up pace and Don and Ian are planning the next stage of Nursery Development and the building of a Mud Brick office/store? Ideas are sought and Don and Ian are eager to hear from any people wishing to join the building forces. (We do not divide our work force on existing lines you know!)

Peter Stoddart, from Head Office planning, has settled into the Park on a part time basis. We enjoy his company over lunches etc. and we will be able to use his experience to help with much planning. He is also a person able to help with enlightening us on processes of wide planning issues such as WHEN will Mt. Lofty and the corridor to Kinglake be formalised.

We have had several V.I.P.s from the new Head Office at Dandenong visit over the summer period and we hope to develop close ties with Bob Brinkman, and Mark Stone who manage the Region. Ian Christie, another manager of Port Phillip Region, has accepted an invitation to lunch on a Thursday so as to see our Nursery and revegetation works.

We have several members on interstate work or study courses. It is very nice to have them wish to use our Newsletter as a way of assuaging homesickness. We really like letters from those members, telling of similar organisations they join or of environmental experiences they have. If you are such a member, don't forget to send your contribution.

Timber for the Frogland walkway has been delivered and Ron has dug all the stump holes. The construction will commence and this will mean the very precious wetland species will be protected from big feet. Bill Roxburgh has been very busy with rabbit trapping and he, Ron and David Van Bockel now

feel the big exclusion zone is at last rabbit free.

The Osborne Peninsula people have been working very enthusiastically. A huge amount of Ivy was removed from the top end opposite Black Flat. Large amounts of blackberry were sprayed by the private land owners and David V.B. has arranged the similar spraying of the Park strip. Follow up work will continue all year and we hope this critical area will become a wonderful example of co-operation between private and public landowners. Ivy is again the target on the Park section abutting Trish and Neal Qualtroughs(42) later this year. We will notify keen Ivy pullers of the date.

We are very pleased with the stock at the Nursery at present. David, Pat and Cathy have planned and timed much more critically this summer and we have our plants at a peak just ready for the autumn plantings. The stock in the community hardening off section is also coming along beautifully and we are able to help members if they would like some stock. Please see Marg for community stock.

Both hardening off areas are close to being completed. We have mulch laid and this will become compost for next years potting mix. The City of Doncaster and Templestowe have provided large amounts of mulch from their depot and we are extremely grateful for the co-operation. In return we will be providing those rare plants which they need for revegetation works. We will work together this year also on the continuation of plantings along the river bank.

Bev Hanson has expressed concern at the deterioration of the lovely plantings behind the Community Centre. The back section was all grown by F.O.W.S.P. or Bimbadeen and we had several planting days to establish the indigenous garden. If there are any people living in the area who would like to join Friends of the Community Centre Garden would they contact Bev Hanson on 844 3906. (or a Fowspanian Committee

person.) This would be a very satisfying 'indigenous garden club' - all plants supplied!

We have several new groups forming at present. If you also are interested in leading or helping with a group in the section of Park closest to home we would love to hear from you. Several new sub-groups are in the developmental stages. Ron Taylor is having the first working bee for the F.O.Stane Brae with the Thursday afternoon group this week. We have F.O. the Hundred Steps in the 'planning'- linked to the Osborne Peninsula Landcare. The North river bank will then have continuous groups to take care, from Pigeon Bank Creek to the Bridge! Any other people interested?

Anna Richtarik had looked for a task suitable to her talents and we chose the upgrading of the plantings around the dam. Lots of work is going into this somewhat neglected planting. As she is fitting it between time at Uni you are likely to catch her there at all kinds of hours. Lots of problem weeds like couch grass will keep her very busy but Anna's dedication is extraordinary.

The opportunity to apply to go to courses run by Greening Australia is available to members. The lists, application forms etc. are all on the notice board at the Folly. Members are entitled to a substantial reduction in costs - something we had suggested to G.A.V. If you are prepared to give a lecture, hands on seminar or class or an article for the Newsletter F.O.W.S.P. will subsidise your expenses.

News from Gail Roche is very sad. Kevin Koala, who had been doing so well with the Roche family, developed pneumonia and died. We send very deep sympathy to all the Roches as Kevin was a beloved family member.

Any volunteers for the Festival will be able to do lots of things. We do need someone to look after the Billy-tea and damper. Please contact Marg B, Ron- float, or roster - Betty Oke 844 3763.



# WARNING! CAPER SPURGE, HANDLE WITH CARE.....



by Pat Coupar.

Recently, a group of about a dozen 'Friends of Warrandyte State Park, myself included, were involved in the removal of Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) from a small area of the Park at Pound Bend. At the time none of us were aware of the unpleasant consequences of handling this introduced weed.

*Euphorbia* is a large genus of mainly tropical plants including the popular and spectacular Poinsettia. In South-eastern Australia there are about fifteen species of the genus. The most common introduced species, certainly around the suburbs, is Petty Spurge (*E. peplus*). This small bright green herb pops up annually in gardens, between cracks of paths and alongside roadsides. Perhaps less familiar is Caper Spurge (*E. lathyris*), a larger plant with bluish-green sessile leaves.

An infestation of this spurge was first noticed at Pound Bend following a bushfire that swept through the area in February 1991. The plants were discovered growing in soft ground under a stand of Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) about 20 metres from the bank of the Yarra River. They covered an area of about 40 square metres.

The afternoon on which we pulled the weeds was hot, about 30 degrees Celsius, and many of the group were dressed in shorts and T-shirts. Gloves were available, but due to the heat, not everyone chose to wear them. The spurge pulled easily and was bundled into plastic bags. However, in the process of pulling and bagging some of the stems snapped releasing a milky white sap, called latex.

Although no adverse reactions were noticed at the time, by the next day everybody who had been exposed to the plant (i.e. those with bare arms and legs) reported some degree of skin irritation. This varied from mild itching and redness to raised wheals and painful blisters. The milder reactions seemed to occur on unbroken skin and the most severe, where the skin had been previously scratched. Two people suffered swelling and erythema (heat and redness) on the face and around the eyes. This reaction probably occurred as a result of unwittingly transferring some of the latex by hand onto the face. Most of these symptoms cleared up within a few days, but in a couple of cases the blisters were slow to heal.

I have subsequently learnt that the milky latex which oozes from the cut stems of *Euphorbias* is notorious for causing skin and eye problems. But it seems little work has been done to determine the active ingredient(s) of the latex. However, it is known that Caper Spurge (*E. lathyris*) does not lose its toxicity on drying or storage.

Incidentally, the indigenous Flat Spurge (*E. drummondii*) a prostrate annual, also contains a white sap. This was used by the Aborigines to treat snake bite and remove warts.

Fortunately none of the 'Friends' suffered any lasting effects from their encounter with the Caper Spurge (*E. lathyris*). And we have learnt from our experience. Next time long-sleeved shirts, trousers, and gloves will be the order of the day and hopefully when that day comes it will not be another 30 degree scorcher.

This article was originally written for the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association (I.F.F.A.) and will be published in the March edition of 'Indigenotes'.

## AN ADDITIONAL WORD FROM MIKE COUPAR.

Little, if any, research has been carried out to determine what substances are responsible for inducing the inflammatory actions of *Euphorbia lathyris* latex. However, experiments on other species have isolated a substance named *resiniferotoxin* which specifically stimulates nerve endings sensitive to pain and dilates blood vessels in the skin.

Recently Pat and I decided to collect some *E. lathyris* latex for experimentation. It took us just over an hour to obtain 4mls of the milky sap from the cut stems of the plant. This small amount which has since been frozen will be used to assess its pharmacological properties.



Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) in fruit.

# February Fascinating Facts From Flora.

## Enter the Hedonists.

### Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera

Crescent Honeyeater.

Gr. pyr, five  
pyrrhos, five coloured. (black, yellow, white, light and dark grey)  
pteron, wing.

The generic name was given by the French ornithologist, Lesson.

Gr. philos, loving  
hedone, pleasure.

I could not find written evidence of this bird's excessive hedonism, but Crescent Honeyeaters do cavort about catching insects in the air, which act, to we earth - bound creatures does appear one of gay abandon.

Other names - Chinawing and Egypt (referring to the call in which the emphasis is on the second syllable.) and Horse - shoe Honeyeater.

### Phylidonyris novae hollandiae

New Holland Honeyeater.

Former name for Australia. Also called Yellow - winged Honeyeater.

### Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris

Eastern Spinebill.

Gr. acantha, spine.  
rhynchos beak;

L. tenuis, slender  
rostrum, beak.

With this long, slender, spiny beak the Eastern Spinebill takes the nectar from tubular flowers.

Other names, Cobblers awl and Humming Bird.

### Dicaeum hirundinaceum

Mistletoe Bird

Gr. dicairon is the name of a small Indian bird. A well developed genus in the Indian region.

L. hirundo, swallow.

Also called Australian Flower - swallow and Australian Flower - pecker.

The gizzard of the Mistletoe bird has practically disappeared, so that the whole of the digestive system is an even duct enabling large quantities of Mistletoe fruit to pass quickly through. A bird can void the sticky seeds of berries it has eaten twenty - five minutes previously.

### Melithreptus brevirostris

Brown - headed Honeyeater.

Gr. meli, honey  
threptos, nourished

L. brevis, short  
rosrtum, bill.

Also called the Short - billed Honeyeater.

### Melithreptus lunatus.

White - naped Honeyeater.

L. lunatus, moon - shaped. (markings)

Also called Blackcap.

Flora Anderson.

## ALL THE WAY FROM W.A.

Hardly had the dust settled on his driveway than we received a letter from member Rod Safstrom. We could imagine him lying on a white sandy beach thumbing through old Fowspian newsletters. Rod had made a careful study of koalas from his house overlooking the depot at Pound Bend. He has now entrusted this task to Ron Taylor who has been testing the deck chairs since Rod departed.

Rod writes : "I have enjoyed reading about the koala count. Editor states that Koalas have been seen in Red Box, Manna Gums, and Yellow Box but not Long leaved Box. Well we know different! They camp in Red Box and Candlebark, often in Mistletoe. Mid-afternoon they take an aerial stroll via Yellow Box to the Long-leaved Box.- that poor tree is almost bare."

"We find koalas appear every 7-10 days and they have a circuit ,usually staying only one day - that makes it difficult to organise koala watching barbeques.

"One night there was terrible screaming as if murder was being wrought- but then we saw four koalas on the ground with other passions in mind."

We really feel quite privileged to observe the wonders of Nature from our front verandah"

Footnote Ed. It is strongly rumoured that Koalas only visit Bundys on Sundays.

## Committee Meeting Tues. March 29th 7.30pm. Depot.

*Themeda triandra*

# The Mystery Reporter.

Date 'ALL SAINTS DAY' 1993

Name Joy Barbara Hildebrand

Place 'The Depot'.

Joy arrived with news of a 'rescued' tree fern and the task of copying 'water watch' information for the Friends of the Wandering Brogil. The group had just received a grant of \$1200 from "Parks & Waterways" as well as \$400 from Eltham "Parks & Environment".

Joy is leader/catalyst for the group involved in the re-vegetating of Brogil Creek. (Brogil is Koori for parrot.)

Born in 1945 into a -----(see Joy for this one!) at Thornbury, her father said that she "was his joy" thus the name. Time Lapse.

Joy eventually married her music teacher and dear friend Greg - known to all as 'Hildebrand', her second and last (marriage). A singer of 'JUNGLIAN' folk songs, her particular passion is "songs that tell the same story as folk tales".... e.g. the Brothers Grimm, - archetypical. She plays guitar, five string banjo, auto-harp and "a few drums and things", and has "sung from the time I talked".

Joy went off home.

Interview continued. ....December 2nd. 1993.

A State Registered Nurse, Joy trained at the 'Royal Melbourne' and her most memorable moment was when the Beatles visited and drove past in a car. "I could have touched Paul if I'd reached out a little further".

Another memorable moment was when an old man who had been picked up in a park (dwelling there), and was admitted to hospital said to her "...your eyes are like pools of rich red gravy."

Which leads to-

VITAL STATISTICS.

Favourite colour - yellow

sound - "...silence, and second to that, bird sounds."

smell - mint bushes.

touch - Hildebrand's skin.

taste - Blue Heaven malted milk.

Hair - "...usually brown, was green once (well before punks were doing it!)".

Height - "Five feet seven, and no artificial appliances."

Weight - "...variable - usually too heavy."

Favourites -

Meal - Turkish food.

Drink - "...don't drink alcohol, its a terrible thing to do to grapes! I like grape juice.

Television - "Girls on Top."

Feature Films - "Scarlett Empress, The Ruling Class, Plan 9 from Outer Space."

Actor/Actress - "Marlene Dietrich, Peter O'Toole, anything that Robert Altman and Hertzog direct."

Books - "The Flashman Series -George - MacDonald - Fraser."

Play - "Whose Afraid of Virginia Wolf."

Opera - "Not into opera."

Poem - "Yesterday upon the stair

I met a man who wasn't there

He wasn't there again today

I wish that man would go away."

(Does it refer to the Mystery Reporter?)

Australian Animal - "possums."

insects - "jewel spiders and moths"

plant - "sundews"

Question - Children?

Answer - "My two girls, Shayna and Elise, and I've just had two grandchildren, a boy and a girl. And Annie and Joey.

Question - Siblings?

Answer - "Brother and sister, both were adults by the time I was born."

Question - Parents?

Answer - "Dad worked in the Post Master Generals Department. He liked to put together junk in the garage so that it would end up doing something useful." Mum was from New Zealand, had a little shop, women's clothes."

Joy drives a 'mini - moke', usually multi coloured, she has one cat called 'Piaf' (Lives in a special pen. Has been written about in many journals!)

Criminal Record - " nothing I've been caught for!"

Asides 1. "Hildebrand is my best friend.

2. Aliens are like fairies used to be. Their name has just changed that's all.

3. What pips me the most is people who say 'I wish those kangaroos wouldn't disturb my dog', or 'we moved here for the bush', and then they cut it down!

Anything you'd like to say? " Just that I feel privileged to be here today (to be presented in such an important publication)."

Finally, the rumour that Joy is assistant Treasurer of F.O.W.S.P. has been verified.

As promised, more clues to the identity of the Mystery Reporter.

1. Hates rhubarb and tripe.

2. Has never played golf.

3. Has camped at Wilsons Prom many times.

4. Sometimes wears glasses.

5. Has helped fight grassfires at

Warrandyte, bushfire at Kalorama and been at Gembrook when ten years old - only saved (some would wish not) by locals backburning when completely surrounded by fire. Also manned phones overnight at evacuation centre in Ferntree Gully - handling enquiries from overseas and locally about evacuees.



## Fern Spot

*Cyathea australis* Rough Tree-fern  
*Doodia caudata* Small Rasp-fern  
*Doodia media* Common Rasp-fern

## 7. Three rough ferns

by: Keith Vagg

**Rough Tree-fern *Cyathea australis*** - In Warrandyte, this fern is often seen growing in the same area as two others - Mother Shield-fern and Tender Brake. It is a rather slow growing fern, forming a trunk on which the dead fronds remain until they rot and fall away. The base of the frond (stipe) has rough spikes near where it joins the trunk. This is a particularly attractive fern and can grow to many metres high if undisturbed. Fronds are tripinnate and soft when new.

**Small Rasp-fern *Doodia caudata*** - Although this is a rasp-fern, the fronds are usually soft to touch. It prefers to grow in cool, humid places, such as beside small streams with a permanent water supply, where the light green fronds may be seen hanging down to the water. The shape of the pinnae change along the rhachis, and fertile and sterile fronds are markedly different. The sori often form a continuous band close to the midvein.

**Common Rasp-fern *Doodia media*** - The older fronds of this fern feel rough to the touch, while young fronds are soft with an attractive bronze colour and often, glandular hairs. This fern will grow in quite large colonies in moist conditions. Small plants may be confused with the Small Rasp-fern, however, once fertile fronds appear, they are similar in shape to the sterile ones. Sori are elongated.



*Doodia media*

a - fertile frond  
 b - sori - confluent in places & upto 4 rows near midrib

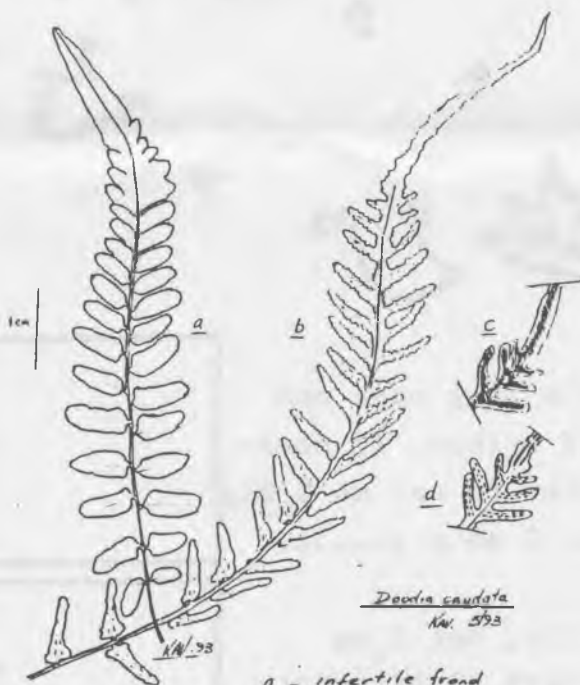
## Identifying ferns

Some of the features of a fern which establish its identity may not be present when you find a fern that you wish to identify, for example, sporangia may be absent in young fronds. Many ferns can be mistaken for other species if you attempt to identify a juvenile plant. However, there are usually other features which will help you identify it, such as the presence or absence of hairs on the frond (particularly the stipe), or the shape of the frond. The form of growth is also important; some ferns are tufted, whilst others spread by means of underground rhizomes.

Where sporangia are present, the way they are clustered and positioned on the underside of the frond often provides a clue as to the identity of the fern. Immature fronds can look quite different to those of a mature plant and this can be misleading.

Notes taken at the time will assist you in later identification of a fern, and if possible, a quick sketch of it. It is difficult to remember just what it looked like later on. The following points are useful to note along with the sketch:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Style (spreading/tufted)     | Size   |
| Sori (shape/colour/position) | Frond colour                                   |
| Rhachis divisions            | Scales on stipe                                |
| Hairs (fronds/rhachis)       | Dimorphism (sterile and fertile fronds differ) |
| Location                     |  |



*Doodia caudata*  
 Nov. 593

a - infertile frond  
 b - fertile frond  
 c - sori confluent (form 1)  
 d - sori broken (form 2)



*Cyathea australis*  
 Rough tree Fern

Fossicking Ross.....

# BIRDS.

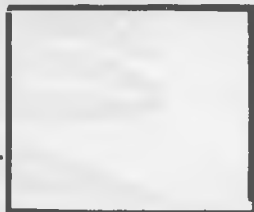
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R	G	B	E	R	K	I	N	A	A
E	L	I	B	I	S	E	B	R	B
N	E	R	O	B	I	N	I	R	U
D	U	D	O	G	U	L	L	I	R
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C	O	C	K	A	T	O	O	R	A

Write the remaining letters here.

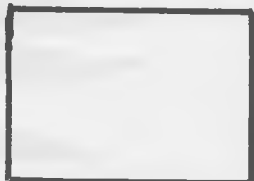
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|----------|-----------|-----------|
| OWLS     | ROBIN     | HARRIER   |
| IBIS     | KOOKABURA | EAGLE     |
| GULL     | COCKATOO  | SPOONBILL |
| PELICAN  | DUDO      | MAGPIE    |
| CHOOK    | HERON     | HEN       |
| LYREBIRD |           |           |

Who am I? Draw me.

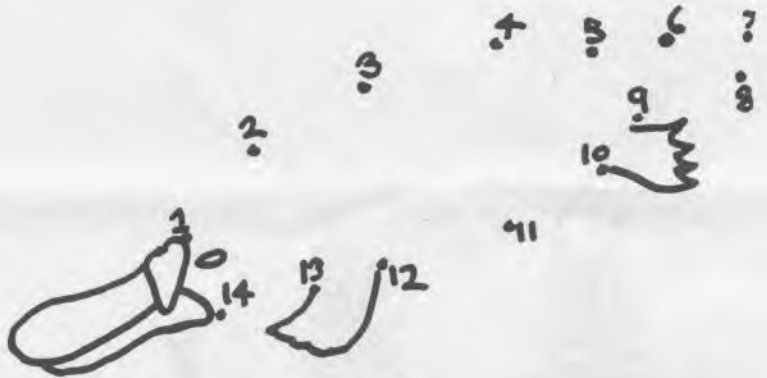
I am not a bear, but  
I am cuddly. I live in  
Gum trees and eat leaves.  
I am a K\_\_\_\_\_.



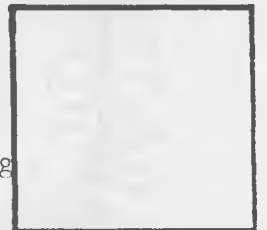
I am related to a Koala  
but I live in a burrow.  
I am a W\_\_\_\_\_.



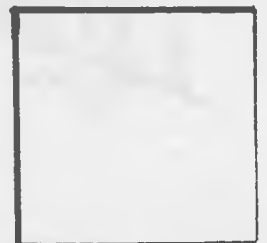
## JOIN THE DOTS & COLOR ME.



I have a long nose and  
lots of spikes. If some-  
one tries to eat me I dig  
a hole. I am a E\_\_\_\_\_.



I can fly, but I am  
not a bird. I have fur  
and I sleep in the  
winter. I'm a B\_\_\_.



# Warrandyte Festival Fun Walk

SATURDAY MARCH 19TH 8.30 AM

5 KILOMETRES

Registration: On the day from 8 am  
onwards.  
At Stiggants Reserve,  
Yarra St, Warrandyte.

Entry Fee: \$5 Adults  
\$1 Children

Prizes: All those who complete the  
course receive a certificate.  
Registration numbers double  
as a ticket for raffle prizes  
drawn at 10am

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