



Chum Creek
Landcare

CHUM CREEK LANDCARE NEWSLETTER

No. 19, Winter, 2019



Chum Creek Landcare and other Northern Yarra Landcare Network members at the well-attended very informative deer control information session in June, 2019.

Next event – Our Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, 17 July at 7.30pm. Chum Creek Primary School

President's Report

A number of you may have watched the Four Corners program last Monday on the extinction crisis. In Australia over 500 species are heading down the extinction path. The producers of the program chose to focus on four case studies in depth. One of these examples was the Leadbeater's Possum and also Greater Glider. There was excellent footage of people like Steve Meacher and the WOTCH team in our local area. As an aside, Steve and members of the Friends of Leadbeaters have just witnessed the final days of the court case they initiated against VicForests over the impact of logging practices on these species survival.

Sometimes one can feel overwhelmed by the extent of the forces causing species decline. However, another event I attended, Melbourne Water's Volunteer Appreciation Day at the Bollin Bollin Billabongs in Bulleen gave one cause to be hopeful and provided an incentive to continue what one can do to restore the environment. Here we saw a project by Melbourne Water to use environmental water flows to restore water in the billabongs. This action certainly stimulated eel and fish populations. We also heard from other volunteer Water Watch groups from Lancefield to Mornington and suburban areas such as Blackburn Lake and Scotchman's Creek. These groups have approached water quality and catchment monitoring in action-oriented ways and as a result have identified problems that councils have been able to rectify by upgrading sewer systems and litter traps.

The key point here is that groups like Chum Creek Landcare can contribute to slowing down the extinction trajectory at least in our catchment. While our creek is in much better health than many of the inner urban streams, it still is in danger of deteriorating and actions such as controlling some upstream turbidity sources, continuing revegetation, controlling weeds and feral animals such as deer are vitally important.

Chum Creek Landcare news

Chum Creek Landcare has decided to try and do something to reduce deer numbers in the Chum Creek valley

The survey of the health of Chum Creek and its adjacent riparian vegetation that we had done a few years ago identified deer as the major environmental problem in the area. Loss of vegetation, transport of weeds, and soil erosion were all associated with deer. This lead to Chum Creek Landcare recommending to our Northern Yarra Landcare Network that an information session on deer control be organized. This happened in June.

A number of Chum Creek Landcare members attended the deer control information session in June and heard the pros and cons of two different approaches to deer culls currently being conducted by two different Landcare groups – use of professional shooters vs. use of amateurs. The former method is more expensive but results can be more reliable. Your committee prefers the former approach (use of professionals) and is willing to provide some initial financial support for a limited deer cull. We intend to apply for funding to assist deer removal but we also need to determine if landowners wish to be involved and have shooters on their property. We are currently investigating the potential costs of such a program and will later try to find out who in the Chum Creek area (not just Landcare members) is willing to participate in the program. In the mean time, could you contact us at chumcklandcare@gmail.com and let us know the answers to 2 questions:

- 1. Would you be interested in participating in the deer cull program by having professional shooters on your property – YES or NO?**
- 2. How much would you be prepared to pay for this cull per year, for 2-3 years –**

\$0, \$50, \$100, \$200, \$300, more?

You can further inform yourself about deer by –

1. [Watching the interesting video](#) on deer in the Yarra Valley prepared by the Middle Yarra Landcare Network. See it at www.warrandyte.tv
2. [Obtaining the app](#) Deerscan in order to record where you see deer. This can be obtained at <https://www.feralscan.org.au/deerscan/>

Chum Creek bushfire fuel management plan update

Work has continued over the summer to develop this plan. Chum Creek Rd. and environs, from the golf course to Heath Rd., as well as adjacent housing subdivisions, are considered to be the greatest assets in the area that should be protected. Boundaries are being drawn on maps and methods of protecting the assets are being discussed.

Featured Weeds – Black Locust (False Acacia) and Madeira Winter Cherry

Black Locust (False Acacia) (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)

Black Locust is a spiny deciduous tree to about 17 m high which is native to the eastern USA. Its Leaves are bright green, divided into leaflets with spines on stems. Pale flowers droop down in clusters. Seed pods are 3 – 8 cm long and reddish brown in colour. Black locust spreads by producing a large amount of root suckers to form quite dense thickets that exclude native vegetation. Black locust is toxic to humans and can cause discomfort and irritation, but is not life-threatening. All parts of the plant are poisonous, especially the pods, seeds, bark and leaves. It can cause dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, convulsions and drowsiness.

It is widely naturalised in southern and eastern Australia where it is a weed of roadsides, disturbed sites, waste areas, gardens, riparian vegetation, urban bushland and open woodlands in temperate and sub-tropical regions.



Distinguishing Features

- a tree that loses its leaves during winter and usually grows up to 10 m tall.
- it produces large numbers of suckers from its root system and eventually forms dense thickets.
- two broad spines (5-25 mm long) are present at the base of some or all of its leaves.
- its alternately arranged leaves are once-compound and have 11-21 oval or oblong leaflets.
- its white (occasionally pink or purple) pea-shaped flowers are arranged in elongated clusters (10-15 cm long).
- its elongated and flattened pods (3-8 cm long and 10-15 mm wide) turn brown as they mature.

Control of Black Locust

Black locust stems can be cut at the base with brush-cutters, chainsaws or hand tools, followed by treating the stump with a 20-percent solution of Roundup or applying diesel fuel to the top of the stump with a paintbrush. You can also drill holes on the top of the stump to apply more diesel.

More information is available at -

1. https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/robinia_pseudoacacia.htm
2. <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/306>

Madeira Winter Cherry (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*)

Madeira Winter Cherry is a native of South America and is an upright (i.e. erect) herbaceous plant or small shrub usually growing 0.3-2 m tall. The younger stems and new growth is greenish, hairless (i.e. glabrous) or sparsely hairy, and are usually somewhat ridged. Older stems may become woody and turn brownish in colour. The alternately arranged leaves are borne on stalks 2-15 mm long. These leaves (i.e. 2.5-10.5 cm long and 0.7-3 cm wide) are narrowly oval or elongated (i.e. lanceolate) in shape margins that are entire or slightly wavy (i.e. undulate). They are hairless (i.e. glabrous) or sparsely hairy with rounded to acute tips. The star-shaped flowers (10-15 mm across) are borne singly or arranged in small clusters in the upper leaf forks (i.e. axils). These flowers have five green sepals (4-5 mm long) and are borne on stalks (i.e. pedicels) 3-10 mm long. They have five white petals (5-8 mm long) that are fused together at the base. Flowering occurs mainly from spring through to autumn. The fruit is a rounded berry (10-15 mm across) and turns from green to yellow and eventually bright orange-red as it matures. Each fruit contains numerous white or pale yellow seeds (3-4 mm long).



Madeira Winter Cherry reproduces mainly by seeds, which are most often dispersed by birds and other animals that eat the fleshy fruit. It is regarded as a significant environmental weed in Victoria. It can invade damp sclerophyll forest, riparian vegetation and warm temperate rainforests, forests and forest edges. It establishes in hedges, plantations, remnant forest and shady places. It is a weed of disturbed areas, rough pasture and along bushland edges. Fruits and seeds are poisonous to humans and livestock.



Distinguishing Features

- an upright herbaceous plant or small shrub usually growing 0.3-2 m tall.
- its alternately arranged leaves (2.5-10.5 cm long) are narrowly oval or elongated in shape with slightly wavy margins.
- its white star-shaped flowers (10-15 mm across) are borne singly or arranged in small clusters in the upper leaf forks.
- its fleshy fruit (10-15 mm across) turn from green to yellow and eventually bright orange-red as they mature.

Control of Madeira Winter Cherry

1. Hand pull all but the largest plants (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.

2. Spray plants over 30 cm tall (spring-autumn) with glyphosate (10ml/L).

To prevent it coming back – (Cut shoots occasionally resprout and it can reseed densely in bared sites).

Exclude livestock at all times, maintain pest control. Usually natural regeneration will overtake plant in time. Replanting, especially of ferns, can accelerate process.

More information is available at -

http://www.flora.sa.gov.au/efsa/lucid/Solanaceae/Solanum%20species/key/Australian%20Solanum%20species/Media/Html/Solanum_pseudocapsicum.htm

and https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/solanum_pseudocapsicum.htm

Events of interest



Platypus Talk

**Thursday 4th July
7pm – 8.30pm**

Mechanics Hall, Arts Centre, Warburton

The platypus is a popular Australian icon, however, very little is known about how this unique mammal is faring in the wild. An important new study is now being launched to monitor platypus in the Upper Yarra River and other waterways within the Yarra Ranges region.

This session explains how local residents can play a key role in keeping track of this fascinating monotreme.

Registration: ycr.vic.gov.au/platypus-talk

Optional platypus spotting tour included the following morning; details provided on the evening.

Keynote Speaker

Geoff Williams

Geoff Williams is the Director of the Australian Platypus Conservancy. He has been studying platypus and water-rats since 1994. Before helping to establish the Conservancy, Geoff was Director of Healesville Sanctuary and Assistant Director of Taronga Zoo in Sydney.



For more information contact Jen Ellison on 9294 6287 or j.ellison@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Understanding Rakali - Australia's “Otter”

by Geoff Williams from the Australian Platypus Conservancy

Wednesday, 3 July, 2019, 7.30 - 9 pm

The Australian water-rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) is a genuine native rodent. It was a natural part of our environment long before the arrival of its pest cousins - the black rat and brown rat. With a thick coat of soft fur, splendid whiskers, blunt muzzle, partly webbed hind feet and furry tail, the water-rat resembles a miniature otter. Geoff Williams will outline the biology and key conservation requirements of this fascinating native mammal and provide tips on how to spot it in local waterways.



Field trip: Learn to spot and survey Platypus and Rakali, by Geoff Williams of the Australian Platypus Conservancy

Sunday 14 July 2019, 3 pm to 5 pm

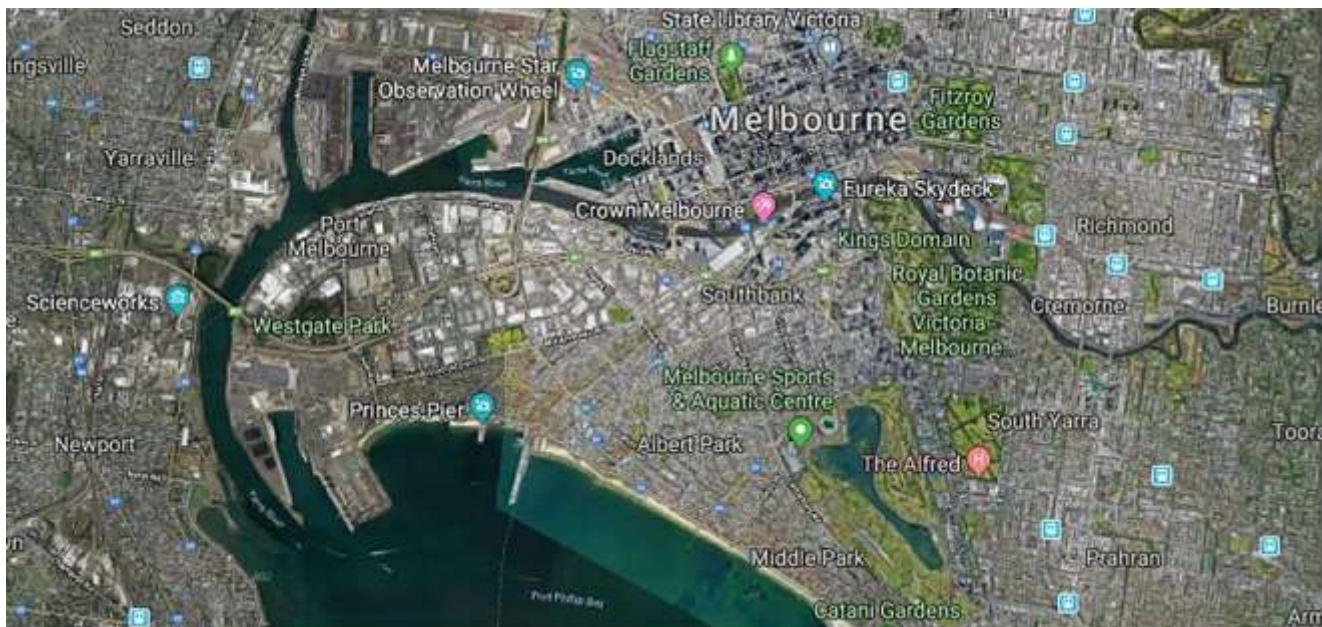
Join Geoff on a field trip to learn how to look for rakali and platypus in the wild. He will also talk about opportunities for becoming involved in the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network (APMN) to help track how these species are faring in the Yarra River and other nearby waterways.

Location: The meeting point for this field trip will be provided when you attend the Understanding Rakali - Australia's “Otter” seminar on Wednesday 3 July.

Booking: Bookings are essential for the field trip as places are limited. Please email csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au or phone 9840 9789 to ensure your spot.

Manningham Environment Seminars(Warrandyte) – How the Yarra and La Trobe rivers find the sea by Dr. Neville Rosengren.

Wednesday 07 August 2019, 7.30 pm to 9 pm



Most streams in Victoria flow north or south. The Yarra and La Trobe rivers do it differently and go west and east respectively. This seminar will examine what factors determine the selection and maintenance of the course of these rivers and how and why they change over different time scales.

Field trip: Explore geological structures of the lower Yarra River

Thursday 08 August 2019, 10.00 am to 3.30 pm.

Join Dr. Neville Rosengren for this extended field trip to explore the geological structures of the bedrock crossed by the lower Yarra River. This bus trip will visit some of the geological, structural and landform elements that the Yarra has traversed through time. BYO picnic lunch.

Location: The meeting point for this field trip will be provided when you attend the How the Yarra and La Trobe rivers find the sea seminar on Wednesday 3 July.

Booking: Bookings are essential for the field trip as places are limited. Please email csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au or phone 9840 9789 to ensure your spot.

Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Ecological costs and benefits of stormwater wetlands by Dr. Robin Hale.

Wednesday 04 September 2019, 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm

Wetlands are increasingly being constructed around many cities to mitigate the effects of urban stormwater, especially reduced water quality. While the primary purpose of these wetlands is to manage stormwater, they also attract animals whose growth, survival and breeding may be compromised. Alternatively, some wetlands may be important habitats for animals. Ecologist Dr. Rob Hale will present the results of a four year investigation into how urban stormwater treatment wetlands perform as habitats for aquatic animals and highlight how the knowledge generated through this work can help inform future wetland management.



Manningham Environment Seminars are conducted at River View Room, Grand Hotel, 110 Yarra St., Warrandyte.

For information: phone 03 9840 9326 or email csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au