



NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2013

April Birding – Banyan Wetland and Braeside Park

Seven members travelled to the wetland off Rossiter Rd in Carrum, opposite the Eastern Treatment Plant. This wetland is apparently to be known as Banyan Wetland. It was a fine clear day and a large number of water and bush birds were observed



Photo – Lee Denis

In all 54 birds were counted, including Pink-eared Ducks, Shovellers and numbers of Teal on the water; Greenshank, Red-necked Stint and Red-kneed Dotterels on the mud verges; and Red-rumped Parrot, Flame Robin, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and a couple of honeyeaters in the bush. Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon were observed in the air.

This location has become a very rewarding birding spot – hopefully it will remain so in the future.

Following Banyan we were joined by two more members at Braeside Park for lunch. This was planned as an “end of SEANA Camp” celebration (see the March newsletter for articles on the SEANA camp hosted by the Club at Merricks). Most of those who helped out at the camp were able to attend, with only one or two unable to make it.

Following the lunch we took a stroll through the Park, finding water levels to be very low and birds scarce. Of the total of 18 birds seen, the only additions to the day's list were Darter, Dusky Moorhen, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Eastern Rosella, and, most delightfully, a pair of Tawny Frogmouths.

Surprisingly we did not see any Red-rumped Parrots or Red-browed Finches at Braeside, both of which we usually expect to see there – these species would not be expected to be affected by the lack of water.

Also observed at Braeside was an Echidna.

Some members then went on to Waterways, where there were also few birds – they did add Spotless Crake to the day's list. - **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Banyan Wetland (Rossiter Rd) 8th April 2013	
Black Swan	Black-winged Stilt
Australian Shelduck	Black-fronted Dotterel
Australian Wood Duck	Red-kneed Dotterel
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing
Australasian Shoveler	Silver Gull
Grey Teal	Spotted Turtle-Dove
Chestnut Teal	Crested Pigeon
Pink-eared Duck	Rainbow Lorikeet
Australasian Grebe	Red-rumped Parrot
Hoary-headed Grebe	Superb Fairy-wren
Great Cormorant	Brown Thornbill
Australian Pelican	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird
Great Egret	Noisy Miner
Australian White Ibis	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Straw-necked Ibis	White-plumed Honeyeater
Royal Spoonbill	Flame Robin
Black-shouldered Kite	Magpie-Lark
Whistling Kite	Grey Fantail
Swamp Harrier	Willie Wagtail
Peregrine Falcon	Australian Magpie
Nankeen Kestrel	Little Raven
Purple Swamphen	House Sparrow
Eurasian Coot	European Goldfinch
Common Greenshank	Welcome Swallow
Red-necked Stint	Common Starling
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	

Bird List For Braeside Park 8 April 2013	
Chestnut Teal	Black-winged Stilt
Australasian Grebe	Crested Pigeon
Darter	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

White-faced Heron	Rainbow Lorikeet
Black-shouldered Kite	Eastern Rosella
Whistling Kite	Tawny Frogmouth

Purple Swamphen	Superb Fairy-wren
Dusky Moorhen	Noisy Miner
Eurasian Coot	Australian Magpie

April 10, 2013
Simon Watharow, editor of *Wildlife Secrets*, spoke on “Living with Snakes & Reptiles”

Simon is a past president of the Reptile Society, author of *Snakes, Lizards & Frogs of the Victorian Mallee*, *Living with Snakes & Other Reptiles* (CSIRO publications) and was previously a snake catcher. His friend Steve who drives him around and is also a snake catcher (a third generation snake catcher!) helped with the presentation.

Simon started with the most common snakes locally. Tiger snakes – have live young, are usually found near creeks and swamps (they eat frogs). They have a reputation for being aggressive, but they warn people before attacking, and their first bite is “dry” (without venom). They have poor vision and no ears, and respond to movement. In the early days 50% of tiger snake bites were fatal, but few die now as the antivenene works well.

Lowland copperhead- have live young, and are common in SE suburbs. They have a docile temperament (Simon compared them to Labradors), rarely bite people, and their venom has low toxicity.

Eastern brown snakes – egg layers, highly venomous and very active. Eat skinks, mice and rats. The antivenene doesn’t work well, and 6 people died of their bites last year.

Red-bellied black snake – their numbers are dwindling, due to road kill and other factors.

White lipped snakes – small and inconspicuous.

The most effective first aid for snake bites is to restrict blood flow to affected limb by tourniquet and to stay calm and move as little as possible. Snakes have the reputation as dangerous animals, but the number one killer of people is horses, followed by cows, dogs, crocodiles and then snakes.

Simon then told us his field trips to the Furneaux Group of islands in Bass Strait, which are of great interest to herpetologists.

The Furneaux Group are Flinders, Mt Chappell, Clarke and Cape Barren Islands. Flinders is the largest, with 950 residents, and also 150 species of birds, 16 mammals, no foxes or rabbits, but plenty of cats, rodents and pigs. The snakes on the islands are larger than mainland ones, which is part of a general pattern – most animals are larger in colder climates, and they are also more numerous and in greater concentrations than anywhere else in Australia. Mt Chappell Is is known as the land of the giants. The average tiger snake there is 1.4 metres long, and weighs 1.1 kg, much larger than mainland ones. On this trip they caught 45 snakes in 4 hours. Their source of food in the many mutton bird chicks is another factor, and Simon said that in rainy weather the snakes come out of the burrows in great numbers to drink. They are also much more venomous than mainland snakes, and used to be caught to produce antivenene.

This trip was to catch snakes in order to collect their ticks which carry *Rikketsia* bacteria. When infected ticks bite humans, the bacteria causes fevers and other diseases which can be fatal, so researchers needed a supply of ticks. Simon and the others also collected ticks from echidnas and other wildlife, but they turned out not to be carriers of *Rikketsia*. The ticks do not kill the snakes though, they are adapted to each other, unlike ticks on dogs for example. Simon also had photos of the two forms of echidnas there – dark and light, which were almost blonde. They both have more fur and fewer spines than mainland echidnas.

The vegetation on Mt Chappell Island used to be mainly tussock grasses, but since the sheep have been removed boxthorn has taken over and now covers 50% of the island. Being tall, this excludes the mutton birds from their burrows, and as their numbers drop this could starve out the snakes. There is a need for human intervention with the boxthorn, or this herpetologists’ paradise will cease to be. - **Judy Smart**

Badger Weir and Stagwatch at O'shannassy

For our April excursion we joined a Vic Field Nats Fauna Survey Group stagwatch out of Healesville – since this is an after-dark activity we decided to make a day of it and began by visiting Badger Weir, then went (briefly) to Maroondah Weir before joining the stagwatch.

The short walk from the Badger Weir picnic ground to the Weir itself is full of interest, both for the setting of lush tree fern gulleys between eucalypt-covered ridges, and for the birds which are in the main not seen on the Peninsula., including Superb Lyrebird, Pilotbird, and Pied Currawong, as well as King Parrots. Flowering plants were few, but included Mountain Correa (*Correa lawrenceana*), on which we noted an Eastern Spinebill feeding.

At Maroondah Weir we found more King Parrots, as well as Gang-gangs., but we had to cut the visit short to meet the FSG at Healesville.

Bird List For Badger Weir 13 April 2013	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Thornbill
Common Bronzewing	Noisy Miner
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Eastern Spinebill
Galah	Magpie-Lark
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail
Rainbow Lorikeet	Australian Magpie
Australian King-Parrot	Pied Currawong
Crimson Rosella	Pilot Bird
Superb Lyrebird	Superb Fairy-wren
Maroondah Weir	
Gang-gang Cockatoo	King Parrot

After meeting the FSG we travelled in a convoy of four-wheel drives to the O'Shannassy closed catchment. For this

exercise the FSG was joining with researchers from ANU, who have been conducting a study on the fauna of this area. The area was burnt out in the 2009 bushfires, and the aim of the exercise was to monitor the return of fauna. The forest consisted of Mountain Ash *Eucalyptus regnans* – which was killed in the fire – and Shining Gum *E nitens*, which is shooting from epicormic buds. An understory of Acacias and other shrubs is already well developed.

A stagwatch is not a watch for deer – a 'stag' is a foresters' term for a large tree, often broken off at the top, with abundant crevices and hollows that might provide habitat for small mammals such as possums – Leadbeaters possum, Sugar Gliders, Brushtails and so on. The idea is to watch the tree at sunset to observe any animals that emerge. Everyone gets in position near a stag just before sunset, and watches for signs of life for 30-60 minutes after dark.

On this night there were 20-25 watchers but unfortunately, apart from quite a number of microbats, no mammals were observed, and very few birds were heard or seen. Whilst this might be disappointing for the watchers, it does provide data for the enquiry into the length of time it takes for fauna to re-colonise an area of forest after intense fire. And it is certainly a different way to spend Saturday night! - **Lee Denis**



At Badger Weir – Photo: Lee Denis

May Birdwatching – Seaford Wetland

Our regular birding excursion took us to Seaford Wetland. We began, on a clear fine day, at the Austin Road viewing platform. Amongst the usual Chestnut Teal waiting for

people to feed them bread there were a couple of Freckled Ducks, as well as Coots and Swamphens. Walking around to the western side of the swamp – water levels were generally low – we found a group of about 60 Pink-eared Ducks, together with both Royal and Yellow-billed

Spoonbills.

Heading back through the middle, where a levee bank was being constructed, we found the Flame Robins as we expected – four or five males and as many females. We did not see any Yellow-rumped Thornbills, however.

In the bush on the Wells Road side we found Red-browed Finch, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Fantail, Black-faced

Cuckoo-shrike and Spotted Pardalote. A bonus sighting was a pair of Crested Shrike-tits in the Red Gums. The only raptors sighted were several Black-shouldered Kites and a pair of Swamp Harriers.

The days total, supplemented by a few on the Eel Race drain, came to 47. - **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Seaford Wetlands 6 May 2013				
Freckled Duck	Royal Spoonbill	Rainbow Lorikeet	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Black Swan	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Eastern Rosella	Flame Robin	Little Raven
Pacific Black Duck	Black-shouldered Kite	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Red-browed Finch
Chestnut Teal	Swamp Harrier	Spotted Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit	Welcome Swallow
Pink-eared Duck (~60)	Purple Swamphen	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Golden-headed Cisticola
Australasian Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Red Wattlebird	Magpie-Lark	Common Blackbird
Hoary-headed Grebe	Black-fronted Dotterel	Little Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	Common Myna
White-faced Heron	Silver Gull	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	
Great Egret	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	
Australian White Ibis	Crested Pigeon	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	



Pink-eared Ducks – (Yvonne Incigneri)



Flame Robins (♀ and ♂) (Lee Denis)

Heather Ducat, “New Zealand Natural History”

May 8, 2013

Heather stepped in at 2 weeks’ notice to speak, repeating her talk from 1999, as requested by Judy, who has been to NZ recently. Heather and husband Robert spent 9 weeks in NZ in 1999, over March and April. They walked the Routeburn and Milford Sound tracks, and walked across part of Stewart Island.

She started with some NZ geology background – the islands are part of a long plate that runs from New Caledonia in the north to Macquarie Island in the south, and include Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. The pressure of the two tectonic

plates – the Australian/Indian one to the west, and the Pacific to the East pushing on NZ define the two islands. In the South island, the Australian/Indian plate pushes under the Pacific plate, forcing up the Southern Alps, and in the North Island the Pacific plate pushes under the Australian/Indian one, creating volcanoes, such as White Island which is constantly active. The Australian/Indian plate is also pushing northwards.

She then showed us slides of some of her favourite NZ things, starting with Mt Cook, and a “rock sheep” – a rock formation created by a glacier grinding over rock – the smooth side being the start of the glacier’s travel. In

Invercargill she visited the Tuatara breeding colony – Tuataras are the closest living relative to dinosaurs – and was able to handle the young ones. Henry, the senior Tuatara, is estimated to be 100 years old.

