

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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GPO BOX 249
CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATTER

MEETING—Thursday 5 September 2019
7:30 pm Australian National University
Jan Anderson Seminar Room, R.N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT
details back page

Eavesdropping on our local frogs in the name of science - what has been unearthed so far?

Speaker: Anke-Maria Hoefer

Anke-Maria will present a shortened version of her ACTHA talk with an additional Q & A session for your froggy queries and observations. The evening will be extra special as Frogwatch ACT has been steered by A-M with great dedication, persistence and engaging communication skills for many successful years. Frogwatch is a superb example of citizen science with volunteers bringing thousands of recordings to be entered on the annual census and into longer-term data sets. Frogwatch brings community leadership to the fore and involves observers of all ages, giving evening time to the sharing of their studies and via love of the outdoors.



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President's report: Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc. 2018–2019

Each meeting I feel huge relief and gratitude that so many members attend to hear the evening's speaker. Thank you all for your support and for always making presenters feel welcome and very much appreciated.

Our monthly meetings' speakers have presented members with a diversity of interesting new information, challenging ideas, shared experiences and brilliant images

Rainer Rehwinkel spoke of his trip to Timor-Leste explaining the country's ecology through many thought-provoking photographs.

Sarah McKenna explained how the Australian Wildlife Conservatory's initiatives have played vital roles in the protection of native species from feral animals.

Geoff Robertson described the experiences of reclaiming Yass Gorge from weeds and neglect and how several agencies created the inspirational booklet.

Stephanie Courtney Jones did research in the jungles of Pulau Buton in Sulawesi. Conservation work in the Wallacea region is exceptionally challenging.

Michael Braby 'took' us to the Northern Australian sites he and others studied whilst compiling an Atlas of the butterflies of the Monsoon Tropics.

Geoff Williams enticed 47 people to the Slatyer Room as he updated us about Platypus and the threats they face in waterways and from drowning in traps.

James Nicholls had researched Gall Wasps on Oak trees in Europe. The beauty and diversity of galls and the intrigue of multiple parasitic attacks is amazing.

Ingrid Singh gave us new outlooks on Flying foxes and Micro bats through her engaging

experiences as a bat-specialist Wildlife Carer in the ACT region.

Special thanks to Rosemary vB, Alison, Bob and Erin who have reversed many unforeseen technical problems with resourcefulness and aplomb.

Outings

Xmas 2018 was celebrated at Weston Park and successfully organised by **Jenni**

Glenn Cocking, with **Bill Murphy** assisting, meticulously organised light units behind sheets at a site off Rani Road in the SW corner of Black Mountain Reserve. The April evening's weather proved to be perfect with hundreds of moths and other flying invertebrates attracted to the two different woodland habitats.

Suzi Bond organised a Butterfly walk on The Pinnacle for the Friends of The Pinnacle that some FNAC members attended.

Alison regularly includes other groups' activities in the *Field Natter* but there is still a need for a FNAC outings organising team from among our 80 members.

Your Committee members have met regularly and convivially. We are considering meeting at the Aranda Fire Station's free community room in future to relieve stress on generous, busy hosts.

Rosemary vB has, as previously mentioned, borne the brunt of the complexities of the ANU's presentation-technology system and taken Committee meeting minutes. Each monthly meeting sees a convivial gathering around the supper table Rosemary's organised.

Lucy has continued to volunteer a very professional approach to achieving urgent, Australia-wide action on banning the 'Opera House' Traps that drown far too many air-breathing animals in Australian waterways. Lucy has contacted all Field Naturalist groups about the deaths in conjunction with the Australian

Platypus Conservancy. Pressure is maintained locally on the Environment Minister.

Kevin has chaired meetings and networked with the NPA for us.

Margaret is working on the graphics and wording of a new FNAC flyer.

Bill has successfully networked with Glenn and informed us about migratory birds.

Rhian has kept us informed about the Children's Literature scene in relation to Picture Book with natural history themes.

George is particularly adept at bringing us up-to-date about mammalian studies.

Jenni has continued her networking with nature in the Ainslie–Majura area particularly alerting us to spot-lighting walks.

Dierk has numerous ideas and suggestions and is adept at managing suppers when Rosemary is elsewhere.

