



Understanding Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Field Nats News No.251

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 9.30 am - 4 pm.

April 2015

From the President

Members, welcome to my penultimate Presidents column. I have to say, it doesn't seem like nearly 6 years ago since I wrote my first front page.

As I write this, Kathy and I are flying to Christchurch for a holiday. We plan to lap the South Island in our motor home, seeing the sights and what it has to offer— wildlife, geology and the scenery.

The Fauna Survey Group's "Mammals of Victoria" seminar on the last weekend of February was a huge success with over 90 people attending on the Saturday and over 80 on the Sunday. There were 16 presenters over the two days who delivered a variety of topics relating to Victorian mammals. The Saturday night field trip to Mt Rothwell Sanctuary was very enjoyable, despite the heavy rain, with eight species of mammals seen, some of which are extinct in Victoria. A very big thank you must go to the 16 speakers for their time, informative and well-delivered presentations.

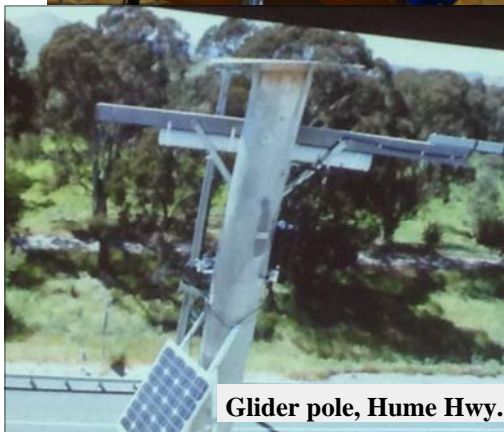
A big thanks to Su and Peter Dempsey for organising the catering and sound equipment and the hundred other jobs that they did leading up to and on the weekend. Thanks to Ian and Julie Kitchen for the various jobs that they did along the way and on the weekend. Finally thanks to those people that helped out with various jobs on the weekend; Barbara Burns, Shellie Drysdale and Neil MacLachlan, Emily Harris-Westrup and Sarah Diggerson. Roughly \$5000 was raised to purchase equipment for the FSG and the Club itself.

We have had all very positive feedback from the presenters and

participants alike. I am having thoughts about other ways we can do similar events to inform people, contribute to our motto of "Understanding our natural world", increase awareness of what the FNCV is about, raise funds and increase our membership.

Regards, John

Dr. Kylie Soanes

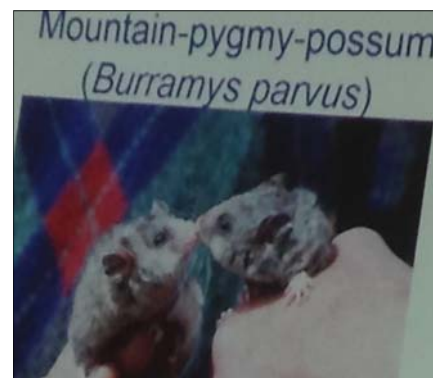


Glider pole, Hume Hwy.



Squirrel Glider

The deadline for the May issue of Field Nats News will be **10 am on Tuesday 7th April**. FNN will go to the printers on Tuesday 14th with collation on 21st



Photos: J. Broadberry
A short report & more photos from the seminar pages 6—7

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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.

April

Friday 3rd to Monday 6th – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Easter Camp*. Wangargabell, East Gippsland.
Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Friday 3rd to Tuesday 7th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *New Holland Mouse Survey at Wilson's Promontory*. Registration one week prior to camp essential. Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651

Monday 6th – Fungi Group. No meeting – Easter

Sunday 12th - Botany Group Field Trip: *Trust for Nature Property*. Meet at 10.30am, 800 Blacksands Rd, Three Bridges, near the Shire water tank. (Mel X912 S4). Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Monday 13th – Marine Research Group Meeting: Contact: Leon Altoff for details. 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Tuesday 14th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: *Direction with Zoos Victoria's "Fighting extinction program" to recover threatened species*. Speaker: Dan Harley, Threatened Species Biologist at Zoos Victoria.
Contact: David de Angelis 0409 519 829; d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au

Wednesday 15th - Microscopy Group Meeting: Contact: Philippa Burgess for details. 0409 866 389

Thursday 16th – Botany Group Meeting: *Orchid Conservation*. Speaker: Dr Noushka Reiter.
Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Thursday 16th to Tuesday 21st – Fungi Group: *Fungimap Conference in Batemans Bay NSW*.
Contact: Virgil Hubregtse for details 9560 7775

Saturday 18th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Reptile Survey, Eastern Metropolitan Parks*.
Contact: Kathy Himbeck 0427 526668

Tuesday 21st - Collate FNN. Starting about 10.00 am. All welcome. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

Wednesday 22nd – Geology Group Meeting: Dr Peter Jackson, *The Geology of the Flinders Ranges*.
Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; rrajh@optusnet.com.au

Friday 24th – Juniors' Group Meeting: 7.30 pm "*Exploring Svalbard*", Norway. Speaker: Sally Bewsher.
Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Sunday 26th – Fungi Group Foray: *Cambarville, Yarra Ranges National Park*, meeting at 10.30 am. From Marysville take the Woods Point Road passing the Lake Mountain turnoff and continuing 5.5km to the Big Culvert. The Cambarville entrance is a further 1km. Meet at the Picnic ground. (Melways Ed 37 map 910 U12). Contact: Ed or Pat Grey 9435 9019

Monday 27th - FNCV Council Meeting 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items & apologies to Wendy, 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 28th – Day Group Meeting: Speaker: John Harris, *Fauna Surveying in the Gibson Desert*. Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat. Speaker at 11 am. Contact: Joan Broadberry, 9846 1218

May

Sunday 3rd – Annual General Meeting, 2 pm: Dr. Gary Presland will speak on his progress towards writing a history of the FNCV. Contact: FNCV office, 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au Full details page 9. Nomination form for Council page 12.



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$2 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. 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:

Madison Evans-Clay; Lynette Clay; Martin Harris; S.M. Wells; John Sise; Jonathon Sise; Judith Sise; Andrew Fraser; Jim Greer; Grace Lewis; Michael Longmore; Christie Bulch; Josephine Pang; Casper Pang; Adrian Pang; James Pang; Rani Sherriff; Cara Mansfield; Anne Moriarty; Elise Wake; Kerry Herman; Mirinda Thorpe; Mark McLean; Miranda McLean; Juliet McLean; Katherine McLean.

Vale Suzanne Clark

Sadly, Suzanne Clarke passed away on the 25 January 2015.

Suzanne joined the FNCV in 1982. Amongst other contributions, she wrote a report of a fungi excursion to Kinglake in 1982. With her husband Gary, she was joint leader of an excursion to Pyrite Range in 1990.

Gary was kind enough to email me that Suzanne had a link to the late Noel Schleiger, the founding editor of FNN. Noel helped her construct a geological trail at Ecolinc, the centre that she helped create at Bacchus Marsh.

Our heartfelt condolences are extended to her husband and family. **JB**

If you find injured wildlife:

Wildlife Victoria

1300 094 535

Help for Wildlife

0417 380 687

Will connect you to your nearest suitable wildlife shelter

**PUT THESE NUMBERS IN
YOUR PHONE NOW.**

bookshop@fncv.org.au

for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

CHRISTMAS PARTY RAFFLE

"Apart from supporting the Club, there is always a good reason to buy tickets in the Christmas raffle. You might win something!"

I was surprised and thrilled to receive a phone call from Wendy informing me that I had won first prize, a voucher at Optics Central in Mitcham. I had been thinking about getting a binocular microscope for a while and, with a little topping up, I was able to redeem the voucher for this fine instrument. It will be very handy as I continue to explore the plants and other wildlife of the region around our new home in Bendigo. Thank you to the FNCV and to Optics Central.

John McCallum



**Advertising in the
Field Nats News**
**VERY REASONABLE
RATES**

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats
Office

admin@fncv.org.au

9877 9860

(Mon – Tues 9.30—4)

**Many thanks to those
who helped collate and
label FNN 250**

Sheina Nicholls
Hazel Brentnall
Andy Brentnall
Neil McLachlan
Sally Bewsher
Barbara Burns
Joan Broadberry

Special thanks to Sheina for
so ably organising the morning's work

Can you spot the creature?



Photo: Rob Hamson

Email from Rob Hamson:

"The above photo was taken in February on the trunk of a fig tree in our garden. It will look better in the emailed newsletter. I imagine the moth will be almost invisible in black and white. I think it is a red-lined geometrid *Crypsiphona ocularia*, (I didn't see the back) though it is greener than those illustrated".

DISCOUNT OFFERED TO FNCV MEMBERS, BY THE GOULD LEAGUE ONLINE BOOKSHOP

At the end of last year, the Gould League generously put forward an offer to all Field Naturalist of Victoria club members, of a discount of 10% off all books and posters that are available from their online bookshop.

This offer is only open for this year, at this stage expiring on 30 December 2015.

The discount can be obtained by entering in the code **FNCV2015** when making an online order at the checkout.

Kathy Himbeck

Sally Bewsher writes:

"A Lace Monitor (*photo right*) was seen at the January FSG Rushworth nest box checking weekend.

It is an uncommon sighting and it's probably close to ten years since the FSG last spotted one in the Rushworth State Forest".



Photo: Sally Bewsher

PARROT RESCUE

Wendy Gare, our Office Administrator, made a trip to the Blackburn Post Office a couple of weeks ago and came upon a small parrot. It appeared to be used to being handled and she was able to pick it up, take it home and care for it. It was very hungry and thirsty and ate and ate for about a week. It then livened up considerably.

A photo, emailed to John Harris, identified it as a Turquoise Parrot, (*photo right*) almost certainly an escapee.

For a short time one or two Field Nats thought it might be an Orange-bellied Parrot!!! The bird is doing well and a suitable long-term home is being arranged.



Photo: Wendy Gare

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



SOLAR PANEL REPORT

The FNCV electricity account for the three months, December 2014, January and February 2015 gave the Club a credit of \$211.05.

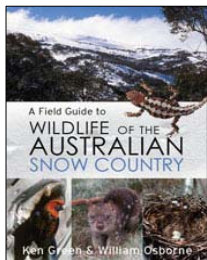
During summer the solar panels, connected in January 2013, generated electricity worth \$434..

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

NEWS FROM THE BOOKSHOP (March 2015)

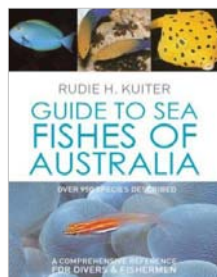
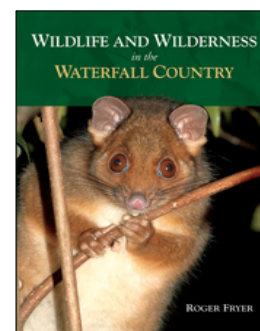
For those that have no email and receive only the printed version of the FNN, you would have missed out on the March collection of books as space was at a premium. If you would like a copy, let Wendy in the office know, I am sure we can send you one. This month there is a range of topics for your enjoyment, from discovering the wildlife in the Snow or Waterfall Country, to identifying fish from a snorkelling venture, admiring the beautiful flowering plants found out in the Western Plains, or taking a journey with Patricia Negus as she guides you through the magical world of fungi with her amazing water colours. If you have any questions, would like to order or inquire about a book, please send me an email to, bookshop@fncv.org.au to submit your order or make an inquiry.

Kathy Himbeck



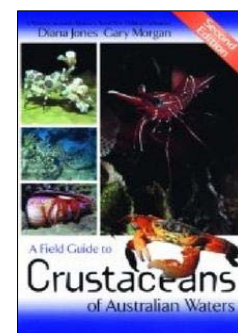
A Field guide to Wildlife of the Australian Snow Country (Green & Osborne) is a comprehensive field guide to Australia's high mountain fauna and environment—an environment that extends for more than five degrees of latitude. There are detailed descriptions of the mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, fish, insects and other invertebrates, including their distribution, breeding, food and habitats. This book is indispensable for the professional and amateur naturalist alike—and anyone interested in the rich natural world of Australia's snow country. (PB, 304 pp., 2012, updated ed.) RRP \$34.95, Members \$28

Wildlife and Wilderness in the Waterfall Country (R. Fryer) is a wonderfully detailed guide to the New South Wales Mid North Coast and the Great Escarpment — the Waterfall Country east of the Dividing Range. Within easy reach of Sydney and Brisbane, the Waterfall Country has spectacular scenery and is of great importance for wildlife. This book is a practical guide to experiencing the best of the Waterfall Country and is illustrated throughout with stunning colour photographs. It is an ideal guide for students, teachers, tourists, bushwalkers, and anyone interested in this beautiful region. (PB, 144 pp., 2007) RRP \$24.95, Members \$20.



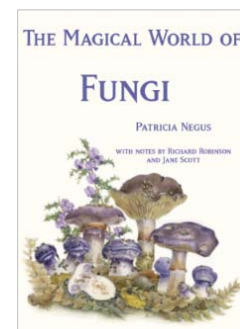
Guide to Sea Fishes of Australia; a comprehensive reference for divers and fishermen (R. Kuiter) is a comprehensive and practical handbook that identifies fishes commonly seen in Australian waters. Families are arranged so that those with closely related features follow on from one another, making comparison easy. Length measurements for adults are given along with general text, highlighting diagnostic features, interesting aspects of the species and habitat. Each of the 950 species is accompanied by one or more colour photographs and a distribution map to enable a positive identification. (PB, 434pp., 1996) . RRP \$45, Members \$36

A Field Guide to Crustaceans of Australian Waters (D. Jones & G. Morgan) is a complete summary of Australia's known crustaceans. This second edition incorporates up-to-date information, checked by world experts, and even features the recently discovered subterranean crustaceans, some of which have never, literally, seen the light of day. This book will be of interest to fishermen, marine zoologists, research organisations and the naturalist who will find it useful for identification and other purposes. (PB, 2nd ed, 224 pp., 2002) RRP \$39.95, Members \$32



Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains (Australian Plant Society) is the second edition and the number of plants described has been increased while still limiting the range to indigenous plants that are available for purchase and suitable for gardens. All the plants described are indigenous to the basalt clays and alluvial loams found on what is described as Melbourne's Volcanic or Western Plains. The list is not exhaustive but it includes most of the plants appropriate and available for use in gardening, revegetation and landscaping. (PB, 224 pp., 2012, 2nd ed.) RRP 19.95 Members \$16

The Magical World of Fungi (P. Negus). In this unique publication, accomplished artist Patricia Negus has illustrated the fungi of Australia's southwest in a collection of stunning water colours. Take a journey with Patricia into this little known biological kingdom and share in her excitement as she talks about her newly found passion. Marvel at the richness of colour, texture and the sheer beauty of these fascinating and enigmatic organisms. (PB, 80 pp., 2014) RRP \$25, Members \$22.50.





Report on the FSG two-day seminar, “*Mammals of Victoria*”

Program details below—See future editions of *The Victorian Naturalist* for details of presentations.

Saturday 28th February 2015

Professor John Woinarski, Charles Darwin University. National Context: the Conservation Status of Australian Mammals.

John Harris, Director, Wildlife Experiences / President, FNCV. “From Colonisation to Naphtine: Changes in Victoria's Mammal Fauna over time.”

A/Prof. Graeme Coulson, Honorary Principal Fellow, School of BioSciences, University of Melbourne.” Endangered to Overabundant: ecology and management of macropods in Victoria.”

Dr. Euan Ritchie, Senior Lecturer, HDR Coordinator, Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University.” The ecology of predators and prey in Victoria: insights from the Mallee, Otways and Wilsons Promontory. “

Jess Lawton, Hons Student Deakin University, PhD candidate La Trobe University. “What drives the Distribution of Mitchell's Hopping Mouse in a fire prone landscape?”

Dr. Pam Whiteley, Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Science, University of Melbourne. “Wildlife Disease Surveillance in Victoria.”

Dr. Lindy Lumsden, Section Leader, Wildlife Ecology ARI– DELWP. “Bats: Fascinating Creatures of the Night.”

Dr Rodney van der Ree, Deputy Director, ARCUE—Royal Botanic Gardens. “Status and Management of Flying Foxes in Victoria.”

Saturday Evening—Visit to Mt Rothwell Sanctuary

Sunday 1st March

Peter Menkhorst, Senior Zoologist and Chairperson, Translocation Evaluation Panel (Fauna) - DELWP.” Victoria's mammal fauna: a review after two decades.”

Andrew Murray, Southern Ark Operations Manager, DELWP. “The Southern Ark Project: reviving the mammal fauna of Far East Gippsland.”

Annette Rypalski, Manager, Mt Rothwell / Southern Brush-tail Rock Wallaby Captive Sub-group Recovery Team. “Saving the Shadow—Southern Brush-tail Rock Wallaby recovery efforts.”

Dr. Dan Harley, Threatened Species Biologist, Zoos Victoria. “An overview of the conservation of Leadbeater's Possum in highland and lowland habitats.”

Dr. Kylie Soanes, Post-Doctoral research, ARCUE, Royal Botanic Gardens. “ Bridging gaps to protect the Squirrel Glider, a high-flying mammal.”

Associate Professor Ian Mansergh, Life Sciences, La Trobe University. “*Burramys* (Mountain Pygmy-possum) learnings from 30 years of research and management for a changing climate.”

Sarah MacLagan, PhD Candidate, Deakin University. “Ecology of the Southern Brown Bandicoot in peri-urban Melbourne.”

Dr. Amy Coetsee, Threatened Species Project Officer, Zoos Victoria. “ Eastern Barred Bandicoots: on the road to recovery.”



Once again we would like to express our appreciation to all the amazing speakers at the symposium. (photo left)

Left to right:
Jess, Lindy, Sarah, Peter, Pam, Andrew, Ian, John, Kylie Annette, Amy and Dan.

Not included in the photo:
Euan Ritchie and Rodney Van der Ree



Drawing the raffle

*Photos were taken by
Joan Broadberry
at Mt Rothwell
and at Sunday's presentations.*



Dinner at Mt. Rothwell





Day Group

A Visit to the World Heritage listed Ile de Réunion

Speaker: Rob Hamson

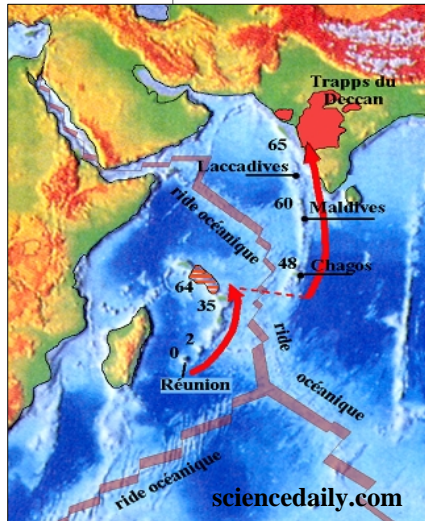
On 24th February, Rob Hamson gave a fascinating presentation to the Day Group on a visit he made last October with his family to Réunion Island. Invaluable in helping us appreciate the geography and geology of the island, was the three-dimensional relief map Rob brought along. This geological relief map has been given to the FNCV via Rob by Professor John Buckeridge of RMIT University who used it while conducting research on a particular barnacle, the plates of which are found in the beach sands around the island.

Firstly, a few facts and figures. Réunion Island lies in the Indian Ocean, 700 km east of Madagascar and 200 km southwest of Mauritius. It measures 63 x 45 km, with an area of 2,511 square kilometres. Ile de la Réunion, then uninhabited, was claimed by France in 1649. Slavery ended in 1848. It is now a French departement and therefore part of the Euro-zone. Its population is 841,000, 45% of African origin, many of Indian background and about 15% European. From May to November the climate is cool and dry and from November to April hot and rainy. The west (lee) coast is drier than the east coast. On 7th and 8th January 1966, Cilaos, a town near the centre of the island, received 1869.9 mm of rainfall, the greatest 24 hour precipitation ever recorded on earth.

In 2011, UNESCO designated 40% of the island as a Natural World Heritage site under the title: 'Pitons, Cirques & Remparts.' A combination of volcanism, heavy rainfall and stream erosion has formed a rugged and beautiful landscape. The major features are "pitons" or peaks, "cirques" or basins and "remparts" or steep rock walls. The vegetation of Réunion is varied. There are deep, partly-forested gorges and escarpments, with subtropical rainforests, cloud forests and above 2000m, heath land. Tamarind

woodlands, found between 1500 - 1900 m, contain the *endemic Acacia hetrophylla*. Much of the island's coastline consists of rugged cliffs, but on the west coast there is a small coral reef, now protected.

After the break-up of Gondwana, the Indian tectonic plate moved north and passed over a volcanic hotspot. A massive eruption of this hotspot 66 million years ago is thought to have laid down the Deccan Traps, a vast bed of basalt lava in central India. The huge amount of carbon dioxide emitted by this event is considered to have played a role in the extinction of the dinosaurs. Reunion Island is now situated over this hotspot. (See diagram below).



The island has nine living endemic species of birds and 19 extinct species. During his visit, Rob photographed a number of birds. The Barred Ground Dove (*Geopelia*

striata), Madagascar Red Fody, (*Foudia madagascariensis*), Village Weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*) and Red-Whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) are all introduced species. The Reunion Grey White-Eye (*Zosterops borbonicus*) is endemic.

It was long believed that Réunion, like Mauritius, had the dodo. Indeed the local beer uses it as its logo. The mistake occurred in the early days with travellers bringing back confused stories. In fact Réunion never had the dodo: instead it had a robust, almost flightless ibis, the Reunion Solitaire-Ibis, so-called because it was only ever seen singly or presumably in pairs. It was last recorded in 1708. Excava-

tions of sub-fossils of the birds from the 1970s onwards have confirmed its status. Rob photographed the extinct endemic Reunion Solitaire-Ibis (*Threskiornis solitarius*) in a museum diorama. Interestingly the museum description included the fact that it is related to the Australian sacred ibis.



Reunion Ibis or Le Solitaire-ibis de La Reunion (*Threskiornis solitarius*)

In the latter part of his presentation Rob took us on a virtual tour of Reunion Island's dramatic landscapes, some of the images being taken from a helicopter. Réunion has three extraordinarily beautiful cirques or amphitheatres formed originally through the collapse of magma chambers and later by erosion. They are the Cirque de Salazie, the Cirque de Cilaos and the Cirque de Mafate (photo below). The last is accessible only on foot or by helicopter. Steep rock cliffs of varying geological age known as 'remparts'

Cirque de Mafate



abound on the island. Examples are the walls of cirques and the double caldera rim enclosing the volcano on its landward side.

The island is dominated by two towering shield volcanoes, the extinct Piton des

(Continued on page 9)

1977 eruption. Notre Dame des Laves

(Continued from page 8)

Neiges (peak of snow) and the highly active Piton de la Fournaise (peak of the furnace). Piton des Neiges http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piton_des_Neiges is the highest point on Reunion at 3,070 metres above sea level. Piton de la Fournaise, located on the south-eastern corner, rises more than 2,631 metres above sea level and is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, its most recent eruption being on 5th February 2015. Most eruptions are gentle not explosive. Two types of lava were mentioned: *pahoehoe* and *aa*. *Pahoehoe* (ropey) forms when lava flows slowly. (See inset photo right) *Aa* forms when lava flows more rapidly. In 2007 a lava flow reached the sea and extended the land area of Reunion Island. Some eruptions have destroyed roads and buildings. In the 1977 eruption, lava flowed around a church, now known as Notre Dame des Laves. (Photo above). Rob showed images of the plants that are starting to colonise lava flows from the 2004

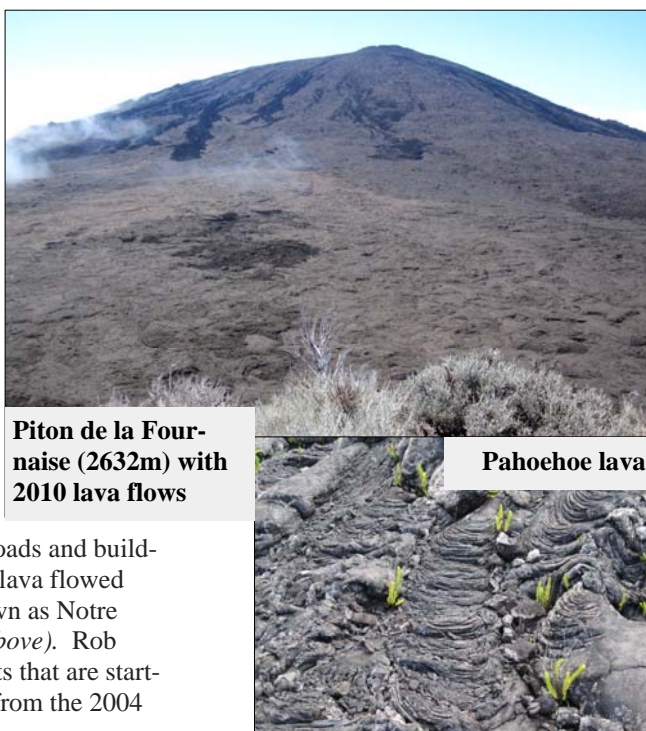
and 2005 eruptions. Images of areas affected by the 1998 eruptions show they are now thickly vegetated.

Other geological features photographed included: lava tubes, green olivine sand, the flat, unvegetated scoria Plaine des Sables on the dry side of the island and the scoria cone, Formica Leo, a remnant left from a 1753 explosive eruption.

Ile de la Réunion is a part of France and is one of the wealthiest islands in the Indian Ocean. Apart from its breathtaking scenery and captivating geology, it promises a wonderful tourist experience. After hearing Rob's talk, I felt a strong urge to visit. The audience asked many questions at the end of his talk, indicating this remarkable island had fired all of our imaginations. Once again on behalf of everyone, I would like to thank Rob for a most informative and enjoyable presentation.

Joan Broadberry

*Photos by Rob, Gill or Estelle Hamson



Piton de la Fournaise (2632m) with 2010 lava flows

Pahoehoe lava



Library News

Recent additions to the Library

Last year the Library received a large number of government reports, in two donations. David Cameron 'rescued' about 100 Arthur Rylah Institute reports that were about to be disposed of and deposited them with the Library. Sally Bewsher, on behalf of the FSG, later donated 26 DSE (Parks Victoria) Reports in the post Black Saturday series 'Rebuilding together'.

Accessioning and cataloguing these 122 volumes has taken some time, but this is now finished and the reports have been shelved in their appropriate spots. We thank David and Sally for their assistance in helping to maintaining the relevance of the Library's holdings.

Other recent donations have come from the authors of recently published works and reviewers of books for The Victorian Naturalist. In this regard I thank Graham Patterson and Warwick Sprawson.

Gary Presland
Honorary Librarian

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 251

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

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

From the Office

Calendar of events due soon. Just a reminder to everyone that items to be included in the next Calendar of Events need to be received by me (Wendy), via email admin@fncv.org.au before the deadline of **Tuesday 31st March**. This covers the four months from June to September 2015.

Please put your name on all direct debits. A subscription renewal of \$100 was paid to the FNCV by direct debit on the 5th March with nothing to identify the payee. Could this person please contact the office ASAP.



Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Botany Group: Dr Mary Gibson presented ‘Fantastic plants and their adaptations’ and the plants truly were fantastic. There was *Welwitschia mirabilis* which is a gymnosperm and is related to Ginkgo and Cycads, but has flowering parts. It can live for 2000 years and can open its stomata at night to cope with desert conditions. *Victoria amazonica*, the Giant water lily, has leaves 2 m diameter and is buoyant enough to support a small child. The flower is white before pollination by a beetle which is trapped overnight by the flower, but turns pinky-purple after pollination. *Dendrosenecio kilimanjari* is only found on Mt Kilimanjaro and is a dicot which mimics a monocot as it does not have wood. Its leaves have thick woolly hairs underneath and the leaves fold up at night to protect the growing parts from the frozen conditions. These are just a few of the fantastic plants that Mary showed us.



Juniors' Group: At our January meeting we had our Junior Council talks:

Tara presented an interesting power point demonstration about Switzerland (as she was about to go there on a 5 month exchange) and its stunning flora and fauna.

- **Tilda** and **Niamh** talked about the bird at home that flew into their window and had to be rescued
- **Claire Ferguson** showed slides about the family's summer holiday trip to the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia
- **Caleb** showed us some very interesting photos of his month long trip to India as part of his school World Challenge Trip
- **Nic Aitken** brought along his spiny leaf insect's exoskeletons which it had shed
- **Nick Goode** did a great factual presentation called ‘Spot the Difference’ about how to identify different types of birds.



Our February excursion was a visit to the beautiful Blue Lotus Watergarden in Yarra Junction where 48 of us learnt about the difference between lotuses and lilies and observed the anatomy of these amazing plants.

FNCV AGM

Sunday 3rd May 2014 at 2pm

*You are invited to attend
The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc
Annual General Meeting*

to be held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn.

Agenda: *Minutes of previous AGM; Annual Report; Financial Statements;
Election of Council; Environment Fund; Other Business*

Guest Speaker: Dr Gary Presland,
who will speak on his progress in writing the history of the FNCV.

Afternoon tea will be served. All welcome

**Nominations for Council must reach the registered office of the Club no later than 48 hours before the AGM,
i.e. Friday 1st May 2015, by 2 pm
(Nomination form, see p12)**





Marine Research Group News

Summary of MRG extended field trip to the Toora region, 24-27 Feb. 2015.

Day 1: Toora, Corner Inlet, Tuesday 24 February, 2015. This area is a mangrove and saltmarsh habitat on muddy/silty flats located a very short drive from the picturesque township of Toora. Birdlife is also prolific in the area, although it was not the focus of the survey.

The typical assemblages of animals living in such areas were encountered. In the upper littoral and supralittoral levels we saw the pulmonate snails *Ophicardelus ornatus*, *Ophicardelus sulcatus* and *Phallomedusa solida*, and the crabs *Heloecius haswellianus*, *Brachynotus spinosus*, *Heloecius cordiformis* and *Macrophthalmus latifrons*, the latter two having prominently stalked eyes and quickly scampering into their burrows on being approached. Amongst the littoral *Heterozostera* beds the pill crab *Belidilia laevis* was common. A variety of isopods and other crustaceans were also recorded.



Saltmarsh at Toora 24/2/15: habitat for *Ophicardelus* & *Phallomedusa* snails.
Photo: P. Vafiadis

The littoral silt and mud yielded many micro-bivalves including *Mysella donnaciformis*, *Mysella dromanaensis* and *Legrandina bernardi*, as well as the larger bivalve species *Katelysia rhytiphora*, *Katelysia peroni*, *Katelysia scalaris*, *Eumarcia fumigata*, *Spisula trigonella* (largely juvenile), *Electroma georgiana* (in abundance on *Posidinia* seagrass in the shallow sublittoral zone, this also supporting the pygmy squid *Idiosepius notoides*), a single example of the heavy ark shell *Anadara trapezia* and a few juvenile *Laternula* species. An adult razor shell, *Solen vaginoides*, was also a notable record.

Gastropods were numerous with the micro species *Hydrococcus brazieri*, *Alaba phasianella*, *Calopia burni*, *Pseudoliotia micans*, *Aschorris tasmanica*, *Syrnola*

bifasciata and *Pyrgiscus fuscus* were present. Various species of *Nassarius* (especially *Nassarius pauperatus*) and *Polinices* (especially *Polinices sordidus*) were common. A few *Amoria undulata* and the rarely encountered naticid *Sinum zonale* were pleasing records, as was a juvenile specimen of the uncommonly seen olive shell *Cupidoliva nympha* from shallow sublittoral silt. A turrid of the genus *Turella* has proven quite difficult to identify to species level and more work is needed towards this end.



Turella sp. from Toora, 24/2/2015 (shell length 6.1 mm). Photo: P. Vafiadis

In such a muddy/silty environment, bubble shells were also present in some numbers, especially *Tornatina* species and *Philine angasi*, with fewer of the other species *Liloea brevis*, *Haminoea maugeansis*, *Retusa* species and *Bulla quoyii* also present (with one very large example of the latter being noted).

Overall it was a most pleasing and interesting day.

Day 2: Port Welshpool, Wednesday 25 February, 2015.

The soft silt/muddy sediment of this protected locality meant a lot of overlap was noted with species recorded from Toora the day beforehand, although the pylons of the disused long jetty, the channel markers, and also lower littoral shell rubble provided some shelter and also solid habitat for encrusting organisms and, in turn, for organisms associated with them to live upon.

Additional gastropods seen at Port Welshpool included *Sassia subdistorta*, the predatory whelk *Pleuroploca australasia*, and the small pyramidellid *Leucotina casta* on its food host, the bivalve *Eumarcia fumigata* (the latter were also seen vigorously thrashing about in the silt to escape predatory *Polinices* snails).

Many blue ringed octopus, *Hapalochla-*

-ena maculosa were present among shell rubble. Several *Phlyxia intermedia* crabs were also seen. The aeolid nudibranchs *Trinchia catachoma* and *Facelina newcombi* were recovered from encrusting organisms growing on a channel post. The tide was so low that it stranded several small seahorses, *Hippocampus breviceps*, on lowermost littoral silt amongst algae and seagrass. These happily swam off on return to the water.

Additional bivalve records included many juvenile *Fulvia tenuicostata* and *Solatellina alba*. A single, large specimen of the fan mussel *Atrina tasmanica* (Victoria's largest bivalve) was very exciting and the first time most of us had seen this species alive. The estimated valve length was 20-25 cm. One valve bore dense fronds of *Codium* alga.

Another interesting find in the lowermost littoral zone was a small echinoid in the order of 15-20 mm long with white spines of variable length and pink tube feet dorsally. John Eichler e-mailed some images to Ashley Miskelly, an Australian echinoid expert, who identified it as *Eupatagus valenciennesii*.



Atrina tasmanica, partly buried. Port Welshpool, 25/2/2015.
Photo: P. Vafiadis.



Eupatagus valenciennesii at Port Welshpool, 25/2/2015.
Photo: P. Vafiadis.

Note: Reports on the remaining 2 days of this excursion will follow in future FNN issues.

Platon Vafiadis



NOMINATION FORM FOR FNCV COUNCIL 2015/16

The FNCV AGM will be held on Sunday 3rd May, 2 pm
at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn

Name of Member Nominated

Position Nominated *

Signature of Member Nominated

TWO MEMBERS SUPPORTING NOMINATION

Name Signature Date.....

Name Signature Date.....

*Elected members of the FNCV Council are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, up to six Councillors and a representative of each Special Interest Group (SIG). Councillors must be FNCV members.

**All nominations, including SIG representatives, must reach the FNCV office
no later than 48 hours before the AGM,
i.e. Friday 1st May by 2 pm**

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