

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Chrysocephalum semipapposum*

Common name: Clustered Everlasting

Family: Astereaceae

Flowering Period: October to May

A tufted perennial herb of numerous erect leafy stems produced from creeping underground woody stems (rhizomes), forming a clumping tussock, 0.5 metre high by 1 - 2 metre wide.

Found in a wide variety of habitats, from box and red gum woodlands and damp & dry sclerophyll forests. The plant grows in a range of soil types & conditions, including moist to dry soils, full sun or dappled shade.

Several forms exist in the Bend of Islands, showing variability in form & habit. The one described here is found on dry escarpments and is distinguished by smaller plants with green narrow small leaves, rather than the more robust leafy form with grey to grey green leaves.

The main stems are long with short lateral branches, with the narrow linear stalk less leaves scattered up the stems and curving down slightly from the stem. The stems and leaves are sticky. The leaves are narrow, green and up to 10 mm long

Each leafy stem bears a terminal flat cluster of small upright bell-shaped bright yellow, stalked, everlasting daisy flower heads, each about 5 mm long.

The flowers are colourful and long-lasting, providing nectar for butterflies and moths and the seeds provide food for other insects.



Optimum flowering period is from early Spring to early Summer, though flowering can extend to Autumn.

After flowering, the plant can be cut back to new growth at the base.

Propagation is done from seed or cutting.

Cric Henry

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter. I am delighted that we have an energetic and talented team consisting of Janet Mattiske (Editor) and Greg Phillips (Design and Layout Editor) who have put together a great newsletter following the retirement of John McCallum who did such a great job for many years.

As well as a major change for the newsletter, our website is up for major refurbishment – a project that was prompted by our website host no longer hosting community websites. The revamp is expected to take some months, so please be patient while we work behind the scenes to unveil what we hope will be a better way of communicating with members as well as the broader community. A sneak preview is available at www.bendofislands.wordpress.com Thanks to Michael Scroggie for driving this change.

Continuing this theme of communication, we are negotiating with Nillumbik Council to improve the signs at each end of the area. As part of this improvement we will acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Bend of Islands – the Wurundjeri people. Keep your eye out for the change.

The Committee is busy organising the many activities that keep the Bend of Islands a great place to live; many of which you will read about in this Newsletter. The Committee consists of Neill Kamminga, Vice President; Rudi Pauli, Treasurer; Gavin Masters, Secretary; Felicity Rose, Minutes Secretary; Liz Mildenhall, Property and Community Involvement; Deirdre Lucas; Jo Henry; Mike Pelling; Leanne and Phil Weizbowski; and I am pleased that Jess Rae will be joining the Committee as a new member.

Thank you to all who contributed to this Newsletter. Keep writing and sending me your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands.

Memberships were due at the end of last year – if you've overlooked it please join now.

Robyn Duff
President

WELCOME

Welcome to new BICA Members Sally and Nathan in Upper Catani and Flavia, Graham, Corrado and Renzo in Henley Road Extension, Andrew Mackie, and Jules Burns in Henley Road.

We wish you all happy adventures in the Bend of Islands and it is great to have you join us on BICA.

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee:
bicacomm@gmail.com

Tom Fisher Reports on CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY



Led by Asher and Charlie Rae (and their parents) and Jarrah and Ned Pauli (plus dad), a Benders crew bent their backs once again to work on the Wurundjeri property in Healesville.

Elder and Chef Dave Wandin provided a briefing to begin with, telling us about the history of the School of Army Health that had been on the land and his own family's connection with it.

The land has attracted rubbish vandals for years, despite attempts by the Wurundjeri to discourage such visitors. So the focus of our work this year was to concentrate on areas behind the old hall and down along the drive. We picked up the garden varieties of rubbish, including the usual plastic bottles, tins, bits of Styrofoam, paper, tyres (about a dozen), a syringe, a toilet seat, a washing machine, and a spring mattress, among other artefacts. We wondered if we had been preceded by someone attempting the clean up task using a vacuum cleaner, which also had been abandoned and needed to be taken away.

Dave again put on a barbeque of exotic meats, including emu (burgers and steaks), kangaroo, crocodile and venison, complemented by salads provided by Kellie, Deana and Hannah

In addition to families mentioned above, other participants were Wolfgang and Marie Krause, Leanne and Phil Wierzbowski, Tserin Wright and Tom Fisher. We joined by local resident Tess Hughes and Nick Reid, an outdoor photographer from Croydon, both of whom had seen the site advertised on the web. As usual, back home Rosemary West monitored the Henley Road extension roadside, recycling her old recycling bag.



KID'S EVENT

Written by Arlo Doyle, (6yrs) about the Kids Event

I went to the kids' event. We went on the scavenger hunt, I found lots of feathers, two very long leaves and I actually found some seedpods too! We played a game; it was about people who protect the country. We had to look if anything was going wrong. We had to run together to 'Sugarloaf', 'Fire shed', 'Bush', and 'River', and we had to protect the Kangaroo. It was lots of Fun

Wonderful fun was had by everyone small and big at the Kids Event on Sunday afternoon. Twenty-five kids and a big bunch of parents took part in an afternoon of face painting, animal gait races, and a scavenger hunt that even saw tiny insects captured, viewed and freed. There was music from many nations, yummy tucker, lots of prizes and a quiz where you could even cheat!

What came out of the afternoon was another reminder that the people in the Bend of Islands make it a very special place. Thank you to Rosemary & Irena for all their imagination and organisation; to Rodrigo, Kurt and Luke for leading the fun games and making music and to Aeshna and Meika for organising the face painting. Lastly, to all the terrific kids who stunned us with their knowledge of weeds and plants and bird calls; who sang and scavenged and made music and joined in together, thanks for coming.

Answers to Rosemary's question "what's best about living in the Bol?" included hearing nature around us, no traffic, the bush and all the animals and "what's worst?" Birds waking you up, rats and "Nobody ever knows where you live!"

A big number of kids also took part in the Canoe Run on a beautiful day with no mishaps. Thank you to Tarquin. Thank you to Tom for organising the Clean up Australia effort which was held again this year at Healesville.

Good on you kids from Bol. Hope to see you all at the next event.

Liz Mildenhall (Community Involvement)



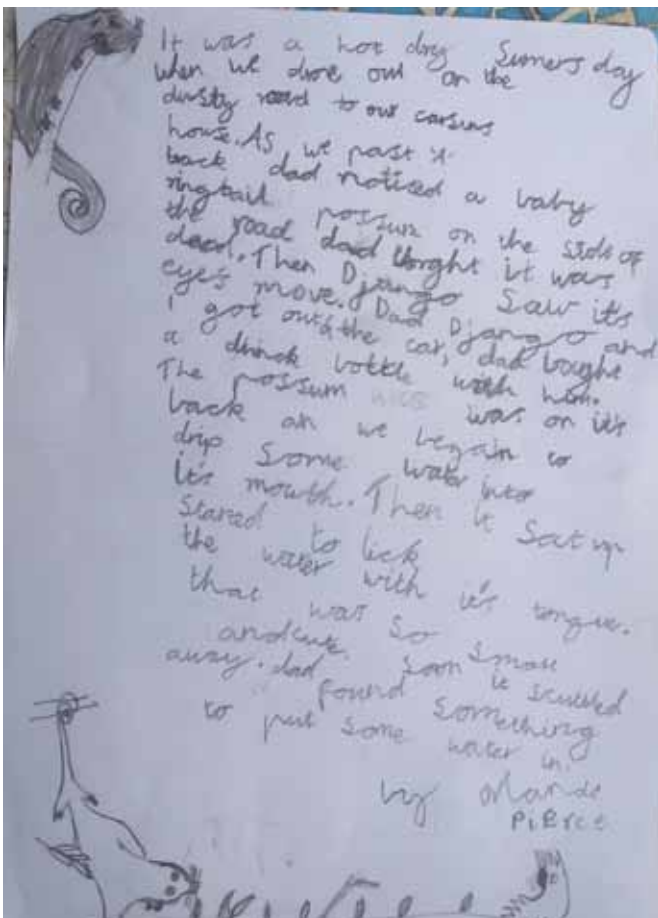
DID YOU KNOW?

Before white settlement, the Wurundjeri people lived in the Yarra Valley, country that included the Bend of Islands. There is still evidence of Wurundjeri life and culture within the Bend, including archaeological remains and at least one canoe tree.



kids art

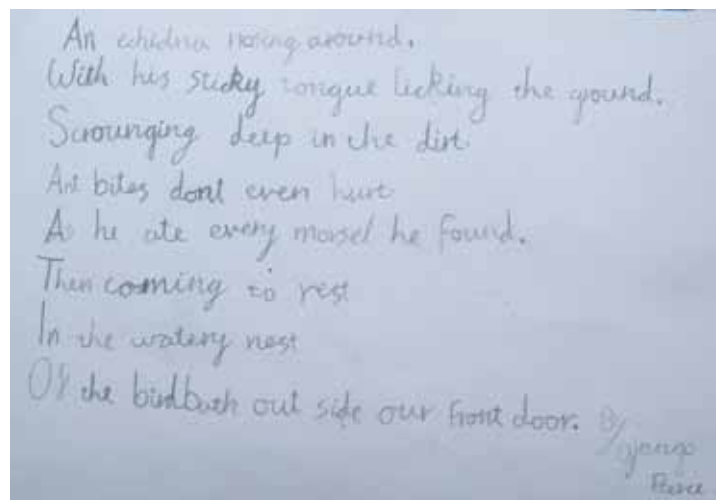
Some great Bend of Islands themed artwork from the kids of the Bend



Orlando Pierce's account of his encounter with a Ring-tail possum



Django Pierce's amazing echidna art and a poem to match



Zahava's beautiful drawing of the King Parrot she saw in the Bend

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bend of Islands is located within the Shire of Nillumbik's Green Wedge zone and is gazetted as Schedule 2, Special Use Zone, (SUZ2), Environmental Living. The Bend of Islands or "Environmental Living zone" combines environmental conservation and residential use in a rather unique way, almost like living in a National Park.



2014 BICA CALENDAR

February

9 Bird Walk (7:30 am)
13 Committee Meeting
15 Café Benders
16 Landcare
23 Canoe Run

March

2 Clean Up Australia Day
9 Bird Walk (8:00 am)
13 Committee Meeting
15 Café Benders
16 Landcare
23 Kids Event

April

6 Flora Walk
6 Daylight savings ends
10 Committee Meeting
13 Bird Walk (7:30 am)
19 Café Benders Easter
20 Landcare Easter
27 Bike Ride

May

3 Open Artist Studios
8 Committee Meeting
10 Open Artist Studios
11 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
17 Café Benders
17 Firehouse Cinema
18 Landcare
25 The Big Walk

June

1 Moss/Fungi Walk
8 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
12 Committee Meeting
14 Café Benders
15 Landcare
22 History of Artists in the Bend
"Art at the heart of the ELZ"



July

5 Trivia Night
10 Committee Meeting
13 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
19 Café Benders
20 Landcare with Co-op
27 General Meeting

August

3 Flora Walk
10 Bird Walk (8:30 am)
14 Committee Meeting
16 Café Benders
16 Firehouse Cinema
Landcare

September

11 Committee Meeting
14 Bird Walk (8:00 am)
20 Café Benders
21 Landcare

October

5 Flora Walk
5 Daylight savings start
9 Committee Meeting
12 Bird Walk (8:00 am)
18 Café Benders
19 Landcare
26 Pub Walk

November

9 Bird Walk (7:30 am)
13 Committee Meeting
15 Café Benders
16 Landcare
22 Open Artist Studios
22 Night Event
23 BICA AGM
23 BICA Subs Due
29 Open Artist Studios

December

4 Committee Meeting
14 Bird Walk (7:30 am)
20 Café Benders Christmas
(evening)
21 Landcare



From the Fire Brigade

Our Christmas Hills Brigade Captain, Dianne Simmons has this to say.....

The Fire Brigade used to go out to about 30 calls a year - in the last few years we have been going to 30 calls in the fire season alone. New ways of managing fires means agencies try to hit any fires that start with a lot of resources, and try to put them out before they can develop. This means we are called to support other Brigades a bit more. However, for Brigade members, it is pretty obvious that we are seeing a lot more fire activity generally.

The increased fire activity can be a challenge for the Brigade, as we need enough members to be able to respond to fires 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The increased fire activity also has implications for the community as well. We used to think the chance of a fire starting in our area was fairly low, though the effects of a local fire might be significant. Now we need to plan expecting to have more fires locally - and we have had a few significant fires close by, such as Ironbark Drive, Nicholas Lane, and Koo's Road.

Even if you choose not to accept the link between human activity and a changing climate, science tells us that we can expect an increase in bad fire weather associated with climate change. The reality is that climate has, and most likely will, continue to change to be hotter and drier, with extreme fire weather becoming more common.

Everyone in high risk bushland areas will need to adjust to the new reality of more frequent and more intense fires. The challenge is to prepare our selves, our properties and particularly our houses, so they are better prepared to survive the passage of bushfires. Balancing fire protection and conservation values is going to be harder than ever in our risk-averse society.

CAFE BENDERS

Come and join us for Coffee and Cake at Cafe Benders, held every 3rd Saturday of the month, starting about 10.30 am at the south Station, 6 Catani Blvd. Bend of Islands.



Thank you to our local CFA – Bend of Islands

On the 14th of January 2014 the fire at Kangaroo Ground had been burning for a few days. It was a 40 plus degrees day and the Fire Rating was raised to "severe". In those circumstances our families from 51 Ironbark Road trigger their Fire Plan, which effectively is to leave early. With so many small kids on the property and no proper equipment to attempt to fight a fire our best option is to leave as early as possible. We sent the usual text to our neighbours and left for the day.

I had been following the fire at KG all day through the Fire Ready App. Somewhere at around 6:30 pm the advice had been downgraded and the fire seemed to be more under control. It was then that I decided to switch my phone off and go to my aikido training. Because it was so late and the fire was still not called "Safe", we had decided to spend the night with my parents in law in Glen Waverley.

At 8pm when I finished training and turned my phone on again, it was with great surprise that I received a notification of a fire in the Bend of Islands. My heart pumped really fast and then I saw the details in the app that the fire had started "200 m from Home".... Gulp! I thought it might have been one of our neighbour's houses.

Suddenly two text messages and one with photos from Kurt showing me that in fact it was our property which had received the incredibly prompt attention of several CFA trucks, a helicopter and a couple of police cars. I could not believe it! Our neighbours Ray and AB had been warned by the helicopter to evacuate the area when the CFA trucks stormed down Ironbark Road towards our property.

Continued on next page





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Thank you to our local CFA

What an incredible job guys!! To our surprise our two sheds caught on fire but because of the amazing intervention of the local CFA and other units nothing else in the property was destroyed. Even the canvas yurt that is a few meters from the shed didn't catch fire, although it is clear that a few minutes more and it would have (several embers on the roof clearly showed that the fire had found its next victim). The CFA acted promptly and efficiently in preventing the fire from extending further. Even a containment line was perfectly created around the fire area to prevent the rest of the tea-tree from catching fire. Thanks to this amazing effort our only losses were the two sheds with clothes, power tools, a tepee and other valuable but replaceable items which the insurance has already taken care of.

The mystery of what started the fire still remains..... In the beginning there was the suspicion of an arsonist (hence the police cars that came to the property) but this was not further investigated. Since nobody was on our property at the time it was hard to see any suspicious activity. Other theories include the explosion of some camping canisters which we did have in the shed or even the self-igniting linseed oil rag that may have been left in there. Either way, possibly the clearest lesson is that on 40+ degree days, it may be a good idea to check the position and status of any flammable materials in your sheds AND leave the door of the shed open (and windows if your shed has some), so the heat doesn't build up inside (a 40+ degree day outside can easily climb the temperature to 50+ inside of the shed).

The most important thing for us is that nobody in our property or in Bend of Islands got hurt and that is thanks to the commitment, dedication and professionalism of the CFA and specially our local brigade.

Thank you very much from all of us at 51 Ironbark Road!
Irena, Sh'ana, Kurt and Rodrigo.

Fire-Scape

Managing Fire in Your Landscape.

In mid March 2014, members of Christmas Hills Fire Brigade and Christmas Hills Landcare met with CFA representatives responsible for a new CFA initiative called Fire-Scape.

Fire-Scape is the CFA's 'response to finding a balance between fire safety and fire ecology'. The new community-based pilot program encourages local groups of residents to become familiar, and therefore confident, with using fire across a landscape-scale as a management tool for both risk reduction and vegetation improvement.

The Fire-Scape program was a recommendation from the Royal Commission into the Black Saturday fires. It is closely modelled on a successful program from NSW called 'Hot Spots' (<http://hotspotsfireproject.org.au/>). Fire-Scape aims to enable residents to plan strategically for fire, improve local fire knowledge and enable sustainable land management. It is that new, there isn't even a website yet!

The program comprises two workshops and a demonstration burn. The first workshop addresses topics such as developing a fire management plan in cooperation with your neighbours, risk management and bushfire protection, fire behaviour, and an introduction to fire ecology. During this session a field visit is organised and a community burn strategy developed. The second workshop seems more 'hands on' where the group begins site preparation and hazard assessment, learns about the local fire history, is given an introduction to monitoring the site post-burn and completes the community burn strategy. The final component is the planned burn, usually in autumn, and conducted by the local fire brigade with workshop participants in attendance.

The program is currently being trialled at Fish Creek in South Gippsland where 6 properties totalling 15 ha are involved, including some that have not seen fire for over 60 years, and in Barongarook, near Colac (200 ha).

While the scheme is in its early days, there are many reasons to consider implementing it both in the Bend and Christmas Hills. This program would allow for a planned approach to burn offs that could have sustainable ecological benefits rather than 'just' for hazard reduction purposes.

Certainly in the Bend, a community 'fire plan' could enhance our Land Management Plan and the use of fire would help manage and restore our landscape and biodiversity. The increasingly rapid spread of woody plants, especially Burgan up our gullies, and choking grasslands could be a target of controlled burns and trials to see what is effective.

Fire-Scape can provide a valuable opportunity for the fire brigade and the community to work together to improve the safety of the community while enhancing the environmental values of the area.

This is an exciting project and we will keep you up to date on developments in future newsletters and emails.

Peter Mildenhall and Deirdre Lucas



Get to know your own part of the Bend of Islands Bush

It is April and with the days noticeably becoming shorter we are prompted to notice seasonal changes. What are we observing in the bush around us and what might we find if indeed we finally get some really good rain?

You may have already noted that the **Red Ironbarks** are not far off flowering and that the **Red Wattlebirds** are starting to become more raucous as they take up their territories. If we have a prolific flowering of these trees the other bird to look out for in the eucalypts is the **Yellow tufted Honeyeater**. We are then also likely to see the **Flying-foxes** which fly in to feed at night.

If we do get some good rains while the soil is still warm, the many varieties of Fungi will be there to see. These are a photographer's delight so try and identify as many as you can find. If you don't have a good reference book, Google <http://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/> or <http://www.fungimap.org.au/>



Red Wattlebird



Yellow Tufted Honeyeater



Usually people think of Orchids flowering in spring. However in the Bend of Islands there are several varieties that we can look out for over the next few months.

A walk through your Bush block may reveal some plants starting to flower, bringing it all back to life after the dry burning summer. You may find ...



Autumn Bird-orchid



Sundew



Common Heath

Don't forget to look out for the myriad of bugs, spiders and beetles that all make the wonderful diversity that is "The Bend of Islands Bush".



Sharp Midge-orchid



Red-tip Greenhood



Rusty Anthelid



Cowboy Beetle

Keep exploring Janet Mattiske. Photos by Frank Pierce.



Breeding Record for White-throated Nightjar in the Bend

In mid February a pair of White-throated Nightjars was accidentally flushed from the ground exposing the chick they were brooding on a north facing slope in Box Ironbark Forest. The chick was estimated to be only 1 or 2 days old at the time. Fortunately the parents returned to their brooding duties and it has been a privilege to monitor the juvenile's progress. The birds were cautiously searched for every few days and, when found, they were photographed from as far away as possible, using a long zoom lens or through the telescope. The birds move location daily once the chick has hatched. There were many days when they were not found which always raised the prospect of predation by fox.

The juvenile fledged on about 12/3 but was with the female adult each time it was found after that. It was observed on 7/4/14 (Newsletter cutoff date) but is expected to migrate to New Guinea within a few days.

This species is amazingly cryptic. They roost on the open ground by day and feed on insects between dusk

and dawn. Their single egg is laid on bare open ground. They rely on camouflage to escape detection and are very difficult to find. Cautious searching is required to avoid flushing them before they are seen on the ground. They fly gracefully on long silent wings. During brooding, the unoccupied adult will make decoy flights to distract attention from the location of the chick. When in trees they perch longitudinally on branches making them difficult to detect.

The birds that breed in Southern Australia migrate to northern Queensland or New Guinea for the winter, flying over the sedentary population in southern Queensland where there is a sufficient supply of winter insects for them to avoid migration.

This breeding event is a tribute to the ELZ. The chances of success would have been much slimmer if there were dogs and cats in the area.

Frank Pierce



White-throated Nightjar Female and Juvenile 2014-03-26



White-throated Nightjar Hatchling 2014-02-16



White-throated Nightjar Perched on branch 2014-03-10



In the nick of time

After that once in a hundred year heat wave, we've noticed a change in the tone of the conversations coming from the roof cavity of our house. That familiar scratching and chirruping noise followed by the flapping of tiny wings has gone, replaced by a larger slow moving sound above the knotted pine lining boards of our bedroom ceiling.

We listen in silence as the mystery creature emerges out of the roof space into the night air. Our new mystery wild thing sounds like some sort of prankster, hopping, jumping and running in fast bursts over our iron rooftop. We wonder if it could be bats on steroids.

You know we've pretty well got used to the idea of the wild life around here getting up close to share our space in the Environmental Living Zone. "How about that wombat in the kitchen?" broke in Sandy. I was about to mention that kookaburra that flew into our bedroom one summer afternoon then perched on the end of the bed and wouldn't leave for ages. Sandy took a deep breath and smiled, "You know magpie beats them all, that bird was more at home than any of the wild things around here." There was more hopping and skipping on the roof then silence. After a long pause I reflected; "In through the front door magpie strode as if that bird owned the joint and without hesitation positioned himself at attention at the fridge door, as if to say, "What's for dinner pal?"

This is starting to sound like a home invasion by the wild things. I got up and closed the door with a loud thud. "Sorry that was a bit heavy handed." Its twilight and I think I can hear a strange hollow watery scratching sound breaking through the tranquil murmur of the distant river and Tree cricket chorus. What a weird sound. Scratch, scratch, splash, splash, splash, muffled splash, splash echoed through the house, weirdly metallic like a ghostly whisper. A search is on and Sandy has found the aquatic ghostly presence in the down pipe connected to the guttering on the corner of the house.

Quickly a ladder is found and the gutter is checked in the gloom. The wire leaf guard has been dislodged and our ghostly companion has fallen into the down pipe. "Hang on, help is on the way!" Splashing and scratching is more frantic by now as we try a broom handle, no luck, it's too short. Splashing



is getting weaker and weaker, try something else, something easier to climb up. A frantic search continues around the house for the right object to lower down the pipe to save the drowning creature. There it was rolled up in the twilight gloom under the sink, a lifeline! Yes, the length was right, a white fluffy rope with a knot tied in the end of it. We lower it down slowly and felt like yelling out, "Grab the rope, we'll pull you out!" We thought it, and just maybe the mystery wild thing read our thoughts and acted. The white rope tightened and we took up the slack. No sound at all from inside the pipe as we slowly pulled on the rope, up, up, up, until suddenly out popped the scrawny mystery creature. The wet bedraggled adventurer slowly dragged itself away from us along a bed of dry leaves in the bottom of the gutter. By this time the night was dark, a light cool breeze had got up from the southwest. The mystery creature had retreated a safe distance from us hugging the dry leaves to its wet body. Perched on top of the ladder I strained my eyes to make out what we had rescued. "Here's the torch," Sandy called from below, a sense of urgency in her voice. There it was in the yellow torch light our mystery new resident from the roof cavity above our bedroom. Exhausted, wet and bedraggled with the hint of a silly smile on its face, was crouched a Brush-tailed phascogale.

M. D. Eames
March 2014

Flying Foxes in the Bend

On 21/5/13 at 9pm Grey-headed Flying-foxes were heard in the flowering Ironbarks at our house on the Co-op's C Track. This was the only night I heard them in 2013. Val Himmelreich heard them on B Track one night in early April, when only a few trees had started to flower. The Ironbarks did not flower profusely in 2013 so there were not the regular nightly visits of the Flying-foxes that have occurred in some previous years when the flowering has been profuse. These isolated records indicate that the Flying-foxes perhaps send out scouting parties to check the status of this potential food resource. **Frank Pierce**

DID YOU KNOW?

Have you heard a Lyrebird calling recently? Since July 2000, some 240 sightings have been recorded in our area. These are all valuable records as they form concrete evidence of the importance of the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor.



BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since April 2013.

Lyrebirds:-

16 new records in the ELZ have been reported from Mia Stephens, K Attwood, J Mattiske, J&M McCallum, N Harvey, D Osler and F Pierce. The details of all Lyrebird records reported since July 2000 will soon be on the new BICA Website.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. The records are valuable as they form concrete evidence that the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor is working and that Stevenson Creek is an important part of this link.

Bird Survey Highlights:-

The June Bird Survey was a good one at Yanakie. The 'bird of the day' was a **Square-tailed Kite**, a new record for the ELZ. This species is listed by DSE as vulnerable. Other highlights were **Peregrine Falcon**, **Rose Robin**, **Lyrebird** and **Spotless Crane**.

On the February Bird Survey we recorded 41 species in the Catani Blvde area. The 'bird of the day' was a **Black Kite**, a new record for the ELZ. Other highlights were **Tree Martin** and **Fairy Martin**; neither had previously been recorded on an actual survey. Five species of raptor were recorded.

Other Interesting Observations:-

On 23/5/13 at about 9am a flock of 80 to 100 **Yellow-Tailed Black-cockatoos** flew over our house on the Co-op, heading towards the southeast.

A pair of **Tawny Frogmouths** adopted a tree just west of Pierre and Caroline's on the Co-op for their winter roost. It was an exposed site and they seemed to only use it when the weather was good.

On 27/11/13 Gavin Masters recorded hearing the distinctive call a **Dollarbird** on the river at Gongflers Peninsula. Unfortunately the bird was not seen despite several follow-up searches. This species was recorded further upstream on the Yarra, near Healesville, a week or so earlier.

Powerful Owls again nested on the Gongflers Peninsula last season and 2 healthy juveniles were a delight to see on the Bird Survey.

Lewin's Rail was first recorded in the area in early 2013. This season it has been typically elusive but has been photographed once and heard on several occasions.

The Birds Section of the new BICA Website is under preparation and will be available soon. It will have lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as an up to date summary of our on-going bird survey.

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce, (97120237), or email – jmandfp@bigpond.com - especially Lyrebirds.

All are welcome to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month. Times are as per the BICA Calendar.

Frank Pierce



Powerful Owl Juveniles

Gongflers Peninsula 2013-12-08

DRAGONFLY NOTES

New records for the ELZ

This summer season 4 additional species were recorded in the Bend of Islands bringing the total for recent records in the area to 33

The new species were: **Southern Riffle Darner** *Notoaeschna sagittata*; **Red & Blue Damsel** *Ischnura heterosticta*; **Southern Evening Darner** *Telephlebia brevicauda* and **Swamp Darner** *Austroaeschna parvistigma*.

Southern Riffle Darner - Nine adults and 40 exuvia (expended larval shells) were found between 25/11/2013 and 23/01/2014. These records are a significant extension to this dragonfly's documented range, which did not previously include the Yarra catchment. Three adults were recorded on the Co-op, at least 1.8km from the Yarra, which is a significantly greater distance from the riparian habitat than suggested in the literature.

Red & Blue Damsel was recorded on the river bank during a Bird Survey.

Southern Evening Darner and **Swamp Darner** were both recorded along Stevenson Creek on the Co-op.

The **Royal Tigertail** and **Common Shutwing** records of last year have now been documented as range extensions for these species. Both species have been recorded again this season.

The Dragonfly page, on the website, has been upgraded with these new finds.

Frank Pierce



Darner, Southern Riffle. *Notoaeschna sagittata* 2013-12-12 elz



Worried about the ferals?

No, not those two legged human varieties but the sometimes seen animal varieties that plague our environment?

