Warringal Conservation Society

EARLY WINTER NEWSLETTER Volume 54/3 MAY/JUNE 2023

Warringal Conservation Society is a local community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

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

Keep up to date on WCS activities by visiting our FaceBook page or website www.warringal.org.au

Join us!

WCS has a lot to offer: plantings, activities and monthly meetings with guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines and interests. There is membership information in this newsletter or go to the web page.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future. We recognise their continued connection to the land and waters of this beautiful place, and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. Note we may edit for space or legal reasons. Opinions expressed in guest material are not necessarily those of the Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaja.

MAY MEETING

DAVID De ANGELIS: Frogs of the Middle Yarra Catchment

David is a local naturalist, environmental educator and consultant with particular interests in the conservation and biology of frogs and reptiles. He will talk about the different frog species found at Banyule Flats and the wider middle Yarra catchment, focussing on aspects of their identification, conservation, breeding and habitat use.

JUNE MEETING

JOHN McGURKIN & MICHELE GIERCK: Galaxiella pusilla

John McGuckin, Director of Streamline Research, is a limnologist with over 30 years of experience in environmental research. He has widespread aquatic knowledge and in particular, the nationally threatened dwarf galaxias – *Galaxiella pusilla*. He will speak about Rosanna wet lands and the issues of re-establishing a native fish population in the flood plains of the Yarra River. Michele Gierck, freelance writer and environmental educator is author and publisher of the award-winning children's book *Gladys and Stripey – Two little fish on one BIG adventure*, based on the *Galaxiella pusilla*.

AT A GLANCE

MAY:

Thursday 4: General meeting from 7.30pm.

Sunday 21: Working Bee: 10am 12noon. See page 4 for details

JUNE:

Thursday 1: General meeting from 7.30pm.

Sunday 18: Working bee: 10am 12noon. Location TBC

Meetings are the first Thursday of the month from 7.30pm

Please note that monthly meetings are face-to-face 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**

Photo: courtesy J South, The Age

Yarra Flats parkland has finally been saved from a private business venture.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

In late March we were shocked by the sudden death of our friend and WCS committee member John Hargreaves. John was incredibly knowledgeable on a diverse range of topics (plants, birds, fish, archaeology, chickens, military aeroplanes, music and more), full of enthusiasm and generous with his time. He was a great contributor to our group and, most importantly, a lot of fun to be around. John was infectiously passionate about the natural world and the best way for us to honour his memory is to keep up the good work.

James Deane

INQUIRY INTO VICTORIA'S RECREATIONAL NATIVE BIRD HUNTING ARRANGEMENTS

Submission due: Monday 8 May 2023

The Select Committee are calling for submissions for their inquiry into and report on Victoria's recreational bird hunting arrangements including the operation of annual bird hunting seasons, arrangements in other jurisdictions, the environmental sustainability and impacts and the social and economic impact.

GO TO LINK: https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/nativebirdhunting

Even if you wrote to your MP in Feb/March please note this is a brand new parliamentary inquiry and it is VITAL that you make a submission on the link. NUMBERS COUNT as the shooters are flooding the mail bags. A few personal paragraphs is enough.

Daphne Hards

Photo: Online

Pink-eared ducks

URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

The Council held three Urban Forest Strategy forums and also extended the date for submissions to 31 March. The forums were reasonably well attended by residents with lots of questions for Council staff.

The WCS committee wrote a submission on behalf of the Society, and committee and other members also submitted their own. It will be interesting to see what all our input brings to the next version of the draft strategy. If you would like a copy of the WCS submission please email warringal3084@gmail.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDREW LEES

Federal Member Kate Thwaites recently presented Andrew Lees with an award for his volunteering efforts in JagaJaga, in particular as President of Friends of Yarra Flats Park. This recognition is extremely well-deserved. Andrew puts in many hours of work behind the scenes and is dedicated to making Yarra Flats Park a place we can all enjoy. Thank you Andrew.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The society extends a warm welcome to new members **Liz Ferguson and her family** and looks forward to catching up with them at a working bee or meeting soon.

A WORD FROM THE COMMITTEE

WCS has over 50 years of significant history, activities, actions and wins. It needs fresh people on the committee to help steer it forward. We have just lost our Secretary, and Treasurer Daphne is retiring at the October AGM. These are busy times; everyone is juggling personal and work life as are the present Committee members who would like some help. If you are interested in supporting the Society into the future and would like to know more about what's involved contact James or Daphne at warringal3084@gmail.com. Or speak to any committee member listed below. They will be glad to speak to you.

THE WCS TEAM AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Warringal Conservations Society Inc
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084
Email: warringal3084@gmail.com
Web: www.warringal.org.au
FB: www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

President: James Deane. Telephone: 8060 8983

Secretary:

Treasurer: Daphne Hards. Telephone: 9497 4831

Committee: Anthea Fleming, Rob Granter, Doug McNaughton, Michelle Giovas, Heather Smith.

Planting Coordinator: Rob Granter

Newsletter: Editor: Heather Smith 0423 191 977
Email: wcs.editor@gmail.com

VALE JOHN HARGREAVES

March 1955 – March 2023

It is with much sadness we acknowledge the loss of our friend and fellow member, John Hargreaves.

John appeared in our lives around the beginning of 2020, bringing his infectious enthusiasm and entertaining manner to meetings and the Committee.

Born in the UK, he was eight when he and his family came to Australia. His very good friend, David Legat met him when they were 17 and the friendship went from strength to strength over the years. When John moved to Heidelberg it was Dave who recommended that he come to a WCS meeting and see if we fit his brief. He quickly clicked, becoming Secretary at his first AGM.

He had a vast range of interests, experience, knowledge and human connections into many different aspects of nature and wildlife.

Over time he had revegetated two or three houses around Victoria including a desolate bare block in Killarney, south-western Victoria, leaving it a buzzing wildlife haven. While living in Killarney he became a solid supporter of the Hooded Plover and stood (to his own risk) against the horse racing lobby who insisted on exercising horses on the beaches over the breeding Plovers.

John was well known to many bird experts, researchers and their organisations. He loved building military model planes and had a very significant collection of them. Passions apart from anything flora and fauna (particularly birds, orchids and aquatic life) included steam trains, Forts (in Malta), motorbikes, stamps and cameras.

He left a degree in Commerce to be a professional photographer at archaeological sites in Syria, Petra and Jordan in the 80's. And more recently at a dig at the Viewbank homestead site by Heritage Victoria.

John went back to uni to do Linguistics, then worked in Italy teaching english for some years. He was many things: a Dive Master; a pathology courier; was great with kids and an inspiring teacher. John was a good listener and a caring and sensitive human who looked beyond his own troubles to brighten the lives of others.

Photo: Rob Granter

John with his favourite anti-Kapok weapon for dragging the vines out of the canopy.

Who will ever be able to look at another Kapok vine or pod and not think of his valiant efforts to remove every one of them from the Banyule Flats.

Heather Smith
(Thanks to Dave who shared these pieces of John's life)

A WIN FOR COMMUNITY - TREETOPS ABANDONED

At the April meeting Banyule Council finally abandoned the land use amendment C107, which was to re-zone an environmentally important area of public parkland at Yarra Flats for the privately run Treetops Adventure Ropes course. ParksVic had given its blessing to the project.

This project made its first appearance at the October 2019 Banyule Council meeting where WCS President, Daphne Hards spoke against it. Four residents (two of which are WCS members) quickly formed *Save Yarra Flats Park* group and developed a Chuffed campaign that raised over $10,000 to fight the development. Since then WCS, other local conservation groups, and community members have continued to fight it.

Council and Councillors (except for Cr McKern) strongly advocated and promoted the project from the very beginning but in February they received a second letter of opposition to the project from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. In light of this they had to abandon the ammendment.

Heather Smith

GUEST SPEAKER REPORTS

APRIL > SONIA SANCHEZ
Beach-nesting Birds Project Officer for BirdLife Australia

The late John Hargreaves had invited Sonia Sanchez of Birdlife Australia to speak to us about their Beach Nesting Bird (BNB) program. John was an enthusiastic volunteer in this project when he lived near Killarney Beach on Victoria's south-west coast.

After a massive crash in Hooded Plover breeding success in the 1980's, observation and research showed that their nests, tiny scrapes in the sand, were vulnerable to many threats, e.g., dogs off lead, crush by horses and walkers, predation by gulls, ravens, foxes, and storm surges. The current BNB program was launched in 2006 and recruitment of more than 600 volunteers allows approximately 800 sites around the Australian coast to be monitored. Their efforts have seen permanent promotional signs erected, plus temporary fencing and signs around nests. Lots of educational material has been given out as volunteers make their regular monitoring walks. This has seen the chance of breeding success rise from 2% to as high as 50%.

Sonia also spoke about work to help the Eastern

Photo: J Turner, Friends of Hooded Plover

Ground Parrot which is endangered in Victoria and vulnerable in NSW. This secretive and cryptic bird can now only be found in East Gippsland, Wilson's Prom and the Nelson area. Its habitat is coastal heathland; it stays close to the ground, where its food, foraging and nesting sites are vulnerable to fire and disturbance by bush walkers. Again, educational material and signage is hoped to raise awareness and secure the Ground Parrot for the future.

Daphne Hards

(*Ed: For more information about the beach-nesting birds https://birdlife.org.au/programs/beach-nesting-birds/*)

MAY WORKING BEE

Sunday May 21st 2023
From 10am - 12noon followed by morning tea.

Please join us for some infill planting along the 50th Anniversary plaque embankment, and behind the dog fence near the Banyule swamp if time permits.

This area is looking amazing and with these additional plants it will be even more spectacular. We hope to see you there.

NATIVE GARDENS A FLOWERING DELIGHT

A big thank to all those that attended our 1st 2023 working bee. We spent the time weeding and cleaning up the entry beds and they are looking fantastic.

Rob Granter

BOUQUETS FROM IVANHOE GARDEN CLUB

Committee members Daphne and James recently went to the Ivanhoe Garden Club and gave a presentation about the Society to about 40 attendees. They were very well received, with one person wanting to join. Another member later messaged:

"Hi guys! One of your volunteers spoke at the Ivanhoe Garden Club recently – she gave an excellent presentation. Despite living in Melbourne for 15 years I'd never heard of the Banyule Flats and took my kids there today. It is absolutely spectacular and I'm so glad we've learnt it is there!!! Thanks, Esther"

Just shows how often residents don't know what a gem they have at their backdoor.

Native Garden working bee crew, led by Warwick, Bushcrew team member, second left.

MAY > ROB GRANTER
The Jatbula Trail in the Nitmiluk National Park

WCS Planting Co-ordinator Rob Granter was our guest speaker for the April general meeting.

Rob spoke about his experience of walking the Jatbula Trail in the Nitmiluk National Park near Katherine in the Northern Territory in August 2022.

Before heading off on the 62 km 5-day hike Rob and his wife Chris spent four nights at the Katherine Gorge area to revisit a place where he worked for 12 months in 1975, and to acclimatise to the heat.

"This is one of Australia's most beautiful places and I recommend taking a river tour, hiring a canoe or walking to really immerse yourself in this extraordinary place"

Rob then took us through each day of the walk. The Jatbula Trail is named in honour of Jawoyn traditional owner Peter Jatbula who was instrumental in securing land rights for the Jawoyn people. The hike follows the western edge of the Arnhem Land escarpment over sandstone plateau and through woodlands and open forest on some of the tracks where generations of Jawoyn people traditionally travelled.

The amazing thing about this walk is that the camping areas for each evening were pristine oasis's of clear cool running water, an incredible contrast to the hot and dry overland sections.

Highlights of the walk were the mass flowering of the Eucalyptus Miniata and the Darwin Silky Oak and the thousands of birds that were attracted to the feast.

The walk is very isolated but not difficult for a person of good fitness and able to carry a pack of 12 – 14 kgs. Rob would love to do the walk again but suggested the ideal time would be June and July. One important tip for anyone considering doing the walk is to book in as soon as the bookings open in early February as the entire walking season books out in a matter of hours. (https://parkbookings.nt.gov.au/)

Typical hot and dry track conditions

Every night was another spectacular new version of an oasis. This was day four's oasis camping site at Sandy Pool.

Photos: Supplied by R Granter

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

WCS FEBRUARY NIGHT WALK

Our thanks to George Paras and Tom Crawshaw for leading the groups and WCS committee members Anthea, Rob, James, Don and Heather for their work on the night. It was nice to see a few new faces amongst the walkers.

James reported a fairly quiet walk with Tom, seeing five Ringtail Possums, two Tawny Frogmouths and many rabbits near the swamp. Brown Tree frogs were heard in the billabong. A bold young fox trotted past them in the carpark upon their return.

The group led by George saw one Ringtail, two Brushtails, one Tawny Frogmouth, two wombats (one clearly suffering from mange), two each of Wolf and Orb weaver spiders and a few Leaf Curl spiders. Also spotted – some Common Galaxia fish under the Plenty river bridge. They heard Ewing's Tree frogs, a Nankeen Night Heron and the magical chorus/music of all the Katydids!

Banyule Flats Conservation Reserve is always a great nature stroll destination.

George later sent through more details :

Fish in Plenty River confluence likely to be the Common Galaxias, *Galaxias maculatus.* More info: *https://fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/species/2129*

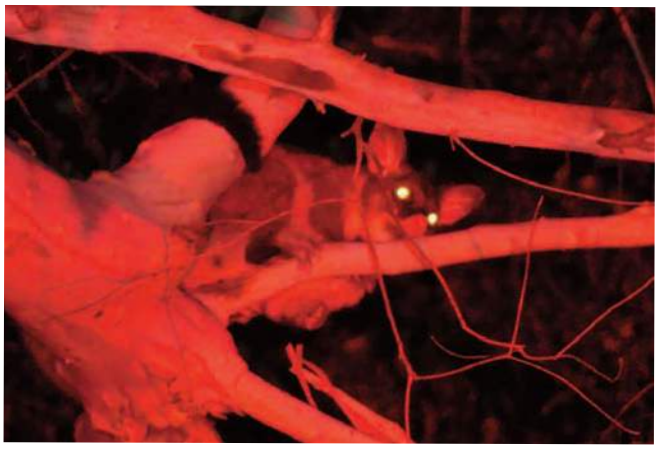
However, the Climbing Galaxias, *Galaxias brevipinnis*, may also have been present, jumping around/on the wet streamside rocks. *https://fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/species/3672*

The frogs calling were Southern Brown Tree frog, *Litoria ewingii*, also known as Ewing's Tree frog. *https://frogs.org.au/frogs/species/Litoria/ewingi/*

Also heard Common Eastern Froglet, *Crinia signifera*. *https://frogs.org.au/frogs/species/Crinia/signifera/*

Also, heaps of insectivorous Microbats, at least a couple or more of types/sizes/shapes, flying/feeding along the Plenty River corridor, particularly below the footbridge we were standing on. White-striped Freetail Bat, were heard too, above the tree canopy. *https://australian.museum/learn/animals/bats/white-striped-freetail-bat/*

Orb weaver spider with moth



Brushtail Possum

Photos: A Fleming

WCS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP /RENEWAL JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Special areas of interest: *This helps us when arranging speakers and events.*

_____

Subscription types:

☐ Single $20 ☐ Concession $15 (seniors/students etc)

☐ Family $25 ☐ Life subscription $200

There are three ways to renew:

1. Renew online at: www.warringal.org.au/about-us/membership

2. Pay by direct debit:
Acc name: Warringal Conservation Society
BSB: 633 108 Acc no: 143918613
(Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor.)

3. By mail: Fill in this form and mail with your cheque or money order to:
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 Victoria.

Any queries email: warringal3084@gmail.com

☐ I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

☐ Yes - put me on the Plantings notification list.

VALE SHIRLEY SARGENT 1929-2023

We record with sorrow the passing of Shirley Sargent in January 2023.

Shirley and her husband Derry Sargent attended the inaugural meeting of WCS at the then Heidelberg Town Hall just over fifty years ago. They joined up and served at the committee level and attended working bees. They took very many photos and kept a visual record of our Society's growth.

Shirley attended working bees alongside Derry. She kept the detailed photographic record of plantings that took place, the incidental working bees and any special events which occurred.

What is so important is that photos taken by Shirley and Derry are still in existence, and form a significant record of WCS history. Witness Derry's panorama of Banyule Flats taken in about 1972; it allows us to rerecord the scene today and feel pride in all that the society has achieved.

Shirley loved the bush with Wilson's Promontory a firm favourite. In fact, her ashes will join Derry's at the summit of Mt Oberon, overlooking their very favourite campsite.

WCS acknowledges Shirley's contribution to our group, with her specialist knowledge of Australian plants, her photographic records and her goodwill and determination to promote the development of another part of Heidelberg's history.

Liz Evans

Photos: Top is Derry Sargent's 1972 Panorama. Bottom is James Deane's taken in 2019 for the anti North East Link presentation.

FOR YOUR DIARY

50 YEARS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS
Sunday 30 April 2023

Come and help FoDP celebrate with a range of great family activities including a bird discovery walk, the Spiritual Healing Trail with Uncle Trev (booking essential), and Junior Ranger activities. More info: *www.fdp.org.au/join-us-on-30th-april-to-celebrate-our-50th-anniversary/*

A GIFT OF FIRE
12 April - 4 June 2023

An exhibition that is a showcase of ceramic art in Banyule and features WCS member Lene Kule Jakobsen among the artists.
Art Gallery 275 @ Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub

WILDFLOWERS, WORMS AND BUTTERFLIES
Project Hindmarsh @ Rainbow
6/7/8 July 2023

This year, Project Hindmarsh, the Big Desert to Little Desert Biolink, will be restoring a section of the Rainbow Rise, planting an array of native wildflowers and food plants for two amazing butterflies – the Golden-rayed Blue Butterfly and the Chequered Swallowtail.

You are invited to join them to get hands on, planting wildflowers, trees and shrubs in a beautiful landscape, and enjoy the hospitality of this historic mallee town.

For more information, contact Hindmarsh Landcare Network: *jstarks@hindmarshlandcare.org.au*

SECOND GENERATION RAT POISONS MUST BE BANNED

We are so fortunate to have a diversity of native animals in Banyule. This includes important nocturnal birds, such as Tawny Frogmouths, Powerful Owls and Boobooks. These birds' prey on smaller animals as important parts of their diets, which include rats and mice, all too common in an urban environment.

Many of us have dealt with rodents in our houses and most of us would have used off the shelf rodenticides. With that however comes unintended consequences.

Recent discoveries in the Rosanna parklands have found previously healthy Tawny Frogmouths dead from confirmed cases of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGAR's). Once rats and mice have consumed rodenticides containing SCAR's, the animals that feed on them become sick and can die from secondary poisoning.

SCAR's are found in common off the shelf rodenticides and their use in controlling our unwanted pests is having a direct impact on not only our birds of prey, but also reptiles and other mammals.

How can I help protect our local wildlife?

Simple tidy up and DIY jobs around the house like;

> Tidy up garden waste (like brush piles)

> Pick up any fallen fruit

> Keep pet feeding areas clean at all times and pick up any unused food

> Rodent proof chook pens

> Seal potential roof/wall cavity access points that rodents can get into

> Plant local indigenous trees and shrubs and install owl friendly nest boxes to encourage natural predators

For more information please visit https://birdlife.org.au/rodent-control

And if using baits - remember to read the 'Active Constituents' on the packaging and only use the less harmful products that contain FGAR's with Warfarin or Coumatetralyl. Anything else, leave it on the shelf!

Simple changes can make a big impact, please consider your choices to help our local wildlife.

**This information was developed by FoSCAAP to raise awareness of rat poison after finding several dead Tawny Frogmouths in the park. The leaflets were delivered to homes abutting the parklands.*

RU READY? FOR THE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE

The City Nature Challenge is fast approaching. Banyule is teaming up with 20+ other local LGA's to compete on the global scale to see how many natural observations can be made using iNaturalist.

Dates: Friday the 28th April to Monday 1st May.

The observations made not only help in the Greater Melbourne standing of global observations, but more importantly provide a critical biodiversity snapshot of our local area. The link below will provide more information. There are also some events and online training opportunities available.

www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Events-activities/Whats-on/Community-events/City-Nature-Challenge-2023

Paul Davis, Banyule Council's Biodiversity Advisor

Photos: R Aspland

Member Jen Chellew was very fortunate to have a guest Tawny Frogmouth in her back yard twice in the last month.

NATURE NOTES: MARCH

John Hargreaves visited the Melbourne Museum – he admired the Triceratops skeleton and the model Pterosaur. He reported three White-necked Herons at Morang Wetlands, and the Pink-eared Duck family at Banyule Swamp.

Dianne Williams saw a baby Bluetongue in her garden.

James Deane reported a Little Eagle over Viewbank Hill, and a Boobook Owl near home.

Robert Bender spoke of seeing Buff-banded Rails in Mat-rush on Ivanhoe Golf-Course, and a brief glimpse of a male Swamp Wallaby.

Helen Boak visited Flinders Island – she saw a Goshawk with a Tiger Snake, and met a baby Wombat.

Anthea Fleming's back garden was visited briefly by a male King Parrot. She found a large female Blotched Bluetongue which had just given birth – it looked exhausted.

Anthea also showed some photos – a Spotless Crake at Bailey's Billabong and scenes from the Night Walk – a Brush-tail Possum, and a spider which had caught a moth. She spoke on the highlight of the walk – seeing the Plenty River by torch-light where tiny Galaxias fish darted around the edges and two species of bats dashed back and forth under the bridge.

Anthea Fleming

Photo: DDeAngelis

Top: Spotless Crake, Bailey's Billabong; Middle: Willy Wagtail juvenile begging at Wilson Reserve; Above: Ewings Tree frog; Below: Pink-ear ducks at Banyule Swamp; Left: Rain Moth case, Wilson Reserve.

SEEN SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

Send your stories/ photos to wcs.editor@gmail.com
Copy deadline for July/August issue is 17 June.

Photos: A Fleming unless marked

NATURE NOTES: APRIL

Helen Boak met a Tiger Snake on her house steps in Somerset Drive. Also seen – an unfortunate Kangaroo which seemed sick. George Paras said it was probably suffering from Phalaris Staggers.

Doug McNaughton while in Rosanna Parklands he photographed a Little Pied Cormorant swimming in Salt Creek, then resting under the bank.

Grant.... reported that Gang Gangs have returned. He also photographed a Spinebill feeding on his Salvia flowers.

Jen Chellew had a guest Tawny Frogmouth in her back yard twice in the last month. He was not very well disguised in her Acer negundo tree.

Daphne Hards heard a Tawny calling from her roof.

Dianne Williams reported Rosellas and King Parrots in her garden. She saw four creches of young Wood Ducks on Marching Girls Flat,with at least 10 or 12 birds in each. She also saw a white Kangaroo near the silos.

James Deane had heard a Powerful Owl calling the night before the meeting.

George Paras reported on the Sugar Gliders which seem to have moved back to their box in his garden. They have a late young one. His neighbour's Banksia marginata has been attracting Flying Foxes, which cling to its flimsy foliage.

Anthea Fleming reported a young Wattlebird, flying but still dependent, on 1st April. This seems very late. She had seen three Gang Gangs that morning in her garden – but they didn't stay. She photographed a very small Marbled Gecko lurking in the track of a sliding door. Her photos included a Frogmouth close up, and a female or immature Musk Duck fishing in the Bailey Billabong at Chelsworth Park – the first seen in about 50 years of bird-watching here.

Anthea Fleming

Photo: A Fleming

Musk Duck fishing in the Bailey Billabong Park

Photos: A Vivian

Male (L) and female Gang Gangs feeding in Liquidamber, Banyule

If not delivered return to: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

Warringal Conservation Society