



Understanding
Our Natural World

Field Nats News No.286

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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June 2018

From the President

It seems that I have commenced my fourth term as President, FNCV. The years certainly move quickly when you are having a good time. I look forward to another enjoyable year. Thank you to everyone who makes the FNCV such a friendly and productive club.

Now that the cooler weather has arrived, my garden is very quiet with little to observe regarding invertebrates. Of course the war on undesirable invertebrates such as introduced slugs and snails continues apace as they cast their beady, stalked eyes over my newly planted autumn vegetable garden. A few jumping spiders are occasionally seen although I am wondering about what they are eating.

There have been, as always, many interesting presentations and field excursions to attend. On April 22nd, the Juniors' Group had an excellent and well attended trip to Point Cook, hosted by Andrew Christie. Our young naturalists and their parents enjoyed wandering about the intertidal zone during low tide and saw many marine animals and plants. The fascination and delight was certainly clear as they searched through the pools for small animals. There were tunicates (below 1), marine molluscs, amphipods (including a caprellid (2) found by a young, keen-eyed observer), small fish, anemones(3) mussels and a host of other interesting lifeforms. A mysterious young quail? (4) joined us on the foreshore and many photographs were taken. I encourage as many of you as possible to attend Juniors' Group excursions and make your knowledge and experience available.

Maxwell Campbell

The deadline for FNN 287 will be at **10 am on Tuesday 5th June** FNN will go to the printers on Monday 11th June (*one day early*) with collation on Tuesday 19th June

Index	Page
From the President	1
Calendar of Events	2
Members' News	3
Extracts from reports to FNCV Council	4
SEANA autumn get-together hosted by FNCV	5-6
Fungi Group Report: Meeting– Presentation by Tom May	7
Fauna Survey Group Reports: Surveys at Jalluka Conservation Reserve and Bael Bael	8–9
Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Report: Licola Camp	10
Day Group Report: Morang wetlands walk	11
FNCV Environment Fund; Long term membership awards	12





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.

June 2018

Thursday 31st May - Sunday 3rd – Fungi Group Extended Foray: *Based in Anglesea*

Weather conditions will dictate our survey areas; we hope to revisit some of the areas we successfully covered last year: Distillery Creek, Sheoak & Blanket Leaf picnic areas, Lake Elizabeth and Forest Road. Registration required.
Contact: Carol Page 9857 6388; cpage356@gmail.com ON DAYS OF FORAY ONLY: 0438 446 973

Monday 4th - Fungi Group Meeting: *Hiding in plain sight: biodiversity of Australian deceiver mushrooms, ie Laccaria*

Speaker: Travis Heafield, Masters Graduate working in fungal systematics
Contact: Carol Page Contact: Carol Page 9857 6388; cpage356@gmail.com

Tuesday 5^d - Fauna Survey Group: Meeting: *Ecology, conservation and surveying for the California Spotted Owl as well as the flora and fauna of the Sierra Nevada Pine Forests.* Speaker: Andrej Hohmann, Fauna Survey Group, FNCV

Contact: Robin Drury 0417 175 148; robindrury6@gmail.com

Friday 8th to Monday 11th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Yarra Valley*

Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury6@gmail.com

Saturday 9th – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre*

This is a wonderful opportunity to see endangered fauna. Meeting at 6.00 pm.
Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Monday 11th - Marine Research Group: No Meeting—*Queen's Birthday Public Holiday*

Sunday 17th – Fungi Group Foray: *Mount Worth State Park, Seaview*

Meet at 10.30 am at Moonlight Creek picnic area (Mel Ed 45 Page X912 U8; Vic Roads Ed 8 Page 97 B6)
Contact: Carol Page Contact: Carol Page 9857 6388; cpage356@gmail.com ON DAY OF FORAY ONLY: 0438 446 973

Tuesday 19th Collate FNN 287 Starting about 10 am. All welcome. Contact the office

Wednesday 20th - Microscopy Group Meeting: Speaker: To be advised. Contact: Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Thursday 21st – Botany Group Meeting: *Imported geological material impacts on biodiversity as well as geodiversity*

Speaker: Dr Jeff Yugovic, Botanist, Senior Consultant Ecologist, Biosis. Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Sunday 24th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Survey for the Swamp Skink on the Mornington Peninsula*

Contact: David De Angelis 0409 519 829; d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au

Monday 25th—FNCV Council meeting: 7.30 sharp Agenda items & apologies to Wendy 9877 9860; admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 26th – Day Group Meeting: *Looking at nature in Central Europe.* A tour through the rural and wild areas of Austria, Bavaria, Slovenia and neighbouring countries exploring beautiful natural and cultural scenery, and looking for flora and fauna. Speaker: Andrew McCutcheon. Meet for coffee and a chat at 10.30 am, speaker at 11 am. Contact: Max Campbell 0409 143 538; 9544 0181 AH; mcam7307@bigpond.net.au

Wednesday 27th – Geology Group Meeting: *Life's Great Crises: New Theories about Mass Extinctions since life began on Earth.* Speaker: Dr Rolf Schmidt, Collection Manager, Invertebrate Palaeontology, Melbourne Museum

Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; 0425 729 424; rroskin@gmail.com

Friday 29th – Juniors' Group Meeting 7.30 p: *Unicellular organisms and their special adaptations.*

Speaker: Max Campbell, FNCV President. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au



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.

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. Ian Benson, Eliza Benson, Fiona Benson, Thomas Sluiter, Tony Hampton, Oliver Ashburner, Ruby Ashburner, Aislinn Sky Ashburner, Leah Kessner, Catherine McDonald, Denise Deerson, Elizabeth Matthewson, Patricia Laidlaw and Mark Cabouret.



FNCV AGM

The annual general meeting was held on 6th May. The minutes will be emailed with FNN. Those who wish to receive a paper copy of the minutes or the Annual Report please contact the office.

The speaker was Mark Rodrique, Statewide leader of Marine and Coastal Parks Vic. (photo left) His most enjoyable presentation was titled, **Wet, Wild and Wonderful—Victoria's Marine Protected Areas.**

See also p12

Congratulations to those elected to the FNCV Council at the AGM

Position on Council

President	Maxwell Campbell
Vice President	Philippa Burgess
Secretary	Barbara Burns
Treasurer	Barbara Burns
Botany Group	Ken Griffiths
Day Group	<i>Vacant</i>
Fauna Survey Group	Susan Dempsey
Fungi Group	Geoff Lay
Geology Group	Ruth Hoskin
Juniors Group	Patricia Amaya
Marine Research Group	Leon Altoff
Microscopy Group	Philippa Burgess
Terrestrial invertebrates	<i>Vacant</i>
Councillor	Andrew Brentnall (Correspondence Officer)
Councillor	Sue Bendel
Councillor	Audrey Falconer
Councillor	Judith Sise
Councillor	John Harris
Councillor	Joan Broadberry

Murrindindi Scenic Reserve— *One of my favourite places*

On a beautiful sunny Autumn morning I met with members of various Field Naturalist's clubs by the suspension bridge at Murrindindi Scenic reserve, not far from Kinglake. This walk was part of the recent SEANA get-together held in late April. As no really good rain had fallen for months there was not a lot of fungi to be found. Two lovely fresh specimens of *Xerula australis* (which is once again facing a name change to *Oudemansiella*), the Rooting Shank was our first find followed by *Vascellum pratense* found in grass beside the track. We spotted a fresh specimen of *Fistulina hepatica*, the Beefsteak fungus, growing on the large above-ground root of a Eucalypt and was photographed extensively. This was the first time I had found it on a tree root as previously I had only seen it on the trunks of Eucalypts.

My husband and I have been visiting this reserve for over thirty years and had never seen it so dry. The group's attention turned to the birds and the botany. With Graham Chapman's assistance and the sharp eyes of the other field naturalists we found a pair of Eastern Yellow Robins close to the track. We could hear Lyrebirds calling in the distance. Scrubwrens, White-eared Honeyeaters, White-plumed Honeyeaters, White-naped Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds added to the bird chorus. The common birds in this reserve are the Superb Fairywrens and the White-browed Scrub Wrens which often hop around our camp site and under our campervan. We had a fleeting glimpse of a male Satin Bowerbird on the walk and later on, both male and female appeared at our camp. This is one of the highlights of camping at Murrindindi along with the Flame Robins that also visit. One year we had one perched on the side mirror of the car, pecking at the "intruder" in the mirror! Swamp Wallabies and Wombats are common around the area, especially mid week when most campers leave. There is a history of Aboriginal use in the area by nomadic tribes and in the Wurundjeri language Murrindindi means "Mountain Home"

With picnic tables, flushing toilets in the day park area, (pit toilets elsewhere) and shelters, it is the ideal place for a day visit or an extended holiday. The weekends can be crowded and noisy and in spite of dozens of campsites spread along the river right down to the lovely Cascades, mid week is the best option, especially for viewing birds and other wildlife. I enjoyed showing the members of the various Field Naturalist's clubs around one of my favourite places close to Melbourne and hope they return to sample it's many delights.

Cecily Falkingham

New membership fees are as follows; they will commence at 1st July 2018

Fee Type	Rate
Single	\$85
Family	\$110
Single Country/Concession	\$64
Family Country/ Concession	\$85
Student	\$38
Junior Family	\$51
Junior additional	\$17
Schools/ Clubs	\$98
Institutional	\$170
Institutional overseas	\$183

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Botany Group: The last botany meeting was a presentation on threatened species of the Central Highlands, presented by Jordan Crook of WOTCH. There was quite a feisty discussion after. There were fourteen people in attendance.

Sue Bendel



Fauna Survey Group:



Meetings: 6th March 2018. The meeting was attended by sixteen members and visitors. The speaker was Ashley Whitt who spoke on the topic of citizen scientists; 'Calling All Citizen Scientists'. Ashley spoke of long running Audubon Society projects in Galveston, Texas including a survey for the Great Egret that has been running since 1900. The progress in data collection and increase in organisations collecting and using data was discussed.

