



WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Deep Winter Newsletter

Volume 46/four

July/August 2016

Warringal Conservation Society is a local, not-for-profit, community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

Join us!!

Warringal Conservation Society is not just a local environment group: it is stimulating, fun and companionable and takes an active role in the wider community.

Single \$15,
Family \$20
Pension/student/
unemployed \$10
Life \$150

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. We may edit for legal, space or other reasons. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Warringal Conservation Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Jenny Macklin MP.

JULY MEETING

Mid Winter Soup Night

MIDWINTER MEETING – gather at 6.30pm for home-made soup and snacks before the Meeting which starts at 7.30 pm! Bring soup, bread or something else to share. ALL WELCOME.

Outfoxed - Feral Animal Control

Statewide expert on feral animal threats and solutions, Mark Femby, will talk about the cunning he applies to catching animal pests in National and State Parks, and in suburbia. Mark is familiar with Banyule, being contracted by Banyule City Council, and is the ideal person to tell us about all things feral.

AUGUST MEETING

Tarkine Association Vicotoria

The Tarkine Association of Victoria is a representative body in campaigning to protect the Tarkine Wilderness. Their primary aim is to spread awareness in Victoria about the importance of the Tarkine; both as a haven of biodiversity and as a place for humans to experience the peace and power of wilderness. The goal is to see the Tarkine protected as a National Park and World Heritage area.

**Meetings on first Thursday of the month
from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices,
60 Beverley Road.**

**Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and
Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

July

Thursday 7th: Soup night starting 6.30pm followed by General Meeting 7.30pm - Feral Animal Control

Sunday 10th: Tawny Pond Planting (See news and Events)

Sunday 31st: National Tree Day (See news and Events)

August

Thursday 4th: General meeting — Tarkine

Sunday 14th: Planting at *Eucalyptus studleyensis* (See news and Events)

News & Events

Upcoming Plantings

Sunday 10 July: 10am - 12noon: Tawny Pond planting, Somerset Drive Viewbank.

We will be planting in around existing plants we put in last year. See WCS facebook for location. Melway ref 32:F2.

Sunday 31 July - National Tree Day: 10am - 12noon: Banyule Native Gardens, Banyule Road, Viewbank. The three beds to be planted - Long, Red Rock and Small Sign. The event is listed as a National Tree Day event on their website so we may have some new helpers. Melways ref: 32:F1.

Sunday 14 August: 10am - 12noon: Eucalyptus Studleyensis Planting, walk in from Somerset Drive car park, Viewbank.

A follow up to the May planting. We will be weeding around the new plants we put in in under the Studleyensis. Turn right out of the Somerset car park and you will see WCS and Banyule bush crew signs leading you to the location. It is a lovely site under this magnificent tree. Melways ref: 32:F2.

Twilight walk Report - Who Roosts at Banyule Flats?

When an activity for World Environment Day (Sunday 5th June) was discussed by WCS Committee, Daphne Hards suggested a change from our usual morning activities – an evening walk, to see what would come to roost on the dead trees in the Banyule Swamp. This would add to our knowledge, and also avoid the weekend morning traffic-jams in the car-park.. We gathered about 3.30 pm, on a still grey afternoon – the light was decidedly poor. A group of about 25 people, including 4 small boys, first visited the Grotty Pond. As we walked across the Oval, it was hard to see the Red-rumped Parrots on the grass, until the Magpies disturbed them and they flew up. At the pond we watched a Dusky Moorhen and some Chestnut Teal which were flouncing about, perhaps in early courtship activity. A Crested Pigeon settled in a dead wattle. Rainbow Lorikeets were flying about and Musk Lorikeets were feeding in flowering Ironbarks, undeterred by the Noisy Miners. We then followed the Bike Path around the raised bank – by this time our eyes had adjusted to the poor light and we saw that the Red-rumps had returned to the Oval,

WCS subscriptions due

WCS membership subscriptions for 2016/2017 are due in July. Thanks to everyone who has already paid! The rates are on pg 1. These are used for the costs of running the Society that include hall hire, insurance, and postage. Subscriptions can be paid to the Treasurer Daphne Hards at a meeting or planting, or a cheque can be sent by mail using the form on page seven of this newsletter.

Subscriptions can also be paid electronically directly into the Society's bank account using the following information:

Name of Account: Warringal Conservation Society
BSB: 633 000

Account No; 143918613

Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor. To be certain, you can email warringal3084@gmail.com that your deposit has been made.

Who we are and how to contact us

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News and Events cont.

with a Willie Wagtail and the Magpies. At this point James Deane reported seeing a King Parrot – I had heard it, but with only one observer, this could not be confirmed. We looked over the Swamp's pale expanse where the most conspicuous birds were the Silver Gulls, and a Swan. A few Straw-necked Ibis were standing in the dead tree.

The party moved on to the Viewing Area on the Swamp's east side; the clouds were beginning to lift and the light improved. We set up three telescopes and observed the Swan and his mate resting near the fallen branches, some Chestnut Teal, and Grebes swimming about between dives. At the north end, there were some Black Ducks and some Grey Teal, plus Dusky Moorhens and Coots. Swarms of Welcome Swallows pursued low-flying insects over the water. A chorus of Common Froglets twittered in the water, and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were flying near Banyule House.

Groups of Strawnecks kept flying in – impressively large against the sky and dramatic in their black and white plumage. They came in groups of between five and a dozen birds, disturbing those already perched so there would be a few minutes of confused flight round the silhouetted trees, before they settled and preened themselves.. They were a grand and impressive sight – unfortunately I had no hope of getting a flight photograph. A few Australian White Ibis settled as well – numbers built up till we had 57 Strawnecks and about 10 White, and a solitary White-faced Heron. We also saw Common Mynahs and a Starling in the dead trees, and other birds flew over. We recorded a pair of Pied Currawongs, Little Ravens, a Blackbird and a single brown Blue Wren (Superb Fairy-wren if you insist.).

At 5.30, we tore ourselves away and started our walk back to the car park – and heard a strange wailing yelp. Over the trees came a splendid flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, looking enormous at tree-top height, flying in line abreast up the valley. A wonderful sight to finish on, and

another question to answer – where would they roost?

This was a very successful outing and we are all convinced that it must be repeated – perhaps for World Wetland day in early February.

Anthea Fleming



List of birds sighted: (29 species total):

- 2 Black Swan
- 3 Pacific Black Duck
- 7 Grey Teal
- 10 Chestnut Teal
- 2 Australasian Grebe
- 1 Hoary-headed Grebe
- 1 White-faced Heron
- 10 Australian White Ibis (Arrived on dusk)
- 57 Straw-necked Ibis (Arrived on dusk in several groups)
- 5 Dusky Moorhen
- 2 Eurasian Coot
- 15 Silver Gull (One adult sat in open topped nest box making lots of movement)
- 4 Crested Pigeon
- 48 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (Flew over right on dark)
- 2 Galah
- 8 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
- 8 Red-rumped Parrot
- 12 Musk Lorikeet
- 9 Rainbow Lorikeet
- 1 Superb Fairy-wren
- 4 Noisy Miner
- 2 Red Wattlebird
- 6 Australian Magpie
- 2 Pied Currawong
- 1 Willie Wagtail
- 8 Welcome Swallow
- 2 Common Blackbird
- 1 Common Starling
- 3 Common Myna



News and Events cont.

Planting Report - Sunday 19th June - Native Gardens

More plants went in at the at Banyule Flats in the garden near the Walter Withers sign.



June General Meeting Report

Planting and Working Bees

Sunday 15 May, Warm sunny morning and well attended planting and clean-up occurred around the large Eucalyptus Studleyensis at the entrance to Banyule Flats, near the Somerset Drive carpark.

Sunday 19 June, Forthcoming working bee around the Walter Withers' sign at the Native Gardens, to be confirmed by Heather Smith.

World Environment Day

This occurs on Sunday 5 June, and WCS members will be celebrating with a late afternoon walk around Banyule Flats from 3.30-5.30pm, commencing at the Somerset Drive carpark. It should be interesting to watch which birds come to roost in the area at dusk.

Wildlife and environmental issues

We are concerned that the Banyule Billabong has been dry now for several years. Anthea has discussed re-filling the Billabong with water with Banyule Council staff; and she has had a response to a letter to Melbourne Water, who have provided advice that they have recently prepared a report on the Billabong. Anthea is currently drafting her response.

We congratulate Danielle Malia, whose 'River of Mists' project is almost complete. An Aboriginal Cultural walk with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Colin Hunter was held on 28 and 30 May at Salt Creek and Heidelberg Park. Dorothy Davies attended on Mon 30 May and enjoyed the experience.

We are very pleased with recent State Government announcements which will improve public transport through Banyule - duplication of the Hurstbridge train line and removal of the level crossing at Rosanna.

Grants

On behalf of the Committee, Denise and Anthony Fernando are continuing to work on an application for a BCC Environmental Sustainability Grant. Denise and Daphne met with BCC staff to discuss the project. We propose to design and erect 3 interpretive signs around the Banyule Flats to highlight the fauna and flora of the area.

On behalf of WCS Daphne has submitted a grant application to Bendigo Bank for design and printing of 5,000 guided walking map/brochures of Banyule Flats. The map has been prepared by Anthea and highlights entrances to the reserve and significant features of the wetlands area.

NE Link

There is ongoing reference to the need for completion of the link in the media. The CEO of the RACV and the Banyule Mayor, Craig Langdon, both support the construction of the link through Nillumbik. Daphne reported that on the Plan Melbourne website the forward planning shows the NE link clearly going through the Banyule corridor.

Truck curfew trial

On behalf of WCS, Don Stokes attended the first meeting of the Community Reference Group on 31 May, which was to report on the North East Truck Curfew Trial. Marked decrease in number of trucks using roads covered by curfew, i.e. at night. A noise volume test was inconclusive. Vic Roads commissioned an independent road safety assessment for Rosanna Road and a list of recommendations were made. A more open community meeting will be organized in the next month or so.

June General Meeting Report cont.

Banyule Environmental Advisory Committee

Denise Fernando reported that BEAC have been discussing the Banyule's Draft Open Space Plan, and encouraged anyone interested to view this on Banyule City Council's website. Comments are welcome till 10 June. WCS committee have contributed to the draft.

Banyule House

The House is now being promoted via a website and Facebook page as 'The Voeux Wedding and Event Venue'. Landscaping works are progressing, including some removal of trees, which may have been diseased or dead. Adjacent residents, Friends of Banyule, and Banyule City Council are monitoring the development.

Coming events

Members may be interested in the following local events. Both events are free.

Change makers event on sustainable food - 6-9pm, *Daphne Hards (WCS Secretary & Meeting Chair)*

22 June at the Streeton Room, the Centre, Ivanhoe. The speaker is Rohan Anderson from Whole Larder Love.

'Towards Zero Emissions: Darebin Climate Forum' to recognise World Environment Day 7-9pm, 15 June.

Discussion will focus on the current climate situation, why we should be taking action, and what local governments, other government bodies and individuals can do to address climate change. The panel of prominent climate change experts will include: Peter Christoff, Nicky Ison, & Lauren Rickards

Other business

Jenny Macklin has written requesting donations of children's books for '3081 Angels' to her electoral office.

Speaker Summaries - March-June 2016

March - Dr Elizabeth Minchinton - Myrtle Rust

Elizabeth gave an update on the plant disease Myrtle rust. Myrtle rust is a fungus affecting plants of the myrtaceae family, including a number of common Australian plants like gum trees (*Eucalyptus*) bottlebrush (*Callistemon*), tea tree (*Leptospermum*) and paperbark (*Melaleuca*). It is believed to have come from South America and causes bright yellow spots of spores on leaves. It has been detected in nurseries and in some forest. Because it affects so many Australian plants, myrtle rust has the potential to cause great ecological damage.

April - Movie - Bag it: is your life too plastic?

This film follows Jeb Berrier as he questions the use of plastics in the modern world. He investigates plastic's effects on our oceans, environment, and bodies. Penny Grose led a discussion of the issues raised in the film.

May - Ben Cullen - Trust for Nature

Ben explained that the Trust for Nature works across Victoria to protect wildlife and habitat, mostly on private land. The Trust was created by Rupert Hamer to allow people to protect land or donate land to become public or be incorporated into National Parks. The Trust facilitates conservation covenants

in a binding agreement between land owners, the Trust and the State Government. This covenant becomes a deed attached to the property. The Trust also owns reserves. The trust is actively involved in assessing properties, monitoring and management. Ben discussed examples where motion sensing cameras had been used to detect a range of species including wombats, bandicoots, echidna, swamp rats, phasogale, antechinus, bassian thrush and black wallabies. Introduced predators such as foxes and cats were also detected. The Trust manages areas of owl, Leadbeaters possum and helmeted honey eater habitat. Ben also discussed rare plants such as several orchids and long pink bells that occur on properties managed by the Trust.

June - Robert Bender - Otways Koalas

Koala habitat has been fragmented by humans and in the Otways they are eating eucalypt forest to death. Once their food trees die, koalas starve. Robert explained that intervening is very difficult because there is no suitable habitat in Victoria for relocating koalas. Managers are taken to task when the public sees koalas in visibly poor condition, but euthanasing an iconic species is also not acceptable. Habitat restoration is the only long term approach likely to be successful but will take time.

2016 Duck Shooting Season Ends

Victoria's 3-month duck shooting season for 2016 ended on June 13th. At the opening on March 19th, many of the State's wetlands were dry. Lake Elizabeth and Johnson Swamp had been artificially filled and were acting as refuges for thousands of waterbirds escaping the effects of drought. Duck shooters were preparing to shoot on these two beautiful wetlands. Fortunately, legal challenges were mounted to protect endangered Australasian Bitterns on Lake Johnson and threatened Blue-billed Ducks on Lake Elizabeth. These were successful and both wetlands were closed for most of the season.

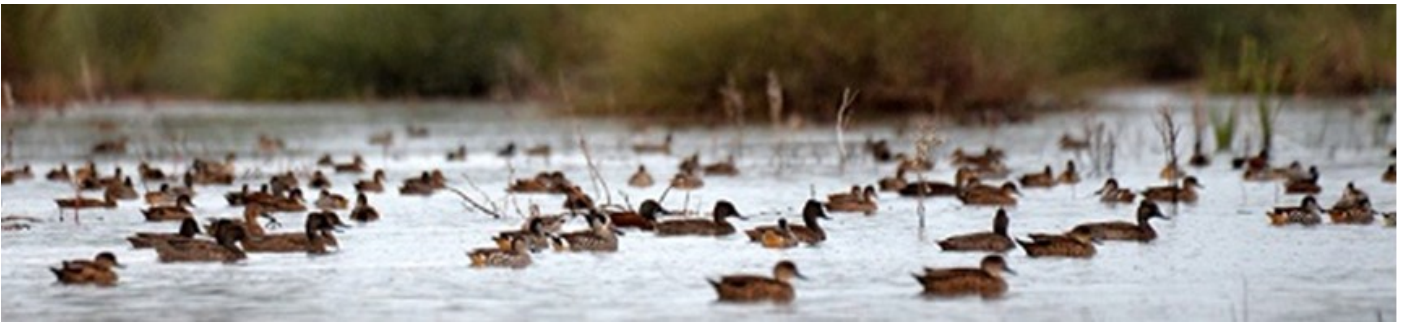
On the opening weekend rescuers, including several WCS members, attended Lake Burrumbeet near Ballarat. There, protected species were recovered including threatened Freckled Duck. Several birds were treated at the RSPCA veterinary centre.

Over the Easter weekend, on Lake Toolondo near

Horsham, rescuers recovered over 100 dead or wounded birds that included 60 protected and/or threatened species. Most of these birds had been shot on the opening weekend. Since Freckled Ducks were still present on the lake, more legal wrangling by the legal team resulted in one section of Lake Toolondo being closed for the rest of the season. This provided a much needed safe haven for birds.

2016 was exceptional in several ways. Environmental conditions were dire and bird numbers were low. There were fewer shooters. Long term campaigner Laurie Levy was banned from the wetlands this year. On the other hand, increased financial and legal support from Animals Australia and other organisations added more knowledge and power to a campaign that will continue until duck shooting is banned.

Celia Smith



Melbourne's Bats

Thanks to all those people who wrote letters of concern about backyard fruit tree netting that is hazardous to Melbourne's flying foxes. Victorian Advocates for Animals (VAFA) reports that some concrete steps forward have been made on moves to achieve netting regulations in Victoria. An update on this will be given later in the year.

Even though Melbourne is chilly at present, our flying foxes are enjoying ample amounts of eucalypt flowerings and even some late fruiting. Trees in Melbourne's industrial parks plantings, now 5-10 years old, are almost 100% native flying fox food source trees. There are thousands of them. This is good news for bats.

VAFA reports that the management of the Kew grey-headed flying fox colony will be handed over from DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) to Parks Victoria this year. VAFA continues to ask for misters; and hopefully there will be a modification and enlargement of the Soft Release Enclosure this year.

VAFA reports that Friends of Bats are seeking to become a recognised Parks Vic 'Friends of' Group. This will smooth the path for better volunteer works within the colony, insurance, tree planting, hazard removal and lobbying for funding for site improvements and public education.

Celia Smith



Caterpillars and other Larvae

As a follow-up to the interesting larva which Jane Crone brought to the June Meeting, I would like to suggest a very useful resource for identifying such things. Search the Internet for a site named Identifying Australian Caterpillars – this is provided by the Coff's Harbour Butterfly House and is first-rate. Particularly a series of thumbnails of creatures which are not caterpillars – i.e creatures which will not turn into butterflies or moths. Among these were a selection of Sawfly larvae – the Callistemon Sawfly looked just like Jane's beastie. The various caterpillars are arranged by their Families – to identify a find, I would look for something similar in appearance, then open that section for more examples. And keep looking – there are plenty. Of course pupae and adults are also shown – and also some larvae whose later stages remain unknown. Bear in mind that Australia possesses thousands of insects whose life-histories are still unknown, though the Lepidoptera are fairly well-known.. There are pictures of several of the Ghost, Swift or Rain-Moth

group (Hepialidae), an adult of which was photographed by Robert Bender, but as the larvae mostly live underground, feeding on roots, the young are not well-known. Some are tree-borers (Bardie Grubs) – fishermen prize them as bait.

Field Guides to Australian Butterflies are readily available. The Moths of Victoria are a much bigger subject and Guides to each Family are appearing, produced by the Entomological Society of Victoria. At about \$15.00 each they are affordable – each includes a disk with extensive data – but collecting the whole series could prove expensive. They are available from FNCV, Museum Victoria and from Andrew Isles Bookshop.

There is a very useful beginners' book called Flying Colours – Common Caterpillars, Butterflies and Moths of South-eastern Australia, by Pat and Mike Coupar (UNSW Press, 1992) . It illustrates about 90 species but is out of print. Should you ever find a second-hand copy, pounce on it!

Anthea Fleming

Nature Notes

May

- James Deane observed Gang Gangs in Canterbury Road, Camberwell, as he cycled to work .
- Daphne Hards saw a single Cattle Egret at banyule Flats; Dianne Williamson had seen six.
- Near the tennis courts, Celia Smith counted more than 30 Crested Pigeons, 30 Galahs, over 30 Wood Ducks and 15 Red-rumped Parrots. When cycling on the Yarra trail, she saw 45 Kangaroos between the Plenty River footbridge and the power-lines.
- Dianne Williamson's garden was visited by Pied Currawongs, Eastern Spinebills and Little Wattlebirds.
- Heather Smith reported 25 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos feeding in pine-trees.
- Anita Bourke saw kangaroos near the Viewbank Farm silos – also a Wedgetailed Eagle pursued by a crow (probably Little Raven) over Beverley Road.

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Special area of interest:	

Membership application/renewal (for July 2016-June 2017)

Donations always welcome

Please send this form and subscription (cheque or money order) to:

Warringal Conservation Society PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 VIC

(Or come to our monthly meeting and see treasurer Daphne Hards)

Nature Notes cont

- Dorothy Davies showed us the nest of native Paper Wasps which was built in the Bougainvillea creeper on her fence. The wasps had to be killed because they were aggressive and inflicted painful stings.
- Anthea Fleming showed some pictures of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos – including some in flight, in which one bird was flying upside-down.
- Chris Watson found a headless possum in his backyard in western Ivanhoe; likely to be the work of a Powerful Owl. About a month earlier a large owl snatched a creature (probably a rat).

June

- James Deane saw a pair of Powerful Owls, and also observed a Swamp Wallaby in Yarra Flats Park.
- Jane Crone saw 15 Kangaroos at Viewbank Farm. She had brought a specimen of a larva which had been attacking young Callistemon plants. This was identified by our visitor, Graham Patterson, as a Sawfly. It was greenish and, covered with small bristles – very different from the well-known black 'Spitfire' grub, also a sawfly larva. Both pupate underground.
- Denise Fernando saw a Marbled Gecko on a Red Gum.
- Lene Jakobsen reported that Cockatoos had been eating the seed-pods on her Illawarra Flame Tree.
- Daphne Hards reported on the frogs calling at Beverley Rd – she identified Common Froglets, Spotted Marshfrogs and Southern Brown Tree-frog.
- Dianne Williamson saw three Eastern Spinebills in her garden.
- Robert Bender showed pictures of the pair of Swamp Wallabies resident in the Horseshoe area at Wilson Reserve – the male is much the bigger. Also various fungi, a Yellow Robin, and the pupal case of a Rain Moth, alias Swift Moth. The larvae eat tree roots, underground.
- Anthea Fleming showed pictures taken at Melbourne Aquarium – Leafy Sea Dragons and the amazing Weedy Sea Dragon from South Australia.. The Aquarium successfully breeds them. Also a Gentoo Penguin swimming in its tank. Whether Antarctic Penguins should be kept in artificial conditions is a moot point, but one pair of the King Penguins have two well-grown young.
- The Fleming compost-heap provided a strange wingless fly, identified by FNCV as a female Soldier Fly. Its larvae help break down compost . The male is winged.



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