

DAREBIN PARKLANDS NEWS

November 2017

It was a hot night on the Hume in 1978. Stopping at Tarcutta I remember my father wiping a thick layer of dead insects from the windscreen of the stiflingly hot car. Some of them would smear and take extra effort to dislodge. The ritual of the bug pogrom and clean up was played out every few hours. Insects were dodging us just as we were dodging the 18-wheeler drivers in Bonds singlets with a pack of Winnie blues up the sleeve and the soundtrack from Smokey and the Bandit turned up nice and loud.

Life teaches us that memories can deceive; and so, I hadn't given much credence to the observation that I wasn't following in my father's footsteps when it came to mowing down our six-legged friends on country drives. But then on the JR sleepout I was made aware of research detailing massive declines in Germany's insect biomass. To quote from the website:

"The decline is dramatic and depressing and it affects all kinds of insects, including butterflies, wild bees, and hoverflies," says Martin Sorg, an entomologist from the Krefeld Entomological Association involved in running the monitoring project"

https://e360.yale.edu/features/insect_numbers_declining_why_it_matters

Since reading about it I've been increasingly disturbed that this seemingly esoteric fact isn't front page news. Ignoring our interconnectedness with the natural world is the epitome of our hubris as a species. So next time you visit the Parklands, revel in the insect habitat we've been investing in for 44 years. And when you get home, a bit less pesticide might also be prudent.

James Garriock
President

Media Release 15/11 Victorian State Government **New link - Alphington to the Darebin -Yarra Trail**

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Luke Donnellan announced the Farm Road Link – a local extension of the Darebin Trail to be built as part of the Labor Government's \$18m Darebin Trail. The media release states: "The new link will provide access to more than 600 kilometres of off-road trails and open up connections to a number of key trails including the Main Yarra Trail, Anniversary Trail and Capital City Trail. The local link will connect approximately mid-way along the last 1.8 kilometre section of the Darebin Trail, which is currently under construction." It will provide south Alphington residents with direct access to the Darebin trail
<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/connecting-alphington-to-the-darebin-trail/>

Tuesday 21 November. 6.30pm

BBQ/ Guest speaker

Members are invited to the final DPA meeting, BBQ and to hear David Williamson from the Melbourne Innovation Centre which adjoins the old tree farm site. This is your opportunity to find out more about how the MIC works and how it is developing connections with the community.

The Education Centre is located at the end of Separation Street. Alphington

Events calendar 2017-18

21 Nov.....BBQ and Information session

[David Williamson. Melb. Innovation Centre]

February..... General Meeting and Info. Night.

[to be confirmed]

4 March Clean up Australia Day

Pete's page

News from the ranger in charge

Darebin Creek Trail nearly done ???

This time of year is always our busiest and this year is no exception. We continue trying to win the battle against the onslaught invasive weeds whilst keeping up with the mowing a challenge at times.

On the positive front our plantings are all doing well if not a little slow on the Mt Puffalo site we did this year. The lilies we planted are all flowering.



Bridge across Yarra on Darebin Creek Trail

The new Darebin Creek trail extension is only a month or so away from being opened to the public. I have been negotiating on behalf of DCMC with Vic Roads for the Rangers to take over the maintenance & patrolling of the extension for the next 3 years. Both Katy and I have been shown over the project and I must say that this trail section is a wonderful addition to the Darebin Creek. Bridge over Yarra

The trail extension is 1.8 km long with 5 bridges the largest spanning 90 Meters across the Yarra.

I remember seeing the original plans for the trail in 1987 at the Heidelberg /Ivanhoe town hall. I also remember Premier Jeff Kennett announcing that it would be completed in time for the 1996 Commonwealth Games to link up with the Thornbury Velodrome.

We have had to wait 20 years but it's nearly done.



The network of ponds we use for the water treatment system on the old tip site has recently been planted with some 5 year old rushes that are fond of salt. The original aquatic species we planted have recently struggled as the salts increase. The new plants planted love brackish conditions and we are hoping they will thrive. We reduced the gamble by using 5 year old harvested stock from Mernda. The new plants are *Baumea juncea*.

I have no additional news from Council about the shared trail extension along Yarana road other than the project has a budget of \$270,000 and it is planned to be constructed within the next 6 months. I must admit to nervousness with this project as I barely can believe it will happen because we have been lobbying fiercely since 2008 for this project.

I think I'll settle down once I see the first signs of on ground works and no more children riding out onto the corner of Parklands Avenue.

As this is the final newsletter for the year, on behalf of Katy and I, can we thank the DPA again for a wonderful year and amazing support. To the amazing Thursday crew who along with Katy have transformed the riparian margins along the creek of which I am so proud.

I personally like to thank James for his absolute support as DPA president and his DCMC contribution which is significant. Katy and I look forward to the new year with the DPA and hope you all enjoy the new trail extensions and of course this fantastic little parkland.

See ya in the park -**Peter Wiltshire. [Head Ranger]**

COMMUNITY BONFIRE NIGHT

Friday September 8th

After a wet week the night of the bonfire was clear but a bit chilly. Rangers Pete and Katy had prepared the pyre carefully. Dead wood from all over the park had been collected and used to create a pyramid that reached for the sky.

Pete had to employ all his pyrotechnic tricks to get a good blaze going due to the wet conditions. Soon enough the pyre was alight and provided a great spectacle. The crowds came and enjoyed the leaping flames and the warmth provided by the fire.

DPA committee members set up an information table and encouraged new memberships. Thanks to Pete Wiltshire for all his hard work and to the DPA Committee volunteers who gave up their time to help out.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARK GETS A BOOST

We are excited to have been awarded funding through the Banyule City Council Environmental Sustainability Grants. Over the next twelve months or so, we'll be connecting with Banyule residents, including many new residents who are yet to discover the Darebin Parklands. As Ivanhoe becomes more densely developed, access to green space like the parklands is even more necessary for community health and wellbeing.

If you would like to be involved in the project, please contact:

Sofie Anselmi at: sofie_anselmi@yahoo.com.au

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Installing Clifton Bridge 1979. Note the lack of vegetation in the background

For more great photos go to the DPA section of the Victorian Collections website:

<http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/darebin-parklands-association>

GRANT FROM COUNCIL WILL RESEARCH DOG BEHAVIOUR

BehaviourWorks, a company specializing in researching behavioral change has been contracted to research and develop positive ways to encourage a better use of designated dog areas in the park. Darebin City Council has provided a grant for the project and a final report will be submitted to the council with simultaneous copies to the DPA and DCMC.

BehaviourWorks believes in motivating people to change behaviours with lots of positive strategies rather than with punitive measures

The DPA and the DCMC have prepared a brief for BehaviourWorks which outlines their concerns about on/off leash areas and safety issues re the Bush Kinder program.

As part of the project BehaviourWorks will conduct interviews with park users. Hopefully by the end of the process dog owners and other users of the park will be more aware of the uniqueness of the Darebin Parklands as a natural environment as well as a recreational resource.

WHAT BIRD IS THAT??

On Thursday 9 November the Thursday crew went bird watching with Ranger Katy as our guide

We meet at Clifton Bridge and were able to record a variety of species in the area

We then walked up Hidden Valley and over to the reflection pool, where we spotted a Tawney Frog Mouth and an Australian Magpie-lark sitting in its mud nest.

Then through Snake Grass to the ponds, over- the crossing stones then along Ivanhoe Wetland. The diversity and range of birds we saw was amazing -27 natives and 5 introduced species. A great day was had by all. We thoroughly recommend this route as a great way to see heaps of birdlife

Katy collated our results see over.



Red-rumped parrot



Spotted Pardalote[heard call]



Australian White Ibis



Tawny Frogmouth



Where did that Silvereye go? [Photo Jill Massey]

Bird Survey Darebin Parklands. 9/11/17. 9-11am

| | | |
|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | 2 | Pair |
| Red-rumped Parrot | 4 | Two pairs |
| Grey Fantail | 1 | |
| Galah | 3 | Flying |
| Rainbow Lorikeet | 7 | |
| Pied Currawong | 3 | |
| Spotted Pardalote | 1 | Heard several |
| Australian Magpie-lark | 3 | One on nest |
| Australian White Ibis | 2 | |
| Noisy Myna | 6 | |
| Australian Raven | 6 | |
| Martin | 3 | |
| Chestnut Teal | 4 | |
| Superb Fairy-wren | 2 | Heard several |
| Pacific Black Duck | 2 | |
| Magpie | 3 | |
| White-browed Scrub-wren | 2 | |
| Silvereye | 4 | |
| Tawny Frogmouth | 1 | |
| Laughing Kookaburra | 2 | Second one heard |
| Pied Cormorant | 1 | In flight pursued by N Myna |
| Australasian Grebe | 2 | Including two chicks |
| Reed Warbler | 1 | Heard |
| Dusky Moorhen | 5 | |
| Eurasian Coot | 8 | |
| Grey Butcherbird | 1 | On nest |
| Blackbird | 1 | Heard |
| Spotted Dove | 2 | |
| Farm Duck | 2 | One near creek |
| Common Myna | Many | near nest boxes |
| Common Starling | Many | |

TOTAL 27 indigenous species. 5 introduced species

Up and down the creek

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

Waller Weekend Sunday 17 September



Planting out Napier St Reserve

On a sunny September morning over 23 people came along to plant out the Napier Waller Reserve in Ivanhoe. At last year's Waller Weekend, we planted mainly small trees and shrubs, this year we planted mainly lower story native grasses. The soil there is soft and rich, so planting into it was a breeze. We planted weeping grass and common tussock-grass as well as *Lomandra longifolia*, Hop goodenia and bidgee widgee.

This will be a busy area once the path goes through to the Yarra River, which is due to be completed by the end of the year. So, this was a good chance to enjoy the relative quiet of this forgotten stretch of the Darebin Creek.

**Darebin Parklands News is published quarterly by:
The Darebin Parklands Association.**

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Waterbugs workshop and October meeting



Before the October meeting began, Friends of Darebin Creek met down at the creek to have a go at catching and identifying some waterbugs. Dave and Laura donned the gumboots and wielded the pole nets to catch some waterbugs to look at. We poured the waterbugs into trays, caught waterbugs using spoons and identified them using ID charts. We found quite a few different types, including a mayfly larva, a very sensitive waterbug which is pretty picky about the water it breeds in. We also found and identified damselfly and caddisfly larvae.

Dave is a regular Waterwatch volunteer, testing the creek water near Southern Road and at Edwardes Lake. There is also regular testing at the Darebin Parklands (Fridays, once a month) so if anyone is interested, contact myself at info@dcmc.org.au

Darebin Creek Bird Survey

A small but enthusiastic group turned out for the annual Darebin Creek Bird Survey on Sunday 29 October, held in the regular location in Heidelberg West.

Our bird expert from La Trobe University Wildlife Reserve, Graham Harkom led a short discussion on bird survey techniques. We then broke into three groups, each heading to different areas.

Some of the interesting bird species spotted included a dusky woodswallow, a black-faced cuckoo-shrike and a yellow thornbill. The dusky woodswallow was the only bird not spotted previously in the six years we have been running the bird survey. Ten-year-old Liam did an excellent job in scribing the results for the group that reached the La Trobe Wetlands. Our total of 35 species spotted was up from last year's 29 species, but still well below our 2013 record of 48.

Peter Grenfell
DCMC Education Officer



Junior Ranger Campout - October 20

Six lucky Junior Rangers, whose names were randomly drawn from those who participated in 'Clean up the Parklands' on 3/3, slept under the stars on a cool October evening. Twenty-two campers in total, including parents and helpers, set up their tents on the grassy plains of the Ivanhoe Wetlands.

Ranger Pete had prepared a perfect marsh mellow toasting fire and after dinner James guided a spotlight tour of the Ivanhoe wet lands.



Ivanhoe Wetlands campsite. Left in pristine condition

The Junior Rangers slept well and the next morning tucked into a hearty breakfast. Tents and stuff was packed away and one would never know that they had been there.

They had a great time and went home with lots of memories.

Thanks to James Garriock and Mel Turnbull for sleeping over and ensuring the night went smoothly



Halloween comes to the Park - October 31

For the second year in a row Halloween in all its goryness came to the Darebin Parklands.

On Tuesday 31st October from 6-8.00pm Halloween enthusiasts 'dressed to kill' participated in some fun Halloween activities and everyone had a great spooky time.



Around 35 children visited for Halloween, and they had to participate to earn their treats.

Scary, Hairy Black Spider made with a Chup-a-Chup and an icy pole stick and wool web for it to reside in. [See photos]

Children also did a Bat Fact Quiz with Max to earn Treats for correct or well-reasoned answers.



Special thanks to Maree Trentin who initiated and organized the night. It looks like it may become a regular part of the Junior Rangers calendar

