

# **THE FIELD NATURALIST**

NEWSLETTER NO. 122: July, 2015

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



Scarlet and Yellow Robins - Chiltern NP (Photos: Peter Spencer)



Dung Roundhead (*Stropharia semiglobata*), Chiltern NP  
(Photo: Dick Andrews)

## This Issue:

	Page
President's Report	2
Winter Talk Report	2
Bright, Cherry Walk	3
Slime Mould ( <i>L. epidendrum</i> )	5
Nail Can Hill	6
Chiltern Mt Pilot NP	6
Baranduda area	9
Upcoming Outings	12

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Albury, 2640.

## President's Report

It is always a positive for the club to have enthusiastic new faces and we extend a warm welcome to our new members this year. We have enjoyed their participation on our outings and hope they are finding the experience rewarding.

We recently held our first Night Talk for some time (see report this page). This was one of the committee's objectives for the year and it was pleasing to see the turnout and the enthusiastic responses. The committee will be meeting in the near future to plan the outings for the remainder of the year, along with additional mid-week Spring outings and further Night Talks. We would love to hear of any suggestions from the members for these outings and talks.

24 members and guests attended our Annual Social Lunch, this year at the Happy Valley Hotel on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Such a strong turnout suggests a happy, healthy club, of which all members should be proud as "the members maketh the club".

Neil Blair

[A brief stroll from Rotary Park in Myrtleford, umbrellas armed but unnecessary, began our annual social foray. The opportunity for conversation and to facilitate friendship was welcomed by the group. Not too many birds, cameras or even binoculars were seen! However, the list for the day did include a male Golden Whistler, Red-browed Finches, Superb Fairy Wrens and a Brown Thornbill. A Yellow Robin & Whip Bird were heard but not sighted.

The stormy weather finally unfolded over us as we sat in the cosy, fire-warmed Lounge of the historic & welcoming Happy Valley Hotel. Lunch was hearty, locally-made & interesting, followed by a surprise – chocolates & cake (provided by David) to celebrate Graham's birthday. Thank you Stephanie, Neil, Veronica & David for an enjoyable club day]

PS Have a great year Graham!



Our first Winter Talk, held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July at Wonga Wetlands Educational Centre, was attended by 12 members and 1 visitor.

Guest Speaker was David Hunter, Threatened Species Officer, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. David's talk, "**Threatened Frog conservation and management in South-eastern Australia**", was highly informative, entertaining and interactive with much time spent answering questions and further discussions.

Topics discussed included:

- Frog habitat is predominantly on private land
- Frogs threatened by multiple factors including loss of habitat, both in quantity and quality. More recently the situation has worsened due to the introduction of the Chytrid fungus, which has become a world-wide problem.
- Scientific efforts to understand the fungus have revealed that species that are not pathologically effected by the fungus can become carriers and transmitters of the disease to susceptible species and this may help understanding of the "mass extinctions" we are now very aware of.
- There are 30 or so local and regional frog species. Techniques to aid Field Identification were discussed including looking for eye shine and triangulating calls to localize the frog, identification by calls and the availability of phone apps with frog calls and photo brochures of local species.
- The importance of 'Citizen Science', especially reporting of sightings of significance to local specialists and ALS (Atlas of Living Australia).

*We are very grateful to David for his time and enthusiasm and his willingness to share his knowledge with us. More meetings are being planned.*



On a damp & threateningly overcast day, a large group departed Hawthorn Lane, Bright to stroll the Cherry Walk which loops alongside the north & south banks of the Ovens River, connected by suspension bridges. It is a truly interesting & well-constructed walk, encapsulating its history with interpretive signage. Also of interest was evidence of the Fish Habitat Enhancement project. A variety of habitats have evolved following the severe damage by extensive gold dredging in the early 1900's. As soil returned near the rivers, so did grasses & low shrubs, while back from the river, larger trees (wattles, ti-trees & Eucalypts) have become established. On higher banks the drier Eucalypt forest can be seen, as well as the Pine forest along the southern bank. Despite this range of options, that day the birds were mainly hiding elsewhere. The different biosystems did however, provide a diversity of fungi on which to practice our improving identification skills. Some seen were as previously noted at Chiltern NP or Pheasant Creek ie Fly agaric, Spectacular Rustgill, Suphur Tuft, Rooting Shank & Parasol mushroom). Some 'new' identifications, including the 'slime mould', *Lycogala epidendrum*, are shown (photos page 4 & 5)





A Landcare brochure cross-references local flora along the track, but we didn't need it – Neil provided ready identification and discussion along the way (see his list below). Happily, rain held off until we returned to the shelter of the picnic area & lunch.

G. Steed

Flora list – species discussed on walk (Neil Blair)

- Wattles - Ovens (*Acacia pravissima*), Silver (*Acacia dealbata*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*)
- Eucalyptus – Narrow and Broad-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives* and *radiata*), Bundy “rough or tessellated bark” (*Eucalyptus gonicalyx*)
- Tea Trees – River (*Leptospermum obovatum*), Silver (*Leptospermum multicauli*)
- Mint-bush – Round- leaf (*Prostanthera rotundifolia*)
- Bursaria – Hairy/Faires’ purses (*Bursaria spinosa* subsp *lasiophylla*)
- Cassinia/Dogwood – Common (*Cassinia aculeata*), Shiny (*Cassinia longifolia*)
- Pomaderris – Hazel (*Pomaderris aspera*)
- Tree Violet – *Melicytus Dentatus*
- Dusty Miller – *Spyridium parvifolium*
- Matt Rush – Spiny-headed (*Lomandra longifolia*)
- Pine – Radiata (*Pinus radiata*)
- Bracken – Common (*Pteridium esculentum*)

Assorted fungi (photographed & identified by Neil Blair & Dick Andrews)

*Cortinarius lavendulensis*



A – young specimen showing cortina (cobwebby ‘veil’)

B – violet gills becoming tinged with brown as ochre-coloured spores develop

C – glutinous (sticky & shiny) cap



*Hypholoma sublatiteritium* (Brick caps)



*Mycena* sp.

**Lykogala epidendrum (groening's slime or wolf's milk),**

Slime moulds are an interesting group of organisms, formerly placed with the fungi. In their life cycle they produce a fruiting body (aethalia) & spores. Often a germinating spore produces a cell (plasmodium) able to move about actively & ingest food like an amoeba, but these are almost never seen. A chemical signal causes the thousands of cells to combine & form the fruiting structure typical of the species.

The aethalia of the wide-spread & easily recognised slime mould seen at Bright are pink/ orange cushion-like globules growing on rotting wood. While immature they are filled with a pink, paste-like fluid, which matures to a powdery mass of small grey-ish spores.

Fungimap (Fungi Down Under Online)

Wikipedia

AM Young, A Field Guide to the Fungi of Australia



[For information only, another common & easily recognised slime mould – *Fuligo septica* (Flowers of Tan) is shown below. When wattle bark was used for tanning, this species was very common on the wet heaps of spent bark, hence the common name]



*F. septica*  
Photo: Gail Steed

**NAIL CAN HILL/ WONGA WETLANDS****24<sup>th</sup> May, 2015**

An interesting and pleasant day by all accounts. Phillip's birdlist from both locations follows.

<i>Common name</i>		<i>Common name</i>	
Cockatoo	Sulphur-crested	Moorhen	
Coot	Eurasian	Pelican	Australian
Cuckoo-shrike	Black-faced	Raven	Australian
Currawong	Pied	Robin	Scarlet
Dotterel	Black-fronted	Rosella	Crimson (Yellow form)
Duck	Hardhead	Shrike-thrush	Grey
Duck	Musk	Shoveler	Australasian
Duck	Pacific Black	Silver-eye	
Egret	Great	Spoonbill	Royal
Fantail	Grey	Spoonbill	Yellow-billed
Finch	Red-browed	Swallow	Welcome
Flycatcher	Restless	Swamphen	Purple
Galah	Pink & Grey	Swan	Black
Grebe	Australian	Teal	Chestnut
Heron	White-faced	Teal	Grey
Honeyeater	Fuscous	Thornbill	Buff-rumped
Honeyeater	Yellow-faced	Thornbill	Striated
Ibis	White	Thornbill	Yellow-rumped
Kingfisher	Azure	Tree-creeper	Brown
Kite	Whistling	Wagtail	Willy
Kookaburra	Laughing	Wattlebird	Red
Lapwing	Masked	Weebill	
Lorikeet	Rainbow	Whistler	Golden
Magpie	Australian	Wren	Superb Fairy
Magpie-lark			
<b>Total Australian Bird species</b>			<b>49</b>

