

September 2013
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MEETING—THURSDAY 5 September 2013

7:30 pm Australian National University

Gould Seminar Room, Building 116, Daley Road, ANU, ACT

details back page



Annual General Meeting



A brief AGM. Please don't stay away because it is our AGM. Many of the current committee are prepared to continue although we would WELCOME any new people onto the committee so please speak up at the meeting OR tell someone beforehand. We need a few more hands on board. Our speaker is a member so come along and hear something very different.

I heard the Field Naturalists are about to hold their Annual General Meeting and are looking for committee members.

Are you going to volunteer? I hear there will also be an interesting talk on molluscs.



The wonder of molluscs

Speaker: David Dedenczuk will introduce us to the marvellous world of molluscs and their shells focussing on those that can be found on the South Coast of NSW.

We will look quickly at the different classes of molluscs, their shells' structure, how to identify them, why people should take an interest in them and hopefully what the interest of listeners to look at the local shells when they next visit the coast.



Mandarin whelk - Lagoon Bay 2008

David grew up in Tasmania, where he first developed an interest in shells, and in recent years he joined up with the Tasmanian Marine Naturalists Association. Now that he is living in Canberra, he finds an outlet for his marine interests through the Nature Coast Marine Group, which is based on the South Coast of NSW.



Cartrut shell - Shelly Beach, Gerroa 2010

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GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATURALIST

FNAC prizewinners

Each year FNAC awards a prize to an ANU student who, in that year was enrolled in a program leading to the award of a degree of bachelor offered by the Faculty of Science and who was also enrolled in four or more Group B courses from the Botany, Zoology and Ecology and Evolution streams, and achieved, in the opinion of the Head of the School of Botany and Zoology the best result across all the relevant courses. This year's prize was awarded to Bori Cser. Bori attended the August meeting to accept her award and give a brief presentation on her recent studies, particularly that of magpies. She has provided some further information on her field of study below.

For my honours I'm doing a project about colour communication in frillneck lizards. Basically I'm testing whether the intensity of frill colour in the red and yellow morphs of the lizard has any role in resolving male-male conflict; i.e. whether males use colour as a signal of competitive ability. I'll be doing this by staging contests between size-matched males in which I manipulate the colour of their frill patches, and also by presenting model frillnecks with frill patches of different colour intensity to lizards in the wild.

Yes, avian cognition is an absolutely fascinating area of research. I only touched on it in my project, but I thought it was really interesting that I found that magpies were able to perform a type of cognitive task - associating a sound a different species made with the appropriate type of predator - that had until then only been conclusively demonstrated in primates. There is more and more evidence mounting that avian cognition can actually be very complex, contrary to the idea of 'dumb birds'! (Mind you, some of them are definitely not very intelligent...)

Bori Cser

Where are they now?

Previous FNAC award winners:

- 2010: Chong Ren Ong is working on plant systematics.
- 2009: Peri Bolton Spoke to us about burrowing snakes and is now doing research on colouring in Gouldian finches.
- 2008: Julianne Livingston "Quantitative genetics of body size and reproductive traits using *Gambusia* as a model organism." Honours mid-2011.
- 2007: Rachel Ann Slatyer "Student at Melbourne University studying population genetic structure and thermal tolerance in Australian alpine grasshoppers."
- 2006: Catherine Hayes "Going up to Darwin for a few weeks over summer to do a field work special topics course was the highlight of my science degree".
- 2005: Jessica Bolton completed Honours at ANU; did three months of fieldwork on fiddler crabs in Mozambique, and then two months more fieldwork in Darwin, then worked on conservation issues on Christmas Island. From November 2012, will be working for the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation with the Djelk Ranger Group in Arnhem Land.
- 2004: Jacqueline Poldy has published several journal articles including Pollinator specificity, floral odour chemistry and the phylogeny of Australian sexually deceptive *Chiloglottis* orchids: implications for pollinator-driven speciation.
- 2003: Sarah Stuart-Smith is working for the commonwealth government on wetlands projects.
- 2002: Geoff Kay has worked with Professor David Lindenmayer.

A list of previous winners can be found at <http://students.anu.edu.au/graduation/prizes/cmbe/field-naturalists-association-of-canberra-prize-prev.pdf>

Draft Minutes of 2012 FNAC AGM, Thursday 4 October

The President, Chris Bunn, opened the AGM at 7:45 pm.

