



Field Nats News No.242

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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Understanding Our Natural World
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June 2014

Photo: Barbara Burns



A very successful FNCV AGM was held on 4th May. The special resolution adopting a revised constitution was passed unanimously. Congratulations to the newly elected Council (listed below). A summary of the minutes will appear in the July issue of FNN. Long term memberships were awarded, see p3. Environment fund grants were announced. See p 9. Dr Euan Ritchie spoke on "A PNG Adventure".

FNCV Council 2014

President: John Harris
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Barbara Burns
Asst Treasurer: Vacant
Councillors: Andy Brentnall, Sally Bewsher,
Su Dempsey, Joan Broadberry.

SIG Representatives:

Botany: Sue Bendel
Day Group: Vacant
Fauna Survey: Ian Kitchen
Fungi: Vacant
Geology: Ruth Hoskin
Juniors: Claire Ferguson
Marine Research: Audrey Falconer, Leon Altoff
Microscopy: Vacant
Terrestrial Invertebrates: Maxwell Campbell

Thanks to those who helped collate & label FNN 241

Hazel Brentnall
Edward Brentnall
Andrew Brentnall
Keith Marshall
Bill Fenner
Ray Power
Cecily Falkingham
Neil McLachlan
Joan Broadberry
Sheina Nicholls
Margaret Corrick
Margaret Brewster

The deadline for the July newsletter will be **Tuesday 3rd June**. FNN will go to the printer on 10th June with collation on 17th June.

Saturday 21st – FNCV Members’ Working Bee – Garden makeover Preliminaries

“Many hands make light work”—bring tools, energy and some lunch

From 10.00 am at the FNCV hall. Contact: Barbara Burns
Ph: 9846 2608



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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. On days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.

JUNE

Sunday 1st – Fungi Group Foray: Garden of St Erth. Meet at 10.30 am, Garden of St Erth Carpark, Jack Cann Reserve, Simmons Reef Road, Blackwood (Melway Ed. 37 X909 E11). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Monday 2nd - Fungi Group Meeting: Systematics and biogeography of the mushroom genera *Austropaxillis*, *Austroboletus* and *Gymnopaxillis*. Speaker: Gregory Bonito, a Research Scientist, currently at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, previously Duke University, North Carolina. Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Tuesday 3rd - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: Interactions between introduced predators and fire, based in the Otway Ranges. Speaker: Bronwyn Hradsky, PhD Candidate, Melbourne School of Land and Environment. Contact: Ray Gibson

Friday 6th to Monday 9th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: Arboreal Mammal Survey in the Grampians
Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury@hotmail.com

Sunday 8th – Fungi Group Foray: Mount Worth State Park. Meet at 10.30 am, Moonlight Creek picnic area (Melway X912 U8, Vic Roads 97 B6) Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Monday 9th - Marine Research Group No meeting—Public Holiday

Sunday 15th – Fungi Group Foray: Kinglake National Park. Meet at 10.30 am, Jehosaphat Gully Picnic Ground. Access off Kinglake-Healesville Road (C724) (Melway Ed. 37 X910 P11, Vic Roads Ed 8, 79 G2) or download new *Parks Victoria Visitors Guide* for better detail. Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Tuesday 17th—Collate FNN. Starting about 10.00 am. Some folk come earlier. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

Wednesday 18th- Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Meeting: An overview of invertebrate parasites. Speaker: Professor Ian Beveridge. Contact: Maxwell Campbell 0409 143538; 9544 0181 AH; mcam7307@bigpond.net.au

Thursday 19th – Botany Group Meeting: Recovery of Tall *Astelia* in Kurth Kiln Park. Speaker Jasper Hails.
Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Saturday 21st – FNCV Members Working Bee – Garden makeover preliminaries
Meet at 10.00 am at the FNCV hall. Contact: Barbara Burns Ph: 9846 2608

Sunday 22nd – Juniors' Group Excursion: Greens Bush, Baldry Crossing, Mornington Peninsula with FNCV Fungi Group Foray Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclaief@gmail.com

Sunday 22nd – Fungi Group Foray: Mornington Peninsula National Park Meet at 10.30 am, Baldry Crossing, Greens Bush Melway Ed. 37, 254 G6 Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Monday 23th - FNCV Council Meeting - 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Wendy 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 24th – Day Group Meeting: Experiences of being a wildlife shelter operator Speaker: Adriana Simmonds. Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat. Speaker at 11 am. Contact Gary Presland 9890 9288

Wednesday 25th – Geology Group Meeting: Mid-Palaeozoic Ostracoda of central Victoria, southeast Australia
Speaker: Ms. Tamara Camilleri, Deakin University. Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; rrajh@optusnet.com.au

Friday 27th – Juniors' Group Meeting: A week of madness in far north Qld. Speaker: John Harris
Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclaief@gmail.com

Sunday 29th – Fungi Group Foray: Cathedral Range State Park. Meet at 10.30 am, Ned's Gully car park (Melway Ed. 37 Map X 910 T9). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775



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.

Members' news, photos & observations

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

Welcome
Welcome

From the Office.....



- Could people paying their subscription fees by direct entry into the FNCV bank account please take extra care to include their membership number and name.
- Also, if you wish to make a donation, please could you email the office stating exactly how you would like your donation to be used.
- PLEASE NOTE: The FNCV fax will be discontinued from 1st August.

Wendy Gare

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

Alice Verrall, Sara Mellow, David Prabhakar, Lyn Munro, Fran McLean, Alan McLean, Viktoria Lonnstedt, Ingrid Lonnstedt, Petter Lonnstedt, Maja Lonnstedt, Axel Lonnstedt, Sofia Lonnstedt, Nikki Nieuwhof, Lief Bloomer, Philip Erm, Jose Ramos, Ethan Ramos, Shari Barmos, Charlie Heather, Craig Heather, Henry Heather, Tomas Heather, Victoria Henkes



Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 242

Joan Broadberry, Wendy Gare, Sally Bewsher

Congratulations to Members awarded FNCV Long-term Membership at the AGM

At the recent AG fifteen members were awarded certificates of Long-term Membership in recognition of being a member of the FNCV for a continuous period of 40 years. Eight of them were present at the AGM to receive their certificates. Congratulations and thank you to you all for making such valuable contributions to the club:

- Dr Robyn ADAMS: has lectured to the Botany Group; had three papers and one book review published in *The Victorian Naturalist* between 1991 and 2004.
- William ASHBURNER: was a member of Council 1985 – 1986; was Conservation Co-ordinator 1990–1991
- Chris BAULCH
- Dr Rod BIRD: has had five papers published in *The Victorian Naturalist* between 1999 and 2011. Has been a major contributor in recent attempts to revitalise the FNCV website.
- Maxwell CAMPBELL is a current member of Council, as the representative for the Terrestrial Invertebrate Group.
- Joan DIXON: has had 14 papers and two book reviews published in *The Victorian Naturalist* between 1968 and 2001; has also been a referee for The Vic Nat, on a number of occasions
- Ray GIBSON: was a member of Council 1973 – 1976; and again as FSG Rep 2000 – 2001. Contributed numerous reports of FSG activities for *Field Nats News* since 1995. Has written tributes to two former members, Stephen Craig and Robert Taylor which were published in *The Victorian Naturalist*.
- David JACKSON: A retired Compliance Officer with the NSW Department of Environment. He spoke to us about how useful the FNCV publications were in his work protecting the environment against damaging developments. David and his wife journeyed down from Merimbula to attend the meeting.
- Douglas JINKS: was a member of Council 1980 – 1981. He spoke of a lifetime interest in Natural History which has been taken up by his children.
- Lindsay JOLLEY
- Dr Murray LITTLEJOHN: is currently a member of the Award Committee for the ANHM; has eight papers published in *The Victorian Naturalist* between 1963 and 1987.
- Dr Robert ROGERS: was a member of Council 1991-2000 and Assistant treasurer 2001-2002.
- Rosalie STROTHER
- Elizabeth TURNBALL: member of Council 1981-1982
- John ZIMMER: was group secretary for Entomology and Marine Biology Group, 1975-1976

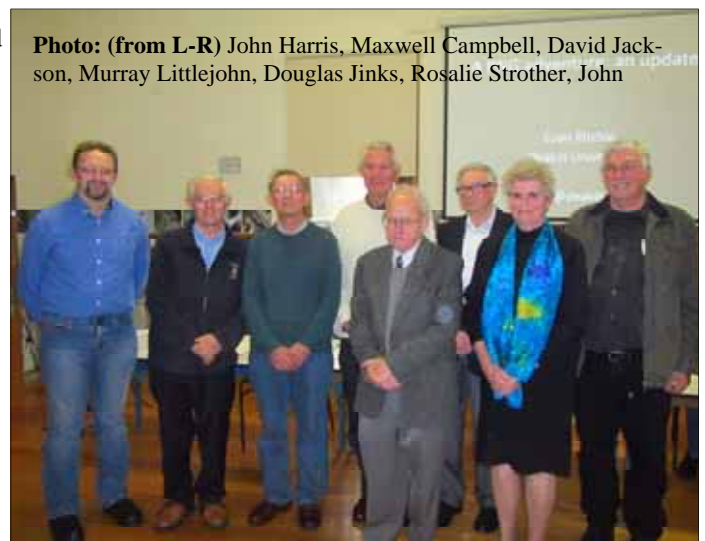


Photo: (from L-R) John Harris, Maxwell Campbell, David Jackson, Murray Littlejohn, Douglas Jinks, Rosalie Strother, John



Geology Group

'BAY WEST' EXCURSION

April 6, 2014

Leader: Graham Patterson

This day excursion took in a number of geological and historical features of the western part of Port Phillip Bay, commencing in Altona, ending in Geelong, and travelling via Point Cook, Werribee South, Kirk Point to Moorpanyal Park on the North Shore, Geelong.

Refers to photo, bottom left
Werribee River, Werribee South
During the Pleistocene (> 80,000 years ago), the Werribee River created a large silty delta at its mouth, dropping sediments on top of a base of 'Newer Volcanics' basalt. This was followed by a lowering of sea level (>20,000 years ago), which created cliffs along the river banks. Sea level rise again has left the low reddish cliffs seen today.



Brachiopod (? *Magadinella* sp.) fossil



Photo: Helen Mill



Kirk Point, Avalon
Low profile landscape and beach. Rocks are 'Newer Volcanics' basalt (less than 2Ma old). This is the site for the proposed Bay West shipping port.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF THE TRIP
Relevant information is to be found under each photograph

Doug Grant Reserve, Altona
Low sand spits in background. This is one of the few locations on the Victorian coast where land is being naturally reclaimed from the sea.

The wooden pylons are remnants of the pier that served the nearby Truganina Explosives Reserve, which operated from 1901 to 1962. Most of the reserve is now part of the Cheetham Wetlands, seen further in the background.



Photo: Graham Patterson



Moorpanyal Park, North Shore, Geelong
Site of State Geological Significance
The lower section of the cliff dates from the Miocene (10-12Ma) and contains many fossils including bivalves, molluscs and bryozoans in the limestone.



Gastropod (*Turritella* sp.) fossil (approx 4 cm long)

For those who would like to explore Port Phillip Bay more extensively, Graham has written a book *Coastal guide to nature and history: Port Phillip Bay*, which is available through the FNCV bookshop.

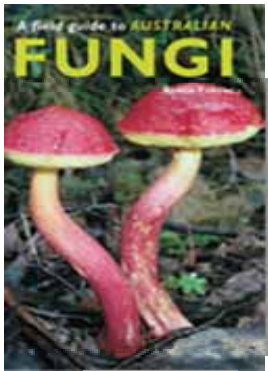
Kaye Oddie

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

NEWS FROM THE BOOKSHOP

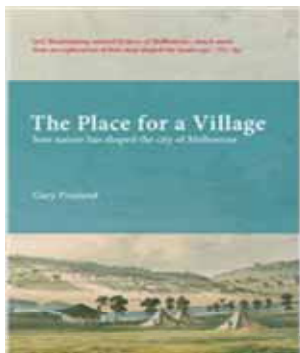
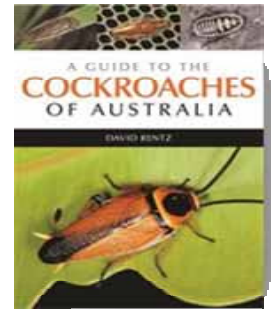
Below is a small selection of books that are currently available on the shelves of the bookshop. There are new titles and updated editions being added to the collection each month. Particularly this month, there is a wide range of naturalist books now available on the book shelf that are suitable for the young reader of any age up to and over 8 years old. There are Australiana books suitable for parents, grandparents or great grandparents to read to children that are 0 – 5 years of age. Send me an email at bookshop@fncv.org.au for any of your orders or book queries. The new and improved website www.fncv.org.au/fncv-bookshop/, will soon provide a more current and comprehensive list of books that are available to order and purchase.

Happy reading—Kathy



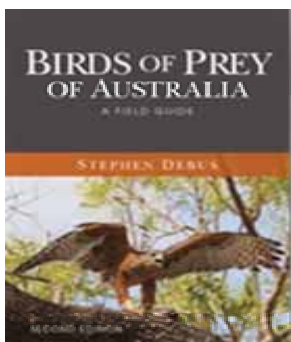
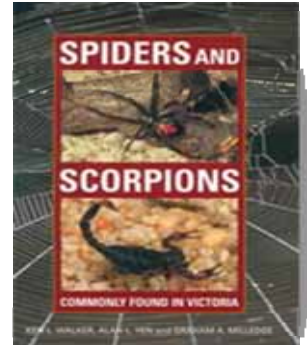
A field guide to Australian Fungi (B. Fuhrer) is a definitive guide covering more than 500 fungi species with 548 superb colour photographs. Information is provided on biology, ecology, classification, distribution, roles of fungi in nature and the spore prints of fungi. **RRP \$49.95, Members \$39.95.**

A Guide to the Cockroaches of Australia (D. Rentz) provides comprehensive information of most of 550 described species found in Australia. It provides a guide to the identification, collection, preservation and storage of native and pest cockroaches of Australia. **RRP \$49.95, Members \$40.**



The Place for a Village (G. Presland) looks at the history of Melbourne from the point of view of nature and considers the ways that urban development has been influenced by the nature of local environments. Gary Presland, an FNCV member, will literally change your view of Melbourne. **RRP \$39.95, Members \$31.95.**

Spiders and Scorpions Commonly Found in Victoria (K. Walker, A. Yen & G. Milledge) richly describes the habitats, biology and venoms of the spiders and scorpions found in Victoria. The book provides an excellent guide with detailed photographs and supplementary illustrations. It is written for readers of all interest levels. **RRP \$22.50, Members \$17.50.**



Birds of Prey of Australia: A Field Guide (S. Debus) provides an illustrated field guide to diurnal raptors. The easy to use format includes clear descriptions, locations, habits and flight silhouettes for each species. The drawings cover stages from juvenile to adult and various morphs, as well as each bird resting and in flight. **RRP \$39.95, Members \$31.95.**

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 and Kathy will be in contact.

Through the Eyes of A Frog (S. Barber, B. Kruger & C. Whyte) allows young readers to discover the wonder of a natural wetland habitat through the eyes of a frog. It is a colourful picture book that illustrates a wide range of Australian plants and animals, with a conservation message for the need to care for the environment. **RRP \$9.95, Members \$7.95.**



Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Botany Group: Dr Tom Duff and PhD candidate Tom Fairman presented on *Managing fire in Australian landscapes: a complex balancing act*.

Carbon records show that fire has been a part of the Victorian landscape for the last 25,000 years. Living in a fire-prone region, it is important to manage fire to protect property and water catchments. Different species react differently to fire, some being dependant on it, some being killed by it. Therefore it is necessary to determine which species to manage for and aim to have fire frequency and intensity suitable for that species. To manage a community for fire-avoiders, it is necessary to have sufficient time between fires for plants to reach maturity and set seed or the community will change. Rainforest will become mixed forest, which will become sclerophyll forest if burned too often. If the sclerophyll forest is burned too often, scrub will result. The Phoenix model will predict what fire will do. From that, it is possible to determine the leverage or the equivalent area of wildfire that will be prevented by 1 ha burning. Fire ecology is a zero sum game such that there is no ideal fire frequency for the ecosystem, but there may be for specific species.

Fauna Survey Group: Biodiversity in Taiwan: At our April meeting, member Stuart Dashper regaled us with stories and photographs about the island of Taiwan, its geography and its biodiversity. Stuart explained that Taiwan is a mountainous island country of some 36,000 km². It is situated about 180 km from mainland China on a tectonic fault line. Much of its biodiversity is quite unique, with many species being re-assessed and differentiated from their mainland counterparts.

Eastern Parks Fauna Survey: Our last spotlighting and bat trapping for the project took place at Churchill and Lysterfield and Churchill Parks on 5 April. As well as usual activities we were carrying out aural surveys for the Smooth Toadlet (*Pseudophryne semimarmorata*). This frog is considered vulnerable according to an Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna in Victoria and populations are known to occur in the Parks. Over 20 volunteers surveyed 8 waterway transects. Unfortunately it had been quite dry leading up to the survey. Nevertheless the frogs were recorded at 5 sites.

During the spotlighting the following were seen: Common Brushtail and Ringtail Possums, Sugar Gliders, Black Rats, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Tawny Frogmouth, Black Wallabies, a Southern Boobook and Red Wattlebirds. Heard were Southern Brown Tree Frogs, Southern Toadlets, an Australian Owlet Nightjar, Sugar Gliders and a Southern Boobook. Little Forest and Lesser Long-eared Bats were captured and released.

Fungi Group: At our April meeting Dr Tom May, senior mycologist at the National Herbarium in Melbourne, spoke about identifying fungi by using keys.

Dichotomous keys are of limited use, because a mistake made at any step is 'fatal'. This is not the case with multiple access interactive keys, where you can keep adding details in any order and the key excludes all characters that don't match. Tom has spent some years creating FUNKEY, which is a multiple access interactive key to Australian agarics (gilled fungi). It is a key to genera, not species, and will be published soon.

Tom demonstrated its use by choosing black as a spore colour. The result showed that there are only 14 genera of black-spored agarics in Australia. Tom also mentioned the possibilities for using this sort of information on the internet, giving as an example a 'Leafmap' web site in North America, which enables users to identify the leaves of certain plants. Apps can also be used for identification purposes: Tom envisages people working on particular genera, making descriptions detailed enough to guide users to individual species, and rolling out the information as apps.

Geology Group: Our talk on 23rd April had an intriguing title: The 7 Wonders of the Mineral World - Unravelling the Mysteries of Life, the Universe and Everything. The presenter, Dr Dermot Henry was the manager of the Melbourne Museum, Earth Sciences Section. His special interest is minerals and he presented a description of 7 minerals, ingeniously linking them to the formation of the Universe, the Solar System, our Earth and its atmosphere, as well as giving clues to the Earth's pressure and temperature changes over time. His last mineral, Heulandite, has unusual properties which are being increasingly used in many industrial processes. A fascinating talk.

