

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATURALIST

MEETING—THURSDAY 1 October 2015
7:30 pm Australian National University
Gould Seminar Room, Building 116, Daley Road, ANU, ACT
details back page

Mulligans Flat and Bettong project

Speaker: Kate Garrock

Kate is currently working as the Ecologist for Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. In this role she mainly focus on the research and restoration of critically endangered box-gum grassy woodlands. A key element to this restoration is the reintroduction of species lost from this ecosystem due to habitat clearing and introduced pest species. Species being reintroduced include the Eastern Bettong, New Holland Mouse and Bush Stone-curlew.



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Changing of the guard



For some years I have been observing the magpie families in my neighbourhood. When I started my favourite family occupied the small park in the street behind my house and their territory extended into my back and even front yard.

The family consisted of a male and his two females. The male had a gammy foot as did the male from the adjoining family and it took me quite a while to realise that they were two different birds.

I watched numerous territory battles between these two adjoining families, with neither gaining any ground. The battles have stopped. I was saddened when first one of the females of my favourite family died. Then with their strength weakened the remaining two were shortly afterwards bested by an invading force. I came home one Saturday and thought I didn't recognise the magpies in the park. My neighbours then told me there had been a huge battle in their back yard, after which the male and female flew off westward.



At the time they had five surviving juveniles, but I have yet to see any juveniles join in territory battles. These five hung around a while but a distance away from the park.

Strangely, this change brought about a shift in territory for nearly all of the five or six family groups in the area.

From my observations I have observed a pattern, at least with some of the changing of the guard. The resident families are descended upon by a group of about six intruders, so it is no wonder that they are able to defeat the residents. However, this group then gradually dwindles to a single pair or a male and two females.

The magpies currently dwelling in my park are a group of four, all male, so there has been no breeding for the past four years.

In about June this year around the start of the breeding season, I started to notice a lot of aerial activity and noise just down the street from my front yard. At times I counted up to seven magpies performing their aerial acrobatics, with much squawking and flapping of wings. This went on almost every day, morning and evening for about two months, and I often wondered who each of

the individuals were. Were they the members of the three adjoining groups performing an aerial battle over territory?

However, I think I worked out what was going on when one day I walked down the street to find my four males from the park and three new females either on the ground or flitting between the trees. It seems that these three females had found an small area of unclaimed territory and the four males were vying for their affection.

Everything has quietened down now and I've found that there are now usually only three male magpies in the park on my visits.

The three females are still down the street and once or twice I've seen them with one lone male. I guess of the four male he won the hearts of the three females. I don't think they have nested this year, but perhaps next year. Meanwhile, another family have nested about four houses up the street in the opposite direction. They are busy feeding chicks in the nest at the moment and I've noticed that most chicks in my area fledge around the October long weekend.

Alison Milton

Activities

Saturday 10 October: 44th Black Mountain Spring Wildflower Ramble

Meet at the Belconnen Way entry before Caswell Drive turnoff (if heading west) watch for balloons. Bring friends, morning tea, hat, sunblock, water, stout shoes and field guide if you have one.

Month	Speaker	Topic
1 October	Kate Grarock	Mulligans Flat and Bettong project
5 November	Ian Fraser	How Australian Birds Got English Names

What to take in your lunch pack for a summer's day bushwalk – 1950s style

The Field Naturalist, Thistle Harris, in her book *Naturecraft in Australia* has a list of equipment to take on a day walk in summer, a list which we would still follow these days.

How times have changed though, is evident in the list of suggested items for the lunch stop:

1 chop, 1 egg, 6 slices of bread, butter in a light container, ½ pound of shelled peas, 1 small potato, 2 pieces of fruit, milk or an orange drink. Utensils – 1 knife, cup, light plate, light pan.

People's Climate March Sunday 29 November

As the next major UN climate negotiations in Paris approach, we are proud to announce we will be coordinating the Canberra People's Climate March, 12 midday Sunday 29 November. Along with member group partners 350.org, Canberra AYCC and others, we want to host the most diverse climate event Canberra has ever seen. Our March will coincide with an international and national wave of action on the even of the negotiations. We will leave politicians in no doubt that the Australian community is already taking climate action and they need to follow our lead. Save the date and stay tuned for all the details!

This month it is clear that international pressure for climate action is building. We attended Caritas Australia's event: Laudato Si dialogue, on the Pope's letter to billions of Catholics urging them to take climate action. The next day saw the release of the international Islamic

Declaration on Climate Change calling 1.6 billion muslims to take action.

Our August Environment Exchange was all about Paris, where an Australian DFAT climate change section speaker outlined our position at the negotiations. Though the Paris outcome won't be a silver bullet, we have never seen so many nations taking concrete climate action commitments into a negotiation. We then heard about other climate action: an update on the ACT's progress to meet its ambitious emission reduction targets. You can see the exciting presentation on the ACT's progress here, we are on track to meet our goals! The announcement that the ACT will now aim for 100% renewable energy by 2025 demonstrates that climate action is achievable and affordable. Australian communities are already taking climate action. Now we need our politicians to follow our lead.

This event is being organised by the Conservation Council. Rosemary Blemings asks "Please could Field Naturalists make a special effort to attend the March".



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

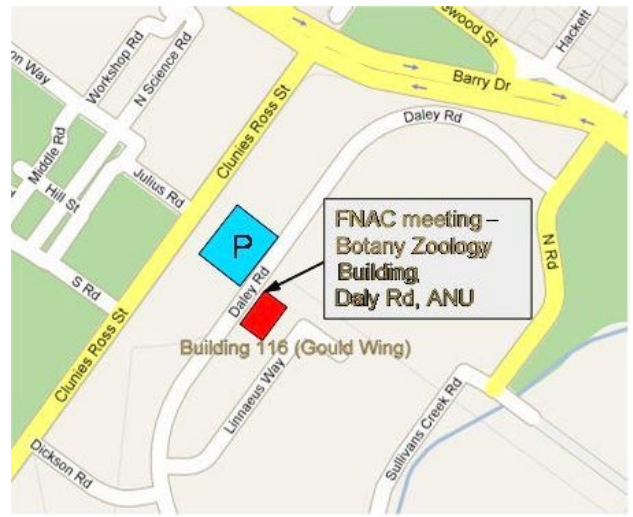
Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

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: