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

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OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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

Unravelling the mystery of eucalypt scribbles

Dr Marianne Horak

Dr Marianne Horak is an honorary Research Fellow at the Australian national insect Collection (ANIC) having retired from full-time employment in July 2010. She has a Diploma in Natural Sciences, Entomology, and a



Doctor of Philosophy from the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zürich, Switzerland.

You are welcome to join us for what promises to be a fascinating evening.

Her systematic research is focussed on the Oriental-Australian Lepidoptera fauna, particularly the economically important subfamilies Olethreutinae (horticulturally important, it includes the codling moth and macadamia nut borer) and Phycitinae

(snout moths, includes *Cactoblastis cactorum* which decimated the invasive prickly pear.)

Dr Horak has a Diploma in Natural Sciences, Entomology, and a Doctor of Philosophy from the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zürich, Switzerland. Dr Horak is editor-in-chief of the *Monographs on Australian Lepidoptera* series. Her tortricid chapter in the *Handbook of Zoology* is accepted as the current standard classification for the family. She is also working on a revision of the approximately 40 Australian genera of the *Phycita* group (Phycitinae).

A just published study on the biology, taxonomy and phylogeny of the iconic Australian scribbly moths on eucalypts is based on a model collaboration across It has revealed not only a novel biology but also resolved the phylogeny of the family Bucculatricidae, identifying the scribbly moths as part of a southern sister group of *Bucculatrix* (*Leaf miners*).

This information has been gleaned from Dr Horak's CSIRO web page with thanks.

<http://www.csiro.au/en/Organisation-Structure/Divisions/Ecosystem-Sciences/MarianneHorak.aspx>

‘Seeing Nature’ Mount Ainslie walk- 11 May 2013

I have been walking a lot this year although mainly at night time. Even though I sometimes see bats and possums and the odd owl, I wasn't feeling the same way when I was in nature. So I decided to try and reconnect with nature, through using 'mindfulness' (ie being in the moment) to fully appreciate my walk. I went on Saturday afternoon on May 11th. I couldn't make it down to Mt Taylor so decided to walk up Mt Ainslie. Any comments on ID would be welcome, as my Reference books are in storage.

Initial Birds: I couldn't have picked a better day, it was sunny with virtually no clouds, hot (I had to take my jumper off) at 23 degrees (BOM, 2013) and with only a tiny bit of wind. I headed up behind CSIRO Campbell/Mt Ainslie and entered the Reserve over the little bridge. At this time I was amongst a cacophony of king parrot calls, mainly their long deep seeeeeep sweeeeep calls but also their harsh churr. I found one young male which had tinges of red through his neck feather, eating a mini acorn. Noisy miners were the other main species, in groups of about 5 – 7. Last time I was down the coast at Tathra we were staying right next to a colony of Bell Miners, which I spent hours watching. Their behaviours, some calls and even their flight is very similar to Noisy Miners and in fact their main calls are also quite similar. So rather than just ignoring the Noisy Miners or seeing them as a pest, I decided to spend more time observing them and instead marvel at how successful they were as a species, using this unusual breeding/ social strategy to help conserve a variable and intermittent resource.

Invertebrates: As soon as I entered the grassland beside the South end of Ainslie Village there was a swarm of at least 20 Common Brown butterflies. I tried to observe every individual to check ID and they were all the same species. A small spider's web was right next to the path, with your 'usual' hexagonal shape and two leader lines. It had a white feather which was bobbing around seemingly out of proportion to the minor wind, yet I could see no spider. But then, on looking closer there was a tiny spider only ~2mm wide pulling on the web. Walking further in I was encouraged to find what I call a 'Forest Formicine ant' which are black but have a yellow/green hairy abdomen. And a whorl of tiny hairs at the end of their abdomen. I only see these in real nature reserves and they seem to be a good indicator of native areas. Some small very healthy looking Yellowbox gum trees were on either side of the path and they were in flower, with at least 6 individuals with sickly sweet smelling white flowers. The leaves hosted equally impressive scale insects, galls and the healthiest mistletoe I've ever seen. Further up the path I saw a similar looking ant to the above but its abdomen was narrower, shiny black with narrow pale cross bands, that I don't recall seeing before. Another great highlight up the trail I initially thought was a Meat ant, but it looked to be walking 'wrong'. On closer examination it was a spider, with a red Cephalothorax, and after checking the web there are numerous spiders that mimic ants, particularly jumping spiders.

Tracks: Looking down I came across what looked like a terracotta pot, 'Could it be an archeological find from earliest colonial settlement?', I thought, until I remembered that on our Geology walk up Mt Ainslie years ago, it was mentioned that they were the early pipes used when developing Canberra. But this kept me looking down. Many different sizes and treads of soles of shoes were on the path, a large diversity, and I wondered whether this indicated an equal diversity of souls wearing them. Walking up the hill I diverted to a narrow (1 foot wide) path and shoe tracks were totally replaced by kangaroo tracks and no humans. This track soon crossed another track (heading directly down the hill) that was dominated by tyre treads and skid marks (which presumably Rosemary B would abhor), but I found it interesting that observing tracks could so clearly display the different uses of the reserve. Some kids rode by, who were about 10 years old and one kid exclaimed loudly 'I can really feel the friction when we are going so fast!' heh heh, the funny things kids say.

Trees, Kurrajongs and Bowerbirds: On the beginning of the walk the canopy/ large trees were often Applebox (or possibly *E.goniocalyx*) with the understory trees being a little hard to identify. Their bark looked like Yellowbox, the buds were stumpy with mainly 5 buds, and the flowers were white tending to yellow in the middle and sickly sweet smelling. The leaves were lanceolate, but not as narrow as I remember. They had a very obvious inter-marginal vein. These key features helped me to cross check on the internet (all my books are in storage) and they do seem to be Yellowbox, but only one website recorded them as flowering at this time. Heading up the hill you go through patches of Red-Anthered Wallaby Grass and very rocky areas with thick stands of Brittle gum & the odd

(Continued on page 3)

OUTING: Sunday June 9, 10 am

Explore the new Eucalyptus Trail at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Join us for the walk and discussion and a warm up in the Cafe. Meet in the Visitors Centre. Bring Eucalyptus Guides if you have one

Contact Rosemary von Behrens phone: 6254 1763.

(Continued from page 2)

Scribbygum. I was heading in a more Northerly direction and hit a big but sparse patch of Allocasuarina. Looking at the cones to see if there were any tell-tale signs of either Crimson Rosella munching (partial, mainly on the edge) or perhaps even Glossy Black Cockatoos (more solid chunks bitten, often up to a third missing), but although the cones looked healthy there were no eaten ones. Then I heard a strange rattling sound that I haven't heard before. A bit like maracas but with much larger dried nuts or seeds inside. On closer investigation I found 5 Kurrajong trees with dried fruits or pods, or 'Large Woody Follicles' (NAC, 2012), the odd one still with some seeds in them, but most of the seeds probably had been eaten or fallen on the ground. This was causing much excitement for 2 flocks of white winged choughs (12 birds in total), numerous pied currawongs and some green birds being chased off by currawongs. On closer examination there were at least 9 satin bowerbirds. All were green. They were foraging on the branches and also on the ground. In general, they were feeding quite peacefully with only the odd squabble. The area is quite bare, with a stand of Allocasuarinas to the North and South. It was probably the least satin bowerbird type habitat that I have seen (see map in Ref's). Kurrajongs do occur naturally in the region, but I suspect were probably either planted in ~1919 or spread from 1960s street trees planted in Ainslie, Braddon and Reid (See NAC, 2012). Interestingly, some trees had ovate leaves and some had 3 lobed leaves, I'm not sure why this is.

Other birds: A Grey Currawong could be heard further up the hill, while a Grey Butcherbird seemed to be following me, down the hill. As it was getting towards sunset I headed downhill towards Ainslie (~ Leslie St). Finally I hit my first MFF (Mixed Feeding Flock) of Golden whistler, Striated, Buff-Rumped and Brown Thornbills, about 6 relatively quiet Weebills and also Grey Fantails and Fairy Wrens and one Striated Pardalote. Plus I also flushed a pair of Common Bronzewing. Even though it was a brilliant sunny day, I only saw very few small birds.

Benj Whitworth

Other Reading & References

- BOM (2013) BOM Climate data online: Daily Maximum Temperature, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/?ref=fr> Accessed 15/5/2013.
- What is that spider? Ant Mimicking jumping spider, http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_spiders/SpidersFieldGuide.htm
- Map for Mt Ainslie <http://maps.google.com.au/maps?daddr=-35.267662,149.150906&hl=en&sl=-35.267539,149.151742&sspn=0.010915,0.02135&t=h&mra=mift&mrsp=1&sz=16&z=16> {The Kurrajong spot is uphill (NE) between the Water tank and the Power station.}
- Friends of Mt Majura (2012) Trees of Mount Majura & Mount Ainslie {Allocasuarina} <http://www.flickr.com/photos/61627737@N03/sets/72157627244893256/>, Created 2002-2012, Accessed 15/5/2013
- National Arboretum Canberra (2012) Kurrajongs http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/resources/tree_stories/kurrajongs Created- 5/11/2012, Accessed 15/5/2013 {Also has interesting information about Weston and Canberra's history}

Mount Taylor Outing 5th May Rosemary von Behrens

A cold crisp shivery morning found five Field Natters strolling up the south-west slopes of Mount Taylor, the second highest peak in Canberra. We were constantly diverted by the vegetation we had come to see, one of which I will discuss in more detail.

Trees and shrubs: Two old time-worn *Eucalyptus blakelyi* greeted us, along with *E polyanthemus*, *E stellulata*, *E dives*, *E nortonii*, *E bridgesiana* and *E mannifera*; native raspberry *Rubus sp* (Australia has eight species), *Acacia implexa*, *A penninervis*, *A pravissima*, *A dealbata*, *A melanoxylon*; *Indigophera australia*, *Hardenbergia*, *Exocarpis cupressiformis*, *Allocasaurina verticillata*. *A verticillata* is a food tree for the vulnerable Glossy Black-Cockatoo (

Calyptorhynchus lathami). It grows naturally on Mount Taylor and is currently being planted in public parks and private properties in the ACT and NSW in an endeavour to ensure the future of this beautiful bird.

Grasses: Red-legged (*Bothriochloa macra*), Red-anthered Wallaby (*Joycea pallida*), Kangaroo (*Themeda australis*), Spear, and Shivery (*Breeza minor*) to name a few.

Less desirables: Fleabane, St John's Wort, Skeleton Weed, Plantain sp, *Verbascum thapsus* (Mullein). Fleabane has had a resurgence this year. South of Bredbo NSW whole paddocks are visible. On checking the web for Mullein I discovered other species of Mullein with white, pink and cherry coloured flowers. *V thapsus* has yellow. The seed is available, how is it possible to prevent the introduction of these potential weeds in today's world? *Verbascum densiflorum* would be an enormous problem.

Eucalyptus stellulata (Black Sally) generally grows in frost hollows and on poorly drained areas. These Mount Taylor examples were off the path on a small flat or gentle slope. 'Stellulata' means star-like which is exactly the appearance of the umbels with many small bright green buds (8-24). Several wilted blooms remained. The small tree has a rough bark stocking at its base and smooth bark above. The trunk and branch colour is grey-brown and a wonderful olive green, at times yellowish-green on some branches. The adult leaves are "stalked, alternate, elliptical, green and leathery, with parallel venation. Juvenile leaves are shortly stalked or stalked, opposite, ovate and grey-green."*



The three wise men who found a suitable seat with a good view are L-R Dierk von Behrens, George Heinsohn, and Jorge Gapella. Jorge rode his recumbent bicycle 2.5 hours just to get to Mount Taylor. Judy Harrison also braved the cold on this outing.

One of the colourful illustrated signs erected by Parks and Conservation attempted to explain the volcanic geological makeup of Mount Taylor. "An explosive beginning. Mount Taylor xxxxxx xxxxx etc" I could barely make out? 'formed'? 'million years ago.' " A creationist obviously didn't like being reminded how old the rocks actually were as they had scratched out the relevant words. Vandalism!

The Mount Taylor Park Care** group, led by Anne l'Ons, has worked constantly on removing weeds replacing them with local native species, even relocating hundreds of plants which grew under the powerlines after the 2003 fires. On a recent visit organised by the Conservation Council during Heritage Week participants planted extra *Bursaria lasiophylla (spinosa)* before enjoying a view of the Brindabellas while having morning tea. FNAC was represented.

* NPA ACT, *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT*, 2007, Goanna Print, Canberra

** Rainbird W, Eyles K, Widdowson J, Welch S, *A Labour of Love: Celebrating Landcare in the ACT*, 2013, Paragon Printers

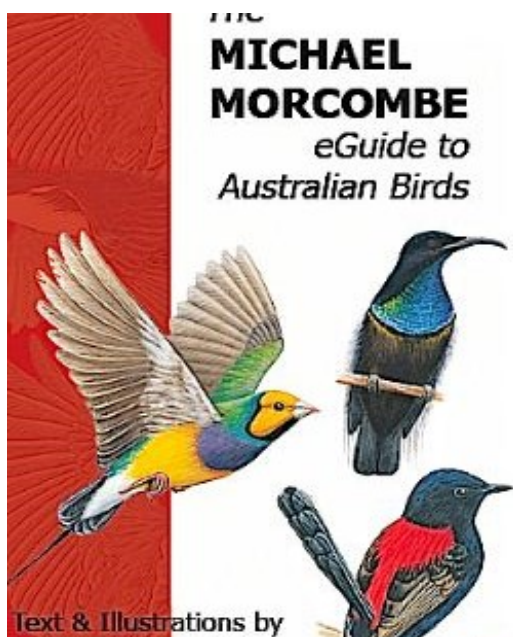
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Chris,

I feel we are at a critical point in Australia's history. The conservatives are bending over backwards to give away what is left of the land's unique beauty and the rights of other species to live out their lives in balanced habitats.

Do those we know well enough in FNAC realise the seriousness of the situation? Do they retreat because of the powerless felt for natural history in order to avoid what is coming? How many are activists beyond membership of ACF, Bush heritage, the Wilderness society or Australian wildlife conservancy? How many read *The Conservation*?

Do people need to be asked to become vigorous ACTIVISTS by taking on more emails and signing on-line petitions against biodiversity loss, social injustice, land grabs and the coal seam gas abominations? Numbers of signatures is one important way — this is a way can be heard. Can I ask that people receive Getup, AVAAZ, SumOfUs, Change.org and CommunityRun? It will take time and a bit of effort, but isn't Australia worth it. It's happening, under the media's radar, all over the world.
Rosemary Blemings.



Soon naturalists will, as a routine, be packing their iPads (or iPhones) when going into the field. The Michael Morcombe field guide to Australian birds is now available for the iPhone and iPad.

A "Smart Search" that gives the ability to search by distinguishing features such as size, colour, physical features, habitat and exclude certain types of birds (eg. Passerines).

The E-version gives you the ability to filter by geographic location, so that you see only the species likely to occur in your State.

Most bird species have a detailed distribution map showing any subspecies that occur.

However the most attractive feature is the carefully-selected and edited sound recordings for some 600 species. Many species are represented with multiple call examples showing the full range of vocalizations. For the first time you can quickly compare the calls you are hearing with a recorded version.

The eGuide retails at around \$30

Another interesting guide is *Australian wildflowers*. This app contains images and information on 520 'most commonly encountered species' At \$3 it is great value, although many of the photographic images could be improved

UNKNOWN WONDERS: CHRISTMAS ISLAND

"Christmas Island is old. It is a volcanic seamount island, rugged and isolated, rising more than 4km from the deep sea floor, with the nearest land being Java, about 360km distant. Over the long period of its isolation, these features have crafted a unique environment. It is characterised by high levels of endemism for many groups and idiosyncratic ecological structuring.

Most of its reptiles, native mammals, and terrestrial birds occur (or occurred) nowhere else; and nearly 200 invertebrate species are considered endemic. There are very few areas in Australia (indeed, in the world) that can match such narrow endemism." *an excerpt from The Conversation*

MONTH	SPEAKER	TOPIC
JUNE 6	Marianne Horak	The scribbly gum moth (Canberra the scribbly moth capital)
JULY 4	Dierk von Behrens and Rachel Marks	Clouding the Vision
AUGUST 1	Ric Longmore	Dangerous snakes of Australia
SEPTEMBER 5	AGM, members' night	Member's choice
OCTOBER 3	Trish McDonald	Macquarie Island, rabbit, rat, mouse control during her time as station manager for the Australian Antarctic Division
NOVEMBER 7	Under construction	
DECEMBER 5	Christmas 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 von Behrens pH: 6254 1763

Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

All newsletter contributions welcome.



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (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
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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: