

FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

February 2012, no. 7



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BRAESIDE PARK

Phone 9265 7300

Lower Dandenong Road

Braeside 3195

www.braesideparkfriends.org.au

The opinions expressed in this
newsletter are the authors' and
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of Parks Victoria or its staff.



Visit to Point Nepean and the Quarantine Station

The Friends of Braeside Park Invite you to attend a day out to Point Nepean and the Quarantine Station travelling by bus from the Braeside Park Office.

- When:** 24th March 2012
Time: Arrive at 8:30 am for a 9:00 am departure
Where to Meet: Braeside Park Office
Cost: \$15.00 per head paid in advance
 \$7.00 on the day for the tractor train
What to Bring: Camera, lunch, snacks, binoculars etc
Return Time: Estimated to be between 4:00 & 5:00 pm

Please call the Park Office on 9265 7300 or Bev on 9551 4578 to reserve your spot.

Please drop your payment to the park office in a sealed envelope addressed to the Treasurer, Friends of Braeside by **Friday 16th March 2012 – Payment confirms your spot.**

Wednesdays with Ernie's 'A Team'

By Bev Bancroft

2012 starts the first Wednesday in February
 - we hope the "A" team returns after the Christmas break, refreshed and ready to attack.

GRASSLANDS

Monthly mowing and hand weeding will continue.

HEATHLAND

Because of the rain and humidity, weeds have increased ten-fold, so this will mean a lot of work.

PROPAGATION

Wednesday afternoons are continuing 1pm - 3pm in the Friends Community Garden for anyone that may be keen to learn about propagation.

More help is always needed and everyone is most welcome.

- meet at the Park Office
- Wednesdays 9am - 12.00 noon
- morning tea provided

Thanks To The Helpers

Those who helped produce the newsletter:

Elsie Anderson
 Bev Bancroft
 Ian Parsons
 Park Rangers

Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

Lower Dandenong Rd. Braeside 3195 (Melway Map 88 D8)

Postal Address: PO Box 608 Braeside, Vic. 3195

ACN: A 002 4027 B

Phone: 9265 7300

President: Margaret Hunter, 9588 0867

Secretary: Elsie Anderson, 9583 6099

Treasurer: Bev Bancroft, 9551 4578

Editor: Jane St Quintin, 0403 851 800

Friends of Braeside Park ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activity	Time/Day	February	March	April
Committee Meeting	4th Monday, from 13.00 at the Visitor Centre	27	26	23
Community Garden	09.30 - 12.00, 3rd Sun of the month at nursery	19	18	15
Community Projects Weekday	09:00 - 12:00 Wednesday at the Park Office	1	7	4
		8	14	11
		15	21	18
		22	28	25
		29		
Nursery open for plant sales	10.00 - 12.00 3rd Sunday of the month	19	18	15
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	4	3	7
		6	5	9
		19	18	15
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	13.00 - 15.00 Wednesday	1	14	
		15	28	-
		29		
Seed & Cutting Collection. Meet at Robin Car Park	10.00 - 12.00 Fri before 1st Saturday	3	2	6
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	09:00 - 12:00 3rd Tues	21	20	17
Community Projects Weekends	09:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs			
Special Activities	Times to be advised			

Help is at hand for injured wildlife: call **AWARE** (Patterson Lakes Branch) on **0412 433 727**

Heathland Burn

By the Editor with pictures supplied by Des Lucas

On 7th December a planned burn occurred in the Heathland area of the Park. Approximately 7 hectares of the Heathland was burnt. The burn was carried out for two reasons; to reduce fuel loads in this area of the park and to help regenerate this area of Heathy Woodland. In the course of time some species in the Heathland can start to take over and crowd out other species, whilst some species require fire in order to regenerate. Burns have always been a natural part of the Australian Ecosystem and must still occur to ensure healthy and diverse vegetation. However since white settlement we often live in close proximity to areas of bushland and we now choose to carry out planned burns in ideal weather conditions to reduce the risk of damage to surrounding properties.

The following pictures show the Heathland section at the start of the burn, during the burn and the end result. The final pictures may look barren and desolate but with the Autumn rains the vegetation will very quickly start growing back and by Spring it will be showing obvious signs of new life.





Nursery News

By Marj Seaton

We plug along, sowing seeds whenever we are on site, pricking out anything that's big enough and of course, weeding. We're mostly sowing *Lomandra*, grasses, *Eucalyptus* species and *Acacias*, depending on the amount of seed we have available. Our direct sowing to tubes has been marginally successful – a few of the sprinkler heads blocked up and caused the boxes to dry out, so we lost quite a few plants. We haven't given up though and a new batch has been prepared in the last few weeks. This is a good way to produce greater numbers of plants without having to go through the labour intensive process of pricking out.

Our seed collecting has brought in *Acacia implexa* (Lightwood), some *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood), *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny-headed Mat-rush), *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum), *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) and *Austrodanthonia geniculata* (Kneede Wallaby-grass), all of which are needed by the rangers on a regular basis throughout the park. We've also taken some cuttings of *Correa reflexa* (Common Correa or Native Fuchsia), *Amperea xiphoclada* (Broom Spurge) and *Billardiera scandens* (Common Appleberry). Although the *Eucalyptus radiata* (Narrow-leaved Peppermint) have flowered well, they have not set seed much in the last few years, so we're hoping that the rains of last season will help in seed formation. On one foray into the heathland, Bill and I found quite a large stand of newish *Ozothamnus ferrugineus* (Tree Everlasting, a bush with off-white flowers) at the top of the Dingley Waterway, so we've taken cuttings of those and hope they take. This largish bush is found more commonly in the southern part of the heathland reserve, with an occasional few in the planted parts of the public areas, and it's good to see how healthy this new stand is.

With school once again in session, we are having regular visits from Mentone Girls' Grammar students. They look after their garden plots within the nursery compound and do excellent work taking cuttings, pricking out and washing pots. Having extra hands like this is of great value to us, as our workforce is being depleted considerably as our members grow older. We hope too, that the students gain some appreciation of what is needed to maintain a park such as ours and to value our natural heritage.

Our regular sessions at the nursery are held on the first Saturday, first Monday and third Sunday of every month (including the long Christmas break) and anyone passing at those times is very welcome to call in and have a chat, buy a plant or two or even consider joining us in our attempts to beautify Braeside Park.

Bird Sightings from January and February 2012

Report from Steve MacDonald

The following bird sightings have been recorded over the last couple of months in the park by Steve MacDonald. We are currently looking for volunteers to help with Bird Surveying in the park, if you are interested please contact the Park Office on 9265 7300 or Bev on 9551 4578. Please also note the new bird survey form for visitors to the Park is now available at the Visitors Centre.

5th January 2012

Black Kite sighted over the Wetland area, last recorded 4-5 years ago
Little Falcon
Pair Wedge-tailed Eagles

21st January 2012

Brown Falcon

26th January 2012

Nankeen Kestrel

28th January 2012

Whistling Kite

4th February 2012

Red-kneede Dotterels, Black-fronted Dotterels, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and the Royal Spoonbill, Australian Spotted Crake last seen about 6 years ago and the Baillon's Crake. Also our first record of the Great Crested Grebe breeding here at Braeside, it has been recorded breeding in Woodlands and has now bred at Braeside. The Great Crested Grebe has been in the Wetland for the last four months and can be seen near the bird-hide.

Two Collared Sparrowhawks were sighted in the Heathland and at Telford picnic area, Steve has film of one after it killed a Crested Pigeon. A Collared Sparrowhawk was last recorded in the Park about 12 years ago.

11th February 2012

Grey Currawong

Earthwatch - Braeside Park Microbat Survey

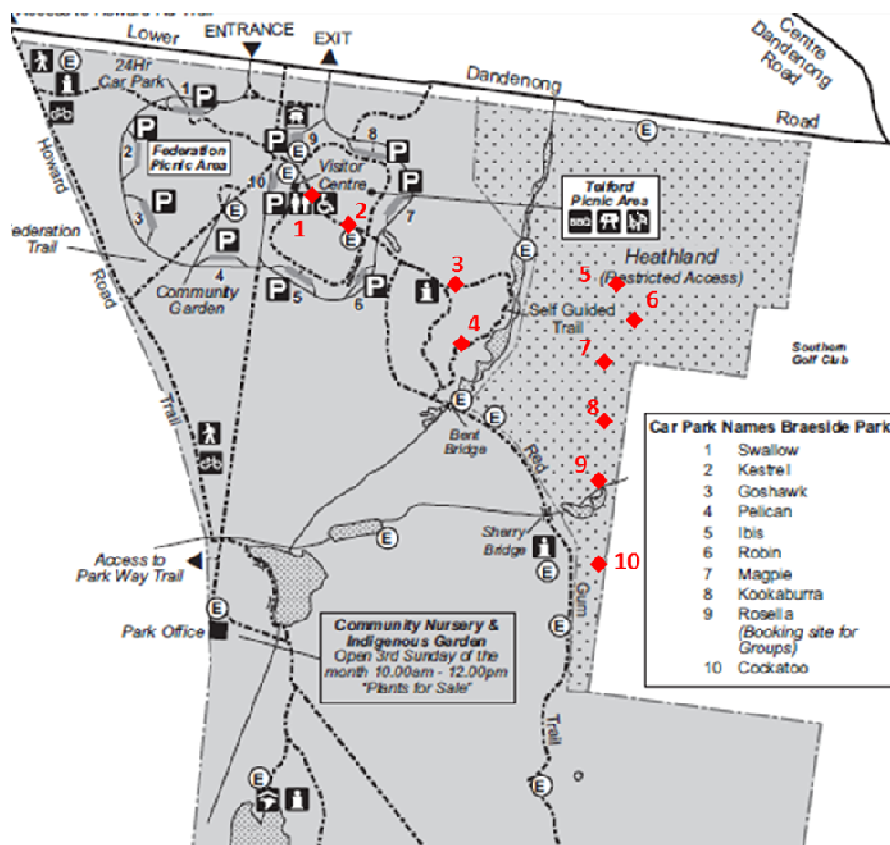
From the editor, with information from Earthwatch Facebook page and website

Earthwatch recently conducted a survey of microbats in Braeside Park as part of their Melbourne Microbats Student Challenge. 8 Students from all around Australia spent the third week in January learning about and trapping Melbourne's elusive microbats. With a record of over 100 microbats and 6 different species found in two new sites (Cranbourne Botanical Gardens and Braeside Park), the students had a jam packed week. With temperatures reaching over 30 degrees the students did an amazing job setting up the harp traps, radio tracking the bats' roosting locations as well as helping with surrounding vegetation surveys.

The results of the trapping in Braeside Park are shown in the table below, along with a map showing the trap locations.

Braeside Park Trap Summary Table from 17th January 2012

Trap Number	Species						Total in Trap
	<i>V. vulturnus</i>	<i>V. regulus</i>	<i>V. darlingtoni</i>	<i>S. orion</i>	<i>C. gouldii</i>	<i>N. geoffroyi</i>	
1	13	1	13	0	1	0	28
2	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	12	1	1	1	9	4	28
5	10	2	0	0	0	0	12
6	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
7	11	0	3	0	1	0	15
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
10	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Species	54	4	17	1	11	4	91



Earthwatch - The Research Behind the Braeside Park Microbat Survey

From the editor, with information and photo's from Earthwatch Facebook page and website

Working with Dr Rodney van der Ree and PhD student Caroline Wilson, volunteers helped survey bats using harp traps and recorded ultrasonic bat calls with hand-held bat detectors and GPS equipment.

Students assisted in setting up traps shortly before dusk, periodically inspected them during the evening, learned species identification skills and assisted with data recording.

Students also had the opportunity to assist in sampling the nocturnal insect fauna using light traps to investigate the diet of urban bats.

Details on the distribution, abundance and diet of bats was recorded and later analysed in the laboratory by researchers. This information will be used to establish baseline data on the community composition and critical habitat requirements of insectivorous bats across greater Melbourne and ways to better conserve and sustain their populations.



Southern Forest Bat, *Vespedelus regulus*
Photo: Lisa Godinho

Checking a Harp Trap



Little Forest Bat, *Vespedelus vulturinus*

Park Report

From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports

Revegetation Program: Climate Positive is looking to plant a further 6 hectares this year with a planting possibly in May and again in October. The species planted will mainly be upper storey species, Redgum and wattles.

Parks Victoria Grants for 2011/12, Burgan Grant a grant has been received for consolidation and maintenance period – planting and weed control in all areas treated previously – planning is well advanced for delivery over the coming months.

