

# Lower Sweetwater Creek Reserve

Sweetwater Creek is a natural habitat corridor from its south of Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve, to Port Phillip Bay. Close to the mouth of the creek lies Sweetwater Creek Nature Reserve, a peaceful oasis tucked in amongst nearby houses.

A refuge for indigenous plants and animals, the reserve is one of Frankston's hidden jewels. Visitors can walk along the paths following the creek through steep gullies, waterfalls and remnant woodland and marvel at the peace and tranquility in the midst of suburbia.

## History

Narringalling, meaning 'sweet water', is the name given to the creek by the local Boon Wurrung people who used it as a source of freshwater.

Around the 1850s European settlers built huts near the creek mouth. In the late 1800s logging by woodcutters operating out of Canadian Bay resulted in the clearing of most of the eucalypts and wattles. The timber was used for the Melbourne fuel, furniture and tanning markets. The denuded areas were then invaded by Coast Tea-tree.

Neglected for many years, parts of the reserve were used as a dumping ground and became overgrown with weeds.

Volunteer group Action Sweetwater Creek Inc has worked since 1974 to clear rubbish, remove weeds, help control erosion and revegetate the creek area. Due to these efforts, the creek has again become an excellent habitat for indigenous plants and animals.

## Things to see

### Indigenous plants

Since 1980, much of the tea-tree has fallen or been cleared and, on the upper slopes Manna and Narrow-leaf Peppermint Gums now form a canopy for various sedges, grasses and heathy species such as Sweet Bursaria, Common Correa and Hop Goodenia. Many wild flowers also appear here like Common Heath, the state floral emblem.

In the more moist areas, Swamp Gums, Blackwood Wattles and an occasional tree fern may be found, and in the swampy areas, through which a boardwalk meanders, we can see a prolific regeneration of Swamp Paperbark.

Close to Nepean Highway, coastal species like Coast Banksia and Boobialla abound. While the reserve still has weed problems, local indigenous species are becoming predominant.

### Native animals

In the 1950s there were koalas, wallabies and wombats living in the area, but unfortunately few animals remain now. They have been driven out of their habitat by foxes and domestic pets.

There are many possums and skinks in the reserve. Occasionally an echidna or a Blotched Blue-tongue Lizard might be seen. Less obvious are the nocturnal resident Sugar gliders and native Swamp Rats.

Freshwater Common Galaxias use the creek for their annual migration, traveling downstream as adults to the sea to spawn and the juveniles return upstream to grow into adults.

Common birds seen here include Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Eastern Yellow Robin and Red Wattlebird, which is often found feeding in amongst the banksias.



## FACT BOX

**Location:** Frankston South

**Melway Ref:** 102 A5

**Area:** 13 ha

**Special features:** Creek, remnant vegetation, "the Granites"

**Best flowering time:** Spring

**Birds:** 40+ species

**Walking tracks:** Network of over 2.5km: main track from Liddesdale Avenue to Baden Power Drive 1.3km

**Walking time:** ½ hour

**Managed by:** Frankston City Council and Melbourne Water

**Pets:** Dogs on lead permitted

**Information:** ☎ 1300 322 322









If you take an evening stroll you may be lucky enough to see a Tawny Frogmouth or one of the many other nocturnal creatures who live in the reserve.

## Things to do

Stroll along the picturesque walking paths and boardwalks, and enjoy views of the creek, waterfalls and bushland. Lookouts, bridges and seats provide resting points where you can stop, look and listen for birdlife and frogs.

"The Granites" is a particularly beautiful spot where the creek has carved out its path around large rocky outcrops and boulders.

You can extend your walk beyond the northern end of the reserve by crossing Nepean Highway to join the Frankston Foreshore boardwalk.

-  Lookout
-  Bridge
-  Information
-  Feature
-  Entrance
-  Trail
-  Boardwalk
-  Creek / water



It is important to protect the indigenous bushland along the creek to provide a natural wildlife habitat and corridor that connects Port Phillip bay to the Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve.

