



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.

THE TNC NEWSLETTER

ISSN 2207-8479

Number 48 December 2025



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We gratefully acknowledge the Ballardong, Yued and Whadjuk Peoples as the traditional custodians of this land and duly respect a deep and unbroken connection to their cultural, physical and spiritual existence. We pay respect to their Elders, both past and present, and emerging.

Recently, we have seen the weakening of Environmental laws and regulations to seemingly expedite the already inexorable destruction of our natural environment and heritage. It may be in the name of development and progress but one would be forgiven for feeling depressed about the future of our bio-diversity. For me, being a part of the "Nats" and the likeminded people it attracts gives me reason to hope. Looking back we can see that it has been yet another satisfying year for the Club with successful events, meetings and excursions. There has also been an increasing interest in the Toodyay Naturalists' Club coming from not only our local community but also further afield. A steady stream of enquiries has been received from people asking for help to identify a species or report a sighting etc. Some of the reports are disturbing though such as negative impacts on the environment and wildlife. However, it shows a real concern out there for our precious wildlife. Being able to capture this information from the public continues to consolidate the Club's standing while adding to our extensive data base. Drummond House provides the opportunity for the public to meet members face to face and ask questions. Thank you to Des, Wayne and Beth who can be found there on a Saturday morning and of course our Community Bank who provide the facility under extremely generous terms.

The past year has also been a sad one for us as we have lost former members and those who had strong connections to the Club. John Zawada, Prim Allen, Vivien Street and Richard Taylor all passed away toward the end of the year. It was a very emotional time losing these wonderful, long standing friends. Last month I visited David Street the husband of Vivien to offer my condolences. As we talked about Viv over a cup of tea David pointed out a stack of sketch books that she had filled during the many years on their river side property. They contained meticulous, detailed descriptions and beautiful drawings of plants and wildlife. It was very moving to see Viv's love of nature represented on the pages. I believe the journals will find a home in the Club's library as a special record of environmental observations and references.

The Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance (JCAFA) which is a sub group of TNC celebrated their remarkable year with a dinner at the Toodyay Hotel. Reflecting on achievements the Bio-blitz was a real standout. High level meetings and engagement with DBCA about the proposed prescribed burning in the forest, another. Recently, the first issue their newsletter "Djoorla-Maart Understory" was distributed. We congratulate the team especially Sharon and Mel who are a "dynamic duo for the campaign".

On the 6th of December key members gathered at Sharon's beautiful property among the Wandoo with views over Acacia Reserve and the hills beyond., the purpose being planning for next year. Fertile ideas and suggestions came so thick and fast that my head was spinning by the end. If we get only half of the proposed calendar done in '26 it will be an action packed year. Make sure to have a copy of the program on your fridge.

As the Club approaches its 60th anniversary (2028) we need to start thinking about how to denote this milestone. It has been suggested a republishing of an updated version of "Exploring Toodyay Naturally" would be appropriate. This idea was enthusiastically supported by members at the planning meeting.

Cover photo: *Verticordia brachypoda*, Wongan Hills

Photo: Lyn Phillips

Julimar State Forest BioBlitz on 5 - 7th September 2025

by Sharon Richards

Julimar Forest BioBlitz reveals rich biodiversity

Julimar State Forest is an amazing place, as we all know from our many excursions there with the Nats' Club. It was no surprise then, that it revealed many hidden gems with nearly 100 people searching during our Bioblitz weekend.

A Bioblitz is an environmental study conducted in a specific geographical area, within a short time frame by both scientists and community members, with the aim of capturing as many different species as possible.

Our BioBlitz weekend kicked off on Friday (September 5), with a fabulous evening of presentations by fascinating experts. A beautiful Welcome to Country by Uncle Ben Taylor AM and Robert Miles opened the event.

Jason Fowler, Senior Campaigner of the WA Forest Alliance, gave an overview of the Forest and the current threats it faces; Max Howard, of the Avon Valley Bird Group, shared what birds we would be lucky enough to see; Daniel Heald captivated us with the world of invertebrates; Dr Kit Prendergast was passionate about our native bees; and Julianne Waldock fascinated us with trapdoor spiders.

The BioBlitz on Saturday commenced on Country, with a smoking ceremony led by Robert and Uncle Ben, joined by Ballardong Elder Sharmaine Miles. It was then time for the survey teams to embark on their searches. Over 94 people set off looking for fungi, flora, birds, invertebrates, reptiles, trap-door spiders, tree hollows, and to study forest areas that had previously been subject to prescribed burns.

Everyone recorded species either on paper or using iNaturalist, an app that allows you to record and share observations of nature and get help with identification in real time, when you have phone coverage, which is decidedly patchy in Julimar!

The first morning was full of interesting and fabulous discoveries, the fungi group found a seldom seen Smooth Cage fungi, the flora group found the endangered '*Many-headed Dryandra*' and the priority four Yellow China Orchid.

The invertebrates didn't disappoint with two velvet worms recorded much to the delight of the visiting expert Daniel Heald.

Our very own Rob Boase was leading a flora group I had joined, not far from the basecamp and recorded a multitude of different orchid varieties including many specimens of the delicate Blood Orchid. Sometimes it is easy to not notice the obvious and as the group reached the brow of the hill, we realised the Wandoo trees had changed from Wandoo to Powderbark Wandoo. The saying "can't see the wood for the trees" came to mind.

Despite being a cold and wet winters day, spirits were high and people very lively, thrilled by what they were finding and revelling in the chance to share their experiences with others and utilise the expertise of the wonderful experts that had joined the Bioblitz.

One such expert was Adam Peck who was examining natural tree hollows to see if there was any evidence of nesting Carnaby Cockatoos. An area to the north of Julimar Forest has a number of Wandoo trees which had previously tagged by Birdlife Australia as being potential nesting hollows. Adam utilised a very small camera at the end of a telescopic pole to "look" into the hollows and this information was transmitted to his mobile phone. Hollows could be viewed with minimal risk to the observer and very little disturbance to any occupant. Unfortunately, there was little Carnaby activity in the Forest and none of the hollows showed signs of nesting activity. Adam felt it was a going to be a late season and committed to returning later in the year.

The bird group, led by Max Howard and Ross McDougal undertook 3 surveys across the weekend and quite a number of species were recorded, including the iconic Rufous Treecreeper, Western Yellow Robin and Jacky Winter. On the Sunday morning at the southern end of Julimar the bird group were privileged to see and photograph a Little Eagle.

Julimar State Forest BioBlitz on 5 - 7th September 2025 (cont)

The Bioblitz didn't stop at night, further surveys were conducted. A moth trap was put up for the insects, and a group went out with bat detectors which could capture ultrasonic sounds. It was a very cold night and few insects were captured, and no bats seen, although once the data was downloaded it was evident that at least two bat species were around. Another group went "spotlighting" and found a multitude of possums and best of all, right near basecamp, a gorgeous critically endangered Woylie hopping across the track.

During the Bioblitz we were lucky to have an environmental management specialist, Mel Howe, take groups to study the forest's recovery after prescribed burns. They sadly observed fallen trees and a lack of natural regrowth in the lower and middle storeys of the burnt areas. This absence of shrubs and bushes leaves small animals and birds vulnerable to predators and fewer foraging opportunities, a stark contrast to the unburned areas.

The Julimar Bioblitz was a great success. It took a lot of organising and wouldn't have been possible without the support of Conservation Council of WA (Kelly Sheldrick and her team worked tirelessly) and all the local environmental groups with their strong local knowledge and expertise, with the Toodyay Nats' Club very well represented leading up to the event and over the Bioblitz weekend.

Members of NKAC, Robert Miles and Uncle Bob, provided a wonderful Welcome to Boodja and Helen Shanks was pivotal in the organisation. Amber Cunningham from the Northam Environmental Hub helped those of us who are less digitally literate with guidance about using the iNaturalist app.

People travelled from far afield (Denmark and Walpole) and a significant number of experts and enthusiasts from Perth gave their valuable time to support the event.

If you'd like to know more of what was found, the results have all been recorded on the iNaturalist website and the project can be found here: <https://bit.ly/inat-julimar>

We are awaiting a detailed report from CCWA which will hopefully be available in the new year and shared with the Nats Club members.



Above: Uncle Ben 'Cuimara' Taylor with Charmaine Miles (Robert Miles hat is visible over Uncle Ben's right shoulder).

Page 5 is a composite of snapshots taken on the day, courtesy Melissa Adams

Julimar BioBlitz 2025



Annual Toodyay Agricultural Show 2025



Above: The Environment Matters Marquee

Photo: Wayne Clarke

Thank you to all those members who carried display materials to the marquee to set up, to those who manned the displays and those who carried signage, books, chairs, etc, etc, etc, back to Drummond House. The displays were great to make it a most successful day!!

Also thank you to those who sent apologies with being unable to assist on the day. There was lots of chatter with visitors demonstrating that the wider public does care for the environment.

One lass and her mother were from Mt Claremont area. The 14 year old is a member of the Friends of Lake Claremont and has been assisting with tree planting and weed eradication.

Another interesting chat was held with a gentleman from Dubai. He was speaking in his own language as he videoed the displays, the JCAFA signage and the inscription on the back of my top.

Three new members applied for membership on the day.

Vale John Zawada

Many of you would have heard about the passing of Naturalists Club member and local identity John Zawada.

John was also a member of the Toodyay Friends of the River where he dedicated a lot of time to the river monitoring project.

He had a strong environmental ethos and had dedicated a life time to conservation, re-vegetation, restoration projects and related activities across the country.

To say John was a colourful character is an understatement, he had a sharp wit and a delightful sense of humour which drew people in.

He was always willing to engage in fascinating conversations about life, the natural world, politics and local issues.

He will be greatly missed in our community and our thoughts are with Despina and his extended family members at this time.

Greg Warburton (TNC President)



VICTORIA'S MALLEE BIRDS



Craig Boase

Above: Cover of a new publication by a former (junior) member of the club.

Craig Boase, the youngest son of our Patron Rob and wife Beth, has excelled with this great publication. It details 141 bushland bird species of the Murray-Sunset, Hattah-Kulkyne, Wyperfeld and Little Desert National Parks, the Big Desert Wilderness Park and the Big Desert State Forest in Victoria's Mallee region. A comprehensive checklist at the end contains 295 species found in these parks. Many of these birds can be found in Toodyay.

For those Nats' that have been around for a while Craig will be well remembered coming to meetings with Mum and Dad and on many of our excursions and camp-outs.

Congratulations Craig - and to his wonderful parents who encouraged him.

Wongan Hills Weekend Away

by Wayne Clarke

THE weekend of 24th to 26th October was the TNC *Weekend Away* - this year to WA's Verticordia '*Hotspot*' - Wongan Hills.

Friday morning we arrived at Wongan Hills and booked into the Caravan Park. Lyn (Johnson) also arrived and after settling in we arranged to meet at the Bakery to have lunch.

After lunch we sat around and chatted, with Lynn (Phillips) and Peter also arriving. We then met at the Wongan Hills Visitor Centre, and after a tour of the Centre we ventured across to the 'Café of Note' for a long afternoon tea, and to work out a programme for the weekend.

Friday night was quiet, with Don and Eva arriving quite late; Eva was in Perth and Don went from Toodyay to pick her up and bring her up to Wongan. Finding their cabin was an ordeal with Desraé helping them in the finish. Unfortunately, she upset the dogs of the area!

Saturday morning we arranged to meet at the Visitor Centre before departing for Gathercole Nature Reserve. Lyn (Phillips) from Dowerin joined us, along with Rob and Beth and President Greg arrived as well. It was still a bit early for most of the Verticordias but there were many other interesting flowering plants found.

Back to Wongan Hills for lunch at the 'Café of Note'; after lunch Lyn (Johnson) left for another function. The convoy then departed along the Waddington-Wongan Hills Road to the moderately steep Elphin Nature Reserve; there were large rock areas that some members climbed. The wildflower list grew...

Saturday evening meal was enjoyed at the Wongan Hills Hotel, then Rob and Beth drove home while the rest of us went back to the caravan park for coffee.

Sunday morning, after packing for home, we met up at the 'Café of Note' at 9am for morning tea, then headed out to Reynoldson Reserve. There were few Verticordias out but Verticordia brachypoda (front cover photo) made up for that, along with many other beautiful wildflowers, like the Diuris laxiflora along with many trigger plants.

The weekend was most enjoyable and a good chance for members to leave their homes to enjoy and smell the bush



Left: One of a number of Trigger plants found at Wongan Hills.

Photo: Lyn Phillips

Wongan Hills Weekend



*Above: Members walking through the Gathercole Reserve at Wongan Hills
Photo: Wayne Clarke*



*Left: Diuris laxiflora, commonly called the Banded Bee-orchid.
Photo: Lyn Phillips*

Bob's 90th Birthday and TNC Christmas Get-together



*Above: Bob Frayne (right) enjoying the celebration, with to his right, Rob Boase, Lyn Phillips, Wayne Clarke, and Andrew St John.
Photo: Beth Frayne*

*Below: Rob Boase addresses club members. From left: Don Smith, Vicki Warburton, Peter Macgill, Lynn Phillips, Rob Boase, Greg Warburton, Desraé Clarke, Beth Walker, Bob Frayne, Beth Boase, Eva Smith and Wendy Giaimo
Photo: Beth Frayne*



Cameras in Julimar State Forest trap the bigger birds



Above: Brown Goshawk Centre: Male emu and chicks Bottom: Wedge-tailed Eagle
Mark Hamilton from JCAFA has been diligently checking their cameras. A small soak has persisted since winter and revealed some of the bird and animal species regularly using the soak.



Members Gallery



Above: Western Whistler

Photo: Sharon Richards

Below: Western Wattlebird

Photo: Robyn Taylor



Members Gallery



Above: Rob Boase, Bridget Leggett and Bob Frayne in Bob's Bideford House garden. Photo Beth Frayne

Below: Purple enamel orchid (Elythranthera brunonis) Manmanning Nature Reserve Photo: Lyn Phillips



Members Gallery



Above : Native bee on Glischrocaryon sp. - Pop flower Wongan Hills
Below: Echidna drinking from a bird bath at 2.39AM

Photos: Lyn Phillips, Dowerin
Photo: Wayne Clarke



Western Wildlife

by Desraé Clarke

While enjoying a read of old Western Wildlife newsletters of the *Land for Wildlife* Scheme I came across a significant article written by Heather Adamson, a Wildlife Officer from the Merredin Office. The particular newsletter was October 2002 Vol 6 Number 4 page 15.

Lindsay White, a keen member of the Toodyay Naturalists' Club, is the owner of the property in question and on which the scene was played out over a week. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Lindsay have given permission to use the article and photo in the newsletter.

In July a week of fauna surveying and trapping at a large and permanent water soak and Banksia woodland on Lindsay White's property north of Goomalling proved to be very interesting despite the time of the year.

Four frog species were identified including the humming frog, Kunapalari's frog, bleating froglet and sandplain froglet. Also identified were the white-tailed dunnart, common dwarf skink and 29 bird species including a pair of Pacific Herons. Black rats, field mice, black crickets and shield beetles were caught and a trapdoor spider is yet to be identified. A big thank you to Lindsay, Heather and your two boys for their assistance and we look forward to returning in spring when the Banksias are in full flower.

You can find out more by visiting the Land For Wildlife Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/LandForWildlife/>

DID YOU KNOW...

...that a number of well-known Australian bird common names have or are changing?

Barn owls (formerly *Tyto alba*) are now called Eastern Barn Owls (*Tyto javanica*); Major Mitchell's cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*) to Pink Cockatoo (or Leadbeaters Cockatoo); White-breasted Sea-Eagle is now White-bellied Sea-Eagle; Richard's Pipit is now Australasian Pipit; the Masked Plover now the Masked Lapwing; the Skua is now the Jaeger; and the Golden whistler is now the Western Whistler (*Pachycephala fuliginosa*).

In America the American Ornithological Society is implementing changes to between 70 and 80 bird species in the US and Canada. It is to remove names that honour individuals with racist histories along with names that are deemed offensive. [Google AI]

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Containers for Change

WA's container deposit scheme 'Containers for Change' has now been operating for over five years. Has the scheme been successful?

The Container Deposit Scheme's website advises 4.56 billion containers have been collected for recycling and diverted from landfill. The state's container recovery rate increased from 34 per cent (prior to the scheme) to 65 per cent (in the 2023–24 financial year). Additionally \$16.77 million has been donated to charities, community groups and schools. The scheme also supports 846 jobs.

In September 2025, the State Government announced the expansion of Containers for Change, with wine and spirit bottles to be included by mid-2026.

Once the wine and spirit bottles are added to the scheme almost all beverage containers between 150 ml and 3 litres will be accepted at Containers for Change refund points throughout WA

In addition to glass wine and spirit bottles, the expansion will include:

- wine packaged in plastic
- sachets and casks
- water packaged in casks
- concentrated fruit and vegetable juices
- flavoured milk and cordial.

The scheme has without doubt been most successful. But it also highlights the potential amount of extra landfill had the scheme not been introduced.

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The Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc. is grateful to Wheatbelt NRM for their on-going support in producing the TNC Newsletter

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