



## Peter Gauci is our August 2024 guest presenter with “Keeping and breeding Blue-eyes”



Peter Gauci showing Glenn Briggs his fishroom. Photo: John Lenagan

As a very enthusiastic and accomplished aquarist, and adept at keeping a wide range of fishes, especially Blue-eyes, Peter Gauci is guest presenter at our August 2024 club meeting. Peter has kept and bred a range of aquarium fish, shrimp and plants since the mid 80's, starting when he was a child and in this presentation Peter will share some of his knowledge on how to keep Blue-eyes - those small but beautiful jewels of Sahul (the landmass that includes Australia and New Guinea).

Whilst Peter's talk will cover many of the Blue-eyes (*Pseudomugil* spp) of Australia and New Guinea, particular focus will be on the beautiful Forktail Blue-eye (*Pseudomugil furcatus*) and he'll be discussing the general conditions that he keeps and breeds them in, including tank setup, foods for adults and fry, and water conditions.

Peter's presentation includes many photos of his fish room setup that he'll be discussing in detail, as well as a number of videos of his Blue-eyes that he's taken over the years that show them in full display.



Forktail Blue-eye *Pseudomugil furcatus*. Photo: John Lenagan



# 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

### 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-Luter Salossa
- 1.45pm Nathan Waltham
- 2.30pm Afternoon Tea
- 3.30pm Brendan Ebner
- 4.15pm Closing by ANGFA NAU President
- 5.00pm Clean up

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

Field trip to the Atherton Tablelands

### Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Field trip south to Innisfail



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## President's Report August 2024



Welcome to VICNews 136! At our June club meeting, Riannon Eastman gave a fascinating and beautifully delivered presentation on research that she has been undertaking on the effects of Pharmaceutical pollution, specifically 17 $\alpha$ -ethynylestradiol (EE2) on Southern Crested Weedfish. (EE2) is a synthetic hormone, which is a derivative of the natural hormone, estradiol (E2). EE2 is an orally bio-active estrogen, and is one of the most commonly used medications for humans as well as livestock and aquaculture activity. This drug is a common ingredient in the female contraceptive pill, is widely consumed and has become a widespread problem in the environment as it has a high resistance to degradation, it can accumulate in sediment and can bio-accumulate.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June a number of ANGFA and NFA members travelled up to Benalla in central Victoria to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> small-bodied native fish recovery forum, held at Winton Wetlands just out of town. There were a large number of very good speakers and it was a very productive networking and brainstorming two days. See the report starting on page 12.

**Our 2024 annual general meeting (AGM) will be held at the beginning of our club meeting of Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October. As is the tradition, the committee will stand down and all positions will be made available for anyone interested in taking on any of the key positions or just joining the committee as a committee helper. If no new nominations are put forward, the existing committee will be automatically reelected. If anyone IS interested in joining our committee, we always appreciate and welcome fresh ideas and new energy.**

Our 2024 ANGFA National Convention is very fast approaching! It is going to be a fantastic event, 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 (Germany), Micah Borok (Papua New Guinea), Josh Lawler (Cape York), Johannes Graf (Germany), Wim Heemskirk (Holland) and Marten Salossa (West Papua)! 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 August club meeting we will have a mini-auction including some nice Blue-eyes.

Our next field trip is an **overnight weekend field trip**, sampling on the Moorabool River, north west of Geelong. We are trying to work out the best weekend in August: either on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August or Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>**. Sunny Syme has been in touch with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation and it looks like we will have a TO guide that will join us. See promo on page 20.

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!

Enjoy this edition and we'll see you at the next meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, for a relaxed evening of learning, of fun, plenty of chat time and catching up with fellow fishos!



Above left: Dr Matt McGee at the recent two day "Wetland Warriors" small-bodied native fish recovery forum, held at Winton Wetlands in Benalla Vic. Lower left: Dr Peter Unmack and Dr Jawahar Patil. Above: Chris Lamin and Gary from NFA. Photos: Greg Martin

## Tony Tucceri - ANGFA Vic life member 1958 - 2024



Tony Tucceri at the ANGFA National Convention in Melbourne in 2019. Photo: Franz-Peter Müllenholtz

In 2023 Tony Tucceri was diagnosed with cancer and was admitted to hospital in early June this year. His cancer had spread far beyond what they were expecting and Tony died three days later on 7th June, age 65. Tony is survived by 3 daughters and his wife Anne and was laid to rest in a simple ceremony attended by family and close friends.

Tony was a formidable force as treasurer of ANGFA Victoria for over 10 years. Extremely hard working, a persistent and very persuasive communicator, Tony got a lot done. Amongst many

notable achievements were persuading the local Narre Warren Council of the need to provide an important sanctuary for the endangered *Galaxiella pusilla* population - a seemingly impossible task. The fantastic 2013 ANGFA National Convention in Melbourne was primarily spearheaded by Tony (with a lot of help from the committee of course). Tony helped organise several other interstate conventions and wrote the comprehensive ANGFA Convention Manual for future convention organisers to refer to. Tony, we thank you for your service and time given to ANGFA Victoria! RIP

# Field Trip Files: Langwarrin Creek, Lower reaches, downstream of Moonlit Sanctuary, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024



Langwarrin Creek below the bridge on Callanans Lane. At this location the water tested fresh but a king tide pushes all the way back to here. Photo: Greg Martin

On Saturday 8th June 2024 we were invited by Graeme Phipps of Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park to continue with our ongoing survey of Langwarrin Creek in Pearcedale on Westernport Bay - this time to look at the creek downstream of the sanctuary, where it transitions from fresh to brackish water. In order for us to sample the creek, Graeme had sought permission from the downstream land

owner, John Allnutt, to access the creek on his land. John's property is located between Moonlit Sanctuary and the important mangroves of north west Westernport Bay (Ramsar listed site number 267, protecting a "nationally important expanses of relatively undisturbed, species-rich, saltmarsh vegetation"), and is used primarily for livestock grazing. On the property is a large dam that attracts many waterbirds - we saw Chestnut Teals, Dusky Moorhens and Pacific Black Ducks on the day, and John said Black Swans visit the dam from time to time.



Above: *Crassula helmsii* growing very well in the fresh creek water just outside the sanctuary. Photo: Greg Martin. Right: Tony McCarthy and net. Photo: Rod Wubben





Langwarrin Creek is still freshwater as it flows through the sanctuary and out towards Callanans Lane, but very quickly transitions into regular tidal influence at the western end of John's land. Within a few hundred meters, the creek becomes a Mangrove-lined tidal creek. From there it flows south east through the dense mangroves 'forest' for several kms, via deeper and deeper chanelns until it reaches the sea.

We started just outside the sanctuary boundary where large beds of *Crassula helmsii* and Cumbungi (Bullrush) are a fair indication of a consistant freshwater environment. Here we found several Congolli (Tupong) and a smattering of Gambusia.



Above: Combungi growing in the freshwater section of Langwarrin Creek. Top right: Glenn and Norm photographing a Tupong from the creek. Right: Rod and Tony gearing up. Photos: Greg Martin



Tupong from freshwater in Langwarrin Creek at the border of the sanctuary, well upstream of the bridge on Callanans Lane. Photo: Greg Martin



Langwarrin Creek just below the bridge on Callanans Lane. Tidal push gets to here on the creek. No fish were found at this location on the day, but we'll return with bait traps and some fyke nets to re-survey this section. Note that the pipes under the bridge do not constitute a barrier to upstream fish migration. Photos: Greg Martin

A little further down the creek we dropped into the creek again at the bridge on Callanans Lane. Here, the water tested fresh but there were signs of brackish water reaching up this far: no aquatic vegetation (except a little bit of *Crassula helmsii* that was struggling at this location - in strong contrast to the lush *Crassula* that was growing upstream of the bridge). Furthermore, there were what appeared to be crab holes along the banks.

We didn't find any fish here but the creek here has a good layout (shallow with a flatish bottom) for setting fyke nets in the future, for a more thorough survey.

Next site was on John Allnut's property where Langwarrin Creek very quickly transitions into a mangrove lined fully tidal creek. Getting down close enough to the water, without slipping in, to be able to dip net was a challenge. Norm Muscat used a swimming pool skim net with a very long handle, Glenn Briggs used a square net with a long string and Tony McCarthy used a dip net with a normal length handle.







Above: here Langwarring Creek is transitioning into a mangrove-lined, deep chanel that was filling very quickly with the incoming tide as we were looking for fish. Lower left: Norm and Glenn fighting their way to the water's edge. Middle right: White Mangrove *Avicennia marina*. Photos: Greg Martin. Lower right: Greg giving encouragement to Glenn's netting efforts. Photo: Rod Wubben





Above, Left to right: Norm Muscat, Tony McCarthy and Glenn Briggs sampling Langwarring Creek where it becomes a mangrove lined fully tidal creek. Middle left: a pipefish. Middle right: a small crab found amongst the saltbush. Lower left: juvenile goby. Lower right: Norm sorting juvenile gobies. Photos: Greg Martin





Langwarring Creek looking upstream from the lower paddock bridge on John Allnut's property, right on the edge of the RAMSAR listed area. Photo: Greg Martin

It was tough going but nonetheless several juvenile gobies were caught as well as a small pipefish. Amongst the thick saltbush undergrowth there was a myriad of crab holes that the incoming tide flooded as it advanced quickly over the ground.

We will be back with fyke nets and box traps, that will be set the night before, to do a more comprehensive survey of the lower section of Langwarrin creek . Thank you Graeme Phipps and Michael Johnson for the generous lunch you provided at Moonlit Sanctuary on the day.



Langwarring Creek looking downstream as it transitions to a forest of White Mangroves, eventually flowing out to sea. Photo: Greg Martin

# “Wetland Warriors” forum, Winton Wetlands 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2024



Above: Attendees of the ‘Wetland Warriors’ forum on our field trip to see the wetlands. Photo: Greg Martin

The Wetland Warriors two-day forum held this year at Winton Wetlands, 20 minutes northeast of Benalla in central Victoria, was the fourth time a group of concerned scientists, community groups, CMAs and government bodies (all fish folks) have met up to discuss the plight of our small-bodied wetland specialist fish species. The initial “Wetland Warriors” forum was held in Bendigo in 2021, the second in Deniliquin in NSW in 2022 and the third in Currency Creek near Goolwa in SA 2023.

Conceived by the Tri-State Murray NRM Alliance, these ongoing forums are aimed at brainstorming ways to facilitate easier communication between the states Victoria, NSW and SA along the Murray corridor, to share lessons learned from different conservation projects and to form alliances between folks that are all interested in the wellbeing of our native small-bodied, wetland specialist fish species. Fish don’t recognize state borders and the policies and actions of an upstream state can have devastating effects on the wellbeing of downstream fish populations.

This forum was well attended and was expertly facilitated by Belinda Lowing. Present were representatives from SA Government, Murray Darling Basin Authority, North Central CMA, Goulburn Broken CMA, Victorian Fisheries, NSW fisheries, Local Land Services NSW, Traditional Owners (TOs) representing the Yorta Yorta, Barapa Barapa, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and the First People of the Milewa Mallee mobs, ANGFA Vic, Native Fish Australia, Middle Creek Farm, Nature Glenelg Trust, City of Greater Bendigo, Oz fish, Arthur Rylah Institute, as well as scientists from Canberra University, Monash University and Inland Fisheries Service Tasmania, as well as private consultants who have worked in this field. Unsurprisingly, alliances have been forged, and real and lasting communication and networking is happening between the different representative parties. It has been very nice to be able to get to know many of these folks over several years of striving for the same causes.





Above: Belinda Lowing addressing the ‘Wetland Warriors’ attendees. Photo: Greg Martin



The first day of the forum began, after a very thorough “Welcome to Country” given by proud Yorta Yorta woman Nicole James, and some housekeeping from Belinda, with the first of the keynote presentations. Some of the presentations included:

Dr Matt McGee – Monash University  
 “Why genomes matter for conservation and restoration”. Sequencing a fish’s genome and therefore understanding its genetics is extremely important to be able to have the best chance of long-term success in the conservation of a species, and how this enables tracking provenance over successive generations.

Dr Peter Unmack – Aqua Evolutionary  
 Peter gave a memorable talk “No time to lose, throwing caution slightly to the wind if we wish to conserve freshwater fishes”, about the disappearance of many fish populations in the upper Murray since the most recent devastating drought (his second powerpoint slide was “Everything is F---ked”!) Peter’s message was clear regarding conservation efforts of small bodied native fish from the Murray corridor: “Give it a go – take the risk, because if we don’t the future looks grim for many of these species, and they aren’t going to save themselves!”.



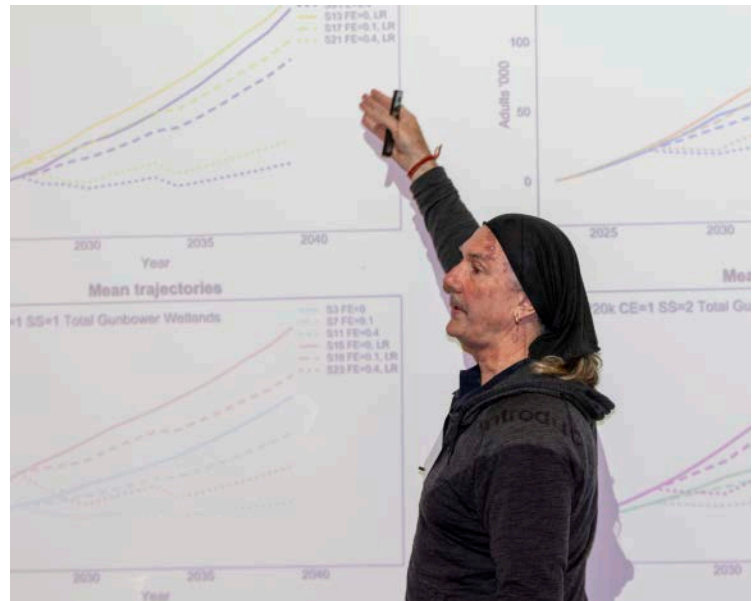
Dr Tarmo Raadik - ARI  
 “Still alive and well: unravelling the secrets of *The Ghost Fish (Galaxias rostratus)* for conservation”. We have learned so much recently about this cryptic species and eDNA sampling has helped locate several new populations. Using surrogate sites and captive breeding at Middle Creek Farm Native Fish Hatchery and Snobs Creek Native Fish Hatchery, the wheels are in motion to bring this species back from possible extinction.



Dr Jawahar Patil - IFS  
 “Genetic and integrated control options for *Gambusia*” was a very technical, yet very exciting presentation on work Jawahar is doing with eliminating *Gambusia* through clever genetic manipulation.



Dr Peter Rose - NCCMA  
 “Get your gudge on!” spoke about the story of the rediscovery of the Victorian Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon. Initial broodstock collection was undertaken with the help of ANGFA and NFA volunteers, and as a result of careful husbandry and kid-gloved care at Middle Creek farm, the breeding cues were cracked (the Victorian Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon breeds differently to its more northern cousins) reproduction was achieved, and decent numbers started to be produced. Several reintroductions to various wild sites have been very successful and now it is very successfully recruiting in the wild: a good news story. This little fish has become a poster child for the effectiveness of conservation collaborations between community groups, CMAs and private small business.



Dr Charles Todd – ARI  
 “Reintroduction of a wetland specialist fish: population models assist learning by doing”. Charles gave a very good talk about the importance of doing computer modelling in order to know what the most effective stocking methods, the optimum stocking numbers and the optimum stocking timing is in order to maximise the chances of restocked fish surviving, recruiting and dispersing.



Dr Silvia Zukowski – Nature Glenelg Trust  
“Winning the fight for survival - Yarra Pygmy Perch back from the brink”. Silvie gave a presentation on the successes Nature Glenelg trust have had with Yarra Pygmy Perch, using surrogate sites in the lower Murray in South Australia.



Jimmy Walker – NSW DPI  
“Reintroducing threatened species – success, failures, and lessons”. Jimmy gave a very honest presentation on the frustrations and successes of trying to create a wetland with suitable habitat for Murray Southern Pygmy Perch in the mid Murray.



Above: ‘Wetland Warriors’ forum attendees listening to Lance Lloyd on our field trip to see the wetlands. Below right: Lance Lloyd. Photos: Greg Martin

After lunch (which included a very good selection of vegan-friendly food to choose from!), we went on a ‘field trip’ to see the wetlands expertly guided by Lance Lloyd. Lance, a Restoration Scientist (Aquatic Ecology) with over 30 years of practical experience in ecology, and management across SE Australia (and the Pacific Islands), leads the fish and aquatic ecological science and environmental water management aspects of the Winton Wetlands project. With his expertise Lance has made a significant contribution to the ecological renewal program and restoration efforts at the Winton Wetlands since 2013.





Following our look at the wetlands, we dropped in to see the Winton Wetlands Growling Grass Frog breeding program. Lisa Farnsworth, a restoration Ecologist with Winton Wetlands in charge of the frog breeding program, showed us the quarantine facility, and the outdoor enclosures used for the captive breeding program. Whilst we didn't see any "Growlers" in the outside 'pits', these enclosures were very impressive in their design and construction. Growling Grass Frogs are very susceptible to the deadly Chitrid fungus so we all had to tread through a couple of footwear sterilizing trays before entering the outdoor enclosure area.

Top left and right, and middle right: Restoration ecologist Dr Lisa Farnsworth showing us around the Growling Grass Frog breeding program at Winton Wetlands. Middle left and lower left: outdoor frog enclosures and a closeup of the Nardoo that is growing well in the ponds. Photos: Greg Martin. Above: Growling Grass Frog. Photo: Craig Broadfield





Then it was back to our conference room for the last of the keynote presentations for the day.

Before dinner, Chris Lamin, Lachlan Nevinson and I slipped out to the Broken River weir at the northern end of Benalla Lake, to have a quick dipnet to see what was there. As Chris and I shone the torch Lachlan waddled in wielding a large dip net and scooped up hundreds of glass shrimp, lots of Carp Gudgeon and a few Murray River Rainbowfish. We were all surprised to find a large Southern Pygmy Perch amongst everything else in the net. Then it was back to join the others...

That evening everyone attending the forum gathered at Zues Coffee Co in Benalla for a very nice two-course dinner, drinks and informal catchup, which was lovely!



Above left and right: Lachlan Nevinson, member of ANGFA Vic and ANGFA NSW, and living near Holebrook in NSW, regularly comes down to field trips in northern Vic. Middle left: Chris Lamin shining the torch so Lachie can see where he's dip-netting. Bottom: (left) a Murray River Rainbowfish and (right) a Southern Pygmy Perch caught on the night. Photos: Greg Martin





Above: Yorta Yorta artist Cilla Atkinson's "Journey of Love". The lizard represents a spiritual journey of love and protection for its young. The connection to land and country is signified by the markings for the mother. Then passed down to continue the journey. Photo: Greg Martin



Above: Part of the sculpture walk celebrating Yorta Yorta artists is this Murray Cod by Glennys Briggs. "Burnanga (Cod) is an iconic fish from Dungula (Murray) River and it is told in a Yorta Yorta Dreamtime story that the mighty Burnanga was one of the creation beings who created Dungula." Photo: Greg Martin



Day two began with a workshop: “Key challenges and knowledge gaps (research & experience) that need to be addressed to accelerate threatened small-bodied fish recovery”, coordinated by Belinda Lowing, where everyone split into groups to discuss, distill and then to write down key points to share with the group.

After Morning tea, the second workshop “Development of a long-term recovery plan for threatened small-bodied fish in the Murray Corridor” was introduced by Dr Sylvia Zukowski and Scott Huntley.

After Lunch was the final workshop “Enhancing local fish communities on Country by utilising natural managed waterbodies as nursery ponds for native fish” was introduced by Iain Ellis and Andrew Briggs.

The forum was wrapped up by 2:30pm as many folks had a long way to travel to get home. It was a great two days and we got important work done towards the continuing story that is the conservation of our native small-bodied wetland specialist fish species. Thank you, Peter Rose, for organising everything.



# Our next Field Trip is: Moorabool River and surrounds 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024



Moorabool River. Photo from Corangamite CMA website

**Where:** Meet at the Meredith Roadhouse, 26 Wallace Street Meredith. GPS coordinates: -37.84636, 144.07633

**Meeting at:** 10.30 am.

**Bring:** waders, buckets, nets, hat, wet weather gear, cameras, field tank, water bottle, snacks, overnight bag etc

**Fishes:** Historically Flat-headed Gudgeon, Common and Spotted Galaxias, Short-headed Lamprey, Australian Grayling, Smelt, Southern Pygmy Perch, River Blackfish, Tupong, Short-finned Eel... who knows?

**Note:** This event is a two day field trip so we will be staying overnight locally. Attendees must organise and pay for their own accommodation.

**For more information:** contact Greg Martin on 0407 094 313 or [gregmartinfishman@gmail.com](mailto:gregmartinfishman@gmail.com)



Moorabool River below Batesford. Photo: Jo Mitchell

# Club meeting details and key contacts of ANGFA Vic

## Office Bearers 2024

**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

## Other fish groups in Victoria

**Aquarium Society of Victoria** Contact: Daryl Maddock (03) 9874 1850  
**Native Fish Australia Vic.** Contact: Tim Curmi 0417 419 765

## Victorian ANGFA National LIFE MEMBERS

Past

Ron Bowman, Barry Crockford and Tony Tucceri

Present

Neil Armstrong, Glenn Briggs and Ken Smales

## ANGFA VIC CLUB MEETINGS

are held at the

**Field Naturalists Club of Victoria**

1 Gardenia Street Blackburn, Victoria

Doors open at 7.30pm

## Remaining meeting dates for 2024:

Friday 2nd August 2024

Friday 4th October 2024 (Includes our AGM)

Friday 6th December 2024



Winton Wetlands, northeast of Benalla Vic. Looking northeast. Photo: Greg Martin