



Frankston Branch News

Official Newsletter of Frankston Field & Game A.B.N. 97 827 331 728

Dec 2010 - Jan 2011

PLEASE SANTA MAKE IT A WET SUMMER FORECAST IS FOR MORE RAIN AND VICTORIAN DUCKS ARE PARTYING EVERYWHERE!

What a fantastic sight it's been to see water lapping at the banks of just about every depression you can find across Victoria.

There has been steady rainfall through winter but if there was any doubt at all as to whether the tide had turned in this lengthy drought, it was removed convincingly by the wide-spread torrential rain and flooding experienced on the fourth weekend of October and the second weekend of November.

From our own perspective, Frankston and the surrounding areas have some very heavy rain and experienced extensive flooding in low lying areas. The Patterson River was well and truly full with millions of litres of runoff gushing under the Wells Rd bridge for weeks on end.

At FFGA two of our shoots were cancelled due to rising water. As unfortunate as it was, there was no denying it was a magnificent sight! Stretching as far as the eye could see, water sat everywhere from Eastlink at one end to the model aeroplane and Police pistol clubs in the south and our range in the north.

I went down to the range in the days after each of the two floods both to assess the situation and capture the view on camera. On each occasion the water over Rossiters Road was deeper than my 4WD's 31 inch tyres and everywhere you looked you could see the flapping wings of many thousands of water birds partying!

On the morning of the cancelled FFGA November shoot my son and I drove into the range to be confronted with black duck and Chestnut teal paradise. There were birds everywhere including substantial numbers of ducklings.

We have even seen a return of the Cape Barren Geese that occasionally visit us. They seem to adore the turf farm up the road from the FFGA range and I just love seeing them, I can't wait till the day I have enough spare time to travel down to Flinders Island to hunt these magnificent birds! I'm guessing the turf farm operators are less thrilled to be visited by these grey feathered behemoths. I'm told they weigh up to 15 pounds or more and haveavenous appetites.

The North East of Victoria saw a lot of rain, perhaps more than anywhere else! Member and past branch President Chris Morris stood

From the President . . .

With the 2010 calendar year drawing to a close the committee of Frankston FGA would like to wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years.

Sitting at my desk, I see my son has been scribbling on one of my notepads. James is four and a bit years old now and Christmas holds an extra special fascination for him, just as it did for all of us at that age. As I'm sure a young Steve Harris did back in the late nineteen seventies and early eighties, James; with a little help from his mum has started writing a Christmas list to send to Santa. A good thing she's helping too, because like most young boys, James's attention span is short and writing lessons invariably end quickly in a flurry of textas, resulting in pages less legible than the hand-penned scripts of my childhood suburban doctor.

Smiling proudly at the thought of my young bloke's efforts to communicate with the big man in the red jacket down at the south pole, I got thinking What would my 2010 wish list be like...?

As an outdoorsman I think the first list entry would be a wish that spring rains continue long into summer. I know guys who've been doing rain-dances for a decade! They and the rest of us are happily now preparing for 2011 hunting and fishing seasons that should be better than anything we've seen in Victoria for decades. Lets just hope the rain continues and we don't have massive floods up north in February to pinch all our ducks before season opening!

I don't care if this next one sounds mean, I hope the Greens start off 2011 licking their wounds having realised a Victorian state election disaster in November 2010! As I write, many from within FGA ranks are working hard to ensure the Greens and their anti-outdoors agenda are not afforded the privilege of a material presence in either the upper or lower houses of our state parliament. They don't deserve it! We've had favourable representations from all other sides of politics in regards the hunting, fishing and other outdoor sports so lets hope our new government (whoever they are) gives us a break because I for one would be glad to refocus from politics, redirecting attentions to the 2011 duck and quail seasons!

From a branch perspective, high on my list I'd wish for a resurgence of member interest in 2011 in respect to our hunting activities. Our clay-target shooting activities have boomed in 2010 but field opportunities being poor for many years, saw many FFGA hunters limit their involvement with the branch. We clearly need to rebuild this aspect of branch life but disappointingly after eighteen months of requests, we remain without a hunting officer and have received near nothing in terms of feedback, property leads or suggestions. I originally joined FGA as a hunter who had only rarely shot at targets. While clays may now be my bread-and-butter, I still hunt and if Santa has time, please send FFGA some keen hunters willing to help us all find good sport afield in 2011.

If I racked my brain I'm sure there would be plenty of other things but you know what, life is good! Try to remember that this is the time of year to be thankful for all the great things we have, family, friends and ever improving outdoor opportunities in the best little country in the whole wide world!

Over Christmas try to have fun, be close to your family and don't stop doing your rain-dances. And don't forget to leave Rudolph the red nosed reindeer some grass in a bucket on the front porch, put a beer and some chocolates on the mantle piece and smile. Ho ho ho



LEND YOUR BRANCH A HAND TO STAY NUMBER 1 IN MELBOURNE

Currently the largest Melbourne-metropolitan FGA branch, Frankston is also right up there on the national stage currently ranked fourth behind the Mornington Peninsula based Pt Phillip branch and hot on the heels of regional branches Sale and Geelong. Our small dedicated crew work hard to uphold proud traditions of member engagement, proactive representation and the creation of member opportunities both at the range and in the field. We crave new faces to keep things fresh, bring new ideas to the table and help with all manner of branch initiatives. We particularly need help with hunting related activities as well as volunteers for working bees.

GET INVOLVED AND VISIT YOUR BRANCH, CALL THE COMMITTEE OR EMAIL FRANKSTONFGA@GMAIL.COM.AU

Frankston Field & Game - Hunting

HUNTING FOR A CITY BASED BRANCH - HAVE OPPORTUNITIES REDUCED OR ARE WE JUST CRAVING DIRECTION?

RICE HUNTING PROSPECTS

Reports are filtering back of members heading to the New South Wales and northern Victorian rice fields to assist farmers with duck problems. The success of these hunters has been mixed but it seems there's plenty of opportunity for the travelling hunter to get amongst it.

Like always the rice is somewhat hit and miss. With the sheer acreage of many properties you either run into hot action else the old adage "you should have been here last week" applies.

We'd hoped to be writing to you with details of plans for a branch rice trip. God knows we've tried to seek out opportunities to enable such a trip. Unfortunately though it's been hard going and location of a property has not been easy.

Calls to the rice board, game council and DSE's counterparts in NSW have yielded little. Improved conditions have seen property owners happily inundated with travelling hunters willing to assist and when you have people at your doorstep asking for permission face-to-face, why would you put your name on a rice-growers register or consider unknown numbers of strangers from an FGA branch hundreds of kilometres away, based only on a phone call...

Like I say it's hard going. The disappointing fact our hunting officer position remains vacant makes it even more so. Too few people at FFGA committee level are spread thin enough as it is and no one can take time from work and other commitments to drive north and scout

properties. It's a shame because many members are hunting in NSW right now but won't share intel or even pass on non-specific details for the sake of our newsletter. Others, many of whom are retired, have all the time in the world and have actually been scouting NSW for months. They too will not offer assistance or direction.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITY-BASED HUNTERS

Hunting opportunity and changes in rural demographics presents a topic worthy of discussion in itself. Rice hunting is just one affected activity, ALL opportunities for city-based hunters have changed in recent years.

Twenty years ago many of us enjoyed spots close to town. When I say close, I mean within 1 to 2 hours drive. Urban spread has seen many of these areas developed for housing or converted to small acreage hobby-farming. Hunters struggle to gain a foothold in even the most quiet of these areas and indeed its often illegal to even discharge a gun in many places given the definition of "built up area". Some continue to hunt close to town, often switching to quieter rimfire rifles or air-guns. Others have access to larger blocks but guard the knowledge closely. For most of us though, noise and safety concerns mean you're destined to drive far.

Further afield we have a new issue to contend with, the phenoneman of "tree changers" and hobby farmers. A few hours out of Melbourne there were once sheep and cattle farms of many hundreds of acres. There are now literally dozens of small properties in these areas, where either the owners are infrequently home (weekenders)

or they are city folk retiring or taking a punt on country life. Both are often unfamiliar with our sport or indeed with firearms at all. And if they are, chances are they'll be in no mood to share their hard earned (and paid for) spot with you.

So what's left for the city based hunter? Evidently (as allways) if you want to hunt private land you have to cultivate your contacts, do the hard yards then carefully guard your spots. In the past you would have joined FGA to access branch hunts. Unfortunately old-school branch hunts are fast becoming a thing of the past for city based branches, unless of course you have committee members who are landholders...

Victoria's public lands and network of State Game Reserves are part of the answer having provided individuals and branches a free and unfetereed source of quality sport for generations. On this vein its no wonder deer hunting is booming considering its predominantly conducted in public wilderness areas.

Another solution is to buy private hunting lands e.g. FGA's Heart Morass project. Until then we'll continue building bonds with rural branches and horse-trade to run combined hunts.

DO YOU HAVE THE ANSWER?

If you want to help build FFGA's field activities then we want to hear from you! We welcome ideas and (constructive) feedback and we're on the look-out for members to represent our hunting fraternity at a committee level.

CALL TODAY TO BE A PART OF THE TEAM!

Committee Details

President: Steve Harris

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Vice President: Michael Eddey

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Secretary: Jessica Walker

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Clay target Coordinator: Dave Jencke

0417 545 661

General Committee:

Graham Lewien
Guy Pilkington
Brett Murray
Daryle Eames

Branch mail: C/- 8 Westminster Ct, Somerville 3912

Up Coming Events

DECEMBER

11th 75 Target Christmas shoot at 11am followed by Branch Christmas Break-up BBQ at 5pm
16th Committee meeting

JANUARY

20th Committee meeting
22nd 100 Target Sporting Clays

FEBRUARY

12th 75 Target Christmas Shoot
17th Committee meeting
26th 75 Target Sporting Clays

All members are welcome to attend committee meetings. Committee meetings are held 6:30 PM Thursdays Watch www.frankstonfga.com.au, future newsletters and attend Hunters Hangouts for date confirmation/changes.

Frankston Field & Game - Sporting Clays

Clay Target News

With the year rapidly drawing to close, it's hard to comprehend just how quickly it's passed. It is also equally hard to come to grips with all that's been done and remains on the "to do" list.

In a fairly short space of time we have done substantial works on the grounds. We have revisited many aspects of how we run shoots. We have also spent a lot of time debating how we will run our competitions both from the perspective of how to obtain maximum value for our competitors but also how the branch can run smoothly and cover its costs.

Unfortunately the big influx of works in summer and autumn 2010 were thwarted by early rains. Being hunters your committee had a mixed blessing on its hands. While the rains were welcome, they stopped major projects and delivered substantial hardship on the branch.

As this is written we have a wet ground with ducklings all over it. Fantastic from one point of view but disastrous from another. In Spring we have had to cancel two shoots so far. More heavy rains are forecast.

In any case, we remain incredibly positive. The foundations for change are there and we are committed to seeing it all through.

We discussed the need to organise working bees at our most recent committee meeting. We hope to run a number of days over summer but given flooding and rains we are hesitant to fix dates. We do need member support though and if anyone can assist we're tentatively thinking of a weekend before Christmas and another in early to mid January. Contact committee if you are able to help.

One exciting bit of news, we have now banked a sum of \$2,000 from Kingston Council being a grant to replace aged clay-target traps. We have spoken with a number of suppliers in recent weeks and are to view some of the available hardware in the coming weeks.

Although the grant is not as substantial as some sports clubs in the area, we are encouraged by the related discussions. We have been told the council is not at all averse to the shooting sports having supported a local pistol club for many years. Our grant while modest this year,

is also something of a "test the waters" and if we can demonstrate positive outcomes for local residents (of whom many of our members are domiciled) we are likely to be looked upon favourably in coming years.

Competition results:

Saturday 23rd Oct 2010 – 75 Sporting Clays

The day started off with some light sleet and a cool breeze. We were coming off the back of a good three days of perfect sunny spring weather. The weather was predicted to change and there was widely forecast to be cold and wet on the Saturday. Well, fortunately for us despite a cool start the weather cleared up and the sun came out!

Anyhow, approximately 60 competitors came down and enjoyed a day of great targets and great company. Many of the guys are about to head to Kingston South Australia this coming week for the FGA Nationals.

AA: B Sartori, V Dubocanin, T Mitrakis
A: D Kell, B Gonzales, B Stewart
B: G Evans, C Markopoulos, S Davidson
C: R Jonkin, D Scantlebury, G Harney
Vets: A Backman, L Box, W Robinson
Juniors: J Paglia, C Dubocanin, C Lenz

Saturday 9th Oct 2010 - 2010 FFGA 100 Target October Mega Shoot sponsored by Benjamin King Money Chartered Accountants and BKM Financial Services

The concept of the 100 target Mega Shoot is a new one, having been born after the withdrawal of the Carlson Classic by the sponsor. Not only was the concept itself new on the day, the sponsor was also new. Benjamin King Money provided an impressive array of gold, silver and bronze medals for the winning competitors of each grade, set with colour ribbons in presentation boxes. Winchester ammunition was also provided along with the medals and a keg of Heinekin was raffled at presentations.

We were hopeful for a significant turnout as a result, and the tremendous weather on the day did not disappoint either. The quality of the competition was tremendous with many positive comments passed to committee on the (vastly varied) targets, layout and prizes.

The sponsors attended on the day and were impressed! We were also pleased to play host to some of Australia's best shots with national / international champions Sox Pilipasidis and Renae Birgan giving us all a tremendous show of the form that catapults them onto the winner's podium time and time again.

AA: S Pilipasidis, T Mitrakis, J Quinn
A: P Johnson, B Murray, R Elder
B: R Pilkington, T Tryp, J Michiais
C: B Rutherford, R Tonkin, I Spiller
Vets: V Smith, V Ruddick, W Robinson
Ladies: R Birgan, N Marshall
Juniors: E Elder, D McIntyre
25 Pin – Sox Pilipasidis

Saturday 25th Sept 2010 - 75 Sporting clays

A gorgeous day greeted us with plenty of sun, little wind and a mild temperature. The beautiful weather and challenging targets saw smiles on the faces of (just about) everyone coming off the range. Afterwards many watched the grand final in the sheds over a few cold beers or sat talking footy and hunting in the club rooms.

Despite the busy day and grand final celebrations Saturday night we had many of the boys return early Sunday morning for a "spring-cleaning" working bee on the grounds. A BBQ was held afterwards (including some beautiful venison snags – thanks Dave). A special thanks to all the guys and my wife Raelene for bringing down the BBQ gear and cold drinks mid-morning. We achieved a hell of a lot!

A: A Xenidis, S Harris, B Morrison
B: L Lambrou, T Tryp, G Lenz
C: M Ferrier, I Spiller, I Ferrier
Vets: J Robbins, V Ruddick, M Terrington
Juniors: C Lenz

Note on merchandise

We are currently placing orders for a modest supply of hats, stubby holders and polo shorts with the logo of our branch front and centre. Lets show some pride in our branch!

Watch this box!

In between newsletters see up-to-date results, photos and more at www.frankstonfga.com.au and register for Claybuster the new full colour e-newsletter from Feathers and Fur Magazine. Visit www.claybuster.com.au to register

UP AND COMING COMPETITIONS

75 Sporting Clays - Sat 11th Dec, 11am - Christmas shoot and branch BBQ

100 Sporting Clays - Sat 20th Jan, 10am

75 Sporting Clays - Sat 12th Feb, 11am

Location: FRANKSTON FGA, Rossiters Road Carrum Downs

Contact Dave Jencke and refer FGA shoot-book

**COMBINED HUNTERS HANGOUT
AND CLAY TARGET
CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP BBQ**

Saturday December 11th

Previously the branch has run separate events at Christmas for the hunters hangout crew and our clay-shooters. We figure why not build fellowship and bring everyone together in 2010 for a true branch event

The BBQ will kick-off at 5pm. Why not make a day of it and come at 11am to see if you have what it takes to win a delicious ham or plum pudding in our annual Christmas shoot

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up at our November hunters hangout and recounted his recent travels to photograph and visit first hand; dozens of state game reserves that are now bouncing back into life thanks to the rains.

I'm told the volume of water in many places is simply astonishing. Like an excited schoolboy Chris and many others at the table talked about wetlands, lakes and river systems they have travelled to see recently, many of which have been dry as a bone for a decade or longer.

Most of these wetlands now hold water and there are birds everywhere! Hunters far and wide are talking about where they will hunt in 2011 and I'm no exception to this. I've hunted Gippsland extensively in recent years but have a list in my head of about half a dozen places around Kerang, the majority of which I haven't seen in years. Some I've been to briefly but only for fox-drives, standing in dry bull-dust where in my youth I'd have been up to my chest waders pass-shooting blackies.

In the coming months we have much to do. After the hard times I think it's incumbent upon every hunter to get organised, get out there and take the kids with you. If they are under twelve, take them along for the camping experience. If they are of age get them booked in for a WIT test as soon as possible, arrange a junior permit for them, clean your spare gun and start patching up your old waders so they will be dry on opening morning. Better still get them to ask Santa for their own basic gear and help out the hunting supply companies that have done it tough here in Australia for so many years.

Most importantly, use the coming months and the 2011 hunting seasons to teach your kids the skills and ethics your mentors instilled in you as a kid. Teach them marksmanship too because nothing will put them off more than a day in the swamp missing everything they draw a bead on. FFGA can help in this so don't be shy to come down to the range on a Thursday practice day or shoot a comp or two.

Country towns have no doubt also missed hunters and the income big duck seasons and opening weekends bring, remind them! Between fuel, food, accomodation and other sundries, we've the ability to bring a short but substantial period of prosperity to many small towns currently doing it tough, so consider doing your shopping on the road rather than at home. It might cost a few bucks more but consider the bigger picture.

When visiting be polite and friendly and make sure you proudly tell the owners of the businesses you patronise that you're a hunter. If we all remind country businesses what they have to gain by hosting us, who knows, some in the bush may even think twice before pumping petrol into Laurie Levy's car, book out their caravan park to duck opening protesters or allow the purple-haired rabble to use their service station showers and toilets after a heavy night on the cous-cous and pumpkin seeds.

After 25 years of misguided protests by a vocal but small minority, a decade of drought and a lifetime of oppressive gun laws, duck hunting remains alive and well in Victoria! Tell those who'd close down your sport just what you think of them by getting out there in 2011 and having the time of your life!

RITCHIES
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