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Glenelg Hopkins



CMA

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Farming better, controlling weeds and getting out in the field the focus of CMA work

The seasons are certainly keeping us all on our toes as we navigate challenging weather conditions around the catchment. Recent fires in the Beaufort area have likely impacted a number of farming communities and assets and we will be looking to visit landholders to determine if any previously government funded projects (particularly along waterways or revegetation sites) have been impacted.

Our staff have remained busy in the field completing projects, and beginning new projects as the cycles of State and Federally funded programs wrap up and begin. Waterway projects funded under the fifth tranche of the Victorian Government's Environmental Contribution are nearing completion and we look forward to showcasing the outcomes of these 4-year projects in coming weeks.

For several years the CMA has been working with farmers and Landcare groups with advocating sustainable farming practices to support both the agricultural businesses in our region and our environment. A large scale Precision Agriculture trial has recently commenced with four cropping farmers in the east of our catchment, which is a great practical example of how projects can deliver productivity results for landholders while also supporting the environment.

The Glenelg River will have additional flows in coming weeks as a summer 'fresh' is delivered to the waterway which will support the aquatic environment, and also ensure the river is in top condition for the community as the township of Harrow gears up to host its annual Johnny Mullagh Championship event in March.

Adam Bester CEO Glenelg Hopkins CMA

CMA NEWS:

ROAD CLOSURE: Beach Road works begin for 9 weeks

Public access to Beach Road at Nelson will be restricted for a period of nine weeks as works to improve the road access of the area are undertaken.

Beach Road is notorious for its inundation by water when the nearby estuarine wetland areas fill through the natural estuary opening and closing processes.

Beach Road closed on January 29 and it will remain so until March 30, when works should be completed.

Single lane land access will be made available during weekend periods to allow the public to continue to enjoy the region

Questions or concerns about the road closure and works should be directed to **Glenelg Hopkins CMA by phoning (03) 5571 2526 or emailing ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au**



EOIs open for woody weed removal in tiny bat habitat

The Southern Bent-wing Bat is a tiny native bat which lives in caves near Portland.

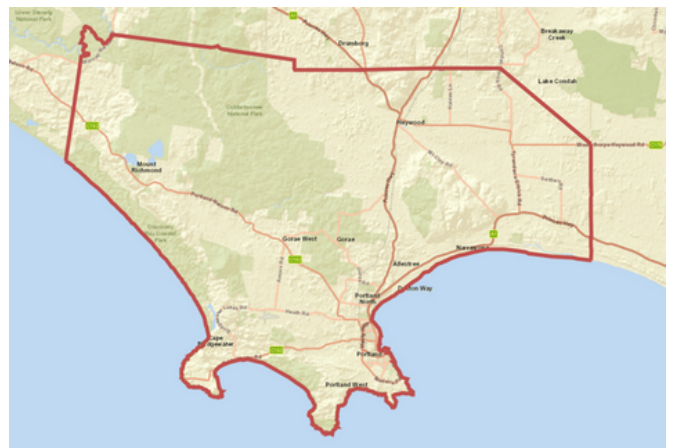
This micro-bat is five centimetres long, weighs 15 grams and relies predominantly on moths for food.

The native bushland areas where moths live are being threatened by invasive woody weeds such as Italian Buckthorn and Sweet Pittosporum. These weeds compete with native bushland and threaten to reduce the availability of moths for the bats.



Critically endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat.

IMAGE: EMMI VAN HARTEN



If you are a landholder in the identified map area and want to access funding to remove woody weed plants like Italian Buckthorn and Sweet Pittosporum from your paddocks, we want to hear from you. Contact Robert Gibson at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA on note 0436 936 168 or r.gibson@ghcma.vic.gov.au **NOTE: Expressions of interest will close 14 March 2024 but interested persons are asked to make contact ASAP to discuss their options.**

CMA NEWS:

Finding the tiny seeds of the Small Milkwort

This is the Small Milkwort (*Comesperma polygaloides*) plant. This very rare plant found in Western Victoria and South-eastern South Australia (and occasionally, in the South-west corner of Western Australia) inhabits grassland and grassy woodland communities and is one of the most challenging grassland plants to propagate.

The CMA's VVP Grassland Team have been closely monitoring flowering steams in the Volcanic Plain Grasslands in hopes to capture seeds as the plant finishes flowering by using tea bags over the flowering steams!

Two seeds have currently been captured from this process and 100 bags are soon to be collected in coming weeks. The bags will be checked carefully for these tiny precious seeds, which will then be used to grow plants for a native grassland seed production area



TAFE lessons head to the river

Students studying the South West TAFE Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management course took to the riverbanks in Warrnambool with the Merri EstuaryWatch volunteers and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA to learn about the citizen science water monitoring program.

Students learned about the program which includes monthly monitoring responsibilities, the importance of instrument calibration and the role that this captured data has on the management of our critically important intermittently closed estuaries.

EstuaryWatch Volunteers ran through specific monitoring techniques at the Stanley Street site, which was followed by the students getting hands-on and undertaking water quality testing on their own water quality samples.



How precision ag is looking after wetlands

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA region is home to about 22 per cent of Victoria's wetland areas and the majority of these are on privately held farmland. And we all know that fencing off wetlands is a really easy way to help protect them, but that's a bit harder if you're a cropping farmer and the wetland is in the middle of a paddock that also is a really good cropping paddock.

To help with understanding how farming businesses can continue to crop paddocks, while also protecting these wetlands, we are working with the Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group and Precision Agriculture and four cropping farmers in the Eastern part of our catchment on a project that demonstrates how Precision Ag (PA) strategies can contribute to the protection of natural assets like wetlands while also enhancing cropping yields.

During the next planting season, machinery will be able to travel through these wetland areas without applying any seed or inputs, saving costs, and avoiding underperformance due to waterlogging.

The Precision Ag team will track the performance of each crop within the 200ha trial area to evaluate whether they can achieve a high yielding crop without the need to cultivate the wetlands using the targeted Precision Ag approach.

People can now get onto our website and social media accounts and see the first video of the project, meet the farmers and the people involved and see how it's all started.

During the project there will be regular updates online and then there will be two on-farm field days next year to showcase the trial and for people to come and see first hand how it's all gone and whether those precision ag approaches can be implemented on their farm.

You can view the introductory video about the project, why its important and who's involved in it by checking out the Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group's YouTube channel [here](#):



Sharing the best way to get rid of Italian Buckthorn

Italian buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*) is a fast-growing invasive shrub that comes from the Mediterranean area. It is a weed now found in coastal areas of Victoria and is also present in the southern part of the World Heritage listed Budj Bim cultural landscape.

The dense growth forms a barrier and shades out other plants, often preventing natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs.

It is now considered an environmental weed as it is not native to Australia, can grow on a range of soil types in full sun, partial or almost full shade, and displaces native vegetation.

As part of the Budj Bim Flatgship Waterways program, a concerted education around the weed is being undertaken. A new page on our website details the plant and advice around how to remove the plants.



[Find out more by visiting the Italian Buckthorn page on our website HERE](#)

Learning to broker partnerships successfully

Learning how to effectively broker partnerships was the focus for 22 participants who recently took part in regional Partnership Broker training held in Warrnambool over four days in February, facilitated by the Partnership Brokers Association.

The regional-based training was an initiative of Community Southwest, Wannon Water, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Thriving Southwest Victoria Association who worked together to create the opportunity for this training to be able to be undertaken within the region.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA and the Victorian state government helped fund six participants to complete the training through the Our Catchments Our Communities Partnerships and Capacity program.

The training is an intensive face-to-face training designed to deepen understanding of the changing nature of the process management role during a partnership cycle and to explore essential partnership brokering skills.



Boost for Glenelg River Ecosystem: Environmental Water Release

Water quality, plant life, animals, and local communities along the Glenelg River are in for a welcome boost in coming weeks with a delivery of up to 270 megalitres per day of environmental water.

Over the next 6 weeks, water levels are expected to rise by 30 cm to 40 cm as the flows travel downstream. This release, known as a 'fresh', works as a pulse of water to temporarily increase river flows.

During summer, these 'freshes' play a crucial role. They help flush out salinity and fine sediments, restore deep pools, and support various species. Notably, the threatened Glenelg Spiny Crayfish and Variegated Pygmy Perch benefit from this pulse of water. Additionally, key recreational species like the Estuary Perch can use these releases to move further upstream.

The Glenelg River no longer receives the water volume and seasonal flow variability it once did due to river regulation. Environmental water helps to offset that impact, supporting species migration, breeding, and the creation of new habitats.

Healthy rivers, wetlands, and ecosystems enhance the recreational experience for the community, especially during peak-use months when fishing, canoeing, and sightseeing along the river are popular. This fresh water release should have the Glenelg looking its best for the upcoming March long weekend.

Want more information?

**Please get in touch with us
by phoning (03) 5571 2526,
emailing ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au
or visiting our website at
www.ghcma.vic.gov.au
if you'd like more information
about environmental water in the
Glenelg River.**

Glenelg River Environmental water release



For more information on Glenelg River environmental water releases or to register for SMS updates contact Glenelg Hopkins CMA on (03) 5571 2526 or visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au

THE GLENELG RIVER AND DOWNSTREAM COMMUNITIES WILL BENEFIT FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL WATER RELEASE WITH FLOWS STARTING ON FEBRUARY 29.

Water levels downstream could rise by 40cm as a peak flow of 270 megalitres a day is released from Rocklands Reservoir.

WATER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT CONTINUES TO ENHANCE WATER QUALITY AND SUPPORT NATIVE PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Glenelg Hopkins



CMA

ASSISTANCE WITH FIRE RECOVERY AVAILABLE

Glenelg Hopkins CMA's works crew is currently out and about assisting landholders impacted from the recent Beaufort Region fires. The crew are able to help in the short-term with clearing and structural fixes to fence lines to contain stock and control sediment entering waterways.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA are also currently collecting information to determine the extent of damage from the recent Beaufort Region fire.

Landholders in the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region who have had Landcare or CMA-funded works impacted by the Beaufort Region fires should get in touch. This can include previously completed projects such as fencing activities, revegetation works, weed control and waterway improvements.

Please contact the CMA on (03) 5571 2526 or email ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au

