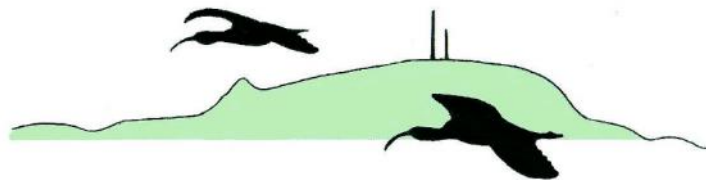


ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2022

NEXT MEETING

Thursday 13th October, 7.30 pm.

Face to face at Nguluway Ngurang Senior
Citizens Centre North Room
(Opposite side of carpark to Harris Farm)

**Australian spiders helping around the
house and garden.**

Speaker – Ben Shoard,
Goulburn Region Spider Seekers.

Committee Meeting, 6.30 pm.

Excursion

**Sunday 16th October
Lees Mountain, south of the SCA.**

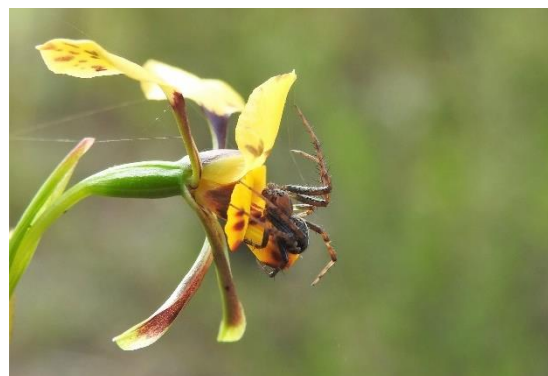
**Next Meeting – Thursday 13th October,
7.30 pm.**

**Australian spiders helping around the house
and garden.** Speaker – Ben Shoard, Goulburn
Region Spider Seekers.

Ben will give a basic overview of spiders in Australia. His talk will be about the ecological role of spiders and how useful they can be around the house. He aims to help people feel more tolerant, if not welcoming, of eight legged neighbours at home or in nature. Some of the common misconceptions will be discussed, including of daddy long legs, white tails, mouse spiders and funnel webs. Ben's talks are interactive and he will bring a few live specimens for demonstration (including a funnel web or two). **A warning** for people with arachnophobia, there will be pictures, live specimens, and stories about spiders.

Ben is a trained Science/Mathematics High School Teacher. He is a very active member of the Goulburn Region Spider Seekers Group and the Australian Spider Identification page.

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.



One of a number of tiny spiders photographed on Diuris flowers this spring. This was at Bumberry. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

**Next Excursion – Sunday 16th October
Lees Mountain.**

Lees Mountain is in the SW corner of Canobolas State Forest. It is a sandstone outcrop remnant in the pine forest with wildflowers, including orchids. OFNCS last visited it in 1992.

Meet at Orange High School Bus Bay at 9.00 am. This will be a full day excursion with no access to toilets. Bring morning tea and lunch. Wear sturdy footwear and long pants as there will be some uneven ground and steep slopes.

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: Raising a dam wall.....drowning a woodland.

Speaker – Dr Cilla Kinross, Adjunct Lecturer, Environmental Management, CSU.
Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

Cilla started her talk in a unique way by singing her composition, 'Witness,' about a much-loved Yellow Box tree. In it she wondered what it had seen in its life over the last 300

years.... the animals like possums and wrens, the impact of fire and flood. She asked what its life was like when Aboriginal people were nearby and about the impact of European settlement. It was a fitting introduction to her talk about the possible environmental impact, in the inundation zone, of the proposal to raise the Wyangala dam wall. A shortened version of her presentation had been given at the Listening to the Lachlan Conference in Forbes in June 2022.

Not only did Cilla give an overview of the threatened species and communities that would be drowned in the inundation zone but touched on the ineffectiveness of Federal legislation to protect them. She was also sceptical of the effectiveness of biodiversity offsets. This was picked up in the questions at the end of her talk and there was general agreement with her.

The proposal to raise the Wyangala dam wall aims to increase the capacity of the dam by 53%. It would drown or disturb 1692 ha of native vegetation (22 plant communities). This included 1391 ha of endangered box gum woodlands such as White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland. The result would be a reduction in habitat for threatened, migratory and other riparian biota. Cilla discussed a number of the 26 threatened plants and 28 threatened animals likely to be affected and the 11 species of migratory birds.



White box, *Eucalyptus albens*, *Grabine*.
Photo Cilla Kinross.

Some of these threatened species were:

- Daisy yam, (*Microseris lanceolata*), an important food source for Aboriginal people.
- Golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*), a diurnal moth that is a poor flyer whose grubs feed on the roots of wallaby grasses.

- Birds, such as Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) and Speckled Warbler (*Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*).
- The Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (below) (*Aprasia parapulchella*) that lives in rock outcrops with Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*).



When asked about the downstream impact of the dam, Cilla said it would be quite catastrophic, especially for the mid and lower Lachlan wetlands where other threatened and migratory species are found.

Cilla also focused on the role of trees as a resource for species, as environmental engineers, and their effect in water control. They were an amazing home offering many different resources. The flowers, seeds, foliage, bark, coarse woody debris, and leaf litter are a larder and pantry for birds, bats, antechinus, and invertebrates. The hollows provide nest sites.

While not currently listed as threatened, the River Red Gum riparian woodland is ecologically and culturally significant. These trees are dependent on water but don't want to be flooded all the time. Drought and climate change will present more challenges. There are many River Red Gums in the inundation zone. Cilla noted this type of woodland was declining quite rapidly and thought that it should be considered under threat. She encouraged us to read "Flooded Forest and Desert Creek: Ecology and History of the River Red Gum" by Matt Colloff, CSIRO Publishing.

This book outlines how these trees have an amazing ability to concentrate and hold water in a mound under the tree, which is used during drought. The tree roots act as water pumps and can be used to help drain areas. They create new waterways and oxbow lakes. One tree can collect debris, which provides a sheltered place for fish. Red gums can help form long narrow islands and their seeds create new habitat such as sand bars.

River Red Gums provided material goods for Aboriginal people but are so much more. Large trees held spiritual power, were often named, and provided strong links to country. Dreamtime stories contain tree characters, involving individual trees, and even tree leaves and they were often gathering places and cultural sites. The river corridor of red gums that will be in the inundation zone mean that there will be a loss of significant places for Aboriginal people, but also Europeans. The present day farmers within the inundation zone treasure these trees and for others they have provided inspiration for much artistic output, such as films and music.



*River Red Gum to be inundated, Wyangala.
Photo Cilla Kinross.*

Cilla finished by asking if raising the dam wall was worth the loss of so much? There seemed to be general agreement that if a critically endangered community, like the Box Gum Woodland with only 1% left, was to be impacted by such a development, it should not go ahead. The reasons being put forward for raising the dam wall were also contradictory. Was it for flood mitigation or irrigation? How could both be achieved when one required the dam to be full and the other that it be below capacity?

More information on the dam proposal was shared by Cilla and Rosemary, who are members of the Wyangala Counterpoint Group. The group members are from the length of the Lachlan and are farmers, floodplain graziers, irrigators, environmentalists, and Aboriginal representatives. All are concerned about the impact of the dam proposal. Some in the audience felt that it was positive that this range of people were coming together and appeared to have a broader understanding of the impact of dams.

The evening ended with a discussion about the focus of the community and world on growth

and that the only way to save the environment was to limit growth and use less energy. Cilla used the words ‘the country is wounded, and it may never heal, even with time.’ Thank you, Cilla, for an informative presentation and for giving all who attended food for thought about the way we live and the consequences.

Last Excursion: Sunday 11th September, Healeys Road, Gooloogong.

Report by Helen Croke.

I will make my apologies right at the start for this report. With Rosemary not being with the group and Dick wanting some thoughts from “new eyes”, he emailed me after our lovely day and asked me to write a few lines. I was very reluctant to say yes as I have such little knowledge of any plants, birds or rocks and am sorely lacking in the observational skills you all seem to possess. So, forgive me for these ramblings.

I wasn’t even sure of exactly where we were going as I drove into the Orange High School Bus Bay. We had been sent information, I just hadn’t quite got round to finding the details, but where we were going was irrelevant to me. I knew it was going to be fun wherever we ended up. I was excited for another wonderful day with my new friends from the Orange Field Naturalist and Conservationist Society. My experience at Bumberry, the month before, had whetted my appetite for the day ahead.

Seven of us had met at the bus bay and it didn’t take long for us to be pulling out in three vehicles. The lovely countryside and wonderful company made the drive go very quickly. We had arrived at Gooloogong in good time, and it was looking impressive as we drove in. I had noticed it had received some Tidy Town Awards and I was not surprised. Sandra, having spent some time there with her work in the past, spoke highly of the community. A vintage car rally met us at the park where we stopped. John spotted a vehicle of the make used by his family when he was but a lad. Not so long ago!

It wasn’t far from Gooloogong that we had turned off into Healeys Road. After all the rain that had fallen, the creeks were flowing rapidly. The first crossing was ok but by the time we arrived at the second crossing Dick and his passengers were already on the other side and so was Jenny Stephens! But unfortunately for Jenny S, not all in one piece.

The spare tyre had been ripped off the strut from under her car after it had plummeted into a huge hole that had been carved out by the water rushing over the road. With the tyre retrieved and much pointing and waving, John was guided across the causeway without incident.



The easy to navigate first creek crossing showing flood debris. Photo R Stapleton.

With the strong possibility of other causeways ahead being as equally deceptive, Jenny S left her car on the side of the road and jumped into John's vehicle. As it turned out, it was a wise move. One of the crossings to come was considerably deeper! Up ahead was a locked gate onto private property, so we parked our cars and got ready for the fun to begin! We were so lucky with the weather. Not exactly hot, but it wasn't raining. And for this we were grateful.

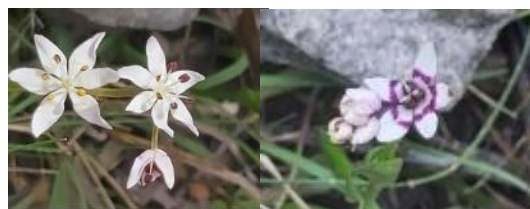
As the group carefully and patiently worked its way into the bush, I was excited to hear many words I had heard before from Jack, Nigel, and Rosemary when we were at Bumberry. Sporophytes, *Acacia paradoxa*, *Caladenia*, Greenhoods, Donkey Orchids and Lady Fingers just to name a few. These words were slightly familiar to me now but if I had to match a label with a picture of each, I would not have scored too well!



Not looking for car keys! Looking for orchids Photo. Peter Toedter

I was so appreciative of nature's design in the placement of these plants as we snuffled our way through the bush. It meant that there was a repetition to the siting of them. Between Jenny's enthusiastic calling out and Sandra's pointing stick I was becoming just the slightest bit more confident in identifying some of them. I was beginning to zone in on the single leaf or the rosette or the one leaf that stood upright from the ground, in my attempt to be more discerning of the orchids.

I was careful not to venture away from the members of the group. I wasn't worried about getting lost! I was worried that I might miss out on something! Information about a plant or bird or rock or the sighting of something wonderful that I would have walked straight past. Any one of the group would point out something of interest about nearly every plant we came across. Just a couple I remember was that the Varnish Wattle has 2 longitudinal veins. The Early Nancy plant has a separate male and female plant just like us!



Male (left) and female (right) flowers of Early Nancy. Photos Helen Croke.

And the plant from the pea family we came across, has toxins that can affect sheep when eaten. Wanting to make sure I got this story right, I googled.... "the toxins in the *Swainsona* pea affected an animal's brain by attacking an enzyme involved in metabolism. They lose the ability to judge where their feet are. They become wonky, fall over, appear to be blind, walking into things," it said. "They can assume funny postures, like head bent down or head bent back...." Mind you, I have seen some people look a bit wonky, fall over and walk into things and I don't think they had eaten the *Swainsona*!

When I saw Peter and Dick looking at a rock they had picked up, I got closer to hear the conversation. Needing some clarification from Dick it was confirmed, in his hand he held a rock that was 360 - 380 million years old! "The geology of the area is basically late Devonian sandstone, originally formed in a continental shelf marine environment of Gondwana. The sandstone in that area is fine-grained and high

in silica, eroding to form shallow soils of generally low fertility.”

Sandra informed me of the carnivorous tendencies of the Sundew and Steve and John added to the info I had gained from Jack and Nigel about the Box, Ironbark, and other magnificent gums. Jenny’s enthusiasm was contagious. The delight that she had when finding particular orchids or fungi could be heard in her voice.



A Morel fungus that Jenny S was excited to find. Photo Helen Croke. (Note Hai Wu also found one a few days later on Edinboro Lane.)

Along with the identifying of plants and trees came many questions. Questions relating to the correlation of undergrowth and vegetation with the Callitris pines. Questions as to when this area had had bushfires and the effect of this on the vegetation and how it would have been burned by Indigenous communities. A question from Dick why the ‘age of fishes’ are freshwater when the rocks of the area are marine deposits. Peter didn’t have time to answer but he did explain the process required for the quartz that he found.

We enjoyed our lunch and the conversation continued. John spoke of his daughter and her work on the DNA of orchids. We touched on parasites and where fungi fitted in to the evolution of plants. A delight for us was some Eastern Yellow Robins flitting in and out of the bush. Sandra had spotted a Double Barred Finch earlier and got a great photo to prove it. We missed you Rosemary as we tried to distinguish other sounds around us as there were many more than these two.

Anxious to get Jenny’s car back over the causeway, we thought best to start heading back. Fortunately, we did not need to put into place some of the solutions we had come up with, as the water had receded considerably, and the hole was avoided! It was time to call it

a day. The vehicles went in different directions as we headed out. As we drove back into the bus bay, we all agreed that it had been another lovely day!



The unusual ‘forest’ of Chiloglottis trapeziformis flower spikes beside Healeys Road that Ruth had alerted us to. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

OFNCS Committee News

The training for arboreal mammal surveys that was due to be held in early September was postponed due to the wet weather. A new date has yet to be set.

OFNCS made a submission to the NSW Scientific Committee in support of the increase in the threat status of *Eucalyptus canobolensis*.

Mt Canobolas Update

As usual spring arrives a little later on the mountain than elsewhere. You will be able to enjoy the spring as all but 2 tracks are now open to the public. **NOTE that the Federal Falls walking track will be closed for upgrades from Monday 10 October until Monday 5 December 2022.**

There will also be limited camping at Federal Falls Campground in this period. Due to the ongoing work on the summit Snowgum walking track and the top section of Summits walking track are also closed. There will be increased traffic of machinery and vehicles on the road during this development and new speed limits are in place.

The SCA may also be closed for The Lonely Mountain Ultra Marathon Running event on the **15 and 16 October 2022**. It includes trail runs of varying length up to 100km on the SCA trails as well as in the adjacent state forests.

Canobolas Conservation Alliance Update

Report by Jenny Medd.



On Tuesday 20th September Andrew Rawson and Uncle Neil Ingram both addressed the OCC meeting at which the revised draft of the Regional Destination Management Plan (DMP) was adopted. Cabonne Council met a few days later and also endorsed the amendments as did Blayney Council. Thank you to all who sent submissions on the DMP - your support has made a difference, and all contentious elements of the original draft have been removed. Better, more generic wording has been used in the final version, with a greater emphasis on protection of the environment.

Many thanks to those people who took time to send in submissions. This pressure from the community heightened awareness of the importance of our precious environment and Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas in particular.

Neither the budget allocation for the mountain bike project nor consideration of the “mini-budget” was discussed by OCC; this appears to have been moved to the first meeting scheduled for November.

**centralwest
environment
council** 7th August 2022
**Meeting Report, by
Rosemary Stapleton**

Nine groups from across the Central West were represented at the Zoom meeting. While we all believe in the need to move to renewable energy sources there are many challenges to the environment in their development. Communities in the Central West Renewable Energy Zone (CWREZ), that includes Dubbo, Mudgee, and Rylstone, are facing these challenges. There are proposals, by foreign companies, for rare earth mines and big solar farms along with at least two major transmission lines. The result would involve habitat loss, which was pointed out as one of the major concerns in the recently released State of the Environment Report. Projects are being fast tracked and the meeting was told of a piecemeal and uncoordinated approach to the developments. While offsets will be required, they will be many small areas rather than a larger more sustainable area. CWEC hopes to be represented on the CWREZ Community Reference Group.

Outside the Zone there are differing views on pumped hydro but positive support for the large battery development at Wallerawang. The issues with coal mines continue with Lithgow Environment Group very concerned about more fracturing in rock structures in the Gardens of Stone, due to underground mining.

Draft water strategies continue to be released for comment. The most recent one is a draft Groundwater Strategy and then the draft second stage of Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies. Environmental groups comment on such strategies, but the outcomes don't seem to include the protection of our rivers and water sources. The most recent example has been with the Barwon Darling Flood Plain Harvesting Rules where the trigger level at Menindee Lakes, when upstream harvesting must cease, has been set at a level lower than the lakes were at when the fish kills occurred during the last drought. What hope is there for sustaining these river systems?

Changes at the federal level will hopefully have some positive outcomes with much of the decision making on water being brought under Tanya Plibersek's portfolios. She will make the final decision on projects like the proposed raising of the Wyangala dam wall.

Orange is not alone seeing proposals for high impact nature-based tourism, such as mountain biking, in conservation areas or on other Crown land. At Lithgow, the newly declared national park will have zip lines, mountain bike and 4WD trails and at Oberon a walking/cycling trail grant has morphed into a mountain bike trail.

The meeting accepted Cilla Kinross's resignation as President and wished her well in her focus on the analysis of the CSU Peregrine data. She has been president since 2013 and has been a vocal and significant advocate for the environment in that time. CWEC will celebrate its 30th Anniversary at the next meeting on 6th November... may it continue to fight to save our precious environment.

Listening to the Lachlan Conference Part 2 – the dam wall raising proposal.

Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

In the July newsletter I shared key messages from this conference about the environmental values of the Lachlan catchment. The NSW Government's proposal to raise the dam wall

was also a focus of the speakers and panel discussions. Key points made by eminent scientists and academics, an engineer and landholders were:

- it is extremely hard to manage a dam for water security (the initial reason given) and for flood mitigation (a reason being given now).
- if the dam wall is raised the river will change and dry from the bottom up. This will lead to significant ecosystem service losses and costs such as in water quality and for grazing and fishing and First Nations people.
- the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) has 85 requirements that must be addressed in an EIS.
- There were significant construction challenges such as the water level needing to be at 20% for 4 years in order to access the previous quarry sites or bring the rock fill in from elsewhere. This would severely reduce downstream water availability during the construction time.
- adding to the clay core of the existing wall and binding it to the old core was critical and challenging.
- landholders would be affected in the inundation zone by losing prime agricultural land. Reduced flows once the wall was raised would affect the production of Lower Lachlan landholders and the economies of surrounding communities such as Hay.
- one study documented that the uncertainty of the proposal had emotional impacts on these landholders as well as people involved in managing and protecting the river.
- there was a need for an independent assessment of the business case when it is released. The 2018 preliminary business case suggested a net benefit from the wall raising however an independent assessment of a copy that 'fell off the back of a truck' showed that costs were underestimated, and benefits overestimated. For every dollar spent there would be a ten-cent return. Dr Sarah Wheeler, University of Adelaide, also noted that the average cost overrun of these types of projects was often over 800%. The jobs benefits were short term.
- the initial cost had blown out significantly and would mean the water that was available would be extremely expensive due to the government policy of cost

recovery. The water charges in the Lachlan are already one of the most expensive.

- Water NSW pointed out that a new business case was being developed.
- How will the value and importance of the Lachlan wetlands to the whole MDB be considered in the business case?
- cheaper alternatives were seen to be available such as implementing the recommendations of a review of the Jemalong Irrigation system. The Lachlan was a forgotten catchment in that the Northern Basin and Murray/Darling had received significant funding for such alternatives, but the Lachlan had received no funding.
- savings in the Murray Darling Basin Plan for the Lachlan have been achieved through one large buy back so other water saving alternatives were not pursued.
- A bigger dam will cause even more decline in the reedbeds and redgums areas.
- The long-term impacts of increased irrigation should be considered, like the salinity problem in the Murrumbidgee.

For me the speaker that said there were 'magic pudding benefits' being suggested for the raising of the dam wall summed up my impressions of this NSW Government proposal.

FALCONCAM.

Report and photo from Cilla Kinross.

Three eggs were laid on 26th, 28th and 31st August. At 9.30am on Saturday 1st October one healthy chick hatched in record time. Chicks usually take from 24 to 72 hours to emerge from the shell after the first pip (small hole made by the chick's special egg tooth) appears until hatching. This chick took less than two hours! So, we are hoping for a strong chick.



Females are usually wary of letting the father near very small chicks, but this pair has been together since 2016, so there is a high level of trust. The photo above shows the chick at just two hours old (after being kicked over by

Mum!) and the male feeding the female. Shortly after this, she allowed him to brood the chick for a short time while she had a break.

There are still two eggs to hatch, neither showing signs of a pip on Sunday 2nd, but it's early days yet.

Dates for your Diary

2022 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,
Dates for 2022 are 15/16 October. Contact Julian Reid on **0405 922 505** or at julianr@homemail.com

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

2022 Aussie Backyard Bird Count
17-23 October. You can do 20-minute bird surveys to 'make every bird count'. [Click to get details.](#)

2022 NCC Annual Conference
Saturday 5th November. Sydney and online. [Find more information and register here.](#)

Sightings around Orange
If you see anything interesting, please email orangefieldnats@gmail.com or post it on Facebook.

'Things with Wings'
Several people have reported **Superb Parrots** being more obvious. Take a close look at them and any **Red-rumped Parrots** and you may see most are males. This suggests that the females are in nests incubating eggs.

On 16/9 Brian Williams emailed some great bird sightings from his new block near Vittoria. He and Pandora have **Little Eagles** nesting in their mountain gum forest and the **Black Falcons** have been eyeing off an old maliyan (Wedgetail) nest. He said, 'we also have **Varied Sittellas, Scarlet Robins** and we're loving the migration of Tasmanian **Silvereyes** across the landscape".

Rainbow Bee-eaters were heard at Killonbutta Reserve (Gumble Scrub) on 25/9.

Nick noticed that the **Australian Reed Warblers** had returned in late August. Their call can now be heard at most wetlands with reeds. However, no Lathams Snipe have been found yet perhaps because there are few muddy

edges at any of the local wetlands. Nick and Neil Jones (below) ventured into the reeds at Ploughmans Wetland but didn't flush any. Tony, Penny, and I were not so keen.



Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

Australian White Ibis (below) are nesting at Brooklands Wetland, in Orange. Nick King estimates there are 200 birds, and you can hear the chicks begging. Some are close to fledging and some adults are still sitting on nests or building them.



Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

Other Fauna
Neil Jones's catch of the day was this **Copperhead** in his driveway on 29/9. A timely reminder to be alert when out in the bush or in your garden.



Photo Neil Jones.

Thanks to all members who replied to Greg Ingram's request about Koala sightings. They were passed on to him and I hope to find out from Greg if any have been spotted.

Flora

It has been a fabulous time to visit the patches of remnant native bush on the western slopes. The shrubs and orchids are putting on a show. Places visited by members have been Cargo Quarry, Killonbutta Reserve, Healeys Road, Nangar, Conimbla and Goobang National Parks, The Falls and areas of the Mullion Ranges and Goonoo SCA near Dubbo. Below is a selection of some of the photos.



An unusual White Hovea from near Clandulla where Jenny Medd said the Acacias were spectacular in late August. Photo Jenny Medd.

Nigel Hobden took visiting friends to Nangar on 10/9 and saw flowering Prostanthera, Calytrix and a Boronia near the top of Mt Nangar but no view due to the fog! Orchids in flower were the Blunt Greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*), a Diuris and the Small or Common Gnat Orchid (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*) below.



A walk in the Bumberry bushland, 19 Sept 2022. Text and photo by Jenny Medd.

On one of our rare fine days, I was fortunate to be invited to join Rosemary on a walk in one of our favourite sections of Goobang NP. Finger orchids, Glossodia and Diuris were in flower, along with a solitary *Pterostylis plumosa* and a few remaining small greenhoods. Although the bush was dominated

by the yellow of *Acacia paradoxa*, many other shrubs were flowering, including *Hibbertia*, *Daviesia*, *Dillwynia*, *Olex*, *Hardenbergia*, *Lomandra*, *Calytrix*, *Grevillea*, *Damperia*, *Micromyrtus* and *Prostanthera*. As always, my photos were a bit hit-and-miss, but I was pleased with this Caper white butterfly (*Belenois java teutonia*, the Australian subspecies) that sat still long enough for this shot:



Note his fur coat (most suitable for our cooler weather!) A migratory and very common species, apparently the caterpillars usually feed only off plants in the caper family (*Capparis* spp.). However, most of the numerous adult butterflies we saw appeared to be checking out the *Calytrix* flowers.

There weren't a lot of birds but just as we walked back down the Staircase Trail Rosemary spotted 2 Varied Sittellas, a threatened species and saw or heard 5 different honeyeater species.

Mullion Village. Hai walked at The Falls on Saturday and went to see if the orchids were out in the cleared area east of the tennis courts. He found over 100 flowers of *Diuris behrii*, **Golden Cowslips** including this one below with a native bee. He had an identification from Facebook that said the insect was a "*Lasioglossum (Chilalictus) sp.* and the females are considered a 'primary' pollinator of this orchid and males (pictured) often sleep in them at night occasionally facilitating pollination."



Creature of the Month

Kreffft's and Sugar Gliders Reclassified.

By Richard Medd.

Arboreal animals are high among declining mammals, with loss of forest and woodland habitat and climate change squeezing their habitable zone. Recent small glider sightings in urban and peri-urban Orange is heartening, but also a reminder to especially keep cats indoors at night. The sightings also alerted me to recent name changes, and what occurs locally is now known as the Krefft's Glider.

Gliders are nocturnal feeders, foraging particularly on the gum of pinnate leaf wattles (e.g. *Acacia dealbata*), eucalypts, banksias as well as pollen and foliage-dwelling invertebrates. They also hunt small birds, eggs, chicks, and nesting adults. During the day they reside in tree hollows lined with leaves, and often go into torpor when stressed to regulate temperature and conserve energy. Usually, two young are born during winter and pouched for 3 or 4 months until able to sustain themselves. With a membrane stretched between the fore- and hind-limbs, called a patagium, they are able to glide among tree canopies, usually in a home range of less than a hectare.

Being smaller than other notable arboreal marsupials, including the Squirrel Glider, what we have been calling Sugar Gliders are generally recognisable, but identification can be a bit trickier. Variation among Sugar Gliders has long been known and previous subspecies based on morphology and distribution patterns have recently been overturned, with three species now recognised. Two of these occur in NSW and the main inland species is called Krefft's Glider (*Petaurus notatus*) as illustrated. It has a dark dorsal stripe which extends along the back to between the hind legs. The true Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), in its stricter sense, is mainly coastal and the dark stripe barely extends beyond the head. Squirrel Gliders (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) are larger, have bushier tails, don't have a white tip at the end of the tail and are generally much less common. Just to confuse the issue, not all Krefft's and Sugar Gliders have white tipped tails!



Image Supplied. Krefft's Glider recently sighted at Ammerdown Crescent.

Note: The request from Ben Shoard for locations of Funnel Web Spider sightings prompted Jennifer Kenna to tell a story about them at an OFNCS biodiversity survey over Easter in 1986 in the Oakey Creek area of the Central Mullions. The spider story will be in the next newsletter, but Jennifer also sent the photos below of what was known then as a Sugar Glider. It would now probably be considered a Krefft's Glider.



Col Bower and Dick Medd, in 1986, measuring the 'Sugar Glider' before its release. Photos Jennifer Kenna.



Dripping Rock at Nangar NP seen as a Waterfall on 10/9/2022. Photo Nigel Hobden.



Acacias in Killonbutta Reserve. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

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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