

Since Christmas I've been reminded of nature's incredible resilience. First came the mighty flood brought to us by thunderstorms and upstream suburbs. The amount of debris and rubbish that the floods left behind won't clean itself up.

The Parklands needs your help and the help of everyone you know on March 5th, Clean Up Australia Day. Please make this the one time you commit to bringing others along - many hands make light work.

To find out more about the flood, where it came from and the damage it did, **come along to our meeting**. Melbourne Water and Ranger Pete will give us an insider's view of just what happened.

So where's the resilience you might ask? You can't find it in the scores of wattles that were flattened by the waters. However, if you look more closely, the grasses we've been planting in recent years mostly survived unscathed - in fact they looked like they enjoyed a good drink. The Poas especially seemed to hold the soil in place, go and have a look for yourself. Thank you to everyone who has planted them.

My other reminder of the resilience of nature was Tom Crawshaw's very excellent photo of the platypus in the creek north of Bell St. See the photo and report of the sighting on P5.

I can't say I ever thought we'd have a platypus in the creek again. This sighting marks the achievement of one of the foundational goals of the Darebin Parklands Association, for the creek to be home to a platypus once again. It makes

me feel profoundly grateful to those whose decades of work have permitted this to happen.



December 2016 floods. Photos Graeme Martin

James Garriock, President



February 21 - 7.30. Education Centre

General meeting and Information evening

'Impact of floods on the Darebin Parklands'

Come and hear from Melbourne Water talk about strategies to cope with flooding. Pete Wiltshire will also outline the impact of the recent flood on the park.

The Education Centre is at the end of Separation St

Events calendar 2017

21 February..... Information Evening
 5 March Clean up Australia Day
 21 May..... Park Care Day. 1.00-3.00pm
 30 May..... DPA Annual General Meeting
 18 June..... Park Care Day. 1.00-3.00pm
 23 July Park Care Day. 1.00-3.00pm

Pete's page

News from the ranger in charge

Park recovering from flash flood

I hope everyone has had a nice break over the Christmas holiday period.

Floods

We are slowly recovering after the 29th December flash flood event that wiped out our crossing stones boardwalk, the upstream hand rail of the Clifton Bridge, our 3" Honda pump used to fill Ivanhoe Wetlands also the Olive Slope path that is used by hundreds of people a day.



I managed to find a contractor to fix the Clifton Bridge and I have rebuilt the pump successfully, but have yet to tackle the boardwalk as the slope above it needs stabilization works. Andrew Downing of Melbourne Water met Adrian, Katy and I for a walk along the creek from Sparkes Reserve to Darebin Road with the main focus being the crossing stones site. The floodwaters have been undermining the sandstone rock face so we asked Andrew for advice on how best to preserve the site and to eliminate the public risk of landslide at the site. Curiously our boardwalk was found in one piece 1 km downstream. We await Melbourne Water's response to this issue.

Myna Program

In other news, the Indian Myna programme disposed of its 1000th bird from Darebin Parklands in December and with Michael's ongoing support we continue trapping these pest birds. Currently we are at 1021 birds. Banyule Council impressed with our Myna trapping skills have contracted DCMC to run their Myna control trial. The Myna control trial programme has generated a lot of interest from Banyule residents so DCMC is conducting a Myna trapping workshop on 23rd February here at the park. The workshop is booked out with all 45 traps allocated. Good to know that people are fed up with these pests.

Nest boxing

Our nest box program produced 9 eastern rosellas, 21 rainbow lorikeets, 2 kookaburras, and numerous ducklings. The biggest change we notice was how little Indian Myna activity there was in the nest boxes

Turtle Havoc

After all the major works we have undertaken over the last year in improving the leachate system there is one thing we didn't count on Turtles! Yes, long neck turtles have been causing havoc with our pumps by blocking the draw pipes and causing the pumps to run dry.

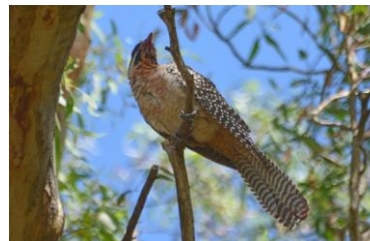


I placed wire cages over all the draw pipe ends yet we found 6 turtles living in the pit under our new deck. How they are getting in is a mystery but Katy and I will continue to seek an answer.

Homeless Camp

A homeless youth camp set up near the Hurstbridge Railway Bridge established in early December has grown with over 15 young people using it. I have supplied bins and am working with the group in an effort to control the rubbish generated. We have brought Darebin and Banyule youth service into monitor the camp.

If you have been hearing a new loud bird call in the park, I introduce you to the Eastern Koel. It's a migratory species from South East Asia and it is a brood parasite (meaning it gets other birds to rear its young). We have both a male and female here at present so keep an ear out



We have both male and female birds. So keep an eye out. This is a female while the male is pure black with red around its eyes

Looks like **Platypus** have finally hit the Darebin Creek. One was sighted by the Banyule bush crew near Doherty's Road West Heidelberg. No more telling people all they have seen is a brown moccasin stuck on a shopping trolley. Fantastic News! Don't forget Clean-up day on the 5th March from 10am to 12pm. I will be on leave in March and will leave the park in the capable hands of Katy

FLOODS IN THE PARK

Flood events have been part of the parkland for many years.

Flood event June 2013

Peter Wiltshire made the following comments

"In my time here at the parklands (28 years) it was the most damaging flood I have seen although not the highest. The velocity of the water through the parklands was extremely fast with it scouring out all the in creek vegetation and changing the morphology of the creek. For example, areas that were deep are now shallow and some shallow sections have been scoured out to be now deep" "The litter that came down in this flood was also close to the worse I've ever seen at the park"

Vegetation along the banks suffered greatly and many plants along the creek were lost.

Flood event December 29th 2016

As Peter has described in his report the flood caused structural damage in a number of areas in the park.

The following before and after photos give an indication of the extent of flooding. Litter is also prevalent although not to the extent of 2013.

Special thanks to Graeme Martin for the before and after shots and Lance Greenwood for the photos from Rockbeare Grve.



Looking upstream to bridge 2016. Photo Graeme Martin



Looking upstream 2016. Photo Graeme Martin



Looking towards Clifton Bridge 2016. Photo Graeme Martin



Taken from Rocbeare grove. Photos Lance Greenwood

How the plants survived the flood



Grasses in the Ivanhoe Wetlands after being submerged in water. Photo Katy Marriott.



Despite the loss of trees, including many wattles, due to the force of the water, shrubs and grasses along the creek bank mostly survived.

Katy Marriot, Ranger, observed:

"...the grasses, bidgee widgees, kidney weed, and goodenia have held on well (and held the soil together nicely.)"

Since 2013 thousands of species have been planted along the banks. It is a credit to Katy and Pete who have ensured the correct species have been introduced, and it is a credit to all those volunteers and members who have helped plant them!!!!

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Given the amount of litter that ends up in our park after a flood event it is really important we get lots of volunteers on Sunday 5th March 10am -12pm. Come to the end of Separation Street Alphington to register. This year will be bigger than ever with local government officials and the media in attendance. Please take into account the weather and dress appropriately-Slip/Slap/Slop???

PLATYPUS SIGHTING

A platypus was sighted in the West Heidelberg area by the DCMC Bushcrew. See DCMC report on p5 for the complete report and great photo. Carina Watson who co-ordinates our Facebook page reported that the post on the sighting went viral:

"861 likes 163 shares 74 comments and a post reach of 42,326!!! Lots of lovely comments of support and people sharing our excitement. Great to know how many people care about these things"



INFORMATION EVENING

Don't miss the Information evening on Feb 21st at 7.30 to hear from Melbourne Water and Pete Wiltshire talk about the causes of flooding and their impact on the Darebin Parklands. There will be a short General Meeting following their presentations.

Up and down the creek



News from the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) Coordination Division.



© Tom Crawshaw

Platypus

DCMC was excited to hear about a platypus in the creek in the Heidelberg West area getting spotted and caught on film. Tom and Sam from the Banyule Bushcrew spotted the platypus again on Friday 10th Feb. This time they observed it for about 20 minutes. One of Tom's photos is attached.

Factors that benefit platypus include:

Constant water flow, dense riparian vegetation, presence of aquatic structures – rocks and logs, and stable banks. They also need enough aquatic macroinvertebrates (water bugs) to eat. Platypus need to eat up to a quarter of their body weight in water bugs every day.

Factors that negatively affect platypus include:

Drought, urban development, habitat loss, entanglement in discarded litter, including fishing line, exotic predators such as foxes, cats and dogs. Platypus like deep pools to swim around in. Excessive sediment in the water can fill up pools, leaving the creek too shallow for platypus. Flash flooding is also an issue – platypus can drown in their burrows if water rises too quickly.



EPA Victoria

DCMC welcomes the state government's \$45 million funding injection to get more environmental protection officers out in the field investigating dumping and spills. A reminder to report any spills into the creek to the EPA, especially if you can ascertain the pipe the pollution is coming from. All major pipes into the Darebin Creek have signs with a code (see attached photo). The EPA's 24-hour hotline is 1300 372 842.

Survey of the creek

A recent survey of the creek conducted by DCMC staff revealed significant typha and phragmites debris in the wake of the December flood. These species clog the creek in a number of stretches, due to a number of factors including high levels of nutrients in the water. A limiting factor seems to be getting shaded out by tall overstorey trees, so DCMC will continue efforts at infill planting along the creek verge with overstorey river red gums, and the like.

Events up the creek

Clean Up Australia Day around Southern Road, West Heidelberg. 5 March.

Cut and paint woody weeds, Cherry Street, Macleod. 30 April.

See Friends website for details:

www.friendsofdarebin creek.org.au

Peter Grenfell. DCMC Project Officer

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JR NEWS ROUNDUP

Fishing Day- 26th March

Junior Rangers members are invited to try their luck at a family fishing day. Some rods will be provided so if you need one, get there early.

Under the guidance of Fish Care staff, participants will be given advice on all aspects of fishing and can participate in educational activities such as a Fish Anatomy Jigsaw Puzzle. The day will finish with a raffle for some fishing gear.

Meet at the Education [Gleeson] Centre at the end of Separation Street.



Fish Jigsaw 2016

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Fishcare Victoria is a community based not-for-profit organization promoting responsible and sustainable practices amongst recreational anglers. We really appreciate their involvement and expertise in our Fishing Days. For more details about what they do go to their website:

www.fishcare.org.au.

"The target fish, as the experts say, is Carp."



'Fishing Day 2012'.

Carp are an introduced pest fish. They tolerate a wide range of environments and water conditions and can lay millions of eggs, quickly overpopulating waterways. Their environmental impacts include degraded water quality, disease, reduced aquatic plant density and the demise of native fish populations.

Junior Ranger Campout.

The campout is on again for late 2017. Places are limited so you need to enter in a draw for places. There will be a DPA table at the Clean Up Australia Day on March 5th where staff will explain the process. If you Join the DPA you will have the chance to win a campout spot in the Parklands. Membership forms will also be available.

Remember you must be a member of the DPA to participate in the Fishing Day and the Campout.

Families (or individuals) can also join the DPA through our website at www.dpa.org.au
Fill in a membership form and pay online, or post a cheque to DPA, PO Box 3, Ivanhoe 3079.

JR Events for 2017

Keep an eye out on our website www.dpa.org.au for upcoming JR events in 2017 including::

- Spotlighting/Star gazing
- Bonfire
- Campout . Apply on Clean up Australia Day