

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

October 2022

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FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.
JAMISON CENTRE ACT 2614
GPO BOX 708

FIELD NATURALIST

October 2022 newsletter No monthly meetings until further notice



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Gossan Hill excursion

The September Field Nats excursion was to Gossan Hill and for some, a return to the cars via parts of Flea Bog Flats.

Usually entering the reserve at the Hayden Drive entrance, this was the first time I had entered via the south-western entrance from Clewes Place.

It wasn't long before we found some early flowering orchids, mostly *Cyanicula caerulea* (Blue fingers) and a smaller number of *Caladenia fuscata* (Dusky fingers).

While some kept a list of native plant species I don't have the list I've found that the plant species isn't as diverse as at other reserves I frequent. This will no doubt be disputed but from the species with which I am familiar, there were several species of Acacia, the Hardenbergias were well in flower and the Glycine lilies were just starting to emerge. *Cryptandra amara* were common.

Sandra kept a comprehensive list of birds, which included a number of species I obviously missed, including the magnificent Wedged-tail eagle. We did however, observe a Galah carrying a Eucalyptus twig to a hollow, where it vainly tried to insert it into its nesting hollow, ultimately failing and dropping the twig.



It was at about this point that group split in two, some opting for the shortcut route back to the cars, while the rest opted to continue and loop back through Flea Bog Flats.

Alison Milton

September observations

Colin had evidence of the Sugar Gliders moving in.

The evidence:

Look at the base of the tree



Now look up to see the sap sucking holes going right up the tree



Meanwhile Rhian had a Tawny Frogmouth in a tree in her driveway.



Activities

Tuesday 4 October: 9.30 am private property at Wamboin

Jo has cared for her bush block for several decades applying her knowledge of grassy woodland ecosystems to caring for native species long before living in the bush became popular.

Jo is a Life Member of the Australian Native Plants Society, an acknowledgement of her years of growing, studying and propagating native species.

For many years after she initiated the concept, Jo took an active part in ANPS's Wednesday Walks exploring reserves and private properties throughout the ACT and region.

Come and see what living on a bush block entails and meet some of the animals and plant species Jo has nurtured over several generations.

Please let me know you are intending to come to Wamboin. A detailed map will be provided for those expressing an interest so please respond to Rosemary Blemings – rosemary@blemings.org

Tuesday 25 October: 9.30 am Percival Hill, Nicholls– preliminary notice

Sclerophyl woodland, Native grassland, expansive views, ancient eucalypts, *Leptospermum* and daisies flowered well in 2021.

Small miracles can lift the spirits

Before winter the compost bin delivered a small tomato plant and three sprouting avocados.

Each was potted up rather than being dumped and they've been moved from the laundry, as a greenhouse, to the north-facing outside everyday.

The variety of any tomatoes remains to be seen but the plant is now growing rapidly from its earlier bushy shape.

When flowers appeared I was tempted to try pollinating them with a paintbrush but never 'got round to it'.

Last week I was delighted to see a small green tomato among the dense foliage.

The avocados have a warrigal greens plant and chickweed sharing their pots. These have been useful when 'salad greens' weren't available.

One has an unidentified lush companion that's challenging my curiosity.

Do you have any small miracles to report?

Rosemary Blemings



Springtime - cuckoo time

Spring is in the air. The wattles are stunning, the Magpies are nest building, the Wood Ducks are wac - wac - wac ing up in the trees as they look for nesting holes.

But the great harbinger of Spring is the Cuckoo and the first Fan-tailed was trilling on 12 August. Now they call most days. Maybe they are passing through on their way South.

Cuckoos: Amazing behaviour. As one book says, *Whatever its origin, brood parasitism involves some of the most complicated and strange instincts in the animal kingdom.*

Charles Darwin discusses cuckoos in Chapter 8 Instinct in his *Origin of Species*. More recently Richard Dawkins tackles this evolutionary puzzle in his famous *The Selfish Gene*.

I always find myself going back to genes and DNA. How is the cuckoo's behaviour programmed into its genes? And how on earth is that program put into operation? Maybe I should have become a biologist!

Colin Pask



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.

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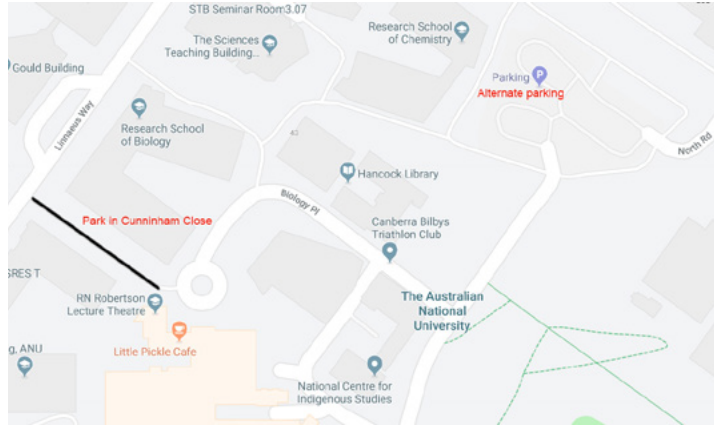
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Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

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Monthly meeting venue: Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, Australian National University

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Membership application or renewal

Surname: First name:

If a family membership, please include the first names of other members of the family:

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Postal address:

Suburb: State: Postcode:

Home phone: Work phone:

Email address:

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: Friend

Other Please specify:

Subscription (Single/Family \$25) Donation: \$.....

Subscription renewals are due on 1 July each year

Pay by post (include completed form)

Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra
GPO Box 708
Jamison Centre ACT 2614

Bank transfer (renewals only: form not needed)

Account name: Field Nats
BSB: 325 185
Account number: 03545251
Reference: **Please include your name**