

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

June 2022

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FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC. GPO BOX 708  
JAMISON CENTRE ACT 2614

# FIELD NATTER

## June 2022 newsletter No monthly meetings until further notice



### Contents

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Aranda bushland excursion | 2 |
| A tale of woe             | 4 |
| Newsletter contributions  | 4 |
| FNAC web site             | 4 |
| Activities                | 5 |
| Fungi bonanza             | 5 |

## Aranda bushland excursion

Twenty-five people, including some members of the Australian Native Plant Society, turned up to explore an unburnt area of the Aranda Nature Reserve hoping to identify reasons why this patch of land should not be subject to controlled burns. It was scheduled for a burn recently, but was spared with the advent of rain.



I'm not an expert in this field and I was hoping to get some input from those who attended. Not having the expertise of these I can only give my uninformed opinion.

With such a large group we decided to split into two groups once exploring the lower slope, with those feeling more robust, venturing further up the incline.

However, before we did so, Kevin led us to an area where a number of introduced trees had been removed and had been replaced with plantings of *Callitris endlicheri*. We found a single Cypress Pine Sawfly larvae on one of these trees, though an earlier sighting on Canberra Nature Map reported 16–100 of these larvae.

Some snippets of conversation I heard referred to the lack of weeds in the sparse undergrowth as can be seen in the photo below. This made for easy-



going off track as we searched for a diversity of plants, and hopefully, orchids.

We only found one orchid rosette, most likely a Greenhood, however, my personal opinion is that this was not the ideal time of year to explore this area in search of orchids that need protection. I would like to see this excursion repeated in spring or summer when the majority of orchids are in their prime.



Also mentioned was the diversity of lichen on rocks and boulders. My thoughts are that a diversity of lichen is not necessarily an indication of an unburnt area, though as I've stated I'm not an expert in this field. However, I do think that the lack of introduced weeds and a low level of undergrowth is a good sign.

There were also some interesting lichen growing in the ground and along tree branches.



## Article

Given the recent rain and wet tracks, I found a number of flatworms along the track still taking advantage of the remaining moisture.



There was a great variety of fungi. Including a nice example of coral fungi, so named because of its resemblance to coral.



This *Austroboletus reticulata/lacunosa* stem is the first reported to Canberra Nature Map, though not reported to be of great significance.



Kevin found an interesting web construction, which I suspect is a spider egg nest, though I can't be 100% sure. It would be interesting to collect it to see what emerges.



What grabbed the attention of everyone however, was a lazy bearded dragon, almost oblivious to the group of people surrounding it taking photos. No doubt it was waiting for the sun to reach it and warm its body enough to venture out on its way. So it was very cooperative for photos.



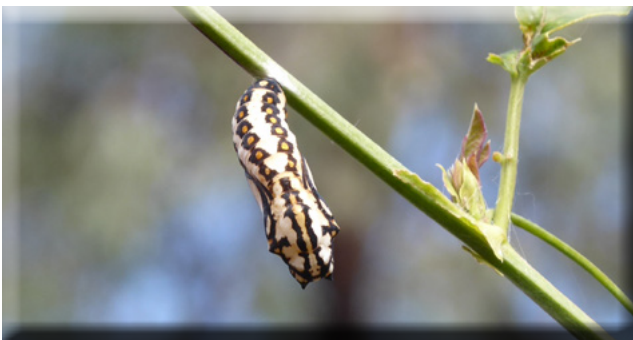
**Alison Milton**

## A tale of woe

A little while ago I noticed on my neighbour's passionfruit vine hanging over my fence an interesting looking caterpillar. He was chomping away for all he was worth and had largely demolished the leaf he was on. I looked him up in Moths of the ACT, which states that *Orgyia anartoides* feeds on passionfruit, among other things. However, a look at the photo quickly confirmed that the one on my passionfruit vine was different.



My interest aroused, I decided to follow its progress. I didn't have long to wait. The following day I could see that he was starting to produce a cocoon. By evening it was finished. I settled down patiently to wait for the outcome and for the moth or butterfly to emerge.



My wait was in vain. Only a couple of days later I went out to again inspect the cocoon only to find it had disappeared totally. Absolutely nothing remained.

A sad ending for my caterpillar.

**Deidre Shaw**

**Editor:** I followed up the ID of this caterpillar with Suzi Bond as the pupa is very attractive and I didn't recognise it. Suzi was very excited to report that this is a Glasswing caterpillar and there are very few breeding records of this species in the ACT, though several adults have been recorded this season. It is therefore a shame that this pupa disappeared. If you find a butterfly pupa it could be worth taking it into protective custody to raise it to an adult, though this, like nature, is not always successful, but may give it a better chance.

## Newsletter contributions

Over the past couple of months I was delighted to receive quite a few contributions to the newsletter from members, however, this month contributions have dwindled once again.

Yes, the colder months does tend to send Canberra's wildlife either into incubation or hibernation.

I have a family of Southern Marbled Geckoes that regularly appear on my back deck (I just need to get the timing right to turn on the back porch light to actually see them). I regularly see three adults but lately have found a quite young one, though over the past week I think they may have decided it is time to hibernate for the winter as I haven't seen them for the past few days.

I also leave the back porch light on at night, mostly to encourage my pooches to go outside to do their business at night, but it also attracts many moths. Over the past month or so I have been amazed at the number of ghost moths that have been attracted, with at least seven moths attracted on just one night. Previously, I have only seen these moths once or twice in many years.

It doesn't take much. Just consider, just looking in your own back yard you may discover you have your own amazing rare record just like Deidre with her record of a breeding Glasswing Butterflies. Her sighting has not only been 'liked' but has been acknowledged as a 'significant sighting', the highest accolade on the Canberra Nature Map web site.

You just never know. You may also have a significant sighting lurking in your backyard that you may think is not worth reporting.

I look forward to receiving photos and stories of what you do find, either in your backyard or out on walks etc. Never stop looking!

**Alison Milton**  
**Editor**

## FNAC web site

It may have taken a while but I am pleased to say that the FNAC web site is now fully functional. You can find links to all the more recent newsletters plus information on upcoming events on the calendar page, plus more information.

This is thanks to the efforts of Darryl and Kevin so please check the web site and pass this link on to any friends who may be interested.

The [web site](https://fieldnatsact.com/) can be accessed at <https://fieldnatsact.com/>

## Activities

### July–August excursions

If anyone has any suggestions or ideas for an excursion in July or August your thoughts would be very welcome and you can contact any member of the committee or Rosemary (blemingsrosemary@gmail.com) or Kevin (mccue.kevin@gmail.com) in particular. You don't have to commit to leading the walk. Your suggestions alone would be most welcome.

### September (date TBA): Namarag River Reserve

I propose to lead a walk to the newly established Namarag River Reserve. This reserve is very close to the new development of Denman Prospect and includes the pedestrian Butters Bridge over the Molonglo River. The reserve is still in the early stages of development but a number of new tracks have been created with lookouts over the river and tracks down to the river. It is still early stages but more than 10,000 new trees, shrubs and plants have been added to Namarag by Greening Australia. Additionally, more than 2,000 tonnes of hardwood logs have been salvaged from trees felled across Canberra's urban forest and have been re-used. It will take some years for this reserve to really transform but I think it is worth a visit at this early stage. Details of date and parking etc will be provided in a forthcoming newsletter.

### Tuesday 4 October: Wamboin private property

Jo Walker accompanied FNAC members on their excursion to Aranda last month and has offered us a chance to similarly walk round her grassy woodland property in Poppet Road, Wamboin in the spring. Jo is a font of botanical knowledge, a significant part of the Native Plants Society, and has propagated plants from her property, lead and instituted their Wednesday Walks and bird-walks for decades as well as being involved in Land for Wildlife conservation so a visit to her property should be a wonderful experience. More details will be available later.

## Fungi bonanza

This time of year seems to be the ultimate for fungi growth as I encounter it everywhere I go. Whether it be taking the dogs on a walk around the block or to the local oval, or a field trip to the arboretum or to London Bridge: a natural limestone arch over Burra Creek River, there has been an expansive array of fungi.

The camera club led two walks to the arboretum, the first under a very drizzly sky but we were amazed to find a large number of the fairy tale mushrooms, *Amanita muscaria*, under the Silver Birch forest trees, I hadn't realised that they had any relationship with Silver Birch.

The second time the camera club visited the arboretum, this time specifically looking for *Amanita muscaria* in the cork forest, we were disappointed.

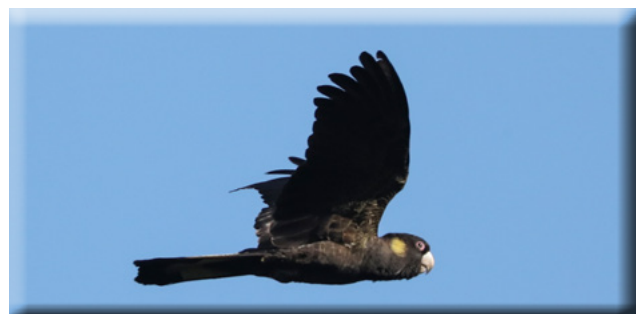
I did however, find a group of Gang Gang cockatoos feasting in a hawthorn just over the fence from the cork forest, and was blessed that after their feed, I was present when they took flight so got a few great photos.

With the disappointment in the cork forest I wandered up to the Himalayan Cedar Pine forest and was overwhelmed by the number of *Amanita muscaria*. A few of us returned to this forest after the morning tea break. Just how many photos could you take? There were just so many toadstools.



The day before I visited Lotus Bay on Lake Burley Griffin in search of these toadstools as I have seen them here previously.

I did indeed find quite a few but my greatest delight was finding a number of black-tailed cockatoos feeding in the pines behind Albert Hall.



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, 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 I

[president@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:president@fieldnatsact.com)

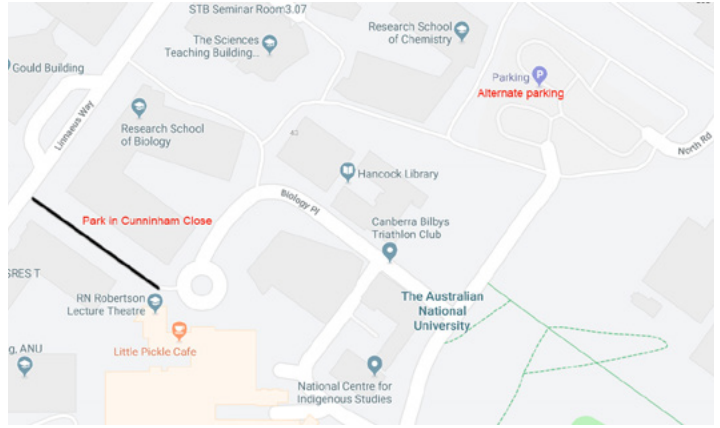
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**Monthly meeting venue:** Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, Australian National University

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



### Membership application or renewal

Surname: ..... First name: .....

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

.....

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How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: Friend

Other Please specify: .....

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

*Subscription renewals are due on 1 July each year*

**Pay by post** (include completed form)

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

**Bank transfer** (renewals only: form not needed)

Account name: Field Nats  
BSB: 325 185  
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