

Editorial :

A Holiday With an Environmental Twist

As FODCR members travel our wonderful country each has discovered their own unique way to appreciate its' wonders. John and Helen Clements are no exception. As they were travelling across the Nullabor they broke their journey with a visit to the Eyre Bird Observatory. The Eyre Bird Observatory is based in the 1897 heritage listed Eyre Telegraph Station, 46kms from Cocklebiddy.

It is located in the Nuytsland Nature reserve which boasts over 240 bird species including the iconic (but increasingly rare) Major Mitchell Cockatoo. There are many other reasons for visiting the observatory. Located in spectacular white dunes within walking distance of the Southern Ocean, beachcombing, bushwalking, stargazing and whale watching can all be enjoyed. As well there is a comprehensive Telegraph museum and guests have access to a scientific library.

The observatory accepts day visitors but overnight accommodation is recommended (accommodation for up to eight, meals are provided).

The observatory is staffed by volunteers who maintain the accommodation, provide meals, conduct tours, report weather observations and conduct research. Helen has given me a copy of the journal from the volunteers who were managing the place when she was there and it seems as though they get an experience you wouldn't be able to buy, but have to work hard for it.

Visitors can participate in courses on birds and wildlife, become involved in a dune

stabilisation project or simply enjoy the environment. Further details can be obtained by visiting the website www.eyrebirds.org.

My own environmental holiday, admittedly an unlikely one, was the Great Victorian Bike Ride. This year, travelling from Yarrowonga to Marysville, there were many sights to be seen, both from landscape and vegetation perspectives.

Our first night's stop was at Dookie and I did a tour of the indigenous seed bank located at Dookie Agricultural college. This (grossly underfunded) group collects seeds for revegetation projects. Seeds are collected in quantities which are almost unimaginable. Trays of seeds for chocolate lilies, bush peas, everlasting daisies and grasses in bulk bags (hundreds of kilograms) for spraying on roadside cuttings by Vic roads. The seed sold to customers is sometimes a careful blend of seed collected in various localities, including seed from NSW, a technique designed to cope with climate change and to promote genetic diversity.

With the knowledge gained from the seed bank I was better able to appreciate the value of the roadside vegetation as a reservoir of the original flora of the country. At cycling speeds, plants such as Dianellas, Wahlenbergias, Chrysocephalums Pultaneas and Thysanotus become obvious. Grasses, a blur from the motor car, become significant with Stipa, Austroanthonia and Themeda becoming distinctive.

Are you interested in trying some environmental tourism for yourself?

Perhaps you could try one of the Bush Heritage options. Look them up at www.bushheritage.org.au They have a range of outings ranging from day trips to camping 4WD trips in locations across the country.

Damper Creek Visitors



Imperial Hairstreak butterflies
(also known as the "Common Imperial Blue")

The cluster of beauties above was spotted by Frank Carder and John Klisaris near Park Rd. It is the habit of the males to cluster around the pupae of the females just before they emerge. This butterfly has only been spotted around Damper Creek in recent years. The larvae benefit from the young growth of the Silver and Black Wattles and the butterflies feed on plants such as the Sweet Bursaria, all of which have been extensively planted in Damper Creek.

Readers can encourage these insects by planting Silver and Black Wattles and Sweet Bursaria (if they don't mind the wattles being eaten by the caterpillars).

Guest Speakers

A highlight of the monthly FODCR meetings is the programme of guest speakers. We aim to have a guest speaker every second month and rely on our members to track down interesting individuals who have a relevant story to tell.

Currently booked guest speakers are:

February : Trish Grant, Waterwatch
April: Doug Scott Simpson Desert
August: Ron Lewis Native fish

Clean Up Australia Day

This year the FODCR has decided not to host a site for Clean Up Australia Day. Those who attended last year will recall that Damper Creek was hosted by a Sinhalese group who did an excellent job. The same group has nominated Damper creek this year (Sunday March 6th) and we urge FODCR members who wish to participate to register with them on the day.

Extreme Weather and Litter Trap Effectiveness.

The recent heavy rains have provided an excellent trial of the litter trap which was installed at the Stephensons road end of the reserve late last year. Observations to date indicate that this trap is close to 100% effective in removing litter washed into the creek via the street drains. Unfortunately the pathways and landscaping around the litter trap did not escape the effects of the deluge and there has been some severe erosion in this and other areas. Anyone walking in the reserve should take extra care due to uneven and eroded path surfaces.

Melbourne Water Grant

FODCR has been successful in securing grants totalling \$4000 for the coming year.

Friends of Damper Creek Important dates to remember:

	February	Notes
Meeting:	Wed23rd - 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
Working Bee	Sun Feb 27th 110-00am to2-300pm	Middle Bridge
	March	
Meeting:	Wed Mar 23rd 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall Rear Yatama Ct
Working Bee	Sun March 27th	Middle Bridge
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Conservation.

*Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the
Yarra Catchment.*

Please address all mail to:
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Mount Waverley 3149

The Newsletter of

**FRIENDS OF
DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.**

Reg No. A0029531G

www.vicnet.net.au/~damper

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DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

February 2011

