Field Nats News No.260

Understanding Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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February 2016

From the President

We celebrated the end of the year with the usual FNCV Christmas Party. It was well attended and everybody had a great time with plenty of delicious food and good company. I would like to thank all of those who assisted in the preparation for and running of the party. As always, the raffle went off well and generated some funds for the Club. (See p4 for further details and photos).

As I have previously indicated, for me one of the highlights of the warmer months is the appearance of the numerous insects that turn up in the suburban garden. In particular over the last couple of weeks I have seen Rhinoceros Beetles, Golden Stag Beetles and Fiddler Beetles in my garden. Numerous green cicadas have been emerging from the soil and starting up their chorus in the trees.

It has been a very busy year with two symposia and a large number of interesting SIG presentations. I look forward to seeing as many faces as possible at the SIG presentations in 2016.

Max Campbell

The deadline for FNN 261, March 2016, will be **10 am on Tuesday 2nd February, 2016.**
FNN will be going to the printers on 9th February, with collation on Tuesday 16th February.

Photos: Max Campbell
clockwise:

*Golden Stag Beetle, male
Lamprima aura
*Greengrocer Cicada
Cyclochila australasia
*Fiddler beetle
Eupoecila australasiae

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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.

FEBRUARY 2016

Monday 1st - Fungi Group. No Meeting

Tuesday 2nd - Fauna Survey Group. Meeting: ***Feeding ecology of Australian and Antarctic fur seals***
Speaker Laëtitia Kernaléguen, PhD student, Deakin University.
Contact Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury6@gmail.com

Sunday 7th – Juniors' Group. Excursion: ***Earthcare, Northern Pacific Seastar removal,*** with Heather. Meet at 9.30 am at St Kilda. Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Monday 8th - Marine Research Group. Meeting: ***Museum Victoria Research Project***. Speaker Lupita Bribiesca, PhD student with Museum Victoria. Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Saturday 13th - 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 14th - Marine Research Group. Field Work: ***Cape Schanck***. Meet at 8:45 am.
Contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773 for further details

Tuesday 16th—Collate FNN. Starting about 10.00 am. All welcome.
Contact FNCV office 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Wednesday 17th - Microscopy Group. Meeting: ***Members' Activity Night.*** Please bring along any interesting specimens for viewing and identification. Contact: Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Thursday 18th – Botany Group. **Meeting:** ***Vegetation of Victorian Coastal Saltmarsh.*** Speaker Geoff Carr.
Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Friday 19th to Sunday 21st - Fauna Survey Group. Survey: ***Mt Cannibal Reserve, Garfield North.***
Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury6@gmail.com

Monday 22nd - FNCV Council Meeting - 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Wendy, 98779860 or email admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 23rd – Day Group Meeting: ***A grey nomad's wildlife encounters.*** Speaker Andrew McCutcheon.
Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat. Speaker at 11 am**.** Contact Max Campbell 0409 143 538, 9544 0181 AH; mcam7307@bigpond.net.au

Wednesday 24th – Geology Group. Meeting: ***World Heritage Stone: establishing a new international standard.***
Speaker Assoc. Prof. Barry Cooper with the Dept. of Natural and Built Environment, University of South Australia
Contact Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; 0425 729 424; rrhoskin@gmail.com

Friday 26th – Juniors' Group. Meeting, 7.30: ***40 years since Jaws: Why do we still fear sharks?***
Speaker Heather Maginn. Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

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, 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

Warmest greetings to Katherine Whittaker who was welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting.

Peron's Tree Frog– Joan B.

Peron's Tree Frog is sometimes known as the maniacal cackle frog due to its distinctive call. Its home range is in northern Victoria and Gippsland but does just reach into the Melbourne area.

I found these two frogs at Friends of Warrandyte State Park Nursery. Plastic chairs were being put out for a end of the year function and the frogs were tucked into the grooves in the back of them. I was told this is one of their favourite resting places.

Adults have small, emerald-green flecks on their backs, with bright yellow and black mottling in armpits, groin and back of thigh. A very distinctive feature for identification is the cross shaped pupil in their eyes, clearly shown in the photo below.

Platypus sighting – Rob Hamson

We were surprised by this close encounter with a platypus in Tasmania. It was at Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden near Burnie, where the volunteer staff told us that a couple of platypuses had recently been seen in their ornamental lakes. The photo was taken at 12 noon on 10 November.

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 260

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

FNCV Christmas break-up function

***Photos*: Joan Broadberry (and Max Campbell)**

On Saturday 12th of December, FNCV members and friends joined together to celebrate another twelve months of discovery, learning, fun and friendship. Only a few times a year are we able relax together as a group over a meal. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Many thanks to those who provided salads, sweets and raffle prizes. In particular, thanks to Max and Faye Campbell , Joan Broadberry and Andy Brentnall who arrived early to set up the BBQ and the hall. Thanks to Barbara Burns for all her help on the night, and also for looking after the office while Wendy was away. Many willing hands made the clearing up easy.

As has become a tradition, images of activities from all nine Special Interest Groups were put together by Gary Presland and shown during the evening.

Wendy Gare had the bright idea of emailing this presentation so that everyone could enjoy it. Another tradition in the making I think.

The raffle was a great success raising $230 for general funds. Special thanks to Phillipa Burgess for providing some of her exquisite hand-made jewellery as prizes. **JB**

Vale Rosemary Robb

It is with great sadness we learned of the death of Rosemary Robb just before Christmas. A funeral service to celebrate her life was held at Box Hill on December 23, 2015. Rosemary had an abiding interest in and love of the natural world. She joined the FNCV at the beginning of 1993.

In 1995 the FNCV purchased its Blackburn premises, close to her home. Rosemary participated in many meetings and excursions. In addition, she took on a number of voluntary tasks which contributed greatly to the smooth running and success of the Club in its new premises.. These included being available to open the hall for hirers, helping collate the newsletter, being part of the gardening team and attending working bees. Perhaps one of her least known, but significant roles was as "Mrs. Mop" a job which involved keeping the hall and kitchen swept and clean.

Rosemary was an exceptionally beautiful human being. A truly delightful and giving person and a valued and loved member of the FNCV. Ones day was always the better for meeting her. Our deepest condolences go to her family.

From the Office…..

POSTAGE COSTS– what you can do to help.
You may have noticed that the cost of posting letters has now increased to $1 per item, a massive increase.

We are currently sending Membership renewal notices and receipts via Australia Post, but soon we hope to be able to email them to those of you who have email addresses. Don't worry if you don't use electronic communications, we will still send out your paperwork in the post. If you haven't already done so, please email the office at admin@fncv.org.au and your email details will be added to our database.

Similar large increases apply to the cost of posting our *Field Nats News* and *The Victorian Naturalist*. PLEASE consider changing to an electronic copy of both publications if you possibly can! Again, just notify the office that you wish to receive electronic copies. Many of you have already done this for FNN but not yet for *The Naturalist.* Of course we understand that not everyone will be able to do so. Rest assured, we will continue to print and post both of them to those who need hard copies.

COMPUTERS
The other major news from the office is that we are having new computers installed in the next few days. This issue of the News is the last thing to be done on the old computers. Our president Max and his talented son Struan have taken on the task of the installation which has taken them many, many hours of hard work. Thank you to both of them for their dedication and toil – particularly Struan, who is giving up time at home with his family, to supply his expertise to help us.

Regards

Wendy Gare
Administration Officer

Library News

Recently acquisitioned books
The following books have been added to the Library's holdings and can be found in the appropriate place on a Library shelf:

Landon, C (2015) Banksia lady: Celia Rosser, botanical artist. (Monash University Publishing: Melbourne) [921 LAN]
Olsen, P (Ed) (2015) *Louisa Atkinson's nature notes*. (NLA: Canberra) [508.94 OLS]
Fletcher, M (2014) *Jean Galbraith: writer in a valley*. (Monash University Publishing: Melbourne) [921 GAL];
Meek, P and Fleming, P (Eds) (2014) *Camera trapping: wildlife management and research.* (CSIRO: Collingwood) [778.9 MEE];

Recent periodicals:
Australian Plants (Spring 2015) is devoted to the Goodenia family which includes Dampiera, Scaevola and Lechenaultia among other genera;
An article in *Australian Journal of Botany* 63(7) looks at the causes of infertility in *Borya mirabilis*, a 'resurrection plant' found only in the Grampians;
Wildlife Research 42 (6) has a series of articles looking at the mobility and habits of little ravens in a coastal reserve near Melbourne, and the impact of predation by corvids and mammals on penguins and red-capped plovers on Phillip Island;
In the *Journal of the Royal Society of WA*, v.97(2) reports on a symposium on WA's freshwater fish, and v.98 (1) focuses on the Indian Ocean coast of WA.

The latest periodicals are displayed in a rack in the library. You can borrow periodicals in the rack, as well as previous issues. Don't forget to fill in the borrowing book.

Library collections now on the website
A reminder that you can now search the library's collections on the FNCV website. Click About us – Library and you will be able to download searchable lists of books, periodicals, maps and photos.

Gary Presland, **Honorary Librarian**

Fungi Group

FUNGI GROUP FORAY 12th July 2015 *NED'S GULLY,* CATHEDRAL RANGE

Vegetation: Riparian Forest - Manna Gum Tall Open Forest along Little River; Open forest - Red Stringybark/ Broad-leaved Peppermint/Longleaved Box on 'Hygrocybe Hill'. Like last year, we again had a rainy foray, so it was decided that the foray would be one long morning and then finish. We went along the river track and up to 'Hygrocybe Hill' where we found a number of brightly-coloured *Hygrocybe* spp. and corals.

Near the car park, a eucalyptus log held a small group of *Mycena carmeliana* with dull whitish caps which were differentiated from a similar-looking species *M. fumosa*, by the orange disc at the base of the stem. Nearby, on another log, were several fruit-bodies of the bracket *Fomitopsis lilacinogilva*, (photo right), distinguished by their pink-lilac margins on the upper surface and the pale, small pores on the lower surface. Further along the track we saw an old degraded earthstar *Geastrum pectinatum* with fawn fleshy rays and a greyish spore sac. Jurrie Hubregtse has this to say on the Fungi CD 3rd edition 2012 '*Geastrum pectinatum* is readily recognised by its grey spore sac with a "beaked" mouth and a uniquely furrowed base sitting on a prominent pedicel (stalk), and by the light brown star (exoperidium) with 6–12 pointed rays. This species also occurs in Europe, North America, South Africa, and New Zealand. *G. fornicatum* looks similar, but lacks the furrows at the base of the spore sac.

Protoglossom violaceum (Cortinarius subviolaceus)
Photo: Paul George

Across the road, before the bridge Richard Hartland found huge whitish *Leucopaxillus eucalyptorum* (cap diameter 200 mm) growing at the base of a Manna Gum, *Eucalyptus viminalis*, where we have seen them on previous forays, although not so large. Scratching away the litter revealed copious amounts of white mycelium, which is a characteristic of this species. Not so characteristic was a malformed one growing in the bark of the tree trunk.

Alongside the *L. eucalyptorum* was a small group of brown-capped *Clitytocybe clitocyboides* showing the typical depression in the cap and the very decurrent gills. Again, these were large specimens with a cap diameter c 150 mm. In contrast, Carol Page found the minute stalked disc *Torrendiella eucalypti* on an old Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon* leaf. The inner surface is a smooth greenish-yellow/pale yellow, the outside dark grey and supported on a dark stalk. Long dark, sparse hairs on the outside cup and stalk come up to frame the disc. This species was first described at Kew, UK and the mycologist mistook the Blackwood leaf for a eucalypt leaf, hence the name.

Up on 'Hygrocybe Hill' we were treated to the biggest display of the Green Skinhead *Cortinarius (Dermocybe) austrovenetus*. All growth stages were present, from young with perfect green convex caps, yellow gills and pale yellow stem to older flatter-capped specimens and those that were falling over. On the moss beds under the tea-trees, Richard Hartland found Australian White Webcap *C. austroalbidus* but it was too wet to smell the characteristic curry smell.

It was interesting to find the yellow coral *Ramariopsis crocea* growing on the ground in scattered groups. This season, we have only found them growing on Smooth Tree-fern trunks *Dicksonia antarctica*. The specimens here were small,

Fomitopsis lilacinogilva
Photo: Ed Grey

to 30mm high, bright yellow-orange and multi-branched, but showed all the characteristics of the species – delicate structure, thin branches, blunt branch tips, and a white spore print. *Ramaria lorithamnus* , another yellow branched coral seen is medium-sized to 80 mm tall and its branches arise from a short whitish base. The blunt prongs at the branch tips divide equally in two. Bruising the fruit-body leaves a wine-red/brown stain on the surface.

Paul George found that many of the *Hygrocybe* spp. were close to those that Young described (AM Young, Fungi of Australia: Hygrophoraceae, 2005) but not quite the same. However, he was confident of the following two: "*H. aurantipes* . The cap is broadly conical, becoming flattened as it matures. The cap starts as a dark olive brown, then greenish yellow and orange tints appear. The gills are

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fairly widely spaced and are cream. The stipe is a bright orange-yellow, often hollow. The specimens were somewhat water-logged. The second I will call *H.* cf *cantharellus*. It has a deep red hemispherical to plano-convex cap that is slightly scurfy. The cap margin is crenulate and tinged with yellow. The gills are thick, distant, broadly adnate to decurrent and cream-coloured. These characters match well with *H. cantharellus*. However, the stipe is a reddish yellow, rather than the brilliant red, yellowish at base that Young describes in Hygrophoracae (2005)."

We saw a specimen of *Hydnoplicata convoluta* previously known as *Peziza whitei* and last seen here on the 2012 foray. The new name is very descriptive for this white convoluted species. N L Bougher and Katrina Syme, (Fungi of Southern Australia p102) write that "Its fruitbodies .... resemble cup fungi that have become greatly inrolled and convoluted. .....It is considered to be so closely related to some cup-like species of Peziza that it is tentatively placed in the same genus" [but now it isn't, it has become a truffle!]

Paul George found the following beautiful truffle on the main track up to the saddle: "I believe it is *Protoglossum violaceum*, (photo previous page 6), although I have yet to examine the spores. It was about 15 mm diameter, a rich lilac colour and had partially burst to reveal the hymenium. The surface was wet, slightly viscid and the perideum was thick and glutinous. The base is pale to white and quite small. When cut lengthways, a short columella was revealed that extend no further than the mid-point. (This feature distinguishes it from Thaxterogaster sp. which has a percurrent columella that extends the full length of the fruitbody). The gleba is a pale cinnamon colour with locules, and the spores appear rusty. This species has recently (August 2014) been moved into *Cortinarius* by B. Gasparini and is now called *Cortinarius subviolaceus* (because the name *C. violaceus* was already in use)".

Thanks to Paul George for his contribution to the report. Thanks to the photographers for their contribution – Paul George, Ed Grey, Richard Hartland, Carol Page, Torbjorn von Strokirch.

Pat & Ed Grey

FUNGI GROUP FORAY 19 July 2015, *Langwarrin Flora & Fauna Reserve,* (near Frankston)

The Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve is an island of relatively undisturbed natural bushland surrounded by the suburbs of Frankston and Langwarrin. The park has an important place in military history with almost a 100 year history of military use spanning from 1886 to 1979. Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve is located on the Cranbourne Sands, a series of parallel sand dunes, formed thousands of years ago, that stretch from Frankston to Cranbourne and beyond. The undulating topography in the reserve, as a result of the parallel sand dunes, leads to a variety of different environments. The dominant heathland plants found on the dry, nutrient-poor sandy soils of the dunes include Coast Manna Gum, Heath Tea-tree and Silver Banksia. The eucalypt woodland communities found on the lower, less well-drained soils include Silver-leaf Stringybark, Coast Manna Gum, Narrow-leaf Peppermint, Swamp Gum, Black Sheoak and Prickly Tea-tree. The understorey of the grassy woodland community contains many different grasses and sedges, such as Kangaroo Grass and Variable Sword-sedge.

A cold, frosty morning gave way to a brilliant sunny day for this, our first survey at Langwarrin. In the car park was a group of brown-capped, yellow fleshed *Cortinarius* sp. somewhat like *C. clelandii*, but not quite dark enough in the cap. One specimen of Rooting Shank *Oudemansiella gigaspora* was hiding behind a eucalypt as was one specimen of the reddish-capped *Leratomyces ceres (Stropharia aurantiaca)*. All of these were growing in the wood mulch.

On the Emu Wren Track was a lot of moss under Tea-tree. Much searching in the moss eventually resulted in finding one tiny yellow *Rickenella fibula* (decurrent gills and a 'fuzz' of hairs on the stem). Further along was a good example of the Horse-dropping Fungus which we have been calling *Pisolithus arhizus* (earlier *P. tinctorius* Dye Ball). This, however, is a northern hemisphere species and recent Queensland work on five species by P Leonard and S McMullan-Fisher (2013, *Fungimap Newsletter* 49 pp 4-8) indicates that three of the species studied are likely to be found in Victoria: *P marmoratus* with a brown to black peridium (outer covering), with or without gold mottling; the larger *P. albus* with a white to pale cream peridium and the smaller *P. microcarpus* with a gold-brown peridium and a clearly defined stipe (stem). The specimen we saw had a dark peridium and no clearly visible stem so is therefore *P. marmoratus* which is also the species that we are most likely to encounter. (see photo above).


Pisolithus marmoratus Photo: Torbjorn von Strokirch

The two earthtongues in the moss were *Geoglossum umbratile* . Jurrie Hubregtse identified them from a description in *Helotiales of Australasia: Geoglossaceae, Orbiliaceae, Sclerotiniaceae, Hyaloscyphaceae* by B.M. Spooner in Bibliotheca Mycologica Band 116. They were black tongues, about 35 mm tall with a grooved, rough pitted head which is distinct from the rough stem and had no minute hairs on the stems or heads thus indicating that they were a *Geoglossum* sp. not *Trichoglossum* sp. which are differentiated by the minute hairs (setae, brown lance-shaped cells)

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that protrude from the surface of the fruit-body giving it a finely bristly texture.

Growing in the sandy soil were numerous groups of the brownish saucer-shaped discs *Aleurina ferruginea* with a smooth inner surface, slightly curved rims and rough outer surface. (Photo right) .The common and widespread Fungimap Target Species Split Gill *Schizophyllum commune* was seen growing on old dead wood. Its shell-like cap is whitish and covered in hairs, and has no obvious stipe. The common name reflects the fact that the gills are split longitudinally. But a cautious note – do not smell because the spores may be pathogenic and cause the disease basidioneuromycosis. Red-brown cushions of *Hypoxylon howeiannum* (*H fuscum*) were found on a small branch and several circular spiky forms of the brownish braided, ropey anamorph stage remained and could be seen changing into the fully developed tan-brown cushions of the sexual form.

A resupinate, violet crust with white woolly margin was found on a dead branch. On the same branch were fruit-bodies of *Stereum illudens* and it was first thought that the resupinate crust may have been a precursor of the *Stereum*. However, inspection under a hand lens showed the wrinkled surface with the white margin was a separate species and identified as *Hjorstamia crassa* which we saw in 2013 at Woodlands Historic Park. It is interesting to note that there are four violet to blue to purple crust-like fungi found in Australia and distinguished morphologically by fertile surface appearance and growth habit. *Chondrostereum purpureum* is resupinate to effused-reflexed but eventually forms frilly brackets, with a smooth to slightly wrinkled, purple to violet fertile surface with a pale margin. It grows on living and dead wood. *Hjortstamia crassa* is resupinate, violet to dark blue to purple with a woolly white margin and the fertile surface is wrinkled like Byssomerulius corium. It grows on dead wood. *Terana caerulea* (syn. *Pulcherricium caeruleum*) Cobalt Crust is resupinate, dark blue ageing to violet, with a white woolly margin. The surface is smooth with tubercles and lumps. This species grows on rotting wood. On the naming side, Index Fungorum gives the species name as T. *'coeruleum'*. *Trichaptum byssogenum* has a pored fertile surface, is resupinate to effused-reflexed, violaceus with some brown tints, and the margin a paler violet. It grows on dead wood.

In the afternoon, along the Dune Circuit Track, Jurrie Hubregtse made a collection for the RBG Melbourne Herbarium of some tiny reddish-orange discs found in the sandy soil. They were scattered to densely aggregated, with a diameter up to 5 mm, concave to flat, sometimes deformed by mutual pressure. The upper surface was slightly pitted (needed a hand lens to see), and the underside smooth and yellow-orange. With microscopical examination Jurrie was able to determine that they were *Pulvinula cinnabarina*, and he made this comment, "There are a small number of very similar looking *Pulvinula* species but they can be readily separated using microscopic features."

We also saw a group of *Lycoperdon scabrum* that beautifully illustrated the developing stages of growth: the youngest was covered in soft dark fibrillose pointed scales, a later stage showed that a lot of the scales had fallen off, but the final stage which leaves a smooth, papery, shiny surface we saw only in the morning. The youngest specimen, ca 30 mm round, had no sign of the opening for the expelling of spores, but the more mature ones showed the spore outlet open at the top, and when the spore sac was pressed a puff of spores was expelled.

Torbjorn von Strokirch had this to say "I went for quite a long walk with John Eichler, Paul George and Richard Hartland in the afternoon along the Centre Break and Owen Dawson Track area. There were many Cortinarius (mostly purple(ish)), one of which was the Emperor Cort, *Cortinarius archeri or C. subarcheri*, Entoloma and Amanita. There were numerous *Russula* including *R. persanguinea*. Others seen were *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, *Entoloma readiae*, various tiny white Ms (*Mycena*, *Marasmius*, *Hemimycena* or the like...), *Tremella fuciformis*, *Panellus stipticus* and various crusts and powders (possible slime moulds). Particularly nice finds were a mass of *Craterellus australis* among some cut down tea trees on the Owen Dawson track west, *Humidicutus lewellinae* on the Centre break among some bracken and on the eastern part of the Owen Dawson track a single example of *Antrodiella citrea*". [It is a soft bracket, mostly resupinate but forms small shelves and is usually found on the underside of dead eucalypt branches. The upper surface is flat, bright yellow, and on the under surface white round pores about 3 per mm, tending to yellow at the margin]. "I was also pleased to see *Mycena interrupta* because they are so pretty, *Nidula emodensis*, very nice cup shaped *Aleurina ferruginea* and *Coltricia cinnamomea*. There were also a lot of coral fungi." I (Pat Grey) thought that the area must have been wetter than the Emu Wren Track and Dune Circuit Track covered by the rest of the group but Torbjorn comments "I wouldn't say that it was consistently wetter. There was just different soil and vegetation in different areas. It was predominantly eucalypt forest in the east whereas the morning areas had a lot of tea tree

Aleurina ferruginea Photo: Jeff Triplett

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Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Fauna Survey Group: 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. The purpose of the property that we visited is for both biodiversity offsets, retaining the remnant vegetation, and carbon offsets by revegetating cleared parts of the property. (Photo right: Birdwatching. Knud, Kathy & John)

Our meeting on 10th November was called *Animal encounters around the world*, with the speaker being FNCV's Dr Maria Gibson, from Deakin University.

Geology Group: **Meeting 28 October** - Alex Condoreanu provided the Geology SIG with a detailed and fascinating history of the universe and of the beginning of life on earth being seeded from debris from space. He spoke of the Rosetta Space Mission as finding vital clues for this theory. The large crowd appreciated his clear explanation and detailed PowerPoint presentation. Ruth Robertson also gave a ten minute talk on her family links to James Blackburn who, as an ex-convict civil engineer, was involved in many civic works in Tasmania and Victoria - including the building of the Yan Yean Reservoir, which at the time of its completion in 1857, was the largest artificial reservoir in the world. A most thought provoking evening attended by 40 people.

Juniors' Group: We have a competition winner amongst our Junior Group! Clare's niece, Bronte Silins, entered the "Save the Bilby" crossword competition on behalf of our club and won the Victoria prize of an educational incursion by "Animals of Oz". This was presented at our October meeting.

Our excursion to Camp Cormorant at Paynesville was held on the weekend of 6th to 8th November.

Day Group: **Meeting, 22nd September.** Two presentations were given. In the first, *Where there's fire, there's Smokies*, Phoebe Burns spoke about her research into the numbers and distribution of the Smoky Mouse in particular in relation to fire. In the second, Stella Shipway spoke on *Where are they now? Changes in the occupancy of the Broad-toothed Rat, Mastacomys fuscus across Victoria.* Twenty members attended.

Excursion on 27th October. Wildflower and orchid walk in Mullum Mullum Park Mitcham, with Cecily Falkingham. Twenty people attended, the weather was fine. Cecily told us a little about the history behind the building of the EastLink tunnels. We observed many wildflowers and bird species but orchids were scarce. Half a dozen people continued on to Antonio Park for a picnic lunch.

(A reminder) FNCV Club Camp &Excursions Policy

The Council has a club-wide policy in place for meetings, excursions and camps.

Non-members will be charged $3 per person for each FNCV meeting and $5. per person for an excursion or camp. Junior non-member families will be charged $2 per meeting and $4 per excursion. All those who wish to attend Junior camps must be members.

Attendance books need to be signed at every SIG meeting, excursion and camp.
This is vital for insurances purposes.

The Club recommends that people with a medical condition, eg. anaphylactic or heart conditions, carry written medical information with them. They should inform the excursion/camp leader of the whereabouts of this information on each outing, (for example, :"*it is in the pocket of my parka.")*

Parents or designated guardians are responsible for all medical needs on Junior camps or excursions.

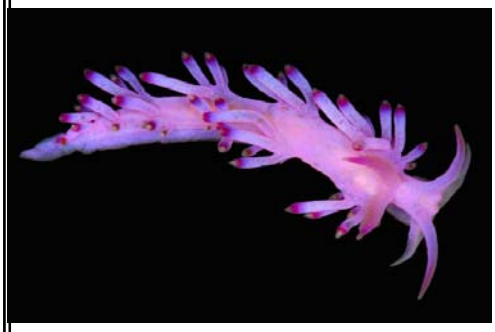
Nudibranchs and related molluscs field guide

Museum Victoria has released ***Nudibranchs and related molluscs*** as part of the **Museum Victoria Marine Field Guide series**. The guide has been written by legend of the field, Robert Burn, who is described as, 'the father of systemic nudibranchology in Australia'. He has studied these beautiful sea creatures for over 60 years and has identified more than 50 species which were previously unknown to science.

Often called 'butterflies of the ocean' nudibranchs are beautiful soft-bodied, marine gastropod molluscs that come in an extraordinary array of colours and striking forms.

The guide introduces marine naturalists, divers, biologists and anyone with a love of the sea to nudibranchs and related molluscs commonly encountered in the Bass Strait regions of southern Australia – their identification, biology and associations with other plants and animals that provide them with food, concealment and borrowed defences. The guide includes nearly 250 species descriptions accompanied by colour photographs and illustrations to aid recognition.

Robert Burn is recognised as having brought this formerly neglected group to science in Australia. Despite remaining an amateur – he is a builder by trade – he is considered an expert of world-standing. He has made a significant contribution to the literature through publishing journal papers, contributing chapters to books and was on the editorial committee of the *Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia* from 1957-1978. Significantly ***Nudibranchs and related molluscs*** is his first book. Having described over 50 species, he also has a number named in his honour including *Robernella* and *Burnaia helocochoridia (pictured here)*. Now retired, Robert Burn remains an Honorary Associate of the Invertebrate Department at Museum Victoria and regularly attends monthly workdays. He is also an FNCV member, heavily involved with the MRG.



Other titles in the Museum Victoria Marine Guide series include *An introduction to marine life*; *Barnacles*; *Crabs, hermit crabs and allies* and *Sponges*.

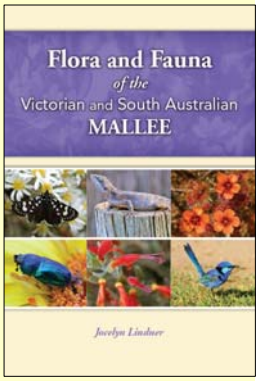
Flora and Fauna of the Victorian and South Australian Mallee

by Jocelyn Lindner
Self published, 2015
Review by Ted Ryan.

In the early years of *the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria* the Mallee country of the north west of the state drew leading club members on annual expeditions in search of particularly rare fauna and what would have been to many an exotic flora and landscape. After the mass clearing of much of the region for farming such expeditions became rarer. Local people had written about the Mallee prior to those FNCV expeditions though and continued to do so after the clearing, leading in more recent years to a tradition of guidebooks developing in the period from 1989 onwards. These include *The Mallee in Flower* by I.R. McCann (1989), *Flowers of the Mallee* by the Mallee Wildflower Committee (no date) and the more localized *The Wildflowers of the Millewa* by Margaret Kelly (1989). The *Flora and Fauna of the Victorian and South Australian Mallee* by Jocelyn Lindner (2015) follows in the tradition of these previous volumes but with some important differences.

All of the works have plant identification at their core. Lindner's new work is much more comprehensive though in terms of the overall number of plants depicted, as well as the presentation of close-up and mid-distance photographs to facilitate identification. Shots depicting particular plant types and notable localities give a stronger sense of the ecology of the region. The main plant ID section is followed by a 'calendar' in which plants in flower are grouped in the appropriate month. The images concerned were created by placing fresh plant specimens directly on a scanner in order to accurately convey the size of flowers, buds, seeds and leaves – an effective technique I have not seen utilized elsewhere.

The survey on the flora of the region is broadened by sections on weed identification, the floral richness of roadsides and reserves, food and medicinal plants, Mallee Aborigines and the recovery of Mallee country after fire. A fauna section which completes the work focuses largely on birds but also some mammals, reptiles and insects – wildlife that might be readily seen by Mallee residents and visitor to the area.



Finally, while it is a very professional guide book to the Mallee country of South Australia and Victoria, it is also a work steeped in family and local knowledge. This is perhaps best shown by the references to the deep knowledge of the late Tom and Robert Lindner and their friends in a section on Mallee fowl and scattered elsewhere in the book. This family and local knowledge shaped by Lindner's enthusiasm and editorial rigour, make the volume a fine guide for anyone wishing to know more of – and importantly actively experience – the natural richness of the Mallee country.

Marine Research Group News

Report on MRG meeting Monday 12 October, 2015: Kristina Cook spoke on the topic, "Whale rescue training"

Dolphins and whales, also known as cetaceans, sometimes strand on the beach, where they may be encountered alive or dead. If alive, the animal requires first aid / medical assistance. **Note: this is a dangerous operation and should ONLY be performed by properly trained and accredited persons following accepted protocols and occupational health and safety standards.**

In Victoria, strandings can be reported to the Whale and Dolphin Emergency Hotline on **1300 136 017** and rescues are carried out by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). ORRCA (Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia), licensed in New South Wales, works with government agencies and operates in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. The relevant agencies in South Australia and Tasmania are, respectively, the AMWRRO (Australian Marine Wildlife Research & Rescue Organization) and the Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment (DPIWE). Hotlines in other states are with the RSPCA (Queensland); Wildcare (Western Australia) and Marine Wildwatch (Northern Territory)

Kristina then spoke about the cetacean rescue training programs run by ORRCA (see also their website at **http://www.orrca.org.au/**). These have a theoretical component (incl. lectures on marine mammal biology, causes of strandings, first aid, rescue strategies and methods, safety requirements and legal issues), followed by a practical component where first aid and rescue techniques are practiced on the beach using plastic blow-up whales. Refresher courses are also regularly offered.

A mass stranding is defined as one involving 7 or more animals. Cetaceans are the only marine mammals that strand 'en masse'. Species tending to strand singly include all southern species of the baleen whales and the Odontocetes (toothed whale) species *Delphinus delphis* (common dolphin), *Tursiops truncatus* (bottlenose dolphin), and *Kogia breviceps* (pygmy sperm whale). Mass stranding species are the Odontocetes species *Globicephala macrorhynchus* (pilot whale), *Physeter macrocephalus* (sperm whale) and *Pseudorca crassidens* (false killer whale). Inter-species strandings are also known.

In the southern hemisphere, stranding incidents are irregular, with higher frequencies on southernmost areas of land masses. In Australia, strandings occur most frequently in Tasmania. There may be seasonal trends depending on the state; in Victoria and NSW they tend to occur in autumn, whereas in Tasmania they tend to occur in summer.In Victoria, there are 4-7 stranding incidents recorded annually, mostly single strandings, with the last mass stranding involving 87 False Killer whales at Croajingolong National Park, East Gippsland in 1983.

Factors potentially involved in whale strandings include **behavioural factors** (social bonding, inexperienced young animals, predator avoidance, foraging in shallow waters); **biological factors** (old age, starvation, sickness, disease, injury, disability); **physical factors** (coastline topography - whale-trap beaches, sandy and muddy substrates, storms, changes in tides and currents, geomagnetic anomalies, lunar cycles); and **human factors** (entanglements, constructed obstacles, pollution, noise, ship strikes, acoustic disturbance - on the latter, United States navy military exercises in the Bahamas have been know to rupture cetacean eardrums, disrupting sonar echolocation and navigation and causing mass strandings).

The rescue sequence for **those properly trained and accredited to undertake it,** is: receive notification of incident from the rescue service; report arrival to the site; assess the stranding site, identify the stranded marine mammals, apply first aid (triage) techniques, collecting data; assist in rehabilitation of the marine mammals, assist in the release of the marine mammals, and post-rescue debriefing.

The marine mammal rescue kit consists of three parts: the **personal kit** (sunscreen, water, food, wetsuit, umbrella, hat, towels, sunglasses, sleeping bag, wet weather gear, hand sanitizer, warm clothes, first aid kit, torch, batteries), **whale kit** (sheets and towels, tarpaulins, disposable gloves, whale rescue mats and slings, plastic buckets), and the **data collection kit** (species ID books, maps, tide charts, mobile phone, GPS, camera, stopwatch, ORRCA photo circles, data recording sheets, waterproof pads and pens).

Rescuers should be aware of relevant legislation governing cetaceans and other marine mammals. All marine mammals, alive or dead, are protected by law. State legislation operates on land and up to 5 kilometers out to sea. Beyond 5 kilometers, federal legislation applies. All cetaceans are protected under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999. The Whale Protection Act 1980 prohibits the killing, injuring, taking or interfering with any whale in Australian waters.

In terms of species identification, cetaceans belong to the **Order Cetacea** and are divided into two groups: **Mysticetes (baleen whales),** characterized by double blowhole, presence of baleen in the jaw, throat grooves, being larger than the odontocetes, females larger than males; and **Odontocetes (toothed whales),** characterized by a single blowhole, presence of teeth in the jaw, use of echolocation—sonar, males larger than females.

The following characteristics of stranded animals need to be noted: the blowhole (most important), length of animal, shape of head, number of teeth and their placement in the jaw or presence and type of baleen in the jaw; indentations, creases, grooves, folds or pleats in the body; the dorsal fin, the pectoral fins, and whether animal is adult, juvenile or neonatal.

Principles of whale release include refloating and releasing the strongest animal and/or senior female into the ocean first, and maintaining pod integrity—the senior female will call the others to follow her. After rehabilitation and release, the cetaceans must be monitored to ensure they don't re-strand. This can be done by shore surveys, aircraft, reports from fishermen, or volunteer observations of the beach and ocean.

We thank Kristina for a most informative and interesting talk, and for making her powerpoint presentation available for the compilation of this report.

Platon Vafiadis

(Continued from page 8)
opening out to sandy heath in the north. As we went back to the west we encountered more tea tree and wetter areas in the central part of the reserve."

John Eichler, who has often surveyed the fungi here said "The Reserve has a quite rich fungal flora although Sunday's foray didn't demonstrate this - my photographic records for the reserve covers about 120 species and, while I haven't combined all records for the reserve, I'm confident the species tally would exceed 160 species." He went on to say "In the afternoon Paul, Torbjorn and I were thrilled to come across a magnificent colony of *Craterellus australis* on Owen Dawson Track. The colony occupies about 25 sq m and contains numerous tight groups of large fruiting bodies. This is the second time I've found this species at Langwarrin - the first was in 1996.

Richard Hartland also saw: a young, small, ash-grey coral, *Clavulina cinerea*, which has thick grey branches and pale branch tips; *Inocybe meridionalis* which like all 'hairy-heads' had a cap shaggy with fibrils and tufts, and was dark brown, the stipe slender and red brown.

Thanks to Virgil Hubregtse, Jurrie Hubregtse and Ed Grey for doing microscopical work on the finds and thanks to John Eichler, Jurrie Hubregtse and Torbjorn von Strokirch for their contribution to the report. Thanks to Torbjorn von Strokirch for supplying the list of fungi seen by his group in the afternoon. Thanks also to the photographers John Eichler, Ed Grey, Richard Hartland, Jurrie Hubregtse, David Lockwood, Torbjorn von Strokirch, and Jeff Triplett.

Pat Grey & Ed Grey

bookshop@fncv.org.au

for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

Many thanks to those who helped collate and label FNN 259

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

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