



“Looking for the Lake Wanam Rainbowfish” Video footage from Phil Littlejohn’s trip to PNG in 1999 is our featured presentation for our March 2022 club meeting



Lake Wanam Rainbowfish *Glossolepis wanamensis*. Photo: Neil Armstrong

Our feature presentation is video footage shot by Phil Littlejohn on a trip to Papua New Guinea in 1999, looking for the Lake Wanam Rainbowfish that Heiko Bleher had declared now extinct in the wild.

This video includes footage showing wild Lake Wanam Rainbows being caught in the seine net - a rare glimpse at this stunning fish in its natural habitat.

Phil will answer questions during and after the video.

After the presentation we will have a mini auction.



Lake Wanam, Papua New Guinea. Photo: Heiko Bleher

Proposals to add new species of Rainbowfish to the allowable import list



Lake Wanam Rainbowfish *Glossolepis wanamensis*. Photo: Derek Byrne

As posted to the ANGFA Facebook page back in January 2022.

Special thanks to Andy Wattam & Dave Wislon for their hard work in submitting requests to import 17 species of New Guinea rainbowfish.

This is the most important news in 20 years on getting new species into Australia and needs the support of all members.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has received applications and the applicant's assessment reports to include 17 aquarium rainbowfish on the Live Import List under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

These species include:

- *Glossolepis dorityi* (Grime Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis ramuensis* (Ramu River Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis pseudoincisus* (Tami River Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis multisquamata* (Mamberamo Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis maculosus* (Spotted Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis kabia* (Kabia Rainbowfish)
- *Glossolepis wanamensis* (Lake Wanam Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina alleni* (Allen's Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina axelrodi* (Axelrod's Rainbowfish)

- *Chilatherina bleheri* (Bleher's Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina bulolo*
- *Chilatherina campsi* (Highlands Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina fasciata* (Barred Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina lorentzii* (Lorentzi's Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina pagwiensis* (Pagwi Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina pricei* (Price's Rainbowfish)
- *Chilatherina sentaniensis* (Lake Sentani Rainbowfish)

See the link: <https://www.awe.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/wildlife-trade/comment/import-17-species-rainbow-fish-2022>

How can I get involved?

Comments are invited on each of the draft reports. They are available for public comment for 40 business days, closing on **Thursday 10 March 2022**.

We need members to submit comments supporting the importation of these fish into Australia as if this is successful many New Guinea rainbow species never seen here will become available and will be many new fish to breed and collect.

Contents

Our next club meeting presentation	1
Proposals to add new Rainbowfish to the allowable import list	2
President's report	3
Vale Ron Bowman	4-5
Field Trip Files: Blind Bight, Westernport Bay	6-13
News from the fishes conservation front	14-17
Upcoming field trips	18-19
Club meeting details and key contacts	20

President's Report February 2022



Welcome back VICNews! We the committee have decided to bring this publication back as it is thought to be an integral tool (along with FaceBook and MailChimp) in communicating with our members. The last VICNews was December 2016, (number 123)!

Well what a relief it is to be getting back into face to face club meetings again! Trying to find the best way keep the club going during lockdowns has been a very stressful time for our ANGFA committee. Sometimes we got it right and some times we didn't, so thank you for your patience and thank you for sticking with us.

After a brief pause to get our 'ducks in a line' we are launching straight into the year with a field trip to the LaTrobe Uni Wildlife Sanctuary with NFA this coming weekend (see the promo on page 18).

Our first club meeting in 11 months is on the first Friday of March (we couldn't quite get organised for the first Friday of February). Note, our club meetings are now held at the AS of V club rooms at 29 Grant Street in Clifton Hill.

We have lined up something special for this meeting: Phil Littlejohn has finally had some video footage that he shot in PNG in 1999 at Lake Wanam, transferred from video to disc. Getting a glimpse of Lake Wanam and the stunning Lake Wanam Rainbowfish in its natural habitat is an unusual treat, so come along and enjoy the occasion. Phil will answer questions during and after the video.

On the night we will also auction some nice fish and a few mystery items from northern Australia (we haven't been told what is being sent yet).

Next on the calendar is our annual field trip to the Murray River at Burkes Beach, downstream of Yarrowonga over the labour day weekend 11th -14th of March 2022. This is always a great trip and everyone has a ball - well worth the effort to get there.

Despite the difficulty of getting out into the field during Covid, our partnered fish conservation projects are progressing surprisingly well. In this edition of VICNews there is an article from Chris Lamin about her work with the *Galaxiella pusilla* conservation project.

You will need to wait for the next VICNews edition to hear about our Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon conservation news.

Enjoy this edition and see you at the meeting!



A teaser for the upcoming article on our Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon conservation partnered program in the next VICNews. A lake in Kerang, northern Vic. Photo: Greg Martin. (Photo inset) Wild caught Victorian Purple-spotted Gudgeon. Photo: John Lenagan



Ron Bowman presenting at the ANGFA Convention in Darein in 2007. Photo: Tony Snake

This is the eulogy given by Rod Wubben, on behalf of ANGFA, in honour of Ron Bowman at his memorial service.

Australia New Guinea Fishes Association, ANGFA, evolved out of a visit to Melbourne by Graham Heidke and Adrian Tappin in 1982, looking to form a national association of aquarists interested in the keeping, propagation, and study of the freshwater fishes of Australia and New Guinea. Melbourne was chosen, as a small native fish study group was already well-established within the Eastern Districts Aquarium Society, and it was thought that this was where the establishment of such an organisation had the best chance of succeeding. A small group of around 20 individuals attended the inaugural meeting and Ron was a prominent member and prime mover from day one.

Ron, a skilled graphic artist, designed and drew the ANGFA national logo which features the Threadfin Rainbowfish *Iriatherina werneri*, as it occurs in both Australia and New Guinea and represents the freshwater fishes of both countries.

Foundation members were given in addition to general membership, an opportunity to provide funding for a club journal. Ron came up with the journal name "Fishes of Sahul" (Sahul is the name of the ancient Australian continental landmass that extended to include the island of New Guinea in earlier geological times). Ron, a skilled graphic artist, threw himself whole heartedly into the production of this glossy magazine and was well placed to do so. From 1959 Ron had been developing friendships with many key people in the aquarium and ichthyological fields including Gilbert Whitley, Herbert Axelrod, Ian Munro, Jurgen Clasen and others too numerous to list. Plus he had many years of editorial experience already from producing *Finchat*.

Fishes of Sahul featured only Australian and New Guinea freshwater fishes, their nomenclature, their habitat and their reproduction. It was purely scientific with no club notes like a typical club magazine. The first issue of *Fishes of Sahul* was produced in June 1983. It contained hand-pasted colour prints and the very first article was by Neil Armstrong. Neil, Ken Smales and Ron became a very good publication team and they were the production backbone of *Fishes of Sahul* for many years.

Creating this journal satisfied a need in Ron to be more than a hobbyist. His perseverance in producing a magazine with contributors from all over Australia (and internationally now as well), obtaining copy, editing, and printing was commendable. Ron was hoping to be the "daddy" of a world recognised scientific resource on Australian fishes. He certainly succeeded. In 1987 full colour printing began and nearly 40 years later *Fishes of Sahul* is now digitally printed and is distributed in Australia, North America and Europe via ANGFA with promotion by the likes of Heiko Bleher.

Ron always supported the local Melbourne ANGFA meetings, and a skilled aquarist, gave presentations on topics such as the finer points of rainbowfish breeding and how to correctly position lighting to maximise the fish's colour.

Ron's aquarium skills and eye for detail allowed him to maintain and breed a large collection of rainbowfish and blue-eyes, and he was adept at keeping these fish over many generations. Wanting to share these fish with other aquarists around the world, Ron started a very successful egg-mailing program. Thanks to Ron's efforts, a large number of species were introduced to ANGFA members in Europe, the US and even to Sergei who was our sole Russian member! Ron's Bowman surname created some speculation amongst some of the US ANGFA members. US rainbow enthusiasts tend to refer to the fish simply as "bows" so they wondered if he had changed his name to Bow-Man because of his affection for these fish!

From 2005-2007 Ron spent over 1,000 hours producing an artwork entitled "12 Morphs of *Pseudomugil gertrudae* - the Spotted Blue-eye". This was an A3 sized fine painting depicting 12 different geographical morphs and their locations in Queensland and the Northern Territory. These tiny fish were always one of Ron's favourites. The twelve fish were hand drawn and coloured from live specimens either kept by Ron or observed in available collections. The original painting now resides at The Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery.

Ron was instrumental in developing the ANGFA biannual national conferences with the inaugural conference being held in Sydney in 1987. Ron always attended and often lectured, though preferring to



Bowmans Rainbowfish *Melanotaenia bowmani*. Photo: Gary Lange

take a back seat in later years and just renew old acquaintanceships, most recently in 2019 in Melbourne where he made a guest appearance at dinner on the Saturday night.

Ron Bowman was awarded ANGFA Life Membership in 1995, in honour of his enormous contribution to the club and to the furthering of knowledge of Australian fishes.

In 2016, a rainbowfish from New Guinea was named *Melanotaenia bowmani*, Bowmans's Rainbowfish, in acknowledgement of Ron's past contributions to ANGFA and rainbowfish knowledge.

Ron will be greatly missed by the many people who were lucky enough to have met him and receive some of his wisdom.



Ron at his legendary fishroom in Chadstone, Vic.



Ron and Audrey Bowman.

Field Trip Files: Blind Bight, Westernport Bay

27th November 2021



Left to right: Greg Martin, Glenn Briggs, Henry Albert, Ross Weber, Damian DiLorio and Rod Wubben. Photo: John lenagan

On Saturday 27th November, on a sunny but slightly windy day just before the Christmas silly season began, we slipped off to Blind Bight in Westernport Bay to look for gobies and any other brackish water critters we might find.

The last time we surveyed this site was on 8th March 2014 (see article in VICNews 107 April 2014) so we were keen to have another look. In re-reading that article I remembered that we had found “Tamar Gobies, Bridled Gobies, Half-bridled Gobies, Glass Gobies and Blue-spot Gobies, small shrimps (including a very large “prawn”) and two species of crab”. I even “unearthed” a Bass Yabby when my net scooped up a large amount of mud at the first site Sawtells Inlet in Tooradin.

Once again there was a good turnout which included John Lenagan, Glenn Briggs, Rod Wubben, Ross Weber, myself, Henry Albert and a couple of fresh faces: Damian Di Lorio and his dad Sam (?). Damian had seen the field trip posted on FaceBook and was keen to come along - his first ANGFA field trip.

Blind Bight, situated at the northwestern corner of Westernport Bay, is located in the middle of large stands of White Mangrove *Avicennia marina*. Approximately 51km² occurs in Victoria and all of it is extremely important habitat for fishes and other marine life. The tidal flats that this plant loves is home to miriads of Semaphore Crabs and the holes they dig in the plentiful mud is ideal habitat also for gobies and shrimp. Intertidal animals take advantage of the rising and dropping of the twice-daily tides that bring food and nutrients to their habitat. When the tide is in the flooded trunks and roots provide shelter for juvenile fishes and mangroves are vital marine nurseries as such.

Blind Bight has a man-made ‘lake’, near the boatramp carpark that is open to the sea via a couple of large pipes that run under the road. It receives an influx when the tide rises and then drains into the mangroves as the tide reds. These entry and exit points are excellent places to look for gobies and we started a bit further down the ‘beach’ at a stormwater channel that drains into the mangroves.



White Mangrove *Avicennia marina*. Fruits and leaves (above). Air breathing roots (pneumatophores) and a closeup of the crab holes used by gobies and shrimp (above right). Photos: Greg Martin. (Photo inset) Semaphore Crab *Heloecius cordiformis*, the most abundant crab found in intertidal mangroves and estuaries. Photo: John Lenagan



Bridled Goby *Arenigobius bifrenatus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Halfbridled Goby *Arenigobius frenatus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Smallmouth Hardyhead *Atherinosoma microstoma*. Photo: John Lenagan



Bluespot Goby *Pseudogoby eos*. Photo: John Lenagan



Glassgoby *Gobiopterus semivestitus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Smooth Toadfish *Tetractenos glaber*. Male at top with yellow tail fin. Ross spotted this pair circling around a cleared patch of sand by Ross Weber. Photo: John Lenagan



Flatback Mangrovegoby, male *Mugilogobius platynotus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Flatback Mangrovegoby, juvenile female *Mugilogobius platynotus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Damian, Glenn and Henry contemplate the best entry point into this muddy pool. Visible are two large swing doors that open to release stormwater out through the mangroves. This pool was 'stagnant' at the time as the tide was out and there were lots of gobies and shrimp present. Photo: Greg Martin



View across the mangroves. To the left is the high tide mark populated by Eucalypts, Tea Tree (*Melaleuca* sp.) and native grasses. In the intermediate zone grows 'Pigface' (*Carpobrotus* sp.) which gives way to the area that is inundated twice a day where only mangroves grow. Photo: John Lenagan



Damian, Rod, Greg and Glenn sampling the shallow water amongst the mangroves for gobies. A surprisingly large number of gobies live in these 'puddles'. Photo: John Lenagan



The mud in the mangroves was very difficult to navigate and every step released the stinky and sulphurous smell of the anaerobic layers underneath - but the rewards of persisting were plenty of gobies, crabs and shrimp. After photographing the various species caught in the channels in the mangroves and then releasing them back to the water we combed the beach for crabs, looking under rocks and anything that we could turn over.

In summary: we found 4 species of crab: Red-spotted Shore Crabs, Semaphore Crabs, European Green/Shore Crabs and a species of crab I can't identify. 5 species of goby: Bridled Goby, Halfbridled Goby, Bluespot Goby, Flatback Mangrove Goby and Glass Goby. We also found Smallmouth hardyhead and Smooth Toadfish.



Henry looking for gobies in this channel in the mangroves that allows water from the sea 'lake' to exit at low tide. He found lots 5 species of goby, Smallmouth Hardyhead and some pretty large 'Mud Crabs' as well. At high tide, the water level is almost up to the green leaves of the mangroves. Photos: Greg Martin



White Mangrove *Avicennia marina* on the shoreline looking towards French Island. The tide comes in very quickly over the mud flats. (Photo inset) Bivalve with foot extended. Photos: Greg Martin



Above and below: Semaphore Crab *Heloecius cordiformis*. Photos: top, John Lenagan, below, Greg Martin



Above and below: Unidentified Crab species. Photos: John Lenagan





John and Ross turning 'rocks' - actually pieces of concrete, but with plenty of animals underneath. Photo: Greg Martin



European Green Crab also known as European Shore Crab *Carcinus maenas* is an invasive species which can compete and eats native species. In some areas this crab has been associated with crashes in shellfish populations, reduced biodiversity, destruction of eelgrass beds and declines in native crab species. Photo: John Lenagan



Red-spotted Shore Crab *Paragrapsus gaimardii* in berry. Photo: Greg Martin



Above and below: John photographing a Semaphore Crab on Glenn's hand. Note the very long eye stalks on this species of crab! The word 'semaphore' means a type of signalling apparatus with moving arms or flags, and refers to the males' habit of standing by their burrows and signalling to other crabs by waving their claws up and down. Photos: Greg Martin



It was a very enjoyable and incredibly overdue field trip and it was so great to get again out after all the Covid lockdowns. We had a great day, added 2 species of crab, another species of goby and also Smallmouth Hardyhead to our species list for this site, which is a definately a good result.

Thank you to everyone who made it on the day - we'll do it again soon.

Greg Martin



Above and top: Red-spotted Shore Crab *Paragrapsus gaimardii*. Photos: John Lenagan



On the way home Henry wanted to check out Rutherford Creek. It was not flowing and has been heavily modified as it passes through agricultural land. Nonetheless, it produced a large Common Galaxias (below left) and a Flathead Gudgeon (below right). Main photo: Greg Martin, fish photos: John Lenagan.



News from the fishes conservation front: A captive breeding program for the endangered Dwarf Galaxias *Galaxiella pusilla*.

Dwarf Galaxias are a relatively short lived small bodied native fish that prefer slow flowing creeks, swamps and often drainage systems that have lots of aquatic and riparian cover. They are currently listed as a Threatened Species under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act).

There had been a lot of discussion at ANGFA (Vic) and NFA (Vic) meetings regarding the plight of this fantastic little native and what could be done to increase their numbers in the wild and possibly make them available in the hobby. In November 2020 a joint submission was sent to DELWP for an 'Application for a permit to conduct activities relating to protected fish' it took quite some time to gain approval but in the end we were successful.



Gybe Forster, Tim Curmi and Chris Lamin, Hallam, October 2021. Photo: Greg Martin



Engaeus sp. Burrowing crayfish always seem to be present where we find *Galaxiella pusilla*. Hallam, October 2021. Photo: Greg Martin



Gybe and Tim catching broodstock in Hallam Main Drain, Hallam. Photo: Greg Martin



Photographing freshly caught fish in the field tank. Photo: Greg Martin



Tim carrying precious broodstock, Tuerong Creek. Photo: Chris Lamin



Adult male showing breeding colour and gravid adult female. Photo: Greg Martin



Intrepid collectors - Greg, Chris and Tim. Photo: Greg Martin



Gybe Forster and Tim Curmi collecting broodstock in Tuerong Creek. Photo: Greg Martin



Cobblers Creek Juveniles, November 2021. Below right: Gravid female, Tuerong Creek. Photos: Chris Lamin

Currently we have wild caught adults from three of a possible six populations, Cobblers Creek, Tuerong Creek and Hallam .

We collected juveniles from Cobblers Creek and adults from the other two sites. The first collection from Tuerong Creek was the 30th September 2021 and within 4 days of their arrival at the hatchery we had our first mop of eggs! They certainly worked fast. The mops were transferred into 5 litre buckets with Methylene Blue added for fungus control, then placed into a 'warm room' where the temperature ranged from 16.8 – 18.2 deg C. The eggs hatched within 10 days. Fry were then added to a green water culture with live rotifers added three – four times daily until they were big enough to take newly hatched artemia. The captive bred fry have done exceptionally well and are now very close to adult size and are feeding well on a mixture of live and artificial foods.

With relatively large numbers of fry able to be bred, partnerships with several conservation organisations, local councils and two Catchment Management Authorities confirmed, the dream of having these brilliant small bodied natives becoming more widespread into

the future looks very much like reality. Amazing things can be achieved when a group of passionate people get together with a common goal.



Cobblers Creek, Bairnsdale, September 2021. Photo: Chris Lamin



Mop with eggs. Photo: Chris Lamin



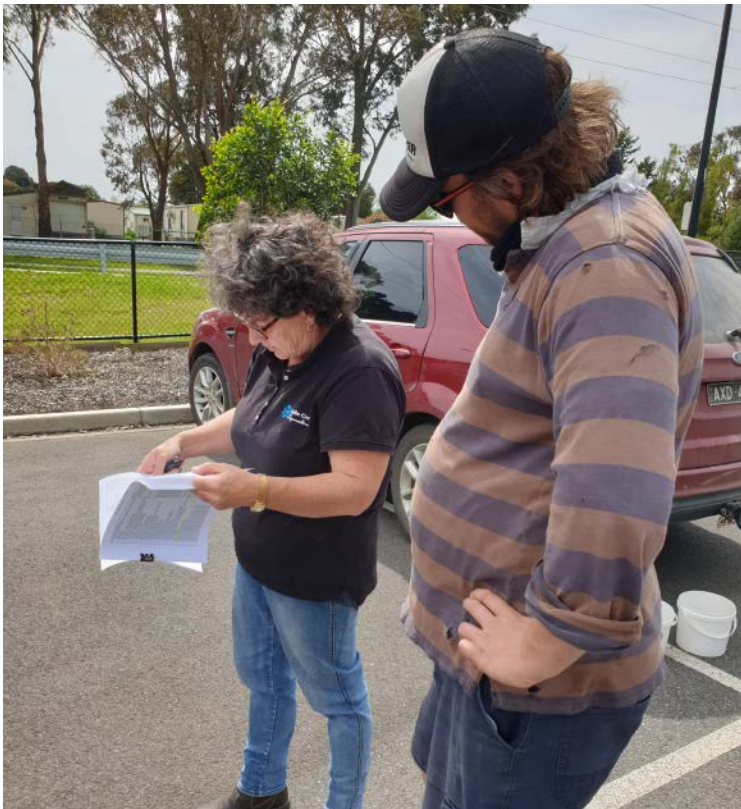
Fry, approx. 72 hours old. Photo: Chris Lamin



Captive bred juveniles, January 2022. Photo: Chris Lamin



Captive bred juveniles, January 2022. Photo: Chris Lamin



Chris checking listed locations before sampling Main Drain, Hallam. Photo: Greg Martin



Chris carefully sorting Dwarf Galaxias from the net, Main Drain, Hallam. Photo: Greg Martin

Our next field trip: La Trobe Uni Wildlife Sanctuary 12th February 2022



One of the beautiful ponds that makes up the creek system that runs through Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary and then on through La Trobe Uni. Photo: Greg Martin

Where: Nangak Tamboree (La Trobe) Wildlife Sanctuary, La Trobe Ave, Bundoora Vic

Why? A few reasons:

1. we want to re-survey the areas we surveyed last year.
2. we want to survey a feeder lake we released Southern Pygmy Perch into last year,
3. and we are looking to catch some *Galaxiella pusilla* to provide genetic diversity for a Dwarf Galaxias conservation breeding program.

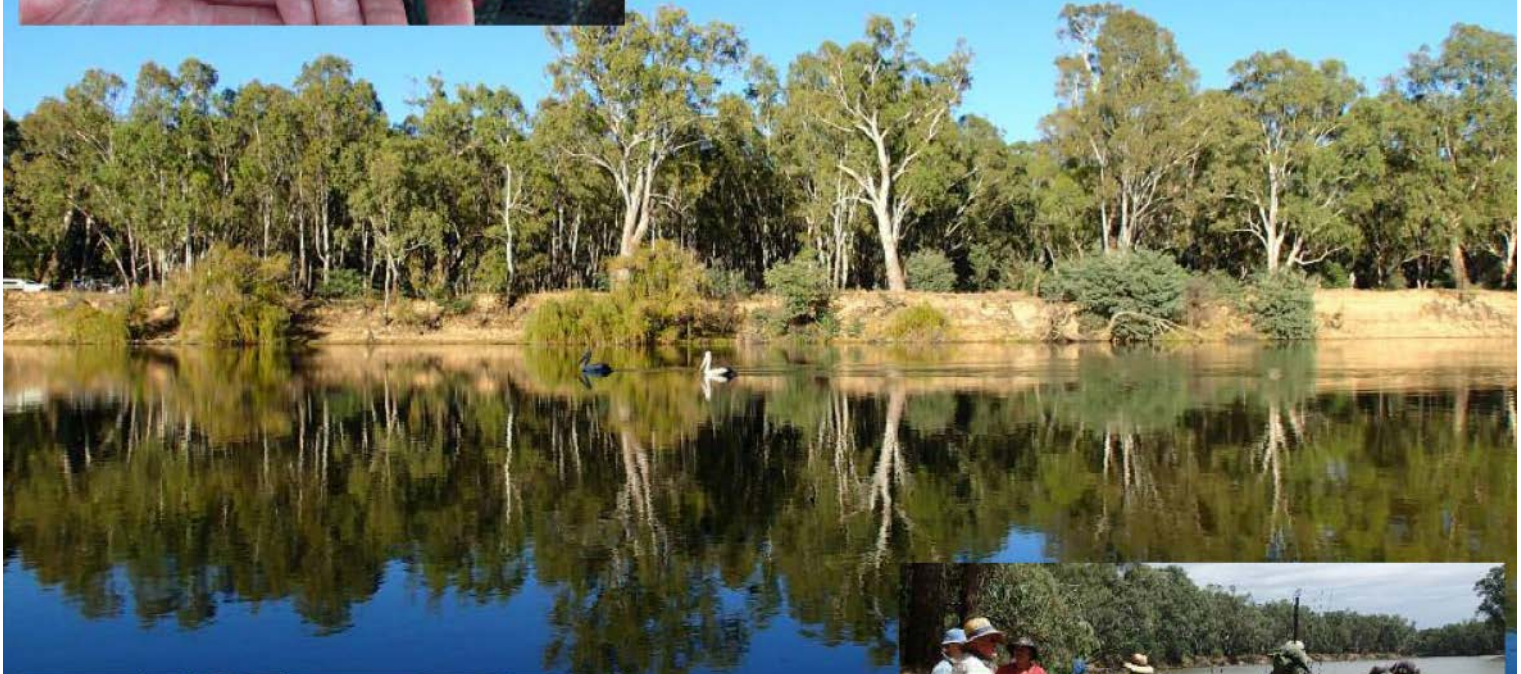
When: meet in the sanctuary carpark at 9am.

Bring: waders (or reef walkers if it is too hot for waders), buckets, nets, hat, wet weather gear, cameras, water bottle and a picnic lunch.

Fishes: Bait traps will be dropped into to various water bodies on Friday night (the night before) and we will be pulling the traps on Saturday morning. We are looking specifically for Southern Pygmy Perch and Dwarf Galaxias. There will most likely be some exotics like Carp, Goldfish, Weatherloach and Gambusia too.

More Information: contact Tim Curmi 0417 419 765 or Greg Martin 0407 094 313.

Upcomming ANGFA field trips: Murray River, 11-14th March 2022 (Labour Day weekend)



Joint ANGFA / Native Fish Australia annual Murray River field trip

Where: Murray River downstream of Yarrowonga on the Victorian side of the river at Bourkes Beach #1 (there are three beaches total). If you put these coordinates into Google Maps <http://maps.google.com.au/> or Google Earth it will show you the final destination -35.976863 145.835180. See map at bottom of page.

Fishes: this region provides excellent opportunities for collecting smaller and larger native fishes. Many smaller native fishes are present including: Murray Rainbowfish, Unspeckled Hardyhead, Smelt, various Carp Gudgeons (4 types), Flathead Gudgeon, plus we usually see lots of small cod and a very occasional River Blackfish. There are lots of exotic fishes like Carp, Goldfish, Weatherloach and Gambusia too. This is also a popular area for cod fishing as well as other large natives like golden perch. Note you will need a NSW fishing license.

Accommodation: Camping is permitted at Bourkes Beach #1 and most other places in the forest. Other options include caravan parks, hotels, etc in Yarrowonga.

For more Information contact:

Greg Martin (gregmartinfishman@gmail.com),
Tim Curmi (president@nativefish.asn.au),
Peter Unmack (peter.angfa@unmack.net)

Directions: Heading east on the Murray-Valley Highway there is a “way side stop” on the left shortly after the big bend in the road. At the back of that rest stop is the start of Bourkes Bend Track, follow that through the forest (see maps) until you see the turn off for Bourkes Beach #1. As long as conditions are fairly dry then any vehicle can make it to the beach.

Club meeting details and key contacts of ANGFA Vic

Office Bearers 2021

President: Greg Martin	0407 094 313
Treasurer: John Lenagan	0413 730 414
Secretary: Glenn Briggs	0408 771 544
Grant Applications and Permit Writer: Tim Curmi	0417 419 765
ANGFA Vic website: Paul Byham	webmaster@angfavic.org
Field Trip Coordinators: Gybe Forster	0430 118 169
and Greg Martin	0407 094 313
Field Trip Safety Officer: Rodney Wubben	0409 890 866
Membership Officer: Rodney Wubben	0409 890 866

CLUB MEETINGS

Our next club meeting is on Friday 4th March 2022
at the AS of V club rooms
29 Grant Street Clifton Hill
Doors open at 7.30pm

Other fish groups in Victoria

Eastern Districts Aquarium Society (EDAS)

Contact: Daryl Maddock (03) 9874 1850

EDAS Plant Study Group

Contact: Eddie Tootell (03) 9337 6435

Aquarium Society of Victoria

Contact: Daryl Maddock (03) 9874 1850

Native Fish Australia Vic.

Contact: Tim Curmi 0417 419 765