

October 2009
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FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA

FIELD NATTER

OBJECTS: To foster an interest in an awareness and an understanding of nature

MEETING THURSDAY October 1 7:30 pm Australian National University Meeting details back page



October is 'members night' and the Annual general meeting. As in previous years, members are encouraged to bring along items of interest, related to nature, and to talk about them. This is intended to be informal and relaxed.

Examples of items may include:

- Nature art or photography;
- Poetry on nature;
- Items of thought, for discussion;
- Stories about a favourite animal, plant or nature park.
- Any other point of interest, which relates to nature.

To encourage members to attend, the following talks have been organised, to help provide a base:

- Margaret Kalms Fantastic frolicking frog fun
- Chris Bunn A week in Kruger;
- Tony Lawson STEP
- And possibly a talk about Lake Eyre

But remember, this is your night, so please bring something along. Whether a feather or a friend, it will all be welcomed.

October Outing

Black Mountain Wildflower Ramble
9.30am to 12 noon - Saturday 10 October 2009
Belconnen Way entry, just before Caswell Drive turnoff

Join wildflowers lovers for the 38th annual Burbidge/Chippendale ramble around Black Mountain to enjoy the spring diversity. This will be an easy guided walk on Saturday 10 October from 9.30am sharp to 12 noon from the Belconnen Way entry. All welcome -it's a great way to celebrate the spring and find out how to look for our sometimes cryptic wildflowers. Bring your friends especially those who are new to plant identification. BYO morning tea, hat, sun-block, water and stout shoes.

Contact Jean Geue on 6251-1601.

CANBERRA DAY LONG WEEKEND FIELD TRIP TO KIOLOA Friday March 5th to Monday March 8th, 2010

Expressions of Interest

The ANU's Coastal Campus at Kioloa is a *biodiversity hotspot* located on 860 acres adjacent to Murrumbidgee National Park, south of Bawley Point, via Termeil. It is an environmental research station which provides access to flora and fauna of diverse eco-systems including beach and coastland, rainforest, dryland forest, heathland and tea-tree wetlands. It is approximately two and a half hours drive from Canberra.



In late summer the critically endangered *Hooded Plovers* should still be nesting, and we may see the highly endangered *Pied Oyster Catcher* and the endangered *Sooty Oyster Catcher*. The *Greater Glider* and the *Yellow-Bellied Glider* are among the many different sugar gliders in this area. We may be able to see and hear the *Green* and *Golden Bell Frogs*. And, there is always time to swim and surf.

Kioloa is very busy at this time of year and we have been able to reserve three self-contained cottages for our group. Each cottage consists of three twin-bedded rooms, a living area, small kitchen and bathroom. The approximate cost for a bed is around \$30.00 excluding bed linen and towels. (\$60 if only one person in the room)

If you would like to join us on this trip you need to register your interest now. We would like to release any spare accommodation to Kioloa before December. A more detailed program of activities and catering arrangements will be available later.

Please telephone Sylvie on 6251-2524 or email to sylviesampson@bigpond.com

PS from the editor It is avgreat place with plenty to do
BUT we must book early.
See more at [http://kioloa.anu.edu .au](http://kioloa.anu.edu.au)



From the Committee

To lessen the load the committee is looking at sharing key committee positions. So don't be shy in coming forward.

A recommendation at the annual meeting will be to raise the subscription by \$5. Our subs has only been \$20 for a number of years. Financial information is included in this newsletter.

A small group has been formed to look at our internet options. Our free site is closing (it is also difficult to find).

We are looking at a change of site for our Christmas function. A proposal is to hold it at Corroboree Park in Ainslie.

Doing the Snowball dance

- a story from the internet

Two famous parrots and a bevy of YouTube videos have now convinced scientists that people aren't the only ones who can groove to a musical beat.

Dancing has long been thought to be uniquely human. Toddlers will spontaneously bob along with music, but you never see dogs or cats listen to a tune and tap their tails in time.

So a couple of years ago, a neurobiologist named Aniruddh Patel was astonished when someone e-mailed him a link to a YouTube video of a sulfur-crested cockatoo named Snowball dancing to the Backstreet Boys.

"I said, you know, this is much more than just a cute pet trick. This is potentially scientifically very important," recalls Patel, who studies music and the brain at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego. He got in touch with Snowball's owner, Irena Schulz. She recalled that when Snowball's previous owner had dropped him off, he "also explained that Snowball dances." And along with Snowball, the man had brought the bird's favourite music.

He put on the Backstreet Boys and Snowball started to get down like there was no tomorrow, says Schulz.

"It was incredible the way that he would lift his legs way up in the air, like a cancan girl," she remembers.

Snowball swayed, he kicked, he bobbed his head — all in time with the music. "I felt like OK, this could be real," says Patel. But he wanted to test Snowball to see if the bird could really adjust his movements to match a different beat.

Patel's group took Snowball's beloved Backstreet Boys song and manipulated it with a computer. They slowed it down and sped it up. They sent the modified music to Schulz, who played it for Snowball and videotaped his reactions.

The videos show that yes, the bird will match his moves to the beat.

For the slower versions, he sways his entire body like a pendulum. But, Schulz says, when the music gets faster, "he understands to adjust his movements. If he's going to sway, don't sway as much, just bob your head."

And when the beat gets really fast and he doesn't have time to bring his leg all the way up and down, she says, "he'll keep his foot lifted up and he'll just, like, do his wave, he'll wave his foot."

The results of this study are reported in the journal *Current Biology*, along with another scientific paper inspired by YouTube videos of dancing animals.

The important thing is that, like humans — and unlike dogs or cats — parrots and elephants are both known to be vocal mimics. They can imitate sounds. It means dancing may be a byproduct of an ability that evolved for vocal imitation and vocal learning. After all, to mimic a sound, you have to listen to it and its rhythm and then use that information to coordinate movement — to shape the way you move your lips and tongue.

"The capacity to extract a beat from sound and move your body to it was, until these papers, believed to be uniquely human," he says, adding that if parrots can really dance, all kinds of new experiments are now possible.

Story extracted from

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103629651&ps=rs>

Where you can see the Snowball dance

Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group

Recent deliberations by members of the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group give an insight into matters of Conservation concern in our region.

The Group's members apply their specific expertise to matters which arise and Sarah Sharp has recently joined the group following her retirement from the ACT's Wildlife Research and Monitoring unit.

Watching briefs are kept on development in Gungahlin with particular reference to the land between the expanding suburbs and Hall village, the impact of new suburbs on Mulligans Flat and Gorooyarroo and a renewed application for a sell-off of some Red Hill Golf Course land for housing.

There has been no satisfactory resolution to plans to construct a long lake on the lower Molonglo river as part of the Molonglo development north of Weston Creek although a sub-committee has been set up to provide ecological input. Plans for suburbs in North Weston are proceeding but there are unanswered questions relating to the remnant grassy woodlands and the river's zone west of the expanding Arboretum. In Central Molonglo the need for ecologically sound buffer-zones for the Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo river has been highlighted.

Although the vision for the Sanctuary at Mulligans Flat, now enclosed by a predator-proof fence, is very positive — road infrastructure plans could see impact from a road-upgrade affecting other parts of the reserve. Through a multi-agency initiative and a Caring for Our Country investment proposal "Greater Gorooyarroo will be the largest landscape of connected and restored Box-Gum woodlands in Australia, demonstrating how sound knowledge can be successfully applied to support agricultural land uses and biodiversity conservation". Many rural and peri-urban landholders are involved in this scheme to protect biodiversity and improve farm management in and for the area.

The Biodiversity Working Group is also working with Parks, Conservation and Lands' Julie Palmer who has a liaison role between establishing and renewal of Land Management Agreements with the hundreds of rural lessees and landholders in the ACT. A complex and detailed Strategic Bushfire Management Plan has been developed for Nature Reserves and open spaces in the urban areas. This plan suggests ways of managing fire-hazard reduction in the coming decade. Members of the Group have also discussed and had briefings about the state of and plans for the ACT's Urban Forest.

CONTRIBUTED BY ROSEMARY BLEMININGS

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 June 2009

	2008	2009
	\$	\$
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Subscriptions	1,260.00	1,300.00
Raffles	391.95	362.00
Tea Money	55.00	15.00
Donations	115.00	45.00
Interest Received (Term Deposit)	762.42	669.08
Interest Received (Cheque Account)	2.09	1.34
Total	2,586.46	2,492.42

Expenditure

Affiliation Fees	0.00	240.00 (1)
Bank Fees	0.00	15.00
Depreciation	0.00	0.00
Govt. FID and Debit Tax	0.00	0.00
Newsletter Printing	368.00	429.25
Postage	300.00	373.35
Post Office Box Rental	123.00	135.00
Presentations (Speakers and ANU's BOZO)	63.00	0.00
Student Prize	200.00	200.00
Sundry Expenses (Secretary)	19.00	0.00
Registrar General's Fees	0.00	0.00
Insurance	0.00	650.00 (2)
Total	1,073.00	2,042.60

Income exceeds Expenditure by 1,513.46 449.82

Note:

(1) Two years' payment : STEP (Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park) – 2 x \$30 = \$60;
and Conservation Council (ACT) – 2 x \$90 = \$180

(2) Two years' payment : Altiora (Insurance) - \$300 (2008) + \$350 (2009) = \$650

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Bob Lehman
Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

**FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF
CANBERRA INCORPORATED**

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2009

2008		2009
\$		\$
	CURRENT ASSETS	
1,459	Bank Cheque Account	1,240
12,211	Term Deposit	12,880
20	Petty Cash Advance	20
13,690	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	14,140
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
-	None	-
13,690	NET ASSETS	14,140
	MEMBERS' FUND	
12,177	Members' Fund at Beginning of Year	13,690
1,513	Surplus for Year	450
13,690	MEMBERS' FUND AT END OF YEAR	14,140

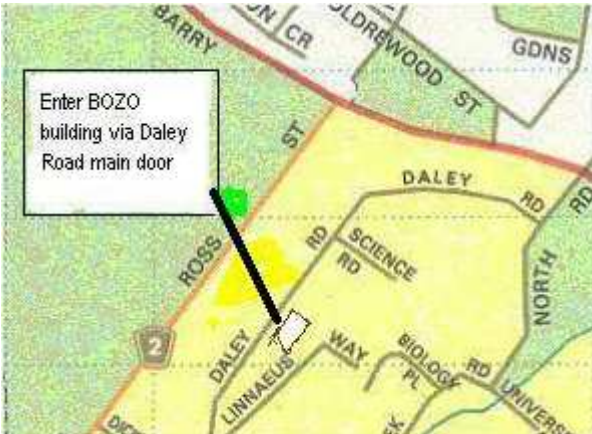
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 Bob Lehman
 Treasurer FNAC (Inc.)

Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra

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: Benj Whitworth
Secretary: Rosemary Blemings,
Website: www.geocities.com/fieldnaturalist/index.html
Newsletter editor: Chris Bunn
 . Member contributions welcome.
 Published and distributed by Bob Lehman



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. Park (occasionally the adjacent building 44). Meetings start at 8 pm and are followed by refreshments.

FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.
 GPO Box 249
 CANBERRA ACT 2601

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Family name: First name:
 If a family membership, please include the first names of other members of the family:

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Postal address:

Suburb: State: Postcode: Home phone:

Work phone: Email address:

Subscription enclosed: \$.....(Single/Family \$20) Donation: \$.....

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: FRIEND? OTHER? Please specify: