

annual koala count this Saturday - your help needed

We are planning to conduct a count every year to help establish a database of how many koalas there are on the peninsula and where their habitats are.

This information will assist us in formulating a 'management plan' to conserve both the koala population and enhance & expand their habitat.

This year's count was organised together with Coast Action, and will concentrate on south-east peninsula, area between Hastings and Shoreham, and **ONLY** between the hours of 2 and 5 pm! This is important because we don't want to count same koalas twice!

Two walks are planned on Saturday, 24th of February, between 2-5 pm. One to Sandy Point (Cerberus base), and the other to Coolart. Meeting place is the car-park opposite Somers general store and participants will need to register on arrival (for insurance purposes). If you are plan-



ning to come you will need to ensure that you have appropriate clothing and footwear.

Walks will be followed by a sausage sizzle at 5 pm at Somers reserve next to the car park.

Two other groups will be meeting at 2 pm, one at Bannaring Beach store, and the other in front of

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If you are not coming to one of the organised walks, you can still help by counting koalas in your neighbourhood

Your Say: Workshop on 17 th of March

Come along and have some input into how best to achieve FOLKLAW's Aims.

Workshop on Sunday, 17th of March will be held at Somers Primary school between 1 and 4 pm. Tracy Neilson will be conducting it and we need people to register their interest prior to Sunday.

If you are unable to attend your ideas can still be discussed and considered, so please phone Judy: 831 034.

The purpose of this workshop is to involve as many people as possible and to enable everyone to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

Our future actions will be based on the outcome of this workshop, so - it is an important event not to be missed!

Dates for your diary:

- 24 Feb: Koala Count
- 3 March: Planting day, Coolart, 10am-1
- 17 March: FOLKLAW Workshop
- 24 March: Friends Seminar at Burnley 9.30am-4pm

FOLKLAW Office Bearers:

President:	Judy Jack,	Tel. 059 831 034
Secretary:	Snez Plunkett,	Tel. 059 832 919 (& Fax)
Treasurer:	Trish Birchill,	Tel. 059 898 524

Friends Seminar

Friends Network Seminar

The theme of the 1996 Seminar is "Hanging on to what we have", with particular reference to indigenous vegetation protection and enhancement.

The Seminar will be held at Burnley Horticultural College, Swan St. Richmond, on Sunday March 24.

the Seminar is open to all Friends groups and will cost \$10.

If you are interested in attending Contact Judy Jack: 831 034.

Planting Coolart

Planting days at Coolart:

3rd March; 13th April; 12th May.

Meet at 10 am for a 10.30 start. Bring gloves, hat, sunscreen and insect repellent.

All participants are invited to a sausage sizzle lunch at the Barracks at 1 pm on each planting day.

Brief News:

☺ We are receiving assistance of \$150 from Coast Action towards running of Koala count

☺ DCNR has approved our grant application, for \$500 to go towards producing a brochure. Any ideas? Phone Snez Plunkett: 83 2919.

☺ Koala Information shelter has been constructed in Balnarring, looks good! It will have the information prepared by a graphic artist and the project completed by late March / early April.

☺ Recently Snez, Judy, Alan and Roger took a walk through the Reserve behind Parklands Ave. (Somers), Mel Ref. 193, K9.

Although suffering from neglect from the Shire Council the reserve has great potential as koala habitat and as an ongoing project for FOLKLAW. If you haven't been there yet, go for a walk and imagine it in ten years time with lots of help from it's FRIENDS.

Dieback

is taking a terrible toll on remnant vegetation in rural Victoria. In a recent study, comparisons were made between aerial photos taken in 1971 and 1993 covering 3300 ha of pastoral land in Northeast Victoria. In the 22 years, 28% of the living trees had died. At that rate all the living trees would die within 77 years. changes in water tables, salinity and build-ups-ups in insect populations are thought to be the major contributing factors.

from: Land for Wildlife Notes, August '95

Christmas Beetles

You don't have to look too far to see what voracious appetites Christmas beetles have, while most trees recover after an attack these beetles provide stiff competition to koalas for food. (Judy's comment)

Christmas beetles have a two year life cycle. Most of it spent as a grub feeding in the soil. They appear for a month or two in the summer to feed on gum leaves and to mate. The fertilised females burrow back into the soil to lay their eggs.

The increasing Christmas beetle populations may be a symptom of land management practices such as cleaning understory and/or trees and the use of superphosphates.

The best natural control of the larval beetle populations is extreme weather conditions, particularly prolonged wet, drought, or extremely high soil temperatures at the time of egg laying. Other natural controlling agents include predators of the C. beetle. More than 10 wasps parasitize the larvae of leaf eating beetles. These wasps feed on the nectar from native trees and shrubs.

Lack of understory species has decreased nectar sources and consequently wasps cannot survive in these cleared areas. The larvae and adults of other beetles and flies also feed on C. beetles grubs, but require shelter by day in leaf litter and can not thrive in cleared land.

The reduction of tree and understory have also reduced the number of insectivorous birds that feed on beetle larvae and adult.

There is no simple answer, but understory planting is essential to providing a balanced habitat.

from Land for Wildlife Notes, May '94.

koala count continued

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Merricks Beach Yacht Club, to conduct a count in those areas.

Apart from that, we are asking all residents to participate by doing a count in their own immediate area. Tally sheets can be collected from post offices at Somers, Balnarring, Crib Point, Bittern, Red Hill, Shoreham, and general stores at Balnarring Beach and Merricks. Advertisements are also placed at some school newsletters and an article in the local paper.

We hope to get a good response.

People can either drop off their Tally sheets at the same point they collected them from, or phone the results through to 83 2919 on the day.