

April 2005

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

Out with the Old, In with the New

By Pat Coupar

Over the years, at various times, rumours have circulated about the closure of the Warrandyte State Park depot located at Pound Bend. One of the suggestions was that the Warrandyte rangers would relocate to the works centre at Westerfolds Park, Templestowe and that the Friends-run nursery would be closed.

How close these rumours came to being a reality we shall never know. We do know, however, that there was strong opposition to the closure of the depot from FOWSP and from the local community.

Now it seems we can breathe a sigh of relief as a new rangers office is under construction at Pound Bend. Crunch time came when asbestos was found in the walls of the old building that was once used as an apple packing shed.

The new office is being constructed by nine 3rd and 4th year carpentry apprentices from the Homes Glen TAFE, under the guidance of an instructor.

The site chosen is opposite the old office on the high side of the hill overlooking the steeply wooded south-facing slopes of Pound Bend.

If all goes according to plan the building should be finished around the middle of the year. The new building will contain a general office, kitchen and meeting room which will be available to FOWSP for our committee meetings.

Once the new building is completed, the old asbestos-riddled office will be demolished. During this time the nursery will be closed.



The Old



The New

Bush Backyard

Contributions this month from *Alwynne Buntine, Steven Katsineris and Pat Coupar*

Another Reptile Tale

By *Alwynne Buntine*

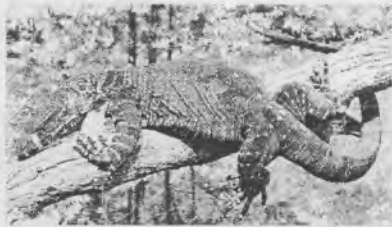
A few weeks ago while visiting my property in South Gippsland, I had a wonderful encounter with a lace monitor.

I had just finished mowing the grass and gone inside to have my lunch. As I was preparing a sandwich I heard what I thought was a rabbit squeal. I went to investigate and to my delight, behind a small hedge I came across this magnificent (approximately one and a half metres in length) lace monitor who had caught a small ginger rabbit. Hence the noise!

Unfortunately, whether due to my disturbing them or whatever, the rabbit escaped into a clump of bushes. The goanna started to pursue it but saw me. It stopped and pretended it was a piece of dead tree branch keeping perfectly still. After a little time it gave up the idea of rabbit for lunch and turning around lumbered its way back down the hill to the fern gully.

I think I may have the answer to another mystery from down there - the reason three clutches of wood duck (maned goose) eggs were eaten earlier in the season. I had blamed the foxes or my neighbours dog.

I was able to identify the monitor by the wide yellow and black stripes around its tail, near the end. I have a pair of them in my fern gully and



have seen them at a distance before, but this is the first time I've had such a good look at one of them.

I hope for a repeat encounter.

A Myna Problem.

By *Steven Katsineris*

Indian Mynas visit our garden in pairs and in flocks. We do what we can to discourage them, with netting over the vegetable garden, not leaving out pet food or bins, chasing them away, planted bushes that attract native birds, as well as other



measures. Their main target is the chicken coop when we have it open for our chickens to free range in part of the yard. I have noticed that when the chickens see the Indian Mynas enter the chicken coop one or two of them will run after them and the Mynas will fly away. Yet when one of the pair of Spotted Turtle Doves that frequent the yard go into the chicken Coop the chickens do not trouble them. The Mynas also hang around an open area of the yard where the children play. Among the native birds that visit our garden are Magpies, including a pair that virtually lives in and around the yard, including nesting here. Whenever the Magpies see the Mynas are around in their territory they swoop at them and drive them away. The Magpies don't attack the other native birds that visit the yard and they have never bothered our family. One of the best ways to displace the Indian Myna clearly is to plant more indigenous flora and encourage more native birds, like Magpies to our gardens.

Autumn Sunshine

By *Pat Coupar*

While camping in the Avon Wilderness area north of Maffra, this Easter, I saw the most dramatic display of Sunshine Wattles (*Acacia terminalis*) I have ever seen. The understorey



Bushbackyard Contd.

was absolutely aglow with their prolific pale yellow flowers.

One of the few autumn-flowering wattles, Sunshine Wattle is a small to medium shrub with bipinnate leaves – like our Black and Silver Wattles.

It is a dominant understorey shrub of the dry, shallow soils of this rocky Gippsland terrain, but rarely exceeds one metre in height. However, shrubs grow very close together in places, giving the impression of quite a dense understorey.

Apart from an isolated occurrence at Airey's Inlet, Sunshine Wattle is confined to the east of the State.

More Snippets Please

Keep contributions coming. Don't forget snippets can be about anything of interest in the environment and do not necessarily have to be about Warrandyte.

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au

Picnic at Kato Pyrgos and the Large Whip Snake

By Steven Katsineris

While traveling in Cyprus in 1994, we took a drive from Polis, where we were staying, up the north coast of Cyprus to the village of Kato Pyrgos. After driving and sightseeing for a few hours we stopped not far from Kato Pyrgos at a lovely beach and deserted house beside the road, under the shade of some old, large grape vines to have a picnic lunch.

We all walked on the beach and then the children and I played on and among the grape vines while Laurie set up lunch.

After sitting, eating and drinking for a little time, Sian started yelling, "Snake! Snake!" and pointing upwards in the air. Laurie, Chione and I looked up in the direction where Sian was gesturing, but we could see nothing. Still Sian persisted, until eventually I looked up and across the road, to an abandoned house and there climbing up the side of the house was a very large bright black snake, it stretched from the bottom to the top of the wall of the house.

Coming from Tasmania and having camped and bushwalked in its wild areas, I am quite used to seeing a lot of big snakes, like Tiger Snakes. But this snake was enormous, the longest snake I had ever seen. We all sat there captivated and watched as it disappeared into the roof of the house and wondered if it was a dangerous species. Its size certainly looked frightening.

Later I asked some Cypriots and also read some information about this snake and found out that the Large Whip Snake, also known as the Black Adder, grows up to three metres long and is the longest snake in Cyprus and in Europe. It is fairly common, not poisonous, but

will bite if attacked and is a relatively harmless species. In defence, it coils itself into a spiral, twisting, lunging and hissing loudly. It is also noted for its swift movements. It is yellow-brown in colour for the first three years of its life and then it turns black.

The Large Whip Snake lives in dry, open places, meadows, rocky-river banks, stony slopes, fields and swamps; it can also be found in gardens, vineyards, cemeteries and abandoned buildings. Feeds on rodents, birds, chicks, lizards and sometimes even on smaller snakes. A female lays 7-11 eggs. They hibernate in winter and are less active in summer to escape the heat. This species is very useful in agricultural pest control, mostly consuming crop-harming mice and rats. It is found throughout Cyprus, but is mainly found in the Macchia and Phrygana areas.

As we found out, looks can be deceptive, despite its fearsome size; the Large Whip Snake is not dangerous and serves a valuable role in the environment, keeping down rodent numbers. Like all animals, the Large Whip Snake has a special place in the ecological cycle of Cyprus and is basically harmless to humans. Without exception they only attack to defend themselves from attack or when trodden on. They deserve to be in this world and should be respected and left alone.

* Laurie is my wife, Sian and Chione are our daughters (they were aged 3 and 1 then).



Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

The Koala from the Otway Ranges is still here and doing well. She should be going home soon, when her medication is finished. Zoe, as the little one has been named, is looking a lot better and not drinking as much water as she was. A friend of ours was here the other night and Zoe started calling, our friend was quite alarmed by the noise, as he had never heard a Koala call. On another night I was out with her while she was calling and she was getting a response from Yarra Brae Farm area, but as yet nobody has arrived.

On the 6th of March I was called to Templestowe to rescue a Koala which was sitting on the ground, he was bleeding a little from the mouth. It was an easy rescue as the



Koala was still on the ground when I arrived, and he made little attempt to get away. He was a big koala but he was very thin, he weighed 10.7 kg, he was quite an old boy and he had a broken shoulder. This was going to be a painful recovery and release would not be easy for an animal who had probably been a breeding male. With the problems the koala had, the two vets, two vet students a vet nurse and myself all decided the kindest thing to do for this boy was to put him down.

Another Koala death in Warrandyte was reported to me this month. In addition, an Echidna was hit by a car on Jumping Creek Road. A vet check found it has nose injuries and a bruised foot. The Echidna has since been passed on to a Boronia Shelter. Sari has a lot of knowledge about Echidnas and has the correct housing for these animals.

Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

The attendance at the Thursday weekly propagation mornings is excellent with a mixture of regulars, new members and old members coming for the first time. While propagation and sales is the main focus of the morning, not everyone wants to stand (or sit) around the tables and prick out seedlings. Some people are interested in other tasks.

In the past we have had activities in the Park and northern reserves organized by rangers. This has mostly been planting for revegetation or species enrichment. We would like to trial a new Thursday group with activities concentrated on four selected locations around the Park. These are: **Pound Bend picnic area; The Koornong; Fourth Hill (School Fence) and Norman's Reserve (Antechinus Swamp/Fern Site)**. The areas have been chosen because they have easy access and have either had work carried out in the past or have limited ongoing works.

The group will concentrate on vegetation management and activities will range from weed control using various techniques, planting and general maintenance. FOWSP

members Kyen Knight or Pat Coupar will lead the group and give advice on plant identification and vegetation management. Hopefully a ranger will also be available to attend.

The activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12.00pm. Either meet at the depot or on site.

So if you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG). No previous experience required.

For more information ring Pat Coupar on 0438984229



TAG dates:

May 5th Norman Reserve. Bradleys Lane
(Mel ref 23 B12)

June 2nd Pound Bend. Picnic area (Mel ref 23 A11)

July 7th Koornong. Lower car park (Mel ref 23 J 8)

August 4th Fourth Hill. Beveridge St. (Mel ref 35 E1)

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.



Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.

Thursday Walks 2005

Meet at 1pm at the Nursery, Pound Bend Rangers Depot, Pound Bend Road Warrandyte (Melways Ref. 23 C10) to car pool to walk starting point. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours

April 28th Fauna Walk.

May 26th Fungi Walk Jumping Ck

Sunday Walks 2005

Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

May 1st National/State/Manningham Biosite. Leader Paul Foreman Meet at Fourth Hill, Tunnel St, Warrandyte Melways 35 F2

For more information contact Cynthia Briscoe 9840 9129

June 5th 100 Acres . Leader Murray Bouchier. Meet at Domeney Reserve lower car park Knees Rd Park Orchards. Melways 23 G12

For more information contact Cynthia Briscoe 9840 9129

Deadline for May Newsletter is May 1st

FOWSP Committee 2005

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor	
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary	
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary	
Michelle Hanslow 0402251577			

<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Julie Pryor	9722 1117
<u>Market</u>	
Marie Krause	9712 0498
<u>Assistant Treasurer</u>	
Ray Clarke	9841 8507
<u>Nursery Manager</u>	
0408317327	
<u>Park Office</u>	
9844 2659	

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2005



- 4th May Authur Stubbs – “Pasture Management”
- 1st June Andrew Pritchard – “Threatened Flora Species Recovery”
- 6th July Kate Whitehouse – “The Long Yarra Walk”
- 3rd August Melanie Birtchnell – “Tree Decline in Jumping Creek Reserve”
- 7th September Glen Jameson – “Recoverability of Landscapes”
- 5th October Heath Butler – “Growling Grass Frog”
- 2nd November Scott Watson – “Indigenous Garden Design”
- 7th December Paul Barnard – “Wildfire Behaviour and Community Safety”

Please Note: The seminars are now on WEDNESDAY nights

The seminars are free and no bookings are required.

Supper provided.

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel

120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner at the pub before the seminars, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cynthia Danby 9840 9129

Dates for your Diary

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

WARRANTYTE MARKET

THURSDAY WALKS

Tuesday 3rd May
 Tuesday 31st May
 Tuesday 28th June
 Tuesday 2nd August
 Tuesday 27th September

7th May
 4th June
 2nd July
 6th August
 3rd September

28th April
 26th May
 30th June
 28th July
 26th August

Call for interest in a FOWSP Project Committee

Interested in helping Warrandyte's environment, but don't want an ongoing commitment? Got a simple environmental project in mind, but need help to organise it? Your local section of WSP needs work, but you are already overcommitted in time?

You could start a Project Committee, with the backing of FOWSP, to achieve your end. The FOWSP committee can supply publicity, help with grant applications, contacts, funding and training.

Contact a FOWSP committee member as a start, write down your ideas and send them to

the newsletter editor, and we'll put you in touch with like-minded FOWSPians!

Here's some headings to help you organise your thoughts.

Project:

- Number of persons / sessions/ days involved
- Publicity required
- Training Required
- Expert Contacts Required
- \$\$ Required – FOWSP funds or PV Grant
- What I wish to achieve personally from the project

On Our Way

(Part Two)

By Peggy Safstrom

A highlight of the trip to Tasmania was a great, steep walk down to the River Leven where the clear but stained water raced between a narrow, carved out bed in the dark basalt. On the way up again, we were resting beside a three foot high, round concrete water trough, where horses came to drink. Waddling down the hillside came a small, very light colored echidna. He made his way right around the tank, then, finding some rocks against the side, proceeded to climb up, stretching to the limit to get a claw hold on the edge. Then, draping himself over the three inch ledge, he dipped his beak into the water, and drank noisily for five minutes.



Very gingerly, after he'd satisfied his thirst, he let go one claw, and waded his feet to and fro, feeling down for the rocks until he found one, then he let go the holding claw, and "Plop", down he went. Then slowly and deliberately, he made his waddling way up the steep bill again. We were left wondering "Was this a daily echidna excursion?"



Can You Help?

One of our members and regular newsletter contributor, Sandy Jones, is very keen to help out at the nursery on Thursday mornings. However, she needs transport. If there is anyone who can give Sandy a lift (she lives in Warrandyte) to and from the nursery she would be most grateful.

If you are able to help please give Sandy a call on 9844 3628.

Rangers Report

By Andrew Nixon
(Ranger-in-Charge)

A successful summer interpretations program was again provided by local ranger staff. The perennial favourites of night walks, bird walks, and a koala count appeared on the program.

The Warrandyte festival also had a Parks Victoria profile again this year. It is planned to have further discussions with FOWSP re a possible joint display next year.

Fires. It has been a quite season on the wildfire front (good!). Staff attended a few minor fires around the state. There was a larger campaign fire to the west of the Grampians in and around Black Range State Park. But on the Fuel Reduction Burning front it has been particularly busy over March. The very stable weather has allowed many planned Fuel Reduction Burns to be completed. New staff are also participating in the burns including our 'fire ecologist' - Cam Beardsell.

Opposite to fires are floods. The February major storm event caused some considerable damage to many Parks Victoria assets throughout the state. In Warrandyte State Park and associated reserves the main damage was to the vehicle management



tracks. Funds are being provided by PV / government for repair of these assets. In particular a major restoration of the visitor node at the exit of the Pound Bend tunnel.

On the conservation programs front it has been 'steady as she goes' for the post summer period. A return to more extensive pest plant and pest animal programs has been evident following the focus for PV on the post 2003/04 Alpine fire rehabilitation programs.

Visitor and assets programs have seen works to walking tracks (new steps above the Pound Bend tunnel exit - 50% complete); visitor safety signage to the reserves; gates and vandalism repair.

New staff - please welcome David Moore to the team. Dave has had a short term with PV having worked as a summer ranger and also on some heritage projects across the state. Dave will be on a six month rotation appearing here at Warrandyte over the summer periods. Also joining the team in about six weeks will be Kylie Tenace. Kylie has a similar rotating position (6 months) as Dave Moore.

The new office is progressing. We look forward to welcoming FOWSP members through the front door and being able to make use of the new facility soon!

Letters to the Editor

I have just read the March edition of the FOWSP newsletter and it has prompted me to write you a big 'thank you'.

