



F.O.L.K.L.A.N

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NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2004

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Well another year is here and the rains, which we need so badly, don't seem to; want to fall down on our gardens and bush land.

The eucalyptus trees are dropping lots of leaves to conserve moisture, and the frogs are not as vocal as usual.

We all hope that autumn will bring us the long absent rains to refresh our gardens and bush lands

Our AGM is on again and this year it will be at Coolart on the 18th of April at the observatory at Coolart. Entree to Coolart will be free but a gold coin donation would welcomed, meeting starts at 3pm

Brain Thomas, the Ranger at Coolart is our guest speaker and will be talking about migrating birds. All Committee positions will be vacant and anyone willing to nominate for a position can do so. All you need to do is contact the secretary on 5982509

We would be very pleased with new committee members as new minds bring fresh views.

WORKING BEES ARE STILL EVERY LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

We have jobs galore from weeding to checking nestboxes etc.

So come along and lend a hand.

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE

What can we do to provide habitat for our native fauna?

BY ROGERS RICHARDS

When Europeans hewed a small area of wattle and ti-tree for a settlement near Sorrento in about 1830, did they envisage that 95% of the Mornington Peninsula would be cleared of bushland habitat by 2003?????? What did they think would happen to the Boonerwong people???????

Could they have forecast the virtual disappearance of the native quolls, bandicoots, finches and babbler, only to be replaced by introduced rats, foxes, rabbits, feral cats, starlings, Indian Mynas, blackbirds and turtle doves??? In the changed landscape where introduced pasture grasses, Radiata Pine, Agapanthus, Boneseed, Blackberry, Arum Lily and Polygala are all too common, some of our hardy fauna hangs on. At Coolart, between Somers and Balnarring Beach, the birdlist is 190 species, though many have not been seen in recent years. Since the drought began in 1996 others such as the White Ibis no longer breed prolifically there. The once common Firetail finches are seen occasionally but in small numbers.

You can always find Koalas, sometimes Echidnas and Blue-tongue Lizards. Swamp Rats abound and Wallabies graze at the relatively pristine Cerberus woodland. Nocturnal species of our neighbourhood include bats, Possums and Tawny Frogmouths.

What must we do to protect what little we have???

Where is it possible to restore or retain vital remaining bushland habitat??????

WE must protect all remaining bushland, like Devil Bend which Melbourne water administers but no longer requires. Melbourne water submitted a plan to subdivide

almost half of the area and retain the rest as a nature recreation park.

A community forum on the issue on the 26th of July drew a large crowd. The vast majority of attendees strongly supported the alternative proposal by Friends of Devilbend Reserve which is, keeping it in one piece rather than in disjointed fragments.

Coordinator Brian Cuming pointed out that "Melbourne Water brings in a net surplus of \$55000, pa from existing leases on the land after paying \$28000, pa for management costs.

The proposal is for gradual restoration over 50 years, associated with gradual change of an income source. The leased farmland could be restored to good bushland habitat with minimum cost over a period of time."

The best management of Devil Bend would appear to be possible if it were to be made into a National Park. Money is available!!! It is a matter of priorities.

Action:

The main issues are:

- 1) The dwindling biodiversity on the Peninsula must be arrested
- 2) Management under one authority is the only efficient way.
- 3) Devilbend as a whole a) has a high value for biodiversity and b) can be restored in time if passive pursuits only are permitted.
- 4) Devilbend fragmented is ecologically unsustainable

Send letters or e-mails to:

Victorian Minister for Environment- Mr John Twaites

RINGTAIL POSSUM

Where it lives: Where there is dense, tangled foliage

Home/Nest: in leaf-lined tree hollows

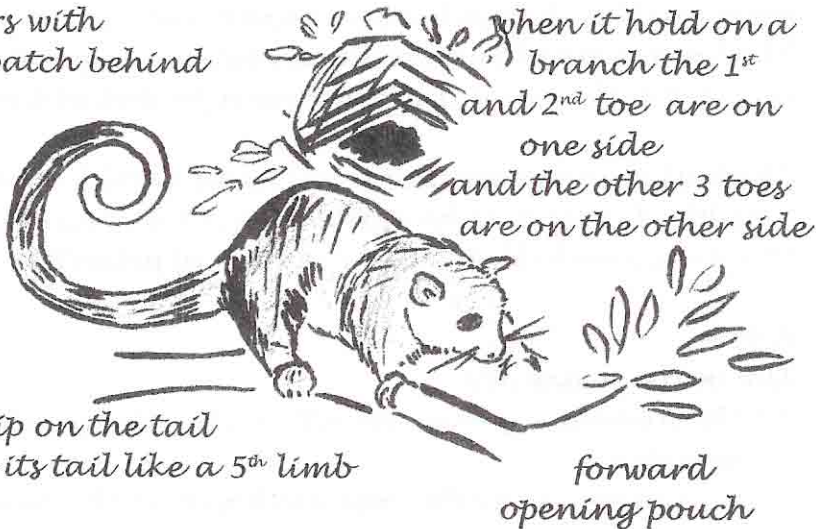
In a nest or 'drey' of twigs and leaves
Lined with shredded bark or grass

Food: Leaves fruits, blossoms

What it looks like

It's tail is about the same length as its body

Little ears with
a white patch behind



The possum is a night animal

It has a soft, high pitched, twittering call

When it isn't using its tail,
the possum carries it coiled up like a watch spring.

THE YOUNG: Usually 1 or 2 babies.

They stay in the pouch for about 4 months

The mother might leave them in the nest or carry them on her back when she goes out looking for food.

The father carries them on his back too.