



Braeside Park

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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.

THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

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The Friends are seeking to reduce postage costs. If you would like your newsletters emailed then please send your email details to braesideparkfriends@gmail.com



President's Report

On an overcast Sunday morning (10 Nov.), I met a small group from the Victorian Field Naturalists' Terrestrial Invertebrates Group at the Red Gum Picnic area.

We spent the morning observing many small iridescent flies, hover flies, and ladybird beetles and their larva feeding on the last Black Wattle blossoms around the car park. We found Paradise Spiders in the Lomondra clumps. Christmas Jewel spiders have a small colony amongst the reeds surrounding the wetlands. A small, dark frog that we observed underneath a log was likely a Spotted Marsh frog, and a dead snake was definitely a copperhead. When I looked up from a leaf beetle busily avoiding being photographed, I saw orange-coated figures moving on the Mordialloc Freeway's new and speedily set up construction site. I wondered if any of those people had ever taken any time to watch the insects pollinating a wattle.

I thought what the world would be like without these small creatures. Their beauty alone would be missed by those with the sense to see it; and the loss of their services would of course be simply catastrophic. I sat beside a municipal Councillor recently who was astonished that I was concerned at the lack of moths over the past few months. She declared, "Moths eat your clothes. I kill them." I didn't say "*You're an idiot!*" which is what the President of the Victorian Field Naturalists recommends for such people, but patiently explained that moths, beetles, bats and flies pollinate most plants. She promptly told me to worry about the honeybees instead! It is hard to know where to start sometimes, but a couple of hours with wiser people wandering around the sweet-smelling wattle in the warm sunshine and observing heavenly creatures restores my spirits.

Representatives of Parks Victoria invited the Men's Shed's members, Friends of Braeside Park, and other interested groups to a meeting about the new precinct plan for the Park (17/10). The Friends' Committee and a few members of the Men's Shed were there asked to share our thoughts on the Park's best bits and what we recommended for the future? Rabbit-proofing. Re-wilding. A restored Phar Lap track. Relocating the Park's Office. More funding. More Rangers. We mentioned all of these and drew them on to the maps provided.

What we were not told at this meeting was that Parks Victoria had issued a licence to the Southern Migrant Group to build a vegetable garden and some sort of cooking facilities and to use the Visitors' Centre on a daily basis – funded by the Commonwealth. The raised vegetable beds are to be installed near the Men's shed, just off the Centennial Walk. This will start in the next few weeks. This had all been mentioned by Parks Victoria in its last consultation with the Friends, who disagreed, the decision was subsequently taken.

Anyway, the Committee has given their thoughts and visions for the Park's future. Hopefully, this meeting was not a corporate box-ticking.

Bushfires now rage across the country, and droughts continue elsewhere. Parks Victoria may realise that avoiding a climate disaster requires the conservation of nature even the urban remnants such as Braeside Park.

The Friends of Braeside Park have volunteered their time to work beside Parks Victoria for 30 years to restore the Park to some resemblance of Australian indigenous space. Such dedication is sacrificed to progress. We are indeed the "selfish species."

By Judith Sise

Park Activities

Bat Night at Braeside Park

Saturday night (23 November) was cool and relatively windless. This was perfect for setting up harp nets to temporarily trap and record the small micro-bats, which call Braeside Park home – for the present!

John Harris, from Wildlife Experiences, was employed by the Friends Group and funded by the Friends Network Award to Margaret Hunter. John spoke of the importance of tree hollows. This was a salient topic considering the tree removal happening for the Freeway.



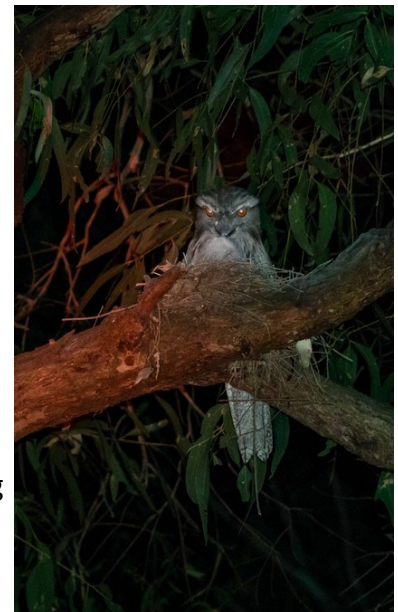
Tree hollows are a product of age, insect infestation, extreme weather and fungi. No matter how they are made, their importance to birds, insects, reptiles and bats is undeniable. The Fauna Group of the Victorian Field Naturalists have put up many bat/bird boxes over the past 5-10 years only to

find that many are never inhabited. Reasons suggested for this are their shape, size, materials, or location.

John said the best boxes to place in reserves, parks and backyards as substitutes for the real thing are those made of timber from the types of trees, which used to live there. Since humans seem hell-bent on



destroying forests and expanding suburbia, trees have little chance of growing old enough to produce the hollows needed by any other lifeform.



The Harp nets were set up in the Heathland, along the tracks next to the wetlands where the trees overhang. One hour later, the nets had caught 12 Little Forest Bats. When removed from the plastic pocket, these clung

shortly to John's gloved finger before taking off to forage for more insects. This bat weighs just 3 grams (think 10 cent piece) and it will eat its weight in insects each night. How many mosquitoes is that?



Park Activities (cont.)

John Harris has a special licence to handle bats from the DELWP, and always wears gloves. Australian bat lyssavirus can be transmitted from bats to humans and causing serious illness. Hence there are gloves and inoculations for bat handlers. The bats that live in Braeside Park are: Little Forest Bat, Large Forest Bat, White-striped Free Tail Bat, Lesser Long Eared Bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, and Gould's Wattled Bat.



It was a very pleasant informative evening. These photographs by David MacLean needed lots of patience and skill!

Judith Sise



Tawny Love

After seeing the beautiful Tawny-frogmouth nesting during the bat night, I had to return and observe this nest to see what eventuated.

On my first two visits, I only saw one or other of the two parents. But on my third visit I saw that the bird was sitting on what appeared to be a cloud of feathers.

After a few minutes, the cloud moved from under mum's (or dad's) wing and a small beak appeared. How coy can you get? But when you are so beautiful, you can!



Park Activities (cont.)

It was difficult to distinguish the shape of the fluff ball, but after a couple of minutes I was rewarded by a very curious look.

I was not to have it all my way, the chick decided to hide again under the parent's feathers.



However, moving to a better position must have aroused the chicks curiosity as I then was rewarded by the most beautiful eye to eye gaze.

David MacLean



Seniors Walk

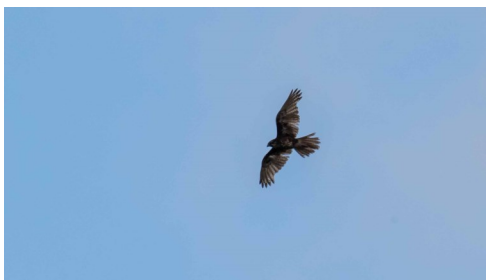
The Friends successfully held a Seniors Walk in Braeside Park with 26 participants including a visit to the wetlands viewing platform. We saw the many water birds at the wetlands including the swamp hens, the swans and cygnets and the ducks in the full wetlands. A further highlight was the visit to the racecourse dam on the racecourse trail with the resident bird life including ducks and others. Many of the group had visions of Phar Lap training here and passing here, even perhaps swimming in the wonderful park asset, well worth a visit. Thanks to Amanda and Andrew, Braeside Park rangers for assisting with this walk.

Margaret Hunter

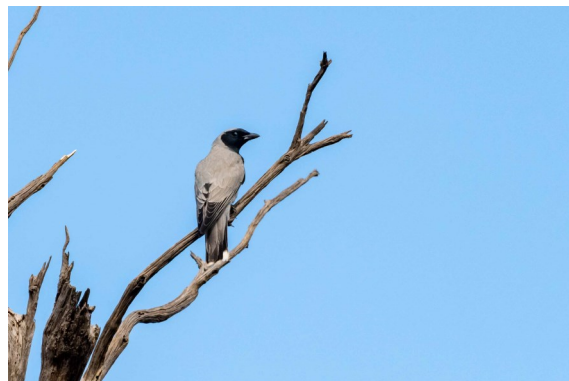
Park Activities (cont.)

Monitoring Bird Populations in Braeside Park

The bird monitoring Survey was set up to look for differences in bird species and numbers (if any) between heathland, naturally-regenerating woodland, and planted woodland. We do 20 min. surveys on 10 x 2 hectare plots, monthly (5 plots in one month; the other 5 in the alternate months). We record species, numbers of birds of each species and breeding records



from each plot - as well as a general list of species seen

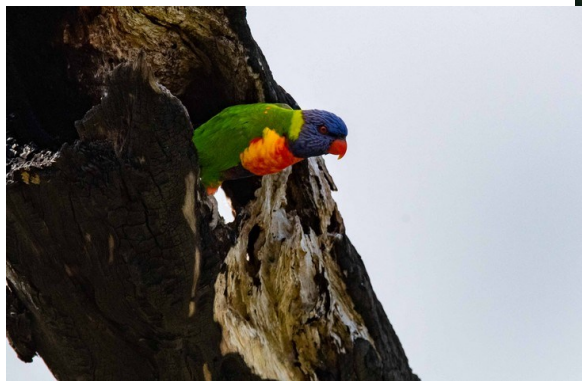


by us anywhere in the area of the Park that we visit on the day of the survey, but not necessarily seen in our plots. (We do not go over to the western wetland areas at all.) We expect the Survey to last at least 10 years - we've been going for well over 3 years. We have 5, fairly regular, participants in the Survey (all

experienced members of BirdLife Australia) but welcome others to join us. David McCarthy puts the formal data from the Survey into the BirdLife database and a report from that goes to the Ranger's Office.

Patricia Bingham

Bird Monitoring Survey Group



Joining the Group

I first joined the bird monitoring group in October and thoroughly enjoyed the company and the activity. I received a warm welcome on arrival and was assured I didn't need to know a lot about birds to participate in the activity. Pat and David (and others) have a wealth of knowledge about the birds of Braeside Park and it was easy to see how passionate they are about the Park (especially the birds!). I find it awesome that they can identify many birds just by their songs; it's exciting to think I can learn to do this over time. The group is open to anyone who would like to attend and is advertised on the Braeside Park website and in the FOBP Newsletter.



Rosemaree MacLean

Park Activities (cont.)

CBA Grant

The Friends of Braeside Park were thrilled and proud to be recognized by the Commonwealth Bank at Waverley Gardens with a donation of \$500 recently. This was accepted by Margaret Hunter, Secretary, and David Maclean on behalf of the Friends' group. It is planned to purchase night vision equipment to assist in the viewing experience of the nocturnal animals during night walks of Braeside Park. This has become one of our most popular activities in non daylight saving periods. This is part of their donation program and is greatly appreciated.



Margaret Hunter

Wetland

The water is receding which is attracting a different suit of birds.

Nursery Management

Focus on production of lower storey species for planting in 2020.

Concern that resources are not available to produce plants for planting days in 2020.

Des Lucas

Friends of Braeside Park—Activity Calendar

**Community Nursery is Open on the Third Sunday of the Month
10:00 am to 12:00 noon – Seedlings \$2.00 each.**

The Wednesday Team

More Volunteers are needed. Please come & join us.

Wednesdays 9 am - 12 noon

Meet at the lunch room - Park Office

Morning tea provided.

Bev Bancroft

Committee Meeting:

2nd Thursday, monthly 7:00 to 9:00pm at the Visitors Centre.

BirdLife Australia - Monitoring Program

10 bird monitoring transects are monitored in this program with 5 completed one month and the other 5 the next month.

The sessions occur on the 4th Friday of each month from 8:00 am alternating between the following starting locations.

Park Office January, March, May, July, September, November

Robin Car Park February, April, June, August, October, December

All welcome, you don't need to be a bird expert to attend.

Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

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Join us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to Judith Sise, Rosemaree MacLean, Frank Russo, Margaret Hunter, David MacLean & Park Staff for contributions to this edition.

All photos in this edition by David MacLean.

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to the newsletter, please contact the editor at braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

The Friends of Braeside Park Activity Calendar for 2020

Activity	Time/Day	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	7pm - 9pm 2nd Thursday at the Visitor's Centre	*	13	12	9	14	11	9	13	10	8	12	10
Community Projects Weekday - "The A Team"	9am - 12pm Wednesdays at the Park Office	*	5 12 19 26	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9
Nursery open for plant sales	10am - 12pm 3rd Sunday	*	16	15	19	17	21	19	16	20	18	15	20
Plant Propagation Community Nursery	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	* *	1 16	7 22	4 19	2 17	6 21	4 19	1 16	5 20	3 18	7 22	5 20
Community Waterwatch Program	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Sunday Visitors Centre	*	9	8	12	10	7	12	9	13	11	8	13
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Park Office	24	*	20	*	22	*	24	*	25	*	27	*
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Robin Car Park	*	28	*	24	*	26	*	28	*	23	*	11
Nightwalks	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	Nightwalks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential! 0417323460											
Community Projects Weekends	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	*	*	*	*	*	World Environment Day Tree Planting Sunday 6th	National Tree Planting Day Saturday 25th	*	*	*	*	*
Special Activities are held throughout the year at various times		*	*	Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 1st Meet at Visitor Centre 10am - 12pm	*	Significant TreeWalk led by Rangers 9:30am on 5th & 12th	Mystery Walk Sunday 21st 12:30pm - 3:30pm with afternoon tea	*	AGM Sunday 9th 2pm-4pm	Breakfast with birds Sunday 20th Red Gum Picnic Area 7am - 9:30am	Spring Walk & Nursery Open Day Sunday 11th, 1pm - 3:30pm Seniors Walk Thursday 22nd 9:30am - 12pm	*	End of Year BBQ Wednesday 9th