



Understanding
Our Natural World
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Field Nats News No 371



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc. Editor: Joan Broadberry 03 9846 1218
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March 2026

From the President

It has been an interesting summer with an astounding range of weather conditions.

The combination of extreme dry heat and cool wet conditions have the plant life, including weeds, growing at almost unmanageable rates.

The animal life has also been impacted by the unpredictable conditions. The extreme heat of mid-forties Celsius resulted in both vertebrates and invertebrates using our birdbaths.

Rainbow Lorikeets, magpies and Noisy Miners were showing signs of heat stress and tolerated being sprayed with a fine mist of cool water (Photo 1). Bees (Photo 2), wasps (Photo 3) and flies also visited the bird baths in large numbers. The introduced Honey Bee, *Apis mellifera*, virtually took over the bird baths, forming complete rings around the water's edge.



Photo 2: Bees in their hundreds took over bird baths and formed a circle at the water line.



The bees made easy targets for the large (40mm) robber fly, *Colepia rufiventris*, as they buzzed around the bird baths in search of water (Photo 4)

Continued on page 4

Photo 3: Quite a number of wasps of various kinds sought refreshment from the birdbaths.

The due date for FNN 372 will be **Monday March 2nd.**

Could contributors please email content to **both** email addresses below

fnnews@admin.org.au
joan.broadberry@gmail.com

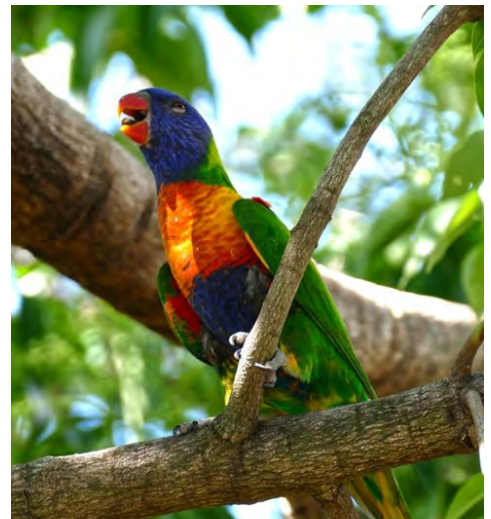


Photo 1: Panting, distressed Rainbow Lorikeets responded well to a light spray of cool water and a plunge in the bird bath.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated.
There may be changes to the program, for example due to extreme weather conditions or the unavailability of a speaker.
Please check with the FNCV website www.fncv.org.au or contact person for the most up-to-date information

March 2026

Monday 2nd – Fungi Group Meeting: Topic and speaker to be advised. Meeting held in the hall and via Zoom— 6:45pm for 7pm start. More details and registration for Zoom: Georgia Beasley georgiaturechick@gmail.com

Tuesday 3rd - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: *The Rakali Community Survey: how citizen science can provide insights into species ecology and drive conservation action.* Speaker: Sabrina Trocini, wildlife ecologist with expertise in conservation biology, wildlife health and management, animal behaviour and citizen science
Contact: Sally Bewsher 03 9752 1418

Friday 6th to Tuesday 10th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Labour Day weekend camp - Grassland Vertebrates at Bael Bael GNCR.* Prior bookings essential
Contact: Andrej Hohmann andrej_hohmann@yahoo.com.au

Thursday 12th—Botany Group excursion: Royal Botanical Gardens 90 minute guided wander through arid/dry lands area surrounding Guilfoyle's volcano. 11 am—12.30 pm. Registration essential: use botany@fncv.org.au or contact Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389 Cost \$12, pay on the day.

Sunday 15th – Invertebrate Study Group Excursion: *Kinglake National Park 10am–3pm.* Registration essential. For more details contact Wendy Clark inverts@fncv.org.au

Monday 16th - Marine Research Group 7.30pm to 9pm. Meeting: *MRG Induction session* - will be held on line via Google Meet. Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys. Attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work. Please register using this link: <https://forms.gle/yLXY2AhPmOYGNgB37>
Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773 marine@fncv.org.au

Wednesday 18th - Invertebrate Study Group Meeting: *An introduction to Parasitoid Wasps.* Speaker: Dr Samantha Edley, Senior Research Scientist at Agriculture Victoria. Sam will discuss her research into these wasps.
Contact: Wendy Clark inverts@fncv.org.au

Thursday 19th – Botany Group Meeting Part 1: *Clonality and Reproductive Capacity in three critically endangered Victorian shrubs Banksia croajingolensis, Acacia daviesii and A. sporadica.* Speaker: Yennifer Longo, Masters candidate, La Trobe University. Yennifer works in the Hoebee Lab investigating population geonomics and reproductive capacity in some of Victoria's threatened flora.

Meeting Part 2: *Tracing the Origins of Invasion: Population Geonomics of Acacia paradoxa in Victoria*

Speaker: Jacob Moore, Honours student, La Trobe University.

Jacob works in the Hoebee Lab investigating population geonomics and intraspecific diversity of *Acacia paradoxa*, which exhibits extreme morphological variation, reflected in its complex taxonomic history with multiple species and variety names. For contact use botany@fncv.org.au or Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Sunday 22nd – Invertebrate Study Group Excursion: *Blackburn Lake at night 6.30pm-10pm.* Registration essential. For more details contact: Wendy Clark inverts@fncv.org.au

Monday 23rd—FNCV Council Meeting 7.30 pm. Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au

Calendar of events continued page 3



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

Calendar of events continued from page 2

Monday 23rd – Thursday 26th - Marine Research Group Fieldwork: *Intertidal survey*. Early morning meeting times. Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys.

Previous experience or attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work.

Location: Inverloch area. Please register using this link for exact location details: <https://forms.gle/u753vqztRq4xd6KW9>

Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773 marine@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 24th – Day Group Excursion: 11 am *Chelsea Australian Gardens, Olinda*. Leader: Nicky Zanen.

Registration essential. For more details contact Joan Broadberry joan.broadberry@gmail.com

Wednesday 25th – Geology Group Meeting: *Structural controls on Rare Earth Element mineralisation*

Speaker: Alanis Olesch-Byrne, PhD student, School of Geography, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, University of Melbourne

Contact: Ken Griffiths geology@fncv.org.au

Friday 27th – Juniors Group 6.45pm meeting: *topic and speaker to be advised*.

Contact: Nicole Brown nicole.vickridge@gmail.com

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:

Andrew Kelly, Brian Treloggan, Amanda McNeill, Evie Nixon, Mandy Johnson, Esme Johnson, Peter Petinatos, Jenny Petinatos, Junseong Kim, Eunseong Kim, Jay Kim, Giuseppe Scelsi, Bradley Hewitt, Merryn Rowlands and Annette Muir.

Dr Bruce McGregor AM

- Congratulations to Dr Bruce McGregor who was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the recent Australia Day 2026 honours list. The award was for his significant service in a range of roles to conservation and the environment. In particular Bruce has been a key figure in community groups in support of Merri Creek. He has been a FNCV member for 50 years. Dr McGregor, with others, gave a presentation at the Biodiversity Symposium last July, which will be published in the Oct/Dec issue of *The Victorian Naturalist*.

Introducing our new library volunteers!



Since our highly regarded archivist and librarian Gary Presland has retired, we have had to find people to fill his shoes – and here they are:

From left to right: Ann Sharrock, Christine Seow, Gary Presland (handing over the reins) and Graham Patterson who has assisted Gary in the library for many years. Not present, Leanne Handoll. We welcome them to the FNCV Library! They are in the library on most Tuesdays, and look forward to many visits from fellow members.

Our library is very well stocked with a vast array of natural history books which members are welcome to borrow. The catalogues of books, periodicals, photos and maps are available here:

<https://www.fncv.org.au/library/>

They all have searchable indexes – you never know what you might find!

Regards

Wendy Gare, Administration Officer



Continued from page 1

Photo 4. *Colepia rufiventris* with its prey, a honey bee, *Apis mellifera*.

On the hottest day at circa 44 degrees Celsius, I noticed mushrooms that had emerged from dry leaf litter overnight after the previous hot day. They were desiccating quickly and collapsing by midday (Photo 5).

Photo 5: It was 44 degrees C on the day that this mushroom reached full size only to quickly wilt in the heat. Oddly it popped up from relatively dry leaf litter under a Melaleuca tree over two extremely hot days.



The heat did not seem to worry the Feather-footed Bugs, *Ptilocnemus* sp, that were under the bark of one of my Melaleuca trees, hunting for small ants which they attract and kill by piercing the back of the head with the proboscis (Photo 6).

Photo 6: *Ptilocnemus* sp, a Feather-footed Bug. Family Reduviidae found under Melaleuca bark.

The Invertebrate Survey Group Excursion to Cardinia Reservoir did not reveal a large number of invertebrates to photograph but, just as I was about to leave, a large Raspy Cricket appeared on the leaf litter and proceeded to climb up the leg of my chair (Photo 7). Raspy Crickets react aggressively when threatened and may jump toward the threat with their jaws moving menacingly. They have an extremely powerful bite and, as I discovered at Mali Dunes in 2013, can slice very neatly through human fingers. It is not recommended that they be handled with bare hands.



Photo 7. A predatory Raspy Cricket, Fam. Gryllacrididae at Cardinia Reservoir.

Photo 8. A threatening posture with mandibles agape,



Max Campbell
All photos
M. Campbell

 **Botany Group**

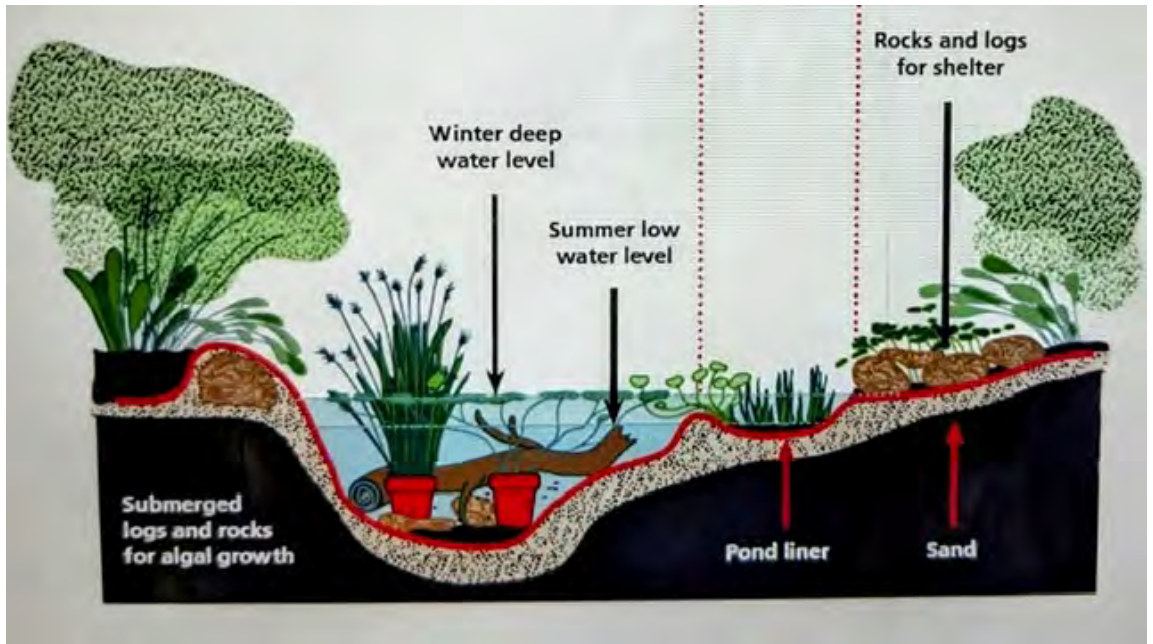
Frog Friendly Gardening and Pond Construction in Greater Melbourne. Speaker: David De Angelis

Creating Ponds

Creating Frog Ponds and gardening using indigenous plants, provides food and shelter for both adult frogs and tadpoles and also sites for frogs to attract mates and lay their eggs. Reliable water sources like garden ponds also sustain other wildlife during hot summers. Create a frog pond with different water levels to support a variety of aquatic and bog habitats. This allows tadpoles to escape environmental extremes and select their preferred temperature. At least part of the bank should be gently sloping.

If space is available, the pond could be a metre or more wide, with a minimum depth of 30 cm, preferably up to 50-70 cm at its deepest point.

Continued page 5



Cross section of a pond. Photo: Sustainable Gardening Australia



Four examples of ponds
Photos: Melbourne Water



(Continued from page 5)

A UV resistant and fish friendly plastic liner, clay or benotite could be used to line the bottom of the pond. Protect plastic liners from punctures by first laying down sand, hessian, or other underlay. Prefabricated moulded plastic, rubber or fibreglass ponds could be used. A successful improvised pond can be made from an old bath, plastic child's paddling pool or sandpit, or modified large ceramic pots.

Place rocks and logs around and in from the edges of the pond to provide sites for adult frogs and tadpoles to forage, seek shelter, for egg attachment and calling. Create safe entry and exit points using a heavy branch as a ladder into the pond. Pebbles and leaf litter hiding the edges create a natural appearance. Ensuring the surrounding area has mulch, leaf litter and moisture helps to attract insects for your frogs.

Keep at least half of the water surface exposed to sunlight, no more than 50% should be over shadowed by surrounding vegetation. Sunlight should be able to reach the water year round. Warmer and sunny, open areas of the pond are important for enhanced aquatic plant growth, creating less favourable conditions for the amphibian Chytrid Fungus, while providing food for tadpoles, such as decomposing vegetation and algal films, and reducing the time it takes for tadpoles to develop into frogs.

Planting out the Pond

Create a diversity of different micro-habitats using plants of a variety of different forms and growth habits, ie submerged, floating and emergent plants as well as small ground covers and a smaller number of taller plants around the edges. Breeding habitat for most frogs generally improves with increased submerged vegetation. Importantly, this provides food and shelter for tadpoles and can be sites for egg attachment. Garden soil is recommended for potting up aquatic plants, overlaid with fine sand and topped with gravel to prevent the soil from floating and clouding the water. Remember that to improve breeding habitat for most of our local frogs, include more aquatic or underwater plants in your pond and ensure taller emergent, floating and surrounding vegetation does not shade most of the water surface. Generally avoid Duckweeds - Lemnaceae and Azolla in smaller ponds given their potential to cover the entire surface and block out light. Cumbungi - Typha and Common Reed - Phragmites, provide ideal habitat for tree frogs but can take over if left unchecked.



Cyanogeton procerum Water Ribbons Photo: Ecolinc

Protecting and maintaining the pond

- Keep ponds secure from cats and other pets that may prey on the tadpoles or frogs and disturb their habitat.
- Avoid introducing fish to ponds or contaminating the pond with any herbicides used within the garden.
- Avoid introducing adult frogs, eggs and tadpoles to your pond to reduce the risk of introducing disease, this practice is also illegal.
- The saying goes: "Make your pond, be patient and they will come of their own accord".



Lobelia anceps Angled Lobelia
Photo: Yarra Ranges Council

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The following table lists some plants broadly native to Melbourne as well as much of the rest of temperate Victoria that are ideal for providing habitat for frogs in and around dams and backyard ponds. Some species are listed multiple times as they provide more than one type of habitat.

Philippa Burgess

Submergent plants (growing under the water)			
Water Starworts	<i>Callitriche</i> species	Swamp Lily	<i>Ottelia ovalifolia</i>
Swamp Stonecrop	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Curly Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>
Water Ribbons	<i>Cycnogeton procerum</i>	Blunt Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton ochreatus</i>
Water Milfoils	<i>Myriophyllum</i> species	Ribbon Weed	<i>Vallisneria australis</i>
Floating plants			
Water Ribbons	<i>Cycnogeton procerum</i>	Swamp Lily	<i>Ottelia ovalifolia</i>
Nardoo	<i>Marsilea</i> species	Floating Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton cheesemanii</i>
Running Marsh-flower	<i>Ornduffia reniformis</i>		
Emergent plants (growing in and above the water)			
Water Plantain	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Knotweeds	<i>Persicaria</i> species
Water Ribbons	<i>Cycnogeton procerum</i>	*Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Spike-rushes	<i>Eleocharis</i> species	Dock	<i>Rumex</i> species
Water Milfoils	<i>Myriophyllum</i> species	*Cumbungi	<i>Typha</i> species
Running Marsh-flower	<i>Ornduffia reniformis</i>	Nardoo	<i>Marsilea</i> species
Water Starworts	<i>Callitriche</i> species		
Small edge (bog) plants (height <0.5 m)			
Swamp Crassula	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Water Milfoils	<i>Myriophyllum</i> species
Club-rushes	<i>Isolepis</i> species	Buttercups	<i>Ranunculus</i> species
Angled Lobelia	<i>Lobelia anceps</i>	Common Bog-rush	<i>Schoenus apogon</i>
Lesser Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum hyssopifolia</i>	Streaked Arrowgrass	<i>Triglochin striata</i>
Tall edge plants (height >0.5 m)			
Sedges	<i>Carex</i> species	Rushes	<i>Juncus</i> species
Marsh Club-rush	<i>Bolboschoenus mediamus</i>	Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
*Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	*Cumbungi	<i>Typha</i> species
Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis</i> species		
Low-growing plants providing habitat for frogs on land around and away from the pond (including leaf litter)			
Bidgee-widgee	<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	Rushes	<i>Juncus</i> species
Sedges	<i>Carex</i> species	Mat-rushes	<i>Lomandra</i> species
Flax-lilies	<i>Dianella</i> species	Weeping Grass	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>
Kidney-weed	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Tussock-grasses	<i>Poa</i> species
Hop Goodenia	<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Wallaby-grasses	<i>Rytidosperma</i> species
Pennyworts	<i>Hycrocotyle</i> species	Ivy-leaf Violet	<i>Viola hederacea</i>

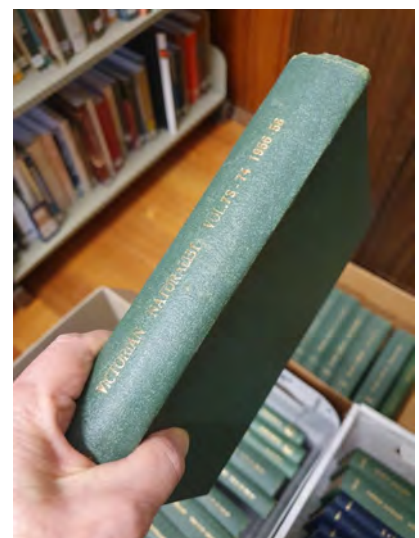
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*The photo right shows the size of ONE bound volume of
The Victorian Naturalist





Invertebrate Study Group

Trip Report to Cranbourne Gardens *14th December 2025* Leader: Wendy Clark

There was good attendance at this trip with 14 people being registered. Despite parts of Melbourne having had rain, the Native Woodland Reserve at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens was very dry. Numbers of insects were scarce, but we saw some interesting ones, including a Velvet Ant *Ephutomorpha picta* (a wasp), a very well camouflaged Cambridge's Crab Spider *Isala cambridgei*, Longhorn beetles *Demomisis filum*, and many ants particularly the Black-scaped Bull Ant *Myrmecia nigriscapa*. Some lichens, fungi and birds were also recorded.

After lunch we visited the more formal native gardens hoping to find the Emperor Gum Caterpillars. We found some hatched eggs, but no caterpillars. We found even fewer insects than in the bush section, but we did see a bandicoot.

Everyone enjoyed the day. See all the observations on iNaturalist from the link below.

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fncv-2025-cranbourne>



Cambridge's Crab Spider *Isala cambridgei*



Velvet Ant (a wasp) *Ephutomorpha picta*,
Family Mutillidae



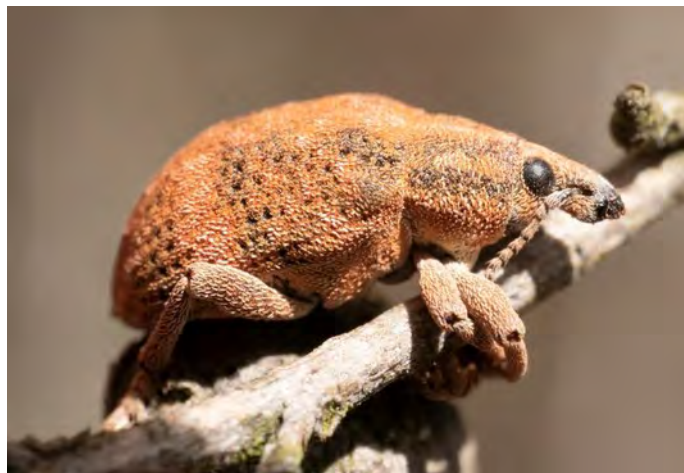
Round-necked Longhorn Beetle
Demomisis filum



Snout and Bark Beetles Superfamily
Curculionoidea



Long-nosed Lycid Beetle
Porrostoma rhipidium



Weevil Tribe Gonipterini

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Felt Scale
Genus *Apiomorpha* Family Eriococcidae



Emperor Gum Moth Eggs (hatched)



Jack Jumper Ant carrying prey

Wendy Clark
All images: *W. Clark*

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**Invertebrate Study Group Trip Report to
Mortimers Picnic Ground 11th January 2026**

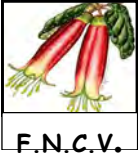
Thirteen people had registered for the trip. However the trip was cancelled due to a Total Fire Ban being declared.

Wendy Clark

**Thank you to all those who
helped produce FNN 371**
 Joan Broadberry, Sally Bewsher and
 Wendy Gare

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.

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



FNCV Environment Fund: Call for Grant Applications, Due Date: Monday 23rd March 2026

The FNCV Environment Fund has the following purposes. To support and finance:

- environmental research, in particular research into the biodiversity of Victoria.
- dissemination of information on the natural environment by any legitimate means, including public lectures, seminars, field trips, courses and publications.
- practical projects aimed at preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of Victoria.

The FNCV Environment Fund is administered by a committee consisting of John Harris (Chair), Barbara Burns, (Secretary and Treasurer), Ian Moodie, Cathy Willis, Bruce McGregor, Ian Temby and Philippa Burgess.

**The committee calls for applications for the April round of funding for 2026.
Requests for projects between \$200 and \$2000 will be considered.**

Applications can be from organisations or individuals, but in the latter case must be supported by an organisation. Suitable organisations are established natural history or environmental organisations (Field Naturalist Clubs, Landcare Groups etc.), educational institutions or government departments. Multiple applications from one research group are not encouraged.

**Applications for funding close Monday 23rd March 2026 at 3pm.
Late applications will not be accepted.**

All applications will be acknowledged and results of applications communicated within **three weeks** of the due date.

Grant money is required to be spent within 12 months of notification of receiving a grant with a short report on the project supplied to the FNCV within 12 months of the same date. The report can be published by FNCV and successful applicants are encouraged to communicate the results of their project to the Club via articles, talks or field trips.

Application forms are available at <http://www.fncv.org.au/environment-fund/>
or from the FNCV office, 98779860 or by email: admin@fncv.org.au
Enquiries Barbara Burns barbaraburns3106@gmail.com

The following information is required by the application:

- Applicant's name and contact details, including email, street address and phone number.
- Indicate if the application is from an individual or an organisation.
- Project title.
- Project description (max 250 words).
- How the project meets the aims of the Fund.
- Budget (include GST on all relevant items). Also indicate other sources of funding if any.
- Endorsement by the supporting organisation which must include the signature of the responsible person, their name and the position they hold., e.g. President, Secretary, Manager, Head of Department,

Applications should be sent to:

**Secretary FNCV Environment Fund,
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.,
1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn Vic 3130.**

or emailed to admin@fncv.org.au

Your support is much appreciated.

Donations to the FNCV Environment Fund are tax deductible.

Donation forms can be down-loaded from the website at this link:

www.fncv.org.au/donate-to-the-club/

or are available on request from the FNCV Office: ph 9877 9860 or admin@fncv.org.au



Day Group

A three week safari in Southern Africa

Speaker: John Harris 25th November 2025

Part 1: Kruger National Park

John Harris and Kathy Himbeck flew to South Africa with friends in late April—early May 2025. It was the end of the wet season. Their safari was organised privately with a local guide who aimed for 15 animal species a day including of course, the so called ‘big five’, lion, leopard, Cape Buffalo, African Elephant and Rhinoceros. However a group of field naturalists want to see everything. It took a few days to convince their guide to stop whenever they spotted something of interest, especially small birds (Jan Frederiks). They came up with their own version, a ‘little five’, Elephant Shrew, Rhinoceros Beetle, Ant Lion, Leopard Tortoise and Buffalo Weaver.

Kruger is bordered on the south by the Crocodile River. The party entered the park at the Malelane Gate. Travel was by an open-sided vehicle (photo 1) on mainly sealed roads. Passengers are not allowed out of the vehicle as they could then become prey. In the event of an emergency it is necessary to ring the rangers to get help.

It will only be possible to report on a fraction of John’s hour and a half presentation. He admitted to 45,000 photos over the 3 weeks, which so far had only been culled down to 33,000. Thirty five species of mammals including bats and 130 species of birds were recorded. At that time of year many bird species had migrated from Southern Africa. A very early sighting was of a pack of rare African Wild Dogs resting in a creek bed, one wearing a radio collar (photo 2). Other mammals were: Blue Wildebeest, close encounters with elephants, warthogs, Plains Zebra, the so called ‘toilet-seat’ Waterbuck which has a distinctive white ring on its rump and the striped Greater Kudu. John’s photographs honed in on a large number of ticks on a giraffe’s skin. Oxpeckers feed on these ticks which also occur on many other animals. Chacma Baboon troops are omnivores. Birds included: Southern Ground-Hornbill, the beautiful Cape Starling, Spurfbwls, Southern Yellow Hornbill, Secretary Bird, (so named for the quills on its head) (photo 3), Hamerkop, its head shaped like a hammer and their sole woodpecker, the Bearded Woodpecker.

John pointed out that as Africa and Australia had once been part of Gondwana some of their birds and animals, will be related. A good example is the ratites, the group of birds that includes the Common Ostrich and the Australian Emu and Cassowary. Another Gondwana connection is the Baobab Tree. Taxonomy has also created a point of contention with South Africans in that Acacias have been split into two genera, with the African genera now known as Vachellia. Accommodation in the park was in thatched



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rondavels (photo 4). Rubbish bins needed to be tightly sealed or baboons would raid them. Tourists were not able to leave the often flimsily fenced accommodation area until 6.30 am but John spent many hours spotlighting within each camp they stayed. At Oliphant's Camp he managed to position his camera to photograph a group of Free-tailed Bats roosting in a bat box. Round-eared Bats, Horseshoe Bats and the Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat, were seen elsewhere including in the roofs of their accommodation.

Being an avid birdwatcher, John photographed many bird species: Southern Red-billed Hornbill, Kori Bustard, Saddle-backed Stork, the beautiful Lilac-breasted Roller (photo 5), the Marabou Stork an ugly scavenger, the vibrant Blue-eared Starling, White-fronted Bee-eater, Square-tailed Nightjar, African Scops Owl, White-breasted Sunbird, Burchell's Coucal, Pied Kingfisher, White-crowned Lapwing and Water Thick-knee to name a few. Some weaver's nests have two entrances, enabling the bird to escape if predated. Birds of prey included: African Fish Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Bateleur and the largest of all, the Martial Eagle. Different species of vulture have different beaks. Lappet-faced Vultures use their big, chunky beaks to rip a carcass open. The Hooded Vulture has a much finer, toothpick beak.

Other mammals observed included Steenbok, a small antelope, Impala with their 'Big M' backsides, a group of lions sleeping after a kill, an habituated African Wildcat, a glimpse of a Honey Badger, Large-spotted Genet, four Cheetahs (photo 6), Spotted Hyenas and Tree Squirrel. The Springhare bounces on two legs and is nicknamed the 'Kruger Roo'. Hippos, Africa's most dangerous animal, were frequently seen in rivers and pools, but they are herbivores and leave the water to graze at night. White Rhinos with their horns removed, are still present in Kruger. Only one snake, a non-venomous species, was seen.

An early morning walk guarded by rangers with rifles was taken on the Limpopo River among Butterfly Leaf or Mopane Trees.

An enchanting video was of a Dung Beetle pushing a ball of dung bigger than a golf ball. The beetle had to climb on top of the ball to look ahead to see where it was going.

Mammals recorded towards the end of the group's time in Kruger included: Vervet Monkeys grooming each other, Slender Mongoose and the Lesser Bushbaby, a primate that feeds on sap.

It is not possible to do justice to John's presentation with this short summary. He is a natural communicator, fabulous photographer, talented naturalist and enthusiastic presenter.

He is also an exceptionally busy person who generously gave the Day Group his time, including an undertaking to give a second presentation on his adventures in southern Africa.

