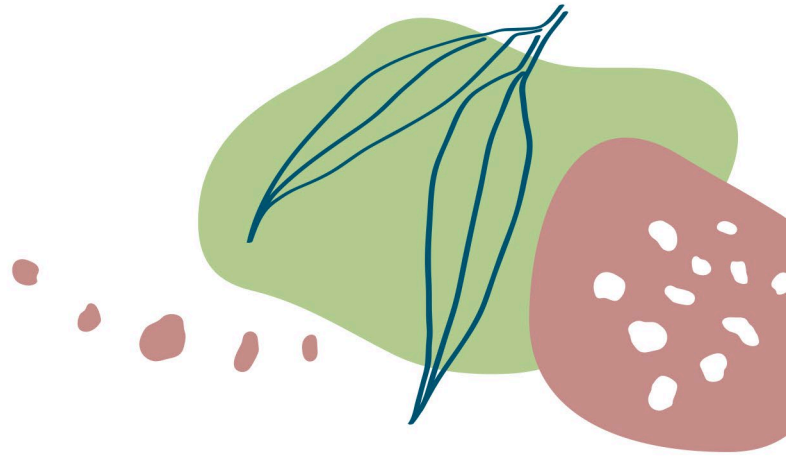


Media Release



23 August 2023

Monitoring moths to help make fat little bats

Moths and fat bats are not often words used together, but a community information session in Portland on 6 September will highlight how members of the public can help a critically endangered microbat survive.

Moths are a major food source for the critically endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat. These microbats, which measure only five centimetres and weigh just 17 grams, live and forage in the Portland area.

As part of its *Reversing Decline of the Critically Endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat* project, Glenelg Hopkins CMA is holding an information and training session for anyone interested in becoming a citizen scientist to help these little bats become fat little bats. Their stored fat helps them survive during the winter months when their food is less available.

Moths are an important part of the bat's diet, so the CMA is about to begin conducting research into the types and number of moths in the Portland area – which is where the community comes in.

“Monitoring moths might sound like an odd pursuit but by doing so, the community can greatly assist this little bat which resides in the Portland region,” Glenelg Hopkins CMA Senior Biodiversity Officer, Robert Gibson, said.

Mr Gibson encouraged members of the public interested in how simple citizen science activities could inform actions that will make a big impact on a little bat's recovery to come along.

The information session in Portland will include presentations from moth expert and bat researcher, Amanda Bush, from the Arthur Rylah Institute, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

“The evening will discuss the importance of moths in the environment and how scientists conduct moth research in the field,” Mr Gibson said.

This will include how a large bed sheet, a bright light and a camera are used to study moths and provide information on how weed management can support moths and Southern Bent-wing Bats.

“Amanda will explain the importance of bats to the ecosystem and the conservation needs of these cute, furry and often misunderstood creatures of the night,” he said.

The information session will be held at the Portland Library, from 5.30pm to 7.30pm on Wednesday 6 September.

The event will conclude with a moth monitoring and bat identification demonstration at Fawthrop Lagoon.

The *Reversing Decline of the Critically Endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat* project is funded by the Victorian Government through the Nature Fund and is being undertaken in the Portland area by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with the support of the Southwest Environmental Alliance.

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CAPTION: Members of the Portland community are encouraged to come along to an information session about how they can help the recovery of the critically endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat with moth monitoring. **IMAGE:** Lindy Lumsden.