



the He Ho Herald

Newsletter of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc.

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Image © Krystii Melaine

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Irene – Environmental Achiever of the Year!



Irene Peary was a past President of Macclesfield Landcare group, a past Secretary and now Treasurer. For an extended period she was both Treasurer and Secretary! Her administrative and financial Management skills have taken so much pressure off the group and enhanced its professional reputation. But she is not just an administrator. Leading the way on the local Rabbit Control Program; striving to get a Landcare Network up and running; hard labour at the Community plant nursery and looking after threatened species. And this is only the story in part. Irene was the recipient of a Major Landcare award in 2004 and she is always eager to assist individuals or other community groups. How fortunate we are that Irene has devoted her time and effort over many years to Landcare, Yarra for Life and Macclesfield Landcare group.

Irene had a significant role in the Macclesfield/Friends work on the Local Area Plan (2006) and is one of the working group that has developed the proposal: “The Yellingbo State Emblems Park” now at Victorian Environment Assessment Council for consideration. *(from introduction of the award nomination)* Her dedication to the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater has outstanding. Congratulations Irene from everyone.



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New Members

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater would like to welcome to the group our **new members**:

J. Ames – Belgrave, **J. Cosemans** – Mitcham,, **K. Beutelschiess** – Pakenham, **J. Beutelschiess** – Pakenham, **D. Beutelschiess** – Pakenham, **K.& M. Haines** - Croydon North

Donations to community education /depot upgrade –

M. S. Ross AM, N. & S. Wentworth, K. & M. Haines, D. Venn

Donations In Memory of Mrs. Traudel (Waltraut) Daeche

M. Beutelschiess

Gift Membership

K., J. & D. Beutelschiess (M. Beutelschiess)

Perhaps you would like your donation to be 0.5% of your shopping spend at IGA stores. Just ask for a community benefits card at IGA and they will process the funds to us.

Thank you for your support

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This newsletter is published on 100% recycled paper.

Thank you to the Shire of Yarra Ranges for their assistance with the postage.

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Thank you to the many people who continue to send us stamps & corks, most of which come to us anonymously. Proceeds from the sale of stamps benefit threatened species conservation at Zoos Victoria, home to the captive breeding program of Helmeted Honeyeaters, whilst the corks benefit the elephants.

A View from the Swamp

editorial comment



Welcome back to the coming year of Friends' news.
 I went to the Australia Day awards to congratulate a friend who was receiving an award. It became doubly special to congratulate Irene - a well-deserved award for the many years of effort she has given to environmental activities and the Friends.
 The newsletter is jam-packed, so...read on!
 Sandra

What's on – Calendar of events

March			April			May			June		
Date	Activity		Date	Activity		Date	Activity		Date	Activity	
Thurs 1 st	Nursery		Tues 3 rd	Nursery		Tues 1 st	Nursery		Sun 3 rd	Reveg	
Sun 4 th	Reveg		Thurs 5 th	Nursery		Thurs 3 rd	Nursery		Tues 5 th	Nursery	
Tues 6 th	Nursery		Sun 8 th	Reveg		Sun 6 th	Reveg		Thurs 7 th	Nursery	
Thurs 8 th	Nursery		Tues 10 th	Nursery		Tues 8 th	Nursery		Tues 12 th	Nursery	
Tues 13 th	Nursery		Thurs 12 th	Nursery		Thurs 10 th	Nursery		Thurs 14 th	Nursery	
Thurs 15 th	Nursery		Sun 15 th	Reveg		Tues 15 th	Nursery		Tues 19 th	Nursery	
Tues 20 th	Nursery		Tues 17 th	Nursery		Thurs 17 th	Nursery		Thurs 21 st	Nursery	
Thurs 22 nd	Nursery		Thurs 19 th	Nursery		Fri 18 th	Newsletter deadline		Tues 26 th	Nursery	
Tues 27 th	Nursery		Tues 24 th	Nursery		Tues 22 nd	Nursery		Wed 27 th	Committee meeting	
Wed 28 th	Committee Meeting		Wed 25 th	Committee meeting		Wed 23 rd	Committee meeting				
Thurs 29 th	Nursery		Thurs 26 th	Nursery		Thurs 24 th	Nursery				
			Tues 31 st	Nursery		Tues 29 th	Nursery				
						Thurs 31 st	Nursery				

Revegetation activities are held at differing locations around the Yellingbo Reserve and area. Activities may include tree planting, seed collecting or works around the nursery or reserve. Meet at the **Yellingbo Ranger's House, 1217 Macclesfield Road, Yellingbo** (Melways Map 305 Ref. G11) at 10am. BYO Lunch. Most equipment is supplied. **For further information call Richard Case on 9720 4062.**

Nursery activities days are held at the Rangers House (see above). They run between 9am and 3pm, with (BYO) lunch. Work mainly involves the potting up of young seedlings. **For further information contact our Nursery Manager, Michelle Faram on 5964 8341**

On Saturday Dec 3rd, the Nursery will be open from 9am -12. It is the last time until Saturday sales start again in April 2012.

The nursery is closed on all public holidays and days of total fire ban.

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are still searching for members who are prepared to actively support our efforts in the nursery, assisting with planting days and, most importantly, help manage the increasingly complex

organisation. The nursery is producing upwards of 100,000 plants a year and it is expected that this level of output will continue. It takes a lot of man hours to sustain this level of activity. There will also be a requirement to help with planting days in the reserve. These are mainly school parties organised by the paid Coordinator who needs assistance on the days to set up the sites, distribute the plants in tube stock and to show the children – and adults! - how to undertake the planting.

The third area is to increase the strength of your committee. Retirements and people leaving the area have denuded the numbers and we would appreciate anyone who thinks that they have some skills that would help manage the FOHH to get in touch.



The President's report *by David Howell*

Members will receive their membership renewals soon, please try to action them as quickly as possible; this will reduce our workload in processing them. I would also ask that you try to encourage friends or work mates to join.

It would be great to see more members actively involved in the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater activities. I must admit it is very pleasing to see that the numbers of volunteers working in the nursery on Tuesdays and Thursdays have been increasing. At morning tea it even looks like a farmers' market some days with all the sharing of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Our nursery produces a wonderful array of indigenous plants, from ground covers and grasses to various eucalypt trees, all with local provenance for the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. The thousands of plants produced, from seed or cuttings, are the direct result of our hard working volunteers who, under the watchful guidance of Michelle Faram, manage to keep the nursery and polyhouses fully stocked.

I understand that many members cannot volunteer for the nursery, due to work or school commitments. Therefore it would be wonderful to meet members at some of the other activities; also remember the nursery is open on the first Saturday of the month (see timetable).

Are you interested in joining our committee? Do you have any skills that we could use? If anyone has previous committee experience, public speaking, computer, public education or lecturing, research, revegetation or natural resource management skills, and would like to volunteer some time we'd love to hear from you. Let us know if you are interested we can always use extra help.

If you think a member would be ideal on the committee, or in some other role, then encourage them – sometimes that's all that it takes.

We continue to work with the local community and various stakeholders on many committees to achieve habitat improvement and protection. The State Recovery Team is preparing for another release of captive HeHos in mid March to augment wild stocks. This is an exciting time for everyone involved especially for Bruce and Emma, who monitor the birds at Yellingbo and Bunyip State Park.

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater relies on our members and their input, please encourage your fellow members to be involved.

I would like to congratulate Irene Pearey, who was chosen as an "Environmental Achiever", in the Shire of Yarra Ranges recent Australia Day Awards. This is a great achievement and recognises Irene's dedication and hard work. The Friends of HeHo provided a letter supporting Irene's nomination.

Irene's environmental credentials are easily demonstrated by her very active roles in many community organisations: these include the Macclesfield Landcare group, the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority's committees ("Yarra4Life" and "Biolinks"), Melbourne Water's Streamflow Management committee

and also as an active member and volunteer of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater. She also grows fantastic raspberries!

Coordinators' Column *by Sue & Bruce Tardif*

"... all good things take time." or so says John Wooden



It helps us to plan our on-ground projects and meet our grant reporting requirements if we know at the start of the year what school, community and corporate group assistance we will have for our revegetation program from May-September. Our nursery manager, Michelle, then knows exactly when plants need to be ready and we know what other community education activities we can program in to our workload. We're sure you would agree that there's no great surprise in that, but of course, our priorities aren't necessarily the priorities of other people. Why is that?! Last year though, the stars aligned and for the first time in our time at the Friends, we had a full revegetation program by February without the need to advertise at all. In fact, we were able to complete our grant commitments with 6 months to spare.

At the time of writing, our 2012 bookings are also very strong. We have only 3 revegetation dates to fill, and in anticipating that this won't be difficult, we have suggested that one of our adult groups help with the Yarra4Life projects planting commitments within the reserve. Adam, the Y4L project coordinator, has accepted (no surprise there) and in return the Friends will receive a fee for managing the day. It's a win-win. All we need now is the money to do the projects that we have bookings for!

In late January we met with Dan, who assesses our Melbourne Water Community Grants applications. For 2012-13 we have applied for 2 grants and early indications are that we will be successful. We will be advised late February/early March of the outcome, then it's all steam ahead getting fencing construction done and weed contractors engaged ready for our first planting in May.

In late December 2011 we were advised that we were successful in receiving a Parks Victoria Healthy Parks Healthy People Grant. We have approached Macclesfield Landcare Group, asking if they will assist us with some extra funding to improve the outcomes of this project. They have agreed, to which we are extremely grateful. This project will see weed management and fencing to protect understorey plantings and regenerating flora at the Helmeted Honeyeater reintroduction site within Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. Zoos Victoria staff will be our volunteer workforce to plant the plants. The timing of this project is critical so that it doesn't disrupt breeding. We expect to start and complete the work in a small window of time between May and June.

The new online enquiry form on our website is proving to be a great asset, with small numbers, but regular enquiries.

The depot improvements, from member donations, are proceeding well. We had some fun gluing a bunch of letters we picked up at a disposal shop into threatened species words on one of the walls. We have a quote for the electrical works and at the time of writing are just waiting on Parks Victoria approval – the depot is a PV asset. In spending a bit of time at the depot over the past weeks, we've been 'distracted' occasionally by some weeds that become obvious in summer, particularly Red Hot Pokers and Thistle. If anyone feels, like us, that these have no place in the reserve, we'd love to hear from you. It's amazing what a couple of hours with a few people can achieve. Did you know that a Hamilton tree planter makes a great thistle remover?

Depot-endangered species wall images S Tardif





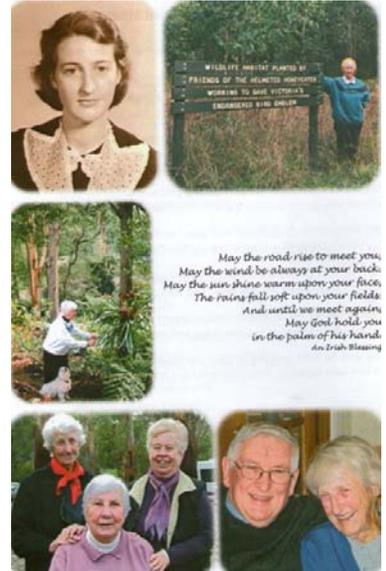
Disappointing to find that overnight recently a locked gate to the reserve was completely removed from its hinges and 3 picnic tables stolen. These tables were for school and community groups to have lunch on when they come in for our revegetation program. You can't see these tables from the gate, so the pilfering was quite targeted. Pretty annoying isn't it!

Shields Road 4-1-12 gate removed image S Tardif

Vale Marie Lynch a warrior for the environment.

Marie fought for the environment and she would stand in front of a log truck, if necessary. While passionate about all living things, the Helmeted Honeyeater, old growth forests and whales were high on her priority list. The Friends were most fortunate to have Marie as a volunteer in the early days of the group. She was a regular volunteer at the nursery and at revegetation projects when living at Millgrove. Upon her moving back to Melbourne, her church work precluded Marie from being a physical volunteer. However, she continued to support the Friends by her attendance at the AGMs and at Members' meetings. Our group has indeed been blessed to have known Marie and to have her as a friend.

By Bob Anderson



Feeding Footnotes by Merrilyn Serong



The 2011-2012 HeHo breeding season is well underway as I write. When visiting the supplementary-feeding area at Yellingbo, it is obvious that adult HeHos don't change much from week to week, or even from year to year, but the young ones change in behaviour as well as appearance very quickly. We who provide the HeHos with their supplementary food generally don't see the young until after they have fledged. When they first leave the nest, they huddle on a well-hidden branch making begging noises while the parents busily take them

food items.

During the breeding season one of our tasks as supplementary feeders is to provide not only the regular, liquid Wombaroo, but also live mealworms for the parents to prepare and give to their young. Mealworms are actually beetle larvae and are available from pet shops. This food adds to the supply of insects and spiders that the parents themselves find for their young. A parent bird typically takes a mealworm from the bowl at its feeding station and proceeds to bash it several times on a nearby branch or the ground. The parent then flies to the hidden fledgling and soon returns to prepare another mealworm. Sometimes the parent tries to pick up two or three at a time, but inevitably drops one. Feeding the young is obviously a great deal of work, but both parents participate.



Taking the HeHos their supplementary food once a week makes it easy to see how quickly the fledglings develop from the first seemingly fragile stage. Soon they move about independently and sometimes come close to their parents' feeding station. They even wait beside the adult bird while it bashes a mealworm. We then have the opportunity of seeing how the parent pushes the food directly into the fledgling's gaping bill. Soon the fledglings are brave enough to go into the station and feed from a dish of Wombaroo.

In what seems to us a very short time the parents become less attentive, despite the young still making their plaintive cries. When the parents are ready to breed again, they can be quite aggressive to their earlier brood and chase them away from their feeding station. It is time to move on, but some young birds take a lot of persuading. At present there are 15 feeding stations at Yellingbo; this number is large enough to effectively reduce the frequency of aggressive encounters between neighbours as well as between parents and their young. If the immature birds cannot use the closest station, another is not far away. Eviction is also a big incentive for these birds to quickly become skilled at finding their own natural food.



HeHos at various sites in the Yellingbo Reserve. Images: Marilyn Serong

Member profile – David, the President

How did you first hear about Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater? From my wife Bernadette who was already a member and had done a study on revegetation practices at Yellingbo.

Why did you join the Friends? I joined the Friends to support the great work already being done by the volunteers and the Recovery Team. I gained great satisfaction out of meeting new people and learning new skills from the volunteers, because of their influence, I changed career and became a “mature age” university student completing Honours in Environmental Science.

You have recently taken on the role of President of the Friends and Media Liaison Officer. We appreciate its very early days in these positions, but tell us what you see as the strengths, challenges and needs of the Friends over the next couple of years. There are many challenges that the Friends of HeHo face - climate change and its impact on habitat and species, funding issues, societal changes which are reflected in the loss of altruism and reduced numbers of volunteers across all facets of society.

Our strengths are the dedication and support of our members, the volunteers who regularly attend the nursery, those who feed the birds and/or help out on members revegetation days. Another important strength is our Recovery Team made up of many well-credentialed individuals.

Our needs of the coming years are basically to focus on what the Friends of HeHo were established for – to increase and improve habitat and the numbers of Helmeted Honeyeaters. This can be achieved by establishing wider links with the overall community; it is the State bird emblem! Increasing our educational profile amongst more schools to foster a better understanding of why we need habitat

protection and improvement, as well as showing how the various species all contribute to ours and the HeHos well being.

When you're not involved in Friends activities, what are the things you enjoy doing?

I enjoy being in the bush; there are so many different things to see. I love to read and often have a number of books "on the go" at any one time; I also have a veggie garden and grow heritage apples.

What or whom inspires you?

I am inspired by nature and its complexities; by the intricate way everything has a niche. I am also really inspired by children and their wide-eyed view of the world – if only their views weren't narrowed by adult influence and bias.

I am also inspired by the elderly members of society they have so much life experience to impart and great insights into coping with adversity, if only we would listen.

If you had 10 minutes with a State or Federal Minister, which one would you choose and what would you say?

I would choose the Premier Ted Baillieu, because it is pointless talking to his subordinates about important issues. I would have a 'heart to heart' discussion about the need for greater resourcing for our various environmental departments (DSE and Parks Victoria), and the need for an extensive schools environmental curriculum and the health benefits for the community by becoming involved in environmental projects. Adults and children can gain wonderful psychological and health outcomes simply by being involved in outdoor projects. The Europeans refer to it as "Vitamin G" (green) while in the USA it is referred to as "Vitamin N" (nature). We have a long way to go but the conversation needs to start with the Premier - in his youth he promoted cleaner beaches!

What do you consider to be the one thing that anyone can do to help our environment?

Simply get involved, read about environmental issues, talk to people and above all ask questions. When you increase your knowledge and skills you can help others better understand the issues or undertake new tasks. Environmental work is not just about nature; it is about you and me and how we work or relate with each other, barriers are broken down and new friendships are made. The social aspects are rewarding because we all have a common aim irrespective of age, culture or religion.

How could Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater do things differently to make your membership or volunteering role even better?

I would sincerely love to see more young people involved in our activities, because they are our future. When their energy levels and inquisitiveness are matched to the knowledge and skills of our older volunteers then the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater will continue to accomplish great things.

It's membership renewal time for the Friends. What would you say to members about this?

Please renew your membership and encourage others to join, maybe your workplace or children's school might like a talk or display on the HeHo.

I would also like to hear from members with ideas on improving the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater.

Nursery News *by Michelle Faram*

2011 was another extremely busy year with over 55,000 plants going out from the nursery for planting days and other orders between April and early December. A large number of plant orders were still being sent out during November, but by the beginning of December the planting days had begun to slow down, as the weather started to warm up and the end of the year loomed large, we had run out of time and a number of orders were put on hold until autumn 2012. Some orders were also put on hold last year due to the wet weather with pre planting weed control works and access difficult in some areas.

Unfortunately I was also unexpectedly put on hold at the start of December and the nursery was left in the hands of our president David and the rest of the volunteer nursery team until January, when I was



able to return in a reduced capacity. The team did a wonderful job of holding it all together, organising a water roster, keeping up with production by sowing seed, producing cuttings, pricking out seedlings, sorting pots and looking after nursery sales.

While away I missed out on organising the annual nursery volunteers Christmas thankyou lunch and in doing so also missed the opportunity to thank everyone for all of the hard work that they had put in over the year. A massive effort again, well done. Special thanks also to Shirley P., Vivian and Irene and anyone else who helped put the lunch together at short notice in my absence.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate one of our valued nursery volunteers Irene Pearey, on receiving the 2012 Yarra Ranges Council Environmental Achiever of the Year award. The award is well-deserved recognition for all the good work that Irene has undertaken, with both the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Macclesfield Landcare.

The discovery of the serious fungal disease Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) in a small number of Victorian nurseries, has recently been reported in a number of newspaper articles. The disease which affects the plant family Myrtaceae, which includes eucalypts and melaleucas among many others, with all members of the family considered potential hosts, was first detected in NSW in 2010. This disease does have the potential to impact on our nursery and the plants we grow so we will have to take great care to avoid infection and also spreading of the disease.

There is lots of information available on the web, for example from the Department of Primary Industries site, which is useful for identification of the disease and also ways to reduce the chances of spread.

Myrtle rust spores are very small and produced in large numbers so they can be spread in a number of different ways for example, the movement of infected plant material, equipment and on clothing.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PLANT MATERIAL INTO THE NURSERY FOR IDENTIFICATION A PHOTO IS BEST.

He Ho Merchandise

Summer stock available	size	number	\$
Steel Blue <i>He Ho</i> Polo Shirts - <i>most sizes</i>	\$25 each		
Green Canvas Hat 8" brim, sizes 57 only \$10 each with He Ho emblem			
Name :			Sub total \$
Address:			10% P&H
..... P/code.....			TOTAL \$

Out in the Field *by Bruce Quin*

2011/2012 Breeding Season

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve

Breeding at the reintroduction site and the last naturally occurring territories at Cockatoo Swamp in Yellingbo has been monitored as closely as possible. Nineteen breeding pairs and 23 fledglings have been confirmed during the 2011/2012 breeding season to date. The significance of this number of breeding pairs is fully appreciated when compared with the number recorded for the six previous breeding seasons (11-13). The total population of Helmeted Honeyeaters at Yellingbo has risen to approximately 70 individuals. It appears that the return of a more normal rainfall pattern over the past two years or so has allowed for high survivorship of Helmeted Honeyeaters because most of the birds banded for the genetic study since autumn 2010 are still alive.

Another encouraging sign has been the re-colonisation of areas within Yellingbo that were abandoned during the prolonged dry period. A pair formed and successfully bred in a location of Cockatoo



Swamp that had not been occupied since the 1997/1998 breeding season. Additionally, at least three Helmeted Honeyeaters were detected at Macclesfield Creek in Yellingbo during December (2011) – January (2012), a site abandoned prior to the 2009/2010 breeding season. This site needs re-visiting to determine if nesting has taken place during the current breeding season.

Another update on the oldest Helmeted Honeyeater on record is warranted in this article; we have written about this bird in previous He Ho Heralds. It is a thrill to report that he was still in his territory when it was last searched on the 9th January this year, at the age of approximately 17 years and 2 months. Hopefully, he will be seen in his territory when it is next visited!

The 2011/2012 breeding season for Helmeted Honeyeaters at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve may have finished and outcomes have been quite satisfying. However, there are always habitat issues to overcome and vegetation dieback is still occurring in habitat occupied by Helmeted Honeyeaters. Several organisations, including Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria are to investigate possible causes of the dieback – altered stream flow patterns and nutrients levels – in the near future.

Bunyip State Park

Just two pairs of Helmeted Honeyeaters remained at the Tonimbuk release sites for the 2011/2012 breeding season, in habitat not burnt since 1967, while others dispersed to floodplain habitat burnt on “Black Saturday” at Labertouche North. It was at the latter location that an unexpected event occurred, as described later in this article.

The two pairs of Helmeted Honeyeaters at Tonimbuk occurred in adjacent territories at the original release site and both produced two fledglings. All four adults but only one of the four fledglings have been detected during February (2012).

At the Labertouche North sites, monitoring conducted by remote cameras at mostly empty feed stations established by Emma Campbell and area searches have continued. Breeding by Helmeted Honeyeaters was confirmed for the first time at the site found in January 2010. One of three nest attempts produced two fledglings, the successful nest occurring late in the 2011/2012 breeding season. This exciting result is extremely significant because it is indicative of Helmeted Honeyeaters doing their own thing – choosing habitat and breeding successfully with minimal support from us! This pair had little prior breeding experience, which may explain the rapid disappearance of one of the fledglings, but the remaining youngster was doing well at 27 days of age on 15th February (2012). The successful nest site was intriguing too, being approximately 20 metres high in epicormic growth of a floodplain eucalypt.

The second site at Labertouche North was located in October 2010 and a further site was found between the first two sites in January 2012. During the 2011/2012 breeding season individuals of the Gippsland subspecies of Yellow-tufted Honeyeater were unexpectedly confirmed as occurring with Helmeted Honeyeaters at these locations. Four pairs comprising individuals of both subspecies of Yellow-tufted Honeyeater formed and two of these pairs bred, producing a total of three hybrid offspring; however, only one of these fledglings has apparently survived. A pair of Helmeted Honeyeaters had two failed nest attempts at one of the sites. Another site was located upstream of the second site just prior to the writing of this article. At least two Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters were sighted there, but subspecies determination occurred for only one individual and it was of the Gippsland subspecies.

Nest sites at Labertouche North have been located in Rough Tree-fern (2), Hazel Pomaderris (2), Hemp - Bush (2) and Mountain Swamp Gum (1).

Overall, 11 Helmeted Honeyeaters (including one fledgling), at least six individuals of the Gippsland subspecies of Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and one hybrid youngster have been detected recently at Labertouche North sites. Breeding between individuals of the two subspecies will be closely



Image: Marilyn Serong

monitored because ‘swamping’ of the Helmeted Honeyeater gene pool by the Gippsland subspecies is not desirable. It is likely that the effects of fires on habitats at various locations have resulted in individuals of the two subspecies ‘meeting’ at Labertouche North.

During most drought years in the 1990’s and 2000’s, the inland subspecies Yellow-tufted Honeyeater was recorded at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and other locations within the historical range of Helmeted Honeyeater (Healesville; Upper Beaconsfield). In one autumn, an individual was with Helmeted Honeyeaters at Tonimbuk too. However, mixed pairings never apparently formed. The next edition of He Ho Herald will update the news on the Helmeted Honeyeaters at both Yellingbo and Bunyip and Gippsland subspecies of Yellow-tufted Honeyeater at the latter reserve. I wish a happy new year to Everyone. Bruce.

Reveg Rambles *by Richard Case*

The last few months have seen us busy with weeds and seeds, visiting many different sites in some interesting weather.

The Reveg Day of the 13th of November was a continuation of our weeding efforts. The first priority was to treat some Tree Tobacco regrowth with herbicide. Most of this patch had died following our earlier efforts and we hope these will also take the hint. Next was to check for regrowth of the Watsonia patch; none was found although it was flowering elsewhere in the district. Then it was time for Quaking Grass. There wasn’t much to find and it was all fairly small, only five bags after half a day’s weeding.

Throughout the day we had the company of the birds; a juvenile Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo squarking after it’s parents, Rainbow Lorikeets, Swamp Harrier, Little Corellas, three species of cuckoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Australian Reed-Warbler and Little Black Cormorant. Over lunch, we were amused to hear a Stubble Quail calling from 30 feet up in a Blackwood. After a little head scratching this turned out to be a mimicking Brown Thornbill.

After lunch, we decided to walk the high track down from Carters Lane, scouting for, finding and removing more Tree Tobacco. From here, there are great views over the Reserve and surrounds. We encountered Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird and a Great Egret. Stunning and visible over long distance, camouflage doesn’t seem to have played a great part in its evolution. A pair of Long-billed Corellas and a pair of Galahs perched in the same tree nearby. As the walk ended a pair of Spotted Pardalotte came down to look at us, 3-4m away. Little gems.

The 11th of December was raining and very wet underfoot. We concluded our weed season with a final, thorough check on the Quaking Grass patch. Very little was found. The birds didn’t seem to mind the weather with many calling and fossicking about in the tree tops. We returned to the Nursery where we did some “quick” jobs until a late lunch.

Next we went to Cockatoo Creek looking for wind-blown seed but found nothing. Over here, a different suite of birds included Rufous Fantail, Eastern Whipbird, Dusky Woodswallow and a pair of irate Satin or Leaden Flycatchers chasing a Kookaburra away!

The 8th of January was spent seed collecting. First stop was Parslows Bridge where we got some Silver Wattle, although mostly finished and not much of it, perhaps due to the spring rains. We also collected a small amount of Tree Violet and left a great deal to ripen up for next month.

Next was a visit to the Depot where we collected Manna Gum and Tasman Flax-lily. A walk along the Middle Creek section was a bit early in the season for most of its specialities and when it became too floody we turned around. An Olive-backed Oriole called from the gully behind the Depot, which we considered a nice farewell.



After lunch, we went over to Cockatoo Creek and walked the section between Macclesfield Creek Bushland and Manuka Meadows South. Here we collected Short Purple flag, Spiny-headed Mat-rush, Grass Trigger-plant, Milkmaids and Red-fruited Saw-sedge.

Seed collecting continued on the 12th of February. We visited Shaw Road wetland first. Now drying out, it was very quiet. One Black Duck. No Australian Reed-Warblers calling. Victorian Smooth Froglets starting to call but Common Froglets were silent. Spreading out across the wetland, we collected Tall Sedge, Tassel Sedge, Flecked Flat Sedge and Leafy Flat Sedge.

Next visit was to the Depot 2 aviary site wetland. Being so small, this area had suffered terribly in the drought but was now recovering. Here we were able to collect more Flecked Flat Sedge and *Juncus procerus* (a Rush).

After lunch, we went to collect from a fallen Swamp Gum I had noticed that morning. This proved to be an absolute bonanza and we spent a while filling the bag. From here we went on to Parslows Bridge to fulfil last month's promise to return and collect the Tree Violet. Which we did.

Something for the kids

Have you tuned into Primary Perspectives yet? Primary Perspectives is a 1 hour radio program about creating a sustainable future for our planet. It is created for kids... by kids. There are no adult voices and no adult deciding what is important to talk about. How cool is that! Check out the website at <http://www.primaryperspectives.info/> or listen to the program on Tuesdays from 4-5pm at 94.1FM or listen via live-streaming at <http://www.3wbc.org.au/> from anywhere in the world! We found out about Primary Perspectives from Senan, one of the Friends past Ambassadors. He's one of the presenters on the show, and invited us on for their 14 Feb 2012 program. Thanks Senan. It's fantastic to see that you're doing something positive to help our planet! I bet you're having fun too!

Are you a kid and doing something positive for our planet? Email Sue & Bruce telling us about it to heho1@optusnet.com.au. We'd love to hear from you and let others know about it.

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