



Secretary: Sue Guinness, PO Box 491, Aireys Inlet, Victoria 3231
Mob: 0407 070 641 Email: sjguinness@gmail.com



FROM
THE
PRESIDENT
Alison Watson

AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

Phil and I are just back from a wonderful two months in northern Australia. Our boat trip gave us insight into the vast wilderness of the Kimberley, stunning geology and river systems, spiritual rock art in remote places, and very few other people - just a small taste of what is out there. We were privileged to visit Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) properties Mornington and Charney River-Artesian Range. AWC are doing wonderful work researching, monitoring and preserving the

many species surviving in this wilderness area. Charney has the reputation of having had no extinctions since European settlement.

They are concentrating on three main threats - fire, feral animals (particularly cats) and weeds. AWC's EcoFire program operates across three million hectares in the Kimberley, the largest non-government prescribed burning project in Australia. It has won awards and has reduced hot late season fires by 80%. Research has shown cats will travel long distances to find areas where food is easy to get, such as after hot burn fires. So this is another benefit of cool early season burns - more protection from cats for small mammals. Some spinifex species take a number of fire free years to produce seed - a critical food source for Gouldian Finches. The benefits of mosaic cool burns were plain to see with unburnt canopy and areas not affected at all. At Mornington we were thrilled to see rare Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens in their restored riverside vegetation habitat.

Out from Alice Springs in the Tanami Desert we visited another AWC property Newhaven and were delighted with the beauty of the area, small ranges interspersed with various spinifex habitats, Zebra Finches by the 100's and Major Mitchell Cockatoos flying in to the water trough at the campsite throughout the day. Newhaven has a program to fence a large proportion of the property and reintroduce many small mammals. AWC is funded primarily by donations and the conservation work they are doing across the country is exemplary and impressive. For more information go to www.australianwildlife.org.au.

OTWAYS THREATENED SPECIES RESEARCH NETWORK FORUM – August 18

The second Otway Threatened Species Research Forum was held in Geelong last week. It was an informative day of short presentations from a range of researchers from universities, NGOs and land management agencies covering a range of topics related to threatened species research in the Otways. Cathy Longmore began with an overview of the Otway Ark Project. With about 13,000 camera nights, 5 threatened species have been identified, along with 11 feral species, 16 small to medium mammals and 17 bird species.

We heard about three overlapping projects which complement the Otway Ark and are mutually beneficial for surveying in the Otways. Modelling of invasive predator control in forest ecosystems, quantifying critical weight-range mammal response, and questioning 'does fox control lead to an increase of feral cats?' Mark Le Pla talked about developing a fox scat monitoring program analysing scats for DNA, identifying individuals to gain a better understanding of fox movement.

After recent Night Parrot sightings in northern Australia Grant Palmer asked 'What about the Ground Parrot in the Otways?' Automated sound recorders are being used in the Carlisle Heath to see if Ground Parrots are present where they have been recorded in the past. Peter Homan talked about his research in the Sheoak Valley. Using video instead of still photos allows for better identification of small mammals and we could see this as he showed us short videos and pointed out the distinguishing characteristics. Peter also tapes over some of the flash which means he can to set up cameras 1.5 metres from the baiting stations instead of the regular 3 metres resulting in closer pictures and less clearing around the camera site. He was thrilled to discover a Broad-toothed Rat recently after looking at 400 Bush Rat images!

Particularly interesting for our area was the presentation by Elizabeth James on genetic identification of *Grevillea infecunda*. She showed the different flower colours and many different leaf and pollen variations between the different areas where they are found in the Anglesea Heath. From 294 samples she discovered just 38 genetically distinct individual plants. Recently in Coalmine Rd, 200 metres from where *Grevillea* plants had been lost years ago, the same plant (clone) has been found!

It was positive to hear of innovative research and the excellent work being achieved by Conservation Ecology Centre and others. **Alison Watson.**





ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

Tuesdays 9.30am–11.00am

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

EUMERALLA – September 12, October 10 and November 14

We intend working in the Eumeralla section of Great Otway National Park where we may have some assistance from the mountain bike riders. *Meet at the car park on the corner of Hurst Road and Great Ocean Road at 9.30*

Mangowak Sanctuary – June 13

Our final session in the Mangowak Sanctuary at the Aireys Inlet School on June 13 saw the young students undertake the removal of a variety of weeds including Bluebell Creeper, Sweet Pittosporum, Myrtle Milkwort, Sallow Wattle and Watsonia. The group that worked with Patrick, named the ‘Watsonia Warriors’, had fun using our special diggers to help get rid of this very unwelcome plant. Hopefully we will see further interaction between the Friends and the students as the Sanctuary is just so special and it is very rewarding working with these children who we hope one day may be environmental leaders.

Right: Patrick Flanagan and the “Watsonia Warriors” at the Mangowak Sanctuary.



Coastal dunes – July 11 & August 8



For the last two months we switched our attention to the coastal dunes near Pt Roadknight. Matt Russell, our Parks Vic Liaison Ranger, is keen to see a planned long-term program to reclaim this site where there are some areas of great coastal heathland that need protection from invasive weeds, in particular from Coast Tea-tree. We worked on the back of the primary dune removing small Coast Tea-tree, and were thrilled to see one section of the dune where young Coast Everlasting bushes, Thyme Rice-flower and Spinifex are flourishing. Many other coastal indigenous plants, including Coast Swainson-pea, were also observed. Removing invasive vegetation, and thus encouraging growth of indigenous species has been a rewarding experience. We will certainly return. **Margaret MacDonald.**

Left: The hardworking weeders take a moment to enjoy the ocean beach below the dunes.

ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend & Art Show

Saturday & Sunday September 23 & 24

10.00 am – 4.30 pm

Anglesea Hall, McMillan St, Anglesea

As members of the Friends’ Group are deeply committed to this annual event, we request as many people as possible to help with the preparation of the show on Friday September 22, and the running of the event during the week-end.

The Friends’ display will focus on the Spot-tailed Quoll with updates on the work being undertaken by the Conservation Ecology Centre and Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre.

We will also include a visual presentation of wildlife found in the Eastern Otways based on our mammal surveys. If you have some time available on any of these days, please contact Margaret 0412 652 419.

Wildflower Walk

Saturday October 21

10.00am – 3.30pm

Anglesea Hall McMillan St Anglesea

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

Venue to be chosen closer to the date depending where we have the best flowering of our indigenous species.

COMING EVENTS

Mammal Survey & Walk

Saturday November 18

9.00am – 4.00pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre

Contact: Alison 0400 570 229

Return to the Watson’s property at Kennett River where we will place cameras in the Park to see what small mammals are in the area. A walk around the property to enjoy the Mountain Ash forest, the fungi and the birds will follow. Bring morning tea, lunch, water, wet weather gear depending on the weather, sunscreen and sturdy shoes.

MAMMAL SURVEYS

First Tuesday

Contact: Patrick 0437 561 702

Meet at Angair office, McMillan St, Anglesea

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras are usually carried out following the committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We welcome people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in our surveys.



FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

CAMERA MONITORING



As mentioned in the last Newsletter, we placed three cameras behind the sand dunes, west of the O'Donohues Rd carpark, in a gully towards The Gulch carpark. When we went to pick up the cameras in the middle of June, there were only two left. One had been stolen! The theft was reported to the police. The results from the remaining cameras were mixed with multiple frames of a Black Rat that tried very hard to dislodge the cap of the baiting station. We also obtained many shots of a fox (or foxes) and a few frames of a cat. The only non-feral animal that visited the cameras was a Rufous Bristlebird.

Since then we have taken delivery of the three new cameras bought with the grant from the Norman Wettenhall Foundation. Parks Victoria

have also very kindly, bought two new cameras for The Friends to use to replace the one that was stolen. We now have six modern cameras at our disposal.

In early July, four cameras were put in thick coastal woodland close to O'Donohues Rd carpark, in an area where the cameras would be less likely to be seen. The cameras were collected on July 26th. We are happy to report that all four cameras were still there!

However, the results were disappointing, as we obtained few pictures of native animals but many frames of feral species. Multiple images were obtained of cats (different animals, given the different colors and markings), foxes, Common Blackbirds and Spotted Doves. One positive is the absence of shots of Black Rats on this occasion. The native animals captured on camera were a Common Brushtail Possum, unidentified small brown bird and a single frame of perhaps a bat that triggered one, very blurry, frame. **Patrick Flanagan**

Top: Patrick Flanagan and Kaye Traynor setting up the cameras; Right: Peter Crowcroft and his son Ollie with Kaye Traynor, Sue Guinness and Alison Watson in the background.



ANNUAL KOALA SURVEY – June 18

We could not have asked for a more perfect day for our Koala survey as it was sunny, cool and with no wind.

Sixteen adults and four young children met at the Aireys Inlet hall and we drove to Kennett River where we stopped for morning tea. Along the way some of the group paused on the side of the road when they saw a White-bellied Sea Eagle flying overhead.

After a short while it became evident that there were fewer koalas. Even allowing for those we miss, the numbers were down on previous years. Aaron from Parks Victoria, who, with his daughter Etta, joined us at Kennett River, suggested that some of the koalas may have moved further down the hill towards Wye River to feed on the tender new leaves which have regenerated since the bushfires in December 2015.



By the time we reached the turnoff, our tally numbered 30 koalas. Along the road, some of the walkers caught sight of a Wedge-tailed Eagle as it flew high above the forest.



After the lunch break which we spent on the ridge overlooking Grey River settlement and the ocean, we walked back along the powerline clearing. The koalas were definitely harder to see in the dense foliage of the trees along the coast side and on our return we saw a further 18.

We felt that the majority of those counted throughout the day were males. There doesn't seem to be any explanation for this, however on the very last section of our walk, a mother koala and her very young joey were spotted resting in a fork midway up a tree. After a while she moved higher holding the baby securely to her chest. Our total number of koalas was 48. It was a very pleasant day for everyone. Pictured above Etta, Ollie, Hugh, James and William with members of the group, who all

appeared to have a great time and very much enjoyed their koala experience. **Kaye Traynor**



FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

TEDDY'S LOOKOUT WALK - July 15



The air was brisk but the sun was shining. What a great start to an enjoyable walk. Our group of 11 set off to Teddy's Lookout where we walked to St Georges River via one section of the Tramway circuit. The group meandered along the river where a lone koala was spotted high up in a tree. This was a special sighting as it was a first for one of our group who had never seen a koala in the wild.

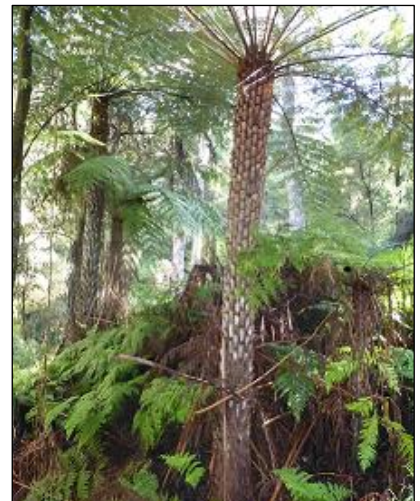


The track became quite muddy and slippery in some areas along the route creating a few challenges. Despite the track condition we passed a number of joggers and a few walkers along the way including a group of international students who were enjoying the Australian bushland.



Morning tea was enjoyed at the Allanvale camp ground, which was very quiet and peaceful. We then headed up the road and made a further stop at Qdos – ahhh...coffee ... before completing the circuit back to the lookout where we were greeted by very demanding Magpies wanting food. A couple of our group enjoyed a well-earned lunch while a few of us looked long and hard for whales from Teddy's Lookout. Sadly, none were seen despite whales having been reported in the area earlier in the morning. **Sue Guinness**

The story in pictures: From Teddy's Lookout at the top to walking the tramway track and along the St George River, there was much to see including Common Heath Epacris impressa (Victoria's floral emblem), fungi and moss, trees and ferns.





FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

VISIT TO LONG FOREST MALLEE – August 19



A very small group of us headed off to Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve to join the Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee for a day out. We were met by Bob Reid who along with another member, Janet, took us for a most enjoyable walk through Long Forest.

The reserve is approximately 600 hectares in size and comprises a number of vegetation classes which are listed under either the EPBC Act or the FFG Act including Rocky Chenopod Woodland Plains Grassland, Grassy Woodland and Stream-bank Shrubland. Over 150 species of birds have been recorded in the reserve. It provides a refuge and important breeding site for a number of threatened bird species such as the Painted Button-quail, Little Lorikeet, Swift Parrot, Barking Owl, Brown Treecreeper, Speckled Warbler, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Diamond Firetail and Crested Bellbird.



The Gold-dust Wattle was in flower and provided the main contrast of colour within the reserve. We also saw areas dominated by Bull Mallee *Eucalyptus behriana*, and Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*. Amongst the Bull Mallee we observed Cane Spear-grass *Austrostipa breviglumis*, a further threatened species. After our walk, and during our lunch the Friends group held their meeting.

Whilst we had been walking they had been doing some revegetation, so post lunch we joined in and helped plant the remainder of the local indigenous seedlings. The use of an auger made for quick and easy planting!

It was a most enjoyable day and a great chance for our new ranger Matt (who joined us for the day) to reconnect with the local community where he had most recently been working. **Sue Guinness**

Top: Planting in the reserve.

Top right: Joining with the Friends of Long Forest Mallee meeting.

Centre left: Cane Spear-grass

Centre right: Red Box

Right: Our group among the Bull Mallee.





CATCHING UP WITH DEB

In July, two of our Friends Committee members, Kaye Traynor and Margaret MacDonald made a short visit north to catch up with Deb Delgrosso, a former Committee member, who is now residing in Pambula, a coastal village on the New South Wales coast, just south of Merimbula. They share their experience with us:-

"After travelling through East Gippsland, Mallacoota, Croajingolong National Park and up to Eden, it was great to catch up with Deb who is now contracted by the NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage to manage a small caravan park at Pambula. Deb took up this position in December 2015 and we were most impressed with the confident, competent manner in which she is carrying out all the varied tasks, almost single-handed, that are necessary for a caravan park to function successfully.

Despite her busy routine, Deb was able to take some time off to share this beautiful part of Australia with us. Aptly named the Sapphire Coast we were stunned by the coastal cliffs, extensive beaches and panoramic vistas of oceans and river estuaries. We were thrilled to see Sea Eagles and Whistling Kites soaring overhead, a Lyrebird crossing one of the roads, and an Eastern Whip Bird and a Wonga Pigeon on one of our coastal walks. Unfortunately the only wombats we saw were many road kills on the sides of the roads. We were just enchanted by the extensive tall Coastal Banksia woodlands and remnants of rainforest where we heard the Lyrebird repertoire, and forest reserves where we identified the familiar cuts of the Yellow-bellied Gliders in the trunk of a Spotted Gum.

It is no wonder Deb has fallen in love with the area, but talking to her it is obvious her heart is still in Anglesea with the coastal heathlands and orchids that she appreciates so much. She has a big decision to make regarding her future, but whatever it is we wish her well, and feel sure it will be the right one for her." **Kaye Traynor & Marg MacDonald.**



Above: Kaye Traynor & Deb Delgrosso in the Mimosa Rocks National Park near Bega on the far south coast of NSW.



CONGRATULATIONS TO CEC ON NEW ECOTOURISM VENTURE FUNDING

The Friends of Eastern Otways congratulates the Conservation Ecology Centre on obtaining funding for the new Wildlife Wonders project to be established next year near Apollo Bay.

The new ecotourism attraction will enable visitors to experience the unique environment of the Otways up-close and predator-free. Set on a spectacular 20 ha property, the attraction will be the first of its kind on the Great Ocean Road. Profits will be reinvested into the Conservation Ecology Centre's research and conservation activities in the Otways.

"We want visitors to the area to be able to experience the Otways truly vibrant with wildlife," said Lizzie Corke, Conservation Ecology Centre CEO. Visitors will be able

to see native wildlife behaving naturally. There will not be any cages and visitors will share space with the animals as they walk through stunning bushland paths and raised walks, all set against the backdrop of the Southern Ocean.

Pictured above: Conservation Ecology Centre CEO Lizzie Corke (centre) with Colac Otway Shire CEO Sue Wilkinson and Mayor Chris Potter. For more information visit the CEC website: <https://conservationecologycentre.org>

Hello Everybody,

I hope that everyone in the friends group is well and in good health. Even though we are still in the grips of winter, I hope that everybody is taking the opportunity to get out into the park and see the many waterfalls that are particularly nice with the little bit of rain that we have received in the last couple of weeks. I recently worked on the Cora Lynn Cascade walking track with some of the other Lorne Staff and it was particularly green, wet, and very special.

STAFF MOVEMENTS

Not many staff movements to report this month with everybody busy working away, or on holidays in the quiet months. I do however want to mention that two of our staff from the Surf Coast, Emma Danby and Peter McGinnis, were chosen to join the team of firefighters from around Australia to head over to British Columbia Canada.

They are currently helping with the large wildfire response, and from the reports that have been trickling back to us everything is going well, and Peter and Emma are learning a great deal from the Canadians. This also means that Craig Hobbs is still acting in Emma’s role for a bit longer, and we are happy to keep Kieran around a bit longer in Craig’s Field Services Officer position.

OUT & ABOUT IN THE PARK

Katrina Lovett and I have been exploring new funding opportunities to extend our pest plant and animal program in the Otways. If successful, we will be able to fund a set of projects out in the Park in the coming year.

The next stage of the large animal protection program Otway Ark is going to begin shortly in the great Otway National Park. With Cathy now stationed down in the Western Otways, the whole Surf Coast PV team will be chipping in to make sure that we can continue Cathy’s excellent work.



Our fantastic field service staff have also been spending a lot of time out in the parks and making sure that we provide a safe environment for visitors. Kieran has been busy installing marine sign installation, and will shortly commence an Anglesea Heath signage plan in preparation for the inclusion of the lease area into the Great Otway National Park. Glen has been busy catching up on the walking track maintenance, and has put in a lot of kilometres out in the Park clearing and fixing problems caused by falling wood.

LAKE GHERANG RABBIT CONTROL PROJECT

Carlie has successfully wrapped up the Lake Gherang rabbit control project. Carlie says “We have now undertaken 3 lots of fumigation. The number of warrens being re-opened has now reduced which is positive. What was not so positive was finding several new warrens closer to the lake that were previously unmapped. We have since fumigated these too. Monitoring recently undertaken at Lake Gherang has shown that rabbit numbers have significantly decreased.

We now need to ensure regular follow up is undertaken to ensure what rabbits are left there do not breed up. Our Good Neighbour funding has now been spent however we have tracked down a warren smoker at the Colac office so we will be able to continue the fumigation work in house with limited expense”.

Thank you once again for your stewardship and dedication to the Otways.

Matt Russell, Ranger, Lorne

Top & left: Our beautiful Great Otway National Park.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their subscription for 2017. The Friends of Eastern Otways from time to time makes submissions to the State and Federal Governments concerning issues we believe are important to the conservation of National Parks in general and our Great Otway National Park in particular. The message is strengthened by the number of our supporting members. We encourage everyone to receive their newsletter by email, saving volunteers’ time and the need to print, purchase envelopes and labels, and postage. Please note, emailed copies are in beautiful color, posted copies are black and white.

ANGAIR WILDFLOWER & ART WEEKEND



Photo courtesy of John Lenagan

Brunonia australis and hoverfly

**23 & 24 September
2017**

10am - 4pm
Anglesea Memorial Hall
McMillan Street, Anglesea

For enquiries please email
admin@angair.org.au
or call 5263 1085

www.angair.org.au



Weekend Attractions:

- Spectacular displays of indigenous flowers
- Insect, spider & scorpion displays
- Guided wildflower walks and bus tours
- Indigenous plants for sale
- Art and craft exhibition and stalls
- Light refreshments
- Children's activities
- Swap an environmental weed for a local plant



www.angair.org.au

Anglesea & District
Community Bank Branch Bendigo Bank

