



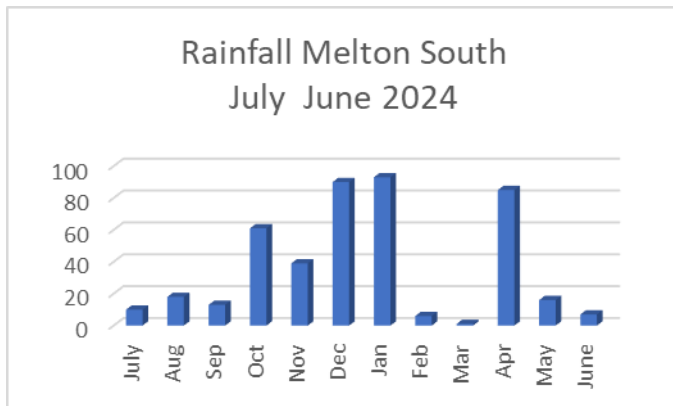
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2024

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

RAINFALL



A disappointing 10mm rainfall recorded in Melton South for June. We will need to water in Pinkerton!

JUNE ACTIVITIES

Pinkerton Forest working bee

On Thursday 6th June Irene & Daryl returned to the Forest to continue our war on Galenia. We are finding less patches but we found two large patches still needing our attention, one near the Pinkerton family graves & one in the Forest centre. Irene flushed a quail from the grass. It exploded noisily into the air before dropping back into the grass again about 50 metres away, feet first. Unfortunately, we didn't get a close look at it to identify it, but possibly it may have been a Brown Quail, due to its being found in woodland. We also saw a Bronzewing Pigeon, in the same place we saw one a couple of weeks back. Hopefully there is more than one. We also noticed a Hobby flying overhead at the shed, similar to one we saw here on our last visit.

The new fence is almost completed, with only one gap remaining beside the gate leading to the Green

Lower Pinkerton Forest is now secure from livestock incursion. All that remains now is the placement of rabbit-proof mesh. Upper Pinkerton still has a gap beside the laneway to the Green Shed where presumably a gate will be placed shortly. Stock can readily access Upper Pinkerton but we are confident that this will be remedied shortly.



Upper Pinkerton fence



Gold-dust Wattle growing in Pinkerton

There are a few Gold-dust Wattles (*Acacia acinacia*) growing in Pinkerton. Hopefully if we can

increase the numbers of these, we may create more suitable habitat in which our declining finches may nest, & hopefully halt their further decline.

Gold-dust Wattles sucker prolifically & readily form dense coppices so we can hope for a dense coppice with every bush we plant! These hopefully should be especially valuable in creating bushy understory bird nesting habitat.

Pinkerton Forest working bee

Irene & Daryl returned to the Forest on Thursday 13th June to continue our war on Galenia. We continue to find new patches of Galenia but these are becoming fewer & further between. We also planted five *Hymenandra* bushes, grown by Irene, thus resuming our strategy of planting a shrubby understory to re-create nesting habitat for our vulnerable & declining small woodland birds. Sadly we seem to have lost our Diamond Firetails, although we hope they may return. We still have some Red-browed Finches but they seem to be in diminished numbers. Similarly, our Superb Fairy-wrens no longer seem common. Two Jacky Winters accompanied us through the Forest, perhaps feeding on insects we may have flushed from the grass. Five of our now resident Grey Kangaroos were in the Forest to greet us. Two large kangaroos were grazing in the lane while three smaller ones were in the Forest.



Birdwalk at Hannah Watts Park

On Saturday 15th June Eynesbury Bird Group visited Melton's Hannah Watts Park. Six people braved the cold wintry morning (9°)! Pam & Daryl of Melton, Debra from Sunbury & Lyndal from Ballan are regular participants. We were joined by visitors Imelda of Balliang & Eileen of Bacchus Marsh. We saw a total of 25 bird species.

In the creek beside the picnic ground was a Greater Egret (recognisable by its crooked neck). every minute or so it reached out to spear

something from the water, so it must have been a good fishing spot. There appear to be two egrets in Melton at the moment. There is also one residing in the man-made wetland along Exford Rd, between Melton South & Exford. It has been a regular visitor here for several years, staying for about a week then disappearing. However, it seems now to be a permanent resident here. *Photo on Page six.*



Greater Egret in Toolern Creek at Hannah Watts

Galas & Corellas were noticeably absent but Eastern Rosellas, Red-backed Parrots, Rainbow & Musk Lorikeets were plentiful. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were also noisy & prominent around the Senior Citizens Centre. We also saw a Hobby (aka Little Falcon) there also. These have been recorded by Nora Peters as nesting in the tall Sugar Gums beside the centre. There were about a dozen Wood Ducks in the Possum Tree, possibly investigating potential nest hollows. It would be interesting to discover how well the dozen or so Brush-tailed Possums that live in these hollows tolerate nesting ducks (or not). Birds observed were recorded on

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2551362>;

We saw a total of 25 bird species. These were:

Red-rumped Parrot	Eastern Rosella
Rainbow Lorikeet	Musk Lorikeet
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Hobby
Black Duck	Wood Duck
Chestnut Teal	Dusky Moorhen

Purple Swamphen	Spotted Dove
Crested Pigeon	Raven
Magpie	Mudlark
White-plumed Honeyeater	Noisy Miner
New Holland Honeyeater	Willy Wagtail
Red Wattlebird	Greater Egret
Starling	Mynah
Blackbird	

There were not the usual numbers of picnickers, probably due to the very cold weather. Not sure what this group were doing, practicing for a haka perhaps?



Hannah Watts Park is a popular park, beside Toolern Creek, in High St, just east of the shopping centre, opposite the golf course. It is also an excellent place to find birds.

Our next walk will be Saturday 20th July at Toolern Creek (Big Red). Meet at Tamar Drive Melway Ref 337 C9

Pinkerton Forest working bee



Themeda Ecology planting in Pinkerton Forest

On Thursday 6th June Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton Forest where we watered the five Hymenanthras we planted last week & then planted another seven Hymenanthras near the new gate next to the gate into Upper Pinkerton.

These had been grown from seed by Irene. We will be planting Irene's remaining Hymenanthras next Thursday. After that we will plant those wattles purchased by Allison. We also met Tom of Themeda Ecology, whose team was busy planting several hundred understory plants in the Triangle area adjacent to the Green Shed.

To increase their chances of survival we will be planting fewer plants but taking more intense care of them. Instead of watering in response to rainfall & weather conditions, we will water them on a fortnightly basis, regardless of the weather.

Our resident kangaroos were there again to greet us; five smaller ones & two larger ones further into the Forest. When disturbed they still usually take off into Pinkerton Link, presumably to return after we leave. The old man kangaroo lives separately from the others & kept out of sight.



Hymenantha planted in Pinkerton Forest



Planting site beside the new Pinkerton gate

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Eynesbury Environment Group Meeting

Wednesday 18th September 7 - 9pm

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

Eynesbury Environment Group 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

Note: We are proposing to change bird surveys at Pinkerton/Eynesbury to a week day in the future. The surveys will be done on the third Wednesday instead of the Sunday unless there is some furious uproar within the ranks.

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 & about 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*

Biosecurity Alert

As the land surrounding Pinkerton Forest is leased for grazing purposes it is imperative that all gates be closed after access.

Wildlife warning in Pinkerton Lane



Visitors to Pinkerton please note:

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! Perhaps it may need to be re-located to somewhere safer, now that there is only one! There was also one that lived beside the gate at Mt Cottrell Rd, also living just as dangerously. This one was relocated to a safer territory in the Forest, close to a location where there is another Blue-tongue living.

Walks in 2024:

Sunday 18th August Sunday 17th 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.

Eynesbury Environment Group's nature walks

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: Melton Bird Walks 2024 schedule

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. 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/>;

2024 NATIONAL ENTOMOLOGY INSECT EXPO - Woodend Buffalo Stadium 4th-6th October

'The National Entomology Insect Expo is Australia's largest exhibition showcasing the entire Science of Entomology (Insects) to the general public. This spectacular exhibition will promise visitors a unique and fascinating look into the world of insects and their relatives.'

Featuring Entomologists, Insect Researchers, Breeders, Spider and Scorpion Keepers, Insect Educators and Specialist Insect Retailers, this amazing event also brings together a large number of static Entomological Collections, 'Live' Insect displays, Spiders, Scorpions and Related Invertebrates, Childrens Workshops, Entomological Merchandise and the ongoing research work of the C.V.R.I.C. Over 100 exhibitors from all over Australia will feature spectacular displays, many of which have never been seen by the public. Featured Insect Pantomime Entertainment will be there to meet and greet all visitors and Quality Food Catering will also be available On-Site during the entire 3 day event.'

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE. admin@cvric.com.au;



NATIONAL
INSECT
EXPO

OCT 4-5-6
2024

WOODEND
BUFFALO SPORTS STADIUM

TICKETS
CVRIC.COM.AU

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Bendigo Bank
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
AUSTRALIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SUPPLIES PTY LTD

The third NATIONAL INSECT EXPO for 2024 will be held on the 4th - 5th and 6th of October at the Buffalo Sports Stadium, Forest Street, Woodend. Tickets are now available and due to venue Capacity Limits, priority will be given to Pre-Booked On-Line Ticket Holders. In order to avoid long queues, we suggest you book your tickets early here:

<https://courses.cvric.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=65>

The Insect Expo Team

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Melton Wildlife

Emu

This Emu was photographed beside the fence in a large semi-wooded paddock in Parwan, north of Five Ways in Telephone Rd. As it stays by the fence, oblivious to the vehicle parked, it appears quite used to a human presence. It may be a young bird as its head is quite dark, possibly also a pet. It readily approaches vehicles when stopped. It also readily approaches people, reaching over the fence to them, making deep rumbling noises. It doesn't seem to leave this spot and there is a well-worn pathway along the fence here. It seems to be feeding on tufts of dry grass.



A group of Emus were photographed in a similar paddock in Eynesbury back in 2010.



Similarly, there is a pair of emus that have been living in a paddock at Toolern Vale for several years

Noisy Miners in Exford



Noisy Miner at Strathtulloh (photo by Nora Peters)

Three Noisy Miners recently were seen flying over Greigs-Bacchus Marsh Road near the Eynesbury Road T-intersection. To date they are not found in Eynesbury Forest. They were similarly absent from Pinkerton Forest until five appeared there about a decade ago after a storm. Nearby Strathtulloh Woodland already has had a flourishing population for several years. Melton has a large population also, in Melton Botanic Garden, along Little Blind Creek & along High Street. Noisy Miners are at present absent from Eynesbury but perhaps they are on the move? The newly planted trees along Eynesbury Rd could provide an easy corridor from Exford.

Exford Road wetlands



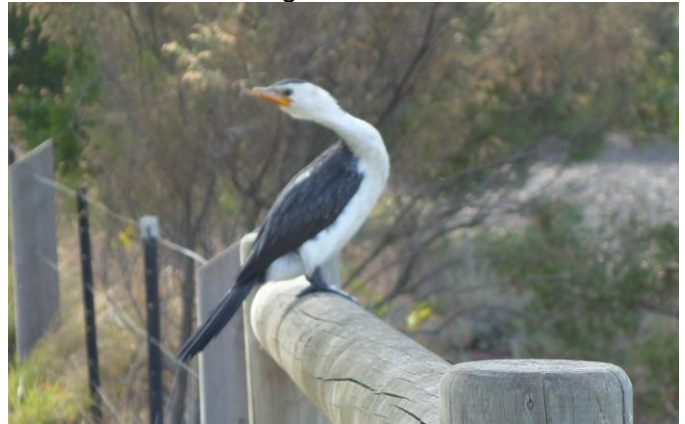
As part of housing development along Exford Road two man-made wetlands have been created, one on each side of the road. Both are easily accessible by footpaths.

These are now home to a variety of waterbirds. For some years a Greater Egret has been a regular visitor here, staying for about a week, then disappearing; to return several weeks later for another week's visit. However, it now appears to be

an almost permanent resident. Perhaps the diversity of pondlife has reach a level of diversity sufficient to support this large egret. Other residents include Black & Wood Ducks, Purple Swamphens & grebes. No doubt there are many other species not readily visible from the road.



Greater Egret in Exford Road

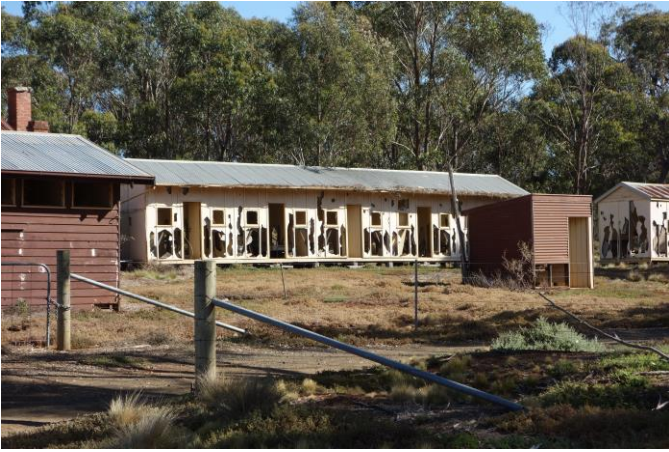


Little Pied Cormorant in Exford Road

Eynesbury historic buildings



Eynesbury shearing shed June 2011



Eynesbury shearing shed March 2024

Photos taken over several years record the sad deterioration of our historic Eynesbury buildings vandalised & destroyed before our very eyes, to our shame. Sadly we seem not to care what is happening to this historic collection of buildings on our own doorstep. So much could have been done with this site, enhancing the historic value of the Eynesbury community. A sad & tragically avoidable loss!

Eynesbury shearing shed complex in 2011

