

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

Vol 57 Issue 1
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MEETING—Thursday xx 2026 7:30 pm Australian National University

Slatyer Room (up the stairs),
R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU
details on the back page

Refreshments before
the meeting. Please
bring your own cup.



A reflection on a silly season

Speaker: Stuart Harris

In the best tradition of the slide show, Stuart has compiled a variety of images from the 25–26 Spring/summer season. A climatic roller coaster accompanied by constant wind, both plants and animals have adapted with irregularity of presence with a boom or bust pattern quite evident. Without delving too deep into one tangent or another, this first presentation for 2026 should whet the appetite for the year ahead!



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Newsletter contributions

All members are invited and encouraged to contribute to the newsletter each month.

If you have an interesting story or photo we would love to include it in the newsletter. It doesn't have to be a local story, maybe it's something you saw while travelling or even something sent to you by a friend.

Perhaps consider a short write-up of the monthly outing. Others may be able to provide the photos if you don't have them.

I'm aiming to select a photo of the month and the winner can collect a Caramello Koala at the next monthly meeting. Maybe a larger prize for the overall photo or story of the year.

I aim to publish the newsletter a week before each monthly meeting so I have prepared a table of the deadlines for receiving stories for each month.

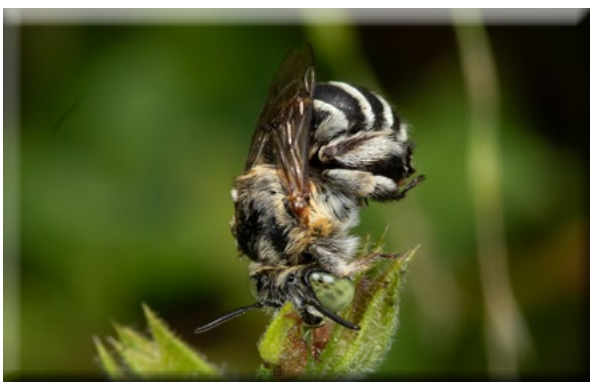
Of course, if you miss the deadline, we can hold it over for the next month.

Month	Contribution deadline
March	Monday 23 February
April	Monday 30 March
May	Monday 27 April
June	Monday 25 May
July	Monday 29 June
August	Monday 27 July
September	Monday 24 August
October	Monday 28 September
November	Monday 26 October
December	Monday 23 November

Send your contributions to:
editor@fieldnatsact.com

Alison Milton
 Editor

This could be your photo or story!
Blue banded bee waking up.



Field Nats online

Website

The [FieldNats website](#) is a useful resource.

It lists the committee members and provides links to contact the key people.

The [Newsletter page](#) has links to not only the current, but most past issues of the newsletter.

Keep up-to-date with upcoming events on the [calendar](#) among other useful links.

FaceBook

Did you know that FieldNats now has a [FaceBook page](#)?

John and Janet would love to receive a photo or two for the FaceBook page. Perhaps an interesting sighting or photos from an outing. It doesn't matter if you also send the same photos to the newsletter.

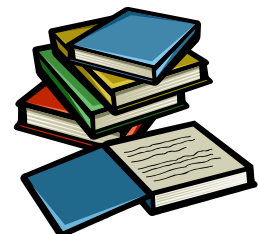
No deadline for these, just anytime you have something to share.

Put FaceBook in the subject line and send to secretary@fieldnatsact.com

Raffle prizes

The monthly raffle is our only fund-raising event and is funded through members' generous donations, mostly consisting of items no longer needed or wanted at home. Fresh garden produce is also highly prized.

Please go through your cupboards for all those little items you no longer use or want and bring them along to donate as raffle prizes.



Introducing the Canberra Nature Map Association and future plans

A number of members contribute to the Canberra Nature Map web site and have concerns over its future after the announcement that the site will be discontinued in 2029/30.

You are not alone and Michael Bedingfield has been studiously working behind the scenes to ensure that this platform will continue as a vital part of monitoring the Canberra species.

To this end, he has the following message.

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra has been a valued supporter of Canberra Nature Map, and a number of members contribute to this website. So I am hoping that this good relationship will continue.

The Canberra Nature Map Association (CNMA) has been created to support the website of Canberra Nature Map (CNM) and the community of people who moderate and contribute to it. However a lot of people have not heard about this so I am trying to spread the word about what we are doing.

The Association activities are likely to include the publication of the newsletter, giving technical advice, field day visits and surveys, social events, identification workshops, school and other community events and moderator group meetings. The Association is a registered not-for-profit organisation and is able to accept donations as well as being able to apply for funding for environmental education and conservation management purposes.

However, since we now know that NatureMapr will cease operations for the Canberra and Southern Tablelands in the financial year 2029–2030, we have to be prepared for big changes in how we operate. So the Association will be working with CNM contributors to facilitate this transition. The Association does not have any involvement with the running or funding of the NatureMapr platform. That is the role of Aaron Clausen's private company.

The list of people who are on the current committee are: President: Michael Bedingfield, Treasurer: Michael Mulvaney, Secretary: Emma Collins. Other Committee members: Kim Pullen, Ian Baird, Stuart Harris, Ciaran Ernst-Russell, Yumi Callaway. This committee also represents Canberra Nature Map ParkCare Group. The committee membership and positions will be up for re-election at the AGM.

We intend to have the first AGM of the Association on Thursday 12 February, 6.30 to 8.30 pm, at the Downer Community Centre, Frencham Place, Downer. Further information will be sent out to members later.



In the meantime the committee is developing a strategy to enable CNM to continue after NatureMapr closes down. A likely possibility is transferring the data of approving CNM contributors to iNaturalist. We may also develop a separate website to retain as much of the knowledge as we can of the 9,600 species that have been identified for the Canberra region. We also hope to keep the field guides for the region and the many nature reserves and other places. We also hope this new website will have a strong focus on communication with and supporting the CNM community.

We are still in the planning stage and cannot be specific about what we will do. However, keeping the CNM community together and retaining the knowledge of local fauna and flora is a high priority. Members of the Association will also be able to get assistance in making a transition to the new platform.

Confirmed members of the Association will receive direct but periodic correspondence about the Association's activities. Ideally we would like all moderators and as many contributors as possible to be members of the Association and for some of them to assist in the transition and any community events. To become a member and be able to vote at the AGM you need to send a 'yes I want to be a member' message to secretary.cnnn@gmail.com. Be sure to include your personal name and CNM username with the email.

The Association needs CNM members to put their hands up to assist in the work of looking after the project and its future evolution. At this stage the most important thing for people to do is to register as mentioned above if you wish to be a member of the new Association. I hope that those of you who are contributors to CNM will take this opportunity.

NatureMapr may be closing down, but Canberra Nature Map will continue on. Please join the CNM Association now to be part of the transition to the next stage.

Michael Bedingfield

ACT Gula (Koala) habitat viability study

The ACT Gula (Koala) habitat viability study is a collaboration between Conservation Council volunteers and ANU Fenner School researchers.

It aims eventually to judge the viability of the ACT's woodlands as wild Gula habitat.

This was prompted by the Gula sighting at Jacka in October 2024 and the ACT Government's desire for a 'carrying capacity' study to inform potential options for enhancing the local Gula population. It's part of the national koala effort and benefits from the work of our Cold Country Koalas (NSW Koala Strategy) neighbours in the Snowy/Monaro.

There is more information online at the [Gula Research in Canberra](#), [Canberra Region koalas Facebook page](#) and the NSW Government's [Cold Country Koalas](#) web page.

We are continually adding to a repository of background information. That's in a large Word document with scholarly references, text, woodland descriptions, ecological reports, images and online links.

There's a supporting Excel table to show sizes of nature reserves and other patches in hectares, the locally important koala trees (LIKTs) they contain, their connectivity to other patches and their fragmentation by roads and suburbs. This table needs more populating, especially with accurate hectare sizes, if anyone is looking for a challenging little desktop exercise.

Our weekly transect surveys are ground-truthing nature reserves and other patches across the whole ACT. Each transect datasheet contains ID codes, species, GPS coordinates, diameter,

height and canopy density of 32 eucalypts plus other information about the site (e.g. dogs, water, disturbance).

A volunteer turns each datasheet into a .shp file, which we then overlay on a number of GIS layers, such as the ACT vegetation type map, the urban ecological network map, the threatened woodlands map, the LIDAR mature trees image and a connectivity regional linkages (animal movement) model. The volunteer is collating the datasheets, pending advice from our ANU collaborators on the best process for analysis.

As of 2 December 2025, we've done a preliminary plot at the Northern Border Campsite, then transects at Taylor, Hall, Mt Ainslie, Mt Majura, Kowen Escarpment, Campbell Park, Aranda Bushland, Black Mountain, Bruce Ridge, O'Connor Ridge, Lyneham Ridge, The Pinnacle, Kama and Winslade (private lease). We're zig-zagging our way slowly south.

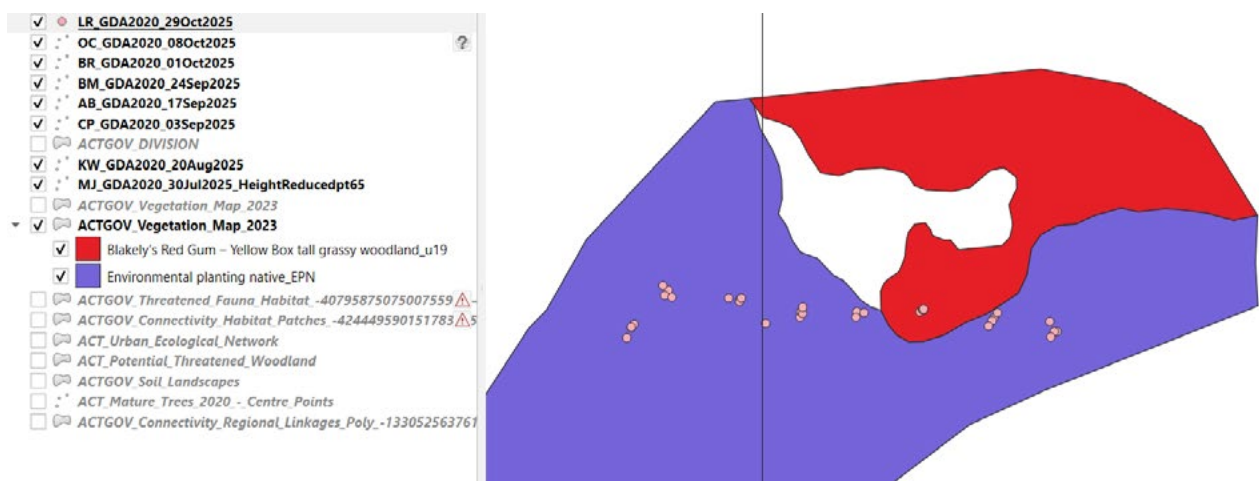
When we've finished the transects (some time in late 2026 we hope), under guidance from our ANU collaborators we'll collect 28 leaf samples and have them analysed by spectrometer for nutrients and perhaps secondary metabolites.

We hope all these inputs will display a pattern that allows us to make an updated policy recommendation to the Conservation Council and ACT Government.

Below is an example of our transect points overlaid on the vegetation types at Lyneham Ridge:

Keith Joliffe

(new FNAC member and Gula volunteer for the Conservation Council ACT Region)



Bradleys Creek excursion

A cool, damp weekend in the mountains now seems dream-like in the midst of a scorching summer. This was the weather experienced by Field Naturalists on 14 and 15 December in the shadows of Sentry Box at Bradleys Creek on the Yaouk Road. The outing occurred on John and Janet Stein's property in NSW, which extends from the valley, at an elevation of 1120 m, to over 1400 m along a ridgeline border with Namadgi National Park in the ACT.

After arriving on Saturday, we had morning tea.



Then some of the group explored the valley, where Native Geraniums and Billy Buttons were flowering in profusion. Here, Alison Milton also discovered many invertebrate species. The remainder of the group crossed Bradleys Creek, leaving the valley floor, for a loop walk up the hill slope. We left the Black Sallee (*Eucalyptus stellulata*) that tolerate cold-air drainage and fringe the creek, and moved up through snow gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) forest with the occasional Candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*). Here there was a carpet of yellow with Clustered Everlastings and Leafy Bossiaea in flower.



We then passed by granite boulders and into Broad-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives*) forest. Then we continued up to the edge of Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana*) forest that covers the slopes above, where we had a lunch break. Almost immediately, John Brickhill noticed scratches on a tree trunk, and Jenni Marsh confirmed it looked like glider landing marks. A huge wood fungus was also seen in the canopy.



High on the ridge was Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*), but the mountain-side slope was steep and fire-regrowth was thick, so we headed down instead, where walking was easy in long-unburnt forest.



We followed the edge of a gully and before long, a cave was found. Elin went right in while others looked on. Eventually we reached the valley, where we stopped for an afternoon snack at the edge of the wetlands, where Bradleys Creek fans out. Some returned by the side of the creek, but others explored the wetland, then needed to cross the main channel

to go back. John came across the distinctive call of a Golden-headed Cisticola.



Those who brought their tents and camped overnight were rewarded with the calls of Whistling Tree Frogs and a Boobook Owl, and a dark sky with very bright stars.

The great discovery of Sunday morning was a Lewins Rail by John. Unfortunately, it was dead.

Before leaving, Isobel Crawford wandered around the valley with us and generously shared her plant identification expertise. This was enormously appreciated.

Elin Adam's efforts in the compilation of a bird list were also greatly appreciated.

Some of the plants that were flowering

- Ozothamnus thyrsoideus* (Sticky Everlasting Bush)
- Geranium solanderi* var *solanderi* (Native Geranium)
- Craspedia variabilis* (Billy Buttons)

- Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Common everlasting)
- Chrysocephalum semipapposum* (Clustered everlasting)
- Bossiaea foliosa* (Leafy Bossiaea)
- Stylidium montanum* (Alpine Triggerplant)
- Cassinia aculeata* subsp. *Aculeata* (Dolly Bush)
- Hibbertia obtusifolia* (Hoary Guineaflower)
- Orchid *Diuris semilunulata* (Late Leopard Orchid)
- Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*)
- Brachyscome decipiens* (Field Daisy)
- Wahlenbergia planiflora* subsp. *Planiflora* (Flat Bluebell)
- Bulbine glauca* (Rock Lily)
- Thysanotus tuberosus* subsp. *Tuberosus* (Common Fringe Lily)
- Velleia paradoxa* (Spurred Velleia)
- Viola betonicifolia* subsp. *betonicifolia* (Mountain Violet)
- Leptospermum grandifolium*
- Callistemon sieberi* (River Bottlebrush)

Bird list

- Gang-gang Cockatoo
- Sulphur-crested cockatoo
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater
- White-eared Honeyeater
- Red Wattlebird
- Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
- Rufous whistler
- Laughing kookaburra
- Baby Australian magpie
- Superb fairywren
- Flame robin
- Scarlet robin
- Grey Currawong
- Pied currawong
- Crimson rosella
- Grey Shrike-thrush
- Fantail Cuckoo
- Sahul Brush cuckoo
- Striated Pardalote
- Spotted Pardalote
- Buff-rumped Thornbill
- Australian Brown Thornbill
- White-browed Scrubwren
- Grey Fantail
- White-throated Treecreeper
- Superb Lyrebird
- Nankeen Kestrel
- Peregrine Falcon
- Swamp Harrier
- Australian Raven
- Little Raven
- Australian wood duck
- Leaden flycatcher
- Golden-headed Cisticola
- Lewins Rail
- Boobook Owl

John Stein

Yaouk outing report

John has provided his report of our visit to the property at Yaouk in December but I had a different focus so this is my alternative report.

Our last outing of the year was a return to John and Janet's property at Yaouk. The property borders the ACT and extends up the hill to the Namadgi National Park boundary.

On our last visit there had been a lot of rain and the creek was flooded preventing us from crossing. This time however, the creek was at its normal low level allowing passage. John and Janet had invited members to stay and camp over night but only one couple chose to do this.

After morning tea I was so engrossed in hunting insects that I didn't see the majority of the party cross the creek to explore the bush beyond, with particular interest in recording the Eucalyptus species.

Janet and Keith's partner had remained behind and just as well as dark clouds had been gathering with some threatening thunder. Then it began to rain. Luckily Janet had the keys to the car where the three of us sheltered just as Keith returned looking for us.

We all sheltered in the car as we ate our lunch, hoping that the others had some shelter under the trees.

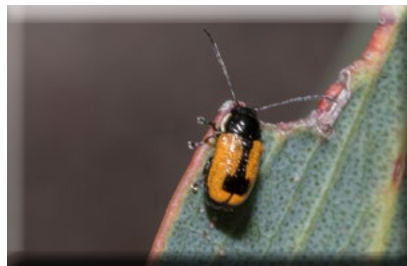
The rain only lasted about 15 minutes so we were then able



to continue exploration of the property.

I found plenty of insects to keep me occupied including a couple that had not previously been recorded at the property.

Of particular interest was a number of *Aporocera albilinea*. This was only the second sighting reported on Canberra Nature Map. I was surprised that the all black beetles were also of this species. The beetles themselves

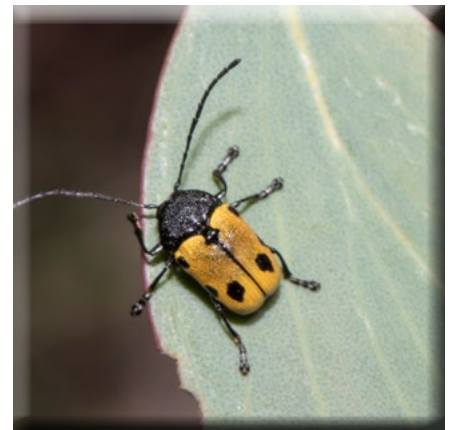


were very small, barely more than 5 mm.

As always, my passion is for leaf beetles and I was pleased to find some larvae that I did not

recognise. Collecting a few to take home, these eventually matured to *Paropsisterna agricola* beetles.

I also found one of my favourite beetles, *Cadmus litigiosus* and a number of *Cadmus crucicollis*, another favourite.



I wish I could have camped overnight so that I could continue to explore the next day.

There is always so much more to find if you just keep looking.

Alison Milton



Activities

Sunday 15 February: an exploratory /mystery trip up Corin Road

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9:30 to car pool. The trip could include a stop roadside at Billy Billy Creek or at the Square Rock carpark. A further option is at Forest BND trail where *Bursaria* is flowering. The hot weather may be continuing so appropriate clothing and protection etc is recommended. Plenty of water, and snacks for morning tea. Please RSVP to [John Stein](#).

The 2025/2026 cicada season in O'Connor

The title of this article is also the answer to a question that was posed in the September 2021 edition of the Field Natter newsletter, "When will we see another good season for cicadas?".

Not since the summer of 2020/2021 have there been so many Redeye Cicadas (*Psaltoda moerens*) in our yard at O'Connor. Their shells numbered in the dozens at least, maybe more than a hundred, and their chorus was deafening. The large population on the wing in O'Connor was not confined to our yard either. One morning Janet spotted masses

season and also finished early in the season, from late November to early January.

Three other species of cicada were also found in our yard this summer, the Clicking Ambertail (*Yoyetta robertsonae*), another early season cicada, the Silver Princess (*Yoyetta celis*), a species that also starts early but persists late, and the Double-spotted Cicada (*Galanga labeculata*), which seems to be a late season

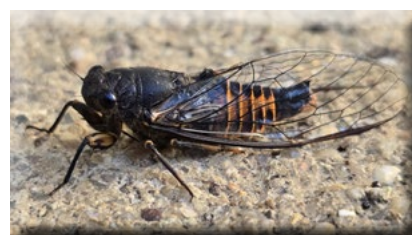


Redeye Cicada (*Psaltoda moerens*), emerging

on the ground about a kilometre away. As usual, the Redeyes started hatching early in the



Redeye Cicada (*Psaltoda moerens*)



Clicking Ambertail (*Yoyetta robertsonae*)



Silver Princess (*Yoyetta celis*), prey of a Common Brown Robber Fly

cicada, which wasn't noticed until early January.



Double-spotted Cicada (*Galanga labeculata*)

So now we are eagerly awaiting the coming seasons, especially to see if there is another 5-year period between Redeye peaks in 2030/2031.

John Stein

(Photos: John Stein, O'Connor, 2025 and 2026)

A new observation

The great thing about nature is that we are always learning something new. This was true this month when two weeks ago I found a hairy caterpillar seemingly on a determined mission. However, I collected it to take home to raise to an adult moth.

Only a day or two later it had formed a large cocoon on the netting covering the insect container. In the past I have found that it can take many months for an adult to emerge but to my surprise, just two weeks later I checked and found an emerged moth. However, I was a bit stunned. It looked nothing like the moth that the moderators had verified. In fact it had no colouring at all and appeared to have no wings.

A bit of research led me to it being a wingless female tussock moth, but not the one suggested by the moderators, which was *Calliteara pura* (Perfect Tussock Moth). I believe it to be *Iropoca rotundata*. I had never before seen a wingless moth let alone even knew that they existed.



Iropoca rotundata



Calliteara pura (Perfect Tussock Moth)

This led me to a dilemma: if she was wingless, how could release her without her falling prey to birds?

However, I soon came to the same conclusion as the moderator. Since I had collected it only around five minutes from home, I took her back just after dark to the same tree on which I had found her. I was advised to leave her with her cocoon as she would lay her eggs on this if she was to find a male.

The cocoon was attached to the netting I put over the containers and I had planned to tie it to the tree trunk. Instead, I managed to lodge it behind some tree bark. Hopefully a male will find her and she can complete her duties.

As a wingless moth, I doubt that Mother Nature had a long life planned for her. Perhaps only to find a male, mate and lay eggs for the next generation.

For me however, this was a new revelation in the mysterious and intriguing world of nature.

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 you would be warmly welcomed.

President: president@fieldnatsact.com

Email: secretary@fieldnatsact.com

Website: www.fieldnatsact.com

Treasurer: treasurer@fieldnatsact.com

Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

Newsletter Editor: editor@fieldnatsact.com

Outings Coordinator: outings@fieldnatsact.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FieldNaturalistsAssociationCanberra>



Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra
PO Box 708
Jamison Centre ACT 2614

Membership application or renewal

New applications

Please use the membership form page on the web site:

<https://fieldnatsact.com/membership>

Renewals

Due on 1 July each year (*no form needed*)

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

Bank transfer

Account name: Field Nats

BSB: 325 185

Account number: 03545251

Reference: **Please include your name**

If you are unable to complete new applications through the web site, or use bank transfer for payments, please contact the Membership Secretary at the email address above, or in writing to the address listed.

Monthly meeting venue: Slatyer Room, R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, Australian National University

