



**Dr Michael Hammer is our December guest presenter with  
“*Mogurnda Madness: lessons from the rediscovery of a  
regionally extinct fish from the Lower River Murray,  
South Australia*”**



Michael grew up into native fish in South Australia only knowing the Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon *Mogurnda adspersa* from jars of museum specimens, as records that documented the disappearance of a once relatively common species by the 1970s. That all changed in 2003 when a chance rediscovery was made on a River Murray wetland near Murray Bridge. How did the population survive undetected all this time? Was it native? What is the conservation strategy? These all became critical questions with the unrelenting advance of the Millennium Drought which stretched an already stressed ecosystem to the point of collapse, and where hundreds of kilometers of wetlands lay parched and

desiccated just a few years after the initial find. This talk will highlight the research (e.g. genetics, ecology, soft release) and partnerships behind a rescue and recovery program for Lower Murray Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon, going through some of the highs and lows, and with the latest updates from a long-term program run by the Nature Glenelg trust. The summary will thereby draw lessons that can help other populations of the species, such as the newly rediscovered population in Victoria, and inform broader aquatic conservation programs. A side tour will also explore links between *Mogurnda*, landscapes and culture in northern Australia and New Guinea.

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## President's Report December 2023



Welcome to VICNews 132! At our club meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> October, we began with our AGM with the ANGFA Vic committee being re-elected as is, but with the addition of 3 new people joining as committee helpers. I would like to extend a warm welcome Dr Matt McGee, Peter Gauci and Sunny Syme! Our treasurer John Lenagan gave a brief financial report and I am pleased to report that ANGFA Vic is well and truly in the black.

I am also pleased to report that our ANGFA Vic membership is now well over 70, reflecting a renewed interest in the club and what we do, and the diligent following-up-work of our membership officer Rod!

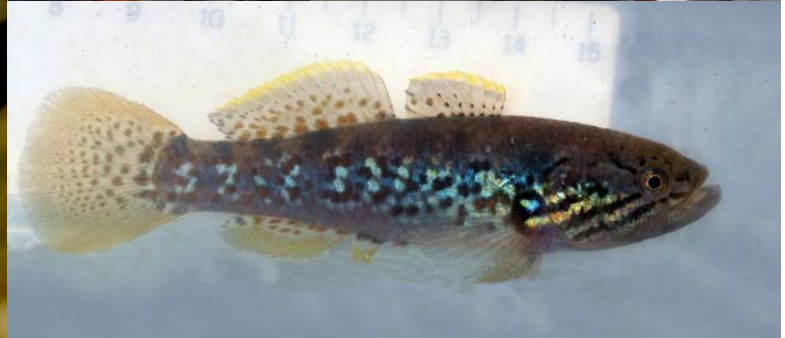
Following our AGM we had our annual auction of Rainbowfish and hard-to-get native fishes. There were many superb lots and the auction was well attended (see a few photos from the night on the following two pages). A big thank you to Steve Brooks, John Cousins, John Coates, Peter Gauci, Glenn Briggs and Chris Lamin for supplying great lots.

On page 4 is a pictorial article on our field trip to Plenty River and King Parrot Creek on 15<sup>th</sup> October. A big thank you to the ANGFA members that attend our field trips - it is always a great day out!

Enjoy this edition and we'll see you at the next meeting on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December for a relaxed evening of learning, of fun, plenty of chat time and catching up with fellow fishos!



Above and top: John Lenagan keeping track of lots, bidders and prices bid. Chris Lamin putting up photos to show each bag lot. Peter Gauci making sure Chris knows the next species lot. Tim Curmi running bags to buyers. Glenn Briggs weaving his auctioneering magic! Photos: Greg Martin



Middle right: the highest bag price on the night was for Honey Blue-eyes, bred by John Coates. Photo: Greg Martin.  
 Above: Honey Blue-eyes photographed by late and great Gunther Schmida.  
 Lower right: Victorian Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon were available for the first time to the public and achieved good lot prices! Photo: John Lenagan.  
 Lower right: Another highlight on the night were Ivantsoff's Blue-eye, Photographed in the aquarium by Gerald Allen.  
 Below left: Freshwater tropical *Macrobrachium* shrimp were sold on the night. Photo: Dave Wilson.



# Field Trip Files: Plenty River and King Parrot Creek, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023

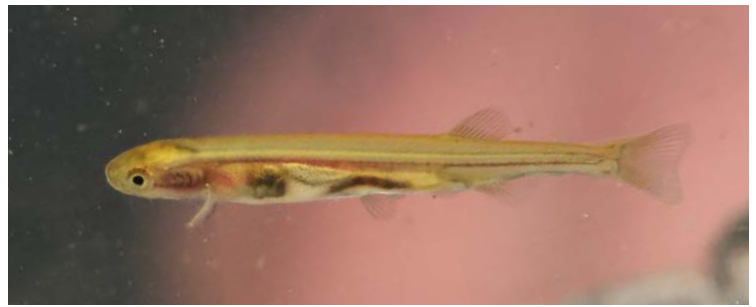


Left to right: Punyanat Phawande, John Lenagan, Glenn Briggs, Gybe Forster, Rod Wubben, Fraser Asquith and Tim Curmi. Photo: Greg Martin



Above: Southern Pygmy Perch (SPP) from the Plenty River. Photo: John Lenagan.  
Below: Glenn catching SPP with his home-made and very effective square net. Left: Fraser and Tim empty a box trap. Photos: Greg Martin





Clockwise, top left and top right: Punyanat and Fraser with a bucket of catch to examine in the field tank. Rod making notes of the plants and fish found at this location. Photos: Greg Martin. Juvenile Common Galaxias. Southern Pygmy Perch. Green Diving Beetle *Onychohydus scutellaris*. Glass Shrimp. Photos: John Lenagan. John with a very long lense! Photo: Greg Martin



Top: Flowerdale Hotel lunch with the crew. Middle: King Parrot Creek showing one of its many riffles. Bottom: the crew. Photos: Greg Martin



Our third field trip to King Parrot Creek since June 2017, which included a visit to the Plenty River on the way, was on a Sunday in the middle of October. We are trialing running field trips on a Sunday as it is more convenient than a Saturday for a few people. We met at Whittlesea by the river to pull some bait (box) traps that had been set in advance, and to do some dip netting to see what else we could find. At eight people attending, including two new faces, we had a good group on the day.

The upper Plenty River at Whittlesea looks to be in fairly good condition and sustains a very good population of Southern Pygmy Perch. There are also Common Galaxias, Flathead Gudgeon and Blackfish as well as several ferals, including Gambusia, Goldfish, European Weather Loach and Redfin Perch to name a few.

At the Plenty River site, we recorded plenty of Southern Pygmy Perch, some juvenile Galaxias, 2 Weather Loaches, some large tadpoles, Glass Shrimp, Green Diving Beetles and ‘Mud-eyes’. The plants present were Persicaria, Cumbungi (Bull Rush), Triglochin, Buttercup, Potamogeton, Dutch iris and Crinum (Swamp lily).

After photographing our catch and returning it to the water we headed straight to lunch at The Flowerdale Hotel - a traditional and pretty much unchanged country pub: no pokies, a big dining room, open fireplace, big servings and favoured by the locals (always a good sign!). Then onto the creek.

King Parrot Creek, just over the Great Dividing Range is a tributary of the Goulburn River and is therefore part of the Murray Darling Basin. Plenty River, on the south side of the divide, is a tributary of the Yarra River. The upper reaches of King Parrot Creek is in good shape and is home to Murray Spiny Crayfish, Macquarie Perch, Riffle Galaxias, Two-spined Blackfish and Southern Pygmy Perch. Sadly, there are trout as well. We found all of the above, except Macquarie Perch on the day. We also found Glass Shrimp, Stonefly nymphs (Family Gripopterygidae), ‘Stream Horse’ Mayfly nymphs (Family

Coloburiscidae) and ‘Toebiters’ (Order Megaloptera). The only aquatic plant visible in the creek at that location was Triglochin.

After photographing the catch and returning it to the water, we headed home. Another great day out with fishy mates - a breath of fresh air and some important time out in nature. Thanks to all those that attended the field trip.



Above and top: Punyanat, Gybe, Glenn and Fraser looking for Riffle Galaxias. Inset: Triglochin in King Parrot Creek. Photos: Greg Martin



Top left: Glenn trying to find a Riffle Galaxias - it took him ages! (Fraser found the first two). Above: Glenn and Fraser turning rocks to flush out Riffle Galaxiids and spiny crays. Left: head detail of a Riffle Galaxias. Note the down-turned mouth - possibly for anchoring to a rock in strong currents? Could Riffle Galaxias include algae-scraping in their diet? Photos: Greg Martin



Riffle Galaxias *Galaxias arcanus*. Photo: John Lenagan





Top and bottom: Murray Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus armatus*. Photos: John Lenagan. Middle: John photographing the spiny cray. Photo: Greg Martin



Top and bottom: Two-spined Blackfish *Gadopsis bispinosus*. Middle left: Two-spined Blackfish with Stonefly nymph (Family Gripopterygidae). Photos: John Lenagan. Middle right: Fraser photographing Two-spined Blackfish in the field tank. Photo: Greg Martin



Above: 'Stream Horse' mayfly nymph (Family Coloburiscidae). "Their quick, nodding swimming motion is reminiscent of a galloping horse". Photo: John Lenagan.



Above left: Dobsonfly larvae 'Toe biter' (Order Megaloptera). Above right: Glass shrimp. Photos: John Lenagan.



Above left: Fraser photographing Southern Pygmy Perch (SPP) in the field tank. Above right: SPP from King Parrot Creek. Photos: Greg Martin

# Club meeting details and key contacts of ANGFA Vic

## Office Bearers 2023

<b>President:</b> Greg Martin	0407 094 313
<b>Treasurer:</b> John Lenagan	0413 730 414
<b>Secretary:</b> Glenn Briggs	0408 771 544
<b>Grant Applications and Permit Writer:</b> Tim Curmi	0417 419 765
<b>Field Trip Coordinator:</b> Greg Martin	0407 094 313
<b>Field Trip Safety Officer:</b> Rodney Wubben	0409 890 866
<b>Membership Officer:</b> Rodney Wubben	0409 890 866
<b>Committee members:</b> Chris Lamin, Paul Byham, Gybe Forster, Matt McGee, Sunny Syme and Peter Gauci	

## Victorian ANGFA National LIFE MEMBERS

Past

**Ron Bowman and Barry Crockford**

Present

**Neil Armstrong, Glenn Briggs, Ken Smales and Tony Tucceri**

## ANGFA VIC CLUB MEETINGS

are held at the

### Field Naturalists Club of Victoria

1 Gardenia Street Blackburn, Victoria

Doors open at 7.30pm

### Meeting dates for 2023:

Friday 3rd February 2023

Friday 14th April 2023 (a week later than normal)

Friday 2nd June 2023

Friday 4th August 2023

Friday 6th October 2023 (Includes our AGM)

Friday 1st December 2023

### Meeting dates for 2024:

Friday 2nd February 2024

Friday 5th April 2024

Friday 7th June 2024

Friday 2nd August 2024

Friday 4th October 2024 (Includes our AGM)

Friday 6th December 2024

## Other fish groups in Victoria

**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