



Understanding  
Our Natural World  
Est. 1880

# Field Nats News No 318



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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May 2021

## From the President

The Juniors' Easter Camp to the Grampians was a great success. It has always been very clear to me that the future of any organisation rests upon the continuous recruitment of new, interested and motivated youngsters. I have attended a number of Juniors' camps and activities over the years since 1976 and witnessed, firsthand, the unbridled enthusiasm of children for the natural world and its marvellous secrets. It would be a great boon for the

The due date for FNN 319 will be, as always, the first Tuesday of the month, May 4th. Please use

[joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com)

I am looking forward to finding my inbox overflowing with members' observations and reports of meetings and excursions!

*See p 5, from the editor.*

activities if more of our experienced and specialist naturalists were able to attend the camps and provide the additional scientific and natural history experience that is required to satisfy the information vacuum that all children possess. There is an enormous pool of natural history experience and knowledge within our membership that would be enthusiastically welcomed on the Juniors' camps as additional support.

During the excursions some very old hollow trees were investigated and Photos 1 and 2 provide indisputable proof that tree hollows do attract wildlife. They quickly became filled with children.



Photo 1. Halls Gap Botanical Gardens.

Photo: Faye Campbell



Another highlight of the camp was a training session on the correct way to apply a Pressure Immobilisation Bandage after venomous bites. There was a great deal of enthusiastic wrapping of limbs (Photo 3 p 2) with apparently partially "mummified" individuals wandering about the camp.

I was able to set up a moth sheet on one evening and many small moths and numerous other insects appeared in reasonable numbers (Photos 4, 5 and 6 p 2). Feeding carrots to the two camels on the property was also a very popular event. Dr Patricia Amaya Cruz planned and organised a non-stop

*(Continued p 4)*

Photo 2. Ancient Redgum with large hollow. Photo: Aviva Brick

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Photo 3. Pressure immobilisation bandage training victim.

Photo: Max Campbell

***From the President***, (Continued from p1)

series of interesting and challenging activities for the entire period which were enjoyed by all. Full details of the Easter Camp will be provided in a forthcoming report. Many more interesting excursions are planned for the Juniors for this year.

FNCV member Professor Barry Cooper has been awarded the 2021 Tom Vallance Medal\* for his contribution to the history of geology, a life-long passion that was supported and nurtured by his membership of the original "Hawthorn Junior Field Naturalist Club". By Year 9, his best friend encouraged him to join the Club, based in Melbourne's suburb of Hawthorn. Within a short time, he was founding and editing the Club's Newsletter "The Junior Naturalist" and writing articles on rocks and fossils. When the Club celebrated its 25th birthday in 1968, Barry wrote an article on its history and had it published in "The Victorian Naturalist". Around the same time, Barry was appointed "Club Recorder" or Archivist. His historical records from this period are still kept today by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. A very successful and productive career in Geology followed. Many others have also benefited enormously from their association with the Junior Naturalists.

We have been holding meetings in the hall under the appropriate Covid 19 regulations and will continue to do so unless advised to do otherwise. It has been good to catch up with fellow naturalists in person after such a long break. Keep an eye out for the excursions and field trips that are planned for the next few months; in particular the Fungal Forays provide great opportunities for macro photographers. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Max Campbell**Photo 4, *Utetheisa pulchelloides*, Heliotrope Moth.

Photo: Max Campbell

Photo 5. *Oenosandra boisduvalii* female Boisduval's Autumn Moth.

Photo: Max Campbell

Photo 6. *Oenosandra boisduvalii* male Boisduval's Autumn Moth.

Photo: Max Campbell

\* **Editor: Dr Thomas George Vallance (1928–1993)**, geologist and historian of science, was formerly Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. Originally a petrologist, his work tracing geological expertise in Sydney during the late 18th and early 19th centuries shed unexpected light on scientific activity in the young colony and ignited his interest in the history of geology and early workers in the earth sciences. He researched and published many articles and papers on famous, infamous and little-known early pioneers in this field. His legacy was in the form of 3000 index cards of information, memorabilia and jottings on miners, geologists, surveyors, prospectors and mining engineers, which was compiled over a number of years and gathered from a wide variety of sources - especially from 19th century mining journals. After his death this rich resource was compiled into a database, which should prove invaluable for researchers.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May 2021

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> - Marine Research Group Field Work: *Martha Point*.** Meet at 10:00 am. **Prior bookings essential.** For exact meeting location please contact Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; 9530 4180 AH

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Annual General Meeting** Join in this important event in the life of our Club and congratulate our new long-term (40 year) members. Meet at 2 pm. Guest speaker: Greg Martin, President of Australia New Guinea Fishes Association, Victoria (ANGFA). *Field trips, Conservation and Fish Keeping—an overview of ANGFA.* All welcome but **prior bookings essential** [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au) See FNN 317 page 11 and 12. It important we have a quorum, if you cannot attend, use proxy voting form p 5

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Fungi Group Foray: *The Ada Tree, Yarra State Forest*.** Meet 10.30 am at the Ada Tree car park. (Mel Ed 45, Map X912 U3 or Vic Roads Ed 8, Page 80 F6) <https://www.visitwarburton.com.au/activity/the-ada-tree-walk>  
**Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Carol Page 0438 446 973; [cpage356@gmail.com](mailto:cpage356@gmail.com)

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Fungi Group Meeting: *Fire and Fungi*.**  
Speaker: Dr Sapphire McMullen-Fischer, an ecologist who has special interest in the conservation of biodiversity, particularly the macro-fungi and mosses. There will also be an opportunity to hear about MYCOcommunity, a not-for-profit organisation aimed at increasing community awareness about fungi and making scientific training equipment and resources available to citizen mycologists. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Carol Page 0438 446 973; [cpage356@gmail.com](mailto:cpage356@gmail.com)

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: *Crocs and kookaburras, dolphins and goannas: what does skull shape and function tell us about convergent evolution?***  
Speaker: Dr Colin McHenry, Senior Lecturer, University of Newcastle. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: David De Angelis 0409 519 829; [d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au)

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group. Meeting: *Field trip roundup*.**  
Join us as we review where we have been and what we have seen during our field work season. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; 9530 4180 AH.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>—Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> - Fauna Survey Group.** Weekend trip to Rushworth Forest to check nest boxes and spotlight. **Prior bookings at least one week in advance essential.** Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651; [rgibson@melbpc.org.au](mailto:rgibson@melbpc.org.au)

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Dolphin Research Institute*.**  
Time and fee to be confirmed. Landcare grant activity. **Bookings in advance essential.** Leaders: Institute Staff. Contact: Dr Patricia Amaya [juniors@fncv.org.au](mailto:juniors@fncv.org.au)

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> – Fungi Group Foray: *Masons Falls, Kinglake West*.** Meet at 10.30 am in Masons Falls picnic area. This is approximately 6 km from the turn off along the Whittlesea Kinglake Road at Pheasant Creek – National Park Rd. (Mel Ed 45, Map 9 1M). **Prior bookings essential.** Contact Carol Page 0438 446 973; [cpage356@gmail.com](mailto:cpage356@gmail.com)  
<https://goo.gl/maps/FcFRQrHawm95pssL6>  
<https://walkingmaps.com.au/walk/4101>

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Meeting:** Speaker to be advised. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Max Campbell 0409 143 538; 9544 0181 AH; [mcam7307@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mcam7307@bigpond.net.au)

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> – Botany Group Meeting: *Communities in Conservation: exploring the case study of the Helmeted Honeyeater*.** Speaker: Dr Melanie Birtchnell. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Ken Griffiths [botany@fncv.org.au](mailto:botany@fncv.org.au)

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> – FNCV Council Meeting: Details of format and time to be advised.** Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

(Continued on page 4)

The calendar has been prepared on the assumption that, in May, meetings will be held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm unless otherwise advised.



As the Covid 19 situation is fluid, this may change at any time. Activities may be cancelled or meetings switched to Zoom. Despite some relaxation of restrictions, there is still a numbers cap in the hall. You are therefore asked to register for *both* meetings and excursions as soon as you can, preferably supplying a phone number and email, so that you can be reached at short notice. Please let the SIG contact know if your plans alter.

Members are reminded that they are required by regulations to carry a mask and wear it when social distancing is not possible. Also, as many of our members feel vulnerable, we strongly urge, as a courtesy to others, that attendees continue to wear a mask at FNCV meetings.

You will be required to sign in with the Victorian Government QR app (logo above). It is simple. Just bring your phone. Assistance is available to everyone. Try to arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Keep in mind that, as always, on days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled at short notice



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

(Continued from page 3)

Max Campbell will email the link.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> – Day Group Meeting 10.30 am, speaker at 11 am: *A Field Naturalist in Iceland*** Speaker: Sally Bewsher. Visitors and friends welcome. **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Joan Broadberry 9846 1218; [joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com)

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> – Geology Group Meeting:** Speaker: Bill Reid, exploration manager for Castlemaine Goldfields Pty Ltd. *Topic to be confirmed.* **Prior bookings essential.** Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; 0425 729 424; [rrhoskin@gmail.com](mailto:rrhoskin@gmail.com)

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> – Juniors' Group. No Meeting**

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> – Juniors' Group Excursion: See below Fungi Group Foray**

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> – Fungi Group and Juniors Group Foray: *Bunyip State Park, Gembrook.***

Meet at 10.30 am at Mortimer picnic ground, off the Gembrook–Tonimbuk Road (Mel Ed 37 P 14 R12) Google maps <https://goo.gl/maps/bCGVyHcg759CVd8Y6>

**Prior bookings essential.** Contacts: Carol Page 0438 446 973; [cpage356@gmail.com](mailto:cpage356@gmail.com) and Dr Patricia Amaya [juniors@fncv.org.au](mailto:juniors@fncv.org.au)

## Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for member photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: [joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com) by the first Monday in the month.

Welcome  
Welcome

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

*Nikita Donovan, Peter Zuidland, Carole Gibbs, Stevie Fox, Linda Presswell, Robert Pergl, Marianne Sherry, Xavier Smith, William Pringle, James Pringle, Hannah Pringle, Tilda Frances Green, Michael Green, Michael William Green, Liesel Green, Jonathan Turner, Anna Turner, Bruce McCann and Mitchell Hatley*

### Second-hand booksale 2021, postponed until 2022

In the February– May Calendar of Events a second-hand booksale was advertised for Saturday 8th May, following the FNCV's usual practice of holding this event every two years. However, because of Covid 19 and the restricted numbers allowed in the hall we are unable to go ahead with the sale.

**We are hopeful that the sale can be held in 2022.**

Advertising in the  
Field Nats News

#### VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field  
Nats Office

[admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

9877 9860

(Mon –Tues 10 am –4 pm )

**From the Editor:**

Hi everyone, I am so pleased, as I am sure you are too, that the FNCV is running an almost full program with meetings now being allowed in the hall.

2020 was a very difficult year, but a magnificent response from members meant that Field Nats News was able to continue each month despite the Club's very restricted program. The many articles and observations that our readers shared through its pages changed the character of the newsletter in such a positive way that the editorial team would love this to continue. So please KEEP sending in your natural history photos and observations and let your fellow naturalists know what you have seen, read and learned.

In FNN 317 I reminded members and SIG co-ordinators that in the past reports of meetings and excursions from our nine sub-groups have traditionally been the backbone of FNN. However, over the last few months, even though there has been a full calendar, FNN has received very few reports. A suggestion to SIG leaders is that at the start of a meeting or excursion you could ask if there is someone who would be prepared to take notes and write a brief report on what was said or what was discovered. Sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement. In working with the Day Group I have also found that many presenters are happy to lend or give you a copy of their notes.

Many thanks for your continued support of FNN, Joan



**The Field  
Naturalists  
Club of  
Victoria Inc**

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Reg. No A0033611X  
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*Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC*

**Proxy Voting Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_

Current member of The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

appoint (full name) \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

or in their absence, the AGM Chair, to be my proxy at the 2021 Annual General Meeting to be convened on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021 at 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn and authorise them to vote on my behalf.

***This form must be given to the FNCV Secretary before the start of the AGM.***

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 2021

*Understanding Our Natural World*



# Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

## BIRDSLAND BELGRAVE HEIGHTS TIG EXCURSION

7th February 2021

It was a drizzly morning but around 18 people still turned up for this trip and, despite my misplaced reservations, we weren't disappointed. If the success of a trip can be measured by the inverse of metres travelled, then reaching less than 300 of them from the car park would score well.

Insects seemed to relish the weather and were spotted all over the place: on grass, tree trunks and their leaves.

We saw quite a few larvae and pupa of the *Harmonia conformis* lady beetle, as well as a few adults. One *Rumex* plant was covered in them.

(Continued page 7)



*Harmonia conformis* - Above: larvae and pupa  
Left: adult. Photos: R. Richter

**FNCV Facebook**

It was reported to the last council meeting, 22nd March that the FNCV had 18,598 followers.

A huge thank you to Claire Ferguson, Andrej Hohmann and Asha Billing for their hard work in moderating the site.



Scale-stalking Lady Beetles

Photo: R. Richter

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The highlight for me was the Scale-stalking Lady Beetles (Genus *Rhyzobius*) found by Amelia. I had only seen individuals of these a handful of times previously, but here were several in the picnic area close to the cars – even a mating pair!

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fncv-2021-birdsland>

Reiner Richter



Above and left. Mantis

Photos: J. Broadberry



Lining up to take photos of mantis.

Photo: R. Richter

[bookshop@fncv.org.au](mailto:bookshop@fncv.org.au)

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

*The views and opinions expressed in any material including websites and newsletters are not necessarily those of FNCV Inc.*

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 318  
Joan Broadberry  
Wendy Gare  
Sally Bewsher



## Day Group

## Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) Speaker: Bianca Friend

On the fourth Tuesday of March, the FNCV Day Group held its first face to face meeting in the hall since February 2020. It was great to be back. Our speaker was Bianca Friend, Development Executive from Australian Wildlife Conservancy, (AWC). We were also pleased to welcome two of her colleagues, Nathan and Emma.

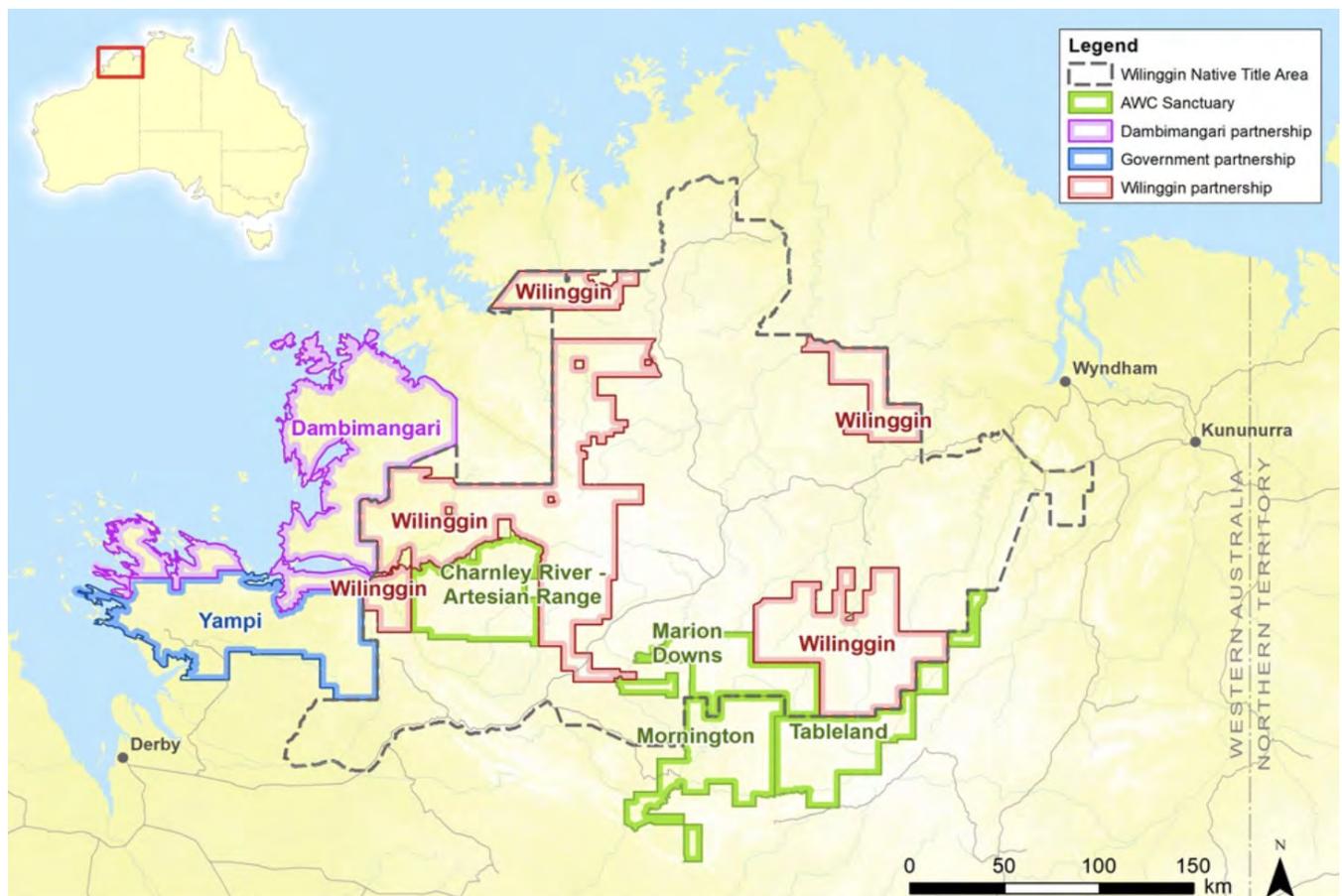
The Australian Wildlife Conservancy was founded in Western Australia by Martin Copley (1940- 2014) in response to Australia's mammal extinction crisis which is one of the worst in the world. Over a third of the world's extinctions from the last 400 years have been from Australia. Since colonisation Australia has lost 34 mammal species. It was clear that 'business as usual' by employing the same strategies for conservation would lead to additional extinctions. For example, the rapid and continuing decrease of small native mammals in Kakadu. In response, AWC developed and is implementing a new model for conservation

AWC is an independent, non-profit organisation working to conserve threatened wildlife and ecosystems in Australia. This is principally achieved through the acquisition of extensive areas of land on which conservation reserves (sanctuaries) are established, or by entering into partnerships with government and indigenous groups to manage landscapes for effective conservation. Many of the reserves or part thereof, are enclosed with predator-proof fences, which allows endangered species, bred in captivity to be translocated into the sanctuaries.

The first reserve, Karakamia Sanctuary, was established in Southern Western Australia in 1991. AWC grew from there. As of February 2020 it owned or managed a diverse network of 30 properties covering 6.53 million hectares (16.14 million acres). These are in key areas including the Kimberley, the Top End, Cape York, Kati Thanda - Lake Eyre and the south-western forests. They protect threatened wildlife and ecosystems encompassing 88% of native birds, 74% of land mammals and 54% of reptiles and frogs. AWC is now the largest private owner and manager of land for conservation in Australia. It operates under a conservation model, using science, (predominantly biodiversity survey work and target research), to inform on-ground land management such as control of fire, feral animals and weeds. Programs are constantly measured and evaluated to monitor their effectiveness. There is a strong focus across the organisation on placing time and resources on the ground with 80% of staff being based in the field. Only 14% of expenditure is used for administration.

Bianca went on to give details of some of AWC's work including:

- Partnerships established with the NSW government in Mallee Cliffs National Park and the Piliga Forest.
  - First of its kind partnership in the Kimberley with the traditional owners who hold native title, the Dambimangari people.
  - First of its kind partnership between AWC and the Department of Defence to protect the Yampi Sound Training area.
  - Partnership between AWC and the Willinggin Aboriginal Corporation to work collaboratively to care for the land and
- (Continued on p 9)



(Continued from p 8)

its biodiversity across 1.7 million hectares of Willinggin country.

- Removal of feral herbivores: one result being the doubling of small mammal populations in Mornington Sanctuary.
- The largest non-government fire-management program in the Kimberley.
- Strategies for the management of the single greatest threat to wildlife, feral cats.

An example of a recent emergency response by AWC occurred in 2020 after the bushfires burnt the Kangaroo Island Durnart, Australia's rarest mammal's, entire range. AWC's team created a 13.7 hectare fenced refuge area, cleared of feral cats in 10 days. Stage two saw the establishment of the Western River Refuge a 370 H sanctuary to ensure the survival of the species.

Many, if not all members of the audience, had some understanding of the work of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Bianca's clear and informative presentation and readiness to answer questions was a great opportunity for us to add to and update our knowledge.

Joan Broadberry

## Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

### Botany Group:

Meeting Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March at the hall, with QR scans, masks and distancing for Covid. Attendance was 12, though we seemed to fit much of the space.

Jordan Crook, a new campaigner at the Victorian National Parks Association, presented on the Forests of the Central West, a region studied by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, whose report is with the State Government. Numerous plots of public land were reviewed, such as Wombat, Mt Cole and Wellsford Forests. VEAC has made recommendations for various grades of protection, including a new Wombat-Lerderderg National Park.

Jordan illustrated the natural values, including local endemic species such as *Bossiaea vombata* (Wombat Bossiaea), and *Grevillea montis-cole* subsp. *montis-cole* (Mt Cole Grevillea). Water resources are also of high value.

Community Consultations resulted in a modified Final Report - see VEAC Central West on the internet.

For a range of views on the future of native forestry in Victoria - [Google search: Victoria native forest future.](#)

Ken Griffiths

### Day Group:

The meeting held on the 23rd March was the first face-to-face meeting since February 2020. We welcomed Bianca Friend and her two associates from Australian Wildlife Conservancy. This organisation is the largest private owner and manager of land for conservation in Australia, protecting endangered wildlife across 6.5 million hectares in iconic regions such as the Kimberley and Cape York. Twenty one people attended. See p 8 for a more detailed report on this meeting.

Joan Broadberry

### Juniors Group:

In March we had two excursions organised and one meeting via Zoom.

Our first excursion to Point Cook Marine sanctuary on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March was cancelled by our activity leader Andrew Christie due to unforeseen circumstances.

Our second excursion took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March. We visited Mt Rothwell for a night spotlighting tour. It was well attended with 24 people and was subsidised by Landcare which meant a heavily reduced price for adults. The children were very engaged and that was the main comment from our activity leader. She said she had not had a group of children so engaged for many years. To me it was the best comment ever.

The last activity for the month on 26<sup>th</sup> March was a meeting via Zoom. Max Campbell spoke about camping gear. Quite a relevant topic since we were looking forward to having an amazing Easter Camp.

Dr Patricia Amaya

(Continued p 10)



(continued from p 9)

**Fungi Group:** Meeting was cancelled by Tom May, the speaker.

**Microscopy Group:** No meeting.

**Terrestrial Invertebrates Group:** Lerderberg State Park excursion on Sunday 7th March was cancelled.

### **Fauna Survey Group:**

Meeting. Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2021. The speaker for this online meeting was Dr Maggie Haines, Hon. Research Associate, Museums Victoria, with the topic 'Cryo-drama in the high country: Untangling the complex evolutionary history of Australian alpine skinks.' Twenty five attended.

There are six species of *Pseudemoia*, three of which are found in the alpine zone; the threatened Alpine Bog Skink *P. cryodroma*, which is found on a few mountain tops, the Southern Grass Skink *P. entrecasteauxii*, and the Tussock Skink *P. pagenstecheri*. They have overlapping distribution in the alps, and are separated mainly by stripe patterns. Detailed measurements of each species showed significant morphologic overlap, and genetic analysis showed occasional hybridization.

Meeting. Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021. The speaker for the night was Matt Clancy, Honours Graduate, University of Melbourne on 'Modelling the distribution of the threatened Howard Springs Toadlet *Uperoleia daviesae* in the Northern Territory. Twenty three people attended.

The Howard Springs Froglet is a very small, 22 mm long Myobatrachid frog found in a 40km area south east of Darwin. It inhabits sand sheet grassland woodland and associated sand plains or Debil-debil micro relief. It is a burrowing specialist and is only seen in the wet season. Surveys were conducted in the wet season where they breed in shallow pools after rain. Some potentially good habitat is unoccupied, but also separated by unsuitable habitat from existing populations. They are predated on by snakes and other frogs, and threats include agriculture, urban development and mining.

**Raymond Gibson**

### **Marine Research Group:**

Field work for March was over the long weekend Friday 5th to Monday 8th in the Apollo Bay area. As a part of that survey the MRG added the Sea Slugs they discovered to the Melbourne Sea Slug Census. See p 11.

Field work over Easter was at Portarlinton on Good Friday 2nd April and at Point Cook on Easter Sunday 4th April. Dates and times always coincide with a very low tide which is the only time the group can have extended access to reefs and rock platforms.

Species lists for each survey day can be obtained from  
Leon Altoff 95304180 AH; 0428 669 773



Point Cook

Photo: Barbara Burns



Portarlinton

Photo: J. Broadberry

## Marine Research Group Apollo Bay Area Melbourne Sea Slug Census



The Marine Research Group (MRG) of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, participated in the Melbourne Sea Slug Census for the first time this year as their March field work in the Apollo Bay area coincided exactly with the census dates. Sea slugs of all varieties, including nudibranchs are a part of MRG's survey of intertidal life around the Victorian coast, so it was a good fit to take part in the census. Surveys over the four days took place at the Apollo Bay Boat Harbour, Blanket Bay, Marengo and Point Bunbury.

The Sea Slug Census is a citizen science program in which volunteers photographically record observations of sea slugs. The eighth Melbourne Sea Slug Census, run by the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), was held between Friday 5th and Monday 8th March 2021. The Melbourne census is independently run but is also part of a larger project taking place in Australia and overseas. This year, Sea Slug Censuses are being held at Nelson Bay NSW, the Sunshine Coast, Lord Howe Island and Vanuatu. For the first time a friendly competitive element had been introduced between the states. The Melbourne competition accepts photographs of sea slug species taken anywhere in Victorian coastal waters. To enter, one picture of each species, including the details of location needs to be posted on iNaturalist. The photographs are then identified and checked by specialists such as FNCV member Bob Burn (photo below). All data goes towards the Sea Slug Census Project, a community based initiative to document the biodiversity of our oceans through collaboration between divers and scientists. This project was started at Southern Cross University in New South Wales in 2013.

Sea slugs are one of the most photographed groups of marine invertebrates because of their dazzling colours and unusual shapes. More than 400 species are known in Victoria. They are very good indicators of environmental change because they have rapid lifecycles, usually less than a year and very specific food requirements. Therefore they respond quickly to changes in oceanographic conditions, for example an increase in water temperature.

With seven successful Melbourne sea slug census events held over four years, there has been the discovery of new species and much improved distribution data for sea slugs, including range extensions. The seven censuses so far have taken place at different times of the year in order to be more effective in monitoring the species.

Sea slugs are most commonly photographed by scuba divers and snorkelers. They can also be found by rock pooling, which is the method used by the Marine Research Group. A few images are shown below.

A Sea Slug Census Facebook Group has been established by Nicole Mertens, a Reefwatch Project Officer with the Victorian National Parks to allow divers and others to add their images, view those photographed by others and discuss identities. It provides an accessible platform for lay people which centralises data and brings participants together.

The MRG photographed over 30 species of Sea Slugs over the four days of their survey. As yet there are no results available from the competitive side of the census.

**Joan Broadberry**



*Madrella* sp. Pt Bunbury, March 13th  
Photo: John Eichler



*Aplysia juliana* Apollo Bay Boat Harbour  
March 13th Photo: John Eichler



*Polycera janjukia* March 10th  
Photo: Leon Altoff

*Edentellina typica* March 10th  
Photo: Leon Altoff



Bob Burn

Photo: Leon Altoff

# She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism

2nd April to 22nd August



## Jane Sutherland

United States of Scottish parents 1853 –  
Australia 1928, Australia from 1864

## Field naturalists

c. 1896  
produced in Melbourne  
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,  
Gift of Mrs E. H. Shackell 1962

(1062-5)

Reflecting her love of the Australian bush, Jane Sutherland was a member of the Field Naturalists of Victoria, formed in 1880 for the purpose of exploring natural history through excursions into the bush. Sutherland's interest in depicting women and children in the settled and domestic rural landscape was shared by Australian and international plein-air artists, including the French Impressionists. The critic for *Table Talk* observed at the time of its exhibition, 'three reckless young loiterers, ankle deep in mud and mire ... [are] wholly absorbed in exploring the contents of the swampy paddock'.

An exhibition of paintings by artists of the Australian Impressionists school is now showing at the Ian Potter Gallery in Federation square. It is called *She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism*.

The FNCV Administration Officer Wendy Gare attended the exhibition recently and noticed that the picture shown above, painted in 1896 by Jane Sutherland, titled *Field Naturalists*, is the one Gary Presland used on the cover of the book he wrote and published in 2016 on the history of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, *Understanding Our Natural World, 1880–2015*.

**Photo right:** Gary displaying his book, was taken by Wendy Gare.

Jane Sutherland's lovely painting shows three young boys wading in a swampy paddock. One of them holds an object hidden from view. The three heads are bent together, examining the find.

It is stated in the text and elsewhere when Googled, that Jane Sutherland was a member of the FNCV. After checking this, no record was found in the club archives of her membership. However, her brother James Sutherland joined the FNCV in 1892.

