

# Friends of Eastern Otways (Great Otway National Park)

Inc. A0030273B



Secretary

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## From the President—Alison Watson



As the new president of Friends of Eastern Otways I am looking forward to another activity filled year in our park. The monthly weeding morning is always rewarding working together in a pleasant environment, and we have some excellent walks planned as well as other enjoyable activities.

At the AGM we were treated to an excellent presentation from Pete Crowcroft and as a bonus the beautiful photographic story of our Moggs Creek Hooded Plover family and finally Cathy showed us the results that Emma and her team have put together from the years of monitoring mammals in the Park with some great video footage, and graphs

summarizing the results.

Peter Crowcroft's talk about engaging with young people to give them a sense of the importance of our natural environment led to some of us remembering how we started our own lifelong love of nature. For me it began on our holidays at Aireys Inlet in the '50's—looking for orchids along the tracks behind Moggs Ck and Fairhaven before there were many houses, and searching for Cowrie shells and other treasures along the local beaches. In those days our schools had nature studies and organisations like the Gould League taught us the importance of the environment. This organisation is still going after many years, with a new website <http://gould.org.au> up and running and lots of ideas to inspire another generation. I'm looking forward to hearing your ideas about activities we should be developing.

## Single Parent of the Year



Photo: Geoff Gates

Over the summer months the Friends of Eastern Otways have helped the Friends of Moggs Creek to provide support for this little endangered Hooded Plover that lost its partner, we believe to a fox, on January 2.

On January 4 three tiny chicks hatched from the eggs near the Moggs Creek estuary. It would appear that this little bird realised that this was not a safe place for its chicks, and that afternoon led these tiny birds 600m along the beach to the neighbouring beach colloquially known as 'Spot'.

For the next five weeks this brave little bird has defended its chicks against a variety of predators – gulls, horses, runners, joggers, beach walkers, surfers, swimmers and the worst predator of all the red fox. Unfortunately one of the chicks went missing overnight on January 27. There were a great

number of fox prints around the shelter boxes the next morning, and while we have no proof the fox was the culprit, it is the prime suspect.

With support and guidance from Birdlife Australia and GORCC, the volunteers worked tirelessly to help this valiant little bird raise its surviving two chicks, wardening the beach site from 7am until evening. Each morning was full of apprehension. Would the little family still be there? Countless hours were expended talking to thousands of visitors who frequented the beach over that time – some first time viewers, others returning just to see how the Hoodie chicks were faring.

Our thanks go to all the dedicated volunteers who gave of their time so freely, but the rewards are apparent. We are thrilled to say that our two chicks fledged on February 8 and are now known as juveniles. This is the first record of a single Hoodie parent raising a chick and our champion little bird managed two!

The two juveniles were banded on February 13 with orange tags VM and MH.

We look forward to following their progress in the years to come.



Photo: Rebecca Hosking

# Annual General Meeting Sunday 8 February 2015

As there were just the required nominations for the positions the following members were appointed to the vacancies:

President	Alison Watson
Vice-President	Patrick Flanagan
Treasurer	Ross Davey
Secretary	Margaret MacDonald
Assistant Secretary	Kaye Traynor
Committee members	Lachlan Richardson, Evelyn Jones, Ross Murray, Deb Del Grosso, Jane Shennan

These nominations were accepted.

Dennis Leavesley was asked to be mentor to the group attending meetings whenever available, nominated unanimously. Dennis accepted this position.

Resignation from Committee of Joe Bolza. Joe was thanked in his absence for his contribution especially in the field of leading walks. Joe has stated that he is prepared to help in this role. Jane Shennan, a new member of the committee, was welcomed to the group.

Kaye Traynor will continue in the position of Public Officer and Cathy Longmore is the Liaison Ranger with Parks Victoria.

Rachel's term as President (3 years) came to an end and she was thanked for the very valuable contribution she made to the Friends Group over that time. She will stay on the Committee in the position of Immediate Past President.

## Guest Speaker:

The Guest Speaker was Peter Crowcroft, Education and Environmental Activities Leader for the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and manager of the Coastal Guardians project taking local year 9 students in planting and rehabilitation activities.

In a very relaxed manner Peter shared his experiences with the group showing his empathy for the local fauna and his belief in sharing his love of the environment with the next generation. His belief is that if you can maintain children's interest we can feel assured that the future is in good hands.

Peter interested us all through his stories and experiences over the last seven years. Mandy moved a vote of thanks to Peter for his presentation.

## Additional Presentations

Margaret shared a presentation about the Moggs Hoodies that were hatched on January 4 and fledged on the day of our AGM February 8.

Cathy Longmore also shared a CD of mammals captured on remote cameras in the Anglesea Heath and put together by Emma Danby and Paul Shields.



Enjoying the Christmas BBQ



## Forthcoming Events

### Heathland Environmental Weeding 9.30am – 11.00am

Contact: Margaret 5289 6326

Tuesday, March 10, Tuesday, April 14

Meet at Urquhart Bluff Car Park on Great Ocean Road

We are working at the National Park entrance removing mainly Coast/Sallow Wattle. This is one of the Friends sites where a number of years ago we planted *Allocasuarina verticillata* seedlings that have now grown into very attractive trees.

Social interaction is encouraged through a visit to a local coffee shop following the activity. We have a great team of helpers but would love some more people to come along.

### Mammal Surveys

Contact: Deb 0417 406 698 Kaye 5263 2011

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras and sometimes hair-tubes are usually carried out 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. Naturally we are keen to photograph rare and threatened species and a minimum of feral animals, but whatever animals we do locate are adding to the overall picture of the fauna population in the Park. Please make contact to find meeting place and approximate meeting time.

We presently have cameras in our weeding site at Urquhart Bluff.

### Lemonade Creek Track

Contact: Ross Murray

Saturday, March 21 9.30 a.m.- 2.00 p.m. Car shuffle required

Approx Distance 4 km (one way) 8km return Grading Easy to Moderate Wear sturdy shoes. Car shuffle between Blanket Leaf Picnic Ground and Erskine Falls Car Park will be organised for those wanting to walk one way only. Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 a.m. Bring morning tea and lunch

Linking Blanket Leaf Picnic Ground to the Erskine Falls Car Park, this fascinating walk leads you through some very interesting vegetation, and offers great views of the forest and the creek gullies. The creek is crossed several times by way of small bridges and boardwalks. It is a track to stroll along enjoying the views and listening for birds. Perhaps you will see or hear a Rose Robin.

### Currawong Falls Track / Commemorative Ceremony for Claire Roberts' Seat

Contact: Lachie Richardson

Saturday, April 18 9.30 a.m.- 2.00 p.m.

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 a.m. Bring morning tea and lunch

In November 2014, the Friends installed a seat in the National Park in honour of Claire Roberts, who with Ted Faggetter was one of the original founders of the Friends Group, known then as Friends of Angahook-Lorne State Park.

Our walk this month will include the official opening of the seat when the walking group meets up with some other invited guests who will arrive at the seat at 2pm in time for afternoon tea.



Claire's seat installed



# Information Regarding Friends' Activities Since our last Newsletter

## Mammal Surveys

We have only carried out one survey since our last Newsletter and that was at Forrest on November 15 where we were fortunate enough to have Trevor Pescott as our guide.



Twelve members and Trevor Pescott participated.

*After meeting Trevor Pescott from Geelong Field Naturalists at Forrest Post Office, the group proceeded along Thompson Track to the start of a narrow track leading down to Lake Elizabeth. Four cameras and bait stations were set up at various points along and close to this track.*

The cameras were collected on November 27 with the following results:-

Reconnyx (1) - Fox, Bassian Thrush, Koala, Grey Shrike Thrush, Swamp Wallaby, Bush Rat

Reconnyx (2) - Fox, Bassian Thrush, Bush Rat

Scoutguard (1) - Fox

Scoutguard (2) Video - Fox eating bait, Kangaroo family, male, female and joey.

We presently have our cameras in position at Urquhart Bluff.

## Environmental Weeding

Our efforts towards the end of last year concentrated on the Anglesea River Site where we were attempting to carry out the requirements to complete the Caring for our Country Grant. We did accomplish this with our final weeding day being December 9.

Environmental Project signs have been installed at both main entrances to the site recognising the team effort of volunteers and agencies that has made the project so successful.

On December 10 we had an exciting day with a small team from Karingal who helped us to remove Boneseed from a neighbouring site. It was a fun day both for the Friends who participated and for the Karingal helpers.

Our first effort for the year has been at Urquhart Bluff where we will be concentrating our efforts for the next two months.

## Walk at Forrest Saturday November 15

Having completed the placement of our cameras, and again with Trevor Pescott as our guide the

group proceeded further along Thompson Track to the start of a track leading down to the upper reaches of Lake Elizabeth. After lunch the walking group proceeded down this initially steep, dry and rutted track to come to lush grassy land at the East Barwon River as it enters Lake Elizabeth. Some time was spent here observing the Galaxia fish in the river, exploring and bird watching.



Back on Thompson Track, the party returned to Forrest to have a cup of coffee at the cafe now owned by Emma and Peter Ashton. Peter was a former Ranger of the Great Otway National Park and had worked closely with the Friends Group.

Even though the rain had been forecast for the day, it proved to be delightful weather for our outing.

## End of Year Celebration at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground Saturday December 13

Forty-three members (Friends of Eastern Otways and ANGAIR), four Parks Vic Rangers (Frank, Aaron, Katrina & Carlie) and Rani from DEPI came along to the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground on Saturday, December 13 to share in the completion of another year of successful activities.

Twenty people came along at 10am and joined in the walk along the track following the course of the creek and crossing a small number of bridges. The gully was exceptionally beautiful with the trees in various shades of green. Cinnamon Bell orchids were flowering and the Victorian Christmas Bush was in full bloom.

Back at the picnic ground and Frank and Lachie had the barbecue under control where the rest of the group had arrived in time for lunch.

The shared food was delicious and it was very pleasant sitting in the dappled shade beneath the eucalypts. Carlie introduced us to baby Addis, and Etta joined us for her second time – she was just one week old in December 2013.

Frank and Helen said well done to all the troops.

*Another year over and we look forward to 2015.*

# 2014 President's Report

I have pleasure in presenting the President's Report for 2014. The Friends of Eastern Otways help to care for the Great Otway National Park and the Anglesea Heath. These are the traditional lands of the Wathaurung, Gulidjan, Gaduanud and Kirrae Whurrong peoples and I acknowledge their continuing connection.

This year we have maintained our programme of supporting Parks Victoria personnel through environmental weeding, mammal surveys and other activities including the annual *Caladenia maritima* survey. We have worked with the Friends of Moggs Creek in wardening two broods of Hooded Plovers at Moggs Creek – one at the commencement of the year with two birds fledging successfully, and again towards the end of 2014 and into 2015 with the parents returning to breed in the area. In May we joined with other volunteer groups in a Volunteer BBQ provided by Parks Vic at Lake Elizabeth.

As 2014 came to a close, and the question of Alcoa's sale of the mine became a challenging issue, the Friends worked with the Geelong Environment Council and ANGAIR in an effort to prevent any extension of mining activities into the valuable heathlands of the Anglesea Heath. As yet no decision has been announced regarding the future of the Anglesea coalmine.

## Mammal surveys

The exciting news that a Spot-tailed Quoll was sighted and recorded on camera in the Western Otways in July has inspired us to make further efforts in our section of the park. In the past we have had positive results from hair tube analysis, but we have not yet been successful.

We have however enjoyed continuing our mammal surveys with our remote control cameras and sometimes hair tubes. These surveys are usually carried out following Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month and anyone is welcome to become involved. We also held our annual community mammal survey at Forrest in November when we were fortunate to have Trevor Pescott as our guide.

Deb Delgrosso is coordinating this program for us, keeping our cameras in good condition, sorting through the hundreds of images and then documenting the results. The records we have accumulated over the years are giving a very good picture of the mammals that inhabit the Park and the Anglesea Heath. During the year we purchased a white light remote camera that is now being used alongside our other cameras. The new camera gives us colour images at nighttime that makes identification of the animals much easier. We have taken photos of Southern Brown Bandicoots,

Black Wallabies, Echidnas, Brushtail possum, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Bush Rat, Koala and birds including Superb Fairy-wrens and Grey Shrike-thrush. Perhaps our most exciting catch was an Eastern Pygmy Possum on the Anglesea river site. We have of course filmed foxes, feral cats, rabbits, domestic dogs and even a fallow deer. Feral animals are of major concern as threats to our native wildlife. We have plans to work with Deakin University with mammal surveys in 2015 concentrating on New Holland Mouse and Swamp Antechinus habitats.

## Environmental Weeding

We have continued our regular environmental weeding on the second Tuesday of each month with two main focus areas - the Heathland at the corner of O'Donohue's Road and Great Ocean Road and the Anglesea river site on Coalmine/Camp Road. Both projects have been very satisfying and we have received support from Parks Vic in our efforts.

We have now expended the Caring for Our Country Community Environment Grant that we received for the Anglesea river site. Environmental signs have been placed at the two main entrances recognizing the support given to the Friends Group with this project over the last four years. Agencies and volunteers have worked together to restore this environment that had been overrun with environmental weeds. Our last volunteer effort with a team from Karingal was very rewarding.

## Walks

The walks we enjoy together add to our knowledge of the park as well as sharing interesting experiences and conversations as we walk 'along the track'.

As in previous years we provided a variety of walks. Perhaps the highlights were the visit to Cape Otway Ecological Centre and the walk to Cape Otway (despite the rain), the visit to Phil & Alison's beautiful property at Kennet River (land that was exempt from the forestry logging that took place in the Otways for over 150 years) and the Wildflower Walk on the Anglesea Heath in October where we were enthralled with the beauty of the flowers. We also had a very pleasant walk along Love's track with the intention of finding a location for a memorial seat to be placed in honour of the late Claire Roberts. Claire was a long time resident of Aireys Inlet and a major contributor to the community. She founded the Friends Group with Ted Faggetter who is remembered on Ted's Track. Claire's Seat was made by the Anglesea Men's Shed and installed by Parks Victoria and FEO members in November on a splendid site with wide views overlooking Aireys Inlet and the Painkalac Creek river flats and estuary. In April this year we intend having

a ceremony at the site to officially recognise Claire's contribution to the Friends' group.

We are very grateful to the Men's Shed for making this seat and we are sure it will give pleasure to walkers who take the chance to pause and enjoy the view.

In July we conducted our annual Koala Count along Grey River Road at Kennet River. Although mid-winter it was a beautiful day - warm sunshine, glorious views, and some 99 healthy koalas in healthy trees

In June we visited the Melbourne Museum. We were most fortunate to be hosted by Preparator Dean Smith and to go behind the scenes to the department where they prepare skins and specimens for display. We admired their meticulous work and the depth of knowledge required to conserve the animals and present them in ways true to their character.

### **ANGAIR Show**

In September we participated in the ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend. Our display, planned by Alison, featured the waterfalls in the Park and was very attractively presented.

We also highlighted the Hooded Plover following our involvement in the Moggs Creek project.

### **General Comments**

We are very grateful to ANGAIR for their continuing willing assistance to the Friends. The Committee meets at the ANGAIR Natural History Centre where we appreciate the use of the ANGAIR photocopier for the production of our Newsletters and other general photocopying needs. Reports of our activities are posted on the ANGAIR website, [www.angair.org.au](http://www.angair.org.au) Follow the links to 'Other Conservation Groups'.

The annual End of Year BBQ, a combined activity with ANGAIR Inc., was held at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground on Saturday December 13 and was enjoyed by over 40 members from the two groups and four Parks Victoria staff member. Again we thank Frank Gleeson (Ranger in Charge) for presiding so ably at the barbecue alongside Lachie Richardson.

A good relationship with Parks Victoria is essential to our ongoing work and we again thank Frank Gleeson, Ranger in Charge and Liaison Ranger Carlie Bronk, replaced by Cathy Longmore in November. We also appreciate the help and advice we have had from Aaron Ledden, Emma Danby, Peter Hay and Lachie Davis. The Friends and Parks Vic staff make a good team.

In March we awarded Evelyn Jones a Life Membership.

*Evelyn was a founding member of the Friends 22 years ago and has been our bedrock supporter ever since.*

*She has hardly missed a meeting or a walk, not to mention weeding and work on projects such Caring for Our Country. She brings to all our activities her acute observation, curiosity and quiet enjoyment of the special values of our national park. Her delightful wry sense of humour and her essential modesty has made her a highly esteemed and valued member of the Friends of Eastern Otways.*

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their support of our work and for being such enjoyable companions in both formal meetings and on our many other activities. I would like to thank Joe Bolza for the contribution he has made to the Committee over the past few years. Joe has decided not to renominate in 2015.

We are especially mindful of the wonderful contribution of Kaylene Trayner and wish her a complete and speedy recovery after her major surgery.

We all recognise the immeasurably important contribution of our Secretary, Margaret MacDonald. The environmental health of this part of the Eastern Otways National Park is in no small measure a reflection of the deep knowledge, detailed attention, hard work and perseverance of our chief organiser.

Rachel Faggetter, Aireys Inlet, 8 February 2015.



Carlie and baby Addis at the Christmas BBQ

# Ranger Report January 2015

## Staff Movements

We have had a bit of movement in the Eastern Otways to do with the ongoing PV restructure. Emma Danby is now back in her Anglesea Team Leader role and Kat Lovett will be returning to work shortly.

Nick Alexeyeff, the Western region Marine Planner, has now moved on to Queenscliff and will be Team Leader for the South Port Phillip area.

We recently welcomed two Peters to the Anglesea office. They have both come from the Bacchus Marsh office (caring for areas such as Brisbane Ranges NP, Werribee Gorge SP, Lerderderg SP and Long Forest Flora Reserve).

Peter McGinnis is a new Ranger Team Leader (Fire and Emergency) for Anglesea. He was previously working as an Environment, Land and Water Ranger. Peter Box is in a new role as Ranger in Charge Fire and Emergency Operations, based in the Anglesea office but working a district role. His previous role was Bacchus Marsh Ranger In Charge. Peter Box has been working the Bacchus Marsh area for approximately 20 years and has a keen interest in the environment and wildflowers.

The Eastern Otway team (Anglesea and Lorne) have now been renamed the 'Surf Coast' team – the Western Otway team is now known as the 'Colac Otway' team.

## Park maintenance

There have been substantial upgrades at Urquharts Bluff in the last couple of months. There have been a number of 'near-misses' on the boat ramp with the increasing number of beachgoers, walkers, school groups, bus groups, surf schools and jet skiers all using the day visitor area. Parks Victoria have installed fencing between the picnic area and the carpark, provided safe beach access paths for pedestrian use and have installed a gate on the boat ramp so that people launching their boats/jet skis have to slow and stop before driving down. We are also in the process of revamping the toilet facilities.

Some new and emerging bluebell creeper and sweet pittosporum plants have been removed around the Moggs Creek Picnic Area. We have also been opportunistically targeting bluebell creeper, boneseed and thistles along Bald Hills Road.

You may have noticed a number of new green metal signs within the park, which have replaced the old timber signs that were looking worse for wear.

A large number of illegal trail bike tracks within the Anglesea Heath have been brush-matted along the roadside and all the way through, thanks to Lachie and the fire crew, who have been spending long, exhausting days undertaking the works.

## Out and about in the Park

The next pulse of fox baiting in the GONP/Heath has commenced and will be running from 19 January to 16 March.

The Anglesea team have been busy with PV's long term small mammal monitoring program. The cameras were retrieved from the 44 sites within the GONP and Anglesea Heath in mid-December and Emma and Paul Shields (our summer ranger) spent a number of days identifying each critter on film and filling out the data sheets. Whilst the number count of threatened and critical weight range mammals seemed low, our data is indicating a decrease of fox numbers on camera, so hopefully small mammal populations will continue to persist and flourish into the future. Some of the species recorded included antechinus, dunnart, Long-nosed Potoroo and Southern Brown Bandicoot.

The data has been recorded and sent on to the Parks Victoria research branch – their statistician is hoping to analyse the data in the next month and compare the data to the last few years to draw some conclusions about the state of our mammals in the park.

The Friends of Point Addis have been doing a wonderful job as Hooded Plover guardians for the pair at the Pt Addis-Red Rocks beach. So far the pair has had 3 attempts at nesting, to no avail. Unfortunately their last egg, which was due to hatch at the end of January, was washed away in a particularly high tide on the long weekend.

Paul Shields, our summer ranger, spent the busy part of January running rockpool ramble activities at Point Addis Marine NP as part of school holiday program. He is now looking to run some interpretive sessions with the Anglesea Primary School during February.

## Friends of Eastern Otways 25 Year Grant

We have received two new Garmin GPS units and two new Reconyx monitoring cameras. (Handed over at the committee meeting).

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

Kind Regards, Cathy Longmore



## Proposed 2015 Program

March 21 - Lemonade Creek Walk  
April 18 – Walk and ceremony at Claire’s seat  
May 16 – Visit to Mt Rothwell  
June 20 – Walk  
July 18 – Koala Count  
August 15 – Mt Sabine Waterfall Walk  
September 19/20 ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend  
October 17- Wildflower Walk  
November 21 – Walk and Mammal Survey  
December 12 – Combined BBQ with Angair



## Reminder About Membership Subscriptions

Thank you to those members who have renewed your membership subscription for 2015. As we have stated in many previous Newsletters we do value your membership.

The Friends of Eastern Otways from time to time make submissions to both the State and Federal Governments concerning important issues that we believe are important to the conservation of national parks in general and to our Great Otway National Park in particular.

We recently made a submission in response to a proposal to remove the Southern Brown Bandicoot from the register of endangered species.

The message in these submissions is strengthened by the number of members we feel would be supporting us. Thank-you.

If you receive your newsletter as a hard copy through the post, the mail label on the envelope shows the year

your membership is current for. (i.e. '15' for 2015). If you haven't renewed your membership, there also will be a membership form enclosed with the newsletter.

If you receive the newsletter electronically, and our records show that you haven't renewed your membership, there will be an electronic copy of the membership form attached to the same email as your newsletter.

To renew your membership, you can pay by cash, cheque or bank transfer. Send cheques (no cash) to: The Treasurer, Ross Davey, PO Box 140, Anglesea, 3230. To pay electronically, make the payment to Friends of Eastern Otways, Bendigo Bank, BSB 633 000, with 150830826 as the account number. So we can identify who made the payment, please provide up to the first six letters of your surname as ID. If you feel so inclined, you can send Ross an email (daveyfam2@bigpond.com), to inform him that you've made the transfer.