



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
COAST COMMITTEE

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Biodiversity Month blitzes past last year

Each September, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) celebrates the arrival of spring and the explosion of life that comes with it. As the caretakers of a 'biodiversity hot spot', there is an unusual diversity of life concentrated within GORCC's land management area.

Biodiversity Month runs throughout September and citizen scientists are encouraged to upload their observations of biodiversity to the online database, iNaturalist.

GORCC hosted a number of education activities during the month in different habitats, this year partnering with Parks Victoria to run sessions in the Great Otway National Park.

Activities included GORCC education team member Possum Pete leading a group in exploring the Anglesea coastal track to see how many species of Wattle (*Acacia* sp.) and other plants and animals they could find. One species spotted was a tiny Brown Thornbill (*Acanthiza pusilla*), poking its head out from a blooming Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) during Wattle Day celebrations.

The group also explored the Point Roadknight rock pools with 25 keen young biologists and their parents, finding a great selection of crabs, snails and anemones.

GORCC partnered with Parks Victoria and the Friends of Eastern Otways to run a special biodiversity activity called 'Spooky Biodiversity', where a group of 30 searched for nocturnal creatures at Moggs Creek picnic ground. The group heard the calls of Yellow Bellied Gliders and Boobook Owls when they went for a walk. Local biologist Craig Graham, under the permission and supervision of Parks Victoria, set up nets to capture a Little Forest Bat (*Vespadelus vultunus*). One of the smallest mammals in Australia, Little Forest Bats can weigh less than 4g.

Over 350 species were identified during this year's September Biodiversity Month, 100 species more than last year, providing a great snapshot of the rich diversity of life in our region.

A big congratulations to Neil Tucker for recording the most observations and the greatest number of species throughout the BioBlitz, logging an amazing 221 observations and 198 different species. Neil is an active volunteer with coastal conservation groups ANGAIR and Torquay Coast Action and is renowned as an expert on local biodiversity, especially plants and fungi.

To check out all of the observations found throughout the Surf Coast this September BioBlitz, see iNaturalist's website: www.inaturalist.org/projects/surfcoast-september-bioblitz-2019.

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