

THE FIELD NATURALIST

NEWSLETTER NO. 133: WINTER, 2018

ALBURY-WODONGA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.
Reg. No. A0023416K



Male & Female Superb Fairy Wren – *Malurus cyaneus*, Sandy Creek
Photos – Dick Andrews, Peter Spencer



Cryptandra amara - Bitter Cryptandra, Chiltern
Photo – Neil Blair



Petroica multicolor - Scarlet Robin, Georges Creek
Photo – Dick Andrews

CLUB INFO:

PRESIDENT
Neil Blair
0428 235 964

VICE PRESIDENT
Robert Robinson
(02) 6024 2904

SECRETARY
Veronica Robertson
(02) 6021 2120

TREASURER
David Bird
(02) 6059 8452

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Gail Steed
(02) 6032 9874
ggadsteed@aapt.net.au

OTHER COMMITTEE:
Richard Andrews
David Coleman
Glenda Datson
Stephanie Jakovac
Phillip Seely

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ALBURY, NSW 2640
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MEMBER'S MEETINGS

Two indoor member's meetings were held during June and July. They were held in the afternoon at Neil Blair's house and consisted of photo sessions from Neil's collection and those of members who bought their photos on USB sticks. The photos were viewed by connecting the computer to the TV screen.

The first meeting (10/06/18) looked at the diversity in the local Fungi.

The second meeting (8/07/18) looked at early flowering plants such as Acacias that may be seen in August and early September, and the leaf patterns of the different orchid Genera that helps early detection before flowering.

A review of the meetings concluded that the place for these meetings may be on days that outings are cancelled due to weather or other factors and it is proposed that we trial this for the next 12 months. [Thanks Neil for your expertise & venue. Lots of interesting information as well as key identification tips, including the meaning of many of their botanical names. And I now have a confirmed ID for the orchid I came across on Bruny Island last year (Mayfly Orchid, *Acianthus caudatus*) – Ed]

Neil Blair

GEORGES CREEK/ JARVIS CREEK STATE PARK

23rd June 2018

On a sunny but cool morning, David Coleman led us on what has become a regular excursion. En route we visited our usual ridge-top stop and rediscovered the 'goo' previously encountered under a Kurrajong tree, determining it to be an exudate from the tree.

At this stop, Neil & Jan located a 'Lightwood' wattle (*A. implexa*) & noted the difficulty in differentiating between it and Blackwood when not in flower or seed.



Note the green, curved (sickle-shaped) hanging phyllodes. This small tree flowers Dec-Mar, later than Blackwood and its seeds have a white, coiled funicle folded underneath (not a doubled red funicle surrounding the seed as in Blackwood).

As in previous years we travelled to Magazine Track and the main focus for many was the good range of fungi.



Armillaria sp



Unidentified mushroom - note the rust coloured spores



Clavaria amoena



Unidentified fungi - (Photos, Dick Andrews)

A mouldy mushroom was quite widespread & it would be interesting to see if the same 2 species are involved as previously seen in Chiltern State Park.



Another unidentified mushroom – Photo, Dick Andrews

[I marvel at the physics of those hanging droplets! – Ed]

By our last stop, the sun was fading quickly and cool air setting in. The *Ramaria sp.* seen last year was there again but the unusually large specimen along the road had disappeared – road work? Narrow-leaved Peppermints (*E. radiata*) were noted and hybridisation of the Peppermint group discussed. Red-anthered Wallaby Grass and Bitter Hop Pea were seen in the understory.

The bird list was similar to previous year's (see Phillip's list below) and Dick managed to capture a good shot of a male Scarlet Robin (see cover)

G Steed

| Birdlist - Jarvis and Georges Creek, June 23 2018 (Phillip Seely) | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Australian Raven | Scarlet Robin |
| Brown Thornbill | Spotted Pardalote |
| Buff-rumped Thornbill | Striated Pardalote |
| Eastern Rosella | Striated Thornbill |
| Grey Fantail | Tree Martin |
| Grey Shrike Thrush | White-plumed Honeyeater |
| Kookaburra | White-throated Treecreeper |
| Magpie | Willy Wagtail |
| Red Wattlebird | Welcome Swallow |
| Red-rumped parrot | |
| Total = 19 | |

CARBOOR/ MILAWA/ PUB LUNCH

28th July 2018



Acianthus collinus (Hooded Mosquito Orchid)

21 members and guests attended our morning outing and winter lunch on a cold but rainless day. Alan Gibb kindly led us on the morning outing to a local bush reserve in Bobinawarra known as Bald Hill. It is a hilly forest with an overstory of Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*), Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*) and Long-leaved Box (*Eucalyptus gonicalyx*). Whilst it was generally too early for most flowering in the understory and ground cover, we were delighted to find some early flowering *Acianthus collinus* (Hooded Mosquito Orchid) and *A. exsertus* (Large Mosquito Orchid).



A. exsertus (Large Mosquito Orchid) – Photos, Neil Blair

Also of note was a shrub, *Pultenaea spinosa* (ex *cunninghamii*). The forest has a number of wattles including *Acacia gunnii* and it will be well worth visiting in the spring [Alan Gibb is currently writing a book on Victorian wattles so keep a look out for it]



It had been dry but an aged specimen of *Fistulinella mollis* – ‘Caramel-topped Bolete’ or ‘Marshmallow Bolete’ – was seen.

Lunch was held at the Milawa Hotel and a lovely, convivial meal was had by all. Our many thanks to Dick and Anne Andrews for the sponsorship of the meal but more particularly for their expressed love and appreciation for the outings and friendships developed over many years with the AWFN’s and sharing your celebration with us.

Fistulinella mollis



Neil Blair

| Birdlist –Bald Hill, Bobinawarra July 28 2018 (Phillip Seely) |
|--|
| Crimson Rosella |
| Fuscous Honeyeater |
| Grey Fantail |
| Grey Shrike Thrush |
| Kookaburra |
| Magpie |
| Pied Butcher Bird |
| Pied Currawong |
| Scarlet Robin (male & female) |
| Striated Thornbill |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| White-throated Tree-creeper |
| White-winged Chough |
| Yellow Rosella |
| Total = 14 |

The photos show the interesting range of birds, plants & mushrooms found.



Omphalina chromacea (Yellow Navel)
Photos P Spencer



Calostoma fuscum (Common Prettymouth)



Photo D Andrews



Tachybaptus novaehollandiae
(Australasian Grebe)



Poliocephalus poliocephalus
(Hoary-headed Grebe)



Cygnus altratus / *Aythya australis*
(Black Swan with Hardhead)

Photos P Spencer



Panaeolus papilionaceus (Mottlegill)



Stropharia sp. (Dung Round Head) – Photos, N Blair



Grevillea lanigera
(Woolly Grevillea)



Hovea heterophylla -
(Common Hovea) Photos N Blair



Corybas diemenicus
Veined Helmet Orchid – Photo D Andrews

| Birdlist - Lockhart's Gap Aug 12 2018 | Upper Sandy Creek Dam Aug 12 2018 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (Phillip Seely) | |
| Brown Thornbill | Australasian Grebe |
| Grey Shrike Thrush | Black Swan |
| Kookaburra | Darter |
| Pied Currawong | Eurasian Coot |
| Superb Fairy Wren | Gang Gang Cockatoo |
| White-browed Scrubwren | Galah |
| White-throated Treecreeper | Hoary-headed Grebe |
| Whipbird | Hardhead |
| | Magpie |
| | Masked Lapwing |
| | Pacific Black Duck |
| | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| | Swamp Harrier |
| | Swamp Hen |
| | White-plumed Honeyeater |
| | Welcome Swallow |
| Total (8 + 16) = 24 | |

CHILTERN/MT PILOT NP

25th August, 2018



(Photo P Spencer)

Lovely weather greeted a large group of 20 members and friends to this outing which commenced with a walk at Magenta Mine site. Jumping spiders were found along with flowering Greenhood orchids, *Pterostylis nana* (Dwarf Greenhood) and *P. nutans* (Nodding Greenhood). 'Fun' was had identifying NON-FLOWERING trees, shrubs and ground covers. We then moved onto Riley's Rd to look at the flowering *Cryptandra amara* (Bitter Cryptandra) [see cover photo] and a nearby larger group of Dwarf Greenhoods. *Ranunculus pachycarpus* (Thick-fruit Buttercup) was flowering and a solitary *Cyanicula caerulea* (Blue Fairy) orchid was found.



Cyanicula caerulea (Blue Fairy Orchid) *Pterostylis nana* (Dwarf Greenhood) and *P. nutans* (Nodding Greenhood) (Photos N Blair)

After lunch Jan Palmer took us into the now closed quarry to look at the rehabilitation/revegetation program she designed and managed over the last few years. At the site Jan explained the project, the trials and tribulations and the lessons learnt. It was lovely to see how well the shrubs had established, especially the local wattle varieties, many of which were flowering. Also noted was the natural revegetation present, especially with the Eucalypts. A successful project that Jan can be very proud of. The bird life was subdued due to the relative paucity of flowering trees and shrubs. This was a very enjoyable outing despite the lack of early 'Spring' flowering due to the drought and very cold weather.

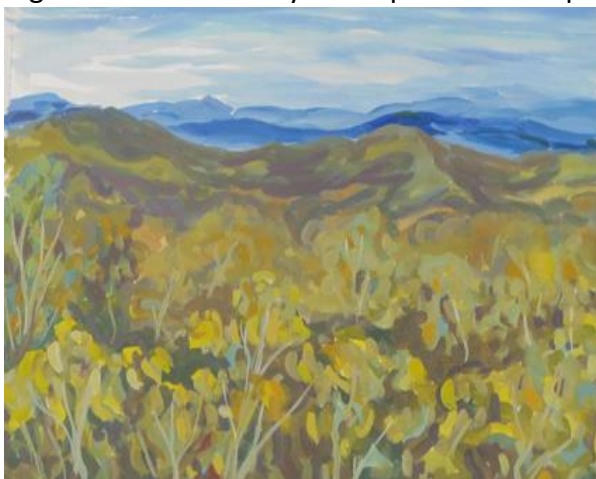


Ranunculus pachycarpus (Thick-fruit Buttercup) – Photos N Blair
Neil Blair

Juniper Wattle (Photo Dick Andrews)

Revegetation of Quarry Site

Jan has provided some 2004 photos taken in early stages of this project. It has become a very different-looking environment as my 'now' photos attempted to show (despite my directional challenges!)



Jan noted that approximately 24,000 plants were used and the project, completed about 6 years ago, was initially set up to maintain the original proportion of plant types. However, as losses were monitored, an alternative was proposed (and approved by DSE) to continue with the plants that survived better. And the result is impressive - as we saw and Stephanie's painting from the site shows.

THEN



The first site we visited

NOW



Looking West from end of the bitumen road



Looking North (but not from southern extent of site)



At the southern extent of planting, looking North



Looking South, with vehicle near the edge of the bitumen. [sorry, didn't get this one! – Ed]

| |
|---|
| Chiltern/ Mt Pilot NP Aug 23 2018 (Phillip Seely) |
| |
| Australian Raven (h) |
| Banded Lapwing |
| Black-chinned Honeyeater |
| Black-fronted Dotterel |
| Brown-headed Honeyeater |
| Brown Treecreeper |
| Common Bronzewing |
| Fan-tailed Cuckoo (h) |
| Fuscous Honeyeater |
| Grey Fantail |
| Kookaburra |
| Mistletoe Bird |
| Red Wattlebird |
| Red-capped Robin |
| Scarlet Robin |
| Silvereye |
| Spotted Pardalote |
| Superb Fairy Wren |
| White-throated Treecreeper |
| Weebill |
| White-winged Chough |
| Willy Wagtail |
| Welcome Swallow |
| Yellow-tufted Honeyeater |
| Total = 24 |

Common Bronzewing – Photo P Spencer



SENECIO SP. RUST FUNGUS

What appeared to be a ‘Rust’ fungus was seen on an unidentified Senecio rosette at Bald Hill Bobinawarra, then again at the Magenta Mine site in the Chiltern Mt Pilot NP two weeks later.



Investigation showed the leaf pustules to be typical ‘rust’ aecia, with the fungal aeciospores breaking through the plant tissue in clusters. The rust (in this case orange/yellow) spores are the Spring/Summer spores of the fungus; they spread easily, are short-lived and germinate rapidly. *Puccinia lagenophorae* is described from Australia and has a wide host range of approximately 110 species, in at least 16 genera of the Daisy family, Asteraceae. The disease has spread to America, United Kingdom and Europe where it can infect greenhouse flower crops via the weed host, Groundsel.

Puccinia lagenophorae colonies on *Senecio* sp – Photo D Andrew Gail Steed

EARLY INTRODUCTIONS OF BIRDS TO VICTORIA by Rosemary Balmford

I recently found this extensively researched, historical article and thought it was interesting. It was published in 1981 in "The Victorian Naturalist" (Vol. 98, No 3 May/June) & I have extracted & précised parts. If anyone is interested in the full article, please let me know.

The article outlined 2 streams of thought involved in the introduction of exotic animals & plants into Victoria in the 1850s & 60s:

1. An international movement for the acclimatisation of animals & plants (La Société Impériale d'Acclimatation)
2. The desire to recreate some familiar sights & sounds of home, especially singing birds

Edward Wilson (Editor of the Argus newspaper) is reported to have driven both streams...he argued in Victoria for the introduction of the Skylark and Nightingale, and in Great Britain, for English Government support for 'acclimatisation' (he proposed wombats as potential domestic food animals). The Victorian society was formally established in 1861, with an emphasis on the useful. Birds recommended in an initial 'survey' for acclimatisation in Great Britain (or dependencies), were Emu, Bustard, Wonga Wonga Pigeon, Mallee Hen, "so-called Magpies", Laughing Jackass, Black Swan, Cape Barren Goose, and "other geese and ducks".

With a substantial Victorian Parliament grant, the Society established, at Royal Park, a holding and breeding place for the acclimatisation program (only later did this become a general Zoological Garden for the public).

The society was active and flourished alongside extensive, private bird importations which were underway well before the formation of the society. In the first 12 years, birds were formally liberated by the society at the Botanical Gardens, Phillip Island, Sandstone & Churchill Islands, Yarra Bend, Royal Park, St Kilda, Ballarat, Cape Liptrap, Plenty Ranges and 'the bush'. The birdlist was extensive, and included Blackbirds, Thrushes, Quail, Ducks, Sparrows, Doves, Partridges, Starlings, Pheasants, White Swans, Finches, Robins, Chaffinches, Mainas [?- Ed] and more. An interesting reference in the article was to the havoc being caused to songbirds by native hawks and small boys with shanghais!

Listed as established in 1967 are: Feral Pigeon, Turtle Dove, Mallard, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Red-whiskered Bulbil, Skylark, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Starling, and Indian Mynah.

Also of interest was the description of changing attitudes to these introduced birds – in 1900, an otherwise comprehensive list (Birds of the Melbourne District) ignored them. In later publications they were either an apologetic inclusion or separate listing. The 1926 Checklist ignored the introduced species but by 1975, the Checklist included them.

Upcoming Outings – Spring / Christmas 2018

~ 9th September – Mt Granya; Completed, refer next newsletter.

~ 22nd September – Warby Ranges, Completed, refer next newsletter.

~14th October – Benambra NP (joint outing with Birdlife); 9 am SS&A Carpark Wilson St, Albury; contact John Shepherd.

~ 27th October – Galore Hill; 8:30 am SS&A Carpark Wilson St, Albury; contact Phillip Seely.

~ 11th November – Mt Big Ben; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Gail Steed.

~ 24th November – Mt Stanley; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Neil Blair.

~ 7th – 9th December – Mt Buffalo Caravan Park; TBC; contact Veronica Robertson.

Please confirm outing details in Saturday's Border Mail and contact the outing leader in the week prior if you need a lift.