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Purple Swamphen

Porphyrio porphyrio

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Purple Swamphens are common in wetlands across eastern & northern Australia. These noisy birds are often seen wandering around the edge of wetlands in reeds & floating vegetation. They eat the soft shoots or reeds & rushes, eggs, frogs & snails. Purple Swamphens are in small groups & build nests made from reeds. Both parents incubate the eggs & care for the young. **Purple Swamphens** are found in wetlands across Melbourne's south-east. Waterbirds like ducks and swamphens reveal the health of our wetlands. They need a healthy food chain with big populations of aquatic invertebrates, tadpoles & frogs. **Keep roadside gutters and stormwater drains clean and clear of plastics, rubbish & chemicals!** Contact your council to safely dispose of oils, paints and other chemicals.

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Swamp Skink

Lissolepis coventryi

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Swamp Skinks are found in wetlands, saltmarshes, estuaries, seadgelands & billabongs across southern Victoria. They like open areas of low vegetation where the sun's warm. Skinks to sun themselves. Skinks feed on slaters, beetles, fruits, berries and seeds. They quickly retreat when disturbed into burrows or thick tussock grasses & are aggressively territorial. **Swamp Skinks** are active from early spring & breed in September giving birth to live young by mid summer. **The first friends of Dandenong Creek are helping in the riparian revegetation program like the Swamp Skink Creek via the Save Our Skinks (SOS) program.** They've been surveying bushland reserves and planting new habitat to re-connect this important corridor with the help of Living Links.

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Rakali

Hydromys chrysogaster

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Rakali are golden-bellied native Australian water rats with white tipped tails. They look like an Otter with webbed feet, a waterproof coat & are well adapted to aquatic life. Rakali feed on a wide variety of prey from insects to crustaceans, mussels, fish, lizards, small mammals & water birds. They build platypus-like burrows above the water line that both animals may use over time. **Rakali** are found in creeks, estuaries & bays across Melbourne's south-east. As they're a good indicator species for the health of our wetlands. **Living Links** is working to create a web of green spaces and link parklands and remnant bushland, to wetlands and creek corridors across Melbourne's south-east.

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Crimson Rosella

Platyvenus elegans

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Crimson Rosellas are normally seen flying in small flocks and are found in open woodlands and wet eucalypt forests from Queensland to South Australia. They feed on eucalypt seeds, grasses, shrubs, tree blossom & insects. **Crimson Rosellas** grow to around 34cm & nest in tree hollows located high up in old trees. Adults place wood shavings & fine soil in the nest and breed from September to January. Females incubate around 5 eggs and both parents care for the young. **Crimson Rosellas** can be seen in Melbourne's south-east along creek corridors. Tree hollows are an important habitat & used for shelter by many species of birds. **Get nesting by many species of birds, parrots, cockatoos, lorikeets & rosellas all need hollows for shelter and nesting.**

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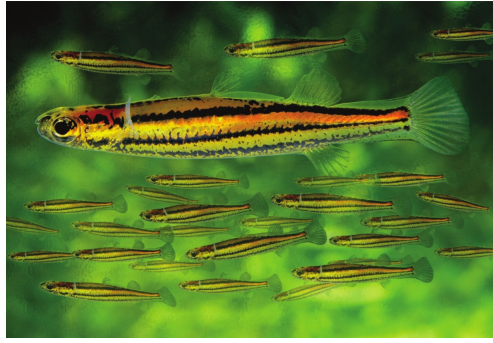
Eastern Banjo Frog

Limnodynastes dumerilii

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Eastern Banjo Frogs are commonly heard at night or after rain & have an attractive & loud 'boink-boink-boink-boink' call. Sometimes called 'nobbieboink', they grow to 70mm & shelter through the day under rocks & logs. They emerge at night to feed on mosquitoes, insects & moths. Females lay eggs in white frothy spawn in aquatic vegetation. Tadpoles are large & dark and found in still water. Wetlands are natural lakes & farm dams. **Wetlands are natural filters that clean stormwater flowing to creeks like the Dandenong. Stormwater carries all sorts of pollutants that can kill plants & animals that can't filter out plastics, detergents, cigarette butts, & stormwater drains. Contact your council to safely dispose of chemicals. Frogs reveal the health of our wetlands & are an indicator species.**

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Dwarf Galaxias

Galaxiella pusilla

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Dwarf Galaxias are a small native fish growing to between 3 & 4cm. They were once common in still water wetlands and the backwaters of creeks & streams across southern Victoria, but are now critically endangered. **Dwarf Galaxias** like wetland habitats with plenty of reeds, rushes and thick aquatic vegetation. When wetlands mud under tracks & logs & stay in a dormant state. They eat insect larvae & crustaceans & spawn from late winter to early spring. Females lay sticky eggs on the underside of vegetation & stones. **Dwarf Galaxias** were once common in the Dandenong Creek. Melbourne Water is conducting a reintroduction program to re-create a network of wetlands & streams along the creek at more than 20 sites along the creek (between Dandenong North and Heathmont), where captive bred fish are being reintroduced.

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Sacred Kingfisher

Todiramphus sanctus

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Sacred Kingfishers are found in woodlands, mangroves, paperbark & melaleuca forests around Australia. They migrate north for winter before returning south to pair up and breed in late spring. Both parents dig a nesting burrow in termite mounds, tree hollows or mounds. They incubate eggs & rear their young in the burrow. They use crutch-like branches on the lookout for crustaceans, reptiles, insects, larvae and fish & swoop down to catch prey.

Sacred Kingfishers can be seen along creek corridors in Melbourne's south-east from late spring to autumn. We can help our local waterways & the birds, fish & frogs that need a clean environment by joining a local Landcare, Coastcare, Beach Patrol or Friends of Group. Living Links is working to create a web of Green spaces across Melbourne's south-east.

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IMAGE: Simon Bennett



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Short-finned Eel

Anguilla australis

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Short-finned Eels prefer slow-flowing rivers, streams & billabongs and can live to 25 years of age. They can breathe through their skin & eat fish, aquatic insects, yabbies, shrimp & frogs. Growing to over a metre, mature eels migrate 4000 km along Australia's east coast to Coral Sea spawning grounds. Females can lay around 3 million eggs. Larvae return as glass eels to Victoria with coastal sea currents. At 1 to 3 years of age young eels migrate back upstream along creeks and rivers across Victoria.

The Kulin indigenous people harvest fish & eels caught in 'basket traps' made from reeds, rushes & plants like *Lomandra longifolia*. Short-finned Eels are found in the Elster, Mordialloc, Scotchmans, Gardiners, Dandenong and Kanarook Creeks across Melbourne's south-east.

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IMAGE: Gunter Schmidt



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Latham's Snipe

Gallinago hardwickii

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Latham's Snipe are long distance migratory birds that breed in Japan & eastern Russia in the northern summer. They migrate to eastern Australia along the East Asian - Australasian Flyway & arrive in September. When hunting, they quietly walk through mud & shallow water on the look out for aquatic insects, earthworms, spiders, beetles & seeds. Latham's Snipe stay for around 6 months & can be seen in a variety of urban wetlands from the Point Cook Coastal Park, Cheetham Wetlands, Yarra River at Banyule Flats, the Edithvale Seaford Wetlands & in the Tirthatun wetlands along the Dandenong Creek. When they arrive they are exhausted & hungry & need to hunt, clean up on a regular basis to keep their long bills free of air-borne parasites.

When we get close to their feeding habitats keep dogs on leads.

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IMAGE: Glenn Chapman



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Aquatic Invertebrates

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Aquatic Invertebrates come in a variety of shapes & sizes. They are an important part of the food chain & feed vast populations of fish, amphibians, platypus, reptiles & birds. They reveal the health of our wetlands. Some prefer fast flowing freshwater while others prefer slow-flowing & still water billabongs with aquatic plants, leaves & twigs. Each species has a unique lifestyle. Caddisfly larvae build a protective home around their soft bodies. Waterboatmen swim like little rowboats and catch an air bubble they use for breathing. Backswimmers have a 3 stage lifecycle from eggs to nymph to winged adult. Mayfly larvae breathe through gills & each of their legs is adapted for healthy filtration of water.

Aquatic Invertebrates in wetlands across Melbourne's south-east, keep roadsides gutters & stormwater drains clean and clear of plastics, rubbish and chemicals!

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IMAGE: Chris Allen



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Yabby

Cherax destructor

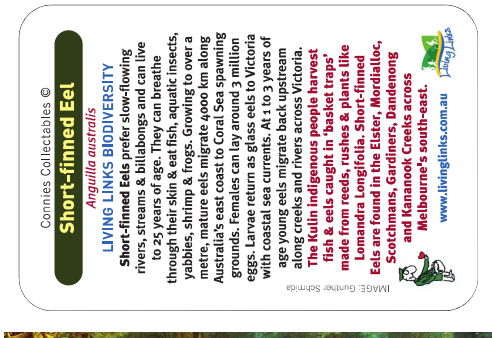
LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Yabbies are found in freshwater rivers, creeks & dams & are the most widespread Australian crayfish. They can grow to 30cm & are found in a range of colours from brown and blue to black. Yabbies are detritivores that eat algae, decomposing plants and decaying fish & animal remains by day or night. They're important in the food chain for animals like fish, eels, turtles and platypus. Yabbies can tolerate poor water conditions & long periods of drought by burrowing into mud & lying dormant in mucky creek beds & swamp margins.

Yabbies are an important part of the riparian ecosystem. They are found in Melbourne's south east. Enclosed Yabby traps (like opera house nets) are illegal in public waterways like the Dandenong Creek as they can trap & kill air-breathing animals like platypus & turtles.

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IMAGE: Luciano Traversari



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New Holland Honeyeater

Phylidonyis novaehollandiae

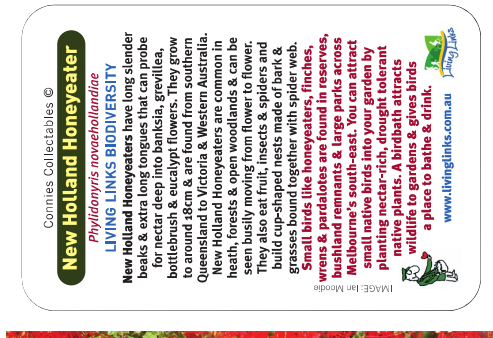
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New Holland Honeyeaters have long slender beaks & extra long tongues that can probe for nectar deep into banksia, grevillea, bottlebrush & eucalypt flowers. They grow to around 18cm & are found from southern Queensland to Victoria & Western Australia. New Holland Honeyeaters are common in heath, forests & open woodlands & can be seen busily moving from flower to flower. They also eat fruit, insects & spiders and build cup-shaped nests made of bark & grasses bound together with spider web.

Small birds like honeyeaters, tinches, warns & pardalotes are found in reserves, bushland remnants & large parks across Melbourne's south-east. You can attract native plants, insect-rich dogwoods, bit native plants. A birdbath attracts wildlife to gardens & gives birds a place to bathe & drink.

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IMAGE: Len Moulden



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IMAGE: Gunter Schmidt





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Powerful Owl

Ninox strenua

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Powerful Owls are Australia's largest nocturnal bird & found from south-eastern Queensland to Victoria in forests, woodlands & wet sheltered gullies. These endangered birds are sometimes seen in parks & home gardens close to the Dandenong Creek.

Powerful Owls are monogamous, mate for life and nest from late Autumn in old trees with large hollows. They eat a variety of wild fruits, flying foxes & birds.

Powerful Owls have a 100cm wingspan & with large yellow to orange talons. They're often seen with prey under foot. Found in large parks & along the Dandenong Creek,

we can help them by protecting large hollow bearing trees. Household rat poison is killing many owls & frogmouths.

If they eat poisoned rodents they also die. Please use traps to catch mice & rats!

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IMAGE: Ben Middle



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Sugar Glider

Petaurus breviceps

LIVING LINKS BIODIVERSITY

Sugar Gliders are small nocturnal gliding possums that grow to around 40cm. They live in a variety of eucalypt forests and woodlands across eastern & northern Australia.

Sugar Gliders stretch a membrane between their fifth finger & ankle and can glide & parachute to around 70 metres from tree to tree. They live in families & breed between August & October in old trees with hollows that are used for nests. They have a variety of calls including a distinctive and repeated 'yip yip' and eat wattle gum, insects, moths, eucalypt sap & pollen.

Sugar Gliders are found along the Dandenong Creek & in the Valley Reserve. We can help them by preserving old trees with hollows.

To help Sugar Gliders migrate & find new habitats, Living Links is working to create a web of green spaces across Melbourne's south-east.

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IMAGE: Lechman Transperence



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Butterflies and Bees

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Meadow Argus Butterflies are migratory & found in a variety of woodlands, grasslands and gardens across Australia. They have a 4cm wingspan & eyespots on their wings designed to scare away predators. Adults fly fast about one metre from the ground & have 1-2 rapid wing beats followed by a short glide. They frequently feed on flowers.

Blue-banded Bees are found across Australia in woodlands, grasslands, parks & home gardens. They have characteristic blue bands on their thorax & legs. They fly to flowers & vibrate their wings to release pollen.

Bees and Butterflies pollinate our plants. They love organic gardens so please don't use pesticides. Planting native wildflowers attracts them into home gardens. Along with ladybirds, ants, beetles, spiders & dragonflies they're good for the environment and are important in the food chain for birds, frogs, reptiles & mammals.

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IMAGE: Robert Crane & Ben Middle