



WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Early winter newsletter

Volume 40/three

May/June 2010

Warringal Conservation Society is a local, not-for-profit, community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

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

Join us!!

Warringal Conservation Society is not just a local environment group: it is stimulating, fun and companionable and takes an active role in the wider community.

Membership:

Single \$15,

Family \$20

Pension/student/

Unemployed \$10

Life \$150

All articles for the newsletter are welcome. Letters to the Editor are to be no longer than 300 words. We may edit for legal, space or other reasons. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Warringal Conservation Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Craig Langdon, State MP.

MAY MEETING

Re-imagining the Australian Suburb: Biodiversity planning in urban fringe landscapes

Sarah Bekessy from RMIT will talk about conservation in the urban environment. Over 50% of nationally listed threatened species occur in urban areas. Accelerating urbanisation in Australia is now considered one of the greatest threats to biodiversity.

JUNE MEETING

Platypus in the Yarra

Geoff Williams from the Australian Platypus Conservancy will talk about platypus ecology and outline how a new program is providing important information about platypus in the Yarra. He will also supply hints on spotting platypus in the wild and explain how to become a Platypus Count volunteer.

**Meetings from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices,
60 Beverley Road, First Thursday of the month.
Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and
Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

May

Thursday May 6th: General Meeting. Guest Speaker: Sarah Bekessy - Biodiversity planning in urban fringe landscapes

Sunday May 16th: Working bee with Friends of Plenty River. Details to be emailed to planting group or contact Don on 0425 730 554

June

Thursday June 3rd: General Meeting. Guest Speaker: Geoff Williams – Platypus

News and Events:

WCS at the Banyule festival

Our sincere thanks to the Banyule Bush Crew – without their support we could not have a presence at the Festival. Many thanks to those who helped me set up – John and Alec and Lene and to everyone who lent a hand to staff our tent – Celia, Margaret and Beryl, and Dorothy who came for the last moments after helping 'Save Albert Park' at the Grand Prix. I hope that no-one has been omitted.

It was great to have the Friends of Banyule with us - they drew much attention with their aerial photo, display of children's paintings and T-shirts.

Anthea Fleming



The WCS Tent at the festival



The Friends of Banyule with a display showing the proposed freeway route

Yarra Valley Climate Action Group: Voices from the Pacific: responding to the challenge of climate change and development

Journalist and researcher Nic Maclellan will talk on climate change in the Pacific islands, and the

impacts on coastal environments, food and water security.

Over the last two years, Nic has visited Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and other Pacific countries, to talk with communities that are responding to the challenges of global warming, peak oil and economic change.

Join us to discuss how the Australian government's climate and energy policies are affecting people in Pacific island countries and what we can do in Australia to work with our neighbours for a better future.

Monday, 3 May, 7.30pm

WATSONIA Library. Ibbotson Street

(adjacent to Railway Station) Melways:20,E4

Contact: Brigitte 9457 2458 or Mary 9455 2581

WCS Library notes

Our Library now occupies two shelves in the Office, and is available to members at our General Meetings. Identification of living things is usually our first need, and the following books will help.

Menkhurst and Knight *Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia* (Oxford 2004)

Simpson and Day *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* (Viking 1996) Hardback

Pizzey -*The Australian Bird Garden* (Angus and Robertson 2000) Beautiful photos, good advice.

Kloot and McCulloch *Birds of Australian Gardens* (Rigby, 1980) Splendid plates by Peter Trusler

Tzaros *Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country* (CSIRO 2005) CD recording included

Casey – *Attracting Frogs to your Garden* (Kimberley 1996)

Hunt, Grund et al *Attracting Butterflies to your Garden – what to grow and conserve in the Adelaide Region* (2007)

Zborowski and Storey *A Field guide to Insects in Australia* (Reed New Holland 2008). No single volume could possibly include every insect species, but this book enables the identification of most insect groups.

Costermans *Native Trees and Shrubs of Southeastern Australia* (Reed 1983)

Lamp and Collet *Field Guide to Weeds in Australia* (Inkata Press, 1979) Mostly farm weeds

Shire of Eltham *Weeds of our Bushland* Small paperback (in pamphlet box)

Trigg – *Wildflowers of the Brisbane Ranges* (CSIRO, 2000)

Fuhrer *Field Companion to Australian Fungi* (Bloomings 1985)

All members need to do is to fill in an entry (including your phone number for contact) in the black Loans Book notebook. Then read your loan, and bring it back again, preferably not more than two months later. Don't forget to tick off your return in the Loans book.

Anthea Fleming

Polluter pays – from the Age newspaper

Readers of "The Age" on 14 April 2010 may have seen a notice headed "Petrol Spill into Creek leads to \$80,000 Court Order". It seems that a faulty petrol tanker owned by Scott's Transport delivered unleaded petrol to a Wantirna service station on 15 May 2008. Petrol spilled into a stormwater drain and

reached Dandenong Creek, where it killed several fish and 9 ducks. Two police officers were affected by the fumes and required treatment.

An EPA investigation found a fault in the truck's manufacture - its maker has since modified all trucks of this model, including Scott's fleet.

On 19 February 2010, without recording a conviction, Ringwood Court ordered Scotts to pay \$80,000 for 2 environmental projects - \$55,000 for platypus monitoring in the Yarra, and \$25,000 for the Darebin Creek Management Committee to build a portable classroom for its education program for 65 schools in the Darebin Catchment. Scott's also agreed to pay the EPA's costs of \$50,000, and to publish the notice.

Also from the Age

“WHY is it harder to get people to believe in climate change than in God?”

Don Stokes, Heidelberg
The Age, March 19, 2010

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President's Report – March 2010

Social Gathering with Jenny Macklin 28 January 2010

Anthea Fleming & Celia Smith of our WCS Committee were able to attend an informal gathering at Jenny Macklin's office on the 28 January 2010. They were able to raise a number of issues with our Federal member. These issues included:

- Protection of the Greensborough Woodland at Simpson Army Barracks, Banyule Flats

and surrounds from the State

Government's proposal for the NE Link

- Calling for the Federal Government to act on a nationwide ban on recreational duck shooting
- Care for the Murray – Darling river system.

Although it was only an informal gathering, Anthea was able to provide our concerns in writing, and Celia was able to enquire about

making an appointment to discuss these issues further.

SOBA Rally 24 Feb 2010 – Parliament House

WCS was approached about having representatives attending a rally on the steps of parliament to campaign against the threat to reserves by the State Government in their unsustainable pursuit of more freeways.

WCS representatives campaigned as part of the Save Our Bush Alliance. It was great to join forces with other groups such as Friends of Banyule, Protectors of Public Land Friends of Pines Flora and Fauna, Save Coomoorra Reserve Coalition, and Green Wedges Coalition, who are all fighting against the destruction of the native bushland and parks by freeways.

Marion Ware, President of Friends of Banyule was one of the speakers at the rally and eloquently spoke on the plight of Banyule Flats, Warringal Parklands and Bolin Bolin Billabong. Many thanks are extended to Marion for her tireless campaigning.

It was re-assuring to note that there was considerable media attendance, and there was some media coverage that evening. What was more heartening was the fact that there are numerous groups all fighting to protect our reserves and bushland – we are not alone, and acting together we are stronger!!

The rally truly lightened the spirits of the members of the Friends of Banyule Steering Committee meeting on 25 Feb 2010. We were further pleased to note that members of the WCS had the opportunity to raise the issue with our Federal Member, Jenny Macklin at a gathering on 28 January 2010.

With renewed resolve in the campaign, further meetings and projects are already underway. Banyule Festival is next.

Banyule Council Intention to Sell Vacant Land

The Society received a letter from Craig Langdon's office regarding Banyule Council's intention to sell off vacant land. Thanks to a number of members and friends, the Society was further notified of various sites that were being considered.

All expressed concern over the intention to sell, and queries were raised as to whether any of the sites were Open Space. This was also recently reported in an article in the local paper

about 9 Lower Heidelberg Rd. Ivanhoe. It is also understood that there is a petition available seeking council to retain these sites.

On behalf of the Society, I made enquiries with the property co-ordinator at Banyule Council, Jeanette Kringle, and was advised of the following:

1. All the vacant lands are housing blocks
2. All are zoned residential - none are zoned as Public Park & Recreation, or public open space
3. Aerial photographs from the 50's show these lands as vacant or were part of broad acre lots
4. There are no "playgrounds on these sites
5. The community was free to make comment on the intention to sell the various sites until 3rd March 2010.

Before putting in comments on behalf of the Society, I enquired further with Banyule Council's Planning Department. What it appeared to show was there was a site situated at 127 Elder Road Greensborough that appeared to be zoned Public Park and Recreation – being part of the park behind the housing lots.

An initial submission was put to Council on 26 February 2010, on the following grounds:

- It is submitted that all of the sites of vacant land, zoned residential, should be retained by Council and converted to public open space for the following reasons:
 - These sites have been vacant, some more than 60 years. Communities have grown up around them, and although most of these sites may be zoned residential, the community around these sites may have perceived these sites as areas of open space.
 - Some of the sites are attached to areas of open space (Bannockburn Road - creek bed at bottom of site and open space along the creek bed - wildlife corridor benefits).
 - One site, ("127" Elder street, Greensborough - no such number exists on Council records), is zoned Public Park & Recreation.
 - Some of these sites act or can act as refuges for local wildlife, and contribute to Banyule's Wildlife Corridors, thereby maintaining biodiversity within the municipality.
 - WCS appreciates that there may be instances where it is not possible to save all the sites of vacant land. It is understood that there may be sites that may have more social and/or

ecological benefits than others as open space. However, WCS beseeches Council to properly investigate the sites and assess whether there are social AND/OR ecological benefits of these sites that may not have been considered at first instance.

- If, after proper investigation, Council does not see fit to retain all vacant land sites as vacant land, or converted to open space, then WCS submits that there are three sites in the current list that should be saved for their social and/or ecological benefit, listed as follows:
 - 9 Lower Heidelberg Road
 - "127" Elder Road, Greensborough
 - 34 Bannockburn Road, Viewbank.
- The Warringal Conservation Society submits that there are merits for retaining vacant land within the municipality, and seeks that Council properly consider all factors before selling its community assets.

A meeting was arranged on 26 Feb 2010 at Council offices – unfortunately no representative of WCS was available to attend, although information had been provided by WCS to some friends that attended. The outcome of the meeting is that some sites were put on hold to further discuss.

I was informed that Council officers confirmed that all sites were zoned residential, and was provided with a copy of the Banyule Planning Scheme relating to 127 Elder Street confirming its zoning.

Concern was expressed that it appeared that conflicting information was being provided to the community on particular sites, and it raised questions about other sites. This question and other were raised at the Council meeting on 1 March 2010.

A further submission was put forward regarding the process and further confirming WCS commitment to retaining and enhancing open space in Banyule.

All in all, this issue has generated a lot of community action seeking council to reconsider its intention to sell off vacant land, or at least to look again at the sites to see if any can be retained. This may require additional meetings with Council – here is hoping some of these sites can be retained as vacant land, and perhaps some becoming part of the open spaces of Banyule.

Warringal Parklands Children's Playground development

As previously reported to members, Banyule Council met with relevant stakeholders regarding a playground development in Warringal Parklands. The site chosen was the place of the old netball courts west of the Beverley Road wetland.

A further meeting will be held on 9 March 2010 to view draft plans for the site. Members will be informed of the outcome of the meeting.

John D'Aloia

President's Report –April 2010

Warringal Parklands Children's Playground development

As the WCS representative of the Warringal Parklands Family Play space Community Reference Group, I attended a meeting on the 9 March 2010, to discuss the concept design plans for the proposed regional playground for Warringal Parklands

Although there was some discussion and concern over some aspects of the design regarding accessibility, child safety and environmental considerations, members of the reference group were impressed with the proposed 2 stage design. The meeting adjourned with the designers and Council officers to consider the proposed changes. On behalf of WCS, an offer

was accepted that WCS members would participate in the proposed planting activities for the proposed play space when the project got under way.

Apart from minor design alterations, all that appears to be required is the funding from Council for this project to proceed.

Banyule Festival

WCS, in conjunction with the Friends of Banyule, again participated in the Banyule Festival on 28 March 2010. It was a very busy day for all involved. There was, again keen interest in the proposed North East Freeway link, and its threat to Banyule Flats, Warringal Parklands and Bolin Bolin Billabong.

Many thanks go to all those involved in making the day so successful, especially to Anthea Fleming for her wonderful displays, to Lene Jakobsen and Beryl Jarman for assisting, and to Marion Ware for her co-ordination of volunteers from Friends of Banyule, and the provision of anti freeway material including the newly created campaign T-Shirts that highlight the issue (available for \$25 – a great price for a worthy cause!!). Thanks also to the many

members and friends that came to demonstrate their support; it was a most rewarding day. WCS wishes to sincerely thank Chis Callahan, Co-ordinator of the Banyule Bushland Crew for generously assisting the Society, by covering our costs in participating at the Festival.

John D'Aloia

March 2010 Guest speaker – Mary Stringer

Transition towns

The guest speaker at the March meeting was Mary Stringer from Transition Banyule. The Transition towns movement is a grass roots response to the challenges of climate change and peak oil. Australia continues to be heavily reliant on burning brown coal for power generation when there is a need for alternatives. Mary explained how she was motivated to make a change, amongst other things, by prospect of losing the Great Barrier reef to coral bleaching caused by climate change.

Part of the Transition towns approach is to meet people fresh food needs locally with community gardens, fruit and nut trees, and encouraging widespread vegetable growing. Mary is involved in regular permablitzes that transform non-productive areas into veggie

gardens. These permablitzes are done on a system whereby you chip in and contribute to transforming several other people's gardens and then your own garden gets done over. As well as getting gardens up and running, the scheme also nurtures a sense of community.

Transition town are a nation-wide initiative, and although locally based, seek to influence attitudes in a way that will politically affect the direction Australia takes with regard to climate and other environmental challenges. As a highly industrialized nation that is heavily reliant on brown coal, it is important that Australia takes a lead on these issues. Transition towns are way to exit from the growth culture and adopt a more sustainable model.

April 2010 Guest speaker – Laurie Levy

Banning duck shooting in Victoria

The guest speaker for the April meeting was anti-duck shooting campaigner Laurie Levy. Laurie has been working to have the recreational hunting of ducks banned in Victoria since 1986. His role in the campaign has involved a great deal of time in the field highlighting conservation and animal welfare issues. Laurie has been a vocal and highly recognizable spokesperson for the anti-duck shooting movement. The issue of duck shooting in Victoria has once again been in the headlines with the decision to have a season in 2010 while water bird populations are still feeling the effects of prolonged drought.

Laurie described how he and others have for many years been documenting some of the more unfortunate aspects of recreational duck shooting and rescuing injured birds. At the time Laurie began his involvement, 15 or so duck rescuers would head out onto wetlands on opening day with about 19,500 shooters. Needless to say, the anti-duck shooting contingent were an unpopular minority in this environment, but importantly their presence was covered by the media. This focused public attention on recreational duck shooting and issues such as maiming of birds and the killing of protected species. Even following the introduction of a compulsory water bird

identification test in 1990, pelicans, swans and protected freckled ducks were still shot. In recent years the number of active duck shooters has fallen. Negative public perceptions of duck shooting, stricter gun laws and less ducks due to drought have all played a part in reducing the number of shooters.

Prolonged drought has reduced duck numbers in Victoria and this was recognised when duck season was called off in 2007 and 2008. Despite ongoing drought, duck season still went ahead in 2009 and 2010. Laurie explained that the reasons for duck season being reinstated were not based on the sustainability of duck populations, but were related to gaining political mileage for the state government, particularly in the lead up to an election in 2010. A ban on duck shooting is likely to be held up as evidence of the government ignoring the interests of rural people by representatives of duck shooting organizations.

Laurie made the point that in reality, the majority of Victorians, in both the city and country areas, support a ban on the recreational shooting of ducks. When asked "*In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?*" 75% of 637 people randomly surveyed thought that it should (Ray Morgan Research 2007). On a national level, banning duck shooting would bring Victoria into line with Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. Western Australia banned duck

shooting in 1990, NSW in 1995 and Queensland in 2005.

In the lead up to the 2009 season Laurie and other anti-duck shooting protesters did everything within their powers to minimize damage to duck populations. In the past, the artificial filling of wetlands prior to the season opening has been used to attract ducks to popular venues for shooters. In 2009 Laurie and friends publicized the illegal diversion of water from the Latrobe river into the private wetlands of Field and Game Australia. This resulted in a \$1500 fine plus a \$1500 bill for court costs. While this is not a great deal of money in the overall scheme of things, water use is currently sensitive issue in rural areas and the incident generated negative publicity for Field and Game Australia. The diversion of water to concentrate ducks for shooting is less likely to occur in the future. Hides have also been removed from some venues to give ducks a better chance of avoiding hunters.

Based on extensive experience over many years, Laurie presented a compelling case for a permanent ban on ducks shooting in Victoria. Although there would undoubtedly be resistance to such a change from some quarters, overall there is a great deal of public support for a ban and it would not be an unprecedented step given what has happened in other Australian states.

For more details see www.duck.org.au

Victorian duck season 2010

Dates: Sat March 20th to Sunday May 30th

Legal to hunt following native species during the season: Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Hardhead (White-eyed Duck), Australian Shelduck (Mountain Duck), Pink-eared Duck, Maned Duck (Wood Duck) and Blue Wing (Australasian) Shoveler.

Book Review – Beyond Reasonable Drought

This is a big heavy book of beautifully taken photographs of places and people affected by drought. It covers most of Australia, more of Victoria and New South Wales, taken by Many Australian Photographers Group, a group of excellent photographers.

Several pages of text by well known writers is presented and a small amount on each photographic page by way of explanation.

Time and care is needed to appreciate each page. Black and white prints are interspersed with drought coloured prints, and occasional green scenery gives relief.

This book is a welcome addition to the society's library. We extend many thanks to Geoff Baker for this generous donation.

Beryl Jarman

Local Plants - Correas

Correas are a widespread group of Australian shrubs with bell or tube shaped flowers composed of four fused petals and leaves arranged in opposed pairs. This group of plants was named after Portuguese botanist José Francisco Correa de Serra who did not actually make it to Australia, but was a good friend of Sir Joseph Banks (of Banksia fame). The tube shaped and nectar-rich flowers of the correa attract honey eating birds. They also flower prolifically during winter when many other plants do not. There are four species of correa that naturally occur in the Melbourne area:

Common correa (*Correa reflexa*)

A small wiry shrub to about 1m with hairy elliptical leaves that are bent back along the stem and tube-shaped flowers. Common correa can have striking red flowers with yellow tips (as shown in electronic version), however the forms found in the Melbourne area generally have uniform yellow green flowers. Local forms can be difficult to grow from cuttings.



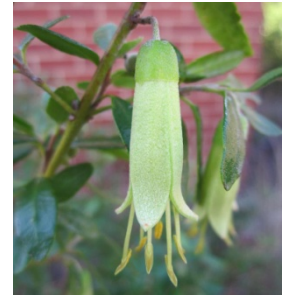
White correa (*Correa alba*)

A dense coastal shrub to about 1.5m with round dark green leaves and open white star shaped flowers. Settlers reputedly made tea from this.



Rock correa (*Correa glabra*)

A shrub to about 2m with shiny elliptical leaves and yellow green tube shaped flowers. Often grows on rocky outcrops. Grows well in cultivation and is usually available from indigenous nurseries



Mountain correa (*Correa lawrenciana*)

A large bush to about 4m with elliptical leaves and yellow green tube flowers with a furry bulb shaped base. Found in moist eucalypt forest in the foothills outside Melbourne.



Correas are notoriously hard to germinate from seed – it is difficult to replicate the weathering and other cues that naturally break seed dormancy. Fortunately they can often be grown from cuttings. Many commercially cultivated varieties with catchy names have been selected for the colour of their flowers and the ease of which they grow from cuttings. The familiar pink flowered “Dusky bells” correa that is available from nurseries is a hybrid of common correa and a correa species from South Australia. Other cultivars go by names such as “Ivory bells.” Despite the clever names of commercial cultivars, there is a certain satisfaction to be gained from planting local correas and knowing that you are restoring something that once was.

James Deane

Latrobe University Indigenous Nursery

The Nursery is next to the wildlife sanctuary at Latrobe University’s Bundoora campus. It is open between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays throughout summer. Please note that the Sanctuary remains open to the public 6 days a week (closed on Saturdays) from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Phone 03 9479 2871 or email plants@latrobe.edu.au for more information.
Website <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/nursery/flora>

Nature Notes – member’s observations

March

Celia Smith reported that she had seen an Echidna near the Plenty Road footbridge, which was trying to get through the Golfcourse fence. A fortnight earlier she had met a Tortoise walking up the footbridge, which she had moved to a safer position closer to the river bank.

Daphne Hards has noted 33 species of bird in her garden including Red-rump Parrots and Eastern Spinebill.

Jane Crone –Ten Gang Gang Cockatoos in an old redgum in The Eyrie.

Robert Bender – Wood Ducks with nine babies at Sandy point on the Yarra at Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe – a late clutch. A Tiger Snake during a weeding/planting. The Wilson Reserve bat boxes continue to support a healthy bat population, including a pair of Eastern Broadnosed Bats, at the far southern limit of their range. Eastern Dwarf Treefrogs (a species from Queensland) are still at Baileys billabong and may be breeding there.

