WILD FAMILIES

Illustration: Rhyll Plant & Jess McGeachin

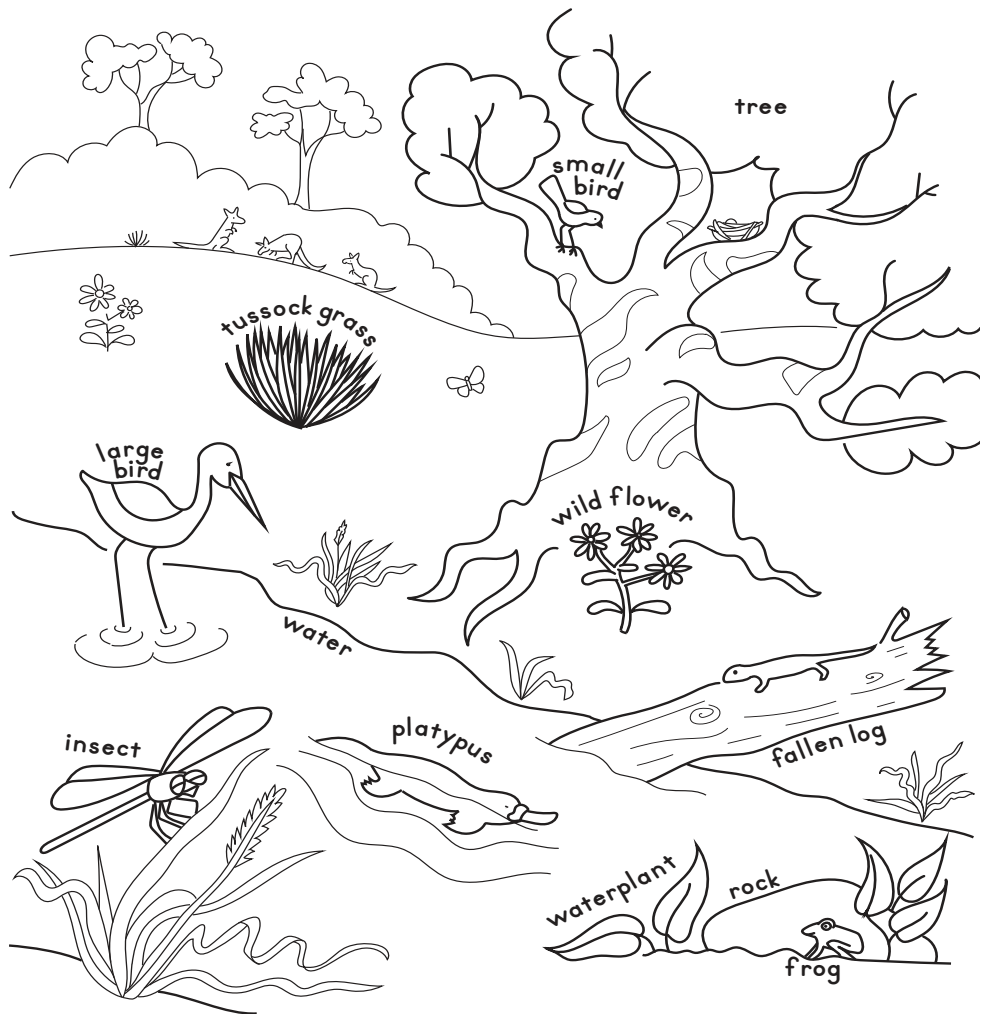## Enjoying, learning and looking after nature with the family

WILD WATERWAY DISCOVERY

Rivers, creeks and wetlands are an important part of our landscape, they:

• Carry water from land to the sea.

• Are a part of our water cycle.

• Are very important habitat and water for birds, fish, frogs, bugs and mammals.

• Are special places for relaxation and recreation.

Waterway spotto

On your next adventure by a waterway, try this 'spotto' activity. When you see or hear the animals, plants or micro-habitats (such as fallen logs) at your chosen location by a river, creek or wetland, you can colour it in. You may see all or just some of these things along your waterway. You might wish to think about what it means if all of these things are present or some of them are missing.
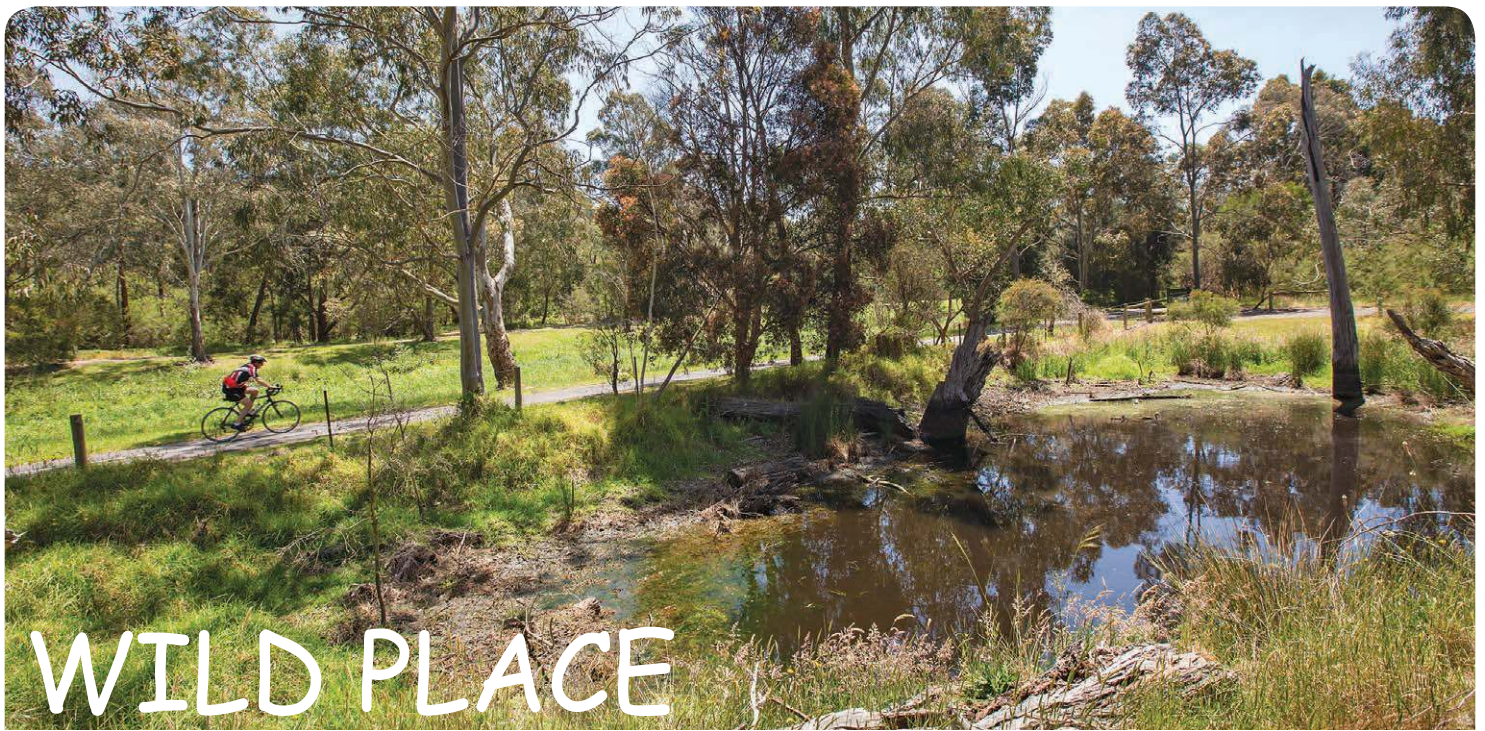
Some more questions to explore

• Is the water clear or murky?

• How fast is the water flowing?

• Where has the water come from and where is the water going? (look at some maps to find out)

• What sounds can you hear?

• Thinking about recent and forecast weather do you think the water level will be the same, higher or lower when you come back?

Waterway spotto – colour in the things you see or hear.

Artwork by Renee Treml

Always consider safety on outdoor adventures and remember to supervise children safely around water.

VICTORIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
Be part of nature

Living Links

Melbourne Water
Enhancing Life and Liveability

WILD PLACE

Winton Wetlands on the Dandenong Creek are a wonderful place to spot wildlife.   Photo © Melbourne Water

DANDENONG CREEK, FROM SOURCE TO SEA

The Dandenong Creek and Corhanwarrabul Creek flow all the way from the Dandenong Ranges through forested headwaters and wetlands, through suburban and industrial areas, then out to sea in Port Phillip Bay.

Dandenong Creek flows through Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung Country.

Here are some great ways to enjoy nature along the waterway.

1. Take a walk in the forested headwaters of Dandenong Creek in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. Listen out for Lyrebirds calling.

2. Visit H.E. Parker Reserve for a bushwalk. There is a Fluker post here, which is a special photo point that tracks changes to Dandenong Creek overtime. You can place your camera on top of the post, take a photo and submit it.

3. Listen for frogs at Winton Wetlands, Jells Park or Dandenong Valley Wetlands. You can download the free Melbourne Water Frog Census app. which will help you identify which species of frog you

Dwarf galaxias have special homes being built for them at Winton Wetlands.
Photo: Rhys Coleman

can hear. You could even add your very own citizen science record.

4. Visit one of the many wetlands and check out the bird life. How many birds can you see?

5. Enjoy a picnic at Jells Park and take a photo of the Dandenong Ranges in the distance. The water flowing past you has journeyed all the way from these mountains.

6. Grab your bike and ride a section or all of the Dandenong Creek Trail. It runs 44km along the length of the creek.

7. Visit the beach at Carrum to see where the waterway has become the Patterson River and meets the sea.

8. Try the Wild Waterway Discovery activity on the front of this sheet at any river, creek or wetland.
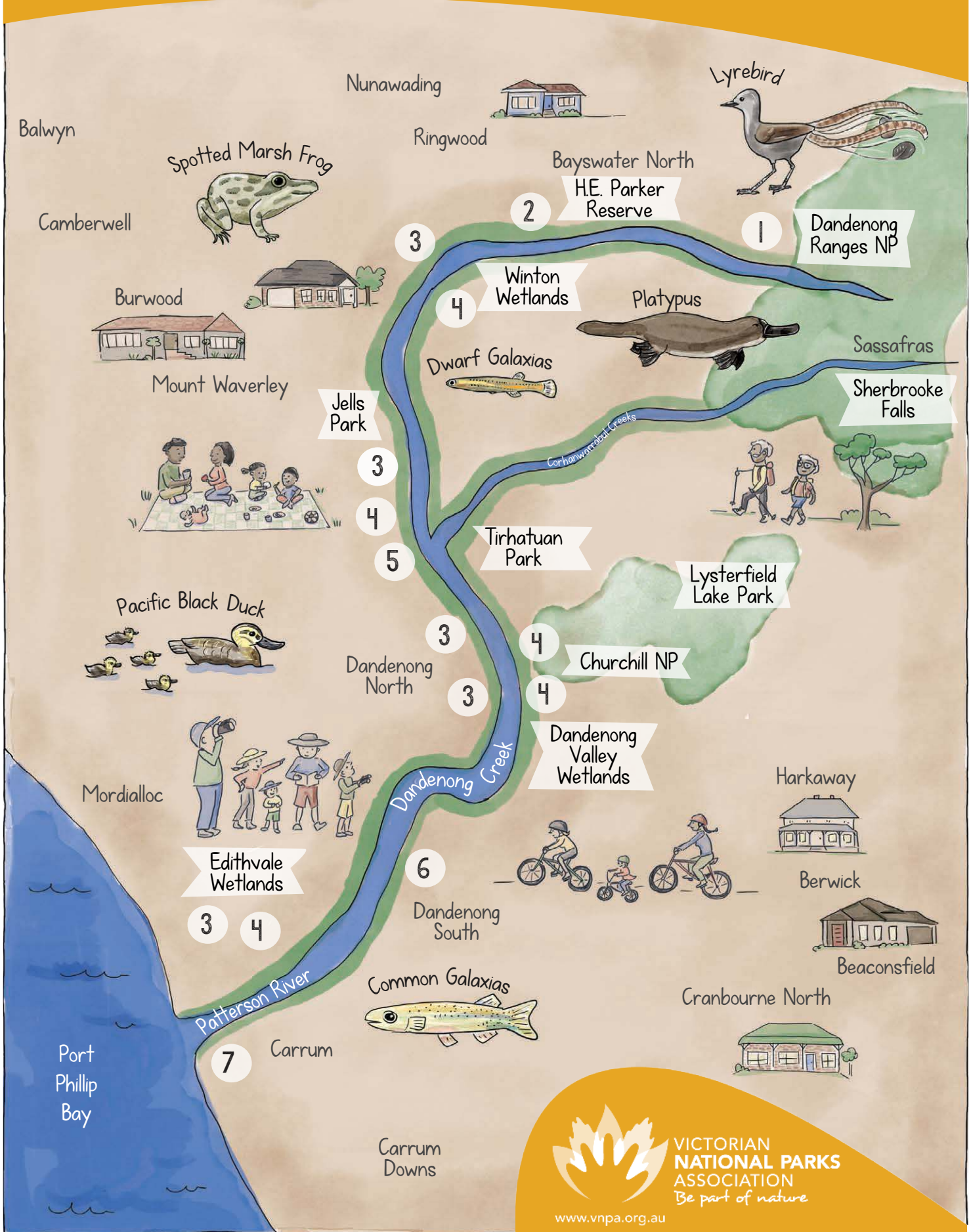
DANDENONG CREEK FEATURE CREATURES

There are many species of wildlife that inhabit Dandenong Creek. Here are some fun facts about the creatures we've featured on our map!

• Lyrebirds can imitate the calls of other birds.

• Platypus dig deep burrows in the banks of rivers and creek. Echidnas and platypus are the only egg-laying mammals in the world!

• The call of the male Spotted marsh frog sounds a bit like two stones being hit together. Each species of frog has a different call. This means we can identify them just by listening.

• Common galaxias visit all parts of Dandenong Creek and the sea in their lifecycle.

• Dwarf galaxias are an unusual species of fish as they are able to breathe air for long periods under leaf litter and in freshwater cray burrows when water levels become very low.

• Pacific black ducks with their ducklings can often be spotted near waterways in Spring.

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DISCOVERING DANDENONG CREEK

Lyrebird

Nunawading

Balwyn

Ringwood

Spotted Marsh Frog

Bayswater North

2 H.E. Parker Reserve

Camberwell

3

1 Dandenong Ranges NP

Winton Wetlands

4

Platypus

Sassafras

Burwood

Sherbrooke Falls

Dwarf Galaxias

Mount Waverley

Jells Park

3

Corhanwarrabul Creeks

3

4

Tirhatuan Park

5

Lysterfield Lake Park

Pacific Black Duck

3

4 Churchill NP

Dandenong North

3

4

Dandenong Valley Wetlands

Harkaway

Mordialloc

Dandenong Creek

Edithvale Wetlands

6

3 **4**

Dandenong South

Berwick

Beaconsfield

Patterson River

Common Galaxias

Cranbourne North

Port Phillip Bay

7 Carrum

Carrum Downs

Keeping storm water clean means caring for wildlife in our waterways.

Photo: Andrew Lloyd © Melbourne Water

KEEPING OUR WATERWAYS HEALTHY

We can all get involved in keeping our waterways healthy. The best way to do this is by keeping the water that runs down stormwater drains clean.

Did you know that when it rains, rainwater washes rubbish and pollutants from our streets in to storm water drains and in to our rivers and creeks? This can be harmful to the plants and animals that live there.

Here are some tips on how your family can keep your local waterway healthy:

1. Do not wash paints or cleaning products into drains or onto the ground. Check your council guidelines on the best way to dispose of these items.

2. Make sure cars do not leak oil in the driveway. Wash your car at a carwash or on the lawn to keep the soaps from washing in to rivers and creeks.

3. Pick up any litter and place in a bin. You could even join or start a local litter clean up group.

4. Clean up after your dog, by placing dog poo in the bin.

5. Put garden waste into a compost and do not wash or sweep down gutters.

6. Join a local Landcare group and get involved in caring for the important vegetation that lines the creek.

7. Talk to your friends and family about how we can look after our waterways.

THE SHORT-FINNED EEL

If you were a Short-finned eel in Victoria, it is thought that your parents would have travelled all the way to the Coral Sea near New Caledonia to breed and die.

As a newly hatched young, you would have drifted back to your freshwater stream home on ocean currents over a 1-3 year journey.

Short-finned eels are active at night and eat insects, yabbies, fish and frogs. They can be found in streams in Victoria, including Dandenong Creek, with males being up to 60cm long and females up to 90cm long.
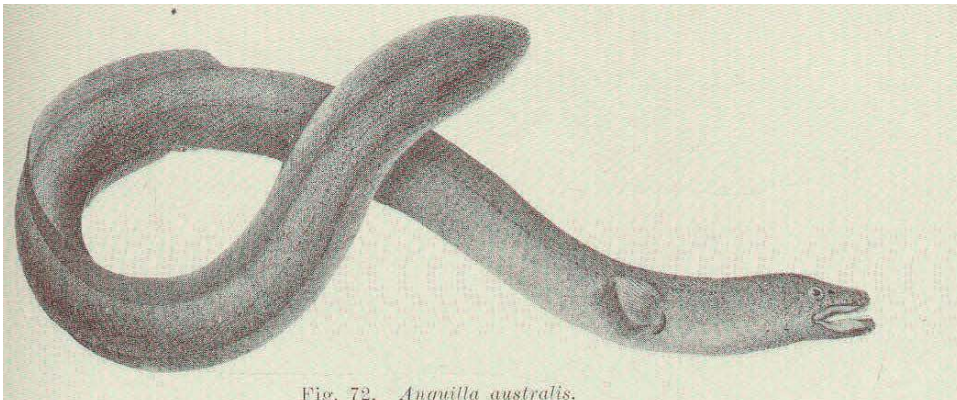

Fig. 72. *Anguilla australis.*

Illustration of a Short-finned Eel by Edgar R Waite.

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