



Shingleback (*Tiliqua rugosa*)  
Photo: Geraldine Harris

## Beyond the Honeybees

By Euan Moore

Our first talk for 2025 was delivered by John Walter, a very active field naturalist from nearby Malmsbury.

When people think of pollinators they immediately think of European Honeybees, *Apis mellifera*, a species introduced to Australia from the time of European settlement. The European Honeybee is very good at pollinating our fruit trees, vegetables and many of our garden plants that they co-evolved with. But what happened before European settlement? How did our native flowering plants get pollinated?

Accompanied by his stunning photographs, John introduced us to some of our native bees of which there are more than 2000 species, many undescribed. Their size ranges from c2mm to c25mm. Many of our native bees are specialists, superbly adapted to a particular plant or group of plants. We were shown a short movie where a native bee lands on a

pea flower, turns around to face the centre of the flower (standard petal) then pushes down on the keel petals with its hind legs. This enables the native bee to reach the nectar while collecting pollen on the hairs on its abdomen. This pollen will later be deposited on the stigma of another flower. In contrast, the larger honeybee, on the same type of flower, pushes in to the centre of the flower without collecting or depositing any pollen.

There was a brief detour to look at the effects of the Varroa Mite, *Varroa destructor*, which has recently become established in Australia and parasitises European and Asian Honeybees. This invasive species is not known to affect any of the native bees and its presence may increase food sources for native species, leave more nesting hollows available for native birds and mammals and result in better pollination of native species

as competition is reduced for our native pollinators. In NZ more than 90% of feral honeybee hives died within three years of the pest becoming established. The negative aspects are more expensive crop pollination services and less reliable pollination of backyard orchards and gardens. The presence of Varroa Mite will require more intensive management of hives by apiarists however it will not be the end of the honey industry as is shown by countries such as USA and NZ where the honey industry has been living with this pest for decades.

The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network (UCLN), where John is the current president, has a pollinator project where they are intensively surveying pollinators across 25 sites. To date they have found over 130 bee species in the district. Full analysis of other pollinator species, beetles, wasps, flies, etc., has not been

*The Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung community as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country where we meet and study the natural environment. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.*

attempted due to the complexity and number of species involved. There are two projects on iNaturalist for the UCLN. The first, "UCLN Pollinators of Central Victoria" <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/ucln-pollinators-of-central-victoria> collects all sightings of potential mammal, bird and insect pollinators for our region. The second project, "UCLN Pollinator Hunters", <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/ucln-pollinator-hunters> is for members only, but anyone can ask to join, and ask for details of the plant being pollinated where applicable.

The UCLN project has also experimented with introducing a native stingless bee. These small bees <4mm long are colonial. Our winters are too cool for them to survive year-round at present. In northern NSW and Queensland they are kept in man-made hives that are harvested for their honey. It was thought that these bees mainly

operated within 50m of their hive but possibly up to 200m. The UCLN pollinator project has detected them in traps up to 1.5km from their hive showing that they travel much further than expected.

There was a brief discussion about artificial nests and bee hotels which John saw as being of limited value. Most of our native bees are solitary and nest in tunnels which they dig into the soil so in this situation having suitable areas of bare soil and other habitat may be of more value. Bee hotels do have value as an education tool and to encourage people to get to know our native bees. They are easy to make and to move if necessary. On the downside, they may concentrate bees in a relatively small area thus allowing diseases or parasites to take hold. Also, if not properly constructed (tunnels too short) they may affect the sex ratio of the local population with long-term consequences.

The talk concluded with a rapid tour through the various pollinators of our native plants. Here we saw some images of various native bees that John had found during the study. This was followed by native wasps and flies, some of the many beetles, butterflies and other garden visitors. Spiders got a brief mention, not so much as pollinators but as ambush predators that hide in the flowers and catch visiting insects. The pollination services provided by insects continue into the night, dominated by moths but with all the afore-mentioned groups involved to some extent.

There was not time to consider the vertebrate pollinators that are also important. In this group are many birds, honeyeaters, parrots and others including woodswallows. There are also mammal pollinators such as our pigmy possums and bats.

Thank you John, for an interesting and well presented talk.



**Bees:** This leaf-cutter bee, *Megachile ordinaria*, builds an urn out of petals, in this case Common Wedge Pea, *Gompholobium huegelii*, in which to store its provisions. Bottom right is a female with a heavy pollen load under her abdomen.

**Flies:** Flies are simply amazing! A great many flies that go about their business without interfering or interacting with humans at all, and among them are some of our best pollinators. *Clockwise from top left.*

- Austalis pulchella*
- Odontomyia decipiens*
- Austalis copiosa*
- Steganopsis melanogaster*
- Eristalinus punctulatus*



**Jewel Beetles:** Not all beetles are as colourful as these Jewel Beetles. The adults are nectar feeders and are very specific about which flowers they rest and feed on. *Clockwise from top left.*

- Melobasis propinqua*
- Castiarina parallela*
- Castiarina octomaculata*
- Melobasis sp.*
- Castiarina xanthopilosa*



All photos by John Walter

# Macquarie Turtle, *Emydura macquarii*

By Euan Moore

The attached photo of a Macquarie or Eastern Short-necked Turtle, *Emydura macquarii*, was taken 17 Feb 2025 at lake Joanna in the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens. It is classified as Critically Endangered in Victoria.

When we created the Reptiles page for the CFNC website our search of records in Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) did not show any records for the Mt Alexander Shire. Current searches of ALA now show two records for Lake Joanna and a similar number for Lake Daylesford to the south in Hepburn Shire. These records are all in the Loddon Catchment as are older



records near Laanecoorie to our north. Records are more frequent around Bendigo in the Bendigo Ck and Campaspe Catchments.

The natural range of this species is the Murray-Darling Basin so this individual may have travelled upstream from the Loddon River via Campbell and Barker Creeks. There is also the possibility that it may have been released from captivity. This individual has a damaged scute (see photo) on the underside left flank which would make it identifiable in photos. One of the other records from Lake Joanna on 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025 includes a photo but does not show the body which is submerged. Could this be the same individual? The other record (December 2020) is held in VBA and may also be the same individual but no photo is available.

## Annual Challenge Bird Count – 2024 results

By Chris Timewell

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club members have been involved in the Annual Challenge Bird Count for more than 20 years, and we continued this tradition in 2024.

This event is overseen by BirdLife Australia, but relies on local coordination. The event involves people from across Australia attempting to detect as many birds as possible during a single day from within their local area, in or around the first weekend in December. For the Castlemaine area, the sightings must be made within a 25km radius of the central township. And for a bird to be a legitimate record, it must be either seen by 2 or more people, or heard by 3 or more people.

Many thanks to the four groups representing Castlemaine in 2024. Kerrie Jennings and I – with two assistants for the first main site - covered areas around Baringhup. Maldon and the Nuggetty. Geraldine

and Geoff Harris collected important data from around Barkers Creek, Sawmill Rd and the Muckleford Train Station. Sue Boekel – a member of BirdLife Castlemaine – led a team of three across a range of sites from Malmsbury to the Nuggetty. Peter and Rosemary Turner undertook valuable surveys within the Castlemaine township, and also around Harcourt reservoir.

A detailed list of the birds that were detected in the Castlemaine area, and then lodged with BirdLife Australia, is provided in the table below. In summary, 1572 individual birds were recorded from 110 different species. This was a remarkably similar result to 2023, when we recorded 1574 individual birds from 108 species.

For comparison, the numbers detected in other recent years were 287 individual birds comprising 61 bird species in 2022 (a reduced event due to the legacy of COVID), 2377

individuals comprising 113 species in 2019, 1840 individuals comprising 107 species in 2018, 1723 individuals comprising 107 species in 2017, and 1212 individuals comprising 84 species in 2016. The event was cancelled due to COVID in 2020 and 2021.

Some of the highlights from 2024 included a Spotted Dove in Baringhup township; a Black-tailed Native-hen alongside the Loddon River; Powerful Owls in Castlemaine; Square-tailed Kites, Southern Whiteface and Brown Songlarks to the west of Newstead; a Leaden Flycatcher pair in Maldon; and White-browed Babblers in Barkers Creek. All four survey groups detected multiple bird species that were not detected by other groups.

Keep this event in your diary for early December 2025. We'd love to have you involved. All abilities and experience levels are welcomed.

Data for previous years for comparison are presented on our website page:

Challenge Bird Count – Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

**Table 1:** Birds detected in the Castlemaine area as part of the Annual Challenge Bird Count

The species are currently listed in taxonomic order, as per the BirdLife Australia listing.

B = evidence of breeding      \* = introduced species

Survey group	Turner	Harris	Timewell & Jennings	Boekel	TOTAL
<b>Number of sites visited</b>	3	3	9	13	<b>28</b>
<b>Number of team members</b>	2	2	4	3	<b>11</b>
Species Name	Number of Birds Detected				
Australian Shelduck			3		<b>3</b>
Hardhead			6		<b>6</b>
Pacific Black Duck	6		3	9	<b>18</b>
Grey Teal			12		<b>12</b>
Chestnut Teal		7	4		<b>11</b>
Australian Wood Duck	40 B	18	37	12	<b>107</b>
*Domestic Duck	3				<b>3</b>
Australasian Grebe		1	4		<b>5</b>
Hoary-headed Grebe			35		<b>35</b>
Common Bronzewing	2	4	4		<b>10</b>
Crested Pigeon			7		<b>7</b>
Peaceful Dove			1		<b>1</b>
*Spotted Dove			1		<b>1</b>
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo				3	<b>3</b>
Fan-tailed Cuckoo				1	<b>1</b>
Dusky Moorhen	8		1	6	<b>15</b>
Eurasian Coot	5	8	23		<b>36</b>
Black-tailed Native-hen			1		<b>1</b>
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	1	1		<b>3</b>
Masked Lapwing			2	2	<b>4</b>
Australian Pelican	2				<b>2</b>
White-faced Heron	2	5	2	3	<b>12</b>
Australian White Ibis				2	<b>2</b>
Straw-necked Ibis		8			<b>8</b>
Little Black Cormorant	2	3			<b>5</b>
Australasian Darter			1	1	<b>2</b>
Black-shouldered Kite				1	<b>1</b>
Square-tailed Kite				1	<b>1</b>
Whistling Kite	1		1	1	<b>3</b>
Black Kite			2	1	<b>3</b>
Powerful Owl	2				<b>2</b>
Southern Boobook			1		<b>1</b>
Tawny Frogmouth			4 B		<b>4</b>
Rainbow Bee-eater			5	5	<b>10</b>
Sacred Kingfisher			3	4	<b>7</b>
Laughing Kookaburra		2	3	1	<b>6</b>
Brown Falcon			1	3	<b>4</b>
Galah		13	15	2	<b>30</b>
Long-billed Corella		48	34	10	<b>92</b>

Survey group	Turner	Harris	Timewell & Jennings	Boekel	TOTAL
Little Corella			15	1	<b>16</b>
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	6	5	11	17	<b>39</b>
Red-rumped Parrot			8		<b>8</b>
Crimson Rosella	7	4	4	8	<b>23</b>
Eastern Rosella	0	12	3	6	<b>21</b>
Musk Lorikeet	20	0	2	12	<b>34</b>
Little Lorikeet	0	0	0	2	<b>2</b>
Rainbow Lorikeet	0	0	0	9	<b>9</b>
White-throated Treecreeper		2	2	7	<b>11</b>
Brown Treecreeper		3	2	4	<b>9</b>
Superb Fairy-wren	4	22	13	34	<b>73</b>
White-fronted Chat			4		<b>4</b>
New Holland Honeyeater	8 B	1	8	2	<b>19</b>
Brown-headed Honeyeater			3	4	<b>7</b>
White-naped Honeyeater				3	<b>3</b>
Black-chinned Honeyeater			1		<b>1</b>
Eastern Spinebill	2	1	2	1	<b>6</b>
Red Wattlebird	7 B	8	10	9	<b>34</b>
Fuscous Honeyeater		10		30	<b>40</b>
White-plumed Honeyeater		14	7	8	<b>29</b>
White-eared Honeyeater			1		<b>1</b>
Yellow-faced Honeyeater		2	2	10	<b>14</b>
Noisy Miner			13	10	<b>23</b>
Spotted Pardalote	1		3	12	<b>16</b>
Striated Pardalote		5		13	<b>18</b>
Weebill	5		12	14	<b>31</b>
White-browed Scrubwren	2	2		6	<b>10</b>
Southern Whiteface				2	<b>2</b>
Yellow-rumped Thornbill				4	<b>4</b>
Yellow Thornbill	2		3		<b>5</b>
Striated Thornbill			2		<b>2</b>
Brown Thornbill	1		3	10	<b>14</b>
Buff-rumped Thornbill			2	3	<b>5</b>
Varied Sittella			2		<b>2</b>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	4	4	4	4	<b>16</b>
White-winged Triller			1		<b>1</b>
White-browed Babbler		5			<b>5</b>
Crested Shrike-tit		1			<b>1</b>
Rufous Whistler		6	4	9	<b>19</b>
Golden Whistler			1		<b>1</b>
Grey Shrike-thrush		5	4	6	<b>15</b>
Olive-backed Oriole		3		4	<b>7</b>
Pied Currawong	1				<b>1</b>
Grey Currawong			5 B		<b>5</b>
Australian Magpie	7	22	14	19	<b>62</b>

Survey group	Turner	Harris	Timewell & Jennings	Boekel	TOTAL
Grey Butcherbird			1		<b>1</b>
Dusky Woodswallow		10		3	<b>13</b>
Willie Wagtail		17	4	6	<b>27</b>
Grey Fantail	2	3	5	14	<b>24</b>
Little Raven		5	60	4	<b>69</b>
Australian Raven	4	1	2	2	<b>9</b>
Leaden Flycatcher			2		<b>2</b>
Magpie-lark	3	8	2	1	<b>14</b>
White-winged Chough		44	7	14	<b>65</b>
Jacky Winter			2		<b>2</b>
Eastern Yellow Robin				4	<b>4</b>
Mistletoebird				1	<b>1</b>
Red-browed Finch			2	6	<b>8</b>
*House Sparrow	20		31	13	<b>64</b>
Australasian Pipit			4	2	<b>6</b>
*European Goldfinch			2	1	<b>3</b>
Brown Songlark				2	<b>2</b>
Rufous Songlark		2			<b>2</b>
Australian Reed-Warbler			5	2	<b>7</b>
Fairy Martin		5	6		<b>11</b>
Tree Martin	2			2	<b>4</b>
Welcome Swallow		12	7	14	<b>33</b>
Silvereye	8	9	6		<b>23</b>
*Common Starling			3	3	<b>6</b>
*Common Myna		4	5		<b>9</b>
*Common Blackbird	8 B	2	2	6	<b>18</b>

## Funga Obscura - Photo journeys among fungi

Alison Pouliot



**ALISON POULIOT** is an ecologist and environmental photographer with a focus on fungi. Her journeys in search of fungi span northern and southern hemispheres, ensuring two autumns and a double dose of fungi each year. This book is about fungi, and the photography of fungi. The title – *Funga Obscura* – unites the two. Beginning in elemental landscapes of ice and rock, the book traces the evolutionary path of fungi as enablers of life on land, and creators of soils and forests. Crossing continents and ecosystems, we navigate lichen-covered landscapes, crawl in the fungal undergrowth, scale glacial extremes and duck between rainforest shadows.

