

From the President

G'day one and all, have you noticed all the agapanthus seed heads adorning the local gardens? They will make nice dried arrangements when the seeds have dispersed around the neighbourhood.

When I see a pittosporum in someone's garden I need to seriously control my urge to attack it. There's a healthy specimen on the nature strip down the road from me and the man of the house said his 90 year old mother planted it and if I give him something suitable he'll tell his mother that the tree died.

It occurred to me one day as I watched a gardening man, commonly known as Jim, using his leaf-blower to rid the driveway of lawn clippings and leaves that it was all going into the roadside gutter where it would join the various litter types that eventually end up in either of our two bays. I think a sucker instead of a blower might be a better alternative for these jobs.

Trees are at times, resilient in the face of adversity. On a recent trip to Echuca I saw great red gum roots clinging tenaciously to the river bank where much of the soil had been eroded by the recent floods. And in another instance a young tree had sprouted in the rudder of the paddle steamer *Pevensey*.



And an angophora at the Devilbend picnic ground displayed its colourful trunk as it shed its bark.



*Marnie Fitzsimons
President*

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2023-2024 DFI Council:

Marnie Fitzsimons (President & FOD Co-ordinator), Jill McIver (Secretary), Sue Milton (Treasurer), Jamie Edgerton, Liz Sarraillhe Michael Mann, Annabel Richards, Roger Richards

The following 2023-2024 member groups are represented on Committee:

Birdlife Australia; Friends of Kangerong Flora Reserve; Mornington Environment Assn.; Peninsula Field Naturalists Club; MP Ratepayers & Residents Assn; Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora & Fauna Assn; Westernport & Peninsula Protection Council, BERG

To join the Friends of Daangean (FOD), contact Marnie Fitzsimons at devilbendfoundation@gmail.com

EDITORS NOTE

One day, when I was driving along Stumpy Gully Rd, in one of the Devilbend leased paddocks was a big flock of grazing cape barren geese. I estimated there 20 to 25 of them at least. I don't know how big their range is, or where these geese came from. Perhaps they flew across from French Is where there are lots of them visible on the various paddocks.

FRIENDS of DAANGEAN (FOD)

Tuerong Rd was busy with birds on my way to pick up the weeding gear from the storage depot. Eastern Rosellas flew up from the road edge on my approach, as did a Bronzewing Pigeon. Lots of Mudlarks about, along with Red Wattlebirds, and a Kookaburra merely observed my passing beneath its branch.



Evan amid the pittos - MF

Lots of bellbirds tinked tunefully in Woodland Break and surrounding bushland. I don't recall hearing them here before. Crimson Rosellas, Red Wattlebirds, Grey Fantails and a Maggie were with us too. It was a pleasant day weatherwise and what better way to spend a Sunday than in the arms of Nature.

FOD received a small grant and part of it was spent on some signs to promote our good works. Les and I hung one on Woodland Break's gate, which has a new padlock.

Saturday March 25th was the second bush bash with seven of us. Five team members were away, one with tennis elbow, which is painful to

which I can attest. Les was a trifle late because when he returned from walking the dog he found he was locked out of the house. Not to be thwarted he still came, the good man.

The bush was very dry but the myriad pitto seedlings soldiered on. The pittos in some places are a challenge for our loppers and ever increasingly blunting saws, however, it was pleasing to see the wake of the fallen behind us.



Clean bush- MF

storehouse of weeds: agapanthus, English ivy, mirror bush, sallow wattle, blackberry and gorse. In times past I think there were probably gardens here but now the plants have become feral.

April's bush maintenance day was Saturday 29th. The team was down to four, but doing the work of ten men was Jake from PV who was equipped with a chainsaw that did severe damage to a substantial number of larger pittos. Much to his disappointment before smoko he was required elsewhere and missed out on Julie's Anzac slice still warm from the oven. Tuneful tinkling of bellbirds was all around us at the current work site

The first maintenance day for 2023 was Sunday February 26th instead of the usual last Saturday of the month due to a forecast hot day. Not wanting to revive anyone in the midst of the scrub I deferred to Sunday. Sundays don't suit some team members; however, four of us ventured forth to great avail and reached the boundary fence. We were amid big stuff this day that our loppers couldn't handle, and dealt with boneseed, gorse and blackberry seedlings. A good number of pittos were coppiced and difficult to tackle due to their multiple stems. A big black wattle is about to fall across the fence in due course, which will enable any cattle dwelling in the neighbouring paddock to escape should they so decide.



Our sign on the gate - MF

I was dealing with a torn meniscus in my knee and was very wary of it even though I had a brace on it and used a ski pole as an extra aid, which I kept putting down and then having to find it again. I managed to deal with it all and emerged unscathed.

Morning smoko was to the tune of tinkling bellbirds and occasional dust clouds from speeding cars on Derril Rd. Nothing like a bit of grit in your muffin!

Some pitto work had been done along the catch drain opposite Woodland Break but when I went to check it out my key wouldn't open the padlock, which it used to do.

The Melbourne Water depot, where the FOD gear is kept, is a

and where we had smoko, but none were further towards the gate; it will be interesting to see if they move up to there.



Jamie & his pitto pile - MF

The proposed forthcoming contract work will hopefully see the end of the pittos in Woodland Break so we'll be able to move onto our other sites that were cleaned up so long ago that there's now a massive regrowth. To keep Woodland Break clean an annual weed sweep might be the order of the day for the FOD team.

In the thick of it were some pittos that had been cut off way too high, plus they hadn't been dabbed. The cuts were fresher than a



The big stick - JM

month, which is when we were there last, so I can say it wasn't any of us. Along Derril Rd verge a large number of pittos had also been cut down but I didn't look to see if they had been dabbed or not. Maybe there is a pitto warrior out there attempting to do good but is unfortunately causing difficulty for others down the track by creating a coppiced forest.

As Jake was required elsewhere I didn't get a photo of him hard at work, however he sent a photo of his find in the field.

I included the WPPC photo because some of the FOD are included in it.

Marnie Fitzsimons

DEVILBEND TOXICOLOGY STUDY COMPLETED

Aquatic Ecology Works Update

In early 2008, Parks Victoria established a research program to facilitate management of aquatic habitats in Devilbend Reserve. An ecosystem approach was adopted, with multiple phases of research, as follows:

Phase One: A desktop summary of existing data and a mapping exercise describing the aquatic vegetation communities. This work was undertaken by Parks Victoria in early 2008.

Phase Two: A detailed ecological survey of aquatic habitats in the Reserve, including invertebrate life, fish communities and amphibians. This work was undertaken by Monash University under contract to Parks Victoria in late 2008 (see [Ecosystem Study Monash Uni Version3](#))

Phase Three: A study to design a monitoring program to measure changes in the aquatic habitats of the reserve, and to have a genuine understanding of the impacts of any changes in management. This work was undertaken by Monash University under contract to Parks Victoria in late 2010 (see [Aquatic Ecology Monitoring Program](#)). The study informed the DFI's Waterwatch initiative at Devilbend reserve, sponsored by Melbourne Water. DFI's Waterwatch team monitors the water quality at Devilbend Reservoir (two sites), Bittern Reservoir (one site), and Devilbend Creek (one site). The team continues to collect and analyse samples on a monthly basis.

Phase Four: A Toxicology Study to test for heavy metals and pesticides in the sediments of Devilbend Reservoir. This study was undertaken by the Aquatic Environmental Stress Research Group (AQUEST) of RMIT University under contract to DFI in 2022, in close collaboration with Parks Victoria (see [Contaminant Assessment Dec 2022](#)). The study found that the collected sediments showed no indications of toxicity: there were zero detections of pesticides, and low levels of some metals and hydrocarbons that were all below ecological guideline values and comparable to the clean reference site sediments. Repeated attempts were made, without success, to launch a study of the level of toxins in flesh of fish that are commonly caught by visitors to the Reserve.

The Phase 3 and 4 studies were funded from grants to DFI provided by the Reichstein Foundation and associated donors, provided under the auspices of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). DFI is grateful for the support of these organisations, and for the very strong support provided by Park Victoria.

Jamie Edgerton, Devilbend Toxicology Study Coordinator

VOLUNTEER WATER-QUALITY SURVEYING

Waterwatch Report

Our team of dedicated water monitors have been doing monthly water testing at Devilbend and Bittern reservoirs. It is always a mixed bag weatherwise, sometimes lovely sunny weather other times it can be wet and windy and threatening to blow our papers and equipment off the table we set up on, and causing a



Site 1 Michael & lower water level - MF

scramble to find rocks to weight everything down. The water levels this year are at the highest we have seen in all the time we have been monitoring, causing seating and paths and the watercraft launching ramp to be completely underwater. Many of the trees and shrubs along the banks that were submerged for a long period have died off and will likely end up in the water to rot away.

The water level at Devilbend has started to drop fairly quickly as Parks Victoria are pumping the water out to maintain a certain level but it is a fairly small pipe so will take a long time. Bittern has maintained its level at this stage. Due to the fairly mild summer we had evaporation was minimal. The upside is the reeds and water plants are growing and spreading very quickly in both reservoirs.

We have been commenting each month about the complete lack of water birds and ducks this year, apart from the resident black swans at Bittern, but this last month the number of ducks and coots has increased greatly (300-400) possible because there is so much food for them at the moment.



Coots at Bittern - MF



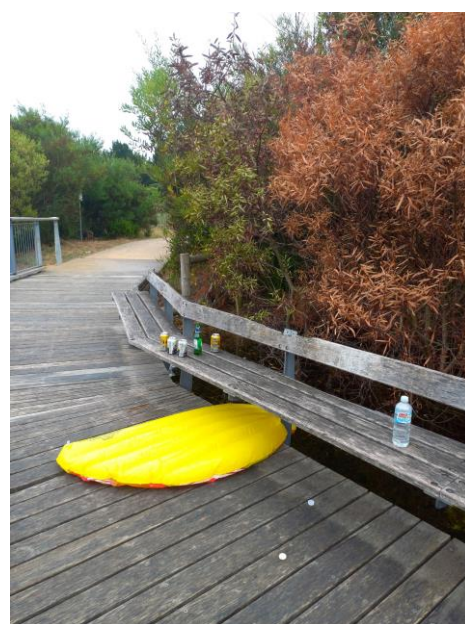
PV & boat of rubbish - GK

One of the tracks leading to one of the test sites is still underwater requiring gumboots to be put on to get close enough to obtain a water sample.

During the hot weather there were a lot of people mainly kids using the platform near the quarry to go swimming and having a picnic. The rubbish left around was disappointing,

everything including inflatable toys, bottles and cans plastic wrappers etc. Parks Vic had to use a boat to be able to clean up all the litter, which then filled up a ute with the bagged rubbish.

The quality of the water has been good and consistent with only minor variations but at this time of the year as in previous years the electrical conductivity (salinity in the water) increases.



Rubbish on the boardwalk - GW

We test and monitor several different parameters, air temperature, and water temperature, both which have an effect on the other tests. Also it is important to try and monitor at the same time of each test day to maintain consistent test results. The other things we are also testing for are: turbidity of the water, the Ph. level, electrical conductivity, the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water and phosphate and ammonium levels as well. Testing requires using some chemicals that need to be handled carefully. After the testing we then record environmental factors and weather conditions. The data is then recorded on the Melbourne Water website https://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/cb_pages/monitoring.php

MW website has us recorded as having 87 visits to Devilbend and 65-70 at Bittern. Prior to this it was manual recording so actual visits would be more.

The snakes are still active and a juvenile brown snake was sighted on the path to the fishing platform. Near the fishing platforms quite a few fish were seen jumping out of the water proving there are a good number of fish in Devilbend.

Cheers *Graham White*

On Wednesday, February 15th, Richard Akers from Melbourne Water came to Devilbend with the WW team's replacement chemicals because the current ones had either expired or run out. His visit was timely as we were due to do the February monitoring on Tuesday the 28th.

At Bittern two horse riders took advantage of the lovely day to ride along the catch drain embankment, although they shouldn't be within the reserve. Tuesday 25th was the April WW day and at our 9am meeting time at the DB car park were six cars and by 12.30pm on our return the car numbers had exploded to both sides of Graydens Rd opposite the car park entry, while inside cars who circled like vultures looked for someone to move out.



New phosphate kit - MF



Site 2 Michael collecting - MF



Current site 2 access - MF

The water levels had dropped somewhat at all sites, however the Southern Tip (Site 2) still required gumboots to reach the sample site. This particular site is being gradually being overrun by cumbungi so maybe in time a

new site may need to be found.

Several people were curious as to what we were doing, so they were enlightened. At Bittern (Site 3) a passing couple looked a little askance at us as we were having a cuppa and Anzac bikkies at the testing table. They thought we were picnicking with our cars on site until we explained that we were on official business. Some form of ID would be an idea to provide a modicum of officialdom such as magnetic door badges or vests with Melbourne Water Quality Testing emblazoned across the back.

European wasps in large numbers were about the front of Michael's car. They were apparently interested in any mashed insects around the grill and headlights. The Anzac bikkies aroused their interest too. Large dog prints were evident in the mud at sample site 3, and the water level had dropped.

Several cormorants flew across the water where there were lots of coots plus the resident swans. Some grebes bobbed up and down amid coots that were busy moving about with weed hanging from their beaks.

On the way through the Bittern gate a man asked if deer shooting was permitted as he's seen lots of prints. We suggested he download the Feral Scan app to his phone to make reports.



Bittern fire Hodgins Rd - MF

Bittern had a curious small fire east of the car park. It didn't go far into the bush and looked to have started near the fence. The bush is thick in this spot so had it really got going it might have been a little difficult to contain.

Marnie Fitzsimons

Macroinvertebrate Monitoring

After delivering the water watch chemicals on February 15th Richard was interesting in looking at some of the big dams for macroinvertebrates even though it wasn't the usual time of year for looking at variations populations and thereof. While we did find dragonflies, caddis flies and damsel flies etc. but what was evident were very high populations of mosquito fish in all of the dams. Young mosquito fish apparently have the ability to attach themselves to birds' legs and feathers as a means of travel between water bodies, which means very few dams would be free of them.

Marnie Fitzsimons

BIRD MONITORING REPORT



Lathams Snipe - MM



Lathams Snipe - MM



Dusky Woodswallows - MM



Yellow-breasted Robin - MM



Wedge-tail Eagle - MM



White-bellied Sea Eagle - MM

8 March 2023 0800 – 1010	Observers:	Brian Thomas, Keith Caldecott, Michael Mann
Site:	Bittern Reservoir	Weather: 5% cloud cover, sunny, cold becoming cool
Purple Swamphen	7	
Eurasian Coot	35	
Masked Lapwing	50	moving around a lot

Species	Count	Comments
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo		Heard calling off site
Galah	2	
Little Corella	5	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	25	
Rainbow Lorikeet	2	
Musk Lorrikeet	6	
Crimson Rosella	8	
Eastern Rosella	2	
Superb Fairy-wren	7	
White-browed Scubwren	3	
Brown Thornbill	5	
Red Wattlebird	7	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	5	
Yellow Robin	9	
Golden Whistler	3	
Grey Shrike-thrush	3	
Grey Fantail	17	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	2	
Grey Butcherbird	4	
Australian Magpie	4	
Raven spp	2	
Silvereye	3	
Common Blackbird	10	
Bellbird		Heard calling off site
Black Swan	8	
Cape Barren Goose	6	
Australian Shelduck	2	
Grey Teal	21	
Hoary-headed Grebe	5	
Australasian Grebe	4	
Darter	1	
Great Cormorant	2	
Little Pied Cormorant	10	
White-faced heron	4	
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	
Swamp Harrier	1	
Peregrine Falcon	1	

Bell Miners are now spreading around sections of Devilbend Natural Features Reserve with probable disturbing consequences to the quality Eucalypt woodlands



Native bird the bell miner has established a trait that's threatening Australia's eucalypts (Birdlife Australia)

People walking in the eastern section of Woods Reserve hear the constant ting-ting of the “bell-bird”. Over the last six months this sound is now resonating through Devilbend Reserve as well. It may be that the increased rainfall has made the conditions more favourable in the areas where there are eucalypt woodlands in excellent condition.

The solidly built olive-green honeyeater, the Bell Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*) with down-curved, bright yellow bill, and red-orange bare eye patch, is more often heard than seen in its aggressively defended Woods Reserve creek territory.

These birds range from coastal Queensland to southern Victoria occupying open eucalypt woodlands with a dense shrubby understorey around water courses. They are co-operative breeders, mating for life, with a complex colonial social structure involving unpaired auxiliary helpers who defend the nests and feed the young.

This colony has occupied Woods Reserve since 2008. The birds’ main food source is tiny insect psyllids and their sugary lerps on the higher level eucalypt foliage which they farm vigorously and protect them from other birds in their territory.

The subsequent eucalypt die back along creek has been substantial, and the birds in recent months have spread extensively through other good quality eucalypt areas in Devilbend Reserve.

From ABC NSW Country Hour 21 Feb 2023

*“Bell miners are contributing to eucalypt forest dieback across the east coast
The ingenious bird cultivates colonies of insects for food
The insects then feed on eucalypts, killing them and causing havoc for biodiversity
In ensuring a steady supply of food, the bell miner is causing the spread of the deadly tree disease dieback.
How it spreads dieback has been found to be a complex relationship that could be likened to milking a cow or shearing a sheep”*

I am not experienced with the management or protection of Eucalypt woodlands from heavy psyllids “Infestations” and Bell Miners but I believe that Parks Victoria (Devilbend Reserve Managers) would do well to look at the consequences in the creek of Woods Reserve then consult with whatever experts they deem necessary to protect these high quality woodlands which provide habitat for many other birds, small nocturnal mammals, and insects.

Roger Richards 31 March 2023

PARKS VIC NEWS

Devilbend Update

The contact ranger for DFI is Jake Manning. He comes to PV from DEECA (ex DELWP) Fire and Emergency and is replacing Gemma Hocking while she is on maternity leave. Jake is keen to help the DFI

with weeding days and has a great knowledge base. Jake will be project managing the Woodlands Peri-Urban works as well as the Devilbend Creek works. If you need any larger trees trimmed Jake's your man! It's terrific to see your DFI/FOD signs around the park advertising all your hard work and encouraging people to join.

Great to see that there is some money and weed works scheduled for Devilbend NFR in the coming months. We have a Peri-Urban Weed Management grant for the Woodlands Block that the Friends of Daangean have been working hard on over the years. This is a three-year program and there is also a planned burn scheduled for the same block. Parks Victoria is working closely with Seeds (the successful contractor) to ensure that works delivered prior to the burn will be complimentary. We then have follow up weed works scheduled post fire and the remainder of the three year grant funding. Fingers crossed that we can make a real impact on the block. PV and Seeds walked the block that they worked on previously and thanks to the Friends group's ongoing maintenance and attention, the treated areas are looking splendid! Seeds plans to do a sweep over the previously treated areas as we noticed some more Pittos popping up.

We also have Bunurong Land Council's environment team working in the Reserve on improving habitat for the Southern Toadlet, Wedge Tailed Eagle and Sea Eagle nest areas which is great.

There is a Melbourne Water grant for Devilbend Creek imminent and this has three years of funding attached also.

The water level is still high and it seems to be great conditions for our Southern Toadlet. with 160 calls recorded one Friday night! What a great result. There is funding to improve the Southern Toadlet habitat and encourage recruitment so this will commence next financial year. We are working with frog expert Craig Cleeland on this project. There is another Deer Shooting Program commencing in June, which will be advertised shortly.

Manda Henderson

Ranger Team Leader - Northern Peninsula Parks and Reserves – Southern & Maritime Region

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Work Days – Monday to Thursday

PV staff completed a weed sweep I the bush broker block adjacent to Hodgins Rd for Pittos and Boneseed. Southern Toadlet monitoring has been really successful in Devilbend by Hansi Wegner with a recording of 160 male toadlets calling on one night! Mushroom season is also underway; with the recent cold and rain we've seen an explosion of all kinds of fungi in the park. PV staff also completed some Blackberry slashing along the horse trail adjacent to Derril Rd to reduce impact on plantings and reduce hazard for horses using the trail.

Jake Manning

"Parks Victoria respectfully acknowledges Traditional Owners, their cultures, knowledge and their continuing connection to and cultural obligations to care for their Country"

BIOLINKS UPDATE

Creating links for nature across the Mornington Peninsula

DEVILBEND-HASTINGS BIOLINK

Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare

The new kids on the block

Did you know there is a new Landcare group on the Mornington Peninsula? It's not your average catchment-based Landcare group but a peninsula wide group of young environmental warriors. It's run by Amy Henson, who is extremely passionate about creating opportunities and positive environmental change for young people aged between 18 and 35. In the past year she has run working bees and informative walk and talks with several of Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network groups, the Greens Bush Association, Gidja Walker renowned ecologist, Friends of Woolley's Beach and run a delightful series of four informative sessions on different topics called "Coolart Conversations" with Parks Victoria.

Wanting to grow the group, twenty young people were lucky enough to join Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare on a Nature Connection Camp on April 1st – April 2nd. The aspiring young conservationists experienced an immersive experience with nature through activities that showcased local natural environments and the opportunity to see the positive work being done in this space. It was two jam packed days full of activities to inspire the group to take positive action for the environment.

The camp commenced with a beautiful Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony with Josh and Danny West from Bunurong Land Council on Jacks Beach. Then it was off to the hear from Dr Mandy Robertson at the Dolphin Research Institute followed by a boat trip on Western Port. The weather was pretty cold and while it threatened to rain, the group learned a lot and even got to see a dolphin. Westernport Biosphere's Lance Lloyd then offered his insights into all things water ecology, including blue carbon, water stewardship, Ramsar values and biodiversity enhancement. Intrepid Landcare campers made light work of the Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera heterophylla*) on Woolley's beach with Jess Brady of the Westernport Biosphere and ranger Arne. The group then returned to base, Iluka Camp and Retreat for dinner and informal "campfire" chats with guest speakers. At nightfall the camp headed out one more time for an evening of spotlighting for animals in the dark with Parks Victoria ranger Casey Lee.

The next day, after an extra hour of end of daylight savings sleep, the crew set off to the Uncommon Folk farm to hear from Beth Phillips about the farming collective and regenerative agriculture practices, including Cherry Road organic flower farm, rotational grazing, no-till farming, and whole of farm baseline measures of water, soils, carbon and biodiversity. The group learnt about biodiversity on farms and planted a tree or two with Greg Holland of the Greens Bush to Arthurs Seat Biolink before heading off to Greens Bush meet Sean and Lionel from Living Culture to learn about bush tucker and finish off with a yidaki session. Thanks to Torello Farm for nourishing us with healthy locally sourced produce and to Melbourne Water for funding this amazing project. The camp was a success with participants connected to Country, Nature and each other and the Intrepid Landcare group has gained 20 more members too.

You're probably exhausted after hearing all that, but not Amy and her Intrepid group who has much more planned for this year. On the 22nd of April is the launch of "Landcare the Next Generation" which is a project funded by the state government through a Victorian Landcare Grant. 15 participants will be taking part in a series of practical sessions with Seeds Bushland Restoration where they will gain important plant identification skills and learn techniques to sensitively remove environmental weeds. Over six Saturdays in Autumn and Spring, participants will gain the necessary skills to assist them with a careers pathways and/or volunteering. The pilot program is being rolled out on private properties participating in the Networks Linking the Mornington Peninsula Biolinks Program.

Coolart Conversations will again be held in 2023 and participants will be treated to four experts who will reveal the wonders of Westernport. Kelly Smith' Koala Research Officer, Westernport Biosphere Foundation will present on May 4th. Wendy Dolling, Executive Historical Archaeologist from Heritage Insight will speak on July 27th. Leon Costermans, renowned local botanist and author will be there on September 7th and on November 2nd the Conversation will finish up with Tom May, Principal Scientist (Mycology) Royal Botanic Gardens.

On the 17th of June the group will be planting indigenous trees at the Briars Conservation Area for the Queens Jubilee with Manton and Stony Creeks. There will also be an opportunity to attend a Climate Conversation at a date to be confirmed. These events are led by a Change for Climate facilitator who help people to navigate the issue of climate change and talk about the practical things we can do the make meaningful change.

If you know any young people in your life who would like to get involved with the Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare Group, contact Amy Henson at mpilandcare@gmail.com or Chantal Morton facilitator@mplandcare.org.au or simply join online for free at [Join a group | MP Landcare](#).



TURTLES

The Daangean Turtle Project is a broad citizen-science community project that DFI / FOD supports. We encourage others to become involved: it provides a fantastic opportunity to make a real impact on turtle habitat and protection.

For more information on how to be involved, contact the Daangean Turtle Project coordinator Hansi Wegner at thecrewatdaangean@gmail.com, or devilbendfoundation@gmail.com and we will be happy to pass on your details.

OPINIONS & OTHER COMMENTS CORNER

Disclaimer: The views expressed in here do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or DFI

EUROPEAN CARP-AN ENVIRONMENT DISASTER

The recent massive fish kill of European Carp and some indigenous species in the Darling River has prompted me to reflect on the circumstances surrounding the original introduction of European Carp into the inland waters of south eastern Australia. This is a story that has never been told.

Sometime in the late 1950s a fish farmer based at Boolarra in South Gippsland applied to the Fisheries & Wildlife Department for a permit to import live European Carp into Victoria. His application was refused on the grounds that European Carp posed a risk to the natural aquatic environment in the event of them entering local streams and lakes.

A little later the local Fisheries Officer based at Yarram carried out a routine inspection of the Boolarra fish farm and found that the ponds contained European Carp which had already spawned at least once. When he was questioned the fish farmer stated that he had sourced the initial brood stock of Carp from the Prospect Hill Reservoir in NSW. This reservoir was closed to recreational fishing at that time.

The Director of the Fisheries & Wildlife Department, Mr A.D. Butcher, immediately informed the Chief Secretary's Office of the situation with a strong recommendation that action should be taken to ban the possession of European Carp. The Minister responsible for fisheries in Victoria was Sir Arthur Rylah the Chief Secretary. Unfortunately the Fisheries Act in force at that time which dated back to 1928 did not contain a provision which would have allowed the banning of a particular species of fish. An amendment to the Fisheries Act was required.

After a further period of deliberation the Government decided to send Butcher overseas to visit the USA and southern Europe. European Carp, which originated in China, had been acclimatised in some American streams and had been farmed in parts of southern Europe for centuries. On his return Butcher advised the Government that anglers in the USA generally shunned European Carp and fishery managers in that country would prefer that the species had not been introduced into the United States.

To further complicate the issue some parliamentary members of the Victorian Country Party threw their support behind the Boolarra fish farmer. After a further period of indecision the Government decided to hold a Parliamentary Inquiry into the issue.

While all this argy-bargy was going on the fish farmer from Boolarra was hawking live European Carp around South Gippsland and selling them to farmers and land holders. He was spruiking European Carp as a hardy species which would thrive in farm dams and provide a valuable food source. Live Carp are easily transported as they will live for hours simply wrapped in a damp hessian bag.

The Parliamentary Inquiry was a time-wasting farce and eventually the Government decided to introduce legislation which made the possession of European Carp illegal and persons with Carp in their dams had to advise the Fisheries Department of that fact together with details of location etc.

The response was surprising as reports came in indicating that European Carp had been stocked in over 100 dams in South Gippsland. The fish farmer from Boolarra had been very busy.

The Fisheries Department then mounted a significant Carp culling program which involved treating all these dams with chemicals in order to kill the resident Carp population. Initially lime was used but later investigations revealed that a common wood preserving chemical was also an effective fish poison and this was used in the place of lime.

At some stage during the Carp eradication program reports started to be received that European Carp had been caught in the lower reaches of the Latrobe River near Sale and had also shown up in Lake Guthridge, also at Sale. Some attempt was made to poison the lower reaches of the Latrobe River using Dieldrin with no apparent effect on the Carp. More reports came in of carp showing up in other parts of the State and in view of this the Carp eradication program was terminated. The Genie was well and truly out of the bottle. It became obvious that some person or persons had been illegally liberating European Carp in waterways of eastern and north eastern Victoria.

European Carp are now the dominant fish species in the Murray Darling system. Whether they were initially put there or migrated from streams in Victoria is unknown.

In summary here is the sequence of events which resulted in this environmental tragedy:

Sometime in the 1950s a strain of European Carp was imported into Australia. This strain is now known by fishery scientists as the “Boolarra Strain”.

In the late 1950s a breeding population of European Carp was detected in a private fish farm at Boolarra in South Gippsland.

European Carp from this farm were sold to many property owners in South Gippsland.

Some unknown person or persons illegally liberated European Carp in Victorian the inland waters.

Out of date fisheries legislation and lack of prompt and decisive action by the Victorian Government of the day may have provided a window of opportunity for European Carp to be stocked in our rivers and lakes.

The “Boolarra Strain” of European Carp comprises 90% of the fish biomass in the Murray Darling River system.

Kevin Street

Websites to peruse:

Mornington Environment Assoc Inc – www.morningtonenviro.org.au

<https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au>

Wiley Online Library – <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/emr.12467>

Echidna Research & Conservation – echidnacsi@adelaide.edu.au

<https://weeds.org.au>

<https://invasives.com.au>

www.pestsmart.org.au

<https://www.nature.com>

<http://www.wildthingsaustralia.org.au>

<http://www.livingwonders.org.au>



WPPC Southern Toadlet team – WPPC Facebook



Tuerong Kangaroo mob - MM



DEVILBEND FOUNDATION INC

SUBSCRIPTION – Please return form via email to DFI: with subscription, and pay on line (**place name in Reference for Direct Deposit and Receipt.**)

YEAR JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021

AMOUNT: \$20.00 (DFI Bendigo Account: BSB 633-000 ACCOUNT NO: 129079448)

NAME:.....

STATUS:.....MEMBER SINCE(approx).....

(General Member, Group Representative Member- state group name)

Address:.....
.....

EMAIL.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER.....

Paid on Line (date).....\$20 enclosed/attached (date).....

DONATION TO DEVILBEND FOUNDATION Inc.

WE ARE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE ORGANISATION! HELP US TO RAISE FUNDS TO MAKE DEVILBEND A WORLD CLASS CONSERVATION RESERVE!

All donations over \$2 can be claimed by donors as tax-deductible, so do help us raise funds & benefit yourself as this financial year comes to a close through our Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund as we are listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under Section 6.1.1 sub-section 30-55 (1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Yes I would like to donate \$..... to the Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund

[] I attach a cheque, or postal order addressed to:

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council

Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9

Hastings

Vic 3915

[] I will use the Foundation's Bendigo Bank, Mornington: BSB 633 000, 'Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund Account' number 130522204 & let you know that I donated to this account direct (Ring DFI Treasurer Sue Milton on 0407 350 175).

Name.....Signed.....

Address.....Date.....

"STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH" BOOKLET

Please send me a copy of the Foundation's 20-page coloured publication '*Devilbend Reserve – A Strategic Planning Approach*'. Post form to Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council

Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9

Hastings

Vic 3915

Name.....Phone.....

Email.....

Address.....

FRIENDS OF DAANGEAN VOLUNTEERS

I'm interested in being a Devilbend Foundation supporter as a volunteer in the Friends of Daangean. Please keep me in touch & note my name & contact details here.

Please contact Marnie Fitzsimons on 5981 2483 or marniefitz1@gmail.com or post this to PO Box 9 Hastings 3915

Name..... (Please print)

Phone.....Mobile.....

Email.....

My special interest in Devilbend Reserve is.....

Signed.....Date.....