



Understanding
Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Field Nats News No 354



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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 10 am - 4 pm

August 2024

From the President

The Fungi Group excursion to Mali Dunes on the King's Birthday long-weekend was attended by a small but hardy group of campers who searched the property for fungi. Despite the moist, cold wintery conditions there were relatively few fungi to be seen. Nevertheless, it was a very pleasant weekend. The nights were very cold but there were blue skies and sunshine for much of the time. (Photos 1 to 4)

(Continued on page 4)



The windmill at Mali Dunes. Photo: Faye Campbell



A cold and misty sunrise at Mali Dunes.

From the Editor

I am going to make a small change in the due date for FNN. As I have been receiving copy after 10 am, often quite late in the day on the first Tuesday of the month, it makes sense to ask for reports and articles to be sent on the **first Monday of the month.**

For FNN 355 that will be **Monday 5th August.**

Use joan.broadberry@gmail.com

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated. On days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.

August 2024

Sunday 4th – Fungi Group Foray: *Mount Worth* starting at 10.30 am. Please register for further details. Contact: Hamish Beshara 0428 219 273
hmb.fungi@fastmail.com.au

Monday 5th – Fungi Group Meeting: *Speaker to be advised.*
 Contact: Tobi May tobi.fungi@gmail.com

Tuesday 6th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: *Mammals, fungi and plants: a three-way relationship for a functioning ecosystem.* Speaker: Aviya Naccarella, PhD Student, Deakin University. Contact: Sally Bewsher 03 9752 1418

Saturday 10th FNCV Second-hand book sale: 10 am—4 pm. Donated books will be accepted up until the end of July. No fiction. Philippa will be setting up a roster for sorting books and organising the sale (Tuesday 6th - Saturday 10th) Please contact her if you can help. Contact: Philippa Burgess pgburgess18@gmail.com

Note: the Invertebrates Study Group Zoom meeting advertised for Wednesday 14th in the four monthly calendar, has been cancelled.

Thursday 15th – Botany Group Meeting: *Identification features of mosses and allied plants.* Speaker: Matt Dell. Contact: Sue Bendel possum56@gmail.com

Sunday 18th – Fungi Group Foray: *Masons Falls* starting at 10.30 am. Please register for further details.
 Contact: Hamish Beshara 0428 219 273 hmb.fungi@fastmail.com.au

Wednesday 21st - Microscopy Group: *Practical meeting.* Compound and dissecting/zoom microscopes set up for members' use. BYO specimens or view our vast array of specimens and slide collection with guidance and help with ID. Freshwater pond samples always available and abundant in multiple organisms. We are now utilising our newly acquired digital microscope. Prepare your own temporary slide for examination under the compound microscopes and also view projected onto our screen. Videos of microscopic life, explanation and identification.
 Contact: Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Monday 26th FNCV Council Meeting: 7.30 pm. Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 27th – Day Group Meeting: 10.30 am for coffee and a chat, speaker at 11 am. *A walk through geological time.* How our concepts of geological time have changed over 200 years, the importance of fossils and modern dating methods, with a stroll along the “Geoscience time walk” in Canberra. Speaker: Rob Hamson, FNCV member.
 Contact: Joan Broadberry joan.broadberry@gmail.com

Wednesday 28th – Geology Group Meeting: *Down the Murray River, source to mouth: geological history, geomorphology, and a bit of botany.* Speaker: Leon Costermans, co-author, *Stories Beneath Our Feet*.
 Contact: Ken Griffiths geology@fncv.org.au

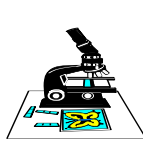
Friday 30th – Juniors Group Meeting: 6.45 pm. *To be advised.* Contact: Adam Hosken adamhosken@gmail.com

IMPORTANT

Those wanting to attend any FNCV excursion or camp **MUST register with the leader at least two full days** before the date of the activity. Some leaders may ask for registration to be even earlier. After registering you will receive details of exact locations, meeting places and times.

There are several reasons for this. Attendees can be contacted if the activity is cancelled or arrangements change. It is also essential for insurance purposes.

Non-members are welcome to register and attend FNCV excursions. Club policy is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion.



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$3 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. Junior non-member families, \$4 per excursion and \$2 per meeting.

Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for member photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: joan.broadberry@gmail.com by the first Monday in the month.

Welcome
Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:

Andy Chan, Stephanie Wong, Bridget Deayton, Beatrix Deayton, Sally Deayton, Steve Fry, Elissa Nicolaci, Tobias Francis, Holly Cooper, Allen Clayton-Greene and Samuel Oizerovitch

Dear Members

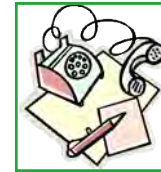
Now that people are out and about again, and our meetings are back in full swing, we would love some donations for the ongoing use of the FNCV hall. The greatest need is for

- *toilet paper*
- *small cartons of long life milk*
- *coffee and tea bags*
- *and importantly, biscuits for nibbling at meetings.*

Thank you for your generosity

If you need any help regarding your membership of the Club, please get in touch. I love chatting to you! I'm here on Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 till 4, phone 03 9877 9860.

*Best wishes,
Wendy Gare*



**From
the
Office**

The capture and handling of all animals on FNCV field trips is done strictly in accordance with the Club's research permits.

Thank you to all those who helped produce FNN 354

Joan Broadberry, Wendy Gare and Sally Bewsher

bookshop@fncv.org.au
for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

NEW BOOKSHOP BANK ACCOUNT

The FNCV Bookshop has a new bank account. If you have the details of the old account in your on-line banking, please amend them ☺
The new details are:

FNCV Bookshop
Bendigo Bank BSB 633 000
Account number 218383826
Please use your name as the reference.

All of our banking is now with Bendigo Bank, so please try not to muddle up the bookshop account with the FNCV account used to pay your membership fees or register for events etc.

Thank you!
Kathy Himbeck
Bookshop Manager

FNCV Facebook report:

43,900 followers (exact number no longer available)
and 3170 Visitors

(Continued from page 1)



3.

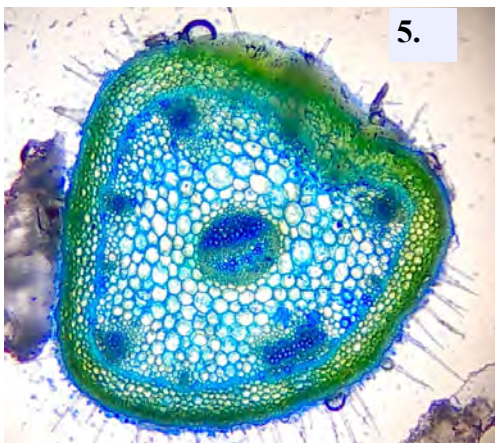
Searching for Fungi at Mali Dunes. *Photo: Faye Campbell*



4.

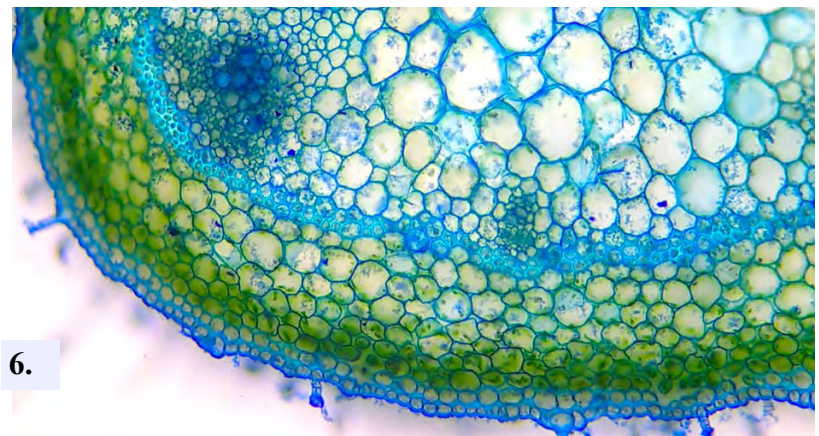
A desiccated earthstar at Mali Dunes. There were many of these.

The Botany meeting of June 20th was a study of plant leaf structure run by Dr Mary Gibson titled “A microscopic study of leaves”. It was well attended and everyone had an opportunity to participate in the practical aspects of making leaf peels, hand sections and staining methods. Hand sectioning, in particular, is an excellent and effective way of cutting plant sections. Once stained with toluidine blue solution, the internal, anatomical structures are clearly detailed in a range of colours. (Photos 5 and 6). There is clearly more to the structure of leaves and plants generally than meets the eye. Investigating the structure of plants in this way is a very rewarding activity. (See Botany Group report page 6)



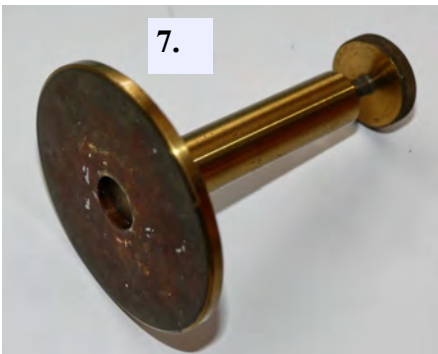
5.

Photo 5. Hand section of a *Geranium* leaf petiole stained with aqueous Toluidine blue.



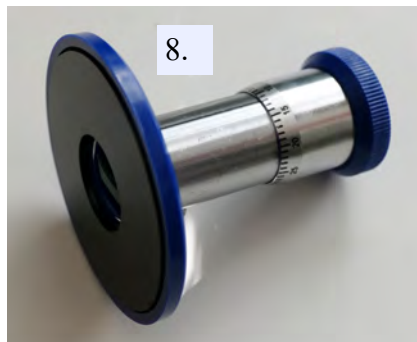
6.

Photo 6. Close up of same.



7.

A traditional brass hand micrometer. (Expensive \$150 upwards)



8.

A modern micrometer-style hand micrometer with a glass plate and specimen clamp. (Circa \$25 upwards depending on quality)

Hand micrometers come in numerous forms and some can be obtained online at modest cost. (Photos 7 and 8)

There are more excellent practical sessions and presentations to come, so please avail yourselves of the opportunities being provided and come along and improve your understanding of our natural world. Despite the very cold weather, field activities are progressing as normal, albeit with many extra layers of warm clothing.

Maxwell Campbell

All photos, unless otherwise indicated, are by M. Campbell



Fauna Survey Group

Meeting, 7th May 2024

‘Predators in the Mallee; assessing the impacts of dingoes, foxes and cats, and their management in semi-arid ecosystem.’

Speaker: Rachel Mason: PhD student, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University.

To protect livestock, predators are often removed and, in Australia, this often means dingoes are culled. Without predation, kangaroos and wallabies increase and too great a population of kangaroos impacts on arid reserves. In the Big Desert in Victoria, only boundary tracks are baited for dingoes, whereas in Ngarkat, South Australia, all internal tracks are baited as well.

Dietary studies were made by studying animal remains in scats:

- Dingoes selected large prey: kangaroos, wallabies and echidnas.
- Foxes had a broad diet which included small mammals and rabbits with no standout prey species.
- Cats ate mostly small mammals and birds with a large proportion of House Mice.
- Fox and dingo prey overlapped slightly and fox and cat prey also overlapped.
- Cats and foxes put predatory pressure on Fat-tailed Dunnart, Common Dunnart, Hopping Mouse, Silky Mouse and Ningau.

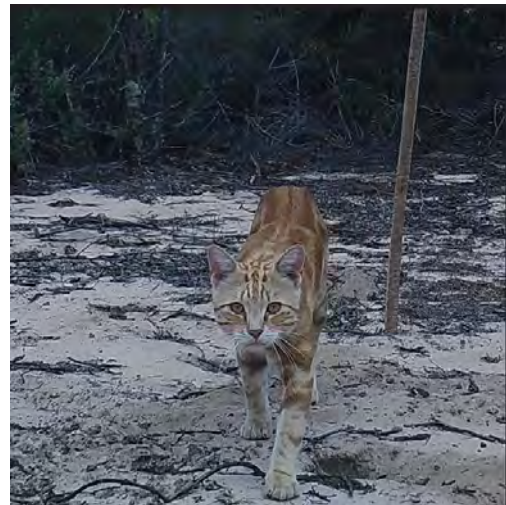
Ray Gibson Photos: R. Mason



Predators— fox.



Predators—Dingo.



Predators—cat



Big Desert National Park



Wyperfeld National Park



Botany Group

Workshop June 2024 A Microscopic Study of Leaves Leader: *Dr Mary Gibson*

The Botany Group is planning to have more meetings where the aim of the FNC, *Understanding our Natural World*, is addressed. Therefore, the June meeting was a workshop, where thirteen participants, under the expert leadership of Dr Mary Gibson, dissected leaves from dicotyledons for examination under the microscope. This enabled them to better understand the natural world.

Mary explained that leaves vary in nature, showing different structures depending on the conditions of their habitat. Leaves have adaptations to environmental conditions, including temperature, humidity, light, water and soil conditions. The leaves on a single plant can also vary depending on their location on that plant. If found in a dry environment, the surface of leaves may be hairy or waxy to prevent water loss. The stoma, open and close for gas exchange, as a result of the water content of the guard cells surrounding these pores. The stoma open when the guard cells have high water content and close when they contain less water. Stomata may be found on one or both sides of the leaf depending on environmental conditions and when found in hot, dry conditions, can open on one side only if required. Water vapour can also evaporate from the stomatal pores, cooling the leaves.

Below the epidermis lies the mesophyll layers where most of the photosynthesis takes place. The palisade mesophyll contains 80% of the chloroplasts, and consists of two layers of compactly stacked columnar cells. The columnar shape of the cell is another water saving feature. This is above the loosely arranged parenchyma cells with air spaces forming the spongy mesophyll. The veins contain the xylem and phloem in the vascular bundle. Phloem transports the carbohydrates produced in the mesophyll cells. The xylem transports columns of water, which can do so for a height of 100 metres as in Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*).

Subsidiary cells are additional cells adjacent to guard cells in the

epidermis of plants. These subsidiary cells can react

very quickly (within one second) to changes in environmental conditions and cause the stomatal pores to close. This is a useful adaptation to prevent water loss. Papillae are small bumps or volcanoes on the leaf cuticle which increase the surface area of cells and provide a waxy surface to stop UVB light and are another mechanism to slow water loss from the leaf.

The plant cuticle forms a skeleton of cutin which protects the plant from water loss. The chemistry of this waxy surface changes depending on the dryness of the area. Plants can produce phenolic compounds as a physical barrier to protect from pathogens like myrtle rust, and insect attack, UV radiation and wounding.

During the workshop the participants prepared and observed leaf structures by making epidermal peels and transverse sections to observe the structures discussed. Thank you to Mary for an interesting and informative session and to Max Campbell and Philippa Burgess for their assistance in setting up the microscopes.



Sue Bendel, Photos: S. Bendel



Fungi Group

Fungi Foray O'Donohue Picnic Ground, Sherbrooke, May 2024

For full list of observations:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fncv-2024-o-donohue-picnic-ground-sherbrooke-foray>

We had over 20 participants, some regular and many new naturalists among us, including an entomologist. Attendees tried their hand at using the clip-on macro lens and practised using field guides.

Walking through the cool temperate rainforest we came across a variety of fungi and some other friendly (and not so friendly) critters. Below are images of some of the highlights.

Melvin Xu



Slime mould, *Badhamia utricularis* letting its hair down. Photo: M. Xu



Looking at the underside of a Scaly Cap with a mirror.



Hamish capturing a photo of what?



A fungus infected Longicorn Beetle
Photo: H. Beshara



A bubblegum smelling Entoloma
Photo: R. Richter

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the FNCV.



A fungus on another fungus? *Neobarya agaricicola*. Photo: Karen Bennets



Looking for fungi with us *Cercophonius squama*, Forest Scorpion.
Photo: John Eichler



Right: *Chlorociboria aeruginosa*.
Fun fact: their mycelium is also blue!

Winter jokes

- When we milked the cows in July we got ice cream.
- We didn't clean the house we defrosted it.
- Why did dad stop using his loyalty card to scrape ice from his windscreen? It only got 1% off
- What do you call a very old snowman? Water
- What do they say at the checkout in winter? Have an ice day!
- A developer wanted to borrow money to build a ski resort. His bank told him it was a slippery slope.



GEOLOGY - Invitation to visit Victorian Tunnelling Centre

Philippa Burgess has booked Ross Digby, Associate Director of the Victorian Tunnelling Centre, to speak at the Geology Group meeting on 25th September 2024. Further details in FNN when they become available.



FNCV members have also been offered the opportunity of visiting the tunnelling centre at Chadstone for a 1.5 hour tour during the day on Wednesday 25th September. There are three possible time slots with a maximum of 20 people in each group.

The visit is some way off, but the Tunnelling Centre would like to know our times and numbers ASAP so that they can keep those slots open for our members. The first time to be offered is from 11.30 am to 1 pm 25th September. If you wish to be included in this tour, please email Philippa pgburgess18@gmail.com You will then be advised of the details including clothing requirements.

If this tour fills, another time slot, 1 pm to 2.30 pm 25th September has been offered and there is also a possibility of a tour at 10 am to 11.30 am on the same day if we get swamped by people wanting to go.

Everything will be handled on a first come first served basis, Philippa is waiting to hear from you.

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Fauna Survey Group— Survey Heatherlie NCR in the Grampians, 17-19 May 2024

Heatherlie is a small Nature Conservation Reserve north of the Grampians, where 10 members deployed wildlife cameras and conducted birdwatching and spotlighting transects.

Survey Deep Lead NCR, 7-10 June 2024

This survey took place in Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve where 10 members deployed wildlife cameras and again conducted birdwatching and spotlighting transect surveys. We also collected the cameras from Heatherlie NCR which we deployed during the May survey.

Both these surveys are in partnership with the Parks Victoria biodiversity science branch.

Meeting 7th May 2024

The speaker was Rachel Mason, PhD student with the Applied Ecology and Conservation Research Group at Deakin University. Her topic was *Predators in the Mallee: Assessing the impacts of dingoes, foxes and cats in a semi-arid environment*. A detailed report appears on page 5.

Meeting, 4th June 2024

The speaker was Sally Bewsher recounting her recent travels in Botswana to the Central Kalahari Desert, Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park. There were many of wildlife photos and also an account of village life where Sally sponsors a student. A detailed report appears on page 10-11.

Ray Gibson

Botany Group—Meeting 20th June 2024

Botany Group is aiming to have more meetings where the aim of the FNCV, (*Understanding our Natural World*), is addressed. Therefore, the June meeting was a workshop, where thirteen participants, under the expert leadership of Dr Mary Gibson, dissected leaves from dicotyledons for examination under the microscope, to enable them to better understand the natural world. A detailed report appears on Page 6.

Philippa Burgess

Day Group—Meeting 25th June 2024

Sally Bewsher repeated the presentation she had given to the Fauna Survey Group meeting earlier in the month. (See above).



FSG equipment day

On 6th July, the Fauna Survey Group held their annual equipment day. The fifteen attendees tackled the usual activities with enthusiasm and had time to chat and socialise too. Work involved: restringing harp/bat traps, sorting tags and bags, checking and mending Elliott traps and funnel traps, cleaning some items, sorting out the processing kits, counting and organising a range of equipment stored under the building and carefully recording everything.

A committee meeting followed in the afternoon and potential activities for the coming months were discussed and tentatively planned. It was a very successful get-together. Thanks go to all who helped out on the day.

Sally Bewsher Photos: S. Bewsher





Day Group Travels in Botswana *Speaker: Sally Bewsher*

In March 2024, I joined a Coates Wildlife tour to Botswana. Botswana is a landlocked country, located in southern Africa, immediately north of South Africa. It is more than twice the size of Victoria, has a population of about 2.7 million and is arid, with much of it covered by the Kalahari Desert. Approximately 40% of Botswana is protected by national parks, game reserves and private concessions.

After flying into Johannesburg and spending a night there, I took a flight to Maun, the third largest town in Botswana after Gaborone, the capital, and Francistown. Maun is a major base for tourist safaris in the country and located on the south-eastern edge of the Okavango Delta. There, I met up with other members of the tour, including Diana our Coates guide/leader. Another flight took us to our first camp on the northern edge of the Central Kalahari Desert where we spent three nights.

The camp is situated atop a sand dune and looks out towards the salt pan and over a maintained, natural-looking waterhole about 200m away. The water attracts plenty of wildlife throughout the day, including lions, Blue Wildebeest, Southern Giraffes, Impala, Lions, Springbok, Greater Kudu and a variety of birds. One morning we observed thousands of Burchell's Sandgrouse coming in to drink.

Early morning wake-up calls were followed by a light breakfast, before we set off in safari vehicles. Lions were present in this camp and were seen sheltering beneath a staff cabin, under shrubbery and, one day, in the shade of the cabin next to mine. As a result, we had to be escorted to and from our accommodation at all times. Wildlife sightings were by chance as we drove around, or where animals were often known to be present. Species seen included those mentioned above at the waterhole, as well as Ground Squirrels, Black-backed Jackals, Warthogs and Steenbok. Another safari drive took place in the late afternoon.

Our second camp was in tented accommodation on the southern edge of the Okavango Delta and the Moremi Game Reserve, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Water from the Okavango River arrives in Botswana from the Angolan highlands after crossing the Namibian Panhandle. It takes around six months to reach this enormous inland delta and wetland. Approximately 95 % of the water eventually evaporates or seeps into the desert. A drought meant that water levels were low during our trip. However, it also meant that animals were more concentrated around the lagoons and channels that remained. Cape Buffalo, African Elephants, Burchell's or Plains Zebras, Chacma Baboons, Hippopotamus, a Leopard and Spotted Hyenas were observed.

The guides/drivers/trackers everywhere were outstanding, friendly, very knowledgeable and always ready to answer our questions. Their skills were clearly evident, after Cheetahs were seen overnight around this camp. Our guides were determined to find them and followed signs, tracks and their resting spots for close to three hours on our morning safari. Assorted wildlife was observed as we followed the trail of the Cheetahs and we finally found the four brothers at a waterhole, having a drink and resting. Fifteen minutes later they set off again into the scrub. On another occasion, we were watching a pack of restless Black-backed Jackals, when one of the guides suddenly noticed something in the bushes. On approach, we saw a Southern African Rock Python coiled around a jackal!

Birds were plentiful but were not always easy to focus on for long as they flittered about in the vegetation or flew off. Some species seen were: weavers, bee-eaters, doves, African Fish Eagle, geese, guineafowl, hornbills, ibis, Secretarybird, Pied Kingfisher, lapwings, oxpeckers, shrikes and Wydahs.

Another flight took us to Chobe National Park. Travelling by road is slow and time-consuming, so planes are a common way of moving around. We were warmly welcomed and again had twice-daily safaris, seeing birds,

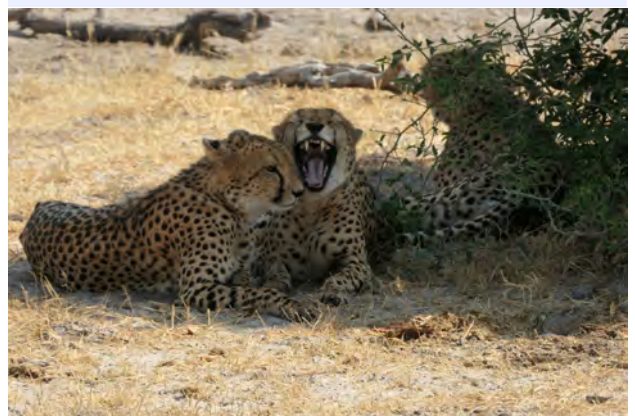
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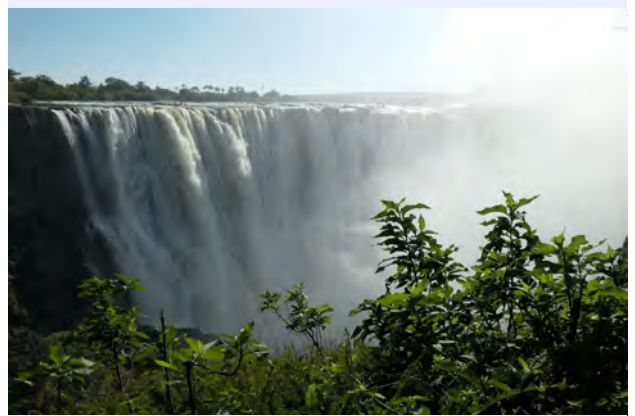
Elephant herd with young



African Fish Eagle



Three of the Cheetah brothers resting in the shade



Victoria Falls, Zambezi River

(Continued from page 10)

elephants, zebras, antelope and a few troops of baboons. A relaxing boat trip on the Chobe River, gave us the opportunity to observe a range of waterbirds such as gulls, terns, cormorants, egrets, herons and storks, along with a big herd of elephants, some hippos, a Waterbuck and Water Monitors.

Our trip ended at Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls, which is across the border in Zimbabwe and was named by David Livingstone. The Zambezi River pours over the falls, sending up enormous clouds of mist, visible and heard for quite a distance. The paths are wet and cool, while the vegetation is lush and dripping. We spent time wandering through the rainforest and peering out from the various viewpoints. We dined together that night, before all heading off in different directions.

Sally Bewsher, Photos: S. Bewsher

On behalf of the Day Group I would like to extend our thanks to Sally for taking us with her to Botswana, for producing the above report for Field Nats News and for her continuing support of the Day Group program. JB



Microscopy Group Practical Meeting



Toothed fungi include a diverse group of species sharing a single feature – the spore-bearing surface is covered with ‘teeth’, they include hydnum, crust fungi, bracket fungi, and fungus icicles, Hericium.



The delicate common Coralline, a marine algae.



A lerp is the actual white sugary, waxy covering which the immature stages of certain psyllid insects produce from liquid excretions known as honeydew which solidify following contact with oxygen. Psyllids are sap sucking insects related to aphids found on eucalyptus leaves.



Example of the pore depth from a pore fungi.

This months microscope group meeting was focused on using our dissecting/zoom microscopes to view the many specimens we collected during our activities at Phillip Island during April. Our specimens covered botany, marine, invertebrates and geology. The formations and beauty of delicate seaweed and marine algae samples were of special interest.

A selection of fungi included gilled fungi, pore fungi and toothed fungi. Some of the gilled fungi contained microscopic invertebrates and millipedes. The pore fungi shapes were quite beautiful, ranging from hexagonal, random, circular and ovoid. The depth of the pores was surprising. The toothed fungi contained an amazing array of regular-shaped, curved, pointed and conical tooth-shaped structures.

Utilising our newly acquired digital camera connected to our Trinocular compound microscope, we now have the ability to review our recently prepared temporary slides of freshwater micro-organisms. We can now view our results on the big screen within minutes of preparation .

Two juniors attended and became involved in learning the basics of microscopy. We also welcomed two members from the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club that had attended our SEANA camp on Phillip Island. They both thoroughly enjoyed the instructive evening particularly with so many specimens to study and photograph using their phone cameras.

An informative and instructive evening was enjoyed by all. The participation by all attendees in the various aspects of microscopy proved to be an fascinating evening discovering ‘unseen’ nature.

Philippa Burgess Photos: P. Burgess

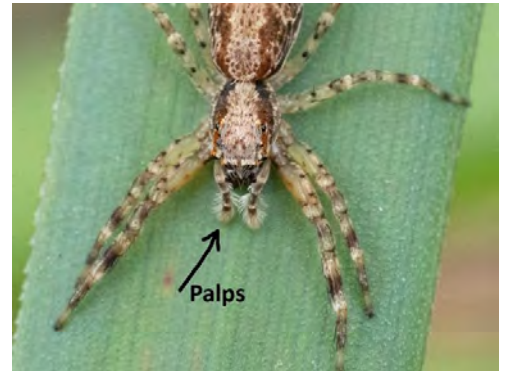
Shedding a Skin by Wendy Clark

As the weather got colder in the mornings, I came across many skin casts of spiders, particularly huntsmans. Sometimes they were blowing in the wind and sometimes covered in droplets of water. With a low sun shining on them, they were stunningly beautiful.

To my surprise, one morning, one of the skins blowing in the wind was actually a spider shedding its skin, probably for a final moult. It was nearing the end of the season, so after this the spider would be out hunting for a mate.

The spider was a Long-legged Sac Spider and was a male. I could tell it was a male as on the skin of the first image, you could see the tips of the palps had a bulb shape. This modified palp is used to store sperm which is sucked up into the syringe-like bulb that the spider had deposited either on a leaf or specially woven web. He could then deposit this sperm into the epigynum of the female spider is under her abdomen near where it joins the cephalothorax (head and thorax). The male usually would need to mesmerise, dance or distract the female with food or a combination, before attempting to mate, otherwise he would be eaten!

Palps are used to feel and sense things by the spider. In males, they change in the final moult to a bulb-shaped syringe-like structure. On some spiders, the bulb is very large and club-like on short palps, others can be quite small and on slender palps. Jumping spiders use their palps in courtship rituals, waving and flashing them at the female and their palps are often hairy and highly patterned.



Continued page 13



Long-legged Sac Spiders Genus *Cheiracanthium*

Continued from page 12

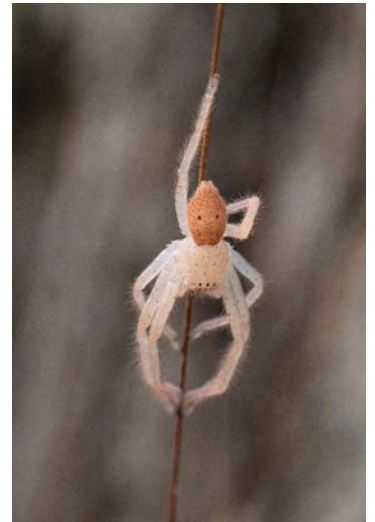
Here are some photos of newly-hatched Badge Huntsman spiders and some of their shed skins. The last one is an adult skin.



Badge Huntsman *Neosparassus* sp so young it is nearly transparent



The shed skin of a Badge Huntsman



The spider that emerged from the skin



Badge Huntsman *Neosparassus* sp.



Huntsman skin Subfamily *Deleniinae*

Something to think about

In cold regions like Melbourne, many spiders mature and mate near the end of the season and then lay their eggs. Do the eggs lie dormant over winter and hatch when the weather warms up? Or do they hatch and feed as much as they can and try and survive on minimal food until spring. I have seen young spiders in late autumn when it was getting cold.

Even at this time of the year I have seen tiny spiders (smaller than a pin head) in orb webs. I wonder what they would catch in their webs. Spiders do of course eat other spiders.

If anybody has knowledge or observations of this behaviour please send your reply to Wendy Clark. inverts@fncv.org

Advertising in the

Field Nats News

VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats
Office

admin@fncv.org.au

9877 9860

(Mon – Tues 10 am – 4 pm)



Coates Wildlife Tours

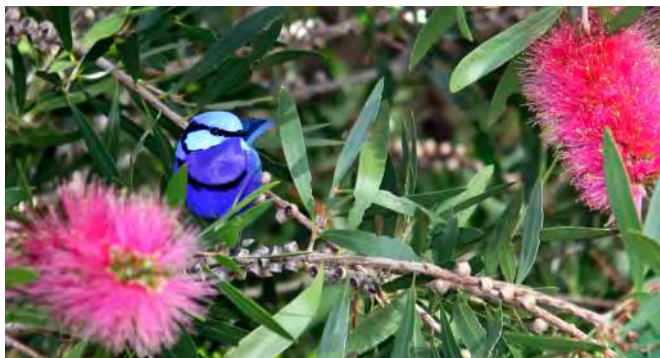
Specialists in Nature Tours since 1986

- Informative naturalist guides • Small groups (6 – 12 participants) • Private charters available
- Fully accommodated, assisted camping, and remote camping tours

South West National Parks

13-Day Accommodated Tour – Departs Perth 12 October 2024 - Max 12 participants

Western Australia's beautiful South West region is one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots. Nearly 80% of the plant species in the SW are found nowhere else on Earth, making the area exceptionally unique. Our visit coincides with the southern wildflower season — come and experience the colourful varieties for yourself! Tour highlights include national parks (Dryandra Woodland, Fitzgerald River, Stirling Range, Cape Le Grande, and Waychinicup), as well as other natural wonders like Wave Rock, Woody Island, Pink Lake, and the Valley of the Giants' Tree Top Walk.



New Zealand South Island Wildlife & Wilderness

15-Day Accommodated Tour – Departs Nelson 7 January 2025 - Max 12 participants

Discover Te Wai Pounamu (NZ's South Island), as we take you away from the population centres and tourist 'honey pots' to lesser known but equally spectacular destinations. One day you're high in a majestic mountain valley, viewing giant buttercups and 'vegetable sheep', and the next you're hiking in sub-Antarctic rainforest or viewing Sperm Whales at sea. Accommodation is in hotels and motor lodges with private facilities, and travel is by comfortable small coach. A local NZ Naturalist will also transform your experience!



Costa Rica Wildlife Safari

17-Day Accommodated Tour – Departs San Jose 25 October 2024 - Maximum of 12 participants

Costa Rica is world-renowned for its biodiversity and exotic wildlife, from sloths and jaguars to toucans and hummingbirds. On this 17-day tour we will explore mangroves, riverways and rainforests, starting in the tropical coastal lowlands. Moving further inland, the landscape becomes more temperate with different birds, plants and other wildlife. We then visit Costa Rica's volcanic highlands and experience the country's spectacular cloud forests. With over 500,000 species of flora and fauna, this small country counts for almost 5% of all biodiversity on Earth.



Sri Lankan Wildlife, History & Culture Tour

16-Day Accommodated Tour – Departs Colombo 3 March 2025 - Max 12 participants

Join Saman Veediyabandara, one of Sri Lanka's leading birding/naturalist guides, and Tom Grove, Managing Director of Coates Wildlife Tours, as they discover the natural and ancient history and fascinating culture of Sri Lanka. Together they will show you the wonders of the island, including the diverse plant and animal life, from whales to elephants to birds, as well as the delicious local food, delightful culture, magnificent scenery and historic fortresses, temples and monasteries that abound this beautiful country.



Contact us for further information on these tours and for details of our full natural history expedition program.

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