

October 2023
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FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC. GPO BOX 708
JAMISON CENTRE ACT 2614

FIELD NATTER

MEETING—Thursday 5 October 2023 7:30 pm Australian National University

Slayter Room (up the stairs), R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT
details back page

How Citizen Science transformed conservation management in the ACT: and how you add to this Speaker: Michael Mulvaney

Within the last eight years, thousands of people have been reporting the wildlife they encounter via the online platform Canberra Nature Map (CNM), with over 250,000 sightings made. The combined knowledge and conservation outcomes from all sightings is staggering. Nature Mappers have provided twice as many records of our region's rare plants as were recorded over the previous 110 years. CNM is guiding weed, fire and other land management daily and is consulted as part of planning and development decisions. New species have been identified and it is the source of most of our information on Gang Gang nesting ecology and much of what we know about the Small Ant-blue Butterfly.



This butterfly sighting by Mathew Frawley led to the discovery of a new species; the Spotted Trident Blue, which has specific habitat requirements.

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Strathnairn excursion

John and Janet organised a lovely excursion for September. Around 18 members turned up to walk, at least part, of the newish track from Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout.

Even while waiting in the car park we spotted 10 species of birds.

At times the group did spread out a bit depending on what interested them enough to stop and examine a bit further, though we did all gather round the area that had numerous Early Nancy in flower as there were a number of other flora of interest to inspect and record, either mentally or through the lens of a camera.

The double dam was at about the half way point, where there were many Damselflies settling on the reeds close to shore, while the dragonflies elusively made their circuits over the water looking for a mate. With some luck, one pair did land on a water lily pad long enough for some photos of their egg laying.

Just past the dam is a styer over the fence, which is a bit steep but can be managed.

Most of the group made it as far as the beginning of the Callitris forest where there is an example of a rare (for Canberra) example of mistletoe.

Among the many flora we did come across a patch of *Caladenia fuscata* (Dusky Finger) orchids and just four Leopard orchids. Good to know that orchards do grow in this area.

The views across the valley were spectacular, looking out over the Murrumbidgee and no doubt to across the border into New South Wales to the west.

While some turned back earlier than others, most gathered at the Strathnairn cafe for lunch and a catch-up chat.

The excursion yielded a quite extensive species list. My list is below. It doesn't include most shrubs or Eucalypts and no doubt I have missed many other species noted by others, such as Chickweed and Sorrel, for example. My list does include both native and exotics.

It was a very enjoyable walk in perfect spring weather. A big thank you to John and Janet.

The next excursion should be equally exciting as Rosemary and Dierk take us on a journey to Black Ridge. Black Ridge is around 100 kms south of Canberra and is co-owned by eight persons and kept as a conservation property. We are also hoping to have Peacock Spider expert, Stuart Harris, join us to hunt for this iconic spider species.

Species list Birds

Australian Magpie
Australian Raven
Australian Wood Duck
Brown Thornbill
Crested Pigeon
Crimson Rosella
Galah
Grey Fantail
Little Corella
Magpie Lark
Masked Lapwing
Nankeen Kestrel
Pacific Black Duck
Satin Bowerbird (female - flushed)
Shining Bronze Cuckoo (heard)
Silver-eye
Superb Fairy Wren
Striated Pardalote (heard)
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Welcome Swallow
Willie Wagtail
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-face Honeyeater (probable)

Insects/spiders

Australian Emperor, dragonfly
Austrolestes leda, Wandering Ringtail (damselfly)
Austropephritis poenia, Australian Fruit Fly

Blow fly
Harpobittacus australis Hanging fly
Melangyna viridiceps Hover fly
Paropsis pictipennis, Tea tree button beetle
Praying Mantis egg sac
Sandalodes scopifer (large jumping spider)
Squat hopper (nymph) (Dianne Clarke)
Swarming ants
Taractrocerca papyria, White-banded Grass Dart
Vanessa kershawi, Australian Painted Lady
Wandering Percher, dragonfly

Plants

Acacia baileyana (Cootamundra Wattle)
Arctotheca calendula Capeweed
Bartsia
Caladenia fuscata Dusky Fingers (orchid)
Callitris endlicheri (Black Cypress)
Calotis lappulacea, Yellow Burr Daisy
Cicendia quadrangularis, Oregon Timwort
Convolvulus (bindweed)
Cymbonotus sp (bears ears)
Diuris pardina, Leopard Doubletail
Drosera gunniana, Sundew
Erodium brachycarpum, Heronsbill
Eucalyptus blakelyi (Blakely's Red Gum)
Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow Box)

Eucalyptus macrorhyncha (Red String-bark)
Geranium
Glycine clandestina, Twining Glycine
Kunzia parvifolia
Leptospermum sp
Leptorhynchos squamatus subsp. *squamatus*, Scaly Buttons
Leucochrysum albicans (Hoary sunrays)
Lysimachia arvensis, Scarlet Pimpernel
Muellerina bidwillii, Cypress-pine Mistletoe
Oxalis sp. Wood Sorrel
Sherardia arvensis, Field Madder
Solenogyne
St Johns Wort
Stypandra glauca, Nodding Blue Lily
Thistles
Triptilodiscus pygmaeus, Annual Daisy
Verbascum thapsus (Great Mullein)
Wurmbea dioica subsp. *dioica*, Early Nancy

Fungi – lichens

Bracken fungi
Flavoparmelia Lichen
Teloschistes sp. A lichen

Reptiles

Skink

Frogs

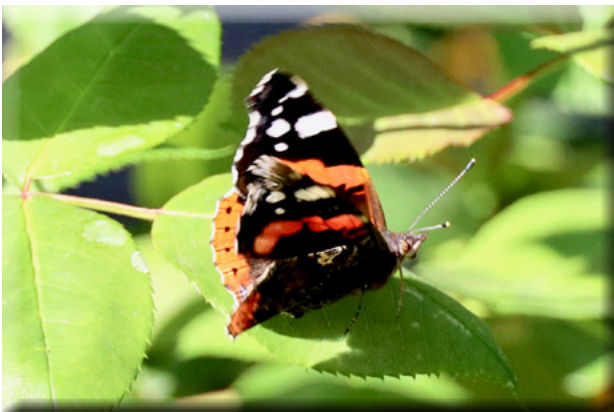
Crinia signifera

Alison Milton

From the Northern Hemisphere

Far, far away and just before the equinox, Sonja and I walked through a nature park just north of Berlin, Germany.

The birds having finished breeding (but don't tell the pigeons), were quiet. There were few insects about as leaves began falling from the deciduous elms, oaks and birches in the forest. Occasionally we heard the tell-tale hammering of a woodpecker. Rain had ruined the last of the plums but these attracted a few butterflies, just as spectacularly painted as their Southern Hemisphere relatives. I managed to photograph a few of them.



Their outlook is poor with habitat loss and fragmentation, and climate change to blame for the dwindling numbers of butterflies.

Kevin McCue



New Aranda Bushland walking track

Barring a few directional arrows, a new walk has been completed starting and ending near the Black Mountain stile as indicated in the map below (Figure 1) with a red arrow. New educational panels were installed in late August by a Parks contractor and at the moment pink flagging tape marks the way. For nearly 8 years the Friends of Aranda Bushland (FoAB) have been lobbying to sort out a route, design and print descriptive panels (see Figure 2), and get ACT Government approval and a grant to make it happen. Jenny Andrews led the project with much support from Ian Falconer, Keith Pantlin and others. Marianna Rollgejser did the panel designs, all eight of them. A Parks team, under guidance from Ranger Julian Lolicato, laid large stepping stones across two of the boggy areas (photo) and substantially cleared the track.



The track is marked in purple on the map below.

A description of the walk is on the starting panel - well worth FoAB's effort.

Kevin McCue

Observations from Lucy

Delighted to hear, see and then identify a few Golden Whistlers about 9.30 am one weekday morning, flitting from the eucalypts in the green belt by our service road to the acacia and callistemon in our front garden. Never before! Such bright yellow breasts. Silver eyes and I think thornbills were also moving through the vegetation with them at the same time. It was a 'rock solid' bird watcher's thrill.

I've just planted some low lying grevilleas and Kangaroo paws by the pathway to our hills hoist. Lo and behold, saw the red wattlebird in one of the grevilleas this morning. At this time of year, it also partakes of the bounty of the crisp white camellia shrub, which we can see from our kitchen window.

The occasional song of the butcherbird continues in our immediate neighbourhood. And, beloved to me, I saw a female wren in one of our mature leptospernums (Starry Night). They haven't been around for ages.

Charles witnessed three kookaburras on an electricity cable at the end of our service road, much to his joy.

One other thing - the ACT Government through the Urban Treescape program will be adding about 30 trees to our service road's green belt and adjoining pedestrian reserve that goes from our main road to another.

I contacted the Urban Treescapes team of the ACT Government to get some trees planted in my area and received the following response from the team:

"It is great to hear about the appreciation for the trees by the FNAC community. For the best results, anyone can request a tree through the [Fix-My-Street](#) portal. This will enable residents to obtain a reference number and they can follow up with their enquiry."

There is also a useful webpage that lists various volunteer working groups on parks etc that people may be interested in, both withstanding we would always like more public funds expended on the conservation of our wild spaces and the creatures that live there.

The FNAC group could register for the UPP volunteer program. I mentioned to the Urban Treescapes contact that many of the FNAC members have done/do this work. Jayne of the Directorate came back with the following question:

"Are there any local trees in particular which the FNAC group would recommend for the smaller birds? Please note, we only have trees, which grow to a minimum of 3 meters – hence we do not have shrubs like grevilleas. The FNAC group could register for the [UPP volunteer program](#) to help with this."

I can pass on the details if anyone is interested in 'densifying' their local treescape. This can include a tree or shrub on your actual front garden.

Lucy Bastecky

Tree planting project

Following on from Lucy's mention of the tree planting project, in recent months there has been a lot of tree planting along suburban streets and in urban parks in Higgins. This week they actually came back to plant two additional trees in my street, though some tree planting are unwelcome.

My neighbour across the road came out to find a tree planted outside her place. Her nature strip has been gravelled to allow car parking so she wasn't so pleased to have a tree planted. Another neighbour further up the street also has gravel on her nature strip but luckily saw the guy walking up the street identifying houses that didn't have trees planted on the nature strip and asked politely that they not plant one.

The little park at the back my street is destined to have a filtration swale added, which includes the planting of 35 new trees and shrubs, plus reeds and water plants in the swale.

Sadly, in the last few days a major branch of one of the two ancient eucalypts fell down taking out more than half of the tree. Annoyingly someone in my street was on site with his truck within hours of the fall to cut up most of the branches for firewood. I do however, have to praise Fix-my-street.

The next morning I reported the fall to Fix-my-street and within hours they had sent out an assessment team and the same afternoon cleaned up the leaves and debris. The huge fallen trunk is still there as I guess they need heavier equipment to remove it. I did ask if they would be able to sculpt into seating for the park. The foreman checked with his boss and said, sadly they were not allowed to.



I was impressed with the speed at which they responded and at putting the clean-up at a high priority. Also, the remainder of the tree does look healthy and they said that they would not be taking down the tree, leaving it for habitat.

Alison Milton

Annual General Meeting

Nineteen members were present for the 2023 AGM held on 7 September with six apologies. Janet Stein presented a report of the year's activities on behalf of the Committee. Three members had resigned from the Committee, Lucy Bastecky, Rhiân Williams, and Morgan McClure and were thanked for their valuable contributions. Monthly meetings had resumed after a two-year covid break with a full program of interesting speakers organised by Deidre Shaw, the new Meetings Organiser.

Alison once again delivered interesting and informative newsletters every month, and with well-attended field outings throughout the year, kept members in touch. Reflecting the diversity of interests of FNAC members each outing had a different focus: native plants at Percival Hill, nature and art at Pialligo, invertebrates at Red Hill, birds at Narrabundah Hill and grassland and wetland restoration at Tuggeranong Homestead.

John Stein took on the new role of Outings Coordinator.

FNAC expanded its online presence with the creation of a new Facebook page and the advertising of its monthly meetings on online notice boards while Kevin McCue and Darryl Seto successfully transitioned the website to a new hosting provider, BluePackets, a local Canberra company.

The Treasurer's report, prepared by Kevin McCue showed 43 members had renewed their membership. There were few meetings so raffle income was down. The insurance package had been renegotiated.

Office Bearers were elected unopposed. Congratulations and thank you to all who have agreed to take on these roles:

President: Robyn Black

Treasurer: Kevin McCue

Secretary: Janet Stein

Committee: Rosemary Blemings (Membership Secretary)

Outings coordinator: John Stein

Financial Statement 1 July 2022–30 June 2023

Reluctant to move too quickly out of Covid restrictions, FieldNats had a very quiet year with few face-to-face meetings and outings. We transferred our website hosting to a local Canberra company BluePackets and renegotiated our insurance after the end of the financial year. Thanks to our Editor Alison Milton the regular newsletters kept the conversation and memberships going.

Income and expenditure statement for year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$
Income	
Membership subscriptions	1,075.00
Raffle	32.50
Donations	185.00
Interest received	260.09
Total income	1,504.47
Expenditure	
Newsletter printing	282.50
Insurance	0.00
Auditor payment / web hosting	132.00
Total expenditure	414.50

Financial situation at 30 June 2023

Cash at bank	\$1787.77
Term deposit (a)	\$10,670.48
Term deposit (b)	\$2,252.57

Kevin McCue
Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

Activities

Sunday 15 October, Black Ridge

Depart Canberra 7.30 am and meet at Rothlyn Road turnoff from the Monaro Highway some 14 km South of Bredbo at 9.00 am. After the second long straight stretch of road following the Bredbo bridge there is a steep decline with poplars on the right. Rothlyn Road starts opposite these.

Please contact Dierk von Behrens on 0448 775 521 to book and offer or ask for a lift.

Within the 1922 ha (4750 acres) of Black Ridge 4 wheel drives are highly recommended.

From the Monaro Highway the entrance to Black Ridge is some 3 km East along dirt roads/tracks navigable by two wheel drives.

Please be self-sufficient for the day: food, drinks, clothes, hat, binoculars, etc.

We expect to have the opportunity for a hot drink at the restored settlers cottage.

Dierk von Behrens, vbehrens@inet.net.au 0448 775 521.

Saturday 21 October: Native plant sale at botanic gardens

A reminder of the October native plant sale at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Be early and take your own bags or boxes for your purchases.

Sunday 3 December: 8:30 am, Mt Painter Nature Reserve

Meet on northern side of William Hovell Drive bordering Mt Painter Nature Park. From Coulter Drive in Belconnen, drive East along William Hovell. Park on the left, after the guard rail ends. There will be pink tape there. This is just before the highest part of the road. If you get to the overhead electronic sign you have gone too far. The walk will pass along the regenerating woodlands of the western slopes of Mt Painter Nature Park. Once a great cow paddock, now recovering after years of landcare. Experience a variety of birdlife, great views towards the Brindabellas, and varied stages of plantings. The walk will be about two-three hours return, along a gentle grassy fire trail, with opportunity to explore off track. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring water, a hat and binoculars if you have them. RSVP: Cecily Sutton (email: cecsutton@gmail.com) Please provide a contact phone number, and an emergency contact.

Join the FNAC Committee

We'd love some fresh faces and new ideas for the Committee. Being on the committee is not onerous. No special skills are needed. We meet in person a few times a year and at other times discuss ideas via email. Our meetings are friendly affairs usually over an afternoon tea. If you would like to help, please talk to any of us at the next meeting or email Janet Stein (JanetStein01@gmail.com).

Also please email Janet if you would like a copy of the full minutes of the AGM or Committee report.

Month	Speaker	Topic
5 October	Michael Mulvaney	Canberra Nature Map
2 November	Doug Finlayson	National Rock Garden
7 December		Xmas party

Raffle prizes needed

As always, we need prizes for our monthly raffle. This is our only fund-raising event and is funded through members' generous donations, mostly consisting of items no longer needed or wanted at home. Fresh garden produce is also highly prized.

Please go through your cupboards for all those little items you no longer use or want and bring them along to donate as raffle prizes. As the saying goes, 'One man's junk is another man's treasure' (or woman as the case may be), and if you are a gardener with fresh produce to donate, this would be greatly appreciated.





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 you would be warmly welcomed.

President: Rosemary Blemings I

president@fieldnatsact.com

Email: secretary@fieldnatsact.com

Website: www.fieldnatsact.com

Treasurer: treasurer@fieldnatsact.com

Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

Newsletter Editor: editor@fieldnatsact.com

Membership application or renewal

New applications and renewals can be done through the membership page on the web site:

<https://fieldnatsact.com/membership>

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

Subscription renewals are due on 1 July each year

Bank transfer (*renewals only: form not needed*)

Account name: Field Nats

BSB: 325 185

Account number: 03545251

Reference: **Please include your name**

If you are unable to make the payment through the web site you can contact the Membership Secretary at the email address opposite, or in writing to the address listed.

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



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

