

## THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK

# NEWSLETTER



### Contents

- Breakfast with the Birds 2
- Tawny Frogmouths in the Park 3
- Nursery Propagation Group 7
- Bird Survey Group 8
- BirdLife Australia Outing 9
- The Spring Walk 9
- Residents 10
- FOBP Info 12
- Membership Form 13
- Activity Calendar 2022 14



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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.*

## Breakfast with the Birds (18th September 2022)

Six o'clock arrival at the Lower Dandenong Road locked gate was not the best start to The Friends of Braeside Park's annual Breakfast With the Birds activity.

After a little struggle with the lock, I decided to drive to the Governor Road entrance where I could easily unlock the gate and get to the Nursery to set up the Breakfast.

Margaret Hunter arrived a few minutes later having managed to unlock the Lower Dandenong Road gate. Vicky P and Margaret and Ian Langdon arrived and completed the preparations by 6:30 am as the cars drew into the nursery.

The overcast grey sky threatened but the forecasted showers held off as 20 people left punctually at 7 am! Margaret and Ian Langdon are both seasoned Braeside Park bird observers and not only recognise the birds, and their calls but told entertaining stories.

Visiting the Bird Hide, the Observation Platform and the new Bird Hide the Group saw 40 different bird species. Two hours passed very quickly and the Group returned to the Nursery for breakfast and a review of the birds spotted. A success activity enjoyed by all!

**Judith Sise**

Spotted Birds	
Silver Gull	Black Swan
Cattle Egret	Grey Fantail
Pacific Black Duck	Eastern Rosella
Rainbow Lorikeet	Red-rumped Parrot
Grey Butcherbird	Australian Magpie
Little Pied Cormorant	Little Raven
Common Blackbird	Magpie Lark
Chestnut Teal	Common Myna
Blue-billed Duck	Spotted Dove
Eurasian Coot	Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Pink-eared Duck	Grey Teal
Grey Shrike-thrush	Great Cormorant
Brown Thornbill	Little Black Cormorant
Australasian Darter	Dusky Moorhen
Welcome Swallow	Australian Wood Duck
Tawny Frogmouth	Superb Fairy-wren
Australian Pelican	Australian Reed Warbler
Striated Pardalote	Noisy Miner
Crested Pigeon	Swamp Harrier
Common Starling	

List provided by **Margaret Langdon**

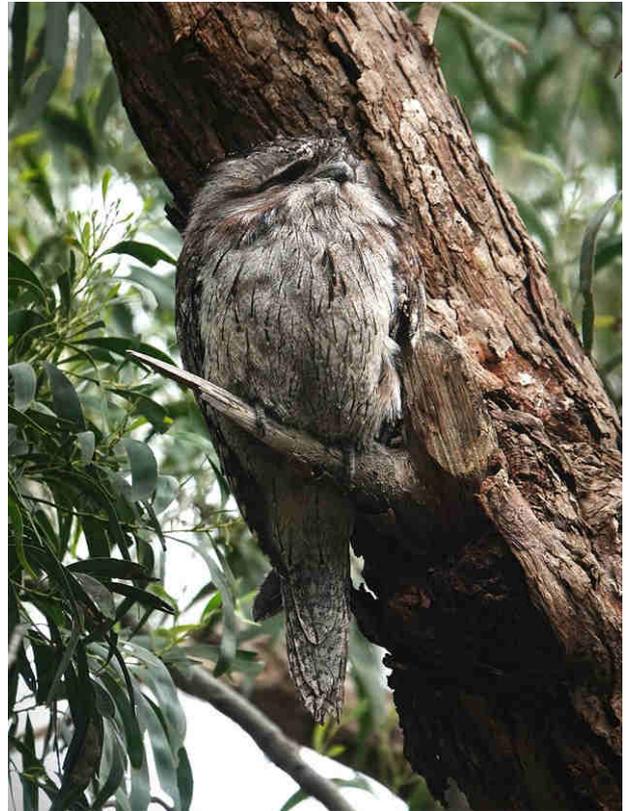
## Tawny Frogmouths in Braeside Park

Everyone loves to spot a tawny frogmouth at Braeside Park, but that is not always so easy to do because of their amazing camouflage and ability to remain practically motionless during the day.

The Braeside 'Tawny frogmouth group' have been carefully observing the tawny frogmouths over the last 5 years and have found some very interesting behaviours of these birds, including some aspects of frogmouth behaviour that have not been previously reported. We have also assessed the trials and tribulations that these birds have gone through over the course of the recent years and have attempted to obtain a better understanding of the birds which have been designated as one of Australia's favourite birds and also labeled as the 'most instagrammable bird in the world'.

Our observations in Braeside Park have found that the park presently has a healthy population of breeding tawny frogmouths. Braeside Park has a surprisingly high density of frogmouths and provides a nice model population to evaluate the health and behaviour of these birds.

Aspects that we can look into with these long term observations include the effects on Tawny frogmouth populations and breeding success due to changes in road and structure encroachments, predator population changes, flora densities and variations over time, storm damage, fires, droughts, climate change, etc.



the raising of the chicks.

Tawny frogmouths are known to pair up for life and usually begin to build nests in early August in the same general location as the previous year's nesting area. We have also observed that frogmouths can have family groups that consist of three adult birds throughout the year. This has not been reported before, but definitely has happened here in Braeside Park on multiple occasions. This is very interesting and there is some evidence that the third adult can even help with

## Tawny Frogmouths in Braeside Park (cont.)

The nests that the birds make are usually constructed of sticks and characteristically integrate some fresh greenery from melaleuca, casuarina and eucalyptus. The nest is usually located in the fork of a tree or on a relatively horizontal branch with a few branches, which can act to support the nest. It is possible the greenery is added as an insect repellent or camouflage, but the reason is not known for sure. Contrary to popular belief, the nests are made with some integrity due to the pushing and pulling of the sticks through the nest structure, but admittedly they are not the best nest builders of the bird world.

The type of tree in the park that the birds nest in is usually eucalyptus; either river red or Gippsland manna gum. We have observed an even distribution of the nests between these two tree species and have not observed nests built in any other tree type within the park. Last year 19 nest areas were identified and this year 20 have been identified throughout the park. We speculate that there could only be a very low number of additional unidentified nests, if any, based on the current frogmouth territorial boundaries we have identified and suitable habitat locations which include appropriate trees and certain types of food rich hunting areas.

The tawny frogmouths usually lay their eggs from late-August through September, although we have observed egg laying later in the season, most commonly in the case of re-nesting when the birds have run into some trauma with the initial nesting. Incubation of the eggs takes about 30 days before the chicks hatch. We estimate that most mating pairs produce two eggs initially. We have noticed that chicks have a number of stages where trauma can occur. Significant loss of eggs and chicks around the time of hatching are common. Commonly losses occur when the birds fledge due to premature fledging falls, hypothermia or predation. Also, last year strong storms caused the demise of some nests and egg



loss. When the chicks hatch, they are not usually seen for the first 10 days or so since the nestling is not strong enough to lift their head and bodies up at this stage and cannot be seen beneath the parent or over the sides of the nest. The time from hatching to fledging for the first egg is also about a month. The nestlings have certainly been hardwired to get out of the nest at some point and if two chicks are present, they fledge generally at the same time even though one may be a few days younger. This could account for premature fledging where fledglings are often found on the ground. We have observed adult birds to stay by a 'grounded' chick and where successful or unsuccessful fledging has occurred. However, we know we can improve the odds of survival when this happens if we get the word out about to go about a frogmouth rescue (see below for details of steps to take when a chick is found on the ground).

## Tawny Frogmouths in Braeside Park (cont.)

Once the chicks have fledged, they normally tend to stay near to the nesting site for the first few days, and then they tend to fly farther away on the following days and maintain moving about their territory for the next couple of months until they become independent and fly off to be on their own. As mentioned earlier, occasionally the fledgling remains with the parents for the next nesting season, but also sometimes leaves the nesting area for good at the time of next year's nesting or even at chick hatching.



An easy way to tell if the bird is a male or female during nesting season is to observe which bird sits on the nest during the day. It is the male that sits on the nest during the day. The female shares this duty with the male during the night. It is very difficult to tell the subtle differences between males and females until you get to know specific characteristics of each and even then it is sometime hard to distinguish the two. Tawny frogmouths have excellent low light vision and typically eat invertebrates such as worms, insects and spiders which is most often done in low light such as dawn and dusk. They are also known to make use of other sources of lighting such as street lights and moonlight to illuminate their prey.

Tawny frogmouths go into a kind of torpor during their resting times, especially during the day. But if you see one, it is certain to be eyeing you! They are very aware of their surroundings during the day and always covertly turn their heads slightly or adjust their eyes to keep you within sight. They can get into a feather fluffed-out position for warmth or cooling, but when something approaches they can turn into a branch-like shape. In this position, it can be quite challenging to pick them out, especially when they are sitting on a dead branch.

Now, what you all have been waiting for; the final chick success count for the 2021/22 season. Of the 19 nest areas that were tracked, 13 of these had successful fledgings. 3 of these had 2 chicks and 10 had 1 chick. So the total success for the 2021/22 season was 16 new tawny frogmouths. We think that these youngsters tend to fly a significant distance away from their nesting area to ensure the genetic diversity and probably end up in the surrounding distant suburbia and parklands.

## Tawny Frogmouths in Braeside Park (cont.)

The first batch of chicks are just now (October) starting to hatch this year. Of the 22 pairs being watched in Braeside Park, 20 have nested. About half of these probably have had chicks hatch already, but a number of these have abandoned their nest due to egg or chick losses. A few of these have already re-nested and hopefully others will re-nest soon. If nest trauma occurs early enough in the season (up until about late November) the frogmouths can re-nest. We have also observed several dead young chicks from nests that have a second chick still in the nest. We hope they are as successful this year as they were last year. Hopefully, we don't have untimely storms like we did last year. We will keep you posted.

### What to do when you find a tawny frogmouth with a problem:

Call 'Wildlife Victoria Rescue' and explain the situation and location (03 8400 7300). They will give you the proper advice on what to do.

***Carl & Helen Forrester***



***Photos by Graham Gill and David MacLean***

## Nursery Propagation Group

On Sunday 15th October, during a propagation session, a lot of weeding, some planting and mulching was completed with gusto.



**Vicky Paraskevas**

## Bird Survey Group

I've made some progress with attendance at the bird survey group. Today we had six people in attendance, all registered on ParkConnect. Everyone was very cheery, and the cool morning warmed up to be quite mild. Spring has brought a flurry of activity and noise with lots of rainbow lorikeets, eastern rosellas and red wattlebirds squawking in the heathland. A few special sightings were the Eastern Yellow Robin and Golden Whistler. Lots of scrub wrens and fairy wrens. Two surprises, we heard the fan tail and shining bronze cuckoos which we confirmed using a bird app. Also, the Horsfield's cuckoo was spotted in the wetlands yesterday.

We saw the tawny frogmouth nesting with its mate close by near the Dingley drain. We also observed four juvenile magpies wrestling. Another juvenile walked with us for some distance in the Heathland, a gorgeous little bird.

I have entered the bird data onto BirdLife Australia's website and it's available to view online.

**Rosemaree MacLean**



**Graham Gill**

## BirdLife Australia Outing

On 5th September, Diane Tweeddale (BirdLife) coordinated a weekday outing for BirdLife Australia at Braeside Park.

Kylie (Ranger) welcomed BirdLife to Braeside Park and went over safety information before commencing the survey.

I introduced myself as a member of the Friends group and offered to show participants the route we follow on our monthly bird surveys in the Heathland. Malcolm Brown, also a regular of the Friends bird survey group, walked at the back and kept the group together. He also proved to be a valuable resource for identifying plant species in the Heathland. We took the group along the routes we take and talked about the bird species we find in each area. This created some happy anticipation as many participants had not visited Braeside Park.

They are a lovely bunch, passionate about birds and very respectful towards each other and the environment. After lunch, the group did another survey of birds in the wetlands. I have since corresponded with Diane Tweeddale and received a list of bird sightings on the day.

**Rosemaree MacLean**

## The Spring Walk

The Spring walk was blessed with brilliant weather. The participants gathered and the children were full of expectation. The first set of Tawny's looked so peaceful there and most of the kids and parents were oblivious to them until we pointed them out.

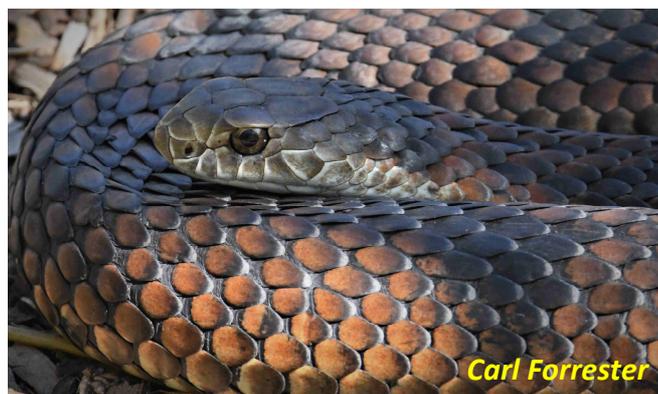
What a great community day, the weather was great, the Heathland was thriving but with all the water and growth spotting was hard.

Will need to look at the timing perhaps mid-September next year to catch the orchids. It was very wet under foot but a glorious day for walking.

Thanks to Judith and Vicky for their assistance and knowledge.

Everyone really appreciated it about 25 all up and the afternoon tea was amazing, no dinner for me just a lot of Judith's cake and my donuts and I was good to go.

**Frank Russo**



## Residents

This edition illustrates pictures from some of the great photographers that enjoy the wildlife of the park. Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo by Roy Burgess, other photos by David MacLean.



## Residents



### Editor's Note

This edition is heavily focused on birds and walks.

We feature Breakfast with the Birds, Bird Survey group, BirdLife Australia Outing and the Spring walk. Also featured is an in depth article from Carl and Helen Forrester who are experts on the Tawny Frogmouth. Their insight and research on this bird is enlightening.

As the Committee group has changed, the new photo is included for your knowledge. We are still the same happy group, but we have lost Helen Russo and gained Vicky Paraskevas, Simon Flemming, Emily Daniels and Heather Markland.

I would like to thank Carl and Helen for their excellent article and all other contributors for their help in the creation of this publication.

**David MacLean**  
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**ABN:** 72 959 503 118 INC NO A002420278

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



**FOBP Committee**

David MacLean, Simon Flemming, Frank Russo, David Boldiston, Margaret Hunter, Vicky Paraskevas, Judith Sise, Rosemaree MacLean

## Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

<b>President:</b>	Judith Sise
<b>Secretary:</b>	Margaret Hunter
<b>Assistant Secretary:</b>	Rosemaree MacLean
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Vicky Paraskevas
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	David MacLean
<b>Communications and Promotions Officer:</b>	Frank Russo
<b>Committee members:</b>	David Boldiston, Simon Flemming, Heather Markland and Emily Daniels

### Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to Judith Sise, Carl and Helen Forrester, Rosemaree MacLean, Roy Burgess, Graham and Kerry Gill, Vicky Paraskevas, Frank Russo and David MacLean for their contributions to this edition.

We thank the many contributors to our Facebook page for their excellent photos and stories.

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to this newsletter, please contact the editor at

[de\\_edfobp@iinet.net.au](mailto:de_edfobp@iinet.net.au)  
or [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)

# Friends of Braeside Park

ABN 72 959 503 118 INC NO A00242027B

## Membership Application/Renewal Form:

*\* Indicates required field*

Name \*

Address \*

Phone Number \*

Email \*

Tick appropriate box(es): \*

*New Member*

*Renewing Membership*

*Donation*

Annual Subscription: \*

\$10

\$15

\$5

\$20

\$15

\$5

*Ordinary Member*

*Family Membership*

*Student Member*

*Corporate Membership*

*Organisation Member*

*Pensioner / Concession*

Payment can be made directly into our Bendigo Bank account:

BSB: 633 000

Account: 155348246

And email completed form to: \*

[membership.fobp@outlook.com.au](mailto:membership.fobp@outlook.com.au)

Or mail to:

The Treasurer  
Friends of Braeside Park  
P.O. Box 196,  
Dingley Village, Vic 3172

Further information on the Friends' activities is available on our website and Facebook page.

<http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240>

Secretary contact number 0417 323 460

## Friends of Braeside Park Activity Calendar 2022

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	*	10	10	14	12	9	14	11	8	13	10	8	
Community Projects Weekday - "The A Team"	9am - 12pm Wednesday's at the Park Office	*	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	7 14 * *	
Nursery open for plant sales	10am - 12pm 3rd Sunday	*	20	20	17	15	19	17	21	18	16	20	18	
Plant Propagation Community Nursery	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	*	5 20	5 20	2 *	7 22	4 19	2 17	6 21	3 18	1 16	5 20	3 18	
Community Waterwatch Program	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Sunday Visitors Centre	*	12	12	9	14	11	9	13	10	8	12	10	
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Park Office	28	25	25	29	27	24	22	26	23	28	25	23	
Nightwalks	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	<i>Nightwalks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460</i>												
Community Projects Weekends	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Special Activities are held throughout the year at various times		*	*	Australia Day Sunday 6th Meet at Visitor Centre 10am - 12pm Volunteer Information Session, Sat 19 2pm	Mystery Walk Saturday 16 12:30 - 3:30 with afternoon tea	*	*	*	AGM Sunday 7th 2pm-4pm with afternoon tea	Breakfast with birds Sunday 18th Red Gum Picnic Area 7am - 9:30am	Spring Walk Sunday 16th 1pm - 3:30pm	*	End of Year BBO Wednesday 14th	

Website [www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au)

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