Issue 41 - September 2017

Wombat Forestcare Newsletter

We hope you enjoy our spring issue. Is the Wombat Forest a beautiful creation for all forms of life, a provider of ecosystem services or a fire risk? Read Alison's article about the use of language. John continues his series of articles on what's what in the pea world. Catch up with Trevor's latest bird article. Happy reading.
Gayle Osborne (editor) and **Angela Halpin** (design)

The Wombat Forest and the War on Nature

Words and image by Alison Pouliot

Remember Summer? Ah for those carefree days when the heady scents of the Wombat's eucalypts made one dizzy. Dragonflies buzzed lazily along the Loddon and the air was shrill with cicadas. Well, I'm sorry to jolt you from any kind of sentimental reverie, but it's time to get real. Summer is gone. Over. Finished. It no longer exists. The *guvament* stole it, perverted it and renamed it. It is now officially the *fire season*. We're no longer allowed to look forward to summer, but rather, we're supposed to feel menaced by a sense of dread at the possibility of another *angry summer,* aka, *fire season.*

Australia's naturally highly variable climate makes it difficult to isolate the effects of global warming but there is no question that Australia is getting hotter and drier. Droughts increase in intensity and extent. Extreme heat and catastrophic fires are no longer the exception. High-intensity blazes have exceeded all Australian records with fire temperatures reaching 1000ºC. Fires generate their own weather systems with winds over 200 km per hour. There's lots of big numbers. Heatwaves are the *new norm* and there's a heightened level of vigilance around their life-threatening dangers. Anyone who has experienced wildfire first hand viscerally understands its power and terrifying ferocity. No-one mucks around with the *fire threat* but rather we obediently *plan and prepare* to be *fire ready*. Fires are commonly described as *unprecedented* and *catastrophic*. We have *firestorms*. They are real.

Back in those balmy summer days, we also used to have weather. Remember that? And fire for that matter. Rain and floods. While I was dangling my toes in the river, they got stolen too. This time, they all got turned into *events – fire events, weather events, rain events, storm events, flood events* . . . Presumably the *event* bit allows us to anticipate the arrival of a defined *happening* so that we can *strategise, action* and *debrief* accordingly. Weather no longer just *is*. It no longer just happens and we accept it and get on. These terms have been revamped and repackaged into *tangible targets* so that we can better manage and control them, or rather, kid ourselves that we can.

The delights of summer, like this cicada (*Cyclochila australasiae*) emerging from the leaf litter, have to contend with the threat of the next *controlled burn.*

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Am I playing with fire? Is the local fire chief going to denounce my every word and accuse me of irresponsible or subversive writing, perhaps even *fake news*? If so, then she will have missed my point entirely. This is not to negate the realities of our changing climate or the increased severity of fire. It is not to downplay the gravitas of environmental issues and our urgent need to respond. Rather, it is about recognising that something else is going on here. I'm referring to language. I'm referring to the intentional and manipulative use of euphemisms to influence human thought through a government-sponsored fear campaign. It is actually not so different from the doublespeak forced into the mouths of soldiers to demonise *the enemy*, disguise gore as glory and mask the horrific realities of war.

Except now, the enemy, is summer.

The *fire season* is one of those insidious bits of jargon surreptitiously implanted into our brains and before we know it, the same words are spewing forth from our mouths, as that thing called *summer* fades into the distant past. It is unscrupulous spin to which we have become disturbingly immune. So why am I getting all hot under the collar about the use of a few old words? Because doublespeak affects the way we think about nature, about the Wombat. Because, in the eyes of the *authorities*, fuelling the *fire season* is our forest of *fuel*.

Not only has summer become the enemy, but so has the forest.

My aim is simply to expose how language can be manipulated to set us up against nature. Doublespeak removes us from nature. It fosters the fantasy that we are somehow separate from it; as if we have no connection, no dependency, no need to assign it any concern. Recasting summer as the *fire season* sets it up as a deadly enemy against which we must collectively, even heroically, fight. Fight, paradoxically, the very thing that sustains us. Fuelling the fervour is the hackneyed narrative of the Aussie battler, braving the perils of our dangerous land, waging a war against nature. Over time, the *fire season* becomes normalised. Repeated often enough, it triggers the desired response of public acceptance of a command-and-control management approach, rather than fostering the innovative and imaginative thinking that is so desperately needed. Gradually we become more reluctant to accept the variable and extreme nature of our land and less willing to work with it, opting instead to join the noble battle against it.

Such bunkum abounds in government propaganda. In a previous article I've written about the doublespeak of *ecosystem services*. This empty neologism is similarly moot. The Wombat is not there to *serve* us. It is not subordinate. It just *is*. The idea of nature's servitude harks back to some biblical delusion that *Homo sapiens* occupy the apex while all God's creatures willingly consign themselves to our exploitation. It's another example of government spin that we're forced to swallow if we want to consider ourselves grown up citizens dutifully participating in the monetising of nature. We're told that if we don't adopt its language, then the forest won't be *accounted for* in their bona fide models and indices. But didn't the forest exist long before the economic overlay that demanded its enumeration? Something doesn't seem to quite add up here.

Ecosystem services is an idealised economic stock-flow model that conveniently overlooks the complexities and functions of real ecosystems. Ecosystems are dynamic environments in constant interaction, change and exchange, not a singular process or product deliverable as a *service*. Moreover, this reductionist view of nature determines *services* based on the value to only one species. In an economic system entrenched in profits and *jobsandgrowth*, conservationists' ethical and philosophical arguments based on intrinsic values are mocked as being passé, unrealistic, even selfish. *Ecosystem services* is convenient and definable, resonating for those important people in society deemed the *decision makers*. But where does *caring* fit into those indices? What number do we assign to care? Nature is not a set of numbers and our dynamic forest is not reducible to simplified costs and benefits. A forest that is cared for might just require less management or enumeration.

Rest assured that as you dream of summer, our politicians will be *making commitments* and developing *strategic delivery channels* for our *natural capital*, to minimise the chance of nature *impacting* on us (insert jargon of choice). But don't despair. The people have the power here. Management rhetoric only gains clout if we comply. We can resist. We can wrestle summer back from the *fire season* and reject the scare campaigns that instrumentalise nature and language and rob us of the freedom of thought and expression. I'm not suggesting being foolhardy or negligent or taking unconsidered risk. This is not to be artless or irresponsible, but on the contrary. I'm just asking how we became so deeply locked in a language of crisis, where nature became the enemy enumerated by its human *victims*, where *events* are described by their potential for destruction. Sounds awfully hope-less to me.

Today's children no longer have summer. That was something from the *olden days*. Instead, they have the *fire season*. The succession of controlled burns in the Wombat means that blackened trunks are the norm. How could they know any different in a forest of *sliding baselines*?

Let's retrieve our language for what we cherish and give them back the forest and the summer. ■

Restoring the role of the Dingo in Victoria

By Gayle Osborne

We attended a thought-provoking lecture by Dr Ian Mansergh, Adjunct Professor at La Trobe University, on restoring the role of the Dingo in remote parts of Victoria.

The Dingo, *Canis lupus dingo*, is Australia's largest mammal carnivore, a top order predator, along with Wedge-tailed Eagles and Goannas.

The Dingo has been in Australia for over 4,000 years, except for Tasmania, which was already isolated from the mainland. In that time it may have contributed to the extinction of mainland Thylacines (Tasmanian Tiger), but by the time of European settlement, the Dingo was co-existing with other species, including numerous species of small and medium sized ground mammals.

Dingo. Photographer © Australian Museum
https://australianmuseum.net.au

Since European settlement we have nearly eliminated the Dingo and introduced other predators, including foxes and cats.

As the settlers arrived, Dingoes preyed on some of the introduced livestock, which led to them being trapped, shot and baited.

Dingoes form stable packs, with only the litter of the dominant female being raised to maturity. If other females give birth, the pups are killed. The female only produces one litter, with an average of five offspring, per year. They have a defined territory that is often defended against other Dingoes.

It is considered that Dingo control may have led to the breakdown of these stable packs and hence displaced female dingos have bred with introduced dogs.

In America, the reintroduction of gray wolves into the Yellowstone National Park has received much publicity. Without predators, many species will reproduce beyond the carrying capacity of their environment. In Yellowstone there was a failure of aspen to regenerate due to overbrowsing by elks leading to beavers being unable to build dams and reproduce. The reintroduced wolves not only preyed on the elk population but also the fear of predation modified the elks' browsing habits and reproduction rates.

This lead to the increased growth of aspens, cottonwoods and willows and has enabled beavers to re-establish. The riparian vegetation has improved. There is greater songbird abundance, and a range of other species are likely to benefit.

'This cause and effect process is called a "trophic cascade," or the progression of direct (predation-driven) and indirect (fear-driven) effects predators have across lower nutritional (trophic) levels in a food chain.' [1]

Ian considers that Dingoes may modify the behaviour of the Sambar Deer that are destroying the sphagnum moss bogs in the alpine areas, as well as have an influence on the fox population. He said that cats have different breeding strategies when exposed to predators. Ian is well experienced in the alpine area having been involved with the program to save the Mountain Pygmy Possum *Burramys parvus* from extinction, and is Dept Director of the Research Centre for Applied Alpine Ecology.

Victoria only legally protects pure Dingoes (listed as a threatened species in Victoria under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*) and the government employs 18 staff across the state to eradicate wild dogs. Much of this is carried out with 1080 baits. Ian considers that the illusion of a "purity" definition (colour, genetics etc.) is useless in the field and needs to be replaced with a functional definition that encompasses breeding only once a year and a social organisation where only the dominant male and female breed.

Ian was only talking about restoring Dingo populations in remote areas of Gippsland and possibly the Big Desert.

Are there any lessons for the Wombat Forest? Probably not, as reintroducing Dingoes to the Wombat is unlikely to be realistic. Our medium-sized predator, the Spot-tail Quoll has probably gone from the Wombat and has been replaced by foxes and cats. Wedge-tailed Eagles, Australia's largest bird of prey can still be seen soaring over the forest. Time for some lateral thinking. ■

1. https://www.predatordefense.org/predators.htm

Egg and Bacon 4 - Our Rare *Pultenaea* Species

Words and images by John Walter

We are well endowed with *Pultenaea* species in this district with fourteen listed for the Wombat Forest and the sister forests just to the north. This is another genus named by Sir James Edward Smith and celebrates the English botanist Dr Richard Pulteney (1730-1801) who is remembered for writing the first account of the life of Carl Linnaeus in English. There are a great many other items of interest to be found in Pulteney's biographical account, published in *The Philosophical Magazine Vol XII* in 1802; one item being that "His parents had thirteen children, of whom he alone arrived at the age of maturity." This high infant mortality level is a clear reminder for us all on how much things have changed.

The *Pultenaea* are commonly known as the Bush-peas and our first species is Cupped Bush-pea, *P. vrolandii*, so named by the FNCV Plant Names Committee for the cup shaped bracteoles enclosing the calyx. This species has not yet been officially recorded for our district but I suspect there is a population in the dryer forest just a little north of Glenlyon. Other observers have recorded this population as *P. hispidula*, which also has hairy stems and leaves with incurved margins that are hairy on the underside. When you examine the plant more closely however, you see that the leaf tips are not always blunt as you would expect on *P. hispidula*, but arrive at a short sharp point. While there are many other differences between these two species, there are also many similarities. I have not been able to examine specimens of either species from other districts, so when making my determination, I am solely reliant upon the many (and varied) written descriptions, some excellent line drawings, and sometimes poor-quality photographs from the internet and in the occasional text.[1]

You are going to have to bear with me for a while as I discuss these new terms; bracteole, calyx and the other important one for *Pultenaea* is stipules. Most members of the Pea family have stipules, and while they are well developed in the *Pultenaea*, they are inconspicuous, small, or absent on the *Dillwynia, Daviesia* and *Bossiaea*. A stipule is an appendage arising from each side of the leaf stem where it meets the branch. The shape, size and attitude of the stipule can be of assistance when identifying different species, but the calyx and bracteole are of greater importance in this pursuit. The calyx is the collection of sepals, often forming a tube, that immediately surrounds the petals of a flower. In *Pultenaea*, the calyx has a tube and five lobes. Two upper and three lower lobes with the upper and lower lobes having slightly different shapes. There are also two additional and differently shaped lobes that are attached to the calyx, sometimes on the sides of the tube, sometimes at the base and sometimes on the stem just below the tube. These are the bracteoles and they are extremely important in identifying the species, especially when the other characteristics do not lead you to a clear identity.

The branches and underside of the leaves are covered in hairs but they are not "hispid" meaning rigid or bristly. The dark brown stipules are recurved, sometimes strongly so.

The brown bits are enlarged stipules giving the appearance of bracts and the green, smooth, shiny and sticky bracteoles are giving way to the developing hairy calyx.

The hairy pedicels supporting the flowers are too long for *P. hispidula* but are consistent with *P. vrolandii.*

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There is insufficient space in this article for me to argue why I suspect this species to be *P. vrolandii*, but I have spent many hours reviewing descriptions and dissecting and examining the flowers and surrounding components under magnification before arriving at my conclusion. Part of the difficulty has been the differences found in the various descriptions of the same species. For example, the original description for *P. vrolandii*, published in *The Victorian Naturalist* in 1905,[2] describes the calyx as "glabrous" meaning hairless whereas the *Flora of Victoria* Vol 3 records it as "covered with soft, pale hairs". *P. hispidula* grows up to one metre in height and is recognised as being a highly variable species. It is found to the south of the Great Divide and in the Grampians but there are no records for Central Victoria other than a couple of collections at Mt Cole. *P. vrolandii* is recorded from the Strathbogie Ranges and further afield and is associated with granite outcrops. It is recorded as growing from 0.5 up to 2 metres in height. Our population ranges from one metre to a little over 1.5 metres in height and is on the old Ordovician soils.

There is a recognised hierarchy to be followed when assessing the characteristics of the *Pultenaea* with the seed being most important, ranging through the ovary, calyx, bracteoles etc. before arriving at the leaf shape and flower colour down at the bottom of the list. I suggested at the beginning of this series that you can use the leaf detail to determine the species identity, and I believe you can, provided you are looking at plants from within this district only. If you were to examine the leaves of a species known to have highly variable leaves that are from Gippsland, or the Grampians, for example, you will often see substantial differences in the leaf shape, or hairiness, or size.

I believe that in this instance, I will have to wait until next summer to examine the seeds of our local population before I can confirm if it is the rare *P. vrolandii* or the more common *P. hispidula*. One thing that is certain however, is that in one patch, we have the vulnerable *Pultenaea graveolens* growing right alongside. This species is listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* in the State of Victoria. It grows in a narrow band near Porcupine Ridge with a couple of outlier populations closer to Glenlyon. The generally arched branches of this shrub serve to mislead the casual observer about the nature of the leaves. What you first see is a mass of small dark green leaves with the occasional hair and the leaf edges curve strongly towards the other side of the leaf, which is densely hairy. Now the hairy side is actually the top or uppermost side of the leaf even though it often appears to be the underside due to the arched branches. As the leaf margins curve towards the hairy upper side of the leaf, they are said to be incurved. This species has small resinous stipules and bracteoles, and interestingly, it exudes a yellow waxy substance which can be seen on the calyx and surrounding leaves. It also comes

The flowers of this species vary from plant to plant in the degree of red marking on the standard, in this instance the red is minimal.

The dark green underside and hairy upper surface of the leaves of *P. graveolens*. Note that the leaf margins are incurved, while the tip is recurved. The tiny stipules are visible in both images.

You can see the yellow waxy exudate on the stem and leaves. The narrowly-triangular yellowish bracteoles are also visible on the developing buds in this image of a *P. graveolens* flower.

with an odour once described as like "spirit contaminated with animal matter", others suggest it has an aromatic odour "resembling that of cream cheese".[3]

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The next two species are both listed as rare in Victoria and both are found to the south in the wetter Wombat Forest country. The most widespread is *Pultenaea reflexifolia*, commonly known as the Wombat Bush-pea. The name *reflexifolia* gives you a ready clue to the most outstanding feature of this plant whose leaves are generally bent backwards with their tip pointing towards the base of the stem instead of towards the growing tip. It is found throughout the Wombat Forest and is very common there despite its rare status. The rarity is due to the fact that almost the entire population is located in this forest and if something catastrophic should occur in this district then the species would be lost.

The reflexed attitude of the leaves makes *P. reflexifolia* unmistakeable in the field.

Some records and references for this plant list it as *P. muelleri*, a much larger species found in the mountainous regions east of Melbourne and also in the Otways. Our Wombat Forest plants were once believed to be *P. muelleri*, and then, in 1940, Willis established its status as a new variety which he called *P. muelleri* var *reflexifolia*.[4] Willis also coined the term Wombat Bush-pea and in 2003 de Kok raised its status to that of a new species.[5]

Leaf detail and the long narrow stipules of *P. reflexifolia* on left and flower with pollen laden attendant on right.

The last of the rare species is *Pultenaea weindorferi*, first collected from a swamp near Wandin in 1903 by Gustav Weindorfer. This plant is almost entirely hairless although there are a few cilia on the edges of the calyx lobes and an occasional hair on the inside of the calyx. The narrow leaves have incurved margins and a blunt tip and appear a lighter shade on the upper surface. Each leaf has a distinctive short stalk or petiole which tends to lie close to the branch, while on the older stems the leaf blade angles sharply away from the branch, often making a right angle. The bracteoles are quite narrow and long but are shorter than the calyx lobes. They are attached to the calyx near its base and the yellow and red flowers appear in dense clusters at the ends of the branches.

The hairless dark green leaves of *P. weindorferi* have an unusually shaped short light-green stem or petiole. The branches are also hairless as is the calyx (inset) with its long narrow bracteole.

Gustav Weindorfer was born in an alpine region of southern Austria and came to Victoria in 1900 and joined the Field Naturalists soon afterwards in 1901. His special interest was botany, with a focus on the alpine regions of the state. He met his future wife Kate Cowle at the club and they returned to her home state of Tasmania where they married and purchased a farm in 1906. After hearing of the beauty of Cradle Mountain, Weinforfer invited Dr Charles S. Sutton, a fellow member of the FNCV and an amateur botanist, to join him in a visit to this remote location in 1909. This expedition led Weindorfer to personally construct Waldheim, the first chalet at the mountain, which opened to hikers in December 1912. Gustav Weindorfer was found lying dead next to his motorcycle a few hundred yards from the chalet on May 6th, 1932. He had remained in regular correspondence with his friend Dr Sutton in Melbourne, his last letter being despatched on May 4th 1932. In an obituary written for the *Victorian Naturalist*, Sutton detailed

The flowers are found in dense clusters at the ends of the branches of *P. weindorferi*. The tiny moth at the top looks like one of the *Glyphipterix* species.

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Weindorfer's last days and provides us with a very personal insight into the life of this great pioneer.

From what he wrote in letters received since his death, he had purposed cycling to the coast on the fifth, and the strenuous effort required to push the cycle and side car over a very rough half mile between the chalet and the track, where it was possible for him to drive it, would seem to have over-taxed a heart already … unduly strained on numberless occasions. … In 1916, Mr Weindorfer had the misfortune to lose his wife. Up till this they had spent their time partly at the farm and partly at the chalet. Now, however, bereft of her companionship, he sold the farm and permanently established himself in the chalet where, in the winters, he spent many solitary months and became known to many as the Hermit of the Cradle Mountain. … Denied human companionship during those long winter months, our friend sought it in the wild life of the forest so close at hand. Unlike the great majority of us, he seemed easily to acquire and secure the confidence of animals. As he once told us, "When the ground is all covered with snow, I do build a big fire, open my door, seat myself very, very quietly in front of the blazing logs, and, presently, one by one, in they would come, without their usual fear of man or of one another, and share with me in stillness the grateful warmth." … One cannot help thinking what an excellent plan it would be, in furtherance of the brotherhood of man and of nations, for these to pick out from among their people as many as possible like Gustav Weindorfer and send them to other countries as propagandists of international goodwill.[6]

"Dorfer", as he was also known, is commemorated in a ceremony at the chalet at Cradle Mountain every New Year's Day, but there is no better memorial for such a gentle man than this beautiful *Pultenaea*. ■

References

1. The texts include H B Williamsons "A Revision of the Genus *Pultenaea*", published in five parts between 1920 and 1928 in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, Margaret Corrick's "Bush-Peas of Victoria – genus *Pultenaea*" published in 24 parts between 1976 and 1990 in the *Victorian Naturalist*, and Corrick also prepared the section on *Pultenaea* published in 1996 in the *Flora of Victoria Vol 3*, and R P J de Kok et al "A revision of *Pultenaea* (Fabaceae)" published in four parts between 2002 and 2005 in *Australian Systematic Bota*ny
2. Maiden J H (1905) "On three new species of *Pultenaea*" *Victorian Naturalist* 22-6 p98-100
3. Williamson H B (1921) "A revision of the genus *Pultenaea* Part II" *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 33 p144
4. Willis J H (1940) "A western variety of *Pultenaea muelleri*" *Victorian Naturalist* 57-5 p98-99
5. de Kok R P J and West J G (2003) "A revision of *Pultenaea* (Fabaceae) 2 Eastern Australian species with velutinous ovaries and incurved leaves" *Australian Systematic Botany* 16 p229-273
6. Sutton C S (1932) "Gustav Weindorfer" *Victorian Naturalist* 49-2 p34-38

Who is knocking on my window?

Words and images by John Walter

Soon after moving into Drummond we found our peaceful late autumn evening disturbed by an irregular Bump! Bump! Bump! on the window. We were being visited by the Wattle Goat Moth *Endoxyla lituratus* which measures a huge 10 centimetres from the tip of the snout to the tip of the wings. This enormous intrusion got me interested and I began observing the moths around our house on an occasional basis. The trouble was, I did not have camera equipment suitable for photographing our visitors, so I never pursued the moths with the same vigour as I do other more sedentary diurnal lifeforms.

Battered remains of a Wattle Goat Moth *Endoxyla lituratus*

Teatree Web Moth *Orthaga thyrisalis*

Proteuxoa oxygona

Underside of a Red-lined Geometer *Crypsiphona ocultaria*

Cymatoplex sp. This colourful species has not yet been formally named

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Even after the purchase of new camera equipment, I took a while to "get around" to chasing down the locals and finally began leaving some outside lights on in late February 2017. By mid-May I had photographed and named 154 different species and had images of at least another 50 species that await the spare time for identification to occur. Now, with warmer weather just around the corner, we will start to see a few more moths again. Not in the same quantities as autumn, but enough to get me outside after dark with my camera at the ready for the next new species.

If you have a camera that can take macro images and can dial down the flash output so you do not lose the specimen in the glare, then you might also be able to record your night time visitors. Victoria has over 2000 known species of moth so there are plenty out there for you to discover. There are some excellent aids to identification available. *Moths of Victoria* published by the Entomological Society of Victoria is always my starting point. Seven parts covering over 1000 species have been published to date and I eagerly await each new addition. For those species not covered in MoV I turn to http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/imagos.html and work through the families. This is not as easy as it first seems, but with time you begin to recognise the features of the different families. Happy hunting! ■

Southern Old Lady Moth *Dasypodia selenophora*

Aglaopus pyrrhata belongs to the Picture-winged Leaf Moth family

Male Grass Anthelid *Pterolocera amplicornis*, the female is wingless

Both the Bardi Ghost Moth *Trictena atripalpis* on the left, and the Variable Oxycanus *Oxycanus dirempta* on the right are referred to as 'Rain Moths,' emerging with autumn rains

Proteuxoa sanguinipuncta

Green Blotched Moth *Cosmodes elegans*

Honeyeaters

By Trevor Speirs with images by Gayle Osborne

Eighteen Honeyeater species have been recorded in the Wombat/Hepburn forests and the Lerderderg State Park over the years, a list compiled from older records and modern day databases. They range from the common White-eared Honeyeater to the one-off sighting of the striking Scarlet Honeyeater in Lerderderg in 2010.

Honeyeaters are generally a mobile species, most being migratory in some way whether it's altitudinal or nomadic, or like the Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters that partake in a mass south to north autumn migration, with the reverse in spring, in SE Australia. Birdwatchers in the 1950s and 60s observed huge flocks of up to 100,000 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters a day travelling through NSW along the Great Dividing Range. Yellow-faced Honeyeaters only continue their migration during the daylight hours and primarily in the morning, and interestingly it has been noted that these birds seem to be fair-weather flyers, being less inclined to travel on cloudy or rainy days. Though not quite as large today, the numbers are still impressive. In an exceptionally good season up to 7000 birds an hour have been seen passing overhead.

However, not all Yellow-faced Honeyeaters travel north, with a small number of birds overwintering in our region. Their strong cheerful call is heard in the forest throughout the cold months. This suggests there is enough lerp, honeydew and insect life amongst the eucalypts, as well as flowering shrubs like Silver Banksia *Banksia marginata* to sustain these hardy birds.

One of the loudest birds in the forest, certainly for its size, is the Crescent Honeyeater, which is considered an altitudinal migrant and while definitely much more common in summer can still be heard and seen in the forest throughout winter. In the Wombat, along Yankee Road and just east of Pronk Track, is a patch of Mountain Correa *Correa lawrenciana*, which is a reliable winter flowerer and here you'll usually find a Crescent Honeyeater, constantly calling and often engaged in a territory battle with an Eastern Spinebill. ■

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus* feeding a fledgling

Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus* on a Silver Banksia

White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis*

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops*

Orchids of the Enfield Forest

Words and images by Gayle Osborne

I was so lucky to be invited to the Australasian Native Orchid Society's field trip in the Enfield State Forest in August. Emily Noble arranged this wonderful tour to four sites, and surprisingly the day was pleasantly sunny.

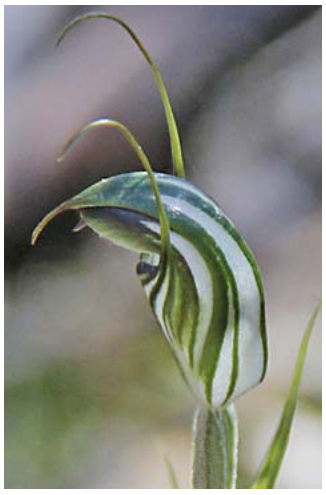
Of particular interest were the two species of *Corybas* (Helmet Orchids). They were much smaller than I imagined and growing amongst mosses in a grassy woodland. From above, the Slaty Helmet-orchid *Corybas incurvus* resembled small animal droppings and could easily be overlooked.

Corybas are deciduous, mostly found in colonies and grow from a small tuber. There is a solitary kidney-shaped or circular leaf with a single flower on a short stem. The leaf superficially resembles *Dichondra repens*.

Eleven species of *Corybas* occur in Victoria, however there are no records for any *Corybas* species in the Wombat Forest. I am now looking much more closely at mossy areas in the hope of locating a population.

Top: Veined Helmet-orchid *Corybas diemenicus* amidst *Rosulabryum billarderi* moss **Above:** Slaty Helmet-orchid *Corybas incurvus*

Bronze Bird-orchid *Chiloglottis Xpescottiana*
(Hybrid between *C. valida* and *C. trapeziformis*)



Striped Greenhood
Pterostylis striata

Blue Fingers
Cyanicula caerulea

We saw a number of species of greenhood orchids, including the striking Striped Greenhood *Pterostylis striata,* also not recorded in the Wombat.

The Blue Fingers Orchid *Cyanicula caerulea* is a reasonably common orchid, but yet again, not recorded for the Wombat Forest.

Wombat Forestcare members have located two orchids that were not recorded in the Wombat, Black-tongue Caladenia *Caladenia congesta* (two plants only) and Eastern Bronzehood *Caladenia transitoria* (one plant only). We all need to be observant on our walks and hopefully we can locate some of these species from the Enfield Forest. ■

Wombat Forestcare Membership research • education • action

Wombat Forestcare Inc. is dedicated to preserving the biodiversity and amenity of the Wombat State Forest by utilising the skills and resources of the community. By becoming a member you will have input into our activities and projects, and give support to caring for our forests.

For memberships and further information contact Gayle Osborne, (03) 5348 7558 or email info@wombatforestcare.org.au

Membership fees are only $15 single and $20 family. Visit our website - www.wombatforestcare.org.au