



Understanding  
Our Natural World

# Field Nats News No.281

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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Governor of Victoria

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December 2017/January 2018

## From the President

The Australian Birds Seminar on October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> was another successful and well-run FNCV event. The Fauna Survey Group and all involved are to be congratulated on their efforts to deliver such an interesting and informative weekend.

On Monday October 23<sup>rd</sup>, as President of FNCV, I had the pleasure of presenting Science Talent Quest awards to 117 junior and intermediate secondary school students. Ten of those I presented were sponsored by FNCV in memory of Dr Noel Schleiger. The cheques and medallions were greatly appreciated by the recipients and, of course, their proud parents. It was very encouraging to see so many young and enthusiastic pupils engaged in science. I received numerous words of appreciation from parents and students who had received FNCV sponsorship and for the Club's support for the awards. In total, 52 awards were sponsored by FNCV. It is a great reminder of our effective commitment to community education.

There has been a paucity of larger invertebrates in my garden so far this Spring. Insects in particular seem to be scarce and there are not as many larger, web spinning spiders



Photo: M.Campbell

as last year. A pair of Grey Butcher Birds, *Cracticus torquatus*, has been nesting in my garden for some years and they are currently feeding their large and very noisy fledgling at various sites around the backyard. The young bird sits on a branch, "muttering", caroling, whistling and piping, *photo left*, as only butcher birds can, until the parents diligently appear with food. They work continuously to keep their charge satiated. In past years I saw large insects, lizards and dismembered small birds being provided, but this year I photographed a mouse being fed to the fledgling. The adults appeared with a relatively larger item of prey which they ripped

into two and gave to their offspring. I realised it was a mouse when I enlarged the image, *photo right*. The name butcher bird seems appropriate for this species. I knew that they preyed upon rodents but had never witnessed it in person.

Photo: M. Campbell



Max Campbell

### SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS ASSOC. (SEANA)

The FNCV is hosting the autumn SEANA get-together, April 27th—29th 2018. We will be based at Badger Creek Hall near Healesville. A detailed information sheet and registration form have been sent by email to FNCV members and all those on the SEANA email list. They have been posted to those on the SEANA list with no email.

FNCV members without email who would like the details of the SEANA get-together, could you please contact the FNCV office and these will be posted to you. 9877 9860, PO Box 13, Blackburn 3130

Many thanks to those who have offered to assist with the running of this weekend. We will be contacting you again in January/February 2018

The deadline for FNN 282 will be  
**10 am on Tuesday 9th January 2018**  
FNN will go to the printers on the 16th  
with collation on Tuesday 23rd January.  
**NOTE ALL THESE DATES ARE A  
WEEK LATER THAN USUAL.**  
In particular note collation is on the  
4th Tuesday of January.

Very best wishes for a safe &  
happy Christmas and a great  
2018 from FNN to FNCV  
members and to all those who  
have contributed to the success of  
FNN during the year.

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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.*

### December 2017

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group—Excursion: Upper Yarra.** Meet 10 am in the car park along Thomas Ave, Warburton Melway 290 A/B4 (behind the shops). We will make several stops along the river including lunch at Upper Yarra Reservoir Park, which has picnic tables and toilets. We should see several Odonata, including the bright blue damselfly *Dipblebia lestoides*, pictured right. **Contact:** Reiner [fncv@rn.id.au](mailto:fncv@rn.id.au)



**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> - Fungi Group—No Meeting**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group—Meeting: Christmas meeting – That was the year that was: a reflection on 2017.** Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; [robindrury6@gmail.com](mailto:robindrury6@gmail.com)

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Party BBQ—**6.30 pm in the hall. Join us and help celebrate another wonderful year with lots of Christmas cheer. See p8 for all details.

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> - Marine Research Group— Meeting: Annual members' night**  
Everyone is welcome to bring along exhibits, items of interest or questions on marine invertebrates  
Contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773;



**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> - Microscopy Group— No Meeting**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> - Botany Group— No Meeting**

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> - Day Group—No Meeting: Boxing Day**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> - Geology Group—No Meeting**

### January 2018

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> - Fungi Group—No Meeting: New Year's Day.**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>—Fauna Survey Group—No Meeting**

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group—**Survey - Swamp Skink Survey, Mornington Peninsula. Contact: David De Angelis 0409 519 829; [d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au)

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group—Excursion: Cardinia Reservoir.** Meet 10 am at Crystal Brook Picnic Area car park: Melway 210 3D/E. Contact: Reiner Richter. Primarily we will be looking for flower-feeding insects including some flamboyantly coloured jewel beetles. We will return to the car park for lunch. See Parks Vic website for information on the reserve.

*Castiarina octomaculata*

**Contact:** Reiner [fncv@rn.id.au](mailto:fncv@rn.id.au)  
<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/cardinia-reservoir-parks>



**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> - Marine Research Group—No Meeting**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group— No Meeting**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> - Botany Group—No Meeting**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>—Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>—Proposed FNCV camp on a remote bush block in the high country** co-owned by Max Campbell. There are no facilities on the property and access is on a rough 4km track requiring a high clearance vehicle, or 4WD.

( Calendar continued on page 3)



**The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$3 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. Junior non-member families, \$4 for excursions and \$2 per meeting.**

(Continued from page 2)

BYO everything. As this is a long way from Melbourne, Sat 20th and Sun 28th should be set aside for travelling. This camp will depend on a number of factors including track conditions, weather and in particular fire danger. **If you are interested in being kept informed please register with Max Campbell** mcam7307@bigpond.net.au 0409 143 538; 9544 0181 AH.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Day Group—No Meeting**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>—Collate FNN starting about 10 am. —NOTE THIS IS A WEEK LATER THAN NORMAL.**  
Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> – Geology Group—No Meeting**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> to Monday 29<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group—Survey – Warramate Nature Conservation Reserve, Yarra Valley.**  
Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury6@gmail.com **Prior Registration Essential.**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> – Juniors' Group—No Meeting: Australia Day**

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> - FNCV Council Meeting: 7.30 sharp.** Agenda items and apologies to Wendy 9877 9860;  
admin@fncv.org.au

## 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 the following new members who were welcomed at our last Council meeting.

Gary Richardson, Sam Gilbert, Karen Jack, Lucy Norton and Kowhai (Ko) Dowd.

Below: An exquisite moth photographed by our administrative officer, Wendy in her carport.

Thumb on the left indicates size.



Photo: Wendy Gare

### Vale Moira Minty

The Club has recently been informed of the death, on 30th July 2017, of Moira Minty. She was 92 years old and had resided in a nursing home in Preston for some years. Moira joined the FNCV on 9 August 1976. She was active in attending meetings of the Club, and was a regular member of the FNN Collation team from May 1995 until July 2000.

Moira was presented with a Certificate of Long Term Membership at the AGM on 1 May 2016. At the meeting she spoke about her involvement in FNCV and expressed her appreciation of the valuable experience she had gained with the Club.

### AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY MEDALLION PRESENTATION 13/11/17

The 2017 Australian Natural History Medallion was awarded to Associate Professor Paul Adam (left) for his contribution to conservation, natural history and education. He was nominated by the Linnean Society of New South Wales.

The medallion was presented by David Zerman (right), the president of the Royal Society of Victoria.

After receiving the award, Paul gave a presentation titled - *Opportunities and Challenges for Natural History in the Twenty-first Century.*

FNN extends congratulations to Paul. A detailed account of his work will appear in 2018 in *The Victorian Naturalist*.

Thanks to Barbara Burns and her team for preparing a delicious buffet meal



*More members' news p12*





# Fungi Group

**FORAY 13th August 2017  
CATHEDRAL RANGE, NED'S GULLY**

**Vegetation:** Riparian Forest with Manna Gum Tall Open Forest along Little River. Open forest with Red Stringybark/Broad-leaved Peppermint/Longleaved Box on 'Hygrocybe Hill'. After a cloudy drive up Black Spur, we enjoyed a fine sunny day for our last formal foray for the season. Torbjorn von Strokirch summed it up nicely - "On embarking on the lengthy drive to Ned's Gully I was rather pessimistic about how productive the foray would be, but while total fungi numbers were down I was pleasantly surprised at the variety that was present. Adding to the nice weather it proved a good way to finish off the formal fungi season."

From River Track, Reiner Richter produced a thin branch with black, convoluted fruit-bodies of *Cordierites frondosa* growing on it. While this species bears some resemblance to a jelly fungus, its texture is gelatinous and firm. *Cordierites frondosa* was also seen by Jurrie Hubregtse along the River Track on the same log where it had appeared for a few years, but there were only a few small fruit-bodies.

Dr Tom May and Pat Grey collected several grey, club-shaped coral fungi to 30 mm tall growing on the ground. Most of these corals were branched, the tips were blunt and the fertile clubs were longitudinally-striate. A pale, ochre stem merged smoothly into the fertile club and the stem arose from a small white mycelial pad. There were three possible identifications: 1. Grey Corals – there are several, including *Clavaria muscula* (reported from Australia). However, this coral has a smooth club, clearly differentiated stem which arises from a pale grey mycelial mat. 2. Infected *Clavulina coralloides* – this species can be parasitised by the pyrenomycete *Helminthosphaeria clavariarum* which renders the fruit-body grey to black. One feature of this parasite is the presence of black ostioles on the surface and these were not seen on our specimens. 3. The Ash-grey Coral *Clavulina cinerea* – this species usually forms branched fruit-bodies which can grow to 120 mm tall with grey longitudinally-striate branches, blunt branch tips and an ochre stem arising from a white mycelial pad, however, unbranched forms are also known. Hence our specimens represent immature fruit-bodies of *Clavulina cinerea*. It should also be noted that the pyrenomycete *Helminthosphaeria clavariarum* not only parasitises *Clavulina coralloides* but also the introduced *Clavulina rugosa* which is turned from white to grey then black. This pyrenomycete may also parasitise *Clavulina cinerea* which is changed from ash-grey to a purple tinged colour.

We again found the small leather *Stereum ochraceoflavum*, that was first identified at White's Corner, Gembrook in 2015 by Richard Hartland who had noted it in *A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi* (2014) by Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky, p 182. It has a whitish, extremely hairy upper surface and a smooth and felty, pale fawn fertile surface. These fruit-bodies (to 7 mm diam) had a central attachment and were conic in shape, in other cases a group may coalesce along twigs or small plant stems to form a resupinate single fruit-body often with shelving. The hairs on the upper surface all point towards the margin. This extremely hairy upper surface might have



*Chromocyphella muscicola*

Photo: Reiner Richter

suggested that it was a *S. hirsutum*, but the hairs were whitish and the substrate was small stick as opposed to the larger pieces of wood that *S. hirsutum* inhabits.

Tom May pointed out some interesting fungi included the minute cups (2-3 mm diam) of *Chromocyphella muscicola* (photo above). The fruit-bodies are a whitish to buff colour, cyphelloid, attached dorsally to mossy wood, brown spored and parasitic on mosses. Wikipedia had this to say about 'cyphelloid' fungi: "The cyphelloid fungi are a group of fungi in the *Basidiomycota* that have disc-, tube-, or cup-shaped basidiocarps (fruit bodies), resembling species of discomycetes (or "cup fungi") in the *Ascomycota*. They were originally referred to the genus *Cyphella* ("cyphelloid" means *Cyphella*-like) and subsequently to the family *Cyphellaceae* but are now known to be much more diverse and are spread through several different genera and families. Since they are often studied as a group, it is convenient to call them by the informal (non-taxonomic) name of "cyphelloid fungi". Fruit bodies of the cyphelloid fungi are typically small (under 10 mm across), disc-shaped, cup-shaped, or tube-like, with or without a stem. The spore-bearing surface is smooth and formed on the surface of the disc, or inside the cup or tube. The sterile outer surface is smooth or often hairy, the hairs sometimes forming a conspicuous margin to discs. Fruit bodies typically occur in troops or swarms, sometimes packed closely together. Better known cyphelloid genera include *Calyprella*, with stalked, cup- or bell-like fruit bodies; *Lachnella*, with conspicuous, hairy-margined, disc-like fruit bodies; *Flagelloscypha* with smaller, but equally hairy, cup-like fruit bodies; *Henningsomyces* with tube-like fruit bodies; and *Merismodes* with clustered, hairy, cup-like fruit bodies". We saw *Henningsomyces candidus* that look like a mass of white dots to the naked eye, but close up showed a dense mass of minute tubes attached vertically on wood from a log. Individual tubes are ca 0.3mm in diameter.

Another unusual species was the 'fungal snow' spiky white mass just under the soil looking like a slime mould. However, this was a *Chromelosporium* sp. which had been exposed by Lyrebird diggings. Tom May determined it as the asexual stage of a peziza. Information from 'Bower Bird' on the web: Heino Lepp (mycologist in Canberra) wrote "...The species of *Chromelosporium* are the anamorphic, or asexually sporing, forms of species of the discomycete genus *Peziza* - according to a 1973 paper that I have. That paper notes that the colonies

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)



*Chromelosporium* sp. Photo: Torbjorn von Strokirch

are velvety to tufted and white at first but later diversely coloured (rose, purple, violet, lilac, blue, yellow, ochraceous, grey or brown). .... the specimens I've collected are more or less white marginally but coloured inwards. One is light brown; another greyish but mostly pinkish-brown and the third pink. Two were on rotting wood, one on the damp soil of a creek bank. Earlier I said that there may have been taxonomic changes. I say that because there have been proposals to have one name for one fungus (rather than a separate name for the sexually-sporing stage and another for the anamorphic form)."

Again there was a variety of *Hygrocybe* spp. to be seen but many of the fruit-bodies were old. This is particularly illustrated by *Humidicutus arcohastata* (*Hygrocybe arcohastata*) where the colours are extremely variable – the caps of younger specimens are a dirty green, with red and/or blue tints, becoming red with yellow margins and the stem is white, and, at the base, yellow, gills yellow, with a decurrent tooth. Other *Hygrocybe* spp included the yellow, glutinous *H. chromolimonea*, the sturdy *H. austropratensis* with a buff cap and wide decurrent gills and white stem, *H. rodwayi* with a creamy white cap with a pale brown small umbo and white basal mycelium at the base of the stem. *H. graminicolor* was identified by the distinctive viscous thread on the gill margins. Most numerous were the red-orange-yellow species, amongst which we could distinguish *H. miniata* which has a dry, convex, scarlet cap with a crenulate margin, yellowish-orange gills and red-orange stem.

At the top of a hill on the Ned's Gully Track we saw huge areas of tiny, thin black earthtongues growing in the moss. There seemed to be a variety of species, one of which was *Glutoglossum glutinosum* with a dark, rough longitudinally grooved fertile club developing smoothly into a smooth brownish stalk, identified by the sticky fruit-body. Another group with a flattened, grooved fertile brown club with a bristly surface and black very rough stalk indicated that these were a *Trichoglossum* species. Surprisingly at the top this area was wet and mossy where small creeks came down the slope, thus favouring these earthtongues.

Additional photos of the foray can be seen from:  
 Reiner Richter <http://photos.rnr.id.au/2017/08/13/>  
 Torbjorn von Strokirch <https://www.flickr.com/photos/123586702@N08/albums/72157684122563092>

Thanks to all forayers for searching and photographing the species and contributing to their identification in the field throughout this season, as well as those contributing to the reports and species lists. Special thanks go to: Michael Barkla, John Eichler, Sue Forester, Paul George, Ed Grey, Pat Grey, Les Hanrahan, Richard Hartland, Jurrie Hubregtse, Virgil Hubregtse, Teresa Lebel, Alannah Matheson, Janet McClean, Dr Tom May, Carol Page, Reiner Richter, Torbjorn von Strokirch and Lachlan Tegart, Neil Tucker, Ray Wallace, and John Walter.

**Pat Grey** - "This is my last report and species list. I would like to thank everyone for their continued support and help over the years."

**Pat & Ed Grey**

#### Addendum re Orange coloured Truffles seen at Macedon and again at Cathedral Range

**Re Macedon Foray:** Les Hanrahan "I took the photo of the truffles near there". Similar-looking orange-coloured truffles were found earlier along the track to the Lake. The skin was dry, texture smooth soft and sponge-like, and inside there was convoluted small chambers. The orange skin looked too bright to be *Zelleromyces* cf *daucus* which is reddish-brown (and shows the internal convolutions through it) and exudes a white latex when cut, although there was no sign of a stipe. Its outer colour looked more like *Arcangelialla* sp. – smooth, dry (1-2 cm diameter), but that species also exude a white latex when cut and also has a remnant stipe which ours did not have (see Gates and Ratkowsky 2016 p168 & p 171). Teresa Lebel (mycologist at the RBG) said that it was a *Zelleromyces*, a *Lactarius* relative, and that sometimes the latex is watery not milky. We also found similar ones at Ned's Gully, Cathedral Range, and Tom May suggested we call them *Z. australiensis*.

#### **OUR PATRON**

An invitation from Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, the Governor of Victoria, was sent to all organisations of which she is patron. They were asked to provide an ornament that best represents their organisation to hang on the Government House Christmas tree. Talented FNCV Vice President, Philippa Burgess designed and made the beautiful ornament pictured below.





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

**Geology Group:** Many thanks to Paul Balassone from Melbourne Water who gave an interesting talk to the Geology SIG on September 27th. He described how Melbourne Water is engaging with indigenous groups and local communities when, in particular, heritage structures owned by MW need to be updated. The talk was certainly different to our usual geologically-based talks, but was an interesting insight into how public corporations are now, in comparison with years past, more aware of their heritage assets and are more involved with the wider community.

**Juniors' Group:** On October 15<sup>th</sup> six members of our group had a perfect day to discover the wildflowers of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary with Elaine, a volunteer from Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Education. We learnt about Kangaroo Apples, daisy bushes and other indigenous plants to the area. We saw some turtles in the lake and enjoyed a play in the new playground. Several of us then headed to the Whitehorse Spring Festival where the FNCV had a stand. Thanks to the small group who attended this excursion and Elaine, our guide.

**Marine Research Group:** A meeting was held on 9 October. Our speaker for the night was Mel Mackenzie from Museum Victoria speaking about the recent research voyage to study Australia's eastern abyss, a dark and largely unexplored habitat found deep beneath the ocean surface. The meeting was attended by 12 members.

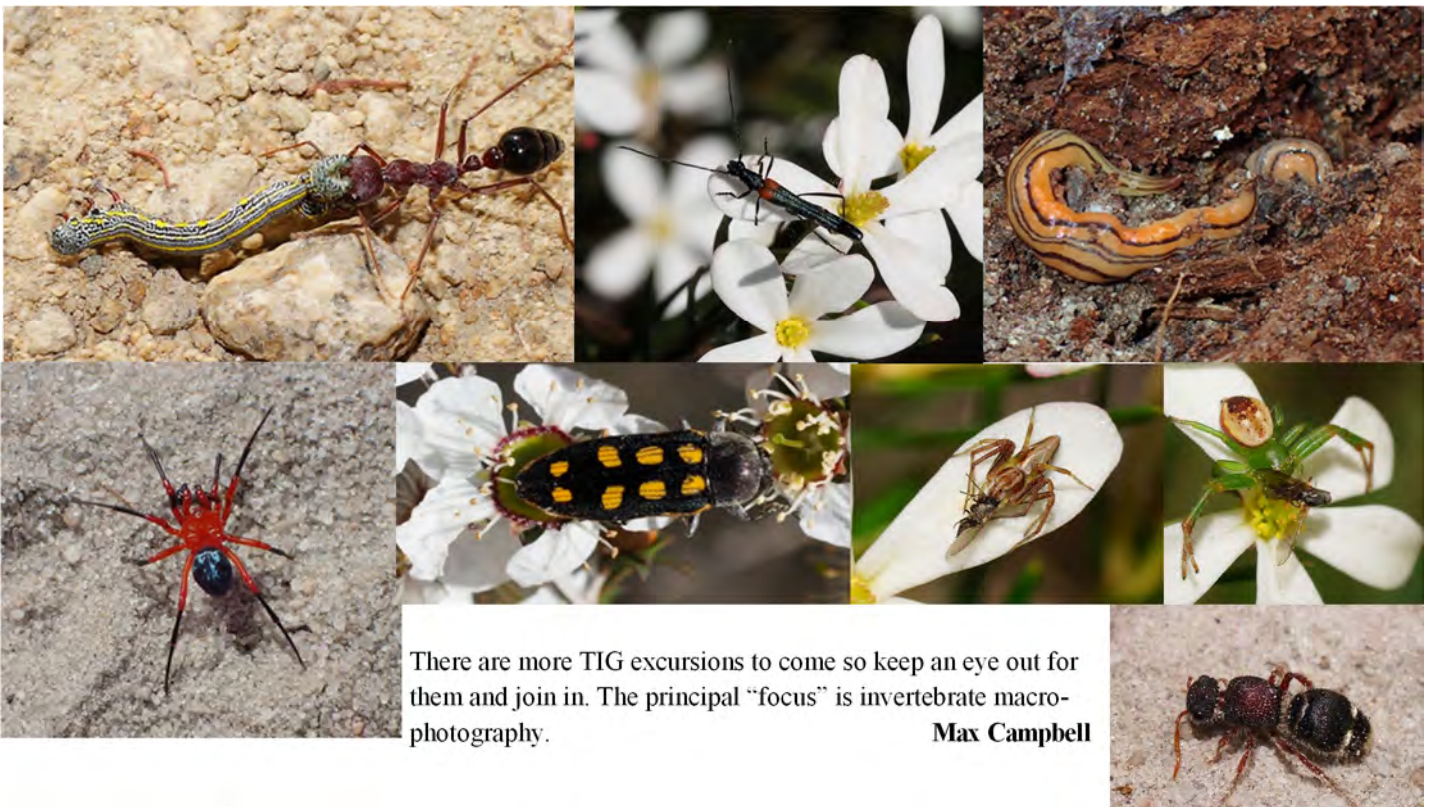


## Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

### Langwarrin Flora & Fauna Reserve

On Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup> there was a TIG excursion to Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve and despite sunny weather there were relatively few insects and other invertebrates out and about to photograph. Even the flies stayed away during lunch. A few bull ants and jumping jacks, *Myrmecia* spp (Photo 1) and Green-headed ants *Rhytidoponera metallica* were observed moving about the sand. The wildflowers, on the other hand were extraordinary with a great display of orchids, native peas, mistletoes, sun-dews and Proteaceae.

Nevertheless it was an enjoyable excursion and many photographs of invertebrates were taken by the participants. Some are included here. Eighteen members and visitors attended and were led around the reserve by the organiser, Reiner Richter.



There are more TIG excursions to come so keep an eye out for them and join in. The principal "focus" is invertebrate macro-photography.

Max Campbell

**Photos: top row**—*Myrmecia* sp with a geometrid caterpillar—Reiner Richter; Cerambycid Beetle—Carol Page; Terrestrial Flatworm—John Eichler.

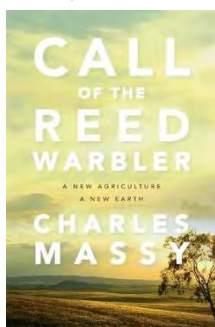
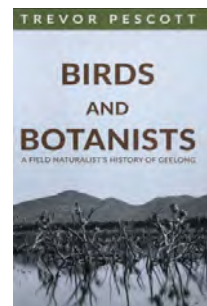
**Second row**—Red and black spider—John Eichler; Jewel Beetle—Carol Page; Lynx spider—Reiner Richter; crab spider—Reiner Richter.

**Below**—Velvet Ant—Reiner Richter.

## NEWS FROM THE BOOKSHOP (December 2017)

There is a book for everybody, on display at the FNCV clubrooms. There are books on a wide range of topics and special interest as well as special priced books, secondhand books and discounted books. If there is a particular book that is not on the shelf, make sure to send me an email so that I can order it in, in time for Christmas! Check out the new Bookshop catalogue for 2017/2018 available through the FNCV website. This month there is a mix of new titles, an old favourite that is back in stock and a relatively recent title. Come into the clubrooms and have a look at the full range of books available on the shelf or to order or inquire about a book, please send an email to me, at, [bookshop@fncv.org.au](mailto:bookshop@fncv.org.au) and I will reply as soon as I can. Your support is greatly appreciated. Happy reading, *Kathy Himbeck*

**Birds and Botanists (T. Pescott)** describes many of the regional places of environmental significance, and the wealth of wildlife still to be found in and around Geelong.. It profiles some of the people who have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the plants and animals found in the Geelong area, and records the history of the two field naturalists clubs in Geelong. (PB, 2002 pp., Nov 2017) RRP & Members \$35



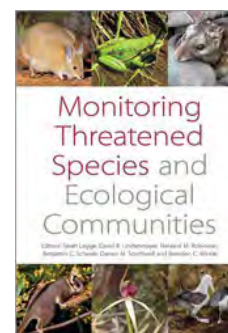
**Call of the Reed Warbler (C. Massy)** is a ground-breaking book that will change the way we think of, farm and grow food. The author explores transformative and regenerative agriculture and the vital connection between our soil and our health. It is a story of how a grassroots revolution – a true underground insurgency – can save the planet, help turn climate change around, and build healthy people and healthy communities, pivoting significantly on our relationship with growing and consuming food.. (PB, 592 pp., September 2017) RRP \$39.95, Members \$32

**Crabs, hermit crabs and allies (G. Poore)** This guide aims to familiarise amateur naturalists, beachcombers, divers and others who have an interest in crabs, hermit crabs and their close relatives, what they do, how they behave, their environment, ecology and diversity. Species descriptions are accompanied by colour photographs, line drawings and illustrations for easy recognition. Maps, further references, a glossary and scientific and common name indexes are also included. (PB, 68 pp., 2007) RRP \$24.95, Members \$20



**Flora and Fauna of the Victorian and South Australian Mallee (J. Lindner)** is an easy to use guide to the wildflowers of the mallee with the inclusion of some fauna including birds, reptiles and invertebrates. The book includes a chapter on what's in flower when using scans of fresh plant specimens that provides a handy tool. (PB, 266 pp., 2016) RRP \$50, Members \$45

**Monitoring Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S. Legge, D. Lindenmayer, N. Robinson, B. Scheele, D. Southwell & B. Wintle)** aims to improve the standard of monitoring for Australia's threatened biodiversity. It gathers insights from some of the most experienced managers and scientists involved with monitoring programs for such species and communities in Australia and evaluates current monitoring programs, establishing a baseline against which the quality of future monitoring activity can be managed. Case studies provide examples of practical pathways to improve the quality of biodiversity monitoring and guidelines to improve future programs are proposed. (PB, 480pp., January 2018) RRP \$69.95, Members \$56



Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 281

Joan Broadberry  
Wendy Gare  
Sally Bewsher

Many thanks to those who helped collate and label FNN 280  
No collation in December  
Please note next collation 23rd January 2018  
—one week later than usual.

Hazel Brentnall  
Edward Brentnall  
Keith Marshall  
Neil McLachlan  
Joan Broadberry  
Sheina Nicholls

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

"All fauna captured in accordance with the FNCV's DELWP Wildlife Research Permit and National Parks Act Permit and animal ethics approved Standard Operating Procedures".



## FNCV Christmas Party

**Saturday December 9th.  
Join us at 6.30 pm in the FNCV Hall  
1 Gardenia St. Blackburn**

Relax and enjoy a BBQ with friends and members from all FNCV Special Interest Groups and celebrate another wonderful year of activities. All welcome

- \* The club will provide meat, vegieburgers, bread and nibbles. Please bring a salad or a sweet to share. BYO drinks. Email the office by **Friday 1st December** to let us know numbers coming and food you are bringing.
- \* We are planning a presentation looking back over the FNCV year. SIG co-ordinators are requested to email about 10 images from their 2017 activities to the FNCV office no later than **Friday 1st December**.
- \* We will also be holding the traditional FNCV end-of-year fund raising raffle. **Donations of prizes would be much appreciated**, e.g. wine, knick-knacks, plants, books etc. Look deep into your 'present drawer'. Deliver to the office or (preferably) bring them with you on the night.

**[admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)**

## Whitehorse Spring Festival 15th of October 2017, 10 am—4 pm



Photo: P. Burgess

Thousands of people attended the festival at Whitehorse Civic Centre on a beautiful warm sunny day. Our activity, education and information stand was literally swamped many times by excited adults and children, all well helped by our enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers!

Activities we had organised were: "Whose skull is this?" A dozen interesting skulls had to be matched up with their photo and name and an identity sheet completed. We also had a

collection with specimens representing each of the SIGs. People were asked to identify which object belonged to each group. The portable rechargeable microscopes also proved very popular. We had a huge variety of mostly marine, botanical and geological specimens. Ruth Hoskin brought along water samples from home, the live wriggling freshwater animals enthralling adults and children alike. Also popular and fun were "Secret Touch Boxes" made by Su Dempsey, filled with very strange feeling marine and botanical specimens.

Many interested adults and children discussed the club and our activities with our informative volunteers and were keen to take away calendars, subscription forms, newsletters and other information on the FNCV and Juniors' Group.

Of course none of this would have been possible without our fabulous team of volunteers, who I'm sure all enjoyed the day as much as the participants. I think we all felt our day to be very successful in making the FNCV and its objectives more widely known in the local community. Our activities and microscopes certainly caused a spark of excitement and interest in many children and adults' enquiring minds. That in itself is a very nice reward as a volunteer.

### Thanks to:

Ray Gibson  
Anne Warren  
Rob & Beth Hamson  
Patricia Amaya  
Jackie Waring  
Cecily Falkingham  
Ruth Hoskin  
Andy Brentnall  
Philippa Burgess



Photo: P. Burgess

**Philippa Burgess**





## Fauna Survey Group Seminar—Birds of Victoria

Saturday 21st October



**Dean Ingerswen, Threatened Bird Program manager, Birdlife Australia:**  
**“The Regent (Honeyeater) Report”.**

**Maxwell Campbell, President: Animal Ethics and Wildlife**

**Martin Scuffins, Raptor handler and biologist – Leigh Valley Hawk and Owl Sanctuary:** “Nurturing the Fierce – the rehabilitation and conservation of birds of prey”.

**Cecilia Imre, Environmental Coordinator - Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater:**  
**“Helmeted Honeyeater recovery program – past, present and future”.**

**Alex Maisey, PhD Candidate – La Trobe University:** “Conservation of the Superb Lyrebird on the urban fringe of Melbourne”.

**Renée Mead, Project Officer, Beach-nesting Birds – Birdlife Australia:** “Beach-nesting Birds Project – Then and Now”.

**Peter Menkhurst, Principal Scientist – Arthur Rylah Institute,:** “Author—Producing the Australian Bird Guide”.

Sunday 22nd October

**Dr. William Steele, Senior Wildlife Scientist, Melbourne Water:** “Melbourne Water’s Western Treatment Plant”.

**Bruce Robertson, Ornithologist and Retired Vet: Cape Barren Geese**

**Nick Bradsworth, Deakin University Honours Graduate:** “Urban Powerful Owl spatial ecology”.

**Mike Honeyman, Ornithologist, Jacobs:** “Results from a study of Melbourne’s urban Eastern Yellow Robins”.

**Simon Verdon, PhD Candidate – La Trobe University:** “Saving the mallee emu-wren: Translocations, burning and everything between”.

**Dr. Mark Antos, Acting Manager – Science and Management Effectiveness Parks Victoria:** “The trials and tribulations of the Plains-wanderer and other fauna in a dynamic grassy landscape”.

The Fauna Survey Group and organisers of the symposium would like to express their appreciation and thanks to the wonderful group of presenters, many of whom appear in the images below.

Grateful thanks must also go to all the hard working volunteers who helped to plan, organise, chair, cater for and otherwise put together this very successful two day event.

John Harris  
 Kathy Himbeck  
 Max and Faye Campbell  
 Robin Drury  
 Ruby Albury (right)  
 Andrej Hohmann  
 Su Dempsey  
 Phillipa Burgess  
 Sue Bendel  
 Ray Gibson  
 Sally Bewsher



### Awesome Fund Raising

Kathy Himbeck sold a large quantity of new books, raising \$1,333+ and \$427 from sales of second-hand books.

A silent auction for donated books was held, raising \$620—this amount will be donated to the FNCV environment fund.

\$204 was donated to the Leigh Valley Owl and Hawk Sanctuary



Thanks to Sally Bewsher for the photos.





# Day Group

## Biodiversity Monitoring with Remote Cameras - 24/10/17

Speaker: Robin Drury

When surveying animals in the wild there will be many questions to answer eg. is the animal present or absent, numbers, gender, weight, dimensions, behaviour. A range of survey tools can be used to help answer these:

- observation - for the animal and its traces eg. nests, mounds, tracks or scats.
- sound - especially good for frogs and birds.
- pitlines - good for reptiles and small mammals, work well in sandy areas. A variation is using funnel traps instead of buckets.
- cage traps of various sizes
- harp traps - used for bats.
- remote cameras

Using cameras is a relatively new technique adopted by the Fauna Survey Group (FSG) of the Field Naturalists Club from about 2012. Since that time a range of more sophisticated cameras has become available. Remote cameras now have many different features and settings, for example, choice of timing (eg night or day), the choice of video (up to 60 seconds) or stills or both and the minimum length of time between triggers. Many cameras record colour images during the day and black and white (infrared vision) at night. Some cameras, using white light at night, produce better quality, colour images at night. The possible disturbance caused by the white light must be weighed up against the improved image quality.

Animals are attracted to the camera with a bait, enclosed in a strong holder, which they can smell but not eat. The bait is made with peanut butter, golden syrup, oats and sometimes fish oil. It is often raised off the ground by mounting it on a star picket. Cameras and baits are usually left out for up to three weeks. Cameras are triggered by changes in infrared light, generated mainly by movement. This means that the



wind movement of grass and vegetation can also trigger the cameras and should be cleared to minimise false triggers. When surveying for arboreal mammals the FSG uses special mounts to place the cameras in trees. The location of each camera needs to be very carefully recorded to ensure that they can be easily retrieved. Security for the cameras has not proven to be a big issue given the remote locations of camera deployment. All FSG work with wildlife is of course done under permit.

Cameras have many benefits over traditional methods of surveying wildlife. They are far less invasive for the animals, provide hard evidence, greatly reduce the time needed to survey and need fewer people with less training to be available. Nevertheless, a big workload is created in sorting through thousands of images, spotting and then identifying any species present. If readers would like to experience this for themselves, there is a website [www.wildlifepotter.net.au](http://www.wildlifepotter.net.au) in which citizen scientists are invited to help find and identify animals from videos and images taken with remote cameras.

Remote cameras have been used by the Fauna Survey Group in many parts of Victoria including the Grampians, Mallee, Mornington Peninsula and during an 18 month survey carried out in parks to the east of Melbourne. *See map above.*

Cameras may be set out in a number of ways including a subjective assessment of habitat, by random grids or grids stratified by vegetation types. However, knowing the habitat and the behaviour of the animals being surveyed is of vital importance in deciding when and where to place them. Timing will be influenced by factors such as seasonal influx of juveniles or times of foraging. Sites may be chosen to be in the proximity of flowering plants, hollows, mounds or nests, a good example being Pygmy Possums feeding on banksias. Sites may also be in association with other survey methods e.g. trapping or spotlighting. On the Mornington Peninsula in a project targeting Swamp Skinks, cameras were installed over cork tiles along a drift fence (some baited, some not). There is a continual learning curve.

Robin illustrated his presentation with many short videos and still images arising from the survey work the FSG has carried out over the last five years. They were a delight to watch as we briefly glimpsed the secret world of the bush at night. On behalf of the Day Group I would once again like to thank Robin for his excellent presentation and pass on to all, his invitation to join the Fauna Survey Group in the field.

**Joan Broadberry**







## Fauna Survey Group

### Southern Ark Project—Cape Conran

Eighteen members, including several members from the Junior Naturalists Group, attended a very successful camp at Cape Conran in East Gippsland from 1/10 to 7/10/2017.

The main activity for the week involved assisting DELWP staff from the Southern Ark Project, which carries out fox control and wildlife monitoring in an extensive area east of the Snowy River. Andy Murray and Simon Ruff from the Orbost office of DELWP supervised cage trapping, targeting Long-nosed Potoroo and Common Brushtail Possum.

Under Andy's and Simon's expert tuition most people got the opportunity to handle and process both species. Everyone was thrilled to see six Potoroos captured, including two females with pouched young. Brushtail Possums are difficult mammals to handle; however, we were shown special techniques that ensured nobody was scratched or bitten, without causing unnecessary stress to the possums.



Peter Homan  
Photo: J. Broadberry

land several kilometres west of Cape Conran. The highlight at this site was the capture of three Green and Golden Bell Frogs, a threatened species. *Photo left.* Haswell's Froglet, Common Froglet and Southern Brown Tree Frog were also recorded at this wetland.

Numerous species were also found around the camp ground. Harp trapping here produced Little Forest Bat, Southern Forest Bat and Lesser Long-eared Bat. The Juniors, in particular, enjoyed seeing bats released. Lace Monitors, Common Brushtail Possums, Black Wallabies and Wonga Pigeons were common visitors to our camp sites. Short-beaked Echidna, Red-bellied Black Snake, Yellow-bellied Water Skink, Common Froglet and Southern Brown Tree Frog were also recorded in and around the camp ground.

Over thirty species of birds were recorded for the week. Notable species included Rose Robin, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Olive-backed Oriole, Sacred Kingfisher, Bassian Thrush, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Golden Whistler.



Inserting micro-chip into Potoroo Photo: J. Broadberry



Juvenile Green and Golden Bell Frog Photo: Ray Gibson

Spotlighting was conducted at the nearby Cabbage Palms Flora Reserve, where we recorded Yellow-bellied Glider, Sugar Glider, Southern Boobook and possibly Feathertail Glider. Leaf Green Tree Frog and Haswell's Froglet were calling along the small creek at this site. Another nearby wetland produced large numbers of Haswell's Froglet.

We also had a very successful frogging night at a large wet-



Long-nosed Potoroo

Ten surveillance cameras were set over four nights, producing records of Long-nosed Potoroo, Bush Rat, Short-beaked Echidna, Common Brushtail Possum and Eastern Pygmy Possum.

Apart from the organised activities, there was plenty of time to explore the wonderful coastline. Australian Fur Seals were seen basking on rocks and several Humpback Whales were observed.

Overall, the Cape Conran camp was a great success with everybody seeing a wide range of fauna in a beautiful coastal setting.

Peter Homan



*Members' news (continued from p3)*

## Scarlet Honeyeater

The male scarlet honeyeater is very striking with its brilliant red head, back and throat, long curved bill and blackish wings and tail. It is a very active little bird darting through the canopy. Until a couple of years ago it was rarely seen in Melbourne preferring the warmer climes of coastal Queensland and New South Wales. However in 2017 there has been an explosion of sightings in Victoria, including in the Melbourne Metropolitan area, which have been the talk of birdwatchers and have resulted in many postings on the website "Birdline".

Cecily and Reg Falkingham and I were talking about this influx while Cecily and I prepared to go for a walk in Hillcrest Reserve in the Mullum Mullum Valley. As Cecily led the way along the west track we came to a spot where a mixed flock of birds were feeding on the blossom of a Yellow Box. We spotted a Rufous Whistler and a Golden Whistler, Spotted pardalote, Grey Fantail and a number of other species when I suddenly spied a flash of intense red high up in the tree tops. Focusing my binoculars I identified a Scarlet Honeyeater. Cecily was very excited, never having seen this species before in her beloved Hillcrest. She didn't see it straight away as it was moving around but we stayed put and ten minutes later it was back and she had her glasses on it. We were both thrilled to spot this tunning bird so close to home and doubly delighted as we had been talking about it only a few minutes earlier. ( Seen 1.11.2017 about 2.30 pm) at Hillcrest Reserve, (Mullum Mullum Valley) Melways Map 48 K 5 or/49 A4.

It is speculated that the Scarlet Honeyeater, which is partly nomadic, is becoming a permanent Victorian summer migrant to escape drought conditions in Queensland and New South Wales.

When we got back to Cecily's house we played the call on the "Birds in Back Yards" website. A good description is in Pizzey, *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, "explosive silvery tinkling, descending and tailing away".

I think I also caught a glimpse of the female, which is quite a plain small brown bird with only a hint of red on the chin. An identification point is its long curved bill.

Listen to the call and keep your eyes peeled. You never know what you are going to see.

**Barbara Burns**



Photo: Peter Storer



Photo: Barbara Burns

### FIRST AID CERTIFICATE COURSE 14/10/17

Twenty participants, including three juniors, attended the one day course held by NPT Group and subsidised by the FNCV.

It was very successful with a huge amount of valuable first aid knowledge being absorbed and practised.

Thanks to Gavin Harrison our trainer.

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