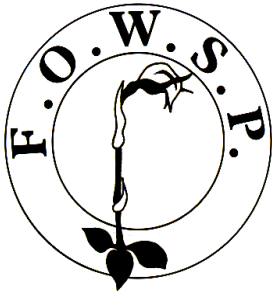


Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Website: www.fowsp.org.au

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/Incorporation No. A0024890C

Editor's Corner

This September newsletter is chock-a-block with FOWSP winter news.

Joan Broadberry shares her delight in seeing Bush Stone-curlews in numbers on a recent trip to Cairns and also shares what she has learned about this endemic bird starting on p. 2.

TAGers, in July, were treated to much that is of interest and Don has let us in on some of the excitement from p. 3.

National Tree Day is an annual event and this year was very successful and led to completion of the Endeavour Bank revegetation project guided by several dedicated FOWSPians, starting p. 4.

P. 5 gives a few snippets about Frogland this winter and p. 6 takes a peek at some of nursery workers.

There are probably many things you don't know about our mystery masked man so check out p. 7 to fill in some of the gaps.



A caterpillar in the first stage of pupation, one of many at Porcupine Gorge.
See also p. 12

Our two new (official) nursery workers are featured on p. 8 and we look forward to hearing and seeing more from them in future months.

For those who may wonder, Peter and I did finally reach outback tropical Queensland. I indulge myself by sharing some of the insects observed and things I have learned about them. I hope you will enjoy seeing some of them on pp. 10-12.

As always, I urge you to think about what you can contribute to future FOWSP newsletters.

Linda Rogan



Who is this masked man approaching some of FOWSP's volunteers? See p. 7.

Deadline for October edition newsletter is

Friday 16 September 2022

contributions can be emailed to Linda Rogan editor@fowsp.org.au
or posted to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Bush Stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*)

The Bush Stone-curlew, sometimes called the Bush Thick-knee, is listed as common in Queensland, endangered in New South Wales, vulnerable in South Australia and threatened in Victoria. On a recent holiday based in Cairns, I was amazed to see them in large numbers in urban areas. At least a hundred roost during the day in the Cairns cemetery. My guess is that they perceive the grey colour of the gravestones as good camouflage (Photos 1 and 2).

Even more astonishing, on a visit to the supermarket in a busy local shopping centre, I counted 17 in a relatively small patch of grass close to a McDonalds sign (Photos 3 and 4). You will notice the trunk of the thin tree is the same in both



photos. I couldn't get all 17 into one image but I counted carefully. It seems Bush Stone-curlews in tropical Australia show a remarkable tolerance for urban environments and proximity to humans.

Historical records indicate that Bush Stone-curlews were widely distributed over almost the whole of Australia (including Tasmania) apart from



arid deserts or rainforests. The question that puzzled me was, "Why are these birds abundant in parts of Cairns and northern Australia, but have almost disappeared from southern Australia?" To answer it, I needed to learn more about these cryptic creatures, beloved of birdwatchers.

Bush Stone-curlews are endemic, nocturnal, ground-dwelling birds. Their favoured habitat is open plains and woodlands, where they stalk slowly at night in search of invertebrates, spiders, frogs, lizards or small mammals. The Stone-curlew's streaked plumage is designed for camouflage. They have prominent white eyebrows, large yellow eyes and long legs. Bush Stone-curlews are capable of flight, but rely on blending into the landscape to evade detection.

During the day, family groups stand quietly in the shade under cover, or squat on the ground in the leaf litter (Photo 5). If disturbed they crouch or walk away slowly, then freeze. This works well against predators that hunt using motion, such as eagles, but not for predators that use scent to hunt such as foxes, dogs and cats.

The Bush Stone-curlew's call is an eerie high-pitched wail. This ghost-like noise is their night time contact call and may be given by several birds in a chorus, culminating in a high-pitched crescendo.



(Continued on page 9)

Restoration progress on old Rifle Range and more TAG 21 July 2022

Led by rangers Phil and Cam, this TAG was a rewarding morning of planting followed by a bonus lesson in protecting and seeking to secure the future of some of our rare and endangered orchids from Cam.



Barrie, Paddy, David, Brian and Cam planting amongst the old pines.

despite deer damage and macropod grazing. The result is an increasingly dense shelter belt. Cam's strategy of nestling new plants within the edge of bracken thickets has been particularly productive for eucalypts and *Leptospermum*.

On a frosty morning, we trekked to the old Rifle Range on Buttermans Track to continue our restoration of this important corridor between the Kinglake National Park and the Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR). Cam revealed that the corridor was being well utilised by wildlife, recently including Lyrebirds which had not been seen in the NCR in the previous 20 years.

Plantings by Parks Vic and FOWSP over the past decade have been very successful,



New plant nestled into the bracken, with a successful previous eucalypt to the right.

TAGers enthusiastically planted and guarded Varnish Wattle *Acacia verniciflua*, Mealy Stringybark *E. cephalocarpa* and Green Scentbark *E. fulgens* before enjoying Lyndy's wonderful morning tea with a hot cuppa in the winter sunshine.



Robyn, David, Brian, Carolyn and Barrie observing Cam's delicate pollination.

plex symbiotic relationship with the grass *Poa sieberiana* and the mycorrhizal fungus in the soil. It is also pollinated by a variety of Thynnid or flower wasps, with their host food plant being the Prickly Tea Tree *Leptospermum continentale*, some of which had been planted previously.

Then came the bonus: Travelling to the Dodd St enclosure, home of the largest remnant population of the critically endangered Wine-lipped Spider Orchid *Caladenia oenochila*. The area was burnt in November 2020 to protect nearby assets, the timing also designed by Cam to stimulate germination of the Wine-lips, which proved remarkably successful. We were able to spot many first and second year plants emerging, the latter hopefully progressing to flowering this Spring. The orchid has a com-



Emerald-lip Greenhood *Pterostylis smaragdyna*

Cam also treated us to sightings of Emerald-lip Greenhoods *Pterostylis smaragdyna* in flower. This endangered orchid has suffered the loss of its native pollinator, a variety of fungus gnat, necessitating hand pollination of each individual flower by Cam.

National Tree Day Success (NTD)

Preparation for National Tree Day commenced well before the day, with Josh and Artur identifying an area for revegetation on Endeavour Bank and Josh setting aside appropriate plants.

TAGers placed the plants on Thursday 28th July and set up stakes and guards for some 500 plants. These included *Carex* species, Swamp Gums and Black Wattle which were planted in a damp gully along the river fringe, and the wooded area also received Man-na Gums, Black Wattle, and a variety of mid-storey shrubs.

On NTD forty-one people of all ages, including families, enthusiastically gathered tools and carefully planted the laid out stock. So quickly in fact that Josh and Artur scrambled to find more plants, stakes and guards and keep ahead of the keen planters. At the end of the day, over 640 plants were homed.



National Tree Day was a family affair at FOWSP this year

Overall a successful day planting with positive comments from happy planters.

(Continued on page 7)

TAGS (Thursday activity groups)				
TAGS meet at the nursery at 9.00 am for a 9.15 am departure. Please remember to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather, and please bring your own filled water bottle. Contact number: 0408 317 327				
1/09/2022	Betton Fence	PHIL	Planting, woody weed control.	Easy
8/09/2022	Craspedia Fence???	PHIL	Weedy wattles	Easy Moderate
15/09/2022	Endeavour Bank	ARTUR	Restoration of enclosures, weeding	Easy
22/09/2022	Pound Bend	DON		Easy
29/09/2022	St Andrews weedy wattle work	KYLIE/ JUSTIN	Sallow wattle, Flinders Wattle, etc	Difficult
6/10/2022	Frogland	LINDA/ MARIE	Ixia removal	Easy Moderate
<p>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.</p> <p>Check the website for any changes at http://fowsp.org.au/activities.php</p>				

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	legality@bigpond.com			

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

Newsletter Team this month: Linda Rogan, Gloria Moore, Lyn Moore

Next Committee Meeting
Date: Tuesday 12 September 2022
Venue: Education Centre, Pound Bend
Time: 19:30 pm sharp

Frogland over winter



In July, I had the chance to work in Frogland between two attempts to travel north. This year the leaves of weedy Ixia were progressed enough to be worth beginning to dig out old and new bulbs. The photo (left) was taken in October and shows the flowers of this bulb. They earn one point from me by being attractive to some of our *Lasioglossum* native bees. However, they don't belong in Frogland and we endeavour to eradicate them. This is a multi-year task and we will welcome any one who is able to assist. We also look forward to some assistance from TAGers later in the spring. By the time it is in full flower, the plant is so plentiful that our best option is to remove all the blooms to prevent any spread by seed.



A somewhat larger pest found its way into Frogland over winter. Thank you to Josh, Phil and Col for managing to carefully remove this fawn before significant damage was done. As the fence appeared intact, it must have been quite a jumper.

Thirdly, Lyndy sent us the photograph on the right to appreciate some of the artwork in Frogland. Lyndy says, 'Our resident artist Carolyn Noel has kindly provided mosaic seats in Frogland for use when the weather improves'.

Linda Rogan



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 every Thursday.

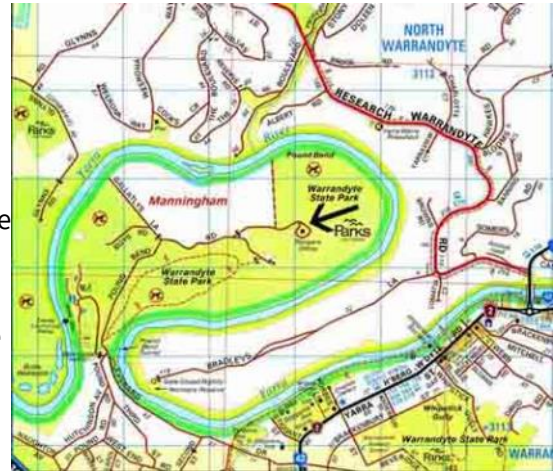
9.30 am to 12.30 pm and

the first Saturday of every month, 9am to 2pm (to coincide with the Warrandyte Market) April to November only.

Closed Christmas and New Years days.

Also closed to customers and volunteers on days of severe weather and on Total Fire Ban Days

Prices: Members \$2.00 Non-members \$2.50



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Winter in the nursery



It was amazing to see frost on plants in the sales area where they are under a mesh roof (above right). This only slowed our crew of volunteers a little as they reported, the soil for the tubes was frozen solid and had to be thawed before they could push in the tender roots of new plants. Perhaps the masks kept noses from freezing.

Lyndy celebrated her birthday over winter as well, an event which was marked by Kay's flower decorated cake.



Some of the happy planters on NTD. Photos Lynda Gilbert

Many thanks go to Josh and Artur and helpers Cathie, Don and Kelvin. It was particularly helpful that the TAG group had set out trees, stakes and guards so all people had to do was pick up tools from the trailer.

Special thanks to Josh, Cathy and Artur for turning up early to register attendees and assist with the parking.

The day ran very smoothly. It was lovely to see the Friends of the Yarra Valley turned up to help as well and also Janaya O'Dempsey, our previous ranger, now working for DELWP on cultural heritage issues.



Josh inspected the result of the day's work, and saw that it was good.

Mystery masked man is former I SPY

It was a pleasant surprise when Ben and Margaret strolled into the FOWSP nursery on a chill but sunny day in July.

Ben Gotlib is very fond of the Friends of Warrandyte State Park - he admires their community spirit and their purpose. Ben has been a supporter since 1988. He will be 88 this year. Happy Birthday Ben!

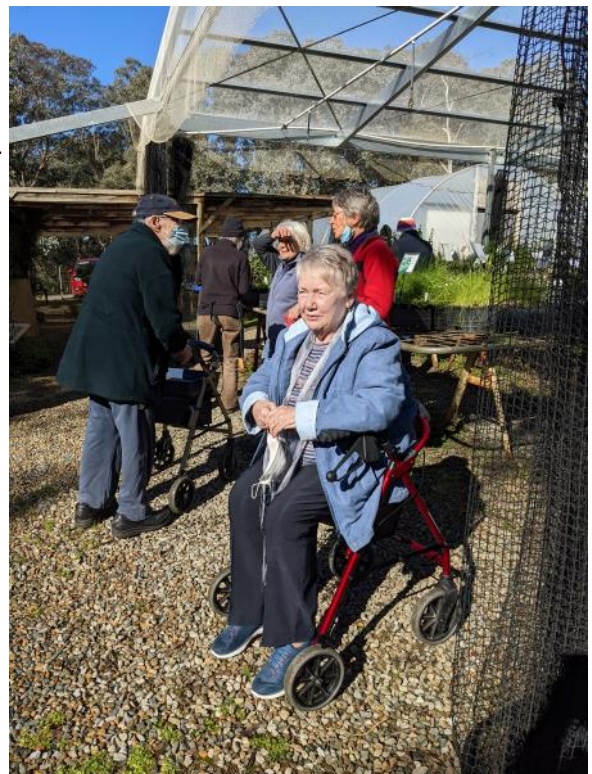
He has been unable to come to the nursery for the past 8 months as he had a severe infection which meant he spent 5 weeks in hospital, followed by daily visits from the nurse at home to administer antibiotics near his heart. He is now doing physiotherapy to recover his strength. Margaret's health is not good either, but they hope once the weather gets warmer, they will be able to visit the nursery again.

Ben and Margaret have planted hardenbergia and running post-man in their front garden and are hoping for a good show this year. Margaret has observed many birds and insects visiting their garden, including King Parrots and Spotted Pardalotes which appear to be nesting.

They planted a Queensland *Stenocarpus sinuatus* "Firewheel" tree 25 years ago and this year for the first time were rewarded with a flower, which is 10 centimetres across.

Thank you Ben and Margaret for your continued support of FOWSP and for your kind donation which will be used to purchase soil.

Lynda Gilbert



Margaret pauses for a requested photo while Ben is attracted elsewhere.

Our New Nursery Staff

Congratulations to Lynda Chambers and Patrick Leahy. Out of 13 candidates, there were 5 who were interviewed because of their excellent qualifications and experience. Two candidates who were not successful indicated they would be happy to work for the nursery if required. The committee thanked Gray, Cathy and Josh for their commitment to this task and staff appointments made.



Many of the nursery volunteers will already have met Patrick aka Paddy (above left), who is keen to learn more from all the experience FOWSPians possess and to contribute to the nursery. You will also be aware that Lynda (above right) has done an excellent job of filling in the gap during the months where we were short of staff. It is great to welcome both now as official on-going nursery staff members. The editor will endeavour to get a few words from each of them for future newsletters.

Words by Lyndy Gilbert and Linda Rogan

(Continued from page 3)

Some of us were further rewarded with an extension to One Tree Hill, on Beardsell's Track no less, home of the Dunnart Affordable Housing Estate (a previous newsletter story), to further hand-pollinate a couple more precious Emerald-lips in flower. This area, recovered from potential subdivision and development of an allocated water catchment, is an important area of Silurian geology and habitat to a range of Northern Victoria plants not occurring elsewhere this far south. Cam's carefully tended and protected patch of Rosella Spider Orchids *Caladenia rosella*, also critically endangered, was very exciting to view with many new leaves and flower buds evident. Our last treat for the day was checking the Dunnart homes, to find not one but four Eastern Small-eyed Snakes *Cryptophis nigrescens*.



Three of the Eastern Small-eyed Snakes
Cryptophis nigrescens.

An informative and exciting day out. Thanks Cam and Phill!

And thanks to Don for these photos and the report.

(Continued from page 2)

Rendered as *weer-loo*, it is occasionally heard during the day.

Most Stone-curlew pairs stay together in the same territory throughout their life. They prefer 'untidy' landscapes covered in fallen timber and debris. However, it seems that, even in Victoria and NSW, they utilize open grassy areas for their daytime roost if there are adjacent treed or woodland areas in which to feed at night. Open roosting areas provide high visibility for predators and, as already mentioned, they have incredible tolerance for the presence of humans. In Queensland and right across the north, there are many reports of Stone-curlews being long-term residents of backyards, caravan parks and sports grounds.

Bush Stone-curlews lay their eggs in a shallow scrape in the ground. In many cases the same nesting sites are re-used in successive years but may be abandoned if the surrounding grass becomes too tall, or disturbance of their nests is too severe. The eggs are mottled grey-brown and are incubated by both parents, with the off-duty bird usually standing guard nearby. The chicks can walk almost as soon as they hatch. The pair often lay two clutches of eggs in a season.

Referring back to my question, the answer, sadly, is the same one that applies to the decline in numbers of nearly all wildlife species, both in Australia and overseas. Bush Stone-curlew numbers have crashed in the south principally due to habitat destruction. The clearing of land for agriculture, the planting of crops, mining, logging and the expansion of towns and cities has led to the removal of a huge amount of the pre-European woodland. Paddocks used for grazing have been planted with exotic grasses and left with few remaining trees so that fallen branches and leaf litter are minimal. Further hazards are the disturbance of nests and eggs by stock and more frequent bushfires.

Tropical Australia is, as yet, not nearly as closely settled as are the southern states. Despite land clearing for crops such as sugar cane and cattle grazing, much of its forest remains. Even in urban areas, there is often a patchwork of woodland. Cairns has many strips of forest, channels and streams crisscrossing the suburbs. Near the shopping centre I visited, a network of waterways and bushland provide a suitable habitat for Stone-curlews to feed at night as do the often untidy tropical gardens of the residents. They choose their daytime roost on nearby lawns in order to watch for predators. Of course the warmer climate means that insects, frogs, reptiles etc are more plentiful year round, another important point of difference to southern Australia particularly during the colder months.

As well as loss of habitat, critical to the demise of Bush Stone-curlews in the southern states, there has been predation by foxes, cats and dogs. European Red Foxes do not do well in the tropics. The accompanying map showing the distribution of the European Red Fox indicates that they are largely absent from the north. Predation by dogs and cats and disturbance of nests are still present, but the severe toll caused by foxes is missing.

Unfortunately, in this era of Anthropocene, finding a large population of any bird, animal or insect is something to enjoy but, sadly, not something to be complacent about. Bush Stone-curlews will face many problems in the tropics as the human population grows and land clearing, predation, nest disturbance and bushfires increase.

As I finished writing this article, I opened *The Age* newspaper and read in the *State of the Environment* report that a panel of 32 experts listed land clearing as a top cause of wildlife losses. The report said that between 2000 and 2017, there were 7.7 million hectares of land cleared across Australia (nearly the size of Tasmania) and 93% of the vegetation was felled without federal approvals for threatened-species habitats. Good luck Bush Stone-Curlews.



Map of European Red Foxes distribution in Australia.

Joan Broadberry (All photos unless otherwise indicated: J. Broadberry)



Orange Spider Wasp *Cryptocheilus bicolor*, family Pompilidae

This colourful female was nearly twice the size of her mate. They were observed in Julia Creek in August. Later she will drag spiders much bigger than herself, such as huntsmen, to her nest, often over very rough terrain. The wasp paralyses the spider by stinging it in its underside. The prey is then dragged to a burrow which has been dug by the female using shovel-like hairs on its front legs. The wasp then lays an egg on the spider, and conceals the nesting chamber at the end of the burrow. According to Wikipedia, when the grub hatches it feeds on the spider before pupating in a thin silky cocoon in the cell .

Linda Rogan

September is the month for the Platy-project

This September take part in the **platy-project month of action**, and you'll help researchers understand more about this elusive animal, and how we can better protect it. Warrandytians and other river-side FOWSPians are well placed to participate.

Just google Platyproject

<https://platy-project.acf.org.au>



Are your subs due??

Please check the message on the email you receive with the newsletter link . If they are due soon a message such as below will be included in the email.:

'Please note that, according to our records, your Membership is due to expire on . Please click on the link below to re-new your Membership.

http://fowsp.org.au/membership.php?member_id=&membership_renewal=Yes

Of course, if this matter has been attended to recently, please disregard.'

FOWSP Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

.....

Telephone no.

Email

Membership (family) \$30
 Concession \$15

Newsletter by email (tick box)

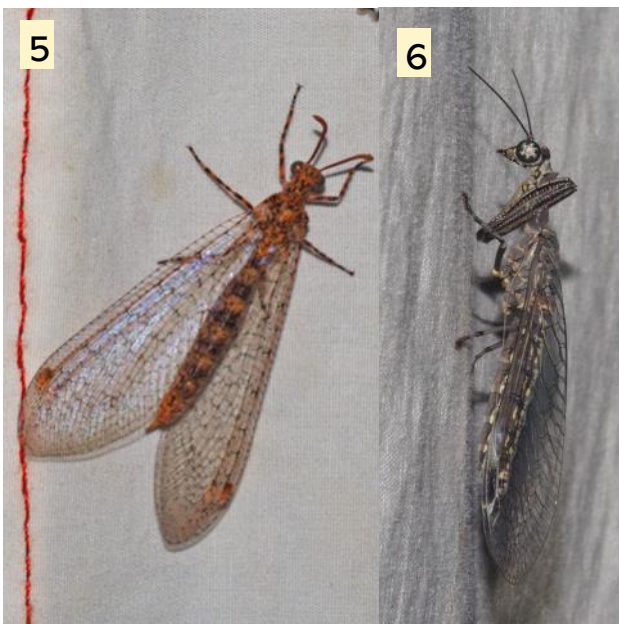
Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or renew on the website www.fowsp.org.au with the option of direct deposit payment.

Caper white butterflies *Belenois java*

These were definitely the most common butterfly seen on a recent Queensland trip. Most impressive, at Porcupine Gorge, a thorny, leafless, dead-appearing shrub (possibly a caper species) was surrounded by a halo of freshly emerged butterflies. A closer look at the shrub revealed it was dotted with live pupae, empty pupal cases and mating pairs, sometime triplets (1), of butterflies. Later in the day about 100m away there were two still-leaved but badly chewed small trees of another kind, which were studded with live feeding caterpillars (3) and pupae (4) and also haloed by the flight of live white butterflies (2). I have yet to confirm but think the latter trees were native sandalwood and the caterpillars and pupae were caper whites which (according to <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/>) also feed upon Australian Sandalwood *Santalum spicatum*.



Also at Porcupine Gorge, I had the opportunity to test what insects would be attracted at night. There were many interesting moths but I was particularly impressed by some Neuroptera (lacewings 5,6,7) and mantids. The first (5) is the adult form of one of the antlion and owlfly group, which are actively predatory as larvae and adults. Numbers 6 and tiny 7 are also predatory lacewings in a group called the Mantispidae for the forearms resemblance to mantises. Eight is not yet identified but looks like a miniature or nanomantid while (9) is a true mantis, perhaps the common Australian mantis *Orthodera ministralis*. Linda R



Your photos can appear on this page (subject to space available) if you email them as follows: editor@fowsp.org.au



Wildflowers at Welford National Park near Jundah Queensland included pale coloured wild parsnip *Trachymene cyanantha*, which surprisingly to me is closely related to the ivy family, pink mulla mulla *Ptilotus leucocoma* and *Brunonia* which may be *B. australis* if not a specific northern species.

Linda Rogan