

Gippsland Waterwatch



STREAMLINES

Autum 2006

Waterwatch Monitors the Frogs of West Gippsland

by Phil Marantelli

The West Gippsland Waterwatch Frog Census is for individuals, community groups and schools interested in frogs and involves recording frog calls in local areas.

"Because every frog species has a different call, I can listen to the recordings, and identify their calls" said Phil Marantelli, Frog Census Project Officer.

"We all know that frogs are an important indicator of environmental health, especially of waterway health" said Phil. "So it's vital that we monitor them to determine where they are and roughly how many are present. If we do this each year, we will know if our local frog numbers are decreasing, which could indicate environmental issues that need to be addressed".

There are about 15 species of frogs found in the West Gippsland catchment, ranging from the Critically Endangered Baw Baw Frog and Alpine Tree Frog, to the very common Spotted Marsh Frog and Eastern Common Froglet.

The program has so far targeted Autumn breeding frogs, particularly the Southern Toadlet and Dendy's Toadlet which are Vulnerable and Near Threatened, respectively.

The Southern Toadlet and Dendy's Toadlet are often overlooked because they live in dry forest habitat, where they lay their eggs in shallow depressions which fill up after the winter rains.

To date there have been two community frog census training sessions and over 50 frog census kits distributed to volunteers. A number of school visits have also taken place to teach children about our local frogs and frog related environmental issues.

The information collected will allow for more informed management of our local frog communities, and contribute to our understanding of environmental issues across the region

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LOY YANG
power

This newsletter was printed with funding from Loy Yang Power

If you would like to participate in possible future frog surveys, please contact Phil Marantelli 51757800 philm@wgcm.vic.gov.au Photographs courtesy of LydiaFucsko/frogs.org.au



Whistling Tree Frog (L. verreauxi verreaux)



Growling Grass Frog (L. raniformis)

The **Snowy River Canoe Tour** was held on Saturday May 6th. The sun was shining and the river was still.

After learning how to stay dry and not fall out of the canoes (thanks to the guys from GOTYA) we were set to make our journey. Participants learnt about the riparian rainforest, negative effects of willows, the history of the river, large woody debris, restocking of native fish and the Snowy River Schools Project.



Rafting up along the bank to listen to a guest speaker along the way

We stopped in at Lochend Boat ramp for a great big yummy lunch and a stroll through the Lochend Jungle with Bill Peel from the EGCMA. The day was fantastic and enjoyed by all with lots of great questions and suggestions throughout the day.

Thank you to everyone who attended: the guys from GOTYA, guest speakers, caterers and the weather!



Grabbing a bite to eat before a wander through the Lochend Jungle

Education Update by Marni Speed

Action in Our Catchment!

Bringing together current and future natural resource managers in the region, and enabling students to contribute to a sustainable future.

Gippsland schools have been busily preparing presentations for the "Action in Our Catchment" conference, to be held on World Environment Day, June 5 2006. The conference provides students with an opportunity to present an overview of an environmental project that they have been working on in partnership with other organisations such as DSE, water authorities, community groups and Waterwatch. The conference also gives students the ability to voice their hopes for the future state of the environment.

Grade 5 and 6 students from Flinders Christian Community College in Traralgon will be giving a presentation on their project, entitled "Cry Me a River". The project aims to monitor the impacts of the Moondarra fire on water quality and wildlife and has been assisted by Waterwatch and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The project has involved a presentation from Colleen Wood from Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter talking about rescuing wildlife after the fire; an orienteering and an animal identification activity presented by DSE Forest Manager, Peter West, and monitoring the water quality of the Tyers River with Marni Speed from Waterwatch.

"The project has aligned well with the school curriculum and came at the right time for the students" said teacher Angela Daniels. "We're doing "Planet Earth" and the water cycle and catchment story, so this all links in very well" she said.

The students also embarked on a bus tour to examine some of the effects of the Moondarra fire on local forest areas and how



the fuel reduction burns in the area helped to control the fire.

Peter West led the tour, "It's a fun and interesting way for them to learn and a great opportunity for DSE and our partner agencies to work with future natural resource managers and increase awareness of environmental issues," he said.

The conference is being coordinated by West Gippsland Waterwatch and the Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum (GINRF) in partnership with a number of other agencies involved in catchment management in the region.

Top and bottom: Grade 5 and 6 students from Flinders Christian Community College sample water from the Tyers River with Marni Speed.



Dates to Note

Our Estuary – Get to know it!	2nd June 2006
Quality Assurance/ Quality Control Week	4th -10th June 2006
Action in Our Catchment Conference	4th June
Down to Earth Wetlands Night	7th June 2006
Estuarine Explorers Expo	13th June
National Water Week	15th – 21st October
Lake Narracan Catch A Carp Day	26th November

Regional Ramblings by Becky Van Der Heyden and Tammy Dawson

In the East...

We have been flat out in East Gippsland. We've had Clean up Days, Saltwatch Week; Catch a Carp Day, East Gippsland Field Days, and Canoe Tour, Mitchell River Walk and Talk, and heaps of school visits! All of these events had great weather every day! I would like to give a big warm welcome to Bruthen Landcare Group and Orbost Angling Club. Thank you to everyone who contributed to and attended these events.



Shopping Trolleys pulled out of the Mitchell River at the Port of Bairnsdale on Clean up Australia Day

In the West...

Hi Waterwatchers, I would like to introduce myself as the new Regional Coordinator for West Gippsland. Most of you would already know me from my previous role as the Latrobe Facilitator, so I would just like to say that I am extremely excited to be in this new position and I look forward to the continued growth and maturation of the Waterwatch program. Marni Speed has also changed hats from Education and Professional Development Officer to the Latrobe Facilitator. Marni's previous work in the education sector and with volunteers from other organisations means that she is well equipped for the role.

Recognising 10years of Sponsorship by Tammy Dawson

Earlier this quarter West Gippsland Waterwatch recognised 10 years and 5 years of Sponsorship to the program. Sponsors were invited to enjoy lunch with the Waterwatch team and were presented with certificates signed by the Minister for Water, John Thwaites.

"We are delighted to be able to assist Waterwatch to continue its excellent work in raising awareness for the need to protect our waterways and catchments. The work they do with the community and schools to encourage everyone to consider the impacts of their actions on local creeks and rivers is resulting in improved waterway health. Loy Yang Power look forward to continuing and growing their relationship with Waterwatch in the future" said Russell Center, Senior Manager, Sustainability, for Loy Yang Power.

Gippsland Water and ESSO Australia received certificates for 10 years of contributions, while the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Grandridge Plantations, Loy Yang Power, SGS Environmental Services, Southern Rural Water, and South Gippsland Water received certificates for 5 years of ongoing support. Other sponsors such as TRU Energy and the Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Action Plan were also thanked for their sponsorship in recent years.

"Waterwatch is truly a partnership program, drawing expertise from many stakeholders involved in catchment management" said Tammy Dawson, Regional Waterwatch Coordinator "It is the reason we continue to deliver successful education resources and activities into schools and the community".

Below: (Left to right) Richard Appleton, Grandridge Plantations; Rob Stallard, ESSO Australia; Martin Fuller, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority; Christina Colantuono, Gippsland Water; Sheldon Harvey, SGS Environmental Services; Neil Bennie ESSO Australia; Hanna Wardell, Deputy Chair WGCMA.



Latrobe River Rumours by Marni Speed

School Grants Program

Funding from the Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Action Plan has enabled schools in the Gippsland Lakes catchment area to apply for a grant to receive either a Water Quality Monitoring Kit or a Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Kit.

To receive a grant, schools had to provide a water quality monitoring plan to demonstrate that the kit would be used in an ongoing capacity to expand their units of work. Schools in the Latrobe region jumped at this opportunity and I am pleased to announce the successful applicants in the Latrobe region are: Newborough Primary School, Warragul Regional College, Flinders Christian Community College, Commercial Road Primary School, Narracan Primary School, Neerim & District Rural Primary School,

Neerim Secondary College, Cloverlea Primary School and St Paul's Anglican Grammar Traralgon.

I will be working with these schools to put their monitoring plans into action and am looking forward to seeing the data they collect in the months to come. Well done to these schools and the other schools in the Latrobe region who are also engaged in Waterwatch activities.



Above: Water quality monitoring kit

Teacher Profile by Fiona Stevens

Name: Greg McNamara

School: Snowy River Cluster

Involved with Waterwatch since: In this capacity since 2004

Parameters monitored: pH, Temp (air/water), P, Turbidity, EC, Dissolved O2 as well as water bugs
Started monitoring: 2004

What do you enjoy most about Waterwatch: The way it gets the kids really excited about their local environment

What Projects are you involved with: My cluster project is called Snowy River Thinking, mainly because Lower Snowy River Rehabilitation Trial School's Program is too much of a mouthful! This project is aimed at establishing a rapport between cluster students and their local river, the Snowy, while monitoring changes in the river brought about by local rehabilitation and upstream alterations such as changes to the Jindabyne Dam, removal of Willows and natural events such as storms.

In addition to the SRT programs we have run an additional program called Snowy Growy [called SCIPs funded by DEST through ASTA) where students in Yrs 5-6 grew local plants used in revegetation sites from seed and experimented with germination variables to see if they could establish better rates of germination for some of the species. Also, we have recently been

awarded an ASISTM grant of \$78,000 called Totally Spatial! Seamless Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Teaching Science. It is to train teachers in the use of GPS and GIS so that they can write ICT rich science units and teach kids seamlessly about GPS and GIS while teaching science.



Greg McNamara

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South Gippsland Gossip by Tanya Cowell



The Leongatha Green Corps group has started up with 10 team members, I will be working with the group on a monthly basis logging data on macroinvertebrate and phys/chem. parameters of several waterbodies in the Koonwarra/Leongatha. The group

will be working on weed removal, revegetation and other environmental projects in the area over the next 6 months. I am looking forward to working with this enthusiastic team led by Tony Gardner.

In April Waterwatch Victoria ran a three day macroinvertebrate workshop. Experts in their field Edward Tsyrlin and John Gooderham presented at the workshop held at Monash University, Melbourne. A very interested South Gippsland volunteer, John O'Grady from Allambee was sponsored by South Gippsland Waterwatch to attend this training. John reported that "the course was excellent", he "thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing." John thought the "presenters were excellent, very knowledgeable, and presented well." "The practicals were similarly very good, and we went through all the Orders in the macroinvertebrates, with lots of microscope exercises in identifying further to Family level." It is fantastic to see that John who is a histopathologist, has enjoyed gaining identification skills in a microscopy field. If you have particular areas of interest please let your local

Waterwatch Facilitator know, we will keep you in mind for upcoming training. Mary MacKillop CRC South Gippsland has received a Waterwatch macroinvertebrate kit through our school grants program.. Paul Stampton, Mary MacKillop CRC Science Coordinator noted that, "The College has just begun a programme in VCE Environmental Studies. Unit 2 is centered around 'Monitoring the Environment' the Waterwatch programme seemed ideally suited to the curriculum". The class will be monitoring on a fortnightly basis at several sites along Coalition Creek, tracking changes downstream using several parameters including macroinvertebrates. This data will be an asset to the South Gippsland Waterwatch database and provide an excellent data set for the students to report on.

Welcome to new volunteers Ian Atkin (Ayr and Wreck Creeks, Inverloch (4 sites)) and John Honeybone (Screw Creek and Little Screw Creek, Inverloch (4 Sites)).

Preparations continue for the Estuarine Explorers Expo (13th June) with 7 schools with approximately 200 grade 5/6 students to attend, more in the next newsletter about this event.



Top Left: Green Corps team members identifying macros from a wetland on the Koonwarra rail trail.

Left: Year 11 students from CRC South Gippsland with their new macro kit.

Avon/Macalister Murmurs by Greg Gilbert

In mid May, 20 State Waterwatch coordinators and facilitators converged on Sale and its wetland environment for important water bug training.

Each year the State Waterwatch Science Coordinator holds a training session for the Waterwatch team on macro invertebrate assessment. Murray Darling Basin Commission Unit of Freshwater Ecology (MDBCFE) scientist and author John Hawking and his two assistant scientists Lyn Smith and Kathie Le Busque have mostly been the means to this training in past years.

It was of particular pleasure to have John at Sale and to utilize our local environment for this activity, as he is to retire later this month. The training took the group to two sites on the lower Macalister River and two wetland sites alternately with low and high water salinity respectively.

Over two and a half days of collections were made and followed up by intricate taxonomic assessments using

Waterwatch coordinators enter the waters of Dowd's Morass for macro invertebrate training.



microscopes, while utilising a room at ACES, Sale. The training also provided the opportunity to trial a web-based macroinvertebrate identification tool.

Down To Earth Wetlands

Sale Waterwatch will hold an evening in June to highlight ten years, particularly of monitoring in Dowd's Morass. The night will also recognise longer time volunteers generally and give an opportunity for the local groups to converge for an interesting evening of community presentation.

Run of the River

Sale College and Gippsland Grammar teachers locally are the first to have shown interest in this new educational game that broadens students' understanding of the state government's new Environmental Water Reserve. These teachers will be playing the game with other SOSE teachers and in one case, with their teenage children, to better assess how they will introduce it to their curriculum in the near future.

Richard Marchant, Aquatic Scientist from the Museum of Victoria, Heyfield PS 3-4 pupils and a parent at their 'Bugs on Trail' collection activity at the Heyfield Wetlands





STREAMLINES - The Gippsland Waterwatch Newsletter

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Key Stakeholders and Sponsors



Photopoint Monitoring by Tammy Dawson

Waterwatch recently held a Photopoint monitoring workshop in which 30 West and East Gippsland Waterwatch volunteers and CMA staff attended.

The workshop was designed to introduce Photopoint monitoring as a way of providing valuable supplementary information to quantitative & qualitative data, and to give a good general overview of a situation, landscape or environment.

"The camera is a scientific tool, it is an absolute truth – photographs do not lie" said workshop presenter, Alison Pouliot.

Alison spent a significant amount of time explaining to participants how to use their cameras, as this tends to be the most problematic area for people attempting photopoint monitoring. Some time was also spent learning about site selection and photo composition.

Participant feedback was positive with much conversation about how the workshop had influenced their thinking about photopoint monitoring and how they would be applying techniques to their particular situation.

Right: Waterwatch Volunteer, Michael Thompson practices using his camera to photograph the Morwell River Wetlands. Below: Alison Pouliot speaks to the group about photopoint monitoring at this Tyers River site monitored by Waterwatch Volunteer, Peter Steller.

