



CMA



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- Grassland & wetlands field days
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- EstuaryWatch & community engagement activities
- We found the Sanderlings!

Glenelg Hopkins CMA Festive season closures

The CMA office will be closed and all staff on leave from 12pm Friday 24 December. Staff return to work 4 January 2022, but the office remains closed until 9am Monday 10 January, 2022

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It's been a great end to the year

It has been a year of constant change, uncertainty but also opportunities. Opportunities to now get out and about and commence fieldwork again and also re-establish relationships with our key partners and landholders.

There are some great examples in this newsletter of work being undertaken this month across the region's wetlands, grasslands, coastlines and our rivers. I was thrilled to be able to get out and about for a grassland tour near Ararat and also help celebrate with the Upper Hopkins Landcare Group following their recent funding success.

We wish everyone a great Christmas and a well deserved summer break. Our CMA office will be closed between Christmas and New Year. Staff will be back working from 4 January and our office doors back open to the public from 9am on 10 January.

Adam Bester, CEO Glenelg Hopkins CMA

Red-tails project canvasses new burning opportunities

Glenelg Hopkins CMA staff recently undertook vegetation monitoring at Kentbruck Heath and the Nangeela State Forest.

These sites were recently burnt by Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners, alongside DELWP and Parks Victoria staff. The intention is to introduce a cool burning regime in South-eastern Red-tail Black Cockatoo habitat to avoid stringybark canopy scorch, avoiding impacts on the threatened species food resource.

This Regional Land Partnership project brings together the Australian Government, through the project provider Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Wimmera CMA and Limstone Coast NRM with

Traditional Owners, Birdlife Australia, Trust For Nature, Greening Australia, the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Forest Fire Management, and a significant number of volunteers from the community.

Ben Zeeman and Matt King have also met with Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) representatives to discuss a future possible burn for the Red Tails project.

Matt King presented at the Southwest Biodiversity Forum on the topic of Cultural Burning in the context of the Red Tail project. Matt's talk can be viewed online [HERE](#)



ABOVE : DELWP Forest fire and Gunditj Mirring rangers conducting confidence burn at Kurtonitj IPA



LEFT: Laurie Norman and Damien Skurrie from BGLC taking note of some important cultural plants

Managing and monitoring native grasslands on-farm

Late November was a busy time for getting out in the field for VVP staff. After a two-year break, CMA and ARI staff were able to host field days again with people in attendance!

On 22 November, 30 people from across the VVP came to Peter and Jenny Hinchliffe's property at Ararat, which has over 50ha of newly covenanted Natural Temperate Grassland. It is also home to one of the new Button Wrinklewort populations.

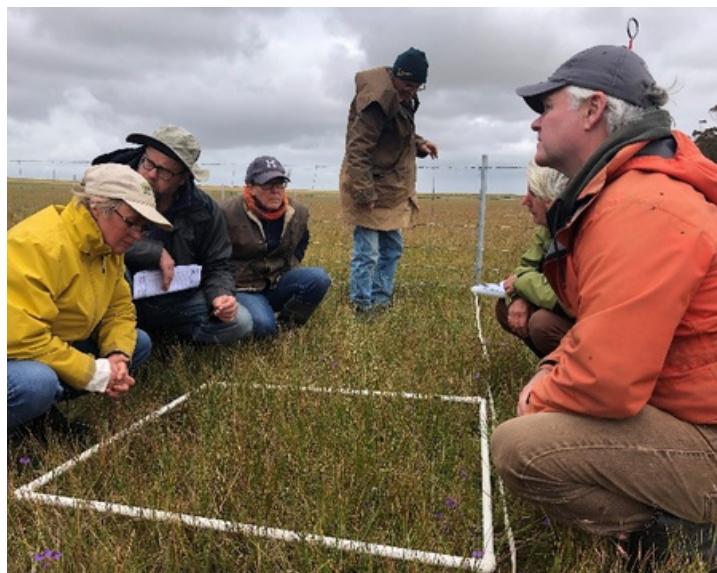
Dr Brad Farmilo from the Arthur Rylah Institute presented on how scientists monitor grasslands for changes in biomass levels and overall health and explained how this translates to useful information for landholders and land managers.



Participants at Grassland field day listen to Dr Brad Farmilo (ARI) discuss monitoring techniques.

The group then moved onto Pete & Christine Forster's property down the road, where the ongoing issue of controlling South African Weed Orchid was discussed, as they battle the issue on their Bullock Hills property.

Wandering around wetlands to learn how to best manage them



Participants at Wetland field day listen to Bryan Mole (ARI) discuss WIMP techniques (Photo: Aggie Stevenson)

On 26 November, participants braved much chillier conditions to attend a wetland field day hosted by Michelle and Anthony Casanova and Rob Coutts, an active Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) Stewardship participant.

Dr Kay Morris from ARI talked to the group about the Wetland Intervention Monitoring Program (WIMP) and how ARI staff are trying to determine the 'best' grazing strategy for wetlands.

Kay and Michelle took groups through the process of wetland intervention monitoring at Rob Coutts wetland at Mininera, which had a great display of Fairie's Aprons (*Utricularia beaugleholei*).

Visit to regional roadsides to learn about the grasslands

A brave group of 25 people came together on the Penshurst Dunkeld Road at Back Creek, to get back into some of the special grasslands on the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP), to learn about the exciting restoration project that is being delivered by Glenelg Hopkins CMA, in partnership with La Trobe University and Regional Roads Victoria.

This is a long-term project, which offers enormous potential for future application on our linear reserves, which will not only benefit the natural temperate grasslands but help to create safer roads with low fuel loads for travelers.



Ben Zeeman, John Morgan (La Trobe University) and Rhiannon Fischer looking for some very rare annual grassland plants on the Penshurst Dunkeld Road as part of the grasslands project.



The grasslands projects on the Victorian Volcanic Plains are supported by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

The project receives additional monitoring, funding and staff support from La Trobe University, Regional Roads Victoria and the Arthur Rylah Institute.



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Improving fish habitats in the rivers of Warrnambool

The first truck load of 30 root balls has arrived in Warrnambool to be placed into the Hopkins River estuary to improve fish habitat. The root balls have been sourced from the Victorian bushfire recovery program.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV), in partnership with John Lyng Group, is supporting the clean-up and recovery work for the owners of private property damaged by fire, storms and floods. Due to the high volume of tree debris throughout affected areas, there is a surplus of green waste to be processed, including large logs and root balls.

BRV are offering up the root balls and logs to various organisations for use as fish habitat and to improve overall river health.



Habitat root balls being delivered on site

EstuaryWatch and community engagement begins again



Monthly EstuaryWatch volunteer monitoring has continued under revised COVID-safe protocols. It has been fantastic to welcome back our volunteers across the Merri and Hopkins estuaries.

EstuaryWatch volunteers have also been actively involved in the Great Australian Platypus Search, which involved 12 sites on the Merri and Hopkins Rivers.

Visit our website www.ghcma.vic.gov.au for more information on how to be involved.

ABOVE: Estuary Watch volunteers undertaking eDNA sampling on the Hopkins River for the Great Australian Platypus Search. BELOW: Merri River estuary and Marine Sanctuary at Stingray Bay, Warrnambool



CMA NEWS:

We found the Sanderlings at the beach!

Sanderling are a migratory shorebird that spends the summer in Australia on high energy beaches such as Discovery Bay and to help them we need to know more about their movements along the coast.

Last week, volunteers from the local community, Victorian Wader Study Group, Friends of the Shorebirds SE and Birdlife Australia successfully deployed 15 radio trackers and leg flagged 122 Sanderling between the Glenelg River mouth and Yambuk as part of a movement study.

Finding the birds involved many hours of beach walking and searching the coastline between Warrnambool and Canunda National Park in South Australia by community volunteers. A big flock of 1500 birds was found near Nobles Rocks and 3 trackers put on. Volunteers found over 200 Sanderling near Yambuk and 12 trackers were put on and 119 birds flagged. Flags are made from small pieces of plastic that go around the birds leg and have a unique combination of letters and numbers to allow identification from a distance using binoculars, telescopes or cameras with zoom lenses.

We are seeking your help to unravel the movements and use of our beaches by Sanderling through taking a photo of flagged birds and sending to GlenelgRamsar@ghcma.vic.gov.au.

WIN AN ORIGINAL ARTWORK PRIZE FOR YOUR LEG FLAGGED SANDERLING PHOTO

We are offering a prize of a Jimmi Buscombe original painting of "Sanderling on Plantation Teak". Winners will be chosen from all the images with readable leg flags emailed to glenelgramsar@ghcma.vic.gov.au by 5pm Monday February 28 2022.

The winning image will be chosen by the Discovery Bay Sanderling Tracking Project Team. Winners will be announced on March 15 by email and on the Glenelg Hopkins CMA Facebook page.



*ABOVE: Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) starting to appear at Discovery Bay Coastal Park. Researchers will fit radio trackers to these migratory shorebirds in an effort to improve knowledge about this species use of the beach and dune areas.*

BELOW: An example of an image of a leg flag which could win you an original artwork. IMAGE: Sarah Campbell.



ABOVE: Sanderling caught on Discovery Bay beach and fitted with radio transmitter before release back into the flock.

CMA NEWS:

New Podcast episodes out now! Featuring: Bitterns and tree planting champions



Episode 8: Searching for the Bitterns



The Pondcast is available on
Apple podcasts
Spotify
Google Podcasts
and ghcma.vic.gov.au



In episode 8 of The Pondcast it's all about bitterns.

We talk to project manager Jacinta – who explains the project behind finding the elusive Australasian Bitterns. These shy, long-necked birds who sway with the rushes, fly south for the winter each year from the NSW rice fields.

And meet siblings, Riley and Macey from Portland, who noticed a weird noise coming from the swamp at the bottom at their garden, and for the last couple of years, they've been actively reporting and recording them for the CMA project.



Episode 9: Don Rowe - Winning trophies for treeplanting



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In episode 9 of the Pondcast we meet Victorian Landcare Awards Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award winner Don Rowe, from Maroona.

This award acknowledges the significant contribution made by an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to Landcare.

But his key message to other landholders is: just start planting.



How to listen to *The Pondcast*

The Pondcast is available to listen, download and follow on the following podcasting platforms: Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Podbean. Or you can find it on www.ghcma.vic.gov.au/whats-happening/

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