

March 2014  
ISSN: 1836-2761



GPO BOX 249  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

# FIELD NATURALIST

## MEETING—THURSDAY

7:30 pm Australian National University  
Gould Seminar Room, Building 116, Daley Road, ANU, ACT  
details back page

# Snakes of the ACT and region

Speaker: Ric Longmore

Some 54 years ago 11 year old Richard Craig Longmore rode off on his bicycle for Lake George to catch his first tiger snake! This he brought back to Canberra in a big potato bag. Thus began a lifetime interest in lizards and snakes – particularly the Elapidae – that family of venomous, front-fanged Australian snakes.

In 1968 Ric started his Bachelor of Science in zoology degree in the older part (Banks building) of the complex he will return to for our next presentation.

During his 33 years as a biologist for the Commonwealth Environment Department he wrote the Atlas of Elapid Snakes of Australia, having examined 'some 20,000 specimens in all unis and museums, etc that housed extensive collections' a precursor to The Atlas of Living Australia. Specimens were only useful for this purpose, of course, if they had detailed latitude and longitude records of collection sites associated with them.

It has taken some five years for Ric to find a time to speak to us!

*A woma python*



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# Farmers working with nature for increased profits

Source: ABC RN Bush Telegraph radio 19 Feb 2014

**B**irds are often considered pests in agriculture.

But maintaining biodiversity on almond farms, including birdlife, has economic as well as environmental benefits.

Farming in a way that protects native wildlife could also give the farmers access to more markets.

Associate Professor of Ecology at Charles Sturt University, David Watson, thinks the problem farmers have with birds is often overstated.

Professor Watson says farmers see birds carrying off the nuts without recognising the beneficial role birds play in boosting farm profit.

Nuts which are left behind after harvest, known as 'mummy nuts', can store fungi and pests which will infect the following year's crop.

Parrots will remove these nuts at no cost to farmers, reducing the need for pesticide or the costs in employing extra pickers.

'We've been able to put a dollar value on that, as well as the losses the growers incur from the harvestable nuts (birds are taking) and it's about a four to one ratio.

'So farmers are better advised to let the parrots do their business... and save hundreds of dollars per hectare in picking fees.'

By helping preserve an endangered animal like the Regent Parrot, Professor Watson says growers could benefit from branding their product as 'parrot friendly almonds'.

'You've got dolphin friendly tuna and switched on consumers know the difference and are happy to pay premium for it.

'I want to see almonds used, endorsed and recommended by Regent Parrot,' Professor Watson said.



# Canberra Ornithologists Gang Gang Project

To commemorate COG's (Canberra Ornithologists Group) 50th year COG is surveying the Gang-gang Cockatoo throughout the ACT and the COG area of concern. They need our help to shed light on the activities of the Gang-gang Cockatoo.

The Gang-gang holds special significance for the Canberra Ornithologist Group (COG) and the ACT. It is the logo of COG and of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Despite this, little is known about the ecology of the Gang-gang within the ACT region, about its abundance, movements or what affects movement patterns, about its food preferences or seasonal distribution, or the frequency or success of breeding events.

There are four intensive week long components of this survey scheduled during the year where, in Garden Bird Survey (GBS) style, participants are asked to record the maximum number of birds seen at a site every day for a week. The first of these weeks ran from 19-25 Feb 2014. The next are scheduled for May (GBS week #21), August (GBS week #34) and November (GBS week #47). Do NOT record other species during these weeks.



The aim of the survey will be to find out:

\*where Gang-gangs are NOT seen, so please fill in the survey sheet even though you have not recorded any Gang-gangs

\*those areas where Gang-gangs are seen occasionally

\*those areas where Gang-gangs are seen frequently.

Any notes on the location, date and time of the following would be important: Numbers in a group; Ages and sexes of birds; Feeding sites; Nest sites; Fledged young.

This is a joint COG - Atlas Living Australia project. To enter details online go to: <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/cog/home.htm>

For more information on COG's Gang-gang project go to: <http://canberrabirds.org.au/> and choose the 'Gang-gang Project' at the bottom of the page.

Source: COG website.

## Erratum

The lichen in one of the photos from the Mt Aggie excursion report was incorrectly identified.

The photo is reproduced here with the corrected caption.



*Crassula sieberiana* in lichen [RVB]

# ANN meeting 17-27 October 2014 – excursion and speaker program

## Excursion program

Sat. 18 Oct.	Sun. 19 Oct.	Mon. 20 Oct.	Tues. 21 Oct.	Wed. 22 Oct.	Thurs. 23 Oct.	Fri. 24 Oct.	Sat. 25 Oct.	Sun. 26 Oct.
Arrivals	Tasmanian Bushland Gardens.	am Bus 1. Mt Field am Bus 2. The Styx Meet for lunch at Mt Field. pm Bus 1. The Styx pm Bus 2. Mt Field	Bruny Island am Bus 1. The Neck am Bus 2. Adventure Bay and Fossil Cliffs Meet at Adventure Bay for lunch and reverse for afternoon.	Tasman Peninsula Tessellated pavement. Tasman Arch-Waterfall Bay.	Hartz Mt – Lake Osbourne	am. Bonorong Wildlife Park – the Tasmanian Devil breeding program. Blackman's Bay beach for lunch pm. Antarctic Division	Marion Bay	am Bus 1. Summit of Mt Wellington, am Bus 2. Pipeline Track and Sphinx Rock Meet at The Springs for lunch and reverse for afternoon.

Please note: Any entry fees are included in the cost of registration.

## Speaker program

Sat. 18 Oct.	Sun. 19 Oct.	Mon. 20 Oct.	Tues. 21 Oct.	Wed. 22 Oct.	Thurs. 23 Oct.	Fri. 24 Oct.	Sat. 25 Oct.	Sun. 26 Oct.
Welcome by the President of the TFNC Keith Corbett: 'The geological background to the landscapes and ecology of Tasmania'	Phil Collier: 'Adaptive management to benefit natural values in northern Tasmania' Mark Wapstra: 'Using fairy lanterns to light the forest floor: <i>Thismia roadwayi</i> in Tasmania'	Mike Driessen: 'What's special about Tassie's fauna?' Eric Woehler: 'Status and trends of Tasmania's resident shorebirds'	Other clubs members night, talks 15 minutes + 5 minutes question time. Please email Genevieve Gates to book your talk: at ANN2014@tasfieldnats.org.au	Sarah Lloyd: 'Where slime moulds creep: myxomycetes in Northern Tasmania' * Early night	Lisa Cawthen: 'Unlocking the secret world of Tasmanian bats' Night excursion: Bat trapping	Simon Grove: 'Between Tasmanian tides' Els Wakefield: Research on Goose Island in Bass Strait (30 mins)	Kevin Bonham: 'On the trail of Tasmania's snails'	Lisa-ann Gershwin: 'Stung! On jellyfish blooms and the future of the ocean'

# Maule's Creek Campaign

350 Canberra is an environmental group opposing the construction of the mine at Maule's Creek/Laird State Forest. In conjunction with the ANU Biology Society and the Fenner School Society. 350 is hosting an information session at the ANU on Thursday, 6th March from 5.30-6.30 pm. Of course we don't want to encroach on the FNAC meeting at 7.30 pm so it'll be well and truly wrapped up in time.

The venue is the Linnaeus Drop-In Centre, on the ground floor of the Linnaeus Building, (Building 134) opposite the rear of BOZO, Building 116, where FNAC meets. <http://campusmap.anu.edu.au/displaymap.asp?grid=ef54>].

350 are providing snacks and drinks, so it should be a really good evening!

**Laura Johnson (Laura is our April speaker.)**

The Maule's Creek campaign received detailed attention at the third Forests and Climate Change Forum on Saturday 22nd of February! The 'offsets' for the intact Laird forest, which will be more than half excavated to enormous depth over a 30 year period, consists of clapped out, overgrazed so called woodland on which isolated trees only remain!

**Dierk von Behrens**

## Activites

### ANN 2014

This year, 2014, the Australian Naturalists Network are meeting in Tasmania at THE LEA, Kingston, south of Hobart. Registration forms will be sent in march this year. Please visit the following website for more information regarding accommodation as the better beds are already booked. The proposed program looks interesting and varied, the speakers numerous, and breakfast lunch and dinner food provided. Costs will depend on how many people register.

<http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html>

Approximate costs are as follows:

The costs (program and food) should not exceed \$900/person

PLUS your accommodation (see website)

PLUS the transport to get to Tasmania (air fares OR bus,ship,bus OR car/ship)

It's up to individuals to make their own arrangements.

### ANT WALK: Sunday March 2nd 2014 Friends of Mount Majura

Meet at Helms Place close to the intersection Rivett and Richards Street, Hackett.

Join ANU ant specialist Ajay Narendra for a glimpse into the fascinating world of one of the most dominant animals on the planet. Learn amazing things about the jack-jumpers and other ants that live on Mount Majura. Kids accompanied by adults are especially welcome. Bring sun protection and a magnifying lens if you have one and wear covered shoes. It is important to notify us if you are allergic to ants or bee stings. Enquiries: Ph 6248 8955

Month	Speaker	Topic
6 March	Ric Longmore	Snakes of the ACT and region
3 April	Laura Johnson	Wattle birds
1 May	Stephen Utick	Camellia Ark and Australia's role: Floral treasures of the vanishing forests
5 June	Dr Alex Ritchie	Ages of fishes
3 July	TBA	
7 August	AGM?	
4 September	Dr Adam Slipinski	Beetles
2 October	TBA	
6 November	TBA	
4 December	Christmas party	BOZO meeting room



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.

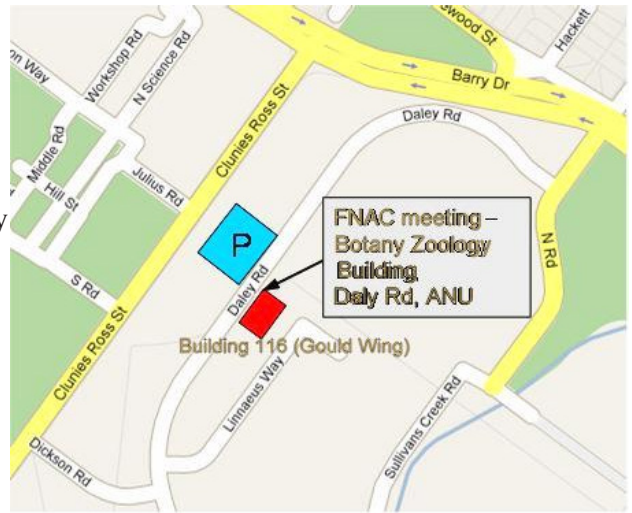
President: Rosemary von Behrens pH: 6254 1763

Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

All newsletter contributions welcome.

Editor



**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  
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: