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# Field Nats News No.206

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.  
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March 2011

## From the President

Well March is almost here and Autumn is on its way. Welcome to this edition of the Field Nat News. So, due to cyclones etc., the rain continues to fall in many parts of Victoria with recent flooding in Melbourne. My fiancée and I were doing a frog survey at Lyndhurst the night the heavens opened and dumped 150+mm in the outer eastern suburbs. The frogs loved it!! All except those that were squashed on the road, making their way between "puddles".

### Community Finding Fauna and Black Saturday Anniversary

The 7<sup>th</sup> of February was the second anniversary of the Black Saturday fires. Over the holidays, I along with other members of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, Birds Australia and Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA) and staff from DSE's Arthur Rylah Institute, began doing research into the effects of fire on native fauna in the bushfire affected areas. This involved setting up remote cameras (photo below) and Anabat survey equipment in 20 locations around the Black Range/Cathedral Ranges area.

Members have since been back to collect this equipment and have started to review the photos. A longer report will appear in the April FNN.

While moving around through the blackened forests, it was amazing to see the recovery that has occurred in two years. Trees that were, only a short time ago, blackened trunks are now green with epicormic growth. Canopies that are coming back to life and plants on the grounds are again thick in areas that was once scorched earth. The renewal of our bushland is a wonder to behold. However, the adversity that the residents faced during the fires, and continue to, after the fires have long been extinguished, is a much slower healing.

### International Year of Forests

The United Nations has declared 2011 as *The International Year of Forests* in recognition of the importance that forests play in our daily lives.

Australia has some of the most beautiful and productive forest areas in the whole world. These fantastic and magical places mean a lot of different  
(Continued on page 5)

Due date for April newsletter  
**Monday 28th February.**

(Note first Tuesday is March 1st.) FNN will go to print on the 8th March, collation Tuesday 15th March

The capture and handling of all animals on FNCV field trips is done strictly in accordance with the club's research permits.



Sally Bewsher

Index	Page
From the President	1, 5
Calendar of Events	2
Members' news, photos & observations	3, 4, 5
<i>Bat Group News: Colony at Yarra Bend</i>	6
Coates Wildlife Tours (advertisement)	7
<i>Fauna Survey Group News: Yookamurra</i>	8, 9
<i>Day Group News: Plants and Mining in the Banded Ironstone Country of WA.</i>	10
<i>Marine Research Group News: The Borders of the State and the State of the Borders.</i>	11
Notices	12



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**All meetings are held at FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated. On days of extreme weather conditions excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.**

**\*FNCV Council meeting Monday 28th February 7.30 pm.**

### March

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> - Fauna Survey Group—Meeting - 'Fire and fauna: some responses of birds and arboreal mammals'.** Speaker: Richard Loyn. Department of Sustainability and Environment. Contact: Ray White 9308 3770 AH

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> - Fungi Group—Meeting - Slime moulds.** Speaker: Paul George. Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

**11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Fauna Survey Group—Field Trip - Post fire trip in the Beechworth area.** This is the second trip involving FSG, Birds Australia and BOCA, following a successful grant to Arthur Rylah Institute from the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA). Contact: John Harris 0409 090 955. *Prior bookings essential (at least one week before trip).*

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>—Collate FNN 207** About 1 pm in the hall. Contact Noel Schleiger 9435 8408.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> - Bat Group—Grey-headed flying-fox count** Meet at Yarra Bend Golf Course carpark Mel 2D G7 at 7.15 pm. RSVP as a courtesy by email or phone Megan Davidson 9380 5062 AH; m.davidson@latrobe.edu.au

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates—**No meeting - replaced by excursion on Sun 20<sup>th</sup> March. (see below).

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> - Botany Group—Meeting - 'Climate change impacts and adaptation: physiological mechanisms in trees'.** Speaker: Professor Terry Blake. Contact: Michael Murray 0416 073 698; michaeljmurray1@optusnet.com.au

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> - Junior Group—Excursion—**Griff Ward (one of the old Hawthorn Juniors) will lead an excursion around Wanderslore Sanctuary in Launching Place. Meet at 11 am - 1 pm: bring a picnic lunch. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates—Excursion—Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates—Excursion—Blackburn Lake** to photograph and collect insects learn how to prepare an insect collection and to identify insects at the club rooms. Meet at the club rooms at 1 pm before either walking or driving to one of the Blackburn Lake areas. Return to club room at 3 pm for indoor session. Note that TIG meetings are usually on the third Wednesday of the month, but this March 20 excursion/meeting will replace the meeting that would have been on March 16. Contact: Alan Yen 0409 194 788

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> - Day Group—Meeting - 'Jean Galbraith and the wildflower shows; a roller coaster ride'.** Speaker: Dr Meredith Fletcher. Contact: Gary Presland 9890 9288

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> - Geology Group—Meeting - "Speleothems and their connection to paleoclimate"** Speaker: Helen Green, School of Earth Sciences, University of Melbourne. Contact: Kaye Oddie 9329 0635

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> - Junior Group—Meeting - Urban Wildlife.** Speaker: Max Campbell. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> - Marine Research Group—Field trip - Stoney Point Jetty, Western Port.** Meet at the car park Melway 195 F5 at 10.15 am. Contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773 or details and to advise if you will be attending.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group—Field Trip - Stagwatch.** Enjoy an evening in the bush, as we endeavour to find Leadbeater's Possum and other nocturnal fauna. Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651. *Prior bookings essential (at least one week before trip).*

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>—FNCV Council Meeting—** 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Hali 9877 9860 (office hours) or admin@fncv.org.au



**The policy of the FNCV is that non-members families pay \$5 per excursion and \$2 per meeting, to cover insurance costs. Junior non-member families, \$2 per excursion only.**

# Members' news, photos & observations

We are reserving a page in future issues of FNN for natural history observations, member news and photos. It is just so easy these days to let us know what you have noted in your life, your travels or perhaps your garden. So how about it? Email: [fnnews@fncv.org.au](mailto:fnnews@fncv.org.au) by Monday February 28th 2011

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

15 January 2011

To the President and Council  
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria

Dear John and Fellow Councillors,

I want to thank you all for the most unexpected honour bestowed on me at the Christmas party last year, the naming of the Club's library after me. It came as a complete surprise, and I regret that I did not pay tribute to the other people, some of whom were there, who have helped me make the library what it is today.

When I took over as Librarian in 1985 I had several objectives, the chief of which was to organise the library and make it readily available to members as a valuable resource. This task was made much easier after we moved to Blackburn, where we have the space to make all the books accessible. Another objective was to classify and re-catalogue all the books. This I have achieved. All other achievements have been the result of combined efforts. The word 'Archives' has been included in the legend above the library door, and much work has been done in this area, so we are able to answer queries with a fair degree of success, but complete organisation is an ongoing task. Being the Club's Librarian and Archivist has given me much interest, and great satisfaction, for which I am very grateful.

Once more, I thank you most sincerely for the recognition that you have given to my work.

With best wishes for all  
future activities

*Sheila Houghton*

**Clarification:** The report in FNN 205:5 of the library dedication at the Christmas party contained a list of my achievements. I am a member of *Fungimap* and I have sent in records of fungi sightings over the years, but I have never held any official position in *Fungimap*, which the statement seems to imply

## "A fitting tribute"

*The Age* 7 February 2011 reported that Karma Hastwell's 26 hectare property is to be added to Kinglake National Park. It is indeed "a fitting tribute". Karma was a member of FNCV from 1961 until her tragic death in the Black Saturday bushfires two years ago. She was a keen ornithologist and member of Birds Australia, and supplied a huge number of records for their *Atlas of Australian Birds*. Her bequest will preserve and extend the area of bush which is a habitat for the lyrebirds that were so important to her.

## President's Roof Appeal

Thank you to the following folk for their recent donations:

Catherine Costello  
Margaret Corrick  
Andrew Brentnall  
Cecily Falkingham



Total of the appeal when FNN went to press **\$8,171.75**. A fantastic result.

Many thanks to Julie Simms for providing several very valuable sessions of GPS training. It was really appreciated by the participants.

## FNCV HALL SIGNAGE

Have you looked up when entering the club rooms by the steps at main door? In fact we have three new outside signs which look terrific. Thanks to Victoria Aitken, Hali Ferguson and Rob Ferguson for their hard work in achieving this long overdue project.

A belated thank you also to Rob Ferguson and Mitchell Brain for cooking the BBQ at the Christmas party.

## Shire of Yarra Ranges Draft Flora and Fauna Strategy.

If you would like to read the draft, it can be found at [http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Public Notices Consultation/Draft Flora Fauna Strategy](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Public%20Notices%20Consultation/Draft%20Flora%20Fauna%20Strategy)  
Alternatively, if you would prefer a cd copy please contact the Environment Department on 1300 368 333.  
They invite written comments to be directed to Marty White, Biodiversity Conservation Co-ordinator, Yarra Ranges Council, P.O. Box 105, Lilydale 3140 or mail [yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

*Due date for public comment, 4th March 2011.*



## Dates for 2011 Here are some dates to put in your diary for 2011:

**Council Meetings:** 31<sup>st</sup> January, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 28<sup>th</sup> November

**New Member's Nights:** will start this year. This is an excellent opportunity for all SIGs to recruit new members. A short spiel from each SIG representative, from John and from Hali will be given on the night. A representative from each SIG or a written statement will be needed on each of these dates:

9<sup>th</sup> February (Wednesday), 5<sup>th</sup> May (Thursday), 26<sup>th</sup> July (Tuesday), 21<sup>st</sup> October (Friday)

**Calendar of Events:** *June to September*

Due Date: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April

*October to January 2012*

Due Date: Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August

*February to May 2012*

Due Date: Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

**AGM:** 1<sup>st</sup> May (Sunday)

**Biodiversity Symposium:** 24<sup>th</sup> September (TBC)

**SEANA Camp -FNCV hosting:** 29<sup>th</sup> October (Saturday) – 1<sup>st</sup> November (Tuesday)

**ANHM:** 7<sup>th</sup> November (Monday) – Replaces Fungi Meeting.



## Help the Club fundraise for the President's Roof Appeal with Good Will Wine

The FNCV in partnership with Goodwill wine has started to raise money for the club. This fundraising endeavour will be ongoing and will hopefully benefit the club for many years to come. For now funds will be directed to the roof appeal.

Goodwill wine is a fundraising website, which offers Charities and Not for Profit Organisations the opportunity to raise money through wine sales. Simply go to the website [www.goodwillwine.com.au](http://www.goodwillwine.com.au) or call them on 59629155 and order half a dozen or a dozen bottles of wine. Most of the wine is sourced within Victoria, Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula etc, with the rest coming from elsewhere in Australia.

For every dozen bottles sold the club will receive \$20.00 (\$10.00 per ½ dozen).

**The wine comes with a 100% money back guarantee if you are not happy with the vintage** and will be delivered to your door.



*The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the FNCV.*

## Welcome

Mr Allan WELLS
Mr Jim GREER
Mr Jules THEODOROU
Mr Theo THEODOROU
Mr Gary LEETE
Ms Grace REIDSIMMONS
Mr Michael NEIGHBOUR
Mr Graeme ROWE
Miss Freya CRAWFORD
Ms Nicole DREVER

Warmest greetings to these new members, all from Victoria, who were welcomed into our wonderful club at the November FNCV Council meeting.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

## Expressions of Interest in a first aid course run through the FNCV

This year the Club aims to have more people trained in basic first aid available on excursions and camps.

If you are interested in attending a short first aid course arranged and subsidised by the FNCV please leave your contact details with Hali on 9877 9860 or email [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

*Note participants would be expected to contribute towards costs.*

## The FNCV Environment Fund

The FNCV Environment Fund has been set up to support the objectives of the Club in relation to the environment.

Donations to the FNCV Environment Fund are tax deductible. Donations are welcome, and donation forms can be down-loaded from our website or are available from the FNCV Office.  
Ph 98779860.

Readers are reminded that applications for the latest round of funding close **Monday 11 April 2011.**

**Details FNN 205 p13 or contact FNCV office.**



Left—Bardick,  
*Echipsis Curta*

**These reptile photos were taken by Carl Hansen near Yookamurra during the FSG Christmas camp.**



Above—Broad-banded Sand-swimmer,  
*Eremiascincus richardsonii*

(Continued from page 1)

things to different people. Some work with the wood from the forests. Some work with the creatures that live in the forests. Some of us live in the forests; some play in the forest, (camping, hiking, exploring), and some of us just love looking and being in a forest!. Most essentially, we all have a huge responsibility to care for our forests and bushland and ensure it is handed down and remains intact and sustainable for future generations

For more information go to

[www.internationalyearofforests.com.au](http://www.internationalyearofforests.com.au)

This year's FNCV Biodiversity Symposium will have forests as the theme. The Council is looking for members to form a sub-committee to organise the 2011 Symposium. If you are interested in helping to organise the day, please contact Hali in the office.

### The Presidents' Roof Appeal

This is going along really well with the fantastic amount of \$8 171.75 raised already. (see p3) We are planning further exciting fund raising events to add to this. More details as they arise. Thank you once again to those that have already donated.

**John Harris**

## FORESTS FOREVER ECOLOGY CAMP EASTER

**22-25th April 2011. Camp by the Broadribb River at Goongerah, 70 k north of Orbost and learn about forest ecology.**

Cost : \$60 for adults (\$35 concession), \$20 a day ((\$15 concession). Teenagers half price, under 12 free.

**Organised by Environment East Gippsland and the Wilderness Society.**

**For information and bookings:**

**Contact Carmen or Jill on (03) 5154 0145 or e-mail [carmen@eastgippsland.net.au](mailto:carmen@eastgippsland.net.au) Book early, numbers limited.**

## Juniors' Group News

A group of 33 parents and children attended our end of year, Baw Baw camp December 17-19<sup>th</sup> 2010. We had lodge accommodation and met up with a ranger/educator for a guided walk up to the summit. We also led a couple of our own walks. We all had a great time.

At the first meeting for the year in January we farewelled Wendy Clark and she ran an orchid potting activity. Wendy will still be contactable for advice and as a speaker in future.







## Bat Group

We were among the 40 people who turned up for the February count of the Grey-headed Flying Fox colony at Yarra Bend Park. (Photo below—Grey-headed Flying Fox at rest). We meet in the golf club car park and split into groups to man the counting stations.

Each person is given a counter and pushes the button once for every ten bats. At the January count I counted 18,986. (I had six left from my last click). There are several people at each station and their figures are collated then averaged to give a sum for each of the stations. These are added for the final result, which was between thirty-eight and forty thousand as of January 19th. The counts are held close to

the full moon so some nights the result is a spectacular display of thousands of Flying Foxes leaving their roosts and heading out to feed.

Our other activity is to monitor the colony during very hot weather (40c+). Usually the hot northerlies come with very low humidity and the bats die of dehydration. We have a team of volunteers from a variety of groups, managed by DSE, who on these extreme days spray water and collect ailing bats for triage.

There are just a couple more weeks before the hot weather ceases to be a problem, so fingers crossed.

**Ian Kitchen**



Grey-headed Flying Foxes keeping cool at Yarra Bend Park

*All photos: Ian Kitchen*



### Letter to the FSG

“Thank you Fauna Survey Group for a fantastic Christmas/New Year camp at Yookamurra.

My friend, Liz, came for the first time on a Fauna Group camp and was so thrilled by the animals and birds and the friendly atmosphere of the group.

We both would like to congratulate the organisers and group for a wonderful experience and we look forward to another camp in 2011. “

Regards Judith Sise.

### Powerful Owls

This photo was from Tennyson Creek camp ground in East Gippsland, an adult Powerful Owl is feeding one of two large fledglings from the remains of a Greater Glider. We heard the adult softly calling the juveniles over. The two fledglings were very noisily begging while it tore pieces of the catch off for them.

**Regards Hayley Davis & Bradley Jenner.**







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## Lake Eyre Basin & Flinders Ranges Wildlife Expedition

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## Kimberley Discovery Tour

**16 Day Camping Tour - Departs 29th May 2011 & 20th June 2011**

The Kimberley region in the north-west of Western Australia is one of the most remote and unspoiled wilderness areas in the world. It's unique geology, ancient limestone reef and rich Aboriginal culture has fascinated visitors for years. It is home to some of Australia's most beautiful and rare birdlife, diverse and interesting flora, and exciting and unique fauna.

## Western Explorer Tour

**14 Day Camping Tour - Departs 12th August 2011**

This walking tour is a magnificent outback experience! Explore the Kennedy Ranges, Mt Augustus & Karijini National Park on foot. This 14 day camping, walking and wildlife tour coincides with the northern and mid west wildflower season and with a reasonable winter rain there should be some colourful displays. The gorges that work their way into the Kennedy Ranges, the aboriginal art, Cattle Pool, the view from the lookout on Mt Augustus and the spectacular gorges and mountains of Karijini provide an unforgettable experience.

## Lorna Glen to Canning Stock Route

**11 Day Camping Tour - Departs 14th August 2011**

Join us as we explore the remote Lorna Glen Station North East of Wiluna, Western Australia. The Department of Conservation and Environment have centred their Range Land Restoration program on the area, aiming to reintroduce 11 native mammal species to the area. To date, Bilbies and Brush-tailed Possums have been successfully reintroduced. The area also supports more than 480 species of vascular plant, 220 vertebrate species, 14 small mammal species and 70 species of reptile.

## Holland Track & Greater Western Woodlands Recce

**15 Day Camping Tour - Departs 31st August 2011**

Join us and experience the features of the world's largest temperate woodland, including the Holland Track and the historic woodlines (where timber cutters operated from 1899 to 1964). The Great Western Woodland (GWW) covers an area the size of England, and is home to 3,000 flowering plant species, rare mammals, frogs, reptiles and birds.

## Midwest Wildflowers

**10 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 8th September 2011**

This early wildflower season tour is designed to allow you to see the beautiful flowering plants north of Perth when they should be at their best. See spectacular landscapes including the station country around Mt Magnet and Yalgoo and the highlights of the Kalbarri National Park.

## South West Birds & Botany

**15 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 16th October 2011**

The South West offers breathtaking beauty and diversity. The region is renowned for its spectacular wildflowers - an extraordinarily colourful scene during the spring months with an abundance of birdlife.

For our 2011 tour program or further information contact:

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# Fauna Survey Group

## Fauna Survey Group's 2010 Christmas Camp at Yookamurra.

The road to Yookamurra (an Australian Wildlife Conservancy property near Sedan in South Australia) does not get any shorter, but the trip is definitely worth the effort. I arrived with my wife and two friends first, followed by Russell Thompson and others as the day progressed. Russell and I went for a walk and

the road.

Project Two involved Numbat transects, driving a set route around the feral free zone and logging the Numbats that were sighted. This gave a good opportunity to see much of the country inside



J. Broadberry

Numbat: *Myrmecobius fasciatus*

we were pleasantly surprised by a Numbat that wandered through the shrubs, crossed the path about five metres in front of us, hopped onto a fallen tree and, after walking along the trunk, vanished into the bush again.

Returning to the complex I showed the new arrivals to their rooms and explained the layout of the property. After our dinner Phil and Mimi, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy staff, welcomed us and ran through the program that they had planned for us.

We had three bird survey sites for Project One. Two were in the feral free area of the property and one was at a dam site about 5 kms down

a block that was on the other side of the road bordering the northern boundary of the fenced area. The purpose of these was to log the positions of the active Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat burrows and Mallee Fowl mounds in the area.

The next morning, festooned with rucksacks, water bottles, CB radios and GPS's, we started the line search and bird surveys. A later group did Numbat training.

Burrowing Bettongs, Boodies, *Bettongia lesueur*, (left and insert), and Brush-tailed Bettongs, Woylies, *Bettongia penicillata* (right), feeding.



J. Broadberry



Carl Hansen

More help arrived during the afternoon and that evening Mimi (who along with Phil was suffering from suspected Ross River Fever) gave us a presentation about AWC and the work that they do. This was much appreciated by the group especially the ones who were new to the organisation.

the fence.

The third project was to do line searches on

During the week the temperatures rose and reached a peak of 46° so we had to be up and working early to avoid the heat of the day. We rotated people through the various projects to give

(Continued on page 9)



J. Broadberry

Sand Monitor, *Varanus gouldii*



(Continued from page 8)

everyone a chance to see the birds and Numbats that were there, although the birdos seemed to score as many (or more) Numbats as the Numbat team.

In the evenings we fed the animals and saw a healthy population of Bilbies, Burrowing and Brush-tailed Betongs, Western Grey kangaroos and Brush-tailed Possums.

The bird teams saw some interesting birds. Elegant Parrots was one that I missed but I did see Mulga Parrots. I'm awaiting the full list.

We visited the Wombat areas and did see Southern Hairy-Nosed Wombats and some of the line searchers saw a Mallee Fowl on a mound.

We found some reptiles on our travels. Bynos Gecko was one that I remember and a fair sized Sand Monitor caused a hurried scramble for cameras as it wandered through the complex.

Having centralised cooking facilities meant that the camp was a bit more social than usual with communal cooking and eating being the thing. The Scrabble competition on New Year's Eve was a bit controversial at times.

All up we had twenty-two attendees at the camp and, apart from seeing some very special animals and birds, had some very useful practice with GPS's and handheld radios.

Many thanks to all who attended. I think that you all contributed to making the camp a very special event.

**Ian Kitchen**

I took this at Yookamurra near the dam where the bird surveys were held. This Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat was sunning himself at the entrance to his burrow in the last sun for the day and was very chilled out and cooperative

**Hayley Davis**



*Note: booking to Paiwalla are essential*

## Report on Paiwalla Wetlands

Most of us visited Paiwalla Wetland on the way home from Yookamurra, thanks to a generous offer by Katherine Rothe, project manager of Mannum to Wellington Local Action Planning Inc.(MWLAP). MWLAP's vision is "A healthy River Murray and riverine environment through sustainable local uses". Located about 10km north of Murray Bridge, Paiwalla is owned and managed by a local community group. It consists of about 70ha of former dairy pastures and its importance has seen it receive substantial environmental flows in the last couple of years. A great deal of restoration work has been done with community and volunteer input. It provides valuable habitat for various species including Freckled Duck, Australian Shoveller, Southern Bell Frog and Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon.

We were shown through Paiwalla by Lyn, whose expertise is in propagating local plants for use in revegetation. Descending to water level from a car park half way down the large exposed cliffs that frame the Murray in the district, we were met by an oasis-like expanse of water - plenty of it, due to the recent heavy rains – and the rich sounds of bird calls, including Reed Warblers and White-plumed Honeyeaters. The canopies of the large remnant River Red Gums had benefited greatly from the rains, but according to Lyn, various plantings have been adversely affected by the river rising and carrying more salt with it.

There was considerable birdlife on the open water and in the vicinity of the aquatic vegetation, including Black Swan, Mountain Duck, Blue-billed Duck and Buff-banded Rail. Raptors were prolific, with both the cliffs and large eucalypts providing nesting sites. Excellent views were available of Whistling Kite, Black Kite, Little Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Swamp Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. Back at the car park, a brief session of turning rocks and discarded building materials revealed Thick-tailed Gecko and *Lerista bougainvillii*.

All in all, Paiwalla was an inspiring place to visit, as it shows what can be achieved by clear goals, community spirit and hard work. You may wish to become a member of MWLAP; for further information, see its website.

**Knud Hansen**



## Day Group

### Plants and Mining in the Banded Ironstone Country of Western Australia

There was a good attendance at the first Day Group meeting for 2011, (25th January), when Margaret Corrick gave a talk on 'Plants and Mining in the Banded Ironstone Country of W.A.'

Margaret has made several trips to the Gascoyne/Murchison Region of W.A., where the vegetation has come under closer scrutiny since the expansion of iron ore mining in recent years. The banded iron formation has a very diverse and rich flora that so far has not been completely surveyed.

Margaret concentrated on the trip, organised by Landscape Tours, that she made in 2009 to Karara Station. This property was purchased in 2002, as part of the Gascoyne Murchison Strategy. Now 5.4 million hectares (about 9% of the region) is in reserves, of which Karara Station occu-



Everlastings Photo: M. Corrick

pies 109,000 hectares. The areas chosen for purchase are carefully chosen to give a good representation of the various land systems. Stock is removed, feral animal control undertaken and artificial water points closed.

Landscape Tours were accompanied by scientists, and Katrina Syme, mycologist

and botanical artist was on hand on the Karara trip to give instruction to anyone more interested in botanical illustration than photography or the flora or fauna *per se*.

Accommodation consisted of individual and well-equipped tents. Sadly, Landscape Tours, which have been run annually since 1992, have now ceased. One of the prime movers of these tours was Kevin Kenneally, a W.A. botanist (who was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion some years ago), and they were run in association with University of W.A. extension. Apart from the staff salaries, the tours were self-funded. However, this did not prevent the closing down of the project. But studies of vegetation and wildlife are continuing.

Margaret has also worked on other reserves in the area, Thundelara in 2008, Muggan, and White Wells, now Charles Darwin Reserve, a Bush Heritage property.

After a description of survey methods, Margaret showed some striking photos (not all hers, she explained; some were taken by Bill Muir, one of the four leaders) of the flora and fauna that they found. Carpets of *Goodenia mimuloides*, *Velleia rosae* and *Schoenia cassiniana*; of *Calandrinia polyandra* (Parakeelya), several species of *Eremophila*, and *Leschenaultia macrantha* (Wreath Leschenaultia) dotted along a roadside, where Margaret said it could be under threat from having the road sealed.

Other photos included a dugite in a can, the lizard *Egernia depressa*, Rosen's snake (a type of python, slightly venomous) devouring a lizard in the middle of the road, and the curious ring-shaped nest of the Mulga Ant *Polyrachis macropis*.

Mining is already taking place on part of Karara Station. Gindalbe Metals is a joint venture with Ansteel, China's second largest steel maker situated in Liaoning Province, Northern China. The banded ironstone at Karara is predominantly magnetite that must be processed into pellets for export, unlike Pilbara ore that is mainly hema-

tite and is crushed and exported without further processing. Karara will produce a high grade concentrate, with an initial yield of 8 mtpa, a rate that will give the mine a life of 60 years. Expansion of the mine,



Wreath Leschenaultia

Photo: M. Corrick

yielding 30 mtpa will reduce its life span to 30 years. It is expected that the first concentrate will be produced by the end of 2011. Other developments in the area to meet the mine's requirements are an 85 spur rail line to Tilley Siding near Morowa, the immediate upgrade of the port of Geraldton, and eventually the construction of a dedicated new port at Oakajee, north of Geraldton. Power transmission lines from Perth, through Eneabba to Karara are to be upgraded. As no water has been found at Karara, licences are being sought to extract 5.3 giga litres per annum of groundwater from the Yandanooka bore field in the Min-genew area. A study is being made of the Arrowsmith Aquifer to ensure that there is no impact on the surrounding environment and other users.

Other images shown of the area included the Breakaway formation on Burnibinnah (east of Karara); a salt lake, a fresh water lake, and some of the orchids found around it; and a clay pan, with *Euphorbia* growing on it.

Margaret also had some pressed specimens on display: *Hemiphora elderi*, *Dodonea petiolaris*, *Lobelia winifrediae*, *Goodenia mimuloides*, *Hyalosperma glutinosum* subsp. *venustum*, formerly *Helipterum* and *Bellida graminea*, the only member of the genus. After her talk Margaret answered questions, mainly relating to the security of the reserves and the impact of the mining. Gary Presland thanked Margaret for a very interesting and informative talk.

Sheila Houghton





## Marine Research Group News

### Report on the MRG meeting Monday 11th October, 2010 (continued from FNN 205): Alan Monger spoke on the topic of the Victorian borders, entitled: "The borders of the state and the state of the borders".

#### Victoria's southern border with Tasmania:

Van Diemen's land was separated from New South Wales in 1825 and the proclamation stated that it included all islands and territories south of Wilson's Promontory from latitude 39°12'S. There is a problem, however, in that the tip of Wilson's promontory is at 39°8'19" S, 7km north of 39°12'S. If the tip of the Promontory is accepted as the actual boundary, at no stage does the proclamation state whether it is at high tide, low tide or somewhere else. Another problem exists with Anser Island which lies due west of the tip of the Promontory—does this mean that half of it lies in Victoria and half in Tasmania? If the boundary is taken at 39°12'S, this poses an additional problem: there is a tiny island, about 6 hectares in area, formerly known as North-East Islet in the Hogan Group east of the Promontory (and now called Boundary Islet)—this is split roughly in half by the border—the actual border with Tasmania here is 85 metres long.

All of these questions are relevant to a relatively recent case of two fishermen who were prosecuted for shooting seals near the tip of the Promontory. Alan thinks they were tried in Tasmania, but is not certain on whether this was correct.

Further to the above, the Victorian Electoral Act of 1851 described the boundaries of the electoral districts which form the boundaries of Victoria, including all islands from Lady Julia Percy to Western Port. These include such minute dots of land as Popes Eye and Mud Island. However, there is no mention of any islands east of Western Port, eg. the Glennie Group and Anser Island, both west of the Promontory. Does this imply they are still part of New South Wales?

#### Victoria's maritime boundaries:

In general, the seaward limit of Victorian coastal waters is 3 nautical miles off shore (between 5 and 6 km). This can be seen in several of our marine parks, all of which stop at the 3 nautical mile limit.

The Australian territorial sea boundary is at 12 nautical miles. The contiguous zone (precise definition?) is at 24 nautical miles. The exclusive economic zone is at 200 nautical miles.

The normal baseline for determination of maritime boundaries is the "low water line along the coast as marked on large scale charts officially recognized by the State." In Australia, low water is defined as the lowest astronomical tide that can be expected under average meteorological conditions and under any combination of astronomical conditions. The location of this is a very inexact science, particularly taking into account accretion and erosion.

The eastern maritime extremity of Victoria is defined by the Cape Howe Maritime Park. Its northern boundary is an extension of the Black-Allan Line as far as the 3 nautical mile limit. The park extends westwards towards, but not as far as, Gabo Island.

The western maritime extremity of Victoria is not defined anywhere but surely must be an extension of the South Australian border due south for 3 nautical miles. Alan has heard it queried whether this maritime border should extend out perpendicular to the coastline at the coastal termination of the land border, but this would still be very close to due south and would seem too hard to define considering the changing nature of the coastline.

Tasmania's official boundaries are as far south as 45°S and between the meridians 142°E and 150°E. The only part where there could be any dispute over maritime boundaries is adjacent to Wilsons Promontory. However, apart from the problems outlined above, the boundaries are fairly well delineated. Interestingly, if the boundary is accepted at 39°12'S, this is roughly at the 3 nautical mile limit south of the tip of Wilsons Promontory—a fortunate co-incidence?

We thank Alan very much for his most interesting talk. It has greatly enhanced our appreciation of the intricate science, mathematics, human resolve and endeavour involved in surveying.

(Compiler's note: I am again indebted to Alan for providing detailed notes from which this summary has been drawn—PV).

### Report on the MRG members night, Monday 13 December, 2010.

The following summaries are listed in order of presentation:

**Barbara Hall** discussed aspects of her anatomical research on the small amphipod *Maera mastersii* and illustrated it with photomicrographs.

**John Eichler** discussed his finds of four dying holothuroids washed up at Rickett's Point after stormy weather. The specimens were unusual, being 15-16cm in length, 25-30 cm in diameter, pale white in colour with a brownish tentacular crown and mouth region, tube feet on the surface, and very slimy. John forwarded the specimens to Mark O'Loughlin from Museum Victoria. The diagnosis at this stage is some sort of stichopodid holothuroid, but samples have been taken for DNA analysis to clarify this situation.

John also showed flatworm photos and the nudibranch *Anteaeolidiella foulisi* from Inverloch.

**Platon Vafiadis** presented photographs taken at Apollo Bay on 13 November, 2010 during the effort by Parks Victoria to clear the introduced alga *Undaria pinnatifida* from the Apollo Bay harbour (see MRG page of FNN 203). The MRG has examined samples of the retrieved alga for its association with other marine organisms, and more will be reported on this issue in upcoming MRG pages.

**Leon Altoff** presented various images of species encountered through the year's fieldwork, as well as images taken at Melbourne Aquarium, the latter including nautilus, the Giant Pacific Octopus, and King and Gentoo penguins.

**Don Cram** spoke about sinistral cowries. Although rare, these have relatively recently been discovered for a few species. Interestingly, the late Dr. Franz Schilder, a cowrie specialist, had confidently stated in print in the 1960s that sinistral cowries do not exist, basing this on his extensive personal experience (he had examined over 150,000 cowrie specimens and all were dextral). The old saying, "Never say never," was certainly applicable here!

Thanks to all for a most enjoyable evening.

**Platon Vafiadis.**

**Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 206**

Joan Broadberry  
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Platon Vafiadis  
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Sally Bewsher

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David Gibson  
Roger Needham  
Sally Bewsher  
Margaret Corrick  
Neil Mc Lachlan  
Joan Broadberry  
Noel Schleiger  
Ray Power  
Sheina Nichols

*Instead of mid-January being a time when we were short-handed (as we feared), we had a great turn-up. As there was a 14 page newsletter, the new calendar of events and an insert we were very thankful for all the help. Special thanks to Andrew Brentnall.*

*South East Australian Naturalists' Association (SEANA)*

**Autumn Camp at Anglesea  
Friday 25th—Monday  
28th March 2011**

ANGAIR (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora & Fauna Inc) cordially invites you to attend the SEANA Autumn Camp which will be based at the Anglesea YMCA Recreation Camp over the extended weekend of 25-28th March 2011.

We hope you will enjoy the program of excursions to the coast, heathlands and woodlands of this beautiful region, and find the evening presentations by local experts on a range of topics interesting.

**Registration and payment due  
25th February 2011**

Further information can be obtained from:

**ANGAIR Inc.,  
PO Box 12 Anglesea 3230  
Phone: 03 5263 1085  
E-mail: [admin@angair.org.au](mailto:admin@angair.org.au)**

## Twitcher's Cottage

Field Nats members Merrin and Paul will welcome you for tranquil and guilt free relaxation less than two hours from the bustle of Melbourne. Set in a native garden with spectacular views and near Mount Worth State Park Twitcher's Cottage puts you back in touch with nature for a relaxing short or long break.

Twitcher's can now also ensure that your holiday is carbon neutral, with solar photovoltaic panels, our own carbon sink re-vegetation and the use of our own plantation firewood. No tricky offset calculations, everything is managed on site!

At \$110 per night for up to four people (self-catering) it is affordable and comfortable for couples, families or small groups.

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