

August 2011
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FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC. GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATTER

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

MEETING—THURSDAY 4th August
7:30pm Australian National University
Venue details back page

Native Fish Strategy

Speaker: Terry Korodaj

Terry Korodaj is the Senior Program Coordinator for the *Native Fish Strategy*, a program for rehabilitating native fish in the Murray-Darling Basin. Terry's background is varied with an early career focussed on 'people' issues and organisational change. As a field ecologist he has worked on Yellow-footed Antechinus, birds in pine forests and now fish! Terry has a strong interest in community engagement and the development of practical adoption and extension efforts.

Native fish populations in the Basin have declined by 90% since European settlement. The *Native Fish Strategy* aims to bring native fish populations back to 60% of their estimated pre-European settlement levels over the next forty years. Underpinned by science, the Strategy works with community to develop and implement local and regional initiatives to improve river health. Terry's presentation to the August meeting will essentially be fishy, with a slightly human dimension.

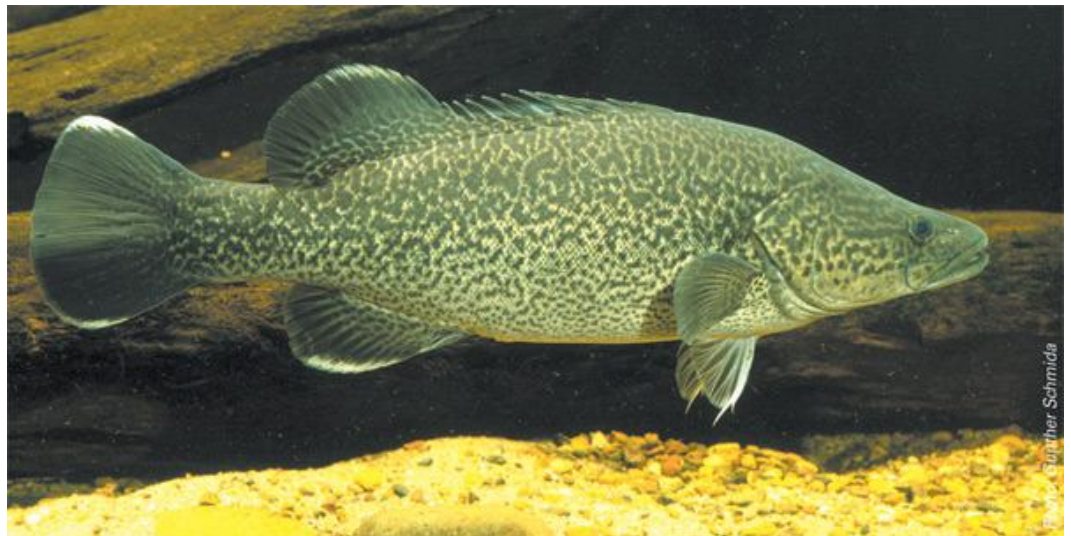


Photo: Murray Cod, courtesy of Murray Darling Basin Authority <http://www.mdba.gov.au/programs/nativefishstrategy>. A fact sheet about the Murray Cod and 40 other native fish species can be found on this website.

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OUTING—Sunday 14th August

9.30am Westbourne Woods Arboretum

This month we have arranged to join The Friends of ACT Arboreta for their monthly two-hour guided walk through the grounds of the Royal Canberra Golf Club. This month, the guide will be John Turnbull and the theme is "Remarkable trees in the woods". We will meet John at 9.30 am at the entrance to Royal Canberra Golf Club, Bentham Street, Yarralumla.

Please note that no dogs are allowed and the dress code of the Golf Club (which can be found at www.royalcanberra.com.au) applies if you wish to accept the invitation of the Club to take refreshments at the Spike Bar after the walk.

For further information contact John (62815991) or Friends of ACT Arboreta on 62887656 or 62811587.

Background

The site selected for the Federal Capital in 1908 consisted mostly of grassland, with few trees. Little was known about what species might thrive best in Canberra's environs. Charles Weston was appointed in 1913, by the Government, to test and choose suitable trees and shrubs for Canberra. He chose a site of 160 ha at Yarralumla on which he developed a plant nursery and an arboretum, now known as Westbourne Woods. Most of the Woods is now within the grounds of the Royal Canberra Golf Club. From <http://sawapl.tech.officelive.com/Westbourne.aspx>.

Looking into the Ocean's Future

This is a New York Times Editorial—Published July 15th, 2011

There is simply no exaggerating the importance of the oceans to earth's overall ecological balance. Their health affects the health of all terrestrial life. A new report by an international coalition of marine scientists makes for grim reading. It concludes that the oceans are approaching irreversible, potentially catastrophic change.

The experts, convened by the International Program on the State of the Ocean and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, found that marine "degradation is now happening at a faster rate than predicted." The oceans have warmed and become more acidic as they absorbed human-generated carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They are also more oxygen-deprived, because of agricultural runoff and other anthropogenic causes. This deadly trio of conditions was present in previous mass extinctions, according to the report.

The oceans' natural resilience has been seriously compromised. Pollution, habitat loss and overfishing are dangerous threats on their own. But when these factors converge, they can destroy marine ecosystems.

The severity of human impact was reinforced last week when scientists concluded that seven commercially important species, including marlin, mackerel and three tuna species, were either vulnerable to extinction, endangered or critically endangered according to I.U.C.N. standards. The solutions that might help slow further degradation include immediate reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, a system of marine conservation areas and a way to protect ocean life that goes beyond national jurisdictions.

This is the work of nations, but such goals require pressure from ordinary citizens if there is to be any hope of bringing them about in the face of opposing political and economic interests. As the new study notes, changes in the oceans, caused by carbon emissions, are perhaps "the most significant to the earth system," particularly because they will further accelerate climate change.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/16/opinion/16sat3.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha211>

Don't miss National Science Week 2011!

National Science Week 2011 is almost upon us. Between 13th and 21st August there will be more than 1,000 events spread across Australia. With 148 of these events occurring in the ACT there is bound to be an event to suit you. A full list of ACT events can be found at <http://www.scienceweek.gov.au/Pages/EventsMap.aspx?state=act>. The following information has been extracted from this website and describes a handful of events that may be of interest to FNAC members. Perhaps you could write a piece about your Science Week experience for the September newsletter!



Mt Stromlo Observatory - Star Gazing Night 7.30pm-10pm, Friday 5th August

As part of Mt Stromlo's 100-year celebrations for 2011, the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics together with the Canberra Astronomical Society are hosting an observation evening providing a unique opportunity for members of the public to get to know our cosmos. On the night attendees will be taken on a 'tour of the universe' with talks by astronomy experts and through observation time on several telescopes. Warm clothing is recommended and observations on the night are weather dependent. Admission is free. Bookings are not required.

Launch of Photoecology Group with David Wong from the University of Canberra 5-7pm, Friday 12th August (at CSIRO Discovery)

The launch of an Inspiring Australia Action Group aiming to bring together people with an interest in both photography and nature. A nature focus will bring people with an interest in photography and nature together to learn, share knowledge and create in a fun and supportive atmosphere. The program will culminate in an exhibition during National Science Week 2012. Bookings are essential (10 people only). Call CSIRO Discovery on 6246 4646. Membership is free.

Unconformity—Rare Rock Formation at Parliament House 10am and 3pm, Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st August

Don't miss your opportunity to join a geologist on an underground adventure at Parliament House to see a geological rarity known as an unconformity deep beneath the corridors of power. An unconformity is the point at which two rock masses, ten million years apart in age, meet. Preserved in the basement of Parliament House, this fascinating piece of our geological history is one of only three known similar formations in Australia. All participants will receive a free hot drink and 10% off any purchases made at the Parliament Shop. Wear warm clothes, good walking shoes and don't forget your torch. Admission is \$16 per person. Bookings are required—contact visitor.services@aph.gov.au or phone 6277 3591.

Geoscience Australia Open Day 10am-4pm, Sunday 21st August

This annual Open Day is an excellent opportunity to visit Geoscience Australia and learn about what happens there. All members of the community are invited to attend. There will be a range of activities for all ages, including science and career displays, bring your own rocks for identification, pan for gold, sieve for sapphires, science talks to highlight Australia's geological history and some of the recent achievements in Earth science, children's program, sale of maps, polished semi-precious stones and many more geoscience related products. Geoscience Australia is located on the corner of Jerrabomberra Ave and Hindmarsh Drive, in Symonston.

Launch of Investigating ACT Urban Birds with The Canberra Ornithological Group

2-3pm, Sunday 21st August (at CSIRO Discovery)

An Inspiring Australia Action Group that will meet throughout the year. The launch will be a lecture followed by a practical demonstration. The Group will collect bird information to help determine the importance of various habitat attributes and to enlighten city planners and managers. Places are limited. To join, you should have a passion for birds, access to the internet and access to and a vague working knowledge of Microsoft Excel. Binoculars would be an advantage but not essential. Bookings are essential through CSIRO Discovery on 6246 4646.





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: Chris Bunn tel: 02 6241 2968 mobile 0417407351

Secretary: Tony Lawson, tel 02 6161 9430 fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: www.fieldnatscanberra.com

Newsletter Editor: Position vacant

All contributions welcome

Published and distributed by Bob Lehman.



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (occasionally the adjacent building 44). Meetings start at 7:30 pm and are followed by refreshments.

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS ON MEMBERS' NIGHT!

* The October Field Nats meeting is our AGM and Members Night. This year, in addition to short talks, we will be asking members to contribute photos. Photos should have been taken by members and can be of either Field Nats activities or interesting natural history phenomena - local, national or international. Video clips could also be included. Photos need to be provided in advance as they will be put into a PowerPoint presentation that will be shown on Members' Night.

* If you are able and willing to create the PowerPoint presentation, please make yourself known to a committee member or email fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au.

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: