



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

voluntary wildlife conservation

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAND FOR WILDLIFE SCHEME VOL 7 NO.1 JUNE 2009



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Photo: Tom Maher



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Dear Land For Wildlifers,

You may not be aware that as of August 2008, Felicity resigned from DSE to begin her new career, and asked me to pass on the following note:

"For the last 15 years, I have had the great fortune of working with a program that is supported by a team of devoted, enthusiastic and wonderful extension officers. But the Land for Wildlife program would not exist without the huge number of members that demonstrate an endless commitment to contributing to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity on private land."

"In August 2008 I decided that it was time for a change and I now work as an education support officer for children with learning difficulties at a local primary school. I love my new career and I find great satisfaction in positively contributing to the life of these wonderful children."

"I would like to thank all the staff I have worked with, but in particular, I would like to acknowledge the guidance, support and friendship that the previous Statewide Coordinator, Stephen Platt, has given me. I wish staff and members all the best and my thoughts are with those members affected by the fires. Peter Johnson will be an excellent statewide coordinator (yes I am biased as he is my partner!) and will ensure that the journey Land for Wildlife takes will be a successful and productive one."

Over to you Peter."

Felicity Nicholls

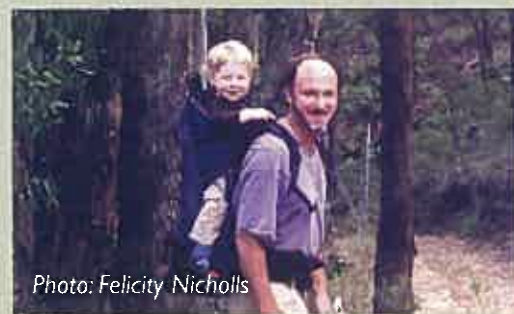


Photo: Felicity Nicholls

Dear Land For Wildlifers,

I would like to introduce myself as your new LFW Coordinator and give you an update of where LFW is at. I've been with DSE (and its various previous acronyms) for 27 years and have a fauna research, conservation planning and management background.

Please send in any articles you would like included, such as items for Bush Detective, Letters to the Editor, or anything you may doing on your property. For example, on pages 8 and 9 a landholder submitted a terrific story on living with tuans and sugar gliders. Articles are for your benefit and to make use of the information, where you can. Please let us know what you would like to have included and what your thoughts are about its presentation.

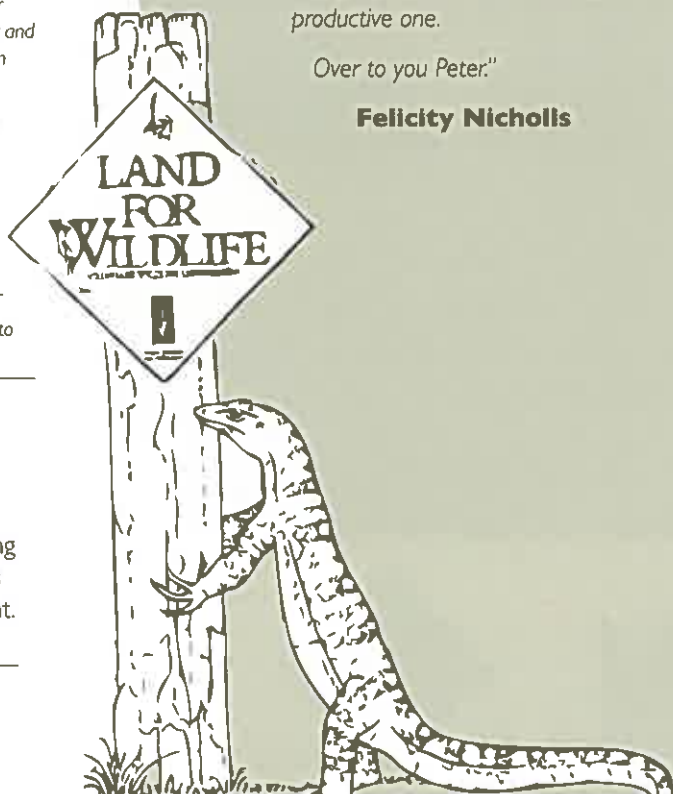
On a personal note, our good friend and colleague, Leigh Ahern and his wife Charmain were both tragically killed while protecting the home at Steels Creek, during the February 2009 bushfires. In this issue, we remember Leigh for his pioneering work in Land For Wildlife. Also, our property near Kinglake was also destroyed by the fires, along with several neighbouring LFW properties. The fires impacted many Land For Wildlifers, and we extend our deepest sympathies to your families and friends.

With time we will all be able to reflect on how resilient our bush is after such devastation. We certainly hope you are recuperating and are on the path to restoring your own lives.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Land For Wildlife newsletter.

Peter Johnson

Statewide Coordinator
Land For Wildlife Program.



Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

We bought our property near Meredith in 2001, after deciding to escape from the northern suburbs of Melbourne to somewhere with some space around us. Our property, "Eclipse Creek", is a 300 acre (120ha) farm situated close to the northern end of the Brisbane Ranges National Park. The property had been used almost exclusively for grazing sheep from around the goldrush days. We still graze sheep, but at a very low stocking rate due to the ongoing drought.



Photo: Colin Cook

The previous owners hadn't applied any fertiliser for the preceding 20 years, so we have a good population of native grasses, including Poa Tussock, Wallaby, Spear and Kangaroo grass. The terrain is mostly sloping land, with many steep sections and gullies leading down to Eclipse Creek, which borders our property. Small remnant patches of trees exist in the gullies, including Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Yellow Gum (*E. leucoxylon*), Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*), Candlebark (*E. rubida*) and Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*E. radiata*). Wendy has identified 78 indigenous plant species to date, with Clover Glycine (*Glycine latrobeana*) and Blue Devil (*Eryngium ovinum*) as notable finds.

We've also recorded 7 mammal, 83 bird, 6 reptile and 4 amphibian species. Highlights include Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), Brush-tailed Phascogales (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), Powerful Owls (*Ninox strenua*) and White's Skink (*Egernia whitii*). The main challenge on our property has been weed control, including Serrated Tussock, Gorse and several types of thistles. These are slowly succumbing to our ongoing spot-spraying, mattocking and lopping efforts. We've fenced off selected areas, particularly along the creek and around the gullies, and aim to revegetate these with indigenous species. We've been successful in obtaining Ecotender funding to fence off, revegetate

and maintain two areas of grassy woodland.

All this work is starting to show on the ground, with fenced areas producing new tree seedlings and a much healthier cover of native vegetation over the thin soil. Just removing grazing pressure has allowed the vegetation to recover. We were delighted to recently find a Wedge-tailed Eagle nest at the rear of our property, so they must like the changes too!

Colin, Wendy Owen and Kristen Cook

A tribute to Leigh Ahern, a friend of the environment and Land for Wildlife

The bushfires that swept Victoria in February claimed the lives of Leigh Ahern and his wife Charmian at their home and Land for Wildlife property at Steels Creek. Leigh was the driving force behind the reinvigoration of Land for Wildlife in the late 1980s. He successfully sought the funding that established a range of services, including this newsletter, and set the direction for the scheme that included funding part time extension staff enabling capable people from the wider community, including many women off farms, to participate. Leigh had an extensive knowledge of, and passion for, nature. His insights helped me enormously as the newly appointed coordinator in providing advice to the rapidly expanding membership base. Many an article originated over tearoom conversations with Leigh and other biologists based at the Arthur Rylah Institute in Heidelberg.

We will miss Leigh's mischievous sense of humour and high quality contributions. Leigh loved natural history and his home was surrounded by the bush and its creatures. Whilst this resulted in his death, Leigh would no doubt passionately argue for the bush he loved to continue to be protected.



Photo: Peter Robertson

Leigh's neighbours and friends, Jenny and John Barnett, also died. Jenny was a passionate and effective advocate for the community on environmental issues, including fire management, through her role at the Victorian National Parks Association. She was a contributor

to this newsletter, providing comprehensive and insightful comment on issues affecting members.

Many other Land for Wildlife property owners were affected by the fires. I wish to offer our deepest sympathy to everyone who has been affected and hope that these unfortunate events lead on to a deeper appreciation of life and relationships.

Leigh was proud of the contributions that you, the members of Land for Wildlife make, and on his behalf I wish to pass on thanks to all members of Land for Wildlife for making your individual contributions to protecting the natural environment of Victoria - a

legacy that will provide inspiration, enjoyment and wonder for generations to come. **Stephen Platt**

Port Phillip Land for Wildlife Volunteer Assessors

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Photo: John Hick

With Australia's National Volunteer Week (11th-17th May 2009) in recent memory, it is an opportune time to acknowledge the significant contribution that Volunteer Assessors have made to the Land for Wildlife scheme. For many of the 28 years that the LfW scheme has existed in Victoria, volunteers have generously donated their time and energy to conducting property assessments for the scheme.

The Port Phillip area currently has a small team of LfW Volunteer Assessors who participate on a regular basis. These dedicated volunteers share a lifelong interest in native plants and animals and other aspects of natural history. Most of the volunteers have had experience working professionally or volunteering in bushland management or nature conservation roles.

Cecily Falkingham has been a Volunteer Assessor since 1994 and has assessed many properties in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs and adjoining rural areas. Cecily is well known in the area as a field naturalist with many years of experience in environmental education and bushland restoration. Under Cecily's guidance, several landholders have tackled challenging restoration projects on their properties, which have progressed from 'Working Toward Registration' status to full registration with LfW.

Many LfWers in the Dandenong Ranges know Noel and Dudley Gross who have assessed more than 40 properties in the area since first volunteering in 2000. Noel and Dudley own a registered LfW property and have been able to help landholders by sharing valuable advice gained from managing their own property and many years of rehabilitating bushland reserves in the area.

Kieran Martin has been involved in the LfW scheme since 1985 when his property was registered with the scheme. Kieran has assessed many properties in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and has mentored new volunteers in the area, including myself in the late 1990's. Kieran has spent many years working as a bushland regenerator and landholders have benefited greatly from the specialist habitat and weed management advice he has been able to provide.

Since 2002, Jane Palomountain has assessed properties in the middle Yarra Valley and surrounding ranges. With a detailed knowledge of local plants gained from managing her own LfW property and volunteering at a local indigenous plant nursery, Jane has been able to advise landholders about the vegetation and identification of plants on their properties.

Max Burrows has assessed properties in the area near his own LfW property to the south east of Melbourne. As the President of the Mornington Peninsula branch of the Bird Observation and Conservation Australia, Max has a strong interest in birds as well as a detailed understanding of local habitats, flora and fauna. With a raised awareness of the plants and animals on their properties many landholders have appreciated Max's advice and the bird-list compiled during his visits.

Since 2003, Daniela Pascuzzo has assessed properties to the north west of Melbourne, particularly on the volcanic plains. As Hume City Council's Natural Landscape Management Team Leader, Danni has extensive experience managing a range of threatened habitats in reserves in the area. By sharing her knowledge during LfW property assessments, Danni has greatly assisted landholders in their efforts to restore and manage habitats on their properties.



Photo: John Hick

To these volunteers and the many others who have participated in the Land for Wildlife scheme, thank you all for the valuable contribution you have made to encouraging and assisting private landholders in their conservation efforts.

John Hick

Land for Wildlife Extension Officer Port Phillip

Bush Detective

Who made this? Who did this?



George and Gloria Krommenhoek of Callignee got more than they bargained for when they heard a thundering noise cross the roof of their house. This determined male Black Wallaby, attracted to peach tree leaves, managed to cross a low span of shade cloth to reach the main roof.

This picture was taken at the end of April, not long after a very stormy weekend. The massive Red Gum has fallen over in strong winds revealing the resting site of a Ringtail Possum. Earlier seen clinging on to the broken side of the tree trunk, the possum has snuggled in, perhaps until the next big storm?

This Red Gum, and many other fantastic large Red Gums are on Felntimber Creek, where it runs through the property of Wodonga TAFE, newly registered Land for Wildlifers. Their involvement in the program recognises and will contribute to the excellent work being undertaken to restore the creekline habitat. This also provides a great opportunity for incorporating hands-on conservation management into courses delivered at the campus.



Since the Fires

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) can help LFW property owners affected by the February 2009 bushfires who may have lost signs, notes and newsletters.

The DSE are able to assist in providing new signs, LFW notes and relevant information which may have been lost. The DSE are also planning visits to the areas affected catching up with LFW members and neighbours affected. If you have lost signs, notes or newsletters please contact your local extension officer for assistance (names and numbers are located on the back page of this newsletter).

For those interested in assisting as a volunteer in affected areas, you can call Conservation Volunteers Australia in Bendigo on 3) 54440777 or Melbourne on (03) 93268250. There is also a website link <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/training.html>



Australian Acacias:

Combating Hunger in Semi-Arid Lands **Tony Rinaudo, World Vision Australia**

Human populations living in semi-arid regions of the developing, tropical world who are reliant on annual crops and/or pastures (for livestock) for food are particularly vulnerable to hunger and periodic famine.



Photo: Tony Rinaudo

Bountiful yield of acacia cowleand growing under semi-arid conditions without fertilization, irrigation or protection from livestock.

The seeds of certain Australian acacias have historically formed a part of the traditional diets of Australian Aborigines in different parts of Australia. The sub-tropical, arid and semi-arid climate of this region corresponds with many parts of the world that are subject to periodic or chronic famine, such as the Sahelian zone of Sub-Saharan Africa and dry regions of southern India. Accordingly, certain Acacia species from Australia's hot, dry regions are considered to have high potential to provide human food and a range of other products and services, such as fuelwood and charcoal, soil stabilisation, windbreaks, soil improvement and nitrogen fixation. A number of these acacia species thrive under adverse conditions; conditions under which annual plants barely survive. The seeds are tasty, safe to consume and nutritious, being high in protein (25%), carbohydrates (40%) and fats (6%). Acacia flour is amenable to incorporation in a diverse range of food products, including over 20 local dishes in Niger and both savoury

and sweet local dishes in India as well as pasta, bread, biscuits and coffee substitutes. Animal and human feeding trials in west Africa have shown that Acacia *colei* seeds can be safely incorporated into millet and/or sorghum-based diets at rates of up to 25% by modifying traditional recipes.

In West Africa the seeds ripen at a time of low labour demand when non-irrigated crops are not being cultivated. Being perennial and thus having an established root system, mature acacias can take advantage of rains that would be ineffective for annual crops (e.g. out of season or poorly distributed rains). Acacia seeds are easily harvested and processed into flour using simple and existing local technologies. The flour can be incorporated into local dishes and in "non traditional" foods such as spaghetti, bread and biscuits. The seed also has great potential for feeding to livestock. Alternatively, the hard-coated seeds can easily be stored for many years and act as a famine reserve food. Acacias can also supply various other products, especially fuelwood, and services such as protection from wind and improvement of soil fertility through fixation of atmospheric nitrogen and production of leaf litter for mulch and creation of humus.



Photo: Tony Rinaudo

In West Africa species such as *Acacia colei*, *Acacia torulosa* and *Acacia tumida* produce very heavy seed crops in less than two years after planting. Their potential for human food has been actively explored over the past decade by SIM International (SIM) and by Project Ecolake in Tamil Nadu, India, backed by scientific research by CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products and its research partners, especially Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, to confirm the safety of using Australian acacia seeds as human food.

Above: Nigerien research scientist, Tiougiani Abas with 18 month *acacia colei* tree already in flower and thriving under the same environmental conditions that destroyed local millet crops.

Left: *Acacia colei* intercropped with sorghum. The acacias act as a windbreak, enhance soil fertility and provide habitat for insect eating birds and insects. The trees are pruned heavily every two years, providing organic matter and valuable firewood and poles as well as nutritious seeds.



Photo: Peter Cunningham

Come on you have to leave home sometime!



Photo: Libby Woodward

Have you noticed a small dark brown bird with a distinctive white throat and chest, running up tree trunks or verandah posts? It is likely to be a white-throated tree creeper *Cormobates leucophaeus*. These acrobatic birds run up tree trunks searching under the bark for their main food which is ants, but they also eat insects and spiders.

There are a couple of species of tree creepers, but near Denver, a locality in the central highlands near Daylesford, it is the White-throated Treecreeper that is commonly observed.

Land for Wildlifers Libby, Steve and Ted have sent in photos of a tree creeper family using one of their nest boxes. These birds are one of many species that rely on hollows to breed. Where you have few hollows it is well worth the effort to erect a range of nest boxes.

The female White-throated Treecreeper builds the nest and sits on 2-3 eggs. The nest is usually made in a tree cavity, which is lined with bark, fur, and hair. Both parents then care for the young and two broods may be raised in a season.

Treecreepers are rarely seen on the ground spending most of their time foraging along tree trunks. This species has a permanent home range. You may notice that they have large feet and claw that give them good grip on the bark and this must be why they also take on verandah posts.

If you are lucky enough to have treecreepers on your property you may have to take care at night because sometimes they sleep clinging onto the rafters under the verandah. **Elsbeth Swan**



Photo: Libby Woodward

Libby writes "we had White-throated Treecreepers use one of our nesting boxes and I was watching and taking pictures when the young ones decided it was time to leave the nesting box. I thought it was interesting that once they leave they do not come back. The parent bird left with two of the young and the third one would not go even though the parent appeared to be encouraging it to do so. A few hours later the third one left on its own with no other birds in the area and I always wondered if it was OK and if it found the rest of its family. I assume it did."

Living with Tuans & Sugar Gliders

8

We have lived for 20 years on a 10 acre Land for Wildlife property at Wonga Park which is a 40km drive to the north-east of Melbourne. In our area the minimum sub-division allowed is 10 acres. Our land backs onto Jumping Creek which provides a corridor to other bushland areas along the Yarra and beyond. Although trees are numerous most are too small to have hollows – in fact we knew of only one tree (and that was dead) which provided a site for a glider nest and after a few years even this was taken over by bees. Experiments with pest strips attached to a long pole kept bees at bay for a year or two but eventually gliders lost interest in this tree. At this stage I started installing nest boxes, the first were made out hollow logs fitted with plywood ends. A 38 mm hole provided an entrance, below the entrance I fitted a perch that extended into the box as well as to the outside. Only when I started making infrared-lit videos did I realize how much use the animals made of the inner perch.

Nest boxes made from logs are hard to inspect so I made a batch with lids that swiveled from one corner. The lids are of 15 mm ply faced with aluminium to reflect some of the sun's heat and prevent the ingress of water. I now have 15 boxes that I can and do inspect monthly and three that I cannot check. The results show that no one box is in constant use but some boxes are more popular than others and on any one inspection I typically find 3 to 5 boxes in use. Over the last few years glider numbers have varied from 2 to a recent maximum of 22. Use by tuans has been minimal and they have only been observed on five occasions. On one occasion there were two tuans in the one box. On other occasions I have found fur and/or feathers in nesting boxes that indicate tuan occupancy. Tuan scats are very distinctive and surprisingly large and glossy. In common with other insectivores the scats are very fragile. They are often deposited in near the nest box entrance.

In addition to seeing tuans in nest boxes they were very occasionally seen when spot lighting – a total of about 8 sightings over 15 years. Then at dusk on an evening in December 2005 I saw several very active tuans at one of my log nest boxes. There were six young with their mother. Over the next few weeks I followed their activity with interest and also made attempts to video tape their behaviour. At this stage I was using visible light and to encourage them to stay around I started supplying them with small pieces of rabbit. They were keen on the rabbit but not the lights. They were not particularly bothered by humans and the adult even licked my rabbit fingers as I waited

quietly on top of a ladder with my camera. Soon the young started bickering with each other and the numbers dropped as dispersal began. Typically the young males leave first and leave the females to sort out their own hierarchy. By January there was just one young female and mum. Mum had the upper hand and after a few weeks her daughter left and moved into our roof – some 50 m distant. By this time I was regularly supplying the gliders and tuans with small amounts of food consisting of rabbit, cheese and sultanas. We also have ringtail and brushtailed possums that sometimes partake of these offerings. I realize that there are risks in feeding wildlife.



Photo: Alistair Trail



Photo: Alistair Trail

"I made sure all water tank overflow pipes were tuan proof. For this I used a piece of wire netting."

After the young female tuan had been living in our roof for some months I built a nest box against one of our windows and fitted a hinged flap on the inside of the window. Access to the nest box was provided by a branch. At this stage her evening forays started with a trip to the nearest food pot so I laid a scent trail (by dragging a rabbit carcass) that crossed her path and led to the window box where I placed a piece of rabbit. It was not long before she was regularly taking this food, however she still preferred living in the roof, perhaps she did not like the glass wall or the box was too big? I placed some wooden blocks against the window thus making a sort of passage way to a nesting chamber that I lined with strips of bark and small pieces of polyester insulation. She started using the box at a time when she could be expected to be pregnant or carrying young. I never saw any signs of either. For some time I was reluctant to open the nest box but by November I could contain my curiosity no longer and briefly looked inside (while the female was absent) to see a furry grey and black ball of young tuans.

Over the next few days I carefully removed the wooden blocks that blocked the view through the window and installed a new lid fitted with recessed infrared light emitting diodes. This was done when mum was out foraging. I also attached an infrared sensitive security camera to a ceiling beam to record the activity within the box. I had supplied bark and polyester fibre for nesting material, this was now worked into a ball and had been meticulously lined with insulating material taken from our ceiling. It was a very snug nest.

As my surveillance camera has no means of recording images I connected its output to my camcorder. This meant I could now see on the camcorder screen what was going on in the nest box even in complete darkness because I was using infrared.

I could also record. I was vaguely expecting to see the young tuans playing or play fighting as they matured. My first shot shows a young tuan that was barely able to walk heading to the entrance of the box. Then it then climbed onto the perch and balanced precariously at the opening before falling backwards into the box. This activity was repeated. Had it fallen out of the box there was a 2.5 m drop to the bricks below. The fascination of the perch and the entrance was to continue, but before that mother and young disappeared well before the young had the necessary survival skills. I knew the mother was still about as I saw her leaving our roof each evening but there was no sign of her young. After about a week the young were back, noticeably larger and more active. Had I disturbed them or was this just a routine manoeuvre? Soon they were leaving the box for short periods on their own. There was no attempt to follow the mother on her forays.

Then had a tragedy. We rely on tank water and periodically I clean the guttering and flush out the pipes that connect to our tanks. Our set-up is fairly standard, the fill pipe runs down the hill from the house before rising vertically by the side of the tank. At the lowest point there is an inspection opening. The top of the vertical pipe connects to a horizontal section at the end of which is an elbow that directs any incoming water through the inlet strainer on the top of the tank. In normal use the vertical pipe is full of water; however when I clean my gutters I often flush the fill pipe by opening the inspection cover. This drains the fill pipe which is refilled with the next rain. So what went wrong? Unbeknown to me the adult female used to obtain water by entering the fill pipe where it overhung the strainer and head along the horizontal section and drink from water at the top of the vertical section. This time the water had been drained and she slipped down the fill pipe. Had the inspection opening been oriented correctly she could have climbed out and I would have been none the wiser. Unfortunately for her the inspection opening was pointing upwards thus trapping water. She could not climb up the vertical pipe, she could not get out of the opening. She drowned. I found her body about 15 hours later.

At this stage the young were leaving the box to forage on their own for about an hour at a time. I was sure they were finding some food during their forays but I was equally sure mum was returning during the night to suckle them. Although I never saw mum suckling I did see the young gathered around the inside of the entrance towards midnight. They looked as though they were waiting for something. In short the animals had some knowledge of the area but were still dependent on mum for the bulk of their food. I hoped that they might take supplementary food in the form of formula milk and finely chopped rabbit. Fortunately our local animal carer was able to provide lactose reduced

milk formula together with supplements at very short notice. I set up a couple of drink bottles and small containers of rabbit. By the second night all six young were taking this food.

After a few weeks they were no longer interested in the milk but still took rabbit. They were spending more and more time looking for food on their own. A popular feeding spot was provided by a couple of dead eucalypts close to their box where they searched the trunks for holes. Once located they would spend anything up to 20 minutes removing bark from the around the hole entrance using their front feet and teeth. Then they would then reach in as far as they could using either front leg. Several times I videoed them extracting large beetles from these holes. It was clear that the supplementary feeding had not affected their hunting drive or their independence.

“Only when I started making infrared-lit videos did I realize how much use the animals made of the inner perch.”



Photo: Alistair Trill

Soon the bickering started and dispersal occurred, all six had survived the loss of their mother. Only one female remained in the maternal territory but there was a change, the window box was taken over by sugar gliders. When the time came the remaining female raised a brood of six in our roof some 4 m from the window box. Her daughter did the same. Access to the nest site in our roof is gained through a gap in our mud brick wall. It has probably been used for many years without us knowing, we heard noises that were attributed to bats. A bit more mud has now fallen from the wall that provides access for young tuans to the interior of our house.

Lessons learned: -

I have now rearranged my tank filling set-up, the inspection opening is oriented so that when it is open no water is left in the pipe. I have extended the final section of the filling pipe so that an animal has a difficult vertical climb of ~ 35 cm before reaching the horizontal section. If the animal does reach the horizontal section it will find it now curves through a series of bends before becoming vertical. This increases the volume of water accessible for drinking and the joins provide additional toe holds.

Tuans seem to explore any openings, after hearing a talk by tuan expert Todd Soderquist I made sure all water tank over-flow pipes were tuan proof. For this I used a piece of wire netting. It is also important to screen down pipes – two or three times I have heard scuffling noises emanating from our down pipes. In these instances young tuans had forced their way through the screens and despite the fact there was an 8 foot drop with no toe holds they have let go. Lowering a rope down the down pipe provided an escape route on a couple of occasions but a third youngster was not so lucky and died. The screens need to be well maintained to be effective as well as fine enough to prevent tuan access.

Alastair Trill - Land For Wildlifer, Wonga Park.

Land For Wild Life Poems

Economology© Linda Zibell 4/4/09

I took my economist to see my psychologist
She said, "I'm sorry to say he's depressed,
I'll try diagnosis, and pills in great doses,
It's a difficult case," she confessed.

"For all his economy, he's got no ecology,"
She said, "He's lost his connection to nature:
Split off from the world, he's plunged, and is hurled.
It's a sad case of earth-schizophrenia."

"Consumed by the dollar, he's also bi-polar,"
She said, "He only wants dollars to grow.
He thinks they are magical, his thoughts are illogical,
Delusional, confusional, oh woe!"

"He's compulsive, obsessive, insanely possessive,
She said, "His excess must stop if you please,
This mad impulse buying, is dreadfully trying
Consumption you see is disease."

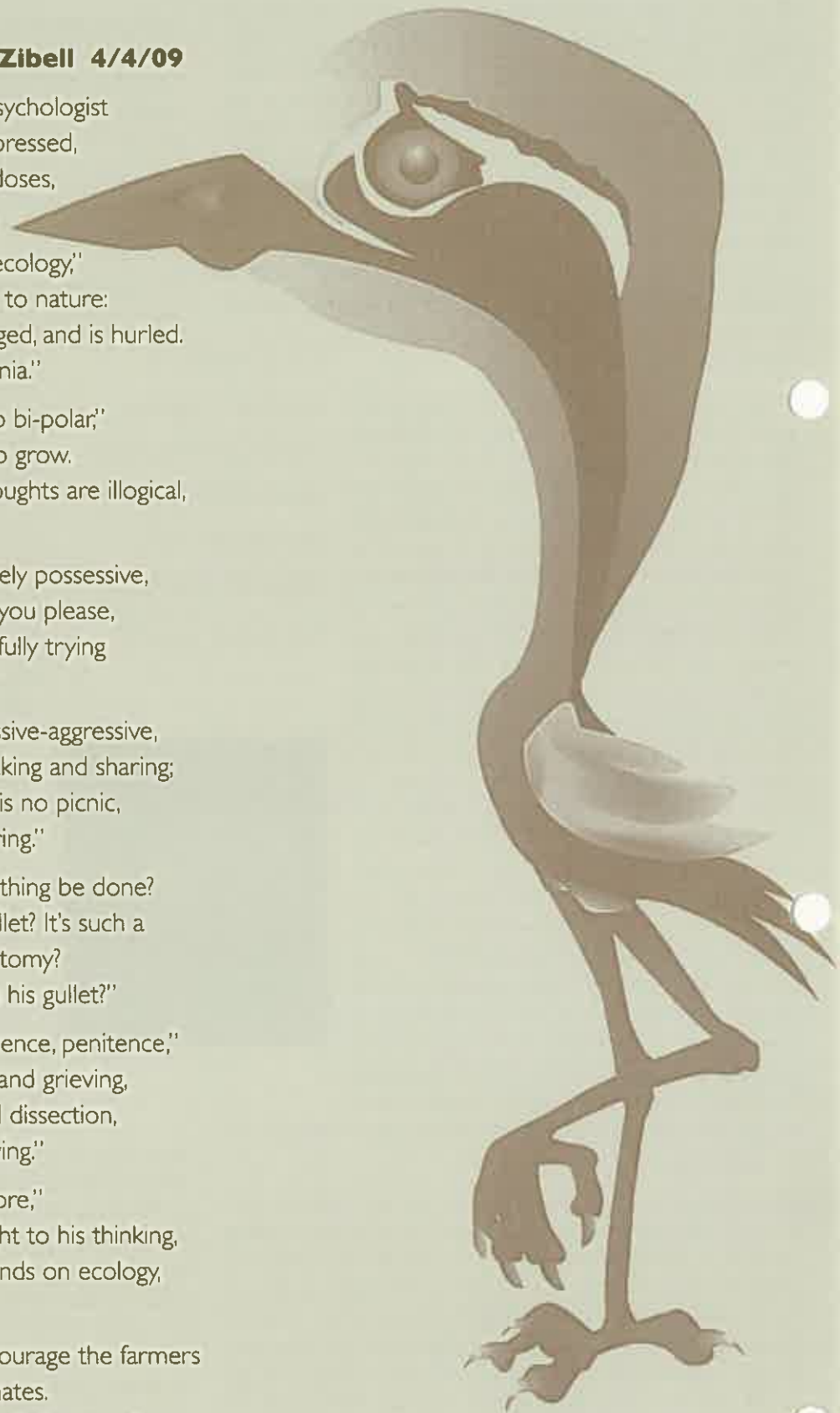
"His sickness' progressive, he's passive-aggressive,
She said, "He can't stop from stocking and sharing;
But he's also narcissistic, this case is no picnic,
And his corporate rorting is wearing."

I asked her, implored her, "Can nothing be done?
To couple his brain, heart and wallet? It's such a
dichotomy, should he have a lobotomy?
Or is the way to his cure through his gullet?"

"I recommend governance, abstinence, penitence,"
She said, "Enclosure, DIS-closure, and grieving,
Inspection, connection, communal dissection,
Will help us prevent further thieving."

"He needs a revival, but sanity more,"
She said, "He must bring some light to his thinking,
And find out that economy depends on ecology,
Even the grapes he is drinking."

"And when he is calmer, he'll encourage the farmers
To care for the land: they're his mates.
He'll tone everything down, stop playing the clown
And one day he'll be steady-state."



Where are the Regies and Swifties?

Keep a look out for Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots

The Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot are both listed nationally as Endangered species and are found locally in areas of Box and Ironbark forests and woodlands. Every year volunteers across the state participate in two national survey weekends to look for these iconic species, held on the third weekend in May and first weekend in August. The information collected from these surveys is vital to provide an overview of the number and location of these threatened woodland birds across south-east Australia.



As part of the National Regent Honeyeater/Swift Parrot survey weekend in May this year, a group of volunteers spent a day in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park in north-east Victoria. A major focus of this survey was the continued monitoring of captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters which were released into the Park in May last year. The captive-bred birds, which were fitted with radio transmitters, were successfully monitored by a team of specially trained volunteers for 12 weeks after the release,

with an amazing 70 percent of the birds still being observed after that time. Unfortunately none were observed during the May survey this year, but this is not overly concerning at this stage given the lack of eucalypt flowering in the forest at present.



The next National Survey weekend for 2009 will occur on August 1-2 but we also want to keep a look out for Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots at any time. Check for these birds in areas supporting local flowering Eucalypts (such as White Box and Mugga Ironbark), and planted species including Spotted Gum. Gardens with native flowering plants may also attract the birds - with ongoing dry conditions, the habitat provided on your property may be just what's needed. The Birds Australia freecall numbers to report sightings are 1800 665 766 (for Swift Parrot sightings) and 1800 621 056 (for Regent Honeyeater sightings) and further information can be found on Birds Australia's Woodland Bird Conservation (WBC) project website www.birdsaustralia.com.au/wbc. The WBC project is funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program. **Sarah Kelly**



Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater

working for an ecosystem



Cutting the cake at Friends 20th birthday are Bob Anderson (President Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater), Karina Cartwright (Senior Keeper Threatened Species Healesville Sanctuary), Mick Kealy (Parks Victoria Ranger) & Bruce Quin (Field Ornithologist DSE).

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater celebrated their twentieth birthday on 23 May 2009. Strong partnerships, clear objectives and committed volunteers can achieve much in conservation.

The first public meeting called by Steve Craig to express concern about the plight of the Helmeted Honeyeater was attended by over 200 people and was held at the Lilydale Senior Citizens' Centre on 23 May 1989. Colin Barraclough of Bird Observation and Conservation Australia chaired the meeting.

A further meeting was held in July at which working groups were formed. Volunteers aligned themselves with groups such as bird surveys, publicity, community education, newsletter, fund raising, committee and works. Within a fortnight the first newsletter was published and soon after an education committee was formed to develop a kit to be later distributed to schools. The various activities embarked upon by many volunteers displayed an indication of the concern for our State bird emblem.



Photo: The Friends Collection

The aims for the Friends became expressed as working to protect the natural habitat, increase it and to educate the wider community about the Helmeted Honeyeater. These aims remain the Friends focus.

One of the most significant actions that helped save the Helmeted Honeyeater from extinction involved Trust for Nature (TFN). In the mid-1990's TFN worked with the State Government of the day to purchase the only private land that Helmeted Honeyeaters occupied. About 150 ha were added to the Yellingbo Reserve and that brought the Reserve to a total of 600 ha. All of the birds from the last natural colony were now within the Yellingbo Reserve.

In the early years Yellingbo Reserve was well served by Parks Victoria Rangers and a Works Crew, so the Friends carried out revegetation activities on properties nearby. Over time, 16 landholders provided part of their properties to be fenced and revegetated with indigenous plant species. Later the Friends had to work within the Reserve due to cut backs in Parks Vic resulting in a solitary Ranger position.

It became evident that a nursery was needed to provide indigenous plant species for revegetation. Healesville Sanctuary provided space and an auxiliary site was built at Yellingbo. Finally the nursery at Yellingbo became the only site, where plant stock numbers have increased over the years to 80,000+ per year.

The employment of a coordinator/community education officer proved so successful that when the funding was no longer available, the Friends worked to fund the position themselves. Funding is provided from the indigenous plant nursery sales. For efficient operation of the nursery and to coordinator its volunteer workforce, the Friends also employ a nursery manager. Over time the hours employed have increased from 9 for the coordinator only to 24 hours each for both the coordinator and nursery manager positions. Unfortunately both positions are totally reliant upon nursery sales.

The role of the coordinator takes on the responsibility of all community education and many revegetation projects within the Reserve. Most revegetation is carried out by volunteers and the Friends are appreciative of the work done by all, especially school groups.

The Friends also assist with regular bird surveys and supplementary feeding of captive birds released at Yellingbo and Tonimbuk and a specialist monthly works program.

The Pale Swamp Everlasting, *Helichrysum aff. rutidolepis* (Lowland Swamps) listed as vulnerable on the DSE Victorian Advisory List was discovered in the past few years on the land acquired by TFN and added to Yellingbo Reserve.



A 2009 fledgling Helmeted Honeyeater. Photo: Bruce Tardif



Photo: Steve Mitchell

Bird survey in the TFN acquired land known as Mauve site, led by Bruce Quin, Field Ornithologist DSE.

Over the years the Friends recognise the teamwork that has been developed between various organisations at the practical level. The local people from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, Healesville Sanctuary, Trust for Nature, Land for Wildlife, Macclesfield Landcare Group, Melbourne Water, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and Shire of Yarra Ranges have been most supportive.

Despite the dry conditions we are experiencing and the fact that Helmeted Honeyeaters are riparian & swamp dependent species, there are three pieces of good news:

- The Black Saturday fires came within 200m of the reintroduced population of Helmeted Honeyeaters at Tonimbuk and not only did they remain safe, but they continued breeding! This colony has just had the best breeding season ever.

- Healesville Sanctuary & Taronga Zoo produced 26 birds for release at Yellingbo & Tonimbuk this year. It is the best result so far in the captive breeding history.
- The foresight of Trust for Nature to acquire land at Yellingbo has meant that many species, including the genetically divergent population of Leadbeater's Possum, Victoria's mammal emblem, are assured appropriate habitat.

Congratulations and thank you to all those who assist the Helmeted Honeyeater and its habitat. In working to save a special bird from extinction, many more species benefit over the long-term. Partnerships and commitment have been vital in achieving the best outcomes for a special habitat.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering in our nursery, bird surveys, rostered feeding activities or works crew, please contact the Friends. Telephone 59 648341 or email heho1@optusnet.com.au

It was standing room only at the Friends 20th 23 May 09

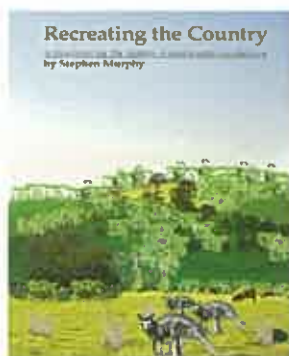


Photo: Steve Mitchell

Recent Publications

14

Recreating the Country *A blueprint for the design of sustainable landscapes* **STEPHEN MURPHY**



ISBN 978 0 957778 3 1. Published by Australian Forest Growers on behalf of Ballarat Region Treegrowers, *Recreating the Country* challenges landholders and land managers in general to consider new ways of thinking about how we might reverse the inexorable decline and disappearance of Australian plants and animals from rural landscapes. While integrating conservation and production has become the catchcry from foresters to dairy farmers, what can be practically done?

This book provides the 'stretch goals' and the blueprint for ways of adding habitat and designing more 'wildlife-friendly' properties. It's set to become the 'bible' for a new form of revegetation.

This book provides the 'stretch goals' and the blueprint for ways of adding habitat and designing more 'wildlife-friendly' properties. It's set to become the 'bible' for a new form of revegetation - the 'biorich plantation.' Integrated with other forms of vegetation, these would aim to enrich habitat potential across rural landscapes, not just for a lifetime, but in perpetuity.

Author Stephen Murphy asserts we have to rethink our revegetation strategies to match the sophistication of natural design principles. Stephen, with his wife Lina, has run a successful native plants nursery in central Victoria for over 25 years. He believes that even the most well-intentioned shelterbelts, Landcare plantings or mixed species farm forests lack the features to make them rich in critical habitat for wildlife, let alone capable of self-perpetuation for centuries to come. Pale shadows of a natural grassland, woodland or forest, they are destined to fail as a wellspring for native plants and animals.

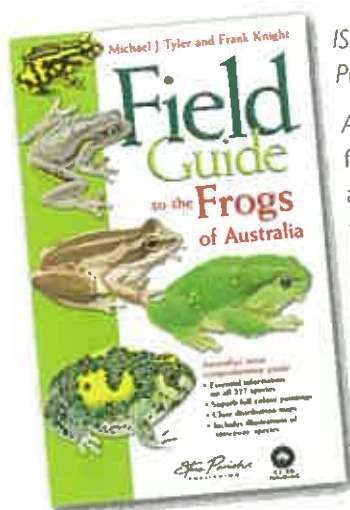
At the heart of *Recreating the Country* are ten design principles, observed from nature, which set out to bridge the gap between farm forestry and environmental plantings and bring back the bush in rural landscapes.



Weeds of National Significance (WONS)

ISBN 0642 449139. Published by The State of Queensland, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries 2008. Continuation of the WONS program has been endorsed by the NRM Ministerial Council including the national coordinator network. The program has been revised to account for the findings of a recently completed independent review. Continued funding for the program remains subject to the Australian Government's budget processes. For further information visit: <http://www.weeds.org.au/natsig.htm>

Field guide to the frogs of Australia. Tyler, Michael and Frank Knight.



ISBN 9780643092440
Publisher; Colling-wood: CSIRO 2009

A fully illustrated guide to all the known frogs of Australia. Includes concise accounts of all 227 species within five main frog families: Hylidae, Limnodynastidae, Microhylidae, Myobatrachidae and Ranidae. Also includes the introduced Cane toad and provides notes on other 'stowaway' species that have arrived in Australia. The text for each species includes details of size, status, distribution, habitat, behaviour and advertisement call. Each species is

accompanied by a map of Australia showing

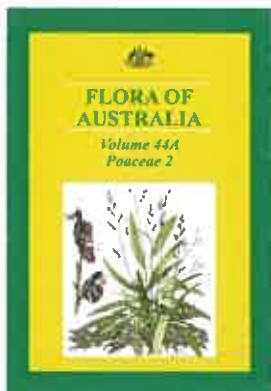
its known distribution, and a full colour painted illustration by Frank Knight. Closely related frogs are shown in identical poses for comparison. The introductory section of the book covers frog biology and habitats and includes notes on families and genera.

Author information Michael Tyler AO is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and was a winner of the prestigious Ig Nobel prize from Harvard University in 2005.

He has published 23 books and more than 350 scientific papers. Among his many contributions to herpetology he has described 65 new frog species or genera, and reported the first fossil frog from Australia. He is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at The University of Adelaide, Honorary Associate at the South Australian Museum and Editor-in-Chief of the international journal *Applied Herpetology*. Frank Knight spent 25 years at CSIRO's Division of Wildlife Research illustrating books and scientific papers. He won a CSIRO Overseas Study Award in 1980, visiting artists and illustrators in Europe, UK, USA and Canada. He left the organisation in 1991 to illustrate the best-selling *Field guide to the birds of Australia*.

Since then he has illustrated a series of field guides including *Parrots of the world: an identification guide* with text by Joseph Forshaw. (ISBN: 0643092447) (EAN: 9780643092440)

Flora of Australia Volume 44A Poaceae 2 Flora of Australia Series.



ISBN: 9780643096295

Published by CSIRO PUBLISHING /
Australian Biological Resources Study
(ABRS) February 2009

Volume 44A of the Flora of Australia documents four subfamilies of the grass family Poaceae, describing 80 genera and 405 species.

The largest subfamily is the Pooideae, a predominantly temperate group with many annual species. It includes

the large endemic genus *Austrostipa*, an important component of native pastures, but one which also contaminates wool and

injures stock with its penetrating 'seeds'. *Poa*, also largely endemic, grows mainly in southern areas of Australia, and is characteristic of higher altitudes. The subfamily also includes our most important grain crops, wheat, barley, rye and oats, and introduced temperate pasture grasses. There are also many weedy genera such as *Briza* and the economically significant *Nassella*.

The largely tropical Bambusoideae are poorly represented in Australia, with only three native species and another three naturalised. Many ornamental species of 'bamboo' are grown in Australia, but few have become naturalised. Also tropical is the subfamily Pharoideae. It includes *Leptaspis*, with its strange inflated florets, the subject of the cover painting. The final subfamily, the Ehrhartoideae, contains another important grain crop, rice, as well as the widespread weedy genus *Ehrharta*.

Wild orchids of Victoria, Australia. Jeans, Jeffrey and Gary Backhouse.



ISBN: 9780977537204

Richmond: Blooming Books, 2006



Victoria has a wonderful, varied orchid flora of 363 species making it one of the richest areas in the world for terrestrial orchids. They can be found from sea level to the highest mountains, from swamps to deserts. The flowers occur in a fascinating array of forms from just a few millimetres across in the onion orchids to almost 200 millimetres across in the spider orchids. 1490 photographs detail all of the orchids in Victoria. Each species has a descriptive text, which along with the photograph should enable the user to identify orchids found growing in the wild.

"Darnum Wood"

Darnum Vic

16.19 hectares (40 acres) - \$825,000



LFW property since 1988, comprises 13.6 hectares of covenanted Lowland Forest in a cluster of several properties with retained natural vegetation. Forest canopy dominated by Messmate and Narrow-leaf Peppermint. Under-storey includes Long Leaf Wattle, Snowy Daisy Bush, Common Cassinia, and Prickly Tea Tree. Ground layer has Austral Bracken, Variable Sword Sedge, Thatch Saw Sedge and Spiny-headed Matrush and a rich profusion of herbs and orchids. There is abundant wildlife including wallabies, kangaroos, wombats, echidnas, possums and plentiful and varied bird species.

Excluded from covenant are 1.18 ha domestic area and 2.57 ha fenced paddock suitable for horses, sheep etc. The dwelling is an environmentally sensitive, stylish 4 bedroom mudbrick residence with all mod cons, located within minutes of freeway, 10 minutes from Warragul, 1 hour from Melbourne.

Contact: Denis Shiels: 03 5623 5051
or e-mail denis.shiels@elders.com.au

Courses and Field Days.

Land for Wildlife Extension Officers and contacts are at the following Department of Sustainability and Environment Offices:

Alexandra

Nigel Waterhouse
Phone: (03) 57354356
nigelwaterhouse@dse.vic.gov.au

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Ballarat & Geelong

Elspeth Swan
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elspeth.swan@dse.vic.gov.au

Bendigo, Swan Hill and Mildura areas

Terri Williams
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Wodonga

Sarah Kelly
Phone: (03) 5723 8659
sarah.kelly@dse.vic.gov.au

DSE Freecall Customer Service

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ANGAIR Annual Wildflower Show 19 & 20 September 2009

Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna
Memorial Hall Anglesea
P: 03 5263 1085 E: angair@pipeline.com.au
<http://users.pipeline.com.au/~angair/mainpage.htm>

Friends of Brisbane Ranges Biennial Wildflower Show

Sunday 11 October from 10am

Anakie Hall, Staughtonvale Rd, Anakie 3221
Contact: Helena Lindorff
E: helenal@pacific.net.au or
P: Judy Locke 5367 2922
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/>

Permaculture Design Course 1 to 13 August

WTree (via Buchan) East Gippsland
Contact: John Champagne (02) 6492 7306
E: champagne@gmail.com
www.permaculturedesign.com.au

Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests Walk Sunday 21 June

Hunter's Track, Columbine Creek, Sanger's Hut
Contact: Deirdre Slattery 5470 5161
<http://www.fobif.org.au/walks.html>

Threatened Bird Network Workshop

Surveying for Threatened Birds – Ecology, ID & Survey Techniques
<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/threatened-bird-network.html>
P: Janelle Thomas 03 9347 0757 0425 712 908
E: j.thomas@birdsaustralia.com.au

Bushfire Dinner Fundraiser @ Bluestone Restaurant & Bar Melbourne Saturday 25 July

Fundraiser Dinner for wildlife affected by the bushfires in Victoria. All proceeds of the dinner go to Wildlife Victoria, Wildlife Rescuers and Wildhaven Shelter in St Andrews.
The dinner is a 3 course vegetarian meal. Cost is \$80 (all proceeds go directly to the cause).
For bookings and information, contact
P: Christine on 0402 127 202
E: winterwildlifesoiree@hotmail.com

Statewide Coordinator

Peter Johnson Bendigo
(03) 5430 4358
peterjohnson@dse.vic.gov.au

Grassland Restoration by Deborah Reynolds @Melton Thurs 27 August 7.30-8.30pm

All local environmental groups & interested parties are invited to attend this interesting evening at Dunvegan Cottage at the Willows Historical Park in Melton. Attendance is free. Melway Map 115 C10 (old) or Map 337 C9 (new).
Contact: Daryl Akers Pinkerton Landcare & Enviro Group 9743 2495 0438 277 252

Platypus Plantout 18 & 19 July

Project Platypus is dedicated to improving land and water resources in the Upper Wimmera River region and engaging farmers, volunteers and the broader community in land degradation issues.
P: 03 5358 4410 E: project@platypus.org.au
<http://www.platypus.org.au>

GrowWest 19 July

Grow West is hosting their planting day at the W. James Whyte Island Reserve, Mymiong.
P: Trevor Prowd 9218 5613 0439 614 548
E: trevor.prowd@ppwcma.vic.gov.au
To register visit <http://ppwcma.vic.gov.au/grow-west/news-events/index.html>

11th Yarrilinks 1 & 2 August

Yarrilinks focuses on the protection, enhancement and restoration of native bush, with a heavy focus on the area's iconic Buloke Woodlands. Yarriambiack Shire, Northwest Victoria
Contact: Rae Talbot 5385 7110 0428 922 647
E: raetalb@netconnect.com.au
<http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/our-solutions/places-faces>

Grey-crowned Babbler Tree Planting 2 August

Join the Friends of the Grey-crowned Babbler for a day's tree planting in the Nagambie district to help link crucial parts of the habitat of this threatened bird. Enjoy the provided lunch and learn about the current status of this threatened bird across Victoria.
Contact: Doug Robinson 0408 512 441
E: dougr@tfn.org.au

Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

PO Box 185, Nunawading, 3131
(03) 9877 5342 or 1300 305 342 (country)
www.birdobservers.org.au
www.dse.vic.gov.au/landforwildlife