

THE FIELD NATURALIST

ALBURY-WODONGA FIELD NATURALIST' CLUB INC.
Newsletter No.108
Reg. No A0023416K

PROGRAMME : March 2010 June 2010

March 28 Sunday, Centaur/Range Road

Meet 10am at Olive St Car Park opposite SS&A Club
Bring Lunch
Leader Phillip Seeley [02] 6021 5313

April 10, Saturday Thurgona 6 Mile Creek

Meet 10am at Olive St. Car Park opposite SS&A Club
Bring Lunch
Leader David Coleman {02 6021 2022}

April 24, Saturday Corowa/Lake Moodemere

Meet 10 am at Olive St CarPark opposite SS&A Club
Bring morning tea and lunch
Leader Neil Blair [02 | 6021 2097]

May 8, Saturday Burroywe/Koetong

Meet 9.30am Acacia car park Wodonga
Bring lunch and, afternoon tea
Leader; Lyle Harding [02] 6037 6225

May 23, Sunday Chiltern Honeyeater, Koala Track

Meet 10 am at Acacia Car Park Wodonga
Bring Lunch ,Afternoon tea
Leader David Coleman [02 6021 2022]

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

**If you think you may be late for an Outing please
ring the leader for their mobile number**

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**ANNUAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS**
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To be sent to the
Treasurer, P.O. Box
251, Albury, 2640
Make cheques payable
to: Albury-Wodonga
Field Naturalists' Club
Inc.

Contributions to this
newsletter are
welcome and should
be emailed as above
or posted to the
Editor, PO Box 25

June 12, Saturday Hawksview/Wirlinga

Meet 1pm. Olive St. Car Park opposite SS&A Club

Bring afternoon tea

Leader; David Coleman [02] 6021 2022

June 27, Sunday Wonga Wetlands

Meet at Wonga Wetlands 1pm Bring afternoon tea

Leader ; Dick Andrews [02] 6056 4112

Reports on recent outings

Kremer Street 28 February: A very productive morning .Five tortoises sunning themselves, a peregrine falcon on a gum tree ,several gang gangs and many ducks but no pelicans.

Bright 13 March: Phillip led us up past the town reservoir to a very interesting rain forest gully. With the help of Jill Dawson we found many interesting plants and varieties of eucalypts, mainly candle bark and manna gums. Dick Andrews found plenty of fungi to photograph. Lunch was by the reservoir with little grebes, gang gangs, yellow robins and the call of a lyrebird



A friendly skink

Australia's unique network

How old are our stock routes? As soon as European settlement began to spread out from the initial settlements trails were formed to get stock out to the outlying stations and back again to market. So the earliest stock trails date from the early 1800's.

In the 1850's onwards these were supplemented by the need to get stock from the new widely scattered squatters' stations to the developing goldfields. The radiating pattern was changed to a network. Later the network developed as large mobs were moved between stations and markets (the droving days), sometimes in response to surviving droughts. The droving mobs could be very large, and to facilitate their movement the Travelling Stock Route system developed to separate the moving stock and the local station's animals. Routes were up to a mile wide to cater for the thousands being moved at a time. Also to aid travel watering and overnight holding spots were added as designated reserves. Usually these reserves were about 10 miles apart – the distance reckoned to be the limit of travel for stock in any one day.



Bakers Gully Road



Unknown Fungi

Other reserves have been added to the system as a result of efforts to stop squatters enclosing prime areas to prevent settlers moving in after the Acts to promote closer settlement. Some of these areas were designated water reserves or the like.

To regularize the network of routes, local Pasture Protection Boards were set up to manage all of these resources. Over time boundaries were altered by various means to suit local landholders. Sometimes the changes were only handshake agreements between local rangers and the landholder, and were not 'legitimised' until new Parish maps were drawn.

Gradually a standard of 3 chains (60m) wide eventuated as the size of travelling flocks and herds diminished. Along the eastern seaboard a lot of the early routes fell into disuse and the routes became fragmented. Inland from the Dividing Range however the network is still largely intact at the moment. Australia is unique in having this continental wide network.

Each of the 43 Boards in New South Wales was supposed to be self-funding with grazing licenses and rural taxes expected to pay for the upkeep of the reserves and routes including weed and pest management. This Government* has however decided to reduce the number of Boards (with a name change) and to put them under the umbrella of the Lands Department. Lands Department was then given the go ahead to sell off, or permanently lease any unprofitable routes or reserves. This is a serious threat to the whole system and to the environment generally.

Although not formally recognized as such the reserves are an essential refuge for native flora and fauna. In large areas they are the only remnants or passageways for our natives – a resource that becomes particularly important with climate change. Not only is our wildlife under threat. The reserves contain innumerable heritage and cultural items such as survey marks, old sign-posts, old Parish maps.

National Parks Association has a campaign to save routes and reserves for their environmental, cultural and heritage values, considering them to be of international importance. After all no other country has a continental wide asset like this.

Oh, and the age of the routes. As the early settlers would have used the existing tracks of the Aborigines (much easier than pushing through undisturbed bush and of course linked up watering places), some of them could be as much as 40,000 years old.

*NSW Government

With thanks to the author Eric Whiting and the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists
: *The Murrumbidgee Naturalist* - 6 - Issue #169 March 2010

A summary of the talk delivered by Jim Blackney from Trust for Nature at the AGM of the Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists Club at Age Concern on Friday February 12th 2010

Jim is the regional manager for the North East of Victoria and is based in Beechworth. He gave an excellent talk on the work of the Trust. Trust for Nature is Australia's oldest land trust and for over 33 years has been protecting our native bushland. Trust for Nature believes in working with local communities and individuals to achieve real and sustainable solutions to conservation. Its mission is achieved by either buying back parcels of high-conservation bushland or working with landowners to remove the

development rights from their property through conservation covenants. Covenants provide ever-lasting protection in preventing land from being sub-divided or cleared. Both purchases and covenants not only protect the land but also the many native creatures that call the bush home. In Victoria almost 900 covenants protect over 38,000 hectares, in the NE 3000 hectares with 45 covenants. In the 2009 bushfires 42 covenant properties were burnt. Among other activities is the provision of 140 nesting boxes for squirrel-gliders and phascogales, with the help of prisoners at Beechworth jail. In the NE over 60 plants and at least 5 animal species are nationally rare or threatened. It is hoped that as a group we will be able to get Jim to lead a visit to one of the local conservation areas.

(Thanks to Dick and Anne Andrews for this contribution and for the photos of the Bright outing)

Shirley Scholes
Editor