# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



# Newsletter

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

# **Pound Bend Tunnel Closed**

By Mike Coupar

he Pound Bend tunnel is closed off to the public at the popular swimming spot at Pound Bend Reserve. Visitors can still access the viewing area via the asphalt path, but cannot use the steps to get down to the rocks, tunnel exit and river.

Initially, over summer, a temporary plastic barrier was erected, but this was ineffective as people climbed over to access the swimming area. This has been replaced by an ugly and imposing cyclone wire fence that extends from above the tunnel, across the steps to the rivers edge beyond the viewing platform.

Warrandyte State Park Ranger-in-Charge, Andrew Nixon, said that Parks Victoria regional office made the decision to fence off the area following erosion damage caused by the two floods several months ago.



Superficially the damage does not appear that serious, however, Andrew Nixon pointed out that rocks had been washed away exposing tree roots and this needed to be fixed to protect the site from future flood damage. In addition, he said this gives Parks Victoria an opportunity to

improve the access and 'beach' area at the tunnel exit.

Because engineering works are involved, the regional office will be handling the project. So far the area has been surveyed with a concept plan to follow. Parks Victoria intend to undertake the works in spring. At this stage the full cost of the reconstruction is not known and although some funding has been allocated, we don't know yet where the rest of the money will come from.

Despite public pressure to close the tunnel permanently following the tragic drowning last December, Andrew Nixon assures us that the fencing has nothing to do with the drowning.

Pound Bend tunnel is one the Park's high profile tourist attractions. We look forward to the time when it is re-opened, hopefully before summer, with its new and improved features.



# **Bush Backyard**

Contributions this month from Joan Broadberry and Steven Katsineris

#### Wedge-tailed Eagle over Templestowe

By Joan Broadberry

onday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2005 was a bright autumn day with a midday temperature of about 21 degrees. I was sitting outside reading in my Templestowe garden, when I became aware of birds in the sky. Right above me six Little Ravens were mobbing a raptor. I thought I could see the distinctive wedge-shaped tail of Australia's largest bird of prev. Upon grabbing the binoculars it was confirmed, a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring right above my home. What a marvelous sighting. The eagle was being harassed by the ravens. The gang of six were quite aggressive, flapping and darting at it, while cawing loudly. The raptor's response was not to fuss, but simply to gain height. The huge bird floating effortlessly on thermals, circled around and around and around until it had left all but one of the ravens far below. I watched for about 10 minutes until the eagle was just a dot in the sky heading north east into the Yarra Valley.

A big part of my love of the natural environment is a passionate interest in birds. I have kept a backyard bird list for over 16 years. Each year I think "well it's going to be near impossible to add to my list", but I am continually surprised. The Wedge-tailed Eagle was number fifty two. All have been recorded from my small house block size property in suburban Templestowe. Another "first" this year were male and female King Parrots which arrived early on the morning of January 24th. I happened to glance out of the window and again, could hardly believe my eyes. The parrots seemed to be very tame and poked about the garden for about 15 minutes, even perching on the outdoor furniture.

This beautiful Wedge-tailed Eagle sighting set me thinking about events two years ago. In 2003 Brian and I went on a 13,000 kilometre car tour from Melbourne to the Kimberly and back. On the way we visited the wonderful Desert Park at Alice Springs. We watched the raptor display and amongst other birds, saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle fly against the magnificent backdrop of the MacDonnell Ranges. During

his commentary the ranger mentioned that many eagles are killed on highways. They feed on road kill, and such a large bird, full of meat simply cannot take off quickly enough to dodge vehicles doing 110 kph and more. To help the birds, he asked us all to consider dragging dead animals off the road when it was safe to do so.



Early the very next morning as we drove north on the Stuart Highway, we came upon a kangaroo carcass with a freshly dead Wedgetailed Eagle lying beside it. That was it. For the whole of the six week trip I kept my rubber gloves handy, and we stopped and pulled many bodies to the side of the road where scavenging birds could clean them up safely.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is found all over mainland Australia and Tasmania. preferred habitat is woodlands where large trees occur. The birds usually catch prey on the ground by swooping on it. Carrion is also eaten. Their stick nests are built in forks or on the limbs of tall trees. Established pairs are sedentary, maintaining a territory near their nest sites all year round. The introduction of the rabbit and the opening up of dense forests which facilitates hunting, have generally benefited them. However, Wedge-tailed Eagle sightings are scarce in the Metropolitan area. It was an unexpected and rare experience to renew acquaintance with Bunjil from my own backyard.

# Our Bush Garden (Haleys Gully Road, Hurstbridge)

By Steven Katsineris

hen we first moved to our house in Hurstbridge the garden had been neglected for some time, the former owners having moved to a new place a year before. The garden was very dry and overgrown with Blackberries, Ivy and other weeds. In the yard were a number of older established trees, mostly Eucalyptus, (twenty Yellow Box, three Candlebark and two Red Ironbark), two Black Wattles, six Plum Trees, two Southern Silky Oaks and a couple of other unknown trees. Cont'd on next page

There were also five younger Candlebark Gums growing. The remaining flora consisted of some 15 bushes, some Bottlebrushes, Mint Bushes, Grevilleas and two Swamp Paperbarks.



While there were these big, wonderful, mature trees, the rest of the garden was sparse, with little undergrowth shrubs and groundcovers, providing only limited habitat for

wildlife and allowing too much sun into yard, scorching and drying the soil. Many of the plants in the yard were distressed and dying and despite my attempts to rectify the problem through watering and weeding, two young gums and some bushes died, including three Hurstbridge Grevilleas. One Hurstbridge Grevillea survived and is now thriving. A number of species of mainly larger birds already visited the yard, such as Galahs, Magpies and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos to feed in the tops of gum trees and on the plums. There were also Ringtail and Brushtail Possums resident.

It is a large yard though and had a lot of space for more plants and I could see the potential for it to be improved, to be a healthier and more indigenous, wildlife friendly garden. So over the past eight years as time and money has permitted I have added more native flora, almost all of these, local plants to the yard and nature strips. These include 50 trees, mostly Red Ironbark, Candlebark, Yellow Box, Silver Banksia and Black Wattle and over 250 shrubs and grasses, Burgan, Bottlebrush, Correa, Hop Goodenia, Tree Violet, Tea-tree, Victorian Christmas Bush, Melaleuca, Mint Bush, Wax Flower, Hurstbridge and Victoria Grevillea, among others. I have also planted more than 250 ground covers, mostly Cut-leaf daisy, Everlasting, Native Violet and Flax-lily.

A diversity of native flora has been planted to attract a variety of wildlife to the garden, like plants that produce flowers, nectar, fruit and seeds to provide food for native birds, lizards, butterflies, mammals and insects. As well as trees, shrubs and ground covers, rocks, hollow logs and dead vegetation has been left to offer refuge and home sites for lizards, birds, frogs, beetles and other animals. I also

built a large fishpond, a smaller pond, put in a birdbath and several other water containers.

As the bush garden has grown and flourished, into a more vibrant, shaded, denser and richer eco-system, so the numbers and diversity of wildlife attracted to the garden has increased dramatically over the years. The garden now provides habitat for a much wider range of native species that live in the garden, or visit regularly, including Eastern Spinebills, Spotted Pardalotes, Crimson Rosellas, King Parrots, Scrub Wrens, Eastern Rosellas, Noisy Miners, Grey Butcherbirds, Currawongs, Rainbow Lorikeets, Gang-gang Cockatoos, Black Cockatoos, Yellow-tailed Tawny Frogmouths, Kookaburras, Blue-tongue Lizards, Frogs and Echidnas. To see the variety and colour, and hear the songs and sounds of the wildlife of the garden gives my family tremendous enjoyment.

In some parts of the yard I am still tackling the weeds and there still remains areas to put in more vegetation, but slowly the garden is being transformed into a magnificent bush garden. As I watch the plants grow and more and more wildlife encouraged into the mostly indigenous garden I feel tremendous satisfaction and pleasure to see it evolving into a place of beauty and wonder. And inspired to do what I can in our yard and locally to preserve what precious native bush we have left and replant and replace something of what has been lost.

Recently a neighbour stopped her car to tell me how beautiful the garden looked and said when returning home she always felt great pleasure as she turned the corner to see all the trees and bushes in and around our yard. Most importantly, she said my efforts had motivated her to do more to create a bush garden in her yard. This is one of a number of encouraging comments I have received about the garden. It is very fulfilling to know that other people as well as the local wildlife value these efforts. The ecological havens we create in our gardens are valuable contributions towards the protection and survival of our unique native birds and other wildlife. It seems they are also potent examples to other people of what can be done in our own backyards to help nature and change things for the better.

#### More Snippets Please

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

# The Coming of Autumn

It fades in its intensity, the fiery Summer sun. The evenings cool, the night draw in, Autumn has begun.

In the misty morning sunrise there's dew upon the grass, showing the tracks of some small creature as it's hurried passed.

The sunny days are peaceful, with a warming gentle glow.
The trees against a bright blue sky, their Autumn colours show.

The smoky smell of evening fires, is carried on the breeze, as it moves amongst the trees and stirs the changing leaves.

In just another few short weeks, they'll begin to fall. On the roads and footpaths, the leaves will cover all A carpet of many colours, of red, and orange and gold. Breathtaking beauty, wondrous to behold

As you walk along the path they'll scrunch beneath your feet, or swirl and flutter in the air, as a car drives down the street.

Then come the foggy mornings when the clouds hang in the trees, objects look like shadowy shapes, while your toes and fingers freeze.

But when at last the sun breaks
through
and the clouds all drift away,
what remains is the tranquility
of another glorious Autumn day.
Alwynne Buntine

#### That First Glimpse!

By Peggy Safstrom

It was another May. We were on our way West to drive right around this great land of ours. Ours? We knew South Australia well, so didn't linger there. We were so looking forward to seeing the Great Australian Bight. This afternoon, our maps told us that we were very near the coast, on that part of the Bight which scooped in towards the road.

We were at the start of the Nullabor Plain - [Null = no, Arbor = trees], just flat treeless plain in every direction. We were longing for some road or track off to the left which we could investigate. We'd had nearly 400km of a grey ribbon of road stretching endlessly ahead, sometimes rising slightly or curving a little, but with no indication of a great ocean almost at our elbow. But we knew it was there, and we were not going to miss it!

At last we came to a track - just 2 tyre marks across the plain - which we gingerly followed, and there, only about 700 metres off the road we saw it! The flat plain just stopped as if pinking shears had cut it off, and there were 100 metre cliffs, vertical, down, down to the ocean



crashing at their base. What a sight! We jumped, danced, and hugged each other. We were SO excited.

It was cold, windy, raining, and it didn't matter one iota. The sky was leaden, the water grey, but our hearts were full of color. We ran whooping back to the car for parkas and cameras. Even schools of porpoises were upping and downing way below us, flipping their tails and turning on their tummies, as happy as we were.

It was a paper mache map of Australia, with the Bight standing out, sliced with a carving knife.

Afterwards, we came to formed tracks in to the left, marked 'Camera Stop', so we drove in each one, and each had wonderful panoramas, but what is etched in our mental camera is that glorious First Glimpse.

## **FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM**

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities <u>every</u> Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), <u>unless otherwise stated below.</u> 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

June 23<sup>rd</sup> One Tree Hill - Ridge to Creek

#### 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.

For more information contact Cynthia Briscoe 9840 9129

July 3<sup>rd</sup> Black Flat. "History – a bush walk discovering some indigenous and colonial history". Leader: Ken Crook. Meet at Stonehouse car park Tills Dve corner with Ringwood-Warrandyte Rd. Melways 23 G12

August 7th Timber Reserve. "The results of ecological burning". Leader ranger David Van Bockel. Meet at the rangers depot. Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte> Melways 23 C10

# Deadline for July Newsletter is July 2<sup>nd</sup>

FOWSP Committee 2005				Nursery Manager Park Office	0408317327 9844 2659	
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	Assistant Tr	easurer Ray Clark	xe 9841 8507	
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	<b>Newsletter Editor</b>				
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary		Wildli	fe Rescue	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894			Julie Pryor	9722 1117	
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secre	etary			
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		Market			
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	7	Marie Krause	9712 0498	
Artur Muchow	041538332	28				
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577			<b>Publications Officer</b>		
Kyen Knight	041814996	1		Kirsten Brunt	0438411278	

AND SHAPE

# **Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2005**

6th July Kate Whitehouse - "The Long Yarra Walk"

3<sup>rd</sup> August Melanie Birtchnell - "Tree Decline in Jumping Creek Reserve"

7th September Glen Jameson - "Recoverability of Landscapes"

5th October Heath Butler - "Growling Grass Frog"

2<sup>nd</sup> 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 El1)

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	WARRANDYTE MARKET	THURSDAY WALKS	TAG ACTIVITIES
28 <sup>th</sup> June	2 <sup>nd</sup> July	30 <sup>th</sup> June	July 7 <sup>th</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup> August	6 <sup>th</sup> August	28 <sup>th</sup> July	August 4th
27 <sup>th</sup> September	3 <sup>rd</sup> September	26thAugust	September 1 <sup>st</sup>

#### Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

Activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site. 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.

July 7<sup>th</sup> Koornong. Lower car park (Mel ref 23 J8) August 4<sup>th</sup> Fourth Hill School Fence. Beveridge St (Mel ref 35 E1) September 1<sup>st</sup> Fourth Hill. Tunnel St (Mel ref 35 F2)

## **Grant Application**

FOWSP has applied for a grant of \$6000 under the Parks Victoria Volunteer Group (VGG) program. The money requested is to fund a project to reinstate the Yering Silver Gum to Spadoni's Nature Conservation Reserve.

The Yering Silver Gum, previously known at this location as the Buxton Gum, is a threatened species currently listed as endangered in Victoria. Only 14 trees are known to occur at Spadoni's – a nature reserve at Yering, north of Coldstream, managed by Parks Victoria. All the trees in this stand are of the same age and are highly vulnerable as there has been no natural recruitment in the last 30 years.

An action plan has been prepared by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) which states that the Yering Silver Gum is threatened by this lack of recruitment, weed invasion and hybridization with Swamp Gum.

Our project to reinstate this rare eucalypt will involve seed collection, propagation, site preparation and planting. The work will be coordinated by ranger Cam Beardsell who will give training to our group in threatened species recovery and weed control techniques.

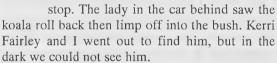
The vegetation at Spadoni's Nature Conservation Reserve is known as floodplain riparian woodland - currently listed as endangered in Victoria – and is one of the better quality remnants of that vegetation class in the region. In addition to the Yering Silver Gum there are several other rare species at the site such as the Poison Rice-flower that will also be propagated at the nursery and planted back.

The recovery of the Yering Silver Gum at Spadoni's is critically important if the species is to survive and indeed flourish in the long term. FOWSP has applied for many grants over the years, most have been successful, some have not. However, this request for funding is probably one of our most important and most exciting.

#### Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

nother koala was hit by a car and the driver didn't



I went back the next morning and found him, but he was too high to rescue. I returned in the afternoon just as he decided to change trees. He slipped a little on his way down then slowly went on his way through the bush. I have notified the owners of the property in Stintons Road that he is there and to ring if he needs help. I was able to identify him as a male by his scent gland.

Zoe did not travel well down to Barwon Heads but she has recovered quickly. She is now eating and climbing as usual and there are no problems.

When we arrived at Jirrahlinga I was taken to the koala enclosure to see one of the captive koalas. He was sitting on the ground in the middle of his enclosure looking very sad. The problem was the climbing branches had just been changed and his tree had been removed. He was brought inside and put in a cage beside Zoe, he soon perked up when he realised he had a visitor.

Did you know that male koalas have a scent gland down the centre of their chest, this is used to mark their territory?



Koala Sightings This Month: Stintons Road, Donvale Summit Crescent, Ringwood





#### Lynn and Leaf

Early May, Lynn Meredith, and Environmental Support Officer with Manningham council was at Pound Bend depot. Lynn works with private landholders applying to LEAF (Local Environment Assistance Fund) – some of whom were picking up free stakes, guards and weed mats at the depot. Lynda Chambers (McLaughlin) was one LEAF person who was present.

#### May Market

Helping at the Friends stall were Ray Kruger, Marion Thomson, Alan Woolcock, Cath Andrew and Anne Warren. Organiser, Marie Krause, did the work of three people! Marie needs more volunteers.

#### More Manningham

David Wadsworth was seen picking up an order of indigenous plants for Manningham Council planting program. David is a coordinator

at the council 'in-house' nursery which produces several tens of thousands of plants each year.

#### More May Matters

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May saw a small group of Friends working actively at Norman's Reserve.

#### 'Working' Weekly

Lauren Birch, journalist, and Robert Carew, photographer, (from the Manningham Weekly) visited the depot to do a short article on the Friends.

#### Phascolarctos Found

Ken Crook and Ray Kruger were clearing excess plants in Frogland when they noticed a koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) in the tree directly above. According to a book by Jack Hyett and Noel Shaw the 'native bear', 'koala bear' "sits in the fork of a tree....it has a voice....pig-like grunting and snoring noises loud and prolonged: whimpering and wailing distress cries....it eats around 1kg per night and ingests dirt". Well, there you are.

#### Caladia? Cruiciformis?

Dick Thomson has been interviewed! Watch for relevant revealing revelations.

### **Powerful Owl**

This photo was taken by Jenny Porter near the entrance to the Fourth Hill tunnel.



The Powerful Owl is a very large hawk-owl with yellow eyes, coarse vshaped bars on underparts and broad bars on upper parts. Voice a loud 'hoo-hoo'. 1-2 white eggs. Uncommon in sclerophyll forests from Dawson Old to south-eastern South

Australia.

Source: Slater's Field guide to Australian Birds,

#### **Final Reminder**

If you haven't paid your subscription for 2005 this will be your last newsletter. If you would like to renew your membership, please fill in the form on the back of this newsletter

# **Sunday Activity**

Osborne Peninsula Landcare and FOWSP are holding a joint planting day in the Warrandyte State Park along the Northern River Frontage Reserve.

Date & Time: Sunday July 31st at 10.00 am Place: Sigma Revegetation Site. Park at Koornong Crescent, North Warrandyte (Mel ref. 23 J8) and follow the walking track downstream.

BBQ lunch will be provided following the planting

# Peeping Tomasima?

#### By Linda Rogan

hot north wind blew across the parched hillside on the first Sunday in April 2005. The 'Helpers' of Plenty Gorge parkland were lucky that coordinating ranger Kylie Tenace was not involved in any fire related activities and able to lead us in a survey of nesting boxes.

Using a pole camera was a new experience for me. I carried the backpack with batteries and the small black and white video screen. One of the taller friends controlled the pole that allowed the camera to enter under the lifted lid or through the round opening of the nest boxes.

At first the screen showed little but leaf litter indicating the boxes had been in use in the past. The view wasn't good enough to tell if it was fresh or not.

Perhaps any inhabitants had left for cooler habitat. We moved on to an older type of box with a divider forming a front and back compartment. A peek through the round front door revealed only more litter. Next the lid was lifted with the long pole for a look at the back room.

After a split second and a blink, a blur resolved itself into a pair of eyes and a beautifully stripped face. A sugar glider for sure! Two delicate paws topped the divider and before we could remove the camera the



beautiful animal was out the front door, springing higher into the tree and then gliding gracefully across to the next. I'll not quickly forget this sight I had only seen on nature documentaries. We watched until it disappeared into another tree safe (we hoped) from predators.

At this stage the heat of the day and weight of the backpack were forgotten. Our next visit was brief as the pole carrier called out, "Bees. Take off!" A cable tethered us, so I took care to flee around the same side of the tree.

With caution we approached another box and finding it free of buzzing insects, we ventured a look. Looking back was a furry face with fluffy tail next to its curled body, larger than a glider but much smaller then a brush tail possum. The camera was quickly withdrawn leaving us uncertain as to the identity of this mammal. Later conversation with ranger Cam Beardsell leads me to believe it may have been a Brush Tailed Phascogale.

The next stage of our nest box work will be to replace damaged boxes. I feel very privileged to have had this peek into the bedrooms of these small mammals.

#### **Treasurer Wanted**

Now being in his nineties, our Assistant Treasurer, Ray Clarke, thinks that his time for retirement has arrived. We are therefore looking for a replacement, male or female, with a knowledge of basic accountancy.

#### Duties will include:

- Be available for committee meetings once a month
- Attend the nursery on Thursday mornings to collect and bank cash from subscriptions and sales
- Clearing the post office box at Warrandyte twice a week
- Drawing cheques for payments
- Keeping the cash book and reconciling the bank statements
- Reporting on the cash position to the committee
- Preparing half yearly and annual accounts

It is really good fun while working with volunteers. If you are interested, please phone Ray on 9841 8507 to discuss



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#### Eastern Yellow Robin

This trusting friendly little bird is quite common in Warrandyte, particularly during the cooler months. Unlike some of the other robins that are migratory, the Yellow Robin is a resident. Usually seen singly or in pairs, it often perches on a low branch or clings sideways to the trunk of a tree waiting to grab a worm or insect disturbed from the soil.

Yellow Robins are widespread and common in the forests and woodlands of south-eastern Australia, but are absent from Tasmania.

## FOWSP Membership Form

Name	************		•••••		•••••
Address	***********	•••••	***************	•••••	
****	*******		************		
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Membership Concession	\$20 \$10				
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