

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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GPO BOX 249  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

# FIELD NATTER

## MEETING—Thursday 2 May 2019 7:30 pm Australian National University

Slatyer Room, R.N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT

details back page

Note change of room!

### Platypus mysteries to be revealed

Speaker: Geoff Williams

The platypus is one of the world's most amazing animals. This furry, warm-blooded mammal lays soft-shelled eggs like a lizard, uses its bill to navigate underwater, and sorts out arguments with the help of venomous spurs. The platypus is also among the most popular of Australia's animal icons - a great flagship species for freshwater conservation. But what about the platypus's own environmental needs? How is the species faring in the wild? And what needs to be done to ensure that populations survive in our local rivers and creeks?

Geoff, from the Australian Platypus Conservancy will share his knowledge of the amazing platypus. He will highlight the features that make the platypus so special, explain its conservation needs and how to go about helping these animals. He'll then give some hints on how to spot platypus in the wild and also talk about opportunities for becoming involved in the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network (APMN) – an exciting new 'citizen science' project to help track how the species is faring across its entire range.



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## Invertefans... invertefantastic... & thank you Glenn

On Monday evening 8 April Glenn Cocking prepared two adjacent sites on Black Mountain for a Moths Spectacular with Bill as chief assistant.

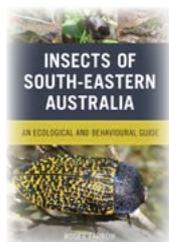
Sheets were installed on frames with generators providing Ultra violet light that attracted hundreds of moths, beetles, bugs, spiders and insects... invertebrates of diverse shapes and a range of sizes.

We were transfixed as much as the mini-beasts were. The weather was perfect and the 3-day-old moon was too young to penetrate the darkness.

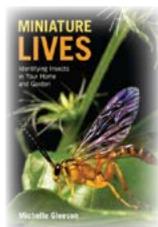
For good measure there were Ring-tailed possums in one of the trees whose trunks were highlighted by the installations.

At home I delved again into:

*A Guide to Australian Moths* by Paul Zborowski (and 'our' local) Ted Edwards, and Roger Farrow's 2016 *Insects of South-eastern Australia*.

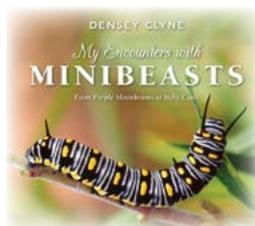


Then, when next at the Botanical Bookshop, I became obsessed beyond our region and Roger's indispensable gatherings on insects' ecology and behaviour:



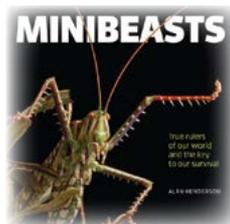
- Michelle Gleeson, from Queensland's Bugs Ed., provides a range of simple strategies for identifying and learning more about the insects encountered in our homes and gardens in *Miniature Lives: Identifying Insects in Your Home and Garden*. Before explaining the insect orders utilising stunning photographs and invaluable comparisons there are chapters on Insect Basics, Morphology and Habitats.

There are interesting facts and clues interwoven on each page allowing readers to enjoy, update or share biology lessons through amazing photographs, a glossary, pronunciation guide and



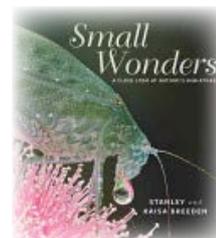
bibliography.

- Densey Clyne wrote the foreword for *Miniature Lives*. Her 2018 *My Encounters with Minibeasts from Purple Moonbeams to Itchy Cows* is a collection of stories from her decades of 'adventures in the world of invertebrates'. Long before the advent of digital photography Densey presented images of invertebrates that enticed us to celebrate minibeasts' diversity beyond the conventions of their being ugly, pestilential, dangerous and too small to be interesting. Densey's parallel, life-long fascination with words shines through as each short chapter explores relationships between minibeasts and their surroundings, and with vegetation as well as with other species.



- Alan Henderson operates Mini-beast Wildlife from Kuranda and he was involved in the development of the "BugsAlive" Exhibition. His 2018 book *Minibeasts: True rulers of our world and the key to our survival* draws on Alan's passion for macrophotography by presenting 13 photographic chapters that reveal the diverse aspects of invertebrates' lives that will inspiringly appeal to and teach us. Colour, shape, form, life on the wing, camouflage, aquatic specialists, mimics, mating, breeding and leaf litter join face to face images

in revealing a new world as only modern imaging (and printing) can.



- Small Wonders a close look and nature's miniatures* is possibly an indulgence. Stanley and Kaisa Breeden look closely at nature often using the multi-exposure technique known as focus stacking with HDR and panorama photography to create their collection of images. The resulting intricate and detailed revelations of the colours, form, structure and complexity of stamens, feathers, fur, scales, patterns, hair and dew drops that create works of art hidden if we dismiss small things as inconsequential.



- In 2018, AB Bishop published *habitat A practical guide to creating a wildlife-friendly Australian garden*. I have barely dipped into this 334 page book that takes the reader on a journey to link garden design and plantings with the needs of animals when interacting with householders and gardeners. Chapters entitled Connect, protect and future proof appealed to me along with the gardener as ecologist and the backyard as an ecosystem. The second part concentrates on habitats and the diverse creatures essential to healthy ecosystems as represented by gardens. The challenges of creating habitat in different spaces are explored and there's a section *What else can I do?* that includes a list of environmental organisations and a bibliography both of which might

## Activities

be prefaced by the words 'select list of'. The book is included in this collection as it shows how gardens can provide us with sources for

adventures in entomology and studies of invertebrates. Perhaps time and further study will prove it is a successor to Peter Grant's

*Habitat Garden: attracting wildlife to your garden.* There's a 2008 reprint on a shelf somewhere.

**Rosemary Blemings**

## *Moths, moths, moths and much more*

Following on from Rosemary's report on Glenn's Moth experience excursion, I took my camera along and was amazed at what was revealed once the photos were uploaded to my computer. I won't go into details and will just let some of my photos tell the story. Sorry Glenn, I don't know the names of all the moths so won't try to add any identifications.

**Alison Milton**



## Activities

### **9:00–11:30 am, Sunday 28 April, Autumn Bird Walk – meet at the reserve entrance at the end of Dungowan Street, Hawker**

Join the Friends of the Pinnacle for a gentle stroll through the reserve to observe the reserve's resident birds and the migrants as they stop over on their way to warmer climes for the winter. Please dress appropriately for the weather and possibly some off-track walking. Bring water to drink and your binoculars and/or camera. All welcome, no need to book.

### **5:30–7:00 pm, 30 April, CSIRO Discovery Theatre – ACT Chapter–Australian Citizen Science Association**

Witness the official launch of the ACT and SE NSW Chapter and hear what is happening with citizen science within the ACT and surrounding area. Presentation followed by nibbles.

### **9:00–12:00, Sunday 5 May, Tree and shrub planting – Reserve entrance on Springvale Drive opposite De Salis Street, Weetangera**

Friends of the Pinnacle have just over 100 plants to find a home in the Bottom Pinnacle (the leased land south of the reserve). These plantings will provide an important connecting link in the wildlife corridors that run along the Belconnen hills and down to the Molonglo valley. Come and spend a few hours making sure that these carefully selected plants get the best possible start.

Refreshments will be provided on site. Bring a bucket for watering, gardening gloves and your favourite trowel. **Bookings are required for catering:** Please RSVP to [johnbrannan@tpg.com.au](mailto:johnbrannan@tpg.com.au) or by calling John on 0405 331 405.

### **6:30–10:30 pm, 1 June: Conversation Council's annual World Environment Day Dinner: Gandel Atrium, National Museum of Australia**

This is the major fundraising event for the Council. Please consider whether you would be interesting in joining a table of FNAC members. Please contact Dierk von Brehens ([vbehrens@iinet.net.au](mailto:vbehrens@iinet.net.au)) if you would like to participate.



Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra Inc.

### Who are the Field Naturalists?

The Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra (FNAC) was formed in 1981. Our aim is to foster interest in natural history by means of meetings and regular field outings. Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Outings range from weekend rambles to long weekends away. Activities are advertised in our monthly newsletter. We emphasise informality and the enjoyment of nature. New members are always welcome. If you wish to join FNAC, please fill in the member application below and send it in with your subscription to the FNAC Treasurer at the address below.

**President:** Rosemary Blemings, et al

**president@fieldnatsact.com**

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**Membership:** [membership@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:membership@fieldnatsact.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** [editor@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:editor@fieldnatsact.com)



**Monthly meeting venue:** Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, Australian National University

**Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra  
GPO Box 249  
Canberra ACT 2601**



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Family name: ..... First name: .....

If a family membership, please include the first names of other members of the family:

.....

Postal address: .....

Suburb: ..... State: ..... Postcode: ..... Home phone: .....

Work phone: ..... Email address: .....

Subscription enclosed: \$.....(Single/Family \$25) Donation: \$.....

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: FRIEND? OTHER? Please specify: