

# Narpulungup News

July 2018 Volume 1

## Fitzgerald Biosphere community celebrates relaunch



Melissa Price, Assistant to the Federal Minister for Environment, cutting the floral 'ribbon'. Photograph courtesy FBCC

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March marked the culmination of many years of effort by members of the Biosphere Implementation Group (BIG) to ensure the Fitzgerald Biosphere's renomination to UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme was successful.

Gathered together in Hopetoun were more than 160 people from varied walks of life - local government, conservation, farming, older generations, school children, the Noongar community and politicians, to celebrate this

momentous occasion.

Melissa Price, Assistant to the Federal Minister for Environment, cut the floral 'ribbon' at Barrens Beach to officially mark the relaunch. Federal Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson and State Environment Minister Stephen Dawson also spoke. The Noongar community lead a choir, conducted Welcome to Country and performed traditional dance. Back at the Community Centre in Hopetoun, Mr Rex Edmondson, one of the pioneers of the Landcare move-

ment in the Jerramungup Shire, announced the 40 year anniversary of the Fitzgerald Biosphere. Special mention has to be made of the Launch Coordinator, Johanna Tomlinson from Clear South who did a fantastic job over many months pulling the day together and seeing to it that everything went without a hitch. The Ravensthorpe Wildflower Society donated their time and spent days collecting and then decorating the hall with local native plants and objects. Everyone who

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walked into the room that Friday morning must have been pulled up short by the sheer impressiveness of the atmosphere. Anyone visiting the Fitzgerald Biosphere for the first time must surely have walked away with a clear understanding of why it is so special. With the renomination phase completed, the BIG will now be known as the **Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective (FBCC)**. The group is completing a strategic planning process and updating the action plan from which it will set priorities for the coming year. Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park are represented on the FBCC.

Leonie McMahon



Friends President, Bill Thompson.



Noongar dancers at Barrens Beach.



Noongar Elder Eugene Eades and MC Professor Stephen Hopper. All photographs courtesy FBCC

## ROCKSWIZ!

For the Paddy's Market day in Hopetoun this year the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park (FRNP) organised a competition to name some commonly occurring rocks of this district, and complemented it with a display of other interesting rocks.

The rocks in the competition were Banded Ironstone, Conglomerate, Granite, Dolerite, Jasper, Laterite, Limestone, Quartz, Quartzite, Schist and Spongolite. Would you recognise each of those? The prize-winners were David Greenwood (adult) and Elijah Barrett-Lennard (under 15 years) and runners-up were Robyn (adult), Henry Johnson and Alorrah Bull (under 15 years). The main prizes were Annual WA Park Passes donated by the Department of



The common rocks from this district that were part of the competition.

Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The runners-up won a Bush Book or Landscape Calendar.

Thanks to all those who had a go at the competition. The Friends of FRNP had fun putting together this display. Their aim was to draw attention to how interesting the geology of the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe area is.

Did you know that you can find as many different minerals in this area as almost anywhere in WA? In addition to the common rocks we were pleased to be able to display some nice specimens of malachite, azurite, pyrites, the lithium ores (pegmatite and lepidolite) and more. Rosemary Jasper



# Opportunities to explore Twertup in spring

## Two day walks around Twertup

Experienced bushwalkers, Bill Thompson and Libby Sandiford, will guide you through interesting landscapes and vegetation in the north-west sector of the Fitzgerald River National Park. A different walk will occur on each day. Some bushwalking experience is recommended, as these walks will require some scrambling and will not be following defined tracks.

**Cost:** \$10/day (+ park vehicle access fee)

**Where:** Twertup Field Studies Centre

**What you need:** water bottles, daypack, sunhat, sunscreen, suitable walking shoes/boots, long sleeve pants/shirt (most parts will be cross-country), food for the day. Optional: gaiters, camera, binoculars.

If staying for the weekend, bring sleeping gear and all food. Some beds available in Twertup Field Studies Centre (Friday—Sunday).

**Registration:** by 12<sup>th</sup> October to [admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](mailto:admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)

Max people per day: 20

**Contact for more information:** Bill Thompson (0419 694 903) or Libby Sandiford (0418 944860)

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018: Day walk to mesas south of Twertup** (beyond Horrie and Dorrie)

Distance: 10-12 km

Grade: Moderate - most of walk will be cross-country, will include small climbs up and down slippery slopes.

Start time: 8.30 am

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October: Day walk to Fitzgerald River valley**

Distance: 20+ km (depending on progress, will aim for Roes Rock)

Grade: Moderate to difficult – a long walk along an old track which is likely overgrown; bush may be thick.

## Plants in the Park

Local botanists, Libby Sandiford and Gillian Craig, will introduce you to the bush surrounding Twertup. Gain an understanding of the main plant Families that are found in the park and how to recognise them. Delve into the flowers and discover their anatomy.

**When:** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**Where:** Twertup Field Studies Centre

**Cost:** \$10/day (+ park vehicle access fee)

**Start time:** 10 am Saturday, 8.30am Sunday

**What you need:** Notebook, pencil, water bottle, daypack, sunhat, suitable walking shoes (not walking far). If you have them, bring a magnifying glass/ hand lens and camera.

If staying for the weekend, bring sleeping gear and all food. Some beds are available in the Centre (Friday—Sunday).

**Registration:** by 1<sup>st</sup> September to [admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](mailto:admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)

Max people per day: 20

**Contact for more information:** Libby Sandiford (0418 944 860)



## A call for historical Friends' information

At the Friends AGM in March this year it was resolved to recreate an archive of historical information about the organisation. Much was lost in the fire that destroyed Twertup in 2008 and with the rebuild completed, members feel now is the time to gather whatever information they can. We are fortunate to have the expertise of Jenny Taylor, a trained librarian, to assist us.

If you have historical documents, photos, records, reports relating to Friends', the park and Twertup please email Anne Gadsby at [anngad@wn.com.au](mailto:anngad@wn.com.au).



# 2018 AGM activities at Twertup

About 24 Friends members visited Twertup in March this year for the Annual General Meeting. Our new committee for 2018 is listed, right. Congratulations to Anne Gadsby, our new Vice President, Del Harland, our new Secretary, and Sheryn Prior, our new Committee Member. Stepping off the committee this year were four long term members who have contributed much to the organisation over many years. Special thanks to Rosemary Jasper, Secretary in 2017 and President for the three years prior; Andy Chapman, Vice President in 2017, who has served a combined number of 23 years as President, Vice President, Newsletter Editor and Fitzgerald River Advisory Committee representative, Steve Janicke, also a long time Committee and Twertup Sub-committee member, and Geraldine Janicke, Minutes Secretary in 2017 and past Committee Member. All have been stalwart volunteers contributing to the rebuilding of Twertup. Lifetime Memberships were awarded to Andy Chapman, Gil Craig and Ric Pepper for their extensive service to the organisation; Gil and Ric being the coordinators of the Twertup rebuild.

## 2018 Committee

**President:** Bill Thompson

**Vice President:** Anne Gadsby

**Secretary:** Delys Harland

**Treasurer:** Liz Utting

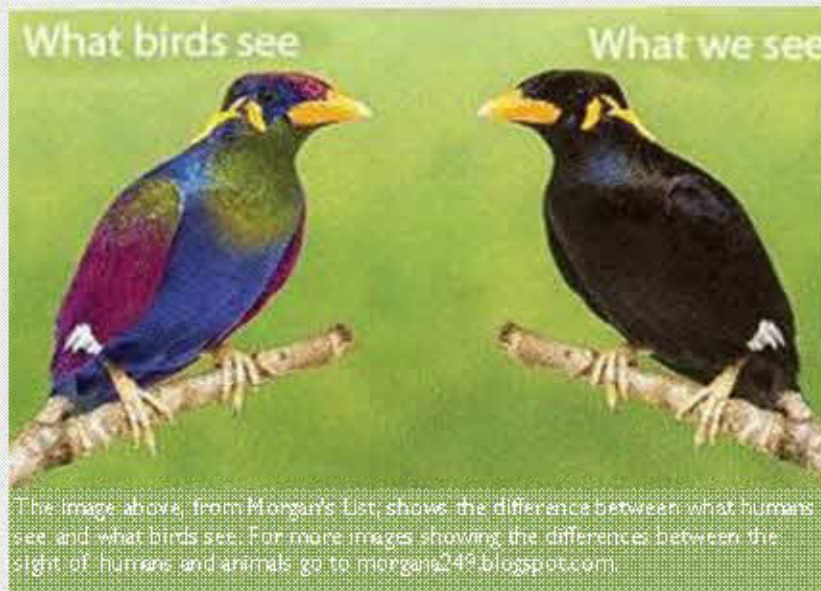
**Committee:** Louise Lodge, Libby Sandiford, Sheryn Prior

**Newsletter Editor:** Leonie McMahon

**Twertup Sub-Committee:** Gil Craig (Committee Representative), Ric Pepper, Kingsley Vaux.

After the AGM our guest speaker, Angela Sanders, spoke about how birds see and gave a report on the results of a decade of bird monitoring in a restored landscape. Angela is an ecologist for Bush Heritage and has worked in the South Coast region for many years.

## A birds eye view of the world



Angela Sanders gave us a birds eye view of the world - a fascinating insight into how birds see the world very differently from us. She said for decades ornithologists assumed birds saw colours in the same way as humans do. Consequently, many aspects of

bird behaviour were not able to be explained until scientists realised how sensitive birds' eyes were to ultraviolet light, and that they see visible colours more distinctly than humans can. For example, a range of food sources look very different under UV light and being able to

see UV gives birds a distinct advantage. Some berries and other fruits have waxy coatings that reflect UV light, making them stand out vibrantly against green foliage. Some flowers and insects reflect UV light. The urine splashes and trails that mice and other rodents use to mark their territory are brilliantly visible in ultraviolet light, enabling raptors to locate prey exactly for more efficient hunting, even when the prey may not be visible itself. Their more acute sight allows birds to more easily see contrasts in their surroundings, perhaps seeing through the camouflage of prey or other birds, for example. Birds also see plumage very differently to us. Species that may look the same to humans are dimorphic (different in appearance between male and female) when viewed with UV light. Angela said male blue tits, for example, have a prominent crown seen under UV light, though the genders look similar to humans. Birds have no difficulty telling the difference,



## Ten years of bird surveys in restoration plantings

Angela has carried out bird surveys in Bush Heritage's properties between the Stirling Ranges and Fitzgerald River national parks every year since 2006, comparing paddocks with restoration plantings at different ages with each other and with reference sites in remnant bush. She completed an analysis of this data (from a total of 444 surveys) earlier this year and presented her findings at the Friends AGM. Before revegetation started, Angela was observing about five bird species, including Richard's Pipits, Stubble Quail and Brown Songlarks, in cleared paddocks. In those same paddocks ten years on, she finds between 40 to 50 species and says monitoring shows the restored areas are providing increasingly suitable bird habitat. She said really fantastic news was the presence of Malleefowl mounds in five and 14 year old vegetation. Usually Malleefowl prefer long unburnt habitat but there was sufficient leaf litter in these restored areas to enable them to build mounds. In the older vegetation high activity of Western Whipbirds, Southern Scrub-robins and White-browed Babblers is greater than the reference sites. Angela said this means at present the revegetation is providing more resources for



Site before revegetation. Photograph courtesy Angela Sanders



The same site post revegetation. Photograph courtesy Angela Sanders

these birds than the remnants, which makes sense. It is flourishing and producing nectar, invertebrates, seeds and leaf litter. As the sites age she expects the diversity of birds present to plateau, with different species eventually moving in. Brush wallabies, pygmy possums, honey possums and a range of invertebrates are now present. Angela said reptiles are the hardest to re-establish so when the Eleven Striped Skink moves in, it will be party time! Reference sites are chosen to

model as closely as possible the type of habitat that was cleared to make paddocks and bird functional groups are used to look at the role birds play in the ecosystem. For example the leaf gleaning birds like pardalotes, weebills and white-naped honeyeaters feed on insects whose larvae can damage the tree canopy, thereby providing a cleaning service for the trees. Angela said it still isn't possible to replicate the original bush but it is possible to recreate structure and diversity.

and can use those UV markings to help select mates, defend a territory or tell individual birds apart. Some brood parasite eggs, despite having similar visible colours and markings, look very different from host bird eggs under UV light, giving birds the ability to tell when an egg is not their own and allowing them to reject the interloper. While not all species that host

brood parasites will reject unwanted eggs, the UV pattern may be a factor for those that do reject them. How do birds benefit from our knowing they can detect UV light? Angela said the information is much more than just an academic 'nice to know'. For example, the American Bird Conservancy reports there are around one billion incidents of

birds colliding with windows each year, though not all result in death. This has significance for bird conservation. Adding UV reflective properties to window decals more effectively prevents bird window collisions without blocking views. Other applications include the design of field bags, clothing and camouflage hides that don't reflect UV light, and cat collars that do.



# Twertup progress report

Late in March fifteen volunteers, led by Ric Pepper, gathered at Twertup to construct a 54 kilolitre concrete water tank for fire-fighting purposes.

Brothers Aidan and Jonas, Mitchell, Mitch Harland and Beau Vaux were a welcome sight, particularly as they are fit, young men and kept the mixer rolling.

This is not to diminish the great work by the less youthful team members, which included some new faces, i.e. Bruce, Andrew Gooch, Julie Outram, Greg and Delys Harland.

The tank mould was generously loaned by Steven Challenger from Jerdacuttup.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) is paying for the tank which is to be used for fire-fighting purposes.

Flash new trail markers have been installed on the walk trails. The 'hakea' reflectors are highly visible in torch-light... a good incentive to go out for a night walk!  
*The Twertup Field Studies*

*Centre Management Guidelines* have been signed by both Greg Mair (Regional Manager, DBCA) and Bill Thompson (President, FFRNP). This is an internal document that provides an agreement between Friends and DBCA on how the Centre will be managed, fees charged and booking guidelines.

Gil Craig





## Dibbler monitoring in the park

Between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 nine 'Friends', Dr Tony Friend from Parks and Wildlife plus one interstate visitor participated in the dibbler monitoring at the established grid near the intersection of Hamersley Drive and Moir Track in Fitzgerald River National Park.

The results were encouraging; five dibblers, four of which were pouch young carrying females with either seven or eight young were weighed, measured, microchipped and released. This was a good result as it indicates dibblers are 'hanging in there' in their FRNP stronghold and breeding when they should. Other animals encountered were 139 bush rats, which is a very high number, five bandicoots, five house mice and one bobtail lizard. The monitoring also achieved its objective as an

exercise in community engagement and awareness raising as it enabled some who had never seen one before to appreciate this endangered species and understand the role of FRNP in its conservation. 'Friends' came from as far away as Waroona and Kulin and we had a visiting botanist from Queensland join us. The voluntary contribution participants made was 114 person hours and 2,820 km of vehicle travel. We usually finished by late morning leaving the rest of the day to enjoy Hamersley Inlet where we camped and its surrounds. Participants either kayaked,



Dibbler. Photograph courtesy Andrew Chapman

walked some of the Hakea Trail, explored or just found a spot in the shade to drink tea, talk or simply read a book. 'Friends' gratefully acknowledge both State NRM and South Coast NRM for their financial support. Andrew Chapman

### *Unique to the Fita* ***Banksia laevigata*** subsp. *laevigata*

At the Twertup opening in November last year on a walk up Dorrie, Friends President, Bill Thompson, pointed out a banksia in full flower amidst the blackened branches very much still in evidence after the 2008 fire.

*Banksia laevigata* subsp. *laevigata*, also known as the Tennis Ball Banksia, is one of approximately 1,748 identified plant species in the Fitzgerald River National Park. It has a restricted range, only being found along the lower Fitzgerald River and in the Ravensthorpe Range. It is named for the Latin *laevigatus* (smooth), perhaps in reference to the smooth upper surface of its leaves and is related to *B. laevigata* subsp. *fuscolutea* which grows in the Hyden - Frank Hann National Park area. This species is killed by fire and regenerates from seed. It grows in rocky soil (spongolite and laterite) in shrubland and open woodland and flowers from October to December.

It was first described by James Drummond in late 1848, probably near Fitzgerald River and is listed as Priority 4 on the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions Threatened and Priority Flora list.





## A frenzy of feathers

Visitors to this year's annual Bremer Bay Easter markets were invited to test their feather identification skills in the Friend's *Frenzy of Feathers* competition.

First place went to Sam Tozer who got all 16 species correct. Second place went to Helen Robertson who guessed 13 of the 16 species. Congratulations to them both. The prizes were Annual WA Park Passes donated by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Friends' maps.

Most of the species are found in our area—Barn Owls, Red Wattle Birds, Kestrels, Tawny Frogmouths, Ravens, Ringnecks and Malleefowl amongst them. For their sheer impressiveness, Red and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Bustards also got to show their tail feathers. The Currawong tripped up all but the most experienced birders.

Many thanks to Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park volunteers from Ravensthorpe who put the display together.

Leonie McMahon



Look out for...

our new banner



natural resource  
management program



The design and printing of the flag banner is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program, supported by Royalties for Regions.

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