



VICTORIA Inc. Regional Group

# VICNEWS

Number 135 June 2024

ANGFA Victoria Inc. is a regional group member of  
AUSTRALIA NEW GUINEA FISHES ASSOCIATION INC.

Published by ANGFA Victoria Inc.

Visit us at: [www.angfavic.org](http://www.angfavic.org) and on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

**Rhiannon Eastman is our June guest presenter with  
“Pollution and pregnancy: The impacts of pharmaceutical  
contamination on a native marine livebearer”**



Southern Crested Weedfish *Cristiceps australis*. Photo: Stephen Mahony

Rhiannon Eastment is a PhD candidate at Monash University, where she studies the evolution of parental care using unconventional study species - such as marine fishes - as a model. In this presentation, Rhiannon will discuss her latest project, which focuses on a unique inhabitant of Port Phillip Bay - the Southern crested weedfish. She will discuss how these

marine livebearers were collected from the Bay, the care required to keep them alive and happy in captivity, and how they were ultimately used to help us understand the impact of pharmaceutical pollution on Australian wildlife and the ecological communities in which the inhabit.



# ANGFA Convention 2024

Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort,  
North Queensland  
21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> September

To book, click [here](#)





# ANGFA Convention 2024

Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort

21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

## Program

### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024

- 8.30am Registration
- 9.30am Opening by ANGFA NAU President
- 9.45am Hans-Georg Evers
- 10.30am Morning Tea
- 11.00am Keith Martin
- 11.45am Pre-lunch drinks then Lunch
- 12.00pm Lunch
- 1.00pm Michael Hammer / Micah Borok
- 1.45pm Josh Lawler
- 2.30pm Afternoon Tea
- 3.30pm Johnannes Graf
- 4.15pm Glynn Aland
- 5.00pm Pre-dinner drinks
- 6.00pm Dinner



Australia's  
aquarium fish  
home delivery  
experts!

[www.livefish.com.au](http://www.livefish.com.au)

**AQUATEC**  
EQUIPMENT



**Premier Pet**

[www.premierpet.com.au](http://www.premierpet.com.au)

### Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

- 8.30am Registration
- 9.00am Wim Heemskirk
- 9.45am Nicole Smith
- 10.30am Morning Tea
- 11.00am Lyle Squire
- 11.45am Pre-lunch drinks
- 12.00pm Lunch
- 1.00pm Marten-Luther Salossa
- 1.45pm Nathan Waltham
- 2.30pm Afternoon Tea
- 3.30pm Brendan Ebner
- 4.15pm Closing by ANGFA NAU President
- 5.00pm Clean up

**AQUARIUMS**  
by design

### Monday 23<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Field trip to the Atherton Tablelands

### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Field trip south to Innisfail



# Contents

Our next club meeting presentation	1
ANGFA National Convention 2024 promo	2-3
President's report	4
Field Trip Files: Bendigo fish releases and reveg weekend	5-20
Next field trip details	21
Club meeting details and key contacts	22

## President's Report June 2024



Welcome to VICNews 135! At our April club meeting, David De Angelis gave a fantastic presentation on field work he has conducted in far East Gippsland. David's work was focused mainly on frogs but, in the course of a lot of field work, he has learning what else inhabits this wonderful area. It appears that there are still a few water bodies east of Mallacoota that could be data deficient in regards to fishes surveying. David's presentation inspired us to organise another ANGFA Vic field trip to East Gippsland and we have penciled it in for the Melbourne Cup long weekend this year (2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024).

The weekend of 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024 was another overnight field trip where we continued to work on our conservation species. A real highlight was on Friday (15<sup>th</sup>) in Kerang where we met up with some of the local Barapa Barapa traditional owners at Kerang weir to release some Victorian Purple-spotted Gudgeon. This was quite a special moment: the mother of one of the Traditional Owners present had been at Kerang when we collected the initial broodstock but had died a couple of years ago, and her daughter was with us to see the F1 juveniles released. The story had come full circle. You can see photos from this field trip in the pictorial

article starting on page 5. As always, a big thank you to the ANGFA members that continue to attend our field trips - it is always great to get out into the natural world. Field tripping is fun!

Our ANGFA Convention is fast approaching! It is going to be a fantastic convention, and being there always presents a great opportunity for attendees to meet international (and local) fishos that we don't normally get to meet and hang out with. For example: Hans-Georg Evers, Micah Borok, Josh Lawler, Johannes Graf, Wim Heemskirk and Marten Salossa! Furthermore, this convention is held in the tropics this time and right at the doorstep of so many fabulous places to explore, see or stay at.

At our June club meeting we will auction some bags of Honey Blue-eyes and Malanda Rainbowfish donated by John Coates.

Our next field trip is to Langwarrin Creek at Moonlit Sanctuary, on Saturday 8th June. See promo on page 21. Enjoy this edition and we'll see you at the next meeting on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June for a relaxed evening of learning, of fun, plenty of chat time and catching up with fellow fishos!



Above: Remembering 20 years ago: ANGFA Vic night time field trip to the Maribyrnong River adjacent to Flemington Racecourse, May 2004. From the (terrible) photos I can see Damian Walsh (then President of ANGFA Vic), Paul Byham, Gary Moores, Paul and Merrick Northey and a few faces I don't recognise. Here, we are all looking at the catch in a field tank lit by our torches. I remember we were looking for a few types of gobies and they were very hard to catch amongst the rocks that stabilise the river banks along that stretch of river. However, persistence pays off and we eventually found a few species including lots of Tamar Gobies *Afurcagobius tamarensis*. Photos: Greg Martin

# Field Trip Files: ANGFA Vic/NFA Bendigo fish releases and reveg weekend, 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024



Kerang Weir Pool. Photo: Greg Martin

**Friday 15th of March 2024.** The initial carload (more members joined us later that night and also during the following morning) of ANGFA and NFA members travelled up to Kerang in north central Victoria to meet up with Peter Rose from North Central CMA and Barapa Barapa traditional owners (TO) at Kerang weir pool to release about 1000 juvenile Victorian Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon, bred by Chris Lamin at Middle Creek Farm.

The weir pool is part of the Loddon River / Pyramid Creek confluence; inundated by the water held back by the weir and Peter Rose chose this site as suitable for SPSG release as it is free of *Gambusia* and (normally) has extensive macrophyte habitat. Due to recent flooding, the aquatic vegetation had died right back to the corms but is fully expected to return to its former condition over time.

Once Chris Lamin had decanted the allocated fish into several smaller buckets, the younger of the 5 TOs took turns releasing fish into the weir pool. Interestingly, the elderly mother of one of the young women releasing fish, was present 3 years ago on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 in Kerang, when we were catching the original broodstock fish. At the time she was not happy about “her fish” being taken away from country for a breeding program. If only she could see now that “her” 50 or so fish have become more than 20,000(!!) but she passed a couple of years ago, so it is her daughter (pictured below) that is seeing the great results of that ambitious program.



Above and right: Barapa Barapa traditional owners who met up with us for the fish release into Kerang Weir Pool. Photos: Greg Martin





Kerang Weir Pool. Photo: Greg Martin

Before we left the weir pool a few of us walked over to see the fishway that enables fish to pass up and down the river, around the weir. The design of this fishway is notably good as the exit point is sufficiently far from the weir wall to enable travelling fish to not be swept back over the wall (unlike the fishway at Dights Falls on the Yarra River in Melbourne!)



Above left: a diagram of the fishway showing easy fish passage for species of all sizes. Above right: the exit of the fishway. Left: upstream of the wall. Above: downstream of the weir. Photos: Greg Martin

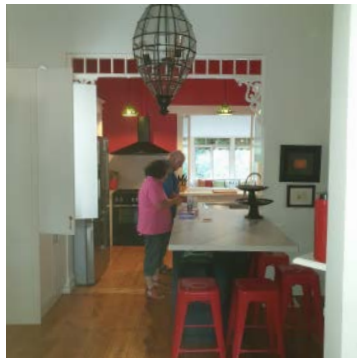


Lachlan Nevinson bringing in fykes from Michael Gardener's dam. Photo: Greg Martin

Next stop on our agenda was a visit to Michael Gardener's dam in Axedale. Michael's dam has been designated a surrogate site for a number of years, initially stocked with Murray darling basin genetics Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon. Frustratingly, this dam already had a staggering number of Flathead Gudgeon before the first stocking of a conservation species. The Southern Pygmy Perch couldn't recruit fast enough to counteract predation from the resident population of Flathead Gudgeon. More recently, Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon have been added to the mix. Our purpose for this visit was to set some traps so we could gauge how they are doing. We put in 2 fyke nets and 10 box traps to be retrieved in the morning.

After that, we headed across to Maldon to our (luxurious – thank you Peter Rose!) accommodation and a delicious dinner and quiet ale at the Maldon pub. Some time that night we were joined by Lachie Nevinson and Megan who had driven down from Holbrook, NSW.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March.** We started the day back at Michael Gardener's dam in Axedale where we pulled the fyke nets and box traps to get an idea of how the Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon have survived in a dam full of Flathead Gudgeon! We found a few adult Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon, no juveniles, and as we knew there would be, a lot of Flathead Gudgeon: the two fykes produced around 1,000 Flathead Gudgeon each! Incidentally, the dam is huge and around 7m deep in the middle, so draining it and starting over is not an option.



A beautiful Southern Purple-spotted gudgeon from Michael Gardener's dam. Although the adults have survived ok, any recruitment is quickly predated by the enormous resident population of Flathead Gudgeon. Photo: Greg Martin



Above block of 4: The beautifully restored Eaglehawk Country House Hotel in Maldon. Our accommodation for the two nights Photos: Greg Martin

A sample of just how abundant the Flathead Gudgeon are in this dam - we caught an estimated 2,000 in the 2 fyke nets! Photos: Greg Martin



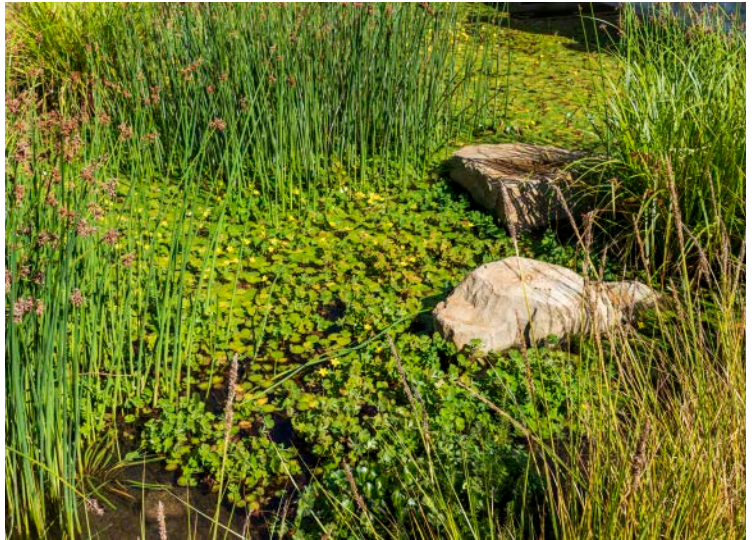


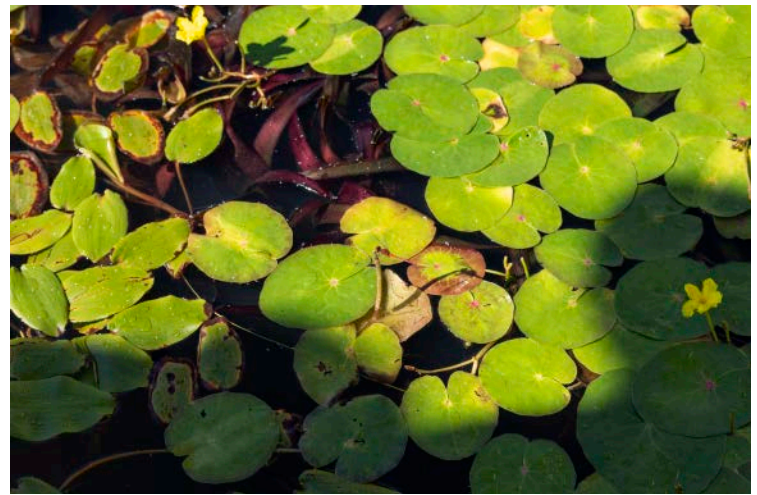
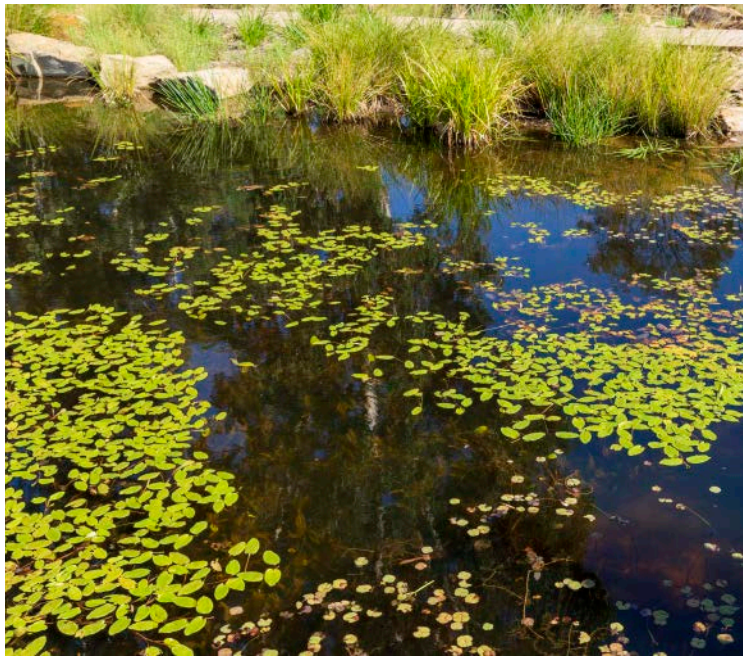
Above: One of a series of recently constructed ponds in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens in White Hills. Below right: Mark Toohey describing the process of creating this wetland. Bottom right and left: Rushes, Sedges and Nardoo planted in the pond and along the margins provide excellent habitat for frogs and emerging dragonflies. Photos: Greg Martin

Next activity on our agenda was meeting up with Mark Toohey and Amy Greenfield from Shire of Greater Bendigo, for a tour of surrogate sites. Sites in-preparation and also sites being used already for conservation fish stocking. We started at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens in White Hills. Here, Mark has once again woven his magic in creating a stunning series of ponds by the (recently burned down) café in the Larni Garingilang Precinct.

These ponds are beautifully planted-out with a huge variety of local aquatic and marginal plant species and have matured beautifully! Frustratingly, an unknown someone recently released a couple of Goldfish and some Gambusia into the until-then, virgin system. The Goldfish were quickly removed, but as you might have guessed, the Gambusia have exploded in numbers.

A sign tells us “Dhelkunya Buluk. Healing People/Mob. The Wetland Area. Gatjin means water. Gapa Gatjin is ‘Knowing water’, the Djaara advisory group who speak for Djaara’s water knowledge. Djaara speak for the water because it can’t speak for itself. Rivers and creeks are the veins of Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), providing food, medicine, and places to hunt, fish, swim and hold ceremony. Djaara have always had a cultural responsibility to pass on clean healthy water to those downstream. The waters of Yaram Yaram Manya (Bendigo Creek) flow through Djandak and into the lands of neighbouring mobs.”





Top left: a deeper part of one of the ponds with good Potamogeton growth and a healthy quantity of this macroalgae (middle left) a little deeper down. Top right: Rod Wubben, Amy Greenfield and Peter Richmond chatting about the aquatic vegetation. Middle right: Various Nymphoides, including an endangered local species are all doing well. Above: our attendees so far. Photos: Greg Martin



Above: the top pond (dam) at the Harcourt Dog Park, showing “barbed wire” surrounding the perimeter of the dam. The ingenious idea is to use council branch trimmings to create a barrier to stop dogs eroding the banks and squashing the newly planted vegetation, Was Mark Toohey’s brainwave. Another benefit is protection for emerging seeds and seedlings planted under the branches. Bottom left and bottom right: Planting pre-grown clods of aquatic vegetation. Middle left: Chris adding to the “barbed wire” barrier. Photos: Greg Martin and Rod Wubben

Our next site was the top pond (a dam really) at the Harcourt Dog Park in Strathdale, east Bendigo, to see Mark Toohey’s work creating a habitat for Tandanus catfish. Here we were joined by Sunny Syme and Ron Lewis. After eating a delicious lunch of fresh salad rolls provided by North Central CMA, we undertook some aquatic vegetation planting. Mark Toohey and Amy have perfected a pre-growing technique that makes aquatic revegetation works easier and far more

successful. I’ll write an article on this for the next VICNews. After a most invigorating planting session and working up a fair sweat in our waders moving branches, we moved onto the next site.





Above: Our crew in front of the enormous Bendigo Library native fishes aquarium. Below right: Rod and Peter discussing the thick growth of Vallisneria and how the Pygmy Perch hide amongst the verticle leaves. Photos: Greg Martin

After planting out the pre-grown clots of aquatic plants and then hauling branches around the Tandanus dam to create a barrier of “barbed wire” against dog intrusion, we needed a break. As we were a bit ahead of schedule, before visiting the next site, we had time to visit the Bendigo Library to see the large native fish aquarium that was commissioned by Goldfields Library Corporation in early 2022 and built (onsite) by Aquariums By Design over a period of several months. At 330cm long, 100cm front to back, with a water depth of 70cm and featuring a glass ‘box’ on top to allow the plants to grow out of the water surface, this aquarium is big.

Currently it houses Murray River Rainbowfish, Murray Darling Southern Pygmy Perch, Olive Perchlet, Hardyhead, Victorian Purple-spotted Gudgeon, Dwarf Flathead Gudgeon and a few Obscure



Galaxias. From time to time Mark Toohey adds locally caught macroinvertebrates which must provide a feast for the inhabitants!

Because of the size of the aquarium and the myriad of hiding places, any fish introduced into the tank can’t be re-caught - they either flourish or disappear. It was great to see that the fish all seem to be doing well (some a little too well – the SPSG have bred and there are many juveniles growing quickly...), the Southern Pygmy Perch have also bred although in smaller numbers and the Olive Perchlet, Obscure Galaxias, Murray River Rainbowfish and Hardyhead are all now full size.





Above: Looking at a new site Mark Toohey has been working on adjacent to an industrial area in East Bendigo. Below: Water Couch, a native aquatic plant and an important one for holding together the banks of ponds, says Ron Lewis. Photos: Greg Martin

The next two sites that Mark wanted us to see was a pond that is fed from water collected around an industrial area and then the Riley Street ponds. The latter has been stocked with Vic Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon and they are doing extremely well! There are no

Gambusia in these ponds, although to the casual eye it looks like the place is swarming with them – there are just so many juvenile SPSG! Furthermore, SPSG have been detected in the adjacent creek having been swept downstream in recent high rainfall events.





Main: One of the Riley Street ponds. No *Gambusia* and the Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon are recruiting very well! Below right: Adjacent to one pond *Combungi* (Bull Rush) is getting a foothold and Mark Toohey's expression says it is a matter of urgency to act quickly and remove it whilst he can! Middle left: Mark Toohey describing the history of this site. Lower left: a couple of Tawny Frogmouths we saw in a tree by the ponds. Photos: Greg Martin





By this time it was late afternoon, and it was time to go back to the Harcourt Dog Park to set fykes and traps to be retrieved the next morning. Our aim was to get an idea of how the Olive Perchlet have been recruiting and also to catch Southern Pygmy Perch for restocking into Axe Creek the following day.

That evening, after a long and eventful day, we all headed (back) to the Maldon Hotel for a dinner with Mark Toohey and Jaquie (his partner), and Peter Rose to celebrate how much had been accomplished in the six years since 2018. The food was good and after we had eaten Chris Lamin reflected on how far we have come in the six years since the initial Southern Pygmy Perch broodstock collection trips in 2018, thanking Peter Rose and Mark Toohey for the fruitful partnership that has seen Middle Creek Farm become an established, viable, respected, and very important cog in the conservation of small-bodied native fishes in Victoria.

It all started with a conversation around 2017 where Mark Toohey asked Tim Curmi about getting native fish for his newly created ponds at the Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park in Kangaroo Flat south Bendigo. Tim said that NFA and ANGFA would be the best resource and with Chris Lamin ramping up production at Middle Creek Farm, the rest is history. There were a lot of ducks to get in line (Broodstock location identification, broodstock genetics confirmation, translocation permits, broodstock collection) before the real conservation breeding work could begin at Middle Creek Farm but we now have growing populations of 3 of the Magnificent 6 endangered small-bodied native fish from the Murray Darling basin now established in and around Bendigo.



Top: Peter Rose setting a fyke trap in the Harcourt Dog Park. Above: Our celebratory dinner on the Saturday night. Photos: Greg Martin



Above: Peter Rose running through the day's schedule. Middle left: Rod wubben keeps track of the Southern Pygmy Perch numbers and lengths during the count and sorting. Lower left: Chris Lamin and Peter Rose sorting and measuring the Southern Pygmy Perch. Right: Sunny Syme and Mark Tookey pulling traps. Photos: Greg Martin



**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March.** We were back to the Harcourt Dog Park after breakfast and a takeaway coffee to clear the nets, count the fish caught and pack Southern Pygmy Perch for translocation to 4 local sites out of town.

As the contents of the nets were carefully released into buckets for counting it very quickly became clear that the Olive Perchlet have been busy recruiting! Not only that, but hundreds of juveniles had been washed into the second pond and there was evidence of two spawnings with 3 distinct different sizes showing up. After a frenzied half hour where Chris Lamin and Peter Rose sorted and measured around 75 fish (with Rod Wubben busily writing down the numbers), the correct number of Southern Pygmy Perch had been divided between 4 buckets for transport.

There was lots of interest from local folks exercising their dogs (it is a dog park after all) and we showed them some fish in the field tank to illustrate our description of what we were doing.

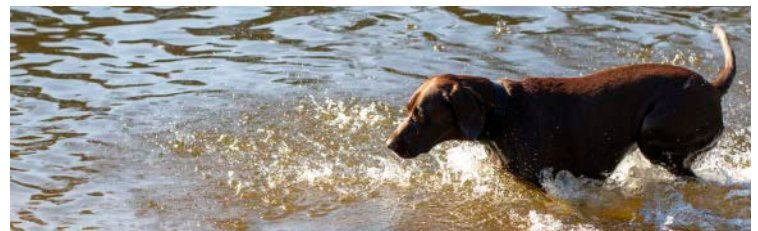


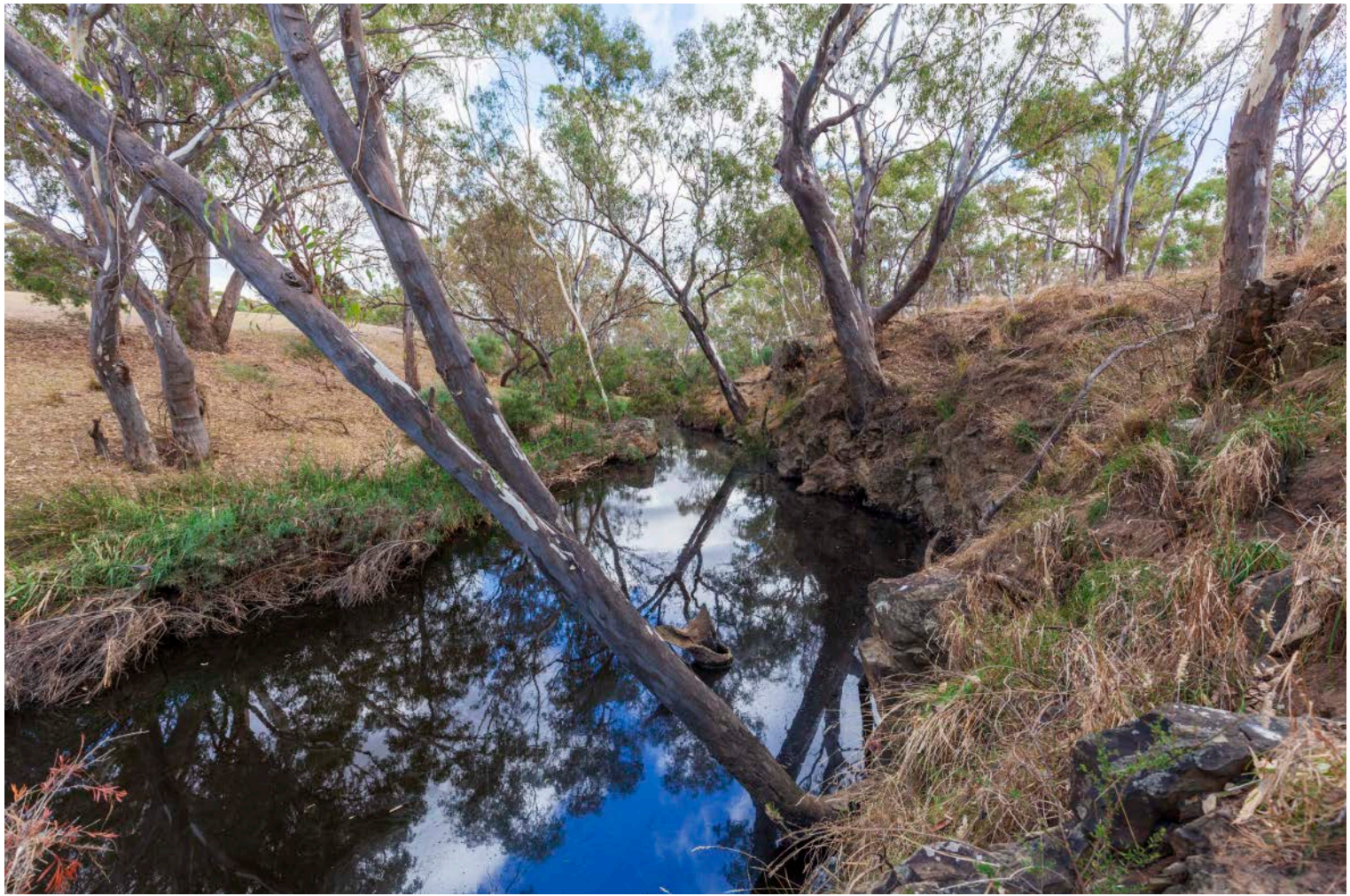


Top left: Lachlan Nevinson using a dip net to catch juvenile Olive Perchlet. Top right and centre left: A sample of Olive Perchlet caught - there were at least 2 spawnings evident. Middle right: Mark Adams checking a box trap. Lower left: Sunny Syme and Mark emptying box traps. Lower right: Lachlan Nevinson retrieving fyke nets. Photos: Greg Martin



Above: The man who coined the phrase “Zombie Fish”, seen here looking at one in a field tank at the Dog Park. This catchy name caused the *Rediscovery of the Victorian Purple-spotted Gudgeon* story to go viral around the world! Middle right: dog doing what dogs do. Middle left: Jackie, checking out one of the Purple-spotted Gudgeon from the Dog Park ponds. Bottom: SPSG - such a beautiful fish! Photos: Greg Martin





Above: Axe Creek at Longlea. Middle right: Peter Rose talking about the conservation efforts, including Platypus habitat restoration works funded by SDCE, and the reintroduction of Southern Pygmy Perch and Catfish into Axe Creek. Lower left: Mark Adams with buckets of Southern Pygmy Perch from the Dog Park for introduction into 3 local creeks. Lower right: Healthy Pygmy Perch for Axe Creek. Photos: Greg Martin

Next item on the agenda was a trip out to Axe Creek at Code Lane in Longlea. Here we met two blokes from Strathfieldsaye & District Community Enterprise (SDCE), a not-for-profit organisation that provides grants of up to \$5,000 each year, and they have been funding conservation and restoration projects in the area that benefit Platypus (and fish). Here we released the first bucket in one of the deeper refuge pools in Axe Creek. Next site was another refuge pool a little further downstream.

At this point many of us called it a day and went our separate ways towards lunch on the road and eventually home (Chris had a long drive home to Briargolong).





It was a wonderful weekend, and we were able to see first-hand that the conservation efforts being undertaken on the Magnificent Six, by this dynamic group of fish-focussed groups, are working!

Thank you to all those that joined us on the weekend – we make a great team!

# Our next Field Trip is: Langwarrin Creek, Lower reaches, below the sanctuary. Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024



From our last survey of Langwarrin Creek in August 2022

**Where:** Moonlit Sanctuary. 550 Tyabb-Tooradin Road, Pearcedale.  
GPS coordinates: 38°12'40.8"S 145°15'03.4"E

**Meeting at:** 10 am.

**Bring:** waders, buckets, nets, hat, wet weather gear, cameras, field tank, water bottle. **Lunch will be provided by Moonlit Sanctuary.**

**Fishes:** Galaxias, Gobies, Tupong, Eels... who knows?

**For more Information:** contact Greg Martin on 0407 094 313.



# Club meeting details and key contacts of ANGFA Vic

## Office Bearers 2023

**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  
**Field Trip Coordinator:** Greg Martin 0407 094 313  
**Field Trip Safety Officer:** Rodney Wubben 0409 890 866  
**Membership Officer:** Rodney Wubben 0409 890 866  
**Committee members:** Chris Lamin, Paul Byham, Gybe Forster, Matt McGee, Sunny Syme and Peter Gauci  
**VICNews:** Greg Martin

**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 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

## Victorian ANGFA National LIFE MEMBERS

Past

**Ron Bowman and Barry Crockford**

Present

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

## 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