

Especially for kids! The Sticky Beaks will be back at Blackburn Lake!

In May, a group of "Sticky Beaks" had great fun dissecting owl pellets, and trying to reconstruct the skeleton of that owl's dinner, making owl kites and fridge magnets. Mums and dads enjoyed themselves too! (Sticky Beaks is the Juniors Club of BOCA (Bird Observation and Conservation Australia). Come and join us on July 13th, and October 26th to celebrate the finale of Bird Week, for more fun and activities. September 6th is our bi-annual bird survey. Come and help us count bird species. Binoculars are handy if you have some, but not essential.

And did you see??? The family of five King Parrots, the Royal Spoonbill, or the two Black Swans when they visited the lake?



Improvements to the Visitor Centre at Blackburn Lake

We are delighted to report that Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Visitor Centre is receiving some much needed improvements.

We are most grateful to the City of Whitehorse for these improvements and for their continuing support for the programs provided at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.

Visitors sometimes comment that they know the park well but have never been inside the Visitor Centre. The Centre is opened each Sunday afternoon from 2pm to 4.30pm by a dedicated staff of local volunteers. VC duty is a fun, and most interesting way to meet other local residents, as well as visitors from a surprising variety of places.

If you would like to help, please phone Anne on 9878 1152, or leave a message on the VC answering machine: ph 9877 9235. **The more volunteers we have, the better!**

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary's Education Program

On weekdays, walkers at BLS will often see groups of children or adults taking a guided walk under the leadership of a BLS Education volunteer. The BLS Education Program is available to schools and community groups by prior booking. Just since Easter this year we have hosted several hundred children in 15 school classes, from Prep to VCE. The Education Program provides wonderful opportunities for children to move outside the classroom learning about the natural environment through hands-on experience. They can understand the importance of preserving our bushland by observing the plants and animals that depend on this habitat.



Within the Visitor Centre, the process of suburban extinctions is illustrated as they see the display animals for which this habitat is no longer suitable. This experience provokes some interesting discussions about sustainability in our local bushland parks and the importance of wildlife corridors in suburbia.

Peter Menkhurst If your school or community group would like to participate in the BLS Education Program, phone Elaine on 9877 5896 to discuss your requirements and make a booking. Elaine would also be pleased to hear from potential volunteers who would like to be trained as Education Program guides

Red-eared Slider Turtles

As the weather warms up in Spring watch out for this destructive pest. They have been sighted in Blackburn Lake and DSE are actively trapping and removing them.

The **Red-eared Slider Turtle (right)**, a species native to North America, has the potential to cause great destruction to our freshwater systems and is recognised around the world as a major environmental pest.

They have yellow stripes on their faces and red stripes behind each eye and grow to about 30cm in length. Like all exotic turtles, the red-eared slider retracts its head straight back into the shell, whereas our native turtles wrap their heads around to the side of the shell.



The **Eastern Long Neck Turtle (left)** often seen in the lake has, as the name suggests, a long neck and does not have markings on the head.

Significant penalties apply for keeping, selling or releasing Red-eared Slider Turtles into any of our waterways.

Please call the **DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186** if you suspect you've seen one or have any other information which might help the DSE investigators.

Did you know? That dumping of no-longer-wanted aquarium plants and fish; insects, such as pet spiders or cockroaches (Yes! Some people **do** have them!); aviary birds; cats; or your garden plants and weeds, interferes with the delicate ecological balance in nature. This can be just the start of environmental problems, such as the red-eared slider has already caused.



WATER BUGS EXPOSED AT THE LAKE!

The Water Watch volunteers at Blackburn Lake carry out chemical tests and study the bugs living in the lake water on the first Sunday of each month.

If you are having a leisurely wander around the Sanctuary between 10 -12, you might be lucky enough to see them. They collect water from Pobble Bonk Point, and take it to the Visitor Centre to complete the required Melbourne Water chemical tests. Every second month they also study the bugs, giving a clear picture of the quality of the lake water. They have microscopes and are always happy for interested visitors to join them to help identify these tiny creatures.

Recently, to celebrate World Environment Day, the Visitor Centre was full of excited children and parents happily peering into trays of lake water. Tiny almost transparent shrimp, damsel fly larvae, caddis fly larvae popping their heads out of their little stick homes, back swimmers and minute rapidly moving copepods, were just a few of the bugs that were discovered in the lake water that day. Put it on your list of must do's, for a fun and fascinating morning.



Our **monthly Sunday afternoon programs** are open to the general public and feature a variety of expert speakers and environmental activities. These are listed in the BLS calendar in this newsletter, and are regularly advertised on the BLS notice boards and entry posts, as well as on our web-site (<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~blsac>).



BLACKBURN
CREEPLANDS

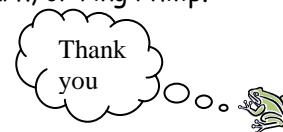
Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee

Dates for July 08 - Feb 09

Committee Meetings: Are held at 8pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except for December) at the Blackburn Bowls Club, Pakenham St, Blackburn. **Visitors welcome!**

Working Bees: These dates and times are sometimes subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Close to the date please check the notice board and notices through the park, or ring Philip.

To join the regular Monday morning maintenance group contact Mary Crouch on 9894 3025.



| | | | |
|-----------|---------|----|---|
| July | Sunday | 06 | Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| " | Sunday | 20 | Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| " | Tuesday | 22 | Annual General Meeting |
| " | Sunday | 27 | National Tree Day Planting From 9.00am onwards in Blacks Walk near Middleborough Rd south entrance |
| August | Sunday | 03 | Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| " | Tuesday | 26 | Monthly Committee Meeting |
| " | Sunday | 31 | Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| September | Sunday | 21 | Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| " | Tuesday | 23 | Monthly Committee Meeting |
| October | Sunday | 19 | Weedbusters Working Bee 9.00am onwards |
| " | Tuesday | 28 | Monthly Committee Meeting |
| November | Tuesday | 25 | Monthly Committee Meeting |
| January | Tuesday | 27 | Monthly Committee Meeting |
| February | Tuesday | 24 | Monthly Committee Meeting |

For all Creeklands enquiries ring Philip Brentnall on 9877 5445



Blackburn Lake Sanctuary

and



Blackburn Creeklands

Newsletter July 08 ~ Feb 09



Photo: ©Ian Moodie, June 2008

Blackburn Creeklands Bird List

Did you know the Creeklands has an official bird list?

It was last updated in 2002 and the Advisory Committee is keen to hear from anyone who has spotted a bird not on the list, or any of the less common visitors. If you would like a copy of the bird list, or can report a sighting, please contact Philip Brentnall on 9877 5445.

While on the look-out for birds be alert for the single male Rose-ringed parrot frequenting the parks. On his own he's not a threat (in spite of energetic attempts to woo the lorikeets!), but should a female join him, they could breed, which is very undesirable, as they are an invasive species from India. If you see a pair, please let Philip know.

Creeklands Revegetation Report Card

Extensive revegetation has taken place in Furness and Kalang Parks over the past 18 months following major erosion control works and creek rehabilitation by Melbourne Water. After some initial losses, the new plants are looking surprisingly green and still growing despite the lack of water. There is a lesson there for our gardens as well - indigenous plants will continue to thrive without watering while the exotic species succumb to dry conditions.

National Tree Day.

Every year we have a good turn-out of local residents to plant trees in the Creeklands, to increase habitat, mitigate the effects of climate change, and make the bushland park a wonderful refreshing places for passive recreation. *Come and join in on July 27th from 9.00am onwards, at the Middleborough Road end of Blacks Walk, south side of the creek.*

08/09 Budget

Sadly the proposed Furness Park Bridge did not make it into the Whitehorse Council budget for this financial year, but instead \$80,000 has been ear-marked for engineering works at the Middleborough Road entrance to Blacks Walk. Following recent removal of several mature willow trees where the creek goes under the road, damaged fencing and other safety issues have become evident. Planning is underway to redesign the immediate area to improve safety. Hopefully the bridge will be funded next year.

Jennifer Nijs and Grant Lambert have resigned from the Creeklands Advisory Committee due to pressure from other commitments. Warm thanks to them both for their respective contributions.

Whitehorse Council is reviewing safety practices in relation to volunteers working in the parks, singly and at working bees. Relevant information, training, first aid, safety equipment and checklists are being made available. Volunteers are valued!

KALANG PARK FROG BOG *(east of Pakenham Street, north of the creek)*

Following saturation of the ground with recycled water, matting was laid, the area mulched, and extensive planting out of water-loving species has occurred. We now wait for rain to establish this small ephemeral frog-friendly wetland



BIRDS & THE ENVIRONMENT ~ Field Naturalist Club of Vic. Symposium

Sunday 14th September FNCV Building, 1 Gardenia Street Blackburn 3130.

Hear talks by leading experts about our urban raptors and shore-birds, whether or not weeds can form important habitat for our birds and what we should do about this, plus much more. Check the FNCV website at www.vicnet.net.au/~fncv for further details. To register interest, contact Mary Gibson on 9251 7466 or maryg@deakin.edu.au

Bowls Club Water Off Take Project

An innovative scheme will soon be implemented to supplement the water supply to Blackburn Bowls Club for its bowling greens. A pipeline will be put into the creek with a pump that will be triggered when the creek reaches a certain (high) flood level, and the water stored in large underground tanks at the Club until needed. Consultation is underway with Melbourne Water, Council Officers, and the Creeklands Committee about protection of tree roots, and other installation details.

BULL ANTS

Now in the middle of winter watching the acacias flower, chocolate and bulbine lilies soon to burst into bloom along with the greenhoods raising their heads, and birds and bees doing what they do best, another small creature is giving us its own piece of pleasure and that is the Bull Ant.

Finding their mounds of dirt with the many entrances, they busily go about the day to day needs of survival, amazing us with their endurance skills after such a long dry spell. As they guard fiercely their territory, to watch them stalk a perceived prey can be fascinating. Then one day to see the arrival of a Praying Mantis looking for lunch and knowing the predator had arrived, they had all vanished underground. Yes,  they bite!

Yes, they are part of the environment and should be carefully protected.

Yes, admire the flowers and enjoy the birds singing but look a little further and there is so much more to be found in our bushland parks.





.....Coming up late 2008

All Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of every month, at 8pm,

Interested park users are warmly invited to attend any of the following events.

| Month | | | Blackburn Lake Sanctuary |
|-----------|----------|----|--|
| July | Sunday | 13 | Sticky Beaks Club Kids fun & activities with BOCA & Friends of the Lake |
| | Saturday | 19 | Working BeePlanting left-overs! |
| | Sunday | 27 | National Tree Day Celebrations |
| August | Saturday | 16 | Working bee ...just enjoying the bush this month, and pulling a weed or two! |
| | Sunday | 24 | Walk and Talk with Darcy Duggan. Well-known & respected Naturalist & lecturer. Experience the Sanctuary through new eyes! |
| September | Saturday | 6 | Breakfast with the Birds , & Barb Longmuir (BOCA) & Ian Moodie (Parkswide) Come & help with our regular bi-annual survey. |
| | Saturday | 13 | Working bee. Spring is in the air, & all the plants (weeds as well) are thriving! |
| | Friday | 19 | On the prowl for Possums & other night critters! |
| October | Saturday | 4 | Working bee each Saturday in October <i>We'd love to see you!</i> |
| | Sunday | 5 | Wonderful Wildflower Walks Come and enjoy! |
| | Saturday | 11 | Working bee each Saturday in October <i>It's great to have your help. Thankyou!</i> |
| | Saturday | 18 | Working bee each Saturday in October <i>Still more work to be done!</i> |
| | Saturday | 25 | Working bee each Saturday in October <i>Wow! It's looking Great!</i> |
| | Sunday | 26 | Bird Week Finale! Kids fun & activities with BOCA |
| November | Thursday | 15 | Twilight Working Bee & Bar-b-que <i>Thanks for your help! Now celebrate!</i> |
| | Sunday | 16 | Short Walk , with Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation, & Friends of the Lake |
| | Sunday | 23 | Sustainability Street Celebrations! |
| | Sunday | 30 | Snakes in the Sanctuary! Learn Snake Safety & Identification of Vic. venomous snakes & cuddle a python or 2! With Fred Rossignoli, as seen this year at the Royal Melb. Show 2008 |

Visit our website for more information: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~blsac>

City of Whitehorse: All enquiries or reports: Ring 9262 6333, business & after-hours,

Help for Wildlife: ring 0417 380 687, RSPCA:9224 2222

EPA Pollution Hotline: 9695 2777 or 1800 444 004 (both 24hrs)

For information or enquiries about Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, or to contact a Committee member, ring 9877 9235 & leave your contact details.

