

VICTORIA Inc. Regional Group

VIC NEWS

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“Where Salties dare” John Lenagan’s highlights from two field trips to far north Queensland in 2015.



Redfin Crested Goby *Cristagobius rubripectoralis*. Photo: John Lenagan

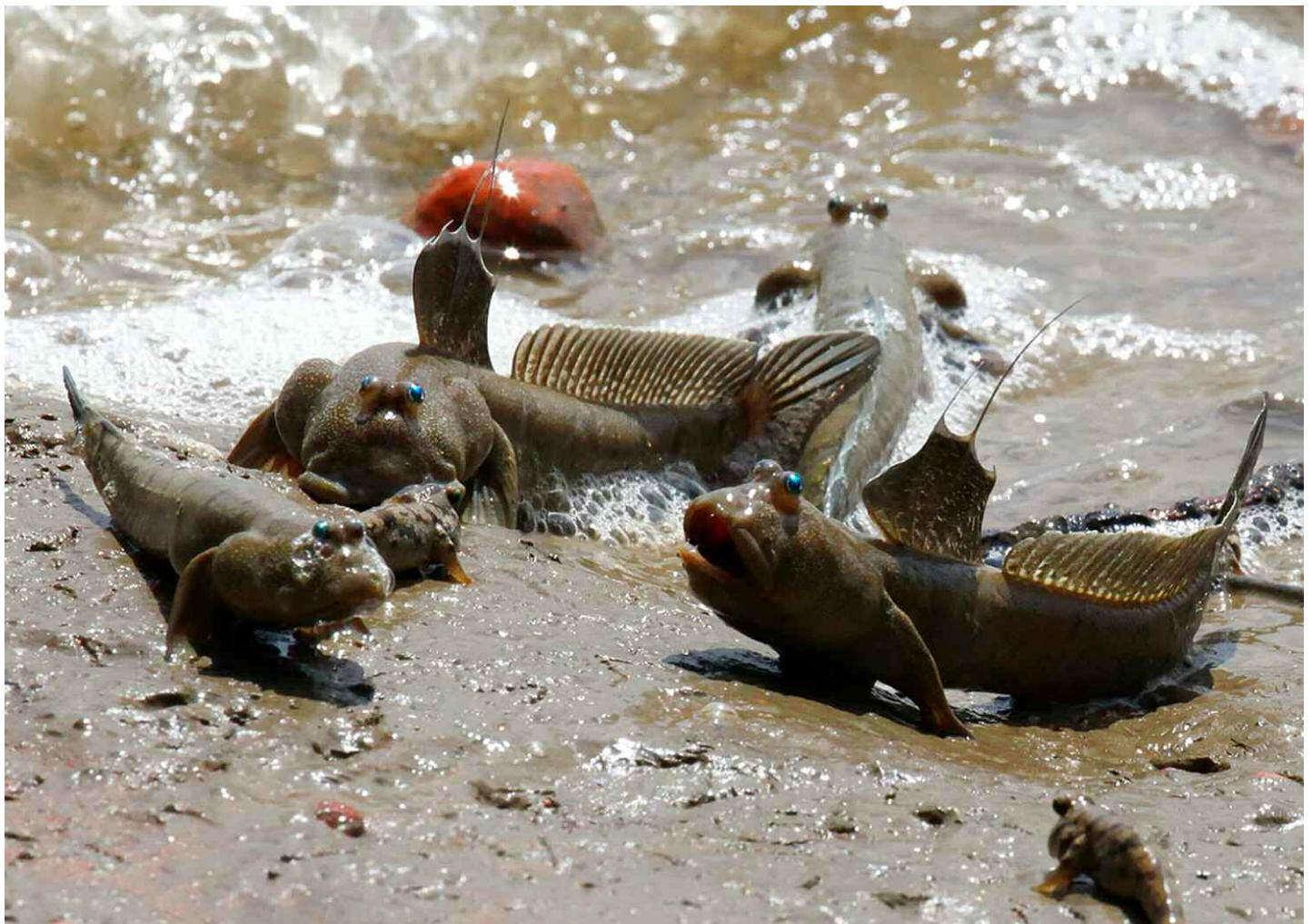
John Lenagan will be presenting highlights from recent 2015 field trips into Queensland's far north and Gulf Country. This will be a unique presentation revealing footage of many underwater habitats and various encounters with the local native fish.

The excursions included a 2,500 km road trip taken with Gary Moores beginning in Townsville and going up through the Gulf and back down through the Simpson Desert to Cooper Creek.

Then there was a ten day field trip with Dr Michael Hammer from Cairns to Weipa and back through Cooktown and the Daintree, with many tips on



Netted Cheek Drain Goby *Mugilogobius notospilus*
Photo: John Lenagan



Blue-spotted Mudskippers *Boleophthalmus caeruleomaculatus*. Photo: John Lenagan



Krefft's Short-necked Turtle *Emydura krefftii*.
Photo: John Lenagan



Orange-fingered Yabby. This freshwater crayfish is part of the *Cherax depressus* complex. Photo: John Lenagan

how to stay alive and afloat in the mangroves teeming with "Salties".

Included will be some footage from the many river systems flowing east off the dividing range into the Daintree as compared to those flowing west back into the Mitchell catchment system.

There are over 80 freshwater and estuarine fish identified from the 18 river systems surveyed. The



presentation has been compiled from over 12 hours of raw footage into a final 45 minute edited film, capturing the rugged beauty of these remote areas and the few remaining sanctuaries where these resourceful fish are still congregating after a 5-year long drought which has impacted most of Queensland's far north.

Typical of John's presentations there will be the odd character study of some of the other unique wild life encountered along the way.

Come and join us as John reveals these amazing places, habitats and the diverse fish encountered.

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Editor's Note



This edition of VICNews is a little bit smaller than the previous bumper edition as I had to eventually break the cycle of bigger and bigger editions!

First up: John Lenagan's presentation for our April meeting is a not-to-be-missed event and we have provided some excellent photos in the first three pages of this edition as a teaser of the kind of quality of photographs we can expect to see during his presentation.

Secondly, we have provided a comprehensive article on the field trip we ran to Powelltown on 12th March, which replaced the Murray River combined clubs field trip that was cancelled due to a blue-green algae outbreak in the area we were to sample in.

Lastly, there are a couple of updates from the ABC website that are very relevant to what we are interested in.



A panoramic photo of the Little Yarra River near Powelltown; home to good numbers of the species we found and a superb example of the classic central Victorian cool mountain stream. More information in the field trip article within this edition. Photo: Greg Wallis

President's Report April 2016



Welcome to another great edition of VICNews. We started the year on a high note with lots of members turning up to see Bruce Sambell's presentation, on collecting and preparing the broodstock for breeding Jade Perch, in our February meeting. It was wonderful to see Ron Bowman and Barry Crockford at the meeting representing the original ANGFA F1 generation.

In our last committee meeting John Cousins gave us fair warning of his intention to "retire" from committee involvement. Even though John hasn't held an official position on the committee for a couple of years he has still been very involved in ANGFA duties, even hosting the most recent committee meeting. John's perpetually positive and "she'll-be-right-mate" attitude will be sorely missed. The Specialist Rainbow Breeders Group will still be co-ordinated by John Cousins at this stage.

Our next field trip will be held in May. We will be surveying 4 creeks, starting in Frankston at Sweetwater Creek and ending at Chinaman's Creek in west Rosebud. As the date draws closer we will post specific details on the ANGFA VIC Facebook page. FIELD TRIPS ARE FUN!, and a great way to catch up with like-minded mates in the field.

Don't forget to pay your membership fees! John Lenagan can be paid on the night of the meeting but it is easier for him if you go online and pay with PayPal, as he has his hands full with fish purchases and sales from the trade table.

Lastly, please make sure that you sign the ANGFA meeting attendance book on arrival to each meeting; it enables us, amongst other things, to keep accurate records of attendance numbers.

See you at the next meeting this coming Friday 1st April 2016.

The Field Trip Files: Little Yarra River and the upper Latrobe River. 12th March 2016



The upper Latrobe River at our sample site. Tree ferns and King ferns made up the entire lower story of the forest giving lots of in-stream habitat from their fallen fronds. Photo: Greg Martin

Text by Greg Martin.

Our planned annual field trip to the Murray River downstream of the Yarrawonga weir, over the Labour Day weekend, was cancelled due to high levels of blue-green algae detected in the river. This effected a large area that extended from Lake Hume all the way down to Lake Boga, just upstream of Swan Hill.

On hearing about the blue-green algae issue, and as field trip officer for ANGFA VIC, I sought advice from a friend who does a lot of work up that way and he forwarded me a safety fact sheet from Emergency Management Victoria which included the following advice:

- all personnel should avoid direct contact with water affected by blue-green algae, as high levels of blue-green algae are potentially toxic to humans.
- personnel are to avoid direct skin contact with contaminated water or equipment that has come into contact with contaminated water (even if the ground or



This hole in the mud bank looked like a Burrowing Crayfish burrow but we couldn't confirm that it was without actually seeing the occupant. Photo: Greg Martin



A medium sized Blackfish from the upper Latrobe River. These Blackfish are still called *Gadopsis marmorata* but will be a new species once the morphometric work has been finished and there has been a taxonomic revision of the group. Photo: John Lenagan

equipment are dry). Blue-green algae can be present at microscopic levels and not easily detected, if in doubt assume blue-green algae is present. Skin rashes, itchiness, sore eyes, ears, nose, asthma, numbness of lips and limbs, nausea vomiting or diarrhoea are symptoms of exposure.

- personnel who come into contact with affected water should wash affected skin immediately in cool clean non-contaminated water.
- do not use affected water for cooking, drinking, washing or showering, boiling the affected water will not make it safe for these purposes.
- PPE, clothing and equipment, contaminated by BGA should be removed as soon as it is safe to do so and washed thoroughly in clean cool water before reusing.

In light of this alarming information I decided that the risk was too great and cancelled our involvement in the field trip to the Murray River, sending out notification via Facebook and email informing members of the decision, adding that there would be a day field trip run somewhere locally on the Saturday. On Friday I decid-

ed on the Little Yarra and upper Latrobe Rivers as the headwaters of both rivers are easily accessed from the Powelltown/Noojee area.

On Saturday 12th March John Lenagan and I drove up to Powelltown to meet Greg Wallis outside the “Powelly” Pub. From there it was a short drive up the Noojee Road to find the headwaters of the Latrobe River on the other side of the ridge. We had looked at a map on John’s tablet that clearly marked where the Latrobe River began about 3 kilometres SSE of the township of Powelltown “as the crow flies”. We were able to access the upper Latrobe River from near the junction of Boys Camp Firetrail, a logging road, and the Yarra Junction – Noojee Road (C425). After a short climb down, negotiating our way through tree ferns and deep leaf litter, we found a crystal clear shallow stream lined with ferns. It had a sandy bottom and deep muddy soil along the banks. There was lots of in-stream habitat in the way of fallen bark, leaves and tree fern fronds and there were deeper parts where the bank had an overhang. Location: 37°52'90"S 145°46'53.4"E.



Different sized Blackfish from the upper Latrobe River. Photo: John Lenagan



Photos above and below: A juvenile stage of one of four mussels species collectively known, at this stage, as the Coastal River Mussel *Hyridella drapeta*. Photo: John Lenagan



After taking photos of the undisturbed stream we climbed back up to the vehicles to gather our nets and buckets. On our return back down to the water we commenced the process of carefully dip-netting our way upstream. Our haul: six small sized Blackfish between 25mm and 50mm long, and one medium sized Blackfish just over 100mm long. Also we found a Mussel about 40mm long. We noted that although the river here was very shallow, the Blackfish were recruiting in good numbers.

After carefully photographing our catch and then returning it to the stream, we packed up our gear and headed back down towards Powelltown to where the Little Yarra River flows under Monett Road, on the outskirts of the township. Location: 37°51'55.37"S 145°46'5.95"E. This part of the upper Little Yarra River is similar to the upper Latrobe River in as much as they

are both clean, clear and cold mountain streams, so we expected to find similar species at this second sampling site.

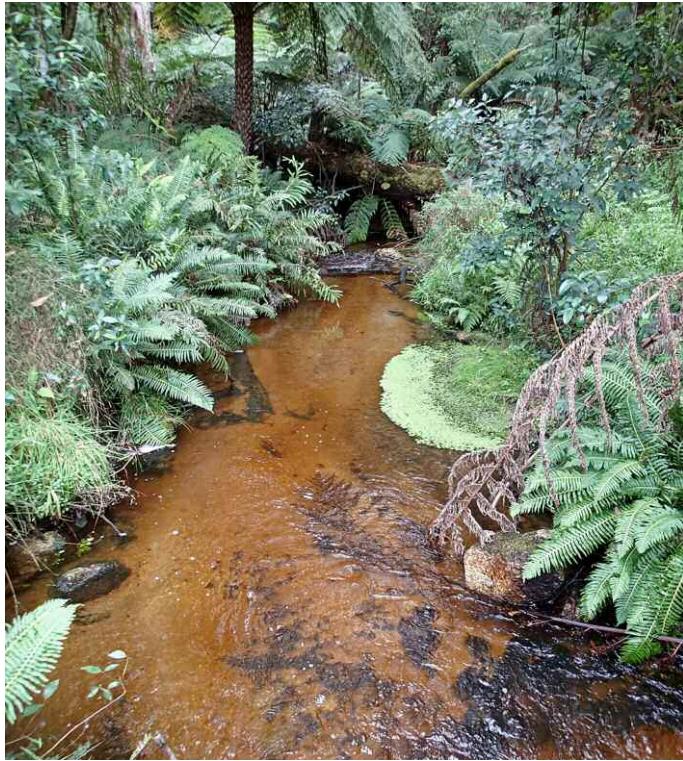
This river was a bit deeper than the previous one so there was a good opportunity to get some in-stream footage at this location. Greg placed two cameras in two different parts of the river upstream of where we were going to sample. Greg and I had some lunch while John chased Damselflies and Butterflies to shoot with his camera.



Greg Wallis photographs Blackfish from the upper Latrobe River. The river gravel, although cleaned very carefully, made the water in the field tank a bit cloudy so we set up another tank in front of it filled with drinking water. This proved to be good technique to enable us to "get the shots". Photo: Greg Martin



The Little Yarra River at Powelltown below the Monett Road Bridge. Photo: Greg Wallis



In the middle right of this photo you can see a large patch of Babies Tears *Soleirolia soleirolii*, an invasive if not beautiful aquatic marginal plant. A healthy Fuchsia bush was also growing by the river.

Photo: Greg Martin

After lunch Greg and I sampled the river, spending approximately the same amount of time dip-netting as at the first site. We used a few different techniques: me holding two nets in the current whilst Greg roughed the instream material to flush anything out just upstream of me, and individually poking around the nooks and crannies to see what we could catch. The first method flushed out a good sized Blackfish about 270mm long.

Our catch for this part of the Little Yarra River: 1 large and 5 small Blackfish *Gadopsis marmorata*, 4 Ornate Galaxias *Galaxias ornatus* of various sizes between 30mm and 80mm and 7 freshwater crayfish of various sizes from tiny to medium in size; all the Gippsland Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus kershawi*. Once again we (John Lenagan) carefully photographed the animals before we returned them to the river.

It is interesting to note that we found so many freshwater crayfish in the Little Yarra River and none just over the divide in the Latrobe River; with the same sampling time and methods.

On the way home, after an important coffee stop in Little Yarra, we had a look at the Little Yarra River just upstream of Yarra Junction to see what we could



Closeup detail of a medium sized Blackfish showing the pores in the head and long divided pelvic ray. Photo: John Lenagan



An Ornate Galaxias *Galaxias ornatus* showing some trematode infestation. Photo: John Lenagan



Several Gippsland Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus kershawi* of different sizes, a Blackfish *Gadopsis marmorata* and an Ornate Galaxias *Galaxias ornatus*, from the Little Yarra River at Poweltown. Note the condensation on the viewing glass of the field tank – the water was so cold that, even though the weather on the day was mild and not particularly humid, the glass had to be de-fogged regularly for John to be able to shoot the required photos. Photo: John Lenagan



Closeup of a juvenile Gippsland Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus kershawi* showing the lovely striping in the tail.
Photo: John Lenagan



Main photo: John Lenagan, always photographing something, seen here following Damselflies along the Little Yarra River. *Photo: Greg Wallis.*
Unbeknown to them at the time but eventually startlingly apparent, John and Greg were also collecting Leeches; see photo inset of the back of
Greg's shirt. *Inset Photo: Greg Martin*



A Ringed Xenica Butterfly *Geitoneura acantha*.
Photo: John Lenagan

find. The river is much bigger there and although it is quite fast flowing, looks less pristine. Greg and I dip-netted for about 10 minutes in and around the Lowes Road bridge, finding only a juvenile Southern Victorian Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus yarraensis* and some Glass Shrimp. After we photographed this crayfish, we headed home.

It was another great day in the bush with some exciting results. Thank you John Lenagan and Greg Wallis for making the day so worthwhile and enjoyable, and a special thank you to Tarmo Raadik for identifying the fish and crustaceans found on this field trip.



A Blue Damselfly. *Photo: John Lenagan*



The Little Yarra River at Yarra Junction, just upstream of the confluence with the Yarra River. *Photo: Greg Martin*



Large photo: A juvenile Southern Victorian Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus yarraensis* from the Little Yarra River at Yarra Junction.
Photo inset: Detail of the metatarsal spines that helped to identify this species. *Photos: Greg Martin*

Ecologists breeding native fish in dams to boost populations through the Murray River



A 'surrogate dam' ecologists are using to breed native South Australian fish species before returning to wetlands in the lower Murray River. *Photo: Dr Nick Whiterod*

Farm dams are proving useful as fish nurseries to help boost South Australian native species populations. There are nine surrogate dams throughout the state, with the bulk in the lower Murray region, which are providing much needed refuge for native South Australian fish species.

Ecologists are using the dams to breed up populations of endangered or declining species such as River Blackfish, Yarra Pygmy Perch, Murray Hardyhead, Southern Pygmy Perch and the Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon.

The 'purple spots' were thought to be extinct for 30 years, until a chance discovery by a shack owner in 2002.

Since then, scientists have been breeding the fish in captivity and releasing the juvenile fish back into the wild.

Aquatic ecologist Dr Nick Whiterod said 70 purple spots were taken from a surrogate dam this week, and released into a wetland between Mannum and Murray Bridge, 75 kilometres east of Adelaide.

"Originally we were releasing fish that were only two centimetres," he said. "Now that we can grow the fish out in these surrogate dams, this week we released fish that were about five centimetres. The bigger fish are more likely to be able to combat predators and have a better survival rate."

Dr Whiterod said he was pleased with the results he was collecting from a purple spot monitoring program.

He said he was able to recapture a fish from an

earlier release, which was a sign the fish was becoming established in the wetland.

"This individual was six centimetres long, so I estimate it was released about a year ago.

Dr Nick Whiterod: "It was healthy, it was colourful, which tells us it's not just hanging on, it's doing well and is likely to breed in the future."

The surrogate farm dam project is a collaboration between Aquasave and SARDI with funding from the South Australian Government and Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Researchers initially investigated 60 sites, with nine surrogate dams now in use across the state.

Dr Whiterod said farmers had played a big part in the project's success.

"We've had a few that have really championed the species, they didn't know anything about it until we asked if we could put some fish in their dam.

"We had one dam where only 200 fish were released, and the population increased quite rapidly to 5000.

"That's the idea, that the dams are self-sustaining, so we can harvest some fish to release into other habitat, and the fish in the dam will just breed back up again."

From ABC Rural, by Narelle Graham.

First posted on 3rd March 2016



A Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon ecologists captured in a lower Murray River wetland. They say its a sign of a successful breeding program. *Photo: Dr Nick Whiterod*

Native fish return to River Murray floodplain after creation of stable water levels



The carp gudgeon is one of the native fish found in the Katarapko floodplain. *Photo supplied by Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin*

Native fish species are flooding back into the Katarapko wetlands near the River Murray in South Australia's Riverland.

Key points:

- Native fish numbers bounce back after obstacles removed from waterway
- "Ladders" helping fish to breed in floodplain
- Species include carp gudgeon, unspecked hardyhead and Murray River rainbowfish.

Fish numbers in Eckert Creek, in the floodplain and near the town of Berri, had shrunk due to restricted flows and obstacles.

But wetland ecologist Lara Suior said numbers had grown in the past year after a log crossing was removed and fishways, also known as fish ladders, were installed.

"Locks and weirs have created stable water levels, meaning native fish have been unable to follow their natural cues to move into the upper reaches to breed and spawn," Ms Suior said.

"The log crossing has been a significant barrier to the flow of water and movement ... in the upper reaches of the system for many decades."

Ms Suior said recent works in the area including the completion of new fishways had helped facilitate

breeding.

"Completion of the new log crossing regulator and fishway, and the removal of associated smaller barriers in the creeks now gives native fish [the] ability to move more readily in response to changes in water level and water flow, which may promote breeding," she said.

"Fishways provide native fish with the flow, velocity and light conditions that they need to move naturally throughout the system."

Ms Suior said the Eckert Creek and Katarapko system provided diverse habitats for native fish species, including the unspecked hardyhead, carp gudgeon and Murray River rainbow fish.

She said the annual summer monitoring program had found increased numbers of those species.

"This is a promising outcome which demonstrates how barriers in systems such as this can impact on the movement of native fish," Ms Suior said.

Natural Resources South Australian Murray-Darling Basin's community partner, Katfish Reach, will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the new fishways.

From ABC Rural, by Isabel Dayman
First posted on 1st March 2016.

Club Meeting Details

General Meetings:

ANGFA Victoria's meetings are held on the first Friday of every second month starting the year in Feb, at The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria which is situated at 1 Gardenia Street Blackburn. (Melways map 47 K11). Doors open at 7:30pm. Meetings start at 8.15pm sharp and aim to be finished by 10pm, followed by supper.

Next Meeting Date: Friday 1st April 2016

ANGFA Vic Committee Meetings:

Venues: To be announced. Contact Kwai Chang Kum if you would like to be further involved (0430 434 488).

Trading Table

Any financial ANGFA member who has fish, plants or live food that they would like to sell is invited to bring their goods to the trade table. All items being presented for sale must be clearly marked: fish showing species name and location if applicable and plants identified by species. Goods will be accepted prior to 7.45pm and the Trading Table will operate between 7.45 and 8.15pm.

ANGFA Vic key contacts



President: Kwai Chang Kum
Phone: 0430 434 488



Treasurer: John Lenagan
Phone: 0413 730 414



Secretary: Glenn Briggs
Phone: 0408 771 544



Vice President and Membership Officer: Gary Moores
email: kathmoores@yahoo.com.au



VICNews: Greg Martin
Phone: 0407 094 313
email: greg@aquariumsbydesign.com.au



ANGFA Vic Website: Lyndon Giles
email: webmaster@angfavic.org

Contribute to ANGFA Vic on Facebook

ANGFA Vic Website: www.angfavic.org

ANGFA National Website: www.angfa.org.au

Postal mail: ANGFA Victoria

P.O. Box 298 Chirnside Park, Victoria. 3116.

Other Fish Groups in VIC

EDAS

Meets last Friday of the month starting Jan.
Contact: Daryl Maddock (03) 9874 1850

EDAS Plant Study Group

Meets Second Friday of the month (at various members' homes).
Contact: Eddie Tootell (03) 9337 6435 (a.h.)

Aquarium Society of Victoria (AS of V)

Meets last Friday of the month, alternating with EDAS.
Contact: Daryl Maddock (03) 9874 1850

Marine Aquarium Society of Victoria

Contact: MASOV (03) 9830 6073.

Victorian Cichlid Society

Meets first Wednesday of the month.
Contact: Graham Rowe (03) 9560 7472.

Join ANGFA now!!!

New expanded membership package now applies

To join ANGFA or to renew your membership online, follow these 4 easy steps:

1. Go to www.angfavic.org
2. Click on membership
3. Select membership renewal tab for ANGFA then ...
4. Click the Paypal icon to pay with Paypal.

To pay with your Debit Card or your Credit Card talk to the Treasurer John Lenagan at a meeting.

If you want to use snail mail and pay by cheque, print out the form below, fill out your details and send it to: ANGFA Victoria, P.O.Box 298, Chirnside Park. Vic. 3116

Join ANGFA now and enjoy benefits including regular meetings, digital versions of two regional club magazines and buyer discounts.

To the Treasurer, ANGFA Victoria, Please accept my application for membership to ANGFA.

(Please print)

NAME.....

.....

ADDRESS

.....

Postcode.....

Phone Bus

A/H:.....

1. I enclose \$45 for my ANGFA Membership which includes digital copies of Fishes of Sahul (FOS), VICNews and the ANGFA NSW magazine.
2. I enclose \$65 (in total) to get a printed copy (at the end of the year) of the four editions of FOS for this subscription year, as well as the above items.

Forward application and cheque to: ANGFA Victoria, P.O.Box 298, Chirnside Park. Vic. 3116.

Businesses who support ANGFA Victoria

The businesses listed below actively promote Australian Native Fishes by making native fishes available in the aquarium trade.

ANGFA suggests that members show their appreciation by supporting these businesses.

Amazing Amazon

Paul and Ben
365 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley
Phone: (03) 9545 0000
www.amazingamazon.com.au

Aquagreen

Dave Wilson
Phone: (08) 8983 1483
aqua.green@bigpond.com

Aquariums By Design

Greg Martin
Phone: 0407 094 313
greg@aquariumsbydesign.com.au

Coburg Aquarium

Greg Kirby
Phone: (03) 9354 5843
232-236 Bell Street, Coburg
www.coburgaquarium.com.au

Exotic Aquatic

Adrian
300a Neerim Road, Carnegie
Phone: (03) 9079 3899
www.exoticaquatic.com.au

Subscape Aquarium

Justin and Kim
Phone: (03) 9427 0050
310/312 Victoria Street, Richmond

Upmarket Aquarium

Greg Kirby
Phone: (03) 9600 9051
442 Queen Street, Melbourne

Victorian Reptile Supplies

Adam
Phone: (03) 8742 1283
6/75-85 Elm Park Drive, Hoppers Crossing