10th April 2018. The scheduled speaker was unable to attend and instead we were fortunate to have David de Angelis speak on the reptiles of the Mornington Peninsula, covering identification, distribution and records, and some ecological aspects of many of the species. The meeting was attended by sixteen members and visitors.

Surveys: 9th to 12th March, 2018. The survey in Jalluka NCR was attended by six members who set up remote cameras, conducted spotlighting and birdwatching transects, and checked nest boxes. The cameras were collected on the 13th of April and the results are being analysed. Full report p 8.

30th March to 3rd April. This was our second trip to Bael Bael NCR to survey for grassland fauna. Some new species records for the reserve were made. A newsletter report will follow. The survey was attended by fourteen participants. Full report p 9

Raymond Gibson



Searching for reptiles at Bael Bael

Photo Joan Broadberry

Geology Group: A most interesting and informative talk on volcanoes was the subject of Professor Ray Cas's talk to the Geology SIG on March 28th. The meeting was well attended with 37 highly involved attendees. He presented a concise summary of the how, why, where and when of volcanoes, with particular emphasis on the Victorian volcanic plain.

Ruth Hoskin



Juniors' Group: Easter Camp at Clive Disher Scout camp, Gippsland.



It was a combined camp with Bairnsdale Field Nats. Vicky Fraser had organised presenters and walk leaders to Mitchell River National Park and Eagle Point. All the presentations and walks went really well. 54 people attended in total, mostly members of the club. About 8 people (non-members) were not able to join due to the number of participants. The campsite was excellent, with showers and flushing toilets.

April excursion: On the 22nd April, we went to Point Cook Marine Sanctuary. The leader was Andrew Christie, a fantastic leader for this excursion. We had 34 people coming initially but two families cancelled due to medical illness. Two member families and two non-member families were not able to join due to the large number of participants. They were advised to register with me in advance their intention to participate in our activities to avoid this outcome.

We were very lucky to have Philippa Burgess and Max Campbell taking part in this excursion. We also had Marlene Rodriguez, a PhD student and biologist from Mexico. We all had a great day, with perfect weather and beautiful marine creatures to see. We even saw a quail chick.



Pt. Cook, a discovery. Photo: Max Campbell

Dr Patricia Amaya, volunteer Juniors' group coordinator

Microscopy Group: A discussion was held at the April meeting regarding possible amalgamation with the Terrestrial Invertebrates Group and with a photography group. It would be called Invertebrates, Microscopy & Photography, or IMP. A firm decision will be made during the year. Members also brought their photos from recent excursions for viewing and discussion.



SEANA AUTUMN GET-TOGETHER AT BADGER CREEK *hosted by FNCV*

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV) has hosted SEANA camps in 1992 at the Basin, 2002 at Campaspe Downs, 2011 at Phillip Island and the recent the autumn get-together over the weekend of 27-29th of April 2018. The get-together was based at Badger Creek Hall, a few kilometres from Healesville and within walking distance of Healesville Sanctuary. In all 84 members from 14 Clubs attended and took part in a range of excursions in the Yarra Ranges area. Participants organised their own accommodation with many choosing to stay at the Sanctuary Resort Motel or at nearby caravan parks.



Registration took place on Friday afternoon at the Badger Creek Hall with each person selecting their own program from the twelve excursions arranged for the weekend. Those who had ordered natural history books from the FNCV at discounted prices, collected their orders.

On Friday evening the speaker was **Alex Maisey**, (right) convener of the Sherbrooke Lyrebird Survey Group. His presentation was titled, *Conservation of the Superb Lyrebird on the Melbourne Fringe*. Included in his very informative and well received talk were several stunning video clips of lyrebirds dancing, displaying and feeding young. We were heartened to learn that very good numbers of Superb Lyrebirds remain in Sherbrooke Forest. However, with the many threats to wildlife in this increasingly urbanised area, conservation efforts remain critical to their continued presence. Field naturalists from around the state then took the opportunity to catch up with each other over supper.



The FNCV were very fortunate with two days of beautiful autumn weather. An all day excursion, taking in O'Shanassy Aqueduct, Cement Creek Rainforest Gallery and finishing with a walk along the Donna Buang Rd left at 9 am. This excursion was repeated on Sunday. A small group took part in an ongoing revegetation program designed to improve the habitat of the Helmeted Honeyeater at Yellingbo Conservation Reserve and were lucky enough to view this rare species. Our thanks to **Cecilia Imre and Sue Bendel** from the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater for their work in organising and leading this activity. Others choose a morning excursion, touring two sites in the Dixons and Chum Creek areas to compare the differences fire intensity has had on the recovery of vegetation since the Black Saturday fires. This was ably led by local ecologist **Marty White** (image left, second from right) and repeated on Sunday.



Fifty participants took part in a special behind the scenes tour of the threatened species and Australian Wildlife Health Centre at Healesville Sanctuary. Our thanks to **Dr Rupert Baker**, General Manager of Life Sciences, Zoos Victoria for leading this personally. Many choose to explore the sanctuary for the rest of the day with others enjoying a picnic lunch at the Badger Creek Hall, then joining the two afternoon excursions offered. The first, involving a car shuffle, was a one-way walk from Maroondah Dam to Donnellys Weir. This group were very excited to find a pair of Powerful Owls when walking along the aqueduct. The second group, again led by **Marty White**, visited an old tip site, managed by Yarra Ranges Council to learn about how its restoration was managed and the challenges that were faced.

In the late afternoon many members of affiliated clubs attended the SEANA AGM and general meeting. A short committee meeting was also held to elect office bearers for the next 12 months.



A highlight of the get-together was a catered, two-course meal in the Sanctuary Resort Motel dining room on Saturday evening. **Dr Rupert Baker** (left) was the after-dinner speaker: his topic, *The Role of Zoos in Conservation*. Rupert commenced his presentation with an account of the decline and extinction of the Christmas Island Pipistrelle. In 2009 Zoos Victoria was contracted to establish a captive breeding program for the tiny bats on the island. They were too late. It was very much a wake-up call. Since that time Zoos Victoria has created a 'Fighting Extinction' commitment that no Victorian Terrestrial Vertebrate will go extinct on its watch. This commitment has resulted in organizational structural changes which have delivered increased conservation actions, with over \$10m now spent annually on conservation program.

On Sunday the FNCV fungi group invited SEANA participants to join their regular program of surveying, photographing and identifying fungi at Dom Dom Saddle. Another group left early to meet their leader at Murrundindi Conservation Reserve. Keen nature photographers spent a very enjoyable time at the beautiful Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk searching out invertebrates and fungi. A very popular excursion was 'Giant Trees', an opportunity to walk off track under the capable leadership of **Brett Mifsud** to view some of Victoria's largest trees. These included the Kalatha Giant, a Mountain Ash *Eucalyptus regnans* which has striking buttressing and is the seventh largest tree in Victoria with a volume of 200 cubic metres, a girth of 13.85 metres and is 65.5 metres tall.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the tremendous help and support given by a number of FNCV volunteers in making this weekend get-together of field naturalists the success it was.

Joan Broadberry, Co-coordinator

Thank you

The report on the previous page was written for the SEANA website. However, in no way does it tell the full story of what went into planning and running this weekend or the hard-working group of FNCV volunteers who made it all possible.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the support of **Max Campbell, Sally Bewsher and Wendy Gare**.

Max was instrumental in finding the venue at Badger Creek and liaising with speakers. He travelled up to Badger Creek twice on Friday and Saturday to set up equipment and to chair the evening meetings. Sally has been an invaluable collaborator and advisor over many months. Wendy in her job of administrative assistant to the FNCV handled enquiries, registrations, payments and solved all sorts of problems with her usual friendly efficiency.

I am especially grateful for the responses from **Marty White, Geoff Lay, Cecily Falkingham Reiner Richter, Cecilia Imre, Brett Misfud, Sally Bewsher, Sapphire McMullan Fisher and the FNCV Fungi Group** who volunteered to take on the responsibility of leading excursions. Marty generously gave up most of his weekend to lead three activities and Geoff also volunteered for both days. Assistants were needed for all 12 excursions, in a few cases taking convoys some distance to meet up with the leaders. My thanks goes to **Sally Bewsher, Ken Griffiths, Sue Bendel, Ruth Hoskin, Sheina Nicholls, Rosalind Smallwood, Carol Page and Graham Patterson** for so ably and willingly taking on these tasks and ensuring everything ran safely, smoothly and to time. Three very special people, **Hazel and Edward Brentnall and June Anton** shopped and baked to provide a delicious supper on Friday evening and made themselves available throughout the weekend to keep the kitchen open. Thanks also to **Kathy Himbeck** who took on the work needed to administer the FNCV's offer of discounted natural history books to participants. In addition Kathy brought up and displayed a range of books for purchase on Friday afternoon and evening.

A number of people completed necessary tasks prior to the weekend. **Ruth Hoskin and Geoffrey Patterson** collected materials for and assembled 'show bags', **Robin Drury** volunteered for the time-consuming job of making sure our program was communicated to Parks Vic and complied with their guidelines and **Su Dempsey** undertook to check the SEANA first aid kits and make sure all the items out of date were replaced.

I have had very positive feedback on the success of the 2018 SEANA autumn get-together. It was a great pleasure to work with people who freely gave so much of their time and expertise to assist me in coordinating the weekend.

Joan Broadberry





Fungi Group

What do nearly 10,000 observation records collected by the FNCV Fungi Group tell us about macro-fungal communities in Victoria?

A presentation by

Dr Tom May, Senior Mycologist, National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
5th March 2018

Since 2004, the FNCV Fungi Group has been conducting forays and keeping records of fungus species seen at each foray site. These activities have generated 9870 records of nearly 700 named species from 29 sites. All records have been sent to Fungimap, where these species are entered into the Fungimap database.

At our first meeting for 2018, Dr Tom May demonstrated how the data in our foray records can be analysed to reveal extra information (such as geographical distribution, abundance, or rarity), and how we can improve our recording methods to provide even more useful data to Fungimap.

Tom used an analysis of fungal community composition to group together foray sites that had a similar suite of fungal species present. This comparison revealed that a few fungi species are common to drier sites such as Jumping Creek, Langwarrin and Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, while others prefer damper habitats such as Melba Gully, Maits Rest and Triplet Falls (in the Otway Ranges) and The Beeches (near Marysville). Some fungi, such as *Mycena toyerlaricola* and *Calostoma rodwayi*, grow only with Myrtle Beech *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, so are found only in places where these trees are present.

We were a little surprised to hear that the only fungus that has been recorded at all foray sites is *Hypholoma fasciculare*. *Mycena cystidiosa* and *Lactarius eucalypti* are also common. Of the Fungimap target species, *Stereum ostrea* and *Mycena interrupta* are the most commonly recorded. Target species that have been recorded only rarely include *Agaricus xanthodermus* and *Boletellus obscurecoccineus*.

To date, the four most productive sites have been Jack Cann Reserve, Blackwood; Mortimer picnic ground and nature

Sarcodon sp.

Photos: John Walter



walk, Bunyip State Park; Ned's Gully, Cathedral Range State Park; and Greens Bush, Mornington Peninsula National Park. These are sites that we have visited the most. In the analysis of fungal community similarity, these most-visited sites tended to cluster together, indicating that other sites are not yet surveyed enough to reveal the full list of fungi present. As Tom showed with a graph of a previous 10-year survey at Kinglake, continued visits to a site result in a steady increase in the total number of species found over time.

One hundred and eighty species have been recorded only once, while 216 species have been found at only one site. The high number of apparently rare species makes identifying the truly rare species difficult, as it is likely that, with further sampling, some of the seemingly rare species will be encountered. Low recording of some species is likely due to the fact that each site has been visited only once a year (and some sites have been visited only in some years).

A graph of the number of species found per year at Mortimer picnic ground and nature walk, in Bunyip State Park, showed a considerable variation, with 2010 being the best year, followed by 2011 and 2013.

The distribution of fungi can change over time for various reasons – climate change being an example – and observational records are useful for verifying this. For many species, there is insufficient information to establish a baseline against which to check for changes over time. Tom showed a map of places where *Mycena interrupta* has been found. Because this is a Fungimap target species, there are numerous records across the state, especially since the mid 1990s when it became a target species. There were several sites where this fungus was found before 1980, but not in 1990 or subsequently (although these have not been specifically surveyed since).

We can improve our recording methods by ensuring consistency in the use of the names of foray sites, and also the names of the fungi, especially when using 'tag names' such as *Clitocybula* sp. 'streaky yellow' or *Marasmius* sp. 'angina'. Tom suggested that it is best to mark the area surveyed at the various sites on a map to eliminate confusion, particularly in cases where some of the tracks are not named on commonly available maps.

Tom also encouraged the Fungi Group to continue surveys and lodge voucher specimens (especially those with 'tag names') in the Herbarium. More voucher specimens are always needed.

Tom ended his presentation by asking us to **please look out for *Sarcodon***. To date, this genus has been observed very rarely in Victoria. One of the few sightings has been by John Walter, in Wombat State Forest. The upper surface of the pileus (cap) is not unlike that of an *Agaricus* sp., but the lower surface consists of taupe-coloured spines rather than lamellae (gills) (see photos).

Many thanks to Tom for an interesting presentation that gave us much food for thought, and also for his assistance with the preparation of this report. Thank you to John Walter for permission to use his photos of *Sarcodon* sp.

Virgil Hubregtse



Fauna Survey Group

Jallukar Nature Conservation Reserve— Survey

The focus of the FSG's Labour Day weekend was the Jallukar Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), near Moyston in Western Victoria. The reserve is one of a number on the eastern side of the Grampians. Both the Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) have been shown to exist in the area. Seven members made the trip west to survey the vertebrate fauna in the reserve. We camped at Lake Fyans.

The NCR has an area of approximately 1200 hectares and is 15 km west of Ararat. The reserve surrounds approximately 100 ha of private land, mostly cleared. It comprises three main Ecological Vegetation Classes – Alluvial Terrace Herb-rich Woodland, Heathy Woodland and Plains Grassy Woodland, with the latter having the dominant coverage. There are also small strips of Creekline Grassy Woodland. The dominant trees are River Red-gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) and Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*). Amongst these are mature trees containing many hollows. There are also the occasional stands of *Allocasuarina* spp. on the reserve and the eastern end in particular contains thickets of *Acacia paradoxa* (Hedge Wattle).

The survey consisted of bird surveys, spotlighting on foot the deployment of remote cameras and the checking of nest-boxes. The bird survey and spotlighting were carried out on six 500-metre transects and the cameras were deployed at 10 sites spread evenly across the reserve. At each site one camera was deployed in a tree and another on the ground. The nest-boxes had been installed in 2015 by Parks Victoria with community help as a monitoring method for arboreal species. We had inspected them on a previous occasion and found them to be uninhabited by any vertebrate species. Sixty species were detected during the survey – 50 birds, nine mammals and one reptile..

Nearly 600 birds were recorded during the surveys with the five most-recorded being Long-billed Corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*) 202, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*) 62, Tree Martin (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) 27, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops*) 24 and Red-rumped Parrot (*Psephotus haematonotus*). Two of the bird species Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*) and Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) are considered near-threatened. In addition these two species, plus Jacky Winter (*Microeca fascinans*) and Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops*), are members of the Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community which is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

None of the arboreal mammals of conservation concern were detected. The four species of arboreal mammal that were detected were Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), Feathertail Glider (*Acrobates spp.*) (Fig. 3b), Sugar Glid-

er (*Petaurus breviceps*) and Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*) (Fig. 3a).

T. vulpecula was widely spread throughout the reserve being recorded at eight of the ten camera sites and on five of the seven transects.

The Jallukar nest-boxes showed no signs of mammal activity. The only vertebrate was a Marbled Gecko (*Christinus marmoratus*) in nest-box 12. The nest-boxes at the Lonsdale NCR showed more use. Two contained the typical cup-shaped nest of a glider, two contained leaf litter also suspected of reflecting glider activity and one contained scats suspected to be of a Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*).

The concerning aspect in terms of threatened species is that this and previous surveys have had limited very success in detecting either *P. norfolcensis* or *P. tapoatafa*. The area is not known for large populations of these species and the two obvious possibilities are that the species no longer exist in these reserves or we have just not located them. Perhaps our survey design and methods need refining. In this regard it is worth putting some thought into developing a process that improves our chances and the certainty of our results.

Robin Drury



Fig. 3a Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*) – (Remote Camera)



Fig. 3b. – Feathertail Glider (*Acrobates spp.*) – (Remote camera)

Bael Bael Survey 30th March— 3rd April 2018

This was the second in our series of grassland fauna surveys at Bael Bael NCR, following on from the previous survey in March 2017 (FNN 276), and a continuation of an FNCV and Parks Victoria collaborative project. Bael Bael Grasslands Nature Conservation Reserve is a relatively large native grassland about 20 km NW of Kerang.

The field work followed a similar pattern to last time, so valid comparisons will be able to be made between the two sets of data. The major activity is a census of the grassland fauna at night, in this case from slow moving vehicles travelling across the paddocks in a systematic pattern of transects, either north-south or east-west. Typical grassland species that were recorded were Stubble Quail, Australasian Pipit, Brown Songlark, Horsfield's Bushlark, Eastern Barn Owl, Banded Lapwing, Tawny Frogmouth, Owlet Nightjar, Australian Magpie, Black-

tling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel and Black Kite. At Yassom Swamp where we also surveyed the birds, Blue Bonnet, Red-rumped Parrot, Mallee Ringneck, Galah, White-plumed Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Hooded Robin and Variegated Fairy-wren were seen.

There was a little time for sightseeing visits to wet-

lands at Lake

Bael Bael and Lake Cullen. At Bael Bael, Black-winged Stilts, Great Egrets, Freckled Duck and many other waterbirds were seen. At Lake Cullen there was a large flock of Hoary Headed Grebes fishing, Australian Pelicans, Caspian Terns and a number of other waterbird species.

We were comfortably accommodated at the Ibis Caravan Park in Kerang, and communal barbecues each evening made for an efficient use of time considering the long periods of time spent in the field. Thanks to Mark Antos from PV for organising the survey program, Tim Schwinghammer from PV, to PV for a vehicle and funding, to Jenny Spence from DEDJTR and for the use of a vehicle and to Friends of Terrick Terrick National Park for obtaining funding from the Federal Government Department of Environment and Energy "Threatened Species Recovery Fund" for the survey.

Raymond Gibson

shouldered Kite and White-winged Fairywren. The only reptiles recorded during spotlighting transects were a few Curl Snakes. Mammals that were recorded were one Eastern Grey Kangaroo and one Red Kangaroo. The rest were introduced species, including numerous house mice, and small numbers of hares, rabbits and red foxes. Absent from this year's observations were Fat-tailed Dunnarts and Little Button Quail which may have moved further inland. The large number of house mice probably explains the greater number of Barn Owl sightings.

Bat trapping was conducted in Black Box woodland along Back Creek over two nights, where Little Forest Bats and Lesser Long-eared Bats were recorded. We also recorded Brushtail Possum and Owlet Nightjar there. During the day, Boulenger's Skinks were seen and a number of birds including Blue Bonnet, Pied Butcherbird, Rufous Whistler, Striated Pardalote, and Brown Treecreeper.

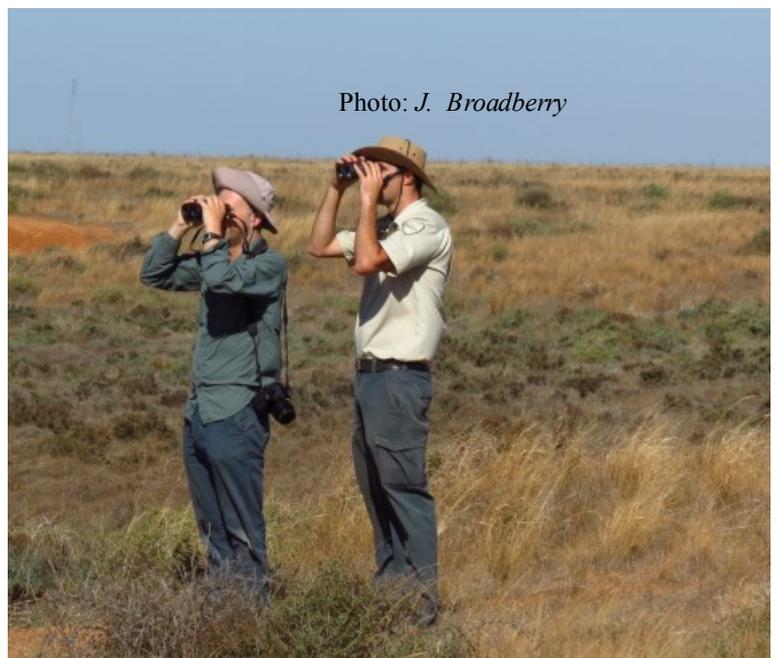
Daytime bird counts and reptile searches were done at a salt lake where Samphire Skinks were seen, a new record for the reserve. Birds recorded included: White-winged Fairywrens, Orange Chat, White-fronted Chat, Brown Falcon, Black-shouldered Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whis-

Barn Owl Photo: *Ray Gibson*



Black Box woodland Photo: *R Gibson*

Photo: *J. Broadberry*





Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

Licola Camp

17 – 19 March 2018

There were six of us on all three days with an extra visitor on the Sunday. Most of us stayed at Red Box Camp along the low flowing Wellington River and on the first day we targeted Moroka. Although in their outlook the Bureau had forecast average rainfall for March, virtually nothing had fallen for over a month prior to our visit, leaving things very dry for us. This meant the 50km gravel drive up the into the mountain was very dusty but at least the high country was slightly greener than the valley.



Velvet Worm, *Euperipatoides rowelli*, Moroka

Photo: R. Richter

We spent a little while at some flats by the upper Moroka River where there was some insect activity, including a small spider-wasp seen on the home of a leaf-curling spider. We observed it entering several times until eventually it emerged with the relative large arachnid and, after allowing numerous photos to be taken, it eventually tried to take off with its oversize load. I had never seen a spider-wasp actually capturing its prey so this was a highlight for me in the morning. The activity was observed for over 20 minutes.

In the afternoon around Horseyard Flats a highlight was the black velvet worm *Euperipatoides rowelli*. This group of primitive invertebrates is rarely encountered in Victoria. Although there was water present and seeping out of the swamp near the flats, we saw very few insects around despite the sunny weather.

Overnight the lights at the camp ground had attracted three different leaf-beetles and during the second day along the Wellington River we encountered about another three species. We also observed many paper wasp nests, particularly under overhanging rock ledges. The *Polistes* species build a nest from a single anchor point and may contain dozens of individuals or pupae. In contrast the slightly smaller *Ropalidia* species construct large colonies that can be several metres across with over a thousand individuals.

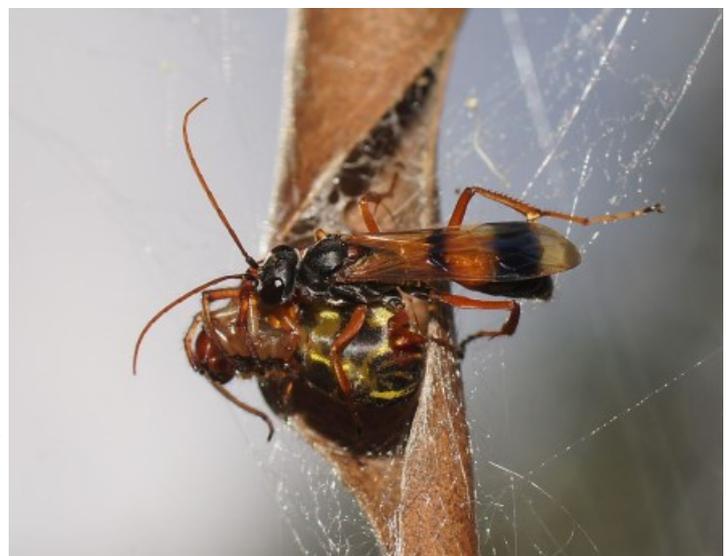
The third day was spent exploring the Thomastown camping area up at Tamboritha. Some of the snow gums were in flower and it was hoped to see some pollinators present but we failed to find much on these trees. We did find several other insects including three different katydids.

Reiner Richter



Leaf Beetle, *Patropsis atomaria*. Licola

Photo: R. Richter



Wasp, *Spichtostethus* sp. Moroka

Photo: R. Richter

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



Day Group

Day Group 24th April 2018 - Morang Wetlands Walk (Plenty Gorge Park)

The April Day Group activity was a walk through the relatively unknown Morang Wetlands in Melbourne's north. The Morang Wetlands is located in South Morang and is part of the Plenty Gorge Park.

The group met up in the Hawkstowe Picnic Area for which the Le Page Homestead and farm complex is the central feature. Peter Le Page settled the area in 1855 and created his farm on a former meander of the Plenty River. Our first stop was at the two ornamental lakes within the picnic area, here we observed a number of birds scurrying for cover amongst the reeds and many insects, including a number of dragonflies flitting across the water. Where's Reiner when you need identification?

Further on we entered the Morang Wetlands precinct proper where we first came upon "Mother In Laws". This is a former quarry hole which filled with groundwater thus preventing further rock extraction. The water depth is about six metres which suits many of the diving birds like Grebe. Blue-billed Ducks were recorded breeding here up until the early

Photo: J. Broadberry



part of the millennium drought when the water level dropped considerably and the salinity levels increased. While the water levels are back to near normal unfortunately the Blue-billed Ducks have not returned as yet.

We passed a dry quarry which looked to be very good reptile habitat. Efforts in the 1990's succeeded in creating summer habitat areas for Growling Grass Frogs. Unfortunately this species hasn't been recorded across the Morang Wetlands since the mid-2000's; maybe another casualty of the millennium drought.

Next stop was the Wiltonvale Marsh, a favoured location for wading birds. Due to the dry conditions in the early part of 2018, it unfortunately didn't contain any water which was disappointing as it is normally a great place to view dragonflies, damselflies and many other insects. Parks Victoria has worked with Melbourne Water, Whittlesea Council and the developer of the land to the north to redirect treated stormwater into this natural ephemeral wetland. It can be diverted around the Marshland during summer so as to create the former natural wetting/drying cycles.

We stopped off to view Tortoise Pond and then proceeded past the Carex Wetland which provides great habitat for species like Latham Snipe. A little further on was a viewing spot at the southern end of the North-east Wetland. This wetland is normally around two metres deep and provides good opportunities for ducking birds. When it starts to dry out active mud flats are created. The highlight here was seven Yellow-billed Spoonbills that were happily foraging across the mudflats in the northern section of this wetland.

The walk back to our cars took us past an ancient River Red Gum, thought to be at least 700 years old, while sighting Kookaburras, Eastern and Crimson Rosellas along with a number of Kangaroos. In all a total of 32 bird species were recorded during the walk.

The Morang Wetlands complex provides a variety of wetland habitats for ducking, diving and wader birds and is a great place to connect to nature.

Gary French

From the office

Dear Members

Our Facebook group now has over 9000 followers! There are some fascinating photos and lively debates happening all the time, you would most likely enjoy having a look. Thanks to Ian Kitchen, John Harris and Claire Ferguson who act as moderators. Here is the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/191099460990243/>

Finally another note about lost property. Two children's jackets are still here after more than 6 months. Please take them if they're yours!

Wendy Gare
Administration Officer



Thanks to the
editorial and layout
team who put
together FNN 286

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

Many thanks to those
who helped collate and
label FNN 285

Hazel Brentnall
Edward Brentnall
Andy Brentnall
Cecily Falkingham
Keith Marshall
Neil McLachlan
Sheina Nicholls
Joan Broadberry

"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".

More from the AGM...

Environment Fund

At the AGM Barbara Burns advised that the Environment Fund is not a very well-known section of the Club. It has been running for 14 years and has approved 59 grants from \$188 to \$1000. Small sums can have high impact when they go to individuals or small groups. There have been 29 grants to sub-groups from the FNCV, 13 to local nature groups, 6 to university and TAFE students, including PhDs, 6 to other Field Naturalists Clubs and 5 to other organisations.

We need to publicise the Fund because currently most donations are only from Club members. This year we had 10 applications but could not approve them all due to insufficient funds.

Recipients for 2018:

Cardi Creek Kids, a subgroup of Cardinia Catchment Landcare Group \$840

Jacinta Humphrey, PhD Student, La Trobe University \$723

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary \$925

Helmeted Honeyeater Inc \$380

Juniors' FNCV \$969

Marty Lockett, PhD Student, University of Melbourne \$902

James Douch, Honours Research Project,

University of Melbourne \$710

Sue Bendel, Wildlife Shelter operator \$284



From left to right: Sue Bendel, Su Dempsey, Marty Lockett, Patricia Amaya and Jacinta Humphrey.

Photo: J. Broadberry



From left to right: John Eichler, Graham Patterson, Geoff Duke, Cecily Falkingham and Helen Bartoszewicz. Photo: J. Broadberry

Long term memberships

Congratulations to those who received Long term membership (40 years) awards:

Helen Bartoszewicz
Kenneth Bell
Anabel Carle
Geoff Duke
John Eichler
Cecily Falkingham
Michael McBain
Graham Patterson