## Striped Legless Lizard, *Delma impar*

Members of St. Arnaud Field Naturalist Club - Avon Plains Banyena Landcare Group are currently running a small project at a swamp on the Wimmera Plains, to establish the size and overall reproductive health of the Striped Legless Lizard, *Delma impar* before any cultural burns take place.

Their project is running with input from Parks Victoria, North Central Catchment Management Authority and they have a Permit Holder.

As they are doing a number of field days (up to 8) in Spring this year, they are enquiring if any people would be interested in joining them in this somewhat labour-intensive but exciting work.

Their discovery of this species still in existence at their site is a range extension, with implications for proposed developments in the region.

Contact Anne Hughes, Vice President - [anne@antmail.com.au](mailto:anne@antmail.com.au) or 0419 632688 during office hours.



Photographer: Ian R McCann  
Museums Victoria  
<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/species/8389>

## Swamp Antechinus (*Antechinus minimus maritimus*)

### Deceased male found near Anglesea.

By Geraldine Harris

There are two subspecies of the Swamp Antechinus. *Antechinus minimus maritimus* is only found in wet heath and wet tussock grassland and sedge-land along the southern coast of Vic and SA and Glennie Island. The other subspecies of Swamp Antechinus (*Antechinus minimus minimus*) is found in Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands in wet Button Grass sedge-lands from the coast to subalpine zones. In Tasmania it is also known as the Little Tasmanian Marsupial Mouse.

These small mammals (body 120 mm, tail 80 mm, weight 65 grams) have coarse grey fur on their head and shoulders grading to a yellowish brown on the rump and flanks and are buff below. They have a short sparsely hairy tail, a mouthful of tiny teeth, small eyes and ears and long fore-claws .

They are terrestrial and insectivorous, using their long fore-claws in a manner similar to a bandicoot to dig for food. They are strictly nocturnal and most active in the first few hours after dark.

Males appear to die after first mating but some females survive to breed in a second and occasionally a third season. Litter size depends on number of nipples - 6 in Tasmania and 8 in mainland populations.

Since its preferred habitat is limited, the Swamp Antechinus is vulnerable on the mainland and restricted in Tasmania. New populations are being discovered but known populations are disappearing because of habitat destruction.



After finding this small creature we arranged to deliver it to Associate Professor Barbara Wilson, School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University for genetic testing. Professor Wilson has been studying the Swamp Antechinus in the Eastern Otways for many years looking at the relationships and movements of these vulnerable mammals and the role of coastal scrub dunes and gullies as important mammal refuges.

Ref: *The Australian Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals - The National Photographic Index of Australian Mammals 1991*, ed. Ronald Strahan, Cornstalk edition, Collins, Angus & Robertson, NSW, Australia.

# Shingleback (*Tiliqua rugosa*) – feeding in the garden

By Geraldine Harris

Geraldine and Geoff Harris witnessed and recorded on video a wonderful scene of this Shingleback (*Tiliqua rugosa*) grazing on several grass species. Shinglebacks are common and widespread in the Bendigo /Castlemaine region; this being near the southern and eastern limits of its range.

A large male can grow as big as 390 mm. They have a large triangular head and tail and irregular scales that look 'like a pine cone'.

They are terrestrial in arid and semi-arid box-ironbark forests and feed on vegetation and invertebrates.



In this instance our shingleback was feeding on wallaby grasses and mallow plants but they also eat clover, cranberry heath berries, and yellow flowering plants such as cape weed and milk thistles. They give birth to up to 2-4 live young in summer. They mate for life and are known to live for at least 31, possibly 50, years.

Ref: Green, D. & Gibbons, D 2010, *Frogs and Reptiles of the Bendigo District*, Bendigo Field Naturalist Club Inc.

# Roadside Clean-Up, February 2025

By Geoff Harris

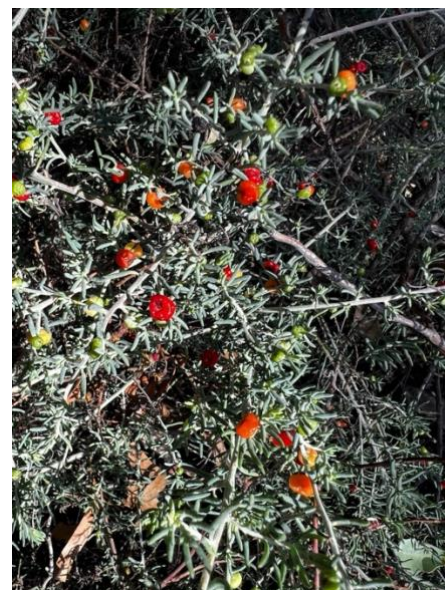
Our first Roadside Cleanup for 2025 was held on Monday 17 February. Our team of eight collected about 250 litres of rubbish. It was a lovely late summers day and we saw beautiful Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* with seed heads, a waist-high Ruby Saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa* with red berries, and Magenta Stork's-bill *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, Grey Box *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* & (unfortunately) St Johns Wort *\*Hypericum perforatum* in flower. For years now we've been

concerned that we should be separating the recyclables from the landfill rubbish but have just been putting it in the too hard basket. With the introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme we saw a sharp reduction in the volume of drink cans, cartons & bottles on the roadside but numbers are starting to build up again. After this roadside cleanup Geraldine & I sifted through the thirteen bags of rubbish collected & separated out 27 glass bottles, 45 plastic bottles & 53 aluminium cans.

These we took to the Chewton Refund Point (I notice that there is now one in the Castlemaine railway station northern carpark) and donated the proceeds (a grand total of \$12.50) to YIMBY, who are a local community group doing great work diverting organics from landfill and recycling them into good soil by composting. Sorting through the rubbish bags isn't much fun, so in future we will work out a better way to separate the recyclables from the garbage as we do the cleanup.

Thanks to Linda, Helen, Jan, Geraldine, Annette, Jenny & Euan.

Geoff Harris.



Left: Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) seed head

Middle: The offensive rubbish collection.

Right: Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*).

Photos: Geraldine & Geoff Harris



# February Observations



Top - Eastern Billabong fly (*Austroagrion watsoni*) with parasitic red mite attached.

Left - Wandering Ringtail (*Austrolestes leda*)  
Over farm dam at Shepherds Flat.

Photos: Jill Williams



Common Flatwing Damselfly (*Austroargiolestes ictromelas*) flying over Forest Creek, mid-January.

Photo: Noel Young.



Blue-banded Bee (*Amegilla asserta*).  
One of several observed on Salvias.

Photo: Lou Citroën



Southern Moon Moth (*Dasypodia selenophora*).  
This large, nocturnal moth is predominantly found in the southern regions of Australia, including Tasmania, and extends its range to Norfolk Island, New Zealand, and Macquarie Island.

Photo: Judith Nimmo



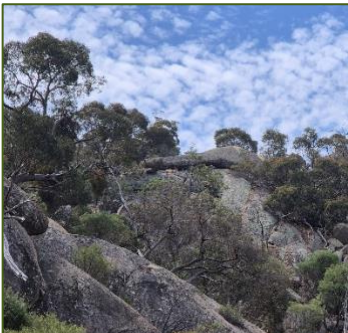
Mistletoe Day Moth (*Comocrus behrii*) on Wire Leaf Mistletoe (*Amyema preissii*) near Forest Creek.

Photo: Noel Young



Lou Citroën has been studying the comings and goings of these Southern Australian Paper Wasps (*Polistes humilis*) around his bird baths with growing interest and was able to identify them. Often maligned (because of the nasty sting they can inflict if aroused), he found these wasps both beautiful, very industrious and not aggressive if left alone. As you can see in the nest image, one of the wasps is carrying a globule of water (top right-hand) to utilise for or in the nest. Observing these 12 or 13 creatures busy on and in the nest, it's fascinating to see how they cooperate, sometimes exchanging substances between mandibles.

The space-efficient hexagonal shape of their nest cells and comparisons with the same hexagonal shape of bee hive cells was the subject of extensive research at Auburn University in the US in 2023, resolving that bees and wasps have independently 'invented' the same 'architectural tricks' whilst using quite different materials: wax and paper respectively.



## CFNC weekend at Wedderburn, 12-14 September, 2025

### *Mark your diaries!*

This year, our "out of town" weekend will be based at Wedderburn. An exciting program of evening speakers and day-time excursions to nearby nature reserves is being planned. We are delighted that CFNC member and local orchid expert Russell Stanley will give an evening talk on the update of his "Field Guide for the Orchids of the Inglewood and Kooyoora Areas". He will also lead an orchid hunting excursion. Our other expert speaker and excursion leader will be Professor Michael Kearney from the University of Melbourne, Biosciences. Michael has a special interest in the reptiles and insects of Mt Korong, using these field studies for his ongoing research programs.

**Venue:** dinner and evening talks on Friday and Saturday will be in the Wedderburn Community House, 24 Wilson Street.

Attendees will look after their own breakfasts and lunches. There is a supermarket and café in town.

**Accommodation options:** we suggest you book as soon as possible.

Wedderburn Goldseeker Motel, 43 High St., 03 5494 3002  
(mention "Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club" for the special price of \$145/night for a twin or queen room, \$170/night for a family room).

KurracaBurN Heights, 1 Hospital St., 0427 943 5962 - Kurraca House or Kurraca Cottage.

Wedderburn Hotel, 72 High St., 03 5494 3008 – "Miners Cottage" rooms with shared bathrooms.

Pioneer Caravan Park, 63 Hospital St., 03 5494 3301 - large cabins (3), powered and unpowered sites.

Hard Hill Tourist Reserve, 64 Wilson St. - free camping, toilet and shower block.

**Transport:** Wedderburn is about a 1hr 15 min drive from Castlemaine. Car-pooling will be organised.

**Registration:** We will call for registrations in July. A registration fee will cover hire of the meeting room and evening meals. Attendees will organise their own accommodation.

**Enquiries:** Jenny Rolland 0400 565 092.



Sacred Kingfisher  
(*Todiramphus sanctus*)  
Observed during Annual  
Challenge Bird Count.  
Photo: Kerrie Jennings.

## Coming Events in March

### AGM and Monthly General Meeting, Friday 14th March, 7.30pm

Uniting Church Fellowship Room, Lyttleton St.

#### Annual General Meeting

The 2024 AGM will be held before the usual monthly meeting on 14th March. The AGM agenda will include the Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report for 2024, and the election of office bearers and committee members for 2025. All positions on the committee will be open, so you are strongly encouraged to consider joining the committee. Members with a range of skills and interests are very welcome. For more information, please contact the President or one of the current committee members (see back page). Nomination forms are available from the Secretary and completed forms should reach the Secretary ([castlemainefnc@hotmail.com](mailto:castlemainefnc@hotmail.com)) before the meeting.

**Our speaker will follow the AGM. In the interests of time, this month there will be no Observations segment.** But we would love to see your interesting observations in the April Castlemaine Naturalist. Please forward them, with photos if available (preferably as uncropped jpgs), by email to the newsletter editors at [newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com) by 28th March.

#### Monthly Talk

**Speaker: Christine Kilmartin (President, Castlemaine Landcare Group)**

#### Learnings and leanings from two decades of Landcare

Forest Creek and Happy Valley were devastated by alluvial mining in the 1850's and subsequent neglect. Subsequent farming in the Valley changed soil profiles and introduced competitors to remnant vegetation. Christine will describe the habitat restoration work by CLG and supporting agencies over the last 20 years and explain the Landcare vision for future works along the creek including the exciting new project to rewild the channelised section of the creek. Both the challenges and highpoints of these works will be flagged. She will also stress the importance of regular monitoring such as bird surveys and Waterwatch to assess the health of the recovering ecosystems.

### Excursion, Saturday 15th March, 1.30pm

#### Forest Creek Restoration by Castlemaine Landcare Group

**Leader: Christine Kilmartin**

Following Christine's talk the previous evening, she will take us for a walk along the Great Dividing Trail path beside Forest Creek (now named Leanganook Track) to see first-hand the remarkable transformation of a broom- and gorse-infested valley to a productive native riparian strip following over 20 years of work by CLG and supporting agencies. She will also point out sites of ongoing projects such as the "Indigenous Food and Fibre" plot. As we walk, we will also be noting the birds, insects and other wildlife enjoying the restored habitats.

**Meet:** for car-pooling and **1.30pm** departure at the northern end of the Car Park north of the Railway Goods Shed, Kennedy St. Castlemaine. We will start and end the walk at the grasslands at 7 Montgomery Street.

**Bring:** water, snacks, **clean** sturdy shoes, binoculars (if you have some), chairs, afternoon tea.



Australian Pipit (*Anzthus australis*) observed during the Annual Challenge Bird Count. Photo: Kerrie Jennings.

## Program

**Monthly meetings:** 7.30pm, 2nd Friday of the month except for January.  
**Venue:** Uniting Church Hall (UCH), Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine except during winter (June-August) when they are held by Zoom.

**Excursions** are usually held on the Saturday following the monthly meeting and leave from the northern end of the car park north of the Railway Goods Shed, Kennedy St. at 1.30pm unless stated otherwise.

See “**Coming Events**” page for more details about March events.

### Fri 14th March, 7.30pm

Meeting (UCH) **AGM**

**Learnings and leanings from two decades of Landcare.**

Speaker: Christine Kilmartin (President Castlemaine Landcare Group)

### Sat 15th March, 1.30pm

**Excursion: Forest Creek Restoration by Castlemaine Landcare Group**

Leader: Christine Kilmartin (President, Castlemaine Landcare Group).

*All welcome.*

### Fri 11th April, 7.30pm

**Meeting:** (UCH). **Life cycles of moths.**

Speaker: Steve Williams.

### Sat 12th April, 1.30pm

**Excursion: ‘Photographing flowers, grasses and insects for effective iNaturalist identification’.** Red, White and Blue mine.

See our website calendar of events for further dates and activities: [Calendar of Events – Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club](#)

**Visitors are welcome at club activities**

## Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc. #A0003010B

[castlemaine-field-naturalists.org.au](http://castlemaine-field-naturalists.org.au)

[castlemaine-fnc@hotmail.com](mailto:castlemaine-fnc@hotmail.com)

**PO Box 324, Castlemaine, 3450**

### Membership

Includes the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist.

(Membership forms on [CFNC website](#))

Single \$35, Family \$50

Pensioner or student:

Single \$25, Family \$30

**Newsletter: Castlemaine Naturalist**

Email items: [newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com)

April edition Deadline: **28th March**

### Committee

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Euan Moore (0407 519 091)

Vice-President: Vacant

Secretary: Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Treasurer: Geoff Harris

Committee:

Lou Citroën

Jill Williams

Jenny Rolland

Noel Young

Peter Turner

Newsletter Editors: Noel Young,

Jenny Rolland, Jill Williams

Program Coordinator:

Jenny Rolland

Newsletter Distributor:

Geraldine Harris

The Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis nutans* is the club emblem. Design by Rita Mills

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club.