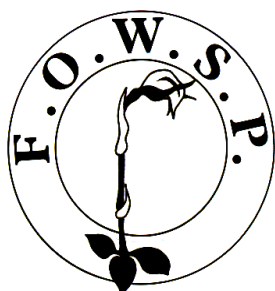


Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Website: www.fowsp.org.au

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

Editors corner

Another month and the ghost of summer is still with us although the crisp mornings are welcome.

Birds feature prominently in this issue with a story of a lucky duck from Monique Decortis on page 2.

On page 3, Joan Broadberry brings us the unexpected beauty of Silvereyes seen on a recent trip.

Kel from the nursery suggests climbers for winter planting p. 3.

On page 8 she takes us stag watching as part of a team of volunteers working with the Friends Of Leadbeater's Possum.

Keep the good news from the bush coming and enjoy this newsletter.

Linda



Contemplating inkweed on a TAG work day at the old house site at Glynn's reserve. See page 9 for more TAG adventures

New members are warmly invited to a special afternoon tea.

Come and meet your FOWSP Committee members, learn about our activities and take a tour of the nursery.

Location: The Folly (opposite the Nursery located at the end of Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte, Melways Reference 23 C10).

Date: Sunday 5th May.

Time: 2-4 pm.

RSVP Lyndy 9844 0106 by 3rd May.

Deadline for May 2013 edition newsletter is

Friday 26nd April 2013

**contributions can be emailed to [Linda Rogan lindarogan@netspace.net.au](mailto:lindarogan@netspace.net.au)
or posted to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113**

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of FOWSP



Pacific Black Ducks Photo by Ian Moodie

Wild Matters: One lucky duck - Monique Decortis –

WHAT DOES IT TAKE to rescue an animal in distress? Sometimes it takes just one person. Other times it takes a team that has to be gathered from various places. And at yet other times, the various members of “the team” just seem to “appear” when they are needed.

Yesterday I was on the way to Warrandyte to attend a talk by Dr Pam Whiteley from ‘Melbourne University’s Wildlife Health Surveillance. Going a little early to have a picnic along the Yarra before the presentation turned out to be a very good move for an injured duck.

I was about to sit down and eat when I noticed a young couple who were concerned about a duck they had spotted, with discarded fishhooks in its beak and feet. The young man had been trying, without success, to catch the duck and was about to call Wildlife Victoria when I happened to turn up.

As I have been wearing a back brace since precipitately parting ways with a ladder a couple of months ago, I was pretty useless where getting into the river was concerned, but I assumed a useful role as “coordinator of the rescue effort”. I initially directed the young man in his efforts to catch the thrashing duck, but unfortunately it got away from him and swam to the middle of the river.

I then noticed two canoeists a little upstream and called out to them to assist the young man who by now had waded out to the middle of the Yarra.

Canoeing in “V formation”, they guided the duck to the opposite bank, where one of them was able to pick the bird up and put it into his canoe. After removing the fishhook from the bird’s beak, they paddled across the river to hand the duck to the waiting young man for transfer to me on dry land.

The next requirement was the removal of the remaining two fishhooks. Duck under the arm, I walked across the road to the Warrandyte pub in search of someone with a pair of pliers.

Several tradies were having their knock-off beers outside and, sure enough, the first person I approached happened to be a plumber, and he was happy to help.

One of the duck’s feet was slightly damaged and I had to weigh up the pros and cons of releasing a duck with a mild foot injury against confining a wild animal for care.

I concluded that the wounded foot would soon heal, but as I had a vet (the speaker) nearby I took the opportunity to get a second opinion from Pam.

Vet check over, the duck was back in the water in just over an hour after having been captured.

A happy ending thanks to “all the right people being in the right place at the right time”.

Do NOT take me for granted!

Joan Broadberry

TOWARDS THE END OF MARCH I explored the area around Mansfield with a wonderful group, The Ringwood Field Naturalists Club. Even though I had lived in the district I did not know about the beautiful walk (and picnic area) along the Delatite River. It is accessed off the Mt. Buller Rd almost opposite Sawmill Settlement and is known as *Plains Creek*. The track is a 1.5 k round trip through an exceptionally beautiful piece of bush.

As we walked, birds were calling constantly. A persistent "psip" sound filled the air and we soon realized it was coming from large numbers of Silvereyes. The flocks were much greater than any of us had ever seen. Quite astonishing; we estimated there were thousands of birds. The Prickly Current Bush, *Coprosma quadrifida*, was in berry and was certainly a food source. However, it was not the main attraction as Silvereyes were literally everywhere, feeding on insects at all levels of the bush. Ground, mid-story and up in the tallest gums.

The Silvereye is a small, greenish-yellow bird 11 to 13 cm in length and around 10 - 12 grams in weight. It has a conspicuous white ring around its eye. There are a number of plumage variations depending on the sub-species. Silvereyes are more common in the south-east of Australia including Tasmania, but their range extends to Cape York and they are also found in southern Western Australia. They occur in almost any wooded habitat, including parks and backyards. Silvereyes are omnivorous, with a diet that includes insects, berries, fruit and nectar.

The birds are seen alone, in pairs or small flocks during the spring breeding season. However, the Silvereyes of Southern Australia form large migratory flocks in autumn foraging busily during the day with much calling and quick movement through the shrubbery, then flying long distances at night. Most of the Tasmanian population crosses Bass Strait (an amazing feat for one of Australia's smallest birds) and disperse into Victoria, New South Wales, and even as far as Queensland.

We had obviously come upon one of these groups, greedily gorging on the

food necessary to generate the energy needed for their journey. In the afternoon we drove along the Howqua Track to Sheeppart Flat, the very popular camping area on the Howqua River which is the gateway to the Victorian high country. It also teemed with Silvereyes. In a quiet moment I lingered beneath an overhanging berry bush where numbers of the birds were feeding. I blended into the shadows with camera at the ready. The birds soon accepted me and I was able to take a series of photos. After consulting field guides, I believe, with its conspicuous chestnut flanks, the bird pictured here was the Tasmanian sub-species, *Zosterops lateralis*. I surmised the flocks had recently migrated from Tasmania.

I have watched birds for 35 years and have commented on numerous occasions. "Oh, just a Silvereye." This time it was different. It was impossible to take these handsome birds for granted. One posed for me looking straight down the lens of the camera daring me not to take him seriously. For the first time ever I really saw the exquisitely formed, pure white eye ring, subtly rimmed in black. Lesson learned: never shut down your eyes, ears and mind, so much will be missed.



Clematis aristata photos from the
Flora of Warrandyte.



Climbing high

WANT TO BLOCK out neighbours quickly or hide something that lies behind that fence line, or just enjoy some petite native beauties?

The Warrandyte State Park is home to some vigorous climbers that have beautiful displays of flowers which can be just as showy as the non indigenous plants to boot. Below are just three of the possible species.

Clematis aristata or Old Man's Beard (due to the fluffy seed heads) is a vigorous climber which has shiny evergreen trifoliate leaves and the female plants have masses of large creamy white, starry flowers measuring up to 60mm across (Flowering time between August - March). *The Flora of Melbourne* states that this species is easily grown in well drained soils and will grow well under established Eucalypts if watered during summer. The plant is usually found along creek sides, (Watsons and Andersons Creeks come to mind), in shady sheltered sites.

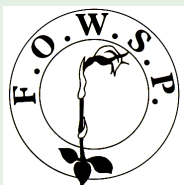
Clematis microphylla var. *microphylla* or Small leafed Clematis is also an indigenous plant of the Warrandyte area. It likes well drained dry areas. An extremely vigorous climber, this one can quickly take over host plants but I think that the amazingly dainty flowers showing between July and November are well worth it and a great way to attract pollinating insects too. If the plant does get out of hand, a prune is not out of the question.

Pandorea pandorana or Wonga Vine thrives in moist well drained soils. It has a very showy tubular creamy white flower with maroon markings on the inside. Flowering times are between September to January. *The Flora of Melbourne* states that it is a strong climber, very showy in flower, can be grown over a pergola, (preferring a shady position), and that many horticultural varieties are grown but most are not the local form.

Kel

(Horticultural forms of *Pandorea* may become problematic in bushland areas. Ed.)

FOWSP COMMITTEE 2013			OTHER FOWSP CONTACTS	
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				9846 1218
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				9722 2908
Jan Falconer	9844 1226		<u>Koala Rescue</u>	Julie Pryor
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Caitriona Young	9844 2842			
Sybille Ims	9844 1335 or 0405 500	Market trailer	Website:	www.fowsp.org.au
	278 imsb@netspace.net.au			



FOWSP/Manningham Thursday nature walks

Leader: Cathy Willis



This series of educational and interpretive nature walks explores some of Manningham's most inspiring and interesting bushland. Each walk is paced to allow participants to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the area. Please wear appropriate clothing for the weather including a hat and sturdy footwear. Bring a water bottle and snack. All times and distances are approximate.

Ratings:

Easy – Flat or undulating well formed tracks/paths with low tripping hazards.

Moderate – May include some moderately steep or narrow sections or have higher tripping hazards. **Difficult** – Includes steep and/or narrow sections, slippery sections, or high tripping hazards.

Bookings are essential as places are limited. Meeting points will be provided at time of booking. To book call 9840 9124 or email eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au **Book early as places are filling fast.**

Thursday 2nd May 9.30 am Westerfolds Wandering. The Westerfolds section of Yarra Valley Parklands was saved from development in the 70s and now forms part of a valuable habitat link stretching all the way from Kinglake Nat. Pk. through to Yarra Bend Park at the city's edge. Distance: 5 km Time: 3 hrs. Rating: Moderate

Thursday 23rd May 9.30 am Yarra Brae – trek through the heart of the gorge. Follow the Yarra River downstream through one of the most remote and least accessible parts of the Warrandyte Gorge. This walk involves a creek crossing and off track walking, but the reward is well worthwhile. Distance: 8 km Time: 5 hrs Rating: Difficult Note: BYO lunch and ample water.

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 9.30 am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. Propagation takes place from 9.30 am to 12.30 midday.

No prior experience necessary -

There is always someone available to show you the ropes.

NURSERY OPENING HOURS

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday.

9.30 am to 12.30 pm and

the first Saturday of every month, 9am to 1pm (to coincide with the Warrandyte Market) and

the first Sunday of each month

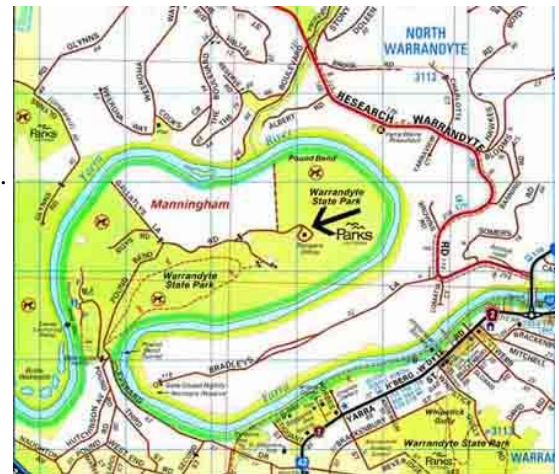
2 pm to 4 pm.

**Nursery is closed to customers and volunteers
on Total Fire Ban Days**

Prices 2012

Members \$1.50

Non-members \$2.00



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Nursery matters—return of trays

Would all members who have obtained plants from the FOWSP nursery please make sure they return the empty forestry tubes and more importantly the black plastic tube holder trays. These trays are specially made and have been bought by FOWSP at considerable cost. They can be returned to the nursery during open hours as above.

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2013

*The 2013 Manningham Environmental Seminars are held on the
first Wednesday of the month
(except May when it will be on Wednesday 8 May).*

Many of the seminars will be complemented with field sessions to facilitate broader education on the topics. **No bookings are required for the evening talks** however **the field sessions must be booked and can only be booked at the seminar.**

Seminars start at 7.30 pm in the Chandelier Room at the Grand Hotel, Warrandyte.
For further information phone Lyn Meredith 9840 9326

3rd April *Gone but not forgotten - Early Fauna of Victoria:* presented by John Harris.