My wife, Ann and I are in the process of moving into Osborne Road and have recently joined the FOWSP. As previous residents of Prahan, we are delighted by the wonderful natural environment of Warrandyte. The birdlife and native bush are wonderful.

Although not spending every day in Warrandyte whilst house renovations progress, we are readily reminded of its special character by reading your excellent newsletter.

Ian and Anne Penrose

From the Plan

Visitor surveys conducted for Parks Victoria at Pound Bend and Jumping Creek in 1998 and 1999 indicated that 82% of visitors were from the eastern and northern suburbs and that only 29% were first time visitors. Nearly all visitors (98%) made a day trip from home and stayed in the Park from less than 1 to 2-4 hours.

Satisfaction with the Park was rated as average or below average compared with other parks managed by Parks Victoria. Improvements requested included more or better signs, longer opening hours and more facilities.

Source: WSP draft Management Plan



By B.G

First Frame

Early March the first wall-frame of the new office building at the Pound Bend depot was raised into position by nine 3rd and 4th year apprentices, led by one Instructor and overseen by one architect.

'Wood' Walk

On the last Thursday of February, and after the morning toils at the nursery, Josh Revell led a eucalyptus walk.

Healey Helps

Ros Healey was seen helping to prick out grasses.



'Crypto' Kebab?

Anne Gaskette turned up at the depot with orchid heads on kebab sticks, "trying to attract the pollinating wasps". Anne, who originally completed a BSc at Melbourne University, is now doing a PhD in biology at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her thesis is about *Cryptostylis*, five species in the genus (Tongue and Bonnet Orchids).

Catching Chiroptera

A bat-trapping and identification activity was carried out on the evening of March 3rd.

Carey Coordinator

Mrs Margaret Adams was on an initial visit recently to the depot. Margaret is the middle school coordinator at Carey Grammar and hopes to set up a propagation area at the school as part of an environmental program.

Interview of the Month

Meeting Marion

By B.G

On a recent Thursday morning Jessie Floyd was seen at the WSP nursery pricking out *Tetratheca ciliata*, *Xanthorrhoea minor* and various prepared cuttings. Jessie is one of our regular long time volunteers. And who is Jessie Floyd? We all know her as Marion King!

Now a young octogenarian Marion was born in Somerville (near Tyabb) and was brought up on an orchard – apples and pears, and still eats fruit. She attended Frankston High School and completed sixth form (honours).

Marion worked as a junior teacher at Hastings. During the Second World War she worked in the office of Marfleet and Weight (engineering co.) where she met William Henry King, and after their marriage lived in South Warrandyte.

When their five children left home, Marion and Bill set up a pioneering native nursery called 'Chalka' (some of our long-time residents bought plants there as I did). One of her favourite plants is *Kennedia prostrata* and she has a big interest in native orchids.

Marion like doing crosswords, gardening, cross stitch, needlework, growing native plants and very tall sunflowers. She was a co-founder of the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club and an early member of the Colour Photography Club of Ringwood as well as being a long time member of the Bird Observers Club. She is also a member of the Australian Plant Society (nee SGAP), was an avid tennis player and likes watching tennis and cricket. Her favourite music is organ music. Her husband was a member of the Phillip Island Racing Club.

Marion and her husband did a lot of outback travelling – "loved the Bungle Bungles and the Hammersley Ranges". Achievements? Five children, fifteen grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren – the eldest of whom is fourteen years old.

Footnote: 'Chalka' is an anabranch of the Murray River. And do you know what an anabranch is? Look it up?

Stop Press: Marion will be 'plastered' for the next few weeks after her carpal tunnel operation. Mend well Marion.



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Common Heath

Epacris impressa

Victoria's floral emblem. This upright prickly shrub grows to about one metre. It has small, sharp-pointed leaves and is one of the few plants to flower during autumn. While this species may have white or pink flowers, the majority of plants that grow in Warrandyte have white flowers. These tubular flowers are an important source of nectar for honeyeaters such as the Eastern Spinebill, which in turn pollinates the plant.

One of the best places to see Common Heath is on the sheltered south-east facing slopes of Fourth Hill.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Membership \$20

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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