Anthea Fleming took part in a BOCA excursion to Wilson Reserve on 24th February, where 45 species of bird were seen, including a Brown Goshawk and an Australian Hobby. Crested Pigeons, Spotted Doves and Ducks were feeding on crushed acorns in Irvine Road. On 3 March she had a splendid view of a young Collared Sparrowhawk in a neighbour's tree, and rescued a little Marbled Gecko, which had taken refuge inside the car door, disguised as a dead leaf.

April

Dorothy Davies –Willie Wagtails in her garden

Robyn Roberts - An Eastern Spinebill and a brush-tail possum at her house (Ivanhoe).

John D’Aloia – Crested Pigeons at Warringal Parklands. Reg Johnson commented that 15 years ago that were not found closer that Yarrambat

Heather Smith – Cicada caught in a spider’s web being eaten by European wasps in the Pine plantation at Warringal Parklands.

Beryl Jarman – Brown Treefrog in backyard. Heard an Eastern Spinebill.

Anthea Fleming – Wed 31st March - three Gang Gang Cockatoos flying along Darebin Creek. A dozen Black Cockatoos flying over the Warringal Parklands during setup for the Banyule festival. 4th April - a European Song Thrush at Banyule Flats Reserve - first seen in about 5 years. A decade of drought has reduced their numbers. An empty swift moth case was found at the Banyule swamp during the March planting/weeding and Anthea later found a Swift Moth in her backyard (see below). Anthea also reported large numbers of Scarlet Honeyeaters this summer (see next page).

On Monday 29 March, Brian found this enormous moth resting on a bucket in our back garden. The photo shows it on my hand - a female Swift Moth.

It is about four inches (10 cms) long overall and the broad body about 4/5ths of an inch broad. We moved it to a Red Gum trunk where it was well camouflaged. The pale markings are silver on a fawn and brown patterned ground. It is probably *Trictena atripalpis*.

These moths emerge after autumn rains, after an underground caterpillar life possibly lasting three years or more, feeding on plant roots. The finger-sized shiny brown pupal case is often found protruding from the burrow. Many are captured by predators at this stage.

Once the wings are expanded, the moth flies off to find a mate. It cannot feed, having no mouth-parts, but lives on its stored fat. The female lays up to 40,000 tiny white eggs as she flies.

I have found only two of these moths in my whole life.

Anthea Fleming



Nature notes continued

SCARLET HONEYEATERS came to Melbourne this summer in large numbers, as unusual summer migrants, well beyond their normal range in East Gippsland. This April there have been several reports of them in the Yarra Valley, and on Tues 13th April I was lucky to find some feeding on flowering Grey Mistletoe, which grows on Silver and other Wattles. Four or five birds, at least two tiny bright red males, others plain brownish females or young. With them were Brown and Yellow Thornbills, Spotted Pardalotes, and newly arrived winter migrant Silvereyes, with dark chestnut flanks. (Locally bred Silvereyes, like other Victorians, will now be on their way to Queensland.) The Scarlet Honeyeaters were near the Windmill in Banyule Flats Reserve - they have also been reported just upstream from Burke Rd Bridge, also in Grey Mistletoe, and could be anywhere the mistletoe grows.

Anthea Fleming

BIRDS IN MACLEOD

February was an interesting month in our backyard

A Kookaburra perched on our roof and called – a very unusual visitor in Macleod.

The Eastern Spinebill made its usual return – with its call like a small bell tinkling.

The Olive-backed Oriole called for two days and “then departed North?” Once an annual visitor but now unusual.

Brown Thornbills moving through the leafage as occasional visitors.

An Eastern Rosella made an unusual visit and stayed for two hours.

Our neighbour provides birdseed, with the result that we have innumerable Rainbow Lorikeets, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, one or two Common Bronzewings and pairs of Crested Pigeons. (I cannot resist sprinkling a handful of seed myself).

The first treat for March in the Johnsons' backyard was the Grey Butcherbird's calls. The beautiful territorial calls continued for a fortnight. Then the Little Wattlebird that normally lives somewhere across the street fed on our blossom, giving its raucous call. Next three Gang Gang Cockatoos, with their harsh calls, perched in our trees for two days. Finally the musical tinkling of two Crimson Rosellas pleased us for one morning. Not so welcome is the visiting Noisy Miner flock, which previously had inhabited Red Gums along the railway 300 metres away.

Reg Johnson

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