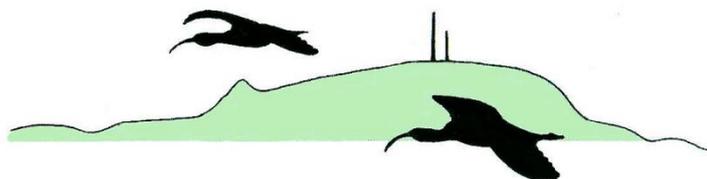


**ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc**



**NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2019**

**NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30pm**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**and members Show and Tell**  
**VENUE: Home & Community Care**  
**Centre (HACC Centre),**  
286–290 Lords Place  
(corner Lords Place & March Street -  
enter from Lords Place)

Committee Meeting at 6.30pm  
All members are welcome

**EXCURSION**

Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> February  
Heifer Station Creek TSR  
Meet at 9am  
at the Orange High Bus Bay  
Bring morning tea

[Visit the OFNCS website](#)

This will be my **final OFNCS newsletter**. I have now been producing this monthly publication (almost) continuously since March 2003 and it's time to pass the reins to a new editor. I hope somebody amongst the members can see the opportunity to put their personality into the newsletter and support the Orange Field Nats in this very tangible way.

**Next Meeting - AGM**

**AGM, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 7.30 pm**

The AGM agenda was circulated early in January by Rosemary and is repeated below. Following the AGM will be a Member Show and Tell night. Members are asked to bring up to 10 recent photographs or items of natural history to share with the meeting.

**AGM Agenda**

- 1. Present**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Minutes of the 2018 AGM**
- 4. President's Report**
- 5. Treasurer's Report**
- 6. Election of Committee**
  - Returning Officer
  - President
  - Vice-President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Assistant Treasurer
  - Newsletter Editor
  - Website Administrator
  - Public Officer
  - Publicity
  - General Committee Members
- 7. General Business**
  - Membership Fees
  - Investment Account
  - Dept Fair Trading Annual Return
  - Meeting Venue and Fee
- 8. Close**

**Next Excursion**

On the next excursion we will be visiting Heifer Station Creek TSR (and, if time permits, other nearby TSRs). This is a valuable parcel of land with a great collection of local eucalypt species.

**Xmas party**

We enjoyed a well attended and relaxing event at Cilla's place with members of CWEC and ECCO also well represented. A tasty barbecue was provided by Cilla and the meal was followed by a walk around her property looking for platypus. See the photo at the end of this newsletter which only shows some of the attendees.

## Members' Notes

from Hai Wu



This Latham's Snipe was photographed by Hai on Australia Day in the shallow western end of Spring Creek Reservoir.

from Dick Medd

Summer ramblings across Mt Canobolas by various observers has resulted in over 40 new records of plants, animals and insects. Two plants are noteworthy as being new for the district as well and both appear to be fire ephemerals.

*Lobelia gibbosa* is sometimes called the false orchid as the flower segments could easily be mistaken as resembling some orchids. The species name means humped or swollen in reference to the seed capsule. But it is the vivid bright blue (sometimes purplish-blue or even white) flowers against the usually reddish stems that stand out.



*Lobelia gibbosa* [photo: Dick Medd]

Stumbling upon mats of Creeping Flannel Flower, *Actinotus gibbonsii*, on certain rock platforms in skeletal soils came as a real

surprise. This is a widespread species but is rarely encountered. The distinctive balls of pinkish flowers, surrounded by a star-shaped, green, hairy bract are tell-tale along with its ferny leaf.



*Actinotus gibbonsii*

[Image: background - Jeremy Bruhl  
Flower head (bottom left) - [www.rymich.com](http://www.rymich.com)  
Fruit and leaf (bottom right) - Dick Medd].

from Col Bower

The focus of the orchid hunts on Mt Canobolas shifted in December to the Hyacinth Orchids and Col sent the following information in a series of emails starting on 19th January.

The Hyacinth Orchids, *Dipodium* spp, have been flowering around Orange for a few weeks; some have succumbed to the heat and finished early, others have proven to be remarkably resilient.



*Dipodium* sp. [photo: Col Bower]

An interesting situation has come to light on Mt Canobolas where there seems to be a second species (identity uncertain according to Mark Clements of the Australian National Herbarium) and possibly *D. roseum* as well with plants which might be hybrids just to complicate the issue. Previously, only *D. punctatum* has been seen on the volcanic soils around Orange (Rifle Range, Black Sally Reserve) and on the mountain.

However, potentially two other species have turned up in the post-fire surveys on the mountain this summer along with a greater number of plants that seem to be hybrids.

The identity of these species and the apparent hybridisation are being investigated by Mark Clements using DNA analysis.

*from Rosemary Stapleton*

On 9 January the quarterly bird survey at Spring Creek Reservoir was conducted. We saw around 45 species. The water level was so low that several muddy spits had emerged and the Pelicans and Little Black Cormorants were resting on them. There were at least ten Freckled Ducks as well; obviously using the reservoir as a drought refuge.

We started at 7.30 and many of the birds were on the mud spits but when I was out there Wednesday at 1pm they were all on the water.... so I think you have to pick the time to see them well.



Nick, Oscar and Cilla doing the quarterly bird survey at Spring Creek Reservoir  
[photo: Rosemary Stapleton]

### World Wetlands Day - 2 February

*from Rosemary Stapleton*

It was a great turnout for both the bird walk and the plant walk with **Bill Josh**. Some were residents from around the wetland, some who walk there regularly and others who live elsewhere in town and wanted to learn something. There was a great age range as well with several generations of some families joining in. The star attraction was two Egrets resting on the mud banks, one with its breeding plumes fluttering in the breeze. About 20 species were seen or heard with my favourite being the Golden-headed Cisticola that kept calling from the grassy area of the wetland area (as well as my phone app!). The walks were followed by

some tasty barbequed sausages. The Ploughmans Wetland Care Group, supported by ECCO, did a great job organising the morning. Hopefully people will join them for their planting day on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April. See photo of the bird walk below.

### Creature of the Month

Muscle Man Ant

*Podomyrma gratioosa*



Muscle ant in Orange Botanic Gardens  
[photo: Neil Morrow]

When Neil Morrow sent me this picture of a muscle man ant which he had taken in Orange Botanic Gardens, the term was new to me. I looked it up and found that species of *Podomyrma* have the femur of each leg swollen giving a muscular appearance to the legs. There are 39 described species in Australia with the genus extending to New Guinea and eastern Melanesia. A number are likely to occur in the Central Tablelands with *P. gratioosa* the most common. *P. gratioosa* is widespread in eastern Australia from Cairns in North Queensland to the Mt Lofty Ranges in South Australia. *P. adelaideae* extends across the central areas of Australia from Western Australia to Parkes and Forbes in NSW but is easily differentiated from *P. gratioosa* with distinctive pale patches on the dark abdomen. These ants nest in tree hollows and forage for prey both on the trees and on the ground.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Payment of Annual Subscriptions is due following the Annual General Meeting in February. 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.

#### Subscription rates:

Single member – \$25

Each additional family member – \$5

Concession rate (emailed newsletters) – \$12.50

Concession rate (printed newsletters) – \$25

Note: concession rate is for *bona fide* pensioners and students only



Relaxing on Cilla's deck at the OFNCS/ECCO/CWEC Xmas Party on 9th December  
[photo: the editor]



Rosemary Stapleton (on right in blue) with part of the bird group at Ploughman's Wetlands, World Wetlands Day  
[photo: Neil Jones]

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