Minutes of Previous AGM – there were no Minutes available. It was agreed that the Minutes would be placed in the next newsletter.

President's Report – the full report was to appear in the November Newsletter (*occurred*). Chris commented on the wide range of talks and outings that were provided. Although we were a small club, there were many helpers. The club faced a few challenges, but he felt that the club would continue to prosper.

Motion to accept President's Report: *Nom. Bob Lehman; Sec. Rosemary Blemings; passed.*

Financial report – circulated by Treasurer, Bob Lehman. Bob thanked Pam for her work with the monthly raffle. He noted a significant donation of \$300.

Motion to accept Financial report: *Nom. Pam Finger; Sec. Dierk von Behrens; passed.*

The Treasurer then provided some information about the forthcoming ANN gathering. There were to be 78 interstate visitors, but after withdrawals this had fallen to 61. There were

also 20 locals. The estimated revenue was over \$32,500. This should more than cover estimated expenditure, but more expenditure was anticipated, e.g. for additional buses in evenings. The visitors would be covered by our insurance.

Auditor – *the Treasurer moved that we appoint the same auditor again. This was seconded by Rosemary von Behrens and passed.*

Election of Office Bearers – Dierk von Behrens was appointed as Returning Officer.

Each nomination was accepted and the table below constitute the FNAC Committee for the next 12 months.

Margaret was away. She was to be asked if she was willing to be a Committee Member again. The Committee can co-opt additional members, e.g. Dierk, who could not be nominated as he was Returning Officer.

The AGM closed at 8:15 pm.

It was followed by a general meeting, led by our new President, Rosemary von Behrens, to discuss the forthcoming ANN gathering.



Committee positions

| Position | Nominee | Nominator | Seconder |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| President | Rosemary von Behrens | Rosemary Blemings | Warwick Daniels |
| Vice-President | Chris Bunn | Rosemary Blemings | Bob Lehman |
| Secretary | Tony Lawson | Chris Bunn | Rosemary von Behrens |
| Treasurer | Bob Lehman | Tony Lawson | George Heinsohn |
| Public Officer | Chris Bunn | (appointed) | |
| Committee | | | |
| | Rosemary Blemings | George Heinsohn | Pam Finger |
| | Pam Finger | Naarilla Hirsch | Shirley Daniels |
| | Margaret Karms | Rosemary Blemings | Adrienne Nicholson |

Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 June 2013

| | 2012 \$ | 2013 \$ |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income | | |
| Membership Subscriptions | 1,480.00 | 1,650.00 |
| Raffle | 366.60 | 289.00 |
| Tea Money | 80.00 | 40.00 |
| Donations | 445.00 | 565.00 |
| Petty Cash Return | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Interest Received (Term Deposits) | 1,040.21 | 757.65 |
| Interest Received (Cheque Account) | 80.78 | 59.00 |
| Total | 3,512.59 | 3,360.65 |

| | 2012 \$ | 2013 \$ |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Expenditure | | |
| Affiliation Fees | 50.00 | 77.00 |
| Bank Fees | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Depreciation | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Govt. FID and Debit Tax | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Newsletter Printing | 409.40 | 476.80 |
| Committee Meeting Printing | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Postage | 399.90 | 564.00 |
| Post Office Box Rental | 149.50 | 156.00 |
| Presentations (Speakers and ANU) | 277.00 | 0.00 |
| Raffle Prize | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Donations | 0.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Student Prize Vouchers | 250.00 | 0.00 |
| Registrar General's Fees | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Insurance | 350.00 | 350.00 |
| Website Hosting | 131.28 | 161.00 |
| Secretary's Stationery | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Sundry Expenses (Assistant Secretary) | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Treasurer's Stationery | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Auditor Payment | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| Total | 2,117.08 | 2,784.80 |
| Income exceeds Expenditure by | \$1,395.51 | \$575.85 |

Bob Lehman

Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

Budget statements

Australian Naturalists' Network 2012 Get Together

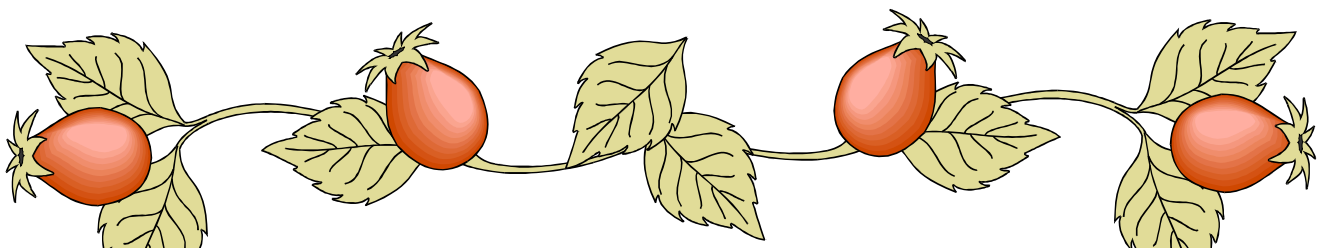
Income and Expenditure for Financial Years Ended 30 June 2011, 2012 & 2013

| | 2011 \$ | 2012 \$ | 2013 \$ | Grand total \$ |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Chinchilla Money Transfer | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | | |
| Participants' Deposits | 3,400.00 | 12,200.00 | 0.00 | 15,600.00 |
| Participants' Final Payments | 0.00 | 0.00 | 23,081.00 | 23,081.00 |
| Total | 5,400.00 | 12,200.00 | 23,081.00 | 40,681.00 |

| | 2011 \$ | 2012 \$ | 2013 \$ | Grand total \$ |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Venue Deposit | 0.00 | 200.00 | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| Participant Reimbursement | 0.00 | 400.00 | 4,400.00 | 4,800.00 |
| Stationery | 0.00 | 60.14 | 0.00 | 60.14 |
| Printing | 0.00 | 60.00 | 15.90 | 75.90 |
| Postage | 0.00 | 195.00 | 0.00 | 195.00 |
| Room Booking | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,450.00 | 2,450.00 |
| Equipment | 0.00 | 0.00 | 640.46 | 640.46 |
| Bus Hire & Venue Entry Fee | 0.00 | 0.00 | 13,973.05 | 13,973.05 |
| Meals | 0.00 | 0.00 | 9,487.44 | 9,487.44 |
| Cruise & Presentations | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,614.00 | 1,614.00 |
| Donations | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,150.00 | 1,150.00 |
| Total | 0.00 | 915.14 | 33,730.85 | 34,645.99 |
| Income Exceeds Expenditure: | 5,400.00 | 11,284.86 | 10,649.85 | 6,035.01 |

Bob Lehman

Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)



Victoria's first birdmen

Alec Chisholm *The best Australian Nature writing*

The first contacts with birds in the area that became known as Victoria were made by maritime explorers, notably George Bass and Matthew Flinders (1797-98) and James Grant and Francis Barrallier (1801). Most of their records related to sea-birds, particularly black swans, but when Grant went ashore from the *Lady Nelson* at Western Port on 22nd March, he made this observation:

The bushes abounded with small birds, many of them having beautiful plumage, and some melodious, and seemingly vying with each other in their notes. I observed a general shyness among the feathered tribe, and concluded they were often pursued by the natives. The ducks were particularly so, and it was with much difficulty I could come within gunshot of them

Later (31st March 1801) Grant and Barrallier went a short distance inland and saw other species in trees beside a stream:

Among these we noted the bird called the Bell Bird, which has no remarkable plumage but a note not unlike the tinkling of a bell; so that when a number of these birds are collected together the noise they make is similar to that made by the bells of a team of horses. Amongst other birds of various note, we often distinguished the laughing bird, whose notes can only be compared to the ha! ha! ha! of a hearty laughing companion....

Early in 1802 the *Lady Nelson* was again in Bass Strait, and this time its new master, John Murray, entered Port Phillip, a notable discovery that was repeated by Flinders two months later. Their reports led to the establishing, in October 1803, of the first settlement in the area. Here, in the short period of occupation (four months), Lieut J. H. Tuckey of H.M.S. *Calcutta* assembled material which he

afterwards published as a book, and in it occurs this note:

Aquatic birds are found in abundance on the lagoons, and so are black swans, ducks, teal, black and pied shags, pelicans, red-bills (a beach bird), herons, curlews, and sandlarks. The land birds are eagles, crows, quail, bronzed winged pigeons, and many beautiful varieties of the parrot tribe, particularly the large black cockatoo. The emu is also a native of this part of the country, its eggs having been found here.

Perhaps it was Lieut Tuckey who complained to the commander of the primitive settlement, Lieut-Governor David Collins, that some members of the party were tampering with birds to a needless degree. At any rate, this statement appeared in General Orders dated at Sullivan Bay 30th November 1803:

It having been mentioned to the Lt.-Governor that many of the people, not adverting to the consequences, are daily bringing birds' nests into the encampment, containing either eggs or young unfledged birds. He thinks it necessary to prohibit a practice at once so cruel and destructive. Any person found offending against this order will be punished.

That General Order, the first legal enactment for the protection of birds to be published in Australia, appears to have been obeyed implicitly. For, as Collins's company was well aware, his record as Judge -Advocate in Sydney from 1788 onward indicated that he would not hesitate to enforce his instruction — probably through the medium of a considerable flogging on the bare back.



Spotter's corner

What have you spotted this month?

Send a photo and / or a short report to the Editor at alison.milton@health.gov.au. During a kangaroo count at the Pinnacle Nature Reserve behind Hawker and Weetangera, I heard the first peeps of this season's young magpies. Sometimes our spottings may not be of the desirable kind. One participant saw no less than two foxes during the morning count, and there were accounts of 'seeing more rabbits than kangaroos' and numerous sightings of hares.

Activities

Saturday 14 September, 11 am: ‘See the wetlands wake up after winter, a ranger guided walk through the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

Don’t miss this – Ranger Michael has a wealth of knowledge of the Wetlands and we will be joining his group along with others. Meet at the car park on Dairy Flat Road.

Sunday 22 September, 14:30 - 16:30 pm: Proposed Ginninderra Gorges National Park

A rare chance to get more than a glimpse of the proposed Ginninderra Gorges National Park from the north - Murrumbidgee Gorge, Wallaroo: A Viewing at . BYO afternoon tea and rug. We will be joining the Ginninderra Falls Association on this occasion. <http://ginninderra.org.au/node/318>

Head north on the Barton Highway, turn left onto Wallaroo Road, left onto Gooroomon Ponds Road, right onto Southwell Road, left onto Brooklands, left onto Woodgrove Close Road and keep to the left when you discover forks to three or four Woodgrove Close lanes – approximately 12 ks.

Wednesday 2 October 2013: 9.30 am start to about 1.00 pm Mulligans Flat (U3A ACT walk)

Field Natters who are also U3A members may be interested in this walk.

Well-known Canberra historian, Matthew Higgins, will lead this leisurely morning walk through Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve, a few km NE of Gungahlin Town Centre. Starting at, you will see remnants of early history, an original border marker, the efforts being made to protect native fauna and the abundant birdlife in one of the dams. The walk will cover about 8 km, much off-track, in relatively open, gently undulating woodland. **Contact:** Garth Setchell 6290 1100. **Limit:** 25. **Fees:** \$5 per person, payable on the day, includes light refreshments at the end.

Saturday 12 October 2013: 9.30 am sharp to 12 noon (or later) Black Mountain Wildflower Ramble

Belconnen Way entry, just before Caswell Drive turnoff (look for the balloons).

Join wildflower lovers for the Burbidge/Chippendale tradition of celebrating the spring flowering with the 42nd annual Black Mountain wildflower ramble. Discover the surprising diversity of tiny orchids, bush peas, wattles and billy buttons with experienced guides. Following the tradition set by Nancy and George, this will be a social occasion with a morning tea break (BYO), relatively easy bush tracks and good company. It will be sponsored by Friends of Black Mountain, NPA, U3A, ANPS, ANBG Friends and Field Nats. Who knows what spring will bring this year in the ‘jewel of the crown of Canberra Nature Park’. It’s always fascinating to see how diversity and abundance differ. Our Patch field guide will be on sale for \$15 and some handouts provided. All welcome. Bring your friends especially those who are new to plant identification. BYO morning tea, hat, sunblock, water and stout shoes. **Please book:** friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com so we have enough guides. **Contact:** Jean Geue on 6251-1601.



Black Mountain Wildflower ramble 2012



| Month | Speaker | Topic |
|-------------|---|---|
| 5 September | AGM, members' night | Member's choice |
| 3 October | Trish McDonald | Macquarie Island, rabbit, rat, mouse control during her time as station manager for the Australian Antarctic Division |
| 7 November | Dr Leo Joseph Australian Wildlife Collection | New Guinea Australia connections |
| 5 December | Christmas party | |



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 pH: 6254 1763

Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

All newsletter contributions welcome.

Editor



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (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: