



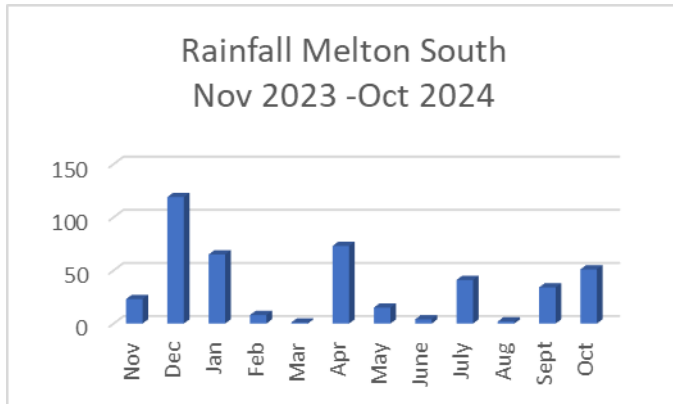
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2024

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

RAINFALL



OCTOBER

51mm rainfall for October. A wild & tempestuous start to the month. Widespread storm damage & multiple power outages. Flooding in Tasmania! Even bushfires in NSW! All that for just 8mm rain!

Again over the last year rainfall has fluctuated widely. After watering regularly over winter, sadly we still needed to water into early spring!

The Fields of Gold that flanked Eynesbury Road (& many local paddocks elsewhere) in August into September have faded. The glorious display of Golden Wattles has also faded, but has been replaced by the equally bright golden Bacchus Marsh & Gold-dust Wattle! These are being replaced by the lemony-coloured Black Wattles beside the watercourses.

Sadly the grassland wildflowers are yet to make their appearance, unlike the spectacular display at Anglesea. The daisies in McCorkalls road are only just now beginning to show some yellow flowers, perhaps in response to the heavy rainfall in mid-October.

CSIRO State of the Climate 2024

<https://www.csiro.au/en/research/environmental-impacts/climate-change/state-of-the-climate>;

Australia's climate has warmed by an average of 1.51 ± 0.23 °C since national records began in 1910.

Sea surface temperatures have increased by an average of 1.08 °C since 1900.

The warming has led to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events over land and in the oceans.

In the south-west of Australia there has been a decrease of around 16% in April to October rainfall since 1970. Across the same region, May to July rainfall has seen the largest reduction, by around 20% since 1970.

In the south-east of Australia, there has been a decrease of around 9% in April to October rainfall since 1994.

Heavy short-term rainfall events are becoming more intense.

There has been a decrease in streamflow at most gauges across Australia since 1970.

There has been an increase in rainfall and streamflow across parts of northern Australia since the 1970s.

There has been an increase in extreme fire weather, and a longer fire season, across large parts of the country since the 1950s.

There has been a decrease in the number of tropical cyclones observed in the Australian region since at least 1982.

Snow depth, snow cover and number of snow days have decreased in alpine regions since the late 1950s.

Oceans around Australia are becoming more acidic, with changes happening faster in recent decades.

Sea levels are rising around Australia, including more frequent extreme high levels that increase the risk of inundation and damage to coastal infrastructure and communities.

<https://www.csiro.au/en/research/environmental-impacts/climate-change/State-of-the-Climate/Report-at-a-Glance>;

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

Bird walk in Pinkerton Forest



Red-rumped parrot



Galah

On Saturday 5th October seven people (Julie, Olga & Daryl of Melton, Giorgio of Hillside, Debra of Sunbury, Marion of Prahran & Imelda of Staughton Vale) participated in an unscheduled bird walk in Pinkerton Forest. A group of people on the last bird walk in Strathtulloh Woodland asked to visit Pinkerton as they had never been there. Note: Pinkerton is not on our scheduled EEG bird walks as there are no paths through the Forest. All EEG walks are published as being on footpaths- with no bushwalking required. There were about five kangaroos there to greet us. Although the day was fairly quiet with relatively low numbers of birds, we still saw an impressive 22 bird species. The morning was heavy with the expectation of an impending storm so this may have affected bird activity. About 10-15 Dusky Woodswallows were conspicuously active. These arrived here a week ago, following a massive storm. We observed three Brown Treecreepers & about five Jacky Winters. We seem to be seeing fewer of these small woodland-dependent birds here. Raptors were

notably absent. The forecast rain held off until after we left.

Giorgio de Nola took these beautiful photos.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S197542321>;



Dusky Woodswallow



Jacky Winter

We saw 22 bird species:

Wood Duck	Black Duck
Straw-necked Ibis	White-face Heron
Eastern Rosella	Red-rumped Parrot
Galah	Long-billed Corella
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	White Cockatoo
Brown Treecreeper	Noisy Miner
White-plumed Honeyeater	Red Wattlebird
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Striated Pardalote
Dusky Woodswallow	Magpie
Little Raven	Jacky Winter
Welcome Swallow	Tree Martin

Working bee Pinkerton Forest

Once again Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton on Wednesday 9th where we resumed the battle against the Galenia. We found a large infestation in the northwest corner close to the carpark. Several weeks more will be needed to remove the Galenia.



Irene spraying Galenia



Galenia sprayed (one backpack!)



Corellas digging nest hollow

The Forest was a virtual battleground as various bird species fought for possession of nest sites. A pair of Long-billed Corellas spent about an hour

working on a hollow tree beside the Green Shed, only to be summarily evicted by a pair of Galahs. We even saw a Crimson Rosella! A long flight from their nearest range in Eynesbury.

27 species were seen, recorded on eBird:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S198086430>;

PLEG visit to Frances Overmars in Anglesea



On Thursday 10th October Frances Overmars (past Environmental Co-ordinator to PLEG & a founding member) invited PLEG members to her home in Anglesea, for morning tea & to see the display of local wildflowers.

We were treated to a spectacular wildflower display at Mt Ingoldsby. The forest floor was quite literally covered with a magnificent carpet of flowers, of all colours & species. Most spectacular was the rich diversity of orchids.

We even met an old friend Colleen Miller in the bush (our former landcare co-ordinator & now Anglesea resident) who was photographing orchids.

Note: if using Google Maps for directions take care to use the correct spelling of 'Anglesea'. If you use the English spelling 'Anglesey' the app may direct you northwest toward Ynis Mon in Wales, via the Menai Straits Bridge!



Lunch at Moggs Creek

Lorraine summed up our thanks best, as well as forwarding these photos:

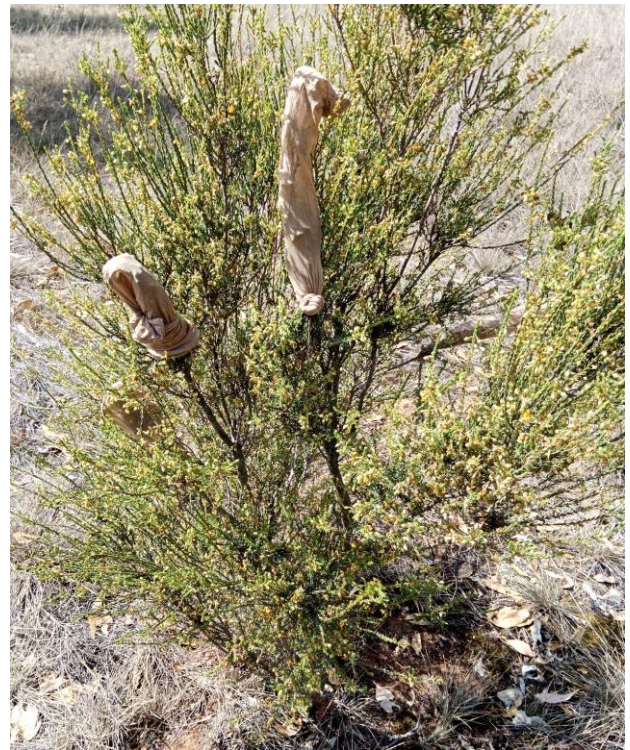
"Dear Frances,

Thank you so much for hosting a lovely day at Anglesea, we had a terrific time, everything from Cake and coffee, to Mt. Ingoldsby orchids spotting, peaceful Moggs Creek picnic, and Ted's track wildflowers".

Working bee in Pinkerton Forest



On Thursday 17th October Irene & Daryl returned to tackle the Galenia in Pinkerton at the very north-west corner. After that we tied four stockings around the ripening seed heads on the Egg & Bacon Bushpea (*Eutaxia diffusa*) so that we could catch the seeds before they fall to the ground. We have similarly placed plates beneath the prostrate (*Eutaxia microphylla*) near the east gate. Hopefully we can then grow new *Eutaxia* plants from seed gathered from Pinkerton.



