



# The Whistler

Newsletter of the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club Inc.

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## From the Editor

I grew up in the 80's and the rock band The Angels were all the rage back then for young men with mullets, one of which I may or may not have had at the time. Regardless of hairstyles, one of their most famous songs is "Am I ever gonna see your face again?". Fast forward 30-odd years and that song could just about be the theme song for our ongoing covid lockdowns.

Thankfully we managed a few meetings and excursions earlier in the year before we were once again plunged into the latest lockdown. Will this be the last lockdown? We can certainly be hopeful with vaccination rates increasing daily, and that we can once again come together as a Club, for meetings, excursions and weekends away. Fingers crossed.

We obviously haven't got many excursion reports to fill The Whistler, so Peter passed on members' articles that were going into the bulletin for inclusion here. Thank you to members for taking the time to contribute to keeping in touch, and thanks to Peter for his work on the bulletin, which has definitely been a great read.

Spring is here and brings more daylight hours and warmer weather. Hopefully you have access to some local parks or bushland and are able to get out for a walk to enjoy nature. Birds are singing and making their nests, and flowers are blooming. Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Jack Airey  
Editor



Sun orchids are starting to flower, although they can be fussy and mostly only open fully on a warm sunny day. This is a Spotted Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra ixiooides*).

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*"... to further the study of Natural History in all its branches"*

## President's Report

Our last AGM was postponed until January this year and was held at Jumping Creek Reserve. This was the first time in many months in which we had been permitted to gather, and members enjoyed sharing time and swapping stories. Unfortunately, our regular monthly indoor meetings were unable to be held. We therefore reverted to outdoor gatherings where we could meet, have a brief walk, a picnic tea and then a general chat.

We held a couple of enjoyable outdoor meetings at Bellbird Picnic Area Yarra Bend in February and at Jells Park South in March.

With the easing of COVID restrictions we resumed our indoor meetings in April with a member's night. Thanks to Hazel Veevers, Eleanor & Warwick Dilley for 3 very interesting short presentations. This was followed in May with a presentation by Robert King on "Why plant names are sometimes altered: explanation and justification".

But COVID struck again, and our June meeting was cancelled. We were lucky to sneak in our July meeting with Graham Thomas showing a delightful DVD on Victorian Orchids which also featured both Doug and Ella checking the orchids. Then lockdown hit again.

In addition, we were able to hold a couple of excursions, Braeside Park (lead by Eleanor and Warwick Dilley) and Wilson Reserve (lead by Inta and Roger Needham). A field care day in May saw eight members assist in planting 1000 trees and bushes. A planned outing to Badger Weir, by Graham Thomas looking for ferns, was cancelled on 3 different occasions. Also cancelled for a second-year running was our planned weekend at Beechworth.

Once again, thanks also to all the members as well for their patience with our inability to gather either indoors or outdoors. Although we don't know when the restrictions will ease sufficiently to allow us to resume our normal routine, we will try to set up normal weekend excursions.

As with the earlier lockdown, we again compensated for lack of personal contact by sharing photos and reports in our regular bulletins. Thanks to all who contributed.

As always, a big thanks to the members of the Committee who have continued to work behind the scenes.

Peter F Rogers  
President







## Out and About

### Braeside Park

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Leaders: Eleanor & Warwick Dilley

Eighteen members and one visitor (Robert Grosvenor from the Birdlife Beginners' group) met at the southern end of Braeside Park on a day which promised and delivered on several showers during the morning.

Fortunately, we started in the wetlands, so the birds were going about their usual business with little concern for the rain. While there were no unusual sightings, there was plenty of variety for us all to enjoy, including both Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills, White-faced and White-necked Herons, Great and Cattle Egrets, Swans, Pelicans, Darters, Cormorants, and a good range of Ducks.



Little Pied Cormorants & Australasian Darter

There were not many bush birds out and about because of the rain and wind, though we did spot some as the day went on.

After lunch, some members left us and the rest drove round to the northern end of the park, where we did a shorter walk on the Heathland Trail.

We listed 47 different bird species for the day, found a rather splendid Ghost Fungus, and saw one very prosperous-looking rabbit.



Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen, Chestnut Teal, Pink-eared Duck family

By Eleanor & Warwick Dilley



Royal Spoonbill & Australian Wood Ducks





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Cattle Egret



Great Egret



Australian Pelicans



*Omphalotus nidiformis* – Ghost Fungus



Yellow-billed Spoonbill



Flame Robin





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## Field Care Day, Ringwood North

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May

Leaders: Hazel & Alan Veevers

On 1st May eight members took part in a planting day at a small reserve in North Ringwood. Council staff had earlier dug 1,000 holes and provided 1,000 native plants to go in them. They were each in a small plant pot and included Eucalypts and bushes of various sorts, down to small local grass species. A few locals also participated. The task was completed in record time, after which everyone enjoyed a well-earned morning tea.

By Hazel & Alan Veevers







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## Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Leaders: Inta & Roger Needham

On a bright almost cloudless autumn Sunday morning an eager group of 19 Ringwood Field Naturalists gathered at the car park of Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe. Our walk commenced at 9.45am along very soggy footpaths past a large billabong swelled to capacity by Saturday's rain. Unfortunately, the only birds seen on the billabong were Dusky Moorhens although the air was filled with the calls of the many resident Bell Miners who could be seen moving from tree to tree.

With the Spotted Pardalotes calling up high in the canopy a family of Superb Fairy-wrens danced through the shrubbery next to a flooded path prior to us seeing Bailey's Billabong and the adjoining picnic area. Initially few birds were seen but then Pacific Black Ducks, Chestnut Teal, Eurasian Coots and Dusky Moorhen made their appearance.



Superb Fairy-wren



Bell Miner



Spotted Pardalote

Walking beside Irvine Road we viewed a few small dams near the fence of the Ivanhoe Golf Course until we came to an area where Buff-banded Rails had been seen in the past. The lead group missed out on seeing these birds, but the rear group spied 2 of them thanks to Don's sharp eyes.

Retracing our steps we walked toward the Yarra River, skirting the Golf Course, then turning east along the Main Yarra Trail toward Burke Road. Horseshoe Billabong along this trail is sometimes good for birds but not today. After seeing 33 birds we returned to the car park where we had morning tea.

From the Wilson Reserve car park most in the group drove along the Boulevard to the Eaglemont Tennis Club car park and walked along the Yarra Trail to Yarra Flats where the River Red Gums lining the Yarra are huge. This area was very quiet bird wise. Lunch was eaten near the Tennis Club, and as the day grew darker and cooler the excursion ended at about 1.30pm.

By Inta & Roger Needham

Brown Thornbill



## Member's Articles

### An Unlikely Nesting Site



On exploring our local area around Ivanhoe East, Inta and I took a walk along the Main Yarra Trail to the west of Burke Road. The Trail here follows closely beside the Eastern Freeway. Not a pleasant site to go walking you would think with the noise of the Freeway to one side and the frequent need to watch out for cyclists riding along the Trail.

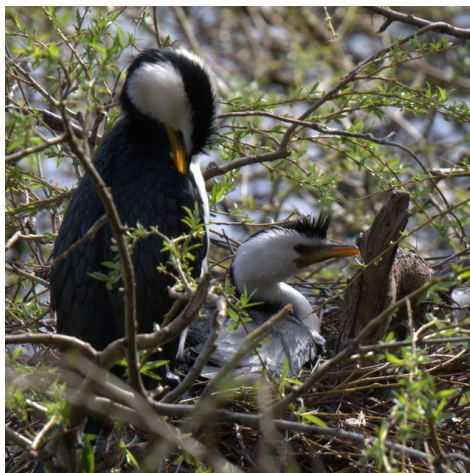
Still, you don't know what is around unless you explore a little. To the left of the Trail when heading west (toward the city) lies the Kew Golf Course and immediately below the Trail is a large dam or small lake. Along the shore of the lake abutting the Trail and freeway is a line of trees and shrubs. Would you believe that this is the place chosen by plenty of Ibis, Cormorants and Darters to nest? Not more than 30 meters from the Freeway with all its noise and lights there they are, nesting.

Next time you travel east along the Eastern Freeway, travel in the left-hand lane and as you approach the Burke Rd exit sign your passenger can look left to see the dam and perhaps some of the nesting birds.

Roger Needham



Left to right (above): Rainbow Lorikeet, Aust. White Ibis (2)  
 Left to right (below): Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant







## Travels in 2021

In early May 2021, with our Covid-19 vaccinations complete, Arthur and I left Melbourne for a 17-week trip to revisit places in South Australia and the Northern Territory, and to explore some of Outback Queensland.

Apart from the pleasure of seeing less-familiar birds again, we were also keen to locate a small number of species to add to our life lists. Eventually our new ticks included Purple-crowned Fairy-wren, Chestnut-breasted Whiteface, Chestnut Rail and Kalkadoon Grasswren. A Black Bittern appeared unexpectedly in the long grass at Fogg Dam, NT, giving me a new species as I had missed it previously, and a Red-chested Buttonquail caused great excitement at the Blackall Common in Queensland.

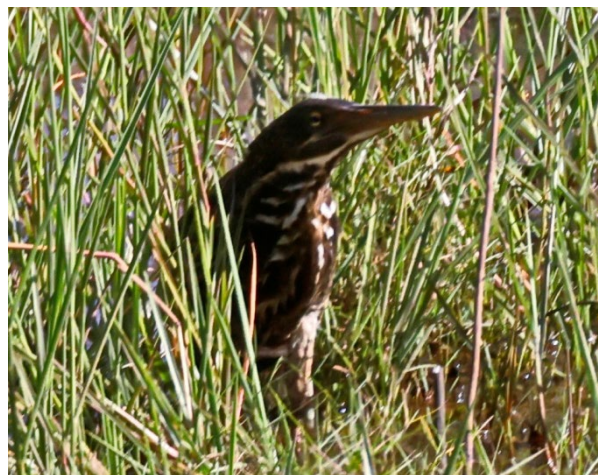
By Denise Carew



Chestnut-breasted Whiteface



Purple-crowned Fairy-wren (male)



Black Bittern



## Orchids within our reach

With the ability to travel further we ventured to Hochkins Ridge Flora Reserve, an area we had explored years ago. Upon entering the reserve, we found a nice specimen of *Caladenia major* (Wax-lip Orchid). Walking along the loop track we encountered huge numbers of this species. We also came across Jack (and Winnie) enjoying a walk and exploring nature. A few *Pterostylis nutans* (Nodding Greenhood) were also found in flower in another area.

We walked to an area identified previously where a large patch of the *Chiloglottis valida* (Common Bird Orchid) were seen. We were not disappointed as a number were starting to flower. Also found were some *Pterostylis melagramma* (Tall Greenhood).



*Glossodia (Caladenia) major*



*Chiloglottis valida*



*Pterostylis nutans*



*Pterostylis melagramma*

Two days later we visited Doongalla in the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Here we discovered some *Diuris orientis* (Common Donkey Orchid) in flower. Also in flower were some nice *Chiloglottis valida*, Common Bird Orchids. Almost to the end of our walk we observed an interesting greenhood. It was a single *Pterostylis alpina* (Mountain Greenhood). A new orchid for us in this National Park.

By Sandra & Don Redman



*Pterostylis alpina*



*Diuris orientis*





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### FJC Rogers Reserve

Below is a photo collage from Judith of some of the more interesting flowers in the FJC Rogers Reserve, taken in early October. There are more flowers to see, and the reserve is definitely worth a visit if you are in the area.



FJC ROGERS RESERVE 6TH OCTOBER 2021

JUDITH V COOKE

Photo collage by Judith Cooke

### Back to the local 5/10/15kms

I know in the grand scheme of things being allowed to travel only 5/10/15kms isn't the end of the world, but why does it have to be in spring!?! There are orchids that need to be seen! At least I'm lucky enough to have Warrandyte within reach, and with the extension to 15kms, a lot of the Christmas Hills area. Here are some of the local beauties I've managed to see over the past couple of months.

By Jack Airey

*Glossodia (Caladenia) major*  
Waxlip orchid (white variety)





Clockwise from top left: *Caleana major* (Large Duck Orchid), *Caladenia transitoria* (Eastern Bronze Cap), *Thelymitra ixioides* (Spotted Sun Orchid), *Caladenia parva* (Small Spider Orchid), *Diuris orientis* (Donkey Orchid), *Thelymitra rubra* (Salmon Sun Orchid)







## Appendix

### Braeside Park bird list – 47 species

Compiled by Eleanor & Warwick Dilley

Black Swan	Cattle Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet
Blue-billed Duck	White-faced Heron	Eastern Rosella
Australian Wood Duck	White-necked Heron	Red-rumped Parrot
Pink-eared Duck	Royal Spoonbill	Superb Fairy-wren
Grey Teal	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Red Wattlebird
Chestnut Teal	Australian White Ibis	Noisy Miner
Australian Shelduck	Straw-necked Ibis	White-plumed Honeyeater
Hardhead	Dusky Moorhen	Flame Robin
Pacific Black Duck	Australasian Swamphen	Grey Fantail
Australasian Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Magpie-lark
Hoary-headed Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Grey Butcherbird
Australasian Darter	Black-fronted Dotterel	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Little Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Common Bronzewing	Welcome Swallow
Australian Pelican	Spotted Turtle-dove	Silvereye
Great Egret	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	

### Wilson Reserve bird list – 33 species

Compiled by Inta & Roger Needham

Pied Currawong	Eurasian Coot	Bell Miner
Superb Fairy-wren	Noisy Miner	Dusky Moorhen
Common Myna	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Rosella
Magpie-Lark	White Ibis	Crimson Rosella
Australian Magpie	Little Raven	Australian Wood Duck
Willie Wagtail	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush
Rainbow Lorikeet	Crested Pigeon	Galah
Pacific Black Duck	Red Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Musk Lorikeet	Common Bronzewing	Grey Fantail
Chestnut Teal	Brown Thornbill	Common Blackbird
Spotted Dove	Striated Thornbill	Laughing Kookaburra