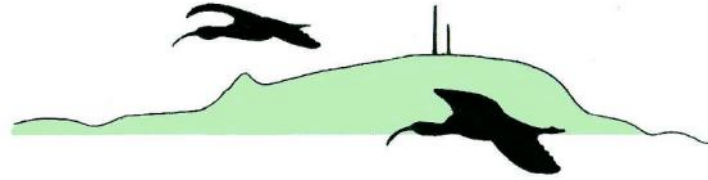


**ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc**



**NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2022**

**NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 pm.**  
Face to face at Nguluway Ngurang Senior  
Citizens Centre North Room  
(Opposite side of carpark to Harris Farm)

**The Movement and Monitoring of Superb  
Parrots.**

Speaker – McLean Cobden

**Excursion**  
**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November**  
**Wambool Nature Reserve.**

**Next Meeting – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November,  
7.30 pm.**

**The Movement and Monitoring of Superb  
Parrots.** Speaker – McLean Cobden  
Difficult Bird Research Group, ANU.

In his talk McLean will discuss some of the preliminary findings of his PhD project in which he has studied the breeding and movement ecology of the Superb Parrot. Despite the species iconic and threatened status, key knowledge gaps have impeded robust assessments of conservation status and possible management action. Critically, the movements of the species are poorly understood and have been variously considered as nomadic, resident, dispersive, migratory, and partly migratory. During his PhD, McLean has monitored the reproductive output of Superb Parrots across their distribution (including Orange) while also tracking breeding adults with GPS satellite transmitters. This study is the first to use this technology on the species.

McLean is an environmental scientist who has worked on and assisted with numerous research projects including monitoring of Greater Glider populations, monitoring Eastern Bettongs, mark-recapture studies on nesting Flatback Turtles in Western Australia, and measuring the occurrence of introduced Rainbow Lorikeets in Tasmania.



*Superb Parrot chicks from the 2021 tracking program in Orange. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

Please be Covid safe and wear a mask if you wish to. Do not attend if you have been unwell in the last week or a close contact.

**Next Excursion – Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Wambool Nature Reserve.**

**Leader Helmut Berndt.**

**Meet at Orange High Bus Bay at 9 am.**

The NPWS website says the significance of Wambool relates to its unusual geology on the edge of the Bathurst plains. As the granite gives way to other rock types the open grassland with scattered trees changes to a woodland of stunted trees with a rich understory of shrubs and herbs. There may be wildflowers and possibly sun orchids.

Wambool is 20kms east of Bathurst so it will be a full day. Bring your lunch and other necessities. We will park on the road and walk along one of the trails some of which will be up hill. Wear sturdy footwear and long pants. There are no toilets beyond Bathurst.



*Photo Helmut Berndt.*

On the excursion you will be responsible for the Covid safety of yourself and others who come along. Please do not attend if feeling sick or if you have been a close contact in the week beforehand. Car-pooling is encouraged, and it is up to the driver and passengers to agree on whether masks need to be worn.

**Last Talk: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October, Australian spiders helping around the house and garden.** Speaker – Ben Shoard, Goulburn Region Spider Seekers.  
*Report by Nigel Hobden.*

We were fortunate to have had Ben travel from Goulburn to speak with us. He kept the audience enthralled with his knowledge and passion for spiders. Ben is involved with two Facebook Spider Identification pages titled Goulburn Spider Seekers and Australian Spider Identification. He is currently studying his Advanced Masters in Biological Science through the Australian National University in partnership with CSIRO. As part of Ben's studies, he is pulling together a genetic phylogeny of the *Hadronyche* genus of Funnel Web Spiders.

Ben also runs a "You Tube" channel called "*The Spider Seeker*". He was recently interviewed by ABC Radio Canberra about Red Back Spiders - [What do you know about Australian Redback spiders? Arachnophile Ben Shoard shares his knowledge - ABC Canberra](#)



*An unusually patterned Red Back Spider. Photo Ben Shoard.*

**Ben's key message is developing an academic understanding of these animals that most people fear in order to raise awareness of the benefits they bring to our daily lives.**

As a result, Ben's talk was very engaging and interactive. Ben commenced his talk with

reference to a funnel web spider that lived by his front door as a 'guard dog'. I'm sure like me, others in the room thought that this funnel web was a free roaming spider, but it lives in a tank at the door to ward off intruders.

Ben looked to dispel some myths and confirm some truths about spiders. This included that it is great to have black house spiders, *Badumna insignis*, as a very helpful addition to any household. These spiders hunt moths and beetles that are attracted to the light of windows and lamps at night. They build a 'funnel-like' web in window frames and wall crevices inside the house and outside in tree trunks, rock walls and bark. The spiders retreat into these webs.

The myth that White Tailed Spiders, *Lampona cylindrica* and *L. murina*, leave lasting skin irritation wounds was dispelled. These spiders have a cigar shaped body with two pairs of faint white dots and a white spot at the tip. They are most active at night when they wander about the house hunting for other spiders, their food preference. They have been recorded eating Redback Spiders, Daddy Long Legs, Black House Spiders to name a few. Ben outlined that media sensationalism of 'necrotizing arachnidism' has given the White-tailed Spider a bad reputation. He said, "a recent study has monitored the medical outcomes of over 100 verified White-tailed Spider bites and not found a single case of ulceration".



*White Tailed Spider. Photo Ben Shoard.*

Ben outlined that there are 36 described species of Funnel Web Spiders (Family *Atracidae*) in Australia from three genera. *Atrax*, *Hadronyche* and *Illawarra*; yep, they're special in the Illawarra coast with their own genus! The *Atracidae* family contains the most venomous spider in the world being the male

Sydney Funnel Web (*Atrax robustus*). There have been no deaths since 1981, however there have been recorded cases of life-threatening bites.



*A rearing Funnel Web Spider.  
Photo Ben Shoad.*

Ben set up a display cabinet and then proceeded to remove a range of spiders from their travel containers for display. Ben pointed out different features of each spider to assist with identification. From their web formation and locations through to physical features of the actual spider, including spinnerets, carapace, eye arrangements and fangs (chelicerae) to habits of rearing and colouration transitions that occur when moulting. Everyone had the chance to get up close and personal to the spiders including Funnel Webs and a strikingly coloured Tarantula. Denis was very interested and brought in two Funnel Webs that had ventured across his veranda near Summer Hill Creek.



*Learning from Ben and his spider display. Right to left - Ben Shoad, Denis Marsh, Dick Medd, and Jenny Medd. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

I encourage you if unsure on the identification of spiders around your house or when out in the bush to take a photograph and post them on Goulburn Spider Seekers or Australia Spider Identification Facebook page for identification. I have really enjoyed the former FB page and learnt a lot about spiders found out in the bush and in the garden. Alison has since identified a Wolf Spider while gardening.

## **Last Excursion: Sunday 16th October, Lees Mountain, south of Mt Canobolas SCA.**

*Report by Helmut Berndt.*

After our 9am briefing at the Orange High bus bay, eight of us, including our newest member Ken Mills, headed out on Cargo Road. We were aware of the need for caution because of the large number of potholes reported due to the wet Winter and early Spring. A section on Coffee Tree Hill had a 40kph speed limit and even that was too fast, with water coming out of a spring which had appeared in the middle of the road. Once on Edinboro Lane, we slowed to appreciate the lush, rolling green hills.

We stopped on the hill overlooking Canomodine Creek, where Dick spoke about the complex geology in this area. We were on the Columbine fault line, with the Molong Rise to our west having been a chain of volcanic islands during the Ordovician Period, 500 million years ago. Lees Mountain and Lapstone Ridge to the east were formed by deposition of sand and gravel which over time became conglomerate and sandstone.



*Dick Medd explaining about the geology and flora. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

It was on the sandstone on the lower western slopes of Lapstone Hill where we left the vehicles and went exploring. The area is part of Canobolas State Forest, but whereas the valley had been planted to pine trees, the poorer sandstone slopes were left relatively untouched. The roadside featured the yellow and orange of Mountain Mirbelia, the purple of a yet-to-be-named mint bush and creamy white *Calytrix tetragona*. Hidden within the regrowth of black cypress pines were various orchids, flannel flowers which were ready to open, mosses and lichens, tiny fungi, and scattered grass trees.

We moved onto a side road where there was room to set up for lunch. A Red Box was

covered in flowers, the good season providing nectar for the beehives we had passed on the way in. Just up from the road the bush was more open than our earlier site and there were also patches of *Hakea decurrens*.



*The unnamed mint bush. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

It was an enjoyable excursion to a lovely, undisturbed patch of bush with a diverse flora. With easy access from the Cargo side, it's an area worthy of further exploration.



*Pultenaea setulosa. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

#### **OFNCS Committee News**

Like the training for Glider surveying the surveys in the state forests for Velvet Worms have been postponed due to the wet weather.

Fortunately, the cryptogam surveys went ahead on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October.

OFNCS will make a submission on both the Lachlan and Macquarie Bogan Regional Water Strategy documents. The closing date for both has been extended until 18<sup>th</sup> November due to face-to-face meetings having to be cancelled due to the flooding.

#### **Mt Canobolas Update**

The shrubs are starting to flower on the mountain, and it shows the evidence of recovery following the fire. At the intersection at Mitchells Way the Starbush, *Phebalium squamulosum* is the pale yellow below the much taller Acacia and Native Cherry. This slope was almost bare following the fire. In other places the Hardenbergia is a purple carpet with arches of purple where it has climbed up the trunks of Acacia and Eucalypt saplings. The Indigofera is not faring so well as it has been seriously 'pruned' and must be tasty for the kangaroos and wallabies.

On Saturday Nigel walked the Nature Trail and saw plenty of *Chiloglottis valida* plus a variant with a very deep metallic green first calli on the labellum. He also saw a group of 60 to 80 plants of *Pterostylis nutans*, the Nodding Greenhood, as well as a number of *Diuris pardina* at Orange View.

There is still so much water around that even some of the wombat holes have been flooded along the Fern Gully Track. However, the water hasn't stopped the Echidnas with two being seen in the last 2 weeks. Nigel has also spotted a plain yellow Planarian and on his walk last Saturday the striped Planarian below.



*Striped Planarian. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

## Cryptogam Surveys in the Mount Canobolas SCA

Report by Jenny Medd.

It was great to welcome back two expert scientists from Canberra, on this occasion along with their international visitor from Poland, to continue a survey of the cryptogams that occur within the Mt Canobolas SCA. They were searching for liverworts, hornworts, mosses, and lichens. Having participated in the survey back in May 2022, Drs Chris Cargill and Cecile Gueidan were keen to return to extend our knowledge of this microscopic world that is such a vital component of our landscape's ecology. Dr Grzegorz Wolski from the University of Lodz, while specializing in mosses, was eager to participate and extremely enthusiastic about the opportunity to visit our SCA.



Looking for cryptogams around the volcanic dyke on Towac Way.

Left to right: Dr Chris Cargill, Dr Grzegorz Wolski, Jenny Medd, Dr Cecile Gueidan, Dr Richard Medd and ranger Jack Fry.

Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

Over the two days of Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October, the three scientists, accompanied by three OFNCS members and, when possible, our busy local NPWS Ranger, explored seven different sites within the SCA. Ranging from the Fern Gully area, across to the Towac picnic site, and from the far end of Gum Ridge back to the Old Canobolas Road. Each site presented something special. However, despite locating really pleasing populations of multiple *Riccia* species of liverworts, hornworts developing spores and seemingly endless gardens of mosses, the consensus was that the autumn survey had yielded a greater variety of specimens. Some of the species appeared not to thrive in the very wet

conditions. Plans for another visit in autumn 2023 are likely to follow!

OFNCS member, Dr Richard Medd, was instrumental in organizing this visit and is to be thanked for his persistence, especially given our continuing wet weather patterns, and commitment to advancing our scientific knowledge of the value of the Mt Canobolas SCA.



A collection of bryophytes from the SCA. The horn-like spore structures developing from flattish, green sheets are a *Phaeoceros* species of hornwort. The crinkly parts are a *Fossombronia* species of leafy liverwort with two black ball-like spore structures visible. The spikey structures are a moss.

Photo Rosemary Stapleton.



A garden of mosses, mostly *Bryum argenteum*.

Photo Jenny Medd.

## Mullion Range State Conservation Area

Several members have visited different parts of this SCA to look at the spring flowers.

Nigel visited his favourite orchid spot on Long Point Road and saw *Caladenia fitzgeraldii*, *C. atrovespa* and *Diuris sulphurea*. John had enjoyed a Spring walk along the Central Mines Track where he said he saw 'a profusion of orchids and other wildflowers'.



*Caladenia fitzgeraldii*. Photo Nigel Hobden.

Hai often visits the Falls Track as did quite a few others this last Sunday. There were many Sun orchids, *Thelymitra ixioides*, in full bloom and occasional Beard and Caladenia orchids were seen. A Rustyhood was spotted by Catherine and her eagle eyes also picked up two Jacky Lizards. The smallest lizard entertained us with tail flicks, head bobs and leg raising after scampering to a high vantage point on a stump.



The copper sheen on this Beard Orchid, *Calochilus paludosus*, was very different to the Beard orchids usually seen. Photo R Stapleton.

### **FALCONCAM**

Report from Cilla Kinross.

The peregrine chicks are doing very well. Rubus is now three weeks old and Indigo nearly four weeks. Adults are bringing in about 4-6 prey a day, mostly starling, eastern rosella, pigeons, and a few oddities: rainbow lorikeet, king-parrot, noisy miner, quail and of course a few ducklings and grebelets. I can't always identify to species level as they usually come in headless, wingless, tailless, legless, and featherless! But as the chicks mature, they have to learn to 'unzip' prey, so the prey are becoming a bit less 'prepared'.

We expect the first one to fledge from about 12<sup>th</sup> November. Volunteers welcome to come and look for juveniles post fledging.

### **Spring Creek Reservoir Quarterly Survey, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022.** Report R Stapleton.

For once we were thankful for the willows growing along the eastern edge of the reservoir as they were an excellent wind break for the gusty westerly wind. What was not so welcome were the many Kinross rowers and motorboats and the shouts from them. This certainly contributed to a less than usual number of waterbird species and numbers. Another contributing factor was the high-water level and the vast amount of water in the landscape across the country. Often over one hundred Coots are counted but today there were only two! And the usual Musk Ducks and Grebe species were nowhere to be seen. Two Blue-billed Ducks took refuge in a sheltered area and on the way back Nigel spotted an adult Dusky Moorhen with six tiny babies.



The adult Dusky Moorhen 'shouting' a loud warning call to the babies. Photo N Hobden.

The large number and species of woodland birds made up for the lack of waterbirds. The Superb Fairy Wrens and Grey Fantails were flitting around the vegetation along the whole length of the track. Rufous Whistlers were calling at many places and Dusky Woodswallows have also returned. We wondered if some were breeding as we watched a pair chasing an Australian Raven from an old tree where we have seen juvenile birds on a previous survey. Another breeding record was of Yellow-rumped Thornbills who were seen carrying insects back to a nest high in one of the Radiata Pines.

Cilla, Nigel, and I watched the amazing skill of a Nankeen Kestrel hover almost motionless facing into the wind. An excellent chance for Nigel to take some photos. He was not so lucky with the Dusky Woodswallows as just as he was set to photograph them, they often moved

a few metres away down the fence or to a more distant branch. Cilla commented that we hadn't seen any Eastern Rosellas and we joked that maybe they had all been caught by the Peregrines as they have often been brought into the chicks in this last week. Just as we were about to head back Nigel spotted a Silver Gull and a Sacred Kingfisher that brought the list to 37 bird species recorded.

### **Burrendong Botanic Garden & Arboretum**

*Text by Jenny Medd.*

Most OFNCS members would be familiar, to some extent at least, with the Botanic Garden & Arboretum at Burrendong and with its history. Some weeks ago, Alice Newton, who is still heavily involved with the Friends of Burrendong Arboretum, contacted Jenny Medd with the following comment: *"We are struggling with small numbers of aging volunteers and a lack of money! Some time ago I suggested that we try to organise a few working bees with groups like Orange Field Nats and Dubbo Field Nats. I thought it would be a good chance for the two groups to meet mid-way and to do some service for us. We could organise a Sausage Sizzle for lunch. We would need to work with small groups, but I am sure we can organise that."*

The OFNCS Committee has discussed the proposition; however, given that our Society has similar issues with age and insufficient numbers for immediate local interests, we do not see a way forward to enable any firm commitment. However, if any individual members (and friends) feel able to help out in any way, please do so. Contact the Friends email at: [foba@burrendongarboretum.org](mailto:foba@burrendongarboretum.org) or Alice: [jeamnewton@gmail.com](mailto:jeamnewton@gmail.com)

### **Dates for your Diary**

**2023 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,**  
Dates for 2023 are February 15/16 April, 15/16 July, 14/15 October and 17/18 February 2024. Contact Julian Reid on **0405 922 505** or at [julianr@homemail.com](mailto:julianr@homemail.com)

**2022-2023 dates for Snipe counts** are November 26, and January 14.

### **Frog ID Week 11-20 November 2022.**

Help record frog calls through the free Australian Museum FrogID app, as a measurement of frog health and distribution

around the nation. All it takes is a minute of your time. Check out the details at <https://www.frogid.net.au/frog-id-week>.

### **Sightings around Orange**

If you see anything interesting, please email [orangefieldnats@gmail.com](mailto:orangefieldnats@gmail.com) or post it on Facebook.

### **'Things with Wings'**

A pair of **Red-backed Kingfishers** were reported on eBird at western end of Gosling Creek Reserve on 24/25 October.

**Male Flame Robin**, at the Pine View Track on Mt Canobolas.

**Leaden Flycatcher**, at Paling Yards Reserve and at The Falls Track, Mullion SCA.

**Wedge-tailed Eagles** are nesting near the Boral Quarry and can be seen from the Mitchell Highway just east of Byng.

**Fan-tailed Cuckoos** have been heard and seen in many places. Nigel Sethack photographed this one at Spring Creek Reservoir.

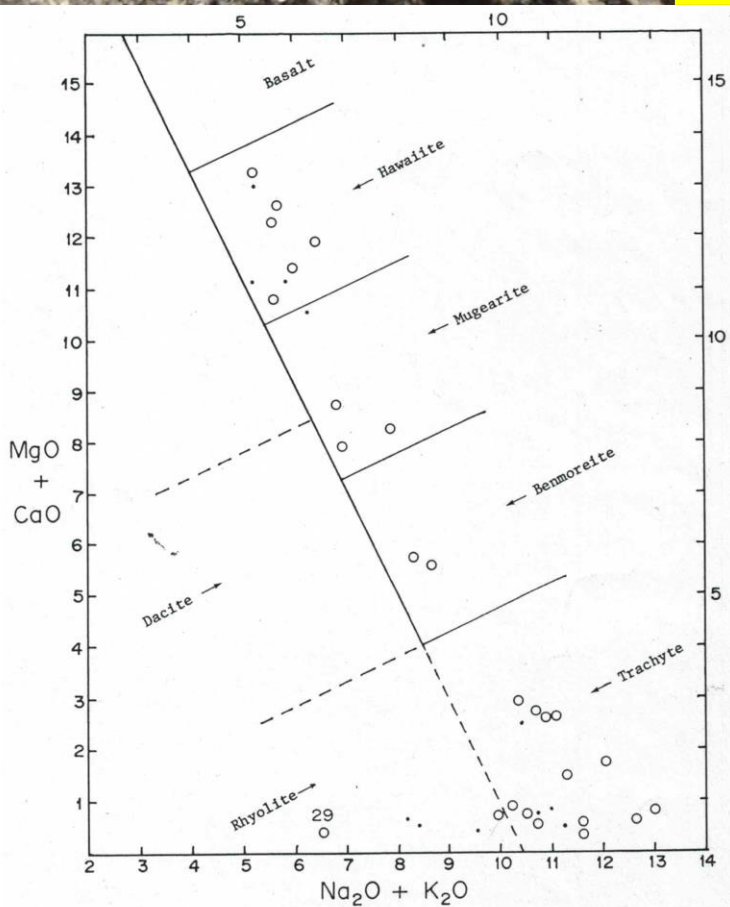
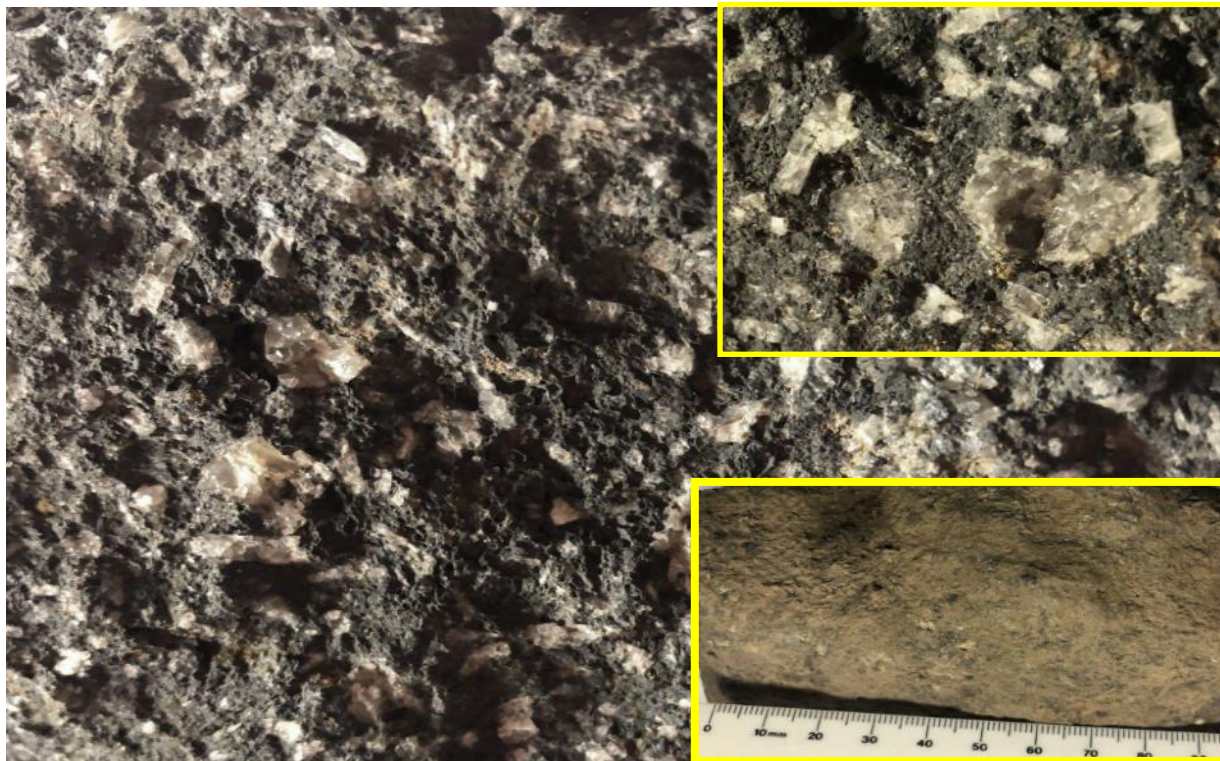


If you wish to enjoy more of Nigel's wonderful bird photos, he has produced a 2023 wall calendar (see below). If you would like to buy one, contact Nigel on [nigel.sethack@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.sethack@gmail.com)

<b>\$17.00</b>	<b>Birds of Orange 2023 Calendar</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>	
			
			
			

**Feature of the Month.** *By Richard Medd.*

And I thought they were quartz crystals! Stumbling across this chip of rock below the summit of Mount Canobolas revealed a fascinating glimpse into geology. Peter Toedter kindly explained that “the rock is a trachytic lava, from the Greek *trachys* meaning *rough*, because of the way the surface feels. What looks like quartz is actually orthoclase (potassium) feldspar, the rectangular crystals showing Carlsbad type twinning. The feldspar phenocrysts give the rock a porphyritic texture. Quite often, depending on the flow, the feldspar long axes are lined up parallel to the flow giving a typical *trachytic* texture.”



Lavas extruded over the almost million or so years, which formed the Mount Canobolas central volcano, varied in chemical composition as the magma chamber evolved. Consequently, a suite of trachyte kindred rock types occur on and around the mountain. Research revealed that the relative amounts of magnesium + calcium oxides *versus* sodium + potassium oxides defines the types of rock, from trachyte to basalt (as shown in the graph from Middlemost 1981). These various lava types occur in different areas of the mountain’s vents, peaks, dykes, domes, and plugs. These features tend to have formed from more viscous (sticky) felsic trachytic lavas. The basaltic type mafic lavas, being less viscous, flowed readily and thus blanketed the landscape further afield from the main piles.

[Confused? Dr Google will help you understand the terminology.]



**Creatures other than Birds and Plants.**

*Photos Rosemary Stapleton.*

During the cryptogam surveys this **Highland Copperhead** made its way across a road in the SCA. Luckily Greg, the visiting Polish scientist, didn't see it as he was extremely nervous of Australia's dangerous creatures.



And to add to the 'excitement' for Greg the next day we found two Scorpions under rocks at the end of Gum Ridge Trail.



*Left to right: Helmut Berndt, Dick Medd, Ken Mills, Peter Toedter, Kerry McGann, Nigel Hobden, Jenny Medd, and Hai Wu at Lees Mountain. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

To join please send your cheque or money order made out to "OFNCS" to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr Dick Medd, OFNCS, PO Box 369 Orange NSW 2800.

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*Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, including the people of the Wiradjuri Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.*

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