



# WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## *Early Spring Newsletter*

Volume 43/five

September/October 2013

*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.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

### **Koalas of the Otways**

Robert Bender will speak about the latest Earthwatch project he went on in February this year. The koala population of the Otways is grossly over-dense and they are eating the Manna gum woodland to death at a great rate. Robert will describe the work he did documenting the daily behavior of individual koalas.

## OCTOBER MEETING

### **Annual General Meeting**

AGM will be preceded by a 5 minute meeting at 7.25pm to ratify our new constitution.

### **Papua New Guinea**

Daphne Hards, WCS Treasurer, recently spent a month traveling around the coast of Papua New Guinea in a small ship. She will relate how she saw life for the majority of the population, the village people. And natural history will vie for air time, though birds were very challenging to spot in dense rainforest canopies.

**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**

### **Annual Subscriptions for 2013/14 were due on July 1st**

Membership application/renewal for July 2013-June 2014 can be paid now either by cheque or money order to:

Warringal Conservation Society PO Box 64 Rosanna VIC 3084

(Use the form at the end of this newsletter or come to our monthly meeting and see treasurer Daphne Hards)

Please provide phone and address for administration and receipt return.

Donations always welcome.

## AT A GLANCE

### September

**Thursday 5th:** General meeting—speaker Robert Bender

**Sunday 15th:** Planting at Somerset Car Park fence line

### October

**Thursday 3rd:** Annual General meeting. Speaker Daphne Hards

## News & Events

### Warringal Conservation Society Annual General Meeting - October 4th

Our October meeting will be the AGM. Nomination forms for positions are attached to the newsletter. There will be a short meeting 5 minutes before the start of the AGM to ratify our new constitution (redrafted to comply with new regulations). Email [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com) if you would like a copy. Speaker to follow AGM business.

### Upcoming WCS Plantings

September 15th - Planting at Somerset Car Park fence line—Creating a “litter catching” planting buffer along the fence line of the car park

October—Wilson Reserve - Combined planting with Friends of Wilson Reserve. Details to be confirmed. [www.facebook.com WarringalConservationSociety](http://www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety)

### Planting report– July 28th National Tree day at Warringal Swamp

19 people, including some kids, put in over 500 plants near the swamp viewing seat. Plants included Flax Lillies (*Dianella*), *Hardenbergia*, *Mellaleuca*, Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*), Nodding Saltbush (*Einadia nutans*), Indigo (*Indigofera australis*), and grasses. Thanks to Kylie and Meg from the Banyule Bush Crew.



## Who we are and how to contact us

### Warringal Conservation Society Inc

PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

Email: [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com)

Web: [www.warringal.org.au](http://www.warringal.org.au)

**President:** John D'Aloia

Telephone: 9457 3250

**Vice President:** Anthea Fleming

**Treasurer:** Daphne Hards

Telephone: 9497 4831

### Newsletter

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Compilation & Mailing: Margaret Pollock, Heather Smith, Don Stokes

**Planting Coordinator:** Heather Smith (standing in for Anthony Fernando)

**Committee:** John D'Aloia, Anthea Fleming, Celia Smith, Daphne Hards, Dianne Williamson, Marion Ware, James Deane.

## News & Events cont.

### Planting report– August 18th—Tawny Pond

318 plants went in a t Tawny Pond next to the Somerset Drive Carpark, Banyule Flats. The pond has been christened Tawny pond because there are usually a couple of Tawny Frogmouths in the Swamp Gums or Wattles next to it. We didn't see them but that doesn't mean they weren't watching us plant. Kylie and the bush crew prepared the site by burning and we planted right down to the waters edge. Plants included Rock Correa, Flax Lilly (*Dianella*), Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*), *Hardenbergia* and the water fern *Marsilia*. Thanks to Kylie from the Bush Crew.



### WCS annual bus trip

Courtesy of the Council and Bush Crew. We will be going to The Briars at Mt Martha on Sunday 10 November. A tour of the house and museum has been booked. Leaving Old shire offices at about 9am - more details closer to date. Limited seats - 23 on the bus - please email Heather on [elephantstamp@optusnet.com.au](mailto:elephantstamp@optusnet.com.au) or call 9455 2771 to book your seat.

### WCS website gallery

Our website [www.warringal.org.au](http://www.warringal.org.au) has a gallery of wildlife photos by Anthea Fleming as well as recent newsletters.

### Spring Outdoors

The spring outdoors programs is run by the Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik Councils. There are a range of outdoor activities available—nature walks, workshops, plantings and tours. Most are free or low cost but bookings are required. The flyer for the program can be found at [www.banyule.vic.au /Council/Environment-and-Sustainability/Get-involved](http://www.banyule.vic.au/Council/Environment-and-Sustainability/Get-involved).



### Darebin Parklands—Park Care Day

Sunday 15th September— See [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au) for details of this event and other activities run by the Darebin Parklands Association.



## July Speaker– Robert Bender—Fauna survey in South Australia

WCS member Robert Bender presented a talk about a survey he participated in on property bordering the Gawler Ranges National Park in South Australia. The survey was organised by mining company for their employees, but participant numbers were low. Robert is always up for a trip like this and got a spot.

The landscape was semi arid with rocky escarpments and sparse vegetation. Bats are one of Robert's favourite creatures and were surveyed using an apparatus consisting of a series of vertical lines they flew into and dropped into a pouch.

Numbers of bats were low, but this was probably a feature of the relatively tough environment. Other surveys used low barriers many metres long that funnelled creatures into pit traps. These traps yielded a number of skins. Insects were surveyed using lights and a sheet at night.

Robert's talks are always an inspiration and a reminder to get outdoors. We look forward to the next installment.

*James Deane*

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## August Speaker– Karen Alexander - Victoria Naturally Alliance

Karen Alexander is from the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and leads an initiative by several environmental organisations called the Victoria Naturally Alliance. Karen spoke about what we can do to protect and restore our environment.

The landscape of the state of Victoria is extremely diverse and includes coastal, tall rain forest, alpine, dry forest, mallee and desert environments. Unfortunately Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia. Approximately two thirds of Victoria is privately owned and contains very little native vegetation. Publicly owned land that retains native vegetation is subject to logging. Recent clearing regulations and management policies have aimed to produce a net gain of native vegetation, but the result has actually been a net loss. The current state government has proposed moving to a no net loss strategy which, if recent results are an indication, will accelerate the loss of native vegetation in Victoria.

Tackling the loss of our native vegetation is a large and complex task. The VNPA have 10 part-time staff which is not enough to do all that they would like. There are other environmental groups with similar goals, so a decision was made to pool

resources. The Victoria Naturally Alliance was formed and its members are the VNPA, Environment Victoria, The Australian Conservation Foundation, Birdlife Australia, Bush Heritage Australia, Greening Australia, The Wilderness Society, Trust for Nature and the Invasive Species Council.

The Victoria Naturally Alliance has gathered information relevant to the state of Victoria's native vegetation including data concerning vegetation loss, revegetation, species fragmentation, water, fire, climate and carbon storage. This information has been published in a series of reports that aim to inform future policy decisions. The former state Labour government was receptive to the issue of native vegetation loss, but the current Liberal government has not been.

Karen also explained how the VNPA and Victoria Naturally engage the community by running planting, maintenance and monitoring projects.

There is some great information and discussion on the websites maintained by Victoria Naturally ([www.victorianaturally.org.au](http://www.victorianaturally.org.au)), and the VNPA ([www.vnpa.org.au](http://www.vnpa.org.au)).

*James Deane*

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## 2013 Duck Shooting Season

Three years of tough court cases did not intimidate Coalition Against Duck Shooting (CADS) duck rescuers or keep them off the wetlands during the 2013 duck shooting season, which closed on June 10. A strong team of over 120 volunteers, including several Warringal members, was undeterred by the government's heavy handed tactics and stepped up to help save native waterbirds.

Because of the courage and commitment of

rescuers over the years, public opinion has changed and shooter numbers in Victoria have dropped from approximately 100,000 in 1986 down to around 23,000. Today, the dwindling numbers of duck shooters make up only 0.4% of Victoria's population.

Despite very low numbers of duck shooters, the damage they did to native waterbirds in 2013 was staggering. Rescuers can only patrol a handful of the

## 2013 Duck Shooting Season cont.

20,000 Victorian wetlands where duck shooting can take place; but in 2013 they recovered altogether 723 dead and wounded birds. This included 394 dead protected species (including 107 threatened Freckled Ducks), 219 dead game species and 110 wounded birds which were treated by veterinarians and wildlife carers. Shooters say they take around 500,000 birds each year; but research has shown that the wounding rate is one in four so there are tens of thousands of wounded birds on other wetlands across the state which will never be rescued.

It only takes a split second for shooters to pull a shotgun trigger; but the result is unimaginable suffering for countless waterbirds and necessitates retrieval by rescuers, hours of care by volunteer vets and wildlife carers (including x-rays and operations),



*2013 duck rescuers at Lake Bael Bael on the opening of the duck shooting season*



- 1. Duck rescuers (a vet and a paramedic) examine one of the victims, Lake Bael Bael 2013.*
- 2. A wounded Pink-eared Duck rescued from the mud, Lake Bael Bael, 2013.*
- 3. rescuer with a shot protected Yellow-billed Spoonbill, April 2013, Lake Gaynor near Rushworth.*
- 4. An illegally shot, threatened Freckled Duck rescued and taken to veterinary care at Melbourne Zoo. A pellet was removed from its wing but it died unexpectedly prior to release from a lung infection.*

rehabilitation, and finally release for the lucky ones. Many vets and carers donated considerable amounts of time and care for the birds again this year.

Lort Smith, Melbourne Zoo and the Healesville Sanctuary were all involved in the treatment of two threatened Freckled Ducks which were wounded on the last weekend of the season. One Freckled Duck was euthanased but the other, which had four pellets lodged in muscle, was returned to the wild by dedicated rescuers after extensive treatment and rehabilitation. (See next page).

On the opening weekend CADS was tipped off about a massacre which took place at Box Flat Nature Reserve where more than 2,000 birds were shot down (including over 200 illegally shot threatened Freckled Ducks). CADS exposed this slaughter through the media and consequently an investigation was instigated. (A similar massacre last year was said to have been hushed up.) Box Flat Nature Reserve is in Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh's electorate and the 150 shooters involved were reported to be mainly locals who Mr Walsh went to school and played football with.

Five months later not a single shooter has been charged, despite the investigation. Yet the Labor opposition remains silent, refusing to criticise Minister Peter Walsh and the shooters over the massacre and illegal shooting of threatened species. It seems both the Napthine Liberal/National government and the Labor opposition support the shooters, regardless of how many threatened species are shot.

According to CADS, currently the newly amalgamated Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), including Minister Peter Walsh, and all the compliance and Game Victoria officers, are on the shooters' side; and it is only the volunteers with the Coalition Against Duck Shooting who are out there on behalf of our native waterbirds.

They say the Liberal/National coalition government will never ban recreational duck shooting because of the Nationals' support for the shooters. Even in this year's state budget \$17.6 million of taxpayers' money was handed to duck shooters and other hunters. \$8.4 million of this will go towards the establishment of a new hunting authority based on the NSW Game Council and New Zealand models. The authority will be independent of government but run by duck shooters for duck shooters. Yet the NSW government has just abolished its Game Council due to a serious conflict of interest, and their CEO is facing seventeen cruelty charges.

## 2013 Duck Shooting Season cont.

CADS believes that unless the Greens hold the balance of power after the next Victorian election, the only way to stop duck shooting in Victoria is to persuade the Labor Party to implement a policy to ban recreational duck shooting. Labor governments in WA, NSW and Queensland have all banned duck shooting, but in Victoria we still have a big job ahead of us.



*A Freckled Duck returned to the wild after treatment and rehabilitation*



*A protected Musk Duck illegally shot on the last weekend of the 2013 recreational duck shooting season.*

Please help by emailing Daniel Andrews, leader of the Victorian Labor Party at [daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au) and ask that Labor changes to a policy opposing the recreational shooting of native waterbirds.

*Celia Smith*

*(Based on CADS Report: August 17<sup>th</sup> 2013)*

## Orchid time

Native orchids have started to come out. Good places to see them include Warrandyte, Smiths Gully and Eltham. The Friends of Warrandyte State Park have a good online flora guide including descriptions and pictures of most orchids you are likely to encounter: [http://fowsp.org.au/fow\\_db.php](http://fowsp.org.au/fow_db.php)



## **Warringal Conservation Society Annual Subscriptions were due July 1st**

### **Membership application/renewal (for July 2013-June 2014)**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Mobile:**

**Email:**

**Special area of interest:**

**Annual subscription type:**

**Single \$15**

**Family \$20**

**Concession (seniors, students etc) \$10**

**Life subscription \$150**

**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)**



**NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE 2012 - 2013**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby nominate \_\_\_\_\_

for the position of \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (Proposer) \_\_\_\_\_

(Secunder) \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to accept the above position if duly elected.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*All signatories must be financial members of Warringal Conservation Society*



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## Nature Notes—Members observations

### AUGUST

Helen Boak - about 10 Galahs and a Mopoke (Boobook) Owl.

Margaret Pollock - an Owl

John D'Aloia reported a flock of Little Corellas

Celia Smith - 12 kangaroos at Riding for the disabled.

Dianne Williamson - an absence of water birds on Banyule wetlands.

Don Stokes - Spinebills in front garden in Hobson St Heidelberg.

Robert Bender - An excellent year for frogs. 400 Brown tree frogs and over 500 frogs all up recorded in a survey at Wilson Reserve. Also found a Redback spider without a red mark on its back.

Vivian - Kangaroos at the Banyule Swamp

Roly Hieser - Swooped by a large angry looking bat, probably a Fruitbat.

Doug McNaughton - Two Tawny Frogmouths at Golf Links park Rosanna.

James Deane - several Wombats seen while bike riding in Westerfolds Park at night. Foxes that have very little fear of people at Yarra Flats and near the Beverley Rd Wetland. Spotted and Striped Marsh Frogs on the main Yarra track in Ivanhoe on rainy nights.



*Top: A Red-Back spider without a red back*

*Bottom: Tree Frog Wilson Reserve*

*(Photos: Robert Bender)*

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If not delivered return to: PO Box 64, Rosanna 3084



**WARRINGAL  
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