

October 2008
ISSN: 1836-2761



FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA

FIELD NATTER

OBJECTS: To foster an interest in an awareness and an understanding of nature

MEETING THURSDAY October 2 8:00 pm Australian National University Meeting details back page



October is 'members night' and the Annual general meeting. As in previous years, members are encouraged to bring along items of interest, related to nature, and to talk about them. This is intended to be informal and relaxed.

Examples of items may include:

- Nature art or photography;
- Poetry on nature;
- Items of thought, for discussion;
- Stories about a favourite animal, plant or nature park.
- Any other point of interest, which relates to nature.

To encourage members to attend, the following talks have been organised, to help provide a base:

Alan Ford (The Little Desert);

Helen Carse & Sybil Free (The Australian naturalists Get-Together in the NT);

Debbie Saunders (Swift parrot update)

But remember, this is your night, so please bring something along. Whether a feather or a friend, it will all be welcomed.

October Outing

The outing this month is the whale watching trip to Eden Friday, October 17 to Sunday October 19. For information on arrangements contact Sylvie Sampson on 6251-2524 or email at sylvie-sampson@bigpond.com.

Information on the fauna and flora of the Eden area.. The ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment not only puts out reports on the State of the Environment in the ACT but has been commissioned to provide reports on a number of surrounding regions. These are well worth checking out.. The latest reports cover the period up to 2004 and are available for 17 regions, namely: Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma-Monaro, Cootamundra, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Gundagai, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan, Snowy River, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley, and Young.

The Bega Valley report includes the area around Merimbula and Eden. The information can be found at <http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/soe/soe2004/BegaValley/index.htm> . The report includes indicators on Ecological communities and on Native species. The section on Native species includes lists of the flora and of the native animal species that can be found in Bega Valley shire. See <http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/soe/soe2004/BegaValley/nativespeciesplants.htm> and <http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/soe/soe2004/BegaValley/nativespeciesanimals.htm> .

September outing report

It seemed like the first day of Spring for the year: a beautiful mild sunny morning at the Gorge carpark near Queanbeyan. Benj couldn't wait to get out into it with his binos and quickly was on the track of birds moving and calling in the large Casuarinas.

Slowly a small group of familiar faces (Field Natters) arrived equally thrilled with it being such a wonderful day. We set off after checking out the Geology explanatory sign which was nice and simple showing where the fault cut across the valley where the River existed even then.

The path is narrow and steep in places but with a little care is easily manageable, winding along the north side. There was plenty of water in the river rock holes and with the Acacia's flowering made very attractive views all the way.

There was plenty to look at and discussion about what species of plant or bird we might have seen. I have drawn up a list of the birds and plants that I or others think we saw or heard on the day. I am happy to be corrected where mistaken. Naturally it is not exhaustive.

Here it is:

Plants: Casuarina leumannii (Bulloak); Eucalyptus macoryncha; E. rossii; E. mannifera (brittle gum) E. bridgesiana (Apple Box); E.meliiodora (Yellow Box) Exocarpus cupressiformis (Cherry Ballart); Callitris endlicheri (Black Cypress Pine); Acacia rubida; A.decurrrens; A. dealbata; A.ulicifolia; Cassinea; Dodonea sps; Mosses; Scleranthus; the usual suspects: Lomandra; Dianella; and Hardenbergia violacea (Sarsparilla); Bursaria spinosa (prickly bush); micromyrtus (white); Pelagonium; Phragmites (grass) and a shrub that could be Ziera or Hovea? Just guessing.

Birds:

Honey eaters: White eared; Yellow tufted and Yellow faced; Spotted pardelote; Grey shrike thrush; Wide browed scrub wren; Grey fantail; Australian raven; Double barred Finch; heard a kookaburra; Wood duck; Crimson rosella; Buff - rump thornbill; Brown thornbill; White cockatoo; Chough's (heard but not seen); and Eastern Yellow Robin. We also heard the calls of a Common toadlet. All in all a rewarding walk in the natural environment where we love to be.

Sybil



Female Golden Sun-Moth photo by Fabian Douglas and used with permission.

The Golden Sun Moth (GSM), is an endangered species in the ACT and also in NSW and Victoria. It is listed as critically endangered by the Commonwealth. FOG with the support of groups like Field Naturalists has recently received a grant for an intensive survey of the GSM in the

There are some interesting talks coming up at the Botanic Gardens during October. The talks are at lunchtime (12:30 - 1:30 pm) in the ANBG Theatre.

On 23 October, Brendan Lepschi, the curator of the National Herbarium, will talk on The ACT Plant Census. In this talk, Brendan 'steps back' to look at the recording of the plant communities and their components within the ACT. This recording establishes a basis upon which future scientists can assess changes brought about by global warming and other factors such as urbanisation.

On 30 October, Ian Fraser will talk on Parallel Journeys: Australia and South America. Ian Fraser will look at the similarities and differences between the birds, mammals and flowering plants of South America and Australia. The continents have followed very similar journeys from their Gondwana connection, through 50 million years in isolation, to the recent end of that isolation.

Black Mountain Walk (9:30 am, Sat 11 Oct)

The **37th Annual Burbidge / Chippendale Walk** to see the biodiversity of Black Mountain flora will be led by Peter Ormay. Meet at the Belconnen Way entry just before Caswell Drive. Please BYO morning tea, hat, sunblock, water and stout shoes. No need to book.

Learning more about our flora and fauna –useful web sites

Tony Lawson

(continued from last month)

COG [Canberra Ornithologists Group]

This is a large and active group that does a lot to preserve the natural environment for our birds. They meet monthly on the 2nd Wednesday, have a midweek morning outing on the 3rd Wednesday, and usually have several weekend activities. Details at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/> .

ACT Herpetologists Association

Meets every second month (even months) at West Rugby Club, Jamison at 7:30 on 3rd Tuesday. No satisfactory website at present.

Geological Society (ACT Branch)

May be of occasional interest if talking about local geology. [Society members and the NPA are about to produce a new geological map of the ACT.] Details of their meetings can be found at:

<http://www.gsa.org.au/divisions/act.html> .

It meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 5:30pm at the Lecture Theatre in the Earth Sciences building, ANU – entry via Linnaeus Way.

C) ParkCare & LandCare Groups

There are many of these. Mainly concerned with park maintenance (weeding etc), but also offer walks & provide information about the park. I want to draw your attention to 2 who organize talks:

Friends of Mount Majura

Hilltop to Backfence – celebrating 5 years of ParkCare on Mount Majura. A monthly lecture series – see: http://majura.org/?page_id=66 .

Friends of Aranda Bushland

Usually have an interesting talk as part of their AGM. And they have published *Our Patch*. See: <http://www.friendsofarandabushland.org.au/> .

These groups are under the auspices of Canberra's 3 Catchment Management Groups: Ginninderra, Molonglo and Southern ACT. Their websites and the email newsletter that they regularly put out are worth checking too, as they have lots of good information. See:

<http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/index.php> ,

<http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au/> , and

<http://www.sactcg.org/index.html> .

D) Education

U3A

This provides a very good and inexpensive education opportunity for the Over 55s. Last year Norm Morrison gave a very good Botany course. Hopefully he will repeat that. There is a course on Birds underway, while on Thursday the third course on Our Tree Heritage will start. This year it comprises 3 talks, interspersed by 3 walks. Tony Fearnside from FACTA is organizing the course.. I have enjoyed the 1st two (including a talk on Eucalypts by John Turnbull) and will be doing this one. Further details of U3A courses can be found at <http://www.u3acanberra.org.au/> .

ANU

The Fenner School of Environment and Society

Unfortunately their seminars are held on Thursdays from 1: - 2:pm, so they clash with the Friends' talks at the ANBG. They are held in the Fenner School's Forestry Lecture Theatre, Ground Level, Forestry building no. 48, Linnaeus Way (comes off Daley Road), ANU campus. You can check out what is coming up at: http://fennerschool.anu.edu.au/news_events/seminars/ .

Research School of Earth Sciences

Seminars are held on Thursdays from 4: to 5:pm in the Jaeger Seminar Room, Jaeger Building. Seminar details can be found at: <http://rses.anu.edu.au/seminars/index.php> . *(to be continued)*

Field Trip Report - Cooma Geology

The Field Nats joined FOG (Friends of Grasslands) on a very successful field trip to study the world famous geology of the Cooma region. On the drive down the clouds were so dark that we could not distinguish them from the Tallanganda mountain range. But the very very strong winds that we experienced at our rendezvous point blew the clouds away and we had quite good weather for the rest of the day.

We were lucky to be able escape the winds by enjoying the terrific hospitality of Bob and June Wilkinson, who had a warm fire and filled us up with tea and cakes, while we listened to Dennis Dyer. He yet again gave another entertaining and informative explanation of geological time and periods, finishing with an outline of the key geological features of the region.

As with Canberra, much of the deposits were laid down in Ordovician times (505 - 434 million years ago (mya)). The Adaminaby Beds consisted of deep marine interbedded siltstone and fine sandstone. There were also some submarine basalt flows. This was followed by folding and erosion and deep subduction which led to high grade regional metamorphism.

Apparently the region is world famous for the metamorphic rocks that are to be found there. Metamorphic rocks result from the application of heat and pressure to sedimentary rocks. The pressure usually results from having lots of rock above. The heat comes from magma rising up from the mantle (when the magma eventually cools it solidifies and becomes igneous rocks). If there is enough heat the nearby rocks will melt and form new rocks, either a mixture of various different types of rocks or a transformation of the existing rock, for example turning limestone into marble. Around Cooma there are many different types of metamorphic rock, reflecting different degrees of heat treatment, including slate, phyllite, schist, gneiss, migmatite and S-granite. S-granite occurs when the sedimentary

rocks are melted by the magma and then get combined with the magma to eventually produce granite when the magma solidifies.

We then set off for 10 sites which illustrated the features that Dennis had discussed. The first site was a syenite, which occurred in the Jurassic period (213 - 144 mya). We had to walk through a field and up the hill to see it. Syenites result from magma flows intruding into existing slates. The hot magma cooks the adjacent rocks. During the discussion there was a loud bang as the high winds brought down a large tree. As well as Dennis's geological pearls, at each stop we were told all about the accompanying vegetation by Geoff Robertson.

The rest of the stops were by the side of the road, on the way into Cooma, two stops in Cooma and another 6 stops on the road out towards Berridale. Firstly we encountered basalt which had been laid down very recently - towards the end of the Tertiary period (66 - 5 mya). The basalt flows had filled in the valleys and flattened the landscape.

In Cooma itself we encountered the epicentre of the magma intrusion where the heat would have been greatest and where the rocks would have been subject to the most change. We observed S-granite and amphibolite. As we headed towards Berridale after lunch, the regular wayside stops illustrated the impacts of different degrees of heat and pressure on the rocks. We successively saw migmatite, gneiss, schist and phyllite.

As we got closer to Berridale the impact of another granite intrusion could be seen. Firstly we observed an aureole, which seems to be similar to the earlier syenite except that the magma intrusion was greater (forming a batholith rather than the earlier pluton), and then the Berridale granite which had been weathered into surface boulders.. All in all a very enjoyable day for the 18 participants. This included the Mayor of Cooma who now can see a new tourism opportunity for the region. Many thanks to our leaders Dennis and Geoff and to our kind hosts June and Bob.

Tony Lawson

Important conservation reports:

In the last two months, two important reports have been issued. The ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has issued a State of the Environment Report covering the period from 2004 to 2007. The report can be found at <http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/soe/2007actreport>. To me the most useful information is in what they call the Indicator Papers. The Indicator Papers provide a detailed technical discussion of the data used to assess the ACT's environment. They are useful for anyone wanting to gain an understanding of the data from which the conclusions and recommendations in the issues were made. The papers on biodiversity are probably of most interest to Field Natters. They include papers on ecological communities, ecomanagement, and native species. The ACT Natural Resource Management Council has just produced a Draft Plan. It can be found at <http://www.actnrmcouncil.org.au/nrmplan>. The Council is now holding a series of public workshops to enable people to hear about the plan, ask questions and put forward their own ideas. **Comments on the draft plan are sought by 10 October.**

**FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF
CANBERRA INCORPORATED**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2008**

| 2007 | | 2008 |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| \$ | | \$ |
| | INCOME | |
| 792 | Members' Fees In Advance | - |
| 1,360 | Membership Subscription | 1,260 |
| 339 | Raffles | 392 |
| 65 | Tea Money | 55 |
| 230 | Donations | 115 |
| 464 | Interest Received (Term Deposit) | 762 |
| 2 | Interest Received (Cheque Account) | 2 |
| 3,252 | TOTAL INCOME | 2,586 |
| | EXPENDITURE | |
| 100 | Affiliation Fees | - (1) |
| 381 | Newsletter Printing | 368 |
| 300 | Postage | 300 |
| 115 | Post Office Box Rental | 123 |
| 68 | Presentations (Speakers and ANU) | 63 |
| 300 | Student Prize Vouchers | 200 |
| 23 | Sundry Expenses | 19 |
| 300 | Insurance | - (2) |
| 1,587 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 1,073 |
| 1,665 | INCOME EXCEEDS EXPENDITURE BY | 1,513 |

Note: (Brief Summary)

(1) Affiliation fees were paid to STEP (Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park) - \$60-00, and to Conservation Council (ACT) - \$180-00 during June, 2008 at the direction of the FNAC Committee. In both cases, payment was made for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 financial years.

(2) Insurance was paid to Altiora under the National Landcare Insurance Programme for the period 01/04/2008 to 01/04/2009 on 28/08/08. The late payment resulted from Altiora merging with Austcover Pty Ltd, and the company's late presentation of an account for payment. The FNAC was regarded by Altiora as being covered by insurance notwithstanding that late payment.

Both of the above mentioned expenditures will be listed in the "Expenditure" section of the 2008-2009 financial year.

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Bob Lehman
Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

**FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF
CANBERRA INCORPORATED**

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2008

| 2007 | | 2008 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| \$ | | \$ |
| | CURRENT ASSETS | |
| 1,817 | Bank Cheque Account | 1,459 |
| 10,340 | Term Deposit | 12,211 |
| 20 | Petty Cash Advance | 20 |
| 12,177 | TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 13,690 |
| | CURRENT LIABILITIES | |
| - | None | - |
| - | NET ASSETS | 13,690 |
| | MEMBERS' FUND | |
| 10,512 | Members' Fund at Beginning of Year | 12,177 |
| 1,665 | Surplus for Year | 1,513 |
| 12,177 | MEMBERS' FUND AT END OF YEAR | 13,690 |

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 Bob Lehman
 Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

Field Naturalists' 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:

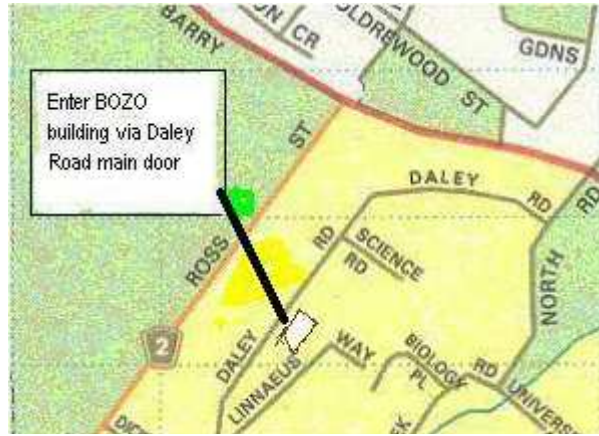
President: Benj Whitworth, tel w 6272 3192
mob:0448049195

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.

Published and distributed by Bob Lehman



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (occasionally the adjacent building 44). 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: