



Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society Inc. President's Annual Report 2011

During 2011 our group was very active in field activities, community action and environmental activism. I apologise if I have missed any activities.

A summary follows:

SPEAKERS and FIELD TRIPS

| Month | Speaker & Topic | Excursion |
|-----------|---|--|
| March | Peng Lingfei and Liu Yang, <i>The natural history of China</i> | South Mullion Reserve |
| April | Dr. Michael Priest, OAI, <i>Myrtle Rust</i> | Fungus hunt, Mt. Canobolas |
| May | John Cooper <i>Bird Photography</i> | The birds of Spring Forest, Cowra |
| June | Tony Smith <i>Creatures of North Queensland</i> | North Mullion Range & <i>Acacia meiantha</i> |
| July | Dr. Peter Fleming <i>A Dog's Breakfast! (Dingoes)</i> | Killenbutta State Forest |
| August | Dr. Geoff Gurr <i>Biodiversity and Biological Control of Pests</i> | Malaise trapping for invertebrates, OAI |
| September | Murray & Vicki Fletcher <i>Two naturalists in Namibia</i> | Goobang National Park - birds and wildflowers |
| October | Ray Mjadwesch <i>Identifying animals from their tracks and traces (bones)</i> | Burrendong Arboretum |
| November | Cilla Kinross <i>Biodiversity of revegetation on farms</i> | Visit to Orange by Cumberland Bird Observers Club & Dubbo Field Nats (over 2 weekends) |
| December | Planning meeting & Christmas Party (chez John Austin) | Superb Parrot Day (with ECCO) |

Some highlights:

I thought the stand out field activity over 2011 was the fungus hunt, but all the activities were enjoyable and well organised. I think the visits from the other groups were excellent, although perhaps these could be spread out a bit! The Cumberland bird-ohs numbered 38 and stayed for

Photo: C. Kinross



three days taking in most of the good local bird spots. The Dubbo Field Nats seemed to draw a crowd and we ended up with 34 for our visit to Mt. Canobolas, which was wonderful (see pictures of heath in flower below & group above).



Photo: C. Kinross

In respect of the talks, the standout for me was Ray's bone game and the mushroom workshop run by Michael Priest. My preference is for more workshops, 'show-and-tell' and other hands-on activities. Having said that, all the talks were of high quality, often very entertaining, with some pretty impressive photography skills on show. There was also a

high diversity of geographic spread with one from China, one from Africa and one from Queensland.

NEWSLETTERS

Murray has maintained an extremely high standard of newsletters over the year with very good input from Tony Smith and others, including some from myself.

The Creature of the Month had a fairly wide taxonomic spread including the following species: Australian Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus australis*, Peppery Milkcap Mushroom *Lactarius piperatus*, Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*, Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*, Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens* Spitfire grubs *Pergagraptia* species, Blue Faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*, and Lesser broomrape *Orobanche minor*. Clearly it is time for more plants, insects, mammals and reptiles!

WEBSITE

I was fortunate enough to be funded by the Central Tablelands Landcare to do website training through the Central West Business Enterprise Centre. Through this, I was able to establish a website for the group. It is still basic, but one can find old and current newsletters, coming activities, and written submissions etc.

MYNA ERADICATION PROJECT

This trapping program (for which I coordinate a small team including Nick King, pictured with trap) continued throughout 2011 (although there is no funding at present) and has expanded to include Millthorpe and Shadforth. There was limited success in 2011, although several juveniles were caught, but hopefully it will be better in 2012. Birds have been seen also in Orange CBD (near CWD car park) and also near the



Photo: C. Kinross

Bloomfield Hospital, so they are gradually spreading. I have brought back six new juveniles from Canberra for decoys for this autumn's trapping.

FAUNA/FLORA SURVEYS

The Regional Advisory Committee of the Western Rivers Region of the National Parks and Wildlife Service asked us to participate in a biodiversity survey in one of the new cypress national parks (Wilbertroy, near Forbes). Unfortunately the notice was very short. I was able to attend and assist, particularly with the bird surveys & spotlighting. It is hoped that this type of activity can be continued and that more members will attend, especially if we receive more notice.

The quarterly bird surveys at Spring Creek Reservoir have continued and have produced some interesting results such as a small population of breeding blue-billed ducks. I have sent the data to the Atlas of Australian birds and an analysis of these data will be carried out towards the end of the year.

Other members are also very active with wildlife surveys eg Rosemary Stapleton provides regular input to the Cowra Woodland Birds program as well as to the Atlas of Australian Birds. Dick is still beavering away on the book of plants for this district.

STREAMWATCH

Jane Paul is now the coordinator of this excellent activity which was carried out during 2011 in autumn and spring. The data may prove very useful in the current debate over the extraction of water from Summer Hill Creek.

REPRESENTATION ON OTHER COMMITTEES

I (along with Jane Paul) represented OFNCS (as well as Summer Hill Creekcare and Central West Environment Council) on the Central West Catchment Management Authority Natural Resources Working Party, the Central Tablelands Landcare group & the Central West Environment Council (along with Paul Meeth). Membership of these umbrella groups provide useful networking opportunities and give us a better understanding of natural resource management and conservation issues in our area at a broader, regional level.

CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Submissions were made arguing against a motorcross development at Gowan and a housing and ancillary development on the Bloomfield bushland. A detailed submission was made to the Orange City Council concerning the Local Environmental Plan, particularly as it relates to remaining wetlands. A letter was also written to the Livestock, Health and



Photo: Plant This

Pest Authority urging it not to sell off the travelling stock routes and reserves due to their conservation value. Correspondence has also been entered into with the State Forests concerning improved protection for the local rare wattle: *Acacia meiantha* (see above).



Photo: Ku-rin-gai Council

The group also participated in a rally protesting against the proposal to alienate many parcels of parkland in Orange. We also became involved again in the effort to prevent the cull of Grey-headed Flying Foxes in Orange and wrote a letter to the Minister to that effect.

Most of these activities actually produced at least some effect - the motocross development in its current format was withdrawn and OCC has scaled down its plan for park alienation. Culling did occur with the flying foxes, but at a much reduced level. Other issues are still ongoing.

GRANTS & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

OFNCS was represented at the Experience Orange Expo, which was very successful in attracting new members. Peter West was successful at obtaining three grants via the Communities-in-Landscape program during the year: two for installation of nest-boxes in woodland and the other for educational activities relating to the protection of Superb Parrot, which has recently started breeding and spending its summers in Orange. To kick off, Peter, helped by Tony Smith and in conjunction with ECCO (Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange), also organised the successful Superb Parrot Day in December. These projects are ongoing and Peter will be reporting on the outcomes of these later this year.

SUMMARY

I enjoyed my one and only year as President, but unfortunately I have to stand down due to my other commitments with Summer Hill Creekgare and Central West Environmental Council (president of both) and Central Tablelands Landcare (secretary) as well as the many other committees and commitments that envelop me eg bushfire management, NPW, CMA, Macquarie Pipeline etc. etc. I shall also be away for three months (May-July) in 2012.

I would like to thank the members for their forbearance with the changes that I implemented, particularly in relation to the streamlining of meeting procedure and, in particular, to the committee for their support and enthusiasm throughout the year, particularly with organising speakers. It was very much a team effort.

Cilla Kinross, President OFNCS, 8 February 2012