



Field Nats News No.227

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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Understanding Our Natural World
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February 2013

From the President

Members, welcome to the February 2013 edition of Field Nat News. It does seem odd to be wishing you all a Happy New Year in February but as a lot of you know, FNN is compiled during the first week or so of the previous month.

The Christmas/New Year period has been one of mixed emotions with occasions to meet with others but also to mourn the passing of family and friends.

Dorothy Mahler, an FNCV Honorary Member, (see FNN 224) passed away on the 12th of December. It was pleasing to talk with Dorothy about her south Pacific cruise, accompanied by Barbara Burns, at the FNCV Christmas party. How enjoyable the trip had been and what birds she had seen. Our thoughts are with Noel at this very sad time.

On Christmas Day, Hali's sister, Chris, passed away after a long battle with cancer. A number of us attended her funeral in early January. Our thoughts are very much with Hali and her family, especially Antoinette (Chris' daughter). Antoinette worked at the club during past Biodiversity Symposiums, Australian Natural History Medallion presentations and Christmas parties.

The Club Christmas party, on the 8th of December, was again well attended with members from most SIGs including the Juniors. The evening featured a slideshow of activities from each of our SIGs. A second presentation portrayed the life of the whole club across the year from the AGM, the Photographic Competition, festivals and everything in between. The raffle was again a big success with a large variety of prizes on offer. I would like to thank the following businesses and members for their donations to the raffle: The Stafford Group, Empathy Photographics (Wendy Clarke), Ray Power, Sally Bewsher, Ian Kitchen, Sue Bendel, Hazel & Edward Brentnall and Barbara Burns. If I have omitted anyone, please accept my apologies. *See page 4 for photos.*

On a more personal note, Kathy and I spent the New Year up at Falls Creek enjoying the wildflowers. We camped at Pretty Valley, where the FSG had conducted a couple of Christmas camps in the past. Personally, I find this time of year in the high country much more appealing than when the "white stuff" covers it all up and people on "planks of wood" go zooming down the slopes. While most of our time was spent look-

ing at and photographing the flora, we also got to see a number of species of birds including Flame Robins, Great Cormorants, ducks and swarms of Australian Pipits. It seems they also prefer the high country during the summer. *Photos below.*

John Harris

*The deadline for the March FNN, 228 will be **Tuesday 5th February 2013** FNN will go to the printers on Tuesday 12th with collation on the morning of 19th February.*

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the 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 2013

Monday 4th – Fungi Group. No monthly meeting.

Tuesday 5th – Marine Research Group. *Field trip to Point Lonsdale.* Meet at the car park Mel 499 J6 at 10:45 am. Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180, 0428 669773 for more details.

Tuesday 5th - Fauna Survey Group. Meeting - “A tale of two sites: the behavioural ecology of the Bobuck”. Speaker: Dr. Jenny Martin. Lecturer in Zoology and Science Communication, The University of Melbourne. Contact: Sally Bewsher 9752 1418.

Sunday 10th—FNCV fundraising sausage sizzle: Masters Store Knoxfield 9.00 am to 4.30 am. Volunteers urgently needed. Details see FNN p5.

Monday 11th – Marine Research Group. Meeting – Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180, 0428 669773 for details.

Saturday 16th - Fauna Survey Group. Evening stagwatch and spotlighting walk. Join FSG members to look for Leadbeaters Possum, gliders, owls and other nocturnal wildlife. Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861651

Tuesday 19th—Collate FNN 228. 10.30 am. in the hall, some folk come a little earlier. All welcome. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

Wednesday 20th – Microscopy Group. Meeting - “Honey bees like you have never seen them before”, including fabulous images through the electron microscope! Speaker: Sabine Perrone, PhD Molecular Pathology Biosecurity (BSASAP/L). Contact: Phillippa Bruggess 9598 3231

Thursday 21st – Botany Group. Meeting - *The Royal Botanic Garden Melbourne: from efficient irrigation to integrated water management.* Speaker: Peter Syme. Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055071

