

Well, we're back in harness, and just to begin the New Year we have, starting at our NEXT MEETING - 7.30PM 6TH FEB, AT PARKS VIC HINTON ST ROSEBUD—WILL BE HARRY BREIDAHL (pictured below) Harry is well known for his marine, including deep-sea, research, and is a most interesting speaker. Supper will follow so that all can mingle and if desired, leave before the plant identification segment and the formal (really rather informal) meeting. Happy New Year Everyone!



No need to leave unwanted furniture, to be spoiled by sun & rain, on the nature strip. The Rotary Warehouse, which takes items in good condition for resale, or Ron Beaton, recycler, are both in the industrial estate, off Boneo Rd in Rosebud. Ron also takes scrapmetal, computers & parts, bric-a-brac, & good furniture. Both will collect. Rotary: 5986 8896 Ron: 0408 395 242

IT IS WELL WORTHWHILE TO REGULARLY CHECK OUT THE EXCELLENT, INFORMATIVE SPIFFA WEBSITE:

www.spiffa.org.

Secretary Phillip Jensen, who set up and maintains the website, includes a wide range of information concerning fauna, flora, climate change and issues affecting these such as the proposed filling of Tootgarook 'Swamp' and an aquatic centre on the Rosebud foreshore. Phillip can be contacted with items of interest via: **5988 6529** or email- spiffa.secretary@gmail.com

SOUTHERN PENINSULA INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA ASSOCIATION INC
PO BOX 480 ROSEBUD VICTORIA AUSTRALIA 3939 REGISTERED NUMBER A0024178A

MYRTLE RUST (UREDORANGELLI) HAS NOW INVADED VICTORIA



MYRTLE RUST ON LOPHOMYRTUS
'BLACK STALLION'
PIC DPI WEBSITE

We were warned in 2010 that this rust posed a threat, and it is now not only in Victoria but has recently been found in Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula.

Other sites were Devon Meadows, Essendon, Frankston South (Langwarrin & Somerville), Gembrook (near forest), Kilsyth, Lorne (near forest), Lynbrook, Oakleigh, Thomastown and Werribee.

Most of these sites were in commercial nurseries, but are linked to another 90 sites currently being checked by the Department of Primary Industries Victoria.

The rust has been found on

Agonis, Backhousia, Lophomyrtus, Metrosideros, Syzygium smithii and S. paniculatum, the latter two being new hosts, sparking the fear that Uredo Rangelli could quickly spread to other species.

The rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots and on fruits and sepals.

As can be seen in the picture below right, leaves on the host plant may become buckled or twisted. The lesions can be purple in colour with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow and occasionally brown, spores.

PREVENTION: Before entering or leaving bushland ensure that vehicles are left outside or have been washed clean. Collect contaminated plants in bags, avoiding contact with vehicles, trailers, skips. Ensure clothes, hats, gloves have been washed

clean. Use a detergent bath to clean footwear. Wipe down personal effects/tools with wet cloth and detergent or disinfectant. Place personal rubbish in a sealable bag and wipe down the outside of the bag before removing from the site. Minimise equipment. Keep to tracks. Do not move or transfer plants into other areas in case of hidden contamination.

REPORT sightings to Dept Primary Industries 1800 084 881 and leave a contact number or Email: plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au

SOURCE: Dept Prim Industries website & Chris Cole, Director, Royal Botanical Gardens, Melbourne



MYRTLE RUST
On Melaleuca paperbark
Pic Dept Primary Industries website.

SPREAD THE WORD

While we still have some summer weather ahead, it is perhaps timely to spread the word about the difference between the indigenous eleven-armed sea star and the five-armed Northern Pacific stars. Jeff Weir has stated that the latter are in plague proportions in Port Phillip Bay (MP Leader 6th Dec 2011). He pleaded for the careful cleaning of boats

and fishing equipment to prevent the spreading of microscopic larvae. They are a serious threat, he said, to native species and could cause some fish species to disappear.



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NEWSLETTER: JAN DWYER this issue

CHANGES IN BIRD POPULATIONS AROUND MELBOURNE AND THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA



Australian Bustard. Photo Keith Hindley

How would you feel if you saw an Emu, or an Australian Bustard, or a Brolga, in your neighbourhood? You would, of course, be startled. But if you'd been on the Mornington Peninsula, or even in the vicinity of Melbourne, in the early stages of European settlement, such sightings would not have evinced surprise. Since those days, the changes in the bird population in our region have been dramatic. This was brought home to us when we recently read a book titled "Bush Wanderings of a Naturalist", written by Horace William Wheelwright in the late 1850's and published in 1861. Wheelwright was born in England in 1815, and came to Australia in 1852 hoping to strike it rich on the Victorian goldfields. He had no luck, however, and took up shooting to supply wild game to people in Melbourne. He undoubtedly came down at least as far as Arthur's Seat when he hunted on the Mornington Peninsula. One of us (S.C.) is happy to forward a scan (size 11.5 Mb) of Wheelwright's book (it is long out of copyright) to any one who is interested. It makes fascinating reading. The sections dealing directly with Wheelwright's bird observations have been extracted as a Word document (size 220 Kb), and can be forwarded to anybody preferring a shorter account.

It was not just the gun and the snare that reduced bird numbers. Land-clearing has had an even more severe impact, and the local populations of some birds continue to decline, occasionally to regional extinction. For example, Barking Owl, Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter, Beautiful Firetail, Southern Emu-wren, and Grey-crowned Babbler were occasionally recorded on the Mornington Peninsula in the 1970's and perhaps beyond, but are not seen in this region these days.



Hooded Robin. Photo K Hindley

There is increasing awareness in the community of the need to tip the scales back in favour of local wild-life, as witnessed by the creation of parks and reserves, and the use of indigenous plants in private gardens. However, a new disturbance, again caused by human activity, threatens the well-being of birds not only on our peninsula but world-wide: that disturbance is climate-change. Despite a measured increase already of 0.9 °C in average temperature in Australia over the last century, it is still unclear how most individual Australian species will be affected by climate change. Part of the difficulty in making predictions is that Australia's climate system is very variable and the movements and other behavior of Australian birds have largely evolved to be quite flexible. (This is in stark contrast to North America, where well over 60% of birds are regular long distance migrants. Most of these species have shifted their ranges northward by an average of over 50 km in the last 40 years!) Nevertheless, it is clear that the distribution, movements and behavior of some Australian birds are already changing. Furthermore, our continent is predicted to warm by



Brolga. Photo Keith Hidley

another full degree in the next 20 years. The birds most at risk are those largely depending on already restricted habitat, such as sub-tropical mountain tops and cool well-watered areas in south-eastern and south-western Australia. Such areas have been identified as being particularly likely to heat up and dry out as Australia's temperatures continue to climb.

Many changes will inevitably occur in the distribution and behavior of the birds of the Mornington Peninsula in years to come. Enlightened management of land and water across the landscape will be increasingly important in ensuring that significant numbers of the birds seen by Horace Wheelwright can continue to thrive.



Grey-crowned Babbler. Photo K Hindley



Jacky Winter. Photo K Hindley

Stuart Cousland
(seastar@pac.com.au) and
John Blyth

WISE WORDS

FROM DAVID SUZUKI, RENOWNED SCIENTIST AND ENVIRONMENTALIST
AND DR. MARCO LAMBERTINI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

Most, and probably all of us, could relate to the sentiments of David Suzuki, who has laboured with all his skill and knowledge to change attitudes and destructive practices concerning the environment. He laments that, despite initially (from 1962) achieving considerable success, resulting in worldwide protective legislation “on air, water, endangered species, (and) millions of acres of land set aside as parks”, the environmental movement has ultimately failed. This, he says, because “for the last twenty years the right wing agenda, focussed on corporate growth, has taken over” in the belief that corporations create jobs and national wealth. Locally we have seen the literal bulldozing of wetlands and 300 year-old pristine bushland (Westerfield, Frankston), although there were other options. The deepening of the shipping channels and the Heads is another example. It seems that no matter how much reliable science has been presented or how many people have protested, we are completely ignored, and even arrested by the authorities. This is most disheartening, especially in a democracy. But, as Dr Suzuki says, we will at least be able to say to our grandchildren that we did our best for them, and that we must now pass the baton on to them. Change begins with each of us, he says, but the elders, “who have the experience and the memories” must be valued and listened to. Perhaps this way we can put old heads on young shoulders.

Dr Marco Lambertini has shared our disenchantment and feelings of failure. He and colleagues have fought for many years despite violence against themselves, to prevent illegal and unsustainable hunting in Italy. Although this initially seemed hopeless, today the “shooting of migratory raptors (over the Sicilian Strait) is basically a thing of the past”. Storks have returned to breed and other species have been successfully reintroduced. Also, “in the last decade the number of hunters has dropped ...from three million...to 600,000”. Overall, this improvement has taken “twenty long years”.

Dr Lambertini acknowledges that much more needs to be done, for example convincing shooters who do take more care, to speak out and isolate those who do not.

He concludes: “Despite the frustration for all of us, and particularly those on the front line, we have to believe that things can be changed. Fight with optimism. ...support (other) competent and determined organisations (worldwide). Support their heart, science and action”.

J Dwyer. Sources: Nature&health, aug_sept 2011, and emailed article “HEART & SCIENCE, BOTH NEEDED TO WIN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN”

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO NEXT NEWSLETTER: 25th April 2012—to Jan Dwyer, dwyerjan@gmail.com. Or post to 56 Sunningdale Rd Rosebud 3939.

Please use Word for the text and send photos separately, with indications (in the text) of their preferred position.

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Did you know that the **ROSEBUD SOUND SHELL**, located on the foreshore, is a unique example of a hyperbolic paraboloid-shaped roof. Designed in 1967 by Ronald Murcott and with the help of JL van der Molen by means of early computer modelling, it was completed in 1969 by Trevor J Luck. It's architectural, aesthetic and technical styles alone make this sculptural building worth saving.

The proposed aquatic centre, if located on the foreshore, will mean that both the vegetation which retards inundation, along with the soundshell and other buildings, will be demolished and a huge edifice with car parking could take their place.

Heritage Victoria is proposing that the soundshell be heritage listed to prevent this destruction.

It is asking for submissions, to be in by 5.00pm Tuesday 14th February inst. Address to: The Heritage Council Hearings Officer, PO Box 2392 Melbourne 3000, or FAXED: 8644 8811

It really is true that "If you provide the habitat the creatures will come". Over the last ten years, with indigenous grasses and shrubs (thanks to Seawinds Nursery) and a pond in my garden, I now see all sorts of insects, including butterflies, Golden green stag beetle, ants of course, dragonflies, native wasps and others I cannot identify. Recently I discovered a family of indigenous Marbled Geckoes, a small tortoise, frogs and small conical holes all around the garden made by 'antlions'. Yet all around me are 'normal' gardens with lawns and neat flower beds or just the odd tree. So how do the little critters find us? That's the mystery. Jan Dwyer



Marbled Gecko Indigenous to Victoria. Photo Monash University via website.



Golden stag beetle (Iamprima aurata) Identified by Ian Faithfull

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