



YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NEWS

Vol: 22 AUTUMN 2016

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EVENTS UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

Newsletter production and design is driven by volunteers on behalf of the Landcare Community. We look forward to your input.

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Melissa Ainsworth, Helga Binder, Sally-Ann Henderson, Samantha Monks, Dina Monks and Warren the Wise.

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Deadlines

14 May 2016 is the deadline for the Winter issue contributions.

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Cover photo

Autumn by Helga

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BIRDWATCHING

When: Thursday Feb 25 (car pool at 9.30)

Where: Sale Common & Lake Guyatt

RSVP: Kaye – 51851398

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

When: Sunday March 6

Where: Bingenwarri

RSVP: Kaye – 51851398 by March 2

WONYIP LANDCARE GROUP AGM

When: March 13 @ 2pm

Where: Wonyip Excelsior Hall

Contact: Werner - 0418 302 575

JARR COMMUNITY PROJECT

PLANNING EVENT

When: March 15 from 10am

Where: Bingenwarri Hall

Contact: Sally-Ann - 51757897

BIRD SURVEY

When: Thursday March 17 @ 9.30am

Where: Alberton West State Forest

RSVP: Kaye – 51851398

BIRD SURVEY

When: March 20 @ 4pm

Where: Alberton/Jack River area

RSVP: Kaye – 51851398

ANNUAL NETWORK BARBECUE

When: April 3 @ 12 noon

Where: Yarram Showgrounds

RSVP: Sally-Ann on 51757897

WOODSIDE LG MEETING

When: April 20 @ 8pm

Where: Woodside Hall

Contact: Jane - 51871400

CONSTITUTION UPDATE MEETING

When: April 27 @ 3pm

Where: Yarram Landcare Office

Contact: Sally-Ann - 51757897

GONE FARMIN' – VEHICLE COLLECTION OUTING

When: Sunday April 10 @ 9.45

Where: Maffra Vehicle Collection Museum

RSVP: Kaye – 51851398 by April 4

BINGINWARRI BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

When: April 21 @ 9.45

Where: Bingenwarri

Contact: Kaye - 51851398

MERRIMAN CK LG MEETING

When: Monday May 9 @ 7.30pm

Where: Stradbroke Hall

Contact: Melissa - 0437 640635

Contacts for Individual Active Landcare Groups

ALBERT RIVER LANDCARE GROUP

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FROM THE OFFICE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Sally-Ann Henderson



Sally-Ann Says:

Greetings to everyone,

Traditionally autumn is seen as the time of year we associate with things coming to an end, however in Landcare that is really the opposite.

Autumn is a busy time for us as the planting season begins and we try to squeeze in the last of our weed control. In the office it is also a time for moving forward and making advances.

We are delighted to show off our new website, we are progressing with a more modernised constitution and strategic plan that will meet the needs of the organisation going forward and we have a number of new projects getting off the ground.

The rather dry topic of constitutional reform seems to put some people to sleep and raise the innate suspicions in others. It's time to do ours, so rather than bog down a fun event like the BBQ or AGM we have decided to hold a special meeting. Everyone who wants to come along will be most welcome to comment on the

proposed changes and vote for their adoption. A revised constitution will be available via your inbox in the coming weeks. If you don't have email and would like a copy mailed to you, please contact the office.

What a great job John Mc Clumpha has done building the new YYLN website. www.yarramlandcare.org

It is a tool for keeping everyone up to date on all that the network has to offer as well as helping connect us to new supporters and supplying resources and contacts. It will also be a repository for past projects and achievements.

John, Samantha and I are all relative newcomers to the work that has been going on for the past 30 years, so it would be great to get some feedback and additional information to add

to the site. Perhaps you have some fabulous before and after photos that you would like to show off, or some details of a past project that you'd like to share with us so we can add it to the records. All ideas are welcome.

As many of you know Samantha has been unwell for most of summer and it is great to have her back with us and working on our projects. Because of her absence, Sam's usual updates won't feature in this edition but if you have a particular question feel free to contact her directly.

Happy Easter to you all. ■

Sally-Ann

Drum Muster Collection

Do you have any empty chemical drums in need of disposal?

The Giffard West Fire brigade is collecting drums for their safe disposal.

Containers need to be triple washed with their lids removed. Lids will also be collected but must be bagged separately. Please call Bill on 0427 468208 to arrange collection.

CONSTITUTION UPDATE

The Yarram Yarram Landcare Constitution is a very important but often overlooked document. It has been in need of updating for some time. Thanks to the diligent work of a small committee the Constitution has been thoroughly reviewed and is ready for update. It is important for all members of our Landcare community have the opportunity to ratify these changes so please come to this special meeting. A copy of the constitution will be distributed to all members before this meeting.

When: 3pm - April 27

Where: Yarram Landcare Office

Contact: Sally-Ann on 51757897 for further information

All Welcome



WEBSITE LAUNCH

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

[Home](#)[Who Are We?](#)[Membership](#)[NewsLetters](#)[Projects](#)

We Make It Happen!



The Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (YYLN) was established in 1995 and covers a diverse area of approximately 118,000 hectares. YYLN stretches from the temperate rainforests of the Strzelecki Ranges to the Ramsar listed wetlands of Comer Inlet and Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park, encompassing the Giffard Plain, along the Ninety Mile Beach to Seaspray. YYLN have been responsible for substantial on-ground changes since their establishment.

February saw the launch of our new website

www.yarramlandcare.org

The website has been designed to advise the broader community about our network along with details of recent projects both current and

completed. It is also designed to keep members advised of upcoming events, current newsworthy items and gives direct on-line access to our

newsletter. The website is in its infancy and any suggestions on how it may be improved or expanded including any constructive criticism will

be welcomed. These can be emailed to jd@incitegraphics.com.au

Thank you John McClumpha for you superb hard work



JOHN, GRAND MASTER OF WEB CREATION, CONSULTS WITH SAMANTHA MONKS RE FINAL CONTENT OF OUR WEB SITE



LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Melissa Ainsworth

Our feature members are well known to our Landcare community, as long time residents and members of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network. Linda Rippon and Bruce Atkin, widely known for his role the current Coastcare Facilitator for Gippsland and former YYLN Coordinator from 1996 - 1998, own a beautiful property just northwest of Devon North, in the area historically known as Whitelaw.

The 12.5 hectare property comprises undulating and some quite steep terrain, which was purchased some 23 years ago. Other than a few scattered remnant trees the site was basically a 'blank canvas' having been subject to widespread clearing from decades past. The trees present consisted of Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*), Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*), Yellow Stringybark (*Eucalyptus muellerana*) and Blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus* ssp. *globulus*).

The house was relocated to the property from Melbourne and over time Linda, a passionate gardener, has established an amazing cottage type garden comprising both exotic and indigenous species, which is a haven for birds and insects.



BRUCE AND LINDA - A GREAT TEAM



MAGNIFICENT OLD TREE IS AN IMPRESSIVE FEATURE ON THEIR PROPERTY



LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

...continued from page 05...

Outside the large garden area the steep sections of surrounding land required revegetating to prevent landslips. The gullies were fenced to protect them from grazing cattle that also share the property. The gullies have enjoyed supplementary plantings to form dense wildlife corridors. As well as stabilising the slopes, they strategically link into other revegetated corridors also serving as windbreaks.

Future projects on their "to do" list include fencing of old and isolated remnant trees, which are a fabulous source of seed. Linda and Bruce were also recently successful in applying for a grant through the new "Connecting Calrossie, Won Wron and Devon North" program and are about to commence work on establishing a 15 metre wide corridor along a section of their southern boundary that will create a link between their three main gullies. A north-south corridor will also be increased from 3 to 15 metres in width.

As all property owners are aware, weed control is a regular necessity and Bruce and Linda tackle ragwort, fleabane, thistles and hemlock each year to control their spread.

The remainder of the property is home to cows and calves and "Roxy" their enthusiastic and loyal campaign dog.

Linda and Bruce are actively involved in the JARR bird monitoring program, conducting quarterly bird counts at three sites, a few kilometres south of their property.

As demonstrated by these past and present photos, Linda and



BRUCE AND LINDA'S PROPERTY IN 1992



BRUCE AND LINDA'S PROPERTY IN 2016

Bruce have not only improved the property to create a haven for countless numbers of birds

and animals, but they have mitigated the erosion risk whilst making a tranquil home for

themselves, their children and their four legged animals. ■



THREATENED SPECIES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Matt Houry

Have you spotted the Spotted Galaxias?



TROUT GALAXIAS, GALAXIAS TRUTTACEUS, FROM BLACKFISH CREEK, WILSONS PROMONTORY. SOURCE: KEN HARRIS © KEN HARRIS

Spotted Galaxias (Galaxias truttaceus), also known as Minnow, Mountain Trout, Native Trout, Spotted Minnow, Spotted Mountain Trout, Spotted Trout, Trout Minnow, Western Mountain Trout and Yarra Trout, are a distinctive species with a wider body than most other galaxias, and pale-edged dark spots on the back and sides, a dark diagonal stripe below eye

and reddish-orange fins with dark margins.

This rather attractive fish can grow to a length of 20cm or more, but are commonly between 12 to 14cm long.

The Spotted Galaxias are endemic to the temperate waters of southern Australia. Their distribution is patchy in local streams of the southern mainland especially in Victoria and the southern part of Western Australia, as well as Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands.

Their habitat is generally in still or slow flowing streams at low elevations close to the sea. Usually found near cover such as

fallen timber or rocks in lakes or near the edges in streams.

Spotted Galaxias, **listed as a rare species** in Victoria, are usually found around aquatic vegetation, rocks or logs on the margins of still or flowing rivers, streams and lakes. Spending the majority of their life in Freshwater environments, this species, like many, reach a point in their life, when they wish to reproduce.

In order to reproduce, the Spotted Galaxias found in coastal waterways (i.e. not land locked) must endure a long seaward journey in search of the dense vegetation fringing our much loved estuaries.

When this destination is found,

they commence spawning.

This usually occurs between autumn and winter. The larvae hatch after approximately 4 weeks, before being swept out to sea, and return as transparent whitebait during spring.

So next time you're at your local estuary between autumn and winter, particularly during an estuary closure, you may just spot and Spotted Galaxias. ■

References:

Native Fish Australia: <http://www.nativefish.asn.au/galtrutt.html>

Fishes of Australia: <http://www.fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/species/3682>



THE AGILE ANTECHINUS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By John McClumpha

Have you been outside on the verandah or inside the shed or maybe walking in the bush and seen a small, grey-brown creature hop or scurry away and thought 'That was a mouse'. Well it may have been a common house mouse or it may have been an Agile Antechinus.



The Agile Antechinus is about the same size as a mouse, although they can grow to 12 cm long (tip of nose to start of tail) with a tail about the same length as their body.

Their fur can be grey just like a mouse but can also be grey-brown in colour with a light coloured stomach. Their eyes are quite dark and large by comparison. They scurry in a similar fashion to a mouse but they also hop frequently.

They are also very good climbers. I have seen them climbing straight up the brick wall of my house just like it was a horizontal surface.

There are three easily

identifiable characteristics of an antechinus which differentiate them from a house mouse. Their ears have a fold in them, their snout is more slender and pointed with the front of their lower jaw set about 1 cm back from its nose whereas a mouse's lower jaw starts just back from the nose and their feet are nearly twice as long as those of a mouse.

See photograph below.

I found this poor antechinus on my verandah one morning early before the currawongs came in (to gobble it up).

There was no obvious sign of why it had died and as it was in April I doubt it was due to a

mating frenzy.

They occasionally find their way into my house via the back of the fireplace (an area I can only block off if I demolish a brick wall) so I get to see them up close and friendly on these occasions.

The young lady above helped herself to the left over skin from the salmon I left on my dinner plate on the sink.

I found one in my bath one day. It must have been there for some time as it was quite weak and made very little effort to escape when I picked it up. I placed it in a large jar and put some water in the base of the jar.

Within a minute the antechinus was lapping up the water. I then put a teaspoon of honey in the jar and it was not long before it started licking that also. I dropped a few small insects into the jar throughout the day and by evening they were mostly consumed.

By this time the antechinus was quite active. I took it out to a bushy area where there are several logs and I had seen antechinus previously. I placed the jar on the ground and

slowly tipped it on its side. The antechinus moved to the mouth of the jar looked around then hopped out and over to the base of an old hollowed tree back to its natural environment.

Antechinus are capable of going through torpor. Torpor is a sleep like state in which the body's processes slow down to a fraction of their normal rate. They enter this state during difficult periods caused by cold weather or lack of food. The one I found in my bath may well have been in a torpid state when I found it which would explain its quick recovery.

I have since caught several in the house with the use of an Elliot trap. Which allows me to release them back into the wild a little further away from the house.

Antechinus mate annually from mid August to end of August (in Gippsland area). The gestation period is 4 weeks after which 6 to 10 young are born. Research has shown that the young from 1 litter are often fathered by up to 7 different males. **The Agile Antechinus does not have a pouch** (as do most other antechinus), each



Continued on page 09...



THE AGILE ANTECHINUS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

...continued from page 08...

young antechinus attaches itself to a nipple of the mother and they are all dragged about as the mother moves around. Ouch!! It has been found that the number of nipples an Agile Antechinus have varies from 6 to 10 (in pairs) and hence a natural weaning occurs when there are more young born than there are nipples available on the mother. When the young are 5 weeks old the mother will leave them in the nest whilst she goes hunting food.

Some interesting facts:

- Antechinus are nocturnal by nature but I have seen them early morning or evening during daylight hours.
- Antechinus build communal nests of dry grass and leaves in hollow logs or tree hollows. Up to 20 families have been recorded in the one nesting community.
- Antechinus eat insects, small invertebrates, spiders, nectar and small berries.
- Following mating the male Antechinus dies and hence they never live longer than 10-11 months (Aahhh. But what a way to go!!)
- Female Antechinus are known to live up to 4-5 years.
- Apart from their natural enemies such as goannas, raptors, owls, etc. Antechinus are also threatened by introduced animals such as cats, dogs and foxes.
- The Agile Antechinus is not a threatened species, however, leaving hollow trees and fallen logs on your property will ensure that there is habitat available for these wonderful little creatures.

The Dusky Antechinus is also found around our way however they are larger than the Agile species growing up to 18 cm long (tip of nose to start of tail). They are also more thickset and have smaller ears than the Agile species. The Dusky Antechinus is believed to be less frequent in this area.

So next time you see a small grey-brown creature running around the shed or even inside the house be sure it is not an Antechinus before you head for the cupboard to get the mousetrap to set. ■



Come and celebrate another big year of Landcare in our region at the Annual Network Barbecue

Bring your kids, bring your friends and be entertained by our fabulous local speaker

Bob McDonald

will share with us his knowledge on a wide range of subjects
Importance of Corner Inlet from the point of view of
conservation of natural resources
fishing industry
farming and forestry
Long Jetty
Fuel reduction burns

April 3, 2016 - 12 noon
Yarram Showgrounds
RSVP to Sally-Ann on 51757897

Meat, tea & coffee provided - please bring a salad or dessert to share and anything else you would like to drink



THE STRZELECKI KOALA

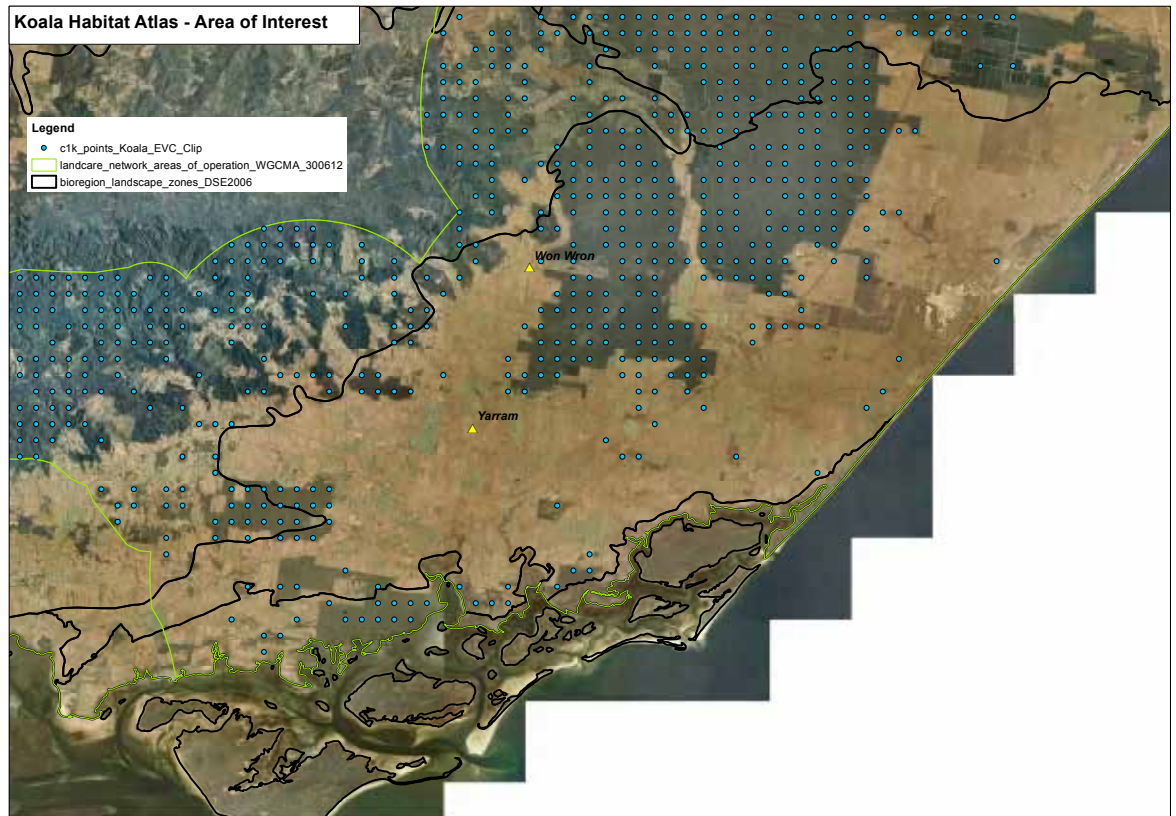
YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Nicole Walsh

The South Gippsland Koala Working Group and Friends of Strzelecki Koala are looking to undertake Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) surveys for areas of public and private land across the Gippsland Plain Bioregion (see map). This coincides nicely with an initiative being undertaken by the Friends of Gippsland Bush (FOGB) and Friends of the Earth Australia who are currently looking for properties with native forest to survey for the presence of koalas.

If this sounds like something you'd like to participate in then let the Friends of Gippsland Bush know at ajamis50gmail.com - If you register by email they will be in contact with you to see if your property fits their survey criteria.

The South Gippsland Koala Working Group is using a somewhat different approach to FOGB in that we are aiming to fill the current information



gap for the Gippsland Plains by applying a 1km grid across the region and selecting survey points where they coincide with native vegetation dominated by eucalypts. We already have a pretty good dataset for the Strzelecki Ranges, so this additional data will help develop a koala habitat model for the entire South Gippsland Region.

Although our approach may be a little different from FOGB they do complement each other. It's all about getting hold of more SAT data as the more data we have the better the koala habitat data model will be.

The SAT is a probabilistic sampling tool that involves an assessment of koala "activity" generally focused on a minimum of 30 trees* of any species around a given

sampling point (*= live, woody stemmed plants, minimum diameter at breast height (dbh) of 100 – 150 mm). Tree use by koalas (or strike rate) is indicated by the presence/absence of a single koala faecal pellet (scat) and limited to a one minute search within 1m around the base of each tree in the site. Koala 'activity' is simply measured as the number of trees beneath which scats were recorded within the prescribed search area, divided by the total number of trees that were sampled.

The data allows us to answer a certain number of questions related to koala conservation. Where are they living, where are they not? How many are there? What are their preferred food trees? These surveys help us to determine the population

density of koalas and their habitat preference.

A number of volunteers have already been trained in how to undertake these surveys. We're also looking to enlist our pool of trained volunteers to help with these surveys. However, it is critical to be able to correctly identify the eucalypt species within your plot as this will determine which trees the koalas prefer. A Eucalypts of the Strzelecki Ranges and Gippsland Plain: Identification Kit has been produced to help with this. To obtain a copy go to the www.fosk.org.au to download an order and payment form. ■

The Strzelecki

Koala

The Strzelecki Koalas are the original Victorian koala and they have much to contribute towards the future management of koalas in Victoria and elsewhere in south-eastern Australia. Because of this the Strzelecki Koalas arguably constitute Victoria's most important koala population but they need our help if they are going to survive into the future.

needs your help

Between November 2013 and April 2014, a team from the NSW Office for Environment and Heritage surveyed 141 locations in the Strzelecki Ranges for koalas. Each site consisted of 30 trees. The koala survey was the first conducted in the Strzelecki Ranges using a scientifically sound methodology. The survey results revealed that the 3025ha of forest surveyed contained ~811 koalas.

Mountain Grey Gum and Southern Bluegum were the most preferred trees for koalas. Yellow Stringybark and Messmate were the next most preferred species based on statistically relevant samples.

Soil types also had a major bearing on koala numbers, with higher numbers on the better quality Strzelecki soils.

The initial surveys targeted the best remaining stands of native forest in the region. Since May 2014, FoE and FoGB have assessed an additional 52 sites or ~1050ha of fragmented forest which is more typical of the region. Lower numbers of koalas have been found in these surveys.

It is necessary to look further afield to better determine koala numbers of the region, including South Gippsland. Friends of the Earth and Friends of Gippsland Bush are now interested in surveying native forest on private land.



Koala scat strike rates from 193 sites (5790 trees) surveyed so far

*These are plantation species which koalas also utilise, particularly if the plantations are in close proximity to native forest.



If you have native forest on your property and are interested in seeing if it can be surveyed for koalas please contact us by email at ajamis50@gmail.com

Tax deductible donations are also most appreciated.





BIRD MONITORING

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Dallas Wyatt

As reported in the summer issue, the JARR Bird Monitoring Program (JARR BMP) has been established. Seasonal bird surveys will be completed at 25 sites within the Jack and Albert Rivers catchment over the next two years. At each site, 20 minute, 2 hectare surveys will collect baseline data for the bird species present (species richness) and the number of individual birds (abundance).

The 25 sites being monitored consist of:

3 Wetlands.

Many of the original wetlands in the Yarram area were drained or have been degraded. So it is important to record which bird species are using wetlands. Two of them are fenced to exclude stock access, with one being a large, open dam with some fringe vegetation, and the other a well vegetated billabong system adjacent to the Albert River. The third is the Yarram wetlands created to manage stormwater runoff from the town.

14 Restoration Sites.

Most of these are sites that have had conservation works completed on them to exclude livestock and all are being managed to allow vegetation to re-establish either naturally or



through planting tubestock. Of the 14 restoration sites, 7 sites have been revegetated in the last 3 years, for example, a steep eroding gully was fenced and revegetated with tubestock in 2014. Another 3 restoration sites have older vegetation that was planted more than 8 years ago, for example, a gully was fenced and revegetated in 2006. The remaining 4 restoration sites are remnant native bushland being managed for conservation.

4 Control Sites.

These sites will see no change to their current management into the future. Three of them are pasture sites that will be grazed and the other site is a reach of the Billy Creek that has willows along it.

4 Benchmark Sites.

These sites are in protected remnant bushland and although modified, resemble the best quality habitat for vegetation type in the area. Two of the survey sites are in the Alberton West and May's Bush State Forests. The Binginwarri Bushland Reserve is another along with a remnant patch of wetter forest in the Madalya area.

The control and benchmark sites are an important component of the JARR BMP. The bird survey data will enable a comparison to be made between them and



the restoration sites. This will be illustrated through seeing changes to the bird populations

over time in the restoration sites as the birds respond to the habitat being created. ■



RABBIT ROADSHOW

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By

Landowners want to help with rabbit control

More than 150 landowners and Landcarers attended meetings in Koonwarra, Kilcunda, Warragul and Woodside last month to hear about a new strain of virus being released to help control rabbits across Australia.

Rabbit expert and research scientist funded through the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, Dr Tarnya Cox, explained that currently rabbits were not only costing farmers and the economy millions of dollars, but they also threaten extinction of 304 Australian native species.

"Rabbits were first introduced to Australia in 1859," explained Dr Cox. "They provided settlers

with a ready source of meat and sport.

"Since this time the population has exploded. The release of myxomatosis in the 1950s and the release of the initial Calicivirus in 1996, effectively reduced populations for a period of time. But now rabbit numbers have returned to pre-Calicivirus levels, causing huge amounts of damage.

"We plan to release a new strain of rabbit Calicivirus which could reduce the rabbit population in some locations by up to 50%.

"Landholders who want to make the most out of the virus strain should couple the release with traditional control methods such as ripping burrows, baiting and fumigation. This will increase the longevity of any results.

"We are asking landowners to get involved either by joining



TARNYA COX & JOHN MATTHEWS SPEAKING TO LIBBY BALDERSTONE AT THE WOODSIDE SESSION

with their neighbours to be a release site or by using the RabbitScan App to help alert us to where the virus has spread.

"We hope the App will be a really useful tool for communities to plan their rabbit control efforts," continued Dr Cox. A disease reporting function of the App will be available in the next few months.

The release of the new strain of the Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus, known as RHDV1 K5, is likely to take place later this year in an attempt to boost the effectiveness of the current RHDV1 strain released in 1996.

RHDV1 has been tested in other species including dogs, cats and native wildlife. No other animal has ever developed an infection from being exposed to RHDV1.

When exposed to RHDV1 K5, rabbits develop cold like symptoms, become lethargic and die quickly.

For more information about the virus release and app please visit www.pestsmart.gov.au

These workshops were supported by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and the Victorian State Government. ■



L-R: TARNYA COX, JOHN MATHEWS, HELEN HENDERSON (PI LANDCARE), DEREK SNOWDEN (BCLN, SOPHIE MADDIGAN, ROB GRAY (BCLN), ANNA SPIDEN (3 CREEKS LANDCARE)



WORDS OF WISDOM

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

Warren the Wise



Dear Warren,

My brother and I were wondering why moths are attracted to our light? Can you enlighten us please?

The Two A's

Dear A and A,

Well there's an interesting question that has been begging an answer for years and years – and the answer is unfortunately that no one really knows!

There are quite a few theories but none has been proven. Maybe that's a good chance for you to get in on the act ~ *find your life's work in studying*

moths to see if you can find out?

As a wombat I get to see a fair few moths, because they are around all the time, flying at night (and even sometimes in the day) so they get in my ears and up my nose on occasion, and invade my burrow here and there.

Moths are positive-phototaxis, that is, are attracted to a light source, as opposed to negative-phototaxis bugs like cockroaches that scurry away into dark corners when you turn on the light.

An early theory, according to my huge reference library, which I've had to dig a special room for in my home burrow, was that moths were attracted to the light of the moon and they mistook your verandah lights, campfires, candles and other outside lighting, for the moon's light. This was called the 'Compass Theory' and it was thought that moths

used the moon's light as a navigational aid, keeping it at a constant angle to their direction of travel, thereby allowing them to fly in a straight line. Since the moon is so far away, the angle stays the same as the insect flies along, but this isn't the case with smaller light sources such as campfires or light bulbs where the angle to the light source changes as the insect passes the source. In an attempt to keep themselves aligned the insect ends up flying round in circles.

So then when they mistook early man's up-close campfire light for the moon, they flew instead in ever-decreasing circles till they hit the flame, then ... zzzzt ...moth flambé!

Another theory is that moths are attracted to the light because they think it's a female moth. Female moths emit pheromones, a chemical scent she uses to attract the male of the species, and the pheromones are supposed to be slightly luminescent. If that is the case, then it is most unlucky for the male moth thinking he's honing in on a female moth and ends up getting zapped... no party for him tonight!

Many theories have been put forward and discounted after study and so there really is no definitive answer yet ~ but the most likely is the first given above. ■

Regards from your friend,

Warren the
Wise



MOTHS, FLYING AT NIGHT BY STEVE IRVINE FROM THE INTERNET



AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By our Landcare Groups

Wonyip

JARR Threatened Species Project:

Shortly Brad Blake and Dallas Wyatt will be starting a mammal monitoring survey in the more remote and dense areas of the JARR and surrounds.

Our group are delighted that some of the sites will be in our patch and have lent them some cameras to set up at various sites.

They are specifically concentrating on capturing and recording endangered species like the Tiger Quoll.

As well as cameras, they will also be setting up hair traps. These sticky traps, capture hairs as the animal passes by, it does not catch the animal. Three sites are selected with 4 cameras on each site and with the help of the expert knowledge and experience of Brad, these sites have been selected for best chances of recording something positive by analysing the habitat preferences.

Brad has had experience with locating and monitoring tiger quolls in Central and Western Victoria. We realise it is a slim chance that we will be able to find something such as the quoll, which has up to 2000 Ha home range, but it would be brilliant if we did find something out there.

Thank you to all the Landcare members who loaned their game cameras for this project, helping to reduce the costs.

25th Year Landcare Anniversary Grant Project update:

The extension of the original Quoll Corridor which ended at the Webb property and started in 2008 has commenced with fencing off agrarian land, blackberry spraying and willow removal along a short section of the Agnes River.

We approached the WGCMA for some advice on how to tackle the willow problem and instead they came offering to do the removal of the willows. They are keen to work with those groups and landholders who are showing an active interest in improving biodiversity.

Because they are going to do the willows, we will be able to build on previous years blackberry spraying and spend the money on further kill instead of willows.

The CMA would like to work from the headwaters down and so have agreed to explore future works on the Agnes River.

Subject to the funding that is made available to them, they intend continuing this willow removal task to the source of the Dingo Creek and Agnes River in future years.

The WGCMA have a declared Strategy to start all future projects at the source of all the catchment under their jurisdiction.....how wonderful for the Environment....."Keep the Source Clean"!!!

Our next meeting will be March 13 in the Wonyip Hall at 2pm. ■

Woodside

Woodside members gathered to celebrate the festive season at the Commercial Hotel in early December. Once again a wonderful night was had by all.

In January we were fortunate enough to be able to participate in the "Rabbit Roadshow" which was held at the Woodside Hall.

The Rabbit RHD Roadshow was organised by Kathleen Brack, Regional Landcare Program Officer in partnership with the Department of Economic, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). The session was also made possible with the support of the Bass Coast, Baw Baw Shire Council and the Yarram Yarram and South Gippsland Landcare Networks. Organisers were delighted with the numbers who attended and we all left fully informed about the introduction of a new strain of the calicivirus that is due to be released in Autumn 2017.

Our next meeting will be held on April 20 at 8 pm at the Woodside Hall. All welcome. ■

Binginwarri

If you are interested in BIRD WATCHING OR BIRD SURVEYING then please do contact Kaye on 5185 1398.

We are always looking for company and willing to teach anyone who wants to learn. Same goes for people interested in the FLORA of the area - contact me if you'd like to come on our trip - open to all interested Landcarers, no matter what group you belong to.

We have several "special"

outings we are going to try this year so if your interest includes snails or old vehicles, then please watch out for our 2016 Activities Calendar which will be emailed to all soon - check out the months of April and August in particular.

Don't forget we have our own website that you may find useful and interesting and is constantly being updated... www.bingilcg.org

See the events calendar on page two for our upcoming events. ■

Yarram Urban

Despite the dry summer and the big clean up we had in late spring, the Bicentennial Gardens have been over run with weeds.

As a small group with limited person power we have had to put on our thinking caps as to how to get on top of them as easily as possible and how to keep on top of them into the future, so that we can move onto other projects and not spend all our time weeding.

We have come up with a maintenance plan to get tractor and mulcher access into the park which will make regular cleanups quicker.

Rather than dragging debris on trailers and removing we'll be able to mulch it in situ. And also we have marked all our plantings with red tape so that we can get help from non-expert weeders who won't have to worry about removing our precious plantings instead of weeds. With all the plants marked we can approach Mirridong or the schools to give us a hand.



AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

...continued from page 11...

Our plan over autumn and winter is to get really on top of the weeds so for next planting season we can actually see the gaps and fill them.

It was a great activity marking each of the plants. Initially it looked like the dry summer had decimated our plantings but after marking each plant with a red ribbon it became very obvious that there are in fact many more plants than one at first thinks and many plants have been revived and saved by that great 50mm downpour that Yarram got in late January. If the autumn rains come in a timely way and our weed control goes to plan, we are hoping to come into next spring with some great growth.

We have applied for a Federal Volunteer Support Grant to buy some much needed equipment to make our volunteering work easier.

We are also keen to get cracking on our part of the JARR Threatened Species grant, which will help us tackle the Indian Myna problem with distribution of traps.

Finally, we aim to install some nest boxes in the Yarram area. ■

Merriman Creek

The Merriman Creek group enjoyed a lovely Christmas barbecue hosted by Norma and Peter Garlick on December 6.

After dinner we had our meeting where those present unanimously agreed that our group should participate in the "Adopt a Highway" program, along a small section of the South Gippsland Highway in Stradbroke. With our upcoming 30th Anniversary approaching, a small sub committee has been formed to coordinate a celebration which is planned for September 10. *More details soon!*

Having completed our "Communities for Nature" project, the board of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority recently visited us at one of the project sites.

It was a terrific opportunity to show off our successful project, which also demonstrates to

the new CMA board members present, the partnership that exists between the CMA and Landcare groups.

Our February meeting was trialled on a weekday evening, which was extremely well attended. Because of this the next meeting is planned for Monday May 9 at 7.30 at the Stradbroke Hall. All welcome ■

CIBAG

The Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group (CIBAG) have had exciting times recently with the completion of our "Communities for Nature" funding program.

Last seasons efforts saw Dingo Creek and Agnes River systems sprayed for blackberry, 20 metres each side of both streams. Some follow up work is being done this season by landowners and local contractors.

This seasons efforts focused on Woomera Ck, work left over from last year but which was always part of the C4N work plan. Again 20 metres has been sprayed each side of the creek on land for which the owners have agreed to a 3 year blackberry control program. Helicopter application of herbicide is being investigated for hilly areas and to date seems to be more cost effective in \$/Ha than hand crews. Accuracy of herbicide distribution is however a major consideration. As with all ongoing work, aerial spraying will only proceed where landholders cost share.

Woomera Creek and the hill work will utilise the remainder of the \$50k Communities for Nature grant and constitutes a

winding up of that project. The Landcare 25th Anniversary grant of \$20k, allocated to eradicate blackberry in the Ramsar area of Corner Inlet, is going full steam ahead. Project Officer Matt Stephenson is making great progress. Matt is visiting landholders in the Bennison area and is proving very successful in engaging them to commit to a 3 year blackberry eradication plan. Landholders are responding with enthusiasm to an offer where the CIBAG will cost match this year to help get their blackberry eradication program up and running. One of the projects also currently being negotiated is the spraying of blackberry along Stockyard Creek at Foster township. The Shire are enthusiastic and Parks Victoria are on side and planning is underway. The 25th Anniversary project is due to wind up at the end of 2016. This is also the final year of funding for the CIBAG from VBT (Victorian Blackberry Taskforce). Funding for next year is so far unsecured. The CIBAG Committee remains optimistic however. Planning for various levels of funding, including none, has been rigorously discussed and documented. The CIBAG will have a presence in the 2016/17 season, funding or not!

The CIBAG is also proud to announce that Dave Smith, Secretary of the CIBAG has been invited to sit with the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce at a statewide level. Dave has accepted the offer. We congratulate him on the recognition of his considerable talent. Wishing you success in the good fight. ■

Merriman Creek Landcare group

30th Anniversary celebration

7pm - September 10, 2016

**Stradbroke Hall, Sth Gippy Highway,
Stradbroke**

Save the date!

More details to come. All welcome.

**Any submissions of former memorabilia would
be appreciated.**

Contact: Melissa - 0437 640635



PROJECT UPDATES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

Drought Tolerant Pastures project – Where to next?

As part the YYLN Healthy Soils project there was an opportunity this year to fund a demonstration of innovation and best practice. YYLN and Tony Gardner from the West Gippsland CMA brought together representatives of the Gippsland Plains Drought Tolerant Pastures group to discuss their priorities and wish list.

The Carbon Action on the Ground project is now complete and although there had been some interesting and clear outcomes from the project, there was unanimous agreement that the real value lay in continuing the work that was begun years ago from the Drought Tolerant Pastures Trial.

Pasture species persistence was

chosen as the thing to measure. In consultation with Lisa Warne at Melbourne Uni, a range of species and conditions have been chosen for monitoring. This will help to determine the persistence of various pasture species, thereby giving the region's farmers information to help guide them in future pasture sowing decisions. Some of the paddocks were sown 8 years ago, so we have the chance to look at some great long term data. The paddocks chosen are;

- Balderstone –lucerne/ cocksfoot, sown 2013
- Belcher –lucerne/fescue, sown 2009
- Foat – kikuyu/cocksfoot, sown 2010
- Triantafyllou –cocksfoot/ Lucerne/fescue, sown 2010

- Walpole –summer active fescue on very saline ground, sown 2009
- Coulson - summer active fescue on very saline ground, sown 2009

All the farmers have kindly agreed to calculate grazing days by recording;

- Date stock go into paddock
 - Date stock leave paddock
 - Class of stock, their live-weight & pregnancy status (eg. 30 kg lambs, 50 kg Merino ewes – dry, preg, lactating, 60 kg Cross bred ewes, 500 kg Cows, 280 kg steers etc).
 - Number of stock in paddock.
- From this information Lisa will be able to calculate the grazing days to see what sort of feed yield is being achieved. "It is vital that projects like this address farmers needs and are

driven by what they require. There is then a much greater chance of the information being taken up and acted upon by the farming community. Ultimately that is what we are after, useful information everyone can use." said Tony Gardner.

YYLN has been fortunate to be able to support the Gippsland Plains Drought Tolerant Pastures group for a remarkably long time in this world of short funding cycles. We look forward to seeing what the next stage of this research will reveal. This project is supported by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, through funding from the Australia Government's National Landcare Programme and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. ■

Connecting Calrossie, Won Wron and Devon North

The Strzelecki Ranges are one of seven landscape priority areas for the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy. YYLN was invited to apply for project funding to address threats, strengthen environmental resilience and enhance biodiversity in this priority area.

The project that YYLN came up with was designed to support landholders in the Strzelecki foothills and in an area was chosen that is beyond the boundary of the current Communities for Nature JARR project. An expression of interest (EOI) process, open to all private landholders in the target area resulted in some great suggested projects. So we now have six landholders in the Devon North area starting work on their new Landcare projects.

The project will support the protection and enhancement of remnant vegetation through fencing and weed control and it will also assist in the establishment of 7 new vegetation corridors and shelterbelts. Work will be done on beef farms, dairy farms and bush blocks.

One participant said; "We'd been planning to put in these shelter belts for ages. When this project came along it gave us the push we needed to get our EOI in and get something happening. We're keen to get started."

The project was a stroke of good future for landholders who had recently lost much in the October bushfire at Devon North. Their properties fell

within the target area and so were eligible for the funding to help them rehabilitate bulldozer containment lines and fence off the remnant vegetation which although burnt, was already showing signs of new growth and restoration.

Sally-Ann said; "It is great to be able to support these families get back some of what was lost and to protect new areas of

remnant bush into the future through landholder agreements. We were delighted to be able to bring some good news in a challenging time."

This project is supported by Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, through funding from the Australia Government's National Landcare Programme and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority". ■





PARTNER ACTIVITY

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Bruce Atkin

SUMMER BY THE SEA

Once again, more than 3,000 locals and visitors took part in over 100 free events on the Gippsland coast during this year's 20th anniversary of the "Summer by the Sea" program.

Events provided by volunteers, agency staff and contractors continue to attract good crowds, proving that Summer by the Sea resonates as strongly as ever after two decades. The popularity of traditional activities like the "Rock Pool Rambles" run at Inverloch and Walkerville and "Coastal Wildlife" display at Welshpool's Sea days Festival highlights how much families enjoy learning about

local wildlife and habitats. Victoria's coastal environments are fragile and strongly affected by introduced plants and animals and by human behaviour. Protection of these environments can be assisted by responsible use and management. The role that coastal volunteers play in this is also celebrated in the "Summer by the Sea" program.

Coastcare Victoria urges those with an interest in their local marine or coastal environments to become a coastal volunteer and make a positive difference. If you are interested in taking part in next year's "Summer by the Sea" activities program, remember this newly-launched website: summerbythesea.vic.gov.au ■



GEOLOGY ROCKS WALKERVILLE WITH GEOLOGIST GARY WALLIS



COASTAL WILDLIFE DISPLAY - PORT WELSHPOOL SEADAYS FEST.



PARTICIPANTS AND PRESENTER LAUREN WITH ELEPHANT SNAIL, BEACHCOMBING & ROCK POOLS AT WARATAH BAY



SEAGRASS SAFARI AT PORT WELSHPOOL SEADAYS FESTIVAL