



PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia

NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 2013

BIRDING AT WARRINGINE AND HASTINGS

July 1st

For our July birding we walked along Warringine Creek, Hastings, from Hendersons Road right to the Flinders Road end and back. We actually heard more birds than we saw, with our total coming to 21, including Bell Miner and Spotted Pardalote, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, and a Whistling Kite. When we came to the water hole there were only a couple of Purple Swampens, and an inquisitive Kookaburra.



Photo – Yvonne Incigneri

We found some "Dead Man's Fingers" fungi growing under the trees, and some very attractive mauve fungi. Tall and Nodding Greenhoods were seen in bud

After lunch we walked along the board walk at Jacks Beach and saw a White-necked Heron, a Royal Spoonbill and a White-faced Heron all eating together near the Board walk. There were also lots of crabs to be seen, and we had good weather. A good day was had.

Final bird tally was 31 for the two sites, with close-up views from the boardwalk being the highlight - **Yvonne Incigneri**

Bird List Hastings Foreshore July 1, 2013

White-faced Heron	Little Wattlebird
White-necked Heron	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian White Ibis	Magpie-Lark
Royal Spoonbill	Willie Wagtail
Silver Gull	Welcome Swallow
Crested Pigeon	

Bird List Warringine Creek July 1, 2013

Australian White Ibis	Noisy Miner
White faced Heron	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Whistling Kite	White-eared Honeyeater
Purple Swampen	New Holland Honeyeater
Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Yellow Robin
Eastern Rosella	Grey Fantail
Laughing Kookaburra	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird
Brown Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Red Wattlebird	Little Raven
Bell Miner	



Photo – Yvonne Incigneri

WORKING BEE AT WALLACE RESERVE

July 21st

We have a once a year working bee, every July, in a different Frankston reserve each year. This year it was Wallace Reserve, which two of our members, Gloria Dean and David Cross, have a long association with.

Wallace Reserve has an interesting history – there was a small quarry in one section, now known as "Red Rock", for

the red sandstone exposed there. The southern part was a School Plantation, planted with *Pinus pinaster* (Maritime Pine) and managed by Frankston High School from 1926 to 1960. It was also put forward as a potential site for the new Frankston High School in 1958 but fortunately the Towerhill Rd site was chosen instead. Since 1960 Frankston City Council has managed the reserve.

The Friends of Wallace Reserve was formed in 2005, and local residents and Frankston City Council, together with Frankston Heights Primary School, Woorinyan Community Services and the 3rd Frankston Girl Guides have cleared 2 large blocks of weeds and replanted with thousands of grasses, shrubs and trees. The contrast between the overgrown weedy areas and the regenerated and replanted area was quite stark, with the re-planted areas looking like original vegetation.

On a rather chilly July morning we joined the Friends and a group of Guides, weeding a previously planted area, ready for the next planting day coming up soon. After we finished work we went on a tour of Wallace Reserve, and were pleased to find a colony of *Pterostylis concinna*, neat greenhoods, which are not at all common. Frankston residents are blessed to have such a large number of reserves close to their homes, and they are all worth a look and a helping hand. - **Judy Smart & David Cross**

AUGUST BIRDING – THE BRIARS

5 August 2013

The weather was fine and mild, with a light wind, as six members turned out for this months birding at The Briars. The final total of 41 species was about average for this site, and considering the season was considered quite a good day's result.

Nothing was to be seen at the Boonoorong hide so we moved on to the larger Chechingurk hide, where the water was high and bird numbers were low. An unusual sighting was an Emu wading in the lake just outside the hide; apart from some Hoary-headed Grebes and Coots there were few other birds here. Since the bridge over the creek was still under construction we could not follow the boardwalk up to the lookout so we went back to the Woodland walk, noting the presence on a log of the jelly fungus *Tremella globispora* on the way, thence up to the lookout and returning via the Kur-Ber-Rer walk.



Wading Emu – Photo by Yvonne Incigneri

We noted an impressive display of the bracket fungus *Trametes versicolor* on a dead stump near the base of the hill, and the earth star *Gastrum triplex*, but saw relatively few birds. A few birds including Pelicans, and White and Straw-necked Ibis were sighted overhead.



Eastern Yellow Robin – Photo by Yvonne Incigneri

The track from the Wetland Viewpoint yielded more sightings, notable ones being Red-browed Finch and a Brown Goshawk being harassed by a Silver Gull. Honeyeaters were relatively few, only White-eared, White-naped and New Holland being sighted, together with Red Wattlebird. A patch of Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*) in flower, and the surprisingly large single white flowers of the Scented Sundew *Drosera aberrans* (syn *D. whittakeri*) were also seen

After lunch at the Visitor Centre a stroll up to the homestead added Cattle Egret to the list, with eight egrets on the paddock with the cattle – these birds took to the air and flew off when a Swamp Harrier flew across. There was a considerable number of Eastern Rosellas near the homestead, and an even greater number along the entrance road.

Four White-faced Herons on the paddock above the entrance road completed the count for the day, the final tally being 41. - **Lee Denis**

Bird List For The Briars 5 August 2013				
Emu	Straw-necked Ibis	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Noisy Miner	Little Raven
Australian Wood Duck	Swamp Harrier	Rainbow Lorikeet	White-eared Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Pacific Black Duck	Brown Goshawk	Eastern Rosella	White-naped Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Chestnut Teal	Purple Swamphen	Laughing Kookaburra	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
Hoary-headed Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Starling
Australian Pelican	Silver Gull	Spotted Pardalote	Magpie-Lark	
White-faced Heron	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	
Cattle Egret	Common Bronzewing	Striated Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird	
Australian White Ibis	Galah	Red Wattlebird	Australian Magpie	



From The Briars: *Drosera aberrans*, *Trametes versicolor*; *Tremella globispora*. Photos: Lee Denis

PENINSULA INTER-TIDAL MARINE LIFE

Presentation by JOHN EICHLER 14 August 2013

John Eichler has been a member of the Marine Research Group of the FNCV since the 1980s, as well as his other interests and expertise in native orchids, fungi, rare plants, and birds.

He spoke first on the work of the Marine Research Group – their focus is on the marine invertebrates and plants of the inter-tidal zone. They conduct surveys anywhere on the Victorian coast, in the warmer months, when the better tides (ie lower) allow. They record their sightings and numbers seen and both keep their own records and provide the information to Museum Victoria. The MRG has its own publications as well as using reference books and the portphilipmarinelife.net.au website.

The MRG regularly make new sightings, such as the porcelain crab, which is originally from NZ, has been found in Tasmania for some years, and the first Victorian sighting was at Phillip Island recently. They note extensions of range, for example the soldier crab, which used to be only found on the East Coast of Australia, has spread as far west as Port Welshpool in recent years, and was also found at

Phillip Island recently.

John went on to speak about finding marine invertebrates – some are out in the open, but most are cryptic – they hide in burrows, under rocks, some are nocturnal, and some are camouflaged, such as the decorator crab, which sticks seaweed to its shell as a disguise. He showed beautiful photos of examples like the semaphore crab, which lives in mangroves; the hermit crab, hidden in another animal's shell; the snapping shrimp, sand octopus, which is nocturnal, dumpling squid, the swimming anemone (likened to a floating bag of baked beans), sea slugs with their extraordinary range of colours and patterns, sea cucumbers, sea stars, again with many colours and shapes, sea urchins, and lastly gastropods such as limpets and periwinkles.

One question was regarding man-made pollution, such as near the mouth of the Yarra. John replied that one issue is freshwater inflow, from flooding, which can kill marine life, but that Jawbone Reserve near Williamstown is a good site for marine life, and Newport can be too. - Judy Smart

GREENS BUSH TWO BAYS WALK

17 August 2013



The forecast was not promising for our planned 9 kilometre walk through Greens Bush, following the Two Bays Walking Track, but in the event the weather was not a factor. After leaving a car at the Boneo Road end of the walk our party of four travelled to the Greens Road entrance, where we were joined by a fifth member. A slight complication due to a fallen tree across the road added another kilometre or so to the distance, but the walk itself is quite easy, with a few minor uphill but by starting at the Greens Road end the general trend was downhill.

The first section, from Greens Road to Lighthouse Creek, passes through an open woodland primarily of Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Messmate (*E. obliqua*) and Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*), with a sparse understory dominated by bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), with some impressive stands of Austral Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

Few birds were observed in this area, until at the junction of the Lightwood Track a number of honeyeaters including White-naped, Brown-headed and Crescent, as well as Golden Whistler and Mistletoebird, were seen.



Photo: Lee Denis

After lunch at Lightwood Creek, and a visit by a very curious Grey Shrike-thrush, we continued across the Creek, encountering a Swamp Wallaby on the track and sighting a few more birds including Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Grey

Currawong and Red-browed Finch. The most often sighted bird – Eastern Spinebill. A few orchids, including Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*) and the leaves of Mosquito Orchids (*Acianthus* sp.).

About 2-3 kilometres from the Boneo Road end of the walk there is a dramatic change in the vegetation, with a sudden transition to a Banksia woodland. Here also there is a large influx of weed species, including Nettles, Arum Lily, Forget-me-not, Fumitory and Cleaver. These weeds seem to be coming down the hill, since a bit further on there is a wide section consisting of an open bracken covered area, which contains few if any weeds. Native species in the weedy area included Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*) and Muttonwood (*Myrsine howittiana*, formerly *Rapanea howittiana*) along a stream line leading down into Main Creek.



Photo: Lee Denis

The weedy area did support a lot more birds, including two Spotted Pardalote males engaged in a furious contest showing brilliant flashes of red and yellow colour, flashing through the vegetation and even rolling on the ground. Eastern Yellow Robin, more honeyeaters, Grey Currawong, Black-shouldered Kite and Superb Fairy-wren were some of the birds seen, while Wedge-tailed Eagles soared over the adjacent paddocks, where numerous kangaroos lounged in the open.

This very pleasant walk, of about 10 kilometres, took about five hours at field naturalist pace. - Lee Denis

Bird List For Greens Bush 17 August 2013

Black-shouldered Kite	Spotted Pardalote	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red-browed Finch
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Thornbill	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	Mistletoebird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Striated Thornbill	Crescent Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Welcome Swallow
Crimson Rosella	Little Wattlebird	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	
Laughing Kookaburra	Noisy Miner	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Magpie	
White-throated Treecreeper	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Currawong	
Superb Fairy-wren	White-eared Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	Little Raven	

BIRDS OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

Late in August I went to Flinders ocean beach to look for Double-banded Plovers that were about to leave for New Zealand. What I found was a small group of waders that live very contrasting lives.

There were four Double-banded Plovers mingling with a group of a dozen Red-necked Stints. These birds had all spent the winter together and were comfortable sharing the protection of the weed wrack, but that is where the similarity ends.

Physically, the stints are smaller, in fact the smallest migratory wader in Australia, and have smaller eyes than the plovers that have typical large eyes for finding food visually.

The plovers were mostly adults while the stints were likely to be all

juveniles, because the adult stints had migrated to the breeding grounds in the arctic, some 10,000 kms to the north and their young birds remain in Australia for the first non-breeding season. For some of the larger waders like Bar-tailed Godwit, the young birds can stay for their first two or three years before they venture to the breeding grounds for the first time.

Unlike all the other waders that migrate from Australia to breed, Double-banded Plovers all leave for New Zealand, both juveniles and adults and all leave with breeding plumage. This leaves our spring and summer without any Double-banded Plovers until they return in partial breeding plumage again in autumn. In contrast, Red-necked Stints are a common bird around our coast over the summer.

When the plovers left for their breeding grounds shortly after I took their photos, they were heading east, not north, to their breeding areas in the centre of the South Island of New Zealand. This is a migration (east-west) that is, in my understanding for waders globally, exclusive to the Double-banded Plover.

Another interesting difference with these birds is that not all the population of New Zealand birds come to Australia, only the central South Island birds move across the Tasman.

When you see some of these birds around the coast next autumn and winter, take a moment to think of how unusual their life is. - **Roger Standen**



Three Double-banded Plovers with Red-necked Stint in the background



A single Double-banded Plover among Red-necked Stint.

Photos: Roger Standen

ROLFES RESERVE

2 September 2013

Our September birding trip was to Gordon Rolfes Reserve in Tyabb, where we expected to find some early orchids as well as a good bird list. Little Grassbirds could be heard, competing with the frogs, in the wetland, and eventually one was sighted skipping across the Water Ribbons. Little Eagle and Swamp Harrier were overhead, and Kookaburra and Grey Currawong were in the trees nearby. The frogs, incidentally, were mostly Common Froglets (*Crinia signifera*) and Pobblebonks (*Limnodynastes dumerili*), with the Striped Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes peroni*) also clearly audible.

We then walked a circuit of the Reserve, seeing a number of orchids flowering or just finished flowering:

Acianthus caudatus – Mayfly
Acianthus pusillus – Mosquito (finished flowering)
Pterostylis concinna – Neat Greenhood
P. curta – Blunt Greenhood
P. melagramma – Tall Greenhood
P. nutans – Nodding Greenhood

Many of the latter were seen just above the salt marsh.



Acianthus caudatus
(Lee Denis)



Pterostylis concinna
(Lee Denis)

Birds included a number of Honeyeaters, Golden Whistler, Red-browed Finch, and Mistletoebird among others, as well as a pair of mating Fan-tailed Cuckoos. A detour through the salt marsh brought sightings of White-faced Heron and White Ibis.

Plants in flower included

Acacia oxycedrus – Spike Wattle
Acacia verticillata – Prickly Moses
Amyema pendula – Drooping Mistletoe

Billardiera scandens – Common Apple-berry
Bossiaea cinerea – Showy Bossiaeae
Drosera peltata ssp auriculata – Tall Sundew
Drosera aberrans (whittakeri) – Scented Sundew
Epacris impressa – Common Heath (mostly white)
Hibbertia fasciculata – Bundled Guinea-flower
Leucopogon australis – Spike Beard-heath
Leucopogon virgatus – Common Beard-heath
Ricinocarpus pinifolius – Wedding Bush (just starting)

After lunch we went around to the western side of the wetland, where to the almost deafening calls of frogs we again saw the Little Eagles and Swamp Harriers, this time perched in the tall trees. Waterbirds on the small proportion of open water included Hardheads, an Australian Grebe, Coots, and Pacific Black Ducks, with Purple Swamphens clambering through the vegetation.

We then proceeded to Yaringa Boat Harbour, but were only able to add Masked Lapwing and, oddly, Eastern Rosellas in the rigging of a yacht, to bring our final bird tally to 48 – a few less than last year, when we visited a couple of weeks later in the year. (see September 2012 newsletter). This is probably also the reason there were more plants in flower in the 2012 visit. - Lee Denis



Swamp Harrier
(Yvonne Incigneri)



Little Eagle
(Lee Denis)

Bird List for Gordon Rolfe Reserve, Tyabb, 2 September 2013

Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Little Raven
Hardhead (6)	Silver Gull	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Australasian Grebe	Spotted Turtle-Dove	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Australian Pelican	Common Bronzewing	Brown Thornbill	Magpie-Lark	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	Little Grassbird
Australian White Ibis	Galah	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	Common Blackbird
Swamp Harrier	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Common Starling
Little Eagle	Eastern Rosella	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna
Purple Swamphen	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-naped Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
Eurasian Coot	Laughing Kookaburra	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Currawong	

TRAPPING MICROBATS AROUND VICTORIA

Presentation by SALLY BEWSHER: 11 September , 2013

Sally Bewsher is a Councillor in the Fauna Survey Group of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, and organizes field surveys including microbat surveys.

Bats are the only true flying mammal, and they make up one fifth of all Australian mammals. There are around 90 species of microbat in Australia, and Victoria has 21 species – made up of species of Forest, Wattled, Long-eared, Freetail, Bent wing, Horseshoe and Myotis, or fishing bats. There are also 3 megachiroptera, or flying foxes (fruit bats) -Grey headed, Black and Little Red.

For their habitat they need protection from weather and prey, and they use a wide variety of roosts – tree hollows, spouts, cracks in trees and under bark, fallen timber, caves, under bridges, mines, cliffs, nestboxes, sheds and under roofs.

Survey methods used are mainly harp traps, which are put out during the day – in the evening bats hit the lines and fall into a soft bag where they await their examination for sex, age, forearm length, weight and teeth. They are held during the day in bags and released at night where they were captured. Bat detectors, thermal imaging cameras and radio transmitters are also used. All trapping is under permit. Microbats breed once a year, and usually have one young, born in November – December. The young are born unfurred, and are carried initially by the mother, attached to the teat, and as they grow are left in a maternity colony roost. They are fed live food after milk, are independent at

6 to 8 weeks, and can breed at 2 to 3 years of age. Males play no part in the raising of the young.

Bats are big eaters – they eat one third to one half of their body weight each night, and travel several kilometres to find their food- insects. The only exception is the Myotis or fishing bats, which eat shrimps and small fish. No bats are truly blind, but they use echolocation for orientation, finding prey and communication. Each species has its own call. Fruit bats use sight and smell as well.

Why are bats important? They control insects and pests (especially mosquitoes), they pollinate plants and crops, and disperse seeds, especially the fruit bats. The threats to them from humans are: loss of habitat and food sources, disturbance when roosting, netting and barbed wire, electrocution, shooting, poisons and climate change. They are preyed upon by foxes, cats, snakes and birds, and are also impacted by extreme weather.

People worry about bats carrying diseases. Bat handlers have to be inoculated against lyssavirus, which is a form of rabies. The situation with Hendra virus, a horse virus, which was thought to be transmitted to horses by fruit bats is not certain – dogs and cats may be involved.

For more information on bats there is the Australasian Bat Society (www.ausbats.org.au), Museum Victoria and the Dept of Environment and Primary Industry. - **Judy Smart**

SEPTEMBER EXCURSION: THE PINES RESERVE

14 September, 2013

It has been a few years since our group had a visit to the Pines, so long that we hadn't seen the "new" part. We expected to find open paddocks in the process of regenerating, and were thrilled to find instead beautiful heathland in full flower in the new section. We started at the Ballarto Rd car park and walked parts of the School break, Darnley and Boggy Creek tracks in the morning, seeing some great birds along the way with the wildflowers - Wedding Bush and Common Aotus in particular..

emblem, chosen because they were so common around Frankston decades ago

Orchids In flower:	
Nodding greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>
Donkey	<i>Diuris orientis</i>
Waxlip	<i>Glossodia major</i>
Rabbits ears	<i>Theelymitra antennifera</i>
Dusky fingers	<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>
Red beak (leaves)	<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>

After lunch we walked under Peninsula Link to the original section and up to the viewpoint near the trig point with its great views over the Bay and to the Dandenongs.

There had been a burn off in recent years, and the orchids were plentiful and spectacular, especially the Rabbits Ears, our Club



Glossodia major



Thelymitra antennifera



Diuris orientis

(Photos – Lee Denis)

We were pleased to see an echidna and a family of dusky wood swallows.

Other Plants in Flower	
Blackwood	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>
Spike wattle	<i>Acacia oxycedrus</i>
Common aotus	<i>Aotus ericoides</i>
Appleberry	<i>Billardiera scandens</i> var <i>scandens</i>
Showy Bossiaeae	<i>Bossiaea cinerea</i>
Correa	<i>Correa reflexa</i>
Love creeper	<i>Comesperma volubile</i>
Showy parrot pea	<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>
Heath	<i>Epacris impressa</i>
Bundled guinea flower	<i>Hibbertia fascicularis</i>
Silky guinea flower	<i>Hibbertia sericea</i> var <i>sericea</i>
Silky tea tree	<i>Leptospermum myrsinoides</i>
Beard heath	<i>Leucopogon ericifolia</i>
Beard heath	<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>
Melaleuca	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>
Wedding bush	<i>Ricinocarpus pinifolius</i>
Twining fringe lily	<i>Thysanotus patersonii</i>
Annual Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia gracilenta</i>

Other interesting plants were a solitary Saw Banksia (*Banksia serrata*), native of East Gippsland, out in the heathland, and water cress growing in the shadow of Peninsula Link.



Photo – Lee Denis

We had done a lot of walking during the day, and only seen parts of the whole 220 hectares – there is a lot to see. -

Judy Smart

Bird List for The Pines 14 September, 2013

Australian Pelican	Crested Pigeon	White-browed Scrubwren	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
White-faced Heron	Rainbow Lorikeet	Brown Thornbill	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Straw-necked Ibis	Eastern Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Eastern Yellow Robin	Little Raven
Black-shouldered Kite	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Bell Miner	Rufous Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Nankeen Kestrel	Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Silver Gull	Superb Fairy-wren	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Spotted Pardalote	White-plumed Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	Common Blackbird
Common Bronzewing	Striated Pardalote	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow	Common Myna

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Judy Smart, Yvonne Incigneri, David Cross and Roger Standen for their contributions to this newsletter.

Thanks also to our speakers John Eichler and Sally Bewsher.

FIELD TRIP TO MUD ISLANDS

November 17, 2013

Excursion to Mud Islands, in Port Phillip Bay. Attractions include breeding grounds for a number of bird species, as well as a fascinating salt marsh community.

Led by botanist Dr Jeff Jugovic, leaving from Blairgowrie.

At this point the boat is fully booked, but in case of dropouts we can keep a waiting list

Contact Club Secretary for details & booking.

PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month with a field trip the following Saturday. Further information and current Programme of Activities can be found at our website.

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TBA

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