

April 2019

ISSN: 1836-2761



GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATTER

MEETING—Thursday 4 April 2019

7:30 pm Australian National University

Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R.N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT
details back page

Butterflies of the Australian Monsoon Tropics

Speaker: Michael Braby

Michael Braby will talk about his latest book *Atlas of Butterflies and Diurnal Moths of the Monsoon Tropics of Northern Australia*, which has just been published by ANU Press. Northern Australia is one of few tropical places left on Earth in which biodiversity—and the ecological processes underpinning that biodiversity—is still relatively intact. However, scientific knowledge of that biodiversity is still in its infancy and the region remains a frontier for biological discovery. The butterfly and diurnal moth assemblages of the area, and their intimate associations with vascular plants, exemplify these points. However, the opportunity to fill knowledge gaps is quickly closing: proposals for substantial development and exploitation of Australia's north will inevitably repeat the ecological devastation that has occurred in temperate southern Australia—loss of species, loss of ecological communities, fragmentation of populations, disruption of healthy ecosystem function and so on—all of which will diminish the value of the natural heritage of the region before it is fully understood and appreciated. Michael will explain why the region is important for butterflies, highlight some of the distinctive peculiarities of the fauna, and what needs to be done to ensure their continued survival.



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A Flynn moth tale

At 13.30 on a 27 degree March day I was waiting for a bus in mid-Flynn when I watched a Red Wattlebird fly over the street and drop what I thought at first was a leaf in the middle of the road. The leaf moved!

I walked over and picked it up. It protested in my cupped hand but didn't fly away when I put it on the ground under a street tree. There was time for two photos before the bus came.

On the bus I explained to another regular why I appeared a bit disorganised and showed him the photo. He took to the idea of my rescuing the moth from being run over and said he sometimes wished he'd not, inadvertently, squashed snails in the garden. He admitted to killing snails at other times to protect his garden. We agreed with a concept I'd recently confirmed

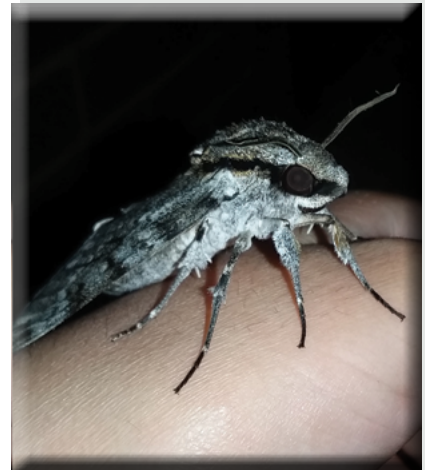


whilst reading Hugh Mackay: that it's in humans' nature to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

Rosemary Blemings

Another moth story!

While in Holt I met this very big, very relaxed moth just hanging out in some clothing placed in a laundry basket.



I said "hey moth you shouldn't be here" and held a cardboard box near it, which it politely walked inside of and waited patiently. I took the box outside and used my hand to coax it out. The moth calmly walked onto my hand and settled so I could take some photos. I then transferred it to the ground where it again decided moving was overrated. The next morning however it had gone.

Lauren Venugoban

Editor: Lauren's moth is a Privet Hawk Moth (*Psilogramma casuarinae*)

Black-caped Crusader

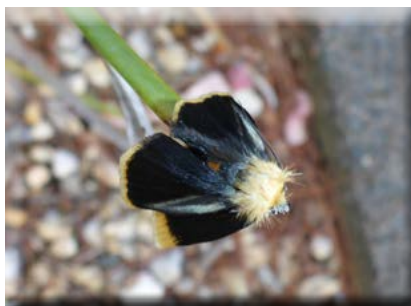
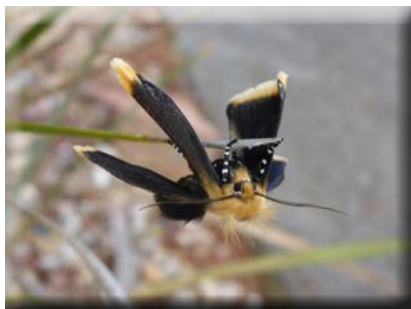
In 2015, I took a late afternoon spring walk round our Aranda garden. At that time of the day it was full of warm westerly light and colour. It was a good time to check out the wildlife. I started to take an interest in the invertebrate world after we removed many of the exotic shrubs that gave cover to the birds in our garden. The birds were rather shy for a while during the course of creating our new native garden. I was surprised by the many different insects and spiders who became my next best friends that appeared during that time.

On this foray, I found a dramatic-looking moth clinging to a Lomandra blade. I managed to get several photos of it before it moved on. The photos remained in the wildlife folder on my computer for three years. We moved shortly after that find and in the interim I had signed up for Canberra Nature Map (CNM) and since then I have been quite active putting up photos of the flora and fauna I have come across in the region.

In 2018, I decided to progressively upload my Aranda garden sightings on CNM. It is still a work in progress. I uploaded the photo of the moth to the CNM site and discovered that it had been found previously on Black Mountain, but it had not been described. On CMN it has been categorised as a concealer moth and identified as Xyloryctinae sp (subfamily). As far as I am aware it has still not been described. I was surprised to find this post appear some time later from ACT Parks on my Facebook feed: NAME THIS MOTH. This pretty little thing hails from Black Mountain and is yet to be named. Our suggestions are 'The bad hair moth' or 'The black-caped crusader'.

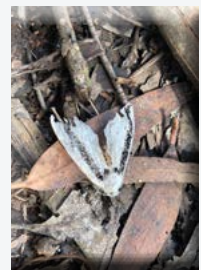
Image: Canberra Nature Map credit: Janet Russel (sic) <https://www.facebook.com/ACTParks/posts/1948582805452040>

There were quite a range of name suggestions from the ACT Parks community



More moths

This moth was photographed by Andy Russell while on a walk in Tallaganda State Forest. This one sadly, was not alive.



and not surprisingly given the orange hair, the name Trump, came up more than once. It was a good way to engage the community in taking a closer look at a specimen in a class of insects that gets little attention.

Janet Russell

Activities

29 Sept–4 October: 2019 Australian Native Plants Society National Conference, Albany WA

The 2019 Australian Native Plants Society National Conference will be held in the International Biodiversity Hotspot of the South-West, in Albany WA, hosted by the Wildflower Society of WA. This Biennial Conference is titled 'Blooming Biodiversity'. The Conference will feature the flora of the south-west of Western Australia, which has a high percentage of fascinating, endemic species. We are planning an interesting and entertaining series of pre- and post-conference tours, excursions and speakers. We are confident you will find it a rewarding experience, no matter how far you have to travel to join us. Full details and registration can be found at: www.bloomingbiodiversity.com.au

Month	Speaker	Topic
4 April	Michael Braby	Butterflies of the Australian Monsoon Tropics
2 May	Geoff Williams	Platypus mysteries to be revealed
7 December		Xmas party

Made in Australia: Native Species Introduced Overseas (Kindle edition)

by Maurits Zwankhuizen

Australia's indigenous inhabitants and its native animal species were decimated by the arrival of settlers from the late 18th century onward. We live in a nation which was isolated for many thousands of years from the ravages of European and Asian species. To a degree, Australia's ecosystems had found their points of balance and were extremely vulnerable to the introduction of new species. They were in no state to resist an entire invasion.

There is a forgotten element to this history. We are all aware of the damage wreaked upon the landscape and native wildlife by rabbits and foxes, cane toads and camels, mynas and starlings. What has remained largely undocumented, until now, has been the story of those native Australian species which reversed the trend; those creatures which were exported overseas, often in large numbers, and became established in their new homes. Although relatively minor compared to the array of imports which Australia has received, there are enough of them to warrant a book dedicated to their story.

This publication is available from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Moths: the next stage

Continuing on the moths theme, a short foray today may be an indication that insects are about to move into their pupal stage and virtually disappear for the winter. My foray found an unprecedented number of caterpillars in an area no larger than three house blocks.

The first was a caterpillar in my front yard munching on a salvia plant, while nearby is a small brown looper caterpillar I have been watching for several days (on a blueberry plant).

A stroll down the nearby laneway found yet another caterpillar on a tree I don't normally check for insects, so this was a pleasant surprise.

Moving further down the lane I inspected a grevillea growing in the front of a neighbour's house and found three more caterpillars. Two are definitely the same species and the third may also be the same but a much larger specimen. I also found a case moth on this same grevillea.

In the past week or two I have found two Saunder's case moths on a grevillea in my back yard. At the time of spotting the first Saunder's there were also two other smaller case-moths that were classed as Unknown bag or case moth on Canberra Nature Map. However, after watching the progression of one of these (the other disappeared) I've confirmed that these were early instars of the Saunder's case moth.

Not moths, but I also have 11 Orchard Swallowtail and two Dainty Swallowtail caterpillars on my citrus trees.

Alison Milton





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

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Newsletter Editor: 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: