



Legless-lizards & convergent evolution

strathbogierangesnature-view.wordpress.com/author/berthohosouth/

Strathbogie Ranges – Nature View

The natural world is truly amazing! In the foothills around the Strathbogies, in grassland and grassy-woodland habitat occur legless-lizards, that look just like small snakes: the Olive Legless-lizard (*Delma inornata*) and the Striped Legless-lizard (*D. impar*). They look like snakes, because they have evolved to lead a snake-like life-style; slithering through grass and squeezing into tight, narrow cracks in the ground and under rocks, where legs are a hindrance.

Evolution that results in organisms (that don't have a close common ancestor) becoming more alike, like snakes and legless lizards, is called convergent evolution. In fact many groups of reptiles have independently evolved limblessness. Unfortunately for our legless-lizards, this often results in death at the hands of fearful, or unaware, human intervention.

Recently, I 'discovered' a more subtle, yet no less surprising example of convergent evolution relating to legless-lizards.

In my friend's garden are several compost bins. To stop weeds growing he covers the vegetable matter in the bins with old carpet. He knows that I'm interested in legless-lizards and has been telling me for years that he has them in his garden. So, when I was finally in Tom's garden about two weeks ago, he took me to the compost bins, lifted the carpet and, lo-and-behold, there they were. Clearly they were legless-lizards and almost indistinguishable from the *Delma* species we have in our region; Tom and the locals call them 'Slow Worms'.

Only one problem – I was on a garden allotment in London, the one in England! Legless-lizards in England?? ... they hardly even have snakes, so what was I looking at? They are, in fact *Anguis fragilis* a legless-lizard occurring though parts of Europe, Britain and Asia. Photo: Slow worms



BOX IRONBARK ECOLOGY COURSE

Nagambie, 10 – 14th October 2011

For those interested in gaining a general understanding of ecological processes and principles. Five absorbing days of field studies in the heart of Box Ironbark country.

Registrations Now Open!

This five day residential course commences on Monday 10th October and concludes on Friday 14th October, 2011.

Topics:

- Distribution and history of the ecosystem including indigenous use and post settlement impacts.
- Introductory sessions on geomorphology, soils, fauna and vegetation communities.
- Flora and Fauna of the region - how to read the landscape, search for and identify the plants, reptiles, birds, mammals and invertebrates that inhabit Box Ironbark communities.
- Detailed study of ecological interactions between landscape, soils, plants and animals and implications for management.
- Survey skills and project planning.

Participants will gain:

- a better understanding of the distribution, natural values and ecological processes of Box Ironbark landscapes, past and present;
- an understanding of the impact of human use on the ecosystem, past and present;
- practical skills in observation, description, survey, analysis, interpretation, map reading and ecosystem monitoring of flora, fauna, geomorphology and soils;
- opportunity to apply new skills and to collate and communicate information collected from the field;
- resources to help plan for enhanced ecologically sustainable management outcomes for Box Ironbark remnants on private and public land.

2011 KINGLAKE LYREBIRD SURVEY

SATURDAY 9th / SUNDAY 10th JULY

Please confirm your attendance and indicate your accommodation requirements to: LAWRIE RIGG 9434 6685

rigg@bigpond.net.au Please confirm your attendance by Tuesday 6th July so we can plan our survey sites effectively.

WELCOME TO ISSUE 18

Please send articles to mirandayorston@bigpond.com or ring on 57969261

Just a reminder that you can receive The Granite News by email. Just send me your address, it's as easy as that and you receive it early, each week and in colour.

Remember that there is no charge for advertisements or articles in the body of the newsletter, again, just email them to me.

HIGHLANDS HALL BOOKINGS

Please note that anyone wanting to use the hall for any reason MUST check with Judy Cameron (5796 9247)

THE MAD HATTERS RETURN

ARE YOU INTERESTED in being involved with local theatre? The Mad Hatters (Highlands Amateur Theatrical Society) group is planning to present a play later this year, around September, and is looking for people wanting to join in either on stage or backstage. If you are interested and are willing to commit to regular evening rehearsals, please contact Susan Bennett (57904333) or Pauline Roberts (57969301) before the end of June. There are small parts for a limited number of children, but only if accompanied to rehearsals by an adult.

2011-12 COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS NOW OPEN

Community groups around Australia can now apply for grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to help protect and conserve their local environment and natural resources.

\$5 million will be available in the 2011-12 Community Action Grants round to help local communities undertake activities such as revegetating landscapes, rehabilitating dunes, removing weeds, controlling pests, and improving sustainable land management practices.

In response to community feedback, eligibility has been broadened this year to include all community groups that deliver environmental and sustainable agriculture projects. Applications for the 2011-12 Community Action Grants will close on Monday 1 August 2011. Information on how to apply is available at www.nrm.gov.au or by calling 1800 552 008.

COMMUNITY WHAT'S ON CALENDAR - JUNE/JULY 2011

Week beg 27th June	TERIP TERIP MOWING ROSTER Alec & Marion Rowan Brad Kellett & Kate Wright Around clubhouse and all four courts
Week beg 26th June	WHITEHEADS CREEK- TARCOMBE RFB TRUCK B Bortalazzo John Dalziel
Tuesday 22nd June	The ADA Upper Goulburn Branch will hold their June meeting at the Alexandra Bowling Club. Well known and respected hunter Doug Reid of Bairnsdale will be the key speaker. Doug is known as one of the first successful trainers of Wire Haired Pointers for the purpose of stalking Sambar deer. Wire Haired Pointers are the most widely used gun dog in Europe and Doug has a lot of success over the years. The meeting will start with a BBQ at 7pm with the general meeting at 8pm. Details of the branch hunt will be announced along with guest speakers for the remainder of 2011. Later in the night the branch will conduct its Annual General meeting. New hunters and prospective members are always welcome. For further details please contact the branch President Roger Wootton on 0427 015539 or Secretary Bob Carey on 0429359180
Wednesday 22nd June	Understanding the Consequences of Long Term Stress An evening with Dr Rob Gordon. Clinical psychologist Rob Gordon is a sensitive and motivating speaker, whose insights will help explain our responses to some of the challenges we have experienced in the past decade. 7:00pm – 10:00pm Strath Creek CFA Shed Bring Your Friends and Family Light refreshments will be provided Admission is free, but for catering purposes please RSVP to Bridget Clarke 5736 0479 clarkeb@humehealth.org.au .
Wednesday 29th June	HIGHLANDS/CAVEAT CFA Low Structure Course to be held at Alexandra CFA Shed on Weds June 29th, July 6th Weds or Thurs July 7th at Wangarratta Training Facility, open to all CFA members. If anyone is interested please contact either Sharyn 0357904297 or Peter 03 5796 9301 asap for numbers to run this course. NB: We must have numbers to run this course so please let us know asap. Thanks, Sharyn Shaw
Friday 1st July	Next Meeting of the HCCC will be at 7.00 pm Friday the first of July at Rocky Passes tapas provided. If you have tasted their tapas you'll know that this is too good to miss really.
Saturday 2nd July	Ruffy Store, at 3pm HABBIES HOWE JACKAROO MEMOIR Local author; local story. Taggerty resident Michael Thornton has written a memoir about his years as a jackaroo. A major part of the book is about his year at Habbies Howe. The book will be released by Penguin on 27 June. Michael will talk about the book and sign copies at the following events: Alexandra Library, Tue 5 July 6.30pm Gallery 34 Yea, Saturday 30 July, 3pm Visit www.michaelthorntonbooks.com.au
Saturday 2nd July,	Yea Country Market , 9am to 2pm (1st Saturday of each month) Yea Railway Park, Station Street, Yea. Contact: 0409 130 587 or yeamarket@gmail.com Whatever you're looking for, you'll find it at the Yea Country Market. Fresh local produce - cheeses, wines, fruit & vegetables, olives, oils, bread, beef, organic honey, jams and preserves, Creative arts and crafts, Beautiful clothing and accessories, Children's activities, Delightful soaps, candles, jewellery and crystals, Plants, Trash and treasure of all description, Entertainment, Scrumptious food, cakes and treats, Great coffee, Fabulous community spirit, Support local organisations/charities with gold coin entry donation
July to Decem- ber timetable for New baby and Preschool	NEW Baby and Preschool Timetable for July – December 2011! Come along to our new Rhyme and Story Time sessions starting in July. All infants from newborn to 6 years welcome. Join in rhymes, stories, and craft.. All sessions are FREE. Euroa Library, Second Friday of the month, 10.30am-11.30am, Aug 12, Sep 9, Oct 14, Nov 11, Dec 9 Nagambie Library, Fourth Tuesday of the month, 10.30am-11.30am, July 26, Aug 23, Oct 25, Nov 22, Dec 6 Violet Town Library, Fourth Thursday of the month, 10.30am-11.30am, July 28, Aug 25, Sep 22, Oct 27, Nov 24, Dec 1
Friday 8th July	'Drinks on the Deck' at Highlands Community Hall from 6.30pm. Bring food to share for a meal together and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome - especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power.
Saturday 9th July	Black Market 10am-2pm Richard and Kunie's, at 'Abdalallah House', Seymour
Saturday 16th July	MASQUERADE DINNER AT THE TERIP TERIP REC RESERVE 6.00pm for sherries followed by a Spit Roast. This year's theme is Masquerade, and there will be prizes for the best masks. Tickets are \$20 per adult, or \$50 for a family. Tables can be booked for the dinner. RSVP, to Kate Wright (5790 4148), by 1st July is essential. We look forward to seeing you there!
Sunday 31 July	National Tree Day Planet Ark is calling on all Green Thumbs to register and run a National Tree Day Site in 2011. National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day combine to make Australia's biggest community tree-planting event. Co-ordinated by Planet Ark, these are special days for all Australians to help out by planting and caring for native trees and shrubs to improve the environment in which they live. Since 1996 more than 2 million volunteers have planted over 15 million native trees and shrubs! It's a day to get down and get your hands dirty to help the planet! Information and Registration: http://treeday.planetark.org/

Classifieds & Community Notices

BOOK REVIEW

The Uncommon Reader – Alan Bennett

A delightful little spoof about the Queen's latently awakened desire for a good read. "Had the dogs not taken exception to the strange van parked in the royal grounds, the Queen might never have learnt of the Westminster travelling library's weekly visits to the palace. But finding herself at its steps, she goes up to apologise for all the yapping and ends up taking out a novel by Ivy Compton-Burnett, last borrowed in 1989." And so her journey of self-discovery begins, much to the chagrin of her equerries and government ministers. A subversive and enjoyable read.

By Pauline Roberts

FABLE OF THE PORCUPINE

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After awhile, they decided to distance themselves one from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together.

They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

Moral of the story: *The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities. The real moral of the story.....LEARN TO LIVE WITH THE PRICKLES IN YOUR LIFE. Thank you to Michael Greer for sending in this story.*



BITS OF BOTANY AND

Varnish wattle – *Acacia verniciflua*

If I had to identify this plant from a book I'd never have managed it. We seem to have our own variant around here, with much thinner and curvier leaves than any illustration I've seen. It is a shrub or small tree and likes rocky hilltops with thin soil. The leaves are supposed to be a bit sticky, hence the common name of Varnish. The flowers and seed pods are typical wattle.

By Louise Currie



ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS

HiArts Art Exhibition and Family Festival 2012. HiArts are planning the next Art exhibition on the Weekend 2nd to 4th March 2012. This is an advanced notice for artists. We are particularly interested in adding more sculptures to our exhibition including out door items. More details about entry procedures later in the year. For further information contact Stuart Reid 5796 9358 or email kadumbla@mac.com

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LANDCARE OFFICE

The Landcare Office at the Tablelands Community Centre (Old Ruffy School) is open Friday afternoons from 1pm tp 6 pm Rabbit numbers are increasing and now is the time to fumigate warrens with phostoxin tablets. For a 50% subsidy on this product please order supplies through Janet at the Landcare office on 57 904281 (phone will be connected soon)or email jhagen@harboursat.com.au

MOBILE MUSTER

Help us save our natural resources & protect our environment by recycling your old mobile phones at work now!

Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative Landcare Network has joined the mobile phone industry's recycling program, MobileMuster, to help round up and recycle old mobile phones and at the same time do some good for the environment.

Why recycle?

Did you know that: Most people buy a new phone every 2 years. 7 out of 10 people have at least one old unused mobile phone at home, nearly 4 out of 10 have at least 2 or more old unused mobile phones at home that could be recycled. Mobile phones are not biodegradable and contain small amounts of potentially hazardous substances such as cadmium in NiCad batteries which if not managed properly can be harm the environment. By recycling mobile phones, more than 90% of the mobile phone product materials can be extracted and reused such as plastics, gold, silver, copper and nickel.

One tonne of mobile phone circuits can yield the same amount of precious metals as 110 tonnes of gold ore, 123 tonnes of silver bearing ore and 11 tonnes of copper sulphide ore.

What/Where do I recycle?

Simply bring in your old mobile phones, batteries and accessories and drop them into the box at Tablelands Community Centre, Old Ruffy Primary School at Ruffy. It's that easy!

What happens to them?

All mobiles collected by MobileMuster are dismantled, sorted and separated into circuit boards, batteries, handsets and accessories. These are then processed either locally or overseas for resource recovery.

To find out more detail about what happens to your phones go to www.mobilemuster.com.au

Thank you for helping us protect our precious environment and saving valuable resources by recycling your old mobiles.

FOR SALE

1000 kg Ruddweigh weigh bars and scale. Has been serviced by Gallagher May 2011
A 22 panel portable sheep yard
Contact Roger Strong .+57969213

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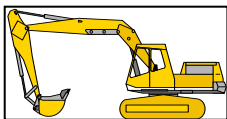
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