

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

May 2015
ISSN: 1836-2761



GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

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

Australian Epiphytes

Speaker: Ben Wallace

Epiphytes (or air plants) are plants which grow on other plants, such as a tree. Common epiphytes include mosses, ferns, cacti, orchids and bromeliads. Epiphytes derive their moisture and nutrients from the air and rain and sometimes from debris which accumulates around it. From childhood Ben Wallace was fascinated by life forms free of terra firma. Birds were his first interest; epiphytic orchids became a passion – you could grow them and get them to flower, if you observed how and where they grew in the wild and provided their needs.

He will explain some particular features of the ecology and ecophysiology of Australian vascular (i.e. not including mosses, lichens etc) epiphytes, and show images of species of this flora.



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Autumn sightings

Autumn has arrived and with it spectacular sunsets, bird migrations and less appreciated; the sudden wind and cold snap bringing snow on the Brindabellas following (ironically) the much desired rain of the past few weeks.

The week around Easter saw magnificent red and pink sunsets over Lake Burley Griffin for about three days, but unfortunately I didn't have my camera. The sunsets since have been largely disappointing. We had snow on the Brindabellas to coincide with the rain at this time, and now again just before ANZAC Day, but this time bringing with it fierce winds and freezing cold conditions: a foretaste of the Winter to come?

It has been too dry and the green hood orchids seen in the Pinnacle Nature Reserve have not yet flowered but on my last visit the rosettes were finally starting to appear. This visit coincided with the latest Autumn guided bird walk at the Pinnacle, once again led by John B.

While a slow start through the woodlands near Dungowan Street, where we would normally expect to see quite a number of birds, we eventually had a tally of approximately 30 bird species sighted or heard. Of special interest were two separate sightings of a full coloured male Golden Whistler.



Other sightings included the more common inhabitants such as the various rosellas, scarlet robins, grey cuckoo shrike, magpies etc. However, while those who trekked to Tharwa to see the migrating Yellow-faced Honeyeater were disappointed, our group found a male that was not acting typically

for the migration. He was hanging around quite low and even on the ground. I managed a quite good photo of him as he sat patiently on a low branch.



The Pinnacle however, is not the only place for exciting observations. The previous week confirmed once again that my yard can be haven for native birds and unusual visitors. The plum tree in my front yard harboured a Rufous Fantail, which I initially did not recognise as it didn't have the same colourings as the ones I'd seen at Binna Burra last year. The next weekend, this same tree housed a pair of Scarlet Robins; perhaps both male but one with a much brighter chest colour. Both weekends there was also an Eastern Spinebill.



Activities

Sunday 10 May Lowden Forest Park and Water Wheel

Visit the site of an early forestry camp and see the historic water wheel and other relics, ancient trees and a short walk in some nice forest. This site is 25 km from Captains Flat so we will meet in the Spotlight carpark at Queanbeyan at 9:30 am to carpool. Bring a picnic lunch, stout shoes, hat and water bottle etc. **Contact:** Warwick Daniels wda68126@bigpond.net.au

The April excursion: trip report

A keen group gathered at Tharwa before proceeding to the Tharwa Sandwash and setting themselves up with chairs and binoculars.

Unfortunately the only participant to actually observe some honeyeaters was Bill, who fortunately for him, arrived earlier than scheduled and saw several flocks darting along

the Murrumbidgee corridor. Of course we did see other birds including several wedge-tail eagles soaring over the vicinity.

Almost half the party of nine then had a sociable lunch at the Deep Space Tracking Station.

Month	Speaker	Topic
7 May	Ben Wallace	Australian Epiphytes
4 June	John Turnbull	Casuarinas: taxonomy, biology, and uses

Friends of Black Mountain achievements

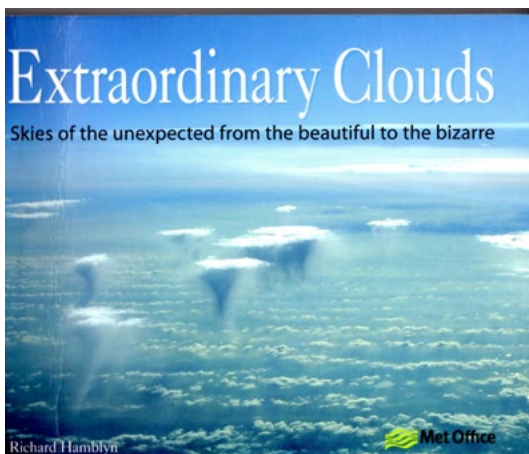
The Friends of Black Mountain have recently celebrated two more exciting achievements. There is an exhibition about Black Mountain in the ground floor space of Black Mountain Tower. It features some inspiring photographs and explanatory text to inform visitors. Their brochure on Black Mountain has recently been published. We Field Naturalists donated money which contributed towards the design and printing of the brochure. If you would like a copy sent to you please let me know. Rosemary Blemings 6258 4724.

Wanted: raffle prizes

As you know FNAC holds a raffle at each of their monthly meetings: perhaps the only raffle where almost everyone wins a prize. The prizes are donated by members and while they may be secondhand there are still lots of treasures.

Pam has generously run this raffle for some time and is now looking for fresh 'stock'. We all have things that we no longer use or want but feel are still of use and too good to just throw away. So why not have a bit of a clean up and bring any unwanted items to the next meeting. As they say, one man's trash is another man's treasure.

Extraordinary Clouds - Skies of the unexpected from the beautiful to the bizarre



By Richard Hamblyn - in association with the **Met Office**, David and Charles, 2009, 144 pgs., including index.





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 **Phone:** 6254 1763

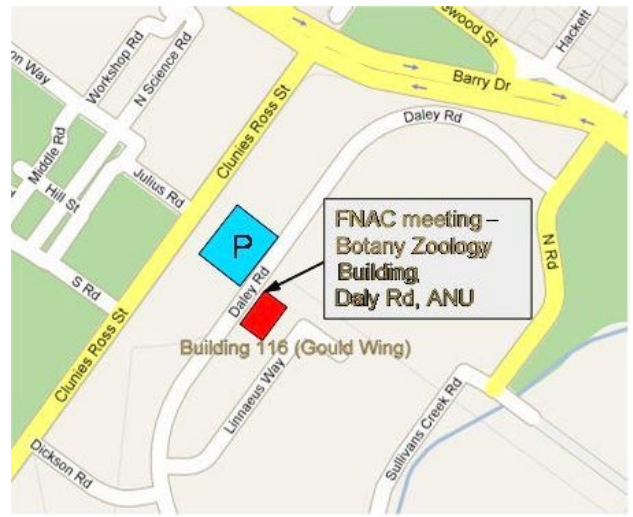
Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

All newsletter contributions welcome.

Email: alison.milton@health.gov.au

Editor



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, 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: