

Merri Creek Management Committee

Fauna report summary for 2015/16



There were 55 fauna records in MCMC's fauna book recorded by crew members and reported by the public.

In late 2015, strong levels of emergence of Golden Sun Moth were recorded at all sites monitored by MCMC crews. These populations were possibly favoured by sequential years of droughty conditions, ecological burning and kangaroo grazing.

Two observations are of particular management concern. One was of a high level of misdirected mating behaviour by male moths toward broken glass along a reserve perimeter at Cooper Street grassland. The second was an apparently successful application of bird-scarer tape at Amberfields Grassland Reserve to reduce birds using the artificially high density of perches that enhance predation pressure on Golden Sun Moth. A short article was published in the December 2016 [Victorian Naturalist](#) documenting these observations

During November 2015 surveys for Golden Sun Moth in Craigieburn, parkland staff identified an Amethyst Hairstreak butterfly, *Jalmenus icilius* (FFG-listed, Vulnerable in Victoria) patrolling wattles. This species has not been recorded locally for many years and has been considered as likely to be extinct in the Melbourne area. The nearest known colony is 25 km away at Riddells Creek. MCMC staff notified the Museum of Victoria.

Two website sightings were of particular note. A Murray Cod was caught in the Merri Creek at Ida St in Coburg on 16th December, documenting the continued presence of this introduced species in the Merri. An Echidna was reported fossicking for ants around an East Brunswick warehouse close to the Merri Creek in early December.

An intriguing record, including photo, of an albino Brushtail possum was reported by community members from the Sumner Estate, Northcote, in May.

A small population of the regionally uncommon Dwarf Boronia, *Boronia nana* ssp. *hyssopifolia* was located at Heathcote Junction in December. A scatter of plants was found in a linear site spans the catchment of the Merri Creek and the Goulburn River. The plant is found in a small number of sites in the nearby Kinglake National Park.



Above:
Dwarf Boronia, an uncommon plant found at Heathcote Junction Victoria in December 2015.

Left:
The Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly at Craigieburn Victoria in December 2015, an exciting discovery of a species thought to be extinct in the Melbourne area.