



WHIRRRAKEE

March 1997

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO
FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3550

Office Bearers for 1996 - 1997

President	Bill Holsworth	13 Nabilla Crs. Bendigo	43 4063
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Treasurer	Glenise Moors	Mandurang South Rd. Sedgwick	39 6254
Membership Officer	Rob Moors	Mandurang South Rd. Sedgwick	39 6254
Excursion/syllabus organiser	not filled. Excursions are organised by the committee at present		
Librarian	Dianne Collier		
<i>Whirrakee</i> contact	Sabine Wilkens	82 Somerville Street, Bendigo	43 2797

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single \$30; Family \$35; Concession: Single \$25; Family \$30. *Whirrakee* subscription only is \$30.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. Meetings start at 7:30pm and conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearers listed above, together with the following members:

S Beattie; J Burtonclay; A Bridley; B Chmielewska; A Liebert; R Moors; A Sheean; M Stone.

Excursions The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Full-day excursions normally commence at 10am (usually on a Sunday); half-day excursions normally commence at 2pm and may be either on a Saturday or Sunday. Full-day or half-day excursions are usually held on the weekend following the General Meeting. Campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has 2 active sub-groups:

Bird Observers Group: meets on the first Friday of the month, at 7:30pm. The venue for meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

President: Anne Bridley

Secretary: Jane Cleary

Mammal Survey Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (39 5710)

Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (43 4063)

Equipment Officer: Ian Fenselau

Vice Chairman: John Guley

Front Cover

Photographer: Ian Flecknoe-Brown

It is not easy to get any wildlife shots appropriate to this time of the year when much of the bush appears to have gone to sleep. Luckily (for some), spiders are around all the time and this photograph shows the Golden Orb Weaver, *Nephila*.

WHIRRAKEE

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Vol. 18, No. 2, March 1997

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.

Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.

Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request (see article in March *Whirrakee*).

News from the BFNC Garden Development Group

Author: Barbara Chmielewska

I am sure that every one who came to the meeting on the 12th of February was very pleasantly surprised to see how beautiful the garden looks. As expected, most of the plants are surviving. The flag pole area was paved and looks very good. Also during our cleaning of the Club House working bee, our sign was cemented in by Glenise, Rob, Rod and Anthony. They have done a fantastic job without damaging any plants! The sign is visible from quite a distance away.

Since our last working bee on the 20th October 1996, the following jobs were done:

1. The garden paths were marked and approved by Anthony and Jane.
2. On the 29th October, Elaine replaced 17 wooden stakes and 5 plastic sleeves and marked the upper walking track edges with Round Up. She also replaced 30 shrubs and ground cover that had died. She found that the soil was very wet and this may have contributed to the high loss rate.
3. During the very hot days, Barbara and Stan have watered the large trees;
4. Some weeding was done during the Club House working bee;
5. Anthony organised the paving of the flag pole area;

6. Anthony planted the very wet area with native grasses.

7. We have started a photo album to record the progress in the garden.

The date for the garden group meeting and working bee will be decided soon and Club members will be notified in the *Whirrakee*.

The list of replaced plants is as follows:

Myoporum parvifolium Whipstick
Creeping Boobialla (3x)

Pittosporum phylliraeoides Weeping
Pittosporum (1x)

Kennedia prostrata Running Postman (3x)

Dodonaea angustissima (1x)

Olearia ramulosa Daisy Bush (2x)

Acacia williamsonii Whirrakee Wattle (2x)

Acacia pycnantha Golden Wattle (2x)

Acacia ausfeldii Whipstick Cinnamon
Wattle (6x)

Brachyscome multifida Cut Leaf Daisy (3x)

Helichrysum apiculatum (6x)

Bursaria spinosa Sweet Bursaria (1x)

Donation to Club Library

The Committee, and I am sure all Club members, wish to thank Bobbie and Allen Malone for their donation of a large number of books to the Club Library. New shelves are soon to be added to the library storage area and all books and magazines will soon be catalogued and ready for members to borrow.

A list of the books, gratefully received from the Malones will appear in the next *Whirrakee*.

**Correction to the December (1996)
Bird Observations,**

(Whirrakee Jan./Feb. 1997)

Author: Anne Bridley

It was erroneously stated that nine nests with young of the Brown Goshawk were found in Sutton Grange, late November 1996. In fact, these nests were found in a survey in 1989. A visit to the same area in 1996 found no nests. John Robinson, who took part in these surveys, attributes the lack of nests to a decline in rabbit numbers.

Bush Stone-curlew

Author: Anne Bridley

Bush Stone-curlews have declined in our area. If you wish to help build knowledge of what these birds require for their survival, there is now a way.

Friends of Stone-curlews, sponsored by the Bird Observers Club of Australia, are collecting information on sightings and habitat of Stone-curlews.

Any sighting is valuable, but the most important are records from sites that are visited over a period of time.

The Friends have prepared two forms, one for the birds and one for its habitat.

The Bird Observers Group has a copy of each form and the instruction sheet. These can be photocopied. More forms are available from

Friends of Stone-curlews
c/o BOCA
PO Box 185
Nunawading, Vic 3131

News from Inglewood

Margaret Watts wrote a lovely letter which accompanied the observation below. She says that she and Fred are sorry that they are no longer able to get to meetings. Fred turned 81 in January and Margaret (the driver) is 76. They can still do plenty of bushwalking though and, luckily for us, share their observations from this interesting part of the country. (eds.)

**Yellow-faced Honeyeater in
Kooyoorra State Park**

Authors: Fred and Margaret Watts

We used to think the Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (*Lichenostomus chrysops*) together with the White-naped Honeyeaters (*Melithreptus lunatus*) were Winter visitors to the forests around Inglewood, but for several years now we have noted that there appears to be a small group of Yellow-faces living permanently in the Kooyoorra State Park, as we hear or see them on every visit to their favourite haunts.

A few years ago, in the Spring, Fred found a nest in vegetation while walking along Breakneck Road, and so far this Summer, we have recorded these cheery Honeyeaters on Breakneck Road on Wednesday January 8 and today, Sunday February 2nd, while walking along Long Rock Tk.

Unfortunately we haven't found any White-napes preferring to remain year-round with us. In fact they have become very rare Winter visitors to the area.

Bird Observations - January/February 1997

Author: Bird Observers Club

Great Crested Grebe (1), Spring Gully Reservoir, 3/2/97
Brolga (2), Bell's Swamp, 5-8/1/97
Collared Sparrowhawk (1), Bendigo East, 7/2/97
Black Kite (1), Puckapunyal, Feb. 97
Curlew (2 pairs), Puckapunyal, Feb. 97
Peaceful Dove (1), Sedgwick, 2/2/97
Peaceful Dove (1 on nest), Kangaroo Gully Creek, 2-6/1/97
Galah (2, feeding on artichoke thistle), Epsom, 6/2/97
Crimson Rosella (3-5), Sedgwick, 24/1/97 - 1/2/97
Barking Owl (2), Costerfield, Feb. 97
Leaden Flycatcher (2), Sedgwick, 9/1/97
White-browed Babbler (2), Kangaroo Gully Creek, 9/12/96 - 26/12/96
Superb Fairy Wren (2), Junortoun, 23/12/96
Bell Miner (1), Jackass Flat, 6/2/97
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (2), Sedgwick, 19/1/97
Silvereve (eggs in nest), Junortoun, 11/1/97
Dusky Woodswallow (10), Kangaroo Gully Creek, 6/1/97

Breeding activity is still keeping observers interested. Dusky Woodswallows have returned to the same site for four years; the Peaceful Dove was nesting 25m from the ground in a Redgum; the silvereve was not so fortunate - its eggs were predated and nest destroyed.

Books for children relating to our natural environment

Author: Barbara Chmielewska

1. Kevin Gilbert (1996)
"Me and Mary Kangaroo"
Puffin Books

Based on Kevin's childhood experience, the book tells the story of a boy's friendship with an orphaned kangaroo.

2. Stan Breeden (1995)
"Sally and the Rock Wallabies"
A Steve Parish Children's Publishing

Concentrating on the rock wallabies, the book is a story of a child's exploration, experience and observations of wildlife in the woodlands near her home.

3. Greg Pyers and Andrew Plant (1996)
"Australian Wildlife at Risk"
Cardigan Street

The book is an excellent introduction for children to Australia's native species and the threats they face.

Mammal Survey Group Excursion

The 26 March meeting of the Mammal Survey Group will be held at Lake Weeroona Picnic Shelter where we will have a BYO barbecue dinner followed by BAT trapping with mist nets surrounding the pavilion. Before the bats emerge Bill Holsworth will give a short lecture on the biology of bats in the Bendigo area. It is expected that 10 to 50 bats will leave their roost about 7:45pm. We hope to catch all the bats and examine them to determine age, sex, and whether or not they carry a band from previous years banding. They will not be banded this year.

BFNC Easter Campout
28th - 31st March 1997
Author: Ian Fenselau

Over the Easter holiday period, 28th - 31st March 1997, an informal camping, bird watching, mammal studying, relaxing time may interest BFNC members.

The centre of activities is planned for near Lyell State Forest (refer to enclosed map for campsite), and is approximately 30km from Bendigo, making day visits convenient for those not interested in camping.

The area of interest adjoins 'Pilchers Bridge Flora and Fauna Reserve', and, given the current L.C.C. review of the Box-Ironbark forests, is worthy of attention from BFNC members.

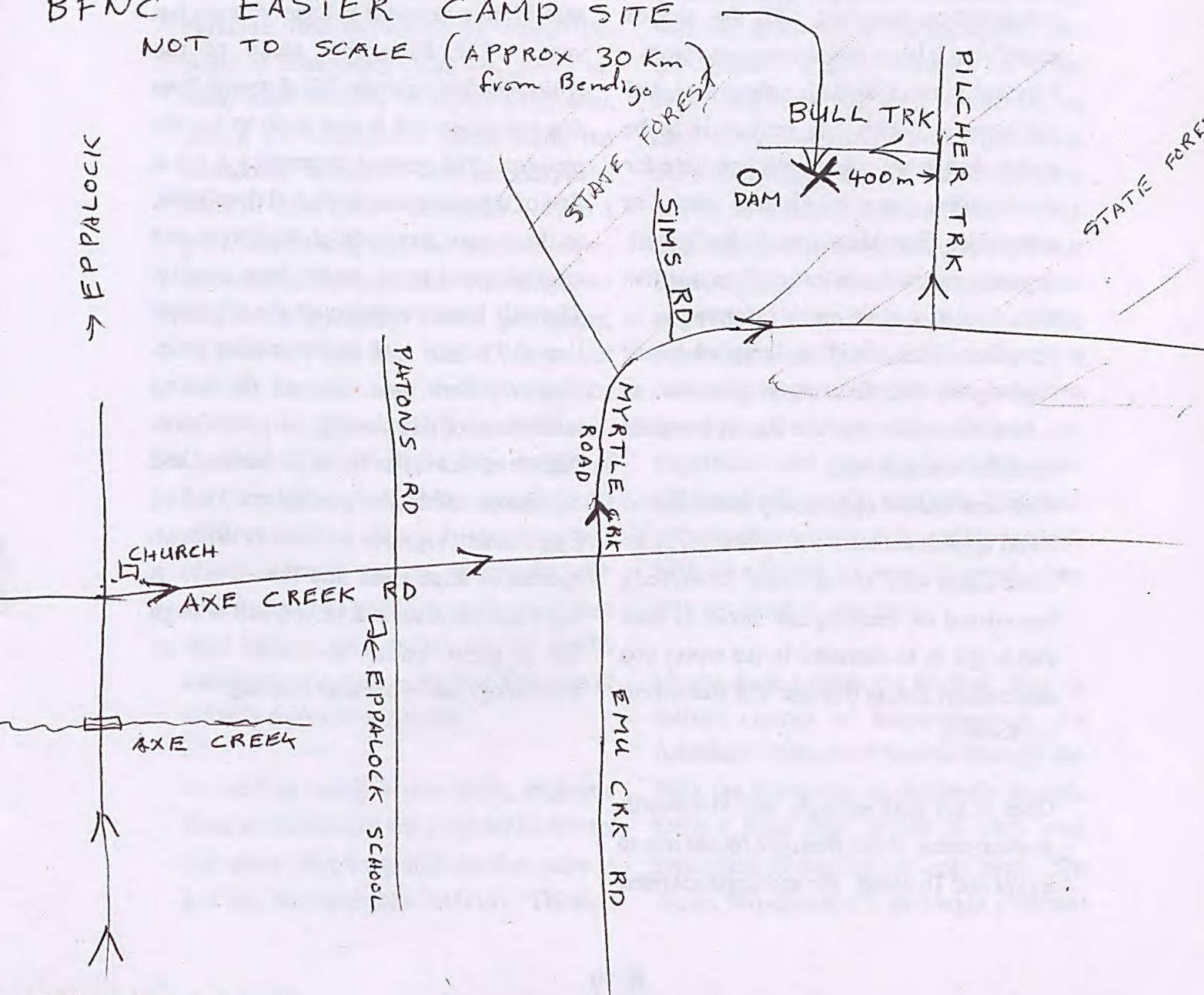
A heavy flowering of Long-leaf Box is predicted, and this, combined with a secluded forest dam 300m from the campsite, should ensure productive birdwatching

A spotlighting activity is planned for Saturday night, and as the area contains many remnant hollow trees, combined with a good scattering of forest litter, it is anticipated that a productive night will ensue.

Large avian predators are regularly observed in the area, and a 4 hour ridge-top walk for the fit on Sunday, to possibly locate an eagle's nest sighted many years previously is planned.

For further information contact:
Ian Fenselau (054) 484384 or
Bill Holsworth (054) 434063.

BFNC EASTER CAMP SITE
NOT TO SCALE (APPROX 30 Km from Bendigo)



February Club Meeting

Author: Sabine Wilkens

The first meeting of the year is usually used for showing holiday slides and having a chat, but this year we also had a speaker, Simon Cropper who is working on a roadside conservation project on the Calder Highway between Bendigo and Lake Tyrrell (near Sealake). Vic Roads are sponsoring this project over a two months period and it involves the surveying and documenting of roadside flora for conservation purposes with the aim of classifying it into various vegetation types. Obviously, two months is a short time, and the time in which this project is to be undertaken is not exactly the best time for discovering many plants, rare or otherwise... For this reason Simon's work depends on the knowledge of groups like ours to find out as much information as possible which could be included in the final report. This final report is to serve as a base document for Vic Roads for their roadside management.

Members had the opportunity to tell Simon about significant sites they knew of, as he came along with lots of maps. If anybody has missed the meeting but thinks of sites that ought to be included in the report you can contact Simon through Bill Holsworth on 434063.

Once it got dark enough, Bill Holsworth showed some slides from his recent trip to Egypt and Thailand. He and Carol climbed

Mount Sinai at 3am just to see a beautiful sunrise, saw what was claimed to be the burning bush, cruised for days on the Nile in tiny boats that didn't have any toilet facilities and had as a guide the actor who played the Arab in Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile*. Some of the carvings in the temple stones were magnificent but a very strong impression Bill also reported on was that Egypt was completely littered with plastic bags and PET bottles - even an oasis they visited was messy and not at all like in the movies!

Then we saw Bev Culvenor's slides of the Mid-Murray campout at Lake Victoria last year. The November issue of the *Whirrakee* last year was full of reports from this excursion and it was great to see the pictures. The general impression I got at first of the place was death and desolation, as there were hundreds of dead trees and sand hills and stony, rocky, bare country. The half buried remains of the telegraph line to Darwin was an interesting relic. However Bev then showed the living inhabitants of this country, carpets of pink Pigface stretching as far as the horizon and big clumps of Mueller's Daisy and Poached Egg Daisies together as well as different species of Blue Bush and Emu Bush. A big Sand Monitor had stayed still enough for a great photo to round off an interesting, balmy summer evening.

Stranger in Paradise

Author: Tom Burton

What a corny title for this article, which is an account of my stay in the village of Paradise, in the Chiricahua Mountains in the south-east corner of Arizona! Paradise is about 1700m above sea-level, which means that when I was there in mid-winter, snow was lying about the house and on some of the roads, and invisible ice on the sheets of granite made walking hazardous at times.

Paradise used to be known as Galeyville, home of John Galey, who was one of the many arch-enemies of Wyatt Earp, who, during his Tombstone years, made the occasional unfriendly visit to Galeyville. Back in those days – the 1880s – it was a gold-boom town, and the tumbled down jail is one of the few relics. Nowadays, the area is occupied by retired professors, birdohs and the like, and a Mecca for birdohs from all over the USA. In the canyons – Cave Canyon, White-tail Canyon and others – live a large number of Mexican bird species at the northern limits of their ranges. Thus, driving can be a hazard, even in winter, as drivers with birds rather than traffic on their minds stop their cars at odd angles on the roads, looking for the elusive Bridled Titmouse or the wily Acorn Woodpecker.

As well as resident rare birds, migrants flock north through the canyons in spring, and many Humming-bird species make it just this far north from Mexico. Thirteen

species of hummer can be expected in the Chiricahuas in summer, whereas over most of the US, only one species (Ruby-throated) occurs. In winter, raptors and other birds move down from the freezing north to southern Arizona.

For a week in January, I was the guest of Dick and Fran Zweifel in their three-storey log cabin, which overlooks the East Turkey Creek, with superb views of the snow-covered 3000m peaks. Their few-acre block is covered with pinyon pine (source of pine-nuts), agave, juniper (a great source of berries for wintering birds), with deciduous planes and sycamores near the creek. Fran's attempts to grow vegetables have met with no success, as daily visits from the beautiful White-tailed Deer and extraordinary Javelinas (also known as Collared Peccary, a native pig), aided by the occasional Raccoon and Black Bear, rapidly put paid to anything that might have been edible to humans. The deer and Javelina families are very endearing, so much so that Fran has given up trying to be self-sufficient for vegetables, and puts food out for them. Chipmunks live in the woodpile. These are very small squirrels, very prettily marked, with an electrifying turn of speed when they are caught in the open.

On the deck outside the kitchen, Dick (a retired curator of herpetology at the American Museum of Natural History) and Fran (an illustrator of children's books), have a seed tray, which is very well patronised all day by the local birds. The Acorn Woodpecker is strikingly patterned

in black and white, with a red cap. This bird drills holes in the smooth-barked deciduous trees, and stores acorns and other seeds in the holes. As the seed has to fit the hole, this is trickier than it sounds, but I guess the Acorn Woodpeckers must soon learn the size of an average acorn. House Finches and Cassin's Finches also visited the seed tray. These sparrow-sized birds take a little learning, as in both cases, the male is brown with a blush of pink on the head and breast, and the female is pale with dark streaking. It took me a few minutes to learn the differences between the males, but I was never confident of the females.

Another pair of species that used the seeds were the Yellow-eyed and Dark-eyed Juncos. These sparrows are grey with brown backs, white bellies, dark tails with conspicuous white edges. The only way to recognize the local, rare Yellow-eyed from the widespread, common, migratory Dark-eyed is guess! Particularly interesting were the colour forms of the Dark-eyed. I had seen this species in Central Park, New York, where the birds have black backs and hoods. This form did not turn up at the seed tray, but identifying the origins of wintering birds from other parts of the US was quite easy, as the juncos of each area of the US are distinctive.

The Arizona/ Grey-breasted/Mexican Jay (shades of White's Scaly Ground Mountain Thrush) is the size of a small crow, and is a beautiful baby blue above (seen at its best in sunlight), and pale grey below. Stellar's

Jay is all royal blue, apart from the male's white eyebrows. The White-breasted Nuthatch is an American attempt at making a Sittella, and the similarity is most striking. At the seed tray, these small birds made quick, darting movements, and were very wary. The Evening Grosbeak, strikingly beautiful in yellow and black, has a huge version of a finch bill.

We visited the home of Sally Spofford in the nearby town of Portal. Sally has a row of seed trays and vertical bird feeders, and her yard is open to birdohs. She provides a number of seats for visitors to sit quietly and watch the birds. Unfortunately, on the days we visited, a Sharp-shinned Hawk had discovered the feeders also, and it had taken a bare branch with a good view of the feeders, so there were more birdohs than birds. One bird that braved the hawk (or didn't notice it) was the Bridled Titmouse, a little crested bird, beautifully patterned black and white around the face. At Dick and Fran's I had seen the Plain Titmouse, which apart from the crest, is completely lacking in useful identification markings - which is itself useful for identification. The Sharp-shinned Hawk was not tempted by the titmouse, and instead attacked a Flicker, which is quite a large woodpecker. As the Flicker was bigger than the hawk, it seemed, and was, a waste of effort.

One day we travelled to San Pedro, a well-known bird spot near the Mexico border. There we saw the Ladder-backed Woodpecker, so called because of the black and white bars from tail to head; Canvasback ducks; Blue Herons;

Curve-billed Thrashers, with long sickle beaks – like large babblers, I thought; Marsh Harriers (yes, white rump; no, not the same species as ours); three species of sparrow – Song Sparrow, White-crowned, Rufous-crowned; Meadowlarks – which species? Eastern or Western? – I don't know, as they didn't call, the only way to distinguish them ... and I don't know the calls anyway; Sandhills Crane; Green-winged Teal; Ruddy Duck (a relative of Blue-billed); Yellow-rumped Warbler; Canyon and Rufous-sided Towhee; and the superb Red-winged Blackbird.

From there we went on to Tombstone, home of the OK Corral, where the Earps and the Clantons held the most famous gun fight in the history of the Wild West, and which you can see daily ... for a price. It is everybody's worst idea of a tourist trap, but I guess that the alternative would have been the death of the town, a common fate for these old gold towns. Plaques on the verandah posts in the main street marked the spots where various gunslingers had bitten the dust.

Another old gold town in the area has become an "arts and crafts" town – galleries everywhere. A feature of the highways in this part of Arizona is the signs that indicate which family is responsible for the cleaning up of the highway; well, the highway near this town is under the care of the local gay and lesbian society.

A list of other birds that I saw in southern Arizona: Great-tailed Grackle (shiny black bird, like an overgrown starling, with a

long twisted tail); Mourning Dove; Bewick's Wren; Eastern Bluebird (lovely!); American Coot (white bill, but not the face shield of our coot); Townsend's Solitaire (blackbird-sized, brown with white eye-ring, orange wing-stripes, white edges to tail); Gambel's Quail (very close to our introduced California Quail, pictured in Simpson and Day); Pine Siskin (like a small sparrow with yellow on the wings); American Goldfinch (like the siskin, it is a relative of the European Goldfinch, but the entire body of the male is bright yellow, with a black cap, wings and tail, while the female is brown with yellow tinting around the face, with black wings and tail); and the Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

The Kinglet is a very beautiful little bird, and my favourite, so I shall finish my saga with an account of it. These are tiny birds, only 11cm long. Despite their small size they are migrants, as so many American birds are. As most of the country is under snow, and all of the deciduous forests are entirely closed down for the winter, migration is commonplace. In summer the Kinglet ranges right into the north of Canada and Alaska. I do not know whether they cross the Bering Strait and enter Russia. They are dark grey-brown with contrasting white eye-rings and two distinct white bars on the wings. The striking feature of the male, which never ceased to surprise me whenever I saw it, is the richest deep ruby-pink stripe on the crown. This is only visible when the bird is at just the right angle, and then it flashes brilliantly in the dark (evergreen) oak forest. Kinglets of different species are

found right across Europe. A lovely little bird, with loads of personality.

Other native animals I saw: Coyote; Harris's Ground Squirrel, a small squirrel that runs very fast, with its tail held vertically; Cottontail, a typical bunny; Jack Rabbit, a very hare-like animal, both in appearance and habits, e.g., they don't burrow, just make a scrape. It is a pity that in winter the frogs and reptiles sleep the time away, as I did not see any. Similarly, the lack of butterflies was a pity, as this region boasts about 170 species. Dick has collected 120+ species of butterfly from the region, some of them new.

So now I am back in Australia, with not much leisure to think about the birds I saw in my six months in the US, but I did while I was there. Some general observations:

In the temperate east of the US, where I was for most of my stay, there were many more plants with fleshy fruits dispersed by birds, such as Mockingbirds, than we have here, and far fewer plants with hard seeds hitting the ground and being dispersed by ants than we have.

The seed-eating birds in the US are mostly finches and finch-like birds. The National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America (which the birdohs I spoke to agreed is the best bird book for the US), lists 80 native species of finch and sparrow, and some of these, like the Cardinal, the Buntings and Grosbeaks are among their most striking birds. Of course, there was only one resident native parrot which was wiped out long ago, so the slack has been taken up by the

sparrows, some of which grow to quite un-sparrow-like size.

I have already mentioned how difficult birding is in areas where the leaves are broad and horizontal, especially when you don't know the calls.

The last point I would make is that most flowers are adapted to insect pollination with only a minority of flowers being bird-tractors. This reflects the stunning diversity of native bees in North America, and the paucity of nectar-eating birds. Only the one species of migratory bird (the Ruby-throated Hummingbird) contributes significantly to pollination. Since the hummers are around in summer only, bird-flowers flower in summer, when there are plenty of insect pollinators anyway. In Australia, very many plants are able to flower in winter, because there are so many nectar-eating birds that spend winter in the forests. This reflects also the differences in climate between Australia and the parts of the US that I visited. In winter, most of the US is freezing, literally. Apart from an insignificant area, Australia's winters are mild, and winter flowering works well. So perhaps I have got all of what I said then back-to-front – mild winters allow birds to stay around, so plants can flower in winter and have their pollen carried by birds.

As in Australia, birdohs are friendly, generous, and only too keen to share their knowledge, so if you ever go to the States with your binoculars, you can expect a good time.

From the Mailbag

Author: Elaine Mathison

Each month the Club receives a number of newsletters and magazines: some by subscription and some in exchange for *Whirrakee*. These are available from the Club librarian at our meetings.

NATURE AUSTRALIA(Aust. Museum) Summer 1996

"Richmond Birdwing" by Don Sands & Sue Scott reports that this spectacular butterfly of sub-tropical Eastern Australia is becoming much less plentiful in its range. Only two areas now contain viable breeding colonies..

"Goannas in the Graveyard" by Graham Thompson outlines a study of the Sand Monitor undertaken in Karrakatta Cemetery in Western Australia. The goannas have made their burrows under broken or cracked grave covers and find the sloping headstones are excellent basking places and lookouts.

"Did Martians Ever Exist?" by Geoff McNamara points out that 'conditions are so right on Earth that life seems inevitable. Yet Venus, Earth and Mars all started out much the same. What made Earth different? And was there ever life on Mars?'

"Vagrants in the Desert" by Chris Dickinson reveals that long-distance travel may be crucial in allowing small mammals to escape drought-stricken habitat with diminished food, and to exploit new areas where resources are temporarily enriched.

THE VICTORIAN NATURALIST (FNCV) Volume 113(6) 1996 December

"New Holland Mouse in South Gippsland, Victoria" by Bruce Dunn & Ross Williamson presents recommendations for

the conservation and management of the New Holland Mouse populations found at Wilsons Promontory and other sites in South Gippsland.

"..... Herpetofauna of North-Western Victoria" by A.J.Coventry reports the results of several surveys of reptiles and amphibians in sections of the Big Desert. Details are given of species diversity, and the soils and flora of each site.

"The Distribution and Abundance of Australian Fur Seals and Bottlenose Dolphins in Western Port, Victoria" by P.Dunn, R.Jessop & M.Healy outlines the methods used and the results obtained from 34 monthly surveys of these marine mammals.

HABITAT(ACF)

Vol. 24 No. 6 December 1996

A special supplement celebrates the Australian Conservation Foundation's 30th birthday, reporting on its development into an influential environmental group. The achievements and failures of each decade are revealed.

Other articles express concern about possible environmental damage from a large resort development on the Hinchinbrook Channel in Queensland and from defence department use of the Beecroft Peninsula south of Sydney.

Also received recently:

*The Bird Observer December 1996

*Geelong Naturalist(GFNC)
February 1997

*Castlemaine Naturalist(CFNC)
February 1997

*News Sheet(Ballararat FNC)
February 1997

BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB EXCURSION PROGRAM 1997

MONTH	SUNDAY	SUBJECT	LOCATION
March	16	Geology	Coliban Falls
April	13	Graptolites	Spring Gully
May Blackwood	18	Botany, walks	Garden of Saint Erth,
June	15	Mammals of box-ironbark	Wellsford Forest mammal boxes
July	13	Plants (mosses, lichens), geology	Mount Alexander
Aug	17	General	O'Keefe Trail
Sept	14 or 21	Botany	One of the following: Salomon Gully One Tree Hill Rifle Range Jackass Flat
Oct	12	Grassland flora	Terricks State Park
Nov	16	Insects of box-ironbark forest	Heathcote Insectarium
Dec	14	Wetland birds	Sewerage farm or Corop or Tang Tang

Bendigo Alpine Club Calendar:

March 18

BAC General Meeting - Field Naturalists Clubrooms, 8pm.

Guest speaker: Peter Ellis - Conservation History of the Whipstick State Park.

March 23

Federation Day Walk - Kinglake National Park.

April 4-6

Mount Buffalo Base Camp.

Contact: Kerrie Norris, ph. 54 478017

USED BOOKS FOR SALE

A retired member of the Club wishes to sell a number of Natural History books. The books will be available during all March and April meetings, or from Bill Holsworth (Phone 5443 4063). The Club hopes this service will be of help to all members.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
Australia's Native Orchids	W. Watson Sharp	1970	\$ 10
Australia's Wildflowers	Michael Morcombe	1970	\$ 5
Lamington National Park	Tony Groom	1973	\$ 2
Ovens Valley in Colour	Jocelyn Burt	1971	\$ 2
Growing Australian Native Plants	F. J. C. Rogers	1971	\$ 5
Our Amazing World of Nature	Reader's Digest	1969	\$ 5
What Wildflower is That?	Alec M. Blombery	1972	\$ 10
What Indoor Plant is That?	Stirling Macoboy	1976	\$ 10
Wildflowers of South Australia	M. Beek & D. Foster	1972	\$ 2
Shrubs and Trees for Australian Gardens	Ernest E. Lord (5th edition)	1970	\$ 15
Eucalypts (1st edition = Vol 1)	Stan Kelly	1969	\$ 15
Complete Book of Australian Mammals	R. Strahan	1983	\$ 15
Complete Book of Australian Birds	Reader's Digest (2nd edition)	1977	\$ 25
John Gould's The Birds of Australia	A. H. Chisolm	1973	\$ 10
Birds and Where to Find Them	W. Roy Wheeler	1974	\$ 5
Australian Honeyeaters	Brig. H. R. Officer	1964	\$ 5
Australian Flycatchers	Brig. H. R. Officer	1969	\$ 5
Grampians Flora	Rodger Elliot	1975?	\$ 2
Australian Native Plants for Home Gardens	A. E. Brooks	1959	\$ 2
Wildflowers of the World	B. Evarard & B. D. Morley	1970	\$ 20

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Mammal Survey Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Speaker Syllabus for 1997 General Meetings

12 MARCH: 7.30pm

Bird Reserves in Britain

Speaker: Greg Binns, Ballarat Field Naturalists Club

9 APRIL Roadside Conservation

Speaker: David Fairbridge, Roadside Conservation Committee,

14 MAY Land Conservation Council study of the Box Ironbark Forests in Victoria

Speaker: Paul Peake or Simon Ransome, Land Conservation Council,

4 or 5 JUNE Special Public Lecture to be arranged for
World Environment Day

11 JUNE Fauna Conservation in Box and Ironbark Forests.

Speaker: Dr Andrew Bennett, School of Aquatic Science and Natural Resources Management Deakin University, Rusden Campus,

9 JULY Earthquakes

Speaker: Dr Gary Gibson, Head, Seismology Department, RMIT, Melbourne

13 AUGUST Natural History in Croajingolong National Park. East Gippsland, Victoria.

Speaker: Bob Semmens

10 SEPTEMBER

Annual General Meeting

Speaker: To be announced

8 OCTOBER Botanic Gardens or Antarctic Natural History

Speaker: Dr Moors, Director, Melbourne Botanic Gardens

Excursions

The assembly point for excursions is outside the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise specified. Full-day Excursions normally commence at 10am. Please check details (or any changes) in the *Whirrakee* for the month of the excursion.

Sunday March 16 (full day excursion) Coliban Falls, and two other nearby waterfalls.

Paradoxically, the best time to view Coliban Falls is when they are practically dry, and the beautiful rock formations are completely exposed. The granodiorite has been worn by the water, with its load of abrasive sediment, into a series of potholes, some of which are joined to give a honeycomb effect. On Granite Creek, there is a small but quite spectacular gorge, cut by another smaller waterflow.

Meet/Start: 10.00 am outside Clubrooms, Golden Square

Leader: John Lindner

Drive: To Summerhill Road, Metcalfe, via Sedgwick, Sutton Grange and the Sutton-Grange-Redesdale Road. About 50km.

Activity: Walk about 0.75km across open paddocks to the falls. There is a short but steep descent into the river bed.

Explore the rapids and the actual waterfall and plunge pool. Picnic lunch and swim. Walk 2km upstream along Granite Creek to visit the other two smaller waterfalls. This second walk is optional.

Bring: Lunch and other refreshments, back pack (recommended), bathers, hat, strong walking shoes/boots.

Bird Observers Group

March 7, 7:30pm

Rob and Cynthia Watkins will give a talk on their recent trip to Africa.

Bird of the Night - White-faced Chat

April 4, 7:30pm

John Robinson will give a short talk on Emus and Bush Stone-curlews at Puckapunyal. This will be followed by a members' discussion on the use of the forest floor by foraging birds. We will be using observations collected at the Easter campout in the Lyell Forest.

Bird of the Night: Crested Bellbird.