



*Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.*

## **THE TNC NEWSLETTER**

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**wheatbelt**  
natural resource  
management

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Desraé Clarke

A group of Nat's members travelled to Eneabba over the last weekend of August and found, unfortunately, few flowering plants attributed to the low annual rainfall. However, Greg Warburton has contributed a beautiful image of the Arrowsmith River that runs through the area shown on page eight.

Vice-president, Jennifer Donegan, took a September 10-day self-planned trip to Queensland, accompanied by her aunt and Honorary Life Member of the Club, Pam Masters, and a friend, Birgitta Wypych.

Jennifer gave a wonderful presentation of the trip at the September meeting commencing with acknowledgement to her Grandfather, the late Mr Jim Masters OAM. Mr Masters had a wealth of natural history knowledge, especially that of birds and the moods of the Avon River, areas he knew so well. However, his greatest gift was that of sharing his knowledge. Jennifer is following in her Grandfather's footsteps giving her time and expertise freely.

Wayne and I attended the 2019 WA State NRM and Coastal Conference with the title 'Our Coast – Ngaalang booyembara, Our Land – Ngaaland boodjar, STRIVING TOGETHER - Dandjoo warniny'. It was held at the Edith Cowan University on the 1st to the 4th October with the superb Master of Ceremonies, Verity James. The extensive Aboriginal component, with participants from throughout Western Australia, made it a wonderful learning experience for all who attended.

The first day began with the offering of an assortment of field trips along the beaches and coastal reserves, remnant bushland, wetlands, and an upper Lesmurdie Falls cultural and wildflower tour. In the evening the conference opened with the presentation of WA Coastal Awards held at AQWA.

Day two commenced with the Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by Walter McGuire followed by the official opening.

Amazing work has been done, and continues to be done, in caring for our country. But, of course, the converted attend such conferences!

It is imperative to educate *with a loud voice* all peoples. We need to include our members of parliament and our policy-makers. Ideally, education to be a major part of the school curriculum to understand, appreciate and conserve our precious environment.

The 166th Toodyay Agricultural Show was well-attended on an ideal day, weather-wise, for show-goers. The Environment Matters marquee had a steady stream of visitors who had many, many natural history queries and questions from identification of plants, weeds, fauna to an interest in learning of the commitment required as a wildfire carer.

The final presentation for 2019 was given at the CWA hall on Saturday 19th October by local farmer, Frank Panizza. Frank spoke of the challenges to modern-day farmers with the most significant alteration in farming practices related to the changes in our climate. It was interesting to hear of the research achieved with cereals developed to cope with, generally, lower annual rainfalls.

Another interesting topic was the lack of acceptance by the 'powers-that-be' of the continued development, and use of, bio-fuel.

Saturday 16th November was an excursion to the beautiful rehabilitated Morangup property, by nature, of Ric Jones and Sue Bussell. Several of the first arrivals were greeted by a large Goulds Monitor who disdainfully watched all proceedings as they parked their vehicles on its territory.

Despite the recent and continuing heat, the display of delicate flowering plants was absolutely amazing. Ric, and his late wife, Pat, purchased the barren 17 acre paddock in 1981. Since that year the area has regenerated at its own pace - 'naturally'

A brainstorming Planning Meeting for 2020 on Saturday 30th November resulted in many excellent suggestions for an interesting forthcoming year commencing February.

The first meeting is to be combined with the Toodyay Friends of the River (TFOR) and the wider community with guest speaker, Helen Brookes.

Helen is a Director and the Principal Hydrologist at Urbaqua and the member of their team who is acting as the Consultant for TFOR's Pelham Brook Outlet Restoration Project. The first planning stage of that project involves community consultation, the aim of the combined February meeting.

Several notable excursions were suggested at the Planning Meeting together with a variety of interesting speakers. Appreciation is extended to those members who were unable to attend the meeting but sent in ideas – thank you!



# Baudin's Black Cockatoo



Above: A Baudin's Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus baudinii*) stripping the bark of a Marri tree in search of a meal  
Photo: Neville Tanner, Nannup (former TNC Member)

ONE of the characteristics that distinguishes the Baudin's (long-billed) Black Cockatoo from the Carnaby's (short-billed) is their feeding habits.

Carnaby's are well known for chomping up the fruit from the Marri tree (*Corymbia calophylla*), also known as 'honky nuts,' that litter the ground beneath where Carnaby's feed.

On the other hand Baudin's will strip the bark from Marri, Jarrah and Karri trees in search of grubs found beneath the bark (like in the above image); they also feed on the seeds of Banksia and Hakea.

While it's unlikely that the Baudin's will be found in Toodyay nature moves in mysterious ways so it pays to be observant. On the other hand with climate change and loss of habitat there is a good chance that the Carnaby's will venture further to the south.

# 'Johno, the Little Bat who Just Wouldn't Listen'

An overview of a November 2019 publication by Desraé Clarke

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animal?



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Main Roads Wheatbelt

This  
children's  
book is a  
heart  
warming  
story of  
little  
Johno's  
second  
chance at  
life.

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WRITTEN by Beverly Naturalists' Club member, Phyllis Facey, and beautifully illustrated by Lynda Staker, this 24 page book would make an ideal children's Christmas gift. It also has much general knowledge on bat species to render it an educational tool for both children and adults alike.

The story describes the many scraps that the small bat, Johno, gets into by not listening to his Mum and Dad. However, it also describes how bats feed, carry their young (known as 'pups') and the main predators these tiny, but maligned, creatures deal with. There is a quiz and extra interesting information on bats and how to make a 'bat friendly' garden.

What is WERTWA?

In 2016 a suggestion was made to the Main Roads Wheatbelt Region office offering a trial of education and assistance to on-ground staff that come across injured wildlife in their day-to-day work. It may be a bird with a broken wing or a dead female kangaroo with a live joey in her pouch.

A meeting was held and the suggestion was accepted with the commencement of a *pilot program* and the birth of the Wildlife Emergency Response Team Western Australia.

Two types of rescue kits were developed with one a 'basket' style and the second kit, a flat pack to be held in vehicles with limited space. The kits also contain 24 hour WERTWA contact data with advice and support for any emergency involving wildlife.

The pilot program was successful and now rescue kits are held in all Main Roads Wheatbelt Region work vehicles with the on-ground staff knowing that support and assistance is but a phone call away.



*How bamboozled lerps entice ants' attention*  
by Robyn Taylor



*Above: A piece of bamboo inhabited by lerps, with their sugary 'ant fishing lines'*  
*Photo: Robyn Taylor*

I LIKE to have a vase of flowers or greenery in the bathroom and in April this year (the month may be significant) I decided a few bamboo stems would give a nice Japanese touch to the vanity.

I soon realised it wasn't just me that liked the bamboo. A congo line of ants appeared and over a week they kept marching to and fro' from wherever they found entry, along a ledge of tiles, down to the vanity and up the vase to the bamboo. I suspected lerps (mealy bugs) were living in the jointed sections where new leaves grow, and that these were the attraction.

I was about to throw the bamboo out when I noticed long filaments with droplets on the ends had begun to grow out of the bamboo sections.

I took a photo and emailed Desrae for enlightenment. She then forwarded my email to Andras (Andy) Szito, who works in Biosecurity at the Department of Primary Industries. Andy replied he would forward my email to a specialist with the plea, 'please don't chuck the plant yet it may well be something interesting or significant'.

*... cont. Page 6*

## How bamboozled lerps entice ants' attention

... cont. from Page 5

The specialist believed the lerps are a specie of *Antonina* (*Pseudococcidae*) and that the long filaments were formed in response to the ants stopping their feeding. Apparently when ants are attending to the *Antonina* species, the filaments are kept very short. When they stop, the lerps attempt to attract the ants back by producing long filaments with enticing droplets of what feels like sticky sugar syrup.

According to the specialist the species could be *Antonina graminis* which is known in WA and to feed on bamboo. For more detailed information the following was provided.

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6b33/aadc5a94a4839c0255fd5513987a6a5ae048.pdf>

Desrae then received another email, this time from the MyPestGuide Team, asking if the story and photo could be used for a MyPestGuide Report as 'it is such a great photo of an unusual situation'. which chuffed me no end. Watch out, Georgie, you have competition!

To quote from the Team's email: there is a free app available on both Android and iPhone stores to download as a reporting tool for the community and to get advice:

<https://agspsrap31.agric.wa.gov.au/mypestguide/#!/create-report>

Simply drag and drop your image from your email, and move the dot on the map to the location you found the [insect/pest/other].

We look forward to receiving and responding to your future MyPestGuide reports.

*Right: A juvenile Pied Butcherbird in the early morning.*

*Photo: Ardina Van de Ven*



# *BIRDING across Australia*

*by Jennifer Donegan and Desraé Clarke*

“BIRDING across Australia’ was the interesting topic of the presentation given by Jennifer Donegan on Saturday the 21st of September.

Jenny enjoys the search for birds especially in more interior areas of our state but recently had a wonderful self-planned visit to Great Barrier Reef islands, mainland coastal, rainforest and mountainous areas and the Atherton Tableland of Queensland.

Photography of birds in the rainforest is a great challenge. The extremely high, dark vegetation allows the birds to blend in to the canopy but, despite this, Jenny was able to take some wonderful images that aided in identification of the bird species not found in Western Australia.



*Above: White-eared Monarch, Cape York, Qld. Photo: Jennifer Donegan*



## *Photo Gallery*



Above: Male Golden-shouldered Parrot, Artemis Station, Cape York, Qld.

*Photo: Jennifer Donegan*

Below: The Arrowsmith River, Eneabba. At the Club's annual Campout on 31 August/1 September., 2019

*Photo: Greg Warburton*





## *Photo Gallery*



*Above: Tawny Frogmouth*

*Photo: Rob Thompson*

What a privilege it's been to see these young birds grow from nestlings to this stage in life. The privilege has been even more so for Vicki and Rob Thompson who watched them from the back of their home.

*Below: Blue-eyed Smokebush (Conospermum brownie)*

*Photo: Sharon Richards*





# Morangup - End-of-Year Morning Tea



*Above: Wayne Clarke and Ric Jones discuss the development of Ric and Sue's property  
Below (Left to Right): Sharon Richards, Bethan Lloyd, Desraé Clarke, Wayne Clarke (red hat) and Hostess Sue Bussell*      *Photos: Above - Sharon Richards; Below - Ric Jones*





# Read all about it!

by *Jacquie Lucas*

MAD Toodyay Naturalists' club members headed out bush to collect native plant seed - on a 43 degrees day!! However, it wasn't too hot for Mr Varanus Gouldii to check out who was entering his patch when we arrived!

Many thanks to the hospitality of Sue Bussell and Ric Jones of Morangup to have 15 Toodyay Naturalists' Club members descend upon their property on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of November.

Ric and Sue have an amazingly beautiful property with a combination of native bush and European gardens. We went out to collect seeds from their regenerated natural bush for the Toodyay Seed Orchard Group. These seeds will be used to germinate plants for the local community.

There was a beautiful range of late spring flowers out. These included two types of Adenanthus or woolly bushes, blue smoke bush, *Tricoryne elatior*, the autumn lily, with its brilliant yellow flowers all over the place. *Ptilotus mangleissii*, the purple pom poms, and Tricholine spathulata, the native gerbera. Despite the very dry year there were plenty of flowers to be seen.

Once the temperature reached too high, we all retreated to the shade for morning tea, and Ric and Sue told us the story of the property.

Ric spoke of his original sighting of the property with his late wife, Pat, in the midst of summer; they were not overly impressed. However they returned later, following some research of the area and the knowledge that good ground water was available, and purchased the 17acre property in around 1981. Ric lost his Pat and eventually met Sue who loves the property as much as Ric and Pat. A photo was passed around of the original barren land.

Since that time, together with a beautiful home garden, the native flora and fauna on the property has made it a 'little piece of heaven'.

*[Some of the images of the day appear on Pages 9]*

## DID YOU KNOW...

THERE are two types of bats in Australia - micro bats and mega bats. One of the bats that we see around Toodyay are the Gould's wattled bat. These are micro bats and have the biggest distribution of bats in Australia. When born they are less than two centimetres long and weigh less than a gram

Bats live in colonies of thirty or more. They can travel up to fifteen kilometres from their roost in search of food (such as mosquitos - they can eat up to 2,000 a night).

These and other interesting bat facts can be found in the publication 'Johnno', an overview of which can be found on page four.

# ENVIRONMENT MATTERS



BOB, the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo was again the masthead of the Environment Matters marquee at the Annual Toodyay Agricultural Show.

Bob's manners seem to be improving every year, this year listening to (and not competing with) the celebrity that opens the show each year.

The dwindling habitat for Black Cockatoos on the Swan Coastal Plain is driving both the Forest Red-tail and Carnaby's Black Cockatoo further and further inland in search of roosting and nesting sites.

*Photo: Beth Frayne*

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