



# Field Nats News No.218

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.  
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April 2012

## From the President

Welcome to the April edition of the Field Nat News. Easter is nearly here, so it must be time for the Easter Bilby to dust off his basket and bonnet and prepare to start delivering all those Easter goodies. As usual, the last month has been a busy one for many of the SIG's, while others are starting to get itchy feet as they prepare for their peak season.

### Members Input – Future Directions

As highlighted in January's President's Report, the Council sought input from members on various aspects of the functioning of the club. Thank you to those members who took the time to put their thoughts "down on paper". Ten submissions were received. The Council organised a day in early March where the feedback was discussed. Many of the ideas raised were already on the Council table for discussion, so it is good to see that the Council and members think alike on many issues. A report of these discussions will be available at the AGM.

### The Victorian Naturalist and Field Nats News

One of the ideas that has been discussed is making *The Victorian Naturalist* available on-line through a link on the FNCV website. Many members, of course, already receive their FNN via email. I would like to encourage more people to contact Hali and ask to be added to the list. There are many benefits of receiving publications electronically. These are; getting the publication in colour: (think of those gorgeous nature images), not having to wait for the mail, it takes up no space on your bookshelf, it is easier to search for interesting topics and species, no recycling issues and it is financially beneficial to the Club.

As our website is improved, access to current and past issues of *The Victorian Naturalist* will also become available. If you would still like to receive yours in its current paper form, rest assured that option will always be available.

### Annual General Meeting

Just a reminder that our next Annual General Meeting is on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May

at 2 pm. This promises to be a very interesting function. Dr Gary Presland will be the speaker, his topic being, "*Aspects of the History of the FNCV*". As mentioned earlier, a summary of the work done on Future Directions of the FNCV will be presented to members. *Invitation p 4.*

John Harris, President

Due date for the May edition of FNN will be **Monday 2nd April** with FNN going to the printer on 10th and collation on 17th April.

Index	Page
From the President	1
Calendar of Events	2, 3
Members' news, photos & observations.	3
FNCV AGM invitation; Thank you to Paul George; Australasian Bat Society Conference	4
Fauna Survey Group News: Chambers Reserve, Upper Pakenham; Field trip to Alexandra	4-7
Myrtle Rust Warning	7
Day Group News: Flora, Fauna & Photography	8, 9
Extracts from SIG reports	9
Donation requested; Club notices	10
Marine Research Group News: Field trips to Flinders & Portland area	11
Nomination form for 2012 FNCV Council	12

This stunning photo, titled *Welcome Swallow babies*, taken by Ian Moodie deserves top billing. Read the report of his talk on photography given to the Day Group p 8-9.





## 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.**

### April

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Fungi Group. Meeting – *Phoenix fungi – mushrooms and other fungi appearing after fire.*** Speaker: Tom May. Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Fauna Survey Group. Meeting - *Regulating the Wildlife Trade in Victoria.*** Speaker: Mike Sverns, Senior Wildlife Investigator with DSE. Contact: Sally Bewsher 9752 1418 AH

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> – Bat Group. *Grey-headed flying-fox count.*** Meet at Yarra Bend Golf Course car park Mel 2D G7 at 5.45 pm. As a courtesy please RSVP by email or phone Megan Davidson 9380 5062; m.davidson@latrobe.edu.au

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group. Survey - Easter camp & survey in Victoria's Western District.** Contact: Russell Thompson 9434 7046 AH. Prior registration of at least a week essential.

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Juniors Group. Camp – Wedderburn.** Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairref@gmail.com

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group.** No Meeting.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group. Survey - The Jawbone, Williamstown.** Meeting 10.30 am. For meeting place and details, contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH or 0428 669 773

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April – Marine Research Group. Survey - Shoreham WP.** Meeting 8.30 am. For exact meeting place and details, contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH or 0428 669 773

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> – Fungi Group. Fungi foray - 10.30 am** Noojee, Toorong Falls Circuit (MEL X928 B5, VIC ROADS 81 B7), meet at Toorong Falls car park, Toorong Falls Rd., (turn off 2.5 k east of Noojee). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> – Botany Group. Meeting –** Speaker: Damien Cook: *'Responses of Victorian wetlands to a record wet summer after 15 dry years.'* Note this has been changed from the usual Thursday meeting night. Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>—Collate FNN 219.** Starting about 10.30 am. Some people come earlier. Contact Joan Broadbery 9846 1218

**Wed. 18<sup>th</sup> – Terrestrial Invertebrates Group. Meeting – *Native bees.*** Speaker: Ken Walker. Contact: Alan Yen 0409 194 788

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> - Fauna Survey Group. Stagwatch -** Join FSG members on the last stagwatch for this season. Help look for Leadbeater's Possum & other wildlife near Melbourne. Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fungi Group. *Fungi Foray – Fungi after Fire.*** 10.30 am. Meet at the corner of Gembrook-Launching Place Road, (C424) and the eastern side of The Pack Track, Gembrook. (MEL 299 A5). Contact: Ed Grey 9435 9019.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>— FNCV Council Meeting** 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Hali 9877 9860 or admin@fncv.org.au

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> – Day Group.** No Meeting.

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> – Geology Group. Meeting – *Working with the Melbourne Museum Paleontology Collection.*** Speaker: Ms. Lisa Nink, Public Programs Presenter, Melbourne Museum. Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; rrajh@optusnet.com.au

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> – Juniors Group. Meeting – *Victorian Mammals.*** Speaker: Wendy Clark. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairref@gmail.com

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> – Fungi Group. *Fungi foray* – 10.30 am** Badger Weir, Healesville, (MEL key map 10 R5; VIC ROADS 80 B4). Contact: Ed Grey 9435 9019.

(Continued on page 3)



**The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$2 per meeting, to cover insurance costs. Junior non-member families, \$2 per excursion only.**

(Continued from page 2)

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> – Fungimap Festival Tasmania.** Contact: fungi-map@rbg.vic.gov.au.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>—Botany Group. Field Trip.** Meet at 10.30 am. at the IGA supermarket carpark, Forest St, Castlemaine. VicRoads map 287 Q6. Join Damien Cook for a tour of Central Victorian wetlands. We may even see Fairy's Aprons. Magic! Contact Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

**ADVANCE NOTICE:**  
**Botany excursion not advertised in COE—** Experience a whole new world of plants.  
*Algae (seaweeds) of the intertidal zone. Saturday May 12, 10 am Flinders.* Come and join Mary Gibson and the Botany Group. Contact :Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

## Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for member photos, news and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: fnnews@fncv.org.au by the first Monday in the

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:

*Barrie Spencer, William Tovey, Catherine Jovanoski, Nicholas Janovski, Faye Gordes, Clive Gordes, Patricia Amaya, Gleb Beliakov, Sofia Beliakov, Chequen Beliakov, William Phillips.*

Welcome  
 Welcome

### Back Issues of *The Victorian Naturalist*

Some of you will have seen the table with back issues of *The Victorian Naturalist* on the table in the hall. I replenish this table with new issues as they run out. Please take the time to have a look and fill any gaps you may have in your collection. Leave a donation in the tin on the table.

Hali Ferguson, Admin.

### Urban Bird Feeding Station Study – A fantastic opportunity to find out more about our native birds

*Do you feed birds in your garden?  
 Are you interested in finding out more about the birds in your garden?  
 Would you like to help increase our knowledge about urban birds?*

If so, you are the perfect candidate for an urban bird feeding study that I am conducting. My name is Chanaka and I am a science student doing an observational research project on Urban Bird Feeding Stations for my honours year at Monash University. The aim is to find out which bird species use such feeding stations, how often they visit them and how they interact with the other birds that they encounter there. If you are interested in this study, I am looking for individuals or families with an area in their backyard in which they regularly feed birds. For this study I will not need any volunteers to help watch the birds, rather just people generous enough to allow me into their garden and let me watch birds.

The study will run from April to August and exact details are to be finalized, although I aim to visit each feeder several times throughout the study. I expect most of my work will occur in the early morning and late afternoon as birds are typically most active then.

If you or someone you know think that this is a project you might be interested in or would like to find out more about, please feel free to contact me.

**Chanaka Ruwandeniya**  
 Mobile: 0432693455  
 Email Address: [c.ruwandeniya@gmail.com](mailto:c.ruwandeniya@gmail.com)



### Vale Ruth Doig

Ruth Doig, who died on 22 February 2012, was elected as a member of the FNCV on 13 October 1958, and became an honorary member in December 1998. She was unable to attend that meeting but provided notes that told of her many years of enjoyment and some of the memorable FNCV members she had met. Ruth was an active participant in Club activities in the early decades of her membership, including a number of the major excursions. She also participated in a trip to Central Australia in August 1960. While it was not an FNCV excursion, a number of Club members took part, as well as members of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club; Ruth was a member of both groups. She was a regular at FNCV Day Group meetings in the latter half of the 1990s, and became so again when the Day Group was revived in June 2008. In April 2009 she gave a talk to the Group, on the Central Australian trip



## FNCV AGM Sunday 6th May 2 pm

*You are invited to attend the FNCV AGM, FNCV hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn.*

**Agenda:** Annual Report, Election of Council\*, Honorary & Long Term memberships, Environment Fund, Future Directions of the FNCV

**Speaker:** Dr. Gary Presland. '*Aspects of the History of the FNCV*'



**Afternoon tea served, all welcome.**

\*Nominations for the committee due in the office 48 hours before the meeting.  
See p12 for Council nomination form

### A BIG 'THANK YOU' TO PAUL GEORGE

Highly respected FNCV Fungi Group chairperson Paul George has stepped down after eight years. When the Fungi Group SIG was formed back in 2004, Paul volunteered to be the chairperson, and proved to be so well suited to this position that no one ever imagined that a time would come when he would want to retire!

During his stewardship, Paul was able to impart his extensive knowledge about fungi to the Fungi Group, while with his considerable skills in macro photography he produced exciting images of fungi that inspired new members to join. He gave many talks, introducing countless fungi – as well as slime moulds – to the members. He also gave talks about fungi to the Day Group, the Juniors, and a large number of organisations in the wider community.

In addition to managing our group and leading numerous forays, Paul produced the first two Fungi Group CDs, *Fungi Group Forays 2004* and *Fungi Group 2005*, and was the Fungi Group SIG representative on FNCV Council for at least two years. Fortunately, although no longer the chairperson, he will remain a member and will still participate in the forays, where his expert knowledge, infectious enthusiasm and genial company will be very welcome indeed. Thank you, Paul!

**Virgil and Jurrie Hubregtse**



### 15th Australasian Bat Society

### Conference & AGM

The 15th Australasian Bat Society Conference is to be held on 11-13 April 2012 at the University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, in the Turner Lecture Theatre in the School of Botany

The Australasian Bat Society, Inc. Annual General Meeting will be held during the conference.

We welcome everyone with an interest in bats to attend this conference. See website for registration details, including costs.

The conference runs from Wednesday 11th to Friday 13th April 2012, with a welcoming function on the evening of Tues. 10th April.

On Wednesday there will be a public forum with a range of speakers.

*All welcome. Cost of forum \$50.*

A post-conference field trip will be held on Saturday 14th – Sunday 15th April 2012.

**Further information will be found on the ABS website:**

<http://ausbats.org.au/2012-conference>



## Fauna Survey Group

### Chambers Reserve, Upper Pakenham February 2012

Late in 2011, the Toomuc Valley Land-care Group approached the Fauna Survey Group to assist them in adding to their knowledge of the fauna of Chambers Reserve, Upper Pakenham. As a result we visited the reserve for our February survey trip and were warmly welcomed by this very enthusiastic group.

Chambers Reserve is managed by Cardinia Council. It is 121 ha in size and was logged in the early 1900s and 1960s, before being preserved as bushland. The reserve has numerous walking tracks and a pleasant picnic area, where we were granted permission to camp. Horse riders are able to use the outer trails, which had been slashed just prior to our survey, but clearly they use other tracks too at times. There are several vegetation communities including: drier open forest of Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) mixed with Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*) and an understorey of wire grass; beautiful wet gullies full of tree ferns; riparian forest along Toomuc Creek, which has several small intermittent tributaries flowing into it; and stands of eucalypts such as Mountain Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus cypello-carpa*), Manna Gum (*E. Viminalis*) and more Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*) with a dense understorey. There are many native grasses, along with sedges, rushes and ferns present and a good record of indigenous orchids exists. We observed Hyacinth Orchids, some late Tongue Orchids, Banksia spinulosa and Cassinia species in flower. Except along the main Toomuc Creek and tracks, there appeared to be surprisingly few weeds throughout the reserve.

Traps were set in two locations over both Friday and Saturday nights, along with all four of our Harp traps. General observations were made at both sites, as well as at the campsite and we went spotlighting on Friday evening.

Our first exciting sighting was of a Lace Monitor or Tree Goanna (*Varinus varius*), seen before we had even begun setting up traps. The locals said they had never seen



Lace Monitor *Varinus varius*. S. Bewsher

one in the reserve, although it had been recorded in the past as being present. Several of us saw a Sambar Deer (*Cervus unicolor*) crash through the bush and then cross a track as we were putting out our trap lines a little later and many of us saw a Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) perched high up in the trees too. An Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*) was seen feeding one of its offspring with a McCoy's Skink (*Anepischtos maccoyi*), which was quite amusing, as the young bird initially tried to eat the skink tail first, then had a second and third try before swallowing it head first. While the cage traps caught nothing over the weekend, the Elliott traps yielded several Agile Antechinus (*Antechinus agilis*) and Bush Rats (*Rattus fuscipes*). The Harp traps caught three species of bats and many bird observations were made, particularly with the help of some keen bird observers.

It appears that little if any trapping had been carried out prior to our stay.

We were pleased with the results of our efforts and, as anticipated, we added many common species to the known fauna list – nineteen in fact. No bats had been previously recorded, so the three caught, Chocolate Wattled Bat (*Chalinilobus morio*), Lesser Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*) and Little Forest Bat, (*Vespedalus vulturnus*) and the one which was heard, White-striped Freetail Bat (*Austronomus australis*) were a positive start. Surprisingly, a couple of other common bats were not found, but are most likely present. A number of adult and juvenile Water Skinks (*Eulamprus tympanum*) were seen or handled and two Garden Skinks (*Lampropholis guichenoti*) were recorded. Mammals additions were of the Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), the Mountain Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus caninus*), Eastern Grey Kangaroos (*Macropus giganteus*), Black Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*), Common Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*), Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*), Bush Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) and the introduced European Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and Sambar Deer (*Cervus unicolor*). Ewing's or Brown Tree Frogs (*Littoria ewingii*) and Striped Marsh Frogs (*Limnodynastes peronii*) were heard calling and two new birds were added too, namely the Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) and Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*).

(An unexpected sighting of a Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) seen during spotlighting the week before our visit was another new record for this



Water Skink—*Eulamprus tympanum* S. Bewsher

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

bushland area. All our results are sent to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas as part of our permit and this record, along with other sightings, will be noted separately).

On Friday night, a large number of people met in the picnic shelter before splitting into four groups to go spotlighting along



the road and tracks. Only Edward, Hazel & Su a few species were observed or heard, perhaps because

of the moonlight. These included Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*), Common Froglets (*Crinia signifera*), Striped Marsh Frogs (*Limnodynastes peronii*), Southern Boobook Owl (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*), some roosting birds and a Bobuck or Mountain Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus caninus*).

On Saturday evening we were invited to a combined thank you with Landcare and Fauna Survey Group members. The weather continued to hold off or to circle around us and we had time to socialise, enjoy the views across the valley and partake of the scrumptious food on offer. On dusk, an eager group, including some children, ducked off to release the bats. There were many cries of surprise and wonder as the microbats emerged from the holding bag and then flew off into the darkening sky. We returned for dessert, before eventually heading back to our tents after a sensational evening. Many thanks go to Don and

Sue for their wonderful hospitality. During the camp two Powerful Owl (*N. strenua*) pellets, which had been found in Chambers Reserve prior to our visit, were also examined. The bones in both pellets were identified as being the remains of a juvenile Yellow-bellied Glider (*P. australis*) which was a most interesting find. The owl had been observed from time to

time in previous weeks with the remains of numerous Common Ring-tailed Possums (*Pseudochireirus peregrinus*), but none were seen during the survey. The bird had possibly reduced their numbers and had then been lucky enough to grab the juvenile glider.

**Summary of trapping results**

Total cage trap nights - 20. Total Elliott trap nights = 200. Total Harp trap nights = 8.

Species	Female	Male	Total
Agile Antechinus	1	5	6
Bush Rat	7 adults, 3 juveniles	0	10
Chocolate Wattle Bat	11	5	16
Lesser Long-eared Bat	3	0	3
Little Forest Bat	14	10	24

The weekend was a great success, with about thirty Landcare members and two Cardinia Council officers joining us at some stage during Friday, Saturday or Sunday for the various activities. Thanks go to the other Fauna Survey Group permit holders and FNCV members who helped make everything run smoothly, as well as to the wonderful Landcare Group,



Agile Antechinus *Antechinus agilis* S. Bewsher

who showed lots of interest in our work, did so much to assist us and who clearly love their piece of bushland.

Sally Bewsher

\*The Landcare group has a website if you are interested to learn more about them. [toomu.landcare.com.au](http://toomu.landcare.com.au)

**Field trip to Alexandra 26-29th January 2012**

Twelve members made the trip to Alexandra to survey three reserves on the town's southern outskirts. Adjacent to Mt Pleasant Road, the three reserves total approximately 100 hectares. Two (McKenzie Nature Conservation Reserve and Alexandra Bushland Reserve) are under the management of Parks Victoria while the other, Mt Pleasant Reserve, is managed by a committee under a Trust for Nature covenant.

The reserves are typical of small bush remnants which fail to attract many resources to support their ongoing management, but are supported by small interest groups, in this case the Upper Goulburn Field Nats.

The reserves contain three threatened Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) which have regenerated over the last 150 years after being cleared through gold prospecting activity.

We were lucky enough to have camping facilities on the property of Lorraine and Barry Pyke, located on the banks of the Goulburn River. As well as being a fantastic place to camp, the area was a haven for bird life.

The weekend consisted of early mornings and late evenings as we set and checked our traps, searched for fauna by day and spot-lighting by night. We also reviewed the success of hollows and nest boxes placed by interested parties in the last 15 years (old growth trees and hollows being in short supply).

Some 110 species were identified during the weekend (four amphibians, 82 birds, 19 mammals and five reptiles).

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Memorable moments included:

- A Sugar Glider being caught in an Elliott trap
- Two species of frog caught in our bat traps
- A Tiger Snake eating a Pobblebonk frog
- Noting a Whistling Tree Frog change colour from the light colour that matched the bat trap to a darker shade when placed amongst wet vegetation.
- 14 of the 26 logs and nest boxes were being used or contained evidence of use
- The balmy happy hour on Saturday evening after a job well done

Everybody survived the weekend except a certain members' tooth and, sadly, the Pobblebonk.

**Robin Drury**

**Ed.** A highlight for Robin was finding and photographing Verreaux's Tree Frog for the first time.



## MYRTLE RUST

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) would like to advise that the exotic plant disease myrtle rust has now been identified in nine commercial nursery premises, mainly in the metropolitan region of Melbourne and one on the Morning Peninsula. As yet there have been no detections in the natural environment.

Myrtle rust, which is now widespread in New South Wales and Queensland, is of significant concern because it potentially affects all members of the Myrtaceae plant family, including Australian native species such as lilly pillys, bottle-brushes, tea trees and eucalypts. Over 100 known myrtaceous hosts have been identified within the natural environment, but the full host range is not yet known.

In collaboration with government agencies, local council and industry representatives, DPI has developed a response plan to deal with the incursion of myrtle rust into Victoria. Because myrtle rust is currently contained on commercial premises, DPI is asking people to simply keep an eye out for the disease and report suspected detections, particularly in the Port Phillip/Westernport region.

DPI is collecting host species data and mapping disease distribution to inform the community and to assist research into the full host range of myrtle rust and long-term solutions for management.

Further information can be found on the DPI website [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust). The response plan or training package can be obtained by emailing [plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au)

**Photos from Alexandra FSG trip: clockwise, from top left.:**

*Checking nest-boxes; *Litoria verreauxii* verreauxii; group members—from left, Barbara, Sally, Joan, Greg, Robin, Russell; Juvenile Sugar Glider caught in Elliott trap; Three Toed Skink* Photos: S. Bewsher

The capture and handling of all animals on FNCV field trips is done strictly in accordance with the club's research permits.



## Day Group

Ian Moodie from ParksWide, a department of Whitehorse Council, was the speaker at the February meeting of the FNCV Day Group. Ian's topic was advertised as *'Flora, Fauna, Photography and the Uses to Which it can be Put'*. However, his title slide read, *'How not to take good pic-chewers' or 'Here are some mistakes you might like to try yourself'*. This set the tone for an instructive and fun morning looking at the pleasure and pain of nature photography.

Ian's first question was, "What makes a 'good' picture good?" The answer is of course subjective. Some suggested (and illustrated) criteria were: artistic, quirky, personal or perhaps a startling juxtaposition of subjects. See below, *Spider attack*.



Ian does not usually choose to manipulate his images except to correct obvious faults such as red eye or cropping out a distracting background.

### A few tips for taking good pictures

- Know your equipment and in particular keep it with you. Ian often finds his subjects opportunistically while walking in the bush. See p 9, *Dirty big Snake and victim*.
- Know your subject and where to find it. For example, suitable habitat, food preferences, time of day.
- Know your limitations. Most of Ian's images are hand held, but this is virtually impossible beyond a speed of 1/15 of a second.
- BUT - be prepared to push those limits! Remember, 'Luck favours the prepared mind', -*Louis Pasteur*.

**'People hah, they're the worst'. - Jerry Seinfeld.**

In this segment Ian unleashed a set of images of people with faces in shadow, inappropriate hats, stiffly posed groups etc. He then proceeded to show us how these faults could be corrected with fill-in flash, more relaxed poses or using angles less harsh than full frontal.

### Macro Photography

For this, a Single Lens Reflex camera using a viewfinder and macro lens is almost essential. Macro photography has many limitations, in particular a shallow depth of field and often poor lighting. Always important is a steady hand, perhaps braced with elbows close to the body or leaning against an object such as a tree or fence. Other solutions are: (a) Increasing the camera's ISO setting - (but this risks grainy photos or 'noise'). (b) Using flash - ring or double close up are recommended. (c) Using a tripod to avoid camera shake at the slower shutter speeds needed to let in more light.

It was obvious that macro photography is Ian's forte and great love. His many close-up nature photos were absolutely stunning. They included an ultra close-up of a dragonfly eye. (See upper right), A Peacock Jumping Spider, (see above), the beautiful antennae of an Emperor Gum Moth, an Ogre-faced (also called Net-casting) Spider and an Elbow Orchid. In addition Ian was able to give us a little of the natural history of his sub-



jects. For example, the Peacock Jumping Spider spreads out its multi-coloured tail and dances about the attract females.

### Compositional Theory

There were many valuable tips, illustrated with appropriate images.

- Many photos benefit from using an object or person to provide a sense of scale.
- Rather than being in the centre, it is pleasing to the eye to place the subject of a photo to one side. The photographer should try to avoid having the sky, water or land occupy half an image. Instead he/she should aim for about a third. This is often known as "the rule of thirds".
- Framing, for example with foliage or a branches, helps isolate the subject.
- The eye can be lead into a picture with a diagonal such as a path or river.
- Odd numbers of subjects e.g. 1, 3 or 5, work better than evens. Avoid 2 or 4 subjects, (birds, flowers, insects), unless they are touching or in close proximity.
- A slightly unusual perspective can pay big dividends. For example photographing through fog, homing-in on an

eye or shooting from an unusual angle e.g. below.

- Don't overlook the impact of patterns in nature, such as rocks, berries or terraced fields.

Ian's final bracket of images were entitled. **Things**

**NOT to do.** They encompassed:

- the perils of auto focus.
- Depth of field too great, resulting in a cluttered background, (use a

(Continued on page 9)





(Continued from page 8)

faster shutter speed).

- the importance of always getting the eye in focus.
- avoiding one's own shadow.

Photography is extremely important in recording the natural world and most members of our club frequently use a camera. Ian cleverly reduced what can be complicated technical explanations to a series of seemingly simple propositions. Each point in Ian's talk was reinforced with carefully chosen images. These perfectly complimented his wise words. It is therefore almost impossible for this report to do justice to such a visual presentation. Luckily Ian has generously allowed FNN to publish a number of his photographs. It is also difficult to convey just how much fun we had. Ian's style was light-hearted and witty and we laughed as we learned, always a winning combination.

On behalf of the Day Group I would once again like to record our thanks to Ian and also to Gary Presland for chairing the meeting and organising the day group program.

**Joan Broadberry**



Dirty big snake & victim. (Olive Python swallowing a wallaby– ed.)  
Photo: I. Moodie

**EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF THE SIG REPORTS GIVEN AT THE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING**

**Botany Group**

Meeting 16/2/2012. *Sex in the Sphacelariales (brown algae)*. This order of brown algae is mostly marine, with 3 species found in brackish water, and possibly 1 fresh water species. There is a gametophyte which a haploid and a diploid sporophyte. In some locations only haploid algae are found, and other sites only diploid algae are found. It happens that members of the order Sphacelariales are only fertilized under certain conditions, being 13 deg C and 9.5 hour day length. Therefore sex is very rare.



**Fauna Survey Group**

- Meeting 7/02/2012. The speaker was unable to attend so John Harris spoke about *Bird Watching in New Caledonia*.
- Survey 11/12/02/2012 Chamber's Reserve, Pakenham Upper. This was an excellent weekend, working with the Toomuc Landcare Group. FSG were able to add many species to their list.
- Stagwatch 25/02/2012 This was cancelled due to Total Fire Ban and the heat.



**Fungi Group**

Paul George, who has been the highly respected chairperson of The Fungi Group since its inception nearly eight years ago, decided to step down from the position. He called a special meeting to elect a new chairperson. This meeting was held on 13 February, with eight members present. The only nomination received was for Jurrie Hubregtse, who was subsequently elected.

Jurrie thanked Paul for all the work he has done in running the Group and guiding it to a point where the members have developed considerable skills in identifying fungi. Jurrie then presented Paul with a bottle of FNCV wine. See also FNN p4



**Geology Group**

The last Geology Group meeting was a talk by Dr Stuart Mills from Museum Victoria about *How Minerals Form*. This was an interesting and well attended talk with about thirty people there.



**Marine Research group**

- The February meeting, one week early, was an interesting talk by Fiona Warry from DSE. She spoke about using fish as indicators of the ecological condition of estuaries. She uses stable isotopes to find out how many steps up the food chain from plants the fish are and what plants are available in the area.
- The following week the MRG went to Portland. They surveyed six locations. Twelve people participated, including some local rangers. This was a good trip.



## Donations requested for 2nd Hall Mural

If you are in the building, please take the time to look at our wonderful new mural on the wall next to the kitchen. *See FNN 217 for story.*

We are raising money for a second mural to be painted by the same artist, Lori Duncan, on the back (south) wall of the hall. A coloured drawing of the design of the proposed mural is available to view in the office. If you care to donate, mail your details to FNCV, Locked Bag 3, BLACKBURN 3130; ring 9877 9860 or email: [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au) All donations will be acknowledged in FNN.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



*Detail from the new mural.*

TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$
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\*Please make cheques payable to *Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc* or provide credit card details:

VISA       Mastercard

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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CARDHOLDER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE: /

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

## Donations for Hall

Thank you to the people who have responded to my unusual request for items for the hall. These supplies will be used in the running of the kitchen and the hall generally. If you could put one item from the list in your shopping trolley and bring it when next come in, it would be greatly appreciated.

This month's donations are:

*Coffee (instant Nescafe or McCona preferred)*

*Liquid hand-soap*

*Pine-o-clean wipes (for bin) OR*

*Gift vouchers from Office Works, Coles or Safeway.*

**Once again, thanks—Hali**

### Thanks to the editorial and layout team for FNN 218

Joan Broadberry  
Platon Vafiadis  
Hali Ferguson  
Sally Bewsher

## Volunteer Register

As the club moves forward, the role of the volunteer is more vital than ever before. To facilitate our volunteer resources and spread the load, we are once again asking members to take the time to fill in the Volunteer Register form and return it to the office. For those who don't know, this is **not** a commitment, but a list of those who might be asked to help out with activities from time to time. The form can be collected from the office or down-loaded from the website.



*Please consider getting more involved in YOUR club.*  
**Every SMALL contribution can make a BIG difference.**

### Thanks to those who helped col- late and label FNN 217

Keith Marshall  
Dorothy Mahler  
Noel Schleiger  
June Anton  
Andrew Brentnall  
Hazel Brentnall  
Edward Brentnall  
Pieter Boschma  
Joan Broadberry  
Sheina Nichols  
Bill Fenner  
Ray Power

## STOP PRESS The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria is now on Facebook!!

Just press 'Like' and you will receive weekly updated calendars and club news quickly and easily. While you are there, the Marine Research Group is also now on Facebook.



**Your milk bottle caps can make \$ for the club. Box is in kitchen.**



## Marine Research Group News

### Report on the MRG field trip to Mushroom Reef, Flinders Ocean Beach, Saturday 24 December, 2011.

A nice low tide and a sunny afternoon-evening greeted us for this Christmas Eve field trip. This picturesque and species-rich site once again proved interesting, with records made of the common representatives across the molluscan, cnidarian, polychaete, crustacean and echinoderm fauna.

The clusters of the cone shell *Conus anemone* under sub littoral rocks were enormous. The fasciolarid *Pleuroploca australasia* with egg capsules and the trochids *Stomatella impertusa* and *Granata imbricata* were nice records. Adult specimens of the dove-shell *Mitrella semiconvexa* were common as was *Cystiscus obesulus* on the *Amphibolis* seagrass. The uncommonly seen sea star *Meridiastra nigranota* was most pleasing. Overall, a very good evening out.

### Report on the MRG field trip to Yellow Rock, south of Portland, Victoria, Monday 13 February, 2012

This harsh, exposed rocky coastline just south of Portland opened the five day extended excursion to the region. The air breathing snail *Marinula xanthostoma* was present amongst the upper/supra-littoral rocky rubble, and upper littoral rocks had a good assemblage of the limpets *Scutellastra peroni*, *Cellana tramoserica*, *Lottia mixta*, *Notoacmea alta* (on the mussel *Brachidontes rostratus*), *Patelloida alticostata* and *latistrigata*, and *Notoacmea mayi*.

As with our last visit to the area five years ago, the elongate cerithiopsid snails *Seila crocea* (all orange) and *Seila albosutura* (dark brown with white spiral ribs) were feeding on encrusting sponges growing on rocks. The opisthobranch *Corambe* sp. was collected on its food—encrusting *Electra pilosa* bryozoans growing on the stems of brown algae. Several

interesting micro-molluscs were collected from algae and encrusting material including the pyramidellid *Pseudoskenella depressa*, and the anabathrid *Pisinna approxima*. Four species of crab and only one echinoderm, the sea star *Meridiastra calcar* (which was abundant) were recorded. Pleasing opisthobranch records included the stunning nudibranch *Madrella sanguinea*, *Hermaea* sp and *Runcina australis*. A beautiful cluster of *Culicia* hard corals, the sand octopus *Octopus kaurna* and a sole sea-spider, *Anoplodactylus evansi*, were also pleasing records.

### Report on the MRG field trip to Murrells Beach, Portland region, Tuesday 14 February, 2012

This locality, south of Portland and on the eastern aspect of Bridgewater Bay, was accessed by a dirt track coming off the road to the Cape Nelson lighthouse, and then a long walk down a moderately steep escarpment to the sweeping coastline and rocky basalt reef. Flint was abundantly washed up on the shore, and fossil shells, all of currently living species, could be seen weathering out of sandstone (?) at the shoreline, some so vibrant in colour that they looked fresh. This locality was more productive as there were many loose rocks to turn, and algal cover was good.

Highlights included the nemertean *Notospermius genniculatus*, the chiton *Chiton diaphorus*, the mitre shell *Mitra carbonaria*, two juvenile *Noto-cypraea piperita* cowries, the nudibranchs *Discodoris paroa*, *Rostanga calamus* and *Phyllodesmium serratum*, and more of the sand octopus, *Octopus kaurna*. Several *Stimdromia lateralis* crabs with the protective sponge covers were pleasing records. The sea star *Aquilonastra scobinata* was not uncommon, but perhaps the highlight of the day (apart from the micro-mollusc *Lironoba australis*!) was the stunning crab *Actaea peroni*, found by John Eichler under a sub-littoral rock. A beautiful location and a very enjoyable field day.



*Actaea peroni*, Murrells Beach.  
Tues. 14 Feb. 2012. Photo: P. Vafiadis

### Report on the MRG field trip to Sealers Cove, Cape Bridgewater, Victoria, Wed. 15 February, 2012

This locality is on the western aspect of Bridgewater Bay adjacent to the town of Cape Bridgewater. The littoral zone is composed of rocky basalt reef, with a narrow intertidal band that does not see much exposure to air, the result being quite slippery rocks. It once again proved to be very rich, with unusual records including the chitons *Rhysso-plax diaphora*, *Notoplax rubrostrata*, and the uncommonly seen snails *Naricava vincentiana* (Vanikoridae), *Benthoxystus petterdi* and *Litozamia brazieri* (both Muricidae).



*Notoplax rubrostrata*, Cape Bridgewater.  
Wed. 15 Feb. 2012. Photo: P. Vafiadis

Pleasingly (remembering the Portland region as an initial point of abalone viral ganglioneuritis outbreak in Victoria some years ago—see MRG page of FNN 180, Oct. 2008), the abalone *Haliotis rubra* was common and large adults were present. Crabs included *Petrocheles australiensis*. Echinoderms were well represented with 8 holothuroid, 7 sea star, 2 brittle star and 2 echinoid species.

**P. Vafiadis**



# NOMINATION FORM FOR FNCV COUNCIL 2012

The FNCV AGM will be held on Sunday 6th May,  
2 pm FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn 3130

Name of Member Nominated .....

Position Nominated \* .....

Signature of Member Nominated .....

## TWO MEMBERS SUPPORTING NOMINATION

Name ..... Signature .....Date.....

Name ..... Signature .....Date.....

\*Elected members of the FNCV Council are President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer and six Councillors. Councillors must be FNCV members. (Council also consists of Immediate Past President, and a representative, nominated in writing by each Special Interest Group.)

**Please return this form to the FNCV office  
Locked Bag 3, Blackburn 3130  
Phone/Fax 9877 9860  
E-mail: admin@fncv.org.au**

*Nominations must reach the registered office of the Club no later than 48 hours before the AGM, i.e. Friday 4th May by 2 pm..*

## Field Nats News 218



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