

Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve

The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve is an important area of remnant heathland; a protected site for indigenous flora and fauna, some of which are considered to be rare or threatened. It is one of the last remaining habitats for some species, such as the endangered New Holland Mouse and the Southern Brown Bandicoot, which need the cover of the dense heathy vegetation for their survival.

It is a precious area of nature in the midst of our urban landscape. Walk through the remnant indigenous bushland and stop at the lookout to enjoy stunning panoramic views of Melbourne, Port Phillip Bay and the Dandenong Ranges.

Geology

The reserve is located on the Cranbourne Sands, a series of parallel sand dunes, formed thousands of years ago, and stretching from Frankston to Cranbourne and beyond (see pages 9-10). The reserve is crossed by two creeks, Tamarisk Creek and Boggy Creek, but flow in these is irregular.

History

The local Boonerwung tribe used the local springs at the reserve as a source of fresh water for thousands of years. Much of the natural bushland in Frankston North was cleared in the early 1900s for pine plantations and yet again in the 1950s for housing development.

Since the 1970s, strong, sustained community action has helped to protect this area as the last substantial piece of land with indigenous bush left in Frankston North. The original reserve of 108 hectares was established in 1989 and in 2006 was increased to 220 hectares using Crown Land.

Things to see

Indigenous plants

The combination of sand dunes, springs, swampy areas and creeks create a mosaic of different plant communities at the reserve.



The low-growing heathland is composed of Heath Tea-tree and many other smaller shrubs including Silver Banksia, Spike Wattle, Green Sheoak and Common Heath. Coast Manna Gum is also found in the heathland. At lower levels, Narrow-leaf Peppermint and Black Sheoak join the Manna Gum. Scented Paperbark and Swamp Paperbark occur in the poorly drained areas, such as along Boggy Creek.

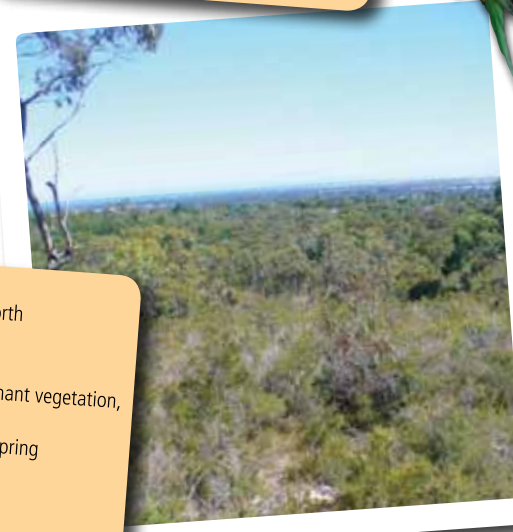


Native animals

The diversity of habitats and the large size of the reserve make it an important sanctuary for many different native animals, particularly small mammals. The resident Swamp Wallabies and Short-beaked Echidnas are active during the day while Southern Brown Bandicoots and Sugar



Parks Victoria manages the reserve with the help of the Friends of The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve. Regular working bees monitor and improve habitat for Southern Brown Bandicoots and control the spread of environmental weeds.



FACT BOX

Location: Frankston North
Melway Ref: 100 C9
Area: 220 ha
Special features: Remnant vegetation, threatened species
Best flowering time: Spring
Birds: 100+ species
Walking tracks: 1+ km
Walking time: 1+ hours
Pets: In areas where dogs are permitted they must be on a lead
Managed by: Parks Victoria
Information: ☎ 1300 322 322

Gliders are nocturnal. Snakes are present in the reserve so walkers should keep a lookout on the tracks.

Over 100 species of birds have been recorded, including many honeyeaters, waterbirds, parrots and birds of prey like the Tawny Frogmouth. The Red and Little Wattlebirds are common in the surrounding eucalypts while the White-eared Honeyeater is often found in the heathy vegetation.

Things to do

Surrounded by over 200 hectares of bushland at the reserve, it is easy to feel a sense of remoteness and disbelief that you are so close to suburbia.

An extensive network of walking tracks provides access to the lookout for spectacular views over Port Phillip Bay and Dandenong Ranges. Alternatively, there is a short one kilometre boardwalk through the damp heathland near the Exelsior Drive car park. Birdwatching, walking, photography and nature study are popular activities in the reserve.