

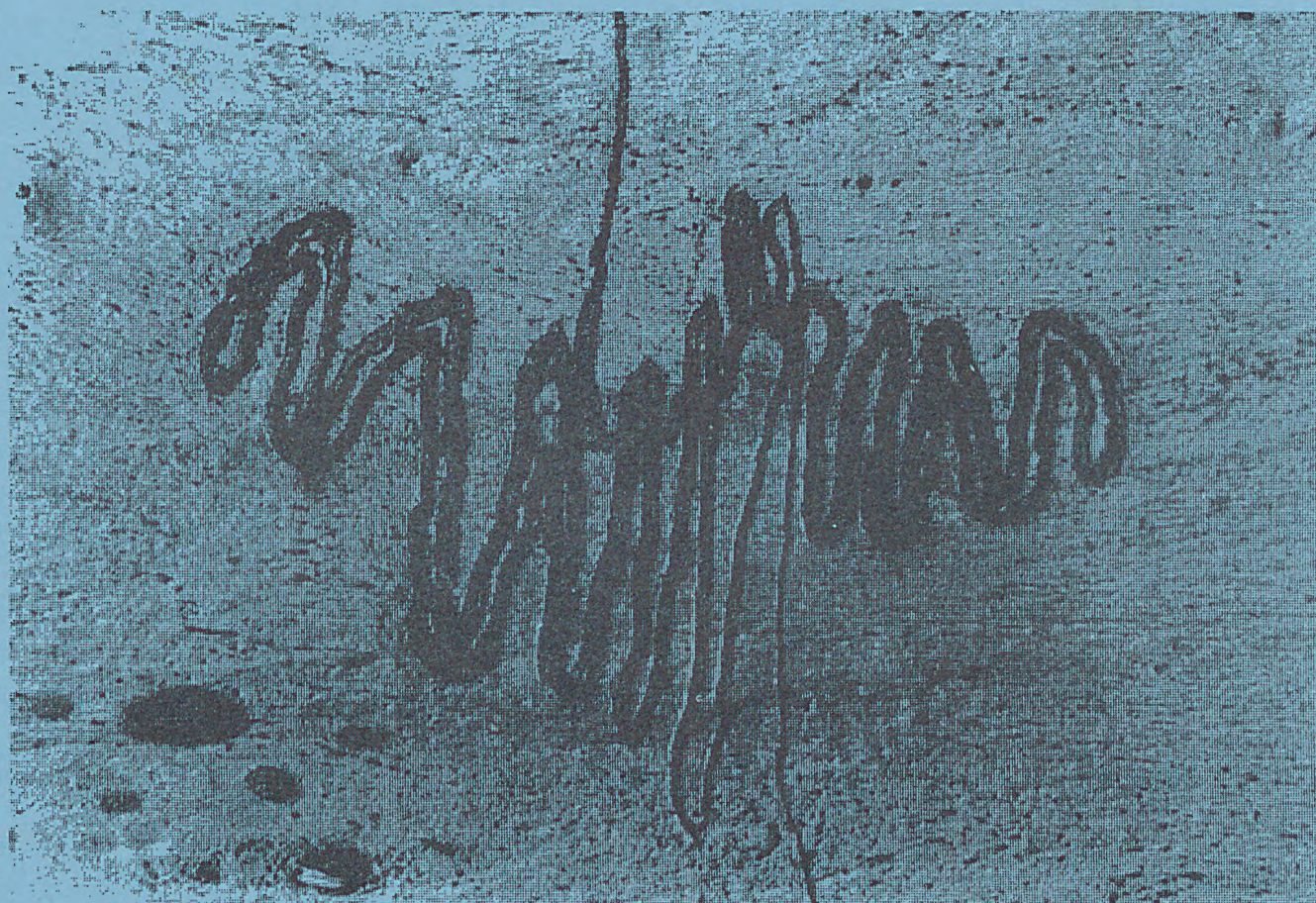


WHIRRAKEE

April 1993

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO
FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3550

Office Bearers for 1992 - 1993

President	Rob Moors	Mandurang South Rd. Sedgwick	39 6254
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<i>Whirrakee</i> contact	Tom Burton	5 Naranghi Drive, Bendigo	42 5518

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single \$25; Family \$30; Concession: Single \$20; Family \$25. *Whirrakee* subscription only is \$25.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Department of Food and Agriculture (formerly DARA) Meeting Room, Epsom. Meetings start at 7:30pm and conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month in members' homes. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearers listed above, together with the following members: J Cleary; W Demeo; R Orr; R Ruddick; M Stone; L Hamilton.

Excursions The assembly point for excursions is outside the Ministry of Education complex in Havlin Street East, Bendigo, unless otherwise specified. Full-day excursions normally commence at 10am (usually on a Sunday); half-day excursions normally commence at 2pm and may be either on a Saturday or Sunday. Full-day or half-day excursions are usually held on the weekend following the General Meeting. Campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has 2 active sub-groups:

Bird Observers Group: meets on the first Friday of the month, at 7:30pm. The venue for meetings is the Department of Food and Agriculture (formerly DARA) Meeting Room, Epsom.

President: Tom Burton

Secretary: John Guley

Mammal Survey Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8pm in members' homes as announced in the monthly diary.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (39 5710)

Secretary: David McDonald, "Mulgara", Guys Hill Road, Strathfieldsaye (39 5756)

Equipment Officer: Ian Fenselau

Vice Chairman: John Guley

Front Cover

Photographer: David McDonald

Insect tracks on a Snow Gum *Eucalyptus pauciflora* at Lake Eucumbene, Kosciusko National Park, January 1993.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 14, No.3, April 1993

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.

Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.

Editor's note

Probably the worst ecological disaster to befall Bendigo in recent years is the arrival of the Common Myna, which now lives up to its name in the Mandurang and Epsom areas, and possibly elsewhere. This bird has spread in recent years so that it now reaches the Murray (see this month's bird notes), and as there is variant of Murphy's Law that states that humans can only eradicate desirable species, it is unlikely that we shall ever dislodge it.

However, it is possible for us to fight a rearguard action, as suggested in Margaret Watts's article on page 4, to make life difficult for the Myna, and suggestions were received at the last Bird Observers Group meeting. Any further suggestions will be received gratefully.

Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Back issues are available at a cost of 80 cents each. Complete sets are available at \$ 8.00 for each volume. The above prices do not include postage.

Bees in Nest Boxes

Author: Bill Flentje

In the February issue of *Whirrakee*, mention was made in the article 'A Cosy Abode for Kookaburras' that bees had invaded two nest boxes, one intended for Ringtail Possums, the other for Eastern Rosellas. Over the years, on three occasions, we have also experienced the unhappy, and even tragic invasion of bees into our Eastern Rosella nest boxes. On one occasion I was unaware that the bees had taken over the box when five baby parrots were in the box. By the time I found out and lowered the box, the babies were dead. However, in the 1991 season, we noticed bees entering the box one morning, when again baby parrots were in the box, and the parents were quite concerned. Acting on wonderful advice from John Burtonclay, I sprayed up into the top of the box with fly spray - I think it was Aerogard or similar. Within 15 minutes, the bees had vacated and no more were to be seen. About two weeks later, about six or seven baby parrots left the box totally unharmed, and I captured three of them leaving the nest box on the video camera. Now I leave about 3/4 of an inch space between the top of the nest box and the tin cover above it. Since the bees hang from the roof, the gap not only makes it easier to spray in to the bees and less spray onto the babies, but the bees also don't like the light coming in from the gap.

We had no trouble in the 1992 season and raised seven baby Eastern Rosella in one nest box and five from the other nest box.

One Home Less

Author: Lyndall Rowley

In early January 1993, John Robinson and I were driving through Longlea Forest when we noticed that a very large tree had been felled. Immediately we stopped to take a look. As we approached the remains, it became evident that the tree was substantially larger than the surrounding trees and that it had been, in fact, alive and hollow. The tree had been cut for some time and a large section of the base had been left on the ground - probably too heavy to remove.

At first a sense of disbelief filled us both; then disgust and outrage. Who did this? Was it legally or illegally cut down? And why would anyone cut down an old and invaluable habitat tree?

The next working day I contacted the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Mark Riley, a park ranger, said that he would go out and have a look as the forest officer was on leave. (In a subsequent discussion with Mr Riley, he stated that an estimated three hundred trees had been illegally cut from the Whipstick last winter!)

A week later I talked to Bob Dean, the forest officer for the area, and found that he was aware of this particular tree's fate. Apparently the tree had been illegally cut down about six months ago (during winter) and was 'probably used for dry firewood'. (Or was it selected for use by misguided aviculturists?). Mr Dean had recognised that it was a habitat tree but it was not a 'marked' habitat tree. Around the same time in a nearby area, green trees had also been illegally cut down for fencing material such as strainers and stays. Mr Dean said that sometimes even green trees with dry limbs are cut down if people are after dry firewood; and that illegal cutting is usually done during winter for domestic purposes.

The forestry prescription for habitat trees is five per hectare. But there may actually be more, depending upon the area and each situation. As well as these, the forest officer also has to look for five potential habitat trees in the same area and ensure their protection. Official habitat trees are marked. Any standing dry trees that are going to be harvested are marked, and the operation is supervised.

Ironically, for a first offence there is no differentiation in the law between a branch and a habitat tree; and an 'on the spot' fine is \$ 100. Second offences are automatically court cases. However, legal action is time-consuming and expensive and the consequent fines are relatively small - a reflection of the magistrates' (and the public's?) attitudes.

Paul Foreman of DCNR is currently working on plans to delineate more specific 'Domestic Firewood Areas' of 20 hectares or more throughout suitable areas in our forests. At the moment, a

licensed person is able to collect timber on the ground practically anywhere in the forests. A licence for domestic firewood does not include standing trees - dry or green. The new (proposed) system would enable closer monitoring and protection of the flora and fauna.

Mr Foreman, along with Cathy Gosby, is also involved in the development of a new Wood Utilization Plan for the Bendigo Region which will govern harvesting for the next three years. The draft will be advertised in March and public comments invited.

This opportunity for public participation is ideal. There are probably many Field Naturalists who know of important areas for flora and/or fauna which are potentially at risk in our state forests but are unknown to DCNR. Now is your chance to have an input.

Ongoing is our opportunity to be aware of illegal harvesting and to let the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources know. Rangers and forest officers cannot be everywhere and around all of the time. Besides, I feel that it's up to us to look out for our precious forests and their inhabitants. Please report any evidence of removal of trees. And if you come across something in progress, try to get some details like the car registration and ring DCNR (ph.446666) as soon as possible. If it's on the weekend, ring the police through D24 and they will contact a ranger.

Stop the Common Mynas

Author: Margaret Watts

My husband Fred, and I look forward to the arrival of *Whirrakee* each month and read it with pleasure. However we are becoming more and more alarmed at mention of Common Mynas in the Bird Notes and Observations with never a word of anyone endeavouring to **kill** the birds before they become really numerous in the Bendigo area.

As former residents of Melbourne we are only too well aware of the harm these unpleasant avian introductions can cause to our native bird populations. They are well known as destroyers of other birds' nests, eggs and young and for taking over nest holes and other nesting sites. They are most unpleasant birds with not a single redeeming feature and it will be a very sad day for Bendigo if, or when, they become established in this city. Please do everything in your power to have these pests exterminated before their numbers become too great to be dealt with successfully.

What don't we know about local birds and what could we do to find out Report from the Bird Observers Group Meeting of 5.3.93

Author: Anne Bridley

The bird lists and observations that have been made by members provide a fairly good coverage of the distribution of birds in forest areas to the north, east and south of Bendigo. However, we do have some gaps as follows:

Threatened species: we have quite a high number of threatened species in our region and most people probably already put in observations when they see one.

Action: take particular note of the habitat used.

Trends in bird numbers in our district: it is known that some birds have declined markedly over the past few decades. But we lack hard data about the status of many of our bush birds.

Action: it has been decided that a number of sites will be surveyed at about quarterly intervals on a long term basis. this will give a much better indication of what is happening to our birds. David McDonald will coordinate these counts.

Areas not covered: these are mostly west of Bendigo, eg. the Lockwood and Shelbourne Forests.

Action: a group is to go out to the Shelbourne Forest on the 21 March to do some bird counts.

Habitat poorly covered: our two major waterways, the Loddon and the Campaspe Rivers as well as our smaller creeks and their associated River Red Gums woodlands.

Action: Any lists and observations from these habitats are welcome.

Grasslands: we have insufficient records of grassland birds such as Golden-headed Cisticola, Brown Songlark, Singing Bushlark, Richards Pipit and White-fronted Chats.

Action: any records of these birds would add to our knowledge of their distribution.

Breeding records: these are generally lacking for many birds. Knowledge of the breeding distribution is particularly important for the conservation of a species.

Action: any welcome.

Night birds: these may be under-reported compared to diurnal species. We have fewest records of Barn Owls and Spotted Nightjars.

Action: any records of night birds are welcome.

Migrants: we generally know when migrants arrive. However, knowledge of when they leave is sometimes scanty. This is partly because birds such as cuckoo are all silent when the breeding season is over. Dollarbirds and Sacred Kingfishers are two species where we do not have good records after December.

Action: take note of dates of summer migrants after mid-February and winter migrants after mid-August. Visit rivers in February and March.

The following species are threatened in Victoria and have occurred in the Bendigo region:

Malleefowl, Plains-wanderer, Baillon's Crake, Painted Snipe, Bush Thick-knee, Australian Bustard, Brolga, Australasian Bittern, Little Bittern, Magpie Goose, Freckled Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Grey Goshawk, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Square-tailed Kite, Grey Falcon, Black Falcon, Barking Owl, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Pink Cockatoo, Turquoise Parrot, Swift Parrot, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Grey-crowned Babbler, Painted Honeyeater, Regent Honeyeater.

Other threatened Victorian species are:

King Quail, Red-chested Button-quail, Lewin's Rail, Little Tern, Fairy Tern, Hooded Plover, Eastern Curlew, Cox's Sandpiper, Cape Barren Goose, Sooty Owl, Red-tailed Black-cockatoo, Glossy Black-cockatoo, Superb Parrot, Regent Parrot, Scarlet-chested Parrot, Orange-bellied Parrot, Ground Parrot, Red-lored Whistler, Western Whipbird, Slender-billed Thornbill, Redthroat, Striated Grasswren, Eastern Bristlebird, Rufous Bristlebird, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, White-browed Treecreeper, Helmeted Honeyeater, Grey-fronted Honeyeater, Apostlebird, Spotted Bowerbird, Black-eared Miner.

The Atlas of Victorian Wildlife would like to have all records of these species. They would also like to have all breeding records of the following colonial species which are known to occur in our area:

Pied Cormorant, Darter, Australian Pelican, Whiskered Tern, Glossy Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Rufous Night-heron, Little, Intermediate and Great Egret.

Notes and Observations: March 1993 Meeting
Author: Bird Observers Group

Highlights

Australasian Bittern (1) Carnies Reserve on Bullock Creek, 7.2.93
Australian Crake (1) Strathfieldsaye, 2.3.93

Infrequently reported

Barn Owl (1 dead) Huntly, early '93
Southern Whiteface (3) Native Gully, 1.3.93
Caspian Tern (1) Corop, Jan '93

Pest Species

Common Myna (3) Echuca East, early Feb '93
" " (25) Mandurang, 3.3.93
" " (16) Strathfieldsaye, 14.2.93
" " (1) Strathfieldsaye, 2.3.93

Migrants

Sacred Kingfisher (1) Campaspe River, 4.3.93
Dollarbird (2) Campaspe River, 4.3.93

Breeding

Whiskered Tern (4prs, 10+Y) Prairie, 2.1.93
White-faced Heron (4 chicks raised) White Hills, Dec'92 - Feb'93
Australasian Grebe (10 chicks) Strathfieldsaye, 2.3.93
" " (2 chicks) Longlea, 21.2.93
Little Black Cormorant (2N,Y) TangTang, Dec '92
Little Pied Cormorant (DY) Tang Tang, Dec '92
Brolga (N) Mitiamo, 14.1.93
Yellow-billed Spoonbill (N,Y) Tang Tang, Dec '92
Pacific Heron (N,Y) Tang Tang, Dec '92
Red-rumped Parrot (DY) Terrick Terrick, Dec '92
Spotted Nightjar (E) Whipstick, 27.2.93
Buff-rumped Thornbill (DFY) Wellsford, 27.2.93
Yellow Thornbill (1 DFY) Sweenies Creek, 1.3.93
Magpie-lark (1 DFY) Longlea, 5.3.93

Feeding Behaviour

Clamorous Reed Warbler (1) taking insects from river bank, Campaspe River, 4.3.93
Black Swan (1) taking leaves from tree, Kennington, 3.3.93
Sacred Kingfisher (1) taking skink, Mandurang, 24.2.93
Willie Wagtail (1) feeding in flight on moth held in claw, Epsom, 8.2.93
" " (8) foraging together, Mandurang, 26.2.93
Blue-faced Honeyeater (6) taking spiders from wall, Strathfieldsaye, 3.3.93

Other Observations

Australian Hobby (1) Bendigo, 24.2.93
Painted Button-quail (2) Mandurang South, 27.2.93
Black-fronted Plover (1) Junortoun, 10.2.93
Speckled Warbler (1) Native Gully, 1.3.93
Wedge-tailed Eagle (1) Strathfieldsaye, 2.3.93

Lists

Loddon River Mar '93
Strathfieldsaye 22 & 29.12.92, 2.3.93
Sweenies Creek Mar '93
Mandurang Forest Mar '93
Russel Bridge Mar '93
Tang Tang 20.12.92

Notes

Red Wattlebird numbers usually decline in the Bendigo district over summer and revive in autumn, probably because of the gap between the end of flowering of Yellow Gum and the beginning of flowering of Grey Box and Box Mistletoe. So it has been this year, and the Wattlebird numbers have built up again. Musk Lorikeets are also feeding on the mistletoes. The records of Sacred Kingfishers and Dollarbirds are unusually late but this probably reflects the lack of records rather than the lack of birds. We tend to notice the arrival of migrants but not their departure.

The unusually wet summer has prolonged the breeding efforts this year; many species are still raising young, and there may be more to come. It should be remembered, however, that some of our bush birds normally have a long breeding period, and in some, such as the New Holland Honeyeater, the autumn breeding is almost as productive as the spring breeding. On the other hand, Red-browed Firetail juveniles make up an unusually large component of the population at Big Hill at the moment: they have usually mostly acquired their red eyebrows and lost their cream gapes by this stage.

From the Syllabus of the Mid-Murray Field Naturalists Club

June 12-14 (Queens Birthday Weekend) Campout (or previous weekend if so proclaimed) to uncleared private land south of and near Hattah Lakes National Park.
Visitors are always welcome at excursions but it is important to check with the leader, Bert Curtis (Nyah 230556), in case there is a sudden change in arrangement.

Bird Observers Group - Bird of the Night Discussion

Author: Bill Flentje

Subject: White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus*

Calls: The main call is a scratchy syllable repeated several times, and can be vocalized as “sherp, sherp sherp”. Another call is a somewhat quiet, short whistle, repeated three or four times, then a longer interval before repeating. However, as the birds are usually in small colonies several birds may be calling together. The agitation call, when danger threatens, is similar to that of other honeyeaters which are usually also in the near vicinity, such as Fuscous, White-plumed Honeyeater etc.

Appearance: A relatively small honeyeater 13.5 cm long. The upper plumage of the body is in general olive-green, and underneath is whitish. The crown of the head and back of the neck are black, but a white band partly separates the crown and back of the neck. The bill is dark, and above the eye is a small crescent-shaped, orange-red area of skin.

Immatures have a brownish head, and could be mistaken for Brown-headed Honeyeaters, but the latter lack the orange colour of the area of skin above the eye of the immature White-naped Honeyeater.

Habitat: They can be found in most habitats of the Bendigo District during March to August, but are not common during September to February, they usually migrate to Eastern and Southern Victoria to breed. Although it is not common, heavy flowering of eucalypts outside the breeding season may result in an influx of locally large numbers of White-naped Honeyeaters, and sometimes together with Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.

Breeding: The nest is built of shreds of bark, and grass, cup-shaped, and attached to twigs towards the outer ends of eucalypt foliage. They lay two or three eggs, buff-coloured with red-brown spots, denser at the larger end. The incubation period is about 14 days, and the young fledge in another 14 days.

Food: These honeyeaters mainly eat insects and spiders in the foliage and blossoms of eucalypts, but they also gather nectar and pollen from the blossoms.

General: Often found feeding in flocks of about twenty birds. Occasionally seen searching under bark for insects. Rarely, birds have been found nesting in the southern parts of the District, but they usually migrate to more southern and eastern areas of higher rainfall. In the latter half of the summer, they are often found drinking at dams in the forest, especially when some eucalypts are in blossom.

Spiders of Melbourne

For those members who, at the last general meeting, have ordered the new booklet on spiders in the Melbourne area please pay for these at the next meeting. The bulk order price is \$ 7.50 per copy. If you are unsure about whether this concerns you please ring Jane Cleary on 484396.

Mammal Survey Group Meeting Report.

24th February 1993

Report by the Secretary: David Mc Donald.

The February meeting at A Spence's home was attended by 12 members. It was pleasing to see some new member interest, with Trish Pilling, a dedicated and registered wildlife shelter operator, and Kerry Norris also attending.

Excursion report.

The November 1992 inspections of the Spring Gully nest-box sites recorded 17 Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps* in each of the two nest-box sites surveyed. No other mammals were recorded using the nest-boxes. A highlight was the record of three different aged young Sugar Gliders in the one nest-box. Also of interest was a nest-box with an Owlet-nightjar and young, and 2 white eggs, possibly Kookaburra, in a large box.

Notes and Observations

Brush-tailed Phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa*

- 1 In nest-box One Tree Hill Regional Park - November 1992. Also use recorded in other nest-boxes in OTHRP and Mandurang State Forest.
- 1 Twin Rivers Rd Eppalock.

Brush-tailed Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*

- 1 Moors' shed, Sedgwick.
- 1 Licking J Guley's foot outside his front door, Junortoun.

W. Holsworth reported the longevity of a Red Kangaroo being tagged twenty-eight years ago, and was at least two years old at the time. A increased incidence in fox *Vulpes vulpes* sitings was also recorded, particularly in the Strathfieldsaye-Mandurang areas.

Activities Diary

Wednesday 31st March 1993. Bat trapping (mist nests), Lake Weeroona. BBQ tea from 6 p.m.
Sunday April 25th 1993. Nest-box check: Spring Gully Res. 10 a.m. at Shakespeare St. gate.
Sunday May 2nd 1993. Nest-box check: Spring Gully Res. 10 a.m. at Shakespeare St. gate.
date to be decided: Mammal trapping in South Mandurang State Forest.

Speaker. Dr. W. Holsworth

Topic: Estimating Animal Home Ranges by Grid-Trapping and Radiotelemetry.

This topic was prompted by a recent paper by Quin *et al.* (1992) which examined home range estimation comparisons between grid-trapping and radiotelemetry techniques to determine Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps*, home ranges.

There needs to be some recognition of how the terms *home range* and *territory* are used. *Territory* refers to the area that is usually defended by the animal and includes activities such as fighting, scent marking or calling. *Home range* refers specifically to the area the animal usually uses in its normal day to day activities which include food gathering, mating and caring for young (Burt 1943 cited in Quin *et al.* 1992).

Past grid-trapping techniques have been used to determine home ranges, but it appears that inadequate emphasis has previously been placed upon the frequency of re-trapping at any particular point. Past efforts to determine an animals home-range resulted in recording nearly the entire area in which animals were re-trapped (after marking the animal in some way). This has resulted in an over-estimation of normal daily use by including re-trapping records in areas where the animal might have made an infrequent excursion, such as escaping from a predator. To support this view, Quin *et al.* (1992) found by radiotelemetry of *P.breviceps*, that the animal's normal area of use

(home range) was much smaller than the entire area used over a long period, the maximum home ranges for *P. breviceps* being from 3.5-5.4 hectares. Thus there is a concentration of activity within certain areas, and lesser excursions by the animal outside this area.

Frequency of the animal's use of the area can be illustrated by connecting isopleths or areas of similar frequency (rather like the isobars on a weather map). These isopleths can then be used to show the most often used areas:— i.e. home range (fig. 1b). A species' home range might also alter in response to changing needs of the animal at particular times. For example changes in nectar supply might concentrate *P. breviceps* activity on a particular tree until this food supply was exhausted. This would then require a change in home range to access a new nectar source. Therefore in determining home range a time element must also be considered.

fig. 1a. — past home range estimates from grid-trapping

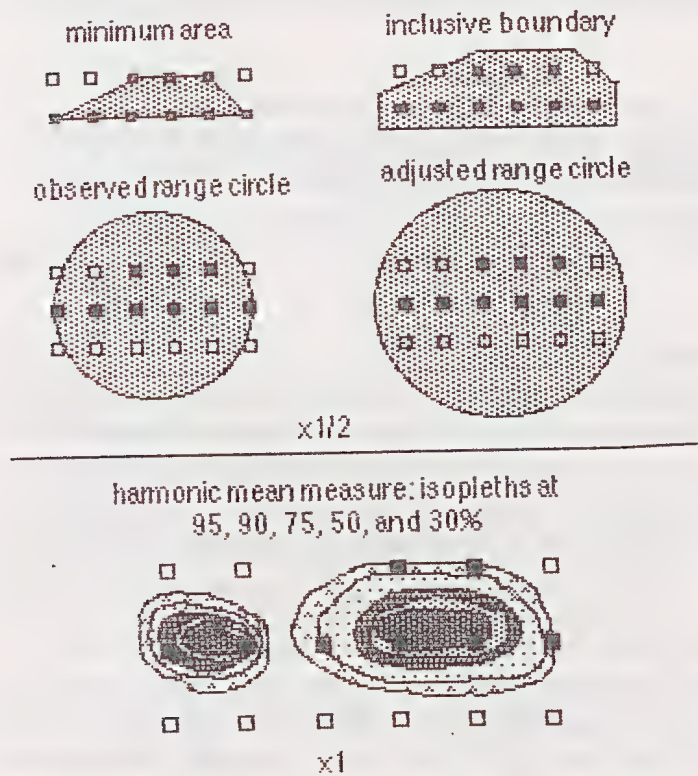


fig. 1b. — home range estimate using isopleths

- traps where animals caught
- traps where animals not caught

Quin *et al.* (1992) shows several examples of home range estimates by grid-trapping, which can produce a number of possible outcomes (fig. 1a). Firstly recording the area of all the exact trapping points (minimum area), secondly allowing a 50% increase in area around all trapping points (inclusive boundary). These are both over-estimates but the second method covers almost twice the area of the other. Other methods using circles to encompass the entire trapping grid indicated even larger home ranges such as the observed range circle and adjusted range circle (fig. 1a). However by using isopleths calculated from a harmonic mean measure method (fig. 1b), for grid-trapping and radio-telemetry, they were able to determine *P. breviceps* home ranges from a minimum of 12 captures (50% isopleth) for trapping grids and 36 fixes (95% isopleth) for radio-telemetry. It is suggested from their research that this method may be appropriate for determining home ranges for other animals, and is useful in highlighting shifts in home-range and centres of activity.

Reference:

Quin, D.G., Smith, A.P., Green, S.W., Hines, H.B. (1992) Estimating the Home Ranges of Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) (Marsupialia: Petauridae), from Grid-trapping and Radiotelemetry. *Wildlife Res.* 19. 471-87

From the Mailbag

Author: Elaine Mathison

Each month the club receives a number of newsletters and magazines: some by subscription and some in exchange for *Whirrakee*. These are available from the Club Librarian at our meetings.

PARK WATCH (VNPA), No. 172, March 1993

Cornerstone of the Continent”: A history of Wilson’s Promontory by Jane Lennon, describes what happened on the Prom before it became a National Park. Prior to European activity there is evidence of Aboriginal occupation going back several thousand years. Despite its isolation Wilson’s Promontory has seen many uses since then. These included sealing, whaling, timber milling, mining, fishing and pastoralism.

“35 Years Hard Labour: Regreening Lanark” by Francine Pullman details John Fenton’s development of the barren Western Victorian farm into a fertile, well-treed property. He has planted thousands of indigenous trees and shrubs, and re-established a large wetland. He began his farm conservation activities years before their value was realized, facing the scorn of many “traditional” farmers for doing so; he is now reaping the rewards while other land-owners struggle with degraded farmlands.

AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY (Australian Museum) Volume 24, No.3, Summer 1992-93
“Of Koalas, Tree-Kangaroos and Men” by Roger Martin, looks into the problem of koala populations which increase to the point of stripping bare the food source, resulting in malnutrition and death of many animals. Unlike some other creatures, koalas do not regulate their numbers in accordance with the food supply, and there are no natural predators. The writer examines the role of aborigines in controlling koala numbers in years gone by and visits New Guinea to investigate the effect of hunting on tree-kangaroo populations.

“Funnel-webs: Separating Fact from Fiction”. It is claimed that they can leap tall people, live under water and bite through shoe leather ! This article by Mike Gray deals with many of the common myths about these dangerous spiders. The different species and their geographical areas are described, along with details about funnel-web habitat and behaviour. Sensible information is given for those who live in areas where these spiders are found.

“Elizabeth Gould 1804-1841” by Maureen Lambourne. “John Gould is well known as colonial naturalist through his brilliantly illustrated books. Less well known is that many of those lavish illustrations were done by his long-suffering wife Elizabeth, who manage to circumnavigate the world, produce 600 illustrations and raise six children during her short life. The story of this remarkable woman provides a demonstration of the immense problems involved in combining the role of wife and artist in 19th century society before the notion of the career woman existed.”

“Shark Attack: But Who’s the Victim ?” by John D. Stevens and John R. Paxton. Sharks are generally seen as “primitive, vicious, mindless eating-machines to be killed at every opportunity”. But with more accurate information becoming available about them we are beginning to appreciate that sharks play a vital role in marine ecosystems, and to understand that they are being attacked to the point of endangering their continued existence. Commercial and sports fishing and beach meshing are contributing to the decline of shark species in Australian waters.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Easter Campout 1993

Dates: Friday 9 - Monday 12 April

Location: Mt Cole and Mt Buangor State Parks

Campsite: Ditchfield picnic area and camping ground. Approximatey 11 km out of Raglan.

How to get there: From Bendigo proceed via Kangaroo Flat, Laanecoorie, Eddington and Havelock to Maryborough. Then follow the Pyrenees Highway to Avoca and Amphitheatre. Turn off the Highway, and proceed south towards Beaufort. The divergent turnoff to Raglan can be missed, so watch out. Distance from Bendigo to Raglan 134 km.

Directions from Raglan:

1. Turn **left** at the T-junction signposted "Western Highway".
2. Turn **right** at the intersection signposted "Cave Hill Creek, Elmhurst, Mt Cole 6, Beaufort 10, Amphitheatre 22".
3. The road leaves Raglan on a big a big curve for 2 km heading towards the hills.
4. Turn **left** at the crossroads signposted "TV station 17, Ditchfield camp, Mt Cole Forest, Elmhurst, Beaufort, Cave Hill Creek".
5. 6.8 km up the road into the forest, find a Y-junction with two signposts:
Left - Ditchfield Road, Right - to Ditchfield Camp. Turn **right**.
6. A little over 1 km further on, turn **right** at a signpost "Ditchfield's/Camp Road" The camp is another 1 km along here.

Facilities

1. Limited camping space in the trees behind the wooden barrier, against which cars may be parked.
2. Some space for caravans and campervans on each side of the road around the central grassed area.
3. Pit toilets, fireplaces, tables, shelter building
4. Plenty of water for washing is available from a small dam close by. Bring drinking water.

Activities: Walking on formed tracks (waterfalls, lookouts)
Scenic drives to points of interest
Bird watching
Botany
Campfire socialising, chit chat, idle gossip, argument. speculation, philosophising,
post election analysis, aimless trivia - all good clean fun !

Please notify **John Guley 493479**

A Visit to Mt Cole

Author: John C. Ipsen

Jean and I were wending our way home after spending a few days on the south Coast; as we were leaving Beaufort we followed signs that pointed to a picnic ground on Mt Cole. We travelled along tree-lined roads to a track that led through Manna Gums and wattles to Richards Picnic Ground. From the car park a track led through wattles and tea-tree scrub over a small creek with an ornamental bridge over a stream lined with natural stone; the creek which passes through this area provides visitors with cool, clear water from the mountain slopes.

The picnic area has every facility that the day visitor would require and tracks are provided to lead to views of the mountain side.

In the evening we walked along a sloping track and observed Cockatoos, Grey Fantails, Yellow Robins and Grey Thrush, then using a spot-light we observed a wallaby that appeared very tan coloured in bright light; several Brush-tailed Possums also came into our light.

We spent a quiet night expecting night bird calls, however others could be better treated. In the morning we made several short walks that provided more birds; the ferns by the way-side were very interesting; one track led up Cave Creek providing a good study in water plants and some of the early flowering shrubs. We could not go as far as we liked owing to our footwear stopping us at the creek crossing.

As we left this spot to drive west around the mountain we came to a cairn with a tablet in memorial to the original settlers at "Glenlogie" the early station homestead dated 1840 and said to be the earliest in the district.

From here on home through Avoca.

THE BENDIGO REGION CONSERVATION STRATEGY HAS COMMENCED

Author: Kevin Tanner

WHAT IS THE BENDIGO REGION CONSERVATION STRATEGY?

It is an environmental management plan that will consider the present situation, identify priority conservation issues of community concern, prepare achievable goals, select appropriate policies and action strategies to achieve these goals, and assign tasks to individuals and groups.

It is a community/Local Government-driven program.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

This is an opportunity for all people within the region to contribute collaboratively to an environmental management plan from the beginning, therefore achieving a balanced conservation strategy that will be owned, and then implemented, by the entire community.

It is a chance to become proactive and address environmental problems from a different angle.

PROGRESS SO FAR

- A Steering Committee has been established with representation from all 5 local government Councils, government agencies, environment groups and community members.
- \$5,000 has been provided from each of the 5 participating Councils - The Borough of Eaglehawk, City of Bendigo, Rural City of Marong, Shire of Huntly and the Shire of Strathfieldsaye.
- \$20,000 has been obtained from the State Government Local Conservation Strategy funding program.
- A Project Officer has been employed for the initial 12 month period of preparation.
- 5 working groups have been established from a Community Conference day held late in 1992. They are :
 1. Protecting the Water
 2. Restoring the Land
 3. Use of Resources
 4. Planning and Heritage
 5. Flora and Fauna
- Many environmental issues have been identified including : water quality, water quantity, chemical use on land, salinity, erosion, alternative farming practices, statutory land use policies and practices, heritage planning, waste, transport, energy, cats, native animal pests, residential sub-divisions and wildlife corridors.

The Conservation Strategy Steering Committee is asking for your contribution in this process. You could :

- join a working group
- attend any of our meetings
- write down and post any issues you think are relevant
- provide expertise along the way
- express support for the project

If you wish to contribute could you please contact either the Chairperson of the Steering Committee (Kevin Tanner 447487) or the Project Officer(Graeme Angus 752915).

Diary

General Meeting

Wednesday April 14, 7:30pm at the Department of Food and Agriculture (formerly DARA), Midland Highway, Epsom. Dr Jenny Shield and Bert Candusio will speak on the Central Victorian Insect Collection Update.

Wednesday May 12, 7:30pm at DARA Midland Highway, Epsom. Speaker: Lindy Lumsden from the Arthur Rylah Institute on the natural history of bats.

Bird Observers Group

Friday April 2, 7:30pm at DARA Midland Highway, Epsom. Andrew Bennett from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will talk on his study on conservation of wildlife of the northern plains of Victoria. He has censused birds at a large number of sites there. Bird of the night: Rainbow Bee-eater.

Friday May 7, 7:30pm at DARA Midland Highway, Epsom. Alan Caddy will give a talk on the increasing numbers of the Common Mynas in our area. Bird of the night: White-browed Woodswallow.

Mammal Survey Group

Please contact David McDonald (395756) for details about the venue of the next meeting.

Committee Meeting

Please contact the President (Rob Moors 396254) for information about the venue for the next meeting.

Excursions

Easter Campout: this will be held in the Mt Cole and Mt Buangor State Parks. We will be camping at the Ditchfield camping area, 11 km from Raglan, between the 9th and 12th of April. See notice about details and directions in this edition of *Whirrakee*. Please contact John Guley (493479) for further inquiries. Bring drinking water.

Supper

The usual arrangements for supper are as follows: members either bring a plate or pay \$1 for supper. This small amount is used by the Treasurer to reimburse members who purchase essential supper supplies.