



Education

ANNETTE COOK

Loddon River Expo, Baringhup Primary School (Vic). Photo: Anette Cook

RIVER EXPO ON THE LODDON

Baringhup is a small town on the Loddon River, just over 10 km from Maldon where Cathy McCallum and her team organised a River Expo on Friday, 16 October. Baringhup, Talbot, Timor and Tarnagulla Primary schools attended the day.

Participants were welcomed to Jarra Jarra country by Brien Nelson. Then the Mayor spoke acknowledging the Jarra Jarra people and describing the role we all have in caring for the Loddon River. The action really got underway with a re-enactment of the Loddon river story – complete with bushrangers and horses.

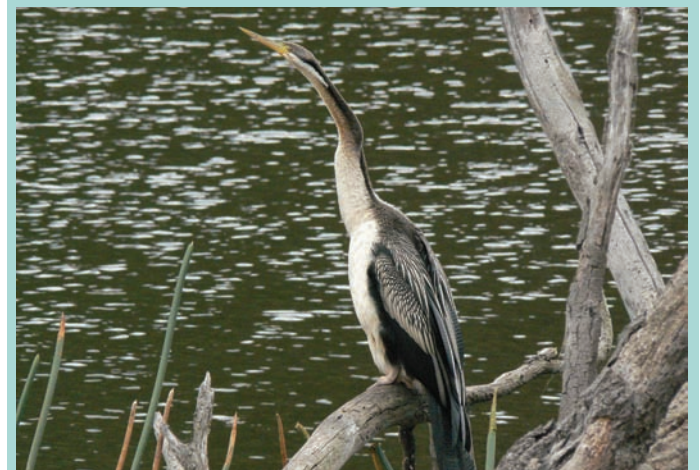
The school children were divided into groups and moved through several workshops. These included an indigenous workshop and performance, fishing with Department of Primary Industries, basket weaving, Waterwatch with North-Central Catchment Management Authority, planting with Baringhup Landcare Group, a walk to encourage understanding of river ecology and birds of the Loddon presented by BOCA.

I took appropriate skins from the BOCA collection and some posters, the river and its banks were alive with the real thing. An Australasian Darter conveniently spread its wings while sitting on a log in the middle of the river, a White-faced Heron, wading in the shallows, paid us a visit, and Red-rumped Parrots landed in a tree. I was really upstaged when a Brown Treecreeper snuck in behind me as I was telling the children how to make their own creepers with cardboard and a rubber band.

The most vocal bird for the day was the Singing Honeyeater but even it faced competition from the local school children. In closing the event the children sang several songs describing the importance of the river in the local environment. My favourite was a song about frogs that started with the children imitating frog calls. It sounded just like a wetland with the different species being quite distinct.



River Red Gum by the Loddon River (Vic). Photo: Anette Cook



Australasian Darter. Photo: Arthur Carew

BOCA BIRD WEEK 2009 WETLAND HABITAT-WETLAND BIRDS

Getting ready for BOCA Bird Week was, as usual, a busy affair. This year there was a new project to manage. In keeping with the theme, Melbourne Waterwatch were approached with the idea that birdwatching could become part of Waterwatch activities. The result is some resources to assist the training of Waterwatch volunteers to identify birds. Included is an illustrated dichotomous key originally developed by Tania Ireton, president of BAYBOCA and member of the BOCA Board. At the time of writing, two training workshops are also planned to further assist Waterwatchers identify wetland birds.

Although this project is being developed in conjunction with Melbourne Waterwatch, the resources and workshop program will be transferable to other localities. If you are interested in conducting a similar program in your local area please contact Annette Cook at BOCA, education@boca.org.au or 03 9877 5342.

BOCA BRANCHES CELEBRATE BIRD WEEK

Many BOCA Branches were involved in promoting BOCA Bird Week in their local areas.

Library displays were the most common means of doing this, with some areas having several displays. Townsville (TRBOC), Qld, set up displays in three libraries. Yarra Valley Branch, Vic, borrowed an Australian Wood Duck and chick (mounted!) for their display in the Healesville Library. They also had a display in the Montrose Library. Displays during October and November were also organised in Brisbane, Wagga Wagga, Bundaberg and Melbourne.

Some Branches found other venues. A vacant shop window in Nhill, Vic was used as part of the Back to Nhill Festival. Tweed Bird Observers, NSW, who have surveyed the Tweed Estuary for 14 years, had a display and information stall at the Tweed River Festival. Penboc's display and presentation was at The Briars Regional Park on the Mornington Peninsula, Vic.

Other Branches held outings as well as putting on a display. BOCA members in Portland, Vic, put up a display in the Portland Library and held walks to Fawthrop Lagoon and the gannet nesting colony at Point Danger. Ballarat Branch, Vic, held their annual outing to Lake Wendouree while also having a display at the Ballarat Library. Echuca and District Branch held an outing to Gunbower Island Wetlands and arranged a display in the Echuca Library.

MELBOCA ran Breakfast with the Birds with Banyule City Council and a Stickybeak activity at Blackburn Lake. Both were well attended with adults and children enjoying the opportunity to learn more about birds in their local neighbourhood. A stall and display was also provided at a Native Plants Expo.



Zoe looking for birds at Banyule City Council Breakfast with the Birds (Vic). Photo: Bill Ramsay



Templestowe College (Vic) display. Photo: Janet Hand

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2010

The theme for World Wetlands Day 2010 will be – Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change. This is in keeping with 2010 being proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year for Biodiversity (IYB). This theme aims to increase worldwide awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and to engage more people in its conservation.

BOCA, with its focus on conservation of birds and their habitat, is already involved in raising awareness of biodiversity issues. Next year could help us to further extend our education and conservation efforts. The IYB will help provide direction for BOCA's 2010 education program.

The Australian Museum website provides some insight and information on what is happening in Australia to support IYB. Visit <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Biodiversity/> to find out more.