

*OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature*

March 2021

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

# FIELD NATTER

## March 2021 newsletter No monthly meetings until further notice

### March outing

Friday 26 February 9:30 am: Hall Village



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## Gang Gangs at the Pinnacle

Grahame Muller reported that a pair of Gang Gangs nested in the Hawker reserve this summer. To his knowledge this is not a known previous nesting site, however, it is believed that the young did not survive.

One of the projects being run through Canberra Nature Map is a survey of Gang Gang nesting sites in the ACT since they are considered an endangered species. Consequently, I sent Grahame's report on to Michael Mulvaney, who believes that this is the sight being monitored by Chris Davey and Barbara Allan.

The pair did indeed raise a chick and it was about to fledge however, it was not present the next day. The project has access to motion detection cameras and a scope to check inside the nesting hollows. When they used the scope to check the hollow they found a possum and believe that the possum killed the chick the day before it was about to fledge.

We will be keeping a watch on the site for the next season so hopefully they will be more successful this time around.

Thanks to Grahame for this report and to Tom Cochrane, who took photos of the nesting tree. Unfortunately, the photos were of too poor a quality to include.

**Alison Milton**

## A murmuration of starlings

Murmurations are huge groups of starlings that twist, turn, swoop and swirl across the sky in beautiful shape-shifting clouds. Just before dusk, small groups of starlings from the same area come together above a communal roosting site.

The following YouTube video films such a murmuration in Otmore, UK. The photographer estimates around 300,000 birds in this murmuration.



While not on the same scale this was a small flock I witnessed in April 2009, west of Pine Ridge off Stockdill Drive, Holt and above the vineyards that starlings used to harvest from.

The area has now been transformed by the Ginninderry development to the west.

**Rosemary Blemings**

## Butterflies of Australia

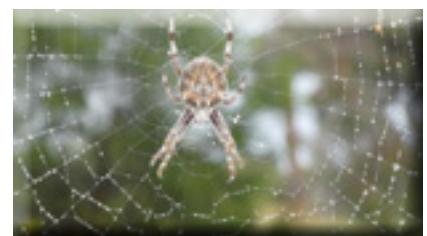
I was reminded of a discussion about ants and butterflies at the Christmas lunch, which brought to mind the book *The Butterflies of Australia* by Orr and Kitching. Both are highly experienced entomologists and Orr does wonderful paintings.

It is big book, 21 by 28 cm and 296 pages plus 30 in the appendix. It is very comprehensive and in the introduction there is a section on 'Ant-caterpillar interactions'.

I never knew about this. Fascinating.

All Australian butterflies are covered. It is a super book.

We saw a Yellow Albatross last week (there is a wave of them passing through the ACT at the moment) and a Meadow Argus. Spiders are still everywhere.



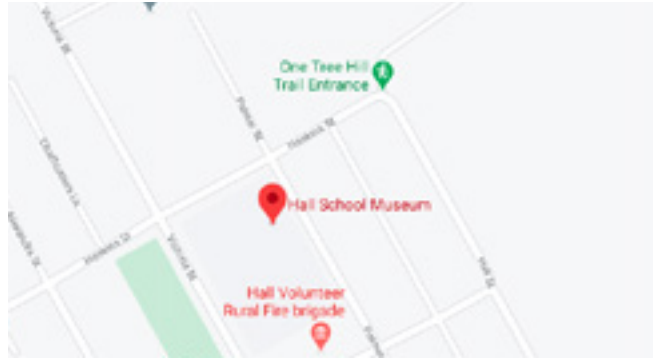
**Colin Pask**

## Activities

### Friday 26 February 9:30 am: Hall Village

Join us for a stroll around tree-shaded Hall Village for our first 2021 foray and possibly treat yourself to a bite to eat afterwards at Daughters of Hall, Kynefin and 1882. Check their websites for booking processes. Assemble on Hoskins Street under the pines that are beside Hall Museum's grounds. Please RSVP to [rosemary@blemings.org](mailto:rosemary@blemings.org) so we have some idea of numbers for those who have not already contacted me.

**Rosemary Blemings**



## Recent observations

I haven't been out and about as much lately but on the few times I did I found some interesting new beetles. While still classed as local natives these beetles have only been recently reported on Canberra Nature Map so I was excited to find a few of these myself. These have mostly been leaf beetles found on young Eucalyptus leaves, however, I was the first to report a new jewel beetle *Nascio vetusta*, found under bark on a tree along Kingsford-Smith Drive. A second beetle was reported in Kambah five days later, but none since.



There have only been three records of this leaf beetle, *Aporocera erosa*.



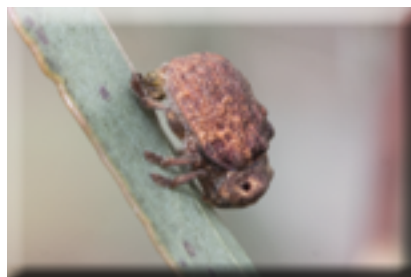
The first record was by Stuart Harris at Nimmo in 2019. Stuart again found this beetle this year at Kosciuszko, but meeting a friend

at DFO in Fyshwick I wandered around checking the trees and also found a single beetle.

*Aporocera sculptilis* was found in Melba in December, but I also found one beetle in Fyshwick this month. A third beetle was found in Aranda a few days later. While I believe these three sightings to be of the same species, the colouration differences are remarkable with the Melba species being distinctively red, mine more brown and the third sighting quite green.

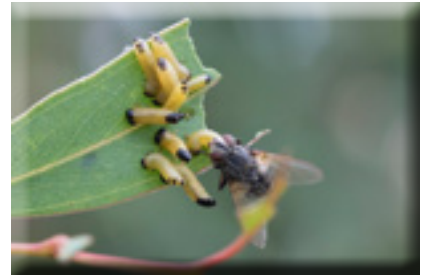


Among the beetles I found at Fyshwick, was this very strange ugly looking beetle



Besides beetles, I also found many beetle larvae, but in a first for me I found that flies were very interested in the larvae.

I've seen ants attending butterfly and leafhopper larvae but I've not yet seen flies this interested. The larvae kept 'flipping' their abdomens, which tended to put the flies off, but they still kept coming back.



Closer to home, just two nights ago I found a longhorn beetle attracted to my night porch light.



I captured it to better photograph it in the light of day but trawling through my online sights of known longhorn beetles, I couldn't find a match. No doubt it is not rare but I hope it is also new to Canberra Nature Map, adding to my records of new species for the website.

**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, et al

**president@fieldnatsact.com**

**Email:** [secretary@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:secretary@fieldnatsact.com)

**Website:** [www.fieldnatsact.com](http://www.fieldnatsact.com)

**Treasurer:** [treasurer@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:treasurer@fieldnatsact.com)

**Membership:** [membership@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:membership@fieldnatsact.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** [editor@fieldnatsact.com](mailto:editor@fieldnatsact.com)



**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

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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  
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