Juniors' Group: The Juniors' Easter Camp was held in the Killawarra Forest in the Warby/Ovens National Park. Our group of 76 adults and children camped at the oval near the forest camp with 2 pit toilets and carry-in water. We had great weather, with only a sprinkle of rain on our Friday afternoon 'walk, talk and twitch' with the self confessed bird addicted, Chris Tzaros. The area is very popu-



Continued on page 12)





Day Group

Natural History around Port Phillip Bay

Speaker: Graham Patterson
22 April 2014

On Tuesday morning 22 April, FNCV member Graham Patterson got the 25-strong Day Group involved right from the start. Members were seated in a circle around a rope on the floor fashioned into the outline of the Port Phillip Bay coastline. Graham then handed out locality labels for people to place them at the correct spot on the 'coastline'. After that, we did the same with geological labels. These exercises and the related discussion got everyone thinking and interested as Graham then proceeded with his illustrated talk entitled "Natural History Highlights of the Port Phillip Coast".

Graham began by referring to his recently published 172-page book titled "Coastal guide to nature and history - Port Phillip Bay". (*Note - this great book can be purchased by members for the discounted price of \$23.*) The book came as a result of his findings as he walked the Victorian coastline, although he has still some sections to complete.

He pointed out how the Bay was created due to various fault lines to the east and the west, and that there were four main rock types found around the Bay - granite (e.g. Mt Martha), sedimentary rock (Tertiary period) (e.g. Red Bluff/Black Rock), basalt (on the western shores) from volcanoes further west, and calcarenite (e.g. Pt. Nepean) formed by wind-blown sand.

Mammals which may be seen around the Bay include dolphins, seals and water rats.

Breeding sites for birds include Mud Islands, Popes Eye, South Channel Fort and St Kilda Pier. The many species include seagulls, ibis, gannets and pelicans. Significant wetlands along the

coast (protected under the Ramsar Convention) are the habitat of wading birds such as the nomadic Black-winged Stilt, and the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint which migrate to Alaska and Siberia to breed during our winter. Other birds to be seen include the White-fronted Chat (near saltmarshes) and the Singing Honeyeater (common



Black-winged Stilt

home to the White Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*), the only species which grows in Victoria, although it is restricted to three spots on the western coast. Graham showed photos of Coast Tea-tree, Coast Banksia, Sea-box and Karkalla, which are examples of plants inhabiting the harsh environments of cliffs and sand dunes.

Graham answered several questions on topics such as the effect of dredging in the Bay, and access issues at different parts of the coastline.

Day Group convenor, Gary Presland thanked Graham for his fascinating and educational presentation of natural history on Melbourne's doorstep, giving him a FNCV mug as a token of our appreciation.

Peter Fagg



Sand Hopper

on the Nepean Peninsula).

On the sandy inter-tidal areas, animals include sand or lugworms, sand hoppers (which decompose seaweed) and soldier crabs. Sausage-shaped egg masses of the moonshell or predatory sand-snail (*Polinices*) can be mistaken for jellyfish. In and around rock pools we can find shellfish such as blue periwinkle, green turban, *Siphonaria*, and dog winkle. Graham pointed out that there were four Marine National Parks or Marine Sanctuaries in Port Phillip Bay.

Seagrass beds are important fish nurseries, while Port Phillip's western shore boasts Victoria's most diverse saltmarsh communities, where common plants are Beaded Glasswort (*Sarcocornia*), Shiny Swampmat (*Sellieria*) and Coast Saltbush (*Atriplex*). The Bay is

Shiny Sand-mat





Fungi Group

FNCV FUNGI GROUP FORAY 13
April 2014
CAMBARVILLE
Wet Eucalypt forest, with
Mountain Ash

A fine sunny morning saw 17 group members assembled at the Cambarville picnic area. It was pleasing to welcome some new faces: Katie, Kaitlin, Nikki, Mark, David and Lewis. It was some time before we were able to leave the picnic area as keen eyes kept finding fungi.

In the grassy area were numbers of *Russula clelandii* (with the faint pink bloom on the stem). Unfortunately most of the purple/red colours originally on the cap had been washed out by the rain, so that the caps were mostly white with only a faint tinge of colour. Oldish large *Agaricus* sp. had a whitish cap with faint pink tinge, and pink gills. It is possible that it might be *Agaricus* 'pink stainer', the one described by Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky (*A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi* (2014)) p 27, which seemed similar to the species we saw. A number of *Phylloporus rhodoxanthus* - 'gilled boletes' - with bright yellow gills and drab brown

cap were scattered throughout the grassy area. The species is considered to be close to the pored boletes because the gills bruise a green colour (see photo 1) and microscopic work and DNA analysis have confirmed the bolete association.



Phylloporus rhodoxanthus showing staining on the gills. Photo 1: B. Leithhead



Entoloma sp.

Photo 2: Richard Hartland

The bright colours of the tiny red Ruby Bonnet, *Cruentamycena viscidocruenta* (Fungimap Target species) stood out in the grass. On a eucalypt log White Brain jelly *Tremella fuciformis* was growing, along with troops of *Mycena subgalericulata* which had distinctive brown-caramel parabolic caps with an umbo. Most caps had a white margin, which indicates that the fungi was at a young stage. In fact, most of the fungi seen on the foray were quite young. A long strip of eucalypt bark

was covered with the tiny white *Mycena minya*. The species was determined by the small grey mealy balls of the young species and the disc at the base of the mature white fruit-bodies. CA Grgurinov (*The Genus Mycena in South-Eastern Australia*, 2002) p 279 does not mention any smell, but Jurrie and Mark, our keen-nosed forayers, did - 'a foetid smell, like rotting fish'. It is great that our group can

add
to
the

knowledge of species. A few *Mycena cystidiosa* fruit-bodies were scattered in the litter, although the sterile stipes were not obvious.

On the Big Tree Track growing on the ground was an unidentified purple-blue capped *Entoloma* sp. (see photo 2) with white gills and dark blue stem. It looked so distinctively-coloured we thought we might find a species name. However, in *A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi* (2014) by Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky) and *A field guide to Australian fungi* by Bruce Fuhrer 2011 (no 83), a lot of *Entoloma* species with this purple-blue colouring were listed - *E. haastii*, *E. paniculus*, *E. discrepans*, *E. uliginicola* and *E. moongum*. Pixie's Parasol *Mycena interrupta* (Fungimap Target species) made a bright blue display along a large log.

A few more examples of the orange-capped Velvet Parachute *Marasmius elegans* (Fungimap Target species) were growing among grass and litter, while a rotting log was home to a large fruit-body of the Peppery Coral *Artomyces austro-*
(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

piperatus. Several members tried the taste test – small bite, chew and spit out – and found the peppery taste took a little while to develop. Richard Hartland discovered a distinctive cauliflower-shaped *Ramaria* sp. coloured rusty orange, yellow and cream while foraging down towards the creek.

After lunch most of the group walked down the road to the Water Race Track. Recent slashing had left a lot of debris on the track which made for slippery going. Here were found more examples of the Rooting Shank *Xerula gigaspora* (Fungimap Target species, one of the most common species seen today, plus numerous *Laccaria* spp. On small pieces of fallen wood was the interesting *Lasiosphaeria ovina*, a mass of ‘white balls with dark eyes’ dome-shaped surrounded by scurfy hyphal tissue and were best seen under a hand lens, as they were only a couple of mm in size. Another species, which had tiny white shells (diam 8 mm) with cream gills and laterally attached to a piece of a small branch, was *Pseudomerulius curtisii* (*Tapinella curtisii*, *Meiorganum curtisii* – seems to have had quite a few name changes).

On the ground was a group of ‘*Clitocybe*’ species that had very smooth grey caps with slight depression in the centre, crowded decurrent thin gills and a grey

stem. There was a discussion as to whether it was *C. clitocyboides* or another species. On looking back to earlier forays, (at Bunyip 2013) we found a very similar-looking species and Virgil Hubregtse had determined it microscopically as *Clitocybe clitocyboides*. It is interesting to see the colour range for this species.

An interesting and delicate, branched coral – the tiny, bright yellow *Ramariopsis crocea* – was growing on a Tree-fern stem. Although the colour of this fungus is distinctive, the very small size (this one was 9 mm tall) makes it easy to overlook.

Paul George very energetically ‘did’ the whole circuit (round by Cora Lynn Track and up to join the Old Tree Track) and found two species not previously found today (although they were found in 2004/2005): the polypore-bracket *Rigidoporus laetus* with a yellow, orange, brown cap and orange tubes with white openings, and the large, violet/purple *Cortinarius* sp ‘Toolangi’ with mauve cap, dark mauve gills and a pale mauve stem. It looks similar to the purple *C. violaceus*, but is differentiated from it by the scales on the cap.

In the afternoon along the Cumberland Creek where the Falls track ends, Richard Hartland saw an *Hydnellum*

auratile (Brown Tooth) and the beautiful green *Entoloma*, *E. rodwayi* which we have not often seen. *H. auratile* has a brown zoned cap with a white margin, brownish teeth and a stout dark stalk. (Note that it has a brown spore print.) In the field, it looks fairly similar to *Phellodon niger* (White Tooth) which has a black-grey cap with a white margin, grey-white teeth, a tough brown stem, but a white spore print. Both grow on the ground in the litter. *E. rodwayi* has a lime-green to yellowish-green smooth cap, pale gills and a shiny; olive-green to pale green stem with a tuft of white mycelium at the base. A similar-looking species *E. viridomarginatum* is easily distinguished because its gills have a dark green edge.

We have listed 72 species seen, a good start to the season, helped enormously by keen-eyed enthusiastic forayers. Thanks to all the photographers (Paul George, Ed Grey, Richard Hartland, Bill Leithhead, and Carol Page) who supplied photos for this report and species list.

Ed and Pat Grey

FNCV Environment Fund—2014 AWARDS (announced at the AGM) Barbara Burns (Secretary)

1. FNCV Botany Group—Project for the conservation of the Maroon Leek Orchid at Clyde Grassland, involving fungal isolation and seed storage. (work to be done by Royal Botanic Gardens \$752– Granted in full
2. Yarran Dheran - Nature Reserve—One LED TV and fittings. For the education of groups and the public. \$981– Granted in full.
3. Nature Watch VNPA ‘Caught on Camera’ 1 motion sensing camera and fittings to work with the community to monitor the effects of fire on small mammals in the Wombat State Forest, Bunyip State Park and in the Wimmera region. \$800.80—Granted in full.
4. FNCV Microscopy, Juniors and TIG Groups—3 stereoscope dissecting microscopes for shared resource for the FNCV SIGS, 3 x \$330 = \$990—Granted in full.
5. Biosphere Pty Ltd, Dr. Graeme Lorimer—Contribution towards the production of an illustrated identification key for Victorian Stipoid Grasses to be made available online. \$1000—Granted in full.
6. John Harris, Kathy Himbeck, Colin Clay—Contribution towards a project for an investigation into the stygofauna of the Port Campbell limestone aquifer. \$945—Granted in full.

Through the generosity of our members, the Environment Fund has been able to support over 50 small projects since it has been set up. The 2014 list is a good cross-section of the wide range of recipients. FNN readers are encouraged to consider making a tax-deductible donation either by contacting the FNCV office or when they renew their membership.



Above: 1— Sue Bendel accepts an Environment fund award for the Maroon Leek Orchid. 2—Graeme Lorimer accepts an award for production of a Key to Vic Stipoid grasses.



Fauna Survey Group

Volunteering at Yookamurra

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is an independent, non-profit organisation, working

to conserve threatened wildlife and ecosystems in Australia by acquiring land and delivering practical, on-ground land management informed by good science. Funding comes from tax-deductible donations from the public as well as government grants. As of 2013 AWC owns and manages 23 sanctuaries covering over 3 million hectares (7.4 million acres), in places such as north Queensland, the Kimberley, western New South Wales, Northern Territory, South

Australia and south-western Australia. The origins of the organisation date back to the initial purchase of land in 1991 of what is now Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary by AWC's founder, Martin Copley.

Yookamurra Wildlife Sanctuary was established to help the devastating decline of native wildlife that has occurred in the mallee ecosystem. It is situated within the Murraylands region of South Australia, between the eastern slopes of the Mt Lofty Ranges and the Murray River. The nearest town is Sedan, 24k south. It covers an area of more than 5,000ha (12,350 acres). Soils are thin, 0-50cm and overlie



a layer of calcrete. The sanctuary is dominated by Eucalyptus shrubland (Mallee), Sugarwood shrubland and open Chenopod shrubland communities. The most important habitat feature on Yookamurra is the large area of very old-growth mallee, with many of the trees dated over 600 years old. This is significant as most of Australia's mallee has been cleared for agriculture or for timber harvesting with less than 1% of the mallee remnant



L-R John, Mel, Russell, Kathy, Peter, Ray, Su, Mary.

being old-growth.

AWC established a 1,100 hectare fox and cat-free area at Yookamurra, which is surrounded by a special purpose feral-proof fence. Foxes, cats and rabbits were actively eradicated from this section of the property, and regular monitoring - including the use of camera trap technology - maintains the integrity of the fence. Here, safe from the threat of introduced predators, AWC has reintroduced four threatened mammal species - Woylies *Bettongia penicillata*, Boodies *Bettongia lesueur*, Numbats



Myrmecobius fasciatus, and Greater Bilbies *Macrotis lagotis*.

A group from the FNCV Fauna Survey Group travelled to Yookamurra during the Easter break. Our goal was to survey the entire area enclosed by the predator-proof fence on foot. In particular we were looking to find and GPS Mallee Fowl mounds and Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat warrens. Several other features of interest were also recorded.

The numbers in the survey group varied between nine and four, as people came and went. We assembled after breakfast each day and were driven to our starting point. Using compass bearings and GPS we managed to walk a reasonably accurate north-south transect across the fenced area (3.2k) and then, after a short rest, moved along to the next section and walked back. We were spaced between 40 and 50 metres apart. With the help of USB radios and high-visibility vests we more or less mastered the knack of moving forward together. It took five days to complete the survey. We generally finished our transects about 1.30 pm and were picked up to enjoy a late lunch and rest. It was sometimes a little tiring, but extremely enjoyable and interesting to

Old-growth Mallee



walk through bushland as close to its pre-European state as we are ever going to see it. It was wonderful to observe the many natural hollows that occur in an old-growth mallee woodland and come across enormous trees possibly over 1000 years old. We kept our eyes and ears peeled for birds and recorded a list of 51 species. These included Hooded Robin,

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Owlet Nightjar, Shy Heathwren, White-fronted Honeyeater and Southern Scrub Robin. We also had occasional glimpses of Woylies. The autumn weather was fine and mild.

Su Demsey co-ordinated the arrangements for the trip. She asked each of us to record a highlight of our week at Yookamurra.

These were as follows.

"Seeing the animals released into the compound rather than in the holding cages like last time I was there. Being in the Mallee with the wildlife and friends."

"Watching the quirky antics of a numbat (*we named*) Boxy and the memorable first sighting of a Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat."

"The lovely welcome and care Mel and Noel gave us. Especially all the information supplied and spotlighting Hairy-nosed Wombats etc. "

"Spotting my first Bilby, Numbat and Hairy-nosed Wombat. Being buzzed by Spotted Nightjars and watching the sun set over the Mallee at the sinkhole. Spending time with wonderful like-minded people who don't find it strange when you start making bird calls! Radio banter walking transects. Barking Gecko sighting. Boodies and Woylies everywhere!! Too many wonderful things to mention from a wonderful trip."

" Highlight was being able to front up to the transect walk every morning; the fabulous hospitality of Mel and Noel; the great camaraderie of the FSG Group; not to mention seeing Bilbies, Numbats, Boodies and Woylies, Wombats and 50+ species of birds. (My) lowlight, doing the 'wombat waltz'."

On behalf of the Fauna Survey Group and the FNCV I would again, like to thank Mel and Noel, who manage Yookamurra, for making us so welcome and comfortable and Su and Peter Demsey for their great organisation."

All photos:
J. Broadberry,
photographed with
the assistance of
Australian Wildlife
Conservancy



Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat

CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDEN

Over the course of many years we have tried to make our garden as bird friendly as possible. We created small on-ground water features, surrounded by rocks and low vegetation which provide protective cover as they approach the water. We also have elevated water bowls made from terracotta placed under the foliage of trees. The branches are used by the birds to perch on as they wait their "turn" to bathe and drink. Bathing for birds is extremely important as feathers need to be scrupulously clean to enable them to fly.

We have planted indigenous, native and some exotic plants to form a fairly dense habitat, with seats strategically placed to observe the birds. Over the years we have observed three lizard species, Brushtail and Ringtail Possums and eighteen bird species. As our house went from being surrounded by bushland to a completely urbanised environment, the bird species have adjusted accordingly. For instance as the Noisy Miner population increased the bird numbers dropped, but has now stabilized as fewer of these bossy creatures visit. Back in the sixties and seventies we had regular visits from White-plumed, White-naped and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. They still occur in the nearby Mullum Mullum Park, but I fear the populations of Red and Little Wattlebird and the increase of the Noisy Miners has been more than they can cope with.

None of the immediate neighbours own cats and with the recent long hot weather patterns the bird population has exploded with them seeking food, shelter and water on a daily basis. Correas, Grevilleas, Banksias, one ancient *Melaleuca ericifolia* (part of the original bushland) and some Eucalypts provide them with the food they need. They can also sip moisture from the leaves of the plants plus the multitude of insect life that lives on the foliage. Rocks and logs help to retain moisture, and every branch that falls is cut up and used as habitat. I have planted masses of indigenous grasses which help to create a "natural" effect.



Some of the birds that visit are: Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Grey Butcherbird (photo) Magpies, Galahs, Willy Wagtails, Eastern Spinebills, Brown Thornbills, Pied Currawongs, Kookaburras, Crested Pigeons, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Red Wattlebirds and many others. The joy of observing them (without any artificial feeding) and listening to their songs has added a new dimension to our lives.

Cecily Falkingham

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

(Continued from page 6)

lar with bird lovers and many of us were lucky enough to see the beautiful endangered Turquoise Parrot.

On Saturday we had Geoff Barrow, retired ranger from the region, spend the day with us. We went for a walk through the Killawarra Forest checking nest boxes along the way with a scope (where we saw a sugar glider and the bedding of other animals) and echidnas buried in hollowed out dead tree stumps. Back at our campground, we collected pond water samples and looked at the macro invertebrates under microscopes before heading into the Warby Ranges for a 'walk and talk' through Pine Gully.

We had a slower day on Sunday morning with the much anticipated Bilby Hunt and then a drive into Wangaratta, where we met Ian Davidson, local ecologist, who walked us around Kaluna Island. Surrounded by the King River, Kaluna Island is one of the last remnants of open woodland forest of its kind anywhere and is home to many birds, insects, plants and trees. Sunday night's camp concert was a highlight as always, with our prize giving ceremony to end the camp. A few families returned home together on Monday via Winton Wetlands and Chesney Vale Hills, where we saw a Lace Monitor, Brown Snake and aboriginal water holes. A big thank you to all the campers who shared telescopes and other equipment, dug toilets, shared knowledge, presented information about the region, helped with planning and made the camp so enjoyable for everyone.

April's speaker was James Murray, astrophysicist and outreach officer at Mt Burnett Observatory. He spoke to us about how to look at the night sky by observing shape, colour and size and explained lunar and solar eclipses. We look forward to visiting his observatory in May.

Marine Research Group: The April meeting was very well attended with a magnificent talk by Anna McCallum from Museum Victoria on seamount biodiversity. We are beginning to plan next season's fieldwork



Juniors' Group Easter Camp

Field Nats News 242



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