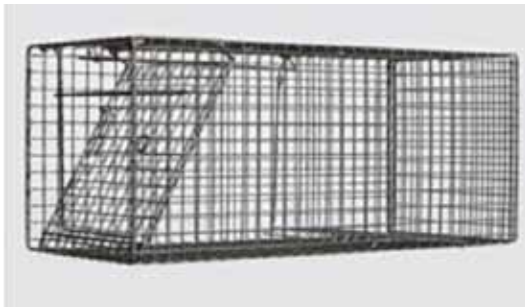
As you may be aware BICA has invested over the years and more recently in a variety of traps that can help...small cage type traps for rats, to larger ones for cats and soft jawed traps suitable for rabbits and foxes.

The traps and sometimes 'expertise' can be loaned out to residents interested in getting rid of these unwanted pests who upset the balance in our environment.

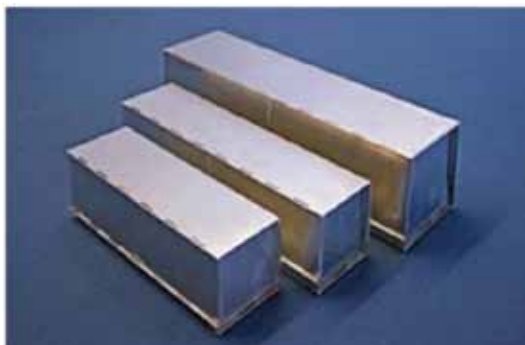
Hopefully the rabbit group are keeping an eye on the population in the Bend and we need to reinvigorate ourselves to keep at them!

Traps are available from the Mildenhalls at 209 Catani 9712 0577

Example cat trap:



Example rat trap:



Locals Learn How to Check a Nest Box....

Recently, Julia Franco, Nillumbik Shire Council's biodiversity officer came out to the Bend of Islands to test the latest gadget purchased through Nillumbik's Conservation Corridors project - a nest box camera.

The camera allows nest boxes or hollows to be inspected with minimal disturbance to the occupant. The small camera is on the end of a flexible probe which all connects onto carbon-fibre extension poles that extend to eight metres! A separate hand-held monitor screen shows images from inside the nest box. The monitor also allows the user to capture and store the image or create a video.

Frank, Jo, Tserin, Michael and Deirdre discovered that some skill and a steady hand is required to manipulate the camera into the nest box or hollow opening!

While this initial trial didn't identify any animals, we hope that further hollow inspections will reveal some critters.

We will be borrowing this camera again in the future and intend to conduct a more systematic survey of the area. So if you have a next box or hollow that you think might be worth investigating - stay tuned!

Jo Henry and Deirdre Lucas

Photos by Frank Pierce

DID YOU KNOW?

In September 1982 the Victorian Government gazetted the Healesville Shire's planning Scheme which incorporated the provisions for the Environmental Living Zone. Later, in October, we had an official declaration of the ELZ by the then Minister for Conservation, Mr Evan Walker when he cut a symbolic floral ribbon placed across the Oxley Bridge at Watsons Creek.



Working with our Shire: Nillumbik's Conservation Corridors Project Update

Since 2012 through the BICA newsletters, we have kept you informed of projects that BICA has been able to carry out thanks to funding received from the Nillumbik's Conservation Corridors project. The Bend of Islands is not the only community involved in this project: a total of 10 Landcare groups stretching from St Andrews to Osborne Peninsula (Warrandyte) are also participants, with the project having another two years to run.

To date, across the Shire, many exciting projects have already been implemented, aiming to conserve and improve the habitats of our rare and threatened flora and fauna. Projects include on-ground management works such as weed control and pest animal control, fauna and flora monitoring and biodiversity enhancement.

While we have informed you about some of our projects in the past, we thought that in this newsletter we would let you know about some of the implemented and planned projects elsewhere in the Shire. This isn't an exhaustive list, but just a few examples of what's happened so far, or will be happening soon:

- St Andrews and Dunmoochin : Large amount of Bluebell Creeper control.
- Woody weed control across each of the Landcare areas including control of Blackberry, Sweet Pittosporum, Bone Seed, Spanish Heath and exotic Wattles and other weed control including Angled Onion, Watsonia, Bridal Creeper and Blue Periwinkle.
- North Warrandyte, Bend of Islands, Christmas Hills, St Andrews, Arthurs Creek, Strathewen, Dunmoochin/ Cottles Bridge (Strathewen being the most recent): Motion sensing camera surveys have now been completed in seven of the Landcare areas. Smith's Gully will be next. Of significance, we have recorded Brush-tailed Phascogales, Lace Monitors, Common Dunnarts and Long-nosed Bandicoots. Pest animals have also been recorded including dogs, cats, foxes, deer, rabbits and black rats.
- Rabbit control is currently being carried out (mainly baiting and some fumigation). We are also looking for locations where landowners are interested in undertaking ferreting or netting to control rabbits.

- A nest-box monitoring camera has been purchased for each Landcare group to use on a borrowing system.
- 50 nest boxes for Brush-tailed Phascogales were purchased from the St Andrews Men's Shed and distributed.
- 2000 indigenous plants will be planted on a cleared block in Smith's Gully/ Panton Hill, close to the Panton Hill bushland reserves.
- Apart from pursuing the propagation of Rosella and Wine-lipped Spider Orchids, we will be looking to propagate an additional two species of orchids, most likely *Pterostylis smaragdyna* (Emerald-lip Greenhood), and *Pterostylis* sp. aff. *plumosa* (Woodland Plume Orchid) or *Pterostylis* sp. aff. *striata* (Silurian Striped Greenhood).
- We are investigating the possibility of conducting a controlled burn on private property in Smith's Gully to control Sweet Vernal-grass.
- Upcoming flora and fauna surveys across the Landcare areas: three types of surveys are on offer (General Flora and Fauna, Intensive Flora and Threatened Flora surveys).

So as you can see, a wide variety of projects have been implemented. It seems that weed control is a pressing issue in all areas, as is vermin control. If you have any further questions, or would like more information please contact Jo Henry or Deirdre Lucas, or Julia Franco, Biodiversity Officer at NSC.

Jo Henry & Deirdre Lucas



Caterpillar of Four-spotted Cup Moth

Four-spotted Cup Moth, *Doratifera quadriguttata*

You may have noticed some cute looking caterpillars, up to 25mm long, feeding on eucalypt leaves. They are the larvae of the Four-spotted Cup Moth, *Doratifera quadriguttata* and are unusually numerous this year.

This Caterpillar is beautifully patterned but definitely not to be handled. It has 4 sets of red stinging hairs near the head. If stung, apply a piece of adhesive tape to each of the affected areas, then pull the tape off immediately. This will remove some of the hairs and irritants and reduce the full impact of the irritation. If the irritation persists more serious treatment may be appropriate.

Frank Pierce



Adult Four-spotted Cup Moth



Community Says FAREWELL to long-term residents, The McCallums

John and Meg built one of the early houses in the area on a block of land purchased from Sunday and John Reid well before this area was designated as the Bend of Islands or the Environmental Living Zone. They were here at the very beginning of BICA activities so we will probably be forgiven for thinking about them as fixtures in the area.

When I'm away from the Bend of Islands one of my most evocative memories of this area is sitting around the dam at the Night Event one warm evening with candles on the dam and the bush smelling beautiful after rain and hearing off in the distance coming through the mist a strange musical sound. I eventually made it out to be bagpipes as John ceremoniously came down the hill playing. It was enough to make the hair on the back of my neck stand up and still does when I think about it.

When I was talking with someone about the tragedy of the McCallums leaving the area – pointing out that

- John was on the BICA Committee from as early as the 1970's and
- Had been president of BICA at least twice over many years and
- Was editor of the newsletter for more than 50 editions and
- He was webmaster of our first and only website and
- Meg arranged and organised the archiving of BICA's documents and
- She ran the local book club.

... they said – no you're missing the point ... These are not the most important things – the most



important thing is that they have been like glue for the community – they have always been here and we thought they always would be... They are intrinsically part of the Bend of Islands.

This brings me to the lament – it is sad that people have to / choose to leave the Bend of islands as they get older – this is ahead for all of us and we haven't found a way of making living in a bushfire prone area comfortable for people as they get older. But we'll keep working on it. We know that there is life after the Bend of Islands – some people have even made a life outside and they return regularly to tell us about it. I'm sure that John and Meg will do that in their new home and we trust that they'll return to tell us about it too.

John and Meg we'll miss you.

Robyn Duff



RAPTORS IN THE BEND

Raptors (or Birds of Prey) are a group of birds that always seem to get birdwatchers' hearts racing. Fourteen raptors have been recorded in the Bend of Islands by local residents and through the monthly bird survey; while there are approximately twenty-one raptors in Victoria. So in our immediate area we might expect to see two thirds of all the raptors that might be seen at some time or other in the state.

This made the second weekend in February quite remarkable for raptor sightings. In "The Bend" and the immediate area we saw ten different species which is quite a haul.

Several local residents regularly survey the nearby Yering Backswamp for Melbourne Water. Here we started with:-

A Whistling Kite and a White bellied Sea-eagle

At the gate, as we left the closed area, there were:-

3 Wedge-tailed Eagles being chased by a Nankeen Kestrel and 2 Peregrine Falcons, while a short distance away was perched a Black-Shouldered Kite.

At home there was a Collared Sparrowhawk and another Nankeen Kestrel for good measure.

Sunday was cool and breezy for the local monthly bird survey with very few birds in the early stages. However we finished the walk on a high note from Wolfgang and Marie's veranda where we spotted:-

2 Little Eagles, 1 Brown Goshawk another Whistling Kite and a first record for Bend of Islands a Black Kite.

Last year on a monthly bird survey Square-Tailed Kite was recorded for the first time. Which made us think; which of the remaining Australian raptor species may reasonably be expected to show up at some point or other. Black Falcon, Spotted Harrier and Swamp Harrier are all possible as new additions to the local list.

Gavin Masters

Photo Frank Pierce



B.I.C.A

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BICA membership for 2014 is now due

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