



# the He Ho Herald

Newsletter of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc.

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Image © Krystii Melaine

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## What are you doing on Fathers' Day this year?

Making a special day of it and coming to the Friends AGM at Healesville Sanctuary we hope!

By now you would have received your invitation to our AGM on Sunday 4 September 2011. Make sure you hang onto this invitation, or this newsletter, to gain free entry. Join us from 12pm.

We are very pleased to have Peter Menkhorst, Chair of the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team, coming along as our guest speaker. There has been a lot happening recently with the recovery program, including a new reintroduction strategy, new expertise on the team, great successes and some real challenges for us going forward.

Come and hear Peter's perspective on the Helmeted Honeyeater's recovery. After 22 years working on this program, and 30 years experience in threatened species management and conservation policy development, Peter has a lot of knowledge to share.



The translocation of eggs and young birds between population groups is integral to the recovery plans success.

Radio tracking of captive bred birds released in May 2011.  
Image E. Campbell

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## New Members

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater would like to welcome to the group our **new members**:

**A. Hubschmann** - Vermont South, **C. Hubschmann** - Vermont South, **C. Hubschmann** - Vermont South, **P. A. Meyer** – Eltham, **K. Kelly** – Warragul, **Black Family** – Seville, **S. Reid** – Mooroolbark, **Port Phillip & Westernport CMA** - Frankston

## Donations to community education /depot upgrade – Thank you for your support

A. & M. Beutelschiess, M. Faram & R. Young, B. & G. Faram, R. Mauger & C. Taylor, B. Hubschmann, E. Smallwood, D. & N. Gross, E. & K. Matheson, M. J. Cantwell, V. Cheffings, G. Molyneux & L. Harris, L. Thomson, H. Wurth, P. Johnston, L. Kerr, J. Epstein, R. & F. Benson, Belgrave South Primary School, D. Dower, K. & R. Anker, K. & R. Martin, V. Bunker, B. Aitken, Knox Environment Society, P. Bellis, G. & L. Smith, K. Murphy, A. Robinson

## Donations in Memory of M. Dear

F. Cross & S. Duke, J. & F. Parrish, G., M., R., & B. Dear, D. & P. Foster, S. & S. Lawlor, A. Bonnett, G. Barnard, W. Bradley, B. Vaiopoulos, J. Ryan, S. & B. Tardif, R. Case, B. Roe, J. Tardif, T. J. & S. Beaumont, D. Ross

## Gift Membership

**A., C. & C. Hubschmann** (B. Hubschmann), **P. A. Meyer** (K. & R. Anker)

*Perhaps you would like your donation to be 0.5% of your shopping spend at IGA stores. Just ask for a community benefits card at IGA and they will process the funds to us.*

*Thank you to the many people who continue to send us stamps & corks, most of which come to us anonymously. Proceeds from the sale of these stamps benefit threatened species conservation at Healesville Sanctuary, home to the captive breeding program of Helmeted Honeyeaters. Thank you!*

**This newsletter is published on 100% recycled paper.**

**Thank you to the Shire of Yarra Ranges for their assistance with the postage.**

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# A View from the Swamp *editorial comment*

And so the rain has continued, although a few days of sunshine have my daffodils blooming in the garden. Some fascinating images from Marilyn are included, especially one of a leech. Thank you to all the photographers who send images for the Newsletter. ‘A picture tells a thousand words’ ...which is fortunate as I have only 12 pages to fit it all in.

Hope to see you all at the AGM on Sunday.

Sandra



## What's on - Calendar of events

September			October			November			December		
Date		Activity	Date		Activity	Date		Activity	Date		Activity
Thurs	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nursery	Tues	4 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nursery
Sun	4 <sup>th</sup>	AGM & Members' Day	Thurs	6 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	4 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	6 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery
Tues	6 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Sun	9 <sup>th</sup>	Reveg	Tues	8 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	8 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery
Thurs	8 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	11 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	10 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Sun	11 <sup>th</sup>	Reveg
Tues	13 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	13 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Sun	13 <sup>th</sup>	Reveg	Tues	13 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery
Thurs	15 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	18 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	15 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	15 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery
Sun	18 <sup>th</sup>	Reveg	Thurs	20 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	17 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	20 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery
Tues	20 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	25 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Tues	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Nursery
Thurs	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Nursery	Wed	26 <sup>th</sup>	Committee meeting	Wed	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Committee Meeting			
Tues	27 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	27 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery	Thurs	24 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery			
Wed	28 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	Fri	28 <sup>th</sup>	Newsletter deadline	Sun	27 <sup>th</sup>	End of year Members Day			
Thurs	29 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery				Tues	29 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery			

**Revegetation activities** are held at differing locations around the Yellingbo Reserve and area. Activities may include tree planting, seed collecting or works around the nursery or reserve. Meet at the **Yellingbo Ranger's House, 1217 Macclesfield Road, Yellingbo** (Melways Map 305 Ref. G11) at 10am. BYO Lunch. Most equipment is supplied. **For further information call Richard Case on 9720 4062.**



# The President's report *by David Howell*

I would like to thank Arthur Carew for his time as President – ill-health necessitated his resignation from the position and also from the committee.

Arthur continues to be involved as a volunteer feeder at Yellingbo. I took the opportunity of going out with Arthur and Geoff Anderson, on one of their feeding days, to catch up and better understand the role of the volunteer feeders.

Vice president Richard Case, the Friends stalwart of member revegetation days (*see 'Reveg Rambles'*), took over as acting president until my appointment by the committee. Richard was one of the founding members of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater and he continues to play a pivotal role in restoring habitat for this critically endangered bird.

I would also like to thank our Coordinators, Sue and Bruce Tardif, and our Nursery Manager, Michelle Faram, for their outstanding work. Without these three hard working individuals the Friends would not be accomplishing as much as we do. Michelle manages to fill orders, converse with customers and keep all her volunteers busy with their many varied tasks – the numbers of plants produced is testament to her efforts. While Sue and Bruce harness the energy and concentration of school children and adults to successfully accomplish various planting and weeding projects.

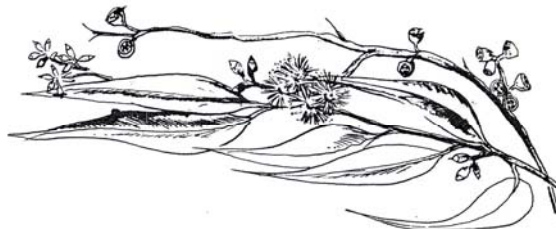
Anyone seeking a dose of *vitamin N* (N=nature) should consider volunteering at the nursery, assisting Bruce and Sue or, attending the revegetation days with Richard. A “Working with Children Check” is required if planning to assist with school groups – as a volunteer the only cost is your photo.

The New Members Day was very successful; it was pleasing to meet new members Pat, Heather, Steve, Peter, Andrew and Kimberley and volunteer feeders Robyn and Keith. The committee and I look forward to meeting many members of the Friends, at Healesville Sanctuary, on the 4<sup>th</sup> September and at future events.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change has recently requested that the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) investigate public land in the vicinity of the Yellingbo, in order to:

- (a) identify the biodiversity values in the specified area
- (b) determine the current and likely future threats to these values
- (c) make recommendations for appropriate management arrangements to conserve the biodiversity values

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc working closely with other groups (Woori Yallock Creek Park Alliance and the Macclesfield Landcare Group) made a submission to vary the VEAC investigation's Terms of Reference. The investigation will be open in the future for public comment/submissions, specific details can be obtained from the DSE website (<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/>)



# Coordinators' Column *by Sue & Bruce Tardif*

*"One guy I spoke to after the event had thought the whole thing was 'a load of crap' at the start..."* Tony, PSG Elecraft Managing Director



It's been an interesting, challenging and of course enjoyable planting season to date. Access tracks to planting sites are wet, slippery and in some places almost impassable. We had to call on the assistance of Parks Victoria on one occasion to transport plants and equipment into one site on the quad bike and trailer. Our little Subaru Brumby has managed to get in and importantly out of all other sites. Having said that, we made the call to carry 1,500 plants plus pump, hoses and planting tools down the tracks to our 26/7/11 planting site on a wet and brisk morning. No grumbles at all from the Swinburne students despite the hard work before we even got started planting! Here's a summary of the education/revegetation program to date:

Date	School/group	Activity	No. of plants
3/5/2011	Aquinas College Year 11 students	Talk at Yellingbo	
16/5/2011	Yellingbo PS (Ambassador program)	Seed sowing at the school	
17/5/2011	Macclesfield PS (Ambassador program)	Seed sowing at the school	
19/5/2011	Cockatoo PS	Revegetation	800
24/5/2011	Fountain Gate PS	Talk at school	
26/5/11	Oxley College	Revegetation	600
2/6/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	Revegetation	600
1/6/2011	Swinburne TAFE Ist year Conservation and Land Management (CLM)	Revegetation & browsing trial	2,160
2/6/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	Propagation and weed management	
9/6/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	Created a path at the front of the nursery	
21/6/2011	Macclesfield PS (Ambassador program)	Pricking out of seedlings following propagation session on 17/5	
23/06/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	AM Nursery propagation PM Nursery entrance road verge cleanup	
28/06/2011	Yellingbo PS (Ambassador program)	Pricking out of seedlings following propagation session on 16/5	
30/06/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	Revegetation	600
12/07/2011	PSG Elecraft (corporate)	Revegetation	1,500
14/7/2011	PSG Elecraft (corporate)	Revegetation	1,500
19/07/2011	Swinburne TAFE 2nd Yr CLM	Revegetation	2,000
26/07/2011	Swinburne TAFE 2nd Yr CLM	Revegetation	2,000
27/07/2011	Swinburne TAFE VET & VCAL students	Talk	
3/08/2011	Swinburne TAFE VET & VCAL students	Nursery entrance road verge planting	250
11/8/2011	Zoos Vic	Reveg 3.2 hec	2,000

....and coming up

Date	School/group	Activity	No. of plants
25/8/2011	Lilydale HS (Yr 12 & Duke of Ed)	Revegetation	1,000
29/8/2011	Emerald Cubs	Talk	
31/08/2011	Swinburne TAFE VET & VCAL students	Revegetation	430
6/9/2011	Yellingbo PS (Ambassador program)	Revegetation using the plants they propagated (Threatened species day 7/9)	500
8/9/2011	Macclesfield PS (Ambassador program)	Revegetation using the plants they propagated (Threatened species day 7/9)	500
15/9/2011	Lilydale HS (Duke of Ed)	Revegetation	300
21/09/2011	Swinburne TAFE VET & VCAL students	Weed management	

Due to the uncertainty around good safe access we have not promoted the program to primary schools this year but we have managed to have planting days with Cockatoo Primary School and welcomed a new school to our program, Oxley College. We have also continued our wonderful relationship with our bookend schools, Yellingbo and Macclesfield Primary Schools.

As you can see we have had great assistance from Swinburne TAFE and the Lilydale High School Duke of Edinburgh program again this year.

PSG Elecraft staff are new to our program but we are hoping to have an ongoing relationship. Their senior staff, all holders of company fuel cards, are part of a program where they plant habitat to offset their carbon emissions by threefold. What a great initiative for the company and a welcome partnership for us. Tony, the Managing Director, tells us “One guy I spoke to after the event had thought the whole thing was ‘a load of crap’ at the start. During the day he’d felt it was a good team building day, but by the end of the day he had a better appreciation for the habitat of one of the states emblems and the need to help protect and it.” What great feedback from a senior work team whose experience with conservation was limited, and who struggled for a while with planting in a random way when their work is all about straight lines! They were fun to plant with and we look forward to seeing them, and their BYO BBQ lunch, again in 2012.

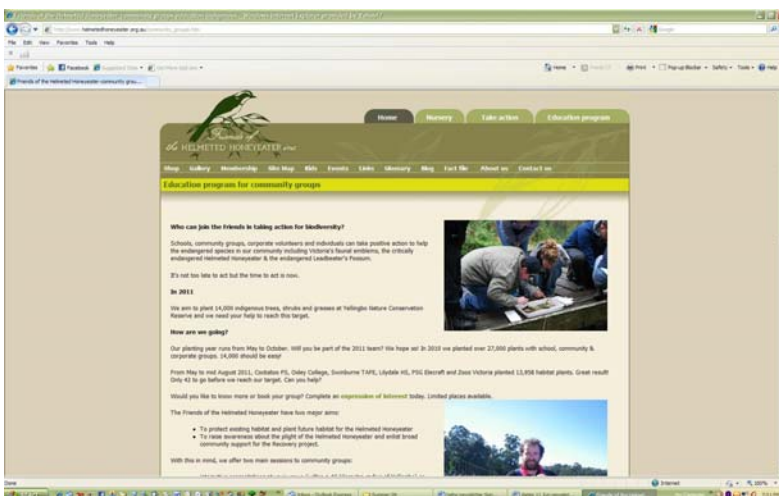
We hope that you have had the opportunity to look at our new website at [www.helmetedhoneyeater.org.au](http://www.helmetedhoneyeater.org.au) or taken the opportunity to visit the new Lilydale Museum where a mounted Helmeted Honeyeater on loan from the Friends is on display. Let us know what you think.



Macclesfield PS students looking very proud of their seed sowing work  
*Image: Bruce Tardif*



PSG Elecraft staff brought along their children to help plant habitat  
*Image: Sue Tardif*



The ‘Education program for Community groups’ page on our website

# Feeding Footnotes *by Marilyn Serong*

After a very wet summer and autumn, rain has continued throughout the winter. The terrestrial leeches are thriving. We humans provide the Helmeted Honeyeaters with supplementary food, but we are also inadvertently helping to feed the leeches in the Yellingbo Leech Nature Conservation Reserve - with our own blood. We are obviously devoted to benefiting all the wildlife!

Gumboots and adequate waterproof clothing are now essential items to include in our equipment when feeding the birds. Even when it is not raining, water lies across the vehicle track as well as the trails to the feeders. The mud is slippery in some places and deep in others. This is all as it should be in a flood plain. In recent years we have become too used to it being dry.

A great benefit of all the water is that it seems to have eradicated the introduced European wasps that generally make their nests in the ground. Last year there were numerous such nests. Interestingly the wasps were previously often seen at the edge of puddles or even at the bird baths. They apparently like a little water, but not too much.

Winter has provided a pleasant break from the mosquitoes. I'm sure they will be back once the weather warms, however.

Warmer weather and longer days are signals for the HeHos to start breeding. Another of the tasks of those of us who deliver the HeHos their food is to watch for birds that are collecting or carrying nesting material and record their direction of flight. If nests are located anywhere near the feeding stations, we must be particularly careful to feed quickly and quietly so that we avoid disturbing the birds at this important time.



*Images: Marilyn Serong*



# Nursery News *by Michelle Faram*



What a wonderful start to the autumn and winter planting seasons with lots of summer rain creating ideal planting conditions. Good rainfall throughout the past couple of months is keeping soil moisture levels up and conditions should be ideal for spring and early summer planting also.

The rain, cold wet and muddy conditions have not deterred those involved in revegetation days however and since the middle of May the nursery has sent out approximately 36 plant orders comprising over 28,000 plants.

Approximately 17,000 of the plants have gone into the Yellingbo Reserve. Our Schools Program coordinators, Bruce and Sue have been busy planting with school groups and corporate groups putting in about half, while the Yarra4Life program has been involved in planting out the rest into the 3.2 ha site, which was added to the reserve recently, using the Conservation volunteers and corporate groups from the National Australia Bank.

There are lots of orders still to complete and the nursery team is working hard to keep on top of them. Selecting the best plants to pack and send can be quite a time intensive task and one which is much more enjoyable on a calm and sunny day. These seem to have been very few and far between this year with lots of rain and cold winds blowing through the nursery.

We are also busy producing new plants to keep up with the orders and I am especially looking forward to some warmer sunny conditions so the plants will grow faster. I am also aware that this will also bring a greater demand for plant orders.

Our nursery gardens are looking fantastic, with special thanks to the hard work of Bob Anderson, who has been pruning weeding and mulching. The drifts of Nodding Greenhood orchids, *Pterostylis nutans* are particularly beautiful this year along with the white heath. I am looking forward to the yellow flowers of the wattle's next, which will be followed by the yellow and oranges of the pea flowers, which are currently covered in lots of flower buds. The entrance to the reserve and nursery has also been given a makeover with the removal of all the weedy grasses from the nature strip, it has been mulched and the weeds replaced with a mix of more suitable plant species. Lots of groups have been involved including Lilydale High School, Green Corps and Swinburne TAFE students.



We have had some extra help in the nursery over the past couple of months with students from Lilydale High School spending time in the nursery doing some propagation exercises which included direct seeding into tubes, pricking out seedlings and division of plants all with great success. Swinburne TAFE students have also helped out by sorting out over 100 crates of tubes returned from the planting days.

With the cooler weather over the past few months our regular volunteer numbers have been up and down. Despite this a few new volunteers have joined our group in the past few weeks to help out. I will take this opportunity to send best wishes to one of our longest serving volunteers Margaret Williams and hope that she is recovering well after recent heart surgery. I would also like to send best wishes to those who have previously volunteered but have either moved address or can no longer help out. Hope you in good health and enjoying life.



# Member profile – Meet Pat Child

We firmly believe that all Friends members are valuable. Without members we would achieve very little, so with this in mind we thank Pam for taking the time to introduce herself by responding to our questions below. Please help us out if we contact you for a future issue of the *HeHo Herald*. We will be randomly inviting members from our membership list to share a little about themselves. We could be ringing you.

**Hi, my name is Pat**

**How did you first hear about Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater?**

From Healesville Sanctuary. My daughter got pamphlets from Yellingbo; she then paid for my membership in the club as a Mother's day gift.

**Why did you join the Friends?**

To help in some small way, to save our precious birds.

**It's not common for people to join Friends of groups that aren't close to where you live. You live on the other side of Geelong. What does being a Friends member mean to you?**

It means I may be able to spark an interest around Bellarine to help support your work.

**Tell us about the things you most enjoy doing.**

Bird observing, Field Naturalist walks, golf (see lots of birds), walking along the beach looking at shells.

**What or whom inspires you?**

David Attenborough, he has tried to teach us all everything in nature is important – each to each other.

**If you had 10 minutes with a State or Federal Minister, which one would you choose and what would you say?**

Federal Minister for the Environment. Stop wood chipping Stop destroying native old growth forests Stop developing lush farmland for housing.

**What do you think is the one thing that anyone can do to help our environment?**

Make sure you recycle as much rubbish as possible; try to keep beaches and forests free from rubbish, particularly plastic bags.

**You and your daughter Heather attended the New Members Day in July. What would you say to other members, either new or 'old', about coming along to Member events?**

Go along and join the Friends you will receive a warm welcome. Try something new and rewarding; it is very healthy walking in the bush. Come on, join in the fight for our Victorian Emblem; help them multiply.



Pat Child spotting Helmeted Honeyeaters at New Members Day In July

*Image: Sue Tardif*

# Out in the Field *by Bruce Quin*



## **Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve**

### 2010/2011 Breeding Season

Survivorship at the reintroduction site at Cockatoo Swamp in Yellingbo was high during the non-breeding season and almost 30 individuals currently make up this colony. In the second week of August (2011), four nests were being built and other females were sighted carrying nest material. The more usual rainfall level experienced over the past 12-15 months should provide suitable breeding conditions with respect to food availability.

One setback at the release site was the death of one of the oldest birds in that colony on 8<sup>th</sup> August (2011). At this stage, it appears that he had a severe respiratory complaint and Healesville Sanctuary Veterinarians have sent lung tissue to a pathological lab in the hope that the reason for his death will be further determined. This male was one of the original seven Helmeted Honeyeaters released at the site during February 2006 and he has at least three offspring surviving in the population. At the time of writing this article, his mate of the past two breeding seasons was persevering with building a nest, but the identity of the male she is pairing with had not been confirmed.

Surveys at the last naturally-occurring colony at Cockatoo Swamp in Yellingbo recorded approximately 15 individuals, but this number should increase once more territories are visited. Some birds were observed collecting nest material and locating nests appears imminent.

In the previous He Ho Herald, I wrote of the rediscovery of Helmeted Honeyeaters at Macclesfield Creek on 20<sup>th</sup> May this year. Three individuals were seen at this site over the next five weeks, but a recent search there failed to locate any Helmeted Honeyeaters. One of the three (a female) was recorded back at the last naturally-occurring colony at Cockatoo Swamp on 12<sup>th</sup> August (2011). The other two birds, both males, may have returned to Cockatoo Swamp too.

## **Bunyip State Park**

### 2011 Release

On 6<sup>th</sup> May (2011), 11 captive-bred Helmeted Honeyeaters were released into Bunyip State Park near Gembrook. Three weeks later, the four surviving birds alive at the release were subjected to a “rescue translocation” to Tonimbuk, because of the loss of the other seven. Briony Mitchell (Monash University School of Biological Sciences Honours student) had radio-tracked all 11 releasees and five were known to have been predated. The aim of the “rescue translocation” was to shift the remaining four out of the territory of a small hawk which Briony had confirmed as predated two of the 2011 releasees, but which is also suspected of taking others. Taking the four survivors to Tonimbuk would also allow them greater pairing opportunities once they became integrated with the Tonimbuk birds. A “rescue translocation” of Helmeted Honeyeaters had never been attempted before, but it is now known to be possible because the four birds shifted from Gembrook to Tonimbuk have settled in well at the second home in the wild.

The radio-tracking study conducted by Briony was modified to incorporate Tonimbuk birds, as well as the four individuals translocated from the Gembrook release site. Emma Campbell reports that a family group (pair and son and daughter) resident at Tonimbuk remained in their colony throughout the tracking period (more-a-less as expected), but that the other Tonimbuk birds made forays to Labertouche North. Therefore, the mobile group of birds have been using habitat last burnt in 1967 (Tonimbuk) and habitat burnt on “Black Saturday” (Labertouche North) and they fly over the ridge between the two locations. The ‘rescued’ birds are yet to be recorded at Labertouche North, but this is a likely happening. Body weights of the birds taken when transmitters were being attached or reattached (after transmitters fell off) indicated they were in good condition. The Tonimbuk-Labertouche North sites are home to a total of about 20 individuals.

The radio-tracking project was jointly conducted by Monash University School of Biological Sciences, Zoos Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater member Nick Bradsworth. All organisations and personnel are thanked by the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team.

The two Helmeted Honeyeaters taken from Tonimbuk into captivity because of illness earlier this year are still receiving treatment for respiratory complaints. The younger bird may be released soon, but the older bird is likely to spend the rest of her life in captivity because her health has not improved sufficiently for her to survive in the wild.

Genetic monitoring and management, nest protecting and probably supplementing nests with captive-bred eggs or nestlings will occur at both Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and Bunyip State Park during the 2011/2012 breeding season. An update will occur in the next edition of He Ho Herald. Thank you to everyone for your highly valued help and support. Bruce.

## Reveg Rambles *by Richard Case*



Only two days to report on this time, both a continuation of our seed collecting.

The 12<sup>th</sup> of June began with a cold foggy morning. As I drove up a Swamphen fossicked on the grass near the Caution Swamphens sign. Around the house calls of the Butcherbird and Magpies greeted me. Loading up the car, we headed out to Macclesfield Creek Bushland.

Here we collected seed from the Bushy Needlewoods near the old stockyard. By now, the sun was shining and the birds were out and about. A small flock of Striated Thornbills called as they moved through the trees, searching for insects. Further down the hill, White-eared Honeyeaters called from the trees at the edge of the flood plain.

We headed down under the arch of trees toward the creek and were met with a wonderful sight. The dear little creek was almost to the top of it's bank and the floodplain was rather wet. Glorious! How many years has it been since we've seen this?

As we pushed through the shrubs a Yellow Robin gave an alarm call. Was it for us or that dot hanging in the blue sky? Andrew quickly identified it as a Wedge-tailed Eagle. As it turned, the tail became visible, revealing it's identity to us slower ones.

We wandered through a large area, gathering seed from the Yellow Hakea which grow down there. A few of the drought damaged individuals are starting to recover but it's early days yet for them. Gray Fantails fussed around us and overhead, a rain of gum-nut debris indicated the presence of a group of Crimson Rosellas.

We stopped for lunch by the stockyard dam, quite today but usually a mass of insect activity. In the afternoon, we searched the slopes, collecting both Dagger Hakea and Furze Hakea.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July we were greeted by cold and rain with a North-West wind ahead of a cold front. Not a promising start. Nevertheless, we bundled into the car and headed out to Turnoff Hill, in Macclesfield Creek Bushland.

We set out in a loose line along the slope of the hill and collected Bushy Needlewood, Furze Hakea, Narrow-leafed Peppermint (which had even smaller capsules than usual) and Dagger Hakea.


It was a gray day and cold with very little seen, except a pair of Gray Currawongs that flew over us. We heard the voices of our usual bird friends, Thornbills, Wrens, Fantails and so on but they sounded disembodied and directionless. Common Froglets and a Brown Tree Frog called without a lot of enthusiasm.

We turned around and packed into the car for lunch. Somewhat refreshed, we set out again, along the other flank of the hill. I moved around near the top of the hill and lost sight of the crew further down

the slope. The rain intensified and just poured down. Farm sounds became muffled and faded away. Visibility became reduced. Alone. Me. The Bush. The rain over everything. Brilliant colours in the cloud-light. And the rain, absolutely pouring down. After a while it eased, like a living presence moving away across the bushland.

I kept watching my various landmarks until eventually, the wallaby track lifted sharply upwards to join the stockyard track. There was Peter who had come back to look for me, the others safely back at the car, but who had the key? We were all pretty wet so decided to call it a day.

Until we got back to the Nursery and went for a quick walk down to Woori-Yallock Creek. Here it is very wet. We walked down to the end of Big Fence where we recovered some plastic culverts that had been washed away and ended up in the plantings. Back at the Nursery, we called it a day for the second time and headed home.

<p><b>If undelivered please return to:</b>  <b>Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater,</b>  <b>PO Box 131,</b>  <b>Woori Yallock</b>  <b>Vic. 3139</b></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p><b>POSTAGE</b> <b>PAID</b> <b>AUSTRALIA</b></p> </div>
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