

OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature

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

FIELD NATTER

MEETING—Thursday 7 September 2023

7:30 pm Australian National University

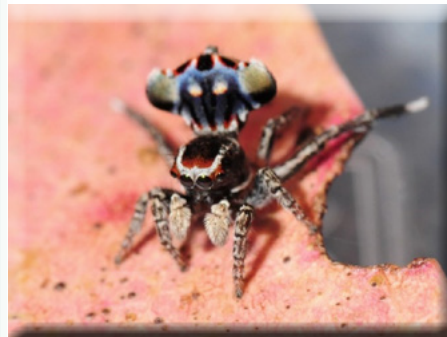
Slayter Room (up the stairs), R. N. Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU, ACT
details back page

Canberra's small and silent peacocks: to be followed by the AGM

Speaker: Stuart Harris

Unlike their noisy namesake of the avian world, Canberra's Peacock spiders lay virtually undetected in the leaf litter of our woodlands and suburban spreads for time immemorial! This changed in 2008 when an unsuspecting photographer accidentally took a picture of a peacock spider when walking the popular Booroomba rocks walking trail. To cut a long story short, you are encouraged to watch the 30 minute documentary called 'Maratus' on ABC I-view which details the three year quest to find an actual specimen so it could be described by science. *Maratus harrisi* was the eighth peacock spider identified and in the past decade, citizen science and taxonomic endeavours have added another 95 species to the genus from all around Australia.

Stuart Harris has been involved in the discovery and naming of at least five of these and will talk about the nine species that one may encounter within the bounds of the ACT



Maratus harrisi discovered at Booroomba 2011



Maratus hesperus discovered at Mt Majura vineyard 2013

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FNAC annual award: Kate Farkas

Each year FNAC presents an award to an ANU student in recognition of their studies. This year's award goes to Kate Farkas. Kate describes her studies as follows.

I completed my undergraduate courses last semester with a major in Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology. I am currently starting my honours project, where I will be studying how climate warming and drought will affect soil invertebrates in Kosciuszko National Park. My main areas of interest are entomology and ecology, although I have also taken a recent interest in birds.

Seal behaviour

Just out of Merimbula NSW is an aquarium and wharf, a popular fishing spot and restaurant.

The day Sonja and I were there a local seal pod put on an amazing display oblivious of their human audience. Lots of flipper waving and touching.



Young keen fishermen at the wharf only 25 m away were still catching tiddlers the two hours we were there.

Pleased to hear from anyone with views on what the show was about. Contact Kevin at: mccue.kevin@gmail.com

Kevin McCue

Vale Jean Casburn

I received the sad news today that avid bird-watcher Jean Casburn lost her battle with cancer on 21 August. She died peacefully in her sleep. As many would know she was the kingpin to the campaign of saving Bluetts Block from development. Let's hope that her dream comes to fruition even if she isn't here to see it happen.

FNAC Committee meeting 30 July 2023

Monthly meetings, field outings, membership, finances, online presence, and insurance were all on the agenda for the recent FNAC Committee meeting.

Since resuming in May, monthly meetings had been generally well attended by both members and visitors. The Committee applauded the new Meetings Organizer, Diedre Shaw, who has done such a great job lining up a full program of interesting speakers helping to attract new interest to FNAC. We are looking at options to stream future meetings for members who cannot attend in person. The Committee agreed to hold the AGM at the next meeting on 7 September after Stuart Harris's talk on Peacock Spiders.

The Treasurer, Kevin McCue, dealt with the difficult issue of finding an insurance policy appropriate to the activities of FNAC. He advised the Committee that the Landcare Community Environment Package insurance policy still offered the best fit, providing cover for both public liability and personal accident insurance for members. Membership renewals were due at the start of the new financial year. To date 33 members had renewed.

John Stein agreed to take on the role of Outings Coordinator. John welcomes any suggestions of suitable locations and/or offers to lead outings. Email John at fieldnatsact_outings@outlook.com

We all learn from each other, so you don't need to be an expert to lead an outing. An outings registration sheet will be developed for the web site to allow for easy registration online in addition to the usual options of email or phone contact. Other ideas for the website were discussed including enabling new members to join online, a suggested revision of the wording and the design for the home page and making FNAC policies and procedures and the constitution available to members.

FNAC Committee

As I finalise this newsletter the Canberra sky is putting on an amazing show of rain, lightning, and from the sounds, I suspect a bit of hail. The cockatoos in the nearby park weren't so impressed, squawking out their disgust, or perhaps their eager anticipation of a fresh bath.

Alison Milton

Activities

Sunday 17 September: 10:00 am Strathnairn 2023

Meet at the Link carpark at 1 McClymont Way, Strathnairn. The walk will be about two hours return, along a well-maintained track of moderate slope, towards Shepherds Lookout. We may turn around near the Elioth Gruner Viewpoint, depending on what interesting things are found on the way. The track meanders through the Murrumbidgee Corridor, high above the river, passing through eucalypt woodland and stands of callitris. Expect a variety of birdlife. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring water, a hat and binoculars if you have them. There is a coffee/lunch option after the walk at the Stepping Stone Café. It can be reached by walking through the Link building and across a pond bridge, or alternatively by driving to the café carpark (marked as a red rectangle on the map). RSVP: John Stein (email: fieldnatsact_outings@outlook.com) Please provide a contact phone number, and please indicate if you'd also like to join us for coffee/lunch after the walk

Upcoming events in September

Due to popular demand, FW in partnership with Sally Holliday from Landcare ACT's Wellbeing through Nature program is offering another series of froggy fun after dark sessions. These events are a fantastic opportunity to learn about our local amphibian species and the importance of their wetland habitats under the cloak/croak of night. Rug up, wear comfortable enclosed shoes, and bring a torch. Book your free ticket through Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/>

Family Froggy Fun - Fri 15 Sept

Hop down to the Ginninderry Link Building for froggastic facts after dark. Arrive at 5.30 pm for a hot chocolate. This event is a family friendly event, from tadpoles to fully grown frogs

Frog Facts after Dark - Fri 22 Sept

Discover the frogs of Farrer Ridge dams and why we monitor them. The dams are located on the corner of Sulwood and Erindale Drive Wanniasa. We'll enjoy a hot drink at 5:30 pm and chat before making a pleasant 250 m stroll to the wetland. Last year, it was a delight to witness a symphony of frogs. We may be lucky again...

Frogwatch Census Training Events

Spring is around the corner and so is the annual FrogTober, the month of our local FrogCensus. Before heading out to collect vital data (simply by listening to the frog calls), it is necessary to attend one of our training events. You will learn all about when, how, where and why to look out for frogs. No previous knowledge required. Just rug up, bring your favourite torch and wear sturdy shoes. Each event runs from 18:00 - 20:00 and includes some theory, spiked with plenty of fun frog facts, and I.D. practice during a walk to a nearby frog habitat.

Month	Speaker	Topic
7 September	Stuart Harris	Peacock spiders
5 October	Michael Mulvaney	Canberra Nature Map
November	Doug Findlayson	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, 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 I

president@fieldnatsact.com

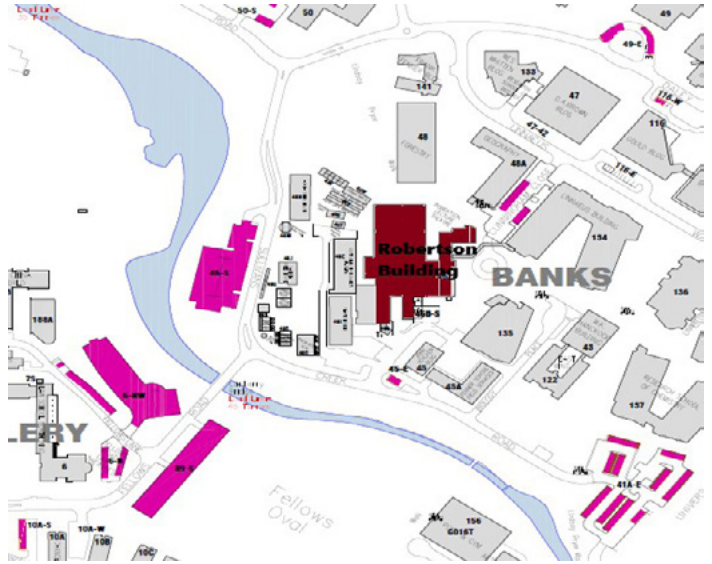
Email: secretary@fieldnatsact.com

Website: www.fieldnatsact.com

Treasurer: treasurer@fieldnatsact.com

Membership: membership@fieldnatsact.com

Newsletter Editor: editor@fieldnatsact.com



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

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

The map for the meeting venue has been amended to show parking locations marked in pink on the map. The orientation is not what is shown on Google maps but may help in finding suitable parking for the monthly meetings.



Membership application or renewal

Surname: 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:

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**