



Field Nats News No.216

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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Understanding Our Natural World
Est. 1880

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Patron: Governor of Victoria

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 9 am-4 pm.

February 2012

From the President: **Future Directions for Club in 2012**

The November FNCV Council meeting identified the need for a strategic look at the future of our Club. We are often so busy carrying out day-to-day tasks that we neglect to look at the organization as a whole and plan ahead.

The Council would like to consult as widely as possible with the membership. This will be in the form of written submissions, to be emailed or posted to the office by February 29th, 2012 (six weeks allowed). This timeline has been set up so that future directions can be part of the 2012 AGM (held in early May).

The main areas to look at have been identified below. However if your ideas do not fit under these headings, please feel free to express them.

1. Finances and Fund-raising - As revealed at the last (and next) AGM, the club is now running at an unsustainable, substantial operating loss, exacerbated by, but not due to the 2011 fire. The need to increase revenue, and/or decrease spending has to be a major priority – we have no choice.
2. Retaining/increasing membership
3. Publicity and promotion— who are our target groups? methods, presence on the Web etc.
4. The operation of the SIGs. Leadership, programs, expansion etc
5. Whole organization programs - e.g. Biodiversity Symposium, ANHM, library
6. The role of volunteers within our club.
7. Publications - *Field Nats News*, *The Victorian Naturalist*

Once written submissions have come in, it is proposed the FNCV Council, including representatives of all SIGs, set aside at least a whole day to discuss the issues and prepare a report to be submitted to the AGM in May 2012.



ADVANCE NOTICE—Weekend Geology Excursion (details p6)

Come and enjoy learning about Western Port's beach, shore and coastal geology on another wonderful field trip led by Dr. Eric Bird. Photo: Neil McLachlan

*Due date for the March issue of FNN is **Monday 5th March**. FNN will go to print on the 13th, with collation on Tuesday 19th March.*

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

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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.

February 2012

Sunday 5th – Juniors' Group. Excursion – 10.30 am Marine Discovery Centre Queenscliff. Marine Biology cruise 11.30 am. Limit of 30 people, please book early. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Monday 6th – Fungi Group. No monthly meeting.

Monday 6th—Marine Research Group. Meeting (note, one week early). Speaker. Fiona Warry DSE. *Using fish as indicators of the ecological condition of Victoria's estuaries.* Contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Tuesday 7th - Fauna Survey Group. Meeting - "Regulating the wildlife trade in Victoria." Speaker: Mike Sverns, Senior Wildlife Investigator with DSE. Contact: Sally Bewsher 9752 1418 AH.

Wednesday 8th – Bat Group. Grey-headed Flying-fox count - Meet at Yarra Bend Golf Course carpark Mel 2D G7 at 8.00 pm. RSVP as a courtesy to Megan Davidson 9380 5062; m.davidson@latrobe.edu.au

Friday 10th – Sunday 12th - Fauna Survey Group. Survey -Chamber's Reserve, Pakenham Upper. Surveying, especially for bats & spotlighting with the local Landcare Group. BYO everything including drinking water. Contact: Sally Bewsher 9752 1418 AH. *Prior registration of at least a week is essential.*

Sunday 12th – Bat Group. Bat Lover's Barbee - Join us at Yarra Bend Park, Bellbird Picnic Area (Mel 2D K6) from 12 noon until fly out. Tours, speakers and a children's costume competition. BYO everything. Contact: Ian Kitchen 9795 7423

Monday 13th – Friday 17th Marine Research Group. Survey - Surveying in the Portland area, with low tides early in the morning. Contact: Leon Altoff for meeting times and places 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Wednesday 15th – Terrestrial Invertebrates Group. Meeting – *Caterpillars*. Speaker: Peter Marriott. Contact: Alan Yen 0409 194 788

Thursday 16th – Botany Group. Meeting - *Sphacelariales: sex a rare event*. Speaker Dr Mary Gibson. Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Tuesday 21st—Collate Field Nats News—Starting about 10.30 am. All welcome. Contact Joan Broadberry 98461218

Wednesday 22nd – Botany Group. Excursion - Looking at algae in the intertidal zone Mushroom Reef, Flinders. Leader: Dr Mary Gibson. Meet at 6.30pm for a 6.45pm start - in the case of inclement weather contact Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Wednesday 22nd - Geology Group. Meeting – *An Insight into How Minerals Form*. Speaker: Dr. Stuart Mills, Senior Curator, Geosciences, Museum Victoria. Contact: Kaye Oddie.9329 0635; koddie@bigpond.com

Friday 24th – Juniors Group. Meeting – Bats. Speaker to be confirmed. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Saturday 25th – Fauna Survey Group. Stagwatch—Join us as we look for Leadbeater's Possum and other nocturnal inhabitants in forest close to Melbourne. Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651. *Prior registration of at least a week essential.*

Monday 27th—FNCV Council meeting— 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Hali, 9877 9860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 28th – Day Group. Meeting – *'Flora/fauna photography and the uses to which it can be put'* Speaker: Ian Moodie (Parkside Dept, City of Whitehorse). 10.30 am. for coffee and a chat, speaker 11.00 am. Contact: Gary Presland 9890 9288



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.

Club notices & members' observations

We always have space for member's photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: fnnews@fncv.org.au by the first Monday in the month.

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:

Milly Formby, Pieter Boschma, Catherine Baynes, Jordan Baynes, Caitlin Baynes, Brian Baynes, Warwick Sprawson, Yasmin Kelsall, Thomas Mitchell, Kathryn Elder, Christine Spits.



BUNNINGS SAUSAGE SIZZLE Sunday 27th November

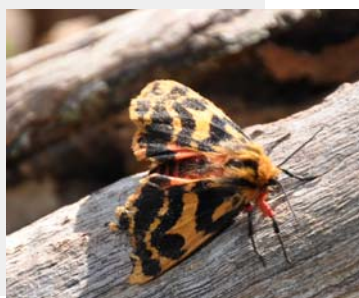
Many thanks to those who volunteered on the day: Linda Parker, Alan Yen, Scott Ferguson, Barbara Burns, Gary Presland, Melissa Junginger, Cathy Sewell, Heather Eadon, Jan Skinner, Greg Dudgeon, Pat & Russell Green, Wendy Clark, Sue Bendel, June Anton, Sally Bewsher, Ruth Hoskin, John Harris, Kathy Himbeck and Joan Broadberry.

Photo (left): Sally Bewsher

The total (net profit) raised was \$1700.70
a truly fantastic effort



Photo 1. Members of the Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists exploring a Conservation Covenanted property at Taggerty recently. Highlights included many different orchids, some in flower, others in bud waiting for warmer weather and sunshine; lots of bushland birds; a white-breasted sea eagle; and most exciting of all, a female Crimson Tiger Moth. *Photo 2.* These moths are rarely seen. *Thanks to our friends at UGFN.*



Many thanks to those who helped collate FNN 215

Bob Rowlands
Noel Schleiger
Margot Bundy
Cecily Falkingham
Edward & Hazel Brentnall
Andy Brentnall
Margaret Corrick
Keith Marshall
Joan Broadberry
Ray Power
Bill Fenner

Thanks to Hali for the Christmas cake and mince pies.

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 216

Joan Broadberry
Noel Schleiger
Platon Vafiadis
Hali Ferguson
Sally Bewsher



This photo of an ant-like grasshopper (above) was taken during the recent Juniors' Invertebrate excursion to Pound Bend, Warrandyte. Alan Yen, who led the survey, (*photo right*), writes, "It is most probably an early instar Katydid. Most Katydids feed on plants, but there are a few predatory species. There are lots of species, so I cannot even have a guess at the species name."

per Joan Broadberry

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGHS

Just recently, while camping at the Little Desert National Park, I was delighted to find a flock of White-winged Choughs. I had already discovered that last year's nest was on the ground and badly damaged. The flock had already been into our camp site and checked us out and, like many birds in camping areas, seemed unafraid of us.

