



FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION
OF CANBERRA INC.

OBJECTS: To foster an interest, an awareness and an understanding of nature

PRESIDENT: Simon Spinetti, Phone after 5 pm 257 4108

SECRETARY: Kay Hahne, Phone 251 1792 (H)

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: GPO Box 249, Canberra ACT 2601

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Bob Ecclestone, Phone 241 4512 (H)

Meetings are held downstairs in the Division of Zoology and Botany, ANU, on the first Thursday of each month. Meetings commence at 8.00 pm and are followed by refreshments.

NEWSLETTER — FEBRUARY 1993

FEBRUARY MEETING - Thursday 4TH

Our first speaker for the year is Feary, the Regional Archaeologist of the NSW parks and Wildlife Service (currently on a one year loan to the Australian Heritage Commission). She will give us a slide talk about the significance and management of cultural heritage of the south east region. It should be a very interesting talk.

FEBRUARY OUTING - Sunday 21st February 1993

Walk to Mt Franklin and Mt Aggie (in Brindabellas) Snow Gum and Alpin Ash. Choice of walks either 3, 6 or 9 km but please share your vehicle with others who want to walk the same distance. Car shuffle for drivers between Mt Franklin and Mt Aggie. Bring suitable clothing and lunch.

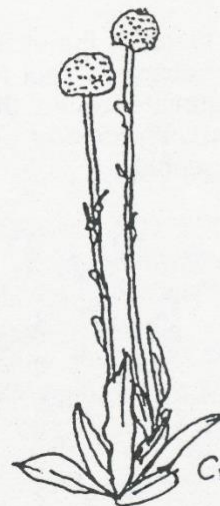
Meet at corner of Cotter Rd. and Eucumbine Rd. at 9.00 am and drive to Mt Franklin. Ring Rosemary on 254 1763 for further details.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

The Proposed changes to the constitution will be voted on at the February meeting. All financial members are eligible to vote. This should not take very long as we do not want to bore you all to death and we have a interesting talk to follow. A copy of the changes were enclosed in the last Newsletter. If you require a further copy ring Pamela Finger (on 264 4412 wk).

BUSH and BEACH

New Book written by Richard Nott and published by the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra(Inc). A guide to enjoying and protecting the South Coast of New South Wales. The book describes the natural and cultural heritage of the Far South Coast of New South Wales as well as outlining the principles and strategies to help interested citizens and organisations identify, protect, manage and interpret that heritage. A copy of the book will be available to peruse at the February meeting. Contact Dierk von Behrens on 254 1763 for further information.



Craspedia sp. D.

REPORTS

'BLACK RIDGE' EXCURSION - November 22, 1992.

by von Behrens sp (F).

In pleasant warm weather a sizeable group (25-30) of Field Naturalists gathered at the entrance gate of 'Black Ridge' located south-east of Bredbo. It was a case of travelling on foot or using a four-wheel drive to explore but one section of this 5,000+ acre property.

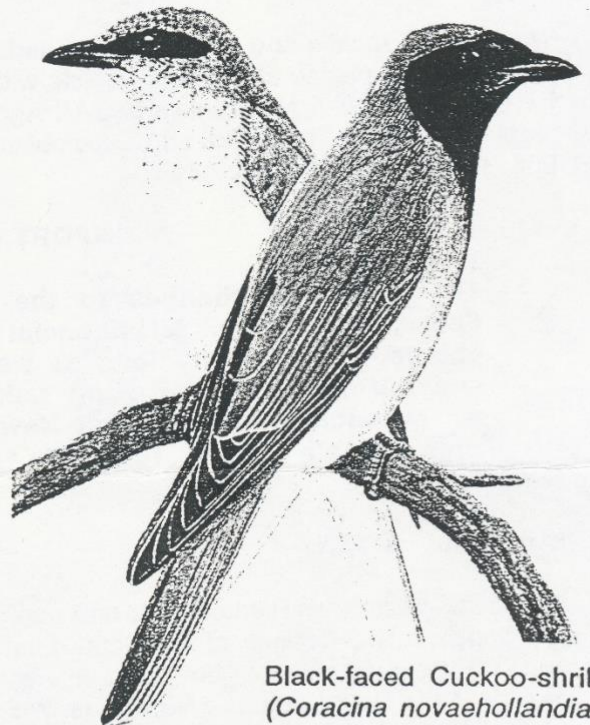
Several cars set out for Buchans Creek where we were all to meet for lunch. Most chose to walk at a leisurely pace through open eucalypt forest (*Eucalyptus dives*, *E bridgesiana*, *E rubida*, and *E rossii*) in what is loosely called the 'front paddock.' This area is cut off from the rest of the property by a large powerline. There are two small dams. The party strung out in a long line. Murray Dow and Lachlan had a 'real map' while several of us used photocopies. Dierk digressed to the north. He had discovered a soak. Leonie and Beth brought up the rear. They were continually absorbed in collecting and discussing plant samples.

Some plants included: *Hibertia obtusifolia*, *Helichrysum* sp, *Acacia dealbata*, *Acacia ulicifolia*, *Vipers bugloss* (a relative of Salvation Jane/Paterson's Curse and definitely unwanted), *Chielanthes temifolia*, *Stylidium graminifolium*, *Drosera* sp, *Brachyloma daphnoides*, *Hardenbergia violaceae*, *Caladenia carnea*, *Calochilus saprophyticus* (Bearded orchid), *Pterostylis nutans* (Nodding Greenhood), a Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra* ?), *Oxylobium alpestre*, *Viola betonicifolia*, *Hovea*, *Craspedia* and *Psoonia* sp. In January, 1993, *Spiranthes sinensis* (Austral Ladies' Tresses), and *Microtis unifolia* (Common Onion-orchid) were also found.

The soils in the valleys are deeper but one could be excused for thinking the ridges consist mainly of scree slopes. Little undergrowth is to be found on the steep dry western side of the ridge. The eastern slopes were richer in vegetation. Ricky Ford decided to visit the highest point on the ridge, Mt Clifford. He saw three snakes and plans to return for a spot of rockclimbing. The remainder of the walkers split into two groups. One chose a steep descent into a *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *E macrorhyncha* forest, the other was to walk along the ridge until it hit the track and then descend to the creek. We never did find the track. It was unnecessary. The land sloped gradually downwards and we descended through groves of yellow shrubs and a beautiful red grevillea with soft grey/green leaves. We also saw *Parahebe* in bloom and some isolated native pines, many of which had been felled in the past.

Everyone met up for lunch in the vicinity of a large fallen Eucalypt which became a seat for many. Only dedicated Field Naturalists would think of sitting adjacent to a large gravelly nest of black ants. We all coexisted quite peacefully.

After lunch many of us plotted, planned and acted. A delicate operation had to be performed. One of the four-wheel drive vehicles had become bogged where in finer weather it had previously parked. Recent heavy rain had turned the soil into a deceptive trap for the unwary. A few experienced stronger voices and common sense prevailed. It took one hour to prepare the vehicle for its successful once only attempt at freedom. A sincere thank you to all the helpers. This was indeed a valuable lesson. The land had only been in the hands of its new owners for a few months. Definitely not a house site, and definitely not a spring car park!



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
(*Coracina novaehollandiae*)

Jenny Bounds provided us with a list of the birds recorded that day. Australian Raven, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Grey Currawong, Grey Butcherbird, Superb Lyrebird, Fuscous Honeyeater (in apple box woodland, *E bridgesiana*), Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, White-eared honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill (in *Oxylobium/Grevillea* heath), Red Wattlebird, Rufous whistler, Grey fantail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren, Grey Shrike-thrush, Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Goshawk, Yellow Robin, Scarlet Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Brown Treecreeper, Common Bronzewing Pigeon, Crimson Rosella, Weebill, Pallid Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, Welcome Swallow, Willy Wagtail, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, and Dusky Woodswallow.

This property has not yet been thoroughly explored. The owners (5 shareholders) wish, among other things, to study and record all life-forms, eradicate the feral animals and plants and propagate the winter flowering species with a view to brightening Canberra's gardens. We already have a few takers for the Grevillea.

PS

Dierk, Tanja and I camped out for three nights during January 1993. Day time was given over to removing *Verbascum*, *Vipers Bugloss*, and about four different kinds of thistle (All Scotch of course - even if some was pinky/purple, yellow, or miniature versions of the above). As we know that 'only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun', this period was spent snoozing under a tree, or reading. An onlooker may have wondered at our trusty van. It developed this odd habit of moving backwards and forwards in a 1/4 circle - following the shade. We were near the small dam and only saw about three mosquitoes. The chorus of frogs at night indicated that mozzies were no doubt tasty dinners. Tanja found fresh frogs eggs one morning and was quite excited.

I eventually did a small painting. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, this time it was bluer. Lots of bugloss. I'd never painted anything blue before and the early morning light made the *Verbascum* look like candles standing out amid the blue. Much to my spouse's horror, I painted the neighbour's paddock. HE says I'm glorifying WEEDS! I say I'm showing what a CURSE they are.

A pair of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos formed the highlight of my campout. We had visited my parents for Christmas in Normanville, South Australia, which is diagonally across the Gulf from Kangaroo Island. These beautiful birds visit Normanville every day and feed off the native pines and banksias that remain in this area, hence my delight in discovering them here on Black Ridge. They allowed me to get quite close. Both were holding onto the vertical branches of a stringybark, and spent most of the time pulling off the rough bark looking for edibles. One gave up and became a sentry, calling gently and reassuringly the whole time. They then swapped places. The second sentry didn't make a sound. This type of foraging for food could quite effectively ringbark a tree branch. A branch on another tree had had about two feet of bark removed and was stained red by the subsequent oozing of sap although fresh leaves still adorned its crown. I certainly enjoyed their company.



Common Bronzewing
(*Phaps chalcoptere*)

The joint office, 'Natural history centre', run by the Canberra Ornithologists group, FNAC and the Herpetologists is going well. You can buy the recently released Atlas of Birds of the ACT there for \$25, below the retail price of \$29.50, as well as some posters and a small range of publications: the FNAC library is located there.

Volunteers are always needed to staff the office; if you can work for 3 or 4 hours on a Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday, please let Jenny Bounds know.

If you haven't visited the office yet, go in sometime. It is at the Griffin Centre, Room G5, next door to the Griffin Centre Office in Bunda St.

Relief Manager Required

The Office Manager, Sarah Thomas, will be away from the middle of February to the end of March and we are looking for someone to take over as temporary Manager; this caretaker job will involve doing a roster and some simple office jobs - perhaps one of the regular day volunteers will take this on? Ring Jenny Bounds: 2887802, or Sarah Thomas at the office 247 4996 on Fridays.

Also, Sarah Thomas will be leaving Australia in September and we will need a new Manager for the office if anyone is interested they should speak to Jenny or Sarah.

New Treasurer Needed.

Jenny Bounds, your Treasurer, will be giving up that job in August this year at the AGM. Although some months away, it's not all that long off and Jenny would be happy to train someone else in the meantime. You don't need to have accounting qualifications or skills; we use a simple cash book system. It involves no more than an hour or so a week of time. Anyone interested, please speak to Jenny (ph 2887802).

ODDS'N'ENDS

ACT Birdwatchers Hotline - Ring 247-5530 for a current 5 minute recorded message on meetings, outings, bargains, interesting, rare or migratory birds to be seen in our area.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Bookings essential. For more information ring 237 5120.

Murrumbidgee River Corridor - Ranger Guided Walks For Bookings ring 288 4930.

Namadji National Park - Bookings essential for popular walks. Ring 237 5222.

Canberra Nature Park - For details on activities ring the Information Line on 290 1057.

The first Australian Science Festival - will be held in Canberra from 27 March to 4 April 1992. Volunteers may be required to build design or arrange a display. Ring Pamela on 264 4412 to volunteer your services -- put the date in your diary, ideas will also be gratefully received.

NEWSLETTER

I would be interested to hear of new ideas for the newsletter and to receive your contributions. If you are not writing long reports we always need short notes or maybe a poem, drawings are also very useful. Let us know what you've been up to during the holidays. Share with us your tidbits of news and information, find an appropriate spot for them - eventually. Contributions can be handed in at meetings or sent to:

Pamela Finger

1 Hayter Place

Page ACT 2614

Telephone 264 4412 Wk

or 254 0311 Hm

If required I can be faxed. Please ring me first.

Deadline for the March newsletter is Friday, 19th of February.

FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION of CANBERRA Incorporated

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra was formed in 1981. The aim of the club is to stimulate interest in the natural history of the ACT through regular meetings and field outings. Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Field outings are also planned each month and range from day outings to long weekends and camping. The emphasis is on informality and fun. New members are always welcome, especially family groups and young people. Information on activities is circulated in the monthly newsletter.

If you wish to join FNAC, please complete the form below, and send it with the appropriate subscription to:
The Treasurer, FNAC, GPO Box 249, Canberra ACT 2601

FAMILY NAME **FIRST NAME**

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

.....
HOME ADDRESS

..... **SUBURB** **POSTCODE**.....

PHONE: HOME **WORK**.....

SUBSCRIPTION ENCLOSED: \$ Single/Family \$17; Concession \$10 (pensioners and F/T students)

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