

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATURALIST

MEETING—THURSDAY 6 July 2017
7:30 pm Australian National University
Gould Seminar Room, Building 116, Daley Road, ANU, ACT
details back page

Scientific illustration

Speaker: Erin Walsh

Erin says she is a scientist first and an artist second. She will talk on what scientific illustration is and how it differs from art more generally; a brief history/argument for its relevance in a world of digital photography; how everyone thinks like a scientific illustrator; and how a scientific illustrator does their job, using her recent work as examples.



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Natural Playgrounds

I've recently had three inspiring experiences with natural areas as children's play spaces.

a. The Open Gardens Canberra scheme introduced The Children's Garden in Holt. The parents allowed their garden preferences to adapt to the arrival of children, now 6, 8 and 10. Large climbable trees shade the garden where a deck is an outdoor room, where there are chooks, a sand pit, an orchard area including plots for each of the children's planting preferences. A pile of soil proved much more popular for unstructured play than the large sandpit. This possibly proved that the young bodies instinctively knew that making mud pies, getting 'dirty', experimenting with 'clay' and water provided their bodies with beneficial microbes to enhance their developing immune systems and gut biodiversity. The family also adopted and weeded part of the easement alongside their place. This extended their play space into public land and also allowed the children more play opportunities with minimal supervision.

b. There was a meeting of many of the ACT's Urban Landcare Convenors where three examples of reclaiming public garden spaces were explained. These were near Curtin shops, an easement through O'Connor and the Lyneham Commons garden not far from the shops. In each

case community groups had formed to initiate and achieve restoration and reimagining for a public place. Other locals had been drawn in. Transport Canberra - City Services personnel had provided assistance and links for supplied materials including plants. They'd helped communities apply for grants to cover costs.

c. Nature Play Canberra www.natureplaycbr.org.au invited Adam and Jill Bienenstock to explain how their Natural Playgrounds had evolved in Canada. Spend some time browsing www.naturalplaygrounds.ca/adam-bienenstock to discover how, time and time again, children choose natural structures such as grassy slopes, logs, rocks, piles of soil, hay-bales, nearby trees and natural collectables for their play over manufactured slides, plastic seats and expensive, climbing equipment designed by adults. They use their imaginations, communicate, collaborate, help each other to climb, classify found objects, get messy and clean up after jumping in puddles or making mud pies. The improvement in in-classroom skills, work and enthusiasm after outdoor, unstructured play is incredible.

d. The session was attended by Early childhood carers, teachers amongst other interested folk. It's to be hoped that more ACT schools and Child centres are

able to overcome the shackles imposed by litigious parents and the insurance industry to give more children the natural, outdoor childhood their bodies and minds crave.

Let's hope school communities can rethink their definitions of playgrounds and even explore the bush capital's assets near most schools to extend their students' experiences on a daily basis. Perhaps young students can show those who have been persuaded to abhor mess, untidiness, dirtiness, natural odours, and natural decay that these features of life are integral to understanding our habitats, our lives and ourselves. As naturalists and citizen scientists we know there's plenty to offer curious and observant people outdoors and we know natural systems seem messy to others' perceptions.

Perhaps more community members throughout the region can be inspired to initiate natural play-spaces, to generate creative enterprises, to incorporate landcaring, or to reach out to strangers through home-grown projects like those I've tried to describe.

Perhaps more communities can grasp the potential of their collaborations as organisations within Transition Towns Canberra have done.

Perhaps children from natural playgrounds will transform the way they learn and the wider networks they create as they grow.

Rosemary Blemings

Ghost mushroom

I recently took a trip to South Durras with my camera club. On the second day I spotted some mushrooms just outside the grounds of the caravan park and one of our members said it was the variety that glows in the dark. I was excited as I'd heard of ghost mushrooms but never seen one.

My two cabin mates and I went back at night and were the only ones to get photos. What a thrill. (Best seen in colour.)

Alison Milton



If I was a Mountain Hut

Klaus Hueneke

If I was a mountain hut I would
be warmed by the morning sun,
be protected from icy westerly winds,
be close to a gurgling mountain stream
and have a view across a snowgrass plain.

If I was a mountain hut people would
renew my scarred and tired old skin,
replace my worn out, tottering legs,
leave some food for me to eat,
replenish my wood supply,
build a fire to keep me warm and
tell me stories, tall and true.

If I was a mountain hut I would never
have to move house,
pay rent, get a divorce,
be in a traffic jam,
put my clothes away,
or have to wash the dishes.

If I was a mountain hut I would hear
wombats scratching and scuffling under my
floor,
swallows building and tending their nests,
the wind swishing in nearby snowgums,
urrawongs composing melodious tunes,
snow settling like a butterfly kiss and
later sliding off with an oooompphh.

If I was a mountain hut I would be famous in
people's minds and memories,
their photographs and archives,
their videos, movies and books,
and their sacred management plans.

If I was a mountain hut I could
meditate all day and night,
sleep whenever I like,
be silent if I wish and
never write another damned word.

If I was a mountain hut I could
live forever
as long as people loved me and
no joker burnt me down.
Amen



June excursion

Friday 9th June 2017.
Great teamwork and
sharing of knowledge.

Thank you Cecilia for
your leadership and the
ANBG's info.

L to R Vicky, Mike,
Robin, Dierk, Maureen,
Warwick, Shirley,
Cecilia, Bill.

Kevin S didn't have time
to walk this far.

CSIRO survey

The CSIRO and the Department of the Environment and Energy are conducting a survey help us all understand how Australia's biodiversity has been changing in recent years.

The survey will help us understand how Australia's bushland and biodiversity has been changing in recent years, and whether the 1°C increase in surface temperature experienced over the past century may have contributed to these changes.

If you have a strong, long-term relationship with the land and are passionate about the future of Australia's special plants and animals then the CSIRO would love to hear from you. The survey will collect first hand observations, insights and stories about places that are changing and places that aren't changing. For example, you may have observed new species appearing, plants flowering at

unusual times, or trees dying in your area. This will provide a unique and important historical record for Australia.

To participate, you would need to be able to select a natural area (e.g. your local region or farm, a Nature Reserve, urban bushland) that you have been familiar with for at least the last 10 years. Note that the CSIRO is interested both in areas where change has been observed and where change has not been observed.

The survey would take about 30 minutes and closes at the end of August 2017. If this has sparked your interest, additional information about the full project can be found on the [CSIRO Internet web site](https://research.csiro.au/biodiversity-knowledge/projects/recent-history-climate-driven-ecological-change-australia/) at: <https://research.csiro.au/biodiversity-knowledge/projects/recent-history-climate-driven-ecological-change-australia/>

August is not too far away

The Field Naturalists' AGM is on Thursday 3 August. It's the time when members can 'shine' by planning a short presentation for the occasion.

We've had some wonderful insights into people's talents and interests in recent years. We've gone on arm-chair journeys to fascinating places, seen photos and videos of nature captured in gardens or on outings and heard short talks on topics that have fascinated fellow members.

Kevin Mc has already promised a short summary of their visit to Uzbekistan in search of volcanic activity.... so will you be able to join him as one of our 2017 presenters please?

Bill has offered to bring his slide projector if anyone wants to show slides.

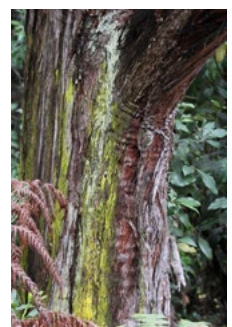
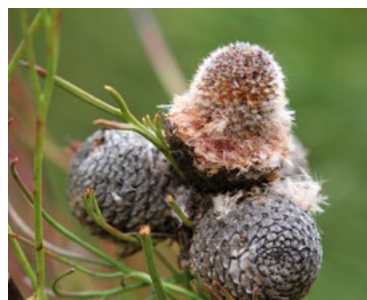
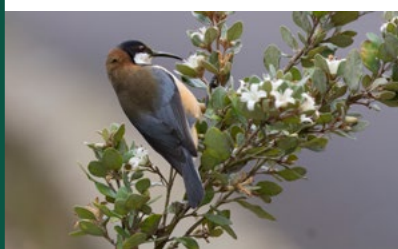
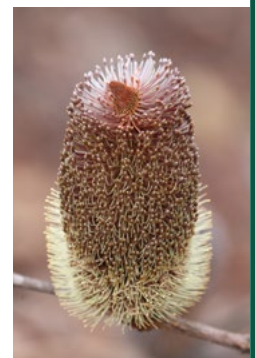
Members' contributions: Glenn gave us his insights into Moths earlier in the year and Erin is showing us her scientific illustration journeys in July.

Please consider making a contribution on 3 August. This is a preliminary notice.

We had a lively and inspiring Committee meeting and all agreed to remain on the Committee so the AGM brings no danger of your being co-opted unless you're willing!

Rosemary Blemings

National Botanic Gardens June 2017



Alison Milton

The Children's Book Council of Australia Inaugural Bettong Prize for the Best Australian Nature Storybook

Established in 1945, the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) is a not-for-profit, volunteer run organisation, which aims to engage the community with literature for young Australians. To encourage a love of all things reading, the CBCA ACT Branch sponsors a Make Your Own Storybook Competition.

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra are delighted to announce that they are sponsoring the inaugural Bettong Prize for the Best Australian Nature Storybook in the CBCAACT *Make Your Own Story Book Competition*. The Competition is open to all ACT Primary School students whose schools are members of the CBCA. To find out more visit <http://cbcaact.org.au/myosb/>

The Winners will be announced during ACT Children's Week at an Awards Ceremony with celebrated author Jackie French on Wednesday 25 October 2017 at 2.00 pm at the Belconnen Library.

Bettongs, a rabbit sized marsupial were once common throughout Australia. They play a vital role in maintaining the health of the woodland environments. They forage at night, digging through the soil in search of underground fungi or truffles. In their hunt for food they can dig up to 100 teacup shaped holes, which increases the soil's capacity to capture and absorb water.

Many of the truffle spores eaten by Bettongs pass through them undigested. This enables the spread of fungi across the Bettong's home range. These truffles hold precious water reserves and exchange hard to acquire nutrients with the roots of eucalyptus, acacia and other tree species with which they associate. These truffles are essential to good health of Australian woodland – they help preserve forests in times of drought or prolonged heat waves.

Bettongs are also important to the renewal process after disruptive events such as fires, spreading seedlings and their associated fungal spores in the desolated habitats. Researchers have discovered that Bettongs help reduce the chance of brushfires too, by burying leaf litter that otherwise dries to become food for fires. Bettongs are also unique in their ability to carry nesting material with their curved prehensile tail.

The Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra is delighted to have chosen these tiny but magnificent Ecological Engineers as the inspiration for the Bettong Prize. Just as Bettongs are essential to the health of our forests, young people who write about our unique Australian nature will be the essential Ecological Champions of tomorrow.

Wasp orchid habitat

Eleven of us were guided along the ANBG's Bushland Nature Walk by Cecilia on Friday 9th June on a day where the sun burned through clouds later on. At one point a camera-carrying father and son (we assumed) passed us purposefully. A bit later they shared their holy grail, a colony of Wasp Orchids.

This was the orchids' habitat; a south facing grassy slope with *Cassinia*, a mossy mulch, and much fallen, decaying timber. Some of us took photos of the nearest Orchid. Not far

away I found and photographed clusters of leaves. By Googling Wasp Orchid Australia I confirmed my hopes that the rosettes were those of other Wasp Orchid plants.

Wasp orchid habitat



Wasp orchid rosettes



View from the lookout



Perhaps others' photos reflected our slow progression along the fine new track as we recorded our fascination with detail, individual species and the healthy untidiness of the bush on Black Mountain's south-eastern slopes. There was no shortage of species to interest Field Natters even though the area's vegetation was becoming wintry.

Cecilia had an APP of the 2.2 km return walk and was adept at alerting us to must-see species and facts. We shared what we knew and debated species' names at other times. It was some time before we had our first views of Lake Burley Griffin between the dry sclerophyll forest's trees. Traffic noise from Parkes Way caused us to reflect on what those busy people were missing.

At one point a Mixed Feeding Flock including Scarlet Robins moved through in search of insects.

It's a walk for all seasons and where there's always new sights and questions for enquiring minds. In the future the route will extend towards the Arboretum. The ANBG must be one of the few Botanical Gardens surrounded by a fine example of its site's original vegetation. Rosemary Purdie's article *Black Mountain Vegetation Boring? Never!* is a fine example of well communicated botany!

Rosemary Blemings

Activities

Saturday 29 September - Monday 8 October 2018 Australian Naturalists' Network 2018 Get-together

The 10th Get-together of Australian Naturalists' Network is being organised by the South East Australian Naturalists' Association Inc. It will begin at Halls Gap in the Grampians on Saturday 29 September 2018 and conclude on Monday 8 October 2018 at Anglesea on the Surf Coast near Geelong. This is the middle of the spring season in southern Victoria when many local communities hold native flower shows. To assist with planning and information regarding travel and accommodation expression of interests are being sought from those likely to be attending. This will enable planning and budgeting. This circular and any updates will be available on the [ANN](https://australian-naturalistsnetwork.wordpress.com/) website (<https://australian-naturalistsnetwork.wordpress.com/>).

Proposed program:

Sat 29 Sep	Travel Tullamarine to Halls Gap for registration and dinner	Norval, Halls Gap
Sun 30 Sep	Southern Grampians	Norval, Halls Gap
Mon 1 Oct	Northern Grampians	Norval, Halls Gap
Tue 2 Oct	Lake Fyans, Pomonal	Norval, Halls Gap
Wed 3 Oct	Halls Gap to Warrnambool via volcanic plains	Deakin Uni, Warrnambool
Thu 4 Oct	Warrnambool to Anglesea via Great Ocean Road.	YMCA Camp, Anglesea
Fri 5 Oct	AM free time; PM You Yangs, Mt Rothwell nocturnal animals.	YMCA Camp, Anglesea
Sat 6 Oct	Bellarine peninsula, Queenscliff, Mud Island	YMCA Camp, Anglesea
Sun 7 Oct	Anglesea Heathland	YMCA Camp, Anglesea
Mon 8 Oct	Depart after breakfast. Travel Anglesea to Tullamarine	

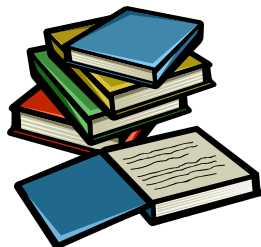
Accommodation details and the expression of interest form are available on the ANN website. If you are likely to attend ANN 2018 please return the Expression of Interest form by 31 July 2017. This will ensure that you receive the Circular No 2 which will include more details of costs and programs. This will be sent out early in 2018 and ask people to book in and pay a deposit by March 2018. Final payment will be required by July 2018.

If you have any queries please contact:

John Gregurke email: jgregurkel@bigond.com phone: 0408 353 671
 Geraldine Harris email: gedharris49@gmail.com phone: 0407 663 109

Raffle prizes

As you know the Field Naturalist's monthly raffle prizes depend on contributions by members. Here is a great opportunity to recycle all those unwanted/unused items hanging about in your cupboard space; regifting unwanted presents that you fear may make their way back to the original giver, or your over supply of fresh produce etc. So please bring along to the next meeting, any items that you think may make a great prize in the next Field Nats raffle draw.



Month	Speaker	Topic
6 July	Erin Walsh	Scientific illustration
3 August	Members chance to shine	AGM
7 September	Martin Royds	Organic/non-industrial farming
5 October	Alex James and Jennie Curtis	Small Farms network
2 November	Meredith Cosgrove	Photographic guide to ACT native plants
7 December		Xmas party



Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra Inc.

Who are the Field Naturalists?

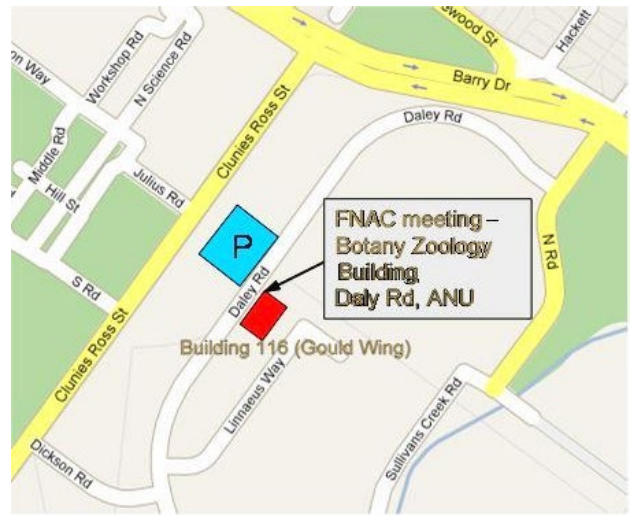
The Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra (FNAC) was formed in 1981. Our aim is to foster interest in natural history by means of meetings and regular field outings. Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Outings range from weekend rambles to long weekends away. Activities 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

Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

Editor: Alison Milton All newsletter contributions welcome. **Email:** apm56@optusnet.com.au



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Road, Australian National University. (The Xmas meeting is at the adjacent building 44 and will start at the earlier time of 6:30 pm.)

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: