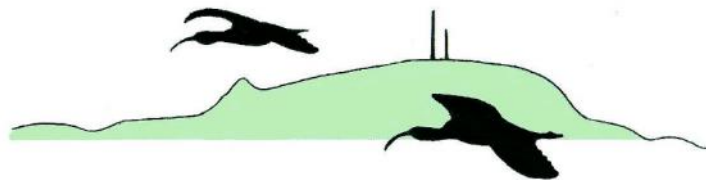


## ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER MAY 2024

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30 pm.**  
**An Insight into Cultural and Cool Burning Practices.**  
**Speakers Greg Ingram and Geoff Selwood**

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

**Excursion**  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Nangar National Park.**  
Meet at Orange High School Bus Bay at 9am.

### **Next Meeting**

**Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup> – An Insight into Cultural and Cool Burning Practices**

**Speakers** - Greg Ingram, Senior Land Services Officer, Central Tablelands LLS, and Geoff Selwood (in his role at Canobolas Zone, RFS).

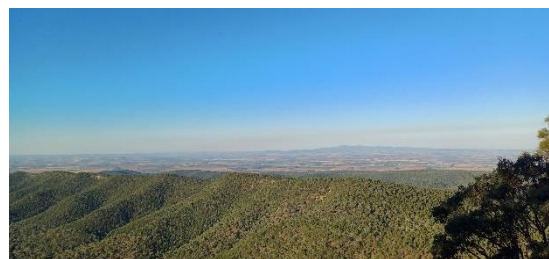
Greg and Geoff will share their knowledge of the differences between cultural and cool burning practices. They will also talk about their experiences of using these methods to care for cultural resources and the natural environment. Greg will also give an overview of the training in Indigenous Land Management in which he has been involved, in association with Tocal College.

**Next Excursion – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Nangar National Park.** Leader Nigel Hobden.  
**Remember 12<sup>th</sup> May is Mothers' Day.**

This excursion will take the regular route to Mount Nangar with stops at Terarra Picnic Area and Dripping Rock. If time permits, we have permission from National Parks to access the Mogong Creek Trail which runs to the east.

What will make the excursion unusual is that Alison Downing will be joining in and has received permission from National Parks to search and collect samples of bryophytes. As there has only been a small number of

bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts) identified in Nangar this should add significantly to the species list. Some autumn flowering orchids might be out.



*View from the lookout at Mount Nangar on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

Nigel reports the road is in great condition, well graded and repairs holding up well. 4WDs are preferred although it is negotiable for vehicles with more than standard vehicle ground clearance. Meet at Orange High bus bay at 9.00am to organise car-pooling. It will be a full day excursion.

BYO everything – food, water, and drinks. Please wear sturdy footwear, long sleeve shirts and long pants.

**Last Talk - Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Birds of Kakadu National Park and Darwin. Speaker - Nigel Sethack.** *Text by Helmut Berndt, photos by Nigel Sethack.*

In June 2023, Nigel teamed up with his sister who lives in Darwin and hired a houseboat on Corroboree Creek Billabong, primarily to photograph birds. The houseboat was to become the ideal platform from which to take photos. It allowed him to be there at the best times of the day and the birds were accustomed to visitors on boats. After becoming serious about bird photography in 2014, he visited Kakadu the following year and has since gained greater knowledge of his subjects and the skills needed to photograph them. He brought along and demonstrated his 'walkabout kit' which consists of camera, long zoom lens and a monopod with a gimbal head.



*Whistling Kite with fish. Photo Nigel Sethack.*

Bird photos from his trip were presented in groups such as Birds of Prey, which included action photos of Whistling Kites, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Australian Hobby and Brown Goshawk. There were photos of the Black-necked Stork (Jabiru), Australasian Darter, Great Egret and Little Black Cormorant. Among the water birds, Nigel showed the White-headed or Pied Stilt, Glossy Ibis, Magpie Geese, Pied Heron and Nankeen Night Heron.



*Comb-crested Jacana with a chick behind and another under his wing. Photo Nigel Sethack.*

Moving away from the water, Nigel treated us to portraits of birds on perches, which he likes to call "Birds on Sticks". These included Crimson Finch, Spangled Drongo, Shining, Satin and Restless Flycatchers, Sacred and Forest Kingfishers, colourful Rainbow Bee-eaters, White-breasted Woodswallows and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.

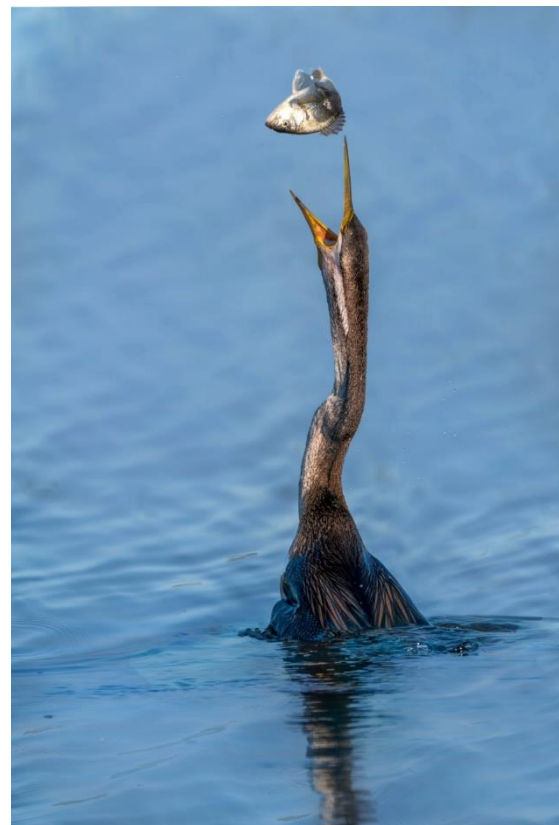


*Lots of White-breasted Woodswallows. Photo Nigel Sethack.*

Waiting in the water for an unwary bird and easy meal were saltwater crocodiles. There's a large population of crocodiles in Corroboree Creek Billabong and feeding them is strictly forbidden.

Nigel explained what he likes in a bird photo:

- Action
- Flying
- Feeding young
- Feeding
- Fishing
- Fighting
- Multiple numbers
- Nice lighting
- New species (Lifer)
- Portrait pose (Birds on Sticks)



*A Darter fishing. Photo Nigel Sethack.*

For technically inclined readers Nigel's gear consists of:

- Sony a9ii
- Sony f4.5 200-600mm Telephoto Lens
- Sony f2.8 24-70mm Lens
- 2x 256gb SD Cards
- Tripod
- Monopod
- Gimbal Head
- Batteries & 12v charger
- Backup Hard Drive

Typical settings are:

- Manual
- RAW
- Continuous shooting  
Option 1 Centre Focus Point, Lo (2.5 fps)  
Option 2 Tracking, High (5 fps)
- Aperture f8
- Iso 640
- Shutter speed as high as possible. Usually higher than 1/2000. No lower than 1/125

Nigel has now also recorded numerous species of birds around Orange and the Central West, a number of which have been shared in the newsletter.

### **Last Excursion – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April – Bald Hill and surrounds with Col Bower.**

*Text by Rosemary Stapleton with contributions by Col Bower.*

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> was a glorious day to be out in the bush and away from the recent worries of the world. At the bus bay we welcomed new members Marian and Paul Wright and Col outlined the route for the day. All thirteen of us piled into Col and Paul's 4WDs and Helmut's trusty Land Rover.

From the turn to Towac Picnic Area we headed down Glengariffe Way onto Bald Hill Forest Road. This took us into the Radiata Pines of Canobolas State Forest. The first stop was at an exposed rocky shelf where Col showed us tiny Bluebell plants, a small *Wahlenbergia* species that he believes is unique to the higher areas of the Mount Canobolas Volcanic Complex.



*One of the Bluebell flowers from the slope. Wahlenbergia flowers have male and female phases, the male phase first. This flower is unusual in that the anthers are stuck to the style. Photo Catherine Stapleton.*

A winding route through the pines led us to the track up to the top of an unnamed shrub covered peak to the north of Bald Hill. The lithology here was comendite, a volcanic rock different to the lithology of the other peaks to the south that we were to visit. After exploring the unusual rock formations Col lead the younger and fitter members down a steep slope to the forested valley a long way below. Three of us elected to stay and explore the summit.



*Following Col into the valley. Photo H Berndt.*

Col later reported *'The forest area was built on scree from the rock outcrop above, the scree trapping soil and allowing trees and deep-rooted shrubs to grow. The most startling feature was that the very rocky soil had been extensively excavated by wombats trying, mostly unsuccessfully, to make burrows. It was quite difficult to walk around.'*

*The site was all Eucalyptus dives and E. canobolensis. Unlike other places where E. canobolensis grows, there was no Red Stringybark (E. macrorhyncha) or Snow Gum (E. pauciflora), which might have something to do with the geology or very rocky soil. It represents a nice population of Canobolas Candlebark – there were some juveniles growing in the heath areas as on other rock platforms on the mountain.'*



*Sandra and Glen negotiating the wombat burrows. Photo Marian Knight.*

After having a relaxed lunch on the top of the hill, where some of us watched tiny Copper-tailed Skinks hunt among the rock rubble and shrubs, we drove to our next stop.



*Copper-tailed Skink. Photo R Stapleton.*

On the way to Bald Hill there was a quick stop to check out the different fungi growing among the pines. On the northern side of Bald Hill, we found quite a different vegetation community probably due to the different geology. There was discussion that the brown rocks here were like those at the top of Young Man Canobolas. Col suggested this site *'had a lot of vertical cracks that fill with soil, giving a better substrate for roots and moisture retention. The site seems to provide habitat for small shrubs, grasses and herbs that can't survive on the first site. The first site favours larger shrubs that grip the rock, their roots trapping soils which retain moisture after rain for a shorter period*

*than the Bald Hill site. The high rainfall of Mt Canobolas probably allows shrubs to survive in such difficult conditions.'*

A short drive took us to the southern side of Bald Hill to look at the unused fire tower. A few people climbed it, but any view had been obscured by the mature pines. It was disappointing to see that this area had been visited by others who left a lot of bottles, cans, and other rubbish. Many hands combed the area to collect and remove the rubbish.

Our last stop was also an unnamed outcrop (called Helen's Hill for the afternoon) with stunning views to the south and west. Once again, the geology was interesting with a fractured ridge line that the group walked along. While the lithology was superficially similar to the comendite peak it was much finer grained and lacked the obvious dark inclusions. Col suggested the light colour at both sites indicates they are felsic rocks with high silica contents.

There were tall columns on the northern side of this clearing surrounded by thick heath growing over a soft and spongy layer of moss and lichens. It would have been an ideal place to watch the sunset while having a sundowner (as they do on African safari drives). Such a pity we hadn't brought our cocktails as they would have been well shaken and stirred in our drives along the rough and eroded fire trails.



*The view from 'Helen's Hill' looking towards Cadia mine. The Flyers Creek Wind Farm was just visible in the distance, beyond the pine forest and the mine. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

At the end of a long day it was hard to pick the right fire trail for our return. One trail had restricted access due to logging operations, then a large fallen tree blocked our way. Finally, after much debate two of the vehicles skidded across 100m of wet and slippery red volcanic soil. Unlike the other vehicles that became mud spattered it was good to know that

Helmut's Land Rover arrived back at the bus bay, via a different route, clean and white.

During the day we saw very few birds and no mammals. This reminded me that there is always limited diversity in any pine forest monoculture. The drive through the pines also highlighted their vast extent to the south of the SCA and how easy it would be to get lost there. We commented that the many changes in altitude, varying slopes, and the fire trails we drove along would surely be suitable for mountain bikers. My take home message was about how special the small State Conservation Area is and how it must be preserved to protect the unique biodiversity within its boundaries.

Thanks to Col for suggesting this excursion and being such a good leader. And thanks to all who came for sharing your knowledge, asking questions and being such cheerful company.

### **Membership News**

Before Nigel's talk on Kakadu, Honorary Life Membership Certificates were presented to Dick and Jenny Medd by President, Geoff Selwood. Geoff related some stories and shared a few photos of their early years as Field Nats members. The citation outlining their contribution is at the end of this newsletter.



*Jenny and Dick Medd receiving congratulations from Geoff Selwood on the award of their life membership of OFNCS. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

Following the article about Chris Pratten in the last newsletter Elsie Howe, a Life Member and last active founding member of Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation emailed memories of Chris. Elsie related how Chris, as the founder and then-President of Orange Field Nats, had come up to Dubbo in 1977 to address a public meeting that had been called to gauge support for starting a similar Field Naturalists

group in Dubbo. She said *'My late husband Don and I (and probably also our two Primary-school-age daughters) were in the audience (does memory correctly tell me of around 70 people?) crowded into the then Red Cross Rooms'*. The meeting was obviously successful as it catalysed into being Dubbo's own Field Nats group in August 1977.

This is just one of the many contributions that Chris made 'out west' that people are recalling.

### **OFNCS Committee News**

Welcome to new members Paul and Marian Knight.

A small subcommittee will be set up to plan the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Our archivist Jenny Medd has drafted a comprehensive history and timeline of the Society and its activities. The Committee is also keen to do interviews with some of the people who were members in the 1970's and 80's. If you have any memories of the early years of Field Nats please share them by email to [orangefieldnats@gmail.com](mailto:orangefieldnats@gmail.com).

OFNCS made a submission on the draft Nature Positive Laws that have been proposed by the Federal Government to replace and update the current environmental legislation. The submission supported the recommendations of the Samuels Review including strong and legally enforceable national environmental standards that are focused on outcomes and include provision for the assessment of a development's contribution to climate change. The problems of using offsets for developments were highlighted and it agreed that offsets should only be used as a last resort and not at all if a CEEC was to be impacted by a development. The submission also highlighted the imbalances in the current consultation process for developments that often means there is not meaningful and genuine community participation. It also said the new laws must include provision for a merit appeal process to allow communities to test decisions through an independent body.

Unfortunately, recent media suggests that these proposed Nature Positive Laws may well be watered down.

As a stakeholder, OFNCS was invited to attend a dinner with the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) Board when they met for the first meeting time in a regional centre. Rosemary

attended and provided feedback that while data from ALA can be very useful, there were several concerns with ALA for OFNCS. These were the lack of scientific checking of iNaturalist records, lack of timely transfer of Birddata records to ALA and the impact of the reduction in the number of working taxonomists.

The committee has agreed to support Nigel Hobden with leaders for the spotlighting nights he is organising as part of the Central Tablelands LLS Biodiversity Month in September. Nigel and Nick King, from ECCO, are also planning a Backyard Biodiversity Information Session at the Orange Botanic Gardens on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Orange Show Results**

Orange Field Nats sponsors the Nature Photography Section of the Orange Show. This year 27 entries were received from 15 people.

Congratulations to Sebastien Comte, who is an OFNCS member, for being awarded first prize for his spider photo 'Shelob's Lair' taken in Tasmania.



*Seb and his prize-winning photograph. Photo Helmut Berndt.*

Thanks to Helmut Berndt for all his work in organising the display and co-ordinating this award.

### **June Talk and Excursion**

**Talk - Thursday 13th June** - Woodland Birds on Farms – rescuing Regent Honeyeaters in the Central Tablelands with Viv Howard and Beau Palmer, Senior Land Services Officers, CT LLS.

**Excursion - Sunday 16th June** – A visit to 'Koolewong Arboretum', Chris Pratten's Bush Block at Amaroo thanks to Jenny and Michael Pratten.

### **Spring Creek Reservoir Quarterly Survey, 30 March 2024. Report by R Stapleton.**

Cilla, Nigel, and I headed to the reservoir for the quarterly survey on Easter Sunday. Even before we walked in the gate we were greeted by a mixed flock of Red-browed Finches, Silveryeyes and Superb Fairywrens foraging on the long grass stems and Fleabane. Nigel Sethack also greeted us, with camera in hand, as he returned from his morning walk. Our first scan of the water showed the grebes were back with six Great Crested Grebes loafing on the far side and a raft of Australasian Grebes. They were among the usual large number of Coots on the water (about 220).

Scanning along the edge I was excited to spot the ripples and nose of a Rakali that must have been feeding around the roots of the willows and reeds. This was a first for me on the surveys. Much further down the track Nigel spotted another Rakali and managed a photo (below) before it dived underwater. Nigel also spotted a pair of Blue-billed Ducks swimming out from their usual hiding place.



*A fast-swimming Rakali. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

The little birds in one of the old Radiata Pines challenged us. Which type of thornbill were they and was the dull little bird with a finch's beak a Greenfinch or a Red-browed Finch? After looking at a birding app and Nigel's photos we decided on Brown Thornbill and juvenile Red-browed. Groups of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flew quickly between trees, (about 45). Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants were scattered along the length of the reservoir. Right at the southern end a group of 10-15 Little Black Cormorants were fishing in a pack.

We counted a total of 39 species. Surprisingly there were very few ducks. Most of the Grey Fantails also seemed to have left on migration, although we spotted three. Many of the very large Blackberry clumps had been sort of

sprayed with parts of the bushes left untouched yet adjacent plants had been hit.



*The juvenile Red-browed Finch that had us confused. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

When we were almost back at the gate, we saw there were no birds on the water, despite there having been hundreds an hour earlier. All the grebes and even the coots had disappeared. This was probably because three people were paddling in kayaks with trawling fishing lines. If this was the impact of just three kayakers, we wondered what the impact would be if the reservoir was opened to other watercraft.

Bye bye waterbirds!



*No birds in sight near the kayakers. Photo Cilla Kinross.*

### **Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas Update**

On 26<sup>th</sup> May Ranger Jack Fry and NPWS volunteers will be removing pine seedlings from an area of the SCA adjacent to one of the pine forests. If you wish to become a volunteer and help with this task you need to register with the NPWS Friends of Mt Canobolas Volunteer Program. [Click here](#) to join.

Volunteers will be meeting at Orange View Lookout at 9.30am and are asked to bring their lunch. Jack has already sent details to those already registered and will do so for those who register in the next few weeks.

NPWS is planning to undertake improvements to the Spring Glade Carpark soon. It will be closed while the work occurs.

For the most up to date information, please contact the Central West Area Office in Bathurst on 02 6332 7640.

### **Dates for your Diary**

**2024 Cowra Woodland Bird Survey dates** are July 27/28, and October 19/20. Contact Sue Proust for more information or to register for surveying at [sueproust@bigpond.com](mailto:sueproust@bigpond.com)

**Mycology May** is happening again but in a slightly different format. Some events may already be booked out so check at <https://events.humanitix.com/host/central-tablelands-regional-landcare-network>. There are workshops with Alison Pouliot from May 1<sup>st</sup> until May 4<sup>th</sup>. The **Mt Canobolas Fungus Foray** is on Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup> with morning and afternoon sessions. If not booked out you can also register at Humanitix for **The Mushroom Mysteries: A Fungi Whodunit**, Wednesday 1st May, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. It is co-hosted by Intrepid Landcare.

**Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society** are now only visiting **Burrendong Arboretum** on Sunday 26th May. For details email [contact@dubbofieldnats.org.au](mailto:contact@dubbofieldnats.org.au)

On Tuesday 17th September at 7pm **Col Bower will be speaking on 'Orchids of Central Western NSW'** in Dubbo. DFN hopes to visit Orange the following Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, to look at orchid locations around Orange. Details will be circulated closer to the date.

### **Sightings around Orange**

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

### **Parkes Constructed Wetland**

*Update from Murray Fletcher.*

On 30<sup>th</sup> March Vicki and I decided to go out and see how the development of the former Parkes Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) into a constructed wetland was going. It is looking very good but progress is still slow. There are plenty of birds taking advantage of the water although probably no more than were on the STP before this all started. They have installed a number of standing dead trees to provide perches for birds that like to be up high. They

still need vegetation to start growing as it's a bit bare and there is no bird hide although the lady in the Visitors Centre said that there was one coming and they are also planning cycle and walking tracks from the city out to the wetland.



*Parkes Constructed Wetland. Photo Murray Fletcher.*

We then headed to Forbes, and this was a great disappointment. There were a few birds in the trees around Gum Swamp (including the large population of rock doves) but the swamp itself was thick with green algae and there were few waterbirds. I thought the term "pee soup" or perhaps "leak soup" (both spellings deliberate) was more appropriate. We saw 18 species at Parkes with the best being eight Black-fronted Dotterels and eight White-faced Herons. At Gum Swamp we only saw nine species most of which weren't near the water but in the bush around the swamp. The Grey Teal and Pacific Black Ducks were sitting on the bank - they didn't want to get in the soup either.

### Other Things with Wings

James and Ian Roth photographed this bird below on 4<sup>th</sup> April at Borrodell Drive. They wondered if it was a juvenile Fan-tailed Cuckoo or a juvenile Brush Cuckoo as its colouring was different. Consensus was a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**.



The **Black-shouldered Kite** has still been visiting Ploughmans Wetlands. On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April the Wetland Care Group watched it swoop several times and harass some Ravens that were perched on the dead branches at the top of the willow near the picnic shelter. Perhaps the Kite was trying to reclaim its perch. This demonstrated that the willow was a sought-after roost and lookout point for the birds visiting the wetland.

Spring Creek Reservoir was a popular spot for early morning bird photography on Anzac Day after the dawn service. Nigel H and Nigel S were there. Nigel H said '*not much happening on the water, Coots, Darters, Pacific Blacks and Grebes. The birds of the trees were happy to be photographed*'.



*White-browed Scrubwren at Spring Creek Reservoir. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

On 28<sup>th</sup> April Nigel Hobden saw a male Superb Parrot at Bloomfield Park. He thought this seemed to be a very early sighting for Orange.

### Plants

Two plants of the **Red-tipped Tiny Greenhood**, *Specularia rubescens* (photo below), were spotted by Rosemary during a bird survey site along Major West Road, south of Conimbla National Park.





## **Creature of the Month**

### **Burton's Legless Lizard (*Lialis burtonis*)**

*Text and photo by Heidi Zimmer*

One afternoon in late March my family was surprised by a “small snake” in our paddock in Clifton Grove. My partner quickly identified it as, not a snake, but rather a legless lizard! We took a picture and sent it to a friend in Queensland who is also a herpetologist (the best kind of friend); he quickly responded that it was a Burton's Legless Lizard. Excitedly I logged onto the Atlas of Living Australia to investigate how special our discovery might be ... and was somewhat deflated to see records covering almost all of Australia. Nevertheless, records for the Central Tablelands are scarce. The most recent record from Orange was from 1997, from almost exactly the same date (31<sup>st</sup> March – ours was the 30<sup>th</sup>). The next closest record (geographically) was from west of Molong, from 1946.



Dr Ross Sadlier commented “*Even though it's widespread in the state it's amazing how rarely you see this species. With all the survey work I was involved in northwest NSW using pitfall trap systems with deep buckets we still only got a few records.*”

Burton's Legless Lizard is native to Australia and PNG. It has no front legs and only rudimentary hind legs, consisting of a scaly flap (not immediately obvious) – hence its name. Tongues are fleshy with a notch, whereas those of snakes are long and forked. Other differences from snakes include an obvious ear-opening, their ability to shed (and regrow) their tail which is usually much longer than the body and the presence of paired belly scales. Legless lizards, of which there are about 40 species, are placed in the family Pygopodidae, the Flap-footed Lizards, the only reptile family endemic to the Australian region. They are most closely allied to geckos. Burton's Legless Lizard is in the genus *Lialis* with only one other species, *Lialis jicari*, which is endemic to New Guinea.

Burton's Legless Lizard can be identified by its wedge-shaped or triangular head and its elongated snout. Colour and patterns are highly variable from cream to deep brown, with or without patterning or stripes. Being oviparous, it lays one to three elongated eggs over summer. It is a burrower and prefers low vegetation with litter and can occur in a broad range of habitats from moist forests to deserts. Burton's Legless Lizard has special adaptations to its jaw that allow it to swallow prey (mostly other lizards and skinks) whole. It can also retract its eyes to keep them safe! Some references say that Burton's Legless Lizard can employ caudal luring (tail wiggling) to attract prey. It is a diurnal feeder (and we saw it during the day) - I only hope our friendly backyard Kookaburra has not sighted it yet.

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Cogger, H. (2018) Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia. Updated 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. CSIRO Publishing, Clayton.

Murray, B. A., Bradshaw, S. D., & Edward, D. H. (1991). Feeding behaviour and the occurrence of caudal luring in Burton's pygopodid *Lialis burtonis* (Sauria: Pygopodidae). *Copeia*, 509-516.

## OFNCS Honorary Life Membership Citation for Dick and Jenny Medd, 11 April 2024

Dick and Jenny Medd joined the Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society in 1982. They have remained members for the last 42 years. In that time, they have played a major role in fulfilling the objectives of the Society. In particular, in educating members and supporters about nature conservation and organising field trips aimed at studying and conserving Australia's natural environment. They have been mainstays of Field Nats and have contributed to its growth and sustainability into the future.

For many years Dick and Jenny have been active members of the OFNCS Committee. Dick's first year on the committee was in 1985 and he has been Treasurer since 1997. He was Vice President in 2005. Jenny became voluntary archivist in 2009 and joined the committee as Assistant Treasurer in 2016. Dick has led many field excursions, and both have suggested and organised interesting speakers and excursion locations. When on excursions they have always been willing to share their knowledge and expertise and help members identify the species they have seen. They have also made regular contributions to the newsletter. Jenny researched and wrote up the history of Mt Canobolas in 2019 and has just started on the history of the Society.



*1988 – Dick (with cap) and Jenny (in light blue) enjoying a break during an excursion to Cliefden Caves. Photo courtesy Jennifer Kenna.*

Dick has made a substantial scientific contribution to our understanding of the vegetation of the Central West. While his main focus has been on plants, he has also contributed significantly to our knowledge of the biodiversity of the Orange district. Dick often makes suggestions and instigates projects that result in further research. Jenny has accompanied Dick as an active participant on many field trips. Her eagle eyes have spotted many plants of interest. In 1986 the Medds helped with biodiversity surveys in the South Mullion Range. On visits to reserves, Dick has created or updated plant species list and shares these with National Parks staff and other land managers.

In the late 1990's Dick, along with members Dr Col Bower and Jennifer Kenna, undertook several flora and fauna survey consultancies to raise funds for OFNCS. The funds were to go towards publication of a 'local native plant field guide'. Due to all their changed circumstances the first publication using these funds has been the recent book '*Orchids of Central Western NSW*', authored by Col and Dick. Jenny provided support and advice for this project and assistance with proof reading. This publication has been received with great acclaim in this region and beyond.

Since the 2018 fire on Mt Canobolas, Dick has played a pivotal role in increasing our knowledge of the biodiversity of the Mt Canobolas State Conservation Area (SCA). He has worked with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the scientific community to undertake research on the mountain. This has included:

- Land snail and velvet worm surveys by Mandy Reid from the Australian Museum
- Assisting Col Bower with post fire orchid surveys
- Post fire vegetation and fauna surveys by NPWS

- Cryptogam surveys by CSIRO and other scientists
- Arboreal mammal surveys and training with Peter and Judy Smith.
- Surveys for velvet worms in land surrounding the SCA
- Research on plant species within the SCA such as *Prostanthera gilesii*, as part of the Saving Our Species Program, *Eucalyptus canobolensis*, orchids, lichens, *Phebalium* and *Melichrus*
- Lobbying for construction of the lichen wall on the summit to highlight the importance of the *Xanthoparmelia* Lichen Endangered Ecological Community that occurs nearby.

At times other members have been able to participate in the surveys including 10 members being trained for, and undertaking, biennial Arboreal mammal surveys.

In 2018 Dick, in partnership with Col Bower, nominated the Mt Canobolas SCA to be an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value, however the NSW government has yet to make a decision. In that year he instigated and did much of the work for the important Linnean Society conference presentation and paper on '*Biodiversity and endemism within the Mount Canobolas volcanic complex*'. This cast a new light on the uniqueness of Mt Canobolas. Then in 2020 Dick had an article on the '*Distribution, ecology and conservation of the endangered shrub, Acacia meiantha (Fabaceae) in Central West New South Wales*' published in *Cunninghamia*. He has also done, or helped with, work to nominate a number of species to the NSW Scientific Committee for listing as threatened species. Examples include *Prostanthera gilesii*, *Acacia meiantha* and *Eucalyptus canobolensis*. Other nominations that are pending with the NSW Scientific Community are for the Mt Canobolas Velvet Worm and the two orchid species that are endemic to the mountain.

As the society's archivist Jenny is always able to search out and provide information on its history. She developed the OFNCS brochure, has assisted with displays, such as at the museum in 2018 and the recent LLS Biodiversity Month activities. Jenny has also provided support for the newsletter editor since 2018. Since the formation of the Canobolas Conservation Alliance in 2020 Jenny has contributed to the Society's representation on the CCA Committee, producing the CCA newsletter and monitoring the media for updates on the OCC mountain bike proposal.

For this long term and ongoing involvement and support of the Society it is considered appropriate that Dick and Jenny Medd are awarded honorary life membership of Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society.

### **Publications**

Dick Medd has authored, or co-authored, publications, some of which raised funds for the Society.

- Bower, C.C. and Medd, R.W. (1995), Flora Report for Newcrest Mining on the 'Cadia Project'. Appendix D of Newcrest Mining Limited (1995) Cadia Gold Mine Environmental Impact Statement, Report prepared by Woodward-Clyde.
- Medd, R.W., Bower, C.C., and Kenna, J.I. (1997). Flora and Fauna Survey of Ophir Reserve. 37pp. OFNCS Inc. ©
- Bower, C.C., Kenna, J. and Medd, R.W. and Resource Strategies Pty Ltd (1998), Flora Survey of the Ridgeway Trial Development Application Area and Surrounds. Report prepared for Cadia Holdings Pty Ltd.
- Kenna, J.I., Medd, R.W., and Bower, C.C. (1998). Flora of the Walking Tracks of Mount Canobolas State Recreation Area. 10pp. OFNCS Inc. ©
- Medd, R.W. and Kenna, J.I. (2002). Bird and Plant Survey of Cobborah State Forest. 33pp. OFNCS Inc. ©

In more recent times:

- Medd RW and Bower CC (2018). Nomination of Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area as an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value. Submission to Office of Environment and Heritage, Unpublished.
- Medd, R.W. and Bower, C.C. (2019). Biodiversity and endemism within the Mount Canobolas volcanic complex. Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales 141, S45-S8
- Medd, R.W. (2020). Distribution, ecology and conservation of the endangered shrub, *Acacia meiantha* (Fabaceae) in Central West New South Wales. *Cunninghamia* (2020) 20: 183–192
- Bower, C.C., and Medd, R.W. (2023), Orchids of Central Western NSW. OFNCS Inc. ©



*The Bald Hill excursion group at the last stop in front of an imposing columnar formation.  
Front row: Marian Knight, Rosemary Stapleton, Catherine Stapleton.  
Middle row: Swee Chuah, Hai Wu, Penny Todman, Tony Caine.  
Back row: Glen Griffiths, Sandra Chrystall, Paul Knight, Col Bower.  
Photographer Helmut Berndt.*

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