



*OBJECT: To foster an interest in nature*

## **MEETING–THURSDAY 3rd November 7:30pm Australian National University Venue details back page Overview of a koala survey program in South East New South Wales**

Chris Allen is a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service senior threatened species officer and will talk about his research and the discovery of koala “chew trees”. Chris is involved with co-ordinating and encouraging volunteer surveys. To find out which trees they prefer, join us and stay for coffee or tea afterwards.

## **OUTING–SUNDAY 6th November Black Ridge**

Black Ridge is a property located between Bredbo and Cooma where some of the “chew trees” are located. Garth Dixon, a former Field Natter, discovered the chews on Black Ridge which is a Voluntary Conservation Property owned by Field Naturalists and others. You will need to wear sturdy footwear, dress for the weather, and bring your own water/thermos/lunch. The Bredbo public toilets are the last loos. I recommend a stop.

**IMPORTANT:** To visit we need people with 4WDs who are prepared to take passengers, as a 4WD or AWD is needed to cross the ridge and get out again. Subarus have achieved this. Please ring Rosemary von Behrens 02 6254 1763 no later than 3 November please, to register your interest in visiting AND if you can bring a suitable vehicle and how many passengers you can help. Thank you.



*Photo of chewed bark at Black Ridge (Chris Allen)*

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## A Summary of the 2011 Members' Night by Rosemary Blemings

### FIELD NATURALISTS, HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD NATURALISTS

After the formalities of the AGM the 14 members present were treated to three inspiring member-presentations. Thank you Adrienne, Kevin and Ruth for re-connecting us with the essence of being field naturalists very close to home.

**FIELD:** Adrienne had gathered extraordinary photographs of the progress of two distinct caterpillar-types observed on the citrus plants in her Garran garden. With great persistence and patience she's taken SLR and digital photos of each stage of the butterflies' lives and transformed them into an intriguing presentation.

Adrienne became fascinated by being able to see the transforming forms within the chrysalis clearly through the enveloping 'skin'. She drew us all into the sense of wonder at these everyday miracles and showed that her observations and new connections became far more important than trying to find out which species of butterflies she was studying. This was and is citizen-science at its best.

**HOME:** Kevin showed videos of Wattlebirds breeding in trees in their Weetangera garden. We could all relate to the intenseness of the constant demands of hungry chicks and the assertiveness of the Wattlebirds' behaviour. So much growth in such a short time and the amazingly brief few hours between their first leaving the nest and flying away as almost self-assured fledglings. Kevin's also become fascinated by capturing cloud movement through time-lapse photography. We were able to see the massive, boiling, build-up of cloud-mass in the days that lead up to the storm that caught many Canberra buildings by surprise (and even cancelled one FNAC meeting at ANU). The sheer power and beauty of the clouds, set against background of familiar landmarks seen through this new technology is literally awesome and humbling. A short interlude showed how he'd captured the brief, colourful life of a cactus flower. And a series of true stories gave other twists of nature-in-action: a magpie taught its offspring about suitable diet with the attraction of mincemeat; a currawong chick, lying on its back was seen wrestling with a stick. ...a magical story of a bird at play; and Holly's assignment was interrupted by a bee circling round in the courtyard. The flight pattern was repeated several times before the bee's route took it too close to a waiting, calculating spider.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD:** Ruth was attending her first FNAC meeting, curious to find out more about us as her mother has booked to attend the ANN gathering we're hosting in October 2012. Ruth is an artist, illustrator and designer whose interest in nature began as a child through exposure to The Gould League's work and ideas. Using the Swamphen as a personal icon and incorporating chooks, kids, Tawny frogmouths, a possum and a cat called Mango, Ruth has drawn those in her street together as street-naturalists. They have become more observant, more involved with nature and they've learned the vital lessons that come with slowing down to look, learn, laugh and wonder at the lives and habitats around them in North Canberra. Visit [www.hingstonbrook.com/drawing](http://www.hingstonbrook.com/drawing) to see what I mean!

### **'A Bush Capital Year' achieves success at the Whitley Awards**

Each year the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales hosts the Whitley Awards. These awards are presented for outstanding publications (in printed or electronic form) that contain a significant amount of information relating to the fauna of the Australasian region.

A number of publications are selected for presentation of a Certificate of Commendation at the Whitley Awards ceremony. Ian Fraser and Peter Marsack were awarded a Whitley Certificate of Commendation, in the Regional Zoology category, for their publication "A Bush Capital Year: A Natural History of the Canberra Region". Ian Fraser spoke to us about this book at our March meeting and it is great to see Ian and Peter get this recognition.

## President's ramblings

While surfing the net I came upon this curious website with some curious explanations of scientific naming <http://www.curioustaxonomy.net/etym/misnamed.html>.

Some examples:

*Echidna Forster, 1777* (eel) not the echidna. Here, the monotreme might more reasonably be considered misnamed, since Latin *echidna*, from Greek *ekhidna*, means "viper". The monotreme echidna comes from the same word, but may have been influenced by Greek *ekhinos*, "hedgehog, sea urchin."

*Bufo marinus* (cane toad) The toad is adaptable to many habitats, but it is not marine.

*Pan troglodytes* (L.) (chimpanzee) Linnaeus, relying on unreliable stories, named a species *Homo troglodytes*. It is not entirely certain which species, since he had no type specimen, but it was probably the chimpanzee, which carries the name today. But "troglodytes" means "cave dweller," and chimps do not live in caves.

*Fratercula* (puffin). The name probably refers to the puffin's plumage, which looks something like a monastic robe; *fraterculus* means "small brother". However, *fratercula* is a feminine form, so the name literally means "small (female) brother".

*Pseudione quasimodo* Boyko & Williams, 2004 (parasitic isopod (Crustacea: Isopoda: Bopyroidea) found under the carapace of hermit crabs) Named for Victor Hugo's bell ringer of Notre Dame, as the parasite has a distinct bulge in dorsal view. (Boyko originally wrote in the manuscript that he "had a hunch" it was a new species, but the un-amused editor insisted that be stricken from the text.)

*Zaglossus attenboroughi* Flannery and Groves 1998 (long-beaked echidna from New Guinea) Named after well-known wildlife presenter David Attenborough. It is known from only one specimen collected in 1961 and may now be extinct.

During October we visited the Age of Fishes Museum at Canowindra. If you haven't been it is worthwhile a visit. The museum presents an excellent laid out presentation evidence of a mass fish kill that occurred 360 million years ago! Maybe the club should arrange an overnight visit.

Chris Bunn



## Friends of the Pinnacle—activities this month

Saturday 5th November 10am (5-hour return walk)

*The Great Walk: life on the river*

Contact: fotpin@optusnet.com.au

Sunday 20th November 4pm (2-hour photography workshop)

*Imaging Connection: The Pinnacle and Kama Nature Corridor with Andrew Trousdell*

Contact Heather to register your interest by Sunday 13 November on 6254 5979.

See <http://fotpin.hussat.com.au/walking/spring-2011.html> for more details of these activities.

## Mapping the Northside— A special project at Belconnen Arts Centre 18 October-17 November

What's your favourite place? Andrew Leigh MP and Belconnen Arts Centre join to create an interactive map of the Federal electorate of Fraser on the northside of Canberra. Everyone is welcome to contribute and note their most meaningful places onto the map. Come along and let us know where you like to live, work or play, on a giant sized map especially set up in the foyer for one month. And this may be registered with a story, a photo, a poem, an artwork or performance work! Surprise us please! The creative process will be supported by a professional artist with workshops held in several locations across the northside, but we would love to see your favourite places any time while the map is on display. This map will then be summarised and compiled to be available to all residents in the new year.

**More information:** 02 6173 3300 (Belconnen Arts Centre) or 02 6247 4396 (Andrew Leigh MP)

**Suggest a favourite place:** [andrew.leigh.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.leigh.mp@aph.gov.au)

<http://www.belconnenartscentre.com.au/whatson/mappingthenorthside.html>

## Help map feral animal sightings in your area

Here's a new reporting scheme that links citizens' concern with species management science in response to the \$720 million annual damage caused by feral animals in Australia.

If you are interested in signing up to map sightings, damage and control-activities in our local area take a look at the website [www.feralscan.org.au](http://www.feralscan.org.au).



Help map feral animal sightings in your area - **Get involved!**

Select a feral animal to get started

## Discover the Botanical Resource Centre at the Australian National Botanic Gardens

Extend your botanical skills and identify local Australian plants using plant identification tools, microscopes, and a public reference herbarium collection at the Botanical Resource Centre.

Open seven days a week from 9.30am to 4.30pm and free of charge, visitors can browse the public reference herbarium of plants from ACT and south-eastern New South Wales, test their identification skills or bring specimens to identify (from ACT and south-eastern NSW region).

Trained volunteer facilitators are present on Thursday afternoons and Sunday mornings, and can be booked to give an introductory tour on other days.

Focusing on identification of flora from the Australian Capital Territory and south-eastern New South Wales, the centre is a great resource for students and researchers, plant surveyors, native plant enthusiasts and amateur botanists.

### Computer identification tools

The following interactive computer keys are available on the computers in the Botanical Resource Centre:

- [Families of Flowering Plants](#) - key to the families
- [Euclid](#) - key to the eucalypts of Australia
- [Wattle](#) - key to the genus *Acacia*
- [Australian Orchid Genera](#) - key to the genera of Australian orchids
- [The Pea Key](#) - interactive website to identify Australia's pea flowers
- [Australian Tropical Rain Forest Trees and Shrubs](#) - tropical rainforest plants



## One for Francophile Field Natters by Maureen Bell

A rather esoteric broadcast of ABC's Radio National *Lingua Franca* on 1 October discusses a theory of Margaret á Beckett from Monash University on how nouns (classifiers) are assigned gender in French.

She looked at the behaviour of birds (whether they endanger their own lives or those of other creatures, at their diet, whether they are diurnal or nocturnal, how they communicate with other birds) and also at the notion of privation (what they lack or is absent) and how unique they are, especially as to size. Also that things can be reclassified from male to female according to environmental change.

The compere commented that it illustrates how people apprehended the world.

For a full transcript of the program go to -

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2011/3330013.htm>



**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 above:

**President:** Chris Bunn tel: 02 6241 2968 mobile 0417407351

**Secretary:** Rosemary Blemings, tel 02 6258 4724

**Email:** fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

**Website:** www.fieldnatscanberra.com

**Newsletter Editor:** Position vacant (this newsletter has been compiled by Paula Banks)

All contributions welcome



**Monthly meeting venue:** Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (occasionally the adjacent building 44). Meetings start at 7:30 pm and are followed by refreshments.

**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: