Field Nats News No 337

Understanding Our Natural World Est. 1880

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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Governor of Victoria

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 10 am - 4 pm

February 2023

From the President

Welcome to the first FNN for 2023. I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year. Our Summer was a bit late and there has been a lot of cool, wet weather which has frustrated our attempts to get into the field for excursions. A modest improvement in the sunshine in mid-December stimulated a small increase in the numbers of insects and spiders in my garden and local parks. There was a commensurate increase in the activity of the birds which quickly accounted for many of the invertebrates. I do not have an open water lake or pond in my vicinity but the garden has nevertheless been taken over by large numbers of damselflies (Photo 1) and many large, patrolling dragonflies. The increase in numbers is probably linked to the incredible rainfall we have experienced in 2022 but they must still be travelling considerable distances to reach my garden. One visitor that clearly likes sunlight and warmth is *Eristalinus punctulatus,* the native drone fly, (Photo 2) which suddenly appeared, later than usual, on the vegetation and flowers.

1.

Damselflies appeared in considerable numbers in December.

2.

Eristalinus punctulatus The Native Drone Fly.

In mid-December, nymphal skins of the Green Grocer Cicada, *Cyclochila australasiae*, (photos 3 & 4) appeared on my freshly painted fence after a particularly warm day. They started singing the next evening but most were taken by birds within a couple of days. Their loud protests were heard as they were grabbed. Hungry Australian Magpies, Grey Butcher Birds and Noisy Miners are constantly patrolling the garden for food. Even the cicada nymphal skins were scavenged from the fence. Both spiders and insects alike are being heavily predated. Most of the St Andrew's Cross Spiders (Photo 5) that I had were quickly plucked from their webs and I witnessed Grey Butcher Birds taking large huntsman spiders. A few tiny, newly-hatched mantids are patrolling the plants and are probably small enough at this stage to avoid larger predators but not the jumping spiders which get many of them. As I was attempting to photograph a tiny 3mm bug a small salticid spider, *Opisthoncus sp ,* (Photo 6) appeared from under the leaf and grabbed it.

(Continued on page 4)

The due date for FNN 338 will be, as always, the first Tuesday of the month, 7th February 2023
joan.broadberry@gmail.com

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3.

Nymphal skin on a newly painted fence.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated. On days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.

February 2023

Monday 6th - Fungi Group No Meeting

Tuesday 7th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: ***Large gulls of Australia***. Speaker: Bruce Robertson, ornithologist and retired vet. Contact: Sally Bewsher sbewsher@bigpond.com

Friday 10th – Juniors Group Meeting 6.45 pm: ***Animals of the Little Desert***. Speaker: To be advised. Contact: Adam Hosken adamhosken@gmail.com

Sunday 12th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: ***Birdsland, Belgrave.*** **Registration essential**. For more details contact Wendy Clark wendy.empathy@optusnet.com.au

Monday 13th - Marine Research Group: No Meeting

Wednesday 15th - Microscopy Group Practical Meeting: ***Compound, dissecting and digital microscopes set up for your use.*** BYO specimens or view our slide collection with guidance and help with identification. Videos of live microscopic organisms. Contact: Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Thursday 16th – Botany Group Meeting: ***A Layman's guide to the flora of Victoria.*** This will be a pictorial guide to the various regions highlighting the flora that grows in each. Speaker: Geoff Lay, FNCV member . Contact: Ken Griffiths botany@fncv.org.au

Friday 17th to Sunday 19th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: ***Reptile survey in the Warby-Ovens National Park***. **Prior bookings essential**. Contact. Ray White rwhite5@live.com.au 0458 393 275

Wednesday 22nd – Geology Group Meeting: ***Unquiet Victoria –tectonic activity over the last 5 million years*** Speaker: Professor John Webb, La Trobe University. Contact: Ken Griffiths geology@fncv.org.au

Friday 24th – Juniors Group: No Meeting

Saturday 25th – Tuesday 28th - Marine Research Group Field Work: ***Phillip Island area***. Meet at 8.30 am. Locations to be decided while on site. Meeting times may vary due to varying tides around the island**.** **Register for more details.** Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773

Sunday 26th – Juniors Group Excursion: ***Queenscliff snorkelling / boat tour***. **Registrations essential.** Details to be advised to Juniors by email. Contact: Adam Hosken adamhosken@gmail.com

Monday 27th—FNCV Council Meeting 7.30 pm via Zoom. Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au Max will send out the link.

Tuesday 28th – Day Group Meeting 10.30 am coffee and a chat. Meeting 11 am: ***Travels through Myanmar in 2017 before the takeover by the Military in 2021.*** Speaker: Eve Kolar. Contact: Joan Broadberry joan.broadberry@gmail.com Friends and family always welcome.

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.

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:

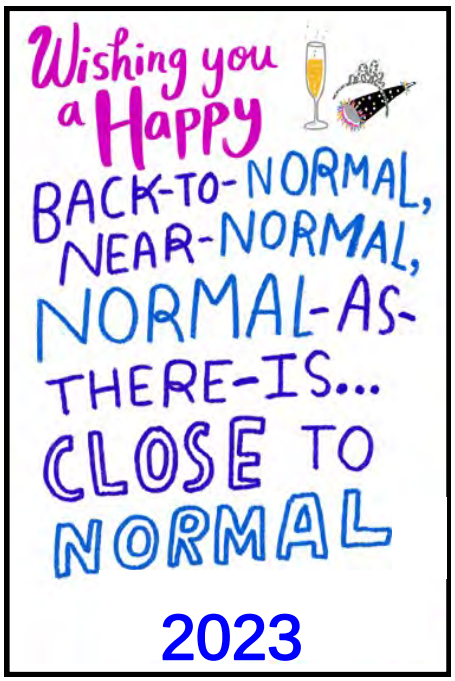
Zoe Davis, Emily Hornby, Gabriella Allegretto, Scott White, Julie White, Philip Bachelor, Sandra Luke, Fiona Mawson, Glenn Mawson and Daniel Stuart.

MEGATHANKS TO PAT GREY FOR COMPILING THE 2022 FNN INDEX

Pat has once again done a fabulous job in providing a detailed and comprehensive index for issues 326-336.

A huge, much deserved thank you Pat, for your continued dedication to this task and for the consistent hard work you put in on behalf of Field Nats News and the whole of the FNCV.

The index will be emailed with the March FNN. If anyone would like a hard copy please contact the office.



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.

FNCV DAY GROUP— VOLUNTEER (S) NEEDED

We are looking for a volunteer (s) to help organise the FNCV Day Group activities. The meetings are held in the hall at 10.30 am on the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December and January.) Attendance is between 20 & 30. There are occasional walks or other outings.

The Day Group runs a generalist program in that speakers are invited from all aspects of natural history. As Gary Presland quips, 'a GIG not a SIG'. Keep in mind that the group has always been exceptionally well supported from within the Club by members, our president and the office. These things make the job of the organisers relatively straightforward.

Joan and Sally are happy to continue as part of the Day Group team, but would love to hear from anyone who would be willing to help share in its organisation.

To discuss this further, please contact Joan on 0428 132 864
joan.broadberry@gmail.com

or Wendy at the office
admin@fncv.org.au

The FNCV no longer has a post office box because Blackburn Post Office is now closed. Our new postal address is:

1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn Vic 3130.

A reminder to please amend your address book.

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 am—4 pm)

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

Thank you to all those who helped produce FNN 337

Joan Broadberry, Wendy Gare, Sally Bewsher and Sheina Nicholls.

(Continued from page 1)

Small, metallic, dolichopodid or long-legged flies (photo 7) also appeared once the weather warmed and could be seen hunting for small insects. They are usually difficult to photograph but can be approached while they are eating.

I detected a single katydid nymph so far (Photo 8) and hope to hear some serious chirping in the near future. A few nymphs of the cockroach *Ellipsidion australe* (Photo 10) were making brief appearances as they scuttled about the shrubs. Apart from a few caterpillars munching the potted herbs I have not seen many others at all. At this time of year, I usually have many native geometrids happily eating the shrubs or dangling from silken threads at night. I have not seen any Bottlebrush Sawfly, *Pterygophorus cinctus*, or their larvae as yet. However, there is no shortage of mosquitoes after all of the rain and *Aedes notoscriptus* (photo 9) is definitely making its presence painfully felt throughout the day and night.

Close-up of the face of a newly emerged cicada, *Cyclochila austsralasiae*. The Green Grocer Cicada.

A surviving St Andrew's Cross Spider, *Argiope keyserlingi* wrapping up its prey.

A small salticid *Opisthoncus sp*. grabs a 3mm homopteran. The safety line is still attached to its spinnerets.

It seems that there are fewer invertebrates around at the moment and, in particular, there is global concern for the impacts human activity is having on the insect world. A new book, "The Insect Crisis – The Fall of the Tiny Empires that Run the World" by Oliver Milman 2022, discusses the issues in detail. "Silent Earth - Averting the Insect Apocalypse" by Dave Coulson 2021, also embraces the subject. Refer also to "Scientists' warning on climate change and insects", Ecological Monographs 2022e1553 for additional reading.

https:/doi.org/10.1002/ecm.1553
(to access this link, please copy and paste it into your browser)

Please make every effort to attend our field excursions with your cameras to record the biodiversity of our environment and help to promote the understanding of our natural world.

Max Campbell
(All photos M. Campbell)

Long-legged dolichopodid flies are easier to photograph while they are preoccupied with food. (Probably a small homopteran.)

Aedes notoscriptus, the phlebotomist at work.

A small garden Katydid nymph was a pleasant surprise, nicely camouflaged in a *Callistemon*.

Ellipsidion australe nymph.

Marine Research Group *Members' night*

On Monday 12th December the Marine Research Group (MRG) held its annual members' night with a meeting in the hall as well as using the google meet platform.

1. Barbara Hall gave a presentation on the effects on marine life in the Stoney Creek Backwash Park of pollution caused by the 2018 petro-chemical fire. ***A detailed report will appear in a future FNN.***

2. In an underwater video shot at Eden in 1999, Carol Bathie recorded a swimming Sea Hare. She has kindly provided FNN with a written version of her presentation.

https://youtu.be/qyD7u5AALss *This video was taken in 1999 on a trip to Eden with a group of Hard Hat divers. While filming the divers underwater we were distracted by a free swimming sea hare. A recent review of the footage prompted me to seek out a scientific name. With reference to 'Nudibranchs and related molluscs' by Robert Burn I found it belongs to the family Aplysiidae. Some Aplysia were easy to rule out as they have black rings, bulky bodies or narrow parapodia. The large parapodia (wings) on this one suggests it may be A. sydneiensis however the maximum length of sydneiensis is much smaller than the estimated 160 mm animal in question.*

It soon became apparent I needed the skills of more experienced MRG members so the footage was shown at the recent December 10th members' meeting.

Joan Hales quickly determined it as Aplysia sowerbyi Pilsbry, 1895. A fairly common species along the east coast that is quite large and beautiful when swimming as it does in the YouTube link.

An octopus makes a brief appearance before sidling away from a brass footed hard hat diver I was supposed to be filming.

The seastar (left) is a brightly coloured Nectria ocellata Perrier, 1876. The five arms and disc are covered with orange, yellow and dark pink tabulae that are flat and do not overlap. The species ranges from the Great Australian Bight to Northern NSW.

Carol Bathie

The images used are screen shots taken from Carol's video.

3. Leon Altoff gave a detailed tutorial on the many aspects needed to aid in identifying sponges in the field. He is in the process of compiling notes from his work so that it will be available to members. It promises to be an invaluable guide for MRG field work.

4. Leon then gave an account of the recent holiday he and Audrey spent on Green Island, one hour by boat or 25 kms from Cairns. Leon judged it a little bigger than Mushroom Reef at Flinders. Leon and Audrey walked and snorkelled the surrounding reef every day of their stay and were able to post 86 observations onto iNaturalist.

Internet

These included: Green Turtles, Moray Eels, Leopard and Blue-spotted Rays, forams, (single celled animals measuring up to an astonishing 8mm), sponges, corals, ascidians, nudibranchs with egg ribbons, Aplysia (Sea Hares), Sea Stars, sea urchins, brittle stars, holothurians (Sea Cucumbers), gastropods and worms.

Joan Broadberry

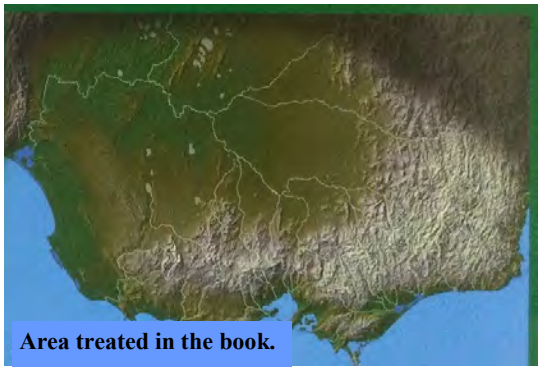
Stories beneath our feet: exploring the geology and landscapes of Victoria and surrounds

by Leon Costermans and Fons VandenBerg

This long awaited, hard-cover book of 660 pages explains the geological origins of the diverse landscapes in south-eastern Australia. It is written to appeal to a wide range of readers with interests in the natural environment and does not assume a geological background.

Stories beneath our feet is intended for land managers, teachers and senior students of environmental subjects, ecologists, naturalists, tour group leaders, outdoor activity leaders, or simply interested travellers. It examines the stories behind the wide range of landforms, rock types and life-forms through geological time, and emphasises geological influences in ecosystems.

It includes over 1870 high quality photos, digital images, geological maps, and diagrams; and has a comprehensive glossary, user-friendly indexes and other supplementary descriptive lists. *Stories beneath our feet* also makes suggestions for field activities suitable for various age groups.


Area treated in the book.

Leon Costermans, amongst his many other accomplishments, is known for his best-selling and well-loved book, *Native trees and shrubs of South-eastern Australia.*

Club members can purchase the book from Kathy who runs the FNCV bookshop **bookshop@fncv.org.au** for a very reasonable $65, plus postage.

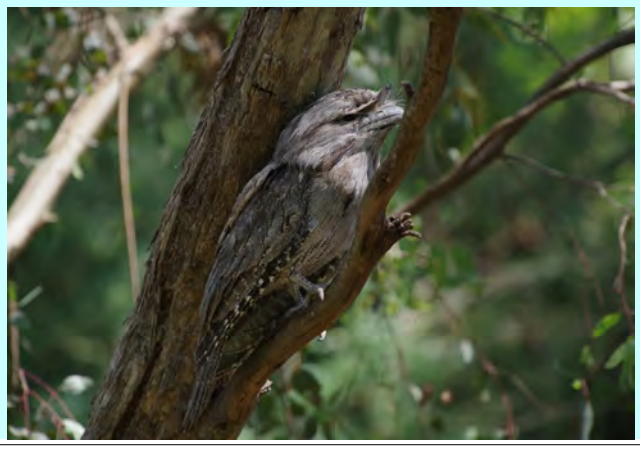
What's in your yard?

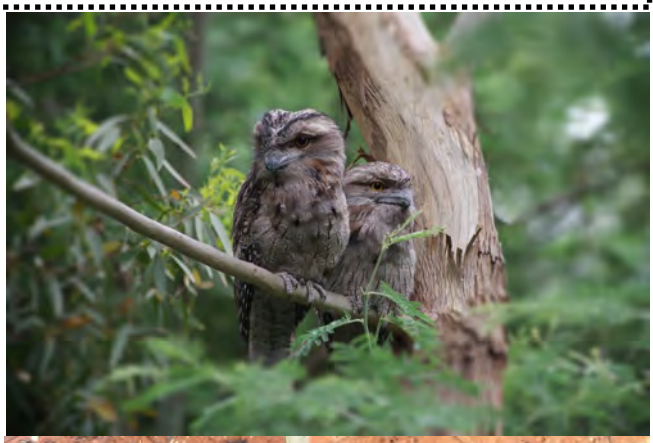
Don't forget to share your observations with FNN

Email 28th December 2022

Hi, just thought I'd share a couple of photos of our recent Christmas visitors with FNN. We've had a family of Tawny Frogmouths, (three) visiting our little front yard revegetation area for the last three days; so I've had a fantastic opportunity to observe and photograph them! As of this morning, I've only spotted two of the three so have attached a couple of photos of them. I'm hoping the two in the photo might be calling our front yard home for a while, as it's been great to be able to share them with family and our granddaughter, who was really excited to see them.

Kind regards, Geoff Boyes (*Photos: G. Boyes***)**





Blue Tongue Lizards have been living and breeding in our very suburban Templestowe backyard since we moved in in 1981, 41 years ago. This photo was taken on 24th December 2022. **J. Broadberry**

Day Group

12 Day Western Explorer Expedition

Departs:	Broome	10 August 2022
Ends:	Perth	21 August 2022

Speaker: Joan Broadberry
Wish List:
Mt. Augustus Nat. Park
Kennedy Ranges Nat. Park

Itinerary Overview:

Day 2	Thu	Aug 11	De Grey River to Karijini National Park
Day 3 & 4	Fri & Sat	Aug 12 & 13	Karijini National Park
Day 5	Sun	Aug 14	Karijini National Park to Tom Price
Day 6	Mon	Aug 15	Tom Price to Mt Augustus
Day 7	Tue	Aug 16	Mt Augustus
Day 8	Wed	Aug 17	Mt Augustus to Kennedy Ranges
Day 9	Thu	Aug 18	Kennedy Ranges
Day 10	Fri	Aug 19	Kennedy Ranges to Murchison
Day 11	Sat	Aug 20	Murchison to Coalseam Conservation Reserve
Day 12	Sun	Aug 21	Coalseam to Perth

NOTE: The above itinerary may be varied according to conditions or advice at the time.

After being cancelled in 2020 and 2021 I finally went on a Coates Wildlife, small group (11 of us), 4WD, outback tour from Broome to Perth, the itinerary being via Karijini, Mt. Augustus and Kennedy Ranges National Parks. It was a camping trip, but with the delightful Coates innovation, *easy camping,* where tents and stretchers are put up and taken down by staff. We were to travel mainly on remote unsealed roads, well off the beaten track.


Photo: Martin Tymms

It was another brilliant season in Western Australia with wonderful displays of wildflowers and abundant birdlife. We saw flocks of Budgerigars soaring and wheeling almost every day. Other great sightings were: Spinifex Pigeon, Zebra Finch, Pied Butcherbird, Crimson Chat, Painted Finch, White-winged Triller and Grey-fronted Honeyeater.

Our first highlight was Marble Bar, population now less than 200. Its claim to fame is being the hottest town in Australia. For five and a half months to the 20th April 1924 the temperature did not drop below 100 degrees F. It is also famous for its massive veins of Jasper (originally misidentified as marble) which cross the Coongan River. A must do is to go down to Chinaman's Pool with a bottle of water, which, when splashed on the rocks, showcases the vivid layers of the jasper. The different colours come from trace amounts of mineral: iron making the red layers and pyrites and carbonaceous material making the blue black layers. The white layers are pure silica. Ours was just a whistle stop, Marble Bar deserves more time.

We camped for two nights at Karijini National Park in the heart of the Pilbara. Numerous streams have cut breathtaking, deep, rugged gorges featuring waterfalls, lookouts and

walks, (below left). A wealth of infrastructure such as platforms and metal stairs allow easy access to the gorges. The colourful rock layers, known as banded iron formations, were deposited 2500 million years ago on an ancient sea floor. Many layers are preserved horizontally so they are seen just as they were laid down. The colour depends on the minerals they contain. Over the last 20m years the ephemeral, but sometimes fast-flowing watercourses, eroded the softer rock along cracks (joints), leaving overhangs which eventually collapsed forming the steep-sided gorges.

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Before the long drive to Mt. Augustus we stayed overnight in a caravan park at Tom Price, the purpose built Rio Tinto mining town, in order to resupply. Next morning the group took an early walk at Mt Bruce, the second highest mountain in WA at 1234m. The highest is Mt Meharry 1249 m (only another 15m!). We walked for over an hour along part of the summit track, enjoying some of the best bird-watching of the trip. Ring-tailed Dragon Lizards (right) were common but so beautifully camouflaged, they were only seen when they moved.


Photo: Martin Tymms

The Pilbara is the heart of iron ore mining in WA. In the distance we could see Marandoo, an open-cut mine run by Rio Tinto employing about 400 people on a fly-in-fly-out roster. Rio Tinto operates 17 iron ore mines in the Pilbara. The ore is transported to the coast to three shipping terminals— Dampier, Port Hedland and Cape Lambert by the largest private railway network in Australia. A section of Karijini was excised for the mine and rail in 1991.

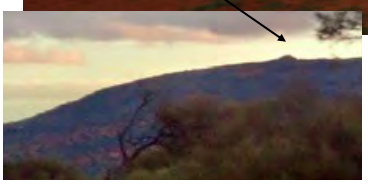
We were very fortunate, as the wildflowers were fabulous everywhere—varieties of Ptilotus or Mulla Mulla being widespread. Others included: Grevillia sp., Goodenia sp., Eremophila sp. and many types of everlastings.

The bus arrived at the Mt Augustus tourist park in the late afternoon and we found, to my surprise, a comfortable caravan park with all facilities, petrol, repairs, showers, shop, accommodation, bar etc., run alongside the Mt. Augustus cattle station. Brochures and signs claimed that Mt. Augustus is the world's largest monolith i.e. single rock. Mt Augustus (or Burringurrah) is not a single rock as is Uluru, It is an asymmetrical anticline, also called a monocline. Rock layers have been folded into an arch-like structure about 900m years ago. Burringurrah rises 717 m above the surrounding alluvial plain with a central ridge about eight km long. In the evening as the sun set, the mountain glowed red. (Photo below)

Uluru and Buringurrah are sometimes compared.

- Uluru is a Monolith. Burringurrah is a monocline
- Burringurrah covers twice the area of Uluru
- Uluru is largely devoid of vegetation, Burringurrah is well vegetated
- Both are impressive landmarks in flat country
- Both have great significance to the aboriginal people and have many sacred sites around their base.

The local Wajarri people call Mt Augustus Burringurrah, after the dreamtime figure of a young boy. The boy could not handle the pain while going through an initiation ceremony. He ran away breaking aboriginal law and was chased and punished by spearing. He died of his wounds and fell face down with his left leg bent up against his body and part of the spear still protruding from his leg. With some imagination his shape can be traced today in the outline of the mountain, the stump of the spear still visible, *arrow left*.



The next day was spent exploring via the 49k loop-drive around the base of the mountain. Edneys Trail, with great views, leads to the place where the spear in Burringurrah's leg is to be found. Lunch was eaten near the beginning of the summit trail where we could see the peak 717 m (below right). The climb to the top is a difficult 12 k return. We did not attempt it. A short distance along the summit trail, under a large slab of rock by a tiny stream are petroglyphs, made by first nations people, pecking directly onto rock using a stone chisel and hammerstone. The pools in the little creek attracted a group of Chequered Swallowtail butterflies drinking and Zebra Finches. I am sure climbing over Burringurrah's sacred sites is not the right thing to do. Western Australia can resemble the wild west. We had great luck with reptiles on the circuit road. Two highlights were a Dwarf Bearded Dragon, *Pogona Minor (left)* and a King Brown or Mulga Snake. *Pseudechis australis*.

In the late afternoon, the bus rounded the northern curve of the mountain and came upon a large pool of water which we had been told earlier was good for a swim and many of us did just that. The Cattle Pool on the Lyons River, surrounded by River Red Gums, is one of the few reliable billabongs, holding water even in dry seasons. It would have been an oasis for the Wajarri people who know it as Goolinee. After European settlement, it was an important stopping place as thousands of sheep and cattle were driven along the stock routes. Road transport finally took over in the 1950s. Our final stop for the day was at Emu Hill lookout, which provided a wonderful view of the whole of the north-west side of the mountain.

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At this point, a wild card was thrown into the trip. We had heard a few days earlier that the weather bureau was tracking a very strong rain front heading slowly inland from the coast. Many roads, including ones that had been central to our original plan, were being closed. We needed to get onto sealed roads as soon as possible or perhaps be stuck for days. As we packed up quickly early the next morning, the light changed dramatically and we could see the edge of the front coming from the west over Burringarrah.

Disappointingly, we would not be able to get into Kennedy Ranges National Park nor head down the unsealed road south via Murchison. Luckily, there is always a Plan B. We were to make a dash on 300 km of dirt road to the bitumen at Gascoyne Junction, drive another 177 km to Carnarvon where we would stay overnight, then head south to Kalbarri. Instead of the Kennedy Ranges National Park we would spend two days exploring Kalbarri National Park. Our last night would be at Eneabba not Coalseam Conservation Reserve. A change of itinerary is not uncommon on outback tours.

The photo (right) taken out the bus window shows how badly unsealed roads can be cut up. Roads are closed because severe damage can occur. It is not only dangerous but very expensive for the shire to repair. We caught glimpses of the Kennedy Ranges National Park as we passed. At Gascoyne Junction notices of roads closed were prominent. The town brands itself as gateway to the Kennedy Ranges. It was only another 47 km, but sadly we couldn't get there.

Never say die! Carnarvon was about to produce a second, this time fabulous, unexpected wild card. Dawson's Burrowing Bees *Amegilla dawsoni* have fascinated me ever since I saw the photo on the right. They are one of the largest of Australia's native bees. I knew this trip would be in the right area at the right time, but had concluded I had only the faintest chance of seeing them. However, by a serendipitous series of events we located a colony just outside Carnarvon. There is so much I want to write about the bees, that I am going to hold their story over to FNN 338.

The Murchison River is central to Kalbarri National Park. Although its source is in the arid inland area, it has many tributaries and a massive catchment larger than Tasmania. Kalbarri National Park is known for its magnificent 80km gorge carved by the river with spectacular lookouts, walks, mammals, reptiles, birds, fossils and of course its stunning spring wildflower display. Opened in 2017, two 100 metre high lookouts project 25 and 17 metres beyond the rim of the Gorge. Black-flanked Rock Wallabies were thought to be extinct in the park until two were spotted in 2015. To re-establish a viable population, 70 animals were translocated to four Kalbarri locations from other parts of WA. The Western Shield Wildlife Conservation program which aims at controlling feral animals such as goats, foxes and cats by culling and baiting is key to the wallabies long term survival. We were lucky enough to see one *(see p13).*


Z Bend, part of the Murchison River Gorge

The Kalbarri Spider Orchid, *Caladenia wanosa* (right) was another Kalbarri highlight. Other orchid species seen on the way back to Perth were: Pale Pink Fairy Orchid, *Caladenia reptans ssp. impensa*, Purple Enamel Orchid, *Elthranthera brunonis,* Kalbarri Cowslip Orchid, *Caladenia flava, ssp maculata* and Arrowsmith Pansy Orchid, *Diuris Eneabba.*

Joan Broadberry
(*All photos J. Broadberry except where otherwise indicated*)

FNCV Christmas Party

On Saturday 3rd December 2022, the Club held its annual Christmas party. It was really wonderful after two years without a celebration to be able to, at last, meet with fellow naturalists and look back over a year of shared knowledge, activities and friendship.

Judith Sise, Philippa Burgess and Barbara Burns did a great job in setting up beautifully decorated tables in the hall and organising the food. A delicious selection of sweets and salads were provided by those who attended, together with BBQ cooked by Max Campbell and Ray Gibson.

Our ever-generous FNCV members donated a number of appropriate natural history prizes, ensuring that the traditional Christmas raffle, run by Philippa, was a great success. Nearly everyone present went home with a selection of goodies. The raffle made $128 for Club funds.

As a reminder of what we had achieved over the year, Gary Presland put together a display of images from the Club's 2022 program.

Thanks must go to all those who helped to make this such an enjoyable social evening

Joan Broadberry
All photos: J. Broadberry

The beginning of a new year seems an appropriate opportunity to extend a special thank-you to Max and Faye Campbell, who have steered the Club so capably through some challenging years.

Absolutely nothing has ever been too much time or trouble for Max over the eight years of his presidency. He attends almost every meeting and offers unstinting, practical support to all Club activities. His amazing technical and IT skills are legendary. The acquisition of Mali Dunes in 2022 (and arrangements for its ongoing management), was a milestone event in the life of the FNCV.

I know I speak for the whole Club and, in particular, for every SIG co-ordinator and council member in acknowledging the always positive encouragement and invaluable help that Max and Faye have graciously, generously and continually extended to all.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy and productive 2023.

JB

Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

Langwarrin Flora & Fauna Reserve
Leader: Wendy Clark

The Terrestrial Invertebrates Group, led by Wendy Clark, planned an outing to Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve on November 13th. A very poor weather forecast led to the excursion being rescheduled to November 20th. However, once again the weather outlook caused it to be put forward to December 11th. Invertebrates like warm, dry weather as they are not able to generate their own body heat and rely on the warmth of the sun to keep them going. The forecast for the 11th was for a warm morning with rain later on. TIG took the plunge and it paid off.

The Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve preserves a pocket of the indigenous flora and fauna that once extended across the Mornington Peninsula. It covers an area of 214 hectares and also has a military history spanning the period between 1886 and 1979. The vegetation is of state significance with over 300 indigenous flora species recorded, equating to 45% of the species indigenous to the Peninsula.

Sword Grass Brown

By December, many of the wildflowers had finished flowering, but not all. There were remnants of Prickly Tea Tree, *Leptospermum continentale,* which can be very productive for insects; Burgan, *Kunzea leptospermoides* was flowering abundantly. Purple Flag Lilies, *Patersonia sp*., Tufted Blue Lily, *Thelionema caespitosum,* Wedding Bush, *Ricinocarpos pinifolius,* Parsnip Laceflower, *Trachymene composita* and the Small Grass-tree, *Xanthorrheoa minor* were other species in flower.

The group set off along the Emu Wren Track and the humid weather proved ideal for invertebrates. Several butterfly species,

Photo: J. Broadberry

Castiarina flavopicta

Photo: J. Broadberry

Salsa fuliginata,

the Common Brown *Heteronympha merope* being the most numerous, with a few beautiful Swordgrass Browns, *Tisiphone abeona (above),* fluttered around. Dragonflies and Damselflies were patrolling the track, sometimes flying overhead in quite big groups. A variety of beetles were observed, a few examples being, Nectar Scarabs, *Phyllotocus ruficollis*, Long-nosed Lycid, *Porrostoma rhipidium* and Stinking Longicorn, *Stenoderus suturali.* Iridescent green beetles belonging to the genus Diphucephala, often seen mating, were common. Native bees, ants, spiders, moths, birds and a Ringtail Possum were among the many other sightings.

Searching for and photographing invertebrates always means gradual progress. The group spread out and proceeded slowly back to the carpark via the Reservoir Track where Parsnip Laceflower was flowering in profusion. A Sooty Orb weaver, *Salsa fuliginata*, (above right) hunting on the flower heads had obviously been feasting on Nectar Scarabs. Their exoskeletons, sucked dry, studded the web. A Jewel Beetle probably *Castiarina flavopicta* (above left) was another delightful find. Thanks to Carol Page for the ID.

It had become quite warm and a welcome lunch was taken in the carpark, with most people intending to return home after eating. However, it was not to be. We were called over to a nearby mulch heap to view an interesting discovery which had been recognised as dried-out patches of Dog Vomit Slime Mould, *Fuligo septica.* As we looked around, a large group of Leaf Hoppers was discovered (right) and then the eggs, larva and adults of various species of Leaf Beetle. These included *Parapsis atomaria*, which deposits eggs in a distinctive circular pattern on a twig. *(Photo D below).* Cameras worked overtime for another hour, with a final sighting of two Common Brush-tail Possums, one very large, sleeping in the gums.

Different species of Leaf Hopper, genus Eurymeloides

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There is now a Langwarrin Page live on iNaturalist. Anyone who would like to post their photos, or just have a look at what was seen, can do so. A total of 104 observations of 60 species have already been posted by Zoe Daniels, John Eichler, Andrew McCutcheon and Wendy Clark.

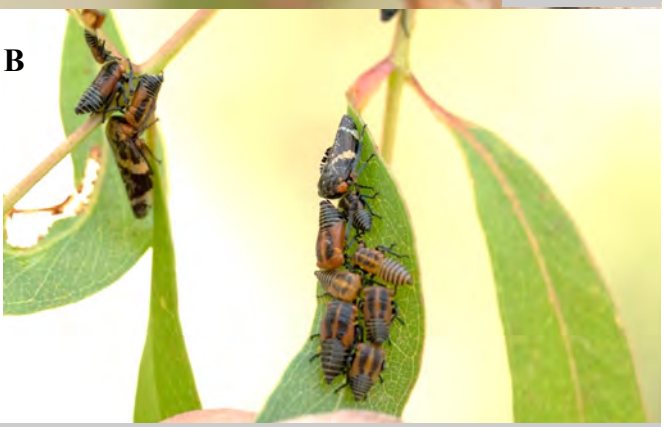
https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fncv-2022-langwarrin

Our thanks to Wendy Clark for her great leadership, sharing her knowledge and for not letting La Nina win.

We look forward to another TIG outing, searching for and photographing invertebrates planned for Sunday February 12th to *Birdsland Reserve, Belgrave.* Registration is essential. For more details contact Wendy Clark wendy.empathy@optusnet.com.au and include a mobile phone number for possible late messages.

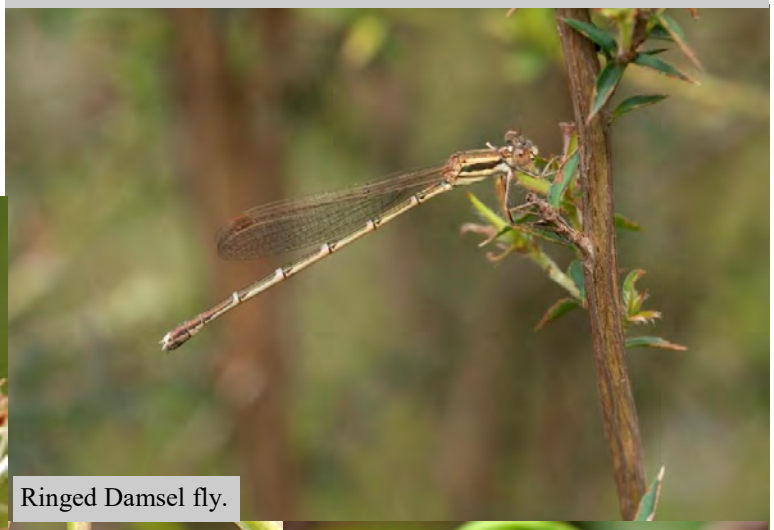
Joan Broadberry
(*All images Wendy Clark except where indicated*)

Underwing



A & B Mottle-headed Gum Tree Hoppers, *Eurymeloides punctata.*

Crane Fly



Ringed Damsel fly.

Nectar Scarabs

C, D & E Leaf Beetle *Paropsis atomaria,* eggs and about to fly.

More photos see p 14

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Botany Group: Thursday 17th November 2022. 28 attended, via Zoom. David Lindenmayer, of the Australian National University, presented: *Trouble in the forest – logging and fire have the potential to trigger biodiversity and ecosystem collapse*.

The Greater Glider Possum is found in upper elevation Mountain Ash, mostly in older forest and mostly in hollow-bearing trees. Put simply, many threatened species are in forest areas targeted for logging. To protect biodiversity, scientific studies show that native forest logging should cease in Victoria. Logging fragments the forest. The reserve system is inadequate.

Old forests suffer fire with less severity. Recovery is faster. Animal recolonisation is earlier. David cited numerous of his team's research papers which have established these principles. A 'landscape trap' can constrain forest recovery.

For future forestry, well designed plantation regimes are recommended and a Great Forest National Park is desirable for Victoria! Amongst the questions from the audience was a concern on the progress of the current native logging phase-out in Victoria.

Ken Griffiths

Geology Group: Meeting Wednesday 26th October 2022. Speaker: Dr Tony Hayes, Physicist and Inventor and U3A Lecturer. Tony spoke on Carbon-14 dating, Dendrochronology - studying tree rings, radio carbon dating on the Turin Shroud, Miyake Spikes using tree rings to study historic solar activity and magnetic reversal. There were over 25 members and visitors present.

Philippa Burgess

Meeting Wednesday 23rd November 2022. 28 attended, at the hall. Agathe Lisé-Pronovost of Melbourne University spoke. Australia has not been studied as much as the northern hemisphere. The surface magnetic field of Earth is expressed variably in the human part of geological time, not simply as a virtual bar magnet between the N and S magnetic poles.

When several different kinds of method are used for a site, date confirmation can be achieved. For example, at Lake Mungo, four methods were used to confirm the current date estimate of ancient indigenous people first there.

Whereas the N-S of Earth flips roughly each 800,000 years and is marked on the ocean floor near expanding basalt rifts, a geomagnetic excursion lasting just a few thousand years occurred about 41,000 years ago. This Laschamp excursion was detected by Agathe's team from 5.5 metre sediment cores taken at Lake Selina in Tasmania. Several modern methods were subsequently used to date the cores. By the way, three glaciation periods were detected for Tasmania, within the 270,000 range of study. Palaeo magnetism has the properties of declination, inclination and intensity. Agathe has further team projects in sight, including Nullarbor caves (stalagmites), and Budj Bim (basalt ancient fish traps).

https://theconversation.com/we-found-the-first-australian-evidence-of-a-major-shift-in-earths-magnetic-poles-it-may-help-us-predict-the-next-155040

Ken Griffiths

Day Group: Meeting Tuesday 22nd November 2022. Joan Broadberry spoke on a recent trip in outback Western Australia from Broome to Perth via Marble Bar, Karajini, Mt. Augustus and Kalbarri National Parks. *See this FNN p7-9 for a full report.* 22 Attended.

Joan Broadberry

(Photos: J. Broadberry)

Black-flanked Rock Wallaby, Kalbarri NP.

Juniors Group: Sunday 9th October: Birthday Picnic at Royal Park

Fifty-five Superb Fairy Wrens have been banded as part of an ongoing study in Royal Park. Kylie Soames from the University of Melbourne spoke to the Juniors about the behaviour and ecology of the wrens and then led a walk to find them. The study is looking to name each of the fairy wrens so while walking the Juniors made many suggestions for names.
https://superbcitywrens.com/how-to-become-a-wren-watcher/

The group also searched a rocky area especially designed as a habitat for White's Skinks. The outing was a great success as both the fairy wrens and skinks were located and a great deal was learned about conserving them. For example, the wrens live in an area densely planted with lignum. This allows small birds to hide and nest while keeping out larger birds and

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predators. Skinks need rocks for shelter and to bask on. An area of old rocks was fenced off and goats introduced to control the grass. White's Skinks are now thriving.

After their walk the Juniors held their annual birthday party with a picnic and costume contest, won by James with a superb mantis costume. **Summarised from *The Junior Naturalist*, volume 60, issue 8**

Juniors Meeting 7.30 pm Friday 25th November 2022.
Speaker: Dr Lindy Lumsden, Principal Research Scientist and Science Leader,
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP): ***Bats - Fascinating Creatures of the Night***.

Lindy is based at the Arthur Rylah Institute, the wildlife research institute of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, where she has been conducting ecological research on insectivorous bats for over forty years.

Microbats play an important role in controlling insect numbers, including a range of pest species, by eating up to half their body weight in insects in a night. However, due to their small size, nocturnal behaviour and cryptic roosting habits, these fascinating native mammals are rarely seen and are often portrayed negatively in the media.

Lindy is passionate about trying to reverse these negative perceptions and to educate and enthuse people about bats. In her presentation, Lindy described intriguing, little-known aspects of their natural history, the innovative approaches used to study these cryptic nocturnal animals, their habitat requirements, and what you can do to help protect them.

Adam Hoskin

A Little Forest Bat sitting on Lindy's thumb, showing how tiny some of these bats are!

Terrestrial Invertebrates Group:

The November meeting was held in the hall with five attendees. Wendy Clark gave a talk on Tips and Techniques for Improving Focus Accuracy of Macro Images together with some photo illustrations. There was good discussion and sharing of ideas as well as equipment used – both the useful and the awkward ones. Other camera techniques were also discussed.
A worthwhile topic for discussion.

The October Excursion was to Black Rock looking for Peacock Spiders and any other invertebrates. Eventually when the sun warmed the area we were searching, the spiders appeared and were much photographed. After lunch we headed up the road to Long Hollow Heathland and found various insects and spiders. *See FNN 336 p7-8 for a full report.*

Wendy Clark

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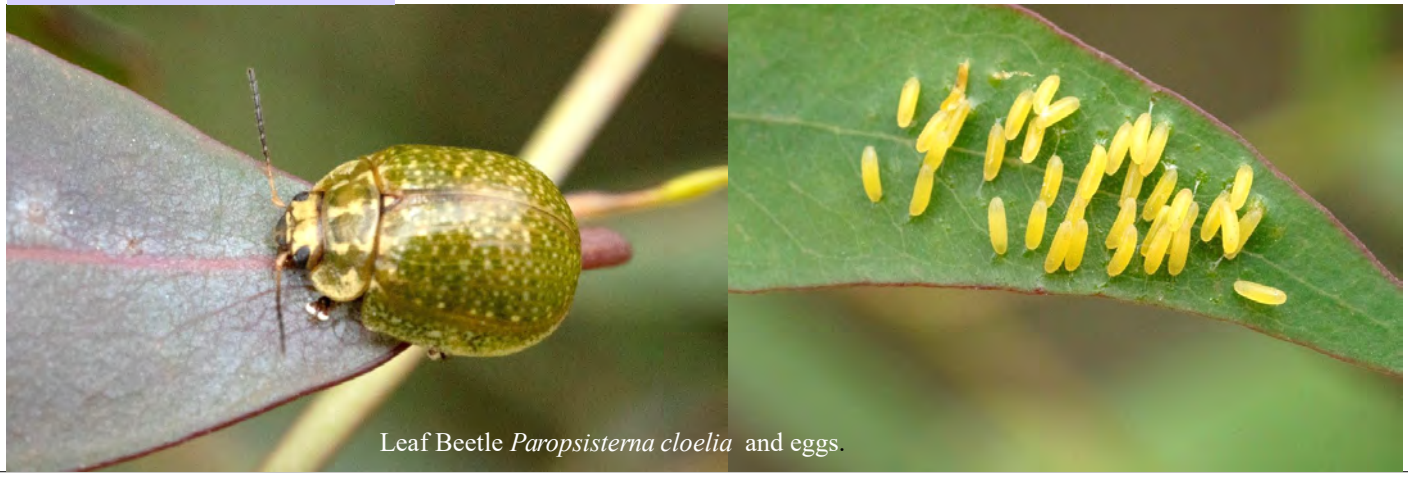
Leaf Beetle *Paropsisterna cloelia* and eggs.