Bob is retiring from the Treasurer's role after 13 years at the helm. He has set up several efficient processes including organising a discrete laptop for FNAC's financial arrangements. Attention to detail is Bob's hallmark and he's asked Sandi Jack to audit the FNAC accounts during his time as treasurer. You'll be missed Bob!

Rosemary compiled a FNAC submission to the Nature in Our City inquiry held at the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Beyond the committee

Pam has retired as organiser of the monthly FNAC Raffle. Pam's efforts, together with donations from members have produced hundreds of dollars for the group in an informal and welcoming manner. Pam has been a Field Natter since 1989 with an enviably proud record of attendance at meetings, contributing to interesting sightings around the region and FNAC itself. Thank you Pam! Thanks to Johanna

who has taken on the Raffle-organising role.

Alison continues to thrive on her daily observations of the region's wildlife incorporating many of her photographs and studies into newsletter after newsletter. By networking and being alert to natural history news items Alison's *Field Natters* attractively and skilfully keep members up to date.

The www.fieldnatsact.com Website is the opposite alas as I'm finding it difficult to add items in good time. Even so there are consistent visitors to the site with the result that there are about a dozen new subscribers who receive the emailed edition of the *Field Natter* each month.

Kara Tedman is the winner of the Field Naturalists' Prize at ANU for 2018. We met Kara at the July meeting being able to present her with her prize, a \$300 Harry Hartog Gift Voucher.

Thank you members for your consistent donations to the FNAC Conservation Support Fund. This enables FNAC to support local natural history initiatives. FNAC donates annually to the ACT EDO and the Conservation Council ACT region. This year we also and recently donated \$750 to the Frogwatch program. It's a great

example of citizen science and community engagement.

Rosemary Blemings

Field Naturalists Association of Canberra, Annual general meeting Minutes

Present: Rosemary Blemings, Alison Milton, Adrienne Nicholson, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Bob Lehman, Helen Lehman, Jenny Marsh, Bill Murphy, Margaret Kalms, Dierk von Behrens, Rosemary von Behrens.

Apologies: Maureen Bell, Lucy Bastecky, Rhian Williams, George Heinsohn, Johanna Pask, Colin Pask.

President's report: Rosemary Blemings wrote a comprehensive report for 2018–2019 outlining the year's meetings, outings and individual member's contributions to the successful functioning of the Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra. Thank you Rosemary. The acceptance of her report was Moved: Rosemary von Behrens, Seconded: Helen Lehman. Agreed by all present.

Treasurer's report: Bob Lehman presented the following audited financial statements for the year 2018–2019 to the meeting:

Treasurer's comment on the Audited Financial Information

1. Certificate by Committee
2. Independent audit report by Sandi Jack
3. Income and expenditure statement for year ended 30 June 2019
4. His resignation as Treasurer after 12 years of dedicated service.

Moved: "that the Treasurer's Report be accepted" by Bob Lehman, Seconded: Sonja Lenz. Accepted.

Rosemary Blemings moved a very sincere thank you to Bob for his 12 years of service as Treasurer and all the extra tasks he had acquired. Accepted by acclamation. Kevin McCue presented Bob with an imaginary bottle of wine.

Returning officer: Dierk von Behrens was appointed Returning Officer. He moved a "Thank you" to the outgoing committee, which was seconded by Alison Milton, agreed to by those present, and then declared all positions vacant.

The above were declared duly elected and thanked. The AGM was declared closed at 8:00 pm.

The new Committee and positions for 2019–2020

Position	Person	Nominated	Seconded
President	Rosemary Blemings	Kevin McCue	Alison Milton
Vice President	To be nominated by the committee		
Minute Secretary	Rosemary von Behrens	Adrienne Nicholson	Dierk von Behrens
Committee 1	Jenny Marsh	Margaret Kalms	Alison Milton
Committee 2	Margaret Kalms	Helen Lehman	Adrienne Nicholson
Committee 3	Rhian Williams	Alison Milton	Bob Lehman
Committee 4	Lucy Bastecky	Rosemary Blemings	Jenny Marsh
Committee 5	Bill Murphy	Dierk von Behrens	Sonja Lenz
Committee 6	George Heinsohn	Rosemary von Behrens	Helen Lehman
Extras			
Newsletter editor	Alison Milton		
Public Officer	Dierk von Behrens		