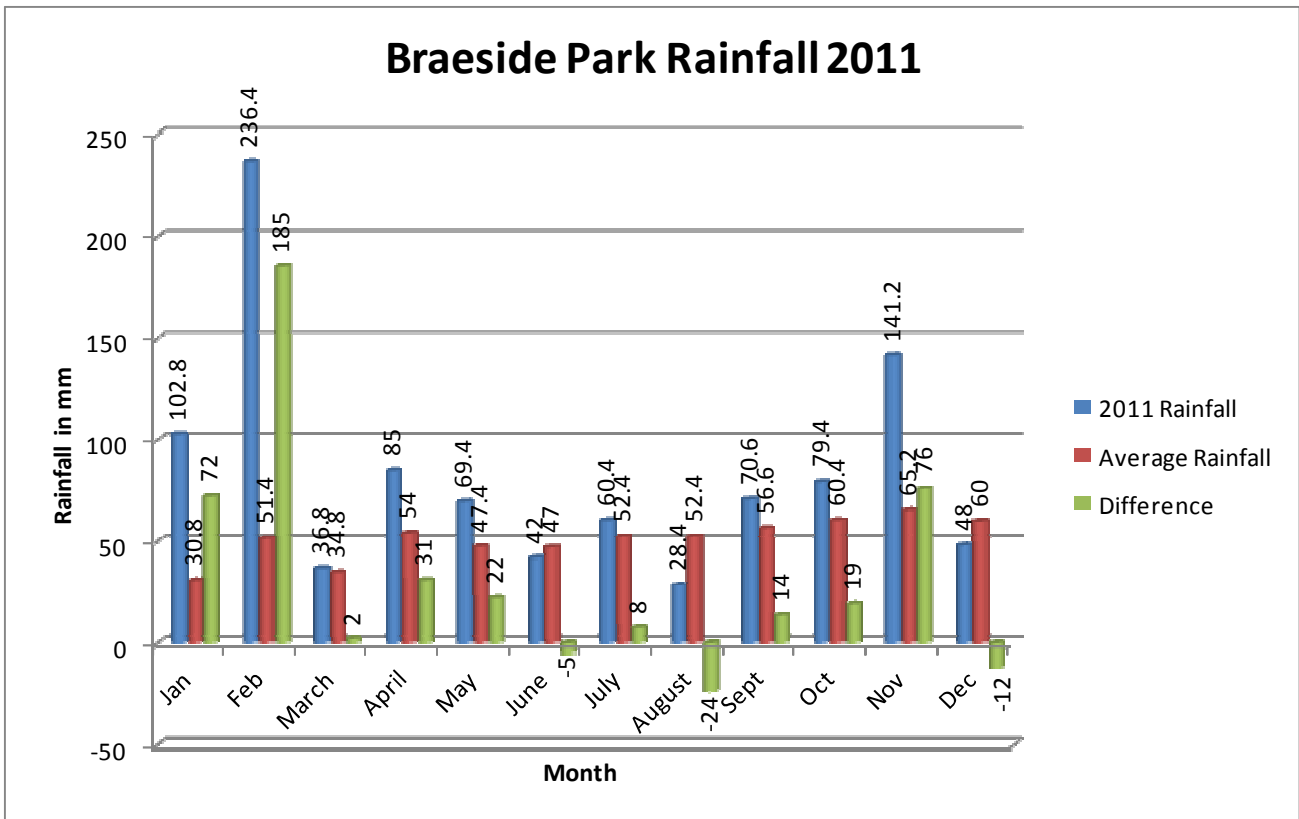
Burning Program: 7 Hectare of the Heathland was burnt on 7th December 2011 - see page 7 for further details and pictures.

Rainfall: The rain events during 2011 have seen 1000.4 mm of rainfall. See the graph below showing the monthly totals, the monthly average and the difference between the two. There were only 3 months when we received below average rainfall. The total rainfall for 2011 was 388mm above the expected average.

Wetlands: Summer has seen most of the ephemeral wetlands dry up throughout the park. Long swamp will be totally dry come the end of February unless a substantial rainfall event is received over the coming few weeks.

Keysborough College: There has been a request for year ten student activity in the Park on Friday afternoons from 13:20 to 15:20. A discussion has been held with the teacher to determine request requirements. Looking to commence mid February assisting with propagation activities and planting.

Visitor Centre Displays: are currently being upgraded by Felix and Glen. See the new graphs on parks statistics, the fire display on the Heathland Burn, key location photo's, happenings boards and the wildlife note descriptions for the mounted specimen displays.



Long Swamp full over winter
Photo: Des Lucas