



Understanding
Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Field Nats News No 315



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn Vic 3130

Telephone 03 9877 9860

P.O. Box 13, Blackburn 3130 www.fncv.org.au

Newsletter email: joan.broadberry@gmail.com

(Office email: admin@fncv.org.au)

Editor: Joan Broadberry 03 9846 1218

Founding editor: Dr Noel Schleiger

Reg. No. A0033611X

Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC
Governor of Victoria

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February 2021

From the President

Welcome to the first FNN for 2021. I hope you have had a pleasant festive season.

On Monday January 4th, Ed Grey, our dear friend and fellow naturalist, passed away. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Pat and their family. Ed has made an enormous contribution to FNCV and his enthusiasm and friendship will be sorely missed by all of us. There will be a memorial function at the FNCV hall when it is possible to do so.

Covid 19 is still with us and we must comply with the current and ever-changing requirements for physical meetings and excursions. For now we will continue with Zoom meetings. **All February 2021 SIG meetings that normally take place in the hall will be held using Zoom.** Field excursions will be held under strict rules and guidelines. A list of these mandatory Rules and Procedures for all attendees at FNCV field excursions is set out on page two and is available from the office via email. You must register at least a week in advance for all excursions. Field excursions will use a manual register. By signing attendance registers, participants are declaring that: *"I am symptom free and have not been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid 19 or directed to isolate."*

Please be aware that all visits to the hall are currently on an appointment only basis. The Hall is now provided with a QR code and a register to be used by all visitors. QR stands for Quick Response and can be described as a two-dimensional bar code. This is a Victorian Government system which

The due date for FNN 316 will be the first Tuesday of February, 2/2/21 Please continue to use my home email joan.broadberry@gmail.com



Birds in the Dandenong Valley Wetlands. Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike

Photo: Gleb Beliakov (FNCV Juniors')

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allows your name and contact details to be recorded digitally. All stored information is automatically deleted after 28 days unless the Department of Health and Human Services requests the information for contact tracing. If we do not use this system but instead record names and contact details on paper, we will only be able to admit half the number of people into the hall. Instructions for downloading the App and using the code are given below. However, please be assured that when meetings in the hall recommence, assistance will be available. For those who do not have a suitable phone your details will be recorded via someone else's phone. If unsure of what to do, don't worry about the instructions below, it can all be done very easily at the hall. Just bring your phone.

*You can register your visit to the FNCV by using your iPhone or Android device. You will need to visit the Service Victoria site for instructions on using the Services Victoria App which can be downloaded free from Apple Apps Store for iPhones or Google Play for Android phones. It can only be done on your phone. Clicking on it will activate your camera which will show a white cornered frame which is to be placed over the QR code and oriented so that the code is within the frame. It will automatically tell you that you are at FNCV and ask you to insert your name and contact number. It will then ask if you want the App to remember your details for next time. If you are using your phone to log on for more than one person, I have found it more convenient to **NOT** store my details.*

Max Campbell

**Mandatory Rules, including Covid 19 Safe rules, for attendees at FNCV field excursions. (Organised and run by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria)
Ver. 14-12-2020**

These rules are to protect members of FNCV and support the safety of the broader community. All attendees are required to observe these rules and the excursion leader may exclude anyone who fails to observe them.

- If you wish to participate you must register with the SIG leader at least a week in advance of the excursion. (Do not turn up if you have not booked in advance)
- Arrive on time for excursions.
- Do not attend under any circumstances if you are unwell in any way.
- Sign the attendance register at arrival.
- By signing, participants declare that: "I am symptom free and have not been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid 19, or directed to isolate."
- Maintain recommended and effective, safe physical distancing (1.5m) from other people at all times (this includes safe distance from members of the public as well).
- Observe current Covid 19 safe hygiene practices at all times.
- Wear an approved, fitted facemask if physical distancing is not practicable or possible.

What you will need to provide to be Covid 19 safe.

- Provide your own hand sanitiser, wipes, tissues, towelling and soap.
- Approved, fitted face masks are to be carried at all times; particularly for FNCV group activities where safe distance cannot be maintained.

Tracking and Tracing requirements.

- All participants must sign the attendance register upon arrival and provide the following:
 - o Full name, clearly printed
 - o Time of arrival
 - o Best contact telephone number
 - o Contact email address
 - o FNCV membership status (Y/N)
 - o Signature
- All participants must advise the excursion leader and sign off by entering the time of departure in the register.

What you will need to provide for general protection from the sun and weather as per usual

- Appropriate clothing, footwear and hat
- Sunscreen
- Water
- Food (There will be no shared food or drink provided for this excursion and sharing is discouraged to reduce infection risks. Families may make their own arrangements)

These rules may change in accordance with Government Requirements so check for currency for each excursion. FNCV reserves the right to terminate all excursions if conditions change and the welfare of participants is at risk.

Unless otherwise indicated ZOOM meeting will be held at 8 pm.
 Participants in all ZOOM meetings will need to contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au at least three days before the meeting so that they can be emailed the link.
All meetings and excursions may be cancelled at short notice to comply with lawful restrictions

CALENDAR OF EVENTS January/February 2021

January

Sunday 24th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group: Braeside Park excursion. Approximately 10 am-3 pm. Meet at Red Gum Picnic Area in the south of the park (enter off Governor Rd). We hope to photograph numerous interesting insects and spiders in the trees and near the wetland. We will return to the cars for lunch. Be self-sufficient for the day. **Booking in advance essential.** Register at least one week in advance with Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-38.0084,145.1342>

The FNCV Juniors' Group from an abundance of caution will have two excursions per month and no meetings

Monday 25th - FNCV Council meeting 7.30 pm sharp. Apologies or agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au **ZOOM MEETING**

February

Monday 1st - Fungi Group: No meeting

Saturday 6th - Marine Research Group: Field Work: Barwon Heads Exact locations will be decided while on site. **Booking in advance essential.** Register at least one week in advance with Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Sunday 7th - Juniors' Group: Excursion: Blackburn Lake Sanctuary. Meet at 2 pm. Getting to know your waterways. Hands-on work activity as part of Landcare grant. No fee. **Bookings in advance essential.** Leader: Su Dempsey, FNCV Councillor. Register at least one week in advance with Dr Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Sunday 7th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group. Excursion: Birdsland, Belgrave Heights. Meet at 10 am in the car park, about 700m off the bottom of McNicol Rd. We will walk around the wetland and lakes. <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.9234,145.3369> **Booking in advance essential.** Register at least one week in advance with Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au

Monday 8th - Marine Research Group: No meeting

Tuesday 9th - Fauna Survey Group (NB 2nd Tuesday of month) **Meeting: 'Cryo-drama' in the high country: untangling the complex evolutionary history of Australian alpine skinks.** Speaker: Dr. Maggie Haines, Honorary Research Associate, Museums Victoria. More information: Sally Bewsher 9752 1418. **ZOOM MEETING.** Please email Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au so that you receive the link

Sunday 14th - Juniors' Group: Excursion: Point Cook Sanctuary. Meet at 11.30 am. Leader: Andrew Christie. **Booking in advance essential.** Register at least one week in advance with Dr Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Wednesday 17th - Microscopy Group: Macro-photography using natural light. Speaker: Wendy Clark. Contact Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389 **ZOOM MEETING.** Please email Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au so that you receive the link

Thursday 18th - Botany Group: Meeting: Botanising in Western Australia - a brief look at some of the unique species. Speaker: John Harris, Director Wildlife Experiences. More information: Ken Griffiths bota-ny@fncv.org.au

ZOOM MEETING. Please email Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au so that you receive the link

Sunday 21st - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group: Excursion: Badger Weir, Healesville Meet at 10 am near the end of the car park, along Badger Weir Rd. We will explore the cool rainforest and sunny picnic area <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.6855,145.5704> **Bookings in advance essential**

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Register at least one week in advance with Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au

Monday 22nd - FNCV Council meeting 7.30 pm sharp. Apologies or agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au **ZOOM MEETING.**

Tuesday 23rd – Day Group Meeting: 11 am. FGA Barnard: a foundation member of the FNCV who edited The Victorian Naturalist for 32 years. Speaker: Dr Gary Presland, FNCV historian and archivist.

More information: Joan Broadberry 9846 1218 **ZOOM MEETING.** Please email Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au so that you receive the link

Wednesday 24th – Geology Group Meeting: Acid sulfate soil formation and the acidification risk at Tooradin, Victoria. An introduction into the formation of soils. Speaker: Bridgette Small, Honours 2018, Honours Student, Swinburne University. More information: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; 0425 729 424; rrhoskin@gmail.com **ZOOM MEETING.** Please email Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au so that you receive the link

Friday 26th – Juniors' Group: No meeting

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 per excursion and \$2 per meeting.



Australian Natural History Medallion 2020

The 2020 Australian Natural History Medallion has been awarded to Craig Morley for his contribution to ornithology, conservation and education. He was nominated by the Geelong Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 restrictions in Melbourne, it was not possible for the presentation of the medallion to be organised in the usual way including a reception hosted by the FNCV. Therefore, Max Campbell asked the Geelong field Naturalist Club (GFNC) to conduct

the ceremony at their December meeting, with the FNCV and guests participating via Zoom. Max mailed the inscribed medallion to Geelong and chaired the presentation remotely.

The 2020 ANHM award ceremony took place on Tuesday 1st December 2020. Nick Williams, (photo above right) representing the Royal Society of Victoria, gave the citation. The medallion was then presented to Craig by Graham Possingham Secretary of the GFNC.

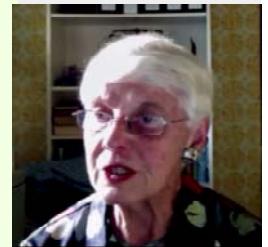
In response, after expressing his thanks, Craig gave an illustrated talk based on his research, titled *Australian Hobbies breeding in an urban parkland, some insights.*



Craig Morley (right) receives the 2020 ANHM from Graham Possingham. Apologies for the poor quality, the photo is a Zoom screen shot.

J. Broadberry

Nick Williams
Photo: J. Broadberry



(Continued on page 5)

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From 1992-1994 Craig intensively studied a breeding pair of Australian Hobbies and has published a detailed report on the diet, prey partitioning and hunting behaviour of these birds in *Australian Field Ornithology*.

Australian Hobbies breeding in an urban parkland

What was investigated?

- Avian prey/diet
- prey transfer
- prey partitioning
- prey-delivery rates
- potential impact on the local bird community
- hunting behaviour



Adult female Australian Hobby perched with plucked prey (Common Starling), apparently making an unsuccessful attempt to entice a juvenile 2004/2005

Craig Morley has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to ornithology, conservation and the education of others over more than forty years. His detailed knowledge of the birds of the Geelong Region and beyond has been refined by decades of study, experience in the field and with the wider community. In 2019 Craig was awarded life-membership of the Geelong Field Naturalists Club for his outstanding service and contributions to the club. A detailed account of his life and work will appear in a future edition of the *Victorian Naturalist*.

Joan Broadberry

Macro and Micro Photography and Videography

Speaker: Maxwell Campbell



The TIG group held a Zoom meeting on Wednesday 2nd December, the topic being **Macro and Micro Photography and Videography**. The speaker was Max Campbell.

Max used a number of images and videos from his personal library to illustrate a variety of techniques which can be used to capture amazing images and videos. There was also a discussion of photographic equipment. About 20 people participated in the meeting. Our thanks, once again, to Max for sharing his expertise in recording amazing moments in the life cycles of invertebrates. The degree of difficulty of the images he produces is very high as many of the creatures photographed or filmed are very small, some microscopic.

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



Geology Group

The Many Factors Causing Climate Change

Speaker: Professor Ray Cas

The Geology group held a zoom meeting on Wednesday 25th November. The topic was **The Many Factors Causing Climate Change**. Professor Ray Cas, now retired, from the school of Earth, Atmosphere and Environment, Monash University, was the speaker.

Mankind's influence on his environment is a very relevant topic which the Geology SIG via Zoom has examined over the last two months. In October Professor Lawrence gave a fascinating talk on the extended and ongoing problems of historic mining sludge on Victoria's river systems. The levels of this sludge can be seen in river banks and continue a long way from the actual mining sites. Many of these former mining sludge dump areas remain non-productive and contain high contaminant levels. A detailed report on this meeting, entitled *Rivers of Gold* appears in FNN 314 pages 4 –5.

In November, retired Professor Ray Cas discussed climate change throughout earth's long history and looked in depth at five major factors. They were: solar insolation, the Earth's orbital behaviour, periods of prolonged vulcanism, biological factors and ocean current patterns. These were examined for evidence of their contribution to the present climate crisis. On looking at the present situation, the facts strongly support the premise that major cause of climate change must be anthropogenic. That is, man-made rapid changes to the greenhouse gases that protect the earth from solar radiation.

Both sessions were well attended with some country and indisposed members being able to join in. This was an unanticipated, but welcome advantage of using the Zoom format.

Our thanks are extended to both speakers for their particularly pertinent discussions of anthropogenic changes in our environment. That also go to Max Campbell for working his magic with technology.

Ruth Hoskin
Geology Group co-ordinator



Marine Research Group

The Marine Research Group held its first survey for the year on a very low tide at Point. Addis on the 9th January. Amongst some interesting finds was the unusual chiton *Bassethullia matthewsi* (photo below) Interestingly it was also recorded on the same reef by the MRG on 10/1/13.

A full list of species seen can be obtained from Leon Altoff. **Photos: JB**



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: joan.broadberry@gmail.com 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:

Natasha Verspeek, Maggie Cowling, Paul Reser, Andree Poulter, John Stone and Patrick Wakefield

Vale Pamela Faragher

It is with great sadness that we learned recently, from her daughter Lynn Smith, of the death of Pamela Faragher. Pam passed away on 23rd November 2020. She was a valued member of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria for 31 years, her particular interests being botany and geology.

Pam attended many geology meetings and excursions run by the late Noel Schleiger and became good friends with both him and the late Dorothy Mahler. Pam also enjoyed the SEANA weekends away, where she could meet with field naturalists from other clubs.

Lynn extended her thanks to the FNCV for the many friendships, great meetings and excursions her mother was able to participate in and enjoy during her long association with the club.

SEANA & ANN UPDATE

The SEANA autumn camp 16-18 April 2021 is fully booked, unless there are any cancellations, advises Diane Luhrs of Hamilton Field Naturalists Club. A circular in February will update excursions and dinner for those booked. The AGM will be held during the camp.

Ballarat Field Naturalists Club has agreed to host the Spring 2021 get-together.

The spring 2020 get-together at Stanthorpe Queensland was postponed and deposits returned. It is anticipated to be held in spring 2022 subject to confirmation. (Provisionally 7-16 October 2022).

The Official flag of 2020



Correction: Re Question 3 in Nature Quiz 6, an Emu has 6 toes, 3 on each foot.

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.

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 315

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

FNCV Facebook report:
17,207 followers.

Creatures of Interest from Wendy Clark

A Unusual Looking Bug

I was on my daily walk in Blackburn Creeklands when I saw what looked like a Praying Mantis egg case (I was a fair distance away). It was on the black trunk of a mature Black Wattle

On closer inspection I was thrilled to see it was orange and black with hairy protusions and it was slowly walking down the trunk. It was 1.5cm long. I had never seen one before and only had a vague idea what it could be, so I sent photos to Max Campbell who came back with an ID.

It is a female Pseudococcid bug, a species of *Monophebulus*. The life cycle is quite weird. The male is nothing like the female, it is



Female Monophebulus sp.

smaller, thinner, has wings and is a dark purple/blue! After mating the female becomes a live incubator. She becomes sedentary, the eggs hatch on her and later the hatchlings disperse.



Advertising in the Field Nats News

VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats
Office

admin@fncv.org.au

9877 9860

(Mon – Tues 10.00 – 4.00)

Scarlet Honey Eaters make it to Melbourne!

These beautiful small honeyeaters are usually found in Queensland and the east coast of NSW. Some years they make it down to Melbourne. The word got around that they were seen in Bushy Park in Vermont and birdo's and photographers descended onto the park.

This was my first sighting of these birds and I was stunned by its small size and intense colours. The male has a distinctive call which he emits frequently which is terrific for locating them – especially when they fly off to another spot and you can't see them through the lens.

I was lucky enough to observe a few of them working over a gum tree that was in flower, which also wasn't too high. Later I got some photos of one sitting on a dead branch singing his heart out with only the blue sky behind. I was very pleased with my sightings.

Wendy Clark



A Beetle Fly and Peacock Spiders!

My next interesting sighting was when I was looking for Peacock Spiders to photograph. As soon as we could travel more than the 5km, I high tailed it down to Black Rock so I could photograph these delightful tiny spiders in full breeding colours.

We arrived there on a cool morning and looked carefully for ages and couldn't see any movement. However, I spied what I thought was a tiny (about 1mm) black beetle. So obviously I got my Macro lens onto it. What a surprise. It turned out to be a fly with its wings bent under the end of its abdomen, just like a beetle wing case!

The fly was in the Family: Lauxaniid and was *Steganopsis melanogaster*



Steganopsis melanogaster

Peacock Spiders - *Maratus Volans*

These beautiful tiny spiders are in the jumping spider family – Salticidae, which means to dance. This describes their mating ritual which is dancing in front of the female. The Peacock Spiders are particularly spectacular as they put their abdomen up like a peacock tail and try to entice the female (who is usually larger and a drab brown colour). There are many different species of Peacock Spiders all with their own distinct colours and dance routine.

Check out the YouTube Video of them dancing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPh_Gi7PCqs

Jumping Spiders are hunters and consequently have very large eyes. The spiders turn and look at you and are very endearing. They sometimes even end up jumping onto the lens.

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Could *Maratus volans* use his skin flaps to glide as well as court females?

Gliding Spider

Back in 1970 I found one of these beautiful jumping spiders whilst searching through the grass in my garden. Family Salticidae (salto means dance). I identified the spider as the Gliding Spider *Saitis volans* which is now called *Maratus volans*. The species name *volans* means flying. This was because the flap of skin around the abdomen, that we now know they use to entice the female by using it like a peacock's tail, was thought to be spread out and used to glide during their jumps.

Quote from Ramon Mascord's Book – Australian Spiders printed in 1970:

"This is probably the most beautiful spider and only the male is known to science. Though a jumping spider, it is better known for its ability to glide. This is achieved per medium of two 'flaps', one on either side of the abdomen, which have a long, hairy fringe on the outer most edges. When not in use, these flaps fold under the abdomen, where they almost meet in the ventral surface of the abdomen. To use these flaps the spider jumps, then extends the flaps and holds them rigid so that they act as wings, and the jump ends in a glide. These midgets can cover considerable distances with this jump-glide combination, and although the spider is only 4-5mm in body length, he can cover a distance of 17cm."

Do they use it to glide?

If one assumes that the statement above (quoting 'a glide of 17cm') written in Ramon Mascord's book is based on observation and measurement by someone, if not himself, then the skin flaps could have a dual use. It would be great if some current day observations could confirm this.

Peacock Spider History 1874 to Current Day

<https://www.peacockspider.org/which-was-the-first-peacock-spider->

On investigation, I came across an article that gives the history of these spiders which were first named in 1874. This article discusses the reason they were thought to be a gliding spider and the first observations of courtship. It also states that it was believed the gliding ability to be unfounded. If that is so, where did Ramon Mascord get his figures from?

Wendy Clark



Peacock Spider showing abdominal skin flaps

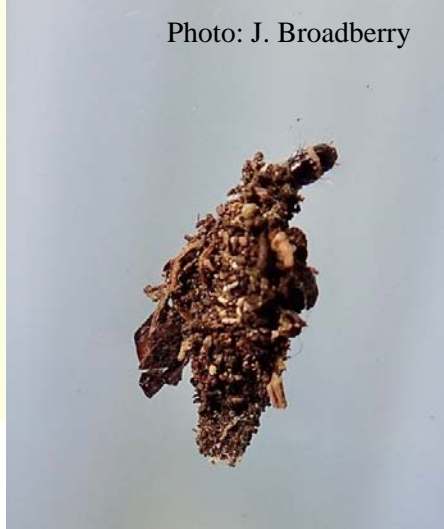
(Right) Denise Carew sent me a photo of a tiny case moth, a number of which were in the garden of her unit. I was able to visit and photograph them. It has been identified as *Cebysa leucotelus*.

It was exciting to realise that the stunning images taken by Wendy Clark and published in FNN 307 p4 of adult male and female moths mating, is the same species.

Joan Broadberry (with thanks to Wendy and Denise)

More about case moths

Photo: J. Broadberry



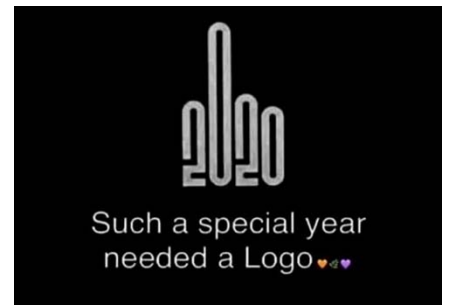
The case moth, pictured left, was found climbing up a Spotted Gum at Inverloch.

It puzzled me for a while, but I think it is a Leaf Case Moth *Hyalorcta huebneri*.

This species make their cases out of silk and cover them with leaves. In this instance the caterpillar has used pieces of the bark of the Spotted Gum giving it an unusual appearance

Joan Broadberry

Members' photo page



(Right) "On Boxing day this cheeky Kookaburra put on a very entertaining show for us, bashing this Saunders Case Moth larvae for quite a while. I assumed it was going to extract it, but in the end it was swallowed, complete."

Patrick Deasey



(Left) Australian Magpie collecting Hessian material for a nest.

Sally Bewsher