Friday 22nd – Juniors’ Group. Meeting – *Ray Thomas: Regent Honeyeater project.* 7.30 pm. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474: toclairef@gmail.com

Friday 22nd – Monday 25th - Fauna Survey Group and Juniors’ Group. Survey - Plenty Gorge Parklands north of Melbourne. Meet at the gate to Nioka Bush Camp on Gordon's Rd at **7 pm.** Mel 183 J8. A weekend of trapping, spotlighting, checking nestboxes and joining with members of the Plenty Gorge Friends Group. Bunk-style accommodation is available on a first in arrangement or camping. Full kitchen facilities and PV staff will provide a BBQ Saturday or Sunday. Prior registration, including vehicle registration **essential one week prior to the camp.** Contact: John Harris 0409 090955

Monday 25^h - FNCV Council Meeting - 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Hali, 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 26th – Day Group. Meeting – ‘*Australian cicadas*’. Speaker: Wendy Clark. Contact: Gary Presland 9890 9288.

Wednesday 27th—Grey-headed Flying Fox Survey. Meet at Yarra Bend Golf Course carpark, Mel 2D G7 at 7.45 pm. More information from Rod Van Der Ree (rvdr@unimelb.edu.au), Jo Ainley (j.ainley@unimelb.edu.au) or Ian Kitchen (iankitchen@optusnet.com.au)

Wednesday 27th – Geology Group. Meeting – *Using minerals to trace H₂O and metal cycling on Mars.* Speaker: Dr. Siobhan (Sasha) Wilson, School of Geosciences, Monash University. Contact: Kaye Oddie 9329 0635



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members 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 always have space for member 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.

Welcome
Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting: *Trish Sullivan, Jed Sullivan, Stephanie Clark, Marrissa Clark, Dr. Jonathan Clark.*

Dec 2, 2012— Hi, I thought I would share a couple photos. The Brushtail was taken at Echuca at a camping spot. The White-faced Heron was taken at Rickett's Point, Black Rock. It was roaming around and hunting in the rock pools and the Southern Bullfrog was taken at Wonthaggi Heathlands while I was doing some fauna survey work.

Alex Hlawaty



I came home recently, one very hot day and thought the Brush-tail Possum had died. On the contrary, over the next few days he continued to amuse me with his efforts to keep cool. He loves his hollow and won't desert it despite the heat.

Sally Bewsher.



Vale Dorothy Mahler

28 February 1941 – 12 December 2012

It is with great sadness the President and Council note the death of Dorothy Mahler, on 12 December 2012. Dorothy was elected a member of FNCV in 1985 and became active almost immediately, contributing to the operations of the Club in a number of positions over the following 27 years.

A more complete tribute will be published in *The Victorian Naturalist* but in summary it should be noted that at for various periods Dorothy was a Council member, Excursion Secretary and Tour Operator, Assistant Secretary of the Botany Group, a team member for both *Field Nats News* and *The Victorian Naturalist*. Along with her partner, Noel Schleiger, Dorothy was made an Honorary Member of FNCV in August. She will be missed greatly by her many friends within the Club

FNCV Christmas party 2012



The smell of sausages wafted through the hall as the annual Christmas BBQ get-together was held on a beautiful evening on the 8th December. The turnout was good including many Juniors and their families. It is always great to see the members of the various SIG groups coming together to socialise and swap stories. It was the last FNCV function that Dorothy Mahler and Noel Schleiger attended as a couple before we heard the sad news of Dorothy's passing.

The club knows how to put together a sumptuous spread and the gathering tucked into sausages, hamburgers, kebabs, snacks, nibbles, bread, salads, cakes, deserts, Christmas puddings, pavlovas, fruits etc, etc, etc.

Hali put together a slide show of the SIG's activities for the year and our president, John Harris, refreshed our memories with a run-through of all the things that the club achieved in 2012.

The evening finished up with the usual raffle which is unique in that there are almost as many prizes as tickets sold. Even the most unlucky people generally win something! Thanks to Sally Bewsher for the photos.

Barbara Burns

**Thanks to the editorial
and layout team who put
together FNN 227**

Joan Broadberry
Platon Vafiadis
Hali Ferguson
Sally Bewsher

*This newsletter is printed
on recycled paper.*

**Many thanks to those who
helped collate and label
FNN 226**

Bob Rowlands
Ray Power
Margaret Corrick
Neil McLachlan
Margaret Brewster
Bill Fenner
Andrew Brentnall
Hazel Brentnall
Keith Marshall

IMPORTANT– The FNCV has a *New Fax Number*

Through the generosity of one of our members, the Club has been able to get a second phone line in the office. We have also purchased a new phone, with 3 handsets and an answering machine and a new Fax machine. Faxes are now able to be received at any time, not just when someone is in the office, making it easier for members to communicate with us. The club phone number remains unchanged.

The new Fax number is 9877 9862

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting.



Botany Group—Colleen Miller from Western Melbourne Catchment Network presented on Grasslands of the Basalt Plains. There is less than 2% of the pre European grasslands left in Victoria. Grasslands are more than just grass. Colleen showed us many photos of beautiful wildflowers found in the grasslands as well as photos of insects, reptiles, frogs and raptors.

The Juniors joined us for the field trip, where we visited two fairly dry grasslands. The first had been burned two years prior and had had some weed control. It was a good *Themeda*, Kangaroo Grass grassland with some wildflowers. The second grassland had been burned six months prior, but didn't have weed control and formed a weedy area with almost no wildflowers. The third grassland was above an underground creek and due to the dampness didn't require as much weed control, although it was fairly dry when we visited. There were several groups of wildflowers, including the beautiful *Eryginums*, Blue Devil, and Prickfoot.

Lastly, we went to the Werribee Zoo and observed the native grassland which has been developed for the Eastern Barred Bandicoot and other species. The grassland was set up by scraping 10cm of topsoil from the area to remove weed seeds and nutrients. Lastly, we went across to see the pots of critically endangered Fragrant Orchids in a shadehouse and the many stock plants kept for seed collection. On the way into the shadehouse we saw a nest of baby Willie Wagtails, which were very cute. The remainder of the afternoon was free to be spent enjoying the antics of the meerkats and the other animals along the walking tracks.

Fauna Survey Group—The group is involved in a fauna monitoring program in three parkland complexes in the east of Melbourne. The project will take place over two years and will involve Parks Vic, FNCV, Melbourne Water, Friends Groups and BirdLife Melbourne. A number of grants will be submitted for equipment and other requirements.



Fungi Group—The last meeting for the year was a member's night. Members brought their photographs to share with the group.

Geology Group—In October, the Geology SIG members were treated to an interesting and very well presented photo show by two of our members, Kaye Oddie and Neil McLachlan. They had travelled to the Canadian (Kaye) and Russian (Neil - Franz Joseph Islands) Arctic regions in July/August 2012. Their photos and descriptions of the geology, plants and animals were fascinating.



Our last meeting for 2012 (on 28th November) will feature Dr Nick Porch from Deakin University's Environmental Earth Science Dept. talking about "The Recent Fossil Record of Insects in Australia and the Indo-Pacific Region." We are really looking forward to hearing this talk which was recently given to the Royal Society as well as the Fauna Survey and Marine Research Groups.

Volunteers needed for FNCV Fundraising SAUSAGE SIZZLE

at the **MASTERS HOME IMPROVEMENT** store in Knoxfield

Address: 1464 Ferntree Gully Rd, KNOXFIELD – Between Stud Rd and Scoresby Rd.
Melway 73 A7 (opposite Bunnings)

Date: Sunday 10th February 2013

Time: From 9.00 am to 4.30 pm.

We are going to need at least 15+ volunteers to cover this period. So that a roster can be drawn up in good time, please contact Hali ASAP in the office on 98779860 or email her at admin@FNCV.org.au It would be great to see some new faces helping out.

*Having participated in previous similar fundraisers we can promise you
an enjoyable experience.*



Fungi Group

FNCV FUNGI GROUP FORAY 29th JULY 2012 Cathedral Range State Park, Ned's Gully

This was our last organised foray for the season. After a beautiful drive in the mist up Black Spur our group was once again blessed with good weather.

We saw many of the species that had appeared at the May foray this year. In the morning, we barely got to the bridge, our attention being drawn to the black fronds of *Cordierites frondosa* seen again on the same log by the side of the road. Another very fresh group, growing on a fallen log, was seen on 'Hygrocybe Hill' in the afternoon and a collection was made for the Herbarium RBG.

Tubaria rufofulva was seen again in the planted bed. Here one cap of *T. rufofulva* seemed very large 80mm diameter. *Leucopaxillus eucalyptorum* was still around the base of the Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis*, only one old fruit-body remained of those seen in the earlier foray with copious amounts of white mycelium. Just over the bridge on the pine cross bar was our old friend *Gloeophyllum sepiarium* where just one had a brown cap with the characteristic radial brown labyrinthine gill-like pores the others had turned black with age.

Also here of special interest was the stalked earthstar *Geastrum pectinatum* with its ribbed, cone-shape mouth. Jurrie Hurbregtse has this to say on the Fungi CD 3rd edition 2012 '*Geastrum pectinatum* is readily recognised by its grey spore sac with a "beaked" mouth and a uniquely furrowed base sitting on a prominent pedicel (stalk), and by the light brown star (exoperidium) with 6–12 pointed rays. This species also occurs in Europe, North America, South Africa, and New Zealand. *G. fornicatum* looks similar but lacks the furrows at the base of the spore sac.'



Cordierites condosa

The stalk also often has a ring-like structure which is the remains of the Pseudoparenchymatous layer.

Marasmiellus candidus was seen in a number of places in all stages of growth clustered in a caespitose manner on upright dead sapling stems. Mature specimens had flattened white caps with white gills and dark, almost black stems. Grouped around the stem of another dead upright sapling trunk were several *Resupinatus cinerascens*. They were pendulous from a lateral attachment and the hoary grey cap had a white margin. Also in this area was a group of the white/cream *Clitocybe semioculta* growing on a very fragile standing trunk and a massed display of Golden Curtain Crust *Stereum ostrea* on a fallen log.

Further along the River track ground-dwelling fungi were virtually absent and of the wood-inhabiting species the foul-smelling Little Stinker *Marasmiellus affixus* and the orange-brown sheets of *Hypodontia australis* stood out. There was a mass display of the black cones of *Annulohyphoxylon bovei* on bark and bare wood while the cream-coloured resupinate *Steccherinum ochraceum* with its short, blunt spines was abundant on dead branches

Up on 'Hygrocybe Hill', *Hygrocybe*



Geastrum pectinatum Photo: Pat Grey

spp were conspicuous by their absence, but we did see several small red ones dotted about. We looked closely to try and determine the species: it had a dry red cap with a crenulate margin, red stem and red-pink gills. We determined it as *H. miniata*, particularly by the crenulation around the cap margin and disregarded two similar-looking red species - *H. firma*, which has pink gills and an even cap margin, and *H. kandora* which has a viscid cap and stouter form. Another red fungus was the red tongue *Clavaria miniata*. These specimens were very red, many had grooves and a few were forked, but all ended in blunt tips. They all grew singly in scattered groups.

At the base of the hill near the track were lots of groups of Jellybaby *Leotia lubrica*. All the fruit-bodies of this nail-shaped species had yellow heads and yellow stems indicating that they had no infection by a *Hypomyces* sp. that would turn the cap and stalk green.

Ed Grey & Pat Grey

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

Photo: Pat Grey

fungimap7



Advancing knowledge and conservation of Australian fungi
 Rawson, Victoria, May 24-27, 2013. www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap

Friday May 24: Day of Talks

Saturday May 25: Forays, Workshops and Celebratory Dinner

Sunday May 26: Forays and Workshops

Monday May 27: Full day foray to Tarra-Bulga National Park, Trivia Night

Speakers

- Gary Presland: 'The place of fungi in Aboriginal economic practices'
- Jurrie Hubregste: 'Activities of the FNCV Fungi Group'
- Sapphire McMullan Fisher: 'Managing bushland for fungi'
- Alison Pouliot: 'Finding cures for mycomyopia – embedding fungi in Australian biodiversity conservation'
- Pam Catcheside: 'Fungi Down Under 2'
- Tom May: 'An overview of mushroom classification'
- Laurton McGurk: 'An overview of the genus *Amanita*'
- Roy Halling: 'Boletes in Australia'
- Elizabeth Sheedy: 'Population genetics of Australian macrofungi'
- Noushka Reiter: 'Fungi and orchid fertilization'
- Melissa Danks: 'Mycophagy in swamp wallabies'
- Alena Moison: 'Fungimap's work 2012-14: the Atlas of Living Australia, online field guides and beyond'

Workshops

- Alison Pouliot: A sense for fungi - Introduction to the fungi kingdom
- Tom May: Identification of agarics using FunKey
- Pat Grey: Beginners guide to describing fungi in the field
- Ritchie Robinson: Surveying macrofungi
- Geoff Lay and Ian Bell: Fungi foray leaders' workshop
- Roy Halling: Identification of Boletes
- Jasmin Packer: Funky fungi (for kids)
- Pam Catcheside: Basic fungal identification and ecology
- Nimal Karunajeewa: Making collections of fungi
- David Cameron: How to do a threatened species assessment
- Alena Moison: How to use the Atlas of Living Australia tools
- Paul George: Photographing fungi in the field
- Laurton McGurk: *Amanita* identification
- Sarah Lloyd: An illustrated guide to the slime moulds of a wet eucalypt forest in northern Tasmania
- Simone Louwhoff: Lichen workshop

Fungimap 7 is suitable for people with all levels of knowledge about fungi, but places are limited - please register early to avoid disappointment.

Registration will open from February 4th 2013.

Check the Fungimap website for more info and to sign up to the Fungimap 7 mailing list.

South East Australian Naturalists' Association (SEANA) AUTUMN CAMP

Friday 15th March to Sunday 17th March 2013. Hosted by PENINSULA FNC Inc.

VENUE: Merricks Lodge (UCA Camp), 3870 Frankston Flinders Rd. Merricks. Camp is fully catered for.

FOR DETAILS of costs, accommodation options and excursions - email penfieldnats@gmail.com or contact Ms Doris Weigert, Peninsula FNC Inc., Unit 3, 2 Skinner Street HASTINGS VIC 3915, (03) 5979 3268

Registration and deposit due end of January 2013



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, John Harris and Cathy Willis.

The Committee is calling 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 8 April 2013**. All applications will be acknowledged and results of applications communicated by **30 April 2013**. Late applications will not be accepted.

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 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 avail-
 able on request from the FNCV Office. Ph. 98779860



Fauna Survey Group

Gobur Fauna Survey November 2012

Six enthusiasts took part in the Gobur Flora and Fauna Reserve survey, conducted during the Melbourne Cup Weekend. The reserve is located in the northern part of the Black Range, west of the township of Yarck and south of Euroa. Dry, tall, open forest with a sparse herb-rich ground covers most of the reserve, with some areas of common Bracken and Silver Wattle found in the wetter higher elevations.

The Gobur Reserve has lots of old growth hollow-bearing trees throughout, with no recent evidence of selective timber getting. The weather was mostly mild to warm with cool evenings. The main focus of the survey was in the lower altitude forest in the northeast end of the Reserve, with a few other locations in the higher elevations to the southwest. We also got a good species list of birds at the Gobur Recreation Reserve just outside the Flora Reserve.

Survey methods employed included the use of small Elliott traps, Harp traps, spotlights, bird watching, log turning, chance sightings and the use of remote

cameras.

Up to seventy five species of birds were recorded collectively from all the survey sites. Some of the notable species were: the Australasian Little Grebe, White-necked Heron, Black-shouldered Kite, Long-billed Corella, Shining-bronze Cuckoo, Pallid Cuckoo, Boobook Owl, Sacred Kingfisher, Leaden Flycatcher, Satin Flycatcher, Restless Flycatcher, Satin Bowerbird, Rufous Songlark, White-winged Triller, Rainbow Bee-eater and Mistletoe Bird, just to name a few.

Mammal species trapped, included the Agile Antechinus, and 48 bats of four species, mostly made up of gravid female Lesser Long-eared Bats, along with Little Forest Bats, Chocolate Wattle Bats and one specimen of a Free-tailed Bat (*Mormopterus sp.*)

Spotlighting revealed Ring-tailed Possums, Mountain Brushtail Possums, Koalas, Black Wallaby, Greater Glider, Grey Kangaroo, Common Wombat, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, White-winged Chough (on nest), Eastern Banjo Frog and Perrons Tree Frog. Other frog species detected were the Common Froglet, and the Spotted Grass Frog.

Six remote cameras were set up at different locations throughout the Reserve two weeks before the main survey. Animals photographed included: Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Wombats, Mountain Brushtail Possum, Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Bush Rats and a Fox.

Other species detected through chance sightings included a Sambar Deer, a road kill Mountain Brushtail Possum and the Eastern Horseshoe Bat seen when visiting an old Gobur Gold Mine.

A dead specimen of a Blind Snake was found in the Gobur Goldfield. The snake was about 30cm in length and is believed to be *Ramphotyphlops* spic members of the Fauna Survey Gro.

Russell Thompson

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



Right: Eastern Horseshoe Bat
Rhinolophus megaphyllus

Photo:
J. Harris

Left: Free-tailed Bat -
Mormopterus sp.
Photo:
B. Burns





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New Zealand South Island Wildlife & Wilderness

15 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 2nd February 2013
See three national parks, the Catlins, the Otago Peninsula & Stewart Island.

W.A.'s South West Endemics

8 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 2nd March 2013
Discover the diverse range of bird life that populates this area.

Sri Lanka Wildlife, History & Culture

18 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 10th March 2013
See the exotic flora & fauna of this enchanting island.

Pilbara Reef & Ranges

14 Day Camping Tour - Departs 12th April 2013
Experience Ningaloo Reef, Abrolhos Islands & Karijini N.P.

Gibson Desert Expedition (Recce)

15 Day Camping Tour - Departs 16th April 2013
Explore the wildlife & geology from Perth to Alice Springs, travelling on Len Beadell's historic outback tracks.

South Australian Outback Expedition

16 Day Camping Tour - Departs 11th May 2013
Visit some of Australia's most spectacular outback locations in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Tanami Expedition

13 Day Camping Tour - Departs 5th June 2013
Join us to see the birds & other wildlife at Newhaven Station & Lake Gregory.

Kimberley Discovery

15 Day Camping/Accom - Departs 15 June & 6th July 2013
Explore the wildlife & gorges of this unspoiled wilderness area.

Kimberley Wonders

12 Day Camping Tour - Departs 26th June 2013
See spectacular gorges, Gibb River Rd, Mitchell Plateau, El Questro & more.

Rudall River Expedition

14 Day Camping Tour - Departs 17th July 2013
Experience the very remote, harsh yet beautiful Rudall River N.P.

Western Explorer

14 Day Camping Tour - Departs 30th July 2013
Explore the unique botanical highlights of the Kennedy Ranges, Mt Augustus & Karijini N.P.

Carnarvon Range Expedition

11 Day Camping Tour - Departs 8th August 2013
Visit the remote Little Sandy Desert & discover the fascinating wildlife, geology & indigenous culture.

Holland Track & Great Western Woodlands

12 Day Camping Tour - Departs 28th August 2013
See the wildlife of the world's largest temperate woodland.

W.A.'s Mid West Wildflowers

10 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 7th September 2012
See botanical hot-spots north of Perth during wildflower season.

Western Australian Outback Expedition

15 Day Camping Tour - Departs 15th September 2013
Explore remote outback tracks & the Eyre Bird Observatory.

W.A.'s South West Birds & Botany

15 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 11th October 2013
Join our birding & botanist guides to explore the biodiversity of this extraordinary region.



Contact us for our full 2013 tour program, featuring the world's most desirable natural history destinations.

Phone: 1800 676 016 **Web:** www.coateswildlifetours.com.au **Email:** coates@iinet.net.au



Marine Research Group News

Report on the Malacological Society of Australasia (MSA) marine micro-mollusc workshop, Queenscliff, Friday 30 November-Monday 3 December, 2012.

This workshop, held immediately preceding the MSA conference held at St. Mary's College, The University of Melbourne, was attended by eleven people: Winston Ponder and Rosemary Golding (workshop co-ordinators, Australian Museum), Robert Burn, Alan Monger and Platon Vafiadis (MRG and MSA), Lynton Stephens (MSA), Michaela Mitchell (Taxonomy Services Australia), Simon Grove (Curator of Invertebrates, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery), Anne Brearley (University of Western Australia), Lynda Weeks (Infauna Data), and Lincoln Critchley (marine ecologist, Queensland).

After some excellent introductory talks bringing us up to date with the latest in the higher taxonomy of the gastropods and bivalves, we also learned how the Australian Museum experts collected. Apart from direct collection of various substrates for examination back at the lab (eg. algae, *Galeolaria*, etc.), another favoured method of algal sampling was vigorous washing in seawater in a plastic ice cream container, swilling off excess water and emptying any residual contents into a vial. Rocks are also similarly washed vigorously within the ice cream container as above. All collections were grouped according to substrate sampled and were divided into washings from green algae, brown algae, red algae and rocks. Interesting areas that we in the MRG tend to overlook are beneath kelp holdfasts (they need to be prised off the rock), and upper littoral debris.

Group group fieldwork occurred on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 December, with two locations visited on each day, guided by the local knowledge of Robert Burn. The bulk of each afternoon was spent in the laboratory of the Marine Research Facility at Queenscliff, where the samples were examined and specialist tuition in identification and key anatomical and ecological information of examined species was provided by Winston Ponder.

The fieldwork began at Pt. Lonsdale on Saturday 1 December, 2012, on a very

ordinary low tide. Despite this, some extraordinary finds were made, including Victoria's smallest gastropod, *Omalogyra liliputia* (procured from *Ulva* algal samples), the rissoellid *Rissoella imperforata*, the pyramidellids *Oscilla tasmanica* and *Miralda suprasculpta* (from rock washings) and two triphorids, again from rock washings, one of these representing a new record for the state. With Robert Burn present, it was inevitable that nudibranchs would be found, with outstanding examples of *Digidentis perplexa*, *Noumea haliclona*, *Doris cameroni* and *Ercolania cf. boodleae* seen.

From Point Lonsdale there was a quick coffee stop at Portarlington followed immediately by another intertidal foray there, sampling *Heterozostera* beds, silty sand, upper littoral debris and *Galeolaria*. Once again the tide did not drop much but some exceptional finds were made, including the small ellobiid *Leuconopsis pellucida* from *Galeolaria* and the swimming trochid *Ethminolia tasmanica*. Litiopids and dialids were common amongst the seagrass, and on looking at the striped *Austrocochlea* were wondered about whether they were truly *A. porcata* or not. A beautiful pipefish was also sieved amongst the seagrass and after a brief period of admiration was quickly released.

On the Sunday 2 December, calmer, silty/muddy habitats were sampled on the areas on the sheltered northern shorelines of Queenscliff, near the YMCA where we lodged (yielding *Hydrococcus brazieri*, *Ascorhis tasmanica*, and the bivalves *Nucula* and *Arthritica helmsii*) and also near the yacht club, yielding the same as above including the ellobiid pulmonates *Ophicardelus quoyii* (a new record for central Victoria) and juvenile *Marinula meridionalis*, the truncaellid *Scalarina vincentiana* and many small *Assimineae* gastropods from the uppermost littoral / supralittoral zones. Also sampled later in the day was Lake Victoria yielding the potamiopsid gastropod *Coxiella striata*.

To supplement the field and lab work, the individual participants were also able to present their own work / observations / images / research projects to the group, which provided very interesting discussion and insights, with talks going on into the late evenings.

It was a great opportunity to meet a wide variety of people interested in micro-molluscs, to learn about the animals and their higher taxonomy, to exchange ideas, to learn techniques for field and lab, and simply to get to know the people themselves. Winston Ponder and Rosemary Golding's organisation and educational content (well supported by Robert Burn) were excellent, as was the co-operation of the Queenscliff Marine Study Centre, which specially opened its doors and equipment to accommodate us. As Lynton quipped, it was like a 'malacological boot camp', only not unpleasant—we came away with a lot of information, new friendships and happy memories.

Brief report on the MSA Molluscs 2012 conference, St. Mary's College, The University of Melbourne, Monday—Thursday 3-6 December, 2012.

Space is short to provide a comprehensive overview, but papers generally fell into one or more of the following themes: molecules and molluscs, threatened and endangered species, molluscs and climate change, molecular markers and barcoding, and general sessions, including research into commercial species such as scallops and abalone. A good variety of topics were covered, although the molecular talks were quite heavy at times. The next conference will be in 3 years time.

Report on MRG Field trip to Pt. Danger, Saturday 15 December, 2012.

This was the first of the 2012-2013 MRG field trip season. A mild evening and low wind provided good conditions. Notable finds included the gastropods *Seila crocea*, *Notocypraea angustata*, *Vexillum australe* and *Mitra carbonaria*; *Ischnochiton elongatus* 'decorata' forms; several large *Patiriella gunnii* seastars; many 'false crabs' *Petrocheilus australiensis*; beautiful encrusting sponges and ascidians; and the nudibranchs *Trinchesia catachroma*, *Trinchesia thelmae*, *Polycera parvula*, *Doto ostenta*, *Ancula* sp. 2 and the very rare *Eubranchius* sp. 3. We were also hoping to see the beautiful sea star *Nectria macrobanchia*, recorded from this site on previous MRG trips, but were not successful. Overall it was a nice start to the 2012-2013 field trip season.

P. Vafiadis

From the Office.....



FNCV Facebook Group:

As some of you will know the FNCV have a Facebook page. Join the group and receive weekly updates on everything that is happening at the club. This is a great way to get the environmental message of the Club out into the wider community. Just search for Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and join.

FNCV Club Jackets:

There is a complete set of sample sizes to try in the hall. The jackets come in three colours (royal, navy and black) and 6 sizes (S, M, L, XL, XXL and XXXL). They cost \$45.00 and can be ordered through the office.

Photographic Competition 2013:

This year's Photographic Competition commence on the 8th April and close on the 3rd June. The exhibition of photographs will be held from 12th to 14th July. Start going through your photographs or take the opportunity to get some great shots over summer.

Wendy Clarke will be holding a Photographic workshop and information session to help you improve your images on Tuesday 12th March,. Don't miss it.

Donations for Hall:

This month we need:

Coffee (Nescafe or Moccona), Biscuits (always needed), Long Life milk, Peppermint Tea, Toilet Paper, Gift cards from Coles, Safeway or Officeworks.

Due dates for the FNCV four monthly calendar details:

For 2013, all calendar information needs to be received by the following dates:

June to September 2013

Due Date: Friday 12th April

October to January 2014

Due Date: Friday 16th August

February to May 2014

Due Date: Friday 6th December

If we all stick to these dates the calendar can be properly proof read to avoid embarrassing mistakes and misprints.

Don't forget our phone number is unchanged but the new

FNCV fax number is 9877 9862

Thanks, Hali.

Photographic tips:

Here are some tips to help you in the competition:

Relevance to category: Is your photograph in the correct category? Putting an excellent photograph in the wrong category wastes your entry fee, as it cannot win if it does not meet the criteria of the category.

Impact: Does your photograph tell a story? Does the photograph convey something of special interest or significance instead of being just pretty?

Look out for more next month.

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