



FIELD NATTER

Field Naturalist's
Association of
Canberra

October 2006

Field Naturalist's Association of Canberra

Members' night Thursday October 5, 2006 at 8:00 pm

(Meeting details back page)

Ok - October is member's night and the annual meeting. So it is a night of surprises—not to be missed.

At the time of writing the following members are providing ten minute talks.

Margaret Kahns Wildlife Management Conservancies
Dierk vB- His trip to WA
Philip Bell- Geology
Rosemary B- Being 'energy efficient'??
Janet TP- Wildlife art

However, all Field Nats members are encouraged to bring along items of interest and to talk about them.. Any queries please contact Chris at 6241 2968



Outing - Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve - Saturday October 7th, 5.30pm

Following on from last month's talk, we'll be testing out our new frog identification skills at one of the best frog habitats in Canberra. Mulligans Flat is recognised as a great bird watching site but the area is also rich in frogs, reptiles, invertebrates and mammals. It includes many rare and uncommon species such as red-necked and swamp wallabies, sugar gliders, black shingle-backed lizards, regent honey-eaters, and the spotted burrowing frog. We might hear up to 7 different species of frog and will hopefully see a few too. We'll meet at the Mulligan's Flat carpark - this is signed from Horse Park Drive. If you haven't been out there recently, you'll find that Gundaroo Road

has moved - drive along the new Gundaroo Road for 2.2km, turn right (onto the old unsealed road) and after 1.8km you'll find the Mulligan's Flat carpark on your left at the road's end. Assuming that daylight savings won't start until the end of October, last light will be at 6.35pm and we'll start the walk at 5.30pm. This will allow us time to walk out to the dams in daylight. We'll be walking around the dams and back to the car park in the dark, so please wear sturdy shoes and warm clothes and bring a torch and water. For car-sharing or further information, please call Paula on 0428 654 044..

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Special points of interest:

- Leaf litter—a new brilliant children's book reviewed on page 5

Also a Kiwi story page 5

Editor's Note

Many thanks during the year for the contributions from members. They have my job so much easier.

After asking for photos I have received a number requiring some selection. Often the photos are smaller than seems desirable, this is usually due to keep clarity. This issue is 2 pages longer than usual to provide room for the President's report and for the financial statements.
Chris Bunn

From the Bedside Book of Birds

Here is another (entirely wholesome this time) quote from Graeme Gibson's *Bedside Book of Birds*

B FLAT

Sing softly, Muse, The Reverend Henry White

Who floats through time as lightly as a feather

Yet left one solitary gleam of light

Because he was the Selborne naturalist's brother

And told him once how on warm summer eaves

When moonlight filled all Fyfield to the brim

And yearning owls were hooting to their loves

On church and barn and oak-trees leafy limb

He took a common half-a-crown pitch pipe

Such as the masters used for harpsichords

And through the village trod with silent step

Measuring the notes of those melodious birds

And found that each one sang, or rather hooted

Precisely in the measure of B flat.

And that is all that history has noted;

We know no more of Henry White but that.

So, softly, Muse in harmony and conformity

Pipe up for him and all such gentle souls

Thus in the world's enormousness, enormity,

So interested in music and in owls;

For though we cannot claim his crumb of knowledge

Was worth much more than virtually nil

Nor hail him for vast enterprise or courage,

Yet in my mind I see him walking still

With eager ear beneath his clerical hat

Through Fyfield village sleeping dark and blind,

Oh surely as he piped his soft B flat

The most harmless, the most innocent of mankind.

DOUGLAS STEWART (1913-1985),

New Zealand/Australia

Thumbing through (with revived interest) Gilbert White's *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* I happened upon the following, at the end of Letter 9 (the book is largely a collection of his correspondence): "My musical friend, at whose house I am now visiting, has tried all the owls that are his near neighbours with a pitch-pipe set at concert pitch, and finds they all hoot in B flat. He will examine the nightingales next spring." So 'musical friend' or brother Henry? Henry was the youngest of the family of 11 children and vicar of Fyfield and Gilbert was the eldest, born in 1720, curate of Selborne and Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. He is often called England's first ecologist. *The Natural History* is the fourth most published book in the English language.

