

Friends of Eastern Otways (Great Otway National Park)

Inc. A0030273B



Secretary

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From the President—*Alison Watson*



On a recent trip to the Limestone Coast SA, Phil and I visited Jack Bourne, who has been a bird collector and taxidermist for 40 years. His museum displayed over 400 species of beautifully preserved birds and some reptiles. It was amazing to be able to see up close birds from emus to pardalotes, eagles to Needle-tail Swifts, to be able to compare Little Eagles to Whistling Kites, different owls and all the robins. In all, an excellent time with a great enthusiast.

Jack regaled us with a story of his childhood and befriending Reg Attiwill who collected birds' eggs. Over the years this collection, including the original tools and detailed notes starting from the early 1900's has passed to many custodians, and is now in Jack's

museum. The collector would take the first clutch of the season as birds will always lay again, which was the prevailing view of the time.

His wife Pat is passionate about orchids and told us that she'd found a rare Helmet orchid and Banded Greenhood that morning at the nearby Mary Seymour Conservation Park.

This was a wonderful example of what happens when you follow your passion. The Bourne's Bird Museum is well worth a visit. It is near the important birding area of Bool Lagoon, which unfortunately was dry when we visited. Visiting Jack and Pat heightened our awareness of the value of local people sharing their knowledge and experience of their environment to enable future generations to learn and appreciate nature. It gives us all great pride to see all our members and volunteers with their ongoing commitment and passion.

Anglesea Heath/Great Otway National Park

The Friends of Eastern Otways welcome the state government's decision that the Alcoa leasehold land (Anglesea Heath) will be added to the Great Otway National Park following Alcoa's closure of the Anglesea coal mine and power station at the end of August 2015.

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change Lisa Neville

"We have committed to the inclusion of the Anglesea Heath in the Great Otway National Park and are working with Alcoa to make that happen as soon as possible for the benefit of the local community."

Addition of the internationally significant heath, with its unique landscape values and one of the richest and diverse vegetation communities in the world, will provide another facet to the very beautiful, and significant Great Otway National Park.

We would like to thank Alcoa for the partnership they have formed with Parks Victoria and the local conservation groups to protect the heathlands of the Alcoa Lease since the Anglesea Heath was declared in 2000, and the Management Plan was launched in 2002.



Smokebush and Smokestack Photo: Bryce Dunkley

Discussions with the local Alcoa personnel have always been constructive, and conservation works have been carried out in a cooperative manner and always to the advantage of the environment.

Naturally as conservation groups we are excited that there will be no further mining in the precious heathlands of the Anglesea district .

However we also recognise that there are employees from the Anglesea coalmine and power station who are affected by the decision to close the mine, and we wish them every success in finding future employment.

Forthcoming Events

Environmental Weeding 9.30am – 11.00am

Contact: Margaret

5289 6326

**Tuesday August 11; Tuesday September 8;
Tuesday October 13; Tuesday November 10**

*Tuesday August 11; Meet at western end of
Robyn Road, Moggs Creek at 9.30am*

The coastal heathlands at Moggs Creek are crying out for help. Bluebell Creeper, Coast Tea-tree and Coast Wattle are all invading this great section of coastal heathlands.

This is an opportunity for you to view and help conserve this section of the Great Otway National Park with all its remoteness and beauty.

Decisions re sites for other dates will be made later and helpers notified. Contact Margaret for information.

A visit to a local coffee shop at Aireys Inlet will follow the activity. We have had a great team of helpers on the Anglesea heathlands and hope that this support will continue. We would love some more people to come along.

Mammal Surveys Contact: Kaye 5263 2011

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras will continue following Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities.



New Holland Mouse

We are concentrating our efforts on supporting the work carried out by Deakin University in conjunction with Parks Victoria in endeavouring to locate the New Holland Mouse that has not been seen for many years in the Anglesea district.

We will be leaving three cameras at each of two locations over the next few months, checking

regularly to see if there is any action. It would be just wonderful to find these small animals in the Anglesea district once again.

Sabine Falls Walk

Contact: Lachlan Richardson

52897029

Saturday August 15 9.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Approx Distance 7 km Grading Medium

Meet Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 a.m.

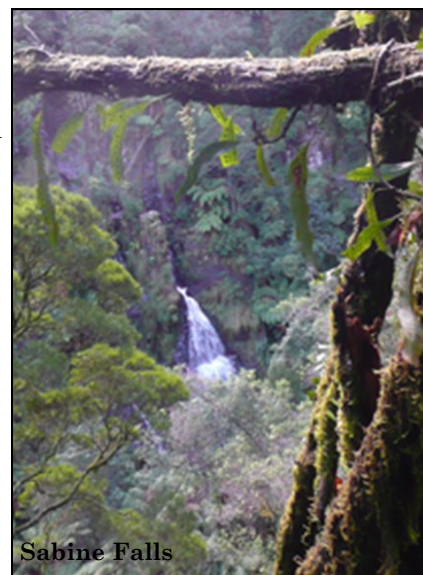
(Bring morning tea and lunch)



Otway Snail

As we have visited the waterfalls behind Lorne over recent months and the tracks to waterfalls in the Upper Cumberland valley and Aquilla Creek have become too overgrown, we will travel further afield to Sabine Falls off Sunnyside Rd. These are the tallest waterfall complex in the Otways consisting of three waterfalls plunging down a 130 metres escarpment into a magnificent heavily forested valley in pristine state. Many species of fungi are found along the track to the waterfall as well as evidence of early timber tramways and sawmill sites. It is also prime habitat for the Otway carnivorous snail.

We are lucky that the pristine picnic area and track to the waterfall still exist as in 2000 the area around the falls was destined to be clear felled for logging, and the picnic area and track to the falls was closed and reference to them was deleted from maps of the area. Since the formation of the Great Otway National Park we can still enjoy this walk.



Sabine Falls

**ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend and Art Show
Saturday September 19 & Sunday
September 20**

10.00 am – 4.30 pm

Anglesea Hall, McMillan St, Anglesea

As members of the Friends' Group are also deeply committed to this annual event, we are requesting that as many as possible help with the preparation of the Show on Thursday September 17 and Friday September 18, and also with the running of the Show during the week-end. Our Friends' display will be focusing on some of the activities we have been carrying out in the Great Otway National Park during the last 12 months as well as highlighting the mammal surveys and Hooded Plover monitoring carried out last summer.

If you feel you have some spare time on any of these days, please contact Margaret 5289 6326

Wildflower Walk

Contact: Margaret

Meet at ANGAIR 9.30 am

October 17

5289 6326

The actual walk will be chosen closer to the date.

Mammal Survey and Walk in the Park

Saturday November 21 9.00 am – 3 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Hall at 9.00am (Bring morning tea and lunch)

Details for this activity will be included in the next Newsletter.

End of Year Celebrations

Saturday, December 12 *Combined activity with ANGAIR Inc .*

Early diary entry – details in next Newsletter

Information Regarding Friends' Activities Since our last Newsletter

Mammal Surveys

We have been thrilled with our results over the last few months as you can see from the following media release by Parks Victoria.

Threatened Bandicoots surviving in the Otways

Rare and threatened Southern Brown Bandicoots and Long-nosed Bandicoots have been recorded by remote cameras in the Great Otway National Park. The exciting discovery was made by the Friends of Eastern Otways who do regular



monitoring work in the park each month. The group set up the cameras at Urquhart Bluff near Aireys Inlet after bandicoot prints had been observed on the foreshore dunes. The Friends Group was rewarded last month when camera results proved that the rare Southern Brown Bandicoot and the Long-nosed Bandicoot were sharing the same habitat. The Southern Brown Bandicoot is listed as 'Endangered' under the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and as 'Threatened' in Victoria.

Margaret MacDonald, Honorary Secretary of the

Friends of Eastern Otways, said that the volunteer group was excited to know that these two species of bandicoot are happily using the same habitat.



"We are really thrilled to share this good news and hope that the small mammals will remain in the area and increase in numbers. The bandicoots were recorded on separate occasions during the afternoon and after dark. This is a great reminder of the wonderful habitat that the Great Otway National Park provides for native animals, including rare and threatened species," she said.

These sightings are also a good reminder to keep dogs from roaming freely in the dunes area to ensure the bandicoots are safe.

Parks Victoria Ranger Cathy Longmore, said volunteers from the Friends Group do a huge amount of work to help care for and improve the park and its natural environment.

"The Friends monitoring work complements the ongoing small mammal monitoring program and research that Parks Victoria conducts in the park. The results will be added into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and really help to build our knowledge of which species are present and their locations," said Ms Longmore.

“It makes a huge difference to have volunteers like the Friends of Eastern Otways who really care about the area and are actively helping to manage the park,” she said.

The Friends of Eastern Otways are a local group of people who share an interest in the natural environment. They are involved in a variety of environmental projects within the Great Otway National Park, including threatened flora and fauna monitoring, environmental weed removal, indigenous plantings and community awareness activities.

Environmental Weeding



Over the last few months our efforts have concentrated on the removal of Coast/Sallow Wattle from the mulched section of Coast/Sallow Wattle on the Anglesea heathlands on the Great Ocean Road. This site was the area where research into Coast Wattle control was carried out by Parks Victoria for a number of years with trialing a variety of herbicides. The research was not successful, and it was decided to mulch all the wattles that were still flourishing there despite the various treatments. Following the mulching many small wattles reappeared amongst some very good indigenous vegetation, and it has been exciting to see the variety of indigenous species that have appeared.

We are grateful to ANGAIR for their support with this project.

We are hopeful that Parks Victoria will be successful with a Coastal Tender Application for the Anglesea Heathlands that will enable them to continue to protect this very special part of the Great Otway National Park.

Visit to Mt Rothwell Saturday, May 16

Following a week of wet and windy weather, the evening of Saturday 16 May was fine and clear

and provided perfect conditions for a night ramble at Mt Rothwell. Mt Rothwell property is 450 hectares of land formerly owned by a member of the Chirnside family and contains woodland, granite outcrops and remnant native grassland. It is surrounded by predator-proof fencing which provides a safe haven for the native animals



Rufous Bettong

The Friends' group met our Volunteer Guide for the evening, John Holman, at the Biodiversity Interpretation Centre. We accompanied him as he fed rabbit portions to captive Spot-tailed and Eastern Quolls in their breeding enclosures. Another enclosure was home to Feathertail Gliders who were given nectar, fruit and mealworms.

We enjoyed a picnic tea after which John gave us a short talk about Mt Rothwell. He explained the importance of maintaining the fence and this is checked everyday to make sure there are no breaches which might allow foxes or cats to enter the sanctuary. Other priorities include dealing with long term environmental concerns including rabbit eradication, removal of Serrated Tussock and restoration through affiliation with Landcare.

After dark we started our walk. One of our first sightings was an Eastern Quoll. During the walk we saw Eastern Barred Bandicoots, Common Brushtail Possums, Southern Brown Bandicoots, Rufous Bettongs, Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies. Eastern-barred Bandicoots and Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies are critically endangered in Victoria and their populations at Mt Rothwell are crucial to the survival of these species.

We found the night walk very informative and the frequent sightings of rare native marsupials gave us a glimpse into the past and what the landscape may have resembled

before the land was cleared for pasture with the introduction of sheep and cattle as well as feral predators such as cats and foxes.



Eastern-barred Bandicoot

Joe's Walk – Ironbark Drive/Zig Zag Track Saturday June 20

In perfect walking weather – calm, dry, cool with dappled sunlight, 17 walkers completed a figure of eight walk in the Aireys Inlet area. This involved two separate circuits. The first was around Ironbark Drive, starting with a short, steep walk up Loves Track from the Distillery Creek Rd end. Those with binoculars saw a number of Crescent Honeyeaters. Due to recent rains the fungi ever-present, attracted a lot of camera shots. Morning tea was back at Distillery Creek Picnic ground, where a Bassian Thrush was seen. A pleasant walk along the Currawong Falls Track followed.



Stepping out

Photo: Alison Watson

The second circuit involved taking a feeder track, then crossing Distillery Creek Rd, later starting up the nearby “Tip Track”, leading off to a zig-zag path that gradually climbed towards Ted's Track extension. This path was notable for its fields of red heath mixed with a virtual lawn of healthy grasstrees and some pale yellow Sweet Wattle. A welcome lunch was enjoyed on top of the highest point, with views of the sea, Aireys Inlet and the nearby hills. Descending towards the cars along Snakey Gully Track, the red heath display was dazzling, mixed again with even more Sweet Wattle. These tracks are worth repeating in early Spring when the red/pale yellow flowers mixed with the green of the grasstrees are even more spectacular.

Joe Bolza

Koala Survey Saturday, July 18

The annual koala count was held on 18 July. Ten people met at Aireys Inlet hall early and we then drove to Kennet River where we had morning tea at the picnic area. Our survey began at Grey River Road in the

Great Otway National Park at about 11.00 am. The weather was fine, cloudy and cold.

We followed the usual survey procedure, walking along the road and checking either side for koalas. Our impression was that the tall forest trees bordering the roadside showed signs of over-browsing. From what we could see the koalas however appeared to be generally in good health. Some of them were active, either feeding or moving around, grunting and scratching.



A fine male Koala showing oil gland on chest

Photo:Chrissy Freestone

About an hour later, we turned to walk up on to the ridge where we had lunch overlooking Grey River settlement with Superb Fairy Wrens and Grey Shrike Thrush nearby.

During our return walk along the powerline clearing, we saw a small group of between 15-20 kangaroos move ahead of us. We could also clearly hear the White-throated Treecreepers and Rufous Bristlebird was very vocal.

By the time we arrived back to the cars, we had seen a total of 93 koalas.

It was a good day and I think everyone enjoyed the walk.

Kaye Traynor



Koala survey team

Photo:Chrissy Freestone

Grey River Road

Ranger Report

Staff Movements

Thousands of wildfires have been burning across Canada's boreal forest and a large international effort is currently underway to bring them under control. Twelve Parks Victoria staff, including local staff Dale Antonysen and Peter McGuinness, are among the 95 Australian emergency services personnel who have been deployed to Canada to join the effort. They will be away for 5 weeks. Frank Gleeson is acting District Manager whilst Dale is away.

Out and about in the Park

The fox control program within the Anglesea Heath/GONP is occurring from 6 July 2015 to 31 August 2015. We currently have remote cameras at half of the fox baiting sites, to monitor species visiting the area. This monitoring is additional to ongoing sand pad monitoring, to record any tracks, scats and diggings, and ensure that there are no off-target species taking baits from each site.



One of the licenced tour operators discovered a bird trap at Blanket Leaf Picnic Area on Wednesday 8 July. The trap was located right

next to the path in a cleared area near the toilet block. There were no identifying tags on it to indicate that the trap is part of an authorised research program. The trap has been removed and the information has been passed onto all staff and DELWP Wildlife Officers in case there are other reports of traps in the area. If you come across any traps along your travels, please notify PV ASAP. The size of the trap pictured was approx. 40cm wide and 27cm radius.

Lachie Davis and Craig Hobbs have been busy replacing broken and missing bollards, patching up pot holes and conducting drainage works at sites such as Sunnymede carpark, O Donohue carpark and Distillery Creek picnic areas.

There has been a noticeable increase in litter in the Park and rubbish being dumped along the roadside in both the Anglesea Heath and GONP. If you observe anyone littering or dumping rubbish please report to the EPA on 1300 372 842 or the local Parks Victoria office.

Other news

Katrina Lovett has submitted the Corangamite CMA Coastal Tender application to manage

weeds at O' Donohues and Urquhart Bluff North and to target bluebell creeper at Cathedral Rock. Successful projects will not be announced until November, so please consider this in your upcoming weed planning.

Liza Dalziel is currently developing a plan for Otway Eden for the 2015-16 financial year. She will be meeting soon with representatives from ANGAIR and FEO to discuss each groups visions and ensure that we are all working together effectively to complement each other's projects.

It was great to see positive articles regarding the FEO camera monitoring and bandicoot discovery published in the Geelong Advertiser and the Echo and the photos displayed on the Parks Victoria Facebook page. Everyone loves a good news story!

The 2015-16 Fire Operation Plan for the Barwon South West region will be available for public comment in August. This plan indicates where and when DELWP intends to carry out fire management activities (planned burning, slashing, mowing, clearing) and is part of a broader strategy to reduce bushfire risk in Victoria. This year, in August, communities can review the local plan, ask questions and give feedback. The final updated plan will then be published in September. From 2016, DELWP are moving away from the formal comment period in August and will be encouraging greater input year-round. It will always be available for communities to provide input on and will continue to be updated yearly and republished in September.

Thank you once again for your tremendous help and dedication to the Anglesea Heath and Eastern Otways.

Kind Regards, Cathy Longmore



Bournes Bird Museum SA Photo:Phil Watson
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