

July 2007

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Anniversary Preparations Underway

By Pat Coupar

An informal meeting over a barbeque to discuss FOWSP's 25th Anniversary was held at the Folly on Sunday June 17th.

It is important that our group marks our 25 years of supporting the Warrandyte State Park and its rangers.

Over the last few months the FOWSP Committee of Management has been formulating ideas to celebrate this very special milestone.

We see it as an opportunity to acknowledge some of the people involved over the years and the various contributions they have made. It is also a chance to attract new members.

In order to highlight some of the major achievements over the 25 years we have been delving into the past. At the Sunday barbeque members were asked to bring any old photo albums, newsletters or other relevant information.

It was amazing what came out of the woodwork, so to speak! There were photos of our original propagation morning in pouring rain under a large introduced *Eucalyptus nicholii* as well as many 'arbor week' plantings with the schools.

As the lunch progressed and the red wine flowed, stories started to emerge. These were captured on tape and may be used later in a special newsletter.

One of the decisions already made by the committee is to publish a special edition commemorative newsletter. With a colour front



page the newsletter will be totally dedicated to 25 Years of FOWSP.

There were suggestions as how to celebrate our anniversary. It was agreed that a special event should be held at the Folly, probably in November. This could be a reunion where we get together as many founding members as possible.

If any member has any further ideas on how to celebrate our 25th anniversary, don't hesitate to contact a member of the committee or if you would like to be more involved, come along to a meeting.

Anyone who would like to contribute stories or anecdotes about FOWSP for the special October newsletter can either post them to PO Box 220, Warrandyte or email them to ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au by 31st August.

Bush Backyard

The Red-rumped Parrot

By Steven Katsineris

Over a period of years I had often seen pairs and groups of parrots feeding on the ground in parks, beside roads and nature strips in Eltham, Bundoora and other Melbourne suburbs, but I couldn't get close enough to identify. Then one day while my son Andreas was at soccer training in north Eltham, I spotted a group of about 20 of them feeding in the grass, perching on the wire fence and flying around next to the soccer field. I managed to get very close up and observe details of their size and colour. After later checking several bird books I realized these parrots were Red-rumped Parrots. They are also known as Grass and Ground Parrot, because they spend a great deal of time feeding on the ground.

The Red-rumped Parrot is a slender, elegant, medium-sized parrot, about 28cm in length, with a long tail. The adult male is bright emerald-green, with blue-green head, yellow shoulders and belly, blue specks on the wings and upper back and a red rump. The female is duller in colour, with olive-green underparts, pale green wings and back and blue wingtips. Only in the male has the red rump. The Red-rumped Parrot's call is a sweet warbling song, 'chee chlip, chee chlip.'

Red-rumped Parrots mate for life. Like other parrots they nest in a tree hollow, usually a living or dead Eucalypt tree, or a hollow stump or fence post. They will use a nest box or other site if these are not available. They lay 4-6, but usually 5 white eggs. Breeding usually takes place in spring.

Red-rumped Parrots feed in pairs or small flocks mainly on the ground, eating seeds, leaves of grasses, fruit and flowers. Also feeds on Eucalypt and other blossoms in trees.

Red-rumped Parrots inhabit lightly timbered country with access to water, like open grasslands, open woodlands, paddocks, roadsides, playing fields, farmland, parks and gardens. They shun wetter more heavily timbered areas, but are seldom far from creeks and other watercourses.

The Red-rumped Parrot is found in inland southeastern Australia, from southern Queensland, throughout most of NSW and Victoria to eastern SA. The clearing of large areas of forest has probably extended their former range.

Red-rumped Parrots can often be seen feeding in suburban parks, gardens and other grassy clearings around outer Melbourne. Red-rumped

Parrots living in urban areas close to humans are prone to being hit by cars and domestic pets, like cats often kill others. But these pretty parrots are common and the species seems secure.

Close Encounter of the Bird Kind

By Pat Coupar

Recently, while working in a bushland reserve beside the river in Warrandyte North, I saw this strange bird perched in a dead tree.

Looking into the sun, it was just a silhouette - but I could see it was large. What was it? I couldn't see its head or beak.

Determined to identify this intriguing bird, I started to creep up on it. There was no cover, I had nowhere to hide and anyway the bird was perfectly positioned to see any movement. I had to rely on not frightening it into flight.

As I stealthily approached I saw that the bird had a sleek body and long neck - a cormorant perhaps. But it was too big! Anyway, with a greyish brown back and a pale buff breast its colour was not right for a cormorant.

As I got nearer the bird shuffled nervously on its perch. Then it turned its head and stretched its neck. At once I knew what the mystery bird was. No other bird has such an ultra long slender sinuous neck like that - no wonder they call it 'snakebird'. More correctly it is known as a Darter. And it was a female. Males are glossy black.

I have seen these birds before, but always swimming in the river with just head and kinked neck visible above the surface of the water. While most birds swim on top of the water, the Darter swims beneath it.

Eventually I got too close for comfort and, stretching its magnificent broad wings and long wedge-shaped tail, the wary Darter took off.



What's happening in your backyard this month?

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

People in Plants

By Shelagh Morton

Goodia lotifolia (Golden tip)

Fragrant yellow pea flowers cover this lovely shrub in spring. Robert Brown, the botanist on the Flinders ship "Investigator" named it for Peter Good who was the gardener on board. He trained at Kew Gardens, which was controlled by Sir Joseph Banks who recommended him for the post.

He was one of the few on board who kept a diary and it is a plain man's view of the wonders the voyage revealed. It sounds an entertaining read. He died in Sydney "regretted by all" two days after the circumnavigation, probably from tropical dysentery.

The Goodenias we know are not named after Peter Good, but after a Dr. Goodenough, Bishop of Carlisle and Vice President of the royal Society. He wrote on seaweeds and sedges.



Canned Hunting Comment

By Pat Coupar (editor)

In last month's newsletter I reported on the terrible practice of trophy hunting that is going on in South Africa and other parts of the world. It is called Canned Hunting and involves pre-capturing animals, holding them in an enclosure to provide clients with a guaranteed kill.

In response to this article I received this email from FOWSP member Dick Thomson:

"Having read your article in the newsletter about trophy hunters I thought that I would let you know this issue has arisen in Victoria.

It was written up earlier this year. I cannot recall all the details, but think that it was in the Gisbourne area. A shooting club was set up at a property and, if my memory is correct animals such as deer and goats were released. Maybe pheasants also, but this may be my imagination.

It took neighboring residents with council support some years to get the place closed down. I think a planning appeal finally closed their doors.

Perhaps more insidious were the people who released deer (and are now releasing pigs) in State Forests and Parks so they can be hunted."

Middle Yarra Sustainable Gardening Award Competition

Do you have a sustainable garden? Have you maximised water efficiency, created a haven for wildlife or harvest an abundance of foods? Your contribution may include composting, worm farms, vegie gardens, indigenous plant species, rainwater and greywater systems, habitat for local fauna, or any number of other sustainable gardening ideas?

The Middle Yarra Sustainable Gardening Awards Competition aims to recognise your efforts however small, towards achieving sustainability in your garden and neighbourhood. This is your chance to share your ideas and achievements with the local community.

There are several Sustainable Gardening Award categories (courtyard, urban and rural) allowing you to enter a garden of any shape or size.

The awards will be judged by Gardening Australia presenter Jane Edmanson who will visit shortlisted gardens and present to winners at the awards ceremony.

Entries close September 10th 2007. Entry forms can be obtained from the following councils:

Belinda Moody at Banyule City Council ph no 9457 9821

Nigel Philpot at Manningham City Council ph no 9840 9173

Alison Hickey at Nillumbik Shire Council ph no 9433 3328

Book Review

By Pat Coupar

A guide to Australian Moths By Paul Zborowski & Ted Edwards

There are estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000 species of moths in Australia belonging to 140 families and only 400 species of butterfly belonging to just five families. By the author's own admission, this guide covers only 2% of the moth species. Nevertheless, it serves as a useful identification guide to the most common species as well as some of the more unusual moths.

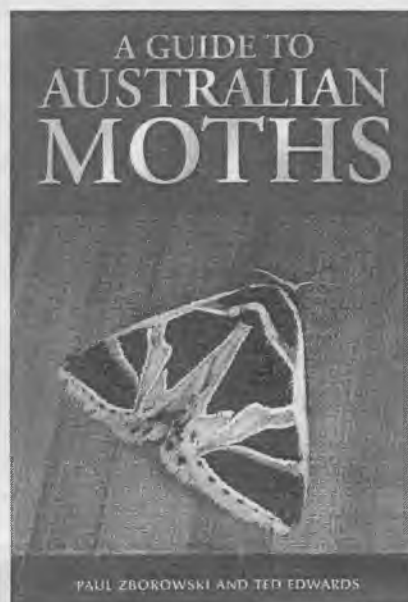
Moths are generally thought of as the poor relations of butterflies, often small and drab and lacking the brilliant colours and patterns of their more illustrious cousins. But this is not necessarily the case. Many moths are brightly coloured with striking patterns on their wings and bodies. Some are intricately designed to blend into their environment – like many of the Geometrids that rest with wings outstretched on bark, leaves or lichen and are correspondingly coloured to provide perfect camouflage.

While butterflies and moths both belong to the same order of insects – Lepidoptera meaning 'scaly-wings', moths are more diverse in their biology and lifestyles than butterflies.

Prior to the main section of the book on identification, there are short chapters on such topics as: What is a moth? What is the difference between a moth and a butterfly? Why are there so many different moths? Why are moths attracted to lights? What use are moths? Etc.

The book delves into the environmental role of moths and their relationships with other animals and plants. Scattered throughout the book are short special interest features on the Bogong Moth, Witjuti Grub, migration, hairy caterpillars, pollination, aquatic moths and others.

The bulk of the book is taken up with the identification of moth families. No complicated keys are used, just simple lists of key characteristics. Around 400 species are illustrated with crisp clear photographs of living moths as they would be seen in their natural habitat – rather than pinned specimens.



This is not a detailed scientific reference book. There is one of those already called 'Moths of Australia' by Ian Common and published in 1990 by Melbourne University Press.

Many of the species featured in the book are the most colourful representatives of their family, but this makes for an attractive book.

I like the book very much. It is an ideal size for a field guide and feels good in the hand. I find myself turning the pages just to admire the images of the moths, the complex designs, colours and shapes of their wings and the strange postures that some of them adopt to fool their predators. In the end learning about the fascinating private lives of moths somehow seems more important than actually naming the species.

My only regret is that there are few photographs of caterpillars, but it would need another volume of equal size to accommodate them!



Editors Note:

Members are invited to send in a review of any books they think might be of interest.



Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the June Warrandyte market: Ray Kruger, Marion Thomson, Alison Thom, Mark and Margaret Hassell, Marie Krause and Jan Tindale.

The trailer was delivered and returned by Peter Curry.

Anyone who would like to be rostered on to help with the trailer, even for just one hour, can contact Marie Krause on 9712 0498. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary.

News from the Committee



Rangers Report:

- Canoe Safety Signs have been installed along the River, at the Canoe Launch's. The Project is currently being finalised at the moment, with the installation of the accompanying poles to be installed shortly. The funding for this came from a Grant from Marine Safety Victoria.
- An audit on the Sugarloaf BBQ's has found that they are un-safe, and have now been decommissioned. A new bbq has been installed, with more to come early in the next financial year.
- A new 680m Rabbit Proof Fence has been installed at Hotchkins Ridge Flora Reserve.
- FOWSP did a very successful planting at the Pound Bend Picnic area along the edge of the car park, roughly 600 plants were put in. This was part of Volunteer Week.
- A new platform was put around the Gold Memorial Cairn near Gold Memorial Rd.
- A very successful weed program has been done this year in the new Warrandyte Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve, using the funding that came across with the Reserve from Melbourne Water.
- Aiden O'Dempsey, one of the Warrandyte Staff, recently got engaged to his partner (Janaya, Ranger from Yarra Bend), while holidaying recently in Darwin.

Nursery Report:

- Nursery sales are still up.
- TAG activity this Thursday (June 14th) is a visit the heritage cottage in Nillumbik followed by a walk
- On June 28th there will be a TAG outing to Edna Walling garden and the Alistair Knox designed house. Two gardeners from Heidi will tag (sic) along.

Other Business

- Discussion on DSE paper - Land and biodiversity at a time of climate change. Agreed that FOWSP will put in a submission.
- Fred Rich has volunteered to drive a bus for activities outside of the local area.
- Tim O'Donnell joined the committee to talk about his role with Manningham as a Landcare Facilitator for the next 12months. Tim is currently the Landcare Facilitator for a Landcare Coalition in Nillumbik and Whittlesea. Tim will be working closely with other Manningham Land Care groups to help them to develop Future Direction plans. Tim will assist groups with:
 - implementing their plans;
 - applying for grants
 - running training for groups if they want it next year;
 - organising and running networking opportunities for Landcare Groups in Manningham

FOWSP agreed that it will be beneficial to be part of the networking opportunities and have access to a grants coordinator. Tim will come to the Nursery and talk with Josh and Jodie to find out more about what FOWSP does.

Saving a Sumatran Paradise

By Ben Gaylard

The wildlife of Southeast Asia has fascinated me since I was a small boy, old enough to read. The area is home to tigers, leopards, rhinos, elephants, tapir and the only great ape outside of Africa the orang-utan. South East Asia is also home to a large, rapidly expanding human population, which largely lives below the poverty line. So conservation of the areas amazing flora and fauna is seen as a low priority for governments across the region. Those areas that are included in National Parks and other protected area systems, often suffer greatly from illegal settlement, logging and poaching.

No other area of Southeast Asia has fascinated me more, than the Indonesian island of Sumatra; unfortunately it has been far from immune to the problems mentioned above, with one of the world's highest rates of deforestation. Indeed the Sumatran Orangutan (recently recognized as a distinct species to the Borneo Orangutan) numbered 12,000 in 1993 now numbers just 3000 due to both rampant illegal logging, and conversion of forests for palm oil plantations. These problems intensified further following the Tsunami in 2005, which rocked the city of Banda Aceh in North Sumatra.

Being a second year Environmental Science student at Deakin University, I have been keen on securing volunteer work, so I can help to secure the long term future of the islands amazing flora and fauna. In early June I was delighted to get in touch with Chris Banks, coordinator of Melbourne zoos conservation partnerships, who has been invaluable in helping me fulfil my ambitions of Sumatran Volunteer work.

So in November of this year I, along with friend Jake Urlus will be assisting staff from Melbourne Zoo and Flora and Fauna International, with there Sumatran Elephant Conservation program. The program using the Endangered Sumatran Elephant (the smallest subspecies of the Asian Elephant) as a flagship, is working with a local village to protect a 17,000 hectare block of forest(known as the Hidden Paradise) adjoining the Gunung Lesueur National Park, the largest continuous forested area in Sumatra.

In a rare decision the Indonesian government has handed control of the 17,000 hectare forest block to the Tangkahan community home to Orangutans, Tigers and Sumatran Elephants (possibly the hairy Sumatran Rhino, I hope !). Rather than log the forest, the community with the

aid of Flora and Fauna international and Melbourne Zoo, is working to develop ecotourism and research in the area. Jake and I will be helping to develop ecotourism and assisting with research programs, as the community is in the process of building a research tower .

You can help too !!!!!

Listed below are items desperately needed by both the elephant patrols, and the Tangkahan community. If you can help, call me on 0421 046 525 to arrange pickup of items.

Second hand laptops x4
Second hand video camera
Second hand digital camera
Compass x15
Trangia x15
Binoculars x3
Night vision binoculars
Small backpacks x26 (must be water proof)
GPS x2
Torches with rechargeable battery kit x5
Camping cups/plates/eating equipment x15
Camping water purifier
Uniforms x11
Sleeping bags x11
Floor mats x11
First Aid equipment including snake bite kit x2
Camping mattresses x11
Communication radio program

Donations of money will also be gratefully received. Cheques should be made out to Zoos Victoria - Sumatran Elephant Conservation and can be sent to Chris Banks at Melbourne Zoo, or Ben Gaylard at 36 Kangaroo Ground Rd, Warrandyte Nth 3113, along with a return address for a tax receipt.

Also Jake and I are in the process of organizing a charity auction so if you have items you think may make some money, they would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you can help !!!!!!!



"I SPY"

By B.G



Team Time

Recently the TAG (Thursday Activity Group) Team planted over 300 plants near Boys Rd (Melways map23 A10). The species included wattles, poas and other grasses. A dozen people including Rangers worked together on the project.

Volunteers Visiting

On a Park activity a group of our FOWSP volunteers visited Kangaroo Ground Museum then moved on to One Tree Hill.

Extra Curricula Activity

Catherine Thomas and Ellouise Smith, both from Eltham High visited the depot (it was curriculum day at school) trying to 'find some plants for mum'.

Catherine likes basketball and wants to be a photographer, Ellouise likes horse riding and callisthenics. She wants to be a vet one day.

Library Link

Judy Green who regularly looks after our library, sorting, checking and making sure all is in order is sometimes seen at the nursery helping to prick out plants.

I Spy is informed that Judy had to leave early on one Thursday mid-June to attend a tennis luncheon. Her team had played in the grand finals and lost (by 38 games!).

Hasties Happening

In late June a largish group was led to 'Hasties' and then on to a walk. The leader was Ranger Cam Beardsell.

Botanical Bungle

Readers will recall the mention of FOWSP aprons in the May newsletter and their floral decoration. In an intelligence mistake, as serious as the misleading as the Iraqi WMD misinformation, I Spy referred to Yellow Box and Golden Wattle. I have been castigated by several members who pointed out that the flora description was wrong.

'Flu' Flown

Kay Williams, Business Support Officer at the Park, has been off recently with the flu, but fortunately is back at work now.

Chocolate Chillies

Apropos the apron plant blunder I Spy noted several weeks later that one FOWSP member, pricking out *Arthropodium strictum* (chocolate Lillies) was wearing an apron brazenly decorated with a bright red chilli motif!

Seen Scoping

During June, Conrad Annal, presently Ranger-in-Charge, was showing two visitors around the Park. On their top vestments were the words Te Papa Atawhai. The visitors were from New Zealand's Department of Conservation. They were Darrin Woods – a Technical Support Officer (fire) who is specifically involved in strategic planning and Tony Teeling – a Technical Support Supervisor (fire) 'basically a fire manager'.

They spent several days in Victoria looking at different fire agencies, ie DSE, Parks Victoria and CFA and were then moving onto Tasmania for three days. (It was called a 'scoping Tour').

Phascogales Finished

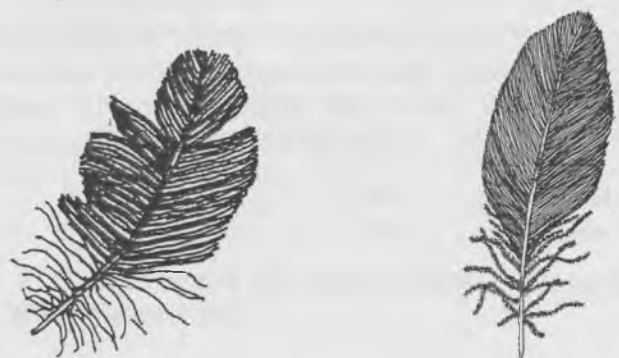
Recently two dead male Phascogales were brought into the depot office. Both had died a natural death. Apparently males exhaust themselves fatally after a very short lifetime.

Macquarie Matters

Surveys were conducted from January to March 2007 in the Yarra River from Dights Falls to Warbuton. The intensive fish study went very well, according to Steve Saddler, Senior Scientist at the Freshwater Ecology section of the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research.

The Macquarie Perch (*Macquarie australasica*) a threatened species, normally found north of the Dividing Ranges, was the main study, but other species were also looked at.

Steve, a one time member of FOWSP, commented that the fish in the Yarra were a particularly healthy lot. If you catch one of the tagged fish (tag on dorsal top fin) please ring the number on the tag and provide details. The survey was to determine the status of all native fish present.



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Omphalina
(*Omphalina* spp.)

In shades of bright orange and yellow this pretty little fungus can commonly be seen at this time of year particularly beside tracks, on bare banks and even rabbit mounds.

It is a lichenised gilled fungus that grows on algae-covered earth. It can be seen on bare ground at Sandy Bay car park at Jumping Creek Reserve and along the Black Flat walking track.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE

FOWSP Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Email.....

Membership \$20

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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