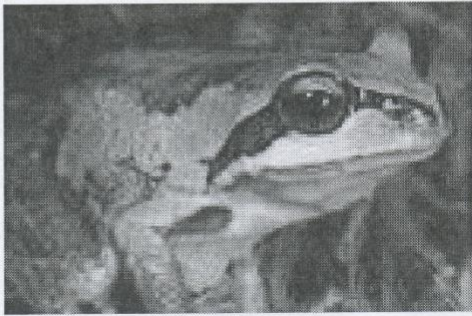
Contributed by Phyl Goddard

A Froggy Story

Discussion at the last meeting highlighted the uncanny ability of frogs to discover a new source of water. I suppose other FNAC members have been surprised and delighted to find a couple of green frogs enjoying life in the toilet bowl on arriving at a coastal holiday home. But I was also reminded of the time not so long ago when a large washing machine was being operated on our back verandah because of a laundry renovation. Imagine our surprise one day to hear the machine croak-croak-croaking away; a frog had managed to work out that a handy reservoir of water was being left under the bowl! And was telling the world about it. We haven't a pond in the garden so the frog had come from nowhere to find our washer. How do they do this? Luckily, we worked out that a pumpout cycle could safely eject the frog through the exit hose without having him washed in soapy water, or worse, spun dry. A slow learner, the frog returned to the washing machine twice and was removed twice more before apparently becoming convinced this was not the place to be.

Rod Panter

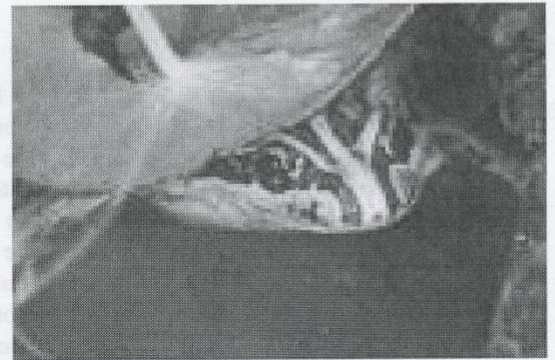




Some frog images sent in
my Deb Saunders from

www.frogs.org.au

Can you identify the spe-
cies?



Gap-crossing by gliding marsupials: thresholds for use of isolated woodland patches in an agricultural landscape

van der Ree R, Bennett AF, Gilmore DC

BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION 115 (2): 241-249 FEB 2004

Single trees and small patches of trees in farmland are conspicuous components of agricultural landscapes around the world, but their value for the conservation of biodiversity is not well known. In this study, arboreal mammals were censused by using hair-sampling tubes in small patches of woodland (single trees to patches < 1.0 ha) in cleared farmland adjacent to a linear network of woodland known to support resident populations of arboreal mammals. Ninety-one small isolates were stratified by size (single trees or small patches) and distance from the linear network to test the capacity of animals to cross habitat 'gaps'. The genus *Petaurus* (small gliding marsupials), the most commonly detected taxon, was recorded in 31% of hair-tubes (98 of 316). It occurred in 21% of sites in isolated trees and patches, and in all linear strips. A logistic regression model demonstrated that *Petaurus* sp. was most likely to occur in isolates in close proximity to linear strips and other patches of woodland. Ninety-five per cent of sites at which this taxon occurred were within 75 m of the linear network. This threshold corresponds with the maximum distance that animals can glide in a single movement between trees. The size of isolates did not influence utilisation rates. Such isolates are smaller than a single home range and were probably used to supplement home ranges centred on the linear network, by providing additional foraging habitat and den sites. **Protection and restoration of isolated trees and small woodland clumps in cleared landscapes contributes to mammal conservation and this study provides quantitative data that can assist landscape design and habitat restoration in rural environments.**

Provided by Deb Saunders

Bruce Ridge report September 06

Field Naturalists visited Bruce Ridge on Sunday 10th September. A good crowd of 10 Field Natters were eager and waiting when I arrived. Moving in from CIT side along the bike path we spotted many glorious flowers. Dotted along the path almost invisible unless you looked close were dozens of finger orchids, of two species. A very blue one with reflective white spots was probably *Caladenia caerulea* the blue finger orchid and there was another pinker one with dark labellum (Unfortunately I didn't have my field guide so if I make some mistakes I apologise. Lots of *Olearia microphylla* (a daisy) were in flower south of the path and they looked like bushes covered in snow. Even two yam daisies were seen, buried amongst the leaf litter and this seemed very strange in this habitat. Damon and Paula shouted 'bike' every so often to warn walkers like Margaret, Bryan, Chris and Pam who were often too busy investigating or chatting to notice. Lots of wattles were in flower further in, mainly early wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*) and box-leaved wattles *A. buxifolia*, also some Black wattles, Cootamundra wattles (boo) and one Ploughshear wattle.

Not many birds were around, but we are pretty sure there was a grey currawong on a nest. Other birds included a few Crimson rosellas and Pardalotes of both species.

A grand bracket fungus was hanging onto a Eucalypt, and some very strange barked eucalypts were discussed, that had bark with large chunks missing all the way up and down the main trunk. Nearing the highway we ran into 6 ww choughs which gave most people a fright. It was very disappointing to see that the best stretch of flowers along the bike path last year, which was behind the Canberra stadium, is now all under 2m of dirt. They seem to have extended the road much further than I thought they were going to. We made a diversion up the hill into the reserve and saw the tallest *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* I have ever seen, although not in flower. On the way back I saw *Hardenbergia violacea* and *Hovea linearis* which are always beautiful with blue/purple flowers and some Indigofera in bud. Phyll Goddard, Philip Bell and I discussed a mixed feeding flock of thornbills, silveryeyes and weebills while others feigned interest.

Benj.

Googong report August 06

The August meeting was about water quality and use in Canberra and therefore it seemed appropriate to visit Googong Dam, one of the ACT's major storage dams (although as Alan pointed out in his talk the other dams received more rainfall and flow, even though they are smaller in size).

Even though early, we had a good turnout, with 16 Field natters. On meeting at the Dam lookout, I managed to open my weary eyes enough to see a grey currawong fly into a gum tree. We made our way to the Foreshores carpark to do a loop circuit. It wasn't long before George and I lost the group but we managed to see flocks of cormorants, mainly little peds but also a couple of peds, a mixed feeding flock of thornbills, weebills and specially a speckled warbler. The grass was so short and bare, due to kangaroos, but on close inspection there were some native plants that I couldn't identify. On walking back to the carpark we spotted a hooded robin female.

Back at the car park some people couldn't wait and ended up eating lunch, while the Panters family continued to 'bird', and

Kevin's crew talked to the other crews. Finally the last stragglers came along (such as Pam Fenning, Rosemary B, Paula) and excitedly said they had seen a pair of hooded robins.

Then most of the group drove to the London Bridge Arch walk. Our little group almost lost their way, but managed to redirect and walking over difficult terrain, made it down to London Bridge Arch. The North side was a bit disappointing and my heart sank, but Leone guaranteed the other side was better, so we went there and it sure was spectacular (see photo). Pamela Finger made a triumphant exit while a small group ate their lunch, discussed docos and the World and admired a large



flock of about 19 redbrows feeding with fairy wrens. Pam Fenning and Rod Panter noticed a hooded robin male and female and we also saw a flame robin male.

A satisfied group left, vowing to return and encourage oth-

"THE MOUNTAIN KIWI"

I have very little to say regarding this bird, as I have only seen two of them, and being pushed with hunger, I ate the pair of them, under the circumstances I would have eaten the last of the Dodos.

It is all very well for science, lifting up its hands in horror, at what I once heard called gluttony, but let science tramp through the Westland bush or swamps, for two or three days without food, and find out what hunger is. Besides at the time, which was many years ago, I was not aware that it was an almost extinct bird. Had I known so, I would at least have skinned it and kept the head and feet.

CHARLES EDWARD DOUGLAS (1840-1916),
Scotland/New Zealand"

Contributed by Phyl Goddard

LEAF LITTER BY *Rachel Tonkin*

"In one small patch of leaf litter beneath one tree, this secret world is changing day by day, as seeds turn into plants, grubs hatch from eggs and animals grow big enough to leave their mothers.."

Leaf litter follows a patch of Australian bush as it changes throughout the seasons. Children of all ages will be delighted as Australian animals, insects and plants participate in the circle of life.

With flaps to lift on every page, a "Things to Find" section in the back, this book is described as the perfect book for parents and children to share

Published by Harper Collins at \$29.95

(Editor—this is not an ad, other people have admired this book)

Why do Manta Rays sometimes jump out of the water?

(This follows a discussion at Deb's talk in July, When she showed photos of jumping Mantas)

Mantas may leap completely out of the water for a variety of reasons. They may do it to escape a potential predator or to rid themselves of skin parasites. Or they may leap to communicate to others of their own species -- the great, crashing splash of their re-entries can often be heard from miles (kilometres) away. It's anyone's guess what they may be trying to communicate. Leaping male Mantas may be demonstrating their fitness

as part of a courtship display. Since these leaps are highly energetic and often repeated several times in succession, they may simply represent a form of play.

Here's a bit of an explanation for you. The humpies also do similar things but I guess no-one is really sure, all just theory. I have seen them leap 2-3m high so yes same as your friend, 30cm not sure what you were looking at?? It's always elaborate and can be loud if you're close enough. If I find any more info will let you know. I have seen them leap in succession as well as just the

one off display. Mantas visit this end of the Ningaloo reef from Around June-Nov but can still be seen at other times of the year just not in abundance. Coral Bay has Mantas all year round. Now is the perfect time to see them feeding on the West-side, the actual Ningaloo Reef. This is the main time I've seen them leap outta the water but in saying that I've also seen them do it around the islands(Muiron Islands) and the top of the North West Cape which is where we dive the majority of the year. Hope this helps you out.
Jennie Thompson

Since these leaps are highly energetic and often repeated several times in succession, they may simply represent a form of play

Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Presidents report for 2005-06

This is my first year as Field Naturalists president and I wanted to take a hands off, consultative approach, while learning the ropes for my first few months. Unfortunately, due to sickness and work commitments this approach has extended much longer than expected. Nevertheless Field Naturalists has had a successful past year and achieved good progress in a number of key areas discussed below:

Insurance

I don't want to labour this issue, but after four years of work Field Naturalists gained insurance after almost unanimous support from the committee and membership. We did this in an open and consultative manner on an issue which can be contentious. A couple of people did disagree, and this is fine in any society, but gaining insurance has allowed us to confidently advertise talks and walks during 2006. Thanks to Pamela Finger who took on the task, and numerous other people who were also involved.

Meetings

Field Naturalists has always had excellent speakers, and this year was no exception, thanks to Rosemary von Behrens (With some help from FNAC members). The move to the new lecture room has reduced some of the atmosphere but with the majority of meetings having over 30 people, was a necessity. I have tried to single out a couple of talks, but in reality every talk has been excellent (except for mine where we achieved a record for the 'number of people asleep' & I have learnt my lesson). Advertising through ANU, through like-minded societies, and by word of mouth may also be reasons for increased attendances (often 2-5 visitors). Having said that we can still improve our public advertising and the committee has suggested some directions- if you have any ideas then please tell us.

Pam Fenning has been great with the raffle. The increased attendances and Pams perserverance have meant income from the raffle has increased, supporting the society.

Newsletter

To provide improved 'value' to members the FNAC committee agreed that improving the newsletter could provide the biggest benefits. Chris Bunn is the editor and has worked on the content and layout, particularly gaining local input. The articles which stood out for me were the stories by Kay Hahne on Namibia, Phyl Goddard's bird stories and Dierks musings. In any case, the increased member input is the best outcome. The 'species of the month' series has been set up to improve local species content and allow that information to be easily placed on the web.

Philip Bell has also taken on a major role with the newsletter, helping to set up colour newsletters, with colour photos, that can be printed and/or emailed to members. The enhanced cost of printing has been offset by emails being free, aswell as outweighed by improved quality. Philip also prints and mails the newsletter and this is a substantial contribution to the club, every month.

Field trips

Field trips have been well attended over the past year (with 1 exception). My favourite was Corang peak with beautiful views and surprising numbers of flowers for the time of year. Thanks go to the von Behrens and Garth Dixon for opening up their properties to Field Nats and also to Rosemary Blemings for leading quite a few trips when I have been sick.

Finance

Field Naturalists is a non-profit society. To improve value to members we looked at ways in which we could achieve the best benefits from the least costs. This does not mean wasting money, but also doesn't mean being afraid of spending money. The improvements over the past year have cost more money, but this has been offset by improved attendances at meetings and on field trips and improved quality newsletter for members.

Please see Paula's financial statement for further information and thanks to Debbie Saunders for auditing the books. Thanks to Paula for carrying out the treasurers work over the past 2 years.

Benj Whitworth



Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Statements of Accounting Concepts, applicable Accounting Standards and the requirements of law. They have been prepared on the basis of historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated.

The following is a summary of the significant accounting policies adopted by the Association in preparation of the accounts.

Income Tax.

The Association is exempt from income tax and consequently the principles of tax effect accounting do not apply.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets including buildings and capitalised leased assets, but excluding freehold land, are depreciated over their useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held for use.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

SCOPE

I have audited the accounts of the Association for the year ended 30th June 2006 as set out on the attached statements. I have examined the accounts and the other related records and further information has been furnished to me by the Treasurer and the Membership Officer. It was not practicable for my examination relating to cash receipts to extend beyond the accounts recorded by the Treasurer and the Membership Officer. The committee of the Association is responsible for preparation and presentation of the accounts and the information they contain. Proper accounting and other records have been kept.

In accordance with the rules of the Association, I have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of the Association.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion the accounts of the Association are properly drawn up:

- a) So as to give a true and fair view of
 - 1) the state of affairs of the Association as at the 30th June 2006 and the income and the expenditure of the Association for the financial year ended on that date; and
 - 2) the other matters required by sub-section 72(2) of the Associations Incorporation Act (1991);
- b) in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act (1991); and
- c) in accordance with proper accounting standards.

Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc.

Income & Expenditure Statement for year ended 30 June 2006

	2006	2005
	\$	\$
Income		
Tea Money	50.00	45.00
Field Trip Fees	0.00	0.00
Interest received (term deposit)	387.84	404.07
Interest received (cheque acct)	2.34	1.30
Membership fees	1163.34	1181.66
Raffles	329.85	242.00
Donations	30.00	35.00
Total	1963.37	1909.03
Expenditure		
Affiliation fees	70.00	30.00
Bank fees	0.00	0.00
Depreciation	0.00	56.00
Field trip costs	0.00	0.00
Govt. FID & Debit tax	0.30	9.30
Newsletter printing	573.70	383.75
Postage	402.61	301.01
PO Box rental	107.00	102.00
Presentations (Speakers & ANU)	136.00	188.00
Registrar General fees	29.00	28.00
Insurance	300.00	0.00
Other	28.45	249.45
Total	1647.06	1347.51
Income exceeds expenditure by	316.31	561.52

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2006

	2006	2006	2005	2005
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Current Assets				
Bank Cheque account	2,407.82		2,302.69	
Term deposit	8,875.39		8,487.55	
Petty cash advance	20.00		20.00	
		11,303.21		10,810.24
Non-current assets				
Furniture & fittings	133.15		133.15	
Less accumulated depn	133.15	0.00	133.15	0.00
Library	8.00		8.00	
Less accumulated depn	8.00	0.00	8.00	0.00
Software-Filemaker	339.00		339.00	
Less accumulated depn	339.00	0.00	339.00	56.00
Total Assets		11,303.21		10,866.24
Current Liabilities				
Field trip fees in advance	0.00		0.00	
Members fees in advance	791.66		615.00	
Total Liabilities		791.66		615.00
Net Assets		10,511.55		10,251.24
Members Funds				
Retained surplus at beginning of year		10,195.24		9,633.72
Surplus for year		316.31		561.52
		10,511.55		10,195.24

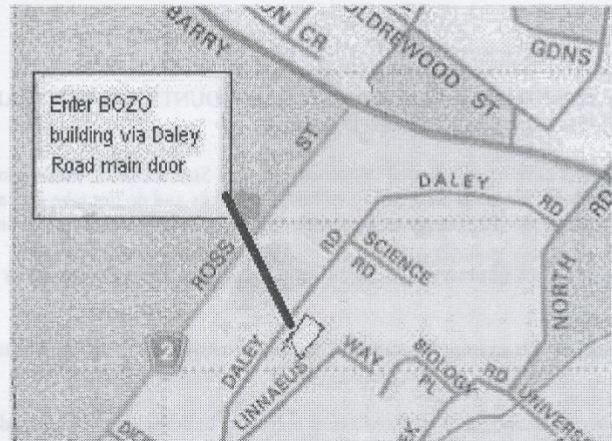


**Field Naturalist's
Association of Canberra**

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: Benj Whitworth, tel 02 6254 4556
Secretary: Rosemary Blemings, tel 02 6258 4724
Website: www.geocities.com/fieldnaturalist/index.html
Newsletter editor: Chris Bunn <chris_b@webone.com.au>
Tel 02 6241 2968. Member contributions welcome.



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 44, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park in Linnaeus Way. Meetings start at 8 pm and are followed by refreshments.

FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

GPO Box 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Print Post Approved
PP 233744/00022



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 \$20) Donation: \$.....

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: FRIEND? OTHER? Please specify: