

# Merri News

NOVEMBER 2011

The quarterly newsletter of Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) - caring for the Merri Creek

## Tour discovers Threatened Species

In early September, MCMC's Waterwatch Coordinator, Jane Bevelander, organised a joint tour with the North-East Waterwatch Coordinator, to introduce local threatened species.

Community participants visited Hendersons Creek Wetlands and Plenty Gorge in South Morang. They enjoyed guided walks and talks and were lucky enough to see a Threatened Species, the Hardhead Duck.

Photo: Jane Bevelander (at left), tells the group about Plenty Gorge, alongside Julia Vanderood, from North-East Waterwatch, and Parks Victoria Ranger, Mick Francis.



## Expanding UGB to Wallan

The State Government's Logical Inclusions Review is considering additions to Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary. The biggest change for the Merri is the proposal to bring headwater areas of the catchment – the rapidly urbanising Wallan township and environs – into the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The proposed area includes an extensive, low lying flood prone area, the former Hernes Swamp, which MCMC believes is not suitable for development. Before it was drained, the swamp formed a seasonally inundated wetland, rich with bird life. See MCMC's submission at:

<http://www.mcmc.org.au/file/News/Logical-Inclusions-Review-MCMCsubmission.pdf>

## Help collect frog calls

The Melbourne Water Frog Census is looking for people to go out to spots where they've heard frogs and make five minute recordings. They ask people to visit the same site more than once to get an idea of that site at different times and get an accurate picture of frog populations. The technique of making longer recordings and returning to the same site multiple times has resulted in interesting species being identified in the background of sound recordings, that weren't obvious at first. For information on how to make and send the recordings visit [www.frogs.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.frogs.melbournewater.com.au).

**Guided Frog Walk, Edwardes Lake, Reservoir on Thursday 17 November, 6.30pm.** Contact Jane at MCMC on 93808199 or [jane@mcmc.org.au](mailto:jane@mcmc.org.au)



## Students circle Edwardes Lake

In July MCMC began working on the second year of the *Circling the Lake Project* for Darebin Council at Edwardes Lake in Reservoir. Students, such as those from St Joseph the Worker Primary School, Reservoir (shown above) will learn about the Merri Creek catchment, habitat and pollution issues.

## Stormwater pollution talk

**Wednesday 9 November, 6.30pm**  
at Thomastown Library. Supper supplied.

Steve Marshall, an environmental scientist from the Victorian Centre for Aquatic Pollution Identification and Management, will give a presentation on pollution from heavy metals and hydrocarbons in industrial drains that enter Merri Creek. All welcome. Bookings required. Contact [jane@mcmc.org.au](mailto:jane@mcmc.org.au) or 9380 8199.

**For upcoming community events, see the MCMC website: [www.mcmc.org.au](http://www.mcmc.org.au)**

## Waterwatch in Ecuador

Jane Bevelander, MCMC's *Waterwatch* Coordinator, volunteered at Sacha Yacu, a wildlife sanctuary in the Ecuadorian Amazon in June 2011. She writes:

"We organised environmental education sessions for a morning at the local school, which had 30 children from 5-15 years old, with little or no English. There was a small wetland near the school so I decided to do a waterbugs session. I collected the macros using a very makeshift net, with no pole and found snails the size of golf balls, many needlebugs and dragonfly nymphs, very similar to those found in the Merri Creek.

I was apprehensive that these children, who are surrounded by the jungle, would not be very impressed with waterbugs; however they loved it as much as any other group I have taken and were very engaged. I tried to help identify them using my very limited Spanish. The *Waterwatch* stickers I took for them were very helpful. We also ran a rubbish relay game in which they had to decide what was rubbish, reusable and compost (there is no recycling there), which they were very good at."

"We finished the morning with a plant printing activity, although we had to hunt for some small leaves as many were too big to fit on the paper! I found it very enriching to take MCMC's environmental programs across the globe and find that they were just as engaging as here."



MCMC's Jane Bevelander brings *Waterwatch* to children in Ecuador.



## Snapshot of 2011 plantings

In the 2011 planting season MCMC organised the planting of 21,390 plants. Of these 2.5% were trees, 6.5% were shrubs and 82% were ground storey. Nine percent were semi aquatics and aquatic species.

Clustered Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia racemosa*), Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) and Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*) were the top three species planted with over 4,000 individual plants each. They accounted for over half of the total plants. The first two small grasses are hardy colonising plants that have been planted beside pathways and to consolidate existing sites with mature trees. The larger Tussock Grass creates attractive swathes of Tussock grassland in more open areas beside creeks such as alongside Merri Creek between Rushall Station and Queens Pde in North Fizroy and at Edwardes Lake in Reservoir.

Photo: Planting by the new foot-bridge at Broadhurst Ave Reservoir on 18 September.

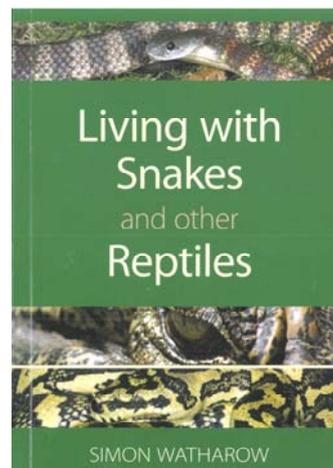
## Feeling snakey? – Book review

*Living with Snakes and other Reptiles*, Simon Watharow, CSIRO Publishing, RRP. \$29.95.

Snakes frequently get some unwanted publicity around this time of year. Often these articles sensationalise the risk posed by snakes and add to the dread of snakes among the wider community. These fears reduce many people's enjoyment of the Merri parklands.

As MCMC has worked in the Merri Parklands almost every workday for over 20 years, without a snake problem, we welcome this very readable book. It provides plenty of sound, well-tested advice to help prevent unpleasant encounters with snakes around the home and in local parklands, such as how to use a hose to safely encourage a snake to leave your property.

There is also fascinating information on other reptiles from around Australia.



## The Merri Creek Environment Fund

The Merri Creek Environment Fund is seeking donations for revegetation and conservation works in the Merri Creek catchment. *Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.* Please make cheques out to Merri Creek Environment Fund and send to MCMC, 2 Lee Street, East Brunswick, 3057, or drop in a cash donation (sorry, no credit card facilities) or contact us to arrange a direct deposit.

Merri Creek Management Committee produces these quarterly newsletters for the wider community in the Merri Creek catchment. You can download this in colour from our website (see below) or contact Ray Radford for a hardcopy at:

**Merri Creek Management Committee 2 Lee St East Brunswick VIC 3057. Phone: 9380 8199 Fax 9380 6989**

**Email: [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) Website: [www.mcmc.org.au](http://www.mcmc.org.au)**