

# FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

March 2011, no. 2



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## **BRAESIDE PARK**

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Braeside 3195

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The opinions expressed in this  
newsletter are the authors' and  
do not necessarily reflect those  
of Parks Victoria or its staff.



## Mammal Monitoring in the Heathland

By the Editor

At the end of last year the Friends group purchased 10 Hairfunnel traps to be used in the Heathland to monitor the type of animals that are using this area.

A Hairfunnel is a trap designed to capture mammalian hair on a specially formulated sticky medium, without actually containing the animal. This means that the Hairfunnels can be set out along a specified transect line and left for a week or more without disturbance. The other advantage of not containing the animal is the animals monitored are not stressed. The captured hair samples are analysed and this enables identification of many species of small to medium mammals.

The device consists of carefully sized and shaped half cone, open at one end and housing a perforated bait chamber at the opposite end. A sticky wafer coated with pressure sensitive glue is inserted in the cone and a bait ball is placed behind a perforated metal plate at the narrow end of the funnel. To be honest most of us would also be attracted by the bait ball as the commonly used recipe is a mixture of honey, oats and peanut butter! Animals are enticed by the smell of the bait and enter the large open end of the funnel and try to eat the bait, whilst entering and leaving the funnel the animals will come in contact with the sticky wafer and a sample of their hair will be collected.



Photos courtesy of [www.faunatech.com.au](http://www.faunatech.com.au)

Continued on page 4...

## Wednesdays with Ernie's 'A Team'

By Bev Bancroft

We have returned from the summer break to find weeds, weeds & more weeds.

**Grasslands:** The grasslands have been mowed and weeded several times. The rabbit warrens have been fumigated and the fence perimeter checked for holes.

**Dingley Waterway:** Tree guards have been removed, ready for this winters community plantings.

**Heathland:** A concerted effort has been made to remove our favourite weeds - Banana passion fruit, *Acacia longifolia*, etc.

**Green Gym:** These volunteers (2-6) have joined us - their help has been great.

Extra help is always needed for a variety of jobs  
- meet at the Park Office, Wednesdays 9 am  
- 10.30 am morning tea provided



Banana Passion fruit flower, whilst it is a pretty flower it is becoming an increasing environmental weed  
*Photo DSE website*

### Thanks To The Helpers

Those who helped produce the newsletter:  
Elsie Anderson  
Bev Bancroft  
Ian Parsons  
Park Rangers

**Thanks to Mark Dreyfus** and his office for their support in the printing of previous issues of the Friends Newsletters and their continued support of the Friends of Braeside.

### Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

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## Friends of Braeside Park

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activity	Time/Day	April	May	June
Committee Meeting	4th Monday, from 1.00pm at the Visitor Centre	18	23	27
Community Garden	9.30 - 12.00, 3rd Sun of the month at nursery	17	15	19
Community Projects Weekday	9:00 - 12:00 noon Wednesday at the Park Office	6	4	1
		13	11	8
		20	18	15
		27	25	22
Nursery open for plant sales	10.00 - 12.00 3rd Sunday of the month	17	15	19
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	2	2	4
		4	7	6
		17	15	19
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	1.00pm - 3.00pm Wednesday	-	-	-
		-	11	-
		-	25	-
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	9:00 - 12:00 noon 3rd Tues	19	17	21
Community Projects Weekends	9:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs	-	Community Planting Day Sat 28th	Community Planting Day Sun 26th
Special Activities	Times to be advised	-	-	-

## Wednesday Afternoons at the Nursery

Author Bev Bancroft

Our new group of Mentone Grammar Girls have started, keen to begin a new project. More details to come. Already they have been a great help - pricking out boxes of Acacias & trays of grasses. The challenge is on !! Who can was the most pots !!

A new chore is seed cleaning ie. *Lomandra* sp, *Themeda triandra*, etc.

## Eastern Yellow Robins in the Heathland

By Malcolm Brown

We have been Mist netting at Braeside for around 17 years and in that time we have caught 104 Eastern Yellow Robins and re-caught a further 58. Figure 1 shows the average number of Yellow Robins we caught each session and the bottom line is the average number of birds caught again each session, (retraps).

Whilst Eastern Yellow Robins are common in Australia, at Braeside they have had their ups and downs over the years. Results from our mist netting indicate they have declined and stayed lower from 2001 at Braeside.

Little is known about Eastern Yellow Robins but they do like very dense habitat. They sit in a tree or bush and drop to the ground to catch insects. They don't live in open exposed areas. We don't know about how much they disperse but as Braeside is now an island remnant, Robins are unlikely to find a new home away from the reserve and it is also unlikely new Robins will enter the reserve.

Eastern Yellow Robins like thick vegetation with bare patches of ground under old growth shrubs. However, this is hard to achieve in an urban park where fire is often seen as a risk and in general, people don't like monocultures of thick shrubs. We don't know how long Eastern Yellow Robins will last at Braeside but I think it will be a very long time before they disappear.

In the mean time we can continue to monitor Eastern Yellow Robins at Braeside and be assured there are many areas in Australia where they should successfully survive for a long long time.

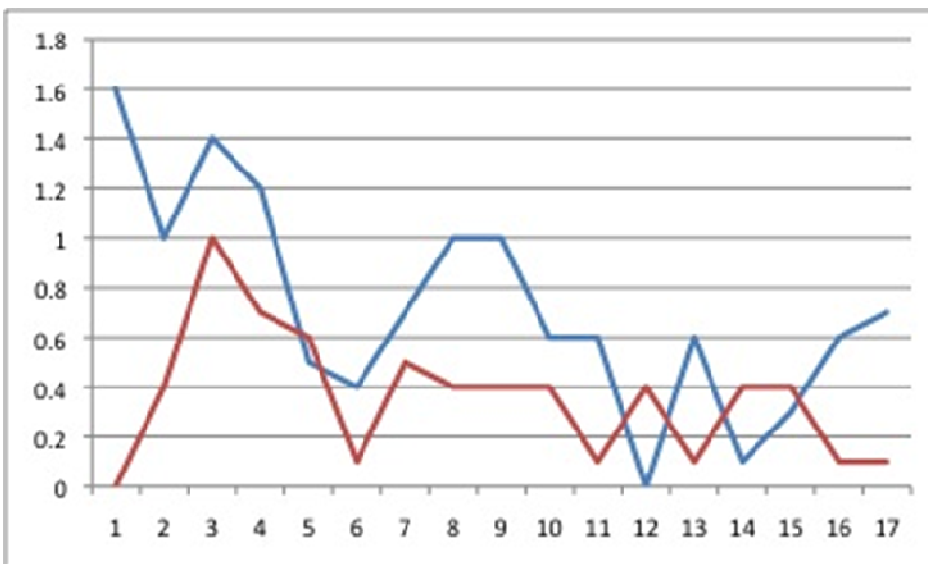


Figure 1 Average number of Eastern Yellow Robin caught each session.

*Continued from page 2*

Due to the wet summer the deployment of these traps has not been practical until now. Glen Oliphant (PV Ranger) has worked with the Friends group to set up program that can be used over a period of time to collect valuable data about the fauna species using the Heathland area. A 100 metre stretch of one of the Heathland tracks has been chosen as a transect line and the Hairfunnels have been deployed at 10metre intervals about 5 metres into the vegetation away from the track. The Hairfunnels are pegged into place on the ground using small tent pegs and they will be collected after one week. This means we will have the results from the initial testing for the next Newsletter.

To collect meaningful data the Hairfunnels will be set out for week long periods along a number of documented transect lines within the Heathland and these transects will be repeated at set intervals. This will give an indication of the types on mammals using the Heathland on an ongoing basis. This type of monitoring does not give an indication of the number of animals present but does give an indication of the diversity present. The Hairfunnels are designed to collect hair samples from mammals ranging in size from something as small as an antechinus to a much larger ringtail of bush-tailed possum.

The Rangers have also booked the use of 4 infrared sensor cameras for later in the year and these will be set up in the Heathland to record the activity within the area. So look out for some exciting results in the next edition of the Newsletter

## Nursery News

By Marj Seaton

**Extra Help:** Conservation Volunteers Australia and Mentone Girls' Grammar have been welcome helpers over recent weeks.

**Direct Seeding:** We have been sowing eucalypts directly into tubes rather than into trays in order to facilitate quicker production. *Eucalyptus radiata* hasn't done very well but both *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *Eucalyptus pryoriana* have grown well. Once the seedlings reach a reasonable size, we thin them out (transplanting some) and leave them to their own devices. A successful manoeuvre.

**Cuttings:** *Goodenia ovata* cuttings are required in great numbers this year, as well as Correas. We put more Goodenia in each time we meet. They strike particularly quickly (2 to 3 weeks in warm weather) but Correas can be very slow so we probably won't be able to cover our needs this winter. We've some problems with slime on the heat bed trays so we're having to watch the watering and we're also adjusting our mixtures to something more sandy and open, in an attempt to get more cuttings to strike.

**Seed Collecting:** Our February collection was done in the pouring rain. Bill and Marj collected Lomandra and Trachymene (wild parsnip) which had to be laid out on Marj's spare bed to dry out. The parsnip gave a goodly lot but sadly the Lomandra gave surprisingly little seed up. Bev and the rangers have collected more so we should be right for this year. Our river red gums have flowered prolifically this year, like us they loved the rain, so we're hopeful of collecting plenty of seed later. We grow more of these than almost anything else and the gums can be a little erratic in their flowering. Hopefully, we'll get enough this year to last us a while.

**Plant Sales:** Remember that we do sell to our members, so if you want something that you see growing around the visitors' centre or elsewhere in the Park, come along to one of our sessions and see what's in stock. The third Sunday of each month is a good time to visit as you can see the Community Gardeners in action too. 9-12 noon. Cash only – we don't have credit card facilities.



*Goodenia Ovata* flowering in the nursery grounds  
Photo J St Quintin

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## Conservation Volunteers Australia

By Bev Bancroft

C.V.A. have been an enormous help.

They have concentrated on pricking out 65 boxes of plants plus grasses and 20 boxes of cuttings (approx 5,000 plus plants) and there is more - they have pruned a lot of the grasses, shifted boxes of plants from the polyhouses, to the green house, to the hardening off area.

Some of the crew painted picnic tables, cut back a lot of vegetation in the propagation area and redefined the paths with Lilydale topping.

Pot washing was frenetic - they had to keep up with those pricking out and doing cuttings.

Very many thanks to all who helped to propagate this large number of plants.

## A Rambling Ranger!

By Glen Oliphant, Ranger

Dreaming when dawns left hand woke me from my slumber land  
 Enchanted Braeside forest comes alive  
 With dragonflies dancing on the breeze their gossamer wings caught by the early morning dew sparkle like diamonds in the sun.  
 Cryptic spiders with their many eyes watching with intent  
 Beetles scurrying back and forth beneath my feet  
 The laugh of the Kookaburra breaks the momentary silence as if to announce its presence  
 The frogs that croak with fervour to attract a mate  
 The rains have come and breathed new life

Braeside has been transformed after the rains and creatures that haven't been seen for many years have started to come back. The square tailed kite has been sighted by Steve and according to his records it has been five years since the last sighting. The elusive and secretive Buff banded rail has been sighted along the waterway. This little bird often reminds me of a politician, seldom seen and always in a hurry to go somewhere.. to a meeting perhaps .....

An echidna aimlessly wanders across the path and oblivious to my presence lifts its nose to test the air and satisfied that there is no threat, ambles on .....

The treasures of nature, the privilege of being a witness to this amazing scene which unfolds daily. All part of a day in the life of a Ranger.



One of the resident Braeside Echidna's out for a stroll!  
 Photo J St Quintin

## Grasses—Can you tell the difference?

By Audrey Goldberg

What is the difference between a sedge and a reed? Here's the chance to perhaps make your table a winner if this question surfaces at your next trivial pursuit night – chanting the catch phrase that no one will forget!

### **Sedges have edges, Reeds are round!**

This we learned on our Friend's trip through the Wonthaggi coastal heathland last year. Use it to test your identification of native grass leaves and their forms as you progress through Braeside Park.

If you are looking for some classy grasses that will survive heat, cold, wet and dry conditions and bring flamboyant clumps to your home garden, take a look at these showy, robust and versatile plants in the following publication.

**Title:** Native Grasses for Australian Gardens

**Authors:** Nola Parry and Joycelyn Jones

**Publishers:** Reed New Holland, 2007

Our grasses have adapted readily from the natural environment into cultivation. Small birds will shelter in the dense foliage of native grasses and tuck into the seed heads of a handy food source.

## Tiny Bird – Big Round Trip for 9Y!

By Audrey Goldburgh

Are you hot, red faced and spent after a trot of a few kilometres around the Braeside Park circuit? As you recover, spare a wee moment to consider the endeavours made by our tiny migratory birds over huge tracts each year.

In her informative article “Ruddy Turnstone”, in BAYBOCA’s Newsletter Bulletin February 2011, the BAYBOCA president (and local bird guru), Tania Ireton, sets out the figures for us, detailing some amazing feats of trans-pacific flight.

In 2007, a female Bar-tailed Godwit (E7) carrying a satellite transmitter, flew non-stop for 10,219Km in 7.5 days from New Zealand to the Yellow sea near the China/North Korea border, on its way to breeding grounds on Alaska.

But the satellite transmitter is too heavy for a small wader! Advances in technology have given us the “geolocator”. It weighs as little as 1 gram and is small enough for a bird weighing 50grams to carry comfortably. The geolocator is used to calculate the date and time of dusk and dawn, and from this the latitude and longitude at the time of recording is deduced.

Let us look at some of the stages that our star Ruddy Turnstone – 9Y – achieved, fitted with a geolocator and leaving Flinders (VIC) 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and returning 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

**Round Trip** – 2007Km

**Non-Stop** – Flinders to Taiwan – 7,600Km in 6 days

Alaska to the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) – 6,200 Km in 4 days

**Average Flying Speed** – 50-55Km/hr (65Km/hr with a tail wind!)

9Y carried a new geolocator in 2010, clocking up another 27,000Km, this time via the Marshall Islands. 9Y is the first wader to be tracked on its complete migration in successive years, giving us another super statistic. Turnstones live up to 20 years, so it’s likely 9Y will have flown over 500,000Km (that’s half a million Km!) if he lives to 20 years.

The birds in such research reveal which are their staging stops, providing the evidence to support their protection by governments of such areas. Our research dollars are at work in these studies.

Tons of thanks to Tania for allowing me to extract this brief overview, do try to read the whole of Tania’s article, you will find it compelling!

Look out for these migratory birds in Braeside Park over summer

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Red-necked Stint

Common Greenshank

Latham’s Snipe

*Editor’s Note: the full article by Tania will be available on the website under the Newsletter link.*



Lathams Snipe



Photo DSE website

## Park Report

*From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports*

**Staff:** Summer Ranger Felix – Bowman- Derrick has completed his 12 week period at the park.

Glen completed 4 weeks leave through February.

**Nursery Management:** The in line filters are now serviced monthly to ensure the irrigation system operates at its optimum output.

One of the inline irrigation taps had been turned off – this created problems as plant dried out but did not die as it was noticed before it was too late.

**Parks Victoria Grants for 2010/11 - Community Garden-Interpretive information, interactive hopscotch and creek bed:** 4 of the 6 plant interpretive signs have now been installed.

Materials for the Hop Scotch and creek bead will be purchased over the next few weeks.

**Revegetation Program:** Completed for the year.

Planting sites for 2011 include, Grasslands, Climate Positive site, Howard Road Trail, Heathland, Community Garden sites x 2, Visitor Centre infill's and the Federation and Telford Car Parks.

**Salinity Revegetation Project:** Materials, tree guards & metal frames purchased & fencing materials have been purchased for this project. A project day will be scheduled to undertake fencing.

**Burn Program:** The burn for the Heathland will occur when the fuel material is suitably dry and the weather conditions permit

## Rain, Rain and Yet More Rain...

*By the editor*

In the last few months, most of us have experienced an unprecedented amount of rainfall and certainly, after 10 or more years of drought an unexpected amount of rain. Many of us have been affected by or known people affected by the floods in Queensland and Victoria and I, like many others, would like to express my sympathies.

In the last couple of months the effects have also been seen very close to home, with Braeside Park actually having to be closed on Saturday 5th February. I was due to be at the nursery that morning for a couple of hours to help out with the propagating and arrived at the Lower Dandenong Road Entrance to be faced with the Closed signs. After a phone call to Digger, one of the Rangers on duty that weekend, I managed to make my way gingerly into the park and witnessed first hand the effect of all that water falling out of the sky - it was an amazing sight but as luck would have it I didn't have my camera in the car to record it!! Unfortunately some of the cypress trees have been adversely affected, with at least one tree lost on Cypress Drive and some of the tracks requiring some repair work.

For the statisticians out there, last year was the wettest year recorded in the park with a rainfall of 881mm, the next wettest year was recorded in 1991 with a rainfall of 781.5mm, with the lowest recorded rainfall in the park being in 1997 at 374.2mm.

Who knows what 2011 will bring?

**Visitor Centre - AV Presentations:** The new television and sound system have been installed – Des has donated a DVD player. A four camera security system has also been purchased to protect the investment.

**Telford Picnic Area: Tidy up:** Volunteers Max and Henry have been tidying up the area underneath the trees, this has required fallen branches to be removed and then the site mown. See photo below.



Max busy at Telford Picnic Area  
*Photo Des Lucas*