

A Broader Issue

Corinne from the Wilderness Society gave a presentation to the Creeklands AGM on the plight of Tasmania's ancient forests, faced with continued logging. Her informative and colourful imagery of the vegetation of the unique Tarkine area and the Styx Valley highlighted their bleak future if not protected. The Tarkine's value is not just its beautiful rainforests, but also its mountain ranges blanketed with wildflowers, and an undeveloped coastline featuring over 1000 aboriginal sites. A lively discussion followed as this was prior to the federal election, and the issue of logging old growth forests, the threat to the environment and the fight to protect this region, was a hot political topic. That election has now been won and lost, but please don't let your local politicians forget the importance of this issue.

National Tree Day

National Tree Day in late July saw a fantastic turn out of enthusiastic locals along with members of the Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee. Over 300 native grasses, shrubs and trees were planted in areas adjacent to the Laburnum Primary School boundary in Blacks Walk. This day was made special by the large number of children who attended with their families, to plant trees for future generations. Laburnum Primary School conducted a planting within the school grounds at the same time, and we joined them in the school ground for a sausage sizzle afterwards, which was appreciated by everyone. Other working bees in the past six months have included "Weed Busters" which concentrated on weed reduction in and around previously planted areas. Weeding is an endless and extremely important task, in that it reduces competition for water, light and nutrition that is essential for our native plants to thrive.

In addition to our scheduled working bees a group of Burnley Horticultural College students have each completed 45 hours practical revegetation works in the Blackburn Creeklands. Tasks included weeding in Blacks Walk, site preparation and planting adjacent to the Waratah wetlands and removal of a large amount of buttercup weed at the end of Gardenia Street.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those involved. Regular users of the Creeklands appreciate the many voluntary hours put in by members of the local community who attend the working bees.

Summer Visitors

We are delighted that a pair of Sacred Kingfishers (*Todiramphus sanctus*) have taken up residence in the Creeklands again after many years' absence, and have raised some young over summer. These Kingfishers are of medium size, with turquoise backs and tails, buff-white underparts and broad cream collars with a broad black eye stripe extending from their bills to the nape of their necks. The female is a bit lighter in colour. As the Kingfisher is a migrant bird, this pair which arrived at the southern limits of their travels in August or September, is likely to depart northwards again around March, possibly to as far away as New Guinea.

The Sacred Kingfisher is basically an insect eater and is often found far from water, but this pair have built a nest in the hollow of a dead tree near the creek. They are using a number of favourite perches from which they dart out to capture water dwelling creatures, insects, small reptiles and frogs. Their call is a loud "ek ek ek" repeated continuously, a "kee kee kee" when excited, and a series of chirring, scolding notes when alarmed, and they can be quite aggressive in defence of their nest. Keep your eyes peeled while walking, and you may be lucky enough to see these beautiful visitors.

Refs: Australian Museum Fact Sheet, and "Birds of Australia" by Robin Hill. Nelson 1967. Also the source of the front picture.

Retirement

Our warm thanks go to David Grounds who recently retired from the Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee. Since he joined in 1997 David has enthusiastically kept records of new bird sightings, and last year undertook the revision of the Creeklands Bird List, which has been reprinted and is now in circulation. He also has a special talent for editing, and kept the Committee up to the mark with punctuation and grammar, particularly around Newsletter time! We wish David well for his future activities.



indigofera australis

Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos

The noisy troop that were reported a year ago around the Blackburn Lake, are back again this year making their presence felt in the Sanctuary, and with occasional forays to the Creeklands. Don't be alarmed by their bark tearing - it is not detrimental to the trees, and helps reduce pest insects. Where do they go when they leave Blackburn for winter? Probably the Dandenongs.



Dragonfly

There are ample natural food sources for all the birds and animals that live in the Lake Sanctuary and the Creeklands. For their health and safety, animals and birds should not be fed!

Lake Park Nursing Home Re-development

Along with the rest of the community, we are outraged at the proposed development of a large nursing home and retirement village next to the Sanctuary. This development has the potential to damage the good bushland next to the proposed nursing home. The retirement village will overlook the Visitor Centre and the area most used by visitors around the playground area.

The committee has drafted a list of issues which need to be met to ensure that the proposed development does not damage the bushland. These are things like, water flows into the Sanctuary to ensure that the trees and shrubs continue to get adequate water, the height of the buildings which will increase wind flows and damage trees, light pollution which will upset animals which are adapted to dark, night time conditions.

We have been part of the discussions which are continuing on this proposal, attempting to protect the bushland. We are not opposed to having a nursing home on this site, we have no complaints are about the current home. But we do believe that the community wants the bushland to be protected. Nursing homes can be built almost anywhere, we can't move our remnant bushland. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Protecting the bushland must take priority.

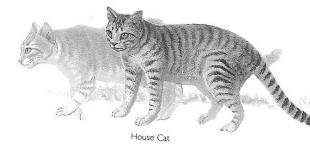
Let your local councillor know your views.

Central Ward - Cr Peter Allen 9878 6874 & Cr Hayley Weller 9894 7536

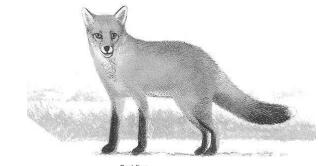
Protect Our Bushland Wildlife - *And Protect Your Cat!*

In the vicinity of the Sanctuary and the Creeklands there are a growing number of cats hunting and killing our bush birds, lizards, frogs and mammals.

Stray cats are known to be carriers of diseases such as feline aids, cat flu and feline enteritis, and fights between pet cats and strays cause injury, infection and disease. Stray cats constitute a significant health risk to pet cats as well as our wildlife!



- Do not feed stray cats. This not only encourages an increase in the stray cat population, but attracts rats and foxes which are also heavy predators of our wildlife.
- If cats spend time on your property, the best option is to trap and remove them. If you intend to do this, inform the Whitehorse Council Local Laws staff (9262 6394) and enquire about hiring a trap, or seek their assistance. Trapped cats can then be taken to the RSPCA (Burwood Highway) where the cat will be treated appropriately.
- Also inform Local Laws if you observe cats and foxes living in the Sanctuary and Creeklands.
- To protect your cat, have it de-sexed, micro-chipped, and registered with the Council. Always keep a collar on your cat with an Identification tag and several bells. Cats are safer if they are kept inside from dusk to dawn and are safest of all if they never free range outside!



Catteries and cat gyms are an excellent idea, and can be connected to your home!

SO, TO PROTECT BOTH -

- * keep wildlife & cats apart
- * keep your cat confined
- * remove strays

Celebrating our community and heritage - Fun and entertainment on 6 March

On 6 March, a new bush tucker track will be opened near the Visitor Centre. It is part of the celebration of Nunawading Rotary Club's 40th birthday. The club helped finance the Visitor Centre in 1990 for their 25th anniversary and now have very generously offered to fund the new track as part of their current birthday activities. For 20 years, the Community Education Program at the Visitor Centre, has offered a bush tucker activity to schools and adult groups. This new track will make offering the activity much easier and exciting. This year Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation Picnic will be part of this event.

Whitehorse Council has brought together a great group of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people to help organise the building of the track and a fabulous day of celebrations.

There will be bush tucker walks and talks, weaving mats and baskets, picnics and entertainment, dancing including getting the kids to try some aboriginal dancing and lots of fun. Do come along from noon onwards. But you're welcome to come to Clean Up Australia Day first!

Further details on all activities

Blackburn Creeklands	Blackburn Lake Sanctuary
Meetings: Field Naturalists Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn, at 8.00pm on the fourth Thursday in the month. All welcome	Meetings are held at the Visitor Centre at 8.00pm on the first Thursday in the month. Everyone is welcome to attend
All Enquiries - Ring Sally Brentnall on 9877 5445	All Enquiries - Ring the Visitor Centre and leave a message on 9877 9235



Line drawings are reproduced from "The Flora of Melbourne" by the Society for Australian Plants, Hyland House, and "a Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia" by Menkhorst and Knight, Oxford University Press.

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and Blackburn Creek



Newsletter Summer - Autumn 2005

Sacred Kingfisher



Coming up in early 2005

Date		Blackburn Lake Sanctuary		Blackburn Creeklands	
March	Sunday 6	Clean Up Australia Day Nunawading Rotary & Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation Picnic Nunawading Rotary 40 th birthday celebration	10 am - noon Meet at the Visitors Centre Noon onwards, this will involve bush tucker talks and walks, weaving and entertainment 1 pm - Inauguration of the bush tucker track	Clean Up Australia Day	10 am - Noon. Meet at the Scout Hall in Pakenham Street
	Friday 18	Frog Census with Melbourne Water	7 pm -9 pm bookings essential, ring Melbourne Water 131 722, email - education@melbournewater.com.au		
	Sunday 20	Friends lunch with frog talk Creaking & croaking, Frogs at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary	Noon - 2pm 2pm - 4pm. Meet at Visitors Centre.		
April	Saturday 9	Breakfast with the birds Barbara Longmuir & Ian Moodie	7.30 am. Meet at Visitors Centre		
	Friday 15	Possum Prowl	7pm. Meet at the Visitors Centre		
May	Sunday 8			Working Bee	For details check park notices or ring Sally 9877 5445.
	Friday 13	Astronomy Night	7pm - 10pm. Meet at Visitors Centre.		
	Sunday 22	Fungi Walk with Cecily Falkingham	2pm - 4pm. Meet at Visitors Centre		
	Sunday 29	Working Bee	10am - noon. Meet at Visitors Centre.		
June	Saturday 18	Bush Tucker talk followed by Planting Day	10am - noon. Meet at Visitors Centre		
	Thursday 23	Planting Day for Schools			
	Sunday 26			Working Bee	For details check park notices or ring Sally 9877 5445

For further details check the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Web-site
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~blsac>, the notice board at the Visitor Centre, or the entrance posts.

For further details see the Noticeboard in Pakenham Street.