



VICTORIA Inc. Regional Group VICNEWS

Number 140 April 2025

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

Published by ANGFA Victoria Inc.

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Our 4th April club meeting features 2 mini presentations:
“Feeding Fry” and “Far North Queensland Kuranda Shrimp - the very effective cleanup crew for fry tanks”

Then a “Nano Natives” auction.

On the night we will have a very special fish as our door prize!



Red Finned Blue-eye *Scaturiginichthys vermeilipinnis*, only found in the Artesian springs of the Edgebaston Station region central Queensland, now being captive bred at Middle Creek Farm and available for the first time to hobbyists! Photo: Jason Sulda



Forktail Blue-eye *Pseudomugil furcatus*. Photo: Gunther Schmida



Red Neon Blue-eye *Pseudomugil luminatus*. Photo: Hans Evers

Chris Lamin and Peter Gauci are going to share hard-earned important tips in two mini presentations: “Feeding Fry” and “FNQ Kuranda Shrimp - The very effective cleanup crew for fry tanks” respectively. Then we will have a mini auction with some special lots available including *Pseudomugil gertrudae* “Woomera Head” form that was first collected by Josh Lawler, *Pseudomugil signifer* “Ross River” form, an absolutely spectacular blue eye collected by Matt M, Peter U, and others. *Pseudomugil furcatus* “Forktail Blue Eye”, *Pseudomugil luminatus* “Red Neon Blue Eye”. *Pseudomugil mellis* “Honey Blue-eye”,

Galaxiella pusilla “Dwarf Galaxias”, *Rhadinocentrus ornatus* “Bribie Island form” and *Melanotaenia eachamensis* “Maalan River”, Peacock Gudgeon, *Melanotaenia* sp. “Tully River” (an undescribed small rainbowfish species from the southern Atherton Tablelands).

Our special door prize is a bag of 6 Red-finned Blue-eyes, captive bred at Middle Creek farm, and now available for the first time in the hobby!

Our next Field Trip is: Overnight field trip to the Otways Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th May 2025



Hopetoun Falls, Beach Forest. Photo from Travel Victoria website

When: 17th - 18th May 2025

Where exactly?: Details to be posted closer to the field trip date. Sunny Syme is researching good locations to survey and she will do a reconnaissance trip in the next month or so. Stay posted.

The Area: The Otway basin encompasses the Aire River, Allen Reservoir, Anglesea River, Barham River, Bream Creek, Carisbrook Creek, Carlisle River, Cobden Lake, Cumberland River, Curdies River, Elingamite Lake, Erskine River, Ford River, Gellibrand River, Kennett River, Painkalac Creek, Parker River, Purumbete Lake, St George River, Scotts Creek, Sherbrook River, Skenes Creek, Smythe Creek, Spring Creek, Thompsons Creek, Wild Dog Creek and Wye River, and has a rich fish fauna.

Fishes: Australian Grayling, Estuary Perch, River Blackfish, Short-finned Eel, Tasmanian Mudfish (*Neochanna cleveri*), Australian Smelt, Climbing Galaxias, Common Galaxias, Mountain Galaxias, Spotted Galaxias, Congoli, Flathead Gudgeon, Pouched Lamprey and Southern Pygmy Perch. Also present is the Otway colour form (reddish brown) of the Yarra Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus yarraensis*, which we would love to see and photograph.

Accommodation: To be advised.

Directions: To be advised.

For more information: contact Greg Martin on 0407 094 313 (gregmartinfishman@gmail.com) or Sunny Syme on 0435 532 612 (Sunny.r.syme@gmail.com)



A stream near Lorne. Photo from Travel Victoria website

To join us on this trip you must notify us in advance of your intention to attend.



The Yarra Spiny Crays from Werribee Gorge share a similar brownish colour to the Otway form. Photo: Greg Martin

You must be a current financial member of ANGFA Victoria Inc. to attend an ANGFA Victoria Inc. field trip.

It is a requirement of ANGFA Victoria Inc. that any persons under the age of 18 who wish to attend an ANGFA Victoria Inc. field trip must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

ANGFA Victoria Inc. operates its field trips within the rules of our General Research Permit (RP1559) being Catch-Photograph-Release. All non-noxious fishes caught shall be returned to the water immediately after being photographed.

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President's Report April 2025



Welcome to VICNews 140! At our February club meeting, Jade Tramontana gave an excellent overview of the roll she has as an aquaculture technician caring for Macquarie Perch at Deakin Uni's Warnambool campus. She covered in detail general husbandry, feeding, as well as some of the interesting behaviours she has observed from her time working with these wonderful fish.

Our annual combined clubs field trip to the Murray River was a very enjoyable long weekend away, and was well attended! Read all about it in our field trip report starting on page 4.

Our next field trip is an overnight trip to the Otways basin. Sunny Syme is researching good sites and is (once again) doing the legwork for this trip. See (pre) promo on page 2 for inspiration to attend. I have never been to this area in a fish-looking-at capacity, so I'm very much looking forward to this trip! Thank you Sunny! And 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 and field tripping is so much fun!

Peter Gauci has been working hard behind the scenes bringing our ANGFA Vic website up to date. Below is a sample of some of the website pages (taken as screenshots on my phone). Amongst many things of value and interest, our ANGFA Vic website now has all of our VICNews editions available as free downloads, as well as info/care sheets on Microworms, Grindleworms, Whiteworms, Brineshrimp, Vinegar Eels and even tips on 'Taking fish home'. Thank you Peter for your ongoing commitment to updating and refining our website.

Enjoy this edition and we'll see you at on Friday 4th April at our next club meeting. There is a very special fish that has been made available for the first time in the hobby, and it will be offered as our door prize on the night. Thank you Chris Lamin and Middle Creek Farm for this special opportunity for our members to acquire this species.

As usual it will be a relaxed evening of learning, of fun and with plenty of chat time and catching up with fellow fishos!



Checking the seine net on our recent Murray River field trip. Photo: Jay Wan



- VICNews

VICNews

VICNews is published by ANGFA Victoria Inc.

ANGFA Victoria is a regional member of Australia New Guinea Fishes Association Inc.

VICNews, published up to 6 times a year, contains a preview of the next club meeting presenter, a president's report and articles on field trips and surveys, as well as club activities and contact details.

At the beginning of 2017 "VICNews" became a part of the ANGFA National newsletter "ANGFA News", representing regional news from Victoria. In February 2022 we decided to bring back VICNews as our own Victorian-based stand alone club newsletter, which explains why VICNews 124 is dated February 2022.

Download the last editions of VICNews.

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Field Trips

As part of our ongoing field work gathering data on rivers, creeks and waterways and the species that inhabit them, ANGFA Vic holds regular field trips. **ANGFA Victoria has a permit to use Bait Traps, Fyke Nets and Seine Nets as well as Dip Nets for surveying activities, on a basis of catch, photograph and then release. Collected data is uploaded into the ANGFA Survey Database.**

These trips are a chance for our members to get out into the creeks, rivers and dams of Victoria and see what lives in our local Victorian waterways. As well as being a fun day out looking at aquatic critters, field trips are a good opportunity to get to know other members better. So don't be shy, get out there, bring the family along and make a day of it.

Most field trips are family-friendly, with activities including walking, sightseeing, photography opportunities, netting from the bank and even full waist-deep netting, photographing from the field tanks and water testing etc. There are usually 1 or 2 overnight/multiple nights field trips per year.

Field Trip Files: Murray River at Burkes Beach

7th - 10th March 2025



View from our campsite looking down the river. To the left is the NFA sun tent, behind it is Tim Curmi's boat, and to the right Brian Daniell's boat. Photo: Greg Martin

Our March 2025 combined clubs (members from ANGFA Victoria and Native Fish Australia's Victorian branch) field trip to the Murray River over the Labour Day long weekend was very well attended this year. The weather was hot and mostly dry (it rained a bit on the last night) and, despite the thick powdery dust along the road into Burkes Beach, camping was surprisingly civilised. There were no flies, no Paper Wasps and almost no mosquitos.

The NFA and ANGFA crowd was able to claim the camping area at the end of the Burkes Beach track which is a little less dusty (being at the end of the road) and is far enough away from the caravans camped along the first part of the beach area to feel private. The "Wogs out of Worms" signature "Philmac" tent provided a neat gathering spot for drinks, chatting and catching up with folks not seen in a while. It also gave ample shade in the heat of the day, as did the several other "kitchen tents" that many folks seem to include in their camping kit these days. There were fires for cooking (the fire contained of course in a perforated drum) and most folks had a gas or solar powered (beer) fridge.



Simon and George doing what you do on a long weekend on the Murray River. Photo: Rachel Remington



Top: the Philmac tent with George and Spiro Paras' nephews chilaxing. Above: Peter, George, Rachael, Spiro and Tim. Photos supplied by Rachael Remington



Peter and Gybe dragging a seine net off the upstream end of the campsite beach. Below right: Seining a small drying pond. Photos: Jay Wan

I arrived (a day later than usual) on Saturday and the campsite was already claimed and well established as the first of our crew had arrived on Thursday. After doing the rounds greeting those that were already there, and setting up my tent, it was time to gather the enthusiastic and do some seine netting.

ANGFA Vic’s General Research Permit allowed us to use a seine net, fykes nets, box traps and dip nets in the water bodies on the Victorian side of the river (remember, the Murray River itself belongs to NSW) to catch, photograph and release and, Chris Lamin’s permit to collect a limited number of Murray Rainbowfish allowed seining in the main river body. So, we could pretty much check out any site we wanted to.

Using a seine net is a whole lot of fun and most folk want a turn at holding one end of the net and helping to bring it into the beach. As someone always has to take the deeper end of the net when working in a river, there is always the obligatory jokes about “Beware of the Crocs!”... and probably a mention or two of John Lenagan and Gary Moores seine netting in the Mulgrave River Qld (where there are crocodiles!). We started with the drying pond at the eastern end of the campsite hoping for Murray Rainbowfish, but there was no rainbowfish or Hardyhead to be found, only a staggeringly large Carp that must have been quietly waiting for the next flood to get back to the main river. Then it was over to the beach on the river by the

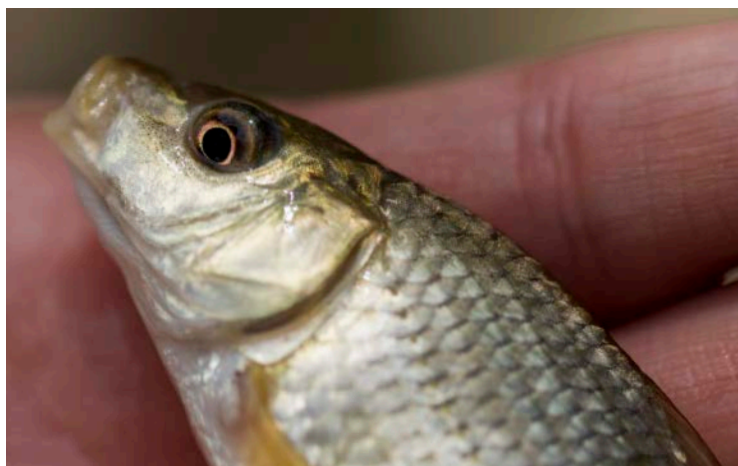


willow trees. No Rainbowfish or Hardyhead here either. There were however plenty of Smelt, Macrobrachium and Glass Shrimp, Carp and the occasional juvenile Cod. After seining along the beach all the way down to our campsite... and even further down the river, the light was beginning to fade as evening approached, and it was time to call it a day for seine netting.



Above: checking the seine for rainbows. Right:: this large Carp that was netted in the small drying pond at the east end of the campsite. Photos: Greg Martin





Clockwise for top: Macrobrachium Shrimp are always so plentiful. Juvenile Carp at an age when they still look attractive. Smelt. Murray River Rainbowfish. Photos: Greg Martin. Seining near the campsite. Photo: Rachael Remington



The ghostly silhouettes of late evening swimmers 'haunt' this long exposure photo of the river at dusk. Photo: Greg Martin

Being deliciously warm weather, and with the river water being surprisingly warm, there was quite a few people who continued to swim even well after sundown.

Dinner with mates around a campfire is always enjoyable and having a drink with it completes the picture and amplifies the experience. As the drinks went down the conversation became more and more boundary-less (?)... and there was much laughter as hilarious story after story rolled out from a few key field trip attendees (no names mentioned in this article).



Marbled Gecko *Christinus marmoratus*. Photo: Henry Albert



Garden Orb Weaver *Hortophora* sp. Photo: Henry Albert

That night Henry, Frazer and I went out spotlighting for bugs for Henry's Uni project: Henry had been tasked with collecting 24 species from 4 Phyla (I may have that wrong?). Whilst spotlighting I noticed a few changes since the last time I spotlighted in that riverside bushland in 2018. Seven years earlier we saw a plethora of spiders at night, on the ground and on the tree trunks (their eyes have extraordinarily bright eye-shine). This year we hardly saw any spiders at all. There were several examples of impressive Garden Orb (*Hortophora* sp.) Spiders that build a strong web across the track and sit waiting for a catch. Interestingly, there were no Golden Orb (*Nephila*) Spider's webs as there have been on so many occasions in the past and the Paper Wasps who's nests are often found under low-hanging branches around the campsite, were absent. We did however see Brushtail Possums, Tawny Frogmouths, a noisy mob of Kangaroos crashing through the tinder-dry bush, a couple of House Centipedes (*Scutigera*), a gecko, lots of Spotted Marsh Frogs and a couple of Water Skinks where Murray Track crosses Duffys Creek.

We met a late arriving car on the dusty road we were walking along and it turned out to be Jay Wan, true to his word, arriving on Saturday late evening as he said he would. We pointed him in the direction of the campsite and then continued on our way.



Above: heading downstream in Brian Daniell's boat - we saw so many campsites that we could check out on a future trip! Middle left: Gybe, Brian, Greg, Phil and Sophie in the boat. Photos: Jay Wan. Middle left: Jay, a new-comer to our field trips, fitted in so well! Bottom: the exposed tree roots that dominate the eroded river banks caught the eye of Brian and myself as good aquarium theming material! Photos: Greg Martin



On Sunday early morning Brian Daniels offered a few of us a boat ride down the river to look for birds (we were hoping to see a Kingfisher) and to “see what was around the next bend in the river”. Boats are a wonderful tool for getting around on the river, and the trip, which took us more than 10 kms down the river, was wonderful! We saw

lots of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos ‘mining’ mud from the cut away riverbanks, both kinds of Corellas, Darters, Cormorants, White-winged Choughs, a White-faced Heron and various ducks. No Kingfishers this time...





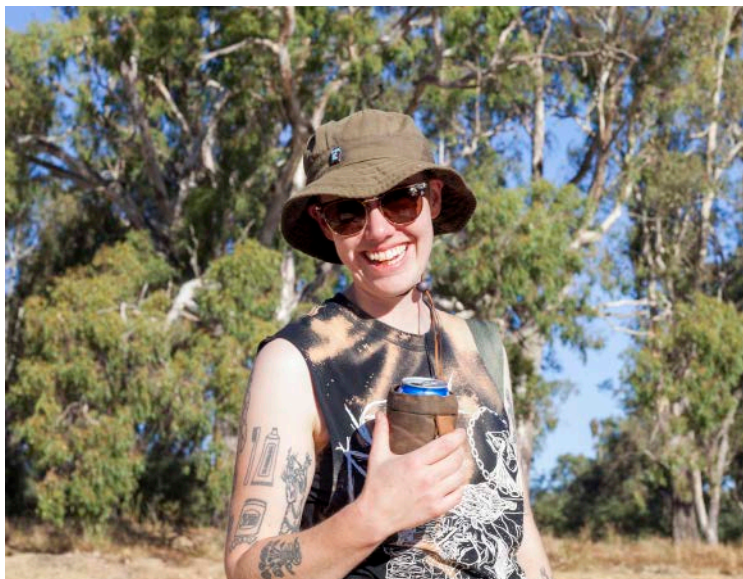


Top: checking the net after seine netting on the beach near “Mussel Beach”. Middle right: Little Mussel. Bottom left: a Mirror Carp. Bottom right: another two types of mussels? Photos: Greg Martin.

Later that morning a large group of us took the boats up the river to “Mussel Beach”, an area where we had found lots of the large Murray River Mussels. There is a long open beach area for easy seining and a little further along the beach, an area of Common Reed *Phragmites australis* which is usually more productive for rainbowfish than the open beach. At night, they seem to come into the shallow beach area and can be caught in a night seining.

Walking on the hot sand along the river we found empty paired shells of the freshwater Little Mussel *Corbicula australis*. Each pull of the seine was full of Smelt, which perish quickly so we had to sort through the catch rapidly to minimise losses.





Top: Our crew stopping for a quick photo between seining along the river banks. Middle left: Sunny and Ryan. Middle right: Frazer and Henry. Bottom left: Jayne and (beer). Photos: Greg Martin. Bottom right: Seining amongst the *Phragmites*. Photo: Jay Wan



Mid-afternoon, as the heat of the day peaked, we returned to camp for a late lunch and some relaxing. Brian Daniels, looking for rainbows caught a juvenile turtle which we spent some time photographing before releasing it back in the river.

Phil Littlejohn and Jayne Burton were working a project that required looked at the parasitic load of *Gambusia* under the microscope. Phil also took the opportunity to have us look at some of the fish we caught that were carrying *Lernaea* (called 'Anchorworm' but actually a genus of Copepod crustacean). When examined at magnification the *Lernaea* organism is quite horrifying and we could clearly see dozens of juvenile *Lernaea* pulsating in the transparent parent body waiting to be released! Crickey!



Top left and right: juvenile Short-necked Turtle. Middle right: Henry photographing the turtle. Middle right: a deceased Smelt pinned for examination for parasites under the microscope. Bottom right: Chironomid worms taken from the Smelt stomach. Photos: Greg Martin. Bottom left: Microscope and preparation table. Photo: Jay Wan



Above: Twin Bridge Creek. Below left: Frazer and Gybe setting fyke nets. Below right: Greg reiterating the need to have the small end of a fyke net set above water so that any air-breathing animals caught will survive. Photos: Jay Wan

As evening drew nearer, and it being the last opportunity to set fykes overnight, we decided to drive to the start of Burkes Bend Track near the main road (Murray Valley Highway) where the road crosses Twin Bridge Creek. We had 6 fykes to set and Gybe and Frazer volunteered to (carefully) jump into the creek to set the nets. Once we were satisfied that they were not going to be seen from the road (tampering is an issue), we left them for the night.





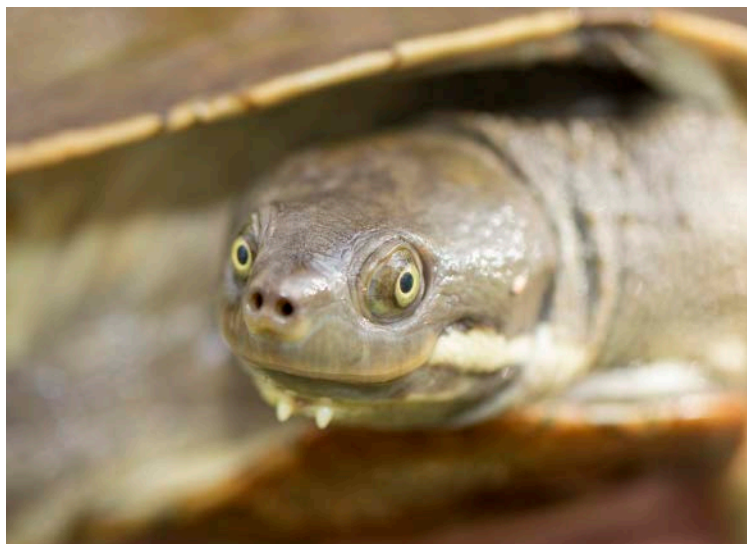
On Monday morning our first job was to go back to Twin Bridges Creek and retrieve the fyke nets. This time Gybe and Jay were the 'swimmers' that entered the creek to untie the nets and bring them in for 'processing'. All the fykes seemed to have heaps of Carp Gudgeon and Macrobrachium Shrimp and a few Flathead Gudgeon. In one net there were also three Murray Short-necked Turtles *Emydura macquarii* - one of the males had a very impressive penis which it slowly extended as Henry (blushing) held it (the whole turtle) for photographs - and a Golden Perch *Macquaria ambigua*! No Murray Rainbowfish were caught in Twin Bridge Creek which wasn't a surprise as they generally prefer the main river channel.

After photographing the catch and then returning all the fish and turtles to the creek we headed back to pack up camp and (reluctantly) return to the 'big smoke'.

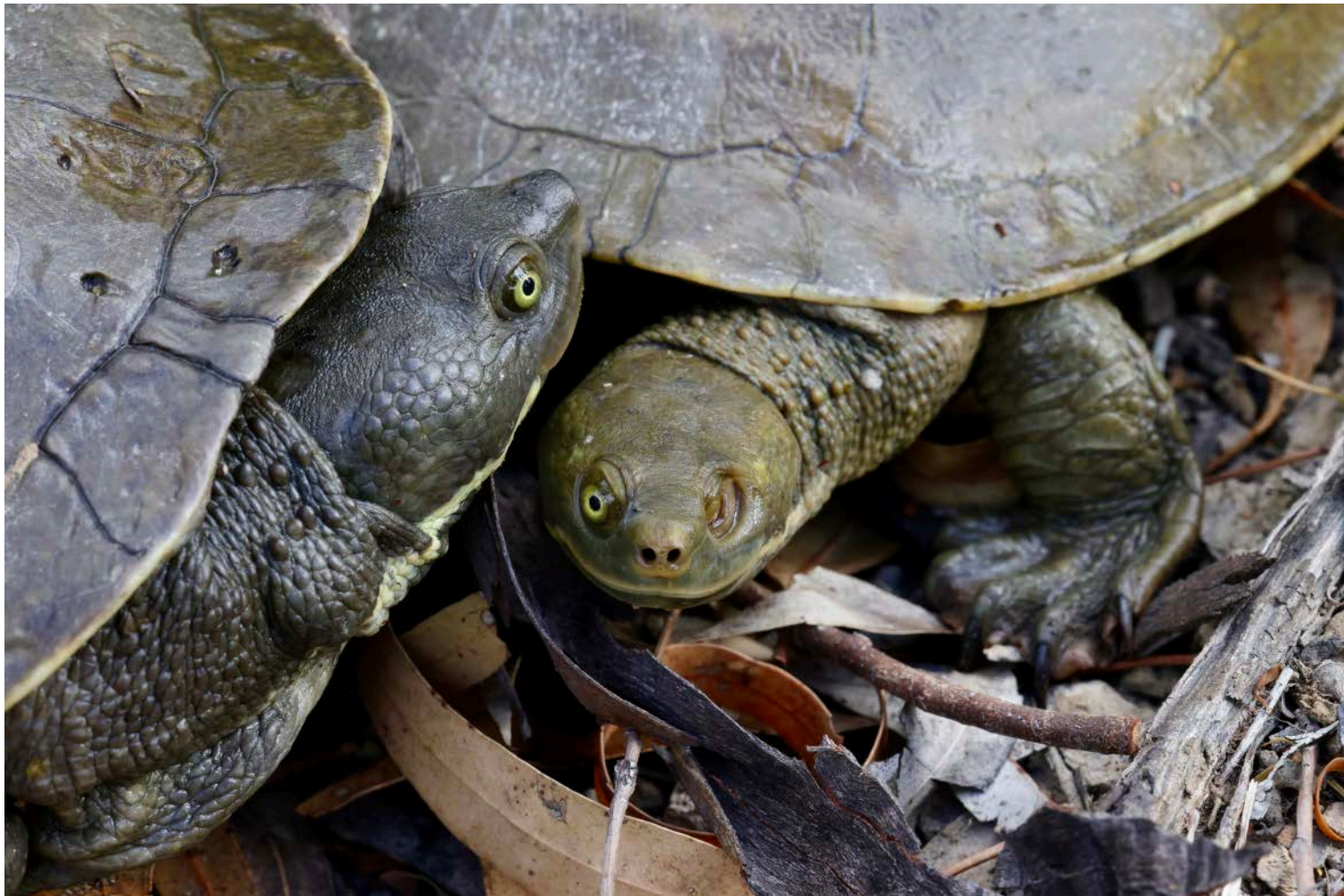
Fish species caught over the weekend were: Murray Cod, Golden Perch, Murray River Rainbowfish, a couple of species of Carp Gudgeon, Smelt, Flathead Gudgeon, a single Mirror carp, European Carp and Gambusia. We found four Murray Short-necked Turtles. A few different types of Mussels (probably 3 species) and of course plenty of Macrobrachium Shrimp and Glass Shrimp.



Top: The bush along the river is predominantly Redgum with a very sparse understory and, as the almost complete absence of large trees indicates, was logged for railway sleepers at some stage last century. Middle right: Jay checking the fyke prior to bringing it in. Bottom right: filling buckets to receive the catch for photographing. Photos: Greg Martin



Clockwise from top left: Jay and Gybe bringing in a fyke net containing turtles. One of the three turtles caught in the same fyke net. Jay with the other two turtles. Close up of a Murray Short-necked Turtle's face. Tim with a beautiful Golden Perch. Photos: Greg Martin



Above: One of the Murray Short-necked Turtles was missing an eye. Photo: Jay Wan. Below left: Henry with male Murray Short-necked Turtle. Below right: Jay photographing the turtles prior to releasing them back to the creek. Photos: Greg Martin



Once again, the combined clubs Labour Day weekend field trip to the Murray River at Burkes Beach was a most enjoyable four days away. Thank you as always to everyone that joined us on the trip. Field tripping is fun!

Greg Martin

Club meeting details and key contacts of ANGFA Vic

Office Bearers 2025

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, Gybe Forster, Matt McGee, Sunny Syme, Peter Gauci and Matt Schreuder
VICNews: Greg Martin

Other fish groups in Victoria

Aquarium Society of Victoria Visit: www.asov.com.au
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 dates for 2025:

Friday 4th April
Friday 6th June
Friday 1st August
Friday 3rd October (Includes our AGM)
Friday 5th December



Gybe in Twin Bridges Creek, wading back after setting fyke nets. The impressive River Redgum roots provide such an important complex habitat structure for the aquatic inhabitants: shrimp, fish, turtles. Photo: Jay Wan