



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK INC.

June 1996 newsletter

EDITORIAL

The May issue of **The Warrandyte Diary** did not bring good news to our members. The front page article entitled '*State Park Staff Cut*' is an accurate account of the dwindling numbers of Rangers and Work Crew employed at the State Park Depot. The Committee have been worried by this deteriorating situation for some time. In fact it became serious enough to arrange meetings with local members Phil Honeywood and Lorraine Elliott and to inform the Minister in writing on the 22nd of March this year. In addition, we have telephoned the Department of Natural Resources & Environment's Area Manager of Parks and Reserves, and the Chief Ranger on several occasions. This culminated in a meeting on the 5th of May at which we specifically asked what the Department's plans are relating to the position of Ranger-in-Charge, numbers of Rangers and Park budget. Basically, there have been two protracted issues - the relocation of The Ranger-in-Charge, Matt Le Duc, to Woori Yallock without a replacement and a Department attempting to operate on dwindling funds.

FOWSP enjoyed a close and productive working relationship with the Ranger-in-Charge, Matt Le Duc during his time at Warrandyte. Matt set up the Flora Management Team consisting of

Rangers and 'Friends' and as a result has achieved major advances as far as identifying and managing rare and endangered plants in the Park (see 'Parkwatch', Dec 1995, April Newsletter). Matt is now a Wildlife Officer in the Division of Flora, Fauna & Fisheries. We wish him success and satisfaction in his new job and look forward to hearing about his work and hope that he will still find time to attend FOWSP activities where he will be most welcome.

We have been informed that a replacement RIC will be appointed in 2 to 4 months with the 'possibility' of another Ranger. This would bring the number of Rangers to 5, where it used to be 6 full time Rangers. However, we have made the point that Staffing levels should be increased when the promised Mt. Lofty and Scotchman's Hill are added to the Park.

However, news is not so satisfactory regarding the drastic reduction in Work Crew. We have been told that there are no plans to restore the number from 2 back to 6.

If any of our members feel they would like to write letters or pick up phones to keep the lines of communication with the Department open, please contact a member of Committee.

Mike Coupar

SUNDAY FAMILY ACTIVITY SHARE THE SECRETS OF STANE BRAE

Date: Sunday June 30th

Time: Following general meeting for a BBQ lunch 12.30pm - 3.30pm

Place: Proceed through the gate at the end of Stane Brae Crt and meet at the end of the track (Melways ref. map 24 C9)

Due to limited access, Stane Brae is one of the least known and least visited parts of WSP. However, 'Friends of Stane Brae' have been working tirelessly in this beautiful and relatively remote area for a couple of years. This is a chance to see their great achievements.

Following some easy planting in soft soil (no rabbit guarding), there will be a walk along the river track - this is a great place to see greenhood and bird orchids and if it has rained there will still be some late fungi.

Planting tools, gloves etc will be provided. Bring meat for BBQ lunch.

FOWSP THURSDAY P.M PROGRAM

Depart from Depot at 1.15pm (except for **July 4th & July 25th**)

or

Meet on site at 1.30pm (except for **July 4th & July 25th**)

June 20th Focus on Frogland

We pass it every time we drive into the depot. Now it's time to give our aquatic haven a little attention.

Leader Ron Taylor. Meet at the depot. (Melways ref map 23 C10)

June 27th Normans Reserve - a reservoir of rare plants

Blanket Leaf, Elderberry Panax, Wonga Vine and ferns - they are all here. Perhaps we will make some new discoveries while checking out the old ones.

Leaders Ranger David Van Bockel and Joan MacMahon. Meet at Normans Reserve car park at the end of Bradleys Lane. (Melways ref map 23 B12)

July 4th Timber Reserve Review MORNING ACTIVITY (10.am-12.30pm)

About a year ago FOWSP spent a morning planting inside a rabbit-proof fence where hundreds of Pittosporum had been eradicated. It's time to plant again and to hunt for orchids leaves.

Leader Pat Coupar. Meet at Timber Res. car park at the end of Webb St. (Melways ref. map35 G3)

July 11th River Walk - Jumping Ck to Black Flat

This is one of the most pleasant walks in the State Park particularly at this time of year when the Rock Correa and Common Heath are in full bloom. Car shuffle will be arranged on the day.

Leader Pat Coupar. Meet at Sandy Bay car park, Jumping Ck (Melways ref. map 23 K9)

July 18th Koala Walk - Pound Bend

It's time to count Warrandyte's koalas again. Ranger Brian Phefley will lead the walk give us an update on the numbers and health of these special marsupials.

Leader Brian Phefley. Meet at the depot Pound Bend. (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

July 25th Visit the Traill's MORNING ACTIVITY (10.am-12.30pm)

Al and Carol Traill have kindly offered to show us round their property at Wonga Park. Come and see the fantastic wetland Al has created as well as some locally rare and endangered plants. Soup will be provided.

Leader Al & Carol Traill. Meet at 'Narr-meian', Freyne St Wonga Park (Melways ref. map 36 D3)



LIBRARY RELOCATION UPDATE



At the May committee meeting we decided to shelve the library debate - at least for the near future. There are two main reasons for this:

- 1) **The cost.** Now we are paying to print the newsletter we will have to be very careful with inessential expenditure.
- 2) **The lack of response from members.** Obviously very few of you feel strongly about this issue. For those who do I can report that more members who responded were in favour of relocation, but a few were strongly against the idea.

Report by Cathy Willis

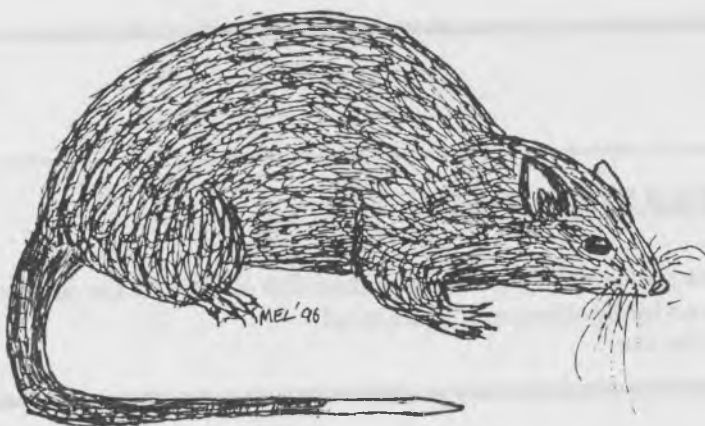
Help change the image of *Rakali*, our native Australian Water Rat.

Now that we have an Australian television show called 'Water Rats' the real Australian Water Rats have yet another 'image' problem. If we change the way we talk about them, we can help improve their 'image', aid understanding, and help protect and conserve them.

The Australian Water Rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) (hydro- mys = water mouse and kris'-oh-gas'-ter = golden-bellied) is also commonly known as a Beaver Rat. I have found that if I talk about them using this alternate name and running the two words together with the emphasis on the first syllable, and by adding the preposition native, more interest is created, ie. 'Native Beaverat'.

However, when common names were handed out, our predominantly anglo-european society used common names to describe our animals as parallels with European and North American animals. A recent report by CSIRO / ANCA has proposed that we adopt new common names for many of our native animals, particularly those such as our rodents that have a poor public image such as Water Rat, Rabbit-rat, False Water Rat and Rock-rat. (Refer: 'Australian Names for Australian Rodents', Australian Nature Conservation Agency in association with CSIRO. Canberra 1995)

The proposed new common name for the Australian Water Rat is **Rakali**, an aboriginal name from the Murray River (SA) linguistic group. Fifty-five different aboriginal names from around Australia were identified for this animal and considered, alongside other names for other animals before Rakali was recommended. Perhaps in the Yarra River area, the animal's Wurrundjeri name would be more appropriate, but we do not know this name.



Apart from the platypus, Rakali is our only other widespread non-marine aquatic mammal. As Rakali is aquatic and 'otter-like', it has broad partially webbed hind feet and a beautiful water proof coat. It has a distinctive thick black white-tipped tail and a broad nose. Its dense, soft, lustrous pelage was its undoing, particularly during the 1930s depression when its commercial exploitation as a fur-bearer seriously depleted its population, especially around Melbourne and other large centres.

Its colouring is not dissimilar to some common possums: its golden belly is like some brush tailed possums, and it has a white-tipped tail similar to that of ringtail possums.

Rakali lives in creeks, rivers, wetlands and along rocky sea shores. It is not entirely nocturnal and can often be seen foraging during the day time. I have seen them recently during the day at St. Kilda Breakwater; at the wetlands beside Gardiner's Creek near Hedgley Dene; and in the Mullum Mullum Creek Ringwood. Rakali eats large aquatic insects, crustaceans, fishes and even small mammals, and often carries its prey to a regularly used feeding site. Many of its habitat requirements are similar to the platypus. If you are lucky enough to see one with a big fish, you would appreciate its behaviour similarities with a European Otter.

Because it is aquatic, it usually does not travel far from water, and so it is not a pest in backyards. Quite the contrary it will eat fresh carrion and so help clean up the creeks. In turn it forms a part of the food cycle for birds of prey, and it's young can also be preyed upon by snakes and large fish.

So talk about Rakali to your friends, look out for Rakali in your local stream, do your part in helping to keep our creeks clean, keep your dog under control, and help to create more interest in conserving this beautiful Australian animal.

Ken McInnes
Friends of Mullum Mullum Valley

A WHOLE CREEK TO PLAY WITH

On Sunday 26th of May around a dozen adults and half as many kids got together to do some planting along the banks of Stony Creek. "Friends of Stony Creek" are one of FOWSP's newer sub-groups, we meet on an irregular basis to work at weeding and re-vegetation.

Last year Mark Gardener organized two LEAP (Landcare, Environment Action Program) teams to come and spend some time around the creek. They monitored the water quality of Stony Creek, constructed a fish ladder in the CFA dam (so that fish can move freely up and down the creek, rather than being restricted to either side of the dam) and chewed away at the endless task of weeding, weeding, weeding that Stony Creek needs. Where tangled masses of honeysuckle and ivy were removed, carpet underlay was put down to stop further weed infestation and soil erosion.

Some people didn't like the carpet underlay, and it's true that when it was newly put down, it did look ugly. But it's amazing what time and a few fallen leaves can do - now the carpet underlay is exactly dirt coloured.

At our working bee we concentrated on these areas that had been weeded, planting into the carpet underlay. And lo and behold, another example of Forest's Hound Tongue (*Cynoglossum latifolium*) was discovered! This timid, unprepossessing little creeper is the emblem of our group. At one of our working bees last year, a Forest's Hound Tongue was discovered growing by the broken bridge over Stony Creek. There was great excitement because David Cameron said he'd **never** seen such a plant in Warrandyte, **ever**. In fact, there was so much excitement that the poor little Forest's Hound Tongue was nearly mistaken for a forget-me-not and rudely ripped from the ground. But at our working bee in May, all brains were as sharp as razors and we instantly recognized the weak-stemmed prickly perennial for what it was.

Now, some thanks. The FOWSP nursery team have raised 1000 plants for the purpose of revegetating Stony Creek. As always, the plants are beautiful. Thank you, to the team down there who put in all those hours. Melbourne Water, in response to an application put in by our group, came forward with a grant of \$800 to pay for those plants. Thank you, Melbourne Water. Also, when I let it slip to Cathy Willis that we hadn't actually organized tree guards for the plants, she threatened to do such unmentionable things to me that I ran, quaking, back to Melbourne Water and asked if they could possibly supply us with 1000 tree guards. They said yes. So thank you again, Melbourne Water.

And thank you to the members of our group who do come down to the creek on the occasional Sunday afternoon to toil away. It's cold down there, and muddy, and there are lots of bunyips. But as Helene Paizes, a group member once said, "Isn't this fun? A whole creek to play with."

Report by Fia Clendinnen

THANKS from ANNA

Anna Richtarik, sub-group leader of 'Friends of Endeavour Bank', would like to thank those enthusiastic Fowspians who planted over 250 trees, shrubs and ground covers in less than one hour at a recent Thursday afternoon working bee. The work was completed so quickly that there was plenty of time for a leisurely stroll around the old orchard including the sighting of the rare Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) on a steep escarpment on the opposite side of the river. Once again it shows the value of planting into a weed-free, mulched area inside a rabbit-proof fence.

FASCINATING FACT

Australia has over 1,000 different plants that are pollinated by birds, more than 600 of these occur in south-western Australia. Europe, by comparison, has no bird-pollinated flowers at all.

Source: *Australia Nature, Winter 1996 Land of Nectar* by Tim Low

NEWS From AROUND The STATE

The Gippsland Lakes are promoted as The Victorian Riviera - sun, sea and sand. However on my last visit to Metung in late April the weather was miserable and I had plenty of time to read the papers. The three locals (East Gippsland News, Lakes Post and Bairnsdale Advertiser) all contained articles relating to the environment. This started me thinking that it might be interesting to FOWSPians to hear some news of what is happening in conservation in this area of the state.

European Carp are a big problem in the rivers. The Tambo/Nicholson Water Board is working with landholders to try to deal with the infestation. Metung Yacht Club's newsletter reported that Carp are now also adjusting to the salt water in the lakes. In the two most inland lakes they are reported to be the most common fish, and are moving into the saltier lakes.

Still on the lakes, a public meeting resulted in the formation of "Friends of North Arm". North Arm is a severely degraded backwater at Lakes Entrance, these new Friends will have their work cut out battling with issues such as water quality and aquatic weeds.

Land For Wildlife and Landcare Group signs seem to increase in the area every time I visit. Its really encouraging to see their plantings becoming established and to realise that there are now a large network of people committed to rehabilitating their land and conserving the remnant vegetation.

Several years ago there was a big community tree planting around the Metung foreshore. Many of the plants didn't make it due to exposure and trampling but there are now good stands of Banksias, Casuarinas and Wattles along the shores.

Friends of Nyrimerlang Park (a magnificent old DNR&E owned homestead) and Bairnsdale SGAP are working with staff to construct and plant an East Gippsland flora garden. This will contain over 400 species and have areas of alpine, heathland, rainforest etc. vegetation. It is a huge project and should be well worth a visit in a few Years time.

At Lakes Entrance DNR&E is spending a large sum on landscaping and replanting the lake foreshore. Lakes Entrance has always struck me as an ugly town in a beautiful setting. Already these works are making it a more pleasant place to visit. Unfortunately there is no evidence of money being spent on the rampant weed invasions between the lake and ocean.

Overall there are lots of positive signs of a growing awareness of the need to look after this special environment. Perhaps some FOWSPians from other areas could fill us in on developments close to you?

Report by Cathy Willis

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

On June 6th the FOWSP Committee of Management resolved to give notice of a general meeting.

Date: Sunday June 30th

Time: 11.00am (Note: Stane Brae Family Sunday Activity will follow the meeting)

Place: The Folly, Pound Bend Depot (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

AGENDA

- 1) Amendments to the constitution to incorporate changes suggested at the 1995 AGM.
- 2) WSP Staffing update
- 3) Any other business

TREES IN THE GROUND (FOWSP family day)

About 600 trees, shrubs, grasses and ground covers went in the ground at Pound Bend on Sunday May 26th. Planting was easy in the soft silty soil, the only hazard was the danger of slipping backwards on the mud into the icy cold, fast-flowing water of the Yarra River. No one did, but some came close!

The planting was carried out inside a large rabbit exclusion fence constructed last year near the high profile Pound Bend tunnel. Over the years this area had become very degraded and was riddled with some of Warrandyte's worst weeds, namely Wandering Jew, Onion Weed and Bridal Creeper, but following an intensive weed eradication program much of the site is now weed-free and ready for planting.

The morning finished with a barbeque on the grassy picnic area under the magnificent Manna Gums - a lovely setting. Many thanks to Neal Tessier for organising the mornings activity and to Betty for making the wonderful trifle which was shared around. Thanks also to Ranger David Van Bockel for his advice on the planting and for assistance with plants, tools, BBQ etc.

BITS AND PIECES - Part one

1 JOY AND HILDEBRAND : Two of our longest-standing members are leaving Melbourne on the 29th of July for a new life in the western district. Greg and Joy are moving to Minhamite (halfway between Hamilton and Warrnambool), where they've bought the lovely old white one-roomed red-roofed school house and nearby headmaster's residence . What an amazing change! Instead of negotiating the steep slopes of Warrandyte, the Hildebrands will have the pleasure of **cycling** about on the **flat** basalt plains with its totally different original vegetation .As well as getting to know the local folk, Joy is looking forward to learning about the indigenous plants of the region (after 150 years of grazing there's not much left). Apparently there is a precious remnant only a mile and a half away on an old railway line. Their 5 acre block is in for a pleasant surprise over the next few years as Joy works at clothing it in it's original covering.

2) RAISING THE ROOF :Our shade house is now a much more pleasant and safe environment to work in. Don Cameron and his team have cleverly lifted the whole roof by about 30cm. Colin Bromley (our remaining Construction and Maintenance worker, Craig having recently left) has also contributed to the project. Over the last 6 -8 months the whole of the propagating area has been wonderfully renovated and it's a really pleasant environment (better than some commercial nurseries !). Thank you to everybody concerned.

3) CONGRATULATIONS :To David and Bronwyn van Bockel - who now are the happy parents of a little baby girl whom they've named Talia.

4) ACTING HEAD RANGER : As a result of the loss of Mat, our Ranger-in-Charge, there has been (to say the least!) something of a hiatus. At the moment one of our longest serving Warrandyte staff members, Ranger Steven Anderson, is acting in the position. Silly question I know, but is anyone acting in Steven's position?

5) OUR SECRETARY STEPPING DOWN : Kym has decided to hand over her job to Cathy as she has something far more important to occupy her time. She and partner Brad Reid are expecting a youngster in August!



INTIMATE ASSOCIATIONS



with Pat and Mike Coupar

Slide Night on Butterflies, Moths, the Caterpillars, their Food Plants and Habitat

We arrived later than most of the others and put our potatoes in the ashes, finishing the rest of our dinner before the potatoes were cooked, even though we talked our heads off and fitted a lot of good socialising in too. So we had to build up the fire because the show was starting and we took the potatoes out so they wouldn't burn.....

The lights were dimmed, the slides were started, metre long native Lepidoptera (scaly-wing insects) flitted in the Folly in amazing clarity and colour, the Coupars' narration relating with love and experience their life stories to us.

We heard details of animal! sexuality, (Painted Acacia /Tussock Moth) males sporting a huge hairy pair of pheromone receptors (antennae) to aid the seduction of the roundly cherubescue, flightless female.

On metamorphosis and pupation I remembered my wonder finding a translucent golden chrysalis suspended in wallaby grass and meeting the emergent orange Xenica before it flew away.

The specific food plants (grasses, sedges, herbs, shrubs and trees) required to sustain the healthy appetites of caterpillars especially, and the winged stages (flower nectars) were illuminated by superb photography and narration with attention to detail and highlighting of natural beauty.

Some of these insects (Australia-wide: 380 butterflies and 20,000 moths) remain abundant and secure in our changed modern world, they will eat weed species as well as indigenous vegetation or have more flexible habitat requirements, but some don't eg. Eltham Copper Butterfly only lives in Eltham (and a couple of other places) in tiny reserves (a significant achievement) amongst the houses. This species has an imperative association with specific ants and is particular about its diet but the reasons for its disjunction and scarcity is unknown- typical of our association with the insects - the Coupars are going some way to redress this.

Pick up a copy of the book *Flying Colours* by P&M Coupar from FOWSP or the market stall.

Report by Ant Owen

BITS AND PIECES - Part two

6) **HELP FROM THE LEAP TEAM** : June 6th turned into a lovely sunny day and encouraged a large turnout at Cathy's monthly Koornong activity A group of about eight "LEAPERS" came to assist (LEAP stands for Landcare and Environment Action Program). After dividing into small groups we headed across the hillside opposite Periwinkle Mound on the hunt for Smilax, Cotoneaster and Pittosporum. Most of us had to be content with digging and pulling, of which there was a moderate amount to be done. Cathy and Pat attacked the large Pittosporums with the drill and fill apparatus, having to leave some for another day. Wouldn't it be **marvellous** if all the residents of Warrandyte were inspired to remove Cotoneaster and Pittosporum from their own gardens-**then** we could see an end to this ongoing battle! We finished near the old school site and ambled back along the track at the top of the ridge, taking a short detour to look at one of our rarer wattles, Acacia ulicifolia (Juniper Wattle). It has short spiky "leaves" and grows in an open straggly fashion to about a metre in height and width. For an unknown (to humans) reason all the plants have fungal galls growing on them. Our final activity was deciding who was having tea and who preferred coffee!

MOUNT LOFTY VISIT

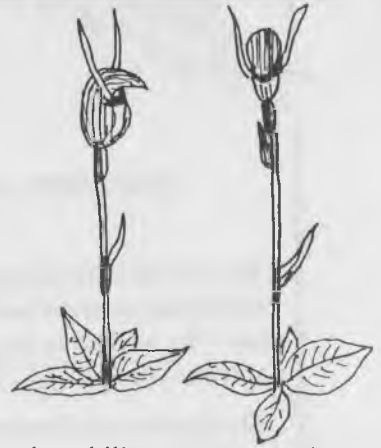
The visit, on Thursday May 23rd, to one of Warrandyte's promised new Parks attracted around 20 Fowspians. The location was Mount Lofty at Wonga Park, one of two areas that the Coalition promised (prior to the election) would be incorporated into the Warrandyte State Park if they won office.

The walk was led by Flora Anderson who filled us in on the latest developments according to Lorraine Elliott, the local member of Parliament. It seems that Mt Lofty is to be purchased by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, but first must be valued and no one is prepared to say how long that may take. Meanwhile we keep the champagne on ice.

Our first stop was the wetland. Although there were obvious signs that rabbits were inside the fence, grazing damage was mostly confined to the Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*) bushes. The sedges (*Carex appressa*) and Paperbarks (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) that has been planted by the 'Friends' about a year ago, had grown well and now formed a dense barrier between the swamp and the advancing weeds. Water ribbons, Millfoil and other aquatic and semi-aquatic plants were flourishing. Also doing well were several Flecked Flat-sedges (*Cyperus gunnii*), a rare regionally vulnerable species, planted in the swamp as part of the Parks species enrichment program.

As we left the wetland Flora explained that the walk would be in the form of a circuit taking about two hours to complete and that people could 'bail out' at any time. "We go this way" she said, pointing to a near vertical grassy slope. She cheerfully assured us that this would be the only steep track on the walk - a statement that later proved to be slightly inaccurate! However, from the top the view was superb taking in the river flats to the east across the old meanders, now filled with water, to the mountains of the Great Dividing Range on the horizon. Looking in the other direction it was just as spectacular with views of the densely forested escarpment of the Warrandyte Gorge.

Trim Greenhood
(*Pterostylis concinna*)



Following a ridgeline downhill we came to the confluence of Brushy Creek and the Yarra River opposite Wittons Reserve. Then at last a flat track which followed the winding river back upstream. Along the way our orchid-spotting whizz found dozens of sun orchid (*Thelymitre sp*) leaves scattered in patches close to the Burgan, and then came the highlight - a dense colony of Trim Greenhood (*Pterostylis concinna*) leaves and flower buds close to the track. Estimated number of individuals - several hundreds. This particular orchid had not been seen in WSP for many years until a small group was found at Pound Bend last year. This new occurrence now more than doubles the population, and together with the sun orchids makes it even more important that Mt Lofty be incorporated into the Park.

There was a further climb up the hill, where once again we admired the view. But as we watched the bulldozers in action on the land to the east of Homestead Rd our hearts sank. For this floodplain, together with land on the opposite side of the river is the site where the huge Heritage & Country Club complex is to be built. Work on the land, it seemed, had already begun even though the requested management plan had not at that time been lodged with the Yarra Ranges Shire.

We returned to our cars somewhat weary, but nevertheless having been given a taste for Mt Lofty. One that I'm sure will have most of us coming back for more.

Report by Pat Coupar

NATIONAL PARKS.

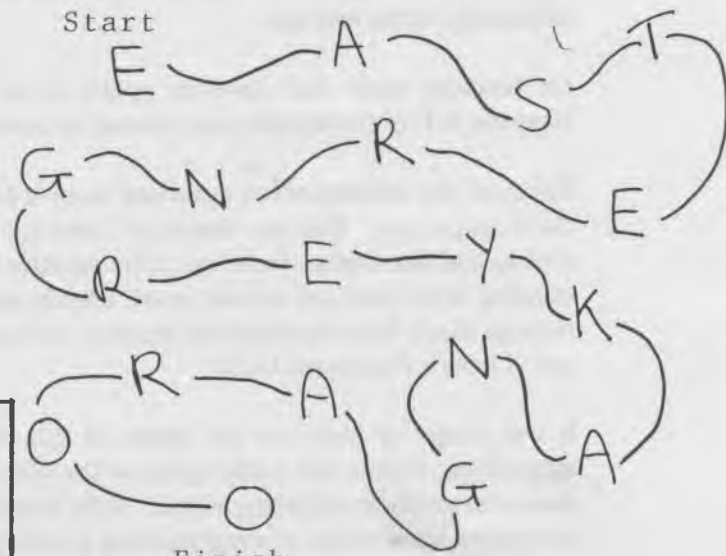
JOIN THE DOTS.

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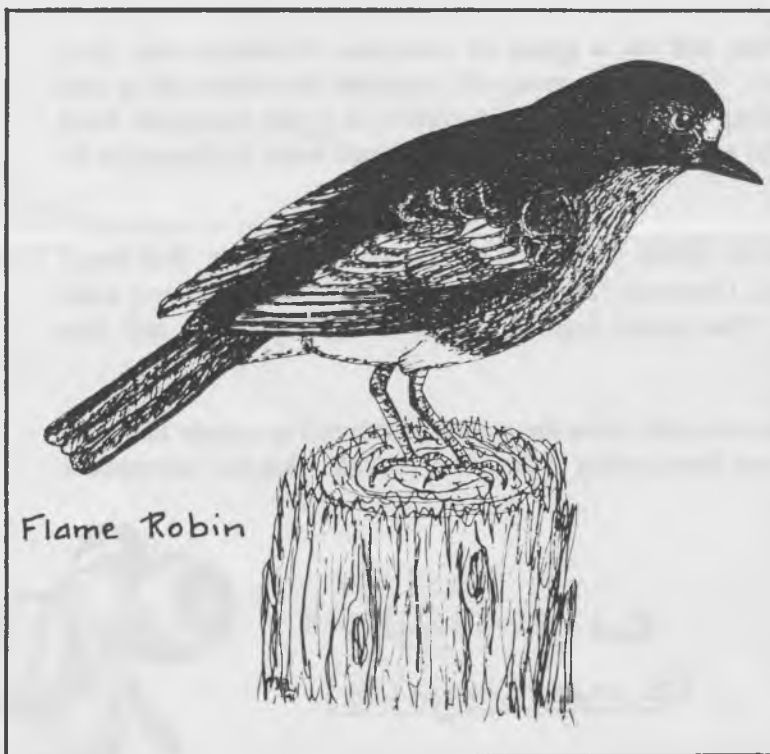
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| GRAMPIANS | WYPERFIELD | DAINTREE |
| ALPINE | SNOWY RIVER | ROYAL |
| KOSCIOSKO | HATTAH | STURT |

Write the remaining letters here;



Flame Robin

FOWSP ON LOCATION

(A Bird Observers Outing from Echuca)

On May 11th I joined a group of bird observers at the Echuca railway station where Keith Stockwell, the Echuca BOC president, was staggered at the number of people who had come to a combined Echuca/Melbourne outing. At his suggestion we pooled transport, but it was still a long convoy that finally set out.

Our first stop was Horseshoe Lagoon Bicentennial Park Moama which has extensive board-walks as well as a circuit through remnant bushland. We travelled north along Pericoota Road making several stops to observe birds and remnant roadside bush. After travelling on along dusty roads we came to a property called 'Womboo' at Womboota West. This was the home of the Ferguson family where we lunched on the banks of a beautiful little dam set in front of the family home and watched various small birds making good use of the water.

Joan Ferguson gave a talk on the local Landcare group which is involved in revegetation on local farms and in particular the planting of saltbush on badly salinated land, and as a pasture plant for sheep raising. We broke up into groups to walk about the property and saw corridors of trees, planted between paddocks, which are providing food and shelter for small birds such as Zebra Finches, Thornbills, Restless Flycatchers and others. We were shown the tree planting machines being used by the group. These machines dig the holes and water the plants as they are dropped in by two people seated very low at the rear of the machine. We finished the day with a visit to Green Gully, a badly salinated area where the landholder has planted saltbush in the gully and various trees and shrubs, including our old friend Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*), on the hillsides.

On Saturday night Ken Simpson spoke to the group on the long involved and difficult history of the Simpson & Day Field Guide and showed an assortment of slides taken along the Murray River.

The next day we assembled again and were led to another farm, the home of Dr Kate and 'Tim' Moffat in the Koyuga area. Tim has created a 'Land for Wildlife' swamp. He pumps irrigation water in to fill the swamp and then pumps from this to his pastures when needed. The swamp is large and contains many large standing dead trees and several small islands and is a veritable refuge for water birds. As we approached through Black Box woodland the 'birdoes' put up their telescopes; there were cries of "Red-kneed Dotteral" and "I have a Pink-eared Duck".

It was magic to stand on the banks of this dam and see a group of Australian Shelducks rise, do a magnificent flypast and settle again on the water. Then hear a group of Australian Shovellers fly in with their characteristic whistling sound. After thanking Tim profusely we travelled on to the Kunagella flood alleviation basin which is a regenerating grassland with sparse trees into which flood water is channelled by the placement of levees around nearby farmland.

The bird highlights for this bird observer were: Zebra Finches, Grey-crowned Babblers, Red-kneed Dotterals, Yellow Rosellas, a Red-capped Robin, Diamond Firetails, the aforementioned ducks and three Budgerigars in a tree on Tim Moffats farm. The people highlights were: Andy's patience and Ken Simpson's eagle eye.

I drove home thinking that it's not the politicians who will solve the worlds problems but people like Joan Ferguson and Tim Moffat and their like who are out there putting in the effort provided that the Government provides the wherewithal.

Report by Olive Walters

Red Stringybark
(*E. macrorhyncha*)



Dates for your Diary

JUNE

Thurs 20th Focus on Frogland (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Ron Taylor* 9844 4285

Wed 26th Koornong sub-group
Contact: *Cathy Willis* 984 1841

Thurs 27th Normans Reserve - a reservoir of rare plants (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Joan MacMahon* 9844 3213

Sun 30th General Meeting (see notice this newsletter)
Family Activity Share the Secrets of Stane Brae (see ad. this newsletter)
Contact: *Cecilia Le Duc* 9722 1926

Thurs 11th River Walk (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Pat Coupar* 9844 1650

Wed 17th Koornong sub-group
Contact: *Cathy Willis* 9844 1841

Thurs 18th Koala Walk (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Ranger Brian Phefley* 9844 2659

Thurs 25th Visit to the Traill's (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Al Traill* 9722 1518

AUGUST

Sat 3rd Warrandyte Market
Contact: *Betty Oke* 9844 3763

Sun 4th Plenty Gorge Trip (see ad. this newsletter)
Contact: *Cecilia Le Duc* 9722 1926

JULY

Thurs 4th Timber Reserve Review (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Pat Coupar* 9844 1650

Sat 6th Warrandyte Market
Contact: *Betty Oke* 9844 3763

Any sub-group or individual who would like to advertise an environmental activity in this newsletter please ring Pat Coupar on 9844 1650



Eurasian Coot

PLEASE NOTE

Newsletters from other environmental and 'Friends' groups will be kept in the Folly in a blue plastic box for a couple of months before being filed away. FOWSP are welcome to look through these or borrow them at any time.

COMING SOON

A visit to the Plenty Gorge has been organised for Sunday August 4th. Ranger Stuart Judd will show us around the wetlands and orchid 'hot spots'. BBQ lunch. More details in next newsletter.



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