At the time of European settlement in Victoria, the faunal composition in Victoria was very different from what is it today. Of the 91 terrestrial (non-marine) species recorded in this state, 14 are no longer found here and five have become extinct altogether. This presentation will look at these 19; possible causes for their disappearance and attempts to reintroduce them. *John Harris is a Fauna Ecologist and President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.*

Wednesday 8th May *The Physiography of the Yarra Valley Foundations:* presented by Dr Neville Rosengren, Honorary Associate at La Trobe University This seminar will describe the physical environment of the City of Manningham in the wider context of the Yarra Valley and the Port Phillip Sunkland. This region has been in and out of salt and fresh water, covered by kilometres of ice, blanketed in dust, stretched and compressed, lifted and tilted before *Homo sapiens* did their bit for it. The presentation will describe geological units, examine the development of the modern Yarra River system as a major landform and carry you from the earliest known times to a prognosis for the future from the perspective of an earth scientist.

Field Trip: Bus tour Mt. Lofty—Yarra Bend Park Thursday 9th May 10 am to 3 pm; OR Friday 10th May 10 am to 3 pm Join Dr Neville Rosengren for this extended field trip from Warrandyte to Dights Falls, where examples of some of the geological, structural and landform elements, as discussed in the 'Physiography' seminar, will be seen. BYO picnic lunch.



TAGS (Thursday activity groups) & **WAGS** (weekend activity groups) **2013**

TAGS meet at the nursery at 9.15 am for a 9.30 pm departure. No WAGS scheduled for April. Please remember to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather, and please bring your own filled water bottle. Contact number: 0408 317 327

Day	Date	Time	Site of Activity	Activity undertaken	Leader	Difficulty rating
Thurs.	04/04/2013	9.15am~12 noon	Naughton Ave.	Woody Weeding	Janaya	Moderate
Thurs.	18/04/2013	9.15am~12 noon	Lower Orchard Track	Maintenance of revegetation areas.	FOWSP led	Easy
Thurs.	02/05/2013	9.15am~12 noon	Boys Rd. Pound Bend	Weed removal and maintenance of reveg. areas	Kylie/Warren	Moderate

Difficulty Ratings

Easy: Even terrain, some light lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Few tripping hazards.

Moderate: Uneven terrain, light to heavy lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Tripping hazards present.

Difficult: Steep terrain, light to heavy lifting, working in over-grown areas and lots of bending. Many tripping hazards and slippery surfaces present.

Check the website for any changes at <http://fowsp.org.au/activities.php>

TAGS and WAGS will be cancelled on Total Fire Ban days or when weather conditions are deemed hazardous.

News from the Committee

• **Redesign of the Nursery:**

The resource centre is now built and awaiting transport to the site. The old hot house has been demolished to make room for it. A concrete slab has been poured at the rear of the nursery to house a new storage shed. Quotes are being obtained to erect the shed.

• **Leaflet for schools:**

A leaflet is currently being prepared for distribution to local schools offering FOWSP involvement in their planting programs.

• **FOWSP Finances:**

As most of the money currently held in reserve will

be used to pay for the redesign of the nursery, it will be necessary for FOWSP to engage in some fundraising activities.

• **New members afternoon tea:**

This will take place on Sunday 5th May. See p. 3

• **New Rules for Incorporated Associations:**

New legislation came into operation in November 2012. Incorporated associations have 12 months to consider changes that may need to be made to their Constitutions in order to comply with the new legislation. The Committee is currently looking into this and will bring the required changes to the attention of the membership in due course.

SEE Ranger and Nursery news p. 9

FOWSP MARKET TRAILER

Assistants for March

Thank you to all our regular volunteers for their continued support and welcome to Fay Jenkins as a new volunteer.

Peter Curry pick up and delivery of the trailer

Diane and John Baird

Marion Thomson and Fay Jenkins

Catriona and John Young

Lyndy Gilbert and Ken Crook



The Warrandyte market is held on the first Saturday morning of the month from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm at Stiggants Reserve. Volunteers are rostered in pairs to (man/woman) the FOWSP information trailer for just one hour. If you are interested in being on the market roster for 2013 please contact **Sybillie Ims 9844 1335/0405 500 278**

imsbs@netspace.net.au

First timers are always paired with someone more experienced.

Future market dates are: Saturday 6th April, 4th May.

Stagwatching Endemic Emblem Endangered

Kelly Wooster

RECENT NEWS HEADLINES have caught my attention regarding the logging of the beautiful forests around the Central Highlands of Victoria. Accounts of action by people against the logging included blockading by locals, individuals chaining themselves to machinery and even a group of grandmas having a 'knit in' to demonstrate their anger towards what was being done. I, myself, felt the need to assist in keeping the small area of forest, which hadn't been burnt in the 2009 fires, standing. I also found it quite mind boggling that our states' faunal emblem, endemic to these forests, the Leadbeater's Possum, is being further endangered. So when I saw requests for 'Stagwatchers' I was keen to know more.

Well known mammal expert David Lindenmayer and his Australian National University researchers have been conducting studies in this area for 30 years and were in need of people to assist with fauna surveys. The description was enticing, trekking into forests and the upper water catchments just before dusk to find your viewing spot for the night; be guided by experts with the possibility of spotting Greater Gliders (that can glide over 70 meters) Yellow Bellied Gliders, Sugar Gliders and of course the Leadbeater's Possum (numbers thought to be at only 1000 individuals).

The aim of the game was to sit under a known hollow bearing habitat tree (also known as a stag) just before dusk and to keep your eyes and ears peeled for any movement up above. After a week of working on a task where I was having to look down all day, this stagwatching idea was great for my neck!

On my first night of surveying, after winding our way to an area near Marysville which had been burnt we promptly found the site (there are 300 survey sites all up). I was allocated my stag to watch. Then a quick rundown of what to look and listen for, and off we went to sit.....and wait.... and watch.....and listen.

Apart from the mozzies being quite deafening, the sitting out under the stars silently for two hours constantly searching across the sky for any silhouette, strangely felt like some type of meditation and the hours flew by. Collectively that evening we only heard 10 species of birds and did not get a record of any mammals in the area. I learned that the Leadbeater's cannot cross gaps in the understory greater than a meter; that they rely on the connectivity of a dense understory in order move around and find food such as nectar, sap from wattles



Leadbeater's Possum

Photo from Friends of Leadbeater's Possum inc. website

which they harvest, insects and honeydew. It was noted that the burnt areas may not have been able to provide all of this as yet.

This species was first recorded in 1867, but thought extinct in 1960 due to heavy vegetation clearing of its habitat. It was found again in 1961. Therefore I was not deterred from trying once more. I joined the research team for another evening of surveying. This time we were heading towards the pristine reaches of the Upper Yarra Reservoir with 20 volunteers in tow. Hearing of recent Leadbeater's observations nearby and heading to a unburnt site, I had high hopes. After a few hot days I thought the weather was good to go but as soon as we hit the higher altitudes the mist started to wrap around the vegetation and immerse the researcher's Hilux's into drifts of white fog. Arriving at our site just in the nick of time, we were each lead amongst the lush vegetation to an allocated 'stag'. Knowing what was in store this time I nestled on a little bit of cushioning I had brought along and waited. The sun went down and the drizzle continued at a heavier pace as dusk fell, (optimum possum spotting time). I persisted with hope of seeing something. Time passed without a mere pip or a squeak from my stag (their calls are actually described as being "distinctive alarm calls of 'ch-ch-chirr' like a scolding bird").

Our state emblem still proves to be elusive as it seems the only recording for this night was one Sugar Glider, but as the people in the science world say 'no result is still a result' right?



For more information on stagwatching nights and the plight of the Leadbeater's Possum check out www.leadbeaters.org.au

Ranger's News:

- A rabbit eradication program is soon to get under way - particularly in Pound Bend.
- The long hot summer has brought a lot of visitors to Warrandyte resulting in a number of problems caused by people using blow-up toys in the river and a number of small fires started from camp fires along the river.
- Warrandyte Rangers have been deployed to fire fighting duties - particularly with the Abefeldie fire.
- Local burn-off fires will be commenced when weather permits.
- Conrad Annal is on leave for two months from the end of March - see below.
- Alanah Gottschalk from Noble Park will replace him during his leave.

Nursery Manager's Report:

- The propagation program is going well - despite problems with a rat.
- Autumn work will start soon.
- Recent TAGs at Tikilara and Candlebark both went well.

Congratulation to Sam and Conrad on the birth of their son, James Bradley Annal.

Best wishes from FOWSP



What's Happening at TAGS?

Thursday 7th March

Gray Ardern

A TAG WITH CAM is always a treat: We always visit an interesting site, and Cam keeps up a non-stop commentary on the botany, ecology, geomorphology and social history of the site.

I frequently cycle along the Main Yarra trail through Candlebark Park - a beautiful riverside ride - but I did not realise that there is a lot more of the Park hidden away over the ridge.

There are very extensive and successful plantings by our sister group, Friends of Yarra Valley Parks, a really rich wetland, full of interesting plants and birds, and there is also the site of one of the earliest houses in the district.

This house-site was the focus of our TAG. While others did maintenance work on a previous planting, I cut

and painted lots of tough woody weeds which have been resisting efforts to kill them. When this weed-control has finally been achieved, all that will remain to mark the house-site will be a few shady, gnarly old Peppercorn trees. Although these are exotics, at this site they show no tendency to spread but do provide welcome shade for the large resident population of Eastern Grey Kangaroos - and for human visitors too.

I can imagine how much the kangaroos also enjoy this elevated sunny site on cold mornings when there is frost in the hollows, and icy air flowing down the valley of the Yarra - conditions very different from the morning of our TAG.

Janaya was a good mother to us, making sure that everybody remained hydrated! At the end of our TAG Janaya and Cam took us to Pontville, at the confluence of the Mullum and the Yarra.

Pontville was *the* first European dwelling in the district, built by Major Newman, who violently and murderously dispossessed the original inhabitants. Personally I feel that Pontville should be erased from the face of the earth, just leaving the Major's Bhutan Cypress to mark the site of his house, but perhaps it could be argued that there is a place for memorials to our own Holocaust. What do you think?



Thursday 21 March

ON THIS DAY we

gathered to exterminate the last vestiges of inkweed *Phytolacca octandra* at the old house site. We also found and removed weedy *Acacias provissima* and



floribunda, boneseed and a cousin from the Asteraceae family, St. Johns wort, *Hakea salicifolia*, heaps of *Amyrillis belladonna*. All this under the watchful eyes of a flock of Choughs that took advantage of anything tasty we dug up.

At the end of the morning I discovered a cluster of Horehound bugs. Gathered appropriately on a Hore-

hound plant where they tend to overwinter. *Also see photos on the bonus email page.*

Linda

Email photo bonus page

Some shots from the March 21st TAG at Glynn's house site



Left: Jan uses leverage to attack this *Acacia pravissima*, a garden plant that is indigenous as far south as the Strathbogie Range and the Macalister River in Vic.

Below she and Gray remove a rather large *Acacia floribunda* and Lyn digs out some weedy *Asteraceae*.



This Gang gang cockatoo feeding on weedy Hawthorn berries is such a pretty sight. It almost makes a case for keeping a few weeds in the neighbourhood. This one was near my home in Greensborough.

This horehound plant *Marrubium vulgare* is one of the hardy remainders of a garden at Glynn's house site. The orange and black bugs are Horehound bugs *Agonoscelis rutila*. They tend to overwinter in the White Horehound plant.



Your photos can appear on this page (subject to space available) if you email them as follows: lindarogan@netspace.net.au