Income and expenditure statement for year ended 30 June 2019

	2018 \$	2019 \$
Income		
Membership subscriptions	1,275.00	1,250.00
Raffle	247.00	254.20
Tea money	75.65	35.00
Donations	860.00	2,430.00
Interest received (term deposits)	309.00	460.19
Interest received (cheque account)	0.26	0.15
Total income	2,766.91	4,429.54
Expenditure		
Affiliation fees	100.00	110.00
Bank fees	0.00	7.50
Newsletter printing	424.60	394.14
Postage	400.00	200.00
Post Office Box rental	201.00	205.00
Presentations (speakers and ANU)	79.75	100.00
Student prize voucher	300.00	600.00
Registrar General's fees	0.00	0.00
Insurance	400.00	400.00
President's / Secretary's stationery	0.00	74.50
Treasurer's stationery / Common Seal	0.00	1,033.00
Auditor payment / web hosting	100.00	100.00
Total expenditure	2,005.35	3,224.14
Income exceeds expenditure by	\$761.56	\$1,205.40
Donations to environmental organisations	\$2,500.00	\$2,750.00
Monies transferred from term deposit	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
Monies transferred to Term Deposit		\$509.82

Financial situation at 30 June 2018

Cash at bank	\$2,228.07
Term deposit (a)	\$10,387.76 (2.35% p.a.; 6 months; \$126.90 interest)
Term deposit (b)	\$3,536.89 (1.30% p.a.; 3 months; \$14.27 interest)

Financial situation at 30 June 2019

Cash at bank	\$1,840.38
Term deposit (a)	\$10,119.65 (2.05% p.a.; 6 months; \$103.730 interest)
Term deposit (b)	\$2,137.27 (2.00% p.a.; 3 months; \$10.69 interest)

Bob Lehman
Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

FNAC annual fees

The committee decided at its August 2019 meeting to increase membership fees to \$30 per year for households (one or more residents) and make all memberships due in July.

Costs of affiliation, producing and posting the newsletter and demands for environmental actions have increased whilst returns from investments have decreased and increasing membership fees is the only way for us to balance our books. Members can always make donations, which help bolster our Conservation Support Fund. Rationalising the due date for membership eases the workload for the incoming treasurer.

Bob Lehman and Kevin McCue

Australian Naturalists' network get-together, Stanthorpe, Queensland

Fri–Sun 11–20 September 2020.
Replies by 30 September 2019.

This notice has been sent by email and there doesn't appear to be a website where you can download and complete the Expression of interest form.

If you are interested, please email Rosemary Blemings (rosemary@blemings.org) for the form or contact or email anngb2020@gmail.com to be put on the mailing list for further details and advice. The following is a shortened form of the information provided by the Stanthorpe group.

This is a preliminary notice about the next ANN Get-together in September 2020 in Stanthorpe on Queensland's Granite Belt.

The Get-Together will be based at the Stanthorpe Showgrounds located on the northern edge of town.

A coach will meet participants at Brisbane Domestic Airport at 1 pm on Friday 11 September and return to Brisbane Domestic Airport arriving before 1 pm on 20 September.

All outings will be in coaches and will depart from the Showgrounds. For those not staying in the Showground vicinity, parking will be available during the day within the grounds.

If you wish to discuss accommodation options prior to making a selection, please call Sue Frances on 0474 342 995 or email anngb2020@gmail.com.

All meals, except breakfast, will be provided. The booking form will indicate the cost of each meal and you will be able to nominate which meals you require.

Provisional program

Outings will be to local protected areas with high botanical diversity including those on granite soils, traprock soil and basalt.

Areas we hope to visit include:

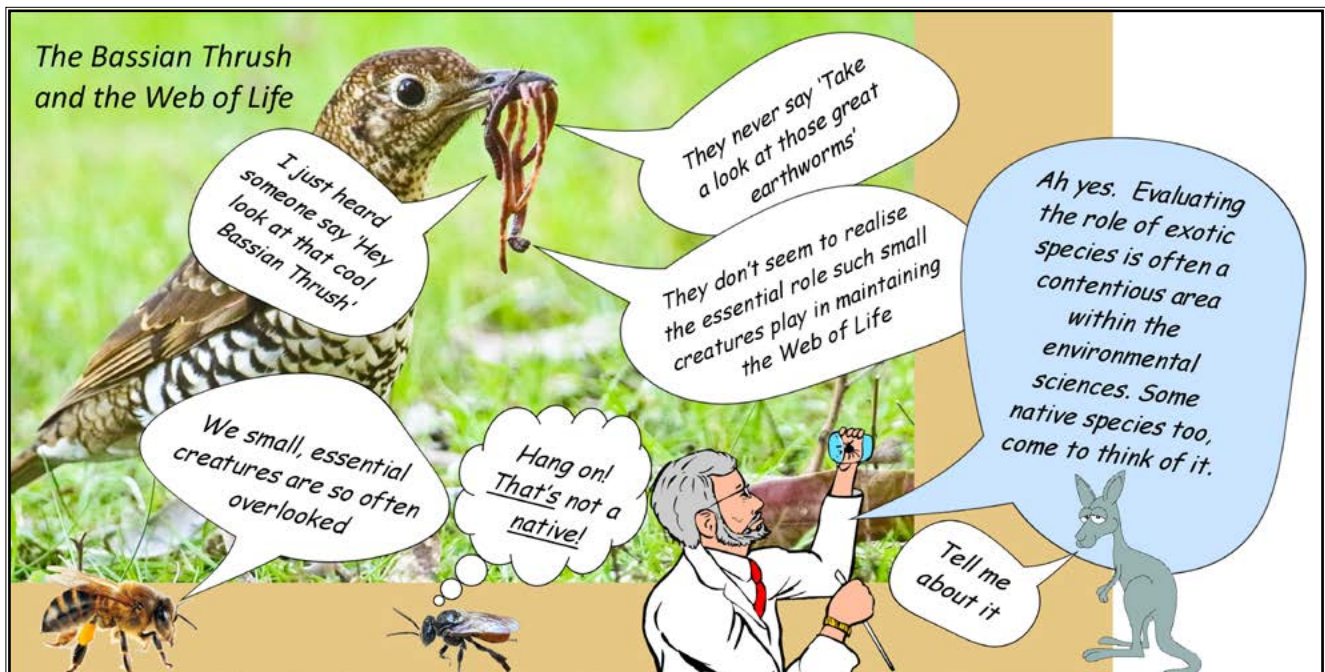
- Girraween National Park – noted for its wildflowers and striking granite features.
- Sundown National Park - containing box/ironbark woodland which provides excellent bird-watching.

- Amiens State Forest – a great diversity of flowers and birds.
- Queen Mary Falls at Killarney – spectacular area in rainforest.
- At least one outing will concentrate on geological aspects of the district.

Half day outings will be offered on the rest day to local wineries or a district tour.

We will be sending out more information regarding costs etc after we get some feedback as to how many people will be attending. We will then ask for your registration and a deposit. At that time, we will also attend to dietary requirements and other issues.

Please complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) form if you are thinking of attending the Get-Together in Stanthorpe and return, as soon as possible but before 1 October, to the ANN 2020 Committee secretary, Lynette Haselgrove, via email (preferably) or postal address on the form.



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The power of communities in action

“A sense of futility haunts us all, so I sought to distil in as few words as possible what could be done by us as a people. Writing them, I felt my despair lift.”

Richard Flanagan wrote these words in *The Guardian* published into my In Box on Thursday 22 August. He cited the patronising insults from Australia’s Prime Minister and Deputy PM in the aftermath of the Pacific Forum on Tuvalu.*

Richard continued: *“And when next it is our homes that vanish in an unprecedented mega-fire, or flood, or cyclone, or under a rising sea, what patronising cant might our Marie Antoinettish leaders offer up for our future? Help in the kitchen of a coal company executive? Work in the garden of a National Party grandee?”*

Like so many Australians, I have felt powerless watching the climate crisis unfold in our country.

In every facet of our lives bedrock individuals with vision, energy, persistence and compassion cooperate and network to create

* Last week’s events brought home to me how the most powerful in our country seemed to be those that would ensure the very worst future eventuates in their craven service to the fossil fuel industry and its propagandists, thereby ensuring we exacerbate the climate emergency rather than seek to limit its damage.

The question of the age is how. In the face of a human-induced change that threatens the future of our species how to act? How to live? How to be?

In seeking the answer we find ourselves alone in the universe without illusions. There are no leaders, no parties, no nation, no gods that will save us. We discover at this terrible moment a shocking truth: we only have ourselves. And each of us finds within ourselves only failure, cowardice, timidity, in short, a despair at our general weakness.

This sense of futility haunts us all.

And yet within that failure is hope. Having only ourselves we finally discover bedrock: ourselves.

Everywhere – in every party, organisation, workplace, club, gym, street, café and pub – are to be found those who do not agree with where power is taking our country.”

solutions to the needs of their habitats.

Two examples may celebrate the power of communities as initiatives come from them to pressure government agencies into cooperating towards and funding what’s needed:

Franklin Grasslands

Geoff Robertson devised a Concept Plan for managing a 22 hectare area in Franklin where residual Natural Temperate Grassland has been spared suburban development. Friends of Grasslands (FOG) organised a Workshop-in-the-field on 16 July that revealed the extent of the network FOG had developed. Landcare volunteers, citizen

scientists, grassland ecologists, riverine restoration practitioners and fauna experts from the Mullett Institute, ACT Government land managers and ecologists, MLA’s came together to continue Franklin residents’ journeys towards the reserve becoming a place that will encourage respectful appreciation of the region’s original landscape, flora and fauna.

Being winter, we saw no Striped Legless Lizards *Delma impar* or any Ginninderra Peppergrass, *Lepidium ginninderrense* plants but we were reunited with familiar wildflower and grassland species in pre-spring or drought mode and geological treasures.





We learned and shared ways to restore native species and enhance their habitats through management of water flow and introduced species. We could re-connect with regenerative agriculture practitioners and those who were promoting outdoor activities through natural playgrounds and nature play, people linking the intrinsic value of open spaces with communities looking to reconnect with nature and for their own wellbeing.

A Campbell Park and adopt-a-park place

A special open space south east of Campbell shops hosts magnificent, pre-settlement gum trees augmented by plantings of other eucalypts and Casuarinas. Naturalists from the Campbell community have contacted TCCS' (Transport Canberra and City Services) Urban Parks and Places Volunteer Co-ordinators who are establishing the Adopt-a-Park program. They've already explored options for and consulted about enhancing the often-traversed park, aiming to restore native vegetation including shrubs, wildflowers and native grasses.

The Adopt-a-Park 'rangers' are able to connect local enthusiasts with the services, expertise and funding possibilities they will need as the locals seek to consolidate other community groups' involvement.

There is exciting potential for the Campbell volunteers to involve students, Scouts and local residents in reimagining their connections to each other, nature, natural play and their individual well-being through the park. There are 20 similar urban examples around the ACT in addition to the traditional landcaring groups that are up to 30 years old.

Rosemary Blemings

Scientists discover fossils of giant parrot

CBC News · 7 Aug 2019

Scientists have discovered the fossils of what may be the largest parrot that ever lived.

Heracles inexpectatus, named after the strongman and hero Heracles of ancient Greek mythology, was estimated to be a metre tall and a hefty seven kilograms, based on fossil leg bones found in New Zealand. Heracles's bones were first unearthed from a site in Otago in 2008, but weren't re-examined again until earlier this year.



Reconstruction of the giant parrot Heracles, dwarfing a bevy of 8-cm-high Kuiornis, small New Zealand wrens scuttling about on the forest floor. (Brian Choo/Flinders University)

The giant parrot lived about 19 million years ago, during the early Miocene, a time when small three-toed horses roamed North America. Back then, its home in New Zealand was a subtropical forest full of laurels, palms and lots of other birds such as parrots, pigeons, eagles and the forerunners of the giant flightless moa, which stood up to 3.6 metres tall and were the biggest birds that ever lived.

Heracles “no doubt” had a “massive parrot beak that could crack wide open anything it fancied,” and its diet may have consisted of far more than nuts, fruits and seeds — “perhaps even other parrots.”

“New Zealand is well known for its giant birds,” Trevor Worthy, a Flinders University professor and lead author of the paper, said in a statement. That included the moas, giant geese, giant adzebills and a giant eagle.

“But until now, no one has ever found an extinct giant parrot — anywhere.”

Animal behaviour: through the lens

Last month Jenni reported an encounter with an echidna train (a female followed by several males in competition to mate with the female). I've longed to find one myself after hearing about them a few years ago.

Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve is a common ground for echidnas and I've been able to find at least one on most visits and often three or more, but always separately. August is the mating season so I headed up to Mulligans. I took a different direction to the areas I usually visit and pleased to actually find three echidnas feeding together. Although they weren't following each other in a train, I've been assured by a naturalist that this was indeed a train as they will also stop and feed together.



Besides feeding they were also doing a lot of scratching.

My favourite photo is this unusual scratching pose, which could also be interpreted as "Hmmm, let me think".



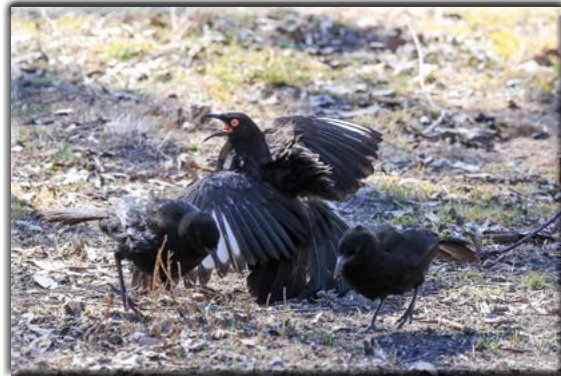
More recently, I visited Gossan Hill and finally achieved a photo of White-winged Choughs in flight as about 14 flew overhead in two groups.

A short time later one group flew back and two of the birds tussled mid-air.



An hour or two later, at the far end of Gossan Hill I encountered a group of six choughs, perhaps the ones I saw fly over Haydon Drive earlier? There were also a number of magpies and currawongs feeding on the grass.

There were four interesting behaviours. There was some displaying to other choughs.



Then one of them had an altercation with a magpie.



Activities

Next, the chough began playing with a stick. I've seen Magpies and Cockatoos playing like this, but not Choughs.



Finally, three birds huddled together at the base of a tree. I watched as they picked up dirt in their beaks and worked it through their feathers.



Alison Milton

Activities

Saturday 12 October 2019: 48th Black Mountain spring wildflower ramble—9.30 to 12.00

Celebrate the spring flowering on beautiful Black Mountain with a social ramble for wildflower lovers in the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge, and continued by George Chippendale. Discover the surprising diversity of tiny orchids, bush peas, wattles and billy buttons on easy bush tracks with experienced guides and good company. All springs are not the same. The pattern remains but timing and abundance vary with the weather. Friends of Black Mountain welcomes all comers, be they experts or those who have never slowed down to see the somewhat cryptic diversity. We plan several guides, with helpers, who will take different directions. Please allow time to park and walk to the meeting point. BYO morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

Belconnen Way entry just before Caswell Drive turnoff - look for the balloons.

Bookings essential to ensure we have enough guides. Contact friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com or Cathy 0406 976 751 or Libby 6296 1936

ANBG talks

Thursday 19 September Jim Peacock: 'Can plants meet the challenge of the food needed for the world's growing population'

Thursday 3 October Kate Auty: 'Sustainability and the Environment'

Thursday 10 October: Brett McNamara 'Life of a rain drop - protecting the Cotter Catchment'

Thursday 17 October: Simon Haberle 'The Wonders of Pollen: a Truly Canberra perspective' including honey, allergies and deep time history of the Canberra region.

Thursday 7 November: Marita Bradshaw 'History of Australia in seven rocks.'

Thursday 28 November: Michael Doherty 'Vegetation types, vegetation dynamics and fire ecology on Black Mountain'

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, please fill in the member application below and send it in with your subscription to the FNAC Treasurer at the address below.

President: Rosemary Blemings, et al

president@fieldnatsact.com

Email: secretary@fieldnatsact.com

Website: www.fieldnatsact.com

Treasurer: treasurer@fieldnatsact.com

Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

Newsletter Editor: editor@fieldnatsact.com



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

**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: