

**PLANTS**

**Kangaroo Grass**  
(*Themeda triandra*)

Found in open areas, including Nungurner roadsides, this grass has distinctive flower heads that turn from fresh green to russet brown over the summer months. It is attractive as an ornamental grass in gardens and is a good gap filler. It has a fibrous root system that helps bind soil, therefore reducing erosion, and it is drought-resistant. Birds are attracted to kangaroo grass for its seeds and for nesting material. It also attracts butterflies as it is a food source for caterpillars.



**Pink Hyacinth Orchid**  
(*Dipodium roseum*)

This orchid is probably the easiest to recognise in Nungurner due to its colour and height. When flowering, from December to February, its stem can reach a metre tall. It grows in well drained, often poor or rocky soil in open bushland. Like other orchids, the pink hyacinth relies on decaying leaf litter for nutrients and native bees for pollination. To give these orchids the best chance of re-seeding, it is best to avoid slashing in areas where they are known to grow until the flower heads have completely dried off.



**Wonga Vine**  
(*Pandorea pandorana*)

The wonga vine grows best in shade, but will grow in full to part sun and has dark maroon seed pods. It loves to climb and will make its way up into the top canopy. Grow it along fences, trellises or pergolas or use it as a climber on trees. With beautiful tubular bell shaped flowers, it is most obvious in Spring and provides useful nesting material for birds.



**Kangaroo Apple**  
(*Solanum laciniatum*)

A large shrub 4 m high by 5 m wide, this is a coloniser shrub that will pop up after clearing or disturbing an area. It is fast-growing and hardy in most soil types and conditions, except salt spray. It is relatively short-lived with a life expectancy of 5-6 years in good conditions. The kangaroo apple makes a good screen plant, in the understorey of a wind break, or for bank and erosion stabilisation. It will flower from September to March. The fruit turns from green, through yellow to orange and then bright red when ripe. Birds are attracted to the ripe fruit.



**Mosquito Orchid**  
(*Acianthus exsertus*)

This tiny terrestrial orchid is found in sheltered forest, often below shrubs or bracken and is easily overlooked. Search at ground level for single heart shaped leaves, dark green above and purplish-red beneath. They often grow in massed groups but only a few will bear small and delicate flowers on stalks growing to 30cm tall. They are pollinated by insects and small flies. Decaying leaf litter and bracken provides them with ideal growing conditions.



**Bulbine Lily**  
(*Bulbine bulbosa*)

The Bulbine lily is a great native alternative to the daffodil. Its yellow, starlike flowers create an attractive garden plant that can be placed among rocks and between other flowers and grasses. When in flower, from September to November, it will stand at 20-50 cm tall. It tolerates the occasional frost we get in this area. It is also known to be a nutritious food plant; the plump, round corms can apparently be roasted and eaten all year round.



**Native Cherry**  
(*Exocarpos cupressiformis*)

A small tree 3-8 m tall, the native cherry or cherry ballart is prominent on Nungurner roadsides and in gardens. It relies on the roots of other nearby trees to use as a host for growth. The red 'cherries' evident from July to November are edible and attractive to birds as food. Why not decorate a native cherry in your garden for Christmas? Its soft foliage and shape makes it a perfect alternative to the traditional pine.



**Warrigal Greens**  
(*Tetragonia tetragonioides*)

Also known as native spinach or New Zealand spinach, this plant prefers a moist environment for growth. It tends to trail and hang downwards forming a thick carpet on the ground or climbing through other vegetation. It is highly salt tolerant and grows well in saline soil. Small yellow flowers will appear in late spring to summer. Warrigal greens are good to use as a ground cover to help exclude weeds and are edible, with a flavour similar to spinach.



**Austral Indigo**  
(*Indigofera australis*)

Austral indigo is a mid-storey plant growing up to 2m high. It likes full sun to semi-shade so can be grown under taller trees. It is susceptible to frost when young, but very frost tolerant after 2-3 years. An attractive garden plant, Austral indigo puts on a show of delicate pink flowers from August to December, that provide a pleasing contrast against its soft green leaves. Butterflies are attracted to it for its nectar and food for caterpillars.



**Tiger Orchid**  
(*Diuris sulphurea*)

This is another of the larger orchids found in Nungurner, although it is not very common. As you can see from the photo, its distinctive colouration gives it its common name. If you are lucky enough to see one of these orchids, it is likely to be in open forest or grassland where the soil drains well. The tiger orchid will flower between October and December and will grow up to 40cm in height.



**Coast Grey Box** (*Eucalyptus bosistoana*)

The coast grey box grows amongst other eucalypts and is listed in Victoria as a rare or threatened species. Some wonderful specimens of this tree are found in Nungurner. Look for greyish, scaly bark on the lower trunk and smooth, pale bark above. It grows from 25-45 metres tall and flowers from November to March. Sea eagles may use the tree for nesting and it can also provide important hollows for bats and birds.



**Seaberry Saltbush**  
(*Rhagodia candolleana*)

This is a fast growing, dense, shrub with a shiny dark green appearance, common in Nungurner. It will grow up to 2 metres and has a tendency to sprawl but is easily trimmed. It is a good salt tolerant plant and also tolerates wet areas and shade. When left to grow between trees, the seaberry saltbush will help reduce weed growth and provide cover for lizards and small birds including the very shy buff-banded rail. The small, glossy dark red berries appear in Autumn and inconspicuous whitish flowers appear from December to April.



**Trim Greenhood**  
(*Pterostylis concinna*)

One of the many species of Pterostylis orchids, often found in large colonies, the trim greenhood needs open forest in which to thrive. Although their numbers vary from year to year, if you look carefully they can be seen on the Nungurner roadside reserve from May to September. A ground level plant, they can grow to 15cm tall.



**Twining Glycine**  
(*Glycine clandestina*)

The thin, long twining stems of the twining glycine growing up trees, on fallen branches and twigs can be hard to spot. From August to January, however, when its flowers are in profusion, you should be able to see this plant, fairly easily along the roadsides and paths of Nungurner. Leave small branches and twigs in your garden to encourage the creeper to grow. As well as being an attractive plant for your garden, it is a useful food source for caterpillars.



**Native Pigface**  
(*Carprobotrus modestus* or *C. rossii*)

Native pigface is a fleshy, drought and salt tolerant ground level plant. It grows well in the sandy soils of Nungurner and makes an attractive ground cover between other plantings in gardens. Flowering will occur during spring and summer.



**Forest Nightshade**  
(*Solanum prinophyllum*)

Often mistaken for a nasty weed, the forest nightshade is low to the ground, but can grow up to 50cm high. It is a short lived herb found in most areas in eucalypt forest or in disturbed areas. The delicate lilac flowers will occur at any time of the year and the fruit is a round berry that will either stay green or turn purple. With its very spiky leaves, pretty flowers and interesting berries this is a good 'filler' plant in amongst others in the garden.



**Nungurner Landcare** is local people coming together to address environmental and land management issues in our area through practical action. Our priority activities focus on protecting and enhancing native vegetation and wildlife, and community awareness of our environment.

We are an active group holding monthly working bees at the Nungurner Jetty Rd roadside reserve and other areas of public land. We also support re-vegetation activities on private land, and hold educational and social events for members and the general public.

If you want to be part of preserving the natural beauty of Nungurner, join us. For more information: email [nungurnerlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:nungurnerlandcare@gmail.com) or contact:

**East Gippsland Landcare Network**  
Ph. 5152 0608

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# Naturally Nungurner





Whether you are a visitor to Nungurner or a resident, we invite you to use this guide to help you identify the birds, plants and animals you may see. Use it to learn how you can encourage native birds and animals into your garden and how to create conditions for our plants, animals and birds to interact with each other and share space with you.

Maintaining the biodiversity, or the variety and richness of life in Nungurner, is important for all of us—visitor, resident, flora and fauna alike—for our health and that of future generations.

## BIRDS

### Wonga Pigeon

*Leucosarcia picata* (36-40cm\*)

Should you hear loud clattering wing beats while walking in local woodlands, damp gullies or gardens, you have probably startled this plump pigeon. Predominantly grey on its back with white V-shaped marks on the breast, it is easy to recognise and its loud, repetitive 'wong' call is also very distinctive. Its nest is a flimsy platform of twigs in the fork of a tree.



John Saxton

\*All bird measurements are beak to tail.

### Tawny Frogmouth

*Podargus strigoides* (35-50 cm -male larger)

A common local resident, sometimes glimpsed at night in wooded roadsides and well-treed gardens pouncing on moths and other prey. Roosts by day singly, in pairs or small family groups on tree branches, where it may adopt a pose resembling a dead stump. It usually has several customary roosting sites in an area, which it uses by turn. Its call is a loud, reverberating 'oom-oom-oom'. It has been known to nest in Nungurner gardens building a flimsy platform of sticks on a horizontal fork.



Ken Sherring

### Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

*Calyptorhynchus funereus* (55-65cm)

The far-carrying, loud squealing calls of this large, lanky black cockatoo often draw attention to its presence. In flight it appears leisurely with deep wing beats, wheeling among the treetops. Usually observed in pairs or small parties, in woodland and coastal scrub, it sometimes travels long distances over farmland and is regularly seen in Nungurner. Feeding mainly on seeds of hakea, banksia and exotic pines it also rips open limbs of black wattle to extract wood-boring grubs. It is dependent on old large forest trees for nest hollows.



John Hutchison

### Powerful Owl

*Ninox strenua* (60-65cm)

This very impressive, dark owl with golden eyes is the largest in Australia. Previously recorded in Nungurner, but probably only vagrant due to lack of extensive undisturbed forest, it requires extensive areas with mature hollow trees for breeding. Powerful Owls roost by day in dense tree cover, sometimes clutching a dead possum or other large prey. Its call is a low, measured 'whoo-hoo', with second note usually lower (male) or higher (female). Listed as 'vulnerable' in Victoria.



John Saxton

### Red-browed Finch

*Neochmia temporalis* (10-12cm).

The Red-browed finch prefers disturbed habitats, grassy areas, margins of forest, scrubland, gardens and parks. They feed mainly on small seeds of grasses, taken by climbing on grass stems or from the ground. Members of small flocks maintain contact with high-pitched almost inaudible 'sitt' calls. The finch nest is a bulky bottle-shaped structure of grass-stems with a side entrance in the 'neck', often conspicuous and usually in a spiky tree or shrub within two meters of the ground.



Ian Wright

### Buff-banded Rail

*Gallirallus philippenis* (30-33cm)

Locally, we have the occasional influx of this shy, ground dwelling bird, especially after good rains. It skulks in damp areas of thick undergrowth, rank grasses and marshy areas. Its range of calls includes squeaks, rattles, grunts and donkey-like brays, often a clue that they are visiting our area. It nests in a grass-lined depression in dense vegetation, sometimes a long way from water. If we allow vegetation in parts of our garden to thicken, the more likely it is the buff-banded rail will pay us a visit.



John Hutchison

### White-bellied Sea-Eagle

*Haliaeetus leucogaster* (70-90cm).

A very large eagle with white body and black and grey wings, typically seen soaring in circles over the Nungurner shoreline and adjacent land on broad wings held in an upswept V. It feeds on large fish, birds etc. Many breeding pairs maintain territories across the Gippsland Lakes, mainly in winter-spring. Their nest is a huge structure of sticks usually in a large eucalypt, added to over years. Pairs duet in loud goose like "honks". This eagle is listed as 'vulnerable' in Victoria, though the Gippsland Lakes' population is thought to be stable.



Ron Mackenzie

### Little Tern

*Sternula albifrons* (21-24cm).

The Little Tern is the smallest tern in Australia. It is globally in decline and listed as 'vulnerable' in Victoria but small numbers do breed in summer on sand islands in the Gippsland Lakes. Only slightly smaller than the Fairy Tern, with small differences in plumage stages, referring to a field guide could help make a distinction. It is gregarious and often associates with other terns, patrolling shores of sandy islands in the lakes. Keeping dogs on a leash when walking them on the beach reduces disturbance to these birds.



John Hutchison

### Azure Kingfisher

*Ceyx azureus* (17-19cm).

As its name suggests, this small jewel-like kingfisher is named for its iridescent plumage. It can occasionally be spotted along tree-lined margins of rivers, streams and lakeside, especially with high earth banks. Often it perches on a branch over water and darts out to dive for small fish and aquatic invertebrates. You may be lucky enough to see one taking a bath in your dam if you have one. Its nest is a tunnel excavated in the bank by the water's edge where it breeds in spring-summer.



John Hutchison

### Eastern Spinebill

*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* (16-17cm).

This active and colourful honeyeater frequents flowering trees and shrubs in forest, woodlands and many gardens in Nungurner where it is attracted to native and exotic flowering plants. Immature birds lack the bold patterns on throat and breast, being olive brown above and olive-cinnamon below. It feeds on nectar as well as small insects and its wings make a purring sound as it flits between bushes. Breeding mainly spring-summer, its nest is usually a well-concealed delicate cup suspended in the foliage of shrubs or trees.



Ian Wright

### Scarlet Honeyeater

*Myzomela sanguinolenta* (11cm).

The male has a brilliant scarlet head, breast, back and rump while the female is mostly grey-brown with a red wash on the throat. Mainly a summer breeding visitor to our corner of Victoria, most of them migrate north in winter. Frequenting the outer foliage of trees and shrubs in forest and woodland areas, it also visits well-vegetated gardens. It feeds on nectar, especially of eucalypts, but also takes insects. Its song is a descending tinkling trill, its nest a neat cup concealed in the outer foliage of a tree or bush.



John Hutchison

### Eastern Whipbird

*Psophodes olivaceus* (26-30cm).

The loud 'whipcrack' call of the male whipbird is iconically Australian. Seldom seen, this bird inhabits dense vegetation, including damp gullies and forest understorey. Pairs often sing a duet, with female adding 'chew-chew' after the male whipcrack. It forages on the ground and in undergrowth for insects and other invertebrates, where susceptible to predation by cats. Its nest is made made from a cup of sticks and bark, usually hidden low in dense undergrowth.



Ian Wright

## ANIMALS

### Eastern Long-Necked Turtle

*Chelodina lonnicollis*

Often hard to avoid as they cross the roads, these turtles grow up to 22cm over their lifetime. Clean waterways are essential to their survival and in turn they keep the mosquito population down. They eat a variety of animals including flying ants, worms, tadpoles, snails and yabbies. Females lay 2—10 eggs in the banks of waterways, including dams, up to three times each year. Provide shelter for young hatchlings by growing aquatic plants along the edge of your dam.



Louise Avery

### Echidna

*(Tachyglossus aculeatus)*

A frequent and welcome sight around Nungurner. Their ideal habitat is dense undergrowth, including rotting tree stumps with a good supply of ants and termites which they collect with their long, sticky tongues. Disturbed ground near the base of trees or fallen logs can be an indicator that an echidna has been browsing for food. Echidna young are commonly known by the charming name of 'puggles'! For their protection we should avoid insecticides that kill ants and may be toxic if eaten by echidnas.



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### Agile Antechinus

*(Antechinus agilis)*

The agile antechinus is usually found in dry areas of Nungurner. They are small carnivorous animals which nest in tree hollows and hunt only at ground level. They eat a diverse range of plants and animals including spiders, beetles, cockroaches, small lizards and soft berries. Distinguish them from brown house mice by their pronounced snout, lack of large front teeth and nor do they have the typical musty smell of mice. To assist these timid animals to hunt and breed we should allow undergrowth to form to provide them with safety.



Wildlife Unlimited

### Blue Tongue Lizard

*(Tiliqua scincoides scincoides)*

Keep an eye out in your garden for these friendly lizards. The male lizard has a proportionally larger head than the female, the females are bigger overall, but they both have vivid blue tongues. They usually produce from 10—25 live young between December and January, once every one or two years. They are not fussy eaters but are very partial to slugs and snails. Sadly sometimes Blue Tongues are killed by eating those that have been poisoned by snail bait. The provision of undergrowth and empty logs provide them with shelter.



Louise Avery

### Brown Tree Frog

*(Litoria ewingii)*

This frog is a great climber and jumper and is capable of leaping to catch a fly in mid-flight. Between 25 and 45mm long, it feeds on insects, including mosquitoes. It is found in a variety of habitats, and is common in gardens in this area. They need unpolluted water, free from run off from chemicals or fertilisers, to breed. The female lays 500-700 pigmented eggs in jelly clumps, usually attached to submerged vegetation in ponds, dams, lakes and flooded roadside ditches. Listen for the "weep..eep..eep..eep..eep" call all year round. Insects are a favourite food of the adult frog so the more frogs we have in our gardens, the less mosquitoes!



Colin Brimblecombe

### Feather Tailed Glider

*(Arobates pygmaeus)*

This is the world's smallest gliding marsupial, named for its long, feather-shaped tail. It is 6—8 cm long and only weighs 10—16 grams. It can leap and glide up to 25 metres, with the help of a skin membrane between its fore and hind legs. It feeds on nectar, pollen and insects and produces live babies that live in the pouch until they are big enough to climb onto their mother's back. They are found in most bushlands and survival is increased in areas with tall trees, relatively close together so they can move around to hunt for food. Preserving hollow trees is very important for these endangered possums.



Healesville Sanctuary

### Sugar Glider

*(Petaurus breviceps)*

The sugar glider earned its name from its love of eating nectar and flowers, but its diet also includes the sap of the black wattles and eucalypts common in Nungurner. Sugar gliders are very social and a number of them will inhabit the same nest in a tree hollow or in a nest made of leaves and twigs. Weighing only 100-160 grams, it moves nimbly about the tree tops at night seeking out food. The membrane that extends from its forelegs to hind legs helps it to glide through the air and float down to a landing. Its yip-yip-yip call is a telltale sign you have a sugar glider nearby.



Les Goldsmith

### Lesser Long Eared Bat

*(Nyctophilus geoffroyi)*

This is only one of around 12 species of microbats that you might find in Nungurner. As with other bats you are most likely to see this one at dusk as it emerges to feed. It will flit and dart quickly between trees and over dams catching insects mid-air and eating 'on the move'. A feast of up to 500 mosquitoes and other insects per hour is standard fare. It roosts in tree hollows and crevices, under bark and even in rooves and unused roller doors and awnings. During winter bats are slow to wake up and are easy prey for cats so keeping cats inside at night will help protect them.



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