Stockings on *Eutaxia diffusa* to catch seeds

Bird walk in Eynesbury Forest



On Saturday 19th October Eynesbury Environment Group led a group of seven people on a bird walk in Eynesbury Forest. Eynesbury is a 200 hectare Grey Box Woodland with 180 bird species observed so far. The latest bird to be discovered here was a Satin Flycatcher found here the previous week. Sadly we did not see this bird today! We did see a Black Swan on its nest in the Ornamental Lake.

Pam, Sharon, Margaret, Karen & Daryl of Melton, Wendy of Eynesbury & Lyndall of Ballan walked along the track from the Discovery Centre to the old shearing complex then back again. When we email: jenniferkayakers@outlook.com

reached the shearing shed & were about to return, we were swooped by a Magpie. After two swoops, it returned to its tree, watching us in triumph-satisfied that it had driven us off!

The area received about 40mm rainfall over the previous two days, along with some wild stormy weather, so the day was in doubt. However, despite a cold start the day warmed up & the sun came out, also bringing out the birds.

We found several large red bullants, possibly *Myrmecia nigriscapa* on the track near the shearing complex. These do not seem to be as common as other local species of bullant. Despite their menacing appearance they did not appear to be aggressive. Unlike the inhabitants of a large nest of *Myrmecia nigriceps* in the middle of the track that poured out of the nest in a most aggressive manner, possibly indignant at being walked over!



Myrmecia nigriscapa (?)

Close by the lake we discovered a pair of Magpies attempting to feed its three babies on the ground. We were fully expecting to be swooped but were saved by a pair of Willy Wagtails that aggressively attacked the Magpie family. The female Magpie had a worm in its beak, trying unsuccessfully to feed its young but it was continually thwarted by the aggressive Willy Wagtails, holding the worm throughout the constant attacks. This altercation was caught live on camera by Lyndal, & recorded on Facebook! When we reached the shearing shed & were about to return, we were in our turn swooped by a Magpie. After two swoops it returned to a tree, watching us in triumph-satisfied that it had driven us off!

Many birds appeared when the sun emerged from the clouds making the world warm again. Perhaps they were taking advantage of the warm break after the previous few days of wet, stormy weather.

Several Black Ducks were investigating tree hollows in the Forest.



Black Duck at tree hollow

We saw 36 bird species, mainly after the sun came out. Birds seen were recorded on eBird checklist <https://ebird.org/checklist/S199488793>;

Sharon took these magnificent photos. The photo of the Galahs clearly shows the female on the left & the male on the right.



'The male and female Galahs look almost identical with their pink and grey feathers. To help you tell them apart, check the colour of their eyes. The male Galahs have dark-brown or black eyes while the females have pink or red ones'

<https://backyardbuddies.org.au/backyard-buddies/galahs/>;

Sharon also captured the altercation between the pair of Willy Wagtails & the Magpie family. The wings of the Willy Wagtail can be seen behind the Magpie (below).



Crimson Rosellas



Brown Treecreeper



Willy Wagtail attacking juvenile Magpie

Working bee in Pinkerton Forest

Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton Forest on Thursday 24th October where we continue spraying Galenia in the north-west corner, followed by mattocking Serrated Tussock. We will be spraying Galenia here for the foreseeable future. Despite the cold windy morning we saw 25 bird species,

recorded on

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S200056061>;

Working bee in Pinkerton Forest

Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton Forest on Thursday 31st October where we continue spraying Galenia. As well as our usual welcoming committee of Grey Kangaroos we also found a Swamp Wallaby beside the Green Shed, looking somewhat lost!

We noticed that the fence beside Pinkerton Forest has now been rabbit-proofed! Many thanks to William Rajendram (Environmental Engineer for Greater Western Water) for arranging this!



NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

Eynesbury Environment Group Meeting
Wednesday 13th November 7 – 9.00 pm

Bird walk in Long Forest Mallee
Saturday 16th November

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

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group
Xmas breakup Thursday 12th December

Eynesbury Environment Group
Xmas breakup

Pinkerton & Eynesbury bird survey
Wednesday 20th November 9:00 am

From Melton head south along Exford Toad to the T intersection ay Exford, at the bottom of the steep descent

Head east (turn left), up the steep rise. Continue along Greigs Road, past Butler Road, to the T intersection at Mt Cottrell Road. Turn right (south) into Greigs Road, beside Mt Cottrell

Next to the third house on the right there is a lane. It will have a banner stating Pinkerton Landcare &

Environment Group. Please make sure the gate is kept closed behind you as this is a working farm with strict biosecurity protocols

Wear sturdy footwear as this is bush with no tracks. Also we have a few Brown Snakes, making sturdy footwear and socks important. They are starting to emerge now in warm weather so they should be active in October.

Wildlife warning in Pinkerton

There is a Blue-tongue Lizard living in the stone wall beside the lone tree about 100 metres from the Mt Cottrell gate. On sunny days it likes to sun itself on the track. When the sun gets hotter it likes to move into the thin shadow cast by the tree, where it becomes almost invisible. We have had to shift it a few times to avoid running over it! There was a pair here but sadly one was run over last spring. Blue-tongues have no road sense!



FUTURE ACTIVITIES

**Possum Walk at Hannah Watts Park
January 2025 ? Details TBA**



Brush-tailed Possum at Hannah Watts Park

We had to cancel our Possum Walks due to several year's Covid lockdowns. The walk is along a concrete footpath (no bushwalking in the dark!).

We *should* be able to 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!)
Date & details TBA

Eynesbury Market

Eynesbury Environment Group is a regular participant in Eynesbury Market as a stall holder
Sunday 22nd September Sunday 27th October
Sunday 24th November Sunday 22nd 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 Wagtails

Bird surveys at Pinkerton & Eynesbury

**Note: change to quarterly bird survey days
*Pinkerton/Eynesbury quarterly bird surveys will now be done on a week day in the future.***

The surveys will be done on the third Wednesday instead of the Sunday.

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 in Pinkerton. Part of the Eynesbury walk is on a bush track.

Within the greater City of Melton, over 170 different bird species have been recorded. About 127 bird species have been recorded at Pinkerton & 170 at Eynesbury to date. Wedge-tailed Eagles regularly nest in these woodlands. These quarterly surveys provide valuable scientific data as to both bird diversity & numbers in these woodlands. This data helps us make decisions & plan for the protection of our vulnerable birdlife. Citizen science in action! We may see some of the 60 or so kangaroos that live across all three of these adjoining sites as well as the several hundred kangaroos in Eynesbury. Birds of Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forests are recorded on eBird.

Pinkerton is private property located at <http://goo.gl/maps/drFnS.0-p;l./>;
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 now held quarterly on the *third Wednesday of February, May, August & November*
Wed. 20th 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; or follow Eynesbury Environment Group on Facebook.

EEG: Melton Bird Walks 2024 schedule

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 MATTERS

New Environment Group: Trash Patrol Melton

There is a new volunteer environment group in town!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/330071463783370/>;

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Environmental vandalism in Eynesbury



Eynesbury Forest is once again under threat. The chain fence on Eynesbury Road, that prevents unauthorised vehicular access into the Forest has been cut; allowing easy vehicle access into the Forest. Vehicles accessing the Forest here are obviously not doing so for legitimate reasons. If they were they would simply have used the key. One SUV was seen entering the Forest with a large white German Shepherd dog, but left quickly when observed. On another occasion a 4WD was seen driving from the river. What are they up to? Illegal tree cutting? stealing timber? rubbish dumping? chasing kangaroos with dogs? who knows! A walk along the track shows a tree that has been felled, with branches sawn off and removed. Presumably for firewood. At another site a sofa has been dumped. At yet another site there is sign that vehicles have been doing 'donuts', churning up the ground. One section of track has been churned up creating a quagmire. This could possibly hinder legitimate access to fire trucks in the event of an emergency this coming summer. Illegal tree felling destroys wildlife habitat. Excessive donut activity damages the forest floor, again damaging wildlife habitat. Incidents like this make the continued survival of the Forest look less secure. Eynesbury wildlife is already under threat. Environmental vandalism of this nature makes us wonder how serious we are about conservation and protection of the environment. Especially as it is happening on our very own doorstep! Perhaps we could ask the landowner if the fence could be repaired.