Stewart Island is 1/3 rd the size of Tasmania, and 350k further south of it. It has been isolated from the South Island for 10,000 years, and is very different- no beech trees, lots of pittosporum, olearias and ferns. There were no photos because it rained constantly! It is a stronghold of the Kiwi, which Heather had hoped to see. It nests in the roots of trees, and forages on beaches at night, and has a

characteristic musky odour. They heard and smelt kiwis, but none were seen.

Another experience was climbing Mt Tongariro, eating lunch in one of the craters, and feeling the still-warm ash under them.

We also saw slides from the Routeburn and Milford Sound walks, Gillespies Beach looking up to Mt Cook, Marlborough Sound and its gannet colony, and the Catlins.
- **Judy Smart**

Eatons Cutting & OT Dam - May 11th

According to the weather forecasters this was going to be the last Saturday of our late summer - tomorrow the temperature would drop, the heavens would open, and winter would begin in earnest. So, eight field nats decided to make the most of it. On a fine, sunny, still day we travelled to Eatons Cutting, which is a part of Arthurs Seat State Park.

The main walk is a circuit walk that is supposedly only 1 km and should take half an hour. We did it in nearly three. The walk passes through a fairly open woodland dominated by Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), with some Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*) and Peppermint (*E. radiata*). The understory is sparse, with some Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and quite a lot of Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*). Several other wattles form a lower story together with some members of the pea family (*Pulteneaes*, *Platylobium* etc), *Olearia* spp, bracken and grasses.

The area contains quite a lot of Pittosporum, some Boneseed, Spanish Heath and other exotics. Some patches of Sweet Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*) looked a bit out of place, making us wonder if they were also exotic to this area - likewise Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*).

The only flowering species was Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*); the leaves of a tall greenhood were observed in one part, while deep purple fungi similar to *Cortinarius archeri* were just starting to break through the soil. Also seen was a puffball fungus similar to a *Scleroderma* sp.

Birds were generally scarce, with a few Crimson Rosellas and Red Wattle Birds near the car park. In a small section, in a more sunny position on the northern side, there was an abundance of honeyeaters, including Yellow-faced and White-eared and Eastern Spinebill; Brown and Striated Thornbills, Spotted Pardalote, and Eastern Yellow Robin. Sightings on the way back included Coot and Grey Teal on a dam on private property beside the track, Golden Whistler and Superb Fairy-wren.

The walk is very pleasant, albeit with some steep sections, and gives some good views north towards Mt Martha from the lookout.

After lunch we took a short walk down adjacent Holmes Road, and again in a short section - really in just a few trees - we saw six species of honeyeater, adding White-naped, Brown-headed, White-plumed and Crescent to our list, as well as Crested Shrike-tit. This latter represented the second sighting for the week, after Seaford Wetland a few days earlier.

We then drove the short distance to OT Dam. Again birds were scarce, except for Grey Shrike-thrush and Wattlebirds, until we got to the dam itself, where some other visitors on the dam circuit flushed a Nankeen Night Heron and a White-faced Heron. Also seen were Mistletoebird, and Black Duck and Hoary-headed Grebe on the dam.

The vegetation is similar at OT Dam and Eatons Cutting, although near the dam some wetter areas provided conditions for ferns including Coral Fern (*Gleichenia microphylla*). We scanned all of the Manna Gums for koalas, but without success. Some tracks suggested the presence of kangaroos, but were not nearly as well marked as those to be seen on the Arthurs Seat section of the Park.

One interesting sighting was a strikingly coloured bracket fungus, possibly *Stereum ostrea*, pictured below.



Photo – Judy Smart

Bird List For Eatons Cutting & OT Dam 11 May 2013			
Pacific Black Duck	White-throated Treecreeper	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Grey Teal	Superb Fairy-wren	White-eared Honeyeater	Crested Shrike-tit
Hoary-headed Grebe	Spotted Pardalote	White-plumed Honeyeater	Golden Whistler
White-faced Heron	White-browed Scrubwren	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Nankeen Night Heron	Brown Thornbill	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Thornbill	Crescent Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Eurasian Coot	Red Wattlebird	New Holland Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Crimson Rosella	Little Wattlebird	Eastern Spinebill	Welcome Swallow

June Birding: Bulldog Creek Rd Merricks

On a sunny but cool morning four members met at Bulldog creek Road, near Foxey's Hangout in Merricks. This area usually provides a good bird list, and whilst numbers were somewhat lower than on our last visit we did see some less often observed species including King Parrot, Mistletoebird and Varied Sittella. One of our number was especially pleased to see the four King Parrots!

A number of large fungi were also seen, including the Fly Agaric *Amanita muscaria* under a stand of pine trees, and a patch of small, bright yellow fungi identified as *Lichenomphalia chromacea* (formerly *Omphalina chromacea*), which grows on algae. Also nearby were what appeared to be the closely related species *Omphalina umbellifera*.



King Parrot at Bulldog Ck Rd - Photo: Yvonne Incigneri

Bird List: Bulldog Creek Rd Merricks 03 June 2013	
Australian Wood Duck	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-eared Honeyeater
Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian King-Parrot	Varied Sittella
Crimson Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
Eastern Rosella	Magpie-Lark
Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Fantail
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird
Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Striated Pardalote	Little Raven
Brown Thornbill	Mistletoebird
Red Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Noisy Miner	Common Blackbird

John Roth, “Diving off Mornington Peninsula, an amateur diver’s perspective”, June 12, 2013

John has been scuba diving for 10 years, and reminded us

Some tongue orchid leaves were also observed.

On the way home a couple of members stopped off at nearby Devilbend, where our most notable observation was the White-bellied Sea-eagle. Also on the way home, about 20 Cattle Egrets in a paddock at the corner of Derril and Eramosa Roads - **Lee Denis**

that what we see on land is only half of the earth’s environment.

He has dived in the tropics, but prefers the diversity of

Southern Australia’s waters.

He started his underwater tour under Flinders Pier, with weedy seadragons and smooth stingrays, which can get to 4m long and weigh 100kg. Stingrays are only dangerous if startled, and have killed very few people, apart from Steve Irwin. He continued on to Rye Pier, with beautifully coloured sponge gardens on the pylons and creatures such as ascidians (filter feeders), angler fish, which disguise themselves with seaweed and attract prey with a worm-like bait, pot bellied seahorses, and nudibranchs – diverse and brightly coloured sea slugs which eat sponges

The water temperature in summer is 20 degrees, which is pleasant, but in winter it is 12 degrees, and even with a full wetsuit it is very cold, but John and friends continue to dive then. He showed us the equipment they need to take photographs – strobes (lights), to counteract splatter, which is a spotted background created by the water, and also because below 5 metres red colour is lost and everything is blue or green without extra light.

We had a tour of underwater creatures starting with echinoderms – sea urchins, sea stars, showing us the difference between the native eleven- armed sea star, and the introduced North Pacific sea star. His club remove these

from Mornington, but make no impression on them – there are so many.

Then crabs, including seaweed crabs, which disguise themselves with seaweed, and hermit crabs, which live in other animals’ shells, and have to relocate as they grow. Fish, such as ornate male cowfish, stargazer, which hides in the sand with only eyes visible, gurnard perch, and globe fish which puff up to frighten predators. Cephalopods – cuttlefish (we have the giant cuttlefish – the largest in the world at 1 metre long), squid, calamari, and octopus, including blue ringed octopus – the only danger with blue ringed octopus is from their saliva, so they are only dangerous if you pick them up or are under them. The only shark John sees is the small and harmless Port Jackson, and in response to a question he said that great white sharks are around Phillip Island and in the ocean, so they don’t see them often.

He finished with the ships’ graveyard outside the Heads, with wrecks of the Eliza Ramsden from 1855, and HMAS Canberra from 2009, and a 1920s submarine.

He also showed us a number of short videos from underwater, so it was just like being under water, without being cold or wet! - **Judy Smart**

Greens Bush - Fungi Excursion, June 2013

Our excursion to the Baldrys Crossing area of Greens Bush was primarily looking for fungi, but as always any observations of natural history interest were welcome. Our first sighting was in fact an orchid - the Autumn bird orchid *Chiloglottis reflexa* at the car park

The FNCV Fungi Group had held one of their forays at this site a couple of weeks earlier, so we had their listing as some guide to what we might find. Naturally our list of identified species was much shorter than theirs, (about one-fifth) but we did find some species not on their list, and we did see some small, brown specimens described by them only as “*Cortinarius* sp”.

Whilst studying the jelly fungus *Tremella fuciformis* our attention was diverted to a beautiful dark green and black leech on the ground nearby† - although some of our number were less impressed than others.

Fungi Greens Bush 15 June 2013
<i>Agaricus</i> sp – very attractive fresh specimen in creek bank
<i>Cordiceps gunnii</i> – 'Vegetable caterpillar', parasite on buried moth larvae near <i>Acacia malanoxylon</i>
<i>Cortinarius</i> aff <i>alboviolaceus</i> (ref Fungi Group)
<i>Cortinarius austrovenetus</i> - olive-green cap with mustard yellow stipe & gills
<i>Cortinarius persplendidus</i> - 'Splendid Red Skinhead'

<i>Crepidotus variabilis</i> - on fallen wood
<i>Discinella terrestris</i> - small yellow discs on ground
<i>Entoloma moongum</i> - striking black cap and stem, white gills
<i>Fistulinella mollis</i> - the only bolete found (has pores rather than gills)
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i> 'Sulphur Tuft' - decaying wood
<i>Laetiporus portentosus</i> - 'White Punk', large bracket on living tree (<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>)
<i>Morganella pyriformis</i> - puffball
<i>Mycena cystidiosa</i> - tall mycena surrounded by tangle of mycelium in litter, creek bank
<i>Psilocybe subaeruginosa</i> - leaf litter
<i>Ramaria botrytis</i> var <i>holorubella</i> – pink & white coral fungus (see picture below)
<i>Russula persanguinea</i> – striking bright red cap, white gills & stipe; mycorrhizal
<i>Russula purpureoflava</i> - purple cap, yellowish gills; mycorrhizal
<i>Scleroderma cepa</i> - puffball; mycorrhizal
<i>Scleroderma</i> sp – similar – but different -to above
<i>Stereum ostrea</i> - bright orange coloured bracket on dead wood
<i>Tremella fuciformis</i> - white jelly fungus

We also observed some birds, the most notable being a pair of Bassian Thrushes on the track quite close to us. The usual treecreepers, honeyeaters and fantails were also seen.

- Lee Denis

Bird List Baldrys Crossing 15 June 2013	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-eared Honeyeater
Galah	White-naped Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater
Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill
White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Yellow Robin
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Brown Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Red Wattlebird	Australian Magpie
Noisy Miner	Little Raven
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Bassian Thrush

† Some later research revealed that there is very little specific information available on Australian terrestrial leeches - *What Leech is That?* has apparently not yet been published. It seems there are about 650 described species of leech worldwide, most being aquatic (marine or freshwater). Terrestrial leeches are believed to be confined to Australia and South-east Asia. There are about 100 named leech species in Australia, of which only a small number are terrestrial, although some aquatic leeches spend part of their lives out of the water.

Attempts to discover the ecology, or even the names and species descriptions of leeches likely to be found on the Mornington Peninsula, have so far been unsuccessful.

It does seem that the best ways of dealing with leeches in the bush are:

- leave them alone, they will drop off when full of your blood; or (if this doesn't appeal)
- gently lever them off - they will not leave mouthparts stuck in you, and application of chemicals or heat is likely to cause them to regurgitate stomach contents, including bacteria, into the wound.



Bassian Thrush



Autumn Bird Orchid



Ramaria botrytis var holrubella

Photos: Lee Denis

Peninsula Field Naturalists Club Inc

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month with a field trip the following Saturday. Further information and current Programme of Activities can be found at our website.

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