



WHIRRRAKEE

April 2016

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD
NATURALISTS CLUB



Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552.

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Website: www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au E-mail address: info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au

Office Bearers for 2015 - 2016

President	<i>vacant</i>	
Vice President	Alistair White	0419 613 737
Secretary/Public Officer	Matt Comer	0409 162 627
Treasurer	Ben Goonan	

Positions delegated by the Committee

Minute Secretary	Anne Bridley (for general meetings)	
Excursion sub-committee	John Lindner , Simon Hay, Richard Goonan	5448 3406
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
Librarian	Jess Milroy	
Garden sub-committee	Kerrie Norris, Jess Milroy	
Observations coordinator	Jenny Shield	
Supper coordinators	Alistair White, Jess Milroy	
Hall management sub-committee	Maurie Lewis , Rob & Glenise Moors, Ben Goonan	0407427179
<i>Whirrakee</i> sub-committee	Sabine Wilkens, Alistair White, John McCallum, Ben Goonan	
<i>Whirrakee</i> contact/editor	Sabine Wilkens e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797
<i>Whirrakee</i> mailing coordinator	Jenny Shield	
Website sub-committee	Ben Goonan, John McCallum	54439347

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single \$40; Family \$50; Concession: Single \$35; Family \$40. *Whirrakee* subscription only is \$40.

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. The meeting starts with members sharing their recent natural history observations. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Diana Collier, Devi Shanty, Simon Hay, John McCallum, Richard Goonan, Karen Thomas, Jess Milroy

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188. To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 37, No. 3, April 2016

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 should be posted or e-mailed to the editor at least two days prior to the last Wednesday of the month. They will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although space restrictions occasionally require shortening of articles or holding them over till the following edition 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.

Editor's Note

This month, there is a huge range of activities offered for your participation and enjoyment: the geology excursion, a nest box excursion and some newly planned Saturday walks. In addition there is a workshop on lizards planned, and the speaker at the general meeting will talk about geckos from Mt Korong. Bendigo in autumn is indeed a treat, however one wonders how the situation is underground, where the heat and lack of rain has surely made a difference to developing roots, buds and seeds. February was a very unusual month in terms of temperature and has been dubbed 'monster-month' by some climate scientists, since it smashed records in all directions worldwide. Natural selection is working on our local flora and fauna... so let see what comes up in spring!*

**see <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/a-monster-of-a-month/>*

Front page photographer: Karen Thomas

Early last month, Karen Thomas took the Field Nat skins to the Bendigo Adventurers Club Nature Day. The club engages children aged 4-10 in learning, songs, craft and games. For many, this was the first time they had seen these animals. The children and parents meet at the Seventh-day Adventist church hall, 396 High Street, Golden Square once a month from 2:30 - 4pm.

Contact details: Michelle Robinson, 0423 352 902

Short Notices

Excursions

April will be very busy with several excursions planned...

17th April: Geology excursion (see page 9)

24th April: Nestbox excursion (see page 7)

BFNC Wild Weekly Walks – Nature Knowledge Exchange,

Excursions, 9am-12pm Saturdays:

Club members and visitors (families and students) are invited to join our new weekly excursions program starting Saturday April 16th. Excursions to areas of local interest will provide participants with an excellent introduction to natural history and forest ecology, including birds/plants/fungi/insects etc, recording observations, and learning/developing field skills. New members and visitors who would like to know more about the Field Naturalists Club and/or our local forests and woodlands (including local wetlands/creeks/lakes) are particularly encouraged to take advantage of this exciting opportunity. Excursions will be running weekly from **9:00am to 12:00pm each Saturday morning, simply meet (8:50am) at the Golden Square Hall to attend.** Please carry with you some water and a light snack, along with clothing suitable for the prevailing conditions. Walks will be short and of easy to moderate difficulty, suitable for anyone with a basic level of fitness.

The first four excursions in **April/May** will include:

- 16th April -Mandurang
- 23rd April -Ravenswood
- 30th April -Wildflower drive
- 7th May -Sedgwick

Call **Richard on 0423418815** or email **richard.goonan@optusnet.com.au** to find out more or **check the club's website** (www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au) **for the latest updates.** So dust off your field guides and join us for a morning to explore and share in the wonders our forests offer.

Workshop 5: Scincid Lizards of Bendigo's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands:

Identification and natural history

Presenter: Ben Goonan

Date: 27/04/2016

Time: 7:00pm, Golden Square Hall

RSVP: Please register your interest via info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au or by

post to PO Box 396 Bendigo VIC 3552.

More detail on what to bring etc. is on page 9

A welcome return visit

On the morning of 29th February, 2016, we had a pair of Magpie-larks come to our house block for the first time since the early 1980s. One bird repeatedly swooped a resident Magpie. They made their combined calls several times, then moved on. This species regularly nested in the general area, often in the same tree as Willie Wagtails. The Willie Wagtails used to nest near the house but have not been seen for about five years. We really miss them!

Rob & Glenise Moors

The Friends of the Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail

intend to provide signage that will help users understand something of the wild-life and plants that they might encounter along the trail. At this stage it will probably be an interpretive notice-board at or near the Bennett's Road crossing where there is a "Field Naturalists Reserve" already signposted.

The group has contacted our club asking for help in selecting a few representative plants and animals that might be used in the project and we have undertaken to become involved. We would also provide some information about each species.

I would like to have a meeting with any club members who would be prepared to contribute their knowledge of the area or make other suggestions about the project. We could meet at the site.

Please contact me if you would like to help.

John McCallum

mccallum@minopher.net.au

0408 359 011 or 5443 9347

Some special finds

Gemma Candy and the participants of bushkinder were excited to see some Eltham Copper Butterflies in Castlemaine last week. Gemma felt lucky to get this photo in the small bushland reserve behind the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens. There were four individuals flying around a Sweet Bursaria (their food plant).



This Bristle fly (left) flew into Karen Thomas' house in early March. Karen had never seen one before ...she thought it was a big bumble bee at first



The photo on the right was taken by Tim Lipert in the Maiden gully area, also in early March ...it shows a Zebra Spider Wasp carrying her paralysed prey (destined for her young larvae).



Zebra Spider wasp (*Turneromyia* sp. ?)



Left: John McCallum found this Marbled Gecko, *Christinus marmoratus*, in his suburban Kennington garden last November. It appears to have a regrown tail.



Left: Processional caterpillars, *Ochrogaster lunifer* on their way to or from their food tree, spotted by Jenny Shield in the Spring Gully area on February 24. A tempting trick, is to join up the head and the tail of the procession, so that the caterpillars keep going round in a circle....These caterpillars mostly feed on wattle (Jenny found a demolished Flinders ranges Wattle) and rest in a bag close to the food tree, hence the name of the adult: bag-shelter moth. An amazing experiment is

described by the program 'Catalyst': <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/3221684.htm> which looks at what exactly keeps the moving line of caterpillars (in this case 22 of them) intact.



Above and below: Boxing demonstration (lesson ?) in Jenny Shield's backyard, with a young male looking on, after having had a one-on-one practice with both adult males.



Karen Thomas' photo (left) shows the audience at the March workshop about woodland bird calls





top left: unknown resupinate fungus photographed by Joy Clusker during the water bird count excursion to the Treatment works at Huntly in March

A bird count excursion does not only reveal birds... (photos by Joy Clusker)

Top Right: Rainbow Lorikeet, also from the Bird count excursion at Huntly. A highlight was the sighting of a White Bellied Sea Eagle, but Joy didn't have a good enough lens for a photo, it was just a tiny white spot in the distance!



Bottom Right: a *Calvatia* sp, a large puffball about the size of a soft ball, splitting open, exposing its spores

Below:...the fences were covered with the shells of what Joy believes are Dragonfly nymphs, but she was not entirely sure about that identification.





"Nest box location...takes some planning" (photo by Kerrie Norris)

Additional excursion in April: Nestbox Project Excursion

For more than twenty years, the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club has been involved erecting nesting boxes in surrounding bushland to provide suitable habitat especially for use by arboreal fauna. Currently a group of members have been revisiting some of these sites to collect data, assess viability of boxes and consider contribution to the scientific body of knowledge. Come and share how the Clubs pole camera is being put to use. We might not actually see any mammals but there are a lot clues to be considered as to their presence.

When: Sunday 24th April

Meet: 9.30am at Field Naturalist Clubrooms, Old High St, Golden Square for car pooling or at 9.45am at Mandurang Hall/Reserve rear carpark off Fadderson Lane for more car pooling

Wear: Protective foot wear and clothing suitable for rough ground, scratchy vegetation and

weather. A hat and protective glasses or sunglasses are also recommended.

Bring: Binoculars, magnifying glass, notebook etc personal first aid, lunch and refreshments for the day.

Contact: Kerrie Norris 5447 8017, 0488 297 532 or Karen Thomas 0417 377 223.



Left: a serious group of fieldnats at the Glider symposium in Seymour, held on March 18 (photo by Karen Thomas)

March Committee meeting summary

by John McCallum

At the last committee meeting it was decided to provide a short summary, to be published in *Whirrakee*, of the business discussed at the previous meeting. This is the summary for the meeting of 6 March 2016.

- It was resolved to adopt documents to guide Committee in the following areas. Drafts have been adopted in principle and sub-committees are continuing to work on fine-tuning these. They are:
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Bullying and Harassment
 - Policies and Procedures.
- A discussion on guidelines for the Club making donations to other organisations was carried over until the April meeting.
- Final details of an event (which will probably occur in May) in memory of Peter Ellis are to be made available to Club members when they are available.
- A proposal to have club shirts made was discussed and an indication of support for the idea will be sought at the next general meeting.
- One new member was nominated and approved; Amy Greenfield.
- Our position on the City of Greater Bendigo's Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) became vacant and Jess Milroy was elected to be our representative. She will speak briefly on the matter at the next Club meeting. She will also continue to work with the Club library at a level of commitment that suits her current situation.
- The Treasurer has been following up outstanding memberships and mailing of *Whirrakee* will be restricted to current financial members.
- A proposal was made to conduct short excursions on a weekly basis. Richard Goonan is prepared to trial the idea for eight weeks or so. At present the intention is to hold them on Saturday mornings. Keep an eye on the Club website for more information (see also page 3)

- The Club has agreed to work with the Friends of the Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail who want to help users to understand more of the natural history of the areas along the trail. More information appears in this edition of *Whirrakee* on page 3.

Naturalist Workshops

The Naturalist Workshops offered in 2016 are specifically designed to develop participants' proficiency across a broad range of field based naturalist skills and knowledge. They will be designed to cater for a wide range of abilities and will use a participatory/interactive model, where participants learn from one another in a friendly and welcoming environment.

Workshop 5: 27th April 2016

Scincid Lizards of Bendigo's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands: identification and natural history

Presenter: Ben Goonan

Time: 7:00pm, Golden Square Hall

RSVP: Please register your interest via info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au or by post to PO Box 396 Bendigo VIC 3552.

What to bring: Enthusiasm! and images if you have any, your field guides and notes, paper and pen, your laptop or phone to use apps etc.

More information:

www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au or info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au

On March 20, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water released the "*Review of the native vegetation clearing regulations - Consultation Paper*", which sets out proposed improvements to Victoria's native vegetation clearing regulations.

A six week public submission process until **29 April 2016** is now underway, where the community can provide feedback on the proposed improvements.

Information about the review, including how you can make a submission to the Consultation Paper, can be found at:

<http://haveyoursay.delwp.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation-clearing-regulations>

continued from previous page...

On the same day, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water released the draft Biodiversity Plan titled '*Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036*' for public consultation.

The draft plan has been released for an eight week consultation period until **15 May 2016**.

The draft plan and consultation questions can be found at DELWP's consultation website HaveYourSay at:

<http://haveyoursay.delwp.vic.gov.au/biodiversity-plan>

The finalised Biodiversity Plan is scheduled for release later this year

BFNC April Excursion Permian glaciation at Lake Eppalock

The sites that we visit are world renowned for their quality. Members of our club had a leading role in defining the geological status of this area in the 1970s.

Date Sunday 17 April

Leaders Eric Wilkinson and John Lindner

Meeting place, time and car pooling

Meet at the clubrooms at 8.30am.

Carpool as much as possible to reduce the number of vehicles and share costs.

Passengers are asked to make a contribution towards the cost of the fuel

(at least \$10 in this case)

Proposed itinerary

- Drive to the lake shore at the end of Moorabbee Road, south of Knowsley (40 km)
- Walk to Kellam's Rock and other sites (till deposit and erratics) via the shore of the lake
Distance = 1.25-1.5 km return
- Morning tea – on return to the cars
- Drive to Point Patterson via McIvor Highway and Moorabbee Foreshore Road (14 km)
- Stop at glacial till deposit site on the way in Park at the gate near the caravan park
- Follow the track to Point Patterson and do a loop. Distance = 0.75 – 1.0 km return
- Return along Moorabbee F'shore Rd and turn off to Moorabbee Bluff carpark (750m)

- Walk down to Moorabbee Bluff and do a loop. Distance = 0.75 – 1.0 km return
- Drive to Moorabbee boat ramp parking area (1.0 km)
- Lunch and toilets
- Drive to the start of the track along the foreshore to The Stranger (1.0 km)
- Walk to The Stranger and other erratics (2.0 km return)

Total driving distance: 90 km approximately

Total walking distance: 4 walks totalling about 4.75 – 5.5 km

NOTES

The walking will be at a leisurely pace, and you can opt out if you need a break.

The second and third walks allow shorter alternatives.

The first and fourth walks cannot really be made shorter.

Additional possible excursion site

If we have time and everybody is still keen, awake and "with it", we could do a detour to the south to another notable Permian glaciation site at O'Sullivan's Rock.

This is at Spring Plains (Heathcote-Spring Plains Road) via Heathcote and Mia Mia. The distance is about 35 km.

We would then return to Bendigo via Redesdale and Kimbolton (60 km).

We can decide on the basis of what people decide at the time.

Some may wish to return home, and some may wish to forge on. Either will be fine.

What to bring

Clothing for both hot weather and cooler weather, depending on the forecast at the time
Sunhat and sunscreen

Sturdy boots for the somewhat rough track walking

Water and snacks

Lunch, morning and afternoon tea

Camera, notebook

Folding chair for lunch etc.

Money to contribute to cost of fuel if you travel in another car

Contact: John Lindner (5448 3406)

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club

Excursion Program 2016

Excursion Subcommittee • John Lindner (5448 3406) • Richard Goonan
• Simon Hay (0410) 424686 • Tim McCaw

Proposed Excursions With Firm Dates

- **Geology - Lake Eppalock glaciation (see page (9))**
- **Arboreal mammals (see page 7)**
- **Bird survey - Coliban Water treatment works, Epsom**
Date Friday 12 August Details the same as in March

There are also some proposed excursions with uncertain dates

• Fungi

Leader: Joy Clusker Location: Bullarto or Mount Macedon. Depends on rains.
Date: Sunday 15 May or Sunday 12 June Duration: One day

• Wetlands

Leader: Ben Goonan Location Tang Tang Swamp
Date: July, August, September or October, depending on winter rains Duration: One day

• Spring wildflowers

Leader: Richard Goonan Location To be decided as the season dictates
Date: September or October Duration One day

• Birds in Knowsley S F

Leader: Anne Bridley Location Sites in the forest as investigated in November 2015
Date: Some time in October (or other suitable time) Duration One day

Sign up for e-mail alerts

If you would like to be included in e-mail alerts amongst members about interesting sightings or important happenings in town, please go to the website (address is on top of inside front cover). The green sign-up button is on the home page.



Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday, 14th April 7.30pm
Associate Professor Michael Kearney
Lecturer, School of BioSciences, Melbourne University, will talk about 'Climate coping strategies of the geckos of Mt Korong'

Excursions

17th April Geology excursion (see page 9)

24th April Nest box excursion (see page 7)

New regular Saturday excursion activities

Non-members welcome, suitable for families
Weekly from 9am to 12pm (no cost)

Meet at Golden Square Hall (please consider car-pooling)

Contact Richard on 0423418815 or email
richard.goonan@oprtusnet.com.au

See page 3 for more details

BFNC Workshops 27th April

Title - Scincid Lizards of Bendigo's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands:
identification and natural history

See page 8 for details

Family Nature Club

The Nature Club activities will continue in 2015, so look out for announcements or check out their website. **Registration:**

Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326
<http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/>

Bendigo Native Plant Group meeting.

All interested people are welcome to come along. Meeting starts at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of the month, Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall.

The next meeting is on the 19th April.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.

Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

WRIN meetings held on the 1st Saturday of the month at 1pm the Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall

SEANA Autumn camp. 8-11th April 2016 Queenscliff, Bellarine Peninsula

The Geelong Field Naturalists Club looks forward to welcoming you to this year's SEANA Camp. See page 3 for details.

If you have any queries, please address these to info@gfnc.org.au

N.B. The registration form (includes prices for Camp Wyuna and the excursions) and a fact sheet 'Where to stay: Queensland and Point Lonsdale' available from Sabine or Matt. At this stage, please ring Deborah Evans AH: 5243 8687, mobile 0424 292 447

Australian Naturalists Network

The ANN Get-Together for 2016 (ANN16) will be held in Western Australia and hosted by the WA Naturalists' Club.

Please contact the ANN 2016 Committee and the secretary Margaret Larke by email at ANN16@wanaturalists.org.au;

mlarke@inet.net.au for more information.

New book...

If you're interested in learning more about the tiny creatures that are all around us, insect expert Michelle Gleeson – also known as 'The Bug Lady' – explains what you really need to know about insects in her new book *Miniature Lives: Identifying Insects in Your Home and Garden* from CSIRO Publishing.

The book will be especially useful if there are children in your life who are always asking questions about their latest such discoveries... ISBN: 9781486301379 - AU \$ 39.95. Order at: <http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/7264.htm>