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FROM THE  
PRESIDENT  
**Peter  
Crowcroft**

## A SEASON OF ABUNDANCE

Hi Friends! I hope everyone has enjoyed the spring wildflower season. The weather has certainly been mixed but, overall, the continual wet conditions have ensured the orchids and flowers have been out in splendid abundance (reflected in our articles headed with words such as 'Bonanza', 'Spectacular' and 'Smorgasbord').

As you know, my favourite activity is admiring and photographing biodiversity, especially that which I have not seen before. Spring

was great for that purpose, and summer promises to be incredible also, with so many insects successfully breeding and feeding on the voluminous vegetation growth. Read more about our interesting finds in the article about the Otway Bioblitz/Great Southern Bioblitz, in which many FEO members participated.

The Friends was the environmental partner for a large running event in September, the Surf Coast Century. Around 1000 participants took to the trails in very challenging weather conditions. Volunteers from FEO

directed spectators and runners, helped refill water bottles and hand out food, and lent a hand wherever they were needed. We designed some interpretive signs to go on the trail so runners could learn more about the environmentally significant animals and areas they were passing. Our contribution was rewarded with a large financial donation, which we will put back into local environmental projects.

On the same weekend the Angair Wildflower Show was back in town. It was fantastic to be part of this event and see so many people appreciating the wonderful environment of the Anglesea area.

Unfortunately, our Yellow-bellied Glider Survey planned for 20 November was cancelled due to wet and windy weather, much to the disappointment of organiser Craig and all who were looking forward to it. It will be rescheduled so watch for the new date.

Our end-of-year celebrations are on 10 December at Moggs Creek picnic ground. I hope many of you can make it - keep a lookout for emails with the finer details, but it is a lunchtime BBQ. And lastly, please make a note of our 2023 AGM date. Cheers! **Pete.**

**STOP PRESS**  
Annual General Meeting  
SUNDAY  
**12 February 2023**  
2pm  
Anglesea CFA Meeting Rooms

*Pictured: Some of the Friends' interpretive signs which were dotted along the Surf Coast Century trail to inform runners about our local environment.*





Above left: The great September weeding team. Right: Matt and Phil, the designated African Weed collectors.

## OUR BEAUTIFUL HEATHLANDS

The spring weeding program on the Anglesea Heathlands at O'Donohue Road was most successful with the three sessions tackling a number of species that were invading the heathlands but in particular the Bluebell Creeper *Billardiera heterophylla* a native to Western Australia.

Growing as a dense shrub or a climbing plant this species produces copious amounts of seeds which are eaten by birds and foxes and spread in their droppings. It can soon smother native ground covers and shrubs invading the bushland. We feel we have made a great impression in keeping this species under control. Another feature of the spring weeding was the removal of hundreds of the introduced South African Weed Orchid *Disa bracteata* tubers from the heathlands. We are just so grateful to our strong support group who come along each month to help with environmental weeding. **Margaret MacDonald**

**SUMMER WEEDING PROGRAM** - Tuesdays 9.30 to 11.00am

13 December: Boneseed removal from River Project site. Meet at corner of Camp Rd and Coalmine Rd

January: No weeding.

9 February: *Hakea sericea* and *Kunzea ambigua*. Meet in Forest Rd Anglesea side of Gum Flat Rd.

## BEARDED BONANZA

Our orchids are always a major attraction in the Anglesea area and this year has been no different. One highlight has been the observation of all four of our local species in the genus *Calochilus*. The Purple Beard Orchid *C. robertsonii* has been particularly prolific with observations of robust, many flowered specimens across much of the park. The rare Red Beard Orchid *C. paludosus* and Copper Beard Orchid *C. campestris* have also been seen in diverse locations.

The locally extremely rare Naked Beard Orchid *C. imberbis*, was observed in Fairhaven and the Forest Rd area of Anglesea although the occasions on which the flowers opened have been as scarce as sightings of the sun. To aid with identification, the fourth edition of Margaret MacDonald's book *Orchids of the Anglesea District* is highly recommended and can be bought from Angair and other local outlets. **Keith McLean.**



Above left to right: Prolific Purple Beard Orchid *C. robertsonii*; rare Red Beard Orchid *C. paludosus* and Copper Beard Orchid *C. campestris* in diverse locations and locally rare Naked Beard Orchid *C. imberbis*



## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES



### ANGAIR SHOW DISPLAY - 17-18 September

Every year the Friends support the Angair Show by providing a new interpretation of some aspect of our work within the Great Otway National Park to stimulate people's knowledge and interest in this great environment.

This year our display highlighted the variety of birds that we have observed within the woodland sections of the Park. Using Pete Crowcroft's great photo of the woodlands, and Marg Lacey's exquisite photos of birds we provided a competition for people to identify the various birds that were resting in the woodland environment. This proved to be a popular activity with many people participating.

Patrick's video of animal sightings from previous camera surveys also proved popular and Kaye prepared a diorama of the Bassian Thrush where people were able to view this bird from the ANGAIR taxidermy collection at close range.

Planning and preparing for our presentation at the show takes many weeks of enjoyable research and activity. Hence a big thank-you to all the team for their efforts prior to the show and during the two days of the event. **Margaret MacDonald.**



*Above: Alison gives Hugh a hand to complete the challenge.*

*Left: Figuring out 'which bird is that?' is a family effort.*

*Right: Not looking thrilled seeing a feral cat visit our camera survey site.*



*Above: Margaret & Patrick were on hand to display Friends' activities and student's questions.*

### LORNE ON THE LAWN - 28 OCTOBER

A special event, the United Nations *Sustainable Development Goals*, was co-ordinated by Year 11 students from Lorne/Aireys Inlet School. Friends of Eastern Otways were invited to participate.

The function was intended for the foreshore lawn but, owing to unpredictable weather, was moved indoors to the Mantra, an excellent venue.

The vibrant gathering consisted of displays and presentations from various local organisations with an important role in a sustainable future.

Musical background was provided by the students who also organised environmental speakers to share their message of sustainability. Over 600 school children from local and surrounding schools attended.

On the theme of 'Life on Land' with our message being 'Supporting the environment today to ensure a sustainable tomorrow', the Friends

prepared a display focused on our activities including children assisting with environmental projects. Eight large photographs featured Revegetation, Koala Count, insect identification, camera monitoring, Junior Ranger activities, orchid surveys, environmental weeding and the MacKillop College students project at Moggs Creek. The aim was to attract interest in getting involved with environmental care in our National Park.

Friends' members, Margaret, Alison, Phil, Gretel, Patrick and Kaye were on hand to answer questions and inform interested students about Friends' volunteer work in the National Park. Special thanks to Margaret for organising the photographs, enlargement and laminating for our attractive display and to Patrick who transported the display stand to the Mantra and its return to ANGAIR later in the day. **Kaye Traynor.**



## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES



### WILDFLOWER WALK - 15 OCTOBER

This popular walk organised by the Friends every spring always attracts a large group of interested people and this year was no exception. The weather was cool but sunny, and a record number of 40 people, including children, met at the Fifth Avenue entrance to O'Donohue's heathland for a circuit walk of 1.5 kms.

Because of the number of participants, we divided into four groups each with a leader, to enable orderly access along the walking track. It was great to see so many children who showed an obvious interest in the flowers and were also keen to identify them from the field guides.

The choice of venue was an excellent one. The profusion of flowering plants throughout the heathland provided an extremely colourful display including Showy Parrot-pea, Dwarf Bush Pea, Pink Bells, Guinea-flowers, Cypress Daisy-bush, Common and Woolly Rice-flowers, Trigger Plants, Twining Fringed Lilies, Sundews and many more.

There was insufficient sun and warmth for the flowers on the magnificent large Sun Orchids to open up, but the stalks and buds were impressive. Large numbers of Donkey and Waxlip Orchids were spread throughout the area. Rabbit Ears and Twisted Sun Orchids were also plentiful but not prepared to open in the cooler conditions. We were able to view some of the extremely rare Angahook Fingers near the end of the wildflower walk.

Following lunch at the ANGAIR office, for those who wanted more wildflowers, a short trip out to Forest Road gave people an opportunity to walk among many different species of orchids including Large White, Small Greencomb, Heart-lipped and Eastern Mantis Spider Orchids and Tall Leek Orchids.

Considering the unpredictable spring weather this year, we were fortunate to spend a wonderful day in the heathland with so many interested and enthusiastic people. Many expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about our special local flowers. **Kaye Traynor.**



*Top: Setting off through a field of flowers.  
Above: Our field guides were handy references.  
Below left to right: Donkey Orchid, Large White Spider Orchids and Pink Bells.*



### END OF YEAR CELEBRATION BBQ

**Saturday December 10 10.00 am – 2.00 pm**

Combined activity with ANGAIR & Parks Vic.

Meet at the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground. Contact: Kaye 0408 551 667

Enjoy a short, guided walk at 10.00am around the Moggs Creek circuit track to see the wealth of flora and listen to the calls of the birds. Or just join us for lunch at 12.00

We are thrilled to once again plan for a BBQ lunch which will be prepared by Parks Vic rangers. Meat, sauce and bread provided. BYO salads, sweets, drinks, plates, glasses, cutlery and chair.



### GRASSTREE SPECTACULAR

One of the outcomes of the controlled burns in the Great Otways National Park has been the mass emergence of the flower spikes of the grasstree *Xanthorrhoea*.

There are two common species of grasstree in the park, *X. australis* and *X. minor subsp. lutea*. The flowers of *X. australis* are borne on a spike above a bare section called the scape and the spike can be up to 3 metres long.

Throughout spring these flowers have made their presence known across our area with tens or, occasionally, hundreds of spikes in some parts of the park. The flower spikes themselves make for a spectacular sight but the plants also serve as a food source for insects, birds and mammals, which feed on the nectar, pollen, and seeds.

Many flower spikes bear the scars of an encounter with a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo has also been spotted feeding on the plants.

The pollen attracts a variety of insects including hornets and butterflies and the nectar attracts wattle birds, honeyeaters and silveryeye amongst many others.

Unfortunately, another increasingly common sight in the park in our grasstree populations is a condition known as phytophthora dieback. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is a soil borne fungal pathogen that attacks root systems, causing host plants to die through lack of nutrients and water.

It is spread through infected plants and contaminated soil so when heading out to see our spectacular grasstrees ensure you clean your footwear with, for example, 20% methylated spirits or use the cleaning stations provided in some sections of the park. **Keith McLean.**

*The mass emergence of flower spikes of Xanthorrhoea australis (top centre & right) and Xanthorrhoea minor subsp. lutea (top left) has provided a bountiful feast for butterflies, hornets, cockatoos, wattlebirds, honeyeaters, silveryeyes and many more species.*





**JUNIOR RANGER FUN**

It's always fun sharing our knowledge of the beautiful flowers in our National Park with others, and the families that came along to participate in Parks Victoria Junior Ranger Program on 21 September really enjoyed the activity.

The Friends had prepared challenge sheets for the children to identify and discover some of the flowers that were in bloom at this time of the year. Thanks to Camille for printing and laminating the sheets for us. With the sun shining, and with plenty of volunteers to help, the children were soon able to place a sticker on each of the plants as they identified them on their challenge sheet. Although the orchids were late in appearing this year, the children were able to find Leopard Orchids, Unicorn Bearded Greenhoods and Heart-lipped Spider Orchids.

It was an opportunity for us to give some guidance to Hugh and Ollie who acted as leaders for one of the small groups. It was exciting to watch their interaction – our leaders of tomorrow! We look forward to continuing to support Parks Vic with their Junior Ranger Programs.

**Margaret MacDonald.**



*Top: Yes, that's one of those...*  
*Left: The group was keen to get started.*  
*Right: Hugh shows how to make a Trigger Plant 'trigger'.*



**Caladenia maritima - RECORD NUMBERS**



Our annual Angahook Fingers *Caladenia maritima* surveys took place over two sessions on 27 September and 10 October. When we looked at the site in mid-September, we were aware that a very high number of orchids were starting to flower. We were not wrong!

Our first count realised 804 flowers, and it was pleasing to see that the colony appeared to be extending in a southerly direction. Our second count gave us another 765 flowers making our overall count 1569 orchids. We were amazed with these results.

The total was our highest count since 2012 when 1272 orchids were recorded. It certainly has been an exceptional year for this little orchid.

We didn't count what we believe are either hybrids or a recessed gene in the maritima type. These have pink flowers and are very beautiful. We may hopefully be able to explore the answer to this question. **Margaret MacDonald.**



*Clockwise from top left: Angahook Fingers, the September team, Kaye and Margaret in October, Rani and Margaret starting the September count.*



**A SMORGASBORD OF SUN ORCHIDS – but short on sunlight**

So many orchids were seen throughout the Great Otway National Park during the spring, with sun orchids appearing in profusion along the sides of the heathland tracks. But we waited and waited for that sunny day to come and tempt them to show their colourful splendour, and our opportunities were very limited.



There were some nice observations of Great Sun Orchids, *Thelymitra aristata*, while Rush-leaf Sun Orchids *T. juncifolia* and Salmon Sun Orchids *T. rubra* put on some great displays on those few days when the clouds parted and the warmth of the sun managed to break through.

A highlight was Keith's discovery of a hybrid between these two species - a single specimen of a Crested Sun Orchid *T. x irregularis* showing features of both parents. However we had just about given the sun orchid game away when, at the beginning of November, we got a few days when those sun orchids that had not self-pollinated exploded and showed themselves in all their brilliance.



There was a great display of Trim Sun Orchids, *T. peniculata*, a group of the extremely rare Merrans Sun Orchid, *T. merraniae*, two Truncate Sun Orchids, *T. x truncata*, and one Peppertop Sun Orchid, *T. brevifolia*. You had to be quick to see them as the sky once again clouded over and the curtains were drawn.

The two late flowering Sun Orchid species Pallid Sun Orchid, *T. pallidiflora*, and Blotched Sun Orchids, *T. benthamiana*, are now flowering in good numbers and fingers crossed will continue to do so over the next few weeks.

Luckily, we do have orchids that don't really need the sun to open, and Spider Orchids continued to flourish throughout the cooler weather. Large White Spider Orchids, *Caladenia venusta*, have had a magnificent flowering season and large colonies of Eastern Mantis Orchids, *C. tentaculata*, have appeared IN November. 'Otway Coast' Heath Leek Orchid, *Prasophyllum spicatum* (Anglesea form) is produced some spectacular flower spikes in many sites. Other interesting orchids to observe included Large and Small Duck orchids, *Caleana major* & *C. minor*.



Continue to look out for Horned Orchids, *Orthoceras strictum*, Cinnamon Bells and Tall Potato Orchids, *Gastrodia* sp., the magnificent Hyacinth Orchids *Dipodium* sp. and the tiny Elbow Orchids, *Thynniorchis huntianus*.

**Margaret MacDonald.**

*PS - Have you bought your new copy of Orchids of the Anglesea District available through ANGAIR, Anglesea Newsagency, or Great Escape Books Aireys Inlet? It is a great local field guide - a possible Christmas present!*



*Clockwise from top right:*

- Great Sun Orchid*
- Salmon Sun Orchid*
- Truncate Sun Orchid*
- Pallid Sun Orchid,*
- Trim Sun Orchid*
- Merrans Sun Orchid*
- Peppertop Sun Orchid*
- Blotched Sun Orchid*
- Crested Sun Orchid*
- Rush-leaf Sun Orchid*





## BIOFEST AND BIOBLITZ WEEKEND

The Otway Biofest took place over the weekend of 29-30 October, and celebrated the wonderful biodiversity that lives in the Surf Coast and Otways regions of south eastern Australia. Experts in their field were leading activities throughout the Otways, such as Adam Fry who co-authored Colac Otway Birds, botanists like Luke Hynes, nocturnal mammalogists like Craig Grabham and myself, or marine biologist educators like Marg O'Toole from Portland. Each leader was passionate about sharing their love for nature and biodiversity.



The event coincided with the 3-day Great Southern Bioblitz, a global initiative to facilitate citizen scientists to observe wild plants and animals that can be found in their local area. Hundreds of areas take place around the world, including the Surf Coast and Otways.

Currently, 60 observers have made 1,700 observations of over 600 species of plant, animal and fungi that can be found here, including the endangered Black Otway Snail, and the rarely seen carnivorous plant, the Forked Sundew.

Surveying the Barham River estuary in Apollo Bay proved successful, with a number of fish species carefully netted, photographed and released. Estuaries provide important habitat for juvenile fish which will live in the safety of the sheltered estuary system until they are large enough to take on the risks of the open ocean.

Young Short-finned Eels, in a phase of their life when they are known as glass eels (for obvious reasons!), were recorded. Their story is quite remarkable. They travelled back from the Coral Sea where their parents laid their eggs on the East Australian Current, rounded Wilson's Prom and along our coast until sensing the fresh water of the Barham and swimming into the estuary.

A night walk near Gellibrand revealed the wonders of the nocturnal biodiversity, with Yellow-bellied Gliders and small insectivorous bats on display. The Yellow-bellied Glider calls like a cackling witch, so even when some participants missed seeing it face to face, they couldn't miss the incredible calls that echoed through the dark and otherwise quiet forest.



*Left: An endangered Otway Black Snail  
Below left: The rarely seen carnivorous Forked Sundew.  
Above: Young Short-finned Eels known as glass eels.*

This year's event proved that there are plenty of people keen to check out the natural value of the wildlife in this special part of Victoria. Everyone enjoyed hearing from experts who have devoted their lives to learning about biodiversity. Really though, just getting outside and reconnecting with the natural world was a positive experience for everyone, and we're looking forward to next year. **Pete Crowcroft.**

## PIZZA AND SLIDE NIGHT

John Lenagan and I gave slideshows of our journeys in 2022 at a social evening at the CFA on 2 September. I had been to WA photographing everything I possibly could, while John did the same but further afield, to the wilds of South American jungles and cloud forests. I do try to be a hard act to follow, but it turned out that I have never been quite so jealous as sitting there looking through John's amazing images of South American birds, moths, reptiles, and sloths. It was a great night enjoyed by everyone, and the pizza was great too. **Pete Crowcroft**

*Right: A rare Sand Dune Frog snapped by Pete in WA.*



### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members and look forward to seeing them at our activities.

- . Fiona Tinney and family, Aireys Inlet
- . Terri Moyle and family, Bells Beach
- . Carmen Koster and family, Anglesea
- . Jenny Featonby, Grovedale
- . Matt Jones and family, Torquay
- . Turner family, Point Cook





**OH DEER!**

Deer are emerging as one of Australia’s most serious environmental and agricultural threats. Victoria has possibly the largest deer population in Australia, estimated at more than a million animals (Source: Invasive Species Council)

The deer population in Victoria is expanding rapidly and invading new areas. With no predators, and great habitat flexibility, deer are set to become one of Victoria’s most damaging animal invaders.

As a response to the growing deer issue in Victoria, the State Government released the Deer Control Strategy, detailing the state’s plan to reduce the impact deer are having across Victoria. Link to the strategy: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/deer-control-program/deer-control-strategy>

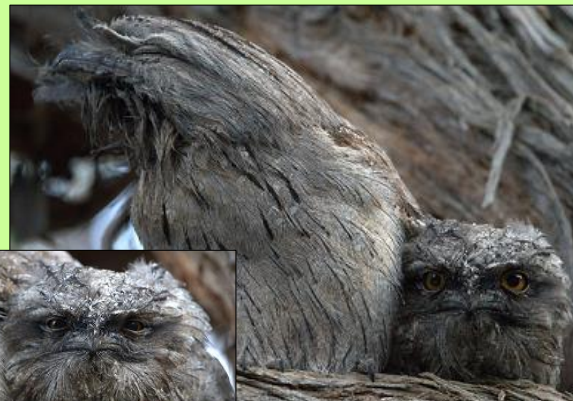
To help achieve the strategy’s objectives, the Victorian Government has provided funding to government land managers, including Parks Victoria, to implement control programs around the state.

Deer monitoring and ground control works will be implemented in the Great Otway National Park in 2023. Focal areas include Anglesea Heath, Ironbark Basin, Carlisle Heath, Barwon River Catchment, Cape Otway, Hordern Vale and Wet Sclerophyll rainforest. The deer control will be undertaken by qualified Parks Victoria contractors under the supervision of Park Rangers.

We have four species of deer in the Otways - Fallow, Red, Sambar and Hog Deer. All these species will be targeted by the ground shooting operations. If you see a deer, please report your sighting to Deer Scan. <https://www.feralscan.org.au/deerscan/>

DeerScan is a free resource that anyone can use to record sightings of deer, report the damage (or problems) they cause, and record control actions. It has been developed to address the growing problem with free-ranging populations of deer in Australia, and it is intended to assist landholders, communities, government, industry, and pest controllers to use data on deer to support strategic pest management.

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please reach out to me via email: [carlie.bronk@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:carlie.bronk@parks.vic.gov.au). **Carlie Bronk - West Region Deer Program Coordinator, Parks Victoria**



**FEATHERED FAMILIES**  
Scarlet Robin, Tawny Frogmouth,  
Red Wattlebird, Australian Wood  
Duck and Spotted Pardalote.



Photos by  
Keith McLean.



Hello Friends,

I hope everyone in the Friends has had a chance to see some of the spring wildflowers on offer. Here is my photo of a lovely Beard Orchid I found whilst removing Boneseed in the Anglesea Heath.

Normally at this time of year our ParksVic staff are busy getting the Great Otway National Park ready for the high fire danger period. Like last season, DELWP/Parks Vic staff under the Forest Fire Management banner, will measure the extra moisture in the landscape and accordingly perform fuel reduction burns within the summer period. However, as we enter another La Nina season with the prospect of another wet summer, fuel reduction burning takes on a different form, which I feel provides a wider range of conditions for our species. I have noticed that the fuel reduction burns completed last year were closer to the fire mosaic that is promoted within ecology. Gullies in the landscape remain unburnt and trees are more resilient with extra moisture in the leaves.

One major aspect of fire preparation is the kilometres of firebreak slashing that occurs around townships and in strategic places across the Otways. This year the team are trying to balance wet conditions, a late orchid season and budgetary timelines.

With the major flooding that is happening across the state, the Great Otway National Park has largely been spared (hopefully I haven't spoken too soon).

Many tracks however are in a sorry state, with some washed out and rutted. Some seasonally open tracks are still closed, but we are aware of most of the damage and have begun the process of repairing.

In the Lorne area, some walking tracks are shut due to damage and minor landslips, including the Wye to Kennett River Walk and Cumberland River Walk. Check the Parks Victoria Website for information if you want to walk these tracks.



At this year's ANGAIR Wildflower and Art Weekend, Parks Victoria staff promoted the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Marine National Parks. The Marine National Park system was established in Victoria in 2002 to protect areas of unique and diverse marine environment in the same way that our beloved National Parks protect some of the best natural areas of our state.

On 13 November the Friends of Point Addis and ANGAIR organised a celebration, and by all reports this was a fantastic event. If you missed it, here is a link to the Parks Victoria website with some wonderful videos and photos.

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/explore-nature/marine-national-parks-and-sanctuaries-20th-anniversary>

Thank you once again to everybody for helping us look after the Great Otway National Park, and I hope that everyone has a good summer. **Matt Russell.**

**SUMMER SAFETY IN THE PARK** - In every November Ranger Report I provide a quick note about summer safety in the National Park. While these will be fairly well known to FEO members, we unfortunately encounter people who get into some tricky situations. Here are a few tips from our rangers to be safe outdoors:

- **Plan your trip** – Let someone know where you are going and avoid extreme fire danger days.
- **Download the VicEmergency app** – I don't need to mention how important this tool is for early information about an emergency.
- **Pack a hat and carry plenty of water** – we often provide first aid for park visitors who have insufficient water for hiking in the heat.
- **Carry a map** – Either take a photo or download a map before starting in case you lose phone reception, Google maps cannot find the location, or the phone battery has run out. Better still, carry a paper version.
- **Beware of snakes and mosquitoes** – most snakes will move on if they see us, so just give them space. Wear suitable footwear and leg coverings. This summer I have also added a caution about mosquitoes. There are some unpleasant health risks such as Ross River Fever so wear some repellent.