So I set off to find a new nest. All I had to do was follow their wonderful piping whistles and small throaty clicks. Looking up into a large yellow gum I soon found their large bowl-shaped nest. Not wanting to disturb a nesting bird I backed off and watched from a discreet distance. The rest of the flock of about nine birds fed on the ground, making graceful swooping dives up and along tree branches and down again to feed on the insects that make up a large part of their diet. They flipped up sticks and leaf litter with their strong beaks.

The social hierarchy is interesting and complicated with strong social co-operation within a family group. Most young Choughs stay within the group into which they are born. The very young chicks have fine fuzzy grey crewcuts which blend into the rim of the grey, clay-coloured nest, withdrawing their heads at the first sign of danger. More than one female may lay in a nest. This I knew, but for the first time ever, I saw two females sitting side by side brooding the eggs.

Much has been written about communal nest building and rearing of chicks by all family members, but I would like to know if anyone has seen two birds sitting side by side in a Chough's nest before?

Cecily Falkingham

REMINDER to those who contribute to the Annual Report

Contributions for 2011 activities are due **Friday 2nd March.**

Please send to Barbara Burns Email: barbgb@bigpond.com
Phone : 98462608

Note—do not send copy to the FNCV office or Field Nats News.

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

Diary Date GARDEN WORKING BEE Thursday 15th March

Work will continue on the FNCV garden from 10 am. Please bring smiles and tools.



HELP wanted!!!

The office is the hub of our club, and as such, is a very busy place. In 2012 year I am asking for several people to assist me in the office with some basic office work. As I already have a person lined up for this job, you will be job-sharing. I will require this person to come in fortnightly, on a Monday between 10 am and 3 pm.

I will also require one or two people with fair computer knowledge to help out on another day in the week. If I can get two people, this can be a job-share position as well. If you can help, call Hali in the office from 23rd January, Monday or Tuesday 9 am to 4 pm or email at admin@fncv.org.au.

Thank you. **Hali Ferguson**



Biodiversity Symposium Forests

19th – 20th November

Saturday's program was well attended with 26 participants. The speakers covered many interesting topics with passion and knowledge.

Sunday's excursion attracted 13 people. This was another interesting day, filled with many discoveries.

The Symposium will be written up at a later date in a special issue of *The Victorian Naturalist*.

Thanks to Sue Bendel who did a great job organising the symposium. Special thanks to our panel of speakers and to David Cameron for leading the field trip.

Club Christmas Party Thank you

Over 50 people gathered to enjoy our Club Christmas Party this year. We were pleased to see so many Junior families enjoying the evening too. John spoke about the busy year that the club had had, using a back drop of a Power Point presentation.



After dinner the main club raffle was drawn and the winners were:

- 1st prize – a Toshiba Laptop and software – Ray Gibson**
2nd prize – 3 nights at Twitchers Cottage – Inta Needham
3rd prize – \$100 Bunnings voucher – Andrew Brentnall

Congratulations to all our winners.

Thank you to all the people who donated to our raffle table; your donations helped to make our Christmas party a success. Apologies if your name has not been recorded.

Beetle Branding, Leon Altoff, Barbara Burns, Sally Bewsher, Patricia Cowley, Hali Ferguson, Sue Bendel, Heather Eadon, Wendy Clark, Ian Kitchen, Fauna Survey Group and Joan Broadberry.

Extracts from the SIG reports given at the FNCV November Council Meeting

Fauna Survey Group



Justine Smith, a PhD student at University of Melbourne, spoke about fire ecology of Long-nosed Potoroos and Southern Brown Bandicoots. This was an interesting talk and well attended.

Juniors' Group

On the 13th November, the Juniors had an excursion to Warrandyte led by Alan Yen looking for terrestrial invertebrates. The weather was perfect and they found many different species using different collection methods. Alan then explained which insects could be kept at home, how to care for them, and which could co-exist.



Botany Group



November 25th was the last meeting for the year and we had botanist Kath Dickenson from NZ speak on NZ flora.

Terrestrial Invertebrate Group

Due to the cancellation of a speaker, the evening was a members' show and tell night. There has been a proposal by TIG to use the website to help with a moth survey that they plan to run.



Library News

Recent additions to the Library:

(1) Books

Hateley, R. (2011) *The Victorian bush: its 'original and natural' condition*. (This book won the category for best publication (commercial) in the recent Victorian Community History Awards; Turek, V. et al (1988) *Fossils of the world*;

Thomas, R. et al (2011) *The complete guide to finding the birds of Australia* (2nd Ed);

Mattison, C. (2011) *Frogs and toads*

All of these books were donated to the Library.

(2) Periodicals (thanks to Graham Patterson):

Australian Geographic no.105 includes articles about the Barrington Tops in NSW and a biodiversity survey in the Kimberley;

Fungimap Newsletter;

News from the Alps which looks back on 25 years of Alpine national parks.

The latest periodicals are displayed in a rack in the library. You can borrow periodicals in the rack, as well as previous issues. Don't forget to fill in the borrowing book.

**Gary Presland,
Honorary Librarian**



Working Bee

Thanks to Heather, Sally, Sue, Barbara, Andrew and Jurrie for their hard work in the FNCV garden— weeding, mulching and pruning.

Further working bee planned for 10 am Thursday 15th March 2012. See p4



Geology Group

Our Lost Serengeti of the Sea: *Uncovering Australia's Extinct Marine Megafauna* Talk by Dr. Erich Fitzgerald of Museum Victoria 26 October 2011

Dr Erich Fitzgerald is a vertebrate paleontologist with a special interest in cetology, the study of whales and dolphins. Erich completed his B.Sc. at the University of Melbourne and earned his Ph.D. in Earth Sciences at Monash University. Subsequently, Erich was awarded a fellowship for postdoctoral research at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, where he worked with eminent cetologist Dr James G. Mead. Erich's current work includes study of the impact of past environmental changes on the evolution of marine mammals, to gain the insights that palaeontology can provide about the effect of long-term climate change.

Erich opened his talk with a slide showing a vast herd of zebras and a few other ungulates on the Serengeti, showing that today that part of Africa is fertile enough to support a large population of megafauna. He also showed pictures of seals, sea otters, dolphins, elephant seals, and whales that densely populate some seas today. What is normal?

By the late Eocene, the Murray, Otway, Torquay, Port Phillip, Westernport, Bass and Gippsland basins had become predominantly marine, but later became shallower and at times even terrestrial.

In the Late Miocene and Early Pliocene, from 7 to 3.5 million years ago, Australian coastal waters supported a large marine megafauna in areas that are now land. This was a climatically stable period, 2 to 3°C warmer and wetter than today, before the Pliocene/Quaternary cycles of glacial and interglacial periods set in during the Late Pliocene about 2.6 million years ago.

Some formations in these basins, such as the Black Rock Sandstone at Beaumaris, which was deposited between 6.2 and 5.0 million years ago, are highly fossiliferous and include many fossils of a variety of marine megafauna. Other sites that have provided Late Miocene and Early Pliocene marine megafauna fossils are Whalers Bluff, Portland; Grange Burn near Hamilton; and Jemmys Point, Lakes Entrance.



Great White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
Mid-Miocene to present. Photo: Terry Goss

The fossils found indicate that by the Late Pliocene the types of marine fauna off south-eastern Australia were similar to those of today, though their populations were probably more dense. The following were common.

- Port Jackson Shark (*Heterodontus portjacksoni*) dental plates have been found.
- Many large sharks including *Carcharocles megalodon*, now extinct but regarded as the largest shark ever to have lived, and *Carcharodon carcharias* or Great White Shark which still exists today.
- Giant Mako Sharks (*Isurus hastalis*). These sharks shed teeth throughout their life and thousands have been found.
- Penguins, including large species.
- Sea birds such as albatrosses.
- Dugongs, the only strictly herbivorous marine animals, were common. They are temperature sensitive and now found only in warmer waters further north. The seagrasses on which they grazed are still available in southerly waters.
- Seals, though not related to modern Australian seals.
- Baleen whales (Mysticeti), of both the right whale (Balaenidae) and the rorqual whale (Balaenopteridae) families.
- Sperm whales, which have teeth, were more diverse in the Miocene/Pliocene there being 3 or 4 species of fossil sperm whales but only one today.

- Small dolphins, unrelated to modern species.

It would appear that since the Late Pliocene the seas around the south of Australia have contained less nutrients than previously, and therefore no longer support as many large marine vertebrates.

Erich intimated that recent research, soon to be published, sheds light on fur-

Continued on page 7)

GEOLOGY EXCURSION **SATURDAY 3rd &** **SUNDAY 4th MARCH**

Geology & Geomorphology of Western Port

Leader: Dr. Eric Bird (Geostudies)
University of Melbourne

Weekend excursion: *Day 1* - Flinders to Lang Lang. *Day 2*- San Remo to Lang Lang with option to stay Saturday night at San Remo or join the excursion on one or both of the days. There will be a group pub dinner on the Saturday night.

Day 1 - Saturday 3rd March: Meet 10:30 am at the Bass & Flinders Monument, Flinders (Melways 262 A9)

Day 2 - Sunday 4th March: Meet 10:30 am at the San Remo Jetty, San Remo (Melways 634 H7)

Walks will be along beach, shore and coast; no cliffs. Sturdy walking shoes advised and participants should be prepared for wet or sunny weather with rain jacket, hat and sunscreen and plenty of water. Bring a packed lunch on both days.

Cost: \$7:50 per day plus additional \$5 per day for non-FNCV members.

Details and bookings, please contact:
Kaye Oddie,
Member, Geology Group
tel. 9329 0635,
email koddie@bigpond.com

(Continued from page 6)

ther species that were present in the Miocene/Pliocene. We thank him for his well illustrated presentation that helps us to appreciate the possible future effects of climate and other changes on the marine megafauna in our southern seas.

David Gibson

Editors' note:

During his talk, Erich recognised the vast fossil contributions made by Francis Alexander Cudmore to the Museum of Victoria.

F.A. Cudmore joined the FNCV in 1912 and was an active member. He wrote several articles for *The Victorian Naturalist*. He died in 1956.

Advertising in Field Nats News, very reasonable rates

Contact Hali in the Field Nats Office

admin@fncv.org.au
9877 9860



FNCV Environment Fund: Call for Grant Applications

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.

The FNCV Environment Fund has the following purposes:

- To support and finance environmental research, in particular research into the biodiversity of Victoria.
- To support and finance dissemination of information on the natural environment by any legitimate means, including public lectures, seminars, field trips, courses and publications.
- To support and finance practical projects aimed at preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of Victoria.

The FNCV Environment Fund is administered by a committee consisting of Malcolm Calder (Chair), Barbara Burns, (Secretary & Treasurer), Bob Rogers, Noel Schleiger, John Harris and Cathy Willis.

The Committee calls for applications for the next round of funding from the FNCV Environment Fund. Requests for projects between **\$200 & \$1,000** will be considered.

Applications can be from organisations or individuals, but in the latter case must be supported by an organisation. Suitable organisations are: established natural history or environmental organisations (Field Naturalist Clubs, Landcare Groups etc.), educational institutions or government departments. Multiple applications from one research group are not encouraged.

Applications for this round of funding close **Monday 2 April 2012**. All applications will be acknowledged and results of applications communicated by **20 April 2012**. Late applications will not be accepted.

DUE DATE: 2nd April

Successful projects are required to be completed within 12 months of receipt of funding, with a report supplied on completion. The report will be published by the FNCV and successful applicants are encouraged to communicate the results of their project to the Club via articles, talks or field trips.

Additional information about the Environment Fund is available at **www.fncv.org.au**.

Please include the following information in the application:

- Project Title.
- Project description (max 250 words).
- How the project meets the aims of the fund.
- Budget (include GST in all relevant items). (Also indicate other sources of funding)
- Indicate if the application is from an individual or organisation and give the name of the individual or organisation.
- Applicant name and contact details (including mailing address/phone/fax/email).
- Signature of applicant.
- Endorsement of organisation (signature of responsible person such as President, Secretary, Manager, Head of Department, include name and position held).

Applications (two copies) should be sent to:
Secretary FNCV Environment Fund
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria
Locked Bag 3,
PO Blackburn Vic 3130
or emailed to admin@fncv.org.au

Donations to the FNCV Environment Fund are **tax deductible**.
Donations are always welcome, and donation forms can be down-loaded from the website www.fncv.org.au or are available on request from the FNCV Office. Ph 98779860

FNCV 2011 Christmas Party
Photos: Sally Bewsher



**SEANA
Camp
Phillip Island**
Photos:
Joan Broadberry





Day Group

Excursion to Antonio Park

The last Day Group activity of the year (20/11) was a morning excursion to Antonio Park, Mitcham, led by Cecily Falkingham. Heavy rain was forecast, but cleverly, we dodged bad weather and enjoyed a relaxing late spring walk in this significant, local bushland park.

HISTORY

Antonio Park is only 7.2 hectares in size, and is managed by Whitehorse Council. It is an isolated urban bushland remnant surrounded by houses, (similar to The Blackburn Lake Sanctuary). The Reserve was named after the Antonio family who were first associated with the land in 1892. The site of their original weekend shack is now part of the Antonio Park Primary School grounds. In the early 1900's the family bought what is now the main body of the park and built a permanent home in Deep Creek Road. Remnants of the garden are still present. The Antonios made a gift of the land to Nunawading Council in 1955, but members of the family continued to live there until 1963. The northern section, previously known locally as "The New Lands", was purchased from Charles Schwerkolt in 1975 to replace the land sold to the Education Department for the school.

FLORA

The flora of the reserve is classified as the rare Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC), Valley Heathy Forest, an ecosystem characterised as having as large a variety of

plants as rainforest. Valley Heathy Forest is a low, open forest to 15 m tall with a sedgy/grassy understorey and a component of small ericoid shrubs and grass-trees. Soil and moisture factors are critical in delimiting the vegetation.

A summary of this EVC specifications from DSE's website includes: 30% tree cover; main species being *Eucalyptus melliodora*, Yellow Box, *E. goniocalyx*, Long-leaf Box, *E. macrorhyncha*, Red Stringybark; Immature Canopy Trees 5%; Understorey Tree or Large Shrub 10%; Medium Shrub 15%; Small Shrub 5%; Prostrate Shrub 1%; Medium Herb 10%.

Some of the main plants of the middle story shrub layer are species of *Acacia* e.g. *A. Myrtifolia*, Myrtle Wattle, *Acacia Mearnsii*, Black Wattle; Tea-tree, *Leptospermum juniperinum*, prickly Tea-tree and the closely related *Kunzea ericoides* or Burgan. One of the highlights of the reserve is its wildflower display, best in spring but delightful throughout the year. Species which can be seen include many members of the pea family, native grasses, orchids and lilies. Unfortunately, especially with the downpours of the last two years, the park also carries a heavy load of weeds.

FAUNA

Birds are an obvious component of the fauna of Antonio Park. Commonly sighted species include: Kookaburra, Grey Butcherbird, Rosellas, Cuckoos and Wattlebirds. There are also at least twelve butterfly species. Like any small urban reserve, Antonio Park

lacks a diversity of animal species. In spite of this it has a large collection of invertebrates and several species of skinks, Blue-tongued lizards and snakes. Antonio Park is a valuable (but incomplete) corridor for wildlife linking up with Yarran Dheran Reserve, the Mullum

Creek and beyond.

ON THE DAY

Our party of nine enjoyed the display of late spring wildflowers and shrubs. *Cassinia aculeate* (Common Cassinia) was in flower together with *Kunzea ericoides* (Burgan) and *Goodenia ovata* (Hop Goodenia). Just coming into bloom was *Brunonia australis* (Blue Pincushions). We also noticed a number of Onion Or-



Female Common Brown Butterfly, *Heteronympha merope* resting upside down.

J. Broadberry

chid plants (*Microtis* sp.)

Birding was rewarding, with a sharp-eyed naturalist spotting a wonderfully camouflaged Tawny Frogmouth. We also observed both adult and immature Butcherbirds and glimpsed a Common Bronzewing. For me, the highlight of the excursion was the clouds of Common Brown butterflies, (*Heteronympha merope*), literally surrounding us as we walked. Cecily taught us the difference between the smaller males and the larger more colourful females. These beautiful native butterflies are especially active on a warm humid day, as it was that morning. They have one generation annually, with males flying in spring and summer and females being more active in autumn. Mating occurs during late spring and early summer. Females wait for the heat of summer to pass and the grass to grow before laying their eggs in early March. They lay directly onto various plant and native grass species to ensure an immediate food supply when the larvae emerge.

Once again, on behalf of the Day Group I would like to extend our thanks to Cecily. It is one of any field naturalist's greatest pleasures to walk with her in the bush as she generously shares her amazing knowledge of the local flora and fauna.



Cecily, centre, with the Day Group.

J. Broadberry

Joan Broadberry



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Coral Coast Wildlife Tour
10 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 12th April 2012
Take in the highlights of the unspoiled coast between Perth & Exmouth.

Flinders Range & Lake Eyre Basin Expedition
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Visit some of Australia's most spectacular outback locations.

Tanami Expedition
13 Day Camping Tour - Departs 15th June 2012
Join us to see the birds & other wildlife at Newhaven Station & Lake Gregory.

Kimberley Discovery
16 Day Camping Tour - Departs 2nd June 2012 & 26th June 2012
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Free call: 1800 676 016 Web: www.coateswildlifetours.com.au Email: coates@iinet.net.au

GSA Coates Tours Licence no 96/1135/06

FNCV Camp & Excursions Policy (a reminder)

It has been decided at Council that a club wide policy needs to exist for both Excursions and Camps.

Non-members will be charged \$2 per person for attendance at each FNCV meeting and \$5. per person for an excursion or camp.

Junior meetings are free to non-members. However, non-members on Junior day excursions pay \$2 per person. All those who wish to attend Junior camps must be members.

Attendance books need to be signed at every SIG meeting and excursion. This is vital for insurance purposes.

The club recommends that people with a medical condition, e.g. anaphylactic or heart conditions, carry written medical information with them. They should inform the excursion/camp leader of the whereabouts of this information on each outing, e.g. "You will find it in my backpack."

Parents or designated guardians are responsible for all medical needs on Junior camps or excursions.





Marine Research Group News

Report on MRG meeting, Mon. 14 November, 2011: Leon Altoff, MRG secretary, spoke on the Wilsons Promontory Bioscan Survey conducted in late October, 2011.

Leon began with the recent pressures on the Prom caused by the fires of 2009 and the floods earlier this year, which also cut road access. The Bioscan project aimed to assess the health and diversity of life on the Prom. Groups attending included Parks Victoria, Museum Victoria (including specialists in mammals, reptiles, terrestrial invertebrates and marine fauna; a wildlife photographer, a wildlife artist and media team), the Marine Research Group and the Entomological Society.

Regions that the MRG surveyed were Norman Bay, Picnic Bay, Millers Landing, Sealers Cove and Whisky Bay. Leon showed many photos including anemones, barnacles, common intertidal molluscs, crustacea, polychete worms and holothuroids. Also shown were scenic photos and images of the terrestrial flora and fauna including insects, flowers and reptiles.

From the marine invertebrate perspective, the conclusions were that Wilsons Prom is a harsh environment: the lack of sea grass, algae and loose rocks reduces available habitats, resulting in a reduced diversity of animals. Animals expected to be seen were recorded, with additional species of worms and anemones. Numbers of species recorded, excluding species awaiting identification, were: Norman Bay (1 hour visit): 23; Picnic Bay: 53; Miller's Landing: 42; Sealer's Cove (1 person for a few hours not at low tide, with photos for additional identification): 28; and Whisky Bay: 43.

We thank Leon for his informative talk and all members who contributed to the survey work.

Report on MRG members' night, Monday 12 December, 2011.

In order of presentation, the following items were raised:

John Eichler brought in a copy of Simon Grove's new book 'The sea shells of Tasmania – a comprehensive guide', Taroon Publications, Hobart, 2011. This A5 size book has good colour images and also illustrates a few of the smaller species. John also reported on a trip he took to the region around Broome Western Australia in mid 2011, and brought in many interesting photographs to share. The images of molluscs included cerithiids, littorinids, *Onchidium* pulmonates, *Trochus hanleyanus* and *Polinices melanostomus*. Some spectacular crab photos included male and female specimens of the orange fiddler crab *Uca flammula* (the male possessing a huge right chileped), *Scopimera* sp. sand crabs, and *Pinnotheres* pill crabs, the latter living in the mantle cavity of pearl oyster shells.

Leon Altoff showed images of the Osaka Aquarium in Japan from his recent trip there with Audrey Falconer. This establishment is themed on different regions/habitats of the Pacific Ocean rim, and the complex with its huge tanks housed many different species. Leon showed images of porpoises, various sharks, turtles, penguins, fish, and various invertebrates including octopus, jellyfish, holothuroids and a pelagic opisthobranch.

Barbara Hall showed a detailed educational model amphipod which she

had made (out of felt) to show the complex structures on these animals. She also discussed dark blue amphipods found during the recent Wilsons Prom Bioscan trip which may represent a new species, and a marine insect from Brighton Beach, Port Phillip Bay.

Cecily displayed a beach washed hard coral (locality uncertain – either Venus Bay or Phillip Island) that looked like a fungus.

Phil Bock spoke on his (and fellow bryozoan researcher Kevin Tilbrook's) ongoing research involvement with bryozoan diversity on coral reefs in Australia (the CReefs Survey 2008-2010). Regions surveyed were Lizard and Heron Islands, Qld. and Ningaloo Reef, WA. Phil showed many scanning electron microscopic images - many of the species were undescribed or represented species or genera not previously recorded from Australia. Work will continue long into the future on the material collected, which will also include DNA analyses. Very preliminary species estimates are: Ningaloo \approx 200 species; Lizard & Heron Islands \approx 200-400 species each, only about 30% being shared between the two. Does this mean that there could be equally great diversity found in other GBR regions and across tropical northern Australia? This is as yet unknown and awaits further sampling.

Platon Vafiadis reported on the upcoming Malacological Society of Australasia conference to be held in Melbourne in late November—early December, 2012. As part of this, Dr. Winston Ponder of the Australian Museum is considering putting together a micro-mollusc workshop, something which will be highly valuable for the MRG. Further details will follow as they unfold.

P. Vafiadis

Book Review: The Whitehorse Landscape

The Whitehorse landscape: as seen by the first settlers



Gary Presland

Gary Presland has written a small book that focuses on the landscapes of the area of Whitehorse, as seen by the first European settlers. This is an attempt to reconstruct the natural history of the area, from the geology through to animal life, and describe how it would have appeared in the mid-1830s.

A feature of this booklet is a coloured map that displays the original extent of different vegetation regimes with the city boundaries, as well as the location of local streams and wetlands. Typically, it is the hydrological aspects of natural environments that are most severely effected by urbanisation, and that is certainly the case in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. There is thus a greater importance in creating a record of where streams and wetlands once existed, as Gary does

in this book. The book is illustrated throughout with photographs, and includes a bibliography, a glossary of terms and (most essentially) an index.

As he did in *The Place for a village*, his larger study of the Melbourne area, Gary draws on historical sources such as maps and written descriptions, as well as more recent natural science studies in the area. Prominent among these latter sources are the many articles published in *The Victorian Naturalist* that report on some aspect of the natural history of this district. These include nine notes on birds of the 'Box Hill district' published between 1896 and 1898; as well as more recent pieces on plants, mammals, frogs and insects, and a host of excursion reports to local naturalists' haunts.

The Whitehorse Landscape was written for the Box Hill Historical Society to publish, as a means of raising funds. It is available through the Club, at \$6 for members (\$8 for non-members).

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