

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

November 2019
ISSN: 1836-2761



GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATTER

MEETING—Thursday 7 November 2019
7:30 pm Australian National University
Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R.N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT
details back page

Bettongs, Bulbs and Biodiversity

Speaker: Catherine Ross

In 2012, the Eastern Bettong, *Bettongia gaimardi*, was reintroduced to Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, a fenced reserve on the outskirts of Gungahlin. Catherine Ross will talk about her research on the role of Bettongs as 'ecosystem engineers', and the impact they are having on the ecosystems at Mulligans Flat since their reintroduction. Catherine agreed to bring the presentation to Field Nats so you'll have the opportunity to hear about soil health, extinction remediation on our doorsteps and the successes for nature reserves when local communities are able to take up stewardship responsibilities.



Contents

STEP at the National Arboretum: A regional botanic garden at Forest 20	2
Australian water dragons book	2
Spring is here	2
October sightings	3
Sunday 17 November Wildflower walk	3

STEP at the National Arboretum: A regional botanic garden at Forest 20

On 3 October Jennie Widdowson revealed that there's a great deal of natural history behind this possibly cryptic title and that the Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park is a very fine example of community members coming together to create and maintain a mini-masterpiece.

Jennie brought posters, brochures, photographs and her own lived experiences to illustrate how STEP's habitats have literally grown into microcosms of each of the ecosystems in our region over the years since the garden's 2002 inception.

The Forest 20 land slopes to the north away from the busy central complex of the Arboretum. The landscape plan began to take shape with the planting of 16 Eucalypt and 24 Acacia species. These core species established the micro climates needed for forbs, grasses and sedges.

A demonstration garden through the centre of Forest 20 shows the understorey species typical of the forests, woodlands, grasslands and ephemeral wetlands of the local region. Purpose-designed labels fulfil STEP's dual purpose of being an educational resource offering ideas of what could grow in suburban gardens. There's been a Bush Tucker Garden since 2018 another practical response to the community's interests and needs.

Words can't do justice to Jennie's images. Something is in flower all year round and often with some of the 45 insects she'd recorded as pollinators. The website: www.step.asn.au records STEP's journey and species. Field Natter Andy Russell circulates a monthly collage of the wildflowers he's photographed at STEP. Better still make a point of visiting STEP for its local species and community spirit. You're welcome to join STEP members for their Thursday working bees!

Rosemary Blemings

Australian water dragons book

At the last meeting, I announced the production of an Australian Water Dragons booklet. The ANBG bookshop has ordered a few copies. In addition, the book is being advertised in the ACT Herpetologists newsletter - \$10 a copy or an additional \$2.50 for a posted copy.

Spring is here

Spring is here and some strange digging is going on. Who could it be?



Yes it's me, Mrs Bearded Dragon. I need a hole to....



lay my eggs.



Now it's all over. Nothing to see here. Try again in about 50 days.



Of course, there is always someone to add a bit of tension.



Submitted by Colin Pask

October sightings

Like many others I trekked out to Isabella Ponds this month to catch sight of the Common Sandpiper that has made a special visit to the ACT, along with a Pied Stilt, another uncommon visitor.



Common Sandpiper

Also present was a White-faced Heron (among other waterbirds).



White-faced Heron

But I really couldn't resist the Pacific Black Duck ducklings.



Alison Milton

17 November Wildflower walk

2 pm to 4 pm. Meet: Nature reserve entrance, off Mackenzie St near Grayson St, Hackett. Gold coin donation.

Come for a Sunday afternoon stroll through Mount Majura's bushland with local plant ecologist Michael Doherty.

We will enjoy learning about flowering plants of the grassy woodlands and forests in this nature reserve.



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

Website: www.fieldnatsact.com

Treasurer: treasurer@fieldnatsact.com

Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

Newsletter Editor: 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 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: