

17 December 2013

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Victorian Alpine National Park Bioscan complete

Parks Victoria, Museum Victoria and 4WD Victoria have completed one of the most comprehensive wildlife, geology and palaeontology surveys ever conducted in the Eastern area of the Alpine National Park.

Over two weeks, the 100+ member team of researchers, park rangers and 4WD Victoria volunteers descended on the Park, focusing on a wide range of habitats including sphagnum moss bogs and streams, alpine meadows and grasslands, snow gum forests, boulder fields, limestone caves, rivers and adjacent riparian zones, rocky knolls and mixed eucalypt woodlands.

“Our focus was on species that previously had little or no recorded information. Many of these were listed or endangered.” Dr Mark Norman, Head of Sciences, Museum Victoria, said. “Using small cage traps baited with peanut butter, oats and sardines, mammal researchers surveyed the small mammals of alpine bogs, boulder fields, grasslands and woodlands. “Over the fortnight, we recorded endangered native Smoky Mouse and Broad-toothed Rat, as well as native Bush Rats and the tiny predatory Dusky Antechinus and Agile Antechinus.”

“Other teams were also successful, the reptile team recorded a wide range of species including five snake species, 14 skink species and three dragon lizard species including the spectacular Gippsland Water Dragon.” said Dr Norman. “The survey also recorded and photographed the many bats, frogs, insects, spiders, scorpions, fishes and crayfish of these special high-altitude environments.”

Parks Victoria Chief Executive Bill Jackson said, “This is the fifth bioscan Parks Victoria has undertaken in partnership with Museum Victoria, and one of the most successful to date, demonstrating the benefits of productive partnerships at work.”

“We are very grateful to everyone for the months of planning and the many individual contributions that will help us find out more about these iconic national parks. The evidence gathered will help with the long-term management of the park.”

For the first time, 4WD Victoria joined the Bioscan as a critical logistics partner, with members volunteering their time to deliver the researchers to some of the most inaccessible parts of the park.

**For further media information, interviews or images, please contact:**

Claire Fitzgerald, PR Officer Museum Victoria Sciences 0400 130 675 [cfitzgerald@museum.vic.gov.au](mailto:cfitzgerald@museum.vic.gov.au)

Melanie McVey-DiLazzaro, Regional Marketing & Communications - East Region, Parks Victoria 0459 818 451

[melanie.mcvey-dilazzaro@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:melanie.mcvey-dilazzaro@parks.vic.gov.au)

“Our volunteers were delighted to be involved in such a large-scale research survey, as they could contribute their skills and knowledge of the bush to assist in the delivery of this project”, said Wayne Hevey, Projects and Events Manager, 4WD Victoria.

“Volunteers provided critical support services including specialist driving required to navigate the difficult and steep high country terrain, movement of equipment to isolated locations and even participating in field research”.

"The 4WD Victoria drivers were fantastic", said Dr Norman, "Without their expert skills and experience combined with the knowledge and excellent logistics of Parks Victoria staff, we wouldn't have covered half the area or found anywhere near as many animals".

An integrated community program of events was also conducted over the final days of the Bioscan.

At Dinner Plain, Alpine School students were treated to an in-house evening Bioscan lecture presented by Parks Victoria and Museum Victoria staff.

An oral history training program was delivered to students from the Alpine School. The students then conducted interviews with Museum Victoria Scientists and Parks Victoria staff. Their short-form stories will be published on Parks Victoria and Museum Victoria's websites.

A miniature natural history museum was created for a day at the Omeo Memorial Hall. Over 120 students and teachers from Omeo Primary School and Swifts Creek P-12 School visited, and were able to talk to museum scientists and Parks Victoria rangers, and learn about the mammals, insects, rocks, fossils and reptiles of the area – as well as visit a photo studio setup to learn how to photograph wildlife.

A 'Backyard Science at the Pub' presentation was also held at the Golden Age Hotel in Omeo for locals, involving a presentation of the Bioscan's findings by Dr Mark Norman. More than 50 people took the opportunity learn about the scan and chat with scientists and rangers over dinner.

-ends-

**For further media information, interviews or images, please contact:**

Claire Fitzgerald, PR Officer Museum Victoria Sciences 0400 130 675 [cfitzgerald@museum.vic.gov.au](mailto:cfitzgerald@museum.vic.gov.au)

Melanie McVey-DiLazzaro, Regional Marketing & Communications - East Region, Parks Victoria 0459 818 451  
[melanie.mcvey-dilazzaro@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:melanie.mcvey-dilazzaro@parks.vic.gov.au)