

Melton Environment Group

Yes, I would like to join or learn more about Melton Environment Group.

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Phone: HomeWork

Mobile:

Email:

Membership details (GST):

Single/Concession: \$10

Family \$20

Corporate: \$50

Yes, I would like to make a donation to MEG

\$5 \$10 \$20 Other \$

How did you hear about Melton Environment Group?

Melton Environment Group Inc.

PO Box 481, Melton, 3337

No. AOO40049F A.B.N 47 411575097

President: Daryl Akers 0438 277 252

email: daryljpolyanthesmos@outlook.com

Vice President: Doug Godsil

Meetings on 3rd Wednesday of the month at Don Nardella's office, Alexandra Street at 7.30 pm

Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>;

Blog: <http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

Facebook: facebook.Melton-Environment-Group



Over 160 species of birds have been observed in & around Melton. Melton is fortunate in having many areas of natural beauty, although these are often unnoticed or underrated. Their future survival depends upon our continued care and protection. Melton has many easily accessible areas with a wide diversity of birdlife. These include:

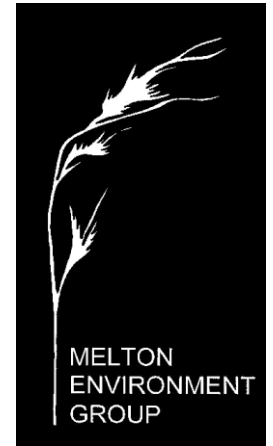
- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Caroline Springs | Botanica Springs |
| Toolern Regional Park | Toolern Creek |
| Arnolds Creek | Little Blind Creek |
| Ryans Creek | Werribee River |
| Melton Botanic Garden | |

Other places rich in birdlife are:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Eynesbury Forest | Pinkerton Forest |
| Melton Gilgai Woodland | Toolern Vale |
| Strathtulloh Woodland | Long Forest Mallee |



Photos by Nora Peters



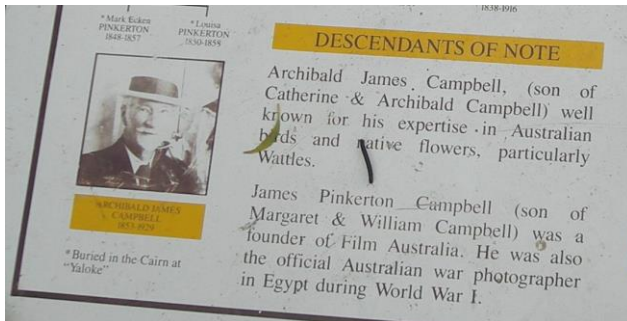
Melton Environment Group *History of Bird Watching in Melton*



Bird watching has a long history in this region, since the 1880's! We sometimes think that interest in our natural environment is a modern phenomenon but bird watching and natural history were clearly popular with many people over a long period of time. The Melton region has long been recognized as a place to see birds!

Melton and our local region has been in the forefront of interest in the natural environment for a very long time. Bird watchers have been coming here to observe birdlife in Long Forest Mallee, as well as at Toolern Vale, since the 1890's. In the days before privately owned vehicles became commonplace, bird watchers would travel to Melton by train, then travel overland to Long Forest Mallee or Toolern Vale. Then return home again by train! Indeed the Werribee Gorge has also long been a magnet for naturalists and bird lovers since the 1890's!

Field Naturalists Club of Victoria member and early ornithologist A J Campbell was a member of the Pinkerton family, early settlers at Melton. His interest in birds and natural history was no doubt fuelled by many visits to Pinkerton Forest and the nearby Werribee River. He advocated the creation of 'Wattle Day' to commemorate these most well-known of Australian flowers; and as a celebration of Australia.



A J Campbell (as per plaque in Pinkerton Forest)

Toolern Vale Naturalists Hut

The Naturalists' Hut was built by Vern Davey in 1933. Vern Davey was an apiarist with a property at Melliodora Park in Toolern Vale. Mr Davey was also a passionate bird lover and established the Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary at his property in the 1930's. At about this time he also constructed a Naturalists' Hut on the property, so that naturalists and bird watchers

could stay there to better observe the wildlife of Toolern Vale.

The Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary is described in detail in 'Birds of the Long Forest 1889–2005' pages 102-110

'At his own expense. Mr Davey constructed a cabin, which was officially opened in October 1933 for the use of visiting bird watchers, and the area was frequently visited from that date up to the 1960's.'
Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005 page 11



'The Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary was a place of constant activity, but never more than during the Gould League's Bird Days, when school children visited for a day of nature study. The children were escorted in groups around a series of birds' nests, with a 10 minute talk given at each station by a knowledgeable birdwatcher.with up to 1000 children attending

Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005 page 106

A detailed description of the Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary and a photo of the hut 12 1934 was recorded by John Gray in the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union's magazine 'The Emu' Vol XXXIV October 1934:

'Even in winter one can record between fifty and sixty species of birds without any difficulty in this 240 acre sanctuary, whilst in the spring and summer months, visiting and nomadic species often bring the bird list up into the neighbourhood of seventy.'

http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=MU934120.pdf;

John Gray in the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union's magazine 'The Emu' Vol XXXIV October 1934 made the comment:

'It behoves Melbourne ornithologists to see that interest in this fine area is not allowed to wane'

http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=MU934120.pdf;

The Naturalists Hut is a priceless piece of history, not merely relating to Melton but a valuable reminder of the activities of pioneering naturalists, as well as highlighting the activities of both local and Melbourne birdwatchers.



Bird watching is still a popular activity in Melton. Birdlife Australia have regular bird surveys, see details on: <http://birdlife.org.au>; as do Melton Environment Group. MEG also conduct regular bird walks in Melton.