

2019-03-HFNC-activities-events

Hello Friends & Members

Following is a brief account of HFNC activities for this month and the excursion held in February.

Special Meeting Thurs 21 March – Greg Kerr from Nature Glenelg Trust “Behavioural ecology of the Sleepy Lizard: when life gets tough monogamy has its advantages”. The presentation will begin shortly after 7.30 pm at HIRL.

Victorians will know the Sleepy Lizard as the Shingleback or Stumpytail. Greg has studied this species and will provide many fascinating insights into its behaviour.

Greg recently moved to our area, working as a Senior Ecologist with Nature Glenelg Trust. He is now primarily involved with the development of Walkers Swamp and associated wetlands adjacent to the SE corner of the Grampians National Park. He has had extensive experience as a consultant working overseas and across Australia in a variety of environments. Greg is also an award-winning secondary teacher who loves working with community and involving people in environmental projects such as wetland restoration, raising environmental awareness, development of citizen science programs and fauna monitoring. He recently conducted a bird identification course in Dunkeld with 27 participants. This was similar to a project he initiated in Port Lincoln, South Australia.

Greg has published many papers and reports in scientific journals on topics as diverse as Bent-wing Bats, frogs, grassy woodland landscapes and wading birds.

Excursion on Saturday 23 March - Port Fairy Griffith Island Ocean Rock Pools. We will be meeting with members of SEANA who have a weekend event at Port Fairy and surrounds. Diane from HFNC has helped organised that ‘campout’ and will be leading the rock pool excursion. We aim to leave Hamilton at 9 am and meet SEANA members at 10 am, at the Griffith Is. causeway parking area.

There will be a number of other excursions planned for that day and on Sunday morning, if any members and friends have an inclination to join in. Birdwatching to Killarney is one option.

HFNC Program for 2019 (see attached pdf) – our program has a range of speakers and activities, including excursions and working bees to plant more local Silver Banksia, Sweet Bursaria and Drooping Sheoak at Kanawalla Rail Flora Reserve, and weed control works on conservation reserves.

Summer Bird surveys for Birdlife Australia’s Shorebird 2020 program - summary tables are provided as pdf files for the 3 major areas covered: Killarney wetlands and beach, Hamilton area and Willaura-Lake Bolac area. These data were also useful in detecting threatened duck species (Australasian Shoveler and Blue-billed Duck) on wetlands subject to shooting in the Open Season that starts 16 March and concludes on 10 June. We were able to have shooting on Lake Linlithgow banned on the opening weekend and shooting from boats prohibited thereafter. Shooting is banned on West Lake at Tower Hill and banned from boats at Lake Bolac.

February 2019 excursion to Lake Linlithgow – a highlight for this excursion was the sighting of 3 Pacific Golden Plovers near Boonawah Creek, the second record for this species at the lake (Steve Clark reported one bird near The Point in 2002). We also saw 23 Freckled Duck and about 1200 Blue-billed Duck, mainly in the centre of the lake. About 200 Red-necked Avocets were also present, along with 4 Double-banded Plover (autumn-winter guests from NZ). As a result of past duck hunting the waterbirds were wary and hard to approach and observe. A report is attached as a pdf.

Working Bee with Nature Glenelg Trust – NGT is looking to start construction of the regulator at Walkers Swamp at 08:30 on **Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th March**. There are 4000 geofabric bags to be filled with over 90 m³ of sand and placed into the drain. This means about 20 people on are needed on both days to help with bag filling and movement.

If you can find one day (or two) to come to Walker Swamp and help out can you please RSVP to **Greg Kerr** by email (greg.kerr@naturegleneilg.org.au) or text Greg (0418 846 993) with your name, the dates you are available and your contact details.

NGT will provide a BBQ lunch and snacks on both days. NGT will provide a portable loo on site. If you want you can camp out at Walker Swamp overnight.

Regards
Rod Bird

Secretary,
Hamilton Field Naturalists Club