**CHILTERN MT PILOT NATIONAL PARK****13<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

With eight starters on a cool morning, we walked along an old track off Tower Hill Road where the week before a Regent Honeyeater and a male Rose Robin were observed, but today were not to be seen. However, we did find a mixed party of small birds up ahead with several Varied Sittella, Weebill, Golden Whistler, Brown-Headed Honeyeaters, White-Plumed Honeyeaters, and Spotted Pardalotes. Other birds seen were Red Wattle Bird, Fuscous Honeyeater, pair of Scarlet Robins, Grey Fantail and Grey Shrike-Thrush.



Several small Guinea flowers were noted, Urn Heath (*Melichrus urceolatus*) was in flower and a few fungi were found pushing their way up through the leaf litter.

(Photo – Dick Andrews)



*Stereum* sp. at base of Iron-bark tree



Pixie Caps (*Cladonia pyxidata*) – Photos Dick Andrews

We then moved on to Honeyeater Picnic spot for lunch and were greeted by a lot of bird song on arrival which slowly faded as we ate lunch. Twelve bird species were added to our list with a walk around the dam, water level very low and along White-Box walking track we were watched by a Black Wallaby which was unmoved by our presence. Cameras were working overtime with the variety of fungi found near the fallen log at the creek crossing.



Black Wallaby



Fuscous & White-naped Honeyeaters (Photos – P. Spencer)

Some of our party then set off for home while the remaining few moved to Green Hill Dam for afternoon tea where more bird species were noted at the dam and along Magenta Track. Several Fuscous and White-Naped Honeyeaters were seen bathing along the edge of the dam as we packed up and left for home.



Unidentified sp. growing on dead log, showing cortina (veil) and young, sinuate, lemon-coloured gills before being darkened by oval, ochre-coloured spores.

See list next page of bird species at each location visited.

**CHILTERN MT PILOT NATIONAL PARK – Birds observed 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

		Tower Hill Rd	Honeyeater Picnic area	Greenhill Rd Dam
Currawong	Pied		x	
Fantail	Grey	x	x	x
Flycatcher	Restless		x	x
Gerygone	Western			x
Honeyeater	Black-chinned		x	
Honeyeater	Brown-headed	x	x	
Honeyeater	Fuscous	x	x	x
Honeyeater	White-naped		x	x
Honeyeater	White-plumed	x	x	x
Honeyeater	Yellow-faced		x	x
Honeyeater	Yellow-tufted		x	
Kookaburra	Laughing		x	
Lorikeet	Little			x
Miner	Noisy			x
Mistletoe bird			x	
Pardalote	Spotted	x		x
Raven	Australian	x		
Robin	Scarlet	x	x	x
Robin	Eastern Yellow		x	
Rosella	Eastern		x	
Rosella	Crimson (Yellow form)		x	
Sitella	Varied	x		x
Shrike-thrush	Grey	x	x	
Spinebill	Eastern			x
Tree-creeper	Brown		x	
Tree-creeper	White-throated	x	x	x
Wagtail	Willy			x
Wattlebird	Red	x	x	x
Weebill		x		x
Whistler	Golden	x	x	x
Wren	Superb Fairy		x	x
	<b>Total Australian Bird species</b>		<b>31</b>	

Phillip Seely

**Baranduda outing Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

**Glenda Datson**

This outing was to some of the vegetated corridors and patches which are part of the Wodonga Retained Environment Network (known as WRENS) which link the Baranduda Range, Drapers, Bears and Federation Hills to the Kiewa River. The WRENS incorporates 30-40 year old Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation tree plantations which were originally planned as links between the hills and the river and which are now being used as offsets for tree removal for urban development. These are to be retained in perpetuity under conservation agreements between the Wodonga City Council, the Department of Water, Land and Primary Industries (formerly DSE/DEPI) and the Albury Wodonga Corporation, a former Commonwealth statutory authority. The WRENS is a strategy aimed to preserve and benefit threatened species in the Baranduda-Leneva Valley growth area.

On a pleasant winter's morning our group drove to Ellen McDonald Drive, Thurgoona where we had an early morning tea under the bush shelter whilst observing the Flame Robins which are usually prevalent along the fence here at this time of the year.



*Photo: Neville Bartlett*



*Photo: Rob Watkins*

After strolling through "The Triangle" at the corner of Ellen McDonald Drive and Boyes Road we crossed to the Stringybark block on the Kiewa Valley Highway. Here we observed nest boxes, purpose-built for Squirrel Gliders and Tuan, which are part of Baranduda Landcare's nest box program and which are monitored periodically to check their usage and success.



*Juniper Wattle*

We noted the prickly Juniper wattle (*Acacia ulicifolia*) and good remnant stand of Red Stringybark, White Box and Red Box along with plantings of other regional species. The leaves of the Trim Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra peniculata*) were also observed along with Yellow Rush Lily and Chocolate Lilies all readying for spring flowering, provided we have follow up rains.

After lunch at the Baranduda Community Centre we travelled to Drapers Road where a number of woodland birds were found (as per list, page 11). Additionally David and Veronica returned there to find Diamond Firetails as well.

The final stop for the day was a walk along Drapers Lane into the WRENS blocks on the ridge where we observed a nice patch of remnant Black Cypress Pine and Varnish Wattle.



**WRENS Stringybark block**



*Piptoporus portentosus* (Photo – G Steed)



**Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) in Drapers Lane WREN block**

Baranduda		Birds observed 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2015		
		Site 1 Ellen McDonald Drive & "The Triangle"	Site 2  WRENS Stringybark block	Site 3  Drapers Rd/Drapers Lane
Chough	White-winged		*	
Currawong	Pied	*	*	*
Dove	Peaceful			*
Duck	Wood	*		
Eagle	Wedge-tailed			*
Fairy Wren	Superb Blue	*	*	*
Finch	Red-browed	*	*	*
Finch	Double-barred			*
Galah		*		
Honeyeater	White-plumed	*		*
Honeyeater	Fuscous		*	*
Honeyeater	Brown-headed		*	*
Honeyeater	Yellow-faced		*	
Honeyeater	White-naped			*
Ibis	Straw-necked	*		
Jacky Winter		*		
Kookaburra	Laughing		*	*
Magpie	Australian	*	*	*
Magpie-lark		*	*	*
Pigeon	Crested			*
Raven	Australian	*	*	*
Robin	Flame	*		
Robin	Scarlet	*		*
Rosella	Crimson		*	*
Shrike-thrush	Grey	*	*	
Silver eye			*	
Sitella	Varied		*	
Spoonbill	Yellow-billed	*		
Thornbill	Buff-rumped		*	
Thornbill	Yellow-rumped		*	
Thornbill	Brown		*	
Thornbill	Striated			*
Tree-creeper	White-throated		*	*
Wagtail	Willy	*	*	
Warbler	Speckled			*
Wattlebird	Red	*		
Weebill		*	*	
Whistler	Golden		*	*
No of species per site		18	22	21
<b>Total no. of species for the day: 37</b>				

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**Upcoming Outings** - a delightful variety of habitats

~26<sup>th</sup> July ~

**Warby Ranges State Park**

– although similar geographically to Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP and only 80 km apart, the flora and fauna of this NP contains a number of unique species not seen locally eg Peach Heath, Spur-wing Wattle, Prickly Parrot-pea.

~8<sup>th</sup> August ~

**Beechworth / Stanley area**

– an opportunity to see the winter flora and fauna of a higher altitude habitat with its Peppermints, Pines, Blue Gums and other montane vegetation.

~23<sup>rd</sup> August ~

**Mitta Mitta**

– Mitta Mitta – a trip to the “high” river country where pleasant mining and river walks once again reveal a different habitat and some of its unique flora and fauna including a variety of ferns.

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

**Note: Electronic Payments -**

Payments to the club can be made via Internet banking using details below.

**BSB:** 803 070

**Account No.** 61019

**Account Name:** ALB WOD FIELD NATURALISTS INC

*(Please note, the account name should be written in its abbreviated form as shown, and don’t forget to include **your** name)*

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