

New Holland Mouse

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The Mammal Survey Group of Victoria is a voluntary association of people with concern and interest in the effect of declining natural habitat on wildlife in Victoria. The group has been in existence for over 40 years and has been visiting this reserve since 1993. Surveys are now conducted every 2 years in this reserve to get some idea of this species numbers which have dropped alarmingly since 2002, probably because of the drought. It is hoped to see some recovery with the improved rains more recently.

General information on the group and its activities can be found at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~msgv/> and specific information about the last camp in 2006 can be found in the May 2006 newsletter at this site which also includes trapping results since 1993.

Article based on information from MSG member Jenny Barnett

Did You Know?

The New Holland Mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*), was thought to be extinct for almost 100 years and was rediscovered in NSW in 1967, then in Victoria, near Tyabb in 1970. It has since been found in a number of sites on the coastal plains east of Melbourne, including Providence Ponds in 1993. The habitat there is patchy heath with emerging Shining Peppermint, Saw Banksia and Austral Bracken. It also occurs in NE Tasmania and Flinders Island.

It is a small, terrestrial, burrowing, native rodent to a maximum head and body length of 90mm. It is grey-brown above with a dusky-brown tail which is 10-15% longer than the rest of the body and it has relatively large eyes. The latter 2 features distinguish it from the House Mouse. Breeding occurs between August and January and relates to availability and quality of food, (rainfall patterns) and possibly to fire succession.

The species is regarded as being under threat due to alteration and reduction of habitat as well as from the impact of feral carnivores (Cat, Red Fox).

Information from The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement No. 74 DSE 2003

Jenny Dalglish



President's Report - David Ellard

The pig eradication program continues with limited success and its future will be reviewed by the Works and Grants sub Committee. The difficulty and cost of providing a continuous supply of bait was offset by utilising local resources. Thanks is extended to David & Sue Welte of Metung and Jeff Morecroft of Paynesville for their assistance with Project Burragarra.

At our first committee meeting much time was spent discussing the Member Survey results and their implications. Below is a full report

Member Survey and Future Plans Results

20 Responses – family returns counted as 2 members where both Christian names appeared on the response.

RANK		HIGH	MED.	LOW	PERSONAL INTEREST
1	Silt Jetties	17	2	1	11
2	Project Burragarra	16	2	2	10
3	Newsletter	15	3	2	10
4	Land Conservation Council	14	5	1	6
5	Jones Bay Planting (2008)	14	4	2	9
6	Parks Management Plan	13	6	1	6
7	Macleod Morass	12	6	2	11
7	Metung Bush Reserve	12	6	2	10
8	Publicity	12	4	4	7
9	Photography	11	7	2	7
10	Boole Poole Signage	11	6	3	11
10	Private land use	11	6	3	9
11	Speaker Program	6	13	1	7
12	Canoeing	5	8	7	10

Discussion

As can be seen, except for the last two items there was over 50% support for all other areas with a number indicating member interest with hands on or practical involvement. These results support the proposed organisation structure with interested members taking a facilitating role in specific projects.

1) Silt Jetties (Facilitator: Nancy McMurray)- Detailed report appeared in the last newsletter the focus being on rubbish removal, regeneration public education and investigating improved access to the north arm

- Draft action plan based on report
- Establish contacts with other possible interest groups
- Finalise action plan in consultation with Parks

- Undertake preliminary works
- Map area to show recommendations
- Media Coverage

2) Burragarra (Facilitator: Maurice Burns)

- Review pig eradication program
- Reaction to Proposed Hog Deer Management Strategy

FOGL involvement in light of other priorities. Initiate exclusion plot if controlled burn occurs on Boole Poole. Investigate possible action when strategy is released

3) Newsletter Distribution (Facilitator Jenny Dalglish) The survey indicated how highly valued this publication is. Production creates difficulties so other options to be explored without losing present impact of Newsletter

4) Policy and Management Research Through the survey members indicated the “political” issues as being important and it is pleasing to see that a few respondents in-

7) Metung Reserve (Contact Jenny Dalglish) This project is well supported and Forestech student Emma Orgill’s draft management plan provides an excellent starting point. Parks funding/resourcing for any works could not be expected because of priorities, however they would encourage and support voluntary work which could be commenced once some joint agreement on involvement and the feasibility of a management plan is confirmed.

8) Signage at Silvershot (Facilitator Maurice Burns) This is in hand. Survey indicates possible voluntary assistance available if required

9) Speaker Program This has been an area we believed important but the survey suggests otherwise. At this stage will continue to inform members of other speakers of interest and liaise with other groups to explore what is on offer.

10) Canoeing While not a high priority in terms of the group’s purposes still a lot of interest in participating. Autumn is a good time for this to make up for last year

Conclusions

- The sharing of responsibility across the group, particularly the recruiting of facilitators will greatly assist in implementing many of FOGL’s plans.
- The operation of sub committee functioning will need to accommodate the work of smaller groups working with facilitators.
- As FOGL largely operates in areas managed by Parks close liaison is necessary to implement many of the above proposals. Communication will thus be important for coordination and planning to effectively utilise FOGL and Parks resources.
- Seeking funding will continue to be a major need and objective of the group.

From Your Editor

As outlined in the email from David Ellard on the 29th February, we are trialling an electronic version of this newsletter, with a black and white copy available for those who wish. It provides not only better reproduction but also is less wasteful in time and materials, which is of some significance in an organisation focusing on environmental issues! We hope you continue to enjoy the publication and welcome your feedback.

Thanks as always to our contributors.

Jenny Dalglish

indicated an interest in these areas so need to enlist their help.

5) Jones Bay Planting This has been on the radar for some time. Action is planned for the southern end Jones Bay adjacent to the Silt Jetties.

6) MacLeod Morass (Facilitator Bill Cotter) The friend’s group which had put many years into the upgrade of the Morass was forced to conclude its operation in 2006. Key surviving members Bill Cotter and Margaret & Bill Regan have since joined FOGL and are keen to join with other FOGL members in this important work.

Works established by previous group which could be revitalised will include

- Cycling/walking track (EGW,PV,Shire)
- Tree sourcing / Replanting
- Education, Cleanup Publicity etc

Sub Committee Reports

Activities Sub Committee Report World Wetlands Day

Bill Cotter, Lynne Ellard, Maurice and David attended Macleod's Morass. FOGL able to make contact with EGW & Parks staff and distribute membership information to all those that attended.

New Holland Mouse Survey Mammal Survey Group of Victoria

As a follow up to the interest indicated on the Night Walk last year we have organised for FOGL members to join the survey this Easter, March 21-24 at Providence Ponds. Members of FOGL are welcome to either camp with the Mammal Survey Group or to just attend to participate in trapping. **Numbers attending to be finalized by March 3.**

Future Activities

1. Planting on Silt Jetties

A major tree planting day is being organised. It will be similar to the one held last year on the property of Hilary Rigg and Chris Walker and is planned for April once availability of plants is confirmed.

2. Canoe Paddle – This is also planned for a weekend in April with an early morning start followed by a BBQ breakfast.

David Ellard (Convener)

Projects, Works and Grants Subcommittee Report

Pig Trapping continues on Boole Poole many thanks to members John & Anne Schmidli and David & Lynne Ellard. One boar has been trapped and dispatched (read full notes on FOGL website, Project Burragarra). Project to be reviewed at next PWG subcommittee meeting early March.

Metung Bushland Reserve The Subcommittee has received the 'unofficial' Management Plan created by Forestech student Emma Orgill. Further development of a proposal for Metung Bushland Reserve now awaits involvement from Friends of Metung and/or a FOGL member stepping up to take a facilitating role.

Lune Beeuke signage and Park Note Design and production of signage and a park note for a FOGL-made walking track in the Lakes Coastal

Park has commenced with the assistance of Felicity L'Hotellier, Summer Ranger Parks Vic.

To include:

-general intro to Boole Poole, including mention of tracks, particular mention of Lune Beeuke tk

-indigenous history (and photo) -change associated with european settlement (clearing of land, transition of lakes from fresh to salt and associated change in vegetation)

-unique eucalypt species (illustration of leaf/gumnut)

-white-bellied sea-eagle (with photo/illustration) -bats?? (with photo/illustration)

-dolphins? (with photo/illustration)

-info on FOGL

-background map of Boole Poole, with walking tracks highlighted

PWG awaits a first draft from Ian Charles, Parks Vic contractor.

Maurice Burns (Convener)

Membership and Publicity Sub Committee Report

1. The following have been identified as possible actions

- a. Press releases – aim for monthly and utilise appropriate articles from Newsletter

- b. Revise Brochure

- c. Radio – investigate possible regular spot on community radio

- d. Banner – design and seek funding (for use as display where FOGL present)

2. A one page pamphlet was prepared and used at Macleod's Morass (in place of brochure)

3. Need to explore ways of reaching a wider audience e.g. Art Exhibition (similar to Nowa Nowa Nudes)

Annie Marshall (Convener)

Dolphin Update

Latest news from Kate Charlton is good! The research group have been visiting monthly for a couple of days and the nursery pod has again been spotted. The community has been terrific too in notifying them of sightings.

The lesions are recovering quite well, with white rings forming the 'tattoo' where the lesions have been. No further outbreaks have been identified. Their movements are as expected of them, (the 5m contour line from Loch Sport to Raymond Island and Lake King) with some extra

'in and out' of the Lakes system, the salt water of the ocean no doubt helping with their healing process.

Monthly visits are planned until May then the team will return for 5 days in July in anticipation of the migratory group from Port Phillip.

Please continue to send information of sightings via the Dolphin Research Institute website, www.dolphinresearch.org.au

Jenny Dalgleish

What's On

Fri 21-Mon 24 March (Easter): New Holland Mouse Survey at Providence Ponds

Thurs 3rd April 2008: Committee Meeting, Bairnsdale Bowls Club, 6pm Dinner, 7pm meeting. Guests from 'Watermark'

April: Tree planting at the Silt Jetties - date to be confirmed.

April: Morning canoe paddle – date to be confirmed

Watermark

At the next FOGL Committee meeting on Thursday 3rd April, representatives from 'Watermark' will be joining us for an exchange of ideas and information. There follows a brief outline of the history and achievements of the organisation gleaned from the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Watermark is a successful non-profit, community-based organisation formed in August 1999 to foster community action to protect and enhance the catchment, shores and waters of the Gippsland Lakes. It is a non-political community trust which seeks funding from Government, industry and philanthropic organisations to initiate projects which will improve the regions natural features.

Importantly, it does not replace any other organisation. The Watermark committee actively seeks partnerships and involvement of other organisations with a common goal of enhancing the Lakes and catchment.

Major areas of achievement and support include:

- Heart Morass Wetlands Rehabilitation
- Bugs and insect education program
- "Peach Flat" private wetland
- Community forum – 'Any water? – 'Any where? What is the future of the Gippsland Lakes?'
- Rotomah Island Bird Observatory
- Monitoring of the Latrobe aquifer study, with ongoing concerns for falling aquifer levels and subsequent potential for coastal subsidence.
- Salinity barrier in McLennan Straits
- Strathfieldsaye

For further information: www.watermark.asn.au

We look forward to establishing an ongoing relationship with 'Watermark' and invite FOGL members to join us at the April meeting.

Algae

The word algae covers a variety of life-forms which is either single or multicelled. There are many hundreds of different "Algae". Most Algae belongs to the "Kingdom of Protista" which includes your usual marine sea-weeds and also amoebas, diatoms and dinoflagellates. However Blue-green Algae is a cyanobacteria from the "Kingdom of Bacteria". Cyanobacteria use sunlight to grow while normal bacteria relies on the food around it for growth (dark cupboards). Looking from a marine perspective, we humans belong to the "Kingdom of Animalia" which includes sea-jellies, cuttlefish, sea-urchins, fish, birds and mammals.

Over the last 3 months there has been many news items on the extent, causes and dangers of algae in the Gippsland Lakes. The primary source of "green algae" is the decomposition of leaves, grass, bark and debris that was washed down the rivers during the floods of June. This debris is now decomposing on the river beds and lake floors thus creating the nutriment for algal growth. While there are many different algae, the 3 algae that have made the news are *Noctiluca scintillans* (red algae), *Synechococcus* (green non-toxic) or *Nodularia* (blue-green toxic). The toxic level is determined on the quantity of algae per litre of water and the presence of lipopolysaccharides which can irritate the skin. The danger limit for *Synechococcus* is above 10 cubic millimetres per litre while *Nodularia* is four cubic millimetres per litre. EPA have a laboratory at Lakes

Entrance to determine the levels of algae in the water. Algal blooms have recorded in the Gippsland Lakes over the last 43 years including 1999, 2001 and 2003.

Blue-green algae relies on sunlight and contains small pockets of gas which allows it to float or move through the water. The blooms form in calm, warm water with high nitrate levels. If the water becomes turbulent, the small gas pockets disappear and the algae sinks thus away from sunlight. When the algae dies, its decomposition consumes oxygen with in the water thus this can suffocate fish. If numbers of fish are found dead, please contact EPA 96952777 as the State government has a "Fish Kill Protocol".

More information can be found in Media releases from DSE, www.DSE.vic.gov.au, google or Australian Marine Life by G.J. Edgar.

Peter Johnstone

Lakes Entrance

Blue - Green Algae in Boxes Creek, Metung



Flora & Fauna Reports

Over the last 12 months, Gippsland Ports have produced several reports connected to dredging works currently underway at Lakes Entrance. They are very detailed and produced by specialist consultants. They include:

Lakes Entrance Terrestrial Flora and Fauna Assessment July 2007

Archaeological Impact Assessment (Heritage) July 2007

Lakes Entrance Marine Communities Report June 2007

These, any many more reports are located at www.lesmp.vic.gov.au (lesmp = Lakes Entrance Sand Management Program)