



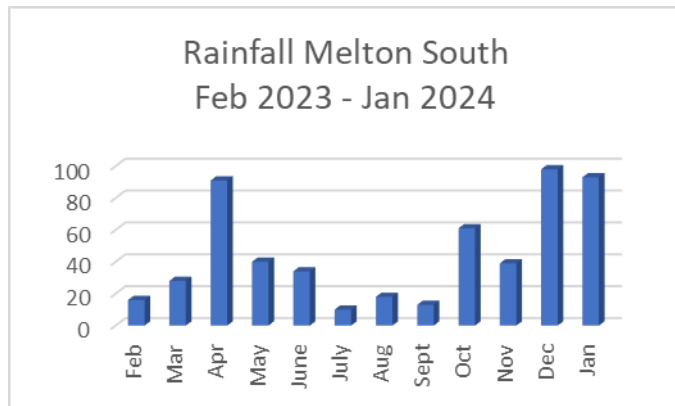
# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## FEBRUARY 2024

### WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

### JANUARY



A tropical & stormy start to 2024. Again, we received 23mm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January! Low rainfall in winter 2023 killed many of the trees planted in Pinkerton Forest. However, the long wet summer ensured that most of the survivors are thriving.

### JANUARY ACTIVITIES:

**Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group:**  
removing Cane Needlegrass from Graves  
carpark & removing fallen timber from fence



Irene & Rosemary removing Cane Needlegrass

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January Irene, Rosemary & Daryl returned to Pinkerton for our first activity for 2024. We found several Cane Needlegrass plants in the carpark near the Pinkerton family graves. We matted these out and placed them in bags so that they could be removed from the scene and properly disposed of. They will be placed in a few large plastic rubbish bags to be left in the summer sun so that the seeds will be destroyed prior to disposal.

While at the carpark we found Adam the farm hand trying to remove a single freshly shorn ewe from the Forest. It had entered via the dilapidated fence beside the lane after having been shorn in the nearby shearing shed. He had driven it to the carpark gate but it refused to leave. Presumably it didn't like the look of our cars parked there, or us. We decided to help Adam chase the sheep through the gate but it evaded all our efforts. We left the task to Adam who no doubt had a better idea of mustering sheep than we did. Hopefully it may have been more willing to leave via the gate if we were not present. We left to deal with the broken branch across the fence, chastened by the thought that the four of us had been outsmarted by a single sheep!

Fil, the farm manager, had texted us previously in the week advising that sheep were entering the Forest here:

*"The whole fence along the track back to the pump shed needs replacing. Sheep keep getting in off the track when we muster."*

We then cut up & removed a large fallen branch from the fence dividing Pinkerton Forest and Upper Pinkerton to restore the integrity of the fence.

The countryside was green and lush after heavy summer rains. Pinkerton Forest is looking quite

healthy with very few weeds. Irene noticed several Galenia were showing fresh growth so we will return on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January to spray these.

Over lunch we discussed the dilapidated state of the fence beside the lane and how to deal with it.

### **Eynesbury Environment Group (Bird group): Possum Walk at Hannah Watts Park**



Lyndal, Denise & Pam at Hannah Watts Park



Brush-tailed Possum at Hannah Watts Park

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January Eynesbury Environment Group Bird Group held its first walk for 2024, and our first Possum Walk since before the Covid lockdown. Lyndal, Denise, Pam & Daryl participated. In November we had to cancel our newly re-instated Possum Walk at Hannah Watts Park to visit the Possum Tree, due to rainy weather. We had to cancel these walks due to several year's Covid lockdowns. The walk is along a concrete footpath (no bushwalking in the dark!). We can also guarantee to see possums. Numbers of possums live in the Possum Tree and they emerge at nightfall to feed on picnic leftovers in the

playground. This is a child (& elderly person!) friendly event, with possums (virtually) guaranteed. (Sadly, nothing in life is guaranteed!). In past years it was held on Friday evening to better coincide with Bird Week in Melton. However, Saturday may suit people better now. We were surprised to see Hannah Watts to be filled with several thousand visitors, mainly young families. There were also a couple of food trucks present. Hannah Watts is obviously a vibrant meeting place! As night fell however the crowds quickly dispersed.

At first it seemed as though we would be disappointed but at about 9.30 the first possum appeared, shortly followed by several more. The Possum Tree is an old dead tree with numerous hollows & appears to be home for a number of possums. We counted about five possums, somewhat fewer than in previous years. The possum in the photo had both ears visibly torn so it may have been the toughest possum in the tree, possibly explaining its position at the top of the tree.

### **Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group: spraying Galenia**

On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton to spray Galenia. Environmental contractors Themeda have done a good job removing weeds from the Forest but recent summer rains have facilitated their return, with a vengeance. Irene noted that the Galenia especially have taken advantage of recent rains. The interior of the Forest is quite good but Pinkerton Lane is a constant source of re-infestation. We sprayed two backpacks each but it is obvious that there will need to be several more return visits to control them.



The old dead tree beside the graves' carpark was found toppled. As no high winds have occurred lately the roots may have been so old & rotted that they were no longer able to support its weight. It was long dead, having been ringbarked long ago, possibly during pioneering days. It had long

provided nesting sites for hollow nesting birds. Hopefully it will continue to provide habitat for wildlife.

We will return on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February to tackle the Galenia again

### **Rubbish dumping in Harkess Road**

Two people were observed with what appears to be a pile of building rubbish immediately behind the truck in Harkness Road, beside Melton Gilgai Woodland Reserve. The impression was that it had just been dumped from the truck.

A photo, clearly showing the faces of the rubbish dumpers, was forwarded to City of Melton Environment Dept. They said they were forwarding the photos on to the EPA and to Council's internal Compliance team. They also suggested forwarding the photos to the Police as rubbish dumping is a crime. The licence plate number was unfortunately obscured by the lowered tailgate.

The environmental vandalism is made worse by it occurring beside one of our precious few environmental reserves. Sadly Harkness Road has become a popular place for dumping rubbish, although few are brazen enough to do so in broad daylight. Piles of rubbish like this are becoming a more common sight on our back roads. As Melton Council has to clean up this rubbish this is a considerable impost on Council finances, not to mention our rates!

Perhaps a trail camera could be placed here to better identify dumpers.

### **FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES**

#### **'Welcome Back' BBQ Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 6.00**

Eynesbury Environment Group's end-of-year Christmas Party was unfortunately cancelled due to stormy weather. It has been postponed to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. It will be a BBQ at the tennis courts near the Discovery Centre, starting at 6.00. BYO drinks

#### **Bird Walk at Caroline Springs Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February**

Caroline Springs wetland has a rich variety of waterbirds. A birdlife oasis in the midst of the western suburbs. One of Melton's best waterbird sites. A paved footpath is on both sides of the waterway. Meet in the carpark in the new shopping centre beside the large lake at the entrance at Caroline Springs BLVD. Melway 358 Ref G4

### **Eynesbury Market Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February**

*Note: EEG will have a stall this market day  
7:30am - 2:30pm*

### **COMING ACTIVITIES**

#### **Eynesbury Environment Group**

##### **Meeting Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 6 - 9pm**

EEG's first meeting for 2024 will be on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury Homestead. Arrive at 6.00 for tea for a 7.00 start

##### **AGM / Ordinary Meeting Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March**

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

##### **Clean up Australia Day Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

9am - 12pm

##### **Meeting Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 22**

meeting will be on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at Ms Peacock Restaurant & Bar, Eynesbury Homestead. Arrive at 6.00 for tea for a 7.00 start

##### **Meeting Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 7 - 9pm**

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

##### **Meeting Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> 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

Eynesbury Market	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> April
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> May
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> July
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> August
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> October
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> November
Eynesbury Market	Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December

#### **Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group**

##### **Meeting Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

PLEG's first meeting for 2024 will be Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00 at the Green Shed in Pinkerton Forest

#### **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.

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;l./>; As you drive up Mt Cottrell Road from Werribee 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](mailto:jackmack37@hotmail.com); or Daryl Akers [jenniferkayakers@outlook.com](mailto: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 <sup>th</sup> February	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> August	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> November

### **Eynesbury Environment Group: 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](mailto:eynesbury.environment.group@gmail.com); or follow Eynesbury Environment Group on Facebook.

#### **Eynesbury Environment Group's nature walks**

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

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 9am - 11:30am  
Eynesbury Nature Walk

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 7pm - 9pm  
Eynesbury Nature Night Walk  
*Meet at Tooronga Rd*

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 9am - 11:30am  
Eynesbury Flora Walk  
*Led by Simon and Lorraine Jolly*

### **EEG Bird Walks**

#### ***extra walk in January!***

Eynesbury Environment Group (formerly MEG) bird walks are held on the third Saturday of the month. All walks begin at 9.00.

There have been no bird walks in December or January. December is usually too busy with Christmas & end of year functions, while in January many people are away on holidays. However, it has been suggested that we could have our first bird walk of the year in January. A bushland setting may be impractical & possibly unsafe in midsummer. All our walks take place on tracks or paved footpaths.

### **Bird walk schedule for 2024**

#### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February Caroline Springs**

Caroline Springs wetland has a rich variety of waterbirds. A birdlife oasis in the midst of the western suburbs. One of Melton's best waterbird sites. A paved footpath is on both sides of the waterway. Meet in the carpark in the new shopping centre beside the large lake at the entrance at Caroline Springs BLVD. Melway 358 Ref G4

#### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March Eynesbury**

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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. Meet at Tamar Drive Melway Ref 337 C9

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August Strathtulloh**

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

### **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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**

### **National Eucalypt Day**

#### **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March,**

Held annually on 23 March, National Eucalypt Day aims to raise awareness of eucalypts and celebrate the important place that they hold in the hearts and lives of Australians.

*'The National Eucalypt Day program aims to meet the promotion, education and conservation objectives of Eucalypt Australia by addressing the themes of tree breeding and genomics, primary education and public awareness.*

*'Eucalypt Australia is the operating name of the Bjarne K Dahl Trust. It is a charitable trust that awards grants to support the conservation, education and research of eucalypts.*

*inaugural National Eucalypt Day on 23 March 2014. The 23rd of March 1898 was the birthdate of the Trust's benefactor, Bjarne K Dahl.*

*Eucalypt Australia supported the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to create a series of videos on how to select, grow and maintain suitable eucalypts in the home garden.'*

[https://www.eucalyptaustralia.org.au/cool\\_timeline/national-eucalypt-day-turns-10/;](https://www.eucalyptaustralia.org.au/cool_timeline/national-eucalypt-day-turns-10/)

This could be a day to celebrate our own iconic Grey Box tree, the defining species of Eynesbury. It is also common in Pinkerton Forests, Mulla Mulla, Strathtulloh & Melton Gilgai Woodlands. It was once widespread across the Melton plains.

### **Wattle Day**

#### **Sunday September 1<sup>st</sup>**

September 1<sup>st</sup>, 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/;](https://wattleday.asn.au/)



Wattle Day is a fitting day for environmentalists, especially local ones, to celebrate.

Noted ornithologist & early Field Naturalists Club of Victoria member A J Campbell, founded the 'Wattle Club' & advocated the creation of a 'Wattle Day' to commemorate these most well-known of Australian flowers; & as a celebration of Australia. A J Campbell founded a Wattle Club in Victoria in 1899 to promote a Wattle Day demonstration every September to encourage recognition of the flower as a symbol of patriotism. In 1908 he delivered a lecture entitled *'Wattle Time; or Yellow-haired September'* in which he stated that *'by numbers, the Wattle is almost exclusively Australian, and should undoubtedly be our National Flower'*.

<https://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2007/02/01/yellow-haired-september-a-reflection-on-the-national-floral-emblem-in-aj-campbells-golden-wattle1/>;

Melton has a long historic connection with Wattle Day. A J Campbell was a member of the Pinkerton family, early settlers at Melton. Their property was beside the Werribee River, where Western Water's treatment plant stands today. It is still known today as Pinkerton Forest. His interest in birds & natural history was no doubt fuelled by many visits to Pinkerton Forest & the nearby Werribee River. According to Wikipedia: *'the first recognised use of wattle as a symbol of the first day of spring was the formation in 1899 of a 'Wattle Club' in Victoria by Mr A. J. Campbell, a field naturalist. For several years the club organised bush outings on the first day in September. The first suggestion of a Wattle Day was made by Mr Campbell during a speech in September 1908.'*

Ian Campbell writes in his description of his grandfather:

*'AJ [Campbell] moves on to discuss September and Acacia pycnantha or Golden wattles. He talks of his earliest reminiscences of Golden Wattle, 'the nodding yellow plumes, which seemed to beckon me, of slender saplings that grew in the dear old box forest' at the base of Mt Cotterall, close to his early boyhood home. '*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle_Day);

There are almost 1000 species of Wattle in Australia. The Golden Wattle possible our best known native flower, is the official floral emblem of Australia; & our national colours are green & gold, reminiscent of wattle trees. The Golden Wattle is the floral symbol of Australia. Details of Wattle Day can be seen on: <http://wattleday.com/>;

## Eynesbury Falls



Eynesbury Falls

After 66mm rainfall over the Christmas-New Year period water was roaring over Eynesbury Falls. Sadly the good vantage point was too muddy & slippery for a closer photo.

## Arnolds Creek





After beginning the new year with 49mm in the first week of January Arnolds Creek was running high. MEG's planting project site at Brookfield was under water, as was the playground just across the road in Black Dog Drive. We can expect high water events such as this in ever greater in magnitude as more development occurs along the upper reaches of Arnolds Creek.



Railway Viaduct over Exford Reservoir

The rocky pools here, just below the footway, are of ecological importance as they may be the spawning grounds of the Spotted Galaxias (*Galaxia maculata*) in the Werribee River above Exford Weir. These fish normally run the sea to spawn, like eels, after which the young fish return to their home waters. However, the Weir prevents the young fish moving upstream. Unlike the eels, the young Galaxia are unable to scale the high dam wall. As the rocky pools here have a high salt content (according to Melbourne Water salinity testing), the Galaxia may be substituting these pools as a breeding site. Shoals of juvenile Galaxias found here could be evidence of this.

Perhaps a fish ladder at the Weir may remedy this, sometime in the future.



Spotted Galaxias at Melton Pistol Club



Melton Pistol club

## OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

### Duck Hunting! The slaughter continues.

Jacinta Allen's Labor government has declared yet another open season on Australia's native ducks. Shame!!!



### 2023: hottest year on record!

Another temperature record:

*'Scientists have confirmed 2023 is the hottest year on record'*

*'Scientists have confirmed 2023 will be the hottest year on record, with the official declaration from climate change service Copernicus, run by the EU, made with a month to spare.'*

*The startling heat records come as large parts of Australia are set to endure heatwave conditions, with temperatures expected to reach over 40 degrees in some places.*

*The world can't stop breaking heat records this year, with each month since June becoming the warmest on record.*

*The Copernicus data confirmed the trend, with the warmest November on record globally hitting 1.75 degrees above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial reference period'*

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-12-08/2023-hottest-year-on-record/103205324;](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-12-08/2023-hottest-year-on-record/103205324)

### The Joys of Birding

Many thanks to Dave Torr (Werribee's leading bird observer) who draws our attention to this article in 'The Guardian' by Georgia Angus:

*'Birdwatching changes the way you look at the world – it truly is the gateway drug to environmental awareness'*

*"More than simple pleasure and ticking a species off a list, it's a hobby that dwells on the joy of being alive.*

*"For most, it's idle curiosity or an appreciation of nature that draws their attention.*

*"But for some of us, birdwatching is serious business.*

*"To onlookers, birdwatching appears to be a very niche hobby. Spot a bird, then tick it off your list – it's a narrow formula. In practice, however, birdwatching requires a broadening of perception.*

*"To fully appreciate birds and their behaviour, you need to be paying attention to other aspects of their environment.*

*"If it's proposed that a parkland, waterway or nature strip is be swallowed up by urban swell, we need local individuals who know which road verge hosts rare orchids, which tree bears nesting hollows, where in the thicket a satin bowerbird is constructing a bower. In this way, we stop*

*observing the natural world from "the outside" but step into the landscape as advocates and participants."*

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/07/birdwatching-changes-the-way-you-look-at-the-world-it-truly-is-the-gateway-drug-to-environmental-awareness;>

### MELTON WILDLIFE



Kangaroo tracks in mud

This kangaroo must have found it heavy going after a night of heavy rainfall in Eynesbury. The tracks of this large kangaroo showed signs of its feet sliding & sinking into the soft, slippery mud.

### Happy Chinese New Year: Year of the Dragon

*'Chinese New Year 2024 falls on Saturday, February 10th, 2024, and celebrations culminate with the [Lantern Festival](https://www.lanternfestival.com.au) on February 24th, 2024.*

<https://chinesenewyear.net/>