



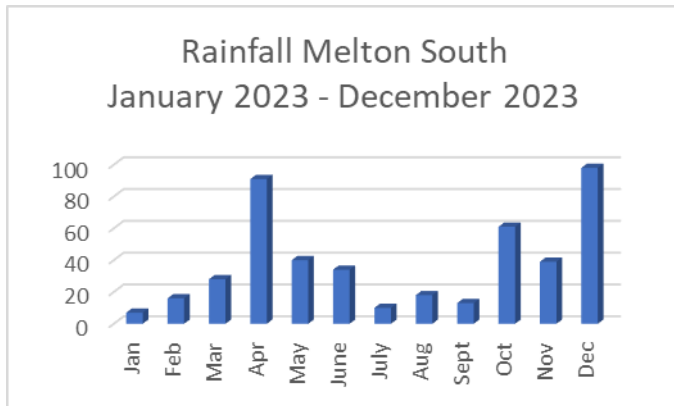
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2024

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

FEBRUARY



1mm rain recorded for Melton South! Hence the need to water!! An uneventful month until the fierce storm mid-month, causing widespread wind damage & fires in the west. Melton shared the wind damage but mostly it seems north of the railway line. However summer finally arrived with a vengeance at the end of February, bringing storms & bushfire in its wake! March brought several heatwave days, with accompanying fire ban days. From 96mm rain in January we had 6mm the following February & 1mm in March. Low rainfall for the last two months of summer, interspersed by heatwaves meant we were back to watering, to save our plants.

MARCH ACTIVITIES

Eynesbury Environment Group Clean up Australia Day Sunday 3rd March

About 16 members of Eynesbury Environment Group as well as some local volunteers met to clean up rubbish at Eynesbury. The day was cool & cloudy, in stark contrast to the weather just days past. Three separate groups cleaned up around

the Discovery Centre. It had been placed in a plastic storage box that was now crumbling & filled with putrid water.



A Melton family was enjoying itself on the playground when the father spoke to us thanking us for the good work we were doing cleaning up. He then bought us all coffee as a thank you for the good work we were doing, not taking no for an answer! Good to be appreciated!



Grateful Melton resident with EEG members

Afterward Resimax provided lunch in the form of pizza, chips & potato wedges, as well as soft drinks, as thanks for the cleanup effort. Again, good to be appreciated!

As Chris Lunardi, EEG President stated:
"The litter around Eynesbury is not only unsightly, it has a big impact on wildlife as it makes its way into our wetlands, rivers and creeks via the gutters and stormwater drains on the sides of our streets. Every bit of rubbish we can prevent from entering our waterways will make a massive difference."

Big thanks to Resimax for their support of this event."

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group Weeding in Pinkerton 7th March



On Thursday 7th March Allison, Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton Forest where we continued to tackle the Galenia.



There were large numbers of huge Tachinid (?) flies that looked ominously similar in appearance to March Flies. However no-one was bitten & March Flies do not appear to frequent Pinkerton. They also did not appear to have the large & menacing proboscis of March Flies. Tachinid flies are parasitic rather than blood-sucking.

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group Watering Bulokes in Pinkerton 7th March



On Thursday 14th March Allison, Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton Forest where we intended to tackle the Galenia again. However February's rainfall was only 8 mm and March has had several heatwaves with no rain. We found about ten healthy Bulokes & one lone Hymenantha seedling on the last Bird Survey in February so we thought it may be wise to give them some water, to keep them that way.



We found a large branch, the size of a small tree fallen beside the track. As there have been no winds lately it must have fallen during the recent three-day heatwave.

Works in Pinkerton Forest

Greater Western Water's Senior Environmental Engineer, William Rajendram, advises that farm manager Fil is undertaking rabbit control across the farm property, including Pinkerton Forest. He also advises that AJM have been contracted to undertake repair of the fence across Pinkerton Forest; this should be completed in a few weeks.



Rosemary & Irene examining dilapidated fence

The sagging fence has allowed sheep to enter the Forest. When sheep are mustered along the track they have been able to climb through the fence & enter the forest, preventing regrowth of understory, especially as understory plants have been extensively planted in Pinkerton by both Themeda & PLEG.

Many thanks to William Rajendram & Greater Western Water for the fence repair & many thanks to Fil for the rabbit control.

National Eucalypt Day: Bird walk in Eynesbury Forest

On Saturday 16th March we celebrated National Eucalypt Day by a bird walk in the Eynesbury Grey Box Forest. Eight people participated in a bird walk in Eynesbury Forest. We enjoyed a beautiful sunny autumn morning. Birds were everywhere! Prominent were numbers of Brown Treecreepers while we only saw one Tree Martin. We also saw a dozen or so kangaroos which headed toward the wetland. Crimson Rosellas were found in the eastern edge of the Forest. They are not often seen in the remainder of Eynesbury Forest.

Sadly, we saw no Diamond Firetails. Not too many years ago these were quite commonly seen in Eynesbury but their numbers now seem to be declining rapidly! Diamond Firetails are not only an iconic bird species of dry woodlands but also spectacularly beautiful! Perhaps we need to investigate what is causing this rapid decline in

their numbers? Perhaps we could ask Birdlife Australia for advice as they have been surveying bird diversity & numbers in Eynesbury for about 20 years?

Allison recorded 24 bird species, recorded on eBird as: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S165359723>;

Little Raven	Magpie
Willy Wagtail	Grey Fantail
Brown Treecreeper	Superb Fairy-wren
White-plumed Honeyeater	Tree Martin
House Sparrow	Red-browed Finch
Mynah	Starling
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Brown Goshawk
Bronzewing Pigeon	Crested Pigeon
Red-rumped Parrot	Galah
Long-billed Corella	White Cockatoo
Eastern Rosella	Crimson Rosella
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Kookaburra
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	



Vandalised shearing complex in Eynesbury

Unfortunately, on each visit we find the old shearing complex has been even more vandalised.

There is obviously no protection for this important historic site!

We were also disappointed to see a large pile of builders rubbish dumped beside the track. This pile would appear to have been deposited by a vehicle due to the volume of the rubbish & its proximity to the track. Perhaps vehicular access into the Forest is too easy? The volume of this pile of rubbish may need to be removed by a vehicle & trailer?

Most of us returned after having reached the shearing complex, our usual routine. However, the younger ones, led by Allison & Olivia, decided to continue along the track for a full circuit of the western half of the Forest. We also collected a bag of rubbish from along the track which we took back for disposal.



Cleaning rubbish in Eynesbury

Eynesbury Environment Group
AGM / Ordinary Meeting Wednesday 20th March
 Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury
 Homestead. Arrive at 6.00 for tea for a 7.00 start

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group
Watering & weeding Thursday 7th March



On Thursday 7th March Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton where we once more resumed spraying Galenia in the Forest. We then decided to water the four Bulokes & one Hymenanthera remaining in Pinkerton Link. Two Bulokes appeared to be thriving but the other two seemed to be doing poorly. We gave them two litres of water each.

APRIL ACTIVITIES

Saturday 20th April Little Blind Creek

Little Blind Creek flows through Melton, meeting Toolern Creek at Hannah Watts Park. It is home for large numbers of birds. The many old hollow trees provide nest sites for many hollow-nesting birds & possums. Meet in Guide Hall carpark in Pinkerton St (off Yuille St opposite Melton Golf Course). Melway Map 337 Ref C8

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group

PLEG meeting Thursday 16th May 10.00

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group's (PLEG) next meeting will be Thursday 16th May 10.00 in Pinkerton Forest at the Green Shed, following a working bee in the Forest. Cottrell Road. Melway Map 221.

Eynesbury Environment Group

Meeting Wednesday 22nd May 22

meeting will be on Wednesday 18th February at Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury Homestead.

Arrive at 6.00 for tea for a 7.00 start

Meeting Wednesday 18th September 7 - 9pm

Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury Homestead. Arrive at 6.00 for tea for a 7.00 start

Meeting Wednesday 13th November 7 – 9.00 pm

Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury Homestead

Eynesbury Market

Eynesbury Environment Group is a regular participant in Eynesbury Market as a stall holder

Sunday 24 th March	Sunday 28 th April
Sunday 26 th May	Sunday 23 rd June
Sunday 28 th July	Sunday 25 th August
Sunday 22 nd September	Sunday 27 th October
Sunday 24 th November	Sunday 22 nd December

BIRDWATCHING IN MELTON

Birdwatching activities in Melton are now confined to two groups.

These include:

- Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group
- Eynesbury Environment Group

PLEG / Werribee Wagtrails

Bird surveys at Pinkerton & Eynesbury

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) & Werribee Wagtails once again invite the community to join them birding at Pinkerton Forest & Mulla Mulla Woodland (Bush's Paddock) in the morning & Eynesbury Forest in the afternoon.

Toilets, café & bar at Eynesbury & composting toilet at Pinkerton. Eynesbury Forest, is one of Victoria's largest remaining stands of Grey Box), We finish around 3 pm. Flat but uneven ground, with no paths.

Within the greater City of Melton, over 170 different bird species have been recorded. About 127 bird species have been recorded at Pinkerton & about 170 at Eynesbury to date. Wedge-tailed Eagles regularly nest in these woodlands. These quarterly surveys provide valuable data as to both bird diversity & numbers in these woodlands. Citizen science in action! We may see some of the 50 or so kangaroos that live across all three of these adjoining sites.

Pinkerton is private property located at [http://goo.gl/maps/drFnS.0-p';!./](http://goo.gl/maps/drFnS.0-p';!./;); From Werribee, drive up Tarneit Road, turn left into Boundary Road, then turn right into Mt Cottrell Road. After about 3 Km, just after a rise, there is a group of houses on the left. The gravel track to Pinkerton (behind a locked gate) is just before the first house (1668 Mt Cottrell Road).

Mulla Mulla Grassland (formerly Bush's Paddock) is accessed by the same track. For more info: John McKenzie jackmack37@hotmail.com; or Daryl Akers jenniferkayakers@outlook.com; (0438 277 252). Meet at Mt Cottrell Road. Melway Map 221 Ref H8 Gates open 8.45 am, walk starts 9.00

Pinkerton & Eynesbury bird surveys are held quarterly on the third Sunday of February, May, August & November

Walks in 2024:

Sunday 18 th February	Sunday 19 th May
Sunday 18 th August	Sunday 17 th November

Eynesbury Environment Group:

Daryl Akers

Phone: 0438 277 252

Nature Walks

The Eynesbury Environment Group's (EEG) nature walks are back for 2024. Join us for a guided walk through the Eynesbury Grey Box Forest and discover why it is one of the most important woodlands around Melbourne.

Meet outside of the Eynesbury General Store. Bring long pants, walking shoes, water, binoculars (available to borrow), camera. All walks are free! All ages, bird watching abilities and interest levels welcome. More walks and events are added throughout the year. For further details, updates or to join the Group contact us at: eynesbury.environment.group@gmail.com; or follow Eynesbury Environment Group on Facebook.

Eynesbury Environment Group's nature walks

Sunday 26th May 9am - 11:30am
Eynesbury Nature Walk - Swift Parrot survey

Sunday 28th July 9am - 11:30am
Eynesbury Nature Walk

Saturday 5th October 7pm - 9pm
Eynesbury Nature Night Walk
Meet at Tooronga Rd

Sunday 3rd November 9am - 11:30am
Eynesbury Flora Walk
Led by Simon and Lorraine Jolly

EEG Bird Walks

Bird walk schedule for 2024

Saturday 18th May Melton Botanic Garden
Melton Botanic Garden features plants that tolerate a dry climate and low water conditions. It is one of Melton's finest birding sites. Gather at the information Shelter near the corner of Williams & Tullidge Streets.. Melways Map 337 Ref: C10 and D10

Saturday 15th June Hannah Watts Park
Hannah Watts Park is a popular park, beside Toolern Creek, in High St, just east of the shopping centre, opposite the golf course. Melway Page 337 Ref D9

Saturday 20th July Toolern Creek
Toolern Creek (Big Red) There is a footpath that runs along the creek. The creek forms a corridor for birds & other wildlife through Melton, from Toolern Vale in the north to the Toolern Regional Park in the south, thence to the Werribee River.

email: jenniferkayakers@outlook.com

Meet at Tamar Drive Melway Ref 337 C9

Saturday 17th August Strathtulloh

Strathtulloh Woodland is a remnant regenerating Grey Box Woodland overlooking Toolern Creek
Meet in Strathtulloh Circuit Melway 343 Ref A12

Saturday 14th September Melton Gilgai

Melton Gilgai Woodland (Harkness Road Woodland) is a remnant Grey Box/ Yellow Gum woodland. We hope to see a variety of woodland birds. Perhaps also some of the 100+ kangaroos that live here.

Meet in Harkness Road Melway map 330 Ref B11
Drive through Melton along High Street, west along the old Western Highway toward Bacchus Marsh.

Turn right (north) into Harkness Road, just before descending into the deep Anthonys Cutting.
There is a woodland a few km down the road.

Saturday 19th October Eynesbury Forest

Eynesbury is a 200 hectare Grey Box Woodland with over 150 bird species observed so far, as well as a small ornamental lake rich in wetland birdlife. A rare opportunity to see woodland bird species. Toilet facilities, general store, restaurant & bar! On Fire Ban Days, walk will be around the lake only. Eynesbury Discovery Centre Melway 226 Ref H1

Saturday 16th November Long Forest Mallee

Long Forest Mallee (LFM) is a unique Mallee remnant between Melton & Bacchus Marsh. Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Wattle Day

Sunday September 1st

September 1st, the first day of spring, is recognised as Wattle Day in Australia. According to the Wattle Day Association: *'Since 1992 National Wattle Day has been 1st September in all of Australia's States and Territories. Before then, Australians in different States celebrated wattle day on different days between August and September.'*

<https://wattleday.asn.au/>;

Melton Wildlife

Birds in heatwaves

Birds often suffer greatly during heatwaves so the best way we can help them is to place a water supply for them, preferable out of reach of cats. This no-cost bird bath is an old disused frypan with broken handle placed on the stump of a Lightwood

Wattle about two metres from the ground, with a rock placed as a landing site!.



Cowboy Beetle

This impressive Cowboy Beetle, (*Chondropyga dorsalis*) about 3cm (one inch) in length was found beside a rotting tree stump in Melton South in February. It had magnificent antler-like antennae but these were out of sight as it tried to hide its head among leaves. The large curl grubs that we sometimes find in the ground turn into large chafer-type beetles like this.



According to Atlas of Living Australia: *'Chondropyga dorsalis is a large Australian beetle commonly known as the cowboy beetle. The cowboy beetle grows to 20–25 mm (0.8–1 in) long with females generally slightly larger than males. It has a yellow-brown colouration and when in flight produce a loud buzzing noise which creates the illusion of a large wasp. It also does this when it feels threatened. It is found in south eastern Australia - throughout Victoria, New South Wales and part of Queensland. Adults feed on nectar while larvae live in rotten wood. They live in woodlands, dry sclerophyll forests and residential gardens.'*

<https://bie.ala.org.au/species/https://biodiversity.or>

[g.au/afd/taxa/c88d4abd-4262-429b-b70a-428d1fb2cd8d](https://www.g.au/afd/taxa/c88d4abd-4262-429b-b70a-428d1fb2cd8d);

Marbled Gecko hatchling



This tiny hatchling Marbled Gecko was found dead under a front door in Melton South. The five-cent coin was added for a size comparison. These geckoes are common household lizards found in Melbourne & surrounding suburbs, including Melton, Bacchus Marsh & nearby towns. Originally found only north of the Great Dividing Range they are said to have been accidentally transported here in firewood & timber.

White butterflies en masse

Vast clouds of white butterflies, probably Cabbage Whites (*Pieris rapae*) appear to be literally everywhere this late summer. They can be seen flocking across roads, drifting on the wind perishing in their thousands as they splatter on vehicles windscreens. Wild brassica or similar plants seem especially popular with them



OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

2023 broke every single climate indicator

ABC News reports:

'The World Meteorological Organization's State of the Global Climate report confirms 2023 broke every single climate indicator'

'The UN agency's annual State of the Global Climate report confirmed it wasn't just the hottest year on record, ocean heat reached its highest level since records began, global mean sea level also reached a record high and Antarctic sea ice reached a record low.'

The impacts of extreme weather and climate events up-ended life for millions of people across the world and inflicted billions of dollars in economic losses, according to the WMO.

"Extreme climate conditions exacerbated humanitarian crises, with millions experiencing acute food insecurity and hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes," WMO Secretary General Professor Celeste Saulo said.

"Heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires and intense tropical cyclones wreaked havoc on every continent and caused huge socio-economic losses." <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-03-20/wmo-climate-records-broken-global-temperature/103604076>;

Eynesbury Forest regenerating.



Grey Box seedling in treeless corridor

The summer rain has helped the Grey Box Forest to regenerate itself. The weed infested (*Serrated Tussock & Carpet Weed*) treeless corridor leading to Eynesbury Falls now has several hundred (*thousands perhaps*) Grey Box seedlings growing among (*perhaps sheltered by*) the vast swathes of *Serrated Tussock*. These are growing alongside the existing woodland, just beyond the drip line, on the northern edge of the corridor, close to the

canopy's edge. The Woodland is extending itself along the northern edge of the Corridor. The middle of the corridor however remains treeless. Over a few years the woodland should eventually reclaim this barren weed-infested Corridor



Weed infested corridor

Old Djerriwarrh Bridge



Old Djerriwarrh Bridge is a beautiful old sandstone bridge spanning Djerriwarrh Creek at the bottom of Anthony's Cutting midway between Melton & Bacchus Marsh on the old Ballarat Road (Western Highway). This stretch of the old highway has been replaced by the new Western Highway Bypass. Sadly it has become an eyesore due to its being a dumping place for rubbish, as reported in Melton Moorabool Star Weekly: <https://meltonmoorabool.starweekly.com.au/news/new-love-for-old-bridge/>;

Scattered among a pile of rubbish are the foul-smelling remains of a rotting animal that appears to be the remains of a large deer. Presumably the choice cuts have been removed while the legs, hide & offal have been discarded in this public roadside park. Looks too big for a local Fallow Deer, possibly a Sambar. Unfortunately, Melton's back roads have similarly become dumping places for rubbish. Some people seem intent on turning Melton into a rubbish dump. Perhaps a hidden trail camera may identify dumpers! Rubbish dumpers

should be reported to Melton Council & the Police! Is Melton becoming the rubbish capital of Melbourne?



A new community group, Djerriwarrh Creek Bridge Community group, has been formed to draw attention to the sad state of this picturesque old bridge. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/286290907201908>;

Old Djerriwarrh Bridge is maintained by Vicroads; <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/newsmedia/2023/djerriwarrh-creek-bridge-old-western-highway-maintenance-works>;
Email: DoTroadprojects@roads.vic.gov.au;
DoTroadprojects@roads.vic.gov.au;

Melton Wildlife Corridors

Melton is fast becoming engulfed with housing. However, there are several natural corridors that traverse Melton, providing corridors through which wildlife can migrate through this sea of development. Migrating birds especially use these corridors on their annual migrations through our region. Perhaps the most visible & brightly-coloured example of this is the Sacred Kingfisher. These arrive in Melton in late November, almost like clockwork, before moving southward to nest along the Werribee River.

These corridors are:

Arnolds Creek corridor	Toolern Creek corridor
Little Blind Creek corridor	Ryans Creek corridor

Two of these (Arnolds Creek & Ryans Creek) have had part of their length 're-wilded' whereby the concrete drains through which they flowed had been removed & the creeksides revegetated with indigenous vegetation.