



Understanding
Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Field Nats News No.259

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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December-January 2016

From the President

Another year is almost gone and planning for next year's activities is well under way. There have been many interesting SIG presentations this past month and I urge everyone to attend as many future meetings as possible and enjoy the interesting talks and discussions. There is a great deal of overlap between the SIGs and most of the presentations will interest the broader membership. The Christmas party on the 12th December is not too far off and I look forward to seeing you there. (*Invitation and details p3*)

Flies

I was near Maryborough last week and the people I was with were complaining endlessly about the annoying bush flies. However, beyond annoying flies and more serious vectors of disease and pest species, the insect order Diptera includes a truly amazing host of predators, scavengers, pollinators, nectivores, mycophages and decomposers. Wherever the interested naturalist cares to look there will be a great diversity of dipterans, both as larvae and adults, to observe and study.

Australia has a rich and diverse fly fauna. They range in size from minute gnats to large Tachinidae which parasitise beetle larvae. Their sheer biomass is staggering and they are truly ubiquitous. This week I was pleasantly surprised to see large numbers of long-legged flies, (Dolichopodidae), *photos below*, shining

like little emeralds on the foliage in my garden and was reminded of the beauty of some of our flies. Many dolichopodids are coppery, metallic green in colour. They are very skittish and difficult to approach. They are predatory and some species eat aphids.

Another group of flies is also active at the moment and can be seen on twigs and leaves waiting for prey. The assassin flies (Asilidae) dart out to intercept prey and return to their vantage point to consume it.

Eristalis tenax (Syrphidae) can be seen visiting flowers and sunning themselves on leaves. They resemble bees at first sight. The larvae live in open drains and are generally known as rat-tailed maggots. The related Native Drone Fly, *Eristalinus punctulatus*, is also a handsome insect.

There are many species of blow flies (Calliphoridae) and flesh flies (Sarcophagidae) now buzzing about in the warmer weather including bright metallic green *Lucilia cuprina* and multi-coloured *Calliphora* species. Take the time to have a close look at the flies in your garden; they are diverse and interesting. A dissecting microscope will allow you to examine, in detail, their incredible anatomy

Max Campbell



Long-legged flies Photos M. Campbell

No separate January FNN.

The deadline for FNN 260, the

February 2016 issue, will be

10 am Tuesday January 5th 2016.

NOTE: This will be a **final** deadline with FNN going to the printers on 5th January as the editor will be away the following week.

Collation as usual

Tuesday 19th January 2016



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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.

December 2015

Tuesday 1st - Fauna Survey Group. Christmas BBQ at the hall 6 pm. 'This is the year that was!' Please bring a salad or a dessert to share. BBQ meat provided. Contact Su Dempsey 0437 172 333

Monday 7th – Fungi Group. No Meeting

Saturday 12th - FNCV Christmas BBQ 6.30 pm in the hall. Come and help celebrate another wonderful year. SIG reps. please send images for the slide review of 2015 and everyone bring prizes for the traditional raffle. **Details & invitation p3.**

Monday 14th – Marine Research Group. Meeting: Annual Members' Night. Everyone is welcome to bring along images, items of interest or questions on marine invertebrates. Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 699 773

Tuesday 15th – No collation. No separate January newsletter

Thursday 17th – Botany Group. No Meeting

Tuesday 22nd – Day Group. No Meeting

Wednesday 23rd – Geology Group. No Meeting

Friday 25th – Juniors' Group. No Meeting: *Christmas Day*

Saturday 26th - Marine Research Group. Excursion: Shoreham Beach. Meet at 5 pm at the car park, Melway map 256 A10. Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 699 773.

January 2016

Monday 4th – Fungi Group. No Meeting

Tuesday 5th – Fauna Survey Group. No Meeting

Monday 11th – Marine Research Group. No Meeting

Saturday 16th – Fauna Survey Group. Excursion: An evening survey to look for Leadbeater's Possum, gliders, owls and other nocturnal wildlife. Contact Ray Gibson 0417 861 651

Sunday 17th - Marine Research Group. Excursion: Martha Point, Mt Martha. Meeting time is 1:15pm Contact Leon Altoff for exact meeting location, 9530 4180 AH; 0428 699 773

Tuesday 19th—Collate FNN. Starting about 10.00 am. We would REALLY appreciate your help during this holiday period. All welcome. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218.

Thursday 21st – Botany Group. No Meeting

Saturday 23rd to Tuesday 26th – Fauna Survey Group. Camp at Rushworth to check nestboxes. Contact Ray Gibson 0417 861 65; rgibson@melbpc.org.au Registration is essential.

Sunday 24th – Juniors' Group. Excursion: Beach/Snorkelling Day. Meet at Black Rock Pier at 11.00 am Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Monday 25th - FNCV Council Meeting - 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Wendy, 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 26th – Day Group. No Meeting: *Australia Day*

Wednesday 27th – Geology Group. No Meeting

Friday 29th – Juniors' Group Meeting 7.30 pm: *Council member talks.* Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com



NOTE: 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 for excursions and \$2 per meeting.

Members' news and notices

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

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

*Kia Hawkins, Hannah Glasson, David Galwey, Darren Macdonald,
Lois Bedson, Willow Bakogiannis, Julianne Bakogiannis, Harry Foozwell,
Katherine Whittaker*

FNCV Christmas Party

Saturday December 12th.
Join us at 6.30 pm in the FNCV Hall
1 Gardenia St. Blackburn



Relax and enjoy a BBQ with friends and members from all FNCV Special Interest Groups and celebrate another wonderful year of activities. All welcome

- * The club will provide meat, vegeburgers, bread and nibbles. Please bring a salad or a sweet to share. BYO drinks. Email the office by **Friday 4th December** to let us know numbers coming and food you are bringing.
- * We are planning a presentation looking back over the FNCV year. SIG co-ordinators are requested to email about 10 images from their 2015 activities to the FNCV office no later than **Friday 4th December**.
- * We will also be holding the traditional FNCV end-of-year raffle. **Donations of prizes would be much appreciated**, e.g. wine, knick-knacks, plants, books etc. Look deep into your 'present drawer'. Deliver to the office or (preferably) bring them with you on the night.

Office email = admin@fncv.org.au

Preliminary notice regarding the AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS' NETWORK GET-TOGETHER Perth, Western Australia, Saturday 1 October to Sunday 9 October 2016 plus pre and post tours



PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Pre-ANN Tours Friday 24 September to Saturday 1 October:

- 8 Day bus tour north between Perth, Jurien, Mingenew and Dalwallinu to see the highlights of the wildflower areas (with camping/cabin accommodation most likely). Cost to be advised.
- 6 Day bus and boat tour to Abrolhos Islands, a meeting place for tropical and temperate sea life and more than 90 species of seabird (accommodation on board vessel). Estimated cost \$2,400 if 20 or more. Start & finish Perth.

ANN Get-Together Saturday 1 October to Sunday 9 October:

Accommodation venue will be close to Perth or Fremantle but is not yet decided. Own accommodations arrangements possible. All meals are included in the ANN Get-Together fee and will be at the accommodation venue.

We will travel by two 45 seater buses on excursions. Proposed excursions include visits to:

Darling Scarp / Granites, Wetlands, Coastal Bushland, Rottnest Island, Jarrah Forest, Wandoo Forest, Banksia Woodland, WA fauna viewing sites (late afternoon/early evening). Information regarding venue and costs available early 2016.

Post-ANN Tour Monday 10 October to Sunday 16 October:

- 7 Day bus tour south between Perth and Albany to see WA's less known attractions (likely with camping/cabin accommodation). Possible whale watching boat tour. Start and finish Perth. Cost to be advised.

Please note for logistical reasons we will be capping the number of participants on the Pre- and Post- tours to 40, (30 for Abrolhos Tour) and 90 for the ANN Get-Together.

Please contact the ANN 2016 Committee and the secretary Margaret Larke by email at ANN16@wanaturalists.org.au; mlarke@inet.net.au **ASAP** to let us know if you are interested in attending the ANN 2016 and what options you might choose. For those without an email address contact WA Naturalists' Club at PO Box 8257, Perth Business Centre WA 6849 **ASAP**.

ANN 2016 Committee, Western Australian Naturalists Club, Perth WA. Tel. 08 9228 2495



Fungi Group

**FUNGI GROUP FORAY,
WOODLANDS
HISTORIC RESERVE,
28th June 2015**

**Woodlands Historic Park,
Greenvale**

Vegetation: Hills Herb-rich Woodland is identifiable in the landscape as dry, open eucalypt woodland with a sparse shrub layer, overlying an understorey of herbs and grasses. Bedrock outcroppings are a regular feature. The canopy is dominated by Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa* with interspersed Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* and River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* with thickets of Drooping She-oak *Allocassuarina stricta*.

We welcomed Lisa, Jeff, Eric and Patrick to our foray, and after meeting at the car park, the Ranger, Tristan Factor, led us to the first of our three sites. This year, Woodlands, was very dry and fungi were scattered and scarce in the open woodland. Richard Hartland led the foray. On the paddock with very short grass, a numbers of species were just appearing through the sandy soil – *Scleroderma* ? cepa, a small dark *Cortinarius* sp. and in the woodland a group of the pink-brown capped *Tricholoma australocolossus*. Note that is the name that is accepted in Index Fungorum and ICAF and Australian Mycologist 21(1). The possession of a ring is uncommon as *Tricholoma* species typically lack this feature.

An interesting find was the Icing Sugar Fungus *Beauvaria bassiana* growing on a Darkling Beetle (*Tenebrionid* sp.) (Photo below.) Last week at Wanderslore we found it had infected a Preying Mantis. The white mass is the conidial (asexual stage) of the teleomorph *Cordyceps bas-*

Beauvaria bassiana Photo: Richard Hartland



siana which has only been collected in East Asia. *B. bassiana* grows naturally in soils and acts as a parasite on various insect species causing White Muscardine disease. The conidia (asexual spores) contact the body of an insect, germinate, penetrate the cuticle and grow inside killing the insect in a few days. Afterwards, the typical white mould emerges from the dead host and produces new spores. This species is being used as a biological insecticide to control a number of pests including aphids, whitefly, leaf hoppers, weevils, locusts and possibly the malaria bearing mosquito. As an insecticide the spores are sprayed on affected crops in an emulsified suspension or wettable powder (Wikipedia, *Beauvaria bassiana*).

In this woodland Les Hanrahan pointed out an Inkcap. It was small with a plicate cap which had 'micaceous' pale brown scales on it. The scales would seem to indicate Glistening Inkcap *Coprinellus truncorum* (European species *Coprinus micaeus*) but the small size and very plicate cap indicated *Parasola plicatilis* (*Coprinus plicatilis*) - a delicate fungus, identified in the field by its grey-brown pleated pileus with a central disc and lamellae attached to a collar at the apex of the stipe. With age, the pileus erodes, often leaving a skeletal form of itself. This is a global species. However, in the descriptions there is no mention of micaceous scales, but CA Grgurinovic p 478 (*Larger Fungi of South Australia*, 1997) describes *Parasola virgulicolens* (*Coprinus virgulicolens*) as having pallid scurfy granules scattered over the pleated cap surface, which fits with the characteristics of the fruit-body that we saw – membranous plicate cap with scurfy granules and slightly raised brown disc, purplish brown gills and a white stem with a small bulb attached to rotten twigs.

Since fungi on the ground were scarce, a lot of time was spent searching fallen wood and branches. On a large fallen branch, Richard was able to take us to a fine example of the Hairy Trumpet *Panus fasciatus* with its densely hairy, centrally depressed, brown cap. Purple-brown decurrent gills ran down the hairy brown stem. This is the first time that it has been found on our forays. Among the bracket fungi was one specimen of the hard, dark-brown, hoof-like *Phellinus robustus*. An old pale Curry

Pink *Piptoporus australiensis* was found on a fallen log. The fresh fruit-body of this large thick bracket has a white upper surface which becomes stained pale cream to orange by the orange flesh; deep orange-yellow pores exude copious amounts of saffron-yellow juice. However, despite the fact that it was very pale, almost white, underneath some of the deep cinnabar colour remained and a number of forayer were able to smell the strong curry/fenugreek odour in a small piece. On a Grey Box branch was the brown woody *Phaeotrametes decipiens*, (photo below), which has large white pores. B Fuhrer no 411 (*A field guide to Australian fungi* 2011) notes that the pore size is one or two per mm and that it is 'Usually found on species of She-oak in semi-arid to arid habitats',



Phaeotrametes decipiens Photo: Joy Clusker

this find on Grey Box wood appears to be an exception. The Australian National Herbarium web site cpbr.gov.au states "the genus *Phaeotrametes* contains just one species *P. decipiens* and Leif Ryvarden (an expert on polypores of the world) thinks it to be an archaic genus and a living fossil". A fresh bracket of *Fomitopsis lilacinogilva* had a reddish/brown top with a beautiful pink margin and pores that stained red when marked; thus confirming the ID. This species causes brown cubical rot in wood, ie. this is named after the appearance of the decayed wood, because the fungus destroy the cellulose framework of the cells leaving brown-coloured lignin. In contrast, *Trametes* spp. cause white rot by attacking all the constituents of the cell, leaving a white, spongy or stringy residue.

Lisa's keen eyes spotted a patch of the earthstar *Geastrum minimum*, which, as the name suggests, is very small but extremely variable. It is whitish usually no taller than 7mm, a stalk holds up the spore sac and silky fibres defining the mouth. Woodlands

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is the only place that we have seen this species. Later Ed Grey found a few examples of the larger Collared Earthstar *Geastrum triplex* which has thicker, pale fawn buff rays that curl back under the fruit body. The buff –coloured spore sac sits in the saucer between rays and the mouth is usually surrounded by a paler area. Several points need to be observed about the earthstar when making field identifications. What type of mouth occurs on the endoperidium (spore sac) - naked without a definite opening, definite surrounded by silky fibrils and usually raised, or definite, raised and sulcate (consisting of small vertically grooved ribs)? Is the endoperidium stalked? Are the rays hygroscopic, and in dry conditions do they curve back over the endoperidium? Other factors to consider are its size and habitat.

Other fungi growing on the ground included a number of Boletes which seemed to be the same species – ‘bulbous’, dull brown bun-shaped cap with dark brown tessellated scales and a bulbous, brownish stem; the pores were pallid yellow with a green tinge and both the cap and pores stained dark blue/black. Apart from the fact that the cap is not viscid it seems to be like *Boletus punctato-brunneus* described by CA Grgurinovic p230 (*Larger Fungi of South Australia 1997*). Many of them were infected with the Bolete Eater *Hypomyces chrysospermus* and showed the white/grey mould of the first stage around the cap. When we turned one over we could see the brilliant yellow of the next stage. This is a 3-stage mould - at first white and mouldy, then yellow and powdery, and finally reddish-brown and pimpled. Another bolete that Richard Hartland recognised was *Pulveroboletus ravenelii*. This is a yellowish species and the cap has tan/red scales scattered over a yellow base, a ring that tears unevenly from the cap margin and mustard-yellow pores that stain bluish. The pale lemon flesh stains both red and blue. The yellow stem which is overlaid with red scales and fibres has bright yellow basal mycelium at the base.

Thanks to Richard Hartland for a very interesting foray. He knew so much about the species that were unfamiliar to us. Although the foray might have been hard, we were looking in an area of dry woodland unlike the wet forests of most forays, Thanks to everyone for scouring the area.

Thanks to the photographers for their contribution – Joy Clusker, Ed Grey, Richard Hartland, Carol Page and Jeff Triplett.

Ed and Pat Grey

FUNGI GROUP FORAY BALDRY CROSSING, GREENS BUSH, MORNINGTON PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK 5th July 2015

Heathy Eucalypt Forest

Greens Bush has the largest area of remnant vegetation on the Mornington Peninsula - the dominant Eucalypts are *E. radiata* (Peppermint), *E. obliqua* (Messmate) and *E. viminalis* (Manna Gum). They can roughly be distinguished by the bark type – *E. radiata* has grey-brown, somewhat fibrous bark, never stringy; *E. obliqua* had pale brown fibrous, stringy bark, even to the small branches, and *E. viminalis* has pale whitish trunk usually with persistent bark at the base of the trunk, often with ‘ribbons’ of bark. The understorey consisted of *Pomaderris*, most likely *aspera* (Hazel Pomaderris), *Olearia lirata* and *Bossiaea* probably *cinerea* (Showy Bossiaea) which had arrow-shaped leaves. Apart from the Bracken, *Xanthorrhoea australis* (Austral Grass-tree) is very prominent.

On the upper track David Lockwood spotted a group of the yellow-green knobby-headed Jelly Babies *Leotia lubrica* and a second group was found close by. And then a Wedge-tail Eagle, soared over the trees. Further on through the dip and just up the hill were several groups of the pale brown puffball *Morganella pyriforme*. Groups of these were scattered through the bush but always on buried wood. Interestingly, it now appears that the name may revert to *Lycopodon*!

We then had a feast of coral fungi. Two specimens of the lilac *Ramaria versatilis* var. *latispora* showed the typical blunt branch tips and no sign of browning on the branches, compared with the similar-looking *Ramaria fennica* var. *fumigata*. While we were looking at these, close by were short white roughened clubs of *Clavulina subrugosa* and the simple clubs of *Clavaria corallinorosea*. It is more usual to find them with a pink and red colour, these were apricot, but the colour can range from orange to pink. The apricot fertile section was covered with a bloom of spores, while the stem was distinctly separate and red in colour. Jurrie Hubregtse also found the simple clubs of *C. miniata* which were also apricot-coloured. In *C. miniata* the stem is not distinctly differentiated from the

fertile head. A little way down the hill were bright yellow clubs of *C. amoena*. Along this track in the mud bank, Group members also found the tufted, young yellow fascicles of *R. lorithamnus*, and the upright, branched, mustard yellow *R. flaccida*.



Entoloma haastii Photo: R. Hartland

Richard Hartland has described a number of fungi found on the foray. “*Hebeloma aminophyllum* was found in a more open area on the edge of the ti tree gully in litter and moss. There was no sign of any animal remains with which it is often associated. However the sticky hemispherical cap and pinkish gills confirmed its identity. *Entoloma haastii* (photo above) was found in a wet ti tree gully with a moss/grass understorey. The umbo, colour and size of cap diameter (approx 50 mm) is large for the genus and gave a clue its identity (now confirmed by Jurrie Hubregtse). There were several in a loose group and the pink spores were evident on the cap of the smaller specimen. Another *Entoloma* sp. was found in a forested area amongst grasses and bracken in a loose group of four specimens. It was first thought to be *E. coeruleogracilis* (photo p12) which was found nearby on a previous foray as well as on this foray, but on closer inspection it lacked the yellow base on the stipe of that species. The appearance of the specimen was a closer fit for the description of *E. amarum* with the depression in the cap and the purplish hues, although the brown margin on the gills was not present. It was collected for further inspection for clues to its identity”.

For *Entoloma* spp, it is important to look for a pink-pinkish-brown spore print often seen trapped in fibres on the stem, or on caps growing below, and a mass of white mycelium at the base of the stem. Caps usually have an umbo or depression in the centre. Most grow on the ground but some on wood, for example *E. readiae*, (sounding like reed-ee-eye) which grows on well-decayed wood.

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Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Botany Group: Cathy Powers presented on the biodiversity of the Brisbane Ranges. Cathy showed us a map of the area and introduced the geology. Then she showed us many examples of the fauna and flora of the Brisbane Ranges including an echidna train and many spectacular orchids. An enjoyable evening which was well attended.



Juniors' Group: Sept 27th, excursion to Brisbane Ranges: A group of 16 adults and children met up with Cathy and Ron Powers at Bert Boardman Recreation Area where they led us on a beautiful wildflower walk full of colour and a variety of orchids, acacias, lilies, sundews, bush-peas, banksias, goodenias, heaths, etc. Cathy is very involved in Australia's plant scene and monitors flowers in the Brisbane Ranges where she lives. She gave us all Indigenous Plant brochures which we used to identify and remember what we had seen. Along our walk Cathy took down GPS coordinates for a mint bush and two spider orchid species that she was tracking. After lunch we followed Cathy in our cars to a second wildflower walk on nearby Butcher Road which had a different soil type and had been burnt at a different time where we found a few new plants. We then said "Thank you" and "Goodbye" to Cathy and Ron and headed to Stony Creek Picnic Area for a snack and a short walk to the reservoir which was brimming with life – frogs, birds (lots of grey fantails) and insects all calling out and enjoying the water.

Excursion on Sunday 18th October: We had 12 juniors and parents join Wendy Clark at Baluk Willam Conservation Reserve. Before leaving the car park we saw a herd of Sambar deer crossing Courtney's Road near us – they have been getting closer to the city over the past few years and are being culled in many areas. We saw some unopened sun orchids; milkmaids; fringe lilies; bearded, spider and brown beak orchids; a native iris; a beetle and a red and black spider; a couple of eastern grey kangaroos; crimson rosellas and heard many other birds. Thanks to Wendy for leading us (and for the photography tips) and to all who joined us on the lovely, sunny morning.



Microscopy Group: The Microscopy Group met on Wednesday 21st October for a members' activity night. We had 4 low powered microscopes and 5 high powered, set up for members' use. We also set up a members' new digital microscope with a LCD display screen to view, focus and zoom in on specimens. Very comfortable and easy to use instead of needing to view through eyepieces. Several people brought in specimens they had found for us all to view and help identify. We also have a large collection of dried marine and botanical specimens, as well as hundreds of prepared slides for members' use.

During the evening Max Campbell played his latest video work on HD Blu Ray DVD showing us close up and personal, several predators of aphids which were present on milk thistles. We watched caterpillars carefully choosing their next meal and then piercing the aphid and sucking out its life juices. We could see the liquid entering through the caterpillar's mandibles and through his body.

We also saw the result of wasp eggs laid in the aphids abdomen and their nibbled exit hatches in the aphids dead, dried bodies. The images were so large and clear, it was quite gruesome at times. Ray Power brought in his wonderful fresh-water samples, teeming with life! We welcomed 10 members, of which 2 were regulars from other groups and new to microscopy, and one 'just joined' member. As usual, members were enthralled by the microscopic worlds they discovered!



Thanks to the
editorial and layout
team who put
together FNN 259

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

*This newsletter is printed on
recycled paper.*

From the Office.....



Another year has almost gone and, lucky for me, I'm still really enjoying working for you here in the FNCV office.

Colin (my husband) and I will be having a 2 week holiday touring Japan by train at the end of November. We're leaving on 27th and getting home on 9th December, so the office will not be open on Monday 30/11, Tuesday 1/12, Monday 7/12 & Tuesday 8/12 when I would normally be here. I'll be back at work on Friday 10th to catch up with everything. Our treasurer Barbara Burns has kindly agreed to check the emails for anything urgent which crops up in the meantime.

The office will also be closed for the festive season, but not for long. I'll be here up until and including 22nd December, then back on 4th January. Best wishes to everyone for a very safe and happy New Year,

Regards, **Wendy Gare**, Administration Officer



Day Group

Tuesday October 27th was a beautiful late-spring day with temperatures in the mid twenties, perfect for our Day Group excursion to the nearby Mullum Mullum Park in Mitcham. Our leader was local naturalist and FNCV member, Cecily Falkingham.

Mullum Mullum Park covers an area of 35 hectares, was officially opened in June 2009 and is managed by Parks Victoria. Adjoining reserves are the Schwerkolt Cottage & Museum complex, Yarran Dheran Reserve, (both managed by Whitehorse City Council) and Mullum Mullum Creek Linear Park and Huggins Reserve (managed by Manningham City Council). The Park encompasses a variety of habitats including Valley Heathy Forest, wet gullies and riparian strip along Mullum Mullum Creek which forms an important wildlife corridor to its confluence with the Yarra River.

Mullum Mullum Park has a fascinating history. The original route for the East-Link Freeway would have destroyed much of Hillcrest Reserve, part of the Mullum Mullum Creek and an area of significant native vegetation around Chaim Court. A group of about 10 people including Cecily set out to stop this happening. Cecily told the Day Group how she walked through this bushland with premier Steve Bracks and minister Peter Batchelor showing them floral and faunal treasures which would be lost if the original plan went ahead. She also mentioned to us how at one stage activists staged a cricket match in front of bulldozers! The campaign was a long and wearing struggle with many setbacks, but in 2000 the decision was finally made to tunnel under

the bushland. The 1.5 kilometre long EastLink Tunnels, Melba and Mullum Mullum, were opened ten years ago in June 2005. They are between 15 metres and 40 metres deep.



The start of our nature walk led us through a healthy stand of Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*, a very unusual sight in suburbia. We continued down a

mingled with bird calls. A beautiful group of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flew lazily overhead and we noted several Kookaburras, Grey Fantails, Blue Wrens and Red Wattlebirds. Spotted Pardalotes called around us.

After thanking Cecily for an informative and very enjoyable morning, half a dozen of us continued on to Antonio Park and rounded off the outing with good company and a picnic lunch.

Joan Broadberry



Photos (clockwise): Cecily right, speaks to the group; *Brononia australis*; *Dianella revoluta*
J. Broadberry

steepish hill where there were many native wildflowers to admire including: *Pimelea humilis* Little Rice Flower, *Helchrysum scorpioides* Button Everlasting, *Bursaria spinosa* Sweet Bursaria, *Burchardia unbellata* Milkmaids, *Dianella revoluta*, Black-anther Flax Lily, *Senecio sp.*, *Dilwynia cinerascens* Grey Parrot Pea and *Brunonia australis* or Pincushions. Although Mullum Mullum Park is home to many orchid species it has been a very dry season and few have appeared this spring. A short diversion onto a narrow side-path led us into a mossy gully overlooking the Mullum Mullum Creek. Cecily pointed out that this had once been a designated drilling site.

As we walked, distant but noticeable traffic noise from EastLink





Coates Wildlife Tours

Specialists in Nature Tours since 1986 (Small groups 12–14 passengers)

- Informative naturalist/birding leaders
- Small groups (6 – 12 participants)
- Private charters available
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New Zealand South Island Wildlife & Wilderness Expedition

15 Day Accommodated Tour – Departs 13th February 2016

This unforgettable tour looks at the natural history of the breathtakingly beautiful lower South Island, Stewart Island plus three of the countries national parks and the unspoilt coast of the Catlins region and the Otago Peninsular.

Sri Lanka Wildlife, History & Culture

18 Day Accommodated Tour – Departs 14th March 2016

Highlights: Yala and Bundala National Parks, Kitulgala and Sinharaja Rainforests, historic Sigiriya and Polonnarawa. This trip has it all a diverse array of mammals from Whales, elephants to squirrels plus each year we record sightings of over 200 species of birdlife. When you add this to the local culture, food and wonderful historic sites plus being lead by one of countries top naturalist guides then this a trip not to miss.

Pilbara Reef & Ranges Expedition

15 Day Camping tour – Departs 5th April 2016

Experience Ningaloo Reef, Abrolhos Islands & Karijini National Park. Join us as we explore the wildlife of the Western Australian coast including the Abrolhos Islands, Shark Bay and the Ningaloo Reef before travelling in land to experience the spectacular Karijini National Park.

Kimberley Discovery

15 Day Camping / Accom Tour – Departs Broome 4th June 2016

Enjoy a wonderful outback experience as we discover the Kimberley's wildlife, spectacular outback scenery, and many wonderfully refreshing waterholes as we explore Purnululu N.P, the many gorges of the Gibb River Rd, El Questro and Mornington Stations.

Kimberley Wonders

12 Day Camping Tour – Departs 25th June 2016

A different twist on the Kimberley, we include the best of the Gibb River Road but add a visit to the Mitchell Plateau. On the plateau experience the spectacular Mitchell and Mertons Falls plus great examples ancient rock art along with the regions wonderful flora and fauna.

Kununurra to Alice Springs Expedition

14 Day Camping Tour – Departs Kununurra 14th July 2016

This trip is packed with highlights including a Lake Argyle cruise, the Keep River National Park, Duncan Highway, Wolf Creek Crater, Lake Stretch, the Tanami Road, New Haven Sanctuary and the West MacDonall Ranges.

Rudall River Expedition

15 Day Camping Tour – Departs Perth 30th July 2016

Join us as we head to the very remote, harsh, yet beautiful Rudall River National Park. Experience the wildlife that the very remote, harsh yet beautiful Rudall River National Park has to offer. Situated approximately 400 Km east of Newman in Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert this is truly one of the most remote wilderness areas in the world.

Lake Eyre Basin and Flinders Ranges Expedition

15 Day Camping Tour – Departs Alice Springs 3rd August 2016

This tour covers some of South Australia's most historic outback locations in the Lake Eyre Basin and the spectacular Flinders Ranges. Both regions offer vastly different examples of our great country and offer an opportunity for a wide range of wildlife sightings.

W.A.'s Mid West Wildflowers

10 Day Accommodated Tour – Departs Perth 3rd September 2016

See botanical hot-spots north of Perth during wildflower season. The trip covers a diverse array of landscapes with the farm lands of the wheat belt, the station country around Mt Magnet and Yalgoo before covering the highlights of the Kalbarri National Park and the northern sandplains around Eneabba, Badgingarra and the Mt Lesueur National Park.

Great Western Woodlands and Helena Aurora Ranges

12 Day Camping Tour – Departs Perth 17th September 2016

Join us and experience the divers wildlife and spectacular wildflowers of the world's largest temperate woodland, including the historic woodlines (where timber cutters operated from 1899 to 1964) and the ironstone Helena Aurora Ranges which are currently under threat of being mined.

South West Birds & Botany tour

15 Day accommodated Tour – Departs Perth 9th October 2016

Experience one of the worlds flora hot spots during Western Australia's spectacular spring wildflower season. The birdlife that is attracted to the region is plentiful and varied.

Lord Howe Island

8 Day accommodated Tour – Starts 29th October 2016

Experience one of the worlds most fascinating natural history destinations. The island's many and varied walks plus the Balls Pyramid boat trip just add to the enjoyment.

Christmas Island

8 Day Accommodated Tour – Departs Perth 19th December 2016

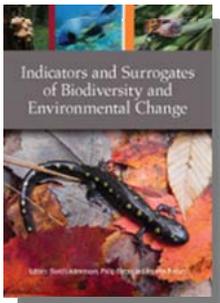
The Islands birds, crabs and rainforest walks make this a naturalists wonderland.

Contact us for further information on these and other natural history expeditions.

Ph: 1800 676 016 or 08 9330 6066 Web: www.coateswildlifetours.com.au Email: coates@iinet.net.au

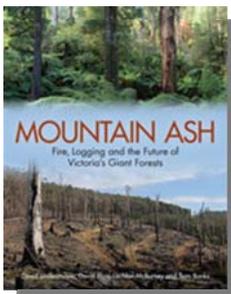
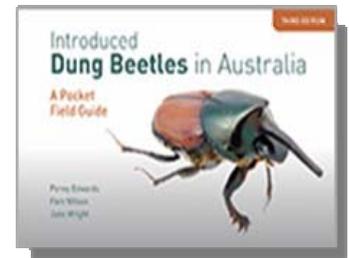
NEWS FROM THE BOOKSHOP (December 2015)

Included this week are some new and exciting titles that are soon to be released which cover a range of topics that might be venturing outside subjects we generally stock. These books will be for order only and will not be available on the shelf. Please remember that the bookshop is a completely voluntarily run activity of the FNCV and while your orders and queries are always welcome, I may not be able to respond to them immediately. Also, to reduce bookshop expenses and thus raising more funds for the FNCV, when an order is placed to the wholesaler, the order needs to be of a minimum amount before it is delivered for free. This is usually the hold up on waiting for books to come in. I greatly appreciate your patience and will keep you informed on your order when I can. For the titles below and any others that might be of interest to you, send me an email and I will get back to you as soon as I can. To order or inquire about a book, please send me an email to bookshop@fncv.org.au Have a great Christmas and may you spend some time relaxing and enjoying reading a book!



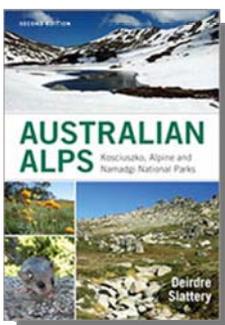
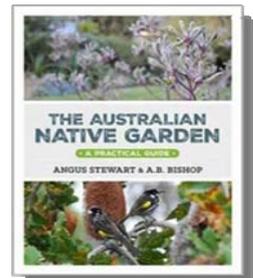
Indicators and Surrogates of Biodiversity and Environmental Change (ed. Lindenmayer, Barton & Pierson) provides insights into the use of indicators and surrogates in natural resource management and conservation – where to use them, where not to use them, and how to use them. Using an ecological approach, the chapters explore the development, application and efficacy of indicators and surrogates in terrestrial, aquatic, marine and atmospheric environments. The authors identify current gaps in knowledge and articulate the future directions for research needed to close those gaps. (PB, 216 pp., Nov 2015) RRP \$79.95, Members \$65.95

Introduced Dung Beetles in Australia: A Pocket Field Guide (Edwards, Wilson & Wright) covers all species found in Australia, including two newly introduced species. This is the third edition and it will enable farmers, Landcare workers and the interested public to identify and learn about the basic biology of beetles found in cattle dung. (Spiral bound, 80 pp., Oct 2015) RRP \$22.00, Members \$18.00



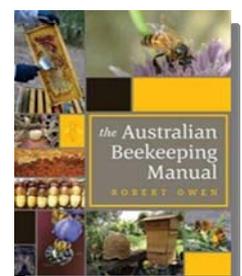
Mountain Ash: Fire, Logging and the Future of Victoria's Giant Forests (Lindenmayer, Blair, McBurney & Banks) draws together exciting new findings on the effects of fire and post-fire ecological dynamics following the 2009 wildfires in the Mountain Ash forests of the Central Highlands of Victoria. The book integrates data on forests, carbon, fire dynamics and other factors, building on 6 years of high-quality, multi-faceted research coupled with 25 years of pre-fire insights. With spectacular images of the post-fire environment, this book will be an important reference for scientists and students with interests in biodiversity, forests and fire. (PB, 200 pp., Nov 2015) . RRP \$59.95 Members \$49.50

The Australian Native Garden (Stewart, A) focuses on growing and using native plants in the home garden. It provides expert information on the fundamentals – soils, cultivation techniques, pruning, fertilising and maintenance – and looks at different styles of garden design not only for aesthetic reasons but for creating drought proof gardens, fire resistant gardens and environments attractive to native fauna as well. (HB, 288 pp., Dec 2015). RRP \$49.99 Members \$40.00.



Australian Alps: Kosciuszko, Alpine and Namadgi National Parks (Slattery, D) is in its second edition and introduces the reader to Australian's highest mountains, their climate, geology and soils, plants and animals and their human history. The book traces the long-running conflicts between successive users of the mountains and explores the difficulties in managing the land for nature conservation. This new edition updates many themes, including the involvement of Aboriginal people in the region, catchment function and condition, pest plants and animals, fire and the issue of climate change. (PB, 320 pp., Dec 2015) RRP \$45.00, Members \$37.00

Australian Beekeeping Manual (Owen, R) is aimed at both the novice and experienced beekeeper and explains in detail the steps required to manage colonies of bees. Supported by over 350 photographs and drawings, each step is explained in detail with the aid of photographs. The book explains how to obtain bees, where to locate them in the garden and the basics of colony management. It is a comprehensive manual and is the ultimate Australian reference source. (HB, 350 pp., Oct 2015) RRP \$49.99, Members \$40.00





Fauna Survey Group

FSG camp at Minimay Melbourne Cup 'weekend'

A small but enthusiastic bunch of fauna folk attended the FSG Melbourne Cup "long-weekend" at Bank Australia's Conservation Reserve at Minimay, south of the Little Desert. We were also joined by Iestyn Hosking the property manager and Rachel Lloyd, a local landcare coordinator and West Wimmera Shire Environment Officer.

Bank Australia has bought a number of properties around the western Wimmera to set up conservation reserves as part of their corporate responsibility. Clients who take out new home loans or car loans can nominate to offset their purchase. The bank then buys property as a biodiversity offset or carbon offset for these customers.

The purpose of the property that we visited was for both biodiversity offsets, retaining the remnant vegetation, and carbon offsets by revegetating cleared parts of the property.

Those that arrived early decided to set up the traps Saturday morning as it was forecast to be the best day of the camp. Three sites were chosen in the remnant patches for pitfalling. The first site was amongst stringybarks and Desert Banksia *Banksia ornata*. However, the banksias hadn't flowered this year due to dry conditions. The second site was again in stringybarks, but with Silky Teatree *Leptospermum myrsinoides* as the dominant understory.

The teatree had mostly finished flowering but there was still some hope held for capturing some interesting animals. The

final site was again in stringybarks with a mixture of shrubs in the understory. Sites 1 and 3 had scattered patches of Muntries *Kunzea pomifera* in heavy flower. Harp traps were also set near these sites.

While we were there, we checked some of the tile grids that had been

Shingleback and a species of snake-eyed skink *Cryptoblepharus* sp. that is yet to be confirmed. The shingleback was a surprise find in a bucket at site 2, while a Common Bearded Dragon was seen on the track not the property. Ten species of mammals were recorded although we only trapped a Little Forest Bat across the weekend. Others sighted included four species of macropods, Echidna, White-striped Freetail Bat and the usual exotic species – fox, rabbit and hare.



L-R: Barbara, Knud Hansen, Martin Banning, Kathy, John, Ruby Albury and Andrej Hohmann
(Photo: Barbara Burns)

established and also went spotlighting one night surveying Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa* for Eltham Copper Butterfly caterpillars. Despite there being a population north of the Little Desert at Kiata, we were unsuccessful in our search. It would have been a new population if we had been successful in finding any caterpillars.

We recorded nearly 50 species of birds including Brown and White-throated Tree-creepers, Diamond Firetail, three species of woodswallows, Crested Shrike-tit and Australian Owlet-nightjar. Six species of reptiles were captured in the pit buckets including Boulenger's and Bougainville's skinks,

Thanks must go to Nikki Jordan from Bank Australia for allowing us to survey their property and to Iestyn for all his help over the weekend. The portable toilet was definitely appreciated.

John Harris



Australian Owlet-nightjar
Photo: John Harris



Little Forest Bat Photo: J. Harris

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

2015 Australian Natural History Medallion Congratulations to Margaret MacDonald OAM

Margaret MacDonald has been involved as the leader and major researcher in a number of major projects in the Anglesea and Aireys Inlet district, including:

- Surveying to discover, record and photograph orchid populations;
- to discover, record and photograph indigenous flora species for ANGAIR;
- she leads annual survey of *Caladenia maritima* to record the density and extent of the species population;
- working with Neil Anderton (of the National Herbarium) to collect material for cultivation and endeavouring to ascertain pollinating agent;
- conducting annual survey of Spiral Sun Orchids *Thelymitra matthewsii* at Aireys Inlet, to ascertain the effect of fire on the species;
- Leading projects to record the occurrence of rare and threatened flora species in the area, particularly:
Grevillea infecunda; *Olearia pannosa*; and *Leiocarpa gatesii*

In addition, Margaret has participated over many years in ongoing regular mammal surveys with the Friends of Eastern Otways (FEO) using a range of strategies to increase knowledge of mammal populations in the district. This has included documenting the presence of Yellow-bellied Gliders for the first time in the forest area at Moggs Creek.

A regular leader of field excursions for FEO, as well as a range of other local groups, she has made many public presentations to meetings, on radio and on television about the subject of indigenous flora and fauna in the eastern Otway region. Margaret is the author or editor of a range of publications based on this fieldwork, including six books, and a number of reports and brochures. She is well known also for her field photography, many examples of which appear as illustrations in her books.



Margaret's presentation: *ODonohue's Heathland Magic*

Below: Margaret receiving the 2015 ANHM from Dr Bill Birch AM



Margaret MacDonald was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2011 for service to conservation and the environment of the East Otway region. She was nominated for the Medallion by ANGAIR Inc. (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna).

Thanks to the volunteers who staffed the FNCV stall at the recent Whitehorse Spring Festival

Su Dempsey, Jackie Waring, John Harris, Robin Goode, Barbara Burns
Ruth Hoskin, Claire, Scott, Daniel & Caleb Ferguson

After a slow start everyone reported a lively and interesting time presenting the work of the Club to the local community. Russell's bone and skull collection and a donated collection of shells beachcombing treasures were very popular, as were the club microscopes.

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

The FNCV now has 1949 facebook members. Thanks for your good work Ian Kitchen

Many hanks to those who helped collate and label FNN 258

Sheina Nicholls
Ian McDonald
Margaret Corrick
Margaret Brewster
Edward Brentnall
Hazel Brentnall
Andy Brentnall
Keith Marshall
Ray Power
Joan Broadberry

(Continued from page 5)

It has a small brown cap with a deep brown 'eye' (depression) in the centre and a pale brown stem.

We had thus recognised a number of *Entoloma* spp, but then the group was soon into the world of unknowns i.e. *Cortinarius* species and especially 'brown *Cortinarius* spp', of which there were a lot. Their caps ranged from being slimy tan-brown, to brown with tinges of mauve, or had mauve gills, pale gills, brown stems, purple stems, white stems. However, there were two brown Cortinarius that we recognised from other forays here: *C.* sp. 'brown zoned cap with nipple' where the nipple in the brown cap is very dark and pointed and *C.* sp. 'cap with brown umbo and pale yellow margin'. The brown cap grades from brown at the umbo, to a paler brown around it and then the pale yellow margin cf IR McCann p 18 centre (*Australian Fungi Illustrated*, 2003). We have also seen specimens with these macroscopic characteristics at other forays. One distinctive group had a tan-brown cap with an umbo (most of the colour had washed out leaving the caps mostly white), a pale stem with a hint of mauve, and their caespitose groups were growing out of a huge white mycelial mat. And then we were further confused by the brown *Cortinarius* sp. growing on a tree! However, it was a very rotten tree and there had been a lot of soil blown into the split trunk which made a nice sheltered location for the ground-inhabiting *Cortinarius* sp. One red *Cortinarius* species, *C. kula*, could be identified by the blood-red colour of the cap, gills and stem, its dry cap, small size and pink mycelium at the base of the stem.

Another less frequently-seen fungus were the Small Dung Button *Poronia erici* found near the gully. It was last seen here in 2009 growing on old macropod dung, probably Eastern

Grey Kangaroo. It has been known to grow on dung of introduced herbivores. These button-like discs are white, grey or pale fawn, and on the top are minute, but distinctive dark holes (ostioles) through which spores are expelled. European records for the Small Dung Button only date from the 1920's, suggesting that it was probably introduced there at that time and found rabbit dung to be a good substrate. Later European findings show that it occurs on pony, hare, sheep, goat, cow and horse dung (Brian Spooner, *Fungal Portraits* no 48: *Poronia erici*. *Field Mycology* vol 12 (4) October 2011, p 111)

In the afternoon, a ramble along Baldrys Creek track revealed a fine display of the Horsehair Marasmius, *Marasmius crinis-equi* growing in the litter. These were in such numbers as to form a miniature forest. The white wrinkled crust of *Bysosomerulius corium* was covering two thin, fallen branches while the black *Biscogniauxia* sp. was still on the same dead trunk as on the previous forays but without the *Nectria* this time. A group of tiny orange balls were spotted growing on a log. Paul George was able to identify them as *Lycogala epidendrum* a slime mould. He explained that even though they began life as the same time, they came in different sizes, unlike most slime moulds., Each 'orange ball' has latex inside, as Paul was able to demonstrate, and they go grey and hard on aging.

Several black earth tongues were found growing in the grass. As they did not have hairs on the stems or heads they could be identified as a *Geoglossum* sp. with a grooved, rough pitted head which is distinct from the rough stem. *Geoglossum* species have no setae in the fertile head or stem (which differentiates them



E. coeruleogracilis Photo: D. Lockwood

from *Trichoglossum* species) and the texture varies from smooth to viscid or only slightly velvety. The fruit-body is club-shaped to spatulate with a fertile, flattened head, often twisted and grooved, and can be distinct from the stalk or merge into it without a sharp differentiation.

Next to a group of *Panellus pusillus* growing on a fallen branch was a cluster of the very tiny *Hypocrea gelatinosa* – gelatinous yellow-green cushions (1-2 mm diam) dotted with green wart-like spore bearing structures. We first came across them last year at a Grampians foray and, once seen, although very tiny, they are distinctive. Another, larger but unusual species was *Craterellus australis* seen only once before by our Fungi Group, here in 2010. It has a shaggy dark brown to black funnel-shaped cap and the fertile surface consists of pale grey gill folds with many irregular branches and crossings that extend down the stem.

Thanks to Paul George and Richard Hartland for their contribution to the report. Thanks to the photographers, John Eichler, Ed Grey, Richard Hartland, David Lockwood, and Reiner Richter

Pat & Ed Grey

Field Nats News 259



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