

September 2015
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GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATURALIST

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

A wattle briefing

Speaker: Margaret Webber

Margaret Webber is a UK trained teacher, holds a University of Canberra BA and Horticulture Certificate III. She has taught Secondary School students in London, Sydney and Canberra and TAFE students in Canada and Canberra. A Volunteer Guide at the ANBG since 2002, she has always been fascinated by Acacias.

The Wattle Day movement

Speaker: Terry Fewtrell

Terry Fewtrell is President of the Wattle Day Association Inc. which is dedicated to the promotion of Wattle as Australia's national floral emblem and the celebration of National Wattle Day on 1 September. He is a long time Canberra resident who has a particular interest in national symbols, prompted by his work on the new Parliament House.



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Unusual bird behaviour

Wednesday

We live near the Gleneagles Golf course and for the first time in late June, a male Satin Bowerbird decided to make a bower in our garden. It was situated right off our lounge room windows so we have had a wonderful time watching the goings on. He had the regular company of 4-5 females and 2-3 immature males (white beaks). He was very tolerant of the immature males who were allowed to assist and make minor additions to the bower under his close supervision (teaching them the trade?).

In the last couple of weeks, action has picked up with a few favourite females being danced to and presented with his collected treasures. All the junior males have been tolerated while they practice the dances and entice others into the bower corridor.

Yesterday however, he was absent all day till about 4.00 pm. He then turned up to see the usual activity by the rest of the group. All of a sudden he swooped down to the bower and started destroying it. He was pulling bits out and really flinging them away. All that is left now are the

blue “treasures” and the dance floor. It was definitely the same male. I have not seen him today and the bower is as he left it. I know you should not ascribe human traits to animals but there was no doubting his anger while ripping apart all his hard work over the previous months.

Interesting

Thursday/Friday

Following the report below, there was been a reconstruction by a juvenile male. He then used the bower to court a couple of females throughout the rest of Thursday. However late on Thursday afternoon the fully mature male returned and made another teardown .

The younger male spent all Friday morning on a rebuild with the help of a couple of females.

The fully mature male has just turned up (late Friday pm) and spruced up the younger ones' effort. The mature male is now happily dancing and courting the females and tolerating the young male as if nothing had happened.

Terry and Mary Lovett



FNAC prize winner 2015

Xenia Weber will be attending the November meeting to receive her prize.

In the meantime she will be writing up her Honours thesis.

Nesting activity

I've been observing bird nests in this winter season since they are easy to spot. The three nests are: one in a tree in London Circuit and one in each of the two decorative steel sculptures (green and blue) adorning the front of the Canberra Convention Centre. I love the birds' ingenuity!

The birds have constructed the nest in the middle of the top cross-beam. These are more difficult to spot in a photo but they are definitely there.

The fourth photo is of a largish spider (sorry, no article of reference was used to help you judge the size) that my husband noticed on our driveway on a recent pleasant afternoon in August. I'd love to know what it is, if anyone could help.

Lucy Bastecky



Reconnect

How about a brochure and file for websites that gives brief details of and contacts for the groups we belong to?groups and agencies which offer interpretive activities and guided walks that encourage people to:

- be outdoors and enjoy fresh air
- reactivate their curiosity
- pause long enough to see what surrounds us
- become observant
- reconnect with nature
- appreciate the bush, its habitats, plants, animals and geology
- move towards understanding inter-relationships with other species
- learn not to fear the bush's untidiness, perceived dirtiness and dangers.

A draft list of groups includes: ABatS, ACTHA, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, ANBG, ANPS, Arboretum Guides' Walks, Bushwalking groups, COG, Conservation Council, Catchment Groups (Ginninderra, Molonglo and Southern ACT and through them each of the reserves' landcaring groups), Environmental Educators' Association, FNAC, FOG, Frogwatch, Indigenous initiatives (Thunderstone, Buru Corporation), Landcare ACT, STEP, Waterwatch. (Is there a local group celebrating Fungi?)

If the **Field Naturalists** were to fund the first printing, that edition could also be used to promote FNAC. Rosemary vB has been working with another long-established environmentalist, Darryl Seto, to recreate a FNAC Website... an ideal vehicle for online searching for reconnection.

If you **disapprove** of FNAC funding this first edition please would you leave a message with Rosemary B rosemary@blemings.org or 6258 4724.

If you **have** up-to-date contact details for any of the above groups please send me a message. Thanks to Tony for sharing the listing he created for the Friends of the ANBG's Guides.

Previously I've had visions of a publication which lists the natural attributes of each suburb. The aim being that the time, costs and emissions of travel to attractions are all minimal but that's a larger undertaking. It might be better to work with cultural and heritage agencies in order to offer a broader range of attractions for people to investigate and enjoy locally. The TAMS *Explore* publication already achieves a fine listing of parks and public places from a recreation viewpoint.

I should mention that this RECONNECT listing is a unilateral idea sprung on an unsuspecting committee and FNAC membership.

Rosemary Blemings

FNAC web site

A small group is working on re-activating the Field Naturalist web site, but in the meantime Tony Lawson has set up a blog.

Visit the Blog at:

<https://wordpress.com/posts/canberrafieldnats.wordpress.com?verified=1>

For the first post he has put up a write-up of a recent outing if you wish to visit the blog.

Outing to Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve - Sunday 9 August

A dozen Field Natters enjoyed a pleasant afternoon walking the Nature Trail at Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, which is part of Canberra Nature Park.

The Trail was quite wet and muddy in parts due to quite a lot of recent

rain and a lack of warm sun to evaporate the moisture. The Trail is also quite up and down. But that meant that we were able to enjoy some very nice views - both South West to the Bullen Range and the Brindabellas and later North to the suburbs of Weston Creek, Woden, the new development in the Molonglo Valley (where the buildings stand out due to the current lack of vegetation), and the city.

In addition to the views, the other focus of the Nature Trail Guide (see <http://www.coolemanridge.org.au/images/brochure.pdf>) is the various trees that are found in the Reserve. Under the guidance of Dierk we tried to figure out the key identifying features of Blakely's Red gum, Yellow Box, Red Box, Mealy Bundy and Scribbly Gum. Other trees included the Kurrajong, Native Cherry and

Drooping She-oak (whose female cones are a very important food source for the threatened Glossy Black Cockatoo). Many of the Wattles were starting to come into flower.

The Reserve boasts a plant list of over 300 species (<http://www.coolemanridge.org.au/>). But not a lot was in evidence, though the False Sarsparilla had the odd flower.

The fauna was also not much in evidence. We did find quite a big mob of Grey Kangaroos, and a group of around 10 White-winged Choughs, together with around half a dozen other common species.

Even in the middle of winter there were frogs (Crinias) calling on the dams.

Activities

Saturday 5 September, 2:00–4:00 pm Mt Painter & Aranda Bushland

For this outing we will explore the Wildflower Triangle on the Eastern part of Mt Painter NR (adjoining Bindubi Street) and the northern part of Aranda Bushland. We will meet at the parking area in Bindubi Street at 1:55 pm, near where the electricity transmission wires cross the street. Some information on (and a map of) the Wildflower Triangle can be found in the Mt Painter brochure at <http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/membership/friends-mount-painter> where you will also find bird and plant lists. There is also a map at http://www.tams.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/390605/MTPAINTER.pdf

A great deal of information on the flora and fauna of Aranda Bushland can be found on the Friends website at <http://www.friendsofarandabushland.org.au/> There is a map of Aranda Bushland at <http://www.friendsofarandabushland.org.au/aranda-bushland-map/>

Friday 4 to Sunday 6 September, 9.00 am to 4.30 pm: Joint Parkcare display in Jamison Plaza

Parkcare friends in Belconnen suburbs of Canberra will showcase the beauty and diversity of the bush in the Bush Capital. The annual display involves seven volunteer groups. You will see photos of the beautiful valley selected for the nation's capital, cryptic wildflowers, eucalypt forest, box-gum woodlands and endangered grasslands. Our enthusiastic volunteers will provide brochures, field guides, guided walks and interpretive signs to uncover bushland secrets. The Indian Myna trap is always a draw-card.

Groups involved include Friends of Aranda Bushland, of Black Mountain, of Bruce Ridge, of Mount Painter, of The Pinnacle, of Grasslands and the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group. We are privileged to be supported by Jamison Plaza management and ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

The surprising diversity of flora and fauna in the urban area is matched by the range of volunteer activities to conserve and rehabilitate our bushland inheritance. Canberra's early early planners kept the hills free of buildings and maintained green spaces in the suburbs. Twenty-five years of diligent volunteer weed control has bought back the bush diversity.

We have encouraged natural regeneration, undertaken restoration planting and monitored results. We work on track maintenance, low-tech erosion control of long standing gullies, develop self-guided walks and remove those pestilent Indian Mynas.

Jean Geue is a key organiser.

Sunday 13 September 2015, 9.00am to 11.30am: Wattle Walk

Following in the theme of our September speakers, you may be interested in this Wattle walk. Enjoy a Walk among the Wattles on Black Mountain with local plant ecologist, Michael Doherty. Let's learn to identify some of the common Acacias found on Black Mountain, including *Acacia dealbata* and *Acacia buxifolia*. You will also learn about how Acacias cope with fire and drought. The walk will mostly be flat to undulating, but with a few steeper sections later on in the walk. Books will be for sale.

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

Bring: Friends and family. Water. Snacks if you wish 'Gold Coin Donation' for Friends of Black Mountain.

Please book: If you are planning to go, please provide your name and phone number to friendsof-blackmountain@gmail.com or phone Linda (0437 298 711) or Libby (0427 542 298). It helps them to let you know if arrangements need to change unexpectedly (e.g. adverse weather).

Month	Speaker	Topic
3 September	Margaret Webb Terry Frewtrell	A wattle briefing The Wattle Day movement
1 October	Kate Garrock	Mulligans Flat and Bettong project
5 November	Ian Fraser	How Australian Birds Got English Names



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: