Warringal Conservation Society

TRUE SPRING NEWSLETTER Volume 52/6 November/December 2021

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.

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.

Keep up to date on WCS, local and not so local environmental news by visiting our Facebook page or our website www.warringal.org.au

Join us!

WCS has a lot to offer: Planting events and monthly meetings with guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines and interests. Membership forms and details in this newsletter or go to the web page.

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

NOVEMBER MEETING

George Paras: Re-growing wildlife habitat in our backyards and neighbourhood

Local resident, hands-on conservation volunteer and activist, career environmental educator and ranger, George has been involved in many tangible and longitudinal bushland and wetland ecological restoration and conservation management projects; particularly with almost four decades with La Trobe University's Wildlife Sanctuary and Reserves.

George will talk about practical things we can do to support local biodiversity and wildlife, through indigenous gardening choices, in our own yards, right up to taking community revegetation and bushland management action in our neighbourhood public land and reserves.

DECEMBER MEETING

MEMBERS NIGHT:

Join us for an evening of discussion and conversation as three members - Anthea Fleming, James Deane and Rob Granter - share their stories on varied environmental topics.

This will be the last meeting before we meet again in February 2022.

Meetings are the first Thursday of the month from 7.30pm and are CURRENTLY ONLINE.

MEETING LINK: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83197674288?pwd=T1lsY1JHbDR6a1BuSER0NXp5NjlxUT09**

Meeting ID: 831 9767 4288 ***Pass code: 862886***

The link will also be on the Facebook event posts.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT HERE ? Go to page 3 for answer!

Photo: Rob Granter

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

All our committee members returned for another year at our annual general meeting in October. Thank you **John, Daphne, Anthea, Rob, Doug** and **Michelle.** Thanks also to Heather Smith for taking over as editor.

In the last couple of years the Society's Facebook page has become one of the main ways we engage with members and the local community. It is an immediate and interactive way to get information out. Regular posts from Rob and Heather have included meeting and activity announcements, local nature observations, and links to a range of interesting conservation-related topics. Posts with photos of a koala sighted in Westerfolds Park and footage of the Yarra in flood have been particularly popular. If you haven't done so already, have a look at the WCS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

Photo: StockPhoto

James Deane

FROM THE TREASURER

Lockdown easing and we can stretch our wings!
Summer is coming to blow all viruses away. Keep enjoying your gardens and the lovely area we live in.

I presented the Treasurer's report at the recent AGM and our Society is in very good shape financially, largely due to your subscriptions and generosity. Our financial year runs from July to June so annual subs became due on July 1st 2021. Many have paid thank you, but may this please be a reminder to those who have not. The means of paying are on page four of this newsletter. And you can renew online on our webpage.

Daphne Hards

Welcome to a New Members:
We extend a warm welcome to Andrew Kelly and Rachel Morgan

KANGAROO ATTACK PROMPTS SIGNAGE >>>>>

Dogs attacked and chased the kangaroos in Yarra Flats Park recently, which resulted in more than a dozen of them fleeing into the streets of Eaglemont. Two had to be euthanased due to serious injuries sustained. Friends of Yarra Flats Park have since put up signage on the Main Yarra Trail near Banksia Billabong.

NEWS

Urban Forest Strategy:
John D'Aloia has been appointed to the Community Reference Group.

Heidelberg Park Masterplan:
Detailed response drafted by George Paras and John.

Treetops Adventure Ropes Course proposal at Banksia Billabong/Yarra Flats:
Disappointing decision by the Panning Panel to allow private development of public land to proceed. Only requirement is more consultation with traditional owners (who technically have no power of veto).

Warringal Conservation Society Prize Awarded
We hope to meet winner Jim Keller at the November general meeting.

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

Vice President: John D'Aloia

Treasurer: Daphne Hards. Telephone: 9497 4831

Planting Coordinator: Rob Granter

Committee: Anthea Fleming, Daphne Hards, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, John D'Aloia, Michelle Giovas and Rob Granter.

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

HOPPING FULL - FROG BOG IS CALLING

The Frog Bog is looking and sounding glorious at the moment! Thanks to the Wurundjeri Narrap Rangers Land, Water & Fire Natural Resource Management team who directed the burn off and Kylie and Warwick who did a ton of planting!

BOOK REVIEW

People of the River - Lost Worlds of Early Australia
Grace Karskens 2020

For anyone interested in early Australian history this book is a good read. It is the outcome of the author's PhD thesis and is a credit to her thorough research. In the late 18th century the Sydney settlers were struggling to feed themselves, and small parties explored north, west and south in search of better cropping country. In the 1790s the valleys of the middle Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers were discovered, known as Dyarubbin by the local Aboriginal groups. The lush river flats with vistas of yellow yam daisies and overlooked by the eastern rim of the Blue Mountains were reported on their return to Sydney. It was not long before convict settlers arrived and took up river frontage. Never mind that the yams appeared to be tended.

To the Aboriginal people of Dyarubbin, their history, culture, and spirituality were inseparable from the river country. This 'majestic book' details the early acceptance of white man, then dislocation, conflict, and finally integration. The traditional owners managed to remain on their Country, and still live on the river today. This is an evocative and enthralling 500 page read.

Daphne Hards

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING AT??

Checkout what Kylie, Warwick and the Narrap Rangers have also been creating. An indigenous food garden just south of the Somerset drive car park and north of the Banyule Billabong. The future management of the project include the potential for harvesting and educational works. There are over 26 edible plant species here. Congratulations to all involved.

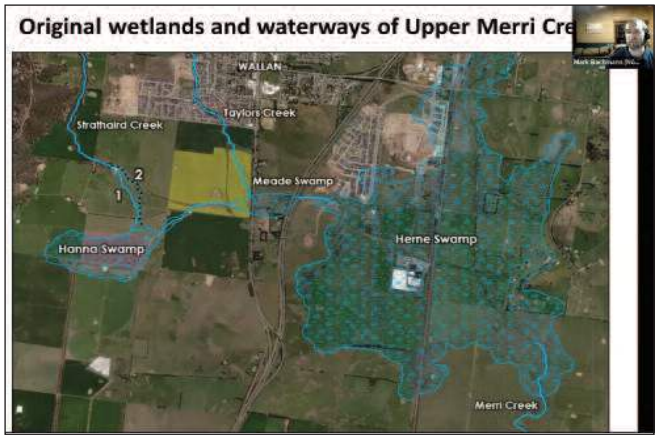
GUEST SPEAKER REPORTS

SEPTEMBER > WETLAND RESTORATION

Mark Bachmann, Principal Ecologist and Manager of Nature Glenelg Trust spoke about restoring wetlands and about the planning and eco-hydrological detective work involved. They use many types of information to guide their projects – from original maps and written descriptions from the 1800s, aerial and satellite mapping and on-the-ground investigation. This gives them a history of change over time.

Mark described four wetland project sites in detail. He finished by explaining some of the issues they are coming across more frequently – old river courses and wetlands that have been modified by 150 years of agriculture becoming housing estates – in particular Hanna Swamp at the upper reaches of Merri Creek near Wallan in an urban growth corridor.

A link to the recording of this presentation will be available soon.



Nature Glenelg Trust was established and is operated by a group of professional ecologists who support environmental objectives such as restoring wetlands and protecting the native plants and wildlife that call them home.

OCTOBER > URBAN PLATYPUS

Our October speaker was **Josh Griffiths, a wildlife ecologist who specialises in platypus**. He spoke about their biology, the habitat they need and their conservation status. Josh, who has been monitoring a selection of sites around Melbourne and regional Victoria, provided interesting insights into the threats they face in urban environments, and the impacts of climate change and pollution. He also detailed new DNA based survey methods that are making platypus detection easier.

Platypus are one of two egg laying mammals, the other being the echidna. They have no teeth and locate prey using electroreceptors in their bill that detect electric fields. Platypus are unusual because they are from a group that went their own way early in the evolution of mammals. They are not more primitive or more closely related to birds – they are just different.

Platypus can often be seen in the Yarra River. The suspension bridge over the Yarra at Finns Reserve is a particularly reliable spot to see them.

Josh's talk can be seen in the News section of the WCS website. You will need this passcode: d9z?VU!q

Photo: James Deane

WCS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

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

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

Any queries email: warringal3084@gmail.com

☐ I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

☐ Yes - put me on the Plantings notification list.

September 2021 – Nature Notes

◆ **Elizabeth Ainsworth** reported that her neighbour had been grooming her guide dog – some fur on the ground was carried off by a "big black bird". Doubtless a Raven seeking nest lining.

◆ **Heather Smith** remarked that after brushing the dog if you put the fur in the foot of an old stocking and hang it in the garden, birds will take it.

◆ **George Paras** reported a Swamp Wallaby resident in Yarra Flats Park, in the area claimed by the TreeTops commercial development.

◆ **Don Stokes** has also seen the Swamp Wallaby in the same area. While canoeing had also seen a snake swimming across the Yarra in front of him.

◆ **Robert Bender** reported on clearing Cape Ivy from trees on the very steep slope above Wilson Reserve. Unfortunately many are weed species such as Cherry Plum, Privet and Pittosporum – without the creeper they can at least be seen. East of Bailey Billabong, he cleared Tradescantia from round a large Tree Violet. Now seedlings will have a chance. Weasel Skinks and frogs hide under the Tradescantia; Brown Tree-frogs have been calling. Tree Violet began flowering in August -very early. Rob showed many slides, including a favourite - the Yellow Robin.

◆ From Yarra Flats, **Daphne Hards** showed a slide of four eggs, possibly a Darter's, smashed by a predator.

◆ **Anthea Fleming** presented slides of new rockwork at Sparkes Reserve, repairing erosion in the Darebin banks. Also a feral Honey-bees' nest in a poplar, some black bees, probably native, and the Water Skinks from her front garden. She also showed a booklet, *The Gardener's Guide to the birds of South East Melbourne*, by Gio Fitzpatrick – an excellent publication.

October 2021 - Nature Notes

◆ **Elizabeth Ainsworth** reported seeing between 30 and 40 Kangaroos at Watsonia Barracks.

◆ **Don Stokes** saw a metre long Brown Snake along the Darebin Trail, near Latrobe University.

◆ **George Paras** was doing some guerilla weeding along the railway line, and photographed some Galahs eating Chickweed. (Humans can eat it too). Though there is no pond handy, on a wet night he found a Pobblebonk, alias Banjo Frog in his vegetable garden.

◆ **Daphne Hards** passed on a note from Liz Evans(WCS' first ever Secretary) that she has a pair of Frogmouths nesting, in Rivergum Walk, in a tree which they have been using for 14 years.

◆ **Michelle Giovas**' garden had a visit from Brown Thornbills.

◆ **Lynne Matheson** saw Powerful Owls in Banyule Flats. (Exact location suppressed in hopes of less disturbance for the birds).

◆ **Heather Smith** nearly stepped on large frog on the path near the south arm of the Banyule Billabong.

◆ **Anthea Fleming** recorded this spring's first Painted Lady and Yellow Admiral butterflies, from the second week in September. She was lucky to glimpse a Collared Sparrowhawk in a neighbour's tree – on hearing frenzied alarm calls from Noisy Miners and Rainbow Lorikeets. At Wilson's Reserve, 13th September, another lucky sighting – a Spotless Crake at Reedy Billabong. No photo, alas, but a feeding Bell Miner was photographed.

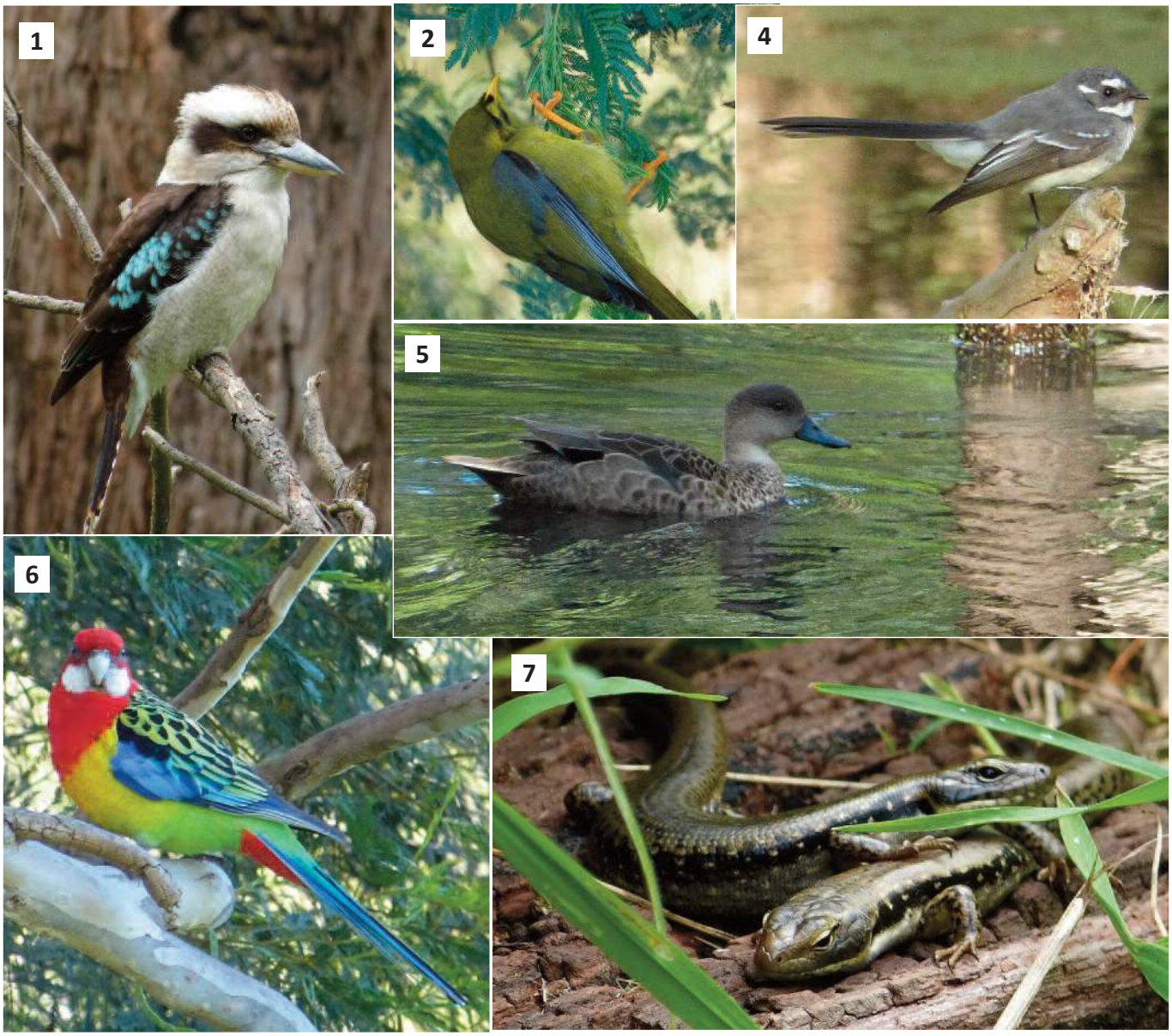
On 26th September – At Banyule Swamp, Reed Warblers were singing in the new reed bed. I saw a Black Duck with five tiny ducklings. Another photographer showed me pictures of a slightly older duckling which tried to join the family group - but it was savagely attacked by the mother – she grabbed it by one wing and dragged it about and was definitely trying to drown it!

On 5th October – three Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes at the poplars near the windmill at Banyule Flats – newly arrived summer migrants.

Anthea Fleming

NATURE NOTES

Photos shown at the October meeting, taken by Anthea Fleming are: 1. Laughing Kookaburra. 2 & 3. Bell Miner. 4. Grey Fantail. 5. Grey Teal. 6. Eastern Rosella. 7. Water Skinks.



If not delivered return to: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

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