

Results of three fauna surveys at Bells by the Geelong Field Nats

Bell's Beach Foreshore Reserve, Bones Road, fauna survey 11-14 June 2015

GPS at car park 55 263096E, 5750755N, alt 55m

All trapping is carried out in accordance with the conditions in our DEPI permit 10006519 and our WSIAEC permit 27.12

Location

The site chosen for the survey was the heathlands between the Bones Road carpark and the top of the coast cliffs.

The vegetation consisted of stunted Moonah, Coast Pomaderris, Messmate, Yellow Gum, Winged Spyridium, green-flowered Common Correa, Silver Banksia, Seaberry Saltbush, Slender Velvet-bush, Prickly Moses, Common Heath, Cranberry Heath, Coast Beard Heath and various sedges and grasses.

Weather

Mainly fine and sunny but cool to cold.

Elliott traps

We set 40 small Elliott traps in four lines each of 10 traps.

They were baited with a peanut butter, golden syrup and oatmeal mix, a ball of Dacron bedding was in each trap, and they were enclosed in a plastic weather-shield.

Results

12/06/15: E2 Bush Rat *Rattus fuscipes*, wt 99g

E9 Bush Rat, not weighed.

13/06/15: E30 Bush Rat, wt 93g

14/06/15: E11 Bush Rat, wt 90g

Cameras, harps and funnels

These were not used on this survey.

Comments

Although the trapping site was close to the car park, and to residential development, none of the three introduced rodents that we have found in other similar sites were caught. It was also surprising that Swamp Rats were not caught – there was evidence of extensive digging and tunnelling in the area just below the car park.

Wallaby, fox and rabbit scats were abundant and there were some recent echidna diggings.

No herps – frogs or reptiles – were found during the survey.

Thanks

To Surf Coast Shire for encouraging us to carry out the survey.

Alison for suggesting the site, and for the list of plants.

Helen, Lance, Graham and Brett for setting the traps, and Guy, Graham, Brett, Chrissy, Suyeon and Deborah for checking the traps.

Mammals

Short-beaked Echidna Eastern Grey Kangaroo	Some fresh diggings noted. At least 20 grazing in the farmland behind the car park.
Black (Swamp) Wallaby	One seen, many scats found.
Bush Rat	Four caught.
Red Fox	Many scats found.
European Rabbit	Many scats and diggings, one skull and a skin found.

Birds

Three Blue-winged Parrots were seen flying overhead.

Rufous Bristlebirds were heard calling.

The Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters were “streaming” through, apparently in their annual migration northwards along the coast.

Australasian Gannet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Whistling Kite	White-eared Honeyeater
Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	White-naped Honeyeater
Blue-winged Parrot	Grey Shrike-thrush
Rufous Bristlebird	Australian Magpie
Superb Fairy-wren	Silvereye
White-browed Scrubwren	Welcome Swallow
Brown Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Eastern Spinebill	

**Bell's Beach, Wave Car-park area, fauna survey
8-11 October 2015**

GPS at car-park 55 263096E, 5750755N, alt 55m

All trapping undertaken in accordance with the conditions of our DEPI permit
10006519 and WSIAEC permit 27.12

Trevor

Pescott

Location

The site chosen was north of the Wave car-park at the end of Bones Road. We had conducted a survey there from 11-14 June (see *Geelong Naturalist* Vol.51, No.03, July 2015).

Subsequent to that survey, the body of a male Swamp Antechinus was found on the walking track north of the car-park, and it was decided to look for the species in this survey.

Weather

Mainly fine and warm, although a change came through on the morning of 10/10/15, and on 11/10/15 there was light fog early with mild, overcast conditions later in the morning.

Elliott traps

We set 20 small Elliott traps in two transects each of 10 traps.

E1-10 along the south edge of a gully leading down from the walking path.

E11-20 along another eroded gully further north, also running down from the path.

The bait used was the standard peanut butter, golden syrup and oatmeal mix, and a handful of Dacron filling was placed in each trap for bedding.

Results

09/10/15: E8 Bush Rat, *Rattus fuscipes*, male, wt.138g

E16 Bush Rat, male, wt.145g

E20 Bush Rat, female, wt.142g

10/10/15: E9 Bush Rat, male, wt.145g

E10 Bush Rat, female, wt.159g

E11 Bush Rat, not sexed, wt.157g

E13 Bush Rat, not sexed, wt.157g

E19 Bush Rat, not sexed, wt.142g

11/10/15: E1 Swamp Rat *Rattus lutreolus*, female, wt.115g

E6 Bush Rat, male, wt.137g

E7 Swamp Rat, male, wt. 111g

E17 Bush Rat, not sexed or weighed

Cameras, harps and funnels

Not used in this survey.

Comments

1. Although we did not find any antechinuses, it was good to be able to record high numbers of both Bush and Swamp Rats. Judging by their weights, all were adults.

2. Trap success rate was a very high 24.5%, i.e. 12 animals in 49 trap/nights (we do not re-set traps in which we catch animals until they are cleaned and sanitised.)

3. There was no evidence of introduced rats or mice, although both fox and rabbit were listed.

4. As well as Varied Dusky-blue and Australian Painted Lady butterflies, there were many Heliotrope Moths that although not obvious when at rest, in flight their white wings made them very conspicuous.

5. It appeared that the Blue-winged Parrots we saw were using the heathlands to feed, but were flying inland to the adjacent ironbark forest possibly to nest-sites.

Thanks

Again, thanks to Surf Coast Shire for encouraging the survey on the reserve under their management. It is an interesting area where further surveys may be warranted in the future.

To Geoff for helping set the traps, and Chrissy, Deborah, Guy and Jake, Tara and Eva (Sedy) for checking and collecting the traps

Mammals

Black (Swamp) Wallaby	Several seen.
Bush Rat	Ten caught.
Swamp Rat	Two caught.
Red Fox	What appeared to be a den was found in the eroded gully where the trap line E11-20 was located. There were a number of bones and other material near some holes under the bank overhang.
European Rabbit	Several seen.

Birds

Spotted Dove	New Holland Honeyeater
White-faced Heron	Rufous Whistler
Crimson Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
Eastern Rosella	Australian Magpie
Blue-winged Parrot	Pied Currawong
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Little Raven
Superb Fairy-wren	Eurasian Skylark
Rufous Bristlebird	Silvereye
White-browed Scrubwren	Welcome Swallow
Brown Thornbill	Common Blackbird
Red Wattlebird	

**Bell's Beach, Wave Car-park area, fauna survey
16-17 April 2016**

The Geelong Field Naturalists undertook further fauna survey work near the Wave car park on 16 and 17 April. During this survey they found several Bush Rats and Swamp Rats and they also found one female Swamp Antechinus (*Antechinus minimus*). The finding was reported by Trevor Pescott.